THE SEMAPHORE

Official publication of the North County Model Railroad Society

Issue No. 49, January 2018

Amtrak Genesis No. 81. See page 6.

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THE SEMAPHORE

The Semaphore is published quarterly as the official publication of the North County Model Railroad Society. The next edition of *The Semaphore* will be published April 1, 2018. Please submit articles and pictures to the editor at rhbale@aol.com by March 10, 2018.

The North County Model Railroad Society is a not-for-profit public benefit corporation whose objectives are 1) to hold and manage property and funds for charitable purposes, 2) to provide public displays of model railroads in order to present and teach the history and operation of railroads, and 3) to promote and teach railroad safety. Donations are welcomed. For reference the NCMRS tax ID is 33-0478444.

NCMRS is located at Oceanside Heritage Park, 220-230 Peyri Drive, Oceanside CA 92058. Our web site is www.ncmrs.org

From the Interlocking Tower **January 2018**

It is hard to believe that another year has passed and here we are in a brand new year. 2017 was busy for NCMRS with two successful Swap Meets, five Operating Sessions, completion of the scenery, and major advancements in our control system. The Trains 4 Kids room was decorated for the various Holidays and kids enjoyed building freight cars for their home trains. Our chili came in second at the Chili Cook Off during the Heritage Park Festival. We also held a very successful club Family Picnic attended by numerous members. And most importantly, we had a great time running trains and being with fellow club members. Donations this year provided a significant amount of additional income. We were able to sell some to club members and the rest on eBay.

There also was a club excursion to see the Santa Fe 3751 steam engine at Los Angeles Union Station. We updated our Timetable and modified the club railroad name to *"Inland & Pacific Railroad"* with the added slogan of *"Gateway to the Coast"*. I want to thank all the club members who helped organize and execute these events and those who continued to work on the scenery and controls to make our layout a showpiece.

2017 was a great year for us and now I'm asking every NCMRS member to think about how we can make 2018 even better?

We need to plan what the club will do for next year and how each of you can participate in the events. I am sure there will be two Swap Meets, several Operating Sessions, a club picnic and hopefully another club excursion. There is always room for additional help in running these events and any other club functions. Your help and support is needed to make all of these activities successful.

What would you like to suggest for club functions in 2018? Where would you like to go for a club excursion? How do you think we can improve on our past events? There are no bad ideas, so please provide your thoughts to the club officers for consideration. Would you like to have us build a new Trains for Kids layout (the current one is very old)? Are there changes to our main layout that would make it better? We are going to try a Saturday Operating Session to get more member involvement. What day works best for you? We would like to have a clinic following each monthly club meeting. Do you have a suggestion for a clinic?

Your club officers would like the input and support of all members to make this new year successful. Please take the time to tell us about your ideas. Send an email, talk to a club officer, or bring up a subject at a club meeting. We would like to have a club that provides enjoyment for all members.

We are looking forward to a fun and successful 2018.

Have a great day.

Harold

About Our January Cover Photo

Amtrak No. 81 is one of 207 Genesis II locomotives built by General Electric in Erie, Pennsylvania during the mid to late 1990s. No. 81 was delivered in Amtrak's Phase III paint scheme but was subsequently redecorated in her current Phase Vb paint. The diesel locomotive is equipped with DC traction motors and a 4,250 horsepower prime mover. Our cover photo shows No. 81 leading a 2009 December holiday snow train special near Leavenworth, WA. The photographer is unknown.

Timetable of Selected Events

NCMRS Events are in bold

January 6, NCMRS Model Railroad Class
January 13, PSR San Diego Division Layout Tour
January 27 NCMRS Business Meeting
February 5, **NCMRS Model Railroad Class**
February 3 & 4, Great Train Show, Costa Mesa
February 10, PSR San Diego Division Winter Meet
February 18, California Express Railroadiana Show, Buena Park
February 24, NCMRS Business Meeting
February 24, Roundhouse Gang Swap Meet, San Bernardino
March 3, **NCMRS Model Railroad Class**
March 3, Orange Empire Swap Meet, Perris
March 24, 25, 27 & 31, San Bernardino Co. Museum Train Days, Redlands
March 31, NCMRS Business Meeting
April 7, NCMRS Model Railroad Class
April 14, NCMRS Spring Swap Meet
April 21, PSR L.A. Division Spring Rail Meet, Whittier
April 27 & 28, PSR Cajon Division Meet, Perris
April 28, NCMRS Business Meeting
April 28, Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet, San Bernardino

Department Heads & Committee Chairs

Effective January 1, 2018

Decoder Pro and Track Test	Leo Valley
E-bay Sales	Rich Blankinship
Electronics/Electrical	Nick Ruddick
ETC Team	Tom Ashton, Chris Davis
Kids Programs	Laura Reese
Layout Planning and Design	David Ford
Layout and Facility Construction	Harold Helland
Layout Landscape and Scenery	David Ford, Harold Helland
Maintenance	Bob Kale, Kevin Harper
Membership	Jim Gillie, Lynn Wagner
Member Support (badges, shirts)	Rich Llewellyn
NMRA Liaison	Pete Steinmetz
Operating Sessions	Harold Helland
Operation Lifesaver	Laura Reese
Program Chairman	Pete Steinmetz, Dick Bale
Public Relations	Dick Bale
Purchasing Control	Rich Blankinship
Semaphore Editor/Publisher	Dick Bale
Semaphore Proof Reader	Sue Ruddick
Signal Master	John Burrow
Storage and Inventory	Bob Hunt
Swap Meet	Rich Llewellyn
Training	Rick Keefer
Trains4Kids	John Castaneda, Jim Gillie, Laura Reese
Trains4Kids Scheduling	Laura Reese
Web Master	Nick Ruddick

NCMRS 2018 Officers

Harold Helland, President
Rich Llewellyn, Vice President
Rich Blankinship, Treasurer
Jim Gillie, Secretary

Nick Ruddick, Chairman
Dick Bale, Director
John Burrow, Director

NCMRS Officials Named for 2018

During the December 2 Business Meeting NCMRS members reelected the 2017 slate of officers to serve again in 2018. Shown at the right are the 2018 board of directors. They are Dick Bale, director: Nick Ruddick, chairman; and John Burrow, director. The officers, shown below, are from the left, Harold Helland, president; Rich Llewellyn, vice president; Rich Blankinship, treasurer; and Jim Gillie, secretary.

