



THE SEMAPHORE

March 2014

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



High Wheeler 2014

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Reminders!

- No March or May monthly meetings due to High Wheeler and RailFun.
- The next monthly meeting is April 13 at 1:00 pm. A pizza lunch will be served.
- Elections for Superintendent and Clerk will be held at the April 13 meeting.

See you there!

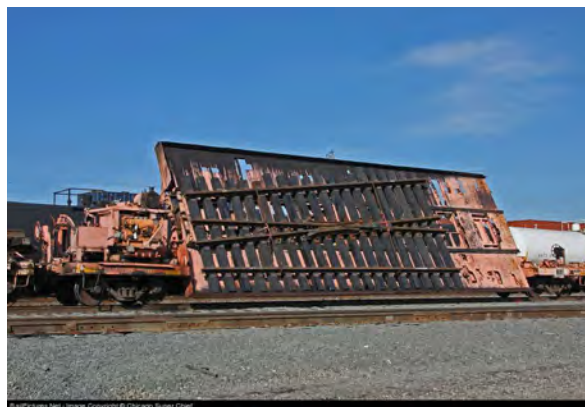


The FVD's Jim Osborn, Tim Kleimeyer and Leif Hansen pause for a photo at the **High Wheeler 2014** operations desk. Among many things these guys did for the show were, Jim handling the show's publicity and advertising, Tim the show's accounting, and Leif the job of directed vehicular traffic to and from Harper College's Field House loading doors during the show's set up and take down. HW photos by Walt Herrick.

Asked about the 2014 High Wheeler Train Show put on by our own Fox Valley Division, FVD Superintendent and High Wheeler Show Manager, Jeff Jarr, said, "I am very proud of the work done by this year's High Wheeler team and all our volunteers. They all did outstanding jobs. We received many compliments and good comments from our vendors, layout operators and attendees about the way the show ran this year. Everybody did great work." The show's publicity and advertising coordinator Jim Osborn added, "From an operations standpoint, this was one of the best run High *con't on p. 2*

Jim Allen's Fun Stuff

This is a photo of a special purpose flat car with reporting marks from either the Southern or possibly the SP. Here's a case when the model becomes the prototype as the big roads decided this "Snap Track thing" would work for them, too. The next step was to invent special rolling stock like this to move the stuff!



High Wheeler 2014 con't

Wheeler Train Shows ever. Everyone associated with it really enjoyed how smoothly it ran.” The only disappointing thing about the show was a drop in attendance no doubt due to the harsh winter weather experienced during both days of the show. Show workers hoped “Old Man Winter” would give us a break, but the opposite happened. FVD Paymaster Tim Kleimeyer said “There’s nothing you can do about the kind of weather we had.”

The High Wheeler team is excited about building on this year’s smooth running success, and is already starting to think about next year. Said Jeff Jarr, “We have an excellent system in place and the staff and volunteers to make it another great, well run show. Some early vendor and layout reservations have already been received, and several new vendors and layouts have approached us about participating next year.” Before saying “good bye” to High Wheeler 2014, a big “Thank You” goes out to all of our High Wheeler 2014 staff and volunteers for their excellent work. Now on to High Wheeler 2015! WH



High Wheeler 2014 seen from Harper College’s field house balcony. Vendors, layout operators and attendees appreciated this year’s show’s smooth operations.



FVD member, Ingrid Drozdak, won a “Best Display” award at this year’s High Wheeler with her beautifully done coffee table layout in Z scale. Little kids love this layout!



The Kid’s Rail Junction tables were always a popular place with lots of fun things for children to do.



Grampa’s “Kid Transporter” was built especially for transporting grand kids around High Wheeler. This year was the fourth High Wheeler for the Transporter and it worked just as well as ever.

You're Invited! by FVD Superintendent Jeff Jarr

You're invited! Yes, this is a personal invitation to you, and every other member of our great Fox Valley Division, to a "once in every eight years", model railroading and train extravaganza in our very own Fox Valley (and DuPage) Divisions' back yards!

