

LA Coupler

The Newsletter of the Los Angeles Division of the NMRA



Giving Back to a Long Time Member

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

In This Issue:

Welcoming our new LA Div Director

PSR Convention Photos

...and more!

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On the Cover... Jeff Smith shares an act of giving back to a long standing Los Angeles Division Member.

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

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Submission Deadlines

Spring Issue: February 1

Summer Issue: May 1

Fall Issue: August 1

Winter Issue: November 1

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Jeff Smith

Electronic PDF Distribution:

Kurt Matthews

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

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Thank you for supporting the LA Division!



Superintendent's Report

- Jeff Smith

September has been a busy month for the LA Division.

We had a great time attending the PSR Convention in San Diego. It was good to see fellow model railroaders, visit with old friends, and enjoy everything the convention had to offer. Next year the PSR Convention will be held in Mesa, Arizona, and then in 2028 it will be our turn when the LA Division hosts the Regional Convention.

I am happy to report that we have found a Chairperson for the 2028 Regional Convention. Thank you to Frank Kenny for stepping up and taking on this important job. I am sure Frank will be reaching out to members for help as we get closer.

We all have to pitch in. One person alone cannot put on a successful convention. It takes all of us working together.

One thing that concerns me is our membership. We have now dropped below 200 members.

Folks, we need more members.

The question is, how do we get there?

We have been holding layout tours and would also like to start hosting more one-day, in-person events. These could be clinics, layout visits, operating sessions, demonstrations, or simply a chance for model railroaders to get together and enjoy the hobby.

If you would like to help with an event, host something, or have an idea you think the Division should try, we would love to hear from you. Just drop me a line and we will get the ball rolling. The more members who get involved, the stronger our Division will become.

We also have several mini groups within our Division. Looking for a group? Let us know and we will tell you if there is a group in your area and help get you connected. Sometimes getting together with a smaller group of local model railroaders is one of the best ways to enjoy the hobby.

We are also working on tracking down our 28 Life Members. Over the years, contact information changes, emails change, and people move. We want to make sure we can still reach everyone.

Superintendent's Report

- Jeff Smith

If you are one of our Life Members and you are receiving this newsletter, please drop me a quick email and let me know you are still receiving our messages. That will help us update our records.

Visit a Model Railroad Club in the LA Division

Did you know that there are 13 model railroad clubs in the LA Division with permanent operating layouts inside a building?

That is pretty impressive when you stop and think about it.

To the best of my knowledge, Orange County, San Bernardino County, and Riverside County do not currently have permanent model railroad club layouts. They have modular groups, but not permanent club layouts like we have in Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

So take advantage of what we have. With 13 operating model railroad club layouts in our Division, there really is something for everyone.

Where are they?

- Camarillo – Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club – HO
- Glendale – Glendale Model Railroad Society – HO
- Los Angeles – Amtrak Employees Model Railroad Club – HO
- Los Angeles – East Valley Lines – N
- Los Angeles – Los Angeles Model Railroad Society – HO/HOn3
- Los Angeles – Pasadena Model Railroad Museum – HO
- Norwalk – California Southern Model Railroad Club – HO
- Pasadena – Slim Gauge Guild – HO, HOn3, S, and Sn3
- Pomona – Fairplex Garden Railroad – G
- San Gabriel – Highland Park Society of Railroad Engineers – HO
- San Pedro – Angels Gate Hi-Railers Model Railroad Club – O
- San Pedro – Belmont Shore Model Railroad Club – N
- Simi Valley – Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society – HO

With HO, N, O, S, HOn3, Sn3, and G scale represented, there is something for just about every model railroader.

Have you visited these clubs?

If not, please do.

Superintendent's Report

- Jeff Smith

Some of these clubs are hurting for members and would love the opportunity to show you around, tell you what they are doing, and maybe even put a membership application in your hand.

You may find a club that fits exactly what you are looking for. You may find a new place to run trains, learn something new, work on a layout, and make some new friends along the way.

Supporting these clubs also helps keep model railroading strong in Southern California.

The LA Division has a lot going on and even more coming up over the next couple of years, especially with the 2028 Regional Convention.

We need your help, your ideas, and your participation.

If you have an idea for the Division, want to host an event, want to help with a tour, are looking for a mini group, want to visit one of our clubs, or want to get involved with the 2028 convention, please let us know.

This is our Division, and the more we all participate, the better it will be.

