



The Daylight Observation

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Next Meeting In Fresno

HobbyTown Hosts February Meet

By Dave Grenier

We hope you can join us for a fun-filled day of model railroading activities, including clinics, model and photo contests, layout tours, door prizes, the “World Famous” Daylight White Elephant Auction (well, WE know about it!), and, of course, the obligatory quarterly Daylight Division business meeting. The meet coordinator is Bob Sexton.



The meet is on Saturday, February 22, and starts at 9:00 AM (note earlier start time) with registration, refreshments, contest entries, socializing and more. The program begins at 10:00 AM.

Registration is \$4.00 for NMRA members, \$5.00 for non-members.

See the Daylight [website](#) for the latest information.

Schedule of Events

- 9:00 am – Registration, Refreshments, Contest Entries
- 10:00 am – Welcome, Clinics
- 12:00 pm – Break
- 12:15 pm – Daylight Business Meeting, Door Prizes, White Elephant Auction
- 1:30 pm – Adjourn for lunch and Layout Tours

Clinics: See the Daylight [website](#) for the latest information.

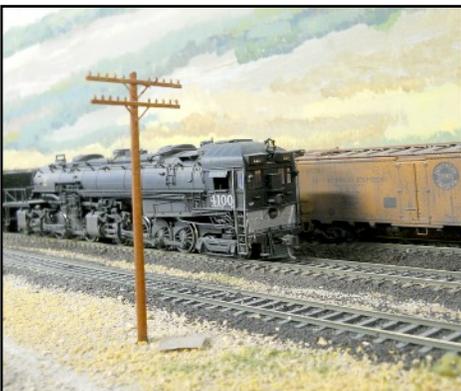
Contests Categories: Models: Caboose • Photos: Track and Structures

NOTE: Both categories have changed.

Beginning with this meet, we will have both a judged model contest and a favorite model contest, as determined by popular vote. Be sure to read Chuck Harmon’s Contest Report elsewhere in this issue for all the details. Display-only models, including works in progress, and photographs are also welcome.

NOTE: At the time this was being written (12/31/13), things were still in flux and may be different on the meet date. See the Daylight [website](#) for the latest information.

Next Daylight Meet is in Fresno on February 22, 2014 at Hobbytown U.S.A.



Continued on Next Page

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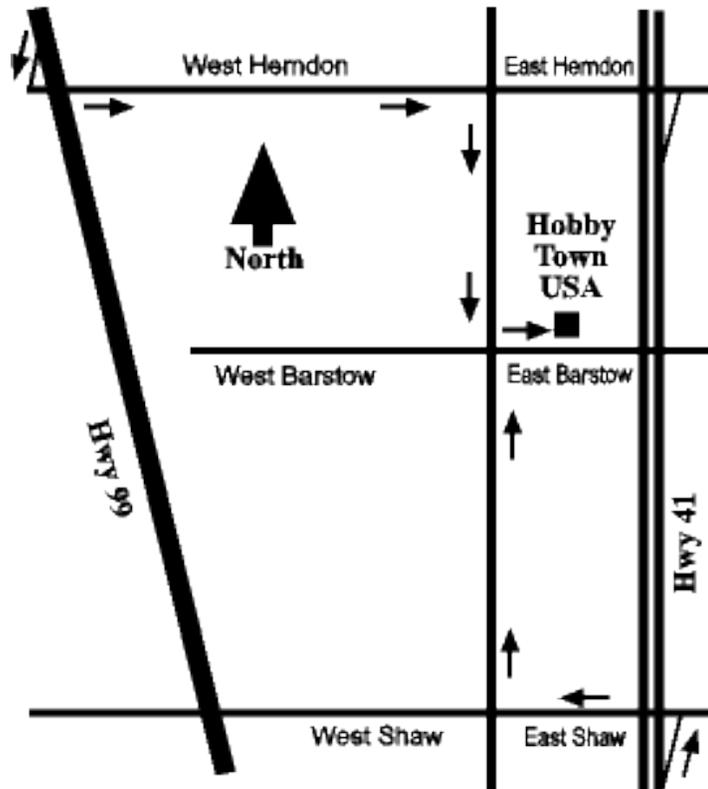
George Pisching • Gmpisching@netzero.com



February Meet

There will be tables for display-only items, in addition to contest entries. Please bring whatever items (prototype, model or photograph) that you are especially proud of and would like to display for our enjoyment.

Door Prizes & Auction: Donations of new, unused items for door prizes would be especially welcome. Remember to bring plain-wrapped rail-road-related items for the White Elephant Auction. The more the merrier! Think of it as “re-gifting!”” *Nc{qw'Vqwtu<'Ej gem'lj g'y gdukg'hqt'rc{qw'vqwtu0*



Driving Directions to Meet:

From the North:

Take Hwy 99 south.

Take Exit 143 toward Herndon Ave. Continue for ½ mile.

Stay straight onto N Golden State Blvd. Continue for .4 mile.

Turn left onto W Herndon Ave (at Taco Bell). Continue for 7.0 miles.

Turn right onto N Blackstone Ave (just past Maroa Ave). Continue for 1½ mi.

Turn left onto E Barstow Ave (at Chevron). Continue for 1/10 mi

HobbyTown USA will be on the left.

From the South:

Take Hwy 99 north.

Take Exit 131 and merge onto CA-41 N toward Airport/Yosemite. Continue for 6.6 miles.

Take Exit 132/Shaw Ave toward Clovis. Continue for .3 mile.

Turn left onto E Shaw Ave. Continue for .4 mile.

Turn right onto N Blackstone Ave (at 1st major intersection). Continue for .5 mile.

Turn right onto E Barstow Ave (at Chevron). Continue for 1/10 mi

HobbyTown USA will be on the left.

Chuck Harmon Named Contests Chair

Chuck Harmon was named the new Daylight Contests Chair, filling the vacancy left by the sudden passing of Steve Biggs this past October 29.



Thanks to Chuck for his willingness to take on this important job. Be sure to read Chuck's Contest Report elsewhere in this issue, where he describes the changes we have made to the contests. The contest categories have also been changed for upcoming meets and are posted on the website,

www.pcrnmra.org/daylight/



Be sure to stay up-to-date by visiting the Daylight Division Web Site often at

www.pcrnmra.org/daylight/

Updates are made regularly, so stay on schedule by being a regular visitor. See all the new items that have been added on the latest updates.

Director's Report **Coast Rails 2014** By Paul Deis



I couldn't say it any better, so I give you Steve Wesolowski's posting on the Yahoo PCR Group.

Hi PCR Members,

This is just a friendly reminder. You have less than 17 days left to register for only \$79.00 for the Coast Rails 2014 Pacific Coast Region, NMRA / SLO RR Museum Convention - *Trains to Hadley Jct.* It takes place from April 30 to May 4, 2014 in San Luis Obispo, California. After Midnight, January 31, 2014, Full Fare goes up \$10, to \$89.

To Register OnLine or download a Registration form to mail in and to learn about all other extra fares go to:

<http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2014/registration.html>

We also have a Special "First Timer" Fare of \$69.00. This is available for PCR members that have not registered for the past 5 conventions.

Visit our website to learn about the Clinics, Contests, Layouts, Prototype Tours, Modeling With The Masters, Train Rides and all the other Train Fun we've planned for your enjoyment.

<http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2014>

By the way, the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum is Co-Sponsoring 'PCR 2014,' which only adds to the fun we will all enjoy!

Until we see YOU April 30, Many Happy Trains to You until we meet again!



Coming Events

Bay Area Layout Design & Operations Weekend, January 24-26, 2014, Alameda.

O Scale West / S West Meet, February 6-8, 2014, Santa Clara.

GEHAMS Annual Model Train Show, March 8-9, 2014, Bakersfield.

Coast Rails 2014 PCR Convention, April 30 – May 4, 2014, San Luis Obispo.

Daylight Division meet, May 2, 2014, San Luis Obispo (at Coast Rails 2014)

Check the [PCR Master Calendar](#) for even more events.

