

# THE SEMAPHORE



October 2017

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



## Layout of the Month: Part 2-Minneapolis on Greg Bedlek's GNP by Walt Herrick

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**Next FVD meeting:  
Sunday, October 15th**

1:30 pm. at the  
Gary Morova Rec Center  
Prospect Heights

Contest: "Billboard Refrigerator Cars—limit 4".

Clinic: "Quick Industries for Your Model Railroad" by Rick Mahoney, MMR



This month we return to Greg Belek's Great Northern Pacific layout for a closer look at the sprawling 16 x 60 foot Minneapolis section of the layout. Above we see a Great Northern RS1 working the 20 foot long, Sieben's Brewery plant just west of Minneapolis where a *lot* of switching occurs.

## Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

This is a Vert-A-Pac railroad car used to ship the sub-compact General Motors Vega automobile in the 1970's. Developed in conjunction with the Southern Pacific Railroad and GM, they were able to double the number of vehicles per car by loading them vertically. 30 autos could be shipped in this car as opposed to 15 in a standard auto-rack. The autos were tied down to the doors then a forklift would raise the door into place. The autos were shipped with all their fluids in place. An oil baffle in the engine, a custom battery and a re-positioned windshield washer bottle were installed because the autos were loaded nose down. The Vert-A-Pac rail cars were a success, but not so much the Vega which GM stopped building in 1977.





## Layout of the Month: Part 2-Minneapolis on Greg Bedlek's GNP

In May's *Semaphore* we introduced Greg Bedlek's huge, beautifully built and sceniced Great Northern Pacific Railroad to our readers. That month we focused on (with a couple of exceptions) the large open spaces of western scenery on the layout. This month we come back to feature the huge city of Minneapolis. In an upcoming article we will feature *next column*

the south side of Chicago with its steel mills and other heavy industry. Greg has done such a good job modeling his urban/industrial areas, we can't resist devoting more coverage to these areas. They are integral to the operations of the layout and are very nicely prototypically modeled. They are very much complete layouts in and of themselves.



The upper left photo shows the longest aisle on Greg Bedlek's railroad stretching almost 60 feet. The city of Minneapolis is modeled on *both* sides of this aisle. Right behind the photographer is the Seimons Brewery complex seen on page 1. In the upper right photo we are looking in the opposite direction of the first photo, and see the *three* Minneapolis freight yards complex. A ton of switching occurs here during an op session including breaking down incoming trains, making up new trains, interchange runs, industrial runs, changing out power as needed, switching the bad order tracks, etc. Yard crews assigned to this yard are kept quite busy, as are the crews running the road freights, local freights, etc. in and out of the yards.



The upper left photo shows the freight yard locomotive servicing facility in Minneapolis where a wide variety of locomotive makes and models are regularly serviced. The upper right photo shows a back drop of a small slice of the city of Minneapolis. In the foreground are the RIP tracks and car shop. The RIP tracks and car shop are an actively worked industry.



## Layout of the Month: Part 2, Minneapolis Greg Bedlek's GNP



The Minneapolis passenger locomotive facility (above) sits just past the Minneapolis Union Depot. Note the wash racks used to keep passenger locos clean and shiny. The front of Minneapolis Union Depot is shown in the upper right photo. The rear end of the station is shown in the lower right photo. The architect and guru of the GNP layout's operations scheme, Mike Ritchsdorf, does some passenger car card organization below.



Passenger yard operations at Minneapolis are every bit as challenging as the freight yard ops. The passenger yard was originally half the length it is now. Mike Ritchsdorf convinced Greg to double the length of the yard to allow for full length passenger trains to come into the yard and be worked. All passenger trains get worked either by receiving new power, or switching cars in and out of the express, commissary, mail, or coach tracks. Traffic is so heavy for the Minneapolis area of the GNP layout, a Terminal Control Manager position was added to the layout's staffing. This position is essentially the "Minneapolis Dispatcher". Layout owner/builder Greg Bedlek is at the TCM's compact, lighted control panel in the photo to the right. Notice the much needed telephone set to Greg's right.



