



The WinnebagoLand Whistle

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Midwest Region - National Model Railroad Association

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SPRING 2024

Photo

*Ore Extra on the Badger
Mid Western.*

*Photo courtesy: Paul
Hillmer*



Superintendent's Report

Paul (Tree) Hillmer

Another "rainy" winter day outside as I type this. I had to postpone downhill skiing today with some friends. What a whacky winter but great for model railroading. A good chance to hide out in our basement and work on projects, run our layouts, and enjoy our hobby with others. Exactly what I plan on doing. You?

We held the winter WLD BOD meeting on January 20th at the excellent Arctic Run Train Show in Stevens Point. I had called the Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders and they put me in contact with the Holiday Inn, who let us use a real "board room" for free! The staff were very nice and made us feel like big timers.

All the Division Officers and many of the Board of Directors sat around the table on-site. Vern Ehlke, our Chief Clerk, connected John Leow and Dave Nitsch to the meeting via Zoom. Modern technology, you got to love it!

Among the normal business reports by various chairs (treasurer, web master etc..) our main discussion centered around the NMRA Achievement Program. Prior to the meet, I had reached out to Marv Preussler who is WLD's current AP program chair. Marv is stepping down for now but wants to stay involved with the program. So, John Leow got railroaded into the chair position by yours truly.



After much discussion, we agreed that along with an AP chair, we should have an informal, non-board AP committee composed of 3 or 4 board members to help promote this excellent program. The committee will work with those WLD members who are interested in earning Master Model Railroader status. The committee will be responsible for mentoring and approving the 7 certificates out of 11 that members need to satisfy the MMR requirements. Furthermore, the committee will help members achieve the Golden Spike certificate.

Roger Wurtzel and Gerry Ring have volunteered for the committee. Me too!

NMRA Achievement program is one of the things that sets NMRA above other model train groups and online activities. When someone says why should I join? The Achievement program is one reason.

Speaking of the spring meet, we are set for Saturday April 6th at ST Paul United Methodist Church in Stevens Point. Roger Wurtzel and the "Tuesday Morning Group" have been working hard on making this a fun and activity-filled day.

The day will kick off with registrations at 8 am. We will have entry modeling contest (for AP merit points) and a best of show non entry table (You will need to fill out a short form please), plus the photo contest.

We will also have clinics and roundtables (thinking of AP?) starting at 8:30 am. Phil Herman is putting the program together (attached). The local Boy Scout troop will provide snacks, coffee, and lunch. It is pay as you go and not part of meet registration.

At lunch, we will also have our Annual Meet and election of the new board along with award presentations. If you like to run for the board, please contact Gerry Ring.

And in the afternoon, Roger Wurtzel has six home layouts on tour (2-6 pm) including his own "never been on a tour" layout, Pat Lyons beautiful CBQ River Subdivision, and Mike and Mary Eiden's amazing huge double-deck MB&E RR.

So please attend the meet. We will have a great time.

The next board meeting will be at the SLHTS Archives, 2124 N Locust St Appleton 3/23/24 at 11 am. Vern will also have this meeting on Zoom and

with the same link as prior meetings on Meta and on our web page.

That's all for now. Any questions or concern, feel free and reach out to me.

View From the Cab

Gerry Ring, Whistle Editor

This is a special issue of the Whistle. We are honoring Ralph Wehlitz, the last charter member of The Wisconsin Valley Model Railroad Club, for his 100th birthday upcoming in June by reprinting Dave Rickaby's Railroad Model Craftsman article describing his layout "The Penokee, Grandview, & Winnipeg Railroad." I wish to thank White River Publications for letting us print the text of Dave's article. Thanks to Roger Wurtzel for providing the photographs.

You will notice that two regular columns are appearing for the first time in this issue. The first is "In the Hopper" by Paul Hillmer, who will be describing operating model railroads. In particular, he will cover layouts that are part of round robin groups. Please note that Ralph Wehlitz is also a pioneer in layout operations.

The second column is entitled "Off the Bench". This will be my opportunity to discuss a few loosely related topics that will include 3D printing, interesting modeling materials, tools, and electronics. My first topic will be Homasote.

In The Hopper

Paul Hillmer

I have been involved with model railroading for over 40 years and enjoy everything about the hobby. But the one area that has become my favorite is operating model trains with switching and car forwarding. When people come and visit the Badger Mid Western, I tell them this is a fictional model "railroad" built to operate like the real thing. After all most trains just don't run around in circles!

