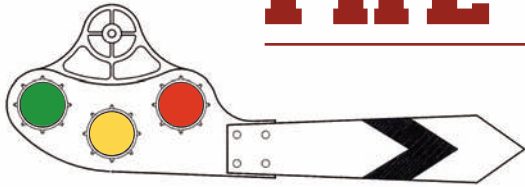


# THE SEMAPHORE

April 2012

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



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## FUN STUFF



SD70ACeDC (Dual Cab)

## End of an Era for the Denver and Cat Canyon R.R.

by Walt Herrick with photos by Dave Johnson except as noted.

For nearly 20 years on the first Tuesday evening of the month, Jim Spice's beautiful Denver and Cat Canyon Railroad hosted three hour operating sessions for about a dozen local model railroaders. Many of the D&CC crew came from the former North Shore and Western division (now Fox Valley Division) of the NMRA. For the last 15 years, the railroad also held op sessions on the third Thursday morning of the month for the OCC group from Milwaukee. The end of an era came on Thursday, March 15, 2012 when the D&CC held its last operating session for the OCC guys, and work on the layout ground to a halt. Jim has moved and is selling the Cat Canyon's house. The layout will be dismantled and Jim's locos, rolling stock, structures, etc. will be sold.

The Denver & Cat Mountain is one of Chicagoland's finest model railroads. His operating crew will tell you the photos in this article and others (see Jim Osborn's excellent D&CC feature and photos in the July 2010 Scale Rails) do not do the layout justice. But his layout wasn't always as big and beautiful. "I started with a small narrow gauge layout in the living room of our house," says Jim. "After a couple of years my wife said. 'I want my living room back!' Being a heavy equipment operator by trade, I decided I could just jack up the house and dig a basement under it. So I did! At first my wife said I could only have one quarter of the new basement. When I

filled the quarter with a nice layout, she said I could have more space. I eventually ended up getting the whole basement."

And with that whole basement, Jim created a masterpiece, and a masterpiece that could be operated proto-typically. Crew member Mike Hirvela loved the D&CC. "His layout had everything--DCC, sound equipped locos, reliable track work, standard and narrow gauge, beautiful scenery, excellent structures, and prototype operation with mainline freights, coal drags, yard switching, industrial switching and passenger traffic." Dave Johnson frequently dispatched the layout and remembers it being often quite challenging to dispatch and operate on. "Realistic operations were an important part of the railroad," he says. Hirvela noted that several switching puzzles were built into the 300 foot point to point track plan. The town of Salida was one of them. "Some guys took all night to get their local out of Salida," says Mike. Dave agreed saying, "I needed help from one of the layout's veterans the first time I switched Salida. It was tough until I was shown how to switch it correctly."

While the scenery, modeling and operations on the D&CC were outstanding, the layout will be remembered for more than just *Continue on next page.*

those things. Foremost is the layout's builder. Crew member Jim Allen says, "Jim Spice is a great guy and built a great layout. He did everything really well and won a number of contests with his modeling." D&CC regular, Jim Osborn, adds, "Jim Spice is a very 'welcoming' individual. He is always happy to see you and happy help you with anything in your modeling or answer any question." Mike Hirvela appreciates the Spice sense of humor. "Jim has a great sense of subtle humor which was displayed on the layout. He had a special 'election train' train he ran at election time. One side of the train promoted the Republicans, the other side promoted the Democrats!" Dave Johnson particularly liked the vignette of "parking lot hogs" using models of, you guessed it, hogs in the parking spaces! Osborn adds, "Jim was (also) a dedicated worker for the NMRA and served as the North Shore and

Western's Superintendent for many years. He gave many NMRA clinics."

Jim Spice, through his great layout, his hundreds of operating sessions, his tireless work for the NMRA, and his unselfish help to numerous modelers, has left a great legacy of service to the hobby in the north and northwest Chicago suburbs and beyond. To Dave Johnson, "Jim Spice's operations crew was like a family. We all learned from each other and helped each other. Everyone had fun." The Denver and Cat Canyon and its builder can't ask for much more than that.

What will Jim do now? "Well, one of my crew says I'm going over to the 'dark side' with my other hobby of R/C planes and helicopters," says Jim laughing. "But, I don't have room for a layout in the new house." Wonder if he'd ever consider building another small narrow gauge layout in the living room?



