

THE SEMAPHORE

May 2021

Fox Valley Division • MIDWEST REGION



D&RGW #454 K27 'Mudhen' 2-8-2 Mikado, on loan to the Lehigh Hickory & Western, works its way up the tall trestle to get over the Ishpeming Omaha & Western mainline on Leif Hansen's immaculate HO Scale dual gauge layout. More photos and the LH&W story continue on page 5.....

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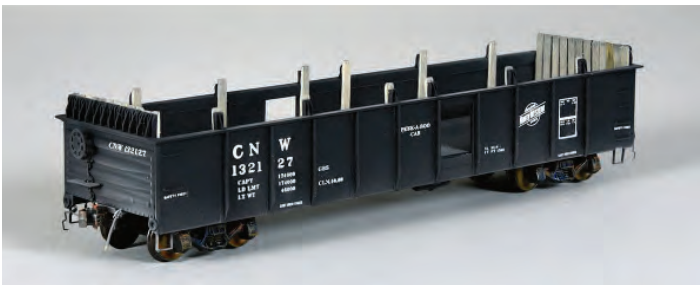
Pgs 1, 5 & 6 Leif Hansen's HO/HOn3 RR
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HO CNW Steam Caboose - Laser Kit built



HO CNW Drover's Waycar - Scratch Built



HO CNW Peek-a-Boo Gondola - Scratch Built



HO C St P M & O Express Car - Kit-bash



HO CNW 50' Auto Boxcar Kit- built



HO Soo Line Outside Braced MOW Car - Scratch Built



HO B&O Wagon Top Boxcar - Kit built

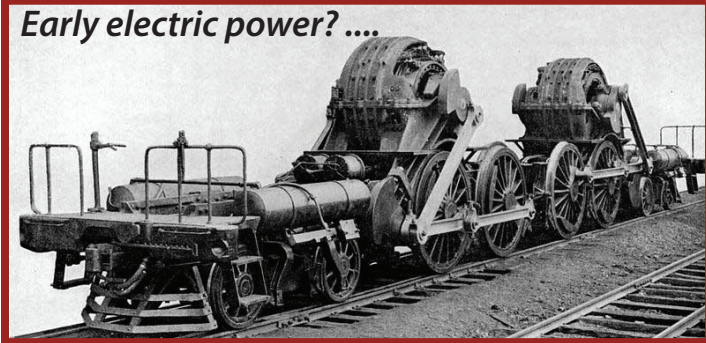


On2 Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Flatcar - Scratch Built

Nice! Eh..... Tired of looking at my photos? Send me yours!

Stay safe and busy in the workshop! J. O.

Early electric power?



A Lifetime of Memories...



Kurt Youngmann recounts his memories of visiting John Allen's Gorre & Daphetid railroad with his final installment.

In the late spring of 1972 I moved to Los Angeles. As luck would have it, I needed to make a business trip to Monterey that June which gave me a chance to call John and try to finagle an invitation. Turns out it was a Tuesday, his regular operating night. He discouraged visitors during those sessions but, when I explained that I was only in town for one day, he broke his rule and told me it was OK to drop by.

The evolution of the railroad over those 11 years was breathtaking! As mentioned last month, the first thing visitors saw on entering the room was the Port / Great Divide city scene. It had transformed from a small town area to a thriving metropolis with skyscrapers, businesses and a streetcar system. Scenery on the rest of the railroad was virtually complete, except for an area toward the far left rear of the room. Details included such clever scenes as the compressed space factory and the "expandalot" parking lot. Both were visible only by looking through magnifying glass built into the fascia. The former showed a room full of men busy creating more space for an HO scale railroad and the latter showed a large parking lot with many automobiles. In reality, it was all an optical illusion: there were several mirrors and only 4 cars, each with different colors painted on them. Very effective!

By this time the permanent crew was in place, most of whom had been with John for several years. I remember a few of the operators but most of their names have faded into obscurity and, indeed, I wonder if any of them are still living. There was one guy I got to be friends with: Allan Fenton, who lived in Carmel, a short drive from John's house. Beginning in about 1990 I began making 2 or 3 trips per year to Monterey to care for an elderly aunt and I always met with Allan when I was there. He had tried to keep the group of G & D operators together after John's

death and the loss of the railroad and they continued to meet on Tuesday evenings for model railroad activities. A club had formed and took its name from a narrow-gauge railroad of the late 19th century - the Monterey & Salinas Valley. The Southern Pacific had taken possession of it and converted it to standard gauge. The members gave me some of their decals and I had two cars lettered for the M & SV on my railroad. Visits to the club, which still exists, were regular stops for us. We remained friends until his death.

