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

The Semaphore

Fox Valley Division • MWR • NMRA

Open Mike Night!

Have an idea that's saved you a lot of time, money, or effort that you've wanted to share but were afraid that you didn't have enough information to fill the time for a "normal" clinic? Maybe you've got several unrelated quick tips that might not seem to go together in a single clinic? Well, December's meeting will give you the opportunity to share without fear: this month we'll have an open mike. We'll allot about 10-15 minutes for each mini-clinic, and still leave plenty of time for questions. So bring your favorite tip and share it with the other FVD members. Visual aids, as always, will be helpful. Contact Dave Leider so he can coordinate the presentations. (847)253-7484 or sooauthor@netzero.net.

Don't have a favorite tip? How about a favorite question? Chances are someone else at the meeting has had the same problem and figured out a solution. If not, there'll be some two dozen hobbyists to try to puzzle it out. So come to the December meeting and hear how others have solved problems you may have encountered. We'll leave plenty of time for questions and refreshments.

In addition, we will have some tables in the back reserved for auction/swap meet purposes. So bring those buildings that worked so well in you layout

when you first built them, but don't fit now. How about all those extra cars or parts that you bought "just in case," but no longer need? Bring them to the December meeting! Looking for that hard to find car or part? Bring lots of money to the December meeting. Odds are somebody bought one years ago on speculation and no longer needs it.

See you there!

Railfun '06

The Midwest Region Spring 2006 convention, named Rail Fun '06, hosted by the DuPage and Fox Valley Divisions, will be held at the Hyatt Regency Woodfield in Schaumburg, Illinois on April 28, 29 & 30, 2006. The convention registration form is included in this month's *Semaphore*.

Hey, but don't just attend the convention, there's plenty else to do. We're still looking for Layout tours, and we always need the V-word (volunteers).

This Month's Contest

The December contest is train-related photography. So, if you consider yourself a Skrebneski, an Ansel Adams, or just a regular Joe who happened to take a lucky shot, bring up to 5 slides or photos to our meeting. We had great participation in October, and I'm looking forward to this month. In the January issue of the *Semaphore*,

This Year's Remaining Events

December 18, 2005
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center
General Meeting

Clinic – 5 minute clinics – Open Mike Night
Contest– Train-related photography

January 15, 2006
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center
General Meeting

Clinic – Gary Chilren:
Modeling Industrial Sidings
Contest– Passenger Cars

February 19, 2006
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center
Clinic – Details to be announced
Contest– Structures

March 4-5, 2006
9:00am-5:00pm, Harper College
High Wheeler
No Contest

April 23, 2006
1:00pm, Gary Morava Center
Annual Business Meeting
Contest– to be announced
Contest– Maintenance-of-way cars

April 28-30, 2006
Midwest Region Convention
Woodfield Hyatt
Details– to be announced

May 21, 2006
Field Trip – Operating session at
Ted Schepf's "Fox Valley O Scale"
No Contest

I'll try to have pictures of the pictures that win. So dust off those 5x7s and 8x10s and share your expertise in capturing prototype details or how well you've captured the "reality" of your or someone else's layout, rolling stock, structures, or diorama. And the prize money can't hurt. See you then!

Hints, Tips, and Innovations

Share your expertise with others
Rick Saviano- Publications /
Membership Trainmaster

Can you remember your first layout? Was it a Christmas gift? Was it set up under the tree? Or was it wrapped up? "My" first layout was set up under the tree: American Flyer and Plasticville U.S.A. (those original Plasticville kits, in their original boxes, would have brought in a small fortune on E-Bay, but that is another topic altogether). I say "my" in quotes because even though I was told it was mine, I wasn't allowed to touch the first or second layout until I was much older.

Now, before you think this is just a trip down memory lane, here's the first big question: How did that first layout influence your current layout? Do you run the same lines? Do you go to the same cities and industries? Did you run mixed services then, or did you have separate freight and passenger trains? If that first layout had turnouts, did you use them to pick up and drop off cars, or to pull one train over to let an express go through? The first

permanent layout my father built was close to 4'x8' with plaster of Paris cloth strips making the mountains and hiding the pylons for the grade separation. The scenery blocks were in our minds, so the fact that the siding on the dairy farm almost touched the sidings at Union Station, even though they were hundreds of miles away, was not a problem. Thinking back, it was a pretty good first layout. It had a few sidings for interest, and even has hidden staging, in a way.

I know that my first "real" layout (the one that I actually had design input on) included the Rico Station, and after I got engaged the RR line became the L&R RR - the Linville and Rico Railroad (it was only a year ago I found out that there was a Linville Station).

