

# THE SEMAPHORE

February 2016

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



## Layout of the Month: A Return to the NS&W Modular Layout by Walt Herrick with photos by Jeff Jarr and Walt Herrick

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**Next FVD Meeting: 1:30 pm Sunday, February 21** with a John Drozdak clinic on "B-Units and Slugs" and a "Lighted RR Signal" contest. There is no March monthly meeting due to High Wheeler. **Note! The March Semaphore will come out one week after the High Wheeler Train Show.**



It's been almost three years since the Semaphore visited the North Shore & Western Modular Club's layout and a lot has been added to it during that time. Several new and well done modules have been built and numerous upgrades made to the layout's other modules. In Jeff Jarr's photo above, we see an outstanding new depot module he created. Jeff wanted a large brick depot representative of big time railroading in its glory days. He wanted something unique and different from any depot kits *con't on page 2*



## 38th Annual Model Train Exposition

March 5 & 6, 2016

Harper College Sports Center  
Palatine, IL

[www.highwheelertrainshow.com](http://www.highwheelertrainshow.com)

9 am to 5 pm March 5 & 6 Hosted by the NMRA's Fox Valley Division

30 Layouts 20 Exhibitors and Vendors Lots of Kids activities

**"A great local train show for modelers, friends and family!"**

## Layout of the Month: Return to the NS&W Modular layout con't

con't from page 1 you might see at your local hobby shop or in the Walthers catalog. So he set about designing and scratch building the gorgeous structure you see in this article's photos. All of the parts for the depot were custom made using various cut up and reconfigured DPM wall sections as masters from which rubber molds were made. 200 urethane castings were cast in the molds. The roof is made of sheet styrene tiles glued onto 1/8th inch acrylic plastic for support. The model was brush painted with acrylic craft paints. The new depot was unveiled at the NS&W's Glenview Library event which was held December 5 & 6. Other projects the club is working on are building more backdrops for its modules, upgrading its older modules, and doing the ever needed maintenance required on the modules to keep them in good running order for shows. The NS&W's next event will be the FVD's High Wheeler Show March 5 & 6. Hopefully Jeff brings his new depot modules so more people can see his craftsmanship!

Jeff Jarr took the shots of his new depot module seen in the two upper right hand photos. The top right photo gives us a nice view of the platform detailing, while the next photo down shows the large covered platform on the left side of the depot along with some of the NS&W motive power being run at the Glenview event in December. To the right is another Jeff Jarr module, "Cardiac City", with seven fast food restaurants and a "greasy spoon" diner. New FVD member, Brendan Berry, was a guest operator in Glenview. That's Brendan's big UP turbine in the bottom right photo. Tom Cara's shay is pulling pulp wood loads on his lumber mill module in the photo below. 3 lower photos by Walt Herrick.



**NORTH  
SHORE &  
WESTERN**



## Layout of the Month: Return to the NS&W Modular layout con't



At 20 x 48 feet, December's Glenview Public Library display was the NS&W's largest layout to date (top). Some of the NS&W's crew pose for a group shot (above) by Jeff Jarr's remote including left to right Tom Cara, Jason Schweitzer, Bob Shlemon, Jr., James Schweitzer, Jeff Jarr, Jim Goettsche, and Mike O'Hara. Other NS&W members are Dick Koch, Eddy Shlemon, Stuart Mankoff, and Mike Bychowski. Below Bob Shlemon, Jr. eases his passenger train past Cardiac City. The below right photo used in this year's High Wheeler publicity, was taken on the NS&W layout. Other photos on this page by Walt Herrick.

### Basic Layout Information

Layout name:	North Shore & Western Modular Club layout
Layout builder:	Members of the NS&W crew
NMRA:	The NS&W is a 100% NMRA membership club
Layout location:	3-4 local area train events per year
Layout scale:	HO
Layout size:	30 x 48 inch modules; 21 x 45 feet is the typical show size layout
Layout style:	Modular
Layout theme:	Generic Midwestern Class I rail-roading
Layout era:	1940s to contemporary
Construction started:	Mid 1980's
Bench work:	1 x 4 grid with flat top and adjustable legs per NS&W specs
Roadbed:	Any 3/8s inch material
Track and turnouts:	Commercial code 100
Minimum Radii:	32 inches
Maximum Grade:	No grades on the layout.
Scenery & Structures:	Individual module builder's choice of subject matter, scenic materials, structures, detailing, etc.
Locos & Rolling stock:	Individual member's choice with locos and rolling stock ranging from the early steam era to contemporary. Locos and rolling stock are checked and approved for layout running.
Control:	DC and Digitrax DCC
Contact:	<b>Contact Jeff Jarr (contact info on page 7) for more information on the NS&amp;W, or to join the NS&amp;W Modular Group.</b>



## Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

What you see to the right is a unique piece of track laying equipment. Once the roadbed is constructed MoW crews bring in this machine which appears to do it all—laying the ties, laying the rail on top of the ties, gauging the rail, and spiking the rail to the ties. The only thing left is ballasting. From the photo it looks like the machine is about 120 to 130 feet long. It is being used on a new railroad project in Australia. Similar machines are also used in the U.S. and other countries.



## Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

### Your First Op Session: You're the Engineer, pt. 3

So, we now have all the information we'll need to run train #483 and you understand how to operate your throttle. While you acquire your locomotives, test the throttle, and couple onto your train, your conductor (me) reviews the written train orders for this run and contacts the dispatcher (DO) for clearance out of Proviso for the trip north. Clearance is granted, but only as far as Lake Bluff, IL, holding (stopping) short of the main lines at Tower KO. You check your track alignment out of Proviso track 3 and have your conductor throw the turnouts to enter the main line. After our caboose clears track 3, the conductor will realign the turnouts back to their original position per Rule 104 which basically states that all turnouts you throw must be returned to their original position after your train clears them. (If you were making this run alone [solo], you would act as both the engineer and the conductor and throw your own turnouts.) We ease down a slight grade onto the main and make a stop at Tower KO. There we check with DO again and find out we have to hold for some commuter traffic. Once it clears we can head toward Waukegan, observing any speed limits and outstanding train orders. We note on our train orders that we have a speed limit of 50 scale mph for freight trains on this sub-division and an order to "slow to 10 mph" at Milepost (MP) 65.0 which is north of Racine. A B & B (Bridge & Building Dept.) crew painting the bridge over the Root River is the reason for the slow order at MP 65.0. Remember "Safety First" applies to model railroads, too!

On approaching Waukegan yard, we get clearance from the Yardmaster to enter the yard on the tracks aligned for our train. Once in the yard we uncouple our engines and run them ahead and out of the way. We have a Waukegan block of cars on the head end of our train that needs to be pulled, and another block of north bound cars from Waukegan Yard to be added. With our locos out of the way, the yard switcher pulls the Waukegan SO's (set outs) and adds the new cars to our train. After the yard switcher crew finishes its work, we back up, re-couple the engines to the train, simulate pumping up the brake system, simulate conducting a brake test, and get ready to depart. The conductor contacts the DO for clearance, and clearance is granted to the next city, Kenosha, WI. Our conductor signals a highball and you ease the throttle and head out of the yard. Here we can keep up speed and don't have to worry about closing the yard lead turnout behind us as it is operated by the yard tower. Picking up speed, we pass the fashionable residences along North Sheridan Road on our left. Next up on our right are the lakeside industries on the north side of Waukegan. Soon we pass through Zion, the Illinois Beach State Park, and Winthrop Harbor. We wave to some rail fans on the bridge over the tracks at Carol Beach Road and then pass through Pleasant Prairie and past the Merkt Cheese factory which is just over the border in Wisconsin. (FYI, I just *had* to have a cheese factory in Wisconsin on my layout!) You're doing a great job as the engineer of #483. Next month we finish our run. See you then!

## January's Clinic and Contest

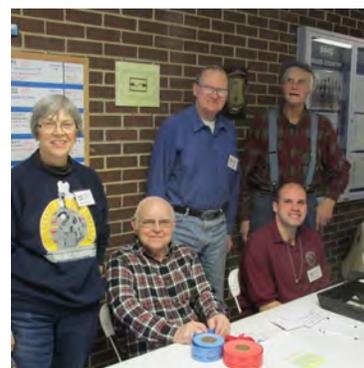
Thanks to George K. (right) for his excellent clinic on “DCC Function Mapping” using JMRI Decoder Pro. This was an informative and thorough clinic on how to use JMRI’s Decoder Pro on a DCC layout to make function mapping quicker and easier. And thanks to MMR, David Leider, for his update on current events in the Union Pacific’s Steam Program. Great stuff from both clinicians in January! January’s “Favorite Model or Prototype Photo Taken by the Member” contest drew 11 entries, many of which were excellent. You are encouraged to check out the FVD web site to view all of the fine entries. Our top three finishers are shown below. **February’s clinic is “Home Built Plows and Flangers” by the FVD’s John Drozdak and is a perfect clinic for this time of year. The February contest is “Lighted Railroad Signal” in diorama format. Remember, there is no March Regular Meeting, Clinic or Contest due to the FVD sponsored High Wheeler Train Show March 5th and 6th. We look forward to seeing you at High Wheeler 2016!** WH



