

# THE SEMAPHORE

October 2015

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



## FVD's Huntley Layouts Tour

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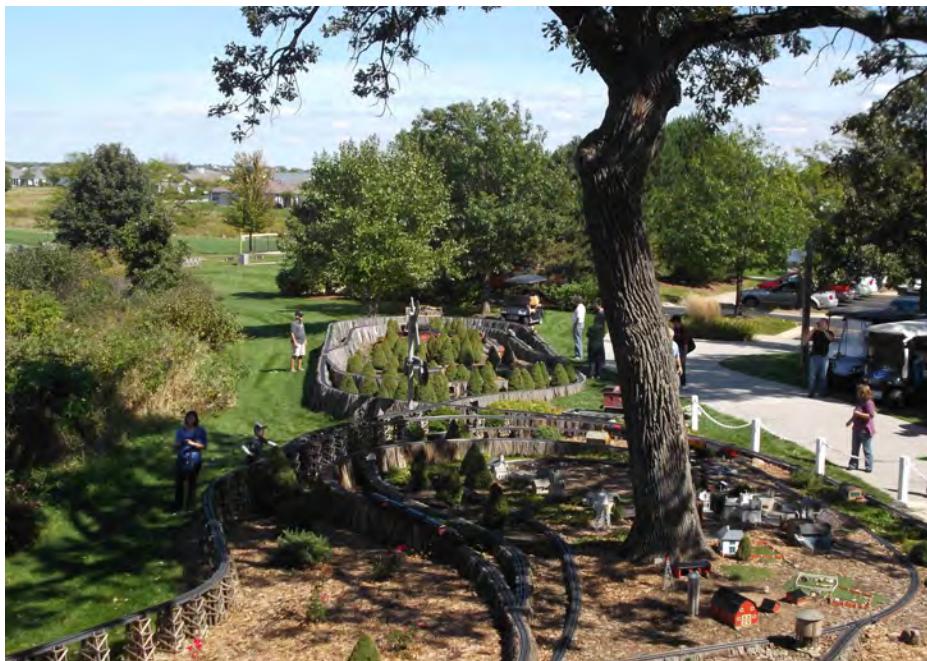
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**Next FVD Meeting:**  
**Sunday, October 18**  
**1:30 pm at the**  
**Morava Rec Center in**  
**Prospect Heights**

**Contest:** Animated  
Model of Your Choice  
**Clinic:** White Pass &  
Yukon RR video pres-  
entation

The FVD's first meeting of the 2015-2016 modeling season was held on September 20th in Huntley, Illinois at the KV&EC Model Railroad Club and Pete Walton's private Great Midwest layout. All of the railroads were located in close proximity in the large Sun City retirement community in Huntley. September 20 turned out to be a gorgeous fall day and more than 35 FVD members and several other guests showed up for the event. *con't on p.2*



Mike Hirvela took this shot of two thirds of the KV&EC's outdoor G scale layout from the club's overlooking balcony. Jeff Jarr, Tim Kleimeyer, George Tranel and his guest are watching the action at the far end of the 25 x 60 foot layout. The weather was perfect for the FVD layout tour event and first monthly meeting of 2015-2016.

## Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

A Dual Gauge, Live Steam Speeder? In one of my more interesting "Fun Stuffs", it appears that a live steam locomotive has been installed on a track speeder to replace its original gas powered engine. How the power is transmitted to the wheels is anybody's guess, but I suspect some sort of gearing and train drive off of one of the live steamer's axles is involved. Also, note the axle under the center of the speeder with a hub to attach highway wheels for off rail transport, and the really tall smoke stack.



## FVD's Huntley Layout Tours con't

*con't from p.1* The KV&EC club has four layouts: a huge G scale railroad in the back yard of the club, a 20 x 21 foot indoor N scale layout, a 25 x 30 foot indoor hi rail O scale layout, and a 24 x 36 foot indoor HO scale layout. All of the layouts were open and operating for the club's Fall Open House that day. FVD member, Pete Walton, also opened his large, beautiful HO scale Great Midwest layout especially for the FVD tour. By all accounts everyone enjoyed their time in Huntley and seeing how some of the FVD's "country boys" build their model railroads. My thanks to Mike Hirvela for supplying the photos for this article. *Walt Herrick*

Don Cook, MMR, and Dan Sylvester check out the street running scene on Pete Walton's Great Midwest layout during the September 20th FVD Huntley Layouts Tour. Mike Hirvela photo.



