



# MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

OCTOBER 2003

## IT STARTS WITH A VISION

*By Sam Dale, 2002 Division Member of the Year*

This story begins over ten years ago, in the Fall of 1992, when four guys got together in the back room of a hobby shop in Escondido. Three had seen a card placed on the bulletin board in the hobby shop, and the fourth person, Kurt Anderson, had placed the card looking for modelers to form a club of "N" scalers. More specifically, a "N" scale module club in the Escondido area. The name "Short Track'N Railroad" was adopted to honor Mrs. Short who, along with her business partner Mr. D. G. Higgins, was an owner of the hobby shop and was providing a place to set up the modules. Yes, I was one of those four original members. The seed was planted and the club has never looked back. I don't know if Kurt had a vision of what the club might become back then, but it has grown considerably.

The first order of business was to get some modules built so we would have something to run. Each person built a couple of modules, including four corner modules, and we were off and running.

The club attended its first Pacific Southwest Region convention at Laughlin, Nevada in 1992. It was a humbling experience, with ten modules, their skinny legs exposed, located in the bowels of the

hotel where few would see us unless they were really looking. By April 1993 we were really in high gear, formally organizing and adopting a set of bylaws. Club member Tom Mohr was always in the middle of club things, doing what ever was necessary to make the club go forward (his role right up until his recent passing). In April 1993 we adopted bylaws and our club had grown to nine members. Tim Woodard, Jim Russel, and his son along with Ken Allen and yes, our first and only lady model railroader, Barbara Schug, were in the ranks by this time.

The Los Angeles Division of the PSR had its "Rails to The Sea in 93" Convention Long Beach in September 1993, so we loaded our modules into the trunks of our cars and headed up that way. In the next few years we ran trains at more regional conventions, visited rest homes, churches and schools with our ever growing modular railroad. Paul Schmitt (currently the club president) joined our group in 1994, a great help since he has a truck! He has been a steady influence and contributor to our club for many of these early years along with providing storage and truck transport to most of our venues. By 1994 the convention setup started to look very professional, so much so that we took a very active part in the 1994 PSR convention held in San Diego. Sometime in the next few years the "Short TRAK N" club became an all NMRA affiliate club, continuing to attend a lot of the Pacific Southwest Regional events as a club.

In the Spring of 1996 the club got its first semi permanent home. We obtained the use of the old Girl and Boys Club portables in San Marcos, Woodland Park. Wow...no more hauling modules in our cars and trucks just to run trains. The year was also notable with several of our members being involved in the running of the NMRA National convention in Long Beach, and the club itself was a

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## LAYOUT MEETS & TOURS

By David Balser, Layout Tour Chairman

So far we've seen an amazing number of layouts, some finished, some not, but all well worthwhile seeing! We'll finish up this year in style, with 3 layouts to visit that you just cannot afford to miss!

Go directly to your collection of "Model Railroad" magazines and find the September 2002 edition and look on page 72. The entire story is there and I can not add another comment except to make sure you visit Mike Komosinski and his 'N' scale layout.

On the same day we visit Mike, you're also invited to another 'N' scale layout. This 7' x 8' N-scale layout is Charlie Baker's first serious model train project, which has been underway for about 2 years. It is a free-lanced layout set in the early-to-mid 1960's with scenery typical of northern California and Oregon. The rolling stock emphasizes the Southern Pacific Railroad. The layout employs Micro-Engineering code 55 track and #6 turnouts. Most of the scenery, including a town, nuclear power plant (guess Charlie's profession!), river and mountains, is finished. Charlie has emphasized much attention to detailing the scenery and other features of the railroad. Work continues to upgrade the wiring of the layout which is based on block control. The layout was adopted and expanded from Ron John's Washington Cascade layout described in the Oct. 2000 issue of Model Railroader (p.101).

To finish up the year we will be visiting Dick Trotter and his complete and fully operational HO scale railroad. Operation is the key word as Dick and his crew operate the railroad in prototypical fashion twice a week. The railroad has many fine structures and the scenery is some of the best. Don't miss this opportunity to visit another excellent example of model railroading at his best!

