



The Daylight Observation

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Daylight Winter Meet February 28th in Visalia

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Daylight Division will hold its Winter 2009 meet on Saturday, February 28th in Visalia, California. The meet will be held at Saint Paul's Anglican Church, 120 North Hall Street at the corner of Hall and Center Streets. We will start at 9:00am with registration, contest entries and chit-chat. A 90 minute clinic on laser kit construction will be presented, with HO and N scale kits from NESM of Davis. This is a make-and-take clinic costing \$10.00 for those who want a kit. Basic construction aids will be supplied. To reserve a kit for the clinic contact Brewster Bird by e-mail at mec569@yahoo.com (please put laser kit in subject heading) or phone 559-732-6096.

Lunch will be served for \$5.00 per plate. The menu is barbequed chicken, tri-tip, crock-pot beans, potato salad and chocolate cake with vanilla ice cream.

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After lunch we will hold our first ever Daylight Division auction! Jerry Jackson of Fresno has moved to a new home and donated his old layout to the Division. (Thank you Jerry!) Among the 3 dozen or so items on auction are brand new Tortoise switch motors and several un-built Walthers structures. Miscellaneous power packs, track accessories and rolling stock round out the collection. Come ready to pick up some bargains!

Of course there will a business meeting and the traditional white elephant auction (more bargains?). Meet coordinator Brewster Bird reports that an operating session on a sectional layout is anticipated at the meet. He calls it Plywood Central.

See map to meet on page 12.

Industry Liaison Reports

By Jay Smith

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Back in October of 2008 Dave Grenier announced that he was looking for someone to fill the vacant position of Industry Liaison Chairman. I reasoned that 1) the position deals with collecting donations in the form of train stuff of all kinds and 2) I get to, in a sense, give it away to all you good little boys (and some girls too). I further reasoned that this position reminds me of that big, jolly guy at the North Pole and since some people have told me that I do resemble him (a slightly slimmer version) I felt I was the man for the job.

I assumed the new position in November of 2008, just prior to the Daylight Division's Fall 2008 meet in Tehachapi, and was able to scrounge up a few donations to be raffled at the meet. Donors included Dave and Terri Baker of **Terri's Timeless Treasures/Dave's Trains** of Clovis, John Houlihan of the **Irish Tracklayer** of Fresno, Roy Ogle of **Roy's Trains & Things** of Clovis, and Linda and Ed Gordon of **Trains, etc.** of Tehachapi. Our many thanks and appreciation goes out to our generous donors.

As many of you know, the upcoming Daylight Division meet will take place in Visalia this February 28th. As Industry Liaison I have two goals in mind for this and subsequent meets. One is, of course, to procure door prize donations from vendors for the fun and enjoyment of our membership, as well as, to raise extra funds for the division. My second goal is to provide support for local vendors, especially the small train and hobby stores that help keep our hobby alive and well. As we traverse about the valley every quarter to a different division meet location I plan to contact local train stores to ask for door prize donations. In return, I will offer to promote their business and generosity to our members at the meeting, as well as mention their names in the upcoming Daylight Observation and Branchline publications. In doing so, I hope to establish and develop positive relationships between our club and local vendors wherever possible that will be beneficial to both.

As locations are announced for our quarterly meets I may be contacting some of you for contact information regarding local railroad supply vendors and businesses in your area. Please feel free to contact me as well. My email is included in this publication.

Superintendent Grenier Appoints Jay Smith Assistant Contest Chair

It is my pleasure to announce that Jay Smith of Clovis has accepted an appointment as Assistant Contest Chair for the Daylight Division. Thanks to Jay for volunteering for the position.

Dave Grenier
Superintendent
PCR Daylight
Division

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DIVISION HISTORIAN

Vacant

Daylight Hosts First Annual Layout Tours in Fresno-Clovis Area

by Gary Saxton, Layout Tour Chairman

Daylight Division members in the Fresno - Clovis area held an open house on December 6. The hosts were happy with the crowd and a good time was had by all.

The tour was put together with only two months notice and organizationally was a carbon copy of a similar effort that had been going on for decades around Houston, TX. The Houston tour celebrated Model Railroad Month. Gary Saxton, who lived in Houston for nineteen years, enjoyed the tours there and thought it could be successfully trans-



Guests enjoy visiting the Belmont Group.

successfully trans-

planted to the Central Valley. This tour target audience tried to add some of the general public, in contrast to tours done in connection with meets and conventions, which cater primarily to model railroaders.

