Warrant

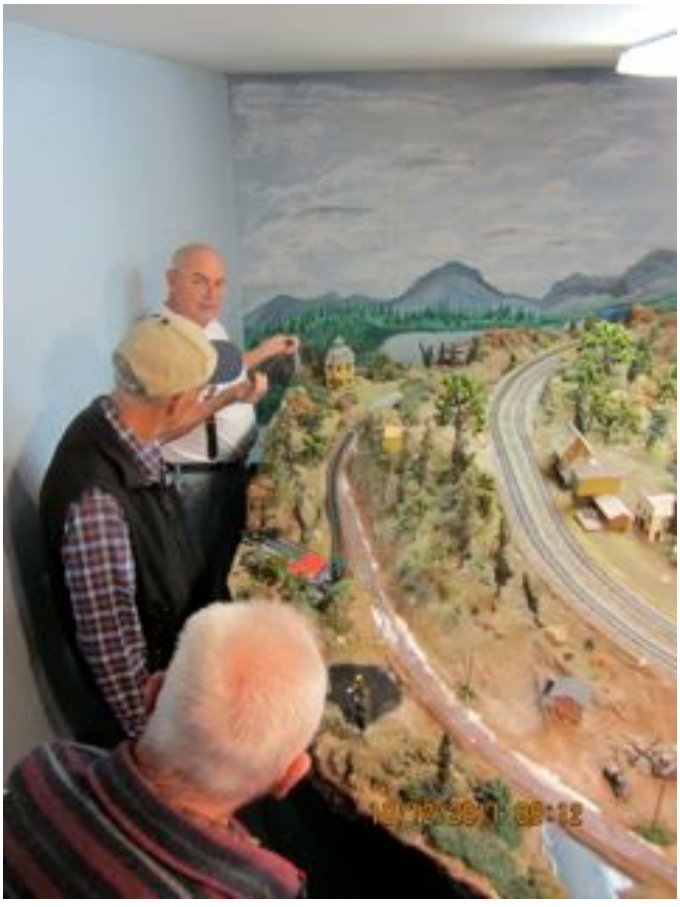
November 2011

President's Message: Greetings from the "Old Man"

by Jim Brown, President RRA

Well now are we ready for winter yet? Noooooo?

It is coming just like always, so get ready! Projects are coming along at the depot as well as other things for RRA. The layout at the depot has had some problems with certain DCC engines faulting. Turns out we've worn the track out by our practice of constant cleaning. Some newer engine wheel flanges would touch the ties, lift the wheels, and lose electrical contact. New rail is the first step (or well worn engines). We need to rethink the topic: cleaning methods and frequency. Members are taking care of some of the 'short rail problems' at this time (see left).



Tim is leading a program to provide interior lighting in some of the structures. The results are fantastic.

The "almost free mo" layout is ready to be farmed out or adopted by members who wish to add to it be it scenery or what ever! Some sections are out and about and being worked on at this time. More on this at the next business meeting.

The RRA planning committee for the NMRA divisional meet in October 2013 met on October 20th, Thursday. We need to find a location to hold the event as soon as possible!

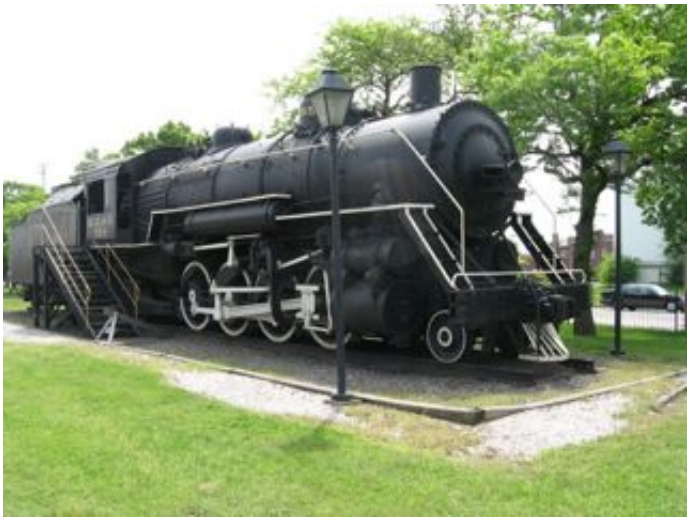
The next business meeting of RRA will be held at the depot on Wednesday, November 2nd, at 7pm. Much to discuss, hope to see you there! Take care, Jim Brown President RRA.

