

December 2020



From Your WISE Superintendent... — Mike Slater



Trainfest-X 2020 Recap

On Saturday November 14th, 2020, Trainfest took place on the internet. We had seven hours of live content that was streamed on the Trainfest Facebook page, originally we had planned over 10 hours of live content with about another couple hours that was to be released on our Division’s new Facebook Page. Right now, you may be asking why we were about 3 hours short of the planned content? The answer simply was unplanned issues that happened. First off, The NMRA-X team was to help with the broad band and tech end of things. They backed out on Nov 7th, one week before the event. The second issue I had was my internet had data issues that prevented me from live streaming the event past that point. Another issue I did not notice on the software I was using was I was getting some audio issues. Overall, the response from those that watched the event was positive. They knew we were not professionals at doing this type of technical event, and everyone also knew we did not have to put on this event.

All of the presentations have been uploaded to our new NMRA Division YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9sFsiCEzuJg7HnKDdidWVw> or you can search for the videos by looking for “Trainfest-X 2020” Now that we have this channel, you may ask what are we going to do with it? This is where I will leave it up to you..... we as a division can present clinics on this channel, layout tours, or Railfanning videos that you took. I am not looking for everyone to create content on their own, however, by working together we can help one another produce content. If you want your layout featured on this channel and you have questions email me superintendent@trainfest.com and we will work together on ways we can do that.

Moving forward throughout this model train season we will be having one Wise Division sponsored Zoom call a month (you will receive an email with call details). The meetings give you the option of calling a phone number for audio only, or all you need to do is click on the link in blue text of the invite email and it will open up a webpage for the meeting. If you want to see a video on how to join a call watch this video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E>. Please consider joining a meeting.

Have a great Holiday Season,
Mike Slater

PS—If you go to view Trainfest-X on YouTube please select "Like and Subscribe" to stay current on future Trainfest planning. *Ed*.



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\$\$\$ From the Cluttered Desk of the Paymaster

— Dennis Janssen

Are Tap-and-Pay Cards Secure?

Tap-and-pay technology, also known as contactless payment, allows you to complete transactions without physically swiping or inserting your credit or debit card at a payment terminal. It may seem strange at first, but you can use tap-and-pay with confidence — it's a safe and reliable method for making purchases.

How does tap-and-pay technology work?

Tap-and-pay cards use RFID or near-field communication (NFC) technology to communicate with the payment terminal. Inside your card, a chip and an antenna send out radio waves containing a random, one-time encrypted number. According to U.S. News & World Report contributor Ben Luthi, these waves travel only a few centimeters — long enough to let you pay by tapping the terminal with your card or by simply holding it very close. When the terminal receives the card's code via the radio waves, it can quickly and securely process your transaction. This same technology powers mobile wallet systems like Apple Pay and Android Pay. It's also used for EMV chip technology, which requires you to insert your payment card into a terminal.

What are the advantages of using a tap-and-pay card?

Using a tap-and-pay card can reduce the time and hassle of making a transaction. Luthi notes that this technology works significantly faster than EMV chip technology. EMV chip transactions take 30 seconds to complete, but tap-and-pay only takes 13-15 seconds. Tap-and-pay is especially convenient if you live in a big city and frequently commute via mass transit. CNET reporter Ben Fox Rubin writes that several transit systems around the United States, such as New York City, Portland, and

Chicago, have installed tap-and-pay terminals so travelers can spend less time on transactions at the turnstile. Tap-and-pay is also handy for international travel, as many other countries have adopted the technology to a much greater extent than the U.S.



Are tap-and-pay cards safe to use?

Tap-and-pay credit or debit cards are quite secure to use. Luthi writes that EMV chip cards represented a major security upgrade over the old swipe cards — and tap-and-pay cards utilize the same technology. Theoretically, a criminal could get close to you and use an NFC skimming device to steal the information transmitted by your card. However, even if crooks were able to pull this off, experts say the data they'd glean wouldn't be enough to enable a fraudulent transaction in your name.

How can you protect yourself from tap-and-pay fraud?

