



# PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DISPATCH

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



ARIZONA  
CAJON  
LOS ANGELES  
SAN DIEGO



VOLUME 42, NUMBER 4 4th Quarter, 2024

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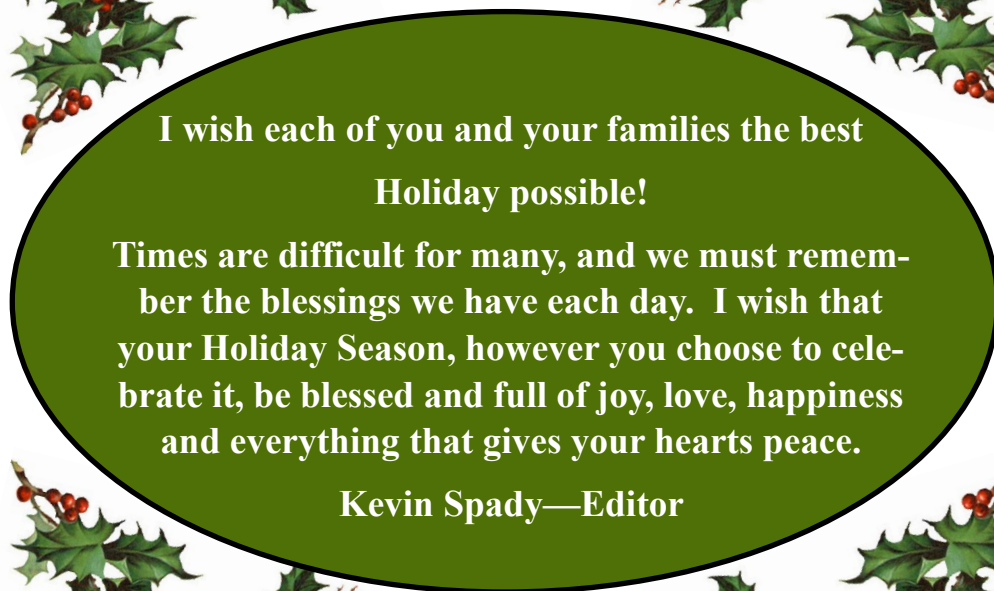
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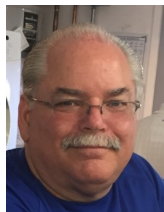
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# PSR President

Joel Morse, President

## From the Brass Hat

Holiday Season Greetings! I'm writing this column over the Thanksgiving weekend and the column will be in the PSR Dispatch Winter 2024 edition, which makes it appropriate for me to wish all of you and your families health, happiness and model railroading enjoyment during the holidays and in the coming year!

And because it's Thanksgiving, it's also appropriate to tell you what I'm thankful for in the model railroading and NMRA parts of my life and ask you to think about what you are thankful for too!

I'm thankful to my wife, who understands my need to fill most of the garage with the New York, Ontario and Western Railway in N scale, who makes the operations crew and open house guests feel welcome, and who recognizes how important model railroading is to me (and my sanity).

I'm thankful for all the NMRA members who volunteer their precious time to help make all our membership experiences more enjoyable and valuable. That especially includes each of the PSR Vice President and Treasurer, and for each of the Division Officers and Executive Committee Members, who identify, organize and manage the numerous membership activities and Division efforts, with both visible efforts and behind the scenes work that you may never see. The Division Directors, Division Superintendents, Paymasters, Chief Clerks, Membership Chairs, Social Media/Web Chairs, Contest Chairs, Publication Chairs, Donation Chairs and Achievement Chairs and their committees work hard all year round to do the best they can for you. Next time you see any of them, please thank them in person. Meanwhile, I'm thanking them for all of us here.

I'm thankful for the work done by PSR Past President Pat Raymer and for the friendship that we developed working together on the SurfLiner2024.

I'm thankful to the regular (and irregular) operating crew of the New York, Ontario and Western Railway, Southern California Division for their help in achieving my vision for the layout.

And last, but not least, I'm thankful for the many model railroaders I have met over the last year (and over past years), for their willingness to share their knowledge, experience, and time which has enhanced my model railroading journey in countless ways.

Who are you thankful for? I urge you to tell them!



# PSR Vice President

Frank Kenny, Vice President

Unfortunately Frank was unable to provide a report for this Quarter. I am certain he wishes you all the best this Holiday Season! - Ed.



# Membership

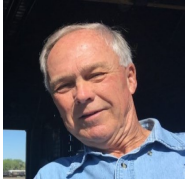
Rudy Spano, Membership Chair

As we head towards the end of the year, our membership continues to hold steady.

In November of 2023 our regional membership was 943 members. This November we have 976 members. Arizona continues to lead with 325 members, followed by Cajon with 272, Los Angeles with 229 and San Diego with 150. Thank you to the Divisional Membership Chairs and each of you who have worked to make the Pacific Southwest Region a strong association of model railroaders.

The Divisions continue to provide benefits to our members keeping active with layout tours, Division Meetings and ongoing communication of events and information. Our success is the result of many hands working to bring new events and experiences to our members.

Wishing you all Happy Holidays and a healthy, Happy New Year.



# Cajon

Harold Helland, Director

I would like to start by welcoming Paul Stoner as our new Cajon Division Superintendent. Paul took over from Joel Morse, who moved on to be the PSR President. Paul has several good ideas which will be seen as he puts his thoughts into action for the Cajon Division.

The Cajon Division is sponsoring Layouts of the Cajon Division. These are home model railroad tours presented by Cajon Division members. The Cajon Fall Meet was held at the Messiah Lutheran Church on October 19. We had another successful event which was enjoyed by everyone present. Clinics, Celebration of Models, Swap Meet and the Hobo Auction, provided plenty of action to keep everyone busy for the day.

The Cajon Division is responsible for the 2025 Pacific Southwest Region Annual Convention which will be held at the Hilton Irvine - John Wayne Airport. The convention, "Pacific Southwest Express" is scheduled from September 3 through 6, 2025, and will feature modular railroads at the hotel which will include operating sessions, home layout tours, prototype tours, home operating sessions, numerous clinics, general interest activities, and an Awards Banquet. There will be opportunities to find something new for your home model railroad from the Silent Auction, Swap Meet, Hobo Auction, or the Vendors Booths. We are planning four days packed with model railroad fun.

Prototype Tours include Los Angeles Union Station and the Southern California Railway Museum. In addition to the normal fun at the Southern California Railway Museum, we will be focusing on Santa Fe 5704 which recently joined the museum. There will also be an opportunity to drive a diesel engine. The Los Angeles Union Station tour includes a behind the scenes tour of areas not open to the public. The original ticket counters and the original Fred Harvey restaurant will be included in the tour.

The convention will end with an Awards Banquet and our guest speaker, Cinthia Priest, Editor NMRA Magazine. The NMRA will be celebrating 90 years of service to model railroad enthusiasts, and I am sure Cinthia will have plenty of information for an interesting presentation.

I wish everyone a great Holiday Season filled with joy.



## Historian's Report

Brian Neeley, Historian

If you have any historical items or questions for Brian, you can reach him at [brianneely@att.net](mailto:brianneely@att.net).—Ed.



## The Show Room

Open Position, PSR Contest Chair

### We could use your expertise!

Are you interested in being a part of the PSR NMRA leadership group? Contest Director position is open to those that are interested.

Contact Joel Morse if you want to contribute to this great organization!