Our winner in January’s “Favorite Model or Prototype Photo” contest was Jim Osborn’s great “Sterling Station” photo (above left) taken on his beautiful HO Chicago Northwestern layout. Second place went to Will Westfall for his excellent “Soo Line #145 on Trestle” shot (above right—note, the reflections on the photo are from the glass in the frame). Will’s photo was also taken on his fine, HO scale, Soo Line layout. Walt Herrick placed third with his prototype photo (above middle) of Illinois Railway Museum’s #1630 taken in June, 2014. All clinic and contest photos by Jim Osborn.

## Last Call for High Wheeler 2016 Train Show Volunteers!

This is your last call to be a High Wheeler 2016 Train Show volunteer! The Fox Valley Division’s terrific show at Harper College in Palatine is now only one month away. Most of the High Wheeler jobs have been spoken for at this point, but **volunteers are still needed in several spots and as backups** in case someone cannot serve at the last minute. No experience is necessary; you’ll be trained as needed on what to do. In addition to knowing you played a vital role in High Wheeler’s success, you will be rewarded with an excellent meal at our High Wheeler Recognition Dinner on Sunday, March 20th at Lou Malnati’s in Buffalo Grove. **Contact Jeff Jarr at [jjarr@comcast.net](mailto:jjarr@comcast.net) or 773-286-8755 to sign up and give us a much needed hand. Thank you!** WH



## Call for Candidates and a Volunteer!

As is done every year, FVD elections will be held at our April monthly meeting. This year we elect a new Superintendent and Clerk as both incumbents are not running for re-election. Members are encouraged to consider running for either of these positions. Please note that **any member interested in running for office must contact Leif Hansen (contact info on p. 7) to indicate his/her intention to run.** The division is also looking for a volunteer to assume the important Ways and Means Trainmaster position. This position involves organizing and running our High Wheeler Train Show each year. Contact current Ways and Means Trainmaster, Jeff Jarr, (contact info on p.7) for information on this job. Look for candidate bios in the April Semaphore. WH

## Member News

FVD Membership Promotions Trainmaster, Mike Hirvela, and former FVD Board member, Jim Allen, have been busy this year promoting the hobby of model railroading, the NMRA, and our Fox Valley Division at many local train shows. In their work they use some excellent promotional tools: the FVD's professional looking promotions booth, Jim's Action-Reaction RR, and, of course, themselves! To the right is Mike's photo of the FVD booths at January's World's Greatest Hobby Show in Schaumburg. THANK YOU guys for all your hard work! WH



## 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>
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><u>Note: there is no regular March meeting, due to High Wheeler. Come to the show!</u></b>			
April 17, 2016	Prototype <u>slide presentation</u> by MMR Don Cook on "CNW System Wide"	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>Clinic TBD</u> by MMR David Leider	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, <b>July 3-10</b> . 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

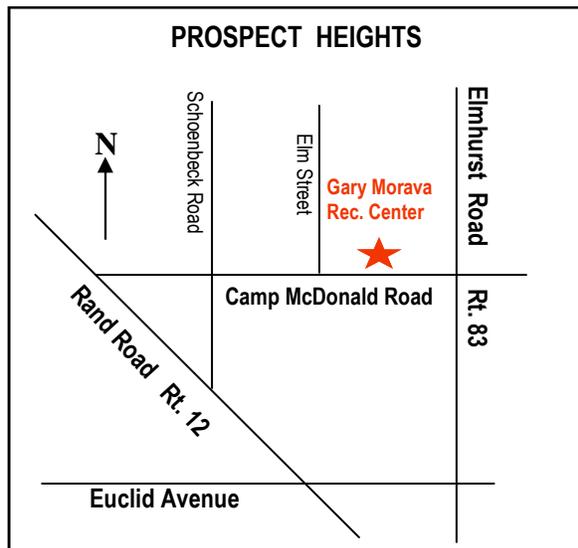
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, and parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 210 members of varied ages and modeling 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)

FVD mailing address: Fox Valley Division  
Midwest Region-NMRA  
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