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Midwest Region - NMRA  
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# The Semaphore

Fox Valley Division • MWR • NMRA

## May's Meeting

This Month's meeting will be May 17 at the Gary Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Heights. Ed Rosengren, the director of safety and training at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, will tell us about the history of the museum. This will be a good primer for a summer visit to the Illinois Railway Museum. The contest will be rolling stock, but not the Wall Street kind, unless you get really inventive.

## May's Contest

The subject for month's contest is Rolling Stock. What exactly is Rolling Stock? Well, quoting from the NMRA National Contest Information (Section 5 of the People's Choice Awards Contest Rules, to be exact):

"Rolling Stock - All types including passenger, freight, non-revenue cars and powered rail buses and RDC cars. Caboose are not included in this category."

That's not very restrictive now, is it? I would venture a guess that everyone has at least one piece of rolling stock on their layout. As to whether or not you've done something more than placed it on your layout straight from the box, well, that's another matter. So, come on, bring in a box car, gondola, hopper car, passenger car, or SOMETHING with trucks and couplers, and see how it fares with the other entries. The April meeting only had three entries, so everyone got money for their entries. Why, I might even bring in an entry this month, although I don't think a quarter inch of dust qualifies as weathering. Let's see

how many entries we can get for this last meeting of the season!

## NMRA Contest Rules

It's not plagiarism if what you write is properly cited, right? The following is heavily paraphrased from the Fox Valley Division's website, so thank you, Jim Osborn:

Contests are an important aspect of NMRA membership. Not only can you enjoy the experience and fun of sharing the results of modeling and/or photographing a prototype or model, you may receive the satisfaction of having your work reviewed by experienced NMRA modelers.

There are two types of contests: Division level contests and those at the National or Regional levels. Winners are selected by popular voting at Division level contests. The entries are not judged for Achievement Program (AP) purposes, unless advance arrangements are made.

National and Regional contest entries are judged for AP purposes. In 2009, the NMRA has added People's Choice Awards (popular vote contests) and display only categories to their contest programs.

Models and photographs submitted for judging at National and Regional conventions require appropriate documentation and must meet certain criteria in order to qualify for any of the NMRA Achievement Awards. Click on the appropriate links below to view PDF files of the NMRA contest rules or the link to NMRA Contests to maximize your results

For more contest or Achievement Program information contact the division Achievements and Contests Trainmaster, Jim Landwehr via

# This Year's Remaining Events

May 17, 2009  
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center  
**General Meeting**  
Clinic – Ed Rosengren,  
*History of the Illinois  
Railway Museum*  
Contest– Rolling Stock

## Wanted! Clinics and Layout Tours!

Have you figured out a solution to a layout problem that's been bugging you for a long time? Have you come up with the next best thing since Car Cards? Are you doing something that you think is so easy you don't know why others haven't thought about it? Share your knowledge! Give a clinic! Contact Dave Leider

[sooauthor@netzero.com](mailto:sooauthor@netzero.com)

847-253-7484

And he can schedule you in to give a clinic on your latest solution to Model Railroading's biggest problems. Contact Dave today!

Have you finally painted over your last piece of pink Styrofoam? Are you hankerin' to have others ooh and ah over your layout? Contact Dave Leider for that, too, and he'll arrange for a layout tour after one of our meetings!

Come on, share your knowledge!

telephone at 847-577-7984. Need more information and details on the Contest rules? Visit the Fox Valley Division's website - you can find the links there.

Speaking of the Fox Valley Division's Web Site, here's the url:

<http://www.foxvalleydivision.org/>

Visit often for the most up to date FVD information! It also has links to The Midwest Region and National sites of the NMRA.

## Sun City R.R. Club Open House

Harry Sorenson, our Assistant Superintendent, submitted this next piece:

The Sun City R.R. Club invites all to visit the open house on May 17 between 10:00 am and 4:00pm.

Our Partner club The Garden Club assures me that the floral displays will be ready, and they are joining with various historical groups to have a Lincoln commemoration as a part of the program. The program will include a Lincoln impersonator, and a choral group singing songs of the era. Period costumes are encouraged.

The R.R. Club will be running their layouts indoors in N, HO and O and outdoors on the 850' G Gage layout throughout the day. The O layout will be running a Lincoln Funeral train and a Lincoln Funeral train will be operated on a hourly schedule on the G Gage layout.

The same day, May 17 is the second day of the open house at St. Aubins. If you are there, come over and see us. We are about 8 or 10 miles South on Rt. 47 to the Sun City main entrance (West side of the road) We are also 3/4 mile North of the tollway I-90 and Rt. 47. We are also about 2 1/2 miles south of the Algonquin Rd., Rt. 62 and Rt. 47 intersection. Enter the main entrance to Sun City, DelWeb Blvd. Drive about 1 mile to the first Stop Sign Turn left on SunCity 1/2 mile to the

"barn" styled building There are parking lots either side of the bare. On street parking is acceptable. The layouts are accessible behind the barn.

