



A brace of Santa Fe diesel locomotives lead a train through the barren land of New Mexico's Abo Canyon. See page 3.

In this issue

- **Scenery Update**
- **NCMRS Swag**
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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 January 1, 2021. Please submit articles and pictures to the editor at rhbale@aol.com by December 15, 2020. 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, 230 Peyri Drive, Oceanside CA 92058. Please send all correspondence to PO Box 22, San Luis Rey, CA 92068.

From The Chaplain's Desk

By Rev. Bill Pope

Thought for Today Chinese Proverb

"If you want happiness for an hour – go fishing. If you want happiness for a year – inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime – help someone else."

Happiness is not something that is achieved, it is a skill that is cultivated and practiced daily. Its mastery comes from serving others. In seeking happiness for others, you will find it in yourself.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." (Psalm 37:4).

About our cover photo

Tracks on the newly expanded NCMRS layout now extend from coastal Oceanside all the way to Arizona and New Mexico. The landfall is significantly different in the desert as shown by the unusual rock formation in Abo Canyon in central New Mexico. Led by David Ford, the NCMRS scenery team has created this realistic view of the rugged canyon, right here in Oceanside's Heritage Park. The HO scale locomotives include an Atlas EMD SD-26 at the point followed by an EMD SD-45 from Walthers. For more on the new scenery see Bob Kale's article that begins on page 12.



President's Message

Hello everyone. I hope this issue of the Semaphore finds you healthy, happy and staying safe from the coronavirus. As you know the City of Oceanside allowed us to reopen the club for members only on June 13. Due to the coronavirus restrictions placed on us, visitors are not allowed and there is no estimate from the City of Oceanside on how soon we will be able to have visitors. However, at least we are open for members. Since many of you have not felt comfortable coming to the club, I will try to bring everyone up to date with NCMRS progress.

Your directors have changed the term of office from one to two years with a three-term limit. This will provide better continuity running the club and will eliminate the need to have an election every year for NCMRS directors. Although club officers are appointed by the directors, their term has also be extended to two years.

Since the club reopened in June, we have distributed new club shirts, badges, coffee mugs and a few picture albums. Rich Llewellyn has an article in this issue of the Semaphore that details what is available and how to order the items.

Also in this issue of the Semaphore is a photo tour by Bob Kale showing the excellent work the scenery team (Eddie Perez, Rich Blankinship, Bob Kale, and Dave Ford) has accomplished in making the upper deck in the new room look like Arizona and New Mexico.

Our organization is blessed with some very capable electrical engineers and technicians. We are moving forward with our signaling and control project. New switch control pads are in place and the sidings in the San Diego yard are now equipped with individual on/off switches. There is plenty of work ahead for the electrical team and if you would like to help, contact John Burrow, Nick Ruddick, or Rick Keefer.

Since the last issue of the Semaphore, we lost two club members and one former member. Frank Mikulka and Bob Hunt passed away and donated their rolling stock to NCMRS. Their names have been added to the Memorial plaque at the club. Former member Dick Miller, who served as president and chairman of NCMRS, died due to complications from cancer. Our deepest sympathy goes out to each of their families.

We are looking for ideas to make 2021 a great come back to "normal" for NCMRS members, including a Spring Swap Meet. Lots of volunteers will be needed to make the Swap Meet a success. The NMRA National Convention is in Santa Clara in 2021 and some members plan to attend. Please let me know if you are thinking about attending this important event. If you have other ideas, please let me know about your thoughts.

Please feel free to talk to any of the NCMRS directors and officers with any concerns or ideas for improvement. We are always looking for new ideas.

Harold Helland

NCMRS MISSION STATEMENT

The North County Model Railroad Society is a not-for-profit benefit corporation whose mission is to share the hobby of model railroading, encourage awareness of railroads both yesterday and today, and to provide rail safety education to the northern San Diego County community



Oceanside's Heritage Village Park, home of North County Model Railroad Society

Contributing to the Semaphore

Material appropriate for publication in the NCMRS Semaphore is always welcome. As your editor, I'm constantly looking for articles, photographs, humor, and other ideas that might be of interest to NCMRS members.

If you have been thinking about submitting something to the Semaphore, please don't hesitate to contact me. We can discuss your idea and I'll be happy to offer any assistance, if needed, in working out a final version suitable for publication.