The Denver and Cat Canyon Herald. Cat Canyon's name came from a family cat who liked to sleep in the canyon before it was scened.



Joe Russ photographs a through freight at Cat Canyon. Jim Spice gave many clinics on his backdrop painting.



Jim Spice doing some switching at Glenwood Springs. Some of Jim's modeling awards are on the wall behind him. *Mike Hirvela photo.*



The Minturn yard throat, roundhouse and loco service facilities.

*Photos continued on next page.*



Working at Salida tonight are Jim Osborn, Tim Scott, and Mike Jurgenson, Jim Allen, and Jeff Markley with their backs turned.



One of the many detailed mini scenes on the D&CC.



Earl's Oil at Minturn. Mike Hirvela photo.

## Jeff Jarr Elected FVD Superintendent

At its annual business meeting April 15th, the FVD held elections for Division Superintendent and Chief Clerk. Current Assistant Superintendent, Jeff Jarr, was elected Division Superintendent and Leif Hanson was re-elected Chief Clerk. Jeff defeated incumbent, Walter Radtke, while Leif ran unopposed. Said Jeff of his election, " I really didn't know what to expect. Now that I'm elected I don't know what to expect either! There will be some 'on the job' learning I'm sure." Jeff and Leif take office May 1st. The division sincerely appreciates the work Walter Radke did as Superintendent while still doing a great job managing our High Wheeler train shows. Thanks, Walter, for taking on two big, important jobs at once!

## 2012 Annual Reports

Officers and Trainmasters gave their annual reports at the April 15 FVD Annual Meeting. Here are some highlights of what they had to say:

- **Assistant Trainmaster, Jeff Jarr**, led off the reports with a little levity saying, "As Assistant Trainmaster I am in charge of monthly meeting refreshments. I'd like to report that this meeting year the division consumed 15 lbs. of pretzels, 480 cans of pop, 40 gallons of coffee, 40 packages of cookies, 30 lbs. of ice, and 34 large Lou Malnati's pizzas, not including the monthly home made treats brought in by several members." Jeff especially thanked every one who helped with food this year.
- **Paymaster, Tim Kleimeyer**, said the division is "in good shape financially". He pointed out that FVD has reserves in a CD that will provide security for the future in case, for example, "we have bad weather during a future High Wheeler and don't generate the revenues we've been generating in recent years."
- **Clinics & Programs Trainmaster, David Leider** MMR, asked members at the meeting if they were happy with this year's clinics and got a resounding "Yes!" to his question. David later asked if members were interested in taking a bus trip to northern Indiana the Sunday before Labor Day to the Hesston Steam Museum's annual Steam and Power Show. This is the show where the museum pulls out "all the stops" and has almost everything running. David got another positive response, so it looks like we could be going to Hesston in September!
- **Jim Landwehr** is the division's **Achievements and Contests Trainmaster**. He reported that Don Cook will soon be receiving his MMR, and that a dozen or so AP certificates were earned by FVD members this past year. Jim is excited that next year's contests will feature several "open car load" and other "load" contests which have proved to be popular in other divisions.
- **Publications Editor, Walt Herrick**, said that because there are no Semaphores to be written, edited, or sent out during the summer, he and Publications Layout and Circulation Trainmaster, Jim Allen, were going rail fanning in Tahiti in June, July and August. Asked where there were trains in Tahiti, Walt said "I'm not sure, but I think there's some down by the topless beach. (And you thought annual reports had to be boring!)"
- **"Membership Trainmasters", Bert Lattan and Mike Hirvela**, gave reports that showed a lot of membership promotional activity this year. Bert said our membership usually runs between 240 and 250 people and we now stand at 240. Discrepancies with national's record keeping could mean we have more members than we are given credit for according to Bert. Mike reported that meeting membership numbers were strong with 40 to 50 showing up for most meetings. Four 6 month NMRA membership Rail Passes were given out this year to prospective members. Mike also reported that the division was very active this past year in distributing High Wheeler flyers at many area train shows and swap meets as well as putting up train displays in local libraries. FVD booths were staffed by dedicated volunteers at the large WGH Show in Schaumburg and every other month at the large DuPage Show in Wheaton. Jim Allen, who regularly volunteers to staff the FVD booth, presented the division's new, professional looking tri-fold display which will be used to promote the FVD at future shows. The display will help show case the division using various promotional tools such as signs, photos, literature, models and Jim's fun and popular Action-Reaction model railroad display.
- **Jim Osborn** told members that as the division's **Public Relations & Webmaster Trainmaster**, he was responsible for the second largest budget in the FVD, the PR budget. Almost all of the PR budget is used to promote the FVD's High Wheeler Train Show. Jim's promotional efforts were again very successful with High Wheeler

