

MAIL HOOK

SAN DIEGO DIVISION, PSR-NMRA

4th Quarter, 2020 Edition

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Superintendent's Report



Fall is upon us. At the time of this writing, Halloween is a couple weeks away with Thanksgiving on its heels. This has been a hard year for many, for many reasons, not the least of which is loss of fellowship at in-person meets, layout tours, op sessions, and such. I have been home so much these past months, I have almost forgotten what it is like to leave home for work each day, and to go to weekend activities with family or friends.

Despite it all, the SD Division has been active. I am proud that we have been able to maintain our Second Saturday events throughout this whole time, albeit virtual via Zoom. We are working on fun content for the upcoming months, so stay tuned. If you are a SD member and have not yet joined us for a virtual meet on Zoom, I encourage you to give it a try. I think you are going to like our November line up. If you are interested in presenting at one of these events, please contact a planning committee member.

In addition to our Second Saturday events, you have also heard about the Multi-Division Virtual Meets. They pop up from time to time. These are organized by our own Pete Steinmetz (San Diego Division Director) and a young NMRA member from the Lone Star Region, James Knabb. On the invite list may be any number of NMRA divisions. This is not expressly a SD Division endeavor, but we will make the effort to get the information out to you when they are announced.

On another note, one thing the planning committee is working on is the Buddy Program. We would like to connect those who are available to help and mentor others in the hobby with those who are looking for some help, guidance, and encouragement. To help with this, look for a survey in the near future.

So, as we enter fall and approach Thanksgiving during these challenging times, I am thankful for the opportunities I have had to interact and share the hobby with fellow NMRA members and friends.

Happy Modeling!

Ryan

superintendent@sandiegodivision.org



Directors Report

By: Pete Steinmetz

Life continues to evolve into our “New Normal”.

The big news is that the Arizona Division has given notice to the PSR that they intend to leave the PSR and form their own Region. Their members are excited to become their own region. The process involves giving notice to the PSR, polling existing Arizona members, doing paperwork, getting this matter on the NMRA Board of Directors agenda for their February meeting, shuffle a few more papers. The move will be completed sometime in 2021. PSR members will still be welcome to attend events in Arizona and Arizona members will be welcome to attend all PSR events.

What impact will this have on the PSR?

We will have 3 divisions, San Diego, Cajon, and LA. The convention rotation will be every 3 years instead of every 4 years. I'm not sure that the current format and rotations will work for the PSR. At least for San Diego, the convention is a major source of revenue that holds us over for 4 years. It allows us to offer a number of events for our members either free or at reduced cost. San Diego will have to find other sources of revenue. (Don't worry, we will not ask members for money). Stay tuned.

The Southern California Railway Museum (Formerly Orange Empire Railway Museum) held their September Swap Meet. It was outdoors with masks required and social distancing. There were a lot of people attending. Not quite as many sellers, but close. Everyone seemed to have a good time. Many were out just to mingle with other railfans and modelers. The museum is open every day. There is a monthly swap meet in Escondido. The meet is held at Escondido World Market, 725 North Quince Street. There are model train vendors at this meet. The organizer is wanting more model

train sellers. The next meet is Saturday November 21. Vendor set up is at 7:00AM. Meet is from 8:00AM-3:30PM.

The Cajon Division is holding their Fall Meet On Saturday October 24 at Messiah Lutheran Church, 6625 Dale St., Buena Park on October 24th 7.00AM to 1.30PM. Even though the content of the meet is about what we normally have, this will be adapted to the current Corona virus situation. It will be a mostly outdoors event and masks and social distancing will be required. There will be no lunch but self-serve snacks and water will be available. Swap Meet, Contest Room, Show & Tell, and HOBO Auction will be on the program. More info: www.cajondivision.org

That's all for now. Be safe and happy modeling, train running, railfanning

Zoom meetings:

August 8th Zoom Meeting

Layout tour- Lode Stone & Iron RR, by Rodger Gredvig



Rodger showed us his detailed N Scale layout that includes various projects that led to Rodger achieving his MMR.





