



The FUSEE



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The NMRA “100% membership” issue - or - What the heck is going on here and why?

If you're a member of a Division within the Thousand Lakes Region you've no doubt experienced some tremors and aftershocks within the past few months as Division membership has been examined and questioned by both NMRA National Headquarters and the Thousand Lakes Region Board. We thought we should explain the history of this situation to the TLR membership.

Back in November of 2007, NMRA National discovered that many Divisions throughout the country had members and officers who weren't NMRA members. To put it mildly, this came as a shock to the NMRA officers, because NMRA bylaws, Regional bylaws, and most Divisional bylaws all stated plainly that all members of any Division and Region *must* be NMRA members. The National bylaws were approved by membership vote about five years ago.



Besides being a violation of bylaws, having non-NMRA members taking part in Division activities also raised the issue of NMRA insurance coverage, so at this point, a brief explanation of that is in order.

Each year the NMRA is issued an insurance policy covering all NMRA-sponsored events, such as Division meets, layout tours and conventions. Should someone get injured at an NMRA-sponsored event and decide to begin a lawsuit, the insurance would cover the sponsoring group. So if the sponsoring group (that is, the local Division or Region) is in compliance with all NMRA regulations, NMRA insurance would pay the claim if the Region or Division was found guilty. However, if the NMRA's insurance company discovered that the Region or Division was not in compliance with NMRA bylaws or regulations, the NMRA's insurance company could rightfully refuse to pay the claim. At that point, the injured party's lawyers would most likely begin a lawsuit against those in charge of the event – the officers of the Region or Division, who would stand to lose personal money or property if the court sided with the injured party.

One more note: if the injury happened during a home layout tour, many have argued that the layout owner's homeowner's insurance could cover the claim. The flaw in that logic is this: once the homeowner's insurance company discovered that the owner was hosting a public event under the auspices of the NMRA, the homeowner's insurance company would most likely refuse to pay, and claim that the NMRA should be responsible.

The insurance issue is complicated and sticky.

The bottom line on this whole issue, though, is that in the end, the NMRA needed to be sure that all of its Regions and Divisions are in compliance with its – and their own – bylaws.

In late 2007 the Thousand Lakes Region's Board of Directors was contacted by NMRA President Mike Brestel, who requested full membership and officer rosters from each of our nine Divisions. Vice President Alan Saatkamp contacted each of the Divisions to get this information. Eight complied, and although he tried repeatedly to contact the officers of the Wild Rivers Division, they never returned email or phone calls. Thus the TLR Board declared that Division “inactive.”

After confirming that four of our remaining eight Divisions did indeed have officers who weren't

“Membership” continued on page 9

“What do I get for my money?” (or “why belong to the NMRA?”)

We all like to think we’re getting our money’s worth, especially in these times of belt tightening and soaring gas pump prices. Whether to belong to an organization that requires dues invites the same question – “what do I get for my money?”

It’s a question I overheard a couple years ago following my return to South Dakota and transferring NMRA membership from the Twin Cities Division back to the Dakota Southeastern Division located around the Sioux Falls area. The question invited a challenge – as the newly elected superintendent, what incentive and return on investment (\$6 a year) could a DSED member expect?

During the past couple years, the Division hosted two home layout tours (drawing regional attendance from four states) and sponsored seven clinics ranging from painting and weathering freight cars, scenery construction, soldering techniques, and freight car tune-up (a la “coupler party” for those familiar with the term). We also arranged tours of the DM&E operations center, Midwest Railcar Repair, and local quarry served by rail. Monthly meetings, rotated among nearly a dozen members’ homes, provided the opportunity to enjoy layouts ranging from N to O gauge. The Division participated in Trains at Christmas at the Fairgrounds, displaying the club layout to the public and held an annual potluck around the holidays, allowing spouses to join in the fellowship and a good meal.

The purpose of sharing these ideas is to show what a group of hobbyists enjoyed over the past couple years as a “return on their investment.” And for the first (but not the last) time to offer your Divisions a few ideas on how to stimulate interest and increase membership (it worked

for us!). The DSED has a decision to make this summer, like the four other TLR Divisions who haven’t yet made their choice. Most of the members aren’t paying the \$38 or \$51 (includes *Scale Rails* monthly magazine) annually to belong to the NMRA, which automatically qualifies them as TLR and DSED members. If the DSED wants to be affiliated with NMRA and TLR, our handful of NMRA members will vote for the division to become a 100% dues-paying division. If not, a number of us will no doubt stay NMRA and TLR members, but the DSED will become an unaffiliated club.

It’s up to each Division to decide whether it’s worth it to meet national regulations, which include two officers, a set of bylaws, and 100% NMRA dues paying members – by the end of the calendar year.

As the newly elected president of the TLR, I can say with confidence that the seven of us entrusted by the general membership in Duluth to lead the Region will do just that. There’s plenty of experience and dedication – check our roster of officers on page 11 and you’ll see. By our fall meeting, we’ll know from each Division their membership vote and status. And before then, each Division superintendent will have opportunity for input into the TLR’s strategic plan for 2008-2009. We intend to give the Divisions the support they request and require, and make sure their members get a good return on their investment in NMRA, TLR, and their Division.

I hope you will choose to join us for the ride, and recognize that what you get out of the NMRA depends on what you’re interested in investing – including your time, talent, and about \$3 a month – less than a gallon of gas. 