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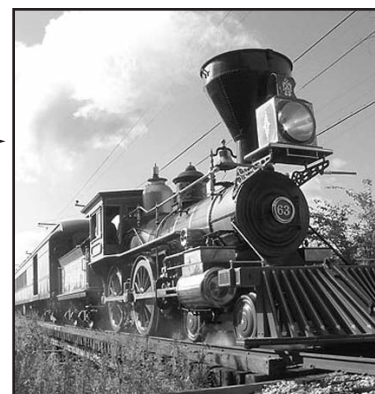
2012 achieving record attendance. New promotional efforts this year included reaching several mom related blogs, bulk mail distribution, direct flyer distribution to 14 Palatine area day care centers and face painting and kid crafts tables at the show. Jim is very much looking for help with next year's High Wheeler promotional efforts which he says, have become "a pretty big job." If you are interested, see him at our May meeting or email him at [jlosborn@comcast.net](mailto:jlosborn@comcast.net).

- **Ways & Means Trainmaster, Walter Radtke**, thanked everyone involved in working for the 2012 High Wheeler Show for their great help. He said, "We've shifted the direction of the show the past several years to target kids and teens rather than just modelers and rail fans. Attendance is going up because of this, and we

are attracting younger people to the show which is good for us and good for the hobby." Walter pointed out that, "High Wheeler is a fundraiser for the division and we want to make money with it. We made more money again this year and profits were also better than last year. This money will help the division do the things it wants to do." Walter concluded by encouraging any FVD member who wants to get involved with High Wheeler or any FVD activity to contact him or a board member. "This work is not done by an exclusive 'club'. We'd love to have you help us," he said.

## Upcoming Train Events

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| May 20                             | Kishwaukee Valley & Eakin Creek Club Spring Open House, Huntley, IL |
| <i>Initial operating days are:</i> |   |
| May 26, 27 & 28<br>June 2, 3       | Leviathan 63 returns to the Illinois Railway Museum →               |
| June 3                             | Great Midwest Train Show, DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton IL     |
| July 29-Aug. 4                     | NMRA National Convention, Grand Rapids, Michigan                    |



## April Monthly Meeting

Besides the elections and annual reports reported elsewhere in this Semaphore, the April meeting included our usual clinics and contest. MMR David Leider presented a clinic on achieving your AP certificate in cars (rolling stock). David stressed, "You only need to do eight cars, one of which needs to be a passenger car. Only four of the cars need to be scratch built and judged. The other four can be detailed kits which do not have to be judged." David presented slides of the cars he modeled for his certificate and gave us the

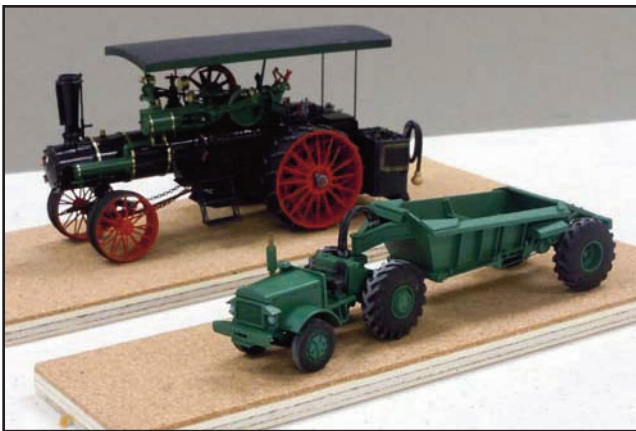
basics on how he modeled the cars. David, Jim Osborn, and Mike Hirvela next presented a slide show of the layouts and activities they attended at the recent regional Railsplitter convention in Springfield. All agreed the layout tours were top notch, the clinics well done, and the promised sessions were, well--non-existent! April's contest was "vehicles" and some beauties showed up. Jim Allen's O scale 1920's CASE steam tractor and HO scale EUCLID tractor with a bottom dump trailer took first.

