

# THE WINNEBAGOLAND WHISTLE

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

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*"No matter how strange or bizarre your model may be, rest assured that there was once a prototype." — John Allen*

## COVER PHOTO:

*Montana Rail Link freight  
against a seasonal winter  
backdrop.*

*Started in 1987 and becoming,  
along with WC, a photogenic next  
-gen regional rail powerhouse,  
MRL has been sold to their  
trackage lessor BNSF.*

*See article on Page 6.*

*Photo courtesy Alan Burns*

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## Superintendent's Report

*by Phil Herman*

We are in the midst of Model Railroading season. We are fortunate here in the upper Midwest where the season is long. I think? That time of year when we hibernate in our train rooms. Although, for some of us it may feel like we have never left hibernation in 2020-21 with still a reduction in events whether related to Model railroading or for that matter anything else. The WLD was fortunate to have our normal slate of events during the second half of 2021. About 30 people attended our fall meet in Neenah last October. It was a great day to visit with fellow modelers in person. We had three great clinics, model and photo contests. A number of members brought models to display. The afternoon layout tours had a eight great layouts open in the Fox Valley area. A big thank you to all those who presented clinics and allowed us to visit their home or club layouts.

The WLD is planning for all events to occur in 2022. With a Spring meet, Fall meet, Fall operating session and four virtual WLD Workshop Wednesdays. Planning is underway for both meets with locations and dates being finalized. The first WLD Workshop Wednesday was on the schedule for January 12 at 7:00pm. Scott Payne shared photos of the Milwaukee Road in Northern Illinois area taken in the 1970's. In March we plan to have a round table discussion on interchanges and how modelers incorporate interchanges into their operations. We are still looking for people to present their projects, photos of a trip, new technology, we

*(Continued on page 2)*



## Superintendent's Report

*(Continued from page 1)*

are open to any topic related to modeling or trains. Contact any one of the WLD officers if you're interested.

That brings me to this issue's story. It a story of a childhood friend, who I recently discovered was a closet modeler railroader. One day at work I was walking past a department supervisor who has some interest in trains especially the history of railroads in our area. We have talked trains before and he knows I am big into modeling. I had not spoken to him in a while and he asked me if I done anything on my trains lately. I discussed a few projects I had worked on and got out my iPhone to show him a few recent project photos. As I was showing him my projects another co-worker, a friend I will call John, who had lived down the street as a kid, took interest in the photos. We ended our conversation and I went about the work I had been in the area to do. A few minutes later John came up to me with his phone out to show me a picture of a less-than-impressive HO plastic structure he had built. Then swiped to a second impressive photo of the same structure detailed and weathered. I said "Wow! You did that?" "Yes, I've got an HO layout in my basement and I like weathering buildings and freight cars."

So, now a little history on me and John: we grew up in the same neighborhood, he was a year behind me in school, our sisters were the same age and were close friends growing up. We both have been employed by the same employer working in the same building for the past 20 years. Although for most of that time John had worked an evening shift so we didn't have a lot of interaction with each other. With all that in common I had no idea he had the slightest interest in trains.

Over the past few months, we have had numerous conversations on modeling and John has stopped over and operated trains on my layout a few times. But he also has expressed to me to keep our hobby on the down low, nobody he works with knows he plays with trains. I can relate to that and have granted his request. It has been a lot of fun to talk trains with the kid I grew up with. I enjoy seeing him out in the shop and trading stories, project ideas and photos with him.

John reminds me a lot of me 10 years ago. I was a closet modeler, big into my hobby but never really sharing the hobby with others. Hard to say how our friendship will

*(Continued on page 3)*

## View From the Cab

*Your Editor*

Brrr. January's a bit chilly this year so it's always nice to "hibernate" in the basement working on projects. Or maybe you're helping someone else with their projects, running some hotshot during an op session, or even out with the 4WD to get some snowy prototype action. In any case, winter is prime time for model railroading. Get your train show fix too; Madison, LaCrosse and TTS are still on the ready track despite the Omicron surge... just remember to stay safe!

Speaking of train shows, it's been really disheartening to hear Bob McGeever's account of the difficulties faced by the WISE Division. Not long after entering the hobby as a teen, I always looked forward to being able to go down to State Fair Park in November; as a young, naive convert, that show seemed magical and unbelievably huge. So when some train knobs and I started up a modular club in 1994 or so, one of our main goals was to set up at Trainfest. Once we got in it was a party every year! Obviously as the years went by we got a better understanding of the behind-the-scenes efforts, some of the normal blemishes that result from any endeavor like that, and the rose-colored glasses weren't so rosy. For me though it rarely detracted from my enjoyment of the show, which in large part inspired my desire to start TTS.

