



THE SEMAPHORE

October 2019

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Jim Spice's New Sn3 D&CCW RR by Walt Herrick Photos by Jim and Cheri Spice

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Semaphore Editor:
Walt Herrick, Jr.
waltherrickjr@gmail.com

Next FVD Meeting:
Sunday, October 20
1:30 pm at the
Morava Rec Center in
Prospect Heights

Contest: One Structure

Clinic: Rail Travel in Japan
by Mike Wood



Fox Valley Division and especially former North Shore & Western Division members of the NMRA will be happy to hear that after 7 years of inactivity, **Jim Spice** has returned to model railroading. Jim took the excellent "early morning" photo of his new railroad above. Jim is well known as the long time Superintendent of the former NS&W Division (which is now part of the FVD), and to those who are active in the operations side of our hobby. *con't on p.2*

Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

Can anybody figure out what going on in this month's *Fun Stuff* photo? Why it's an HO scale model of workers unloading a *grain train, of course!* Pretty corny, huh? (Ouch!)



Jim Spices's New Sn3 D&CCW RR

For many years Jim was a driving force in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin modeling railroading. His beautiful and well known HO/HOn3 scale, 32 x 32 foot, Denver & Cat Canyon Western model railroad was host to scores of excellent monthly operating sessions, and was one of the top featured layouts of the 2010 NMRA National Convention in Milwaukee. But, in 2012 Jim dropped out of the hobby. His first wife had recently passed on and Jim's in-terest in radio controlled aircraft—both air planes and helicopters—had grown stronger. He remarried and moved to a new home in Island Lake. His Denver and Cat Canyon was torn down. 2014 brought more changes when Jim and his new wife, Cheri, decided to move to Arizona following the brutal Illinois winter of 2013-14. Fast forward to early 2019 when a health condition was curtailing Jim's flying hobbies (he flies real planes as well as model planes and helicopters). The model railroad bug bit again and Jim found himself start-ing a new layout this time in Sn3. "I'd collected some Sn3 when *con't on p.3*



Besides having a great HO/HOn3 model railroad and being the long time Super of the former NS&W Division of the NMRA, Jim Spice (in wife Cheri's upper right photo) was also known in our area as an excellent back drop painter. He has given clinics on back drop painting at the NMRA division and national levels. To the right, D&CCW Shay #1 spots an empty wooden gondola at the Scheazal Company's ore mine. The mine (below right) is a good source of revenue for the railroad, extracting minerals that are used in producing the rare and costly "unabtanium" ore. Kits were used to model the mine, with Jim adding the excellent lighting effects. Below left is the primary reason for the railroad's existence: the large, sprawling Mesa Lumber Company mill in Mesa Flats. Jim built the mill's several structures mostly from BTS and Banta Modelworks laser kits. Track work on the new layout is hand laid codes 70 and 55 with some flex track in hidden locations and in staging. Jim has a half dozen Sn3 geared and rod, Paragon sound equipped locomotives, as well as a silver Galloping Goose.



Jim Spice's New Sn3 D&CCW RR

I still had the HO layout and I liked it. I like Sn3 now because it is bigger and easier to do detail work in at my age," says Jim. Construction began on the new layout in February 2019. As you can see from Jim's photos, he has accomplished a lot in less than a year. He estimates the layout is about one third finished at this point. It is great to see Jim Spice back in the hobby again even if he's 1700 some miles from Chicago these days! Jim encourages Fox Valley members to visit him and his new railroad whenever they're in the Mesa, AZ area. From the photos he's sent us, such a visit would be well worth it! (See Jim's contact info below right.)

The top photo below shows the beautifully scened west side of the Mesa Lumber Company, while the bottom photo shows the east side of the mill complex in early evening. The company's single stall engine house in is a busy place where locomotives and other mill equipment is maintained. The trees are scratch built and the realistic water is made of various mediums (gloss, matte, gel) over an envirotex base.



Basic Layout Information

Layout Name:	Denver & Cat Canyon Western Railroad Jim Spice
Layout Builder:	Special out
Layout Location:	building Sn3
Layout Scale:	19 x 26 feet
Layout Size:	Walk-in
Layout Style:	
Layout Theme/Locale:	Freelanced Colo- rado 3 foot gauge short line
Layout Era:	1930s and 40s
Construction begun:	February 2019
Bench Work:	Open grid and L- girder
Sub Roadbed:	3/4 inch birch ply wood
Roadbed:	Cork and special laminate (see this month's Modeling Tip)
Track:	Handlaid codes 70 & 55, with some flex track in staging and hidden track
Scenery:	Hard shell on foam with ground foam, real dirt and static grass ground cover. Hand painted back drops, and envirotex base water
Structures:	BTS, Banta etc. kits, kit- bashing, scratch built
Locomotives:	PBL geared and rod 3 foot narrow gauge locos with sound
Rolling Stock:	Kits, with some brass
Control:	NCE DCC; tethered & wireless throttles
Operations:	Car card system as used on Jim's former layout
Other:	Jim's layout is located in a special 19x26 foot hobby building where it shares storage, display and work bench space with Jim's other model hobby: radio controlled air craft.
Contact info:	Jim's email address is: coptercptn@gmail.com . His new (not up yet) web site is denvercatcanyon.com

