



THE SEMAPHORE

May 2015

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Annual Meeting Recap Elections & “The Future of High Wheeler”

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Reminders! 1) This is your last Semaphore until September. 2) Look for your orange FVD 2015--2016 schedule card in late August. Have a great summer everyone!

The 35 plus members attending the FVD division's April Annual Meeting on April 12th voted by unanimous proclamation to elect Bob Shlemon, Jr., Assistant Superintendent, and Tim Kleimeyer, Treasurer of the division. Both men were re-elected to two year terms. Superintendent, Jeff Jarr, thanked Bob and Tim for their past service and for running for office again.

In the “Future of High Wheeler” open discussion that followed the election, members voted to continue to sponsor the HW train show which the division has presented to the public since 1978. They also agreed to support the show by volunteering to provide the labor needed to produce a quality, well run event. Because of the uncertainty of having Harper College available for the 2016 show, various contingency ideas were discussed. As it turned out, Harper notified Jeff Jarr in late April after our division meeting to say their gym would be available for us on the 2016 dates the FVD requested. WH



High Wheeler 2016

There will be a High Wheeler Train Show at Harper College again in 2016. Show dates are March 5 & 6 with set up on March 3 & 4. The college informed the FVD in late April of its intention to make the 2016 dates available to the division ending months of speculation about what would be happening with the train show due to an earlier Harper policy change in renting its facilities to outside groups.

Midwest Region 2015 Spring Convention

The Midwest Region Convention was held in Manitowoc, WI April 16 – 19 this spring and “a good time was had by all” the FVD members who made the trip north for the festivities. At the convention FVD members made their presence known in their service to the region and by winning or placing in the model and photo contests. Jim Allen, Mike Hirvela, and MMR David Leider all took home well deserved awards for their modeling and photography. See the upcoming MWR Summer *Waybill* newsletter for the complete awards list and photos of the contest winners. A special moment at the convention occurred during the Saturday night banquet when the FVD's Bert Lattan was presented a plaque acknowledging him for his excellent and long 15 year service to the region's as its Secretary. That's Bert on the right in my photo receiving his plaque from a grateful MWR Region President, Paul Mangun. WH



Layout of the Month: Jeff Hershman's Hershey Park Railroad

Article and photos by Walt Herrick

At the FVD's regular monthly meeting in April, our newest member, Jeff Hershman, volunteered to have his model railroad be featured in this issue of the Semaphore. An HO modeler for 47 years, Jeff switched to hi-rail O scale in 2002. "I wanted a bigger scale to work with, and to try a different way to have fun with my trains," says Jeff. The result is definitely one of the most unique layouts you'll ever see. Jeff's five (yes five) deck Hershey Park Railroad layout fills the 12 x 16 foot basement of Jeff's split level home in Northbrook. The lowest deck is just inches from the floor and the highest deck is about a foot from the ceiling. On each deck is a loop of track for a train to run on. The lowest deck is a 4x6 foot portable layout built on 2 inch pink foam. Up until a few years ago the portable layout was taken to various train shows such as High Wheeler for display. Jeff no longer takes the layout to shows, but now uses it as a permanent part of his basement layout. On Jeff's layout you will see whatever suits his fancy, including anything having to do with Hershey chocolate, drive-in restaurants and Corvettes which are just a few of his many interests. There are dozens of vignettes on the layout depicting everything from a fully animated Mel's Diner to a jug band concert. Humor and whimsy are presented in various ways all over the layout. For example, Jeff fired up a blue smoking steam locomotive during my layout visit. He asked what the smoke smelled like, but I couldn't put my finger on the fragrance. It turned out to be Hershey's hot chocolate! Jeff has installed push button switches around the layout for people who visit the layout to turn on lights and activate other animations. He loves showing his layout to visitors. Jeff also loves MTH hi-rail O scale products and you will find a lot of them on his layout including locomotives, rolling stock, and accessories. To go along with his MTH equipment, Jeff has modeled scenery with basic materials such as paper-mache for mountains and land features. Jeff used his talents as an expert wood worker to create bridges out of dimensional lumber. The idea for Jeff is not to create exact scale models, but to build representational models out of common household items and just have fun with the layout. He has certainly done that!



