



SPUR LINE



December 2024

Next NMRA AZ Div. Meet:

Spring Meet will be on

March 29, 2025 in Tucson

**Ellie Towne Flowing Wells
Community Center
1660 West Ruthrauff Road
Tucson, AZ 85705**

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<https://azdiv-nmra.org/index.php>



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Paul Buhrke Elected AZ Division Superintendent



At the October 2024 meet, Paul Buhrke was elected unanimously to be the next AZ Division Superintendent. I recently sat down with Paul for a conversation, and this is a paraphrasing of that conversation.

BG: Congratulations Paul on your election, you must be so excited.

PB: Oh geez!

BG: Seriously, this is another step in your railroading path. Not only do you model but your career was with the railroad.

PB: Yeah, I started as a Trainman and then promoted to Conductor on the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. Then I moved on to Amtrak several years later. I was all over the country, north, south, east coast, west coast. The daily crossing over Donner Summit was a real treat and just plain awesome.

BG: Any favorite humorous stories in your career?

PB: Oh geez, so many crazy stories, but the question is what can be printed. I had a solo passenger occupying two seats and needed said passenger to move to seat a couple. The passenger refused to move. I asked “Okay, by the way where are you going?”

“To Tampa,” the passenger replied.

“Okay but you are sitting on the wrong side of the train. The left side goes to Miami and the right side goes to Tampa.” Said passenger blazed a trail from left to right side of the car. A double seat thus opened for the couple. The Tampa passenger was oblivious to what transpired.

BG: Where do you want to start focusing on as superintendent?

PB: To stir up the blood, get members back, and increase involvement lost during Covid. We have a lot of members on the books but not many involved. We need to create reasons for people to want to be involved.

BG: Any examples that you are thinking of?

PB: First expand the leadership team, which we are already doing. More people bring talent, knowledge and skill. Gives us new perspectives to try new things, new activities. A

BBQ social would be great for everyone to get to know each other and families. That's got to be a good thing.

BG: You recently earned your MMR through the Achievement Program (AP). What thoughts do you want to share?

PB: The AP program is something we should all have fun with and learn from. It should help make us a stronger division because it is another way to promote involvement on many levels.

BG: Mike Guinn has agreed to serve as Assistant Superintendent.

PB: Yeah, Mike is great. I think he will be key to helping tie the state together, with him up north, me in Tucson. I really look forward to working more with Mike.

Chris Thompson: Director's Report



It's been a busy time since our summer meet in Prescott. We had the SurfLiner 2024 National Convention hosted by the PSR in August, our 3rd Saturday Zoom meets in August and September, our Annual Meeting of Members in Prescott during October, and the Cactus Crawl layout tour during November. Throw in a few swap meets along the way, and the calendar was pretty full.

Our current membership in the Division is 335. This has been holding steady for the last year or so. Our in-person Division meets have been averaging around 50 attendees, so a fair percentage of our members have not been attending the meets. It would be great to see more people come to the meets and get an opportunity to get to know more folks in the Division. There is always some time to chat with other members during the meetings, as well as some great models in the contest room to see. If you have not attended a meeting recently, I invite you to come to the next one held in your area and mingle with some other model railroaders.

At the fall meet in Scottsdale we elected a new Division Superintendent, Paul Buhrke, MMR. I'm looking forward to working with Paul to keep the Division running smoothly. I also want to recognize Bruce Petrarca, MMR, for his dedicated service as Superintendent for the last three years. Getting things back on track after the pandemic was a big task and Bruce went after it with a full head of steam, so thanks Bruce for your leadership and support of the Arizona Division.

On November 16th and 17th, the Arizona Division hosted the first annual Cactus Crawl. We had a total of 18 layouts across the state available to visit at various times over the weekend. Hopefully you had a chance to see some of these amazing layouts. I visited six of them in the Phoenix area, and it was great seeing the layouts and visiting with the owners. A big “Thank You!” to everyone that opened their layouts for this event. Next year our hope is that we can grow the event to support National Model Railroad Month and the 90th anniversary of the NMRA.

We are coming to the end of the line for another year, so I will wish you all a Happy and Safe Holiday season!

