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Mike's Minute

December marks the end of 2024 and I hope your year was as good as you dreamed. With the turn of the year into 2025 (where does the time go?), it's a new clean slate with many opportunities. We are looking forward to new challenges in 2025. Particularly, I have noticed a declining number of members attending our monthly meetings at the Morava Center in Prospect Heights. In November, we had more folks over Zoom than we had in person. This is puzzling to me as we started out the year with the opposite participation. I know weather and sporting events have always influenced attendance, but it may be more than that. Just what, I'm not sure. Frank, deliberate conversations about this have been a topic for the Board of Directors with some feeling that we could/should return to over-the-net-only meetings vs in-person meetings, due to a number of factors: 1) member(s) stay at home and not have to drive to the meeting location in varying weather conditions; 2) members stay home and have the benefit of home-made goodies and their own facilities; 3) members stay at home and the division

does not have to rent a meeting room (at increasingly higher costs); 4) Not meeting in person precludes a lot of hardware set-up time at the location (that can take up to an hour); 5) Presentations and presenters can be arranged from their own location over the net precluding their need to travel; 6) the cost for Zoom access is significantly less than room rental; 7) no kitchen clean up time is required; 8) several other considerations. As you can read, there is much to discuss.

Regarding our monthly meetings and locations: Our December meeting will be at the Glenview Public Library that happily is the same weekend as the North Shore & Western module group is set-up in the big meeting room. It also has been confirmed we are also going to be at the Glenview Library in January as well. The Morava Center has confirmed for the remaining months of our schedule through May, but we may still move the meeting around our area – so watch for notices. The reason for moving the meetings around is to stretch our resources (meaning funds). Last month, I asked our members to check with the facilities in their area and let me know if there is a

meeting room we can use for a future meeting. We need to be proactive on this topic for the reasons you can read above.

Also, I and the Board have been discussing options regarding our newsletter, The Semaphore. For a while now, we have been asking for a member to step forward and take the place as editor. To date, I have not had anyone volunteer for the position. With the departure of the last editor, we may have to make some changes regarding the Semaphore. It may become a web-based information platform which any member can access (yes, the one member who gets it by mail will still receive it that way). It may look much different than it has in the recent past. I understand this may start as early as the January edition. More to follow on this topic.

Lastly, as we near the end of the calendar year and reflect on the past few years, I'd like to thank each and every member for their participation and support. I appreciate this more than you know. Please have a safe and happy holiday season no matter how you celebrate it. May all your signals be green. *Mike Hirvela*

Next FVD Meeting

When: Sunday, December 15, 2024, 2:00 PM

Where: [Glenview Public Library](#) and [Zoom](#)

Presentation: *Grand Central Station* by Edward Koehler

Model Achievement Display: A Humorous Load

Show and Tell: Display any category or train related item

Model Celebration Calendar

Division Meeting Date	Contest
December 15	A humorous load
January 19	Any vehicle
February 16	Any train photo
March 16	An unfinished project
April 17	A diorama
May 18	Anything related to trains

- **Monthly FVD Meetings**

Held the third Sunday of every month at either the [Glenview Public Library](#) or the [Gary Morava Recreation Center](#), the meetings are an opportunity to share information, either in-person or on Zoom. Here is the meeting schedule through the end of the year. See the full schedule on the [FVD website](#).

When	Where
11/17/24 1:30 PM	Gary Morava Recreation Center & Zoom
12/15/24 2:00 PM	Glenview Public Library and Zoom
1/19/25 2:00 PM	Glenview Public Library and Zoom
2/16/25 1:30 PM	Location to be announced, no Zoom, in-person only

- **Club Events & Shows** (click links for more information)

The [CPKC Holiday Train](#) has one stop remaining in the Chicago area in Gurnee, Saturday, December 7, 5:15 – 5:40 PM. [See map](#).

[Great Midwest Train Shows](#) are held monthly at the [DuPage Event Center and Fairgrounds](#) in Wheaton. Information on both shows can be found on [Trainshow.com](#).

[Illinois Railway Museum Events](#)

- [Happy Holiday Railway](#), Weekends starting November 29 through December 22. Embark on a magical 40-minute train ride through the winter countryside with Santa Claus himself!

[Mad City Model Railroad Show & Sale](#) February 16 – 17, 2025 at Alliant Energy Center, Madison WI

Wanted: Clinicians for NMRA Convention 2025

Rich Mahaney, NMRA NCR President is looking for clinic presenters for the 2025 convention to be held July 14 through 19 in the Sheraton Hotel, Novi, Michigan. He's aiming for 200 sessions over the week. Contact Rich at hazmatrichm@aol.com or 269-214-4221.

Follow-up to Wanted: Trainmaster for Children's Hospital, Park Ridge

Mike Hirvela will be meeting with hospital staff to evaluate the condition of the trains on Saturday, December 14th at 10 am. Meet at the Children's Hospital entrance at the east end of the open parking area. Contact Mike [here](#).

About the Fox Valley Division

Superintendent: Michael Hirvela

Asst. Superintendent: Denis Zamirowski

Paymaster: Bob Landwehr

Chief Clerk: Richard Hoker

Achievements & Contests: Jim Landwehr

Clinics & Programs: Gary Saxton

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Membership Services: Erich Abens
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Contact any board member [here](#).

About the Semaphore

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If you receive this newsletter you live in the Midwest Region, Fox Valley Division 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 180 members of varied ages and modeling ability belong to the FVD. Most modeling scales are represented in our division. Subscriptions to the Semaphore newsletters are free. Membership in the division is available through the NMRA at: <https://www.nmra.org/>

Monthly FVD meetings run September through May in-person and online via [Zoom](#). Each meeting features a clinic, model show, and

information of interest to the membership. Outings, layout tours, and operating sessions may also be held.

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](#)!

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