



The Official Publication of the
Daylight Division of the
Pacific Coast Region of the
National Model Railroad Association
Issue 1, Volume 2017; January, February, March

The Daylight Observation

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Next Daylight Meet

March Meet at the Historic Kingsburg Depot

By Neil Fernbaugh, Daylight Superintendent



The next Daylight Division meet will be Saturday, March 11th at the Kingsburg Depot, 1465 California Street in Kingsburg California. The meet starts at 9:00 AM with room set-up (please arrive early and help!), registration, refreshments, contest entries, and 'Meet-n-Greets.' Registration is \$4.00 for NMRA members, \$5.00 for non-members.

The Kingsburg Depot was lovingly restored to its 1923 condition between 2005 and 2015 by the Friends of the Historic Kingsburg Depot. It is the only remaining Southern Pacific CS 18 depot with a covered patio. A perfect place for railfanning and photo ops.



DAYLIGHT EXPRESS
Pacific Coast Region
2017 Convention
April 19-23 • Sign up NOW!
See page 10



The clinics will begin at 10:00 AM. We have two clinics scheduled at this time, and would welcome anyone who would like to offer up a third. Chuck Harmon will present a clinic on "Operation with Prototype Waybills," and I will be giving a clinic on "Detailing Your Model Citrus Groves" featuring photos of a variety of prototype equipment you can

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Daylight Call Board

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To submit an article or an item or photographs please contact the editor, George Pisching. If you need help preparing any please contact the editor for assistance. See address above. For other assistance contact that committee chairman.

Kingsburg Depot

model and a list of citrus resources. *Note:* We are working on creating some hands-on clinics as this is written.

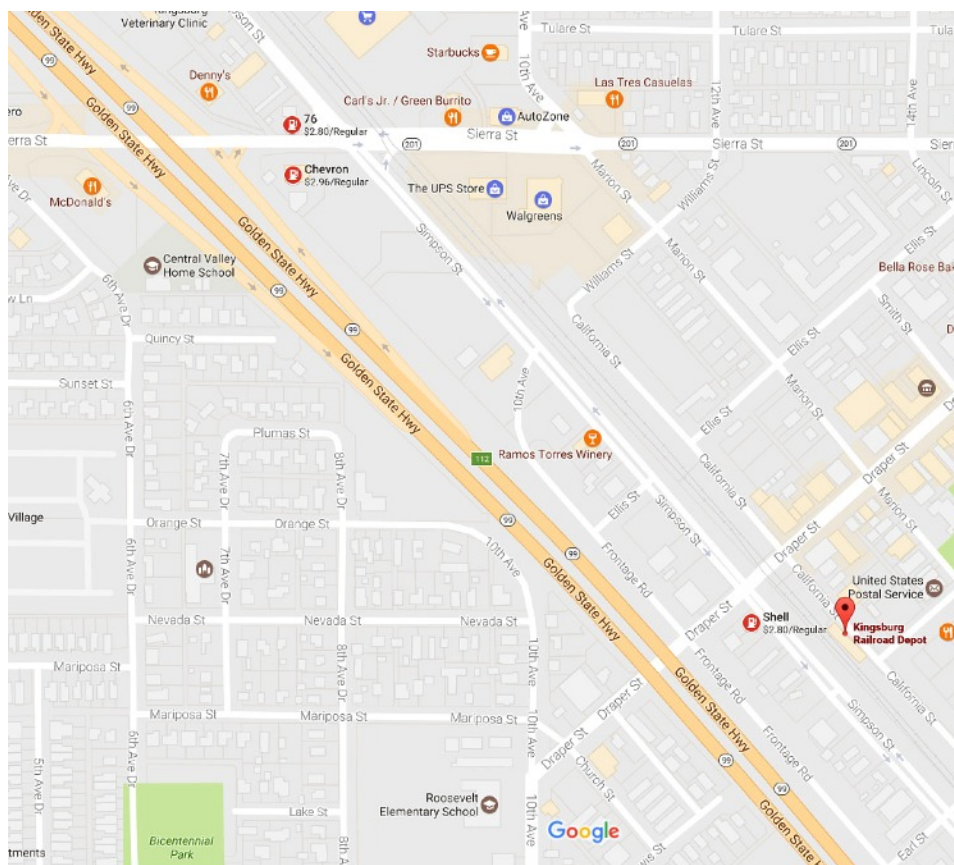
Please bring any new models you would like to share, even projects that are still in the works. The official March contest categories are freight car models and general rail subjects for photographs. Everyone who enters the model category or a photo, will receive one drawing ticket for a chance at \$25.00. There will be tables for display-only items, in addition to contest entries. Please bring whatever items (prototype, model or photograph) that you are especially proud of and would like to display for our enjoyment – our version of show-and-tell.

At various times throughout the meeting we will be having our Famous White Elephant Auction, so remember to bring plain-wrapped railroad-related items for the auction. The more the merrier! Think of it as "re-gifting!"

We are looking for layouts in the area and will announce open layouts at the meeting. If you are from the area and would like to share your progress please let me know.

Directions to the depot:

From Highway 99, take exit 112 (CA201 E) east onto Sierra Street, Turn right on Simpson until you get to Draper Street. Turn left on Draper then right onto California. The depot is pretty easy to find.



Calendar of Events

January 27 – 29, 2017 – Bay Area Layout Design & Operations Weekend, Sponsored by [Pacific Coast Region-NMRA](#), [Layout Design](#) and [Operations](#) Special Interest Groups. Mountain View Community Center, 201 S. Rengstorff Ave, Mountain View, CA. The meet and all three days of layout tours are open to ALL, regardless of affiliation or membership. NMRA, PCR, LDSIG, or OPSIG membership is NOT required! Even NASG members are welcome! If you can't join us for the entire meet, at least come out and enjoy some truly wonderful layouts.

February 11, 2017 - 10:00 am, [Sierra Division](#) Meet, Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, 2766 Dakota Avenue, Modesto, CA. Meet at the church for clinics/presentations. Exact clinics TBA. For more information, contact [Jim Collins](#).

February 13 & 14, 2017 - 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, [The Great Train Expo](#), Del Mar Fairgrounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd., Del Mar, CA.

March 4 & 5, 2017 - Sat: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sun: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, [Golden Empire Historical & Modeling Society's Annual Model Train Show](#), Horace Massey Building, [Kern County Fairgrounds](#), 1142 South P Street, Bakersfield, CA.

Continued on Next Page.

Annual Bay Area Special Interests Groups Event **2017 LD/OPSIG Design Challenge**

By Bruce Morden

Layout and Operation Design Challenge for the Bay Area **PCR SIG Weekend – January 28, 2017**. This year's meet will be in Mountain View. Information about the meet is available at <http://www.pcrnmra.org/sigs/>



Last year in Sacramento we tried an Operation Design Challenge on the SP&S. In the past we have had successful Layout Design Challenges during the Bay Area SIG event. We have had a handful of people who submitted designs and the challenge has led to interesting discussions.

This year the challenge combines both layout and operation design. The railroad to be modeled is focused on New London, Connecticut and includes both the New Haven and the Central of Vermont. Criteria for the Challenge is a PDF file on the web site. This is general information. There is more background information available for those serious challengers.

It's easy to participate: simply develop a layout design or an operations plan or both for the layout along with a page or two of supporting information. **These submissions are due January 20th.** The organizers will pull submissions together into a computer presentation for discussion with the group. Each challenger will have five to ten minutes to present his or her design to the meeting on Saturday, January 28th.

In addition to the Challenge presentation, some of the background information will be presented and possibly some discussion by the layout owner or his team of collaborators.

