

# The Crossbuck

a publication of the DuPage  
Division of the NMRA

Tim Schubert - Editor



## Winter-Spring 2013 Edition

### A MESSAGE FROM THE "SUP"

By Keith Lipske – Superintendent

This is my last column as your superintendent. On June 1<sup>st</sup> the person who you elect in March will take over the "Engineers" seat of this train we call the DuPage Division. I want to thank all of you for giving me this opportunity to serve you these past 4 years. But I did not run this Division by myself. The following people have helped me every step of the way and I want to sincerely thank each and every one of them.

Fred Henize – Asst. Supt., Trainmaster  
Alan Busic – Asst. Supt., Chief Clerk  
John Brennan – Asst. Supt., Paymaster  
Tim Schubert – CROSSBUCK Editor  
Patrick Golden – All American RR Show  
Ron Scharping – Membership Chairman  
Rob Schiavone – AP Chairman  
Charles Lewis – Contest Chairman  
Jim Allamian – Paymaster  
Rich Strebendt – Chief Clerk

Doug Krahn – Trainmaster  
Tom Buller - Trainmaster  
Dave Liesse – Trainmaster  
Gerry Howard – Wheaton Train Show

The next time you see one of these people,  
say THANK YOU!!

It's YOUR Division!! PARTICIPATE!!

The "SUP"

### MEETING LOCATION FOR 2012-13

The Division meetings will be held at:

*St. Paul's United Church of Christ  
5729 Dunham Road  
Downers Grove, IL 60516*

The church is at the intersection of Dunham and Jefferson. There is plenty of parking and it is ADA accessible. Nearest major intersections:

North – 55<sup>th</sup> Street/Maple & Dunham  
South – 63<sup>rd</sup> Street & Dunham

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

By Ron Scharping – Membership Chairman

The following named individuals joined the NMRA and the DuPage Division since October 1, 2012. Welcome! Come to a meeting and say Hi.

Donald Chmielewski, Bartlett, IL  
Lawrence Wagner, Hazelcrest, IL

Save a tree – Use less paper  
Would you like to receive DuPage Division meeting announcements and newsletters via email? If so, and you have not previously provided your email address to the NMRA, send an email to [dupagedivnmra@gmail.com](mailto:dupagedivnmra@gmail.com) with a subject line of Newsletter.

## **2012-13 MEETING SCHEDULE**

### **January 6, 2013**

1:30pm at St. Paul's UCC  
*Program:* "Progress on the Layout" by Tom Buller  
*Contest:* Water towers and depots. Scratchbuilt or kitbashed, bring something to showcase.

### **February 3, 2013**

1:30pm at St. Paul's UCC  
*Program:* "Pickle Factory for Your Layout" by Dave Leider  
*Contest:* Express refrigerator cars and box cars equipped and designated for passenger trains – don't forget the steam lines.

### **March 3, 2013**

1:30pm at St. Paul's UCC  
*Program:* "Ramblings of an Old Railroader Part II" by Fred Henize  
*Contest:* Annual All Categories includes locomotives, freight and passenger cars, buildings, scenic vistas and photos.

**March 23, 2013** – The All American Railroad Show at Lyons Township High School - 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual!

### **April, 2013**

1:30pm at St. Paul's UCC  
*Program:* Division Layout Tours  
*Contest:* No contest this month

### **May, 2013**

1:30pm at St. Paul's UCC  
*Program:* "Colorado Railfanning" by Grant Law  
*Contest:* Any equipment painted or lettered for a free-lanced railroad

June, 2013

Time: TBA  
*Program:* Division outing to TBA  
*Contest:* No contest this month

\*Note: Dates may be subject to change

## **DIVISION OFFICERS FOR 2012-13**

Superintendent – Keith Lipske  
*Term expires 5/31/13*  
Asst. Superintendent – Alan Basic  
*Term expires 5/31/14*  
Chief Clerk – Richard Strebendt  
*Term expires 5/31/14*  
Paymaster – Jim Allamian  
*Term expires 5/31/13*  
**Trainmasters** (All terms expire 5/31/13)  
*Crossbuck Editor* – Tim Schubert  
*All American Railroad Show Chairman* – Patrick Golden  
*Membership Chairman* – Ron Scharping  
*Achievement Program Chairman* – Rob Schiavone  
*Contest Chairman* – Charlie Lewis  
*Trainmaster* – Fred Henize  
*Trainmaster* – Tom Buller  
*Trainmaster* –

Additional Trainmaster positions are available, if you are interested in volunteering, please see the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent.