Take care.
Jim Brown, President, RRA.

Where do old trains go to die?

By Bob Lake

It has been suggested that at one point in the illustrious life of American Railroads over 800,000 cars were on the tracks at any given moment. Some 25,000 locomotives were either at idle awaiting orders or on the move during the same moment in time. These consists of heavy commerce were either captured on home rails or running around loose all over the United States. A New York Central Boxcar could be found twisting its way down the Tehachapi Loop on the west coast, or a CP (Canadian Pacific) gondola might be fighting the salt air along the coast of Florida. Systems of demurrage and freight rate exchanges were almost standard even among Railroad companies in fierce competition with each other from the driving of the golden spike at Promontory signaling the completion of the first transcontinental railway.



This loco, located in a park in Gary, Indiana is an example of one that found a home. Kids ask, "What is that." Grandpas say, "My youth kid."

Added to this mix of rolling stock were the various private freight and passenger cars that could and did show up anywhere tracks were laid. The first and not the least of which were the extravagant, opulent, luxurious passenger cars outfitted for the heady and ambitious railroad Presidents and entourage which contained bedrooms, kitchens, coolers, real rest rooms with toilets that flushed real water right onto the right of way! The Parlor was most important room in the car containing many mirrors to extend the apparent size of the interior, overstuffed furniture, stocked wet bars with water tanks in the clerestory to provide water pressure at the spigot and Persian carpets throughout. Coal oil lanterns provided enough light to keep the occupants from tripping over foot stools and the like… and putting a sparkle in the eye of any visitors who may be laying over.

This wooden caboose now located now in Jackson, Tennessee, has a home and is appreciated. It joins other stock to provide a glimpse at time's past,

Railroading was viewed by the general public as romantic and exciting. Yet the very people who ran them were absolute pragmatists with a sharp eye on the bottom line. Occasionally great risks were thrust forward in the hope of great profit. Sometimes the venture was a resounding success, leading the railroad into an era of prosperity and in

the public mind, aggrandizing the man at the helm. Other times, the venture failed and the outfit found itself at the end of track and belly up. When this happened, the right of way complete with ties and rails and rolling stock found itself under new management and continued to carry heavy loads for years to come.

Some time in the late fifties and early sixties, freight and passenger travel began to diminish. Inquiring minds determined that the concrete noose of the Interstate Super Highways choked it off.

And now we ask: "Where do old trains go to die?" (To be continued)

