



THE SEMAPHORE

January 2017



FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION

*Happy New Year
Everyone!*

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Next FVD Meeting:
Sunday, January 15
1:30 pm at the
Morava Rec Center in
Prospect Heights

**Contest: Refrigerator
 Train—mechanical or iced.
 Max 6 cars**

**Clinic: Operation Lifesaver
 by Dave Philips**



DON COOK, MMR #479
1941 - 2016

Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

My Friend Don Cook

My friend and fellow Fox Valley Division member, Donald Cook of Waukegan, IL, NMRA Master Model Railroader #479, passed away Monday, December 19, 2016, after a courageous, but all too brief, battle with cancer. Don was a NMRA member since 1972, and was one who enjoyed the hobby immensely as modeler, photographer, operator and NMRA member. His quiet demeanor and gentlemanly manner will be missed by many. con't on page 2

Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

Located in Barstow, CA is this McDonalds which occupies retired streamlined passenger cars. The fast food restaurant sits next to the old Barstow railroad station.

(Does anyone remember the old "Train McDonalds" on Route 14 in Crystal Lake? Sometime in the 1970's an old, restored trolley car (or was it an interurban?) was tacked on to that McDonalds for its dining room. The restaurant, which was the first McDonalds in Crystal Lake, lasted until the early 2000s when three better located McDonalds replaced it. WH)



Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela con't

I first met Don one Friday evening back in the middle 1980's at the Larson & Peterson Paint Co. store in Waukegan. It was a local store that had a hobby section. He would stop in on his way to a weekly work meeting of the Illinois Great Northern (IGN) RR club in Zion, IL, as both he and the hobby sales counter guy, Bob Jacobson, along with a young fellow, Ed Pavlovic, were also members. They would 'check-in' with each other before heading off for an evening of model railroading. They invited me to visit which I did and still do.

Don was an avid Great Northern modeler who created some very realistic structures in HO scale, a goodly number of them from scratch. Some were award winners, earning AP points. His interest was in GN mainline railroading in the apple growing region of Washington State along the Columbia River. A trip to a GNHS annual meeting in Wanatchee resulted in the photo backdrop he had on the wall behind the depot. He also had mock-up cardboard buildings, including stations, apple cold storage warehouses and other structures, sitting on his railroad for years until he could get good photographs or drawings of the structure he needed. For example, I asked him why he hadn't built a model of the Chelan depot yet, and he replied he didn't have any idea what the back wall of the depot looked like. He had searched and searched but just couldn't find anything. Upon arriving for an op session some time later, I noticed he had built the Chelan depot. When asked, he replied that a fellow GN modeler had provided a photograph of the back wall so he could finally build the structure. Don also named buildings on his railroad for hobby friends and fellow operators and it was always a nice surprise to find a building with your name on it in a town on his railroad.

In addition to being a master model builder, Don was an avid rail fan and took thousands of quality model and prototype photographs. Three of his SOO LINE photographs are monthly features in the 2017 SOO LINE calendar, along with a thumbnail photo as well; and one photo of his own GN layout is on page 81 of the January 2017 edition of *Model Railroader Magazine*. Don was a frequent attendee at various model railroad operating sessions in Northeastern Illinois and Southeastern Wisconsin with the Old Codgers Club, a round-robin group in the area.



This is how Mike most remembers Don Cook, smiling ear to ear at one of his most enjoyable activities—operating trains prototypically at an op session. Here he's at Mike Ritchdorf's HO N&W layout sometime in the 1990s. Mike Hirvela photo.



Don Cook was a devoted Great Northern Railway fan and modeler. Jim Osborn took the above shot of Don's award winning Wanatchee depot. Jim also took the shot below of GN steam passing by Adrian Tower. Don took a similar photo which was recently published in *Model Railroader Magazine*.



Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela con't

Don's achievement awards for model building, which cover the entire north wall of his railroad room, included Achievement Certificates for and designation as an NMRA Master Model Railroader, the Midwest Region Moskal Award, the Goat Award for best GN model, a Model Railroader Magazine Model of the Month award for his scratch-built Wanatchee, Washington, station buildings; and several WISE Division modeling awards. Don once told me the reason there were so many awards on display was that he had no other place to put them, and he didn't feel it appropriate to keep them in a box, especially when the awarders would visit the awardee! So, the awards they gave him were prominently displayed. I once asked Don if the WISE guys were somewhat insulted that he received so many of their awards. His reply was that he was only trying to get them to build better models!