Despite the short notice the following nine hosts volunteered: Ron Baker, Rob Briney, Marlin Costello, Clay Cunningham, Chuck Harmon, Belmont Train Group, Jim Scheiner coordinating, Gary Saxton, Bob Sexton and Steve Silva. A couple more could not quite be ready on short notice. Only Clay cannot repeat due to relocation. So we should have ten or more for next year.

Average attendance was 39 adults plus 5 children. This was about 80% the amount of the hosts' comfortable level and 55% of the hosts' upper limit. Based on conversations, the hosts estimated 40% of the visitors were active modelers. Thus, 60% were inactive modelers or non-modelers who were not likely to attend meets or conventions. Our quest to share our hobby with more people did achieve success. There were no accidents, thefts or other problems, although two young brothers definitely had their energy drink of choice before hitting the tour with their father. In a rare reversion to old time manners, these boys sent out hand written thank you notes.



Young MR Jimmy Cagle gets into the action at Ron Baker's layout



Jocelyn Luke, Chandler Luke (Dave Grenier's grandkids) at Chuck Harmon's layout



Lots of pictures were taken at Marlin Costello's Goshen and Goosechase.

Story continued on next page



O-Scaler John Houlihan wonders how Rob Briney can work with such small (HO) trains.

Observation Now On-line

Save your Division some postage money. E-mail the Observation editor and ask to be notified when the Observation is posted on the Web site. You will not receive a hard copy through the mail, saving us first class postage four times a year. You will receive an e-mail when the Web posting is available. You can download the .pdf file to print or whatever. The savings can be returned to you in the form of better meets and activities.

Please send your e-mail to me at harmonsta@aol.com. Please put Observation in the subject box so I won't mistake it for junk mail.



Bruce Morden's HO Santa Barbara Subdivision

Santa Barbara Tour Photo by Ken Kelley

Fresno-Clovis Layouts (Cont.)

Visitors' survey indicated each group planned to visit 5.6 layouts. Thus, there were 65 or so people out on the tour. Over half of the visitors learned about the event by a flier at the four cooperating hobby shops. Over one quarter found out via person to person contact. About an eighth found out via PCR communications. (Thank you Dave.)

The promotional literature took the bold statement to claim it was to be the "first annual" and response justified our optimism. See you next year. Date to be determined but part of Model Railroad Month (extended?).

If you want to be a host, contact Gary Saxton - gbs46@sbcglobal.net.



It was a nice day for a stroll in Steve Silva's garden railroad.

Director's Report

These past weeks have been spent on a variety of projects, none having to do with the business of directorship. One experiment being conducted is light control for a 24 hour day/night lighting of the layout using X-10 controllers. So far, I can do a 24 hour change of lighting in 15 minutes. A little more color balance is needed as well as black light experimentation for stars and night lights on the painted walls.



As to directors activities, I have been asked to propose an additional duty for the contest chairman consisting of recording and forwarding to the achievement program chairman all contest entries achieving 87.5 or more points.

The required documentation for meeting the requirements in the respective model building part of the achievement program can then be sent to the entrant without a request for needed paperwork and signatures.

If any members have any other items to present at the April Board meeting, contact me by phone (559-435-0874), mail or e-mail (john@irishtracklayer.com). John Houlihan, Director

Irish Tracklayer
O Gauge Track Products



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Upcoming Events

February 28, 2009

Daylight Division Winter meet
St. Paul's Anglican Church Hall
120 N. Hall St (@ Center St)
Visalia, CA

March 14 and 15

Bakersfield Train Show
Kern County Fairgrounds
1142 S. P Street
Bakersfield, CA

March 14 and 15

Daylight Division Layout Tour #3
Bakersfield area.

Layout descriptions and maps may be available on the [Daylight Division Yahoo Group](#) website.

March 19-21

[BayRails 2009](#)

San Francisco Bay Area. This event is 3 days of exceptional model railroad operations on many of the Bay Area's finest layouts. [Go to www.bayrails.com for an invitation.](#)

April 15 to 19, 2009

[Rails Across the Bay 2009 PCR Convention](#)

Fremont Marriott Silicon Valley
Fremont, CA

Register on the website at:
[www.pcrnmra.org/conv2009](#)

May 2, 2009

Daylight Division Spring Meet
Marlin Costello's home
1125 E Holland
Fresno, CA

DAVE'S DISPATCH

From the Super's Desk

By Dave Grenier



Albeit a bit delayed, I'd like to wish a Happy New Year to all the members of the Daylight Division and their families. I look forward to the New Year and serving you as your Superintendent. I hope you will take advantage of the many opportunities to join us in attending and participating in the activities planned for this year.