In 1997, WLD began our tradition of hosting an annual round-robin operating day in the fall. I attended the first one and virtually all since then.

During our WLD Op Day in November 2013, Randy Williamson, Roger Hildebrandt, Vern Ehle, and me were chatting at lunch. We came up

with the idea of having a local round robin operating group in Appleton and Waupaca area that would meet monthly. It would include Rogers, Randy, and my layouts along with some layouts in the area. We decided to use a private Facebook page rather than emailing or calling crews. We would run late summer till May, take June and July and maybe August off.



Randy Williamson switching Hill Yard on the Badger Mid Western.

I then coined the name Fox River Operating Group or FROG for short. We would “hop” from layout to layout.

We wanted to keep it fun and not a formal “club” deal but decided on 2 rules:

Rule 1# If you come to operate, you must operate. No standing around to watch to watch operate. You must jump into the fire as they say.

Rule 2# Keep things fun but focus on operating a layout of our gracious host who are giving us the privilege to operate their layout.



Bob Bye, Bill Moede, and Vern Ehlke at Joel Weeks GN Wilmar Sub.

We operate once a month on Saturday mornings 8:45am till lunch time. Since our first operating session 1/11/14, we have had around 90 operating sessions.

Now you may wonder then what is TOAD? I retired in June of 2022 and began a very informal monthly (and lately biweekly) op session rotating between my layout and couple of other retired guys on Friday mornings. TOAD is “The Old Aging Dorks.” A subdivision of FROG. But same rules apply to TOAD as in FROG.

And if you do not already attend or host operating sessions, start your own FROG or TOAD with some local buddies. My only advice is to stick to it. It has been a great time! And a great learning experience.

Model Railroading is fun after all. And the operating game of model trains is even more fun. Hop to it!

The Penokee, Grandview, & Winnipeg Railroad

“The Penokee Hill’s Route”

Dave Rickaby, Railroad Model Craftsman, June 2011, p42.

Intro

Upon entering Ralph Wehlitz’s basement, someone once commented that he had a small museum down there. Indeed, he does. Station signs, railroad maps, photographs, lanterns, and an original cast aluminum logo from a Milwaukee Road Hiawatha passenger car adorn the walls. Telegraph equipment, a locomotive headlight, bell, and whistle, a switch stand, and a berth ladder from a Pullman car round out the large items. His basement bathroom includes a sink, shelves, and lighting fixtures from a Pullman car. In fact, the seat that you may be sitting on in the lounge area may have come from a one-hundred-year-old Northern Pacific smoker car.

Oh yes, there’s a beautiful HO scale layout there as well. Ralph’s layout is a museum-like microcosm of miniature antiquities. This layout was built almost 50 years ago and uses equipment that pre-dates that and still runs and looks great. His original goal was to build a railroad that aired a

sense of plausibility and to this end the Penokee, Grandview, & Winnipeg Railroad was brought to life.



Fictional History

The Penokee, Grandview, & Winnipeg is a fictitious railroad set in Northern Wisconsin serving the iron ore, agricultural, manufacturing, paper mill, and woodworking products needs in the Ashland and Bayfield County area. The visionaries of this railroad started the line two miles south of Mellen, WI. at the little town of Penokee. They dreamed of building through Grandview to Lake Superior, where a tug and barge would transport railcars across the lake to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The dream fell short of reality and the line stopped abruptly at Coda, WI. The main terminal of Coda basically usurps the function of Ashland, WI. as it would've been in the years before World War Two. The Chicago & Northwestern, the Milwaukee Road, the Soo Line, and the Northern Pacific Railroads gain trackage rights into Coda over the PG&W and continue to serve the area.

Layout

Ralph started building his 26x24' HO scale Penokee, Grandview, & Winnipeg Railroad on July 4th, 1963. The layout is a U-shaped structure built against three walls. The track plan is a point-to-loop design, with trains departing from and terminating at his main terminal of Coda. This means that all the trains leaving from here will invariably end up back at this terminal and will have to be broken up, engines serviced, and cars classified and reassembled into the next outbound train. From here the trains travel to Mellen Jct., Cayuga, and Penokee. Ralph took these names from real Northern Wisconsin communities to give visitors a sense of geographical realism. From Mellen Jct., a branch line travels to the fictional town of Drang. A lover and student of classical and operatic music, Ralph named this town after a musical movement made popular in the late 1700's

known as "Sturm und Drang" (Storm and Stress). In fact, he also named his terminal Coda because in musical terms it means "the end", hence the terminus. In actuality, the real-life Coda, WI was located on a Northern Pacific branch line which ran north of Iron River, WI and was abandoned in the 1920's.