In Memoriam

| Member | City | Joined NMRA |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Steve Biggs | Tehachapi CA | 1993 |

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|------|
| James Fitzgerald | Paso Robles CA | 1964 |
|------------------|----------------|------|

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|--|
| Patrick Boyle | Coarsegold CA | |
|---------------|---------------|--|

Welcome New Members

| Member | City/State |
|--------------|----------------|
| Riley Bishop | Bakersfield CA |

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Michael Stallings | Ridgecrest CA |
|-------------------|---------------|

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Bill Winter | Bakersfield CA |
|-------------|----------------|

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| Harry Schade | Arroyo Grande CA |
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From the Super's Desk

Dave's Dispatch

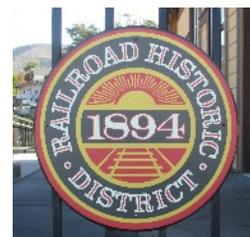
By Dave Grenier



By the time you read this, the 2013 holiday season will be behind us, but I hope 2014 is still young enough to wish all Daylighters a Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and you've been enjoying the shiny new toys you got from Santa.

The Daylight Division lost a good friend on October 29, when Contests Chair **Steve Biggs** passed away suddenly. I had the honor and pleasure of working with Steve since 2011, when he took the job, and at the 2012 and 2013 PCR conventions in the Contest Room. He will surely be missed. To fill the vacancy left by Steve's sudden passing, **Chuck Harmon** was named Contests Chair. Be sure to read his Contest Report elsewhere in this issue for the changes he has in store for the contests.

Our last meet of 2013 was held November 16, 2013, at the newly-restored San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum (SLORRM), located in the recently-restored historic 1894 Southern Pacific Freight House, in San Luis Obispo. We had a great turnout of 28 members and 20 visitors, for a total of 48 attendees, the most we've ever had at a Daylight meet, according to **John Houlihan**. For me, it was an exciting, fun-filled day of clinics, contests, door prizes, white elephant auction, layout tours and more in the Daylight Division.



First-time meet organizers **George Gibson** and **Andrew Merriam** did a terrific job getting the refreshments, clinics, layout tours and the venue setup for us. I especially want to thank our hosts, the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum (SLORRM), for their hospitality and for opening their facility to us. We're looking forward to having future Daylight meets at this great venue.

Both **George Gibson** and **Andrew Merriam** presented clinics. Andrew kicked off the meet with an interesting and educational clinic about the history of railroads in the San Luis Obispo area and the development of the SLORRM. SLO is definitely a railroad town rich in railroading history! George followed with an informative PowerPoint clinic on how he scratch-built a mine structure to hide a Tortoise switch machine mounted upside down on the surface of his layout.

George Gibson won the Favorite Model Diesel Locomotive contest with his DK&P Boxcab Diesels. **Mike Mickens** won the Passenger Train Photo contest with his photo of the Grand Canyon Railroad in snow at Williams, Arizona. **Bruce Morden** won the \$25 door prize.

Following the spirited White Elephant Auction, led by auctioneer **Terry Taylor**, there were five layout tours, starting with our host's museum-quality HOn3 Pacific Coast Railway Harford Pier and town of Avila, incorporating the award-winning wood truss bridge featured on the cover of the September 2012 issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman*.

Continued on Next Page

Letters to the Editor:

Hi George,

Just read your latest issue. WOW! That is one fine newsletter. You and Gary Ray in Sierra Div. are setting a very high standard in editor efforts. Great job and fun to read. I'm especially taken with the photography where just about everyone is smiling and look like they are having a good time. Thanks for all your effort. Rod Smith

Has anyone seen my locomotives?

I am missing a box of locomotives. This box contained a few locos that were my Father's so there is also some sentimental value to them. I believe the box went missing during the late summer of 2013.

I have attached a list of the missing locomotives in the hope that you will let me know if you have been approached to buy any of them. Thank you in advance for any assistance or knowledge you can provide me.

I got your address from an email from Chuck Harmon.

Graham TOMKINS
3925 E Feemster Ave.
Visalia 93292-9265

Email: bgtdcn@gmail.com
Tele: 559-627-0747

If anyone has knowledge of the missing locomotives please contact Graham directly. If you want to see the list of locos contact me at

gmpisching@netzero.com

Dave's Dispatch

The second layout was **Andrew Merriam's** HO layout based on the SP Coast Line in the early 1950s, depicting the area from Santa Margarita to Guadalupe, including the Cuesta Grade horseshoe curve and Stenner Creek Trestle. The third layout was **George Gibson's** new HO/HOn3 layout under construction, based on a freelance railroad trying to make a go of it at the height of the Great Depression. The fourth layout was **Logan Bertolette's** rarely-open-to-the-public HO layout that captures the flavor of the SP in Southern Arizona. The fifth layout was the HO layout built by the late **Jack Parker** of Central Valley Model Works and now operated by his son and daughter-in-law, **Jeff and Heather**. It represents the Northern Pacific in Montana in the era from the early 1940s to the early 1960s. If you missed these layouts, there's a good chance they will be open for layout tours and maybe an operating session or two during the Coast Rails 2014 PCR Convention in San Luis Obispo, April 30 to May 4, 2014.

All in all, it was an absolutely fabulous meet. Lest you think I'm biased, here are some comments sent to me by other attendees:

Josh and Theresa Copeland, Lemoore –

“Theresa and I just wanted to thank everyone at the SLO Daylight meet. It was our first live experience with NMRA. Everyone we met was super nice and made us feel very welcome. Having no idea what to expect, the day went wonderful.”

“The two clinics were very informative. Growing up in Northern California and currently living in the Central Valley I had no idea the rich history of the railroad in SLO. Although Andrew crammed a lot of information into the hour, it sparked my interest in the area's history and in the SLORRM. I look forward to the next time I am in the area so we can revisit the museum. Theresa really enjoyed George's clinic on hiding the switch machine. It gave us both ideas about working on our own road.”

“Business meetings being business meetings, what can I say? I will say that it went fast and everyone got the business of the club done. It did make me chuckle to see Dave Grenier as Superintendent and AP Chair and during the meeting say he was nominated for a third position, and that he would need to wear a few hats.”

“When I first heard about the meet, I was not sure if I should go. Now, writing this I am so glad that I did. If you are new to the NMRA, make it a point to get to the next meet close to you. If you are a member and have not gone to a meet in a while, please make it to the next one, you might just give me the idea that I need for my layout.” - JC

Rex Miller, Long Beach –

“I just spend a very enjoyable weekend thanks to you and the members of the NMRA Daylight Division, and the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. I decided I wanted to attend the meet when I heard that Andrew Merriam was giving a presentation on the local railroad history and the development of the museum. I took the Pacific Surfliner up on Friday morning from LAUS (my home is in Long Beach), enjoying a beautiful ride along the ocean.”

Continued on Next Page

Help Wanted for *Dave's Dispatch* GEHAMS Show in March

by: Dave Grenier

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS !!!

The Daylight Division will have a table to promote the PCR and the hobby at the GEHAMS Annual Train Show in Bakersfield, March 8 & 9, 2014. We need some PCR members to staff the table both days.

If you're planning to attend the show, why not spend an hour or two meeting other train-lovers to help them learn more about the Daylight Division, PCR and NMRA? Volunteers get free admission to the show.

Feel free to bring small projects to work on during the show that visitors can watch and ask questions about. Painting figures, assembling models, or other activities that you can work on using part of the table would work out great. Electricity will be available. Bring your extension cord.

We need help to setup the table on Saturday morning before 10:00 AM and someone else to tear it down after 4:00 PM Sunday afternoon, plus the table staffing volunteers over the two days of the show. The show hours are 10 am to 5pm on Saturday and 10am to 4pm on Sunday. To help out your Region and Division or have any questions, email me at: grenida@pacbell.net.

We need commitments by Feb 14, 2014. If not enough people volunteer, we'll have to cancel the table. Don't let this happen, volunteer! Thanks in advance.

Dave Grenier, Superintendent
PCR Daylight Division
www.pcrnmra.org/daylight

The meet was a lot of fun. Andrew's presentation was outstanding, and George Gibson's presentation kept me busy taking notes; his tips on model building techniques inspired me to resume some currently stalled modeling projects. The new museum is a pleasure to browse through, and the museum staff goes out of their way to be welcoming and offer hospitality. I bought 2 nice books from their store."

"It was great to meet the members of the Daylight Division. The White Elephant Auction was a lot of fun. I bought a locomotive for \$5! The layout tour was excellent. Many thanks to Logan, George and Andrew for opening their homes."