I remember the operators were dead serious about running that railroad during the session! No side conversations, no distractions. John had a world class sense of humor but, other than an occasional trick he'd play on the guys nothing humorous happened on that particular evening. For anyone who has access to the magazines, John's friend Jim Findley wrote a series of articles in *Railroad Model Craftsman* beginning in the December, 1980 issue in which he recounts some laugh-out-loud examples of the stunts he pulled. There was nothing going on in that



room other than running a railroad. One or two of the men, during lulls in their participation, whispered some points of interest to me. Block control was handled by toggles on the control panels. Switches were thrown by solenoids and the clicks they made were very audible due to the general quiet in the room. As I'm typing this, I start to wonder how the room's acoustic would have changed if the locos had been equipped with sound. (At one point John had experimented with an early sound system in one engine and he demonstrated it to me when I made my final visit a few months later, but there was no sound during this session).

After the session was over, we all went upstairs to the kitchen. It must have been standard for the guys to try their hand at the *Timesaver* switching puzzle and that's what they did. Someone suggested that I give it a go and I did. Big mistake! I had had very little switching experience

and I was befuddled. At one point I heard John whisper to someone, "Oh, I'm not sure I'd have made that move" and I knew I was in deep, er, uh trouble. ("Trouble wasn't the word I was thinking, of course)... It was a totally enjoyable evening and I think about it often.

Which brings me to my final visit the following November. It was another business trip. I decided to take an afternoon off and see if John was open to entertaining a visitor. He was, so I made my way over to the house. The layout appeared to be exactly the same as it was in June, but I'm sure there had been some additions that I simply missed. As I said earlier, there was so much to see that it was impossible to take it all in. Since there was no one else there, John was able to explain many aspects of the railroad and answer my numerous questions. He fired up a train and we followed it around the layout, explaining things along the way. This is when he demonstrated the loco he had installed sound in.

He had moved the house in the mid-50s, bringing with him parts of the two earlier G & D layouts. The entire center section of the new railroad incorporated Gorre, originally the biggest town, and Daphetid, a branch from Gorre. This gave him a chance to begin modest operations relatively quickly after the move. As mentioned above the railroad wasn't quite complete. The main line was lacking a final bridge that would have fulfilled his idea for the track plan. Operations to that point were an alternative to what he intended as the complete railroad. The missing bridge and trackwork necessitated several shortcuts for running the trains in his sessions. The most obvious one required backing trains out of Great Divide to situate them on the main line. Westcott's book explains this in great detail.



Naturally, I was curious about plans for installing the bridge and completing the railroad, so I asked him if he had a time frame for doing so. His reply chilled me to the bone! It reminded me of the expression about someone

stepping on where your grave site would be. He said, "I don't know how much time there is left." After a stunned pause I asked if he had been sick but he quickly changed the subject, leaving me deeply concerned.

Two months later, in January, 1973, I walked into the hobby shop in Burbank and was told by the owner that he had just learned that John Allen had died and that the house had burned down. I can't begin to describe my reaction so I won't even bother to try. Needless to say, I didn't handle the news well at all. Ultimately, I found out the exact details of what had happened. There was a fire but it was limited to the basement and the house survived. The Gorre and Daphetid had been destroyed.

