



# PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION DISPATCH

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



ARIZONA  
CAJON  
LOS ANGELES  
SAN DIEGO



VOLUME 41, NUMBER 3 3rd Quarter, 2023

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Hope you enjoy this issue of the PSR NMRA Dispatch! Note that there are notifications for two events further in this issue: The first coming up in November for a NMRA "members only" open house at the Pasadena Model Railroad Museum Sierra Pacific Lines, and the second for the National NMRA Convention in 2024 in Long Beach. Make your plans now to be a part of both of these exceptional events!





## FROM THE WAYCAR

Pat Raymer—President

Adventures in the Lone Star State and more...

Wow!

That's the word that came to my mind as I reflect back on the past month (actually less than a month) and all the places we have been.

Mona and I were off on another adventure again, this time to the Texas Express NMRA National Convention in Grapevine, Texas, about half-way between Dallas and Fort Worth. Whirlwind would be an apt description of this trip. This was not a pleasure trip, although we did have a good time. This trip was for business, the business of promoting our SurfLiner 2024 NMRA National Convention.

First, I would like to thank the Texas Express convention team for their outstanding hospitality. We couldn't ask for a warmer welcome! The Gaylord Texan Hotel and Convention Center was an amazing venue. The hotel is situated around a central atrium, which gives you the feel of being outdoors, but is climate controlled, so one doesn't realize the outdoor temperature is over 100 degrees with high humidity.

There was a full line-up of clinics and many activities for the non-rail attendees as well, in addition to prototype tours and self-drive layout tours. Due to our SurfLiner 2024 promotional efforts, we were only able to visit 2 layouts. Western District Director Mike Mackey hosted a group at his home layout on Tuesday evening. His layout has an incredible level of detail, making it seem much larger than it is. We were also fortunate to be able to visit Speed Mueller's layout. Speed is the NMRA IT Manager, and a very interesting person. Originally from Namibia, he models his native country. Being an electronics wiz, his layout is controlled by touch screens and he hosts remotely attended operating sessions. Those of you who are familiar with his helix, we were honored to be able to visit the interior. Mona was the second woman to go inside and the first to exit facing forward!

The hall for the National Train Show was attached to the hotel, so it was a relatively short walk (in Texas terms) to get there. It was well attended and I spent a great deal of time speaking with manufacturers and vendors. The National Train Show is an integral part of our National Conventions, and I am pleased that we have the space and proximity advantages that our Long Beach location provides in 2024.

All in all, our visit to Texas was very productive. We learned more about how to produce our convention, made many valuable contacts, and gained 47 more registrants for the SurfLiner 2024 NMRA National Convention.

It seemed we had barely gotten back, but in reality it was a couple of weeks later when the Los Angeles Union Station Train Fest 2023 event took place. This 2 day weekend event featured all things train related, from Z scale to 1:1 prototype, modern light rail to classic passenger cars. Our NMRA booth had a great location in the ticket concourse along with four modular layouts. This event drew more than 16,000 attendees and was great exposure for model railroading and railroading in general.

On September 15<sup>th</sup> the PSR Board of Directors held an informal Zoom meeting to officially install our new incoming Division Directors. Because the PSR regional convention was held earlier than usual this year, and our Directors had not completed their 2 year terms at that time, the installation was delayed. Please help me welcome them: Chris Thompson of the Arizona Division and Tim Foote of the San Diego Division. Welcome aboard to you both!

Looking forward, we have just confirmed a NMRA member's only event celebrating National Model Railroad Month in November. The Pasadena Model Railroad Museum will be hosting a tour and operating event on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. This is not a public event and is an exceptional opportunity for PSR members to visit and operate on this iconic railroad. Stay tuned for more details coming soon.

As always, I'll see you down the line!

You MUST RSVP to the email below in order to attend this event.

This is an NMRA members only event, but you are allowed one guest to enter with you.

November 11, 2023



12:00pm ~ Round Trip Pass ~ 5:00pm

PASADENA MODEL RAILROAD  
MUSEUM  
SIERRA PACIFIC LINES



A rare opportunity to tour and operate on the Pasadena Model Railroad Museum's 5,000 square foot Sierra Pacific Lines. Run long unit trains, locals, switch in the yards, or just come and watch! **THIS EVENT IS FOR NMRA MEMBERS ONLY.** To help plan for staffing needs, please RSVP to [President@psrnmra.org](mailto:President@psrnmra.org) to mark up on the call board.

5458 Alhambra Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90032





## THE PSR BACKSHOP

Gary Butts, MMR  
Vice President

As another summer season draws to a close, for many of us, some of our thoughts drift to the Holiday season and the historical connection it has with our hobby. Most all of us at one time or another had some sort of model train running around the Christmas tree. Some of us still do. My thoughts go a bit further to those cold and rainy days when I can spend some quality time with my hobby and not be hampered by the guilt of not working on all of the normal day-to-day outdoor projects that come with maintaining a family, home and yard. You really can't even wash the car or mow the lawn. A few hours at the hobby bench are just the ticket and I plan to do just that. We'll see what comes of it. Spend some time thinking about what your next model train project might be or make definite plans to finish the model you started and have not had time to work on between family visits and Christmas shopping outings. How about setting your sights on one of the NMRA Achievement Program certifications and making it happen before our next regional meet in 2024, which will be part of the National Convention in Long Beach?