It's been a busy time in the Daylight Division and PCR since my last report three short months ago.

On December 6th, we had our 1st Annual Holiday Layout Tour, initiated by Gary Saxton, the new Daylight Division Layout Tour Chairman. See Gary's report on

page 3 for details. From the reports I heard, we could expect to see some new people at future meets as a result. Good job, Gary! Thanks for your efforts.

On Saturday, January 31st, we had Daylight Division Layout Tour #2. The tours of 15 layouts in the Santa Barbara area were held in conjunction with the [Model Railroads of Southern California](#) Yahoo group and coordinated by Daylight member Bruce Morden. See Bruce's report on page 11 for more details. Thanks, Bruce, for all you do to promote the hobby.

Next up on the calendar is our Winter Meet on February 28th in Visalia. See the story on page 1 for details.

We will have a table at the Bakersfield Train Show on March 14th and 15th. Volunteers are needed to staff the table both days from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (4:00 pm Sunday). Volunteers will receive exhibitors' passes for admittance to the show. Please [contact me](#) if you can help. On that same weekend we will have Daylight Division Layout Tour #3 in the Bakersfield area. Check the website for details.

The [Rails Across the Bay 2009](#) PCR Convention is coming up April 15 to 19. There will be about 50 different clinics, layout tours, operating sessions, Niles Canyon Railway tour, speeder rides, contests, and more. Plan now to attend. Register on the website at: [www.pcrnmra.org/conv2009](#) (PayPal accepted)

Our Spring Meet will be May 2nd at Marlin Costello's home in Fresno. More information will be forthcoming soon from the [Daylight Division](#) and [PCR-nmra](#) Yahoo groups.

For other events see the Event Calendar at the left.

Announcements

I can't encourage you enough to join either or both of the Yahoo groups maintained locally by the division and the region to stay informed. To join the Yahoo groups, click on the links on page 6.

As Director John Houlihan mentioned in the previous Daylight Observation, the PCR has purchased two additional LCD projectors. Now that there are four projectors in the PCR, each division will have one for their own use between conventions. At last month's SIG meet, I picked up a projector for Daylight Division from PCR Storekeeper Steve Skold. It's not one of the new ones, but it will do! We can use it for our own clinics at division meets. Be sure to let me know ahead of time if you need it for a presentation.

Help Wanted! We are in need of a volunteer for the newly formed Daylight Division Historian position. The responsibilities include gathering and main-

Continued on next page

**The Daylight Observation
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The Daylight Observation is published quarterly to inform members of division activities and to provide educational articles for the advancement of railroad history and the art and science of model railroading. It is distributed to all members of the Division and to officers and newsletter editors of other divisions in the PCR.

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Dave's Dispatch (Cont.)

taining the historical records of the Division, such as newsletters, officers' dates of service, meet attendance, etc. Contact me if you're interested in volunteering for the position and earning AP activity points.

I want everyone in the nine counties served by the Daylight Division to know that they have an open invitation to attend and participate in our activities and enjoy the fellowship of other like-minded members. As you prepare for the February meet, think of a friend who is interested in model railroading and invite them to come along with you to the meet. You can also bring an inactive NMRA member. Both are welcome! I hope to see you all in Visalia.

Dave Grenier
Superintendent, PCR Daylight Division

Internet Links

Click to join daylightdivision group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/daylightdivision/join>

Click to join PCR-nmra group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PCR-nmra/join>

Other sources of information are the Daylight Division website,
www.pcrnmra.org/daylight

and the PCR Master Calendar,
www.pcrnmra.org/pcr/calendar/mastercalendar.html



Ron Keehn runs 3 trains on 3 separate loops.

Santa Barbara Tour Photo by Ken Kelley



Gary Siegel's G-gauge layout is still under construction.

Santa Barbara Tour Photo by Ken Kelley



Don Neuman explains his HO layout to visitors. It features PIC microcontrollers and hand-laid track that can run 65 cars.

