

MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

3RD QUARTER, 2008

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Don Fowler

"Old railroaders aren't forgetful, they just get side-tracked now & then!"

I hope that this finds you all well and enjoying your summer. Kim and I attended the NMRA's National Convention in Anaheim along with several others from the San Diego Division. Kim provided both Rail and Non-Rail clinics and we both assisted with the SD Division's Scenery Clinic, which was sold out. I volunteered to assist with the clinic coordination all week and also attended the PSR Board of Director's Meeting and Membership meeting. You should know that Bob Moore is a lucky guy as he walked away with two of the three door prizes at the Membership Meeting.

The other lucky winner was Gary Robinson who won a steam locomotive and was also selected as San Diego Division's Member of the Year. Gary graciously volunteered to take over as editor of the Mailhook and has done a great job with it. In the past, he has volunteered to assist with convention committees and a number of other Division tasks.

See "Director's Report" on Page 3

New Summer Meet Date

The **San Diego Division Summer Meet**, originally scheduled for August 9, has been re-scheduled to **Saturday, August 16**, to accommodate our host, John Sigurdson, MMR. If you haven't seen John's layouts before, you're in for a treat! The On3 layout occupies the same space, and uses the same track plan, as his former N scale layout. That's amazing! John's attention to detail is evident everywhere you look.

We'll have access to a charcoal grill for hamburgers, hot dogs, or perhaps something more exotic, and remember to bring something to share. The festivities get under way at 11:00am, and must conclude by 3:00pm. In between, we'll swap the usual railroad lies, and conduct a short business meeting.

Ben, Don, and others will have stories about their experiences at the recent National Convention in Anaheim. There are a couple of changes coming down the pike, including a small increase in the Scale Rails subscription fee.

Come on out and have some fun!



Don Fowler Photo - #3751 at Trestles Beach

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SAN DIEGO DIVISION PSR-NMRA

Summer Meet

Saturday, August 16th, 2008

The Dakota & North Western RR

Escondido, CA

11:00 am 'till 3:00 pm

FOOD! GOOD COMPANY!



John Sigurdson will host this event, giving tours of his 'O' & 'On3' scale layout, along with his outdoor 'O' scale layout.



BBQ GRILL AVAILABLE - SD DIVISION WILL PROVIDE CHARCOAL, CHIPS AND SODAS, PAPER PLATES, PLASTIC UTENSILS AND NAPKINS. BRING YOUR OWN FOOD TO COOK, AND SOME TO SHARE - ENJOY!

Directions: Take I-15 to Via Rancho Parkway exit in Escondido. Turn EAST on Via Rancho Parkway, follow to Bear Valley Parkway - 1.3 miles. Turn RIGHT on Mary Lane and proceed up hill for .6 miles, turn LEFT and park on HAAS street. John's house is across the street at 3264 Mary Lane.

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Mail Hook

The "Mail Hook" is the official publication of the San Diego Division, Pacific Southwest Region, National Model Railroad Association (NMRA®), and is published quarterly in San Diego, California. The "Mail Hook" is available to all members of the NMRA® who live in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Responsibility: Except for official reports, all opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the San Diego Division or its parent organizations.

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Delivery: The "Mail Hook" is available in hard copy (paper) format through paid subscription and at San Diego Division events. Normal distribution is through email delivery or on the Division and PSR websites.

Submissions: Contributions of articles on any railroad or model railroading topic of interest to the membership are welcome. There is no compensation, but published articles can be credited to the NMRA® Author Achievement Certificate. If you are interested in submitting articles, event information, or other information of interest to members of the Division, please follow these guidelines:

1. Preferred method is by email to the editor, with the submission attached as a text document. Also accepted are: text document on diskette, printout from laser or ink jet printer, or typed using new ribbon.

2. Keep in mind that submissions may be edited for length or formatting, or not used, at the discretion of the editor.

3. Submission deadlines for publication: January 2, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

4. If you wish submission materials returned (i.e., photos), please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your submission.

From the Editor...

