

# THE SEMAPHORE

March 2012

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



## Thanks High Wheeler Volunteers!

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As usual, a huge amount of behind the scenes work went into this year's High Wheeler Train Show which ran March 3rd and 4th again at Harper College in Palatine. This annual Fox Valley Division sponsored event takes lots of coordinated effort by lots of talented FVD people. Public Relations Trainmaster, Jim Osborn, generated a ton of publicity. FVD board member Bert Lattan organized the fifty plus vendors, layout operators, and exhibitors for efficient set up, take down and operation of their layouts and displays. Clerk Leif Hanson had dozens of signs and banners made to direct people to the show and direct them around the show once they got there. Leif and Jim Osborn also organized show participant traffic control and the unloading/reloading efforts needed before and after the show. Board member Jim Allen developed the floor plan which turned Harper's big field house into a 28,000 square foot major Chicagoland train show. Paymaster, Tim Kleimeyer, expertly handled the show's finances. And board member Mike Hirvela built a 4 x 6 foot Thomas the Tank Engine portable layout especially for the show.

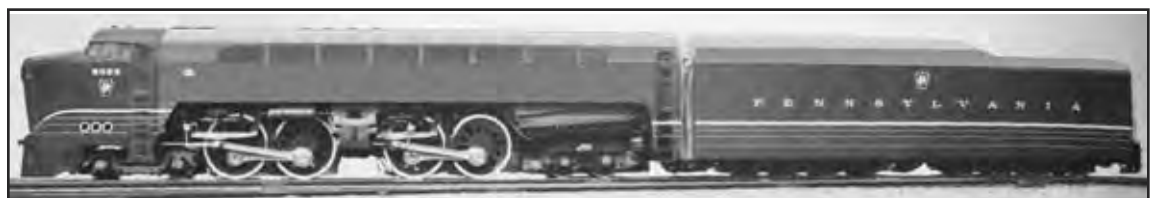
In addition, under the direction of Volunteer Coordinator, Dave Johnson, three dozen or so dedicated FVD volunteers manned the ticket taking table, activity tables, movie showing,



set up/take down efforts, FVD info booth, and layout and display judging activities, etc. These great volunteers were Ann Branstrator, Bobbie Cable, Debbie Cloos, Frank Cole, Barry Cutaia, Gail Erickson, Gordy Erickson, Dave Flebbe, Gary Hendrickson, Walt Herrick, Jeff Jarr, Kathy Jarr, Charlie Johnson, Dave Johnson, Art Jones, Charlie Klingel, Diane Kostick, Bob Landwehr, Jim Landwehr, Dave Leider, Kim Nagy, Madyson Nagy, Tara Nagy, Mary Osborn, Gene Parkhurst, Linda Parkhurst, Janet Peterson, Pete Peterson, Norm Smith, Harry Sorenson, Bob Teuber, George Trandel, Will Westfall, Jim Wyruchowski, Sandy Wyruchowski, and Dennis Zamirowski. Overseeing and directing the entire show, as well as communicating almost year round

*continued on page two*

### FUN STUFF



with all the layout operators, exhibitors and vendors, was Ways and Means Trainmaster, Walter Radke. FYI, Walter has served as the High Wheeler's Show Director for the past seven years and assisted the High Wheeler Show Director for many years

before that. In his spare time, Walter serves as the Fox Valley Division's Superintendent. The FVD Board sincerely thanks each and every volunteer for their work in this year's High Wheeler. Great Job Everybody!

## April FVD Elections

Our April 15th monthly meeting is our annual Business Meeting. At this year's meeting we will elect two board positions to two year terms, Superintendent and Chief Clerk. Please contact Clerk Leif Hansen if you are interested in running for either of these jobs. Call Leif at 847-437-7124, or email him at [mudhen454@att.net](mailto:mudhen454@att.net) mailto:mudhen454@att.net. Note April's meeting has an early 1:00 p.m. start that day. Below are bios of the candidates who are running for office as of "press time".



