



LA Coupler

The Newsletter of the Los Angeles Division of the NMRA



Los Angeles Division
Pacific Southwest Region
National Model Railroad Association, Inc.
www.ladiv-nmra.org



In This Issue

John Parrish's Photography

...and more!



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On the Cover.... John Parrish shares some of his incredible model photography.

LA Coupler Deadlines

Publication Team

The LA Coupler is always looking for submissions, articles, photos, or ideas. Please reach out to the Editor for more information:

Lisican@gmail.com

Submission Deadlines

Spring Issue: February 1

Summer Issue: May 1

Fall Issue: August 1

Winter Issue: November 1

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Thank you for supporting the LA Division!



Director's Report

- Vic Cavalli

This year's Pacific Southwest Region's (PSR) annual convention, Pacific Southwest Express, has just concluded as I start writing this report. As anyone who attended will confirm, it was a very well run, enjoyable four (4) days for model railroading activities and camaraderie.

Here are a few highlights; although admittedly presented with a strong Los Angeles (L.A.) Division biased.

Several L.A. members were recognized during the Award Banquet Saturday night. Past-PSR President and 2024 National Convention Co-Chair **Pat Raymer** received the PSR Member of the Year award, and **Ron Varnell** was named L.A. Division Member of the Year.



Director's Report

- continued



Ron also was a big winner in the Celebration of Models (i.e., “contest”/evaluation) room taking 1st place in both Popular Choice and Evaluated Models – Off-Line Display, the President’s Award (for best first time entry) and overall Best of Show for his South Bay Pier entry.

Also bring home some “hardware” were **Vic Cavalli** – winning 1st and 3rd place Popular Choice and 1st and 2nd Evaluated Models – Freight Cars, 1st place Popular Choice and Evaluated Models – Caboose, and 1st and 2nd place Popular Choice and Evaluated Models – Passenger Equipment; and **Dan Kamikubo** – 1st place in both Popular Choice and Evaluated Models – Diesel & Other Locomotives.

Director's Report

- continued

Thank you, Dan, Ron, and Vic for bring your truly outstanding models to share with the rest of the attendees. [I'm not including photos of these models here as they, and many more, may be viewed in the 3rd Quarter 2025 issue of the PSR Dispatch.]

Also deserving reorganization, I would like to extend my appreciation to L.A. members **Mike Osborne** – “Railroad Like the Pros”, **Kevin Spady** – “Building the On30 Wandering Spruce Railroad” and **Ron Varnell** – “How to Build a Log Pond” for presenting clinics during our annual meet. [Hope I didn't miss anyone.]

As is customary, the PSR Board of Directors (Board) also held its annual end-of-year business meeting at the beginning of the week. Agenda items that may be of interest included:

- Going forward, making the decision to distribute all division-generated newsletters to the entire PSR membership (rather than only to members within their specific Division)
- A “strategy” discussion regarding the composition of future PSR Conventions – such as: controlling hotel costs, eliminating the banquet dinner and/or guest speaker (but keeping the awards presentations portion), shortening the length of conventions by a day, treating non-rail activities as an integral part of the convention (rather than a “side bar”), and how to better market the value of attending conventions in the first place.
- Agreement that profits from last year's NMRA National Convention would be distributed throughout the Region and its Divisions in accordance to policies set forth in the PSR's Management of Operations manual. (L.A.'s share being \$841.14.)
- An overview of next year's PSR annual convention, “All Aboard for 2026”, to be hosted by the San Diego Division. Dates being September 9th-13th; to be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, San Diego-Mission Valley. Registration link and hotel rates may be found at: sandiegodivision.org/index.php/convention-2026.