The good news is that there is no winning or losing ... the bad news is you will not receive any lovely gifts for participating.

If you are interested in participating in the challenge or have questions regarding the challenge, please let Bruce Morden know by return email as soon as possible. Let your friends know as well as they may want to join the Challenge.

Your submissions for the Design Challenge are due no later than Jan 20, 2017. Absolutely no exceptions to this deadline will be accepted, and therefore no walk-ins on the day of the meeting. Our goal is four or five participants.

So pull out your layout design tools, take a look at your rule books and operations resources and let's have some fun!

Thanks, Bruce Morden

P.S. Model Railroader is going to have a story about the CV next month. Let's see if we can beat them to the punch with an outstanding design and operations plan.

Calendar of Events

March 18, 2017 - 9:00 am to 10:00 pm, Winterail 2017 Railroadiana Show and Sale, Corvallis High School, 1400 NW Buchanan Avenue, Corvallis, Oregon. Vic Neves – Winterail 2017, P.O. Box 944, Albany, OR 97321



April 19 – 23, 2017 - Daylight Express 2017 PCR Convention, DoubleTree by Hilton, 3100 Camino Del Rio Court, Bakersfield, CA 93308. Come join us for 5 days of clinics, contests, layout tours, operating sessions, prototype tours, and more! See the Daylight Express 2017 website for all the information you need.

April 29, 2017 - 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, West Side Reunion presents the 30th Annual Logging & Mining Modeler's Convention at the Sonora Elks Lodge, 100 Elk Drive, Sonora, CA. Contact: Frank Markovich, (408) 505-2727 E-mail: frank@frankmarkovich.com,

April 30, 2017 - 9:00 am, "Sierra Seminar," Sonora Senior Center, 540 Greenley Rd, Sonora, CA. Morning presentations and afternoon visit to Railtown 1897 for ride behind recently rebuilt locomotive #28. Pizza lunch included for \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. Contact glennsutherland@sti.net for more information and a registration form.

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Contest Report

Oceano Meet, November 2016

By Chuck Harmon, MMR,
Daylight Division Contest Chairman

At our Oceano meet the Favorite Model contest category was Passenger Car. The Favorite Photo contest category was Model Color. Unfortunately there were no entries in either category.

At the next meet in February, yet to be scheduled, the Favorite Model category will be Freight Car. The Favorite Photo category will be General Rail Subjects.

We have not had any models for judging for quite some time. I will get on my soap box for just a few words about this. The name of our organization is the National **Model** Railroad Association. I know that many of you have a few kits on the shelf and plans to scratch-build that one-of-a-kind structure. Let's get going and do some modeling!

Just to show that I'm not blowing smoke (yes, I do like steam!), I have included a photo of my latest modeling effort on my work bench, the freight station for Jaynestown on my layout. It is constructed of DPM components, plus a few detail items from other suppliers. I plan to bring it to the meet, finished or not, just to have some sort of model on display.



Remember, if you want to get points toward an achievement certificate in model building you need to have your models judged. This can be done at a meet. Another point is that in order to have your model evaluated for suggestions that may help you get more points, bring it to a meet and a team will help you out. If you have a model that you plan to enter in a Region or National level contest, having it judged at a Division meet first is a good preliminary step.

You may also bring any model, finished or not, for display. Even something that you bought ready-to-run is welcome.



Calendar of Events

O SCALE WEST / S WEST MEET

May 25 – 27, 2017 - 27th Annual O Scale West, 12th Annual S West, Hyatt Regency Santa Clara, 5101 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara, CA. Contact: Rod Miller, 876 Boyce Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301, phone 650-218-5752.

July 30 – August 6, 2017 - Orange Blossom Special, NMRA 2017 National Convention and National Train Show, The Rosen Plaza Hotel, International Drive, Orlando, FL.

August 30 – September 2, 2017 - 37th Annual National Narrow Gauge Convention, Denver, Colorado.

September 13 – 16, 2017 - Pacific Southwest Region 2017 Convention, Radisson Ontario Airport, 2200 East Holt Blvd, Ontario, CA.

October 13 – 15, 2017 - Central Coast Railroad Festival, San Luis Obispo and Northern Santa Barbara Counties, CA., Hosted by San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA.

For the Most Up-to-Date Information Go To the NMRA Web Site:
www.nmra.org

PCR Region Convention 2017

Daylight Express 2017

By Chuck Harmon, Convention Publicity

The annual convention of the Pacific Coast Region, National Model Railroad Association will be held in Bakersfield, California on April 19th through 23rd, 2017. Named “Daylight Express 2017”, there will be lots of model railroad displays, a full schedule of clinics, model, photo, arts and crafts contests, an extra-fare tour of the Tehachapi Loop and lots of opportunities to meet and learn from other modelers.



Fun, Fun, Friends

The time is now for you to make plans to attend this the annual gathering of friends and acquaintances for the 2017 PCR convention. I fondly remember my first PCR convention: Rail Spree '83 in San Jose. It was the last time the PCR and PSR got together, just after the original Pacific Coast Region was split. I still have the convention car on my layout, a single dome tank car, GATX 1983. It was an Athearn kit with special convention decals. I suppose I am one of only a few who actually built and decaled one. That convention was the start of many long-time friendships, including Gus and Margaret Pasternak, Bill and Rita Scott, Bob and Sylvia Pethoud, Joe and Suzie Paff, and John Houlihan, to name just a few. While some of them are no longer with us, my wife, Jayne, and I continue to renew old friendships and make new ones whenever we can attend the PCR convention. A couple of years ago we went to San Luis Obispo (my old college town) for the convention and I got my MMR while Jayne brought home 3 awards from the Arts and Crafts contest. There is always a good time awaiting everyone at a PCR convention, no matter where it's located. While the program is directed primarily to events for the modeler, there are always lots of activities for spouses and family members.

This year we will gather near the southern border of the PCR, at the Bakersfield Double Tree Hotel by Hilton. It may be a long drive for those who live in the far north of the region, but air and rail transportation is available to ease the rigors of the trip. Once in Bakersfield, many will be amazed at the variety of activities that are available.

Activities. Lots of Convention Activities!

One of the highlights of the week will be a series of make-and-take clinics, including Modeling with the Masters put on by Master Model Railroaders. Other clinics will be presented by well-known modelers on modeling techniques and prototype railroads and history. All clinics will be scheduled twice so you can attend the ones that interest you. See the list of proposed clinics and presenters later in this article.

Continued on Next Page.

Convention Layouts

Here are photos of some of the layouts that will be open for the convention. The photos are to be credited to Bob Chaparro, unless noted.



John Drazin's Oak Creek and Western.



GEHAM's N and HO scale layouts.



*Kevin Birkbeck's N-scale layout.
(2016040)*

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Daylight Express 2017

There will be a full Layout Design Op-SIG (Layout Design and Operations Special Interest Group) program, including operating sessions on area layouts.

Hotel Layouts

The hotel facility provides ample room for modular layouts to set up and operate, and Robert and Sylvia Pethoud have agreed to bring and operate their Fall Creek Branch layout that was recently featured in Model Railroader. This layout has proved to be a favorite for young people wanting to discover the fun of operation as well as an inspiration to modelers who think they don't have room for a layout.

Outside Activities

Self-guided layout tours will include the Golden Empire Historical and Modeling Society (GEHAMS) club layouts in both HO and N scale, Larry Saslaw's indoor HO layout and outdoor G-Scale layout, John Drazin's Oak Creek and Western, Kevin Birkbeck's N-Scale layout and Doug Wagner's N-Scale layout. Layouts in the Tehachapi area may also be on tour.

