



Thousand Lakes Region

National Model Railroad Association

The FUSEE



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www.thousandlakesregion.org

Summer 2013

A Monstrously Clever Convention

by Tracy McKibben

My apologies if my monstrously clever play on the words “monster” and “clever” are annoying, but I wanted to call attention to two of the convention’s star attractions - Jimmy Simmons from Monster Model Works, and Dave Miecznikowski from Clever Models. Jimmy explained to us how his three-dimensional laser-textured materials are made, and he brought along a selection of those materials and some of his kits. He also offered one-on-one assistance and tips for building them. Dave showed us some tips for modeling with printed paper, brought along some amazing examples of paper models, and offered up a huge selection of free kits and printed textures for us to take home.

These were just two of the more than 30 hours of clinics offered over the weekend. There were clinics on scenery, track-laying, DCC, 3D printing, backdrops, modeling tips, just a broad range of topics. Some of the finest modeling in the region was on display in the contest room, including the award-winning Twin Mills sawmill diorama constructed by Bill Obenauf.

It’s not easy to keep 143 people (yep, that’s right, 143 people registered this year!) contained, and a few managed to escape the hotel. Those who did wandered over to the Mall Of America for shopping, or found their way to

one of the tours being offered. Some went to see Milwaukee Road #261, newly rebuilt and sporting a fresh coat of paint. Others went to Progressive Rail to see their operation, or to the Minneapolis Institute of Art, or maybe to the James J. Hill mansion. Perhaps they just ventured out to explore the Twin Cities or opted to visit one or more of the 28 layouts available for viewing. There was so much to choose from, difficult choices had to be made. Operate on Dave Hamilton’s layout or attend the Monster Model Works clinic? Visit Les Breuer’s layout or listen to Mike Engler’s tips for building a logging diorama? See the gorgeous #261 steam locomotive, tour the James J. Hill mansion, or watch the Clever Models presentation on paper modeling? Decisions, deci-



President Gerry Miller awards Fred Headon MMR the Jock Oliphant Best-in-Show award for his Stubblefield Farm Implement structure. The award was presented

sions, and more decisions!

There’s one sure way to bring everybody back—food. On Friday night, an assortment of wines and desserts were laid out to entice everybody back to the hotel. Saturday night’s lure was an endless buffet of Minnesota favorites (and more desserts). Those who didn’t eat themselves sick were treated to an after-dinner discussion panel featuring five expert modelers, followed by the awards ceremony and the ever-popular Chinese auction. **This year’s auction was not only reasonably short and a sellout - a full roll of 2,000 tickets was sold.**

The TLR seems to have this convention thing figured out. We’ve had a string of successful events in recent years. **Let’s continue the trend next year in Sioux City!**

NMRA Goes Digital!
Is your membership information current? Does it include your current email address? If not, you’re missing out on a members-only benefit - a bi-monthly electronic newsletter featuring NMRA news and highlights. Don’t miss out! Visit <http://www.nmra.org/member/content/member-info-update>.



View from the Cab

by TLR President Gerry Miller

I hope everyone enjoyed this year's convention. The Twin Cities Division did a great job keeping everyone busy with clinics and a large number of impressive home layouts to visit. These finished layouts have me pumped up to finish mine! It was tough to choose from the prototype tours. I went to Progressive Rail where Joe Fehr shared a wealth of information. I didn't know that Progressive Rail owned that many railroads.

The TLR membership has come through again! We have sites for our next two conventions. Next year's convention will be held the *FIRST WEEKEND IN MAY* in Sioux City, Iowa, hosted by the Prairie Lakes Division. In 2015, we will be heading north of the border. Our convention will be in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Anyone up for hosting 2016? It's a great way to spotlight your community and earn points towards your volunteer certificate.

I would like to welcome Ron Olsen to the TLR Board of Directors. Ron will be our new contest director. Many thanks to the TLR's AP Director John Hotvet MMR for serving the last two years as contest director. With John guidance the TLR's pool of contest judges has grown. Our webmaster Dave Hamilton has decided to step aside after seven years of service. Thank you Dave for all your hard work and support of the TLR.

Welcome to the new webmasters, Tracy and Missy McKibben. As summer is upon us it is time once again for many of us to grab our cameras and spend more time trackside. Have a wonderful summer.