I'm having a great summer so far, and I hope all of you are as well. I didn't get much railroading done during May, thanks to two college graduations (Yay!), but June was fun, with our club show at the museum in Vista, and July with the National Convention, was impressive. It was the first National Convention I've been involved with, and I have to say, it was great! I assisted with the San Diego Division clinic, which is always fun, volunteered at the contest room, and attended the National Train Show. Renewed some old acquaintances and made some new ones. That's what it's all about for me. Okay, I did score a door prize and another award, but that's another story.

Last quarter we had a great meet in Linda Vista. This is the Year of the Master Model Railroader (MMR), according to *Scale Rails*. We have a fair number of folks who want to pursue the MMR designation, and they participated in a focused clinic at the Spring Meet. Watch for future offerings in this vein. Further, for those with an interest, the Eastern Iowa Division of the Mid-Continent Region is running a series in their newsletter, the Wig-Wag, on the Cars certificate. It is multi-part, and I highly recommend it. The web page is <http://eid.mcor-nmra.org/>, and you can get the back issues from the links on the left of the page. They also have a great series on intermodal railroading that many will enjoy. We need more authors here in our Division such as they have in Iowa. I know we have the talent here. If you write something up, I'll help you edit it, and it will count towards your Author Certificate! It isn't as hard as you think.

See "From the Editor" on Page 4

Director's Report from Page 1

Please join me in extending congratulations to him for this award. If you would like to help us with Division duties, we would welcome your support. There are currently a number of vacant chair positions to choose from. Please contact Ben or myself for more information. We promise not to twist your arm (too much).

At the PSR Board Meeting, we approved our annual budget and reviewed our membership standings. While stable, I'd sure like to increase our local membership numbers. I challenge everyone to bring in one new member to our Division this year. Congratulations to Ben Sevier who was re-elected as President and Don Stewart (Arizona) who was elected as Vice-President. These NMRA veterans are committed to you and the future of our hobby. We also received a report regarding the upcoming 2009 PSR Convention to be held in Las Vegas. There will be a bowling tournament between divisions on Wednesday evening so start practicing now. Sounds like a great event that you won't want to miss.

On June 1st, ATSF's #3751 steamed into San Diego County and our community turned out in large numbers to welcome her. The North County Transit District was very accommodating for all who wanted to take photos. I caught the train heading southbound at Trestles Beach, Carlsbad's Poinsettia Station, and at Del Mar passing the Fairgrounds. Then she reversed direction on the Miramar Wye and one last time just north of San Onofre on her way back to Los Angeles. I'm not a big steam fan but I have to admit that this was a great event to see.



Don Fowler Photo - #3751 at Miramar wye

Lastly, I encourage all of you to support our local model train stores as they struggle to survive in this current economy and the competition of internet sales. No one wants to see one of our local suppliers have to close their doors. Please patronize their businesses and support them with your hobby dollars and kind words. See you soon,

Don

#3751 Returns to San Diego! Again!

By Gary Robinson

Many of you had an opportunity to see AT&SF #3751 recently when it visited San Diego. I'm sure many of you missed it, as I did. Well, perk up! You're getting another chance!

I've just learned that the American Association of Private Rail Car Owners (AAPRCO) will be having a special steam excursion from LA to San Diego on September 21, to open their annual convention. AAPRCO expects a 26 car consist of private cars to leave LA from the AMTRAK 8th Street yard (because of the length of the train) in the morning, traveling to Old Town San Diego in the afternoon, and returning to the convention site in San Pedro by evening.

Passengers on board must be AAPRCO members or guests as of August 1, but that policy may be subject to change. I'm told the policy has been relaxed in the past, but I'm unable to learn the criteria for that.

Even if you may not be able to ride, you can watch. There are many places between LA and San Diego that you'll have an excellent vantage point. To see this locomotive, with vintage private cars rather than AMTRAK coaches, will be worth it, I'm sure. There was no information on the AAPRCO web page about where 3751 might be turning for the return trip. Last time she used the Miramar wye. It's possible that some cars may need to be reversed as well, so that may or may not be an option this time. National City balloon track?

If you're interested in tracking this event, take a look at the AAPRCO web page, at www.aaprc.com and lay your plans! Don't forget to share your pictures with the Mail Hook editor. Send copies to grobbedobbie@yahoo.com. Thanks to George Boggs for the tip.

