



THE SEMAPHORE

January 2021

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



*In Memory of
Walter Herrick, Jr.*

Frisko 1630 by Walt Herrick -- 1st Place Digital Print Prototype & Best of Show
2017 Midwest Region Convention - Rockford, IL

In This Issue...

Pages 1-6	Walt Herrick Tribute
Page 6	What's Happening (or not)
Page 7	December Contest Results
Page 7	Meeting Schedules
Page 8	Mike's Minute
Page 9	Virtual Meet Instructions
Page 10	Call for Articles
Page 10	Division Information

A Tarnished Season

Typically at the turn of the year, I mention that I hope all division members have a happy holiday season and have been able to add to their train hobby. I also pass on my hopes for the new year: be cheerful and enthusiastic for new experiences and goal achievement. Unfortunately for this issue, I have the sad duty to report that Walt Herrick, our Publications Trainmaster, unexpectedly passed away on December 4th. He had an undiscovered medical condition
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not related to the COVID-19 virus, so his passing was a total shock. Walt's service to the division as Publications, Public Affairs and Social Media Coordinator deserves recognition. Walt's passing stunned each of us and caused us to pause and reflect on our hobby and the friendships it sparks. While you may not have known Walt personally, he was one of those guys who did things because they needed to be done. He wanted the **Semaphore** to be a useful part of the club. He was a key member of the Board of Directors and never had an unkind word about anyone. A capable modeler, Walt was also a great photographer, an excellent wordsmith and a true gentleman. He will be missed by us all. Information about a memorial service in his memory will be forthcoming from the family. MH



Walt's full obituary for your reading: <https://www.davenportfamily.com/obituary/Walter-HerrickJr>

Re-visiting the KV&EC Model Railroad Club.

Here is a photo op blast from the past with some holiday spirit. Walt was a member of the Kishwaukee Valley & Eakin Creek MRRC located in the Millgrove wood shop barn of the Huntley Sun City properties. They operate N, HO, and O scale layouts plus an outdoor G scale model railroad. The 3-rail O scale Christmas display is always an eye catcher for the kids. Unfortunately, the trains will not be running for the public this year due to Covid lockdowns.

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The top right photo is courtesy of Keith Dart. The lower photos are from Walt's collection.



The KV&EC Model Railroad Club, cont'd...

The outdoor G scale RR is built on PVC pipes sunk into the ground with a wood frame laid on top of them. While the terrain undulates like crazy, the track is actually dead level. Past FVD member Harry Sorenson was one of the principle promoters and architects of the design. The local "Woodchucks" woodworking club provided the trestles and fascia while the garden club assisted in the landscaping -- a true community project for all to enjoy. The track plan has since evolved from this early Jim Osborn photo.

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Forney #12 holds on the KV&EC G gauge's West End siding while a freight led by a yellow and blue Alaska Railroad GP40 hustles by. A trolley makes its way up the elevated track in the background. To the far left is the locomotive servicing facility.

Walt Herrick Photo



The SP FA's are just nosing their way into the triple span girder bridges which cross low ground. This photo shows only part of the 170 foot scratch built wooden trestle which graces the back side of the layout.

Walt Herrick Photo

The KV&EC Model Railroad Club, cont'd...

Walt had a real eye for photo composition as demonstrated by this shot (right) of the KV&EC HO scale scene. The layout is a generous 24 x 36 foot spread. There are two decks with a hidden staging and a running deck below the main level. You can see from Walt's photos that the modeling on the layout is absolutely first class.



Pete Walton and Rich Porto teamed up to build this great waterfront. The scenery was built by Pete, and the laser cut structures—including the tug boat—by Rich who is also an expert ship and boat modeler.

After Pete Walton's ***Great Midwest RR*** was featured in the ***Semaphore*** by Walt, ***Model Railroader Magazine*** featured it in the 2018 issue of ***Great Model Railroads***. Walt's friend Pete relocated from Sun City about a year ago. Walt assisted with the disassembly of Pete's Layout.

Another Walt Herrick photo shows an Illinois Central grain train is being held at Hillside Yard Tower while the main line clears. The tower is a heavily kit-bashed Con Cor (formerly Revell) kit with an Atlas signal tower roof. It was built in the late 1980's by Walt Herrick, repainted KV&EC's Railroad "structure red" and then added to the layout with a new street guard rail, gravel parking lot, grass, weeds, etc.

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The KV&EC Model Railroad Club, cont'd...

Three, final, Walt Herrick pictures of the beautiful N scale KV&EC RR wrap up the KV&EC story. Walt was part of an exceptionally talented group of modelers at Sun City. JO

The following are excerpts from one of Walt's early editorials in the ***Semaphore***:

Greetings from the Semaphore's New Editor by Walt Herrick

"Hi, I'm Walt Herrick. This month I take over the reins of Semaphore Editor from David Leider. Work commitments for me now have lessened. In fact, I'll be retiring from the Crystal Lake Park District's Racket Club indoor /outdoor tennis facility in June after 30 years. So it's time to get back to editing the ***Semaphore*** which I love to do."