November is National Model Railroad Month - what better way to get friends into (or back into) this great hobby than inviting them along to one of the layout tours. And don't forget your young

friends or relatives - there is more to life than video games!!

## MONTHLY LAYOUT MEET LOCATIONS

Our November 15th tour is of two layouts close to each other. Directions for each:

Mike Komisinki: From I-5, take Hwy 56 to Carmel Country Rd., the second exit. Turn left (North), over the freeway. Take the first left, Del Mar Trails, and follow it past the park and the Church, both on the left. Pass under the power lines, and at the top of the hill, turn left on Worsch. Again, take your first left on Pilon Point, and follow this about 1/4 mile down the hill. My house, at 12315 Banuelo Cove, is right at the end of Pilon point.

Charlie Baker's: Exit I-5 at Del Mar Heights Road, go east about one block to the first traffic light, turn left (north) on High Bluff Drive, go three streets (past school on right), turn right (east) on Overpark Road. Baker's house is about six houses down on the left (north side) at 3560 Overpark Rd.

On December 13th we visit Dick Trotter's Coyote Pass and Northern.

To get to his house, take I-8 East to Los Coches exit, then turn left onto Los Coches Road. Turn right on Lakeview Road, go to East Lakeview Road, turn right, and go to Rock Acres Drive. Turn left, and go to No. 9245. The layout is in a separate building.



A very nice start! - Jay Styron's layout



part of the event.

By the end of December 1997 we had to give up the San Marcos portables. So...we were out on the street once again. On the bright side the club started attending the Great American Train Shows (GATS) and walking off with First Place with regularity in the ensuing years. Our treasury fattened a little each time. We also got more involved in the Diego Division with several of our members becoming Division officers in 1997.

In 1998 most of our members volunteered to help the San Diego Division run the PSR Convention held in Mission Valley. While this convention wasn't the success that previous ones had been, it contributed to the growth of the Division's treasury, and helped the club as well. 1998 also was the first year that "Short TRAK'N Railroad" brought model railroading to the Del Mar Fair (a very popular addition - 2003 marked our sixth consecutive year at the Fair).

By 1999 the club was showing up wherever there was a need for a professional modular layout. The Orange Empire Railroad Museum was one of the common venues, and we even maintained a model railroad built into a bar top in a bar called "The Old Mining Company", where we held our business meetings for several months. Finally we gave this up as the trains were getting showered with more suds and alcohol than the bar's clients! By 2000 block signals were introduced as our layout had grown to a size requiring them, and for the first time the club acquired its own engines in anticipation of long hours of running at the Del Mar Fair. Thanks to the hard work of Paul Schmitt, the club became a nonprofit association, which has become very important to our future progress. We adopted a club color (yellow) and had shirts made up with the club logo.

Our club membership has continued to grow by leaps and bounds. By 2002 we had twenty-five

members. We'd attended several GAT shows, and continued to be part of the Del Mar Fair. Once again club members were instrumental in the success of the PSR Convention in San Diego, this time at the San Luis Rey Mission Conference Center. This convention was a great success, and added to the Division's treasury once again.

Each year our club has salted away a little more in its' treasury, looking forward to the day when we had a real place of our own, a permanent home. For several years the idea that the club could an affiliate of the "Antique Gas and Steam Museum" simmered in the minds of a few of our club visionaries, and that idea was finally made a reality with a presentation to the Steam Museum Board. In March of 2003 the Short Trak club officially became an integral part of the museum operation, with a designated area within the museum to erect a 3,000 square foot facility to house displays in several scales. On becoming a part of the museum the club changed its name to the "Short Trak Crew".

The club had saved for these past ten years so that model railroading could become more easily accessible to the general public, particularly in the North County area. Now, between the clubs at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park, and the new facility at the Antique Gas and Steam Museum in Vista, we have the means to help the hobby really grow, especially in reaching out to the young people who are the future of the hobby. And the NMRA and the San Diego Division are in a position to assist in establishing a great model railroading facility in the North County.