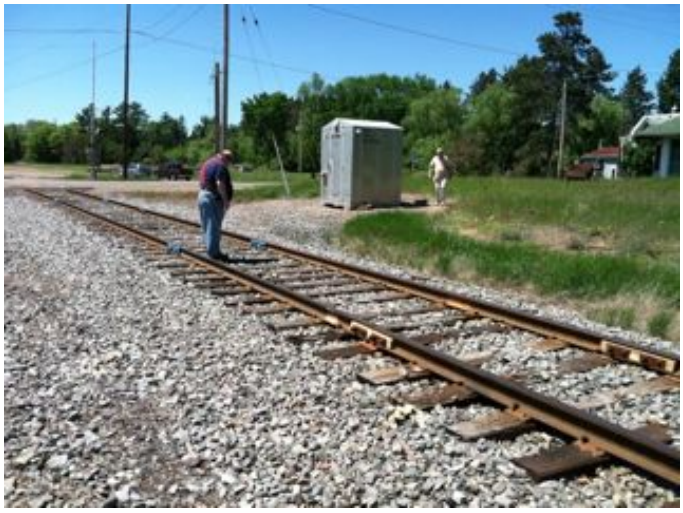
The Rail Crossing at Bradley Junction

by R.G. Blocks

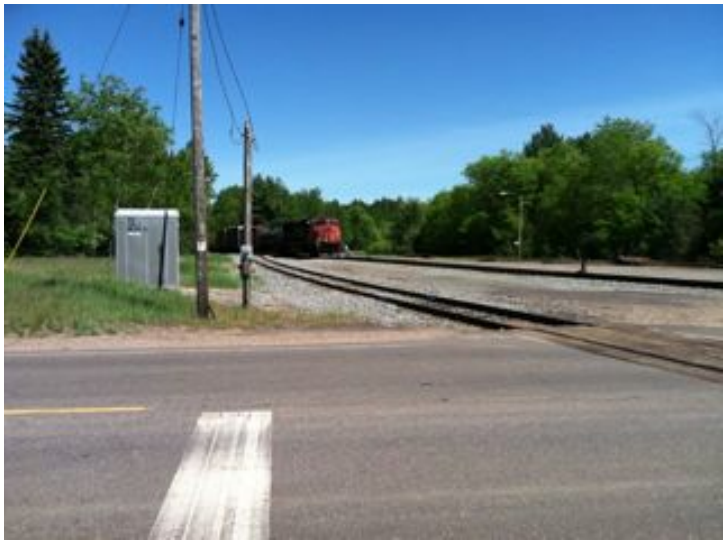
On June 4th, after a visit to Jim and Carol Brown's for a meeting and clinic, we, the assembly of characters from RRA and TLMRC made a brief stop at Bradley Junction. We had no particular plan but were hoping to see the 'Daily Turn.'

As luck would have it we were just about back to our autos when the CN Turn arrived. Bob Lake covered the moment's details in an entertaining and informative article for the July 2011, Three Lakes Turn Newsletter. You can find it at: www.tlmrc.org .

Bob described the interaction of the train crew and the traffic backed up at the road crossing. I'd like to take you on a photo tour of that road crossing. My only purpose is to provide documentation of a simply ground level road – railroad crossing, as it exists in year 2011 in Wisconsin. Exciting? Perhaps not; however, it provides a portion of our needs for models based on prototype.



About 30 seconds distant (based on normal rail speed for the track) the train will enter an electrical block (just about like we have in model railroading) to begin crossing gate operation. Bob Lake, standing in the track is looking at the end of the crossing block for eastbound rail traffic (or so we think). The rail joiner is painted blue at this location. Brendan Marquardt is standing behind a little metal electronic shed or cabinet holding electrical control items for



signaling.

Believe it or not: every rail crossing in the USA is given a unique six-digit number with a trailing letter used as a checksum. It doesn't matter whether the crossing is above, below or at grade. Our crossing of interest today, is at County Hwy Y The idea is to provide an exact location in event of an accident. I couldn't find this one. How's that for inventory?

We won't spend any time describing the inner workings of a checksum at this point. However, the checksum tells the reader of the number whether the number is legitimate. Another example of a checksum: the very last digit of your credit card is a checksum.

Every rail crossing in the US is denoted to the automobile driver using a 'round sign' with painted cross-bucks and the letters RR. Such signs are located usually 300 feet prior to the crossing.

Each actual crossing is to have a cross buck X immediately at the intersection of road and railroad. The photos do show such an indication.

The train engineer, blows two longs, one short and one long roughly 20 seconds from arrival at a road. He also starts his bell ringing. The railroad will have a small sign, along the rail-tracks with the letter W as a reminder for the engineer to provide these audible alarms.

Thus, the gate operation begins with its own ringing bell at the time the engine trips the gate initiation circuit. The red flashing lights begin at about the same time. The gates then begin to slowly lower taking

perhaps seven to ten seconds to swing down roughly 90 degrees and block the lane.

The gates at Bradley junction only block traffic in the right lane of a two-lane road. Thus, an impatient driver could bypass a gate in the 'block traffic' or down position. Such has happened and when two or more tracks are involved (there are two at Bradley Junction) one train blocks the view of other trains from automobile drivers. Terrible accidents result: hence, multiple gates are now becoming the rule. Further, experiments with barriers, traffic channels other warning devices, mirrors, elevation changes, etc are becoming necessary with emphasis on speed.

An excellent summary of bells, lights and gates from a hobbyist standpoint can be found at www.rxrsignals.net. The Federal Railroad Administration Office of Safety Analysis has a very good website at http://safetydata.fra.dot.gov/OfficeofSafety/publicsite/crossing/Xingqryloc.aspx

Had I remembered to write down either the milepost or take a close up photo of the gate we'd have the number to burrow into data on the .go website above. Try them.