Lightning Strikes Helix Summit

In late November, Bob Behm was casually viewing the layout when he saw lightening coming out of the storm clouds above Helix. Stormy weather, including hearing the crash of far off thunder and seeing flashes of high altitude lightening, is a common occurrence above the →

summit at Helix, but witnessing an actual lightning strike and capturing it on camera is definitely newsworthy. Bob investigated and found the unusual light pattern was a reflection from one of the old lead glass windows. Blemishes in the aged glass caused a distorted reflection that appeared to be a bolt of lightning coming out of the cloud and striking the painted hillside behind the Helix.

Clinics After Monthly Business Meeting to Continue

Pete Steinmetz will continue to coordinate a series of monthly clinics that will be held on the last Saturday of the month following the regular NCMRS club Business Meeting.

Considerable effort goes into each clinic and Pete wants to make sure that each session is meaningful. His goal is to have each member who attends a clinic come away knowing something new. It may be a single tip or technique on how to accomplish something fairly simple, or it might be a major eye opener to a new aspect of model railroading. Young or old, there is much to learn. This is a great hobby and there are innumerable ways to enjoy it.

Pete has lots of experience in presenting clinics at model railroad conventions and meets across the nation, but in planning this year's schedule for his home club, he wants expand ideas and get plenty of input from fellow NCMRS members. So, what do you think would make a really good clinic?

Whether you are new to model railroading or an old timer, we all have questions and Pete wants to learn about them. What ideas do you have? What would you like help on? What special knowledge do you have that you are willing to share?

Contact Pete at the club or send him an Email at peteshoscale@gmail.com .

Not every idea will result in a clinic, but some will, and all will go towards making Model railroading more fun than ever.

New Coffee Locker Installed

Dave Ford pours himself a cup of freshly brewed coffee at the new coffee station recently installed outside the Trainmaster's Office. When not in use, all of the coffee making equipment and supplies can be securely locked up without occupying valuable space inside the club facility. A new sign requests coffee drinkers contribute to help offset the cost of coffee and other supplies.

Date Set for NCMRS Spring Swap Meet

The next NCMRS Swap Meet has been scheduled for Saturday, April 14, 2018. Plans are being made to repeat many of the features that made our Fall 2017 event such a success. Mark your calendar now and dig out some of those old items you no longer need or want.. Rich Llewellyn has agreed to chair the event.

NCMRS Field Trips

Organized field trips are one of the most popular activities for many model railroad groups. Pete Steinmetz has suggested that this could be a great opportunity for NCMRS members to travel, see what other clubs are doing, witness some prototype operations first hand, learn new ideas and techniques, and generally have a good time.

Pete is spearheading the idea and would like to see NCMRS get active and plan some trips for 2018. A simple trip might be a journey to Arnie's Hobbies in Westminster followed by lunch. A more extensive outing might be 3 or 4 day trip to Phoenix for an operating session with a local club.

Other ideas that Pete would like to discuss with members include…

- Visit Cajon Pass and hang out on the Hill.
- Ride the Sprinter and have lunch somewhere along the way.
- Visit the car barn and backshop at Orange Empire RR Museum.
- Drive out to Campo.
- Ride the Coaster downtown and have lunch on the fantail of the USS Midway.
- Travel to Torrance and operate at Ron Varnell's layout.
- Tour five hobby shops in the LA area in one day.
- Ride the Metrolink with lunch at Olvera Street.
- Tour the Coaster facility at Stuart Mesa.
- We could see how many Metrolink trains and routes we could ride in a day.
- Visit the live-steam modelers at Rohr Park in Chula Vista.
- Your idea.

Pete would like to hear about ideas for field trips from other members. Talk to Pete and share your ideas. If you have a suggestion that makes sense, Pete has agreed to plan it and organize the details.

Decoder Programming Station

At the start of 2017 we had a–past-its-prime PC, a computer interface and JMRI DecoderPro at the Decoder Programming Station. The PC has been replaced with a new Dell 5-core PC running Windows 10 and all programs transferred. (The old PC has been sanitized and handed to the treasurer, who has since sold it to help recover a little of our outlay). We shall be reviewing the age and function of all of our electronic equipment on a yearly basis, and making upgrades where appropriate. →

Decoder Programming Station, continued

With the rise in the popularity of ESU LokSound decoders, a LokProgrammer device and LokProgrammer software have been installed. This uses ESU's proprietary communication protocol, making programming (especially Sound programming) faster and more reliable than with JMRI.

Finally, due to the number of early morning greetings that started with *'Hey John this isn't working.....'* a TCS Decoder has been permanently installed on the programming track, piggybacked on an ESU Decoder tester. This allows for a complete end-to-end test of the system, along with fault finding if needed. A set of instructions has been developed, and all users of the programming station will be encouraged to attend training early this year. *Reported by John Burrow*.

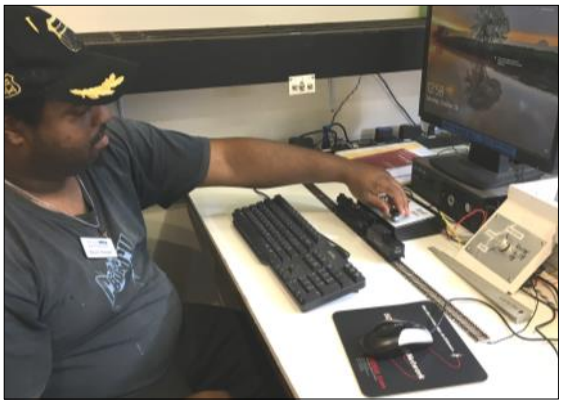
Signaling and Block Detection

Work continues installing signals at all main line turnouts. Some signals will be dummies (unlit), as they are in a position where it's not possible to see the signal light. In this case however, there will still be a repeater on the fascia to show what the color would be, if you could see it.

