



# THE SEMAPHORE

March 2016

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



## Layout of the Month: High Wheeler's Award Winning Layouts Article & photos by Walt Herrick

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**Next FVD Meeting:**  
**Sunday, April 17 at 1:00 pm**  
**Morava Rec Center in**  
**Prospect Heights**

**ANNUAL ELECTIONS for**  
**Superintendent and Clerk**  
**will be held at this meeting.**  
**Please attend!**

**Contest: 12 x 12 inch exact**  
**Diorama of your choice**  
**Clinic: MMR Don Cook's**  
**slide presentation on "CNW**  
**System Wide"**



It's a Chinese Red meet! Paul Schultz's CB&Q low nose GP20s meet Rob Manley's SD24s on the HO scale **Mod-U-Trak** layout which was awarded "**Best of Show**" at this year's FVD High Wheeler Train Show. Below the big SDs sit next to box cars on the freight station siding as they patiently wait for clearance to proceed.

After a several year absence, the HO scale Mod-U-Trak Layout made a triumphant return to the 2016 High Wheeler Train Show by winning the "Best of Show" award, and deservedly so. From its scenery to its wiring, the Mod-U-Trak layout is simply *con't on p.*



## Elections Next Month!

As is done every year in April, FVD elections will be held at our **April 17th monthly meeting**. This year we elect a new Superintendent and a new Clerk as both incumbents are retiring. At present we have two candidates running for both the Superintendent's and the Clerk's positions. **Anyone else wishing to run for either of these offices must contact Leif Hansen as soon as possible (contact info on p. 7) to indicate his/her intention to run.** Candidate bios and photos will appear in the April Semaphore. The April Semaphore will come out the last week in March about a week earlier than usual to give members extra time to review the candidate bios. WH

## Layout of the Month: High Wheeler's Award Winning Layouts con't

con't from p. 1 outstanding. Every aspect of the Mod-U-Trak layout is built to a very high standard. Asked how the layout's excellent quality control is maintained, members often gave a one word answer: "Bob". That's Bob as in Bob Kosic one of the founding members of the HO Mod-U-Trak layout group which began back in 1983. When asked about the layout's QC, Bob is quick to point out that everyone in the group has high standards, so keeping the quality high is not difficult. The first layout Mod-U-Trak built attended more than 100 shows before being retired. Their "new" layout was ready for showing in 2008 and has since been to 15 shows. Eight of Mod-U-Trak's original founding members are still active and another five members comprise its current crew. Modules are stored in Bob Kosic's basement where regular Tuesday work sessions are also held—sessions which have produced the "Best in Show" layout seen at High Wheeler.

Following in the footsteps of HO Mod-U-Trak is the N scale Mini Mod-U-Trak layout, the winner of High Wheeler's "Best Layout" award. Mini Mod-U-Trak was formed by several HO Mod-U-Trak members who wanted to do the same concept in N scale. The result is another stunning scale model railroad. Once again every aspect of the Mini Mod-U-Trak layout is done to an incredibly high standard. The N scalers especially enjoy modeling prototype scenes and buildings. Second place in the layout category went to the excellent Northwest Trainmasters modular layout. High quality structures, scenery, track work and control systems are the hallmark of this layout which also was a big hit with High Wheeler attendees.

The **Northwest Trainmasters** placed 2nd in the "Best Layout" category. A CNW SD pulls a local freight under an old wooden highway bridge on their layout to the right.



Above Steve Cigolle pilot's Bill Denton's Santa Fe Chief over a unique double deck bridge on the N scale **Mini Mod-U-Trak** layout which won the "**Best Layout**" award. On the right, Amtrak pulls into the station for a brief stop. Most of the structures and many scenes in the Mini Moduttrak layout are modeled after specific Midwestern prototypes.



## Layout of the Month: High Wheeler's Award Winning Layouts con't

Great module and display modeling was produced by Pete Juengst (First Place Module), Jeff Jarr (Second Place Module), Greg and Jane Blau (First Place Display) and Gerry Boguse (Second Place Display). These excellent modelers showed what great things could be accomplished in smaller spaces.

Lake County Society Of Modular Engineer's **Pete Juengst** won the "**Best Module**" Award with his amazing harbor scene featuring 14 ships, numerous structures, and long bridges (right). First time High Wheeler attendees, **Greg and Jane Blau**, (below) brought their super fun "Pewaukee Road" Lego layout (middle right) to the show and then won the "**Best Display**"!



The FVD's **Jeff Jarr's** HO "Cardiac City" module (below) placed second in the "Best Module" category. Jeff's module is part of the North Shore and Western Model Railroad Club's layout. **Gerry Boguse's** N scale Southwest Santa Fe layout (below right) was second in the display category. Gerry used lots of real Utah dirt to create his layout's great southwest scenery and he scratch built his structures.



## Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

**Russia's LGN Locomotive.** Given Russia's vast gas reserves, it was only a matter of time before that country began to seriously look into the potential of LNG as a railroad locomotive fuel source. Trains pulled by LNG powered locomotive TEM19 started in 2013 on Russia's Golutvin-Karasevo line. Tests to date appear to be overwhelmingly positive. The TEM19 shown on the right has an interesting modular design feature. The LNG tank is a standard 20 foot container which allows for the quick replacement of empty tanks at service facilities.



## Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

### Your First Op Session: You're the Engineer, pt. 4—Ending the Run

Remember from last month, you're a rookie engineer on my Chicago and Northwestern North Shore Subdivision layout. You've been assigned to be the engineer for train #483, a second class freight running from Chicago to Minneapolis. On my layout this train actually runs from the Proviso staging yard representing Chicago, to the Butler staging yard representing Milwaukee. You've just crossed the border onto Wisconsin and are passing the Merkt's Cheese factory. Your conductor (you are running with a two man crew with yourself as engineer and me as your conductor) has contacted the DO (dispatcher) for clearance to the next city which is Kenosha, Wisconsin. Clearance is granted and you continue on to Kenosha.

Coming into Kenosha, you are advised to back off the throttle to slow the train for a nice, smooth stop at the yard lead. The brakeman makes the cut (uncouples cars) at the end of the Waukegan pick-ups to reveal the Kenosha cars so the local switcher can remove the SO's (set outs) for Kenosha and add the PU's (pick ups). A quick check of our train's paperwork shows no Kenosha cars in the block we picked up at Waukegan, so no additional switching (or "work" as railroaders call it) is required. Once the switching is done we're ready to depart. The DO is contacted, clearance is granted to Racine, and we're off. In Racine, the yard crew there goes through basically the same procedure with our train as the Kenosha yard crew did in Kenosha. This time the brakeman cuts the train at the end of the Kenosha pick ups to reveal the Racine cars needing to be pulled (removed from the train and set out in the Racine yard). When this is done and the north bound cars from Racine Yard are added to the train, we are ready to continue our run north. (I hope you can see how proper car blocking back at the Proviso staging yard has really helped the yard crews at the various towns along the line do their work.) Once again the conductor contacts the DO for clearance to our next and final stop: Butler Yard in Milwaukee.

Clearance is granted. Today the railroad is being particularly accommodating to us as we've hardly had to wait for anything! We throttle up but are careful to observe a written train order for a slow speed limit due to painters working on the Root River bridge at MP 65.0. Once through the bridge, we sound the horn for the Three Mile Road grade crossing, and then throttle up to get back to track speed. We pass the dusty Caledonia Quarry which is switched by another CNW train, and clatter across the diamond crossing with the North Shore at Ryan Road before taking the left track of the Wye at St. Francis. We head to Butler yard and yard the train (park the train in the yard) on the designated staging track. Our final duty is to report our arrival to the DO. After that our run from Chicago to Milwaukee with train #483 is over.

Not a bad run, eh? #483's counter-part east (south) bound is #282, the "Ojibwa," time-carded out of Butler for Proviso at 2 pm. Game to do it again?

## February's Clinic and Contest Winners

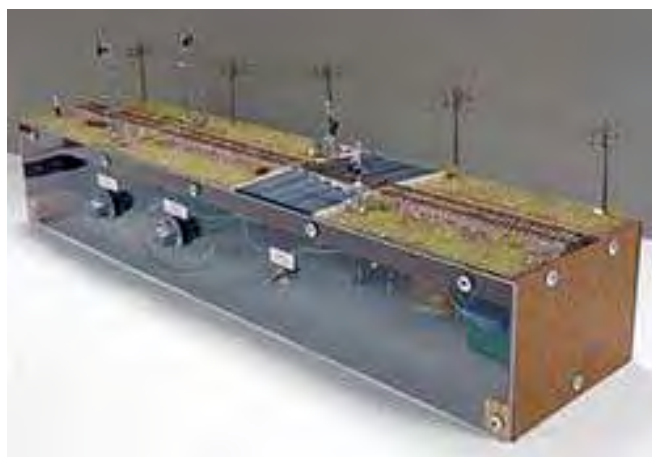
Expert railroad researcher, modeler, and FVD member, John Drozdak, presented February's excellent clinic on "Slugs and B Units". John drew upon his large slide collection to present a slide show with many photos of the slugs and B units he's photographed over the years. He then described how he built custom models of some of the slugs and B units he photographed using models he brought for display. Thank you John, for a great clinic on a unique subject!