# Arizona

Chris Thompson, Director

Greetings to all from the Arizona Division, it has been a busy fall across the state. Our September 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Zoom meet included a clinic on dead rail. With the ever-evolving battery technology it is getting easier to implement dead rail into HO scale equipment. When paired with the wireless control options available these days, you have a lot of flexibility on how you can operate your railroad with dead rail. The High Country subdivision had a get together during September in Flagstaff. After lunch, the group participated in a walking history tour of the downtown area guided by a local historian. Flagstaff has a rich railroad history, and by all accounts it was a very interesting afternoon.

Our fall Division meet was changed to Scottsdale starting this year, and going forward the Tucson meet will occur in the spring. We also moved the fall meet to October from November to space it a little further from the holidays and provide opportunities for other activities during National Model Railroad month.

During our fall meet, which is also our annual meeting of members, we elected Paul Buhrke, MMR as the new Superintendent for the Arizona Division. Paul has hit the ground running and will keep the Division going strong for the next couple years. Incidentally, you can read about Paul's MMR journey in the December issue of the NMRA Magazine. We want to thank the outgoing Superintendent, Bruce Petrarca, MMR, for everything he has done for the Division over the last 3 years. Bruce brought us out of the COVID pandemic and got all of our in-person meets going again, and also started a number of new activities to keep our members engaged in the hobby and with each other. Bruce is also the Division AP Manager, so he will continue to be actively engaged with the Division.

We also had a very good two-part clinic on modeling water by Peter Youngblood MMR. Peter gave some great explanations and examples of how water looks and behaves in the real world, and a number of techniques to duplicate that on our model railroads. An

interesting water feature always gets attention on a model railroad, and I'll eventually be trying some of these methods on my own railroad.

The hot weather in Arizona finally broke in late October, and we had some great weather for the Division-wide Cactus Crawl layout tour the weekend of November 16-17. This being the first year, we are working through the kinks to organize an event like this, but when it was all said and done, I feel like it was a successful event. We had railroads open all over the state, so most people had at least a couple they could get to over the weekend. There were a total of 21 layouts open, with 7 in the Prescott / High Country area, 5 in the Tucson area, and 9 in the Phoenix valley area. Reports are that most layouts got 10 to 15 visitors, and at least one got quite a few more than that. I personally got to see 6 of the 9 layouts on the Phoenix area, a few of which I had not visited before. Most of the others had new stuff to see since the last time I had an opportunity visit, so I really enjoyed all of them. There are some great layouts in Arizona, and I'd like to thank all the members across the state who participated in the Cactus Crawl and shared their model railroading passion with the rest of us.

We are full throttle into the holiday season as this gets published, so I want to wish a Safe and Happy Holidays to all in the PSR.



# Los Angeles

Vic Cavalli, Director

Trust you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Hope it will spill into a fabulous Happy Holiday Season too!

While "things", i.e., events and get-togethers, have basically wound down here in the Los Angeles Division for this calendar year (but not entirely – read on!), the pervious couple of months have been anything but dull.

The quarter started with the annual *Los Angeles Area Prototype Modelers & Swap Meet* on October 5<sup>th</sup>. The following weekend, **Frank Kenny** held an operating

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session on his *CPRX* home layout (Torrance, CA). Then, the month ended with a Division sponsored Open House at Sean Williams' and Kevin Spady's On30 *Wandering Spruce Railroad* layout in Claremont, CA on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

November continued the area's almost weekly offering of model railroading "to dos". The *Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society* held their quarterly swap meet and club open house, (Santa Susana Park in Simi, CA) on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. with the Division in attendance manning our NMRA recruitment table. The following week, the *California Southern Model Railroad Club* (Norwalk, CA) opened their doors November 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> to NMRA members and the general public alike.

November, being National Model Railroading Month, also saw many of the area's clubs extend public invitations to view and possibly better understand/join our hobby. Clubs included: Belmont Shore Model Railroad Club (San Pedro), Highland Park Society of Model Railroad Engineers (San Gabriel), Los Angeles Model Railroad Society (Harbor City), Pasadena Model Railroad Club (Los Angeles), and the Slim Gauge Guild (Pasadena).

Then Thanksgiving weekend hit and, as previously mentioned, "activities" expectedly started "drying up". An item remaining on the Division's calendar, however, is a "second chance" Operating Session to be conducted on **Frank Kenny's CPRX** home layout (Torrance, CA) on **December 14<sup>th</sup>**. Contact Frank directly at [SPRXmodelRR@gmail.com](mailto:SPRXmodelRR@gmail.com) to RSVP.

Don't forget to check the *Upcoming Model Railroad and Prototype Events* report found in the rear of every issue of the **PSR Dispatch** for additional shows, meets, conventions, etc...

My wish for "*green signals ahead*" to you and yours as we prepare to enter into 2025!



### July 14-19, 2025

The **NCR and SE Michigan** will be your host for the 2025 NMRA National Convention! This will be like no other convention you have ever attended!

#### Convention Highlights –

- ✓ One low price for everyone! includes layout tours & OPS!
- ✓ 90+ clinics
- ✓ 65+ layout tours
- ✓ 30+ OPS sessions
- ✓ 2 day National Train Show
- ✓ 5 day Yard Sale Room
- ✓ RPM modeling displays
- ✓ Full NMRA modeling Contest
- ✓ People Choice Voting w/awards
- ✓ Saturday night banquet

....and **MUCH MORE!!**

<https://nmra2025.com/>







# San Diego

Tim Foote, Director

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SAN DIEGO DIVISION:

October, 2024, Model Railroad Layout Tour, Ryan Di Fede's N scale

### Southern Pacific Railroad's Cascade Line



At left, Southern Pacific Daylight passenger train traveling over a trestle.

Picture credits: San Diego Division Web-master, Mike Hampson.

Ryan established the Southern Pacific Railroad's Cascade Line N scale model railroad in 2009. It is based in Eugene, Oregon and East to the Cascade Summit. The main town on the layout is Oakridge, Oregon which was home base to helpers for trains heading up the "Hill" to the Cascade mountains. The era for the railroad is 1954.

Ryan has traveled to Oregon and has done extensive research, including interviewing local people and railroad employees to make his layout as prototypical as possible.



The model railroad layout has lumber based industries, a furniture factory, an oil storage facility, a gas station, a restaurant, railroad station houses, an animal coral, an engine house, city buildings, a paper mill, residential houses and various railroad yards. One of the most interesting aspects of Ryan's layout is that he has compressed everything into an eight by twelve foot garden shed.

The railroad is a multi-level layout and has a track elevator that moves the trains to and from each level. Ryan also conducts operation sessions on his layout.

*Continued on Page 7*



## San Diego

Tim Foote, Director

### November, 2024, Fall Meet at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum



*Picture credit: San Diego Division Members.*

The Fall Meet was at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum. The main clinic was about photo stacking presented by Jay Styron

This was a very interesting clinic that covered newer and less expensive technology to achieve photo stacking results using a cell phone. Photo stacking software creates a sharp, in-focus image by combining multiple photos taken at different focus points. The software then layers these images, resulting in a single image where everything from the foreground to the background appears to be sharply focused. Most importantly, it avoids the problem where picture backgrounds are blurred out.

Jay uses two types of software to achieve his excellent results. One software clicks 20 versions of the same scene. He then processes the results with a photo stacking software that produces a single photo. The process can be done with a regular digital camera that has multiple shot capability, but Jay prefers to use his iPhone because he can then get it into tight spaces on his

layout. You also have to hold the phone very steady while it is snapping the pictures. You can also build a holder for your phone out of wood or plastic. You can select the number of pictures to take, but Jay says that 20 is sufficient.