### Walter Radke

*Candidate for Superintendent*

I have been in the railroad hobby for over 60 years starting with an O27 tin plate railroad in my mother's kitchen. In December 1949, I acquired my first HO locomotive and went on to build two model railroad empires by the time I graduated high school. After college, I discovered railroad clubs. I became president of the DesPlaines Railroad Club and designed and helped build both of their club layouts, one of which was open for the 1976 NMRA National Convention. I later took leadership in the creation of the Lions Den Railroad Club and served as their president and later treasurer, as well as designing and helping to build both of their layouts. I performed a similar role with the Northbrook Railroad Group. Fifty years ago I joined the NMRA and became a member of the Fox Valley Division. I've served as the division's treasurer and two terms as Ways and Means Trainmaster. For the past ten years I helped plan the FVD's High Wheeler Train Show, drawing floor plans of each year's event and working closely with vendors and layout exhibitors. For the past five years I have been High Wheeler's Show Manager. I was elected FVD Superintendent in 2010, and look forward to continuing my service to the Fox Valley Division as its Superintendent.

efficient and productive manner. I have a lot of computer experience and I know how to type, which are two key qualifications for the Chief Clerk's position. I have also served in this capacity for the past eight years and have enjoyed the work which are also key qualifications to holding this position. I am now fully retired and will continue to be able to commit the time to attend the various meetings and functions as required. I look forward to another term as Chief Clerk for the Fox Valley Division of the NMRA and would appreciate your vote on April 15th.



### Jeff Jarr

*Candidate for Superintendent*

I have been involved in model railroading for about 38 years. My father got me interested in the hobby when I was 12. Together my father and I have built 7 model railroads over the years. I model the C&NW in HO scale and currently have a large layout under construction occupying the majority of the basement in my current home. I became a member of the NS&W Division of the NMRA back in 2006. While with the NS&W I was in charge of refreshments, became coordinator of the NS&W Modular Group and was elected as Paymaster. Since the merger of the NS&W and FVD, I have served as your Assistant Superintendent, and the NS&W Modular Group has become a 100% NMRA Club. We continue to display our modular layout at many of the local train shows. I have made many new friendships at the FVD over the past few years, and I would be honored if elected to serve as your Superintendent of the Fox Valley Division.



### Leif Hansen

*Candidate for Chief Clerk*

I have been a member of the NMRA since 1985 and would like to continue contributing my services to the Fox Valley Division to keep it running in an

## Member News

MMR David Leider and FVD member John Hoker have had articles published in recent months. The December Railroad Model Craftsman had a well researched feature article on the Chicago area pickle industry titled, "The Pickle Industry and Railroading" by David. In February's Model Railroader, David's "Scratchbuilding a Styrene Structure" explained how to scratch build Waupaca, Wisconsin's Central Seed Company in styrene using easy techniques. David's scratch building methods are also featured on line on MR's web site, ModelRailroader.com. John Hoker's great article, "Railroading from the Inside" appeared in the third quarter (fall) 2011 Milwaukee Railroader, the magazine of the Milwaukee Road Historical Society. In his article, John tells of his "inside" work on the railroad from 1951 to 1957. We plan to run excerpts of John's article in future issues of the Semaphore. But, if you'd like to read the entire article with great color photographs now, the magazine is still available at better local hobby shops. (The editor got his copy at Des Plaines Hobbies.)

## February Meeting

We had a great February meeting with fifty or so in attendance. More chairs actually had to be set up for the large crowd that showed up! Highlights of the meeting included not one but three great clinics.

David Leider gave us a fascinating look at early Chicagoland railroad milk traffic and the milk industry. Mike Hirvela followed with a short video tour of Don Cook's superb HO Great Northern layout set in the steam/diesel transition era. David Crement concluded with a slide show presentation on how he obtained his Motive Power AP certificate. As Dave pointed out, achieving the AP Motive Power certificate "Is not as hard as you might think it is." Our

"On line Structures" contest was won by Will Westphall's old wooden water tower which he expertly built from a Scale Structures Limited kit that was produced in the 1960s and 70s. Jim Landwehr's nicely done scratch built (from brass) multiple track signal bridge took second. Jim had the bridge lit up for the meeting and it looked great. Mike Hirvela's neat kitbased interlocking tower was reworked and repainted from an inexpensive train show purchase, and took third. photos of the winners are by Jim Osborn's