Website: [www.mwr-nmra.org/dupage](http://www.mwr-nmra.org/dupage)

Division Address:  
*DuPage Division – MWR – NMRA*  
*P.O. Box 475*  
*Downers Grove, IL 60516*

**PRODUCT REVIEW –**  
**dccUncoupling.com UNCOUPLING CAR**  
By Bill Drzal

When you're switching your railroad yard, working a local, or working an industrial complex, do you always find that the uncoupler magnets are in the wrong place or the cars just do not want to uncouple? Is there a need to uncouple a car, but no uncoupler magnet is located in the needed location? Can you not see the uncoupler magnet? Does the uncoupler magnet not work? Does the uncoupler stick damage the car? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then I have a solution for you.

dccUncoupling.com has produced an HO scale car in which the coupler can be remotely opened or closed by hitting the F3 function on your DCC throttle. The cars are available either in a single uncoupler or double-ended uncoupler. When the double-ended uncoupler car is employed, the F4 function of the throttle controls the second coupler.

Now, you might be asking, "Why have I not heard of this product before?" The truth is, the product has been offered the past few years. However, similar to many of the companies that created the hobby of model railroading, dccUncoupling.com is a small company, which has wanted to control its growth. They've also had limited resources to use when promoting themselves, so they have mostly advertised their products by attending trade shows.

I originally met the owner and inventor of dccUncoupling.com, Glenn Loucks, at the 2010 N.M.R.A. Convention in Milwaukee. I had been looking at several DCC uncoupling car systems and decided to give Glenn's uncoupling car a test on my home

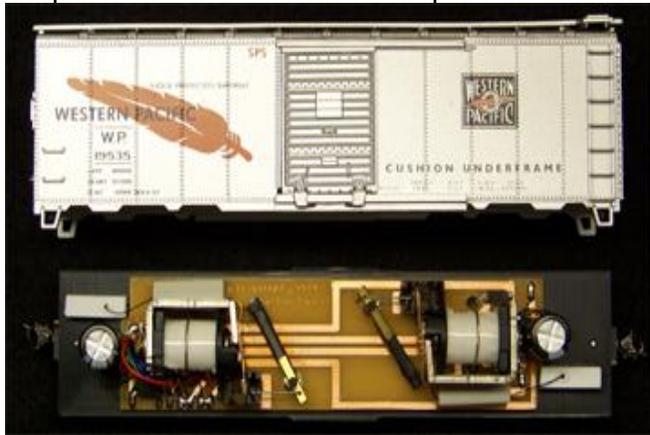
layout. I was impressed with the dccUncoupling.com car right away, but I was curious how it would hold up over time. After a year of being used on my layout, I must confess that my dccUncoupling.com car has worked flawlessly.

The dccUncoupling.com car couples with any car equipped with magnetic couplers. The hardware is located within a 40 or 50 foot Accurail® boxcar. The car comes equipped with a Digitrax® TL1 or TF4 decoder. All of the cars use the F3 function to open and close the coupler on the brake end of the boxcar. The F4 function, on a double-ended equipped car, then controls the coupler on the opposite end. The default address of the decoder is 03, of course. To operate the dccUncoupling.com car, you choose your decoder address, create a little slack between the couplers, press the F3 function, and the coupler swings open. Next, pull your train away and then reset the coupler to its center position by hitting the F3 functions key again. You're also able to program the boxcar number to the decoder of the dccUncoupling.com car and operate the F3 and or F4 functions with it. I've found that a better way is to program the dccUncoupling.com car to the engine you are using. Then you can use the throttle to control the direction, speed, and uncoupler functions of the dccUncoupling.com car all on one throttle.

I absolutely love switching and working my yard with a DCC controlled uncoupler car. Especially when the switch engine is equipped with sound, and coupled to a double end dccUncoupling.com uncoupling car. Even better, is using an engine, with a double-ended dccUncoupling.com car, for switching industries. The uncoupling car is useful for picking-up cars on industrial tracks, dropping off new cars, positioning cars to be unloaded, and running the run-around track to work industries with switches in the opposite direction. You can do all of this without any uncoupler magnets

in place. Using the dccUncoupling.com car eliminates damage to couplers, scenery, and cars caused by the picks of stick magnets.

