

THE CROSSING GATE



Twin Cities Division * Thousand Lakes Region * National Model Railroad Association

Fall 2008 Vol. 27.3



*The
World's
Greatest
Hobby!*

Three TCD members receive awards at the Anaheim Convention

The TCD's own Jim Perske posthumously received the prestigious "Fellow of the NMRA" award at this year's Anaheim Special convention. The award is determined by the NMRA Honors Committee and given to an individual who has championed the NMRA and the hobby, but who hasn't done it in a formal way so as to warrant an Honorary Life Membership or Distinguished Service Award. Jim is the third NMRA member to have ever received the award, which began in 2006. The previous two awardees were Allan McClelland and Gil Freytag. Jim Perske passed away last January 30.

Tim Klevar, another member of the Twin Cities Division, received a President's Award at the Anaheim Convention banquet for his service to the NMRA. Tim took over the job of National Webmaster and successfully spearheaded the complete redesign of the NMRA's website.

Lastly, TCD member Gerry Leone, MMR, won 2nd Place/Model Color Print in the photography contest in Anaheim for his shot, "In Farm Country." The photo won 1st Place at last May's Thousand Lakes Region convention, and was featured on the cover of the February 2008 Railroad Model Craftsman magazine.

Review of Summer '08 Layout Tours

Inside This Issue

- ▶ Two Fall Layout Tours Coming
- ▶ Think Layout Before Storage
- ▶ New Way to Install a Tortoise
- ▶ Upcoming Events

Ninety percent of you missed the August layout tours. The Iron Horse Museum had a lot of 1 x 1 gauge things to see, and you didn't get our discount.



Steve Nitty's N-Scale layout takes up the space of a three car garage. Long trains with lots of track work that you also missed seeing.

Twin Cities Division Board of Directors

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super@tcdnmra.org

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ap@tcdnmra.org

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Education Chairperson
Bruce Selb
ed@tcdnmra.org

Popular Vote Contest Chairperson
Pam Notman

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 3, FALL 2008

THE CROSSING GATE is published quarterly by the Twin Cities Division of the Thousand Lakes Region of the National Model Railroad Association. Material may be reprinted with permission.

Articles, photos, tips, or ideas are heartily encouraged and will be enthusiastically accepted! The preferred format would be in Rich Text Format (RTF), with photos as JPEGs, but we will accept any format (from a PC or Mac; MS Word, Simple Text, typed, handwritten, scribbled on the back of a bar napkin, etc.). Send it to your editor by regular mail to THE CROSSING GATE, 1405 Portland Ave, St. Paul, MN 55104, or by email to editor@tcdnmra.org.

From the Superintendent

I would like to thank the volunteer members and the Board (all volunteers) for all the research put into making decisions about our new meeting location, about our association with the NMRA, and about the distribution of prizes.

I also want to thank Steve Nitty for showing his great N-Scale layout. A big thanks also goes to Art Hill and Walt Thompson for taking on the Timesaver layout project. Another great project would be to finish the Division's N-Scale layout. Then we could use it as an attention-getter at schools and other train events. Without volunteers the TCD wouldn't exist!

The seminar coming up on Oct 9th will be by Neil Hovind the Building Guy. If you have any questions about buildings, glue, or paints—just ask Neil.

Remember to bring old, new, or extra train equipment to the October or November meetings for the Christmas auction on December 11th.

Keep working on those layouts and see you at the Roundhouse!

Ron Bodin
Superintendent

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:

Jim Bernier, Ron Bodin, Arthur Hill, Lester Breuer, Gerry Leone,
Don Smith, Cal Swenson and Walter Thompson.

THANKS!

Deadline for contributions to the next issue:
December 1, 2008

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

Here's the second issue from your new editor, and the beginning of a new season for the TCD. Thus far I have spent \$0.00 on raffle tickets and have won nothing. But stay tuned. I'll be buying tickets at every meeting, starting this October 9th. And don't forget that First Place in the contest also wins a prize—that's why I always try to enter something!

Joanne and I have been busy making a new version of the "All Aboard" issue, three TCD promotional posters for use at local swap meets, and, of course, The Crossing Gate. Thanks to all that contributed to this issue.