The hobby certainly has had challenges staying relevant, especially at the membership level, and the politics that apparently contributed to the undoing of WISE certainly do not help keep or attract members. The negative discourse all over social media has unfortunately not spared our various groups. Unless you're a complete hermit, we all have a goal of sharing this awesome pastime with our friends and often the public at large, so it really becomes our responsibility to act in a manner that encourages participation.

Keep that in mind first and foremost for our own Division, but we're all in this together so whatever you or I or WE can do to help our friends in SE Wisconsin get back on track should be a goal in the new year. If you have ideas, thoughts or suggestions to assist the MWR's efforts and WISE's interim executive committee, please let one of us on the BOD know and we can pass those on to Bob. I'm a firm believer that a strong community and public outreach in what is in many ways the birthplace of the hobby will only help everyone.

Before I close, I'll ask that you make it resolution to send me some modeling content for the Whistle this year too!

*Keep on trainin! — Todd [tbushmaker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tbushmaker@sbcglobal.net)*

## Merit Badges

By Paul Mastalir



November 6, 2021 saw 194 Scouts and 93 Leaders from Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota gather at the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay for the annual Railroad Merit Badge Day.

All participants were involved in each of the six 45-minute workshops covering topics of *Museum Exploration*, *Planning a Train Trip*, *Railroad Signaling*, *Operation Lifesaver*, *Locomotive Exploration*, and my favorite, *Freight Car ID*. The daylong event was a tremendous opportunity to expose Scouts to Railroad-ing and its purpose of moving people and freight and possibly spark an interest in pursuing a model railroading hobby. The diversity of 194 youth and the ability to interact with not only them but the adults who accompanied them on this adventure was incredible. Planting hints of information to them for involvement in their local community and club functions was incredible. After each Scout completed each session they filled out a question and answer worksheet and at the end of the day had to have correct answers for the entire day in order to pass the course. With great pride the entire group of 194 Scouts earned their Railroad Merit Badge and were promoted by Education Director Bob Lettenberger.

This program was a fantastic way for our organization to forward the promotion of the model railroading hobby. If you have an interest in participating in this program next year, please let me know.

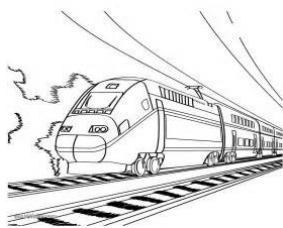
Paul Mastalir, WLD Scout Coordinator; Mastalir54166@yahoo.com

## Supt. Report *cont'd*

evolve in time? Like me, maybe John will start attending NMRA meets and who knows what the future holds but maybe in 10 years, 2031, he will serve as WLD Superintendent.

I guess the moral of the story. In life, you never know when you could be standing next to somebody that has something in common with you. But the only way to find out is if one person shares with the other.

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



## Prototype Industry

By Rich Hopfensperger

J.M. Smuckers will be closing and selling off its facility in Ripon, WI in 2022.

This plant produces mostly jellies, jams and ice cream toppings. They have a spur on which they receive tank cars of corn syrup and perhaps some other sweeteners.



**Above:** Corn syrup car for the Smucker's plant. It is off spot, about 100 yards from the facility, which is to the left across Stanton Street. There are two car spots for unloading on the spur.

**Below:** WSOR switching the Spartech plastics plant, formerly PolyOne. Both names are now gone from the Ripon Industrial Park. Spartech closed the Ripon facility in March 2018. Spartech is adjacent Smucker's and the WSOR serves them both off the same lead. Part of the Smucker's plant is visible on the right. The Spartech facility is now being operated as Advanced Paper Enterprises, a smaller paper converter. It is unknown if they use their spur. The spur was originally set up for plastics from covered hoppers.





**Sound decoders** have been on the market for over twenty years. Over that period many upgrades have been made to improve the sound quality and functionality. Manufacturers have worked to make the sound act more like the real thing with different braking options and by matching the prime mover sound with the motor amp draw or manual notching capabilities. I know some modelers who love sound and others who feel it's not worth the added cost. I like what it adds to operations and purchased several locomotives with sound when they first came out. Now those locomotives are 10-15 years old.

Back then QSI was one of the industry leaders in sound decoders so I have a number of locos with their sound. Recent sound-equipped locomotives added to my fleet have capabilities and sound quality that are now so much better than those early ones. So much better that I am willing to start replacing those old decoders. The two leaders in the industry right now are Soundtraxx and ESU's LOK Sound; I have locomotives with sound from both. Both offer great products, but I prefer Soundtraxx. The biggest reason is, that I am a JMRI user, and I am comfortable programming Soundtraxx decoders in JMRI. ESU offers their own standalone programmer and ESU decoders are not fully defined in JMRI therefore not as easy to program. I do know people that are all-in on ESU. Most all the negative comments I've seen about either brand is usually out of a lack of knowledge. Soundtraxx has been very responsive whenever I have contacted them with questions. I'm not claiming to be an expert—my goal is to explain what I have done on a few installations and what has worked for me, so that you can improve your installations and save some money.

