

THE SEMAPHORE

November 2020

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Valley Model Railroad Club and Their Great Junior Members

Article and photos by Walt Herrick

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Semaphore Editor, Walt Herrick

Next FVD Meeting:

Sunday, November 22

1:30 pm via ZOOM*

Contest: 1 Unfinished Project

Clinic: LCL Traffic Before UPS & FedEx by Mark Vaughan

***See page 8 for complete information about the new FVD ZOOM meetings, and how clinics and contests are conducted via ZOOM.**

In the upper right photo, Marc's CN SD75i and Davis's SOO Line Alco switcher work one of the Valley Model Railroad Club's large industrial areas. At right, are some of the great junior members of the Valley Model RR Club who were present on Family Day. They are, left to right: Jamie, Davis, Jackson, Cole, Max, Bryn, Marc, and Dylan with his dog Buddy.



I've been on many layout photo shoots for the *Semaphore*, but the one I went to on Sunday, October 4 at the Valley Model Railroad Club in South Elgin, IL was one of my favorites in spite of Covid masks, social distancing, etc. Unbeknownst to me, it was "Family Day" at the club and there were a lot of kids there and at least one dog. The energy in the place was fantastic. Many of the kids were junior club members and had heard I was coming. They were enthusiastic about model railroading, the Valley Club, and getting their pictures taken with their favorite trains. I was happy to oblige. Club president Joe *con't on p.2*



Valley Model Railroad Club and Their Great Junior Members **con't**

Montilla was there to coordinate things along with **VP, Bob Opal**. Several other adult members and parents were present as well. Joe says there are currently 11 families with junior club members in the Valley Model Railroad Club. Asked why his club has such great junior involvement, Joe had some excellent answers:

- 1) We actively work at it (our junior membership and recruiting junior members) at all times.
- 2) We have a portable layout we bring to train shows where the kids run the trains 100% of the time. It's not uncommon for us to have a long line of kids waiting to run a train.
- 3) We set a side a day at the big club layout just for the kids. Other members can run too, but the kids have priority on "kids day". We find kids like to run trains with other kids.

The Valley Model Railroad Club is an older club. It was founded in 1949 and moved into the historic Chicago, Aurora and Elgin's interurban Clintonville depot/power station in 1953. That year the railroad moved the power generating equipment out of the depot to another location in Elgin leaving a 40 x 60 foot open area for a layout. The club has occupied that space ever since. In 1953 the club leased its layout space from the CA&E; today it leases the entire building from the Kane County Forest Preserve who now owns much of the old CA&E right of way as a walking and bike path. In 1999 the model railroad layout started in 1953 was torn down and a new layout built. That layout, with modifications over the years, still stands today. Probably hundreds of modelers have come and gone from the Valley Club's ranks during its history with each making his or her contribution to the club.

Today the Valley Model Railroad Club stands as a fine example of one US model railroad club which is proving that, 1) kids still do like trains, and 2) clubs can attract kids to their membership. It takes some work and patience, and you have to stay at it, as Valley president Joe Montilla says, but the rewards are definitely worth it. VMRRC is to be congratulated on its efforts to bring and keep young people in our hobby. **GREAT JOB Valley Model Railroad Club!**

That's **Davis** upper right with his SOO Line MoW train and a **J2C**, Valley member **Jim Pechous**, built throttle. Jim also built the club's **J2C DCC system**. Next down, **Jamie's** UP SD50 is pulling a string of *Coal-Porters* over an old truss bridge. **Jackson** is prepared today with his face shield and a J2C throttle to control his Big Boy at his side. **Joe and Marc** have double headed their Big Boys to pull a heavy coal drag (bottom).



Valley Model Railroad Club and Their Great Junior Members con't



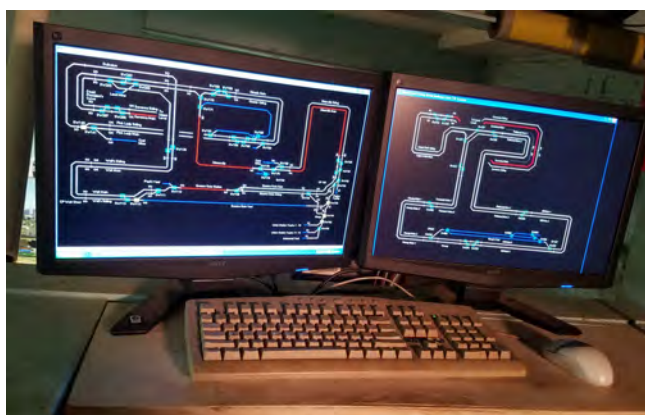
No Chicago area club would be complete without a Metra scene. In the above left photo **Cole's** bi-level, push pull Metra cab car leads its train into the station. In the upper right photo a patched out Milwaukee Road SD now serving the BN, sits along side an Iowa Chicago and Eastern GP40-2 in front of the large brick and concrete diesel house.