Let's keep the LA Division moving forward and keep model railroading strong.

Jeff Smith

Superintendent, NMRA LA Division

The 2028 PSR Convention Needs You!

The Los Angeles Division will be hosting the 2028 Pacific Southwest Region Convention and is looking for volunteers to help plan the event. If you've been to a local convention, you know it takes a team of dedicated volunteers to put it on.

We are looking for any and all members who'd like to step up and lend a hand!

Volunteer Opportunities Include:

Convention Chair

Committee Chairs

Layout Hosts

Clinicians

Convention Staffing Volunteers

etc

So, if you've ever wondered what goes into planning a convention, or have ideas on what would make a great event, please reach out to LA Division Superintendent Jeff Smith today!

superintendent@ladiv-nmra.org

You don't have to be an LA Division Member to step up!



Director's Report

- Pat Raymer

"Back in the Saddle Again" by Pat Raymer

Greetings fellow PSR members!

As many of you may remember, many moons ago I served as Director of the L.A. Division. I am once again back in the saddle as Director, completing Vic Cavalli's term. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Vic was unable to continue in the position, so you might say I am "interim Director". I would like to thank Vic for his service to the Division over the past years. I would also like to thank the L.A. Division members who voted in the Director election. Even though it was a one horse race (as is so common in our Division and Region elections), your participation demonstrates an interest in the Division and its governance. Personally, this encourages me to go forward and improve the Division and the value we offer our members.

And so, Mona and I headed to the **"All Aboard For 2026"** PSR Regional Convention in San Diego with me now representing the LA Div. as the Director. The Board of Directors meeting was very productive, and we covered a lot of business. There were great clinics, the Hobo breakfast, swap meet, Hobo Auction, non-rail activities, Celebration of Models, and awards. Some of us even got to be radio personalities for a moment! Shotgun Tom Kelly of Sirius Satellite Radio interviewed a number of attendees for his 60's Gold show. Some photos of the convention should appear in this issue. We had a fabulous time, and if you missed it, you missed a good one.

One very important subject garnered a lot of discussion, that of the cost and structure of future conventions. L.A. Division is slated to host the 2028 PSR Regional Convention. We are taking a hard look at how to make this more affordable and accessible for our members. We have formed a core convention committee, with PSR Vice President Frank Kenny chairing the effort. We are seeking volunteers at all levels to assist with this production. If you have an interest in helping, please reach out to us. Remember, all volunteer time for the convention accrues time credits at the regional level. This could easily earn you a Certificate of Achievement as association volunteer. The sooner you step up, the more time credits you will earn. There will be much more regarding the convention coming soon, so please follow along with our progress.

Director's Report

- Pat Raymer

One last note before I sign off. After returning from San Diego, Mona and I stopped by to visit Fred Hill at the Original Whistle Stop in Pasadena. He was forced to move from the Colorado Blvd. property he has inhabited for decades due to an exorbitant attempt at a rent increase. His new location is just around the corner at 23 N. Altadena Dr. Although smaller in in square footage, he still has an impressive amount of stock on hand. If you are wondering what will become of the iconic neon sign at the previous location, it is being donated to the Museum of Neon Art.

That's all for now, but there is much more to come!

See you down the line,

Pat



Original Handy Holders

Ergonomically designed to protect your rolling stock

N Scale Handy Holder "Pro"



- Overall dimensions 11 3/4"L x 8 7/8"W x 3"H
- Main channel: 11 3/4"L x 3/4"W x 1/2"D
- Second channel for holding parts
- Angled channel for detailing/weathering
- 2 convenient tool holders

HO Scale Handy Holder "Pro"



- Overall dimensions 11 3/4"L x 8 7/8"W x 3"H
- Main channel: 11 3/4" L x 1 7/16"W x 1"D
- Second channel for holding parts
- Angled channel for detailing/weathering
- 2 convenient tool holders

O Scale Handy Holder "Pro"



- Overall dimensions 18"L x 7"W x 3 1/4"H
- Channel dimensions 18"L x 2 7/16"W x 2"D
- Birch wood base with non-slip feet
- 3 convenient tool holes

G Scale Handy Holder "Pro"



- Overall dimensions 21"L x 10 1/2"W x 5 3/4"H
- Channel dimensions 21"L x 4 1/2"W x 3 1/4"D
- Birch wood base with non-slip feet
- 3 convenient tool holes



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*Pictures for illustration only, products do not include trains and tools.