*continued on next page*

The CASE tractor was especially interesting. Jim took an old SS Ltd. kit and completely re-detailed it before giving it a beautiful black and red paint job. Mike Hirvela's kitbashed, HO scale, boom truck was voted second. Mike started with an old Athearn truck and then stretched the truck's frame. He next added the stake bed half off of a cheap plastic truck purchased at Walmart, and a Preiser boom, to create his model. Frank Cole's

nicely built and subtly weathered HO Jordan Model A Ford took third. Though Jim's CASE tractor took first, his "For Display Only" jet propelled "pulling tractor" (with sound no less!) really stole the show. You could hear that thing revving up and whining all over the meeting room! See Jim Osborn's photos of all the contest entries on the FVD website.

## April meeting contest winners



1st Place Jim Allen's  
O scale CASE Steam Tractor (top)  
HO Scale Euclid tractor with bottom dump trailer



2nd Place  
Mike Hirvela's  
HO Scale Maintenance Truck



3rd Place  
Frank Cole's  
HO Scale  
Jordan Car

## May Meeting

Our May 20th meeting begins at our usual 1:30 p.m. start time at the Gary Morova Center in Prospect Heights. Paul Gehrett will present an excellent clinic on weathering and the contest will be "The Best of the Best" featuring any contest entries that placed first, second or third in the 2011 – 2012 modeling year's contests. The

May meeting is the last regular monthly meeting of the modeling year. After the May meeting we meet again on September 16th. September's contest will be "work train" including a locomotive, four MoW cars (maximum) and a caboose. Our clinics are "TBA" at this point.

## 2012 Calendar

Future issues of the Semaphore will be on the internet at foxvalleydivision.org. If you do not have access to a computer, you can purchase a subscription for only \$8.00 a year. Contact Jim Allen for details at jallenad60@comcast.net

Date	Time	Clinic	AP Clinic	Contest
May 20	1:30	Weathering using chalks and other mediums by Paul Gehrett	Prototype Models	Best of the Best for the year 1st, 2nd, 3rd and place winners
Sept. 2	TBA	Save the date for a possible bus trip to the Hesston Steam Museum's annual "Steam and Power" show. More info at the May meeting.		
Sept. 16	1:30	TBA	Local work train.	One loco, 4 cars (max), and caboose.
Oct. 21	1:30	TBA	Covered or closed load	3 cars of the same type max.

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Membership Promotions, <b>Mike Hirvela</b>	mhirvela1@gmail.com	847-360-9579
Membership Records, <b>Bert Lattan</b>	blattan@comcast.net	847-295-7959

Look for all FVD Board members contact information  
on line at the division's website  
[www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org)

## MIKE'S MINUTE BY MIKE HIRVELA

As a follow-up to the Mike's Minute column published in the March issue of the Semaphore regarding whether or not you have made provision for your accumulated "railroad stuff" in the event of the inevitable, here is one possible excellent solution I have recently run across.

At the Great Midwest Train Show at the DuPage County Fairgrounds a few Sundays ago, as Jim Allen and I were manning the Fox Valley Division table, we were introduced to Brandon Scott of Valparaiso, Indiana. Brandon runs an organization called Re-Training. Re-Training seeks donations of used model train equipment, running or not, which are refurbished, repackaged and provided to local charities in and around Chicagoland to help those organizations provide Christmas gifts to needy and deserving children. What a great idea!

Brandon does a lot of the work himself and has been featured in his local newspaper. I have seen the article, and he is "legit"! Brandon will also accept any left-over train parts: bodies, wheels, truck assemblies, track, transformers, buildings, etc. He uses these to make up extra pieces and accessories for his "new" train sets. Brandon says even the true "basket case" pieces can be used to create scenes. I've got a very full "Xerox box" of left over freight and passenger car bodies and miscellaneous parts, and I know where they are going now!

Here's Brandon's contact information: phone: 219-983-2904 email: [Re\\_Training@hotmail.com](mailto:Re_Training@hotmail.com) <[mailto:Re\\_Training@hotmail.com](mailto:Re_Training@hotmail.com)> .

address: Re-Training, c/o Brandon Scott, 1009 McCord Road #E4, Valparaiso, IN 46383.

