

# THE SEMAPHORE



March 2019

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



## Sundance Central Railroad article and photos by Walt Herrick

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#### **Next FVD Meeting:**

**Sunday, March 17**

**1:30 pm at the**

**Morava Rec Center in  
Prospect Heights**

**Contest: Over, Under,  
Around & Through-Bridges,  
Signals, Tunnels etc.**

**Clinic: "Arduino Devices"  
by George K.**



The Fn3 (1:20.3) Sundance Central Railroad is located in Odessa, FL at the Suncoast Center for Fine Scale Modeling along with six other fine scale layouts. I visited the Center in January. Five of the layouts were on display and another (the Dolly Varden) was undergoing renovations in their shop. Along with the layouts there are more than a dozen fine scale railroading and military dioramas in various scales and sizes ranging from HO to 1:10, and 18 x 18 inches to 2 x 8 feet. All of the layouts and dioramas at the Suncoast Center are beautifully built, finished, super detailed, and professionally lighted and displayed to museum standards. The *Semaphore* may feature some of these in future issues. In this issue we feature the Sundance Central, by far the biggest layout at the Center both in size and scale. Above is a mixed freight winding through the big S curve trestle on the Sundance Central. *con't on p.2*

## Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

How's this for an inventive handcar? I don't have the source of the photo (It found its way to me via Facebook), but it's obviously pretty old. I'm guessing that's a 1920's or 1930's motor cycle and maybe an even older hand car. A drawback to this "Harley Handcar" is that it would have to be turned to go the other way, unless of course, the operator was OK with turning his head and shoulders for miles on end! Walt Herrick for Jim Allen



## Layout of the Month: Sundance Central Railroad con't



The mixed freight on page 1 is now making its way past some tenements (above left), and then past a small yard (above right). Every structure on the Sundance Central is scratch built with the tenements taking 9 months to complete. The middle left below photo shows a three truck Climax pushing log cars across the big S curve trestle. The trestle and another large curved trestle on the other side of the layout were constructed of half inch square cedar sawn on a table saw and then assembled in large jigs. Hundreds of nut and bolt castings and scratch built barrel platforms completed the trestles.



A gas powered industrial switcher sits on a siding in front of a large saw mill in the above photo. The saw mill is modeled after a mill in California. The Sundance Central is a freelanced three foot narrow gauge railroad which draws inspiration from various western three footers, not just the Colorado three footers. On the right a team of work horses pull a log wagon under a three legged derrick for loading.

## Layout of the Month: Sundance Central Railroad con't



Two young spectators intently watch a geared locomotive moving on to the “gallows” style turntable (above). The turntable, like its prototype, is manually turned by hand. Below two beautiful three foot gauge locos sit on outside “garden” storage tracks.

### Modeling Tip--Super Detailing

Almost every square inch of the Fn3 Sundance Central is intensely detailed. Take a look at the handcar shed scene below for some great detailing ideas for your railroad. WH



### Basic Layout Information

Layout Name:	Sundance Central Railroad
Layout Builders:	Frank Palmer, Richard Schmidt, Jim Hopes, Keith Wolfe, Dale MacKeown, Jon Addison, Dave Revelia, and the late Brian Nolan
Layout Location:	Suncoast Center for Fine Scale Modelers in Odessa, FL
Layout Scale:	Fn3 (1:20.3)
Layout Size:	40 x 45 feet
Layout Style:	Single deck island display
Layout Theme/Locale:	Loosely based on several western narrow gauge rail roads
Layout Era:	Late 1930s-early 1940s
Construction begun:	2004
Bench Work:	1 x 4 grid; originally built in transportable sections
Sub Roadbed/ Roadbed:	High density Dow Board 2 inch pink foam
Track:	Code 250 hand laid aluminum track and turnouts
Scenery:	Photo back drops; foam rocks; sawdust, dirt, ground foam, natural materials ground cover; clear chalk water; scratch built trees
Detail:	The entire layout is super detailed
Structures:	All scratch built
Locomotives:	Accu-craft with some brass and kit-bashed
Rolling Stock:	Accu-craft, scratch built, and kit-bashed
Control:	CVP Airwire remote control
Sound/Smoke:	Battery powered Phoenix sound system;
Operations:	Display running
Other:	The Sundance Central was featured in the December 2012 Model Railroader. The layout is open every third Saturday 10 to 3 at the Sun Coast Center for Fine scale modeling in Odessa, FL. See their web site for more info: <a href="http://finescalemodeling.org">finescalemodeling.org</a>

## Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

### Participation and Anticipation

Attendance at our monthly get-togethers over the past two months has been a bit on the light side. Attendance is typically down some in January and February, compared to other months. I tend to blame the weather on this. But, even for Chicago-land, this year has been pretty challenging. And I can understand folks being cautious about traveling when conditions are deteriorating. So, really I'm not complaining. In fact, I'm very appreciative of, and impressed by, those courageous souls who braved those challenging atmospheric conditions to be present at our recent events. We had some interesting topics by some informative presenters and the number of models entered in the modeling contest categories meant everyone was a winner! So, there are advantages to coming out for our winter season monthly meetings. I am happy to report, Spring is around the corner and arrives three days after our March 17 meeting. Here's hoping we'll get a break in the weather by then.