Since Bakersfield is a railroad town, there are many interesting and historical sights to see, including the Kern County Museum, the Bakersfield Museum of Art and the Country / Western Museum at Buck Owen's Crystal Palace. A short 30-minute drive will take you to the famous Tehachapi loop in the nearby Sierra mountains. A bus tour to the "Loop" is available as an extra-fare activity. Also mentioned in Doug's listing is the Shafter Depot Museum.

BSA Merit Badge

This special clinic, conducted by adult Scouters of the PCR at the Daylight Express 2017 PCR Convention, is a presentation of the Railroading Merit Badge requirements. At the conclusion of this clinic, Scouts will have completed all of the requirements necessary to earn the Railroading Merit Badge.

Contest

The contest room will be in full swing with categories for models, photos and arts and crafts. In addition to the judged contests there will be an area for display only, where you may show your in-process project, what-if or levity models. For more information on the contests, see the article by Guiseppe Aymar, MMR, PCR Contest Chairman on page ____.

Convention Car

Commemorating the fruit industry's prominence in the Bakersfield area, we are going to offer the ATSF Grand Canyon Steel ice reefer in 4 exclusive road numbers. There will be a discounted offer for purchasing more than one reefer, such as 2 for XX, 3 for XX or all 4 for XX amounts.

In the 1940's and 1950's, some of the hottest freight train on the Santa Fe Railroad were the GFX (Green Fruit Express) trains, from the farmlands of California to points all over the map.

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Convention Layouts



Larry Saslaw's HO scale layout.



Doug Wagner's N-Scale layout.
(IMG_5972) Credit Doug Wagner



Stay in touch with your hobby and Daylight Division. Go to www.pcnmra.org/daylight/

Send your ideas and stories and photos of your rail fanning and of your model railroad. We are always looking for the next great story and photo.

Daylight Express 2017

For those trains making it all the way to Chicago, distributions were made to all points Midwest. Many entire trains were transferred to the Erie RR for Northeast delivery. The B&O, PRR, and NYC covered D.C., Pennsylvania, and New York respectively. All types of fruits and veggies grown in the West were on these trains, and time was of the essence. Most cars were filled with ice on both ends of each car to keep everything cool. Ice stops were to be made daily. The train took 6 days to reach Chicago, reaching its destination on the morning of the sixth day.

The GFX ran from California to Kansas City or Chicago. Others stops included Galveston, Dallas, and Houston. These Texas trains ran as CTX or BTX. Cars could be pulled from the GTX at any junction point for delivery to places such as Denver or St. Louis, for example.



And to honor those reefer trains that carried the potatoes from Bakersfield to Eastern markets, the convention car for the Daylight Express is a representation of the reefers that ran endlessly to Chicago—and points east—to provide California produce to the Eastern United States. The Daylight Express convention car will be produced by Accurail—in HO ONLY—and will be a 40-foot steel ice reefer, in the Santa Fe Grand Canyon paint scheme, for the mid 1950's era. The cars will be offered in four separate road numbers, so if you order 4 convention cars, you will receive four reefers with four separate road numbers.

The pricing for the convention cars will be as follows:

\$22 for one. \$40 for two \$75 for all four.

For orders of less than four, the car committee will pick the car number.

Tehachapi Loop Tour

Convention Co-Chairman Doug Wagner has made arrangements for a bus tour to the Tehachapi loop. Following is an excerpt from a bit that Doug wrote for the PCR Branch Line a few weeks ago:

What would be a trip to Kern County be without a visit to one of the most iconic rail-fanning destinations—the Tehachapi Loop? If you like rail-roading history, then you will not want to miss this tour. On this tour, you will not only be able to visit the World Famous Tehachapi Loop, but you will have lunch inside a former apple packing shed converted to a restaurant/gift shop, visit the Tehachapi Depot Railroad Museum—and to top off the trip—you will be able to visit Kern County's only model train shop. After this 6-hour Tehachapi Loop-tour extravaganza, you will then be transported back down the hill to the convention hotel.

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2017 PCR Convention **Clinics List**

- Modeling the Southern California Citrus Industry - Bob Chaparro
- Citrus Industry Operations - Bob Chaparro
- Modeling Ideas for Southern Pacific C-77-1, -2 & -3 Chair Cars - Jeff Cauthen
- Super Detailing Your Orange Grove - Neil Fernbaugh
- Clerk Style Operations - Bill Kaufman
- Packing Houses of the Southern San Joaquin Valley - Jim Lancaster
- Furnace Filter Fir Trees, N to O scale, A Hands-on Clinic - Lloyd Lehrer
- Sage Brush Armature Trees, HO to G scale, A Hands-on Clinic - Lloyd Lehrer
- Static Grass - Wayne Maynard
- Modeling Petaluma's Water Street - Ed Merrin
- Layout Photography - Ed Merrin
- Quintessential California: Modeling Eucalyptus Trees - Bruce Morden
- Lighting Your Layout with LED Tape - Chris Palermo
- Battery Power, Radio Control in Small Scales - Pete Steinmetz
- Weathering With Pan Pastels and Ammo of Mig - Pete Steinmetz
- 3d Printing Freight Cars at Home - Robert Bowdidge
- Building a small layout for home or for the Build a Memory program - Mike Blumensaadt and Frank Markovich
- Basic Airbrush clinic - Ed Hall

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Daylight Express 2017

This trip is schedule to start at 10:00 AM and have you back to the hotel at 4:00 PM, on Friday, April 21st. The cost of this tour is \$65.00 per person, and this registration fee includes your meal of either a chicken pot pie and salad, or the all-you-can-eat soup and salad buffet bar, soft drinks and gratuity at The Shed Restaurant. This tour will be limited to the first 50 convention attendees who register for this trip. You must register for this trip by no later than April 13, 2017. If after we fill up the first 50 spaces on the first bus, and if there is enough interest, we will contract a second bus, but we must have this information by no later than April 13, 2017. For further information, please contact Daylight Express Co-Chairman Doug Wagner at carldw@aol.com, or by phone at (661) 589-0391.

Hotel

Convention headquarters will be the DoubleTree by Hilton, Bakersfield. Centrally located near the junction of freeways 99 and 58, the hotel is just minutes from a wide choice of restaurants and local attractions. Reservations will be open sometime in January. Registered attendees will get the information first. At a later date it will be posted on the website.

Registration

Full-fare registration includes contests, clinics (except MWTM and other make-it-take-it clinics), self-guided layout tours, exhibits and swap meet. Also included is the Saturday night PCR awards banquet and Sunday morning PCR membership meeting/breakfast.

The registration rate is \$115. Family members get a break: registration for a non-rail is \$95.00. Youth registration is \$65.00. Family registrations include all the regular registration benefits, registration, banquet and breakfast. A youth is 12 to 18 years old, or a full-time student.

First Timer Registration, \$95.00, for PCR members who have not registered for the past 5 conventions, includes registration, Saturday Awards Banquet, Sunday PCR Breakfast.

Non-NMRA Member Surcharge, \$15.00. A refund of \$10.00 is available to those who apply for NMRA membership before the end of the convention. A completed application, with payment by check or credit card for all then-current NMRA fees, must be provided to Registration staff before the end of Registration Desk hours on Saturday, April 22, 2017, per the convention program. (Subject to change without notice.) Registration staff must retain and mail the application form with your payment as a condition of refund. This is a great way to try out NMRA before joining. Or, avoid the surcharge and join now at www.nmra.org.

Go to the web site at <http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2017/register.html> to register on line.

