

FLIMZIE

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



August 2023 Volume 56, Number 12

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 Superintendent

By Marty Hendrickx

Hello to all! I hope your summer has been up to everyone's expectations. Susie and I have enjoyed a visit with our daughter who works overseas and getting together with our two sons. It was great to get together with our family and spend some quality time that is not on a Zoom meet. I hope all of you have had time to connect with your family and friends.

Your Rock Valley Division Board of Directors has been busy working on this upcoming year's meets. We recently have been advised by the YMCA that they will be doing a Major renovation of the Church of the Good Shepherd and the facility will not be available until at least the beginning of January. With that in mind we are actively looking at a number of other venues to hold our meets for the upcoming 2023/2024 year. The thinking is we will decide on a new venue for the entire year as we are uncertain when the YMCA will be available and, in the interest of continuity, we want to use the same venue for the entire year. We are planning on a holding meeting on Wednesday, the 2nd of August to decide on our new meet site. We will post this information on our web site as soon as the details are firmed up. It may take a few days to a week to get the agreements in place.

Also we are always looking for ideas and/or clinic presenters for our meets. We sincerely welcome your inputs and participation. This is your NMRA group and it is only as good as what everyone is willing to put into it.

You may have noticed that our Rock River Valley Train Show has been scheduled for the weekend of March 16th & 17th. This is two weeks earlier than our normal scheduled weekend but the last weekend in March is Easter so we had to move the date. We would have liked to have kept that weekend but being a holiday weekend we would have not had the participation with both our vendors and attendees. We plan to move the show to the last weekend in March for the 2025 show.

Last but certainly not least, the annual Rock River Valley Division potluck picnic is Wednesday, the 16th of August. Please, please come! This is an opportunity to get together with your fellow NMRA members. Bring your spouse or significant other so they can get to know who you go hang out with once a month with. The division will supply brats and burgers, condiments and beverages. Bring an entrée and a desert to pass. Adult beverages are BYOB. The time is from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Pow Wow Club in Tullocks Woods. There is a map on the web site. We do ask that you email Ken Mosny at registrar@rrvd-nmra.com so we can have enough food for all that attend. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on Wednesday, the 16th.

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.

The New Peterson Layout

By Myron Peterson

Two years after I retired (2 years earlier than planned), I find I am in position to finally build my HO model railroad.

Living in Maryland for the past 30-some years I was introduced to the Chesapeake Beach Railroad, a short line from the DC area to a resort town on the Chesapeake Bay. One of the many men behind building this railroad wanted it to be called the Denver Beach Railroad (wretched few beaches in Denver) after his hometown (Denver). The locals were having none of that and it remained the Chesapeake Beach Railroad. But modelers live in their own fantasy worlds, and I had decided that the Denver Beach would live.

I did build a small layout in a spare bedroom, lasting a few years until the room was needed more for its original purpose. Track, benchwork and the like were torn down, while buildings, rolling stock and locomotives went into storage. Over the intervening years I still picked up the occasional item for a future layout. A six-month stint at a hobby shop immediately after retirement from the Navy helped with that.

Once the decision to retire was made, the house hunt began. We were fortunate enough to be able to stay with our younger daughter in Cherry Valley while we went through the agony of prepping the house in Maryland for sale and selecting a new one in Wisconsin (or as we say, "behind the cheddar curtain.")

Requirements for the new house were a minimum of three bedrooms (one as a craft room for Mrs. P); attached garage (winter is a thing) and a full basement (tornadoes are a thing). After looking at existing homes and not seeing anything we liked I got Mrs. P to look at a new construction. Everything we required with the added bonuses of a gas fireplace and laundry on the first floor.

The basement was stubbed in for a bathroom, so that a bedroom (read, TV lounge) and kitchenette were the first major improvements. Once those were completed the work on the railroad could begin.

OK.

Radical(?) change of plans – no longer the Denver Beach, but the more local themed railroads around Mineral Point. The Milwaukee Road from Monroe to Mineral Point and the Mineral Point and Northern from Mineral Point to Highland

Laying track? – Not so fast. First there was the issue of moving all the overflow craft supplies to better storage areas as well as the normal (for us at least) household storage of holiday /seasonal decorations. Once that was (mostly) accomplished more major work of adding studs to two walls as basic support for the layout. **See photos 1 & 2.**

An infusion of free lumber allowed the construction of angle braces which were then attached to these studs to support the lower level. **See Photo 3.**

This is where we leave it until the next installment.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

The Portage and Westfield RR By Ken Peterson

In months past I described the design and construction of the N-scale portable **Portage and Westfield RR**. I have built it to take to train shows. My wife and others have insisted it have a loop incorporated in it so the show goers can watch a train go around, around, around, and around in circles. **See Photo 1** I find it extremely boring, but the majority of those attending our show expect to see trains go around in circles. For me to have any interest in the layout it had to have many switching possibilities. I used Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of Westfield and Portage WI to provide accurate track plans. I have included a couple of drawings of the layout in case you missed the previous articles I wrote about it. **See Photos 2 & 3.**