## Layout of the Month: Tri-County Model Railroad Club Article and photos by Walt Herrick

I had gotten myself into a little jam. I needed to start the October Semaphore pronto but I no idea what my "Layout of the Month" was going to be. I mentioned this to Jim Allen at the FVD's Huntley Layouts Tour and he said,

"Why don't you do our club layout?"

"The one up in Wisconsin? That'd be illegal. They're not in our division," I replied.

"But they're really close, its an NMRA club, and at least three members are from the Fox Valley Division."

"Sold—but only because I'm desperate!"

In a week, I was on my way to Union Grove, Wisconsin and the Tri-County Model Railroad Club. I had no idea what to expect, but I was pleasantly surprised when I walked into the club. "This is a first class operation," I thought to myself. And it really was. *con't on p.3*



It's a Tuesday work night in late September and the layout room of the Tri-County Model Railroad Club is a beehive of activity. Note the large space, excellent lighting, nicely done backdrop, finished white walls with plaques, photos and interesting framed railroadiana adorning them.

## Layout of the Month: Tri-County Model Railroad Club

The club had an ideal location right next to a CP branch line in a former Piggly Wiggly store. Parking and access were excellent, and the interior of the club was large, bright, well maintained, and carpeted. Besides the layout room, there were other smaller rooms that provided ample storage, and meeting space.

Since moving into the facility in 2008 the members had done a great job utilizing the large room they had for their layout. It was obvious good planning had gone into the layout. It was well laid out with appropriate space devoted to main lines, yards, towns, cities, various scenic features, industries, several very large industries, and nice wide aisles. Nothing appeared "crammed in". All the basic bench work was completed and very solid, as were the back drops, fascia, and about 85% of the track. Well done scenery and structures covered half the layout. My visit to Tri-County was on a Tuesday work night and I could see why so much work had been accomplished—a dozen or so members were busy working on projects all over the layout. It was an active place! Among the larger projects in development are signaling the layout and extending the backdrop higher over the entire layout in a unique "gull wing" configuration that would include layout lighting under the "wings". If you ever get a chance to visit the Tri-County Model Railroad Club, do so. It is well worth the trip to the quaint little town of Union Grove, a short drive across the Illinois border on Route 45.



You'll see nicely done (though not yet finished in this case) mini scenes at the Tri-County Club like the one above, as well as large industrial scenes like the beautiful ore dock and Great Lakes ore boat in the scene below to the left.

### Basic Layout Information

Layout name:	Tri-County Model RR Club
Layout builder:	Tri-County Club members
Layout location:	Former Piggly Wiggly store in Union Grove, WI
Layout scale:	HO
Layout size:	45 x 45 feet
Layout style:	Large irregularly shaped island with wide aisles
Track lengths:	2000 total feet of layout track with a 425 foot mainline and 125 foot branch
Layout theme:	Various Class I roads in Southern Wisconsin
Layout era:	Mixed eras
Construction started:	2008
Bench work:	1x4 grid with 2x4 legs
Sub road bed/roadbed:	cork on 3/4 inch plywood
Track and turnouts:	Commercial code 83 flex track and turnouts
Scenery:	Plaster over shaped foam board. Commercial ground covers, trees and foliage. Epoxy water
Structures:	Kits, kit bashing, with some scratch built structures
Locomotives:	Various manufacturers with many having sound
Rolling stock:	Various manufacturers kits and RTR
Control:	NCE DCC with wireless throttles
Other:	The Tri-County Club has 30 active adult members and 4 jr. members. Memberships are currently open.
Web Site:	<a href="http://www.tricountymodelrailroadclub.com">www.tricountymodelrailroadclub.com</a>

## Layout of the Month: Tri-County Model Railroad Club



Tri-County's industrial base is sizable and varied. In the upper left photo is the small, old Hissen Mine which mines the rarest of minerals, un-obtain-eum. In the upper right photo is a sprawling, modern ethanol plant. Below on the left is a large city and passenger terminal scene under construction. The club decided to move the terminal's support facilities to the front of the scene for easier switching. Below, a colorful Frisco MP-15 holds on the main line at a red board.



