

# THE SEMAPHORE

SEPTEMBER 2014

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



*Welcome to Modeling  
Year 2014-2015!*

## Rochelle....in the Rain!

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**Semaphore Editor:**  
Walt Herrick, Jr.  
waltherrickjr@gmail.com  
815-355-2003

On Saturday, August 23rd, the Fox Valley Division once again ventured to big time railroad hot spot, Rochelle Railroad Park in Rochelle, IL, to kick off the new modeling year. This year's event was a little wetter than last year's with light to heavy rain falling throughout much of the day. That did not stop members from showing up (more than 30 of us did) and having a great time, though! Superintendent Jeff Jarr, Bob Shlemon, Jr. and Eddie Shlemon brought the food, and set up a big cook tent. They then did some masterful grilling with Eddie also breaking out his homemade oatmeal cookies for desert. The Union Pa-

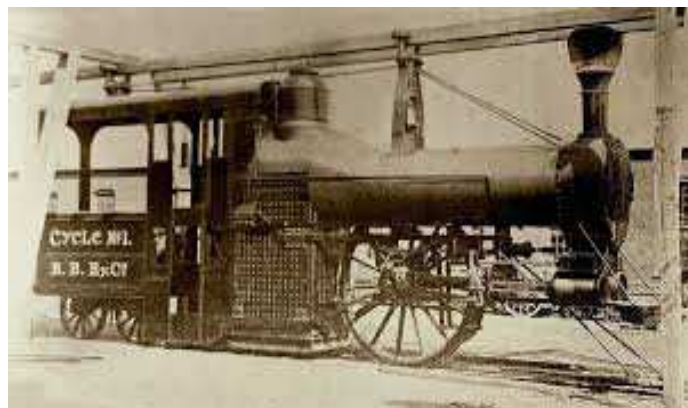


A steady rain did not stop these intrepid FVD photographers from getting their shots at this year's Rochelle Outing. Photos by Walt Herrick.

cific and BNSF provided the day's excellent railroad entertainment even if it was a little on the wet side. One advantage to the rain was we all spent more time talking with each other under Rochelle's pavilion rather than slogging around wet mud and grass trying to stakeout the location for our next great train shot. More Rochelle photos are on page 2. WH

## Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

Here's an experimental 0-2-4 steam locomotive from the mid 19th century probably before the civil war. If you look closely, you'll see some crazy stuff on this locomotive like the cylinders just kind of hanging off the front of the boiler. Also, the balancing of this whole contraption is pretty wild! JA



## FVD 2014 Rochelle Outing con't.



FVD MMR David Leider and others line up their shots of a UP west bound empty hopper train. Dark rain clouds are starting to creep into Rochelle.



Here's a trailing shot of the hopper train's power which is producing some of its own dark clouds. MMR Don Cook, and Bob Teuberg are among those farther down shooting the heavily weathered, mixed road consist.



Fifteen minutes later another UP west bound showed up in shiny clean UP livery the road would prefer us to see! Bob Teuberg was again ready for the "show" which this time was a stack train.



A light rain didn't stop Will Westfall from getting shots of a glistening black, west bound tank train. Note the UP power operating on BNSF rails.



Bob Shlemon, Jr. sports the perfect grilling attire for the FVD's 2014 Rochelle Outing.



Midwest Region President, Paul Mangan joins SCWD Super Bob McGeever, Mike Hirvella, and Bert Lattan for some after lunch conversation (left). I got one last "grab shot" before leaving this year's outing. WH





