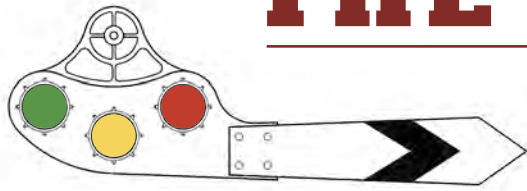


THE SEMAPHORE

October 2012

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



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Meet Bob Shlemon, Jr.

The Fox Valley Division's new Assistant Superintendent, Bob Shlemon, Jr., is no stranger to model railroading or the NMRA. Bob has had a strong interest in trains and model railroading since he got his first American Flyer train set in the early 1960's. He's been an NMRA member since 1977 and a Life member since 1980. Bob joined the NMRA a year after attending the 1976 National Convention here in Chicago. Bob is one of the early members of the old North Shore and Western Division which merged with the Fox Valley Division two years ago. Over the years he served the NS&W as Assistant Superintendent, Refreshments Chairman, Trainmaster, and Newsletter Editor. Bob lives with his daughter Rebecca and son Eddie in the same two flat he grew up in on the north side of Chicago, having inherited the home after his dad passed away a couple of years ago. His dad was instrumental in developing Bob's interest in trains first with American Flyer trains which his dad had, and then with HO trains. "My mom got my dad an American Flyer train set for a wedding present believe it or not. After Flyer went out of business, dad was able to get me my first HO set for \$10.00 from a guy at his work. It had three engines, cars, a loop of track and some switches."

Bob works long hours driving tour buses for two bus companies, the Chicago Trolley and Double Decker Company, and its parent company, Coach USA. It's a job he's been doing for 13 years. Each company has a variety of buses to rent including coaches, double deckers, and trolleys. Many different tours are offered such as city tours, special tours, wedding party tours, pub crawls, bachelor parties, etc. "I'll drive whatever they throw at me," says Bob, "There's always something different each day." Model railroading provides a welcome change of pace from driving the buses. And in the past few years, the hobby has helped Bob to ease the pain of the passing of his dad and then his sister the next year. "The last couple of years have been tough I've tried to keep busy with my trains to keep my mind off my losses. The trains have been a great help."

Having a space to build a layout has been a problem for Bob since he's been in the hobby. That problem is soon to be solved. Bob, Rebecca and Eddie are currently hard at work freeing up about 12 x 12 feet of railroad space in their basement. "I can't wait to get started building," says Bob. "I have a layout concept in mind." The concept is a "little crazy" Bob admits. His railroad will be called the Shelville Railroad which is a play on the spelling of his last name. The towns on the railroad will

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FUN STUFF

by Jim Allen

Twin Boiler Monorail Locomotive



Meet Bob Shlemon continued

all be named after streets he's lived on in Chicago like Bryn Mawr Junction. He'll have a Tall Man Short Line Railroad connection with the "Tall Man" name again coming from a street he's lived on. The railroads will have a little bit of everything—passenger, freight and switching—and a 1955 to 1980 year era span to accommodate his interests. The Shelville Railroad will be in HO

scale but Bob still has a soft spot in his heart for S scale, and he has also become interested in G scale. So don't be surprised if you see *two* basement layouts and maybe a back yard layout if you visit the Shlemon's this time next year. Besides helping run the FVD as its Assistant Superintendent, this year Bob Shlemon will be working on his own railroad(s) at his own home at last.

Mike's Minute

Article and photos by Mike Hirvela

This month we've let Mike go a little longer than his usual "minute", but we don't think you'll mind. Here's his article and photos on building the neat railroad maintenance boom truck which placed second in the April 2012 FVD monthly contest. Ed.