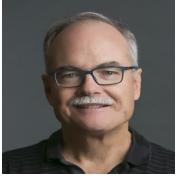
Doing a Google search, I found various stacking software for the iPhone. There are some for Android systems as well. This process used to be very expensive, but the prices have dropped significantly. It doesn't seem that difficult to do and the results can be spectacular. You may want to start out looking at instructional videos on YouTube.



**Early Morning at the Chama Engine House**

**Photo by Kevin Spady**





## Treasurer

John McGreevy, Treasurer

Hello, this is my first report as Treasurer. First off, I must thank Joel for his years of service and his help with this transition. No doubt, there will be much to learn, so bear with me.

There were several PSR financial transactions during the period September 1, 2024, through November 30, 2024, Program Revenue of \$1,219.74 consisted of \$896.00 in membership rebates, \$211.00 in Company Store Sales at the Buena Park Fall Event and \$112.74 profit from the SurfLiner2024 Hobo breakfast. Contributions of \$5,480.68 were received. Thanks, are again due to Joel for his work on bringing in these donations. The total of all revenue was \$6,700.48.

Expenses totaled \$5,362.50. A payment of \$1,590.00 was made to Cabrillo Compliance to complete tax returns for 2023 and setting up the PSR's Chart of Accounts for future tax years. We loaned \$1,000.00 to the 2025 Regional Convention Committee as seed money for the upcoming convention in Irvine in September (per Convention Agreement). We reimbursed \$600.00 to the Arizona Division for a portion of the losses incurred by the 2023 convention (per Convention Agreement). Additional expenses included payments made to Zoom in the amount of \$167.10, \$80.00 for QuickBooks, \$35.97 for In-motion Hosting for website hosting and \$25.00 to the CA Secretary of State in annual reporting fees.

During this period, we transferred unsold SurfLiner2024 merchandise (including HO cars, N cars and Convention pins) and door prizes to the Divisions based on membership. These items will be made available to members by the Divisions at their discretion.

Deposits of \$6,700.42 were made during this period. Net cash expenses this period: \$3,476.17 The on-line Bank Statement indicates that the Region had \$30,561.21 on 11/30/2024.

### PSR Wells Fargo Checking Account:

#### Region Only Assets as of August 31, 2024:

**\$27,336.96**

#### Region Only Assets as of November 30, 2024:

**\$30,561.21**

**Change this period: \$3,224.25**



Add this superb, one of a kind, historical tank car to your collection. The Northern Utah Division of the NMRA is selling a series of HO scale Utah Oil Company (UTOCO) tank cars manufactured by InterMountain Railway. The cars feature a build date of 8/45 and a test date of 9/28/51.

Originally intended to be the convention cars for the 2019 NMRA convention in Salt Lake City, supply chain issues prevented the cars from arriving on time. Offered in six road numbers, the cars have metal wheelsets and Kadee couplers. Priced at \$45.00 each with free shipping, you can get your very own historical tank car before this limited edition is sold out, go to either:

[www.northernutahnmra.org/club-car](http://www.northernutahnmra.org/club-car)

or

<http://northern-utah-division-nmra.square.site/>





# Awards Program

Carl Heimberger, AP Chairman

### NMRA Awards Program end of year report

2024 was a reasonably productive year for the PSR Awards Program. Twenty-three Certificates were issued in a variety of categories and we also awarded two MMR's.

In this current quarter we have so far issued six certificates in a variety of categories, congratulations to the following members.

Bruce Petrarca – Official  
Mike Guinn – Civil  
Harold Helland – Official  
Rudy Spano – Volunteer  
Vittore Cavalli – Official  
Vittore Cavalli – Volunteer

What is amazing out of the six certificates issued above only one required that you build anything and that was Civil. Both Volunteer and Official are just a matter of providing a few hours of your time each month to help run programs for your division, region or even national. Sure, I know a lot of you have zero interest in the AP but you may have already met the requirements for volunteer and not even realized it.

Have you given any clinics? Or do you have a home or belong to club layout that has been part of a division, region or national event? Well, if so, you have earned point toward your Volunteer and all you need to do is fill out some simple forms. And I am certain your local AP manager will be more than willing to help you do that.

Sure, I felt the same way about the Awards Program but after being a superintendent, division director, regional VP and regional president I earned not one but three AP certificates, Volunteer, Official and Author. I also belong to a modular club and have built modules that have given me my Golden Spike, Structures, Scenery and soon to be Civil and Cars. Well, that looks like seven AP Certificates and my MMR, and I

had fun doing all the above as well. And yes, I have been doing this for 24 plus years but would not have traded the experience and new friends I have met for anything.

And I am not saying everyone should go for their MMR, that is a personal decision. But you should enjoy and treasure what this great hobby has to offer. And remember all the division meets, region and national conventions take individuals who go beyond just being a member and get engaged in helping the NMRA grow and continue to be the great organization it is. So, why not become part of that and have some

## Get yours before they are gone!



**N Surfliner Car**



**HO Surfliner Car**

**HO and N Scale NMRA 2024 National Convention Cars are available to members at a steeply discounted rate. These cars are available for \$15.00 each (previously \$30.00 at the Convention) plus S&H. Convention pins are also available for \$3.00 each. These items have been distributed to each Division, so if you are interested, please contact your Division Director for more information.**

**(See page 1 of the Dispatch for contact info)**



**Surfliner Pin**



### **Pacific Southwest Express**

**PSR 2025 Convention  
September 3 thru 6, 2025  
Hilton Irvine – John Wayne Airport**

**[www.pacificswexpress.org](http://www.pacificswexpress.org)**

The Pacific Southwest Express planning is well under way and the convention will have something for everyone.

Do you like to see home model railroads to learn how the owner has accomplished something that you like? Do you like to learn new ideas from the home model railroad owners? If yes we will have numerous home model railroads to visit and learn directly from the owner. Many of the home model railroads will be self-drive, (you can team up with a friend) and one guided tour of home model railroads. We will have several modular railroads set up at the convention for viewing and learning something new.

Do you like Operating Sessions? We have four home model railroads committed to run operating sessions and one modular club that will run operating sessions at the Convention Center.

The Pacific Southwest Express will offer several opportunities to acquire something new for your model railroad. Several vendors are planning to set up at the convention which will provide the opportunity to purchase the latest in model railroading. Of course, we will have the Hobo Auction and Swap Meet to allow you to decide which items you cannot live without. Another new feature will be a Silent Auction which will allow attendees to decide how much they would like to pay to add something new to their collection.

Clinics are always a big hit among attendees. Our clinics will provide historical information, knowledge on building all phases of a model railroad, and prototype information. We are planning for over 80 clinics presented by modelers, historians, manufacturers and MMR's with the most popular being presented twice. Stephen Priest will present a clinic on the restoration of SF 5704, an SD45-2, to the 1976 paint scheme. He will also discuss the process for moving a new model from an idea through planning, production and finally to distribution. We will all learn the importance of the Pre-Order portion of the process. In total, 294 requests for a clinic have been sent to previous presenters. I am sure you will find some clinics that will be of interest to you.

If you like Prototype Tours, we have something for you. The Southern California Railway Museum has the West's largest collection of railway locomotives, passenger cars, street cars, and interurban electric cars. The tour will

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include SF 5704, which was refurbished to the 1976 paint scheme. If you always wanted to drive a diesel engine, this tour will provide the opportunity.

