



The Daylight Observation

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April-May-June 2026

Daylight Director's Message:

By Walter Mizuno, Daylight Division Director

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Time sure goes by fast when you're having fun, and anything having to do with trains is fun! Four years ago I was elected to serve as Director of our division. Throughout my time in this role, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many of you at

meetings, conventions, and train shows. It has truly been an honor to serve in this capacity. I want to sincerely thank all of the members of this diverse and enthusiastic division for the encouragement, support, and friendship you have extended to me during these past four years.

One of the highlights of the past quarter was the Bakersfield Train Show. The event was a great

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**PACIFIC COAST
REGION**

Observation Schedule

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Articles Due</u>
Winter (Jan-Feb-Mar)	December 10
Spring (Apr-May-Jun)	March 10
Summer (Jul-Aug-Sep)	June 10
Fall (Oct-Nov-Dec)	September 10

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success, and we extend our thanks to the Golden Empire Historical and Modeling Society for hosting the show and welcoming our division to participate. To help attract interest and give visitors a hands-on experience, we featured a Timesaver switching layout that Steve Lowe constructed especially for this event. Steve spent the day hosting many interested visitors, including families and small groups of friends who enjoyed trying their hand at switching cars and learning more about model railroading. It was a great way to introduce new people to the hobby and to showcase the kind of fun and fellowship that our organization represents.



Steve Lowe (right) introduces the Timesaver layout to Matthew at the Bakersfield Train Show.

Photo courtesy Dave Theis

The newest member of the Daylight Division, Ron Jones (left), shares a moment with outgoing director Walter Mizuno, and the President of the Fresno Model Railroad Club, Martin Winter (right).



Photo courtesy Dave Theis

Fellow Daylight member, Mike Harris, is all smiles as he prepares to hand stamp show goers for readmission to the show.

Photo courtesy Dave Theis



Tom Osterdock shares his dead-rail On30 locomotive at the show.

Photo courtesy Dave Theis

Coming up in the next few months are several events to look forward to. Our next quarterly meeting will be held on May 16th in Bakersfield, followed by a late-summer gathering on the Central Coast. We will wrap up the year with our traditional holiday meeting in Fresno, featuring several new layouts on the annual layout tour. I hope many of you will join us for these events. Stay engaged, come out to the meetings, and share the fun.

None of what we have accomplished over the past few years would have been possible without the help and dedication of many members. I would especially like to thank our newsletter editor, Robert Pethoud; our 2025 Convention Chair, Bruce Morden; member services coordinator and all-around super volunteer, Doug Wagner; our Chief Clerks and Paymasters, Sandy Theis and the late Milton Sans Soucie, and our Daylight webmaster, Dave Grenier. Their commitment and hard work have helped keep the division running smoothly and moving forward.



Geoff Brown takes a break from selling at the show. Geoff joined last year and just renewed his membership. Thanks, Geoff.

Photo courtesy Dave Theis

As my term as Director comes to a close, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our incoming Director, Dave Theis. Dave brings enthusiasm and fresh energy to the position, and I know he will do an outstanding job leading the division forward. I encourage every member to support Dave in the months ahead. One of the best ways to strengthen our division is for members to get involved—whether by attending events, helping with clinics, volunteering at shows, or simply sharing your ideas and enthusiasm with others in our model railroad community. I look forward to seeing many of you at future meetings and events.

Hi Green, everyone!



Walter

Welcome Aboard!		
Daylight Division's Newest Members		
<u>Member</u>	<u>City/Sate</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>
Visalia Electric Railroad	Woodlake CA	12/16/2025
Modelers and Historical Society		



Finding Inspiration in the Work of Others

Dave Theis, Daylight Division

Regardless of whether you are new to the hobby or a long-time veteran, one of the most enjoyable aspects of being part of this amazing pastime is when we get the opportunity to visit the layouts of our fellow model railroad enthusiasts.

No matter the size, level of detail, or even if it isn't quite completed, touring layouts and observing the work, passion, and the imagination that our fellow hobbyist applies to creating their very own model railroading empire is both motivating and inspirational.