Clinic- Eazy, Peezy, Treezy, by Dick Roberts

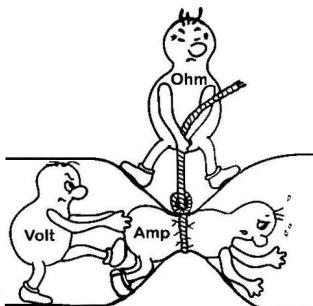
Dick showed us his methods for making realistic pine trees

September 12th Zoom meeting



Layout Tour: Morristown & Erie Railway, by Frank Baker (AZ)

Frank gave us a wonderful tour of his popular HO scale layout which has been featured in various model railroading magazines.



Clinic: Electrical Basics for Model Railroaders, by Tim Foote

Tim gave us an introduction presentation on electrical principles and how they relate to model railroading electrical projects.

Saturday October 10th Zoom meeting



Layout Tour, John Feraca's Stone Canyon layout

John gave us an excellent presentation of his completed HO layout. The timeframe of the layout is the 1950's steam/diesel transition era. In John's presentation we followed a train through the entire layout with stops at each town as well as staging, freight yard, engine service facility and various industries. John hails from Long Island, NY.

Clinic: Keep 'Em Rolling, By Don Fowler MMR

In this clinic, Don discussed the causes of prototype freight car derailments and provided methods to ensure smooth operation that will prevent derailments on our model layouts.

Articles:



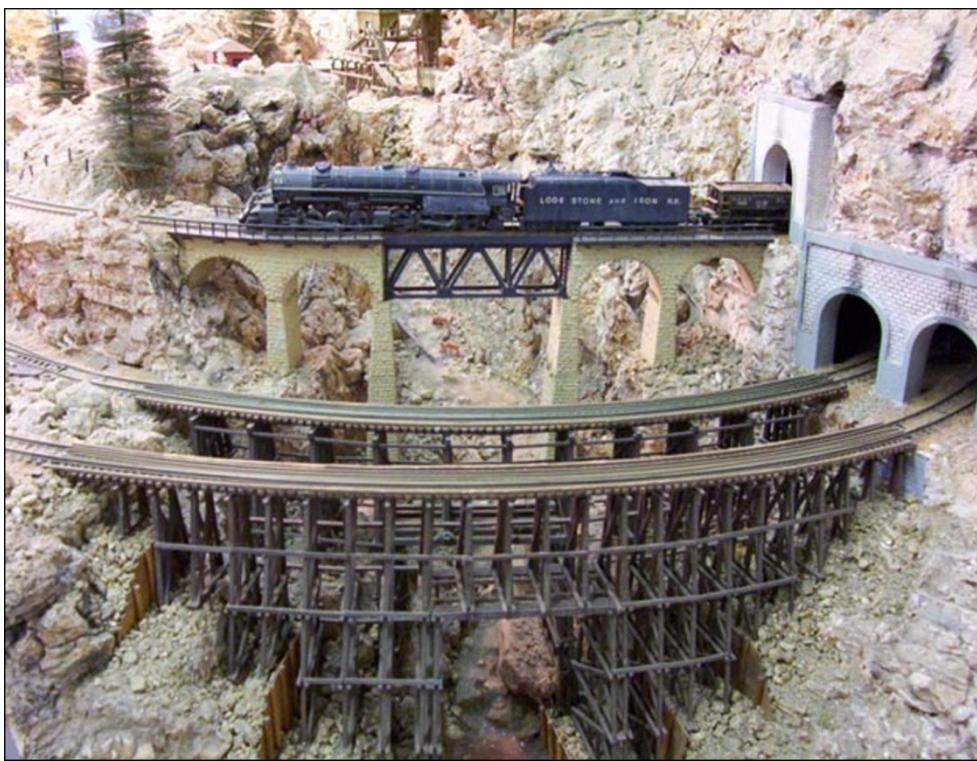
Journey to Master Model Railroader (Rodger Gredvig, MMR 218)

In this series, Journey to Master Model Railroader, local MMRs share their beginning interest in model railroading and subsequent motivation to become an MMR.