## Layout of the Month: Leif Hansen's LH&W

The FVD's Chief Clerk, Leif Hansen, started building his Lehigh Hickory & Western layout way back in 1970. The layout started out as an HO layout, but a few years later the narrow gauge bug bit Leif hard, and soon an HOn3 line appeared. When you walk into Leif's basement layout room you are struck by the beautiful tall, hand painted backdrop surrounding the layout. The backdrop was painted in sections by Leif's mother in Wisconsin, then transported to Leif's Mt. Prospect home and installed on the layout. The layout's electronics are another feature of Leif's layout that catches your eye. They are everywhere and in abundance! Scenery is also one of Leif's hobby favorite's, and his layout is fully and nicely sceniced with lots of mountains and home made trees (see p.5). Our Chief Clerk has packed a lot of railroad-ing into his 9x12 foot layout with 2x8 foot extension. It is another very nice FVD layout! WH



The firemen on trains crossing Twin Falls Trestle have been known to get a little "damp" depending on which way the wind is blowing down the canyon that day. The action is on Leif Hansen's HO and HOn3 basement layout. Layout photos by Walt Herrick.



Rio Grande K-27 #454 with a caboose hop (above left), is crossing High Trestle. The trestle was custom built for the location by layout builder Leif Hansen. The striking backdrop was hand painted by Leif's mother who took up painting after trying it in an art class. The #454 heads up an east bound freight on High Trestle while RGS C-19 #40 is westbound just starting to cross Low Trestle (above right).

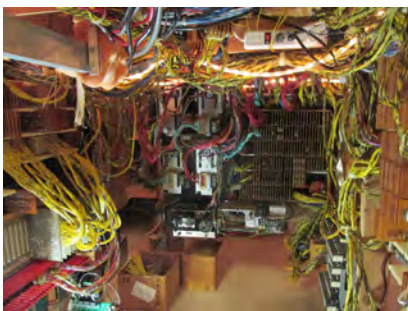


# Layout of the Month: Leif Hansen's LH&W



The LH&W is the layout's standard gauge line which also features mountain running with tunnels, trestles and beautiful backdrops (upper left). A diminutive Rio Grande Southern 2-8-0 pulls up to a water tank to quench her thirst (upper right).

Here's the town of Furlow inspired by one of Leif's model railroading heroes, Malcom Furlow. The buildings on the far ridge are N scale models used to create the illusion of distance. True to Malcom Furlow form, many of the buildings in his name sake town are perched on stilts or sit precariously close to a deep ravine. To get this view of the layout, you must use a step stool and then look down into the scene. 6 foot, seven inch layout builder Leif Hansen doesn't need to use the stool to get this view of Furlow!



## Computer Below, Control Panel Above

Leif Hansen loves electronics and they are all over (and under) his layout. To the left is the layout's main frame computer below the bench work. To the right is Leif at his long ceiling control panel.



## **Basic Layout Information: Leif Hansen's LH&W**

Layout Builder:	Leif Hansen
Layout Location:	Leif's basement in Mt. Prospect, IL
Layout scale:	HO; HOn3
Layout Size:	9 x 12 feet with a 2 x 8 foot extension
Layout Style:	Panoramic along two walls with access hatches
Layout theme/locale:	Colorado
Layout era:	Late 1940's
Construction started:	1970
Bench work:	1x4 grid
Sub road bed/roadbed:	Plywood sub road bed with homasote or foam board as second layer.
Track:	Codes 100, 83, and 70 commercial flex track and turnouts.
Scenery:	Hardware cloth coated with plaster; foam coated with plaster. Hand carved rock work. Commercial ground covers. Homemade trees. Resin water.
Backdrop:	Large hand painted scenes on hard board surrounding almost the entire layout.
Structures:	Plastic kits and kit-bashing; wood laser cut kits; scratch built trestles.
Locomotives:	Atlas, Athearn, Blackstone some with sound.
Rolling Stock:	Kit built, RTR freight and passenger equipment for late 1940s era.
Control:	Second generation main frame with transistor logic and a lap top. Blocking, turnouts, signaling controlled from a ceiling control panel or lap top.
Favorite aspects of hobby:	Electronics, kit building, scenery.
Hobby "Heroes":	Malcom Furlow

It's rumored the town of Hickory on the LH&W will use this restored 19th century 4-4-0 to help them celebrate next year's 45th anniversary of the beginning of construction of the LH&W railroad.