35th Annual Spud Valley Hobby Show

Sunday, October 20, 2013
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Admission: \$5.00
(under 12 free with
paid adult)

Ramada Plaza
Suites
Crystal Ballroom
1635 42nd St. S.,
Fargo, ND

- ◆ Large and small operating model railroads
- ◆ Vendors selling farm toys, plastic models, model railroad items, die cast vehicles, old toys, railroad collectibles and more
- ◆ Door prizes—no need to be present to win
- ◆ Valley RC Flyers display their planes

Call Don—701-234-9351 or email spudvalley@hotmail.com

(FRED) ERom the EDitor
by Alan Saatkamp MMR

Contributors occasionally (but not often) ask for The Fusee publication date deadlines. Here they are again in print below (they are also on the TLR website). My predecessor, Gerry Leone MMR was more faithful in publicizing them. His reminders probably spurred more submissions too—when people saw them and thought “gee, I'd better get going if I want my article to perhaps appear in the next issue.”

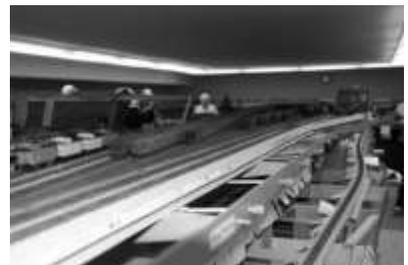
My hopper of ready-to-go articles has diminished slightly. I invite you who have ideas and pictures to contact me or submit your material using the guidelines found on page 11. If you can, submit your material earlier than the deadline. It will improve your chances of being published sooner than later, since I **don't wait to start assembling the upcoming issue** until the deadline. And the next (fall) issue will be my last, as Tracy McKibben will become editor. 

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Publishing Date</u>
February 1	March 1
June 1	July 1
August 1	September 1
November 1	December 1

Twin Rails to the Twin Cities convention highlights
 photos by Richard Dahl (unless otherwise noted)

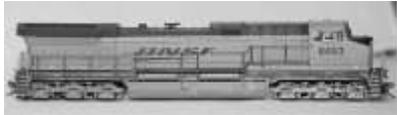


(clockwise, from above) President Gerry Miller awards Gordy Miller (no relation) the Bob Dew distinguished service award; John Hotvet MMR and Tracy McKibben received the President's award; **Gerry Miller's photo of Jeff Otto's massive full-basement layout** in Lakeville suggests much more than meets the eye; Progressive Rail Lakeville tour, one of several offered, wound up indoors—but still allowed showing off PGR SW1500 number 37 on a rainy afternoon; the Lionel O gauge layout at Bandana Square also invited visitors to experience model train layout overload; Larry Vanden-plas captured another great layout, this one by Gary Hanson of St. Louis Park during open house layout tours; **Tracy McKibben's riverbed in minutes** presentation shared the spotlight with numerous clinicians; the dinner and program drew many who shared good food and fellowship; the traditional Chinese auction highlighted evening activities. This year, board members Paul Ullrich, Tracy McKibben, and Jay Manning had fun while serving as masters of ceremony (photo by Margaret Ullrich).



Model and photo judging contest winners

(first place model winners shown by category)
photos by Richard Dahl



Fred Headon MMR earned top modeling honors and the Jock Oliphant Best-in-Show award for his model entitled Stubblefield Farm Implement (above).



Results compiled by John Hotvet MMR

MODEL CONTEST

Diesel Locomotives

1st Ron Peterson BNSF AC6000

Steam Locomotives

1st Ryan Moats, MMR B&CC 0-4-0T # 2
2nd Ryan Moats, MMR B&CC 0-4-0T # 1
3rd Ryan Moats, MMR B&CC 0-6-0T # 6

Freight Cars

1st Craig Symington RGS Box Car 8513
2nd Craig Symington RGS Box Car 8512
3rd John Hotvet MMR SHPX Tank 4297

Caboose/Van

1st Ron Peterson IC Caboose 9508
2nd Tracy McKibben DM&IR CabooseC5

Non Revenue Cars

1st Craig Symington RGS 8714
2nd Craig Symington RGS 8610
3rd Craig Symington RGS 08607

Passenger Cars

1st Tyrone Johnson GN 2nd Class Coach

Structure Off-Line

1st Art Van De Water Ruggles Roofing
2nd Art Van De Water OSOM Supply

Structure On-Line

1st Tracy McKibben Hill City Depot
2nd Tracy McKibben Handcar Shed
3rd Margaret Ullrich Grain Elevator