TUNNEL VISION

by Editor Gerry Leone, MMR

Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain

The topic for this quarter: “behind the scenes” stuff.

I have no idea what it was like to be on the TLR Board back in the ‘90s or before, but I do know this: 2007/2008 was a busy one for this Board.

First off there was the Duluth convention, of course. Hopefully you were there, and hopefully you had as good of a time as I did. And I had a great time. The fact that this convention was so good was no accident, of course. Not having a local host group (a local club or Division in the area who could handle the day-to-day, on-the-street stuff) meant that the TLR Board itself had to do all of the planning.

As I mentioned in this space a few issues ago, Convention Director Chris Dancy, Treasurer Dave Hamilton and I spent a long November Saturday driving up to Duluth to meet with the Depot folks to see what was and wasn’t possible. After that, a lot of long distance phone calls were made, and a lot of emails were sent just to make sure things were going to happen as expected. I don’t mind telling you, there was a lot of finger crossing that went along with all of that. In the end, everything went splendidly (although Friday’s weather could have been nicer), but it was indeed a lot of work, especially long distance.

And in the interest of full disclosure, I’ll fess up to another “behind the scenes” event. When we chatted with Ken Buehler, Executive Director of the Duluth Depot, about the Saturday train ride, he happened to mention that they usually offer four diesel cab rides for \$100 each, to people who rent a train. Dave, Chris, and myself thought it was only fair to

get first dibs on those rides, considering we were doing all the legwork. The fourth cab ride, as you know if you were there, was won in a drawing. I’d never done that before, so for me, it was a real kick.

Next, take a look at the “membership” story on page 1 if you haven’t done so already. That was yet another issue that made for some busy times for the Board. Kudos to go President Alan Saatkamp (at that time, the TLR VP) for spending untold hours talking to, writing to, and emailing all of the Division Supers in the Region along with NMRA President Mike Brestel and NMRA Counsel Bob Amsler to get the situation resolved. He deserves the entire Region’s thanks.

Finally, just so you know, the TLR Board has its own private chat group on Yahoo. It’s amazing how much discussion goes on there on a weekly basis, and how many decisions are made without having to wait for a semi-annual face-to-face meeting.

So now you know all the secrets there are to know about your TLR Board. Turns out we’re pretty boring, right? 

THANKS!
Contributors to this issue
(in order of the number of letters
in their name):

Jim Van Delden, Ron Einarson,
Paul Ullrich, Terry Davis,
Frank Gerry and Jay Davis

Next issue’s deadline:
May 10, 2008

Anyone up for hosting a convention?

By Terry Davis
TLR Convention Director

As many Thousand Lakes Region/NMRA members already may have heard, the Alexandria club has withdrawn from planning the 2009 convention there.

Thus, as we left the very fine Duluth convention planned by the TLR Board itself, a replacement host and site for next year's event has not been determined. Three or four groups are exploring their local interest in hosting the 2009 or 2010 conventions, but

none have yet committed.

With the convention just 12 months away, I welcome a commitment soon for hosting next year's gathering. The Board encourages potential groups to consider a simpler, less-costly two-day affair beginning mid-day Friday and concluding mid-day Sunday, rather than the longer, more elaborate events we've had in 2007 and 2008.

I want to have a commitment by mid-August or Labor Day. Nine months out is not soon to lock up a hotel for a May or June convention. I

can provide any interested group a copy of the convention section from the TLR Handbook that would help you plan the event. I will be available to assist you throughout the process.

Remember, these conventions don't just happen by themselves. If you have enjoyed attending these fun activities but have never helped host one, why not try it for 2009? It can be a lot of work, but it also can be fun and satisfying. Please feel free to contact me if you have interest in hosting the 2009 or future conventions. My contact information is on page 11. 

What does the NMRA actually do?

The following was available on the NMRA's website as a press release. In case you don't know, a company called "Real Rail Effects" claimed, out of the blue, that sound decoders violated a patent it held on such devices. We haven't seen an update since this press release, but watch the NMRA website for details.

February 12, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Update on DCC-sound patent challenge

The NMRA recently filed a patent examination request with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office regarding a Digital Command Control-sound patent awarded to Real Rail Effects, Inc. It was the NMRA's belief that granting the Real Rail Effects patent was inappropriate because prior art, as well as other evidence, existed that negated the Real Rail Effects patent. Moreover, the NMRA believed the patent of Real Rail Effects posed a threat to modelers and manufacturers of DCC equipment because the patent would increase the costs to modelers and unfairly burden and restrict manufacturers who provide decoders with sound.

On February 11, 2008, the United States

Patent and Trademark Office issued a ruling granting the NMRA's patent re-examination request. The examiner stated in the ruling that there was a substantial likelihood that a reasonable examiner would consider the prior art provided by the NMRA important in determining the patentability of the application of Real Rail Effects. In addition, the examiner judged that an affidavit submitted by Real Rail Effects could not overcome the date of some of the prior art provided by the NMRA. Therefore, the evidence submitted by the NMRA raised substantial questions about the patentability of Real Rail Effects' claims. These questions raised now were not considered at the time of the patent request.

The examiner determined that an article by Rutger Friberg, articles by Soundtraxx, and Stan Ames' DCC status report, as well as other evidence submitted, all raised substantial questions about the patent.

In short, the examiner at the United States Patent & Trademark Office determined the position of the NMRA was meritorious and compelled a new analysis of the patent. According to USP&TO practice, Real Rail

Effects has two months to respond to the re-examination request. After their response is submitted, the NMRA will have the opportunity to submit any further comments it may have.

