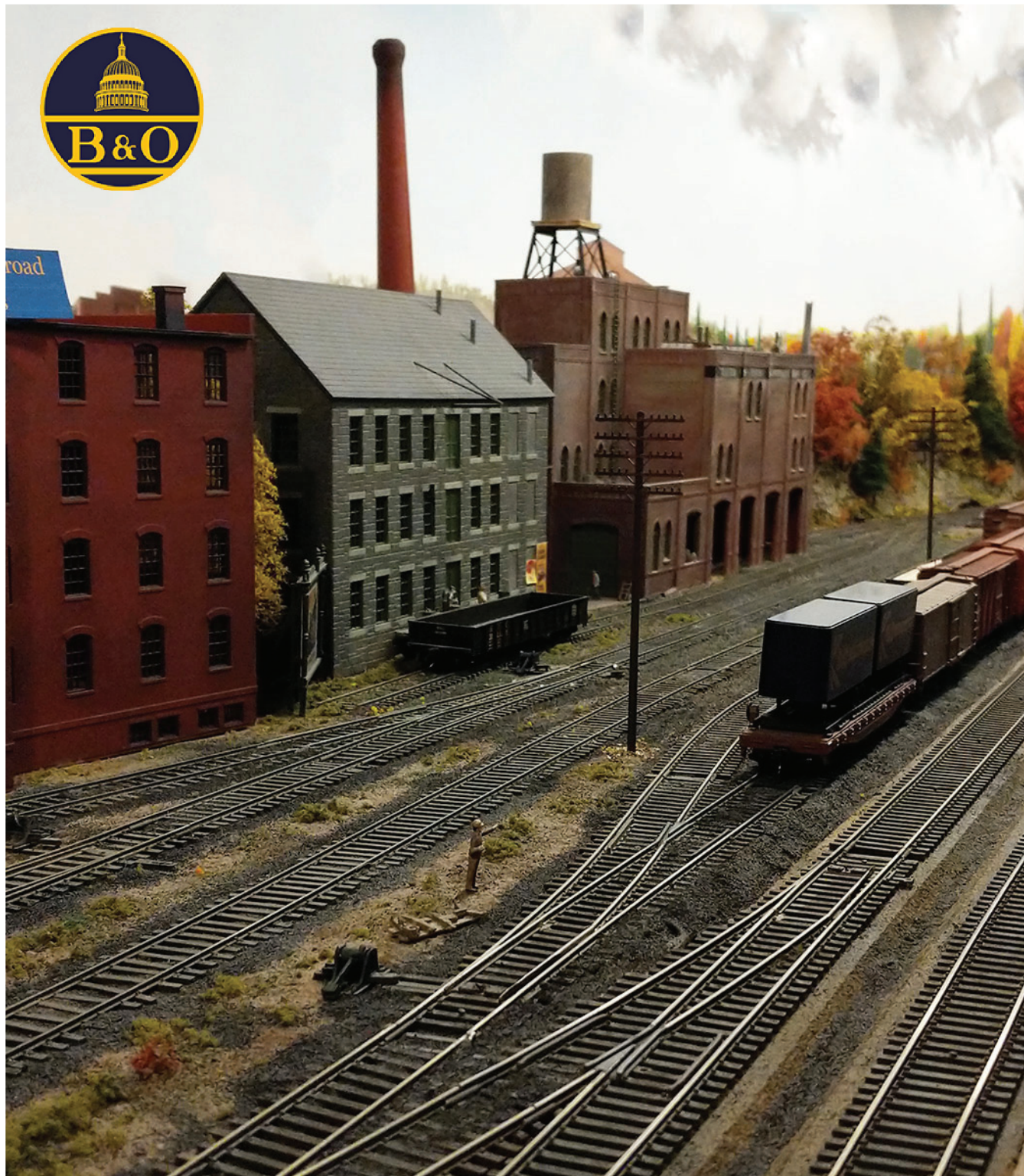


# THE SEMAPHORE

October 2021

Fox Valley Division • MIDWEST REGION



It's an overcast fall day in S. Union as the local crew works the pickups for the next B&O Connellsville to Fairmont freight on Art Jones' realistically operated Fairmont, Morgantown and Pittsburgh RR. (cont'd on page 3)