You're probably wondering how the dccUncoupling.com car actually works. There is a thin line attached to the coupler, which is then attached to a relay inside the boxcar. You press the DCC control function key and the decoder in the boxcar receives a signal telling the relay to pull on the line thus opening the coupler. You then press the F3 or F4 function key which closes the relay and the line releases the coupler. The coupler then returns to its center position.



All of these operating parts are contained within the boxcar. Removing the boxcar body from the frame, you will see a solid-state circuit board that is produced by dccUncoupling.com. The DCC decoder, mounted on the circuit board, has a capacitor that helps alleviate interruptions of the DCC signal caused by dirty track or wheels. There is even a safety strap to secure the relay in place. When looking at the wheels, you will see electric pick-ups inside the truck frames that aid in the transmission of power to the circuit board. These side frames are manufactured exclusively for dccUncoupling.com by a company in England. The nylon bolster bolt is also manufactured by dccUncoupling.com. The Kadee® couplers are even modified so they work better. In summary, when you buy this product, you're

purchasing a carefully engineered product that is comparable to anything else manufactured in the hobby market today. Moreover, the dccUncoupling.com design is based upon years of research and experience.

When my friends inspected the dccUncoupling.com car, they were all very impressed with the engineering and simple design of the car. Like typical model railroaders, the conversation eventually evolved to wondering if we could design and build a remote uncoupler car ourselves. We decided maybe we could, but why would we want to spend so much time trying to build something someone else had already built? Plus, we decided that the dccUncoupling.com product is better than anything we could ever do on our own.

As is stated earlier, the car has worked flawlessly on my layout. In fact, dccUncoupling.com has destructive bench-tested a car 1000 consecutive uncouples on both ends with no failures. The car also includes a "guide sheet" with some suggestions on keeping the mechanism and electric pick up operating well.

dccUncoupling.com is a ready to run product. The price includes an Accurail® 40 or 50 foot boxcar. Prices are \$59.95 for a single ended car and \$79.95 for a double-ended car. There is a \$6 shipping fee and Michigan residents must add 6% sales tax. Finally, dccUncoupling.com will convert your existing car at a reduced rate. Their web site is: [www.dccUncoupling.com](http://www.dccUncoupling.com)

In summary, this is a product every model railroader who owns or operates on a layout should possess. In fact, owning several can be even more fun!

**FROM THE BACK OF THE  
 ROUNDHOUSE - Building the Railroad in  
 Sections: The Perfect End Game – 2.0**  
 By Charlie Lewis

Part 1.0 of this clinic (Fall-Winter 2012) presented a comprehensive but not so complicated way to get railroad sections bolted together with a minimal risk of cars becoming airborne straight to the floor. All our cherished results of hard work can be taken apart for moving and/or even more adventurous, making changes, enhancements and additional sections. So this part will show some of the section end plates on the Illinois Southern RR and highlight details from the part 1.0 text. Understand ends are not pc photogenically elegant, but do hold things together and can supply assembly information and other data. Little is required to know about taking things apart except disconnecting all the wires and not dropping anything. Thanks to Editor Tim for helping with the photography.



Four tracks cross here: 1) at top is narrow gauge on a flat grade, 2) lower narrow gauge (LNG block 13) with a 1.6% grade, 2

and 4) dual gauge main block (no. 10) with a track lead to a depot. The vertical wood I shall call the spine. The 1"x2" crosspiece is cut out for clearance on the lower level. Data includes block numbers and track polarity which I suggest is mandatory even with DCC. Some shims and the weight of the sections here eliminate the need for a bolt. Exceptions do make the rule.



Section MV looking North. The lower dual gauge track is flex-track aligned before completely covering the tunnel, so far, so good. The plywood is suspended from the end plate here, cleats and notches are used to insure alignment of the plywood track base with the next section. Four wires cross here. This bolts to the next section right below the polarity marks. The lift out note is for the Styrofoam scenery which can be removed to clean the track.



Same section, opposite end, now looking South. Five tracks cross here. The tunnel entrance may also be visible. The bolt is stored in this section while it is off the railroad. The end plate has 3 cut-outs for six wires. The plywood track base is structural with the crosspiece as it has been trimmed considerably. The curved arch to the left is a cutaway for the branchline on the lower level.

For a second point of view, hold the photos next to a mirror to see how these end plates match closely with their counterparts on the adjoining sections. Some of this looks unconventional as I built the railroad benchwork to conform to track plans which frequently had changes and required much improvising. None of the guidelines in part 1.0 were compromised to tie sections together without using viable conventional alternatives. Next time will probably be a closer inspection of getting the rails and ties from one section to the next.

