

THE SEMAPHORE

September 2026

The virtues of Scratch Building by Jim Osborn, MMR®

Gary Saxton sent in a photo of his latest scratch building project. It's a 80 foot through girded bridge span. And no, the ruler is not wrong it's Z Scale! Gary designed the span and 3-D printed it. See the photo of Gary's bridge below.



The May model Celebration featured Favorite Locomotives. See photos of the models on page 5 or click on this link to see photos of models brought to past meets.

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

In this issue:

- Page 1 The Virtue of Scratch Building
- Page 1: February Model Celebration & Our Next Meet at the Mt. Prospect Public Library.
- Page 2: Comments from the FVD Superintendent, Michael Hirvela.
- Page 3 -4: FVD Summer Outing
- Page 5: May Meet Model Celebration
- Page 6: FVD Schedule and Happenings
- Page 7: Help wanted - Semaphore Content and an Editor
About the Fox Valley Division, the Semaphore & FVD Board of Directors.

Next Division Meet - September 20, 2026 at the Mt. Prospect Public Library - 1:00 start.

September Model Celebration: **Any type of Locomotive**

Mike's Minute ...



Welcome back FVD family and friends to our 2026-2027 season. We all hope you had a wonderful summer, and maybe you chased the UP #4014 in both directions, or visited your favorite RR museum. We had several FVD members enjoy train rides last July at the Milwaukee Light Engineering Society's property in Jackson, Wisconsin. Yes, I know it was a bit of distance to get there, but for those who attended, it was worth the trip. We rode on some 1/8 -scale equipment on 7.5" gauge track through 12" to the foot scale vegetation and trees, bridging over two streams and a high trestle (yes, it was a thrill!). The folks who model in that size have something to be proud

of. We thank them for their hospitality.

This year, our meeting locations may drastically change as schedules have gone crazy and costs continue to climb. Our Board of Directors continues to strive to get the biggest bang for our buck. Getting a meeting room on a Fall, Winter and Spring schedule and at reasonable cost has been a challenge this summer. Certain places only schedule two or three months in advance, and others have exorbitant per hour rental costs. As of today, as I write this, we have reservation at the Mt. Prospect Public Library for September and the Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Heights for December. October and November haven't been affirmed yet, neither has January and following. We are continuing to endeavor to get locations nailed down for those months. Let me ask each member of the division to contact their local library, park district or even a church you attend and ask whether they could accommodate a Sunday afternoon meeting for 3 to 4 hours. Most libraries and park districts serve their clientele who live within their boundaries. We use the Mt. Prospect library because we have a member who lives in that district. Same goes for Prospect Heights. As an 'outside' organization, we are at the mercy of their schedules. So, please contact your local entity and inquire about meeting space, and let a board member, or me, know what you find. Of course, WI-FI and Internet access, a screen or LED TV for presentations are a big plus. Please let us know.

Coming up this Fall are the AMRAIL "Op'til Ya Drop" weekend in September (25-27); Milwaukee area 'Op-tober Fest' this year on September 18-20; RPM Chicagoland at NIU Naperville (we are co-sponsoring this event) October 16 & 17; "Train Fest" at the Baird Center in downtown Milwaukee on November 7 and 8; All have websites with information and reservation slots. And don't forget the monthly RR swap at the DuPage Fairgrounds September 13, October 4, November 1, December 6. Don't think there is nothing going on in our train world? Come to our meetings and learn more. May all your signals be green.

Regards, MH, Superintendent

You can see the full schedule, clinics and model celebration topics at:

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

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

Also check out other RR events at:

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



FVD Outing to the Milwaukee Light Engineering Society - July 26, 2026

5 FVD members met at the MLES railroad park for a day in the heat & humidity. Fortunately, the train rides provided some breeze and Rich Hocker brought a few refreshments. Here's a few snaps to chronicle the day. Photos by Michael Hirvela and Jim Osborn.



Denis Zamirowski, Mike Hirvela, Gary Saxton & Rich Hocker paused their train talk and posed for a snapshot outside the depot. The right picture is one of the two train barns. Note the charging cables for the battery powered locomotives stored here.



