



The Semaphore

North County Model Railroad Society (NCMRS)

President's Message

Training

We instituted a formal training program early in 2007 after changing our operating system from CVP to NCE. That training consisted of instruction and practical testing in the use of the NCE throttle. Training also included layout operational instruction and a session on the layout to demonstrate operating proficiency. Every member who wished to run trains was required to complete this instruction and be signed off by one of the club's certified trainers. The net result was more enjoyable informal and formal operating sessions, and yes, fewer "shorts".

As most of you know we recently expanded the scope of our training program. The new program was presented to the membership by Lyle Lodwick at our February business meeting. All of you who attended the meeting received your own Member Orientation and Training Guide note book. Additional copies will be made available to members who did not attend the business meeting.

The training program consists of the following six parts.

- Member Orientation
- Cab and Programming Practical Training
- Layout Operation Practical Training
- General Written Examination
- Cab and Programming Examination
- Layout Operations Examination

In order to operate on the main layout new members are required to have completed the six part training program and be signed off by an NCMRS Certified Trainer. Al Cuevas, Lyle Lodwick, Charlie Tucker, Bill Daly, Kevin Harper, and Terry Kirkpatrick are all signed off as Certified Trainers.

So new members read the training guide and make arrangements with a trainer to start the certification process. The whole thing may look a little daunting at first. The truth is the training and testing can be completed in a single day.

As a new member, even if you do not intend to run a train on the layout, you are required to attend a member orientation session.

Work Schedule

Thursday and Saturday are work days at the club. There are plenty of tasks to perform.

Visitor Schedule

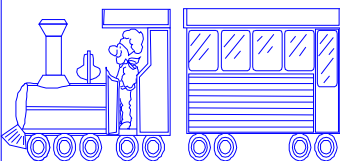
Thursday 3 - 8:00PM
 Saturday 9:30AM*- 4PM
 *11:00AM meeting days

Upcoming Operations Dates

Tuesday, April 14
 Setup time 1:00 pm
 First Departure 4 pm
 Last Departure 7 pm

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New members will be given their club badge after they have attended an orientation session and have been signed off by a trainer. These sessions will be conducted for new and old members after the monthly business meeting.

We strongly suggest that all (existing) members get re-certified with this new expanded training program. I have gone through the new training program and learned a few things that I didn't know, or maybe, just thought I knew. A little review never hurt any one.

Your officers and directors strongly support this expanded training program. We hope you will too.

All aboard ,

Dick Miller, 4/1/09



Leo's Laughs

By Leo Valley

Lunching on the Railroad

A young novice Trainman walks into the seedy cafe in the Atchison, Kansas passenger station.. He sits at the counter and notices an old veteran Engineer, with his arms folded, staring blankly at a full bowl of chili.

After fifteen minutes of just sitting there staring at it, the young railroader bravely asks the old steam veteran, 'If you ain't gonna eat that, mind if I do?'

The older guy slowly turns his head toward the young man and in his best steam driver manner says, 'Nah, you go ahead.'

Eagerly, the Trainman reaches over and slides the bowl over to his place and starts spooning it in with delight. He gets nearly down to the bottom when he notices a dead mouse in the chili. The sight is shocking, and he immediately barfs up the chili into the bowl.

The old Engineer quietly says, 'Yep, that's as far as I got, too.'



Value Craft

I would like to encourage you to use Value Craft for your model railroad needs. They have a wide range of scenery supplies, paint and paint supplies, and tools, as well as a supply of basic HO model railroad materials, structure kits, locomotives and rolling stock. The young guys that work the hobby department know their inventory and are very helpful. They are

happy to place special orders for you, which saves you shipping and handling costs.

Best of all they offer a 10% discount to NCMRS members for in-store purchases. All you need to do is show your member badge.

Value Craft is located at:

342-C W. El Norte Parkway, Escondido, CA

Phone: 760-747-9222, www.valuecraft.net

— Dick Miller



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Leaving Budapest by Howard Levine

In the February issue of this newsletter, I wrote a short space filler about our arrival at the main Budapest railroad station. As I indicated therein, Budapest, at least as represented by this station, is like going back into the dark ages. (More accurately, a walk into the age of Soviet control.) In this issue, I will provide you with a brief follow-up about our departure. Before that, a word or two about the Budapest subway system.

The city on the Danube has three subway lines that intersect two-at-a-time at three points of a triangle centered at the heart of Pest, which is the business and commercial part of the city. (Buda is primarily residential.) As far as I am aware all three lines are of fairly recent construction, most likely from the post-war Soviet era. All three lines are tunneled quite far underground, with access via very long escalators. The walls of the escalator passages are tiled. The tiles are not aligned horizontally, as they would be virtually everywhere else. Instead, their alignment is at a descending angle that matches the descent (or ascent) angle of the escalator. The same alignment is used on the side walls of the escalators.

This arrangement has a very strange affect. Normally, we associate horizontal lines as being at 90 degrees to the pull of gravity. But when “horizontal” lines are not really horizontal, the mind (at the very least, my mind) thinks gravity is not below the feet, and the tendency is to lean backward when going down, or forward when going up. Result: Vertigo. Either you think you are falling over, or you get dizzy, or both.

But one does learn how to handle this problem, and my experience may be of use to you the next time you visit Budapest. When on the escalator, look straight down at your feet, so the sides and walls are not visible. You may miss some of the local lipsticked scenery, but at least you will not be inclined to barf.

Now, back to the railroad station. We arrive by taxi, arranged by our hotel, at a charge about 1/4 of what we paid going to the hotel using a taxi hailed at the front of the station. (Perfectly normal, you might say.) We arrive there at 9:00 A.M. for a 10:30 A.M. train to Prague. There is no waiting room, nowhere to sit down, nowhere to do anything but stand and wait. (Perfectly normal, you say?)

There is one announcement board. It is the old type, with mechanical spinners that spin every few moments, as trains depart and others take their place. It is showing departures between 9:05 and 10:20, so of course our train is not listed yet. We wait.

After some time the board begins showing trains with departure times of 10:35, 10:40, and before much longer 11:00. But still no 10:30 departure to Prague. Panic starts to set in. We do not want to become permanent residents in Hungary!

Well, maybe it will appear on the board soon. But by 10:20 cold sweat sets in. We ask people, but no one knows. Finally, at 10:25, we learn from a passing stranger that “the Prague train usually leaves from Track 8.”

We rush to Track 8 (it seems as if it is about 3 miles away). A uniformed person is there. “Is this the Prague train?” “Yes [in Hungarian]”. We board, just as the train lurches off! Leaving Budapest is harder than arriving there.