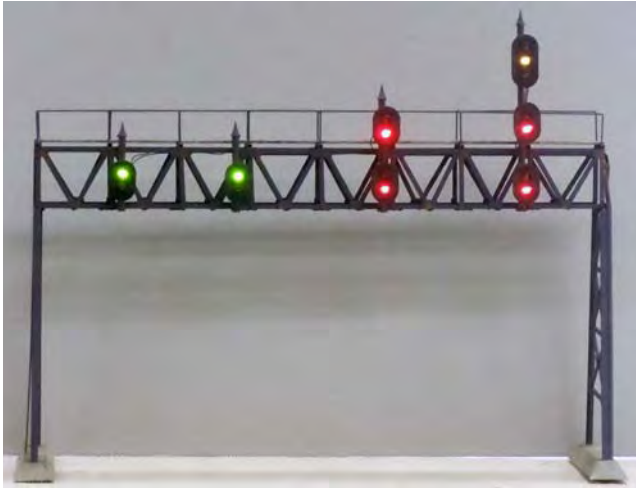
## February contest winners



1st Place, Will Westfall's HO scale, Water Tower

*Second and Third place on page 4.*

## Second and Third place contest winners



2nd Place  
Jim Landwehr's  
HO Scale Signal Bridge



3rd Place  
Mike Hirvela's  
HO Scale  
St. Francis Tower

## Modeling Tip of the Month

This month's tip comes from David Leider's "Scratch Build a Structure in Styrene" article in the February 2012 Model Railroader. In it he says, "After cutting the styrene sheet to the appropriate height, I used a fresh no.11 blade to cut the door and window openings...." Using fresh, new blades in your hobby knife is important for any cutting, but especially in precise cutting like for door and window openings. Make sure to keep a stock of new

blades on hand and change them out of your hobby knife when your cutting starts dragging through or even ripping the material you are cutting such as card stock and wood. Yes, new blades are a little more expensive to use. But they are much safer, easier to use and produce better models. So go ahead, splurge on yourself and use new blades. You don't use old razor blades for shaving do you?

## Deadline Correction

Your new Semaphore Editor got off to an ominous start last month by printing incorrect information about (of all things) Semaphore deadlines! The real deadline for time sensitive material to run in the Semaphore is the day of the monthly FVD meeting. If your submission doesn't get to me by then, it won't get in the upcoming Semaphore. However, it will probably get into the following month's Semaphore. Please also know that I take Semaphore articles any time you want to submit them. All Semaphore articles, info, photos, etc. should be sent to: wherricks@yahoo.com. Feel free to call (815-459-1334) or email me with questions.

## Upcoming Train Events

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| March 24, 25   | Rockford Model Train Show and Sale, Jefferson H.S. in Rockford, IL  |
| March 25       | Prairie Scale Model Railroaders Open House, Lombard, IL             |
| April 1        | Great Midwest Train Show, DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton IL     |
| May 3          | Great Midwest Train Show, DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton IL     |
| May 20         | Kishwaukee Valley & Eakin Creek Club Spring Open House, Huntley, IL |
| June 3         | Great Midwest Train Show, DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton IL     |
| July 29-Aug. 4 | NMRA National Convention, Grand Rapids, Michigan                    |

## MIKE'S MINUTE

This month we introduce a new column to the Semaphore, Mike's Minute, written long time model railroader, Mike Hirvela. Each month Mike will give us a "minute" of his views on a wide variety of model railroading subjects. Here's Mike...

It's probably a sad commentary on the realities of life that someday our loved ones will face the ultimate dilemma – what to do with Dad's, or Grampa's, or Uncle Joe's train stuff. Unless you've groom-ed an in-house model railroader who can be the grateful recipient of all which has meant so much to you, can appreciate it's value, and will

carry it on into the future, a difficult decision will have to be made. If you haven't made provision for this eventuality, now is a good time to consider it. Does your family know what to do with your trains? Do you know what you'd like done with your layout, where you'd like your collection to go, how your railroad books can be disposed of, etc.? My advice: figure these things out, and let your loved ones know what should be done with all of your train items soon!

## Where's Emily?

Mike Hirvela reports that at the Great American Train Show, while manning the FVD booth, a little girl stopped by to watch Thomas the Tank Engine. Thomas was running around Jim Allen's Action-Reaction Railroad display. Like everyone else, the little girl loved the display, but she had a problem. "Mister," she asked Mike, "how come we always see Thomas at train shows and never Emily?" Mike assured the little girl that Emily

would indeed be on the Thomas the Tank Engine--Isle of Sodor model railroad he was building especially for High Wheeler 2012. He invited her to come see Emily at High Wheeler. "OK, I'll come. But please make sure Emily's there, mister," she replied, "I don't want to miss her." And Emily was there, in her beautiful green paint and single large driving wheel.

## 2012 Calendar

Future issues of the Semaphore will be on the internet at [foxvalleydivision.org](http://foxvalleydivision.org). If you do not have access to a computer, you can purchase a subscription for only \$8.00 a year. Contact Jim Allen for details at [jallenad60@comcast.net](mailto:jallenad60@comcast.net)

| Date    | Time | Clinic  | AP Clinic        | Contest   |
|---------|------|---|------------------|---|
| Apr. 15 | 1:00 | Annual membership meeting & Election of officers<br>Zephyr Route tours by Mike Abernethy<br>2012 Spring Convention recap & photo essay<br>- Jim Osborn<br>Time permting "Revisiting Trainfest 2011"-<br>Mike Hirvela<br>Lunch and & Refreshments served | Cars             | Vehicles  |
| May 20  | 1:30 | Weathering using chalks and other mediums<br>by Paul Gehrett  | Prototype Models | Best of the Best for the year<br>1st, 2nd, 3rd and place<br>winners |

