



# MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

APRIL 2003

## DOUBLE-TRACKING THE MAIN LINE

By Frank Tepedino

Some folks like lots of car forwarding, switching and train make-up "Action" on their pike. For me, I love seeing long trains, (50 cars and more), laboriously hauling itself around curves and snaking through turnouts on my HO layout. My pike was built having one main line and a number of long passing sidings and stubs. On an alert day I could get two trains going in the same direction, on the same track, and keep them apart, at least most of the time. (Successfully using the long passing sidings for opposed direction trains seemed to always escape me).

My single-track main line operation satisfied my interest, for a while. Recently, however I fell into the doldrums with my pike. I found myself distracted into constructing several model ships and submarines. To reinvigorate my model railroad interest, I decided that adding a second main line would exponentially increase my railroad "action". Think of it - two, maybe even four, trains passing each other in different directions, clickity clacking, rocking, moving at different speeds - WOW!

After some cogitating and planning, (hesitating), I finally decided to "just jump in" and do what was necessary to add another complete main line to my layout. Fortunately I did not have to start from scratch since my layout already had several long passing tracks and spurs which tied into the existing one main line. This provided a great place to start. However - like everything in life, there is always a downside. I found that converting passing sidings and spurs connecting off one main line, into a separate, entire, main line, powered by its own power source poses challenges of its own.

Following are the results of my experience. Hopefully they will encourage you to take a new look at your layout, and get invigorated in this wonderful hobby.

**Trackwork:** While I may be getting better, I'm just not good enough at track work. Perhaps it is just that as I become more experienced I demand much more of myself. (**Hint:** How about a workshop by one of the Division's experts on proper techniques for good trackwork?) "Thump?" One of my existing track sidings curved through a four-foot tunnel and became part of the new main. Good idea. Except that when it was a siding, it served short, slow running, diesel switcher engines that could climb over anything without problems. Now, serving "C" truck, road diesels and stiff-legged steam engines, my less than perfect track laying abilities became noticeable. The in-tunnel "THUMP!" that I hear when the road engines go over a previously unnoticed, poorly connected, track joint is disconcerting. The bad track joint causing the "thump" is too far in the tunnel to reach. To gain access to the location would mean cutting into the Mountain which covers that portion of the track. Dang - How does one fix that problem now? **Hint:** Before building track-covering mountains, carefully check your track joints, connections, etc.

**Soldering:** I noticed that when soldering ends of

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## LAYOUT MEETS & TOURS

By David Balser, Layout Tour Chairman

We have three great Mini Meets coming up in May, June, and July.

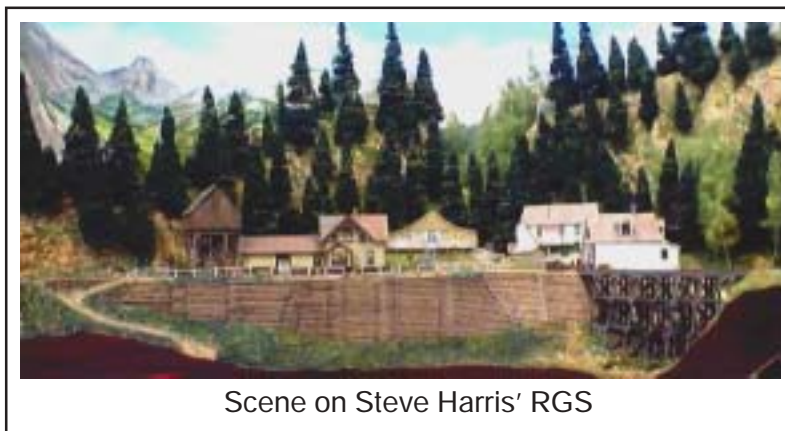
**May:** The meet in May will be at the layout of Dale Barney in San Marcos. Dale has enlisted the services of veteran modeler, Doug Stone to help in the design and creation of a great model railroad. The layout takes up one half of a garage, and the wall separating the railroad is a very neat design including a display case for special models. I really like this railroad because it is realistic in size and scope, and after only a year of work you can see completion in the near future. A lot of model railroads being designed today are too large and complicated and are not being finished because the project becomes overwhelming for one person. Dale's layout has a very narrow theme that helps the builder stay on track and prevents him from adding scenes or equipment that don't fit his design. Adding interest to this layout are the many scratchbuilt buildings built by Doug Stone. If you were lucky enough to see Doug's old layout before he took it down, you would remember over 150 scratchbuilt structures that were all contest quality models. Doug has brought that element to Dale's railroad. If you are thinking about starting a new railroad, this is one you should see,

