



# The Daylight Observation

Official Publication of the  
Daylight Division, PCR / NMRA  
Volume 40, Issue 3  
July-August-September 2026

## Daylight Director's Message:

By Dave Theis, Daylight Division Director



Greetings to all,

My name is Dave Theis and as the new Director/Superintendent for the Daylight Division I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself and

to let everyone know a little bit about my vision and the direction I am looking at for the Division over the next two years.

Let me start by saying thank you to our outgoing Director/Superintendent, Walter Mizuno, whose leadership and dedication have contributed significantly to our success and the growth of our division over the past four years. We greatly appreciate everything you have done, and we wish you the best of luck as you transition to other responsibilities and areas of service within the Division.

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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

**Director**

Dave Theis  
 (559) 901-0386  
[director.daylight@pcrnmra.net](mailto:director.daylight@pcrnmra.net)

**Superintendent**

Dave Theis  
 (559) 901-0386  
[director.daylight@pcrnmra.net](mailto:director.daylight@pcrnmra.net)

**Chief Clerk / Paymaster**

Sandy Theis  
 (559) 901-0386

**Observation Editor**

Robert Pethoud  
 (559) 917-4825  
[pethoud@comcast.net](mailto:pethoud@comcast.net)

**Clinics**

Doug Wagner  
 (661) 589-0391  
[carldw@aol.com](mailto:carldw@aol.com)

**Contest**

Chuck Harmon, MMR  
 (559) 360-0225  
[harmonsta@yahoo.com](mailto:harmonsta@yahoo.com)

**Achievement Program  
And Webmaster**

Dave Grenier  
 (408) 431-8989  
[grenida@pacbell.net](mailto:grenida@pacbell.net)

**Member Aid**

Robert Pethoud  
 (559) 438-7705  
[pethoud@comcast.net](mailto:pethoud@comcast.net)

**Membership**

Doug Wagner  
 (661) 589-0391  
[carldw@aol.com](mailto:carldw@aol.com)

As for myself, I presently model HO and N scale with my local club, the Visalia Electric Model Railroaders and Historical Society. I also operate a Lionel “O” scale postwar inspired layout and Garden Railroad at my home in Woodlake, CA. As a member of the Daylight Division, I have been active in attending NMRA National and PCR Conventions, served on various Daylight committees, hosted and taught clinics, and I am actively writing articles for the PCR Branch Line newsletter and the Daylight Observation, the newsletter for our division. As a member of the Layout Design SIG and the Operations SIG, I have also participated in several PCR Bay Area Layout Design and Operations meets.

While I have only been back in the hobby for about eight years, and while I would not consider myself to be an expert model railroader by any stretch of the imagination, I do believe I possess an energy, enthusiasm, and excitement for our hobby which will help me to continue to build upon the existing programs within our Division and work to implement some of the new programs which members are recommending.

Here are some things I am working on:

- Increasing the frequency of division meetings, activities, and to offer clinics that will have an appeal to all levels of modelers.
- Promoting and encouraging a division-wide emphasis on recruitment of new members.
- Continuing to promote our new Division Facebook page and making better use of the existing Constant Contact email list with regular email updates so that we can emphasize Division activities and highlight what our members are up to.
- Connecting and meeting with the members of the division in order to hear their ideas and even their concerns about ways for us to improve how the division is operating.

I recognize that I have laid out a very ambitious agenda, however, I have no doubts and firmly believe that by working together, we can not only accomplish these goals, but we can develop and secure the future legacy of the NMRA and our Division for generations to come.

If you have any questions or if you want to set up a phone call or meeting to discuss some of these items, you can email me at [director.daylight@pcrnmra.net](mailto:director.daylight@pcrnmra.net)

Thank you and I look forward to the next couple of years as we work together and create opportunities to promote the growth of our hobby, our division, and to advance our common interests in model railroading.