"You have a very friendly group. While I was admiring Andrew's model of the Stenner Creek Bridge, a couple of guys told me how to find the prototype, which I was able to do just before it got dark."

"I want to thank you and the other folks who spend their time organizing and putting on events for all of us to enjoy. I initially heard about last weekend's Daylight Division meet from Bob Chapparo via his *Yahoo* news group, *Model Railroads of Southern California*. Many thanks to him too."
- RM

John Stahl, Fresno -

"This was only my second meeting but with a varied agenda, i.e. auction, clinic, favorite model, it keeps one from getting bored. Thoroughly enjoyed the layout tours with everyone being very gracious and open to all of my questions." - JS

Thanks to Josh, Rex, and John for their great comments and feedback on the meet. If you weren't at the meet, this should give you some idea of what you missed.

Three weeks later, on December 7, the Division had its 6th Annual Holiday Open House and Layout Tour. Eleven layouts, from Z to O scale, in Fresno and Clovis were open for the public to visit. Thanks to **Gary Saxton** for putting it together and especially to all the layout owners for opening their homes for us.

The next Daylight Division meet will be 9:00 AM, Saturday, February 22, 2014, at HobbyTown USA, 102 E. Barstow Ave, Fresno. See the [website](#) for all the details.

See you at the next meet! Come join us for an unforgettable day of Daylight Division hospitality and camaraderie!

Be up-to-date by visiting the Daylight Division Web Site often at

www.pcrnmra.org/daylight/

Updates are made often, stay on schedule, be a regular visitor. See all the new items that have been added on the latest updates.

New Contests Webpage

www.pcrnmra.org/daylight/contests.html

Contest Categories for Future Meets:

Winter (Feb. 2014)

Model: Caboose

Photo: Track and Structures

Spring (May 2014)

No contests due to convention

Summer (Aug. 2014)

Model: Diesel, other Locomotive

Photo: Model Black and White

Fall (Oct. 2014)

Model: Passenger Car

Photo: Model Color

Winter (Feb. 2015)

Model: Freight Car

Photo: General Rail Subjects

Model and Photography Contest Report by Chuck Harmon, Contest Chairman



Congratulations to George Gibson and Mike Mickens, winners of the model and photo contests at our San Luis Obispo meet. George took first place in Diesel Locomotive with his DK&P Boxcab Diesels, and Mike won the Passenger Train Photo contest with his photo of The Grand Canyon Railroad in Snow at Williams, AZ. (see photos).



I plan to hold both favorite (voted) and judged contests. Everyone who enters a contest will receive a voucher for one raffle ticket. (One per person, regardless of how many models or photos you enter.) At this February's meet in Fresno we will hold only the favorite model and favorite photo contests. I want to encourage everyone to participate in the contests.

Favorite Model and Favorite Photo Contests

The favorite model contest encourages members to display their in-progress or finished models for the enjoyment of all meet attendees. There will also be a favorite photo contest. Winners of both of the "favorite" contests are chosen by popular vote of the meet attendees. First place winners will receive a plaque and ribbon. Ribbons will be awarded to second and third place winners. A different category will be chosen for each meet's favorite model and favorite photo contests. The categories will be published in advance in the Observation, and announced at the prior meet. (See sidebar announcement of categories.) If you bring a model or photo to a meet that does not fall into the category for that meet, it will have to be for display only (no prize or raffle ticket) or for the judged contest.

The Spring meet being held during the 2014 PCR Convention will have no Division level contests, so plan to enter your models and photos in the Region level contests.

The Favorite Model Contest categories are Steam Locomotive, Diesel Locomotive, Passenger Car, Freight Car, Caboose, Maintenance of Way, Structure, Display, and Traction.

The Favorite Photo Contest categories are Model Black and White, Model Color, Trains in Action, Track & Structures, Working on the Railroad, and General Rail Subjects. Although the Regional level photo contest is a judged event, our Divisional level Photo Contest will be conducted only as a favorite photo event.

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Contest Report

The categories for the February meet will be Caboose model and Track and Structures photo. The model contest includes all types of caboose, including Maintenance of Way. The photo contest includes color prints of available-light images of prototype railroad track, right-of-way features, or structures. For further information consult the PCR Contest Directory at www.pcrnmra.org/pcr/contest/Contest_Directory_Complete.pdf.

Judged Contests

The purpose of a judged contest is to help us become better modelers. This is done in two ways: as an entrant by having the modeler's work critiqued according to a set of standards that point out positive aspects of the work and illuminate areas that need improvement; and as a judge having the opportunity to examine another person's work according to the same standards under the guidance of an experienced judge.

A judged contest also is an opportunity to earn merit awards that count toward Achievement Program (AP) certificates. A model earning 87-1/2 points or more in a contest qualifies for a Merit Award in the AP program, leading to certificates and eventually the Master Model Railroader designation.

The judged contests will be conducted according to the PCR Contest Directory (www.pcrnmra.org/pcr/contest/Contest_Directory_Complete.pdf). Participation as either an entrant or judge at a Division level contest will help prepare you to participate in a contest at a regional or national convention. Judging also earns points toward the AP Association Volunteer certificate.

Contest Categories

Contest categories are Steam Locomotive, Diesel Locomotive, Passenger Car, Freight Car, Caboose, Maintenance of Way, Structure, Display, and Traction. The judged contest will be open for any of these categories at every meet. If you are going to enter a model for judging, please fill out a Model Contest Entry Form. <http://www.pcrnmra.org/pcr/contest/PCR-Model-Contest-Entry-Form-Open-Kit-Novice-2010-R.pdf>

Judged contest winners will be ranked according to points awarded by the judges. First place will receive a plaque and ribbon, second and third place will receive ribbons.

Get your favorite model and favorite photo contest entries ready for the Fresno meet. Then work on a model entry for the judged contest in August.

Chuck Harmon wows us again with his super detailed building of the Wawona Packing House.



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Be sure to see the *Trains* magazine's special issue, "Big Boy: On the Road to Restoration," which will be published in April 2014.

Where are the Union Pacific Big Boys now?

A continuing story from last quarter ...

Eight of the largest steam locomotives ever built remain. See them on display in Pomona, Calif., in the West to Scranton, Pa., in the East

By Steve Glischinski

Published: *Trains* Magazine, December 18, 2012



Visitors take in the impressive Union Pacific No. 4012, one of only eight surviving Big Boys, in Scranton, Pa.

With the possibility of a Union Pacific 4-8-8-4 Big Boy being restored to service, interest in the largest steam locomotives ever built has never been higher in the post-steam era. Of the 25 Big Boys built by American Locomotive Company in 1941-42 (20) and 1944 (five), eight have been preserved. Today two of the engines are displayed indoors after lengthy outdoor displays. Only four of the locomotives are displayed along original historic UP lines (Cheyenne, Wyoming; Denver; Omaha, Neb.; and Pomona, Calif.), while two, in Dallas and St. Louis, are now on UP's map after mergers enlarged the system.

Here are the surviving Big Boys, and where and when you can see them:

No. 4004

Holliday Park, Cheyenne, Wyo.

Hours: 24 hours a day

The surviving Big Boy with the lowest number, No. 4004, was officially retired in February 1962 after operating 1,060,402 miles. The locomotive was donated to the city of Cheyenne in 1963. While in the park, the locomotive has been flooded up to its running boards on a couple of occasions. Some parts have been removed from the engine and used on 4-6-6-4 Challenger No. 3985. No. 4004 is now being cared for by the Sherman Hill Model Railroad Club Inc., which recently repainted it.

No. 4005

Forney Museum of Transportation, Denver, Co.

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

One of two Big Boys displayed indoors, No. 4005 was retired in July 1962 after operating 1,043,624 miles. The engine was to be sold to a railroad in South America, but that deal fell through, and it was donated to the Forney museum in 1970. After being displayed outdoors, the locomotive was moved indoors at a new museum site in Denver, which opened in 2001. The museum also is home to Chicago & North Western 4-6-0 No. 444, one of only eight surviving C&NW steam locomotives.