The Los Angeles Union Station is the main railway station in Los Angeles and the largest railroad passenger terminal in the Western United States. This is a behind the scenes tour that includes the historic ticket counter and the original Fred Harvey Restaurant. Los Angeles Union Station is included on the National Register of Historical Places.

Celebration of Models is always my favorite portion of our conventions. We will include all the “normal” categories for viewing and evaluation. In addition there will be a special contest for a one square foot model. The model must be no larger than one foot square and not over two feet high. The model must include track and/or a freight car. Photographs and Arts and Crafts will also be included in the model contest.

We will end the convention with an Awards Banquet and our Keynote Speaker, Cinthia Priest, Editor NMRA Magazine. Since 2025 is the 90th Anniversary of the NMRA, I am sure Cinthia will include some of the key events in the development of the NMRA. She may also hit the highlights of her Destination MMR articles.

It is time to reunite with model railroad friends and associates. We will include plenty of general interest activities for spouses. Come and join us for an interesting, knowledgeable and fun four days at the Pacific Southwest Express convention September 3 through 6, 2025 at the Hilton Irvine. Register at [www.pacificswexpress.org](http://www.pacificswexpress.org).

Harold Helland, MMR  
Chairman, Pacific Southwest Express

**Register Now for the Convention and Reserve a Hotel Room**  
**[www.pacificswexpress.org](http://www.pacificswexpress.org)**





## **Pacific Southwest Express Activities**

### **Welcome Reception**

Reunite with Friends

### **Model Railroads**

Modular Railroads  
Home Model Railroads  
Operating Sessions  
John Allen Timesaver

### **Add to Your Model Railroad**

Swap Meet  
Silent Auction  
Hobo Auction

### **Celebration of Models**

Display  
Evaluation  
One Square Foot Model

### **General Interest**

Activities for All

### **Prototype Railroads**

So Cal Railway Museum  
Los Angeles Union Station

### **Clinics**

Educational  
Hands On

### **Awards Banquet**

Delicious Dinner  
Keynote Speaker  
Cinthia Priest  
Editor NMRA Magazine  
Awards

**Register Now for the Convention and Reserve a Hotel Room**  
**[www.pacificswexpress.org](http://www.pacificswexpress.org)**



### **Call for Clinics for the Pacific Southwest Express Convention**

We are looking for individuals to present clinics at the PSR 2025 Pacific Southwest Express Convention September 3-6, 2025, at the Irvine Hilton which is across the street from John Wayne Airport. If you are interested in showing others your model railroad knowledge we want you. Suggested topic areas are:

3D Printing, Laser Cutting and Other Computer Modeling Methods

Achievement Programs and Standards Setting

DCC, LCC, Wiring & Other Electronics

Layout Design and Construction

Layout Operations

Modeling Techniques and Ideas

Prototype Railroads History

Any Other Areas of Interest

If you are interested in presenting a clinic at the PSR 2025 Pacific Southwest Express Convention, we request that you complete the online form, for each clinic proposal, as soon as possible. You can find the form using the link at:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdEkTYilnT677hBO3XrZXqtWYvCl8wqyRU\\_Q7T9K6RUEJDEfw/viewform?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdEkTYilnT677hBO3XrZXqtWYvCl8wqyRU_Q7T9K6RUEJDEfw/viewform?usp=sharing)

**NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION  
2025 National Convention**

**STATION No. VI**

**Hosted by:  
the NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

**July 14-19, 2025**

Open to ALL model railroaders! You do not have to be an NMRA member to attend! **REGISTRATION IS OPEN!!**

Our location – Sheraton Detroit-Novi, MI  
A suburban location with FREE parking!

**CONVENTION GOALS and HIGHLIGHTS -**

Our main objectives are to provide events of value, items attendees will see as worth their money, all at the lowest possible cost. \*\* We will honor the traditions of past conventions but at lower cost and with greater flexibility. \*\* This convention will be shorter, starting at 1 PM on Monday and continuing through Saturday afternoon with a banquet Saturday evening. \*\* Note that registration includes all layout visits and operating sessions, and all activities at the hotel except Modeling with the Masters, and admittance to the National Train Show. \*\* We will support all the traditional activities of the SIG's. \*\* The National Contest will be fully supported. The contest will be in a prominent room and will be run by the National Contest team. There will be space for model displays, modular layouts and other functions. Those putting their models on display will have the option of entering the People's Choice Contest. \*\* We will have several prototype tours which may include a Ford plant tour and a cruise on the Detroit River with an emphasis on the industrial aspects of the waterfront. \*\* We expect to have at least 90 clinics. The clinics will be varied, and each will be given twice. \*\* We expect to have at least 60 layouts open for visit. Most layouts will be at least 900 sq. ft. in size running to over 3,000 sq. ft. in one or more cases. All layout visits and op sessions will be self-guided so you may take your time.

**<https://nmra2025.com/>**





## **Anatomy of a Project: Monterey and Salinas Valley/Nevada Central Boxcars**

Michael James Starkey



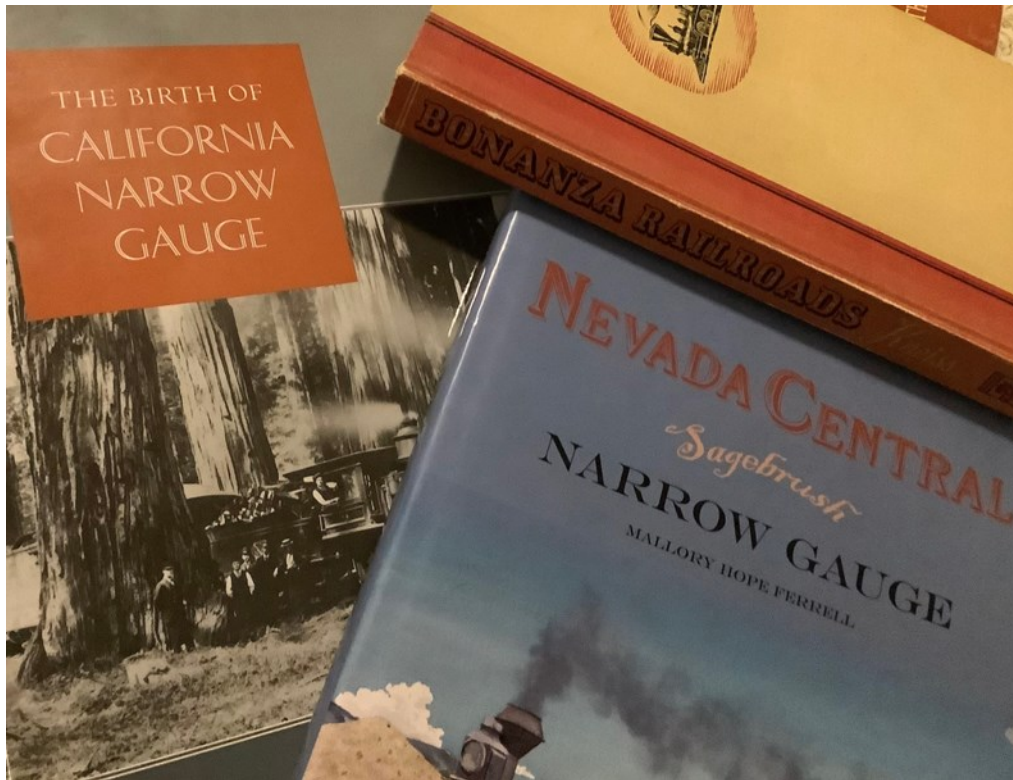
*Nevada Central Railway mixed train.*

I was a little bogged down in my progress towards certification as a Master Builder: Cars. With two cars to go, one needed to be a passenger car, and both needed to be scratchbuilt. However, I had run out of ideas and motivation, so progress had stopped.

