

MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

3rd Quarter, 2020 Edition

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Superintendent's Report



This is quite a year we are having. Little did we know on January 1st how 2020 would play out. For me, school is out, and Summer is on! It is time to work on house projects and increase my focus on model railroading projects, and I have managed to do just that. So, in addition to painting my kitchen door and soon installing a floating floor in my patio room, I recently completed the ballasting of all of the track in one of my towns. I also put in a road and the first layer of base scenery throughout the rest of town. A long-awaited back drop of buildings has arrived to give the scene additional depth. I already have a painted sky and background mountains, so I must apply myself to carefully cutting out the buildings. Of course, I always seem to find something that must be obsessively researched. Lately it has been LED light strips with the potential to provide daylight and nighttime effects. My sideline learning from this research is all about Volts, Amps, and Watts.

You may have noticed that our web site, www.sandiegodivision.org, has come alive. Our new webmaster, Mike Hampson, is working hard to make it relevant and easy to use. Go give it a look.

Thanks to all who completed the recent membership survey. Dick Roberts, our Clinics Chair, appreciates knowing what you would like for future clinic topics. Rolling stock weathering and scenery scored high. In July, Pete Steinmetz's clinic focused on weathering rolling stock with pan pastels. Next month the featured clinic will be how to make trees by Dick Roberts. Last month we learned how to make water using the new Woodland Scenics system from Don Fowler.



At the end of that survey there was a question about in-person meetings, and a question about Zoom meetings. We learned that about half of you will not be ready for in-person meetings for some time. No surprise given the average age of our membership and the continued concerns with Covid-19 in the world at large. Of course, in-person events are presently not an option for us and will likely not be an option for some time to come. As to the question about Zoom meetings, 70% responded that they would attend division events via Zoom. So, the good news is we will continue to offer division events every 2nd Saturday, and those events will be virtual via Zoom.



So far, we have held three such events quite successfully. One was a multi-division event that we participated in (May), and the other two we organized and pulled off ourselves (June & July). These have been both challenging and fun to put on. I was on location in June at Don Fowler's house for his water making clinic/demo. In July, I was again on location for Shotgun Tom Kelly's interview and layout tour. I included a picture of Don and I preparing for the Zoom Meet in Shotgun Tom's radio studio (the studio shares the garage with the trains). Both events are available to view on YouTube.

June: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnCqdh1wAGo>

July: <https://youtu.be/kW3EHkgB-Oo>

We decided from the beginning to publicize to the other divisions in the Region. NMRA members from across the PSR, and beyond have attend our events. We are getting feedback that the events are both enjoyable and appreciated in this time of limited social contact. If you have yet to attend a SD Division Virtual Event, be sure to join us on Saturday, August 8 @ 1pm. We are planning an n-scale layout tour and tree clinic.

If you would like to present at an upcoming event, we need you!

- If you would like to host a layout tour, please email Tim Foote at layouts@sandiegodivision.org

- If you have a clinic you would like to present, please email Dick Roberts at clinics@sandiegodivision.org
- If you would like to present, but do not want to do a full presentation, volunteer for Show and Tell when you RSVP. This is a 5-minute project share.

I would like to thank the planning committee for all their hard work and support from behind the scenes. We are all volunteers and can always use more help. If you are interested, please contact one of us. You will find everyone's email on the Contact page of the SD Division web site www.sandiegodivision.org

Stay safe and happy modeling!

Ryan

superintendent@sandiegodivision.org

Zoom meetings:

June 13th Zoom Meeting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnCqdh1wAGo>



These meetings include people from other regions including some of the heavyweights. Bruce Petrarca attended our session. Bruce is in Arizona and has a great web page called Mr. DCC's University. Check it out at <http://mrdccu.com/>

First up was the show and tell which I even participated in. I showed off my new power plant which was kitbashed from two Walthers kits and a fuel Depot which was also a Walthers kit. You can watch the other show and tell presentations at the link for the zoom session above.



We also had an excellent layout tour by MMR Dick Roberts, of his Nevada County Railroad. Note that there is an article about Dick's layout in the last issue (2nd Qtr. 2020) of the Mail Hook.