Director's Report

- continued

Another item of significance was an announcement forwarded from National. A “forward-looking” strategy called NMRA Vision 2035 and based on the Core Vision Statement: “to become the premier association dedicated to the growth and enjoyment of the scale model rail community worldwide.” Its goals being:

- Improve member satisfaction at all levels of the NMRA to at least 80% (i.e., 7 or above on a scale of 1-10) [Watch your e-mail's Inbox for a link to the ‘baseline’ survey.]
- Increasing membership from our current ~16,000 level to 35,000 by 2035
- Become a worldwide recognized leader for standards and innovation
- Increase revenue per member, while decreasing cost per member
- Modernize National's core infrastructure and digital capabilities
- Introduce the expertise and capabilities necessary for success; properly staffed and implemented

An introductory explanation of **NMRA Vision 2035** may be found in the October 2025 issue of the *NMRA Magazine*, pages 6-7, in the *President's Car* editorial.

The initial impact to the PSR and its Divisions is that we are required to adopt the new NMRA's Brand and Style guidelines. Updated logos and color schemes – for National, Regional, and Divisions levels – will be made available on, or after, November 1, 2025. Thereafter, but prior to April 1, 2026, L.A. will need to update our newsletter, website, Facebook page(s), shirts, hats, signage, forms, etc... to reflect this re-branding. Level of effort, or cost, to implement this is not yet known. More information will be shared as it becomes know...

Well, a longer report than usual. Thanks for reading along and happy model railroading!

N SCALE

Nov 15, 2025



10:30am ~ Round Trip Pass ~ 1:30pm

EAST VALLEY LINES MODEL RAILROAD OPEN HOUSE



The LA Division invites [NMRA MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS](#) to join us for a day of Railfanning on the incredible East Valley Lines N Scale Layout. Located at the Travel Town Museum in Griffith Park, the layout has been in operation since 1979. The layout covers approximately 2,000 square feet, featuring stunning California scenery.

RSVP is Required

NMRAPSRLAJohnMc@gmail.com

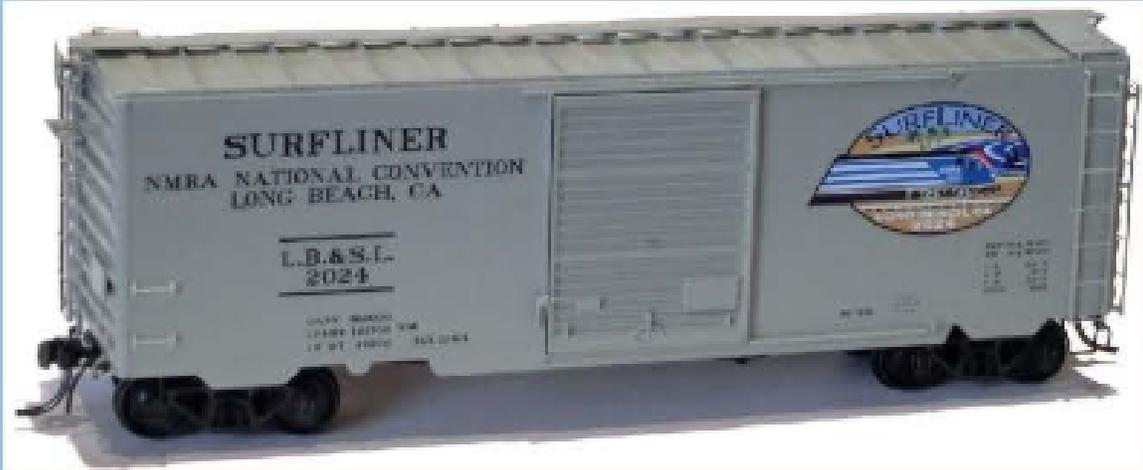
5200 Zoo Dr., Los Angeles CA 90027



SurfLiner Convention Cars



N Surfliner Car



HO Surfliner Car

HO and N Scale *SurfLiner* convention cars are still available! They can be yours for \$15.00 each (originally sold for \$30 at the convention). Each purchase includes a *SurfLiner* convention pin. Please contact Vic Cavalli for information: director@ladiv-nmra.org



Superintendent's Report

- Jeff Smith

As we head into the fall season and start to feel the excitement of the holidays approaching, I want to take a moment to thank all the members who participated in recent events that continue to make the LA Division such a vibrant and active part of the NMRA.