Membership Report

- John McGreevy

The Ventura Group continues to hold meetings almost every month. The most recent meeting was held in the home of Peter and Cathleen Ely. Several members enjoyed a presentation on layout design. The speaker was Bruce Morden from the Pacific Coast Region. PSR members have also been invited to PCR sponsored events. Some have been virtual and others in person. In late August a combination Clinic on Operations and Operating Session was scheduled. More on how that went next time.

Our County Line Crew draws in members from the Cajon Division. Joel Morse hosted Los Angeles and Cajon Division members when he had an open house on the first of the month. All NMRA members have been invited to the Gold Coast Modular Club open house this month. Again, more on that next time.

The point is that the more we mingle, the more opportunities for mingling come up. When we know each other it's easier to convince yourself to take the time and make the drive. More opportunities are ahead. The region's annual Convention is next month. Ron Varnell is hosting NMRA members on Veteran's Day at his AEWRR Model Railroad in Torrance.

I have heard from some of you of more interest in the small local groups. Rumor has it another one may be starting up soon. You can help to make that happen. Reach out and start something. Before you know it, your own group will be meeting on a regular basis.



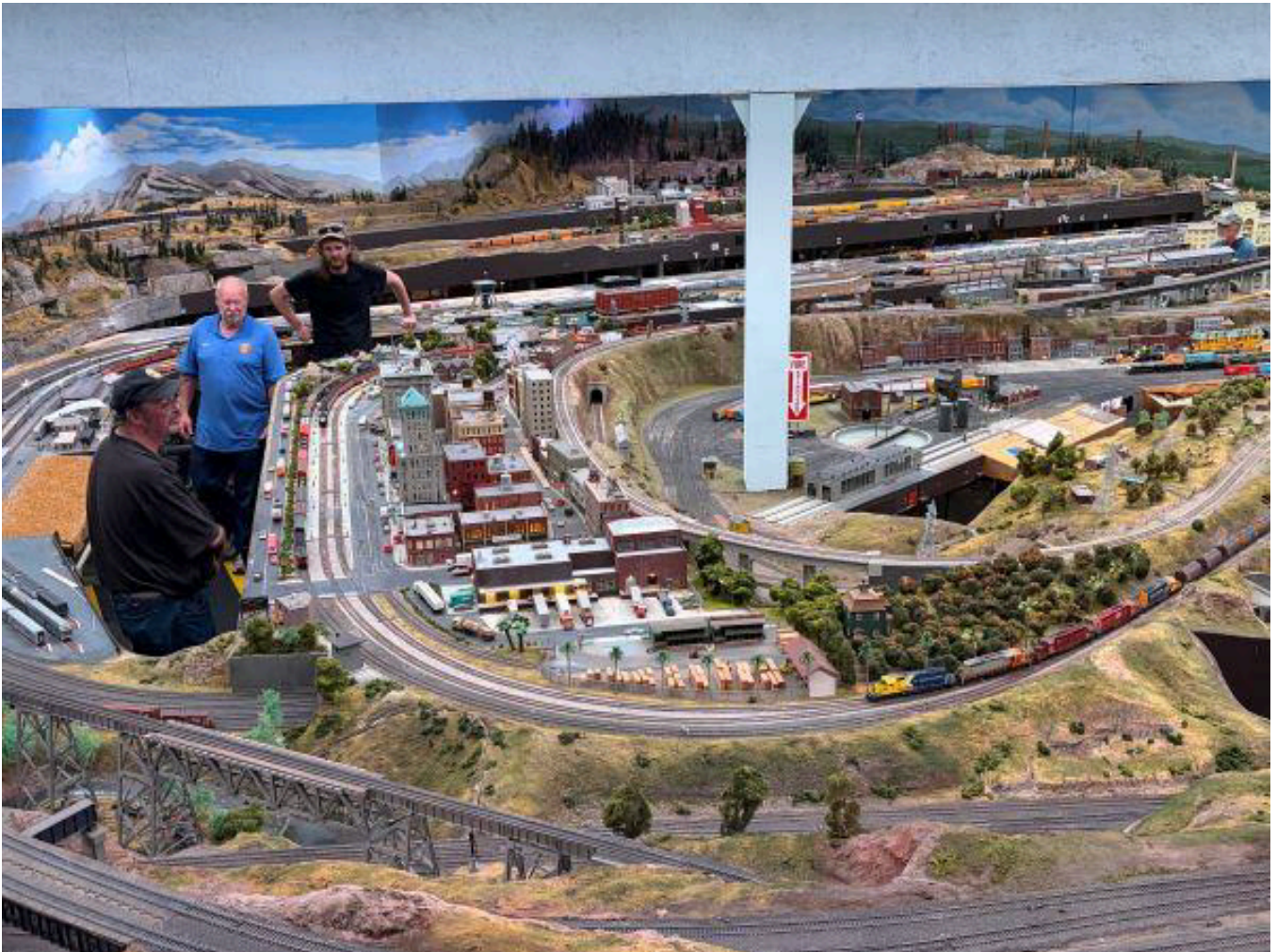
Bruce Morden presenting to
the Ventura Group in August
2026