Don was also Election Committee Chairman of the Midwest Region for many years and held several positions with the North Shore & Western Division, including Assistant Superintendent and Contest Chairman. He also held memberships with both the Great Northern and the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Historical Societies, in addition to his side interest in maritime history and boats of the Great Lakes. Don held various club officer positions many times, most recently Treasurer, in addition to being the Electrical Committee Chairman. Don had wired the original railroad, and single-handedly completed the installation of a DCC system not that long ago. Adept with electronics, Don installed decoders in all of my steam locomotives.

Don was retired from AT&T where he maintained ship-to-shore radio telephone services used by Great Lakes maritime freighters. He and his wife, Leslie, were married for almost 30 years. I'm sure their beagle, Dolly, is wondering where he went. Per Don's wishes, and in keeping with his desire that no fuss be made over him, no visitation, memorial service or funeral was held. Condolences may be sent to his wife Leslie at 2500 10th St., Waukegan, IL 60085-7050. I have been in contact with her and she is agreeable to hosting a farewell operating session on Don's RR, but not yet. We'll let some time slip by so all of us can reflect on Don's passing and his contribution to our lives.

Modeling Tip

MMR Don Cook had many well done mini-scenes on his GN layout. To the right is one of his most well known mini-scenes. It is a cut away of a small clap board building which was the home of a barber shop and a pool hall. The detailing and execution of this scene is masterful, from the gentleman in the barber's chair getting a haircut, to the lit, low hanging pool table lamp. Mini-scenes are a lot of fun to do. If you haven't already, why not try one? WH



Don was a prolific rail fan photographer. He gave many slide show presentations of his work at NMRA division meetings, and had numerous photos featured in RR Historical Society magazines and calendars. Above is his shot of the first EMD SD45, the GN's "Hustle Muscle" at an EMD Open House in the late 1960s. Below is Don's photo "Switching Mike's Macaroni" an industry he named for his friend Mike Hirvela.



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

MMR Don Cook had two great Great Northern Ry. layouts. His primary layout was the 17' x 28' GN Spokane Division layout which was featured in the January 2013 *Semaphore*. Two years later his 6' x 9'6" Mansfield switching layout was featured in the January 2015 *Semaphore*. Though Don continued to upgrade and improve the layouts, he declared them both "finished" several years ago. (See the FVD web site's "*Semaphore*" section for the January 2013 and January 2015 issues with Don's layouts.)

Don loved the Great Northern Railway. Though he primarily modeled the transition era, he had a collection of GN motive power and rolling stock which covered the "modern" GN, too. Sky Blue scheme GN locos from the 1960s were very much present on an occasional "modern" op session on the Spokane Division. Don was knowledgeable in almost all things GN, and all time periods of the GN, as well. Many Fox Valley Division monthly contests drew excellent Don Cook models, and many of these contests were won or placed in by Don. Most all of his contest entries came from his layouts.

We're going to miss Don's inspiring modeling and knowledge of the prototype. And we're going to miss his quiet, humble, easy going manner. Before we say our final good byes to our friend, let's take one more small look at what MMR #479, Don Cook, accomplished in our great hobby. WH



Above, beautiful green and orange RS1 #183 switches the Farmers Coop elevator on Don's Mansfield layout. Mikado #3059 blasts out of a cut stone portal in the upper right photo. Both photos by Don Cook. Don's big layout was unusual in that it ran steam, electric and diesel motive power. It also had private road reefers to service Cook's Orchards Warehouse, a large cold storage business. GN 2581 slowly rounds the curve in Ephrata in the lower photo. Three lower right photos by Jim Osborn.



Layout of the Month: Don Cook's Great Northern layouts con't



In Don's upper left photo, the 183 is hard at work switching the large, concrete Coop elevator on the Mansfield switching layout. On the upper right we see "modern" GN power in the form of SD45 #400, the "Hustle Muscle", popping out of a tunnel in light snow in January 1968. Walt Herrick photo.

December's Clinic and Contest photos by Jim Osborn

The FVD's own **Mike Skibbe** presented an great clinic on the formation of the outstanding N scale, **Midwest Mini-Modutrak modular layout**. Mike took us through the early days of the layout and how standards were developed that resulted in one of the finest US modular layouts in any scale. His full presentation is available in the "Education" section of the FVD's web site. In January, **Dave Phillips** presents his important, must-see clinic "**Operation Lifesaver**" which focuses on railroad safety for rail fans and the public. You don't want to miss this one!



December's contest was "**Odd Consist**"-max 4 units. The three winners are presented below.

