



THE SEMAPHORE

OCTOBER 2013

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Pete Walton's Layout of the Month

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Early morning sun bathes the Illinois Central's City of Walton passenger train and the mountain village of Porto in bright, warm sunshine on Pete Walton's beautiful Great Midwest layout. Layout photos by Walt Herrick.

Semaphore Editor:

Walt Herrick, Jr.
waltherrickjr@gmail.com
815-355-2003

This month's Layout of the Month features one of the FVD's most beautiful home layouts, Pete Walton's freelanced, HO scale, Great Midwest. Pete's layout was started in 2002 with help from the late Hank Brown and his Train Guyz. Hank built the bench work and did the wiring. Pete built the scenery, most structures, and the rolling stock. The layout was started in Madison, Wisconsin, and moved and rebuilt three other times before arriving in its present home in Sun City

con't on page 2

Jim Allen's Fun Stuff

Ever seen one of these? Then you've probably been to Ireland! It's a home built, Irish peat bog locomotive found on the narrow gauge Bord na Mona Railway. The railway was formed in 1946 to develop the vast peat reserves in Ireland. The locomotive is a rail mounted, Massey-Ferguson 135 tractor.



Pete Walton's Layout of the Month con't

Huntley. Hank Brown helped with each move and rebuilding. After retiring from American Family Insurance in 2001, Pete and wife LuAnn moved to Sun City Huntley in 2002. Here Pete started the layout's final rebuilding and a large layout expansion in the 50 x 80 finished basement of his new home. In Sun City Pete met Rich Porto and hooked the expert ship building modeler on building wood model railroad laser kit structures. Currently 20 Porto structures grace Pete's layout with more coming. Pete wants it to be known that the Great Midwest is his fictional creation and he realizes he has taken free lancing to new heights with his railroad. (Mid-western railroads traveling through mountain *and* sea coast scenery? It happens on the Great Midwest!) The railroad is now two thirds complete including scenery. It will be on tour for the Midwest Region **Railfun Convention** in May 2014. WH



Later in the morning the brown and orange E6's cross the stone arch bridge over the Rock River. The family owning the yellow travel trailer frequently vacations at this spot to partake of the good fishing near the falls created by the power plant's dam.

Excellent painting, weathering, and ballasting hide the fact that all of the Great Midwest's track work is code 100 flex track and commercial turnouts.



Tylick Tool is one of 20 beautifully built and finished laser structure kits built by friend Rich Porto for the layout. Rich formally built mostly wood ship models but now also enjoys building laser wood railroad structure kits for the Great Midwest.



A CB&Q switcher moves a Christy Brothers Circus flat car at the west end of the Walton City yard. Circus trains and cars are favorites of the layout's owner.

Pete Walton's Layout of the Month con't

Double Bridge Meet! An east bound Illinois Central 4-8-2 pulls its freight train through the swing bridge at Hank Brown Bay, as a west bound, CB&Q California Zephyr crosses the high truss bridge. Great Lake is just north of the bridges, and sends a fair amount of shipping traffic into the bay's ports. The Rich Porto built light house on the bluff keeps ships and boaters safe from the numerous bridge piers, pilings, trestles, and tricky water currents found in the area. The Great Midwest layout features several such mid west scenic anomalies conceived in the fertile imagination of its builder, Pete Walton.



An ill-timed motive power break down forced the Burlington to rush this freshly painted 2-10-4 into service on a hot west bound reefer train. The "Q" shop crews weren't even allowed apply the locomotive's road name and number before it was "out the door" and on the railroad's main line headed for the city of Walton.

Both photos on this page were taken on the layout's new addition.

Pete Walton's Layout of the Month con't



Union Station is a beehive of activity today with passenger trains from the Illinois Central, CB&Q, Milwaukee Road, and Gulf, Mobile and Ohio all arriving or departing within the hour. 1950's cross country passenger "name trains" are a key feature of the layout, as are a variety of types of well done scenery. Here is the urban/big city scenery found in the city of Walton.

It's 6:35 am and a Chicago Northwestern GP7 has just pulled into town with the daily local freight. The local's first order of business will be picking up and dropping off reefers at the Sterling Dairy.



Pete Walton's Layout of the Month



Big city passenger facilities are modeled at Walton Yard. The long middle section of the layout features a commissary, car/loco washing facility, large REA shipping facility, diesel house, and Union Station. A round house and coach yard are behind the station.

