



The Order Board

Volume 54 No. 2

June, 2026



Tracks Ahead for the Cajon Division

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Upcoming Events

June 27, 2026, 10AM-2PM (see Flyer for details)

*Layout Tour: HO Scale Susquehanna & Blue Mountain RR
1338 Misty Ct., Diamond Bar, CA 91765
RSVP by June 21, Chuck Fisher, (909)-239-2147 or
ChuckFisher43@gmail.com*

July 1-6, Various Dates/Times/Locations

*Rapido Trains visiting SoCal Hobby Shops
<https://cajondivision.org/home/index.php/events>*

July 25, 2026, 8:30-11:30AM

*Roundhouse Gang Model RR Club Swap Meet
Old Santa Fe Train Station
1170 W. 3rd. St., San Bernadino, CA*

August 1, 2026, 10AM-2PM (see Flyer for details)

*Layout Tour: Joel Morse's N-Scale New York, Ontario & Western
11891 Tunstall St., Garden Grove, CA*

September 9-13, 2026 (see Flyer for details)

*PSR All Aboard for 2026 Annual Convention
Double Tree by Hilton Hotel San Diego Mission Valley
7450 Hazard Center Dr., San Diego, CA 92108 USA
<https://www.sandiegodivision.org/index.php/convention-2026>*



October 17, 2025, 8:30-11:30AM

*Roundhouse Gang Model RR Club Swap Meet
Old Santa Fe Train Station
1170 W. 3rd. St., San Bernadino, CA*

October 25, 2026

*Cajon Division Fall Meet
Save the date! Location and times TBD*



From the Desk of the Director

Gary Stenberg, Cajon Division Director



CAJON DIVISION OFFICERS

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Social Media Chair

Lev Michaelian

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Donations Chair

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How many times have we heard that model railroading is fun? I'll wager quite a few. But what fun is Model Railroading if you don't do model railroading? That begs the question, "What is Model Railroading?" Is model railroading running trains? Is it building some models? How about building a layout? Is sitting down with a few friends and acquaintances then talking trains also model railroading? How about an excursion to Cajon Pass to watch them roll by? Does train watching count? Is writing an article for the Order Board on your favorite prototype considered model railroading? How about being an active member of the National Model Railroad Association? Can this be considered model railroading? Is collecting HO or N scale trains model railroading? The answer to all of these questions is YES.

There is an old adage that says "The more you put in, the more you get out." This is absolutely true. In the NMRA we have the Achievement Certificate Program. You can find particulars on the NMRA website under the Education Tab. Participating in the Achievement Program exposes you to many aspects of model railroading that lead to, not just a really impressive layout, but to the lofty goal of Master Model Railroader. There are four areas that are available to enrich your journey: Building Railroad Equipment (Cars and Locomotives), Creating a Railroad Setting (Structures, Scenery, and Prototype Models), Model Railroad Construction and Operation (Civil, Electrical, and Chief Dispatcher), and providing Service to the Hobby (Association Volunteer, Association Official, and Model Railroad Author). The last category is probably the most overlooked because we all want to run trains or at least look at model trains running. So, instead of that let's look at the category of "Service to the Hobby" a little closer.

The easiest Achievement Certificate to get in this category is "Association Volunteer." The more you put in, the more you get out. As the category name implies, the tasks are volunteering to do things. In my journey towards Master Model Railroader (Still a long way to go) I volunteered to be a "contest model judge." Besides putting in time as a volunteer, I learned a whole lot on how to build contest quality models. I volunteered to serve as the Chief Clerk of the Cajon Division, earned volunteer credit, and met a whole group of dedicated modelers who have encouraged me to go further. One group of modelers invited me to their group bent on earning the "Chief Dispatcher" Achievement Certificate (How to run trains in a prototypical manner). I earned my "Association Volunteer" Certificate and now I'm working on the "Association Official" achievement Certificate. Because I write a lot of articles, I'm also working on "Model Railroad Author." The idea here is to suggest that this one Achievement Certificate can lead to many more.

The next easiest achievement certificate in the "Service to the Hobby" category is "Model Railroad Author." You can write articles for the Order Board and get "lower division" credit, and write articles for the Pacific Southwest Region "Dispatch" and get "upper division" credit. You need 42 points of which at least 21 points need to
(continued)



From the Desk of the Director

(Continued)

be at the upper division level. There are a whole bunch of other publications that you can submit an article to (Just don't submit the same article to multiple publications at the same time.) If writing isn't your forte, points can be earned for scale drawings and photographs which are published.

The most difficult achievement certificate in the category of "Service to the Hobby" is "Association Official." A step above "Association Volunteer," the "Official" certificate requires election to a higher level of participation in the NMRA. At least three years of service are required to earn this certificate. Members who earn this certificate have done their best as "Officials" to further model railroading and to provide the membership with fun activities to participate in.

Now for some fun. I love puns and other fun things for naming businesses on my layout. Remember "Dewey, Cheatum, and Howe – Attorneys at law?" Well, James H. H. Lampert, one of our Cajon Division Members, gave these to me, and I just had to share. "John Butt - Gasket Company," "GHOTI Seafood – Home of Piano Tuna," "Ernesto Coli Meats" (Go for the abbreviation), and "Salvatore Monella Poultry." Good ole Sal.

Here's more. The San Diego Model Railroad Association HO layout in the San Diego Model Railroad Museum displays many traffic accidents on the layout. Do you know why? Because we want everyone to take the Train!!!

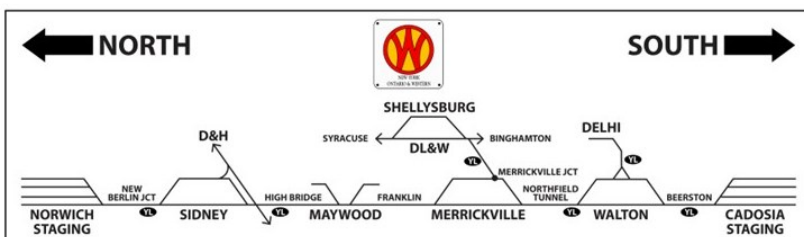
I have had a great time in the 50 plus years that I have been an NMRA member, but truthfully, the best times have been when I have been involved with you, the membership. I want each and every one of you to have as good a time as I have had, or an even better time. The more you get involved with the things I've mentioned, the more enjoyment you will get out of the hobby. Volunteers are always welcome. Participants are always welcome. You are always welcome! Come on down.



Cajon Division Layout Open House

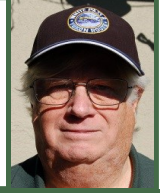
Paul Stoner, Cajon Division Superintendent

Joel Morse will be holding an open house for his N-Scale New York, Ontario & Western Railway at his home on Saturday, August 1 from 10AM-2PM. Refreshments will be served. Come out and socialize with other NMRA members. Talk trains, ask modeling questions, give advice, bring a model to share... Joel's NYO&W is set in upstate New York in the late 1950s and is a delight to see.