So how about you writing an article for the next issue, or at least a letter to the editor? Here's a chance to get your opinions and ideas out there, and although we encourage you to sign your name, if you want it published anonymously, we can discuss that with you.

Your editor and his assistant,
Walt Thompson and Joanne Rust

DEADLINES FOR ARTICLES TO BE SUBMITTED:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Fall	September 1st
Winter	December 1st
Spring	March 1st
Summer	June 1st

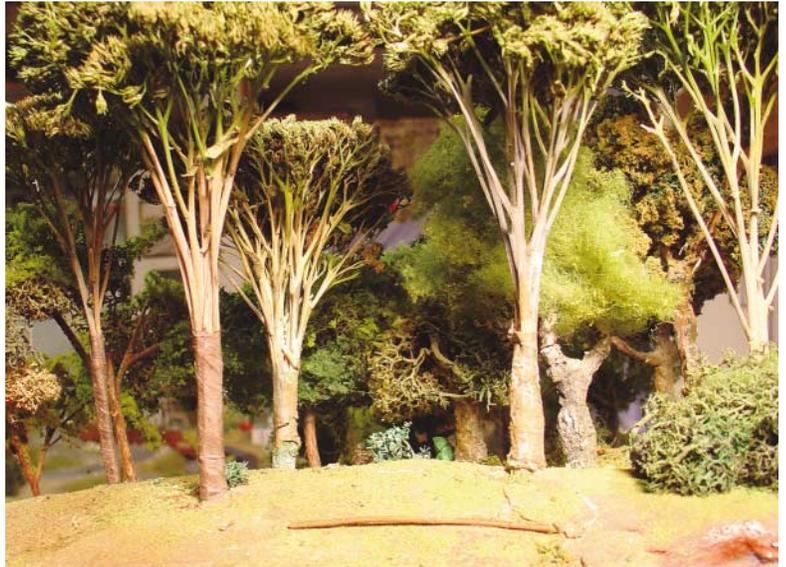
Think Layout Before Storage

Article and photos by Lester J. Breuer, MMR

I finished planting the final elm trees I needed along the Minneapolis back-drop on my Minneapolis & Northland Railroad. I was using Sedum, a flower garden plant I use to make elm trees, and had just enough left over to make one more tree. I could put the Sedum material in storage. “No,” I told myself. “Think layout before storage.” So I made another elm tree so I wouldn’t have to get the materials out later just to make one more tree.

Now...what to do with the elm tree since I did not need it in Minneapolis? Should I get a zip-lock bag to hold the elm tree and put it in storage. “No,” I told myself. “Think layout before storage.” So where on the railroad was another elm tree needed?

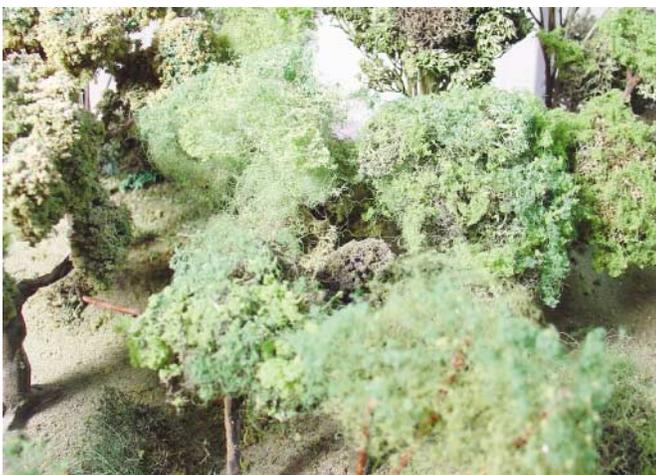
Looking around, I decided the woods on the bluff over-looking the Minneapolis & Northland tracks in Little Chicago could use another elm tree, as I had already planted elms there years ago. As soon as I began looking around the bluffs, I noticed two Life-Like trees I had planted



Back view of the Little Chicago Bluff trees with new elm trees on the left and new lichen bush on the right.

there years ago that were meant to be temporary until better trees were made to replace them. If you are not familiar with the Life-Like tree, you should know it is a small tree, about four inches high, with a plastic trunk and wire armature embedded in it, and lichen for foliage. Not the most attractive looking tree.