Ralph chose to model the 1930's because it's the era that he grew up in and because he believes that it's a more interesting period of railroading than any of the post-war years. In the 1930's our country still had an extensive passenger system which included through passenger trains, local passenger trains, and Pullman operations which enhanced the passenger train movements. There was a greater variety of freight operations, such as way freight and LCL (less-than-carload), and service to industries that no longer exist. Just the fact that everything was powered by steam locomotives made the trains inherently more interesting to watch. The terminal operations for a steam locomotive were more labor intensive considering the coaling, watering, ash removal, etc., which makes for more operation on a model railroad.



When Ralph was developing his track plan, he had to commit his layout to one half of the basement to give his daughter space for a playroom. In developing his plan, he started by listing the type of trains that he wanted to run, which included through and local passenger trains, and through and way freights. A given was that he liked industrial switching and had to include a large freight and passenger terminal with a yard, roundhouse, and a turntable. A point-to-loop concept with one third of

the layout devoted to this terminal seemed to fit the available space best. Another consideration was that he wanted to run full length passenger trains with 80 ft. passenger cars, which neither look good nor run very well on tight curves and led him to commit to a minimum mainline radius of 42 inches. This created a major restriction in the space that he had available and thus resulted in defining the final design.

The benchwork is open grid using 1x4's for the framing and uprights and 2x2's for the legs. Ralph didn't use plywood for the sub roadbed, instead opting to attach Homasote directly to the benchwork. He vividly recalls visiting former Model Railroader Magazine editor Linn Wescott at his home while Linn was running an experiment with Homasote. Linn had clamped a length of Homasote to the back of a chair and had been applying water to it to see if it would warp and found that it didn't. Ralph liked what he saw and attached Homasote directly to his 1x4' risers on 16" centers. Over the 40 plus years that his layout has been in existence some very slight sags have developed but not enough to cause any misalignment of his track. Ralph believes that this method is still better than laying Homasote directly to plywood as the plywood has more of a tendency to warp, particularly if the humidity gets out of control.

Ralph hand laid all his Code 70 track and built #8, #6, and #5 turnouts. His backdrop is 1/8" Masonite painted with oil paints.

The layout lighting was originally done with incandescent bulbs, but Ralph has been converting over to the screw in type of fluorescent fixtures.



Ralph's trains are controlled by a two-cab DC block control system with rotary switches and rheostats. He originally used an early NMRA designed route cab control system which had indicator lights on panels showing blocks ahead of your train. If your train was in the "green" block,

the next block would show an "amber" light, and if the succeeding block was not occupied you could proceed. If it was occupied it would show a "red" indication. Ralph had problems with the system and eventually eliminated it. He still has the original blocks, which are controlled individually from several panels around the layout.

His turnouts are powered by original Walther's TS-5 switch machines, along with switch machines from Lindsey, which Ralph figures are at least as old as the TS-5's. Recently he has added manual controls provided by Hump Yard Purveyors. These are miniature control tower handles, which he attaches to piano wire in Teflon tubes clamped to the underside of the layout to control his switches. They are very easy to install and to adjust.



Most of the structures on Ralph's layout are from craftsman kits, either built by himself or by close friends. He has also scratchbuilt the Soo Line roundhouse and coaling tower at Rhinelander, WI and the Sunday Lake Mine near Wakefield, MI. These are in place in the terminal areas of Coda and Drang respectively.

Ralph's underlying principal in planning out a model railroad is plausibility. For a model railroad to look plausible and believable the equipment should be appropriate to the era in which you are modeling. All the rolling stock on Ralph's layout could have conceivably been seen in Northern Wisconsin in the 1930's.