The risk of fraud occurring during a tap-and-pay transaction is minimal. Some people purchase RFID-blocking wallets to protect their cards, but the Identity Theft Resource Center states that this is an unnecessary — and often expensive — precaution. You're much more likely to be the victim of online fraud or data breaches. To keep your information safe, guard your online accounts with strong passwords, sign up for alerts from your credit card company, review your credit report for suspicious activity and, if you use a mobile wallet, protect your electronic device with the appropriate locks and codes.

You should certainly take the normal precautions against fraud, but tap-and-pay is a highly secure payment method that shouldn't cause you any additional worries.

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Please send any comments, information, or editorials to Steve Miazga, the Owl Car editor, via email: owlcar@trainfest.

Next WISE Board Meeting

All WISE/NMRA members are welcome to attend our monthly board meetings. As noted in the Superintendent's April report all meetings for the balance of this year will be by conference call.

Our next conference call meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

If you are not on the Board and want to listen in please email Mike Slater at superintendent@trainfest.com for login information. You will need to have downloaded and installed the free program Zoom in order to participate.

Trainfest-X Highlights



Above, a garden railroad layout tour by Brian Williams and below, George of Soundtrax gives one of his three clinics.



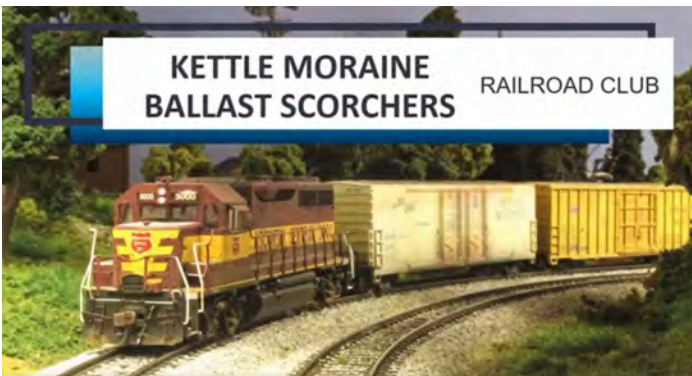
Above—Presentation from Atlas Model Railroad on products. Below—a JMRI operations clinic presented by Bob Frey



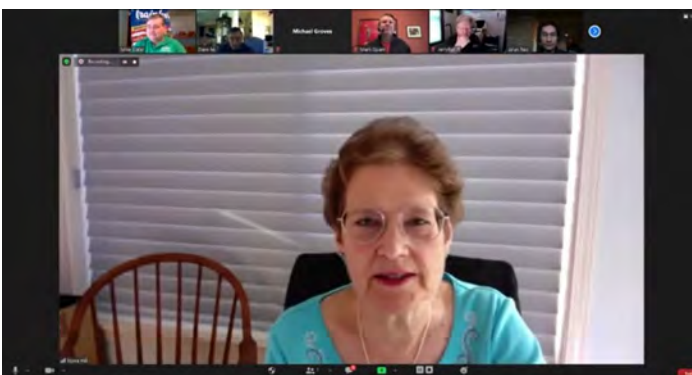
A WISE Div. Clinic using a DVD

JMRI Operations with paper using my Key Codes

Robert Frey Nov. 2020



Layout tours were provided by the Kettle Moraine Ballast Scorchers and the Milwaukee N Southeastern club. Below at left shows an online ZOOM discussion with All Aboard Wisconsin and lower right Dave Ackmann's presentation on Arduino applications.



Dave Ackmann Presents . . .

Amazing Arduino Animations



Upcoming Division Events

- December 20, 2020—Division Virtual Membership Chat**
1:00 pm—3:00 pm via Zoom login
- January 17, 2021—Division Virtual Membership Meet with Clinic**
1:00 pm—3:00 pm via Zoom login
- February 21, 2021—Division Virtual Membership Meet with Clinic**
1:00 pm—3:00 pm via Zoom login
- March 21, 2021—WISE Division Meet** (face to face pending)
Oconomowoc Museum, Oconomowoc, 12:30 pm
- April 9 & 10, 2021— WiseOPs Operating Weekend** (cancelled)
- April 18, 2021—WISE Division Meet and Annual Meeting**
Location TBD, 12:30 pm (pending)
- * **May 2, 2021— Annual DuPage Train Show Bus Trip** (cancelled)