Banquet speaker

Actor Michael Gross will address the convention as banquet speaker on Saturday, April 22. Mr. Gross is a model railroader, a railroad historian with a large collection of railroad antiques,

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Clinics List

- Painting a Espee Cab Forward - Ed Hall
- Detail and paint a 1941 Lark Passenger Train - Ed Hall
- Detail and Paint Espee #378 AC4400CW - Ed Hall
- A Cheap and Easy Automatic Block Signal System - Dennis Drury
- Secrets of the Frog Juicer - Duncan McRee
- 3D Printing - Jack Burgess

This is also posted on the web at <http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2017/clinics.html> >

Bruce Morden

Daylight Express 2017

and part owner of the 1:1 scale Santa Fe Southern Railway, a former branch line of the AT&SF which operates between Lamy and Santa Fe, New Mexico. He is spokesman for the "World's Greatest Hobby" campaign, Operation Livesaver, and the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore. He is a member of the Santa Fe Railway Historical Society. In 2016, he narrated Kalmbach's DVD release "20th Century Limited," about the famed New York Central train which ended service some 50 years ago. He also appeared in the 2016 documentary "Model Citizens". The hobby is lucky to have someone from the entertainment industry so active in our organizations and programs.

Mr. Gross has been active in film and television since 1975. He starred as Steven Keaton in the TV situation comedy "Family Ties" for seven seasons, and played Burt Gummer in five motion pictures in the "Tremors" franchise. He has appeared in "Anger Management," "Suits," "How I Met Your Mother," "Law & Order," and many other productions.

Daylight Limited 2017

Convention Opening Reception

From Doug Wagner

WELCOME RECEPTION AT TEMBLOR MICRO-BREW

Join fellow modelers at the start of the PCR 2017 Convention this year for a registrant-only Welcome Reception at Temblor Brewing Company on Wednesday, April 19 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Temblor is a Bakersfield micro-brewery located at 3200 Buck Owens Blvd., 1/2 mile from the convention hotel.



This is ****LIMITED TO 75 SEATS**** So **DON'T WAIT**, sign up today. Full Convention registration is required in advance, so if you haven't registered already, do so now.

For a \$9 extra fare, you get a Temblor beer or soda, plus taco bar, appetizers, sweet potato fries and other goodies, with a Brewmaster's Chat about the on-site equipment and production process at 8:00 pm. Cash bar available for your second beer. Enjoy opening-night fellowship with other modelers.

The \$9 payment can be made by PayPal (preferred) or check through March 31 or until sold out; \$12 at the door or after April 1 on a space available basis with proof of convention registration. For tickets and payment information, e-mail to CJPALERMO1964@GMAIL.COM or phone 650/208-3150 - DO NOT REPLY-ALL or post in this group.

This event is presented by Hickman Palermo Becker Bingham, LLP, a San Jose-area law firm that is co-owned by Convention Co-chair Chris Palermo. Not presented by NMRA or Pacific Coast Region. Please drink responsibly.

Central Coast RailRoad Org. Activities

Pacific Coast Railway

Bus Tour November 13th

Bus departs the SLO Museum's south-end parking lot at 8am sharp (arrive early!). Pea Soup Andersen's in Buellton for lunch about noon, on your own, off the menu. Museum return about 4pm. Cost is \$39 per person, guests welcome. Led by Karl Hovanitz. Contact Media@SLORRM.com or 805 548-1894 to get tickets.

What's Up at the San Louis Obispo Railroad Museum

The SLO Railroad Museum is open every Saturday from 10am to 4pm. Watch for special holiday displays and events, like Kids FREE Admission when wearing a costume on Halloween Saturday (29th), Santa's visit December 3rd, and more. [Museum website](#). And here's their [Schedule of Events](#).

2017 SLO Train Day set for May 13

The SLO Railroad Museum will be open from 10am to 4pm. Watch for activities in and around the historical Freight House including Running Model Trains, Railroad Swap Meet, Kids Activities, Music, Railroad Art and Photography, Amtrak Display, and railroad films as well as various Presentations and Tours. [See last year's](#).

BSA Railroad Merit Badge

On Sunday, January 22, 2017 the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum will be offering their 3rd Railroad Merit Badge Class

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Central California RailRoad Festival

What a Great 7th Annual Festival!

Next Festival -Mark Your Calendars- October 13-15, 2017

If you'd like to participate in any way, please [Contact](#) us.

2016 Highlights

Loads of people enjoyed events, displays, presentations, layouts, etc. from Lompoc to Paso Robles during the weekend of the Central Coast Railroad Festival. We've got tons of photos from this year's Festival already posted - check them out starting [here](#).

SLO's [Jack House](#) returned to the Festival schedule with railroad songs, tours, and two exhibits: "The Brief Life and Early Death of the SLO Street Railway" and "Dreamlines: The Unbuilt Railroads of the Central Coast." [Photos](#).

How about another standing ovation for Bob Chaparro of the [Model Railroads of Southern California](#) for the fantastic model layout tour! About 18 locations were on the program, and hundreds of enthusiasts got to see some fabulous railroads. Bob's photos are [here](#).

Your browser does not support the video tag. Jack Hutchinson's 2016 CCRRF Layouts Video (43mb, 720p)

Many thanks to the [SLO County Library](#) system that provided railroad storytime reading at all their locations leading up to the Festival. They also made available the community room at the downtown SLO branch for the Orange County N-Gineers layout display and display of all the children's artwork created during the Library Reading Times. Amtrak gave away Coast Starlight tickets to one lucky artist.

Hopefully you made it to the [Oceano Depot](#) to not only see that original Southern Pacific depot but also see the [San Luis Obispo Model Railroad Association](#)'s layouts set up inside.

The bike tour this year followed the Pacific Coast Railway right-of-way from the SLO Museum to the Octagonal Barn. The group stopped at several locations of importance along the PCRY route as it made its way south from the Museum area which was the northern terminus of the PCRY. At each of these stops Glen Matteson (SLO Boardmember) discussed the historical significance and showed old photos of those areas. [Photos](#).

Did you take the excursion on the [Amtrak](#) Coast Starlight over Cuesta Grade and enjoy "Train Wreck Friday" at [Pomar Junction Winery](#)? If not, don't miss the next one!

Of course, there was a great deal of activity at the host location, the [San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum](#). Talks, exhibits, model trains, artists, photographers, Amtrak, Operation Lifesaver, face painting, play area, music, food, etc. For the details of the happenings and photos from the events, go [here](#).

Festival Host: San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum

Central Coast Railroad Org. Activities

and Sign-Off Day. This class gives local Boy Scouts of America an opportunity to earn their Railroad-ing Merit Badge. [Details](#).

Year-Round Calendar

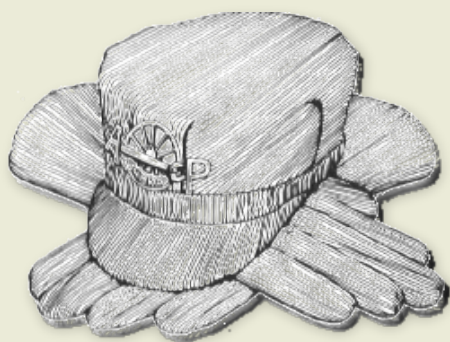
A Central Coast Railroading Calendar offers up-to-date listings for all rail events in our area: CCRRF.com/calendar.html. Do you have a Central Coast railroad event to add to our calendar or announcements? Email it to: addevent@ccrrf.com

Do you have a Central Coast railroad event to add to our next broadcast email? Email it to: addevent@ccrrf.com.

