

THE SEMAPHORE

February 2022

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Ted Witt's *Rankendamp* N Scale railroad graces the pages of the this month's *Semaphore*. Ted offers a unique description of his creation with a fantastical story about how each of the scenes might have come to be if they really existed. Something like that is often missing from many the railroads we visit.

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Keep Those Trains Moving, by Jim Osborn, MMR...

George Milkowski sent in snaps of his latest workshop creations to the *Semaphore*. Recall that last September Dave Ackmann presented a clinic on billboard construction using a set of forms he developed. He sent the FVD a set of his Billboard Construction jigs for the membership to use. George picked up on the idea and built some very realistic looking billboards. He made some adjustments to Dave's technique. First, he didn't use the Internet to get potential billboard photos. He also added lights which made the billboards a bit tippy, so he CA'd small pieces of lead to the rear posts making sure they were properly anchored when installed. He also used wood rather than



The Rula Lenska billboard is based on TV commercials featuring the famous British film star advertising for Alberto VO-5. The ads had her stepping out of a jet holding 2-3 dozen roses while numerous flash bulbs went off. Smiling, she'd toss her hair back into the wind with her hand.

Some may question the safety, or lack thereof, for the workman putting the sign up. There is no railing around the platform, but George's layout is set in 1964 and OSHA was another 6 years down the road. A very nice detail! Thanks for sharing your work George! Contact the Super if you want to use the construction jigs. (Cont'd on Pg 4.)



styrene. The Goodyear Tire billboard above is made from a 1960's magazine ad he had. His layout is set in 1964 so this is perfect.

The Boone/Riggs speech therapists billboard (top right) is based on two real persons. Recall the radio program, "*Lucky Strike Program Starring Jack Benny*" sponsored by the American Tobacco Company. L.A. Riggs and F.E. Boone were tobacco auctioneers who would start off saying something totally incomprehensible and ended their chant pitch with "*Sold to American!*"



The *Rankendamp N Scale Railroad...*

by Ted Witt, FVD



I am happy to share the history and a number of pictures about my home layout. The 4' X 7' N-Scale layout is about 40% complete. (I keep changing my mind about various details, and the consequent demolition and rebuilding has necessitated more delays.)

Additionally, finding the right process or structure, etc., consumes a lot of time. It took me years to discover the perfect water surface for the bay. I finally found that on YouTube in the Marklin of Sweden site. Who knew that toilet paper and Elmer's Glue worked so well?

I've been a model railroader since I was 7, (starting with Lionel and then Marklin HO) when I traveled with my parents to Germany. I still have all of the Marklin track, engines, and rolling stock. The first engine I got in 1957 still runs. Talk about quality!

I'm also a modeler, and in my 'stash' is about 30 unbuilt models. In process: 1) A 1:48 scale TBM Avenger, 2) A wood hull planking tutorial from the Nautical Research Guild, and 3) The HMS Terror, a 1:100 Arctic exploration ship from 1870. I'm currently assembling a 4,000 piece Lego operating model of a Caterpillar bulldozer. I also have two 3D printers, and I dabble with them on occasion.

As I've gotten older, I'm finding that the 'journey' is more important than finishing something quickly. Please take moment to read my chronicle about the evolution of the *Rankendamp railroad*:

<https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/images/semaphorefiles/rankendampchronicles.pdf>

I have included a few pictures to add context to my story and the layout's geography and scenes.

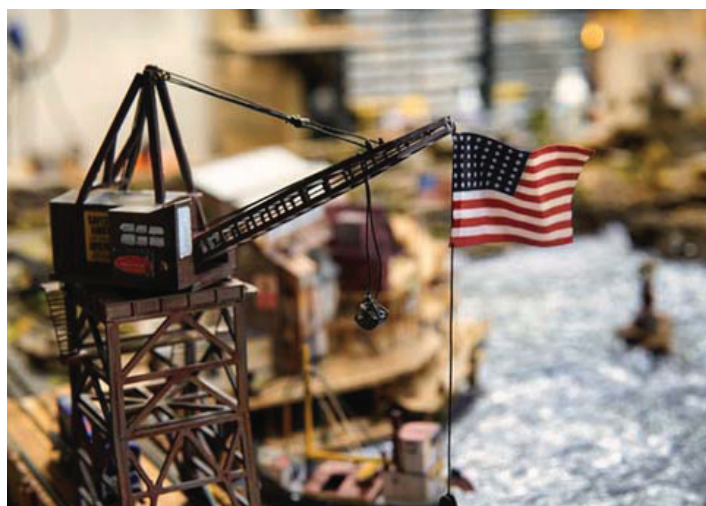
You can see the terrain is rather formidable. The wharf pictured on the cover page is a kit-bash of parts of 8 separate paper models. I was inspired by a Bar Mills limited edition HO model.