Motivating, because when we see what others have created and been able to achieve, it encourages us in our efforts and pushes us to possibly accomplish or do more with our own layouts. Inspirational, because when we see what others have created, it inspires us to dream about the "what if" and what we could possibly add to or do with our layout designs and scenery.

No matter how long a person has been in the hobby, we all learn something new and take something away from each layout we visit. Therefore, let me encourage each of you to make the effort to check out the many layouts of friends or those who open their homes and layouts to visitors. It is also a lot of fun to check out some of the many clubs and organizations who regularly hold open houses and welcome visitors to tour their layouts. Keep in mind, in most cases getting an invitation to visit a layout is usually as simple as asking. For as we all know, most model railroaders are very proud of their layouts (rightfully so) and are more than willing to show off what they have built. More importantly, especially for those new to the hobby, they can be a great source of information on how to build a layout and to provide advice on certain things that should probably be avoided.

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Talk about inspiring: This is a photo from a layout tour of the amazing Hetch Hetchy On30 Black and White Model Railroad by Steve Redeker in Elk Grove, CA. This prototype railroad is highly detailed and modeled directly from the black and white photographs of the original railroad. Notice the backdrops are the actual black and white photographs being modeled.

Whether your layout is still under construction, or even if your layout is finished (if such a thing is even possible), taking the time to visit other layouts and checking out how someone else has modeled a bridge or a building, or the different way they approached a certain obstacle, can be enjoyable, educational, and most differently entertaining and a great way to spend your day.



**EXTRA
2026
NORTH
PCR CONVENTION
APRIL 30 - MAY 3**

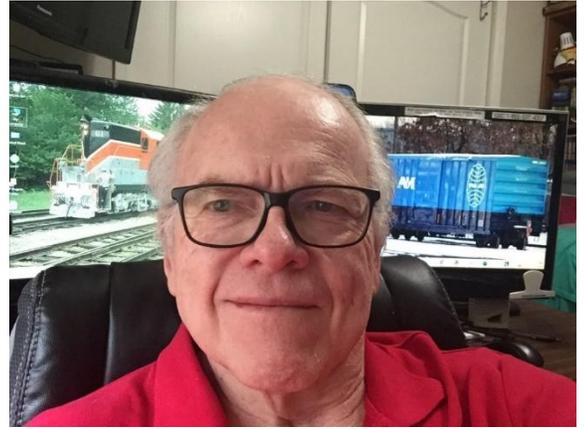
Daylight Membership by County

<u>County</u>	<u># Members</u>
San Luis Obispo County	20
Fresno County	17
Santa Barbara County	15
Tulare County	13
Kern County	10
Merced County	4
Madera County	3
Mariposa County	1
Total Members	83

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

The Golden Spike Award

By Dave Grenier



What is the Golden Spike Award you ask? This is like a “starter” award for those modelers who are just getting started with NMRA’s Achievement Program. The Golden Spike Award is the easiest of the awards and usually the first award modelers earn. It is designed to demonstrate familiarity with the different areas of the hobby rather than expertise or mastery of those areas.

Many modelers in the normal course of building a home layout or module may have already met most, if not all, of the requirements for the Golden Spike Award.

To receive this award, the modeler must complete the requirements in three areas of the hobby, as shown on the Golden Spike Award Application Form: Rolling Stock (Motive Power and Cars); Model Railroad Setting (Structures and Scenery); Engineering (Civil and Electrical).

Let’s look at each area a little more closely to see what needs to be done to qualify for the award. I think you will be surprised and probably say to yourself, “Sheesh, I’ve already done all that!”

1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power and Cars): Display six units of rolling stock either scratchbuilt, craftsman kits or superdetailed commercial kits. Note that the keyword is “display.” Nothing says it must earn any minimum number of contest points. Just having the rolling stock on your layout, or even the display table at a meet, counts as “display” and qualifies.

Some effort does need to be shown here, though. A “shake the box” kit straight out of the box would not be sufficient to qualify. However, by painting and decaling it, adding some details, and some weathering, you will have a qualifying model faster than you can say, “Model railroading is fun!”

