



North County Model Railroad Society (NCMRS)

On Saturday, October 25, 2008, the club meeting will be held at 10:00 am, at Boney's Marketplace, 1820 Oceanside Blvd., Oceanside

### Work Schedule

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

### Visitor Schedule

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

### Upcoming

#### Operation Dates

To be announced  
Setup time 1:00 pm  
First Departure 4 pm  
Last Departure 7 pm

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### Planning

I have always admired John Allen. I followed John and his famous Gorre & Daphetid Railroad in the seventies. To this day I am amazed by his modeling skills. From the things he wrote and what I have heard others say about him, he was a planner. Lots of sketches were part of his planning. He even made models of what he was planning to model. It has been said that he spent more time planning a project than he did in actual construction.

When I set out to build my current railroad I was totally focused on the track plan. I overlooked, or forgot, that the track plan is only a portion of a model railroad. My track plan was drawn to scale and was complete in every detail.

Grades were kept to a maximum of 2.5%. Number 6 turnouts were carefully laid out. My railroad is in a small 11 by 12 foot bedroom so the minimum turning radius was limited to 22 inches. I planned for two passing sidings, six spurs and a proper yard with an interchange track, an engine house and diesel engine servicing. So far so good.

Once I had the track down and began to run trains I quickly realized that I had not planned for

enough industry to make for interesting and realistic switching. So much for planning. This lack of industry on my railroad was reinforced by my participating in operating sessions at the club and an operating session at Dick Trotter's. Back to the drawing board. I realigned two sidings and shortened three others. I now have space for an industry or two on every siding. I have put down a footprint of each industrial building, platform and commercial building. Things are looking better. I may get this railroad right yet.

Operating sessions are much more interesting now even though many of the industries along the various sidings are represented only by a cardboard footprint.

My two grandsons, ages 3 and 8, who like to come to Grandpa's and run trains are getting a little impatient with my lack of completed scenery. So, needless to say that is my current focus. As I lay out hills, valleys, cuts, and mountains, I have come to the realization that I have not allowed for adequate space around various structures for roads. It never occurred to me that roads take more space than the railroad roadbed and track. Where is John Allen when I need him?

I say all this because we are just beginning the planning process for the new expansion area. It's most important that we plan carefully. We have plenty of time. There is no need to rush this process. We still have plenty of work to do on peninsulas, B, C, and D.

Al Cuevas, John Stevens, Charlie Tucker, and Tom Ashton have indicated interest in doing some initial planning. They will use a plan offered by Dan Conway as a starting point, and will keep us all informed as planning progresses. Their first order of business is to determine where tracks will pass through the wall into the expansion area. They intend to determine the expansion layout footprint. They will make bench work construction recommendations and finally will offer a preliminary track plan for membership approval. Cliff Anderson, as the head of the Planning Department, will be involved in final layout approval.

I look forward to seeing this group's proposal. I expect that, unlike me, they will provide adequate space for structures and roads.

All aboard

Dick Miller

9/5/2008

### Expansion Area Survey

This a brief resumé and summary of the results of the survey that was conducted recently by Cliff Anderson, as interpreted by your Editor, who is responsible for the interpretations that follow. If you consider the interpretations are deficient or incorrect, please send your comments to the Editor via E-Mail, for inclusion in the next issue of this newsletter.

Of the 49 currently active members, only 16 responded to the questionnaire. (Just like a typical U. S. election!)

There was a roughly 50-50 split between preference for hilly vs. flat terrain, with flat having a slight advantage. There was relatively little interest in an interchange connection to

"another" railroad. A large commercial facility was desired, but no one suggested a type of facility. Small commercial facilities were somewhat less desired, but again with no particular type suggested. A large terminal or division switchyard received a high rating, with transition era strongly preferred over all steam or all diesel. Several people wanted a turntable or a roundhouse, but others were strongly against it. A turnaround wye didn't rate high (notice the poetry!). There was moderate interest in a medium size switchyard with commercial facilities. There was modest interest in historical and geographic correctness — whatever the time and location.

