

# Region

## Descriptions

*I'm going to start off by confessing to a number of faults here. The point of the Regions Descriptions is for us to look at each other and learn from what each other is doing. Many of us are doing the same things, much of our history is similar so this section tends to be quite redundant. There will be bits about conventions and meetings that will be the same from one to another and might also be in the Meetings and Conventions section. The Regional and Divisional map, though slightly out of date, is repeated from the Divisional Descriptions section so you don't have to keep referring to another section. Each of these are intended to be sort of stand-alone but that doesn't work well because everything we do affects everything else we do. But if we try to do everything together it becomes too big to swallow.*

*If this is the first section you read, good luck. If it is the last, we hope it wraps up a lot of things. The sections are not meant to be read in order.*

*Our first big description is of the Mid-East Region. Like the rest of the US based regions it is trying to cope with the lack of dues and the aging population of Model Railroaders. Their answer is a pretty traditional and straight forward assault on the problem. Their report discusses the need to cut back to one convention a year because of the lack of host groups. They have needed to centralize and create a MER Convention*

*Chair who negotiates with hotels, a Registrar, an Auction chair, and a Contest Chair.*

*As part of its outreach and attempts to recruit, the MER pays for the RailPass program for new members.*

*Our second is the British Region. It is a bit atypical. The Australasian, British, and Canadian regions have a different relationship with the National headquarters than the other regions. Being outside of US borders they have to take responsibility for a number of things that headquarters does for the United States based regions.*

*The British Region has quite an extensive program of meets that is worth looking at. They have two regional meets per year in addition to their convention. Their handbook for putting on these meets is in the "Meets and Conventions" section of this Handbook. The Region also encourages other meets like "themed" meets both as a way to attract new members and as a fundraiser for the region. The region, with no prototypes close at hand and few legacy railroad workers, faces a greater need than most to demonstrate what we are talking about.*

*The report also talks about the activities of some of the subgroups of the region. They seem to fill a niche somewhere between division, club, and round robin and take much of the*

*responsibility for these meets. Many things to think about in this.*

*The third region is the Pacific Coast Region, also quite typical and faced with many of the same challenges that the rest of us have. The report discusses the strength of the Convention and of the interaction between region and division. Many of these like the Sierra division's train show in Roseville and the Coast Division's auction have specifics in the respective sections. It is followed by a history of the PCR developed for its 50th Anniversary.*

*The Pacific Northwest Region is huge. It covers four US states and three Canadian provinces. It is bigger than the whole of the US east of the Mississippi. It is 1435 from Seattle to Anchorage and you can't get there by land. It has seven divisions, five that are mostly US and two that are mostly Canadian.*

*The Thousand Lakes Region is another geographical region and also cross border into Canada. Challenged as it is by size and low population, it has held four national conventions.*

*The last thing in the section is a discussion of various organizational structures focusing on who is or is not a voting member of the Board of Directors in each region.*

*But first we have short reports from three regions that were originally written as e-mails to the Regions and Divisions Yahoo Group.*

*Bill Kaufman*

## **Rocky Mountain Region**

By Harold Huber, President RMR

I seem to be the only region president on the list, but I am very involved with my division which I was instrumental in starting 8 years ago. Our Division is 48,954 square miles and we have only 26 NMRA members in the division. Of these we have a solid 16 that attend our meetings which are held twice a year in the spring in Casper Wyoming, site of our largest club and in the fall in Sheridan, Wyoming site of our smallest club.

We have inherited the Black Hills and Rapid City as they were an inactive division and are trying to get them jump started again. It is about 150 miles between each of the clubs, Casper, Sheridan, and Rapid City. We always announce our meetings in our newsletter a month ahead of time and have at least 2 clinics at the division meeting along with the NMRA judged contest. We also try to have a layout tour or prototype tour at the Division meeting.

I have a new member that is solid and is now on the region board of directors. I am including a portion of an e mail from him it tells why he joined the NMRA and I must tell you he is the only Garden Railroader in our division so we seemed to have something to add to his wants.

*"Why join NMRA?": My choice to join the NMRA has been primarily due to the local club. The NMRA does offer information, the AP program, etc. but these are not the major*

factors. The Sheridan club has knowledgeable, pedagogic, enthusiastic, encouraging, inclusive people. Pedagogic in that they share their knowledge readily. Inclusive in that they accept all aspects of model railroading. The enthusiasm and good natured ribbing is a lot of fun. This can only occur when people are 'comfortable in their own skin.' These folks just happen to be NMRA members. I suspect these characteristics are not as common as one would like in other clubs. It is the ambiance, not the rules."

Is this the key? I do not know, but I do know we in the Rocky Mountain Region are having great success in recruiting and keeping the 6 month membership guys with a heavy dose of coddling and nurturing. The 6 month membership is probably one of the few things the national has done right in past years. This gives a person a chance to test the waters so to speak. But it takes everyone's time, knowledge, and friendship to keep this 6 month member.

## **Southeastern Region**

By Bob Beaty, President,  
Southeastern Region

As Southeastern Region President, I have Divisions over the 6 Southern states and parts of NW Florida and Western North Carolina. Our two largest Divisions are Piedmont (Atlanta) and steel City (Birmingham). I have currently only 1037 NMRA members within the Region. We have 9 MMRs and good participation in the NMRA AP program. We just completed our 2009 Annual convention in Pensacola, FL

with 80 attendees. Our Division Supers face the same issue that we all face nationwide, participation, outreach, recruitment and communication. Many of our divisions are large in area and dispersed in population.

Some of the ideas we have developed are: Superintendent's handbook (downloadable from our web site). Convention Handbook (also downloadable). Hosting a web page for Divisions that do not currently have one (being implemented). The best Newsletter in the Organization with an expanded online version.

## **Niagara Frontier Region**

By Rick Hatton, Canadian Vice president of the Niagara Frontier Region.

