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Fox Valley Division
Midwest Region - NMRA
P.O. Box 1535
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1535

The Semaphore

Fox Valley Division • MWR • NMRA

December's Meeting

What could be better? Pizza, auctions, and a swap meet!

Don't forget to bring your December Semaphore (this one!) to the December meeting. You'll be entered in a special attendance drawing, with a prize of \$50. Why let the same 20 "regulars" get all the cash? Sure, the two raffles are pretty blatant attempts to try to get you to attend the meetings, but why not give it a try, at least for the December meeting? We'll start at 1:00 pm (a half hour earlier than the usual meeting time), have pizza and soda, there'll be an airbrush clinic (video), and we'll wrap things up with an auction/swap meet. In addition, we'll have the attendance drawing that was originally slated for May, so those of you who haven't thrown out all those tickets will have a chance at some more cash! Don't forget - There'll be a regular auction, a silent auction, and a swap meet, so no matter how you prefer to pick up your bargains, you'll have your chance. Hope to see you there.

And don't forget, December's meeting will be your only chance to sign up for the layout tour and operating session at Ted Schneff's home in January. Everyone who attended last year had a great time.

Take a Model Train to Work Day

November 12 was the fourth annual "Take a Model Train to Work Day," a chance to make the phrase "taking the train to work" take on a whole new meaning!

Did you participate? Did someone in your workplace bring in his or her train? Do you have a story about "Take a Model Train to Work Day" you'd like to share? Drop me a line (the P.O. box on the return address or Saviano@att.net) and I'll include it in the next Semaphore!

Hints, Tips, and Innovations

Share your expertise with other members

*Rick Saviano- Publications /
Membership Trainmaster*

This month I'm putting my suggestions in the form of questions: How does your layout change during the holidays? Do you sprinkle "snow" all over your layout? Do you have lift-off scenic areas that you swap out for Christmas? Do you have a permanent Winter Scene on a portion of your layout? Does having a layout under the tree take care of your "Christmas Fix?" I've seen examples of each, as well as some railroaders who run their trains outdoors during the winter, including running snowplow cars to keep the tracks clean.

That's what I like about our "World's Greatest Hobby," the fact that there is no right or wrong way to display or run trains.

Christmas time is one of the best times to create whimsy. Do you cutesy up your layout during this time of year? Are the coal cars earmarked for bad little girls and boys? Do you put up a Christmas tree in the Town Square, or put Santa and his sleigh on a flatcar? It's a nice way to get people to take a fresh look at that "boring" layout they take for granted.

How and when did you first get started in Model Railroading? My first layout (or should I say my father's first trainset) was Christmas 1952, when I was a mere 9 months old. I still remember the American Flyer set, as well as the O scale Plasticville USA train station and gas station. I even remember the cardstock buildings. By the time I was five years old, "we" built a layout in a spare room of our home. That was

This Year's Remaining Events

December 19, 2004

1:00pm, Morava Center

General Meeting

Annual Auction/Swap

Attendance Drawing

Clinic – Operation LifeSaver

No Contest

January 16, 2005

1:30pm, Ted Schneff

General Meeting, Layout visit, and Operating Session

No Contest

February 20, 2005

1:30pm, Morava Center

Clinic – Details to be announced

Contest– bridge or structure (any

scale – With or without background flat)

March 5-6, 2005

9:00am-5:00pm, Harper College

High Wheeler

No Contest

April 17, 2004

1:00pm, Morava Center

Annual Business Meeting

Contest – detailed engines

(steam, diesel, or traction)

May 15, 2004

10:00am, Regency Shopping

Plaza

Field Trip - To be Announced

No Contest

my first experience with Plaster of Paris-soaked cloth strips to make mountains. I don't remember whether my dad designed it himself or used one from Model Railroader, but it had several sidings for industry-to-business interest, as well as the all-important continuous running capability. I even remember how long it took (two hours) to make the two-minute movie of the layout. That layout, as well as the subsequent layouts my dad and I built (I actually did help with some of the layouts when I was older) started me in the hobby, as well as being my first experiences with carpentry and electrical work.

