



MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

2nd Quarter, 2021 Edition

In this Issue:

Superintendent's Report

San Diego Division Zoom meetings

Articles:

Adding Detail to a Timber Trestle Bridge by Bob Behm

Car Department Rolling Stock Standards For Rail Cars, Part 1, by Mike Hampson

Give and Take, by Rudy Spano, Membership Chair

NMRA Exhibit, California State Railroad Museum

Events Calendar

Superintendent's Report



The light is at the end of the tunnel! The San Diego Division has plans for holding the August 2021 meet in person. Stay tuned for details. And if you are not ready to meet in person or live too far away, you can still participate because it will also be our first “hybrid” meeting, meaning we will use Zoom to simulcast the program. For those attending in-person, we will be following any and all Covid restrictions and guidelines that remain in place at that time.

We are thankful we have been able to maintain important connections over this past year with our members because of our virtual events. We were even able to reach out all the divisions in the PSR, and beyond the boundaries of the Region. Thank you for supporting us and coming along for the ride!

Coming up in September is another in-person Model Railroading event opportunity. If you have not registered for the PSR “Orange Blossom Special” 2021 Convention, do so today! The folks in the Cajon Division are working hard to make a great convention for you. The details appear in this issue of the Mail Hook.

But wait there is more! The San Diego Division is in the planning stages for the 2022 PSR Convention. Consider volunteering to help. See Rudy Spano’s article “Give and Take” to expand your thoughts in this area :-)

Also, be sure to read updates of past events and the great modeling articles by San Diego Division members Bob Behm and Mike Hampson.

Happy Modeling!
Ryan

Directors Report



Over the last year, I could write the same report month after month. Lately, there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel. There have been a couple well attended outdoor train swap meets. There is a train show scheduled for August in Pomona. The San Diego Division is planning to get back to “In person” meets. One big sign people are getting out more is traffic. I used to be able to get from Oceanside to North park San Diego in 40 minutes. Now it takes the better part of an hour. If I don’t leave early to return home it will take over an hour to get to Oceanside.

So much for the traffic report.

The NMRA has a new President elect. Gordy Robinson was elected during the recent election. Gordy will officially take office in July. Gordy is the organizer of the popular NMRAX on line meets. They are now running once a month on the last Saturday of the month. Viewing is available on Facebook and You Tube. The San Diego Division continues to present their monthly Zoom meet on the second Saturday of the month at 1:00PM. James Knabb and I run our monthly Zoom meet on the third Sunday of the month at 11:00AM. That’s a lot of modeling for NMRA members and guests to take in. It’s also nice to see the layouts in Balboa Park reopen. The San Diego S Gauge in Grossmont Center is opening back up. The Old Town Model Railroad Depot is open. Check individual web sites for days and times.

Pete Steinmetz

Zoom meetings:

Note that videos for our Zoom Meetings can be viewed on YouTube at

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmVkw_U9jF5NwhFi_jR7vow

Or do a search on YouTube for San Diego Division PSR-NMRA

We have had some excellent Zoom meets that I am sure you would enjoy watching.

May 8, 2021, Saturday, 1:00 pm - 3 pm (PDT)



Layout Tour: The layout tour is by Wayne Pierce who will be presenting his fictional [Mini-ton Railroad & Lumber Co.](#) On 30 narrow gauge layout. The railroad was originally designed for modeling only, but then through talking with model railroad friends, Wayne changed his layout to be designed for Operations Sessions.

Clinic: James Knabb (Trinity River Division, Lone Star Region - Texas, USA) will be presenting, "The Next Generation in Model Railroading".

James will explore the modeling preferences and techniques used by the next generation. He will also analyze modern era modeling and what connection railfanning has to it. He will discuss new and trending technologies that are being used such as a 3D Pen and using photo editing software for model train layouts.

In addition, he will chat about what the next generation has been doing to stay busy in the model railroad community during the Covid-19 pandemic. Lastly, he will talk about how to use social media as a tool for National Model Railroading Association Divisions and model railroad clubs.

Past meets:

February 13, 2021

Layout Tour: Steve Bradley did a wonderful job presenting his fascinating HO and HO_n3 (narrow gauge) layout covering the Southern Pacific Railroad Mina Subdivision (Southwest Nevada to Eastern California - USA).



Steve designed the model railroad on digital software for a 10' X 10' room as a point to point operational layout. Many structures are scratch built to match real buildings from the area. Almost all of the rail cars are custom built and weathered kits. Many of the engines are brass and custom painted.