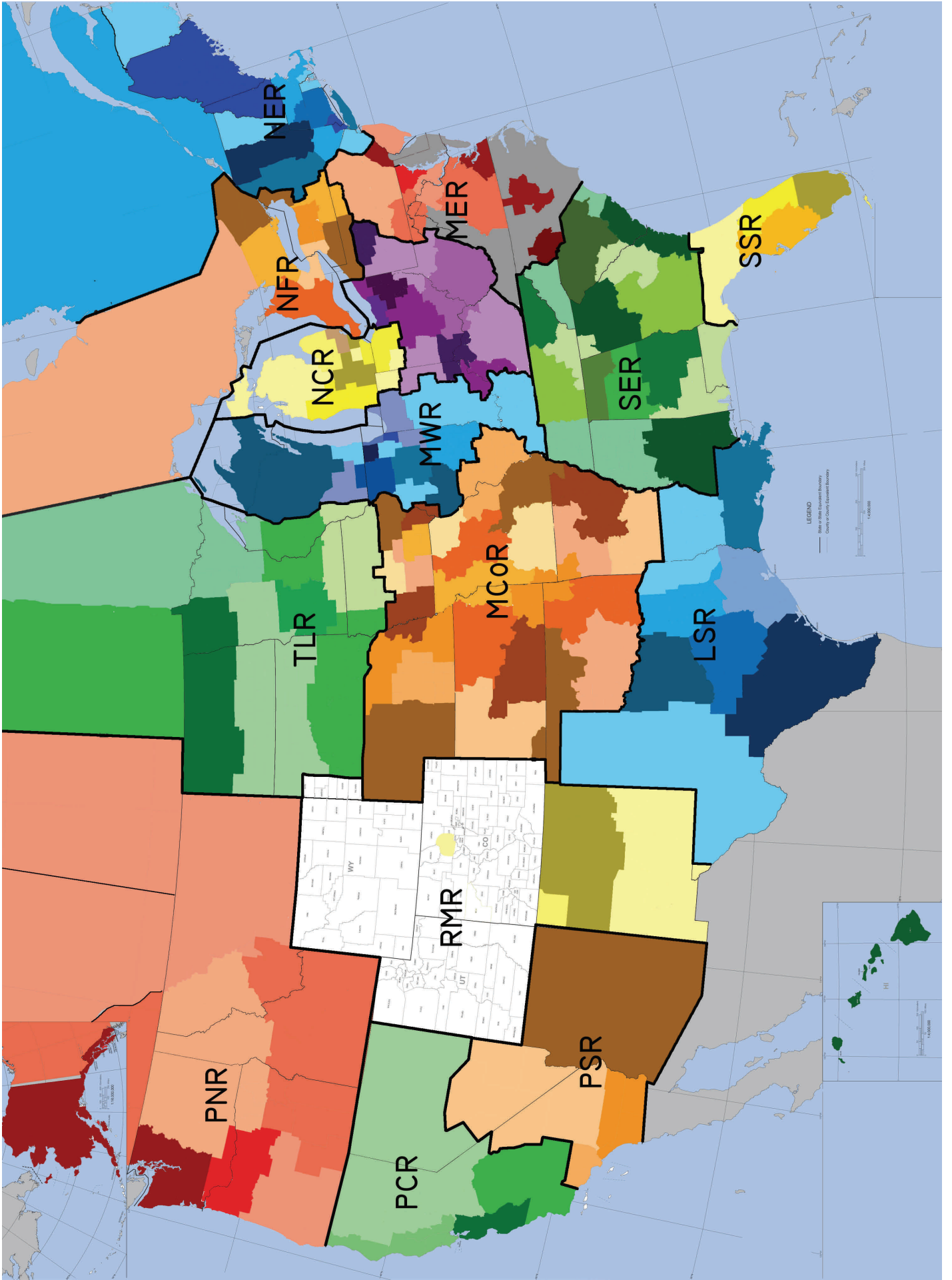
The reason I say Canadian is we are a cross border region. We cover a geographic region that includes all of Ontario and in the state of New York, Erie, Niagara, Jefferson and Oswego counties. We have an annual convention and are currently planning the first NFR Train Show. We are leaning towards making this a showcase of the Hobby by holding clinics and having the local manufacturers present their products and how to build them effectively. This is our first year at it so we will have to see how it goes.

One of the things we do in the region is a demonstration booth called Modelers Corner. The amount of space depends on the local show we are at so we could have anywhere from 4 to 16 modelers

sitting at the table working on whatever they feel like. Whether it is a wood structure kit, painting figures, building trees and just about anything they want. We answer question give advice and basically share. We also display the NMRA colors and pick up a few members from Show to show.

It's a lot of fun and a great way to meet people. You sometimes get great advice from some of the passersby. What a great way to meet people. One of the best things I've done is get involved with this demonstration. Just working the corner and talking to the other members really helps. At any given show you can get an answer on almost any subject. We were at Trainfest in Milwaukee last November and can't wait to go back this year. Hats off to the WISE Division and the people of Wisconsin. What a weekend.

Sorry I get carried away I will save some for another time.



# Mid-Eastern Region

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**Organization:** The Mid-Eastern Region (MER) of the NMRA was founded in 1935 and covers all or part of PA, NJ, DE, MD, WV, VA, DC, and NC. It is incorporated as a Maryland corporation, and is divided into 14 Divisions, of which 10 are presently in an active status. Total membership is approximately 2100 members.

The elected Board of Directors consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and three Directors, all of whom serve two-year terms with a limit of two such terms except for the Treasurer who can serve a maximum of five terms. The first four officers are elected in even-numbered years, and the three Directors in odd-numbered years, to provide for a degree of continuity of operations and “corporate memory.”

The Board of Directors meets at least twice each year, and conducts some business between the physical meetings by the use of e-mail to approve or disapprove actions that cannot be held in abeyance until the next formal meeting. Electronic communication has proven invaluable in the operation of the MER Board.

Each Director has specified areas of oversight (e.g., publications, budget, contests, elections, etc.) but these functional areas are typically administered by committees for their day-to-day operations.

A Business Manager maintains membership and subscriber records, provides contact with NMRA

headquarters, issues welcome letters to new members, follows up with lapsed members, and performs other significant program functions.

There is an Executive Handbook, the key elements of which include the **bylaws** (changes to which must be approved by vote of the membership), **policies** (the procedural structure for operations), **position descriptions** for functional areas, the **Division Superintendent’s Handbook**, and the **Convention Handbook** (which provides procedural information relating to planning and carrying out a Regional convention).

Candidates for elected office must provide a statement and photograph which is mailed to all members as part of the ballot, which will also provide for any proposed changes to the bylaws. Direct mailing of the ballot, while imposing additional costs, has considerably increased the percentage of members voting each year over the previous practice of printing the ballot in the MER LOCAL.

Divisions are required to have at least four officers but may have more as deemed appropriate for the specific situation. Although the MER provides general guidance for Division operations, they function with a high degree of independence in planning their activities, priorities, timetables, and budgets.

**Publication:** The official publication of the MER is the LOCAL, which is issued 6 times each calendar

year. It is available in printed form to subscribers, and is also available electronically at the MER website. Since there are no longer regional memberships and dues, a subscription fee is charged for the printed version to cover its printing and mailing costs. Presently the subscription fee is \$6, which approximately covers costs. The LOCAL consists of MER business matters, a calendar of upcoming events, club and Division news, and member articles on a wide variety of modeling and occasional prototype subjects.

**Conventions:** For many years, the MER held a Spring and a Fall convention each year. Unfortunately, it became more difficult to obtain host groups so we have gone to holding only a Fall convention during the past few years. Also, in a year in which the NMRA National Convention is held within MER boundaries, no convention is held in order not to compete with the larger activity.

Our convention generally begins on Thursday evening with clinics and a Board meeting, then continues on Friday and Saturday with layout tours, clinics, prototype tours, in-hotel activities (contests, white elephant sales, company store, modular displays), and generally a Saturday evening banquet followed by a live auction. The annual business meeting and perhaps clinics are held on Sunday morning, with layout tours during the afternoon “going home” time.

On average, there are 20-25 clinics and 20-30 layouts available during each convention. Some clinics are hands-on “make and take” ones in which registrants are able to build a structure during the clinic time (two or three

hours) and then take it with them. These have proven to be very popular and require advance registration. One relatively recent but very popular activity has been the Operations Call Board, in which one or more layouts that feature organized operation are open to a few individuals who wish to try their hand at running under timetable/train order, car card, fast clock, scheduled trains, and so forth.

Layout tours typically are set up to provide for individuals to drive themselves, with maps and driving directions provided as part of the registration packets. This enables attendees to visit those pikes which they really want to see, and to spend as much time as they wish, rather than be on a tour bus schedule.

While the MER territory is not as large as some other regions, it is still a significant drive for individuals who live in the perimeter areas when a convention is held at the opposite perimeter. Consequently, we have started to organize conventions on something of a geographic rotation, North to Central to South in order to balance the amount of travel any one part of the membership has to do in order to attend. North, South, and Central are somewhat relative terms, since there are at least three Divisions in each of these general areas, meaning that the same location is not always used nor does the same group have to do a convention each time.

Due to difficulties in sometimes getting a Division to sponsor a convention, MER has to a degree centralized some of the functions. We have a MER Convention Chair who

takes care of negotiating with one or more hotels in the specified area, a Registrar who performs the receipt of forms and payment, an Auction chair who oversees the White Elephant and live auction activities, and a Contest Chair who ensures that a room, judges, certificates, and supplies are available.

