

THE SEMAPHORE

January 2023

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Nobody reminds us about winter railroading more than local railroad photographer and friend of the Fox Valley Division, Mark Llanuza. His winter photos always send a message about the power of trains ignoring foul weather. CNW 423 plows through the snow on January 14, 1979 -- only seconds before Mark gets his own personal blizzard courtesy of the F unit.

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Division News by Jim Osborn, MMR...

The January meet at the Gary Morava Center will be in a different room due to a scheduling oops on the part of the center's staff. It will be in the "Jazzercise Room" located past the reception desk and gym -- near the back of the building. Watch for signs directing you to the space.

The **"Rail Yard Sale"** the Superintendent mentioned during the December meet will now be held at the March meet due to logistics issues. The Jazzercise Room is about half the size of our regular meeting room and will not accommodate the extra tables we'll need for the sale. Take this chance to relieve yourself of that extra inventory not used; find some new goodies and support the division. Name the prices on your items. The FVD will retain 10% of all the proceeds from items sold to help fund the division.

What the "Bleep" happened at the last FVD Hybrid Meeting? Well, a cascade of errors led the Zoom system to crash and burn - causing the early termination of the meeting without the scheduled presentation. We had a bad day! Apologies to all affected.

It started with a simple tick box that needed to be checked to allow the video audio to be shared with the zoom audience and quickly turned out to be a disaster. The new audio system does its job, but it is sort of a house-of-cards with three laptops in the room required to run the hybrid meeting.

In an attempt to solve the video-audio problem, the video was moved to the meeting host laptop with no success. Then the Room Cam and audio laptop with no luck. We either had audio in the room or on the zoom system - but not both. Then audio feedback started. Well, adding the video to the Room Cam laptop was the last straw: doing so disconnected the room audio with feed back noise canceling. Unfortunately, once an audio path is changed

in the Zoom system, you have to exit the Zoom system and reboot. That was it, we crashed and burned - and we were done for the day.

Much later, the Zoom support desk helped sort this out so we should be okay for future meets. Ironically, when we set up the system prior to the meeting start, it went so smoothly we said something has to happen - ***well it did***. Be careful what you wish for. Again sorry for the mess, but we learn by doing. We look forward to seeing Charles' videos in the near future.... J.O.

Jon Percy's Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad by Rich Sieben...

As I wrote last month, I attended the Prairie Rail 2022 Operating Extravaganza in Kansas City. The second layout I visited during the sessions took me to ***Jon Percy's Buffalo and Pittsburgh***. It's an N Scale empire!

The **B&P** is the third railroad formed by Genesee & Wyoming Inc in the western New York and Pennsylvania region. It was created in 1988 from ex-CSX/B&O/Bufalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh track running from Buffalo NY to New Castle PA .

The upper level of the layout features the 272' mainline from Buffalo to Butler PA and includes seven major switching areas. The lower level is the 109' Northern Subdivision, a branch serving three chemical plants. The layout depicts the railroad soon after startup in 1988. Crews operate a mix of second-hand and leased locomotives to switch multiple industries and yards. Low train density and high local switching characterize operations on the B&P.

Past Prairie Rails operators with real-world experience have commented that the layout captures the feel of a typical railroad job. Operating sessions are purposeful but leisurely - with lots of time to operate prototypically. Jon has the work planned out so crews from the upper and lower decks are not competing for space in the aisles.

I ran the Northern Subdivision switcher - it was fun and interesting. Since there were no other trains running through this division, I was able to leave cars for later pickup or spotting for facing point sidings. Having train-watched a similar type of run on the ***Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern Railway***, (MNS) I have to say this layout, indeed, feels like the real thing.

(continued next page)

Jon Percy's Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad by Rich Sieben... (continued...)

I hope you like my reports on the various operating railroads I have visited. Perhaps they will give you ideas for your own railroad designs. R. S.

Layout at a glance

- N scale
- 27 ft x 31 ft plus 14 ft x 14 ft in two rooms.
- Point-to-point plan with many prototypical track arrangements and lengths.
- Approximately 35 percent scenery completed.
- Session represents an 8-12 hour shift for two yard switchers and three local switchers. As crews finish jobs, they are assigned road freights and extras.
- Operators use train lists and switch lists and control trains with **GML Enterprises** wireless throttles.
- DC control system uses track blocks corresponding to Direct Traffic Control blocks.
- Dispatched by verbal track warrants.

