

# MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

JANUARY 2002

## Director's Report

By Rodger Gredvig, MMR

As I start my new position as Region Director, I must first acknowledge the deep debt we all owe Chuck Hart who held this position for many years. Frankly, no one could do a better job than Chuck who is involved in all aspects of the hobby and is a tireless champion of the NMRA both locally and Nationally. I have no illusions; I will not be able to fill his big shoes. However, I will try my best to represent our Division and to improve the PSRs ability to function on our behalf and for the good of the hobby.

As all of you should know by now, the San Diego Division is hosting the PSR Convention for 2002 at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside. Convention Chairman, Chuck Hart, and superintendent, Ken Allen have much to share elsewhere in this Mailhook. Suffice it to say, they need our help, support,

and physical presence at each month's committee meeting to make it a success. Phone or e-mail them to offer your services. First of all, if you haven't done it already, send in your convention registration and payment (see registration form). Let's show pride in our Division by our participation.

Normally the PSR *Dispatch* would share information about past conventions, but the winter issue was unable to be completed, so let me summarize some of the follow-up information about the Las Vegas Limited Convention. As you know, a pall was cast over the convention as it began with the events of 9/11. Although many had registered, some were unwilling to travel because of the National tragedy. Still, the convention was a mild success. Of the 197 registrants 172 attended (obviously those scheduled to fly could not come). Of that number, 25 attendees were members of the San Diego Division. They awarded 156 door prizes; nearly enough for each attendee! The Trade and Train Show attracted 13 vendors, 6 exhibitors, and 5 modular train groups. The public show was about 1/2 of what was originally expected, but still amazing, considering that most people were home, glued to their TV. The convention committee handled themselves well in the light of such tragic circumstances.

A complete report along with contest winners is promised from the region newsletter editor later next month.

As your new Division Director, please feel free to contact me with concerns or suggestions which you would like for me to pass on to the Region BOD.



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## Thomas H. Mohr

Tom Mohr, 71, died Tuesday, Jan 8, 2002, at his home in Ocean Hills, Oceanside, CA

Born July 25, 1930, in Allentown, Pa., Tom graduated from Lehigh University, and served as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. He retired in 1983 as a sales administrator from Bethlehem Steel Corp. Tom lived in Oceanside for the last six years, and lived previously in Carlsbad, CA. He retired in 1983 as a sales administrator from Bethlehem Steel Corp.

Tom is survived by his wife of 50 years, Jo Ann Mohr, daughters Holly and Wendy and sons William and Robert, and seven grandchildren.

Tom was a prolific modeler and was in the process of recreating the famous PRR Horseshoe Curve on his model railroad. He helped start an NTRAK club with three other people in 1991 and was a member of the club to his last day. He served in numerous positions of the NMRA both locally and in the Region, and was the current PSR Vice President. Tom also served as the editor of the San Diego Division newsletter 'The Mail Hook' from 1996 through 2001.



## A Railfanning Vacation by Randy Schissler

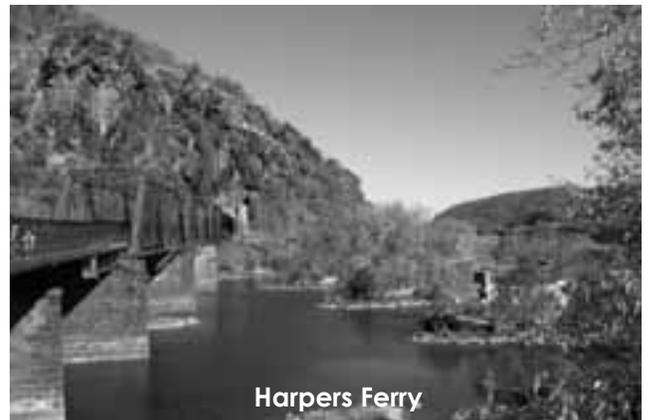
*Model railroading and vintage prototype railroading are interests of mine, but I am also interested in early American history, so when I can combine them into one travel trip I am really happy. In the middle of October, I took advantage of cheap airfares and took a trip to the east coast at the height of the Fall season. My destinations included Baltimore, MD, Harpers Ferry, WV, Altoona, PA, and Gettysburg, PA, and I've related the highlights of this trip as follows.*

Baltimore is a large city with a number of sites worth visiting, including Fort McHenry, U.S.S. Constellation, Babe Ruth House, Inner Harbor, and of course the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum. I'd gone to this museum on a previous visit to Baltimore, and although I didn't go to it this time, I still recommend it. Many restored locomotives and cars are on display inside a full size roundhouse as well as outside on the grounds.

