

THE WINNEBAGOLAND WHISTLE

The Official Quarterly Newsletter of the WinnebagoLand Division - MWR/NMRA

Volume #43 Issue #3

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New NMRA Logo Launches at National

Inside This Issue:

More WLD Membership Survey Results

Reflections From The 75th

WSOR In Action

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The Superintendents Report...

By: Mark Preussler

Winds Of Change...

What happens when change occurs? These days it seems no one can agree on anything including aspects of our hobby. As the front cover demonstrates, the NMRA has a new image. It has not been a very popular choice. It would seem that least 75% of folks I talked to are either somewhat dissatisfied or frankly hate it. I needed a few minutes to catch on to what it was when I first saw it. If you're like me and still wondering, it represents a modern wheel on a rail with the center of the axle standing in for the "dot" in the website address. I have come around to accepting it and their other similar image which uses the n in NMRA as a tunnel portal with rail coming out of it. One is meant for the magazine formerly known as *Scale Rails* (now just the *NMRA Magazine*) and the other for the website and official paperwork.

The popular NMRA driver and coupler logo was deemed as out of touch with the younger generation as the steam engine on which it was based, yet the thud in which the new image landed with would prove otherwise.

I'm not sure who in the National feels we have a great base of young modelers in the NMRA proper, but one only needs to check out the various web based forums or the Prototype Modelers event to view how the hobby is thriving for those "under 40" modelers out there. The National is trying to get these active modelers into the NMRA, but it will take more than an image change to get it done.

As is the case, we in the WLD leadership ranks will work to stay in step with the National. I came away from Milwaukee with several (hopefully) constructive complaints, but also with some real hope for the future of the hobby. I think you'll agree after reading the article in this issue about the NMRA 75th.

Don't forget about our Fall Meet on October 2nd in Escanaba and our Annual Operating Session on November 6th in Sheboygan. In this world of change, we have at least a few things that stay relevant and worthwhile to all modelers!

Mark

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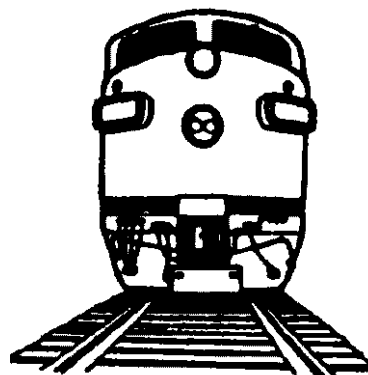
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Wisconsin Southern at Work...



WSOR Tie Gang taking a break at Elkhart Lake, WI

As a youngster, I was interested in The Milwaukee Road's secondary main line which ran to Green Bay and terminated in the Upper Peninsula. Especially scenic was a stretch between Plymouth and Elkhart Lake through the Kettle Moraine landscapes and past what is now Road America. Elkhart Lake was especially scenic as the main line ran through the resort town past a restored depot owned by the village. More important to the Milwaukee was that the village also had a long passing siding.

I admit to being too young to witness the glory days of the Milwaukee, but family friend and railfan/modeler Herb Weiss often speaks of running into town from nearby campgrounds while on vacation to witness Milwaukee Road patrols (locals) meeting time freights. Previously, the siding was also used for meets between passenger trains and freights according to Herb. Soo Line, Lake States, and then finally under WC control, this track hosted daily freights for over a decade after the Milwaukee.

Today the track is operated by The Wisconsin Southern Railroad. After the CN lost interest in the track inherited in the WC purchase, it was up to WSOR to regain business lost during the CN years. Always looking for revenue, the WSOR at this time uses its track north of Elkhart Lake as storage for surplus cars as the original line is severed at Hilbert Jct. Time will tell if it ever returns as a mainline to Manitowoc or Neenah, but the WSOR had another business venture started this year which is the subject of this story.

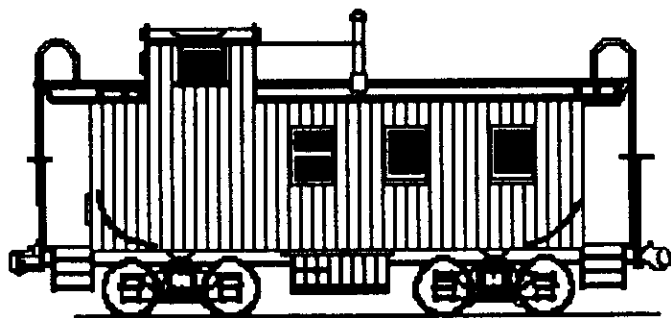
Elkhart Rocks...