The upper deck track plan below



Lower deck track plan below



Now we are going to tag along with the crew as we leave the departure yard to make our westbound run shown below.

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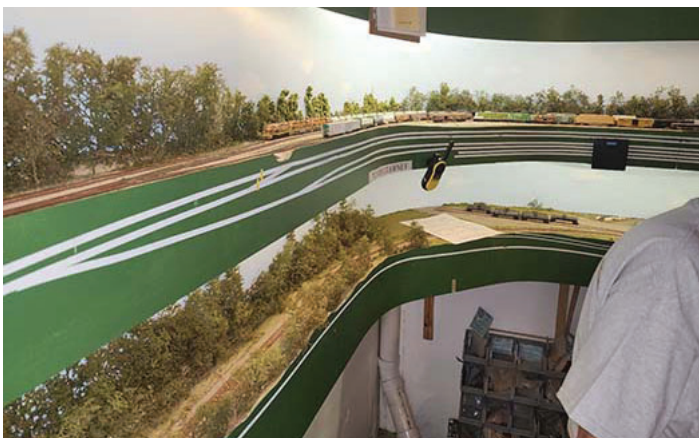


Jon Percy's Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad
by Rich Sieben (continued...)

We roll through an unusual amount of countryside on this pike as seen in the two pictures below.



Our first stop is at Petrolia on the lower deck in the corner. 3 cars in and 2 cars out.



Our 2nd stop was at Wiltco Petroleum where we had to work both sides of the main.



We pass through Penreco Refinery shown below with no work. This town & industry is still under construction.



Plenty of work for us in Dubois.



(continued next page)

Doug Taylor's Pennsylvania RR and East Broad Top
by Rich Sieben (continued...)



And at Wiltco Chemical. We had work on both sides of the main here including some facing point sidings that we will work on our run back later.



Finally we reach the end of the trackage. We had to execute a run-a-round and head back to finish the job. Until the next run Rich Sieben.

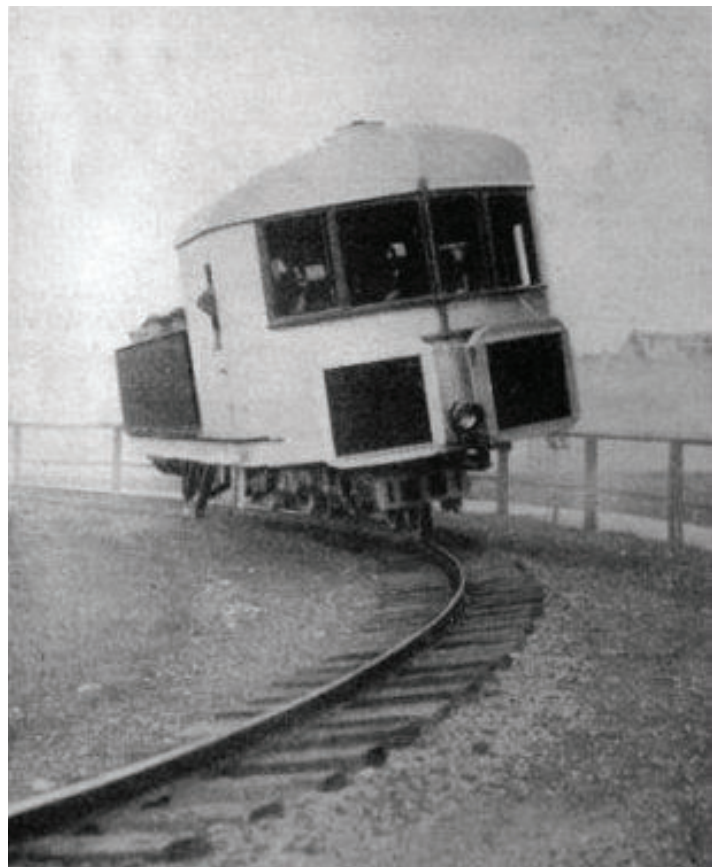
Fun Stuff by Jim Osborn

There is a lot of weird, train-related stories on the web. Here's one that will bend your mind: **The Gyro Train.**

Supposedly turbine powered, it has a couple of gyroscopes inside to keep it upright. There is an interesting article on Wikipedia - with diagrams and the science behind making it work (and of course its issues). Fascinating stuff!

As hard as I have looked, I still can't find the kickstand!

