

THE SEMAPHORE

March 2020

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Bob Hanmer's Great Northern Ry. Layout of the Month article & photos by Walt Herrick

IN THIS ISSUE

Pages	
1-3	Hanmer's Great Northern
Page 1	Fun Stuff
Page 4	Modeling Tip
Page 4	Mike's Minute
Page 5	February's Clinic, Contest
Page 6	Member News
Page 6	FVD Meeting Schedule
Page 7	Basic FVD info
Page 7	FVD BoD contact info
Page 8	*February Show & Tell
	Bonus Page this month!

Semaphore Editor:

Walt Herrick, Jr.

waltherrickjr@gmail.com

Next FVD Meeting:

Sunday, March 15

1:30 pm at the

Morava Rec Center in
Prospect Heights

Contest: Passenger Cars—limit
4 cars

Clinic: LCC by Paul Wussow



Bob Hamner grew up in Hibbing, Minnesota in the middle that state's Iron Range. He loves iron ore railroading. His previous 10 x 11 foot HO layout was based on Hibbing and was covered in his *Model Railroad Planning 2011* article. The HO layout you see in this Semaphore is much larger and covers a larger geographic area than just the town of Hibbing. Above, a GN SD7 brings ore empties into Gunn Yard.
con't on p.2

Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

On today's railroads, the maintenance speeder, for the most part, has been replaced by the hi-rail truck. Many speeders that have survived, have been bought up by enthusiasts, and painted in their favorite roads paint schemes such as the Chessie speeder to the right. There are groups of speeder enthusiasts that gather on abandoned tracks for scenic tours.



Bob Hanmer's Great Northern

If Bob Hanmer and his railroad seem familiar to you, it may be because last November he gave an excellent FVD clinic on his Great Northern Mesabi Division. In the clinic, Bob told us all about ore railroading in Minnesota's Iron Range, and how he models it on his home model railroad. Though Bob's railroad is called the "Great Northern Mesabi Division", his layout also features a sizable portion of the Duluth Missabe & Iron Range Railway. Both the GN and DM&IR were prominent in the Iron Range. (And yes, both roads spell "Mesabi" differently!).

Having been an active member of the Rail-Group model railroad operations group for several years with his room size Hibbing GN layout, Bob was eager to get his new GN Mesabi Division up and running as soon as possible so his op sessions could resume. Rather than hand laying his track as on the Hibbing layout, he used Atlas code 83 flex track and turnouts on the new basement sized layout. The layout was designed to be built in three phases. Eleven months into Phase 1 Bob was running trains.

Bob has a good start on his layout's scenery and structures, and about 30% are done at this writing. A hard shell base is covered with ground foam, real dirt and rocks, and clump foliage from Woodland Scenics. Structures are scratch built, kit-bashed, or sometimes come straight from the box. Bob's steam locos are brass or from Broadway Limited. Diesels are from P2K, *con't on p.3*

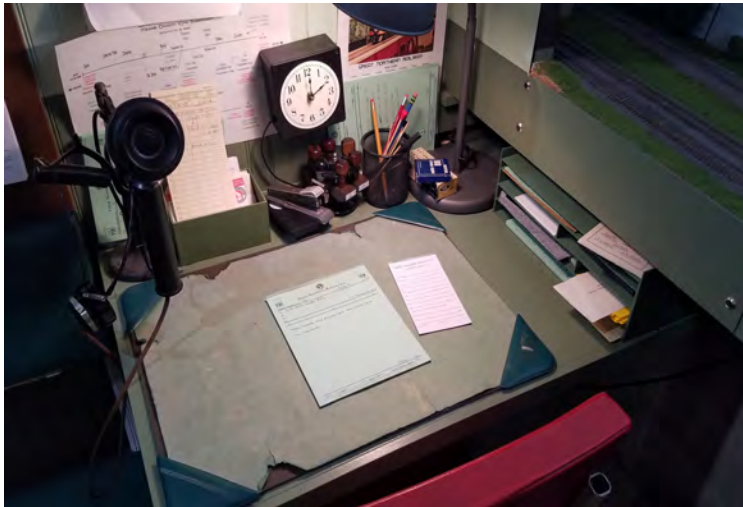


In the upper right photo, a big DM&IR 2-10-2 crosses Holman Trestle with an ore train. In 1958 steam was still in regular service on the DM&IR, although the railroad was preparing for the transition from steam to diesels by ordering new EMD SD9s. Such an SD9 works High Grade Yard in the middle photo. In the lower left photo, a GN switcher works the Grand Rapids Pillsbury flour mill. In the lower right shot, an NW3 pulls into the Grand Rapids depot with passenger local #35 consisting of a single RPO and single coach. Only seven NW3s were produced; all originally went to the GN.