I am speaking, of course, of the up coming **RailFun 2014** Midwest Regional Convention to be held **May 15-18**. It will be headquartered at the Best Western Plus Hotel in Schaumburg. **RailFun 2014** is a unique opportunity to see 33 of the Fox Valley and DuPage divisions' premier layouts, many of which are rarely open for visits. Want to operate? 14 layouts will be open for operating sessions. Want prototype trains? View the construction of a near exact replica of the historic Lincoln Funeral Train at Klope Locomotive Works, or tour the back shops of the Illinois Railway Museum's steam, diesel, car, electric, and their other departments. Want to learn some new techniques, or improve your knowledge? Sit in on one of the 21 clinics being offered. How about contests? We have two kinds: traditional NMRA judged contests, and popular vote (no paperwork) contests for both models and photographs. Non-rail? We've got it. Everything starts Thursday night with op sessions and ends Sunday with contest awards, professional photo shows by Metra's own Mark Llanuza, and more layout tours. As we've been saying, you get **3 and 1/2 days of great railroading, for only 45 bucks general admission!** Companions are \$20.00 and non-members are an extra \$10.00. You must register in advance to get these prices.

Check out the RailFun website for lots of information, photos and how to register. Contact myself or Jim Osborn if you have questions. Our contact information is on page 11 of this newsletter. I look forward to you accepting my invitation and taking advantage of one of the best benefits of being an NMRA member.

I'll see you at **RailFun 2014**. It will be a really great time! *Jeff Jarr.*

Jim Allen's Action-Reaction RR Layout of the Month

Action-Reaction layout builder, Jim Allen, stands next to his unique creation at High Wheeler 2014. Thus far the Action-Reaction RR has logged over 18,000 scale miles and more than 206 *real miles* of running at various mid-western train shows during the past three years! It is now a High Wheeler tradition. Article photos by Walt Herrick.

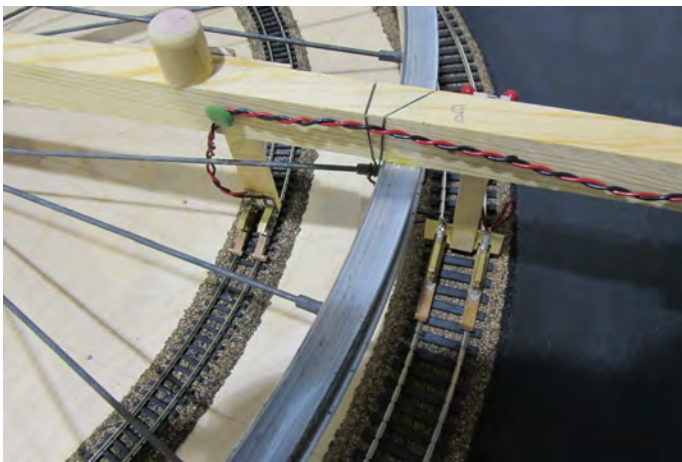


This month's "Layout of the Month" is probably the simplest and smallest HO layout you will ever see featured in this column. It is Jim Allen's Action-Reaction Railroad. Though simple and small, a lot of engineering and craftsmanship went into its building. "To make this layout work it had to be light, perfectly round, and flat," says Jim. He got the idea for his A-R RR from a similar layout in the window of Baltimore's Pro Custom Hobbies hobby shop in the 1970's. Years later he told a colleague at work about it and the colleague said it couldn't work. So Jim decided to prove him wrong. After much trial and error with most of the layout's components, the A-R RR was finished and debuted at High Wheeler 2010. Jim enjoys the fact that the A-R "never fails to get big smiles from its viewers. And then I get to talk model railroading and science with them, too." Science? "Yes, the whole layout is based on Newton's Third Law, "says Jim. So *that's* why its called the Action-Reaction Railroad. Duh! WH