The Boat Repair shop, also on the front page, is a paper model on a wood plank base. I used Z scale track for the marine railway.

The lighthouse (top right) was constructed out of wood from plans from an Australian model railroad magazine. It has a flashing light and is illuminated.



The Clyde Whirley Crane (below) is 3D printed and is a replica of those made by Clyde Ironworks in Duluth, MN.



Here's a close up of the buoy in the bay that's a little fuzzy in the crane picture above. The eagle and marker are 3D printed and painted. The nest is jute, and the shoal is oak bark. It has a flashing light.





The Church on the Rocks (above) is also 3D printed. It has stained-glass windows and is lighted.



The Rev. Zellat conducts a funeral service in the COTR cemetery. The parsonage on the left is a paper model. Fence is 3D printed.



Dorothy finds the remains of the Wicked Witch. Not sure where Toto is...



Carl's House (from the movie *Up*) is a paper model. Carl was 3D-printed and painted.

Don't forget to read the *Rankendamp* chronicle. Hopefully it will spark the imagination lurking in all of us.

Ted Witt, FVD

Keep Those Trains Moving... (Cont'd from Pg 2.)

I want to thank Ted Witt for taking the time to contribute something a little different to the *Semaphore*. I hope each reader enjoys his whimsical story. I really liked the realistic "restless" waters in the bay, so I researched the technique Ted mentioned. The link to the video is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TwpB7sVMn8>

On a different front, FVD member Jim Manfree wrote the *Semaphore* looking for information on the CNW Elgin to Lake Geneva Branch. Jim asked:

"I seem to recall the division used to have a model of that line on a modular layout. I am interested in talking with anyone with knowledge of the line. I've done a lot of research but still have a few questions and thought my NMRA Div might help. Could you put me in contact with any members willing to take a call from me? I would greatly appreciate it. I can be reached at 847-209-0999."

If you have information to share, he'd value your call.

Take care, stay safe and ***Keep Those Trains Moving!***
Jim Osborn, MMR



Marriott East, 7202 E 21st St
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Four Full Days
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One Convention
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<https://www.indyjunction2022.org/>



RPM
CHICAGOLAND



Mike's Minute ...



February is an interesting month on the calendar. Why? We have to reach back to the ancient Romans to find out. They used a 10-month year which started when the first new evidence of spring appeared. That made February as the last month of their calendar year, and much like us, they couldn't wait for winter to be over. Hence, February has 28 days to hasten the arrival of spring. But don't let spring fever get you thinking about outdoor activities just yet. Mother Nature has her own ideas that may provide us with some additional modeling time, swap meets and indoor operating sessions.

Speaking of Train Show / Swap Meets, the FVD mans an NMRA member table at the Great Midwest Train Show (GMWTS), aka the Wheaton swap, at the DuPage County Fairgrounds on alternating months sharing with our friends in the DuPage Division. The FVD has the table in April and June. April is covered. We still need someone to be our rep at the June (5th) 2022 GMWTS. Let me know if you can assist [it ain't that hard] and I can fill you in on the details.