"A little bit about me: I live in Del Webb Huntley with my wonderful wife Laurie and "visiting" grown up son David. I belong to the KV&EC Railroad Club here in Del Webb. I love Appalachian coal railroading and I'll model the Western Maryland Railway in HO scale once my basement ever gets finished. my thoughts on the ***Semaphore*** ... Remember, that it is really your newsletter and I want to feature what you want to read. So, let me know what works for you and what doesn't. Thanks!"

"I am interested in most everything Fox Valley Division members have done or are doing. If you have an article or idea for an article, please send it to me. Don't worry about writing perfect prose, just send it. I'll take care of the rest...really!"

"My bias is the Fox Valley Division. Of course, you will also see things in the Semaphore that aren't local such as things from NMRA national or regions, national hobby news, etc., but I'd like to keep most of the ***Semaphore's*** material from the FVD or Chicago area possible."

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Greetings from the Semaphore's New Editor cont'd...

"Why do we put out the **Semaphore** each month? Several reasons: 1) to keep you informed, 2) to hopefully inspire you with good stories and good modeling, and 3) to help you enjoy model railroading more!"

"Starting next month you'll be seeing several new columns in the Semaphore. We can't promise they will appear every month, but we'll do our best. Look for "Member News" (short bits on what members are doing or have done recently), Hobby Happenings (national and regional NMRA and model railroading hobby news), Member Milestones (notable achievements by members such as AP Awards won, laying a golden spike, starting a new layout, etc.), Train Tips (short "how to" items from experienced modelers in the FVD), and Member Spotlight (a short article on a FVD member). If you have anything you think would fit into one of these columns, please send it to Walt Herrick. Thank you!" WH

The FVD really owes its collective thanks to WALT's legacy! He more than fulfilled his stated goals by producing **92** quality issues of the **Semaphore** since September 2009. In my opinion, the regular communication through the **Semaphore** is an important element in regularly refueling the division interests -- something Walt was very skilled at as is evident by the quality newsletters he produced. We make good friends through this hobby; and it's just so sad when we lose one. Rest in peace Walt.

Jim Osborn, Temporary Editor

What's Happening - or not, due to Covid Lockdowns...

- We will hold **elections** for Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster at the April virtual meeting. We need volunteers - click <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html> and contact Chief Clerk Rich Hoker if you are willing to put your name forward.
- The MWR spring **convention** in Rockford has been postponed until next September. Additional information will be forthcoming.
- **Train Shows, Inc.** is hopeful they'll be able to re-start the train show season sometime in the spring.
- **NMRA-X** mini-conventions by Regions and by National sponsorship are occurring on line. Videos of the "clinics" are available on You-Tube. Search for NMRA-X in your browser search box and it will bring up the video set. A user can pick and choose which to watch. It's almost like being at a convention, but you can attend from your home at no cost. What a Deal!
- **Kalmbach Media** has reorganized their web presence to www.Trains.com. All their website content is available under one name.
- **Canadian National** has added several more "Heritage" locomotives with distinctive paint schemes to their fleet, including GT, IC, BC Rail, and EJ&E.
- The **UP** has the new bridge over Grand Avenue in Waukegan in place and operational. They are in process of removing the 'temporary' shoo-fly bridge and supports.
- The new **Alstom Acela** Trainset testing at the federal RR test facility in Colorado registered a speed of 168+ mph on a test run. Reportedly, the 3rd fastest on record in the U.S.



The FVD's **Jim Landwehr** (left) is running for re-election as a Director-at-Large in the Midwest Region of the NMRA, and FVD Superintendent, **Mike Hirvela**, (right) is running for MWR Vice President in the current MWR elections. The voting is going on now and ends January 31, 2021. MWR members can easily vote on-line through the MWR website. Click this link to vote now. <http://www.mwr-nmra.org/mwr2016/mwr.elections.html>

December Contest Results & More...

Super Mike Hirvela took first place honors with his HO scale R-T-R Car Ferry Switcher in the December Yard Switcher contest pictured at the right. You can see all the model entries on our web site at:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contests.v2.html>

The January contest topic is **Open Loads**. Let the creative juices flow! This can always be fun or serious. Maybe think out of the box[car]. Pun intended. We have had hot tubs, golf clubs (club car), Baby-on-Board load, a pickle car with a 12" to the foot pickle and a giant egg headed for a **McDonald's Big Breakfast**.