Soundtraxx currently offers two lines of sound decoders: the Tsunami 2 and the Economi. I have a few of each and the major differences are that Tsunami 2 offers:

- Dynamic Digital Exhaust (DDE)
- More prime mover and horn sound file options.
- Straight to Eight/Straight to Idle.

In addition to the sound quality, the lighting and speaker options have also improved. Both the Tsunami 2 and Economi have six lighting functions. My conversions include the removal of any incandescent bulbs and replacing them with 603 or 402 micro LEDs. Either size is capable of putting out as much light as you could want. **Figure 1** shows two Kato SD70MACs; the one on the left has LEDs added and the one on the right shows the factory light-piped LEDs.

The 603 LED size will fit in most installations but if not, 402 will. The number 603 means the LED is 0.6 mm X 0.3 mm (that's small). All LEDs will require a resistor to be installed in series. For headlights or ditch lights I use 2k Ohm resistors. For running lights or number board lights I use between 4-6k ohm resistors. These values are not as critical as they had been in the past because of a new feature Soundtraxx has incorporated into their decoders. There are now two different brightness levels you can assign to lighting functions if you select dimmable headlight brightness Level 1 or 2 (see **Figure 2**). This allows you to fine tune the intensity to your liking without temporarily wiring in different resistors or a potentiometer to test.

You can purchase these LEDs off ebay for \$0.50-0.75 per light depending on the quantity ordered. The warm white LEDs give off a color that closely matches a locomotive headlight. Some manufacturers are installing 20+ LEDs in some of their new models: Headlights, ditchlights, beacons, classification lights, step lights, running lights..... The most I have attempted to date is 11 and now your wire management becomes more important!

Sugar cube speakers have become all the rage. They are small and can put out big sound. One thing to note is that the newer decoders have 2-Watt amplifiers which is more power than most sugar cube speakers are rated. So you will need to wire 2-3 speakers in series. The speakers I purchased recently are from Digikey ([digikey.com](http://digikey.com)); the manufacturer is PUI and they offer a 94dB, 8ohm speaker rated at 1W, p/n 668-1520-ND. Current price is \$29.42 for ten. These speakers offer a fairly large frequency range and I have found that the higher end

sounds can be a little distorted. Turning off the highest frequency range in the equalizer provided in the Soundtraxx decoders gets rid of this distortion. (see **Figure 3**).

LOK sound offers reasonably priced sugar cube speakers for around \$6. There are several installation videos out on YouTube. Another great

**Figure 1:** direct-install LEDs (left) vs factory light-piped (right).



(Continued on page 5)

# New Generation Sound Decoders

LIGHTING EFFECTS AND CONTROLS

Headlight F0(f) Effect Selection	On/off - brightness 1	FX3 Effect Selection	On/off - brightness 2	FX5 Effect Selection	On/off - brightness 1
Headlight F0(f) Phase Selection	Use phase A (normal)	FX3 Phase Selection	Use phase A (normal)	FX5 Phase Selection	Use phase A (normal)
Headlight F0(f) Grade Crossing Logic	Disabled	FX3 Grade Crossing Logic	Disabled	FX5 Grade Crossing Logic	Disabled
Headlight F0(f) Light Type	LED	FX3 Light Type	LED	FX5 Light Type	LED
Headlight F0(f) Forward Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FX3 Forward Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FX5 Forward Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Headlight F0(f) Reverse Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FX3 Reverse Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FX5 Reverse Directional Control	<input type="checkbox"/>
Backup Light F0(r) Effect Selection	On/off - brightness 1	FX4 Effect Selection	On/off - brightness 1	FX6 Effect Selection	On/off - brightness 1
Backup Light F0(r) Phase Selection	Use phase A (normal)	FX4 Phase Selection	Use phase A (normal)	FX6 Phase Selection	Use phase B (opposite)
Backup Light F0(r) Grade Crossing Logic	Disabled	FX4 Grade Crossing Logic	Disabled	FX6 Grade Crossing Logic	Disabled
Backup Light F0(r) Light Type	LED	FX4 Light Type	LED	FX6 Light Type	LED
Backup Light F0(r) Forward Directional Control	<input type="checkbox"/>	FX4 Forward Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FX6 Forward Directional Control	<input type="checkbox"/>
Backup Light F0(r) Reverse Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FX4 Reverse Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FX6 Reverse Directional Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SEVEN BAND EQUALIZER