**June:** The June Mini Meet will be at the layout of Dick Roberts in El Cajon. What is very unique about this railroad is that it uses all three dimensions of the garage; length, width, and height using the "mushroom" concept of layout design. Every square foot of space has been utilized. This is one of the best designed layouts you will ever see. If that is not enough, Dick has built an "elevator" in lieu of a helix to deliver the train from one level to another. Dick has modeled a Nevada narrow gauge line as it might have been in the future by making it standard gauge, so I think you get the best of both worlds - the feeling of a narrow gauge line with the operational quality of standard gauge. Dick has incorporated many

sound modules that bring the scene to life and adds another dimension of realism. Dick is a veteran modeler and is always willing to share his ideas and experience with anyone who asks for his help. Make sure to ask him to show you his "barbed wire" machine!

**July:** If you want to experience the "fun" as in the old slogan of "Model Railroading is Fun", do not miss visiting the layout of Max Schwanda in July! Max and his wild band of operators have been running every Friday night for years. The layout is located in a special building Max built in his backyard and is the home of an "O" scale railroad that runs on a timetable with a fast clock. I have operated on this railroad, and if you are not on the ball you will be in big trouble with the dispatcher and the rest of the crew. The railroad is

100% complete and has great looking buildings, rolling stock, and Pennsy style locomotives, some of which are historic. The backdrop is over 60 years old and was once part of the display at the 1939 Worlds Fair. Two highlights of my last visit were seeing one of Max



Scene on Steve Harris' RGS

locomotives testing the strength of the bumper at the end of a yard track and learning about how Max prepares his crew for operation by using "Stingers" for lubrication. While a lot of folks out there are counting rivets and designing their 49th track plan (and that might be fun for them), Max and his gang are getting a lot out of the hobby by having a lot of fun.

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I think we are very lucky to have three great layouts to visit and the opportunity to interact with four great model railroaders!



Running Trains At Jim Hanna's

I would like to ask for your help. We need to find new layouts to host the mini-meets, and I know they are out there. This is your chance to show off your layout and have a good time, so volunteer your layout for a Mini Meet, or ask a friend to be on the tour. Let me know.

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### MONTHLY LAYOUT MEET LOCATIONS

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The May Meet will be at the house of Dale Barney, 544 Avenida Blanco, San Marcos. Take the RANCHO SANTA FE RD exit. Turn North onto N RANCHO SANTA FE RD. Turn RIGHT onto W MISSION RD Turn LEFT onto N LAS POSAS RD. Turn LEFT onto AVENIDA AZUL. Turn RIGHT onto AVENIDA BLANCO.

The June Meet will be at the house of Dick Roberts. Take Hiway 8 (from the east or west) to Greenfield offramp in El Cajon, turn south on Greenfield Drive, go about 1.5 miles to Madison (second traffic light after Greenfield), turn left on Madison, go about 1/4 mile up the hill to Camelot Parkway. The layout is at 760 Camelot Parkway

The July Meet will be at the house of Max Schwanda, 5290 Gaylord Place, San Diego. Max's place is between the 5 and 805, south of the 52. Take Genesee exit off of 52, and go south. Turn right on Appleton (which becomes Merrimac). Turn right on Gaylord Drive to Gaylord Court, then left on Gaylord Place to the end of the cul de sac.

**See you there!**



## MEET NEWS

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We're now into our second quarter of monthly Mini-meets in addition to the traditional quarterly Division Meets. The mini-meets are proving to be a great success, and Dave's article in this issue shows there is more to come. The next Division meet is on May 10th at the Poway Community Center, and is preceded by a free swap meet - see the flyer in this issue for details.