COVID variants continue to impact our lives, preventing us from meeting in person. However, the ZOOM virtual meetings over the computer continue to work well. At the last FVD meeting, we had our local members zooming in, plus members from Arizona, Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, and Wisconsin. Furthermore, we were privileged to get a visit from NMRA President, Gordy Robinson, from his home on Burray, Orkney Islands, on the northern tip of the United Kingdom. We couldn't have done that in the past, but I am looking forward to when we can get back to in-person meetings. We'll have to figure out how to allow for folks attending virtually. I don't want anyone feeling left out for any reason. To pull this off, we need help from a few members having computer and/or video knowledge to organize a hybrid meet. Two computer operators and a video camera person are necessary.

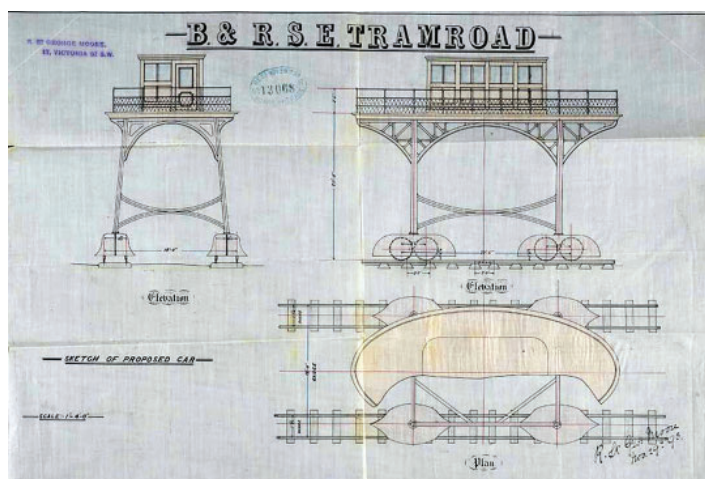
Please join us at the next meeting: February 20th at 1:30 pm, with a log in time of 1:00 pm. Our webmaster sends out the meeting notice with the log-on credentials to make it easy. The notice comes out by e-mail, so be sure we have your current e-mail address and advise of any change.

Everyone take care, and we'll see you on the 20th!
M.H.

Fun Stuff... What the heck is this? by Jim Allen



"The 'Brighton and Rottingdean Electric Seashore Tramroad', the line's official name, was the brainchild of Magnus Volk, an engineer who, prior to the tramroad, brought the first electric illuminations and public electric railway to Brighton, UK. His Electric Railway opened in 1883, a one and a half mile line that ran along the sea front from Palace Pier to Black Rock, and at high tide ran over the sea. It introduced an unusual mix of electricity, transport and sea water to the British public.



Despite many 'gloomy predictions as to its impracticality' Volk's line was a success from the get-go. On the August bank holiday after it was opened, the single car is said to have carried roughly 1000 passengers over a duration of 11 hours, a statistic that would prove useful when pushing the next, more outlandish, seafront experiment: a tramroad running through the sea 200ft from the cliffs, for the purpose of affording travelers a fine view of the sea front."

These photos and text are all cited from:

<https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/brighton-rottingdean-seashore-electric-tramroad/>

The Tramroad ran for an amazing 19 years but was abandoned in 1902 due to storm damage. Click on the link above to read much more about this and another similar UK rail curiosity from 1898.

J.A.

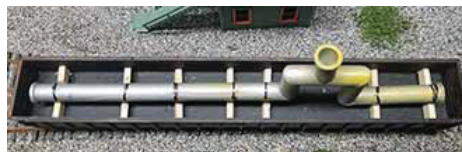
January Contest Results ...

An HO Scale, kit-bashed, "Dragline Bucket "by Bob Hanmer was awarded 1st Place honors in the Open Load contest. The HO Scale scratch-built "Custom pipe assembly on EJ&E mill gondola" by Denis Zamirowski was awarded 2nd place in the contest. An HO Scale, Ready-2-Run "Gondola with Scrap Load" by Michael Wood placed 3rd. Pictures are shown below. We had entries in HO, TT and N scales. See more and larger photos of all the model entries on our web site at:

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



Bob Hanmer's Dragline Bucket (left)



Denis Zamirowski's Pipe Load (center)



Mike Wood's Scrap Load (right)

Next Meet - February 20, 2022....