While there is still considerable work and personnel required of a sponsoring Division, having this centralized staff plus the convention handbook eliminates some of the workload and provides for smooth convention operations. The convention attendance ranges from about 140 to over 200.

**Financial Management:** The MER is now and has been for some time in sound financial condition due to conservative and prudent financial practices. We received our 501(c)(3) status in 1985, and have been fortunate to receive various cash donations as well as donations of model railroad material from the estates of deceased MER members. These have been sold at conventions and at train shows, with the proceeds going into a donation fund for special projects. The conventions typically result in an amount of revenue that is divided equally between the region and the sponsoring division, such revenue coming from more registrants than expected, white elephant and company store merchandise sales, live auction fees (10% of the selling price), and door prize ticket sales.

Many years ago, Region life memberships were sold on a straight dollar basis rather than an actuarial one. This resulted in many members long since having more than received a full return on their investment.

Through financial success with certain projects, the MER was able to set aside in a Certificate of Deposit sufficient funds to cover future costs associated with life membership (primarily the LOCAL). We deal with a small, flexible, but financially sound local bank for all of our operations, one that pays competitive rates and charges minimal fees.

To ensure financial integrity, a review is performed at least every two years or upon change in the office of Treasurer. While not a true professional audit, this review confirms invoices for all expenditures and reconciles bank statements.

Since there are no longer regional membership dues, NMRA provides twice-yearly payments to all regions. These are shared 50/50 with the active Divisions to partially offset their costs of operation. Each Division determines its own subscription fees for any local newsletters, and carries out necessary fundraising locally for its activities. The Divisions provide each year to the Vice President a summary of their financial health, accomplishments, and future plans to enable the MER board to be aware of any problems.

**Activities and Outreach:** As noted above, the annual convention and the LOCAL are the primary communication tools of the MER. We have had five special car projects over the past 15 years or so. One criterion for choosing a freight car project is that the car was either owned by a railroad within the MER territory, or could be documented as having operated within this territory. The car projects have been somewhat difficult in that so many



cars already have been made by manufacturers or historical societies, prototype car bodies are not made, or good photographs are not available. The most successful projects in terms of rapid sales have been transition-era cars; the less successful ones were a mid-60s and an N scale car.

In an attempt to reach out to potential members, the NMRA developed the RailPass program a few years ago. The MER Board voted in 2007 to pay for such memberships up to a budgeted amount. The Divisions must do the recruiting, but the MER pays for the actual membership. As of the last Business Manager's report, 37% of the sponsored RailPass members have converted to full NMRA membership, which we have concluded was a sign of success and hence worth continuing our support through our Region budget.

The MER board recognizes that most outreach and contact takes place at the Division level, since this is much more of a local and accessible level of activity. Most of the Divisions hold monthly or at least quarterly meetings or home layout tours, and many hold one or more mini-conventions during the year. Some of them hold substantial-sized train shows each year, have tables at large train shows to make the public aware of their existence, and have produced car projects for members and non-members as part of their benefit and fundraising programs.

### **Contests and Achievement**

**Program:** Each Division has at least one AP coordinator and the amount activity ranges from relatively inactive to very active. AP awards are announced in the LOCAL, and several

articles have appeared with modeling tips and techniques. At the conventions, there are generally a significant number of AP awards achieved in the judged categories. Total contest entries average 25 or more. In addition to the AP awards, we have several other award categories sponsored by Divisions or groups of individuals, including New Modeler Award, Pride of Dixie Award, Blue Lantern Award, Maryland and Pennsylvania Modeling Award, and a Narrow Gauge Modeling Award, in addition to the President's Choice Award. The Photo Contest varies considerably among conventions in terms of entries, and the Arts and Crafts Contest has decreased greatly in recent years. We are exploring broadening the popular vote aspect at our conventions, to mirror what the National contests have done recently.

**Future:** As is true of probably all parts of the NMRA, the MER is faced with the demographic problem of an aging membership base. While the overall number of members has not declined precipitously, the number of convention attendees has decreased from an average of perhaps 250 two decades ago to somewhere around 180 today. Obviously, the region is a captive of the decline in national membership, but we continue to offer as much as possible to existing members in hope that non-members will see the benefits of joining the NMRA. Some of the Divisions have active Boy Scout programs to encourage the involvement of youth in model railroading, and the RailPass program mentioned earlier may serve as a tool to introduce both the hobby and NMRA to a younger audience.



By Nobby Clark

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## **Description**

**Membership** of BR at the moment is around 650 with a high water mark near 800 a few years ago. A high number of new members join each year but at the same time nearly the same number leave. This is no good to anyone. We have always had an annual turnover near 10% but this high turnover has really come about in the last few years.

**New members**, on joining the NMRA and taking BR services, get two old copies of the house magazine, a letter from the President, a list of all groups within BR and their contact numbers/emails. They also get the NMRA standards on a disc, plus we are thinking of giving them a NMRA gauge in whatever scale they model. There are then (not always) contacted by the group nearest them to invite them along to a group meeting. They also get free entry in to the first two region meets they attend. So a nice package. The trouble is **if** they do not rejoin for a second year we lose money on them!

**Divisions:** BR is split into 13 geographical Divisions covering the whole of the British Isles. Within these Div areas we have 22 groups varying in sizes from ten members up to the mid fifty with a majority of BR members not belonging to any one group. This could be down to distance to travel, or just not wishing to take part in a group.

**Groups** have at least a two man executive body all of whom must be NMRA members. Each group must hold an annual general meeting. The group system is one of the BR biggest success stories. But it has its drawbacks because they have become virtually independent of the Board of Directors. Several feel quite detached with little or no input from above. Of course this all depends on the composition of the BOD of the time and does depend on the way the BOD comes across. Some BODs have had great success in fostering a “we all belong” This is a fine line between telling groups what to do (does not work) or suggesting what to do and working together (works well I know).

## **Web sites**

We have two web sites the main one for anyone to visit and possibly join. Since we introduced PayPal we have seen a rise in members joining and now most new members come via web site. The site has general news of the region and what we do etc. [www.nmrabr.org](http://www.nmrabr.org)

**The chat group** is for members only (any NMRA member can join as long as he can prove he is a member) I set the group up to chat about anything modelling wise and NMRA matters that come up. About a third of BR members use the [www.groups.yahoo/groups/nmrabr](http://www.groups.yahoo/groups/nmrabr)

## ***Region meets***

We hold Two Regional meets a year, fall and spring plus the Convention which is always held in October. (Four regional meets a year did not work because of the lack of numbers.) Additionally, we have several themed meets each year put on by different groups.

**Region meet:** About 18 to 24 months before the date the “meets” officer asks one of the active groups to hold a regional meet. When they agree, he sends the group a “how to put on a region meet” booklet (This is already up on the groups site) It is down to the organising group to select the hall to use along with the trade plus a selection of layouts clinic etc. The meets officer is responsible for advertising the event in all possible formats i.e. internet, club magazines etc. We do allow the general public to attend as this pushes up revenue and gets new members but they pay a 50% high price then members do. Any profits made at this meet are split 50/50 with the region. The region pays the insurance.

**Themed meet:** A subject is picked i.e. Santa-Fe, then layouts are picked that have a western road theme and clinics recruited on the themed subject. These have proved very popular and are becoming more adventurous, and attract a good numbers. Other than the theme the meet follows closely along the lines of a region meet with a 50/50 split in profits.

**Convention:** at the moment bids are for conventions out about two years. For example, we have a bid for the 2010 + 2011 already. In the last few years we

have stayed with one specific hotel in central England every even year. On the odd years, depending where the bid comes from, the convention moves around the Country. This works well though the odd years see a down turn in attendance as big as 40%. We still do not know why this is!