It was time to replace the Life-Like trees; an easy decision since I now had one replacement tree. I pulled them out and planted the new elm in one of the two holes. Now to make another tree to fill the other hole.



Front aerial view of the Little Chicago Bluff trees.

I took the two Life-Like trees to my workbench and removed the lichen. I went to my tree storage box and found a tree trunk—a dried Azalea flower stem. I like the Azalea flower plant for a tree trunk because it can be used as is...no painting required. To the Azalea tree trunk I added Woodland Scenics green poly fiber for a foliage base, some of the lichen from the Life-Like trees for additional foliage on top of the green poly fiber, and finally, some Woodland Scenics dark and medium green foliage material to cover the lichen. I used a little white glue to hold the foliage to the tree trunk and used hair spray to hold the foliage layers together. After the foliage was sprayed with the final coat of hair spray, the tree was complete and ready to plant. I took the tree to the Little Chicago bluff and planted it in the remaining hole. The new trees added new life to the old bluff woods.

—Continued on Page 6

2008 Fall Layout Tour

The Fall Layout tour will be Saturday, October 18th, 2008, from 1:00–4:00 PM. This tour is open to all members of the NMRA. One guest is permitted. Home layouts have limited space, so entry to the train room may be delayed. Please be patient if you have to wait a few moments. You can get additional driving directions by calling Art Hill at 651.636.4963.

You will get an email reminder of this event if we have your current address.

Hennepin Overland Railway Historical Society—Club Layout

Address removed
Minneapolis, MN, 55406

General Directions:
Eight blocks south of Lake Street and nine blocks east of Cedar Avenue

This is a large club layout that includes a mammoth helix, great yards, hand laid track, lots of trees, a farm scene with a huge cornfield, a steel



mill and a refinery. They are just shifting to DCC. They do long trains. The 4,000 square foot railroad display of the Hennepin-Overland Museum currently consists of eastbound and westbound mainlines, a branch line serving the fictitious towns of New Bergin and Summit, a logging line featuring a breathtaking hand made trestle bridge and a logging camp, multiple upper level storage yards and industrial spurs, and lower-level storage/staging yards. For those who have not seen this layout in a couple years, it has really progressed.

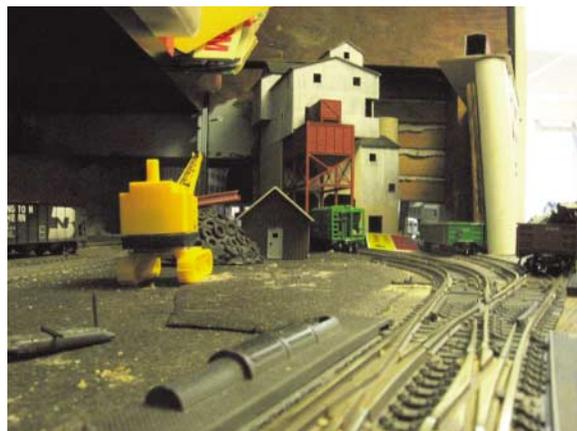
Saturday October 18th

John Anibal's Burlington Northern—LaBina Division

Address removed
Minneapolis, MN

General Directions:
Fourteen blocks south of Lake Street and one block west of Lyndale Avenue South. (Go to the side door and be careful NOT to park in front of a driveway.)

This classic basement layout is a freelanced road serving the towns of Eastcoalbin and Westcoalbin via the city of Northwall. John was one of the first in automated trains using the system called "0-1" by Hornsby. This was the pre-cursor to DCC. He automated the trains to run before the days of computers—using relays, reed switches and magnets to start and stop trains. There is also an operating signal system. In theory, he can push a few buttons, sit back and watch the trains run. He also has a lot of scratch built buildings. This layout has been around for a long time and is a fine example of what we did years ago. This is a fun visit with an interesting modeler.