* Denotes extra fare event

For more event details go to our website: WWW.WISEDIVISION.ORG



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Upcoming National And Regional Events Of Interest

- May 20-23, 2021—Midwest Region NMRA Convention**
Rockford Railway Convention—175 Years of History
Rockford Holiday Inn, Rockford, IL
www.mwr-nmra.org
- July 4-10, 2021—NMRA 2021 Convention—Santa Clara**
Santa Clara, CA
www.nmra2021.com
- May 18-22, 2022—NMRA Tri-Region Convention**
“Indy Junction”, Marriott East, Indianapolis, IN
www.mwr-nmra.org

Historical Society Meetings

- June 17-20, 2021—Milwaukee Road Historical Association**
2021 Convention, Holiday Inn & Suites Chicago Northwest
Elgin, IL *www.mrha.com*
- August 6-8, 2021—Missabe Railroad Historical Society**
www.missabe.com
- September 8-11, 2021—Soo Line Historical & Tech. Society**
2021 Annual Convention
Holiday Inn, Manitowoc, WI
www.sooline.org
- September 18-22, 2021—Great Northern Railway Hist. Society**
2021 Convention, Willmar, MN
www.gnrhs.org
- October 7-10, 2021—Burlington Route Historical Society**
2021 Annual Convention, St. Louis, MO—Check Website
www.burlingtonroute.org

Meetings Pending

- Chicago & North Western Historical Society**
2020 Mankato Convention Cancelled—Check Website
www.cnwhs.org
- Green Bay & Western Historical Society**
2020 Annual Meeting Postponed—Check Website
www.gbwhs.com

Video Library Update

— Burnell Breaker, Video Librarian

With the switch from in-person to virtual meetings, it will be a bit difficult in the near term checking out items from the Video Library. Those of you who have Division DVD's, hang onto them until we can again meet in person.

I am hoping to have DVD's from our VHS tapes available when we resume meeting again.

The Frugal Modeler Thinks Out Loud

— Dave Nelson

I am a junk man ... a model train junk man. The model train junk man seeks out that elusive combination of repairable (or so he hopes) damage, a bargain price, or at least the illusion of a bargain price, and quantity. Often it's the sheer quantity that clinches the deal. Show me an Athearn blue box boxcar at a swap meet, and I'll likely walk on by. Show me a damaged Athearn boxcar and I'll pause a moment. Put twelve damaged Athearn boxcars in a box, sweeten the pot with some rusty hopper car weights and dried-out lichen, and I'll buy it in a New York minute.

Entire hobby shops used to cater to us junk men. Remember Garman's on National? I lived nearby. Garman's had a large supply of derelict and dusty old inventory on the shelves, but those cardboard boxes on the floor - now that was gourmet junk. I remember snapping up a box of 30 seriously busted HO plastic freight cars for five or ten bucks or so. Of the perhaps seven or eight salvageable cars, the most promising was a nearly -mint Athearn C&NW boxcar, but it had one end smashed in. A Lackawanna boxcar in the same color was unrepairable, but it did have one end intact. With great care I sawed and filed and sanded and glued and touched up the paint and when the project was done I proudly showed my handiwork to a friend, who pointed out the obvious: I'd just spent hours of work creating an imperfect Athearn box car I could have bought new for less than \$3.

That way of thinking profoundly misses the point. Like Dr. Frankenstein, we pick over the cadavers of other modeler's failed projects in the hopes of bringing our own monsters to life. Like jackals and buzzards, we follow unlucky modelers around, snatching at their leavings: doomed engine conversions, abandoned craftsman kits, ill-advised superdetailing projects, laughable efforts at kitbashing - we scavenge them one and all, hoping that sweat equity will give us that outrageous bargain we live for.

We don't scavenge from fellow junk men, though. They never discard anything!

We become junk men the same way some people become drug addicts: they hook us when we're young. I blame the old Associated Hobby Manufacturers (AHM). Back in the '60s, AHM would advertise "Funeral Sales" of mildly damaged HO



goods, three for the price of one. These were outrageous bargains, since AHM prices were rock-bottom to begin with, and back then the quality was decent. By swapping parts around you were all but assured of ending up with one, perhaps two, perhaps even three fully working models.