Santa Barbara Tour Photo by Ken Kelley



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Daylight gang gathers in front of Mountain Crossing Restuarant before setting out to view layouts.



Daylight Division Minutes - November 15, 2008

The November meet was held in Tehachapi at the Mountain Crossing Restaurant. The business meeting was called to order at 10:25am by Superintendent Dave Grenier. A motion was made by Chuck Harmon and seconded by Jay Smith to accept the minutes of the last meeting as printed in the Observation. The motion carried. The treasurer's report in the Observation was the wrong report so Suzie Paff read the correct report. Doug Wagner made a motion to accept the report as read. Gary Saxton seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Dave Grenier reported on AP wards. Bill Evert was awarded the Golden Spike award and Doug Wagner was awarded the Association Official Achievement Certificate. Doug's certificate is the first one received by a Daylight Division member in two years.

Dave announced appointments of Chuck Harmon and Bill Scott as Train Show Co-chairs for the Fresno Train show, Gary Saxton as Layout Tours Coordinator and Jay Smith as Industry Liaison.

Layout Tours will be held in the Fresno/Clovis area on December 6, 2008, in Santa Barbara on January 31, 2009 and in Bakersfield in conjunction with Train show on March 14 & 15, 2009.

The next division meet will be held in Visalia at St Paul's Anglican Church on February 28, 2009. Future meets will be May 2009 at Marlin Costello's, August 22, 2009 in San Luis Obispo and November 2009 in Santa Barbara.

Old Business: A train show is being planed in Fresno for sometime in 2009. Jay Smith gave us more information about Division Shirts and Name tags but a final decision was not made. The contests at this meet were favorite model and favorite photo. Ken Weber was the winner of both contests. The meeting was adjourned at 11:25am and was followed by a raffle drawing and White Elephant sale.

Respectfully Submitted, Suzanne Paff, Chief Clerk/Paymaster

Fall meet in Tehachapi

On November 15, 2008, we had our Fall Meet in Tehachapi. After the usual breakfast, business meeting, photo and model contests, and white elephant auction, we visited the local hobby shops and several layouts, with all but one being G-scale. Afterwards we went to John Bell's hilltop home, overlooking Union Pacific's "Cable Siding" north of the famed "Loop". As we toured his around-the-house garden railroad with 1,050 feet of G-scale track, we were enthralled by a steady procession of freights on the full-scale tracks below us. As the sun set slowly in the west, John served up a dinner of BBQ chicken and ribs, along with all the trimmings, followed by several kinds of pie a la mode for dessert. If you missed it, you missed another great meet. Thanks to Doug Wagner for coordinating the meet and a special thanks to the layout owners that opened their layouts to us.



James Dolan's HO scale SP Coast Line. James runs trains based on actual time tables using a fast clock.

Santa Barbara Tour Photo by Ken Kelley

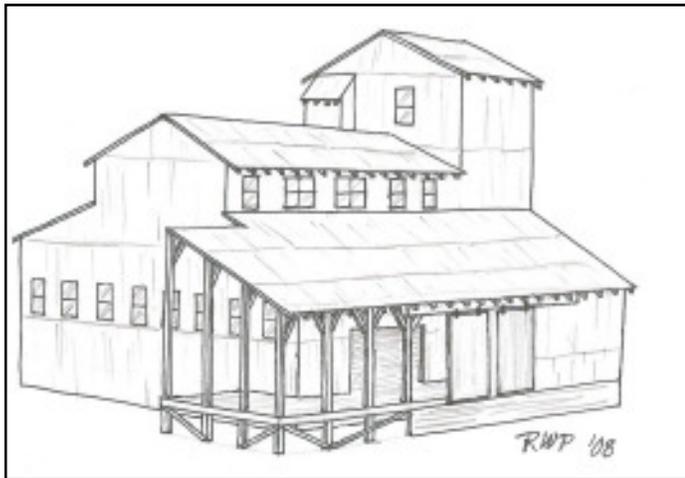


Bill Everett's O-Scale trolley layout. Bill has hand-built every trolley west of the Mississippi.