A New Way to Mount a Tortoise

Contributed by Walt Thompson

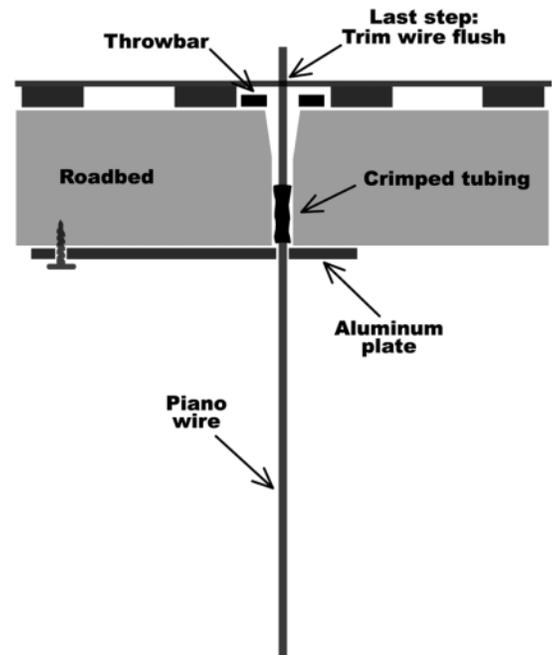
A Problem:

Mounting the Tortoise under the layout in the correct position was frustrating, and re-installing turnouts with it already installed was nearly impossible.

A Solution:

Mount the Tortoise with Velcro so that adjustments can be made, and make the swivel rod for the turnout removable from the top of the layout.

- 1) Drill a 1/4" hole where you would normally need it when using a Tortoise turnout machine to connect to the throwbar. I found that enlarging the top of the hole increases the possible motion for the throwbar.
- 2) Cut off a short piece of tubing and crimp it near one end of a piano wire, leaving enough wire above it to go through the roadbed and throwbar.
- 3) Cut a 1" square from 1/8" thick aluminum stock. Drill a small hole centered on one edge that the crimped tube won't go through (but the piano wire will), and a larger hole on the opposite edge for a mounting screw.
- 4) Mount the plate to the bottom of the layout, positioning the small hole so that it is centered with the hole in the throwbar. I use a 3/8" self-tapping screw to mount it to the bottom of the roadbed. This is the only time you are working on your back under the layout.
- 5) Run the wire and tubing down from the top of the layout through the small hole in the plate.
- 6) Install the turnout and position the plate so that the throwbar is centered when the wire is hanging straight down.



The Tortoise mounted on the bottom of the layout.

- 7) Using needle nosed pliers, make a loop at the end of the wire coming out of the Tortoise. This is what the wire from Step 6 will pass through.
- 8) Establish where you want to position the Tortoise under your layout.
- 9) Hot glue the "hooks" side of the Velcro to the side of the Tortoise. Before attaching the matching "eyes" piece, place paper between them so that only a small area sticks together. This will allow you to remove the Tortoise before the hot glue has totally set on the roadbed.
- 10) Put hot glue on the back of that Velcro piece and briefly press the Tortoise into place. When you then remove the Tortoise (along with the paper), the other half will be glued to the underside of your layout.

BRING YOUR
DONATIONS TO
THE OCTOBER AND
NOVEMBER
MEETINGS!

Letters to the Editor

Well, I warned you! If there are no Letters to the Editor contributed by members or readers, I'll just have to fill the space with photographs of Harley Davidsons!!