Bob Hanmer's Great Northern

Athearn, etc. Rolling stock comes from kits or are RTR, and are from various manufacturers. Locos and rolling stock fit the respective ore roads in the 1958 era of the layout.

Operations are Bob's favorite part of the hobby. He has done considerable research on Iron Range railroading and operations in general, and is currently the vice president of the Layout Design Group SIG. He brings his knowledge to the RailGroup organization, but also has benefited from the layout suggestions offered by RailGroup members. The operations system Bob has developed for his layout is extensive and is based on GN Employee Time Tables. The ops system has proven to be successful and Bob is pleased with his layout. "The layout does just what I want it to," he says. Isn't that what we *all* want from our layouts? You bet!



Basic Layout Information

Layout Name: Great Northern Mesabi Division
 Layout Builder: Bob Hanmer
 Layout Location: Hanmer basement
 Layout Scale: HO
 Layout Size: 23 x 30 feet
 Layout Style: Walk-in/around the walls
 Layout Concept/
 Locale: Minnesota Iron Range GN and DM&IR ore railroading
 Layout Era: 1958
 Construction
 begun: 2000
 Bench Work: L-girder
 Sub Roadbed: Plywood
 Roadbed: 1/4 inch luan plywood
 Track: Atlas code 85
 Track specs: min visible 30 inch radius; 1 1/5% grade; min #6 turnouts
 Scenery: Hard shell on cardboard or plastic web;
 Structures: Kits-based and scratch built
 Locomotives: Era specific GN and DM&IR
 Sound: Sound in most locos.
 Rolling Stock: Kits, RTR
 Control: Digitrax DCC with radio throttles
 Operations: Operations based layout using GN employee time tables, car cards, a special instructions manual, dispatcher, telephone system. Monthly op sessions.

The agent operator's desk above left, is equipped with a fast clock, phone and other essentials for operators. Other smaller operator "registers" are positioned at key spots on the layout. Below left, starting counter clockwise from the bottom, a weed sprayer, tank car, bright red GN "Sno-dozer", and steam crane sit near the Gunn Yard roundhouse. The Sno-dozer is a model of one of two dozen dozers made by Great Northern shops for the GN to combat the heavy winter snows experienced by the road. Joe Binish of Minneapolis built the weed sprayer and Steve Karas supplied the steam crane. With its long nose forward, GN GP9 #654 eases a local freight train over the Swan River bridge.



Bob Hanmer's Great Northern

Modeling Tip

Bob Hanmer came up with an “out of the box” solution to a staging problem on his Great Northern Mesabi Division layout: “elevator staging”. He wanted to move ore trains from Saunders staging on the south end of the line and lower level of staging, to Kelly Lake staging on the north end of the line and upper staging yard. He wanted to do this without making a circuit through the whole layout and having to go through a helix. So, he came up with the idea of raising or lowering a single track with an ore train



on it, from one level in staging to another level. The single track is raised and lowered on an “elevator” using cables, pulleys and a crank (Bob’s using the crank above). The system works like a charm and all Bob has to do is change out locos and cabooses as needed. The elevator can handle more than 25 ore cars plus caboose and motive power.

