



The Daylight Observation

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Daylight Division, PCR / NMRA
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October-November-December 2026

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Daylight Director's Message:

By Dave Theis, Daylight Division Director



Greetings to all.
What an exciting six months it has been since taking over as the Director/ Superintendent for the Daylight Division. It was an

absolute joy and pleasure to work with the many volunteers and members within our division, and I greatly appreciate the hard work they are doing to help make our events so successful. They are truly the backbone of the division and have gone above and beyond in the help and support they have provided.

Since our last update we have been quite busy with several activities. Things started off around the end of June with the Fresno Train Show where our division hosted a table with promotional materials and the opportunity for folks to run trains on a John Allen Timesaver layout.

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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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We also hosted a couple of clinics where folks could learn about how to get started in the hobby and how to ballast their track. Attendance at the train show was pretty good with quite a bit of interaction with the crowd: especially those who enjoyed trying their hand on the Timesaver. I am also pleased to report that we even had a young man, Matthew Riley of Fresno, who signed up to join the NMRA. All in all, it was a fun time and provided a great opportunity to let everyone know about our Division and the NMRA.



***Daylight Members
Walter Mizuno
and Ed Jones at
our booth talking
with one of our
newer members,
Geoff Brown***

***Steve Lowe shows a guest the
ins and outs of ballasting track.
All three photos on this page
are by Dave Theis***



***Daylight
Director Dave
Theis with our
new NMRA
member,
Matthew Riley.***

On Aug. 29th, 2026, the Division also held an Operations Day at Gary Siegel's L&N Eastern Kentucky Division HO scale layout in Santa Barbara. This layout has been featured in several You Tube videos, including one produced by TSG Multimedia which featured our own Bruce Morden as the host. The one-day event, which also featured a clinic on operations that was led by Al Daumann, was attended by over 24 people and guests. Lunch was provided and at the end of the day everyone seemed to have had a really great time. We even had three of our guests who pulled the trigger and made the decision to join the NMRA. Many thanks to Gary Siegel, Bruce Morden, Larry Young, Al Daumann, and many other volunteers for their help in organizing and hosting the event.



Before operating the L&N EK Division, Al Daumann presents his clinic on operations to the group in beautiful Santa Barbara.

Al Daumann and Doug Wagner keep things on track in Dispatch. This photo and the one above are by Dave Theis



Bob Lyons, Tom Osterdock, and SR Bush relax at Dent. Photo by Bruce Morden



Lunch was provided and created an excellent opportunity for connecting with some of the division members who had never met before. Photo by Dave Theis

By the time you read this article we will have also hosted a division lunch event on Oct. 3rd, 2026, during the Central Coast Railroad Festival in San Luis Obispo.

Finally, we are planning our next activity which will take place on Nov. 21st, 2026, in the Fresno, CA area. Our task now is to find a venue where we can have breakfast and host a couple of clinics in the morning, followed by tours of the various layouts located in the Fresno/Clovis area in the afternoon. One of the highlights of the tours that has already been confirmed is a wonderful 2-Rail O Scale layout owned by Dave Myers of Fresno. Dave's 50x80 ft. layout has some impressive and meticulously detailed scenery and is a must see for anyone who will be in the area that weekend.

A peek at Dave Meyers' 2-Rail O Scale layout. If you look closely, you will see the two ladies in the middle of the picture, and that will give you an idea of the size and scope of the layout. Photo by Dave Theis



As you see, we have been busy over the last few months and plan to create even more events to bring our division together around this hobby that we all love. I hope that you plan to join us and I invite you to reach out to me with suggestions or activities that you would like us to consider.

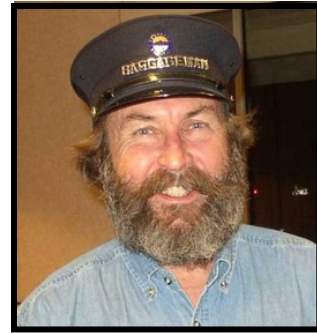
Until next time,

Dave Theis, Director/Superintendent
Daylight Division, PCR/NMRA



Division Meet for Operation

Text and photos by Bruce Morden



Members and guests from the central valley and along the coast gathered on the morning of August 29, 2026, for the third quarter meet of the Daylight Division of the NMRA's Pacific Coast Region. The meet was held at Gary Siegel's home in Montecito, near Santa Barbara. About 25 people attended, including some from the adjoining Pacific Southwest Region.

