

THE WINNEBAGOLAND WHISTLE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WINNEBAGOLAND DIVISION
MIDWEST REGION – NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

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FALL 2021

"All scales cost the same amount - all you can afford." — John Armstrong

COVER PHOTO:

Local freight headed by Engine 42 pauses in front of the Lake Trudie depot on Emory Luebke's steam-era layout.

Emory, Paul Hillmer, Randy Williamson and others had their pikes open for the WLD Fall Meet on October 2nd. Layout tours are part and parcel of these regular meets, and we encourage all WLD members to take advantage of this perk!

Photo courtesy Phil Herman



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Superintendent's Report

by Phil Herman

One of "Those Guys"

One of the first structures I placed on my first layout was Tyco's Rico depot. The Rico depot is one of those iconic steam era Colorado narrow gauge depots. I think at least 50% of modelers had a Rico depot at some point. I used some Testors plastic cement to assemble the kit which was molded in yellow, gray and brown plastic. Once assembled it was placed onto the layout no paint no weathering and at the age of ten, I was quite happy with my accomplishment. I think back to that depot and even if I modeled Rio Grande Southern it would not be acceptable on my layout today. Plastic sprues not completely removed or sanded smooth. The shiny plastic finish with glue snudges along every joint.



That was 45 years ago and since that time, my skills have improved. But like anyone it took many hours of modeling to hone the skills I have. I remember reading *Model Railroader* as a kid and really admiring those modelers who could make a scene look very close to the real thing. The architecture and placement of the structures matched the railroad or area being modeled, which indicated most or all the structures were scratch built. The paint color and weathering looked right, signs, vehicles and details were era-specific. How would I even do that? Where would I find the materials? Where would I find prototype information (no internet at that time)? I thought, there is no way I am ever going to spend the time to do that. I'm never going to be, "One of Those Guys".

(Continued on page 2)



Superintendent's Report

(Continued from page 1)

As time passed my standards have changed and I started kit bashing structures to fit particular places on my layout. I really liked the fact that kit bashing allowed me to create structures that no one else had on their layout. Fast forward to 2021, my layout now has a number of scratch-built structures that closely resemble the prototype being modeled. Some built out of wood some styrene or a combination of both depending on what works and looks best. Windows and doors are the correct style and when built the structures are then painted and weathered. I guess I have to admit that I've turned into "one of those guys".

There are so many ways to enjoy our hobby, in each area, it takes a different set of skills, knowledge and experience. No one starts off doing calculus—they first need to learn how to add and subtract. Your passion and experience in time will take you to the place you want to be. Most of the guys I admired in those magazine articles as a kid were not high school age but were older and had been into the hobby for many years. Some even had fathers that got them started. A young modeler starting out in today's world I think can excel at their passion quicker due to the information available at their finger tips. Now in 30 minutes I can watch a number of how-to videos and in two days get the materials delivered by Amazon and I'm ready to go.

During our WinnebagoLand Fall Meet layout tour in Neenah a few weeks back this was evident. The level of experience and passion on those individual layouts was very different. Each layout told a unique story about the modeler from Emory Luebke's rural steam era layout to Paul Hillmer's bustling N-scale layout that go on and on and on. Observing those layouts you can tell a lot about the modeler. It displays what is important to them. Is it operations, scenery, rolling stock, animation and so on? A modeler's finances, how much they are willing or able to spend on the hobby (without the wife finding out). And of course, it displays how long they have been in the hobby the number of hours over a number of years. Meaning all of us spend differing amounts of time doing this hobby. That time will produce a certain level of skill in the areas the modeler finds enjoyment in.

November 6th is the annual WLD Operating session; this year it will be in the Waupaca area. Roger Hildebrandt and Arpad Eiler are hosting the event. Roger and Arpad's passion and skill for operations will be evident operating these two sprawling layouts. Both have improved their skills over many years of modeling. To participate in this event see our website at wld-nmra.com.

In this hobby only one person can measure your success and that is you. If you follow your passion and get enjoyment out of what you do, that to me is success. No one has ever mastered every aspect of this hobby so don't set that as your goal. Keep doing the things that give you enjoyment and in time you will be "one of those guys" in the area you enjoy.

Until we meet again, "proceed on signal indication, Phil out."

View From the Cab

Your Editor

Hope everyone had a good summer and early fall—as I write this the gorgeous weather of September and early October has given way to more typical chills, and I just put the camper away for winter storage. Halloween is just around the corner, as is our Fall Operating Session on November 6th. If you haven't signed up already, you still have a chance; see the registration form at the end of the Whistle. These are fantastic opportunities to not only experience another modeler's dream and learn from it, but even just to hang out with friends, especially if you haven't had many chances to do so in this COVID world. (Note: masks will be required!)