Enjoy!

* * *

Achievement Program News

by Rodger Gredvig

At the Spring Meet in May we offered a hands-on opportunity to build a turnout from scratch to satisfy a portion of the Achievement Program certificate on Civil Engineering. With thanks to Phil Hermsmeyer and Paul Schmitt (experienced modelers with "Fast Track" jigs) the project went smoothly. This was an initial attempt to get people involved in working on their AP certificates without the trepidation which keeps many folks from even trying. When you read over the requirements (hardcopy or online at NMRA.org) they may seem daunting, but many of them are not. If you look online, be sure to read the side comments highlighted in yellow. They provide shortcuts or advice worth heeding. For example, almost all the certificates begin with this encouragement:

"Remember - don't make the requirements more difficult than they are, by reading more into them than is there".

This quarter let's take a look at Electrical Engineering as an example. You may have read the article in the August issue of *Scale Rails* giving instructions on this certificate. Even that article tended to be complicated. Anyone who has built even a simple table top layout probably has done enough to satisfy this requirement. Again take a look at the highlighted advice online. *"Construct and demonstrate the simultaneous and independent control of two mainline trains... " can be as simple as a single track main with sidings. This means that as long as you can cut power to the sidings individually, you can run one train, park it on a siding while you run another, then park it and run the first again, this meets the requirement"*.

Or the section dealing with wiring turnouts, notice the simplicity: *"Wiring up the simplest powered turnout from your hobby store will satisfy this requirement"*. Or a Crossing: *"Most commercial crossings come pre-wired. Just set one up so that you can run trains through on both tracks"*. Again notice the simplified instructions: *"Don't make the requirements in B or C any harder than they have to be. You do not have to scratch build any of these; you just have to show that you can make them work electrically."*

Many modelers balk at the prospect of paperwork or producing complicated drawings. A couple of hand drawn turnouts showing the electrical connection is all that is necessary. Not being very good at schematics, for my certificate I

From the Editor... from Page 2

Summer is the time to be outdoors (well, okay, all year in San Diego!) and do some rail-fanning. I missed the visit of AT&SF 3751 in June, but some of you got some good pictures. Looks like we'll have another opportunity in September. But let's not forget that we have an active rail corridor in San Diego County, with the Coaster, Amtrak, BNSF along the coast, and SD&AE between here and El Centro. We have one of the biggest auto transfer facilities in the world. Get out there and take some prototype shots, write them up, and I'll publish them, to share with our Division membership.

National has clarified the rules on NMRA liability insurance for Division, Region, and 100% club events. You can actually understand it now, if you read the pages at www.NMRA.org, and click on the Insurance link on the left-hand side of the page. National is also continuing to upgrade the web pages in general. The Achievement Program (AP) pages now have downloadable forms, both as Adobe Reader and Word documents, and the pages are being expanded with more information to make it easier to do the paperwork.

Speaking of National, I've just learned that the subscription portion of our NMRA dues will be going up to \$19 (from \$16) as of October 1. You might want to send that renewal in early, to take advantage of current pricing. New annual dues rate including the subscription will be \$55.

Don Hicke tells me there are two(!) articles dealing with model railroading topics in the August 2008 edition of *Nuts & Volts* magazine. "Railroad Crossing Light Controller" describes a timing and control circuit for 110V railroad crossing lights, and "Model Train Switch Control Via PC or PIC" describes two ways to remotely control Atlas snap switches on either DCC or regular DC layouts. Check them out, maybe you can find an application on your layout.

Gary

simply Xeroxed some samples from a magazine or wiring manual with the diagrams already published. You just have to show you understand how the electrical system works.

Any of you who have constructed even the smallest of layouts probably have all you need. Just contact me and I'll arrange to evaluate your wiring and provide the necessary paperwork. Just let us know.

Rodger

* * *

NMRA Patent Challenge Update: Real Rail Effects fails to respond to NMRA DCC-sound patent challenge

The deadline for Real Rail Effects, Ltd. (RRE) to respond to an NMRA patent challenge has passed, with no response from RRE.

RRE was granted a patent by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) based upon a claim that the technology for using sound with DCC was invented by RRE. The NMRA, with the technical and financial support of a number of DCC manufacturers and hobbyists around the world, filed a challenge to the RRE patent.