All five levels of Jeff Herman's Hershey Park Railroad can be seen in this layout photo. An expert wood worker, Jeff built two truss bridges and the covered bridge from dimensional lumber. Fun, humor and whimsy are key ingredients of the success of the HRRR as evidenced by the blow up Goodyear blimp cruising over head.



An MTH Amtrak Dash 8 leads its train through the red arch bridge on level 4 of the Hershey Park Railroad. The locomotive is sound equipped, and the coaches are all lighted.

Layout of the Month: Jeff Hershman's Hershey Park R.R.



Jeff Hershman stands in the middle of his Hershey Park Railroad. The blue steam locomotive on the trestle smokes and the smoke smells like Hershey's hot chocolate!



There are dozens of vignettes placed throughout the layout. One of Jeff's favorites is this jug band concert on the village square.

Mel's Diner is fully animated with a lighted and detailed interior, flashing sign lights, roller skating car hops and rock and roll music blasting from the restaurant. Jeff couldn't resist putting Jake and Elwood--the Blues Brothers--rockin' out on the roof of Mel's.

Basic Layout Information

Layout name:	Hershey Park Railroad
Layout builder:	Jeff Hershman
Layout location:	Basement of Jeff's Northbrook home
Layout scale:	Hi-rail O
Layout size:	12 x 16 feet
Layout style:	Around the walls with peninsulas
Layout theme:	"Fun with MTH O scale trains"
Layout era:	Multi era
Construction started:	2002. Rebuilt in 2003 with no duck unders.
Bench work:	2x4" frame with plywood table top
Sub road bed/roadbed:	½ inch plywood with track laid directly on the plywood.
Track and turnouts:	MTH
Scenery:	Paper-mache or screen based mountains; ground foam; JMB trees; roads, streams etc. painted on the plywood.
Structures:	MTH; several scratch built bridges and trestles made of dimensional lumber.
Locomotives:	MTH
Rolling stock:	MTH
Control:	MTH power packs
Operations:	Display running on five levels
Favorite aspect of hobby:	Sharing the layout with visitors
Other:	Jeff was in HO scale model railroading for 47 years before going into hi-rail O Scale. He is also a member of the HO Mid-American Module Rail modular club based in Northbrook. Jeff's other interests include wood working, Corvette cars, jig saw puzzles, anything related to John Wayne, Major League Baseball (especially the Cubs), and prototype railroading.



Layout of the Month: Jeff Hershman's Hershey Park R.R.



The engineer of a CNW switcher pauses to check out the accident scene on the street below (above left). When the room lights go out on the Hershey Park RR things light up all over the layout. In the center photo above we see depot and platform lights illuminating the pitch black darkness. One entire wall of Jeff Hershman's basement contains part of his collection of rolling stock, vehicles, and miscellaneous memorabilia.

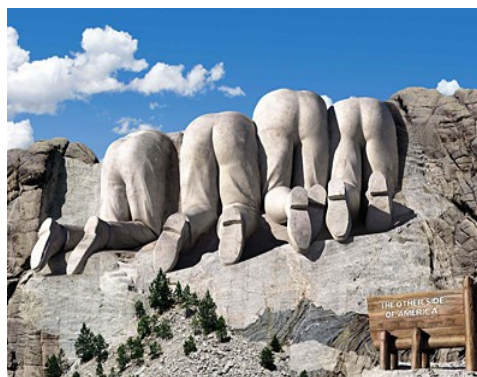
Lincoln Funeral Car, Then and Now



What a difference a year makes! The photo on the left shows the Lincoln Funeral Car under construction on May 16, 2014 during our Fox Valley Division hosted, Midwest Region RailFun Convention tour of Klope Locomotive Works in South Elgin, IL. The center and right photos show the car in Springfield, IL on display May 3, 2015 for the Lincoln Funeral Re-enactment commemorating the 150th anniversary of the event. The car was made available for public tours at the Re-enactment. The latest (June 2015) issue of *Trains* magazine has an excellent six page article on the building of the Lincoln Funeral car by the Klope company with lots of photos and historical information on the original car. Tour photo by Walt Herrick; Springfield photos by Kathy Herrick.

Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

In the interest of education (and also because I think it is hilarious), I submit the photo to the right. It is a photo of "the other side of Mt. Rushmore". I'm thinking few of you have ever seen the other side of Mt Rushmore, hence my submission. "But, Jim," you ask, "what does this have to do with trains?" Well, the nation's oldest continually running tourist railroad, the Black Hills Central Railroad, is based in Keystone, SD within a couple miles of Mt. Rushmore. It runs year round and in the summer runs steam. That's good enough for me!



Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

Your First Op Session

Last month I wrote about overcoming apprehensions about attending a formal operating session on someone else's model railroad where the host runs his model railroad similar to a real railroad. This month let's assume that you've been invited to participate in an operating session or "op session" as it is more commonly referred as. You said "yes", but are wondering what to expect. Let's start with what happens before the op session begins. Your host has probably set up a schedule of op sessions on his layout some months in advance and has gotten the schedule out to his regular crew and others. Prior to the op session, your host has spent time on the layout fixing any mechanical and electrical problems, and setting up the layout for the op session. This means he's done any staging and paper work needing to be done before trains run.

Initially, you may not know much about the railroad you're going to operate on. Doing a little homework about the layout might be helpful. Ask someone who knows the layout for information about it such as its scale, its size, the type of railroad being modeled, what part of the country the railroad is located in, the type of traffic it has, the type of operating system it uses, etc. A good way to get information is to car pool with another attendee and ask questions on the way to the layout. Often participants will have dinner before the op session and that's another opportunity to ask questions. Besides layout information, you'll also want to know where to park, what entry to use to get into the house, and where the layout is. Some guys post directional signs on the lawn, near the entry door, and on the walls leading to the layout. After dinner, you proceed to the railroad's location with a goal of arriving 15 minutes prior to start time. That way, you have some time to look over the layout, and meet the owner and some of the operators.

The owner will usually hold a briefing before the session starts. He'll cover what the railroad represents, the planned operating scheme, the latest updates or changes to the layout or its operating scheme, and a refresher on the basics, i.e. where the rest room is, what to do if you derail or lose power, where the refreshments are, etc. MMR Don Cook calls this briefing the "Sermon on the Mount," but kidding aside, there is needed information given out in the "sermon". Next, operating assignments are handed out or spoken for in bid fashion. Being a rookie, you may want to request a conductor or "co-pilot" to go with you on your first run to show you the ropes. (By the way, it's a good idea to let the layout owner know you are a rookie during introductions so he can plan to give you help during the night as needed.) Though all op sessions are different, that's typically what happens at formal op sessions before trains start to roll. See you September with what to do on your first run during your first formal op session. Have a great summer!

April's Clinic and Contest

In April, MMR Don Cook was our clinician and provided us with a look at the Soo Line Railroad using slides from his personal collection and some slides from the 1940's and 50's taken by others. Don is an excellent photographer and his slide show was full of nice roster and on line shots of the old Soo. Many shots were taken in the 70's when Don did much of his railfanning with camera in hand. Big thanks go to Don for pinch hitting at the last moment when George K. got stuck in Europe and could not present his clinic. George *will* be with us at the May meeting to present his clinic, "A Primer on a DCC Layout with JMRI logic". We only received two entries for April's contest "Open Load Spanning 2-3 Cars". Both entries were in O scale. Bob DiDomenico took first place with his "beams on two flat cars". Jim Wyruchowski took second with his "gun barrel on three flat cars". Congratulations guys! May's contest is "An Unfinished Project of Your Choice". Every-body's got to have one of those, right? Let's see them in May! WH



MMR Don Cook's Soo Line slide show (using real slides!) was a hit with FVD members in April.