Also, in order to more accurately detect the entire length of a train (not just the locomotive), sets of Detector Wheelsets have been purchased and installed on the club cabooses. In 2018 I will work with all members to make sure we have some type of detection on the end of each train, not just the beginning.

Train operators may have noticed that track power On/Off switches have been installed on the Colton yard. When track power is turned Off, the section of track will appear to be occupied, and the associated signals will be Red. *Reported by John Burrow*.

Caught on Camera



Clockwise from upper left: Chris Davis and Rich Blankinship team up to repair a balky engine, Hart Wholesale, honoring the late Bob Hart, has been installed at the end-of-track in Escondido; Kevin Harper programs a locomotive at the DCC Program Desk; Frank Mikulka brings his train into Rainbow; a trucker ready to off-load trailers from a flat car discovers they are facing the wrong way; and a Santa Fe reefer is spotted at the new Del Monte Cannery in Rainbow.

Narrow Gauge Cabal Visits NCMRS

One of the most esteemed group of narrow gauge modelers in the West is the Narrow Gauge Cabal of Southern California. Among its members are , winners of international modeling contests, manufacturers, professionals including a model builder employed by Disney, and guys who just love the narrow gauge world. The cabal is hosted by its founder, Steve Harris, of Valley Center. In addition to being a very nice guy and a terrific host, Steve is a talented scratch builder and a prolific author — mostly in *Model Railroader* and *The Short Line & Narrow Gauge Gazette*. In 2016 Steve Harris was elected to the Narrow Gauge Hall of Fame.

Steve has been recovering from cancer treatments and in recent months has lacked the energy to host the Cabal at his home. After receiving approval from the NCMRS board, Pete Steinmetz invited the Cabal to conduct its October and November meetings at NCMRS. They had a great time at Heritage Park and were very complimentary about the NCMRS layout — high-praise indeed from such a venerated group.

Mike Cartabiano, Steve Bradley, Steve Harris, and Dave Balser (above, left to right), enjoy dining *al fresco* on the green at Heritage Park. Other Cabal members included John Engstrom, John Heller, and Bob Mitchell (below).

NCMRS Fall Swap Meet

A successful swap meet was held October 14, 2017 at Heritage Park. The meet was chaired by Rich Llewellyn who was supported by lots of hard-working members. Highlights included numerous door prizes, two kids layouts, a hot dog cart, and several free clinics. Members of the NMRA, PSR (Pacific Southwest Region) San Diego Division attended the event. PSR officials held their monthly business meeting at NCMRS.

There were bargains galore, and a good time was had by all.

Dale Aarhus and his son Alex (below) coordinated the sale of tickets and distribution of the door prizes.

Don Fowler, president of the National Model Railroad Association PSR Region (left) and Pete Schmidt, PSR AP chairman, presented Pete Steinmetz with an Achievement Award for Model Railroad Author.

NMRA official Don Fowler holds the honorary NCMRS membership certificate presented to him by Harold Helland.

Kids enjoyed the NCMRS T4K layout during the swap meet as well as the G scale Del Oro Pacific Model Railroad set up by Ron Allen and his wife (left).

Several free clinics were presented during the swap meet. Shown at the right is David Ford giving a clinic on scratch building realistic trees, while Bob Kale (below) demonstrates techniques for applying decals to rolling stock.

Weathering Clinic

A hands-on clinic on weathering freight cars with Pan Pastels was presented by Pete Steinmetz following the NCMRS Business Meeting on December 2. Pete demonstrates the first step (below) which is spraying the model with quick- drying clear flat spray to provide a base or "tooth" for the pastels to stick to.

Watching Pete handle the inexpensive rattle-can of spray are Rich Llewellyn, Chris Davis, Ryan Sakow, and Bill Pope.

Using a small cosmetic sponge, Bob Behm carefully applies a variety of pastel powders to his model.

Pete observes as clinic participants learn how to handle Pan Pastels. They include Bob Kale, Rich Llewelyn, John Castaneda, Bob Behm, Bill Pope, and Norm Fury.

Track Signaling System and Configurations

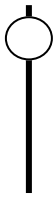
By Rick Keefer

The following is a comprehensive guide to the track signal system on the main layout of the North County Model Railroad Society. Pursuant to the General Operating Rules, all trainmen are expected to know, understand, and operate in accordance with the NCMRS signal system.

Signal Locations

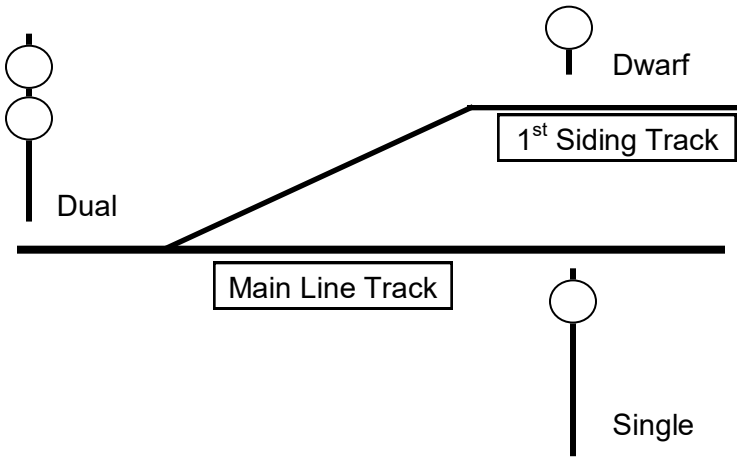
Dual Signals on masts are positioned on the facing side of Turnouts (i.e., the single track into/out of the Turnout).

Single Signals on masts are positioned on trailing side of Turnouts (i.e., the Main Line track into/out of the Turnout on the same side as the 1st Siding Track).

