



The Winnebagoland Whistle

The Official Publication of the Winnebagoland Division
Midwest Region- National Model Railroad Association

VOLUME 57, ISSUE No. 4

SUMMER 2025

Photo courtesy:

Paul Hillmer

*"Gevo Power on
Matt Gelling's
CN Central layout"*



Superintendent's Report

Paul (Tree) Hillmer

Summer has arrived, and no snow is falling as I type this report. My favorite time of the year is early June.

But it is about to storm as type this up 1. If it is bad enough, I will shelter down in the basement. And maybe run some trains to ward off any twisters.

Now onto WLD division news.

Spring Meet 2025 was April 12 in Sheboygan Falls, and 52 people attended. We found a small box of new N scale cars mixed in with our WLD Company Store and we are trying to find its owner. If it is yours, please reach out to either Vern or me.

Phil Herman did an excellent job organizing the clinics. Matt Holman's clinic was "Graphic Design in HO Model RR Production". Shawn Hoppert presented "Prototype Throttles". And Fred Firkus's clinic was "Modeling Freight Carloads".

Phil also set up amazing layouts on tour, including his own BN Montana Main. Not many layouts I have been too where the mainline ends up over my 6' 3" head. But Phil's does. Rocky Mountain high indeed.

Plus, we had a wonderful bonus Friday night 4/11/25 that included a modeler's roundtable and two slide shows.



Gerry will be covering all this below.

Our 2025 Fall Meet is set for October 4 in Marinette. Dave Rickaby has booked the Holy Family Parish Center and is organizing a great meet. We will also have operating sessions Friday on October 3, so I am planning an overnigher! And the home layout tour will be amazing.

Highly encourage you to attend the meet. This will be another good one.

The flyer and registration will be out soon.

Our 27th WLD Annual Operating Day was held on 11/8/2025 in Appleton. My N-scale Badger Mid-Western will be open for operating both in the morning and afternoon session. Joel Weeks will also have his amazing HO-scale GN Willmar Division layout open. And Bill Moede said he can operate his HO-scale Lakeshore & Beecher layout. If we get enough to sign up, I can always gently twist arms of others in Appleton to operate.

Note that Train Fest in Milwaukee will be held on November 1-2 so we are changing the WLD Op Day to the 8th.

This September we will begin our new season Workshop Wednesday Zoom call every other month. On May 14th our Zoom call featured John Leow presenting live inside the roundhouse of the Quincy & Torch Lake. It was excellent! Vern will be sharing this on our Facebook page (Winnebagoland Division, NMRA) and on our website (wld-nmra.com) this summer. It is a must see!

Hope everyone has a great summer. Get out there and enjoy the warm weather and visit some of our railfan locations in Wisconsin (trainweb.us/wisrail). And when it is too darn hot, retreat to the basement and work on models to enter in the fall meet!

In This Issue

Gerry Ring, WLD Whistle Editor

The winter and summer issues of The Winnebagoland Whistle report on the Fall and Spring meets respectively. This issue, as Paul Hillmer describes, features the Spring Meet held in Sheboygan Falls. The people that have made The Whistle's Spring meet reporting successful were the photographers: Al Archer, Paul Hillmer, Dave Rickaby and Phil Herman. Their photographs are posted to the Winnebagoland Division, NMRA public group on Facebook.

2025-2026 Election Results

By Verne Ehlke, NMRA Clerk

The Winnebagoland Division Officer Election was held using Election Buddy from March 18 to April 2. There were 33 votes cast of 104 possible. The result are presented below:

WLD NMRA Superintendent

Paul Hillmer: 32

Other: 1

WLD NMRA Assistant Superintendent

Phil Herman: 32

Abstentions: 1

WLD NMRA Paymaster

Paul Mastalir: 32

Abstentions: 1

WLD NMRA Clerk

Vern Ehlke: 32

Abstentions: 1

Approve changes to WLD Constitution and By-Laws

Yes – I approve: 33

No – I reject: 0

In The Hopper

By Paul Hillmer

This issue of In the Hopper, we will look at the operations of Joel Weeks amazing double-deck Great Northern HO layout. Prototype operations at its finest. Joel has hosted the Fox River Operating Group (FROG) many times, the WLD op day, and many other groups and friends over the years. He also hosted many open houses. The neatest one is an annual bus load of grade school kids at St. Peters Lutheran, where he works!



Layout Name

GN Willmar Division

Owner

Joel Weeks

Description

HO scale, DCC Digitrax double deck with large helix (and inside the helix is the dispatcher office).