You'll be surprised how easy it is to join the ranks of NCMRS members like Joe Kirkpatrick, Harold Helland, Leo Valley, Bob Kale, Ryan Llewellyn, Rich Llewellyn, Rich Blankinship, Pete Steinmetz, Rick Keefer, Bill Jones, David Ford, Jim Gillie, and John Burrow who have all contributed one or more articles for publication in the Semaphore.

Contact me anytime at the club or at home. My email address is rhbale@aol.com.
Dick Bale

Department Heads & Committee Chairs

Effective October 1, 2020

Decoder Pro and Track Test	John Burrow
Chaplain	Bill Pope
Children's Programs	Laura Reese
E-bay Sales Manager	Rich Blankinship
Electronics/Electrical	Rick Keefer, Nick Ruddick
Facility & Railroad Construction	Harold Helland
Maintenance	Kevin Harper, Bob Kale
Membership	Bob Kale
Member Support (swag)	Rich Llewellyn
NMRA Liaison	Pete Steinmetz
Operating Sessions	Rich Blankinship, Jim Gillie,
Operation Lifesaver	Laura Reese
Planning and Design	David Ford
Program Chairman	Pete Steinmetz
Public Relations	Dick Bale
Scenery	David Ford, Eddie Perez
Semaphore Editor/Publisher	Dick Bale
Semaphore Proof Reader	Sue Ruddick
Signal Master	John Burrow
Swap Meet	Rich Llewellyn, Eddie Perez
Training	Rick Keefer
Web Master	Nick Ruddick

NCMRS 2020 OFFICIALS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

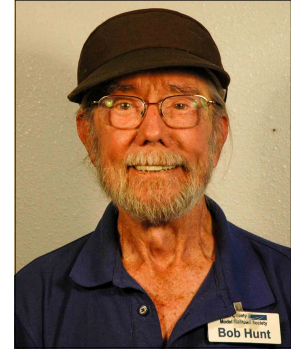
John Burrow, Chairman
Dick Bale, Director
Rich Blankinship, Director

OFFICERS

Harold Helland, President
Eddie Perez, Vice President Operations
Jim Gillie, Vice President Administration
Bill Jones, Treasurer & CFO
Jeff McClain, Secretary

Bob Hunt 1929-2020

NCMRS member Bob Hunt passed away August 27, 2020 at the age of 91. A native of Massachusetts, Dr. Robert Hunt earned his PhD in psychology at Boston University. He lead the alcohol and drug abuse section of the Hawaii Department of Health until his retirement. He moved to Oceanside in 2006 to be closer to family. Bob's passion for model trains was triggered in 1958 when his 5-year old daughter received a Lionel train for Christmas. She was delighted with the train, but soon lost interest. Dad did not. He built a total of six HO layouts over the course of his life, the final one filling his 20 by 24 foot living room. Bob's daughter said her father greatly enjoyed his time as a member of NCMRS.



Frank Mikulka 1926-2020

Frank Mikulka was born on April 17, 1926. He passed away at the age of 94 on July 18, 2020. Although not a model railroader in the usual sense, Frank enjoyed the camaraderie and fellowship he found among fellow members of NCMRS. Frank served his country during WWII as a maintenance expert on the complex 16-cylinder rotary engines of the B-29 Super Fortress bomber. Following the loss of his wife, the New York native moved to Oceanside to enjoy his final years with his daughter.

Dick Miller 1934-2020

Former NCMRS member Dick Miller passed away August 9, 2020. He was 84 years old. Dick was a longtime member of NCMRS having held several offices including president. He was the first editor of the Semaphore. A native of Indiana, Dick was hooked on model railroad-ing at an early age, building his first layout when he was 13. His favorite railroad to model was the Santa Fe. Diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2003, he quietly fought the disease but lost his motivation after the passing of his wife, Janet. Dick left NCMRS and his home in Escondido and moved to Julian to live under the care of his daughter. Later he joined the La Mesa MR Club at Balboa Park, often accompanied by his good friend Al Cuevas.



