



# THE SEMAPHORE

March 2026

## The virtues of Scratch Building by Jim Osborn, MMR®

This month I had the pleasure of judging a scratch built model by Mark Willmering for an AP merit award. Mark is from the WISE division and frequents my operating sessions. His model of a **Track-side Transfer Building** is an excellent scratch building project. It featured board by construction of the building's framing, siding, support structure, floor joists, roof, foundations, interior, etc. He even made a stone foundation using small pea gravel stones. Mark received an excellent merit score for his work. I asked him how he felt about the project. He said, "It was a great experience and I learned so much about building construction and model building in the process of creating the structure !"



To me, this is the essence of scratch building. You have an opportunity to learn and have fun while you create an excellent model to display. Give it a try - contact me if you need help getting started. Mark's Transfer Building is featured in the **Spring 2026 Midwest Region Waybill**. Check his article out if you have not already done so.

<https://www.mwr-nmra.org/mwr2016/mwr.waybill.html>

We need content to share for the "Semaphore." If you have a project, layout or display you want featured, just contact me and I will get it organized. Jim

**The February model Celebration** featured Odd Consists. There were 6 entries. Click on this link to see a photos of all the models brought to the meet.

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

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About the Fox Valley Division, the Semaphore & FVD Board of Directors.

**Next Division Meet - March 15, 2026** at the Mt. Prospect Library - 1:00 start.

**New Location.** <https://mppl.org/> 10 S. Emerson St. Mt Prospect. (2 miles south of the GMC)

Clinic Presentation: **Weathering As Layers** by Eric Hansmann

March Model Celebration: **Billboard Reefers - 2 units maximum.**

**Mike's Minute ...**

Last month I asked the question: What makes the division most valuable? You can imagine the varied answers I received. To me, the most valuable part is our members. Each has knowledge and experiences totally different from anyone else, and it is because of this breathe of knowledge and the exchange of ideas, experiences, and skill development we all share through participation in the division's activities, enables us all to grow and develop into better modelers. To that end, we try to provide information and topics

on various facets of railroading to better understand how the real railroads did things and how we can replicate them in miniature. I'm all-of-a-sudden reminded of a quote from Al Kalmbach, founder of Model Railroader Magazine, when he said, "The idea behind model railroading is to replicate in miniature the purposeful movement of passengers and freight." I hope our efforts to inform and entertain are being great value to you. Let me know.

Division Items = A couple of things:

\* Coming up In the Spring of even numbered years, the Division holds elections for Superintendent and for Chief Clerk. Now is the right time to indicate your interest in running for either of these positions. Voting takes place at our April meeting during the Annual Meeting of the Members.

\* We still need an Editor for our newsletter, The Semaphore. Here is an opportunity to participate and contribute to the division is a big way. See me to indicate your interest.

I always look forward to seeing many of you at our meetings, whether in person or over the net. It seems our attendance hasn't grown much over the past several months. I was hopeful more of our members would find the meetings worthy of participation. I like to say, Bring a Friend, which is a little tough over the 'net,' but you can always ask. Whichever method you choose to participate, either in-person or over the 'net,' your presence is always appreciated.

Spring is around the corner. 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>



## The 2025-2026 FVD meeting schedule:

Date	Clinic or Program	Model Celebration	Time & Location *
<b>Sep. 21, 2025</b>	Lighting basics for model Applications by Jim Osborn, MMR	Any Freight Car	1:00 at the GMC
<b>Oct. 19, 2025</b>	Basics of Interlocking pt. 1 by Patrick Golden	Any Structure	1:00 at the GMC
<b>Nov. 16, 2025</b>	Pan Pastels by Randy Allio - Live Demonstrations	Any Locomotive	1:00 at the GMC
<b>Dec. 21, 2025</b>	Basics of Interlocking pt. 2 by Patrick Golden	Load span 2-3 cars	1:00 at the GMC
<b>Jan. 18, 2026</b>	Meat Packing: Protos & Models - by Douglas Harding, MMR®	1 Illuminated Structure	2:00 at the GPL
<b>Feb. 15, 2026</b>	Railroads & the Natural Ice Industry by Bruce DeYoung	2-4 unit Odd Consist	1:00 at the GMC
<b>Mar. 15, 2026</b>	Weathering As Layers by Eric Hansmann	2 max Billboard Reefers	1:00 at the <b>MPL</b>
<b>Apr. 19, 2026 - Business Meeting and Officer Elections</b>	The New York Division of the PRR by Edward M. Koehler	A Kit-bashed structure	1:00 at the GMC
<b>May 17, 2026</b>	TBA	A Favorite Locomotive	1:00 at the <b>MPL</b>

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

## Happenings:

**Make sure you vote for the Midwest Region Directors at Large.** There are 11 candidates running for 4 positions. The revised MWR Bylaws and Constitution approvals are also on the ballot. Voting is easy on line: Just go to: <https://form.jotform.com/260187691387974>

**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: Apr 12 (due to Easter), May 3, Jun 7.

**Chicago Area O Scale MEET** March 19-22

Westin Lombard Yorktown Center

<https://marchmeet.net/WP/>

**ROCK RIVER VALLEY TRAIN SHOW.** Harlem HS, Alpine Road, Machesney Park, IL, March 21 & 22, 2026

**ALL AMERICAN RAILROAD SHOW,** Lyons Township HS Field house, 100 S. Brainard Ave, La Grange, IL, Saturday, March 28 only. DuPage Division sponsors this show.

**DEPOT STOVE GANG Train Show,** 516 Fremont Street, Lena, Illinois, March 28 and 29, 2026.

**National N Scale Convention** June 23-27, 2026. Crown Plaza Airport Hotel, 6401 S. 13th Street, Milwaukee, WI.

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

# NMRA



**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 railroading. Visit us on the web at:

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

### The Semaphore

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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 1:00 until 4:00 PM per the schedule listed in this publication and on its website at:

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

Temporary Editor: Jim Osborn, MMR®

Assistant Editor: Michael Hirvela

Assistant Editor: Keith Dart

Follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/962012535134445/>

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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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