Don Fowler presented a clinic on using Woodland Scenics Realistic water. He did a great job in explaining the benefits of the Realistic Water system and gave a demonstration along with video shots of how he applied it to his layout. Don also presented this clinic on July 12th on NMRax which is the NMRA's virtual convention: <https://www.nmra.org/events/nmrax-presents-gatewayx-virtual-convention>

July 11th Zoom Meeting

<https://youtu.be/kW3EHkgB-Oo>



We had a special treat for the July meet which was celebrity radio host Shotgun Tom Kelly. Tom shared his layout with us and a professionally produced Layout video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDq3zp56Xkk>

Dave's World of Wonder spot on Tom's layout (see if you recognize any club members in the TV spot):

<https://youtu.be/RDGIRpgVUUg>

Shotgun Tom Kelly biography:

<https://youtu.be/wudj7-AFek8>

Shotgun" Tom Kelly is an American radio and television personality, two-time Emmy award winner, Billboard Air Personality of the Year winner and recipient of a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

More at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%22Shotgun%22_Tom_Kelly

The meeting started out with show and tell including updates on Rudy Spano's layout. Rudy's layout is always interesting, especially since it is based on a prototype mining area in the Rockies of Colorado. Rudy has also done an excellent job of crafting his layout and keeping to the prototype.

There was also a weathering clinic provided by Pete Steinmetz where he demonstrated the use of Pan Pastels on a freight car and the use of colored pencils. See the clinic on the YouTube video for the meeting (link above)

Articles:

The Journey to Master Model Railroader

Don Fowler MMR #518

This is the first in a series of articles profiling the San Diego Division's MMRs in hopes of encouraging others to explore and enjoy NMRA's Achievement Program.

In 1996, while visiting the San Diego County Fair, my sons and I stopped to enjoy Short Track Club's N scale modular railroad. Club members engaged us in friendly conversation and invited us come inside and operate trains. Resulting friendships convinced me to join the Club and the NMRA.

In 2004, I was asked to host a Division open house for my model railroad. Our local Achievement Program (AP) Chair at that time was Ed Hatch. He was very complimentary of my modeling efforts and took a lot of photos. He asked if I was familiar with the AP and explained that I was already qualified for some of the certificates. I successfully submitted the necessary paperwork and received a **Golden Spike Award** and **Master Builder – Scenery** certificate.

In 2006, I qualified for the **Association Volunteer** certificate by simply adding up and documenting the necessary hours of service required for the award.

In 2008, I filed out the paperwork and received certificates for **Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical**, **Association Official** and **Model Railroad Author**. This again was just a matter of documentation.



[Re Pics: The first one is for Model Railroad Engineer Civil and the second one is for Master Builder Motive Power.]

I had been putting off the next certificate, **Model Railroad Engineer – Civil** because I had never hand laid track. MMR Paul Schmitt from the Short Track Club offered to mentor me on the necessary techniques and requirements. Due to his great instruction and my stubborn determination, I qualified for that certificate in 2011.

In case you're keeping track, there was one to go, **Master Builder – Motive Power**. I finally dug in and built three versions of Fairmont Speeders, completing the requirements in 2013.

In reflecting on my AP journey, I'd like to share a few observations with you if you're considering the program:

- You probably already qualify for some of the certificates.
- You will be your own worst enemy by imagining that it's harder than it is.
- You will underestimate your model railroading abilities.

- Your friends are your greatest asset and will support you in your quest.
- Your local AP Chair and local MMRs want you to succeed and will support you as well.

You will learn a lot by participating in NMRA's Achievement Program. I have a greater appreciation for what it takes to qualify as a Master Model Railroader. The program required me to move beyond my comfort zone and attempt things I never would have otherwise considered. I may never hand lay another piece of track or scratch build another piece of motive power, but now I know how to do it if I choose to, and I'm much better at trouble shooting problems with track and locomotives than I was.



Qualifying for the MMR certification is one thing but living up to that distinction is quite another. Serving as a mentor to those who ask for help and as a source of encouragement to those who are struggling is the primary responsibility of this certification. I know that I must endeavor to live up to the legacy and standards already established by the other MMRs of the San Diego Division:

Bob Schimmel MMR #193

Rodger Gredvig MMR #218

John Sigurdson MMR #236

Paul Schmitt MMR #342

Don Ham MMR #491

Dick Roberts MMR #522

In my opinion, the gift of friendship is the greatest benefit of NMRA membership!