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2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery): Construct a minimum of eight square feet of model railroad or module(s) including scenery in any scale. Also, construct five structures either scratchbuilt, craftsman kits or superdetailed commercial kits. The eight square feet of layout could be as simple as a 2' x 4' module, or a switching layout on a 1' x 8' board! There is no requirement as to how elaborate your layout must be. You just have to “construct” it, but please, no loop of track nailed to a piece of plywood painted green!

The same comments for rolling stock also apply to structures. Just gluing a plastic building together straight out of the box isn't enough to qualify but add some paint and weathering and you're on your way to a qualifying structure. Remember that more than just buildings are structures. Bridges and trestles are also considered “structures”. Also, not all the structures have to be on the same layout or module. Separate structures may also be displayed.

3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical): Display three types of track, properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed, and wired so that two trains can be operated at the same time. One additional electrical feature is also required.

All right now, let's break this down into bite-sized pieces so nobody gets scared off. Commercial track may be used to meet this requirement. You don't have to handlay a turnout, but you could if you wanted. The “types of track” can be just about anything: turnouts, crossings or a change in track elevation. The three types do not have to be different; even three turnouts would qualify.

Installing track on a raised roadbed, such as cork or HomaBed™, and applying ballast meets the “proper roadbed” requirement. The “wired so that two trains can be operated at the same time” is also easier than it sounds. This can be a double-track main, single-track main with sidings, block or command control, etc.).

Note the part about “single-track main with sidings”. This means that if you can cut power to the sidings individually, you can run one train on the mainline and hold another in a siding, then park the first train on the other siding and bring out and run the second train. This meets the requirement. Needless to say, the advent of DCC has greatly simplified this requirement.

The last part, “one additional electrical feature,” could be something as simple as installing an Atlas turnout with a switch machine. Practically anything that runs off the “Accessories” terminals of your power pack meets the requirement.

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Now here's where some new challenges or opportunities arise. Not all the requirements have to be met on the same layout or module. They don't even all have to be the same scale! Here's an opportunity to try your hand at a different scale! How about scratchbuilding a large-scale flat car?

You could even work with a friend by doing twice the required number of qualifications (12 pieces of rolling stock, 10 structures, etc.) You can both get the award if you can show that you have each demonstrated the required skills. (This is also true for other areas of the AP.) Nowhere is it stated that you have to do it all alone. Work with a buddy, teach each other, and both of you can earn a Golden Spike Award.

Once you've completed all the requirements of the Golden Spike Award, complete the AP Golden Spike Award Application Form. Have the Division AP Chair or another NMRA member designated by the Division AP Chair, sign as the witness, then submit the form and a copy of your NMRA membership card to the Division AP Chair. He will forward your submission to the Region AP Manager, who will then issue your Golden Spike Award Certificate. The Region AP Manager will then forward the completed form to the National AP Manager so that an announcement can be made in the NMRA Magazine.

That's all there is to getting your first AP award! What's stopping you from getting your Golden Spike Award? Now that we all know what we need to do, let's get going and work on getting our Golden Spike Awards.

For more information on the Achievement Program, visit the NMRA website at nmra.org/education/achievement-program or contact the Daylight Division Achievement Program Chair, Dave Grenier, grenida@pacbell.net.



Welcome Aboard!

Daylight Division's Newest Members

<u>Member</u>	<u>City/Sate</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>
Cheryl Peterson	Visalia CA	12/22/2025
Paul Gaines	Visalia CA	12/28/2025
Jack Erhart	Paso Robles CA	1/6/2026
James Powell	Fresno CA	1/8/2026
Martin Winter	Fresno CA	2/19/2026
Art Sasaki	Fresno CA	2/19/2026
Connor Rock	Merced CA	2/21/2026