Thank You for Supporting Our Layout Tours

A heartfelt thank-you to all who attended the layout tours we coordinated this quarter. These events are only possible because of our enthusiastic members and generous layout hosts. Your participation helps build the camaraderie and inspiration that fuel this great hobby.

PSR Convention – Looking Ahead

I had the pleasure of attending the **Pacific Southwest Region (PSR) Convention** in Irvine this past September. It was a great event, and I'm proud to say that **in just three years, the LA Division will be hosting the PSR convention once again!**

Planning has already begun, and we're currently brainstorming potential locations, clinics, layout tours, and activities. We'd love to hear your ideas—what would you like to see at your future convention? It's never too early to get involved, so please reach out and let us know what would make this an unforgettable event.

LA Area Prototype Modelers Meet – Bellflower

Though not an NMRA-sponsored event, the recent **LA Area Prototype Modelers Meet** in Bellflower was a fantastic gathering. Over 250 pieces of equipment were on display, and I enjoyed connecting with many fellow modelers from both the **LA and Cajon Divisions**.

The LA Division had a booth at the event, and we may have even gained a member or two! Events like this reinforce the importance of visibility and outreach in keeping our community growing and thriving.

Tis the Season to Share the Hobby

With the holiday season approaching, I encourage every NMRA member to think about ways we can give back—especially to families with old or unused train sets. If you hear of someone struggling to get their train running again for a holiday display, why not lend a hand?

A little help from an experienced model railroader can make all the difference—and maybe even spark a lifelong love of the hobby.

Layouts Wanted

We're working on lining up more layout visits and events for the coming months. If you have a layout you'd be willing to showcase—or if you know someone who does—please let us know. Layout tours are one of the best ways we build fellowship and share techniques within the Division.

Thank you again for being an active part of the NMRA and the Los Angeles Division. Let's keep the momentum going, support each other, and continue making model railroading the best hobby in the world.

Member's Photography

- John Parrish



“A Sunny Day on the Santa Fe”

Member's Photography

- John Parrish



“Turbine Power”

Member's Photography

- John Parrish



“Keeping ‘em Cold”

Member's Photography

- John Parrish



“Red Rock Country”

Member's Photography

- John Parrish



“SP Moving Energy”

A special thank you to John for submitting his photographs. If you'd like to share your modeling in a future issue, please reach out to the editor.



Pacific Southwest Region 2026 Convention National Model Railroad Association

Presented by: The San Diego Division
September 9th to 13th, 2026

Come join us in beautiful San Diego for the PSR 2026 Model Railroaders Convention.

The convention has many model railroad activities including an array of clinics, prototype tours, contests,

layout tours, hobo breakfast, hobo auction and a swap meet. The introductory event will be held at the famous Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park. The final event will be the Banquet. The speaker will be SP Author & Historian Jeff Cauthen.

The San Diego Division has some excellent layouts, many of which have been published in popular model railroad magazines. You will be able to view those layouts during the convention. Clinics will include Modeling with the PSR Masters led by Gary Butts, MMR and special guest clinics via Zoom. There will be activities every night of the convention.



Sirius Satellite Radio Show: Well-known radio personality and Hollywood walk of fame, "Shotgun" Tom Kelly will interview model railroaders attending the convention which will be aired on his radio show.

The convention will take place at **the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel San Diego-Mission Valley at 7450 Hazard Center Drive, San Diego, California.**

The hotel is near a trolley stop that provides access to most areas of San Diego. Mission Valley is a centrally located area with access to popular areas of San Diego including restaurants, shopping centers and the beaches.



The convention registration direct link is here:

<https://sandiegodivisionpsrnmra.regfox.com/all-aboard-for-2026>

Additional information and the link for the hotel reservation is here:

<https://www.sandiegodivision.org/index.php/convention-2026>

You can also book a room by phoning 800-222-TREE. Make sure to mention that you are booking to attend the Pacific Southwest Region Model Railroaders Convention.

Membership Report

- John McGreevy

Update to local member groups forming

In the previous *Coupler* I brought up the idea of forming local member groups with our LA Division. Here is a progress update.