### Member News

A rumor has been circulating for weeks now that Don Cook has qualified for his MMR. The rumor is, in fact, true! All Don needs is the letter and paperwork from National to be "official"! ... Former long time FVD Superintendent, Rich Sweet, is trying to sell his house in Hawthorne Woods so he and his wife can move to Phoenix. No luck selling the house yet, but Rich is enjoying being retired....Speaking of retiring, Semaphore Editor Walt Herrick is retiring June 15th after 30 years with the Crystal Lake Park District's Racket Club. Walt is a USPTA certified tennis professional and started with the club as its Head Pro before being named Club Manager in 1986....FVD member Andrew Kirby from Palatine is a native of Australia and models Australian railroads in and around Adelaide during the transition era. If you see Andrew at a monthly meeting, ask him to show you the photos of his layout (under construction) and Aussie railroads on his iphone. They are cool!

### Modeling Tip of the Month

If you haven't seen or read the online Model Railroad Hobbyist Magazine, it is an excellent modeling resource and free. (In fact, they say it is "forever free"! ) Geared to scale model railroaders in any scale, most of their material is in HO with some N scale and a little in the other scales. The quality of the articles and photos is quite good, and many of the authors have been in MR, RMC, and NMRA Magazine. MRH comes each month and there are weekly updates as well. Be advised that, though this is an on line publication, there is a fair amount of advertising. To subscribe go to: <http://mrhmag.com>



## NMRA National News

Fundraising has begun for the "**Magic of Scale Model Railroading**" gallery at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento, CA. As your members will probably recall, this gallery will introduce the Museum's 600,000 annual visitors to the hobby, as well as give them a sense of its history. One of the highlights of the gallery will be actual portions of the finest model railroads ever built. The Museum has donated the space rent-free to the NMRA for the purpose of promoting the hobby. It's estimated that the cost to build the exhibit will be approximately \$750,000, and no NMRA dues or monies will be used; instead, it will be entirely funded by donations. To date, over \$100,000 has been raised, and an anonymous donor has agreed to match donations, up to \$250,000.

Any NMRA member (or non-member, for that matter) who would like to donate to the funding of the gallery should send his or her tax-deductible donation to NMRA Headquarters at 4121 Cromwell Road., Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119, and mark it "Gallery donation."

- In the February edition of the InfoNet News we reported the **agreement of cooperation between the NMRA and the Hasea.com Model Railroad Association of China**. This July we'll be seeing the first fruits of that "Hands Across The Ocean" agreement as a group of teenage Chinese modelers and railfans visits California with the purpose of seeing layouts, prototype trains, and the California State Railway Museum. Several Pacific Coast Region members are helping to organize this 2-week event.
- Grand Rails 2012, the upcoming NMRA national convention, has announced their **commemorative convention car**. Grand Rapids, Michigan, was once known as The Furniture Capital of the World, and appropriately the model was inspired by a postcard photograph of a turn-of-the-last-century furniture manufacturer's wood-sided boxcar. This replica, produced by Accurail, comes complete with a Grand Rails 2012 logo "poster" which can be applied by the modeler. Visit [www.gr2012.org](http://www.gr2012.org) to see a shot of the prototype.
- The folks at Grand Rails 2012 have posted a **preliminary clinic schedule** for the convention in PDF format, downloadable at their website. Among the clinicians are NMRA Worldwide Director Tony Koester, Jim Six, Jim Sacco, and a group of clinics by the Layout Design Sig.
- **Grand Rails 2012 is looking for volunteers** who'd be willing to donate an hour or two of their time at the convention doing things like contest room security, helping with registration check-in, silent auction set-up and tear-down, and bus loading. If you're interested and have an hour or two you'd like to donate, contact Mark Baldwin, Vice Chair of Volunteers. Just use the "Contact Us" link on the Grand Rails 2012 website at [www.gr2012.org](http://www.gr2012.org).

## SQUIRRELS . 3

by Walter Radke

*Here is yet another chapter in Walter Radtke's ongoing saga of "Garden Railroad Man verses Squirrel". We must report that there were several squirrels injured--physically and mentally--in the incidents portrayed in this article. Ed.*

As we all know squirrels are here to stay. No matter what we do to them they will return and in some cases in greater numbers. So live with them I say, and enjoy them. The following is a report on how I enjoyed having them in my yard last summer watching them dig up my flowers, making holes in my lawn, eating my bird seed and...running for their lives! To make their squirrel lives more enjoyable in my back yard last summer, I created several fun activities for them. These activities have not yet been approved by the Anti-cruelty Society (and frankly, may never be!).