2025 AZ Division NMRA calendar				
Date	Time	Event	Location	Registration
12/21/24	10 AM - noon	3rd Saturday Zoom Meet	OnLine	None
1/18/25	10 AM - noon	3rd Saturday Zoom Meet	OnLine	None
2/15/25	10 AM - noon	3rd Saturday Zoom Meet	OnLine	None
3/29/25	9 AM - 4 PM	AZ Division Spring Meet	Tucson	At Meet
4/19/25	10 AM - noon	3rd Saturday Zoom Meet	OnLine	None
5/17/25	10 AM - noon	3rd Saturday Zoom Meet	OnLine	None
6/21/25	9 AM - 4 PM	AZ Division Summer Meet	Prescott	At Meet
7/14/25- 7/19/25	All Day	NMRA National Convention	Novi, MI	nmra2025.com
10/?/25	9 AM - 4 PM	McCormick Ranch Railfair	Scottsdale	None
10/18/25	9 AM - 4 PM	AZ Division Fall Meet	Scottsdale	At Meet
11/25		Cactus Crawl	Statewide	None

For more information on events see AZ Div website

<https://www.azdiv-nmra.org/index.php/calendar>

Cactus Clinics - A Hands-on Learning Experience

The new year is almost here, and just like that, the popular Cactus Clinics are back in the new year. The Cactus Clinic is a hands-on program taught by two certified Modeling with Master instructors: Clark Kooning, MMR, and Peter Youngblood, MMR. The NMRA Modeling with the Masters program sanctions this program. Seating is limited and available only to NMRA members.

As of this publication, clinic dates are only proposed dates; the final dates will be confirmed shortly. The clinic topics are however finalized. All clinics will occur in Mesa, AZ, near the 202/60 interchange. The exact address will be sent along with a tool list after registration. Each clinic attendee is responsible for bringing the tools on the list to participate in the modeling projects. The cost to participate only covers materials, water, and soft drinks for your convenience. Lunch is on your own at nearby fast-food restaurants.

The proposed dates with confirmed topics are:

Saturday, January 11, 2025, register before January 2, 2025

“Introduction to Laser-cut Structures” (HO & N) If in S or O, contact me asap

The clinic runs from 10 am to 3 pm and costs \$25.

Saturday, February 8, 2025, register before January 27, 2025

“Scratch-building a Small Cattle Pen and Ramp” (HO only)

The clinic runs from 9:30 am to 3 pm and costs: \$25.

Saturday, March 8, 2025, register before February 21, 2025

Two short clinics will include “Better Telephone Pole Realism” and “Signs and Lettering” with each being 2.5 hours long. The clinic runs from 9:30 am to 3 pm and the total cost including both clinics is \$35. Both clinics will be supplied material for HO for hands-on experience only, but this can be applied to any scale once you’re home or at a club.

DesertOps Weekend



DesertOps is a model railroad operating event held in the Phoenix area, during the 4th weekend of October in even numbered years. It is an open invitation event primarily geared to inviting people from outside the state of Arizona. This year it took place from Thursday to Sunday, October 25th-28th.

Prototype railroad operating sessions on layouts in the Phoenix area started in 1959 and have been held continuously ever since. The idea of inviting people outside the local geographic area to participate in Operations weekends started in 1986 in Salt Lake City. The popular event went national soon after. The goal is to host out of



Eric White, Editor of Model Railroader magazine operating on Brad Martin’s BEE Line Railroad

state folks providing them the opportunity to visit and operate on layouts in the Phoenix area.

The first DesertOps weekend was held in 2012, with DesertOp '24, being the seventh event as 2020 was cancelled due to Covid. Like many of the other national operating events, DesertOps features a consistent schedule from year to year. Most people arrive in town on Thursday or Friday.



David Zuhn operating on Brad Martin's B&O Railroad

Out of town guests stayed at the Doubletree Hotel in Tempe which also hosted the Saturday night DesertOps dinner. Eric White, MR editor of Model Railroader magazine spoke during dessert. He spoke about his railroading journey, and provided operations perspective gleaned from surveys and observations as a magazine publisher.

The next Phoenix based DesertOps event dates are Friday, October 23, 2026, through Sunday, October 25, 2026. Based on the event's success and the desire to involve more local model railroad hobbyists in operations, the DesertOps team is exploring a similar concept for Arizona model railroaders during odd number years.