—Walt
editor@tcdnmra.org



Walt & Joanne on the '72 Shovelhead

TWIN CITIES AREA HOBBY SHOWS & RAILFANNING EVENTS

Saturday, Oct 4	Prairie Lakes Division's Fall Meet 9 AM–3 PM, Ihlen Community Center, Ihlen, MN. Ihlen is about 8 miles SW of Pipestone and 22 miles north of Luverne on MN Hwy 23. For more information: pete31545@yahoo.com
Saturday, Oct 11	14th Hutchinson Model Railroad Show, hosted by the Luce Line Railroad Club, Inc. 9 AM–4 PM, McLeod Co. Fairgrounds, 780 Century Ave. SW, Hutchinson, MN. Admission: \$3, kids under 12 free. For more information: 320.587.8641 or 320.587.2279, zachmeyer@mac.com or mkbraun@hutchtel.net
Saturday, Oct 11	DSED—3rd Annual Layout Tour Noon–5 PM, Passes available at Hobbytown, 1007 41st Street, Sioux Falls, SD. Admission: \$5.00 individual/\$10.00 family. For more information: saatkamp@iw.net
Sunday, Oct 12	30th Annual Spud Valley Show 9 AM–3 PM, Ramada Plaza Suites, Crystal Ballroom, 1635 42nd Street, South Fargo, MN. Admission: \$4.00 (under 11 free with adult). For more information: Gerald at 701.799.0534 or (for a recorded message) 701.282.0169
Saturday–Sunday, Oct 11–12	Indianhead MRRRC 7th Annual Train Show Sat 10 AM–5 PM, Sun 10 AM–4 PM, Regis High School, 2100 Fenwick Ave, Eau Claire, WI. Admission: \$5.00 (under 12 free with adult), \$1.00 off with food donation. For more information: Andrew at 715.559.0380 or awdoney@sbcglobal.net
Saturday, Oct 18	NMRA-TLR Mid-Year BOD Meeting Starts at 10 AM, Fairmont Holiday Inn, 1200 Togerson Fairmont, MN
Saturday, Oct 25	Woodbury Flea Market 10 AM–3 PM, Woodbury Senior High School, 2665 Woodlane Dr, Woodbury, MN. For more information: ic_geeps@yahoo.com
Thursday–Sunday, Oct 30–11/2	Naperville RPM–2008 Holiday Inn Select—Naperville, 1801 North Naper Blvd, Naperville, IL. More info: http://www.sunshinekits.com/sunimages/thesun2008.pdf
Saturday–Sunday, Nov 8–9	Trainfest 10 AM–4 PM, Wisconsin Expo Center, State Fair Grounds, West Allis, WI. For more information: www.trainfest.com
Saturday–Sunday, Nov 8–9 & Nov 15–16	3rd Annual Railrunners Layout Open House Sat 10 AM–6 PM, Sun 1 PM–5 PM, Grand Meadow Business Centre, 1st St & 2nd Ave, Grand Meadow, MN. Admission: FREE. For More Information: gary.train.austin@hotmail.com
Saturday, Nov 22	Greater Upper Midwest Train Show & Sale 9 AM–2 PM, Century College West Campus, 3300 Century Avenue North, White Bear Lake, MN. Admission: \$4.00 (child under 12 free with adult). For more information: 651.429.2885
Saturday–Sunday, Nov 22–23	Sioux Valley Model Engineers Trains at Christmas Sat 10 AM–5 PM, Sun 11 AM–4 PM, Expo Building at WH Lyons Fairgrounds, Lyons Blvd., Sioux Falls, SD. Admission: \$3.00 (child under 12 free with adult). For more information: www.svmes.net
Saturday, Dec 13	Granite City Train Show 9 AM–2:30 PM, National Guard Armory, 1710 Veteran's Drive, St. Cloud, MN. Admission: \$3, kids under 12 free. For more information: www.granitecitytrainshow.com or email edwardolson@cloudnet.com
<i>Submit events for listing to James Bernier at jrbernier@hotmail.com</i>	

—Continued from Page 3
Think Layout Before Storage



If you are interested in making some Sedum elm trees, look back at Lester's article "Foreground Trees Help Improve Backdrop," published in the Winter 2006-07 issue of *The Crossing Gate* (Vol. 25.4), also available online at tcidnmra.org/cg-pdfs/winter07.pdf

Now back to the workbench for cleanup. I just had no use for the removed plastic tree trunks due to the remaining glue on them after lichen removal, so into the trash they went. Now for the leftover lichen from the replaced trees— should I get a zip-lock bag to hold the lichen and put it in storage? "No," I told myself. "Think *layout* before *storage*." The lichen could be used for bushes on the railroad. So where on the railroad was another lichen bush needed?