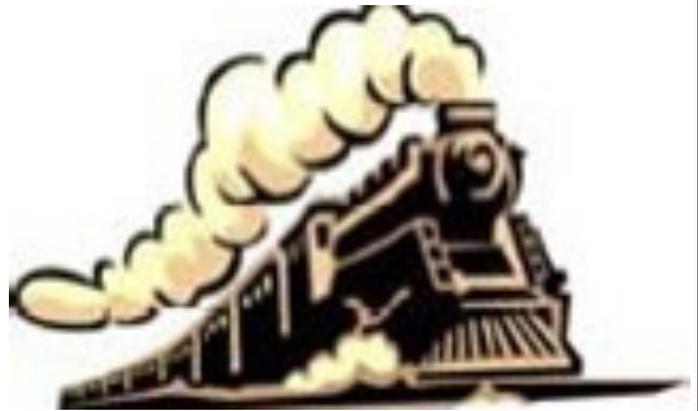
Most of our Divisions have events planned for the next several months and these are great opportunities to get together with our model rail friends and share our hobby interests. The San Diego Division has several interesting meets and parties lined up; Cajon Division has monthly layout tours scheduled as well as meets in both Orange County as well as Nevada. LA and Arizona Divisions sponsor zoom get-togethers monthly and you can participate without even spending a dime on gas! Yep, for me, the Fall and Winter months are my Hobby months and I don't think I am alone.

By the way, get set for the whole national NMRA organization to have a spotlight on our Pacific Southwest Region for the next year! The NMRA Magazine that most of us receive monthly will start featuring one of our PSR Layouts on its cover and magazine spread on

every issue starting with this November issue. This is part of the advertising strategy for our 2024 National Convention. This is quite an honor and opportunity and I am proud that Sandy and my G&SRR layout has been selected to lead off this campaign followed in December by Joel Morse's New York and Ontario RR. Individual and club layouts within our Region will be featured and several have been selected but there are more issues to be published than we have layout articles at this time.

Our region now owns a high-quality camera and focus stacking software that can produce the photos needed for the magazine and we can arrange to take layout photos if desired. Some sort of scaled track plan is required, although the magazine will convert a plain scaled plan to an attractive colored layout for the article. Of course, a two-to-three-page written article describing the layouts origin, construction, operation, etc. needs to accompany the submission for reader interest. We even have ghost writers that will write these articles if need be. These layouts will be part of the Layout tour schedule for the National convention so, if you would like to offer your layout for the national convention layout tour schedule and possibly secure a featured spot in the NMRA Magazine next year, contact our president: Pat Raymer for more information.

By the way- Bonus: these articles do count toward Achievement Program Author certification at the national level.





# Cajon

Harold Helland, Director

The Los Angeles Union Station Train Festival 2023: A Celebration of Past, Present & Future was held on September 9 and 10. Highlights of the festival included railroad equipment, model train displays, as well as architecture, arts, and culture tours. Steam locomotive Santa Fe 3751, BNSF freight locomotive, Santa Fe 5704 painted in red, white, and blue for the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United States, Amtrak passenger equipment, and a display of Metrolink equipment were located on the Union Station tracks. Model railroad modular clubs included Orange County Module Railroaders, Group 160 NTRAK Club, Southern California Z Scale Model Railroading Group, and the Southern California Traction Club. Tours of the Union Station were facilitated by the California Preservation Foundation. The Pacific Southwest Region had a booth at the event to promote the NMRA 2024 National Convention, SurfLiner 2024.

The Cajon Fall Meet is scheduled for October 21, 2023, at the Messiah Lutheran Church courtyard in Buena Park. Plans for the Fall Meet include clinics, swap meet, Hobo Auction, the Celebration of Models and of course lunch. Our Nevada team held a meet with the Scale Trains Road Show on July 22. The Nevada Fall Meet is scheduled for September 23 from 10:00 to 5:00 at the Community Library in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Cajon Division is also hosting the Layouts of the Cajon Division. These are home model railroad tours presented by Cajon Division members. The July tour was the Union Pacific Overland Route presented by Harold Helland. The August Layout Tour was Chris Jean's Santa Ana and Newport Railroad. The September Layout Tour is the Oakhurst Railroad which is a garage to garden model railroad. This open house will be held at Marty Bradley's home in Rossmoor on September 16, 2023.

The 2023 NMRA National Convention is now over and the next National Convention, SurfLiner 2024 is the responsibility of the Pacific Southwest Region.