**In This Issue...**

<b>Page 1, 3-6</b>	<b>Art Jones' FM&amp;P RR</b>
<b>Page 2</b>	<b>Throttle up</b>
<b>Page 7</b>	<b>Call for Mini-Clinics</b>
<b>Page 7</b>	<b>Fun Stuff</b>
<b>Page 8</b>	<b>Mike's Minute</b>
<b>Page 9</b>	<b>Sep. Contest &amp; Next Meet</b>
<b>Page 9</b>	<b>Bob Hanmer recognition</b>
<b>Page 10</b>	<b>What's Happening (or not)</b>
<b>Page 11</b>	<b>Meeting Schedules</b>
<b>Page 12</b>	<b>Call for Articles</b>
<b>Page 12</b>	<b>Division Information</b>

**Throttle up and get those trains moving...**

Last month I mentioned I got started creating a quarry I'd been thinking about for what seemed like eons. There's more work to be done, but here's a couple of current snaps.



Above: View of the pit between the feed track to the sorter and the drill track from the yard around the left wall corner.



Above: View of the conveyor leading to the sorter/loader on the left. The 3 foreground tracks lead to the gravel loading building.

The pit is lined with a quarry photo off the web that I "Photo-shopped" to fit the space. I built up a berm to rim the pit with 2" carved pink foam, painted it and covered it with my mix of "dirt, weeds & rocks." A chain link fence tops the berm to keep teenage boys out of the pit area. (Where did I learn about that?) Two Walther's modern conveyor kits were kit bashed for the 42 needed to take gravel from the pit to the sorter. A couple of home brew fantasy conveyor joints support the conveyors at the turns. (They sort of look real even though I don't think they actually exist.) Since it is an industrial area, I added walkway lighting on the conveyor to illuminate the scene. Finally, the *Super Trees* I discussed making last month fill in the berm to provide a view block and finish off the scene. More work remains on the surrounding areas, but I am pleased so far.

The "dirt, weeds & rocks" soil base recipe that I use just about everywhere is made from **Woodland Scenics** T42, T49, T50 in sort of equal parts. Add some buff ballast and small talus plus fine sand to your liking. Add some T41 for the darker mix. I use these mixes as a landscape base covering painted surfaces on all my ground-related scenes. Scatter it on diluted white glue & fix it with hair spray. Top it with static grass, weeds, trees and/or bushes to finish off your outdoor scene. Bill Boyd created the mix and shared the recipe long ago. (He was one of the FVD members I met at the first meet I attended.) The NMRA is about learning from others and sharing what you know. Send me something **you** would like to share in a future *Semaphore*. Model Railroading is Fun! Jim Osborn, Ed.



The two primary ground cover mixes I use are pictured above. The lighter one was used around the quarry pit on the left.



### ***F, M & P Railroad (cont'd from the cover)...***

The first F, M & P RR operating session since the Covid shutdown occurred last month. The fully-vaccinated crew was eager to get to work (although there was plenty of retraining required due to the 2 year hiatus.) It was a pleasure to see this RR in operation again. When you walk down the stairs to Art's basement empire, the first thing you see is the expansive Union industrial complex on the right, Pittsburgh Terminal station and its industries on the left and the Laughton Jct. wye leading to Connellsville staging along the back wall as shown below. Passenger trains destined for Pittsburgh take the Laughton wye to the right and then back into Pittsburgh station - an 8 mile prototypical journey.



The Pittsburgh Terminal Industries (above left)



Union Industries and the Connellsville Staging hole at the back (above right)



The east side of S. Union is a busy place. The brown brick, coal-fired power plant in the back butts up to the Contention coal mine (next picture) to create a loads in - empties out industry paired with the coal mine, which is an empties in - loads out industry. For example, loaded coal fuel hoppers are pushed through the power plant and into the mine loader to become loads out for the coal mine. The reverse occurs with empty hoppers. No load juggling required!