Something Really Big

This is a link to an interactive page that lets you identify all the valves and controls in the cab of UP 4014. Someone is going to be spending a lot of time studying!

www.trainweb.org/rhs/collection/UP_locomotives/4014_BackHead_mapped.htm

Try it, you might like it ...

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Big Boy No. 4014 was delivered to Union Pacific in December 1941. The locomotive was retired in December 1961, having traveled 1,031,205 miles in its 20 years in service.

No. 4014 will be moved from its display location in Pomona, Calif., to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where it will undergo restoration that is anticipated to take three to five years.

Vital Statistics

Tender Type: 14-wheeled
 Water Capacity: 24,000 gallons
 Fuel: Coal**56,000 lbs.
 Gauge of Track: 4 ft. 8½ in.
 Cylinder: Diameter: 23 ¾ in.
 Stroke: 32 in.
 Driving Wheel Diameter: 68 in.
 Boiler Diameter: 106 9/16 in.
 Pressure: 300 lbs.
 Fire Box: Length: 235 1/32 in.
 Width: 96 3/16 in.
 Tubes: 2-1/4 in. Diameter:
 75 x 22 ft. 0 in.
 4 in. Diameter: 184
 Wheel Base: Driving: 47 ft. 3in.
 Engine: 72 ft. 5 ½ in.
 Engine & Tender: 132 ft. 9 7/8 in.
 Weight in Working Order,Pounds:
 Leading: 97,000
 Driving: 540,000
 Trailing: 125,000
 Engine: 762,000
 Tender: 427,500
 Evaporating Surfaces,Square Feet:
 Tubes: 967
 Flues: 4,218
 Fire Box: 593
 Circulators: 111
 Total: 5,889
 Superheating Surface: 2,466 sqft.
 Grate Area: 150
 Max Tractive Power: 135,375 lbs.
 Factor of Adhesion: 4.00

** Plans for a convert to No. 5 Oil

UP Big Boys

No. 4006

Museum of Transportation, St. Louis, Mo.

Winter hours (Nov. 1-Feb. 28): Thursday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Officially retired in May 1961, No. 4006 has the most mileage of the Big Boy series and type: 1,064,625. It was donated to the museum in June 1961.

No. 4012

Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, Pa.

Winter hours (Jan. 2-April 6): 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; regular hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

No. 4012 was displayed at Steamtown's original site in Bellows Falls, Vt., before making the move to Scranton in 1984. The engine was officially retired in February 1962 after operating 1,029,507 miles. It was donated to the Steamtown Foundation in 1964 and moved to Bellows Falls in 1965.

No. 4014

Los Angeles County Fairplex, Pomona, Calif.

Hours: The locomotive collection is open during days the Los Angeles County Fair is open, during open-house weekends, or during special events. Check the website for exact dates and times.

No. 4014 is being considered for a return to service. It was donated to the Southern California Chapter Railway & Locomotive Historical Society Inc. in 1962 after operating 1,031,205 miles. The chapter maintains an extensive railroad exhibit at the LA County Fairplex that includes UP 4-12-2 No. 9000, the only survivor of its type; Santa Fe 4-6-4 No. 3450; and Southern Pacific 4-10-2 No. 5021, also the only survivor of its type. The display includes several smaller steam locomotives, UP Centennial diesel No. 6915, rolling stock, and the Santa Fe depot from Arcadia, Calif.

No. 4017

National Railroad Museum, Green Bay, Wis.

Hours: May-December: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; January-April: Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

No. 4017 was built in January 1942, retired in May 1961, and donated to the National Railroad Museum in June 1961. It operated a total of 1,052,072 miles. After decades of outdoor display, it was moved indoors to the museum's Lenfestey Center, which opened in 2001, where it is displayed alongside Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 electric No. 4890. No. 4017's lights are illuminated, and visitors can sit in the Big Boy's cab.

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More Whistle Signals

FIRE!

By John Houlihan

Always a danger especially in the Steam Engine days. The alarm for Fire always struck terror in the hearts of the yard workers. Everything was made of wood and hot fires were being produced everywhere. Even the brakes on a train could start a fire.



UP Big Boys

No. 4018

Museum of the American Railroad, Frisco, Texas

No. 4018 was built in January 1942 and officially retired in 1962 with 1,037,123 miles. It was donated to the museum, then the Age of Steam Museum, in 1964. The museum is in the process of moving its collection, including the Big Boy, from Fair Park in Dallas to a new location in Frisco.

No. 4023

Kenefick Park at Lauritzen Gardens, Omaha, Neb.

Hours: Daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day

Probably the most visible of these eight Big Boys because of its location high above Interstate 80 and the Missouri River, No. 4023 is the only survivor of the five Big Boys constructed in 1944. The locomotive was officially retired in July 1962 after operating 829,295 miles, and UP retained it as part of the historic collection in the Cheyenne roundhouse. In the mid-1970s, it was moved to Omaha for display outside the Omaha Shops, complete with shop steam providing smoke. In 1989 the Big Boy and the first Centennial diesel, No. 6900, were moved to a display at the new Kenefick Park near the Omaha Shops. They were moved from the park to interim storage at the Durham Western Heritage Museum at the old

Omaha Union Station in 2002 to accommodate redevelopment. In March 2005, the two locomotives were moved to a new Kenefick Park at Lauritzen Gardens featuring plazas, seating areas, a grand staircase, stone walls, interpretive signage, sculpture, and walkways. Named for former Union Pacific Chairman and CEO John C. Kenefick, the park documents UP's role in the development of Omaha and the West. Lighted by spotlights at night with the marker lamps, headlight, and number boards illuminated, the Big Boy and Centennial are an impressive sight for westbound motorists on the interstate as they enter Nebraska.

Irish Tracklayer

O Gauge Track Products



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Daylight Division Fall Meet in San Luis Obispo

By George Gibson

The Division's Winter 2013 meet was held on Saturday, November 16, in San Luis Obispo as guests of the newly restored San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. It is a 1894 Southern Pacific Freight House and the permanent home of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. The SP Freight House is located in the heart of the Historic Railroad District. Thanks to Daylight member Andrew Merriam and the SLORRM Board for hosting us in their new home.

Thanks too to those who brought contest entries. Winners were selected by popular vote.