Hand Held Air Compressor

By Pete Steinmetz

Always looking for new and innovative gadgets for model railroading. I found this offering by Spray Gunner (www.spraygunner.com)



It is a hand held air compressor with a detachable air brush. I originally purchased just the compressor and figured I would attach an Iwata or Badger airbrush to the top. Unfortunately, a Badger or Iwata will not mate with the compressor.

I sent the compressor back. I was contacted by Spray Gunner and told they were working on an adapter that would allow Badger and Iwata brushes to connect to the compressor. Then Covid 19 hit and work on the adapter was postponed.

I decided I wanted to try the compressor anyway. Spray Gunner is selling Chinese airbrushes that will fit on the compressor. I ordered one. Total cost with the compressor was \$65.00. A good price. I was skeptical of the quality of a Chinese airbrush at such a low cost. When I tried it out, I was pleasantly surprised. The brush won't do fine pin stripes, but would be fine for painting a car or doing weathering. It should be fine for spraying solvent based paints. It would probably be OK for acrylic paints that were thinned with a good acrylic thinner. Not water. I like the compact design and there is no cord to pull around. Charging the internal lithium battery is with a USB-C plug. Run time is supposed to be around 2 hours.

Best

by Paul Wilfong

My Grandparents, Bob and Theresa Smith, lived in a modest craftsman-style house in Pasadena when I was growing up. I have many fond memories of it, starting in the late 1950s, through the 1960s. The house was pretty special, in that it was at the corner of an intersection where the Pasadena Subdivision crossed Foothill Blvd. I recall watching Santa Fe trains go by throughout the day whenever we would visit.

I took some photographs of the house in the 80s. At that time it was being used for storage and in disrepair. It's gone now, as are the AT&SF tracks. So sad.



I decided to base my model on BLMA's Modern Dual-Sided Billboard. The billboard next to the house was single-sided, and uses two support I-beams rather than the model's single support column, but after looking at the information about the kit, I thought it would be a good basis for a kit-bash. As a clinician at our recent NMRA-PSR convention in Mesa, AZ said, "A kit is nothing but a box of parts". When I got the kit, however it turned out that except for the support column, it came already assembled! But I figured I could cut it up and use the pieces for a kit bash anyway. So I guess "A model is nothing but a bunch of parts after deconstruction"!



Since the rear of the billboard was very visible next to the house, I wanted to add some detail that I could see by looking closely at my photos and images. The model included lots of really nice cast-on details, and neat etched-metal walkways. I pored over my photos and images and figured I could add additional upright and walkway support elements, fishplates, etc., to make the rear look busier. The real thing looks a lot more cluttered than BLMA's model! Here is an image, with notes I added...



The tools I used for the project were an NWSL Chopper, a MicroScale Magnetic Gluing Jig, a cutting pad, and the standard collection of knives, tweezers, squares, scale rulers, etc.

I started out by cutting up the model. This was fairly easy to do, except for pieces that were wrapped around the support bar, which were rather delicate and tough to detach; they were damaged as a result, but could be glued back together sufficiently for my purposes.

By the time I started making the model, the billboard had been taken down. Luckily I could still use Google Maps and Bing Maps to get additional images, since there is some lag in their street view updates. Using them, I could make out additional details that I noted for the model. I also made an assembly plan, then started building.

I had expected to use liquid styrene glue to join the plastic pieces back together, so one huge disappointment was to find out that whatever BLMA used for the model, it wasn't normal styrene, and the cement had no effect. I looked on the internet for help, and after some head scratching, tried out a couple of potential glues