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Our mailing address is:

Central Coast Railroad Festival,
1940 Santa Barbara Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401



National Model Railroad Association
Achievement Program
Instructions and Applications.
www.nmra.org/official

Excerpted from the LDSIG Yahoo Group

"Real Benefit" of Brand Names

Posted by: [loggingloco1](#) Thu Jan 5, 2017.

Question Asked: From Carl.

What is the real benefit advantage of one name brand track and turnouts over another, say PECO vs. Atlas?

Dear Carl,

In no particular order of preference, PECO turnouts and track work:

- - Do not generally require the mechanical fettling of most other brands "straight out of the box" (over 25 years of active operational experience, comparing PECO to all comers in scale/gauges N, HOn30, HOn3, HO, On30, and O2R)
- - Have a built-in over-centre spring that really works (for those who dislike the look of CI ground-throws, or just want a Small/Micro layout turnout operation simplification, "finger flicking" PECO turnouts is simple and reliable).
- - Are actually available worldwide in many places that US-manufactured turnouts are not (If one happens to reside anywhere other than the continental US, then PECO is far more-likely to be the "known reliable, go-to option" commercial track of choice.)
- - At prices that don't require a second mortgage
- - That PECO turnouts are generally (with the exception of the HO Code 83 "US Geometry" range) built to BRMSB spec (as opposed to NMRA RP25 spec) does not hold any particular fear or trepidation for those who maintain a consistent track/wheel gauging regime, and lay their track with a basic attention to rail<>rail alignment.
- - PECO does offer "Setrack" options in most of their scale/gauge ranges, with continuous-curved-radii diverging routes. That modellers have a horrible tendency to connect 2x Setrack turnouts back-to-back, thus form nasty "S curve" configurations, is not the fault of the PECO turnout. (Any S-curve presents a risk, no matter what brand turnout forms it.) The space-savings of the curved-diverging route, deployed appropriately, should not be underestimated though!
- - In comparison, check out the "Streamline" options in each range, these use a common frog angle (so all turnouts match with a given diamond crossing piece), with varying switch rail "length of lead" creating an equivalent "substitution radii" and frog-angle. (all the benefits of "large US numbered-frog" with the space and geometry-simplification of a common frog trajectory).
- - PECO flextrack also bends more-easily than many other brands without fear of "busting a rail out of the spikes", (particularly when bent to "small/micro layout" radii!), while still capable of "holding a curve" if so-bent...

I hope this helps... Happy Modelling, Aim to Improve, Prof Klyzlr

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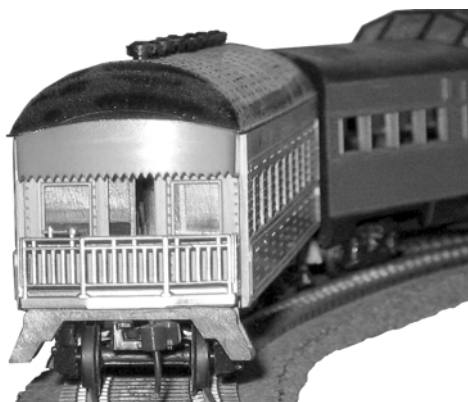
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O Gauge Track Products

John Houlihan

(559) 435-0874
Fax (559) 435-2874
e-mail: john@irishtracklayer.com



2682 W. Palo Alto Ave.
Fresno, CA 93711-1107
www.irishtracklayer.com



The Daylight Division of the PCR is your resource and access to active model railroaders like yourself. Make the most of it by participating in the meetings, events and activities available to you.

Get more Bang for Your Bucks!

Have you changed your address or other membership information?
Please, Pretty Please
Notify NMRA Headquarters
Email: nmrahq@nmra.org
Phone: 423-892-2846 (8am-4pm ET)
Mail: P.O. Box 1328
Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328

"Real Benefit" of Brand Names

Re: Turnout (Brand) Issue... (On a small layout)

Posted by: pgandw Thu Jan 5, 2017.

The Atlas Snap Switch and the Atlas #4 Switch (used to have Custom-Line in the name) are two distinctly different things.

The #4 is a traditional straight frog switch, with an actual #4.5 frog (12.5 degree) with straight rails at and after the frog. The closure rail radius (the curved part between points and frog) is somewhere between 22.5" and 26" radius, depending on who is measuring. The Custom-Line in the name gave it a higher price and usually better tracking than the Snap Switches. It was the switch of choice in many Model Railroader project layouts beginning in the 1960s. One of the differences is that the Custom-Line never came with built-in switch machines (switch motors). Many of the production runs had screw holes to mount an Atlas switch machine, but the machine was never standard.

Older versions of the Snap Switch had a constant 18" radius through the curved route - including the frog - after the 1.5" of straight. Newer versions of the Snap Switch have a somewhat modified design. The frog has been partially straightened, and the actual curved parts have a tighter radius to make up for frog straightening. It still substitutes for 18' radius, although it is tighter than 18" radius in places. Snap Switches have historically had wide flangeways at the frog to accommodate the frog curvature with long wheelbases. Snap Switches generally had electric or manual switch machines attached, which in some production runs ended up too high and too close to the track, causing problems with rolling stock striking the machine casing (shades of Lionel).

At times, Atlas has also produced 22 inch and 24 inch radius Snap Switches. I'm not sure of present production.

At one time, Atlas produced an 18 inch/22 inch radius curved switch (made by Roco for Atlas). This may also be back in production, with Atlas now being produced in China.

FWIW, Walthers track is produced by Shinohara. Shinohara sells all their code 83 track under the Walthers name, and sells code 70 and code 100 under the Shinohara name.

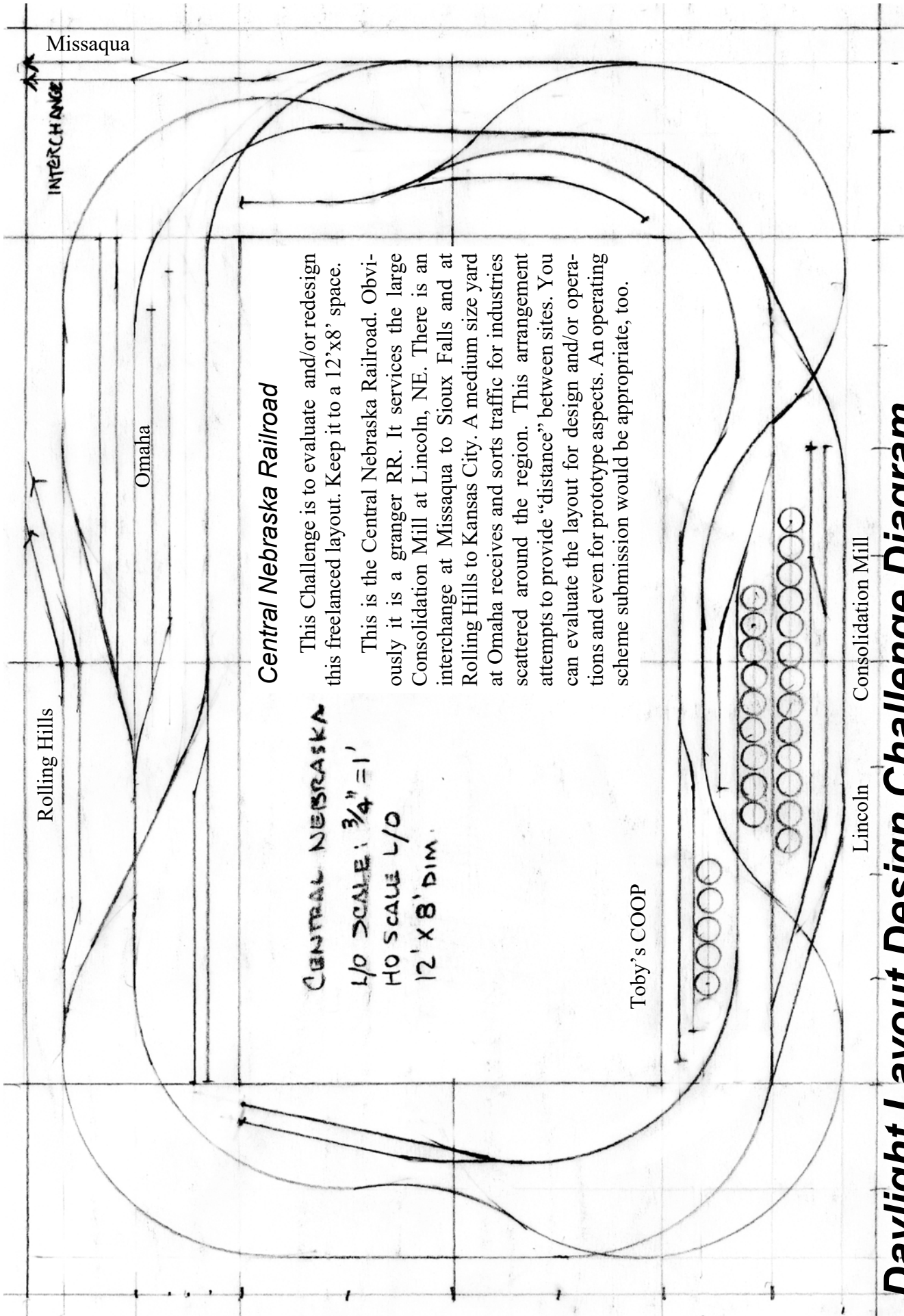
Hope this clears up some of the confusion.

