

MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

2ND & 3RD QUARTERS, 2012

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

By Don Fowler

I hope that you are enjoying your summer. The weather has been great for model railroading and rail fanning. There are a lot of things to see and do right here in our own Division backyard that don't cost much and provide a great opportunity for learning more about our great hobby. Don't let your summer slip away without joining us for some fun activities.

It takes a lot of dedicated people to plan and facilitate our Division activities. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the folks who serve on our Division Board and make things happen for our membership.

Jim Campbell – Jim's job is to ensure that we have drinks, paper products and other necessary accessories for all of our meets.

Bruce Deck – Bruce currently serves as our Meet Chairman and Clinic Coordinator. He ensures that all of the necessary components come together smoothly for our quarterly meets.

Byron Densford – Byron serves as our Club Liaison and Publicity Chairman to ensure that our

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SUMMER MEET PREVIEW

The Summer Meet will be held this year at the Community Park Auditorium in Poway, California, on Saturday, August 11. We'll get under way at 9am with two clinics. This will be followed by a silent auction, then a barbeque hosted by the Division. All you bring is an item for the auction and your appetite. Well, something for Show & Tell, and possibly for judging, would be nice as well. The clinics will be by Duncan McCree, on making trees with natural materials, and Ben Sevier, on aspects of the JMRI Decoder Pro program. Duncan may also introduce some of his new electronic components to help your DCC railroad run better. You'll find Poway Community Park one block south of Poway Road, and two blocks west of Community Road, on Civic Center Drive, behind the library and the sheriff's office.

* * *

In Memoriam

This is a sad time for model railroaders. We lost two good friends in the first quarter of this year, following the loss of another in November 2011.

Max Schwanda, a well-known local O scaler, passed on November 26, 2011. Art Dominy, avid HO scale modeler and national authority on railroad flatware, passed March 22, 2012, and John Sigurdson, MMR, passed away March 26, 2012. Following are some thoughts from other local modelers, beginning with a tribute to John Sigurdson.

John was born July 2, 1929 in Bottineau, North Dakota. As a lad he was a Boy Scout and, like everything he did in life, he was diligent and committed. He earned the coveted Eagle Scout rank. He studied architecture in Fargo where he met Joan in Art class. They married and moved to San Diego when John joined the US Navy and served as an

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Superintendent's Report from Page 1

events are publicized and good relations are maintained between the Division and our local clubs.

Rodger Gredvig, MMR – Rodger is in charge of running our local contests, judges our work and provides constructive feedback on how we can improve our modeling efforts.

Don Ham, MMR – Don is responsible for lining up layout tours for us to enjoy on the second Saturday of every month. He coordinates with layout owners to ensure that their layouts are ready for visitors and good directions are provided to our members.

Ray Inbody – Ray is our Membership Chairman who ensures that our roster is up to date, welcomes new members, prods members when they need to renew and takes attendance at our gatherings.

Gary Robinson – Gary currently serves as our Division Director who represents us on the PSR Board. He is also the editor of the Mail Hook and is currently in the process of developing a model railroad education outreach program to be piloted this fall in our Division.

Paul Schmitt, MMR – Paul is in charge of our local Achievement Program who encourages and coaches members to participate, judges our work, and assists in getting paperwork submitted to the Region and National for approval.

Ben Sevier – Ben has previously served as our Superintendent and is currently our Clerk/Paymaster and Web Master. He also serves as the PSR Convention Coordinator, Web Master and editor of PSR's newsletter, the Dispatch.

Pete Steinmetz – Pete is our Yahoo Group Moderator who established and monitors our Yahoo chat group. This is a new method for us all to keep in touch with what's going on in our Division.

If you see one of these guys, please thank them for their service to our Division. It takes time and commitment from these fine folks to get the job done and keep things moving forward. Are you ready to step up and lend a hand? We're always looking for volunteers!

Our Division Summer Meet will be held at the Poway Community Center on August 11th. We will have a silent auction, clinics, show & tell, contest judging, hosted BBQ and great fellowship. Please plan to join us for a great day of model railroading fun.

Don

In Memoriam from Page 1

officer aboard an LST during the Korean War. After the war John and Joan remained in San Diego where John managed a thriving Architecture practice in La Mesa for many years. John and Joan were married for over 60 years. They had four children, two of each: Deb, John Scott, Jimmy and Cheri. They later moved to Escondido where John eventually retired; although, he continued to do contract work for the San Diego Railroad Museum.

John was a long time, active model railroader. He was a life member of the National Model Railroad Association and worked to become a Master Model Railroader (#236). He was one of only four MMR's in the whole San Diego area. He served as a Superintendent of the San Diego Division and managed a very successful Regional Convention in 1994. John was a member of the San Diego Society of N Scale at the San Diego Railroad Museum. He was an early and continuing member of the Short Track Railroad at the Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum (AGSEM). He also served as a Trustee on the Board of the AGSEM. He spent years documenting the Museum utilities and infrastructure.

John was a consummate modeler and artist with a lively imagination. He created several beautiful and extensive layouts at his Escondido home. He built an extensive O scale outdoor layout featured in the October 1988 issue of Model Railroading Magazine. He also built an indoor N scale layout called the Dakota Northwestern. This awesome layout was featured in the December 1986 issue of Model Railroader Magazine. His latest project was a large indoor O scale layout featuring hand-laid track, beautifully crafted structures, Digital Command Control, and narrow gauge operations. He was always generous with his time and modeling skill. He spent many hours working on various club and private layouts. He was very active in the design and

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In Memoriam from Page 2

construction of the layouts at Short Track RR. He had so many modeling skills that he could do anything. He painted the backdrops at the N scale layout at the Model RR Museum and at Short Track RR's NTRAK as well as the Donner Pass Exhibit. He could paint a beautiful, colorful and realistic backdrop using only five colors, a couple of old brushes and a cardboard palette.