With all the glacier deposits, the area around Elkhart Lake is filled with quarries and gravel pits. These extend towards the south, north, and west. For many years large boulders and rocks were shipped from the Valders area on the Wisconsin Central with some even loaded on barges for cross lake shipping from Manitowoc. Today, similar boulders are now handled from the area via the Wisconsin Southern with a transfer loading site built alongside the old Milwaukee main line just south of Elkhart Lake on land owned by Sheboygan County. However, with Plymouth already congested with covered hoppers (loaded with plastic pellets) awaiting unloading on the WSOR's makeshift team track, the railroad needed an alternative for running around a cut of cars and switching out empties for loads closer to the rock loading site. The old passing siding at Elkhart Lake would be perfect for that once a switch was re-installed on the north end to make it double ended once again as it was in the Milwaukee days.



Left: Rotten ties, no doubt planted years ago by The Milwaukee are dug out by the tie gang. The rail is lifted while another machine grabs the tie and slides it out. Many of the ties were rotted out and simply snapped from the force of the machinery.

Below: A new tie slid into place and ready for spiking. Note the markings on the rail which indicated a replacement was needed



Light Rail, Heavy Cars..

WSOR dispatches one (sometimes 2) 4 axle locos to haul the rock train along with several other freight cars for the area. It is basically a turn-around train at Elkhart Lake. The empty train consists of about 12 well worn gons of the 50' variety. Usual loading is 3 boulders per car which is about the maximum weight. A cut of 5-6 cars are placed by the transload site at a time with the balance spotted either nearby or on the Elkhart Lake siding. The crew will push the loads up the track to the siding and then shuffle the loco and empties so that when heading back south the empties are spotted and left for loading.

I have not investigated the weight of the rail. The main line is certainly elevated somewhat at Elkhart Lake with the siding slightly below the main's grade. The rail on the siding is light. I would assume the main to be 90 lb rail. The siding less than that. WSOR feels confident that with the improved grading and tie replacement, the rails will hold the loads. They have done a great job with what they had to work with! As long as it is maintained, it should work well. Remember, it was not uncommon for Milwaukee Road trains to be heavy tonnage along that line with iron ore even moving through the area, though infrequently near the end of ownership.

All-in-all, it's a neat operation and a good use of track which had been left for dead. Once the cars leave the area, they are off to the Mississippi River and the boulders transloaded onto barges for a seawall being built in a town which borders the Gulf of Mexico. I believe WSOR handles the cars all the way to the river for transloading.



Above: *At one time another siding came off the passing track to serve a local industry. Only the frog and guard rails had to be removed. M-O-W equipment can make interesting scenes on your layout. Often the equipment is left on site while other projects are worked on by the crews. All pictures for this article are courtesy of John Winter, Sheboygan, WI. Information courtesy of Jerry Thompson and Cal Krasonya.*



Views From The National NMRA Convention

By: Mark Preussler, MMR

I attended the NMRA National this past July- that's the good news! Actually, I need to remind myself of the old adage "you only get out of it what you put into it" before going much further with my views I am about to relate. However, I did put some effort into the event as you will see. I feel the critiques offered here are valid and will hopefully lead to better conventions going forward.

As my layout was scheduled to be on tour on Monday, it didn't seem like a good deal to sign up for the entire week, so I did a Thursday-Friday-Saturday package. Since Milwaukee is only 40 minutes from my house, I decided to drive and come back at night to save even more cash.

The back story of this convention really starts about 2 years ago for me as I volunteered to line up layout tours along the eastern end of the WLD. This got me in a little deeper than the average attendee as I now got to witness first-hand the politics which inevitably are part of any event planning. Since this is being posted on the Internet, I'll leave the names, places, and guilty/innocent parties out of the mix. The bottom line was that due to some lack of communication and the heavy control of the National NMRA, some very nice layouts were skipped over in the Winnebagoland Division. As the Superintendent, that made me upset. So, pulling in on Thursday I arrived with a little chip on my shoulder.