Membership Report

- John McGreevy

Something else a modeler can do is join a club. The Los Angeles Division has a dozen clubs with permanent layouts. Many have open houses on a regular schedule. Several have hosted special events for our NMRA members. Then there are modular clubs of nearly every scale. There are Garden Railroad groups and outdoor layouts available for public viewing. We can't forget our Hobby Stores. They deserve your support. There are some large cities with one or no such stores. We are blessed with several. When you check out these clubs and stores you will expand your knowledge and circle of friends. All these groups, locations and stores can be found by visiting our website. Check out ladivnmra.org. Mark Fischer has done a wonderful job adding content and keeping it updated.

NMRA



NMRA members from The Santa Susana Pacific Model Railroad Society visit the historic Pasadena Model Railroad Museum.

Membership Report

- John McGreevy



Cathleen and Peter Ely at the Pasadena Model Railroad Museum.
Gracious Hosts.

Membership Report

- John McGreevy

Santa Susana Swap Meet and Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club Visit:

On August 22 NMRA members had the opportunity for a twofer. In the morning the quarterly Santa Susana Swap Meet was held. NMRA, as usual, was well represented. We even signed up a new member, Brian Bean. Welcome! If you haven't ever gone, you should. Of course, there is the opportunity for great bargains and hard to find items. Plus, there are many knowledgeable modelers present. The members of the Santa Susana Pacific club, housed in the nearby fully restored Southern Pacific Combination Depot no. 22, run the swap meet. Their members show up early, set up tables, make coffee and buy donuts. When the swap meet is over, they put everything away and then prepare to open up their HO scale model railroad for visitors (Open House is 11-4). For those of us who like 1:1 scale, several Amtrak trains pass by during the swap meet. Your next opportunity is November 7 at 8am. Be there!



The Gold Coast Modular Railroad club opened their doors for the NMRA at Noon. Several members made the trip to Camarillo to enjoy it. The club has a great location in a shaded industrial park. They tell me they have increased their membership since moving to this location. Best of all is that many of their members are very young. We saw 3 generations represented. The permanent HO layout isn't all they do. During the recent Ventura County Fair they displayed their traveling modular layout as they have done for several years. Thank you Sudro Brown for hosting us!

All Aboard for 2026 PSR Convention

- Pat Raymer



(L-R) Western Director Lee Calkins, PSR President Joel Morse, and Magnus Christerson discuss the Puget Sound Express NMRA National Convention at the PSR Membership meeting



(L-R) Kathy Stoner, Kim Fowler, and Molly McGreevy painting clay pots

All Aboard for 2026 PSR Convention

John and Molly
McGreevy chat with
Shotgun Tom Kelly on
his Sirius XM 60's
Gold radio show



Per Hawre of the
Cajon Division
working on a
craftsman kit

Helping a Fellow Model Railroader

- Jeff Smith



Sometimes model railroading is more than just trains, track, scenery, and operations. Sometimes it is about helping a friend and doing something that really makes a difference.

Bob DeMoss has been involved in model railroading for many years. He is a former board member of the NMRA Los Angeles Division and is still a member today. Bob has always enjoyed the hobby and has wanted to have a layout, but as he has gotten older, building and setting one up has become much more difficult.

As Superintendent of the LA Division, I knew I had to do something for Bob. Bob has given many years to the hobby and to the Division, and I wanted to find a way to help him enjoy model railroading again.

One day while I was visiting Bob, he mentioned that he had a layout stored along the side of his house and that he wanted me to have it. That got me thinking. Instead of taking the layout, I thought maybe we could fix it up and get it running again for Bob.