Again the organising group get a 50/50 share of any profits with the region paying the insurance. The convention format is very much like a region one in the USA held over three days, with traders on site plus a large selection of layouts Z to G competitions, RPM room, Bring + buy tables (these bring in a good return as some times as much as \$ 900. As we charge members \$8.00 per 4 ft so a 2ft x 12ft table will bring in \$24.00). Clinics are held all weekend. The raffle is very popular and brings in good amount of funds but we have had problems getting prizes from the USA manufactures lately due to the down turn in the economy.

Friday is mainly for members who have booked into the convention hotel. Sat is for day visitors including the public who get a discount on the door cost if they join at the convention. We hold the banquet on the Sat evening. Sun is a more relaxed time with people spending on last minute items plus attending clinics in the morning. As the convention normal starts to wide down just after lunch.

**Convention Non-rail:** We stopped running tours for non-rail as the buses ran nearly empty and costing the convention money. Member’s wives seem to prefer to self drive to shopping and local attractions. We do arrange events for them within the convention hotel if

they so wish.

**Annual Public show:** This started three years ago when, as President, I suggested we needed a show case for the region for the public to attend. I was very pleased when a group came forward to not only run it but to organise it. This show is very popular attracting good numbers and making the region a fair profit. We use member's layouts and ask members to put on clinics.

Traders are charged per foot for their stands space (normally \$ 10 per ft) so a trade stand of 18ft will cost \$180. These charges normally also cover the cost of any expenses of the layouts and a little towards the hall hire. We hold a raffle the same as we do at the convention and it too brings in a good return. The region again pays the insurance but gets a bigger slice of the profits for this event. So far all three shows that have been put on have been good fund-raisers for BR.

**Library:** the region has a large library from which all members can borrow books, DVDs, and magazines at no cost. They only pay any postage.

**House magazine:** Our house magazine is called "Roundhouse" is produced bi monthly and is in colour. This is the main benefit to BR membership and by far the biggest cost. We put all voting and renewal notices in this magazine. What with the web sites and Roundhouse we try to keep the BR membership well informed.

**Main Fund raising:** As you can see from the above our main way of raising funds for the Region is to split profits made at any of the sanctioned meets and share in profits from the

convention. We have a very small working surplus from the charge we make for BR services but this is very dependent on the dollar/pound values because when the dollar was 1.32 we were losing money big time. Our break even figure is more like 1.55. The low dollar has forced the BOD to put up the cost of BR services by £2.00 per member per year. So a BR member taking NMRA membership + BR services pays £23.00 (\$37.00) but if you add Scale rails to that you have to add an extra \$53.00 on top.

**Groups within BR:** as I have said this is one of BR's success stories with several new groups forming in the last four years. Each group is reasonably for its own accounting i.e. hire of meeting place, collecting funds so that hall hire can be paid. Most meet once a month and the membership of these groups' varies from just 10 members to the larger groups who have 50 plus. Some have their own web sites, newsletters even yahoo groups to keep in touch. All NMRA are welcome. I visit three each month.

**Example A:** The Black Diamonds' meet once a month and have two groups within itself, HO and N. The N gauge group is the more progressive of the two, building large number of modules which they take around public shows around the country. Due to the fact the BD group has run three conventions out of the last five years and had a 50% in the share of the profits, it has a healthy bank balance.

I have heard moans of why them again but if no other groups come forward to run a convention what do you do. Have no convention? This also applies for meets as it's normally the

same set of groups that come forward even though I try to bully others it always comes back to the same groups. Membership of a group of course is open to any NMRA member, who can go along to any group they want.

These groups are the back bone of the region and are the ones who get called on to arrange themed meets and region meets. They also supply layouts for the convention that are near them so keeping cost down for gas etc. We are now seeing interlinking between groups who have N gauge modules with a special show being arranged by me this year. This was a modular special attracting more than the normal number of members and made a nice profit.

The problems with some groups come when non-members are allowed to attend and are not asked to join the NMRA. We have a policy that after three visits they should be turned away. Even though these non-members get charged 50% more per visits, their influence on some groups is worrying at times.

**Example B:** my group, the Nene Valley Railroaders, started just over a year ago and has 10 regular members. We are building a HO modular layout. None of us live to near each other so we can't just pop around to play trains. I started a yahoo group for the NVRRR so that we can keep in touch. We meet once a month, but have very little funds. We can apply for a grant from the BOD to help build our layout but the rules to hard to comply to, so we have not even tried. We are going to hold an open house to attract new members and to raise funds. We are also looking at holding a regional meet so we can boost our bank balance somewhat. As a new

group we are very aware of how important it is to build a layout as quickly as possible. Just sitting around talking about it drives people off. I know this is a catch 22 situation because with fewer members it becomes hard on the few pockets to pay out for everything that goes into making a new layout modular or not.

Communication is the key to any good region/group. They must do what they say and be seen to be doing so! The members have a part to play. Paying a membership fee does not entitle them to be given everything they want or expect it is too easy to sit back and moan. Any region is only as good as its members. Members must be willing to offer help no matter how small, write that article, give a demo, or stand in the car park for an hour directing traffic so your fellow member can safely enjoy themselves.



# HOW THE PCR IS ORGANIZED

By Pat LaTorres

This is a brief overview of the organization of the Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA and reasons why we feel it is the best way (for us) to set things up. While we feel that these ideas work best for us, keep in mind that what works for us may not work for all regions and/or divisions.

Basic organization: We are a regional section of the NMRA. Actually we were the first region formed. Within the Region there are five Divisions: Redwood Empire, Sierra, Coast, Daylight, and Hawaiian. The geographic layout was originally all of California, Nevada and Arizona, but with the membership growth during the 1960s the region split into two units. The PCR consists of the northern halves of California and Nevada, while the rest is the Pacific Southwest Region (PSR).

The PCR is now laid out:

**Redwood Empire Division (RED);**

North of the Golden Gate Bridge, including Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties.

**Sierra Division**, in North Eastern California and Northern Nevada; Amador, Alpine, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo and Yuba counties in California and all of Nevada except Clark, Esmeralda,

Lincoln and Nye Counties.

**Coast Division** covers the area between San Francisco Bay and Monterey Bay, including; Alameda, Contra Costa, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties.

**Daylight Division** covers the southern central valley of California down to Tehachapi and Bakersfield, across to Santa Barbara and the central California coastal areas, including; Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Tulare, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.

**Hawaiian Division** covers the state of Hawaii.

For those of you not familiar with West Coast geography that means that the Coast Division consists of the major metropolitan area of the San Francisco Bay Area and then south to Monterey Bay and the other three mainland divisions pretty much split up the rest of Northern California and Nevada into basic geographic areas. Each of the divisions covers an area that not only is geographically a unit but also tends to be similar sociologically as well. While each of the divisions covers a rather large geographic area, population wise the RED, Sierra and Daylight Divisions are pretty close in size.

The Coast Division is primarily an urban social area. The RED covers the north coast of the state and is a bit more

rural, though it does still have the two larger urban areas of Marin County and the Santa Rosa/Sonoma area. Both the Daylight and Sierra Divisions have a more rural/agricultural base, though they are quite different in their demographics. The Sierra Division is based around the Sacramento urban area (which has expanded substantially over the past ten to fifteen years) and the Reno/Sparks/Carson City areas in Nevada, all of which are business and light industry based. The Daylight Division has many members in the Fresno and Bakersfield areas which are agriculturally based and another grouping between San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara which have a more urban base (both having major colleges). Unfortunately the Hawaiian Division is spread between the islands of the state of Hawaii, which makes travel between the various parts of the division problematic at best.

There is a lot of intermixing between the mainland divisions. Since the major urban areas of each division are only two to three hours apart, one can drive with relative ease between divisions to attend various divisional meets. Driving from the southern end of the Daylight Division up to the Reno area, or the north end of the RED can be a bit of a run, but inside a division or to a neighboring division is not too unreasonable.