Jim Spice's New Sn3 D&CCW RR



Above left is a long shot of the finished portion of Jim Spice's new Sn3 Denver & Cat Canyon Western Railroad. In the above right photo, West Side Heisler #2 is crossing the wood trestle over Mill Creek and is headed to the small yard in Mesa Flats. The Heisler is a PBL product and the trestle was scratch built.

Mike's Minute by FVD Superintendent Mike Hirvela

Friends once old are new again.

Since he retired and moved out of our area, former NS&W Division Superintendent, Jim Spice, turned his modeling attention to RC helicopters and other flying machines that replicated the "birds" he flew during his time in the Marine Corps. His pride and joy is a model of a CH-53, Super Stallion, the biggest "helo" the Marine Corps flies. Jim's model weighs 47 pounds, has a rotor diameter just over 6 ft, and with a turbine engine power plant, can lift over 50 pounds off the ground. There is video of Jim on YouTube remotely piloting his big bird model. But, I remember back in the day when Jim had a very nice D&RGW style HO standard gauge layout in his basement in Beach Park. He hosted regular op sessions in rotation with several operational railroads in NE Illinois and SE Wisconsin. I, among others, had the pleasure of running trains up and over Tennessee Pass on Jim's Denver & Cat Canyon RR for several years. Back then Jim had a dream of building an S scale, three foot narrow gauge rail-road in the loft above his garage in Beach Park. Sadly, life "stuff" intervened, and building that railroad remained just a dream. Until recently, that is. Jim today is building an Sn3 railroad at his home in Arizona. He e-mailed me photos of his progress on the new RR, and it looks to be just as nice as his previous layout, maybe nicer. Jim has an artist's eye. His painting and colorizing skills haven't lost a thing over the years as the photos in this month's *Semaphore* article on his new layout attest. We, of course, wish him continued model success. Because maybe, just maybe, we will now have a great new place to visit during one of our snow-bird trips to the southwest. What do you think, Jim? For now though, I'm going to go run some trains here in my Illinois basement. See you at our October 20 meet!



That's Pagosa Springs (above) and Salida (below) on Jim Spice's old Beach Park layout. Mike Hirvela photos.



September's Clinic and Contest Photos by Jim Osborn

Septembers Clinic: "CNW as I Knew It" (and more)

By Mark Llanuza

September's clinic was a real treat as local professional railroad photographer, Mark Llanuza (right) presented three excellent slide shows including shows on the "Erie-Lackawana Railroad", and "The CNW as I Knew It". Mark also did a short show with some of his photos of the UP's 4014 Bi Boy locomotive and a Metra bridge replacement project. Mark is a Metra employee and their "unofficial/official" photographer. **Thank you Mark for a great clinic! October's Clinic is "Rail Travel in Japan" by the FVD's own Mike Wood** who will be giving us a look at current rail activity in Japan. WH



September's Contest: Caboosees***

With eight fine entries, our September contest was a big hit. **1st Place** in the voting went to **George Mikowski** for his nicely done, kit-bashed, HO scale MoW caboose with interior detail (right). **2nd Place** went to **Bob Dominico** for his nice collection of O scale Pennsy cabooses (below middle). Finishing **3rd** was **Jim Osborn's** four HO CNW models featuring several different eras of CNW cabooses (below bottom). **October's Contest is "One Structure"** Bring in one structure of your choice, big or small, any scale, to our October 20 meet! WH



*****See all eight of the Caboose Contest entries as well as four "Show and Tell" items from our September meet in the "Contest" section of our web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org, your FVD information resource!**

Modeling Tip: Drywall Shims

This month's Tip comes from **Jim Spice** who has found a new material to make roadbed from: **drywall shims**. This wood fiber, cardboard-like material can be purchased at most big box lumber stores such as Home Depot or Menards. The product comes in 1/32nd inch thick, 1 1/2 inch wide strips. Jim laminates the strips with white or yellow glue to the thickness he desires to form his roadbed base. Jim says the shims are cheap, easy to cut and work with, and take spikes really well. Give them a try! WH



New At Our Meets! Show & Tells and Bull Sessions!