## Modeling Tip from the Tri-County Model RR Club

One of the neat things you notice on the Tri-County Model Railroad Club's layout is how nicely scenes and buildings are arranged and positioned around the layout. Granted the club has a lot of "real estate" to work with, but members have used it wisely and well. One way they do this is by using mock ups to help plan scenes. On the right is FVD and Tri-County member, Jim Allen, with a mock up of a mill he is going to scratch build. Jim's beautifully done mock up gives him a view of almost exactly how the structure will look and fit on the railroad. To Jim, this 3-D planning is well worth the effort. He encourages you to try mock ups especially in planning "difficult" scenes. WH



## Jeff Jarr to Retire

Memo to Fox Valley Division members: Next year FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr, is retiring from three key posts he currently holds in the division. Besides being our Superintendent, Jeff is also our Ways and Means Trainmaster and Interim Clinics and Programs Trainmaster. (The term “Interim” probably no longer applies since he’s done it for more than a year now!) If you’re wondering what our Ways and Means Trainmaster does, it’s the big job of being in charge of planning and running the division’s two day High Wheeler Train Show the first weekend in March each year. Says Jeff, “I’ve had a nice run, but four years are enough for me. It’s time for someone else to take the reins now.”

All of Jeff’s jobs are important ones in the division and we can be grateful to him for giving us his notice so far in advance. He’ll retire from his Ways and Means position right after the 2016 High Wheeler in March of 2016. He’ll retire from his interim Clinics and Programs position in May 2016. And he will not be running for re-election as Superintendent in our April 2016 FVD election. **So, the FVD is officially looking for several individuals to step up and assume the Trainmaster positions, and/or run for FVD Superintendent next April.** We encourage you to contact Jeff or any FVD board member with your thoughts, questions, or ideas on replacements for Jeff. Contact information is on p.7 of this Semaphore. WH

## Mike’s Minute by Mike Hirvela

### Why I Belong to Four Model Railroad Clubs

Editor Walt asked me tonight why I belong to so many model railroad clubs. Good question, Walt. I guess for me it boils down to several things: the people and camaraderie, the opportunity to learn more, and I just enjoy model railroading. For the record, I belong to four clubs: the Illinois Great Northern Model RR Club (IGN) in Zion, the Bluff City Modular Engineers (BCME), the Fox Valley Division (FVD) of the NMRA (I joined the North Shore and Western Division before it merged with the FVD), and the Tri-County Model RR Club in Union Grove, Wisconsin. In every case it was both my interest in modeling and the people that got me involved and kept me in the club. With the IGN it was Don Cook MMR, Bob Jacobson and the late Bob Deckert who got me involved in that club in the early 1990’s just after I had retired from the Navy. Bob Deckert and I, in fact, became close friends. About the same time Ladd Mazur and his son Bob introduced me to modular railroading at the brand new Waukegan Modular Railroad Club and I found I really enjoyed it. The Waukegan club became so large we formed the BCME and amicably split off from the original Waukegan club. I have been going to Trainfest with the BCME guys since the early 1990’s. Don Cook also encouraged me to check out the NS&W Division of the NMRA and I’m glad he did. The opportunity to learn and camaraderie in the NMRA has been really great. Finally, a few years ago Jim Allen and I heard about a “new” club up in Union Grove, Wisconsin and decided to take a look. We ended up joining the Tri-County Model RR Club which had moved to Union Grove from Kenosha. So there you have it in a nut shell. I suppose I could add that I belong to my own “club of one” with my basement sized, CNW model railroad. Though all of this activity can get to be a little much at times, I do love it and all the folks associated with it. After all, model railroading is fun and more model railroading is....*more* fun!

## A note about our 2015 - 2016 monthly contests

Our 2015 – 2016 monthly contests are listed on page 6 of this Semaphore. These contests were requested by FVD members last year to our Achievement & Contest Trainmaster, Jim Landwehr. One general request Jim received were contests featuring dioramas and/or some type of scenery component. As a result, Jim has specified “in diorama format” on most of this year’s contests. Also specified is that the diorama must have at least 144 square inches in surface size except for the April diorama which is a mini diorama and must be exactly 12” x 12” in size. We have some neat contests this year. Have fun with them and please enter one (or more) of them! We love to see your work because it helps us all become better modelers. We had no contest in September due to our Huntley Layouts Tour so our first contest is October 18th. It is: “An Animated Model of Your Choice”. WH

## Member News

Member Services Trainmaster, Bert Lattan, is pleased to report that Nick Hoffmeister from Elmwood Park has joined the NMRA/FVD. We look forward to welcoming Nick at one of our upcoming monthly meetings soon! Bert also reports that as of September 30, our FVD membership stands at 209 which is *up* 3 from August.

