

THE SEMAPHORE

September 2022

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Roving Reporters Keith Dart and Rich Sieben spent time at the Metra shops during a family day excursion. The SOO 1003 was there as well as antique cabooses and other Metra Equipment, food and refreshments. They took a host of pictures that you can view on the FVD website. (Cont'd on page 3)

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

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

I have to confess that I did not keep my trains moving a lot over the summer. Some travel, outings, outdoor projects and too many Covid naps dominated my days. I did finally get in gear and spent some time doing a bit of landscaping around the *Steve's Scrap and Salvage* scene I started a while ago. I wanted to add some weeds around the corrugated metal fence surrounding the perimeter.

I had some *Woodland Scenics* field grasses in my scenery stash that I decided to put to use. The directions said to use their Hob-e-tac® glue to attach the grass. I did not have good results with that method: most of the grasses wanted to flop over, and it was difficult to grasp and hold the grass bundles with my tweezers. Plus the glue is reflective and showed up when you take a flash picture. I



needed a new process. The field grasses I had are shown above. After thinking about it, I had an idea that worked very well. Now, I have to confess that I do not know if I read about this process a while ago and was a déjà vu or it was something new - but it worked so well I want to share it with you.

The basic process is to make a hole and shove the grasses into the hole folded in half. I made a push tool with a large

sewing needle jammed into a hole I'd drilled in the end of a small dowel. I ground the eye end of the needle off and cleaned the burrs up to make a smooth, forked slot in the end. The tool below has grasses in the needle slot.



I used a thin ice pick to make a hole the scenery base (you might have to use a drill if your are using a plywood base).



I cut the grasses in half and then loaded up the shoving tool fork with a mixture of grasses depending on the colors needed. I then pushed the tool into the hole - which folded the bundle in half. Pulling the tool out slowly left



the grasses in place. I cemented the grass with a couple of drops of unscented hairspray. I use a jelly jar with a hole drilled in the lid that fits a pipette to keep the hairspray fresh.

The new - planted grasses are shown below. Resist the temptation to futz with the them until the hairspray is dry and the grasses are fixed in place. Then you can clean up the loose bits and trim the grass to the desired lengths. Trim randomly so you do not end up with them looking like a "3 Stooges haircut." A final pass with a vacuum will clean



up the scene. Add a few tufts of grass and some ground foam and you'll have an interesting addition to a scene.



Don't forget to plant some weeds around fences, ponds, foundations or right of ways! And always remember....

Model Railroad is Fun! Jim Osborn, MMR, Editor

Metra Family Day, cont'd from the cover....

Here are a couple of more shots from the Semaphore reporters. See larger formats of these and many others on our Prototype Photo Gallery web page.

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



The snap above was taken at the Fox Lake Metra yard waiting for a clear board to head south.



The photo above could be 1003 waiting for the next scoot out to the burbs! I suspect the SOO Historical Society did not approve this skin on 1003.



SOO1003 and its support cars are heading to the Western Ave. shops through the Fox Lake Metra Yard. Thanks to Metra for the event and shouts out to Keith and Rich for the photo essay! ###

Mike Ritchdorff's Open House by Denis Zamirowski

Mike Ritchdorff, long time friend of the FVD opened his *Norfolk & Western Pocahontas Division* RR to visitors on July 9th this summer. Here are a few pictures I took that I would like to share with the division.



You get the theme of the layout - lots of trains, track, switching and memorabilia! Thanks go out to Mike for opening his layout up.

D.Z. Assistant Super, FVD



Fun Stuff... Or maybe not so fun?

Just when you think your are having a bad day -- think of this hostler that forgot to set the brakes! Holy cats! Get the big hook out there fast!



Picture from an anonymous source.

Tom Heilman's Midwest Rail Layout by Rich Sieben

During the RiverRail 2022 event (La Cross), we had the pleasure of operating on Tom Heilman's Midwest Rail layout. The layout is a double-decked free-lance with good size runs and plenty of switching. We had a dispatcher and 5 operators. This HO scale layout occupies the second floor of a 4 car garage, 2 cars wide and 2 cars deep in Winona, MN. The layout is divided into 20 zones; with some jobs defined by the zones. For example, I ran the zone 18-19 turn which ran between the yard and work near the end of the layout. I switched a brewery, grain elevator, chemical plant and fuel distributor in that area. The operating plan and pacing is well thought out as there is plenty of room to work for both people and trains. I took a few pictures shown here to share with our division.



Implied consumer brand plants



Steel mill on top and auto plant and other industries on the bottom deck



Upper and lower staging with zone 1 on the bottom and zone 20 on top.



The westbound yard on the center aisle is above. The EB yard below is on the opposite side of the center aisle.



Notice the many farm-related industries as this is supposed to be in a generic Midwest area with some city features as well. The lower deck here is the approach to one of the two yards (one for eastbound and the other for westbound traffic). Steel mill on top and auto plant and other industries on the bottom deck.