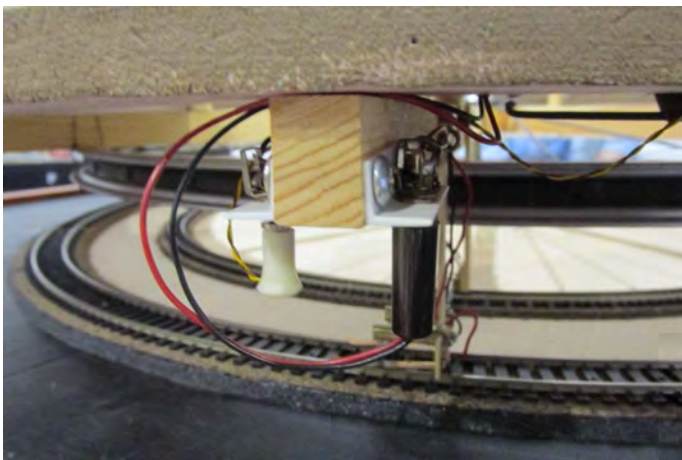
Jim Allen's Action-Reaction Layout of the Month con't



The "hat box" backdrop is removed revealing the layout's pine spoked "bench work" built over a 26" bicycle wheel (above). Knobs on the framing hold the "donut" track section in place (below).



The donut shaped track section comes off next. This section is made of foam board.



The photo above shows the electrical connections. Phosphorous bronze wipers route power from the loco to the tracks. The N scale track is used to power the grade crossing signals.



The base is made of 1/4" plywood painted flat black and trimmed with nicely stained and finished pine. The base was sized to fit the back of Jim's PT Cruiser.

Jim Allen's Action-Reaction Layout of the Month con't

As small as the Action-Reaction RR is, it is still quite photogenic thanks to Jim's beautifully done backdrop, scenery, and detailing.



Basic Layout Information

Layout Builder:	Jim Allen
Layout Name:	Action-Reaction Railroad aka the Cycle Rama Railroad
Layout Location:	Portable layout that travels to area train shows and swap meets
Layout Size:	37" x 37" base with a 35 1/2 " diameter "donut" layout top
Layout style:	Portable display layout
Layout scale:	HO
Construction started:	Late 2009 and finished in 3 –4 months
Type of bench work:	Bicycle wheel and wood spoked frame
Type of sub road bed/ road bed:	cork roadbed on 1/2 inch foam board
Type of track:	Code 100,15 inch radius Snap Track
Layout control system:	DC powered by a small MRC power pack
Electrical:	Layout is powered by a separate HO track below the wheel frame. Grade crossing signals are powered by a separate N scale track below the wheel frame. Phosphorous bronze wipers from slot cars pick up power from the rails. Brass wipers were originally used but wore out in a year. A small MRC power pack provides power.
Backdrop:	Two, 1 inch foam cylinders wrapped and topped with .020 inch styrene and painted sky blue acrylic. The back drop clouds and distant hills were hand painted.
Layout scenery:	Ground foam and natural materials for ground cover; modified Rapido "Totally Wired" telephone poles
Layout structures:	Working NJ International grade crossing signals.
Layout locomotives:	The current Life Like NYC FA1 is on its third year. A Stewart F7A with Kato drive lasted only a year. The layout needs a heavy loco to run well.
Layout rolling stock:	An Accurail NYC reefer and Walthers NYC caboose
Other:	To date over 206 <i>real</i> miles have been traveled by A-R trains. Check out Tim Warris's "The Coolest Layout at Trainfest" on YouTube to see the Action-Reaction Railroad in action three years ago.

Workin' on Our FVD RRs with Jim Allen

The Fox Valley Division of the NMRA is blessed with many truly outstanding modelers including three NMRA Master Model Railroaders (#410 David Crement, #413 David Leider, and #479 Don Cook) at least one member that is only one AP certificate away from his MMR (Jim Osborn comes to mind—are there others out there, too?), and a lot of other talented people. One of our most creative and skilled FVD modelers is Jim Allen. You know him from his Semaphore “Fun Stuff” columns, the two “Layout of the Month” articles we’ve run on him (this month’s and the December 2012 Semaphore’s) and numerous FVD monthly contests he’s won or placed in. Jim has a degree in industrial design from the University of Cincinnati and he knows how industrial equipment—including railroad equipment—is built and works. This is huge when producing accurate models. He also is an exceptional artist and modeler. But what is really amazing about Jim’s modeling is its *creativity*. He comes up with some of the most “off the wall, but totally neat” models you’ll ever see such as his Action-Reaction RR featured in this Semaphore, the paper HOn3 hopper seen in the contest section of this Semaphore, a barn made out of a lady’s wooden curio box, and the list goes on. Below are a few of Jim’s wonderful art and model creations. WH



“Bomber Gas” and “Milk Pail Frozen Custard” are two of Jim Allen’s more interesting HO structure creations. Bomber Gas is modeled after an actual gas station built in the Pacific Northwest. Jim couldn’t find an HO scale B-17 like the prototype so he substituted a DC-3. Both models have interior lighting.