Harpers Ferry, is an interesting place to visit, as it is very historical and scenic. The Civil War pretty much started here in 1859 when abolitionist John Brown raided the armory. Militarily, the

mission was a failure and Brown was tried and hanged in nearby Charles Town, but it stirred up feelings that soon led to the full scale Civil War. Many of the buildings have been restored, and it is enjoyable to walk through the area. Even in 1859, Harpers Ferry was a major pass through point for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and it still is well traveled. Of course now the main railroad on the tracks is the CSX. There are two large yet different railroad bridges spanning the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers as they flow into one, and also an interesting trestle bridge. The rail traffic was quite busy too, as I counted several trains while I was there.

Outside Altoona, I spent a couple hours visiting the Allegheny Portage Railroad (<http://www.nps.gov/alpo/history.htm>). In the 1830's, before railroads took over, some of the northeastern states had a network of canal lines to transport freight and passengers, and the state of Pennsylvania was no exception. A plan was put into place to build a canal system between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, but there was the problem of going through the Allegheny Mountains, and that is where the Allegheny Portage Railroad came in. Someone had the crazy idea to load canal boats onto rail cars and tow them up a railed incline with a cable system powered by stationary steam engines (steam locomotives weren't powerful enough to do the job in those days). Then on



the level sections, the cars would be pulled by a steam locomotive, and finally transferred back to the canal for the rest of the journey. Despite problems, the system worked for awhile until it was rendered obsolete by more powerful and efficient railroads. In the visitor center of the site, run by the National Park

*Continued on page 7*

## Layout Tour

by Rodger Gredvig, MMR

The North County Modular RR Society is the site of our Spring layout tour on Saturday, March 9th, 2002. The club has moved to a new location and is revamping a quarter section of their HO layout to create a Southern California theme. They actually have 3 separate layouts in HO, HOn3, and N. All are modular, but not all are necessarily following formal specifications (such as Ntrak). The HOn3 layout, called the Tri-City Northern, interchanges with the HO version at Arroyo Grande, but only as a team track and passenger station (there is no dual gauge trackage).

These are large setups. HO=50x25; HOn3=40x20; and the N is approximately 40x20, all located in a former bank building. We have arranged to see the layout(s) **March 9 from noon to 2 pm**. They are located at 1360 E. Mission Rd. San Marcos. Take 78 to the Nordahl exit. Turn south (right turn coming from the west; or left back over the bridge if coming from Escondido), immediately turn right on Mission Rd and go 1/2 mile to the Stater Bros shopping center (Mission & Bennett).

If you're unable to join us for the behind the scenes tour on the 9th, the Society is open to the public every Thursday evening from 7-9 pm.



### NOTICE



The Pacific Southwest Region Board of Directors meeting will be held on Saturday, March 16, at 1:00 pm. The location will be the Mission San Luis Rey conference center in Oceanside, California

The Mission San Luis Rey is located between Interstate 5 and Interstate 15 on Highway 76 in North San Diego County.

#### Directions:

From Interstate 5:

Exit Highway 76 - Head East approximately 4 miles to Rancho del Oro exit - Mission will be on your left.

From Interstate 15:

Exit Highway 76 - Head West approximately 15 miles to Rancho del Oro exit - Mission will be on your right.

All PSR members are eligible and urged to attend the meeting of **their** board.