More information about operations events can be found at www.azdesertops.com or by contacting the DesertOps Coordinators:

David Doiron – ddoiron@cox.net / 602-550-3583

Rick Watson – spladivision@gmail.com

Phoenix area layout owners held 27 operating sessions Friday night, Saturday & Sunday. Fifty one participants from 16 states (AZ, CA, CO, FL, IL, IN, KS, LA, MN, NC, ND, NV, OK, TX, UT, WA, WI) operated on 12 layouts throughout the valley. Additionally, those who arrived in Phoenix early participated in four "outlaw" sessions on Thursday evening before the formal start of the weekend event.



Al Daumann, Rob Spangler, and Joel Shank, operating on Bob Ginger's Pepper Valley Division

Inaugural Cactus Crawl was a Success



All Aboard For The Cactus Crawl!!

Arizona's first annual Cactus Crawl took place over the weekend of November 16th & 17th. During this inaugural event 327 people visited 18 home layouts throughout the state of Arizona. The November Cactus Crawl Weekend was one of many events held across the country to honor National Model Railroad month. This year's layouts were spread out

in Tucson, Phoenix metro area, Prescott, and Williams. AZ NMRA Director Chris Thompson had a great time visiting six layouts and expressed his hope to grow the event to further support National Model Railroad Month and the 90th anniversary of the NMRA in 2026.

BALT^o & PENN^a

Baltimore & Pennsylvania Railroad Company / Brouse Excellent Steam Tractor Company

Part 2

By Don Wilde

Set in 1897, the BALT^o & PENN^a is a 36" gauge Class One steam railroad. In those days, many railroads in the area started out designed as narrow gauge. This freelance line chose to stay that way, and I modeled it in Sn3. It's designed to represent a town that fronts Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. One half plus a staging yard in a closet represents the main line heading into Maryland and north towards New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Besides the industries in the town, a whole chunk of the layout will represent the BEST^{co}, a steam traction engine manufacturer. One prominent feature on the main line will be a model Bollmann Truss bridge, a fascinating design from a B & O prototype built completely in cast and wrought iron. Another important feature is the use of behind-the-scenes

‘traversers’ to allow, for example, empty flatcars to be replaced with flatcars loaded with Colin Chapman’s Fine Carriages. A similar sleight-of-hand traverser backs up the Bay side of the harbor freight house and connects it with an off-scene interchange track. Proper use of empties and loads will be a key operating feature of the layout!

The era chosen, besides preparations for the upcoming Turn of the Century celebrations, allows me to celebrate the days of brightly enameled locomotives glittering with highly polished brass work, and passenger cars glistening with varnish and pinstripes. Even the lowly switch engines will have elaborate lettering and pinstriping!

This is intended to be my ‘serious’ railroad. It’s primarily built on a pair of 18” x 96” open frame sections, and it really won’t bother me if I must rebuild a section ten times to get things right to my satisfaction! By the time I complete this model railroad, I intend to have learned enough techniques – and patience – to earn my NMRA Master Model Railroader® certificates.

I’m currently re-motoring my first (of two) Railmaster Exports 0-6-0ST switchers with 200 RPM gearmotors for a much better crawl speed. I intend to complete these with DCC, but, like the On30, my intent is for the sound to be sourced from normal sized audio speakers that track the train as it travels the line. My opinion is that, while sound-equipped DCC locomotives are simply amazing as technology, real steam locomotives shake the ground as they pass by!

Textures are important to me, and another feature of the era and locale is the different building materials used along the line, and this is an important way to show that some of these businesses have been providing wares for generations. My space is definitely limited, but I have been inspired by what the UK modelers in the Facebook **Micro Layouts** group accomplish in much smaller spaces, as well as the work of Carl Arendt (<https://www.carendt.com/>) and the American-origin **Micro/Small Model RR Layouts** group.

Contest Results – NMRA Arizona Division Fall Meet

Scottsdale Fall Meet 2024 Contest results

We had a pretty good turnout for the contest room, we had 11 models entered, two for NMRA AP Merit. Big thanks to all who participated. Special thanks to all the judges: Dan Thompson, Don Wilde, Mike Guinn, John Lovely, and Linda Petrarca.