Along with that hope is the anticipation of something that hasn't happened in the Mid-West Region in a long time – a Joint convention with another region. Specifically, our upcoming MWR/Thousand Lakes Region Convention in La Crosse, Wisconsin, on May 16 through 19. Thousand Lakes Region's territory includes western Wisconsin, northern Iowa, all of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and the Canadian Province of Manitoba, and western half of Ontario. It is a huge geographic area with many capable modelers. It is not often we visit our neighbors to the northwest and I am looking forward to visiting and running on some of La Crosse's finest model railroads. Anyone who has attended "River Rail" op sessions, will encourage you to Go, Go, Go to La Crosse and participate to the fullest. I'm looking forward to the convention. I hope you are, too! Time to go run trains!



### Midwest Region & Thousand Lakes Region 2019 Joint Convention

This year's Midwest Region Convention will be a joint convention with the Thousand Lakes Region in:

**LaCrosse, Wisconsin on  
May 17 - 19**

For convention information go to:

<https://www.thousandlakesregion.org/>



### **You're Invited!** By Kennedy Gauger, Contest Chair MWR/TLR Joint Convention

Hi, I'm Kennedy Gauger, Contest Director for the Thousand Lakes Region of the NMRA. I'd like to invite you to participate in the model, photo, and/or arts and crafts contest of this spring's Grand Junction joint regional NMRA meet in LaCrosse, Wisconsin May 16 to 19. We'd love to see a bunch of models, crafts and photos in LaCrosse in May, and we'd especially love to see *your* model or photo or arts and crafts entry. If you've never entered a model contest, *this is the place to do it!* You may enter as a "Novice" participant if you like, or jump right in to the Master Class. We are very friendly up here in northwest Wisconsin, and we will welcome you with open arms. We have many "popular vote" contest categories, and many "judged" contest categories. All contests require you to fill out a simple NMRA 901 "entry blank" for you model or photo. If you'd like your model judged by experienced NMRA judges, you'll need to fill out an NMRA 902 form describing the techniques you used to build your model. If you need help with the 901 or 902 forms, I can help you. Email me at: [wkgauger@gmail.com](mailto:wkgauger@gmail.com), and I'll send you some helpful information. OK, so you've been invited--and that includes everyone from beginners to "masters". Now, won't you please accept my invitation? I hope you do, and I hope to see you with your model or photos, or arts and crafts entry in LaCrosse this May!

## February's Clinic and Contest Photos by Jim Osborn

### February's Clinic

February's clinic was presented by FVD Superintendent, **Mike Hirvela** (right). Mike was subbing for **Mike Wood** who, at the last minute, was called out of town on business. We'll probably see his "**Modern Railroading in Japan**" clinic sometime next year. Note, Mike Hirvela was originally scheduled to do the February clinic, but gave up his spot when Mike Wood asked to present his clinic in February having just returned from Japan with a bunch of current photos of Japanese railroading. Anyway, (are you following all of this?) Mike Hirvela finally was able to present his clinic. (FYI, he gave up his spot for another clinician *last* year, too!) Mike told us all about the town's history and railroading history of his home town of **Two Rivers, Wisconsin**. Thanks, Mike for your interesting look at the town you grew up in and "cut your railroading teeth" in. We're glad you finally got to present your clinic! **On Sunday, March 17 George K. will tell us more about "Arduino Devices"** and the amazing things they can do for your model railroad. In the immortal words of Maynard G. Krebs, "Be there or be square, man!" WH



### February's Contest

February's contest was "**Kit-bashed Structure or Car**" and we received one entry for each. Of course, as Mike Hirvela said in this month's "Mike's Minute" column, the lousy weather that day probably had a lot to do with the low turnout at the meeting and for the contest. But the two entries received were good ones! **Tim Kleimeyer took First** with his nicely kit-bashed "Piper's Pickles" warehouse building in HO scale. **Denis Zamirowski placed Second** by expertly down-sizing an HO scale MDC caboose to create a new "Shorty Caboose". **March's contest is Over, Under, Around and Through-Bridges, Signals, Tunnels, etc."** This is kind of a wide open contest with a lot of opportunity to bring in a variety of models to enter, so have at it, gang! Hopefully the wicked winter weather we've been having will have run its course by our **meeting day on Sunday, March 17th!** WH