Work is progressing nicely on the large George Sellios inspired urban scene at the far end of the photo. The layout's most recent expansion goes another fifty feet to the left of the city and will feature a street running scene, circus train storage yard, large tree covered mountains, a high water fall, extensive rock cuts, more structures and more big bridges. Track work, wiring, and 25% of the scenery and structures have been completed in the new addition. See page 3.

Basic Layout Information

Layout Name:	Great Midwest
Layout Owner:	Pete Walton
Layout Builders:	Hank Brown (bench work and wiring); Pete Walton (track, locomotives, rolling stock, structures, and scenery); Rich Porto (laser cut wood structures).
Years in NMRA:	Three
Layout Location:	Pete Walton's finished basement in Sun City, Illinois.
Layout Scale:	HO scale
Layout Size:	50 x 80 feet "L" shaped layout room. 600 foot mainline. Abundant aisle ways throughout.
Layout Theme:	Early to mid 1950's freelanced, heavy Class I railroad, serving multiple Midwestern railroads.
Layout Style:	Around the walls on 2 to 4 foot deep sections with two peninsulas.
Construction started:	November 2002
Benchwork/Road bed:	1x4 grid sections bolted to the walls; 3/4 inch plywood sub road bed; cork road bed.
Track/turnouts:	Several manufacturer's code 100 flex track and turnouts painted and weathered; #8 turnouts on the main, #6 elsewhere with a few #4's in industrial areas. 30 inch minimum radius main line curves.
Control:	Digitrax DCC with wireless throttles.
Scenery:	Hard shell, Bragdon Industries resin shell, pink foam bases. Ground cover from Woodland Scenics, Scenic Express, etc. and natural materials. Extensive rock work from resin molds. Puff ball and Woodland Scenics Foliage Clusters tree canopies. Tract lighting with many spot lights.
Structures:	Laser kits from various manufactures built by Rich Porto. Plastic and resin kits, and kit-bashed structures by Pete Walton with many large urban buildings, factories, and railroad buildings.
Bridges/trestles:	Many kit, kit bashed and scratch built bridges and trestles with several long truss bridges.
Locomotives:	Broadway Limited, Proto 2000, etc. steam and diesel.
Rolling stock:	Plastic and a few resin kits, and RTR rolling stock from various manufacturers.
Operations:	Continuous running. An operating scheme is in consideration.
Favorite aspects of the hobby:	Scenery and structures
MRR influencers:	Hank Brown
Other:	The layout has been moved, rebuilt and expanded four times in four different cities/states. Pete Walton began model railroading in 1950 and a few of his early models are in use on the layout today.

Working On My Railroad: Jim Osborn

Working On My Railroad is a new Semaphore column which will feature all types of FVD member layout projects. We'll publish Working On My Railroad whenever we have a project to report on. Members are invited to share their layout projects—either completed or in progress, big or small—in the Semaphore. Contact Semaphore Editor, Walt Herrick, at waltherrickjr@gmail.com or 815-355-2003 with your project. We are pleased to kick off Working On My Railroad with Jim Osborn's ambitious and successful West Chicago Yard project. WH

The goal for this past summer was to significantly move along the scenery development on my CNW Western Division layout. Specifically, the focus was to develop and scenic the freelanced, 46 foot long West Chicago Yard complex. The yard area has an engine facility, 4 arrival/departure tracks, a caboose track, RIP tracks, 10 classification tracks and 2 elevated mainline tracks. The west end of the yard features the West Chicago station on the mainline, the east and west bound yard entrance/exit tracks, a freight house, MoW facility, Sylvester's Sand Company, and WC Oil Company. The yard's engine facility is centrally located in the yard and includes a large scratch built engine house, kit-bashed round house, turn table, RIP and maintenance tracks. The east end of the yard holds a 10 track classification yard. The classification yard detailing features a lot of weeds, junk and load droppings. The yard's backdrop is composed of both thin structure flats and photo flats. I made a custom photo back drop from building and rolling stock photos taken from other parts of the layout. The photos are mounted on both 1/4 and 1/2 inch thick foam art-board and glued to the hard board backdrop. I am pleased with the outcome of this project and have declared it "Mission Accomplished!" See the railroad at the MWR convention - Railfun 2014. Jim Osborn.