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## Education

by Walter Schmalgemeier

At the PSR Convention in Las Vegas, Jan Wescott, the newly named Regional Education Chairman, approached me about representing the San Diego Division as Education Chairman. After some thought, and a review of the job description, I accepted the invitation. Below is an excerpt from that job description:

#### Division Education Chair

Division Education Chair is responsible for sending a quarterly report to the Regional Education Chair at the end of each quarter: March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31. Reports are to include:

1. A list of any clinics offered at any division Meets or similar events including clinician's name, date and subject.
2. A list of the clinics/programs offered at division meetings. etc.
3. Speaking or demonstration events offered outside Meets or meetings.
4. Any educational efforts for adults or youth, like the BSA Merit Badge programs, seminars, etc..

To help in this effort I ask that all Division Members please send me a note whenever you provide any of the above activities/services. I can be reached at the following addresses:

Email: [wschmalgemeier@oriservices.com](mailto:wschmalgemeier@oriservices.com)

Mail: Walter Schmalgemeier

1222 Sumner Ave.

El Cajon, CA 92021

Your assistance in this effort will help the Division, Region and the NMRA as a whole maintain tax-exempt educational organization status.



## "Mission Possible 2002"

### Convention Report

by Sam Dale, Publicity Chairman

Our convention plans got into high gear this month.

Patches and pins, being long lead time items, have been acquired and are on the Country Store's shelves already. The HO and N scale convention cars are in various stages of completion. Cars should be ready by March. Color schemes and printing will be announced in February or March. You will get a store order blank with your preregistration package. We have ordered the above items short so that we will not have to carry any to our next convention. Word to the wise - order when you get the order form in March.

Our local Mr. Railroad, Master Craftsman John Sigurdson, will be running our Train Show. He will also be bringing in a herd of Trade Show people. We hope to get a host of door prizes for all the convention attendees to share in. The show will have a selection of scales including live steamers on the grounds.

Our clinician chairman tells me after a slow start the commitments to conduct a clinic are coming in. We are going to try and schedule clinics of interest so.....when you pre register just pencil in your suggestion for the type of clinic you would like and who you would suggest to possibly conduct the clinic. We will carry the ball from that point. The February update will list some of the clinics we have already scheduled...

Jim Krater, our layout tour chairman, tells me he has sixteen tour stops lined up all over North San Diego, some of which have never been seen by our local model railroaders. Jim is working on a additional ten stops. One of the stops will be at John Sigurdsons, where you are in for a special treat. In addition to his fine N and O scale layouts

John has just spent two years plus building a magnificent On3 layout where everything is scratch built. Well, almost everything. Trestle bridges, snow sheds, every plank individually laid. A sawmill or two... logging operations and operating equipment like, wow! You just have to come and see this work of art.

We are making an intensified effort to come up with a prototype tour or two. With the country on a war footing, security for railroads becomes a very major issue (as you would imagine). Regardless, we are moving on any lead that will allow us to conduct a tour. More on this in the future updates.

Remind your significant other that an outstanding program for non-rails is being finalized and will be released next month. They will be having three days of fun including their own luncheon. Look Mom ...NO cooking.

We will have both a silent and a live auction. So dust off those cars, buildings and engines that you have been meaning to sell .. and bring them with you.

Of interest to many are the NMRA sanctioned contests. Many categories and lots of official prizes are planned. You still have time to build one or take a rail picture or two for judging. At the very least you can gain experience, and you will know what the judges look for next time around. Ed Hatch will be managing the Contest Room, and requests that whoever has the photo rack (used to hang photos) please contact him.

The convention accommodations, Best Western Marty's Valley Inn in Oceanside, will be our meeting place on Wednesday evening for early registration and sign in. It is a very clean and well kept place. When you register, tell them you are with "Mission Possible 2002". The non-rails will be using the inn for a place to meet, converse, watch TV and just relax away from hustle and bustle of the convention. And the pool and spa are most inviting on our pleasant September afternoons.

