

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION DISPATCH

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



REGION CONVENTION

PAGE 9

FIVE DAYS IN MISSION VALLEY, AND THE MUSEUM TO OURSELVES

All Aboard for 2026 runs September 9–13 at the Doubletree in San Diego — clinics, layout tours, ops sessions, a hobo auction, and an after-hours reception inside the largest model railroad museum in the country.



The Minierton Railroad & Lumber engine house, San Diego Model Railroad Museum — one of four club layouts you can visit during convention week. PHOTO: CREDIT

Sep 9-13

 DOUBLETREE, MISSION
VALLEY

11 ft

LA MESA CLUB'S CLIMB

FROM THE CAJON DIVISION

Whose job is the non-member on the show floor?

AP REPORT

Six certificates and two new MMRs.

BY THE NUMBERS

868 members, down thirty-nine.



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MASTHEAD

Editor · Frank Kenny

Next deadline · September 24, 2026

Submit articles and photos to
PSRDispatch@PSRNMRA.org

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Committee chairs and full contact details: page 3.

Still time to register. All Aboard for 2026 runs September 9–13 in San Diego. Registration and hotel booking links are on page 9 and at psrnmra.org



REGION DIRECTORY

OFFICERS, DIVISION DIRECTORS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

IN EVERY ISSUE

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OFFICERS & THE FOUR DIVISION DIRECTORS ARE THE VOTING MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

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THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER.

SEND ME ANYTHING

Welcome to the new version of the PSR Region *Dispatch*. I hope you like what you see here, and I truly welcome your comments — positive or negative — so that I can make this a better publication for you.

My name is Frank Kenny and I've been in the NMRA since I was thirteen years old. I served on the board of the LA Division for several years and was also editor of the LA Division *Coupler*. That was many years ago, when Mary Barstow led the organization. For the past two years I have served as PSR Region Vice President, and now also as *Dispatch* editor.

To me, the *Dispatch* and other publications, railroad and non-railroad, were not very exciting or interesting documents to read simply because of the standard Publisher format that is used across many newsletters. It's just was was available to the public to use. That's not a slight on any editors over the years — it's just the Publisher format that was passed down for decades. The AI format has now opened up a whole new world of editing that is available to all. Editing a publication takes a lot of work, and a lot of thank-you's go out to the past editors of the *Dispatch*, and to the editors of the Division publications as well. Without your hours of hard work we wouldn't be where we are today.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A WRITER

You're probably wondering what I'm going to do now that will hopefully be worth your time to read. First, I want this to be every member's newsletter. That means YOU get to contribute too, should you want to. Yes, I'll have all the traditional regional information in the *Dispatch* so you can keep up with what is going on in the Divisions and the Region — and I want you to feel free to send me an article or photos of things you think would interest others.

Before you feel this is the typical call to send stuff for publication: it is not. You don't need to worry at all about computer programs, formatting, polished form, writing, or any of that. If you want to send me an email of what you want to convey as an "article", please do. I'll help you put it together in a way that others would enjoy.

Or even if you just send a photo or two about an event you did or hosted, I can work with that and your subject line. What I can put into the *Dispatch* is extremely flexible. Say you went to or hosted an op session — send me a photo and a caption. Or perhaps a trip to Tehachapi, Horseshoe Curve, or even another country: send me a photo and a caption. If you want to do a write-up, then do so. The point is that I can use just about anything you send.



I'll keep a disclaimer here that whatever you want included must be of interest to us as a model railroad community, and as editor I'll choose what's appropriate. If you're not sure, ask me about it and we'll go from there.

EVENTS, AND LEAD TIMES

If you have an event coming up, please let me know that as well — I'll add it to the list of events, and you can also send a flyer. Lead times are still being worked out with this new format, so give me as much as you can. If the lead time is short, send it anyway. And I will be relying on the activity list that Bob Chaparro sends out, so if you are on his list you'll be on mine too.

Bottom line: the *Dispatch* is YOUR newsletter. Contribute to your friends and to your membership.

WHY ALL THE FLEXIBILITY

You may be wondering why all of a sudden there is so much flexibility. With this issue I'm introducing the new version of the *Dispatch*, and this version is built by AI. I know — you've heard about AI in one form or another and may have strong feelings about it. It's here to stay, so you may as well just accept it. I accepted it, and now you have the *Dispatch* in your hands.

It's going to allow me to be flexible and to provide more to you than a typical editing program will allow. I believe AI is going to allow a more enjoyable reading experience, and I'm going to rely on YOU to tell me how it's going — and to send me information about what's going on in your model railroad world. The sky's the limit here, and I hope you enjoy where we're going.

“

YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT FORMATTING, POLISHED FORM, OR WRITING. JUST SEND IT.

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

**SEPTEMBER 24,
2026**

WRITE TO THE EDITOR

**CPRXmodelRR
@gmail.com**

THREE WAYS IN

An email of rough notes. A photo with a caption. A date for the calendar. Any one is enough.



YOU CAN LEAD A HORSE TO WATER

**JOEL MORSE**

PRESIDENT, PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION — SEPTEMBER WILL BE HIS TENTH PSR CONVENTION



As President of the PSR, I work with the PSR leadership, at the Region and Division levels, to develop ways to help members get the most out of their NMRA membership.

But no matter what opportunities we may provide, if you don't participate, everyone involved in the effort to create those opportunities has wasted their time and effort — and you have wasted a portion of your membership.

For the past two years, the "All Aboard for 2026" Regional Convention committee has been hard at work creating this year's convention, being held September 9th through the 13th in San Diego.

This Regional Convention creates an unmatched opportunity to meet and socialize with others who share your passion for model railroading, create new and possibly lifelong friendships, and share information which will enhance your knowledge, your skills and your enjoyment of this great hobby.

