

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION DISPATCH

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



VOLUME 44, NUMBER 1 1st Quarter, 2026 Revised

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Table of Contents:

Pages 2 through 9 - Directors and Committee Chair Reports

Pages 10 through 14 - The Fear of Model Railroad Operations - Guest Operators

Article by Frank Kenny

Pages 15 and 166 - 2026 Regional Convention Information

Pages 17 and 18 - Regional Event information

A note from your Editor

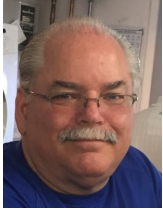
I have been your Editor for the Dispatch for over 8 years, starting with the Q2 2019 issue. During that time you have seen (hopefully) 28 PSR Dispatch issues float across the ethernet for your reading pleasure.

I have enjoyed every minute of the time spent sharing information with all of you. Unfortunately, as is usual, life situations often creep up and surprise you, changing your world and forcing change upon you. Such is my case. I will be giving up the Editor position as of the next issue of the Dispatch in the Q2 2026 issue. I will still remain active in the NMRA as a participant and modeler, but the important responsibility for communication within the Region must pass on to others that I am sure will carry it forward with gusto.

Apologies for the lateness of the Q1 issue, but per my prior notes, it is becoming difficult to put the focus on the hobby. I take my responsibility seriously for making sure that regular issues go out to membership and sadly will be passing those responsibilities on in order to ensure that you all receive important hobby information.

Thanks to everyone for the support and kind words in the past related to my efforts in the PSR Region.





PSR President

Joel Morse, President

From the Brass Hat

The NMRA's **Vision 2035** program is well underway and initially the most visible aspect of the program is the rebranding of the NMRA. By now you have seen the new NMRA logo, hopefully the new PSR logo and you may have seen the new PSR Division logos, which are being rolled out the newsletters and websites. The PSR leadership is working to fully implement the Division logo update by the end of April, so keep an eye out for the changes as they occur.

One of the key aspects of **Vision 2035** is the **2026 Work Plan**, which includes the creation of *Division Standards* outlining the organization's expectations for each Division to assist in improving your membership experience. Additionally, a *Division Standards Checklist* has been created to determine how well each Division meets those standards and identify areas for improvement. In looking over the Standards and the Checklist, I can tell you that each Division of the PSR is meeting the expectations of many of the Standards, but there are clear opportunities for improvement by each Division.

The focus of the PSR Board of Directors over this next year is to identify methods to improve the delivery of member services in the areas identified as not meeting the standards, and then ensure that any effective actions are shared across the Region. The first step in this effort is for each Division to evaluate their consistency with the *Division Standards Checklist* through a survey filled out by the Division leadership. That survey will identify areas where the Division can improve.

If you have questions or suggestions for ways your Division can improve the value of your membership, I encourage you to speak to your Division Director and/or Superintendent and share your ideas with them.

I'm happy to say that I have registered for the National Convention in Chattanooga in July and for the PSR

Regional Convention in San Diego. If you haven't registered for either, I encourage you to do so. At this point unfortunately, the Chattanooga Convention hotel is sold out of discounted rooms but there are other convenient hotels within walking distance.

On a personal note, I've been in Florida for the past few months spending quality time with my three sisters and some old friends while also making time for model railroading. I reconnected with a high school friend and have been spending time with him developing a concept for his large HO layout. It's been a lot of fun and a very interesting experience. Additionally, I've also been assisting another modeler in modifying his good-looking running N scale layout to incorporate operations. He's been very willing to add the necessary turnouts for passing sidings and spurs, and he's good at that kind of work. I'm hoping to have a shakedown session on his layout before I head back to California. Recently, I participated in a one-day event at a local library and presented the clinic I have been preparing for the San Diego Regional Convention in September (Layout Planning for Operations). My clinic was well received by the 35 attendees, who also saw TT&TO, T-Trak, analog scale layout design (pencil, ruler and compass on graph paper) clinics and a live demonstration of the Bragdon Enterprises foam scenery and rock mold method. During this event I met a few new modelers, including members of the South Florida Railroad Museum club who hosted me when I visited (HO and N layouts), and a fellow with an operating layout which I will be operating next week. While I will miss my sisters and the opportunity to get better acquainted with my new friends here, I'm looking forward to being back in Southern California soon and getting back to work on my layout and seeing some of you in the coming months!





PSR Vice President

Frank Kenny, Vice President

It's spring and already the weather is like summer! And in Southern California it's always an internal fight for me between working on the railroad or being outside. Fortunately, I live near the coast, but even still, it's been hot enough here lately that I've been spending valuable time on the railroad instead. After all, I've got ops sessions to host!

