



# ELMHURST MODEL RAILROAD CLUB NEWSLETTER

Fall 2023

THE ELMHURST MODEL RAILROAD CLUB 111 E. 1<sup>ST</sup> ST ELMHURST IL 60126 630-530-9584 [WWW.EMRRC.ORG](http://WWW.EMRRC.ORG)

#### **CLUB HOURS OF OPERATION:**

Sunday: 12:00 pm - 9:00 pm. **Open House** is 1:00 – 4:00.

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm. Friday night is **Open House**.

Saturday: 3:00 pm – 10:00pm.

**Tuesday is work night, there is no operation that night.**

**JULY 14<sup>th</sup> STORMS.** As of late key monitors have been or will be receiving new procedures and operations manuals. Inside are start-up procedures, a contact list and emergency procedures. Little did we know that those procedures would actually have to be used when a tornado warning was issued for our location during an open house. The key monitor and others that followed the procedures and then went upstairs to advise people if they wanted to take cover downstairs they were more than welcome. As luck would have it the storm fizzled out but a special nod goes to our personnel for their response that evening.

**PROTO SESSIONS.** Now that fall is upon us Proto Sessions are starting up again. They are scheduled for September 21st, October 19th and November 16th. We take December off and start up right after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year.

**CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.** On Saturday, November 18th, as part of the C&NWS 24th “Chicago Area Get Together”, the club will be holding an open house from 2:00 until 10:00. C&NWS members have been invited down to visit and been given the OK to run if they wish. The C&NWS has always been very supportive of our club so let’s put on a good show for them.

**ELECTION.** There are two (2) positions up for election on the Board of Trustees this year. If you are interested in running then you must be a member in good standing and your letter / resume must be posted on the bulletin board at the club no later than November 15th.

**SWAP MEETS.** We are not going to give up on swap meets. With the weather changing and people moving back indoors we might be able to find a solution and get back on track. The dilemma is that we have four (4) “requirements” for a new location. It would be optimal if we had the sales areas (including concessions) all on one floor, protected doors for loading and unloading, kitchen facilities and lastly lots of parking. If we can’t find a facility that can provide all of these requirements then the next question is which of item(s) do we wave off? So you can see a lot of consideration has to be given before we can say “OK” to a location.

**SUMMERFEST RECAP.** The weather agreed with us and we all had a good time. Thanks to Andrew F. for providing the goodies and Steve C. for manning the grill and everyone else who helped out with the set-up, take down and clean up.

**N SCALE.** If you haven’t had a chance to check out the locomotive facilities on the N scale you really should. A lot of work has been done with buildings and scenery and the picture does not do it justice.



**ALSO ON THE N SCALE.** The first peninsula branch line has all the feeder wires and switch leads soldered in place at both the top and bottom. The second peninsula was cleaned out and the feeder wires are being installed then the wiring to the switch motors is installed. Three (3) new touch screens will be installed for branch line operations.

As a side note we will be making a map of the N scale layout and then asking for names for certain areas much like the HO layout. This will simplify both operations and maintenance.

**HO SCALE NEWS.** Beginning in this issue and then in subsequent issues we will be explain the evolution of the electronics on the HO layout so members can be aware of what it takes to keep it operational.

So first a bit of history and an explanation as to why things take a while to fix....

The layout started out as a DC, "common rail" (if you're not sure what is meant by "common rail" an explanation follows) layout with six (6) mainline cabs and some local cabs. The intent was to install block occupancy sensing which would eventually connect to signals. These are the cards mounted in the rack in the common area by the electrical panel. This means the cab feeds have to run a long distance to get to their respective blocks.

Back when we were first building it was considered good practice to run all wiring through terminal strips before distributing power around the layout. For example a turnout motor wire would originate at a bus wire under the layout. It would go to a terminal strip then to the toggle switch on the control panel, back to a terminal strip then finally to the turnout motor. This type of arrangement is perfectly fine if it is documented. Well guess what? If you said "it's not documented" you're a winner! In fact very little has been documented. So that means tracing wires back and reverse engineering the wiring system and this can be very time consuming. On the plus side different color wire was used in different applications.

Cab selection is handled by relays that are activated by touching a pair of contacts on the panel. Using relays allows for multiple panels in different locations providing greater operational flexibility.

How did this run so long? We had a couple of people who understood the wiring from the beginning and it stayed in their heads. As age and time have taken their toll on these members we find ourselves in a rather uncomfortable position.

More on this in the next newsletter.

Oh yeah, that "common rail" thing. DC layout wiring has two (2) wires, one labeled positive (+) and one labeled negative (-). On our layout only the positive wire was switched or insulated to create the block boundaries leaving the negative wire intact throughout. This creates the negative common rail.

Also on the HO layout scenery, lighting and ballasting has been moving right along.

**TUESDAY NIGHT, WORK NIGHT.** With the weather changing it would be nice to have more members showing up on Tuesday night for work night. There are a bunch of projects that need to be addressed and it would be great if a person or persons would step and get them done. Hope to see you there.

**LOOKING FOR KEY MONITORS.** We are looking for additional key monitors. We've already had a couple of people step up to the plate but a few more wouldn't hurt. If you are interested contact either Dan through the club's e-mail (emrrc@comcast.net).

**EXISTING KEY MONITORS:** A few things....

First, inside the throttle cabinet door is a list of paid members. When a person signs in and you don't know for certain that they are members then check the list. If their name is not on the list then they are not paid members. We are still having a problem with former members from years back and members who were recently dropped for non-payment showing up and using the layouts. If you have any questions give Dan a call..

Second, those of you who have not received a new "Duties and Responsibilities" manual do not despair. You will be receiving one and there will be a copy in the front desk for your perusal.

**BLURBS (again).**

If in the course of your time operating you damage something or find something damaged or not functioning let the key monitor know so it can be written up and repaired.

Open house....with Fall here the Honey Locust trees out front will be dropping leaves. Grab a broom and give the front hall a quick sweep to keep the mess to a minimum. Also make sure the restroom is clean and stocked.

The club is closed on holidays. Again let's list which holidays: New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. As a matter of record the club is closed on these days.

Storage totes under the layout is limited to one (1) to a member and subject to the following:

- They cannot be any larger than 36" long, 24 "wide and 26" high.
- They must be on wheels so they can be moved for work night.
- They must be locked.
- The owners name must be clearly visible.