NCMRS News

Advance Sign Up Mandatory to Visit NCMRS

After the City allowed us to open the club facility to a limited number of members, John Burrow implemented a control program identified as SignUpGenius. The program provides a simple method for controlling the number of people authorized to enter our facility on any given day. It also provides traceability as to who was in the facility on a specific date and time, which could prove helpful in contact tracing in the event someone is unfortunate enough to test positive for Covid19.

The advance sign up procedure has been working well for the regular group of members who have been visiting and working at the club. If you have not been to the club for awhile and are thinking about visiting, please familiarize yourself with the following procedure.

Advance sign up is mandatory, even if you are just dropping by the club for a few moments. The first step is to go to SignUpGenius at

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054aa5af2ea4f85-ncmrs>.

On the front page of SignUpGenius, scroll to the date and time you would like to visit the club and enter your name in the appropriate location. Note that there is a limit to the number of members allowed to sign up for each date.

Only sign up if you are definitely going to the club. If you change your mind after signing up, send an email to John Burrow who will remove your name and free up the space for another member. At the present time visitors are not allowed in the club facility.

If you have any questions, please contact John Burrow at jburrow@cox.net.

Club Facility Disinfected

As part of the club's on-going effort to keep NCMRS members safe, John Burrow reports that the entire club facility will be given a complete wipe down and disinfectant spray on September 30th. All non-railway surfaces will be treated including...

- The back room, including computers and keyboards
- The lounge, including tables, chairs and desk
- All doors, both inside and out
- Windows and frames
- Any horizontal surfaces
- All Phones, Pads and Tablets
- Anyone who happens to be standing still

John plans to accomplish the cleansing using a solution of bleach. He cautioned that anyone allergic to bleach advise him and he will try not to squirt them.

NCMRS NEWS

Progress Report on Signal Installations

Rick Keefer reports that signals in the lower level of the main layout room are nearing completion with most of the remaining work in the Temecula area. The installation of gantry signal lights at the 50/51 crossover and the 8/9/10/11 double crossover also remains to be accomplished.

Installation of signals on the upper level will move forward once the best location is determined for each signal for both visibility and operational value. Rick Keefer is looking forward to finishing up the main room and getting started with signal work in the newly expanded layout room.

Fall Swap Meet

Although details are still being worked out, plans are underway for an NCMRS Swap Meet, probably sometime in November. Everything hinges on the status of Covid19 and whether or not the City will permit people to gather in Heritage Park. Meanwhile, members can be thinking about unwanted or surplus items that can be turned into cash. Watch for further developments.

NCMRS Elections

The election of NCMRS officials is coming up soon and this year's election will be a little different. The current NCMRS board of three directors and five officers decided to change the term of office for each position from one year to two years. Making the change is permitted in the Bylaws of the organization. To help ensure continuity, the positions will eventually be staggered so that all terms of office will not end at the same time.

Club officials felt the change would provide better continuity in managing the club and reduce the frequency of elections. An additional change is limiting all officials to a maximum of three terms in the same office. The current procedure of the full membership electing Directors, and the Directors appointing officers, will continue.

The names of candidates will be officially announced at the October 31, Business Meeting. The election will take place at the final NCMRS Business Meeting of the year which is scheduled for Saturday, December 6, 2020.

Any NCMRS member interested in running for office should submit their name to the club secretary, Jeff McClain at jrmcclai@uci.edu. It is expected that candidates for Director will have previously been an officer of NCMRS. 🚂



Amazon Smile

By Bill Jones

Amazon Smile is a program where Amazon donates one half of one percent of the price of products to charitable organizations. North County Model Railroad Society is organized as a non-profit club and therefore eligible for this donation.