Ralph employs close to 20 brass steam locomotives lettered for the Penokee, Grandview, & Winnipeg, the Chicago & Northwestern, the Milwaukee Road, and the Northern Pacific. Two of his locomotives are old Varney models. He also has several gas electrics and a Mckeen Motorcar. His collection of 155 freight cars include original metal cars from Roundhouse, Ulrich, and the old Varney cars with the lithographed sides. Rounding out the roster are wooden cars from Silver Streak and some newer kits from Westerfield. The fleet of 45 passenger

cars include the original Walther's cars. Some LaBelle kits are present as well. Some of Ralph's Soo Line cars were built using brass car sides provided by Dennis Storzek, which have a tremendous amount of detail.

When Ralph started to scenic his layout in the 1960's, there weren't as many methods available to do this as there are now. For his scenic landforms he used the old tried and true method of plaster over screen wire. His rockwork is cast from rubber molds and painted with acrylic earth tones. Early on Ralph mixed dry pigments into his plaster in case any of the scenery got chipped or damaged. For his large bushes and tree foliage he used Lichen, which he harvested and processed. He's used a variety of things for trees from commercial products to golden rod, and sprigs from bushes that he's trimmed in his yard. His pine trees are from Mountain Modelcraft of nearby Wausau, WI. He uses Woodland Scenics ground foam for his ground cover and smaller bushes. For a small pond that he modeled, Ralph poured in a two-part epoxy from Envirotex.

Operation 101: A sense of perpetual motion.

When Ralph was building his layout in the early 1960's, the term "Operation" was still being pioneered. He had read an article in Model Railroader Magazine in the 1950's that had talked about a freight car routing system employing a 3x5 card with a paperclip place marker and this really planted a seed for the future.



The idea of just running trains around a layout never appealed to Ralph. He felt that there should be some reason for moving a car from point A to point B and to this end developed a routing scheme for his freight movements. He knew that he would have to give priority to breaking up and making up trains, arrival and departure schedules, delivery to online industries, and to allow ample time for locomotive servicing. He started out by developing a train sheet to see how to move trains over the

railroad and how to integrate the different types of freight and passenger trains. All his trains are run as a sequence of events. These include 13 freight trains, 3 iron ore trains, and 19 passenger trains over a 24-hour schedule. These include dozens of listed supporting movements, which can make each day's duties different.

Ralph developed a routing card for every freight car. These cards have a list of alternating destinations and trains. For example, a car is picked up from Wiener Foods, routed into an outbound train and either delivered somewhere else on the layout or, if placed on a through freight, sent to a concealed holding track from which it returns to Coda Yard with a different train number and is routed into the yard. In either case, the paper clip alongside of the card is slid into place for the next consignee and so on. His overall goal was to create the illusion of what real railroads do. In respect to his own layout, it doesn't matter if these cars are loads or empties, they must move over the railroad regardless and in a logical order.



Northern Pacific cars would be routed west, Soo Line, Milwaukee Road, and C&NW cars relatively east. To further enhance his operation, Ralph added a "timekeeper" clip to each car card which tells him how many days that a particular car has been at its destination. The average is 2 to 3 "Operating Days", sometimes longer. Ralph doesn't use a fast clock; he operates in real time; a virtual "slow clock" on a 24-hour schedule. This 24-hour schedule, then, is an "Operating Day".

The unique thing about Ralph's operation is the absence of a continuous loop system, which you would experience with 4 cycle waybills. Since he operates by himself, his operating sessions don't take 3 hours to complete. Ralph's operating session is in continuous use, a sense of perpetual motion, where the movements from the present actual day flow into the next. Whether the railroad is run for a short while or for several hours, the session is continuous within the schedule. The train that is

currently being run has a magnetic marker next to its train number on a train list which is attached to a metal panel. Ralph may operate for a half hour and walk away for several days. When he comes back, he picks up right where he left off. At this preferred pace, it can take him a month or more to complete a full 24 hour “Operating Day”.

Meet Ralph Wehlitz



Photo courtesy: The Wisconsin Valley Model Railroad Club.

Ralph Wehlitz lives in Merrill, WI with his wife Norma. Together they raised one daughter, Carol. Born in Milwaukee, WI. he was exposed to model railroading at a young age with Scalecraft OO trains. Without much money or space, it never developed into an operating model railroad but he still has some of the original equipment in his collection. He started modeling in 1949 after graduating from the University of Wisconsin with a teaching degree in Social Studies and English. He got his first teaching job in Mellen, WI, where he developed his love for Northern Wisconsin and eventually retired as the District Audio Visual Director at Merrill Area Public Schools in Merrill, WI. Besides model railroading and railroad history, Ralph enjoys listening to his extensive collection of music. An avid railroad historian, he is also a member of the National Model Railroad

Association, the Soo Line Historical and Technical Society, the Chicago & Northwestern Historical Society, the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, the National Railway Historical Society, and is a charter member of the Wisconsin Valley Model Railroad Club of Wausau, WI. Ralph has also enjoyed working with Tom Burg and the Merrill Publishing Associates as a proofreader and editor for their collection of railroad books.