Program: *DCC Speed Matching - by George Keprda*
















Contest: Send in photos of your **Large Structures** to the photo contest website. For this contest the structure should have a foot print larger than 5000 scale square feet. In HO scale that's about 9.75 actual inches on a side for a square structure. Here's an example of a large structure. It's in HO scale and 30 x 6 real inches. Its scale foot print is just over 9,000 sq ft.



You may submit up to three photos of your model to the web site. Celebrate and share your modeling work and fun with the membership.

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

What's Happening - or not ...

-  Fox Valley Division member Rich Sieben has raised his hand to help contribute content to the **Semaphore** in future issues. His first story will be in a subsequent edition. A big **thank you** goes out to Rich for pitching in for the division.
-  As we reported last month, George Milkowski built a few billboards using the plastic billboard templates featured in the clinic on September 26th presented by Dave Ackmann. He says they came out "Fantastic!" Pictures of his billboards are featured in this **Semaphore**. If anyone is interested in using the templates, please contact the Superintendent. <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>
-  The **Midwest Region** is holding its annual election of Directors at Large. Voting can easily be done on-line through our secure ballot portal. The polls close at Midnight January 31, 2022. Click on this link to vote! <https://form.jotform.com/213177297630964> Candidate biographies and an alternative mail-in ballot can be viewed at: <http://www.mwr-nmra.org/mwr2016/mwr.elections.html>
-  **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: February 6, March 6, April 3, May 1 and June 5, 2022. Follow the signs to the fairgrounds entrance. See <https://www.trainshow.com/>
-  **Tri-City Train Show** (Roma Lodge Swap), in Racine, 7130 Spring Street (Cty Hwy C) on the following dates: 8am – 12 noon: (2 shows remaining): February 13 & March 13.
-  **Mad City Train Show** at the Alliant Energy Center, Madison, Wisconsin, February 19-20, 2022.
-  **Lake County Model RR Club Open House (50 Year Celebration)**, March 19 & 20, 11am to 4pm both days.
-  **Rock River Valley Division Train Show** at Harlem High School, Machesney Park, IL, March 26-27, 2022
-  The **Chicago Area O-Scale Meet** will be held on April 1-2, 2022 at the Lombard Westin. See their web site for more info: <https://marchmeet.net/WP/>
-  **Titletown Train Show** will be at the KI Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin, April 9-10, 2022.
-  The **Midwest Region** 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.
-  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.
-  Great Tri-State Rail Sale at the La Crosse Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin, will be held on July 16th in Copeland Park. Info at: <https://4000foundation.org/>
-  **NMRA Gateway 2022 National Convention** will be in St. Louis, August 7 – 14, 2022. Please watch the website for details: https://www.eventsquid.com/event.cfm?preview&event_id=13724
-  The **Rock River Valley Division** will host the 2023 MWR convention. Dates TBD.

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. Save the dates for now - details will follow.

Date	Presentation	Contest	Notes
Sept. 26, 2021	<i>Building Billboards</i> by Dave Ackmann	1 Diesel Locomotive.	
Oct. 24, 2021	<i>Sectional & Portable Layout Planning</i> by Eric Peterson, CID	1 Gondola with Load.	
Nov. 21, 2021	<i>New England Trains</i> by Mike Wood, FVD	1 Illuminated Structure.	
Dec. 19, 2021	<i>New Hard Shell Scenery Method</i> by Bob McGeever, and <i>A Teen/Tween Explores Chicago's Railroads - The Sequel 1975-78</i> by Steve Brown	An Odd Consist - 2 units max.	
Jan. 16, 2022	<i>Four Approaches for Arduino Controlled Signals</i> - by Gary Saxton	Open Load for 1 Freight Car.	
Feb. 20, 2022 Next Meet	DCC Speed Matching by George Keprda	1 Large Structure. 5000 sq. scale feet or more. (eg. in HO Scale that's only 9.75 inches on a side.)	
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	DCC Switching by Mike Wood	1 Small Structure. 500 sq. scale feet or less. (eg. in HO Scale that's only a little less than 3 inches on a side.)	
May 18-21, 2022	Midwest, North Central & Mid Central Tri-Region Convention	For more information, see: https://www.indyjunction2022.org/	



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/>

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