

# THE SEMAPHORE

## April 2026

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

I have this habit of always wanting to do something once. Partly because I am always interested in doing something new. This time it was chandeliers.

I was at an Ops session at Gail and Gordy Ericksen's **Milwaukee Road Southwest Division** layout. You have seen pictures of the layout and structures in prior issues of the "**Semaphore**." Gail built about 200 structures and one of them is a distinctive "Union Station" station at the end of a passenger staging yard. She did a beautiful job of detailing the interior. At the session I commented that she should have lighting in the station to show off the details. She agreed - but said she was not comfortable dealing with lighting stuff. With that, she set the hook.

I spent the next month making 6 fancy chandeliers for the station's interior. A shot of the station temporarily propped up on my workbench is shown at the left. I will detail the process, steps and show final result in a subsequent issue....



We always 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 March model Celebration** featured Billboard Reefers. There were 4 entries and one "show-n-tell". 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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**Next Division Meet - April 19, 2026** at the Glenview Public Library - 2::00 start.

FVD Annual Business Meeting and election of Superintendent and Chief Clerk

Clinic Presentation: **The New York Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad** by Edward M. Koehler

April Model Celebration: **A Kit-Bashed Structure**

## Mike's Minute ...



Well, you can tell Spring has sprung. Trees and other plants are starting to grow, the early wild flowers are arriving, water fowl are seen heading north and then, of course, is the weather. March into April and into May usually are a very challenging couple of weeks weather-wise. Seems like the weather always interferes with our meeting schedule. We have two meetings left on the Division calendar before we wrap up for the summer season. April 19 and May 17. The Board is already working on establishing the dates for the upcoming 2026-2027 season. Exact meeting locations are being discussed and will be dependent on our finances. Overall, we are in

good shape financially, but we are well aware that we have to be frugal and dollar-smart. You wouldn't want it any other way. The Board has continued to review options for meeting space and if you have any ideas or thoughts on the matter, let me know.

Coming up at the April meeting is the Annual Meeting of the Members, where we discuss the division as a whole; where we are and where we'd like to go. We plan on reports from the members of the Division Board of Directors and holding elections for Superintendent and for Chief Clerk for two-year terms. Time is running out to indicate your interest in running for either of these positions. Voting will be by those present in person at the meeting. We will also have the usual regular meeting with news, information and a topic of interest. See the website for specifics.

The Board is also working on a division outing during the Summer. Like the last several years, we are planning on a drive-yourself with friends to visit a railroad-themed location. Nothing has been finalized – yet. We'll put out the word as soon as a decision is made. Also, this Summer, I hope you are planning on attending the 2026 NMRA Convention in Chattanooga, TN, in July. It looks to be a good one. Also, I know several of the historical societies are planning activities in the vicinity. I would recommend taking advantage of these as they are a wealth of information and friendships. And don't forget the Railroad Museums in our area. They are deserving of your visit, too.

I am gratified that we do have a number of members who participate at our meetings 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. 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	2:00 at the GPL
<b>May 17, 2026</b>	Wireless Physical Throttle including buttons and "speed" knob by George K.	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:

**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.

**IRM Train Sale** Saturday April 18, 2026. They are selling excess inventory of ALL Scale track, buildings and equipment. Free - no admission. See the flyer on the next page. Its a chance to stock up and help the museum.

**Rock River Vally Division Meet**, Paulson's Agriculture Museum of Argyle 6950 Belvidere Rd, Caledonia, IL Contest: Box cars. Clinics: Marty Hendrickx on soldering. Tours: Robbie Kapala's N Scale BNSF & Jim McQueeney's HO and Narrow Gauge.

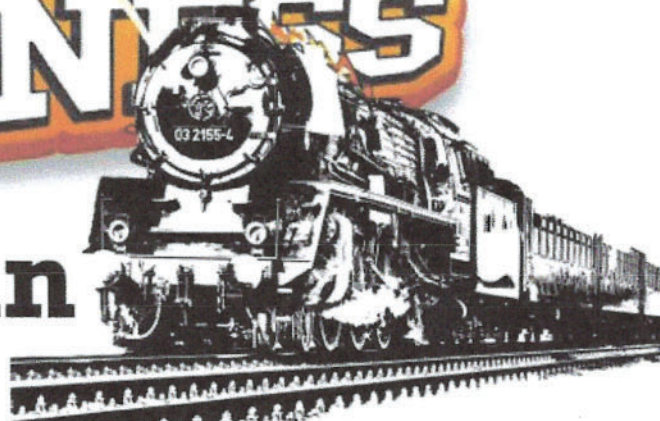
**National N Scale Convention** June 23-27, 2026. Crown Plaza Airport Hotel, 6401 S. 13th Street, Milwaukee, WI.

**2026 NMRA Convention in Chattanooga, TN** July 27 to August 2, 2026  
<https://www.nmra2026.org/>

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

# MARCH MADNESS

## Model Train Show



The IRM Hobby Shop in Union, IL will be selling its large excess inventory of N, HO, S, O and G Scale model trains, track, buildings, and accessories!

Date: Saturday, April 18  
Time: 10am – 3pm  
Location: Illinois Railway Museum  
7000 Olson Road  
Union, IL 60180

**\*NOTE:** IRM Museum Campus will be closed to the public during this event. No fee to attend.

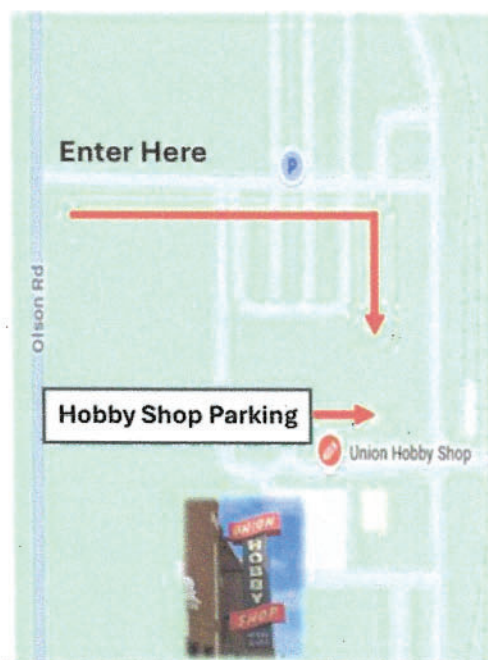
We Accept: Cash



\* No tax on purchases



The Illinois Railway Museum Model Train Hobby Shop is a 501 (3) (c) non-profit organization. Donations of model trains and other items are always welcome and are tax deductible for the donor.



# 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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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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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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