SurfLiner 2024 will be held at the Long Beach Convention Center August 4 through August 11, 2024, with the base operation at the Westin Hotel. The planning process for the convention is in progress and will be a joint effort of all four PSR Divisions. Please consider joining the SurfLiner 2024 Convention Team and contributing to the success of the 2024 NMRA National Convention.

The Cajon Division is looking for three new volunteers to help make our Division successful. We need a Donation Chair, a Membership Chair, and a Publication/Editor Chair. Please consider joining the Cajon leadership team and help with one of these positions!



Santa Fe 5704



Santa Fe 3751



BNSF 3755



## Historian's Report

Per Harwe, Historian

My request for contributions to the Historian website has been answered! In time for the Cajon Division's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary I received a very nice article about the history of the Cajon Division. I'm still trying to get it up on the site but please be patient. It will be there soon.

That makes me wonder if the other three Divisions have someone knowledgeable about the old days in their Divisions. There ought to be some out there.

Please look in your archives and dig out what you need to write a piece for the rest of us to enjoy.



## Los Angeles

Vic Cavalli, Director

Greetings from the Los Angeles (L.A.) Division of the PSR. Trust this report finds you well and going strong.

In my last column, I shared that the Division was in search of a new Superintendent. I am pleased to announce he is **Jeff Smith**! Many will know Jeff as a long time member and active supporter of the NMRA, an avid Santa Fe modeler, founder or co-founder of area Prototype Modelers meets, as well as co-owner of Railmaster Hobbies in Bellflower, CA. Jeff won overwhelmingly by Special Election; held the last two weeks in July, assuming office effective August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Also decided during the same Special Election, L.A. voted to ratify its newly recommended Region-wide Division By-Laws by a vote of 17-to-1. Total turnout for the election was light; approximately 16% according to Division Nominations & Elections Chair John McGreevy.

Activities wise, L.A., along with Cajon, Division members manned a recruitment/ *SurfLiner 2024* National Convention and Train Show information booth at the non-NMRA sponsored *TrainFest 2023* celebration held during the weekend of September 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal. Reports were this was a very heavily attended, well organized event.

The Division also will be present at the annual, non-NMRA sponsored *Los Angeles Area Prototype Modelers Meet*, October 7<sup>th</sup>, held at the Encounter Christian Church, Bellflower, CA. Doors open at 9:00 am, with a free swap meet preceding it at 7:30 am. In addition to numerous fine models on display, there will be clinics and a raffle. Bring a model for display and receive discounted admission! All scales, as well as all types of vehicles, are welcomed.

Then there are the Division's always available on-line resources:

- *Sand House Chat* "Zoom" Sessions held the first Thursday of each month – contact me at [VicCavalli@comcast.net](mailto:VicCavalli@comcast.net) for login details,
- Quarterly publication of the Division's newsletter, the *LA Coupler* – see [www.ladiv-nmra.org/news-and-information/la-coupler-newsletter/la-coupler-archive](http://www.ladiv-nmra.org/news-and-information/la-coupler-newsletter/la-coupler-archive) for the most current issue, as well as
- New or updated contents constantly being added to our local website [www.ladiv-nmra.org](http://www.ladiv-nmra.org).

That's it for now. Until next quarter, Happy Model Railroading to you!



Travel Town Museum



## Arizona

Chris Thompson, Director

This is my first report on the Arizona Division, being elected to this position earlier this year. Our thanks to the outgoing Director Terry Fearn for his service to the Division over the last two years. I would also like to thank all the Division members who took the time to vote. Your participation is important to the success of the Division.

After the great PSR Convention in Flagstaff, the Convention Committee spent the next few weeks tying up all the loose ends and figuring out how we ultimately did financially, and submitting the final report. We had hoped for more attendees, especially considering that our focal event was a chartered steam train. Aside from that, everyone who attended universally said they had a great time, which is of course one of the main goals of these conventions. We still have convention cars, coffee cups, and insulated mugs available, if you are interested please let me know.

Speaking of a great time, those of you who attended the “Supercharged – High Speed” Texas Express in August probably will agree that was a week of fun and fellowship. I made it to 3 layout tours which were all pretty amazing. I learned lots of new ideas and techniques in the clinics I attended, including one hands on clinic and a Modeling With the Masters® clinic. The clinics covered all aspects of model railroading from scenery and scratch building, to electronics and operations. There were several clinics presented by members of the Arizona Division, which was great to see. It all wrapped up on Saturday night with the banquet and the guest speaker was Spencer Christian talking about his time making the PBS series *Tracks Ahead*. This will be a tough act to follow for the SurfLiner next year in Long Beach, but I am sure the PSR is up to the challenge!

In local happenings this summer, the Arizona Division continued the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Zoom meets during the months we didn't have an in-person meet (or a

convention to put on!). During July we had a very informative clinic by George Bogatiuk from Sound-Traxx on using sound decoders to more realistically simulate railroad operations. In August we had an excellent presentation by Terry Fearn on Modeling the Citrus Industry in 1952, which has tremendous relevance for the area of the country covered by the PSR.