Along the same lines, we make the effort to spread the load of our regional conventions between the regions, so that the regions with smaller memberships don't get too much of a load. The Coast Division, which has the largest membership (due to centralized urban

nature of the division), gets the convention every other year (usually the odd numbered years) and then it rotates between the rest of the mainland divisions in the even numbered years.

On the political side of things the Region Board of Directors consists of seven elected positions – President, Vice President and an elected Director from each division, as well as a Secretary and Treasurer appointed by the President. We also have a number of volunteer administrative positions that work for the region through the BOD (see the full listing at our region website - [www.pcrnmra.org](http://www.pcrnmra.org) ). This web site also has a link to the Regional Manual of Operations, which gives a better look at the region's administrative operations practices. Unlike the regional By-laws, this document allows the region make procedural changes without the drawn out process required by a change to the By-laws.

Each of the Divisions has a Board of Operations which consists of three elected positions – Superintendent, Paymaster (treasurer) and Chief Clerk (Secretary). Again, the Divisions have a number of volunteer admin positions to help their boards with running the divisions. As seems to be the case across the NMRA, we often see members wearing multiple hats on either the regional or divisional level to help cover the load.

There are a few things which have really helped us work as a cohesive unit on both the regional and divisional level. First off, the divisions are all set up pretty much the same to provide consistency between the various units, and they also tend to mirror the

organization of the region. All of our divisions are represented on the Regional BoD. This is important in that every member has a fairly direct line of sight to their representative at the region level as well as within their division. We've managed to keep the number of divisions at a workable level, which allows all of the members to be heard while keeping the Region BoD small enough to work efficiently. While I won't pretend that everyone on our region board (much less within the region) sees eye-to-eye on every item the board has to deal with -- and the same on the divisional level, but we all feel that the health of the region is of vital importance for what we're trying to achieve for and through the NMRA. There is also a strong common feeling on both levels that the organization needs to be built from the foundation up to be effective and so the region's primary focus is to help the divisions -- which when they become stronger will help the region in its growth.

Dealing with region and division activities, I'll start at what I see as the top of the food chain and work downward. The primary activity each year is the Regional Convention, which moves around from division to division as was mentioned before and usually runs over three and two half days -- that starts with clinics Wednesday afternoon/evening through an awards banquet on Saturday night and a general membership meeting on Sunday morning. Over the past few years we've run between 150 and 250 attendees, with the larger turnouts being in the Coast Division with its greater population density.

We try to make this event a "mini-national" convention. That is, we often have guest presenters from outside the region giving clinics and many of our local presenters have given clinics at nationals over the years. We feel that it is important to have quality clinics, which will make folks WANT to attend our event. We generally try to add special events -- train rides of some sort, speeder rides, LDSIG and OPSIG activities, layout tours, a full gamut of contests (model, photo and crafts, as well as show and tell), etc. -- to raise the level of return on our member's investment in the convention and we try to keep the cost below \$100.00 -- especially in today's economy (and for the past three years the awards banquet has been included at no additional charge for full convention attendees). Two things that we're looking at over the next few years are a mini-convention (basically a Friday evening, Saturday, Sunday morning meet) in 2011, when the NMRA National Convention will be in our region at Sacramento -- and possibly a joint meet with either of our neighbors to the north or south. Right now the focus is on a joint meet with the PNR, somewhere just north of the California/Oregon border. We'll have to wait and see if these ideas work, but we know that they won't if we don't try them.

Moving down from the regional level, each of the divisions has at least one meet/activity each quarter. Over the past two years we've initiated a program within the region to try and reduce or prevent date conflicts for these division meets, which will make it easier for members from one division to attend meets in other divisions. This program has shown positive results in that more



members are making the effort to visit and share with their neighbors. In addition to these regularly scheduled division meets, some of the divisions get involved with the various model railroad shows in their areas. In most cases this is something as simple as having a recruiting table with a display showing local NMRA activities as well as a portable layout of some sort (often a replication of John Allen's "Timesaver") for folks to try running.

The Sierra Division is actually a co-producer (with three other groups) of a major train show in Roseville, CA. This show is their big fund raiser, which allows them to cover the cost of other divisional events over the rest of the year. In another case, the Coast Division has an auction as a regular part of each of their quarterly meets. These auctions run anywhere from 350 to over 600 items being sold by the members (any NMRA member may participate), and the division gets 10% of all sales. Quite often division members will use the auction to help survivors liquidate estates, which may add another hundred or more items to the regular auction. In addition to the auction, there are usually at least two clinics given at each Coast Division meet.

These are just a few examples of activities by both the region and its divisions.



# Pacific Coast Region History

By Lisa Gorrell

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*(Lisa prepared this for the Fiftieth Anniversary convention of the PCR. Sections were related to the events in the program, i. e. a section on the history of clinics to go with the list of clinics for that convention or a history of "Railroad Widows/Raillettes/Non-Rails" to go with the Non-Rail section. For this article remember that history ends in 1994)*

## Forties and Fifties

In the early 1940s, the Rocky Mountains presented a significant barrier to attending National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) events in the East. This problem led to the idea of a region in the West, and ultimately resulted in the formation of the Pacific Coast Region (PCR). After five meetings, beginning in January 17, 1943 and ending on July 2, 1944 at the Channel Model Railroad Club in Santa Barbara, the organization of PCR was completed. The Charter, granted by the NMRA, was presented by Frank C. "Andy" Anderson. The prepared Constitution and By-Laws were read and accepted. Over 70 members in O, OO, and HO attended and 10 clubs were represented. The new Pacific Coast Region consisted of the western states of Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, and Arizona.

The first Annual Meeting was in Hawthorne, with 90 members and 12 clubs represented. After the meeting, members gathered at the Continella Valley Railroad and ran trains on their point-to-point layout and watched color

movies of new streamlined trains.

These first annual meetings were held at club layouts and lasted one to two days. Often, the activities consisted of a business meeting and operation on the club's layout. By 1949, the agenda more closely followed present-day conventions, with special events for the women, clinics, and contests.

Two important events happened in the first seven years of the history of PCR. In 1948, the Northwest Region was formed, consisting of the states of Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, Washington and the province of British Columbia. In 1951, as a result of much debate about the difficulty of attending meetings because of the large size of the region, the membership voted to divide the region into five divisions (San Diego, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Coast, and Fresno). The date of the convention was also changed from December to the spring. (Additional divisions were added later: Arizona in 1955, Redwood Empire in 1961, Cajon in 1973, Silver State in 1975, and Hawaii in 1985.)

In the early days of PCR conventions, it was typical to schedule a meal after the business meeting on Sunday. These early meals were luncheons or buffets served before operations on the host's club layout.

Based on news from the Branch Line, the first full banquet was held in Reno during the 1953 convention. The trophies for contest awards were handed

out during the meal. The guest speaker was Mr. Gilbert Kniess, Assistant to the President of the Western Pacific Railroad. This was quite typical of banquets through the 1950s, with such speakers as Paul D. Robinson of the Southern Pacific, Mr. A.K. Johnson of the Santa Fe, Mr. Clyde Arbuckle, Historian for San Jose, and Mr. William "Wild Bill" Stone of the Southern Pacific. Often, movies or slides were shown of local railroads after the speaker.

Model contests and switching contests began about the same time as PCR conventions. In 1949, models on display were judged and the winners awarded trophies at the luncheon.

The first switching contests were started in 1950. Contestants were required to operate equipment in a prototypical manner, including spotting cars with a switcher, starting a train on a mainline in a realistic manner, observing appropriate speed limits, and interpreting train orders.