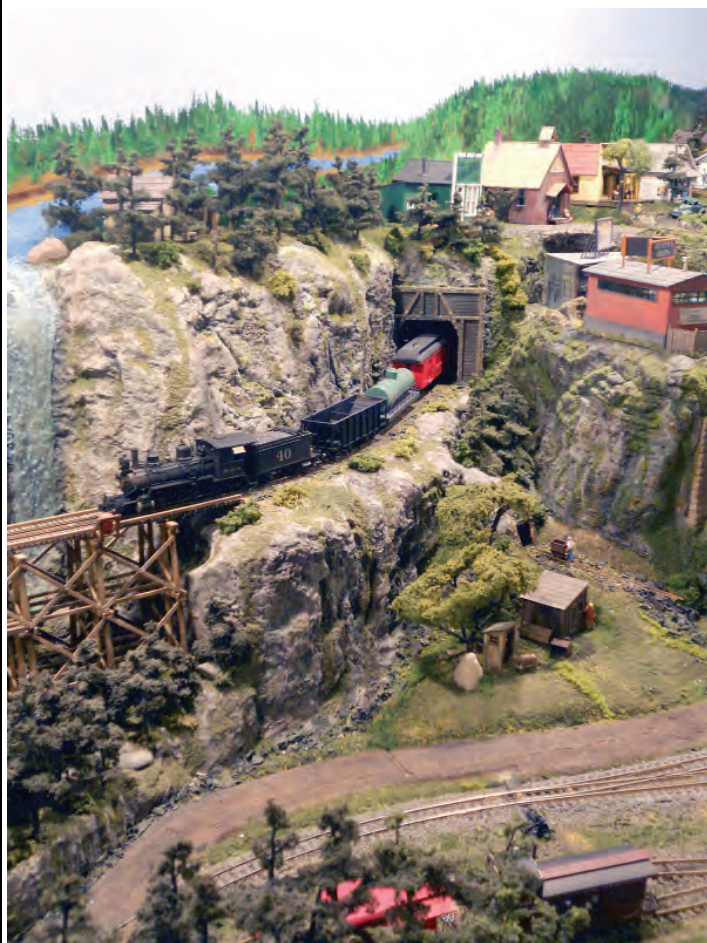
John died of a lifelong heart condition caused by a childhood illness. Jim Findley was staying with him at the time of his death Jim called an ambulance but it was too late.

It's hard to believe that it's been more than 48 years since John's death. The memories live on. Linn Westcott's book *Model Railroad with John Allen* which is available from Amazon and also eBay. An INTERNET search for "Gorre and Daphetid" brings up a plethora of photo sites. K.Y.



Photos in this article are courtesy of Keith Beard and <http://gdlines.org/GDLines/Galleries.html> Check out the website for larger prints of these and many other G&D photos.

Continued from the cover....



RGS #40 C19 2-8-0 Consolidation, on loan to the LH&W, exits the tunnel ready to cross the Triple Falls trestle. (Top left) --- **D&RGW #454 K27 'Mudhen' 2-8-2 Mikado**, on loan to the LH&W, crosses the Great Falls, while RGS #40 C19 2-8-0 Consolidation, also on loan to the LH&W, exits the tunnel and travels along the Great Falls river. (Top right) --- RGS #40 C19 2-8-0 Consolidation, continues its run crossing the Great Falls river trestle. (lower right) -- The town of Hickory is shown below.



Continued from the cover....






















Leif Hansen tells us that the IO&W (Ishpeming Omaha & Western) in HO standard gauge, was started as a freelanced imaginary layout at about 6ft x 12ft in 1970. There was no master plan, it just kind of evolved. There were many changes over the years. In the late 70's, a 3ft x 12ft addition was added, making for an overall size of 9x12. At about that time is also when computerizing with salvaged 2nd generation main frame equipment started. In the early 80's, his Mother offered to paint the background. He provided Masonite panels that were painted white and she used her imagination for the background scenery.

In the early 90s an extension of 3ft by 8ft was added to one end to allow for a Narrow Gauge addition. That extension was then integrated into the main layout. This became the LH&W (Lehigh Hickory & Western). Hickory (above) is a thriving town in the mountains and is supported by a gold mine operation in the center of town. Lehigh is also in another mountain and is primarily a copper mine operation. The layout has over 1000 handmade trees, mostly conifers, but quite a few deciduous trees also. The mountains were created using extruded foam and rock castings made from wood fiber plaster. He used 5 different rock molds, turning them into hundreds of different twisted and turned castings.

The "Main frame" computer can operate one Train, while a second train is operated from a laptop thru the CMRI interface using Quick Basic software. A third train can be operated in the yard. The standard gauge can be operated on either DC or DCC. The narrow gauge routes are strictly DCC. There are about 16 sound chips on the layout that provide various sounds for buildings or waterfalls, etc. Some chips serve more than one building or event. Almost all the structures have been upgraded to LED lighting; however, there are a few 12v street lights still in use. L.H.

What's Happening - or not ...

