



# THE SEMAPHORE

May 2016

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



**This is the last Semaphore until September. See you then!**

## Changing of the FVD Guard

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### Next FVD Meeting:

**Sunday, May 15**

**1:30 pm at the**

**Morava Rec Center in Prospect Heights**

**Contest: Interlocking or Street Crossing Tower in diorama format**

**Clinic: Chicago Stock Yard & Packers by David Leider MMR**

**Note: May is the last regular meeting of the season.**

**Have a great summer!**



At the Fox Valley Division's April 17th Annual Meeting, members elected a new Superintendent and new Chief Clerk to two year terms. Mike Hivela (above left) was elected to replace retiring Superintendent Jeff Jarr (above center left), and George Trandel (above right) was elected to replace retiring Chief Clerk, Leif Hansen (above center right). Jeff retired after two terms as Superintendent and Ways & Means Trainmaster, and Leif retired after six terms as Chief Clerk.



Jeff Jarr awards Leif Hansen a plaque to commemorate his 12 years of service as Chief Clerk and several additional years of service as Achievements and Contests Trainmaster on the FVD Board (right). Jim Osborn awards Jeff Jarr a specially lettered "FVD/ High Wheeler" Accurail box car for his service to the FVD as its Superintendent and Ways & Means Trainmaster responsible for running the annual High Wheeler Train Show (left). Jim made special decals and then lettered Jeff's box car. Photos this page by Walt Herrick.



## Layout of the Month: Arlington Heights Society of Model Engineers Club Layout article & photos by Walt Herrick

A large, first class model railroad club layout in the making resides in Arlington Heights in the basement of an otherwise non-descript office building. There exists the Arlington Heights Society of Model Engineers 24 x 41 foot, multi level HO layout. AHSOME's current club layout was started in 1999. Though scenic progress on the layout has been slower for members than desired according to AHSOME Superintendent, Chuck Rita, the layout is almost fully operational. Efforts in the past several years have improved track work and electrical operation on the layout. More recent efforts have focused on inventorying the club's 840 freight and passenger cars, and bringing each of them up to NMRA recommended standards. The result has been much improved and more reliable operations over the club's 8 scale miles of main line track, 40 staging tracks, 2 freight yards, passenger terminal, 5 major and 6 minor switching areas. This is important because AHSOME members enjoy prototype operations on their layout's two freelanced railroads, the Arlington Valley Railroad, and the Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Paul and Pacific. The two railroads form a huge "X" over the Chicagoland map stretching from Zion staging to the north, Joliet staging to the south, Davis Jct, staging to the west, and downtown Chicago to the east. It all comes alive on the second Friday night of the month when a formal operation session is held using car cards and dispatching. "We have a lot here," says Super, Chuck Rita. AHSOME certainly does, and it all keeps getting better and better.

A CNW geep slowly backs a B&O box car down the brick buildings "canyon" known as "Goose Island" in the heart of Chicago (upper right). This area of the AHSOME layout is the work of member Tom Seibert. Don Zbylut's Santa Fe 4-8-4 (right) makes easy work of pulling its heavy weight passenger consist along the steep embankment near Hampshire.



## Layout of the Month: AHSOME's Club Layout con't



An orange and green Great Northern EMD switcher works the Damen Avenue Yard (above left) while a black and silver Baldwin Santa Fe switcher works the large, deep Illini Gravel quarry (above right). Another black and silver Santa Fe unit spots reefers in Lakeside—formerly the Lakeside Industrial District (below left). Below right we see AHSOME's freelance Arlington Valley Railroad's eye catching silver and red bi-level coaches during a commuter stop.



Scenery is partially complete in the locomotive servicing area of the Damen Avenue Yard (above left). The lower deck's rope lighting will eventually be hidden by a valance. A nicely laid out port scene complete with a tug boat, barge, and traveling crane is being developed at the Waukegan industrial site in the above right photo.

## Layout of the Month: AHSOME's Club Layout con't



The Damen Avenue Yard panel (top) is neatly labeled, lighted, and easy to use by operators. Superintendent Chuck Rita and member Don Zbylut review plans for a new modular layout being built by AHSOME to take to train shows.

### Basic Layout Information

Layout name:	Arlington Heights Society of Model Engineers
Layout builder:	AHSOME members
Layout location:	Basement of an Arlington Hts. Office building
Layout scale:	HO
Layout size:	24 x 41 feet
Layout style:	Double deck around the walls with a peninsula
Layout theme:	Freelance Chicago area railroading
Concept:	Two freelance Chicago area roads, the Arlington Valley, and the Cincinnati, Chicago, St Paul and Pacific with prototype railroads interchanges
Mainline and Staging:	8 scale miles of mainline track with 40 staging tracks in 5 staging yards
Operations:	Car card car forwarding; dispatching according to schedule and orders by a dispatcher; communication by two way radios.
Layout era:	1950s and 60's
Construction started:	1999
Bench work:	L girder with some box grid
Sub road bed/roadbed:	Cork on homasote, plywood or foam board
Track and turnouts:	Code 83 with code 100 in staging
Minimum Radii:	36 inches
Maximum Grades:	2.75 % with 2.25% being the typical grade
Scenery:	15% complete. Plaster newspaper on cardboard strips; ground foam, ballast, dirt, etc. ground covers; lichen trees and shrubs
Structures:	Kits, kit-bashing, scratch built
Locos:	Steam and diesel from various roads
Rolling stock:	Mostly kit built with some RTR.
Control:	DC and DCC
Other:	The club meets every Friday night from 7:30 to 10:00 pm. Business meetings held the first Friday of the month; formal op sessions held on the second Friday of the month. Memberships open.