As good a modeler as John was, he was a better friend. Everyone who knew him considered him a real "buddy". He touched the lives of many with his cheerful, warm smile and the way he would welcome guests to his home layout. He often hosted various Model Railroad events. He was generous with his time and talents and was always eager to share his expertise and help others. He was the nicest guy I know.

Paul Schmitt, MMR

MAX, JOHN, AND ART

A Remembrance by David Balsler

I knew Max Schwanda, John Sigurdson, and Art Dominy as great model railroaders, good men, and, luckily for me, good friends. All three were very unique individuals with their own special personalities, with a love for trains, and they all passed on this past year.

Max Schwanda was a two rail O-Scaler all the way and had a layout in his backyard building that was a gathering spot every Friday night for well over 25 years with his regular operating crew. Max was one of the first guys in San Diego to have real operations, running freight and passenger trains on a timetable schedule using a fast clock. When guests arrived, and I was fortunate to be a guest on occasion, Max handed you a throttle and told you to get ready because the next freight was due to arrive in 4 minutes! That's 4 minutes on the fast clock, not normal time. You had to learn quick or you held up the railroad and that was not a good idea. Operating on Max' layout was real fun because Max was a lot of fun. Everybody always had a good time, sometimes helped by adult beverages, and you always felt welcome. The old motto on the Model Railroader magazine masthead used to say, "Model Railroading is Fun", and Max made sure that happened.

John Sigurdson was always busy. It seemed he was constantly working on his layout or a friend's layout or at the club layouts he belonged to. Many years ago John, Bob Schimmel, and I, took off for the regional convention at Laughlin. Bob was driving and John was in the shotgun seat and, being the junior member, I sat in the back. I brought along some magazines and showed John an article and some drawings about a pile driver and suggested to John he build it for his O-Scale layout. Bob took a look at the article and seemed interested. John challenged Bob to build it and I upped the ante by suggesting he build it as a pile driver capable of pounding in a nail. Bob was working on his MMR so this project was perfect. That pile driver sits on the end of John's layout and it really could pound a nail! I learned a lot from John and Bob.

John was also a night owl model railroader. On a lot of occasions I would call John on a Friday night and he would answer, "Hey, what are you doing, come on out." It might be 8 or 9 at night but I knew John stayed up late so I jumped in the car, drove past Lake Hodges, and walked through the door into model railroad heaven. What a great place it was. All your senses were stimulated when you walked into John's empire. It looked, felt, and smelled, like model railroading. I would stay very late and listen to the master talk about his projects and how to do things the right way.

Art Dominy lived in Del Mar on a hill in a house his son designed for him. The house had a basement built just for the model railroad, The Deboise and Western. The boys (Deboise) were Art, his good friend Vern, and his son Lew. Railroad night was on Wednesday, and I was always glad when Art would call, and let me know the boys were getting together, and invite me over. After coming through the front door you had to climb down a spiral staircase and at the bottom were the seating area and the layout. I fondly remember the lounge area with a big round oak table and the large cabinet against the wall. Art was a great collector of all things railroadiana. There was a real wood burning caboose stove that kept the room warm in winter. The cabinet was filled with a fabulous collection of railroad plates, cups, and all the other pieces you would find in a real railroad dining car. His collection of silver flatware filled many drawers and his well known book on the subject

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In Memoriam from Page 3

sold many copies. The boys would work on the layout and I would try to be helpful fetching tools or supplies. The layout was one of the best in San Diego and, I always felt, magazine worthy. The evening always ended with Beth bringing down a plate full of goodies and drinks and the conversation revolved around the latest project and the new stuff son Lew just bought from the model railroad store. The atmosphere was like home and Art always made you feel welcome.

Max, John, and Art were all good men and I have memories that will last my lifetime. I am really glad I was fortunate to have been in their company. Model railroading brought us together and that is one of the things that make our hobby great.

* * *

Welcome New Members

New members keep our organization vital by bringing new ideas and enthusiasm to our group. Each month, we list the new members since the last issue, and run a short background on those who are willing. This may help both the new members and existing members identify those in the group with similar interests. To submit background, contact me or Ray Inbody, Membership Chair. Ed.

Blount, Steven R

Fast, David

Hunter, Ray

Jarvis, Gary A

Patterson, James E

Please introduce yourselves to these new members at our next event, and make them feel welcome.

LAYOUT TOURS

Don Ham, MMR, has been doing a great job lining up layouts for us to visit. Here's a summary of what you've missed, and what's coming up in the next couple of months.

April

In April we visited Jim O'Connell's Pinnacle Creek Mining & Timber Company HO scale railroad in Santee. The Pinnacle Creek Mining & Timber Co. is set in SE Alaska, up a fjord which is accessible by sea. It is a small subsidiary of a larger mining company. While most locos (a 3-truck Shay, a 3-truck Heisler and a 2-truck Climax) are fairly new, most of the rest of the railroad shows signs of getting less attention. The layout is set on October 1, 1931, the Great Depression is taking place, and small mining sites like the PCM&T have, for the most part, to rely on themselves and not the parent company.