Inspiration can be found in unusual places. In this case, my wife and I were in Tombstone and I happened to spot a few lonely railroad books on a shelf in a shop. When we left, I had a first edition of “Bonanza Railroads” that was signed by the author. I’m no book collector, however, what I really wanted was the information: the stories of some early standard and narrow gauge railroads in California and Nevada. One of them was the Nevada Central Railroad.

After reading about the Nevada Central in “Bonanza Railroads”, I felt a little more motivated. Perhaps a Nevada Central freight car would be my next project!

The first step of any project is a sort of feasibility study. I need three things to make a project work: plans, parts, and decals.



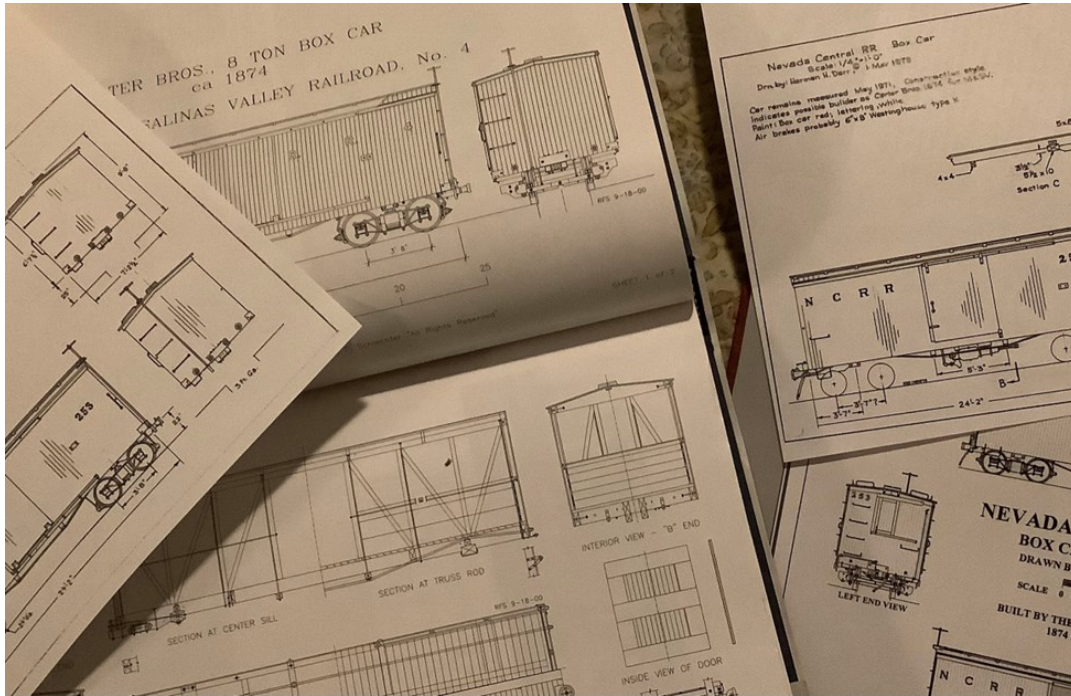
*Inspirational reading.*

It turned out I had an abundance of plans. Mallory Hope Ferrell's book *Nevada Central... Sagebrush Narrow Gauge* had plans for a gondola circa 1898, two boxcars circa 1938, and a caboose. I also had plans from Herman Darr for a boxcar circa 1885 and 1938. So... after some thought I decided a Nevada Central boxcar circa 1885 would be my next project. Modeling cars from an earlier time period is a lot of fun. There wouldn't be any air brake system, and fewer grab irons and other details to make. The car would also be in much better condition than one that had survived into the 1930's. This car also had to qualify as scratchbuilt, so I needed to make as many components as possible myself. A slightly simpler car means a little less work to effectively recreate the prototype. (Don't tell the judges!)

There was still a problem. None of the plans showed how the underbody was framed. But I had one resource left.

**A little history.** In 1879, the Nevada Central purchased all the rolling stock of the Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad. This short-lived narrow gauge line was built in 1874 with rolling stock supplied by the Carter Brothers. I checked the voluminous tome by Bruce MacGregor entitled *The Birth of California Narrow Gauge*. It tells the story of the Carter Brothers, and includes drawings of a Monterey and Salinas Valley boxcar circa 1874, including the under frame (which is really skimpy). I was so excited to find the drawings that I decided to build a boxcar for each railroad. They only differed in a few details, and each one would represent a railroad that is rarely modeled. The model I liked the best could be submitted for evaluation.

## PSR DISPATCH



### ***A plethora of plans.***

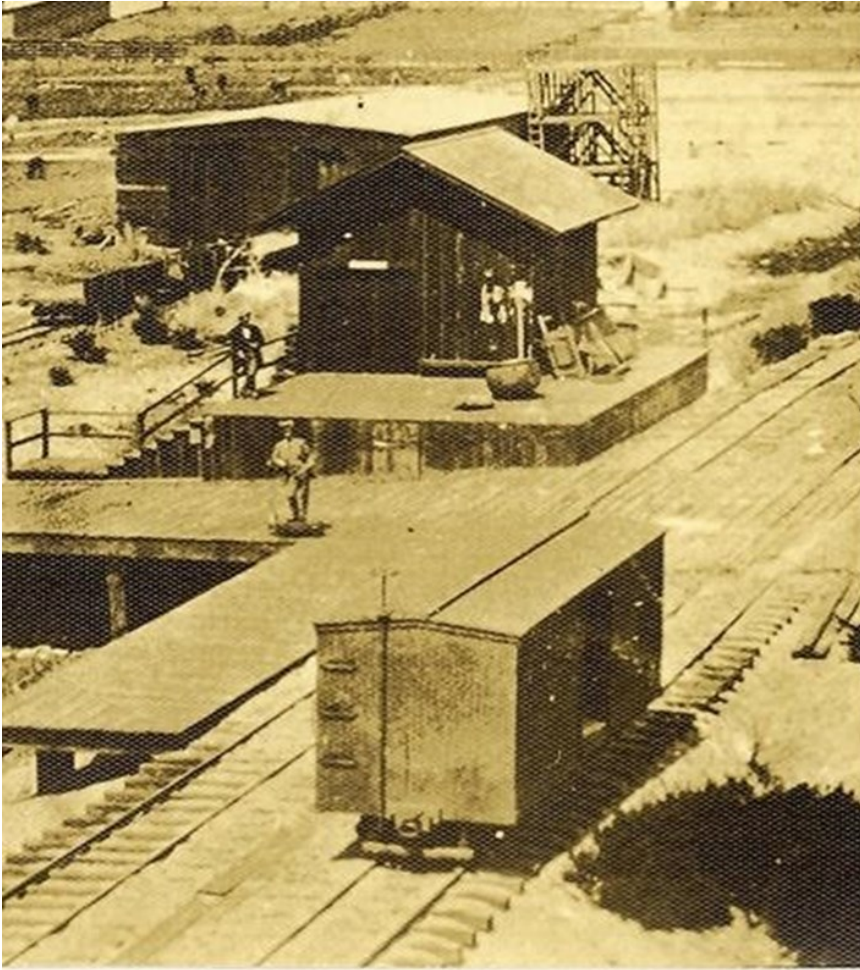
For the car to qualify as scratchbuilt, I needed to create as many parts as possible myself. A few parts are exempt, such as brake parts, NBW castings, trucks, and couplers. I had built a few boxcars before, so I knew I could create everything else out of Evergreen styrene and wire. However... what about trucks? I am really particular (uptight?) about having correct trucks under my freight cars. Nothing commercially made in Sn3 matched. So I started looking at HO trucks. If I could find some HO arch bar trucks with the correct wheelbase and general outline, they could be narrowed. Details, such as the appearance of the bolsters and journal boxes, can be changed with styrene if need be to more closely match the prototype.