Submit up to 3 photos of your entry anytime. Just click on the secure link below to submit your photos for any of the future contests. The sooner the better so I can easily get them posted! JO
<https://form.jotform.com/201995250508962>



Mike Hirvela's Ferry Dock Switcher



Jim Allen's Baby-on-Board open load.

2020 - 2021 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm (except as noted). This season all meetings will be presented online using ZOOM virtual meeting technology. See the next page of the newsletter or the division's web site for complete instructions on how to use ZOOM and participate in the meetings. For the latest clinic and all FVD news and information, visit FVD's web site at www.foxvalleydivision.org.

Date	Clinic	Contest	Notes
Next Meet...			
January 17, 2021	From Idea to 3D Printed Parts by Phillip Burnside	1 Open Load	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
Future Meets...			
February 17	Flat Buildings for Your Layout by Charles Malinowski	1 Over, Under, Around & Through	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
March 21	The Pursuit of Realism by Lance Mindheim; facilitated by Gary Saxton	1 Locomotive	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
April 18	Prototype Jct. Reconstruction by Steve Miazga, Wise Div.	1 Illuminated Model	1:00 pm Start on ZOOM Annual Officer Elections
May 16	Scratch Building Cars for the AP Program by Jim Osborn	12" x 12" Diorama with re-purposed or retired Rolling Stock	1:30 pm start on ZOOM
May 20—23	Midwest Region Annual Convention, "The Rockford Railroad Convention" HAS BEEN POSTPONED. For information see the Rock River Valley Division's web site: www.rrvd-nmra.com		

July 4 - 11 NMRA 2021 National Convention, "**Rails by the Bay**" in Santa Clara, CA. See the NMRA web site for more information: <https://www.nmra2021.com/>

Mike's Minute...

I started out to write an enthusiastic paragraph about the new year with unlimited possibilities while kissing the old year goodbye. Ironically, year 2020 was anything other than 20-20 (pun intended). And to cap off an already crummy year, I received some not-so-good news on the 5th of December. Our Publications Trainmaster, Walt Herrick, had unexpectedly passed away the day before. Walt additionally took care of Public Affairs and Social Media presence for the FVD and was the photographer for the Mid-West Region. He will be sorely missed. It was Walt's idea to do a themed photo spread using 'night' shots showcasing the Woodland Scenics 'Just Plug' lighting system I had installed on my home railroad. Walt was at my house on November 10th to take the photos which appeared in the December issue of our newsletter, the "Semaphore" – one of his best issues IMHO. To me, he was his usual self, suggesting and hinting at ways to stage better shots -- straighten that telephone pole, move that vehicle, place a figure here or there, bounce some light off the ceiling, etc. The photos in the December issue were the result. Walt also had an uncanny ability to use his *Editorial License* to improve the texts I provided for my monthly ramblings. He would patch my seemingly disjointed sentence structures into polished works of literary art. I will miss him greatly.

On the other side of the proverbial coin, Walt's untimely passing opens opportunities for another FVD member or members to step forward and continue his legacy as either **Publications Trainmaster** (*Semaphore* editor), **Public Relations**

Trainmaster (advertise our activities), or **Social Media Coordinator** (Facebook et al. account manager). This could be one, two or even three members. Please consider filling one or more of these positions -- we need your help to actively participate in the division. In the meantime, Jim Osborn & I will be proceeding as best we can to get the newsletter out on time. This is our first issue and it is obviously a tribute to Walt, but now we need help gathering interesting content for subsequent issues. We will be asking for your inputs - whatever you think others would be interested in.

Our next virtual meeting will be on **January 17th**. Please plan on participating. See page 7 for details and page 9 for instructions if you are not familiar with the Zoom application. I have enjoyed seeing everyone attending our ZOOM meetings. It's almost like meeting in person -- and in some ways -- it's better. We have included clinicians from other division across the country to up program content, there is no driving time and you can have the refreshments of your choice! BTW, take a few minutes to participate in our virtual contest by submitting photos of your category -- relevant model -- and also vote for your favorite contest entries. Click this link to vote between Fri. Noon before the meet and Sunday Noon the day of the meet.:

<https://form.jotform.com/201986084212959>

I know in many other ways it is not the same, but it's what we will do at the moment. Everyone take care, stay safe and have your fingers crossed for things to get back to 'normal' sometime in 2021. May we all have clear track and green boards ahead! MH



Walt was known for a rather dry sense of humor. Often cracking a joke and then quietly waiting for a reaction. This was born out earlier this year. He had this idea to devote an entire issue of the *Semaphore* to FVD modeling done during the Covid lock down. In order to promote the idea to the division & to collect photos, he had Laurie take this picture in July wearing Personal Protective Equipment consisting of a mask and goggles at his hobby workbench. He was successful in collecting a large number of project photos from across the division. Last October he ran the "**Shelter in Place Modeling Projects**" story and also created a Zoom clinic to share the results. If you have not seen the models, check out the October *Semaphore* -- available on the *Semaphore* tab of the FVD website. He privately told me that he was lucky he did not cut his fingers off with his X-Acto knife with all that stuff on and the goggle fog - of course all the while waiting for my reaction.... JO