Speaking of, my big quest is to get more people doing operations, or at least introduced to operations. It's really a fun time both for the operator and the layout owner. I wrote an article about the fear some have about being an operator at an operations (ops) session that was intended to be in the last issue, but you're in luck as it's in this issue so you didn't miss out. Most wanna-be operators are fearful they will screw-up or break something! Don't worry about that because you won't screw-up anything. Just come, learn, and have fun! In the next issue of The Dispatch, I'll cover some fears that layout owners have about setting up an op session. I view ops as more of a social event. True, I didn't start my ops journey without some fear and hesitation but as I've operated on more layouts and also my own, that fear has faded into really looking forward to op sessions, especially my own, no matter how much Murphy tries to disrupt the fun.

So, if you are into, or pondering going to, or hosting an op session, I encourage you to just jump in and do it. You'll figure out what works for you and what doesn't. In fact, if you communicate your interest in operations directly to me, I'll set up something where I can help you, or do some operations training and familiarization for you.

In March I attended the Los Angeles Division Banquet and it was truly a great time with a great turnout. Mr. Ellis of Scale Trains spoke about his career in model train manufacturing. But for me, the highlight was my guest, Mary Barstow. Mary is truly the matriarch of the Division and many of us joined or

grew up in the NMRA with Mary at the LA Div. helm. For me, she was the mom of the organization and honestly, she was the original woman in model railroading well before it became a thing. Thank you Mary for being there for me and the rest of us, and thank you again for being my "hot date" for the Banquet!

The next event I highly recommend is the SoCalNScale.com show coming up on Saturday, May 30 in Lomita. The first event was held last year and was a complete success thanks to the other Frank, Frank Hinojosa, so expect the same quality and fun this year. The event is FREE to all so definitely come out to enjoy the fun. Last year Frank had it all, from modular clubs, to vendors, to swap meet vendors, door prizes, and more! Even the Lomita Railroad Museum had a table.

One more event you may want to check out, and it is very well done as well, is the Santa Fe Railroad Historical and Modeling Society convention in the Phoenix area in June, so it's close to all of us, especially the AZ Division. I'd recommend taking Amtrak either to Flagstaff or to the Phoenix area. Last year was in Chicago and it was one of the best conventions I have been to with all of the typical convention activities but really well done. If you are interested in the Santa Fe Railroad, I highly recommend this group. sfrhms.org

Lastly, another interest of mine is the NMRA membership. I've been a member for over 50 years, joining when I was 13 years old. It means a lot to me to be an NMRA member and as I mentioned above, I met Mary Barstow, one of my very favorite people on the planet! You can expect the same from the NMRA if you allow it. I've challenged you a few times to simply invite someone to join. If they don't join, then ask another. The worst that can happen is that they say no. One new member brought in by each of us would make a mountain of difference in the opportunities in your Division and in the Region. So much more railroading will occur for all of us with each new member. I've brought in two new members, and a third is on the way. I'll introduce my newest recruit in the next issue.

OK, I'm out of steam for this issue but I'm sure I forgot two or three things! Have a great time railroading and I'll see you on the rails! Please say hi!



Editors Note: This page is modified to include the Vice Presidents report which was left out of the previous version.



Cajon

Gary Stenberg Director

A new look for the National Model Railroad Association is here. The NMRA has, with their Vision 2035 program, given us a series of serious tasks. We have to enter into the 21ST Century. There will be a lot of “behind the scenes” work done on behalf of you, the membership. We encourage you to get behind the scenes with us and get involved.

The Cajon Division has been working on the Checklist required by the NMRA, both literally and figuratively. We have the Divisional Checklist converted into WORD format so that we can easily keep track of what is required to be done. We also have available the Vision 2035 vision and strategy document converted into WORD. Now we are checking off the things listed.

The Cajon Division By-Laws and Manual of Operations date back to 2018 and are up for review, editing, and re-adoption. The Cajon Board of Directors will be working on this task and, if needed, will present the documents to the membership by the fall meet for adoption.

The Cajon Division Board of Directors lost two members at the beginning of 2026. Steve Cole, the Chief Clerk passed away unexpectedly and Patrick Rogan, the Membership Chair, resigned. We have been looking for people to step forward and volunteer for these much needed jobs. So far, we have been unsuccessful in filling these positions.

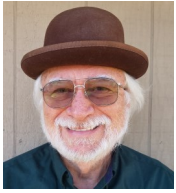
In keeping with the desire to bring service to the membership, we have been searching for a meeting site in the Inland Empire. Our hope is to find a location, like the church facility that we’ve been using in Buena Park. So far our search has not found a place that fits our needs and our fiscal constraints. Consequently, the Cajon Division Spring Meet is slated for April 25TH at the Messiah Lutheran Church in Buena Park (our traditional meeting place.) The search goes



**Is it real? Only the photographer knows!
Photo by Mike Masse on the Wandering
Spruce Railroad.**

Continued on page 5





Cajon

Gary Stenberg Director

on and hopefully we will have a place lined up in the Inland Empire for our Fall Meet.