Size

34' x 34'. Located in Joel's basement. Shelf design with several peninsulas. Construction began with a brand-new house in 2001.

Theme

Prototype Great Northern operations on the mainline St Paul to Breckinridge Minnesota in 1969.

Type of Car Forwarding

Joel uses waybill flip car cards. He made his waybills with auto cad. He took photos of each car and printed on the waybill for easy spotting. He has around 450-500 cars in inventory and around 250 are on the layout at any time for operations.

Joel color codes his spots on each waybill for easier recognition of where the car is going. Orange is East "Minneapolis Staging." Green is West "Minot Staging." And Sky Blue is "Willmar Yard" to be classified for work along the line. Note they are GN colors and works great!

Trains run in operating session/cycle:

Joel likes to run 20 trains per operating cycle. This can vary depending on how many operators are attending. He has successfully captured the feel on the GN main in 1969 across the rolling farmland and prairies of Western Minnesota. These include 4 locals each way with 3 based out of Willmar and 1 out of Breckinridge. One of these works the branch line to St. Cloud (I got to run that in March). Another new one in development is the Hutchinson local, that works that branch line.

Freight movement is king on the 1969 GN. He does run various thru freight trains from the west coast to Chicago or other way around. Usually, 4 per session. Also thrown in are transfers to SOO and CBQ in Minneapolis. You may even spot some odd cars found on the GN that he has built, like a flat hauling Boeing Airplane parts from Seattle.

And GN was still moving people in 1969. The 1969 version of Empire Builder and Western Star make their appearances and various stops with several scratch-built depots.

Joel's thoughts on operating

Joel Weeks

Joel has always used waybills going back to his old Willmar freelanced layout in 1991. When he moved and began this layout in 2001, he decided to make GN 1969 proto-ops a theme and created his own more prototype waybill flip cards. He chose the Willmar division as he had traveled there as a kid with his dad. He wanted wide curves, the wide-open feel of western Minnesota, and no duck-under. Also, Joel is very talented as a CAD designer which has helped him create such a cool operating layout.

Joel says that a model railroader should always be ok with adapting things to make operations more enjoyable.

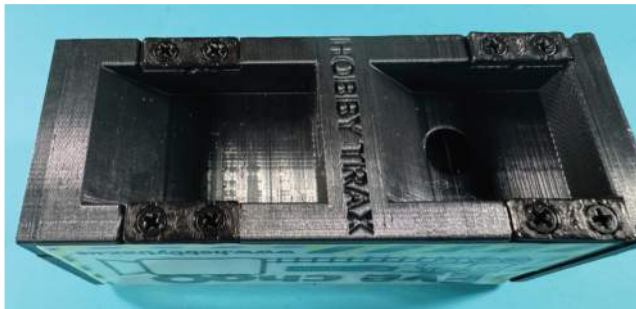
Joel's layout plans are attached after page 9.

Off the Bench

By Gerry Ring

In the last issue of *Off the Bench*, I mentioned that it was possible to mount the Eye Choo without its wheels on a flat car as was shown with the SQ23 security camera. At that time, the method of mounting either camera hadn't been decided upon. However, during a discussion with Irwin Nathanson of Hobby Trax US, he mentioned the possibility of using double-sided Velcro tape rather than a more complicated cradle. In addition, Nathan said using double-sided tape allowed the Eye Choo to be used with O-Scale trains.

I felt using double-sided tape was a great idea; however, the limited mounting area on the underside of the Eye Choo prevented my Velcro tape from adhering adequately.



Underside of Eye Choo with wheels removed.

Double-sided carpet tape, on the other hand, worked admirably. Carpet tape being scrim reinforced is very thin and adheres extremely well.



Eye Choo tape mounted to Athearn 40ft flat car.

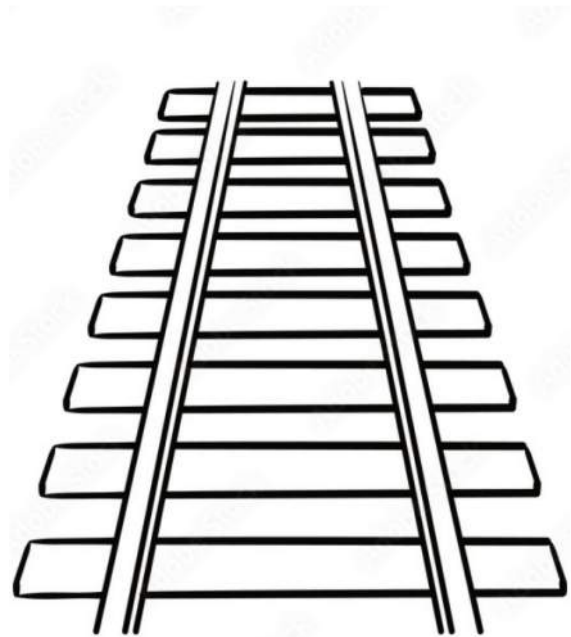
I have now run the Eye Choo on our Tuesday Morning Group mainlines. The camera has no problem videoing the entire run but breaks each video into 6-minute-long files. The flatcar mounting has eliminated the wobbling present with the original two-axle wheels. Immediately after finishing the run, the car was then plugged into the USB port of a laptop for viewing.