While it is not yet the final word, this ruling is a victory for the modeler and the model railroad industry. The NMRA is grateful to its many knowledgeable and concerned members who have contributed their expertise to this challenge, as well as to the manufacturers, organizations, and individuals who have funded our efforts. 



The 2008-2008 TLR Board (left to right): Terry Davis (Convention Director), Jay Davis (Secretary), Dave Hamilton (Treasurer), Gerry Leone, MMR (Public Relations), Alan Saatkamp (President), Jim Bernier (Contest Director) and Chris Dancy (Vice President).

Two New N Dome Side Sets

P-S dome sides for Wabash, MP, B&O, IC, N&W, SR and CoG smoothside coach and parlor cars, to convert Con-Cor ATSF-style dome. #173-563 \$21.75 due in June.
Build dome coach sides for GN/CB&Q/SP&S Empire Builder and NP/CB&Q/SP&S North Coast Ltd. by using current Con-Cor CZ-style dome coach. #520 \$21.75 in July.

Also on our Reservation List

HO & N: MILW 1935 *Hawatha* coach sides (basis for CGW 200-201 coach); NP "Holiday Lounge" 487-93; GN/CB&Q 8-4-4 "Pass" Sleeper for 1947 Empire Builder, Western Star & Blackhawk; UP-CoNW 12-4 "Western" and Wabash "Blue" P-S Sleeper.

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No. 1 Northern Division wraps up another modeling season

**Text and photo by Ron Einarson
No. 1 Northern Div. Superintendent**

The 2007-2008 model railroading season went well in No. 1 Northern country. The first meeting of the WMRC was followed the next day with the Midwest Rail Museum's annual Railway Days. The next month was the WMRC's Great Canadian Train Show which featured several operating layouts and lots of bargains at the flea market tables. The event was well attended and lots of bargains were had by everyone.

The Gateway Western layout continues to be a magnet for local model railroaders and all who come and view are given a chance to run on it. The Gooch's Hobby Shop Open House featured the Gateway, the WinNtrak N-scale layout, the Hobby Shop owner's N-scale layout was a tremendous success. The traffic through the doors was incredible. At times you could hardly move on any of the three floors of hobby related displays. The turnout was much greater than expected and the questions from the public we non-stop. All the model railroad clubs gained new members from the weekend. There were also displays and demos from "The Plastic Modelers,"

"Model Boats, Model Rockets," and the "CPR Police" In addition there was a Thomas the Tank Engine display and a very large display of Meccano.

No. 1 Northern Division Series of clinics at the monthly meetings of the WMRC once again featured a potpourri of topics such as "Plastic to Wood" by Fred Headon, MMR; "Basic Weathering;" "Thermite Welding;" and "Modeling Basics." "Basic Weathering" was also presented to the Selkirk Model Railroad Assoc. in February.

Some of the WMRC's main presentations included: "Tucson Garden Railways;" "Larry & Ron Railfan 2007;" "Installation of Decoders in Steam Locomotives;" and "The Couch Potato's Guide to Railfanning." Table Clinics included: "Converting Trucks & Couplers;" "Making Molds;" and "Digital Railfanning." Junior Clinics included: "Beginners' Startup and Introduction to Modeling" and "Painting Figures."

The 4th Anniversary of the rebirth

of the Gateway Western Railway – the Operating Division of the WMRC (a 12'x 24' modular layout) took place on January 12th, 2008. The crowd grew as the time went on to where there were approximately 70 to 80 people passing through the layout room. We had long-standing members, new members, former members, plus guests.

That's it from the sometimes warm and sometimes sunny North. Look for a new Superintendent next year, if all goes well. 



The No. 1 Northern display at the WMRC Open House

The Mn. River Valley Division operates on the NP



Del Sheet, Leon Lentz, Dave Anderson, John Givan and Eric Thorstad keep a close eye on a meet. The layout depicts October 1955.



Working the yard is MRVD newsletter editor Brian Wordes. He and Supt. Sam Sherman kept trains ready for MRVD crews to take out on the line.

**Photos and captions
by Terry Davis**

About dozen members of the Minnesota River Valley Division took part in an operating session at Jon Bratt's Northern Pacific Yellowstone Division layout in Bird Island last March 8. The visit also included the viewing of some vintage Great Northern slides taken by Lee Thompson in the Willmar area in the 1960s. Here are some photos from that event. 



Eric Thorstad and John Givan work a local.



The town of Silesia is quiet between trains.

Wanted: one Size 9 to the posterior

By Jim Van Delden

Every time I wander down that male bastion also known as my basement it reminds me of that well known tune, "I've been working on the railroad, all the live-long day..." NOT!

There it awaits. Row upon row of rolling stock and engines. Boxes of rails, half a dozen transformers, a variety of train sets (cheap), a mish-mash of HO or perhaps N-scale buildings, and rolls of plaster are yearning for busy hands. Pliers and tiny screwdrivers and stuff I have yet to unpack are patiently waiting for that metamorphosis into a working layout. Most of it is piles on an M-shaped, homemade table top barely passing for benchwork.

Two walls border this eBay-derived, eclectic mess and about three years' worth of model railroad magazines, many in pristine condition (hint) and a handful of Kalmbach's "How to" issues line the third bulkhead. The whole shebang has survived two cross country moves and surely there will not be a third.

