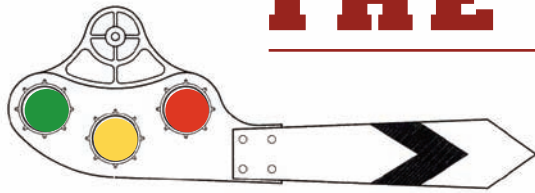


# THE SEMAPHORE



January 2013

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



## “HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE !”

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## Layout of the Month: Don Cook's Great Northern

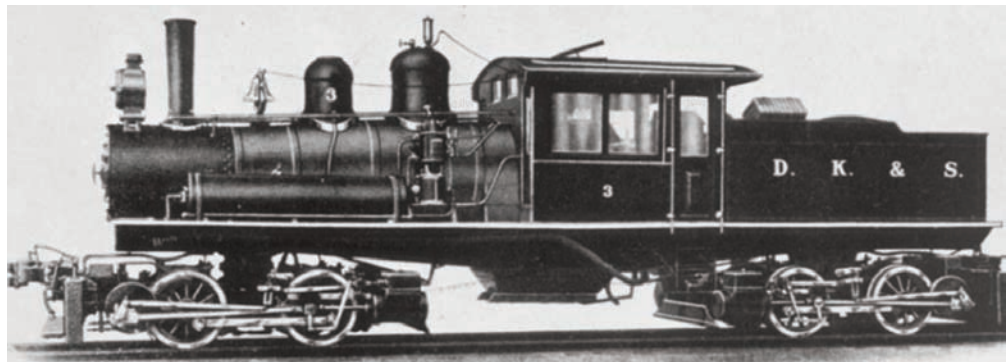
We're happy to begin the new year by featuring one of the Fox Valley Division's finest layouts in our Layout of the Month column. MMR Don Cook's Great Northern—Spokane Division has been seen in the Semaphore before. The FVD's web site also features Don's layout in its “Train Photos” section. Most of the photos in this article are new and were taken by Don (except for the first one which was taken by me). We invite you to enjoy the craftsmanship and attention to detail throughout this layout, as well as the variety of superbly finished GN motive power shown in this MMR's half basement size layout. Ed



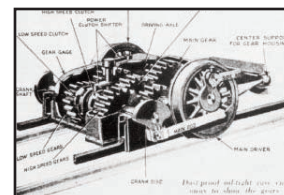
The first few flakes of an early January snow hit GN #400 as it exits a tunnel on Don Cook's Great Northern—Spokane Division layout. Don, and more than 2000 other members of the Great Northern Railway Historical Society, now own the famous prototype “Hustle Muscle” which was the very first SD45 produced by EMD in 1966.

### Fun Stuff

Davenport Locomotive Works duplex geared hybrid with two independently powered and geared trucks that swiveled with track curvature. A total production quantity of 5 built between 1912 -1916 in 3 gauges, 36", 42" and std. The one shown was standard gauge(4'-8 1/2")



Power Trucks



Gear Case

## Layout of the Month *continued*



Many rail fans and modelers consider the GN's orange and green diesel paint scheme to be one of the most beautiful of any railroads' diesel schemes. Two GP-7s display GN orange and green at its finest as they rush a reefer train full of Washington state apples east.

A U28B in the Sky Blue paint scheme and a GP 35 in the green and orange scheme head up an east bound fast freight. The Sky Blue scheme is the most modern GN diesel scheme represented on Don's layout.



An E-6 4-6-0 with a peddler freight has a green train order signal at Adrian Tower. For the past few years, Don's railroad has remained "stuck" in the steam/electric era by popular demand of his operating crew members.

A huge 5000 hp Class W electric locomotive and its train move west bound through Olds Junction. GN electrics not only add variety to Don's motive power fleet, they are an integral part of the operational scheme of the layout.



## Layout of the Month



The transition era is represented in this shot of a Mikado riding Don's scratch built turn table in front of his scratch built roundhouse with interior detailing and lighting.

Mikado #3244 with its large capacity, six axle Vanderbilt tender drift past grazing cattle at Ephrata.



