

MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

4TH QUARTER, 2008

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Don Fowler

"Life is like a train trip. It's about the journey, not the destination!"

As we continue to grow and develop in our hobby, we continue to improve our skills and continue to raise our personal standards. Over the years, I've made many great friends who have patiently mentored my development and assisted me when I was frustrated or challenged. A few years ago, I realized that the best way to repay that debt was to contribute to the promotion and development of model railroading.

While I have informally helped other folks get started in the hobby, I decided to kick it up a notch and enter the NMRA's Achievement Program. I'm hoping that by completing this program, I can be better prepared to assist and support others as they learn new skills. Since I started, I've obtained certificates for Scenery and Volunteer. I just submitted packages for Official, Author and Electrical and I'm currently working on Civil. Some of the requirements have challenged me and forced me to go beyond my comfort zones, which is a good thing.

Many of you have probably already met the qualification requirements for some of these

See "Director's Report" on Page 3

New Fall Meet Date

The **San Diego Division Fall Meet**, originally scheduled for November 8, has been re-scheduled to **Saturday, November 15**, at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum. Festivities will be getting underway at 11:30 AM, beginning with our traditional pot luck lunch.

Rodger Gredvig, MMR, will present a clinic on "How to Take Magazine-Quality Model Photographs." Rodger always puts on a great clinic, and this will be particularly important if you're going for the Author Certificate in the Achievement Program. We'll have a Show & Tell, a Favorite Model contest (judging will be available, but not required) and a Chinese auction. To round out the activities, you'll be able to visit the layouts of the San Diego Model Railroad Museum.

Remember to arrive early, as parking can be an interesting proposition at Balboa Park. Carpools are encouraged. Remember to enter at the rear, directly into the Pacific Beach Room. See you there!

NMRA Joins Combined Federal Campaign

See article on page 5



CFC 12286

Federal Employees! For the first time, the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) will be included in your annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) to be conducted at your workplace. To offer the NMRA your support please designate #12286 on your CFC contribution form.

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SAN DIEGO DIVISION STAFF

Director:	Don Fowler	619-258-3529	director@sandiegodivision.org
Superintendent:	Ben Sevier	858-538-9863	superintendent@sandiegodivision.org
Chief Clerk/Paymaster:	Don Fowler	619-258-3529	donald.fowler@sdsheriff.org
Achievement Program:	Ed Hatch	858-274-2283	
Clinics:	Don Fowler	619-258-3529	donald.fowler@sdsheriff.org
Club Liason:	Jack Eiermann	858-547-4410	jceiermann@msn.com
Contests:	Rodger Gredvig MMR #218	858-571-7118	pgredvig@nethere.net
Layout Tours:	(vacant)		
<u>Mail Hook</u> Editor:	Gary Robinson	760-839-5877	mailhook@sandiegodivision.org
Meets:	Jim Campbell	619-741-1906	warbonet@cox.net
Member Aid:	Bob Schimmel MMR #193	858-273-8511	
Membership:	Gordon Miller	619-857-6908	membership@sandiegodivision.org
Nominations:	(vacant)		
Publicity:	(vacant)		

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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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.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

By Ben Sevier

Nothing like a warm October to make you look forward to winter - yes, winter (or what we call winter here in Paradise) is on its way! Holidays, food, fun times, rain (what's that?). Great time of year! And trains help to take your mind off all the gloom and doom around this year.

The Summer Event at John Sigurdson's place was lots of fun - cook out, trains, model judging, business meeting - a little bit of everything. We had a decent turnout for a hot day in August, interesting conversations, and a chance to see John's trains run - if you haven't seen his layout in a while, you're missing some good modeling. I would like to express my appreciation to John for making his place available.

The Holiday Season will be a busy one in the Division. The Fall Meet will be held at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum on Saturday, November 15th beginning at 11:30am with a Pot Luck lunch (be sure to bring food to share), then a clinic on "Photographing Your Layout for the Magazines" by Rodger Gredvig, MMR. Rodger has lots of tips for the best way to get good photos, not just for publication but for your own collection. I'm looking forward to learning a lot, as I'm always impressed by Rodger's photography. We'll have the "bring a model to show and share" table - not a contest, but a way to bring a project you are working on and would like to share, or just some finished items that you'd like to show off. As we have several members working on their AP Certificates, model judging will be available for those who wish to submit themselves to that form

of torture. Finally, we'll be having a "Chinese" auction, where donated items are bid upon by attendees (that's you) using tickets to bid - the proceeds go to assist the Division's activities. So, donate some of those items cluttering up your train room (or any other room - doesn't have to be train related), and pass your treasures on. We'll end up the day about 3pm with door prize drawings.