Santa Barbara Tour Photo by Ken Kelley

The Answers Are Out There: Old Buildings Worth Modeling

by *Bob Pethoud, Member Aid*



Have you ever searched for one thing and, instead, found something else more important than what you thought you wanted? Recently I purchased Tony Thompson's Southern Pacific Freight Cars, Volume 5 specifically to inspire me with photos of hoppers, covered hoppers, and tank cars I might wish to model. Ironically, my first modeling impulse came not from any of the freight cars, but from the fascinating structure looming behind the tank car on page 249. Its many roof angles, detailed dock area, and stocky proportions identified this immediately as a building I need on my railroad.

So where else can one go for structural inspiration, besides Tony Thompson's freight car books? If you're like me, you have books full of photographs of your favorite railroad(s). Next time you look through one of them, examine the buildings hiding in the background behind the locomotives and cabooses that are the subjects of the photos. Sometimes you can even find a book of photographs of industrial buildings. One such is Structures of Utility, by David Stark Wilson (Heyday Books, Berkeley, CA, 2003).

Old issues of Model Railroader, Railroad Model Craftsman, and the NMRA Bulletin (now Scale Rails) are excellent sources of photos and even scale drawings. I find some of the best articles on structures to be from the 1950s and 1960s. More recently, Master Model Railroader Pat Harriman, who is an architect, published two outstanding volumes of scale drawings, called Early Wood Frame and Stone Structures. They can be ordered directly from NMRA.

Most historical societies have collections of old photographs and it can be a real kick to look through them in search of treasure. A few of these groups have made their photos available online, thus saving us much travel time. And don't forget the Library of Congress, which has many excellent photos available in their Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and Historic American Engineering Record (HAER).

Finally, always take your camera with you in your travels. You never know when or where you may find a subject worth modeling. On a recent trip to Morro Bay I found and photographed an unusual structure that consisted of a Quonset hut with an amazing Art Deco façade. It will make a unique model someday.

Until next time, keep those emails coming to pethoud@comcast.net.

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At Art Sylvester's G-scale layout 2 boys are enjoying the operating engine as it passes by on Art's geological formation layout.

Santa Barbara Tour Photo by Ken Kelley

Photo at right: The Goleta Depot has an HO layout inside the freight portion depicting the coast line around Santa Barbara.

Santa Barbara Tour Photo by Ken Kelley



TREASURY REPORT 11/16/08



DATE	TRANSACTION	DEBT	CREDIT	BALANCE
8/23/08	BALANCE FORWARD			\$2,487.07
9/17/08	PCR ALLOCATION		\$90.00	\$2,577.07
11/16/08	REGISTRATION		\$139.00	\$2,716.07
11/16/08	RAFFLE		\$68.00	\$2,784.07
11/16/08	WHITE ELEPHANT		\$79.00	\$2,863.07
11/16/08	OBSERVATION	\$224.39		\$2,638.68
11/16/08	FROM OLD ACCOUNT		\$596.87	\$3,235.55
11/16/08	AD IN OBSERVATION		\$40.00	\$3,275.55
1/6/09	2 ADDS IN OBSERVATION		\$80.00	\$3,355.55

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM Master Builder – Scenery

By Dave Grenier

In this installment, we will review the requirements for the Master Builder – Scenery certificate, the second of the “Railroad Setting” category. The purpose of this category is for the modeler to demonstrate “the prototypical rendering of scenic effects from the ground up.” The type of scenery you choose to model is completely up to you. You can model a forest setting, a desert scene, or even an urban canyon with tall buildings dwarfing the track running through it.

To qualify for this certificate you must:

1. Construct a completed section of model railroad at least 60 square feet in O scale, 45 square feet in S scale, 32 square feet in HO scale, or 18 square feet in N scale, or other scales in proportional relationship to HO scale. This completed section must contain the necessary elements of Terrain, Structures, Background, Lighting, and Realism/Conformity combined to achieve a realistic appearance consistent with applicable NMRA quality standards.

You do not need to construct a single section of layout to qualify for this certificate. You can also construct separate modules or scenes, each being more than eight square feet and of Merit Award quality (87½ or more points) standards, with a total combined square footage equal to the minimums for your scale, as stated above.

Garden railroaders may also qualify for this certificate by showing that they have worked to create a miniature world, not just run some tracks through the planter beds. For example, bridges should be modeled after a prototype, not just track running on a board across a canyon.

