



NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

The NMRA advances the worldwide scale model railroading community through education and standards as well as advocacy and fellowship.

Headquarters office • 4121 Cromwell Road • Chattanooga, TN 37421 • (423) 892-2846 • Fax: (423) 899-4869

Visit the NMRA on the World Wide Web: <http://www.nmra.org>

NATIONAL OFFICERS

President—Michael C. Brestel (O, HO)
3208 Vittmer Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45238
H: (513) 481-0185 W: (513) 661-2141
e-mail: pres@hq.nmra.org

Vice President—Allen Pollock, HLM (1:20.3)
PO Box 243
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0243
H: (573) 636-9946
e-mail: vp@hq.nmra.org

Secretary—Robert (Bob) V. Gangwish (HO)
1704 S. Lake Reedy Blvd.
Frostproof, FL 33843-7652
H: 863-635-2003
e-mail: secy@hq.nmra.org

Treasurer—Tom Draper, HLM, DSA (HO)
10837 N. 34th Place
Phoenix, AZ 85028-3310
H: (602) 953-1681 Fax: (602) 953-0751
e-mail: treas@hq.nmra.org

NMRA Canada President—Ron Einarson
1364 Dudley Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 1P3
H: (204) 475-6267
e-mail: presca@hq.nmra.org

Past President—John Roberts MMR, HLM (O)
104 Heritage Pointe
Williamsburg, VA 23188-7894 H: 757-345-3797
O: 757-345-3118 Fax: 757-345-6944
e-mail: pastpres@hq.nmra.org

General Counsel—Robert J. Amsler, Jr.
514 Dover Place
Saint Louis, MO 63111-2338
314-353-9131 or
314-754-2688
legal@hq.nmra.org

rev. 1-1-09

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Ferguson (HO, G)
530 Fig Tree Ln.
Martinez, CA 94553
H: (925) 228-6833 e-mail: racdir@hq.nmra.org

Tony Koester (HO)
949 Ridge Rd.
Newton, NJ 07860
H: (973) 579-1938 Fax: (973) 579-7474
e-mail: alwwdir@hq.nmra.org

Charlie Getz, HLM (HO)
42 Madera Ave.
San Carlos, CA 94070
H: (650) 591-8916 e-mail: alnadir@hq.nmra.org

Clark Kooning, MMR (Sn3)
2869 Battleford Road Unit 3014
Mississauga, Ont. Can L5N 2S65
C: (416) 899-9041 e-mail: candir@hq.nmra.org

Peter Jensen (HO, G)
Post Office Box 694
Cessnock, NSW 2325 Australia
(61) 2-4990-9855 e-mail: pacdir@hq.nmra.org

Nobby Clarke (HO, N)
34 Hopmeadow Court
Northampton, England, NN3 8QG
+44-01604-415020 e-mail: atldir@hq.nmra.org

Miles Hale, MMR (On30)
5608 N. Mercier Drive
Kansas City, MO 64118
H: (816) 588-2302 e-mail: westdir@hq.nmra.org

Dave Thornton (O)
2027 Jeffrey Dr.
Troy, MI 48085-3816
H: (248) 879-6806 e-mail: centdir@hq.nmra.org

Kevin Feeney (HO)
831 New Norwalk Rd.
New Canaan, CT 06840-6443
H: (203) 966-5175 Fax: (203) 316-3562
e-mail: eastdir@hq.nmra.org

Review of the BOD Convention Committee Survey



President's Car

NMRA President Mike Brestel

You'll remember that late last year you were invited to participate in an online survey about our national convention. You may also have noticed that an ad soliciting participation in the survey was run in the commercial model railroad press. Following are some conclusions based upon the survey results, assembled by the chair of the BOD's convention committee, Pacific Director Peter Jensen.

Peter reports that a lot of interesting information has been gathered in this survey, and he will hit the high spots in the synopsis below. The general report from the survey may be viewed at www.nmra.org/surveyreport.

We want to be sure to thank Suzie Roberts (John's wife), who is an opinion research professional and heads her own market research organization. She gave us much helpful advice as the BOD worked to design the convention survey.

Peter and the BOD would like to hear from you if you have any comments about the survey, the board's conclusions, or the convention. Please email them to him at this address: pacdir@hq.nmra.org.

Now for Peter's report:

General Demographics of Respondents

The survey was conducted from the middle of October through to the end of November. There were 1831 responses. This is a great response, and we have been advised that it is large enough to be representative of both the organization and the hobby.

1. 1831 respondents (with one giving no answers)
2. 72% were members (1164)
3. 12% were previous members (197)
4. 63% had attended a National Convention (1158)
5. 45% had attend 1 to 4 conventions (821)
6. 53% of members attend a convention when it is in their vicinity (615)
7. 58% thought that SIGs were the most valuable activity

Key messages

- There were several key messages from the survey, which were:
1. General format of the convention (clinics, workshops, layout tours, prototype tours, non-rail tours) is accepted and liked.
 2. Cost of attending is one of the key inhibitors to attending.
 3. Location and the length of the convention are also key inhibitors to attending (as this usually is driving the cost).