-  **Steve Miazga** educated us on the reconstruction of a prototype junction at the last meet. Thanks Steve!
-  We held **elections** for Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster at the April meet. Congrats go to Denis Zamirowski & Tim Kleimeyer.
-  The **MWR** spring convention in Rockford has been canceled because of continued scheduling uncertainties caused by the pandemic. They will host the 2023 convention.
-  NMRA 2021 Virtual National Convention, **RAILS BY THE BAY** will now be held on July 6 – 10, 2021. See their website <http://www.pcrnmra.org/NMRA2021/> for more details and registration.
-  The MWR will hold a tri-regional convention in Indianapolis on May 18 - 22, 2022. See the FVD RR events web page for more details - it should be a dandy! <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/rrevents.v2.html>
-  The **Illinois Railway Museum** has opened its 2021 season Sunday, April 11th - Sundays only in April. More days in May. Electric trains will be in operation. Throttle Time is on June 18, 19 & 20. July 4th may be the big celebration of the year. A full list of dates and activities can be found on their website www.irm.org/calendar.
-  A **Marvel super heroes exhibit** and the **newly rehabbed Zephyr train** greet visitors as the Museum of Science and Industry reopens.
-  The Chicago Tribune reports that 10 new CTA cars made in Chicago start in-service testing on the Blue Line.
-  The **FVD** participated in the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour – Virtually. April 17 - Info at <http://wgh.trains.com/>
-  The National N Scale Convention is planned for a Nashville venue on June 22-26, 2022.
See: <http://www.nationalscaleconvention.com/> for details as they become available.
-  Milwaukee Road Historical Society 2021 convention, Elgin, IL, August 12-15, 2021. Registration is now open.
-  National Railroad Historical Society will be holding their 2021 convention in Milwaukee, August 23-28, 2021. Location TBA.
-  Friends of the 2926 are completing operational restoration of ATSF 4-8-4 #2926 in New Mexico. Boiler has been steamed up and the crew is hopeful for excursions in late 2021.
-  Iowa Pacific announced their entire fleet is for sale. Time to stock up on a caboose or a nice flatcar?
-  The Canadian National Railway has made a counter offer to acquire Kansas City Southern in a cash and stock transaction worth about US\$30 billion. This is roughly \$5B over the last month's offer by the Canadian Pacific Railway. \$1B here & \$1B there - pretty soon you have some real money! Any of these deals are subject to a bunch of "not -so-trivial" regulatory approvals. By the way, the KCS also operates the Panama Canal RR.
-  May 1, 2021 is AMTRAK'S 50th Anniversary. They have had several locomotives painted in commemorative schemes and have put forth enhanced route plans through 2035. Bachmann will have HO models later this year.
-  The WISE division tells us that **Trainfest** is a tentative go for November 13 & 14, 2021 subject to Covid-19 issues.
-  Metra is challenging the industry to create a zero-emission commuter locomotive by converting an older engine from diesel to one powered solely by batteries. They are currently seeking proposals.
-  Steve Miazga (WISE Division & our April clinician) just finished a scratch built passenger car shown below. It is an all wood former coach converted to a Thunder Lake Lumber Company business car. There are 4 interior rooms - office, bunk room, toilet and kitchen. It is HO_{N3} and made with balsa & styrene. Steve is well on his way to his "Cars" Achievement Program award. Nice work Steve!



Mike's Minute...

Time Marches on - and we have adapted ...



After April showers and taxes (yeah, don't remind me) comes May and the realization that we have one more virtual member meeting this season. It has been a tough year with the COVID restrictions and group limits

invoked at indoor facilities and no train shows or swap meets. The saving grace was the Board decided to use the ZOOM virtual meeting system over the INTERNET. I think we can all agree, it is better than not meeting at all. And its use has brought up other interesting discussions regarding obtaining and bringing content from far away to our virtual meeting via a computer screen where you are. Further discussions on this topic are continuing and may be part of the mix during the next **modeling season**. I know our Clinics and Programs Trainmaster, Gary Saxton, is busy at work on the topic schedule, as is Jim Landwehr on the contests and model celebrations as well.

The Board of Directors has been working on plans and schedules for the next season. As of this writing, there are a number of issues unresolved with regard to getting back to 'normal' with in-person meetings, swap meets and train shows. The Board is hopeful that as the year wears on, the COVID situation will be eased, but it is not known what will be when. Be sure to check the FVD Timetable web-page for the latest information. As of right now the 2021/2022 meeting dates are:

- September 26, 2021
- October 17, 2021
- November 21, 2021
- December 19, 2021
- January 16, 2022
- February 20, 2022
- March 20, 2022
- April 24, 2022
- May 15, 2022

Mark your calendars!