High-Pass Filter Cutoff Frequency: 20

Equalizer Control: Micro Speaker (under 1 inch)

62 Hz Cut/Boost: 224

125 Hz Cut/Boost: 128

250 Hz Cut/Boost: 128

500 Hz Cut/Boost: 128

1K Hz Cut/Boost: 103

2K Hz Cut/Boost: 99

4K Hz Cut/Boost: 0

Hyperlight Flash Rate (0-15): 3

Grade Crossing Hold Time (0-15): 4

Brightness 1 Level (0-255): 255

Brightness 2 Level (0-255): 132

Dimmer Level (0-255): 153

Master Brightness: 255

Brightness Adjustment

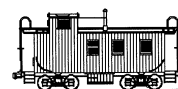
Figure 3

Figure 2

effects to control by combining some to one function and eliminating others. The auxiliary lighting functions I normally combine into one or two functions...I don't see a need to turn lights on individually. Running lights, classification lights and number board lights I wire to the same output or program to the same function. Functions 23-26 are the factory settings for the lighting outputs.

Some sounds are specific to passenger trains. I thought my first locomotive with a Tsunami 2 had a bad motor as it made a terrible sound the first time it ran; eventually I discovered it was the "clickety-clack" sound option. I'm not a fan so that sound gets turned off and that function is left blank. Short horn and crossing signal are two additional horn options available. Straight-to-eight and manual notching are two I like. Modeling a mountainous railroad, I like those features for going upgrade or downgrade. A number of manufacturers have the prime mover throttle up or down based on motor amp draw; Soundtraxx calls their option DDE. I have never had success in getting this to work well when consisting multiple units together. Even when speed matched together it's hard to avoid some pushing and pulling between units causing the prime mover to frequently throttle up and down. There is a sensitivity setting but that can actually exaggerate the problem.

I hope I've given you a little insight into some of the new features available now and components options. There is a lot of capability in today's sound decoders. I'm actually planning to add some instruction for operators at my next OPS session so operators can take advantage. I've had a lot of fun playing with these new decoders hope you do too.



(Continued from page 4)

source of information and component on sound installs is at *Streamlined Backshop* [sbs4dcc.com](http://sbs4dcc.com). Most recommend using a speaker enclosure. Even though these speakers are small and slim mounting, two or more enclosures will still require a lot of space. Several vendors sell various sized 3D-printed speaker enclosures. For my most recent installs I have bypassed the enclosure and have made my own polystyrene baffle. The speaker is open on both sides which does sound awful before the shell gets put on. The key is that the baffle fits tightly inside the shell so that the sound coming from each side of the speaker is isolated from the other. My installs route sound from one side at the rear truck and from radiator fan area. If you go this route a concern is that the foil side of the speaker is open to being damaged if it gets touched. I mount the foil side down and if need be, glue in a spacer for protection. My installs route sound from one side of the speaker out the rear truck and the other from radiator fan area.

With LEDs wired and speakers installed it's time to attempt getting the shell on. Hopefully your careful planning allows for smooth assembly! Once assembled it's time to program the locomotive. Just a couple of quick notes on programming the newer decoders because there are a ton of options. These decoders come with 28 functions and I'm using older throttles that only have 12 functions available. I select my top 12



# Montana Rail Link Sold

Billings Gazette

BNSF Railway announced plans Monday to take over Montana Rail Link and its 900 miles of track in Montana and Idaho.

The Missoula-based MRL, which has a small shop in Billings and rail yard in Laurel, employs about 1,200 people, the company said in a statement about the proposed deal.

BNSF has committed to retain all union and non-union employees of MRL in their current jobs with similar pay, benefits, seniority, and other terms of employment, MRL said.

BNSF will resume operations and maintenance of its mainline rail corridor through southern Montana. The deal must first be approved by the U.S. Surface Transportation Board.

“There have been many changes in the rail industry since this long-term lease was signed, and given the need to be competitive in the current environment, we believe that this was the right time to revisit our longstanding agreement with BNSF,” said Derek Ollmann, president of MRL, “This agreement protects our workers, our customers, and our long-term com-



“Over the last several years, more than 90% of the traffic traversing MRL’s leased line were loads moved on behalf of BNSF,” MRL officials said. “The line has become a critical link in BNSF’s northern transcontinental network, delivering grain, consumer and industrial products to the West Coast.”

The deal will eliminate BNSF’s need to change freight between the two railroads and will continue “strengthening the resiliency of the supply chain and enhancing rail capacity in the Pacific Northwest,” MRL said.