By 1954, the PCR was sponsoring these contests. Before that time, the hosts were responsible for deciding the type and rules for the contest. Bob White became the first PCR Contest Chairman; contest rules were printed in the Branch Line. There were two classes: Novice and Master. A modeler became a Master in a category by simply placing in a contest. There were five categories: Locomotives, Freight Cars, Passenger Cars, Maintenance-of-way Equipment, and Structures; and two major divisions: "A" or large scale (1/4" and higher), and "B" or small scale (3/16" and smaller). Judging was done on a point system. Each year, the list of Masters was printed and the list grew. The rules to

the model contest grew as well, with additions to categories and elimination of the "A" and "B" divisions.

The Model Performance Contest made its first showing in 1956. This was to test operating efficiency as measured by the ability of the mechanism to translate engine weight into drawbar pull and the ability of the locomotive to function smoothly at low speeds without sacrificing top speed.

A new switching contest arrived in 1957. The new contest involved a two-person operation and each team got one of six problems to solve in the least possible moves and in the shortest time.

The idea of clinics began in 1949 at the Annual Meeting held in San Jose. These were clinics or forums run by such experts in their field as Richard Houghton (Scenery), Walter Brown (Live Steam), Cliff Grandt and John Allen (Narrow Gauge), and William Hoffman (Car Building). In the early days, the clinics were held as discussion groups with question/answer sessions. No other activities were scheduled at the same time.

In March 1948, Mrs. Candy Dancer urged her fellow model "railroad widows" to take an active part in model railroading, including fan trips and visits to club and home layouts. She urged that, "Men enjoy your company on these trips, and the more of these activities you attend, the more interested you become, making for a better hobby and for happier homes."

Faith Rider, a member of the San Diego Model Railroad Club, planned activities for the ladies so that they would have something to do other than

sit and wait while their husbands ran trains. The first convention which included women's programs was the 1949 convention in San Jose, where the ladies went on a tour of Stanford Chapel and the Rosicrucian Museum. From that point on, programs for the women were planned, usually a tour to a local point-of-interest and a luncheon. The Los Angeles convention in 1954 scheduled the ladies to attend the Hollywood broadcast of the Reed Browning Radio Show and, after lunch, be guests on the ABC "Ladies Matinee," a television audience show!

In 1955, the "Railroad Widows" revolted and asked that they be called "Railettes." The Executive Committee was to demand similar action on the part of the NMRA National Board of Trustees.

Today, the Railettes are now known as Non-rails, since some Non-rails are husbands of women model railroaders. The Non-rail programs continue to have interesting clinics, tours, and luncheons, as well as great socializing in the Hospitality Room.

Over the years there have been many interesting tours at conventions. In 1945 at the Los Angeles Convention, a caravan of automobiles went on the "Six Bit Tour" of six home and club layouts.

In 1954, if you arrived at the convention by 7 am on Friday, you were rewarded with a trip on a working freight through the San Fernando Valley! On Saturday, there was a choice of three tours running simultaneously: a trip to local home and club layouts, a tour of local manufacturers, or a trip to prototype facilities.

## Sixties and Seventies

In the 1960s and 1970s, the banquets had "entertainment" such as bands, magicians, and balloons. One time, the banquet was the scene of protests by the Brotherhood of ALP Operators, who picketed PCR President-elect Whit Towers for improvement of working conditions and fringe benefits on Whit's HO pike, the *Alturas and Lone Pine Railroad*.

Besides awarding contest trophies and special service awards, banquets also featured raffle drawings, door prizes, and the fabulous centerpieces often made by the Railettes. In 1971, the Railettes made engineer dolls, and one lucky member at each table won a doll to take home.

By the late 1970s, the attendance at banquets had grown to large numbers. There were 775 in attendance in Sacramento and, the following year, 695 attended the banquet in North Hollywood. As the cost of conventions and banquets increased, banquets became an extra fare item, optional to those who wanted to attend. In the 1980s, the smaller sized PCR allowed for smaller banquets at smaller hotel sites.

At the PCR convention held in Sacramento in 1961, a group of PCR members who had attended the NMRA Silver Anniversary in Chicago had a reunion breakfast. Head HOBOS, the "Biggest Bum," also known in the Branch Line as T. Russ Rod, was Karl Busch (who was also NMRA Bulletin editor at the time). Thus began the tradition of HOBOS.

To become a HOBOS, one only needed

to have attended a NMRA convention located outside their home region. Membership in HOBOS is not limited to PCR members. The purpose of the HOBOS is to recognize attendance at model railroad conventions, especially at national conventions, and to just have fun. The HOBOS are a Regional activity and the "Official Event" is the HOBOS Breakfast at the annual region convention.

Throughout the years, HOBOS membership has grown. In 1963, the HOBOS hosted the PCR Convention in Bakersfield with 50 HOBOS attending the breakfast. Last year, over 100 attended the breakfast held in Reno.

In 1964, the tradition of passing the hat for pennies and dimes was begun by Paul Shimada. Because the HOBOS is not an official function of PCR or NMRA, the funding for ribbons, postage and other costs associated with planning of the breakfasts comes from collection at the breakfasts.

Through the years since the first contests, rules have changed slightly and there have been many special contests sponsored by manufacturers (such as Scale Structures Ltd. in 1970) or clubs (Blacksmith Award by the Santa Clara Valley O Gauge Club). Today, all model contests are sponsored by PCR and provide for five classes and nine categories, plus contests for modules, switching, locomotive performance, and photos.

In 1962, the clinics were called "table top" clinics and were given 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon; the presenters demonstrated their skills during these periods. This

idea grew into "See It Done" clinics in 1963, where more than one presenter was in a room and the conventioneer could roam from group to group as the presenters demonstrated their skills. Topics included such subjects as the "Use of Cardboard", "Locomotive Detailing", "The Use of Code 70 Rail," and "Plaster Casting."

For the Silver Jubilee Convention in 1969, Bill Hoffman demonstrated his scratch building skills by beginning at 9:00 am with a pile of basswood and finishing at 6:00 pm with an O Scale PE Combine!

Demonstrations soon went a step further by encouraging a conventioneer to apply his/her knowledge during a clinic. One such clinic, "Construction of a Transistor Throttle," was presented by Ron Oxenham in 1973. For a prepaid fee of \$25.00, you got the parts needed for the throttle, and by the end of the clinic, you had a finished throttle.

As the years progressed, clinic subjects changed as well. Subjects in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s included "Using Jigs & Forms in Model Building", "How to Choose a Prototype Road to Model", "Model Painting with an Air Brush", "Repowering Locomotives", "Locomotive Sound Systems", "Outdoor G Scale Layouts", and "Advances in Command Control".

For the beginning modeler, there are still introductory clinics on all aspects of the hobby, from layout design and construction, to car and structure building and weathering. Pick some clinics and get ready to juice up your modeling interests!

By this time the Railettes had added

babysitting to their features and, in 1964, there was a special program for the children with a trip to the San Diego Zoo, their own junior movies, and banquet.

At the convention site, the women had a hospitality room where they had coffee klatches and clinics on their own interests such as handwriting analysis, genealogy, and fashion shows. White elephant exchanges were great fun. In 1968, the ladies were urged to bring decorated hats - 28 brought hats with everything from souvenirs of past PCR and NMRA conventions to gadgets used by a nurse.

Prototype tours got bigger and better too. The Union Pacific Diesel Shops, where 85-year old equipment owned by movie studios was being stored, was toured during the Pasadena convention in 1960. The tour also visited the Pacific Fruit Express Shops, where new mechanical reefers were being built, and the Santa Fe Coach Yard to view the hi-level El Capitan cars.

The highlight of the Silver Jubilee convention in Anaheim in 1969 was a tour of the Santa Fe and Disneyland Railroad where the shops were, of course, spotless. The narrow gauge facilities at Knott's Berry Farm were also toured.

