

THE SEMAPHORE



December 2018

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Happy Holidays Everyone!

AHSOMES's New Sectional Display Layout

Article and photos by Walt Herrick

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Next FVD Meeting:

Sunday, December 16

1:30 pm at the

**Morava Rec Center in
Prospect Heights, IL**

**Contest: Super detailed section
of track 12—18 "long**

**Clinic: Junctions, Interchanges
& Diamonds**



AHSOME club member Tom Seibert's CNW SD40-2 pulls a local freight past West Martin Jct. tower on AHSOME's new sectional display layout.

For the past two years the **Arlington Heights Society of Model Engineers (AHSOME) club** has been building a new sectional display layout to replace its previous sectional layout which was in use at train shows for many years. The new AHSOME display layout is superior to the old one in many ways, but probably the most important way to club members is the ease in which the new layout can be assembled and taken *con't on p.2*

Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

I could find no information on this steam powered hand car other than its photo. I don't know if this is an original railroad built car, or someone's clever creation. In any event, I thought it is a pretty nifty design (though I'm not sure if it would be the most comfortable piece of equipment to sit on and operate!). Note the unit's head light and "cow catcher".



Layout of the Month: AHSOME's New Sectional Layout, con't



AHSOME president Jeff Golding's Great Northern Empire Builder glides across the grade crossing and into and then past the depot in the above photos. This beautiful train is pulled by an all-powered, ABBA set of Walthers Proto 2000 F units, and includes 17 Walthers passenger cars. It is an accurate prototypical consist as found on the Empire Builder in the summer of 1956. That's AHSOME and FVD member Don Zbyut in the right side photo in the blue shirt, watching the action.

from p. 1 down. Says AHSOME and FVD member, Don Zbyut, "Our new layout takes a fraction of the time to put up and take down compared with the old layout." AHSOME president Jeff Golding agrees, "It only took us about 40 minutes to unpack and assemble the layout this year at TrainFest. It will take about that time to do the take down and store the layout." That's huge for a layout such as this which is really only used at train shows. Besides the excellent new Kam Connect hardware used to join the sections of the layout (no rail joiners are needed between layout sections because of the Kam Connect hardware), much improved storage of the layout's 2 x 4 foot sections in specially built wooden racks contributes to the efficiency of the set up/take down work. But better layout set up/take down and storage aren't the only improvements of the new AHSOME layout. Layout design, bench work, and scenery are also improved. The old layout's "muzzle loading" staging yard was positioned smack in the middle of the operating pit and was tough to maneuver around. A new double ended staging yard occupies one of the long sides of the new layout and is easier to operate. The over all scenery of the new layout is several notches above the old layout's, and the new layout has nice mini-scenes all around the layout just as the old layout did. The club has made good use of new lighting effects offered by Woodland Scenics and Menards' structures. In short, this is a really nice sectional layout built by one of the area's top clubs. The new layout is controlled by a DDC Digitrax Zephyr system with Tam Valley boosters and has worked well for the club as it did on the old layout. Though its not finished, the club has done a great job so far. It is an *awesome* job by the AHSOME club. (Sorry folks, I just couldn't resist that one! WH.)



The "back" side of AHSOME's new layout includes a large classification/staging yard (top), and in a corner (bottom), the beginnings of a nice diesel house scene. In the background of the top photo is one of the special wood racks used for shipping the layout sections.

Layout of the Month: AHSOME's New Sectional Layout, con't



Scenery for the AHSOME layout is “generic Midwest”. In the top photo, CNW SD40-2 #6913 rounds a curve circling a typical mid-western red barn. In the background is another typical mid-western fixture: a grain elevator. AHSOME's previous sectional layout had several nice mini-scenes on it and so does the new layout. In the center photo, a blue '57 Chevy is pulled over by a lighted Woodland Scenics police car. In the bottom photo is a well lit, Menard's modern fire station. To the right is a detail shot of the new AHSOME sectional display layout's fascia, entry gate, curtains and logo. Bright red and light gray are the AHSOME club's colors, and they look great on the new layout.

Basic Layout Information

Layout Name:	Arlington Heights Society of Model Engineers new Sectional Display Layout
Layout Builder:	AHSOME club members
Layout Location:	Local train shows
Layout Scale:	HO
Layout Size:	Max 16 x 28 feet, but can be built in smaller configurations
Layout Style:	Sectional
Layout Locale:	Generic midwest
Layout Era:	Varies
Construction begun:	2016
Bench Work:	1 x 4 grid, mostly 2 x 4 foot sections with other fitter sizes; Kam Kconnect connections
Sub Roadbed/ Roadbed:	Foam insulation board Woodland Scenics foam roadbed
Track:	Code 100 Atlas flex track; Peco turnouts. Min “medium” Peco turnouts and 36” radius curves
Scenery:	Woodland Scenics ground foam, clump foliage; real dirt; Scenic Express and WS trees
Structures:	Kits and kit-bashed
Locomotives:	Members' personal locos
Rolling Stock:	Members personal rolling stock
Control:	Digitrax Zephyr DCC
Operations:	Display layout operations
Other:	This layout replaces the AHSOME club's previous sectional display layout
Membership:	Memberships are open in the AHSOME club. Contact Jeff Golding for more information at: 847-687-7066.