The Division has also been developing sub-division mini meets to provide opportunities for members to get together informally more often without having to potentially drive a fair distance as many do for the regular full Division Meets three times a year. The folks in the Tucson area and the Prescott/Flagstaff/Williams area have been doing this for awhile now, and in August the first one was held for the members in the Phoenix valley area. People met at a Dennys for lunch, then got a chance to view Jim Spices' very nice Sn3 layout. The High Country members also got together for lunch in Williams and a layout tour provided by Mike Guinn afterwards. During July, the Sonoran Sub Division got together for lunch and Paul Buhrke opened his layout for a tour.

This summer the Arizona Division, along with the rest of the PSR, voted on adopting a consolidated set of By-Laws to cover all of the Divisions within the PSR. After lots of work by many people in the Region to develop these, they were overwhelmingly approved by the Arizona Division. This was particularly critical for us, as the Arizona Division By-Laws had not been updated since 1988 and needed significant revisions.



Grand Canyon Railway Locomotive #4960



## San Diego

Tim Foote, Director

This is my first Director's Report for the PSR Dispatch. I attended the Board Meeting at the Flagstaff PSR Convention as a proxy for our former director Pete Steinmetz and I appreciated the information that the meeting provided me. It will be hard to fill Pete's shoes on this assignment, but nevertheless I look forward to serving the San Diego Division as their representative in the PSR Region.

The San Diego Division has been pretty active this year holding in person meets and layout tours. The meets normally include two clinics, sometimes a swap meet and always food. We have some excellent modelers in our Division and they are pretty good about presenting clinics at our meets. Our AP Chairman, Rodger Gredvig often speaks at the meets and has been encouraging us to pursue AP projects. Also, a number of our members have achieved Golden Spike Awards. Every year we hold a meet at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park. Another popular meet will be on October 14, 2023 (Saturday) at the North County Model Railroad Society. That includes a swap meet and viewing access to the club's layout. PSR members are always welcome to visit our meets.

Some of our membership left during Covid and also following member signups for our convention last year. However, lately we have been gaining new members. We continue to issue our quarterly Mailhook bulletin which has been switched to an online format as opposed to a PDF file. The assumption that everyone reads their email on a desktop computer these days is inaccurate. Surveys have indicated that most emails are read on cell phones. Many people dislike having to download PDF files on their cell phones, so we have begun to issue the Mailhook as an email using Mailchimp.

One of our layout tour highlights was a visit to Joel Shank's Rio Grande Southern Railroad narrow gauge Sn3 layout located in the Imperial Valley. I would say that it is one of the most amazing layouts in Southern California. It is in the middle of a farm, East of Brawley, California. The layout has been publicized in Model Railroad Craftsman magazine and is well known by the narrow gaugers in Southern California. The model railroad layout sits in a free standing 1,500 square foot building. The theme is narrow gauge mountain railroading and Joel depicts that with incredible detail and artistic flair. It is one of the few layouts that I have seen that is actually finished, but Joel is working on two additional layouts. One of the layouts is located in Ensenada, Mexico where Joel has a vacation home.



Joel Shank's Rio Grande Southern Railroad

**Noack**  
Awards &  
Engraving  
Inc.

(949) 646-3141  
1835 Whittier Ave # F5  
Costa Mesa, CA



## The Show Room

Mike Allee, PSR Contest Chair

### THERE'S GIVE AND TAKE AT THE SURFLINER CONVENTION

You've registered for the 2024 NMRA convention in Long Beach SurfLiner or you're going to register. If you think about it you've paid to TAKE things away from the convention. TAKE from one, or many, of the clinics, seeing other modelers layouts, visiting a "proto" facility that's not open to the public, having your layout plan critiqued by the Layout Design Sig, operate on layouts you'd never get a chance to otherwise, or view the many model structures and display items in the Celebration Room, etc.

Have you ever thought that you could GIVE by helping other attendees enjoy the things they TAKE from the convention? There's an easy way to GIVE, volunteer. There are all sorts of assignments some of which you could do and not miss out on what you want to do. You could host clinics which would involve making sure the AV equipment is ready and get help if not, or meet and introduce the clinician. Then sit in the clinic and enjoy what you want to see anyway or learn something new. Be a tour bus captain and take the trip free. This would require you to take a count of the number of attendees on the bus making sure they're all on the bus after a stop and "passing the hat" to have a tip for the driver at the end of the tour. There are a number of general tours that your spouse would enjoy taking and could be the bus captain. If riding around in a bus doesn't interest you then help with bus tour check-in. First thing in the morning then the rest of the day to enjoy the convention.

Maybe you're proficient and enjoy working with AV equipment. This would involve you helping the committee chair make sure equipment is ready between clinics and then you'd be free to attend the clinic of

your choice. If you enjoy selling you could assist in the Company Store. If you like to help people you could act as a concierge. Assisting at registration is yet another way to help out. Be a judge in the model contest. If you're a modeler or thinking about modeling (required for an MMR) this is a great way to see the models up close, closer than you can by just looking at them as you visit the room. You get to learn how the model was built, as well as learning from the conversations with the other judges about the model. If evaluating models doesn't interest you maybe helping with security in the Celebration (contest) Room does.