The layout is built on open L-girder benchwork that has already housed Z and N Scale layouts. This is Jim's first HO endeavor. The PCM&T is an operations type of layout in that the locos do not go roundy-round. It is always back and forth and there are only two sidings for operations. Basically, the layout is very much scenery based, which is Jim's specialty, but moving different combinations of ore cars gives him plenty of operating fun.

The layout is three levels with a 6.7 degree grade to be negotiated. Rockwork is fairly unique in the use of stucco, carved into 'rock' before it dried. There are two mines; a wharf, upon which sits an engine house; and an ore tibble. These are all scratch-built. There is a mining camp with mostly scratch-built buildings. There are approximately 175 caspia trees, also made by Jim. The PCM&T is not a large road, but the quality of the work is outstanding, and one can appreciate what is possible in a bedroom-sized layout.

Jim's primary interest is scenery. He's only been modeling since 2005 and has had layouts published in five railroad magazines. Continental Modeler has photos of his N Scale layout in their hands. He has built layouts in Z Scale and these layouts reside in Germany, Mexico City, Japan, Singapore, Iowa, two in Virginia, Florida, and Oregon. Some of you may know his old N layout, the Cascade Mining & Timber Co. It was in a layout tour February, 2010.

June

In June we visited the Little Great Northern & Pacific Railway (LGN&PRy) of George Boggs. What follows is an article by San Diego Division member Linda Albrecht, describing that visit. Photos are by the author.

More...

Layout Tours *from Page 4*

A love affair that began more than 62 years ago, as still going strong, was evident during the June 9, 2012, San Diego Division layout tour in Ramona. More than 40 NMRA members and their families took advantage of the near-perfect weather of San Diego, and headed up into the foothills of Ramona to the ten acres of land that is home to George and his LGN&PRy. There, Boggs proudly showed the three elements that make up his train display.

Element #1

Housed in a building created specifically to resemble a station house, over 475 feet of HO scale track wind through towns and mountain passes, to cross over numerous gorges that are spanned by scratch-built trestles. Scenery is plaster hard-shell over cardboard and screen, and is about 70% complete. George is in the process of upgrading the electronics on the railroad, replacing older analog equipment with more modern solid state components.

Element #2

George is a proponent of what he fondly calls "hernia scale." This consists of almost 1000 feet of 1 ½ inch scale track, laid through his orchard, with a maximum 3% grade. Special home-made jigs in a shaded work area allow George to assemble "sectional track" to various radii. The sections are then installed on the railroad. Scratch-built cars and a locomotive rattle past built to scale barn and silo, or a farm complete with scale cows.

The Great Northern Railway, as well as most other railroads, operated weed sprayers to retard the growth of weeds in and around the ballast. Weeds and their root structures help sustain moisture and standing water which can degrade roadbed by preventing drainage. These cars were typically converted from old an obsolete box cars in the railroads own shops. The LGN&PRy has an award-winning, scratch-built model, LGNX 1864, that exemplifies this type of car. The car is fully operational, to solve the same problems on the LGN&PRy that exist on the full-size railroad.

Probably the gem of the LGN&PRy is the scratch-built Coyote Canyon Trestle, a through truss bridge spanning almost 50 feet. Most of the year, Coyote Canyon is a dry wash, but it can fill up quickly when it rains. Boggs plans to add almost 2000 feet of rail to the existing line over the next months.

Element #3

George has accumulated over 62 different railroad artifacts, on display in his own two-room museum. Visitors enjoyed viewing the many items on the shelves, but Boggs has additional items that could not be displayed, due to age and fragility. On display were things such as numerous timetables and booklets, some more than 100 years old. There were both passenger and employee timetables, a car mover, a spike maul, and two different brake wheels, among other items.

When asked if any of his railroad projects were complete, Boggs replied "never!"

July

July brought us to Rich Perrelli's outdoor garden railroad in Rancho Penasquitos, the Oyster Creek Railroad (OCRR). The OCRR is a lazy rural short line that meanders from the remote seaport village of Oyster Creek to the interchange yard at Black Bear Summit – all this is in a 75 foot long by approximately 7 foot wide garden. The track plan is a folded dog bone. All locomotives are radio controlled and powered by battery or live steam.

The small harbor, complete with real water and live fish, supports the industries of fishing, shipping, and tourism. The pleasant little town of Oyster Creek has several quaint shops which make up quite the tourist trap, with a trolley line that runs down the center of Main Street.

From town the railroad follows a 2% grade as it clings precariously to a steep cliff before entering the horse shoe curve. Continuing the 2% climb along the High Line, the track goes past an old mine, a horse ranch, and a dairy farm, before reaching the station at Black Bear Summit, the gateway to the County Fairground. Wow, the circus is in town, with a hot air balloon and the big top. The circus train is parked on a nearby siding.