### Modeling Tip: Great Looking Brick Work

Crews at the AHSOME club have developed a couple of techniques for improving the looks of plastic brick work found in kits or for scratch builders using plastic brick sheets. The first technique is to use vinyl spackling compound to simulate mortar. Work the spackle into the bricks using a flat, #17 blade hobby knife. Wipe off the



excess spackle with a damp paper towel. A second technique is to use fine tipped markers to color individual bricks as seen in the photo to the right. Permanent ink pens found at art supply stores work best. Let everything dry thoroughly and then lightly Dullcoat your brick. The result? Great looking bricks!



## A word from our new Superintendent, Mike Hirvela

I would like to thank all our members who attended the annual meeting and voted for their choice of officers for the coming two years. We face several significant challenges in the upcoming months, but first let's enjoy some better weather and anticipate our summer outing to Rochelle on August 20, and some other summer events. The first of these is manning our FVD booth at the Wheaton train show in June 5 and August 14. The second is participating in Franklin Park's Railroad Daze on Saturday, June 11. If you'd like to help out with any of these events, let me know. My contact info is now on page 7. Last but not least is the NMRA National Convention in our "own back yard" in Indianapolis this July 3—10. If you haven't registered yet, do so! The list of great things to do is filling fast and some of the more popular events are now "sold out". See page 6 of this Semaphore for all the "Highball to Indy" info on their excellent, informativ web site. I look forward to seeing you down in "Naptown" or at another summer event! *Mike*

## Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

### Waukegan Yard Operations, Part 2

Last month I left you looking at a seemingly insurmountable list of stuff to do as Waukegan Yardmaster. So, how do we go about "eating this elephant"? First, don't panic. If the night crew did their job (and they did), we're OK. The few cars left to sort goes quickly and as we finish, the EJ&E RR transfer will show up from Joliet. At the moment, the yard looks like this:

<u>Track</u>	<u>South half /North half of track</u>
Yard Tk 1	Gurnee Turn cars /CWEX loads (just a couple remain)
Yard Tk 2	Abbott Turn cars /Cars going north
Yard Tk 3	CWEX empties/ open
Yard Tk 4	Cars going south /"shorts" north
Yard Tk 5	N. Chicago Turn cars /EJ & E outbound cars
Yard Tk 6	Thoroughfare track, EJ&E arriving (keep open)

Typically, the EJ&E transfer only has a few cars and they are a quick weigh while the J engine picks up its cars off the north end of track 5. It does a run-around and departs the yard while the yard engine finishes the sort. Now we're free to pull the empties from Com-Ed and add them to the other empties on Track 3. That done, we take the switcher over to the north end of track 1 and take the remaining CWEX loads to Com-Ed. While we're at Com-Ed, the Gurnee Turn heads out first, clearing out Track 1, but not for long. Shortly thereafter, the morning Abbott Turn departs. We return to the yard office to check on any pickups for us and we watch the North Chicago Industrial Turn head out for North Chicago.

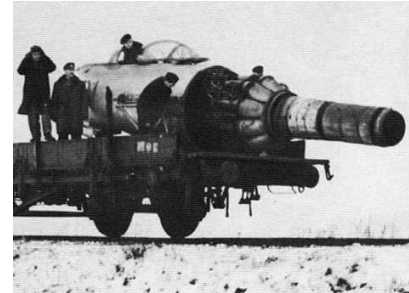
Now we have a chance to work local industries. We get permission from the Dispatcher to cross over the main lines to get to the station team track. We have a pick up there, but more importantly, we expect northbound passenger train #149 to drop an express car off the rear of the train on main track 2. Once we deliver the car to the station team track, we follow #149 on main 2 to the Waukegan industrial spur turnout and quickly get into that track, clearing the main. We make pickups per the waybills and when ready, get permission to cross back over to the yard to sort the pickups and find out the CWEX loads train has arrived on what was empty track 1 and the road power has tied onto the empties on track 3. The yard now looks like this:

<u>Track</u>	<u>South half/ North half</u>
Yard Tk 1	open /CWEX loads
Yard Tk 2	open /Cars going north
Yard Tk 3	engines with CWEX empties /open
Yard Tk 4	Cars going south /"Shorts" north
Yard Tk 5	scale track /open
Yard Tk 6	thoroughfare track (keep open)

We sort the cars we picked up and then head to the north end of the yard and to await the arrival of the daily northbound freight #483, the "Chief". If on time, it arrives in the yard on the thoroughfare track, clearing the main line. The engines cut off, and the yard crew switches cars off the train and to the train from track 2, clearing it. When we have it back together, the Chief continues to Kenosha and points north. We sort the inbound cars quickly because we're expecting any of the 3 turns back at any time, and usually about noon, the Waukegan Way Freight from Butler yard arrives on track 2; (It will take the "shorts" cars from track 4 back north to Kenosha or Racine, ending up back in Butler). When the first of the Turns comes back, the engine will be re-assigned to the Local South clearing track 4, and the yard crew will continue sorting inbound cars to outbound destinations, service other local industries and move express cars at the station. We are done with our shift. No problem, right? Traffic ebbs and flows and an operating session can pass quickly when there are lots of things to do like today. So, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time and the left-overs are terrific, too!

## Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

Snow Removal Machine. This is a Russian version of what is frequently found here in the U.S. and other countries—a snow removal machine made from a surplus aircraft turbine. It appears that this one is an early model MIG fighter aircraft, partially disassembled and mounted on a freight wagon. Although not as sophisticated as similar units found on U.S. railroads, it still probably got the job done clearing ice and snow from the tracks.



## Member News

Following the election of Mike Hirvela to Superintendent and George Trandel to Chief Clerk, the FVD board met May 4th to make the transition of the new officers in their new positions and take care of other division business. Mike reported he is working on filling the Ways and Means Trainmaster position. The Board voted to split Jim Osborn's position in two with Chuck Rita taking on the PR duties and Jim staying on as FVD webmaster. Both positions will be board positions....At this writing, still no confirmation from Harper College for High Wheeler 2017 dates.... Membership Services Trainmaster, **Bert Lattan**, reports FVD membership again rising—we are up four from March and have added six new members! Welcome aboard: **John Bergquist** from Arlington Heights, **Charles Freiburger** from St. Charles, **Thomas Jachtorawycz** from Glenview, **Matt Jacobs** from Vernon Hills, **Joe Montilla** from Schaumburg, **Art Werner** from Niles and **Rolf Schoelkopf** from Marengo.... Achievements and Contests Trainmaster, Jim Landwehr, reports Jeff Jarr recently receiving his AP certificate as NMRA Official, and Jeremy Dummler recently receiving his AP certificate as Author. Congratulations Jeff and Jeremy!

**2015 - 2016 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule** *May 15th is the last meeting of the 2015-2016 modeling season.* Check the FVD web site for 2016-2017 meeting dates at [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org). Meetings are held from 1:30 to 4:00 pm at the Gary Morava Recreation Center, 110 W. Camp McDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070. Visitors are always welcome. The 2016-2017 FVD Meeting Schedule Card is US mailed to all members shortly before Labor Day.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
May 15, 2016	<u>Clinic</u> Chicago Stock Yard & Packers David Leider MMR	Interlocking or street crossing tower <u>in diorama format</u> *	<u>Last monthly meeting for 2015 –2016. Next monthly meeting is on September 18.</u>
	*Contest entry to be presented on a diorama with a minimum surface size of 144 square inches.		

August 20, 2016 Summer Outing to Rochelle's Railroad Park. This great event will be on Saturday, August 20, from 11:00 am to about 3:00 pm, with burgers, brats, salads, cookies and drinks supplied by the FVD. Lots of big time prototype train action will be supplied by the UP and BNSF! **Look for more information and any updates on the FVD web site, [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).**

**July 3-10, 2016** NMRA National Convention "**Highball to Indy**" in Indianapolis. See the convention web site, [www.nmra2016.org](http://www.nmra2016.org) for complete information. **The time to register for this convention is now.** Activities are filling fast and some are already sold out.

(Note there is no MWR convention this year because the Central Indiana Division, a Midwest Region division, is hosting the NMRA National.)





### About the Fox Valley Division

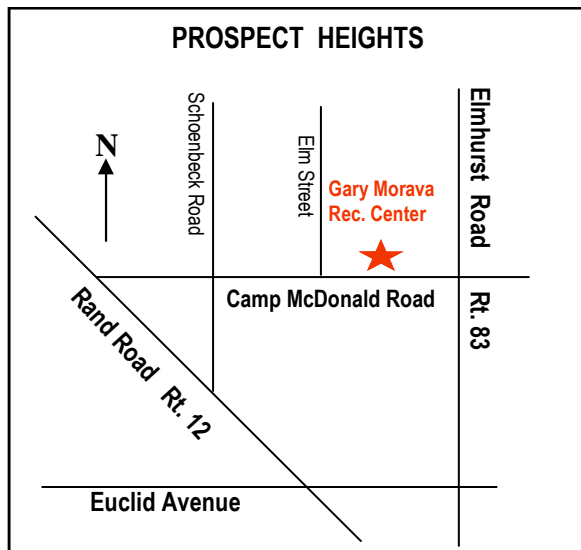
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, and parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 220 members of varied ages and modeling 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 Recreation 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 sponsors and runs the large train show called "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 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 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 are 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.
- 2015 – 2016 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 6 of this newsletter.

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

FVD mailing address: Fox Valley Division  
Midwest Region-NMRA  
P.O. Box 1535  
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Ways & Means TM—TBD

Note: TM designates "Trainmaster"