Scenicing the 46 foot long West Chicago Yard on his CNW Western Division layout was the major layout project Jim Osborn tackled this past summer. As his photos testify, Jim successfully completed the project! Here is the west end of the yard showing the West Chicago passenger depot, freight station, and an interlocking tower. Photo flats were used along with building flats against sky blue painted hard board to form the back drop. Photo flats are from Kingsmill.

The locomotive serving facility is the center piece of the West Chicago Yard. Jim's engine house is a scratch built model of the CNW's Proviso Yard engine house. This fine model features interior detailing and won "First Place—Structures" honors at the Midwest Regional Convention in Indianapolis this past spring. It is a slightly scaled down version of the prototype and was built from photos found in a CNW Historical Society book on the railroad's locomotive facilities.



Working On My Railroad: Jim Osborn, con't

A kit-bashed six stall round house occupies this area of West Chicago's engine servicing facility. Note the three extensions to the back of the roundhouse, and the RIP tracks along its right side.



Ten classification tracks are put to good use every day at the east end of the West Chicago Yard. Once again photo flats are successfully used as a backdrop this time with photos of rolling stock nicely blended into the background scene.



Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

Dreams

During the last couple of weeks in preparation for Railfun 2014, my job has been going over the information submitted by our Fox Valley (and some DuPage) Division members who are hosting layout tours or op sessions for the convention. Each member has filled out a layout questionnaire on his or her layout which was provided by the Railfun convention committee a couple of months ago. The questionnaire asks layout owners to give us basic information about the layout such as name, scale, size, theme, geographic location, etc. This morning, as I write this "Mike's Minute", a thought came to me. Each of the members, no matter what their background, education, career field, or any other factor you can think of, have built their railroads as they have envisioned it. It is the fulfillment of a dream. It doesn't matter what railroad—prototype or freelanded—where it is located geographically, what cities or industries it serves, Class I or short line, basement sized or 4 x 8, it is the owner's attempt to accomplish the vision or dream of what his or her railroad should be. In reviewing the information of the 30 some layouts participating in Railfun 2014, I cannot escape the conclusions that 1) we model railroaders are a bunch of interesting, creative, passionate, whimsical, dedicated folks who love trains and all that goes along with them, and 2) we've taken that love and turned it into our own model railroad dream. I invite you to attend Railfun 2014 and see more than 30 of our fellow model railroader's dreams come to life.

Member News

Dave Methlie

We are sorry to report that former early Fox Valley Division member, Dave Methlie, passed on in Pennsylvania on September 8th. Dave lived in Crystal Lake until about ten years ago when he and wife Maggie retired to his beloved home state of Pennsylvania. He was well known in the hobby as the owner of Crystal Lake Hobbies in the late 1970's and early 1980's, and for his professional layout building business, Design Modelers. Though he built layouts of any scale and size, Dave's specialty was beautifully built and detailed 4x8 HO layouts starting with the Pine Valley (Jan. 1980 RMC). The Magnuson Display Layout, Maggie's Cove (Feb. 2001 MR), Deer Mountain (June 2004 MR), and his Stoney Creek series which ran from January to April, 2006 in MR, were some of his most well known 4x8s. I last saw him three or four years ago at Train Fest where his completely rebuilt Pine Valley layout won a "Best of Show" award. In late 2012 Dave was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia (LBD) and had been in a nursing facility since July of this year. He was a great ambassador for our hobby and always willing to share his knowledge of layout and model building. Our sympathies go to Maggie, their children, grand children and the rest of Dave's family. WH

The FVD at iHobby

The FVD had a presence at the big iHobby Show in Schaumburg October 5th and 6th thanks to volunteers Mike Hirvela, Jim Allen, and Denis Zamirowski. The FVD representatives manned our division's promotional booth and brought along Jim Allen's fun Action-Reaction Railroad. Big "Thanks!" go to Mike, Jim, and Denis for the great work they did at iHobby 2013, and the work they do every other month at the Wheaton (DuPage) Train Show. By the looks of the photo to the right, their efforts are paying off nicely.

Mike Hirvela and a younger train enthusiast enjoy watching the Action-Reaction RR...in action! Denis Zamirowski photo.