September

In September we'll return to Steve Harris' Rio Grande Southern (RGS). This is exquisitely modeled in HO_{n3}, and in many places the modeling is so accurate, you'd swear you were looking at the real thing. Steve has visited the area frequently, and taken many reference photos. He used these photos to re-create the prototype

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August 2012

San Diego Division - Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 Short Track Ops Session, AGSEM	10	11 Multiple Events
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Short Track Clinic, AGSEM	24	25 Santa Susana Swap Meet
26	27	28 Poway Station Clinic, Old Poway Park	29	30	31	

September 2012

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 OERM Swap Meet
				PSR Convention, Oxnard, CA		
9	10	11	12	13 Short Track Ops Session, AGSEM	14	15 SD Div Layout Tour
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Poway Station Clinic, Old Poway Park	26	27 Short Track Clinic, AGSEM	28	29
30						

October 2012

		1	2	3	4	5	6 Short Track Clinic, AGSEM
7	8	9	10	11 Short Track Ops Session, AGSEM	12	13 SDMRM Swap Meet	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Fall Show, AGSEM	
21 Fall Show, AGSEM	22	23	24	25 Short Track Clinic, AGSEM	26	27 Fall Show, AGSEM	
28 Fall Show, AGSEM	29	30 Poway Station Clinic, Old Poway Park	31				

SCHEDULE OF PSR-NMRA EVENTS

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

From various sources. Events may have been submitted by sponsors. Send corrections, additions, and future events to the editor at mailhook@sandiegodivision.org. Events should be of interest to San Diego Division members. List not all-inclusive. Division-sponsored events are listed in **bold** typeface.

2012

August

- 11 San Diego Division Summer Meet.** Poway Community Park Auditorium, 13094 Civic Center Drive, Poway, CA 92064. 9:00 – 1:00. Clinics, silent auction, hosted cook-out, show & tell, judging. Contact Bruce Deck, meets@sandiegodivision.org

September

- 5-9 NMRA, Pacific Southwest Region Convention** "The Ventura Flyer. Ventura, CA. LA Division hosts. Carl Heimberger cjheimberger@gmail.com Mike Allee rmallee@me.com
- 15 San Diego Division Layout Tour.** *Note change from second Saturday, to avoid conflict with convention.* Steve Harris' Rio Grande Southern HOn3, Fallbrook, CA, 12-3pm. Contact Don Ham, MMR layouts@sandiegodivision.org

October

- 13 San Diego Division Planning Meeting,** location and time TBA. Contact Don Fowler superintendent@sandiegodivision.org
- 13 San Diego Division Layout Tour.** Ken Allen's Dakota Northwestern, Oceanside, CA, 12-3pm. Contact Don Ham, MMR layouts@sandiegodivision.org

November

- 10 San Diego Division Fall Meet.** Model Railroad Museum, Balboa Park. 9:00am - 1:00 pm. Clinics, hobo auction, lunch available, show & tell, judging. Contact Bruce Deck, meets@sandiegodivision.org

December

- 8 San Diego Division Holiday Party.** Time and location TBA. Contact Don Fowler superintendent@sandiegodivision.org

2013

January

- 12 San Diego Division Layout Tour.** TBA. Contact Don Ham, MMR layouts@sandiegodivision.org

February

- 16 San Diego Division Winter Meet.** TBA.

2012

August

- 7-11 Circus Week** at San Diego Model Railroad Museum. Family day, 8/11. Circus trains running on all exhibits all week. On Family Day, enjoy clowns, circus snacks, and circus craft activities. <http://www.sdmrm.org/>
- 11 Model Railroads of Southern California layout tour** number 34. See http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Model_Railroads_Of_Southern_California/
- 11, 12 Southern California Railroad Locomotive and Historical Society Open House.** 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., Los Angeles County Fairgrounds (FAIRPLEX) Pomona. <http://www.railgiants.org/special-events.htm#rail>
- 17 ERHA Monthly Meeting.** 1930 (7:30 PM) to 2130. Community Room of the South Pasadena Library, 1059 El Centro Street in the city of South Pasadena. (between Diamond & Fairview Avenues) <http://www.erha.org/erhainfo.htm>
- 23 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic,** 7pm. DCC Speed Matching and Decoder Pro. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>
- 25 Santa Susana RR Historical Society Swap Meet.** 0700 to 1000. in the Santa Susana Park Pavilion, 6503 Katherine Rd., Simi Valley. Admission \$2.00 for adults, children under 12 free. For table and space information please visit our website: <http://www.santasusannadepot.org/swapmeet.htm> or call Dave Putnam (661) 753-6006.
- 28 Poway Station Public Clinic,** 7pm. Porter House Parlor, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA. www.powystation.org
- 31-9/30 Los Angeles County Fair.** Southern California Railroad Locomotive and Historical Society Museum Garden Railroad. <http://www.lacountyfair.com/2012/>

September

- 7 Pacific Railroad Society Monthly Meeting.** 1930 (7:30 PM) to 2130. Joslyn Center (in Story Park) 210 North Chapel Ave. Alhambra, CA 91801

Cont'd...

See the San Diego Division web page calendar for Other Events of Interest for other dates. Ed.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

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<http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org/>

- 8 Orange Empire Railway Museum Swap Meet. Orange Empire Railway Museum, Perris, CA. 8am - 2pm. Admission. Sellers admit at 7am. See www.oerm.org/fall-swap-meet for further info.
- 25 Poway Station Public Clinic, 7pm. Porter House Parlor, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA. www.powaystation.org
- 27 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic, 7pm. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>

October

- 6 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic, 9:30am. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>
- 13 Swap Meet, San Diego Model Railroad Museum. 7am 11am <http://www.sdmrm.org/>
- 20-21, 27-28 Fall Tractor Show, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, Short Track Railroad Open House, 10am 4pm. 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. www.agsem.com
- 25 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic, 7pm. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>
- 30 Poway Station Public Clinic, 7pm. Porter House Parlor, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA. www.powaystation.org