From the Head End

Paul Stoner, Cajon Division Superintendent



The 2026 Cajon Division Spring Meet is now on the books and I want to thank everyone involved in the preparation and presentation of the meet for their efforts: Gary Butts, Lev Michaelian, Bob Calicchia, and Kurt Matthews, for help with setting up and the clean up afterward; Brian Nealy for coordinating the Hobo Auction; Mike Allee and Carl Heimberger for running the Celebration Room; and Kurt Matthews for acting as the meet photographer (*Editor's note: with malfunctioning camera flash*). I would especially like to thank Carl Heimberger for arranging four excellent clinics by four of our most accomplished Master Model Railroaders (MMRs). In addition to Carl's clinic on the new NMRA evaluation matrix, Harold Helland talked about building Fast Track turnouts, Gary Butts shared his knowledge of LEDs, and, from the San Diego Division, Don Fowler discussed operations on his N-scale Mojave Division. Finally, thanks to everyone that attended. It was you that made the event a success and I hope everyone enjoyed themselves.

I was a bit disappointed, however, in the number of entries in the Celebration Room (formerly the Contest Room). I think we only had six entries. Over the past few years, the emphasis of the Celebration Room has not been as much about competition as about evaluating the positive attributes of our models. Mike and Carl spend a lot of effort to ensure that entries are evaluated objectively and constructively and that your efforts are properly recognized and recorded. Almost every MMR will tell you that they didn't get to that level of modeling without the help and support of other modelers, and the Celebration Room is the place where that starts. So, I challenge every member of the Cajon Division to enter as many models as they can in the Celebration Room at the San Diego Convention in September. It shouldn't matter whether or not you think a model is worthy. Let others see what you like to work on. I would LOVE to see the Celebration Room overwhelmed with Cajon Division models in September!

With that in mind, the next Cajon Division event will be an Open House at Joel Morse' N-scale NYO&W layout on Saturday, August 1, 2026. There will be opportunities for operations, a chance to meet other modelers, and refreshments. I also encourage you to bring a model project in progress and discuss your ideas with other modelers. (*Editor's note: See the flyer in this issue for more details.*)

The Pacific Southwest Region annual convention will be held on September 9 – 13, 2026 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in San Diego. See the flyer in this issue for more details. Convention staff is still looking for volunteer to help staff the convention and for clinic presenters. Contact the following folks to sign up!

Don Fowler: superintendent@sandiegodivision.org

Ryan Di Fede: meets@sandiegodivision.org

Finally, *Save the Date* for Saturday, October 24, 2026, for the Cajon Division 2026 Fall Meet at a venue to be announced later.

I'm happy to report that all the vacant office positions in the Cajon Division have been filled. Joel Morse has stepped up to take on the Membership Chair. Lev Michaelian will be the new Social Chair in addition to becoming the new Assistant Cajon Superintendent. Additionally, I'm pleased to announce that new member, Cliff Mathews will be our new Chief Clerk. Thank you all for volunteering.



Modeler's Wanted!



Tom's Country Store

A rare opportunity is presenting itself this coming September! An event that has only happened a few times in the past decade will be available for those NMRA members that are looking for their next modeling adventure, those hesitant to try building a craftsman structure kit for the first time or those just looking for a nice model to build. Available only at the upcoming NMRA Pacific Southwest Region "All Aboard for 2026" Convention, this world-famous "Modeling with the PSR Masters" program will be available.

This 4 to 5 section clinic features Phoenix Model Buildings "Toms Country Store" craftsman kit. This extra fare make-and -take clinic will have individual personal construction assistance available for those wanting some guidance from some of our Region's finest Master Model Railroaders. The goal is to take these kits from opening the box to finished model in one fun convention day. The participating modeler is expected to bring some of their favorite modeling tools, paints, etc. to the clinic, however, there will be supplemental supplies and tools kits available for purchase for those that are brand new to modeling or just don't want to bring their modeling stuff to the convention.

The completed Ton's Country Store measures 2" wide by 4" deep in HO, 1.5" by 3" in N scale and is appropriate for nearly all eras between the early 1900's up to modern times in rural settings. The kit features laser cut panels, windows and doors (which qualifies it for Craftsman quality AP considerations) and bass-wood shapes. Window glazing, 3-d printed chimney and roof shingles are all included in the kits.

This is a limited availability opportunity, so to ensure that you don't miss out, make your way to the Convention web site for more detailed information and sign up for the clinic early. This clinic is anticipated to sell out well before the convention start so don't delay- Sign in today! <https://www.sandiegodivision.org/index.php/convention-2026>



Social Media News

Lev Michaelian



Cajon Division Facebook Page Gets a Fresh New Look

Exciting things are happening on the Cajon Division Facebook page! As the division's new Social Media Chair, I've been working to refresh and enhance our online presence, so it better reflects the energy, creativity, and outstanding activities taking place across our division.

Recent updates include a redesigned cover image, updated profile graphics, and more frequent posts featuring division events, layout tours, clinics, conventions, and member activities. These improvements are designed to make the page more engaging, easier to follow, and a stronger showcase for everything our members are accomplishing.

There's even more ahead. We plan to expand our social media outreach with additional photos and videos of member layouts, spotlights on modeling projects, promotion of NMRA events, and opportunities for members to share their own content. We also want to introduce a wider audience to the hobby by highlighting the many exciting aspects of model railroading and welcoming newcomers to explore what makes it so rewarding.

Social media gives us a powerful way to connect with current members, inspire future hobbyists, and demonstrate that model railroading continues to thrive as a fun, creative, and community-driven pastime for all ages.

If you haven't visited the Cajon Division Facebook page recently, now is the perfect time to check it out! Follow us, join the conversation, and help spread the word by liking, commenting on, and sharing our posts. Together, we can build an even stronger community, celebrate our members' achievements, and grow enthusiasm for model railroading throughout the region and beyond. [NMRA PSR Cajon Facebook Page](#)

(Editor's note: I guess it is time that even I engage in social media. Lev has done a marvelous job!)





So Cal N-Gauge Show

Lev Michaelian



The annual event was held on May 31 in Lomita, CA. There were 19 vendors and 4 modular layouts present and clinics. The NMRA had a sign up table manned by John McGreevey (LA) pictured below, Frank Kenny (PSR VP/LA) and Joel Morse (PSR President/Cajon).

We also had a new member sign up to the Cajon Division at the table during the show, Anthony L. His membership should be processed by National and posted in June. We're excited to have Anthony join our community of model railroaders and look forward to seeing him at future Division events, clinics, operating sessions and conventions. Please join us in welcoming Anthony L. as the newest member of the NMRA Cajon Division!





Achievement Program

Congratulations to Wayne Pierce of El Cajon, CA for achieving *Association Volunteer* and Steven Bradley of Oceanside, CA for achieving *Model Railroad Author*. Both were announced in the February 2026 edition of the NMRA Magazine.

Also in the NMRA Magazine

In the April 2026 issue, Bob Chaparro of Hemet, CA wrote a letter in the Mail Car (pp 8) remembering Marty Quaas (RIP) and his HO scale business car *Alaska*. The car toured many layouts throughout the world. The letter featured *Alaska* on Ron Varnell's (LA) and Bruce Hendrick's layouts.