My story began as a toddler in northern MN. My room was on the second floor of a farm house that faced a RR trestle (GN). My mom tells me I would eagerly whine to see the steam train every time I heard it approach and would wave to the engineer.



to Lionel 5x10, to a 12x6 HO grid layout in my parent's one-car garage. When I graduated from SDSU in the late 60s, within one week, I sold my motorcycle, gave away my trains, got married, and moved to graduate school in Illinois. My first apartment had a 2nd floor bay window (perfect engine cab height) which faced a crossing of the Illinois Central. So when the gates began moving, bells ringing, and lights flashing I hurried to the large bay window (like I did as a toddler) to wave at the engineer. He always waved back!



had a 12x12 "L" shaped layout, the Lode Stone & Iron.

I knew about the NMRA since I was a kid, but couldn't afford membership and pay for train stuff too. But I became more and more interested in their AP program, saying to myself I could do that (except for the Author). Not knowing about clinics, local newsletters, etc., as ways to earn credit for Author. I figured it would take me years to get published in National magazines, so I got to work learning how to do close-up photography. In a matter of two years I had three published articles. So, I attended my

I don't remember any of it, but when we moved to San Diego in the late 40s, our next door neighbor worked as a hostler in the Santa Fe yard downtown. He took his son and me down to watch the action.

My mom worked for Sears and in those days they had a huge Lionel display in the toy dept. On school holidays I spent the whole day at Sears watching toy trains. Fascinated, I begged for a train set. In the next few years I moved from a Marx 4x8 layout,

I visited a train store and discovered the newly invented N scale trains, bought a starter set, and built a coffee table layout which I subsequently put under glass to keep my first baby from destroying it. When I returned to CA after graduation I got in touch with a fledgling N scale club in Signal Hill that eventually became the Belmont Shores Club. At the time they were experimenting with a concept they invented called NTrak. So I built a module. Then, for summer vacations, I took the module to Ntrak conventions in places like Houston, Phoenix, and Reno. Eventually I added loop sections to my module until I

first NMRA meeting at Balboa Park in the late 80s where only Henry Mills, Bob Schimmel (MMR 193), and John Sigurdson (MMR 236) were in attendance. Apparently, the membership had fallen

drastically since the Balboa Park RR clubs opened, so they signed me up and immediately made me Membership chairman. My job was to contact old and new prospects. Eventually, we began to revive. Meanwhile all three experts became my mentors as I strove for the MMR, and eventually achieved it in 1994 (MMR 218). With that accomplishment I felt compelled to work with Scouts on obtaining their Railroading Merit Badge as a way to give back. A set of five BSA modules was a product of that endeavor, the result of which has been



widely shown (the Del Mar Fair, the NMRA 2004 Nationals in Seattle, and various other PSR events)