Building a RR Maintenance Truck

Several folks asked me how I made the RR maintenance truck I entered in the FVD April 2012 monthly contest, and which was also entered in the 2012 May "Best of the Best" contest. To answer those questions, I've submitted this article. First, here's the tools and materials I used for the project:

- a hobby (Xacto) knife with #11 blade
- a razor saw
- plastic cement (like Ten X)
- 0.60" x 0.80" styrene strip
- 0.10" thin plastic sheet
- plastic compatible paints
- small paint brushes
- an Athearn Kenworth diesel tractor kit
- a Mattel Hot Wheels stake delivery truck (see article)
- an articulated boom crane (see article)

In photo #1, my maintenance truck started out as a standard Athearn Kenworth diesel tractor kit seen on the right. You'll also need a Mattel "Hot Wheels" stake delivery truck seen on the left. The Hot Wheels truck appears as it comes in the package in its gaudy paint and decoration. You can find Hot Wheels at hobby stores and hobby sections of discount stores on sale for as little as 87 to 99 cents. What you're after for this project is the stake and railings casting on the back of the truck. Finally, the expensive piece of this project is the articulating boom crane. If I recall correctly, I found one at a swap meet for about \$10. The Walthers Catalog lists the following cranes which could be also be adapted. The numbers are Walthers' order numbers. Check the catalog and see what works for you.

Kibr	#405-10988	\$17.95
Custom Finishing	#247-7275	\$16.95
Herpa	#326-5322	\$6.95

Once you have all the tools and parts, you can build the truck. The basic job is to stretch the Kenworth frame a little to make room for the boom, and then place the Hot Wheels stake and rail casting behind the boom. Here's how it's done.

Step 1. Wash the Athearn plastic parts in dish soap and warm water to remove any mold release compound which may be remaining. Set all the parts aside to completely dry.

Step 2. To lengthen the frame, first test fit the fuel tank casting to the frame. Make a mark on the frame just behind the fuel tanks. Using a razor saw, slice through the truck frame at your mark. Cut 0.60" x 0.80" plastic strips 9/16ths inch long. The 0.80" should match the truck frame's vertical thickness. Glue these strips to the

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Mike's Minute continued

inside of the frame to separate the truck frame sections by about $\frac{1}{4}$ ". This provides the area for the crane to be attached later. Do not attach the 5th wheel hitch parts as they not necessary. Set the frame aside to dry, being careful to keep everything in alignment.

Step 3. While the glue is drying, assemble only one side of wheels onto their axles. You have to leave one side of the wheel assemblies off the axles for now or you won't be able to put the axles through the frame casting later. Cut two $\frac{3}{16}$ " squares from the 0.10" plastic sheet for mud flaps.

Step 4. Paint the cab if desired. Paint the wheel hubs, cab, fuel tanks (unless chromed), and the $\frac{3}{16}$ " square plastic mud flaps. Set these aside to dry. Paint the other side of the mud flaps when one side is dry. Be sure to paint the mud flaps' edges, too.

Step 5. While the parts and paint are drying, remove the stake casting from the "Hot Wheels" truck. Lift the front end of the stakes and tip back like a dumping bed. (See photo #2.) The casting is held on by a tab at the back of the casting. Gently pull or pry this tab out of the truck frame. Once off the truck, cut off the mounting tab and remove one upper rail and supports from the casting. It's too tall for the maintenance truck as it comes. Clean and paint the truck bed a weathered wooden color and the rails a metallic color. Set aside to dry.



Photo 2

Step 6. Go back to the cab casting. Paint the marker light housings, door handles, Kenworth logo, horn, wiper blade arms and any other detail parts you may have chosen to add, like side mirrors. Set aside to dry. Once the cab paint is

dry, add any decals to the truck cab doors if desired.

Step 7. When the frame section glue joint is dry, paint it black and weather the frame, especially the leaf springs and gear housing "pumpkin". When the painted frame has dried for 24 hours, add the wheels and axles to the frame. Push the previously glued axles and wheels through the frame. Then add the other side wheel assemblies and glue. Check for roll. Then add the fuel tanks to the frame.

Step 8. Test fit the articulating crane on the frame behind the cab. If needed, make shims for mounting from scrap plastic. The crane I used didn't need any shimming. It sat on the frame very nicely "as is".

Step 9. If you wish to weather the cab, do so now before the "glass" is inserted. Then overshoot the frame, cab (without glass) with Dullcoat or other flat finish to set the weathering. Let dry for another 24 hours.