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

The biggest event of the modeling year is being held practically in your backyard, one that provides something of value and enjoyment for

almost every member of the Pacific Southwest Region — but for some reason, not every member of the Region is registered to attend.

I know for a fact that those of you who have registered will benefit from the committee's dedication and commitment to host the best convention possible, will enjoy it, will be glad they attended and will feel their money was well spent. "All Aboard for 2026" will be my 10th PSR Regional Convention, and I'm looking forward to it. One of the many highlights for me is always the social time that occurs at the hotel in the morning and evening — so if you are attending, I encourage you to stay at the hotel.

If you have not yet registered, you will be missing out. If you have not previously attended a Regional Convention, there is no time like the present to jump in and find out why members who attend these events enjoy them so much. You really can't beat your prospects for growth, education and friendship.

There's still time to register and book your hotel room. I hope to see you there.

Register: sandiegodivisionpsrnmra.regfox.com/all-aboard-for-2026 — then book the hotel.



APPARENTLY I NEEDED ANOTHER HAT

**FRANK KENNY**

VICE PRESIDENT, PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION — AND EDITOR OF THIS ISSUE



Apparently I really needed another hat, because I just don't wear enough of them. With the retirement of the past *Dispatch* editor I volunteered to take it on, mostly because I can't say no and always like to help. (Slap me now... again!)

Editing is a ton of work and an almost thankless job. Fortunately for me, AI showed up just in time — so with this issue we are now using AI to assist in creating the *Dispatch*. Read about it in my Editor's column on page 4, and please, please, please send in the information you want to convey to others.

Since the last issue several members of the leadership team have been dealing with family or health issues that have kept them from serving their NMRA functions. Out of respect for their privacy I won't mention names, but if you know who these incredible folks are, please reach out and let them know you are thinking of them and that you care.

STILL MY FAVORITE PART OF THE HOBBY

In the last issue I wrote about operating sessions — Op Sessions, or Ops. I have hosted and attended some recently and, as usual, I absolutely love them. I think it's my favorite part of the hobby. I like operating trains, but I think I like the camaraderie of op sessions more.

If you haven't tried ops before, may I recommend reaching out to someone to attend a session. There are several in the area, and of course nationally as well. In fact there are operating sessions at the upcoming Regional Convention in San Diego in September — register and attend. I also had a request from someone who wants to operate in the Santa Clarita or San Fernando Valley. Anyone looking for another operator?

WHO HAVE YOU BROUGHT INTO THE NMRA?

One other area of the NMRA and our Region that is important to me is our membership — and it should be important to you too. No kidding, we're all getting older, and as life has it many of our long-time members are passing along or are just unable to continue their past activities with us. As a result, membership has been decreasing.

It's up to all of us to bring new model railroaders into the hobby, and the same goes for bringing in new NMRA members. So I ask: who have you brought to the NMRA in the past ninety days? Who could use an organization like the NMRA to support them in the hobby with us? Who can you tell me about, so that together we can recognize them in the *Dispatch*?



I want to highlight two new members to our Region. Fortunately for all of us, Greg Tomey and his wife Lillian of SantaClaritaRailroad.com have recently joined us in the NMRA — and fortunately for Greg, he makes a product many of us may need to have: the Original Handy Holder foam cradle and their new Pro Pak model train storage system. They sell their product through the local shops located on the last page of this issue. Greg models in several scales and is an avid member of the Belmont Shore Model Railroad in San Pedro. Welcome, Greg and Lillian!

SHOWS, AND TWO GOOD BOOKS

As mentioned last issue, I went to the SoCalNScale.com show at the end of May and, as usual, it was awesome. If you are at all interested in N scale you definitely have to attend next May; more details will be posted after the first of the year. And speaking of N scale, my N Scale Yard Sale LIVE is coming up on November 21st in Torrance.

Did you go to the recent Santa Fe Railroad Historical Society Convention in Phoenix? Tell me about it so we can let others know. Got any pictures and information? Any other events you can tell me about?

If you want to sit back and relax, I have a couple of books for you. The first is *Wacky Dust* by Fred Frailey, a fun tale about being on the Santa Fe Super Chief in 1946 — nothing serious, but a lot of fun, and a good book for any reader. The other is *FDR's Funeral Train* by Robert Klara, an enjoyable read built from detailed true events in April 1945 and woven into a great story. I had a hard time putting it down.

In the last issue I mentioned I would include an article about the fears of layout owners. Forgive me — I'm going to hold that for the next issue, simply because I want to make sure this one gets to you without further delays.

That's all I've got for this issue. Have a great time railroading!

MORE ON OPERATIONS

OPSIG.ORG
OPERATINGSESSIONS.COM

Sessions run at the September convention — no experience needed.

WELCOME, GREG & LILLIAN TOMEY

SantaClaritaRailroad.com — the Original Handy Holder foam cradle and the new Pro Pak storage system. Their flyer is on page 25.



ALL ABOARD FOR 2026

**TIM FOOTE**

DIRECTOR, SAN DIEGO DIVISION



Come join us at the Doubletree Hotel in Mission Valley, San Diego, September 9th to 13th. The reception alone is worth the drive: the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park, after hours, to ourselves.



Above: The La Mesa Model Railroad Club's Bakersfield–Mojave route, written up by *Model Railroader*. The climb from the bottom of the layout to its highest point is eleven feet; the Tehachapi Loop sits on the second level. **PHOTO:** CREDIT

4

CLUBS AT THE MUSEUM

11 ft

BOTTOM TO SUMMIT

5 days

SEPT 9–13, 2026



There are exciting things in store for you. For our reception you will be visiting the largest model railroad museum in the United States, the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in beautiful Balboa Park. The president of the museum, Mike Warburton, has been very gracious in helping us plan the reception, and there will be refreshments. It is an after-hours event, so you will have the museum to yourself.