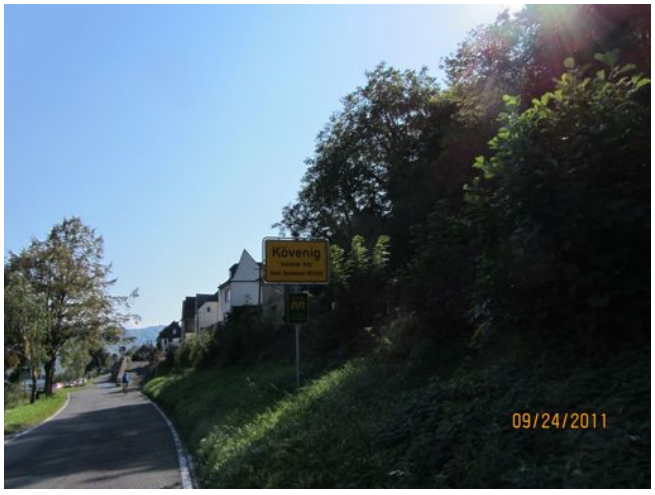
The lights and bell continue until the last car crosses the point Bob is standing at in that photo on the bottom of page 3. Then, the gates lift and lights and bells stop because the train is clear of the road.

It seems what I have just described is either the most common grade level setup in the USA or very close. There are nearly 300,000 rail and road crossings in the USA. The next article compares this simple one with another one located in Germany.

A Road Crossing in Kovenig

by R.G. Blocks

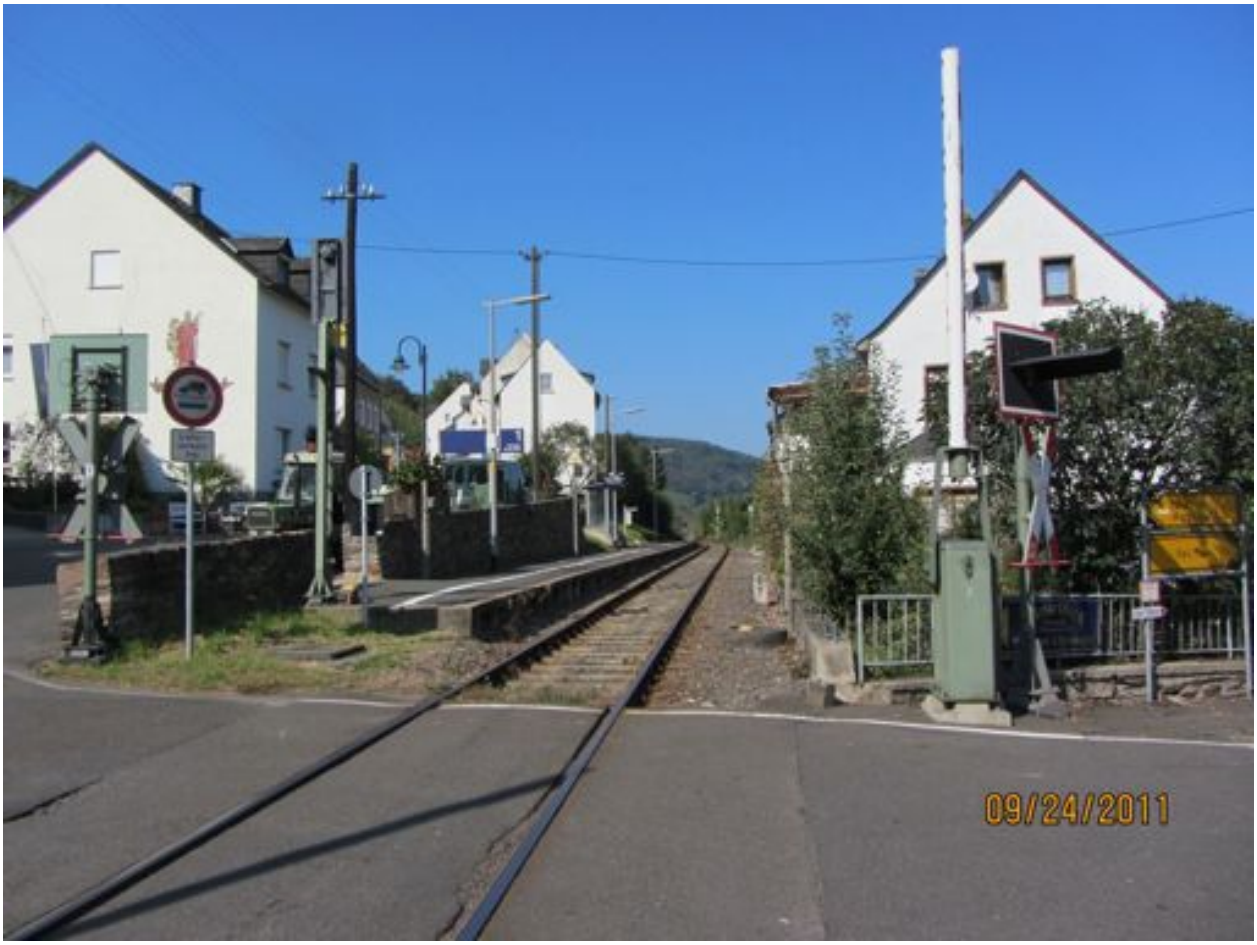
We are just back from biking 'up, not down' the Mosel River in Germany. Pedal bikes, not motorized were used. We also worked out way upwind much of the time.