Tom Heilman's Midwest Rail Layout (continued)

The helix connecting the two decks with the iron ore mine lead in front shown above.



The iron mine (on the bottom) is off on it's own branch line. Above it is another branch line that requires plenty of switching to be done.

Thomas plans to run about 26 trains during a session but usually gets about 18 -22 actually out. He runs his own trains frequently between sessions to find and correct problems such as coupler heights, turnouts, locomotive issues, etc.

The optimum number of operators is 8, but the RR can run with fewer. For a group of 5 or less, there is no dispatcher, and trains going thru the classification yards do their own switching. A yardmaster isn't required.

It was a fun layout to operate on, and the session ran flawlessly. Thomas welcomes visitors; so if you are interested, contact me for the details. R.S.

**September Contest - One Passenger Car
(Could be any car seen in a Passenger Train)**



Next Meet - September 18, 2022, 1:30 start.... In person at the Gary Morava Center and via Zoom.

The Clinic Presentation and Contest Category are to be Announced later. Watch the FVD website Timetable for details as they become available.

The HO Scale, Scratch Built, **Taconite Junction** by Bob Hanmer took 1st Place in the May Small Structure contest. The HO Scale, Scratch-Built **JK tower Roanoke VA** by Michael Shockley was awarded 2nd place in the contest. The N Scale, Laser-Kit, **Pete's Market** by John Grosse took 3rd Place. We had 7 entries in 2 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 HO Scale Taconite Junction - 1st Place

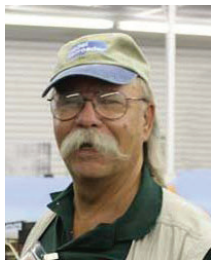


Michael Shockley's HO Scale JK Tower, Roanoke, VA



John Grosse's N Scale Pete's Market - 3rd Place

Mike's Minute ...



Welcome Back! Here we go again – starting our next season of prototype info and practices, modeling, history and technology of trains and railroads, train shows and friendships. Is this a great hobby or what?

We had a refreshing get-together at the Morava Center last May after two challenging years of dealing with the COVID virus limits and restrictions. I think we were successful in keeping the headlamp lit? So, I hope we can continue to do so throughout this upcoming season. Let me get each of you up-to-date with one of my summer activities.

The NMRA National Convention was in St. Louis, MO, August 7 through 14, with just under 800 registered attendees - including NMRA President Gordy Robinson. There were clinics galore on a variety of topics (Joe Fugate, Cody Grivno, Eric White, our own Gary Saxton and others) filled the schedule. Displays of HO_{n3} modular railroads (from Blue Island, IL) and a large N scale Free-Mo layout were available to operate and learn.

Prototype and model railroad tours were going on every day. The celebration room held a variety of models in many scales. And the photo entries were a feast for the eyes! Models and photos will be featured in up coming issues of the *NMRA Magazine*.

Convention attendees had early entry to the National Train Show at the convention center in Collinsville, IL, on Friday, the 12th - a day before it opened to the public. The best part of a show like this is that you get to talk to the folks who make the stuff. If you didn't attend the convention, you also missed a good dinner and a great after-dinner speaker who shared his passion for trains and the hobby.

You'll have to attend the next member meeting to get the full convention story and find out who won the *William Lenoire Award for Best Steam Locomotive*. Sorry, no hints just yet.

Our 2022-2023 meeting schedule and program notice, **the Orange Card**, was mailed out to every Fox Valley Division member so you should have received yours. Our *Clinics and Programs Trainmaster*, Gary Saxton, has been very active locating clinics of interest on a variety of topics for the new season, and while there still are some TBA's listed at the time the card was printed, we are actively filling out the agenda. Gary will have great topics and presenters lined up for the entire season. Be sure to check the website for updates as the season progresses and information gets finalized.

We will be hosting the Midwest Region Board meeting prior to our regular meet. The BoD meeting starts at 10:30. Come by early if you are interested and would like to meet its members in person. Bob McGeever, MWR President, will be there if you would like to chat with him. Note that October's contest category is, **"Up to 5 Gondolas with Open Loads."** Only in-person entries (no web photos) will be accepted in October. Open loads are always fun, so bring your best models to share with the group!

At this time we are planning on holding Hybrid In-person/Zoom meetings for the entire season. Specific meeting notice details are sent out via e-mail one week before each meet, so be sure we have your current e-mail address on file and always advise of any changes. You can update you email address at:

<http://www.mwr-nmra.org/mwr2016/mwr.address.change.html>













Each monthly notice includes the ZOOM system log-on credentials to make it easy to access the Zoom system if you choose participate that way. Details on each hybrid meeting agenda are also listed on the timetable tab of our website and in each issue of the *Semaphore*.

