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From Your Superintendent...

— Mike Slater

Hello,

With all the news swirling around with COVID-19 I want to come out and take a stance of how I feel the Wisconsin Southeastern Division should proceed with upcoming events such as the Board Meetings, the spring Operating Weekend, and the April Meet. It should be stated that the first priority of the WISE Division should be to not subject our membership or their families to any situations that could pose a threat to their health and safety.

Based on the mandates by the Federal and State governments, your Board has decided to cancel all events through May of this year. In particular this impacts the April 19th Meet, the Annual Bus Trip to the Great Midwest Train Show and the WiseOPS operating weekend in Mid-April. Our annual meeting which is always part of our April Meet agenda will be rescheduled for this Fall, more than likely at the October Meet.

But the show must go on. Your Board will still be meeting but not face-to-face. We have recently tested several online conference call programs and will be using "GoToMeeting" for future meetings. In the past we have had our Board meetings open to the public. With the conference call option we are restricted to no more than 25 folks signed in. If you are not on the Board and want to listen in, please email me with your request. Our next meeting will be April 15th at 7:00 pm.

If you have any questions regarding these issues please feel free to email me at mslater@wi.rr.com.

Now I would like to touch on some other things within our Division....

First we will be starting to look for Volunteers with Trainfest; While Trainfest is still eight months away we still need to plan for this event until we have a better understanding what is going on with COVID-19 closer to that event. Also Trainfest's website has been transferred to a new server and updates are currently being made to the site. Also we have the hotels and online tickets in place for Trainfest. And the best news of all is that I have been told we are running out of show floor space. I want to thank everyone within the Trainfest Committee for everything they have been doing.

Planning is also underway for our second annual RPM in September. Please see the flyer in this issue of the Owl Car for more information. If you want to participate with a clinic let me know as well.

Finally this will be the last issue of the Owl Car that will be formatted in a manner to be printed and mailed. Future issues will be digital and emailed only. If you are receiving the Owl Car in your daily mail and want to continue to receive the digital version, please give your email address to Steve Miazga. You can also find the electronic version on our WISE website. The April 2020 issue will be the last issue that will be mailed to the membership except for future election issues. Also we will be looking for volunteers to help to produce issues of the Owl Car. Steve will be developing the new format during the remainder of his term on the Board and will be happy to coordinate the transition to a new editor. Please reach out to him if you are interested.

Thank you for your patience through these uncertain times.

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Video Library Update

— Burnell Breaker, Video Librarian

Since we are not having a physical meeting in April, please hang onto any DVD's you have checked out from the Video Library until our September 2020 meet and return them at that time. I will be in contact with you before the September meet to remind you of this. Have a safe summer.

We have transferred the balance of our VHS tapes over to DVD and I am hoping to have some these titles available for check-out this fall, along with many more of the Kalmbach "Dream, Plan, Build" series that we acquired from the estate of long time WISE Division member Bob Reppert.

If you have not yet picked up your copy of the Division Membership Directory, please do so soon.

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

— Dennis Janssen

How to Avoid Tax-Related Identity Theft

You know that being a consumer in the 21st century puts you at a greater risk of having your identity stolen by hackers. But what you may not know is that you could also have your identity stolen and used against you at tax time. Though the Internal Revenue Service noted in March 2019 that there has been a decline in tax-related identity theft in recent years, it remains among the agency's Dirty Dozen list of tax scams and more than warrants your caution and awareness.

What is tax-related identity theft?

According to the IRS, tax-related identity theft is what takes place when your Social Security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number is stolen for the purposes of filing a fraudulent tax return. In essence, the criminal will file your tax return for you for the purposes of taking your tax refund. This somewhat less common form of identity theft is difficult to track until it's too late. According to the Federal Trade Commission, you likely won't know that you're a victim until you've received a letter from the IRS or have your tax return rejected.

What can you do to prevent it?

According to the IRS, there are a few steps that you can take to make sure that you are not a victim of tax-related identity fraud. Because hackers can learn your Social Security number when you e-file your taxes or fill out other sensitive documents online, it is imperative that you have up-to-date anti-virus software and a functioning firewall on your personal computer and mobile devices. It's also important that you maintain strong passwords — follow the password phrase methodology while using a mix of lowercase and capital letters, numbers and special characters — and encrypt important documents.

Key to ensuring that your sensitive information is not stolen is the ability to recognize and avoid scams. This, the IRS notes, includes phishing emails with suspicious links and attachments and threatening calls from people claiming to represent financial institutions or government agencies. You should never give out your Social Security information to an unknown party even if they claim to be calling on behalf of the IRS or the bank.

It's just as important to make sure that you are protecting yourself physically from becoming a victim of tax-related identity theft. This includes not walking around with your Social Security card on a regular basis and making sure that any documents with your Social Security number are either safely stored or properly disposed of.

