

THE SEMAPHORE

MAY 2013

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



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Layout and Design

Ann Allen

Layout of the Month: Will Westfall's Soo Line

This month we visit Will Westfall's beautiful Soo Line layout. Will's layout is unique in that it travels through six of the seven rooms of his basement! In all but the main railroad room, tracks run on narrow 3 to 5 inch shelves along the walls. Three lift out sections connect key sections of the main line. Will is a long time modeler who began with Lionel and started scale modeling in 1959. He was around when the Fox Valley Division first was formed in the mid 1970's. Will is also a collector of railroad memorabilia and his layout shares space with his collection in several rooms of his basement. Will's layout features excellent hand laid track, beautiful scratch built structures, well done scenery, reliable



operations, and a host of nicely finished and weathered 1954 era Soo Line locomotives, cabooses, and rolling stock. This is one fine medium size layout.

The great layout photos by Will Westfall. WW

End of the Year Reminder

Members are reminded that we've reached the end of the 2012-2013 modeling year. This is the last Semaphore until September, and our May 19 monthly meeting is the last one until the September 15 meeting. Have a great summer!



Fun Stuff

Tank engine, enough said!

Layout of the Month:



Many of Will's structures feature interior and exterior lighting. The prototype Prairie View depot sign hangs on Will's family room wall and inspired him to scratch build the scale model of the Prairie View depot seen in this photo.



Here's a nice night shot of Chicks, a local scrap dealer. The model is scratch built and loaded with character. Lots of great detailing surrounds the structure.



The fishing is supposed to be pretty good here at White River. Caboose #270 is a wooden Centralia Shops kit painted in a scheme the Soo used starting in 1962. Will likes the scheme so much he makes a special exception for running it on his 1954 era pike.



The 145 is an inexpensive Bachman RTR product with sound. Will Westfall detailed and lettered it to replicate a Soo Line class D Mogal. The curved trestle is scratch built.



Consolidation #2426 switches the scratch built Central Wisconsin Seed Company mill west of Prairie View. The prototype mill was located in Richfield, WI on the Milwaukee Road.



The Echo Lake station agent prepares for a mail drop. The Echo Lake depot is a scale model of a Soo class I depot most often found on the Minneapolis/St. Paul line.



A scratch built MoW building with interior detail and lighting sits next to a scratch built water tank at Echo Lake. All of the trackwork is beautifully hand laid.

Basic Layout Information

Layout Builder:	Will Westfall
Layout Location:	Basement of Will's Lake Zurich home
Layout scale:	HO
Layout Size:	10 x 14 foot main layout room; main line circles the rest of the basement on narrow shelves in five other rooms.
Layout theme/locale:	Soo Line in southern Wisconsin
Layout era:	1954, the Soo's last year of steam.
Construction started:	1975
Bench work:	1 x 4 grid
Sub roadbed:	Homasote over ½ inch plywood
Track/turnouts:	Hand laid code 70 mains and code 55 sidings; 22 inch minimum radius
Scenery:	Hard shell base; ground foam, ballast and real dirt ground cover; scratch built trees
Structures:	75% scratch built; 25% plastic or wood kits or modified kits
Locomotives:	60% Soo Line late steam; 40% Soo Line first generation diesel. Locos painted and modified as needed to replicate Soo Line practices
Rolling Stock:	Wood, plastic and resin kits, or modified kits
Control:	DC cab control with tethered walk around throttles
Favorite aspects of the hobby:	Hand laying track and scratch building structures
Model RR influences:	Paul Larson; Bob's model railroad friend and early mentor, Bob Shimer; and the great Soo Line modeler (see GMR 2002) and fan, the late John Proebsting
Other:	Will is an avid model railroader, so avid he brought a small suitcase of modeling tools and supplies with him on his 1967 tour of duty in Vietnam. He then had Walther's mail order him two LaBelle passenger car kits to his Army Post in Vietnam! He finished both kits during off duty hours before returning stateside 10 months later.