Four model railroad clubs call the museum home. The largest layout is the La Mesa Model Railroad Club's, which has been written up by *Model Railroader*. It depicts the route from Bakersfield, California to Mojave. The climb from the bottom to the highest point on the layout is eleven feet, and on the second level is a rendition of the Tehachapi Loop.

CLINICS, TOURS AND OPS

A lineup of excellent clinics gives you the opportunity to learn more about railroading and the hobby of model railroading. Layout tours will be available so you can see the local talent the San Diego Division has to

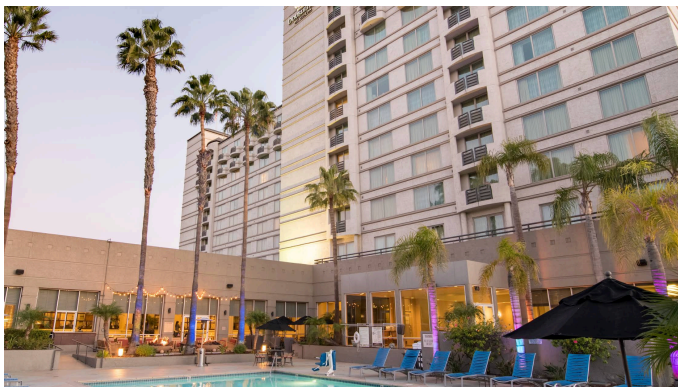
offer. Consider signing up for operating sessions on some of the local layouts as well — you don't have to be experienced in model railroad operations to participate.

Tours during the convention will include the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System headquarters, the Southwest Railway Museum in Campo, and a railfanning tour. Other activities include a hobo auction, a Hobo Breakfast, a swap meet, a bingo event, a contest room and the awards banquet.

IF THE FAMILY COMES ALONG

There will be non-rail activities. The hotel is near three major shopping centers, and a trolley stop close by connects them. San Diego has the tourist attractions you already know about — the Zoo, SeaWorld, Legoland — all within easy reach of Mission Valley.

The San Diego Division has put a lot of effort into this convention to make it a fun and beneficial experience for you. The signup link is on the PSR website and on the San Diego Division site at sandiegodivision.org.



The Doubletree, Mission Valley — convention headquarters for the week, with a trolley stop and three shopping centres close by.

REGISTER NOW

DOUBLETREE MISSION VALLEY SEPTEMBER 9-13

sandiegodivisionpsrnmra.regfox.com/all-aboard-for-2026 — book the hotel at the same time. Links also at psrnmra.org and sandiegodivision.org.

TWO DEADLINES BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE

GROUP ROOM RATE ENDS

August 19

Book on the 20th and you pay rack rate. Reserve today at the best price.

PRO-TOUR SIGNUPS CLOSE

August 10

Register and pay by the 10th. Tours below the minimum may be cancelled — full refund if that happens.

RESERVE YOUR ROOM

Rooms at the convention rate cut off on August 19, 2026. If you book on August 20 it will no longer be at the group rate.

book.passkey.com/event/51116277/owner/10710/home

SIGN UP FOR THE PRO-TOURS

Do not delay registering and paying for your Pro-Tour by August 10th — help us meet the minimum number of signups so the tours can go on as planned.

sandiegodivisionpsrnmra.regfox.com/all-aboard-for-2026

OPS SESSIONS DURING THE WEEK

The list has just been updated to include the San Diego and Arizona Eastern HO layout at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum.

docs.google.com/document/d/1NbUWYufUBHfUNTND6DXR_keR42mRaAqG_Apu_dF4BVg/edit

TOOL KIT FOR MODELING – \$25

Purchase a PSR Tool Kit for Modeling at the Company Store on the registration page.

docs.google.com/document/d/1PDI-hGfH3VtqDGNtFZst_FBxt4ypUyE/edit

NOT SIGNED UP YET?

Now is the time. We have a great convention planned — all that is missing is you.

sandiegodivisionpsrnmra.regfox.com/all-aboard-for-2026

Pacific Northwest Region 2026 Convention
National Model Railroad Association
Presented by: The San Diego Division
September 9 to 13, 2026

CONVENTION CHAIRS WELCOME

On behalf of the 2026 Convention Committee, it is our pleasure to welcome you to San Diego for the annual Pacific Northwest Region Convention. We have spent the past two years planning and preparing the event for your enjoyment.

If this is your first convention, don't hesitate to contact any of our Committee Staff Members (green shirts) for assistance. My hope for you is that you have a great time and make some new model railroading friends. If this isn't your first rodeo, please help me greet all our newcomers and make them feel welcome.

As always, we will host the PSR's Annual Board Meeting, the PSR Membership Meeting, the Celebration of Models, and our Hello Breakfast. Don't forget to stop by and visit Shelton Tom Kelly who will be interesting model railroaders for his Silverado show.

In addition to the many new clinics, operating sessions, prototype and layout tours, be sure to take advantage of Wednesday evening's Welcome Reception at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum, Thursday's Sing for Time, Friday's Hobo and Silent Auction, and Saturday's Sleep Meet and Awards Banquet.

This year's Banquet guest speaker is Jeffrey Cauthen, researcher and author of many railroad books. His passion for his work has provided him some vast knowledge and experience in the world of railroading.

San Diego offers many sightseeing experiences for you to enjoy as well, like the San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park, Balboa Park, Old Town, Seaport Village, Sea World and Legoland.

While Sunday is the last day of our event, don't forget about the many home layout hours open for conventioners to visit on their way home.