The Winter Meet was held on February 8th. Fourteen members showed up to eat some great food, talk trains, and listen to Jim Hanna's clinic on DCC and sound. As usual there were great door prizes, some very nice models entered in the contest, and lots of good conversation. Bob Chaparro and his wife Sherrie came down to talk about the layout tour in Orange County planned for April and to enjoy the fun.

The March Mini-Meet was held at the layout of Jim Hanna in El Cajon. The place got a little crowded with fifteen members showing up to see the progress on the layout, run trains (with remote control and sound), and generally have a good time.

The April Mini-Meet was held at the layout of Steve Harris in Valley Center. His layout is based on the Rio Grande Southern, and tries to represent the road as authentically as possible. The layout is in its' own trailer, which got just a bit crowded at times with fifteen showing up to enjoy the scenery and run trains.

Please join us at the next mini-meet - you will have fun (promise!), and get some great ideas for your layout or club.



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### IN MEMORIAM

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NMRA member and HO modeler, Jim Nemitz, died suddenly and unexpectedly December 19, 2002. He was only in his mid 50s. A long time member of the San Diego Model Railroad Club, he was the second president of museum (1981-'83). His initiative was essential to starting the Gift Shop. For years he organized the museum swap meets and Christmas on the Prado up to the late 1980's. He also organized most of the PSR convention swap meets and auctions for the San Diego Division of the NMRA for the last 12 years. He will be missed.





## RAILROADING MERIT BADGE

Classes for the Railroading Merit Badge are being offered to local Boy Scouts. Beginning Sunday, April 27, and on subsequent Sundays (May 3 & 17) from 1-4 pm, classes for the Railroading Merit Badge will be offered in conjunction with Troop 278. Activities will include model building, electrical wiring, demonstrating knowledge of railroad safety procedures and signals, and constructing an Ntrak module with scenery. There also will be an opportunity to operate model trains in a realistic manner.

Classes will be held at the counselor's home near USD (Linda Vista). Class size consists of a minimum of 4 scouts to a maximum of 8. Cost is \$5 per scout (although, scholarships are available). Any scouts interested in joining the class need to sign up in advance by calling (858) 571-7118 or e-mailing at [pgredvig@nethere.net](mailto:pgredvig@nethere.net).

Railroading Merit Badge Counselor, Rodger Gredvig, MMR #218

## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

*by Ed Hatch, AP Chairman*

The new year began with David Balser receiving the "Gold Spike" award. We are very proud of David. He has, with the help of others, built several layouts over the last dozen years. While it is harder to receive AP awards when others help you do the work (construction, wiring, etc.), if you are careful to follow the rules you can avoid problems in qualifying. If David follows the suggestions that have been made, and continues the fine work he is doing, he should receive several more awards.

In March we received two advanced AP Awards for two members who have worked very hard to achieve this level of craftsmanship. Paul Schmitt received his "Master Builder - Cars" Certificate of Achievement, and Bill Brooks received the "Master Builder - Scenery" Certificate.

Congratulations to all three of these gentlemen. When are you going to start on your AP Certificates?? Full details and forms are available on the NMRA Web site at: [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) - get started today!



## OUR NMRA MEN IN UNIFORM



We recently received a message from NMRA member CWO Gordon Miller (USN), who is currently stationed aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard somewhere in the Persian Gulf. He wrote: "I just received my PSR Dispatch. Mail is somewhat slow getting to us out here. I have read it cover to cover, and will again. It's a nice break from the daily routine (for lack of a better word); it's anything but routine! Just wanted to say hello and I am looking forward to getting back to our monthly meets."

If you would like to support one of our military members directly, you can e-mail Gordon at: CWO2 Miller, G.A. <[millera@bonhomme-richard.navy.mil](mailto:millera@bonhomme-richard.navy.mil)>

## PAYMASTER'S REPORT

*by Paul Schmitt*

After the great success of the 2002 Convention, the Division finances are in pretty good shape. After giving the PSR their part of the profits, the Division netted \$6,473 to fund activities and publications for the next four years. Following is the status of the San Diego Division's treasury as of 3/31/2003:

Petty Cash:	0.00
Operating Account:	\$73.31
Investment Account:	<u>\$15,214.28</u>
Total Balance:	\$15,287.59

## Volunteers Needed!

Looking for a way to help your division? There are many openings for volunteers to help put on Division events and activities. If you would like to help, contact any of the division staff.