This month I wanted to show some pictures of the finished layout and explain the simplified car card/waybill (CC/WB) system I use for operating the system. The CC/WB's are two sided. They don't use car road names or car numbers. They are simply labeled box, reefer, flat, gondola, etc. One side is the **pickup order** and lists what car is to be picked up, where, whether it is an empty or load, and what the load is. The other side is the **car order** and lists what car gets set out, where, whether it is an empty or load, and what the load is. These are shown in **Photos 2 & 3.**

At the start of an operating session, I take the stack of cards, shuffle them and draw eight cards to make up the train. I put eight cars on the MILW INTERCHANGE, PORTAGE that match the CAR ORDER's. Add a locomotive and caboose and the train is ready to go. Each town has a CC/WB box. I randomly place four CC/WB's in the Portage box and the Westfield box. I put cars matching the CC/WB's at the locations called out on the cards. The train starts out heading northbound to Portage. In Portage, the conductor looks at the CC/WB's in the box. He pulls the cars with PICKUP ORDER's and places them on a "for now" track. He looks at the CAR ORDER's in the train and set those cars out at the proper locations. He puts their CC/WB's in the box with the PICKUP ORDER's facing out. The cars that were pulled are added to the train. The CC/WB's for those cars are added to the train's card stack with the PICKUP ORDER's facing up. Then the train heads north to Westfield. The process is repeated in Westfield. When the train is reassembled, it moves north onto the WC INTERCHANGE track. Here the locomotive and caboose swap ends of the train. Some, none, or all of the cars can be swapped out. Just make sure there are matching CC/WB's in the train card stack. Then the train heads southbound towards Westfield. A passenger train can be added and run between freight trains.

These CC/WB's are great for use at the train show. The N-scale railroad initials and numbers on the cars can be difficult to read under the gym lighting conditions. Just matching a car type on the CC/WB with a car on the layout is very easy.

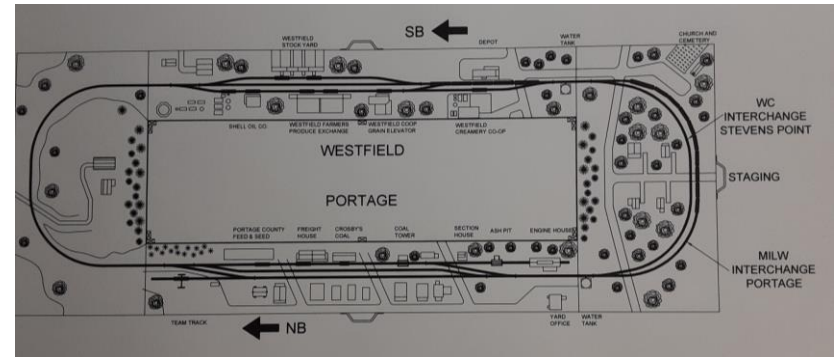


Photo 1

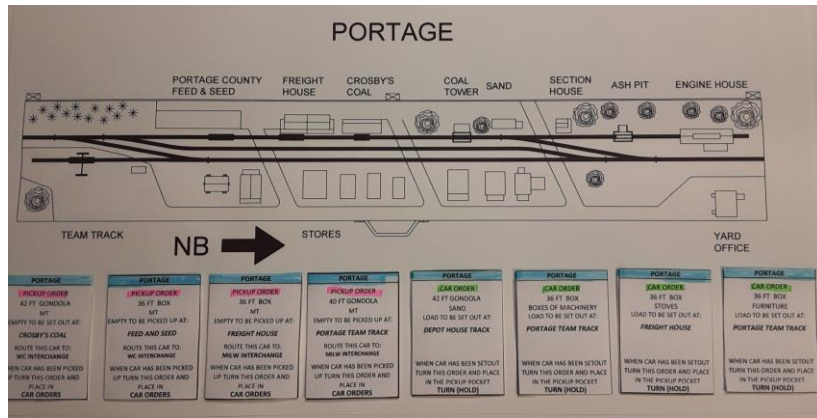


Photo 2



Portage engine house, tool shed & section house.