The meeting started off with a clinic on model railroad operations presented by Al Daumann, newly elected director of the Operations Special Interest Group. Al has years of experience operating model railroads across the country. He is an active member of the Santa Susanna Model Railroad Club and owns a home layout which is operated on a regular basis.

Al is a regular on Gary's Louisville and Nashville, Eastern Kentucky Division. Using examples from the EK Division, he prepared the attendees for the operation to come later in the meet. Al stressed basing operations on prototype practices. There were examples of freight car forwarding, train movements, and descriptions of prototype jobs – engineer, conductor, yardman, dispatcher, and station operator. Some folks just like running their trains and enjoy watching them. Others stick to strict timetables specifying meets with other trains and switching work along the way.

Cade and John take a break from operating the "mole" (Kingsport, North Hazard, Corbin, Norton yards)





Larry Orr and Robert Pethoud working in the Viper Aisle

As the discussion progressed to advanced operations, Al talked about fast clocks, classes and priorities of trains, car forwarding including industries utilizing the different types of rolling stock. Finally, we moved on to experienced operations including traffic management, shippers and consignees. For all of these, Al used examples from the EK Division.

After a few questions and answers, Bruce transitioned the group into selecting which roles the attendees would like to tackle while operating the EK Division. Fortunately, there were several veteran operators from the regular L&N EK Division who were assigned to mentor those who had not been to Gary's before. After the list was complete, we all moved indoors to operate on the layout for the next two and a half hours, ending just in time for lunch.



After the operating session, attendees enjoyed lunch and conversation on the lawn.



Sylvia Pethoud and Caleb Hawkins work the coal mine at Kyles Ford, KY. Photo by Doug Wagner



Tom Osterdock says he hasn't run trains in more than a decade. Photo by Neil Fernbaugh

Al Daumann and Doug Wagner in the dispatcher's office. Photo by Neil Fernbaugh



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Bob Lyon works a throttle. Photo by Doug Wagner



Jude Stacy and Patti Phillips work together. Photo by Doug Wagner

Daylight Division Membership Gauge

August 31,	2016	121
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
June 30,	2026	94
July 31,	2026	92
August 31,	2026	95



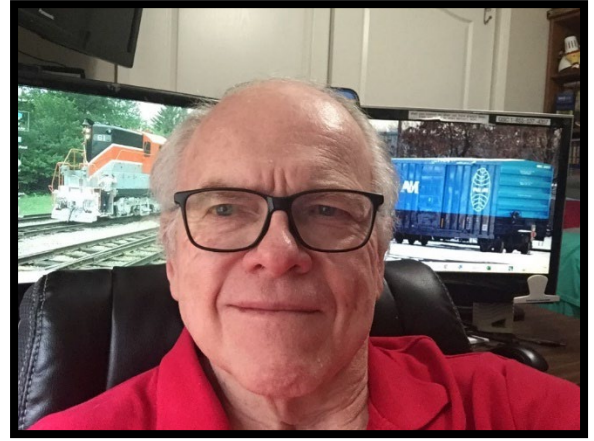
Daylight Membership by County

<u>County</u>	<u># Members</u>
San Luis Obispo	22
Fresno County	20
Santa Barbara County	19
Tulare County	14
Kern County	12
Merced County	4
Madera County	3
<u>Mariposa County</u>	<u>1</u>
Total Members	95

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Master Builder – Cars

By Dave Grenier



This time we'll be discussing the second of two certificates in the Model Railroad Equipment category, namely the Master Builder – Cars certificate.

First, we'll start with a definition. What is a "car"? A "car" is just about anything that runs on rails and is NOT self-propelled (if it's self-propelled, it's Motive Power). This includes freight cars, passenger cars, maintenance of way cars (including equipment such as cranes), cabooses, cable cars, unpowered (dummy) locomotives, etc. If you have a model which is self-propelled but is a model of something that was designed to carry something (besides itself), such as a rail car; it can be used as one of the qualifying models for Motive Power or Cars, but not both.

To qualify for this certificate, you must build eight operable scale models of railroad cars. "Operable" means the models must be able to roll on the track, negotiate a curve, and be pulled by something. It does not mean that every door, valve, or other moving feature of the car must work as the prototype does. (On the other hand, any operating features that you do include in your car are likely to increase your score. (More about this later.))

The models can be any scale and/or gauge. Here's a perfect opportunity to try a scale different than your primary scale. After all, the AP is about learning more about the hobby. What better way to learn something new than to try a different scale? Who knows? You might just be pleasantly surprised by the experience. Give it a try!