Clinic: "JMRI: What It Is,

What It Does", by Robin Becker.

Robin gave a top notch presentation introducing the highlights of JMRI. Robin works with the JMRI group in development and has extensive expertise in the model railroad control software. Robin is also a certified railroad engineer having operated full size engines at the Campo Museum.

Java Model Railroad Interface (JMRI) is a powerful collection of software tools for model railroaders that span the gamut from locomotive programming to complete automated operation. The tools are free, support virtually every computer platform and interface with almost all DCC systems.

The clinic introduces the various features of JMRI: Easy DCC decoder programming, layout panels, signaling, operations, use of mobile devices as throttles. We will wrap up with an example of a customized user addition via "scripting".

Show & Tell: Tim Foote did a presentation on choosing and installing speakers in a locomotive.

March 13, 2021



Layout Tour: Don Fowler, [Master Model Railroader](#), presented his museum quality N scale Southern Pacific's Mojave Division private layout. The layout was made for operations. It was also designed so no one has to duck under the layout during an operations session.

Don's 20' x 22' double-decker N scale layout depicts segments between Southern Pacific's Intermodal Container Transfer Facility from Los Angeles (California, USA) to

Bakersfield (California, USA) from 1975 1995. The layout includes the Tehachapi Loop (using artistic license) and Southern Pacific's West Colton's Classification Yard, complete with a diesel service facility, and an arrival & departure yard.

Show & Tell: Steve Sidensticker demonstrated a new HO scale Blue Amtrak locomotive with Blue Rail electronics inside to control the locomotive and which uses batteries inside to power the locomotive (dead rail).

Steve Bradley displayed a Southern Pacific box car resin kit, converted into a caboose. In the past, Southern Pacific would try to keep their wooden box cars as long as possible and would recycle them as well. Southern Pacific would take a wooden box car and convert it into a caboose.

Clinic: Don Fowler, [Master Model Railroader](#), did a presentaion How Operations Works with his N scale Southern Pacific's Mojave Division private layout. Don uses manifests in his operations sessions and has simplified car switching by car type rather than requiring the reading of car numbers on N scale cars.

April 10, 2021



Layout Tour: The layout tour was presented by Steve Seidensticker featuring his outdoor One scale layout. The layout uses G scale track but the engines and rolling stock look more realistic than G scale.

All locomotives run by "dead rail", that is, there is no power on the rail. The locomotives have micro batteries and DCC with Bluetooth, so they can be operated by wireless throttles or by smart phones. Steve has a point-to-point layout designed for operations and switching. Steve also has regular operations sessions every month

Clinic: Bob Behm gave us an excellent clinic on using LED strip lights to illuminate your layout. The clinic provides an understanding of the electronics and details needed to install strip lighting.

Articles:

Adding Detail to a Timber Trestle Bridge

By: Bob Behm

If you are building a timber trestle, don't forget the NBWs. Both, Tichy Train Group and San Juan Details formerly Grandt Line, provide a much needed detail that adds realism to the structure. Nut, Bolt and Washer (NBW) come in a large variety of diameters and styles.



At NCMRS the tall canyon trestle uses the Tichy Train Group #8143. This is a NBW representing a 3" bolt, 5" nut, and a 12" square washer. They are molded in rust color styrene. I chose to paint and pre-rust before they were attached.



I like to blend different shades of rust to each NBW and allow the color to wash down the timbers.



On the shorter of the two trestles, a smaller size NBW was selected.



Drill a .025 hole with pin vise and drop in the NBW with tweezers. They are hardly visible on top of the 6" x 6" Safety Bollard. Rust and weather.



The finished image.

Car Department Rolling Stock Standards For Rail Cars, Part 1.

Mike Hampson



After many years of not being in the model railroad hobby, I decided to get back into the hobby in October 2019. I wanted to quickly learn as much as possible about model railroading, so I started reading about the hobby online. I had no idea how many new discoveries I'd make.

Some of the major things I had never heard of was Model Railroader Magazine, DCC/Sound (I was shocked and very happy about this), the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) and that there were model railroad clubs which you could join (I was quite surprised and happy about this). Also, when I first learned about

DCC & Sound, I knew I wanted to bypass DC and go directly to DCC & Sound. Then, I keep reading articles about Operations Sessions and did not understand this term. It took me three months to learn what Operations meant.