The website (www.sandiegodivision.org) will list happenings. Speaking of the website, it's been redesigned, with a new look and new features. The "Events" tab has a nice calendar, but we need items to put on there! If you'd like to have your group/club/layout events published, send them to webmaster@sandiegodivision.org, with complete information about the event. And if you have any comments or suggestions about the website please pass them on.

Finally, in December we'll be gathering at the residence of Don & Kim Fowler for the Annual Division Holiday Party. They have a number of fun activities planned for both you and your spouse/guest, along with the ever enjoyable tour of their indoor and outdoor layouts, food, and a gift swap - everyone had a great time last year, so don't miss it!

Next year's calendar is starting to come together, with layout tours, a swap meet, club tours and other activities. If you would like to host a layout tour, please contact me or Don Fowler so we can get you scheduled. We would like to have at least one layout tour a quarter (mine's even going to be open this coming year!), so step up and make yours one of them. In February we'll be having our Annual Swap Meet on the morning of the Winter Meet, so start getting your things together that you'd like to sell/trade, and save up some cash to buy those treasures someone is sure to bring. More details later.

We've had a change in the Division organization. Gordon Miller has taken on the job of Membership Chairman for the Division, relieving Gary of some of his many tasks. Gordon has a lot of ideas on ways to reach out to current and prospective members, and I'm sure he would appreciate any help you can give.

Well, that's about it. I'm looking forward to seeing you at the Fall Meet, or at one the events later in the year. And if you are interested in helping out with the Division operations, don't hesitate to raise your hand! Have a great Holiday Season, and a very Happy New Year!

Ben

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Director's Report from Page 2

certificates but may not know it. Some have resisted the program because of the documentation requirements. This is the first area that I am prepared to offer assistance. If you'd like to discuss the program, review my paperwork or have a copy, please let me know. Just like modeling, if there is a prototype to examine, we can use it to create/develop our own work product. I should also add that our AP Chair, Ed Hatch and local MMR's like Rodger Gredvig, John Sigurdson, and Paul Schmitt have been very supportive in this quest.

On a different subject, I can't believe that we're already gearing up for the holiday season but that time is upon us again. Over the years we've all been the victim of a well intended gift giver who presents us with a railroad item that we have no interest in or use for. For non-modelers, it's tough to select the right road name, era, or scale. It can be pretty complicated for them when you think about it. None of us want to appear ungrateful but if it can't be exchanged or re-gifted, it winds up at the next swap meet. You may also be placed in the awkward position of explaining what happened to it or why you're not using it.

So how do we prevent this from happening? Take the opportunity to create a wish list with a variety of items and a broad price range. Our loved ones are usually thrilled to have the guess work taken out of finding a perfect gift and a varied price range makes it possible for everyone to participate. Be sure to include brand, stock numbers and specify your scale and preferred road name. You could help further by identifying the easiest and least expensive location/method to locate and purchase the item by providing a catalog, store name or web site. Make your list available to those you exchange gifts with or post it in a prominent place like on the refrigerator.

Having trouble thinking of items you want or need? How about magazine subscriptions or club membership fees? Are there any new books out there that you want? If you're building a new layout you're going to need basic staples like track, switches and roadbed. Scenery items are always appreciated and quite varied (backdrops, vegetation, structures, vehicles, people, detail parts, etc). What about rolling stock or locomotives? Are you thinking about transitioning from DC to DCC? If nothing comes to mind, there are always gift certificates to your favorite hobby or hardware

See "Director's Report" on Page 8

Achievement Award Tips

One of the most heard complaints following contest judging is “why did I get such a low score”? Low scores often discourage modelers so much that they swear they will never enter another contest or submit a model for judging ever again. I think we can all understand their frustration, most MMRs felt that way when they began. The problem is usually two-fold: (1) the modeler did not carefully read the requirements (or didn't adequately understand them) and (2) the Judges did not help the modeler to see where the model could be improved to garner more points. Please note the clearly stated purpose of the Achievement Program (found on the judging form matrix), especially the last sentence:

“The purpose of the AP is to recognize and reward good model building. The purpose of contest judging is to choose the winning models in each category. The primary purpose of these guidelines is to help the judges choose the winners. Their secondary purpose is to encourage consistency in scoring. The judges' aim should be to evaluate the models both to inform the modelers of their success and to help them to improve their modeling skills.”