We peddle mostly along Roman Roads, installed along the Mosel sometime after Julius Caesar (100 BC) and improved ever since. We will peddle across large portions of Germany, Luxembourg and a bit of France. My interest is rail.

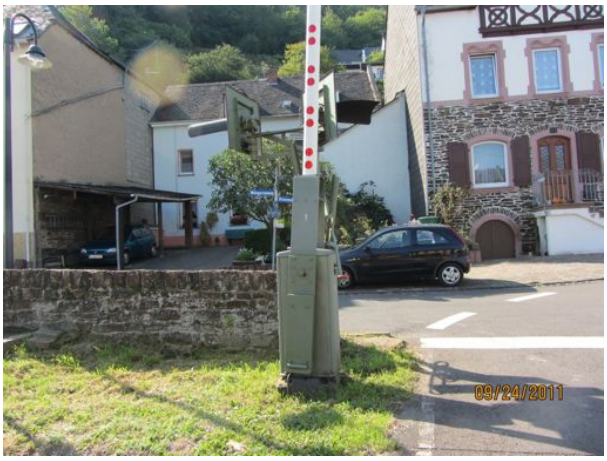
The Mosel is 546 km or 339 miles. Our ride will take us about 400 km (total with some biking in the volcanic Eifel Region of Germany perhaps 40 miles off the Mosel). We biked almost 250 miles and gained a nice slow appreciation of the environment.

Kovenig was simply a small town along a local rail (not high speed) just a bit north of Bernkastel (my favorite town in that region). It has a passenger ramp with a white line. Stay behind the line for your own safety until the train is stopped. The rail line, unlike many, is used for both passenger and freight service. It is not electrified; however, almost passenger service is due to



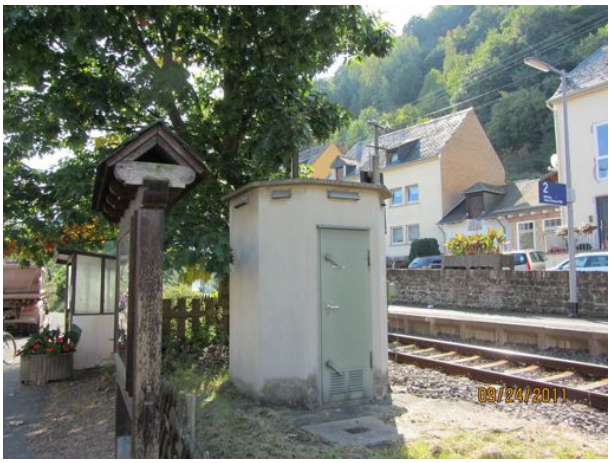
the many tunnels necessary (very hilly), pollution (quite dense populations), and noise (again density). Here we were in vineyard, agricultural low population regions.