And here's the second question: That joy that you felt when you saw your first train (model or otherwise), have you done anything to impart that joy to anyone else? This is my grandson's first Christmas, and the train under our tree is a toy train (Dogs and kids don't really work with floor level Z layout) with remote control. We've got a simple loop, with no sidings (maybe next year). I can't begin to describe the feeling I got when I saw his jaw literally drop when he heard "All aboard" shouted from the cab and saw the train start moving. Since he can't talk yet, I'm not sure whether I impressed him or scared him, but we'll find out soon enough. He sat there watching for quite a few minutes, which, using a child's fast clock was the equivalent of almost an hour.

Call for Layouts!

Layouts needed for 2006 NMRA MWR convention

One of the important parts of any convention is the layout tours. They provide inspiration for others' layouts, and give you the perfect opportunity to share your layout. Add your layout to the tour! Contact Rich Sweet at Rsweet@nactiv.com or (847)550-1399

After he saw the train under the tree, I thought I'd show him the "city" in the basement. I had to bring a few rolls of wire downstairs, so I let him "help" by holding the wire while I held him. The smile on his face because he was helping grampa was superceded only by the look on his face when he saw what I was building. Even without running the trains, he couldn't take his eyes off the buildings and track. Time will tell, of course, but I think I've started a young model railroader on the right track. What we as NMRA members, and as model railroad enthusiasts in

general, have to do is impart that joy to others, especially the younger ones. Video games are turning people (not just children) into tactile-deprived creatures that barely feel the sense of accomplishment beyond "reaching the next level." We are already seeing evidence that woodworking skills are quickly diminishing. Many people actually believe that assembling flat-pack furniture is the same as building furniture. Teach someone the basics of zip texturing, and you'll see a look on an adult very similar to that of my grandson's.

Share your Expertise!

Send me your virtual Layout tour or tips and tricks

Contact me, Rick Saviano at Saviano@att.net. Be sure to include the words "semaphore" or FVD in the title. I'll include your article in the next *Semaphore*.

The biggest challenge I'm facing is my son-in-law. He was brought up on video games, so it may take time. With any luck, he will get interested in playing TimeSaver. Again, only time will tell. I'll have to figure out how much is genuine interest and how much is him humoring me.

So, what was the biggest influence to your layout? Send me an email: Saviano@att.net

Fox Valley Division Board of Directors

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High Wheeler's coming!

We still need volunteers for High Wheeler

Ticket sellers, floorwalkers, set up and teardown. And plenty of timeslots still exist. Sign up at the December meeting.

Holiday Party!

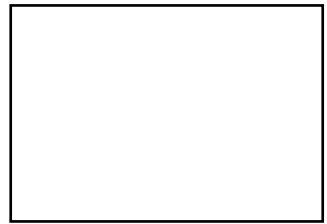
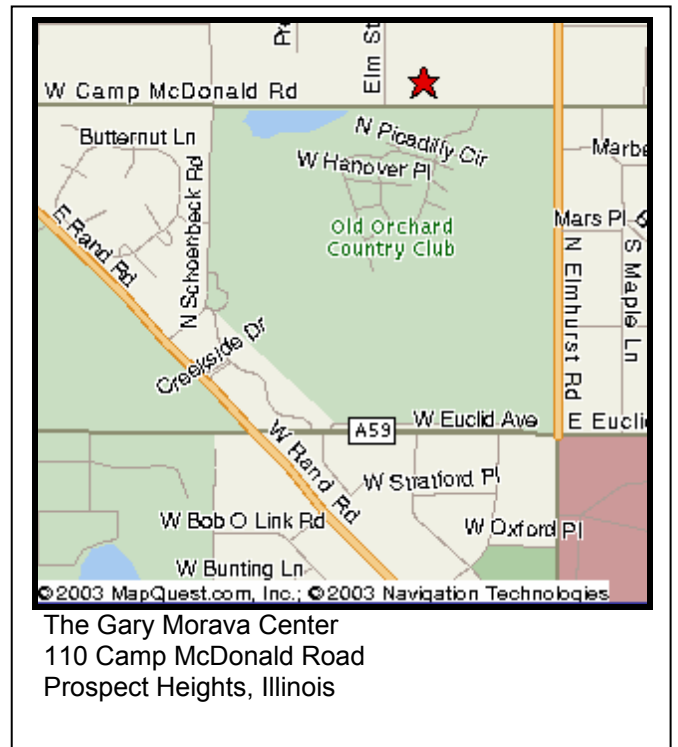
Save time in January for our Holiday Party

Details are being worked out even as this is being printed. We'll have a sign up sheet at the December meeting, or contact Richard Sweet at Rsweet@pactiv.com or (847)550-1399

Location for General Meetings

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

The meeting schedule is listed in this Semaphore, and will be posted on our web site, www.mwr-nmra.org/fvd. If there are changes to the schedule, or if additional information needs to be disseminated to the membership, you will find it there.



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