Crossing over a bridge on Roger Wurtzel's layout.



Simultaneous shot taken by the Eye Choo.



2025 Spring Meet

Modeler's Roundtable



From left to right: Peter Turk, Owen Daniels, Paul Hillmer, Matt Holman, Ivan Ver Gowe, Vern Ehlke, Dave Nitsch, and Joe Lallensack. Backs to the camera: Fred Firkus and Wally Rogers.

Slide Shows

The Sheboygan Slide show presenters were Pete Fetterer, Joe Lallensack, and Ivan Ver Gowe.



Joe Lallensack at the podium.

Photo Contest Winners

Joe Lallensack Photo Contest Chair

It was a particularly good contest with 6 people bringing photos. There were 18 entries in 4 categories. The contest was unique in that we had so many huge enlargements that we ran out of space in a small room! Thanks to Phil Herman on having such a good facility. I want to thank David Rickaby and Dave Nitsch for assisting me in the judging. The photos took a lot of time judging because of the quality.

Plan on bringing a photo to enter for our next meet. All we ask is that the photos be at least 5 x 7 but no larger than 11 x 14. We also like them mounted to allow handling during judging. You too can be an award winner, but only if you enter.

First Place, Prototype Color Print: Tom Bruss-FVLS (HLCX 1048) at New London.

Second Place, Prototype Color Print: Emory Luebke-Jupiter 4-4-0 at Promontory UT Reenactment.

Third Place, Prototype Color Print: Paul Hillmer-Blue Ridge Scenic GP 4631 at work.

Honorable Mention, Prototype Color Print: Paul Hillmer-Soo Pacific #730 at Escanaba.

First Place, Model Color Print: Paul Hillmer-Milwaukee Merchandise meets Flambeau 400 in Narrows Canyon.

Second Place, Model Color Print: Emory Luebke-Train 14 with #36 stopping for water at Lake Trudie.

Third Place, Prototype Color Print: Paul Hillmer-SP&W Challenger 236 during Op Session.

First Place, Tongue-in-Cheek: Paul Mastalir-Foxy delivered at Shawano.



Joe Lallensack contemplating life, the universe and everything.

Model Contest Winners

Richard Cooke, Model Contest Chair

Best of show & 1st Place Structure: Tom Davis, Heinz Pickle Works

1st Place Diesel: Al Archer, Soo Line, EMD SD40-2

1st Place Steam: Rich Hanke, B&O switcher



Richard Cooke and John Leow mull over Tom Davis' Heinz Pickle Works, Rich Hanke's B&O switcher and Al Archer's Soo Line EMD SD40-2.