The Rio Grande Southern never had a Garrett nor did any US railroad. That didn’t stop Jim from bringing one to the US via the above On3 model. Only two thirds done, #250 should be appearing on a contest table at the NMRA National in Cleveland this summer.



RailFun 2014 mascots Al and Winfred are Jim’s creation.



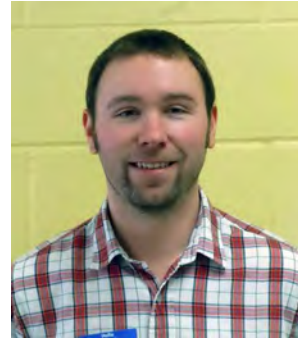
Who would have thought to make a barn out of a wood curio box? Jim did!



This drawing of a Burlington Zephyr demonstrates just one of Jim Allen’s many artistic talents.

February's Clinic: How the CP Replaced a Bridge by Ed Oom

FVD members were treated to a great photo essay on how the Canadian Pacific Railroad replaced its Duck Creek Bridge near Dubuque, Iowa by photographer Ed Oom. Ed's presentation included hundreds of photos and some short movies on how the contractor replaced an old 1897 steel truss bridge with a modern through girder bridge in only twelve hours. This clinic was a true prototype education for those who attended and totally fascinating. The Fox Valley Division extends a big "Thanks!" to Ed for presenting it to us on February 16th.



February's "Hopper Train" Contest Winners

February's "Hopper Train" contest drew nine varied entries from our members. Entries received included those of single cars, multiple cars, coal hoppers, covered hoppers, etc. MMR David Crement took first place with his EBT train of a wood chip and 3 coal hoppers, Jim Allen took second place with his HOn3 open hopper made of paper (!), and MMR Don Cook placed third with his train of covered hoppers. "Great work!" to our winners and all those who entered the contest. See all of Jim Osborn's contest entry photos at the FVD web site.



MMR David Crement's East Broad Top, First Place hopper train featured a wood chip hopper, old wooden hopper, and two steel hoppers all from the EBT. As with all of his East Broad Top models, David's cars were beautifully scratch built (or built from his own molds), painted, weathered and modeled from EBT plans and photos.



2nd Place went to Jim Allen for this HOn3 hopper made from a paper kit. Most of the nice detailing and weathering for this car came already printed on the car's sides. Only the brake wheel, trucks, lettering, couplers and some wood framing were added.



MMR, Don Cook, was our third place finisher with this mix of covered hoppers of various sizes and from various roads including his own favorite, the Great Northern Railway.

Note: no monthly meetings or contests in March or May due to High Wheeler and RailFun, so our last contest this modeling year is in April. It is a good one: "Diorama".

Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

How Not to Enter the Monthly Model Contest by Walt Herrick

Normally "Mike's Minute" is written by Mike Hirvela. This month I've asked him if I could be his guest columnist as I have a story to tell on myself. The story involves Mike so I don't mind using his column to tell it!

The story begins late last spring (you know, that time of year when it turns *warm*?). FVD Achievements and Contests Trainmaster, Jim Landwehr, had announced his 2013-2014 contest schedule. There, on February 16, 2014, was the contest I'd been waiting for—hoppers. Being a dyed in the wool, card carrying eastern coal road (the Western Maryland Railway to be exact) fan, I was a happy man. Then I remembered that in February I'd be in Florida with my wife visiting her dad. "Darn!" I thought, "I really would like to enter that contest!" I ended up writing it off as one of those things that just wasn't going to happen.