Normally around this time my club would be making final preparations to get ready for Trainfest, mainly dusting off the modules after summer storage, finishing up a structure or two for a new scene, and reserving the rental truck. Unfortunately as you know Trainfest was canceled again this year, purportedly due to a lack of volunteer staffing and major players pulling out rather than directly due to the pandemic like in 2020. Even so, if the show had gone on, I'm not sure the club itself would have been able to go anyway—our membership has dwindled over the years and the remaining stalwarts aren't getting any younger! It's a little depressing to see 25 years of time, effort, money and sometimes ingenuity result in perpetual storage, and we're not sure what's going to happen. Wish I had more room myself, but I don't have the space to even set up more than a couple of my modules!

On the other hand, there is some scuttlebutt that the pandemic has helped introduce more people to the hobby, as stay-at-homers look for more things to do, especially with their kids. This is good news, assuming there's data to back that up, but I wonder how long that will stick... Camping has seen a similar uptick over the last 18 months, but now we've noticed a bunch of lightly used, 1- or 2-year old RVs up for sale on various community group pages. Then again, with supply line struggles creating a shortage or delay of seemingly everything, it could be seen as difficult to get started!

In summary, there are both challenges and opportunities, positives and negatives, coming as part and parcel of this crazy messed-up world. If you are finding yourself on the upside in one capacity of your life or another, try sharing that joy around (while stopping the stupid virus from doing the same thing!)

Keep on trainin! — Todd tbushmaker@sbcglobal.net

WLD Fall Meet

Fall Meet 2021 Photo Contest Results

Neenah, WI - October 2, 2021

Best of Show: Paul Hillmer –

Quincy & Torch Lake RR Tender shovel

First Place, Prototype Color Print: Tom Bruss –

CN Local at Combined Locks

Second Place, Prototype Color Print: Adam Bunkelman –

WC 3018 returns over Manitowoc Bridge

Third Place, Prototype Color Print: Paul Hillmer –

Appleton swing bridge winter

First Place, Model Color Print: Paul Hillmer –

West Wisconsin Goodbye

Second Place, Model Color Print: Paul Hillmer –

Milwaukee Road #105 in O scale

It was a pretty good contest with 12 entries from 3 entrants. Even though they were in only two categories, judging was extremely difficult. I want to thank Randy Williamson and Emory Luebke in assisting me in the judging. We spent quite a bit of time looking over the quality photos before we chose the winners.

As this happens often lately, every entrant got an award. You can see that you can have a chance to win, but you need to bring something to enter! All that we ask 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. I look forward to you and your entry at the next Meet.

Joe Lallensack

Photo Contest Chairman

Fall Meet Financial Summary

Income:

Total: \$ 525.00

Expenses:

Facility rental: \$ 543.82

Plaques/awards: \$ 91.52

Total: \$ 635.34

Net income/loss: \$ (110.34)

Attendance:

Members: 27

Non-members: 4

Total: 31

Scott Payne

Paymaster



Dave Allen “Retires”!

Folks: Due to health reasons I must resign my position as contest chair. It has been a great job - looking critically (in the academic sense) at a lot of good models. For example, I was thrilled when I spotted a flaw on one of Emory Luebke's models - it was proof that these were scratchbuilt parts!

Would Rich Cooke be willing to do the job? Or John Leow. Both have good eyes and are familiar with the evaluation process.

Be well; stay safe. —Dave A.

Dave,
I'm saddened to hear of your resignation due to health issues. You have done great service to our hobby over the years. Your expertise will be missed greatly. I remember the first model of mine you judged (sadly the only model). You ripped my masterpiece to shreds. It hurt my ego but made me a better modeler. You are a scratch modeler and you know what it takes to be a good one. You were also a great teacher when explaining what we could do to improve our models.

I can't think of two better candidates than John and Rich. They are also great model builders and have some of the same qualities that made you a great judge.

Thank you.

—Phil Herman

Dave et al -

Sorry to hear this, Dave. You've been my mentor over the years, and I'm a much better and more confident modeler due to your wisdom and encouragement. I'd be humbled to take the reins, along with Richard as co-chair, of the contest arena. I can only aspire to your level of fairness, encouragement, and expertise.

—John Leow

Dave you are a amazing guy and friend! Thanks for also giving me some awards by default (no other N scale) but never sugar coating it!

I was never offended and love your knowledge.

—Paul

Sorry to hear that you are having health issues. Thank you for your many years of service to the WLD and model railroading in general. I hope you are feeling better soon.

