

THE SEMAPHORE

October 2026**The Best Use is Reuse by Jim Osborn, MMR®**

I had several 1/2 building flats that I used as view blocks behind a staging yard on my CNW HO Scale pike. It always bugged me that visitors could see the empty carcass backs of the buildings based on the way that I placed them. I needed to fatten them up and add new backs and sides to the two buildings to improve scene.

I began by photographing the fronts and sides of the backdrop buildings. I then used Photoshop to flip the images, make a few perspective and dimensional corrections, photo paste in a few missing windows and adjust the color, hue and saturation to match the building front. I also needed to widen the ends. When I was satisfied, I printed the photo facades for the wider sides and backs of the structures. (I have a large bed color printer but you can get the large prints done at Staples for a reasonable price.)

I then built out the extended sides and back superstructure to mount the photos on. I used 1/4 inch black foam core and some styrene to fill out the structure's shape. I cut and affixed the photos to the new foam core exteriors using Scotch Transfer Tape. It's a backless glue strip tape that sticks to everything. (Remember that detail while using the tape!) It's available from Amazon or other shops. Finally, I had a couple of Miller Animated Electro-luminescence Signs in my hobby supplies that I accumulated over the years. I finally got to put them to use on the new roofs.

The project definitely improved the scene. They are not the same as a full structure -- but as the late Master Modeler, Don Cook used to say. "Heck, It's just a backdrop!" A few pictures follow on page 3. I think you get idea of what I did. Model Train Projects are always Fun! Jim Osborn, MMR

The September model Celebration featured Locomotives. See photos of the models on page 4 or click on this link to see photos of models brought to past meets.

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

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Next Division Meet - October 18, 2026 only on the Zoom Application - 1::00 start.

October Model Celebration: **Any Car**

Mike's Minute ...

Since my last Mike's Minute, we observed the Milwaukee area 'Op-tober Fest' this year on September 18-20; and the Chicagoland AMRAIL "Op 'til Ya Drop" weekend in September (25-27). Two of our FVD home model RR's were on the AMRAIL schedule. I was docent at Gail & Gordy Ericksen's Milwaukee Road RR with 8 attendees from Minnesota, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan, and Illinois. All reported they had a good time and enjoyed running the Milwaukee Southwest Line in eastern Iowa in a basement east of Crystal Lake. Two attendees asked to be added to the crew call list for the next op session coming up in October. Why do I mention this in such detail? Well, of the 36 total attendees at this year's AMRAIL op sessions on

14 model railroads, 30 attendees were from outside Illinois! The reach of AMRAIL was astounding and the interest in running local RR's amazes me. I am very happy to have been a part of this year's operating sessions, and it was very satisfying to see smiles on the faces of the attendees.

Coming up this month is the RPM Chicagoland at Northern Illinois University in Naperville (we are co-sponsoring this event) October 16 & 17. The Railroad Prototype Modelers' events are well attended and are focused on modeling the railroad scene as accurately as possible. Selected vendors are also present and information sessions like our 'clinics' are held during the event. I'll be there with our display board, NMRA information and hopefully, we'll get a member or two from the event.

Our meeting locations may change as meeting room reservation schedules have gone crazy and costs continue to escalate. Our Board of Directors is continuing to strive to get the biggest bang for our buck. Certain places only schedule two or three months in advance, and others have exorbitant per hour rental costs. As a result, our October meeting will be held over the Zoom computer system, and November's meeting will again be the Mount Prospect Public Library. December's meeting will be at the Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Heights. We are continuing to get locations nailed down for 2027.

Last time, I asked each member of the division to contact their local library, park district or even a church you attend and ask whether they could accommodate a Sunday afternoon meeting for 3 to 4 hours. I have heard from one member who inquired at his local library on the north side of Chicago, and they don't reserve their meeting room more than 3 months in advance. We may take advantage of this space early next year. Most libraries and park districts serve their clientele who live within their boundaries. As an 'outside' organization, we are at the mercy of their schedules. So, please contact your local entity and inquire about meeting space, and let a board member, or me, know what you find. Of course, WI-FI and Internet access, a screen or LED TV for presentations are a big plus. Please let us know.