Mike's Minute by FVD Superintendent Mike Hirvela

Keeping it in Perspective

Something I hear at train shows and public displays is: “trains are expensive!” I’m sure you’ve heard it, too. I guess it’s sometimes difficult to defend our wonderful hobby when the public sees price tags for locomotives asking \$250, or more. (Though our *Semaphore* editor tells me \$250 will only cover 80% of the cost of *one* tire for a vintage Indy race car which is his brother-in-law’s hobby.) Many in our hobby say cars, structures, track and accessories are similarly exorbitant. So, what does “Keeping it in Perspective” have to do with this month’s column? Because perspective to me is a way people look at things and their ability to see or not to see things from a particular point of view. Case in point: going through some old papers at the RR club the other night, I ran across a Roundhouse Products catalog from 1953. In the time-worn pages was an ad for an 0-6-0 steam switcher with a slope-back tender. Kit price was \$16.95; a finished, painted or ready-to-run version of the loco had a price tag of \$26.50. Other locomotives, bigger and/or more detailed in kits and ready-to-run were, of course, more money. But what would those prices be in *today’s* dollars? Today, you can query the ol’ computer and tap into the internet and the answer pops up. I did so, and adjusting for inflation only, believe it or not, the kit would cost \$159.33, and the ready-to-run locomotive would be \$249.35 in today’s dollars. Seems in line with current prices, doesn’t it? In 1953, the average worker made about \$2.10 an hour, so it would take about 13 hours of work to come up with the \$26.50 needed to purchase a Roundhouse RTR 0-6-0. Today, for a person earning \$20 per hour, it still takes about 13 hours of work to buy the RTR loco. Interestingly, I find complaints of how expensive model trains are, often come from folks who think nothing of buying a smart phone for \$750 and a cup of coffee for \$5.00 at Starbucks. It is all a matter of perspective, isn’t it? Thinking back on it, on our tables at a swap meet a little while ago, I had an old die cast metal 0-6-0 steam switcher with a tender that had an asking price of \$40. So, if that loco sold at that price, I would have saved the buyer \$209. Now that’s a bargain! Speaking of bargains, I encourage you to come on out to a FVD meeting and enjoy some railroad/model railroad conversation, appreciate some great modeling, enjoy a “How-I-did-it” lesson or two, learn something new about modeling, the prototype, travel by rail, electronics, photography, and a whole lot more, **for FREE**. That’s a bargain no matter what your perspective! See you soon at a meeting.

PS! Due to the large number of great Show & Tell exhibits we had in February, there is a “Page 8” to this *Semaphore*.

February's Clinic, Contest, and Show & Tell Photos by Jim Osborn

February's Clinic:

Steve Miazga's February clinic "Take Full Advantage of Your Layout Design Software" gave us an excellent overview of just what Cad Rail 9 layout design software can do for the modeler in designing a layout including track planning, verifying track standards such as the size of turnouts, exact curve radii, grades, clearances, etc. But Steve also showed us how we can go beyond just track planning to creating bench work plans, wiring plans, operations timetable graphs, structure plans, and maps of just about anything. His clinic notes in the "Education" section of our web site are excellent. Thank you, Steve, for a great clinic! In March, Paul Wussow will tell us about "LCC". Be there on March 15 for this useful and informative look into Layout Command Control. WH



February's Contest:

We had some excellent entries for February's "12 x 12 inch Diorama" contest. Leif Hansen's HO entry took First in the popular voting with his "'Ol Fishin Hole" diorama. Jim Allen was Second with his O scale "Shell Gas Station" diorama. Bob DiDomenico's hi-rail O scale "Polar Express" entry took Third place. Great job everybody! See all the 12 x 12 dioramas on the division's web site: www.foxvalleydivision.com. Click on "Contests" to see all the entries. March's contest is "Passenger Cars-limit 4 cars". Let's see some of your best "varnish" in March! WH



Leif Hansen's HO scale "'Ol Fishin Hole" 12 x 12 inch diorama took First Place honors in February's popular vote. Leif added lots of special lighting effects and interesting details (like orange trees and tall grass on the roof of the building) to his diorama. Jim Allen is known for his clever and excellent modeling which was on full display in his Second Place 12 x 12 "Shell Gas Station" entry. The diorama was inspired by an actual Shell gas station. Bob DiDomenico's Third Place entry was inspired by the story and movie *Polar Express*. Note the snow and figures on the top of the passenger car, and snow covering the entire diorama. Note! February's Show & Tell entries are on Page 8 this month!



Where to Find Railroad Events and Model Railroad Clubs

Looking for railroad related events and activities, or model railroad clubs in your area? Look no further than the Fox Valley Division's web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org. To find events, click the "RR Events" tab. To find area model railroad clubs first click the "Community" tab, and then the "Local Clubs" tab. If you know of any local events or clubs not on our web site, please let our webmaster, Jim Osborn, know. He's at: FVDWebsite@comcast.net