Fast forward seven months. It's the first week in February and I'm in Florida in the middle of a hopper painting and decaling project I brought down to work on in between all the other stuff we do when we are down there. I had asked Will Westfall in January to mail me some real coal from his pot belly stove for making coal loads. Will (and my wife) thought I was nuts, but the coal came three days later in perfect shape wrapped up in Saran Wrap inside an old LaBelle kit box. That first crazy idea gave me another crazy idea. Maybe I could *mail* my hopper contest entry back to Illinois in time for the contest! This is where Mike H. comes in.

Ring, ring! "Mike, its Walt."

"Hey, Walt."

"I've got a little favor to ask. If I mailed you six Western Maryland hoppers for the FVD hopper contest, would you enter them for me?"

"(Momentary silence) Uh, sure, but there'll be nobody here at home to receive them."

"Hmm. Let me do some calling around tomorrow and I'll get back to you."

The next day I called the local UPS store and found out I could UPS the hoppers to Mike without them requiring him to sign for them. They'd just be put inside his front door. Problem solved. I called Mike back that night and he agreed to take the hoppers to the FVD meet and put them on the contest table. I thanked him profusely since I also reckoned he would have a hopper entry of his own to set up on Sunday besides mine, which he did.

Now all I had to do was finish six hoppers. It was a major scramble, but I completed them only a day later than I had hoped. That extra day cost me an extra \$35.00 as I had to 2nd day Air the hoppers to Mike so he'd get them on the Friday before the contest. The UPS guy said the hoppers will make it on Friday so I was happy despite the sticker shock with the UPS fee. I called Mike Friday night. "Did you get my hoppers?"

"No."

"No?"

"No."

"Did you check inside your front door?"

"Yes."

"And no hoppers?"

"Correct."

"AHHHH! I'll call UPS tomorrow."

Which I did only to have them tell me their records showed my hoppers being delivered to Mike's house at 2:30 pm on Friday.

"Tell 'em they're lyin'," said Mike. "I got no hoppers." AHHHH! I called UPS and they said they'd put a tracer on my hoppers. I waited all day Saturday for a call either from Mike or UPS but none came. I was getting a bit frazzled. At that point I could have cared less about the contest. I wanted my hoppers!



Finishing the hoppers was a major scramble.

I finally reached Mike about 8:30 that night. "Your hoppers arrived sometime this morning. I was going to be gone all day so I had my son come over and check. He found them about 11:00 am inside the front door. "Thank goodness!" I told him, "I owe you dinner at Dan's when I get back. In fact, bring your son. "

Thinking back on this little adventure, I've come to a couple of conclusions: 1) When my wife asked, "Do you really think this is a good idea?" I should have said, "No hon, you're right, it's not a good idea." What did I say? "Sure it's a good idea. Nothing ventured, nothing gained." (Did I tell you I tied for 4th place with five other entries?) 2) If you want to mess up a perfectly relaxing week in Florida, enter a modeling contest by mail, (make that UPS) at the last minute.

RailFun 2014 Preview



Hey Al, what do ya say we give everybody a little preview of what's in store for them at RailFun 2014?

Winfred, that sounds like an excellent idea to me!

OK, then. Here you go everybody!



One of the country's finest layouts in any scale, the Reid brothers' N scale Cumberland Valley, will be on a RailFun Layout Tour.



Mike Richdorf's huge HO scale N&W layout will be hosting a RailFun Op Session featuring big steam and diesels haulin' coal.



Jim Osborn's beautiful CNW Western Division will be hosting both an Op Session and a Layout Tour at RailFun. The layout is HO scale.



A host of Illinois Railway Museum equipment including these two classy CB&Q diesels will be available to see in the museum's special, not to be missed, Prototype Tour for RailFun attendees.



Pete Walton's large Great Midwest HO layout is a scenery and structure lovers delight. It will be on a Friday night RailFun Layout Tour.

The RailFun Midwest Region Convention is May 15-18 at the Best Western Plus Hotel in Schaumburg. Don't miss out, *register today!*

Candidate Bios

At our April 13th regular Monthly meeting we will elect a new FVD Superintendent and Chief Clerk. Below are the bios of the candidates that are running for office as of this writing. Both are incumbents.