Respectfully,

Dave Theis

Director/Superintendent of the Daylight Division



### Daylight Membership by County

<u>County</u>	<u># Members</u>
San Luis Obispo County	20
Fresno County	20
Santa Barbara County	13
Tulare County	13
Kern County	12
Merced County	4
Madera County	3
<u>Mariposa County</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>86</b>

**Visit the Daylight Division on Facebook here:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=daylight%20division>**



### Welcome Aboard!

#### Daylight Division's Newest Members

<u>Member</u>	<u>City/Sate</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>
Ronald Jones	Fresno, CA	3/24/2026
Paul Thomas	Tehachapi, CA	4/16/2026

## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Master Builder – Motive Power

By Dave Grenier



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

This is perhaps the most challenging and daunting of the Master Builder categories, but don’t let this category scare you off. If you recall from my previous column, you are only required to complete seven of the eleven categories.

You do not have to complete this category to become an MMR. There are ten other categories to choose from, all of which will be discussed in subsequent articles.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The final requirement for the Master Builder – Motive Power certificate is to submit a Statement of Qualification (SOQ), which includes detailed descriptions of each model and photocopies of the Merit Award certificates. The detailed descriptions must identify all scratch built features, all commercial components used, and materials used in building the model. Copies of the plans you used are not required but may be submitted. Photos of the model are helpful but not required. Submit the completed SOQ, along with a copy of your NMRA membership card, to the Region AP Manager Earl Girbovan, MMR®. (See PCR Callboard, [www.pcrnmra.net](http://www.pcrnmra.net), for his contact information).

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

For more information about the Master Builder – Motive Power certificate, visit the NMRA website at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org).

Next installment: Master Builder – Cars



## Basics of Model Railroading

By Dave Theis

Daylight Division Director



Recently the Daylight Division played host to a day of hands on clinics at the Veterans/Seniors Center in Bakersfield, CA. The clinics that were offered focused on some of the basics skills needed for model railroading and included information and hands on instruction on wiring a layout and soldering, laying track and installing turnouts/switches, ballasting, and using foam for scenery. In addition, we were running the John Allen Timesaver, which the Daylight Division owns that allowed guests to try their hand at this unique and challenging switching puzzle. Lunch was also included with the program. Overall, the event was very well received with about 23 guests in attendance: 12 of whom were non-NMRA members.

While the goal of the event was to create an opportunity for fellowship and education, one of our secondary goals was to promote the benefits of membership within the NMRA. I am happy to report that we were successful on both counts, with everyone having a great day and with seven new members joining the NMRA by way of the Rail Pass program.

I would like to thank the many Daylight Members who were part of the planning and helped with the set up and running of the clinics. Your efforts were appreciated and helped make our event a memorable and enjoyable day for our guests. This includes Doug Wagner, Tom Osterdock, Bill Vaughn, Robert Pethoud, Steve Lowe, Neil Fernbaugh, Walter Mizuno, and Sandy Theis.

As we hope to build on this momentum, we will be working over the next year to schedule some similar events in other areas within the Division: to include the Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo areas. More information will be provided as we get closer to scheduling these events.

Hope to see you at our next event.



*Daylight Division director Dave Theis welcomes attendees to the meet in Bakersfield on May 16*



*Daylight Division member Tom Osterdock demonstrates laying track and turnouts*

*Daylight Division member Doug Wagner demonstrates soldering track feeders*



*Daylight Division member Bill Vaughn demonstrates ballasting track and turnouts*



*Daylight Division director Dave  
Theis demonstrates creating  
scenery on a model railroad*



*Daylight Division member Neil  
Fernbaugh operates the  
Timesaver. Thanks to Daylight  
Division member Steve Lowe for  
this newly-built operating layout.*



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

**Photos from this  
convention start on the  
next page**

## 2026 PCR Convention Rohnert Park, California

Robert Pethoud

Photos by the author



The 2026 Pacific Coast Region convention, Extra 2026 North, took place in Rohnert Park from April 30 through May 3. It was a full-featured event with clinics, contests, layout tours, excursions, operating sessions, modular displays, a business meeting, the Hobo Breakfast, and a swap meet. It very much appeared to me that a rollicking good time was had by all attendees. The photos below are just a few of the many I took at the five layouts my wife and I were able to visit. There were more than three times that many layouts on offer.