Fox Valley Division ZOOM Meeting Instructions

On September 20, we restarted our monthly FVD meetings using the popular virtual meeting technology called ZOOM. Now any of us with a personal computer, notebook or smart phone should be able to attend the meet without having to worry about being contaminated by any disease! Your FVD Board believes ZOOM meetings could really boost meeting attendance and contest participation. Here's the info you need to participate in our ZOOM meets:

Email Address needed

- We must have your email address in order to send you the login credentials for each ZOOM meet. (If you do not receive the ***Semaphore*** notice each month via email, then we do not have your email address on file.) To add or change your email address, point your browser to the FVD web site <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/>
- Click on the link at the top of the page just below the blue banner. Complete the form to add your email address to our address list.

ZOOM Meeting Procedures

- If you do not have the ZOOM app installed on your computer, please download it and test it out.
- About a week before the meeting date, the FVD Webmaster will email you an invitation to the meet that will include a link to the meeting with your login credentials.
- Also included in the email will be a link to the FVD Timetable web page where you will find PDF downloads for a 1 page "FVD ZOOM Meeting Quick Guide", "ZOOM Meeting Procedures", and other help topics you may find useful. Tip: you may want to print the Quick Guide to have for reference at the meeting.
- For security purposes, please do not post these credentials on any social media sites.
- Note: FVD meets are not being recorded and will not be available for later viewing.

Meeting Day

- The meeting "window" will be open about 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the meet.
- To join the meeting, click on the link in the email meeting invitation. You may be asked to do a short download or update, and you may be put in a ZOOM waiting room prior to the meeting. If so, the meeting host will admit you to the meeting.
- After you are admitted, sit back and "enjoy the show". If you get stuck, email website@foxvalleydivision.org for assistance
- When the meeting is over, click the "Leave Meeting" button and the app will close.

ZOOM Contest Entries

- With each meet invitation you will also be given instructions on how to submit a contest entry, and how to vote for the entry of your choice. Note that submitting a contest entry and voting will be done before each meet with our ZOOM meetings, not during the meet as we do when we are meeting in person.
- With ZOOM meets, contest entries are limited to 1 model per contest. So, if the contest is "locomotives" you may enter one locomotive and no more.
- To submit an entry, take 1 - 3 photos at different angles of your model. Submit your photos with special upload link provided in your invitation email. Photo Tips: 1) Phone camera photos are fine, 2) Make sure there is enough light on your model, 3) "Fill the frame" with your model—in other words, don't take "long shots" of the model.
- **Contest Entry Deadline: Noon the Friday before the Sunday meet.** Early entries are encouraged.

ZOOM Contest Voting

- About two days before the meeting you will be emailed a meeting reminder and contest voting instructions.
- All contest entries will be anonymous.
- Members may vote for any time from Noon the Friday before the meet, to Noon the day of the meet. Voting is done on line by clicking on the special link provided in the meeting reminder email, or you can click here: <https://form.jotform.com/201986084212959>
- Winners will be announced at the meet.
- See the FVD web site for full ZOOM info: <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html>



Call for Articles....

Future Semaphore issues need interesting content. Consequently we are looking for model or prototype railroad related articles. Send us your content (words and photos) or even ideas. We'll take care of the editing and insertion in the publication. Contact us at:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>

About the Fox Valley Division

If you receive this newsletter, you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division area of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, as well as parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 180 members of varied ages and modeling ability levels belong to the FVD. Almost all modeling scales are represented in our division. Subscriptions to the Semaphore newsletters are free. NMRA membership in the division is available through the NMRA at:

<https://www.nmra.org/>

2020 –2021 FVD monthly meetings are held September through May on-line via the ZOOM virtual meeting technology per the schedule in this issue. Each meeting features a clinic, model contest, and information of interest to the membership. Outings, layout tours, and operating sessions may also be held when Covid-19 protocols allow gatherings.

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. Visit us on the web at: <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/>

The *Semaphore* is published by the Fox Valley Division of the Midwest Region of the NMRA once a month, nine months a year, from September to May. The Fox Valley Division of the Midwest Region of the NMRA is registered 501(c)7 not-for-profit Illinois corporation.

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Website:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/>

Until further notice, regular meetings are held virtually via Zoom from 1:30 until 4:00 PM per the schedule listed in this publication and on its website at:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html>

Temporary Editor: Jim Osborn

Assistant Editor: Michael Hirvela

Fox Valley Division Board of Directors

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Need to contact any BoD members? Click this link to:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>