

FLIMZIE

***The Newsletter of the Rock River Valley Division
Midwest Region, National Model Railroad Association***



June 2023 Volume 56, Number 10

The Rock River Valley Division, RRVD, is a local division of the Midwest Region of the National Model Railroad Association, NMRA. The RRVD serves NMRA members in areas of Green and Rock Counties of Wisconsin, and Boone, Jo Davies, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, Carol, DeKalb and Winnebago counties in Illinois. The RRVD holds monthly meets typically the first Sunday afternoon of each month, September through May, in Rockford at the at **YMCA** formally **The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 1829 North Rockton Avenue, Rockford, IL**. They consist of various clinics on model railroading, model contests, drawings for door prizes for NMRA members. All are welcome. The meets start at 1:00 PM, and the doors open at 12:30 PM.

2023 BoD & Chairman Directory

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Office Vacancies

Division Publicity Chairman. This person would be responsible for contacting organizations (newspapers, local ad flyers, TV stations public announcements, magazines, etc.) that would publicize our meets, train shows, and other activities. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, contact Marty Hendrickx, 815-978-7326, superintendent@rrvd-nmar.org.

Flimzie Deadlines

The Flimzie is published once per month on the first of the month. It will be placed on the RRVD website for anyone that wants to read it.

The content for the Flimzie comes from you, our readers. Please submit your articles, pictures and editorial comments to the Editor, Ken Peterson, poplarken53@gmail.com, no later than 10 days before the 1st of the month, i.e., Jan 21, 2022, for a Feb 1st 2023 publication.

From the Editor

By Ken Peterson

Friends of the Flimzie, I need to point out that this publication is for you and by you. All the articles that appear here are written by members of the RRVD. If you don't submit articles for publishing, there is no content. When I took over as the editor, I wanted to change the Flimzie from a quarterly publication to a monthly one. Without articles from you, I may have to switch the Flimzie back to quarterly, or even occasionally, based on when I get content. This will be completely up to you.

What Are Friends For? Chapter 16

Gary D. Loiselle

In chapter 15, I identified five local industries that I have been able to 'rail fan' "open loads". These five included MGF Industries, Gunite Foundry, Liebovich Steel and Aluminum, Behr Iron & Metal, and Artzen Steel. As I mentioned, Artzen Steel IS moving. Unfortunately, of the remaining four, only two may still have some type of rail traffic.

I do know for sure that MGF Industries is long gone. It does, however, fit my "What Are Friends For?" format because a friend of mine used to work there. There were three plants that I was able to visit because our friend Charlie Wickhorst worked there: Dorsey Trailer in Edgerton, WI., Swenson Spreader in Lindenwood, IL., and MGF Technology in Rockford, IL. Dorsey *made* semi-trailers, Swenson makes those big orange highway salt spreaders, and MGF sized large rolls of wire for the manufacturing of fasteners. **(Photo 1A & B)** (Photos were taken at Charter Steel, Saukville, WI. during NMRA 2010 convention in Milwaukee, WI.) The majority of "wire" loads that I was able to photograph at MGF came in on what I would characterize as a dedicated car. **(Photo 2)** I tried to emulate the car by modifying an Athearn 50' flat car. **(Photo 3)** We can go into that project at a later time. I did give Charlie one of the cars I modified that was lettered for my private road name. Charlie loaded it. **(Photo 4)** I have been able to catch similar loads in gondolas going through Rochelle. **(Photo 5)** The direction of the load on the car will determine how the car is unloaded when it gets to its destination. When the flatcars would come to MGF, the chain would be loosened and a forklift with a carpet-style boom could come in from the side and lift the coils off. Loads going the length of the car required a bit more work.

At this point, MGF is gone, Artzen Steel is still going. Gunite Foundry and Behr Scrap Metal are still there.....BUT.... both companies have been sold and changed names. The transfer of scrap from Behr on Seminary St. to the

foundry on Peoples Ave is also no more. I took a field trip in March to Peoples Ave and was fortunate to talk to an employee out in the parking lot who confirmed that there was no more rail traffic. Everything is brought in by truck.

Back in the day, Behr had some dedicated gondolas that would transfer scrap from Seminary St. over to the foundry. **(Photo 6,7,8)** When the Rock River Valley Division hosted the 1990 Midwest Region Spring Convention a set of decals was produced to letter a C.M.& G Furniture Car and a Jos. Behr & Sons Scrap Yard Gondola. **(Photo 9)** I wouldn't be surprised if there are some laying around yet in a few scrap boxes. (Including mine....found 'em)

A neighbor of mine worked at Behr *until* the new company took over. He had told me earlier that Behr had purchased a number of high-side gondolas. With a little photo recon, I was able to find "used" cars with the letters BIMX. (Behr Iron & Metal) **(Photo 10)** Remember what the "X" denotes, company owned car.

I haven't been rail fanning around Seminary St. in a while so I can't tell you if the cars have been re-lettered or not. If there is a cost involved, my guess is... N. O. T. Also, on a frugal note, I don't know the fate of the low side gondolas, but at least one or two are still useful without going out of the yard. **(Photo 11 and 6)**

I am not sure how "camera friendly" a lot of places are anymore. I have noticed a few more NO TRESPASSING signs than I used to. I intend to share some of my collection of open load stuff at a later date. After all, what are friends for?

Oh, I also haven't talked about Liebovich Steel and Aluminum yet. WAFF, Gary



Photo 1A



Photo 2



Photo 2B



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 6



Photo 5



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 10



Photo 9



Photo 10