In the May 2026 issue was a photo (pp 59) of Harry Clark's Indian Creek HO Layout in Connellsville, Pa. I, having my family roots in the area, found it an interesting subject. Harry passed away, but his layout was moved to the Connellsville Canteen. Two videos of the layout and its move can be seen here: <https://www.connellsvillecanteen.org/harry-clark>. I never knew this museum existed, so I will need to visit it on my next trip back to W. PA.

In June 2026 edition of RMC Magazine

Jason Shron's Diverging Points editorial discusses a recent visit he made to the bay area. In the discussion, he mentions the Golden State Model RR Museum. I never heard of it, so I had to look it up. Jason said it was impressive. Next time you are in the Richmond, CA area, you may want to check it out. I surely will. <https://www.gsmrm.org/visit.shtml>

The Whistle Stop Hobby Shop in Pasadena has moved

The shop has relocated about a half a block north from its previous location on Colorado Blvd. The new address is 23 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena, CA 91107. As of June 10, they were still unpacking, so you may want to give them some time to get organized before visiting. See their ad at end of this edition.

Railmaster Hobbies

Recently, I paid a visit to Railmaster Hobbies in Bellflower, CA. They have a wide selection of items in all scales and a large selection of older structures, locos and rolling stock at good prices. Owner Jeff helped me out on some questions I had regarding weathering powders. There is a large free parking lot across the street. Visit them at 9812 Belmont St., Bellflower, CA 90706. See their ad at end of this edition.

Model Train Solutions

A new hobby store ad for this month is Model Train Solutions. They are an internet and traveling seller of all scales and things model railroading. You may have seen them at train shows throughout the west and PSR conventions. Our own Bryan and Karie Neely (Cajon NMRA members) own and operate the business. Check them out at: <https://model-train-solution.myshopify.com/>

Rapido Trains in SoCal!

Rapido Trains has announced a SoCal tour of local hobby shops in early July. Check out our website for details. <https://www.cajondivision.org/home/index.php/events>



On You Tube:

Check out the following You Tube drone video over BNSF's Topeka, KS shops. Look for the surprise locos.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d3fDmsrcJ8>

Ciao Baby

My wife and I recently took a trip to Como, Italy. I walked to the local train station and took some photos. The line goes from Milan, Italy to Lugano, Switzerland. Marklin anyone?



New Book

The Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society has published a new book The Ghost Trains of SP's Over-land Route, Train Nos. 21-22-Second Section. This edition compliments and earlier edition by taking a westward journey from Ogden to Oakland <https://sphts.org/product/sp-ghost-trains/>.

Got a Modeling Question?

If you have a modeling or prototype related question you would like to propose to the greater Cajon NMRA community drop me a line at editor@cajondivision.org and I will publish it in the next **Order Board**. Hopefully, someone will provide an answer that I can publish in the following edition. Currently, I publish on a quarterly basis, but if I get the answer sooner, I can forward it to you directly before publishing that answer in the following edition.



Membership Report

Let's welcome our new members since February 2026:

March:

Andrew Scott, Corona, CA (RP*)

April:

Daniel Bai, Fullerton, CA (RP*)

David Scott, Las Vegas, NV

Ray Villasenor, Corona, CA

Sebastian Villasenor, Corona, CA

May:

None

*What is RP? It is a Rail Pass (Trial) Membership:

<https://www.nmra.org/trial-membership>

If any of our members know these new members, how about reaching out to them and welcome them with open arms!

Reminder: The Cajon Division communicates with its members by e-mail. If your email address is not on file with the NMRA you are missing valuable communications from the Cajon Division.

To update your email with the NMRA go to www.nmra.org and in the upper left hand corner, login to the Member Log-In Registration (if you have not registered on the NMRA website you will need to register). Once logged in, in the upper left hand corner, click on Member Info. Above your user name click on Edit and then update your email address in the space provided and save your changes. Now you should start receiving email messages from the Cajon division. If that might be too difficult for you can contact me at membership@cajondivision.org and I will have the NMRA office update your email for you.



What's Happening in Nevada?

Craig McCormick, Asst. Supt. NV



For March we met at Paul Mickelson's Midland Creek. For April it was my Western Continental (see photos). We had nine + one new NMRA member attendees, as well as several non member guests. Members were Duane Yoder, Paul Mickelson, Dave Toole, Melodye McGroarty, Bob Piety, Dick Shenberger, Elijah Galinsky, Larry Rubin, Craig McCormick and Dave Scott. For June it was Timm Martin's Grandjean Martin RR.



County Line Crew is a local ad-hoc group in the Whittier/La Mirada/La Habra/Fullerton/Brea area with participants from inside and outside of the NMRA, including both Cajon and LA Divisions.

Corona Model RR Museum

Bruce Hendrick recently invited the Crew for an after hours tour and operating session at the museum. Club memberships are open for those interested. <https://www.cmrsclub.com/>

Arnie's Trains

We have carpooled to Arnie's Trains twice in the last few months. The most recent trip a few weeks ago was after Arnie's announced a large consignment inventory that had just arrived. Large was an understatement. Most of the items were older HO models such as Athearn Blue Box, rare AHM & other items from the 1960's & 1970's.

Upcoming Layout Open House

Crew member Chuck Fisher is having an open house at his HO Scale Susquehanna & Blue Mtn RR. The layout is open for all LA and Cajon Members on July 27, 2026 from 10AM to 2PM at Chuck's home in Diamond Bar. Please RSVP to Chuck. See the flyer later in this edition for specifics.

New Crew Member

Welcome to William Shields, who has decided to join the Crew. William is a NMRA LA Division member from Long Beach.

Slim Gauge Guild Open House

On June 9, the Crew carpooled out to Pasadena to attend their semi-annual open house. It was the first time I visited this layout and I found it spectacular, especially the mountain scenery. There are two layouts, both dual/narrow gauge, one in S scale and the other in HO scale. The hosts graciously allowed us to operate on the HO scale portion. The Slim Gauge Guild members are 100% NMRA. The layout has their semi-annual open houses for the public in June and November.

Chuck Fisher (LA) and Stuart Mann (Cajon) met up with us at the layout later.

We met a prospective new member for the NMRA LA Division, Ivan C. He was visiting with some work friends and may have caught the model railroad bug. Check out the photos on the following page.

Want to join the Crew? Contact Mark Schoenberger at: cousin.jasper@yahoo.com



Left to Right: Mark, Kurt, Chuck



Left to Right: Mark, Ivan



*S*n3 Gauge



*H*On3 Gauge



Call for Model RR Donations

Brian Neely, Cajon Division Donations Chair



“One man’s trash is another man’s treasure” seems like the perfect reason for every model railroad swap meet since the beginning of time. But it also applies to the items that appear for bid at our Cajon Division Hobo Auctions

Many members don’t realize that every item that appears in the Hobo Auction was donated by a Cajon Division member or local hobby shop. Our Hobo Auction supplies of donated items are getting low, and we need your unneeded model railroad supplies to the Cajon Division, so we can continue this tradition.

