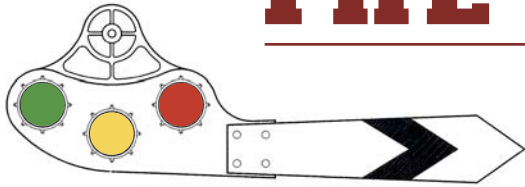


# THE SEMAPHORE

NOVEMBER 2010

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



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## It's December!!

First off, this December Semaphore will be the last printed issue mailed to members unless a member has specifically requested and paid for a printed subscription by the December meeting. Beginning in January, an email notice announcing the availability of the Semaphore on the website and a link to it will be sent to members with an email address on file with the Editor no later than the December meeting date. All Issues of the Semaphore will continue to be provided on the Division Website.

For those of you looking for holiday train displays that may be of interest to young and old, here is a sample list of venues in the Chicagoland area. With thanks to Walter Radtke:

- **Museum of Science and Industry**- recently renovated with a great model of Chicago: <http://www.msichicago.org/whats-here/exhibits/the-great-train-story/the-exhibit/>
- **Morton Arboretum**- <http://www.mortonarb.org/calendar/article/15994/holiday-highlights.html>
- **Brookfield Zoo**- <http://www.czs.org/czs/magic.aspx>
- **Chicago Botanical Garden**- <http://www.chicago-botanic.org/wonderland/>
- **Sun City Open House**-[www.SCCA.com](http://www.SCCA.com)
- **Mitchell Conservatory**- Milwaukee, WI

Lastly, the **Canadian Pacific Railroad** is offering their holiday train with routes in the US and Canada. Details here: <http://www8.cpr.ca/cms/English/General+Public/Holiday+Train/default.htm>

## Fox Valley Division News

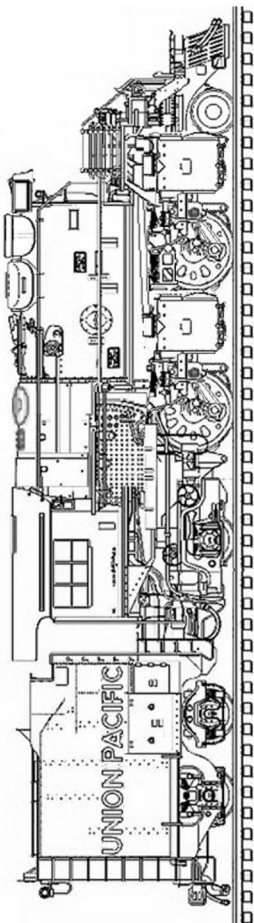
### Highwheeler 2011

Walter Radtke told the group that we are making good progress on the show. *(note: the flyers will be distributed by the time this hits the street)* Walter needs people to volunteer for a few remaining slots. A sign up sheet will be available at the December meeting. Remember that those who volunteer are invited to the recognition dinner to be held March 20th. Those who volunteer for two slots can bring a guest. In addition, volunteer time at Highwheeler counts toward points for the volunteer requirement for AP/MMR certification. Please contact Walter directly to volunteer. Please note that High Wheeler is the only

fundraiser done annually to raise operating funds for the Fox Valley Division. Your volunteer work makes this possible and preserves free meetings, refreshments and other benefits.

Dave Leider commented that a new model railroading website is available that includes the library of Rail Model Journal. The site includes articles, videos, photos, chat rooms and topic areas of interest to all levels of model railroading. The site is: <http://trainlife.com>

Fun Stuff



### Bill Boyd Items for Sale

Bill is offering several items including three, 18 car Atlas coalveyor unit trains in WEPX or NPPX with real coal loads. Bill told me he crushed the coal himself to scale size.

Reach Bill at:  
boydtravel@aol.com

### Fox Valley Recruiting at the DuPage Train show

John Cloos has secured a table at the train show at the DuPage County Fairgrounds each month until May of 2011. Art Paton manned the table for October and November and reports that several people took information on our meetings and the Highwheeler show. A variety of NMRA membership literature, give away Scale Rails and other magazines and the presence of an operating train on the table each month, tended to draw and keep dozens of people over the length of the show. The table is available from 9:00 am when the show opens to the public until 3:00 pm when the show closes. Traffic is usually heavy over the winter months .



The Fox Valley Division's NMRA recruitment table at a recent DuPage Train Show.

## Division Events Calendar 2010 and 2011

**Regular meetings are held from 1:30 PM thru 4:30 PM, at the Gary Morava Recreation Center, 110 W. Camp McDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070**

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are free and guests are always welcome. Contest events include awarding of certificates. Refreshments are provided by the Division.

### December 12, 2010

Note: 1:00 PM start time.