**Bakersfield Model Train Show,
March 7th and 8th**

Robert Pethoud

Photos by the author

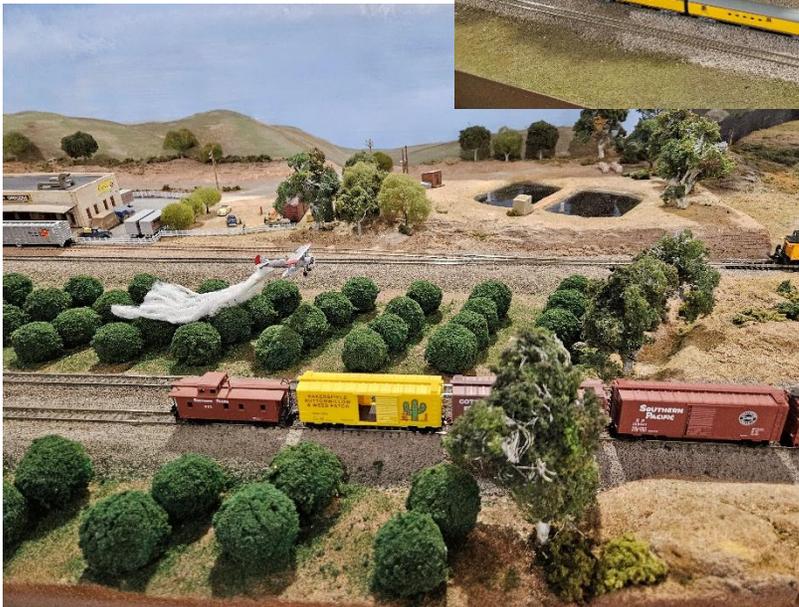


Inspired by the work of others indeed (See Dave Theis's article above)! One excellent source of inspiration was the N scale modular setup by Group 160 Ntrak Club seen above. Hailing from Glendora, their 20' x 24' layout sits low enough that the little fellow you see was able to take it all in, and he was mightily impressed. You may be intrigued as well by the two shots on the next page—also from the same layout—that illustrate the sort of imagination and creativity that can be employed in our wonderful hobby.

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Bakersfield Train Show

A storm cloud over an N scale module? This one came with lightning, thunder, and what appeared to be a tornado that menaced the tiny town from time to time.



On a much brighter day, a crop duster flies over a small orchard. Who hasn't seen that scene in real life in this part of California?

A very different impression was made by this heavy—literally—freight locomotive as it rumbled by on the 30'x30' layout brought by the SoCal S Gaugers from Torrance. To this HO modeler, the sight and sound of this immaculate steam engine made me rethink my scale decision from decades ago.



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April-May-June 2026



Another scene from the S scale group illustrates a drama familiar to many Californians today. What a way to make a statement in a creative hobby!

The center of the display hall featured a 40'x46' HO scale layout from Free-Mo of Central California.



Realism and attention to detail are hallmarks of this group's work.

Bakersfield Train Show

The OC N'ginners from Anaheim had a beautiful 24'x24' layout consisting of modules just one or two feet long and built without legs so they can rest on the folding tables found at nearly all venues.

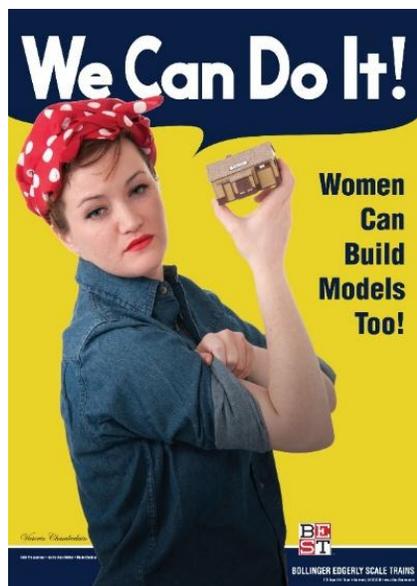


The OC Module Railroaders from Corona had a 24'x36' HO layout with lots of detail and lots of action. The few photos

I've included this time do not do any of the impressive layouts justice, so I promise to include more photos of the 2026 Bakersfield Model Railroad Show in the next issue of the Daylight Observation.