Member News

Member Services Trainmaster Erich Abens reports we have two new members: **Mitch Sparber of Buffalo Grove**, and **Danny Tica from Chicago**. **Welcome aboard Mitch and Danny!** We're glad to have you with us. Please let us know if we can help you in any way on your modeling journey....**Erich** also reports our current FVD membership stands at **184**....For the past several years, **Semaphore Editor, Walt Herrick**, has spent January, February and March in Florida with his wife **Laurie**, her dad, and her dad's wife. On February 13, Walt and Laurie went on the **Seminole Gulf Railway's Dinner Mystery Train** out of Ft. Meyers. Walt reports the train and food were great, the murder mystery so-so, and the violinist on board to celebrate Valentine's Day, excellent. The Seminal Gulf Railway is also a 115 mile, Class III, industrial short line serving Ft. Meyers and the surrounding area. It began operations in 1987. The Dinner Train began operations in February 1991 when the freight line was experiencing a down turn in business....Time to make your plans to go to The "**Peoria Rocket**" Midwest Region Spring Convention! It takes place **May 14—17** in—you guessed it—Peoria! Go to www.mwr-nmra.org for more details....A month later in St. Louis, is the **NMRA National Convention July 12—18**. See their web site: www.gateway2020.org for all the info. WH



Seminal Gulf Railway F7 #502 in Ft. Meyers, FL on February 13 ready to depart with the Murder Mystery Dinner Train. The SGLR is also a southwest Florida industrial short line serving area industries. Walt Herrick photo

April Elections. Per our FVD bylaws, please be advised that **Chief Clerk, Carl Wagus, is now accepting nominations** for the election of the division's **Superintendent** and **Chief Clerk** positions. **Elections will occur at our April 19, 2020 regular meet.** Contact Carl at: crwagus@gmail.com with your nomination. FVD officer elections occur every two years. In 2021 we elect an Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster. Terms of Office are two years.

2019 - 2020 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held from **1:30 to about 4:00 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>
March 15	LCC by Paul Wussow	Passenger Cars-limit 4 cars	
April 19	Changing Scales by Jeremy Dummmler	Weathered Model—limit 1 model	Annual elections 1 pm start with sub lunch
May 14—17	Midwest Region Spring Convention "The Peoria Rocket" in Peoria, IL Check the MWR web site www.mwr-nmra.org for more information.		
June 7	Crystal Lake, IL Diorama by Walt Herrick	Unfinished Project	Last meet for 2019-2020
July 12—18	NMRA National Convention "Gateway 2020" in St. Louis, MO For information, go to the convention's web site: www.gateway2020.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 Lake and McHenry, and parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 190 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.

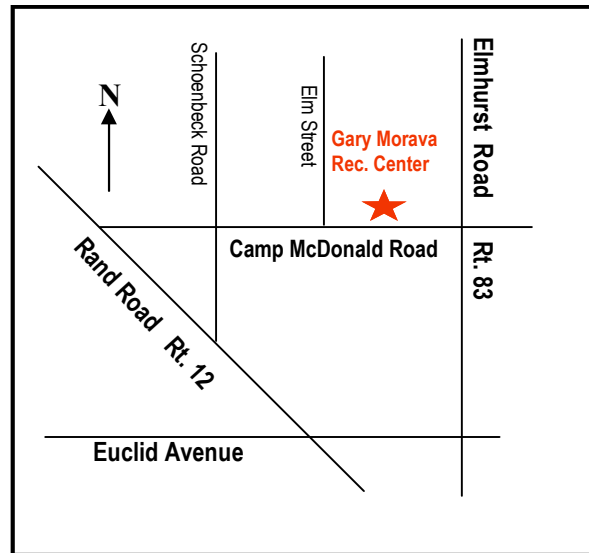
FVD monthly meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm. Each meeting features a clinic, model contest, information of interest to the membership, and a time for socializing. Outings, layout tours, and operating sessions 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.

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

PROSPECT HEIGHTS, IL



- 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.
- 2019 – 2020 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 6 of this newsletter.

FVD web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org

FVD mailing address: Fox Valley Division
Midwest Region-NMRA
P.O. Box 1535
Arlington Heights, IL
60005-1535