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

Have a safe Labor Day. I look forward to seeing each of you and re-connecting soon. Here's to a great 2022-2023 season!

Regards, Mike Hirvela, Superintendent

What's Happening - or not ...

-  The **Fox Valley Division** will be holding in-person division meets at the **Gary Morava Center**. The meets will also be broadcast via Zoom. See the next page for details on each meet. We hope to see you there!
-  The refurbished **East Broad Top Railroad** kicked off it's 150th anniversary on May 6th, 2022. See their event web page for details on remaining 2022 events: <https://eastbroadtop.com/events/>
-  **Great Midwest Train Show** (aka: the Wheaton / DuPage Swap Meet) is under new management and is holding swap meets at the DuPage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton, IL. The dates for future shows are on the 1st Sunday: Sept 4, Oct 2, Oct 30, and Dec 4, 2022. Follow the signs to the fairgrounds entrance. See: <https://www.trainshow.com/>
-  Railroad Days at the **Monticello Railway Museum** is on September 17 & 18. There will be unlimited rides on its trains from 10am to 5pm on both days. You can ride a motor car down the rails and have access to the shop. Southern No, 401 will be in steam both days. <https://www.mrym.org/>
-  In 2023 the Midwest Region (MWR) will elect a President, a Vice President, and three (3) Directors at-Large. All the positions are for a term of two-years, with a two consecutive-term (four years) limit. If you are interested in applying for any of these positions on the MWR Board of Directors, or have questions about any of the positions, please contact Steve Studley at sastudley@gmail.com (812) 876-9726 Or Paul Mangan at pmangan62@gmail.com (608) 835-9577 prior to **October 6, 2022**
-  The Chicago Tribune recently reported that Metra will be rolling out several all battery powered locomotives on the 16 mile Rock Island Beverly branch between Blue Island and the La Salle street station. The locos will run up to full track speed with a 150 mile range and are expected to be in operation in approximately 3 & 1/2 years. 3 locos down and 170 to go! You can read the full Metra press release at: <https://metra.com/newsroom/metra-create-battery-powered-locomotives>
-  The **Kalmbach Media** announced that **Trainfest** will be held on November 12-13, 2022 at Wisconsin State Fair Park in Milwaukee, WI. The show will be open to the public from 9am to 5pm on both Saturday and Sunday. <https://www.train-fest.com/>
-  The **Mad City Train Show**, Alliant Energy Center, Rimrock Road and John Nolen Drive, (just off the 12-18 By-pass), Madison, Wis., February 18 and 19, 2023. <https://www.nmra-scwd.org/scwd-events.html>
-  There will be no Midwest Region Convention scheduled for 2023.
-  The **Rock River Valley Division Train Show** will be held on March 25, 10 am - 5 pm & 26, 10 am - 3pm, 2023
-  The **FVD will hold its Annual Business Meeting** on April 16, 2023. The agenda will include reports from each Trainmaster and the Election of the Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster. Contact the Rich Hoker, Chief Clerk if you would like to run for either of these offices. Contact any officer at: <http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>
-  The resurrected **Naperville RPM** will once again be held in the Chicago area. The dates are October 27 and 28, 2023.

Meetings are held from 1:30 to about 4:00 pm (except as noted). This season all meetings will be presented online using ZOOM meeting technology **as well as in person at the Gary Morava Center**. See the timetable 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 updates 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
Next Meet			
Sept 18, 2022	<i>Dining on the Rails</i> by Marita Richards	1 Passenger Car	
Oct 16, 2022	<i>Two Prototype Steam Engine Overhauls</i> by Chuck Rita	Up to 5 Loaded Gondolas per entrant. (Live/In-Person entries only vs. online - no photos)	Midwest Region BoD meeting starts at 10:30 am - visitors welcome.
Nov 20, 2022	<i>Grain & Railroads</i> by Mark Vaughan	1 "Over, Under, Around, or Through."	
Dec 18, 2022	Presentation TBA	1 Steam Locomotive.	
Jan 15, 2023	Presentation TBA	1 Diesel Locomotive.	
Feb 19, 2023	<i>Interchanges</i> by Scott Payne	1 Illuminated structure.	
Mar 19, 2023	Presentation TBA	1 Refrigerated billboard car.	
April 16, 2023	Presentation TBA Annual Business Meeting and Election of Asst. Superintendent and Paymaster Contact the Chief Clerk if you would like to run for either of these offices.	1 freight car with an Open load.	
May 21, 2023	Presentation TBA	1 structure.	
Submit Your Contest Photos at: https://form.jotform.com/201995250508962			



LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE OUT THERE

Send us your: Prototype or model artwork, images, cartoons, drawings, paintings photos, layouts, etc. We'll take care of the editing and formatting for 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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Regular meetings are held virtually via Zoom and in person at the Gary Morava Center 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>

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