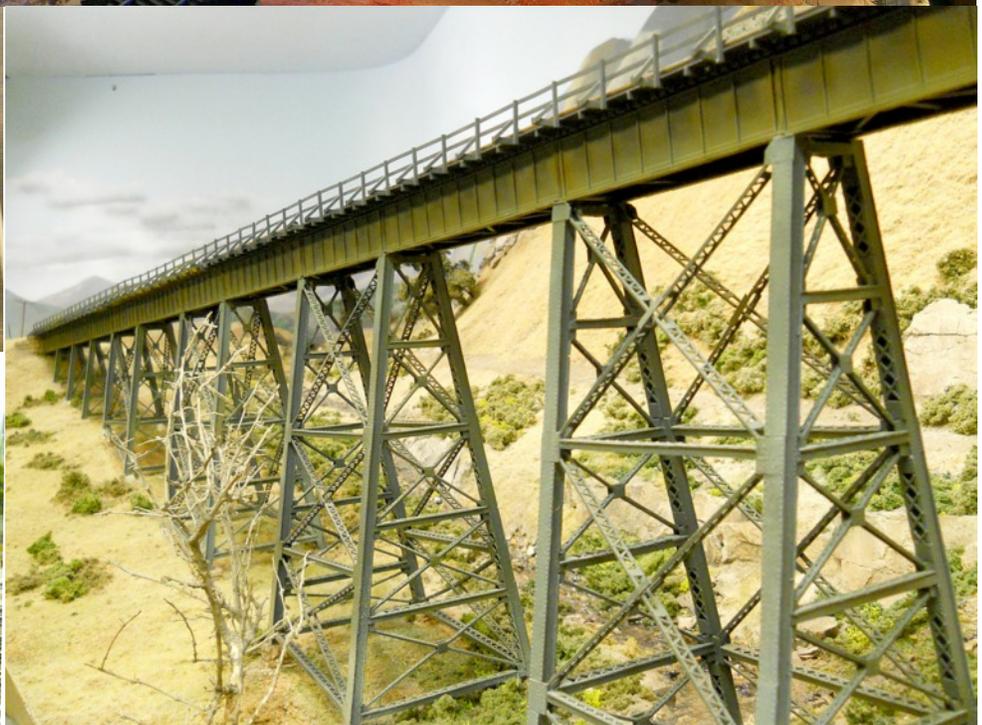
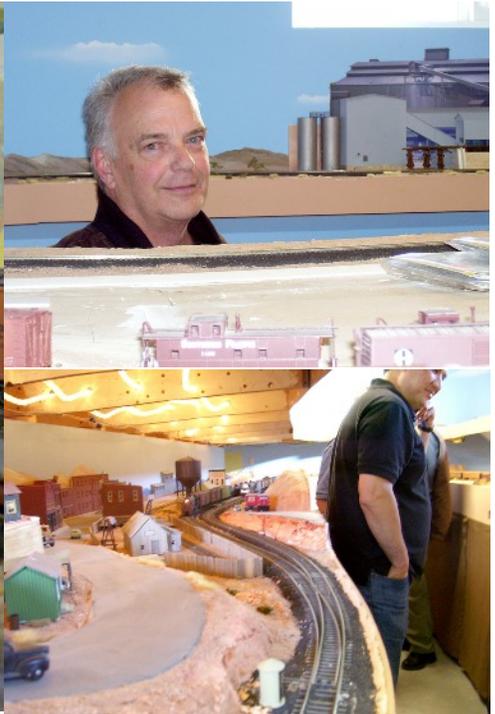
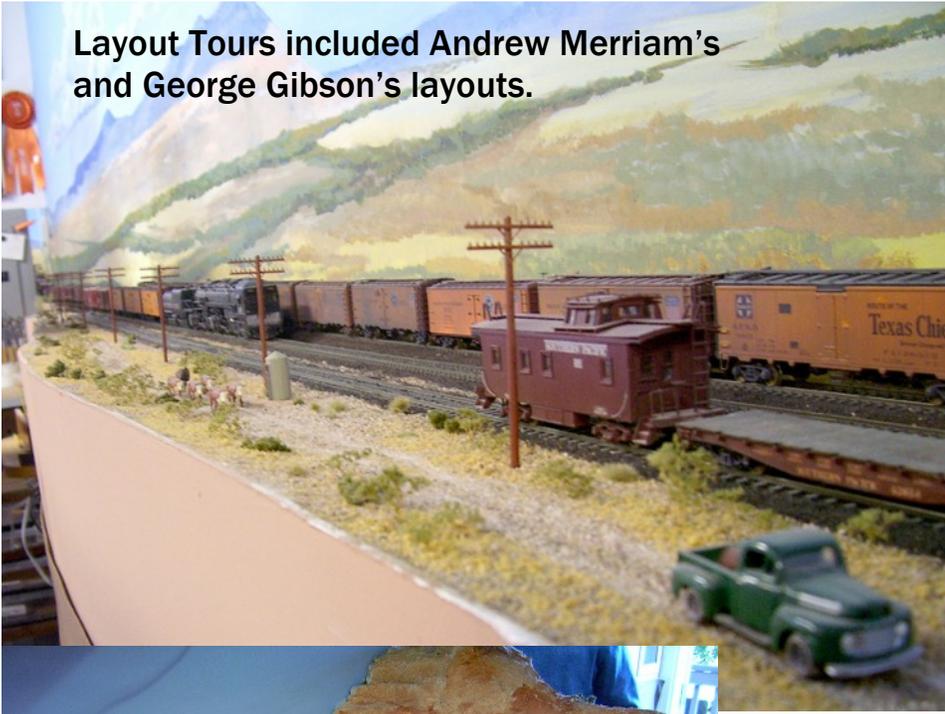
We enjoyed two interesting clinics. The first was by Andrew Merriam on the history of railroads in the San Luis Obispo area and the development of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. The second clinic by George Gibson was about building a structure to hide a "top of the layout" tortoise machine. A very clever solution was presented.

Following the clinics and a short break, we held the Daylight Division business meeting. Next was our "world-famous" White Elephant Auction. Bidding was furious with many great deals won and some bogus ones too. Some excellent door prizes were provided by our Industry Liaison, Mike O'Brien. Thanks Mike for keeping the prizes coming.

The local Railroad District was available for exploration and the layout tours captured most of the members and guests. Additionally, one of the very best regional hobby shops in the nearby town of Atascadero, Central Coast Trains, was open. It is almost a mandatory stop when passing through.



Layout Tours included Andrew Merriam's and George Gibson's layouts.



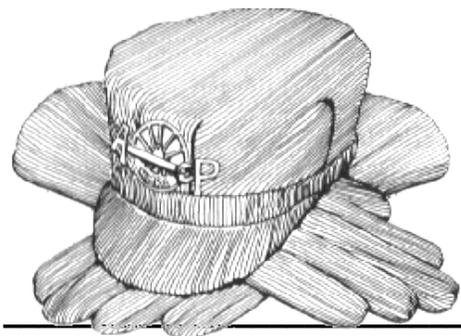
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Master Builder – Motive Power Certificate

By Dave Grenier



In my previous two columns I discussed what the Achievement Program (AP) was and how to get started by earning the Golden Spike Award. In this installment I will be discussing the first of eleven Achievement Certificates that may be awarded to attain the ultimate goal of Master Model Railroader (MMR), the “Master Builder – Motive Power” certificate.



For more information about the Master Builder – Motive Power certificate and all of the Achievement Certificates visit the NMRA website

www.nmra.org

This is perhaps the most challenging and daunting of the Master Builder categories, but don't let this category scare you off. If you recall from my previous column, you are only required to complete seven of the eleven categories. You do not have to complete this category to become an MMR. There are ten other categories to choose from, all of which will be discussed in subsequent articles.

Before getting to the requirements for the Master Builder – Motive Power certificate, let's define what “motive power” is and what it is not. Motive power is any type of steam, diesel, or electric locomotive, traction unit, maintenance vehicle, or other type of self-propelled vehicle that runs on rails. This includes everything from speeders to streetcars to cab-forwards. It does not include things that are powered models of unpowered vehicles (like hand cars) or unpowered models of powered prototypes (like dummy locomotives).

There are three requirements for the Master Builder – Motive Power certificate:

1. Build three scale models of railroad motive power, one of which must be scratchbuilt.
2. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points with each of the three scale models of motive power either via an NMRA sponsored contest or AP Merit Award Judging.
3. Submit a Statement of Qualification.

While one of the three models must be scratchbuilt, the other two can be commercial models that you have super detailed. To be considered as scratchbuilt, at least 90% of the model's pieces/parts must be constructed or fabricated by the modeler. You do not have to scratch build the following items, which are excluded from the “scratchbuilt requirement”: motor, gears, drivers, wheels, couplers, light bulbs, electronics, trucks, paint, decals, bell, marker and classification lights, valve gear, brake fittings, and basic shapes of wood, plastic, metal, etc. Although these parts are exempt from the scratchbuilt requirement, they may be scratchbuilt to earn up to 15 additional bonus points. Basic shapes are things that builders of the prototype would have used as raw materials. For example, an “I” beam would be a basic shape, but a commercial door or window casting would not.



Continued on Next Page

Greetings,

For over two years, Horizon Hobby has offered our complete assortment of model railroad and related products on

HorizonHobbyTrains.com

Beginning Wednesday January 15, we will no longer be offering non-exclusive product lines via our website, Amazon, and eBay. Horizon Hobby will continue to provide distribution of Athearn plus all our non-exclusive model railroad brands to retailers as we have for decades and our interest and support of the model rail-roading community continues as well.

Additionally, HorizonHobbyTrains.com will be redirected to Athearn.com. Athearn models may now be purchased directly from the Athearn website. As a Horizon Hobby Trains subscriber, you'll continue to receive special promotions for Athearn products.

Finally, if you have placed a pre-order using our web site, we will maintain the backorder and ship once it becomes available. If you would like to check the status of your backorders or have any questions, please contact our Consumer Sales Department at 1-888-959-2307.

We appreciate your business and look forward to providing you with Athearn locomotives, rolling stock, and vehicles for many years to come.

Sincerely,
Horizon Hobby

Motive Power Certificate

For steam locomotives, the frame, boiler, cab, tender, main and side rods must be scratchbuilt. For other motive power, the body, frame, cab, power truck frames, pantograph or trolley poles must be scratchbuilt. The power train for the models (motor, gears, wheels, etc) may be commercially made and need not be scratchbuilt.