## **Modeling Tip: tree making**

This month's tip comes from Leif Hansen and its about making trees. 95% of the trees seen on Leif's "Layout of the Month" in this Semaphore are hand made using #4 (deciduous trunks) to #10 (pine tree trunks) stranded wire. This method has been around a while but it's a good one. Here's Leif's way of doing it: He first strips the insulation from the wire and then twists and shapes the strands into tree armatures—either a pine tree shape or a deciduous tree shape. He tack solders the length of the main trunk and branches, trims off the excess, and cleans the armature. It is then dipped in shades of medium to dark flat grey paint. After the drying, the armature is dry brushed with a slightly lighter shade of grey. Then its time for foliage from Woodland Scenics which is glued on with their Scenic Accents adhesive. The trees are planted by drilling the proper size hole and gluing the armature in it. The advantages of Leif's method is that you can make any shape or size tree you need for a particular layout location and they don't look "store bought". WH



Leif Hansen twists stranded wire from #6 wire into a tree armature. Note the drilled 1x4" jigs used to hold the trees in their various stages of production. Woodland Scenics Accent Cement secures the foliage.

Walt Herrick photo.



# Mike's Minute by Mike Hirvela

## My Summer Vacation, part 1: Stairway to Heaven

As a youngster, my Father would travel several times a year to the upper peninsula of Michigan to visit his folks and other relatives. On the way, I would see signs for “tourist traps” (as my Dad called them) such as the RR museum in Green Bay, the Iron Mine tour in Vulcan, Mich., the Cornish pump in Iron Mountain, the mining museum in Ishpeming, etc. But, we had to hurry to visit my grandparents--we didn't have time to see any of these sites. Now that I am older, I can understand his urgency to visit his folks. But since they passed on more than a few years ago, I felt drawn to get back up north to see what I had missed. The opportunity came this past summer, when in the guise of taking pictures of rock formations and colorization for a local model RR club, Jim Allen and I ventured north. Our first visit was to the RR museum in Green Bay, its official name being the National Railroad Museum. The museum now has most of its display rolling stock under roof which will enhance the collection's survivability. They have an interesting mix of equipment, including General Eisenhower's British locomotive, an LMS 4-6-2, fresh from a re-building in England; a PRR GG-1; and a UP Big Boy, along with other displays including a nice collection of drumheads from famous passenger trains. The cab of the Big Boy is accessible by a set of stairs. Walking up those stairs, you feel like you're visiting railfan *heaven*. And the cab of the Big Boy is... BIG! with lots of unlabeled valve handles and wheels. We spent a little time trying to figure out what some of them were. The throttle and brake stand were easy—everything else was hard. We imagined what the UP shop forces are going through in disassembling and refurbishing the UP's “new” Big Boy #4014. You might not have room for a Big Boy to display on your layout, but an old locomotive near your RR station might be an interesting addition to your layout.

The KV&EC club's HO layout builders took Mike's advice (years before he gave it!) by putting an old 0-6-0 steamer on display in a small park near its Hillside depot (right). The club is in Sun City Huntley. Big Boy photos Mike Hirvela, club photo Walt Herrick.



Here's the National Train Museum's Big Boy (above) and its maze of handles, gauges and wheels in its huge cab (below).



## Member News

Membership Services Trainmaster, Bert Lattan, reports that our FVD membership in August stood at 224 which was down three from July. Normally membership starts to rise again in the fall....Best FVD wishes go to Assistant Super, Bob Shlemon, Jr. as he undergoes major knee surgery this month....Welcome back FVD Paymaster, Tim Kleimeyer, from a trip to Europe with his lovely wife. Yes, traveling by train was on the itinerary....Semaphore Editor, Walt Herrick, enjoyed attending the Michiana Division's EduTrain Conference and Workshops September 12 and 13 in Middlebury, Indiana. Middlebury is in the heart of northern Indiana Amish country....FYI, the FVD is still looking for a qualified replacement for the “Clinics” Trainmaster position. If interested please contact Jeff Jarr. See the last page for his contact info....Have “Member News” item? Please email it to Walt Herrick at: waltherrickjr@gmail.com. Thanks! WH



Model Railroader Magazine's Cody Grivno discusses Wisconsin and Southern rolling stock in a clinic he gave at the Michiana Division's recent EduTrain Conference in northern Indiana. Walt Herrick attended the conference and took the photo above.