Step 10. After everything is dry, it's time for the fun part: final assembly. Attach the "glass" to the inside of the cab. Then attach the cab and exhaust stack to the frame. Glue the articulating crane behind the cab over the fuel tanks. Glue the truck stake bed to the Athearn frame ensuring you have enough room to move the articulating crane. Add mud flaps behind the last set of drive wheels and attach any other details parts you want. Add some "lenses" to the headlights using Micro-clear. Paint some red dots on the rear end of the frame to simulate brake lights. Add license plates front and rear if desired, and a load to the truck bed if desired.

Now place the truck on your layout and put it to work. You can also enter it in an NMRA division vehicle model contest some-time! Oh, and, "What should I do with the left over Hot Wheels tractor?" you ask. See photo #3 for a couple of ideas.

Photo 3



September Monthly Meeting Recap

The Fox Valley Division kicked off the 2012-2013 "training season" with a great September monthly meeting. Superintendent Jeff Jarr continued his tradition of starting the meeting with a joke. He must have researched jokes all summer because this one wasn't too bad! After reviewing some key things that were decided at the September FVD Board Meeting (i.e., the division will host the Spring 2014 Midwest Regional Convention, we're dropping our video library, and the election by the board of Bob Shlemon, Jr. as the division's Assistant Superintendent (to fill the vacancy created when Jeff Jarr was elected Superintendent last April) Jeff reviewed various items of interest to the membership including:

- Thanking Clinics and Programs Trainmaster, David Leider, MMR, for organizing a great Hesston trip on September 2nd, and Eddie Shlemon for the day's great meeting refreshments.
- Noting Dave Johnson's report that the Glenview Library has obtained the Model Railroader 75 year magazine DVD and has it in their research section on the library's second floor. The DVD cannot be taken out of the library for copyright reasons.
- Announcing the Grand Rapids National Convention this summer was a big success and was the 4th best attended national convention ever; Atlanta will host the 2013 National Convention.
- Reporting that at the Midwest Regional Board would like to see the Midwest Region do a better job of recruiting new members.
- Saying a FVD Spring 2014 Regional Convention Committee has been formed. FVD members should contact Jeff Jarr if they'd like to serve on the committee or have ideas for the convention.

Following Jeff's remarks, Bill Kirchmeyer from the Rock Valley Division gave an excellent clinic on "Basic Model Railroad Operations". Bill is a highly experienced model railroad operator having operated on 250+ some layouts over the past 30 years. He's on a first name basis with many of the hobby's well known operations oriented modelers. His large HO scale Chicago, Champaign and

Southern hosts an operating session each month except during the summer. (The CC&S can provide work for eighteen operators!) Bill covered key operations basics and history along with telling some pretty funny anecdotes and stories. His clinic notes can be found on the FVD website.

Bill Kirchmeyer gave September's informative, entertaining clinic on basic operations.



Bill's clinic presentation can be found on the FVD web site at:
<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/>
 Select the "Clinic Notes" tab on the left of the home page.

Welcome Guests!

The division was pleased to welcome four guests to the September meeting. All were attending a FVD meeting for the first time and are: Mike Motherway of North Brook, Bill Ebner of Long Grove, George Stevens of Inverness, and Ray Longfield of Elmwood Park. All of our guests are NMRA members. We look forward to seeing each back at an upcoming meeting!

We Need You!

The Fox Valley Division is an active division of the NMRA. We put on a large train show in March each year called High Wheeler. In 2014 we will host the Midwest Region's Spring Convention in May as well as High Wheeler in March. These events will take a lot of volunteer work from our members.

Committees are in place for both High Wheeler and the Spring Convention. Won't you consider lending a hand to help with one or both of these events? Contact FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr at 773-286-8755 or jjar@comcast.net to volunteer your services. We thank you in advance!