Free to a Good Home

Now that Harper College offers us electrical ceiling drops, we no longer need the numerous yellow electrical cord covers we once did for our High Wheeler Train Shows. Before the convenient drops became available, electricity was routed to HW Show layouts and displays via extension cords stretched across the floor and covered by the gorgeous, bright yellow rubber covers you see to the right. Contact (contact info on page 11) FVD Clerk, Leif Hanson, if you'd like one or more of the cord covers. He's really looking forward to hearing from you as his garage is full of these things!



FVD Membership Drops

We hate to end "Member News" on a sour note, but Membership Records Trainmaster, Bert Lattan, reports that in September the Fox Valley Division's membership dropped by nine members from 233 to 224. This is the biggest divisional monthly drop Bert has seen in his long NMRA career serving the Midwest Region, former North Shore Division, and now FVD. It follows a couple years of stable membership numbers. Some of the drop may be attributed to a lag in the NMRA National's recording and reporting procedures. (National is notorious for this says Bert.) We'll keep you posted.

September's Clinic

Master weathering artist Dave Schroedel presented an excellent clinic in September. Members may recognize Dave from the weathering clinics he gives each month in Building 5 at the DuPage (Great Midwest) Train Show. He is an expert at his craft and has done extensive research (some in his basement "laboratory") into weathering methods and materials. After giving us some basic rolling stock weathering instruction, Dave opened up the clinic for any and all questions on weathering. The discussion that followed was good stuff. The many questions from FVD members made for excellent answers from Dave in which he gave us the techniques and materials he uses for modeling a number of different weathering effects. Thanks, Dave!



September clinician, Dave Schroedel, can also be seen on page 82 of the November 2013 Railroad Model Craftsman magazine sporting a longer goatee.

September's Contest Winners

With eleven entries, we had a really nice showing for our first model contest of the year, "Your Favorite Model Locomotive(s)". FVD Super Jeff Jarr took First Place with his beautifully weathered set of CNW RS-3's. Jeff tried to achieve the "grungy" look of RS's he'd seen in CNW photo books and definitely accomplished his goal. Jeff said, "I'd like to do a clinic on the methods I used, but they'd probably fume-gate the room!" Will Westfall's Soo Line Mogul was one of only two steam locomotive entries, and placed Second. Will took an inexpensive Bachman loco with sound and re-detailed and nicely weathered it to replicate a Soo D class 2-6-0. Bob DiDomenico brought in two big, long O scale Indiana Railroad SD90Mac's and took Third Place for his efforts. The red and white IRR units stretched across *four feet* of one of our six foot contest tables, and, unlike the first and second place finishers, were not weathered. Said Bob, "These locomotives are kept very clean by the IRR. This is the way they look most of the time." Big FVD "Congratulations" to our winners and all who entered September's contest. View all the contest entries on the FVD's web site. Model photos by Walt Herrick.



Jeff Jarr's 1st Place HO scale CNW RS3's.



Will Westfall's 2nd Place HO scale Soo 2-6-0.



Bob Dimenico's 3rd Place O scale Indiana Railroad SD90s.

Modeling Tip

Dave Schroedel is an expert at weathering. He's done tons of research on different weathering methods, techniques, products, agents, etc. At his September FVD clinic, Dave shared much of his weathering knowledge and displayed a dozen of his beautifully (if you like grimy, dusty, rusty and dirty stuff, that is!) finished models. Members at the September meeting will remember Dave's number one weathering technique: work from photos of the prototype. His biggest piece of advice for us was, "Obtain and use prototype photos of the weathering effects you want to model. I really don't weather anything without a photo." Good advice. Time to pull out those prototype photos and go to work people! WH

2013-2014 Meeting Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
Oct. 20, 2013	Open Loads by David Sima	Caboose Train Limit 6 cars.	
Nov. 17, 2013	Painting People by David Crement, MMR	Passenger Car(s) Limit 4 cars.	
Dec. 15, 2013	Module Scenery, Part 2 by Mike Wood	Tank Cars Limit 6 cars.	1:00 pm start. Lunch provided.
Jan. 19, 2014	Building Benchwork by Bill Kirchmeyer	“Rescue the Rolling Stock” Re-purposed rolling stock.	
Feb.16, 2014	TBA	Hopper Train Limit 6 cars.	
March 1, 2, 2014	High Wheeler 2014 Train Show at Harper College in Palatine Sponsored by the FVD. 9 am to 5 pm each day. <u>FVD volunteers needed.</u> Contact Jeff Jarr at jjarr@comcast.net or 773-286-8755.		
April 13, 2014	TBA	Diorama	1:00 pm start. Lunch provided. FVD officer elections.
May 16, 17, 18, 2014	Rail Fun 2014 Mid West Region Convention hosted by the FVD In Schaumburg, IL. <u>FVD volunteers needed.</u> Contact Jeff Jarr at jjarr@comcast.net or 773-286-8755.		
<u>Note:</u> there will be no May FVD monthly meeting in lieu of the Rail Fun convention hosted by the FVD.			
July 13 - 19, 2014	NMRA National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. Check the national web site www.nmra.org and <i>NMRA Magazine</i> for further information as it becomes available.		

