

THE SEMAPHORE

March 2018

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



Ted Schnepf's O scale Milwaukee Road Article & photos by Walt Herrick

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Semaphore Editor:

Walt Herrick, Jr.

waltherrickjr@gmail.com

Next FVD Meeting:
Sunday, March 18
1:30 pm at the
Morava Rec Center in
Prospect Heights

Contest: Diorama with On-line Structure

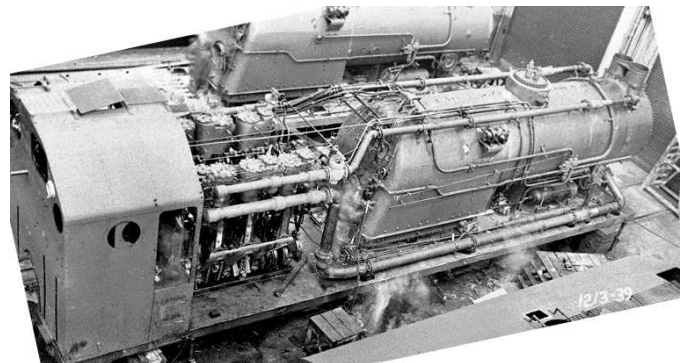
Clinic: Using Ground Goop for Scenery by Art Jones



A Milwaukee Road SD7 slowly grinds its way up Monona Hill with a long way freight in tow on **Ted Schnepf's** two rail, O scale **Milwaukee Road Model Railroad**. The big SD is being helped up the grade by another SD pushing on the rear out of sight of the camera. The Monona Hill grade was purposely created to be a helper grade, and it is the steepest on the railroad. Glenn Guerra built the Monona Hill trestle. On the lower deck, is a glimpse of the west end of the yard at Specht's Ferry which is primarily a coal marshalling yard. Yes, there is coal in Iowa, especially northeast Iowa. *continued on page 2*

Fun Stuff by Jim Allen

Lima Locomotive Works built 4 rotary snow plows after they had ceased steam locomotive production. Lima, noted for their Shay logging locomotives, used the three cylinder Pacific Coast Shay engine design, in tandem, to drive the rotary as seen in the photo. The photo shows UP rotary 076 under construction. Lima built one other rotary for the UP, and one each for the Soo Line and Rock Island railroads. The units were produced between December 1949 and February 1950.



Ted Schnepf's O scale Milwaukee Road con't

No doubt about it, Ted Schnepf's model railroad is one *big* railroad. It's big in scale and big in the amount of real estate it occupies in Ted's large, more than 4,100 square foot basement. Ted started his layout in 1990 and about doubled its size with a 2007 basement addition. Not only has Ted filled his layout space wall to wall (and there are *nine* walls in his irregularly shaped basement), much of the vertical space floor to ceiling, is spoken for as well. Your first impression upon entering Ted's basement is that there are "O scale trains and railroad *everywhere!*" Why so much railroad? Ted loves the Dubuque, Iowa & Dakota, and Madison Divisions of the Milwaukee Road and he is trying to put as much of them—plus a little bit of Iowa & Eastern 3 foot gauge—into his basement sized, O scale layout as his basement will allow. About 50% of his railroad is devoted to the Dubuque Division, 45% to the Iowa & Dakota Division, and 5% to the Madison Division. The divisions cross in Marquette Iowa where there are two large yards. This is an operations oriented railroad with mainline, way freight, yard and branch line ops. Ted is currently using a sequential schedule, but wants to move into full Timetable & Train Order operations as more main line is completed. Car forwarding is done by car cards, and the trains are controlled by an NCE, DCC system. Many locos are equipped with sound. Operations oriented model railroads require reliable track and Ted's is superb with more than 300 hand laid turnouts and carefully laid flex track. Though the layout is large, Ted insists on scratch building most of his structures which are usually based on prototypes. The finished scenery on the layout is excellent, most of it reaching to the ceiling. Ted will be the first to tell you he's had some terrific help in building his railroad. He hosts weekly work sessions in which his crews accomplish a lot. Ted himself also puts in much time on his railroad when he is not running his Rails Unlimited train store business. The result? One great O scale layout!



A Milwaukee Road RS1 sorts cars in the South Marquette Yard in the top photo, while Milwaukee Road 2-8-0 #7805 works the Specht's Ferry coal marshalling Yard in the lower photo.