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gyro_monorail



Next Meet - January 15, 2023, 1:30 start.... In person at the Gary Morava Center and via Zoom.

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The January Presentation will feature Mike Wood educating us on the use of the NCE Switch IT-2 and the Switch IT-8. He will show us non-techies the simplicity of the Switch-IT 2 and that no knowledge of coding, programming or macros is needed -- just a few entries on your NCE cab to set things up.

He will expand to the Switch IT-8 with two examples: 1) for those who have existing turnouts wired up for push button operation and want to add the Switch IT-8 into the mix, and 2) introduce the concept of Macros to allow control of multiple turnouts simultaneously. Check the FVD website Timetable for details and updates as they become available. <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html>

The December Contest Results



The December contest featured Steam Locomotives. There were just 2 entries. Jim Osborn's Ready-2-Run HO scale C.St.P.M.&O Mikado was the division's 1st choice. The N Scale - Ready 2 Run - Intermountain SP AC-12 4-8-8-2 'Cab Forward' #4278 by Keith Dart was the division's 2nd choice.

See more and larger photos of all the models on our web site at:

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

The **January Contest Category** is all about **Diesel Locomotives**. Here's an example photo of a Baldwin AS-16 to get you thinking about your submission. Send in up to 3 photos of your models anytime using the our secure upload form:

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



Mike's Minute ...



folks.

Happy New Year to all. I trust you survived the Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year's holiday celebrations and are looking forward to a fresh start in the new year. If we saw anything from the last two years, it is apparent that model railroaders are a bunch of adaptable and creative

I know of members who have pretty much cleared off their un-built kit repository (whether cars or structures), have completed those 'don't have time for' projects, and have started anew, or re-started, in a new gauge or scale. It's a new year now and anything is possible.

From your holiday displays, consider sending a photo or two to our webmaster, Jim Osborn, for inclusion in our newsletter. Show others what you do to celebrate the holidays with trains. <mailto:fvdwebsite@comcast.net>

Speaking of showing others what we're all about, we have upcoming display opportunities at the Mt. Prospect Public Library. We have the entry lobby display case for January AND February this year. Additionally, the MPPL offered us the meeting room display case for March. So, we have three chances to show our best. By the time you read this, the display for January should be in place. Use it to inspire you for the opportunities in February and March. If you have an item - be it a special car, locomotive, a sign, plaque, or some kind of railroaderiana - let me know to expect you at the MPPL when we change the displays on January 31, about 9 am.

Model trains are alive and well judging from attendance at recent public shows. Three more opportunities are coming up: Mad City Train Show in Madison Wisconsin in February; Rock River Valley Train Show in March in Machesney Park, IL; and the Titledown Train Show in Green Bay in April. See the upcoming event listing on the next page for details.

The Mid-West Region (MWR) is conducting its election of officers as I write this. **We have 3 candidates to choose from for Vice President.** We are however still one candidate short for a 3rd Director-At-Large.

Since the ballot has been distributed and any candidate now would have to be a write-in. Ballots are due to the Election Committee by January 31. If you haven't voted yet, there is still time. It doesn't even cost a stamp - you can

vote on line if you want to. With three positions and only two candidates, the third position might be an appointee by the MWR President. So, exercise that pen, mouse or keyboard and take the time to vote your preference for Region officers. The bios are in the latest **Waybill**. Click here to read them.

<http://www.mwr-nmra.org/mwr2016/mwr.waybill.html>

As mentioned, you can vote on line (and save a stamp) or you can mail in the **Waybill** ballot. Write-in (or type-in) candidates are accepted with all voting methods. Please take the time to vote your preference for Region officers. Click on the link below to vote on-line:

<https://form.jotform.com/223156779610965>

At this time, we are planning on holding Hybrid In-person/ Zoom meetings for the entire season. Specific meeting notice details are sent out via e-mail one week before each meet, so be sure we have your current e-mail address on file and always advise of any changes. You can update your email address at:

<http://www.mwr-nmra.org/mwr2016/mwr.address.change.html>

Each monthly notice includes the ZOOM system log-on credentials to make it easy to access the Zoom system if you choose participate that way. Details on each hybrid meeting agenda are also listed on the timetable tab of our website and in each issue of the **Semaphore**.












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

Finally, I hope you had good holiday celebrations and are looking forward to bringing in the new year with new ideas.

Regards, Mike Hirvela, Superintendent



What's Happening - or not ...