*Jim Providenza's layout is built for operation, so there are many industries to be served, such as this appealing cannery.*



*There is also much impressive trackwork on Jim's HO scale layout, the famous Santa Cruz Northern.*

*Ron Kaiser's HO scale Western Pacific layout has survived the recent death of its owner. The operating crew is keeping it going for the future.*



*The realism of these scenes are a testament to the commitment and care of the layout's builders and operators.*



*These two photos give just a hint of Bill Horstmeyer's HO scale Oregon I-5 Corridor. The beautiful conifer trees are made from dried stalks of the Pride of Madeira plant.*



*Tom Comyns' TCRR HO scale layout is full of highly detailed and very appealing scenes like these two.*

*The railroad features three main lines for continuous running along with a small yard and some spurs for switching.*



*Ed Jameson's HO scale Central Valley Southern Pacific and Santa Fe is fully landscaped and features beautiful locomotives and rolling stock throughout.*



# Bakersfield Train Show

*As promised last time, here are more photos from the March train show in Bakersfield.*

*The OC Module Railroaders from Corona displayed a highly detailed HO railroad with much operational potential.*



*The OC N'gineers' modular setup consisted of many small but realistic sections like this one, all strung together.*



## Daylight Division Membership Gauge

May 31,	2016	122
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
March 31,	2026	82
April 30,	2026	86
May 31,	2026	86

*Free-Mo of Central California displayed an enormous variety of HO modules, many of which were impressively finished.*



**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 Thursday 6:15 PM / **Thursday  
Nite Boomers** (all) / San Luis Obispo  
County, CA / Terry N. Taylor, e-  
mail: [terryntaylor@charter.net](mailto: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 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](mailto: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)

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](mailto:bdmorden@sbceo.org)

**The Daylight Observation  
The Official Publication of the  
Daylight Division,  
PCR / NMRA  
Volume 40, Issue 3  
3rd 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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Robert Pethoud  
460 West Vartikian Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93704  
Phone (559) 917 – 4825  
e-mail: [pethoud@comcast.net](mailto:pethoud@comcast.net)

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## Weekly Events, continued:

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](mailto:mittelj@vcss.k12.ca.us) or 805-525-5136 / David Minkin, e-mail: [dddave@compuserve.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:info@slomra.org) or 805-929-3062

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](mailto: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: [kenatatr@thirdrail.com](mailto:kenatatr@thirdrail.com)

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

**The Left Coast (Elsie) HOn30 Group** invites anyone interested to join us. We use existing standards for module construction but are not merely a modular group. Contact: Al Sandrini in Bakersfield, 661-664-8614 or Ken Lunders in Cupertino, 408-777-9572.



# Fresno Model Railroad Club

Presents

## Our First Annual Toy Train Show

**June 27th & 28th, 2026**

Saturday 10am to 5pm

Sunday 10am to 3pm

**At The Big Fresno Fair Ground's Commerce Building** (25000 SqFt)

1121 S Chance Ave, Fresno CA 93702.

### *Featuring*

Over 175 Vendor Tables, Toys & Model Trains of All Scales, Large Operation Layouts,  
Door Prizes, Food and Much More...



**BIGGEST  
SHOW  
IN THE SUMMER of  
2026**



### **ADMISSION**

Adults \$10 (Cash Preferred)

Military/ Veterans \$8

Children 12 & under FREE

(Anyone under 18 Must be accompanied by parent or legal guardian)

Fair Ground Parking \$10

### **For Show Information, Vendor Tables & Layouts:**

Please visit <https://fresnomodelrailroadclub.com> or

Contact Martin Winter

559-903-4315 / email [fresnomodelrrc@gmail.com](mailto:fresnomodelrrc@gmail.com)



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**Daylight Observation**  
**460 West Vartikian Avenue**  
**Fresno, CA 93704-1441**