Traction modeling is an integral part of the Valley Club's operations. Directly above is the busy trolley yard with its two stall trolley house. In the upper right hand photo, a trio of **North Shore Line** interurbans from **Bob Opal's** home layout, glide past a slaughter house. To the right ITC #1564 pulls a short freight over a steel arch bridge. The prototype wooden box cab was built in Decatur in 1910. The Illinois Railway Museum has 1564's sister, ITC #1565 in very good condition in their extensive collection of electrics.



Valley Model Railroad Club and Their Great Junior Members con't



The top photo is a long shot of the club's layout room showing the excellent room lighting and layout's sturdy double deck construction. The second photo shows the computer CTC panels and trackside signal indicators in the elevated tower. **Valley member Jim Pechous** built the club's outstanding J2C DCC system and wireless throttles using NMRA DCC standards.

Basic Layout Information

Layout Name: Valley Model Railroad Club
 Layout Builder: Club members
 Layout Location: South Elgin, IL
 Layout Scale: HO; HO traction
 Layout Size: 40 x 60 feet
 Layout Style: Double deck, walk in
 Layout Concept: Midwestern/western Class I with traction
 Layout Era: Varies
 Construction: Current layout started in 1999
 Bench Work: Open grid; some L girder: much of the second level is on wooden brackets
 Sub Roadbed: Plywood
 Roadbed: Cork; homasote
 Track: Codes 100, 83, 70 commercial, hand laid
 Scenery: Hard shell and plaster over cardboard webbing or foam board; various ground covers
 Structures: Kits, kit-bash, scratch built
 Locomotives: RTR with wide variety of type, manufacturers, eras; a few kit-bashed and scratch built; sizable fleet of traction
 Rolling Stock: Freight, passenger in various of eras; RTR, kits, kit-bash
 Control: Member Jim Pechous built J2C DCC system and wireless throttles with NCE boosters; computer CTC panels in an elevated tower
 Operations: Display ops; Friday night op sessions; kids op sessions
 Other: The club has a portable layout designed for kids (it's 30 inches high) that it takes to train shows each year (sans Covid)
 Web site: <http://vmrr.org/>
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/ValleyModelRailroad/



The Clintonville station as it appears today (upper left) and as it did in 1962 (upper right) at its annual Fall Open house just before Thanksgiving. Today the station is owned by the Kane County Forest Preserve District and leased by VMRR. 1962 photo courtesy of the Valley Model Railroad Club.

Mike's Minute by FVD Superintendent Mike Hirvela

First this month: Our October virtual member meeting went well with an interesting clinic topic. My thanks also to all members who participated via their computer or phone hook-ups. I trust the presentation was informative. LCC is about where DCC was ten years ago, and like DCC, it is only going to become more popular with modelers in the years ahead. As I said last month, if you have any comment good, bad or otherwise, please send me an e-mail and let me know how things worked for you, what issues you have experienced, and what can we do to improve the event for you. We will be using the ZOOM system for the entire season, and with Covid cases on the upswing again big time, it is probably a good thing we don't have to go out and mingle with folks at our division meets for safety's sake. I am aware that there are those of you who have expressed concerns about adding the ZOOM system software to your home computer system, and I have a solution for you if you don't want to add the system. On your FVD meeting notice, there is a list of phone numbers so you can call in and listen to the conversations and presentations as if you were right in the room with us. Your participation shows up as a blank box with a phone receiver illustrated, so we know you are listening in. As moderator, I do need to remember our "audio only" people and describe in words what I'm showing on the screen, but I can do that! Our next FVD meeting will be on November 22nd, starting at 1:30 pm. Jim Osborn will have the ZOOM system available 15 minutes prior to the meeting starting, so some pre-meeting socializing will be occurring as everyone logs on.

Second this month: I was delighted to learn the Valley Model Railroaders have a large group of junior members, and that they include family members in their activities as Walt reports this month. I really feel including youngsters in this wonderful hobby is a way our organization will see new members down the tracks. Walt's photos show the vitality and energy the Valley club's junior members bring to their activity at the club. They also bring a lot of imagination and creativity as seen in Max's terrific "Ghost Train" in the "Fun Stuff" photos below. What an amazingly creative train! Nice job, Max!

Looking forward to seeing all of you and *your* creativity at the November 22 ZOOM meet!