The definitions of the various elements, which may be combined to comprise the setting for the model railroad and score at least 87½ or more points using the following criteria:

A. Terrain (Max, 35 points) – The terrain and all natural features such as rocks, water, trees, hills, and depressions, as well as man-made features such as railroad roadbed, cuts, fills, drainage ditches, embankments, streets and roads, and so forth. Make the transition between different types of terrain as smooth as possible. Avoid glaring inconsistencies, such as palm trees in a snowy New England scene.

B. Structures (Max, 20 pts) – Structures are considered from the standpoint of prototypical suitability, placement, and appearance as scenic effects - NOT as to construction (which is covered under Master Builder - Structures). This includes bridges, trestles, culverts, buildings, and all other types of structures (towers, power lines, signs, fences, retaining walls, etc.), track and right-of-way features such as turnout controls, signaling structures, crossing gates and shanties, turntables and other service structures, etc.

C. Background (Max 25 pts) – Background is the treatment of the wall, backdrop, and/or ceiling to realistically depict depth, distance, horizon, and sky. This doesn’t mean that you have to have a photographic or landscape artist quality

Continued on next page

Achievement Program (Cont.)

background. Your background should continue the ‘illusion of reality ‘ that you are trying to create with your scenery. The background should match the scenery, and the transition where the two of them meet is smooth and/or hidden. One good question to ask yourself is: Is there enough good background to allow a photo to be taken without showing other parts of the room? If a wall is the backdrop, make sure that the texture is appropriate, as well as the color (a concrete block wall painted sky-blue, still looks like a concrete block wall!)

D. Lighting (Max. 20 pts) – You must include illumination effects from three aspects:

1. Railroad cars, signals and the like
2. Buildings, streets, and roads, etc.
3. Overall lighting effects – day and/or night

An entirely daylight scene is acceptable. The lighting information must be included on the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ). Even in a daylight scene there is evidence of lighting, such as streetlights, traffic lights, and doorway lighting, even if it isn't operational and does not illuminate.

Also note that not all scenes will have lighting elements. If you are modeling the middle of the desert, there may not be any buildings there to light!

E. Realism/Conformity (Max. 25 pts) – In the other four judging areas, the judges evaluate what you were trying to do and what you remembered to include in your scene. In this area, they evaluate how well you did what you were trying to do. Your entire layout does not have to be completed to be judged – just enough to meet the minimum space requirements given above. Areas that are not to be judged should be blocked off visually from those that are.

2. Prepare a set of photographs, or a videotape presentation, and a written description clearly describing the intended setting of the model railroad and the scenic details, including towns or cities in the area being judged. These photos don't have to be professional quality. They just need be at least one overall picture of the layout and the individual areas being judged. Each picture should be accompanied by a written description.

3. Prepare a description of the materials and methods of construction used in creating various features of the Terrain, Background, and Lighting elements as described above. These can be simple statements – nothing elaborate is required.

4. Attach one copy of materials in Sections 2 & 3 to the Statement of Qualification (SOQ) for use by the judges in determining the effectiveness of the craftsmanship displayed by the member requesting certification.

5. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points on the section of layout being judged.

6. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) including the attachments for Sections 2 & 3 and the signed merit judging forms and/or copies of the Merit Award certificates from Section 5.

AP Merit Award judging can be done in one of two ways: 1) at an NMRA-sponsored contest at a convention or meet; 2) arrange for judging at another time separate from a convention or meet. You can bring your work to the judges, or they will even come to you! When you're ready to have your models merit judged, contact the Daylight Division AP Chairman (me!) to setup a time and place. My contact information is listed on the first page of the *Observation* and on the Daylight Division website at: <http://www.pcrmmra.org/daylight/callboard.htm>

Once you have completed all of the above requirements, including the SOQ and the supporting documentation, remember to include the signed merit judging forms and/or copies of the Merit Award Certificates from section 5. Submit the completed SOQ, attachments, and **a photocopy of your NMRA membership card** to the Daylight Division AP Chairman, Dave Grenier and you are on your way toward another certificate!

For an explanation and photos of what the judges look for so that you can better understand what is expected, check out the *Scale Rails*, May 2008 issue, starting on page 13. There you will find several examples of the personal experiences of Dan Lewis, MMR #268, and Larry Smith, MMR #185, when they earned their Master Builder – Scenery certificates.

If you are interested in the Achievement Program or Golden Spike Award, contact me for more details.

I am happy to announce that another Achievement Program certificate has been awarded in the Daylight Division. I earned my Association Volunteer certificate December 1st, my first AP certificate. I only need 6 more certificates for my MMR.