Daylight Division Membership Gauge

February 29, 2016	130
February 28, 2025	86
March 31, 2025	89
April 30, 2025	86
May 31, 2025	86
June 30, 2025	84
July 31, 2025	85
August 31, 2025	87
September 30, 2025	83
October 31, 2025	85
November 30, 2025	83
December 31, 2025	84
January 31, 2026	84
February 28, 2026	83





**EXTRA
2026
NORTH
PCR CONVENTION
APRIL 30 - MAY 3**

PCR Convention: Extra 2026 North
April 30 – May 3, 2026

[DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Sonoma](#)
[Wine Country, One Doubletree,](#)
[Rohnert Park, CA 94928, USA](#)

More details: pcrnmra.net

**The Daylight Observation
The Official Publication of the
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2nd Quarter, 2026**

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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Weekly Events:

Every Sunday 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM and Thursday 5:00 to 8:00 PM / Eastern Sierra Railroad Society (HO, N) / 520 South Richmond Road, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 / [Facebook](#) page or call Gary Gearhart, (760) 269-5762

Every Friday 7:30 – 9:30 PM / [Tri-City Society of Model Engineers](#) (HO, N) Niles Plaza, Fremont, CA / Stanley Keiser, e-mail: sbkeiser@juno.com or 510-791-1504

Every Tuesday & Thursday 7:00 PM / [Roseville Roundhouse Model Railroad Club](#) (HO)
Roseville, CA / George Carter, e-mail: [Geo Claire Carter@msn.com](mailto:Geo_Claire_Carter@msn.com)

Weekly Events, continued:

Every Thursday 6:15 PM / Thursday Nite Boomers (all) / San Luis Obispo County, CA / Terry N. Taylor, e-mail: terryntaylor@charter.net or 805-595-9535

Every Saturday 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM / Fresno Model Railroad Club (HO, N) 1321 Betty Lane, Selma, CA / Mailing Address: PO Box 181, Selma, CA 93662

Every Saturday 9:00 AM to Noon / Belmont Model Railroad Club (HO) 1719 E. Belmont Avenue, Fresno, CA / [Facebook](#) page. Info: (559) 289-5549.

Every Tuesday 7:30 PM / [South Coast Society of Model Engineers](#) (Z, N, HO, O, G, Steam, Trolley, Diesel) Round robin meetings weekly at members' homes. Santa Barbara, CA / Contact: Bruce Morden, e-mail: bdmorden@sbceo.org

Every Wednesday 7:30 PM / [Gold Coast Modular RR Club](#) (HO) Meets in members' homes in Ventura County, CA / Jerry Mittelholtz, e-mail: mittelj@vcss.k12.ca.us or 805-525-5136 / David Minkin, e-mail: dddave@compuserve.com

Monthly Events:

Second Wednesday 7:30 PM / [Golden Empire Historical and Modeling Society](#) (HO&N) Bakersfield, CA / Doug Wagner, e-mail: carldw@aol.com or 661-589-0391 / Club phone: 661-325-5820

Second Saturday 10:00 AM / [Tehachapi Loop RR Club](#) / Tehachapi, CA / Tom O'Brien, e-mail: threerail@earthlink.net 661-822-1546

Third Monday 7:00 PM / [San Luis Obispo Model Railroad Association](#) (all) Oceano Depot, CA / Dennis Pearson, e-mail: info@slomra.org or 805-929-3062

Monthly Events, continued:

Third Tuesday 7:00 PM / Visalia Electric Model Railroad & Historical Society / Meets at Ryan’s Place Restaurant, 3103 South Mooney Blvd, Visalia, CA / Cecil Eppler, e-mail: cecil_eppler@sbcglobal.net

Fourth Wednesday 7:00 PM / Coast Toy Train Club / Wood Glen Hall, 3010 Foothill Rd (at Alamar), Santa Barbara, CA / Lots of collecting in S, O, and Standard gauges. / Contact: Ken Kelley, e-mail: kenattr@thirdrail.com

Irregular / Central California Operators Group (all) / varies / Steve Hayes, e-mail: hayeswp@hotmail.com 209-536-1847



EXTRA
2026
NORTH
PCR CONVENTION
APRIL 30 - MAY 3



The Daylight Observation

Daylight Division

Pacific Coast Region

National Model Railroad Association

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