Our club has invested a large part of its treasury towards our new building. And this building was not invested in only for our club, but as a possible permanent home for the San Diego Division, an organization that many of us have been actively involved in. Several NMRA Life Members are considering founding a library as part of the facility, and there are other possibilities as well. More investment will be needed, of both time and money, and it is hoped that the members of the Division will provide the necessary assistance to help make this vision become a reality. This is no longer just a "club", but a resource for all model railroaders in Southern California.

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## Director's Report

By *Rodger Gredvig, MMR*

The annual PSR Convention, "Arizona Express 2003", was held in Phoenix, September 10-14, 2003. Unlike most conventions it did not have a trade show or modular displays. The host hotel provided break-out rooms for clinics which were well received. Several special Clinics were offered featuring "Modeling with the Masters" for an extra fare. These included scratchbuilding a wooden trestle, working in styrene, and building craftsmen laser and metal kits. Home layout tours were spread all over the greater Phoenix area. Notable were the layouts of Jim Knollmiller, Ron Mei, and Harold Shelton. Jim's HO layout is a huge 62x40 basement GN empire built on two levels. It is larger than most club layouts and is about 1/3 completed. Ron Mei's layout is equally as large with precision desert scenery and prototypical structures along the SF mainline between New Orleans and Los Angeles. It takes about a crew of 12 to fully operate this grand layout. Harold Shelton's Black Canyon Line is modest in size (20x14') but superbly done. Every scene is craftsman quality. You will not see a more finely crafted layout anywhere.

The Board of Director's business focused on the controversial issue concerning the status of registrants for PSR conventions. The BOD last year passed a policy requiring NMRA membership to register. However, some Divisions felt that a surcharge or extra fee was all that should be required to encourage more participation by non-NMRA enthusiasts. The decision is now being submitted to the whole membership for comment. A survey will appear in the next issue of the Dispatch asking for your opinion.

Overall, the PSR has been holding its own, with most growth taking place in Arizona and the Cajon divisions. Discussion also focused on a possible joint convention with the PCR (primarily northern CA) some time in the future.

## Superintendent's Report

By *Ben Sevier*

Well, it's been a busy quarter! We had the Division Summer Picnic at Rohr Park, several mini-meets, and a number of Division members attended the PSR Convention in Phoenix (yes, I think 105 is hot!) With the Fall Meet coming up in November, and 4 layouts on the mini-meet

schedule between now and the end of the year, it doesn't look like it will slow down any.

The mini-meets continue to be a success, with the attendance averaging 22. There are plans afoot to make the mini-meets even more interesting, so make sure to add them to your schedule. The October 25th Mini-Meet at Dave Balser's is also the quarterly Division Business Meeting. We will be discussing a number of ideas for growing the Division, and making it more fun and interesting - isn't that what this is hobby is about?

The Summer Picnic was sparsely attended, but those who attended had a great time (bocce balls, who has the bocce balls?). A number of people have suggested that perhaps it's time to do something else for our summer meet - any ideas?

The convention was great! A full report will be in the PSR Dispatch this quarter, but everyone I talked to had a good time. I even learned how to switch a large yard (getting the operations bug!), and have been convinced to move to DCC.

The lead article this month is part historical, part a look at the future of model railroading in our part of Southern California. Please read it, and think about the possibilities that Sam presents at the end. You will be hearing more about this in the future.

Have a enjoyable and peaceful Holiday Season, and I look forward to seeing you at our events!



Congratulations to Paul Schmitt on being awarded the Master Builder - Cars Achievement Award!