There are two tracks at the Contention Mine shown above mating with the power plant tracks. The front track holds loaded cars for pick up. It receives empties on the second track (just behind the hoppers) that ultimately are picked up at the power plant (out of the picture around on the left). Ah, the magic of model railroading. The main line through Contention is in the foreground of the picture.



Smithfield Yard (above) is a center of action on the RR. It classifies all the freight for the various cities and branches. Note the EM-1 leaving the yard eastbound to Connellsville (lower left corner). The mainline from Contention is the highest level shown. The EM-1 will head out and loop around toward Brownsfield on the main just below the Contention mainline.





The Fairmont-bound mainline passes through Morgantown (left) and interchanges with the M&K. A portion of Leckron is shown on the right. Art is a master of space management - if there is a square foot left, he will find a use for it. Parts of the RR that have no scenery applied yet have been under constant change. He is always optimizing the space and operational functionality of the railroad.



An eastbound freight lead by an articulated EM-1 Mallet has finished its work and is leaving South Union.  
Walt Herrick photo.



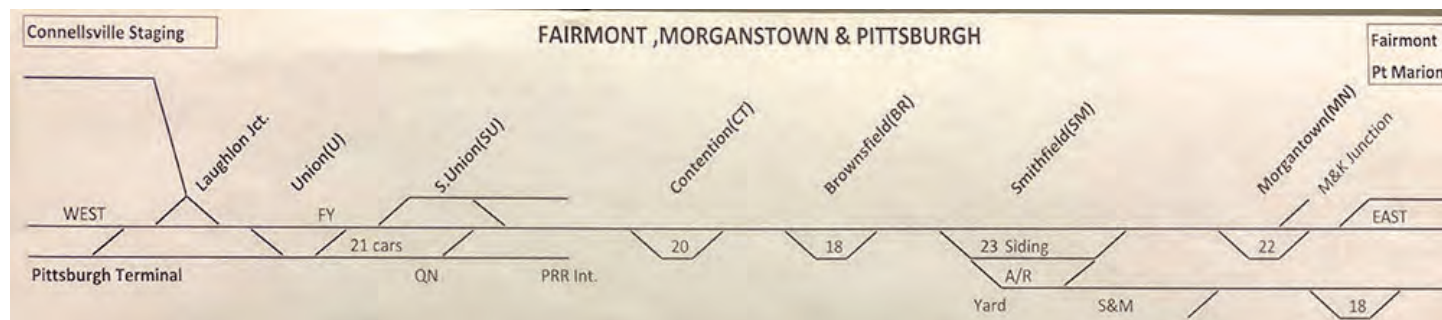
A few of the crew at the operating session take a break for a photo op. (left to right:) Dan Sylvester, Dan Cahill, Art Jones, Mike Hirvela and Jim Allen. Future FVD member William M. is seated in front. At the right, Art is busy in the dispatch office seated below Pittsburgh Station. Art uses telephone reporting at each major station or facility to keep the trains in sequence and on schedule.



Art tells the *Semaphore* that the real FM&P ran from Connellsville to Fairmont, about 67 miles long including three summits on the route. His Pittsburgh extension is a quantum leap from reality but adds to the operating fun and complexity. The real Smithfield Yard was a marshaling yard for coal operations and breakout location for the branch runs and Leckron traffic. It was also at the bottom of grade in both directions, so it always had helpers stationed there.

The layout size is 32' x 30' with a five foot loop in the crawl space so the overall length is 37'. 95% of track is code 83 with all manufacturers represented. (i.e.: Walther's, Shinohara, Atlas, and Peco.) There is some code 55 rail used at a few locations. Art estimates that there is about 1500 feet of trackage with 20% of the railroad having scenery applied -- although most of the buildings placed on the layout are constructed models.