If you were really in the know - AHM didn't advertise this much - they offered what they called "Roundhouse Rubble." Now this was junk, and I swallowed their bait early and often. For \$10 AHM would mail a big box crammed to the brim with trains so defective they were ashamed to sell them in the Funeral Sale. And if you ordered enough Roundhouse Rubble deals, eventually you might have enough fragments to piece together, say, a Nickel Plate Berkshire or an SP cab-forward that ran, well, almost OK, for, as you'd keep trying to convince yourself, practically nothing. The leftovers and debris and hopeless remains were so much frosting on the cake. AHM warned that you could not get Roundhouse Rubble trains to run unless you were "a genius." Well if AHM wanted to call me a genius who was I to disagree? I got addicted ... then my supplier disappeared.

Quite apart from the fact that for the time being train shows and swap meets are not taking place, it seems there are fewer such dangerous opportunities today. Sure, one mail order dealer now and then advertises a handyman's special at \$99 a box, but a price that high lacks the essential sensation that you've just taken advantage of someone. Besides, I ordered one and it was doubly disappointing: the price was far too high for what you got, and the trains were just not shabby enough. An Athearn F unit with one loose sideframe is junk? Since when? Maybe they are selling to junk men, but they sure aren't creating any new ones.

Some years ago I had the ultimate junk man's opportunity. I went to a fellow's place of business to look at his late uncle's large (check that, huge) collection of old HO trains. This uncle had evidently spent about 45 years in a perpetual state of undisciplined acquisition for the dream layout that never happened. There were 15 or more large moving van type boxes and crates literally crammed with trains. At some point every container had gotten soaking wet; the cardboard boxes felt damp and smelled sour. Not all model boxes were wet, but all smelled, and all were very dirty. Some boxes had mildewed into black, weblike, furry stuff.

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Railfanning at Duplainville



On one of the last warm sunny days of Fall a rare pair of locomotives were caught on a northbound intermodal run. In the lead was SD70-M #8009 partnered with a classic Draper Taper GE-C40-8M #2436. A closer look at the unit (below) shows a previous North American paint scheme remaining on the side panel near the "Draper Taper" behind the cab. Originally delivered in 1992, this unit has seen a lot of track miles. CN ordered a total of 55 units from GE, and gained another 26 with their purchase of BC Rail. All 81 units are still in service today.



On November 10, 2020, a southbound CN manifest heads across Green Road in Pewaukee hours before CN and CP crews and contractors would mobilize to replace the diamond at Duplainville. The second unit was a Progress Rail (former EMD) SD70ACe-T4. Progress Rail created a 27 unit lease fleet (EMDX) in 2019 after two cancellations from UP and NS with the units already built.

It is not known whether this unit was on demonstrator service or leased. The units are designed to meet EPA's new Tier 4 environmental standards for locomotives.



Trick or Treat With Special Delivery at the Nelson's

The Dave Nelson household followed the pandemic recommendation of social distancing this year for Halloween. The old Lionel came out of the box and performed heavy duty delivering goodies to all the Ghoulies who showed up for the treats (not tricks). Nice weather made it even better. They have posted a video on YouTube which better captures the moment. Check it out at The Trick or Treat Train (<https://youtu.be/WUgSJa4B56k>).



The Frugal Modeler *(continued)*

The newest trains were circa 1985, but most were museum pieces going back well into the 1940s. The old Walthers passenger car kits, with wood roofs and floors (now warped), punched metal sides (now rusted), and cast lead "details." Unbuilt or partly built craftsman kits. Tru-Scale roadbed with brass rail by the (wet) boxful. Tons of Plasticville toy structures and, oddly, just as many complex Campbell and Suydam structure kits. Metal freight car kits, with chipped paint and rust. Those old 79 cent Kurtz-Kraft PS-1 boxcar kits (astonishing in their detail when new, and still impressive today) in their cheap plastic bag packaging from well before 1960. I couldn't count how many Athearn Hustlers, rubber band drives long since disintegrated. Civil War to Amtrak era, eastern electrics to western diesels, Midwestern interurbans, Northern Pacific, Amtrak, C&NW, UP, PRR, ATSF, Milwaukee Road; this guy didn't care. Steam locomotives, often missing siderods or tenders or wheels. Rusted Marnold powerpacks; anything steel was rusted. Dozens of Gem and Tenshodo switch machines, all ruined by water. I won't even try to describe the condition (much less the odor) of the old Strombecker wood and cardstock locomotives.