1st place April contest winner Bob DiDomenico's "beams" entry is seen in the center photo, and Jim Wyruchowski's 2nd place "gun barrel entry is in the bottom shot. All above photos by Jim Osborn.

Member News

As reported on page 1 of this Semaphore, the FVD's Bert Lattan has retired as Secretary of the Midwest Region of the NMRA having served for 15 years in that capacity. FVD member, David Johnson, was appointed as the new MWR Secretary at the MWR Board Meeting in Manitowoc, WI on April 19th. FVD "Congratulations!" to both Bert and David....Bert, as our Membership Services Train master, reports that the division's membership dropped by one to 216 since March 2015. WH

2014-2015 Meeting Schedule

The Fox Valley Division's 2014-2015 meeting schedule comes to an end with our May regular meeting May 17th. **We hold no monthly meetings in June, July and August.** Our first regular monthly meeting for 2015-2016 will be Sunday, September 20th at 1:30 pm at the Gary Morava Rec Center in Prospect Heights. FVD Board approved dates for the 2015-2016 modeling season are given below. Clinic and contest information for 2015-2016 are not yet available. WH

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
May 17, 2015	Primer On a DCC Layout with JMRI logic	Unfinished Project of your choice	

Note: there are no FVD monthly meetings in June, July or August

August 8, 2015	FVD Summer Outing to the Illinois Live Steamers miniature railroad. This outing is by reservation only . Contact Superintendent, Jeff Jarr, to reserve a spot. Jeff's contact information is on page 7 of this newsletter.		
August 23 - 29, 2015	NMRA National Convention in Portland, OR. Check the convention's web site: www.nmra2015portland.org for complete information.		

Modeling Year 2015 - 2016 Regular FVD Monthly Meeting Dates

2015 – 2016 meetings are normally on Sunday afternoons starting at 1:30 pm at the Gary Morava Rec Center in Prospect Heights. Next season's clinic and contest schedules are not yet available.

September 20	December 13*	March 5&6 (High Wheeler 2016)
October 18	January 17	April 17
November 22	February 21	May 15

*1:00 pm start with a holiday pizza lunch

NMRA Web Sites

Fox Valley Division	www.foxvalleydivision.org
Midwest Region	www.mwr-nmra.org
National	www.nmra.org
National Convention	www.nmra2015portland.org



About the Fox Valley Division

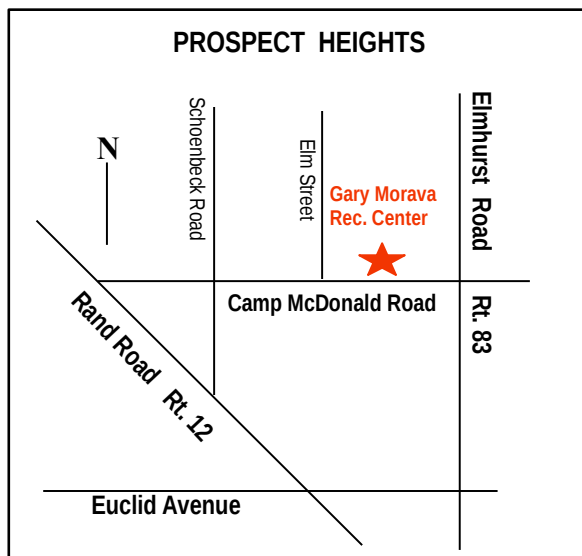
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane, and Lake Counties in northeast Illinois. About 220 members of varied ages and modeling 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 monthly 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 monthly meetings. To promote the hobby of model railroading, the FVD sponsors and runs the large train show called "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 and bring a friend. We'd love to see you. Also visit us on the web at:

www.foxvalleydivision.org.

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr, or any FVD Board member listed below. We are here to help!



The FVD's monthly meeting is at the :

Gary Morava Recreation Center
110 Camp McDonald Road
Prospect Heights, IL. 60070

Our regular meeting time is:

1:30 to about 4:00 p.m.

2014 – 2015 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 6 of this newsletter.

FVD web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org

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