Favorite Model

1st Place

Donn Pease

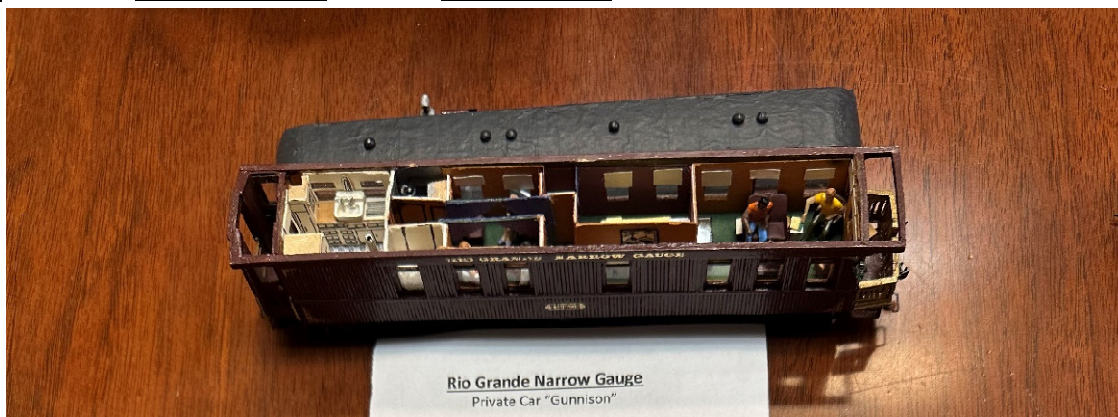
“SP 4-8-2 #5018 brass locomotive”



2nd Place

Paul Buhrke

“Private Car”



2nd Place

Bill Stimson

"Berkshire Valley Station"



Levity

1st Place

Donn Pease

"Fixin' to get Excitin'"



Mike Guinn

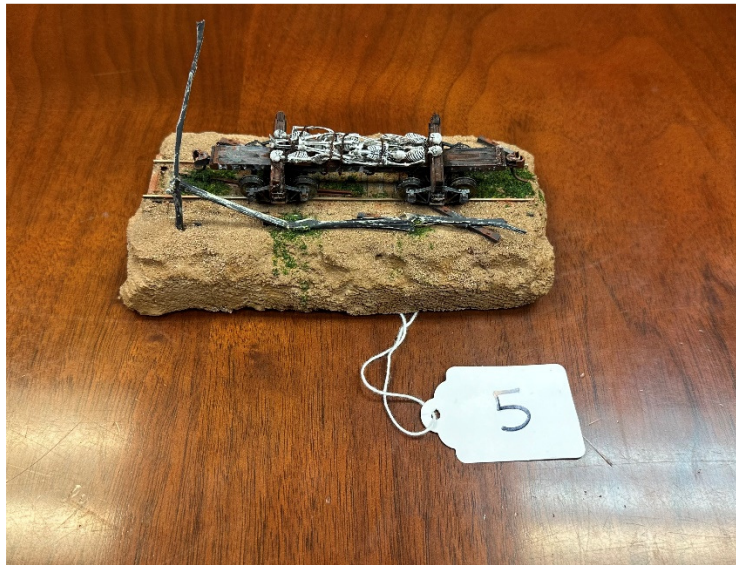
"Bones"



2nd Place

Craig Carnell

"Hel Xpress"



3rd Place

Charlie Nidever

"Skeletons on the Move"

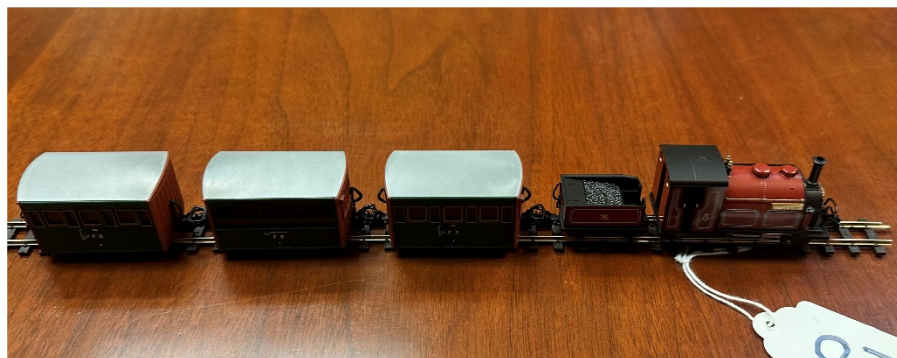


Favorite Train

1st Place

David Carnell

"Welsh Narrow Gauge"



Brian Schnacker

"N-Scale Central"



2nd Place

Brian Schnacker

"HO Gandy Dancer"