Halloween Fun Stuff

by Walt Herrick

I gave Jim Allen the month off so I could do a special **Halloween "Fun Stuff"** using **Max S's "Ghost Train"**. Max is a junior member of the Valley Model Railroad Club and has a pretty vivid imagination as you can see from my photos to the right. Max's Ghost Train has a total of 14 cars including a Dragon Car, Eyeball Box Car, Illusion Painting Car, Spider Box Car, Skeleton Grave Car, and the Weird Scary Stuff gon to the right. The eyes on the skull of the steam engine have glowing red LEDs in them. Max says when you see his Ghost Train coming at you in the dark with the room lights turned down, it can be a pretty frightening thing—which is just the effect he was looking for!



October's Clinic and Contest

October's clinic was "Layout Command Control" presented by **Paul Wussow**. Paul's informative clinic gave us the basics of LCC and showed how LCC can control many non-locomotive electronic related layout functions such as lighting, signals, turnout control, detection, etc. The signals and street light on **Steve Fields layout** to the right are all controlled by his LCC system, for example. LCC is sanctioned by the NMRA, is thus standardized, allowing components from different makers to work together. It is flexible in that you can add as much or as little to your system as you like. Thank you **Paul Wussow** for a very helpful and informative October clinic!

November's clinic is "LCL Traffic Before UPS and FedEx" and will be presented by **Mark Vaughn**. Anyone having an interest in pre 1970s railroading, won't want to miss this one! WH



October's contest, "One Weathered Structure", was won by **Jeff Jarr** in our popular vote. Jeff built and nicely weathered his HO, wood laser, yard office kit above to appear as if it came straight out of the early 1950s. N scaler, **Ted Witt**, needed a specially sized mine for his layout, so he beautifully scratch built and weathered (note the great rusted tin roof treatment) the mine seen in the upper right photo to take **Second Place**. **Gail Erickson** also made good use of a laser kit in building her HO scale Lunde Coal dock building (right) which **took Third** in the voting. Gail realistically painted and then lightly weathered her structure using chalks. Jeff, Ted and Gail took the photos of their models. See all of October's entries on the **FVD web site** www.foxvalleydivision.org

"One Unfinished Project" is the contest for our November 22 **ZOOM meet**. Everybody has one of those, right? Send in 1-3 photos of your work to the link provided for the November ZOOM meet, and good luck everybody! Oh, and please vote for your favorite entry between noon Friday, November 20 and noon Sunday, November 22. You can ...

[CLICK HERE to vote for your favorite model!](#)



Member News

We need more contest voters! Please take a look at November's contest entries and vote for your favorite starting at noon November 20, and ending at noon November 22. Thanks!.....**Membership Services Trainmaster, Erich Abens**, reports "no change" in the division's membership numbers since last month....FVD member **Rich Sieben's** operations oriented, N scale **Chicago Industrial Terminal** layout shown at the right, was featured in the **September Semaphore**, and also recently in a couple of **OPSIG** virtual meeting presentations....The **NS&W Modular Group** has cancelled their annual holiday display at the **Glenview Public Library** this year due to Covid. They join **Wheaton** and many other area shows in canceling MRR events due to Covid....FVD member **Gail Erickson** says after building 130+ structures for her and **Gordy's** Milwaukee Road-Southwest Division layout, she's now found a new interest: brush painting track! WH



2020 - 2021 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held from **1:30 to about 4:00 pm** (except as noted under "Other" below). **This year all meetings will be presented on line using ZOOM virtual meeting technology.** See page 8 of the newsletter or the division's web site for complete instructions on how to use ZOOM and participate in the meetings. For the latest clinic and all FVD news and information, visit FVD's web site at www.foxvalleydivision.org.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
November 22	LCL Traffic before UPS and FedEx by Mark Vaughan	1 Unfinished Project	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
December 20	Layout Wiring by Eric Peterson	1 Yard Switcher	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
January 17, 2021	3D Printing by Phillip Burnside	1 Open Load	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
February 17	Flat Buildings for Your Layout by Charles Malinowski	1 Over, Under, Around & Through	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
March 21	The Pursuit of Realism by Lance Mindheim; facilitated by Gary Saxton	1 Locomotive	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
April 18	1906 Crystal Lake, IL Depot Diorama by Walt Herrick	1 Illuminated Model	1:00 pm Start on ZOOM Annual Officer Elections
May 16	Scratch Building Cars for the AP Program by Jim Osborn	12" x 12" Diorama with Repurposed or Retired Rolling Stock	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
May 20—23	Midwest Region Annual Convention, "The Rockford Railroad Convention" * in Rockford, IL. for information see the Rock River Valley Division's web site: www.rrvd-nmra.com		
July 4 - 11	NMRA 2021 National Convention, "Rails by the Bay"* in Santa Clara, CA. See the web site for more information: https://www.nmra2021.com/		

***Note:** both the MWR "Rockford Railroad Convention", and the National NMRA "Rails by the Bay" Convention will hopefully be run as scheduled. Both events however, are subject to Covid-19 mandates at the time and place of the event.