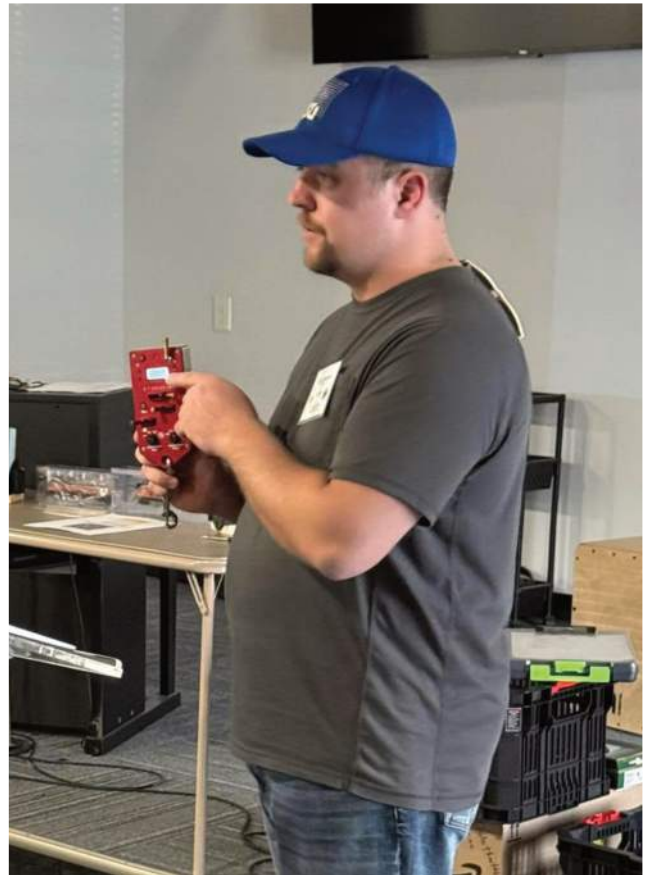


Richard Cook presents Tom Davis with Best of Show award.

The Clinics

Phil Herman, Clinic Chair

Shawn Hoppert, Proto Throttle



Matt Holman, Graphic Design in HO Scale Model Production



Fred Firkus, Modeling Freight Carloads, 1970-current



Layout Tours

Philip Herman



Phil models the BNSF's Highline sub. through Northern Montana built by the Great Northern railway. Modeling the mid 1990's just after the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe merger. The modeled portion of the line extends west from Glacier Park to the summit of Marias pass and then downgrade to the crew change point at Whitefish, MT. The HO scale layout is 35' x 21', multi deck, using digitrax controls and is fully CTC signaled, using JMRI and CATS. The Mainline run is 350'. The goal of the layout is to replicate the beautiful scenery around Glacier National Park and big-time mountain railroading and helper operations. The railroad gains 3 feet of elevation to reach the summit. The scenery is roughly 40% complete.

Sheboygan Railroad Museum



The Sheboygan Railroad Museum was acquired by the Society in 1993. Currently, it features a library and a large layout room featuring various model train operating setups in "G", "O", "S", "HO", "N", and "Z" gauges. The crown jewel is the large "Sheboygan and Western" two-level HO DCC layout that forms a huge dog-bone shape with a helix at the west end. This is a free-lanced layout that loosely follows a path from Chicago to Los Angeles. Digitrax provides the DCC and Train Controller the operating system; the scenery is about 75% complete. The Society owns the benchwork and scenery, while individual members provide the locomotives and rolling stock. the Society also owns a large and historic modular DCC HO-Gauge layout that has appeared in numerous places around Eastern and Central Wisconsin over the years, as well as a smaller G-Gauge modular layout.

Marvin Preussler



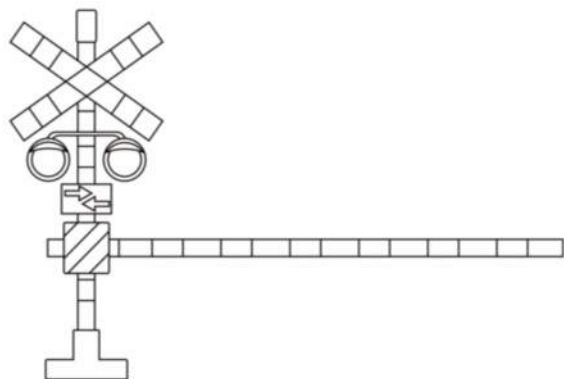
Marvin models the Green Bay & Western Railroad in 1990 in HO scale. Marvin's layout features NCE DCC with wireless NCE cabs. Many custom painted cars and locomotives as well as many scratch-built structures are also found on this operations-based prototype scale layout which

features over 250 freight cars. RailOp for Windows is the operating system used for operating the layout. The scenery is about 85% completed. The towns of Black Creek, Seymour, New Franken, Green Bay, and Kewaunee are featured on this layout. Photos of this layout have appeared in the Walthers catalog, the NMRA calendar, *Railmodel Journal*, and in *Model Railroader* magazine.

Mark Preussler



Mark models the Soo Line in the transition era from steam to diesel. This operations-based prototype HO scale layout fills his 30' X 60' basement. Towns of Waupaca, Dale, Neenah & Oshkosh are featured along with the branch line from Neenah to Manitowoc. Lots of scratch-built locos, cars, and structures can be found on this impressive layout featuring over 500 freight cars. System One DCC with NCE cabs power his layout. RailOp for Windows is the operating system used for operating this layout. An article on Mark's layout appeared in *Model Railroader* magazine. Photos of his layout also appeared in the Walthers catalog and *Railmodel Journal* magazine.



