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Fox Valley Division
Midwest Region - NMRA
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The Semaphore

Fox Valley Division • MWR • NMRA

From the Desk of the Superintendent

- Richard Sweet
Superintendent FVD

National and Region News

The NMRA Board has decided to raise the price of Scale Rails. The new price effective October 1, 2008 will be \$19, and as a result, the new annual dues membership rate with Scale Rails will be \$55. This amounts to less than \$2 per issue for a magazine that has 72 pages in full-color.

The NMRA Rail Pass is still available. It has been an overwhelming success for the NMRA because a number of Rail Pass memberships have been converted to regular memberships. If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining the NMRA, let him know about Rail Pass.

The Midwest Region Convention will be held at the Rockford Clock Tower on April 17 - 18, 2009. It is not too early to think about attending the convention, Rockford is not that far away. So, keep the date in mind.

Division News

The first meeting of the 2008-2009 season will be held on September 21. Our own Dave Crement will present a clinic on "Resistance Soldering," and the contest will be "My Favorite Boxcar."

On October 19, we will hold a joint meeting with the North Shore & Western Division. The NS&W will be joining us at the Gary Morava Recreation Center. The clinic will be "Contest Judging" by Sean

Lamb from the South Central Wisconsin Division (SCWD). The contest has not been determined yet, so watch the Semaphore or look at the Web site. The February 22, 2009 meeting will be another joint meeting with the NS&W and, for that meeting, we will be joining them at the Glenview Library.

The Trainfest trip will be held on November 9 and we are planning on having a bus available. Since the cost of the bus has increased, it depends on the number of people who want to go. Again this year, we will have a November meeting which will be on the 16th. The clinic and contest are still open. If you would like to give a clinic, please see Dave Lieder our Clinics Trainmaster.

Next year High Wheeler '09 will be held on February 28 - March 1, 2009. I have been informed by Harper College that there will be a substantial cost increase for the gym rental. As I am writing this on the Labor Day Holiday, I have not received the contract from Harper College, so I don't know the exact amount. The cost has been going up every year but by only a couple hundred dollars. In light on this increase, the Board will be reviewing our admission price structure to see what works best for the financial integrity of the Division.

The September meeting is on the 21st, I'll see you all there.

This Month's Contest

The September contest will be "my favorite box car". I guess I can't

This Year's Events

September 21, 2008
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center
General Meeting
Clinic – David Crement, resistance soldering
Contest– my favorite box car

October 19, 2008
12:01pm, Gary Morava Center
General Meeting
Clinic – contest modeling and judging.
Contest– favorite scale model structure
– Combined meet with the North Shore and Western Division

November 9, 2008
10:00am – 5:00pm
Trip to Train Fest
Regency Plaza Shopping Center parking lot
No Contest

November 16, 2008
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center
General Meeting
Clinic – TBA
Contest– Locomotives

December 14, 2008
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center
General Meeting
Clinic – Ed DeRouin, North Shore Line - Interurban Freight
Contest– dioramas

enter, because my current favorite boxcar was actually weathered by Jim Osborn at the 2008 High Wheeler. But for all the rest of you, dirty up those Bettendorfs and enter your prized boxcar in the September contest. Remember, this is not a points contest, it is a popular vote contest, so don't worry if the grab bars are from the wrong era, most of us here are not rivet-counters!

What Does The NMRA Actually Do, Anyway?

For those of you who have wondered what exactly your dues are going for, I thought I'd share this email I received on June 6, 2008:

Hi, editors, Presidents and Supers --

Hopefully everyone has heard about the patent challenge the NMRA made against Real Rail Effects, a company who claimed that it held a patent on the concept of sound decoders. The NMRA made a great case for having the patent re-examined by the Patent Office, and Real Rail Effects was told to respond to the challenge by the end of May.

The date came and went with no response from RRE -- a great thing for modelers everywhere.

Attached is a Word document of a press release the NMRA issued today related to this incident. Next time someone asks, "What does the NMRA actually do?" or "What do I get for my money?" this is a perfect answer.

Publish it in your newsletters, read it to members at your meetings, and spread the word!

-Gerry Leone, MMR
Deputy Chair, NMRA Membership Services & Promotion Dept.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 6, 2008

NMRA Patent Challenge Update: Real Rail Effects fails to respond

to NMRA DCC-sound patent challenge

The deadline for Real Rail Effects, Ltd. (RRE) to respond to an NMRA patent challenge has passed, with no response from RRE.

RRE was granted a patent by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) based upon a claim that the technology for using sound with DCC was invented by RRE. The NMRA, with the technical and financial support of a number of DCC manufacturers and hobbyists around the world, filed a challenge to the RRE patent.