That is where everything started.

Our friend Steve picked up the layout and took it to his house. He added legs to it so it could be set up properly. I later went over to Steve's house to check everything out. We cleaned the layout, checked the track, and made sure everything was working the way it should.

Helping a Fellow Model Railroader

- Jeff Smith

Then on a Sunday after I closed RailMaster Hobbies, our friend John and I went over to Steve's house to pick up the layout. We loaded it up and took it back to Bob's house. We set it up in his original living room and made sure everything was ready to go.

I donated a Santa Fe locomotive and some freight cars so Bob would have a train to run on the layout. After we got everything set up, we tested the train one more time and made sure it was all working.

Then Bob's caregiver brought him into the room.

The look on Bob's face was amazing. He was so happy to see the layout set up and a train running again.

That made all the work worth it.

With my wife, Leticia, and our friends John and Steve, we really made Bob's day. Everyone helped in some way, and together we were able to give Bob a chance to enjoy model railroading again.

To me, this is what the NMRA and the Los Angeles Division are all about. It is not just about meetings, layouts, trains, and operations. It is also about helping other model railroaders and being there for each other.

I was very glad that we were able to do this for Bob. Sometimes the best part of model railroading is not the trains. It is the people.



Jeff Smith
LA Division Superintendent
Owner, RailMaster Hobbies
Bellflower, California



Financial Report

8/31/2026

-Kevin Spady

Account Summary					
	# Items				
Beginning Balance on Aug 3		\$	16,146.71	Annual Percentage Yield Earned	0.004%
Customer Deposits	1		192.00	Account Interest Rate*	0.005%
Other Deposits	1		0.06	Interest Earned this Period	\$ 0.06
Checks Paid	1		79.00-	Interest Paid this Year	\$ 0.48
Ending Balance on Aug 31, 2026		\$	16,259.77	Number of Days in Statement Period	31
*The Account Interest Rate reflects the rate your account is earning as of the statement end date. The Annual Percentage Yield Earned is a blend of all the rates (including bonus rates) earned on your account during this statement period.					
Customer Deposits					
<i>Number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Ref Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>		
	Aug 28	9253014260	192.00		
				Total Customer Deposits	\$ 192.00
Other Deposits					
<i>Date</i>	<i>Description of Transaction</i>	<i>Ref Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>		
Aug 31	Interest Paid	3100001087	\$ 0.06		
				Total Other Deposits	\$ 0.06
Checks Presented Conventionally					
<i>Check</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Ref Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>		
0112	Aug 31	8055489279	79.00		
				Conventional Checks Paid (1)	\$ 79.00-

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 Pat Raymer director@ladiv-nmra.org (818) 296-7108	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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kspady@att.net (818) 644-7170

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L.A. Division Assistant Webmaster – Vacant

Publicity/Graphics Manager – Nick Lisica

lisican@gmail.com (831) 594-7640

Contests/Achievement Program Chair – Vacant

L.A. Division Historian - Vacant

Nominations and Elections Chair - John McGreevy

nmrapsrlajohnmc@gmail.com (805) 907-2367

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: 9/20/2026

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.
Saturdays through January 3rd – Christmas Tree Lane Model Train Society Open House, Altadena, 5:00-11:00 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.
1st and 3rd Saturday of each month – Glendale Model Railroad Society Open House, Glendale, 1:00–4:00 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

2026

October 3 – Los Angeles Area Prototype Modelers Meet, Bellflower

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

October 24 – Cajon Division Fall Meet, Riverside

November 7 – Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society Swap Meet & Open House, Simi Valley

November 7 – Coachella Valley Model Railroaders' Semi-Annual Open House, Indio

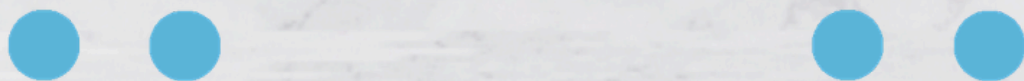
November 11 – San Diego Fall Meet at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego

December 5 – Los Angeles Model Railroad Society Holiday Open House, Harbor City

December 12 – Layouts of the San Diego Division – Wayne Pierce's On30 Minicition Railroad & Lumber Co., Dinner & Holiday Party, Santee

Please send announcements at least 3 months in advance to: VicCavalli@comcast.net

NMRA



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

Special Thanks to Railmaster Hobbies

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