A Hobby Within a Hobby

For some modelers, collecting railroad memorabilia--or as some call it, railroadians--such as lanterns, railroad signage, railroad antiques, time tables, railroad art work and photos, railroad china, etc. is a hobby within a hobby. Will Westfall is one of those modelers. While you may see items Will has collected anywhere in or outside of his Lake Zurich home, the bulk of his sizable collection exists in several rooms of his basement. It starts at the top of the basement stairs where you are greeted by full scale cross bucks surrounded by railroad signs and photos, and continues down into his basement pool room, family room, laundry room and basement bathroom. Being a dyed-in-the-wool Soo Line fan, Will's favorite road is well represented. Several other things make Will's collection really neat. First, along with the "usual" assortment of lanterns, calendars, time tables, and railroad photos a lot of us have, he has several unique, hard to find pieces. These include a large depot sign from the Soo's Prairie View, Illinois depot, a large porcelain maroon and yellow Soo Line sign from a northern Wisconsin Soo depot, an early 1930's O scale American Flyer train set, the head light from Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range 2-10-2 #507, and a large wooden folk art steam loco and caboose he rebuilt for his front lawn at the request of his long time companion Roberta. Second, because Will began collecting train memorabilia in the 1960's, many of his nicest pieces were purchased for a "song". The large 14 x 60 inch, hand painted, wood Prairie View depot sign, for example, was purchased for \$10.00 at an antique dealer in the mid '60s! Finally, so many of Will's pieces have genuine meaning for him. Anything



The original Soo Line Prairie View, IL depot sign is part of Will Westfall's railroadians collection. The O scale American Flyer train set sitting atop the sign dates to the early 1930's. Photo by Walt Herrick

Soo of course has special significance, but also does his original Lionel Berkshire loco which rests on his family room's fire place mantel, a white and red Athearn "blue box" Soo Line plug door box car which was his "good luck charm" in Vietnam, and various old photographs of model railroad friends, railroad acquaintances, and scenes. Will's collection is tastefully displayed through out his basement with several pieces spilling into other rooms of his house, and front and back yards. It is great stuff and certainly brings a lot of meaning into his Soo Line modeling, and a great decorating motif to his home. WH

Elections

Tim Kleimeyer and Bob Shlemon, Jr. were elected to two year terms by unanimous acclimation of the members present at the April meeting. Tim was re-elected Paymaster, a position he has so ably held for many years in the division. Bob was elected to his first full term as Assistant Superintendent having been named by the FVD Board to replace the unexpired term of Harry Sorenson who resigned in May 2012 for health reasons. (FYI, Harry is doing well and is again active in the Del Webb Huntley train club. Unfortunately, he's not able to get to as many FVD meetings as he'd like due to driving restrictions. Ed.)

Mike's Minute/Milepost 50

By Mike Hirvela

Fox Valley Division members enjoyed Hoosier Hospitality at the 2013 Midwest Region Convention in Indianapolis, IN May 2nd through 5th. This year's convention was titled 'MILEPOST 50' in recognition of the Central Indiana Division's 50th Anniversary. Attending MWR members were offered operating sessions on some of the more famous model railroads in central Indiana, 31 interesting and informational clinics, a prototype tour of Indiana Railroad's Senate Avenue Terminal Remote Locomotive operation, and a tour of Amtrak's (former Big Four RR) Beech Grove shop complex where Amtrak repairs and upgrades their car fleet. Many CID home layouts were open for visiting during the day on Friday and Saturday. FVD members were also well represented in the model contest room with photos, structures, cars and locomotives in competition. Jim Allen and I took the FVD display board and auto-picture frame to the convention to advertise the FVD hosted 2014 MWR in Schaumburg, and left it up Thursday evening through Sunday noon. (As a side note: the main hotel, the Marriott, hosted two other groups in addition to the MWR convention – the Indiana PTA with reps from all over Indiana was also meeting in other meeting rooms and a tournament of soccer teams was using the Marriott as their HQ hotel. All those mom's, families and lots of kids were exposed to model railroading because the MWR was meeting there. How about that for free advertising for our great hobby?)

Saturday night capped off a busy day of self-guided layout touring with a delicious dinner followed by an address by guest speaker, Mr. Thomas Hoback, President and CEO of The Indiana Rail Road Company. Mr. Hoback reviewed the last 27 years of bootstrap railroading from 1986 with 151 miles of lumpy 5 mph deferred-maintenance track to today in 2013 with over 500 miles of improved track and facilities, with 14 modern SD-90MAC locomotives with 120-car coal trains, yet provide continuing individual customer service to on-line customers, looking for opportunities every day. After Mr. Hoback's entertaining report, the model and photo contest results were announced, with FVD members, Jim Allen, Don Cook and Jim Osborn earning ribbons, merit awards and several first place awards. Jim Allen took Best in Show with his beautiful On3



The Fox Valley's own Jim Allen, MMR David Leider, and Jim Osborn are enjoying the Milepost 50 banquet. Jim Allen won Best of Show and Best Steam Locomotive awards, and Jim Osborn won the First Place--Structures award in Indianapolis. Congratulations, guys!