Close

Ralph believes that some of the satisfaction that comes from model railroading is in its vast diversity. You can go off into a wide variety of directions and interests in the hobby, and at varying degrees of skill levels. To beginners Ralph would encourage them to be prepared to develop a wide variety of skills of their own. He would also tell them that model railroading offers the opportunity to learn about electricity, carpentry, painting, etc., and to try to develop these manipulative modeling skills to whatever degree that they are comfortable with. The hobby also offers the opportunity to learn about railroads and their history. Ralph puts great value into modeling what a railroad was like during a certain time period.

The hobby has opened a lot of doors of interest for Ralph. He's done a lot of railfan photography dating back to his days as a young man in Milwaukee. His photo collection includes about 5000 slides and 3000 prints. Reading about railroad history has been very satisfying and supportive to his railroad, and the hobby has led to meeting a lot of interesting people and friends over the years.

Just building a model railroad is a significant challenge in itself. While Ralph doesn't see what he's accomplished on his layout over an almost 50-year span as anything “great”, he's been fairly successful in working through a concept and creating a model railroad that satisfies him with the skills that he has been able to develop. Accomplishing the goal of plausibility was key to this success.

For Ralph, satisfaction in the hobby comes from problem solving. Almost every model project that he's undertaken has faced him with some sort of challenge. Partly because he's built the layout by himself and partly because he's done it with one hand. Ralph lost his left hand during the Battle of Monte Cassino in Italy during World War Two.

This was his predominant hand as well. Fitted with a pincer-like prosthesis, Ralph still managed to hand lay track, build rolling stock kits, craftsman structures, scratch build cars and buildings, and a layout that has stood the test of time for almost 50 years. Although disabled, this quiet and humble modeler never accepted defeat and his efforts culminated in the awarding of the highest order in the National Model Railroad Association. In September of 1992, Ralph Wehlitz became Master Model Railroader #191.

(Note: Dave Rickaby was Superintendent of the WinnebagoLand Division in 1992 and was honored to hand Ralph this certificate at the Midwest Region Fall Convention in Manitowoc, WI.

Off the Bench

Gerry Ring

Homasote is a remarkable material and perhaps the best material to lay track upon. It is sound absorbing and easy to nail into. Unfortunately, when you use a circular saw to cut Homasote an undesirable amount of fiber debris is created. Usually, a good vacuum system quickly removes this debris, but if you need to cut Homasote where the debris can't be removed adequately fine-toothed band saws or knives are used instead. Homasote debris appears like fluff pulp that is used in absorbent products and for this reason, the usual assumption has been that Homasote absorbs water. However, when I read in Dave Rickaby's article that Lynn Wescott had tested Homasote and had found that it does not absorb water, I thought that it was time to study this important model railroad material further.

Homasote is a cellulose-based fiber wall board. The source of the cellulose fiber is recycled newspaper that is manufactured from a groundwood pulping process. This means that the natural water-proofing material that exists in all wood called lignin is still present in the final Homasote product.

The manufacture of Homasote is very similar to the manufacture of hand-made paper. However, instead of being compressed then dried, the Homasote pulp is compressed and dried simultaneously at high pressures and temperatures for a lengthy period.

Like paper, no adhesives are used in Homasote's manufacture. What bonds cellulose fibers together is hydrogen bonding. Additionally, a wax is added to the pulp not to enhance fiber bonding but to increase the waterproofing of the fibers. In paper making, wax added to the wet pulp functions as a sizing agent that coats the fibers during drying without interfering with the fiber bonding. Sizing agents make the difference between an absorbent paper and all other types of paper. Thus, Homasote has the benefit of two types of waterproofing, lignin in the fibers and wax coating the fibers.

Another feature of Homasote that is different from wood is the lack of fiber alignment. Dimensional lumber and plywood exhibit warping due to fiber alignment. Homasote remains flat because its fibers are randomly aligned. It also does not shrink in the width or length direction.