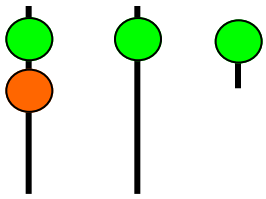
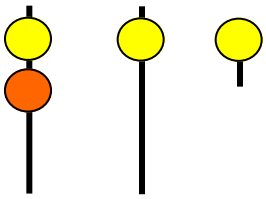
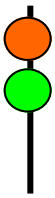
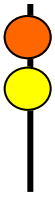
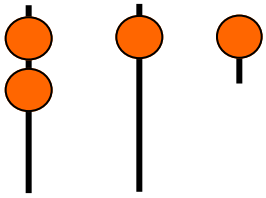


Dwarf Signals are positioned on non-Main tracks (i.e., the 1st Siding Track into/out of the Turnout.

Track & Signal Relationship

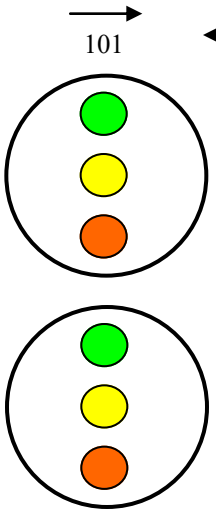


The Semaphore

Signal Indication	Signal Aspect
CLEAR Proceed at track speed.	
APPROACH Proceed prepared to stop short of next signal.	
DIVERGING CLEAR Proceed on diverging track not exceeding prescribed speed through turnout.	
DIVERGING APPROACH Proceed on diverging track not exceeding prescribed speed through turnout, be prepared to stop short of next signal.	
STOP	

FASCIA BOARD — LOWER LAYOUT

Signal indicating colors mean the same as the Layout Track Signals. Each indicator set will have (3) three lights: **GREEN**, **AMBER,** or **RED**. Only ONE light will be illuminated at a time for each fascia board Signal Repeater.



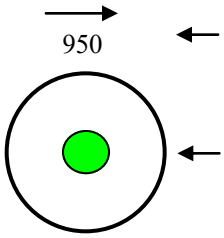
Indicates turnout number and direction of coverage.

Upper Signal Repeater indicator Main Line Track condition.

Lower Signal Repeater indicator 1st Siding Track condition.

FASCIA BOARD — UPPER LAYOUT

Signal indicating colors mean the There is ONLY ONE light for either the Main Line or the 1st Siding Track



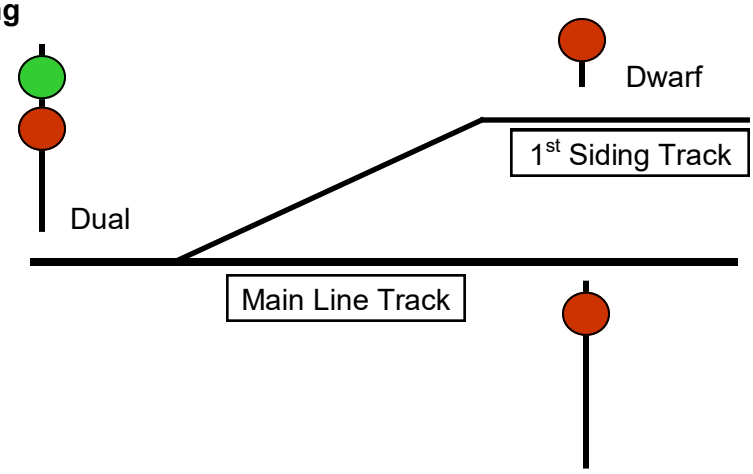
Indicates turnout number and direction of coverage.

Main Line or 1st Siding Track condition. The light is a 3-color LED that will display **GREEN**, **AMBER,** or **RED** as appropriate to the track condition.

TRACK SIGNALING CONFIGURATIONS

Examples of Track Signaling

Normal: Train traveling from left to right, Turnout set to Normal, NO traffic on Main Line. Dual Upper is **GREEN** Due to Normal Turnout position and NO traffic. Dual Lower and Dwarf are **RED** due to Normal Turnout position. Single is **RED** due to your train approaching the Turnout. Operate at normal speed for this area of track.



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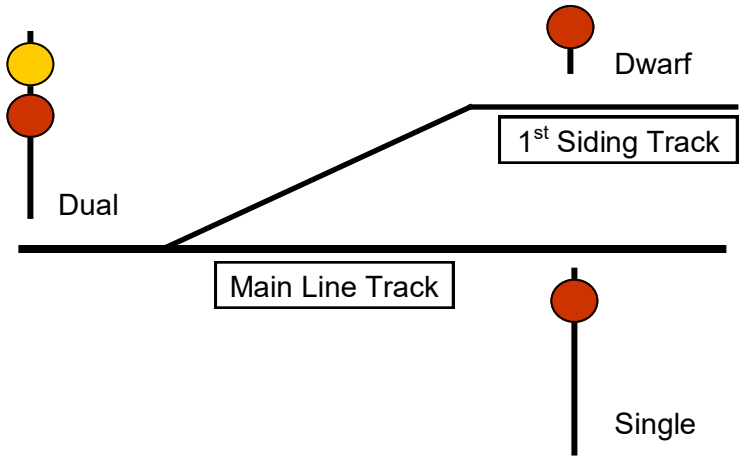
TRACK SIGNALING CONFIGURATIONS, CONTINUED

Normal with traffic:

Train traveling from left to right, Turnout set to Normal, traffic two Blocks ahead on the Main Line.

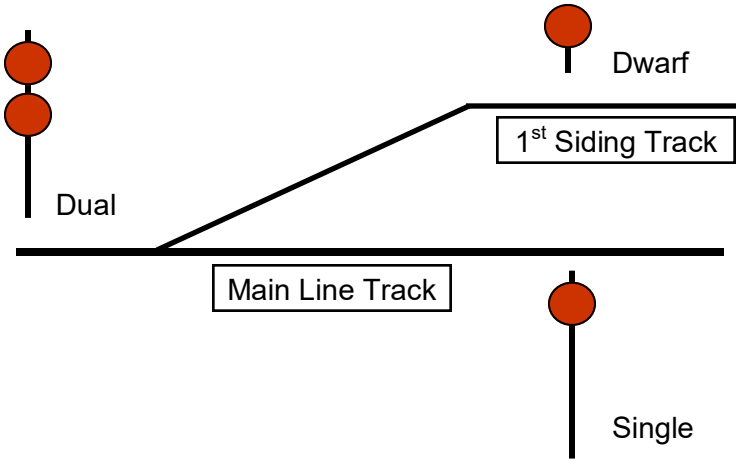
Dual Upper is AMBER due To Normal Turnout position and Traffic is ahead, but not immediately. Dual Lower and Dwarf are RED due to Normal Turnout position. Single is RED due to your train. Operate at a reduced speed for this area of track.