The FVD's David Johnson takes a breather during an afternoon of layout touring at Milepost 50. David is in charge of organizing the layout tours for the May 16 – 18, 2014 Midwest Regional Convention to be hosted by the Fox Valley Division in Schaumburg.



Matt Hewitt's coal hauling N&W Railroad was a popular layout on the Milepost 50 Midwest Convention layout tours May 2 – 5 in Indianapolis.

Photos by Mike Hirvela

single-truck 2-cylinder Shay, and won the Moskal Award for best steam locomotive. Jim Osborn received First Place – Structures for his modern C&NW Engine house. Don Cook nailed several photo categories.

On Sunday, FVD members were up early to attend the CID Swap meet ahead of the crowd to contribute to the local economy, then set down to conduct Region business at the Board of Director's meeting. Several CID home layouts were also available for visits on Sunday afternoon as members headed to their respective home divisions. All-in-all, a good time was had by all. If you were not in attendance, you missed all the above, but fear not fellow modelers, the Central Indiana Division (CID) will be hosting the NMRA National Convention in 2016. Steve Studley, CID Superintendent, said the 2013 MWR Convention was just a warm-up and preview of their effort in support of the 2016 "Highball to Indy" national convention activities, including more clinics, tours, casual get-togethers, SIG and RPM events. FVD gets to put our best foot forward next year as we host the MWR convention in Schaumburg in May 2014.

Modeling Tip

Manufacturer's of luncheon meats such as Oscar Meyer, Sara Lee, Hormel, etc. are doing modelers a favor by now packaging their sliced ham, turkey, pastrami, etc. in inexpensive, clear plastic, resealable containers. These containers come free with your luncheon meat and after washing, can be re-purposed for any number of model railroad uses. I use mine for storing

ground foam, mixing small amounts of scenery plaster, mixing paint, and storing just about any small items such as figures, vehicles, screws, small electrical components, etc. So, instead of putting those plastic luncheon meat containers out with the recycle every Tuesday (or Wednesday, Thursday, etc.) morning, put them to good use in your model railroading!

April's Monthly Meeting

Trainmaster Reports. After an excellent pizza lunch provided by the division, FVD board members gave brief reports on recent activities in their areas. Superintendent, Jeff Jarr, reminded everyone that it was not too late to sign up for the Indianapolis Regional May 2- 5, and that the Atlanta NMRA National Convention, The Peach Tree Express, was shaping up to be an excellent one July 14 – 20. Jeff announced that this year's division outing was going to be a picnic at Rochelle's Railroad Park on Saturday, August 24th. Members will provide their own transportation, the division will provide burgers, dogs, brats and drinks, and, as Jeff said, "the Union Pacific and BNSF will provide the trains"! (Look for more information on the August outing in a special email.) Jeff concluded by thanking the board and FVD members for all their hard work this modeling year particularly on a very successful recent High Wheeler show. Paymaster, Tim Kleimeyer, said the division was in excellent financial shape especially after our successful High Wheeler Show. Membership Records Trainmaster, Bert Lattan, reported we had 239 members as of April 1, and Membership Promotions Trainmaster, Mike Hirvela, suggested members bring a friend to the monthly meetings to spur interest and membership growth. Mike also reported on the various events, layout visits, and op sessions he and Jim Allen attend to promote the hobby. Circulation Editor, Jim Allen, reminded members that we need photos of the holiday model trains of their youth for our December 2013 issue. Email these to the Semaphore's Editor at waltherrickjr@gmail.com. Semaphore Editor, Walt Herrick, said the May Semaphore will be out in mid May after the

Midwest Regional Convention May 2-5. He noted two past FVD Superintendents were in the audience for the day's meeting, Walter Radtke (2011-2013) and Jerry Vojtko (1986-1990). Public Relations Trainmaster, Jim Osborne, reported that 60% of those attending this year's High Wheeler Train Show had never been to a High Wheeler show before—a great number! Jim also said several new things are being considered for next year's HW. Ways and Means Trainmaster, Jeff Jarr, concluded the board reports by saying this year's High Wheeler's attendance was just short of 5,000 and our goal next year is to break 5,000 weather permitting. Next year's HW will be March 1 and 2. Early set up will again be offered for vendors and layouts in 2014.