## April's Clinic

We had no FVD regular monthly meeting in May due to our division's sponsoring of the Midwest Region's RailFun Spring Convention held in Schaumburg May 15—18. But last April, the FVD's own George Trandel presented an excellent, detailed clinic on "Rock Scenery Techniques". His entire clinic is available on line in the "Clinic Notes" section of the FVD web site: [foxvalleydivision.org](http://foxvalleydivision.org). Check it out for some good rock making techniques and information for your scenery efforts. Thank you, George! Jim Osborn photo.



## April's Contest Winners



April's contest was "Dioramas". George Trandel not only presented our April clinic, he also took first place in the April contest! He built his diorama around a nicely constructed and finished, out of production, Perkins Produce craftsman kit in HO scale. The "old time" era and different levels of the diorama, as well as George's great scenery make for one very nice diorama. Contest photos by Jim Osborn.



Denis Zamirowsky's "City Scene" diorama took Second Place honors in our April contest. Note Denis's two levels, "city like" concrete walls and underpass, brick paved streets, and traction modeling complete with overhead wire and poles.



Inspired by a summer railfanning trip out west, Jeff Jarr's Third Place diorama was based on the Durango and Silverton's tourist train operation in Colorado. See Jeff's article and photos of his trip starting on page 7 of the September 2013 Semaphore. It's available for viewing on the FVD's web site, [foxvalleydivision.org](http://foxvalleydivision.org), in the "Semaphore" section.

## 2014-2015 Meeting Schedule

2014-2015 orange Meeting Schedule cards were mailed to members the second week in September. Contact the Semaphore's Editor if you did not receive yours. The complete meeting schedule is also given below and on the FVD web site: [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org). *Schedule changes or additions are posted on the FVD web site as soon as they are known.*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
Sept. 21, 2014	<u>See FVD web site</u>	My favorite freight car	
Oct. 19, 2014	“	Illuminated rolling stock or structure	
Nov. 16, 2014	“	Anything related to trains	
Dec. 14, 2014	“	Double or triple headed diesels	<b>1:00 pm start.</b>
Jan. 18, 2015	“	Large structure—5000 scale feet or more	Lunch provided.
Feb.15, 2015	“	Double or triple headed steam	
<b>Feb. 28 &amp; March 1, 2015</b>	<b>High Wheeler 2015</b> Train Show at Harper College in Palatine sponsored by the FVD. 9 am to 5 pm each day. <u>FVD volunteers needed</u> . Contact Jeff Jarr at <a href="mailto:jjarr@comcast.net">jjarr@comcast.net</a> or 773-286-8755. <i>Note: there is no March FVD monthly meeting due to High Wheeler 2015.</i>		
April 13, 2015	<u>See FVD web site</u>	Open load spanning 2-3 cars	<b>1:00 pm start.</b> Officer elections
<b>April 17 - 19, 2015</b>	<b>Midwest Region Spring Convention</b> hosted by the Winnebago Land Division at the Holiday Inn, 4601 Calumet Ave. in Manitowoc, WI		
<b>May 17, 2015</b>	<u>See FVD web site</u>	Unfinished project of your choice	
	<i>Note: there are no FVD monthly meetings in June, July or August</i>		
<b>August 23 - 29, 2015</b>	<b>NMRA National Convention in Portland, OR.</b> Check the convention's web site: <a href="http://www.nmra2015portland.org">www.nmra2015portland.org</a> for complete information.		