Mike Hivela's "European Odd Consist" took **First Place** honors in December. Mike's unusual HO consist included two steamers and an electric as motive power. **Dennis Zamirovski's** beautiful HO "North Shore, Aurora, and Elgin" interurban odd consist took **Second Place**, and **Jim Osborn's** whimsical HO scale "Santa's Train" finished **third**. **January's contest** is (appropriately!) "**Refrigerated Train**"—mechanical or iced cars—6 car max. WH



*******A special note from our Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, who wishes to thank the 33 hearty and amazing souls who braved zero degree temperatures to attend December's Fox Valley Division regular monthly meeting. Big "Thanks!" go to everyone who brought models to our contest, and the pizza delivery guy who brought lunch! Thank you all! Mike**

April Elections, and Ways & Means Trainmaster needed

The FVD's April 23, 2017 meeting is our Annual Meeting for the year. At that meeting we will hear year end reports from our board officers, and elect an **Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster**. Any member wishing to run for either of these two offices should contact our Chief Clerk, George Trandel, and tell him of your intentions to run for office. Also, the FVD is still looking for an individual to assume the **Ways & Means Trainmaster** position. This position is responsible for organizing and running our High Wheeler Train Show which is usually run each year in early March. Contact Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, about the Ways & Means opening. George and Mike's contact information is on page 7 of this Semaphore. WH

A Note from the Editor

As FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, so well expressed in his article this month on the passing of MMR Don Cook, this is one member of our division who will be sorely missed. Besides the modeling skills, photography skills, and modeling and prototype knowledge Don brought to the table, he was a genuinely great guy to be around. Though quiet by nature, he was always willing to share his knowledge and understanding of modeling and the prototype with anyone. As is so typical of Don, he wanted no funeral, no memorial service or any kind of fanfare to celebrate his passing. This "tribute issue" of the *Semaphore* for him probably has him "rolling in his grave"! That's OK, for even if Don didn't want the spot light on himself, his model railroading friends *do* if even for the few moments it takes to read this *Semaphore* and look at Don's work one more time. Is there a heaven? Is there a God and angels? I happen to think there are, and they have rolled out a beautiful GN orange and green carpet to welcome Don. It says in Great Northern "speed" style lettering, "Welcome Home MMR Don Cook ". WH

2016 - 2017 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

Except as noted under "Other", all meetings are held from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm 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>
Jan. 15, 2017	"Operation Lifesaver" by Dave Phillips	Refrigerated Train—Mechanical or iced; 6 car max	
Feb.19, 2017	"Computer Modeling" by Carl Wagus	The exterior detail of a structure including walls and roof	
March 19, 2017	"GN Ore Modeling" by Bob Hammer	Structure of Your Choice—any size or type	
April 23, 2017	"A Ride on Africa's Blue Train, Rovos Rails Pride of Africa" by George Ferraro	Yard Switchers—max 2	1:00 pm start. Pizza lunch. FVD officer elections.

April 28–30, 2017 **2017 Midwest Region Convention "Golden Rails" hosted by the Rock River Valley Division at the Holiday Inn in Rockford, IL. Complete information on the division's website: rrvd-nmra.com.**

May 21, 2017	"Introduction to Operations Under Time Table and Train Order Authority" by Chris Czyzewski	Exposed or Open Load of your choice	Last monthly meeting for 2015–2016
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July 30–August 6, 2017 **2017 NMRA National Convention "Orange Blossom Special" in Orlando, FL. See the convention's website for complete information: nmra2017orlando.org**



About the Fox Valley Division

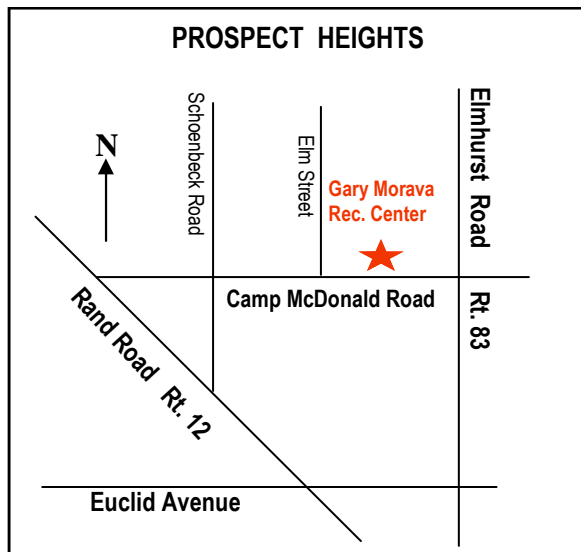
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane, and Lake Counties in northeast Illinois. About 220 members of varied ages and modeling 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 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 normally sponsors and runs a large train show called "High Wheeler" in early March each year at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois. (Note: the 2017 High Wheeler is cancelled due to a major renovation of the Harper gymnasium used for the show.)

We encourage you to take advantage of all the FVD has to offer. We are here to answer your questions 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're 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.
- 2016 – 2017 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
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