As judges (and any NMRA member can be a judge), the secondary task is to help the modeler identify the opportunities to improve the model and elevate the quality of the work performed. But often, the problem is not the quality of the work, but the amount of work, or lack of description of the work. A four-sided simple plastic kit is obviously not contest (or 87.5 pt) worthy. Neither is a scratch built structure worthy if the amount of parts consists of 4 walls, a roof, a few windows, and a door, no matter how well executed. Remember the advice to include quantity, quality and complexity. So if your model falls short of your expectations, do not be discouraged. Ask the judges (they signed their names at the bottom of the form) how they judged your model and what would bring it up to AP standards. It is part of their job to explain.

If you are new to contests or AP judging here is some important advice: Volunteer to be a judge at a contest before you enter a contest (beginners and experienced judges are often paired). Learn what makes or breaks a model in terms of enough points for a Merit Award. Your own models will benefit from your broadened experience.

Next time, tips on filling out paperwork.

— Rodger Gredvig, MMR

Model Railroads of Southern California Yahoo Group

There's a model railroading resource in Southern California that many of you apparently; don't know about. The Yahoo Group, Model Railroads of Southern California, is a group for model railroaders who live in or model the Southern California area. The group is an invaluable source of model and prototype information, and an on-line meeting place for local modelers. Bob Chaparro, the group Moderator, organizes several layouts tours each year, that are announced and open to only group members. Here's an invitation from Bob.

“Members of the San Diego Division/PSR are invited to join over 760 members of the free on-line Yahoo group, Model Railroads of Southern California.

This is a group for Southern California model railroaders to share their progress, experiences, tips and techniques with each other. And you don't have to have a layout to be a member.

The group publishes daily on-line information on Southern California clubs and upcoming model railroad activities such as train shows, swap meets and conventions.

We also sponsor free, self-guided layout tours. Since 2006 we have sponsored fourteen layout tours from Santa Barbara to San Diego and out through the Inland Empire. Well over 100 layouts have been featured on these tours, including a number of San Diego area layouts.

Check out our group at:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Model_Railroads_Of_Southern_California/

Bob Chaparro
Group Moderator”

Another Modeling Resource

I recently found a great modeling resource on the web that I'd like to share with you. The Eastern Iowa Division of the Mid-Continent Region publishes the Wig-Wag monthly. You can check it out from their web pages, <http://eid.mcor-nmra.org/index.html>. Many back issues are available.

They have a great multi-part series on Intermodal railroading, and another on the Achievement Program. They also have individual articles from time to time that I've found helpful.

* * *

NMRA NEWS

National Model Railroad Association Convention Survey

The NMRA BOD Convention Review Committee (CRC) has developed a survey designed to assist them in determining why members do or do not attend the National Convention. In addition, the survey is designed for responses from NMRA members as well as model railroaders who are NOT members. This survey is for everyone. The survey is being advertised in the current issue of Model Railroader as well.

We need to get the message out so that a wide distribution and response to this survey is achieved. The CRC has requested that the the Regions assist in getting the word out about the survey and encouraging every member, whether or not they attend the National Convention, to respond to the survey with honest and frank answers.

The link to the survey can be accessed from the NMRA website at:

www.nmra.org/survey

and clicking on:

"Take the National Convention survey now."

The survey will be open through the end of November so act now to be sure your opinions are considered. Most answers allow you to enter personal comments as well as selecting one of several provided answers. The more people who participate in this survey, the more effective the information that comes from it will be in designing something that meets the needs of members. There will be prizes available as well. How they will be distributed is unknown at this time.

Lets help the CRC in finding ways to improve our national Conventions so more members and modelers can enjoy them. Please encourage all of your model railroading friends, again whether or not they are NMRA members, to take the survey and give us their feedback.

It only takes about five minutes, and will really help the national organization provide what the members need. Please do your part.

* * *

National Model Railroad Association Joins the Combined Federal Campaign

Attention Federal employees! The National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) is pleased to announce that we have been included in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) as an eligible agency. For the first time, the NMRA is listed among the charities on the CFC list. Any Federal employee can designate the NMRA as a recipient of his or her donations. If you haven't submitted your form for the coming year, please consider entering agency #12286 on your contribution form.