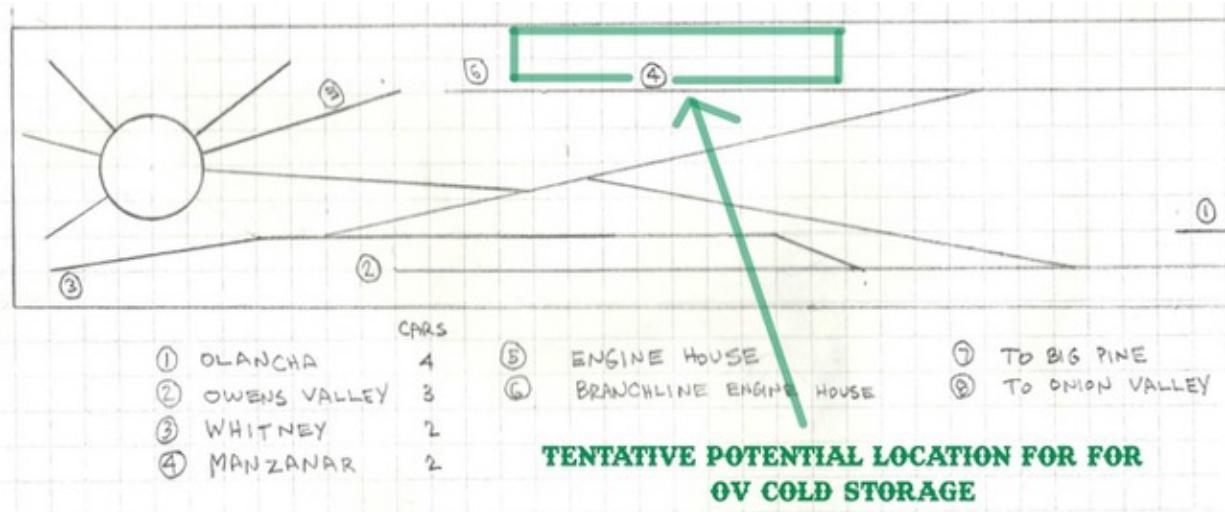
Advice? As mentioned numerous times by other MMRs – just read the AP instructions (it's not that complicated), get help from experienced modelers (don't try doing it alone), and take it one step at a time (oh, be sure to take lots of pictures of each step).

On30 Reefer Model Repurposed as a Refrigerated Storage Industry for the Onion Valley By Paul Wilfong

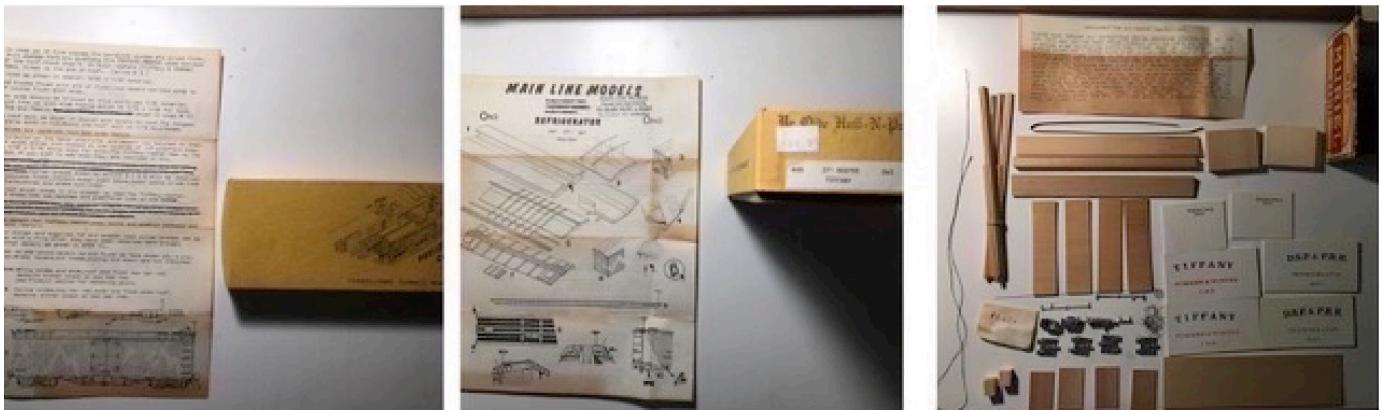


I had an old craftsman kit, an O scale narrow gauge 27' refrigerator car. I thought I'd try to build it up to give to Dave Balser, for use on his layout. Many will remember that Dave built some really swell layouts when he lived closer to San Diego. He and his wife moved up to Hemet a few years ago, into a beautiful retirement community there, and he's building another great On30 version of the "Onion Valley Mining and Lumber Company". As before, he runs Dead Rail on it. Here's a photo of a gold mine on his layout.