I found a possible solution in 3DPTrains HO-7003 NP arch bar truck. The profile and wheelbase, when converted from 1/87 to 3/16 scale, looked good. The trucks are 3D printed. I was a little concerned about how fragile they would be, since I would have to cut the bolster to narrow them. Hoping they could be made to work, I placed an order.

The next step was to search through my file of decals. I couldn't match either car. After taking some measurements, Micro scale sets 90301 and 90321 had the correct size and styles of lettering. The lettering on both cars was fairly simple, so it could be pieced together from these alphabet sets.



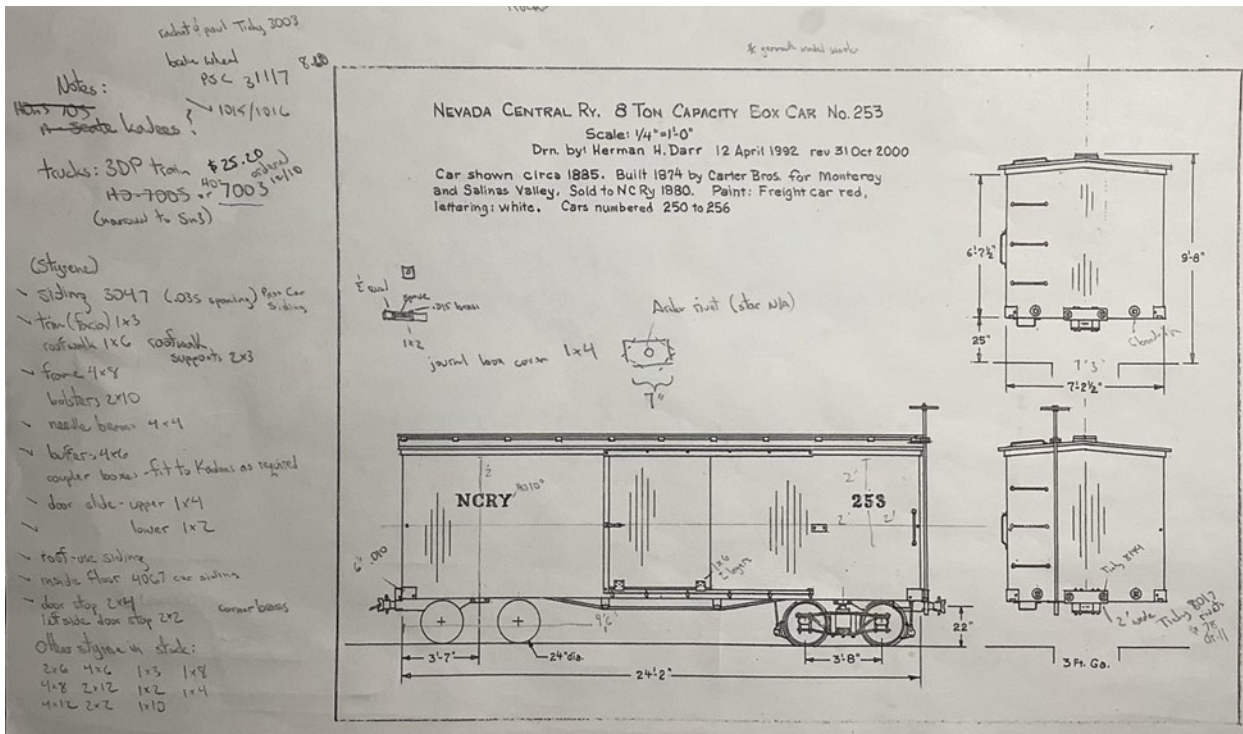
# PSR DISPATCH



I had a bunch of copies of the plans reduced to 3/16 scale. Rather than try to protect a single copy, I treat them as “disposable”, marking on them, cutting them up, or gluing directly on a plan as needed. My first copy is always used for planning the project. (No fancy computer spreadsheet for me!) As I wrote down my ideas for necessary parts, I also started measuring each part of the plan with my scale rule and listing all the parts and sizes. I then compared the measurements to my stock of styrene, and figured out what I had on hand and what I needed to order.

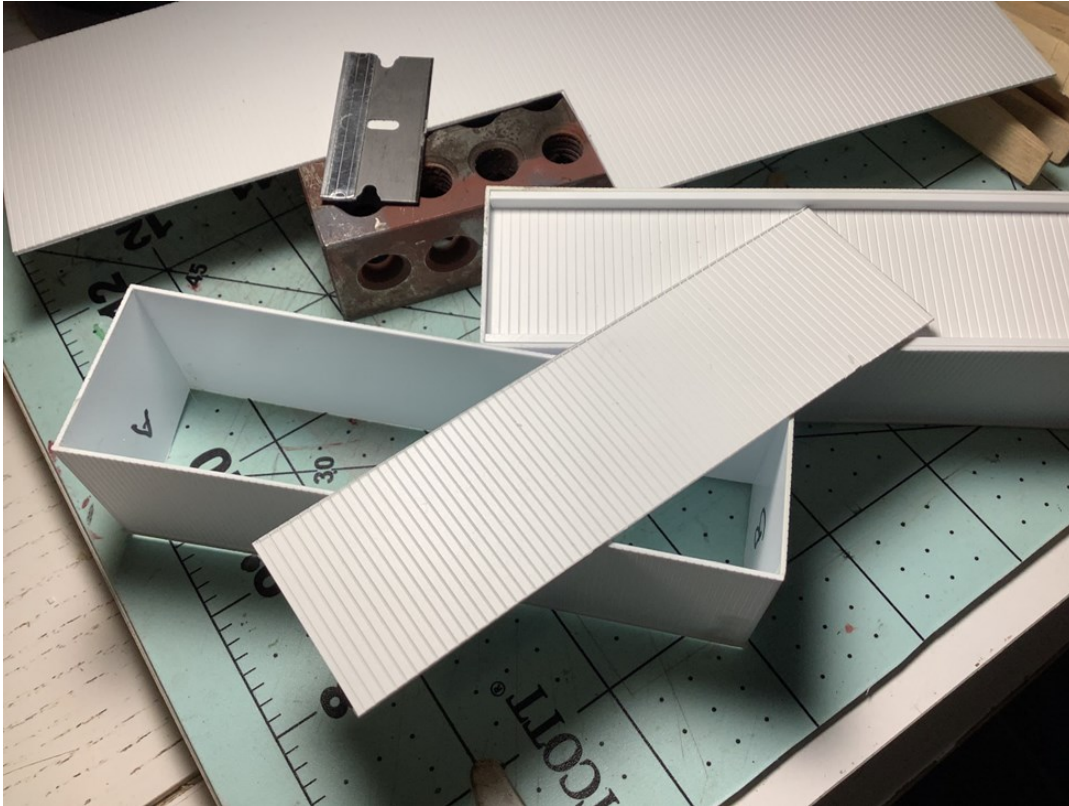
**So I ordered parts and got to work. This isn't a construction article per se, but the following pages show are the steps I followed:**