Paul Buhrke

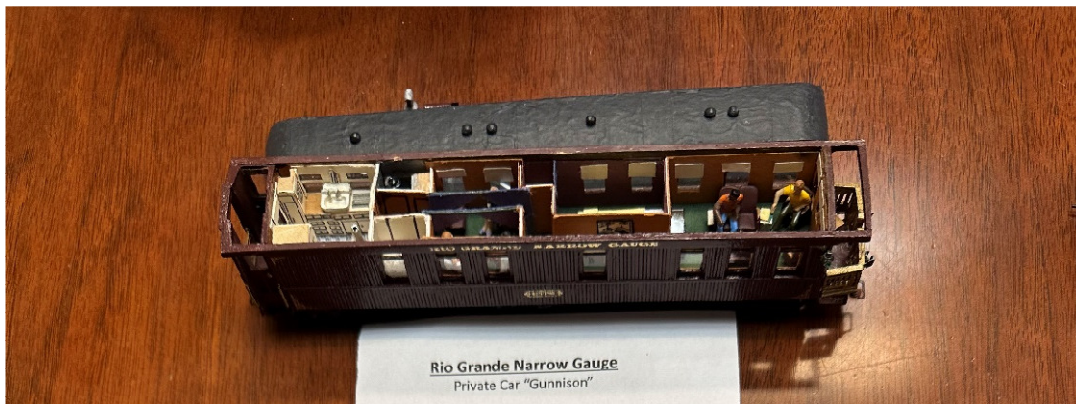
"Live Poultry Car"



2nd Place

Paul Buhrke

"Private Car"



AP Model Evaluation

NMRA AP: Steam

Donn Pease

SP 4-8-2 #5018 Brass Locomotive (Best of Show)



NMRA AP: Structures

Bill Stimson

Berkshire Valley Station N scale



Volunteering to be a judge can be very rewarding and may even improve your modeling skills through the process. Every time you serve as a contest judge you also qualify for one point towards the Association Volunteer certificate.

Next AZ Division Meet

Spring Meet will be on March 29, 2024, in Tucson

Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center

1660 West Ruthrauff Road

Tucson, Az 85705

9:00am to 4:00pm

Thank-you Bruce!

Bruce Petrarca guided the Arizona Division through some of the toughest times ever during Covid. His strength and persistence held us all together and even new trying some new approaches and activities. He did all this while still serving as AP Chair, Education Chair, and assisting with the web site. Additionally, he coordinated in-person and online activities and created and organized mini-meets around the state. Again, thanks for all you have done and continue to do Bruce!

Bob Ginger, Spur Line Editor

Opportunities to Present for Clinics at the PSR 2025 Convention

Suggested topics for presenters:

- 3D Printing, Laser Cutting and Other Computer Modeling Methods
- Achievement Programs and Standards Setting
- DCC, LCC, Wiring & Other Electronics
- Layout Design and Construction
- Layout Operations
- Modeling Techniques and Ideas
- Prototype Railroads History
- Any Other Areas of Interest

If you are interested in presenting a clinic at the PSR 2025 Convention, check out the signup information at <http://www.pacificswexpress.org/clinics/clinicsignup/>.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact us at pacificswexpress@gmail.com

Arizona Division Leadership Roster

Contact leadership team through this link:

<https://azdiv-nmra.org/index.php/leadership>

Director	Chris Thompson
Superintendent	Paul Buhrke
Chief Clerk & Paymaster	John Mick
Achievement Program	Bruce Petrarca
Education Chair	Peter Youngblood
Contest Chair	Dan Zintz
Membership Chair	Paul Buhrke
Election Chair	Chris Thompson
Operations Chair	Rick Watson
Legacy Committee Chair	Jim Dennis
Spur Line Editor	Bob Ginger
Webmaster	Marshall Wales

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RESPONSIBILITY: Except for official reports, all opinions are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the Arizona Division or its parent organizations.

SUBMISSIONS: Contributions of articles on any railroad or model railroading topic of interest to the membership are welcome. There is no compensation, but published articles can be credited to the NMRA Author Achievement Certificate. If you are interested in submitting articles, event information, or other information of interest to the members of the Division, please follow these guidelines:

1. Preferred method is by email to the Spur Line editor with the submission attached as a word text document.
2. Keep in mind that submissions may be edited for length or formatting, or not used, at the discretion of the editor.
3. Submission deadlines for publication are: December 1st., April 1st. and July 1st.”