**A REMINDER!**  
**YOU CAN SAVE \$10 ON YOUR**  
**CONVENTION REGISTRATION IF**  
**YOU REGISTER BEFORE**  
**MARCH 30, 2002**

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COMING SOON  
SAN DIEGO DIVISION PSR-NMRA  
**WINTER MEET**

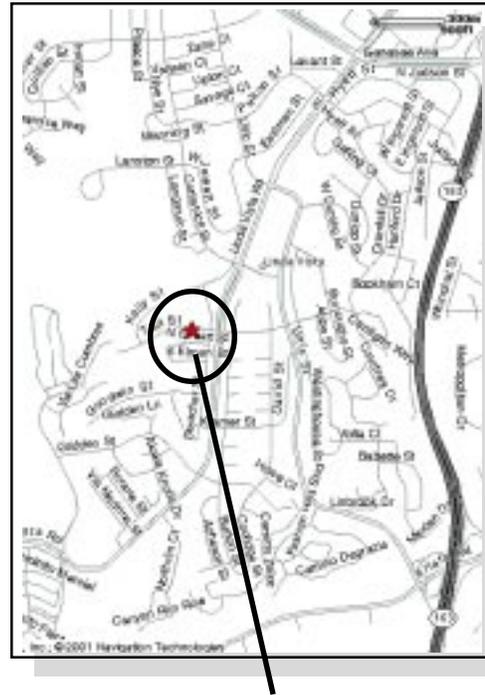
Saturday, February 9th - 11:00 am  
Peace Lutheran Church, 6749 Tait Street, S.D.

*DOOR PRIZES!*

*FAVORITE MODEL  
CONTEST!*

*TIPS & TECHNIQUES!*

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Location: North of I-8, West of 163, off of Linda  
Vista Road

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## **POT LUCK LUNCH**

POT LUCK SCHEDULE:

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F TO L: DESSERT

M TO R: APPETIZERS OR SNACKS

S TO Z: SALAD OR MAIN DISH

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# “Mission Possible 2002”

## September 12,13,14, 2002

Presented by the San Diego Division,  
Pacific Southwest Region,  
National Model Railroad Association

At the Mission San Luis Rey  
Oceanside, California

### Convention Registration Form

(Please Print) Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA# \_\_\_\_\_ PSR# \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Scale \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate how you want each First and Last Name to appear on your name badges: \_\_\_\_\_

### REGISTRATION FARES:

<b>Adult Rail</b> (until March 30, 2002)	No. _____ @ <b>\$44.95</b>	\$ _____
(March 31 through July 31, 2002)	No. _____ @ <b>\$49.95</b>	_____
(after July 31, 2002)	No. _____ @ <b>\$54.95</b>	_____
<b>Youth 15-20</b>	No. _____ @ <b>\$19.95</b>	_____
(Children 14 and under FREE)		
<b>Single Day</b> (which? Thurs. Fri. Sat.)	No. _____ @ <b>\$29.95</b>	_____
<b>Adult Non-Rail Program</b>	No. _____ @ <b>\$24.95</b>	_____

**Total Registration Fares** **\$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Make checks payable to... "Mission Possible 2002"... and send along with this form to

Ben Sevier, Registrar  
12793 War Horse Street Phone: (858) 538-9863  
San Diego, CA 92129-2219 Email: bsevier@pacbell.net

**Cancellation Policy:** Full refund, minus \$5.00 fee, when requested by August 13 and confirmed in writing (Email accepted).

Extra fare items to be announced at a later date

**Our convention accommodation of choice is the  
Best Western – Marty’s Valley Inn, 3240 Mission Avenue, Oceanside  
For reservations call 1-800-747-3529**

Service, they show a well made film that does a good job of describing the history and operation of the railroad. Also, there is a nice operating diorama (maybe S scale) showing the car pulling cable system, along with other exhibits. When I left the visitor center, I walked along some of the pulled up mainline in a peaceful woody area. Also nearby is a restored engine house that shows the cable pulling machinery, and the Lemon House tavern that was popular during the railroad's heyday.

After leaving the Portage Railroad site, I drove a few miles to the Gallitzin Tunnels to watch a few trains. This is part of the old Pennsylvania Railroad line, then Conrail, and now Norfolk Southern, that connects to the famed Horseshoe curve before heading into Altoona. On a ridge



Gallitzin Caboose

above the mouths of the two tunnels is a brightly restored Pennsylvania caboose that serves as an information center. Inside, railfans can look at vintage photographs and pickup information, maps, as well as train schedules and radio frequency numbers. Across the street from the caboose is even a small railroad museum.