***M&SVRR boxcar at the Monterey depot. The only known photograph!***



**Materials, notes, and ideas... it seems feasible!**

## PSR DISPATCH



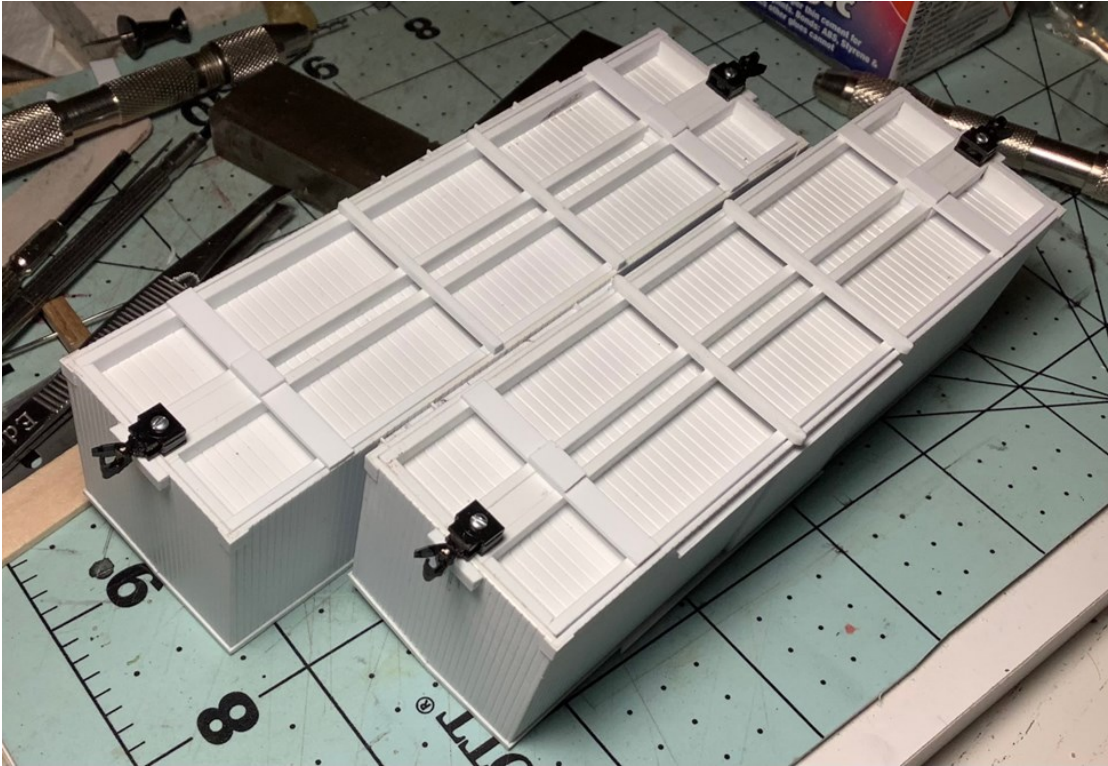
I created the bodies, keeping them as square as possible.



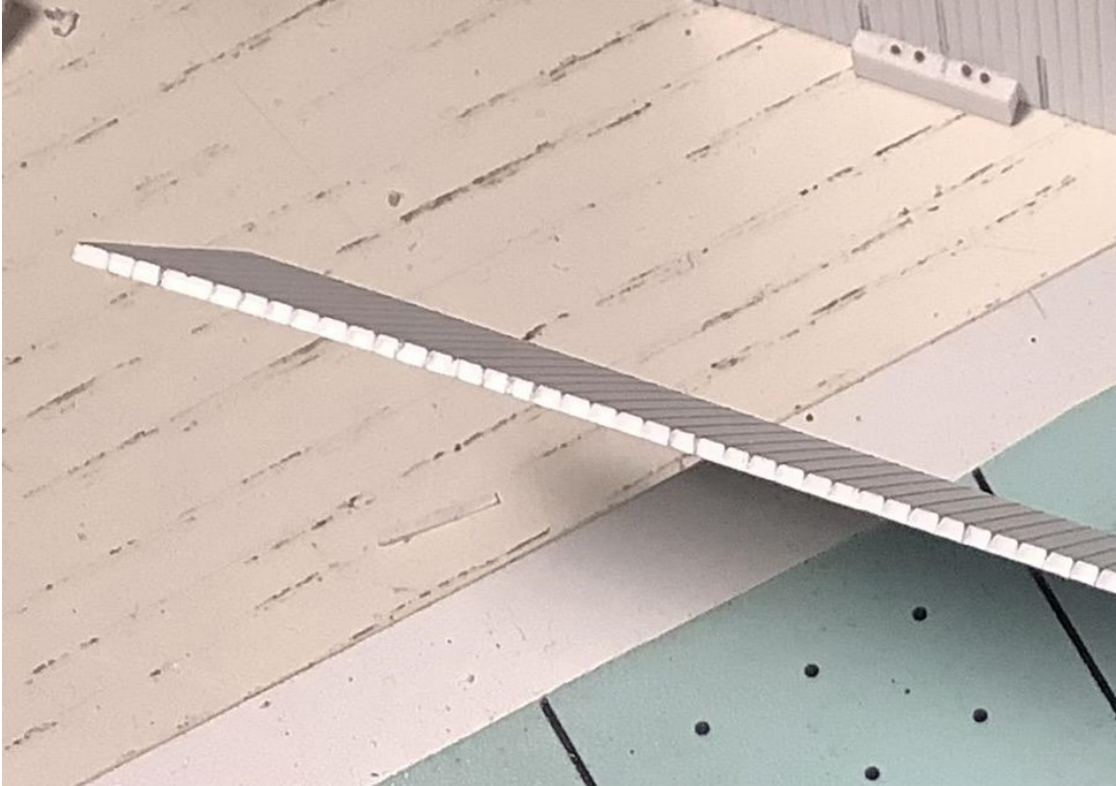
Details are added.



## PSR DISPATCH



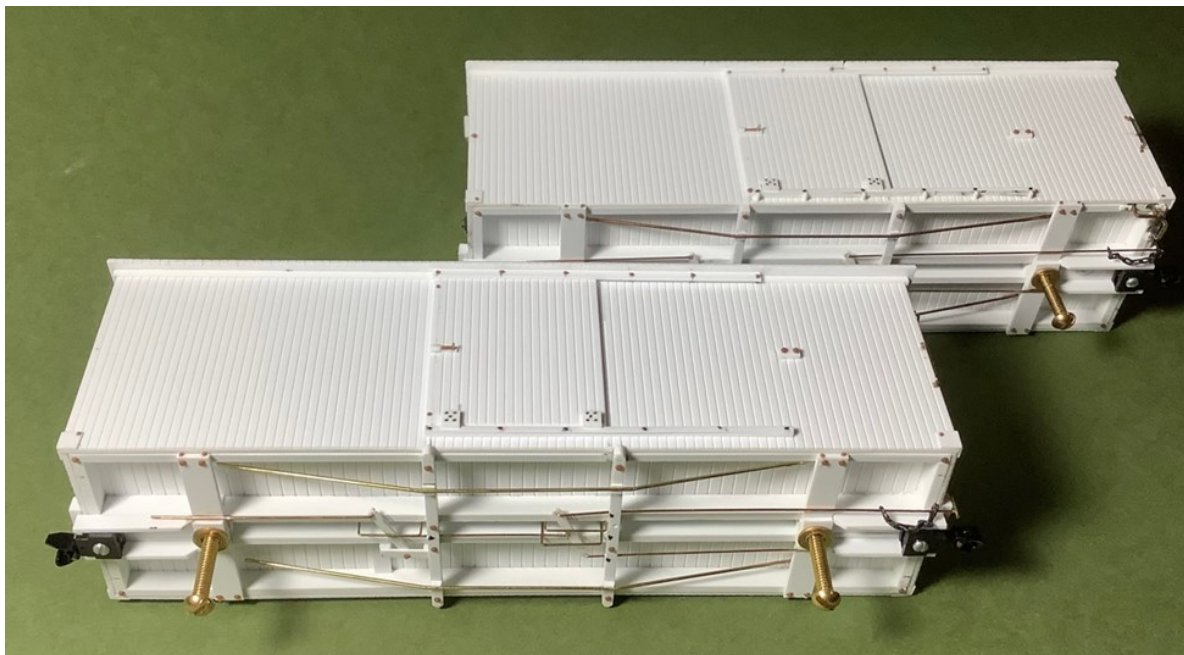
Frames ready to be detailed. I'm using N scale couplers to match the size of link and pin couplers.