Someone please... light a fire underneath me or direct a well-placed size nine boot to my

gluteus maximus. I am retired and have this wonderful hobby to soak up some slack time, keep me off the streets, my mug out of police blotters, and allow the creative juices to flow.

Alas, it ain't working out. Sounds like the usual excuses: part-time gigs, garden and home projects, six

four-legged kids and my dear spouse vying for my attention during waking hours. Model railroading should be a work-in-perpetual-progress according to the experts, but this is utterly ridiculous.

Paraphrasing a famous naval commander, "I have not yet begun to fight...eh, model!"

Something or someone is to blame and I guess the Old Man claims first prize. Check the MMR list and articles. Most of these accomplished folks received their Lionel or American Flyer sets from Santa or Dad. So, if



I'd received a similar present years ago, would things be different than my current method of acquisition and just talking about that model railroad empire?

Having a mentor during the earlier years would have been a definite plus. An affiliation with a club or a division where teaching takes place would have been most welcome to jump start this hobby. However, railroad history and model railroading were fairly low on this immigrant's kid's priority list. Learning a new language, education, sports interests, plus eventual life's responsibilities impacted on free time. The military, playing and coaching soccer, night and weekend ER call plus an unscheduled Middle East trip seriously short-circuited available hobby time. But hey, many of these excuses are non-issues right now except the daily marches with the canines. It is a must for their well being and my coronaries.

I just need to take that plunge... deep breath and jump. Luckily, I can dog paddle. I cannot sing worth beans, but I can sure whistle that tune... you know... "I've been working on the..."

Tumbleweeds: 1, BNSF Coal Train: 0



From the internet

Date: Mon, 19 Nov 2007 10:15:16 - 0800

On Monday morning, if someone would have told me that tumbleweeds could stop a coal train, I would have said, "you're full of it, no way". That was until yesterday morning. Twelve miles west of Hardin, we were pulling up Rowley hill, going 15mph and the wind was blowing about 50 mph and we ran into thousands of tumbleweeds and come to a dead stop in about 5 car lengths. They blew under our drivers and we lost all our traction and were dead in the water. We had 3 engines and got 2 more engines off another train and still couldn't move. We were stuck there for 5 hours and 35 min. finally had to back down the hill and let another crew take over because we ran out of time to work. Crazy, huh?.....Stacy 🐾





**May 2 - 4, 2008
Duluth, MN**



Dave Hamilton, Cody Grivno, and Terry Davis (above) were presenters in an impromptu slide show Thursday night.



Chris Dancy, Alan Saatkamp, and Jay Davis check-in another TLR member at the registration desk.



The five Friday morning clinics began at 8 a.m. and were presented by Pat Dorin (left), Cody Grivno (center), and Doug Harding (right).



In spite of heavy rain, TLR members ventured out to get up close and personal with a 44-tonner at Cenex Harvest States Grain (left). At MidwestEnergy Resources, the group got to see the huge coal indexer and rotary dumper (right), along with the plant's control booth. TLR tour buses also visited Hallet Dock.



Contest director Jim Bernier (left) logged in some long hours in the contest room, thanks to the high number of models and photographs entered. Following the Friday night dessert reception and auction, David Schauer (right) did a slide presentation on the last days of DM&IR steam in Duluth.

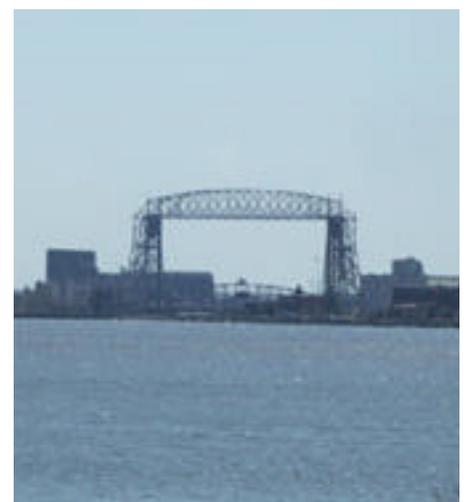




Perhaps the highlight of the convention was Saturday's chartered three-car train from Duluth to Two Harbors (left). The round trip, including the stop, took about five hours. The dinner cruise that evening featured incredible views of some of Duluth's harbor industries as seen from the Vista Queen (right).



Sunday's membership meeting drew a large crowd (above left). Outgoing President Bruce Selb presented both Chris Dancy (above center) and Dave Hamilton (above right) with this year's the President's Award. John Hotvet, MMR received the Bob Dew Sr. award for service to the Region (below left). For the second year in a row, Mike Engler (below center) received the Jock Oliphant Award for modeling craftsmanship from Contest Director Jim Bernier.



All photos by editor Gerry Leone, MMR

In spite of cold weather and torrential rains, 92 TLR members and their spouses attended this year's annual convention, the Twin Ports Express, in Duluth, MN. Early bird activities included three impromptu slide shows on Thursday evening.

On Friday morning railfans were treated to five clinics: one by local railroad expert Pat Dorin, two by *Model Railroader* associate editor Cody Grivno, and two by Doug Harding. At noon tour buses brought TLR members on interesting (and somewhat soggy) visits to Hallet Dock, Cenex Harvest States Grain, and Midwest Energy Resources Company. Non-rail events included a tour to the Glensheen Estate and the Great Lakes Aquarium, as well as downtown shopping. That evening the group was treated to a trackside dessert reception in the Duluth Depot Railroad Museum, along with a drawing for an hour-long cab ride in the following day's chartered train locomotive. David Schauer topped off the evening with a slide presentation on late steam in Duluth.