The bad attitude got worse when I found out the NMRA never received my registration in Chattanooga. However, my attitude adjusted when I re-registered and purchased a banquet ticket on site for the reasonable price of \$25.00 compared to the overpriced \$70.00 ticket that was the regular registration rate. It seems that in the future I'll wait and pick up a ticket at the meet from someone whose plans have changed and can't attend the banquet! What a savings! Things were looking up!

From that point on, the event was what I would have expected. The clinics I attended were first class with only a few exceptions. The contest room certainly was a treat to visit with Winnebagoland Division modelers pulling in all sorts of awards. Dennis and Jeff Eggert and Don Manlick all took first place in several categories. I didn't go on any tours as I've seen most of the layouts before and the owners are just a phone call away.



For the most part, the Hilton hotel in Milwaukee was a good choice of venue. As it's connected to the Frontier Airline Center via a skywalk. Very convenient for guests. The main complaint was parking, really the price of parking. Nothing out of line as compared to sporting events, we just must be a bit more frugal than average. Of course guests to Milwaukee were treated to bad weather during the convention, but luckily the venue wasn't flooded.

Above: Dennis Cook, Mary Eiden, and Mike Eiden at the National Train Show operating for WAMR.

The National Train Show did not do as well. Though not officially connected to the NMRA Convention, it offered free entrance to all conventioners on Friday before the doors opened to the general public. I found several nice items to buy, but us locals are certainly spoiled by the 3 big area shows (TTS, Trainfest, and "Mad City"). As such, attendance really suffered. So, the weekend flew by wrapping up on Saturday night with the banquet. The meal was nicely presented and tasty. I shared my table with old friends John Klink and Bob Frey. Jim Hediger from Kalmbach was the speaker and did a good job with his presentation looking back at the "glory days" of *Model Railroader* and the characters who worked there. I hope to get to more National Conventions, but it's something that just isn't in my budget every year. Here's a few more pictures and a checklist I compiled on the things I thought could be improved upon.

NMRA 75 Checklist:

Here's a brief rundown of what I thought was good (and bad) about the convention. My thanks to Bob Wundrock, Marv Preussler, Dave Leider, and Joe Lallensack among others for their input as well.

What Worked:

- * Contest Room well organized and carefully observed by volunteers.
- * Clinics on time and informative.
- * Socializing with well known and talented modelers.
- * All events basically under one roof. Good facility.
- * Scheduling of clinics -so different topics were going on at the same time with clinics repeated later in the week. This gave us a chance to take in all of them without having to choose between clinics.
- * Plenty of volunteers.
- * Banquet food was outstanding.
- * Attendance was steady in comparison to recent NMRA conventions.

What Needs Work:

- * Name badges were useless. First name in large bold font, the rest in small type.
- * Totally overpriced. Especially for Midwestern values.
- * Banquet too fancy and again too expensive.
- * Very poor communication regarding banquet seating. A sign up sheet was available, but most attendees never knew about it.
- * Not enough local input and setup. For several years the national NMRA approves all activities and dictates what and when things happen.
- * Bus tours often too hurried for attendees.

Next year's convention in CA. is cheaper, features several self guided layout tours, and looks to be setup as a little more user friendly by letting the local NMRA members, those who know best, take control of a bigger part of the show. Let's hope that continues in the future.



Happy Hour The Banquet featured a nice chance to mingle with modelers like LaRoye Chisley, Cody Grivno, and Ewing Row. Mr. Jim Hediger at the podium.



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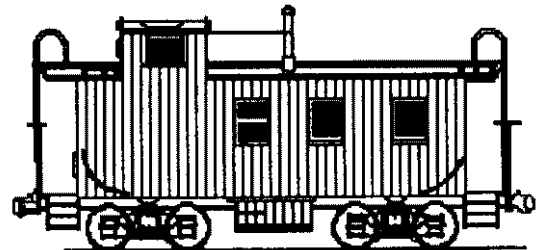
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Operating Session Returns to the Lakeshore...