Thus, Ralph Wehlitz confidently attached Homasote directly to his open grid benchwork without a plywood sub roadbed knowing that it would not exhibit humidity induced warpage or shrinkage. And upon inspection of photos of his layout, he also did not paint or seal his Homasote, since this is unnecessary.



Website: <http://www.wld-nmra.com>

Facebook: [WinnebagoLand Division, NMRA](#)

Team Track

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 06/2024)

Division Officers (above) PLUS:

Al Archer Dave Allen
Dave Nitsch Fred Firkus
Gerry Ring Joe Lallensack
John Leow Mary Eiden
Mike Eiden Phil Herman
Rich Hopfensperger

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Mike Ostertag / Paul Mastalir Scout Coordinator
Paul Hillmer Social Media Chair

On the Ready Track

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

March 23, 2004

WLD Board Meeting
Soo Line Historical and Technical Society
Building and Zoom at 11:00 am.

April 6, 2024

WLD 2024 Spring Meet - St. Paul's United
Methodist Church in Stevens Point, WI.

May 4-5, 2024

Titletown Train Show, Green Bay, 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.



2024 NMRA WinnebagoLand Division

Quick and to the Point
WLD Spring Meet April 6th, 2024
St. Paul's United Methodist Church
600 Wilshire Boulevard
Stevens Point, WI



2024 Spring Meet Timetable

Saturday, April 6th

8:00 – 10:00 am Registration

8:30 am – Noon Clinics

8:00 – 10:30 Model & Photo Contest Entry

8:30 Modelers Round Table

9:25 Layout Improvements – Gregg Condon

10:20 Weathering Techniques – Fred Firkus

11:15 Operations Round Table

○ **12:00 – 1:00 pm Lunch – Boy Scouts Fundraiser**
(lunch not included in registration fee)

○ **12:45 pm Annual Meeting**

○ **1:00 pm Model-Photo Contest Awards**

○ **2:00pm – 6:00pm Layout Tours**

*Bring your
models for
round table
discussion or
enter in the
modeling
contest!!!*

*Tour Six Local
Layouts!!*

2024 Spring Meet Registration (Checks Payable to WinnebagoLand Division)

NAME: _____ **NMRA#:** _____

Email: _____ **Phone #:** _____

Meet Registration Fee

NMRA Member \$12 X ____ = \$ _____ + Non-Member \$15 X ____ = \$ _____

Registration at the Door : Members \$15 non-members \$18.

For more info and meet updates visit www.wld-nmra.com

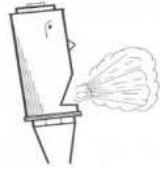
Return this form and Payment by **3/29/2024** to
Paul Hillmer 4711 N Tanglewood Drive
Appleton, WI 54913

Quick and to the Point

LAYOUT TOURS

2024 NMRA WinnebagoLand Division Spring Meet

SATURDAY April 6, 2024 – Stevens Point & Plover, WI



WATCH FOR THE WHISTLE SIGNS

Milladore Rudolph & Eastern - “HO” scale

The Milladore Rudolph and Eastern HO scale railroad is one of 4 private railroads on the layout, along with a bit of prototype (Milwaukee Road and Amtrak). The MRE railroad, “The Dairy Route”, serves a number of industries and businesses from the Portage County area. Besides the MRE railroad, there is the Mosinee Biron and Eastern, and short lines Rocky Run, and Custer Central. The MRE interchanges with the Rocky Run and Custer Central and will also interchange with the MBE. The MRE is on the lower level, and the MBE is on the upper level. The MBE serves additional local industries, businesses and interchange tracks with Evergreen Hills and Allen Creek, GBW, and Badger Central. A helix connects the upper and lower levels. Off the helix you can also go out into the main part of the basement that includes Milwaukee, Hales Corners, Oak Creek and Franklin. Actual photographs of the Milwaukee skyline were used to make the backdrop. Many of the buildings that are on the Milwaukee section are buildings that are in Milwaukee, or they used to be, all serviced by the Milwaukee Road. Amtrak has a large station there with 3 tracks for its passenger trains, which includes the Badger State Flyer. The layout is DCC with the Digitrax System. The layout is also home to the Central Wisconsin Community Zoo, where people can go and enjoy the animals on display there and have some refreshments.