(text continues on page 6)

Membership: NMRA membership dues are \$55 (U.S. currency) per year, of which \$19 covers subscription to the official publication, *SCALE RAILS* and *NMRA BULLETIN*®. Address all membership applications, renewals, notices of non-receipt (issues that have been lost or delayed in the mail), or other business matters to the headquarters office. Back issues of *SCALE RAILS* are available while supplies last from the Kalmbach Memorial Library at Chattanooga — contact the library regarding availability and pricing.

(continued from page 3)

4. The bus versus self-guided tour debate is evenly split. Most respondents thought both types of tours should be offered.

5. Online registration and tour booking is extremely important (80% indicate that it was important or higher).

6. Many respondents expressed that they feel there is an HO-scale bias at the convention.

7. Our members seem to be prototype- and SIG-aligned.

Convention Cost

Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents believe the cost to attend is excessive and is, therefore, not good value for their money.

It follows that if the price of registration can be held as low as possible, and if the hotel costs and associated parking fees can be reduced or eliminated, and if the costs of the additional items such as tours can be constrained, participants at the convention would perceive more value for their money. The convention attendees, in general, like the tours, but the cost is viewed as not a good value.

Convention Bias

The audience of the National Convention has been set as "Model railroaders of all scales." This allows for modelers of all scales and gauges, as well as all prototypes.

We are not there yet, as many respondents talked about "biases" at the convention. We, as the NMRA, must be seen as inclusive and accepting of all scales and prototypes. While our current president and the two before him are O scalers, and the leadership and membership of the NMRA includes aficionados of a variety of scales, gauges, and railroad interests, we need to be more proactive in addressing these perceived biases.

One way we are moving to be more encompassing of attendees' variety of needs is to develop and promote specialized clinic streams for the various scales, prototypes, and interests. We will also be asking hobby luminaries to be involved in guiding and

managing these streams to be sure that the content is what the audience desires.

Convention Date

There was a very clear message to avoid the July 4th weekend. There were many reasons offered, such as summer is the most expensive time to travel, it is too hot, and it is a family vacation time. Unfortunately, two of the next three conventions are already planned for the July weekend, largely because this is the time when the best rates can be obtained from hotels and convention centers.

This will be reviewed for future conventions.

Conclusions

The clear messages from the survey have been:

Provide greater "Value for Money"

- Effective cost management – accommodations, tours, venues, transportation, parking, meals, services, and so on.

- Provide additional benefits, which could involve add-ons such as tourist/family destinations, family registration packages, and tours.

Appeal to the widest audience

- Place new emphasis on embracing all scale modelers and encourage all modeling groups to attend.

- Provide a variety of targeted clinic and tour streams

Convention Survey Prize-winners

At the time we announced the survey, we also invited survey participants to register for a drawing of some very nice prizes. We also said that the names of the winners would be pulled out of a hat by yours truly at the BOD's meeting in Orlando in February.

Well, it seems that technology has overtaken the old names-in-a-hat procedure of time-honored tradition. Instead of doing it the old-fashioned way, here's how we determined the winners:

Before we all left for Florida, Peter, who lives in Australia, assigned a number to each of the survey participants, in the order in which they registered for the survey. These

numbers ran from 1 to 1381, and I did not see the names or numbers of the participants. Then I used the random number generator in my computer's Excel program to pick a series of numbers between 1 and 1381. I sent the winning numbers, in first-to-last order, to Peter. He matched the winning numbers to his list, then he sent the winners' names and contact information to me in Cincinnati.

I reported on the selection procedure and provided the names of the winners to the BOD during the meeting. After the Board sanctioned the results, I called and e-mailed the winners from home and asked them to select their prizes from the following list:

Any scale: Micro-Mark \$50 gift certificate

N scale: Walthers/Life-Like GN FA1/FB1 diesel loco consist, or Bachmann "Yard Boss" train set

HO scale: Bachmann E-Z Command DCC controller with NS GP50 diesel loco, or three Walthers/Life-Like Proto 2000 freight cars

O scale: two Atlas two-rail freight cars

Large scale: Bachmann 1:20.3 scale tank car

The three winners were Richard Brennan, of San Leandro, California; Richard H. Gorman, of Sanford, Maine; and Anton Mazza, of Cockeysville, Maryland. I had a nice chat with each of these gentlemen, and each seemed to be both stunned he had won and appreciative of his prize.

I e-mailed the results to vice president Allen Pollock in Jefferson City, Missouri, and he mailed out the prizes to the winners the next workday.

Thanks to all who participated in the survey, and a special thanks to the manufacturers for donating the prizes.