November

- 3 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic, 9:30am. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>
- 27 Poway Station Public Clinic, 7pm. Porter House Parlor, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA. www.powaystation.org
- 29 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic, 7pm. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>

December

- 1-2 Great Train Expo, Del Mar Fairgrounds, 10am - 4pm each day. Admission. www.greattrainexpo.com
- 8 Christmas in the Park, including Poway Station N scale modular layout. 3:30 - 8:30pm. Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland road, Poway, CA. Free admission. Steam trains rides available. www.poway.org

January

- 5-6 Great Train Expo, Anaheim Convention Center, 10am - 4pm each day. Admission. www.greattrainexpo.com
- 24 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic, 7pm. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>
- 29 Poway Station Public Clinic, 7pm. Porter House Parlor, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA. www.powaystation.org

February

- 2 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic, 9:30am. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>
- 9-10 World's Greatest Hobby On Tour, Del Mar Fairgrounds. 1-am - 6pm Saturday, 10am - 5pm Sunday. Admission. www.wghshow.com
- 26 Poway Station Public Clinic, 7pm. Porter House Parlor, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA. www.powaystation.org
- 28 Short Track Railroad Public Clinic, 7pm. Short Track Section House, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 North Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA. <http://www.shorttrackrr.org>

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Layout Tours *from Page 5*

scenes very effectively. He's made some changes since our last visit, so even if you've seen this railroad before, it will be worth your time to visit again. PLEASE NOTE: This tour will take place on the THIRD Saturday (9/15), to eliminate conflict with the Pacific Southwest Region Conference in Oxnard on the second Saturday.

October

October will take us to visit with Ken Allen, and his Dakota Northwestern Railroad (DNR). This N scale railroad was originally built by John Sigurdson, MMR, and featured in *Model Railroader* magazine in December 1986. Ken acquired the railroad when John moved up to O scale. Ken subsequently moved to Arizona and back, and has only recently begun to reassemble the layout. With the help of several members of Short Track Railroad, Ken has restored it to operation. Along the way electronics have been upgraded and operation improved. This is one railroad you'll want to see.

* * *

Riding the Coast Starlight Over the Tehachapi Loop by Dan Conway

It all started on 18 December 2011 with an e-mail from John Barkley to all members of the North County Model Railroad Society:

"This is a cut and paste from Amtrak's website. Is this a stealth way of announcing a Tehachapi Loop run on the Coast Starlight out of LA? I added the emphasis: 'Train 14 Operates Nonstop Los Angeles - Oakland: February 1 - 8, 2012. From February 1 through February 8, Train 14 will travel on an alternate route from Los Angeles to Oakland and will not stop at any intermediate stations.'"

I am sure the excitement started in a similar way throughout the PSR when the cryptic text on the Amtrak website was noted. Other railfan websites were consulted, and members of the railroad fraternity talked among themselves about possibilities, and plans. It was established that the Union Pacific was doing major maintenance work on its north-bound mainline between Los Angeles and Oakland. But it was hard to get concrete information on the "alternate route" the Coast Starlight was going to follow.

The word was that the Starlight would go up over the Cajon Pass, and then would be routed through Mojave, over the famous Tehachapi Loop and through Fresno and points north before reaching Oakland. The idea was magic: the Coast Starlight, the Cajon Pass, the Tehachapi Loop, three of California's most famous railroad icons, all in one package. Plans started to be made.

With three other couples from our club, my wife Lise and I rode the Coast Starlight as far as Oakland on Friday, 3 February. Others planned to make the trip on other dates. Some railfans were not so lucky: those who took the Starlight on Thursday, 2 February were very disappointed, because the Union Pacific sent the train on its normal route north out of Los Angeles, through the track work. No Cajon Pass. No Tehachapi Loop. A nice train ride, perhaps, but not what they had wanted.

On Thursday, there was concern among those of us planning a Friday trip. There was word of a derailment on the line near the Loop, and there was worry that the Starlight would again be sent north on its normal route, and not through the Loop. Even on Friday morning, this nagging worry persisted.

But on Friday, our little group took the Surfliner out of Oceanside at 7:01 AM, and arrived at Los Angeles Union Station at 8:50 AM. We had time to enjoy the nicely restored art deco waiting room at the station before boarding the Coast Starlight for its 10:25 AM departure. Looking around the station, I saw several other railfans in the place, looking at maps, checking cameras, and drinking coffee, waiting.

Finally the train was called, we boarded, got our assigned seats, and then went up to the lounge car to watch the world glide by. The lounge filled up quickly with railroad fans, and conversations grew to include lone travelers and to link groups of fellow enthusiasts as we rolled through the LA urban railscape.

Cajon Pass, however, was not to be in our future. Contrary to everyone's speculation, the Starlight was routed along the Metrolink Ventura line as far as Burbank, and then up the Metrolink Antelope Valley line to its terminus at Lancaster. From there, the Starlight was on BNSF rails as far as Mojave, where it entered Union Pacific territory for the trip to Tehachapi, over the Loop, and onwards to Oakland. A trip up Cajon Pass would have been great, but the real highlight of this trip was always going to be going around the Tehachapi Loop, which normally does not handle passenger trains, in the Coast Starlight.

Cont'd...