We're in the stream era in this b&w photo. Note the brakeman flagging the road for a switching move, and the era appropriate telephone truck. The Triangle Cafe came from a Suydam card stock kit that was first produced in the 1950s. Don added interior detail and lighting.

These two Z-1 box cab electrics are headed to Appleyard. The train will switch to steam power there before continuing east.





The engineer of an old but well maintained consolidation waves “goodbye” to us as his train passes Ziegler's Zippy Zippers.

## Don Cook's Basic Layout Information

<b>Layout Name:</b>	Great Northern—Spokane Division
<b>Builder:</b>	Don Cook, MMR
<b>Location:</b>	Basement of Don's Waukegan home
<b>Layout started:</b>	Room prep done in 1985; bench work started in 1986. Some locos and rolling stock built prior to 1985.
<b>Scale:</b>	HO
<b>Size:</b>	17' x 28'
<b>Style:</b>	Walk around
<b>Theme:</b>	GN in central Washington state
<b>Era:</b>	Can vary—1949 steam/electric, or 1959 to 1967 diesel.
<b>Railroads represented:</b>	Great Northern Railway; Northern Pacific
<b>Bench work:</b>	L-girder
<b>Road bed:</b>	Homabed on ½ inch plywood
<b>Track:</b>	Atlas code 100
<b>Min. Radius:</b>	30 inches with easements
<b>Turnouts:</b>	Modified Atlas Customline #6; hand laid #8
<b>Max grades:</b>	.7% mainline; 1.2% Oroville Branch
<b>Control:</b>	NCE DCC
<b>Structures:</b>	Scratch built, kit built, kit-bashed with added detailing, and many with interior lighting and detail
<b>Scenery:</b>	Hard shell over card board strip base; ground foam ground cover; “generic” mountains and hillsides
<b>Back drops:</b>	Sky blue painted walls with large photographs of actual locales taken by Don
<b>Motive power:</b>	Brass, plastic; steam, diesel, electrics; most custom painted and detailed by Don
<b>Rolling stock:</b>	Plastic, wood, brass, resin; kits, RTR, and scratch built. Many custom painted and detailed by Don
<b>Operations:</b>	Sequential card dispatching system developed by Don
<b>Car Forwarding:</b>	Car cards
<b>Favorite aspects of the hobby:</b>	Structure building
<b>MRR influences:</b>	Linn Westcott. He was a true innovator in the hobby.
<b>Other:</b>	Though he continues to make additions and improvements, Don has declared his layout to be “finished”!

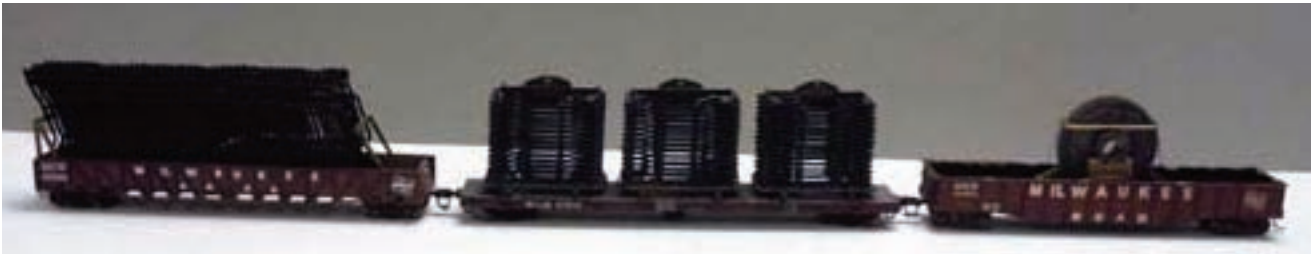
## December Monthly Meeting

December's monthly meeting was highlighted by...food! At our annual Holiday Party December 16th members consumed more than two dozen large delicious pizzas with all kinds of toppings, pop and Eddie Shlemon cookies for desert. Every year we start the party early at 1:00 p.m. so members and guests can enjoy some great pizza and conversation with other members, and this year was no different. FVD Super Jeff Jarr followed lunch with some brief remarks and announcements noting that the 2013 High Wheeler staff assignments were almost full, and that planning for the Spring 2014 Midwest Regional convention to be hosted by the FVD was going well. Public Relations Superintendent, Jim Osborn reported that advertising for the 2013 High Wheeler would

again target young families. Kids coupons can be obtained on the FVD web site should members or friends need them.