* * *

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

Continued from Page 7

Park) 210 North Chapel Ave. Alhambra, CA 91801 <http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org/>

- 6. 7 Great Train Expo, Ventura County Fairgrounds, Ventura, CA. Sat/Sun, 10 - 4. <http://www.trainexpoinc.com/index.html>
- 13 Christmas in the Park, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, Poway, CA, 4:30 - 8:30PM. Poway Station N scale layout. Poway Midland RR 0-4-0 steam loco. <http://www.ci.poway.ca.us/Index.aspx?page=620>
- 13, 14 Great Train Expo, Fairgrounds, Del Mar, CA. Sat/Sun, 10 - 4. <http://www.trainexpoinc.com/index.html>

2009

January

- 3, 4 Great Train Expo, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Sat/Sun, 10 - 4. <http://www.trainexpoinc.com/index.html>

February

- 14 San Diego Model Railroad Museum Swap Meet, Balboa Park, details TBA

* * *

November 2008

San Diego Division - Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Slim Gauge Guild	3	4 Slim Gauge Guild	5	6	7	8 Multiple Events
9 Belmont Shore Open House	10	11	12	13	14	15 San Diego Division Fall Meet
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2008

	1	2	3	4	5	6 GTE, Ventura
7 GTE, Ventura	8	9	10	11	12	13 Multiple Events
14 GTE, Del Mar	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2009

				1	2	3 GTE, Anaheim
4 GTE, Anaheim	5	6	7	8	9	10 SD Division event, TBA
11	12	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 mailhook@sandiegodivision.org. Events should be of interest to San Diego Division members. Division-sponsored events are listed in **bold** typeface.

2008

November

- 15 San Diego Division Fall Meet**, San Diego Model Railroad Museum, Pacific Beach Room, Balboa Park. Pot luck, silent auction, clinic. 11:30 - 3:00

December

- 13 San Diego Division Holiday Open House**, Don & Kim Fowler's, 10768 Sayers Ct, Santee, CA 3:00 - ?:??.

2009

January

- 10 San Diego Division event**, TBA

February

- 7 San Diego Division Annual Swap Meet and Winter Meet**, tentatively scheduled for the Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum and Short Track Railroad, Swap Meet 8:00 - 11:30, Winter Meet 11:30 - 3:00

March

- TBA Cajon Division Temecula meet and PSR Mid-Year Board meeting**, location TBA

April

- 11 San Diego Division event**, TBA

May

- 9 San Diego Division Spring Meet**, TBA

June

- 13 San Diego Division event**, TBA

July

- 5-11 NMRA National Convention**, Hartford CT

August

- 8 San Diego Division Summer Meet**, TBA

September

- 2-6 City of Las Vegas, PSR Annual convention**, Texas Station Hotel, Las Vegas, NV

November

- 15 San Diego Division Fall Meet**, TBA

2008

November

- 1-2, 8-9 Siera Padific Lines, Pasadena Model Railroad Club Open House**, 5458 Alhambra Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90032 (323) 222-1718 E-mail: Webmaster@pmrrc.org
Fall Show:
Saturday, Nov 1 1-5 PM and 7-10 PM
Sunday, Nov 2 1-5 PM
Tuesday, Nov 4 7:30 PM - 10 PM
Saturday, Nov 8 1-5 PM and 7-10 PM
Sun, Nov 9 1-5 PM
Open House Donations: Adults \$3, Children \$1 (under 7 free when accompanied by an adult)
- 2, 4 Slim Gauge Guild MRC Open House**. 300 S. Raymond Ave (Basement), Pasadena, CA 91105 Sun 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM Tue. 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM Info: Jeff Smith (818) 590-1729 www.slingaugeguild.com
- 8 Coachella Valley Model Railroad Open House**. Riverside County Fairgrounds, 82503 Highway 111, Indio CA 92201. 10 am - 3 pm. www.cvmrr.com Contact Jim Hundley
- 8, 9 Belmont Shore Lines (N) and Angels Gate Hi-Railers (O) Open Houses**. Sat. & Sun. 10 AM to 4 PM and Saturday Swap Meet, 8 AM to Noon. 3601 S. Gaffey St, Bldgs. 824 & 848, San Pedro, CA. \$1.00 per person or \$2.00 per family, all donations to Angels Gate Park. Bill Costley 310-831-1140 and <http://www.belmontshorerr.com/>
- 8, 9 Highland Pacific Railroad (Highland Park Society of Model Railroad Engineers) Open House**, 12 - 5, 854 East Broadway, San Gabriel, CA. For more information, contact Brian Hunnell, at bhunnell@comcast.net.
- 14 Pacific Railroad Society Monthly Meeting**. 1930 (7:30 PM) to 2130. Joslyn Center (in Story Park) 210 North Chapel Ave. Alhambra, CA 91801 <http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org/>

December

- 12 Pacific Railroad Society Monthly Meeting**. 1930 (7:30 PM) to 2130. Joslyn Center (in Story

Continued on page 5

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 RR Society

It's been a busy summer for NCMRS. We were featured in the NMRA Anaheim Convention issue of Scale Rails and as a result gained three new members.