There must be at least four different types of cars represented in the eight models, one of which must be a passenger car. This is to show that you can model the different types of cars, not just variations of the same type of car.

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For example, a 40' boxcar and a 36' reefer are two different types of cars, but a 40' boxcar and a 50' boxcar would be the same type of car, unless there were significant differences in the construction methods used to build each car. On the other hand, a steel-decked flat car and a wood-decked car would be considered the same type of car, but a regular flat car and a depressed-center car would be considered different because it is a substantially different kind of car to build. You can even build 4 identical boxcars, plus a flat car, a reefer, a gondola, and a passenger car and still meet the requirement for four different types of cars.

Each of the eight models must be super-detailed with either commercial parts or scratch-built parts, which earn extra points. When considering which parts to super-detail, consider removing the molded-on ladders, grab irons, and brake wheels the car came with and replace them with separately applied parts. Don't forget the car's underside details, as the judges will be looking for the underframe brake details. This also earns extra points.

In addition to being super-detailed, at least four of the eight models must be scratch-built, while the remaining cars can be commercial models that you have super detailed. To be considered as "scratch-built", at least 90% of the model's pieces and/or parts must be constructed or fabricated by the modeler. Use of commercial detail parts will not disqualify the model as being "scratch-built."

The following items are specifically excluded from the "scratch-built requirement": wheels; couplers; light bulbs and electronics; trucks; brake fittings; marker lights and drumheads; paint, decals and the like; basic shapes of wood, plastic, metal, etc. 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. Also consider that although these parts are exempt from the scratch-built requirement, they may be scratch-built to earn up to 15 additional bonus points.

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.

You must earn 87.5 or more points on four of the eight models in AP Merit Award judging. Note that the other four models don't even have to be judged! The four models are judged on the quality of the craftsmanship, including the finish and lettering, the quantity of details and amount of scratch-built parts, and how well it captures the look of the prototype. Up to 15 extra 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.

AP Merit Award judging can be done in one of two ways: 1) at an NMRA-sponsored contest at a convention or division meet; 2) arrange for judging at another time separate from a convention or meet. 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 the Daylight Division AP Chairman (me!) to setup a time and place. My contact information is listed in the Daylight Observation and on the Daylight Division website at: <https://www.pcrnmra.net/daylight/callboard.html>

The final requirement for the Master Builder – Cars certificate is to submit a Statement of Qualification (SOQ), which includes detailed descriptions of each of the eight model and photocopies of all 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. If the model is a kit, whose kit is it? Photos of the models are helpful, but not required. Also include a copy of your NMRA membership card. Submit the completed SOQ and all materials to the Daylight Division AP Chairman, Dave Grenier (me again!). My contact information is listed in the Daylight Observation and on the Daylight Division website at: <https://www.pcrnmra.net/daylight/callboard.html>

For a couple of great articles on super-detailing cars, look at the May 2014 issue of Model Railroader. On pages 52-57 there are step-by-step instructions for scratch-building a caboose. In the March 2008 issue of Scale Rails, there is an article on upgrading an Accurail hopper car by removing the cast on details and replacing them with separate commercial parts and brass wire.

For more information about the Master Builder – Cars certificate, visit the NMRA website at <https://www.nmra.org/cars> . Also refer to the articles "Master Builder - Cars," NMRA Bulletin, February 1992, and "Merit Award Winning Cars" NMRA Bulletin March 1992. Don't hesitate to contact me for more details. I think by now you know where you can find my contact information. Next installment: Master Builder – Structures Certificate



Virtual Events: Yes or No?

By Dave Theis
Daylight Division Director



Are Virtual Clinics and Events a Positive Thing for our Hobby?

As technology advances in our hobby, we have begun to see a number of improvements in the area of video conferencing and the frequency of livestreaming for meetings, clinics, and events. While many have embraced this new technology and the opportunity to attend an event remotely, especially when they are not able to attend an event in person, some are still a bit hesitant and not sure if they like the idea of attending a virtual meeting or event.

I believe valid arguments can be made from either point of view; however, as someone who got my start in the NMRA by attending a virtual conference, I admit that I am a little bit biased and see the virtual option as a positive thing. With this understanding, and since we are presently exploring the possibility of virtual participation in some of our upcoming Daylight Division events, I feel it would be good to discuss this issue and to consider whether the use of the virtual option is a positive thing for our division and for our hobby as a whole.

The first thing we need to acknowledge is that we are already using this technology and have successfully hosted a number of virtual events across the National, Regional, and Division levels of our organization. While the jury may still be out for some, many see a virtual event as something positive that has expanded our reach within the membership and created opportunities for increased attendance at our events.