All models must be super detailed either with scratchbuilt parts or with commercial parts. To be considered "super detailed", the model must have considerably more detail of excellent quality than is usually expected. The quality of the detail is more important than the quantity. Models that are cross-kitted, modified kits, parts built, or extensively altered to a different prototype may also be considered as "super detailed". The phrase "real individual craftsmanship is demonstrated" is key and figures in both the letter and the spirit of this and other AP qualifications.

The models must also be operable and capable of self-propulsion on the correct gauge of track. They must be able to pull and negotiate track curves without derailling. The models can also be of any scale.

Once the models are completed, they must be merit judged and earn 87.5 or more points to meet the requirements of this certificate. The models are judged on the quality of the craftsmanship, including the finish and lettering, the quantity of details and amount of scratchbuilt parts, and how well it captures the look of the prototype. Up to 15 bonus scratch building points may be awarded if the modeler builds some or all of the parts exempted from the scratch building requirement, but the total scratch building score cannot exceed 15 points.

Merit judging can be done in one of two ways: 1) at an NMRA-sponsored contest (NMRA or PCR convention); 2) arrange for judging at another time separate from a convention. You can bring your work to where the judges are, or they will even come to you! When you're ready to have your models merit judged, contact me to setup a time and place.

The final requirement for the Master Builder – Motive Power certificate is to submit a Statement of Qualification (SOQ), with includes detailed descriptions of each model and photocopies of the Merit Award certificates. The detailed descriptions must identify all scratchbuilt features, all commercial components used, and materials used in building the model. Copies of the plans you used are not required, but may be submitted. Photos of the model are helpful, but not required. Submit the completed SOQ to the Region AP Manager, Jack Burgess. (See PCR Callboard, www.pcrnmra.org, for his contact information)

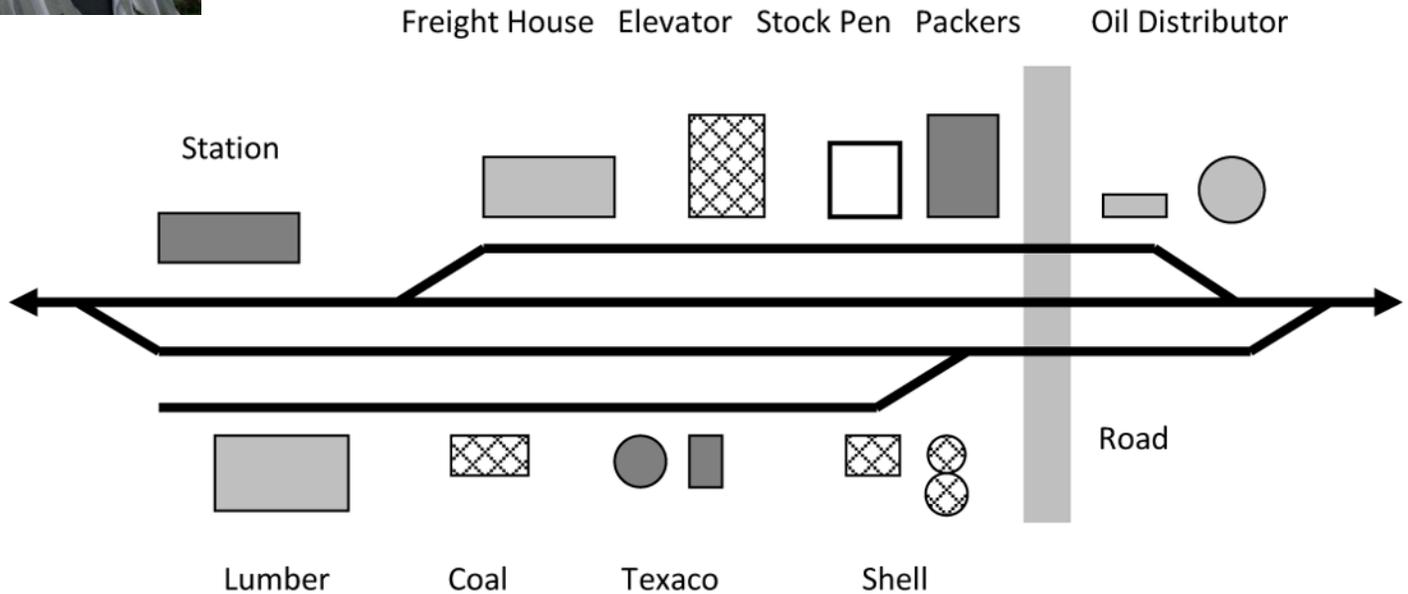
The Master Builder – Motive Power certificate may appear daunting at first, but remember, it doesn't require you to scratch build a cab-forward or a Big Boy. A simple 4-wheel diesel switch engine will qualify just as well. One purpose of the Achievement Program is to encourage and challenge us to expand our modeling skills, which this category certainly does. Just imagine how much satisfaction you'd get earning this certificate. You would be held in high esteem among your fellow modelers.

Next installment: Master Builder – Cars



The Answers Are Out There: *Harriston, Ontario*

By Robert Pethoud, Member Aid Chairman



Lately I've been promoting the joy of peddler freight switching. I get a kick out of setting up my Fall Creek Branch portable switching layout and operating it at meets, conventions, and train shows. I have set out and picked up freight cars for up to nine hours at a stretch and it has yet to become boring. In the previous column we looked at how challenging it can be to switch even a single trailing point spur featuring two industries and spots for four cars. I claimed that the puzzle presented in that column is realistic because it depicts the sort of thing train crews deal with every day.

To give you an idea of how much more we can complicate the switching without straining credibility, I submit the track plan above. It shows the Canadian National's track arrangement at Harriston, Ontario, around 1955. My source for this is Ian Wilson's excellent book, [Steam Over Palmerston](#), one of an extraordinary series of his books published by Canadian Branchline Miniatures (www.canadianbranchline.com).

With only five turnouts, we have two sidings and a long spur serving a passenger depot and nine different industries, most with multiple car spots. The crew of a peddler freight could easily spend hours making the pick ups and set outs at Harriston. An eastbound freight could switch all of the industries using only trailing point turnouts; a westbound could either leave some cars off spot for a later eastbound train to deal with, or it could use one of the sidings as a runaround. Toss in a meet or two with through trains and a memorable afternoon could be enjoyed here. In fact, a very satisfying model railroad could consist of nothing more than two staging or fiddle yards connected by the tracks illustrated.

Until next time, you can contact me at pethoud@comcast.net



Mr. Wendell Hays

Railroading in the Daylight

All About Railroadin'

By Wendell M. Hays

About the author: Wendell Hays grew up in California and attended junior high, high school and junior college in Bakersfield. After two years in the army, he attended Cal Poly SLO, graduating with a degree in mechanical engineering. He then worked on various oilfield projects in 9 countries and 5 states. For many years he worked as the construction manager on large projects for both contractors and owner companies. He retired in 1999.

Part 1: Getting Hired

It was 1953 and I was finishing up my first year at Bakersfield Junior College. Just before the end of the school year a friend asked me what I was going to do during the summer. Assuming that he meant what kind of job I had, I allowed as to how I didn't have one yet. He said, "How'd you like to be a railroad brakeman?" I said, "You're kidding." Then he told me that the Southern Pacific was hiring college kids to work as brakemen during the summer. Now, while this sounded great, it also seemed like so much BS to me and I couldn't have been more surprised when it turned out to be true.

During the summer, with harvest going full blast, there was necessarily a big increase in the number of trains needed to move that produce –along with all the other freight - up and down the valley. My guess is that the number of additional train crews required was maybe thirty to forty percent higher than normal. Southern Pacific and the railroad union had worked out a deal that would allow SP to fill in the crew gap with seasonal temporary employees of one sort or another and guys like BJC students were considered to be in the acceptable category. So off I went to the SP office. We talked for a while and they said it looked like I might be all right and they signed me up. Now I'm wondering if all this was really happening because, if it was, it was like heaven to me. I'd been a train nut all my life especially over steam engines and now here I was getting ready to become an actual railroader! On top of that, I was going to get paid. Fantastic!