We have three local groups in their initiative states. They are centered around these areas:

Claremont

Northern LA County

Western Ventura County

How are they doing? Read on.

Claremont - Charley Hepperle is open to being contacted by other local members. He does not have a home layout but is the founder of the "20's, 30's and Beyond Model Railroad" that some of us have seen at train shows. You can find them at <http://www.trainweb.org/20s30s/>. Here is an update from Charley: Seeing that there were six NMRA members in my Los Angeles suburb, I contacted John McGreevy who passed my contact information on to them. Two responded. One, Tom Volz, was available immediately and another who would be away for a month or so. I introduced myself via email to Tom and included some online links to show him what I was doing in the hobby. We met at a local coffee place one afternoon and had a great time. He's long retired from a mechanical engineering career that included experience in a variety of industries and locales that often were rail-served. We spent about an hour and a half jumping from topic to topic relating to what we were doing with model railroading. Both of us are/were in modular clubs. I'm sure that we'll be getting together again and including others in the area.

In late September Tom Matreyek joined Tom Volz and me at a coffeehouse here in Claremont. We had a wonderful time talking about model trains and 1:1, too, within earshot of Metrolink trains stopping at the depot. We're making plans to visit a couple of private layouts after I'm freed up from my module club's participation in a show in early October.

Northern LA County – Mark Cheer is looking to get together with local modelers. Here is what he shared with me: Mark Cheer, NMRA bio:

My name is Mark; I live in Castaic in the Santa Clarita valley. I am a broadcast engineer, married, with a college-aged daughter.

I grew up around the South Bay and LA Harbor area of Los Angeles, in the 70's. ATSF and SP were all around, and the Santa Fe harbor division went right through my grandmother's tract of homes in Harbor City. The whole house shook when the freights went by. I used to ride my bike to watch trains and dabbled in modeling with blue-box Athearn's as a teen, when there were model train shops in the South Bay area. My dad would take me to Hobart Yard, and the Tehachapi loop and I would railfan with my little 110 camera back in the day.

Membership Report

- John McGreevy

I took a 40 year pause in the hobby and am now getting back into it with serious attention to track laying, foliage, fine detail modeling, painting, weathering etc.

I built a small HO shelf layout, and some railroad dioramas for fine tuning and learning the skills needed for the hobby. I plan on building a larger layout in a spare bedroom when my daughter goes to college starting this fall.

I model HO scale, 80's era, a time of lots of EMD diesels, lots of color, logos, less graffiti, and crews would sometimes even give you a ride in a locomotive.

Other past hobbies include Amateur Radio, Electronics, Boating, and Aviating. I hope to meet others who enjoy modeling and trains, thank you! Mark

Thomas Brooks and Mark connected through this exchange. Now Mark has joined the Pasadena Model Railroad Club (PMMRM) because of this. Please reach out to Mark, especially those of you in the northern part of our division. Plus join the Sandhouse Chat Zoom call on the first Thursday of each month for a chance to meet virtually.

Western Ventura County – This is our newest and perhaps most promising group. First, I must thank Irwin Nathanson for taking the lead. Irwin is the former President of the Hudson Berkshire Division of the Northeast Region. There are already 9 members and most of them have shared information about their interests with Irwin. Now they are working out the details for the first meetup and then they can decide on how to keep things rolling.

Here are some of the thoughts Irwin and I circulated to this group:

Perhaps the division could promote local 'Round Robin Groups where members would host other members, perhaps once a week or once a month (at least to start). During these visits members could engage in any of the following:

- Operate
- Just run trains (the host's or their own)
- Work on the host's layout...maintenance, track work, scenery
- Watch videos/DVDs
- Review host's layout plans (track plans etc.)
- Socialize (hosts may want to supply coffee, soft drinks, donuts, chips/salsa, etc.)
- Visit local clubs (Gold Coast in Camarillo and Santa Susana Pacific in Simi Valley, after making arrangements)
- Exchange modeling tips
- Host mini swap meets
- Misc.