Riding the Coast Starlight Over the Tehachapi Loop (cont'd)

As we rolled through Tehachapi, anticipation grew in the lounge car. There were some tunnels, and then we passed a few freight cars sitting on the ground near the tracks, the result of yesterday's derailment. We all said a quiet thanks that the wreck had been cleared in time to let us make our trip over the Loop.

And then, there it was as we emerged from a tunnel: below us and to our right, the Loop was spread out before us. We still had a downgrade ahead before we reached the Loop. Suddenly, the town of Caliente came into view, far down at the bottom of the deep canyon beyond the Loop. At first, there was uncertainty in the lounge car: was that really Caliente? Way down there? Does the line really descend that far, fast enough for us to pass through that town? But yes, it was Caliente. Way down there!

We had been climbing a 2.2% grade from Mojave to reach this point, and had passed the high point on the line, a summit at 4,025 feet, near Tehachapi. From the tunnel we had just passed through, the line descended towards the Loop. In the Loop itself, the grade is 2%, and the track climbs (or descends) 77 feet. There are 68 miles of track from Mojave to Bakersfield, which passes through 18 tunnels and around three horseshoe curves.

The Tehachapi Loop was built by the Southern Pacific Railroad starting in 1874. The first train reached Los Angeles over this route in 1876. The Loop was considered one of the greatest engineering achievements of its time, and in 1998 the Tehachapi Loop was recognized as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

The Coast Starlight descended to the Loop, and began its trip around the circle to Tunnel 9, where we passed under the track we had just been on. The train continued down grade, eventually arriving at Caliente, the town that looked so improbably far away and far below when we first saw it from the Loop above. We continued through Bakersfield, and on towards Oakland. After night had fallen, the Starlight performed an unusual move to get from one Union Pacific line to another, backing up a side track until the full length of the Starlight was past a switch, which was then thrown and we proceeded forward through the turnout and onto the track that would take us to Oakland.

Some of us spent the night in Oakland at a hotel near the Amtrak station, and caught the southbound Coast Starlight the next day. Others spent more time in the Bay area, and still others flew home to San Diego. Lise and I took the southbound train, and enjoyed that journey as well, through beautiful scenery, and notably through the unspoiled coastal area on Vandenburg Air Force Base, and lovely Santa Barbara. North over the Loop, and South along the coast, we had two great days of railfanning, and rail travel.

What impresses me most now as I look back are the enormous changes in altitude we experienced on our one-day trip over the Tehachapi Loop, as roughly shown below.

Coast Starlight over Tehachapi Loop

3 February 2012

Altitudes Along Route

<u>Location</u>	<u>Track Used</u>	<u>Altitude in Feet</u>
Los Angeles Union Station	Metrolink Ventura Line	295
Burbank	Metrolink Antelope Valley Line	575
San Fernando		1,065
Santa Clarita		1,410
Palmdale		2,625
Lancaster	End of Metrolink Line	2,385
	BNSF track to Mojave	
Mojave	Union Pacific track	2,770
Tehachapi		3,970
Top of Loop	grade in loop: 2%	3,027
Bottom of Loop	down 77 feet:	2,950
Keene		2,640
Caliente		1,310
Bakersfield Yard		425
Amtrak Station, Oakland		15

NOTE: All altitude figures are approximate.

* * *

PSR San Diego Yahoo Group

By: Pete Steinmetz

Tired of getting a lot of e-mails? Here is a trick. Set your mail preference to "Digest". That way you will get one mail per day that contains all the posts that happened during that day. If there were 10 posts, normally you would get 10 e-mails. Set to "Digest" you get 1. If there were 20 posts that day, you still get 1.

How to set your e-mail preferences to "Digest"

1. Sign into the Yahoo Group with your Yahoo ID and password.
2. Click on the PSRSanDiego group.
3. Toward the top of the page click on "Edit Membership"
4. Scroll down to "Message Delivery" and choose "Daily Digest".

While you are there, you can also add or delete e-mail addresses or change which e-mail address your messages go to.

OR

Members can e-mail me at psrsandiego-owner@yahoogroups.com and I will change it for you. I can't change a member's e-mail address, only the delivery method. I don't see anyone's full e-mail address or password. A member's personal data is safe and secure.

Remember to **sign your posts** with your full name. We like to know who is on the group. Other divisions in the PSR are noticing our group and what an efficient way it is to communicate with our members.

* * *

NMRA NEWS

Here are the official results from the NMRA elections:

President:

Charles W. Getz, IV, HLM

Vice President - Administration:

Dave Thornton

Vice President - Special Projects:

Bill Kaufman

At-Large North American Director:

Miles Hale, MMR

Eastern District Director:

John Roberts, MMR, HLM

Pacific District Director:

Mike Bartlett



Our NMRA Online Archives is now open for business! Taken from photo and art collections donated to the NMRA, the Online Archives already features over 10,000 images of locomotives, structures, cabooses, depots, and much more. Images include color and black & white photos, drawings, erection elevations, paint schemes, plans, and logos. NMRA members can download high-quality scans of any of the images for just \$2 each. Non-NMRA members can download scans for \$4 each. And browsing's free! Just click on the "NMRA Online Archives" link at the left to get started.

Members Only Area The NMRA is developing a "Members Only" area. We think we have worked out most of the bugs. Do please let us know if you have issues registering. The Member area can be found [here](http://www.nmra.org/member/) at <http://www.nmra.org/member/>

CLUB CAR

This feature will run every issue that I receive input from the clubs. Use this space to keep us up to date on your current activities. Submit announcements to the editor at any time for the next edition.