Display, Off-Line

1st Eduardo Romo Sonora Copper Mine

Best-in-Show

Fred Headon MMR Stubblefield Farm Implement

Jock Oliphant Award

Fred Headon MMR Stubblefield Farm Implement

PHOTO CONTEST

Model Black & White

First Tyrone Johnson GM&O at Petersburg
Second Tyrone Johnson HT&T Switching Nasby Coal
Third Tyrone Johnson IT at Horace Heights

Model Color

First Frank Gerry Bridge Over Creek

Prototype Black & White

First Dennis Mills Stone Arch Bridge
Second Gerry Miller Blowing Off Steam
Third Dennis Mills Lake Harriet Street Car

Prototype Color

First Gordy Miller IC/CN Ore Train
Second Gerry Miller Snowy BNSF
Third Paul Ullrich Weston Shops in Rain

Best In Show

Gordy Miller Sierra Railroad Roundhouse

May 17, 2013 TLR board of directors minutes

Present: Paul Gerry, Gerry Miller, Jim Krekelberg, Paul Ullrich, John Hotvet, Jay Manning, Tracy McKibben, Richard Dahl, Jay Davis, David Thornton (VP from NMRA), Fred Headon (Canadian Director NMRA), James Wetzler, Missy McKibben, Jim Bernier, Frank Gerry

Call to order at 8:00 pm

The President's message was given by Gerry Miller. The TLR is still stable financially and is total membership. Both have stayed relatively even over the last year. An emphasis on volunteering at the regional level should be made as in the coming years. Many of the current board members will leave due to upcoming five year term limits.

The Secretary report was made by Paul Gerry. John Hotvet made a motion to accept the Fall minutes as printed in the Fusee with Jay Manning seconding the motion. It passed unanimously.

The Treasurer report was made by Jim Krekelberg. The TLR has a very stable cash flow with the deposits made for the 2014 convention in Sioux City Iowa the only major expenditure. The Fusee is also self supporting with ad revenues and subscriptions. The Prairie Lakes Division returned a portion of the matching grant funds provided for AV equipment.

The Vice President report was made by Paul Ullrich. A general advisement is made to all division superintendents to update the division certificate forms on a regular basis to be fully covered under the NMRA insurance program. These must be filled out regardless of if there are any changes in division officials or not.

The Convention report was made by Jay Manning. So far the 2013 Bloomington convention is a success and has not run into any major issues yet. There are 138 members signed up for this convention.

The Public Relations report was made by Tracy McKibben. No news to report. Social media continues to be a major way to reach members and get new members, and the Facebook site is updated regularly.

The Contest Director report was made by John Hotvet. The contest room did well during the convention. The number of entries was on the low side, but the quality of those entries more than made up for it. The most AP certificates ever in a six

month period have been awarded with 13 certificates and one Golden Spike being presented. Most of the certificates came out of the DSED.

The #1 Northern Division report was made by Fred Headon on behalf of Dennis Rietze. The #1 Northern FreeMo group continues to grow in membership with the latest addition being only 12yrs old! The FreeMo modules provided great exposure for the hobby at The Winnipeg Model **Railroad Club's (WMRC) Spring Show** in April. The next division meet will be on the first Saturday in November. More details to follow. As well the #1 Northern continues to work closely with the WMRC judging models at their monthly model show contests. The #1 Northern has also put forward a grant request with more details to follow.

The Prairie Lakes Division report was **made by Jay Davis.** The **PLD's annual Spring meet** was held last April even in the face of a snow storm, which worked to their advantage as cabin fever drove up the attendance! The Fall meet is planned for October 19th in LeMars Iowa. The PLD is also excited to be hosting the 2014 TLR Convention next year in Sioux City Iowa. Planning and preparations continue.

The Southeastern Division report was made by Gerry Miller. A busy year of round robin work sessions on members layouts has allowed some to become fully operational. Op sessions are planned for this fall. The twice yearly business meetings have been cut down to just the Fall meeting in an effort to boost attendance. The division has also put together a small switching module for kids to enjoy and operate at meets and shows. So far it has been a great success with three new members already coming on board directly because of the new module and more current members being more involved than before in the division. The Southeast division has put forward a grant request to help finish the module with more details to follow.