Dave told me my old reefer is longer than the 20' length he wants for his cars, and that perhaps I could use it as a part of a structure instead. He sent an email (edited a bit): "Since it was a reefer in real life, what about converting it to a refrigerated storage industry for the OV? Shorten it to 20' and place it on a dock. I would rather have a building vs. a freight car and 20 feet is better." So that's what I decided to do. Subject to change, he plans to place it at one of his car spots, "Manzanar".



Here is the old kit.



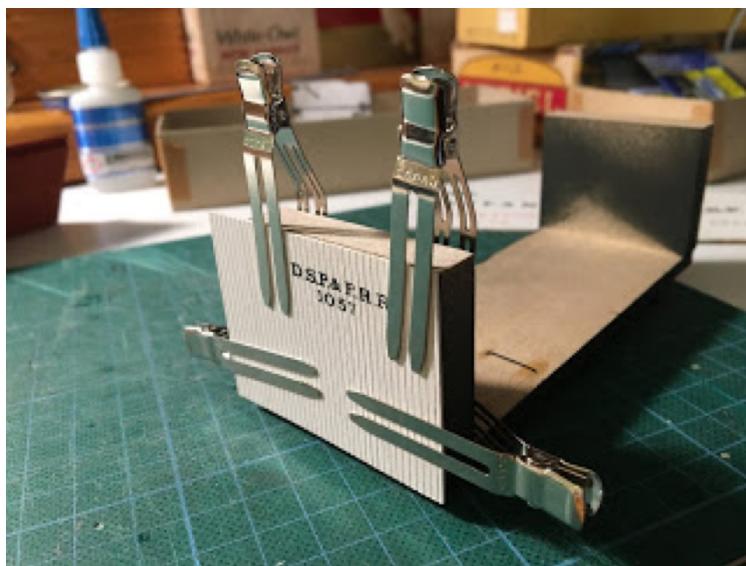
I spent some time looking at the kit, and found the directions to be terse in the extreme. Also, there were some missing pieces, for example, the brake wheel stem support hardware. The directions didn't explain anything about how to install the door or brake hardware, or the grab irons or brake wheel assembly. And a couple of the diagrams provided were obviously for a more modern narrow gauge reefer. So I spent some time trying my best to understand what instructions there were, and thinking about some of the things I would want to do and the order of doing them. I was also able to locate some websites that provided examples and diagrams, which helped tremendously in puzzling out the kit.

The fact that Dave wanted the model cut down, as if it was a damaged reefer acquired and repurposed, meant that I would want to cut off the side with the brake wheel to get the 20' length, as if that had been the damaged side. So I didn't have to worry about some of the missing parts. Serendipitous.

I thought I'd build up the reefer section of the structure, and later build the dock and whatever else Dave decided he wanted. I assembled the car per the instructions, after shortening the floor and roof at one end, to the desired 20' length. I did not glue the roof, sides or ends on right away. The sides and ends came pre-painted and lettered, and I wanted to paint the roof and bottom separately to avoid having to do masking.

The kit included black thread for the truss rods, and some instructions for the standard "lacing" technique. Getting the thread through the holes, and the turnbuckles was impossible due to fraying. So I used the old trick learned long ago from MR, and applied glue (I used ACC) to the ends of the thread to stiffen it. Like a charm it worked.

A brake cylinder was included in the kit, but no instructions for the rigging. I used brake gear from Grandt Line (now San Juan Model Co.), and brass phosphor metal rods for the piping. I had a lot of difficulty locating the pieces correctly, and aligning them. I also don't understand how one is supposed to make good connections between the plastic brake parts and the metal rods. I did the best I could with ACC glue. The end result is kind of embarrassing but it's good enough for what I'm trying to do with this model. One good thing I figured out while trying to glue the metal rods and Grandt Line parts together was to use a "handi-hands" tool, shown here, along with the subassemblies before painting.