Part 2: Student Trips

There was, of course, some orientation required before becoming an official brakeman. Orientation came in the form of several Student Trips, eight or ten of them as I recall. At any rate, they were all done on local freights and involved shuffling cars around in sidings along the mainline. My job was to pay attention to what was going on, listen, and then do what I was told. The first three Student Trips were taken to the packing sheds out at Edison with potatoes and onions being the order of the day. Once a freight car was full, we would shut it up, move it out and replace it with an empty. Not what you would call high pressure work so there was lots of time to listen to the crew talk and generally get the hang of being a railroad hand. In the packing/selection process in the sheds, the culls were separated out. Not all the culls were necessarily rotten or deformed in any way –

InfoNet News

From the NMRA

Welcome to the InfoNet-News
For December, 2013

Message from Frank Koch,
NMRA Chief Financial Officer

NMRA ECONOMICS, PART 1 - A VERY BRIEF INTRO- DUCTION

This provides a very broad perspective of NMRA economics. Subsequent articles will provide more detail on individual elements and explain how we fund the various parts of our organization. We have committed to place the annual audit results and budgets on the website once it is redesigned. The IT department is busy with other higher priority work and this project is a bit down the list.

The NMRA is not a club but is a non-profit corporation, must conduct its business in strict accord with laws and regulations, and must have an annual outside professional audit (We pass with no major issues.).

Like many corporations, we have multiple "business" units (four) and each plays a role in our overall financial strategy. Each of the four units serves a specific purpose and we manage them accordingly. The four units are Operations, NMRA Magazine, Non-Dues Programs, and Howell Day Museum (HDM). The first three are interdependent while HDM is treated as an independent financial unit, but still a part of the NMRA. The overall strategy is that the first three units balance each other every year. We do plan for a small surplus in each annual budget to cover

All About Railroadin'

lots of them were just too big or too little to fit the market requirements. By this time, the train crews were sort of part of the packing crew family so at the end of the day when we headed back to the yard, the front end of the engine would be stacked high with big sacks of fine, free taters and onions, all culls.

With one notable exception, the Student Trips were not much worth telling about but I will need to elaborate a little on that one. There were four ladders on each side of every boxcar. On one end of the boxcar were two long ladders – one on the side and one right around the corner on the end of the car. You could climb these ladders to the roof of the car. Once on top, you could get from one car to the next or go from one end of the train to the other if you wanted to. On the other end of each car could be found two short ladders with just two rungs and a footrest. Those ladders didn't go anywhere; once you were on it, you were on it. The only way off was for the train to stop or slow down enough for you to jump or, alternately, for you to get so exhausted that you just fell off. Usually though, somebody in the engine or caboose would notice that you were in a jam and take the necessary steps to save your ass. On one particular day we were shuffling cars around on an industrial siding where three tracks converged on a single one which then continued on parallel to the main line for a few miles to a location somewhere south of Delano. I was standing by a switch stand, thinking I had to re-align it after our four or five car train cleared and that the train would then stop for me. As the last car was coming along, it struck me that these guys weren't slowing down and that I better get aboard but all I had to grab onto was a short ladder. So off we went, me hanging on for dear life. It wasn't long before my hands, arms and legs were killing me and I didn't know how much further we were going. Lucky for me, not very far as it turned out. We pulled into another siding close to a café for lunch. As I started wobbling up to the engine, the whole crew was laughing with great delight and giving me a hard time for not knowing I didn't have to reset the switch when we left. One said, "Bet you won't ever get on a short ladder again, will you?" And he was right.

After the Student Trips, there were just two things left to do before being put on the extra board as a brakeman: One was to pass an open book test on the Book of Rules; the other was to get a railroad watch, one that had been certified as being able to meet the railroad accuracy standard. That done I was ready to begin my (brief) career as an official Southern Pacific brakeman.

Part 3: On the Board

After I finished my Student Trips, I spent part of an afternoon doing the Book of Rules test. Once that was completed, one of the SP guys checked it over, then said I should go home and get some rest since they were putting me officially on the Extra Board and I would likely be called before too long. Oh, boy!

This was the middle of the afternoon so between my anticipation and it being a nice sunny day outside, sleep was pretty much impossible until I settled down. I think it was around 9 o'clock in the evening when the phone rang. I answered it and a voice said, "Hays?" *Continued on Next Page*

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unexpected opportunities or expenses during the year.

Within each unit, there are income and expense streams that are budgeted, tracked, and monitored. The challenge is to balance the first three against today's mix of member services, while finding ways to increase net revenue so that improvements and/or new services and benefits can be provided. We can also choose to redistribute our resources to change the mix of member benefits. As an example, in 2013 the BOD chose to increase the budgets for IT and Marketing so that we could increase our reach and communication to members and non-members over the next few years. The website is being redesigned and responsibility for some content is moving to the Department Heads. The increased Marketing effort includes membership applications in all mail orders from several major suppliers, distribution of materials at railroad museums, and a trial of the Build A Memory initiative.

The total annual NMRA budget varies, but about \$2.3 million in 2013. This may seem like a lot but remember that it includes the annual convention, the National Train Show, and a major fund raising effort by HDM in 2013. Each area has its own budget which is reviewed by a Department Manager, the Finance Committee, and then approved by the Board of Directors on an annual basis. Each fiscal year starts with a zero budget and we build it based on the funds needed to deliver the agreed and planned programs. The chart below shows how the 2013 budget was distributed between the four units.

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After confirming that I was indeed Hays, the voice said, "Seventeen fifty, twenty-four ten, oh two hundred" or something like that, then hung up. Totally baffled, I called back and got the dispatcher and asked him what that was all about as this was my first call and I had no clue as to what the hell to do. He laughed, and then interpreted the message for me. The first number, he said, was the train number, the second was the engine number and the third was the time the train was due to leave the yard, in this case, at 2 a.m.

I was supposed to be at the roundhouse office an hour ahead of the called time for the train so I showed up at the appointed time and stood around looking at stuff on the walls, engine and train information mostly, and wondering all the time just what the hell I was supposed to be doing. After a while I got a tap on the shoulder and a guy, who turned out to be the engineer, asked me if I was Hays. "Yep", I replied. He nodded and said, "Come with me."

We walked out to the train which was all hooked up and the brake line was pressured up. So we climbed aboard and were ready to go. I was the head brakeman, so called simply because I was in the engine at the head of the train. It had nothing to do with being the "head" of anything. The pecking order had the conductor at the top and in charge of the train, the rear brakeman next and then me. We were "in train service." The engineer and the fireman were in "engine service" so maybe in a different union. I was never sure about the whole union deal.

Starting a train with a steam locomotive was a bit tricky even on a level track. The engineer had to back up a number of car lengths in order to bunch up all the slack in the couplings of what he judged would be enough cars rolling one at a time to get the train underway. The momentum created by this group of cars would be enough to jerk (with a WHAM!) all the other cars and get them rolling and, with that, we would be on our way. And so we were off to Fresno.

Part 4: First Trip

My first trip was a real learning experience, to say the least. The main line between Bakersfield and Fresno is a single track and my best guess is that in those days there were between five and ten trains on the main at any given time. Some would be going west, toward San Francisco, and some east, away from San Francisco. The system that kept them all moving and not running into each other was called simply "the Schedule". The Schedule listed all the scheduled trains for that day along with their intended times and locations as they were en route. The Schedule was updated to actual conditions by means of the Train Orders, passed to each train by a series of telegraph stations along the way. Orders also were the means for authorizing all extra trains and maintaining progress updates on them through additional Orders, the same as scheduled trains.

There was also an overall train classification system. Passenger trains were the first class, scheduled freights were the second and extra freights had the lowest priority. Trains of a higher class had preference over those of a lower class. Additionally, westbound trains had rights over eastbound

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NMRA 2013 BUDGET (\$ Thousands)

| | <u>Income</u> | <u>Expense</u> |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Operations | 668 | 720 |
| Magazine | 352 | 441 |
| Non-Dues Activities | 871 | 673 |
| Howell Day Museum | <u>458</u> | <u>456</u> |
| Total | 2,349 | 2,290 |

This has been a very brief introduction. Over the next year, I'll expand on each of the four areas and provide an introduction to the various types of assets and liabilities that make up the NMRA. If you have any questions or thoughts, my contact information is in the Magazine and on the website.