And to Bill Brooks on being awarded the Master Builder - Scenery Achievement Award! (sorry, no photo available)

**SAN DIEGO DIVISION PSR-NMRA**

# Fall Meet

**Saturday, November 8th, 2003**

**Templar Hall, Old Poway Park**

**14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA**

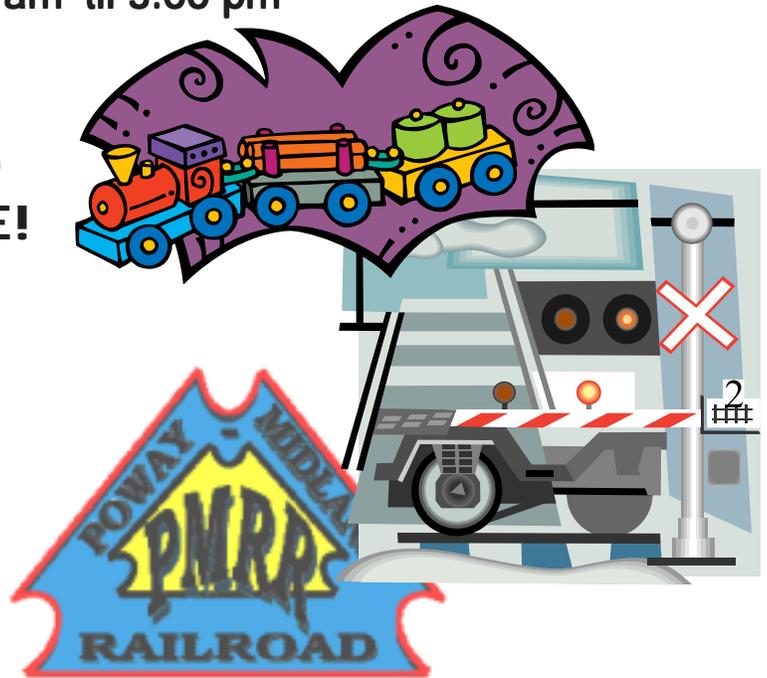
**11:30 am 'til 3:00 pm**

**CLINICS!  
BRING A MODEL AND  
LEARN HOW TO JUDGE!**

**DOOR PRIZES!**

**ANNUAL MODEL  
CONTEST**

**FAVORITE MODEL  
CONTEST!**



Directions: Take I-15 to Poway Road. Take Poway Road East to Midland Road (about 4 miles), turn left on Midland Road. Old Poway Park is about 1 mile north, on the left. Templar Hall is across from "The Hamburger Factory". You may park in the restaurant parking lot.

## *P O T L U C K D I N N E R*

REMEMBER TO BRING FOOD TO SHARE - THE DISHES NEEDED ARE:

MAIN DISH, SALADS, APPETIZERS & SNACKS, AND DESSERTS

THERE IS NO KITCHEN IN THE FACILITY, SO BRING SOMETHING TO KEEP YOUR FOOD WARM

Bring your own serving utensils - drinks, plates & eating utensils supplied

November 2003

San Diego Division - Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> Los Angeles Division Train Show - Arcadia
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> San Diego Division Fall Meet - Poway
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Mini-Meet Jay Komisinski Charlie Baker San Diego
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23 / 30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <i>Thanksgiving</i>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>

December 2003

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Mini-Meet Dick Trotter El Cajon
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <i>Hanukkah</i>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <i>Christmas</i>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

January 2004

				<b>1</b> <i>New Year's</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Mini-Meet & Div. Bus. Meeting Don Fowler Santee
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	

## DOUBLE-TRACKING THE MAIN LINE

By Frank Tepedino (continued from last issue)

What I learned from it all:

**PLAN AHEAD** - Make sure you plan ahead to have sufficient clearance between the tracks, the walls of the "Cuts", and the mountain sides **AFTER** you apply the rocks and boulders! I thought I did. The freight cars made it through the curves OK - but the long passenger cars and my long engines, with large overhangs, had problems. I had to go back and perform surgery on a number of plastered in place rocks and boulders. Note on rock debris and "talus": I found that I had to tone down the light color of the Woodland Scenic, rock debris and talus to more closely match the color of the "Parent" rock faces. I used diluted washes of several water based dark grays and oily backs.