The DSED report was given by Richard Dahl. The division is in great shape financially and for membership. The modular layout is traveling to multiple events each year and is a great hit with visitors. There is also a drive to increase the number of clinics by members for members via a grant request to help with the purchase of AV equipment. The DSED is now registered as a non-profit organization in South Dakota. This registration is separate from filing for 501c status federally.

The Historian report was made by Jim

Bernier. There have been two requests for information over the last six months. Jim reminds members that he is now retired and will be available almost 24/7 for research requests now. A small snag has occurred in that most of the historical info saved to disk is in Word Perfect format. Microsoft Word was having issues with it. The problem is being addressed with either formatting or buying a copy of WP Office and a request for funds for the latter will be issued at the next board meeting this Fall, if necessary.

The Fusee report was made by Jim Krekelberg on behalf of Alan Saatkamp. This is the final year for Alan as editor. He will official resign Sept 1st after serving as editor the past three years. The Fusee is paying for itself and has an increased readership of 10% above last year, at 281 subscribers. A discount in printing costs is also still active for the next two issues as there was an overcharge mistake by Alphagraphics. They are still making up for this overcharge in 2013 rates. Thanks for all the articles, advice, and support.

The NMRA report was made jointly by Fred Headon (Canadian Director) and **David Thornton (NMRA VP).** The **NMRA's** focus over the coming months will be on member service. This will center around communication between head office and the membership in general. Everyone will get an answer to their question in a timely fashion and by a person who is able to respond to their question correctly. This is a two way street and problems (with solutions preferably) need to be brought to **head office's attention as well.** This initiative has many components, some of which include directors attending all regional conventions (out of their own pocket), the E-Bulletin which is a supplement to the NMRA.ORG magazine, a revision of the NMRA Handbook (both Corporate and Model sides) and a definitive time frame for all projects. A new marketing director has also been found. The California Railway Museum Exhibit is also 2/3 paid for by donations. There is also a new release form for non-NMRA members to use for layout tours so that the insurance will still be in effect. All officials of a division must still be members of the NMRA for full insurance coverage.

Old Business

Update on the DSED 501c grant. The grant request has been withdrawn at this time and no money had been transferred to the DSED from the TLR at this time so everything is even financially. The request was withdrawn after it was learned that the NMRA is attempting to obtain blanket (continued on page six)

(continued from page five)

501c coverage for all regions at the National level. As mentioned before, the DSED has become a non-profit corporation in South Dakota.

New Business

Dave Hamilton is stepping down as webmaster for the TLR website. Tracy McKibben has been appointed the new temporary webmaster until a new one can be found or the Public Relations / Webmaster roles meld into one. If you have any wish to become webmaster for the TLR please contact Tracy McKibben or Gerry Miller. Their email is on the Thousand Lakes Region website.

As part of the open communications strategy of the NMRA, Fred Headon suggested listing all new members to the TLR in the Fusee. The new members name and home town only would be listed so that anyone in their area could potentially contact them for division meetings, op sessions, etc. Permission from the new member for the posting would be requested at time of sign-up. This method of welcome is already being done in other Regions. Tracy McKibben as PR director and Webmaster will be looking into the matter further.

Gerry Miller then introduced a long list of division changes within the TLR due to

the removal of zip codes and changing over to county lines as methods of boundary identification. This information was published in the spring 2013 Fusee for all members to see. Two counties were omitted in the MRVD. They have been add to the list that will be voted on at this meeting by the Board. The TLR Handbook will be updated to reflect the new changes. Please contact Gerry Miller via email if you have any questions. A motion to accept the new boundaries was made by Tracy McKibben, seconded by John Hotvet, and passed unanimously.

David Thornton reminds members to update their email address to receive the new E-Blasts from NMRA National as part of their new communications initiative. Please visit the NMRA website to update your email address. He gave an update to the 501c status for tax exemption for the region. NMRA headquarters is looking into it and expects it to be done in 1-2 yrs. This is the main reason behind the previously stated withdrawal of the DSED grant request made in order to pursue 501c status for the division.