### **SHORT BLASTS (THINGS TO DO)**

By Tim Schubert – Crossbuck Editor  
Some upcoming model railroading events for your calendar:

Jan 26 & 27 – **Venture Crew 9911 BSA Rail-Rama 2013** at Charlestowne Mall in St. Charles, IL 10am–6pm & 11am–6pm Free

Feb 16-17, 2013 – **Mad City Model Railroad Show & Sale** in Madison WI. 9am-5pm

March 9 & 10 – **Highwheeler Model Railroad Show 2013** at Harper College Sports Center – Building M 9am -5pm

March 16, 2013 – **Ridge Model Railroad Club Open House** – 10am-4pm Located at Colfax & Ridge in Lake Co. IN.

March 23, 2013 – **All American Railroad Show at Lyon Township High School**

**32nd Annual** - LaGrange, IL sponsored by the DuPage Division

April 13-14, 2013 – **Decatur Train Fair** at the Decatur Civic Center Info at [www.decaturociviccenter.org](http://www.decaturociviccenter.org)

April 21, 2013 – **Garfield-Clarendon Model Railroad Club Open House** 1-4pm Info at [www.garfieldcentral.org](http://www.garfieldcentral.org)

Every Friday and Sunday – **Elmhurst Model Railroad Club Open House** Elmhurst, IL 7-10pm and 1-4pm

First Friday of each month – **Wagon masters Model Railroad Club Open House** Elmhurst, IL 7-10pm

~~Third Saturday of each month – **Bolingbrook MRRG meeting** – Community Center B at 201 Canterbury Lane in Bolingbrook, IL. Currently on hiatus~~

See additional details on these events at [www.modelrailroader.com/events](http://www.modelrailroader.com/events).

If you know of any other events or are sponsoring an event, please let us know and we'll post it on the Division web site.

### **SPREADING THE WORD ON THE NMRA AND THE DUPAGE DIVISION (and Fox Valley as well)**



DuPage Division member Jerry Howard manning the DuPage/Fox Valley table at the Great Midwest Train Show

## NATIONAL & REGION NOTES AND INFORMATION

May 2-5 – **Midwest Region Convention - Milepost 50** info at <http://cid.railfan.net/MP50.html>

July 14-20 – **Peachtree Express NMRA National Convention** – info at <http://www.nmra2013.org/>

### FROM THE EDITOR

By Tim Schubert - Editor

Thank you to everyone that provided materials for this edition of the Crossbuck. As always, submissions are welcomed and encouraged from Division members. If you have an idea or thought to share, please consider sending in an article – short or long. Submissions can count towards your MMR achievements.

The **due date for submissions** the Fall - Winter 2013 Edition of the Crossbuck is **August 9, 2013.**



**All Aboard, 32<sup>ND</sup> Annual**  
ALL AMERICAN RAILROAD SHOW

**The All American RAILROAD SHOW**  
Saturday, March 23, 2013  
9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Lyons Township High School Fieldhouse  
100 S. Brainard Ave. (corner of Brainard and Cossitt)  
La Grange, Illinois

Exhibits and Operating Layouts Door Prize Giveaways  
Grand Prize Giveaway 4x6 HO Scale Layout  
Family Fun No Selling

FOOD, SNACKS AND DRINKS AVAILABLE!

Lyons Township High School Fieldhouse  
Corner of Brainard and Cossitt  
LaGrange, Illinois

Large Parking Lot West of the Fieldhouse

Fieldhouse is a short walk from the BNSF/Metro Stone Avenue Station



**Admission \$4.00**  
(Free under age 5)

Co-Sponsors: DuPage Division/National Model Railroad Association and Lyons Township High School

## CONTEST WINNERS FROM THE JANUARY 2013 MEETING

*Best in Show/1<sup>st</sup> Place Stations – Wayne Pelke – GN station in Bellingham WA*



*1<sup>st</sup> Place – Water Towers – George Herman*



*Contest notes: Effective with the next meeting, there will be two divisions for the modeling contest: Novice and Advanced. The Novice division is for those new to the hobby or just starting to hone their skills. The Advanced division is for the experienced modeler. Once a modeler wins the Novice division 3 times, they will compete in the Advanced division. This change is being made to encourage additional participation in the Division contests.*

**This edition of the Crossbuck is your notification for the February 3, 2013 Division Meeting.**

The Crossbuck  
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c/o Tim Schubert  
1278 Oxford Lane  
Wheaton, IL 60189

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