Convention hosts have tried to include tours of major prototype facilities in the convention package ever since. Examples included the tour of the Southern Pacific Railroad Locomotive Heavy Repair Shops in Sacramento in 1975 and again in 1981, and the tours of the Southern Pacific Railroad Taylor Yard and Union Pacific Railroad East

Los Angeles Yard during the 1976 North Hollywood Convention.

## **Eighties and Nineties**

People began arguing that the region was too large. These discussions sprang up several times over the years, especially in the 1980s, when the cost of putting on conventions grew tremendously. In 1982, the southern portion of PCR was spun off to form the Pacific Southwest Region, which consists of southern California, southern Nevada, and Arizona.

Because the HOBOS was an entire region activity, there was no way for the north or south to lay claim to the name. Thus, the name HOBOS stayed with both regions, with the Herald remaining the same except for the difference in region designation.

As the prototype railroads have downsized their facilities, the availability for tours has decreased. Transportation costs to the site have increased and often the facility must limit the number who can visit, requiring many present-day tours to be "extra fare." Still, many great memories and photos can be had on prototype and excursion tours.

Today, the Pacific Coast Region is over 1,300 members strong, with the majority of the membership residing in the Coast Division. The region has held successful conventions each year with a multitude of activities that please everyone, including clinics, prototype and layout tours, non-rail activities, exhibits, and contests.



## The Pacific Northwest Region

The Pacific Northwest Region, located in the extreme northwestern corner of the North American continent is the largest land area region in North America. The region includes British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan in Canada and Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana in the US. The total land area is nearly 2 million square miles, greater than twice the total land area of

the US east of the Mississippi River. The Region is comprised of 7 Divisions with two in Canada (primarily) and five in the US. The distances between major population centers in the divisions, as well as the region, are staggering. With Seattle as the starting point, the following are straight line and driving distances within the region

City	Straight Line	Driving
Anchorage, AK	1435	Ship or air only
Juneau, AK	898	Ship or air only
Vancouver, BC	119	145
Edmonton, AB	564	796
Calgary, AB	442	680
Regina, SK	824	1046
Billings, MT	666	818
Missoula, MT	393	476
Boise, ID	405	505
Medford, OR	367	446
Portland, OR	147	173
Aberdeen, WA	74	109
Spokane, WA	229	280

The region is also separated by several mountain ranges which tend to make driving between points in the winter months exciting and uncertain. The region covers three time zones and borders the international date line. This is all made up for by absolutely beautiful country, the bluest skies in America, and the dedication of modelers to join together for common benefit and fellowship.

The major population concentrations in the region are in western Washington and the western British Columbia areas with well over one half of the membership located there. Needless to say divisions 4 and 7 located in that area have the largest membership and are the most active. However, even in those areas, the distances and complications in moving from one place to another limit the ability of divisions to execute the

most aggressive of programs. For example, in western Washington access to areas west of Seattle is normally by cross sound ferry (not inexpensive) or lengthy drive around. Access to Vancouver Island is by ferry only. Simple travel between points in the US and Canada are complicated (and lengthened) by cross border considerations and customs issues which limit what can be carried across the border.

PNR is organized as a not-for-profit corporation under the laws of Oregon and is in compliance with the NMRA regulations. PNR is provided continuing leadership through elected officers and a Board of Directors. The president and vice President are elected for a term of two years. The Secretary, Treasurer, and office Manager are appointed to non-voting positions on the Board. The Director are the seven Division Superintendents. In addition to Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, PNR maintains a Policy Book which provides significant detail on the routine operation of the region. In addition, PNR has published and maintains a Convention Handbook and a Division Superintendent's Guidebook which provide assistance to members performing those duties.

All that being said, PNR is a very active region. Strong emphasis has been placed on viability of divisions and strong programs in each division. The nature of individual division programs are as appropriate for the division. In Division 4 with over 500 members, a total of 13 clinics are operated throughout the fall, winter and spring months. The division also holds several

fund raising events or activities and normally holds a "spring meet" each year. Division 7 has a similarly active schedule. The other divisions, with membership more widely dispersed concentrate on local area club and modular group activities with at least one division "meet" scheduled each year.

The region conducts an annual region convention, normally in the late summer or early fall. The PNR BOD meeting is scheduled to precede the convention. Timing is scheduled to not conflict with the National convention and, to the extent possible, to be able to act on any action items arising from the National BOD meeting. The convention is a three day event (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) and has the normal fare of clinics, layout tours, prototype tours and social events. One specific element in convention scheduling is that the annual meeting of the PNR membership is scheduled during the daytime and without any clinics or tours scheduled against it. Because the primary purpose of the convention is the annual meeting, every effort is being made to make sure as many members as possible can attend. Sponsorship of Region Conventions is currently rotated among divisions with the intent to maintain a normal east-west rotation to compensate for travel distances and to enable more members to attend convention at least every other year.

PNR maintains a basic web site to provide information to members and to members of the public who may be interested in our organization and activities. Most of the divisions also maintain a web site for local area items of interest.



# The Thousand Lakes Region

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Mr. Robert F. Smith, president of the Twin City Model Railroad Association (TCMRA) in 1949, was informed at the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Convention in Denver of the issuance of the charter of the Thousand Lakes Region of the NMRA (TLR). The TLR received the charter January 1, 1950.

The formation of the TLR began prior to receiving the charter. An organizational meeting was held October 30, 1949, at the Minneapolis Union Terminal club rooms located in the Great Northern Depot. On November 16, 1949, the constitution of the TLR was written and adopted by the Board of Directors (BOD). The preamble of the constitution states the constitution is authorized and drawn up to promote the greater fellowship among Model Railroaders and to advance the hobby of Model Railroading.

The original officers of the TLR were: Robert F. Smith 1949, 1950, Harris R. Baiter, Secretary 1949, 1950 Directors: Robert Parker, Kenneth J. Nasty, and Robert Weigand

Articles of Incorporation of the Thousand Lakes Region of NMRA, Inc. were signed on January 25, 1969. The purpose of the corporation is to engage in educational, recreational and social activities in connection with, and in furtherance of, the hobby of model railroading.

The TLR is one of the largest geographical regions of the NMRA. The boundaries of the Thousand Lakes Region: Including all Counties in Iowa north of and including Buchanan, Blackhawk, Calhoun, Delaware, Dubuque, Grundy, Hamilton, Hardin, Ida, Sac, Webster and Woodbury Counties; Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota; all Counties in Wisconsin west of and including Ashland, Clark, Crawford, Grant, Jackson, Monroe, Price, Taylor and Vernon Counties; and Manitoba, all communities in Ontario west of and including the Port Arthur-Fort William area and Northwest Territories east of 102 degrees West Longitude in Canada.

Any person joining the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) becomes a member of the Thousand Lakes Region of the NMRA, Inc... Our original membership in 1949 is not known. We do know that from that date the interest in the TLR grew. In February 1952 the NMRA TLR membership per the NMRA Bulletin was 236. In 1955 NMRA TLR membership was 295. The largest TLR membership was achieved in the mid 1980's when membership soared to 750 plus. As of the last 2008 membership report, membership is 468.

The TLR stays in touch with the membership with The Fusee, the official Region publication. Our quarterly published Fusee contains modeling and

prototype articles and regular columns informing the membership of Regional activities. The first Fusee, Volume 0, Number 0, with Allan Haze as editor, was published in November 1952.

The September 1965 Fusee reported the Board of Directors authorized Arden Smith of the Big Sioux Model Railroad Club of Sioux City, IA to design a herald for the Thousand Lakes Region. The TLR logo approved at the Board of Directors meeting held at Ft Dodge, IA in May, 1966 has not changed since. The design features a yellow locomotive driver wheel with large bright red TLR letters superimposed on a black background, edged in yellow lettering and lines.