By Saturday the clouds had vanished, the sun shone brightly, and the TLR's three-car chartered train pulled away from the depot for a two-hour lakeside trip to Two Harbors. Lucky TLR member Bill McGuire of Brandon, MB, spent his first hour riding alongside the engineer and fireman up front. After sightseeing and shopping in Two Harbors, TLR members were back in Duluth by 3 p.m. That evening the Vista Queen cruised the calm harbor waters as TLR members dined on prime rib and chicken.

The convention ended Sunday after the General Meeting and Awards Ceremony. A swap meet at the Depot, along with local layout tours put the icing on what was a very memorable convention!





Model & Photo Contests



1st Place On-line Display & Jock Oliphant Craftsmanship Award

"Olson Dead End"
by Mike Engler



Diesel & Other

1st Place: Doodlebug – John Hotvet, MMR
2nd Place: VIA 6657 – Fred Headon, MMR
3rd Place: VIA 1418 – Fred Headon, MMR



Freight Car

1st Place: GN 49470 – Dennis Mills
2nd Place: UTLX 17311 – Dennis Mills



Caboose

1st Place: SOO 235 – Gerry Miller
2nd Place: SOO 99115 – Gerry Miller
3rd Place: Ferry Idler – Chris Dancy



Structure Online

1st Place: IC Alta, IA Depot – Ron Peterson
2nd Place: Wood Bridge – Dennis Mills
3rd Place: Fuel Platform – Paul Ullrich



Structure Off-line

1st Place: Flint Lock & Key – Ron Peterson



Prototype Black & White Print

1st Place: "Ready to Leave" – Dennis Mills
2nd Place: "Servicing" – Terry Davis



Prototype Color Print

1st Place: "Soo 2550 at Superior" – Terry Davis
2nd Place: "BNSF Grand Forks Yard" – Paul Ullrich
3rd Place: "DeSoto Crossover" – Tom Mauszycki, MMR



Model Color Print

1st Place: "In Farm Country" – Gerry Leone, MMR
2nd Place: "Sunrise on Bridge" – Gerry Leone, MMR
3rd Place: "Cleveland, Mankato & Eastern" – Terry Davis

Model Color Slide (not shown)

1st Place: "DSS&A on Trestle" – Fred Headon, MMR
2nd Place: "Pseudo Soo" – Fred Headon, MMR
3rd Place: "Superior Northern on Trestle" – Fred Headon, MMR

Prototype Color Slide (not shown)

1st Place: "High Bridge on Georgetown Loop" – Terry Davis
2nd Place: "WB #8 at Winona" – Terry Davis
3rd Place: "261 at Sacred Heart" – Terry Davis

"Membership" continued from page 1

NMRA members, the NMRA's legal counsel, Robert Amsler, sent a registered letter to the TLR Board, requesting that it inform all Divisions that they must comply with NMRA and TLR bylaws. Until that happened, the TLR was considered "not in compliance" and the NMRA rightfully refused to issue the insurance certificate that would cover our May convention.

This "100% membership" issue is forcing each of our Divisions to make some tough choices, the bottom line of which is, in order to retain their affiliation with the NMRA, every member within the Division must be an NMRA member. By a rough estimate done earlier this year, approximately 60% of all Division members were *not* NMRA members.

It's important to realize that many Divisions were operating under the "old" rules at that point: they would charge members an annual "Division membership fee," and those paying would consider themselves Division members, even though they may not be NMRA members. Although that practice should have ended when the new NMRA bylaws were put into effect five years ago, the NMRA never really made those bylaw changes as clear as they could have to either Regions or Divisions.

This just about brings us up to the present. At the end of April the Minnesota River Valley Division met to discuss the compliance issue, and voted unanimously to uphold the regulations and adhere to their own bylaws by enforcing the 100% NMRA membership policy. The Prairie Lakes Division and Twin Cities Division held their meetings soon afterward and both also voted to stay in compliance.

As this issue goes to press, the TLR's other five Divisions have not yet made their decisions.

At the May 2 TLR Board meeting, the Board decided that all remaining Divisions must make their intentions known to the Board by October 15, 2008, and all Divisions must be in compliance by December 31, 2008, or their Division status will be suspended.

The "100% membership" issue is complicated, to be sure. It's forcing some Division members to make some hard choices. Many members feel it's unfair to be excluding friends and neighbors from activities in which they've taken part for years. Many feel the NMRA is being too hard-nosed about the situation or trying to make itself into an exclusive club. On the other hand, many dues-paying NMRA members feel that they've been carrying the entire load far too long, and that it's time the "free ride" stops for those who haven't paid their own way.

Minutes of the Board and General Membership Meetings at the 2008 Duluth Convention

Minutes of the May 2, 2008 TLR Board of Directors Meeting Duluth, MN

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 P.M. CDT. Present were John Hotvet, Terry Davis, Gordy Miller, Gerry Leone, Jim Bernier, Alan Saatkamp, Dave Hamilton, Tom Mauszycki, Chris Dancy and Jay Davis.

Old Business

The meeting started with a motion from Alan to approve the minutes as printed in the last FUSEE. Gerry Leone offered a first and seconded by Dave Hamilton.