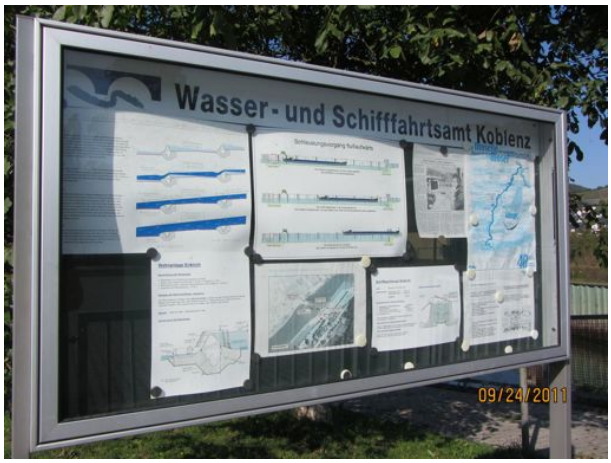
Note the road is asphalt; ties are concrete, waiting area open, and fences low and plentiful, and a crossing gate on the right. It appeared there was a conventional station; but not located here.

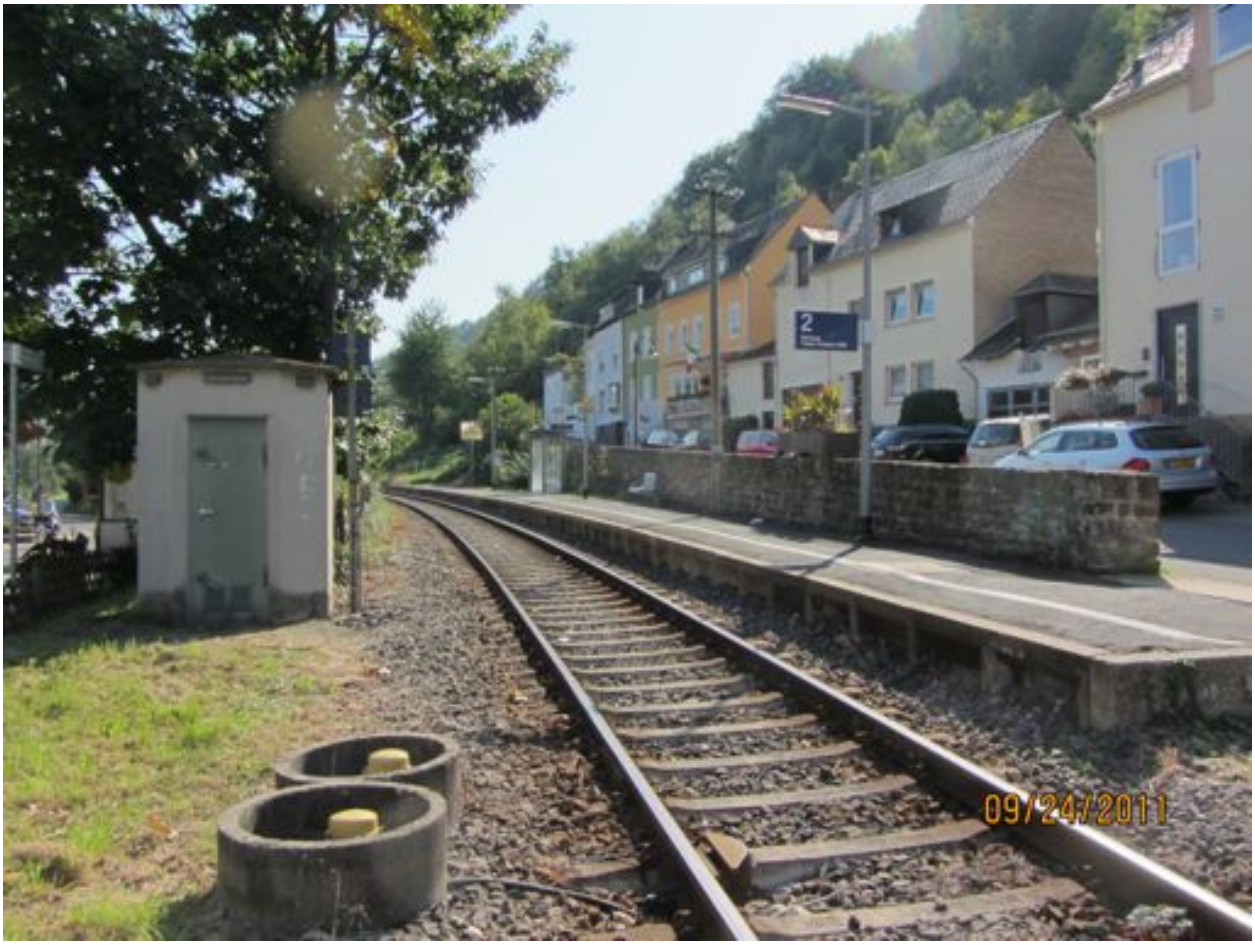


The gate crosses but one half the road; however there are two gates, both blocking the right side of the road (just like Bradley Junction on Hwy Y). Simple reflectors served to catch the motorist's eye on the gate. The warning light was mounted above the cross buck on its own post.

The control house or shed was about the same size as the one at Bradley Junction. The billboard however emphasized the river. It should be noted that the Mosel carries all manner of bulk goods in boats that simply fit into the lock system quite nicely and tightly. Coal, fuel and road building materials were easy to spot. Chemical shipments were also apparent. We saw a number of barges carrying passengers. We in fact had a barge following our little troupe of near two dozen biking enthusiasts. On the barge we took our meals and slept in comfort knowing we'd unpack once for the trip. The river competed with rail and roads in all manner of commerce.







Welded rail is the order of the day. Lots of folks live within fifty feet of railroads in this town. Electronic signals sense the passage of wheels to clear the gate. It's all quite modern. Germany.

Railroad Happenings: or semi local coming events..

November 5, 2011- Winnebagoland Division Annual Operating Session- Waupaca, WI Info at: www.wld-nmra.com

November 12-13, 2011 – Trainfest, State Fair Park:

December 4, 2011 WISE Division Meet, Best Western Plus Midway Hotel, 1005 S. Moorland Rd, Brookfield, WI

January 15, 2012 WISE Division Meet, Best Western Plus Midway Hotel, 1005 S. Moorland Rd, Brookfield, WI