Short Track continues to move forward with construction on the Donner Pass Exhibit. People who only visit occasionally remark on what progress we are making.

Our monthly clinics continue to be popular. The clinics are on the fourth Thursday of the month, starting at 7:00PM, and the first Saturday, starting at 9:30am. There will be no clinic Labor Day Weekend.

The August 23 clinic will feature Eric Bradford describing one technique for speed matching of DCC locomotives. This will help those that want to consist multiple DCC lashups.

Check out www.shorttrackrr.org for details.

The San Diego S Gaugers recent meeting was preceded by a Fix Your Locomotive work session, and several locomotives were returned to the tracks as a result. Our window layout is progressing nicely. The station is being constructed and the mountain in the corner is being upgraded.

We will be the featured layout again this year on Labor Day Weekend at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park. This will be a four day event. Beginning the Wednesday before, we will be tearing down the layout in our home location and preparing it for transit to the park. We'll set up in the park Thursday, and the layout will operate Friday through Monday. We'll return the modules to the clubhouse late Monday afternoon. Tuesday and Wednesday we'll rebuild the layout at Liberty Station.



The new walls around both the O-scale layout and the HO (SD&AE) layout have been completed. These walls give a uniform look to both layouts and the windows provide access to the scenery at the edge of the layouts.

Now that we have access on the SD&AE layout, we can begin to install and rehab scenery. There is a 4 inch gap between the new walls and the edge of the layout which will need to be filled. Scenery is never done it seems. The SP and SD&AE depots in the El Centro area are being moved out from behind a post for better display. The SP depot has interior scenery. The SD&AE depot is now getting interior scenery that it never had before. The public visitors always try to look into any building near the edge of the layout. I'm sure you have noticed this when visitors visit your layout.

The O-scale layout is getting a lot of new wiring. Some of the old wire was not of adequate size and the trains would slow down in some sections just because there wasn't enough current flowing through the small size wire. The layout is now signaled and panel indicators tell the operator where the trains are at any time.

Come down on Friday nights (use Museum backdoor) for more information or contact me. We can always use help in all aspects of model railroading.

Ron Goudy

Cont'd...

“Ventura Flyer 2012” Pacific Southwest Regional Convention

By Carl Heimberger

Planning is well underway for the 2012 PSR/NMRA Convention to be held in Oxnard, California, September 6th to 9th, 2012. As the convention Chair I would like to highlight some of the Convention activities with the hope you will attend.

The Ventura Flyer will feature over 60 hours of clinics that will range from basic how to get started in the hobby including how to build bench work, designing your track plan and installing track work, wiring, buildings, scenery, tuning up locomotives and rolling stock for flawless performance, and programming DCC. We will also have clinics tailored to hold the interest of the most experienced modelers as well. Here is a sample of clinics; Joe Villaryo - A three part clinic on how to install DCC sound in any locomotive; Orange County Module Railroader Club will present their DCC Camp where you can bring your locomotive and club members will show you with hands on how to program address, speed settings, sound and lighting; Todd Scott will do 3-D backdrops, and a series of clinics still in the planning stage, presented by Jimmy Simons and Scotty Mason, that will captivate you for most of the convention. And not to leave out the Railettes, a full schedule of clinics and special luncheon will be available for them to enjoy.

A convention is not just about clinics however, and we have already lined up some spectacular layouts to tour; Mike Murphy's 26' X 30' transition era railroad featuring Santa Fe Southern Pacific/Union Pacific operations; Santa Susana Model Railroad Club representing Southern Pacific's Coast Line in mid 1950's; South Coast Museum, housed in a 1901 Southern Pacific Depot, with steam/early diesel era Southern Pacific; and no visit to Ventura – Santa Barbra would be complete without visiting Gary Siegel's HO L&N were it is 1971 and 1st and 2nd generation diesels rule.

We will also have a full series of social events including the Wednesday welcome reception, Friday night Hobo Auction, and the Saturday AM will bring a swap meet followed in the evening with the Awards Banquet.

A Convention is only as good as the Convention Facility and the Courtyard by Marriott Oxnard is a class act. The hotel room rate is \$109.00 + local taxes and fees, and includes free parking and breakfast for two per room.

The Los Angeles Division looks forward to seeing you at the “2012 Ventura Flyer”. For additional information visit the NMRA/Pacific Southwest Region Convention web site or contact:

Carl Heimberger - cjheimberger@gmail.com

Mike Allee – rmallee@me.com

* * *

Model Railroad Clinics Available Locally

A couple of local clubs have opened up their clinics to anyone who wants to attend, not just club members. Both Poway Station and Short Track Railroad have a clinic program aimed at improving the skills of their members, and both have graciously opened attendance to any interested party. Poway Station's clinics will be held in the Porter House in Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA, the last Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Short Track clinics will be held in their section house at the Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave, Vista, CA, on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7pm. Short Track's next offering will be a presentation on speed matching DCC locomotives, by Eric Bradford, on August 23. Poway Station offers Track, ballasting, and basic scenery, by Adrian Barnard, on August 28. Both groups meet for dinner prior to the clinic. For more information, contact:

Poway Station - president@powystation.org

Short Track - modeltrains@agsem.com

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Mail Hook

The "Mail Hook" is the official publication of the San Diego Division, Pacific Southwest Region, National Model Railroad Association (NMRA®), and is published quarterly in San Diego, California. The "Mail Hook" is available to all members of the NMRA® who live in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Responsibility: Except for official reports, all opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the San Diego Division or its parent organizations.