Treasurer's Report

Dave Hamilton told the board that he had received \$5000 from TLR Canada. As of the end of April the TLR has seven \$5000 Certificates of Deposit. Alan made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. Gerry Leone offered a 1st and Chris Dancy seconded the motion.

Contest Director Jim Bernier said this convention has a record number of contest entries. He was very happy with the number of entrees at this year's convention.

John Hotvet reported on the Achievement Program. He said that the past year was slightly below average for the Achievement Program. Two Achievement

Certificates and three Golden Spikes were awarded, one certificate was pending.

Gerry Leone submitted his report for Public Relations as well as Editor. In the PR dept, he reported he had spent most of his time promoting the Duluth convention. In December he put together a three minute promotional video and posted two versions on YouTube. The original video received 175 views and the updated video received approximately 375 views. Gerry also sent out seven press releases to the Duluth area newspaper about the convention.

THE FUSEE remains at twelve pages and is published on time each quarter. He reported that the number of subscribers dropped from 240 between the fall and winter of 2007 to 208 at present. 529 spring 2008 FUSEES were mailed

to all NMRA members within the TLR's boundaries. THE FUSEE currently carries annual ads from three advertisers: Brass Car Sides, the Granite City Train Show, and the Spud Valley Train Show. Within the past year individual ads from the Twin Cities Model Railroad Museum and the Luce Line Railroad Club have also appeared. FUSEE costs are projected to go up slightly as the postage rate changes to 42 cents on May 12. He didn't know yet how this will affect the issues which are mailed to Canada in an envelope.

Tom Mauszycki reported to the board as Historian. He had completed putting all THE FUSEES in binders for preservation. Tom put a call out for pictures of past conventions of people with names and dates. He wants to preserve a record of some of the people who have been a part of the past conventions.

Division Reports

Dakota Southeastern - Alan Saatkamp reported that membership was down slightly from last year. They still have over two dozen members. Mike Kaufman was re-elected to the chief clerk position and Alan Saatkamp was also re-elected superintendent for a two-year term.

Their recent activities since last year have included a tour of a local quarry served by rail, clinics on freight car tune-up and soldering techniques, a visit

"Minutes" continued on page 10

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“Minutes” continued from page 9

to operate on Doug Harding’s Iowa Central HO model railroad, and monthly meetings hosted by club members as well as their local Hobbytown store. The division sponsored its second annual open house layout tour of five members’ homes. It was back in October and drew 40-50 guests, which was down compared to the year before. Good weather was to blame.

SiouxRail 2008 is scheduled for the second weekend in June, a four home layout operating weekend, with two layouts in South Dakota and two in Iowa. For more information check out their website at dsed.svms.net. All are welcome!

The division will address the NMRA membership requirement following clarifications at the Duluth convention and they hope to continue their association with the region and national organization.

Minnesota River Valley- Terry Davis reported that they had a voted to enforce their By-laws and to be in compliance by September 1.

Prairie Lakes- Doug Harding reported that the spring meet was held in Sioux City, IA, at the Siouxland Historical Railroad Association’s former Milwaukee Road shops. It was well attended and three great clinics were given by Dr. Rudy Daniels on Sioux City railroads, Matt from the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center on the Sioux City Stockyards, and PLD youth member Jessie Wells on car weathering. At the business meeting elections were held and a motion was adopted to amend the PLD By-laws to require officers to be NMRA members. This brings the PLD within NMRA regulations. A fall meet is planned for Ihlen, MN on October 4, 2008

Twin Cities- Eric Boone reported that they were looking at moving their meeting to the Jackson Street Roundhouse to cut costs on rental and parking. He also reported that they have about 58 subscribers and 38 NMRA members.

New Business

Alan reported to the board that Dave Brosh and the Alexandria Club had decided not to host next year’s convention. A long discussion was held on possible convention sites but no site was decided on. It was agreed on by the board to have a site selected in the next 30-60 days.

The Alexandria Club expressed some interest in forming a new division. It was unclear to the board what steps needed to be taken for this to happen so National was contacted. This information was conveyed to the Alexandria through email but it was decided an official packet would be sent to them. The board is totally receptive to any such request by any parties interested in forming a new division.

A few months ago Jim Wetzler resigned as Membership Chairperson. A discussion was held about the position and a replacement. Dave Hamilton volunteered to fill the position. A motion was made by Gerry to accept Dave as the new Membership Chair and Jim Bernier seconded it. Motion carried.

A discussion was held on the NMRA rebates the region receives every 6 months. TLR rebates cover

the spring mailing of THE FUSEE to all NMRA members in the region. Gerry took an independent survey of different regions in the USA and found that most do not give anything back to the divisions. The few that did gave a very small percent back.

The board next tackled the compliance issues of the divisions. Some divisions had already replied and acted on the TLR’s requests. Some hadn’t responded so October 15, 2008 was set for these divisions to decide if they want to be a 100% NMRA division or become a train club and drop NMRA affiliation. It was also expressed that guests can attend meetings but need to join the NMRA in a timely matter and not be a guest indefinitely. Then the divisions who want to remain divisions need to be in full compliance by December 31, 2008. It was decided that the TLR vice president would draft a letter and send it to all divisions. A vote was taken and carried.

Dave Hamilton expressed his problems with the current wording of the By-laws on subscriptions. The current By-laws state that a subscription year shall be from June 1 to May 31 of the following year, except that new subscribers applying for a subscription on or after January 1 shall be given a subscription service to May 31 of the following year. Dave proposed a By-law change that a one year subscription be from May 1 to May 1 of the next year. The formal proposal is to be published in THE FUSEE.