### They're almost Gone!

Our FVD special run **Cook Orchards reefer car** done by Accurail are almost gone! Each car costs \$23.00 plus shipping and handling of \$7.50 for one car, and \$14.00 for 2 to 4 cars (if available). Go to the FVD's web site:

[www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org)

for complete purchase and shipping information. We have only a few cars left, so act now! (Photo by Jim Osborn taken on his layout.)



## Where to Find Chicagoland Model Railroad Clubs

Looking for model railroad clubs in our area? The FVD web site [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org) lists 25 clubs in Chicago and its suburbs. Click the “Community” tab, and then “Local Clubs”. You can also go directly to <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/clubs.v2.html>. Most clubs feature regular open houses to view the layouts. Club memberships are also often available if you’d like further involvement. Jim Osborn

## Member News

As promised last month, to the right is a photo of the **Mt. Prospect Public Library display** which was put together by members of the Fox Valley Division. The display was in the library during the month of February and was a big hit. Once again, a big FVD “THANKS” goes to all those who made this display happen...Membership Services Trainmaster, **Bert Lattan**, reports that as of January 31, total FVD membership stands at 195, up three from December. He also reports we have four new members: **Aaron Fogg from Chicago, Kevin Gibbons from Antioch, Frederick Mina from Chicago, and Michael Sigler from Lake Villa**. Welcome Aboard, guys!...The FVD congratulates its Achievements and Contests Trainmaster, **Jim Landwehr**, for election to the NMRA Midwest Region’s Board of Directors as a “**Director-at-Large**”. Also elected were **Steve Studley** from the Central Indiana Division as **president** of the MWR, **Reid Kahrs** from the WISE Division as **vice president**. **John Coy** from the Central Indiana Division, and **Jerry Peterson** from the Michiana division were also elected as **Directors-at-Large** of the MWR. Congrats to all! WH



## 2018 - 2019 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held from **1:30 to about 3:30 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](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
Mar. 17, 2019	Arduino Devices by George K.	Over, Under, Around & Through—bridges, signals, tunnels, etc.	
Apr. 28, 2019	Keeping Your RR in Focus by Jim Osborn	Humorous Open Load	1:00 pm start for Officer Elections
<b>May 19, 2019</b>	<b>Midwest/Thousand Lakes Joint Regional Meet in LaCrosse, WI.</b> For info, email <a href="https://www.thousandlakesregion.org">https://www.thousandlakesregion.org</a> . Also, see pages 9—12 of the Winter issue of the Midwest Region <i>Waybill</i> newsletter for convention information and convention registration forms. Note, the special room rate for this convention is \$67.00 at the Days Inn LaCrosse!		
June 2, 2019	Modular Construction of User Objects in AnyRail by Carl Wagus	Vehicles—limit 3	Last monthly meeting for 2018 – 2019
July 7—13, 2019	<b>NMRA 2019 National Convention in Salt Lake City, UT.</b> See the convention’s web site for more information: <a href="http://www.nmra2019slc.org">www.nmra2019slc.org</a>		



### About the Fox Valley Division

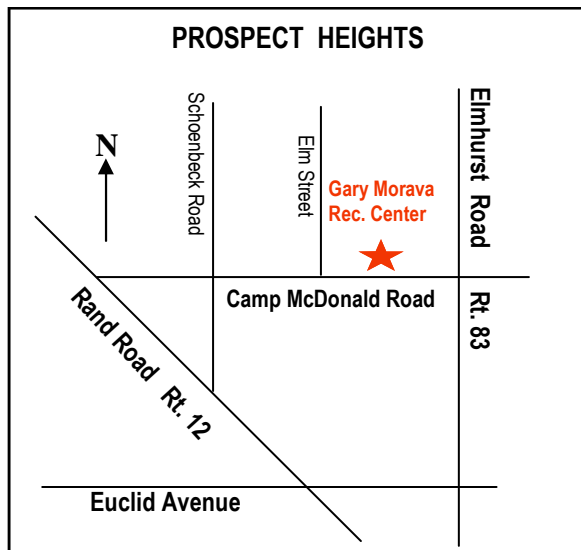
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, and parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 190 members of varied ages and modeling 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](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, 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 3:30 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  
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