A PowerPoint presentation for the 2014 Convention in Sioux City was then made by Jay Davis. It will take place May 2-4th 2014 due to a conflict with the CNW Historical Society on our usual weekend **and Mother's Day occurring on the weekend of the 9th.** The theme will be **"Exploring the Trails" with Lewis and Clark** historical sites being featured on the non-rail side of things. Also there will be tours of the old Milwaukee Road Shops **that's now a historical site and a reminder** that Sioux City plays host to UP, BNSF and CN trains. The Stony Creek Inn has been booked as a convention center. It is trackside for those of you who consider this a bonus. There will be a guest speaker, Rudy Daniels (a local historian and author) along with layout tours, clinics, and a swap meet lined up. Patch-Craft Hobbies is also located in Sioux City for your railroad shopping needs. A request that the swap meet profits go to the PLD was made by Paul Gerry, seconded by Tracy McKibben, and passed unanimously. Frank Gerry presented an outline and proposal for a convention to be hosted in 2015 in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. So far twp Garden, one N, one HOn3 and three HO layouts have been put forward for layout tours. A planned Bombardier Plant tour, where they make all the bi-level commuter cars, is in the works along with hopefully a paper mill tour as well. The #1 Northern has pledged support in the form of man hours volunteering since there is no current division in Thunder Bay (the Kashabowie Division became inactive a few years back). A motion for Thunder Bay to look into hosting the 2015 Conven-

tion was made by Paul Ullrich, seconded by Jay Manning, and passed unanimously. Gerry Miller then asked the Board of Directors if the TLR Grant Program should continue. Yes was the unanimous answer by the board members.

A grant request was made by the Southeastern Division. They are building a small **2' x 8' portable switching layout to bring to shows for kids to try out** as previously mentioned. The division is requesting a forgivable grant of \$250 to help defray the costs associated with the layout. **The layout would have "sponsored by the TLR"** prominently displayed, and any remaining leftover funds would be returned to the TLR. Paul Ullrich became acting President as Gerry Miller declared a conflict of interest. John Hotvet moved to approve the grant request, Jay Manning seconded, and it passed unanimously.

A grant request was made by the DSED. The request is for a \$500 forgivable grant to purchase AV equipment (projector, jump drive, etc.) for use during presentations, clinics and public demos. DSED reminded the board it currently has no grant request. Jay Manning and Jim Krekelberg declared conflicts of interest and did not vote. A motion to accept the grant was made by Paul Gerry, seconded by Tracy McKibben, and passed unanimously.

A grant request was made by the #1 Northern Division. The division has a strong FreeMo group going but lacks two end loops/staging yards that would allow for continuous running which would in turn show off the layout to the general public better. The #1 Northern points out that the FreeMo group generates a lot of exposure for the TLR and the hobby in general, the funds from the profitable 2010 Convention in Winnipeg all went back to the TLR general fund, and the division itself does not have a large bank reserve. The request is for a \$900 forgivable grant. Some modifications to the grant were discussed and agreed upon. The following changes were made: 1. The TLR will have recognition of its support on each module. 2. The #1 Northern will look into reducing the complexity of the loops to reduce the overall costs. #3. The request is outside of the \$500 upper limit for forgivable grant requests so will be restructured as a \$500 forgivable and a \$200 matching grant. Paul Ullrich declared a conflict of interest. A motion to accept the proposed modified grant was made by John Hotvet, seconded by Jay Manning, and passed unanimously. A motion for adjournment was made by Tracy McKibben, seconded by John Hotvet, and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Gerry, TLR Secretary



New GN Side Sets Planned

HO & N brass sides for GN 308-313 rebuilt 6-axle 82" Baggage-Express-Mail Storage cars, GN 1215 P5 48-seat Coach w/full skirts and GN 1105-07 ACF Mail-Baggage are planned for fall release. Reserve these and other potential side sets. Commission a new item for as little as \$350-400 for 4 HO or 7 N sets. Most discontinued sets may be obtained by special order. info@brasscarsides.com.

Our brass sides make cars for GN, NP, SP&S, CB&Q, BN, MILW, UP, PRR, NYC, SP, C&NW, IC, B&O, C&E, L&N, KCS, ATSF, MP, CN, VIA & Amtrak. Use HO sides with TSP, Rivarossi, Con-Cor, ECW, Bachmann, Kato, Walthers, our HO Basic Body Kit. N sets use the ALM core kits or plastic dome car overlays. Available through hobby shops or direct from us. See our website for bulletin, illustrated catalog, photos of models from our customers, closeout items, reservation form, tech sheets and Two-DVD "Indiana, Minnesota and Early Amtrak Railroad Memories: 1964-72". Shipping \$4.50 for side orders. Add 6.875% sales tax for MN orders. www.brasscarsides.com 507-931-2784

**Brass Car Sides, 715 S. 7th St.
St. Peter, MN 56082-1435**

Minutes of general membership meeting held on May 13, 2013

All six board members were present along with roughly 18 general members. Meeting called to order at 8:10 a.m. by President Miller. Board members, committee chairs, along with division superintendents reported on their respective areas of responsibility.