**Clinic:** Jim Darnaby will present his clinic on Scenery Techniques directly from the national convention.

**Contest:** "Diorama" including a structure and a piece of revenue rolling stock.

### January 16, 2011

**Clinic:** TBA.

**Contest:** "Styrene" structures only.

### February 20, 2011

**Clinic discussion:** TBA.

**Contest** "Wooden Structures".

### March 5 & 6th, 2011

The 33rd Annual High Wheeler Train Show

There will be no regular meeting this month.

**March 20, 2011-**The High Wheeler Train Show Recognition Banquet Sign up to volunteer and help with High Wheeler get a seat at the banquet for food, fun and recognition.

**April 10, 2011-** Note: 1:00 PM start time.

This is our annual business and election of officers meeting. This year we will elect the Assistant Superintendent and Treasurer positions.

**Program:** Cody Grivino, Associate Editor of Model Railroader Magazine will present a discussion on the Wisconsin Southern Railroad.

**Contest:** "Bring Anything" that is related to trains. This is a real opportunity to be creative.

### May 15, 2011

This is the final meet for the 2010-2011 modeling year.

**Clinic:** Dan Goins, from the Central Indiana Division, "How to easily make beautiful rock cliffs from ceiling tile."

**Contest:** "Old" loco or piece of rolling stock.

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**Look for all FVD Board members contact information**

**on line at the division's website**

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

## November Meeting Clinics

**Jim Allen** described the materials and methods for casting parts from resin. Jim showed how the mold base and frame are made using wood, or plastic forms. He also described the use of carpet tape (non-reinforced) on the mold base to adhere the master patterns in place during the creation of the rubber mold. He recommends the materials from Micro Mark for their freshness as shelf life is a major concern. Jim shared hints such as using the product Xtend-It by Smooth-on for removing air from inside containers of molding rubber and casting resins as this will extend their shelf life. Jim then demonstrated the molding of rock wall forms and commented that before they fully set-up they can be removed from the mold and shaped to meet the particular requirements of the model being made. Other key points made were the use of disposable brushes to apply rubber molding material into detail areas of master patterns to help eliminate air pockets in the finished mold. Jim also described the preparation of master patterns and the use of non-oil base clays to fill voids that would otherwise fill with rubber and prevent the master patterns from being removed from the finished mold. Jim showed a home made pressure pot made from a second hand pressure cooker used to cast very small parts or parts with thin cross sections. The technique is to fill the mold with casting resin, place in pressure pot, close pressure pot and apply pressure (about 15-20 psi). This will force the air from molds with thin sections or small cavities. The use of water thin resins with longer working times is helpful.

Other hints:

- get measuring cups with graduations on the OUTSIDE
- foam core can be used for mold frames too.
- PVC sections from pipes and gutters can make good mold frames too
- Keep molding processes above 65 Fahrenheit for best results



Jim (right) describes the construction of two part molds.



Resin pouring demonstration



Home made pressure pot from a second hand pressure cooker.



Display of mold parts and molds.

**Dave Crement** added a part two to his clinic on rivet embossing. Last month he showed us the finished products and described techniques for getting the results. This month, Dave brought in the tools and dies he uses. His innovative swing arm hammer with height stop illustrated the fine control of embossing depths he can achieve in materials ranging from brass sheet to styrene. A variety of tools were shown and Dave described how they could be adapted to the swing arm hammer and stop. Dave commented that in HO scale, a one inch rivet is only 0.010 inches across. He also described efficient

methods for making multiple rows of rivets, offset rows and angled rows.

**Dave Leider** presented slides from the layout tours that he and Leif Hansen attended during the 2010 Milwaukee NMRA Convention. A variety of layouts offered realistic scenery, scale and flats of buildings and a variety of layout designs for small and larger spaces. Dave proposed a group tour of the Lionel Club of Milwaukee due to its large size, wide variety of models, operating trains and accessories and ability to view it from above. Contact Dave if you are interested.

## Midwest Region News

You are reminded about the events and opportunities at the Midwest Convention in Madison, Wisconsin on April 15-17, 2011. Details are available at <http://www.NMRA-SCWD.org/>

## NMRA National News

The Winter Board Meeting will be held in sunny Las Vegas, Nevada in February 2011.

National has openings for volunteers to help with several projects.