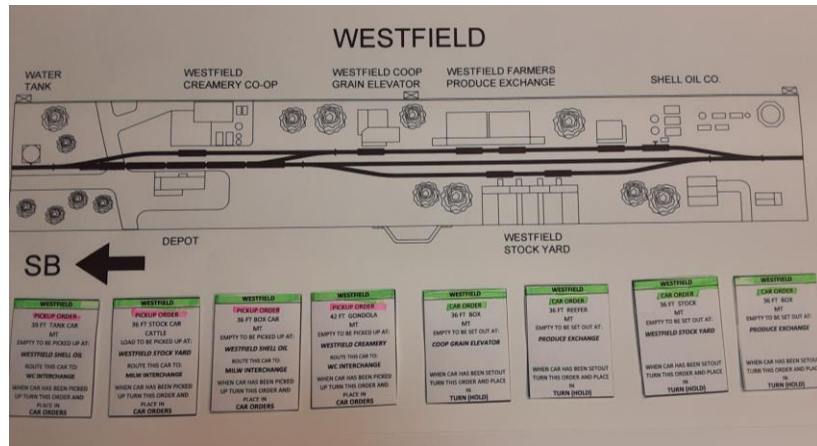


Photo 3



Country farm



House in Portage



Westfield Stock Yard



Westfield CO-OP Feed Mill



Westfield Creamery

What Are Friends For? Chapter 19

Gary D. Loisel

In a previous Chapter, I reflected on my early rail fanning in Rockford. In particular, I highlighted several industries that brought 'open loads' in. One of these was MGF Industries which was located down by the airport. And keeping with the theme of "What Are Friends For?", yes, our friend Charlie Wickhorst used to work there. (Among several other places) MGF would bring in carloads of 'wire', draw it down to size, and forward it to local industries like Rockford Products that would use it to produce fasteners. (How do you think we got to be known as the "screw capital of the world"? One of my favorite in-bound cars was what I assumed was a dedicated flatcar. **(Photo 1)** I must admit that I never loaded the car, but it does add a touch of interest to any consists. The prototype has some interesting details. You might notice that the from-the-factory stake pockets have been removed. Wider-spaced stake pockets were added with large verticals and two steel horizontal strips welded on to contain the load. The horizontal chain at the top I assume was also to hold the load. According to Charlie, the chain would drop to accommodate loading and unloading. The way the car was loaded facilitated unloading from a dock inside the factory with a forklift fitted with a carpet boom. I did a number of these cars. Some were lettered for the prototype Canadian National, or Canadien National if you prefer. **(Photo 2)** I did one for Charlie that I lettered for my private road name the Overland Short Haul & Industrial Transfer Co. Charlie did a wire load for his car and ran it at his layout on Danforth Dr. At this writing, I do not know where the car ended up or where my photo of it with his load is either.

This project was for fun, not for contest or points. The starting point was an Athearn undecorated 50' flat car. You need to remove the cast-on stake pockets. You can use a single edge razor blade or a hobby knife. If you look at the prototype, you don't need to be very fastidious. The bulkheads, stakes, and side rails are from Evergreen styrene strips and shapes. The new stake pockets are from Grandt Line, the chain and lift ring at the end of each chain are from Detail Associates. The decals are from a Champ ore car set. You will probably need to go on-line to find some of these items. The car was airbrushed with Floquil paint.

The most challenging part of this endeavor was the chain. The chain is attached to the bulkheads at each end with a lift ring and thread. The chain is threaded through a pre-drilled hole at the top of each stake. I can't tell you how much time I spent trying to get the chain through the holes. I tried using a tweezers to push it through the hole, and holding the car vertically to let gravity do its thing. If you have ever tried to push chain you know what turn

my vocabulary took. Helpful hint, I held the length of chain up and applied a dab of super glue to the first four or five links. When it was dry, I used a tweezers to grip the stiff section and tread it through the holes like the eye of a needle. Talk about slick. (What Are Friends For? Right?)

I upgraded one of these flat cars by adding horizontal strip wood pieces on the bulkheads and along the inside edges of the side rails. **(Photo 3)** At the time, I was working on NMRA AP Certificate for Master Builder-Cars. This was the last certificate I needed to achieve MMR. Fortunately, I had the eight cars required, so this car didn't need to be tweaked any further.

Follow-up Two

In an 'earlier' chapter, I mentioned that at one of our Thursday morning breakfasts get together someone mentioned that Arntzen Steel was moving from its' current location on School St. in Rockford to Sharon, WI. Road trip. My wife likes to get out of the house. What better reason to find out where Sharon, WI. is? Yes, Arntzen is building a new facility. **(photo 4,5)** From my vantage point along the highway, it doesn't seem that things are ready just yet for production. Another road trip will not be out of the question.

Arntzen does have another facility in Woodstock. **(Photo 6)** I do not know exactly what the Woodstock location does. There doesn't seem to be the same product stockpile. **Photo 7** is Woodstock, **Photos 8 and 9** are Lee St. just off of School St. if you are inclined to add an **Arntzen Steel** to your operation, Pikestuff has buildings that should fit the bill. **Photo 10** is at the Woodstock location and **Photo 11** is on School St. I will let you be the judge. **(Photo 12)**

After all, WAFF? Gary

Postscript- Right next door to **Arntzen Steel** in Woodstock is an Alter Company. We are more familiar with the name **Behr Iron and Metal**. **(Photo 13,14)**



Photo 1



Photo 3



Photo 2



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 7



Photo 6



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 12



Photo 10



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14