The Cajon Division website is pretty poor. But not to worry...Kurt Matthews has been working on transitioning the old site and format to a new format. With the assistance of Marshall Wales (PSR webmaster) Kurt has gotten the sign-on authorization for the new format and will be transitioning the website into the new format. When that is developed and tested, Kurt will open it up and then take down the old site. Hopefully the new website will be up and running by May.

By unanimous consent, the Board of Directors for the Cajon Division has authorized the filling of the position of Assistant Superintendent – California. Congratulations are in order for Lev Michaelian, who has been selected to fill this long empty post. In addition to helping Paul Stoner, our current Superintendent, our new Assistant Superintendent will be in training, so to speak, for future advancement.

The Cajon Division continues to publish the Order Board on a quarterly basis and has also published supplemental issues as content continues to grow. Kurt Matthews, our current Publications Chair, keeps finding interesting content and photographs for the Order Board. Our Division membership is encouraged to submit articles for the Order Board. The next issue of the Order Board will be issued on or about March 27TH 2026.

Last month saw the Great American Train Show being held at the Orange County Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa. Although limited to only one exhibition hall, there was a lot to see. Merchants had their wares, Modular Clubs had their empires set up, and all of us had a lot of fun. The Cajon Division staffed an informational table dedicated to the National Model Railroad Association. While we only got one person to sign on, we did get to meet a lot of people and planted the idea of membership in them.

Looking ahead to the rest of 2026, the Board of Directors will be laying out plans and schedules for future events. We intend to formalize the decisions by publishing a “Timetable” within the Order Board and also to post it online at the new website that is due by May. We are calling on all division members to submit ideas and suggestions of what they would like to see as division events.

Here in the Cajon Division we are blessed with good weather (most of the time) and several great vantage points to just watch trains. After all, the division is named after the Cajon Pass, a railroading hotspot where you can see a train go by every twenty minutes or so...maybe even more frequently. Fullerton Station has a really good vantage point from the bridge over the tracks for looking at trains (and a couple of good restaurants nearby too). How about the railroad museum in Perris, or the Live Steamers at Hunter Park in Riverside? There are a lot of opportunities for inspiration. Go for it!!!
PAX and High Green



Arizona

Chris Thompson, Director

One of the primary focus areas of the NMRA to promote growth of the hobby is fellowship. A goal of many of the activities we plan as Divisions and Region is to bring model railroading enthusiasts together to share and enjoy this hobby. Several aspects of the NMRA Vision 2035 plan are targeted at ensuring we provide opportunities to encourage all of our members and potential future members to come together in various ways. In the Arizona Division, a survey recently conducted by Superintendent Paul Buhrke indicated that many members would prefer a weeknight for the division Zoom get together rather than the Saturday schedule that had been established as we came out of the COVID pandemic. Like many things in life, changes in needs and wants cause us to alter the status quo, so I am hopeful once the new

Continued on page 6





Arizona

Chris Thompson, Director

Zoom meet schedule is in place, we will be able to engage more frequently with more of the membership.

Continuing on the line of promoting fellowship in the hobby, it was about 4 years ago I attended my first operating session. I was fortunate enough to get an invitation to operate at a layout due to my participation in the NMRA. After a division meet one of our members opened up his layout for visitation like several have done. After admiring the layout and talking to the owner for a little bit, I got an invite to come and operate on the layout (thanks David!!) I was a complete rookie, but crew there all were friendly and supportive. I didn't even come close to completing the job I was on, but I had an awesome time! I've met a lot of people through operations and have been lucky enough to attend a couple operating weekends out of state, as well as op sessions at Regional and National conventions. There are a lot of friendly and sharing folks in this hobby, and I'm glad I have been able to meet so many.

On my own railroad, I have reached the point where the track is 97% complete, and all of the installed trackwork is operational. Now that I have the "operations bug" as I have heard it called, I am starting operations on my own layout. I had a few guys over to do the initial shakedown session, and everything ran pretty well. The guys had some good suggestions for changes and improvements, so now I'm refining my operating scheme and will have another run at it in the near future.

When there are Division events, layout tours, a chance to participate in an operating session, or other NMRA activities, I encourage all of our members to take advantage of these fellowship opportunities. I find they have enhanced my enjoyment of the hobby.

The Division spring meet in Tucson is on April 4, so I hope to see you there! Check the Division website calendar for more information.