Soo Line Locomotive 2713 & Caboose 158 - 12” = 1’-0” scale

Soo Line 4-6-2 Pacific Class H-21 Locomotive. Built by the American Locomotive Company for the Wisconsin Central Railway in 1911, part of a 16 locomotive order. Retired from service in 1955 and placed on display here in Veterans Memorial Park in 1957. The roof was built in 2004. The locomotive weighs 258,000 lb and had a tractive effort of 36,833 lbf. Drivers are 75” diameter. Boiler pressure was 180 PSI. Original wood cab roof was replaced by a new steel roof in 1944. Tender capacity was 16 tons of coal and 10,000 gallons of water. Complete mileage records no longer exist but from 1937 to 1955 the 2713 put in 1,094,492 miles. It would be safe to say the locomotive put in well over 2 million miles over its lifetime. The side and main rods off of this locomotive were swapped with operating locomotive 2719 when her rods were damaged in a side swipe accident. 2713 is owned by the City of Stevens Point.

Soo Line Caboose 158 was built by Wells & French Car Company in 1893 at a cost of \$1,210. It was originally equipped with wood underframe, archbar trucks and 33” cast iron wheels. A steel underframe was added in 1927. The archbar trucks were replaced in the 1960’s with heavier freight car trucks with leaf springs and steel wheels.

“North Shore” Railroad Co. - “HO” scale

The North Shore Railroad (NSHR) is very loosely modeled after a real present day short line located in central Pennsylvania. Reclaimed predecessor lines of the North Shore are the Pennsylvania Railroad, New York Central System, Reading Lines and the Lackawanna Railroad. The real North Shore is a collection of six short lines, of which three are modeled. Each short line railroad bears a name association with area history. In addition to modeling the North Shore, the Juniata Valley RR, The Nittany & Bald Eagle RR and the Lycoming Valley RR are modeled. The North Shore interchanges with the Norfolk Southern, Canadian Pacific, Reading Blue Mountain & Northern RR, and the R. J. Corman Group.

Local businesses have flourished with the growth of the North Shore and it thrives on providing excellent service to its loyal customers. Standard Steel, Lyons Logistics, Shirl Mills, NPK Fertilizer, Yuengling Brewery, American Eagle Paper Mill and Nittany Pulp & Paper Mill are the primary customers served by the North Shore. Standard Steel is the only US manufacturer of forged steel wheels and axles for the railroad industry. Lyons Logistics and Cold Storage is a large warehousing industry. Shirl Mills is a major manufacturer of food products for the consumer. NPK Fertilizer manufactures fertilizers for the agriculture industry. Yuengling Brewery is the oldest brewery in the US, serving most states east of the Mississippi River. Nittany Pulp & Paper manufactures kraft paper and market pulp as well as recycled pulp and paper for the paper industry. American Eagle Paper Mill manufactures consumer paper from waste paper and purchased market pulp. The industrial buildings are very large, approaching prototype size.

The modern day North Shore pike is a 17' by 45' single level basement layout built 56 inches above the floor. The benchwork is L-girder and open frame. Track is spiked to cork, homosote and plywood. Track is Atlas, Peco and Micro Engineering with a mainline run of 232 feet (3.083 scale miles). About seventy-five percent of the structures are built, with structure details, ballast and scenery planned for the future. Digitrax is used for control and detection and JMRI Operations Pro for its web server, train operations, and turnout control. The layout is set up to be operated via small tablet and smart phone.

CB&Q La Crosse Division - “HO” scale

Magnificent bluffs flank the Upper Mississippi River Valley. A 37' recreation of these bluffs makes an excellent backdrop for passenger operations. Some modeler's license has been used in the construction of the layout. Most towns along this route were small, rural communities. They have been expanded to support more opportunities for freight operations.

There is a staging yard under the bluff representing the Dayton Bluff Yard in St. Paul as the Western terminus and the Cicero Yard in the Chicago area as the Eastern terminus. At Savanna, IL a branch line ran south thru Western Illinois to Galesburg, IL and connecting with the CB&Q's Chicago/Denver main.

In the fall of 2013 Kalmbach published “103 Realistic Track Plans”. This railroad was selected as the Editor's Choice for large layouts. Since then Galesburg has been added which expanded the operating potential of the layout.