Normal with traffic:

Train traveling from left to right, Turnout set to Normal, traffic ahead in next Block on the Main Line.

Dual Upper is RED due to Normal Turnout position and Traffic is immediately ahead. Dual Lower and Dwarf are RED due to Normal Turnout position. Single is RED due to your Train approaching the Turnout. You must STOP immediately until the track ahead is cleared or has moved to the next Block further away from your position and the Dual Upper has turned AMBER or GREEN.

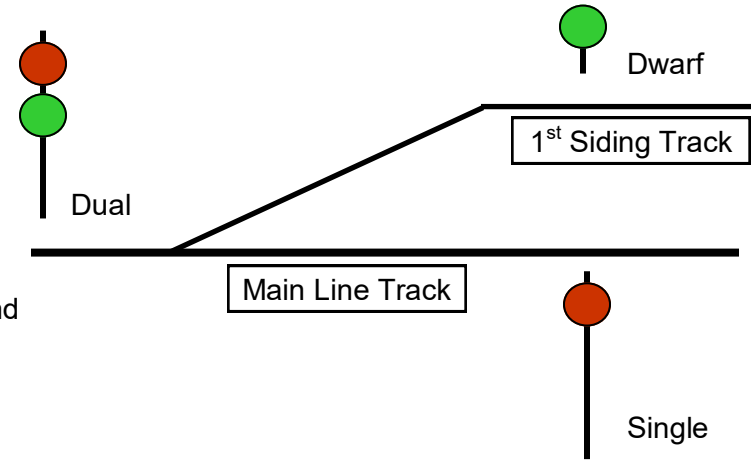


TRACK SIGNALING CONFIGURATIONS, CONTINUED

Divergent:

Train is traveling from left to right, turnout set to Divergent, no traffic on Main Line.

Dual Upper is RED due to Divergent Turnout position and NO traffic. Dual Lower and Dwarf are GREEN due to Divergent Turnout position and there is NO traffic ahead of you. Single is RED due to your Train approaching the Turnout.



Author Rick Keefer has been an active member of NCMRS since 2014. He is responsible for accomplishing much of the under-the-layout wiring. Rick retired in 2012 after a career in the US Navy as a Nuclear Machinist Mate, followed by three decades at San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station as an instructor. In addition to trains, Rick is active in the North County Senior Softball League where he plays most positions but excels as a pitcher.

When not at the train club or playing softball, Rick and his wife Vicki are busy planning another cruise. So far they have logged 46 of them and are looking forward to cruise number 47 this January.

Model Railroading Class

By Pete Steinmetz

Beginning in January, on the first Saturday of each month, I will host a monthly class titled, *Model Railroading Class*. How, you might ask, did I manage to come up with such a catchy title? Here's the back story.

I had been helping Andy with some projects including altering a Bachmann HO scale steam locomotive to resemble a prototype based in Ely, Nevada. The project involved moving a few parts around and soldering some wires for the headlight.

When Andy brought the model to the club for some help, it had become a box of loose parts. He removed one or two screws too many and the chassis fell apart. At first I was a little angry that Andy expected me to wave my magic wand and put it all back together. In the process of dismantling the Bachman locomotive, Andy misplaced a unique screw that was key to keeping the chassis assembled. Without it, the model was going to remain just a pile of parts. We checked with Bachmann, but unfortunately they no longer stock the specialized screw.

After thinking about Andy's dilemma, it occurred to me that no one had ever taught him some of the basics of model railroading. Understanding the limits of disassembling a model locomotive and keeping the individual parts and screws organized come to mind. Andy is my friend and I decided to teach him some basic ways to do things that will reduce his frustration (and mine) and increase the fun of modeling.

As I began to think about the steps for helping Andy, it occurred to me that other NCMRS members could also benefit from the experience of fellow members. Voila!. A class was born. ⟶

Class Topics

Getting Organized
Basic Tools
Using Photos in Modeling
Running Goofy Stuff and Doing Prototype Research
Track Cleaning
Prototype Practices While Running
Consisting
Car Tune Ups
Wheel and Car Cleaning and Why
Correct Way to Unplug the Connectors Between Loco and Tender
Making and Using Static Grass
Decaling
Painting
Portable Toolbox
Soldering
Safe Railfanning
Using Facebook as a Modeling Tool

Beginning Model Railroading seemed like a good name, but I realized that individual classes could go well beyond just basics. So, in order to not limit the subject matter and the direction this class will go, I decided to simply call it *Model Railroading Class.*

Most importantly, this class isn't just for Andy, or our younger members. It is for all members to share their ways of doing things. The tips, tricks, shortcuts, techniques, and experience we will share will add to the fun of model railroading and make us all better modelers.

The class will be at 11AM on the first Saturday of the month. Each class will last about 30 minutes —- and it will be interactive. Members are urged to participate. There will be a theme or two, but it is entirely up to the participants to see what direction each class will go.

The first topic will be *Organization*. Workbench, tools, projects, storage. A preliminary list of class topics is shown in the side bar. Some topics may be combined into one class.

I'm looking forward to our first class on January 6, 2018.

Pete Steinmetz is a life-long model railroader who, until recently, was involved primarily in N scale and narrow gauge. He has held numerous regional and national positions with the National Model Railroad Association and has presented clinics on a variety of modeling subjects at several conventions and meets throughout the country. Pete is an active member of the Narrow Gauge Cabal of Southern California and the North County Model Railroad Society. He is an expert on instrumentation batteries and founder of Dead Rail Installs, a commercial firm that specializes in the sale of kits for converting model locomotives to battery operation.