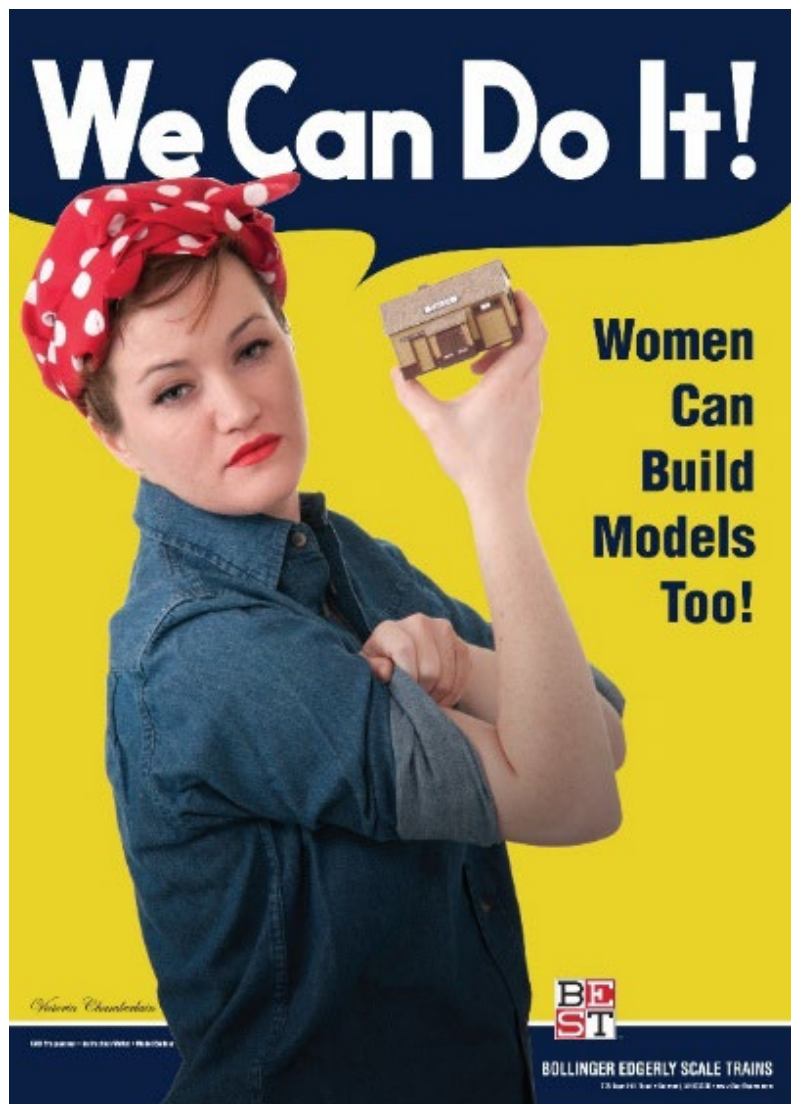
Let me be clear: I am a firm believer that attending events in person is the best option and will give the attendee a more immersive and interactive experience. That being said, the reality of modern life is that not everyone has the time, financial resources, or, due to health concerns, the ability to attend all events in person. For those who fall into one or more of these categories, attending a virtual meeting or event might be just the thing.

Virtual Events: Yes or No?

At the same time, I recognize that there are some limitations and legitimate concerns with this approach. Some may worry that offering a virtual option could reduce attendance at a live event. Others are concerned that many older members may not even have computers or that the technology/process for connecting with and participating in video streaming is too complicated. It has also been expressed that there is a cost associated with the equipment needed to handle a virtual production; as well as the need for trained individuals who can operate the setup and run the virtual event. All of these concerns are valid and will have to be addressed as we move forward with expanding the virtual options for our divisional meetings, clinics, and events.

Therefore, and with a full understanding of the limitations and concerns, it is my recommendation that we do not consider the virtual option as a replacement for attending events or activities in person, but that we adjust our mindset and look at a virtual component as an option for those who can't, or as an option for short term meetings where traveling long distances is just not practical.

For me, this approach has the potential to increase attendance by reaching a broader audience within our membership, it can reduce or eliminate costs associated with travel, it minimizes the time needed to participate, and it offers flexibility to those who would otherwise not be able to attend.



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Virtual Events: Yes or No?

Yes, there are some shortfalls, and it will not appeal to everyone, but it will make a difference for many others. Therefore, if we want to expand our reach and create greater opportunities for participation in our activities and engage our membership in a more positive manner, then I believe the virtual option is worth trying.



