

THE SEMAPHORE

November 2025

FOX VALLEY DIVISION • MIDWEST REGION



The October model Celebration featured Structures. This very nice S Scale model of Taylor Tool and Die was submitted by Joel Leboviz. Click on this link to see more photos of all the models brought to the meet. <https://www.foxvalleydivision.org/fvd2016/contests.v2.html>

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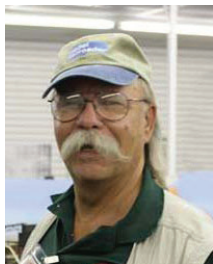
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Next Division Meet - November 16, 2025 at the Gary Morava Center - Back Exercise room 1:00 start.

Clinic Presentation: We have a "hands on" live clinic scheduled for this meet. Randy Allio is a distributor of Pan Pastels and will join us at the Gary Morava Center to share his techniques on using the Pan Pastels for modeling applications.

November Model Celebration: Any Locomotive

Mike's Minute ...

Last month, I noted we're off and charging down the tracks to another successful modeling season. No kidding – modeling and train show season IS upon us. We co-sponsored another successful RPM meet at NIU in Naperville on October 16, 17 and 18. Over 200 registered modelers and guests attended with many familiar faces. Following that event, a number of us were prepping for TrainFest 2025 at the Baird Center in downtown Milwaukee. Yes, parking in downtown Milwaukee is a pain in the you-know-what, but the event is worth it. Businesses displaying include some local folks like Sommerfeld's from Butler, Wis.; our friends ReSourced Rails from Des Plaines, IL; Good Deals DCC from Cary, IL;

and Jelsma Graphics all the way from Jacksonville, FL. A number of railroad historical societies were present with models from their favorite railroad available for sale. Several vendors and suppliers were announcing and demonstrating new products. I'll have some photos in the slide presentation at the start of the next meeting.

Then there were a bunch of modular layouts, including the award-winning Santa Fe All The Way layout, modular groups from Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Port Washington, Green Bay, Madison, and Garden Railway Societies from Wisconsin and Illinois. Even the circus modelers got into the act. You should have seen the BIG Lego pile of blocks young kids were having fun with. Then there was the guy with the 3-D printed locomotive control stands. If ya didn't go, ya missed a great time.

Our next division meet will be at the Gary Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Heights, IL, in the smaller (cozy?) meeting room. The smaller room lets us stretch our limited budget to get the most benefit for our members. Like last time, members arriving early assisted in reconfiguring the room 90-degrees and removing some wall art to enable the program to be projected onto the wall.

We have a great live clinic scheduled for the November 16th meet. Randy Allio is a distributor of Pan Pastels and will join us at the Gary Morava Center to share his techniques on using the Pan Pastels for modeling applications. And Denis Z always provide some tasty snacks. I think you'll agree that in order to get something out of an activity, you have to put something in. We're trying.

Gary Saxton, our Program and Clinics Trainmaster, has lined up some interesting informational 'clinics' from various sources for the next couple of meetings and he continues to seek out presenters for the remainder of 2026. The second part of a two-part clinic is coming up in December on mechanical interlocking -- a subject that has puzzled me for years.

We set up access to the meetings over the Zoom computer system. As much as I'd like to see smiling faces in the meeting room, however you choose to participate works for you and me. Join in.

Division 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. We also need an Editor for our newsletter, The Semaphore. Here is another opportunity to participate. It is not that tough and is very rewarding.

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>



Looking forward to see you all at the next meeting. 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 Randy Allio - Live Demonstrations	Any Locomotive	1:00 at the GMC
Dec. 21, 2026	Tappets, dogs & bridles - Basics of Interlocking pt. 2 by Patrick Golden	Load spanning 2-3 cars	1:00 at the GMC
Jan. 18, 2026	Meat Packing Plants: Protos & Models - by Douglas Harding, MMR®	1 Illuminated Structure	TBD
Feb. 15, 2026	Railroads & the Natural Ice Industry by Bruce DeYoung	Odd Consist - 4 unit max	TBD
Mar. 15, 2026	Revolutionizing Model Railroading with AI - by Pat Fleming	Billboard Reefers - 2 max	TBD
Apr. 19, 2026	TBA	A Kit-bashed structure	TBD
May 17, 2026	TBA	A Favorite Locomotive	TBD

*Location note: GMC = Gary Morava Center, Prospect Hts. - GPL = Glenview Public Library

Happenings:

GREAT MID-WEST TRAIN SHOW (aka: the DuPage Swap), at DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton, IL, is scheduled to operate Dec 7, 2025 - 9am until 3 pm. 2026 dates: Jan 4, Feb 1, Mar 1, Apr 12, May 3 & Jun 7.

FVD MEET NOVEMBER 16. Clinic Presentation: **PAINTING WITH PAN PASTELS** by Randy Allio, MMR®. Randy will demonstrate techniques discovered using **Pan Pastels** to paint detail castings, stone walls, and wood. Models will be on display showing the results possible using this medium to replace the lost paint brands that modelers used for years. Time will be available for anyone wanting hands on practice.

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.

IRM HOLIDAY TRAINS: The 2025 dates are Saturdays and Sundays, November 28th (Black Friday), 29th, 30th, December 6th, 7th, 13th, 14th, 20th, 21st, and Monday the 22nd. Trips take place at 11:30am, 12:30pm, 1:30pm, 2:30pm, 4pm, 5pm and 6pm. For details and tickets see: <https://www.irm.org/> or https://www.irm.org/event/happy-holiday-railway/?event_date=2025-12-21

ROCK RIVER VALLEY DIVISION MEET will be December 7th - 1:00 - 3:00. Contest: Switch Engines Clinics: Railroad Watches and the NMRA Achievement Program Tours: Ken Reinert's RR

FVD DIVISION MEET DECEMBER 21. Clinic Presentation: **Tappets, dogs, bridles - Basics of Mechanical Interlocking - Part 2** - by Patrick Golden, DuPage Division. Part Two builds on Part One in that a mechanical interlocking "locking bed" is built step-by-step on the PowerPoint screen and then lineups are made to demonstrate how manipulating various levers lock out others and how levers are manipulated in a precise order to make lineups and clear signals. Trains are then "run" through the interlocking plant. A crossing (diamond) is introduced to demonstrate the need for "crossing" or "route" levers, trap circuits to protect the dead section of track at the diamond are discussed and time release mechanisms are discussed when it is necessary to take down a signal previously cleared in order to change a lineup. Don't miss this one! Bring a model of a load that spans 2 or 3 cars to show off your work.

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

ROCK RIVER VALLEY TRAIN SHOW. Harlem HS, Alpine Road, Machesney Park, IL, March 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>



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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Regular meetings are held virtually via Zoom and in person at the Gary Morava Center 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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