I had used Scalecoat II spray cans for a previous project and liked them, so I used them for this project also: Grimy Black, and Red Oxide. I wanted to hold the roof and body to paint them with the spray cans, so I made a holder by gluing a clothespin to the end of a paint stirrer. But there wasn't anything I could easily hold for the roof, so I also glued a short peg to the underside, which would be inside the car after assembly and not visible. To glue the sides and ends to the car, I used hair pins for clamps, which I bent to allow the surfaces of the clips to lie flat against the siding as it was being held.

On the "damaged" end of the car, I cut out a bit of siding, to allow a "repair patch" to be applied later. The kit included a brass strip to be used for the end braces and plates, and I used NBWs with 2.5" nuts from Tichy for the end stay bolts. I tried to use ACC to glue the NBWs to the brass

braces/plates, and painted them with the grimy black. Unfortunately I found that the NBWs would become detached pretty easily. I decided to try good ol' Walther's Goo, and it really worked well - Though it's a bit of a pain to work with, it's also nice because it adheres right away but allows slight repositioning, and when dry the bond is nice and strong.



I made a sign to fit on top of the reefer, using scribed and strip wood. I painted the wood using Antique White from Apple Barrel, and used an India ink stain mixture to weather. I used decal paper to make a home-made decal on my ink-jet printer. The results were ok but not really very good. Next time I'll try laser-print decals and the laser printers down at the local Fed-Ex store. I also made up some bracing using the phosphor bronze rods, with the Grandt Line NBWs cut down for the brace footings. I'm not that happy with the sign and may try to replace it with another attempt someday.

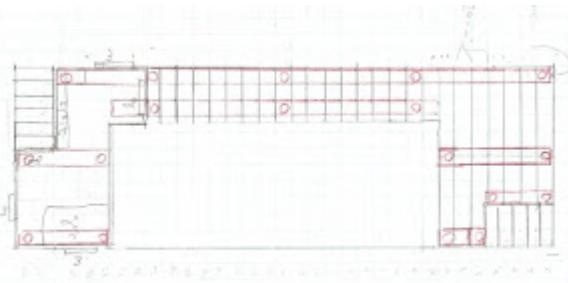


At this point, with much trepidation, I commenced to weathering the reefer. After a wash of India Ink stain, I used Pan Pastels, following methods from Pete Steinmetz MMR, as described in his recent Zoom clinics. I had to first spray the car and sign with Krylon clear flat, or the car lettering would smear (ask me how I know). As recommended by Pete, I first used Pan Pastel tints to fade the paint (Raw Umber tint), then different other colors for random streaking and dirt effects. In his clinic, Pete says that he does not fix his work with clear coat, but I didn't want dusty pastels getting all over my fingers and Dave's layout, so I tried to overspray with a light coat of the Krylon clear flat.

I've had the experience using chalks to weather, where they would disappear with the clear coat application, so I crossed my fingers. With the Pan Pastels, I think it turned out rather nicely (before (left) and after)...