Plan ahead! November 6th, 2010 is a date you will not want to forget as the WLD is planning a return to the Sheboygan and Manitowoc area for our annual WLD Operating Session. Details will be coming in later this year, but here's your chance to learn operations from experienced layout builders and operators! Remember, you don't need to be a NMRA member to participate.

Full details and guidelines are available right on our website www.wld-nmra.com

WLD Membership Survey Reflections

By: Mark Preussler, editor

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One of the questions on our recent survey dealt with changes you would like to see within the WLD. It seems from several response that a major issue with our division is the sheer size of it. In looking at the makeup of our membership, a case could be made for either a subdivision or an actual new additional division (s) within our current boarders.

Now before we get to brainstorming, all of this would need to be approved at the regional and national level. The recent trend has been towards consolidating divisions, not creating new ones so I'm not sure what our chances would be in making this happen. But let's look at a few options...

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Reflections From The Membership Survey...

Thanks to our survey, we have hard numbers to show us where our members reside. Green Bay, our largest city has the most with 17 members as of last January. The Fox Cities of Oshkosh, Neenah, Menasha, and Appleton have 6,6,1, and 7 respectively. Manitowoc with 7 and Sheboygan with 7 also create a pocket of membership. As a comparison, all of our counties in the U.P. have a total of 15 members. Geographic boundaries of the WLD today are as follows: The counties of Brown, Calumet, Dodge, Door, Florence, Fond du lac, Forest, Green Lake, Iron, Kewaunee, Langlade, Lincoln, Manitowoc, Marathon, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Oneida, Outagamie, Portage, Shawano, Sheboygan, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago, Wood and Vilas in the State of Wisconsin and the counties of Alger, Baraga, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon and Schoolcraft in the State of Michigan.

The guiding question in all of this talk would have to be “ would the membership be better served with a series of smaller divisions”. If the answer is yes (and I honestly believe that would be the case), then who or what decides the new boundaries? Several issues jump off the survey as I review it:

- *Green Bay would need to anchor a “Northwoods” division which would include the Upper Peninsula, Brown, Vilas, Door, Kewaunee, and Oneida counties among others.*
- *As the WLD runs all the way west to Lincoln, Marathon, and Wood counties, The Fox Valley cities would be an anchor for those areas.*
- *Manitowoc and Sheboygan counties would anchor the southern end of the current WLD including Dodge, Green Lake, Calumet, and Fond du Lac counties.*

All of this is purely conjecture on my part, but as noted it was a response from several on the survey stating our division is just too big for its members to really feel like they “belong” to anything as travel, especially for a one day event is prohibitive.

Has the time come to “subdivide” our WLD? Would you feel better served having more frequent meets that encompass a much smaller area? Would/is there any interest from members in selected areas to investigate the possibilities? As Superintendent, I would welcome your thoughts on the subject. I will bring this item up on the agenda for the next Board meeting. I have not investigated any guidelines set forth by the national or region on this issue. Right now it’s just a talking point, but one several members feel strongly enough about to include it on the survey. As such, it’s important to me as well.

As space permits, I will continue to investigate your responses from the survey and include them here in *The Whistle*.



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On The Ready Track

Sept. 18, 2010 WLD BOD Meeting- Mark Preussler's House- Sheboygan, WI

Sept. 25-26, 2010- Train Show & Swap meet- Minocqua, WI

October 1-2, 2010- 7th Annual Marshfield Train Show- Marshfield Community Center
201 S. Oak Ave. -Marshfield, WI Free Admission
e-mail Keith at soobrat6@complusis.net

Oct. 2, 2010- 2010 NMRA WLD Annual Fall Meet- Escanaba, MI See the WLD Website at www.wld-nmra.com for Information

Oct. 16, 2010 Paper Valley Model RR Club Fall Model Train Show & Sale National Guard Armory- 2801 West Second St. Appleton, WI
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Oct. 24, 2010- 1st Annual NEW O Gaugers Fall Train Show & Swap Meet Riverside Ballroom- 1560 Main St.- Green Bay, WI Info at info@riversideballroom.com or Contact Dennis at (920) 494-4919

Nov. 6, 2010- Winnebagoland Division Annual Operating Session- Sheboygan, WI
Info at www.wld-nmra.com

Nov. 13-14, 2010- Trainfest- State Fair Park- West Allis, WI www.trainfest.com

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