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CPKC Holiday Train coming to Chicagoland

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Rebel Without a Train: One Modeler's Opinion

Beware the Model RR Industrial Complex!

Words: Chris Mattimiro

What's your favorite railroad, and which do you model? My heart skipped a beat when I was recently asked that question. What? Are modelers required to have an interest in an era or a railroad?? My short answer: I don't have a preference. I'm not a prototyper. I guess I'm either a fantasy railroader or a freelancer, depending upon whether my layout includes the *real* Santa Claus, or a *person dressed as* Santa Claus. Semantics matter.

The long answer: given the extensive width and breadth of the railroad industry it makes sense to narrow your focus if you're going to build a realistic layout. Hobby media (NMRA, Model Railroader, YouTube influencers) give the impression that many modelers follow a preferred, historically documented, U.S.-origin prototype. And have detailed, basement-spanning layouts. And enjoy operations. Paging through a year's worth of MRR at the library confirms these themes appear repeatedly.

But I'm not a lot of modelers. Or maybe the hobby influencers don't cover other modeling topics for whatever reason? What about railroads outside the U.S.? Portable, part-time layouts? Winter landscapes? Automation, lighting, other forms of animation? In other words, what about the attractions that got a lot of us into the hobby originally, i.e., Christmas Winter Wonderland locos with twinkling lights and skaters on mirrored ponds?

There's a spectrum of modeling enthusiasm, and resources. Some are more passionate about the hobby than others, willing to devote much time, space and money. For others like my grandkids, it's not the train, it's the stories you can tell with them in the span of an afternoon. My interests lie somewhere in between. I like to focus on the engineering aspects and build my layout as a part-time hobby.

What about you? How do you want to spend your time and money vs how does the "model railroad-industrial advertising complex" want you to spend your time and money? If you like the images of 'typical' modeling they bring you, that's all well and good. But don't worry if you don't. You may have to experiment to find the level of engagement you want. Personally, I'm still aiming for a part-time Christmas layout that'll look tastefully festive, let the kids run it while minimizing crashes, and include spinning skaters and a bike-riding Santa.

And if the NMRA really wants to expand membership, maybe consider opening the tent a bit more to allow and encourage other types of modeling. Brio wooden trains anyone?



This oughtta liven up the layout.
[Magnorail animated bicycling Santa \(video\)](#).



Mike's
Minute

Our 2024-2025 season continues November 17 at the Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Heights with a great topic on using dry powder glue for scenery and ballast. Our December meeting will be at the Glenview Public Library, with some holiday cheer. The locations for our monthly meetings in 2025 have been requested but not yet confirmed, so watch for notices. The reason for moving the meetings around is to stretch our resources (meaning funds). We can use the Glenview Public Library at no cost to us because we have members who live in the library's area, while the Morava Center charges us for the time we are there. I know we have other libraries in our area which probably have a similar program availability for their clients. Mount Prospect and Arlington Heights come to mind. I would ask our members to check the facilities in their area and let me know if we can use their meeting room for a future meeting. It would be greatly appreciated.

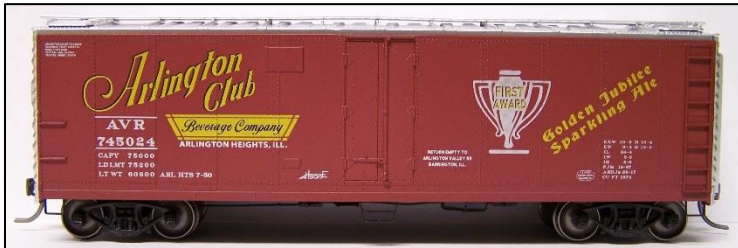
I encourage you to be at our meetings in person as the COVID restrictions have been removed, plus we have some interesting topics on the schedule. Also, because we have some tasty snacks available. However, if you still have reservations about getting together with other folks, we do have arrangements for participation via Zoom. Whichever method (in person or over the net) you select to participate, I appreciate you taking the time and effort to attend and contribute. There are several topics our Clinics and Programs guy, Gary Saxton, is pursuing. We will put the updated information on our website and Facebook page as soon as solid topics and dates can be arranged.

Oh, don't forget: Rich Mahaney, of North Central Region, has asked the MWR and divisions to help locate members who have presented topics recently, and would be willing to be presenters at the 2025 NMRA National Convention in Novi, Michigan. More info is elsewhere in this newsletter. This is something to consider as it will provide national exposure to your topic.

We have a volunteer position coming available. Our newsletter editor, Chris Mattimiro, has informed us he intends to relinquish the position of Newsletter Editor soon. So, if you think you have what it takes to do our newsletter, please let him or me know. Chris has done a wonderful job on the last several issues and he will be a tough act to follow, but here's your opportunity to shine. Additionally, there are Achievement Program points for this service. You don't have to be an expert, just have an interest and volunteer yourself. Chris will confirm it is rewarding. One of the things that makes this hobby great is we can have diverse opinions about modeling and railroads, even when you don't have a train.

Lastly, as we are nearing the end of the calendar year, I take this time to wish you and yours a very happy holiday season. May all your signals be green.