Planning is underway for the 2027 PSR convention, and we have room on the committee for more members to jump on board and help make it a great event. You can contact me at: director@azdiv-nmra.org



Los Angeles

Vic Cavalli, Director

A happy start to 2026 from the Los Angeles (L.A.) Division of the PSR, NMRA. Hope it has been good to you thus far. It definitely has been one full of opportunities for the membership of the Division.

January started with **Jeff Traintime** sharing his magnificent *Northern Division of the Milwaukee Road* layout to both NMRA and non-NMRA individuals alike. Dozens of model railroad enthusiasts were treated to Jeff's version of the road's branch operations in the autumn of 1957; the locale is southeast Wisconsin. The layout is double decked, fully scenic, and housed in its own 13' x 25' room. Jeff's work has most recently been featured in the February 2024 issue of the *NMRA Magazine*.

The month then continued – rolling into February – when the Great Train Show made a stop at the Ventura County Fairgrounds. Larger, and I think, better attended than previous years. A special "shout out" needs to go out to **John McGreevy**, L.A. Division's Membership Chair, and his membership recruiting team – his wife, **Molly, Pat and Mona Raymer, Steve Branton, and Vic Cavalli**. During the two day event, they signed-up eight (8) new NMRA members!

For those L.A. members who live in the southern portion of our Division, we were treated to a second Great Train Show two week later; this time, in Costa Mesa.

The quarter then concluded, mid-March, when we held our annual Membership Meeting and Dinner Banquet. Thirty members and family/friends, were treated to an Italian buffet, short business meeting, and raffle with

Continued on page 7





Los Angeles

Vic Cavalli, Director

dozen of prizes. Guest speaker this year was **Paul Ellis** of Scale Trains – an entertaining talk, followed up with many excellent questions being asked and answered regarding the “business” of model railroading.

Also during the annual Banquet, L.A.’s recently elected 2026-2027 Division Offices were introduced and installed – **Jeff Smith**, Superintendent, and **Nick Lisica**, Paymaster/Chief Clerk.

Second quarter 2026 should continue with many more local events too. (Please check “*Upcoming Model Railroad and Prototype Events*” at the rear of this issue of the *PSR Dispatch*.) Including:

An additional *Layouts of the L.A. Division* tour – likely a “double header” – tentatively being scheduled for early May.

The second annual *Southern California N Scaler’s Meet and Train Show*, held at the Calvary Assembly of God (in their Gymnasium) located in Lomita, CA on Saturday, May 30th. Admission is free and includes 15+ vendors, 7+ layouts, 3 clinics, and a raffle.

And, for those of you who might enjoy “shooting the bull”, don’t forget L.A.’s monthly sponsored *Sand House Chat* Zoom sessions held the first Thursday of each month. We welcome all NMRA members.



San Diego

Tim Foote, Director

EXAMPLES OF THE MANY EXCELLENT LAYOUTS IN THE SAN DIEGO DIVISION

All photos by Tim Foote

There are many excellent layouts in the San Diego Division of the Pacific Southwest Region. You would have the opportunity to visit most of them during the upcoming convention in September 9th to 13th. For more information go to sandiegodivision.org/index.php/convention-2026. Or go to the PSR web page and click the link there.

Wayne Pierce’s layout:

Past San Diego Division activities include our Holiday Party in December where we convened at a restaurant, played holiday challenges and exchanged gifts. Prior to the Holiday Party a layout tour was available of Wayne Pierce’s Mini-ton Lumber Company. The layout is mostly scratch built and created with exceptional detail and realism in ON30 scale. You can find more information at Wayne’s web page <https://minietonrailroad.org/>.

Wayne pays careful attention to details and realistic weathering. It is an inspiring experience to witness the work that he has done on his layout.



Continued on page 8





San Diego

Tim Foote, Director

The layout is in the Eastern part of San Diego and will be available for viewing during the PSR convention in San Diego this fall. In fact, there are three other exceptional layouts in that area that should be available for viewing during the convention. The Picture on left was taken by me and is of a workshop on Wayne's layout.

The picture below depicts the roundhouse area of Wayne's layout.



Joel Shank's Layout:

Another inspiring layout within the San Diego Division is that of Joel Shank. Joel's layout has been featured in various model railroad magazines and depicts mountain and lumbering operations in Sn3 gauge.

The layout is 32 X 33 feet and meticulously landscaped with beautiful forest and mountain terrains. It has over 3000 trees and does an excellent job at projecting realism.