Then there are rewards. Helping your fellow modelers enjoy the convention and you receive volunteer credit at a national convention. This may not seem like much if you've not been thinking about earning your MMR. But at a later date the accumulation of these little things, from the past, could count up when you've decide to earn an MMR and you just need a few more points and you wish you had volunteered oh so long ago.

So, when you register check the box to volunteer or if you've already registered and didn't check the box go back to registration and change the choice!



## Membership Report



Pete Steinmetz, Director

Membership continues to grow for the region. As of July, region membership is 951. June membership was 945. This is good as other regions and divisions outside the PSR can't say the same. We have found that divisions that have activities for members grow membership.

I have also found that Railpass members that don't participate in activities don't renew at a high rate. Let's get new members and Railpass Members to participate in layout tours, Zoom Meetings, discussions, and meets. Participation makes belonging to the NMRA much more rewarding.



## PSR Treasurer

Joel Morse, Treasurer

### PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION 37

#### TREASURERS FALL 2023 DISPATCH REPORT

##### SUMMARY:

During the period June 1, 2023, through August 31, 2023, there were just a few PSR financial transactions, both deposits and credits.

On the Credit Side, this included reimbursement to Vic Cavalli for PSR Election Buddy Account (\$99.00), reimbursement to Bruce Petrarca for Golden Spike Award name plaques (\$11.40), and purchase of 1,500 promotional stickers "NMRA Join the Fun" for distribution at public events to introduce the NMRA/PSR organization and benefits of membership (\$406.22). Many of these stickers were distributed at the Union Station event in September and will be utilized going forward at Train Shows and other events.

On the Deposit Side, only the Hobo Account proceeds from the Arizona Division Regional Convention Grand Canyon Special (\$32.26) were deposited in this period.

The June 1, 2023, Bank Statement indicates that the Region has \$22,586.23 in the Region Checking Account.

Note that the PSR loaned \$10,000 in "seed money" to the 2024 Convention Committee.

#### PSR Wells Fargo Checking Account:

**Region Assets as of June 1, 2023: \$22,586.23**

**Region Assets as of August 31, 2023: \$22,258.09**

**Net Change this period: - \$328.**



## Awards Program

Carl Heimberger, AP Chairman

Not a bad summer with ten members receiving eleven AP Certificates. Although this was the summer of Dispatcher Certificates with a total of five being earned. Congratulations to the following members:

Don Vest - Arizona, Volunteer

Patrick Rogan – Cajon, Dispatcher

Andrew Chier – Los Angeles, Cars and Motive Power

Gary Butts – Cajon, Dispatcher

Gary Stenberg – Cajon, Dispatcher

Chuck Molnar – San Diego, Scenery

Rudy Spano – San Diego, Scenery

John Vavra – San Diego, Scenery

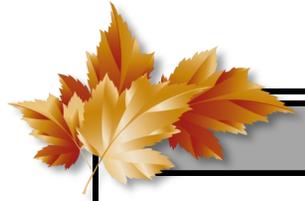
Per Harwe – Cajon, Dispatcher

Joel Morse – Cajon, Dispatcher

Just a reminder when doing the paperwork do not over think it. Just provide what is asked. We, are not looking for the great American novel just the information required. Likewise, we do need all the information required including all pages of the SOQ and your signature.



**Build more models!**



# Scratch Build Some Stake Pockets

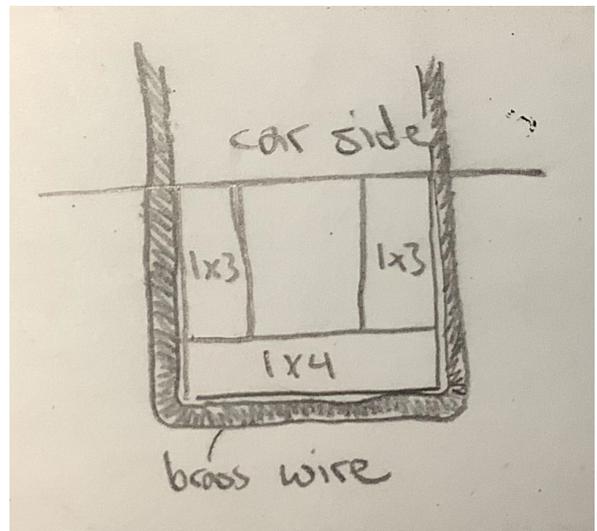
Michael James Starkey

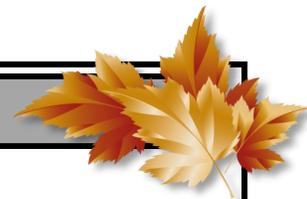


I was nearing the end of my journey to complete the requirements for the NMRA Master Builder- Cars certificate. However, I still needed to finish one of the four scratch-built cars. According to the NMRA Qualifications, the car had to be at least 90% scratch built. While certain parts, such as trucks, couplers, brake parts, and decals are exempt, I would have to fabricate most of the car and use as few commercial details as possible.