Some of my first steps into the world of model railroading were:

- Reading as much as I could online about the hobby.
- Getting a subscription to Model Railroader Magazine
- Started purchasing a lot of books about the hobby and real railroads
- Got advice from Reed's Hobby Shop employees
- Started purchasing items to make a HO train hobby work bench
- Started purchasing HO model tools including the NMRA Standards Gage
- Purchased a NCE Power Cab
- Purchased rolling stock and track
- Joined the National Model Railroad Association
- Joined the La Mesa Model Railroad Club

As I was reading articles in Model Railroader Magazine, I read an article which talked about the goal of never derailling your train, by adding better components to your rolling stock. I was shocked. I had no idea that I could buy better components and install them on rolling stock. It's at this point when I started investigating on how to improve rolling stock.

Some of the first things I learned at Reed's Hobby Shop was to pick a scale, pick a railroad, choose DC or DCC/Sound, the importance of using metal Kadee couplers and the importance of using metal Intermountain wheelsets.

As many of you probably know, Kadee couplers are extremely well machined, made of metal, include one tiny spring for each coupler head and have two metal whiskers at the rear of the coupler shank. The small whiskers allow for reliable back and forth action of the coupler around turns and will return the coupler to being straight when on straight track. Kadee couplers are very important when running long trains because these couplers will be able to withstand the pulling and pushing forces which long model trains exert on the couplers. Kadee couplers will absolutely improve the coupler action on any length of train, including short trains.

Furthermore, the coupler model used on your model rail car are more prototypical, if it matches the same coupler model as the prototype. For example, a model box car will typically take a standard Kadee coupler, such as a #148 or #158 coupler. However, on a model tank car, you need to purchase the #119 coupler, called a double-shelf coupler. Tank car couplers, once coupled, are difficult to uncouple.

In real life, double-shelf couplers are installed on hazardous material tank cars because they are designed to remain engaged with car bounce, coupler drop or during a train accident. These specialized couplers are needed because when a tank car coupler becomes uncoupled, the coupler can ride up over the draft assembly and puncture the head of the tank car, allowing hazardous material to escape. Double-shelf couplers greatly reduce the chance of couplers uncoupling and puncturing the ends of another tank car. Also, it's fun to see Kadee #119 couplers on tank cars because you can visually see these #119 couplers have completely different coupler heads than a standard rail car coupler.

About wheelsets. Reed's Hobby Shop recommends to only use metal Intermountain wheelsets because plastic wheelsets pick up dust and don't run as freely on the trucks. I also surmise that plastic wheelsets will wear out faster and could be deformed from the start (or get deformed) and will not have a long service life. Metal wheelsets don't pick up as much dust and they run more freely on the truck. When checked with the NMRA Standards Gage and other tests are performed, metal wheelsets should have a very long service life.

After months of reading and trying to understand all of this, I finally started to learn that the wheelset size on your model rail cars need to be the same size as the prototype's wheelset. In a later article, I will discuss more about wheelset sizes and the other moving component on a rail car - trucks.

I started reading the National Model Railroad Association's website on rolling stock standards and I've printed out multiple standards pages from the NMRA website. Even though I didn't understand all the information in the standards pages when I first read them, these standard's sheets also helped me to begin learning about good model rail car standards.

When I joined the La Mesa Model Railroad Club, they provided me with a seven page document with their Rolling Stock Standards requirements. Some of the information in their Rolling Stock Standards I understood at first but most of it, I did not understand. Again, this lead me to wanting to learn more about how to improve each piece of rolling stock I owned and what test equipment I needed to purchase or make.

In addition, my model railroad online searches helped me find the *Run Like A Dream Rolling Stock* book published by Model Railroad Hobbyist. I have read this book several times.

As I finish Part 1 of this article, I will leave you with some questions and further information.

When it comes to rolling stock standards and maintenance, I would ask yourself, what is the goal of your model train hobby?

- For example, if you are a collector, collectors buy locomotives and rolling stock and the collector possibly never takes it out of the box, never makes a layout and never runs trains! No rolling stock standards or maintenance is required for model train collectors. (In March 2021, is when I learned there are model railroad hobby collectors. Who knew?)
- If you have your own layout and run short trains, do you need to improve your rolling stock components and improve the stability and rollability of each of your rail cars?
- If you are part of a model railroad club with a large layout and you plan on pulling long trains, will having better components and testing your rail cars for stability and rollability be important to you?