The board took a look at the issue of division boundaries as set by the zip code list National uses to assign new members to divisions. The topic came to light with the Alexandria club’s division idea and the Prairie Lakes Division’s fall meet in Ihlen, MN. It was thought that the town of Ihlen wasn’t in the PLD territory.

Terry Davis provided maps of the region with division towns highlighted in different colors. It was decided that, in fact, Ihlen was within PLD boundaries. After looking at the maps it was decided that in the future we should try to straighten out these division boundaries. A motion to table the matter until after the October 15 division NMRA membership deadline had passed was made by Doug Harding and a second was offered by Dave Hamilton. Motion passed.

It was brought to the board’s attention by National that the TLR’s By-laws needed to be compared to NMRA By-laws by a licensed lawyer. It was decided a lawyer would be sought to do this.

Dave Hamilton made a motion to adjourn and Gerry Leone seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:03am CDT.

Minutes of the May 4, 2008 General Membership Meeting, Duluth, MN

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. CDT.

New Business

Bruce told everyone that we didn’t have a site for next year’s convention after the Alexandria Club decided not to host it. He said that several possible sites were being considered.

Alan Saatkamp spoke about the Alexandria club’s interest in forming a new division. He said no formal request had been submitted and how the board was open to such a request.

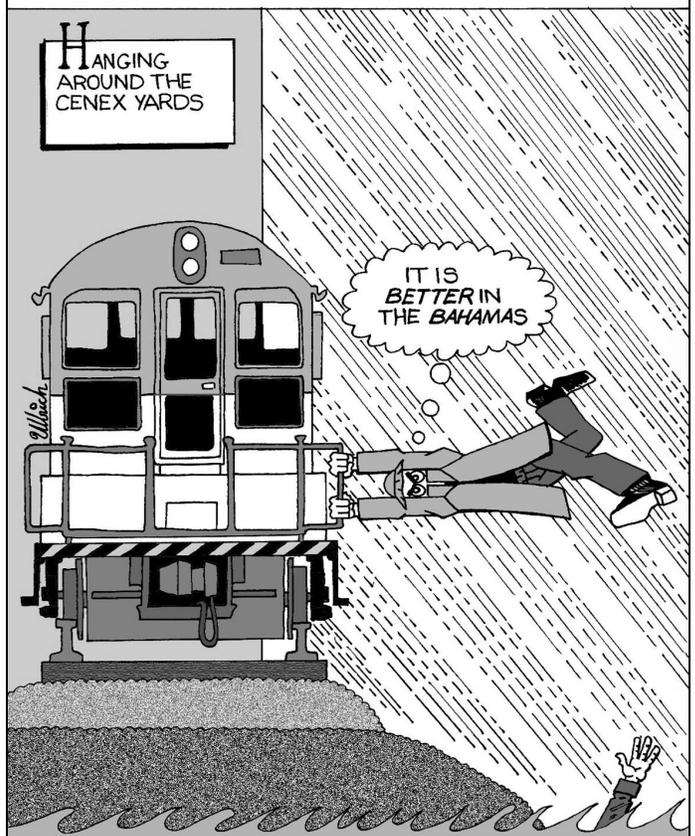
Elections were held to fill four board vacancies. Nominations were called from the floor by Bruce. Terry Davis, Chris Dancy, Jim Bernier and Jay Davis were nominated. Charles Durrenberger moved to close nominations. This was seconded by Tom Mauszycki. The motion carried. (Jim, Chris, and Jay were elected to two year terms and Terry got a one year term.)

Alan explained what was going on with the division compliance issue. He explained that back in April National had requested rosters from all TLR divisions. It was found that almost all divisions were not in compliance with NMRA regulations. This led the national to not issue the TLR’s insurance certificate for the Duluth convention until we addressed these issues. The board acted and we were granted our insurance. Alan went on to explain how a deadline had been set for compliance and an official letter would be sent to each division. After much discussion it was decided to add with the compliance letter, a list of ways to promote and benefits of NMRA membership and also a copy of generic NMRA By-laws so divisions without them could draft their own.

Tom Mauszycki moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 a.m. Paul Ullrich seconded. Motion passed. 

TrainToons

by Paul Ullrich



The Thousand Lakes Region of the NMRA

Board of Directors

President

Alan Saatkamp
902 Chestnut St.
Harrisburg, SD 57032
605-767-9743
saatkamp@iw.net

Vice President

Chris Dancy
335 So. Vine-NApt.
West Union, IA 52175
563-422-6192
cjdancy@msn.com

Secretary

Jay Davis
P.O. Box 264
Everly, Iowa 51338
712-834-2073
jdandice22c@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Dave Hamilton
18015 33rd Pl N.
Plymouth, MN 55447
612-281-8643
mzz64@yahoo.com

Convention Director

Terry Davis
1380 Jefferson St. S.E.
Hutchinson, MN 55350
320-587-7820
ptdavis@hutchtel.net

Public Relations

Gerry Leone, MMR
6459 Smithtown Road
Excelsior, MN 55331
952-474-8364
gerryleone@earthlink.net

Contest Director

Jim Bernier
5631 Silas Dent Rd NW
Rochester, MN 55901
507-261-4991
jrbarnier@hotmail.com

Department Chairpersons

Membership & Handbook

Dave Hamilton
18015 33rd Pl N.
Plymouth, MN 55447
612-281-8643
mzz64@yahoo.com

Achievement Program

John Hotvet, MMR
5100 Nicollet Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55419
612-822-5788
johntrain@aol.com

Historian

Thomas Mauszycki, DDS, MMR
1671 Valley View Drive
Winona, MN 55987
507-454-3800
tmauszycki@charter.net

Webmaster

Dave Hamilton
18015 33rd Pl N.
Plymouth, MN 55447
612-281-8643
mzz64@yahoo.com

FUSEE Editor

Gerry Leone, MMR
6459 Smithtown Road
Excelsior, MN 55331
952-474-8364
gerryleone@earthlink.net

Division Supers

Dakota Southeastern Div.