MRL was founded in 1987 by Dennis Washington. MRL and BNSF have had a unique lease arrangement since 1987 in which MRL leases and operates mainline tracks owned by BNSF between Huntley, Montana and Sandpoint, Idaho.

mitment to safety, and it will ensure a more seamless operation of rail services in Montana.”

MRL will become a subdivision of BNSF’s Montana Division, said BNSF president and CEO Katie Farmer.

“We will continue to invest in the business, provide great service and maintain the highest level of safety just as we have for over a century in Montana,” Farmer said. “This will best position employees, customers and the communities we serve for future success.”

*Photo: Laurel Yard, MRL’s primary facilities just southwest of Billings. Courtesy Larry Mayer, Billings Gazette.*



# Autonomous Trains?

Mark Wilson—*Ars Technica*; images courtesy Parallel Systems

## AUTONOMOUS, ELECTRIC FREIGHT TRAINS ARE HERE TO TAKE ON SEMITRUCKS

Trains may be an old technology, but they are still remarkable machines—operating with roughly four times the energy efficiency of semitrucks driving on a highway.

However, over the past several decades, railways have been working against themselves. To compete with semis, they've ceded shorter deliveries. Instead, railways have doubled down on long-haul shipments of 1,000 miles or more. And to maximize efficiency on long routes, train companies have simply kept making trains longer . . . and longer. Today, it's relatively common for trains to be nearly 3 miles long.

Which is why when SpaceX engineer Matt Soule was mulling his next startup and a random video of a freight train popped up on YouTube, he realized something obvious: If we want to curb greenhouse gas emissions, we should be moving more shipments to rail from trucks. But how?

Three years later, with \$50 million of Series A funding in hand, he's sharing his solution. Now the CEO of Parallel Systems, Soule—alongside two cofounders who both led major engineering initiatives at SpaceX—is transforming individual freight train cars into autonomous electric vehicles.

Parallel Systems' invention is a modular, motorized set of train wheels. Cargo containers are placed on top of the wheels by a crane, and the wheels can drive this train car up to 500 miles to anywhere on the track.

The company's potential impact is in its ability to redesign the way freight is transported, moving shipments that would have been delivered by truck to a more efficient train. Understanding that impact requires dipping your toe into the 143,000 miles of U.S. railway.

### HOW AUTONOMOUS RAIL CARS COULD SOLVE A NETWORK PROBLEM

Dean Wise is the former vice president of network strategy at BNSF Railway (aka the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp., one of the largest railway companies in North America). He's also one of several established industry advisers who Parallel Systems has brought in to help navigate the relatively closed industry of freight transport.

"You actually are not going to get into this game unless the railroads themselves are going to invite you in," Wise explains. "The rail industry in North America is basically privately held and privately funded . . . and they can say, 'We don't like this [idea].'"

Parallel Systems plans to make money by providing its

technology to the railroads, rather than competing with them. Meanwhile, railroads make money by charging clients to move their goods (and to break your heart, one of their most popular cash cows is actually coal). In the U.S. and across North America, five regional companies operate the vast majority of railways—and you might recognize them by their distinctive train engines. Union Pacific is the largest, with routes from the Midwest to the West. BNSF has a similar footprint, but reaches north where UP reaches south. Then you have CSX and Norfolk Southern from the Midwest out East. And pushing north? That's the territory of Canadian National.



Wise calls this arrangement "co-op-etition." The same track standard is shared across North America, meaning this network is completely interoperable for all trains on the continent. However, because the network is split among companies, they often have to work together, handing off cargo from one to another for it to reach its final destination (and as a further complication, freight lines share the same track with passenger lines).

This strategy drives what Wise calls the core "irony of the freight business." Railroads make money moving big trains long distances. However, most freight is moved shorter distances (fewer than 1,000 miles) by trucks. (Trucks carried 58% of all freight in 2017, whereas trains followed in second place at 16.2%. Meanwhile, the average truck delivery dropped from 800 miles to 500 miles between 2005 and 2019.)

While long trains are profitable for the train companies, they're not terribly efficient for anyone else. A long train is full of goods that need to be delivered to all sorts of different places once they reach a depot—that's when those goods are handed off to semitrucks. Not to mention that parking a 3-mile-long train vastly limits where it can go. Furthermore, train cars are often parked for days while they wait for other cars to be loaded and unloaded so that they can move, as this giant caterpillar, to their next destination.