Members liked the idea of another hidden staging yard — large, multi-tracked, and double ended. There were several concepts offered, and it appears that simplicity (single level, open walk-in) is preferred, rather than more complex designs such as "duck under" entry.

There were no "wild ideas" and only one member had a specific preferred location; "freelance" was the popular choice. (Editor's comment: since the expansion area is of a limited size, in reality there will likely be only one location. So "freelance" is equivalent to "I haven't decided.")

The traffic type preference was split between "all freight" and "both passenger and freight,"

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and members strongly preferred additional mainline over branch line or local service.

Opinions varied widely as to desired length of passing sidings, with suggestions ranging from roughly half that on the current layout to twice that on the current layout. Opinions also varied widely concerning special features, so much so that your Editor is at a loss to explain much. Among the leading suggestions were canyons-mountains-tunnels, an engine wye, and long single track lines through rural countryside.

Operation appears to be slightly preferred over scenic realism (why not both?), and switching seems to have a slight edge over mainline running (why not both?).

Cliff's survey also presented several member's responses for a request for details. These are so numerous and varied as to defy simple classification. Tune in next month for their description.

#### The 3/4 Page Problem Revisited by Howard Levine

When last month's newsletter was being "put to bed" (that's editor-ese) I complained that I had 3/4 of a blank page to fill, and you (the member-readers) had supplied nothing to fill this space. So I wrote a short article to fill it. Here we are one month later and the same thing has happened.

So now I must grow more "violent" and berate my member readers for their failure — for two consecutive months — to supply sufficient material for this newsletter to "survive." If this were a "real" circular that you pay to receive, survival would depend upon having paying advertisers and paying subscribers. Here the rules are different but analogous. What is needed are "paid" writers, and I offer again, as I did several months ago, payment in Hard Cash of \$1.00, (from my own pocket) for each article or set

of pictures that you provide. However now I go one step further: I supply you with a list of topics that you can write about. These are topics that I have considered from my own experience, but surely you will have others that you may prefer. The purpose of the list is to jog your thinking. So come on, railroaders, get with it!

The 20th Century Limited

The California Zephyr

Your favorite train/train ride

Railroad Tunnels and Tunneling

Rail Line Electrification (or lack thereof)

Trains vs. Planes

Trains vs. Automobiles

The New York Subway

The Chicago "EI"

BART

The Paris Metro

The London Underground

The "Chunnel"

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Signaling, But Were Afraid to Ask

Chicago's Central Station: What happened to it? Streetcars

Interurban Rail Lines

The Model Railroad at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago

My Life as a Hobo

...anyway, you get the idea.

I must also point out that the club has a very nice library of books about trains and railroads. Just flipping the pages of one of these can give you many ideas about interesting topics. I did this recently, looking through the pages of Lucius Beebe's book "Overland Limited." Why not try the library?

And don't worry if you are not a "professional writer" — I promise to fix you "spulling," "grammur," and such-like. Just think of the compliments you will receive from your fellow members, and especially of the huge One Dollar payment (you can frame it!) you will receive.

### Mind the gap

While growing up in southern England I had many opportunities to visit London and also lived there for a while and so got very used to using the London Underground or tube. This system has been in existence for many years and was even used by Londoners as an air raid shelter during the second world war. If you have ever used the tube you will know that many of the stations are built on a curve and so there is a gap between the platform and the train when the doors open. To try to stop people falling down the gap there is an announcer that says in a very clear voice over the paging system, called locally, the Tannoy, to "**Mind the gap**".

One day when I was young and trying hard to impress I offered to carry the skis for a friend who was on her way to Switzerland for winter sports. It all went well carrying these long skis down the rabbit warren of passages in the morning rush until we got to the tube train. When we entered, of course, I did not mind the gap as I was watching the top of the skis to be sure that they did not hit the rather low ceiling and fell down the gap. The saving grace was the fact that the skis wedged in the door way and I was able to climb up them to get in the train. I must have done this so quickly that the girl never even noticed that I had fallen between the train and the platform and so the sympathy that I

had expected was not received.

The thing I learnt is to let people carry their own skis and not try to impress.

If you visit England remember to look to the right before you cross the road and mind the gap.

Nick Ruddick