Every one of us has bought and stored items that we know we will never use, not on the current layout and not on the next layout, because our model railroading focus, need, or interest has changed. These items are cluttering up our limited storage space. Sure, you could wait until you get around to selling your items at swap meet after swap meet until it’s gone, or you can just donate the items to the Cajon Division.

The Cajon Division (and the PSR) are 501(c)(3) Charitable Organizations under the IRS and California tax codes and therefore you may be able to take a tax deduction for the items you donate. When you donate items to the Cajon Division, we provide you with a receipt for your taxes.

If you have items to donate for future meets, contact me directly at donations@cajondivision.org and arrange to donate your items. Thank you in advance for your generosity!



Call for Member Layouts

Paul Stoner, Cajon Division Superintendent

We had seven **Layouts of the Cajon Division** Open Houses in 2023, four in 2024, four in 2025 and four so far completed or scheduled in 2026. We want to continue to schedule these events in both SoCal and Nevada, which have been well attended and enjoyed by the membership.

We are looking for layout owners to join in the fun and host an open house this year or next. Your layout does not have to be the “finished article”, you just have to be interested in showing your fellow members what you have been working on and spending a few hours talking about model railroading. In fact, input from visitors at your Open House may provide you with some new ideas and tricks! The Cajon Division will provide up to \$50.00 to reimburse you for food and drinks that you might serve. If you are interested in hosting an Open House and showing us what you have been doing, please contact me and we’ll work out a date that works for you. Email Paul Stoner at superintendent@cajondivision.org.





Layout Planning

As I mentioned in my previous article, I chose to build my benchwork first then do my layout planning. I felt this was the correct way to do it for me, as I had limited space and within that space I had other structural limitations as well. Many of you will do the layout planning first, then plan your benchwork around your layout plan.

Since I joined the NMRA close to ten years ago, I cut out every layout in the NMRA magazine as well as the layouts in Model Railroader magazine. My plan was to use these as references when I eventually planned my model railroad layout. Keep in mind I did not plan on copying other layouts, but I wanted ideas to inspire portions of my own layout. It is also worth noting that I am not a prototype modeler. I do not want to plan my layout for any specific location, era, or railroad.

When designing my layout, I wanted to be sure that my layout would qualify for both the NMRA Civil and Electrical achievement programs.

The size of my layout needs to fit into an area that is approximately 7 ½ feet by 9 ½ feet around the room [as described in my previous article on Benchwork] that will potentially include a lift up gate rather than a crawl under.

My goal for my layout is to be able to run trains around the room and be able to do operations, even if it is only me running ops. I would like to have 2 mainlines on my layout as well as a number of sidings to manage freight shipments.

My other issue that needs to be addressed is the civil electrical requirement of a provision for turning motive power by using a turntable, a wye, or a reversing loop. I can always create these outside my layout, but my direction is I do not want to build something that is required without using it on my layout. To me the cost of doing that is a waste of resources.

Now to me a turntable is a waste of space, especially on my size of layout. I wanted to consider a reversing loop but due to the configuration of my benchwork, that required me to put the workbench down the middle, I did not have enough room to make a reversing loop work. That leaves me with the wye option but how do I make that work on my layout?

During the NMRA Surfliner National Convention in Long Beach, CA in August 2024, I visited the Layout Design Special Interest group booth/clinic room. I realized that after that visit I needed additional help to design my layout.

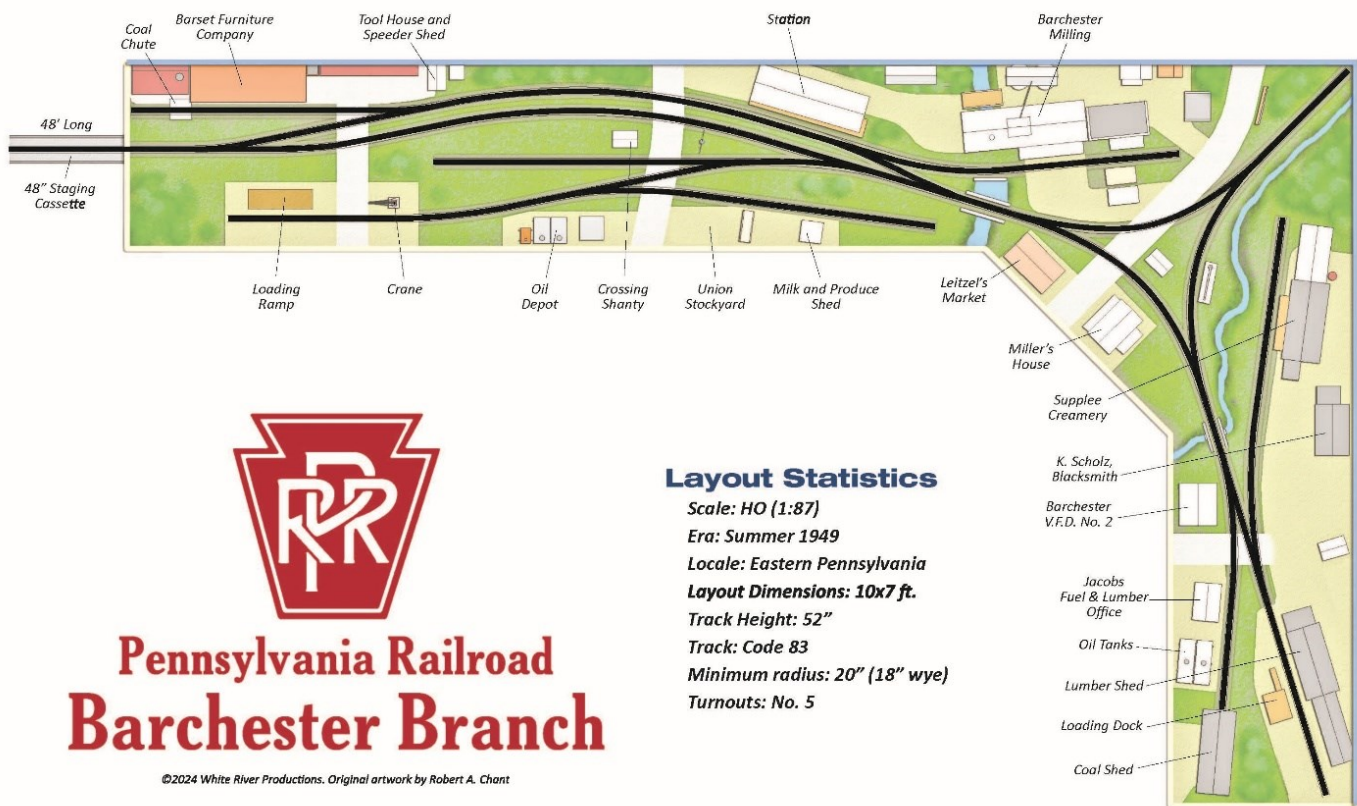
Sometime after the convention, I decided to join the Layout Design Special Interest Group [<https://ldsig.net/>]. From their website, the benefits of being an LDSIG member are for people who are thinking of building a layout, have trouble finding the perfect design or drawing lots of design with nothing to show for it. That fit my scenarios exactly before joining LDSIG.