Frank J. Koch, NMRA CFO

If you have any questions or comments about any of the above, please send them directly to a Director or Officer. You'll find those addresses at

www.nmra.org

or in the NMRA Magazine.

If the person holding a region or division office changes, or their email address changes, please contact me at tcdraider@aol.com with the corrected information

Regards, Tom Draper, HLM,
DSA, FA ; Director, Support
Services

All About Railroadin'

trains of the same class. The Block System with semaphore signals on each Block completed the overall system of train control. This system worked pretty well in determining who had to get out of the way of whom.

In those days, all communications with the trains was by paper. Orders, which were essential to the whole system, were rolled up and tied securely into a loop of string, then strung into the Y shaped end of a six foot long stick. The stationmaster held the stick up so that the engineer - with the brakeman as a backup - could hook his arm through the Y, picking off the string loop and the Orders as the train rolled by. The same thing was done by the conductor and the rear brakeman. Missing the pickup of the Orders was really bad news as the train couldn't proceed without them. Thanks to the train gods, that never happened on any of my trips

The head brakeman's primary job was to open the mainline switches to get the train into and out of the sidings. The mainline switches were all locked and I had the key tied to a leather string on a belt loop. Unlock it, throw the switch, make sure it was set correctly, and then get aboard the engine as it went by. No big deal - except for one thing and I described it earlier: the art of getting a train started with a steam locomotive. In the yard it's one thing; out on the line it's even trickier. Although it's pretty flat between Bakersfield and Fresno, there are slight ups and downs in many of the track sections so it was critical to keep the train rolling so that it maintained its momentum going into a siding. This involved the brakeman having to do what was called "running for switches". The idea, of course, is to drop off the engine and run for the switch, getting ahead of the engine to have time to get the switch unlocked and aligned with the siding. The first time I had to do this procedure, I dropped off and started running only to notice that I wasn't gaining on the engine. Fortunately, it began dropping a little speed. I had badly misjudged the whole works and was gasping for air and a bit dizzy when I finally got to the switch and moved the tracks into the proper alignment. The rest of the way to Fresno was pretty uneventful and we got into the yard about sunup, as I recollect. All that was left to do was check in with the yard office and then go find a place to stay until the next call.

Part 5: Place to Stay

At the end of our run to Fresno, and before leaving the yard, all crews lying over had to leave a record of where they would be staying or otherwise leave a phone number where they could be reached by the dispatcher when he was ready to call them for the run back to Bakersfield.

My crew, and I think just about all the crews from Bakersfield, holed up at the Hiway Rooms which was kind of a unique place. It was on the upper floor of a two-story building with access only by an outside stairway. Entry, day or night, was gained by slipping a dime into the key slot and giving it a turn. As far I know, rail crews were the only folks who ever stayed there. Legend had it that in the past, it had been a whore house, probably during WWII. It didn't have actual rooms; each "guest" bunked down in what at one time had likely been a crib for use by one of the ladies of the night back in the good old days. The sleeping accommodations were

Continued on Next Page

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anything but spacious, maybe six feet wide by ten feet long with partitions separating you from your neighbor. The walls were seven to eight feet high with the top foot or so being glass. No doors. The really great part of this arrangement was that, since nobody but rail hands stayed there, security wasn't even thought about. You could leave all your stuff, including your expensive railroad watch on the tabletop or in your pants hanging on the wall and never give it a thought. And there was a novel process for checking in and checking out. There was a blackboard on the wall with room numbers and a line next to the room number for your name. Just had to print your name next to your room number and put a dollar in the slotted wooden box next to the blackboard. Well, it was sixty years ago, but it's still hard to believe that we got a bed with clean linen for a night for one buck.

When dispatch needed to notify a crew for the return trip, they would send out the "Call Boys" to find them. The Call Boys were old retired railroaders who pedaled around on bicycles to find the crews. If we were not still in the hotel, they would go looking for us in our "neighborhood", which was as I remember, limited to a couple of blocks of Fremont Street close by. This was kind of a mangy part of town, with a few cafes and a couple of bars that opened up at 9 o'clock or so in the morning. The Boys and the senior crew members pretty much all knew each other and each other's habits so finding each other was not that hard. Sounds like a fairly crude system but 40 years or so before any kind of mobile phone was in use, it worked pretty well.

I don't remember ever staying in Fresno for more than one full day or night. If I remember the time required between signing off one run and signing in for the next was 9 hours. And there were so many trains arriving and leaving at all hours that it was highly likely that shortly after our 9 hours was up, we would be called for another run. After a while, it got so I wasn't sure what day it was or what town I was in - but the pay was good.

Part 6: My finest hour

A short and simple description of the Westinghouse Air Brake System is needed here to provide background for the rest of the story. Although it has been greatly improved upon over the decades, the system is basically the same as it was when invented in the 1800s. The train's brakes were actuated by pressurized air in lines that ran the full length of the train. Pressure in the lines was maintained at about 70psi. The line itself was made of steel pipe with short sections of flexible hose connecting cars to each other. A system of air reservoir tanks, pistons, valves and mechanical devices, attached to the underside of each car, was required to control the brakes. To apply the brakes, the engineer normally releases air in measured amounts. In the event of a sudden drop in air pressure due to a break in the line, a bad leak or some other malfunction of the line, the system was designed to immediately lock all the brakes on all the cars. In railroad parlance, this was known as "big holing", a condition to be avoided at all costs since it meant the train could be delayed for an hour or so while all lines and hoses were re-pressurized. Until that was accomplished, the train's brakes could not be released.

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All About Railroadin'

Another term that was no doubt unique to railroading was “died on the law”. All trains running between Bakersfield and Fresno were expected to complete their run in no more than thirteen hours, from yard limit to yard limit. A train that took longer than that was said to have “died on the law” meaning that no matter how close the train was to the yard limit, it was required to stop dead and a new crew was brought aboard to take it the rest of the way.

For me, all of this became painfully clear while making a return trip from Fresno. Somewhere near Delano, we pulled into a siding and found that we were blocking a road crossing. Protocol required that when the road was to be blocked for about fifteen minutes, as I remember, the cars near the crossing had to be uncoupled and moved to allow automobiles to proceed. This was a fairly regular event. The responsibility for uncoupling the train fell on the brakeman – either head or rear – who was closest to the point of separation. The train in this instance had to be separated some fifteen to twenty cars back of the engine and since I was the head brakeman, the task of uncoupling the cars fell on me. As I headed back to clear the crossing, I was the beneficiary of lots of advice by the rest of the crew but what I heard most was “Don’t big hole us!”

The first step in the procedure was to close the valves, called angle cocks, on both air hoses between the cars. That locked in the system’s air pressure. Then it was merely a matter of uncoupling the hose connectors, opening the couplers and signaling the engineer to move ahead enough to clear the crossing. This was accomplished without a hitch.

When ready to leave the siding and head on down the line, one merely had to reverse these steps. The very last step in the re-coupling procedure was to very, very carefully open the angle cocks to re-pressure the six feet of hose between the cars. I barely cracked one of the valves and listened to the slow, steady hiss of air. When the hiss fell off to a level where I thought it safe to do so, I opened the valve all the way. Apparently my technique was flawed since the next thing I heard was the loud, long whoosh of escaping air all the way down the line – the sound of “big holing”.

Walking back to the engine I could hear the engineer and fireman cussing me out when I was 100 feet away. I thought maybe the best thing for me to do was walk over to 99, hitchhike home and say goodbye to my SP career...but I didn’t.

It had been a long day and night. Being an extra freight and eastbound, every train on the tracks had rights over us. It seemed that we had been in and out of every siding on the line, sitting and waiting for another train to clear so we could get on down the road. And here we were, 30 miles or so from Bakersfield, big holed, now blocking the road crossing, and needing about another hour to get the lines re-pressured and on our way again. And on top of that, because of my blunder, there was now the distinct possibility that we would die in the law.

We did make it in time but just barely. You can imagine my popularity. I later worked with the guys in this crew and they had forgiven me...actually we had a few chuckles out of the whole thing.

WMH

My railroading career was short but it produced a whole lot of good, and often funny, memories.

Wendell M. Hayes