Next installment: Master Builder – Prototype Modeler

Second Daylight Division Layout Tour Held January 31

By Bruce Morden

Editor's note: Because Bruce's description is so enjoyable to read, I choose to run it with very little editing, leaving no room on this page for the photos. You will find the photos of the Santa Barbara tour on pages 4, 6, 7, and 8.

Over the years, Santa Barbara has hosted many Daylight Division meets and at least one regional meet. During those meets we have opened up our layouts for a few hours for the meets, but a day-long layout tour turned out to be a different type of adventure.

Most of the layout owners spent the week before the tour tuning up their layouts – checking track work, adding scenery, making cosmetic improvements in anticipation of the hoped for crowds. Saturday, January 31, 2009, the day of the tour, became a beautiful and busy day for all of us here. The turnout was estimated at between 60 and 80 model railroad enthusiasts from as far away as Temecula and San Luis Obispo. One visitor and his friends logged over 400 miles, but said the tour was worth every mile of it. Veteran modelers and inquiring children rubbed shoulders as they navigated the 14 layouts at 12 different locations. Some of the men brought their wives, who showed more enthusiasm than their husbands.

Many of the owners were still working on their layouts when the first visitors arrived. From that point on it was hard to catch our breaths as wave upon wave of visitors came with cameras, questions, and admiration. Some of the discussions were about layout design, layout construction, DCC vs. DC, scenery techniques, rail joiners, plants, rocks, hedges, trees, Santa Barbara weather, building walls, gravel, the pros and cons of USA Trains track vs. LGB, track expansion, tracks laid directly on bricks. There were discussions about prototypes and models, space utilization, creature comforts, and lighting.

Several highlights from some of the layouts on the tour include questions about the work Gary Siegel has done on his outdoor layout. The faux rockwork and the trees were the most common. Everyone wanted to know if the Dwarf Alberta Spruce trees were real. “Yes they are.” Then Gary told them he had planted 1100 of them! People were in disbelief, but they saw with their own eyes. On Gary’s indoor L&N EK Division most of the visitors were amazed at the extent of the layout, coming in and seeing a few feet, rounding a corner to see a few more, then looking over their shoulder to see even more... “This just goes on forever!” seemed to be the standard statement of the day. One man who seemed to sum everything up toured right before lunch. As he came through the door having only seen 20 feet of layout, he stated, “this is amazing.” Then he explained that he had spent considerable time in the Ashlan, VA area in 1972 working with automobile dealerships. He started talking in particular about one of his clients, an automobile distributor in Harlan, KY. When he saw Gary’s version of Island Springs, with that steep narrow road coming down out of the mountains to pass under a coal mine into a narrow valley “where the sun never shines”, he exclaimed that the road into Harlan looked exactly like that.