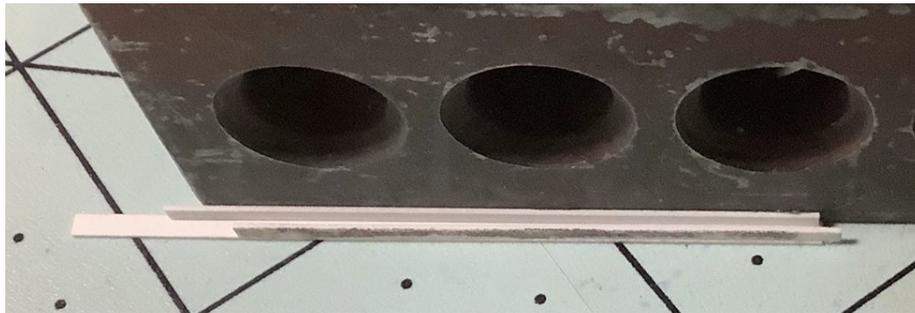
Having found a prototype I was interested in building, Arizona Narrow-Gauge Railway excursion car number 7, I quickly realized that if I used 12 commercial stake pockets the car wouldn't qualify as scratch built. This is how I scratch built the stake pockets, in order to keep the scratch built percentage as high as possible.

A close look at prototype and commercial castings of stake pockets revealed they are basically a short section of metal channel secured to the car body with large "u" bolts. While I wouldn't be able to recreate all the fine details of a casting, it might not be too apparent in Sn3. (By the way, HO scale stake pockets are only a little bit smaller.) So I sketched out a plan, using styrene for the channel and .008 brass wire for the bolt. This is a top view.





The first step is to create the channel part of the stake pockets using styrene. I used plenty of cement, after I discovered that if the parts aren't welded completely together they can break when cut.



The second step is to cut the channel into individual stake pockets. Mine were about 7 scale inches. I was careful to keep my cuts, done with a razor blade, as straight as possible. The last four steps are illustrated in this example, from left to right.



Glue the channel to the side sill. I used styrene for the side sills, so once the channel was properly positioned I simply cemented it in place. I then drilled holes for the wire just above the midpoint of the channels, keeping the holes as parallel as possible. Prebent wire was then inserted into the holes and ACC'd to the side sill. Finally, I used a pin to apply a fillet of ACC along the wire where it touches the channel.



They're not as detailed as castings, but after painting my scratch built stake pockets proved to be an acceptable substitute. When I calculated the parts, the car was 97% scratch built, and scored 107 points when judged. I hope this encourages some of you to scratch build a car!

# Building On30 Gas Mechanical Critter Kits

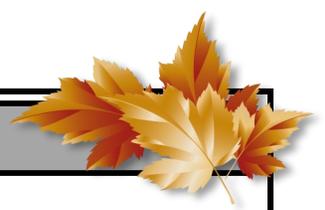
Kevin Spady

Although I am aficionado of the days of steam, and particularly steam logging locomotives from the 20's through the 40's, (I can't count how many Shays and Climaxes I have tucked away as future projects!) I have recently developed an interest in small gas mechanical locomotives that were used in industrial settings. I was exposed to this genre of motive power by Fran Foley (Foley Car & Locomotive Shops) who periodically issues a small run of On30 3D resin printed locomotive kits. He had seen one of my clinics at an event and was looking for someone to paint and finish the prototype kits for promo material when he decided to go to market.