Have Fun!
Don Fowler, MMR

It's all Happening at the Convention

Frank Baker MMR - Scratch Building
Via Zoom from Arizona

Gary Butts, MMR - Modeling with the PSR

John Fiscella - Passenger car Heavyweights
& Lighting the Heavyweights

Tim Foote - Basic Electronics & Converting a Bluebox engine

Gene Forbes - Layout Planning

Rodger Gredvig, MMR - Animation Ideas

Don Fowler, MMR - Keep on Rolling & Modeling with the PSR

Evan Gerdes - Model Railroader Turned Railroad

Steve Bradley - Scratch Building

Mike Hampson - Scale, Track Code, and Gauge

Tim Harris - Current So Cal Rail Scene

Carl Heimberger, MMR - Judging Clinic

Pete Leach, MMR - Backdrop Painting

Duncan McRee - Wiring for Tricky Track Situations

Steve Siedensticker - Aspects of Dead Rail Operations

Jonathan Meador - Do You Know Pico?

John Mick - Flag & Play DCC

Joel Morse - Layout Planning for Operations

Wayne Pierce, MMR - Got Rust?

Jim Price - San Diego Streetcar History & Restor of Caboose #2

Justin Rasas - Building Scenery with Foam

Gary Robinson - Improving Realism of Commercial Kits & Static Grass

Pat Rogan - "Any Rail" Basic and Beyond

Pete Steinmetz - Dead Rail, Hobby Glues

James Keena - Weathering

Jay Styron - Photo Stacking

Dan Williams - Live Steam History & the Chula Vista Live Steamers

Madison Kirkman - Mcken Motor Car Co

Pete Lynch MMR - Painting Figures

Registration is still open for the PSR San Diego Convention 2026.
www.sandiegodivision.org/index.php/convention-2026
Purchase a Tool Kit for Modeling with the PSR
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PDI-hGfH3VtqDGNtFZst_FBxt4ypUyE/edit

Design by: Wayne Pierce

Don Fowler, MMR, welcomes conventioners — and thirty-odd clinics are already on the board, from scratch building and dead rail to weathering, photo stacking and painting figures. FLYER: WAYNE PIERCE



THE ROOM IS FULL SO WHY AREN'T THEY MEMBERS?



GARY STENBERG

DIRECTOR, CAJON DIVISION



Greetings from the Cajon Division. Have you ever gone to a model railroad train show and seen almost no one there? Me neither. While a large percentage of the attendees are NMRA members, a larger percentage are not. Which begs the question: why aren't more of them members?

Perhaps one reason is that they haven't had a one-on-one contact with us. Another is that they live in the more rural areas of our region and just don't have enough regular contact with our membership. And another is that there are simply too many distractions in our society's daily events.

Fifty years ago I was active in the NMRA in Orange County. I was the first editor of the Cajon Division's *Order Board* and its second Superintendent. Then life

happened; I got married and had children. I had been a firefighter and was promoted to Fire Apparatus Engineer, then Fire Captain. Still a model railroader at heart, I was just too distracted to be active.

The kids became adults and I finally retired. But the one telling thing that occurred, from a hobby perspective, is that I was contacted by one guy — Gary Butts, MMR — who suggested I get active and volunteer for Chief Clerk. I said sure, and that I'd be happy to take on that job. I met a lot of great people and discovered that volunteering for a position with the NMRA was fun in and of itself.

One phone call. That is the whole mechanism, and it is available to every one of us.



A modeller talks about his work during the Show and Tell portion of the meet.



A grade crossing on Chris Jean's HO Santa Ana & Newport Railroad.

“

**WE HAVE TO BE A BRIGHTER
LIGHT IN THE WILDERNESS OF
TODAY'S SOCIETY.**



A VERY LARGE DIVISION

The Cajon Division is geographically enormous. The largest concentrations of members are in Orange County and the greater Las Vegas area. Unlike the Los Angeles Division, we don't have many brick-and-mortar clubs. There used to be a Santa Ana Model Railroad Club and an O scale club at the Orange County Fairgrounds, and they encouraged participation in Orange County. Alas, they are no more.

We have hosted spring and fall meets in the Buena Park area for several years, but haven't had a meet in the Inland Empire for a really long time. Because of this, our Inland Empire membership has suffered. Las Vegas members have instituted local events and get-togethers, but we haven't had much activity in the Palm Springs and Coachella Valley area.

DISTRACTIONS? WHAT DISTRACTIONS?

Aside from family distractions like marriage and children, we have our share of cultural events, Facebook, sports, internet scrolling, cable television, internet scrolling, movies, concerts, internet scrolling, random social media — and internet scrolling. There is a lot going on that takes away from model railroading and from membership in the NMRA.

What do we need to do? For me, it's to stop scrolling and get back to model railroading. As a member of the San Diego Model Railroad Association I get to regularly meet the public as well as run my trains. Talking about the museum, and the four clubs housed there, isn't hard. In fact it's kind of fun.

We can do the same at all our NMRA events. We have to talk about what membership means to us, personally, and tell others what it can mean to them. We need to describe the programs and events that have been the most fun or the most significant. In the Cajon Division

we've had operating sessions on members' layouts, celebrations of models at our regular meets, and tours of significance like the Orange County Model Engineers railroad in Costa Mesa. We have quite a bit we can talk about, and we can do it one-on-one.

INVITE A FRIEND

Besides the general public — what about friends who are interested but haven't taken the plunge? Invite one to the next meet. That covers two birds with one stone: they get to come, and you commit to coming as well. The enjoyment of this hobby doesn't have to be limited to lone-wolf activities. It can be social too.

For the past several months the Cajon Division Board has been looking for viable locations in the Inland Empire to host some of our regular meets. Finding a suitable site at a reasonable price has been difficult. Attendance at our meets ranges from 50 to 90. We need a large room for the meeting, the HOBO auction and the luncheon, plus rooms for clinics and the celebration of models — usually three — and an outside area for swap meet participants. We are still looking and hope to find something soon.