## Mike's Minute from FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela

### Starting the New Modeling Season and “Ah-Ha” Moments

The division started our new modeling season on September 17<sup>th</sup> and it was very nice to see all those in attendance at our first meeting. OK, at the meeting the Superintendent was a little long on his review of the summer activities and newsy items—sorry about that! But, there was just so much to cover as it was a very busy summer. September's contest had a good number of entries and the voting was brisk during the break. Our contest winner was truly unique (see p.5 of this Semaphore or our web site). Dave Leider, MMR, provided a new informational clinic on his rationale for, and how he is re-building his home railroad as modules. Unfortunately after the break, the crowd was noticeably smaller. Seems like some folks decided there wouldn't be more interesting things coming up after the main presentation. They missed out on what did come after! Let me step up on my soap box for a minute. Our hobby is one of information exchange coming in the form of presentations, demonstrations, stories, experiences, jokes, etc. We get together to share these things and the lessons learned from them however they turn out. Sometimes they're good, sometimes not so good, sometimes complete failures (Rare, right? But usually pretty funny after the fact!). And then there are the *Ah-Ha* moments. I *love* the Ah-Ha moments when somebody says something and a new idea crystallizes in my thought, a light bulb turns on to help me solve a problem, or a new concept comes to me straight “out of the blue”. I hope every member has an Ah-Ha experience or two at our monthly meetings. And, I like to think our members that stay to the end of our monthly get-togethers really get the *whole* Ah-Ha potential of our meetings. Wait a minute; was that an Ah-Ha idea that just came to me? Hmmmmm. Anyway, see you at October's meeting where my introductory remarks will be a bit shorter (I promise!) and even a few Ah-Has.

P.S. Get ready gang, TrainFest is coming up next month, November 11 & 12. This year TrainFest will be held in only *one* building—the BIG exhibition building at State Fair Park at Greenfield Ave and 84<sup>th</sup> Street in West Allis, Wisconsin. No more commuting between buildings! As usual, this year's show promises to be another model train heaven. In the photo, that's me with FVD members David Leider, MMR, on my right and Art Jones on my left at TrainFest a few years back. Were we having fun? Oh yeh. Walt Herrick photo.



### Modeling Tip by Jim Allen

This tip comes to us from George Trandel who originally got it from one of our division's master modelers, Jim Allen. George asked Jim how he was able to make his joints so neat and precise. Jim responded by saying he used a special tool to apply liquid glue to exact locations. The tool is a micro liquid glue applicator. You can purchase one from MicroMark as seen at the right. Or, you can make your own by clipping off about half of the “loop” end of a needle to form a two tined “fork”. Then drill an appropriate sized hole in the end of a 3/16 or 1/4 inch wooden dowel, and insert the pointed end of the needle in with a drop of ACC to hold it tight. WH





## September's Clinic and Contest Photos by Jim Osborn

### September's Clinic

The Fox Valley's own **David Leider, MMR**, presented the first FVD clinic for the 2017–2018 modeling year and it was a good one. As some of you know, David is planning to move from Illinois to Florida in the next year or so, and he wants to take his superb "Waupaca 1947" layout with him. (The layout was featured in the February 2013 *Semaphore* and the June 2008 *Model Railroader Magazine*). The problem is the layout, though a relatively modest 10 x 20 foot "L" shaped, shelf layout, was not built to be moved. David's clinic described how he is solving this problem by re-building his layout as modules. He is re-using his beautiful scratch built structures and his locomotives and rolling stock on the new layout. **Thanks, David, for a great clinic!** October's clinic is "**Quick Industries for Your Model Railroad**" by **Rick Mahoney**. WH



### September's Contest

September's Clinic was "**Anything Related to Trains**" and drew nine diverse entries. Our top three winners appear to the right. To see all the entries, go to the FVD's web site, [www.foxvalleydivision.com](http://www.foxvalleydivision.com). **First Place went to Al Hill** for his amazing 1910 Canadian Pacific pocket watch which still runs! The watch was used by Al's grandfather from 1910 to 1923 when he was a conductor on the CP working out of Winnipeg. The movement on the watch was made by Elgin National Watch Company in Elgin, Illinois in 1910. The watches' case was made by the American Watch Company's plant in Toronto, Canada. September's **Second Place award went to Ben Nicholas** for his unique, circa 1920's railroad supply mini bell. Ben's bell is in excellent condition. Our **Third Place finisher was David Leider, MMR**, for his steam locomotive oiler. This tool, or something very similar, was found on every steam locomotive riding the rails during the steam era. **October's Contest is "Billboard Refrigerator Cars—max 4 cars"**. Let's see those beautiful billboard reefer cars everybody! WH