Mike's Minute by FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela

photos by Mike Hirvela

We Did It Again!

The Bluff City Modular Engineers club, consisting of myself and members from Waukegan (me), Lake Villa, Lindenhurst, Lake Bluff (and our own Fox Valley Division!), received the BEST IN SHOW—MODULE award from the WISE Division at the 2018 TrainFest for our Denver Union Station scene. The scene was built on three new modules built expressly for the show. This is the second year in a row Bluff City won the Best in Show-Module award. Having won the same award at last year's TrainFest for our rendition of the Milwaukee Road's original Milwaukee gothic station and shed, the crew and I were totally shocked to receive the award this year, but very humbled with this accolade from the WISE guys. The Bluff City crew was not able to use the Milwaukee Road station and shed on our layout this year because the builder/owner has permanently installed them on his father's beautiful home layout.

So, we opted for another station, this time a kit of Denver's Union Station from Custom Model Railroads. The owner of CMR said ours is only the second Denver Union Station kit he's cut. The CMR kit was made up of hundreds of custom laser-cut, Plexiglas station parts. These were assembled and painted by Jim Allen, who enhanced the model kit with additional scratch-built parts, custom cut parts, interior detail, people, and dimmable LED lighting. The T-shaped supports for the platform canopies were custom-cut for us by GC Laser of Genoa City, WI to Jim Allen's design. We knew Jim's skillful assembly of the station kit would be the highlight of the modules. The owner of CMR, who had a manufacturer's booth at TrainFest, stopped by to see how the model and modules turned out. He was very impressed and congratulated us on a job well done. When we told him it took Jim 3 months to complete the station, he replied that he had told Jim the kit would not be easy. Got that right! The kit had hundreds of parts and a bare minimum of instructions.

While Jim Allen had the task of building the DUS kit, Art Jones built the module bases—the main 8 foot long station module section, and two, 6 foot long approach module sections. Jim Jakob did most of the wiring, and shared track laying and ballasting duties with myself. Scenery, which is still in progress, was done by all of us. When representatives from the WISE Division stopped by the layout the Sunday of TrainFest to present us with our award, we were, as I said, surprised to say the least. But, upon reflection, I am happy we were recognized for our (mostly Jim Allen's!) many months of hard work creating a totally new, impressive station scene—Denver's signature Union Station landmark no less—for our beloved Bluff City modular layout.



The Bluff City club's and FVD member Jim Allen (above left photo) looks over the HO Denver Union Station he built from a highly complex Custom Model Railroads kit. In the above right photo, Jim Jakob, Art Jones and Mike Hirvela pose with the Best in Show-Module plaque presented to the Bluff City club at this year's TrainFest. The three were also instrumental in the building of the DUS modules.



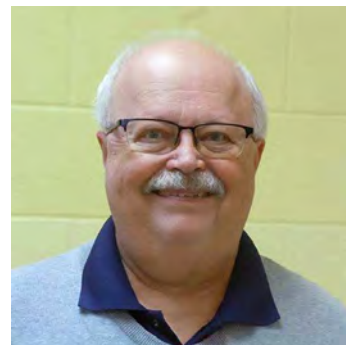
Tip of the Month: Bright Layout Curtains?

In almost every layout building article or book you will receive the sage advice, “Make your layout fascia, curtains and valances dark or neutral in color so as not to detract from the layout itself.” The Arlington Heights Society of Model Engineers threw that advice out the window with its new sectional display layout. They used bright red curtains trim around their layout and the result is stunning. Maybe bright colored curtains aren’t so bad after all!



November’s Clinic and Contest photos by Jim Osborn

Steve Hile presented a great **November clinic** On “**Tank Cars**”, specifically Union Tank Car Lines (UTLX) tank cars built and used from the late 1800s to the mid 1950s. Steve is an admitted “tank car junkie” with a near encyclopedic knowledge of the prototype, so his clinic was very interesting and informative. Thank you Steve, for a really excellent November presentation! On **December 16** we hear from **Rick Mahaney** who will talk to us about “**Junctions, Interchanges, and Diamonds for Your MRR**”. This promises to be another really good clinic and we encourage you to be there for it!



November’s contest was “**Re-purposed or Retired Rolling Stock**”. The contest garnered only two entries but they were good ones. **Walt Herrick** took **First Place** with his nicely detailed and weathered storage shed made from an old Ahm caboose (on the left below). Said Walt, “This is actually a mini diorama, but I couldn’t pull the model off the base with out destroying it, so I entered the whole thing.” **Jim Osborn’s Second Place** entry (on the right below) was a Walthers Milwaukee Road outside braced box car, which he turned into a yard office. Jim did a great job detailing and finishing his model, which also included lighting effects. **December’s contest** is an interesting one: “**Super detailed section of track, 12 to 18” long**”. Let’s see those entries, everyone! WH



