



THE SEMAPHORE

September 2025

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



The May model Celebration welcomed anything railroad related. This O-Scale scene incorporates a Bill Leider rock formation and oil refinery model. MTH Indiana Rail Road SD90MACs are in command of a freight - photo submitted by Bob DiDomenico. Click on this link to see more photos of the items on display. <https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contests.v2.html>

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Next Division Meet - September 21, 2025 at the Gary Morava Center - Back Exercise room 1:00 start:

Clinic Presentation: *Lighting Basics for Modeling Applications* by Jim Osborn, MMR

Jim will cover all the basics of incandescent and LED lighting for modeling applications. He will step you through the installation of lighting the interior of a detailed structure. You will leave with knowledge about components, tools and tips to light up your structures and outdoor scenes.

September Model Celebration: Any Freight Car

Mike's Minute ...

Welcome Back to the 2025-2026 issue of the Semaphore newsletter. I hope everyone had a good Summer which included some train chasing and photo opportunities. MMR Jim Allen & I, were in Novi, Michigan, for the 2025 NMRA National Convention for a full week of travel, information, modeling, swap sessions, dinner and wonderful exchange of information on a lot of RR topics. I got a chance to meet NMRA President, Gordy Robinson and his family. His daughter, Annabell, is a little charmer, whose smile will melt your heart. Also got to meet NMRA Social Media Specialist, Lucy Dormont, with whom I spent several minutes talking about Meridian, MS, where I spent two years during my Navy career and she got the Meridian Railroad Museum going. I had many conversations with other members and a home layout visit to a very large EJ&E RR.

A highlight for me was meeting and talking to noted railroad artist, Robert West. Jim and I also took a watercraft tour of the Detroit waterfront with a LOT of railroad infrastructure still visible and marveled at the new Gordy Howe bridge over the Detroit River. We also took the opportunity to visit the Henry Ford Museum and visited some of the exhibits we missed during a visit a couple of years ago. I will have convention photos to share at the Sept. meet.

On August 2nd, the FVD had a good group of 25 at the Illinois Railway Museum for a 'behind-the-scenes' tour of the diesel shop – something no other group has ever done -- along with back area tours of both the Milwaukee Road and Chicago & North Western Historical Societies' archives buildings. And if you're wondering about the cost, we did a little better than break even thanks to member and our Chief Clerk, Rich Hoker's, efforts in coordinating the visit.

So, what is on tap for 2025-2026? Well, a lot. Our first two meetings will be at the Gary Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Heights, IL, in the smaller meeting room. Our 2025-2026 season starts September 21st. We have scheduled informational 'clinics' from various sources during our Fall meetings and Gary Saxton continues to seek out presenters for the beginning of 2026. Come take advantage of what the division has to offer. It all works best when you are present and participate whether in person or over the net.

Speaking of opportunities: Mr. Osborn needs a back-up person who can assist with equipment set-up for the meetings and Zoom sessions and to fill in when he can't be Mr. High Technology. Could that be You? We also need an Editor for our newsletter, The Semaphore. Here is another opportunity to participate.

Looking not that far down the tracks, the FVD is co-sponsoring the Chicagoland Railroad Prototype Modelers (RPM) Conference at Northern Illinois University in Naperville, IL, October 16-18. Someone to help rep the division during the conference would be nice.

Opportunities abound for education, skills-building and feedback on your modeling. Let's GO.

Watch for the 'orange card' in the mail this summer with the upcoming schedule. You can see the full schedule, clinics and contest topics at:

<https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html>

Always check the Timetable on the website for the latest meeting updates.

Also check out other RR events at: <https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/rrevents.v2.html>

I hope everyone had great months of train watching and may all your signals be green.