Check out full schedule & calendar of events on the FVD website Timetable. There's a lot going on through May next year. See you at the next meeting over the Zoom system. May all your signals be green. Regards, MH, Superintendent

<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>



Here are a few pictures of the backdrop building project discussed on page 1. I'll call the buildings the "Red Building" and the "Gray Building". If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

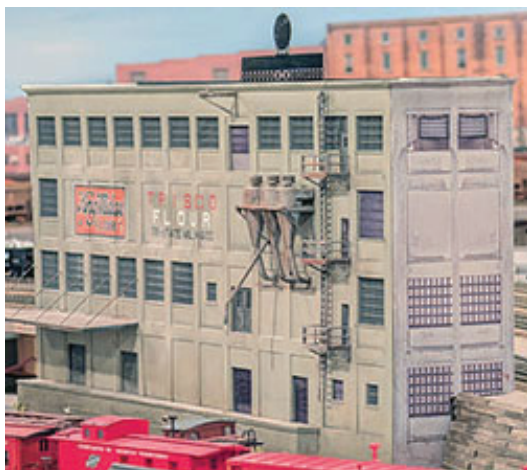


The original width of the red building (top left) and the gray building (top right.) Top center shows the red building structure modifications to prepare for the back foam board plus the back and side and photos.



The completed red building original front (above left) and the back & sides (above right) with the facade photos attached.

Below left shows the gray building original front and the new photo side. The photo back is shown on the right picture. I could have done a better color match but as Don Cook used to say, "Heck, It's just a backdrop!" These modified buildings do just the trick to improve the staging yard scene.



We had 4 locomotives displayed to celebrate modeling at the October meet at Mt. Prospect.



HO Scale E J and E RS1, submitted by Denis Zamirowski.



HO Scale Santa Fe 2-10-4, submitted by Jim Landwehr



O Scale G, M and O Pacific repaint, submitted by Bob DiDomenico.



HO Scale Spokane, Portland and Seattle, RS3 submitted by Nick Hoffmeister

The 2026-2027 FVD meeting schedule:

Date	Clinic or Program	Contest	Time & Location
• Sep. 20, 2026	Hand Laying 7-1/2 Gauge Track	Any Locomotive	1:00 pm @ MPL
• Oct. 18, 2026	Building a 7-1/2 Gauge Turnout	Any Car	1:00 pm Zoom Only
• Nov. 15, 2026	Using AI in Model Railroading by Pat Fleming	Any Structure	1:00 pm @ MPL
• Dec. 20, 2026	TBA*	Your Favorite Locomotive	1:00 pm @ GMC
• Jan. 17, 2027	TBA*	2 Refrigerated Billboard Cars	TBA*
• Feb. 21, 2027	TBA*	One Illuminated Structure	TBA*
• Mar. 21, 2027	TBA*	An Odd Consist	TBA*
• Apr. 18, 2027	TBA*	One Load Spanning 2 - 3 Cars	TBA*
We will also Conduct our Annual business meeting and hold the election of Assistant Superintendent & Paymaster at this meet. Contact the Superintendent or Chief Clerk if you would like to run for either office.			
• May 16, 2027	TBA*	A Kit-bashed Structure	TBA*

* Clinics, programs, meeting location & start times will be scheduled as the year progresses. Always check the Fox Valley Division Timetable web page or the Semaphore for the latest program information.

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

Rail Related 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: October 4, 2026, November 1, 2026 and December 6, 2026

RPM Chicagoland at NIU Naperville (we are co-sponsoring this event) October 16 & 17
<https://www.rpmconference.com/>

"Train Fest" at the Baird Center in downtown Milwaukee on November 7 and 8, 2026
<https://www.eventcreate.com/e/trainfest-2026-reg>

Rock River Valley Division Train Show April 3 & 4 2027
Harlem High School Gym, Alpine Rd. MacHesney Park, IL <https://rrvd-nmra.com/>

Titletown Train Show April 24-25, 2027 Green Bay Wisc. <https://ttsgblc.com/>

2027 NMRA Convention in Tacoma, Washington August 10-15 <https://2027.nmra.org/>

2027 Midwest Region Convention Dates TBD

2028 NMRA Convention in Rochester, NY Dates TBD

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



**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 railroad-ing. 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, 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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Need to contact any BoD members? Click this link to:

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

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