Calmar Door & Sash (left) is a recent scratch building project. An On3 Iowa & Eastern Mogul is shown below, and to the right, an RS1 brings in hoppers of coal for the Ossian power plant.



Ted Schnepf's O scale Milwaukee Road con't



An Atlas SW900 detailed by Brian Strom switches the coaling tower at Marquette Yard (top photo). Ted has a soft spot on his heart for West Virginia as seen by the Sewell, WV depot photo above. Ted spent 25 years and took many trips to West Virginia researching the tiny 3 foot gauge Mann's Creek Ry. for an excellent book he and Ron Lane wrote about the road in the 1990's. The book is now out of print.

Basic Layout Information

Layout name:	Milwaukee Road—Iowa Divisions
Layout Builder:	Ted Schnepf
Layout Location:	Ted's basement
Layout scale:	Two rail O scale; On3
Layout Size:	4100 plus square feet
Layout Style:	Around the walls, multi deck
Layout theme:	Milwaukee Road in northeastern Iowa
Layout era:	1954 with some 1929
Construction started:	1990; 2007 addition
Bench work:	Open grid; L girder; mushroom; and "floating" bench work
Sub road bed/roadbed:	Homasote over 3/4 inch marine plywood
Track:	Codes 148, 125, 100 flex track; hand laid #8 & #10 turnouts
Minimum radius:	84 inches (7 feet)
Scenery:	Plaster over cardboard web; foam; "a little of everything"
Structures:	Mostly scratch built with some "stand-ins"
Locomotives:	Steam & diesel, brass & plastic
Rolling Stock:	Wood, urethane, plastic, kits & scratch built
Control:	NCE DCC
Operations:	Sequence scheduling now, but working on moving to TT& TO; car cards; 7 to 28 person crews
Hobby Heroes:	John Armstrong, RMC's Bob Walker, local modeler Don Robinson
Other	Hosts regular op and work sessions; owner Rails Unlimited train store in Elgin and at train shows. Contact Ted at 847-697-5353.

Ted Schnepf's O scale Milwaukee Road con't



Ted Schnepf is in the 2007 room addition to his Milwaukee Road layout (above left). This addition about doubled the size of Ted's layout space. Note the multiple levels of layout, the "floating" section suspended from the ceiling, and the LED rope lighting which Ted loves to use on his layout. The upper right photo shows Ted's version of John Armstrong's "mushroom" layout design. From side to side and top to bottom, there is a *lot* of O scale railroad squeezed into Ted Schnepf's basement!

Mike's Minute by FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela

Impressions of Ted Schnepf's Milwaukee Road Layout

I first went to Ted Schnepf's at his invitation in the 1990's, B.E. (before expansion). Ted was able to stuff several O scale miles of a T-shaped prototype railroad into a continuously winding and climbing model railroad that provides the awe in awesome. I always get a chuckle inside when I tell people who have never seen Ted's layout, about the layout. After a few minutes their eyes kind of glaze over. I tell them his lower staging tracks are knee-high off the floor, and that the railroad winds around a large layout room a couple of times, leading to upper staging tracks which are above the ceiling tile! I tell them Ted's O scale locomotives weigh 10 pounds, his passenger cars are about 2 feet long and his freight cars a foot long. Get a string of cars behind an engine and you're pulling some real weight, I say. I tell them Ted's 300 plus turnouts are all *hand laid*. I suggest they seriously consider wearing their walking shoes to his layout if they're invited to an op session. Towns there are 30 feet long and the brakemen get a work-out doing run-around moves. I warn them some tracks in a town are on a grade, so "hill-holders" are provided and need to be used, *or else!* (It's embarrassing chasing a string of heavy O scale cars back down a hill. They seem to move faster than runaway HO cars—don't ask how I know this!) I explain that in 2007 Ted thought his main basement wasn't big enough, so he greatly expanded the layout by building an addition to his already large house, adding lots more length to his runs and routes. I delight in telling them Ted used John Armstrong's mushroom design and flying backdrops to full advantage in a couple of areas in the new addition, and that they really have to watch for low overhead clearances there. I tell them working Dubuque yard can be worth aerobic credits, and if a train derails on the upper deck at Calmar, you'll need to get a step ladder. I admit to them that, OK, O scale is big, clunky, noisy, and heavy, but *a pure joy* to operate. Nothing like hearing O scale wheels clacking on O scale rail joints. It *is* the sound of railroading. The only thing missing is coal smoke and diesel exhaust. Finally I tell them if they *ever* get an invite to Ted's layout, to most definitely *GO!*