Fox Valley Division ZOOM Meeting Instructions

On September 20, we will restart our monthly FVD meetings using the popular virtual meeting technology called ZOOM. Now any of us with a personal computer, notebook or smart phone should be able to attend the meet without having to worry about being contaminated by any disease! Your FVD Board believes ZOOM meetings could really boost meeting attendance and contest participation. Here's the info you need to participate in our ZOOM meets:

Email Address needed

- We must have your email address in order to send you the login credentials for each ZOOM meet. (If you do not receive the Semaphore notice each month via email, then we do not have your email address on file.)
- To add or change your email address, point your browser to the FVD web site <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/>
- Click on the link at the top of the page just below the blue banner.
- Complete the form to add your email address to our address list.

ZOOM Meeting Procedures

- If you do not have the ZOOM app installed on your computer, please download it and test it out at one of the webmaster's Orientation Sessions prior to the September 20 meet. The ZOOM app is FREE. Orientation sessions will be held Sunday, September 13 at 1:30 pm, and Wednesday, September 16 at 7:00 pm.
- You will follow the same ZOOM procedures for each meet you attend.
- About a week before the meeting date, the FVD Webmaster will email you an invitation to the meet that will include a link to the meeting with your login credentials.
- Also included in the email will be a link to the FVD Timetable web page where you will find PDF downloads for a 1 page "FVD ZOOM Meeting Quick Guide", "ZOOM Meeting Procedures", and other help topics you may find useful. Tip: you may want print the Quick Guide to have for reference at the meeting.
- For security purposes, please do not post these credentials on any social media sites.
- Note: FVD meets are not being recorded and will not be available for later viewing.

Meeting Day

- The meeting "window" will be open about 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the meet.
- To join the meeting, click on the link in the email meeting invitation. You may be asked to do a short download or update, and you may be put in a ZOOM waiting room prior to the meeting. If so, the meeting host will shortly admit you to the meeting.
- After you are admitted, sit back and "enjoy the show".
- If you get stuck, email the webmaster at website@foxvalleydivision.org
- When the meeting is over, click the "Leave Meeting" button and you will go back to your computer's normal operation.

ZOOM Contest Entries

- With each meet invitation you will also be given instructions on how to submit a contest entry, and how to vote for the entry of your choice. Note that submitting a contest entry and voting will be done before each meet with our ZOOM meetings, not during the meet as we do when we are meeting live.
- With ZOOM meets, contest entries are limited to 1 model per contest. So, if the contest is "locomotives" you may enter one locomotive and no more.
- To submit an entry, take 1 - 3 photos at different angles of your model. Email your photos to the special contest link provided in your invitation email. Photo Tips: 1) Phone camera photos are fine, 2) Make sure there is enough light on your model, 3) "Fill the frame" with your model—in other words, don't take "long shots" of the model.
- **Contest Entry Deadline: Noon the Friday before the Sunday meet.** Early entries are encouraged.

ZOOM Contest Voting

- About two days before the meeting you will be emailed a meeting reminder and contest voting instructions.
- All contest entries will be anonymous.
- **Members may vote for any time from Noon the Friday before the meet, to Noon the morning of the meet.** Voting is done on line by clicking on the special link provided in the meeting reminder email, or you can:
[CLICK HERE TO VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE MODEL](#)
- Winners will be announced at the meet.

See the FVD web site www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html for full ZOOM info.



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 180 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.

2020 – 2021 FVD monthly meetings will be held September through May on line via ZOOM virtual technology per the schedule on page 6. Each meeting features a clinic, model contest, and information of interest to the membership. Outings, layout tours, and operating sessions may also be held when Covid 19 protocols are lifted.

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 at:

www.foxvalleydivision.org.

The Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal History



David J. Leider

David Leider's new book "The B&O Chicago Terminal History" is now available! To purchase the book directly from David, or for more info email him at: sooauthor@netzero.net

FVD's monthly meetings this year are on the internet via ZOOM virtual meeting technology (see page 8).

- Regular meeting time is: 1:30 to about 4:00 pm
- 2020 – 2021 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
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Assistant Supt., **Denis Zamirowski**

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*Contact information for all FVD Board members is available on the division's web site:

www.foxvalleydivision.org