Some Favorite Models

From time to time we plan to headline the favorite model of NCMRS members. Some will be predictable, some will be a surprise, but they will all be fun and give readers a peek into the breadth and durability of model railroading.

Jeff McClain's favorite model is an Athearn Alco PA unit decorated in Southern Pacific's colorful Daylight scheme. The nearly 50-year old model has a few scratches, it has ugly horn-hook couplers, the molded-on detail is rather crude by today's standards, and it doesn't run — but it is special because it belonged to his father before it became part of his Jeff's collection. The locomotive number is 6009, a series Athearn produced in October 1969. Jeff's family lived in Washington at that time and he figures his father bought the HO scale model at the local hobby shop sometime during the early 1970s. Jeff's durable SP PA is shown here at Rainbow.

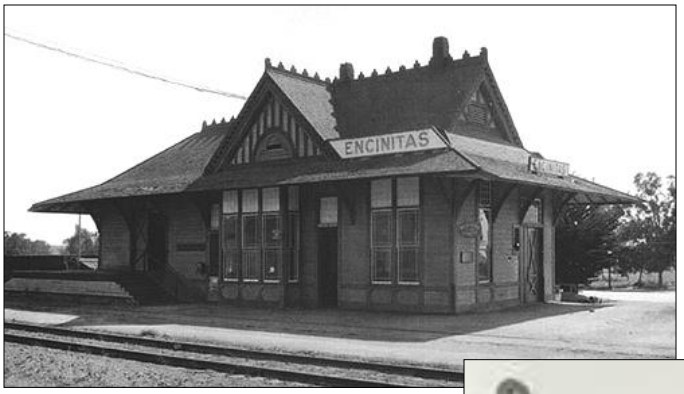
This Pennsylvania Railroad T1 class 4-4-4-4 rigid-frame duplex steam locomotive is one of **David "DJ" Edwards** favorite models. Imported by Broadway Limited, the HO scale model is based on prototype locomotive No. 5536 which went into service on the PRR in 1950. DJ's model is shown here at Santa Fe's San Diego Depot, something the sleek prototype was never able to do.

Eddie Perez liked the looks of his Santa Fe diesel switcher No. 1529 so much that when he saw a similar Rock Island model for sale, he bought it and repainted and lettered it for Santa Fe. He gave it number 1506. Eddie assigned the pair of diesels to a work-train seen here crossing the trestle at dry gulch en route to Box Springs. The Bachmann models replicate 1000 horse power class S-4 locomotives built by ALCO (American Locomotive Co.) in the late 1950s.

North County Train Watch

By Dick Bale

The original coastal railroad between San Diego and Oceanside was constructed in 1880-81. To handle the growing freight and passenger activity in the Encinitas area, Santa Fe built the combination station shown at left in 1887. It was located on the west side of the tracks with its back facing the dirt road that would evolve into busy coast highway (left).



The panoramic contractor's photo documents the completion of the Encinitas station in 1886. The Victorian design had considerable decorative wood trim including gingerbread detail on the roof (above).

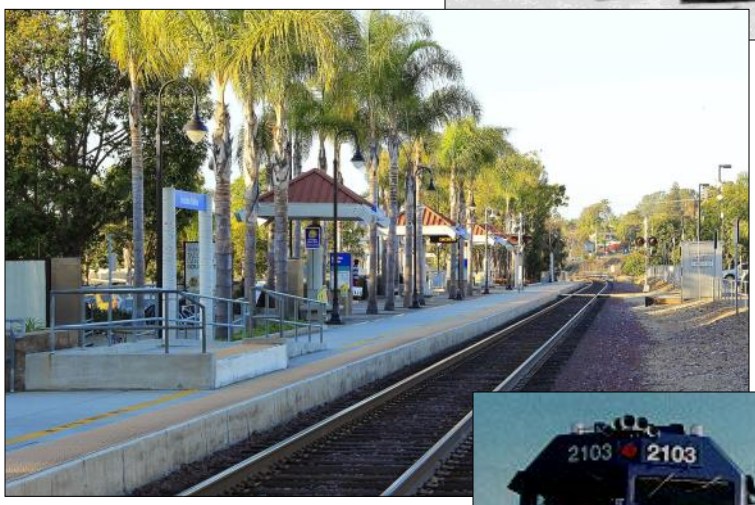
The roof detail is shown to advantage in this 1931 photo (above).

By 1949 the station had been reduced to a whistle stop but it had gained an electric signal.. The gingerbread roof detail was removed at the time a new roof was installed (right).

ENCINITAS

Rear view of the Encinitas station seen from Coast Highway shows the loading dock (left).

Three years after the station closed in January 1969 it was moved to Leucadia where it was restored and continues today as a popular coffee house and art gallery (right).



The current commuter station (shelter) at Encinitas was completed in 1995. It is served today by the Coaster and NCTD Breeze bus service.

The single track stations at Encinitas and Carlsbad Village cause bottlenecks for rail traffic on the Coast Line.

Our thanks to Carolyn Cope of the Encinitas Historical Society for providing information for this article. ⟶

ENCINITAS

In the fall of 2013, Amtrak began serving Encinitas with its *Pacific Surfliner* train. Blaming low ridership, Amtrak discontinued the service on October 9, 2017.

A special train dubbed California Operation Lifesaver heads south from Encinitas into Cardiff on April 23, 1987. The unusual line up of colorful locomotives included Santa Fe FP45 No. 5998, Union Pacific E9A No. 951, Southern Pacific SDP45 No. 3201 and Amtrak F40 No. 240. Photo courtesy of Jim Minor.

Creating a realistic load for a bulkhead flat car.

By Dave Ford

While shopping around at a train show, I bought a nicely detailed model of a modern bulkhead flat car made by ExactRail. The HO scale model is based on a 67-foot 11-inch prototype that Trenton Works of Nova Scotia delivered to TTX in 2005.

Building loads for flat cars and gondolas using photographs of prototype equipment is one my favorite modeling activities. Whether the load is machinery, steel beams, or pipe, it is fairly easy to create a unique piece of rolling stock. I decided my ExactRail bulkhead flat car needed a load of steel beams.