Here are some reasons for having improved rail cars.

- You reduce the wear and tear on your locomotives because your wheelsets have less friction when rolling than plastic wheelsets do.
- You reduce derailments to almost zero which results in not ruining your rail cars because they are not falling off the track, or onto the floor and shattering.
- You don't risk the embarrassment of derailments among your fellow model railroaders and/or friends.
- You can be proud that you actually know about the finer points of model railroading and that you've actually improved your rolling stock performance.
- You will also have rolling stock which will provide many years of service without the components failing.

In my future articles, I will discuss the tools and test equipment I use and how I made my rolling stock standards check list. It has taken me over a year to develop my check list I use for each piece of rolling stock. So, I've included some pictures of my tools and rolling stock standards check lists. If anyone is wondering, I am actually still in the process of revising and updating my rolling stock standards checklist! I've included these pictures to help you see the process I've been going through, during 2020 and 2021 with creating my Car Department with its Rolling Stock Standards and Rolling Stock Standards Checklist.

Give and Take

Rudy Spano, Membership Chair

In the April 2021 issue of the NMRA Magazine, Editor Cinthia Priest wrote in her column, Observation Car, an article titled Why? Why? Why? In the article she asks four good questions for members to consider. Why did you join the NMRA? Why do you stay? Why do you see membership in the NMRA as being personally beneficial? And Why would you encourage other modelers to join? Some of the answers she gives includes the fellowship with Association members and the techniques that she and her husband have learned from other modelers. She also mentions the standards set by the NMRA for our hobby. This got me thinking about how I would answer those questions.

I joined the NMRA to support my hobby and to be a part of a group of likeminded modelers and railfans. I stay because I continue to gain new friends, learn new techniques and have a chance to visit great layouts across the country at conventions and through Zoom sessions like NMRAX. The NMRA provides continuing learning, sets standards for manufacturers and hobbyists and provides an opportunity to be evaluated for talent and skills through its Achievement Program, all good reasons to join and support the Organization.

But then I started thinking not just about the benefits to me of being an NMRA member, but how I could be a benefit to the NMRA. While there are opportunities on the National and Regional levels, I stayed focused on the Division level. My questions for members would be along these lines, How can you help the Division organizationally? How can you help your fellow modelers learn more about your hobby? How can you be more involved in the Division activities?

Two years ago, I was approached to be the Membership Chair for the Division Planning Committee. I accepted and found not only was I contributing the Division organizationally, but I was meeting new friends and learning a lot about the Region and National NMRA. Currently there are several positions open on the committee. Maybe that is a way for you to give back to the Division.

We have been meeting monthly on Zoom. For one of the meetings, I did a show and tell of my layout. There are always opportunities to share at these meetings through show and tell, doing a tour of your layout or presenting a clinic. Maybe this is an opportunity to give back to your fellow modelers.

Finally, in 2022, the San Diego Division will be hosting the Pacific Southwest Regional Convention here in San Diego. As the event gets closer, we will be looking for volunteers to help make this a great experience for the San Diego members as well as the other three Divisions in our Region. Please consider saying yes if the opportunity to help out arises.

Thank you all for your continuing support of the NMRA and the San Diego Division through your membership. Thank you, too, for considering taking a more active role in supporting your hobby and your fellow modelers.

The Magic of Scale Model Railroading at the California State Railroad Museum

After over 15 years of development, construction, and installation, NMRA's exhibit titled "The Magic of Scale Model Railroading" opened at the California State Railroad Museum on April 6, 2021. A detailed, 6-page feature article with a floor plan, authored by exhibit leader Charlie Getz, appears in the April 2021 NMRA Magazine. You can also view the article here:

<https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/museum/21-0321-exhibitarticle.pdf>

This series of posts shows brief highlights of the exhibit. A set of 40+ photos is available online on Flickr here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmUFzyye>

Welcome To Our Newest Members

July 2020 through March 2021

John Grim	Solona Beach
Jack Moran	Chula Vista
Larry Riehle	El Centro
Earl Grad	Poway
Lyndon Foster	Oceanside
Wayne Pierce	El Cajon
Steve Williams	San Diego

Rerails: Members who have rejoined the Division after a leave of absence

San Diego Model Railroad Museum	Balboa Park
Richard Bale	Oceanside
Leo Staples	Escondido
Ron Walker	San Diego

EVENTS CALENDAR:

If you want your event listed please contact mailhook@sandiegodivision.org



NMRA Pacific Southwest Region 2021 Convention The Orange Blossom Special

September 8 - 11, 2021, Hilton Hotel / Orange County Airport

Please consider signing up for the convention put on this year by the Cajon Division of the PSR. The conventions provide a very memorable and inspiring experience. They will have some great clinics and unique layout tours including a very Interesting Disney themed garden layout tour:

<https://www.cptrr.com/videos.html>

They will also offer a prototype tour of the Union Pacific Railroad GEMCO yard. These yard tours are a once in a lifetime opportunity to see a prototype railroad in action and they are extremely informative. There will also be a hobo auction, a swap meet and an awards banquet.