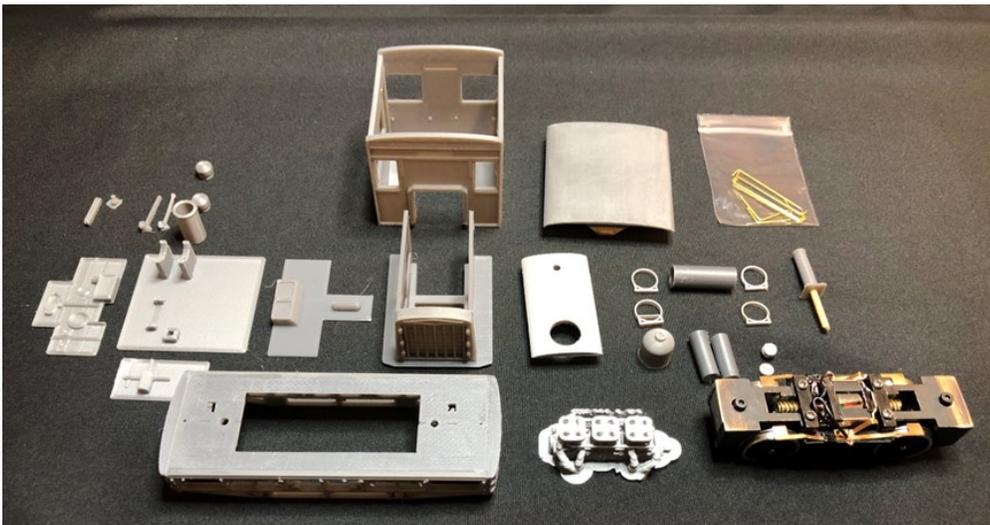


## 10-ton Whitcomb gas mechanical

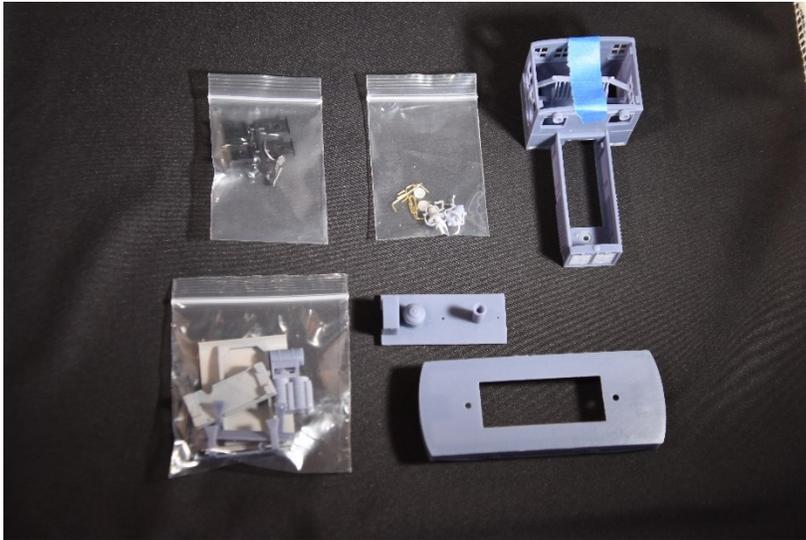
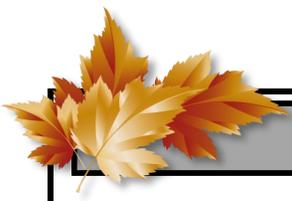
My first two builds of his kits were done a couple years ago. The first was a little 10-ton Whitcomb followed by a larger 20-ton Whitcomb. These are both built on modified Bachman trolley motor chassis. All of Fran's kits are well made and the fit of parts is excellent. This kit was slightly bashed with a light and air tank on the roof, and an additional tank on the side. As you can probably tell from this article I really enjoy weathering my locomotives to look well used....some to the point of looking worn out!



20-ton Whitcomb gas mechanical (not quite finished )



This is the second loco I built, which is a 20 ton Whitcomb. This particular kit came with a 3D print of the gas engine, so I left the sides open. Fran prefers to have the windows fogged so I lightly fog them using Dullcote. You also have options for grilles or mesh sides on the engine compartment.



The kits come well packaged with the parts bagged and good instructions.



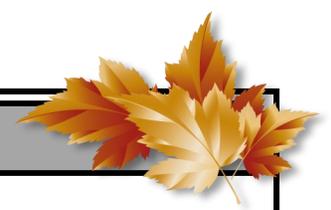
**Hetch Hetchy Locomotive #1171**

**PCRR Locomotive #120**

These are the third and fourth locos I built for Fran, a Plymouth 20 ton loco modeled after a unit that was used on the Hetch Hetchy Railroad and Plymouth #120 that ran on the Pacific Coast Railway. The detail and parts on his recent kits are even better than the earlier kits. I made no modifications to this kit so everything you see is part of the kit except the couplers.