—Wally

Sorry to hear about this Dave. You did a fantastic job as model chairman. I hope all goes well for you in the future!

—Mike Eiden

Best wishes to you Dave. Thanks for the great job you have done.

—Mary Eiden

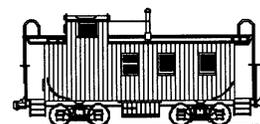
David, Sorry to hear about your health issues, I wish you the Best! I cherish the times I got to judge contests with you over the years, as I learned a lot! Thank You for all your years of service to the NMRA and the WLD.

—Dave Nitsch



Dave, thanks for being such a dynamic part of the WLD for so many years, complete with the generosity that is sharing your talents and experiences with all of us. Please stay healthy and keep us apprised!

—Todd



State Rail Project to Spur Development

Various Reports

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), announced that a \$630,000 rail project that will help Arntzen Corporation move a production facility from Illinois to Walworth County will be supported by a \$200,000 WisDOT Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) grant.

The new \$10 million Arntzen Corporation facility will employ 40 workers in the village of Sharon and is designed to produce large-diameter steel pipes for underground use. The rail project will connect the site to the Union Pacific Railroad.

“Strong infrastructure and strategic investments are key to adding high-skill, high-wage jobs and connecting the dots so our state and economy can grow,” said Gov. Evers. “I welcome Arntzen Corporation to Wisconsin, and I welcome more businesses to collaborate on transportation solutions and find new success in Wisconsin.”

The TEA grant was recently approved by WisDOT Secretary-designee Craig Thompson. “Whether it is improving rail access, strengthening our harbors or improving our roads, Wisconsin is committed to infrastructure investments that improve our economy, safety and quality of life,” Secretary-designee Craig Thompson said. “Thank you to Arntzen Corporation for investing in Wisconsin.”

Arntzen will use the new 1,100-foot rail spur to receive deliveries of steel plate which is the primary raw material for their operation.

“Wisconsin’s pro-business environment combined with the Village of Sharon’s industrial site with rail access made this community the logical choice for our new manufacturing facility,” said company Vice President John Arntzen. “Transporting steel plate from the various steel mills by rail is key to staying competitive as a steel casing pipe mill.”

Construction of Arntzen’s plant in Sharon is expected to begin this fall with completion slated for next year. Work on the WisDOT supported rail spur which will serve the site is expected to begin in the spring of 2022 and be completed by the time the manufacturing facility is operational.

“This partnership between the Village of Sharon, the State and Arntzen is so important to growing our economic base and creating new jobs,” said Susan Steele, Administrator of the Village of Sharon. “This new manufacturing facility, which will be built on a 68-acre site in Sharon, will provide Arntzen with room to grow in the future and add even more new jobs.”

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Walworth County Economic Development Alliance and the Milwaukee 7 (M7) regional economic development organization all assisted in recruiting Arntzen to locate in Wisconsin.

“Arntzen is the kind of company that can thrive here,” said Rebecca Gries, M7’s Director of Corporate Attraction and Expansion. “Their arrival is another validation of the value proposition that our region offers to so many manufacturers.”

Since the beginning of 2020, Wisconsin’s TEA program has awarded 15 grants totaling \$7.1 million to support transportation improvements linked to business development projects that will create 1,367 new jobs and retain more than 700 jobs in Wisconsin.

The TEA program provides financial assistance to communities to support transportation infrastructure improvements that will help attract new employers or encourage existing employers to expand. A municipal or county unit of government must sponsor a TEA application. The project must have the local government’s endorsement, and it must benefit the public.

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Before Interstates, America Got Around on Interurbans

At the beginning of the 20th century, a network of electrified “rural trolleys” raced between small towns and cities. Their fate could offer lessons for today’s train boosters.

Once, there was no better selling point for your town than an interurban line.

These small railways connected small towns and large cities throughout the U.S. at the turn of the 20th century, giving residents a chance to go places, literally and metaphorically. The cars were bigger and better-appointed than your standard streetcar, and instead of soot-chuffing steam locomotives, they used the latest clean-energy innovation: electric power provided by the overhead wires known as catenary lines.

Any settlements that lacked an interurban badly wanted one, even to the point of faking their existence. In Ohio — a hotspot for the interurban industry — just about every town with a population greater than 5,000 had an interurban connection, except one: Coshocton, an Appalachian town between Canton and Columbus. Roger Grant, a history professor at Clemson University who’s written at length about U.S. railroads, said that postcards from the 1910s show interurbans running through Coshocton anyway. It was that big a deal.