- Mike Hirvela



Arlington Heights Club Celebrates 50th With Custom Reefer

The Arlington Heights Society of Model Engineers is celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2024 with these custom run Accurail HO scale reefers for the Arlington Club Beverage Company of Arlington Heights, Ill. The cars are \$30 plus \$6 postage, or \$9 postage if ordering more than one. Checks can be made payable to "AHSOME" and mailed to 918 W. Colfax St., Palatine, IL 60067, or PayPal payments can be sent to superior1980@yahoo.com.

CPKC Holiday Train in Chicagoland

The Holiday Train runs Nov. 21 to Dec. 20 for its 26th year of spreading holiday cheer and raising money, food and awareness for people struggling with food insecurity.

Stops in the Chicago area:

- Franklin Park: November 26, 7:00 - 7:30 PM, <https://maps.app.goo.gl/47STdFHnyGyCrf4XA>
- Pingree Grove (west of Elgin): November 27, 9:00 - 9:30 AM, <https://maps.app.goo.gl/2j9y4favfSfnNGZo6>
- Gurnee: December 7, 5:15 - 5:40 PM, <https://maps.app.goo.gl/SqhUCy9CjEe3itox7>

American Authors and KT Tunstall are performing at the Franklin Park and Pingree Grove events. The Lone Bellow and Tiera Kennedy appear in Gurnee.

Schedule:

<https://www.cpkcr.com/en/community/HolidayTrain>



Steamy Videos on YouTube

Burlington's Spectacular Steam Program:

Zoom presentation of a book preview by the Center for Railroad Photography & Art

Jay Leno's Garage: Union Pacific's Big Boy

Locomotive: Jay Leno explores the world's largest steam engine.

Animagraffs – How A Steam Locomotive

Works: A thorough examination of a steam locomotive, using the mighty Union Pacific Big Boy as the example.

Next FVD Meeting

When: Sunday, November 17, 2024, 1:30 PM

Where: [Gary Morava Recreation Center, Prospect Heights](#) and [Zoom](#)

Presentation: *Using Sand with Pre-mixed Dry Powered Glue for Scenery and Ballast* by Eric Petersen, CID

Model Achievement Display: One load spanning 2 or 3 cars

Show and Tell: Display any category or train related item

got trains?



Riding one, running a model, laying track, assembling scale structures, debugging hardware/software, looking at art, visiting a museum, just thinking about them? Got an interesting story to tell? We're story spotters, looking for people to share their experience (or lack thereof)! Contact Chris Mattimiro, cmattimiro@outlook.com.



Model Celebration Calendar

Division Meeting Date	Contest
November 17	One load spanning two or three cars
December 15	A humorous load
January 19	Any vehicle
February 16	Any train photo
March 16	An unfinished project
April 17	A diorama
May 18	Anything related to trains

- **Monthly FVD Meetings**

Held the third Sunday of every month at either the [Glenview Public Library](#) or the [Gary Morava Recreation Center](#), the meetings are an opportunity to share information, either in-person or on Zoom. Here is the meeting schedule through the end of the year. See the full schedule on the [FVD website](#).

When	Where
11/17/24 1:30 PM	Gary Morava Recreation Center & Zoom
12/15/24 1:30 PM	Glenview Public Library and Zoom

- **Club Events & Shows** (click links for more information)



November 23-24, 9 AM – 5 PM. Baird Center, 400 W Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee WI. 170,000 square feet of model trains! [Trainfest Information](#)

[Great Midwest Train Shows](#) are held monthly at the [DuPage Event Center and Fairgrounds](#) in Wheaton. Information on both shows can be found on [Trainshow.com](#).

[Illinois Railway Museum Events](#) in 2024 Follow link below for more information.

- [Happy Holiday Railway](#), Weekends starting November 29 through December 22. Embark on a magical 40-minute train ride through the winter countryside with Santa Claus himself!

[Chicago & North Western Historical Society](#) 15th Chicago Area Get Together, Saturday, November 16, 2024, 3 pm to 8 pm, at Normandy Banquets located at the American Legion Hall, 210 West Butterfield Road, Elmhurst, IL. \$48 per person.

[Mad City Model Railroad Show & Sale](#) February 16 – 17, 2025 at Alliant Energy Center, Madison WI

Wanted: Clinicians for NMRA Convention 2025

Rich Mahaney, NMRA NCR President is looking for clinic presenters for the 2025 convention to be held July 14 through 19 in the Sheraton Hotel, Novi, Michigan. He's aiming for 200 sessions over the week. Contact Rich at hazmatrichm@aol.com or 269-214-4221.

Wanted: Trainmaster for Children's Hospital, Park Ridge

The nurse who built and supported two layouts on the pediatric floors has retired. The hospital is looking for someone to assume responsibility. Interested? Contact Chaplain Martin at hans.karrer@aah.org.

About the Fox Valley Division

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Contact any board member [here](#).

If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region, Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA). The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, as well as parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 180 members of varied ages and modeling ability belong to the FVD. Most modeling scales are represented in our division. Subscriptions to the Semaphore newsletters are free. Membership in the division is available through the NMRA at: <https://www.nmra.org/>

Monthly FVD meetings run September through May in-person and online via [Zoom](#). Each meeting features a clinic, model show, and

information of interest to the membership. Outings, layout tours, and operating sessions may also be held.

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. Visit us on the [web!](#)

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