A Sante Fe, Wisconsin Central, and 2 CNW Geeps will be providing the power for the trains sunning that day. The photo on the right is the depot. There are 4 tracks for dispatching passenger trains.



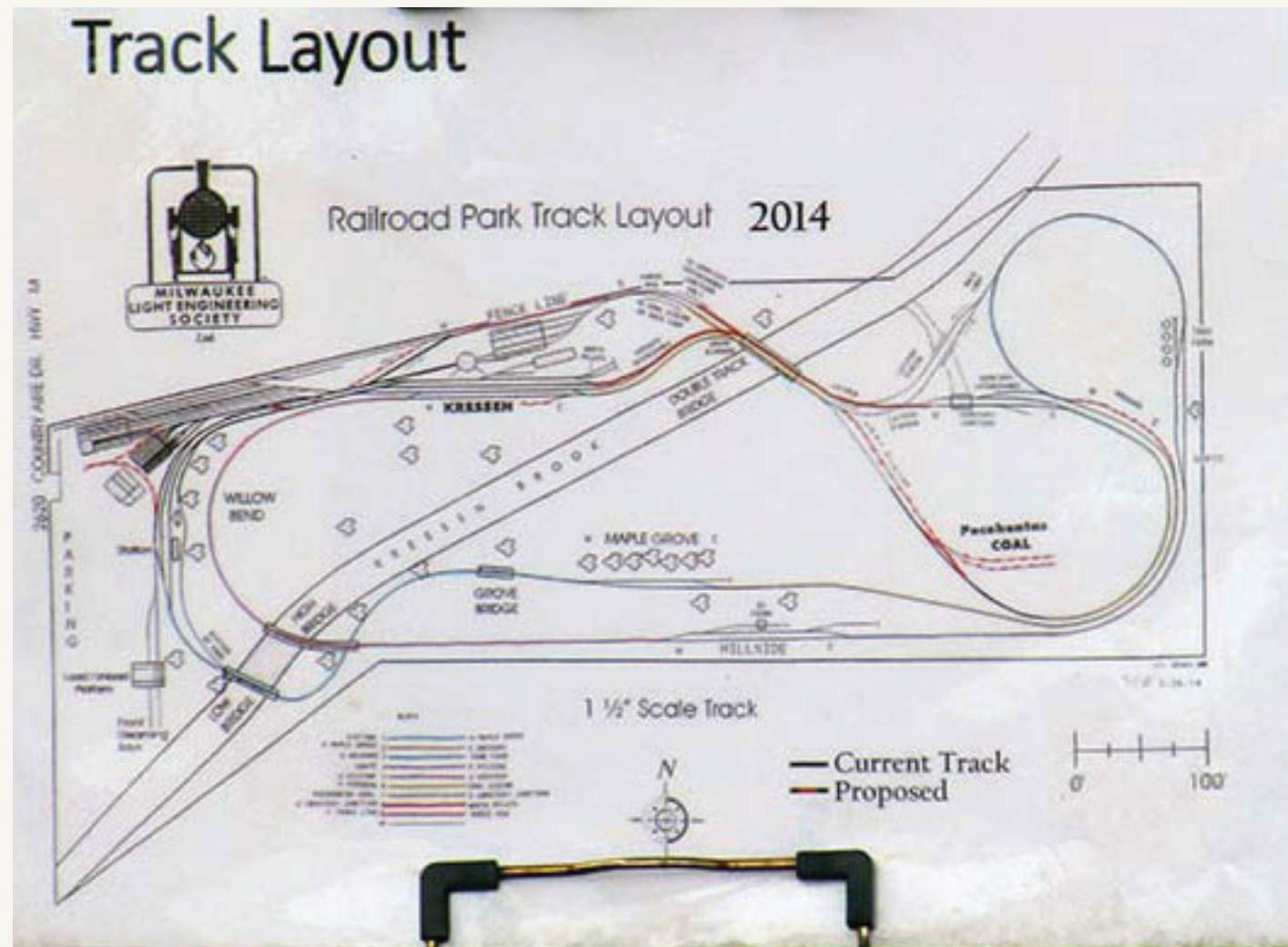
The left photo shows some of the track work leaving the depot. The right photo captures a train ride through the wooded property.