Altoona was the site of the Pennsylvania Railroad's main railroad shops where cars and steam locomotives were built as well as repaired. A major classification yard exists here too, only it and the shops are now under the direction of the Norfolk Southern. At Altoona I visited the Railroaders Memorial Museum. It is an ultra modern, well done museum focused mainly on the people connected with railroading, but of course emphasizing the ties to the Altoona railroad shops and the Pennsylvania Railroad. During the steam era, thousands of people were employed by the railroad here, and their lives are told through the museum. In the museum, and of interest to model railroaders, is an excellent HO

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layout with highly detailed structures and many figures and vehicles populating it. It is mainly an urban setting and is quite impressive. Judging by the movement of the trains on the layout, I figured they were computer controlled or with some kind of timing control. After leaving the museum I took a short walk across the way to the Norfolk Southern mainline. There is a platform there with benches and it is a good spot to freely watch trains go by. Also, right next to it rests several old locomotives and cars in a park like setting.

After that, I took a drive to the Horseshoe Curve. When you get to the visitor center you have to walk up several flights of steps, or ride this cable car called a funicular to get to the actual curve. One problem I found is that you can only see the front section of the curve, at about a 90 degree angle, because trees and bushes obstruct the view on the sides. I remember seeing a sign at the visitor center saying that when they get \$50,000, this vegetation would be cut down. Still, it was quite a thrill being able to hear a train in the distance and be right there when it came rushing by. I could really feel the ground rumble beneath me, the sounds from the big diesels were enveloping, plus the engineer would always blow

*Continued on page 8*



Horseshoe Curve

## Remembering Tom Mohr

by Sam Dale

Tom and I were the last two survivors of the original Short Trackers club.

He was a dedicated hard worker, a perfectionist, a giver, a sharer. Always honest and always there when you needed him. When no one else would take notes he would pick up the pen. A super scribe, a super editor, and an all around nice person. He contributed much to the benefit of all of us who knew him. May the Lord bless him and keep him, may his face shine upon Tom, through all the days to come.

A friend and fellow railroader - Sam Dale



### SCOUT FAIR - Help Needed

Rodger Gredvig

The annual Boy Scout Fair features what is called a Merit Badge Midway. It gives scouts the opportunity to work on various Merit Badges. We (the NMRA) have been invited again to offer the RAILROADING MB this year, Saturday, April 13, at the Del Mar Fair Grounds. There is a urgent need for adult volunteers to work with the Merit Badge Counselor helping the boys complete their paperwork and to work on small projects like plaster castings, tree armatures, and weathering. Please see this as an opportunity to promote the hobby and to help young men develop healthy and constructive skills.

If you are available, contact Rodger Gredvig  
email: [pgredvig@nethere.net](mailto:pgredvig@nethere.net)  
telephone: (858) 571-7118

Everyone, be sure to support scouting by attending the Scout Fair on April 13 (see your local boy scout or cub scout for discount tickets).



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*Railfanning - continued from page 7*

the horn when going by. I was there about 1 ½ hours and a train came by probably every 15 minutes, so it was quite busy, and several times two trains would cross right there on the double tracked curve! Watching and enjoying the trains wasn't limited to just the hard core rail fans either, as there were many families and couples present.



Gettysburg Scenic RR

The viewing area is covered with grass and a few trees and would make a good picnic area, and there is also an old rusting GP-7 on display. Except for the tree overgrowth along the line, the only other irritant was that the place seemed to be invaded by ladybugs. They were everywhere and you couldn't keep them off you.