Building My Railroad

(Continued)

It helped me to get more out of the layout I wanted and assisted to maximize my design for me. The LDSIG website [<https://ldsig.net/>] has a variety of resources to help me with my endeavor. The site introduced me to innovative ideas and experienced model railroad designers, operators, and modelers.

I reached out to the LDSIG with my wye dilemma to see how to fit one on my layout. John Young, Membership Services Representative, reached out to me and let me know that there was a layout in the December 2024 issue of Model Railroad Craftsman magazine that might be a good start in what I needed for my layout. That layout was the Pennsylvania Railroad Barchester Branch. This layout was a good start [Figure 1].



Pennsylvania Railroad Barchester Branch

©2024 White River Productions. Original artwork by Robert A. Chant

Figure 1—"©2026 White River Productions, used with permission. Original artwork by Robert Chant."

From there I then attempted to design the rest of the layout. I wanted to be sure my layout qualified for the NMRA Civil Achievement Award.

So, starting with that layout from Figure 1, I adapted that wye to begin to establish what I prefer in that corner. [Figure 2]

Building My Railroad

(Continued)

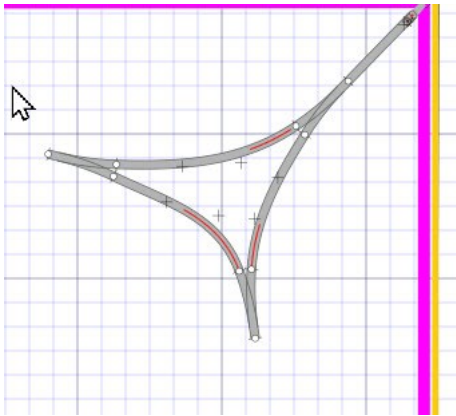


Figure 2 - Wye.

Since I wanted two mainlines, I expanded my idea to create my initial layout with two mainlines as shown in Figure 3.

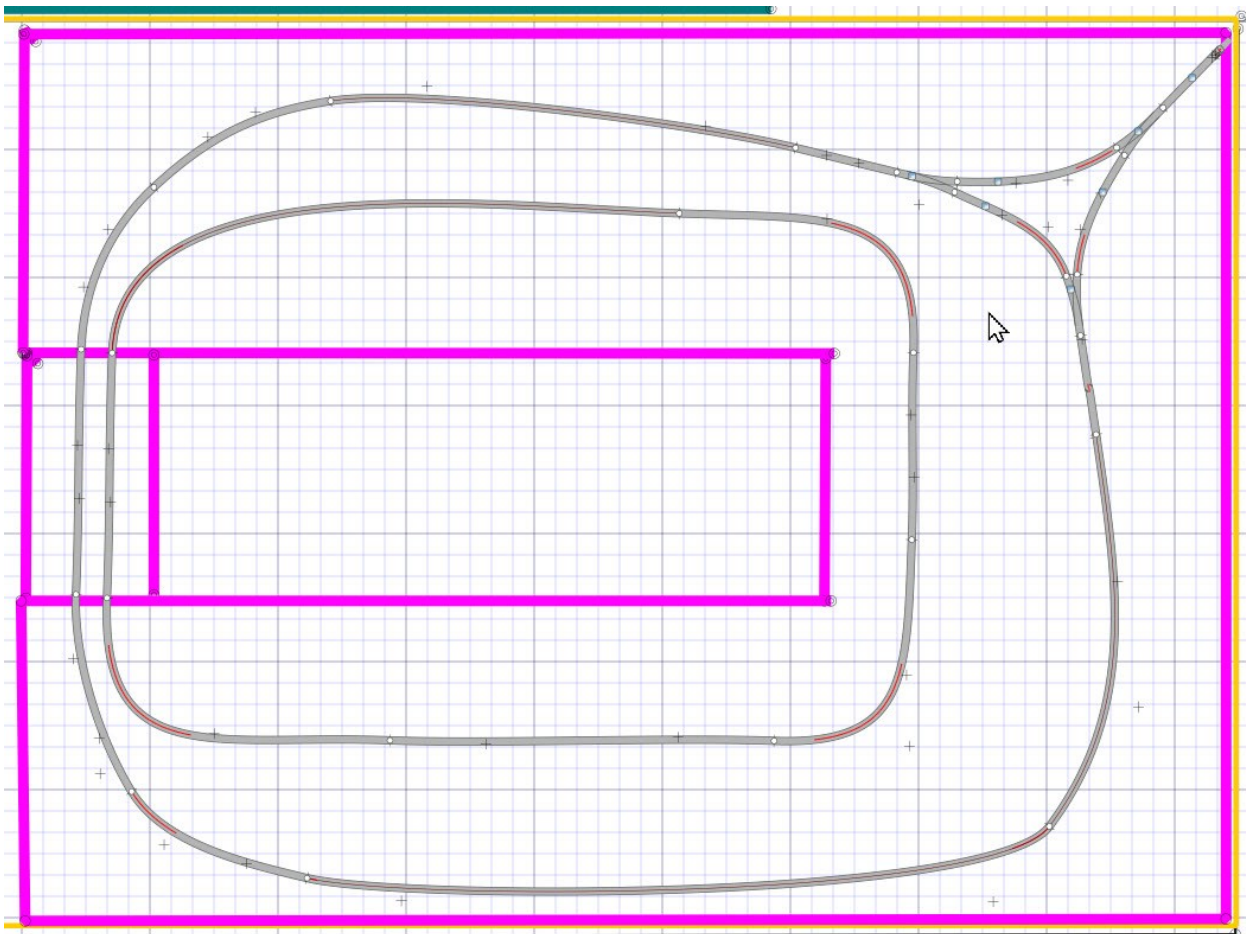


Figure 3 - Two Mainlines

For the layout to qualify for the civil achievement, I needed to build the following:

Since I am modeling in HO I need 50 feet of track.

The track work needs 6 additional items, and during the design I picked the following for my layout:

- Passing siding
- Spur
- Crossover
- Wye
- Simple ladder, which should have a minimum of 3 tracks.
- Super elevation, banking the track and roadbed on a curve.
- Grade Elevation, which requires a change in the slope of the track.

Let me walk you through how I added the above to my layout.

The passing siding was my first step in adding to my two mainlines. I decided to add it in the inner mainline first as shown in Figure 4.

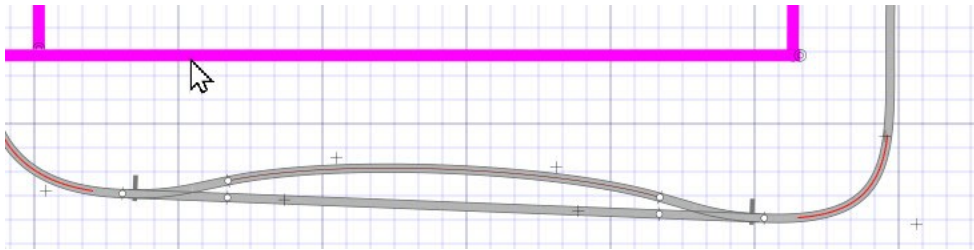


Figure 4 - Passing Siding 1

I then added a passing siding to the outer mainline as shown in Figure 5.