It was like a dream, a very strange dream. A junk man's dream.

I didn't have much time, maybe an hour, and my hands grew filthy (and numb from the damp in the unheated room) as I merely skimmed the surface in going through the boxes. The nephew had one condition: it had to be sold as a unit, no picking and choosing. I knew at once that over half, maybe 75% would have to be thrown out, including some of the most potentially interesting items. I was willing to take my chances, for here were projects enough to last a junk man's lifetime. I offered \$1000 on the spot.



Which was promptly rejected. The uncle spent a fortune on these trains and the nephew wanted a good percentage of it back regardless of condition. I astonished myself by declining to change my bid and left, dejected. Had I lost my touch? Was I maybe, finally, an ex-junk man?

Nah. I purchased some of the very stuff at the next Tri-City swap meet from the guy who did buy it.

Work'n on My Railroad....

As in past issues, our members have shared their projects done during this interesting year, 2020. Enjoy the updates and please forward any new projects to the Owl Car for inclusion in future issues. Email them to owlcar@trainfest.com.

Robert Niedermann

Robert added three more individual buildings to his layout, the "Midwest Central RR."

The first is a Yard Office which can be used for industry or I put it in my main yard.

The second is a Bungalow which are all over Milwaukee.

The third is the Postville General Store which existed when and where I grew up. I modified a kit.



(Continued on Page 8)

Work'n on My Railroad....

Greg Haacke

Being retired at home during the Covid virus, model railroading in all forms has kept my sanity intact. My layout the Chicago, Milwaukee & Northern Railroad has reached its developmental peak in undertaking with only small detailing items remaining to complete. With all the rail laid, signaling in place and operating, scenery 95% completed, structures finished and most track ballasted the only remaining project on the horizon is to naturally expand the layout.

A small freight yard and a collection of industries is



An old and tired Proto 2000 SOO GP38-2 locomotive that's ready for the junk-yard.

planned for an area on the other side of the furnace wall and will not be in the sight of the current layout. This modified "through the wall" concept has trains leaving the existing layout through a tunnel or even maybe through a building ala George Sellios and end up at the freight yard. With the trains leaving the sight of the operator, it will provide the sense that the trains are in fact traveling somewhere off the layout.

The planned layout expansion, by many standards isn't large for a HO layout. The design is leaning towards the finished Milwaukee Beer Line as modeled by the staff of Model Railroader, but be only less half the size of the original Beer Line layout or follow the design of even the Beer Line Extension is possible. The track plan must have an interesting track arrangement to permit the shuffling cars between industries and include some car storage, remembering larger isn't always better in layout



A rust bucket of a BB SOO caboose on a siding off the mainline of CM&N Railroad



The New River Mine that towers on the layout at eye level.

design. I like switching and recreating a version of the Beer Line that will provide the setting for the action.

I read about the Beer Line in *Model Railroader* and then actually had the opportunity to view the layout in person at the Kalmbach offices. In person the layout is indeed impressive. The fun that David and Jenny had switching cars in a MRVideo Plus segment about the Beer Line helped seal the deal.

A smaller layout, close to being a shelf design will permit easy uncoupling by hand without the need to locate Kadee magnetic uncouplers. Now being a fan of hand uncoupling since it helps bring the modeler into the railroading action.

Speaking of industries, the majority of the structures on the original CM&N are detailed, painted and weathered Walther's background buildings with a small group of other manufactures represented. While these buildings add to the overall industrial feel to the layout, there's nothing like a wooden and scratch-built structure for real life realism. Besides, the construction of these structures will take some modeling effort and time to complete.

Now, with the help of the Boss of the Household, moving items stored in the footprint of the expansion is the last remaining hold up before beginning the open grid benchwork for the expansion. Let the fun begin!