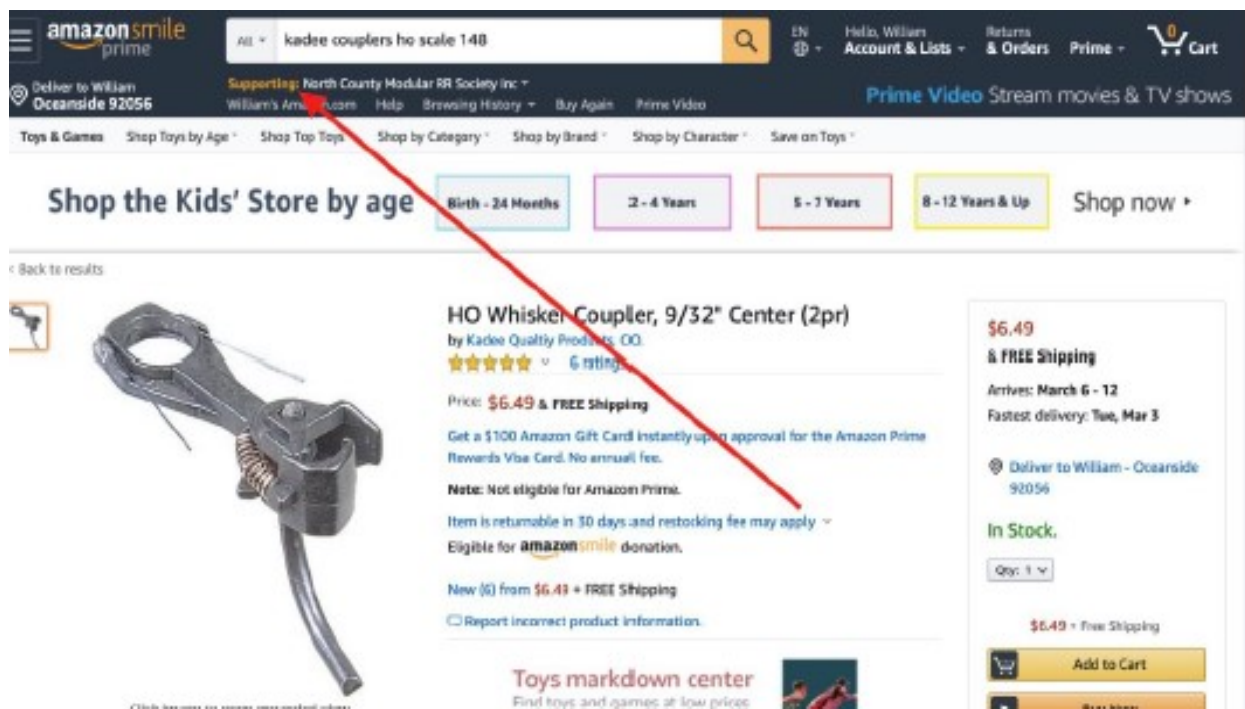
A half of one percent does not seem like much until you consider how much the average person purchases from Amazon in a year. This program could provide significant income to our club.

The price is the same for a product purchased on the Amazon Smile site or regular Amazon. Please ask your friends and family to participate.

There are two ways to find the Amazon Smile website:

#1. Enter - <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/33-0478444> - in the web address or search bar of a web browser such as Chrome, Safari, Firefox, or Edge. Enter your Amazon log-in name and password or create an account. Your amazon.com and amazon.smile.com sites use the same account name and password.

#2. Go to smile.Amazon.com and search for North County Model Railroad Society in the section "Supporting". See the screenshot below. Note that North County Modular Railroad Society is the same as North County Model Railroad Society. 🚂





National Model Railroad Association Report

By Pete Steinmetz

Director NMRA PSR San Diego Division

San Diego Division Zoom Meets

The San Diego Division of PSR NMRA continues to conduct Zoom Meets every second Saturday. No in-person meets are planned for the remainder of 2020.

NCMRS members who would like to monitor a PSR Zoom Meet, but are not NMRA members, can request an invite by contacting me at peteshoscale@gmail.com.

Cajon Division Fall Meet

The PSR Cajon Division will be holding its Fall Meet on Saturday, October 24, starting at 7:00 AM. The location will be at the Messiah Lutheran Church, 6625 Dale St, Buena Park. The meet will be outside with face covering and social distancing required. The swap meet starts at 7:00 AM, followed by a hobo auction at 12:00 Noon. Admission is \$10.00 for NMRA members and \$15.00 for non-members. Complete details are available at www.cajondivision.org.


Because Covid numbers vary significantly in different counties, it is hard to plan public events. For example the Cajon Fall Meet in

Orange County's Buena Park, will be held as scheduled, while the Los Angeles RPM Meet was forced to cancel its October 3 date. Many future shows have been canceled because facilities won't, or can't, commit to being available. Larger shows require 9-12 months to plan and need firm commitments from the facilities.