At Gettysburg is the National Military Park and it is a picturesque and historical area to tour, especially with the Fall colors. If you want to see or buy anything related to the Civil War, this is the place to go. There is a tourist excursion railroad there, the Gettysburg Scenic Railroad, and although I didn't ride the train, I did take a picture of it leaving. Passengers can ride in old heavyweight cars or enjoy the view from the open air cars. The train was powered by a nicely painted F3 or F7 (I'm not an expert engine spotter) in an A-A configuration. Also, in Gettysburg modelers will want to see the absolutely huge Artillery Ridge diorama of the Gettysburg battle. It is in HO scale and beautifully depicts the battle scenes, structures, and landscape. There are thousands of figures on the layout and it is well worth a visit.

A little bit of history, a little bit of trains, and overall a great trip.



## **SCHEDULE OF PSR-NMRA EVENTS**

### **February 2002**

Feb 9 - Sat 11:00 am **S.D. Division Meeting and Clinic - for everyone!** - at Peace Lutheran Church, San Diego (See flyer)

### **March 2002**

Mar 9 - Sat 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm - **Layout Tour** - North County Modular RR Society, San Marcos (see article)

Mar 16 - Sat 9:00 am - **Convention Committee Meeting** - Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside

Mar 16 - Sat 1:00 pm - **PSR Board Meeting** - Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside - All members welcome to attend.

### **April 2002**

Apr 2 - Tue 7:00 pm - **S.D. Division Business Meeting** - Short Track 'N Club House.

Apr 2 - Tue 9:00 pm **Convention Committee Meeting** - Short Track 'N Club House.

### **May 2002**

May 7 - Tue 7:00 pm **Convention Committee Meeting** - Short Track 'N Club House.

May 18 - Sat 10:00 am - **S.D. Division Annual Business Meeting & Free Swap Meet** - Poway (details next issue).

### **July 2002**

Jul 2 - Tue 7:00 pm - **Convention Committee Meeting** - Short Track 'N Club House

### **August 2002**

Aug 10 - Sat 11:00 am - **S.D. Division Annual Picnic** - Rohr Park, Chula Vista

### **September 2002**

Sept 12-16 **Mission Possible 2002 PSR Convention** - San Luis Rey Mission, Oceanside, CA

### **October 2002**

Oct 7 - Mon 7:00 pm - **S.D. Division Business Meeting** - SDMRRM

### **November 2002**

Nov 9 - Sat 5:00 pm - **S.D. Division Fall Meet** - San Diego Model Railroad Museum

## **OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST**

### **March 2002**

Mar 2 - Sat 9:00 am to 2:00 pm - Spring 2002 Railroadians Swap Meet - Orange Empire Railway Museum, Perris, CA

### **April 2002**

Apr 27 & 28 - 9:00 am to 5:00 pm - RailFest 2002 - Orange Empire Railway Museum, Perris, CA

### **May 2002**

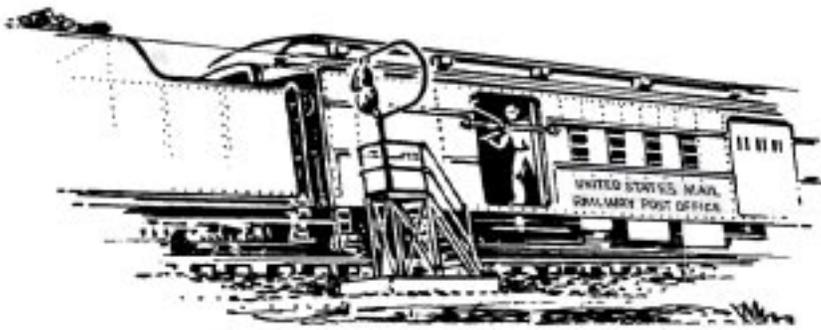
May 4 & 5 - Sat 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, Sun 9:00 am to 5:00 pm - Fullerton Railroad Days, Fullerton Train Station, Fullerton, CA

July 2002

July 15 to 22 - "Tracks In The Sand" NMRA National Convention, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

## **SAN DIEGO DIVISION STAFF**

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# MAIL HOOK

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**Winter Meet Details - See you there!**



## MAIL HOOK

c/o Ben Sevier, Editor  
12793 War Horse Street  
San Diego, CA 92129

A quarterly publication of the **San Diego Division**  
of the **Pacific Southwest Region**  
of the **National Model Railroad Association**