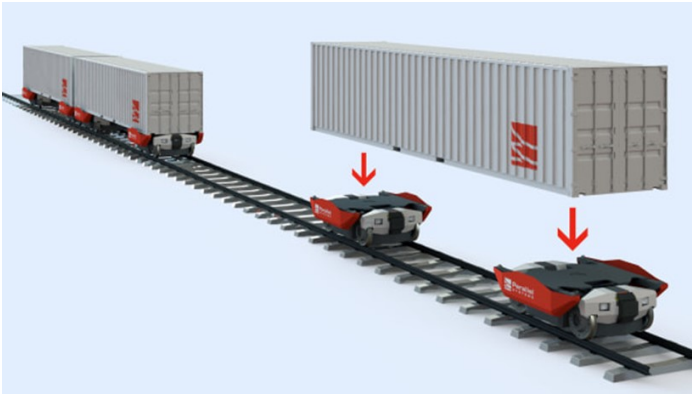
*(Continued on page 8)*



# Autonomous Trains *cont'd*

Mark Wilson—*Ars Technica*; images courtesy Parallel Systems

In theory, a Parallel Systems car has no such limitations. Once a car is loaded, it can simply drive to its destination. The reality is that a vast majority of tracks are single-lane only, and so single-car trains might make for an inefficient use of that track. Furthermore, even Parallel Systems trains are more efficient running in small platoons rather than as one-off cars.



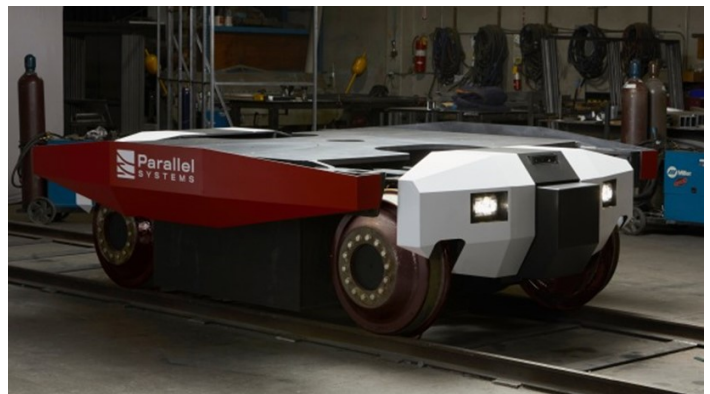
Soule estimates the longest Parallel Systems train might run a half-mile long. But with shorter lengths, train yards themselves can be re-architected to have smaller footprints and fit more places in our infrastructure. Parallel's platoons can also split themselves in half if blocking an intersection for too long. Because the train cars don't even couple together (instead, they just push themselves bumper to bumper), it's easy for them to break rank and let road vehicles pass through their middle.

Parallel's trains might cruise down the standard, major railways. But as the platoon approaches its destination, the rail cars could break off from one another onto short-haul tracks. Think of short-haul tracks as the last mile of train delivery. These lines, which run less than 500 miles in length, were mostly abandoned by major players years ago because they didn't fit the train's business model. Yet short hauls connect major railways, and they can drive right into a city or even a factory. These use cases might not make sense for a 3-mile-long train, but they might make a whole lot of sense for a three-car train.

"We can do unique things like take a container from a port to a warehouse . . . and you never have to put it on a truck," Soule says. "And because you don't have to put it on a truck, you can load more weight." Parallel Systems cars can carry 128,000 pounds, or 2.8 times more than a semitruck. They also recharge in an hour: Without being plugged in or pulled off the track, the wheels can be recharged to drive another 500 miles.

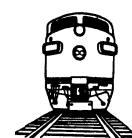
## AUTONOMOUS TRAINS ARE EASIER TO BUILD THAN AUTONOMOUS CARS

Perhaps self-driving, environment-saving trains that squeeze into our existing railway infrastructure sound too good to be true. Indeed, anyone following railroads knows that short-haul lines have been proposed as a solution to the industry's woes for years. But Soule points out that compared to building autonomous electric vehicles for highways, building and managing autonomous electric trains is far simpler. Because rails are simpler. Trains stay on a track without a steering wheel. They also don't need to worry about responding to random traffic. Unlike roads, where pretty much anyone can drive anywhere at any time, railways are tightly controlled and scheduled. Truthfully, some passenger trains have driven themselves since the 1960s. Parallel Systems is simply pushing that autonomy to the individual car level.



The technology isn't ready for market yet. Parallel Systems has been testing a prototype since November 2020 on 50 miles of track in California. The company is currently finishing up its second-generation prototype, which it plans to begin testing this year. Until that testing is done, the company is declining to forecast its commercial launch. Though don't be surprised to see more pilot testing, done in conjunction with railway lines, first. That said, if Parallel Systems can move fast enough, perhaps it can get ahead of the electric semitruck revolution. Tesla recently delayed the availability of its electric semi, while California has targeted 2045 for its zero-emission truck mandate.