Following lunch and FVD board member remarks, noted rail fan and author of the "Train Watcher's Guide" books (now out of print), John Sz wajkart treated us to a thorough look at the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad. John's numerous slides and historical maps traced the road's basic history along with documenting the various changes in routes, motive power and paint schemes from the 1950's through the 1980's. Thanks John, for a nice look back at a local regional railroad!

## Contest Winners



December's First Place winner was John Hooker who modeled three excellent auto frame loads on two gondolas and a flat car.



Second Place went to Frank Cole's realistic looking pulp wood loads—two stacked and one loose--in three battered gondolas.



Jim Allen took third place with his used 25 ton switcher being shipped to new owner on a 50 foot flat car. Note the appropriate crates, blocking and strapping.

## Member, Regional, and National News

- Walt Herrick's "Trains in my Christmas's" article in the December Semaphore generated response from a couple FVD members who say they also have old holiday time train photos. So, expect to see another installment of "Trains in my Holiday" next December. Start looking for those old photos now, everyone. We'll need them by Thanksgiving!
- It's not too soon to start making plans for the Milepost 50 Midwest Division Spring Convention! The convention will be held in Indianapolis May 2 – 5 and promises to be a good one. See the Winter Waybill newsletter for more details and an application blank to the convention.



Join Us As We Celebrate 50 Years!

- By now you should have all received NMRA President, Charlie Getz's letter requesting financial support for the new Magic of Scale Model Railroading Gallery to be built at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. National has been promoting this venture for some time now and for good reason: it is a tremendous opportunity to show case the hobby of scale model railroading at an absolutely first class railroad museum. Remember, an anonymous donor is matching every dollar of NMRA members contributions up to \$250,000. As soon as \$250,000 is collected and matched, building can start! Won't you consider giving whatever you can?

## Modeling Tip

This month's tip comes to us from the FVD's Chief Clerk, Leif Hansen. Ed.

Is your Railroad Layout way too quiet? Do you have birds chirping, noises from the local buildings, or street noises? Are the only sounds you hear on your layout, train type sounds? Do you want more variety in your train type sounds? If so, then it might be time for some sound modules. I've found a great source for sound modules that are easy to install and control, and offer more than a hundred different sounds. It is ITT Products. They can be checked out at <http://www.ittproducts.com/>.

Want that factory to make some noise? Try ITT's Sound Module HQ602-1. Why is that blacksmith shop so quiet? Let's have it be more realistic with Sound Module HQ650. That machine shop you built across the tracks seems a little "dead". Bring it to life with Sound Module HQ600. Ever heard of a quiet saloon? Me either! Liven it up with Sound Module HQ625. How about some animal noises for that farm operation? Sound Module HQ40x will do the trick.

All the above Sound Modules and many, many more are available from ITT Products. Check them out at the site I listed above. As I said, the modules are easy to install and control, and they come with full instructions. Just provide a power source, a switch, and a speaker and you have sound! If you have questions or comments about ITT sound modules, please see me at one of the monthly meetings. Leif Hansen.

## Mike's Minute

A while back, one of the ladies where I worked asked if I had any photos of my HO scale railroad. She said, "You always talk about it, but we never see it." Good point. So, I set about taking some photos of the layout to satisfy her request. I knew that the tried and true "train trip around the railroad" might be a good way for them to see what I'd been up to the last several years. I model the 'Shore Line' of the C&NW Railway between Evanston and Milwaukee the spring of 1956. The layout covers about 65 miles of Shore Line in about 400 feet of double-track and double-deck model railroad. I started the photo tour at the north end of the layout in the Milwaukee terminal area with an old 4-4-2 Atlantic and a way car pointed south. The train picks up milk cars from locations on the railroad as it heads to Chicago.