Brian Wiegand



Brian Models a portion of the Wisconsin Central Manitowoc Sub. Proto Freelanced railroad is set in the city of Menasha, WI on the Wisconsin Central Manitowoc Sub in the 1990's. The Railroad is a 19' X 18' shelf style switching layout. The layout is powered by an NCE controller and utilizes an Iowa Scaled Engineering Proto Throttle. Switch lists are generated by JMRI operations. The layout features two large paper mills, a smaller paper mill and numerous other rail-served industries found around Menasha during that time-period. Track is Micro Engineering code 83 and code 70 flex track with turnouts hand laid using fast tracks jigs. The scenery is roughly 20% complete.

Operating Session

Scott Payne



Scott Payne models the CNW Alco line from Winona, MN (staging) to Brookings, ND. Circa 1970's. Scott's layout features many of the agricultural related industries along the line and interchange operations with the M&StL, Milwaukee Road and Rock Island. His operations

utilize a color-coded car card and waybill system. Mainline trains work two main yards in Mankato and Tracy Minnesota dropping off and picking up cuts of cars. Those yard masters sort cars for local industries, way freights and interchange transfer jobs. Scott has done a great job recreating these operations even down to how the work rules of each railroad affected the interchange operations. Scenery on the layout is nearly complete with lots of detail along the way. The layout operates well with 6-7 operators and is powered with NCE DCC wireless throttles.

Officers and Volunteers

<http://www.wld-nmra.com/?action=personnel>

Division Officers

Paul Hillmer	Superintendent
Phil Herman	Asst. Superintendent
Paul Mastalir	Paymaster
Vern Ehlke	Chief Clerk
Paul Hillmer	Division Director

Board of Directors

(terms thru 06/2026)

Division Officers (above) PLUS:

Al Archer	Fred Firkus
Dave Nitsch	Mike Eiden
Gerry Ring	Joe Lallensack
John Leow	Mary Eiden

Committee Chairs

Gerry Ring	Whistle Editor
Gerry Ring	Membership Chair
John Leow	AP Chair
Phil Herman	Clinic Chair
Paul Hillmer	Operating Session Chair
Paul Mastalir	Company Store Chair
Richard Cooke	Model Contest Chair
Joe Lallensack	Photo Contest Chair
Michael Eiden	Webmaster
Paul Mastalir	Scout Coordinator
Paul Hillmer	Social Media Chair

Event Calendar

<http://www.wld-nmra.com/?action=onTheReadyTrack>

June 21, 2025

Strawberry Fest Model Railroad Swap Meet - Waupaca, WI.

September 6, 2025:

BOD Meeting is at the Soo Line Historical & Technical Society Building - Appleton, WI; and on Zoom at 10:30 AM.

October 3-4, 2025

WLD Fall Meet - Marinette, WI. - More information to follow. .

November 8, 2025

WLD 2025 Annual Operating Day - Appleton, WI.

Company Store

Make sure to check out the WLD Merch store for WLD boxcars, shirts and caps: http://www.wld-nmra.com/?action=co_store