Clinics and Contest

In April's first clinic, Bob Shlemon, Jr. presented his nicely produced (with great back ground music!) and very entertaining four minute time lapse video of this year's entire High Wheeler Train Show from set up to take down. Members loved it and rightly so. It was a great video. Thanks, Bob! Via video tape, MMR David Leider presented the excellent clinic he gave at the 2012 NMRA National Convention in Grand Rapids. Dave had another commitment on Sunday, so the actual clinic he gave in Grand Rapids—as video taped by MMR Jerry Leone—was shown. The clinic described how David did the research for his 1947 Waupaca layout, and how he applied that research in building his outstanding layout. The clinic was superb and showed how certifiably crazy bolt by bolt, board by board prototype modelers like David really are. (Just kidding, of course, David!) continued on page 8

David models Waupaca almost identically as it existed in 1947, all in about 10 x 20 feet. See David's layout in the February 2013 Semaphore. Mike Hirvela took home first place honors with his "depressed" 4-4-0 on a depressed flat car. Jim Landwehr used an old washing machine gear painted to look like a new large load on his depressed flat to capture second place. Third

place went to George Trandel's, straight from the 1970's, "Love" load.

Next Month. The Fox Valley's own David Crement, MMR will show us how to realistically paint figures for our layouts. David will be working in O scale, but his techniques can be used in any scale. "Whimsical or Humorous Loads" is May's contest.

FVD annual Outing August 24th

10 am until 4 pm (or maybe even later)

Enjoy a day with friends watching trains at Rochelle Railroad Park. We will bring a grill, plenty of food and drinks for everyone.

(Train run bys provided by UP & BNSF)



Meeting Dates

The end of the modeling year is here! May 19 is our last division monthly meeting until September 2013. Look for our orange FVD 2013-2014 Meeting Schedule card in late August or early September. It will list all of next modeling year's meeting dates and the contact info for all FVD Board members and Trainmasters. Have a great summer everyone!

Date	Clinic	Contest	Other
May 19	Dave Crement on painting figures. Dave Leider on early steel cars.	Whimsical or humorous load.	Regular 1:30 p.m. start. Last meeting of 2012-2013. Have a great summer!
July 14-20	NMRA National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. See the convention's website for complete information: nmra2013.org		
August 24	Fox Valley Division Annual Outing to Rochelle Railroad Park (see above)		

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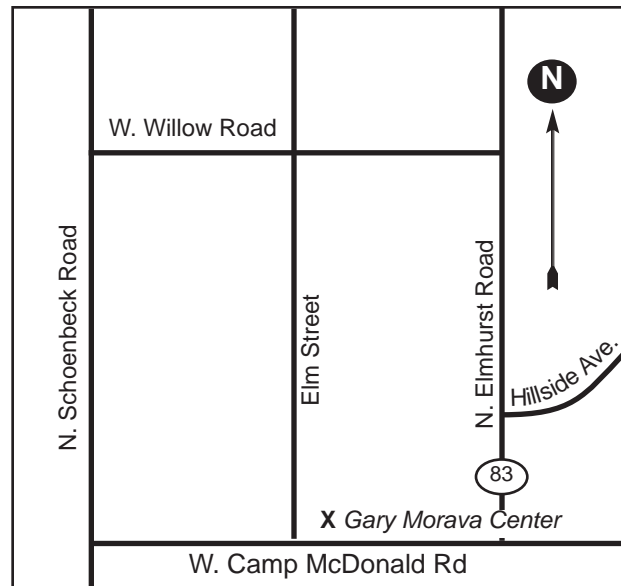
About the Fox Valley Division

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 240 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 called "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.

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr or any board member listed on the "FVD board section of this newsletter. We are here to help you!



Next Meeting

The Fox Valley Division will hold its next regular monthly meeting **Sunday, May, 19 2013** from 1:30 to about 4:30 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Gary Morava Center, 110 W. Camp MacDonal Road in Prospect Heights, IL. We invite you to attend and look forward to seeing you!



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