## 2015 - 2016 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

Except as noted under "Other", all meetings are held from 1:30 to 4:00 pm at the Gary Morava Recreation Center, 110 W. Camp McDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070. Visitors are always welcome. **Important: clinics are subject to change without notice.** For the latest clinic and all FVD information, visit our web site at [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
Oct. 18, 2015	<u>Video presentation</u> on the White Pass & Yukon RR	Animated model of your choice <u>in diorama format*</u>	
Nov. 22, 2015	<u>Clinic</u> on "What Makes a Contest Photo a Winner" by Ingrid Drozdak.	Highway or railroad bridge with men working on the bridge <u>in diorama format*</u>	
Dec. 13, 2015	<u>Two prototype slide presentations</u> , "BN Coal Train and EJ&E" by Don Cook MMR	Holiday theme—any train related model that has a holiday theme <u>in diorama format*</u>	<b>1:00 pm start.</b> Pizza lunch.
Jan. 17, 2016	TBD—check FVD web site	Favorite model or prototype photo <u>taken by the member.</u>	
Feb. 21, 2016	<u>Clinic</u> on "Home built Plows and Flangers" by John Drozdak	Lighted railroad signal—signal bridge, grade crossing signal, etc. <u>in diorama format*</u>	
<b>March 5 &amp; 6 2016</b>	<b>High Wheeler 2016 Train Show</b> at Harper College in Palatine sponsored and run by the Fox Valley Division. Hours are 9 am to 5 pm each day. <u>FVD member volunteers needed.</u> Contact Jeff Jarr at 773-286-8755, or <a href="mailto:jjarr@comcast.net">jjarr@comcast.net</a> to volunteer. Thank you!		
	<b>Note: there is no regular March meeting, due to High Wheeler. Come to the show!</b>		
April 17, 2016	<u>Clinic</u> TBD by David Leider, MMR	12" x 12" mini diorama. Your choice of subject and scale.	<b>1:00 pm start.</b> Pizza lunch. FVD officer elections.
May 15, 2016	<u>Slide presentation</u> by MMR Don Cook on the prototype Milwaukee Road	Interlocking or street crossing tower <u>in diorama format*</u>	Last monthly meeting for 2015 –2016
July 3 – 10, 2016	National Convention " <b>Highball to Indy</b> " in Indianapolis, July 3-10. See the web site: <a href="http://www.nmra2016.org">www.nmra2016.org</a> for more information. Note there is no MWR convention this year because the CID, a Midwest Region division, is hosting the NMRA's National Convention.		

\*Contest entry must be presented on a diorama with a minimum surface size of 144 square inches. See page 5 of this Semaphore for details.



### About the Fox Valley Division

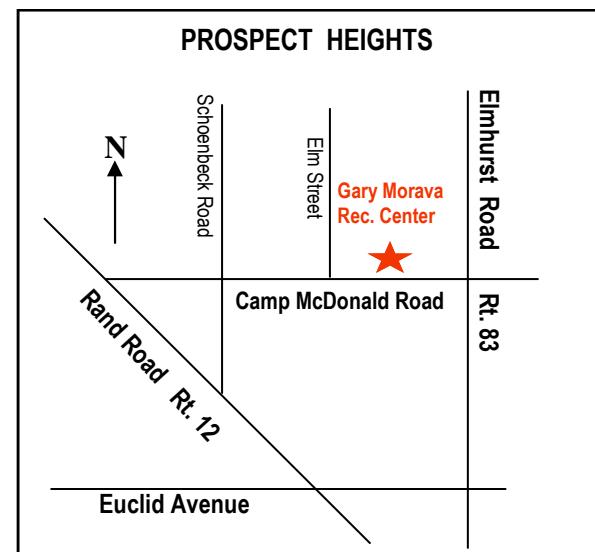
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, and parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 210 members of varied ages and modeling 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 Recreation 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](http://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.
- 2015 – 2016 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 6 of this newsletter.

FVD web site: [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org)

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