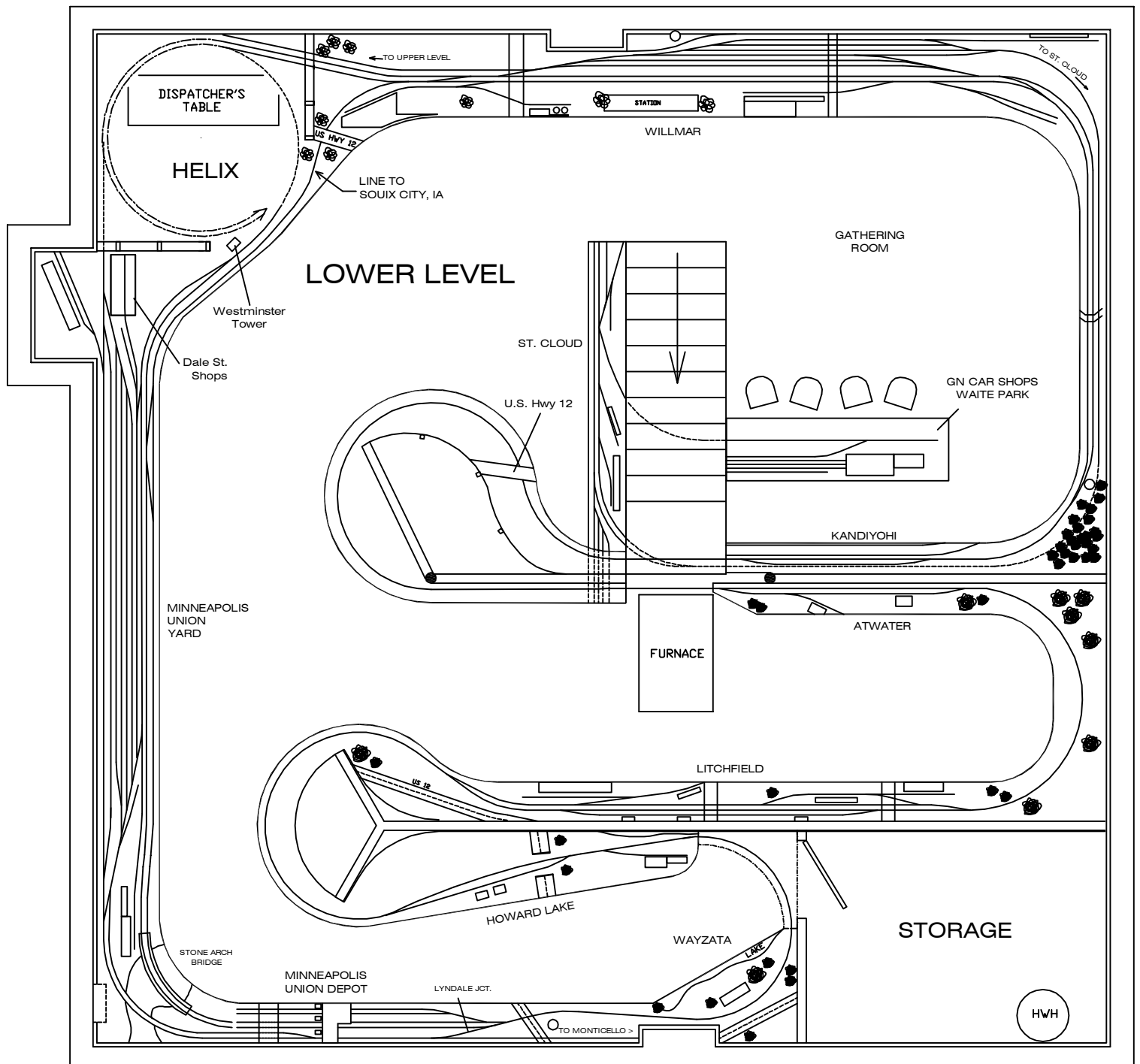


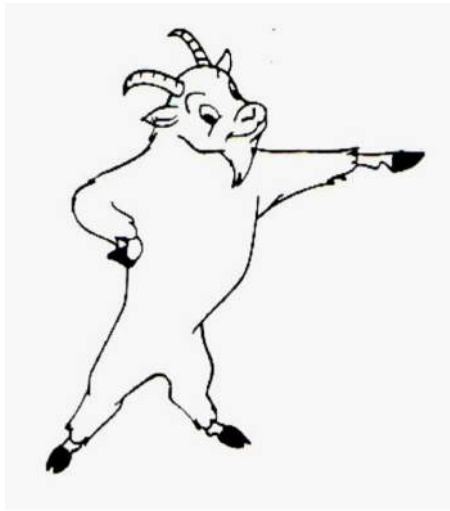
Just a few of the HO-scale WinnebagoLand boxcars are left; let Paul Mastalir know how many and he will work out getting them to you. His phone is (715) 853-7274, or email him at mastalir54166@yahoo.com or wldpaymaster@gmail.com.





Time-travel back to 1969. Far from the war in Vietnam and the political unrest of the cities and universities, there is a peaceful, simple place - central Minnesota. The Great Northern Railway stood out from other railroads in the late 60's with its many innovations and progressive railroad practices. But its blue and white passenger trains, and modern equipment also stood out against the backdrop of old tractors and weathered grain elevators. Having a passion for a railroad that existed years before, one relies heavily on pictures from books, magazines, historical societies and now the internet. Many of the towns and highlights I chose to depict on this layout are inspired by particular pictures. With the invaluable help of dozens of aerial photos taken in the 1960's, I have a historical starting point for laying out the right-of-way and buildings associated with the railroad. Still dozens more photos taken from trackside from the handful of GN fans at the time have had an influence - to them I am forever grateful. Thanks for coming!