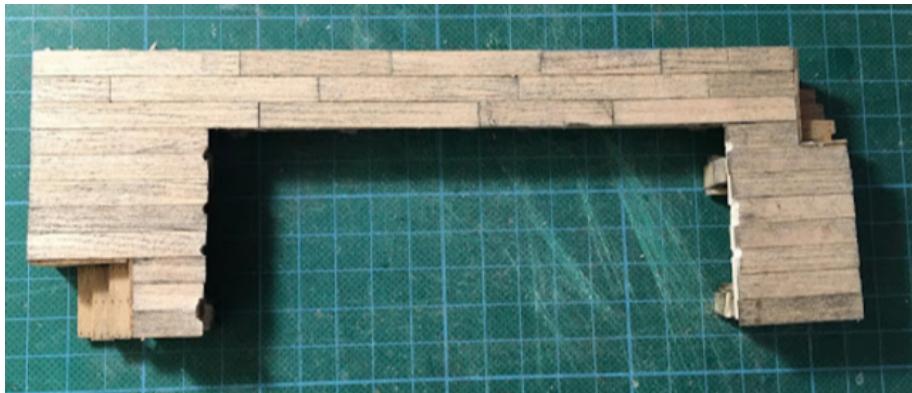


I built up the deck as a separate assembly, based on information from an article from the February 1973 issue of MR, "Useful freight platform" by William Koteles. I drew a plan for the deck, designing it to wrap around the car on three sides. The size of the deck was constrained to the expected location on Dave's layout, 8.25x2.75". I planned on building it so that a small office can be placed at one end, in the future. Here is the plan I drew up.



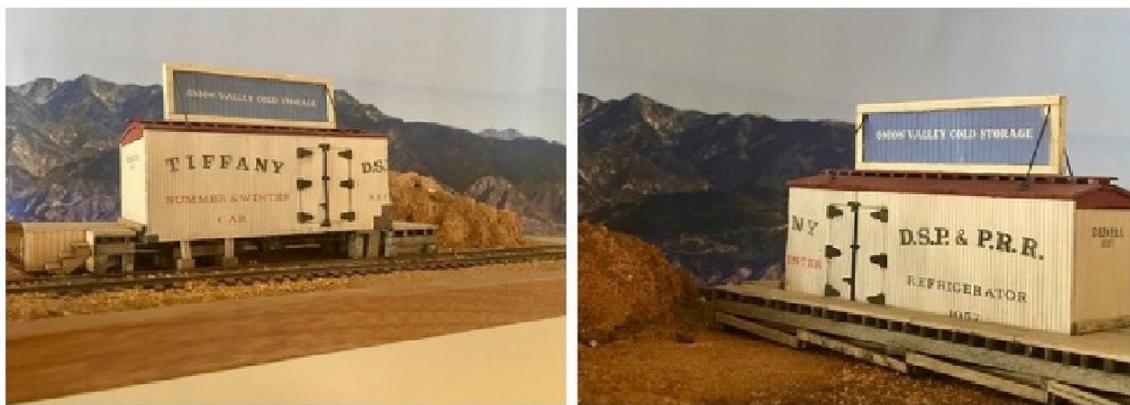
Using an NWSL Chopper, I cut strip wood for the deck, with dimensions taken from the MR article. I distressed the wood using a tool I picked up at a hardware store that had dull metal blades spaced such that they would leave grooves when dragged along the wood. I think it might be a file card for large files.

I stained the strip wood using India ink. Then I used the standard technique of taping wax paper over the plan, and using double-sided Scotch tape on the wax paper to fix the wood joists over the plan. I used wood glue to glue the stringer beams on the joists, using the plan to line them up. I built the stairs using LaserCut kits from Builders In Scale. Here is the result.



I had to put small notches where the car's stay-bolts impinged on the deck surface. I didn't do a very neat job, because I'd planned to place a piece of strip wood on the deck next to the ends to cover them up.

At this point I could put the deck and car together. I also used a small diorama base I'd made many years ago for another project, so that I could take some photos to send to Dave...



My son and wife tell me they think it's looks pretty good, and I'm inclined to agree! Now I wish I could visit Dave and see how it looks on his layout, but it looks like that's going to have to wait for a while until we've wrestled Mr. COVID-19 to the ground!

(If interested in gory detail about my build, including the oopsies, I have a blog post at <https://paulw-modelrr.blogspot.com/p/on30-reefer-model-repurposed-as-cold.html>.)

EVENTS CALENDAR:



Model Railroading events in the Region, and by local clubs can be found on the following links. If you want your event listed please contact mailhook@sandiegodivision.org

San Diego Division Zoom Meeting November 14, 2020, Saturday, 1:00 pm (PST):

Show & Tell (30 minutes: 3-5 minutes for each person): We need people to volunteer for Show & Tell. Please email Ryan at superintendent@sandiegodivision.org

Layout Tour: The layout tour will be presented by the San Diego Model Railroad Museum (located in Balboa Park) which will be an overview of the museum.