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# SAN DIEGO DIVISION PSR-NMRA SPRING MEET

Saturday, May 10th, 2003

Poway Community Center Auditorium

10:00am - FREE Swap Meet

12:00 noon - Division Spring Meet

**SWAP MEET - FREE TO ALL!**

**CLINICS! VIDEOS!  
RUNNING MODULAR  
LAYOUT!**

**DOOR PRIZES!**

**FAVORITE MODEL  
CONTEST. BRING YOUR  
FAVORITE MODEL, OR  
HAVE A PROJECT JUDGED!**



Directions: From **I-15** take Poway Road east approx 4 miles to Bowron Road. Turn right on Bowron Road. Go to the first stop sign and turn right to the Poway Community Center Auditorium. Parking is free.

## *P O T L U C K D I N N E R*

REMEMBER TO BRING FOOD TO SHARE - LAST NAME BEGINING WITH

A TO E: MAIN DISH

F TO L: DESSERTS

M TO R: APPETIZERS OR SNACKS

S TO Z: SALAD OR MAIN DISH

*Bring your own serving utensils - drinks, plates & eating utensils supplied*



Continued from page 1

track together or soldering electrical lead wires to the track I tend to press down on the rail with the soldering tool tip, or the tool used to hold the wire being soldered. This may cause permanent vertical and horizontal rail displacement. The problem is aggravated where the plastic rail ties were removed to allow for soldering or track connections. I typically use 18 gauge, stranded, copper, wire for the power supply to my track. However (another however), when I solder this wire to the track rail-side, sometimes a wire whisker or two becomes unraveled and tends to interfere with the passing locomotive wheels or car wheels; or worse, could pose a short circuit problem. Plus, the diameter of the 18-gauge wire is big enough that if I don't firmly seat it and solder it down properly, the wire, and solder, may interfere with the passing loco and car wheels. **Never** push down on a soldered track-rail connector wires to try to improve clearances - you could bend the rail over - (ask me how I know this). I've found the better approach is to solder a thinner, solid wire, to the rail side (or bottom if you can), and then solder the 18-gauge power supply wire to this smaller diameter wire. (This approach is more work so I don't often do it).

**Rail Joints:** My trackend to trackend joints seldom seem perfect. Lately, I try to always run a fingernail over the joints to detect any problems. If there are "glitches" I file the rail top and flange face. Great - but be careful. Sometimes I get carried away in my filing and actually create a small, problem causing depression in the railhead. That's not so good!

Well, I'm out of space! Join me next time when the saga continues! I'll be discussing the trackwork, electrical and scenery issues that are involved when you "double-track" your main line.

🌀 To Be Continued 🌀

## ELECTIONS! HOBBIES! TIME!

*Ben Sevier, Editor*

Election Time! At the Spring Meet in May there will be elections for Division Superintendent and Clerk/Paymaster. The current office holders (Ken Allen & Paul Schmitt) have hit term limits, so now is your chance! If you are interested in running for one of those positions, or would like to nominate someone (please check with them first!), contact the Nominations Chairman, Ed Hatch, at (858) 274-2283.

The upcoming Division elections bring up a question that (probably) all volunteer organizations are wrestling with right now - how to a) get more people interested in joining the organization, and b) get members interested in helping the organization accomplish its purpose.

As you may be aware, the NMRA has been seeing a gradual decline in membership levels for several years now, one that accelerated last year with the dues increase. It seems to have stabilized for a while, but with a poor economy, security issues, and a general sense that the world is "iffy" at the moment, people don't seem to have as much time (or money) for "play". Or is it just a reflection of the increasingly busy, ever connected life we all seem to have nowadays?

These various issues came to mind when I was putting together this issue of the "Mail Hook". At the last Division business meeting it was decided to send the "Mail Hook" to all NMRA members in the San Diego area, not just PSR/Division members. As I went through the lists, I began to run some numbers to see how we are doing, and discovered, well, actually not so hot. There are only 219 NMRA members in the San Diego Division geographical area - do you really think that 5 or so hobby shops are kept in business by 219 people? No, of course not, meaning that there are many model railroaders in our area who are either not interested in belonging to an organization like the NMRA, don't know that it exists, or haven't felt like they would be welcome ("Gosh, I'm not nearly a good enough modeler to join them!"). Then, in looking at the numbers a little closer, I discovered that of those 219 members, only 94 belong to the PSR & San Diego Division!