"There's a lot of talk about making trucks autonomous, and a lot of talk about electric trucks. And many railroads are wondering what their future [is] going to look like when those are realities," Soule says. "We think trucks are going to stay, but what we're doing is trying to shift the balance."





## Team Track

### Division Officers

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

### Board of Directors (terms thru 04/2022)

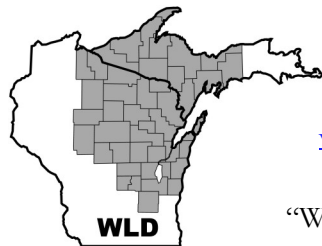
Division Officers (above) PLUS:

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

### Committee Chairs

(Asst. Supt.)	Property Manager
Todd Bushmaker	Whistle
Marv Preussler	Achievement Program
Wally Rogers	Membership
Phil Herman	Clinics
(At-will, current meet)	Convention Chair
Paul Mastalir	Company Store
Paul Hillmer	Operating Sessions
Rich Cook / John Leow	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](http://www.wld-nmra.com)

Facebook:  
“WinnebagoLand Division  
NMRA”

## Timetable

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

- Jan 26, 7pm** WLD BoD Meeting  
*Zoom teleconference; stay tuned for info.*
- Feb 19-20** Mad City Model RR Show  
*Alliant Energy Center, Madison*  
[www.nmra-scwd.org/scwd-events.html](http://www.nmra-scwd.org/scwd-events.html)
- March 16, 7pm** WLD Workshop Wednesday  
*Zoom teleconference; watch email for link*
- March 19-20** LaCrosse Train Show  
*Omni Center, Onalaska*  
[www.lcrsand3rvrsmrrclub.com](http://www.lcrsand3rvrsmrrclub.com)
- March 26** Paper Valley MRRC Swap Meet  
*Randercom building, Appleton*
- April 9-10** Titledown Train Show  
*KI Convention Center, Green Bay*  
[www.titledowntrainshow.com](http://www.titledowntrainshow.com)
- May 18-22** Indy Junction—Tri Region  
Convention  
[www.indyjunction2022.org/](http://www.indyjunction2022.org/)

## Division Merch

Check your closet and see if it is time for a new WinnebagoLand 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 WinnebagoLand 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](mailto:mastalir54166@yahoo.com).