Donald Radeck added the Red River Valley Division report. The Spud Valley Show continues to be a great success. Their club will convert to DCC and is building a small N scale layout for the Christmas show at a local radio station. Their highlight this year was a BNSF open house enjoyed by the members.

Board minutes from the meeting in St. Louis Park MN were presented. Duane Durr moved to approve them as printed in The Fusee, Peter Thordig seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Jay Davis of PLD played the Sioux City 2014 convention promotional Power Point. Highlights include the convention hotel, Stoney Creek Inn, being trackside; a tour of the old Milwaukee Road shops turned into an historical park; lots of non-rail activities; and a swap meet. Convention dates are May 2-4th due to a conflict with the CNW Historical and Technical Society meet and Mothers Day. A proposal for the 2015 convention in Thunder Bay was offered. Layout tours and many easily accessible prototype operations are planned. A visit to the commuter car building Bombardier facilities is another possible tour. Members were reminded that current passports are required to re-enter the United States. Gerry Miller passed out a handout with proposed new division boundaries as presented at the BOD meeting. A motion to accept the new boundaries and to put them into the

TLR Handbook and not the TLR by-laws for ease of editing was made by Paul Ullrich and seconded by Duane Durr. The motion passed by unanimous ballot.

President Miller announced Alan Saatkamp is completing his third and final year as Fusee editor. Tracy McKibben will be the new editor following the fall 2013 issue.

The next order of business was elections. Jim Krekelberg, Paul Gerry, and Gerry Miller were up for reelection. John Hotvet did not seek to retain his seat as Contest Director. All current officers stood for reelection. None expressed interest in Contest Director. No new candidates were presented or came forward at the meeting. Richard Dahl moved to close nominations and pass a unanimous ballot in favor of those nominated, Fred Headon seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The currently elected officers maintain their present positions for two year terms.

A motion to adjourn was made by Frank Gerry, seconded by Fred Headon MMR

TrainToons by Paul Ullrich



and passed unanimously. The meeting officially adjourned at 8:46am.

Following the meeting, Ron Olson approached the board and volunteered to serve as Contest Director. The board voted him a one year term.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Paul Gerry, TLR Secretary



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The TLR board includes (from left to right): Ron Olsen (new contest chair), Gerry Miller, Jim Krekelberg, Paul Ullrich, Paul Gerry, and Jay Manning. The continuing five officers remain in their current roles.
Richard Dahl photo

www.granitecitytrainshow.com

All Aboard!

ST CLOUD, MINNESOTA

GRANITE CITY TRAIN SHOW

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2013
Buy, sell, trade or just view hundreds of trains under one roof.

10:00 am -3:00 pm - National Guard Armory - 1710 Veteran's Dr. - Saint Cloud, MN
Admission \$5.00. Kids 12 and under FREE

REGISTER TO WIN

**WIN A LIONEL TRAIN SET
-OR-
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AP update

by John Hotvet MMR

Thirteen AP certificates have been approved in the last six months as indicated below:

Jay Manning, Sioux Falls, SD – Association Volunteer, Association Official

Richard Dahl, Sioux Falls, SD – Chief Dispatcher

Eric Carlson, Crooks, SD – Association Volunteer, Model Railroad Author

David Hohle, South St Paul, MN – Association Volunteer

Eric Boone, St Michael, MN – Association Volunteer

Ron Bodin, Blaine, MN – Association Volunteer

David Feller, Sioux Falls, SD – Association Volunteer

Chad Boese, Sioux Falls, SD – Association Volunteer

Paul Gerry, Thunder Bay, ON – Association Official

Don Miller, Crooks, SD – Chief Dispatcher

Scott Nesbit, Sioux Falls, SD – Association Volunteer

Paperwork for two AP certificates is in process.

Finally, one Golden Spike was awarded, to Ed Schultz, Farmington, MN.