We are just completing a 1000 sq ft addition to our club facility. This added space includes a lounge area, a maintenance/repair area, and space for our business office. In addition and most importantly there will be space for an additional layout peninsula.

We are open to the public every Sat from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Please see our web site www.ncmrs.org for directions, or call 760-722-7366.

We have a special 4 track demonstration layout set up just for junior engineers. They can bring their own DC train to run if they wish.

* * *

Poway Station All Scale Model RR Club



Poway Station has just completed a successful show at Old Poway Park, in conjunction with the annual Train Song Festival and Railroad Movie Under the Stars. If you've never been, mark the first weekend in October on next year's calendar and join us for the fun!

Next up, we have two events on December 13. We expect to have our HO layout at the Great Train Expo in Del Mar on both Saturday and Sunday, the 13th and 14th. Note that this is the *second* weekend in December, rather than the first as it has been in recent years.

Also on Saturday December 13th, we'll be back at Old Poway Park in the evening for the annual *Christmas in the Park* event, from 4:30 - 8:30 PM. You can hit the GTE early in the day, then enjoy a turn of the century Christmas celebration while you check out our new N scale layout. This layout will consist of two return loop modules, that can be used as end modules for a loop-to-loop layout that can include Ntrak, oNetrak, Bend Track, or free-mo modules. We're really

excited about the many possibilities this will open up. We hope you'll come out and see what we've been up to.

Membership in this exciting modular club is open. We meet Tuesday evenings at various locations. Check our web page, at www.powaystation.org, for more details and contact information.

* * *



The San Diego Model Railroad Museum (SDMRRM) hosted a "frightfully fun Halloween Family Day on October 26.

The Lego Train Exhibit opens November 25, and runs through January 17, 2009.

Rebuilding of the library is nearing completion, and we hope to reinstate the popular Mac's Kids' Corner soon.

The semi-annual swap meet on Saturday, February 14, 2009, beginning at 7:00 AM. Enter at the rear door. Swap Meet admission charges apply.

The Museum is currently recruiting for a new docent Group, The Conductors. This group will provide guided tours, educate children's groups, and entertain dignitaries and enthusiasts from around the world. People interested in joining this group should contact Chief Docent Charles Young at 619-696-0199, or cyoung@sdmrm.org.

Get more information about the SDMRRM at our web page <http://www.sdmodelrailroadm.com/>.

* * *

Director's Report from Page 3

stores. A little list like this will make things easier for everyone, including you. Sure beats that traditional lump of coal!

Please plan to attend the Division Holiday Party on December 13th at our place. There will be trains running, good food, games, a gift exchange, and great fellowship. We all had a great time last year and hope that you'll make it one of your continuing holiday traditions.

Happy Holidays,

Don

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 www.ncmrs.org

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.org

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

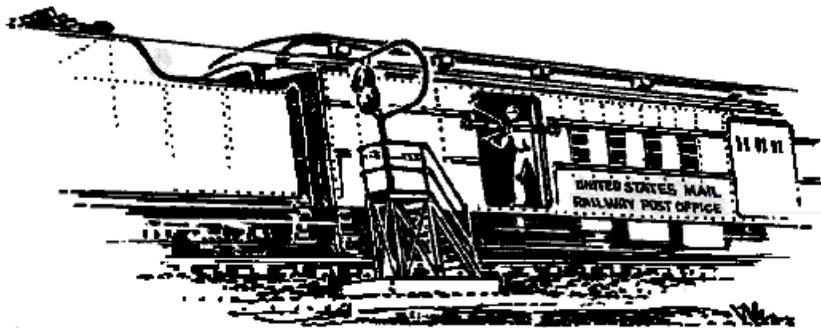
World's Largest Operating Model Railroad Museum

1649 El Prado, Balboa Park

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!

- Model Railroad Month Event Schedules
 - NMRA News
 - Fall Meet Preview
- Look Inside!



MAIL HOOK

c/o Gary Robinson, Editor
2319 Conway Drive
Escondido, CA 92026



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