Fox Valley Division Board Contact Information

Superintendent, Jeff Jarr

jjar@comcast.net 773-286-8755

Ass't Superintendent, Bob Shlemon, Jr.

shlemonjr@gmail.com 773-334-4208

Chief Clerk, Leif Hansen

mudhen454@att.net 847-437-7124

Paymaster, Tim Kleimeyer

kleimeyert@comcast.net 847-426-4732

Achievements & Contests, Jim Landwehr

jlandwehr901@yahoo.com 847-577-7984

Clinics, David Leider, MMR

sooauthor@netzero.net 847-253-7484

Membership Promotions, Mike Hirvela

mhirvela1@gmail.com 847-360-9579

Membership Records, Bert Lattan

blattan@comcast.net 847-295-7959

Public Relations & Webmaster, Jim Osborn

FVDWebsite@comcast.net 815-578-8315

Semaphore Editor, Walt Herrick, Jr.

waltherrickjr@gmail.com 815-355-2003

Ways & Means—High Wheeler, Jeff Jarr

jjarr@comcast.net 773-286-8755

All of the board members listed above want you to become a better, more knowledgeable modeler, and to have fun with the great hobby of model railroading. Contact them with your questions, concerns, or suggestions. They are here for you!

NMRA Web Sites

Fox Valley Division www.foxvalleydivision.org

Midwest Region www.mwr-nmra.org

National www..nmra.org

About the Fox Valley Division

If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane, and Lake Counties in northeast Illinois. About 240 members of varied ages and modeling ability levels belong to the FVD. Almost all modeling scales are represented in our division. Membership in the division is free as are the Semaphore newsletters.

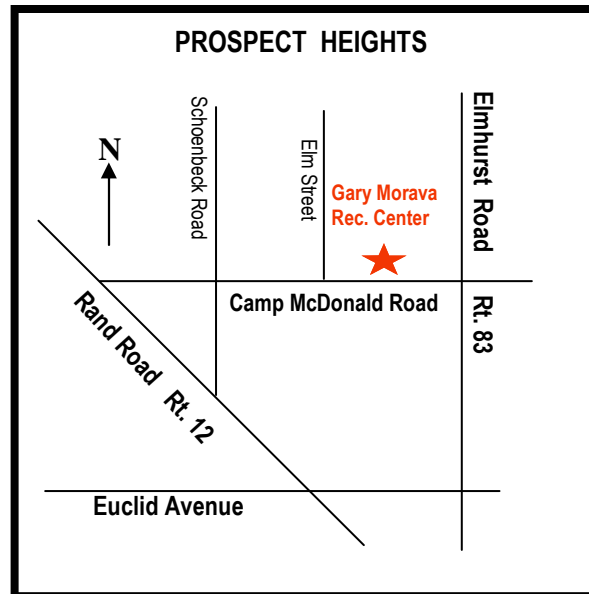
FVD general meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm. Each meeting features a clinic, model contest, information of interest to the membership, and a time for socializing. Outings, layout tours, and operating sessions are also held periodically in addition to, or instead of, the general meetings. To promote the hobby of model railroading, the FVD sponsors and runs the large train show, "High Wheeler", in early March each year at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois.

We encourage you to take advantage of all the FVD has to offer. We are here to answer your questions, help improve your modeling, and help you better enjoy the great hobby of model railroading. Join us at a FVD meeting or outing. We'd love to see you.

Visit us on the web at:

www.foxvalleydivision.org.

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr, or any FVD Board member listed on the previous page of this newsletter. We are here to help you!



Regular Meeting Location: Gary Morava Center,
110 Camp McDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL

Regular Meeting Time: 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. See
page 10 for this year's meeting schedule.



**Fox Valley Division
Midwest Region-NMRA
P.O. Box 1535
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1535**