“If you had an interurban, you were modern,” he says. “You were up to date.”

But the interurban’s moment in the sun was all too brief, peaking in 1916, with 15,580 miles of interurban lines throughout the U.S., about a third of which were in Ohio and Indiana. Perhaps not coincidentally, 1916 was also the year President Woodrow Wilson signed into law the Federal Aid Road Act. Wilson ran for re-election that year on a platform that included increased funding toward public roads, and the act allocated \$75 million for road improvements throughout the country.

Instead of the wave of the future, the interurban turned out to be a transitional mode of transportation, Grant says, bridging the gap between the large passenger railroads and personal automobiles. But the dream of clean, fast and frequent rail travel between U.S. cities never really died. And now, with railfan Joe Biden in the White House and \$66 billion to expand Amtrak’s passenger rail service in the infrastructure bill that still awaits a final vote in Congress, the interurban era could be an instructive model for what a climate-friendlier national transportation network might look like.

“Lots of corridors need better connections,” says Christof Spieler, a transportation engineer and former board member for Houston’s METRO. “I think rail is part of that, and



I think electric rail is part of that.”

For train travelers of the mid-19th century, the arrival of electricity was a technological game changer. After the driving of the golden spike at Promontory Summit, Utah, in 1869, a network of long-distance trains spread westward, pulled across heavy tracks by powerful steam locomotives. Within cities, smaller horse-drawn trolley lines negotiated narrow streets. (San Francisco, where horses couldn’t ascend steep hills, adopted cable cars that moved by gripping underground cables that moved from machinery at a central power plant).

Then, in 1887, Frank Sprague, a Naval Academy graduate and former assistant to Thomas Edison, devised a reliable electric motor that could power a streetcar. He formed the Richmond Union Passenger Railway and launched the first electric trolley service in the Virginia capital the next year, with 40 cars and 12 miles of track. It was an instant success, quickly serving as many as 12,000 passengers a day. Boston officials came to view the system and returned home with plans to electrify its trolley — and then build a subway.

If electric trains could run in cities, there was no reason they couldn’t run between them as well. In 1889, a “rural trolley” opened between the towns of Granville and Newark in Central Ohio — a sort of proto-interurban. The following year, Grant says, one-sixth of animal-drawn trolley lines were electrifying. Several urban streetcar companies expanded service to towns nearby. (One side effect of the electrified rail boom: amusement parks. Trolley and interurban companies often built a modest park or picnic ground at the end of their lines, to boost weekend ridership.)

At a time when most Americans still lived in rural communities, interurbans were the most convenient way to travel. Small-town residents could ride to the closest city for a day trip. Traveling salesmen used them to hop from town to town. The electrified lines offered a cleaner ride than coal-fired steam engines, and they were fast, too, with many reaching what we now consider “highway speeds” of 60 mph or more as they raced through the countryside. (By

(Continued on page 7)

Interurbans—Today's Light Rail

Vince Guerrieri—Bloomberg

(Continued from page 6)

comparison, a Ford Model T's top speed was around 45 mph, if you could find a stretch of straight road to wind it out.)

"If you were on a main line, like between Cleveland and Toledo, you had a lot of choices," Grant says. "But if you were out in a smaller community, you might only get one train a day, and that might not run on Sunday. But with interurbans, you had trains running every hour or two hours."

In a frenzy of investor-led overconfidence, the industry expanded aggressively, especially in the flat Midwest, where construction costs were lower. At the height of the boom, there were even plans for a high-speed electrified railway linking New York and Chicago in just 10 hours. "The industry grew prodigiously, if not always wisely," wrote the late railroad historian William D. Middleton. "Glib promoters and prideful local boosters, with little regard for traffic potential, brought many lines into being where scarcely a chance for success existed."



Ultimately, the convenience of interurban began to be surpassed by autos — which also began to crowd out interurbans on city streets. In some instances, their tracks were swallowed up by the roads they were competing with. Add in a Great Depression, and interurbans started to go under, becoming impediments to the progress they represented decades earlier.

"A lot of interurbans were private and for-profit," Spieler says. "As rural roads got paved, they just couldn't compete. They were private companies competing with taxpayer-funded infrastructure."

To stay afloat, some interurbans offered bus service or freight delivery. World War II provided a brief reprieve for rail travel in general, thanks to gasoline rationing and travel restrictions. After the war, Grant says, several interurbans transitioned to diesel locomotives and became short-line railroads. Others found it more lucrative to just sell the

electric power generated for trains and they transformed into utility companies. FirstEnergy Corp. — recently in the news in Ohio thanks to a \$60 million bribery scandal — can trace its origins to the Akron, Bedford and Cleveland Railroad, an interurban line in Northeast Ohio.