What to do if you become a victim

If you are the victim of any kind of identity theft, contact your bank's customer service department immediately to notify them of fraudulent activity so they can take the appropriate precautions with your bank accounts. In addition, the IRS also recommends that you file a complaint with the FTC at <https://identitytheft.gov/> and place a fraud alert on your credit records through one of the three major credit bureaus — Equifax, Experian or TransUnion. You should also contact your financial planner to notify them of fraudulent activity.

If your Social Security number is stolen and you are the victim of tax-related identity theft, contact the IRS as instructed and complete IRS Form 14039, Identity Theft Affidavit. You can also contact the IRS for special assistance at 1-800-908-4490.

Identity theft of any kind is an unfortunate reality for all of us, but being forewarned and forearmed can help make the difference when it comes to effectively responding and recovering if you become a victim. Take care to protect your information and you will minimize your risk of becoming part of a growing statistic.

WiseOPs Update

— Andy Greco

With regret we have decided to cancel this Spring Wise Ops for obvious reasons. I waited as late as possible in the hopes that things would improve so we have something to look forward to. Operating is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the hobby - the social one! These times will pass, and we will reschedule once they do, but in the meantime I'd like to share a poem about our pastime from my friend Bill Pfister, Superintendent, General Manager, and CEO of the Tomah, Portage & Mauston Railway.

A poem by Bill Pfister, with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore!

'Twas the night before the session, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The paper work was hung by the layout with care,
In hopes that model railroaders would soon be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds;
While visions of trains raced in their heads;
And mamma in her jammies and I in my cap,
Had just settled in for a long winter's nap,
When down in the basement those rose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the stairs I flew like a flash,
Raced down them wildly while avoiding the trash.
The moon light through the window with barely a glow,
Gave a luster of midday to the objects below,
When what to my wondering eyes did I see,
But a miniature railroad all set for the glee,
With the staging yards all ready,
And the yard engine idling steady,
With a little old engineer so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it was ready to clack and to click.
More rapid than eagles those engines they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now, *Walthers!* now, *Atlas!* now, *Kato* and *Athearn!*
On, *Stewart!* On, *Broadway!* On, *Proto* and *Bachmann!*
To the top of the switchback! to the top of the hill!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away still!"
He sprang to the foot board, as the engine gave a whistle,
And away he did go like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he chugged out of sight---
"Happy Railroading to all, and to all a good night!"

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Upcoming Division Events

- September 26, 2020—WISE Division RPM Meet**
Four Points Sheraton Milwaukee Airport,
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- October 18, 2020—WISE Division Meet**
Washington County Fairgrounds, West Bend; 12:30 pm
- * November 14-15, 2020—Trainfest 2020**
Wisconsin State Fair Park Expo Center, West Allis, WI
- January 17, 2021—WISE Division Meet with “Rail School”**
Location TBD, 12:30 pm
- * February 20, 2021—Annual MadCity Train Show Bus Trip**
- March 21, 2021—WISE Division Meet**
Oconomowoc Museum, Oconomowoc, 12:30 pm
- April 9 & 10, 2021— WiseOPs Operating Weekend**
- April 18, 2021—WISE Division Meet and Annual Meeting**
Location TBD, 12:30 pm
- * May 2021— Annual DuPage Train Show Bus Trip**

** Denotes extra fare event*

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



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- Jim Hebner—Webmaster
hebnerj@gmail.com, 937-207-0163
- Open - Membership Director



Upcoming National And Regional Events Of Interest

- April 18-19, 2020—Tittletown Train Show**
CANCELLED FOR 2020
- May 14-17, 2020—Midwest Region NMRA Convention**
“The Peoria Rocket”
Postponed Until Fall
www.mwr-nmra.org
- June 20-21, 2020 — Strawberry Fest Train Show**
Waupaca Recreational Facility, Waupaca, WI
- July 12-18, 2020—NMRA 2020 Convention St. Louis**
Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark, St. Louis, MO
www.gateway2020.org
- July 17-19, 2020—National Train Show**
Dome at America Center, St. Louis, MO
www.nationaltrainshow.org
- July 4—10, 2021—NMRA 2021 Convention Santa Clara**
Santa Clara, CA