Alan Saatkamp
903 Chestnut St.
Harrisburg, SD 57032
605-767-9743
saatkamp@iw.net

Kashabowie Division

Frank Gerry
frank.gerry@sunlife.com

Minnesota River Valley Div.

Sam Sherman
63583 Co. Rd. 5
Franklin, MN 55333
507-557-2355
sherman4863@yahoo.com

North Dakota Div.

Charles Durrenberger
319 5th Street North
Grand Forks, ND 58203
701-746-7652
mwkrr1@msn.com

No. 1 Northern Div.

Ron Einarson
1364 Dudley Crescent
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3M 1P3
204-475-6267
ron.einarson@pwgsc.gc.ca

Prairie Lakes Div.

Doug Harding
1019 6th St. N.E.
Sibley, IA 51249
712-754-3303
Doug.Harding@iowacentralrr.org

South Red River Valley Div.

Jim Moore
453 Oakland Ave. South
Fargo, ND 58103
701-293-7834
jimraemoore@msn.com

Twin Cities Division

Ron Bodin
763-755-8408
ronbodin@gmail.com

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Changes of address should be sent to the Treasurer.

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Ad size (HxW)	Annual Comm. rate	One time Comm. rate	Annual Pike ad rate
Full pg 9 1/8" x 7 1/8"	\$145.00	\$50.75	\$90.00
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1/4 pg 4 1/4" x 3 1/2"	45.00	15.75	25.00
1/6 pg 4 1/4" x 2 1/4"	35.00	12.25	18.50
1/8 pg 2 3/8" x 2 1/4"	25.00	8.75	15.00
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1/16 pg 1 1/8" x 3 1/2"	15.00	5.25	7.50

All advertising should be mailed to THE FUSEE editor as camera-ready artwork or electronic files (jpeg, tiff, gif, or EPS with outlined fonts). Payment must be enclosed and should be in U.S. funds, international money order, or by check drawn on U.S. Banks. Questions? Contact the Editor!

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Summer 2008

THE FUSEE

18015 33rd Place N.
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INSIDE:

**A look back at the
Duluth convention**

Size 9 to the Posterior

**Tumbleweeds: 1
BNSF Coal Train: 0**

Train shows & events in and near the Region

Compiled by Gerry Leone, Jim Bernier, and Terry Davis

July 13-19 2008 The Anaheim Special -- The NMRA's National Convention in Anaheim, CA. For more info, visit www.nmra.org/2008

Saturday, 9/13/08, C&NWHS Minnesota Division Meet, End-O-Line Railroad Park, Currie, MN. Tour the park and one in Tracy. To get on the mailing list, contact Terry Davis, 320-587-7820 or ptdavis@hutchtel.net

Saturday, 10/4/08, Prairie Lakes Division's Fall Meet, Ihlen Community Center, Ihlen, MN. Clinics, BNSF presentation, swap tables, displays, layouts, and contests. Ihlen is about 8 miles south of Pipestone and 22 miles north of Luverne on MN Hwy 23. For more information contact Ken Berghorst 507-442-7571 or Denny Davids 712-754-3996.

Saturday, 10/14/08, 14th Hutchinson Model Railroad Show, 9 AM - 4 PM, McLeod Co. Fairgrounds, 7780 Century Ave. SW, Hutchinson, MN. Admission: \$3, kids under 12 free. Hosted by the Luce Line Railroad Club, Inc. 50+ tables of trains for sale, a dozen operating railroads, how-to clinics, contests, prizes. For more information contact Terry Davis at ptdavis@hutchtel.net

Saturday - Sunday, 11/22-23/08, 7th Annual Trains at Christmas, 10 AM - 5 PM (Sat), 11-4 (Sun), Expo Building at WH Lyons Fairgrounds,

Lyons Blvd., Sioux Falls, SD 57101. Admission: \$3, kids under 12 free with adult. Model railroad show and swap meet. Buy, sell, and trade. Fun for the whole family. For more info, contact Sioux Valley Engineers Society, PO Box 1963, Sioux Falls, SD 57101 or www.svmes.net

Saturday, 12/13/08, Granite City Train Show, National Guard Armory, 1710 Veteran's Drive, St. Cloud, MN. Admission: \$3, kids under 12 free. Swap meet, operating layouts, kids' play area, door prizes. For more information call 320-255-0033 or email edwardolson@cloudnet.com. www.granitecitytrainshow.com.

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If you're in the Thousand Lakes Region and would like your train show, swap meet, Division meeting, club meeting or other railroad/model railroad-related event listed in our calendar, please send it to Jim Bernier at jrbernier@hotmail.com by the deadline listed inside.