Chuck Molnar's Layout

A recent layout tour for the San Diego Division included that of Chuck Molnar. Chuck has modeled the Rio Grand Southern which went West from Durango, Colorado and then North at Dolores and up to Ridgeway. The track is hand laid HO_{n3} and Chuck has done a wonderful job with the scenery. Most of the structures are wood kits or kit-bashed wood.



Shotgun Tom Kelly's layout.

Shotgun Tom's layout sits over the top of a pool table and is set up to be lifted automatically to the ceiling when it is time to play pool.





Awards Program

Carl Heimberger, AP Chairman

Over the past 3 months only three AP Certificates have been issued but we did get one new MMR. Members who received certificates are.

Wayne Pierce, San Diego, received his Volunteer Certificate

Steve Bradley, San Diego, received his Author Certificate

Terry Fearn, Arizona, received his Civil Certificate

And of course, congratulations to Terry Fearn, Arizona for completing his MMR.

The National AP Manager has over the past several months been working on a scoring system that will make evaluation of models more uniform nationwide. This will be a good thing and will clarify just how and why points are given in each of the categories. Basically, it has broken each evaluation category into small segments of four points each. This will we hope eliminate large number of points being taken away for one flaw. It also clarifies which of the categories the deductions for any one item can occur. I will be trying out the new matrix at the next Cajon meet. Again, our hope with this new system is to level the playing field and have members work evaluated objectively.

And finally, I have been the AP Manager for some time now and will be looking for my replacement this year. This is not a position to take lightly as it has a large time commitment in the range of eight to fifteen hours a month depending on the number and quality of the submittals received. I have developed an Excel spread sheet that make producing the Merit Awards a lot easier and will pass that along. The basic tasks are reviewing submittal received from the various divisions, approving or rejecting them and if approved forwarding them too national. Once returned from national logging them into the proper spread sheet and mailing the certificate back to the division AP manager.



Treasurer

John McGreevy, Treasurer

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION 37

TREASURERS DISPATCH REPORT

John McGreevy - Treasurer

There was one PSR receipt during the period December 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026. The Cajon Division paid \$469.95 for the Region's share of the net profit from the 2025 PSR convention in Irvine.

On September 3 the Board of Directors approved distribution of the Surfliner Convention Profit to the divisions. The amount was based on the number of members who participated in hosting the event. The amount paid to San Diego Division (\$271.47) cleared in the current period. Amounts paid to the other divisions cleared in the prior period. The payments were recorded as a reversal of previously recorded Surfliner Convention revenue.

Expenses totaled \$763.78. A payment of \$135.60 was made to the Cajon Division for 10% of 2025 storage fees. We paid \$44.25 for Joomla. There were two payments to InMotion; one for \$547.96 for two years of website hosting (end date 1/10/28) and \$35.97 for one year of domain registration.

Deposits consisted of \$469.95 from Cajon for the 2025 Convention proceeds and \$42.68 for the Hobo Account (current balance \$714.88). Cash expenditures during this period: \$763.78 for the expense noted above. The on-line Bank Statement indicates a balance of \$30,991.05 on 2/28/2026.

PSR Wells Fargo Checking Account:

Region Only Cash as of November 30, 2025:
\$31,242.20

Region Only Cash as of February 28, 2026:
\$30,991.05

Change this period:
-\$251.15





Membership

Rudy Spano, Membership Chair

As of February 2026, our Regional membership is 862 members. This compares to 946 members in February 2025. Arizona continues to lead our Divisions with 271 members, followed by Cajon with 244, Los Angeles with 206 and San Diego with 141. We have seen a decrease in membership across all Divisions.

Please Note! Current Members will need to register your membership on the NMRA Member Portal to create an account and link to your membership. This will require a separate password for the Portal Account. You will then be able to renew your membership through the Portal.



Historian's Report

Brian Neeley, Historian

No report was filed for this issue.



Education

Mike Allee—Education Chairman

No report was filed for this issue.

Keeping Your Membership Info Up To Date.

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

A Request for a change to your Membership Information must be made by you on the NMRA Website. No one else can change your Membership Information, even if you make a request for change to Division or Regional personnel.

In order to change your Membership Information, log on to the NMRA.org website with your username or email address and your unique password.

On the home page on the blue Navigation Bar, click on Membership. Scroll down to the last menu choice, Request for Membership Info Changes, click on that choice. Complete and submit the form to request changes to your Membership Info.

If you have trouble completing and submitting the Change form, please contact your Division Membership Chair for help.



The Fear of Model Railroad Operations - Guest Operators

By Frank Kenny

Do you have a model railroad and have never invited friends over to operate it? Have you thought about operating your railroad and you are just not sure what you need to do or how to prepare to operate it? Or, are you an enthusiast and thought about operating someone else's model railroad but are unsure about what "operations" entails or just fearful you might screw something up? I'm here to suggest to you (tell you?) to just jump in, the water is fine! In this article I'll address the person that is curious about being a guest at an operating session. In a future article I'll discuss the layout owner that is curious about hosting an operating session.