### NMRA Fox Valley Division Board Contacts

|  |  |              |
|--|--|--------------|
| Superintendent, <b>Walter Radtke</b>               | <a href="mailto:wagx2@email.com">wagx2@email.com</a>                     | 847-255-2977 |
| Assistant Superintendent, <b>Jeff Jarr</b>         | <a href="mailto:jjarr@comcast.net">jjarr@comcast.net</a>                 | 773-286-8755 |
| Chief Clerk, <b>Leif Hansen</b>                    | <a href="mailto:mudhen454@att.net">mudhen454@att.net</a>                 | 847-437-7124 |
| Publications Editor, <b>Walt Herrick</b>           | <a href="mailto:wherricks@yahoo.com">wherricks@yahoo.com</a>             | 851-459-1334 |
| Circulation Editor, <b>Jim Allen</b>               | <a href="mailto:jallenad60@comcast.net">jallenad60@comcast.net</a>       | 847-356-2061 |
| Clinics, <b>David Leider</b>                       | <a href="mailto:MMR_sooauthor@netzero.net">MMR_sooauthor@netzero.net</a> | 847-253-7484 |
| Public Relations & Webmaster,<br><b>Jim Osborn</b> | <a href="mailto:FVDWebsite@comcast.net">FVDWebsite@comcast.net</a>       | 847-587-5654 |
| Achievements & Contests,<br><b>Jim Landwehr</b>    | <a href="mailto:JLandwehr901@yahoo.co">JLandwehr901@yahoo.co</a>         | 847-577-7984 |
| Membership Promotions,<br><b>Mike Hirvela</b>      | <a href="mailto:mhirvela1@gmail.com">mhirvela1@gmail.com</a>             | 847-360-9579 |
| Membership Records,<br><b>Bert Lattan</b>          | <a href="mailto:blattan@comcast.net">blattan@comcast.net</a>             | 847-295-7959 |

Look for all FVD Board members contact information  
on line at the division's website  
[www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org)

## Jim Allen, Don Cook Win Big in Springfield

A dozen or so Fox Valley Division members ventured down to Springfield, Illinois March 8 – 10 to the Midwest Regional Spring Convention. The convention was a good one with 6 -7 fine layouts and a couple of really fine ones. Tony Koester, Andy Sperandio and Allen McClelland all gave great clinics as did FVD member David Leider. We got a to hear what Koester, Sperandio, McClelland and NMRA President Mike Brestel thought about a variety of NMRA and model railroad topics at the NMRA Update clinic and Model Railroad Masters Unplugged presentation Saturday night. But the highlight of the convention for several of us, was the awards ceremony held at the end of the festivities Saturday. During the ceremony FVD members Jim Allen and Don Cook garnered fourteen model and photo awards including three “Best of Show” awards. The Fox Valley “crew” in attendance very much enjoyed giving rousing applause each of the fourteen times Jim and Don went up for one of their awards. Below are the awards won by Jim and Don and photos of Jim's models. Absolutely Great Job! you guys!

### JIM ALLEN

#### On3 M of W tank car

- Best of Show Model Contest
- 1st place Non-Revenue Car
- Narrow gauge award

#### HO Hot Metal Car

- Best of Show Craftsman
- 1st place Freight Car

#### On3 Work Motor

- 1st place Diesel & Other

#### Photos

- 1st place B&W Prototype
- 3rd place B&W Prototype
- 2nd place Color Print Prototype digital
- 3rd place Color Print Prototype digital

(Photos of models by Jim Allen)

### DON COOK

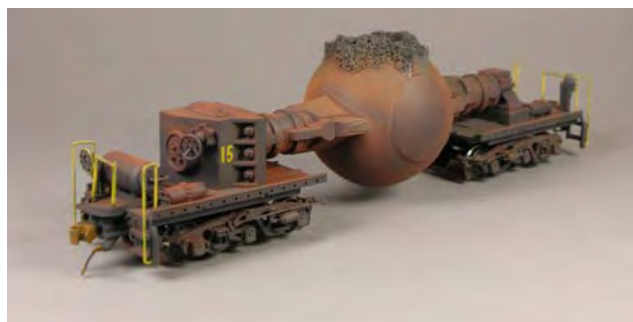
#### Photos

- Best of Show Photography
- Moscol Award for Best CNW photo
- 1st place Prototype Color Print
- 2nd place Prototype Color Print

Don's photos and other contest entries can be viewed on the Midwest Region web site at [www.mwr-nmra.org/#News](http://www.mwr-nmra.org/#News)



On3 M of W tank car



HO Hot Metal Car



On3 Work Motor

## LYFX 2-29-12

by Walter Radke

Today started out earlier than usual. The weather was predicted to go into the 50's and that is unusual for the last day in February. The plan was to run a special train on my garden railroad, weather permitting. It had to be in the morning as a weather change for the worse was expected for mid to late afternoon. Cold weather was coming back with a vengeance.