Jeff Jarr, candidate for Superintendent. I have been privileged to be FVD Superintendent the past two years. I have been involved in model railroading for about 40 years. My father got me interested in the hobby when I was twelve and together my father and I have built seven model railroads over the years. I model the CNW and currently have a large layout under construction which occupies most of the basement of our home. I became a member of the NS&W Division in 2006 and served as refreshments “chairman” and NS&W Modular Layout Coordinator, as well as being elected Paymaster. After the NS&W and FVD merged, I served as FVD Assistant Superintendent and our NS&W Modular group became a 100% NMRA membership group. We continue to show our layout at various train shows throughout the year. I have made many new friendships during my time in the FVD, and I would be honored to be elected to another term as your Superintendent.

Leif Hansen, candidate for Chief Clerk. I have been a member of the NMRA since 1985 and would like to continue contributing my services to the Fox Valley Division to keep it running in an efficient and productive manner. I have very good computer and keyboard skills which are key qualifications for this position. I have held this position for the past ten years and have enjoyed the work which are also important qualifications for the Chief Clerk. I will continue to be able to devote the time necessary to attend the various meetings and functions required of this position. I look forward to serving another term as Chief Clerk of the FVD, and would appreciate your vote on April 13th.

2013 – 2014 Meeting Schedule

2013-2014 orange Meeting Schedule cards were mailed to members the last week in August. The remaining months’ schedule is given below and on the FVD web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org. *Any schedule changes or additions are posted on the FVD web site as soon as they are made known to the web master.*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
April 13, 2014	Rock molds/scenery techniques by George Trandel	Diorama	1:00 pm start. Lunch provided. <u>FVD officer</u> <u>elections.</u>

May 15 - 18, 2014 **Rail Fun 2014** Mid West Region Convention hosted by the FVD In Schaumburg, IL. FVD volunteers needed. Contact Jeff Jarr at jjarr@comcast.net or 773-286-8755.

Note: there will be no May FVD monthly meeting in lieu of the Rail Fun convention being hosted by the FVD.

July 13 - 19, 2014 **NMRA National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio.** Check the national web site www.nmra.org and *NMRA Magazine* for further information.

NMRA Web Sites

Fox Valley Division	www.foxvalleydivision.org
High Wheeler 2014	www.highwheelertrainshow.com
Railfun 2014	www.foxvalleydivision.org/2014railfun/welcome.html
Midwest Region	www.mwr-nmra.org
National	www..nmra.org
2014 National Convention	www.2014cleveland.org

Fox Valley Division Board Contact Information

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*Do you have a question or two? Visit our website at: www.foxvalleydivision.org.
 Or, call or email one of us above. We're here to help you!*



*"3 1/2 days of trains for only \$45
 bucks for early registrants! That's
 a deal, Al, a real deal, for such a
 great convention, yessiree!"*

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 north-east 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.

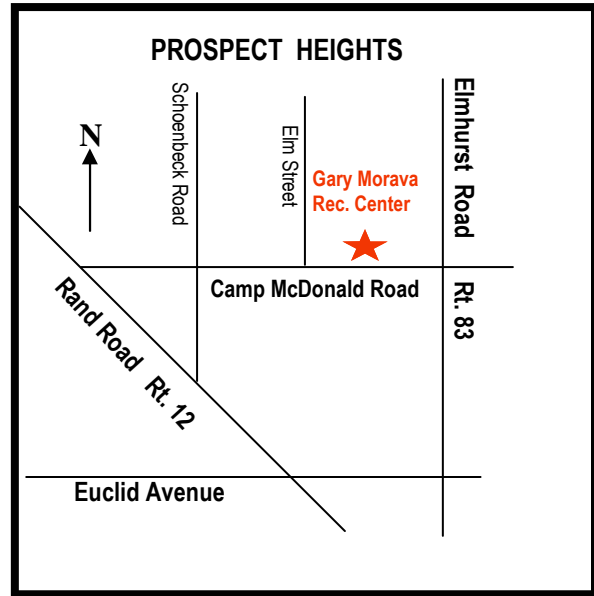
FVD general meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm. Each meeting features a clinic, model contest, information of interest to the membership, and a time for socializing. Outings, layout tours, and operating sessions are also held 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 the rest of this year's meeting schedule.



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