Seems to me we have some work to do if we are to get the most out of this association! Are you willing to put some of your time to help this hobby grow? What are some ways we can get the attention of model rails around the county? We need your help!

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## SCHEDULE OF PSR-NMRA EVENTS

### May 2003

May 10 - Sat 10:00 am - 12:00 noon - **S.D. Division Annual Swap Meet** - Poway Community Center

May 10 - Sat 12:00 noon - **S.D. Division Spring Meet & Elections** - Poway Community Center

May 17 - Sat 12:00 noon - **Monthly Layout Meet** - Dale Barney

### June 2003

Jun 14 - Sat 12:00 noon - **Monthly Layout Meet** - Dick Roberts, rlroberts44@cox.net

### July 2003

Jul 7 - Tues 7:00pm - **Division Business Meeting**

Jul 12 - Sat 12:00 noon - **Monthly Layout Meet** - Max Schwanda

### August 2003

Aug 9 - Sat 11:00 am - **S.D. Division Summer Meet & Family Picnic** - Rohr Park, Chula Vista

### September 2003

Sep 11 - Sep 14 - **Arizona Express 2003 - PSR Annual Convention** at Embassy Suites Hotel Phoenix-North, 2577 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Contact Debbie Draper, Registrar. 602-953-1681 (Phone); 602-953-0751 (Fax). Online forms at: <http://www.trainnet.org>

Sep 20 - Sat 12:00 noon - **Monthly Layout Meet** - TBA

### October 2003

Oct 11 - Sat 12:00 noon - **Monthly Layout Meet** - TBA

### November 2003

Nov 8 - Sat 12:00 noon - **S.D. Division Fall Meet** - TBA

## OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

### May 2003

May 3 - 7:00 am to 11:00 am - **San Diego Model Railroad Museum Swap Meet** - SDMRRM, Balboa Park. Contact: Pete Munoz, 619-293-0162

### July 2003

July 13-20 - **Maple Leaf 2003** - NMRA National Convention. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Web site [www.ml2003.com](http://www.ml2003.com).


### October 2003

Oct 18 - 7:00 am to 11:00 am - **San Diego Model Railroad Museum Swap Meet** - SDMRRM, Balboa Park. Contact: Pete Munoz, 619-293-0162

### Submissions

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 floppy disk, 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 2003/2004: July 12, 2003; October 11, 2003, January 10, 2004




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Youth (under 20)	\$30.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$2.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$32.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Affiliate (no bulletin or local publications)	\$23.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$4.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$27.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$ 9.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$1.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00 <input type="checkbox"/>

\* You **MUST** be a member of the NMRA to be a PSR member

For information on NMRA activities, contact the San Diego Division membership Chairman:

Ben Sevier, (858) 538-9863

Please send this application and your check or money order made payable to "Pacific Southwest Region, NMRA". Mail to: PSR-NMRA Membership, Ben Sevier, 12793 Warhorse Street, San Diego, CA 92129

*Cut along this line, and mail to the above address with your payment*

### Online - Web Sites of Interest

Train Net: [www.trainnet.org](http://www.trainnet.org)

NMRA: [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

PSR: [www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/psr/psr.html](http://www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/psr/psr.html)

Arizona Express 2003 Convention: [http://www.trainnet.org/documents/az\\_express1.htm](http://www.trainnet.org/documents/az_express1.htm)

San Diego Division: [www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/sdiego/sdiego.html](http://www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/sdiego/sdiego.html)

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# MAIL HOOK

## LOOK INSIDE FOR THE LATEST NEWS!

- Layout Meet Schedule
    - Meet Reports
      - Spring Meet details!
        - Interesting Articles!
- Details in this issue!



## MAIL HOOK

c/o Ben Sevier, Editor  
12793 War Horse Street  
San Diego, CA 92129

A quarterly publication of the **San Diego Division**  
of the **Pacific Southwest Region**  
of the **National Model Railroad Association**