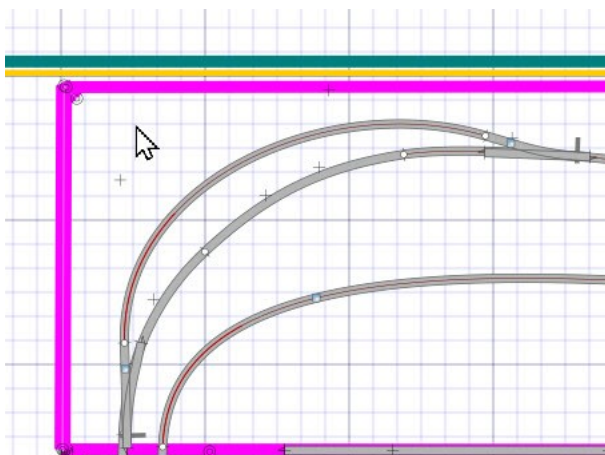


Figure 5 - 2nd Passing Siding

Building My Railroad

(Continued)

I then added a number of spurs as you can see in Figures 6-8.

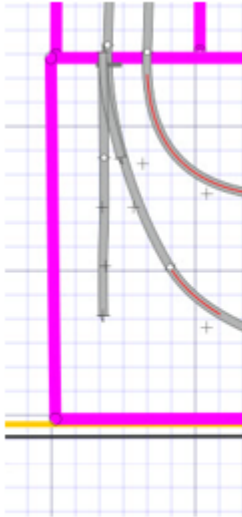


Figure 6 - Spur 1

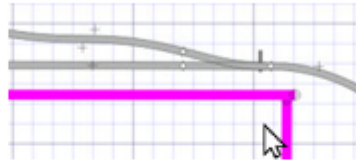


Figure 7 - Spur 2



Figure 8 - Spur 2

Since I wanted the ability to have trains move between the outer and inner mainlines, I chose to add a double crossover at the point of either the lift up gate or crawl under space. See Figure 9.

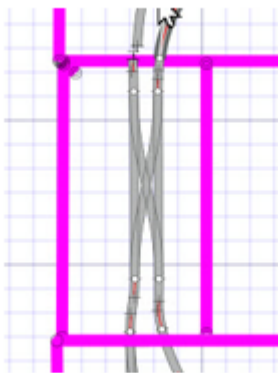


Figure 9 - Double Crossover

Then I added two different simple ladders with three tracks as shown in Figures 10 & 11.

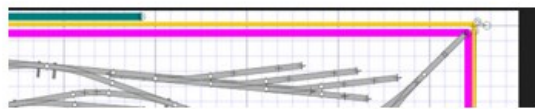


Figure 10 - Simple Ladder with Three Tracks

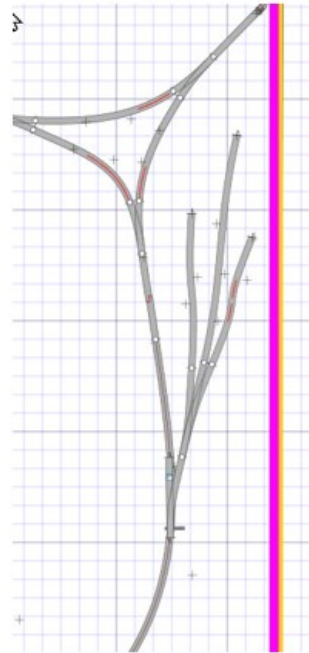


Figure 11 - Simple Ladder 2 with Three Tracks

The additional requirements for the NMRA Civil achievement meant I had to build 3 distinct types of turnouts.

One of the requirements for the Civil achievement is to construct for merit judging, three distinct types of turnouts and may include the following [taken from the NMRA Civil requirements]:

- Turnout [straight, curved, or wye are turnouts]
- Crossover
- Double crossover
- Single slip switch
- Double slip switch
- Crossing
- Gauntlet track
- Gauntlet turnout
- Three-way turnouts
- Spring Switch

Since I was given 23 various straight turnouts, I needed to add another type of turnout, so I decided to add a tree-way turnout to the layout near the passing siding on the outer mainline as seen in Figure 12.

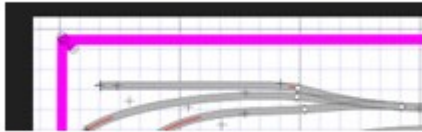


Figure 12 - Three Way Turnout

After making various changes my draft [Figure 13], the layout looks as follows:

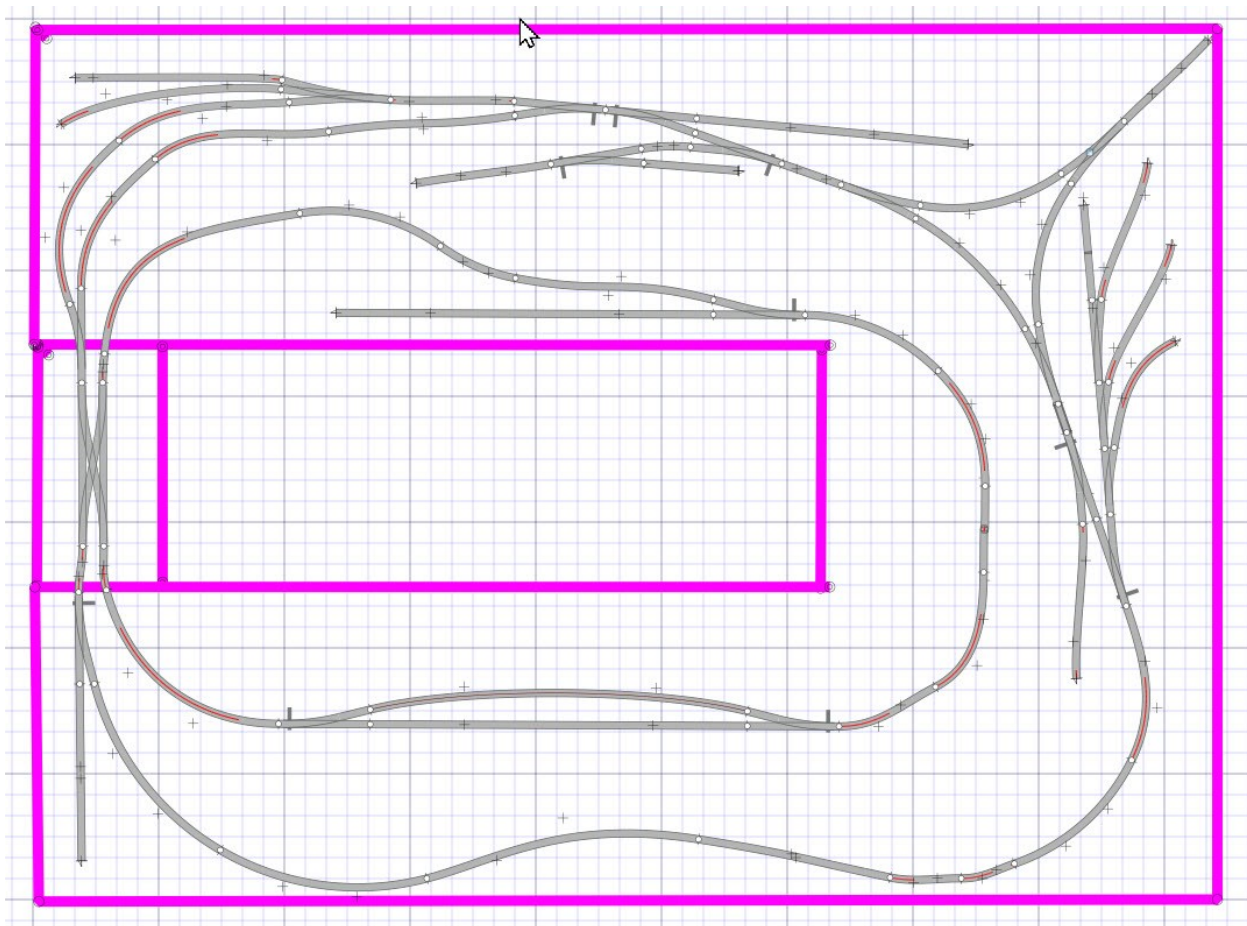


Figure 13 - Draft Layout

Building My Railroad

(Continued)

After reviewing this draft layout, I was not happy with it as the layout did not seem right and did not appear very flexible. So, I sent the layout design to several individuals I know to get their comments and suggestions.

The layout covered the basic requirements of the civil requirements. The main suggestion I received was to consider adding curved turnouts in certain areas to make the layout more functional and to be sure the ladder with three turnouts had room for an engine and rolling stock to make work without affecting the mainline.

I had never considered curved turnouts before I was given this suggestion. What a wonderful idea. I changed the turnout for the ladder to a curved turnout and moved it closer to the lower right side of the layout. This gave me more room for the siding, so I could avoid having to work on that siding and affect the main. Once I made that change, I also changed the passing siding on the inner main to curved turnouts as well. I then added a curved siding for the spur on the inner main. Now with this configuration, I felt I was able to maximize my layout space more efficiently.

It was also suggested that I use either a gauntlet track or gauntlet turnout, The more I investigated that option I could not determine the right place to put it on my layout, so I abandoned either option.

As I mentioned earlier, I was given 23 straight turnouts What I found out was that all of the turnouts were code 100. Upon further investigation there were few options available to purchase code 100 in both curved and double crossovers. Since I already have 20 various code 100 turnouts, I decided to build the curved and double crossovers in code 100.

Since I already had the three-way turnout on the layout, I decided to add a crossing, so I now had an option to build either turnout to qualify.

I have made some other changes to the layout [Figure 14]

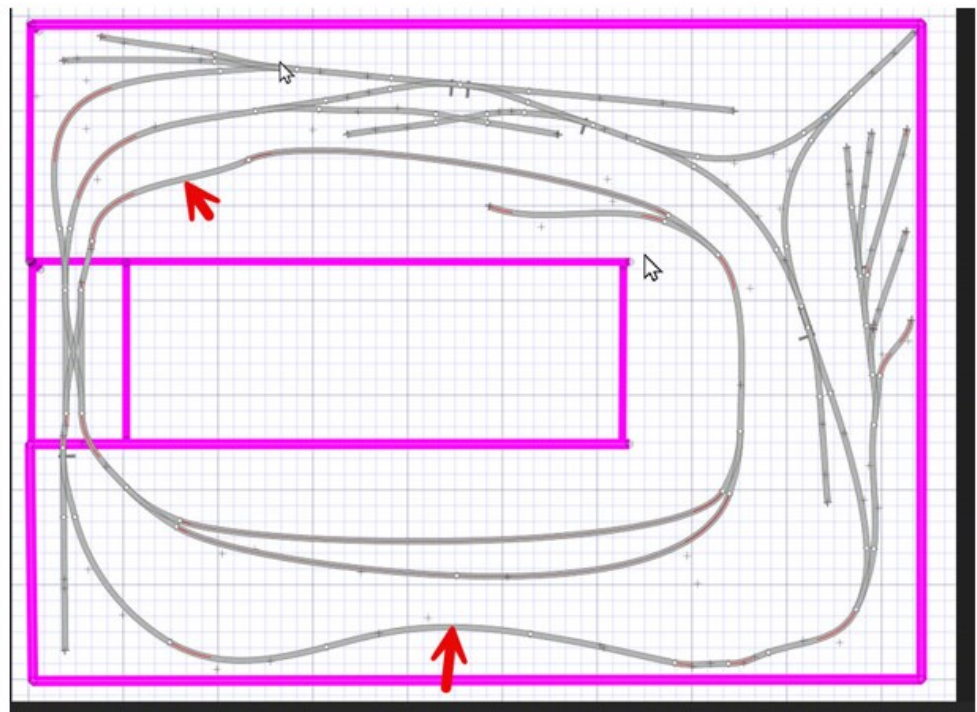


Figure 14 - Final Layout Design



Building My Railroad

(Continued)

Even though it is not apparent on this layout, I plan on a super elevation, [banking the track and roadbed on a curve] at the arrow in the upper left corner and a grade elevation [which requires a change in the slope of the track] at the arrow at the bottom on the layout in Figure 14.

This has been a long and slow process. I appreciate the assistance I received from Harry Buehrle, Carl Heimberger, and Harold Helland, the three individuals I asked for advice, and they gave me insightful and constructive comments. Without their assistance, I would have struggled to complete my layout design.

Some of you may be wondering where my structures and other items that need to be on my layout. I have a tough time relating to that on paper. I know that there will be buildings and warehouses at the sidings. I plan to have a depot at one of the passing sidings. I know that I will have a winery and winery production facility and hopefully even a lumber yard. I am unable to visualize these locations and dimensions on paper. I will need to see the track placement before I can actually plan structure placement.

I also realize that my layout design is not complete, as I will tweak it and make changes as I begin to lay track to better fit my benchwork. I look forward to continuing my journey and will follow up on a future article.

I hope this article was helpful and an inspiration to design your own layout. In the next article I will describe the steps in laying track on my layout.

For questions and comments, you can contact me at patrick.rogan@gmail.com.

(Editor's note: Thanks Patrick for a thoughtful and useful article on track planning...Looking forward to the next installment)

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Art in Miniature Modeling

Bryan Hummell

We know art is part of our hobby, and when it comes to weathering that is art.

I want to explore how art is **talked about** when being discussed in our hobby.

Let me narrow that down to your/my layout and some basics to have in our art repertory. Art is best understood if some basics are revisited in mini-**review**. Then I hope we will see even the NMRAs **evaluation** process using the NMRA **matrix** document (see finish & lettering), that one can find art included, if we know where to look.

Why I think a review is necessary is this, most advice or lessons were published so long ago as to be **buried & forgotten**. In some cases, hidden in plain sight but lost. Time to refresh.

I will attempt to link disparate (incongruent) pieces together and avoid the trap of too much information. The goal is to include just what we model-makers need, to accomplish our hobby and **leave behind** the wider ranging art worlds complexity. Stuff that really does not apply to us and is not needed by us.