In the meantime, we plan on continuing with the virtual meetings through our next **modeling season**. The Board will be monitoring the requirements of the state health authorities and local facility managers and will make future decisions with the health of the members a primary concern. A lot is still up in the air and unknown and may change on a moment's notice, but we are continuing to try. The Board thanks you for understanding.

Congratulations to our Assistant Superintendent, Denis Zamirowski, and Paymaster, Tim Kleimeyer, on their election to office.

We still need a volunteer to staff our Publications Trainmaster position. I would ask you give serious consideration to being that volunteer who wants to contribute to and support the division's activities. It isn't all that difficult.

Our next virtual meeting will be on **May 16th - 1:30 start!** See page 9 for meet details and page 10 for Zoom instructions if you are not familiar with the application.

By the way, take a few minutes to participate in our virtual contest by submitting photos of your **Small Scene or Diorama with repurposed railroad equipment**. Take up to 3 photos of your favorite scene and send them to the webmaster for display. Click the link below to submit photos.

<https://form.jotform.com/201995250508962>

Entry photos are accepted any time through our Contest web page. Finally, don't forget to vote for your favorite contest entries. Click the link below to vote between Fri. Noon before the meet and Sunday Noon the day of the meet.

<https://form.jotform.com/201986084212959>

Everyone take care, stay safe, have your fingers crossed for a better year ahead! May we all have clear track and green boards ahead! M. H.

March Contest Results & More...

Jim Osborn's HO Scale scratch built CNW style engine house shown at the right won 1st place honors in March for an Illuminated structure. Leif Hansen grabbed 2nd place with his HO scale Grandma Jean's B & B and Michael Hirvela's HO Scale North Chicago Texaco Station kit took 3rd place. You can see more photos of all the model entries on our web site at:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contests.v2.html>



The May contest category is **A Small Scene or diorama with re-purposed or retired Rolling Stock**. Whether it's a stand-alone structure, scene or one in place on your layout, we would like to see it. An example is shown below. Submit contest photos any time. Just click on the secure link below to send in your photos for any of the future contests. JO

<https://form.jotform.com/201995250508962>



2020 - 2021 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm (except as noted). This season all meetings will be presented online using ZOOM virtual meeting technology. See the next page 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.

Date	Clinic	Contest	Notes
Next Meet...			
May 16	Scratch Building Cars for the AP Program by Jim Osborn	Photo of a small scene with re-purposed or retired Rolling Stock	1:30 pm start on ZOOM

Sept. 16-19, 2021 Midwest Region Annual Convention, IS NOW CANCELED. "As a result of continued scheduling uncertainties caused by the pandemic, the MWR Executive Committee has voted to cancel the "Rockford Railway Convention" that was to have been held September 16-19, 2021. For the second year in a row, we are not going to be able to meet and share our great hobby. Unfortunately, the efforts put forward by the 2020 and 2021 convention committees have not been able to be put to use." Stephen Studley, President, Midwest Region of the NMRA

Fox Valley Division ZOOM Meeting Instructions

On September 20, we restarted 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.
- 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 to 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 admit you to the meeting.
- After you are admitted, sit back and "enjoy the show". If you get stuck, email website@foxvalleydivision.org for assistance
- When the meeting is over, click the "Leave Meeting" button and the app will close.

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 in person.
- 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. Submit your photos with special upload 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 day 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: <https://form.jotform.com/201986084212959>
- Winners will be announced at the meet.
- See the FVD web site for full ZOOM info: <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html>



Call for Articles....

Future Semaphore issues need interesting content. Consequently we are looking for model or prototype railroad related articles. Send us your content (words and photos) or even ideas. We'll take care of the editing and insertion in the publication. Contact us at:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>

About the Fox Valley Division

If you receive this newsletter, you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division area of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, as well as 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. Subscriptions to the Semaphore newsletters are free. NMRA membership in the division is available through the NMRA at:

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

2020 –2021 FVD monthly meetings are held September through May on-line via the ZOOM virtual meeting technology per the schedule in this issue. 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 allow gatherings.

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: <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/>

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Until further notice, regular meetings are held virtually via Zoom generally from 1:30 until 4:00 PM per the schedule listed in this publication and on its website at:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html>

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Need to contact any BoD members? Click this link to:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>