NMRAX On-Line Programs

NMRAX on-line has scheduled monthly sessions through the end of the year. Details of each event are published close to the date. You do not need to be an NMRA member to view the NMRAX programs on either Facebook Live or You Tube.

NMRA National Convention

It is not too soon to begin making plans to attend the 2021 NMRA National Convention. The "Rails By the Bay" convention and the National Train Show will be held July 4-11, 2021, in Santa Clara, CA. For more information visit www.nmra2021.com. 



Scenery Nears Completion in Expanded Area

By Bob Kale

Although Covid19 has slowed down many activities at NCMRS, a small group of members have been able to continue creating scenery on the expanded club layout. The scenery team has been focusing on the upper level of the new layout room. Locations and their principal creators include Peach Springs (Harold Helland), Crozier Canyon (Rich Blankinship), the Arizona Divide (Eddie Perez), and Abo Canyon and New Mexico in general (Bob Kale). David Ford was involved in much of the planning and initial scenery work but has not been available during Covid19.

One of two entrances to the upper level is at the desert community of Peach Springs. The partially completed backdrop shows the artistry of Becky Watson



Another view of Peach Springs shows two structures on Old Route 66 built by Bob Behm. Harold Helland developed the overall scene.

Our cover photo, repeated here, shows the realism of the Abo Canyon scenery envisioned by Dave Ford. Bob Kale and Eddie Perez helped Dave complete the scene.



THE SEMAPHORE



Eddie Perez created this scene near the Vulture Mine in Arizona.



The timbered area near the end of New Mexico's Abo Canyon shows the combined work of Bob Kale, Dave Ford, and Eddie Perez.

THE SEMAPHORE



A storm threatens as a trio of Santa Fe diesels leads a string of tank cars through Abo Canyon, New Mexico.



A marker showing the New Mexico-Arizona state line can be seen behind the second diesel unit. 🚂

NCMRS Swag

By Rich Llewellyn



Over the years the NCMRS club has offered a variety of items to our members that incorporates the Club logo. Now that the club has a new logo, this is the perfect time to review all of the items currently available.

SHIRTS

First up are the Club shirts which every member is encourage to have. The club currently offers both a short sleeve polo and a long sleeve denim shirt. The short sleeve polo, manufactured by Port Authority, has a left side pocket in the club color of Royal Blue. The logo is embroidered above the pocket. It is available in all sizes, including youth sizes, and a lady's version. Cost of the polo shirt is \$25.00 each.

The long sleeve version, also Port Authority, is offered in faded blue denim with left side pocket. The logo is embroidered above the pocket. These shirts are available in adult sizes SX – 6XL. Cost of the long sleeve shirt is \$40.00 each.

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Next are name badges with the new logo. The club recently paid for one badge, with the new logo, for each current member. Additional badges are available at a cost of \$10.00 per badge.

MUGS

Coffee mugs are now available with the club logo courtesy of John Burrows. These can be made with or without your name on them. Cost of the mugs is \$8.00 per mug.

COASTERS

Leather coasters in the image of the new NCMRS logo are available courtesy of Rich Blankinship. These coasters are about 4 inches in diameter and go well with club coffee mugs. The cost of these coasters is \$5.00 each.

FACE MASKS

Face masks with the new club logo are also available courtesy of John Burrows. The masks are constructed of two-ply stretch fabric for comfortable wearing and they are washable. Cost for each mask is \$8.00.


TIMETABLE

Did you know that the formal name for our layout is the Inland & Pacific Railroad, "Gateway to the Coast"? As the club layout has expanded and track arrangements revised, NCMRS publishes an Employee Timetable with key information on our layout. The latest version of the Inland and Pacific Railroad Employee Timetable incorporating the expansion areas is being compiled by Dick Bale. The updated version is scheduled for publication in November. These timetables have a wealth of information specific to our Club and layout and cover such items as: Directory of Officials, General and Operating rules, Operating help, Signals as used on the layout, System Maps covering all switching locations, and lists of all Industries and their locations serviced by the Inland & Pacific Railroad. The detailed information contained in the timetable is an important reference source for all members running trains on our layout and is especially helpful during club operating sessions. Costs for the Employee Timetable is \$5.00 each.