Set up for my railroad takes only 10 minutes for the electrical. Choosing which cars were available at this late date in the winter posed the greatest problem. After some searching, the consist ended up with SP 9737, an SD40L locomotive on the point, followed by UP #86265, a two bay hopper loaded with M&M's of various types (regular, almond, coconut, etc.), then UP tank car #48404 which was filled with rum and Coco-vine wine. UP combine #140 came next. It was converted into a "bar car" with space for a band and dancing in a wide center aisle. The aisle was created by relocating most seats to the sides of the car. More dancing was provided for in the last car—a coach—by backing its seats up to the windows. This was going to be one nice party train!

The train left town about 10:10 a.m. with great anticipation. It was soon apparent no one was going to be disappointed. The music of choice

was the "Chicken Dance" and nobody remembered anything else being played. The train proceeded slowly but the passengers didn't care. Everyone was too busy celebrating with numerous trips to the tank car and several trips to the hopper. After quenching their thirst and abating their hunger, the passengers came back and chicken danced like crazy. The engineer and fireman being highly responsible trainmen, did not join the celebrating. The conductor on the other hand... There was one minor derailment which everybody celebrated by getting off the train and toasting the errant wheel set. Another toast was made when the train crew got the wheel set back on the rails. Still another toast was made when the train started rolling again. But, any delay was considered a good delay, because it gave passengers more time to "celebrate".

All good things must come to an end, and the party train completed its round trip by mid day. When the train pulled into the station there were a few M&M's left in the hopper, but the tank car was now bone dry. We all had lots of fun, but were sad as well, knowing that Leap Year comes around only once every four years. What does LYFX 2-29-12 stand for, you ask? Why, Leap Year Fun Express



# Train Set Drawing Winners



# High Wheeler



Best Module



Facing Painting



Father & Son ready to race trains



Mike Hirvela discussing the finer points of Thomas the Train.



LGB Floor Layout



Ingrid Drozak (the tree lady) and her coffee table z scale layout admired by future model railroaders.



First place display



2nd place layout



2nd place display



Trains of Japan display



FVD's display layout built by Mike Hrvela.

All High Wheeler photos by Jim Osborn

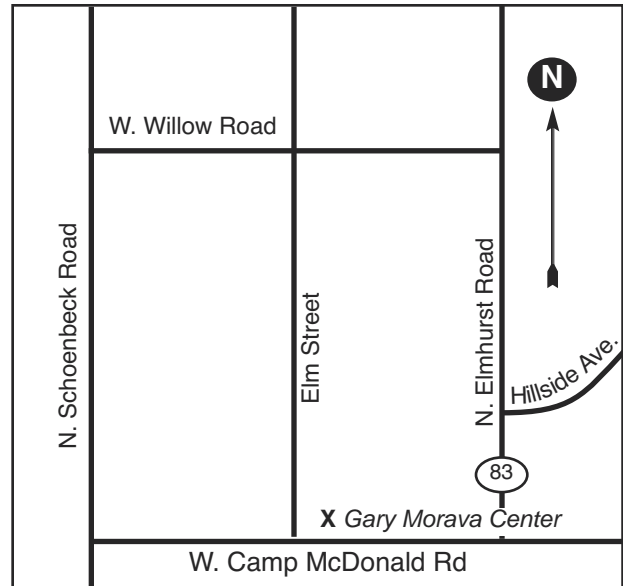
## About the Fox Valley Division

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 McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane and Lake Counties in Northeast Illinois. About 150 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 general meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:30 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 general meetings. To promote the hobby of model railroading, the FVD sponsors and runs a large train show, 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 help 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. We'd love to see you. Or, visit us on the web at: [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

**Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Walter Radtke or any board member listed on page two of this newsletter. We are here to help you!**



## Next Meeting

The Fox Valley Division will hold their **April meet, elections and annual membership meeting on April 15, 2012.**

Note: 1:00 pm start time to 4:30 pm, at the Gary Morava Center, 110 W. Camp MacDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL  
Lunch and refreshments served.



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