Since I got into model railroading at 13 years old, I've wanted to build a railroad where I can invite friends over to enjoy the operation of the layout. It was at that age that I built my first layout on one side of a 2-car garage. Today, I have a railroad that is on both sides of a finished 2-car garage attached to a bedroom and we operate it regularly.

To me, operating a model railroad is the best of enjoying our hobby of model trains combined with hanging out with my model railroad friends! I'm not sure how that idea came to me as a new model railroader at 13 years of age but it probably was further encouraged by operating on Allen McClelland's Virginia & Ohio Railroad at the NMRA convention in Dayton, OH. I was 15 years old then and I think that experience solidified the operations itch that still fuels me today. By the way, that was over 50 years ago! Time flies boys and girls so you'd better get to it!

Since then, I've operated on many layouts around the country. And honestly, there have been layouts and operations that I've loved and layouts and operations that were less than exciting. It's just a preference, which you will discover in yourself too if you choose to start operating. But unless you jump in and operate, you won't know what you like and that brings me to the point in this article.

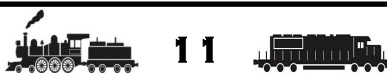
THREE OPERATOR CATEGORIES

I've spoken to many people about operations and in my opinion they fall into three categories.

- 1.They love operations. Any layout anywhere!
- 2.They are interested in operations and have operated a few times but are unsure they are good enough to operate.
- 3.They are terrified to operate. Fearful they don't know enough about operations or where to start and/or fearful they might ruin someone else's layout...just being a newbie.

Let's start with, you are someone who has thought about operating on someone else's model railroad but you are afraid, terrified or reluctant to operate. That would be in category 2 or 3 above. First of all, just about any model railroader that has a layout to operate does so because they want other operators to come and operate their railroad. Like me, they love operations and they love having their

Continued on page 12



friends over to operate. It's a type of satisfaction for them and they genuinely want to share it with others. Now, don't think for a minute that every layout owner believes their railroad is perfect or anything near it. Trust me, they may be just as anxious to have people over to operate as you are anxious about going to operate and they want the session to go perfectly. However, we all are aware of Murphy and his laws and every layout owner knows that Murphy will show up someday. It's not a maybe, it's a when!

TWO AREAS OF RELUCTANCE

As someone who is reluctant to operate, you may fall into one of two areas of reluctance. You may think you don't know enough about operations, or you may think you might mess up the operation or break something, ruining the operation.

If you are in the first area of reluctance, that is you don't think you know enough about operations, there is only one way you can learn more and that is by simply accepting the invite and going to an operating session and operating. Didn't get an invite? Then ask to be invited...yes, you can do that. You can read all about operating but unless you actually operate, you really won't learn to operate. At an operating session, you will learn more about operations, but only how THAT railroad operates, which means you need to attend another operating session on the same or another layout. That's because operating sessions are very different on each railroad. They are as different as the people that own the layout and honestly, each operating session on the same railroad may be different because many times the railroad takes on a life of its own and each session may have different outcomes and enjoyment levels. The bottom line is that to be comfortable, or proficient, at anything in life you must practice and in this case, it requires going to as many operating sessions as you can, even if they are on the same layout. The goal isn't to be an expert in operations. In my opinion the goal is to have fun and enjoy the time spent with others on the railroad, making the model railroad come to life.

In the second area of reluctance, you may think you will screw something up on the railroad and that has you avoiding operating on someone else's layout. I can tell you that out of the many years I have been operating my model railroad, no one has screwed something up so badly it was unfixable. In my opinion, the only screw-up would be disrespectful damage to a layout or its equipment. I'd be willing to guess that you were invited to operate by the layout owner because they thought you would be a great addition to their operating railroad. This may be confirmed by a second invite.

In my experience, if something gets broken it's 99% of the time due to a simple mistake or something that has nothing to do with you. Most people don't intentionally break things. If you are a disrespectful person and don't care about other people's belongings, you probably haven't been invited to an op session, or been invited back.

In model railroading as on the prototype, trains derail. That's not necessarily your fault. Sometimes trains fall to the floor, or a detail is broken. Again, it's not necessarily your fault, but you will know to be more careful next time. Or maybe you mis-routed a car or lost a Car Card or perhaps lost the car. Honestly, it happens all the time and eventually that car or card will show up. My point is, you really can't mess anything up if you are simply being a conscientious and respectful guest so don't worry about things like that.

Continued on page 13



Just come to the session intending to have a great time. Be a newbie and learn more at each operating session.