Come in and say "Hi"

[Editor's note: Even though the Sun City Open House is on the same day as our May meeting, I printed the piece. If you get there at 10:00 and spend 2 hours, that still leaves 1-1/2 hour to get from Sun City in Huntley to the Morava Center on time!]

## April's Contest

The subject of the April Contest was Railroad-related photography. First place went to Jim Osborn for his model railroad pics:



Second place went to Bob Di Domenico for his layout shots:



And Third place went to Ed Asfrauskas for his real-life picture of the Ogilvie Transportation Center, complete with tracks and commuter trains:



All in all, a pretty amazing collection of photos. Congratulations all the way around!

# Hints, Tips, and Innovations

- Rick Saviano  
Publications Trainmaster /  
Membership Trainmaster

When I was in High School, our band played a song called "The Hippo and the Butterfly." It was a duet between a tuba and a piccolo. I enjoyed the song because of the comic juxtaposition of the huge and tiny. I guess that's one of the reasons I enjoy the friendly arguments I have with Walter Radtke - his modeling in G and my modeling in Z reminds me of "The Hippo and the Butterfly."

With that in mind, this month I'm talking about tolerance. Not the "getting along with others" kind as much as the technical measurements kind. Like, did you know that the tolerance for the flangeway for a G turnout is about 1/2 the check gauge of Z track? Or that the additional weight per inch of car body length (in

ounces) for an O scale car is twice as much as the initial weight (in ounces) of an N scale car (according to the NMRA RP-20.1, Car Weight). I wish I could give you the G to Z comparison, but the RP doesn't include either of those scales. I guess that G and Z have a few things in common!

Speaking of tolerances, I currently have 2 GPs that can't carry more than 21 cars up a 1-1/2% grade. Adding a tiny weight to the engines would help, but the main problem is discussed in one of the Yahoo! Groups I belong to. Below are excerpts from the email thread (I've edited out all the "Me Too" and "Me Three" comments, as well as the shorthand IMHO - "In My Humble Opinion" - comments that usually make their way in all email threads):

**"...the only way to run such a long train on grades is using mid-train helpers,..."**

**"...the problem doesn't come from**

**motive power tractive effort, but from coupler strength..."**

**"On long trains the pulling apart of MTL couplers is not new and it is caused by the parting line on the inside of the hook. I use a very fine jewelers round file to fix this up by removing the tooling ridge on the inside of the hook. I need a visor magnifier to see what I am doing though when doing this fix."**

Now, the thing to realize about the above conversation is that this "parting line," or "flash" as we usually call it, is about 1/3 the size of the "knuckle" of the Z Scale coupler. "Flash" does not scale, so that same "flash" is minimal in comparison to the knuckle of a G coupler.

Now don't get me wrong - I'm not complaining about the scale I model in. Every scale has its advantages and disadvantages. Z is the only scale that allows an actual scale city block to be modeled in a 21x42 inch section, so it's easier for me to model a scale mile of track than most other scales. And once I finish my Board of Trade Building, I'll have the satisfaction of not having to use selective compression on at least one Chicago Landmark. Yes, Z is great for broad strokes, but I haven't had much luck hand applying grab irons or doorknobs to my rolling stock.

I can't stress it enough: Every scale has advantages and disadvantages. I was talking with a 1:1 railroader at High Wheeler, and he said that BNSF doesn't consider a consist of less than 115 cars economically feasible. I guess they don't have many problems with parting lines on their couplers!

**We hope to see you at the May meeting! If not, watch for the September Semaphore!**

*Happy Modeling!*

## Fox Valley Division Board of Directors

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**Location for General Meetings**

General meetings of the Fox Valley Division are held at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights (See map at right).

**Why Do You Get This Newsletter?**

You are a member of the National Model Railroad Association. Thank you for joining a group of people interested in and enjoying the Model Railroading hobby. The NMRA is divided into Regions and Divisions. You live in the Midwest Region and the Fox Valley Division.

The Fox Valley Division has around two hundred members and you are one of them. Membership in the Fox Valley Division costs you NOTHING. As a matter of fact, most times we give you things. How can we do that? In March each year, we hold a train show at Harper College in Palatine. The proceeds from the show support our activities throughout the year.

If you are interested in learning more about model railroading you can come to our meetings and sign up for our events. There you will meet and hear from people who want to share their knowledge of the hobby. We meet once a month at the Gary Morava Fieldhouse in Prospect Heights. Each year (our year runs from September through May) the Semaphore is mailed to the entire membership.

*Welcome to the Fox Valley Division!*



**Next Meeting: May 17, 2009**  
**1:30pm, Gary Morava Center**  
 Clinic – History of the Illinois Railway Museum  
 Contest– Rolling Stock



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