FVD members are invited to bring anything railroad related they want to “show and tell” members about to our monthly meets. If it interests you, it will probably interest others, so bring it on in! We’re also holding an informal “Bull Session” after every meet this year. Ask questions, talk about show and tell stuff, or just “shoot the railroading or model railroading breeze” following each monthly meet. You are invited to both of these new activities! WH



Member News

Membership Services Trainmaster, **Erich Abens**, reports we’ve had no new members join the FVD recently, but we have had four renewals...Former FVD Superintendent, **Jeff Jarr**, (right) and his sons spent several weeks in August fishing in Orr, Minnesota. From all the fishing photos he published on Facebook, you’d think there are no more fish to be caught up there! Kid-ding aside, Jeff and his sons are responsible fishermen and almost all of the fish they caught were caught and released...Jeff’s good friend **Mike Bychowski** says even though Jeff’s been doing a lot of fishing, he is making good progress on his home layout, too. WH



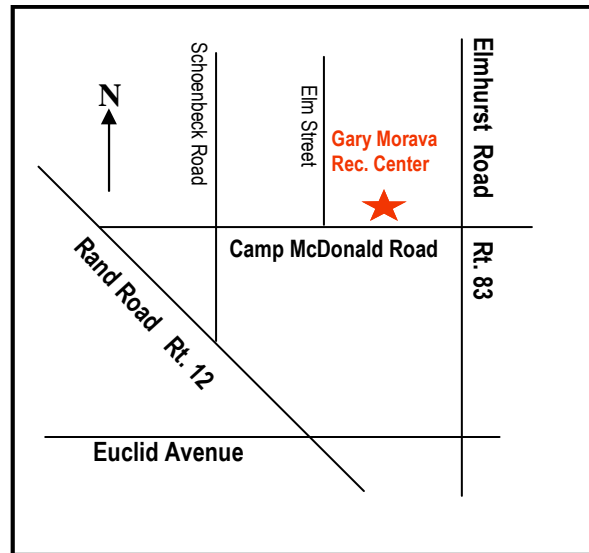
2019 - 2020 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held from **1:30 to about 4:00 pm** (except as noted under “Other” below) at the **Gary Morava Recreation Center, 110 W. Camp McDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070**. Visitors are always welcome per the NMRA’s visitor policy. Note that clinics are subject to change without notice. For the latest clinic and all FVD news and information, visit our web site at www.foxvalleydivision.org.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
October 20	Rail Travel in Japan by Mike Wood	One Structure—any size or scale	
November 17	Electronics and Model Railroading by George K.	UP 4014 or other Steam Photo—limit 1 photo	
December 15	Great Northern’s Mesabi Division by Bob Hamner	Switching Layout Track Plan—any scale	1 pm start with a pizza lunch
January 19	\$220 Laser Cutter by Gary Saxton	Open Loads—limit 4 cars	
February 16	Take Full Advantage of Your Layout Design Software by Steve Miazga	12 x 12 inch Diorama—any scale	
March 15	LCC by Paul Wussow	TBD	
April 19	Changing Scales by Jeremy Dummler	Weathered Model—limit 1 model	Annual elections 1 pm start with sub lunch
May 14—17	Midwest Region Spring Convention “The Peoria Rocket” in Peoria, IL Check the MWR web site www.mwr-nmra.org for more information.		
June 7	Crystal Lake, IL Diorama by Walt Herrick	Unfinished Project	Last meet for 2019-2020
July 12—18	NMRA National Convention “Gateway 2020” in St. Louis, MO For information, go to the convention’s web site: www.gateway2020.org .		



PROSPECT HEIGHTS, IL



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 190 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.

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, or any FVD Board member listed below. We are here to

- 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.
- 2019 – 2020 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 6 of this newsletter.

FVD web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org

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

Fox Valley Division Board Contact Information

Superintendent, **Mike Hirvela**
mhirvela1@gmail.com 847-360-9579

Assistant Supt., **Denis Zamirowski**
zam972@aol.com 312-590-6472

Chief Clerk, **Carl Wagus**
crwagus@mail.com 847-516-2016

Paymaster, **Tim Kleimeyer**
kleimeyert@comcast.net 847-426-4732

Achievements & Contests, **Jim Landwehr**
Jlandwehr901@yahoo.com 847-577-7984

Clinics & Programs, **Gary Saxton**
gbs46@sbcglobal.net 281-210-0414

Membership Services, **Erich Abens**
erich.abens@gmail.com 847-341-1120

Membership Promotions, **Mike Hirvela**
mhirvela1@gmail.com 847-360-9579

Public Relations, **Vacant**

Web Technologies, **Jim Osborn**
FVDWebsite@comcast.net 815-578-8315

Publications/Semaphore Editor, **Walt Herrick**
waltherrickjr@gmail.com 815-355-2003

Ways & Means—High Wheeler Show Manager
Vacant