I'll add that being conscientious and respectful means following instructions, reading the paperwork provided, don't be annoying, stay focused on the session and be aware of any points the layout owner wants you to know. Be engaged in the session and not distracted by your phone or rambling on to others about things unrelated to the operating session itself. If you follow those rules, you'll earn another invitation to operate.

I recommend you operate on as many layouts as you have the opportunity to operate on. Some you will like and others you may not. Each owner has a specific type of operating plan. Some are complicated and some are simple. Keep operating on different layouts to see what feels right for you. When you travel and have the opportunity, reach out to other layout owners and see if they have an op session coming up that you can join.

My layout uses JMRI (computer) for manifests and switchlists, which is just a sheet of paper with instructions, nothing fancy. Several of my friend's layouts use Car Cards. Others use a combination of Car Cards and switchlists. I started down the Car Card route but changed to JMRI because my handwriting is terrible and no one would have been able to read the Car Card. My point is, keep operating on various layouts to figure out what you like and where you feel most comfortable and have the most fun. Your preferences may vary over time and layouts.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OPERATING SESSIONS

There are many ways to explore the world of Operations. I'd recommend joining the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) at NMRA.org as there are many opportunities to learn and operate model railroads there. I'd also recommend joining the OpSig at OpSig.org, a group dedicated to discussing and developing ways to operate model railroads similar to the prototype. There you will gain valuable information about operations as well as be connected to a large group of operators. Both have monthly publications that will facilitate your learning process and enjoyment of the world of operations and the hobby in general.

There is also an operating sessions website that lists sessions around the country. OperatingSessions.com

Locally, if you want to jump in and try your hand at operating please reach out to me and I will get you an invitation to one of our local operating sessions so you can experience the fun and excitement of operations. So, jump into the model railroad operating pool and have fun with the rest of us. We love newbies and we'd love to have you operate with us. It's a safe space and we'll teach you the ropes. Once you do you'll wish you had started participating long ago. Frank Kenny CPRXmodelRR@gmail.com

Continued on page 14



PSR DISPATCH



Continued on Page 15



PSR DISPATCH





Pacific Southwest Region 2026 Convention National Model Railroad Association

Presented by: The San Diego Division
September 9th to 13th, 2026

Come join us in beautiful San Diego for the PSR 2026 Model Railroaders Convention.

The convention has many model railroad activities including an array of clinics, prototype tours, contests, layout tours, hobo breakfast, hobo auction and a swap meet. The introductory event will be held at the famous Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park. The final event will be the Banquet. The speaker will be SP Author & Historian Jeff Cauthen.

The San Diego Division has some excellent layouts, many of which have been published in popular model railroad magazines. You will be able to view those layouts during the convention. Clinics will include Modeling with the PSR Masters led by Gary Butts, MMR and special guest clinics via Zoom. There will be activities every night of the convention.



Sirius Satellite Radio Show: Well-known radio personality and Hollywood walk of famer, "Shotgun" Tom Kelly will interview model railroaders attending the convention which will be aired on his radio show.

The convention will take place at **the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel San**

Diego-Mission Valley at 7450 Hazard Center Drive, San Diego, California. The hotel is near a trolley stop that provides access to most areas of San Diego. Mission Valley is a centrally located area with access to popular areas of San Diego including restaurants, shopping centers and the beaches.



The convention registration direct link is here:

<https://sandiegodivisionpsrnmra.regfox.com/all-aboard-for-2026>

Additional information and the link for the hotel reservation is here:

<https://www.sandiegodivision.org/index.php/convention-2026>

You can also book a room by phoning 800-222-TREE. Make sure to mention that you are booking to attend the Pacific Southwest Region Model Railroaders Convention.



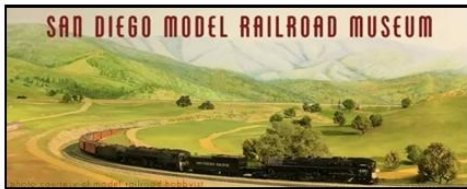


Pacific Southwest Region 2026 Convention
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MARCH UPDATE!

The Convention reception will be held at SDMRM



The San Diego Model Railroad Museum

The San Diego Model Railroad Museum (SDMRM) is a space where imagination is beautifully engineered. SDMRM features both indoor and outdoor exhibits and programming for all ages.



San Diego Model Railroad Association

The San Diego Model Railroad Association operates the Cabrillo Southwestern O Scale layout and the San Diego and Arizona Eastern HO layout.