Our modeling relies typically on **appearance** and improvements of such. Here is where a touch of applied art comes to the aid of any layout builder. We can **evaluate** art in ways beyond the **I like it or the emotional level of acceptance**. Formal versa informal it all works...the formal approach would be and is the matrix in our hobby's evaluations.

The **appearance AP now called finish and lettering** (within the matrix evaluations) allows review of painted models. If weathering is done with paint, then that is part of finish, so I suggest it is worth including. All the same rather it is a uniform coat of paint or weathered splashes and tonal variations (mild to wild). Note I say paint is finish in this discussion, so weathering done with paint is finish. A definitional fine point to make is, paint is pigment and binder making for a finish. So even dusting on chalk powder (minus binder) is part of this finish process.

The usual examination is looking for a very **uniform coating**, adding a **flat coat of paint** overall that is acceptable and often done to great satisfaction. So acceptable to us, that we tend to forget it is not prototypical. This (flat coat or also a wash) I suggest is art applied to make something take on the appearance of "age" (old in the world) to indicate **passage of time**. It does this simply by reducing the new and somewhat shiny constructed vehicle or structure to not be so shiny, due to being **out in the Sun light and rain**.

A bit faded since when something was built, the **shiny new coat of paint turns dull in time**. To obtain such on our models, apply a wash (for instance a highly diluted white on top, sides, bottom, running-gear), very notably all uniformly applied. That is **level one** I'm suggesting for discussion purposes. I'm introducing 1 of 3 levels at this point, more later.

Thinking about the thought process of judging / evaluation, it is done after the painting is done and very dry, I am now discussing ONLY a system of analysis. Enter the three levels of weathering idea for analysis.

This level thing is something I have noted over the years of being in our hobby. Weathering is done or applied in layers. I think I have identified them for you.

If this system works for evaluations, then surely it will work for less formal usage.

Benefits can be over all blending (bringing together) the look of: scenery, structures. rolling stock (cars, locos, road vehicles) for any layout as if it all belongs. About the goal to bring it together, the look that is. John Allen said that it has to be brought together. The wizard of Monterey knew his stuff so I am passing it on.

Again, another fine point or minutia of detail in a definition.

Don't confuse the order of when paint coat is applied with the sequence of analysis by layers 1,2,3. Layer order is not painting order of application. They are different.

To start here it's the easy first level.

Starting with **level one** the simplest, an overall **wash or diluted color** is applied. This level is uniformly applied to all sides the same. An old well-known method by modelers, nothing new here. The point is, it is a starting point or level and the next levels can be applied over this wash of uniformity.

This can pull together the look and turn it into a more subdued one at that. Again, uniformly applied top to bottom!

An example is an out of the box Athearn stock car in HO, lending itself to a coat of black **wash over all** surfaces to control the shine, but still allow reading the reporting marks.



Oil Car is example of wash in black

Art in Miniature Modeling

(Continued)

A Next level or **level 2** is applied over level 1 (the two work together). This covering takes on shapes or areas in patterns of splashed up effects for instance. Hall marks of this level is its less uniform nature, in fact rather **random shapes**. No lines or rust chipped spots yet as that is the last step/level.

Just indications of something happening in the life of a model's existence; in the simulated world we present.

The weathering we apply at this level, can be a less uniform coating, it is still paint (pigments and binder making the finish). Weathering is added typically on top the previous uniform coating, there is a layering of the two here, a buildup of layers.

Some level 2 examples are soft shapes. Maybe the walls that have acquired soil, dust, grime, all free loading on the surface. Maybe **splashed up** the logical means that brings this.

Shapes here have a soft edged character to them. **Random areas** are what make level 2.

The next level will be more defined and less random, indicating detail not included in level 2 here.

Worth a try once level 1 is done, is to add on some level 2 effects. The level 2 effects can be applied on top of level 1.



Stock car is level two. Note earth tones in brown. Also some wash in black, under the level two brown splash ups

Level three using indication of; lines, chipped places, more defined shapes and spots.

Yet again, another fine point or minutia of detail in a definition details meaning.

Paint can supply two dimensions detail (2D). Note parts are 3D, paint is 2D.

Lines can be of two types.

- **Horizontal** lines / scrapes of passing objects / opening doors scraping / sliding freight car door or warehouse doors.
- **Vertical** lines / drip lines water or soot, wheels kicking up a mist in vertical lines on ends of coupled neighbor car end.
- **Chipped** out spots / rust spots on steel structures and rolling stock / level 3 spots are more detailed than level 2 random ones. They can represent something we will recognize.
- **Defined spots** and grime as coming from exhaust soot or reporting marks streaking below in lines flowing downward etc.

This level 3 is an anything goes level. Notable example of this level are the models at a Prototype modeler's show. I like the creativity and the look of ultimate wear and tear on a model, mostly done in 2D paints. Applications are so convincing. A few of these seems to be ok to include I would think.



Near end of life and stored in Pomona, CA. WP 38077 note the level 3 paint and rust showing up.

This car has not been humped recently so that is why the wheel rims are not shiny steel but rusty, from sitting all winter. Note the patch of new paint for the refreshed WP and number plus LD LMT etc. to cover over the graffiti. Note the rust is orange-brown from age. A natural color shift in rust with time from orange to a mix.



Another patch of new paint to cover tagging for the dimension details to be readable. The truck is faded gray and springs are showing slight orange-brown for rust color. Old large WP lettering is ghosting through above paint patch.

Some good news is box cars are surviving in general but at reduced numbers to this date. Railway Age magazine '2026 insist the count has stopped its reduction/decline in numbers and is holding on.



Note the two locos their trucks are not the same in color, tint or tones. Not silver any more. Also, the ballast pile is a mix of several tones. Point is the slight mix in any layouts ballast is suggested but prototype. Same mix for each loco component parts, in this case trucks are slightly different in coloration.



BNSF locomotive 4048 must have been needed in a big hurry (primer patch). Note the truck are not silver any more at this point in time. Also, if you look closely to the left of the primer paint patch vertical streaks are present (likely soot).

The attempt you make is the important part in all this.

For instance, if the level one wash is all that is applied/done, that can be sufficient as a blending process with in the overall look of the rest of the layout. One can stop at that point if wanted, because doing more is optional.

In a nut shell what I have presented boils down to these three sentences, that is all you need to remember.

- **Level one = uniform / the wash approach WEATHERING.**
- **Level two = added on with random blushes and shapes, WEATHERING.**
- **Level three = here lines and detailed chips, appear TOTAL WEATHERING.**

I hope this is helpful and in a usable way.

Bryan

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Presented by: The San Diego Division

September 9th to 13th, 2026

Come join us in beautiful San Diego for the PSR 2026 Model Railroaders Convention.

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The San Diego Division has some excellent layouts, many of which have been published in popular model railroad magazines. You will be able to view those layouts during the convention. Clinics will include Modeling with the PSR Masters led by Gary Butts, MMR and special guest clinics via Zoom. There will be activities every night of the convention.



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The convention will take place at **the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel San**

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The convention registration direct link is here:

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