While Ohio was the most interurban-intensive region, the biggest network was built out west. The Pacific Electric Railway Company ran its famed Red Cars along more than 700 miles of track that spanned several cities in Southern California. A conspiracy theory — given popular credence in the film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* — holds that the network was bought by a consortium of carmakers after World War II and intentionally scuttled to make way for the freeway age. Like many urban legends, there's a kernel of truth to it. But the fact remains that by then, most American trolley and interurban lines were losing money and ripe for sale. (In Europe and the U.K., it's a very different story, as their robust networks of electrified intercity rail show.)

Vestiges of the interurban age still exist today, Spieler says, like the T light rail serving the South Hills of Pittsburgh, SEPTA's Norristown line around Philadelphia, Chicago's South Shore Line, and some BART transit in San Francisco. Many a bike trail traces the right-of-way of an abandoned interurban. And the wave of light rail projects undertaken in U.S. cities in the 1980s revived the electric railway concept, though most were designed to shuttle suburban residents into downtowns.

"Arguably, light rail is today's interurbans," he says.

But the role that interurbans played in American life has never truly been replaced by succeeding modes. The infrastructure demanded by private automobiles proved to be disastrous for U.S. cities, and their ongoing environmental toll is doing even broader damage. For those who can't drive, a dwindling and cash-strapped intercity bus network connects rural communities that might have once boasted of interurban service. Meanwhile, pie-in-the-sky projects like hyperloops and maglev lines continue to stir the imaginations of city leaders who dream of getting in on the next big thing.

It may be worth remembering how a similar infatuation with technology led to an overabundance of interurbans a century ago. Indeed, some places built lines less out of need and more just to be modern, as a selling point for their towns, Grant says. "Some investors really lost their shirts."

"There were a considerable number of interurbans that didn't make sense," Spieler says, likening it to the 1990s dot-com bubble. "There were interurbans built because people were excited about the technology." In contemplating how to make new investments in passenger rail, today's transportation thinkers would be wise to heed a lesson: "One of the things we do wrong in transit is get excited about technology. We say, 'This is what we want to use.' What we should do is say what we want to do: Define the goal, and get technology to help."

Team Track

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Phil Herman	Superintendent
Todd Bushmaker	Asst. Superintendent
Scott Payne	Paymaster
Vern Ehlke	Chief Clerk

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Division Officers (above) PLUS:

Wally Rogers	Joe Lallensack
Dave Nitsch	Dave Allen
Mary Eiden	Mike Eiden
Rich Hopfensperger	Paul Mastalir

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Todd Bushmaker	Whistle
Marv Preussler	Achievement Program
Wally Rogers	Membership
Phil Herman	Clinics
(At-will, current meet)	Convention Chair
Paul Mastalir	Company Store
Scott Payne	Operating Sessions
(Open)	Model Contest
Joe Lallensack	Photo Contest
Vern Ehlke	Technology
Paul Hillmer	Social Media
Michael Eiden	Webmaster
Rich Hopfensperger	Hobby Shop/Model Club Liaison
Paul Mastalir / Mike O.	Scout Coordinators
(At-will Volunteers)	Financial Review

Note that these positions need not be Directors; any member in the Division may chair or participate in these committees!



www.wld-nmra.com

Facebook:
“Winnebago Division
NMRA”

Timetable

Please note that these events are subject to the fluid COVID-19 situation. Check with each individual event.

- Nov 6th** WLD Operating Sessions
Waupaca Area - see elsewhere in this issue
- Dec 1st** WLD BOD Meeting 7pm
Virtual—Zoom call, watch for email
- Feb 19-20** Mad City Model RR Show
Alliant Energy Center, Madison
www.nmra-scvd.org/scvd-events.html
- April 9-10** Titledown Train Show
KI Convention Center, Green Bay
www.titledowntrainshow.com
- May 18-22** Indy Junction—Tri Region Convention
www.indyjunction2022.org/



Division Merch

Check your closet and see if it is time for a new Winnebago Division shirt. Available through the Division website store with a link to the shop for you to direct order.

Also available is a visor cap with the train curving around the edge! Nice additions to your list this year.



Just a few of the HO-scale Winnebago boxcars 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.

WINNEBAGO LAND FALL OPERATING SESSION REGISTRATION FORM

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6, 2021 8.30 AM – 4.30 PM

WAUPACA WI

ROGER HILDEBRANDTS EH & RR & Arpad's Great Freedom RR

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- Also please check off going on Facebook Event posted on WLD FB page and watch for updates there !