



**ELMHURST MODEL  
RAILROAD CLUB  
NEWSLETTER  
Summer 2020**

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**WHAT  
HAPPENED?**

## **AS JULIE ANDREWS ONCE SANG, “LET’S START AT THE VERY BEGINNING”.**

The news media had been humming with stories on the COVID-19 virus and all the bad juju that it was causing. We heard about it on cruise ships and in foreign countries never once thinking that it might affect our operations.

There was talk of the ease of transmission and proper precautions that could be made to avoid contacting or spreading this nasty little bug. Statements from the CDC and WHO fueled an already growing fire with questions about what exactly was happening and whether or not an operation like ours would find itself in the crosshairs.

## **MARCH 2020.**

With the state health agencies starting to report cases of the virus and in a few rare instances a fatality we really did not think it would get to our level.

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> there were three (3) confirmed cases and within 10 days the total was almost 50. Private companies and governmental units were beginning to close things down to stop any potential infectious spread. When the state closed schools for 2 weeks beginning the 17<sup>th</sup> it was starting to get obvious that we were going to have to act.

The first attempt to adhere to the recommendations was to shut down open house and try to remain available for members. We were still operating under the impression that this closure was only going to be for a few weeks and we would handle it as minor inconvenience. When the case numbers started to get into the thousands we knew we were going to have to step things up. After discussion the Board decided to follow the recommendations and shut down completely. We were still cautiously anticipating being closed a month at the absolute worse. After the government extended the virus lock-down then we knew we had to stay the course and that we were going to be in this for the long haul. This also meant cancelling the May swap meet and other events that were scheduled.

## **THE PLUMBING.**

Now before we were forced to close there was an issue with water leaking from the enclosed grease trap over block 2 on the HO layout. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of March the problem had gotten severe enough that local authorities were called to try to gain access to the coffee shop and plastic covers and temporary diversions had to be created to protect the layout. The landlord was contacted and advised of the situation but anger and frustration was starting to increase. Since we were going to be closed for a while we decided to open the enclosed ceiling section and see exactly what was going on up there. The drywall was moldy and wet and there was a water mark on the wood frame showing how deep the water had actually gotten. Seeing no active leaking at that time we continued checking on the place and monitoring the problems.

In the first part of May a board member was delivering another de-humidifier and when he got there he was greeted with a ½ inch diameter stream of water leaking from a hole in the grease trap onto the layout.



Our landlord was contacted immediately and their property maintenance people came down and verified the problem. With the owner of coffee shop being out of the country getting him to return our calls was difficult at best. The landlord also contacted him which finally yielded results. However these 'results' were nothing more than a urinating match over who was responsible for the grease trap.

It was ultimately determined that indeed the coffee shop is responsible for their plumbing and therefore the grease trap. So now we have a person who is out of the country and not taking our phone calls responsible for fixing a massive problem.

After a few days and pressure from the landlord, a reluctant coffee shop owner got in touch with his plumber who came and determined that trap would have to be replaced. The plumber put it on his schedule for Monday the 18<sup>th</sup>. But as luck would have it we would have one more thing go wrong first.

## **AND NOW FOR THE HAT TRICK, FLOODING! THURSDAY AND SUNDAY.**

Thursday night, May 14<sup>th</sup> into Friday the city of Elmhurst received 3+ inches of rain in a few hours which caused the storm sewers to back up and leave a nice layer of mud and silt at the floor drains throughout the club. After reviewing the conditions and knowing that the plumber was starting on Monday it was decided to continue to dry the place out and wait until Tuesday to begin the clean up since the plumber should be done making his mess.

Then it happened again. Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> rolled around and after steady rain all day a deluge hit us again dumping another 3+ inches of rain. Only this time since the systems were still recovering from Thursday's flood the additional rainfall forced more storm water into the club and our "we're in trouble" rain gauge (the underpass) was letting us know that bad things were probably on the horizon.

Fortunately, if we can say that, we only had about 3 inches at the deepest point but it was still enough to make the mud, stink and humidity situations worse. Now with our plans in place to begin the clean up on Tuesday the plumber called to let us know that he had to cancel until Wednesday. This meant that the big clean-up could not begin in earnest until Thursday.

We put the word out as best we could for members to check their equipment if they leave it in a container at the club. We blocked aside hours for them to come and check and noted that we would also be doing the severe clean-up on that Thursday and Friday. We could not have been more pleased with the response from members. About 15-20 people showed up over the course of the 4 days to throw out wet boxes, mop floors, clean tracks, mop floors, test electronics and mop floors. We still have some humidity issues in the club room but the priority is to get layouts up and running and that's where we're at.

## **AS IT STANDS.**

The ultimate goal has always been to get the club back opened and in service as quickly as possible. **But we were not going to take short cuts or do anything to jeopardize the safety and health of our members.**

As of this writing the club is open on a restricted level. As things begin to improve the restrictions will be lifted. We hope to be back in full operation for members only within 3-5 weeks. If all goes well all the fall events will go as scheduled.

This is not over yet and we still have some problems to address **but** with the help and co-operation of our membership we'll get through this again.