BOOK

Lastly, we now have a very nice paper bound book of layout construction pictures covering the build activities as we moved into our current location at Heritage Park. The book was compiled from member pictures and covers the period from 2014 to 2016. It is an important document of our recent history. Supplies are limited so if interested let me or Nick know soon. Cost for the book is \$20.00.

If you are interested in any of the above items, please contact the sponsor of the item or me, Rich Llewellyn at kymric@roadrunner.com.

We are always looking for interesting items that could have appeal to our membership. Please let me know if you have any new ideas for unique and interesting NCMRS swag items. 



Decoder Programming Question - Asked and Answered

One of the bonuses of belonging to a club is benefiting from the knowledge and experience of other members, even during Covid19. Here is a recent example.

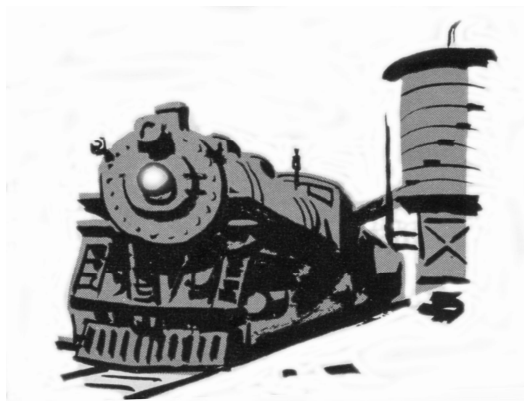
NCMRS member Sean Martin recently asked a question about programming. The responses, from two fellow club members with considerable decoder experience, may prove helpful to other members.

Sean Martin asked: I've been using JMRI and attempting to do some programming. Is there a more user friendly solution beside JMRI?

Pete Steinmetz offered the following: I'm a big Soundtraxx person. I have some locomotives that have TCS and ESU, but I prefer Soundtraxx. ESU is from locos with factory installed sound. I recommend people choose a company and stick with them. It will make consisting and speed matching much easier. It has been my experience that it is more difficult to match a loco with an ESU with one with Soundtraxx.

John Burrow responded with the following advice: When choosing a decoder (and software to update the decoder), think about this: Some decoders can be loaded with custom sounds (ESU Loksound, Zimo, Digitrax). Some decoders cannot be loaded with custom sounds, but have many configurable choices when it comes to sounds and lights (Soundtraxx, TCS WOW and others). If the chip manufacturer makes hardware/software for programming, then use it (ESU, Zimo, Digitrax, MTH?). You can use JMRI for simple CV changes. Factory installed sound is often a downgraded version of the decoder you think you are getting.

I standardized on ESU Loksound years ago as I wanted to load my own sounds. At that time only two manufacturers allowed you to load your own sounds – ESU and Zimo. The Zimo manual was available only in German, but the ESU manual was available in near-English, so I went with ESU. I use only one brand of decoder (ESU Loksound, versions 3.5, 4.0 and 5.0) and this makes my life much easier. I agree with Pete's suggestion about staying with one brand. 🚂



Can You Identify These Locomotives?

Pictured below are three relatively uncommon diesel locomotives. They are all production models manufactured in the US. Railroad names and road numbers have been photo shopped out. The first NCMRS member to correctly identify the manufacturer (brand) and model number of all three locomotives will receive one of the new NCMRS coffee mugs. The first non-NCMRS member identifying the locomotives will also receive an NCMRS coffee mug. Submit your answer by email AFTER October 4, 2020. Note that emails dated before October 5 will not qualify. Send your answer to rhbale@aol.com. Winners will be notified. Watch for the winners names and correct answers in the next issue of the Semaphore. Good luck to all!



Mystery Locomotive #1



Mystery Locomotive #2



Mystery Locomotive #3

Intermodal Railroading

By Dick Bale

Defining Intermodal Transportation: *Intermodal is the use of two or more modes such as truck, ship and rail, to move freight in a standard container from shipper to consignee.*

Intermodal is nothing new for railroads as this 1920s photo demonstrates. What is new in recent years is the greatly expanded use of ISO containers on ships, railroads, and trucks. Currently there are over 17 million shipping containers in circulation globally, making around 200 million trips a year.



In the late 1930s railroads began carrying trailers on standard flat cars. Securing the trailer was time consuming and required the use of numerous chains. The service was known as TOFC (Trailer on Flat Car) or piggyback for short. Flat cars of the period were generally 40 feet in length which meant only one trailer could be accommodated on each flat car.