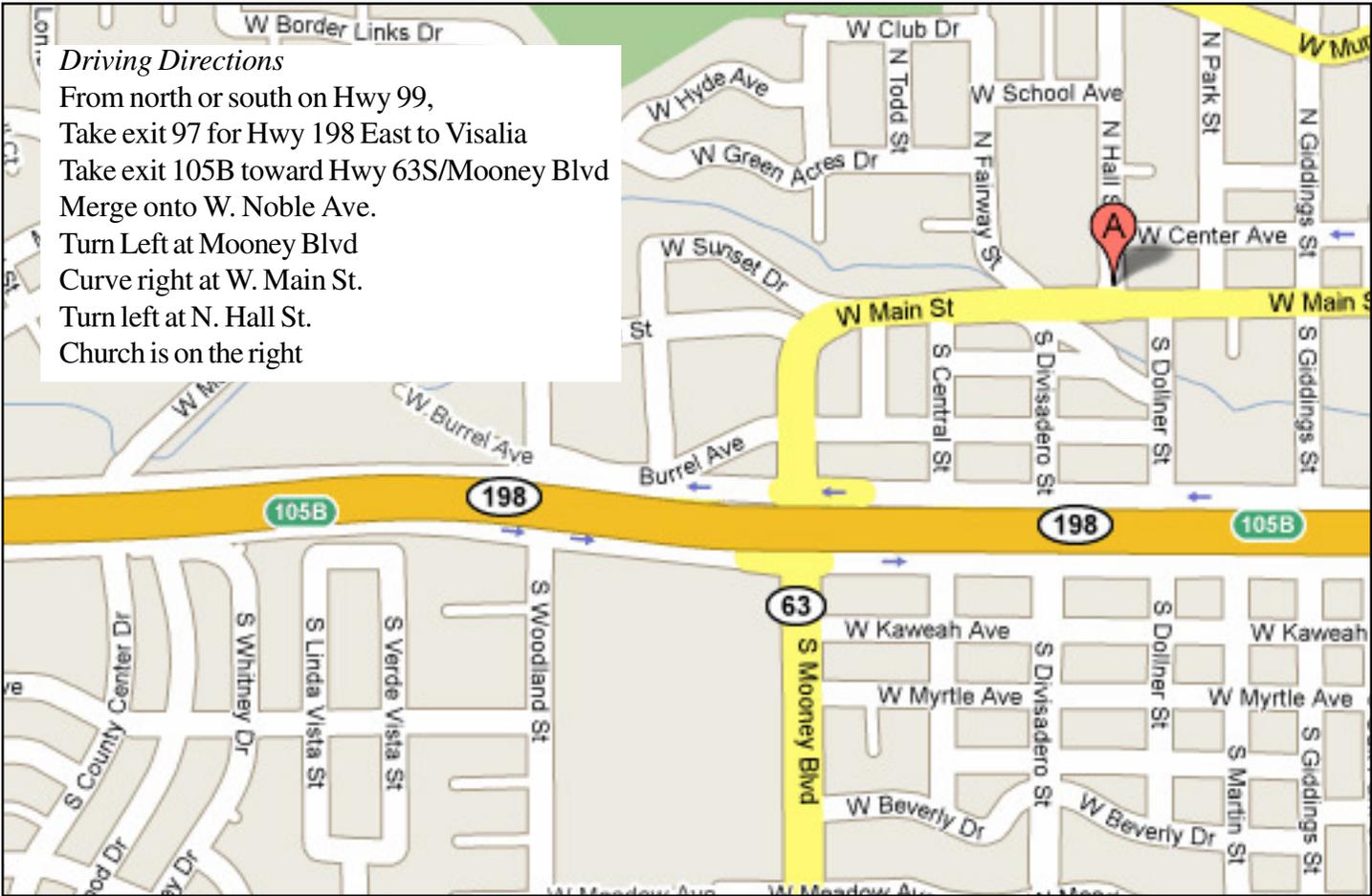
One of the wives was not only curious about the group that operates the EK Division but also really interested in the club aspect of model railroading. Noticing the name badge at one of the layouts, she asked about SCSME. She was interested in how the club is a round robin, working together on each other’s projects. As her husband came back around the corner, she told him “honey, I think you need to join a club!”

Next to Ron Keehn’s N-scale layout, Ron and his wife are working on the “I’ll Hold You In My Dreams” puzzle (the William Phillips painting of the Daylight at Santa Barbara Station). He jokingly told his visitors that they had to put in at least one piece before they were allowed to leave. Many pieces were installed throughout the day. The puzzle is now finished.

At Walter Nauman’s UP&W, not only did he demonstrate his RPS system with 10 trains running but he also had a train with front end power consisting of two Athearn Big Boys pulling a 70 car freight at 20 mph and an eight car passenger train behind a Challenger at 60 mph passing in the other direction on the parallel main portion of his Sherman Hill vignette.

Don Newman had three trains running simultaneously (hands off). One was a 42-car freight. His only derailments occurred when he demonstrated his control system while the train was running over the turnout being switched. Three youngsters who visited were handed throttles, and after a demonstration they ran trains.

The highlight of the day for many of us was 6 year-old Charlie from Santa Monica, who is in love with trains. Every layout brought out his enthusiasm for trains. At first he just wanted to take it all in. At Gary’s he started outside and just watched the trains go. He then went inside. Once done inside, he had to watch the trains some more outside. Charlie would run from here to there. When one of the operators got his train to a siding he asked, “Can I switch the points?” Gary and the operator looked at each other in disbelief that he actually knew the term. He was allowed to switch the points and from there he wanted to help at every turn. Finally, he asked if he could run the train. His mom was trying to tell him no, but the operator slipped the lanyard to his throttle around his neck, and he was happy as can be. Big smiles on little faces, that’s what it’s all about. When it was time to go, he wanted to stay. I guess that is the way we all are about trains.



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