One of photos I took was in front of my version of the Merck Cheese factory in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin. I used some "modeler's license" to move the factory from Salem east to Pleasant Prairie. In its un-prototypical location the factory conveniently hides an equally un-prototypical staging yard behind it! In the caption to the original photo, the Atlantic and southbound train of milk cars stops to pick-up a carload of Wisconsin's finest from Merck's. But the reality is that the engine can't do that because a cross-over between the mainline tracks was never installed! This section of double-track was hastily ballasted for the 2010 NMRA National Convention held in Milwaukee in July 2010. Nothing like a big deadline to get the adrenaline flowing so fast you paint yourself into an operational corner! But that was then and this is now. So, now I reckoned it was about time I installed the missing cross-over. I'll show you how I did it next month in Mike's Minute.



## High Wheeler 2013

Mike plans to attend this year's High Wheeler Train Show at Harper College in Palatine. The 2013 show promises to be bigger and better than ever with great layouts, vendors and displays. Kids love High Wheeler almost as much as they love Thomas the Tank Engine (who we hear will be attending the show on several different layouts including the FVD's own "Isles of Sodor" layout!). High Wheeler will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 9th and 10th from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. The show is in Building M, the Harper College Sports Center. Come on out and bring the whole family for an enjoyable morning or afternoon of model trains!

## Correction

Eric Bronsky wrote to remind us that he is a member of the Northwest Traction Group, not the Northwest Train Masters as we inadvertently said in the December Semaphore. Eric mentioned that his Northwest Traction Group, like Jim Allen in 2012, was also a Trainfest Module award winner several year's ago.

## Meeting Dates

Here's the FVD meeting dates and activities for the next several months. Check out the "Local Railroad Related Events" section of the FVD's web site for other area upcoming events.

Date	Clinic	Contest	Other
January 20	Jim Woods on modular layouts.	Favorite Train Picture	Regular 1:30 pm start
February 17	Leider and Lebovitz on the 2012 Steam Festival	Open Loads. Single load with 2-3 cars to transport.	Regular 1:30 pm start
March 9, 10	FVD's High Wheeler 2013 Train Show. No monthly meeting. Go to HW instead!		

## Fox Valley Division Board

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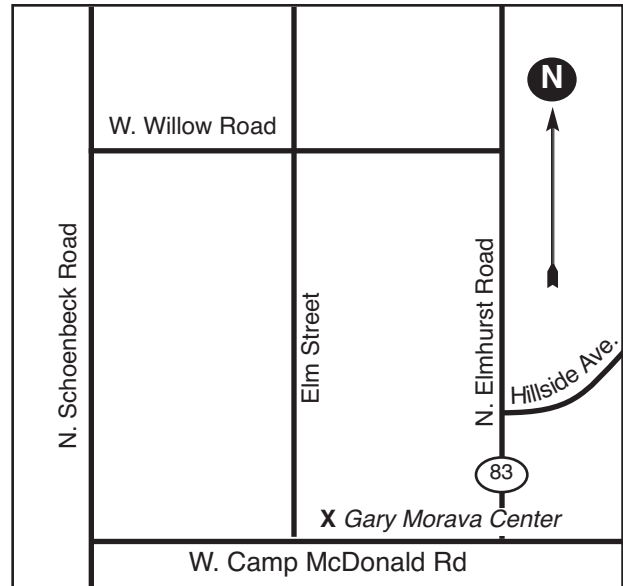
## About the Fox Valley Division

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 McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane and Lake Counties in Northeast Illinois. About 240 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 general meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:30 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 general meetings. To promote the hobby of model railroading, the FVD sponsors and runs a 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 help 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. We'd love to see you. Or, visit us on the web at: [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

**Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr or any board member listed on the "FVD board section of this newsletter. We are here to help you!**



## Next Meeting

The Fox Valley Division will hold its next regular monthly meeting **Sunday, January 20th, 2013** from 1:30 to about 4:30 p.m. Meetings are held at the Gary Morava Center, 110 W. Camp MacDonal Road in Prospect Heights, IL. We invite you to attend and look forward to seeing you!



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