Membership Report

- John McGreevy

These kinds of ideas can work in all the local areas. The responses we received also highlight some of the “hidden talents” and interests of our members? Here are some examples from the members of this new group:

Peter: Involved with Pasadena Model Railroad, moderator for I/O Group Heads Up Coast Fans

Steve: Involved in FreeMoN and 3D printing Ken: Well versed in the NMRA Discord site.

David: Worked for the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific. He originally hired out on the LA Division and worked on the Coast Line until about 1983 when he accepted an opportunity to move to Northern California, Shasta Division

Jeff: Lone Wolf modeler who welcomes the chance to get together with local modelers Sudro: Gold Coast Model Railroad Club member and active HO Modeler.

We are just getting started! Of course, what we need are active members. Who wants to lead a local group in Long Beach, VanNuys, Torrance and more? A group of 4 to 10 could meet at members' homes, parks or restaurants. If someone wants to lead a local group, let me know. Send me a short paragraph about yourself. I will circulate your information to all potential members in your local area. Like the three groups above, you may be surprised by the positive responses and opportunities to share the hobby.

Here's another follow up thought for you. **Wouldn't you like to know if other members share your interests?** I have heard that the NMRA used to have a member directory. I suppose legitimate privacy concerns may have been part of the reason this doesn't exist. We could create a voluntary list of members' interests that could include:

The scale(s) you model

Freelance or Prototype Prototype Railroad Interested in Era modeled

Home layout?

Club member? Areas of Expertise

What areas would you like help in? Activities you would like to see offered.

I propose we start a directory that could be on our LA Division website for those willing to share their data. Those are my thoughts on this issue; please share yours!

John McGreevy Membership Chair

NMRAPSRLAjohnmc@gmail.com



Financial Report

9/30/2025

-Kevin Spady

U.S. Bank National Association

Account Number

Account Summary

	# Items				
Beginning Balance on Sep 2		\$	15,802.63	Interest Paid this Year	\$ 0.27
Customer Deposits	1		836.41	Number of Days in Statement Period	30
Other Deposits	1		0.06		
Ending Balance on Sep 30, 2025		\$	16,639.10		

Customer Deposits

Number	Date	Ref Number	Amount		
	Sep 29	8014471615	836.41		
				Total Customer Deposits	\$ 836.41

Other Deposits

Date	Description of Transaction	Ref Number	Amount		
Sep 30	Interest Paid	3000006297	0.06	\$	0.06
				Total Other Deposits	\$ 0.06

Balance Summary

Date	Ending Balance	Date	Ending Balance
Sep 29	16,639.04	Sep 30	16,639.10

Balances only appear for days reflecting change.

First Thursday of the Month Sand House Chats!

WHAT: Sand House Chats is your chance to find out what others in the Los Angeles Division have been up to the previous month

WHEN: Held the first Thursday evening on each month starting at 7:00pm (chats typically last about an hour)

FORMAT: Roundtable style, very informal, no agenda ...via the Zoom app

WHO: Available to all members of the Los Angeles Division

HOW TO JOIN: Contact VicCavalli@comcast.net for your *free* link

Advisory Board Contact List

OFFICERS

Director Vic Cavalli director@ladiv-nmra.org (805) 680-5826	Superintendent Jeff Smith superintendent@ladiv-nmra.org (562) 867-5627	Paymaster Kevin Spady kspady@att.net (818) 644-7170	Chief Clerk Nick Lisica Lisican@gmail.com (831) 594-7640
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TEAMS, COMMITTEES, and CHAIRS

Members' Services Team

Team Chair and Membership Recruitment/Retention – John McGreevy

membership@ladiv-nmra.org (805) 907-2367

Members' Services Chair - Vacant

Events Scheduling - Vacant

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lisican@gmail.com (831) 594-7640

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lisican@gmail.com (831) 594-7640

AContests/Achievement Program Chair – Gary Butts, MMR

gary.cajon@gmail.com (714) 842-4980

L.A. Division Historian - Vacant

Nominations and Elections Chair - John McGreevy

Non-Rail Coordinator - Vacant

Upcoming Model Railroad & Prototype Events

Areas Covered:

Counties of Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Mono, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara & Ventura + National Conventions

Last updated: 10/01/2025

Recurring

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 Heritage Park, Corona, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
1st Tuesday of each month – L.A. Division Sponsored "Sand House Chat", starts at 7:00 p.m.
1st Saturday of each month – Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club Open House, Camarillo, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
3rd Saturday of each month (except October) – Arizona Division Monthly Zoom Meet, starts at 10:00 a.m.
3rd Sunday of each month – Pasadena Model Railroad Open House, Los Angeles, 1:00-5:00 p.m. Admission charged.
Last Saturday of each month – Railmaster Hobbies' Model Railroad Fellowship Get-Together, Bellflower

Upcoming

October 18 – Arizona Division Meet, Scottsdale Congregational United Church of Christ, Scottsdale, AZ
October 18 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino
October 25 – San Bernardino History & Railroad Museum's Railroad Memorabilia Show, San Bernardino

November 1 – Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet & Open House, Santa Susana Park, Simi
November 8 – Arizona Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet, Glendale Christian Church, Glendale, AZ
November 8 – San Diego Division Fall Meet, San Diego Model Railroad Museum, San Diego
November 8-9 – Great Train Show, San Bernardino County Fairgrounds, Victorville
November 8, 9 & 11 – California Southern Model Railroad Club Open House, Norwalk
November 9 – All Gauges Tucson Model Trains Swap Meet, Gadsden Pacific Division Toy Train Operating Museum, Tucson, AZ
November 15 – Layouts of L.A. Division – East Valley Lines Model Railroad Open House, Travel Town, Los Angeles (RSVPs required)
November 15-16 – "Cactus Crawl" Layout Tours, AZ (state-wide)

December 13 – San Diego Division Model Railroad Tour, Dinner & Holiday Party, Santee

Upcoming Model Railroad & Prototype Events

2026

January 31-February 1 – Great Train Show, Ventura County Fairgrounds, Ventura

February 14-15 – Great Train Show, Orange County Fair & Events Center, Costa Mesa

February 28 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino

April 30-May 3 – PCR Convention “Extra 2026 North Limited”, Rohnert Park

July 25 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino

September 9-13 – PSR Annual Convention “All Aboard for 2026”, Double Tree Hotel - San Diego/Mission Valley, San Diego

October 17 – Roundhouse Gang Model Railroad Club Swap Meet, San Bernardino

*For inclusion, please send announcements at least 3 months in advance to:
VicCavalli@Comcast.net*

Advertisement Guidelines

Interested in Advertising in the LA Coupler?

Please note that advertisements in the *LA Coupler* need to be related to the hobby of model railroading (including prototype railroading). All ads are to be supplied by the owner and published at the discretion of the *LA Coupler* editor and/or the LA Division Advisory Board. If you have questions about the guidelines, please reach out to the editor at Lisican@gmail.com

Publishing guidelines for ads are as follows:

Ad space is sold on an annual basis (four issues, published quarterly), for a full, ½, ¼, or ⅛ page sized ad

A commitment for two issues is requested up front (totaling 50% of the total costs), a full year commitment would receive a discount of 10% on the price.

	Full Page Ad	Half Page Ad	Quarter Page Ad	Eighth Page Ad
Annual Cost	\$100	\$60	\$40	\$25
Minimum 2 Issue Commitment	\$50	\$30	\$20	\$12.50
Full Year Discount (less 10%)	\$90	\$54	\$36	\$22.50

Payments are to be made to the LA Division NMRA. Please contact the editor for details.

Funds from advertising go directly toward supporting your Los Angeles Division of the NMRA.



**For more information on the NMRA
please visit www.NMRA.org**

Special Thanks to Railmaster Hobbies

*9812 Belmont St.
Bellflower, CA 90706
(562) 867-5627
www.railmasterhobbies.com*

Thank you for supporting the LA Coupler!