Small groups are trending within the division. I mentioned Las Vegas. Now we also have the Border Buddies — my name, not theirs — who bring together folks from both the Cajon and Los Angeles Divisions, meeting at members' homes. Small groups become cohesive units, and that attracts more like-minded friends. It wouldn't hurt if the organizers also recommend NMRA membership.

And the distractions? They are always going to exist, and people gravitate to their priority interests. We have to be a brighter light. We have to step up with more interesting events, clinics and tours. Most importantly, we need to step up with interpersonal contact, in order to brag about our hobby and to invite others to join us.

PAX and High Green — Gary

KNOW A ROOM IN THE INLAND EMPIRE?

One large hall, three breakout rooms and outdoor space for a tailgate, for 50–90 people. If you know a venue, write to Director@CajonDivision.org.

BRING ONE PERSON TO THE NEXT MEET

The friend who has been thinking about it for two years counts. So does the person you talked to at the show and never followed up with.

A SHOW AND TELL, AND A CRAWL THROUGH NOVEMBER



CHRIS THOMPSON

DIRECTOR, ARIZONA DIVISION



In the last edition of the *Dispatch*, I mentioned I was starting operations on my home layout. Since then, a lot of tuning has been done based on suggestions from the shakedown session and observations of how everything flowed while the trains were running.

The first couple of regular sessions seemed to go well, and I am working on getting regular sessions established and running. Sharing my layout with others has added a lot to the fun of the railroad, and provides an opportunity to get together with a few guys to enjoy some time “playing with trains”. If you haven’t tried operations yet, give it a try. There are normally operating sessions during the PSR convention, and many people hold regular sessions throughout the year.

PRESCOTT, IN JUNE

Our summer Division meet was held in Prescott at the end of June. We had a good selection of clinics presented to the members, and a nice turnout of models in the contest room as well.

We mixed in a couple of new activities this time. After the business meeting concluded we had a show and tell, where a few members shared something that had a personal connection to model railroading for them. The stories that went along with the items made this an interesting part of the meeting. We will look at continuing it in future meets — so think about sharing some of your own model railroad history or inspiration at a future Division meet.

THE FOURTH MONDAY

A reminder to all Division members, and to the members of the PSR: our monthly Division Zoom meetings are now on the 4th Monday at 7pm MST. It is an open forum discussion, and we would like to see what is currently on your workbench, what is happening on your layout if you have one, or hear a tip or trick you can share with the group. The link is on the Division website calendar, so it is easy to join.

CACTUS CRAWL, AND SCOTTSDALE

The Arizona Division will host the Cactus Crawl layout tour again this year on November 21–22. Since November is National Model Railroading month, this is an effort to engage with the public, promote the hobby, and perhaps inspire some of them to join the hobby or become involved with the NMRA. It is also a great opportunity for our members and their families to see some impressive model railroads in the community, so I encourage everyone to visit a layout — or many — during the event. I find it inspiring to see the creativity people put into model railroads.

The next in-person meet for the Division is October 17 in Scottsdale. This is our annual membership meeting, and this year we will conduct the election for Division Superintendent as stipulated in our By-Laws. As the date gets closer, details will be posted on the website calendar, and we will be incorporating new ideas and activities as we did in Prescott this summer. I look forward to seeing all of you there.

Oct 17

ANNUAL MEETING, SCOTTSDALE
— SUPERINTENDENT ELECTION

Nov 21-22

CACTUS CRAWL LAYOUT TOUR

4th Monday

DIVISION ZOOM, 7PM MST



KEEPING THE MEMBERS WE ALREADY HAVE

**JEFFERY L. SMITH**

SUPERINTENDENT, LOS ANGELES DIVISION



The Los Angeles Division continues to move forward, and one of the most encouraging areas has been membership. Like many organizations, we understand that attracting new members is important, but keeping our current members active and involved is just as important. People are more likely to remain involved when they feel welcome, receive useful information, and have opportunities to participate.

We have been working to improve communication with our members through the *LA Coupler*, email notices, layout tours, meetings, and special events. The *Coupler* gives us a way to share Division news, recognize our local clubs, promote upcoming activities, and remind members that there is a great deal happening throughout the Los Angeles area. We want our members to see the value of belonging to the NMRA and understand that the organization is about more than receiving a magazine. It is about fellowship, education, sharing knowledge, and enjoying the hobby together.

DUES ARE COMING DOWN

We also received some great news from the National Convention. Annual NMRA dues are dropping from \$68 to \$50, effective immediately. This is a positive step for the organization and will make membership more affordable for both current and future members. We hope the lower dues will encourage more model railroaders to join the NMRA and become active in their local Divisions and Regions.

A GUEST FROM SCALETRAINS

Our annual Los Angeles Division Banquet was another important event for us. This year, we were pleased to welcome Paul Ellis from ScaleTrains as our guest speaker. Paul gave our members an inside look at ScaleTrains and discussed some of the work that goes into bringing detailed model railroad products to the market. His presentation was informative and enjoyable, and it gave everyone a better understanding of what happens behind the scenes before a locomotive or freight car reaches the hobby shop.

Having someone from a major manufacturer speak directly with our members was a great opportunity. Members were able to learn more about the company, hear about product development, and ask questions. Paul was very approachable and clearly enjoys sharing his knowledge of the hobby. We appreciate him taking the time to be with us and helping make the banquet a successful evening.

Events such as the banquet also support our membership efforts. They give longtime members a reason to reconnect and provide newer members with an opportunity to meet people from across the Division. Sometimes the best way to keep someone involved is simply to help that person feel that he or she is part of the group.



A SEAT TO FILL

There has also been a change on our Division board. Vic has stepped down from his position as Director, and we appreciate the time and service he has given to the Los Angeles Division. We are now looking for a new Director to fill that position. This is an important role, and we hope one of our members will consider stepping forward to help support the Division and be part of its future direction.