In April we have elections for Superintendent and Chief Clerk. I am pleased to say we have a volunteer for Assistant Superintendent to finish out the unexpired term of our late friend, Ingrid Drozdak. But, FYI, we are looking for a *Refreshments Person* to help with monthly meeting refreshments. And one last thing: registration has started for the Capital 400 Midwest Region Convention in Madison April 13—15. This is shaping up to be a really fine convention, *and it's in our own back yard!* May I suggest you make plans to go and enjoy yourself there?! Until then, I look forward to seeing you at our March 18th FVD meet. As they say, *be there or be square!*

April Elections Info; Ways & Means Trainmaster still needed

The FVD's April 22, 2018 meeting is our Annual Meeting for the year. At that meeting we will hear year end reports from our board officers, and hold elections for two of our four board officers. This year we elect a **Superintendent and a Chief Clerk**. Any member wishing to run for either of these two offices should contact our Chief Clerk, George Trandel, and tell him of your intentions to run for office. Also, the FVD is still looking for an individual to assume the important **Ways & Means Trainmaster** position. Contact FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, about the Ways & Means opening. George and Mike's contact information is on page 7 of this Semaphore. **Job descriptions for all of the above positions were given in the February Semaphore. Bios for candidates running for office will be given in the April Semaphore.** WH

February's Clinics and Contest—contest photos by David Leider, MMR

The Fox Valley Division's Chief Clerk, **George Trandel**, presented **February's clinic** on "Mid-20th Century Box Cars" and it was excellent. George's presentation covered mid-century box car prototypes, prototype design considerations, car construction, available models, model detailing, period paint schemes, developing a period collection of cars, and more! Thank you George for a very informative and very interesting clinic! **March's clinic** will be another great one as one of the FVD's scenery gurus, **Art Jones**, shows us how to "Use Ground Goop for Scenery". WH



February's contest was, "Gondola With Load—max 4 cars". Seven entries were received (see all of them on the FVD's web site) with **Jim Landwehr** taking **First Place** in the judging. His three, 50 foot gons having large pipe loads appear in the top photo below. All the cars and two loads of large, old pipes were nicely weathered. Jim's third load represented new pipe and was not weathered for a nice contrast. **Second place went to Ben Nicholas** for his gons with realistic loads of scrap metal and wooden poles (middle photo below). Ben brought in the prototype photo he used as the basis of his unique "pole load" car. **Leif Hansen's** well done cotton and banded scrap metal loads earned him **Third Place** honors in February (bottom photo below). **March's contest** is "Diorama with On Line Structure". Your diorama can be any size so long as you can get it through the meeting room door, and it fits on a contest table!



Cook Orchards Car Now Available!

The FVD is pleased to announce that our **Cook Orchards reefer car** is now available for sale. This car is a replica of the Cook Orchards cars that traveled on our late FVD member, MMR Don Cook's, Great Northern—Spokane Division layout. The car is being sold as a fundraiser for the division and was produced by **Accurail** from artwork that faithfully represents Don's original design. Each car costs \$23.00 plus shipping and handling of \$7.50 for one car, and \$14.00 for 2 to 4 cars. Members may save shipping costs by purchasing their car at a FVD monthly meeting. Otherwise, go to the FVD's web site: www.foxvalleydivision.org for complete purchase and shipping information. Members should act quickly as only 100 of these cars were produced! WH