How about you? What our first layout like? What sparked your interest in model railroading? Share your story with others. Drop me a line (Either mail to Fox Valley Division Midwest Region - NMRA P.O. Box 1535 Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1535 or email me at Saviano@att.net) and I'll include it in the next Semaphore.

Follow up: Why aren't you at the meetings?

I haven't gotten any emails yet, and haven't checked the post office box, but I would guess that there were no responses to last month's question as to why more people don't come to the meetings. I'll confess, I was a member a few years before I started attending, and I'm not at every meeting, but I really enjoy the meetings I go to.

You're receiving the Semaphore because you are a member of the National Model Railroad Association. Included in your annual membership is the right to attend local division meetings. The fact

that you receive the Semaphore means that you live in the area known as the Fox Valley Division (or have specifically asked to receive the Semaphore). The *Semaphore*, the *Waybill* (the Mid West Region's publication, and *Scale Rails* (the National's publication) are the magazine and newsletters you should be receiving. It's a shame not to take advantage of all the benefits of your membership.

I'm guessing that the main reason more people don't attend is time - there never seems to be enough time to do all the things you want to do. So here's a suggestion: Why not take the crew Christmas shopping at Randhurst? You can drop everyone off around 12:45 on December 19, take the short drive to the Gary Morava Center, attend the meeting and have pizza and soda and a good time, then return to Randhurst in time to pick the crew up with plenty of time to spare!

You've joined the NMRA, and that's great. Some divisions don't hold meetings, but since the Fox Valley division does, it's a real shame if you don't take advantage of them. It's amazing how much you can learn by talking to others that share your interest in model railroading. Discover a new technique, find out what works and what doesn't work, and find out what others think the most important part of model railroading is. It could also change the focus of your own feelings about what model railroading is.

Call for Layouts!

Share Your Layout with Others

Did you enjoy the layouts we've visited last year? Have they provided inspiration for your own layout? Here's the perfect opportunity to share your layout with the rest of the Fox Valley Division.

Contact our Events Trainmaster, Steve Martinak at 847-854-7545 or email him at mart832@attglobal.net

Call for Clinics!

Did you enjoy Tim Kleimeyer's clinic? It was based on a clinic he attended while at the National Convention. Have you been dying to share a special technique with other NMRA members? Contact our Events Trainmaster, Steve Martinak at 847-854-7545 or email him at mart832@attglobal.net. We may devote a meeting for your clinic!

Model Railroad Puzzler

Did you get a chance to think about the model railroad puzzle I printed last month? Rather than give you the answer, why not come to the December meeting? We'll give the answer there!

There's no puzzler for this month, you've probably got enough to think about already.

Have you got a puzzler you'd like to share? Drop me a line (Either mail to
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Or email me at Saviano@att.net and I'll publish it and give you the credit.
Happy Puzzling!



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Dust off your layouts!

Another reminder - the DuPage Division and the Fox Valley Division will be hosting the 2006 Spring Convention, and we'll be looking for layout tours and (shudder) the "V" word - Volunteers. Details in a future Semaphore.

Save the Date! Our Winter dinner

Our Winter dinner is tentatively set for the second or third Saturday in January. The details were not set at the time of this publication, so we'll publish the details in the January Issue. You can also check the Fox Valley Division's website (www.mwr-nmra.org/fvd/) for updates. Previous dinners were at Chessie's and Winberry's. This year's promises to be as enjoyable as in the past. Hope to see you there.

Our January Meeting

January is going to be an abbreviated meeting, followed by a layout tour and operating session. We will meet at Ted Schneff's house. Be sure to sign up for this meeting at our December meeting!

Check the WWWeb

Don't discount the World Wide Web as a hobby resource! Here are just a few examples:

The NMRA website:

www.nmra.org/

The Midwest Region's site:

www.mwr-nmra.org/

The Fox Valley Division's site:

www.mwr-nmra.org/fvd/

World's Greatest Hobby website (links to various manufacturer's and retail sites):

Location for General Meetings

General meetings of the Fox Valley Division are held at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights (See map at right).

Why Are You Receiving this Newsletter?

You are a member of the National Model Railroad Association. Part of your National dues includes membership in the Fox Valley Division. The Semaphore is your guide to the monthly meetings, clinics, field trips, and layout tours of the Fox Valley Division



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