LAYOUT AT A GLANCE:

Theme: GN's Willmar Division - 1969

Scale: HO

Size: 34' x 34'

Layout height: 42" and 60"

Layout style: Double deck w/ 2-trk Helix

Roadbed: Cork on plywood

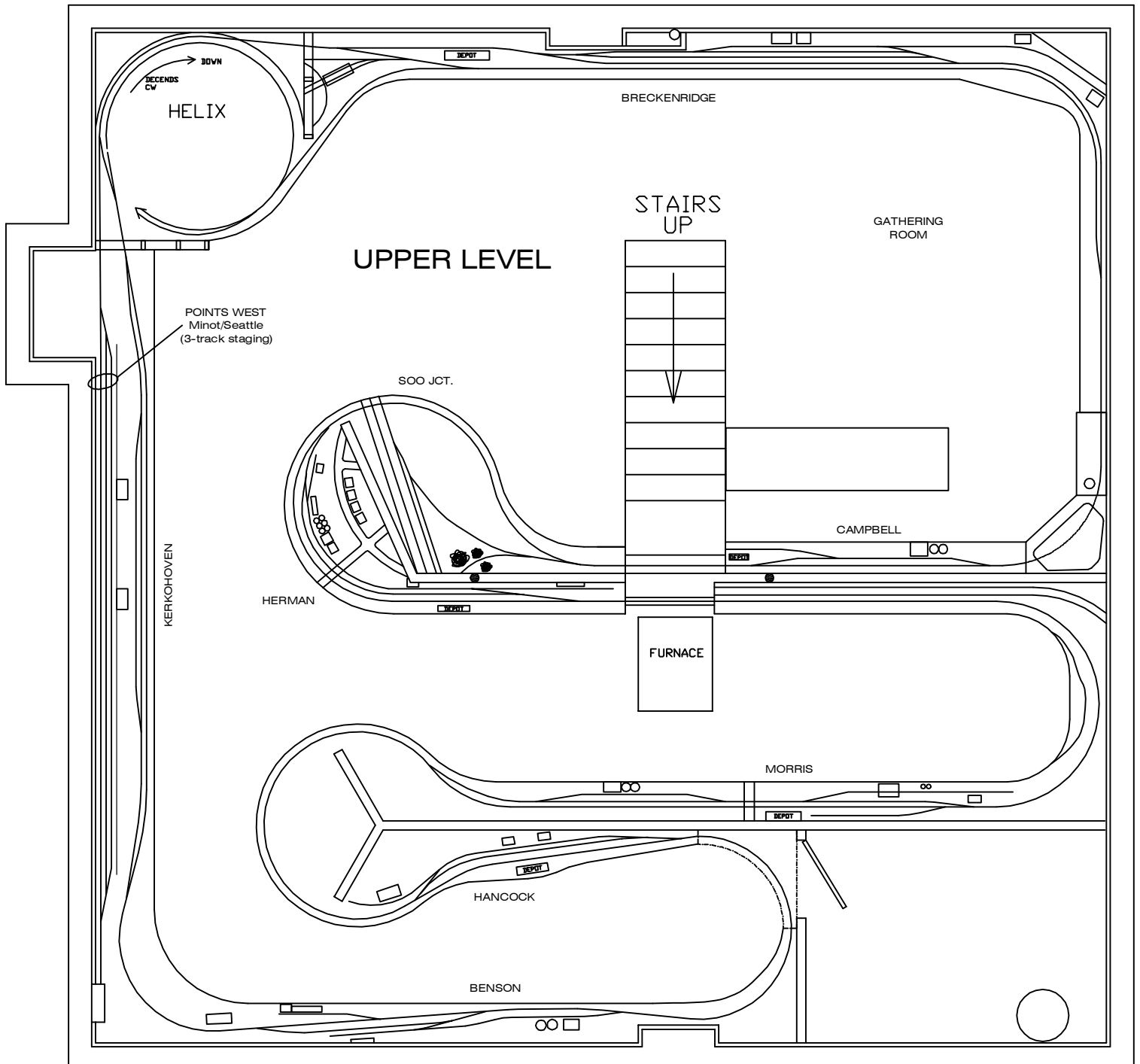
Track: Code 83 mainline, Code 70 off-line

Code 100 in Minneapolis & Helix

Minimum radius: 36"

Throttle: DigiTrax DCC radio control Ca

Car Cards: Shenware



Editorial: The Certainty of Enjoyment



photo: David Rolle

Uncertainty is a term that is finding its way into many aspects of our society these days - including the model railroad hobby. Pricing and availability of model railroad products has become a concern for manufacturers, retailers, as well as modelers. Amherst has joined with many others in the model railroad industry to form the Hobby Industry Coalition - hobbycoalition.org - in an effort to bring economic certainty back to the hobby.