Clinic: "How to Make Your Own Resistor Wheels" by Pete Steinmetz, Pacific Southwest Region, San Diego Division Director, National Model Railroad Association. The reason for the clinic is that many clubs and layouts require rail cars to be equipped with resistor wheelsets so that scale signaling will work correctly on a layout using block signaling. This clinic will help you learn how to install your own resistors on rail car wheelsets.



All Gauge Toy Train Association Swap Meet Saturday, November 14th, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the San Diego Electric Railway Museum at the National City Train Station

There will be a raffle of select train items, plus a test track available to test accessories and locomotives. In addition, they will give away two complete train sets (train, track and transformer) to kids in our FREE KIDS RAFFLE, that is open to all children who attend the meet.

It should be noted that all sellers need to bring their own tables, umbrellas and chairs, plus there will not be any food or refreshments offered. They will provide a rental restroom at no charge. This is an opportunity for all toy train enthusiasts to congregate in an outdoor environment in a friendly environment. There is no admission fee or membership requirement and all adults and children are welcome.



Cajon Division Fall Meet, October 24, 2020, Buena Park, CA <http://www.cajondivision.org>

"Our 2020 edition of our regular Fall Meet will be held at the Messiah Lutheran Church, 6625 Dale St., Buena Park on October 24th 7.00AM to 1.30PM. Even though the content of the meet is about what we normally have, this will be adapted to the current Corona virus situation. It will be a mostly outdoors event and masks and social distancing will be required. There will be no lunch but self serve snacks and water will be available. Swap Meet, Contest Room,

Show & Tell, and HOBO Auction will be on the program. The PSR Board meeting will follow the Cajon events. See their web page for more information.

LA Division events:

click the link for more information

<https://www.ladiv-nmra.org/events.html>

Arizona Division events:

<http://www.azdiv-nmra.org/index.shtml>

From the Editor**Do your part for the club and submit an article:**

The Mail Hook needs interesting articles and features. Please consider writing and submitting an article on a model railroading or railroading topic to share your knowledge with other modelers. It can be a how-to article or highlighting a project you are working on or any special knowledge you may have about a railroad. Maybe you could write an article about your layout progress, including pictures. Earn AP points or just make it a fun challenge. Note that we will accept most articles from other divisions as well.

Tim Foote

Acting Mail Hook Editor

mailhook@sandiegodivision.org

Submission Guidelines:

There is no compensation for articles submitted or published. Please Submit articles by email to the Mail Hook Editor at mailhook@sandiegodivision.org, with the submission attached as a text or MS word document or in the body of email message. Pictures can be attached separately to the same email. Submissions may be edited for length or formatting, or not used, at the discretion of the editor.

The following are the quarterly deadlines for submitting to the Mail Hook Editor:

First Qtr.-January 2; Second Qtr.-April 1, Third Qtr.- July 1, Fourth Qtr.-October 1

San Diego Division Officers

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|---|---|--|
| Director: Pete Steinmetz | Superintendent: Ryan Di Fede | Chief Clerk/Paymaster: Trudy Seeley |
|---|---|--|

San Diego Division Chairs

| | |
|---|--|
| Membership Services: Rudy Spano | Layout Tours: Tim Foote |
| Contests: vacant | Meet Coordinator: Don Fowler, MMR |
| Clinics: vacant | Member Aid: Vacant |
| Publicity/Club Liaison: Vacant | Webmaster: Mike Hampson |
| Achievement Program: Rodger Gredvig, MMR | |
| "Mail Hook" Editor: Tim Foote (acting) | |

Websites

San Diego Division website:
<https://www.sandiegodivision.org/>

San Diego Division Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/San-Diego-Division-PSR-NMRA-460628147317440/>

San Diego Division Facebook Group:
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