More info at:

<https://psrconvention.org/OrangeBlossomSpecial2021/>



National Model Railroad Association
Pacific Southwest Region

2021

“Orange Blossom Special” MODEL RAILROAD CONVENTION

September 8 – 11, 2021

Hilton Irvine/Orange County Airport Hotel
Irvine, Ca



❖ Operating Sessions

Featuring:

10+ Layouts

❖ Prototype Tours

Including:

A Tour of **The UPRR Gemco Yard**

❖ Non-Rail Activities & Tours

Including:

Whale Watching & The Nixon Library

❖ Welcome Reception

❖ Private Layout Tours

❖ Railroad Modeling Clinics

❖ Hobo Breakfast

❖ Model Railroad/Railroadiana Swap Meet

❖ Railroad Model Contest Room

❖ Model Railroad Auction

❖ Awards Banquet

Hotel Reservations: You can now reserve your room on-line by going to the convention website and clicking on the ‘Hotel’ link. The convention rate rooms at the Hilton are guaranteed to fill up, and you don’t want to miss out on the discount, or worse, be trying to find a last-minute hotel deal. Hilton Reservations: 949-833-9999 – Group Name: 2021 PSR Convention / Group Code: PSRC

Convention Tours: Convention staff is working on securing additional rail and non-rail tours. Currently, the list of tours includes the UPRR Gemco Yard in Van Nuys, as well as a trip to the Nixon Library and a Whale Watching Tour for the non-rail attendees. Check the website for additional information and updates.

Convention Goodies: Don’t forget to check out the Company Store, where you will find shirts, pins, patches, as well as our special run model railroad cars.

Registration: The full fare rate of \$125 covers your convention registration and the awards banquet. See the convention website for complete registration and convention details.

www.PSRConvention.org

From the Editor

Do your part for the club and submit an article:

The Mail Hook needs interesting articles and features. Please consider writing and submitting an article on a model railroading or railroading topic to share your knowledge with other modelers. It can be a how-to article or highlighting a project you are working on or any special knowledge you may have about a railroad. Maybe you could write an article about your layout progress, including pictures. It can be a half page or larger. Earn AP points or just make it a fun challenge. Note that we will accept most articles from other divisions as well.

Tim Foote
Acting Mail Hook Editor
mailhook@sandiegodivision.org

Submission Guidelines:

There is no compensation for articles submitted or published. Please Submit articles by email to the Mail Hook Editor at mailhook@sandiegodivision.org, with the submission attached as a text or MS word document or in the body of email message. Pictures can be attached separately to the same email. Submissions may be edited for length or formatting, or not used, at the discretion of the editor.

The following are the quarterly deadlines for submitting to the Mail Hook Editor:

First Qtr.-January 2; Second Qtr.-April 1, Third Qtr.- July 1, Fourth Qtr.-October 1

San Diego Division Officers

Director: Pete Steinmetz	Superintendent: Ryan Di Fede	Chief Clerk/Paymaster: Trudy Seeley
------------------------------------	--	---

San Diego Division Chairs

Membership Services: Rudy Spano	Layout Tours: Tim Foote
Contests: vacant	Meet Coordinator: Don Fowler, MMR
Clinics: vacant	Member Aid: Vacant
Publicity/Club Liaison: Vacant	Webmaster: Mike Hampson
Achievement Program: Rodger Gredvig, MMR	
"Mail Hook" Editor: Tim Foote (acting)	

Websites

San Diego Division website:
<https://www.sandiegodivision.org/>

San Diego Division Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/San-Diego-Division-PSR-NMRA-460628147317440/>

San Diego Division Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/683893925747889/>

PSR

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

NMRA

<https://nmra.org/>

Copyright 2021
San Diego Division
Pacific Southwest Region
National Model Railroad
Association