The NMRA filed the challenge because we believe that the claims in the RRE patent application were not supported by the facts. The NMRA was aware that prior art and other evidence existed which negated RRE's patent.

The NMRA felt that, should it remain in force, the RRE patent posed a threat to modelers and manufacturers of DCC equipment because it would both increase the costs to modelers and unfairly restrict manufacturers who provide decoders with sound. Therefore, the NMRA coordinated an industry- and hobby-wide effort to have the patent overturned. The NMRA submitted evidence from a number of sources raising substantial questions about the validity of the patent.

On February 11, 2008, the USPTO issued a ruling granting the NMRA's patent re-examination request. The examiner stated in the ruling that there was a substantial likelihood that a reasonable examiner would consider the prior art important in determining the patentability of the application of RRE.

After the examiner at the USPTO determined that the position of the NMRA had merit and compelled a new analysis of the patent, RRE had two months to respond to the re-examination request. The deadline for a response has come and gone, and RRE made no reply. The NMRA is now very hopeful that a favorable decision will be announced and that the position of the NMRA and its supporters will be vindicated.

The NMRA considers this a clear triumph for the modeler and the model railroad industry. We are proud to have led the challenge team that has made this victory possible.

Robert J. Amsler, Jr.
General Counsel
National Model Railroad Association, Inc.

(This is something the NMRA does for you! Ed.)

Scale Rails Subscription to Increase

One of the things that was voted on at the National Convention was an increase to the price of a subscription to *Scale Rails*, the NMRA monthly magazine. Currently, members can elect to subscribe or not, paying an extra \$15 with their annual dues for the subscription. This total, for membership and subscription, has been \$51 for the past couple of years.

Due to increased production costs, the subscription portion will increase to \$19, effective October 1. This means the total membership will cost \$55 for one year. This is a bargain! *Scale Rails* will still cost less than \$1.60 per issue, delivered right to your door. I don't think there's a better deal in town.

San Diego Division Encores Scenery Special at National Convention

The San Diego Division did an encore presentation of their famous "Scenery Special" clinic at the recent national convention. Twenty four participants started with a plain block of foam, and ended up with a fully-sceniced diorama. Chuck Hart and John Sigurdson demonstrated how to make, install, and color rock castings. Then Kim Fowler and Bob Moore showed how to make a small pond using cork stock and nail polish. Don Fowler next did roads, and Ben Sevier demonstrated ground cover. Gary Robinson finished up with trees.

Prizes were awarded for the best diorama when everyone had finished. It was very interesting to see the wide range of displays, and the amount of detail some folks worked into their model in just two short hours. It was fun for clinicians as well as participants!



*Don Fowler at the SDD Scenery Special
Gary Robinson photo*

August 2008

San Diego Division - Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 San Diego Division Summer Meet
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 Santa Susana Swap Meet
31						

September 2008

	1	2	3	4	5 Shake Rattle and Rail	6 Multiple Events
7 Glen Landin's Show	8	9	10	11	12	13 Multiple Events
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 #3751 Special	22	23	24	25	26	27 SP Historical & Technical Society 2008 Convention
28	29	30				

October 2008

			1	2	3	4 Multiple Events
5 Multiple Events	6	7	8	9	10 Barstow Train Show	11 Multiple Events
12 Multiple Events	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	28
26	27	28	29	30	31	

SCHEDULE OF PSR-NMRA EVENTS

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

Assembled from various sources. Events may have been submitted by sponsors. Send corrections, additions, and future events to the editor at grobbiedobbie@yahoo.com or (760) 839-5877. Events should be of interest to San Diego Division members. Division-sponsored events are listed in **bold**.

2008

August

- 16 **San Diego Division Summer Meet** and picnic. 11:00 - 3:00, John Sigurdson's, 3264 Mary Lane, Escondido, CA

September

- 13 San Diego Division Event, TBA

October

- 10-12 Barstow Annual Train Show, Cajon Division, PSR.
www.cajondiv.org/events.htm

- 11 San Diego Division Event, TBA

November

- 8 **San Diego Division Fall Meet**, details TBA

December

- 6 **San Diego Division Holiday Open House**, Don & Kim Fowler's, details TBA.