## NMRA Web Sites

<b>Fox Valley Division</b>	<a href="http://www.foxvalleydivision.org">www.foxvalleydivision.org</a>
<b>Midwest Region</b>	<a href="http://www.mwr-nmra.org">www.mwr-nmra.org</a>
<b>National</b>	<a href="http://www.nmra.org">www.nmra.org</a>





### About the Fox Valley Division

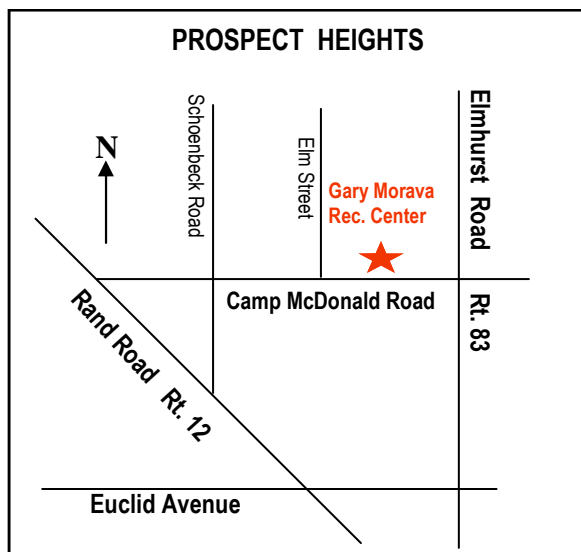
If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region and Fox Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Association or NMRA. The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane, and Lake Counties in northeast Illinois. About 240 members of varied ages and modeling 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 monthly meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:00 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 monthly meetings. To promote the hobby of model railroading, the FVD sponsors and runs the 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 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 and bring a friend. We'd love to see you. Also visit us on the web at:

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

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr, or any FVD Board member listed below. We are here to help!



- The FVD's monthly meeting is at the :  
**Gary Morava Recreation Center**  
110 Camp McDonald Road  
Prospect Heights, IL. 60070
- Our regular meeting time is:  
1:30 to about 4:00 p.m.
- 2014 – 2015 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 7 of this newsletter.

FVD web site: [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org)

FVD mailing address: Fox Valley Division  
Midwest Region-NMRA  
P.O. Box 1535  
Arlington Heights, IL  
60005-1535

## Fox Valley Division Board Contact Information

Superintendent, **Jeff Jarr**  
[jjarr@comcast.net](mailto:jjarr@comcast.net) 773-286-8755

Ass't Superintendent, **Bob Shlemon, Jr.**  
[shlemonjr@gmail.com](mailto:shlemonjr@gmail.com) 773-334-4208

Chief Clerk, **Leif Hansen**  
[mudhen454@att.net](mailto:mudhen454@att.net) 847-437-7124

Paymaster, **Tim Kleimeyer**  
[kleimeyert@comcast.net](mailto:kleimeyert@comcast.net) 847-426-4732

Achievements & Contests, **Jim Landwehr**  
[jlandwehr901@yahoo.com](mailto:jlandwehr901@yahoo.com) 847-577-7984

Clinics—position open

Membership Promotions, **Mike Hirvela**  
[mhirvela1@gmail.com](mailto:mhirvela1@gmail.com) 847-360-9579

Membership Services, **Bert Lattan**  
[nswnmra@comcast.net](mailto:nswnmra@comcast.net) 847-295-7959

Public Relations & Webmaster, **Jim Osborn**  
[FVDWebsite@comcast.net](mailto:FVDWebsite@comcast.net) 815-578-8315

Publications—Semaphore Editor, **Walt Herrick**  
[waltherrickjr@gmail.com](mailto:waltherrickjr@gmail.com) 815-355-2003

Ways & Means—High Wheeler, **Jeff Jarr**  
[jjarr@comcast.net](mailto:jjarr@comcast.net) 773-286-8755