Historical Society Meetings

- April 18, 2020—Green Bay & Western Historian Society**
Annual Meeting
Postponed Until this Fall
www.gbwhs.com
- April 30—May 2, 2020—Burlington Route Historical Society**
2020 Mile High Spring Meet
Joint Meet with Rio Grande Modeling & Historical Society
CANCELLED FOR 2020
www.burlingtonroute.org
- May 28—31, 2020—Chicago & North Western Hist. Society**
2020 Annual Convention, Rails & Rivers, Mankato, MN
CANCELLED
www.cnwhs.org
- June 18—21, 2020—Milwaukee Road Historical Association**
2020 Annual Meeting, Elgin, IL
Holiday Inn & Suites, 495 Airport Road, Elgin, IL
www.mrha.com
- September 10-13, 2020—Burlington Route Historical Society**
2020 Fall Meet, Radison Duluth-Harborview, Duluth, MN
www.burlingtonroute.org
- September 17-20, 2020—Soo Line Historical & Tech. Society**
Holiday Inn, Manitowoc, WI
www.sooline.org
- September 19-23, 2020—Great Northern Railway Hist. Society**
2020 Convention, Nelson, BC
www.gnrhs.org
- October 8-11, 2020 — Missouri Pacific Historical Society**
2020 Convention, Branson, MO
www.mphs.org

Next WISE Board Meetings

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

Our next conference call meetings will be held on Wednesday, April 15th and Wednesday, May 13th at 7:00 pm.

Attendance on the conference calls is limited to 25 participants. So if you are not on the Board and want to listen in please email Mike Slater at m Slater@wi.rr.com.



NMRA Achievement Program Update

WISE Division member Steve Miazga has successfully completed the requirements for three NMRA Achievement Certificates. He earned Chief Dispatcher, Model Railroad Author and Association Volunteer. Steve is focused on obtaining his Master Model Railroader certification which will require the successful completion of one more Achievement Certificate—Master Builder Cars.

If you have questions regarding the NMRA Achievement Program go to the website www.nmra.org. Further questions can be directed to our Division AP Program Director, Gary Children. If you have been modeling for some time, you will be surprised at what you have already accomplished as it relates to these awards. So give it a read and push yourself a bit to test your skills against the masters.

Reminder—WISE Election Ballots Due

Just a friendly reminder that your ballots for the current WISE Director elections are due no later than April 10, 2020. Since our Annual Meeting and April Meet are cancelled for now, we will announce the election results in the May Owl Car or by separate email to the membership.

Safer at Home—Make the Most of It!

—Steve Miazga

Being a Model Railroader during this unusual lull in world activity can have it's blessings. But how do you make the best use of this unexpected period of staying home? In most cases, I am sure that all of us have projects to complete that have lingered because we were too busy with our normal job and life in general. This "Safer at Home" request will not last forever so we need to make the best of it.

With so much loose time it can be difficult to stay focused. Step One should be to develop a wish list of projects you want to complete. Once you make that list, you can better plan your time out to accomplish the most in the time at home. Having a list can help you multi-task several projects at one time. For instance, you may want to complete a great structure or car kit. There is always dead time while

you wait for paint and glue to dry. So why not do some weathering or decal work during this time.

If you operate your layout with friends, now is a good time to check those electrical glitches, derailment points or just the plan of operation. In my case, I expanded an industrial siding business by adding a track and connecting three buildings with new loading docks. Switching this siding will now take a little longer and be more interesting than in the past.

One of your roadblocks may be a lack of enough material to complete your projects. Most of our local hobby suppliers have website ordering, and in some cases, a phone call can get you a curbside pick-up. Giving these local shops your business during this tough stretch will be remembered and you will be helping them keep the lights on for a better day. So take advantage of your extra time and have fun!

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The WISE Division of the NMRA Presents Milwaukee RPM 2020



4-Clinics

September 26th 2020

Four Points by Sheraton Milwaukee Airport
5311 S Howell Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207

NMRA members - Free
Non-NMRA members - \$3.00



WISE Division of the NMRA

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Show Us What You Have Been Up To!

Our May 2020 Owl Car will be the first one that we will be doing only in digital format. By printing in only a digital format we are not limited on the number of pages we can put together in each issue. Our text and pictures will all also be larger in the new format as well, making your reading easier and pictures will really pop out.

So let's have some fun! Most of us have been pretty much house bound for the past several weeks and we still have about three more weeks to go. We are hoping that you have had some time to work on your hobby. Doing some kit building, scenery improvement, working on your operating scheme, doing some weathering, building Benchwork or just running trains? Send us some pictures and a short description of what you have been doing while quarantined to your home. If you have been doing some solo rail-fanning, send us pictures as well. Show your fellow WISE members how you have filled your personal time during this uncertain time. We will publish everything we can in the May Owl Car.

In terms of format, we prefer your pictures to be in a JPEG format (don't worry about the file size). Text can be in a Microsoft Word compatible format or just text within the email you compose to send the pictures.

Send your email to our Owl Car Editor Steve Miazga (smiazga50@gmail.com) no later than April 23, 2020 and we will all look forward to our new Owl Car in May.