Tip from Dave
Use Super Glue to create the layers and to attach the load to the flat car.

The first step was to spray the car with Dullcote. I then weathered it using a combination of paint and dry pastels. When I was satisfied with the look of the model I protected the finish with another light coat of Dullcote.

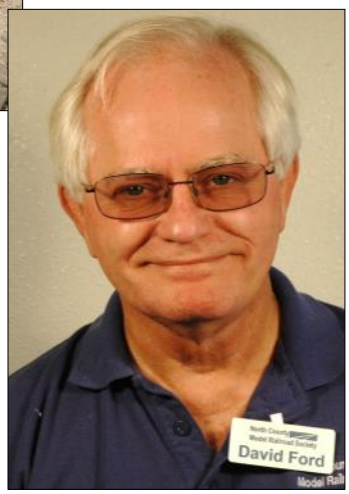
To create the load, I gathered Plastruct versions of steel beams and tubes, most of which I had left over from other projects. I arranged them into rows and painted each one a dark grey followed by a layer of Dullcote.

After they had thoroughly dried, I added a slight amount of rust to the beams using the prototype pictures as a guide. Then I put three or four thin black bands around each layer to represent the metal bands used to tie prototype steel loads together.

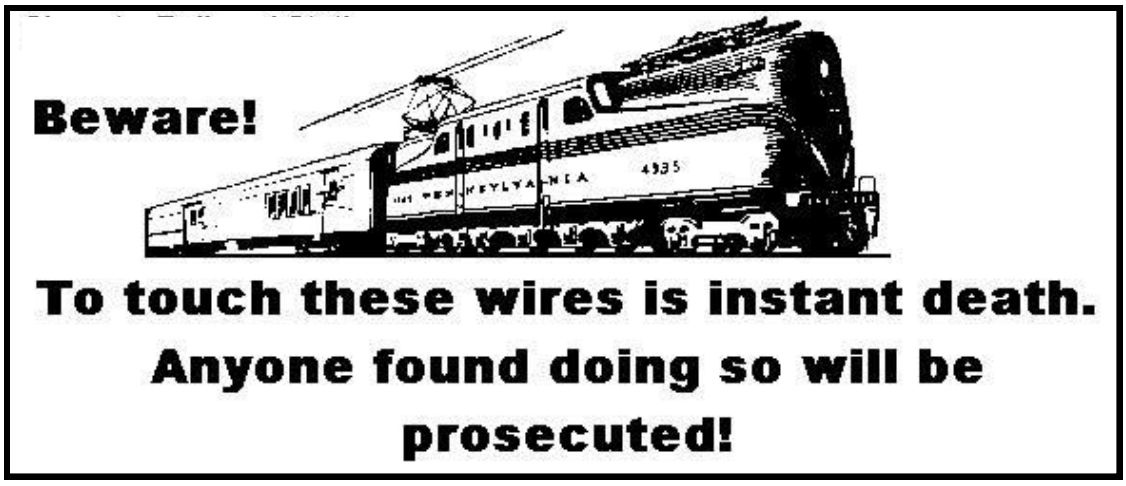
To assemble the load on the car, I put four vertical pieces of wood representing stakes on one side of the deck. Next, using balsa wood as spacers, I glued each layer to the car with the largest beams on the bottom and smaller beams on top. ⟶

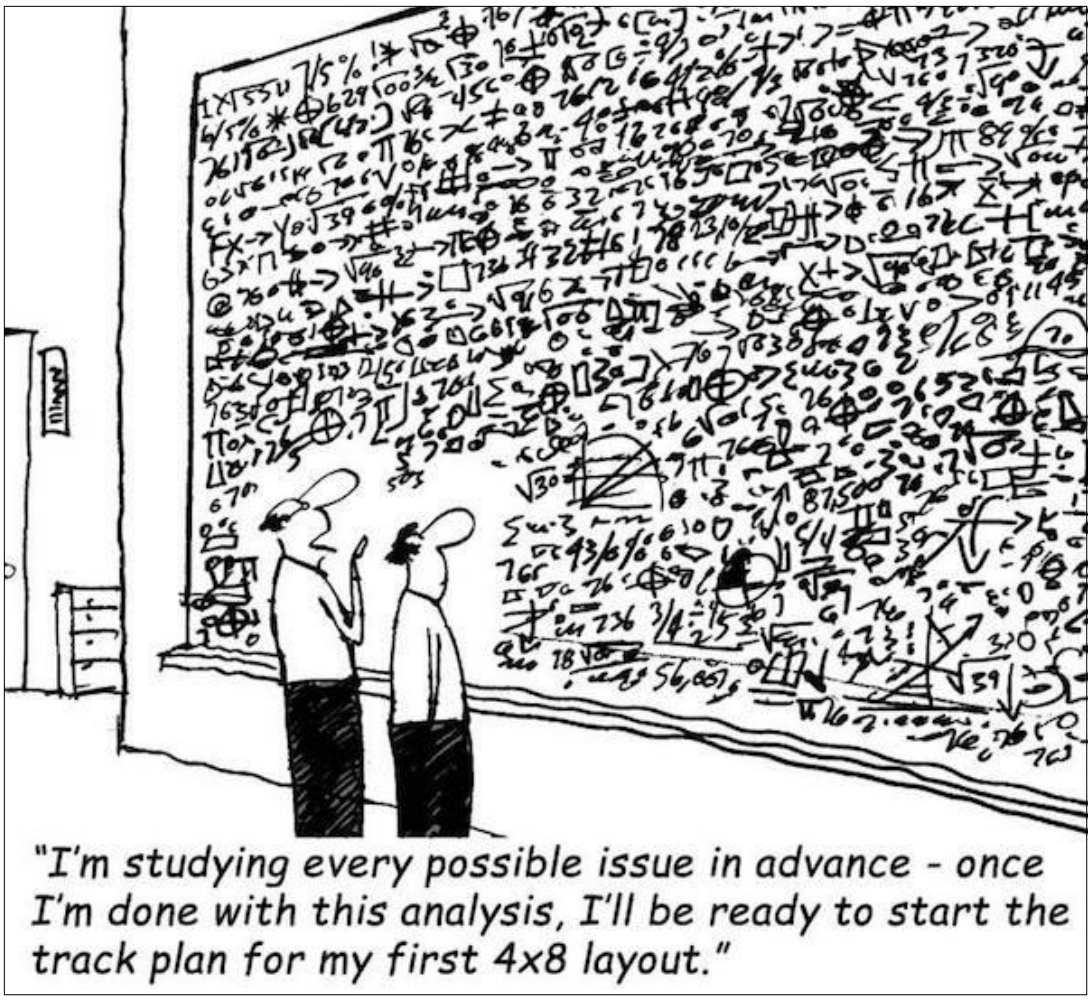
I then added four more vertical stakes on the opposite side of the deck to keep the load from moving laterally, replicating what I saw in the pictures.