AUGUST 22 – A SWAP MEET AND A CLUB LAYOUT

We are also looking forward to our next layout tour on August 22, 2026. NMRA members and their guests are invited to tour the Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club's permanent HO scale layout in Camarillo from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. The layout is located at 1220 Avenida Acaso, Camarillo, California 93012, on the second floor.

Members may also want to begin the day at the Simi Valley Railroad Swap Meet, which will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Santa Susana Railroad Depot and Museum, located at 6503 Katherine Road, Simi Valley, California 93063. The suggested donation is \$5, and children under 12 are free. This gives members the opportunity to enjoy a swap meet in the morning and then visit an outstanding club layout in the afternoon.

WHY THE TOURS MATTER

Layout tours, club visits, clinics, and other activities remain an important part of what we do. Southern California has many talented model railroaders and

several outstanding clubs and home layouts. Every layout tour or club feature gives someone a new idea and may encourage that person to begin a project, improve a skill, or become more active in the NMRA.

The upcoming Pacific Southwest Region Convention will give all of us another opportunity to learn, share ideas, see layouts, and spend time with fellow model railroaders from across the Region. We are looking forward to attending and seeing many of our friends and fellow members there. Regional conventions remind us that each Division is part of a much larger organization and that we all share the same interest in supporting and growing the hobby.

The Los Angeles Division still has work to do, especially when it comes to reaching members who may not regularly attend events. However, I believe we are heading in the right direction. We are improving communication, offering more opportunities for participation, and working to remind people why membership matters.

The strength of the Division does not come from one person or one event. It comes from the members, volunteers, clubs, presenters, and supporters who continue to give their time and share their knowledge. I appreciate everyone who has helped keep the Los Angeles Division moving forward, and we look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming PSR Convention and at our August layout tour.

Jeffery L. Smith — Superintendent, Los Angeles Division

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

SWAP MEET, THEN A CLUB LAYOUT

8–11 a.m. Simi Valley Railroad Swap Meet, Santa Susana Depot & Museum, 6503 Katherine Road, Simi Valley. \$5 suggested, under 12 free.

Noon–2 p.m. Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club, HO scale, 1220 Avenida Acaso, Camarillo — second floor.

FUN FACT

More than twelve model railroad clubs call the Los Angeles Division home, across different scales and styles — a standing invitation to visit layouts and trade ideas.

\$50

ANNUAL DUES, DOWN FROM \$68

Director

POST OPEN — STEP FORWARD



OVER THIRTY AT THE NYO&W



JOEL MORSE

NEW YORK, ONTARIO & WESTERN RAILWAY, SOCAL DIVISION — N SCALE, SPRING 1954 ·
PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK KENNY



Four members of the regular crew worked locals, coal drags and passenger trains, with guests taking a hand. PHOTO: FRANK KENNY

On August 1, over 30 PSR members attended the layout open house held at Joel Morse's New York, Ontario & Western Railway, SoCal Division, in Garden Grove. Joel's NYO&W is an approximately 125-square-foot "proto freelance" 1/160 scale N scale model railroad located in his finished garage.

While Joel provided the "nickel tour" of the layout and its history to numerous guests, four members of his regular crew worked locals, coal drags and passenger trains across the layout with the assistance of interested guests. The layout ran well, fifteen trains were completed, and a good time was had by all.

The layout loosely models the prototype railroad's main line as it serves the rural towns of Walton and Sidney, along with the Delhi Branch and a fictitious connection with the DL&W mainline at Shellysburg, New York, in the spring of 1954.

Located in New York's Catskill Mountains, the model railroad depicts approximately 35 of the 541 main line miles served by the New York, Ontario & Western. Running from Weehawken, New Jersey, on the west bank of the Hudson opposite New York City, the railroad ran north and north-west to the town of Oswego on the Great Lakes, and south-west to the coal fields around Scranton, Pennsylvania. Opened in 1873, the NYO&W was abandoned in 1957.

30+

MEMBERS ATTENDED

125 sq ft

IN A FINISHED GARAGE

15

TRAINS COMPLETED

35 mi

OF 541 MODELLED



THE TEMPERATURE OUTSIDE WAS RIDICULOUS

**FRANK KENNY**

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS · VICE PRESIDENT AND EDITOR



Your PSR Region president, Joel Morse, had an open house on his railroad on August 1st, and he had over thirty people stop by for a visit. The temperature outside was ridiculous, so we all stayed in the train room or the house. It was a great day for camaraderie amongst us railroaders — and the wives! Here are a few pix.

YOUR TURN

Hosting an open house or an ops session? Send a photo and a caption to PSRDispatch@PSRNMRA.org — that is all it takes to land a page like this one.



Garden Grove, August 1. Thirty-odd visitors, a 125-square-foot N scale railroad and an air-conditioned train room. Joel's own report is on page 17.
PHOTOS: FRANK KENNY



MEMBERSHIP & TREASURY

REPORTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31 MAY 2026

RUDY SPANO · JOHN MCGREEVY

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Hope everyone is having a great summer. If you haven't already, consider registering for the PSR Convention in San Diego — a good time to renew friendships and enjoy the camaraderie of model railroaders.

Our numbers are down a bit from last year. As of June 2026 our regional membership stood at 868. In June 2025 it was 907 — thirty-nine more than this year. The numbers continue to trend down. Some of this is due to members aging out or passing away, and some to members moving to other regions.

868

MEMBERS, JUNE 2026

-39

YEAR ON YEAR

DIVISION	MEMBERS
Arizona	281
Cajon	246
Los Angeles	204
San Diego	137
Region total	868

Thanks to all the membership chairs and members who are working to sign up new members and keep our region strong. — **RUDY SPANO, MEMBER SERVICES**

TREASURER'S REPORT

There was one PSR receipt during the period 1 March through 31 May 2026: \$800.00 from National for membership rebates. National pays \$1.00 twice a year based on the number of members in each division; no payment is made for Family, Rail Pass or Student members. The rebates are distributed to the divisions on the same basis.