The first activity I call "tunnel fun". I boarded up one end of a long tunnel on my garden railroad and then placed a 1 inch ball of peanut butter laced with nuts, three quarters of the way into the tunnel. My LGB-L locomotive was sent to just outside the tunnel portal to wait for the squirrel to enter and find his delicious peanut butter and nuts. While the fuzzy rat was enjoying his treat, I fired up the locomotive, turned on its head light, sounded the warning whistle to announce its coming and turned motor sounds up full blast. I then sent the loco roaring into the tunnel. What a commotion with loud screeches and yells! Incredibly, the blocked end of the tunnel exploded out! Watching the little guy take giant leaps to the back yard fence and beyond was a sight to behold.

The second activity is called "music fun". To set up for this activity I placed a section of track next to a pile of bird seed. On that track I placed

my LGB sound car, the one with the Chicken Dance sound track. As you might be aware, the music starts with two high pitch sounds before it goes into the chicken dance music. Then I wired the track to a transformer and added a push button. Next is the hard part. You wait for that little guy to come near the sound car. When he comes you wait some more until he is facing the sound car and close to it. NOW you press the button! Two loud high pitched sounds and the little guy is off to anywhere except there. Are we having fun yet, squirrels?

The final entertainment activity is called Go-Daddy-Go. This activity requires you to go through the stuff your kids left behind when they left home. What you are looking for is an old RC car, its battery and charger. Did you find it? I did. I charged the battery and then into the car it went. Now with this activity you have to get qualified with practice runs so you can handle the fast car. That done you are ready to go. Place some delicious bird seed between the car and a big tree. Place the car about 30 inches from the seeds. When our little friend comes to steal the seeds, wait for the proper moment, and then put "the pedal to the metal". The noise of the wheels spinning looking for traction will alert the squirrel. When he locates the source of the noise, the car should be heading straight for him. Don't give up! Keep coming at him and chase him up the tree. Once he's in the tree, drive around the base of the tree a few times. This will make sure the squirrel knows it is not safe to come down ever again. Now are we having fun yet, squirrels?

Let me answer the question this way: I have the only squirrels in the neighborhood that have hair standing straight up on their backs. I kind of like the look.

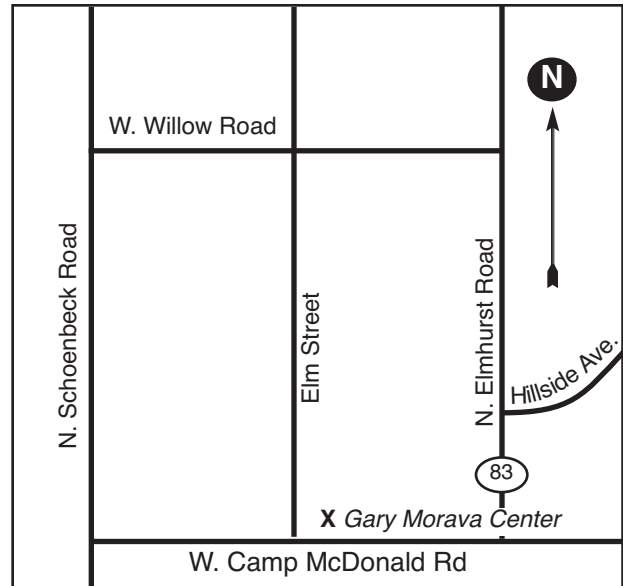
## About the Fox Valley Division

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 McHenry and parts of Cook, Kane and Lake Counties in Northeast Illinois. About 150 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 general meetings are held September through May at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights from 1:30 to about 4:30 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 general meetings. To promote the hobby of model railroading, the FVD sponsors and runs a large train show, 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 help 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. We'd love to see you. Or, visit us on the web at: [www.foxvalleydivision.org](http://www.foxvalleydivision.org).

**Questions? Contact FVD Superintendent, Jeff Jarr or any board member listed on page seven of this newsletter. We are here to help you!**



## Next Meeting

The Fox Valley Division will hold their **meeting on May 20, 2012.**

Note: 1:30 pm start time to 4:30 pm, at the Gary Morava Center, 110 W. Camp MacDonald Road, Prospect Heights, IL  
Lunch and refreshments served.



**Fox Valley Division**  
**Midwest Region-NMRA**  
P.O. Box 1535  
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