After checking out the new load and making sure everything was secure, I placed the upgraded model in a train. The most satisfying thing to me is that I was able to create a prototypical car myself.



NCMRS member Dave Ford has been a train fan since he was a kid growing up in Iowa. Although Dave enjoys and participates in all phases of model railroading, he is especially adept at creating scenery. His guidance is behind most of the scenes that capture visitors attention at our Heritage Park layout. Dave recently presented a clinic on building realistic trees at the NCMRS Fall Swap Meet.


Beware!
To touch these wires is instant death.
Anyone found doing so will be
prosecuted!


"I'm studying every possible issue in advance - once I'm done with this analysis, I'll be ready to start the track plan for my first 4x8 layout."

News & Views In Anonymity

Happy New Year to one and all. NCMRS members accomplished some great things in 2017 and this new year should be equally exciting. The Old Yardmaster will be watching with interest…

Good to see Rick Keefer come out from under the layout long enough to pen an article that thoroughly explains our complex signal system...

Concern for the Lilic Fire in December was real, with residential evacuations taking place within a mile of Heritage Park…

Why is dirty track a bigger problem on the main layout (where engines frequently get their wheels cleaned) than it is on the T4K layout where cheaper models run endlessly with fewer problems?

Congratulations to Messrs Helland, Llewelyn, Blankinship and Gillie. They must be doing something right as NCMRS members didn't hesitate to reelect them as president, vice president, treasurer and secretary for the coming year…

FRED devices are too modern for the era I model, but since it is important that my freight trains trigger the NCMRS signal system, all my cabooses will soon be getting resistive wheelsets...

Nice to see John Engstrom, VP and General Manager of San Juan Car Company, visit NCMRS. John was previously Athearn's top west coast executive and was the original owner of Reed's Hobbies in La Mesa…

Great to learn that Nick Ruddick's hip replacement was entirely successful. Our chairman looks downright robust...

Rapido Trains is working on an HO version of Santa Fe's unique RDCs for delivery later this year. The prototype operated between LA and San Diego until a major derailment in 1956. The model would look perfect scooting along the coast line just north of Oceanside...

*Consist is an odd word with pronunciation depending on how it is used. The **con**sist of my train is a locomotive, six boxcars and a caboose. My train con**sists** of a locomotive, six boxcars and a caboose.*

My calendar is already marked for the Spring Swap Meet on April 14, 2018. How about yours?

Laura Reese has done her usual good job of decorating for the season. Have you checked out the North Pole on the T4K layout?

Kudos to John Castaneda for taking second place in the Great Chili Cook-Off …

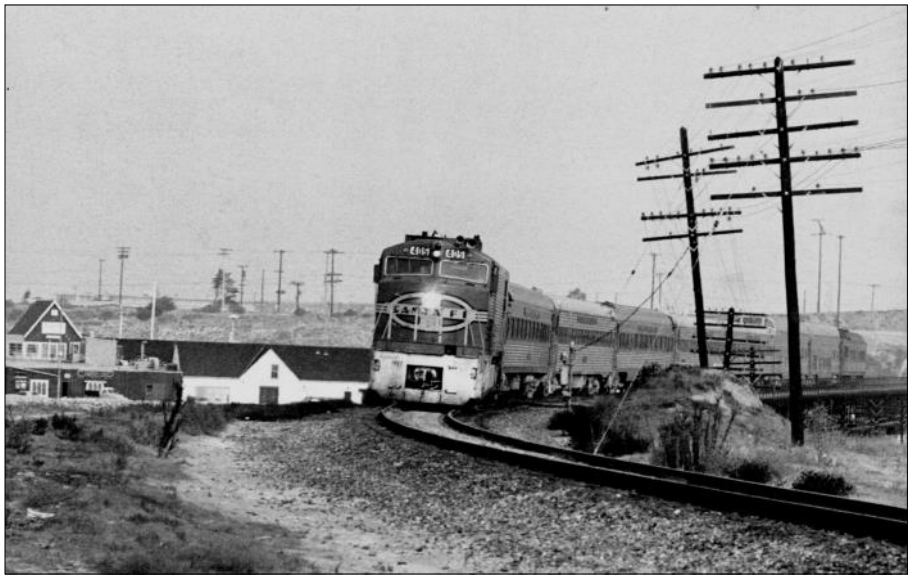
Here's hoping retired mayor Jim Wood will continue to visit NCMRS. We wish him all the best as he continues to recover from a debilitating stroke…

Until next time... OYM

From The Editor's Scrapbook

Next stop Oceanside! A Del Mar racetrack special with heavy-weight coaches parallels Coast Highway as it heads south from San Clemente in June 1946. Note the stack extension on the 4-8-4 locomotive.
Photo from John L. Whitmeyer /Bob Kern Collection.

A Budd-built RDC with a modified Santa Fe Warbonnet paint scheme stops at Del Mar on Nov 13, 1955. John Shaw photo.



Leaning into the curve as it crosses San Luis Rey River near Oceanside Harbor in October 1968, a GE 3000 hp U30CG leads a special Santa Fe excursion train that includes two big Santa Fe dome cars.
Photo by Rick Peterson.