Eventually, specialized flat cars up to 89 feet long were built that could handle two 40 foot trailers. Securing trailers was simplified with the development of innovative systems that collapsed out of the way to allow loading ISO containers or trailers.



Athearn's HO model of a Pullman-Standard 85-foot flat car has collapsible trailer hitches so it can also be used for either trailer or container service.

THE SEMAPHORE

In the 1950s steel intermodal containers began to appear. By the late 1960s the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) issued standards for overseas containers. ISO containers are 8-foot wide by either 8-foot or 9-foot-6-inch high. The most common lengths are 20, 40, 45, 48, and 53 feet. This 40 foot NYK container is an HO model from ScaleTrains.com.



In the early years railroads transported ISO containers on standard flat cars.



A container called a tanktainer, with a tank inside a standard container frame, was introduced to carry liquids. The tanktainer above is a Walthers HO scale model.



Perishable goods are transported in containers fitted with an integral refrigeration systems powered by small diesel units. They generally plugged into external power while traveling aboard ship.

Well-cars resemble flatcars but have a container-sized depression, or well, in the middle of the car. Well-cars permit double-stacking containers with sufficient clearance for operation on most main lines in North America.

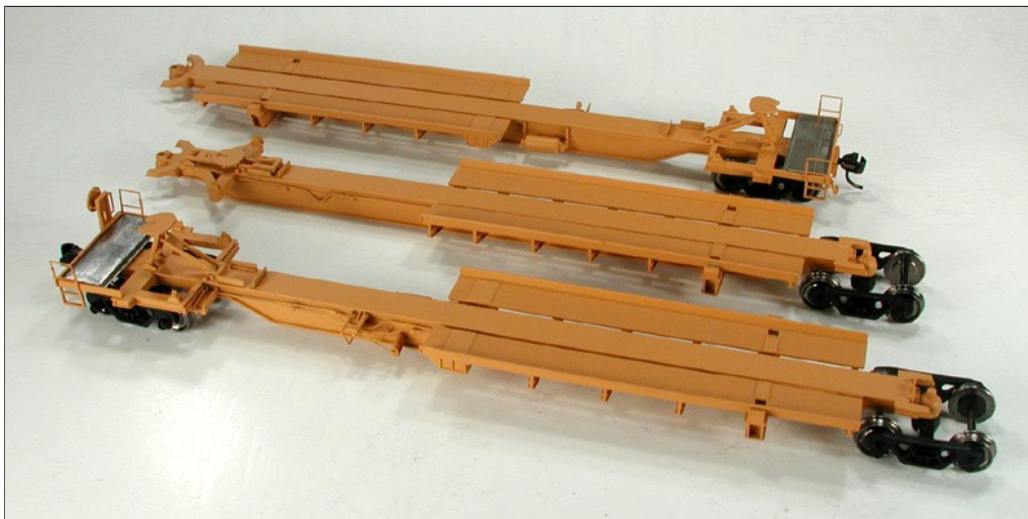


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Gunderson's first well-cars had a partial bulkhead (above). Later units did not have the bulkhead when it was found to be unnecessary.

Double-stack well-cars are built as individual cars and in 3-unit or 5-unit articulated sets that share a common truck.



Spine cars, like the Bowser HO scale models shown here, were developed by the Santa Fe to transport trailers. They operated only on ATSF trackage since they did not meet AAR interchange standards. 🚂

The Spray Gunner

By Pete Steinmetz

Pete discovers a handy new air brush system

I'm always on the lookout for new and innovative gadgets for model railroading and recently came across this innovative idea from Spray Gunner (www.spraygunner.com) .

The Spray Gunner is a hand-held air compressor with a detachable air brush. I originally purchased just the compressor with the idea that I would attach a quality Iwata or Badger airbrush to the top. Unfortunately, neither the Badger or Iwata will mate properly with the compressor, so I sent the compressor back.

I was contacted by Spray Gunner and told they were working on an adapter that would allow Badger and Iwata brushes to connect to the compressor. Then Covid19 hit and work on the adapter was postponed.