September Contest Winners

The September contest, "Local Work Train" drew a strong field of quality entries. Art Jones' "Back Woods" work train took first place honors. Mike Hivela's CNW work train placed second, and Dave Johnson's ATSF "Snow Removal Train" was third. When introducing Dave's "snow" train, Achievements and Contests Trainmaster, Jim Landwher, asked, "You're getting us ready for winter, aren't you, Dave?" All the contest entries were photographed by Jim Osborn, and can be viewed on the FVD web site. Next month's contest is "Covered or Closed Loads" with a three car max of the same type. Bruce Moffat will present his excellent "A Train Runs Through It—Part 2" slide show for our clinic.



Art Jones First Place "back woods" work train.



Mike Hirvela's CNW work train placed second.



Dave Johnson's Third Place ATSF snow removal train reminded us winter is coming!

Tip of the Month

Want some free scenery tools? Look no further than your favorite fast food restaurants for...

1. Ballasting spoons. My friend Ed Kuhr from Bellevue, Kentucky swears Wendy's "Frosty" spoons are the perfect tool for ballasting. I've found Ed's assessment to be correct. The Wendy's spoon (which is also used to eat their chili) is light, nicely balanced, perfectly shaped, easy to maneuver, and carries just the right amount of ballast (for HO and N scales at least).
2. Ground cover spoons. Another friend, Pete Walton from Huntley, took a Wendy's spoon

and cut off about half of the front of the spoon's "bowl". This allows him to sift his ground cover better with the front end of the spoon. This is really a help when you have to put ground cover under trees and bushes, under rock outcroppings, close up next to building foundations, etc.

3. Long reach spoons. Need to reach way into a scene to distribute some ballast or ground cover? Try a long Steak and Shake plastic "milk shake" spoon.

Of course there's more free fast food "tools" and supplies out there that can be used for your layout. We'll give you some additional ideas in a future Semaphore. Walt Herrick

Meeting Dates

Semaphore Circulation Editor, Jim Allen, mailed every FVD member a bright orange 2012 - 2013 Meeting Dates card on August 28th. All our monthly meeting dates, clinics and contests were listed on that card. (Email Jim at jallen60@comcast.net if you didn't get yours by now.) So we don't have to reprint all that information in the Semaphore each month, right? From now on we'll just print the next three months meetings and let you refer to your orange card for any other meeting information.

Date	Clinic	Contest	Other
Oct. 21	A Train Runs Through It—pt.2 by Bill Moffat	Covered or closed loads 3 car max of same type	Regular 1:30 p.m. start
Nov. 18	C&NW Grain Hoppers by Dave Phillips	Large Structure—5,000 (scale) sq. ft. or larger	Regular 1:30 p.m. start
Dec. 16	Brookfield on the CB&Q by John Szwajkart	Open load on one car; 3 car max	Start at 1:00 p.m. Lunch will be served.

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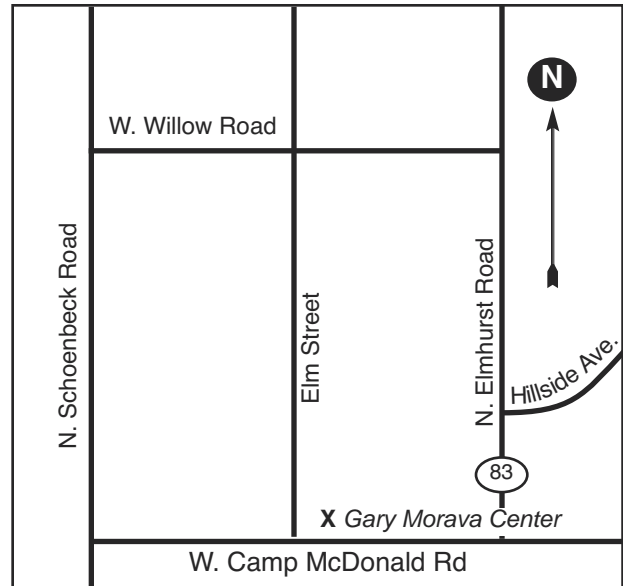
About the Fox Valley Division

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 240 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.

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr or any board member listed on page seven of this newsletter. We are here to help you!



Next Meeting

The Fox Valley Division will hold their **meeting on October 21, 2012.**

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



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