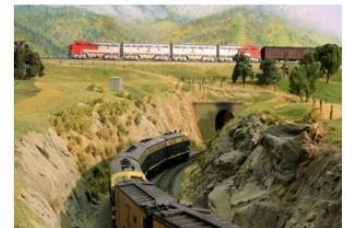
San Diego 3-Railer Club

The San Diego 3-Railer's Club operates the Toy Train Layout in the Toy Train Gallery. This fantasy layout features O Scale "Lionel Type" toy trains running on 3 rail O gauge track.



La Mesa Model Railroad Club

The La Mesa Model Railroad Club operates the Southern Pacific-Santa Fe Tehachapi Pass Layout. This exhibit is a highly accurate replica of Southern California's busiest single track mountain railroad and is HO scale.



San Diego Society of N Scale

The San Diego Society of N Scale maintains the Pacific Desert Lines layout with approximately 1500 square feet.



SIGN UP TODAY AT OUR CONVENTION WEBSITE!



Upcoming Model Railroad and Prototype Events

Area Covered: Counties of Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Mono, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura plus the PSR's Arizona Division; also including selected Regional/National Conventions

Updated 3/23/2026

Reoccurring

Tuesday & 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 of each month – L.A. Division Sponsored “*Sand House Chat*”, 7:00 p.m.

1st Saturday of each month – Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club Open House, Camarillo, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

1st and 3rd Saturday (1:00-4:00 p.m.), 1st and 3rd Monday (7:00-9:00 p.m.) of each month – Glendale Model Railroad Society Open House, Glendale

3rd Saturday of each month – Arizona Division Monthly Zoom Meeting, 10:00 a.m. (local time)

3rd Sunday of each month – Pasadena Model Railroad Open House, Los Angeles, 1:00-5:00 p.m. Admission charged.

4th Monday of each month – Arizona Division's Zoom Session, 7:00 p.m.

Last Saturday of each month – Railmaster Hobbies' Model Railroad Fellowship Get-Together, Bellflower

2026

April 4 – Arizona Division Spring Meet, Elle Towne Flowing Wells Community Center, Tucson, AZ

April 11 – Layouts of the San Diego Division – Lunch, at Brownie's Diner, followed by visit to Joel Shank's Layout, Brawley

April 11 – Coachella Valley's Spring Open House, Indio

April 18 – Layouts of Cajon Division – Western Continental Layout Tour, Las Vegas, NV

April 25 – Cajon Division Spring Meet, Messiah Lutheran Church, Buena Park

April 25 – Grand Canyon Model Railroaders Swap Meet, Phoenix, AZ

April 28 – Arizona Division's High County Lunch & Open House – Hank Morris' PRR themed layout, Chino Valley, AZ

April 30-May 3 – PCR Convention “*Extra 2026 North Limited*”, Rohnert Park

Continued on Page 19



Upcoming Model Railroad and Prototype Events

June 7 – Arizona Division’s Prescott Meet, Quad City Christian Church, Prescott, AZ

June 13 – Layouts of the San Diego Division – Dick Roberts’ Nevada County Railroad, San Diego County

June 27 – Los Angeles Model Railroad Society Open House & Swap Meet, Harbor City

June 27-28 – Fresno Model Railroad Club First Annual Toy Train Show, Fresno

July 11 – Arizona Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet and Open House, Tempe Nazarene Church, Tempe, AZ

July 11 – Layouts of the San Diego Division – Shotgun Tom Kelly’s layout, San Diego County

July 12 – Layouts of Cajon Division – Corona Model Railroad Society Open House, Corona

July 25 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino

July 27-August 2 – NMRA National Convention, *2026 Scenic City Express*, Chattanooga, TN

August 8 – San Diego Division Summer Meet, location: tbd

August 22 – Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet & Open House, Simi Valley

September 9-13 – PSR Annual Convention “*All Aboard for 2026*”, Double Tree Hotel - San Diego/Mission Valley, San Diego

September 26 – Los Angeles Model Railroad Society Open House & Swap Meet, Harbor City

October ?? – Los Angeles Area Prototype Modeler’s Show and Swap Meet, Bellflower

October 10 – Layouts of the San Diego Division – Chula Vista Live Steamers, San Diego County

October 17 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino

October 17 – Arizona Division Meet, Scottsdale Congregational United Church of Christ, Scottsdale, AZ

November 7 – Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet & Open House, Simi Valley

November 11 – San Diego Fall Meet at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego

November 14 – Arizona Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet, Glendale, AZ

December 5 – Los Angeles Model Railroad Society Holiday Open House, Harbor City

December 12 – Layouts of the San Diego Division – Wayne Pierce’s On30 Minicition Railroad & Lumber Co., Dinner & Holiday Party, Santee

Please send announcements at least 3 months in advance to: VicCavalli@comcast.net



NMRA



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

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