I decided I wanted to try the compressor anyway. Spray Gunner is selling Chinese airbrushes that will fit on the compressor. Total cost for an airbrush with the compressor was \$65.00, which is an attractive price, assuming the system works.

I was skeptical of the quality of a Chinese airbrush at such a low cost but was pleasantly surprised when I tried it out. The brush won't do fine pin stripes, but it works fine for painting or weathering a model. The lack of hoses makes it particularly handy for working on scenery on a layout.

I haven't tried it yet but it should be fine for spraying solvent based paints. It should also be OK for acrylic paints that are thinned with a good acrylic thinner. Not water.

I like the compact design of the compressor and there is no cord to pull around. Charging the internal lithium battery is with a USB-C plug. Spray time is supposed to be around two hours which should be more than enough for most projects. 🚂



New Models Appropriate to Oceanside Rails

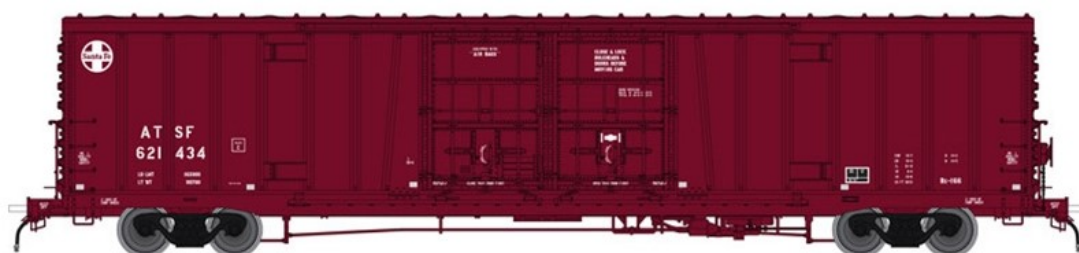
By Dick Bale

A great variety of railroad equipment has rolled through Oceanside during the past 120 years. Local hobbyists are fortunate that historically accurate models continue to be introduced. Here is a brief look at three new HO scale items scheduled for release during the 4th quarter of 2020.

Rapido Trains has introduced a museum-quality model of a 40 foot USRA double sheathed wood boxcar. This is an exquisite HO scale model of a WW-I era car operated by the Santa Fe Railway.



Atlas has released an HO scale model of a Dash 8-40BW diesel locomotive decorated in Santa Fe's iconic Warbonnet scheme. Both DC and DCC versions are available. A special feature on the economy priced model are the operating ditch lights.



This Santa Fe class BX-166 62 foot insulated boxcar with double doors is available now from Atlas. Over the years prototype BX-a66 cars have worn several variations of Santa Fe and BNSF paint and lettering schemes. This one is decorated with Santa Fe's 24 inch circular logo.



Also new from Atlas is this Gunderson's 48 foot all-purpose well-car decorated for BNSF. The HO scale model is typical of cars that get loaded with overseas containers at San Diego's Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal then rumble North through Oceanside late at night. 🚂

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Train Watching in Oceanside



After several years of planning and construction, commuter service connecting Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido began operation in 2008. regular passenger service had not been available to Escondido since 1946. Minor realignments notwithstanding, the sprinter's track follow the right-of-way established by the Santa Fe Railway in 1888. Utilizing Siemens VT642 two and three-car diesel multiple units (DMU) train sets manufactured in Germany, the new Sprinter service stops at 15 stations along the 22-mile route to the inland city. The North County transit District built a separate loading platform at Oceanside to insure that the Sprinter could operate independently without interfering with Coaster or Amtrak operations

While the DMUs are not much narrower than freight cars, the space for employees hanging at the sides of cars considerably increases the free space required, and gangways were designed into the stations that fold up after end of service to allow the BNSF trains plus employees at their sides to pass through. At the eastbound side of the Escondido Avenue platform, the tracks curve so sharply that a gap existed between the outside edges of the gangway and the side of the DMU. The California Public Utilities Commission declared the gap is unsafe, resulting in the Eastbound platform at Escondido Avenue not being used for six months after the opening of the Sprinter. On September 12, 2008, the facility was completed and three days later the station became operational.

Of ten rail projects built or planned in California in 2005, Sprinter was the least expensive. The American Public Works Association awarded Sprinter the Transportation Project of the Year for projects valued over \$75 million. 🚂