While the economics of the hobby might be up-in-the-air, the enjoyment that we all receive from the railroad hobbies is not. The pure joy of riding a train, or building a model, or learning how to solder, or getting the shot (photo), or making new railroad friends - those enjoyments are not uncertain. They are real. They are happening every day. And, they are not going away.

Planning for the 2026 Railroad Hobby Show is well underway, and a word that keeps coming up in the discussions is - celebration. Celebration. In January, 2026, we are going to celebrate the enjoyment the railroad hobbies bring to our lives - big time! The Amherst Railway Society exists to make a positive difference in people's lives through the railroad and model railroad hobbies. That's our mantra. And, that's a certainty.

The economics are a struggle right now, but as an industry we will find a way to work through that. Enjoyment? - that's not a struggle. That's a certainty, and no one can take that away.

No one.

Waupaca Area Model Railroaders Waupaca, Wisconsin

Hosts the 1st ANNUAL

STRAWBERRY FEST MODEL RAILROAD SWAP MEET

*In conjunction with the Waupaca Historical Society
and Waupaca Area Chamber of Commerce*

Saturday, June 21, 2025 - 9 AM to 4 PM

***Waupaca Recreation Center, 407 School Street
at the intersection of School, State & Badger St***

- Hobby Shop Dealers and Vendors
- Swap Meet (hobbyist sale tables)
- Great Food Available

For vendor tables, contact:
Jim Payton 920-407-0296
jpayton000@centurylink.net

Eugene Much 715-281-6925



Waupaca Area Convention & Visitor Bureau
is a proud sponsor of our swap meet.



Also available at the train show for purchase will be a special lola & Northern 40ft box car. These HO car were custom made by Accurail as a club fundraiser. We only have limited qty left of both car numbers.

For swap meet information see our website: www.wamrltd.com
and <https://visitwaupacachainolakes.com/event/strawberry-fest>
provides all area Strawberry Fest events.



Admission: \$3

Kids Under 12: Free

Historic Soo Line Depot Open House

Saturday 8am-7pm & Sunday 8am-5pm

*It is only 7/10th of a mile away at 525 Oak St
or go north on State St, right on Mill St, and
then left on Oak St just past the railroad bridge
on your left.*



W&MMRRC TRAINS & GAMES AUTOMOBILES MARINETTE, WI

Free Admission
Saturday June 28, 2025
Trains 9 AM – 5 PM
Games 9 AM – 8 PM
Car Show 9 AM – 4 PM

Free Admission
Sunday June 29, 2025
Trains 9 AM – 4 PM
Games 9 AM – 4 PM

Marinette Community Rec Center
2501 Pierce Ave, Marinette, WI

Free Convention

Free Admission!!!!!!

Operating Model Train Layouts Model Train and Game Vendors
Tabletop Board Game Event Classic Car Show Outdoor Display
Food Trucks

Sponsored by
Wisconsin and Michigan Model Railroad Club
Contact: Dave Rickaby (President) (715) 584-9310 wmwestdiv@yahoo.com

Game Knights Hobby Store, 2035 Marinette Ave., Marinette WI
Contact: Mike Bastien Proprietor (715) 330-6001

Local Game Club Coordinator: Dan Chinnery, danielchinnery@yahoo.com

Classic Car Show Coordinator: Jay Wessley, (906) 792-5112

Use the QR Code to see what games are being played and register to hold your space!



West Wisconsin Railroad Club

23rd Annual

Train Show

Saturday

Oct. 11, 2025

10 am – 5 pm

Sunday

October 12, 2025

10 am – 3 pm

L.E. Phillips YMCA Sports Center

3456 Craig Road

Eau Claire, W

Operating Layouts, Displays
Sellers, Concessions

Adults (17 and up) \$8

Adults with non-perishable food donation \$7

Children (age 6 – 16) \$3

Children 5 and under are FREE

www.westwisconsinrailroad.club



info@westwisconsinrailroad.club

STEAMIN' OVER TO MARSHFIELD



In Marshfield Operating Layouts and Dealers

*22nd Annual
Model Train Show*

**OCTOBER 18th
AND 19th, 2025**

at the Marshfield Community Center
(a.k.a. Old Marshfield Armory)
201 S Oak Avenue, Marshfield, WI



**DEALER, VENDORS
AND LAYOUT SETUP:**

**Friday, October 17th
4:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.**

**Saturday, October 18st
6:00 A.M. to 9:30 A.M.**

SHOW TIMES:

**Saturday, October 18th
10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.**

**Sunday, October 19th
10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.**

Admission: \$2.00 18 and up



**For Dealer Information Contact:
Jon Vick (715) 305-3493**