**Tunnel Portals:** While my tunnel portals were fine for the short yard diesels, they had to be cut back at the curves to allow passage of longer road engines and passenger cars. I painted the cutaway section with grimy black paint to partially mask the area.

**Domino effects:** Be prepared for the "Domino Effect". The expanded "cut" at the town of Johnstown required moving an adjacent street, which caused the adjacent buildings with their lighting systems to be moved, which caused problems with the orientation of a number of adjacent structures, and scenes, people, trucks, etc.

**More Relocations:** At the other end of my layout the new parallel line required moving an installed roundhouse, its access tracks, an engine shed, and a number of engine storage stubs. (Fortunately I did not have to relocate the turntable. What a job that would have been).

**Somewhat Smart Move - Muv Dumb Move:** During the work, I covered the track - (somewhat smart move) with tape to prevent the plaster, paint and other debris from my newly installed mountain and rock face from dropping and dripping on the adjacent track and track ballast.

**Muv Dumb move:** - I used "Paper Packing" tape, off a roll, which I purchased from Staples. If you have such a roll of tape, immediately burn it, promptly throw it out, or banish it FOREVER from your train room. After the work was completed, I tried to remove the "protective" tape from the track. The tape left a sticky glue residue on the top surface of the track. Plus the tape tended to tear and come off the track and ballast

in small strips and tiny pieces.

I ended up scraping the rail surfaces, using an Exacto knife edge and my thumb nail, inch by inch, to get the sticky stuff off the rail and ballast. Then I had to use an alcohol-moistened cloth to rub off more residue, and finally used a Bright Boy to polish the railheads. My thoughts were, (as YOUR'S will be if YOU use this tape), - "Oh Darn " (*I doubt it was that mild! ed.*)

Do a layout plan! Prior to starting the work, I drew a series of schematics of what the track plan Would look like using my software package: "3D Railroad Concept & Design" by Abracadata. I plan on doing an "as built" schematic shortly, and mounting the schematics on the walls by each layout control area for the operator.

What's next? Installing a contour following "around the layout" fascia board. Any suggestions on how to do this would be greatly appreciated!

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## PAYMASTER'S REPORT

by Don Fowler

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Following is the status of the San Diego Division's treasury as of 8/29/2003:

Petty Cash:	0.00
Operating Account:	\$187.96
Investment Account:	<u>\$13,880.45</u>
Total Balance:	\$14,068.41

Orders: 1-800-642-9054  
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## SCHEDULE OF PSR-NMRA EVENTS

### October 2003

Oct 25 - Sat 12:00 noon - **Monthly Layout Meet & Division Business Meeting** - Dave Balsler (Encinitas)

### November 2003

Nov 8 - Sat 11:30 am - **S.D. Division Fall Meet** - Model Contest, Potluck, Clinics - Templar Hall, Old Poway Park, Poway

Nov 15 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - Jay Komisinski, Charlie Baker (San Diego)

### December 2003

Dec 13 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - Dick Trotter (El Cajon)

### January 2004

Jan 10 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - Don Fowler (Santee)

### February 2004

Feb 14 - Sat 12:00 noon - **S.D. Division Winter Meet & Contest** - TBA

Feb 21 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - TBA

### March 2004

Mar 13 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - TBA

### April 2004

Apr 17 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - TBA

### May 2004

May 8 - Sat 10:00am - **S.D. Division Spring Meet & Swap Meet** - Poway Community Center

May 22 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - TBA

### June 2004

Jun 12 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - TBA

### July 2004

Jul 10 - Sat 12:00 noon - Monthly Layout Meet - TBA

## OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

### October 2003

Oct 26th - 11:00am to 3:00pm - **HALLOWEEN FAMILY DAY** - San Diego Model Railroad Museum, Balboa Park.

### November 2003

Nov 1 & 2 - 9:00 am to 5:00 pm - **LA Division - Train Show** LA County Arboretum, Arcadia, CA - \$5 park admission.

Nov 8th - Noon to 4:00pm - **North County Modular Railroad Club** - open house, Escondido.