I notched the sides of the roof to highlight the individual boards. If the roof looks thick to you... it is! However, it isn't obvious on the finished model.



## PSR DISPATCH

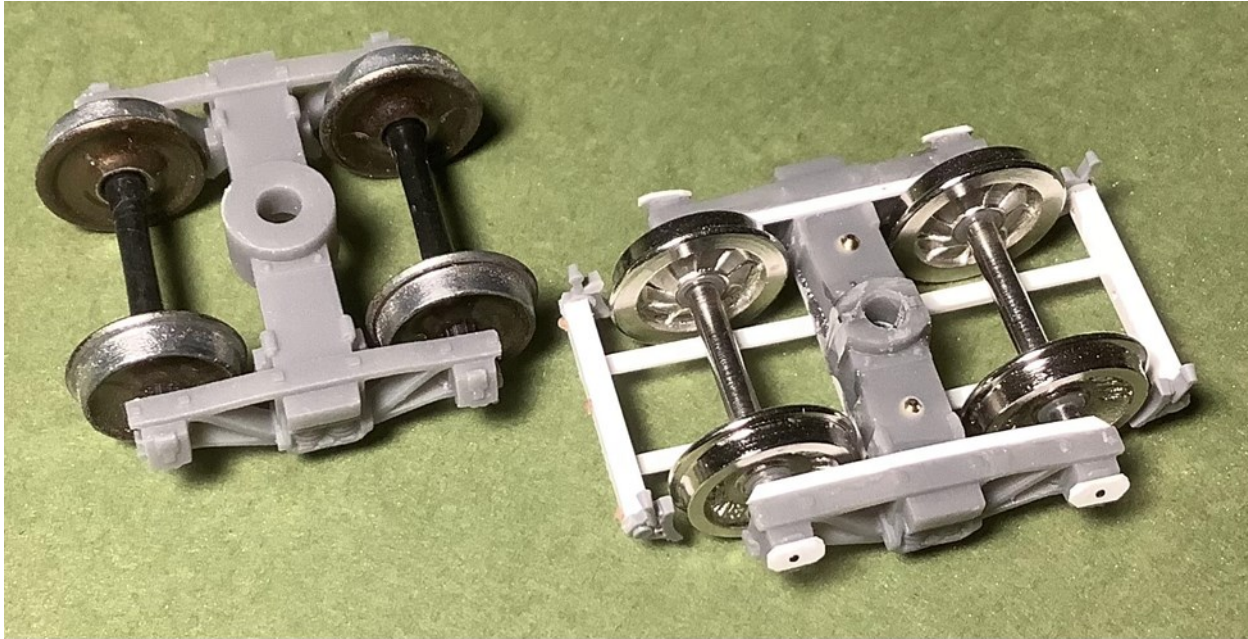


As you can see, I prefer to bend truss rods from brass rather than use nylon line. Where even the smallest NBW casting would be oversized, I use Tichy 8017 rivets. The lower door guide and door brackets are detailed with Archer rivet decals.



Ready for paint!

## PSR DISPATCH



Trucks were narrowed, reinforced, and re-detailed.



I primed and painted the cars with Tru-Color paint. A simple spacer helped keep the lettering straight and even.



## PSR DISPATCH



Finally, ready for weathering!



Washes of acrylic craft paint were used to weather the cars, then I sprayed them with DullCote. Done!



## PSR DISPATCH



Some final views!

## **Upcoming Model Railroad and Prototype Events**

**Area Covered: Counties of Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Mono, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura plus the PSR's Arizona Division; also including selected Regional/National Conventions**

**Updated 12/1/2024**

### **Reoccurring**

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays – Los Angeles Model Railroad Society “work” sessions, Harbor City

Tuesday & Saturdays – San Diego S-Gaugers’ Open House, Grossmont Shopping Center, La Mesa, noon – 6:00 pm

Saturdays – Corona Model Railroad Society Open House, Corona

Saturdays, July-May – Belmont Shore Model Railroad Club Visitation, San Pedro

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month – Arizona Division Monthly Zoom Meet, starting at 10:00 a.m.

Last Saturday of each month – Railmaster Hobbies’ Model Railroad Fellowship Get-Together, Bellflower

### **2024**

December 13-14 – Toy Trains Operating Society – Southern Pacific Division, Super Meet, Brookhurst Community Center, Anaheim

December 14 – Ops Session on the CPRX, Torrance (Contact Frank Kenny at [SPRXmodelRR@gmail.com](mailto:SPRXmodelRR@gmail.com))

December 15 – Pasadena Model Railroad Club Open House, Los Angeles

### **2025**

January 11 – Dick Trotter’s HO Scale model Railroad layout Open House, San Diego County

February 15 – Grand Canyon Model Railroaders’ Cactus Winter Train Swap Meet, North Phoenix Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ

February 15-16 – Great Train Show/World’s Greatest Hobby Tour, Orange County Fair & Event Center, Costa Mesa

February 22 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino

February 23 – California Express Railroadiana & Transportation Show, Buena Park

March 1-2 – Golden Empire Historical & Modeling Society’s 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Model Train Show, Bakersfield

March 8-9 – Great Train Show, Ventura County Fairgrounds, Ventura

March 18 – Tim Foote’s HO Scale model Railroad layout Open House, San Diego County

March 27-30 – PCR Annual Convention, *Daylight Limited*, San Luis Obispo

April 12 – David Lancaster’s Z Scale model Railroad layout Open House, San Diego County

# Upcoming Model Railroad and Prototype Events

## 2025 Continued

April 26—(tentative) Cajon Division Buena Park Event, Orange County

June 14 – Justin Rasas’ multiple scales modules Open House, San Diego County

July 14-19 – NMRA National Convention, “*Station No. VI*”, Novi, MI

July 26 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino

September 3-6 – PSR 2025 Convention, Hilton Irving – John Wayne Airport, Irvine

October 18 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino

## 2026

September 8-13 – PSR Annual Convention, Double Tree Hotel, San Diego/Mission Valley

**Please send announcements at least 3 months in advance to:**

**[VicCavalli@comcast.net](mailto:VicCavalli@comcast.net)**







***D&RGW Flanger OC at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, CO***

***Photo by Kevin***

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