# 31<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MODEL TRAIN SWAP MEET

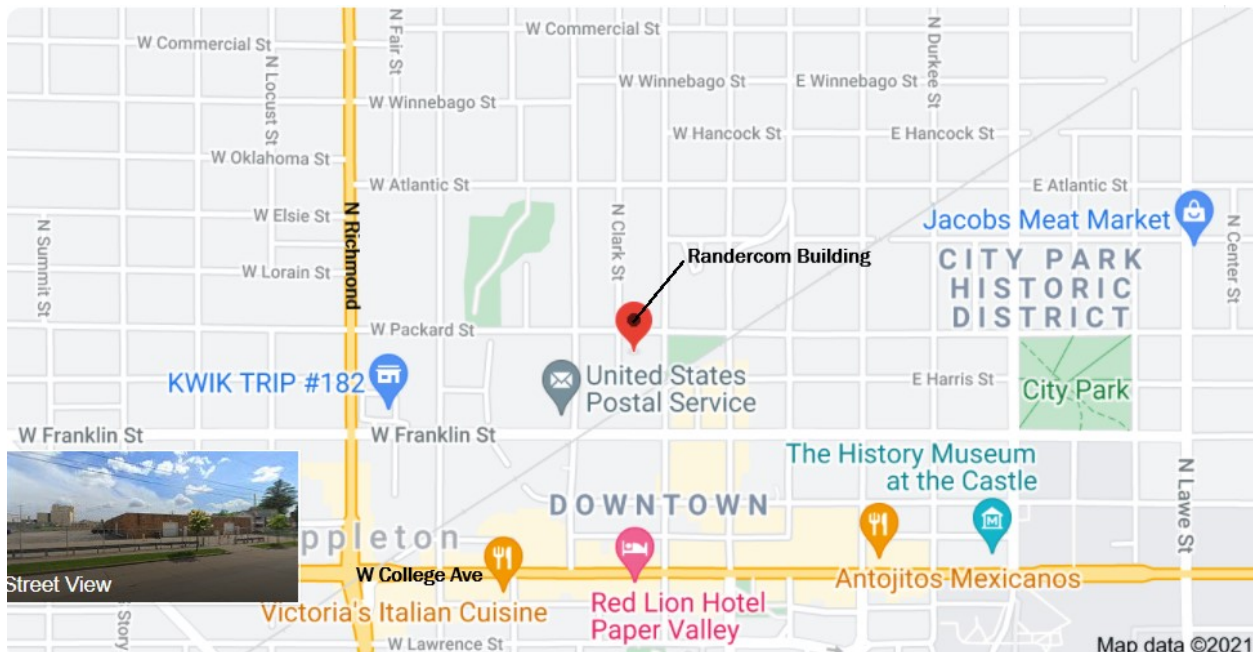
SPONSORED BY

PAPER VALLEY MODEL



SATURDAY MARCH 26, 2022  
9 AM TO 3:00 PM

*RANDERCOM BUILDING  
311 WEST PACKARD STREET, APPLETON, WI.*



Enter off Clark Street (Dead end, Turn left into parking lot)

Registered 501 c3 non-profit Corporation

## DONATIONS:

\$3.00 PER PERSON age 17 and over  
\$5.00 per Family  
CHILDREN FREE

The Building is Handicap Accessible.

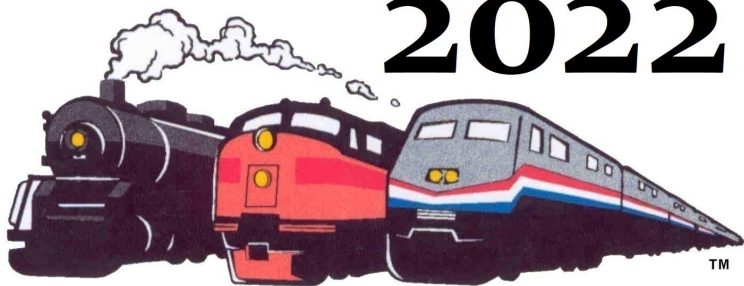
## FOR TABLE INFORMATION CONTACT

Tom Teague (920) 470-6449  
EMAIL : [jteague@new.rr.com](mailto:jteague@new.rr.com)  
Table rental fee \$25 each table and mail to:  
Tom Teague  
W6829 Willowglen Way  
Appleton WI 54915



TITLETOWN TRAIN SHOW™

2022



April 9th & 10th, 2022

Saturday: 9 am - 5 pm

Sunday: 10 am - 4 pm

**KI Convention Center**

333 Main Street, Downtown Green Bay

*Northeastern Wisconsin's Premier Show!*

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*Dozens of Vendors & Shops      Hourly Door Prizes*  
*Kids Activities      Demonstrations*  
*Operating Layouts in Multiple Scales*  
*Model Kits, DCC, Toys, Books, Videos, Antiques, etc.*

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*Sponsored in part by:*  
Winnebagoland Division,  
National Model Railroad Association (NMRA):  
[www.wld-nmra.com](http://www.wld-nmra.com)

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Contact us at: (920) 217-5318  
[www.titletowntrainshow.com](http://www.titletowntrainshow.com)  
e-mail: [info@ttsgbllc.com](mailto:info@ttsgbllc.com)  
Facebook: Titletown Train Show



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Marriott East, 7202 E 21<sup>st</sup> St  
Indianapolis, IN 46219



Four Full Days  
Three Regions  
Two Day Train Show  
One Convention  
May 18-22, 2022



Clinics  
Layout Tours  
Ops Sessions  
Prototype Tours



[www.IndyJunction2022.org](http://www.IndyJunction2022.org)



**RPM**  
CONFERENCE





# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 30, 2021



Dates:	Wednesday May 18 to Sunday May 22, 2022
Sponsors:	Midwest, North Central and Mid Central Regions National Model Railroad Association and the RPM Conference
Event:	<b>Indy Junction 2022 Convention</b>
Location:	Indianapolis Marriott East 7202 East 21st St Indianapolis, IN 46219
Convention Fee:	\$85 early registration until December 31, 2021 \$95 January 1, 2022 to April 27, 2022 \$110 late registration April 28, 2022 or thereafter \$25 for additional family members
Information:	<b>4 Full Days, 3 NMRA Regions, the RPM Conference and 3 Day Train Show</b> The Midwest, North Central, and Mid Central Regions of the NMRA and RPM Conference will host the convention in May 2022 Clinics, Layout Tours, Ops Sessions, Prototype Tours, Non-Rail Clinics and Activities and a Train Show Mark your calendar NOW FREE Parking and Much More !

For more information visit:

Website:	<a href="https://www.indyjunction2022.org/">https://www.indyjunction2022.org/</a>
Facebook:	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/indyjunction2022">https://www.facebook.com/indyjunction2022</a>
Contact	<a href="mailto:info.indyjunction2022@gmail.com">info.indyjunction2022@gmail.com</a>

Submitted by: Ron Ellison  
Indy Junction 2022 Media Committee  
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