I encourage members to offer their comments and feedback on what you think of this approach and recommendations for using the virtual option. Remember, it will not take the place of live events or activities, but it will be another tool we can use to reach as many people as possible. You can email me at director.daylight@pcnrmra.net with comments and suggestions.

Until next time,

Dave Theis
Director/Superintendent
Daylight Division
PCR/NMRA

Visit the Daylight Division on Facebook here:

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



Newest Members

Welcome Aboard!

Daylight Division's Newest Members

<u>Member</u>	<u>City/Sate</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>
Marlin Woodside	California City, CA	6/16/2026
Tai Quan	Bakersfield, CA	6/16/2026
John Maynard	Shafter, CA	6/16/2026
Ric Garofalo	Bakersfield, CA	6/16/2026
Bruce Barker	Bakersfield, CA	6/16/2026
James Province	Tulare, CA	6/28/2026
G. Dodd	San Luis Obispo, CA	7/15/2026
Gary Clark	Morro Bay, CA	7/18/2026
Matthew Riley	Fresno, CA	8/12/2026
Anthony Miller	Bakersfield, CA	8/14/2026



Last Run

<u>Member</u>	<u>City/Sate</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>
Darrel Harbin	Fresno, CA	1/1/1966
Jim Williams	Lompoc, CA	1/1/1970
Donald Dixon	Rosamond, CA	1/1/1970



Conventions:

2026 Western Pacific Historical Convention

October 1 – 4, 2026

Feather Falls Lodge and Casino, 4 Alverda Drive, Oroville, CA 95966

Contact: Kerry Cochran kc6knt@gmail.com

The Feather River Rail Society is the Sponsor

Oroville is the Gateway to the Feather River Canyon and was the Western Pacific's base for canyon operations. The city also features a Sacramento Northern branch, the Oroville Dam Railroad, and various lumber and industrial railroads that fed traffic to the WP system. Visit:

https://wplives.org/news_items/2026_Western_Pacific_Historical_Convention.html

2026 Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society Convention

October 7 – 10, 2026 at Wyndham Visalia, 9000 W Airport Dr., Visalia, CA 93277

Convention Website: <https://sphts.org/convention/>

On-Line Registration: <https://sphts.org/convention/register-online/>

Great Train Show Pleasanton

Sunday, December 13, 10:00am – 4:00pm

Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton

Train show with vendors, modular layouts and the ACCRS train club. Admission is charged and the fair charges for parking. If you are interested in volunteering at the PCR/NMRA booth, please email coastsup23@gmail.com

Silver Rails 2027- PCR Convention

March 31 – April 4, 2027

Atlantic Casino Resort Spa, 3800 S Virginia St., Reno, NV 89502

Mark your calendar for this convention, sure to be unique. The convention will be held at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa in Reno. There will be great clinics, layouts to see, prototypes to ride and more. All with the backdrop of the Biggest Little City in the World and the great railroad environment surrounding Reno.

Check out the Silver Rails 2027 website at <https://pcrnmra.net/conv2027/>

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 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 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

The Daylight Observation The Official Publication of the Daylight Division, PCR / NMRA Volume 40, Issue 4 4th 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, 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 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

Third Tuesday 5:30 PM / **Visalia Electric Model Railroad & Historical Society** /
Meets at Apple Annie's Restaurant, 1165 N. Blackstone, Tulare, CA / Cecil Eppler, e-mail: cecil_eppler@sbcglobal.net

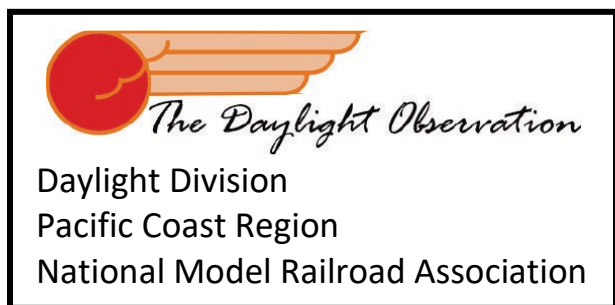
Fourth Wednesday 7:00 PM / **Coast Toy Train Club** / Wood Glen Hall, 3010 Foothill Rd (at Alamar), Santa Barbara, CA / Lots of collecting in S, O, and Standard gauges. / Contact: Ken Kelley, e-mail: kenatttr@thirdrail.com

Irregular / **Central California Operators Group** (all) / varies / Steve Hayes, e-mail: 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.



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