### Member News

Congratulations to FVD member, **Pete Walton**, for his layout being chosen for the **2018 Great Model Railroads** annual publication by *Model Railroader Magazine*. Pete's HO Great Midwestern Railroad is featured on page 88 of GMR which is at hobby shops now. Also, currently there is a video of Pete's layout on MR's web site.... FVD members attended visitation and funeral services for FVD Assistant Superintendent, Ingrid Drozdak, which were held in Chicago September 10 and 11. Ingrid lost a long and courageous battle with cancer on September 7th, and as Mike Hirvela said in his eulogy in last month's *Semaphore*, "Thanks Ingrid. We will miss you a lot." So true.... Member Services Trainmaster, Bert Lattan, reports that as of September, FVD membership stands at 212. This is down 4 members from May 2017 meaning we "lost" a few members over the summer....Speaking of Bert, he and his Midwest Rails Modular club colleagues had their G scale layout in the "Railroad and Reading Room" of this year's Huntleyfest festival September 23 and 24. WH

## 2017 - 2018 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

Except as noted under “Other”, all meetings are held from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm at the Gary Morava Recreation Center, 110 W. Camp McDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070. Visitors are always welcome per the NMRA’s visitor policy. Note that clinics are subject to change without notice. For the latest clinic and all FVD news and information, visit our web site at [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
Oct. 15, 2017	“Quick Industries for Your Model RR by Rick Mahoney	Billboard Refrigerated Cars— 4 cars max	
Nov. 19, 2017	“Signaling the CNW Western Division” by Jim Osborn	Small Structure—max 300 scale square feet	
Dec. 17, 2017	“Ramblings of an Old Railroader” by Fred Henize	Hopper Train—4 cars max	
Jan. 21, 2018	TBD	Large Structure—5000 scale square feet or larger	
Feb. 18, 2018	“Mid 20th Century Box Cars by George Trandel	Gondola with load—4 cars max	
March 18, 2018	“Using Ground Goop for Scenery” by Art Jones	Diorama with On Line Structure	
<b>April 13–15, 2018</b>	<b>2018 Midwest Region Convention “Capital 400” hosted by the South Central Wisconsin Division at the Radisson Hotel in Madison, WI. More information at the convention’s web site: <a href="mailto:Capital400@charter.net">Capital400@charter.net</a></b>		
April 22, 2018	“Two Rivers Wisconsin 20 Years Later” by Mike Hirvela	Maintenance of Way Train	
May 20, 2018	“Building My Great Midwestern Layout” by Pete Walton	Illuminated Structure—any size	<b>Last monthly meeting for 2017 – 2018</b>
<b>August 5–12, 2018</b>	<b>2018 NMRA National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. See the convention’s web site for more information: <a href="http://www.kc2018.org">www.kc2018.org</a></b>		



### About the Fox Valley Division

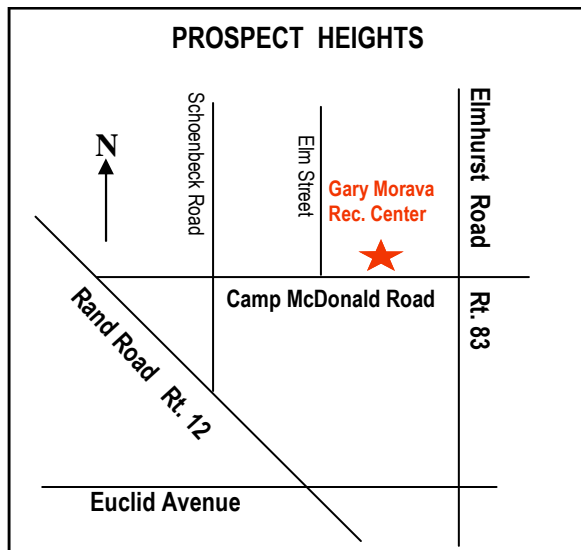
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane, and Lake Counties in northeast Illinois. About 215 members of varied ages and modeling 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 monthly meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:00 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 monthly meetings. To promote the hobby of model railroading, the FVD normally sponsors and runs a large train show called "High Wheeler" in early March each year at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois. (Note: the 2017 High Wheeler was cancelled due to a major, multi year renovation of the Harper gymnasium used for the show.)

We encourage you to take advantage of all the FVD has to offer. We are here to answer your questions and help you better enjoy the great hobby of model railroading. Join us at a FVD meeting or outing and bring a friend. We'd love to see you. Also visit us on the web at:

[www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

**Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, or any FVD Board member listed below. We're here to help!**



- The FVD's monthly meeting is at the :  
**Gary Morava Recreation Center**  
110 Camp McDonald Road  
Prospect Heights, IL. 60070
- Our regular meeting time is:  
1:30 to about 4:00 p.m.
- 2017 – 2018 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 6 of this newsletter.

FVD web site: [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org)

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