Honoring Don Cook with a Special Run Car

The FVD honors our good friend and late MMR, Don Cook, with a special run **Cook Orchards reefer car**. This car was produced for the division by Accurail and is a close replica of the Cook Orchards cars that traveled on Don’s layout. Each car costs \$23.00 plus shipping and handling of \$7.50 for one car, and \$14.00 for 2 to 4 cars. You may save shipping costs by purchasing your car(s) at a FVD monthly meeting. Go to the FVD’s web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org for complete purchase and shipping information, and then buy one soon before they’re gone! Also see page 13 of the January 2019 *Model Railroader Magazine* and page 80 of the November 2018 *Railroad Model Craftsman* for more info on these cars. (Photo by Jim Osborn on his layout.) WH



Member News

Member Services Trainmaster, **Bert Lattan**, reports that at the end of November this year, Fox Valley Division membership was up 3 from September and standing at 195 members. He also reports we have one new member, **William Hanetho from River Grove. Welcome Aboard William!....** Congratulations **Mike Hirvela** and his **Bluff City Model Engineers** colleagues in winning another **Best of Show-Modules award at this year's Trainfest** (see Mike's Minute on page 4 of this newsletter). Fellow **Fox Valley Division members Jim Allen and Art Jones** were also very involved in the building of this year's award winning modules....Some other familiar faces that have been featured in past Semaphores also had layouts at this year's TrainFest including the **AHSOME club** (see pages 1—3 of this newsletter), **Midwest Rails**, and the **SDRT Modular Group**....Reliable sources say that TrainFest attendance was up about 6% over last year's gate which is good news for our hobby.... According to his Facebook entries, FVD member and former Assistant Superintendent, **Bob Shlemon, Jr.**, has moved to Tennessee. **A big FVD "THANKS!" to Bob** for his years of service to the FVD....The division continues to have two BoD openings for a **Ways & Means Trainmaster** and a **Public Relations Trainmaster**. **Member Services Trainmaster, Bert Lattan**, has also expressed his desire to retire from his position after many years of service to the division. So, the division still needs your help! If you have an interest in, or willingness to serve in any of these positions, please contact **FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela at mhirvela@gmail.com** or **847-360-9579** and let him know of your willingness to serve the FVD....Finally, the **FVD board** wishes you and yours a **Very Happy Holiday Season** filled with trains of every kind, color, size and in your favorite scale! WH

2018 - 2019 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held from **1:30 to about 3:30 pm** (except as noted under "Other" below) 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.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
Dec. 16, 2018	Junctions, Interchanges, & Diamonds for your MRR by Rick Mahaney	Super Detailed Section of Track, 12—18 inches long	
Jan 21, 2019	Train communications in the 1940s by Bob Hamner	Trackside Industry—one structure only	
Feb. 17, 2019	Two Rivers Wisconsin, 20 Years Later by Mike Hirvela	Kit-bashed structure or car	
Mar. 17, 2019	Arduino Devices by George K.	Over, Under, Around & Through—bridges, signals, tunnels, etc.	
Apr. 28, 2019	Keeping Your RR in Focus by Jim Osborn	Humorous Open Load	1:00 pm start for Officer Elections
May 19, 2019	Midwest/Thousand Lakes Joint Regional Meet in LaCrosse, WI. Questions, email Reid Kahrs MWR Convention Chair at: rkahrs@charter.net. See pages 9—12 of the Winter issue of the Midwest Region <i>Waybill</i> newsletter for convention registration details and convention information.		
June 2, 2019	Modular Construction of User Objects in AnyRail by Carl Wagus	Vehicles—limit 3	Last monthly meeting for 2018 – 2019
July 7—13, 2019	NMRA 2019 National Convention in Salt Lake City, UT. See the convention's web site for more information: www.nmra2019slc.org		



About the Fox Valley Division

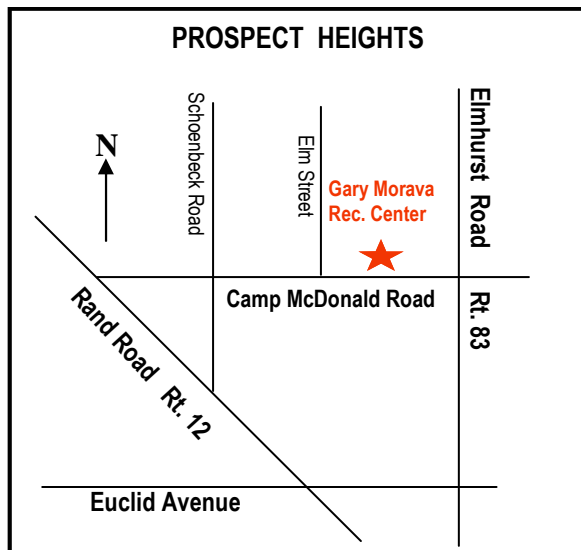
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane, and Lake Counties in northeast Illinois. About 200 members of varied ages, modeling ability levels, and interests 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 and 2019 High Wheelers were cancelled due to a major 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.

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, or any FVD Board member listed below.



- 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.
- 2016 – 2017 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 6 of this newsletter.

FVD web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org

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