**The Build**

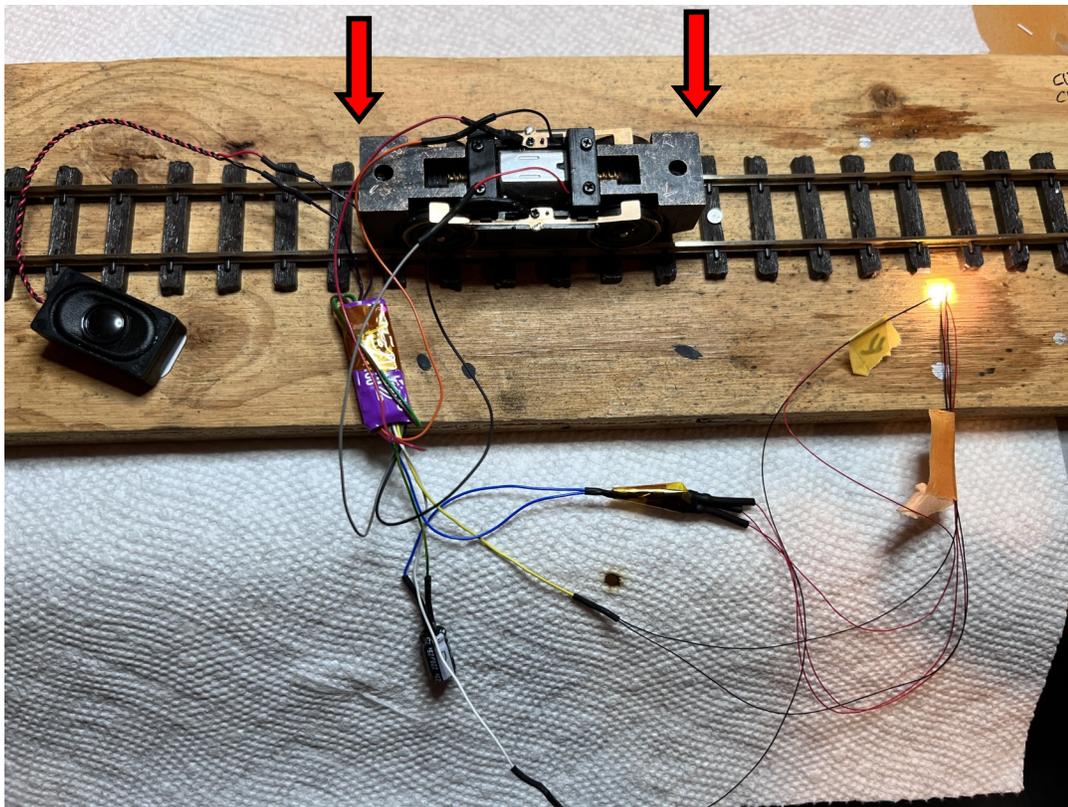
The builds are quite easy, and the parts fit is excellent. The instructions include directions for the modification of the Bachman trolley mechanism, which includes cutting off the ends of the trolley motor chassis. Bachman appears to have updated the trolley motor assembly in recent years making it much easier to perform these modifications. Early versions required modification of the pickups and motor mount, but newer versions only require removing the metal ends of the chassis and reconnecting the motor and pickup connections to the decoder.



The metal chassis modification is easily accomplished using a cutoff wheel if you take breaks periodically to avoid overheating the assembly and motor parts. (Cut points shown with red arrows). I wrap the motor area and wheels in painters' tape to prevent metal shavings from entering the motor or geared parts of the chassis.

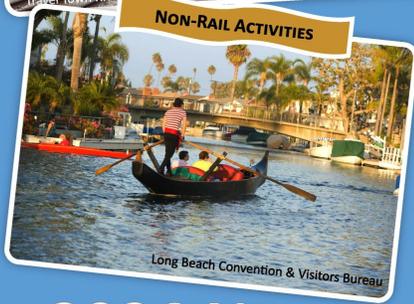
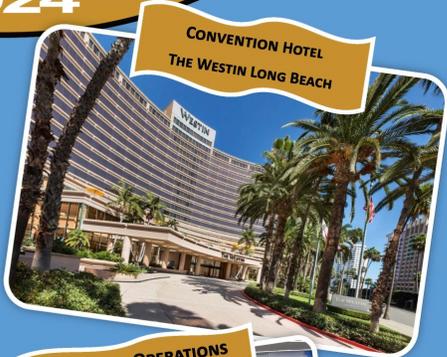
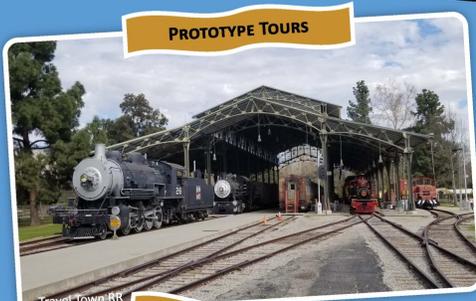
The hood/cab and platform are screwed directly to the motor chassis using two screws, which also serve to keep the motor chassis assembly held together. If you unscrew these screws, you just need to be careful when removing the motor assembly as it is not held together any longer.

Below you can see all the electronics gear on the test track. I always test the electronics before I install them in the locomotive because if there is anything wrong with the electronic installation, I want to fix it outside of the locomotive, not after it's installed. This installation included a Soundtraxx Tsunami TSU 1100 decoder, a 24 x 14 speaker, and micro LED's for the 3 lights on the Hetch Hetchy loco. I simply double stick taped the speakers to the floor of the cab and the sound is quite good as the cab acts as a resonating chamber. The decoder and keep alive are placed in the hood of the locomotive.



### Painting and Finishing

I start by painting all the various pieces separately prior to assembly and letting them dry completely. I begin with a primer coat, typically using Tamiya grey primer. I then airbrush the finish coats on using multiple very thin coats to achieve the final look. All my locomotives are painted using standard craft acrylics from Michaels, with custom mixed colors to try to achieve a match to the original color of the locomotive. Detail parts like the steps, bell, barrels etc. are hand painted. After painting I install decals using a flood coat of Pledge floor polish as a base, then apply the decals using Solvaset once the polish is dry. I add detailing to give an appearance of worn exposed metal in areas, using a simple graphite pencil rubbed over wear areas like handrails and the platform. As a final step I weather it all with Bragdon powders followed by a very light final overspray of Dullcote.



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