Virginia Pine Ridge & Northern - “HO” scale

The VPR&N, also known as the “Superior Route” is a free lance layout modeled in northwest Wisconsin in June of 1966. The layout will be in two rooms, one is 44' x 20' and the other is 18' x 11'. The benchwork and track is approximately 50% complete. Very little scenery has been completed. Control is analog block control panels and six walk around throttles. All turnout except the six track staging yard are manual control using Caboose Industries ground throws and high level switch stands. I am leaning towards using car cards but the decision has not been finalized.

Major industries on the layout include iron ore mining, ore dock, pulp wood, paper mill, grain elevators, chemical company and food plants. Other industries include lumber yards, bulk oil dealers. power plants, boiler works, furniture factory, and several more that have not been determined yet. There are interchange tracks with the Wisconsin & Michigan, Soo Line, Fever River and Milladore Rudolph and Eastern.

Bruce's Crossing Railway & Navigation Company - “HO” scale

Bruce's Crossing Railway and Navigation Company, recreates a few extra years of the Milwaukee Road pontoon swing bridges. There are two swing bridges, Dutch door style, to access the layout. The theme roughly models the Milwaukee Road from Prairie du Chien Wis. to Mason Iowa. The main area is 11 x 14 ft, and the wall shelf staging area around half of the basement makes it 22 x 22 ft. There are 4% grades with helper service as needed to climb out of the Mississippi River valley. A model towboat and barges travel ('roll') on the rivers (the walkways of the layout) and you can get your River Pilots license and learn some rules of river navigation.

Golden Sands Southern Railroad - “HO” scale

Freelance 13'x31' linear layout with a 170' mainline set in the 1940 to 1960 era. All track and switches are hand laid. Scenery depicts the flat sandy agricultural area served by the Golden Sands Southern. From the major yard and engine facility at Plover WI it extends out to Mehean Station, Bancroft, Hancock and Waupaca. The Plover facilities include a 15 stall round house, freight and passenger car shops and a classification yard capable of holding 150 cars. Industry is heavily geared to its agricultural base and serves the needs of farmers and food processors. Industries that serve the area include food canners and freezers, grain elevators and milling operations. Service industries include fertilizer, feed/seed, lumber, petroleum and ice. The Golden Sands Southern also operates its own ballast pit in Plover. DCC and DC control.

Bancroft Depot / GB&W Caboose / Heritage Park - 12” = 1’-0” scale

Bancroft Depot and GB&W Caboose 617

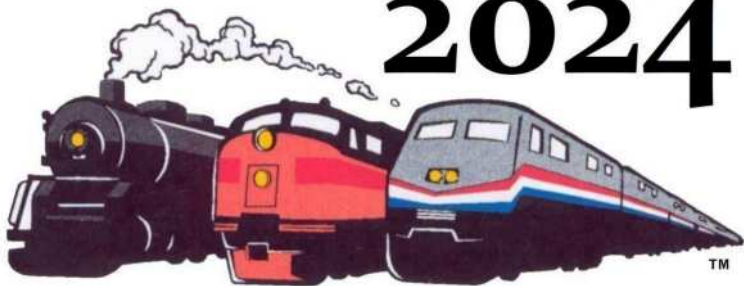
Built in 1902, this depot was an important stop on what was known as the P Line, the Soo Line Railroad's branch extending from Portage to Stevens Point. It was moved from Bancroft to Heritage Park on June 13, 1990. The exterior and first floor have been restored to its 1920's look by the Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders, Ltd. (CWMR) The Station Agent's living quarters on the second floor are now used for display. This is the only remaining example of six Wisconsin Central's 1898 Combination Depots built to this plan. The Green Bay and Western Caboose was donated by the Canadian National Railroad in 2002. The CN delivered rail, ties, tie plates and spikes and the CWMR laid the track on which it sits. Built in 1965, the caboose interior has been restored as closely as possible, and the exterior painted to its colors of that time.

Pierce Building/Anday Agricultural Barn

The front section of this structure was built in 1874 by James Pierce on what is now the corner of Post Road and Green Drive in Plover and moved here in 1992. It was a grocery store operated by 4 generations of the Pierce family until closing in 1967. Originally occupying the entire footprint of the current building, the back portion was destroyed in a 1994 fire while being restored. A new “old” barn was constructed in 2016 on the remaining foundation to house agricultural artifacts including potato, corn, dairy, and logging pursuits. The exterior lean-to houses agricultural machinery used in the early 1900's up to WWII. The remaining original front section has been converted into a print shop housing a variety of printing machines.

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May the 4th (and the 5th) be with us!