-  The **Fox Valley Division** will be holding in-person division meets at the **Gary Morava Center**. The meets will also be broadcast via Zoom. See the next page for details on each meet. We hope to see you there!
-  **Great Midwest Train Show** (aka: the Wheaton / DuPage Swap Meet) is under new management and is holding swap meets at the DuPage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton, IL. The dates for future shows are generally on the 1st Sunday: Jan 8, 2023, February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7 and June 4. Follow the signs to the fairgrounds entrance. See: <https://www.trainshow.com/>
-  In 2023 the **Midwest Region** (MWR) will elect a President, a Vice President, and three (3) Directors at-Large. Please read bios & cast your vote at: <http://www.mwr-nmra.org/mwr2016/mwr.elections.html>
-  The **Illinois Railroad Museum** in Union IL is celebrating their 70th year in existence in 2023. They will also be celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the demise of the Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railway by running the CNS&M cars in their collection on Saturday, January 21. <https://www.irm.org/>
-  The **Mad City Train Show**, Alliant Energy Center, Rimrock Road and John Nolen Drive, (just off the 12-18 By-pass), Madison, Wis., February 18 and 19, 2023. <https://www.nmra-scwd.org/scwd-events.html>
-  WI, STEVENS POINT: CWMR 25th Arctic Run Model Railroad Show & Sale. Holiday Inn Convention Center Hotel. 1001 Amber Avenue. January 21-22, 2023. Saturday 9:00 am-5:00 pm. Sunday 10:00am-3:00pm. Adults \$4.00, \$2.00 kids 12-17, under 12 FREE. Many layouts, swap/sales tables, vendors. For information contact Jim Miller, (715) 340-0265 or email to jimbrow67@gmail.com or Don Anderson (715) 340-8105 or email to crm114@tds.net.
-  There will be no Midwest Region Convention scheduled for 2023.
-  The **Rock River Valley Division Train Show** will be held on March 25, 10 am - 5 pm & 26, 10 am - 3pm, 2023
-  The **Title Town Train Show** will be held on April 9-10, 2023 at the **KI Convention Center, Green Bay, WI**. Please see: <https://www.ttsgblc.com/> for all the details.
-  The **FVD will hold its Annual Business Meeting** on April 16, 2023. The agenda will include reports from each Trainmaster and the Election of the Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster. Contact the Rich Hoker, Chief Clerk if you would like to run for either of these offices. Contact any officer at: <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>
-  The resurrected **Naperville RPM** will once again be held in the Chicago area. The dates are October 27 and 28, 2023.

*May you and your Family all have
a New Year full of Trains
and Green Boards ahead!*

Meetings are held from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm (except as noted). This season all meetings will be presented online using ZOOM meeting technology **as well as in person at the Gary Morava Center**. See the timetable on the division's web site <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html> for complete instructions on how to use ZOOM and participate in the meetings. For the latest clinic updates and all FVD news and information, visit FVD's web site at www.foxvalleydivision.org. Save the dates for now - details will follow.

Date	Presentation	Contest	Notes
Nov 20, 2022	Grain & Railroads by Mark Vaughan	1 "Over, Under, Around, or Through."	
Dec 18, 2022	Two Prototype Steam Engine Overhauls by Chuck Rita	1 Steam Locomotive.	
Jan 15, 2023 Next Meet	Simplified use of the NCE Switch IT-2 and the Switch IT-8 for non-tech folks! by Mike Wood	1 Diesel Locomotive.	
Feb 19, 2023	Interchanges by Scott Payne	1 Illuminated structure.	
Mar 19, 2023	Presentation TBA Rail Yard Sale - bring your stuff to sell	1 Refrigerated billboard car.	
April 16, 2023	Annual Business Meeting and Election of Asst. Superintendent and Paymaster Please contact the Chief Clerk if you are able to run for either of these offices. Presentation: Weathering with Pastels by John Drozdak	1 freight car with an Open load.	
May 21, 2023	History of Cardboard Structures by Dave Lull	1 structure.	

Submit Your Contest Photos anytime at: <https://form.jotform.com/201995250508962>



LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE OUT THERE

Send us your: Prototype or model artwork, images, cartoons, drawings, paintings photos, layouts, etc. We'll take care of the editing and formatting for the publication. Contact us at:

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

The deadline for any issue is 1 week prior to the 1st day of the issue month.

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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Regular meetings are held virtually via Zoom and in person at the Gary Morava Center 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>

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