2009

September

- City of Las Vegas**, PSR Annual convention, Las Vegas, NV

Correcting Coupler Height

Running trains of 40 or 50 plus cars on my HO layout highlights coupler misalignment problems, resulting in uncoupled or de-railed cars, and collisions.

I've found that using a KADEE coupler gauge to static test coupler alignment is not sufficient. It is better to combine this static test with a dynamic, roll-by, under-load, test.

Pick a convenient spot on the layout, place a light colored square of paper, approximately 2" by 2", behind the active track, then slowly roll the entire train by this spot, while illuminating the space between the cars with a flashlight.

You see a surprising number of coupler misalignments when the train and the couplers are under a dynamic load.

Frank Tepedino

2008

August

- 30 **Santa Susana RR Historical Soc. Swap Meet and Open House**. 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. In the Santa Susana Park Pavilion. 6503 Katherine Rd. Simi Valley CA 3Admission \$2.00 for adults. Sellers contact Richard Parshall
oltwntrn@pasbell.net <http://www.santasusannadepot.org/2006swap.htm>

September

- 5 Shake Rattle and Rail Train - "Happy Days are Here Again!" , Fillmore & Western Railway Co. 5:30 to 9:00 pm Fillmore , CA
- 6 Western Prototype Modelers Meet. La Habra Community Center , La Habra , Orange County , California .
http://www.westernp_rototypemodelers.org
- 6 , 7 Glen Landin's Show. G Scale and railroad memorabilia. Orange , CA
<http://glenlandin.com/index.html>
Contact grl@glenlandin.com
- 13 Orange Empire Railway Museum swap meet, Perris, CA www.orem.org
- 21 **AAPRCO #3751 Special** - See article, page 3.
- 24 - 28 , Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society 2008 Annual Conference , Doubletree Hotel , 3100 Camino Del Rio Court, Bakersfield , CA. www.sphts.org/convention

October

- 4-5 Train Song Festival, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway. Poway Station ASMRC HO layout. 10-7. Railroad movie under the stars, *Santa Fe*, 7-9pm. www.ci.poway.ca.us or www.powaystation.org
- 4-5, 11-12 Clarkson's Open House, 1-4pm, 1463 Rim Road, Riverside, CA www.rfrailroad.com
- 11 Pomona Valley Model Railroad Club Swap meet & OPEN House, 303 N. Manchester, Anaheim www.pvmrrc.org
- 11 Western Prototype Modeler's Meet 8:30 - 7:00, La Habra Community Center, 101 W. La Habra Blvd at N. Euclid. \$15, or \$12 with a display model. www.westernprototypemodelers.org

CLUB CAR

This feature will run every issue that I receive input from the clubs. Use this space to keep us up to date on your current activities. Submit announcements to the editor at any time for the next edition.

The North County Model Railroad Society

The North County Model Railroad Society (NCMRS), located upstairs from Boney's Marketplace at 1820 Oceanside Blvd. in Oceanside, is pleased to announce completion of its new expansion area.

In January of 2008 the NCMRS acquired an additional 870 square feet of space adjacent to its existing area. This new space was to be used not only for expanding the club's HO layout, but to provide room for a business office, a work and storage space for the maintenance department, and an area for member's to work on scenery and rolling stock projects. The space also will have a member's lounge area with a television, bookshelves, and a small kitchen.

The expansion plans included carpeting and a new look for the entry area.

Construction involved clearing the space, running power, installing a lighting grid, building walls, and relocating an exit door. That work is now finished and moving in has commenced. Once the office is moved out of its present location where the setup tracks are located, the setup area will be reconfigured to allow more space for members to prepare trains to run on the layout. This will be especially helpful during the club's regular operating sessions.

Still to be done are the design and construction of the part of the layout that will be built in the new area as well as a new small, simple layout for the entry that will be designed to be run by the many young children who visit during open house hours.

Contact the NCMRS at 760-722-7366 or ncmrs.org for more information.

* * *

Poway Station participated in the Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum's Spring Harvest Fair over the last two weekends in June. We had a successful show in a new building (for us), and had fun running trains.