This was an outstanding six month period. On the average I have presented eight certificates *per year* since I was appointed Regional AP Chair. On an annualized basis, the rate for the past six months is triple our recent experiences. *(editor's note: congrats to all the first-time AP certificate recipients, who also earned the region's \$50 incentive for getting started on the path to Master Model Railroader.*

Two hobbies, multiple
times the fun
article and photos by Richard Dahl

While living in apartments and working 10, 12, and 14 hour days, I stuck to photography as my hobby. Finally a larger basement railroad easement has been awarded courtesy of Fanny Mae and my better half. With years ahead building a model railroad, photography is really taking off as well. The two enhance each other. Photo equipment comes in handy railfanning as well as a model railroad resource. The Tenth Street bridge above the BNSF yard in downtown Sioux Falls provides a good spot to photograph details on cars, engines and tracks for modeling reference. Inside/loads of gons can also be seen. It also helps get me out of the house—a good thing for someone who is a cubicle dweller much of the week.

Buying photo equipment can be expensive and compete with investing in your railroad, but it is not necessary to spend a lot to get great and useful pictures. I mainly use a DSLR body with a 18-135 mm autofocus lens with image stabilization/ vibration control. I have other lenses, but this range generally covers my needs. A good sized memory card matched to the speed capabilities of your camera, a camera bag, a tripod and (if you do indoor/ model shooting) an external flash unit are good too. You also want something to clean your lenses and preferably a UV filter for image quality and protection. I suffer from "gadgetitis," but you don't need the latest equipment to have fun.

Much can also be accomplished with simpler point and shoot cameras. Manufactures are coming out with more compact (but

somewhat less flexible perhaps) DSLR products. I recommend research before you decide on a particular camera. One "trap" that may be easy to fall into is to seek out the larger resolution (Mega Pixel) cameras. Mega Pixel's are only one measure of camera capability. My mobile phone is capable of taking ~8 Mega Pixel images, but there is a lot of noise and need for a lot of light to take an ok picture. My oldest DSLR body, about a decade old, takes 6.3 Mega Pixel images. This would be a significantly better tool (these can still be purchased used online) with **better optics. I've learned that better baseline equipment is certainly nice, but it is more important to learn how to use the equipment's capabilities**

Photo editing software is a must with digital cameras. One can get **quite advanced, but it's not necessary** for fun and making good use of photos for your hobby. Many consumer grade DSLRs will also have software including elementary functions to meet your

needs (for cropping, formatting to standard (adjusting contrast, sharpness, etc.)

There are various photography related classes available locally, of tremendous value. Yes, you can get all sorts of books/guides or **"For Dummies" books. But having someone with knowledge go over material and answer questions is very useful and helpful.**

Practice using your equipment **and what you've learned. Since there's a great deal to learn about model railroading and photography, I use about any opportunity to photograph things I would like to do on my railroad. I find new techniques/ functionalities etc. and try to make the effort to understand the trade-offs for various choices as to how you take a picture. While DSLRs in many respects can be used as point and shoots, I have found it pays great dividends to learn how to adjust the various parameters (ISO speed, time value, aperture value, white balance, light metering (continued on page ten)**



TRAINS AT CHRISTMAS
MODEL RAILROAD SHOW AND SWAP MEET

W. H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Saturday November 23rd 10AM-5PM
Sunday November 24th 11AM-4PM

Operating model railroad layout displays and vendors from across the area!

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(continued from page nine)
scheme, selection of point to autofocus on, etc.) manually to get closer to my desired end results. You can be smarter than onboard electronics to figure out what you want to accomplish. Of course, much can be done to a digital image after it is taken - but it does take some time to "clean" it up using Photoshop or other commercially available software.

I am increasingly aware of my surroundings before I take pictures. I try to understand my light source better, whether it is the sun, the light fixtures, specially rigged lights or using a camera mounted/hot shoe mounted flash. Will I capture the detail I would like to see with light available? See BNSF locomotive images of two similar scenes, but with a different angle of light on the subject matter. One can make out what it is in both images, but the light makes a lot of difference on the details showing. Will there be undesirable shadows? Will any of my equipment or my position impact the image I am taking? (e.g. don't cast unwanted shadows on your scene yourself by inadvertently blocking the source of light) Will the flash bounce where it should not such as in a mirror or window? If I am outside doing railfanning, am I at the right vantage point relative to the position of the sun (time of day) and the image that I would like to capture?