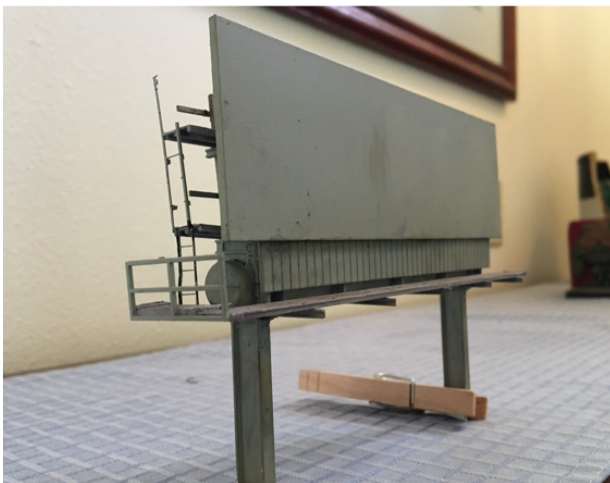
from Plastruct. The one that ended up kind of working was their “Plastic Weld” product. Bonds weren’t as quick and strong as when using normal styrene, but they were good enough.

Another big disappointment was trying to attach the two I-beam support legs. I made them from styrene, and couldn't find a way to attach them to the billboard support bar that was strong. I used the Plastic Weld and even epoxy. Finally I used epoxy to make small pockets for the legs that are good enough to get by with, but the prototype doesn't have them, and the attachment is still not as strong as I wish it could be for mounting the billboard on my layout.

I painted the model with spray cans, using a couple of shades of gray. To weather the billboard. I used pan pastels, and was happy with the results on the catwalks. But the results on the back of the billboard looked too blotchy. So I used dull cote to fix the pastels and resprayed with the gray, and tried the pan pastels again with very light applications. The results seemed better to me.

The back of the billboard has a yellow-tan tint in the prototype pictures above, which I tried to capture with a thin wash of bronze yellow acrylic. The paint tended to pool wherever there were edges, so the model's color was not as uniform as in the prototype photos. But I like the results anyway.

Here is the result of my efforts...



There are a number of misalignments that can be seen in these photos; I wish I'd been alert enough to have noticed them earlier in the construction, when they could've been fairly easily corrected. There are also rough areas around the I-Beam support connections with their epoxy blobs. But I think the flaws don't detract much from the way it turned out.

With the busy look of the back of the billboard, I really like the end result of this build. Now all I have to do is find a nice period sign I like, and it'll be ready for business!

(If interested in gory detail about my build, I have a blog post at <https://paulw-modelrr.blogspot.com/p/the-billboard-next-to-my-grandfathers.html>).

Welcome to Our Newest Members

January Through June 2020

Rudolph Blaw	El Cajon
Michael Cartabiano	Carlsbad
Barry Dzindzio	San Marcos
Richard Figone	San Diego
Bill Geiger	Escondido
Michael Hampson	San Diego
Thomas Lazet	San Marcos
Sean Martin	Oceanside
Kenneth McDonald	Oceanside
Timothy Miller	San Diego
Rick Rossiter	San Diego
Rollin Swan	Oceanside
Jordan Urquizo	Chula Vista
Brian Williams	San Diego

Railroad and Model Railroad links for home isolation time viewing:

[Send me your favorite links for the next issue of Mail Hook. mailhook@sandiegodivision.org]

EVENTS CALENDAR

August 8th at 1:00 pm: San Diego Division Zoom Meeting

Show and tell (Contact Ryan to volunteer)

Layout tour by Rodger Gredvig

Tree Clinic by Dick Roberts

Model Railroading events in the Region, and by local clubs can be found on the following links. If you want your event listed please contact mailhook@sandiegodivision.org

LA Division events:

click the link for more information

<https://www.ladiv-nmra.org/events.html>

Cajon Division events:

click the link for more information

<http://www.cajondivision.org>

Arizona Division events:

Fall Meet, Saturday, Nov. 9th 9am to 4pm

click the link for more information

<http://www.azdiv-nmra.org/index.shtml>

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. 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:

Contributions of articles on any railroad or model-railroading topic of interest to the membership are welcome. There is no compensation. If you are interested in submitting articles, event information, or other information of interest to members of the Division. Please Submit by email to the Mail Hook Editor at mailhook@sandiegodivision.org, with the submission attached as a text 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
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San Diego Division Chairs

Membership Services: Rudy Spano	Layout Tours: Tim Foote
Contests: Dick Roberts, MMR	Meet Coordinator: Don Fowler, MMR
Clinics: Dick Roberts, MMR	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/>

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Pacific Southwest Region

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