REBATE SPLIT – FIRST PAYMENT	AMOUNT
Division 01 — San Diego	\$128.00
Division 02 — Los Angeles	\$192.00
Division 03 — Arizona	\$259.00
Division 04 — Cajon	\$221.00

Expenses totalled \$665.09: \$500.00 to CNPro Services for preparation of the 2024 tax returns; \$44.25 to Joomlashack for one year of Shack Forms Pro through 15 April 2027; two payments of \$35.97 to InMotion for one year of domain registration, one for the Region and one for the LA Division; and \$48.90 to Paddle for the Joomla content editor. We subsequently paid for the Cajon and San Diego Division domains in June — reviewing prior years, the Region has been paying for the divisions at least back to 2024.

Region cash, 28 February 2026	\$30,991.05
Region cash, 31 May 2026	\$31,125.96
Change this period	+\$134.91
Hobo account — no change	\$714.88

Wells Fargo checking. — **JOHN MCGREEVY, TREASURER**



KEEPING YOUR MEMBERSHIP INFO UP TO DATE

By keeping your NMRA membership information current, you guarantee that you will receive all email correspondence and newsletters from the NMRA National Office, the Pacific Southwest Region and your local Division. Adding your phone number, if you haven't already, allows for more personal outreach by the Division Membership Chairs.

ONLY YOU CAN MAKE THE CHANGE

A request to change your membership information must be made by you, on the NMRA website. No one else can change it — not even if you send the request to Division or Regional personnel.

HOW TO DO IT

- 1 Log on to **NMRA.org** with your username or email address and your unique password.
- 2 On the home page, click **Membership** in the blue navigation bar.
- 3 Scroll down to the last menu choice, **Request for Membership Info Changes**, and click it.
- 4 Complete and submit the form to request the changes to your membership information.

STUCK ON THE FORM?

If you have trouble completing or submitting the change form, contact your Division Membership Chair for help.

ADD YOUR PHONE NUMBER

It is the one field that turns a mailing list into a phone call.



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM



Cajon Division Fall Meet contest winners with their certificates.

SECOND QUARTER 2026

**SIX CERTIFICATES,
ONE GOLDEN SPIKE,
TWO NEW MMRS**

We did quite well in the second quarter of 2026.
Congratulations to every member listed here.

6

AP CERTIFICATES

2

NEW MMRS

MEMBER	DIVISION	CERTIFICATE
Wayne Pierce	San Diego	Prototype Modeler
Paul Buhrke	Arizona	Structures
Chris Thompson	Arizona	Electrical Engineer; Author
Jake Debolt	Arizona	Dispatcher
Linda Petrarca	Arizona	Volunteer
Nick Lisica	Los Angeles	Volunteer
Michael Dayton	Arizona	Golden Spike

AND OUR TWO NEWEST MMRS

Wayne Pierce
San Diego Division

Terry Fearn
Arizona Division

NEW EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Over the past several months National has been reworking the guidelines for evaluation, and they should be up on the NMRA website soon. The hope is that these will help clarify what is being looked at in each evaluation category. Mike Allee, PSR Contest Chair, should be implementing them at the 2026 PSR Convention in San Diego.

THE AP MANAGER'S JOB IS OPEN

As I stated in my last report, I will be stepping down as PSR AP Manager effective at the 2026 PSR Convention. Anyone interested should contact Joel Morse, PSR President, as this position is appointed by him. I have everything you will need in electronic form and will gladly share any information I have with the new AP manager.

— CARL HEIMBERGER, MMR, PSR AP MANAGER



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST THROUGH DECEMBER 2026

— provided by Bob Chaparro of Southern California Model Railroad Club **BOOKS** **BEFORE TRAVELLING**

DATE	EVENT	WHERE	DIVISION
Aug 6	Sand House Chat — 7 p.m. on Zoom, meeting ID 704 611 7065, password LADivSandH	Zoom	Los Angeles
Aug 8	San Diego Division Summer Meet — location to be announced	TBD	San Diego
Aug 15	Swap Meet	National City	San Diego
Aug 15–16	Tehachapi Loop Railroad Club Model Train Show	Tehachapi	Daylight
Aug 22	Simi Valley Railroad Swap Meet, Santa Susana Depot & Museum — 8–11 a.m., \$5 suggested	Simi Valley	Los Angeles
Aug 22	LA Division layout tour — Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club, HO scale, noon–2 p.m.	Camarillo · see page 16	Los Angeles
Aug 23	Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society Swap Meet	Buena Park	Cajon
Aug 24	Presentation: The Hemet Depot	Temecula	Cajon
Aug 29	Daylight Division Operations Clinic & Operating Session	Santa Barbara	Daylight
Sep 9–13	PSR Annual Convention — All Aboard for 2026	Doubletree, Mission Valley	Region
Sep 26	Los Angeles Model Railroad Society Open House & Swap Meet	Harbor City	Los Angeles
Oct 10	Layouts of the San Diego Division — Chula Vista Live Steamers	San Diego County	San Diego
Oct 17	Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet	San Bernardino	Cajon
Oct 17	Arizona Division annual membership meeting — Superintendent election. Scottsdale Congregational UCC	Scottsdale, AZ	Arizona
Oct 25	Cajon Division Fall Meet	Cajon Division	Cajon
Oct TBA	Los Angeles Area Prototype Modeler's Show and Swap Meet	Bellflower	Los Angeles
Nov 7	Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet & Open House	Simi Valley	Los Angeles
Nov 11	San Diego Fall Meet, San Diego Model Railroad Museum	Balboa Park, San Diego	San Diego
Nov 11	Veterans Day Open House — Ron Varnell's AEWRR, 10am–4pm	Torrance · see page 24	Los Angeles
Nov 14	Arizona Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet	Glendale, AZ	Arizona
Nov 21	N Scale Yard Sale LIVE — Frank Kenny, PSRDispatch@PSRNMRA.org	Torrance	Los Angeles
Nov 21–22	Cactus Crawl layout tour — National Model Railroading month, open to the public	Arizona · see page 14	Arizona
Dec 5	Los Angeles Model Railroad Society Holiday Open House	Harbor City	Los Angeles
Dec 12	Layouts of the San Diego Division — Wayne Pierce's On30 Minicition Railroad & Lumber Co., dinner & holiday party	Santee	San Diego