Some railfanning spots are better at certain times of the day based on the position of the sun. Practice, practice, and more practice will increase your skills. But there is also great value in stopping for a moment to reflect on your surroundings and think about the basics of photography.

Digital photography offers the convenience of not having to worry about the cost of developing 35mm film. You can buy a couple of large memory cards to download to your computer as needed and start shooting without much regard to how many pictures you actually take.

While I am not counting the clicks on my camera (a DSLR body may be designed for 100,000 - 200,000 shutter operations from a mechanical wear and tear perspective), I have observed that you can take too many pictures with a digital camera. Yes, I am more liberal with my DSLR than I was with my 35 mm SLR camera 10+ years ago, but there is such a thing as too many pictures. The hassle comes when you get back to your computer, download the pictures and then have many versions of the same basic image. There can be great value in bracketing (shooting the same image at different exposures) to later determine which one is better (or experiment with high dynamic range known as HDR images). You can perhaps cover a couple of different angles but do not

hedge your bet in excess as it can be frustrating to sort through later and I think ruin the fun. I have found that as my skills improve, I am more confident in my shooting and take less shots of essentially the same scene.

Photography has also offered me other opportunities related to NMRA activities. Pictures for division newsletters, The Fusee, and photos for an article in the NMRA magazine all help me towards my goal of the Author certificate in the NMRA Achievement Program. Material for the NMRA magazine also offers a chance to recover part of the cost of photo equipment. It also provides chances to work on projects with others and make contacts outside of the division and the region.

Photography and model railroading greatly enhance one another. If you have not discovered it yet, give it a try--with DSLR equipment or a point and shoot. For me the two hobbies are quadruple the fun with lots to learn yet.



Below left: A BNSF train heads north on the main through Hills, MN. Little detail is shown on the nose of the locomotive, as it is not exposed to very much light. Below right: A BNSF locomotive sits in the yard at Sioux Falls. The nose is exposed to a lot of sunlight, and therefore reveals far more detail.



The Thousand Lakes Region of the NMRA

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Advertising should be mailed to THE FUSEE editor as camera-ready artwork or electronic files (jpeg, tiff, gif, or EPS with outlined fonts). Enclose payment in U.S. funds, international money order, or by check drawn on U.S. banks. Contact the editor if questions.

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Summer 2013
The Fusee
6305 W. Westminster Dr.
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

What's Inside?

Convention highlights/contest winners

Two hobbies, multiple times the fun

Achievement program update

Thousand Lakes Region meeting minutes

Check your expiration date! If you have questions (or a change of address) email Jim Krekelberg at: jkrekelberg@sio.midco.net

Region Roundup

Model railroad-related events in and around the TLR

Saturday July 6 to Sunday July 7 Prairie Village Railroad Days, Madison, SD. DSED club modular layout on display along with many other activities. Visit www.prairievillage.org.

Friday August 23 through Sunday August 25 51st Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree, Madison, South Dakota. Visit www.prairievillage.org.

Saturday September 28 Dakota Southeastern Division Library Clinic Day 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Oak View branch 3700 E. 3rd Street, Sioux Falls. Scenery making, N gauge layout, HO scale switching layout, and the ever-growing DSED modular layout. Free. Check website www.dakotasoutheastern.org.

Saturday October 19 Dakota Southeastern Division eighth annual open house home layout tour noon till 5:00 p.m. Plenty of model trains, including the Sioux Valley Model Engineers Society club layout at the fairgrounds, plus layouts in and around the Sioux Falls area. Railpasses for \$5 (\$10 family) available late September from Hobbytown, 1007 W. 41st Street, Sioux Falls.

Saturday October 19 Prairie Lakes Division fall meet at LeMars, Iowa., at the Plymouth County Historical Museum. Meet features popular vote contest, vendors, clinics, operating layouts and more. See details in the Fall issue of The Fusee.

Sunday October 20 35th annual Spud Valley hobby show from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Ramada Plaza Suites Crystal Ballroom, 1635 42nd St. S., Fargo. See ad on page two.

Saturday, November 16 Granite City train show from 10:00 to 3:00 in St. Cloud. See ad on page eight.

Saturday November 23 and Sunday November 24. Trains at Christmas at the W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls. See ad on page nine.