Fred W

Re: Turnout (Brand) Issue... (On a small layout)

Posted by: "Reynolds John" atravellertoo Thu Jan 5, 2017.

If one sets an Atlas #4 switch immediately under or on top of a "snap-switch" the differences become obvious. Hope this helps, John



Central Nebraska Railroad

This Challenge is to evaluate and/or redesign this freelanced layout. Keep it to a 12'x8' space.

This is the Central Nebraska Railroad. Obviously it is a granger RR. It services the large Consolidation Mill at Lincoln, NE. There is an interchange at Missaqua to Sioux Falls and at Rolling Hills to Kansas City. A medium size yard at Omaha receives and sorts traffic for industries scattered around the region. This arrangement attempts to provide "distance" between sites. You can evaluate the layout for design and/or operations and even for prototype aspects. An operating scheme submission would be appropriate, too.

CENTRAL NEBRASKA
 L/O SCALE: 3/4" = 1'
 HO SCALE L/O
 12' X 8' DIM.

Toby's COOP

Daylight Layout Design Challenge Diagram

Critique it, Re-Design it, Correct it, or Submit another one of your designs to fit a 12'x8' space. Have at it! Please submit your response to the Editor by March 3, 2017, so it can be included in the DLObservation-Quarter-2-17 issue.

InfoNet News

Welcome to the NMRA
InfoNet News (Infoblast)
For December 2016

Recruiting Tools

A message from Pete Magoun, MMR, current NMRA Central District Director:

As I travel around the NMRA I hear a common theme rumbling at Division and Region levels: "How do we attract more members to the NMRA?" Sure, there are variations on this theme, like "What's 'National' doing to attract new members," or "What tools do we have to attract new members," but the underlying theme doesn't change. We need new members if the organization is to survive. That job is for each of us.

This discussion came up awhile back at a Region convention, where I had been asked to comment after the banquet. The term used was "After-Banquet Speaker," which is generally not a good idea around me, because I can talk about the benefits of the NMRA for a long time. This is a great hobby, and the NMRA makes it even better. But I digress".

The festivities included a slideshow of host Division activities, including modular shows in shopping areas, open houses, road trips and so on. That slideshow triggered a major change in my intended remarks, for I realized that it could be the basis for a completely different presentation. So let's have a look at the discussion. It's Tool Time!

There are really only three tools you need to conduct a successful membership growth campaign.

Continued on Next Page.



Orlando...a city for everyone!

Have you ever wondered how a host group decides to do a NMRA National Convention?



Sometimes it comes from reading the minutes from the NMRA Board Meeting. (Yes, truth is stranger than fiction.) In the 2012 Midyear Board Meeting "About the Future of the NMRA Annual Conventions" Tony Koester stated, "...it's clear that we cannot continue to do the same thing year after year [at the National convention], no matter how well we do it, and expect markedly different results."

The NMRA 2017 Orlando host group took these words to heart and have been a driving force to bring to the NMRA membership an exciting and dynamic convention this year.

Model Railroading is still our driving force, but each one of us has a family. Often you have to make a choice between the family vacation and the national convention. Not, this year! We have designed a convention for the modeler and his family too. We will still have the staples of the convention you've come to expect: layout tours, clinics, prototype tours, silent auction, Modeling with the Masters, and the National Train Show. For the spouses we have a "beefed up" non-rail and general interest tour schedule.

But in case you haven't heard, we have 12 theme parks located in the Central Florida area. Through the Convention and Visitors Bureau we have the opportunity to sell **discount theme park tickets** to you and your family. This is the convention to bring your spouse, kids and grandchildren.

The Rosen Plaza Hotel is located on International Drive right next to the Orange County Convention Center. The convention activities will be held on the first and second floors of the hotel. For those planning to attend The National Train Show, it's an easy walk across the Skyway Bridge.

There are five restaurants in our host hotel and 50 more restaurants within two miles of the hotel. You can select from McDonald's to Capital Bar and Grill, from burgers, to seafood to vegan, and in any price range. There is so much to do in Orlando you can't possibly do it all in a week!

Registrations for The Orange Blossom Express Orlando 2017 are currently open. You can get a paper registration form on the Orange Blossom Express Orlando 2017 website at www.nmra2017Orlando.org.

Continued on Next Page.

InfoNet News

They're inexpensive, and all of us have them. We simply need to use them!

The first is our eyes. We need to make eye contact with a potential member. We can smile with our eyes (try it, it works!), and our eyes tell the new prospect a great deal about who we are and where we're going. When we're happy, enjoying ourselves and proud of our organization, this shows in our eyes. [So does the Grumpy Old Man part, so be careful!]

The second is our mouth. We can smile with our mouths, and we can say a lot about the educational opportunities, fun, fellowship and so on we're enjoying within our little corner of the NMRA. We can answer questions, provide invitations, and make folks feel welcome.

The third is our hands. Use them for handshakes. Invite people in with a handshake. Make folks feel welcome. It's not difficult, and it makes a world of difference to a prospective member.

At some point in our NMRA experience, someone smiled, extended a hand to us, made us feel welcome, and invited us to join the fun. It wasn't difficult, and it opened the door to us. Be that someone! Go for it!

In Memoriam: Page Martin

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of our first Director of Marketing, Page Martin, from a long-term illness. Page worked as Marketing Director as long as his health allowed and was instrumental in creating a program to advance the NMRA that still resonates today.

Continued on Next Page.



Or electronically register by visiting www.nmra.org, clicking on "NMRA Store" at the top left of the page, clicking on "Members Only Company Store," then choosing "Conventions" from the "Categories" box at the left.