Art uses an interesting, single-sided car card routing system. Between sessions, Art pulls the destination waybills from spotted car cards. Most of the car card pockets have a "return to Connellsville or Fairmont yard" message pre-printed on them. When a train has finished its run and is in staging, the staging *mole* pulls any remaining destination waybills from the car card pockets. Then, he identifies the next train out route and blocking order before moving down the train, car by car, and inserting an appropriate destination waybill in the pocket based on the car type and blocking order of that train. If no solution exists, for example no tank cars go to Union and if Union is the first stop and the first car is a tank car, the mole chooses the next stop that can take a tank car. He continues down the train filling car destinations for the second stop until no solution exists, and so on. This is a very efficient method of readying trains in the stage without having to shuffle cars around.



A map of Art's FM&P is shown above. You can see that there's plenty of single track mainline and branch lines on the F, M & P to keep the dispatcher busy. This is a great operating railroad and should be on your bucket list to visit.

J. O., Ed.



# STOP!

## We need your help!

### ***Wanted - a few short clinics...***

***by Gary Saxton, FVD Programs Trainmaster***

Now don't just blow by this article! Please give it a read. The NMRA is about sharing and learning, and we need your help to facilitate this fundamental requirement.

We need a few more clinics to fill out this year's schedule. It is easier than you fear if you think just a little outside the box. Here a few thoughts to get you started.

An easy way is using other people's videos. We did this only once before. The presenter plays an NMRA EduTRAINS clinic from:

<https://www.nmra.org/clinic-videos> or  
<https://www.nmra.org/edutrain/edutrain-approved-clinics>

or a YouTube video or something from another source. The presenter adds some commentary to enhance the video which might include the following:

- An introduction
- Stops, pauses or replay section to highlight a point
- Comments such as "pay attention to 'X' because the next video will say something different"
- A video from another source highlighting any complimentary or contradictory aspects
- A handout with relevant references, hyperlinks, data or summary
- Concluding comments

You do not have to be an expert in the field. Sharing your research will be useful to the group. Something I strongly encourage is the half or mini clinic. That is talking about a subject that can be covered in twenty minutes. Two half clinics can be presented at the same meeting. All the same subjects as a traditional clinic would apply. Think short story vs. a novel.

- A trip or vacation in which you took prototype or model railroad photos
- Scenery methods or materials you use
- Model railroad operations
- Painting and/or weathering techniques
- Scratch building rolling stock, structures, etc.
- What you learned from making mistakes
- A research project involving models or the prototype
- Toy or tin plate trains
- Electrical, electronic and computer-assisted modeling

For example, Bob McGeever recently presented a SCWD Division mini clinic on a new twist on making scenery shell. It was short, sweet and informative. An 8 photograph slide show and no PowerPoint.

So why do a clinic? It is basically to share your knowledge and interest with fellow modelers and to help them on their model railroading journey. You also might want to do a "test run" of a clinic you are doing for a regional or national convention, or earn points toward your MMR or maybe just update a past clinic you've already given with new information. G. S.

### ***Fun Stuff... What the heck is this?***

This has to be the smallest interurban car ever made. Empty Wt. 1600 Lbs. What's the loaded Wt.?



Maybe it operates in a Scandinavian country? It might be a gas powered power unit that pulls a small trailer? How about a portable rest stop for the MoW crew? Could Metra use this to upgrade it's heads? BTW, you could even flush in the station! A future contest entry? Send us your thoughts or ideas.

[webmaster@foxvalleydivision.org](mailto:webmaster@foxvalleydivision.org)



## Mike's Minute...



A hearty thanks to our members who attended the September FVD season kick-off meeting over the ZOOM system. It was nice seeing everyone almost in person again. And if you were watching, we had guests from Tennessee and from the Gateway Division of the St.

Louis area.

In addition, two of our members were in a vehicle traveling to an operating session on an N scale model railroad in the area taking the video link with them. They were able to check back with the meeting during a lull in their train assignments. We couldn't do that during an in-person meeting. Our guest from Tennessee was a former FVD member who relocated to the eastern portion of that state a little while ago, and reported he is now employed driving a vehicle for Google Maps in east Tennessee, western North Carolina and the SW corner of Virginia. Darn if he isn't on the lookout for trains as he maps the designated areas from a specially equipped vehicle. How's THAT for a job!