Subscriptions: The "Mail Hook" is available in hard copy (paper) by subscription at the following rates: \$6/year for NMRA® members, \$10/year for non-NMRA® members, and is mailed First Class.

Delivery: The "Mail Hook" is available in hard copy (paper) format through paid subscription and at San Diego Division events. Normal distribution is through email delivery or on the Division and PSR websites.

Submissions: Contributions of articles on any railroad or model railroading topic of interest to the membership are welcome. There is no compensation, but published articles can be credited to the NMRA® Author Achievement Certificate. If you are interested in submitting articles, event information, or other information of interest to members of the Division, please follow these guidelines:

1. Preferred method is by email to the editor, with the submission attached as a text document. Also accepted are: text document on diskette, printout from laser or ink jet printer, or typed using new ribbon.
2. Keep in mind that submissions may be edited for length or formatting, or not used, at the discretion of the editor.
3. Submission deadlines for publication: January 2, April 1, July 1, and October 1.
4. If you wish submission materials returned (i.e., photos), please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your submission.

From the Editor...

Well, the first thing is, I apologize for the absence of the second quarter Mail Mook. I knew I was going to be under the gun to get it out, then my computer went down (no backup), and I had to leave town for a couple of weeks. When I got back, I got a new computer, but I couldn't find the software I needed to complete the Mail Hook. I'll tell you, being an editor isn't easy. So, those few of you who subscribe to the hard copy will have your subscription extended one quarter.

I think I've gotten everything of importance into this combined issue. The size of it and the timing of my knee surgery has prohibited the inclusion of any pictures, although I may add some of them later and update the issue on the web. Hard copy subscribers won't miss the pictures anyway.

I'd like to put on my Director's hat for a moment, and encourage any of you who might be interested in helping out the Division to contact me. My second term as Director will be up, and I can't run again. It isn't a hard job, but there is a minimum time commitment, and there may be a small cost. Depending on your current habits in attending the PSR Convention, it may not be an additional cost.

Speaking of the Convention, it's coming up next month. Carl Heimberger and the LA Division have put together an exciting program, and I can't wait to get there! I hope many of you will be able to attend.

We welcome a new author, Linda Albracht, this month, with her article on the layout at George Boggs Six Lazy Bs ranch and his Little Great Norther and Pacific Railway. I'll try to replace the pictures when I update this issue.

We've got some fun and exciting things coming up, as mentioned in the events calendar. I hope you are all taking advantage of the local clinics!

Model Railroad Clubs in San Diego

San Diego Model Railroad Museum

Balboa Park, San Diego

Info: www.sdmodelrailroadm.com

La Mesa Model Railroad Club (HO)

Info: LaMesaClub@att.net

San Diego 3-Railers (O)

Info: (858) 538-0930

San Diego Model Railroad Club (HO & O)

Info: www.sdmrrc.org

San Diego Society of N Scale (N)

Info: www.sdsons.org

North County Model Railroad Society (HO)

*If you would like your club listed, contact
the Club Liason, San Diego Division*

Oceanside. Info: (760) 722-7366 www.ncmrs.org

Poway Station All Scale Modular Club

Info: www.powystation.org

San Diego Free-Mo (HO)

<http://sdfreemo.org/>

San Diego Garden Railway Society

Info: www.sdgrs.com

San Diego S-Gaugers

Info: <http://sites.google.com/site/sdsgaugers/Home>

Short Track Railroad Club (N)

Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, Vista

Info: www.shorttrackrr.org

ZoCal Group (Z)

Info: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ZoCal>

Online - Web Sites of Interest

NMRA: www.nmra.org

PSR: www.psrnmra.org

NMRA National Convention <http://www.gr2012.org/>

San Diego Division: <http://www.sandiegodivision.org/>

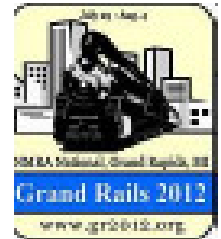
Arizona Division: www.azdiv-nmra.org

Cajon Division: www.cajondiv.org

Los Angeles Division: www.ladiv-nmra.org/

San Diego Model Railroad Museum: www.sdmodelrailroadm.com

San Diego Rail: www.sandiegorail.com



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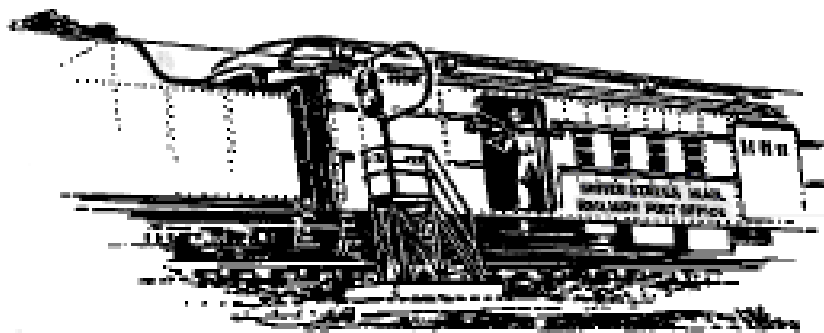
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MAIL HOOK

LOOK INSIDE FOR THE LATEST NEWS!

- Coast Starlight over Tehachapi!
 - PSR Convention
 - NMRA Election Results
- Look Inside!



MAIL HOOK

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