It is not too early to start making your plans for you and your family to attend The Orange Blossom Express NMRA 2017 Orlando Convention. We look forward to seeing you in Orlando! REGISTER TODAY!

General Interest Tours at the Orlando Convention

Five, Four, Three, Two One! We have lift off! The Kennedy Space Center is one of the most exciting places to visit while you are in Florida.

In 1968 the **Kennedy Space Center** became the primary launch center for NASA. The Kennedy Space Center Visitors' Complex is the only place in the world where you can walk under the largest rocket ever flown. You'll also be able to touch a moon rock, meet an astronaut, experience the International Space Station, stand nose-to-nose with Atlantis, and much more. This is one tour that is really "out of this world!"

Or, step back with us to the 11th Century where knights do the bidding of kings! Join us at "**Knights of the Realm**" for a four-course feast and a show that will entertain you with pageantry and thrills. You'll also be able to visit an authentic medieval village containing a series of workshops including a basket shop, carpentry shop, metalsmith and a blacksmith creating chain mail armor one link at a time. See you at the show!

Did you know that **St. Augustine** is the oldest continuously occupied settlement and port in the continental United States? St. Augustine has 452 years of history including rule by Spain, Britain, and the U.S., and is full of sights and attractions that will entertain and educate. To get there you'll take a ride on the Old Town Trolley Tour -- one of the best ways to see most of the city in the shortest time. Your conductor will narrate the tour with a fascinating and fun mix of trivia and humorous stories. It's a tour that you will not want to miss!

Do you feel the need for speed? Our convention has arranged a private tour of the **Daytona 500 International Speedway**! You'll get a behind-the-scenes look at what makes the Daytona 500 the "World Center of Racing." You'll see the driver's meeting room, NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Garages, Tech Inspections, the Coca-Cola Theater, and Gatorade Victory Lane, along with the Champion Car of the Daytona 500 for 2017. You'll also have time to visit the Motorsport Hall of Fame of America which contains displays honoring all forms of motorsports. Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines!

What convention would be complete without a trip to a model railroad manufacturer? **Broadway Limited Imports** President Bob Grubba, Vice President Ken Silvestri, and their staff will be providing a behind-the-scenes tour of their operations. During the tour they'll explain how they

Continued Next Page.

InfoNet News

Page was principal director and executive producer with Old Hampton Entertainment. Page's career has included a stint as Director of Special Events for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts during the company's historic 50th Anniversary. He engineered major events in the U.S., Europe, Latin America, and Japan, and was creative consultant or Fortune 100 organizations. Page was also an executive producer with one of the industry's largest providers of corporate entertainment and communications.

In addition, Page served on the Board of Directors of the Long Beach Garden Association and was an Assistant Coach in the Beach Cities Youth Lacrosse League.

He was the former owner of Arbour Models and modeled upstate New York, near the Syracuse area, in N scale.

If you have any questions or comments about any of the above, please send them directly to a Director or Officer. You will find those addresses at www.nmra.org or in the NMRA Magazine

If the person holding a region or division office changes, or their email address changes, please contact me at tcdraider@aol.com with the corrected information.

Regards, Tom Draper,
HLM, DSA, FA, MSA, PA
Director, Support Services



choose the models they produce, technological advances in sound equipped locomotives and cars, and how you can have "rain and thunder" on your layout. They'll also review common customer service and DCC questions. This is a rare opportunity and we're proud to be able to offer this tour during our convention!

Registration for the NMRA 2017 Convention is open! Register for the convention on line at www.nmrastores.com and choose the 2017 convention tab. If you'd like a paper registration form, visit www.nmra2017orlando.org.

Reviewers wanted for "Research & Test Car" column

Ever thought you'd like to do product reviews for *NMRA Magazine*? Here's your chance!

We're looking for individuals who want to share their knowledge and passion for models with other NMRA members. You'll have fun doing it and you'll be paid author rates!

For more information, contact editor Cinthia Priest at sreditor@pairedrail.com.

Patent and trademark attorney needed

The NMRA needs a volunteer patent and trademark attorney to manage the various patents and trademarks owned by the NMRA.

It will not entail a significant amount of time -- most likely just one to two hours a month on the average. The attorney would monitor the patents and trademarks to meet all deadlines for renewal and to maintain the intellectual property. The position would report to the Robert J. Amsler, Jr., NMRA General Counsel.

Please contact Robert Amsler at nmrlegal@charter.net if you're interested.

We're looking for retention and recruitment success stories!

By Christina Ganzer, NMRA Marketing Consultant

As we work towards continuously improving the NMRA, we'd like to gather information from our members on successful techniques you've used for retention and recruitment. It's our plan to collect this information, compile it in a concise and organized format, and distribute it as guidelines for best practices that Regions and Divisions can employ.

We recognize and understand that every Region and Division has its own unique challenges (geography, population density, funding, etc.), so it's our hope to assist you with retention and recruitment activities that have proven successful in a variety of areas. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated, and will hopefully prove beneficial to the entire NMRA family.

Continued on Next Page.



PRESENTED BY THE
CENTRAL COAST RAILROAD FESTIVAL



Wine Rail Excursions feature a ride on Amtrak's Coast Starlight up or down the famous and scenic Cuesta Grade between Paso Robles and San Luis Obispo. Trips include complimentary wine tasting at rail related Wineries such as Templeton's Pomar Junction, a light lunch, rail history and a private bus trip in the opposite direction of the train trip. Starting city alternates between Paso Robles and SLO.

Wine Rail Excursions offered:

- Monthly on Every Second Sunday Afternoon
- Additional Excursions for Special Events
- Private Excursions are available for groups

The CCRFF also offers Family Excursions on Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner using stations in San Luis Obispo, Grover Beach and Santa Barbara County.



These trips occur on Nation Train Day, during the October Railroad Festival and for other special occasions.

Full Details and Online Tickets Available at:
www.ccrff.com

Questions? Call the Festival Office at 805-773-4173



Submit your info and stories to Marketing@nmra.org. If your Region or Division has supplemental materials, such as brochures or presentations, please submit those, too!

Editors: Gerry Leone, MMR, HLM, and Chuck Diljak

Wondering about the NMRA member survey you received?

Here are some answers.

By Christina Ganzer, NMRA Marketing Consultant

On December 10th, the NMRA emailed a survey to all members in our email database. While our intentions were good, there were some aspects of the process that caused issues for our members. In addition, there were some complications with the Constant Contact software (which we use to send out this *NMRA eBulletin* and the surveys) that inadvertently reverted our personalized settings and messages back to a default state. We couldn't see this until the survey was actually mailed. While it's still a mystery as to why it happened, we take responsibility for this and apologize if you were inconvenienced.

However, we'd like to take this opportunity to explain the purpose and importance of that survey, and the ones coming in the future.

In an effort to improve communication with members, and gain valuable insights and feedback on both the positive and negative aspects of the NMRA, we developed this initial survey. It was meant to give us an overall picture of the state of the organization through the eyes of the members. Many of the questions were "required" and some prompted you to provide written answers. The reasons for this were to gather as much useful information as possible and allow for personal experiences, rather than limiting your answers to choices supplied by us. To date we've received almost 2500 responses and greatly appreciate so many members taking the time to complete the survey. We hope that your responses will provide the NMRA with a good foundation of information from which we can learn and use to start improving the organization at every level.

We plan to continue sending out surveys every other month. These surveys will be much shorter and focused on specific topics. As I mentioned, the NMRA hopes to incorporate positive changes in the coming months based on both member feedback and ideas, and our own observations and experiences. In addition, we hope to open the lines of communication even wider, which will hopefully lead to a better and brighter future for the NMRA.