Leif Hansen's "The Ishpeming, Omaha & Western" was mentioned on page 36 of the August NMRA Magazine – referring to the May 2021 Semaphore article we did. The Semaphore article is also mentioned in this month's Division Business Car section of the NMRA Turntable email. Very deserving national notoriety for your modeling skills. Congratulations Leif!

Well, it is apparent that the Fall season is now upon us as the sun is setting earlier, temperatures getting a little cooler, and with the change of seasons our attentions typically shift to more indoor activities which include model trains. Train operating sessions have started after a pause for the COVID situation and a welcome social activity that has been greatly missed. The Great Mid-West Train Show (aka: The DuPage Swap) at the DuPage County Fairgrounds was conducted on September 12th. A new management team is in place and the crowd was enthusiastic. It is very encouraging to realize that interest in model trains has not diminished in

spite of the limitations of the COVID situation. FVD member John Drozdak managed our member table in August and was willing to do so again at the October swap on the 17th. We do need a volunteer for the December swap table. Let me know.

We (the FVD Board) are keeping our eyes and ears on developments with the continued effect of the respiratory virus on social events and gatherings here in Illinois. The future remains unsure and may change on a moment's notice. We will post any developments on the FVD website.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you over the ZOOM system on October 24th. Help us help you by keeping our webmaster advised of your current e-mail address. In the meantime, check the website timetable page for the latest program information.

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

The Midwest Region is hosting a Tri-Region convention in Indianapolis on May 18-22, 2022. They are looking for clinic presenters. If you are interested in sharing your skills, please contact me.

While a lot is still up in the air and unknown and may change on a moment's notice, I am focused on the future and I am looking forward to seeing all of you over the ZOOM system on October 24th.

Regards, MH





## September Contest Results ...

Keith Dart's N Scale SP DD35B #9900, with a 3D Printed shell, took 1st place honors in the Diesel Locomotive contest. Bob Hanmer grabbed 2nd place with his HO scale #555 Geep and Leif Hansen's HO Scale RS-2 placed 3rd. Pictures below. We had 9 outstanding entries in 4 different scales. See more photos of all the model entries on our web site at: <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contests.v2.html>



Photo captions:

Keith Dart's N Scale DD35B (top left)

Bob Hanmer's HO Scale #555 Geep (lower left)

Leif Hansen's HO Scale RS-2 (lower right).



**Bob Hanmer** received national recognition for his contributions to the hobby from the OpSig group. The Bill Jewett Award, created in honor of a long time OpSIG President and **Dispatcher's Office** editor, was presented to Bob in September. The award is given annually to the individual who promotes and contributes the most to The Operations Special Interest Group, Inc., and its stated goals of promoting the art of model railroad operations. Bob is the co-author of the **Condensed Code of Operating Rules**, a handbook of operating rules adapted for model railroad operations. Bob is a FVD clinic presenter and frequent contest participant. Bob, thanks for all your contributions.

**Congratulations from the entire FVD!**

## Next Meet....
















**Program:** *Layout Sectional Construction saves You Work, and Speeds Up Moving from 5 Basements and 2 Garages* by Eric Peterson, CID

**Contest:** Send in photos of your favorite **Gondola with an Open Load** to the photo contest website. You may submit up to three photos of your model to the web site. Celebrate and share your modeling work with the membership.

Click on: <https://form.jotform.com/201995250508962> to submit your contest photos.