Regards, Mike Hirvela, Superintendent

The 2025-2026 FVD meeting schedule:

Date	Clinic or Program	Model Celebration	Time & Location
Sep. 21, 2025	Lighting basics for model Applications by Jim Osborn, MMR	Any Freight Car	1:00 at the GMC
Oct. 19, 2025	Tappets, dogs & bridles - Basics of Interlocking pt. 1 by Patrick Golden	Any Structure	1:00 at the GMC
Nov. 16, 2025	Pan Pastels by Rndy Allio	Any Locomotive	TBD
Dec. 21, 2026	Tappets, dogs & bridles - Basics of Interlocking pt. 2 by Patrick Golden	Load spanning 2-3 cars	TBD
Jan. 19, 2026	TBA	1 Illuminated Structure	TBD
Feb. 15, 2026	Railroads & the Natural Ice Industry by Bruce DeYoung	Odd Consist - 4 unit max	TBD
Mar. 15, 2026	TBA	Billboard Reefers - 2 max	TBD
Apr. 19, 2026	TBA	A Kit-bashed structure	TBD
May 17, 2026	TBA	A Favorite Locomotive	TBD

Happenings:

Passing of note: **Gary Children**, long time Midwest Region and Wise Division member of the NMRA passed away at his home during the weekend of August 30th. Gary has been a member of the NMRA for over 60 years. He was very active in the Wise Division and Midwest Region holding almost every leadership position in those organizations. There are no further details available as of the time of this publication.

GREAT MID-WEST TRAIN SHOW (aka: the DuPage Swap), at DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton, IL, is scheduled to operate Oct 5, Nov 2 & Dec 7, 2025 - 9am until 3 pm.

CHICAGOLAND RPM CONFERENCE at NIU, Naperville, October 16-18, 2025. FVD Co-Sponsors the event.

TrainFest: at the Baird Center, downtown Milwaukee, November 1 and 2, 2025

The Danville Indiana Train Show. November 22, 2025 at the Hendricks County Fair Grounds, 1900 E Main St, Danville, IN 46122 10am - 3pm Eastern Time

The MAD CITY Train Show, at the Alliant Energy Center, Madison, Wis., February 21-22, 2026

For more details on these and other events, please visit the FVD Railroad Events webpage

<https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/rrevents.v2.html>

Here's a few interesting web links:

- Learn about 8 currently operating K-36 Mikados after 100 years of service.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGugQiRemqA>
- A brief history of the original - and only - real **Ferris Wheel**. 250 feet in diameter. 89,320-pound axle. 36 cars, 60 people per car. Note the spoked wheel design built 135 years ago. Amazing!
<https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/images/semaphorefiles/ferriswheel.pdf>
- A photo history of passenger trains in the US from 1950 to present day. Categorized by railroad.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P6lx_CkTMA
- Railroad on Water: The Story of the SS Badger. Learn about the history of and a detailed tour of the **Badger** coal fired steam ferry operating on Lake Michigan.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKcjAhLXRNI>



Semaphore Content and Help Wanted

Interested in keeping the ***Semaphore*** alive? Send us your model or prototype pictures, stories, modeling tips, etc. to share with others in the hobby. **We are also looking for an editor!** Contact any officer with your interest at:

<https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>

About the Fox Valley Division

If you receive this newsletter, you are an NMRA member & live in the Fox Valley Division area of the Midwest Region and of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA.) The Fox Valley Division (FVD) includes all of Lake and McHenry, as well as parts of Cook and Kane Counties in northeast Illinois. About 130 members of varied ages and modeling ability levels are in the FVD. Almost all modeling scales are represented in our division. Subscriptions to the Semaphore newsletters are free. NMRA membership is available through the NMRA at:

<https://www.nmra.org/>

2025-2026 FVD monthly meetings are held September through May on-line via the ZOOM virtual meeting technology & at various physical locations per the schedule in this issue. Each meeting features a clinic, modeling celebration of member projects, and information of interest to the membership. Outings, layout tours, and operating sessions may also be organized. 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. Visit us on the web at:

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

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Mailing address:

Fox Valley Division
P. O. Box 1535

Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1535

Website:

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

Regular meetings are held virtually via Zoom and in person at the Gary Morava Center generally from 1:30 until 4:00 PM per the schedule listed in this publication and on its website at:

<https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/timetable.v2.html>

Editor: Jim Osborn, MMR[®]

Assistant Editor: Michael Hirvela

Assistant Editor: Keith Dart

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Need to contact any BoD members? Click this link to:

<https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contactus.v2.html>

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