Major Reconstruction at Duplainville

— Steve Miazga

Since our September issue, we have given our members updates on construction activity in and around the Duplainville crossing of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National in Pewaukee. Early November brought about the closure on a major project that had started in the Summer of 2019. Last August, the CP removed the westbound to northbound switch on their mainline that connected to the interchange track to the CN that had been in place since 1987 at this major crossing. In June of this year, crews from CP removed the balance of the interchange track up to Green Road on the north and the former roadbed was excavated and used to enlarge the maintenance area in the northeast quadrant of the railroad junction.



Above, the diamond components have arrived and are ready for final site assembly. Note the heavy plating on the new steel design.



The first of two major track panel shipments is off-loaded from a flatbed semi. This was one of the two large panels that were prefabricated for the diamond replacement. Delivery was early September.



A view of the expanded landscape at the junction. Track panel construction is underway with CN crews in the foreground. This photo was taken in late October 2020.

The overall scope of the construction began to become apparent when new prefabricated “crossing diamonds” began to arrive via flatbed semis in September. The maintenance area began to show the signs of a staging area for a much larger project. Track panels were being assembled by CP and CN. Ballast stock piles began to grow. Construction equipment would come and go. Questions to local crews pointed to an early November conclusion to the project. The core project was the replacement of the twin diamond at the junction and the removal of the remaining interchange track infrastructure, much of which was below ground and controlled the signals and train communication. The evening of November 10 was the planned diamond replacement date, with train traffic to be at a standstill for 12 hours beginning at 7:00 pm. But the heavy activity would start ten days before that and continue at least two weeks after the big action night. The week prior brought on the removal of the now no longer used southbound (CN) to eastbound (CP) switch and the interchange track that remained north of Green Road. That would shut down the CN main for about 4 hours. After the diamond replacement there would be additional welding and surfacing along the new track. And finally, the crossing gates on Green Road would be moved and the railroad crossing would be reconstructed with the balance of the interchange track removed.

Enjoy the pictures that were taken during this construction. As a retired civil engineer, I enjoy and appreciate the efforts that are involved in bringing a project to a good conclusion. My observations of the teams on-site during this project are nothing but positive. I plan on preparing a clinic on the overall activity that took place some time in the future, so consider this a sneak peak for now.

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Duplainville *(continued)*



November 5th: Top left, CN crews cutting the abandoned switch and interchange track into lift able sections. Top right, an end loader and backhoe make easy work of removing the main switch section. Below left, the old ballast is excavated for the new replacement track panel. Below right, the last section of the interchange track is lifted from the roadbed. At the very bottom, an end loader and two backhoes move the replacement track panel from the staging area to the mainline location of the former switch.



Duplainville (continued)



With the ballast in place, surfacing crews restore the track structure while CP crews move the crossing gate to its new location for one track only. On November 8, the CP Watertown local drops three ballast cars at the Brookfield siding. On the day before the replacement, crews move floodlights into position for the all night work.



CP's primary contractor for the lift of the new diamond was Cranemasters. Their fleet of 9 semi's arrived late in the morning of November 10th. Two of the cranes came disassembled, each requiring three trucks to transport them. Shown at right is the arrival of the cranes requiring assembly. The crane body was on special lowboy trailer with hydraulic controls to allow the crane to install itself. The crawlers required a trailer of their own and the counterweight as well. At left, two large Cat excavators arrive.



The nearly empty maintenance yard that had been created for the project was soon full of equipment for the overnight project.



Duplaineville *(continued)*



During the afternoon of the 10th, crews were busy staging equipment for the long night ahead. At top left, Cranemasters does a dry lift on the fabricated diamond. All four of their cranes would be used in the removal and placement of the new diamond. Above right, CN's contractor moves a new track panel to the south side of the diamond for track replacement after the new diamond was placed.



Top left shows the removal of the old diamond—yes in one piece. This was only about 90 minutes into the work effort. Top right shows the four Cranemaster units setting the new diamond in place. This was after the entire site had been excavated with a new structural stone base put in place. Then came those ballast cars from Brookfield and the surfacing crew moved in to get the track in shape for traffic. The project began at 7:00 pm on the 10th and both mainlines opened for traffic around 8:00 am on the morning of the 11th.