It took only minutes to use some of the lichen to add a bush at the end of a spur track in Little Chicago. Another large bush was created near the woods on the bluff in Little Chicago. There was still enough lichen to make two more small bushes to fill a bare

spot near one leg of the wye in Minneapolis.

The Minneapolis & Northland Railroad now had scenery improvements that gave the railroad a more completed look when viewed by regular operators and visitors. The scenery improvements were made possible by telling myself to "think *layout* before *storage*." Apply it to all your railroad



projects, and you'll make your railroad *better* rather than your storage area *bigger*.

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*Rail Pass offer is for new members and those who have not been NMRA members for two years or more. Individuals can join at Rail Pass rates only once; membership renewal will be at the regular membership rate. Rail Pass members can attend conventions and participate in contests, but cannot vote or hold office and will not receive a New Member Pak.

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4476 Mason Ave NE
St. Michael, MN 55376

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And Watch the Callboard for Other Events!

TCD TIMETABLE

Twin Cities Division Schedule for Meetings at the Roundhouse

Month	First Clinic	Second Clinic	Contest
2008			
October 9	Neil Hovind The Building guy	Neil Hovind The Building guy	Buildings: Diorama
November 13	Dave Hamilton Sound Clinic	Walter Thompson Programming Decoder using JMRI	Photos: Real or Model Railroads
December 11	Auction	Auction	Box Cars
2009			
January 8	Art Hill Mountains & Canyons made out of foam	Art Hill Mountains & Canyons made out of foam	Diesel Engines
February 12	Bill Dredge California RR trip on Cal Zephyr & SW Chief	Bill Dredge California RR trip on Cal Zephyr & SW Chief	Railroad Vehicles
March 12	Cy Svobodny	Gary Braasch & Cal Swenson	Reefers & Cattle Cars
April 9	Art Hill Building Trees Galore	OPEN	Steam Engines
May 8	Business Meeting	Business Meeting	Business Meeting



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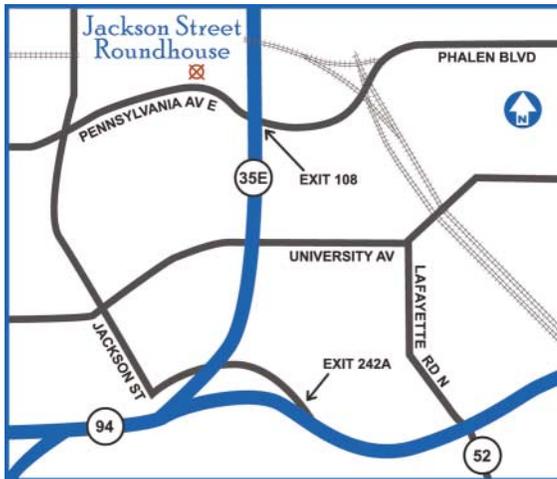
Twin Cities Division, TLR, NMRA
4476 Mason Ave NE
St. Michael, MN 55376

Next two meetings:

October 9 and November 13 at 7 PM

Where:

Jackson Street Roundhouse
193 Pennsylvania Ave E
Saint Paul MN 55130
651.291.7588



LOCAL TWIN CITIES HOBBY SHOP SPONSORS

These listings are sponsors of the Twin Cities Division. Please show them your support!

Becker's Model Railroad Supply

2166 Silver Lake Road
New Brighton, MN 55112
651.635.9480
<http://members.aol.com/wcbecker>

Choo Choo Bob's

2050 Marshall Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104
651.646.5252

Historic Rail

121 5th Ave NW
New Brighton, MN 55112
651.635.0100
<http://www.historicrail.com>

Hobbytown USA

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Woodbury, MN 55125
651.702.0355
http://www.hobbytown.com/zcl/detail.html?zcl_info_id=73

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651.490.1675
<http://hubhobbycenter.com>

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Richfield, MN 55423
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915 Hopkins Ctr.
Hopkins, MN 55343
952.938.5456
<http://www.KDC-Trains.com>

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P.O. Box 176
114 Depot RD
Osceola, WI 54020
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Osseo Train World

340 Central Avenue
Osseo, MN 55369
763.425.7171

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651.646.7781
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