CONVENTION WEEK

SEPTEMBER 9-13 · MISSION VALLEY

After-hours reception at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum · clinics, layout tours and operating sessions · MTS headquarters, Southwest Railway Museum at Campo and a railfan tour · hobo auction, Hobo Breakfast, swap meet, bingo and the contest room · awards banquet on the 13th.

SUBMIT AN EVENT

Please send announcements as early as you can to **PSRDispatch@PSRNMRA.org**. Date, event, city and a contact is all we need.



RECURRING EVENTS

OPEN HOUSES, CHATS AND ZOOM SESSIONS, ALL YEAR

CONFIRM BEFORE TRAVELLING

WHEN	EVENT
Tuesdays & Saturdays	San Diego S-Gaugers' Open House, Grossmont Shopping Center, La Mesa. Noon–6:00 p.m.
Saturdays	Corona Model Railroad Society Open House, Corona Heritage Park, Corona. 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
1st Tuesday	L.A. Division sponsored <i>Sand House Chat</i> . 7:00 p.m.
1st Saturday	Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club Open House, Camarillo. 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
1st & 3rd Saturday 1st & 3rd Monday	Glendale Model Railroad Society Open House, Glendale. Saturdays 1:00–4:00 p.m., Mondays 7:00–9:00 p.m.
3rd Saturday	Arizona Division monthly Zoom meeting. 10:00 a.m. local time.
3rd Sunday	Pasadena Model Railroad Open House, Los Angeles. 1:00–5:00 p.m. Admission charged.
4th Monday	Arizona Division Zoom session. 7:00 p.m. — link on the Division website calendar.
Last Saturday	Railmaster Hobbies' Model Railroad Fellowship Get-Together, Bellflower.

EVERY MONTH, SOMEWHERE

NINE STANDING INVITATIONS ACROSS THE REGION

Two of them are Zoom sessions you can join from anywhere in the Pacific Southwest — no travel, no host duties, just trains and conversation.

HOSTING SOMETHING REGULAR?

If your club or group meets on a standing schedule and is not listed here, send the details to PSRDispatch@PSRNMRA.org and it will run in every issue.



MILITARY TRAINS, AND TRAINS THAT SALUTE AMERICA

Ron Varnell is opening his 1,400-square-foot AEWRR layout to everyone who served and everyone who supports the troops. Doors open at ten, and he will be there until 4pm.



YOU ARE INVITED

VETERANS DAY OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday, November 11, 2026

Ron Varnell's AEWRR Model Railroad

2741 Plaza Del Amo, Suite No. 213

Torrance, CA 90503

Opens 10:00 am · closes 4:00 pm

310-213-1697



“

**I AM A 100% DISABLED VIET
NAM VETERAN. I AM OPENING
MY LAYOUT TO ALL WHO
SERVED.**

RON VARNELL



Ron Varnell's AEWRR in Torrance. PHOTOS: RON VARNELL

1,400 SQUARE FEET

Free to attend, and open to the public.
Bring someone who has never seen a
layout this size.



HELP WANTED

PSR Achievement Program Manager. Carl Heimberger, MMR, steps down at the September convention. The post is appointed by the President — contact Joel Morse at President@PSRNMRA.org. Everything you need is already in electronic form.

An Inland Empire venue. Cajon Division needs a hall for 50–90, three breakout rooms and outside space for a tailgate, at a reasonable price. Director@CajonDivision.org.

Clinic presenters for divisional meets. Short clinics are welcome — but to earn Achievement Program points as Author or Volunteer, a clinic must run 45 minutes and include a hand-out for attendees.

FOR SALE & WANTED

*Member ads run free in every issue.
Send twenty-five words and a contact to
PSRDispatch@PSRNMRA.org by September 24, 2026.*

WRITE FOR THE DISPATCH

Division reports, layout tours, clinic write-ups and prototype notes.

Photos with a caption and a credit for each one. Unfinished layouts are genuinely welcome — most of ours are.

Next copy deadline: September 24, 2026 — PSRDispatch@PSRNMRA.org.

ALL ABOARD FOR 2026

SAN DIEGO · SEPTEMBER 9-13 REGISTER BEFORE YOU PUT THIS DOWN

sandiegodivisionpsrnmra.regfox.com/all-aboard-for-2026, then book the hotel. Ten conventions in, the president says the mornings and evenings at the hotel are the best part — so stay there if you can.

5 DAYS



Support Your Local Hobby Store

We like to support local hobby stores when we can. So, we have included a list of local shops for your use.



Arnie's Model Trains & Milepost 38 Toy Trains

Arnie's Hours: Monday - Saturday 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Milepost 38 Hours: Monday - Saturday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm



Arnie's Trains | arniesmodeltrains.com | (714) 893-1015
Milepost 38 Toy Trains | milepost38.com | (714) 892-9471

6462 Industry Way, Westminster, CA 92683

RailMaster Hobbies

Tuesday - Saturday 10:00am - 6:00pm

Sunday 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

railmasterhobbies.com

(562) 867-5627

9812 Belmont St., Bellflower, CA 90706

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X (formerly Twitter): @RMHobbies



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