[Editor's side note: if you clicked on the "SUBMIT" button but got an error, the red asterisks in front of the questions did not indicate the questions with problems. Instead, they indicated questions that required an answer. If you received an error you may have inadvertently skipped

Region and National 2017 Conventions

(Only those Regional conventions occurring in the next three months are listed)

Mar 4-5: European Region, Walferdange, Luxembourg

Jul 30-Aug 6: National Convention, Orlando, FL

Master Model Railroaders

#580 - John Parker (AR)

#581 - Rodney Vance (MER)

#582 - Arthur Hayes (AR)

#583 - Dale Sproule (PNR)

In Future Issues of NMRA Magazine

- Smartphone Throttles
- Uses for Foam on the Workbench
- Precision Design's Extreme Load #3
- Reworking a Rivarossi Observation Car

STAY CONNECTED:

National Model Railroad Association, P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328

Sent by marketing@nmra.org



answering a question. If this error happens to you again, look for the question with the exclamation mark inside of a triangle preceding it -- that's where the error is. -Gerry]

WWW.NMRA.ORG DOWN?

By Ben Sevier, Manager, Information Technology Department

A week before Thanksgiving the NMRA website went down. The cause was a massive hardware failure in one of the bays of the web hosting service that we use to host the website. We weren't the only ones affected - there were a number of business and organizations that were brought down as well. I don't have all the details, but it took a while for the network engineers to determine the scope of the failure, attempt to bring the hardware back on line (based on what did come out, it appears the disk arrays were massively corrupted), make the difficult (expensive) decision to replace all the affected hardware, then restore each customers system one by one. This all takes time, and a lot of very long days for the engineers. Our site began to come back on line on Thanksgiving Day, and a couple of days later our webmaster (Scott Povlot) had verified the restoration, made a couple of fixes, and we were back in business.

This type of thing happens in the computing business. Microsoft's *Azure* service has been having a number of problems the past few months, as have some of the other larger services. There are things we can do to mitigate the effect of a failure, but those increase the cost to us, the customer. I will be discussing this with the Board of Directors at the meeting in February.

What happened to the Division Business Car column website posts for December?

By Jim Zinser, MMR

The Division Business Car made an unscheduled stop at Malfunction Junction, that's what happened. So the items I talked about in my December column in *NMRA Magazine* didn't get posted to the website.

Actually there were three stops in Malfunction Junction. The first was the NMRA website going down just as the items were being prepared for posting. Meanwhile the next malfunction happened inside of John Grubb, the graphics guy who does the posts. His pacemaker/defibrillator was the culprit. John's fine now, but before he was able to finish his work, our Business Car ran straight into malfunction number three: John's computer died.

We're working to get this last issue resolved, so by the time you read this, the items may already be posted. To find them, log in to the Members Only section of www.nmra.org, and click on the NMRA@HOME icon. But if they're still not there, please check back frequently.

Continued on Next Page.

Results of the Regional Advisory Council

Director Election

By John Stevens,
NMRA Secretary

The Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Director election opened Saturday, December 10, 2016 and closed at the end of the day Tuesday, December 20, 2016. After votes were tabulated, Steve August was re-elected RAC Director.

The election was run using electionbuddy, an online voting system, which sent email to all RAC members at the opening of the election on December 10. The announcement included a unique voting key and instructions.

Ballots were submitted by 16 of 18 RAC members.

The Regional Advisory Council Director is the voice of each of the NMRA's 18 Regions on the NMRA's Board of Directors. If your Region has some special concerns or questions, address them to Steve August.



Cincinnati Division 7 donates \$10,000 to the Diamond Club Fund

Cincinnati Division 7, one of the many very active Divisions in the NMRA, recently donated \$10,000 to the NMRA to help pay for additional scanning for the NMRA Online Archives, otherwise known as the Diamond Club. To date over 6,000 slides, 19,000 negatives, and 1,600 large-format drawings have been scanned, all paid for with Diamond Club donations.

The Division is known for its many and varied community programs, which include donating large numbers of model railroad books to public libraries around their area. In addition, they sponsor hugely successful train shows that generate the income that allows them to continue their generosity. The Division has donated over \$50,000 to the NMRA over the past 30 years.

The NMRA greatly appreciates Division 7's gift. **THANK YOU!**

A few words from the President

The State of the Hobby and the NMRA



Each January, the United States President gives an address to Congress entitled the "State of the Union." This address advises Congress on how the government is working, as well as those issues facing society in general. Well, with apologies to the U.S. President, I would also like to address the state of our hobby and that of our association.

The full text of these thoughts can be found in the January issue of *NMRA Magazine* but let me summarize by stating that the state of each is excellent. Never has the hobby been more fulfilling and never has it been more rewarding. I think we would all agree that model railroading has never looked better nor operated more realistically. From DCC to new technologies that offer unlimited promise, we are living a true golden age in our hobby.

Similarly, the NMRA has never been stronger or more enjoyable than it is today. Gone are the "politics" of the old days and the inward focus that emphasized insular issues over the hobby in general.

But technological advances and increased realism are not the only reason the hobby is satisfying to an extent never before seen. It is today's hobbyist who also adds to the scene. For as we age, one advantage is that we now have the time and in many cases, the discretionary income to pursue our hobby in ways only dreamed of in our younger years. At last, with the kids out of the house and college paid, there is money available for that newest N-scale diesel or HO craftsman kit.

Continued on Next Page.



BULLETIN



The UP Big Boy from a California Display has been rebuilt in Colorado and is ready for it's steam up tests. Watch for it's return to the rails for excursion runs. Pictures © Trains Magazine, used with permission.



Despite my earlier more gloomy prognostications on our future, I refuse to either admit or predict the demise of scale model railroading anytime soon. Our hobby is just too satisfying and appealing to believe it is in its "last days." One need only look in the eyes of a child at a train show or witness the excitement at a Thomas event to conclude that trains remain fascinating to younger generations, as they have been for decades and decades.

Therefore, I remain bullishly optimistic about our future. It is not optimism without foundation for it is based upon the fascination of trains for generations and generations. It is also based upon the fascination of the younger generations with new technology, which our hobby increasingly offers. I do not believe that we will live to see the day when our hobby no longer exists. That is why I conclude the state of our hobby remains strong.

Similarly, claims that the NMRA is no longer relevant to the hobby or will soon disappear are simply without foundation. There is no evidence that the NMRA is in danger of either event happening. Of course, the NMRA faces challenges. From a fairly realistic high membership number of over 26,000 in the mid-1970s, to today's 18,000+ members, we have seen a decline in member numbers. But so has the hobby. That is not to say we cannot improve the Association or cannot do better for the hobby. In past and future columns I have and will discuss what we can continue to do to improve both the NMRA and the hobby.

The State of the Hobby is sound and the NMRA remains a proud leader of that hobby. There are challenges on the horizon but I look forward to this new year and the wonders it will bring.

As I always say, and mean: Well, those are my thoughts; what are yours?

Charlie

Winter BOD meeting in Atlanta, February 18-19

The Winter Board of Directors meeting will once again be held in Atlanta, Georgia, on February 18, and 19 at the Drury Inn & Suites. The Budget and Operations meeting will begin at 2:00 PM on Friday, February 17, and the Board will be in caucus that evening. Both of those meetings are only open to invited guests.

The regular, open session of the BOD meeting begins at 9:00 AM on Saturday, February 18. Because the agenda is not yet finalized, there's no way to tell if the meeting will continue on Sunday. All members are invited to attend the open sessions. Watch www.nmra.org for details.