By the time you read this, our August show at the San Rafael parish hall in Rancho Bernardo will be history. This is our biggest show of the year, and we expect to have five layouts operating, from Z through G, including our first-ever Lego layout.

Our N scale group continues to make progress with the planned return loop modules. The last few kinks have been ironed out of the plans, and we're about ready to make some sawdust. We hope to have the Plywood Pacific running by Train Song Festival in Old Poway Park, October 4. We'll also be at the park, 14134 Midlan road, Poway, on Sunday October 5. Check our web page, www.powystation.org, for times. Come out and see how we did!

* * *



The San Diego Model Railroad Museum would like to remind you of its constituent clubs:

San Diego Society of N-Scale

Meet every third Friday of the month at 6:30 pm
For more information please contact: Jim Bence
at jbence@san.rr.com

San Diego 3-Railers

Meet every third Thursday of the month at 7:30
For more information please contact: Jon Everett
(858) 538-0930

La Mesa Club

Meet quarterly on the second Tuesdays in March, June, September and December at 8:00 pm
The club meets every Tuesday at 7:00 pm to work on the layout.
For more information please call or email: (619) 233-8269 or lamesaclub@att.net

The San Diego Model Railroad Club

Meet first Friday of January, March, May, July, September, October, and November.
For more information please contact: Tom Ilas
(619) 295-5084

NMRA Convention

We hosted the NMRA Convention tour at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum July 15, 2008.

* * *

Model Railroad Clubs in San Diego

San Diego Model Railroad Museum

Balboa Park, San Diego

Info: www.sdmodelrailroadm.com

La Mesa Model Railroad Club (HO)

Info: LaMesaClub@att.net

San Diego 3-Railers (O)

Info: (858) 538-0930

San Diego Model Railroad Club (HO & O)

Info: www.sdmrrc.org

San Diego Society of N Scale (N)

Info: www.sdsons.org

North County Model Railroad Society (HO)

Oceanside

Info: (760) 722-7366 ncmrs@cox.net

Poway Station All Scale Modular Club

Old Poway Park, Poway

Info: www.powaystation.org

Short Track Railroad Club (N)

Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, Vista

Info: modeltrains@agsem.com

San Diego Garden Railway Society

Info: www.sdgrs.com

If you would like your club listed, contact the Club Liason, San Diego Division

Online - Web Sites of Interest

NMRA: www.nmra.org

PSR: www.psrnmra.oorg

NMRA National Convention <http://www.nmra.org/convention/>

San Diego Division: <http://www.sandiegodivision.org/>

Arizona Division: www.azdiv-nmra.org

Cajon Division: www.cajondiv.org

Los Angeles Division: www.ladiv-nmra.org

San Diego Model Railroad Museum: www.sdmodelrailroadm.com

San Diego Rail: www.sandiegorail.com



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**San Diego
Model Railroad Museum**

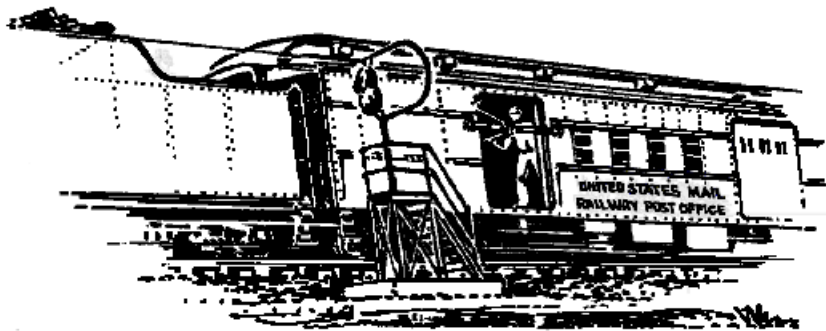
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Open to the Public

Tuesday through Friday 11:00 - 4:00
Saturday - Sunday 11:00 - 5:00

Admission: Adults \$5, Students \$3, Seniors \$4
Military \$2.50, Tuesdays free to all



MAIL HOOK

LOOK INSIDE FOR THE LATEST NEWS!

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MAIL HOOK

c/o Gary Robinson, Editor
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