- Engineer with experience setting up control systems
- IT Staff with experience in PHP and other applications
- Members Only Content Manager for the website
- Data Sheet Program Manager to find new topics

Each role requires a few hours to a few days per week Contact NMRA Headquarters if you are interested. The Union Pacific sponsored photo contest was won

by Harlan "Buzz" Lenander. He received a cab ride in UP 3985 over quite a route in the Midwest. An article on the contest and the ride on the steam engine will appear in NMRA magazine. Photos and video clips from the route are available at:

[http://www.uprr.com/newsinfo/media\\_kit/steam/3985/mre-sedalia\\_video.shtml](http://www.uprr.com/newsinfo/media_kit/steam/3985/mre-sedalia_video.shtml)

Union Pacific is also sponsoring a tour of 3985 and 844 in 2011 and is running a contest to select both the cities they will visit and the routing of the trip. You can participate by voting for your city and getting others involved. For this you receive points. The top 5 point recipients receive prizes with the top prize being a ride in the cab of one of the engines. Thanks to John Cloos for the initial email notice on this. Vote often and bring these beauties to Chicago. More information and registration can be found at: <http://upexcursion.com>



Photo above shows the display provided by John Cloos.

Action-Reaction display shown at TrainFest.

## Milwaukee TrainFest 2010

Trainfest drew 23,476 attendees in 2010 – a number which excludes the nearly 1,800 exhibitors who also participated in the show. Saturday attendance was at a new three-year high and Sunday attendance was at an all-time record high. Fox Valley Division was well represented at TrainFest this year. John Cloos had a display on the history of traction railroading in the Fox Valley. Several models were on display along with posters and history of the rail lines and the cars used. Jim Allen attracted many people at the show to his "Action-Reaction Railroad" and had many puzzled people asking how it worked or making wrong guesses. A good time was had by many. Other members helped on one or more of the many layouts on display. This is definitely a high quality, high traffic event with many great layouts and a good supply of vendors who were selling lots of items from what was seen on Saturday.



## November Contest Results

There were two contest entries in the Category of "Lighted" item.



The First Place winner was Don Cook for his lighted Barbershop and Pool Room building. Don told us this was a Dyna Models Kit that has been offered continuously for over 50 years and is available with or without interior details.

Second Place went to Jim Osborn for his long CNW passenger platform. Jim revealed that the model was made in response to a complaint from Don Cook. Seems that passengers at the station on Jim's layout had to hop down and cross the tracks to get to some of the trains. Don thought this was just too dangerous. Jim made the platform and used some thirty-three light bulbs to illuminate the length of the waiting areas. Jim recommends N-Engineering for scale light bulbs, shades and aluminum tubing for hiding wires.



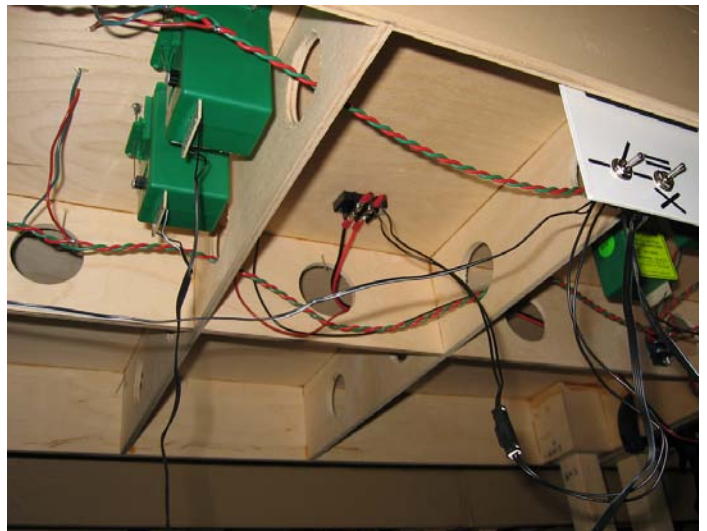
### Division Survey

Jim Osborn presented the results of the survey of Division members. The survey results will be posted on the Division website. Some items from the survey were interesting. Fifty percent of members responding identified themselves at the intermediate modeling level. As expected, HO scale is predominant among

members. About 30% of members "usually" attend meetings. Of events, Clinics were the most favored. Hobby interest favored Diesels, Steam and Operating as the top 3 among responding members. In the general interest category, Open Houses topped the list. Check out the results on the Division website for a full picture of member interests and preferences.

## Featured Layout Art Paton's Modular

Some modelers without basements or inside rooms in which to model are left to create temporary track plans on the floor or go elsewhere to operate trains among scenery and structures. Another solution that may work for these modelers is the personal modular layout. Having only one half of a two car garage available from April to November, it was clear that a well-built modular layout with scenery and buildings could be made for temporary setup and storage as needed. The layout consists of 6 modules conforming to NMRA standards for track plan, size, height, electrical wiring and adjustable legs. When all modules are connected, they occupy a space of 5 feet by 13 feet, or about 3/4 of a one car garage.