To increase the effectiveness of the TLR, the BOD gave approval in May 1980 to Winnipeg, Minneapolis-St. Paul (Twin Cities), and North Dakota to form divisions. The No. 1 Northern, Twin Cities, and North Dakota were followed by the LaCrosse - Three Rivers, Minnesota River Valley, Prairie Lakes, Bluffs and Rivers, Kashabowie, Dakota Southeastern, and the Red River. The TLR Divisions are the primary contact for the membership. During the spring of each year, the annual TLR convention is held in a different location within the Region. The location is chosen via a bidding process. In the early years, two conventions, then known as the spring and fall rallies, were held. After Divisions were formed, Division conventions replaced the fall TLR Rally held each year. Annual conventions provide rail and non rail programs for attending members.

The non rail program was approved at the October 1964 Minneapolis Fall

rally. Iris Downs of Sioux City, IA filled the first non rail chair position. At the annual convention the TLR takes time to honor members who have made contributions to the TLR. Current awards used to recognize such contributions are the R.J. (Bob) Dew Sr. Memorial Service Award, President's Award, and Old Goat Award. A model and photo contest is held at each convention. Contest awards are presented by the TLR to the winning entries.

In addition to TLR annual conventions, the TLR hosted the national convention in St. Paul, MN in August 1956 under the slogan "Back to the Sticks in 1956". The activities included a railfan tour to see the facilities of the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroads and another trip to Duluth-Superior to see ore facilities. In 1969 the national convention was held in Minneapolis under the slogan "Lakes and Pines in '69". The highlight of the convention was the fan trip on the Great Northern to the Allouez ore docks in Superior, MN.

Again the national convention was hosted in 1983 in Winnipeg, Canada under the slogan "Railway Jamboree". A fourth national convention, NorthStar '99, was held in St. Paul, MN in July 1999. Profits from "Railway Jamboree" and "NorthStar '99 purchased investments which are still a source of income for the TLR general fund today. The TLR Region has a proud past and a bright future due to contributions and support of all the membership. We must never forget that without the membership there is no need for the Thousand Lakes Region to exist.

# Regional Structures

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One of the difficulties in creating any sort of “One Size Fits All” program for the regions is that the regions are organized so differently. Starting with the most basic “who is in charge” question, there are many models. All seem to have a President and a Board of Directors (BOD) but beyond that there is no consistency and no agreement on which best represents the needs of the members

## Lone Star Region

In the Lone Star Region (LSR) the Directors of each Division (they use the term "Director" instead of "Superintendent") are also voting members Board of Directors. They are elected by the members of a Division, and serve for two-year terms. Three years of service qualifies for Association Official in the AP scheme.

The LSR Constitution and By-Laws only require a Director in a division. Some LSR Divisions have a VP and/or other officers, but much of that is a carryover from when Divisions were considered separate entities from the Region, and non-NMRA members could "join the Division".

The Board of Directors in the LSR consists of:

- LSR President (elected - term limit of two terms)
- LSR Vice-President (elected)
- LSR Secretary (elected)

- LSR Treasurer (elected)

(Sometimes a glutton-for-punishment will volunteer to do the jobs of Secretary and Treasurer. In which case, his/her title is "Secretary-Treasurer"; however, the Secretary-Treasurer has only one vote on the BOD, not two).

- LSR Immediate Past President (who sits as a member of the BOD until the LSR President finishes his last term. In this capacity, the Immediate Past President serves as "Board Advisor")

- Three Directors-at-Large, elected by all members of the LSR.

- Eight Division Directors, one elected from each of the 8 LSR divisions by the members of their division. The Division Director and the Division Superintendent are one in the same person.

Total members of the LSR BOD: 16  
(or 15 if Secretary-Treasurer)

## Rocky Mountain Region

The RMR has voting Superintendents, they are not part of the executive board, (6 BOD, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice and Pres). But they can run for BOD and become both.

## **Niagara Frontier Region**

NFR does have the division Superintendents as voting members of the Region Board. In the NFR there is also the "Executive" which consists of elected members who make certain decisions beyond what the Board does.

As Superintendent of the Lakeshores Division, I vote on the Region Board.

## **Pacific Northwest Region**

PNR has the elected Division Superintendents as the majority of the Region BOD. They have five Divisions representing about 1600 members. The Divisions are the creation of the Region and, to the extent that region policies exist, the Superintendents are the ones who are responsible to carry out those policies. They also are the ones who are directly impacted by region level decisions about dispersal of the NMRA member rebate, location of Region conventions, head tax on region events, and general region policies. Since they have the responsibility to make things work, it seems appropriate to us to also let them have a direct say in what they are tasked to do. While the separate Division Director will certainly work, our approach allows the guy (or lady) holding the bag to be the primary participant in the decision making process.

As an aside, we have successfully conducted BOD meetings on line to deal with specific issues. We use email with

reply to all as the primary vehicle. The President gets to be the moderator and is responsible to keep things on track. It takes a bit of coordination but works acceptably for us. The alternate is trying to bring all of us together in one place, involving about 350 miles one way for each BOD member. Time and cost make that a real downer.

## **SunShine Region**

The SSR has four Division Superintendents, all of whom are voting members of the Region BOD. They, the four officers and the Past President constitute the Directors.

## **South Eastern Region**

The SouthErneR, the SER's Region newsletter show the usual four officers, four separate Directors elected by the membership, and an Executive Advisor who was a past president. The Division officials are listed separately.

## **Pacific Coast Region**

In PCR, the Division Superintendents lead the division, and the Division Directors, a totally separate group, represent the Divisions at the Regional level. Thus there are elected Division Superintendents, and separately elected Division Directors. The Division Superintendents (along with the Chief Clerks and Paymasters) are elected at the same time as the Region President and Vice-President (in odd years), and the Division Directors are elected in even years. What that means is that, in theory (and generally

in practice), there will never be a Region board comprised of completely new people.

## **Thousand Lakes Region**

The Thousand Lakes Region (TLR) does not have a provision for Division Superintendents to vote on decisions being considered by the TLR Board. Instead, only Board members themselves (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations, Convention Director and Contest Director) can vote.

However, the TLR by-laws do state that, "There shall be an Advisory Council consisting of the Vice President of the TLR and the Division Superintendents. Its purpose is to provide the Divisions with a voice in the affairs of the TLR and to facilitate communication between TLR and the Divisions."

While in the not-so-distant past this Advisory Council concept was largely forgotten by both the Region and Divisions, in recent years the TLR Vice President has been in touch with all Division Superintendents on a regular basis

## **Pacific Southwest Region**

In the PSR the By Laws setup the Divisions with the Superintendents as local only, and an elected Director who sits on the Region Board of Directors. This gives the Division a person who

represents the Division at the Region, is charged with Division oversight from the Region level, but isn't directly involved in the day to day running.

## **Mid West Region**

The Midwest Region has Directors-at-Large (7) and Division Directors (11). The Directors-at-Large are elected by the membership of the Region. The Division Directors are designated by their Divisions. Although there are exceptions, most Division Directors are also Division Superintendents. Since the Region does not permit one individual to have more than one vote, the most common reason for a Division Director who is not the Division Superintendent is a Division Superintendent who is also a Region Officer or Director-at-Large.

### **Pacific Northwest Region**

The PNR BOD is comprised of the elected Pres and Vice pres and the seven division Superintendents. It also has a Secretary, Treasurer, and Office Manager appointed by the Pres with approval of the BOD. Only the Pres, VP, and Superintendents are voting members of the BOD. As a result, PNR has a tendency to be division oriented in its programs and inner workings.

## **North Central Region**

The North Central Region has their Division Superintendents on the BOD, also three Director seats and the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer also hold BOD seats. One of the three Directors is the immediate past President, he holds an automatic seat.