Nov 23rd - 11:00am to 3:00pm - **Thanksgiving Family Day** - San Diego Model Railroad Museum, Balboa Park.

### December 2003

Dec 6th & 7th - **Great American Train Show** - Del Mar Fairgrounds, Del Mar, CA

### July 2004

July 4 thru 11 - **Puget Sound Express - NMRA National Convention** Seattle, WA

### September 2004

Sep 15 thru 19 - **Rails to the Verdugos - PSR Convention** - Glendale, CA

### Submissions

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 floppy disk, 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 2004: January 10, 2004; April 9, 2004; July 9, 2004; October 9, 2004



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## Membership Application

### Pacific Southwest Region - National Model Railroad Association

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Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Scale \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

New  Renewal  PSR # \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Class of Membership</u>	<u>NMRA</u>	<u>PSR*</u>	<u>Both</u>
Regular	\$45.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$7.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$52.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Youth (under 20)	\$30.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$2.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$32.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Affiliate (no bulletin or local publications)	\$23.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$4.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$27.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$ 9.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$1.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00 <input type="checkbox"/>

\* You **MUST** be a member of the NMRA to be a PSR member

For information on NMRA activities, contact the San Diego Division membership Chairman:

Ben Sevier, (858) 538-9863

Please send this application and your check or money order made payable to "Pacific Southwest Region, NMRA". Mail to: PSR-NMRA Membership, Gary Robinson, 13928 Barrymore St., San Diego, CA 92129

*Cut along this line, and mail to the above adress with your payment*

### Online - Web Sites of Interest

Train Net: [www.trainnet.org](http://www.trainnet.org)

NMRA: [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

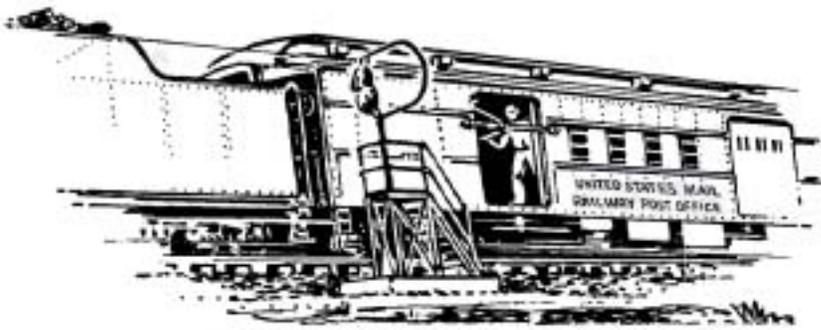
PSR: [www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/psr/psr.html](http://www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/psr/psr.html)

Arizona Express 2003 Convention: [http://www.trainnet.org/documents/az\\_express1.htm](http://www.trainnet.org/documents/az_express1.htm)

San Diego Division: [www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/sdiego/sdiego.html](http://www.getnet.net/~dickg/nmra/sdiego/sdiego.html)

### **SAN DIEGO DIVISION STAFF**

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Achievement Program:	<b>Ed Hatch</b>	858 274-2283	
Member Aid:	<b>Bob Schimmel MMR #193</b>	858 273-8511	
Layout Tours:	<b>Dave Balsler</b>	760 436-6139	dbalsler@adelphia.net
Meets:	<b>Milt Perkins</b>		mep Perkins@cox.net
Convention:	<b>Chuck Hart</b>	858 748-6816	pce@cox.net
Membership:	<b>Gary Robinson</b>	858-538-5256	grobbiedobbie@yahoo.com
Nominations:	<b>Chuck Hart</b>	858 748-6816	pce@cox.net
Clinics:	<b>Bob Moore</b>		bobmoore24@earthlink.net



# MAIL HOOK

## LOOK INSIDE FOR THE LATEST NEWS!

- Layout Meet Schedule
  - Fall Meet Details
  - Reports on Division Activities
  - Interesting Articles!

Look Inside!



## 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**