The layout has a dual oval of track on 1 inch foam plus roadbed with ballast and six spurs. The dual ovals are connected at one point by a double crossover. The crossover is electrically isolated to allow separate inner and outer blocks. All crossover, spur and yard switches are moved by Tortoise switch machines, located under each module. The switch machines are powered by a separate power supply located under one of the modules and distributed by an accessory bus.

Locomotive control can be by DC or DCC controllers. I operate this layout on DCC. Two Digitrax Zephyrs and UT-4 control are used for one to three cab locations.

The track plan includes a yard and locomotive service area that can hold up to 13 cars and 4 to 6 locomotives, depending on length. There are coal, oil and water service spots in the yard and an engine servicing building with machine shop interior.

There are 6 industry spurs on the layout that accommodate a total of 12 cars. The industries are:

- Heinz Pickles
- REA Freight Station
- Icing Platform
- Fruit and Vegetable Packing Plant
- Cattle Loading
- Grain Elevator

Consists usually include boxcars, tank cars, reefers, stock cars, flat cars and grain boxcars. I run a



passenger consist on the outer oval using the large and small stations for stops. The outer oval is also good for a long freight running the opposite direction.

Photos show a Walthers Valley Produce building next to a working orchard with workers up on ladders picking oranges. In the back, a couple of people are buying vegetables from a small farmers market. Next door is a heavily reworked and painted Life Like Stock yard and loading platform that includes the water spray bars required for wetting down stock in the summer.

The town module has 4 Woodland Scenics buildings and one DPM restaurant. Streets were made with the Woodland Scenics system and striping was done with striping tape and then over sprayed with clear flat. Sidewalks were made with Woodland Scenics system and cracks were drawn in with artist pen and over sprayed with clear flat. The buildings have lots of details on the outsides provided by Woodland Scenics. The restaurant interior was designed and built by me and includes tables, chairs and people dining. Buildings have curtains or shades and lots of additional detail. Most vehicles are Woodland Scenics or die cast metal. Some Life Like plastic vehicles are used selectively.

The layout is decorated and landscaped for the time period of 1950-1953 during the steam to diesel transition. I modeled the Western lines of the Union Pacific.

Many of the buildings are Woodland Scenics Pre-Built types. Others are Walthers or DPM that I built, painted and decorated with posters and interiors. None of the buildings are lighted. Buildings are either placed on the layout or are glued to 1/8" styrene plates that are landscaped and simply are placed on the layout after modules are set up. I keep the building plates in cupboards inside the house. Landscaping is almost exclusively Woodland Scenics materials including trees, shrubs and ground cover. All ballast is a mixed gray also from Woodland Scenics. The wheat field consists of six wheat field kits from Busch, painstakingly painted, then glued down row by row.



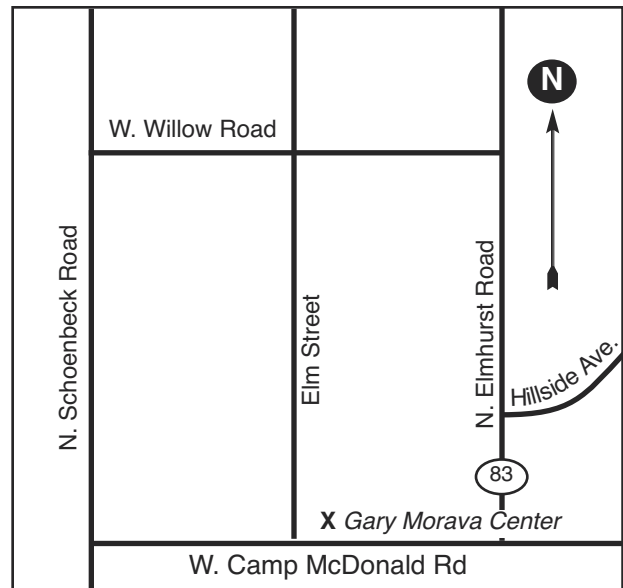
## About the Fox Valley Division

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 McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane and Lake Counties in Northeast Illinois. About 150 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 general meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:30 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 general meetings. To promote the hobby of model railroading, the FVD sponsors and runs a large train show, 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 help 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. We'd love to see you. Or, visit us on the web at: [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

**Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Walter Radtke or any board member listed on page two of this newsletter. We are here to help you!**



## Next Meeting

The Fox Valley Division and the North Shore Division will hold their next meeting on December 12, 2010, from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm, at the Gary Morava Center, 110 W. Camp MacDonal Road, Prospect Heights, IL



**Fox Valley Division**  
**Midwest Region-NMRA**  
P.O. Box 1535  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1535