## What's Happening - or not ...

-  A number of **old Semaphore issues** have been discovered. Take a gander back in time to check some out on the **Semaphore** web page. BTW if you have copies of issues not shown, contact the webmaster so we can add them.
-  The memorial celebration of Walt Herrick's life is on October 9th at 1:00 pm. at **The Racket Club**, 9101 S. Illinois Route 31, Algonquin, Illinois 60102. Please join us if you can.
-  The Superintendent has received the plastic templates for the billboards featured in the clinic on September 26th presented by Dave Ackmann. If anyone is interested in using them, please contact the Superintendent.
-  The **MWR** will hold a tri-regional convention in Indianapolis on May 18 - 22, 2022. See the FVD RR events web page for more details - it should be a dandy! See: <https://www.indyjunction2022.org/> There will be an RPM meet in conjunction with the convention. Book your hotel rooms now - INDY time trials are running at the same time.
-  NMRA **Gateway 2022** National Convention will be in St. Louis, August 7 – 14, 2022. Please watch the website for details as they evolve: [https://www.eventsquid.com/event.cfm?preview&event\\_id=13724](https://www.eventsquid.com/event.cfm?preview&event_id=13724)
-  The Rock River Valley division will host the 2023 MWR convention.
-  The **Illinois Railway Museum** has opened its 2021 season. Select trains will be in operation per the schedule posted on their web site. The Steam Shop is working on getting UP 4-6-0 #428 finished. They wrap up the steam demonstration season on Oct 2 & 3. The Diesel Shop is working on former UP Doodlebug M-35. A full list of dates and activities can be found at: [www.irm.org/calendar](http://www.irm.org/calendar).
-  The National N Scale Convention is planned for a Nashville venue on June 22-26, 2022. See: <http://www.nationalscaleconvention.com/> for details as they become available.
-  Friends of the 2926 are completing operational restoration of ATSF 4-8-4 #2926 in New Mexico. The boiler has been steamed up, and the crew is hopeful for excursions in late 2021.
-  The WISE division tells us that the 50th Anniversary **Trainfest** originally scheduled for November has been canceled due to covid uncertainties. <https://trainfest.com/>
-  **Great Midwest Train Show** (aka: the Wheaton / DuPage Swap ) is under new management and is holding swap meets at the DuPage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton, IL. The dates for future shows are: October 17, November 14, December 12, January 9, February 13, March 13, April 10, May 8 and June 12. Follow the signs to the fairgrounds entrance. See <https://www.trainshow.com/>
-  **Tri-County Train Show** (Roma Lodge Swap), in Racine, 7130 Spring Street (Cty Hwy C) on the following dates: 8am – 12 noon: (6 shows remaining): November 7, December 5, January 2, February 6 & March 6.
-  The CP is proceeding with the KCS merger - pending regulatory approvals.
-  C&NW Historical Society 22nd Chicago Area Get Together is scheduled for 3:00 pm, Saturday, November 20th at the Normandy Banquets on Butterfield Road in Elmhurst. Info on <https://cnwhs.org/wp1/>
-  The Bucyrus Museum is open in South Milwaukee. Check out their web site for a host of historical photos of the iconic heavy equipment manufacturer. <https://www.bucyrusmuseum.org/>



## 2021 - 2022 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 timetable tab on the division's web site <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html> 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](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org). Save the dates for now - details will follow.

Date	Presentation	Contest	Notes
Sept. 26, 2021	Building Billboards by Dave Ackmann	1 Diesel Locomotive	
<b>Next Meet</b> Oct. 24, 2021	Sectional & Portable Layout Planning by Eric Peterson, CID	1 Gondola with Load	
Nov. 21, 2021	TBA	1 Illuminated Structure	
Dec. 19, 2021	TBA	An Odd Consist - 2 units max	
Jan. 16, 2022	TBA	Open Load for 1 Freight Car	
Feb. 20, 2022	TBA	1 Large Structure. 5000 sq. scale feet or more	
Mar. 20, 2022	TBA	1 Steam Locomotive	
Apr. 24, 2022	Railroads of International Harvester in Chicago by Richard Sieben	1 Refrigerated Billboard Car	1:00 Start Business & member meeting, election of Super & Chief Clerk
May 15, 2022	TBA	1 Small Structure . 500 sq. scale feet or less	
May 18-21, 2022	Midwest, North Central & Mid Central Tri-Region Convention	For more information, see: <a href="https://www.indyjunction2022.org/">https://www.indyjunction2022.org/</a>	





### **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, ten months a year, from September to June. 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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<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/>

Until further notice, regular meetings are held virtually via Zoom generally 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>

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

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