February 19, 2012 WISE Division Meet, Best Western Plus Midway Hotel, 1005 S. Moorland Rd, Brookfield, WI

March 9, 10, 11, 2012, Midwest Region Convention, Annual Meeting of Members, President Abraham Lincoln Hotel, Springfield, Illinois. Discount Amtrak fares: host Illinois Valley Division.

March 18, 2012 WISE Division Meet, Best Western Plus Midway Hotel, 1005 S. Moorland Rd, Brookfield, WI

April 15, 2012 WISE Division Meet, Best Western Plus Midway Hotel, 1005 S. Moorland Rd, Brookfield, WI

July 29 – August 4, 2012 it's the 77th National Model Railroad Convention, Grand Rapids, MI. The host club is found at www.grmrhs.org a 100% NMRA club. For info on the convention: www.gr2012.org Seventy fantastic layouts within one hour of the 12th best hotel in North America (Amway). Let's all go!

April 2013 Convention, Midwest Region, Marriot Indianapolis, IN (tentative).

Time to Renew your Membership

It's that time of year. Renew your membership in the Rhinelander Railroad Association.

Sent your renewal to Norm Braeger, Treasurer at 417 Lincoln Street, Rhinelander, WI. Prices remain, as ever $20.

Send questions or observations to either Jim Brown, President at 2372 Pine Cone Drive, Tomahawk, WI 54487 or Bob Lake, 1344 Eagle Street, Apt A, Rhinelander, WI 54501. Or, better, join us for our monthly membership meetings at 7 PM on the first Wednesday of each month in the Depot at the Rhinelander Logging Museum. All members and the public can express their opinion.

Work sessions take place on all Wednesday evenings starting NLT 7 PM at the Depot.

Want to write an article? Want to be heard and feel writing is your style. Send your written articles and pictures to Roger G Blocks, 1162 Medicine Lake Lodge Road, Three Lakes, WI 54562 or rgblocks@me.com . Thanks !