Fox Valley Division Board Contact Information

Superintendent, **Mike Hirvela**
mhirvela1@gmail.com 847-360-9579

Assistant Supt., **Denis Zamirowski**
zam972@aol.com 312-590-6472

Chief Clerk, **Carl Wagus**
crwagus@mail.com 847-516-2016

Paymaster, **Tim Kleimeyer**
kleimeyert@comcast.net 847-426-4732

Achievements & Contests, **Jim Landwehr**
jlandwehr901@yahoo.com 847-577-7984

Clinics & Programs, **Gary Saxton**
gbs46@sbcglobal.net 281-910-0414

Membership Services, **Erich Abens**
erich.abens@gmail.com 847-341-1120

Membership Promotions, **Mike Hirvela**
mhirvela1@gmail.com 847-360-9579

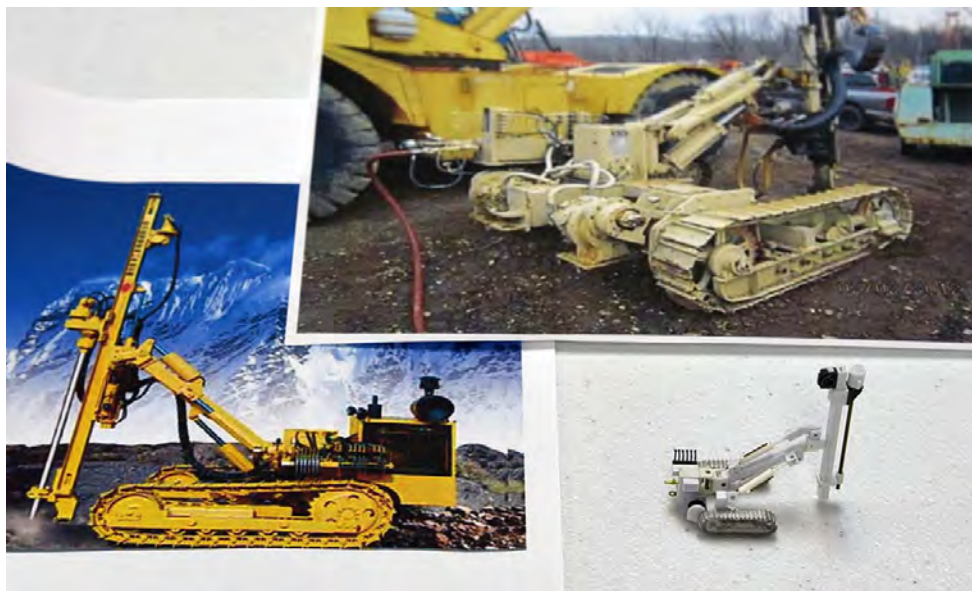
Public Relations, **Vacant**

Web Technologies, **Jim Osborn**
FVDWebsite@comcast.net 815-578-8315

Publications/Semaphore Editor, **Walt Herrick**
waltherrickjr@gmail.com 815-355-2003

Ways & Means—High Wheeler Show Manager
Vacant

February's Show & Tell Bonus Page! We had so many excellent February Show & Tells, we added a "bonus page" to this month's *Semaphore* to show you them! THANK YOU to our "S&Ters"! See larger views of the S&Ts on the "Contests" page of our web site www.foxvalleydivision.com WH

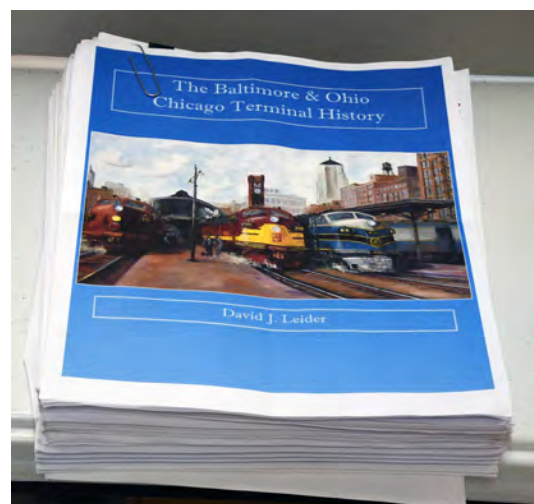


In February, **Jim Allen** brought a great entry to our 12 x 12 Diorama contest. He also brought to our Show and Tell the very cool **scratch building** project on the left. Jim's model is of a **rock drill**. With his model he also included a couple of the photos he used in building it.

Directly below, **MMR David Leider**, brought in *two* S&Ts: a several model demo on building **Funaro & Camerlengo resin box car kits**, and a draft manuscript for his new book "*The Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal History*". Exciting stuff, David!



Leif Hansen also brought an entry for our February contest (which took First Place!), and the Show & Tell demonstration item above. Leif's neat S&T shows **how he builds trees** using homemade wire armatures and Woodland Scenics foliage.



To the left, is **Jim Osborn's** excellent animated "**Signal Demonstration Module**". The module contains electronics which activate the raising and lowering of the crossing gates, and the semaphores' signal blades. The gates are activated by the toggle switch. The semaphore signals move from red to yellow to green using the control knobs.