The members of M.L.E.S have constructed more than 5280 feet of 7 1/2 inch gauge track, with another 1800 feet of sidings, spurs, train yards and storage tracks. This gives Railroad Park one full mile of mainline: that is 8 scale miles in 1 1/2 scale railroading. There are several bridges spanning the creek that runs through the property, and a variety of routes through the woods.

Continued on Page 4.....

MLES continued....

The MLES Railroad Park track layout is shown below:



And finally, I photographed a car of interest to me on a hot summer day. Of course, the roof is hinged to access its cargo Jim Osborn, MMR



We had a nice grouping of locomotives to celebrate modeling at the last May meet at Mt. Prospect.



TT Scale T678, submitted by George K



HO Scale CNW H1a #3010, by Michael Hirvela



O Scale Nickel Plate EMD F7 1949 Demo Unit, & Freedom Train Alco PA 1948 by Bob DiDomenico



HO Scale Baldwin CNW H-16-66, by Jim Osborn



HO Illinois Terminal Class E by Denis Zamirowski



S Scale FS44, submitted by Joel Lebovitz



N Scale SP GS4 #4449, submitted by Kieth Dart.

The 2026-2027 FVD meeting schedule:

Date	Clinic or Program	Contest	Time & Location
• Sep. 20, 2026	TBA*	Any Locomotive	1:00 pm @ MPL
• Oct. 18, 2026	TBA*	Any Car	TBA*
• Nov. 15, 2026	TBA*	Any Structure	TBA*
• Dec. 20, 2026	TBA*	Your Favorite Locomotive	TBA*
• Jan. 17, 2027	TBA*	2 Refrigerated Billboard Cars	TBA*
• Feb. 21, 2027	TBA*	One Illuminated Structure	TBA*
• Mar. 21, 2027	TBA*	An Odd Consist	TBA*
• Apr. 18, 2027	TBA*	One Load Spanning 2 - 3 Cars	TBA*

We will also Conduct our Annual business meeting and hold the election of Assistant Superintendent & Paymaster at this meet.

Contact the Superintendent or Chief Clerk if you would like to run for either office.

• May 16, 2027	TBA*	A Kit-bashed Structure	TBA*
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* Clinics, programs, meeting location & start times will be scheduled as the year progresses. Always check the Fox Valley Division Timetable web page or the Semaphore for the latest program information.

*Location note: GMC = Gary Morava Center, Prospect Hts. - GPL = Glenview Public Library
MPL = Mt. Prospect Public Library: <https://mppl.org/>

Rail Related Happenings:

GREAT MID-WEST TRAIN SHOW (aka: the DuPage Swap), at DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton, IL. 9 am to 3 pm, on the following 2026 dates: September 13, 2026, October 4, 2026, November 1, 2026 and December 6, 2026

AMRAIL "Op 'til Ya Drop" weekend in September (25-27)

Milwaukee area 'Op-tober Fest' this year on September 18-20

RPM Chicagoland at NIU Naperville (we are co-sponsoring this event) October 16 & 17
<https://www.rpmconference.com/>

"Train Fest" at the Baird Center in downtown Milwaukee on November 7 and 8
<https://www.eventcreate.com/e/trainfest-2026-reg>

2027 NMRA Convention in Tacoma, Washington August 10-15

2027 Midwest Region Convention Dates TBD

2028 NMRA Convention in Rochester, NY Dates TBD

For more details on these and other events, please visit the FVD Railroad Events webpage
<https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/rrevents.v2.html>



**FOX VALLEY
DIVISION**

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 railroad-ing. Visit us on the web at:

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

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Regular meetings are held virtually via Zoom and in person at the Gary Morava Center, Mt. Prospect Library or the Glenview Library generally from 1:00 until 4:00 PM per the schedule listed in this publication and on its website at:

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

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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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