The NMRA filed the challenge because we believe that the claims in the RRE patent application were not supported by the facts. The NMRA was aware that prior art and other evidence existed which negated RRE's patent.

The NMRA felt that, should it remain in force, the RRE patent posed a threat to modelers and manufacturers of DCC equipment because it would both increase the costs to modelers and unfairly restrict manufacturers who provide decoders with sound. Therefore, the NMRA coordinated an industry- and hobby-wide effort to have the patent overturned. The NMRA submitted evidence from a number of sources raising substantial questions about the validity of the patent.

On February 11, 2008, the USPTO issued a ruling granting the NMRA's patent re-examination request. The examiner stated in the ruling that there was a substantial likelihood that a reasonable examiner would consider the prior art important in determining the patentability of the application of RRE.

After the examiner at the USPTO determined that the position of the NMRA had merit and compelled a new analysis of the patent, RRE had two

months to respond to the re-examination request. The deadline for a response has come and gone, and RRE made no reply. The NMRA is now very hopeful that a favorable decision will be announced and that the position of the NMRA and its supporters will be vindicated.

The NMRA considers this a clear triumph for the modeler and the model railroad industry. We are proud to have led the challenge team that has made this victory possible.

www.NMRA.org

Sun City Open House

The Sun City Huntley Railroad club and the Garden Club of Sun City invite you to the Railroad open house at the "Barn" on September 28 between 10:00 am & 5:00 pm.

You will be treated to layouts in "N", "HO", "O" and the completion of the 2nd phase of the Garden "G" gage layout. This brings the layout to about 700' of track, 2 main loops, 3

passing sidings 3 bridges and several new features including a trolley line. There is also a preview of the next addition for 2009.

The site is 80% Handicap accessible, by wheelchair and washrooms are on site.

Location and Directions: Huntley is near the intersection of Westbound I-90 tollway and Il. 47. Access roads are Algonquin Rd. rt. 68, to the North and Lake St Rt. 20 or Higgins Rd. Rt. 72 from the South. From the I-90 exit to Rt. 47 North (right) to the 2nd light, turn West (left) on to DelWebb Blvd. Proceed about 1 mile to the first stop sign. Turn left and proceed on Sun City Blvd about 1/4 mile to the Softball field on your right. If the parking lot is full, go to the other side of the large "barn" and park in the upper lot. Otherwise either side of the street is legal. Follow signs to layout.

Stop by and see just how active the active adults have been at the Sun City Model Railroad Club!

Fox Valley Division Board of Directors

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This Year's Events (continued)

January 18, 2009

1:00pm, Operating session at Ted Schnepf's "Fox Valley O Scale"

No Clinic
No Contest

February 22, 2009

1:30pm, Glenview Public Library at 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, Illinois

Clinic - TBA
No Contest

February 28 -March 1, 2009

9:00am-5:00pm, High Wheeler

No Clinic
No Contest

April 26, 2008

1:00pm, Gary Morava Center Annual Business Meeting

Clinic - TBA
Contest- train related photographic prints

May 17, 2008

1:30pm, Gary Morava Center General Meeting

Clinic - Ed Rosengren, history of the Illinois Railroad Museum
Contest- TBA

The MWR needs your help!

The Midwest Region Board of Directors has elected openings for the 2009 positions of:

President

Vice President

Directors at Large (3)

If you are interested, contact Jim Osborn:

jlosborn@comcast.net

Location for General Meetings

General meetings of the Fox Valley Division are held at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights (See map at right).

Why Do You Get This Newsletter?

You are a member of the National Model Railroad Association. Thank you for joining a group of people interested in and enjoying the Model Railroading hobby. The NMRA is divided into Regions and Divisions. You live in the Midwest Region and the Fox Valley Division.

The Fox Valley Division has around two hundred members and you are one of them. Membership in the Fox Valley Division costs you NOTHING. As a matter of fact, most times we give you things. How can we do that? In March each year, we hold a train show at Harper College in Palatine. The proceeds from the show support our activities throughout the year.

If you are interested in learning more about model railroading you can come to our meetings and sign up for our events. There you will meet and hear from people who want to share their knowledge of the hobby. We meet once a month at the Gary Morava Fieldhouse in Prospect Heights. Each year (our year runs from September through May) the Semaphore is mailed to the entire membership.

Welcome to the Fox Valley Division!



Next Meeting: September 21, 2007
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center
Clinic – David Crement, resistance soldering
Contest– my favorite box car



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