Below are photos of February's contest winners. The contest was "Lighted Railroad Signal" on a minimum 144 square inch module. Jim Osborn took first with his outstanding "Wisconsin Track Scene, Leif Hansen was second with his "Dinosaur v. Signal" entry, and new FVD member Don Armbruster placed third with his "DIY Crossing Gate and Signals" entry. See all the entries on the FVD web site, [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org). WH



February's clinician, John Drozdak, presented a unique clinic on "Slugs and B Units". John's photo by Jim Osborn.

February's contest winner is shown on the right. It is Jim Osborn's beautifully built "Wisconsin Track Scene" featuring operating semaphores and crossing gates. Note the excellent craftsmanship in Jim's module, the plexiglass front which allows viewers to see the module's electronics and mechanics, and the fully strung trackside telephone poles. Leif Hansen's tongue in cheek "Dinosaur v. Signal" second place finisher is seen in the photo directly below. We haven't heard if the dinosaur or the signal won the battle. Don Armbruster's "DIY Crossing Gates and Signals" took third place and is seen below to the right. Don added lighting to basic Bachmann block and grade crossing signals which are electrically operated. The crossing gate also raises and lowers. Great job, everyone! Contest photos taken by Jim Osborn.



## Member News

Please welcome **Don Armbruster** from Lindenhurst, **Richard Donovan** from Richmond, and **Morrie Waud** from Long Grove as our newest Fox Valley Division members. Don is January's Rail Pass recipient. "Welcome Aboard Everyone!"...Membership Services Trainmaster, **Bert Lattan**, reports that as of the end of February, the FVD's total membership is up from January.... **Leif Hansen** and **Jim Landwehr** installed two model railroading displays in the Arlington Heights public Library. The displays appeared in the AHPL in February. **Mike Hirvela** and **Jim Landwehr** installed a similar display at the Mt. Prospect Public Library for viewing in January. **Jim Osborn** and **Tim Kleimeyer** contributed items for both displays. The displays promoted the model railroading hobby and the High Wheeler Train Show.... Members are encouraged to attend April 17th's regular meeting so they may vote for a new Superintendent and new Clerk in our annual FVD elections. Incumbents **Jeff Jarr** and **Leif Hansen** are retiring this year and four new candidates—two for Super and two for Clerk—are running for the offices. See their bios in the April Semaphore....Finally big FVD "THANKS !" to **all the volunteers** who made this High Wheeler Train Show the big success that it was. Especially popular this year was the "Kids Run Trains" program done by many of the show's layouts. The program allowed kids to actually run the layouts' trains with supervision and, of course, they loved it! WH



Here's one of three model railroading displays FVD members installed at the Arlington Heights and Mt. Prospect Public Libraries in January and February. Leif Hansen photo.

## 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, but per the NMRA's new policy, must join after three visits. 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>   |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| April 17, 2016 | Prototype slide presentation by MMR Don Cook on "CNW System Wide" | 12" x 12" mini diorama. Your choice of subject and scale. Diorama <u>must</u> be exactly 12 x 12 inches in this contest. | <b>1:00 pm start.</b><br>Pizza lunch. FVD officer elections. |
| May 15, 2016   | Clinic "Chicago Stock Yard & Packers by David Leider, MMR         | Interlocking or street crossing tower <u>in diorama format</u> *   | Last monthly meeting for 2015 -2016                          |

\*Contest entry must be presented on a diorama with a minimum surface size of 144 square inches.

**July 3-10, 2016** NMRA National Convention "**Highball to Indy**" in Indianapolis. See the convention web site, [www.nmra2016.org](http://www.nmra2016.org) for complete information.

(Note there is no MWR convention this year because the Central Indiana Division, a Midwest Region division, is hosting the NMRA National.)





### About the Fox Valley Division

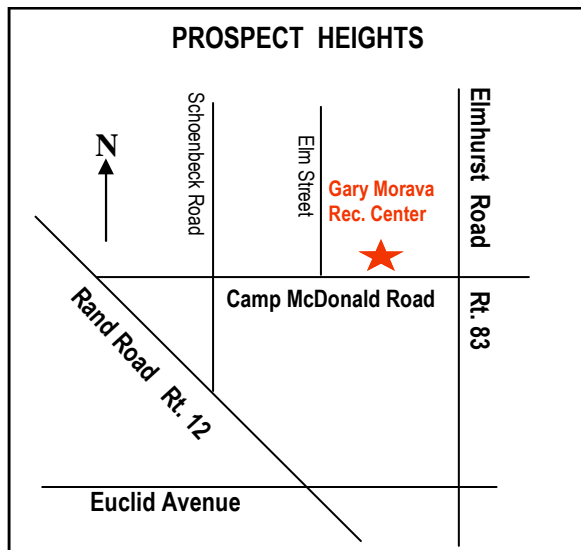
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, and parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 215 members of varied ages and modeling 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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