2017 - 2018 Fox Valley Division Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held from 1:30 to about 3:30 pm at the Gary Morava Recreation Center, 110 W. Camp McDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070. Visitors are always welcome per the NMRA's visitor policy. Note that clinics are subject to change without notice. For the latest clinic and all FVD news and information, visit our web site at www.foxvalleydivision.org.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Other</u>
March 18, 2018	"Using Ground Goop for Scenery" by Art Jones	Diorama with On Line Structure	
April 13–15,	2018 Midwest Region Convention "Capital 400" hosted by the South Central Wisconsin Division at the Radisson Hotel in Madison, WI. Get more information at the division's web site: nmra.scwd.org		
April 22, 2018	"Connecting Arduinos for an ABS or APB Signal System" by Gary Saxton. (Note clinic change.)	Maintenance of Way Train	1:00 pm start time for FVD board elections. (No pizza lunch.)
May 20, 2018	"Building My Great Midwestern Layout" by Pete Walton	Illuminated Structure—any size	Last monthly meeting for 2017 – 2018
August 5–12, 2018	2018 NMRA National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. See the convention's web site for more information: www.kc2018.org		

Tony Koester at "Capital 400" Convention April 13-15 in Madison

April's Midwest Region Convention in Madison, WI, will have a special speaker: model railroader, writer and editor extraordinaire, **Tony Koester**. Tony will both present his excellent clinic "Lessons Learned Building Two -- Now Three! – Layouts," and also regale us with many of the funny and crazy experiences he's had in his 50 plus years of model railroading as **Saturday Night's Banquet speaker**. And, you not want to miss **Tom Garver's** program on his work as an assistant to the legendary photographer **O. Winston Link**. Of course we'll also have many excellent area layouts to tour with four open for operating sessions on Friday, great non-rail activities, and of course, great model and photo contests as well. Full convention information is available on the South Central Wisconsin Division website at: nmra-scwd.org. Registration has started and is now in full swing. So, we invite all of our friends in the Fox Valley Division, to register and "c'mon on up to Madison" for a great convention!



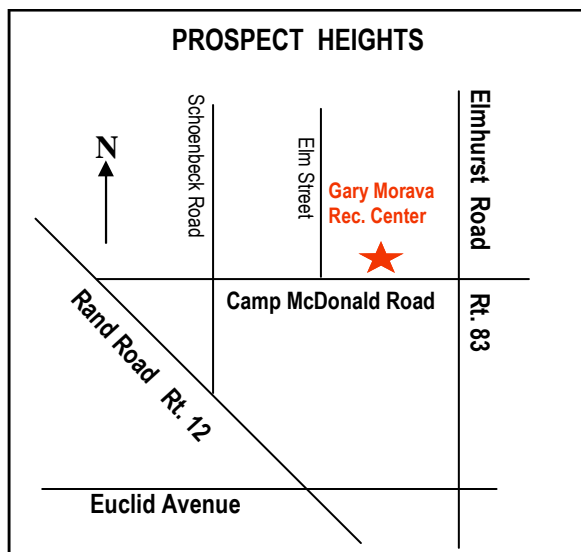
About the Fox Valley Division

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 220 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 normally sponsors and runs a large train show called "High Wheeler" in early March each year at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois. (Note: the 2017 High Wheeler is suspended due to a major renovation of the Harper gymnasium used for the show.)

We encourage you to take advantage of all the FVD has to offer. We are here to answer your questions 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.

Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Mike Hirvela, or any FVD Board member listed below. We're 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.
- 2016 – 2017 meeting dates, contest and clinic info are on page 6 of this newsletter.

FVD web site: 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, **Mike Hirvela**
mhirvela1@gmail.com 847-360-9579

Acting Ass't Supt., **Bob Shlemon, Jr.**
shlemonjr@gmail.com 773-334-4208

Chief Clerk, **George Trandel**
georgetrandel@rcn.com 773-975-7366

Paymaster, **Tim Kleimeyer**
kleimeyert@comcast.net 847-426-4732

Achievements & Contests, **Jim Landwehr**
Jlandwehr901@yahoo.com 847-577-7984

Clinics & Programs, **David Leider, MMR**
sooauthor@netzero.com 847-253-7484

Membership Services, **Bert Lattan**
nswnmra@comcast.net 847-295-7959

Membership Promotions, **Mike Hirvela**
mhirvela1@gmail.com 847-360-9579

Public Relations, **Chuck Rita**
carita@ameritech.net 847-328-1914

Web Technologies, **Jim Osborn**
FVDWebsite@comcast.net 815-578-8315

Publications/Semaphore Editor, **Walt Herrick**
waltherrickjr@gmail.com 815-355-2003

Ways & Means—High Wheeler Show Manager
VACANT