CONVENTION CONTTESTS

Have We Got Some Contests for You at Anaheim!

By Bob Hammett, MMR
NMRA National Contest Chairman

I t looks like the Anaheim Special is shaping up to be a terrific convention thanks to the efforts of the good folks out in the PSR and the various national committees. We on the national contest staff have also been working on several other expanded program to provide you, the attendees, with a menu of contest choices that will tickle your fancy and entice you to bring a model or two to share with your fellow hobbyists.

For your PSR guys and gals, and we’re hoping a lot of you will join us in the fat PSR contest, the PSR model contest will be run in parallel with the national competition. The judging will all be done in one pool, but judging will be in two rounds. The first round will be award of the PSR folks. And, judging by some of the modeling I’ve seen from the great southwest, more than one or two of you will have your arms full carrying away the extra PSR and national certificates.

Moving on to the national attractions, the first event I would like to put out there is the Model Showcase. This is a non-competitive judging contest and is about what you can build—no rules about your favorite model’s. It doesn’t have to be scratchbuilt or even complete, something that would be interesting to your fellows and I hope to see. It only needs to be minimal, just enough to tell who you are and identify the model. All entrants will be recognized and receive a certificate of participation. That’s about it. However, we would love to see models that have never been anything out of the contest room and may be a little apprehensive. We’ve done this event for years in the NER and it’s very popular.

The People’s Choice is next on the menu. This is a popular vote contest and includes six categories: locomotives, rolling stock, cabooses, structures, dioramas, and trains (yup, a full train with engine and cars). This one is for the folks that may be too busy to do judging. It’s been around for a while, and their gang-buster models together with lots of commercial parts and pieces. Again, the entry is very much a paper, quite easy to be given in the first five categories, and first, second, and third place awards for the favorite train. In addition, there will be five special awards, including the Creativity Award for the best structure of your own design, the Photo Match Award for best match-up of model and photo, the Best of Show Gold Medal for the folks who do the best. As with all contests, your entry is given to all the folks involved in the judging have their toes, the models entered in the judged model competition, the folks that do the judging take their job very seriously and strive to be as fair and uniform as possible in their evaluations. They’ve all been there, too.

We try to keep the paperwork to a minimum, but because you built your entry using a model kit, we need to have it a little. However, the models are subjected to the scrutiny of the judges and to their personal judgment. They’ve all been there, too, and they’ve been there before. The models entered in the judged model competition, the folks that do the judging take their job very seriously and strive to be as fair and uniform as possible in their evaluations. They’ve all been there, too.

A full spectrum of place awards await the winners in each category, plus a Best of Show, so start digging through your albums and slide trays and bring some of your favorites to Anaheim. They don’t take up any space, so I suggest you bring your best models to the room. We do hope that maybe you’ll have thrown out some of your old models, either for the new models, or for the best entry submitted by a person under 18 and the Best of Show.

Judging is done by an experienced team, who carefully evaluates entries on each of ten factors, including such aspects as impact, composition, artistic approach, lighting, and so forth, in accordance with the rules of the NER. The only rule is that each model must be explained by a team of judges based on the creativity, originality, and materials, complexity, finishing and display, and finally neatness.

This is another nice little affair for those creative folks who design and print passes for their model railroad projects. Judging is done by the photo folks, and first, second, and third place awards will be given along with ribbons for the winners. They don’t take up much room either, so why not take yours along?

Modal model railroad building has become a popular activity across the country, and our contest menu features a competition dubbed the Module Showcase for PSR modelers. The competition will be open and you’ll find the contest room starting Tuesday morning.

And finally on the model side of the menu, we have the People’s Choice contest. This is the crown jewel, the Olympics of railroad model building with all the guns and glory, the triumphs of winning, and the agony of defeat. Well, maybe that’s overstating it a little. However, the models are subjected to the scrutiny of the judges and to their personal judgment. They’ve all been there, too, and they’ve been there before. The models entered in the judged model competition, the folks that do the judging take their job very seriously and strive to be as fair and uniform as possible in their evaluations. They’ve all been there, too.

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And, if you think this is a waste of time, think again. The competition is substantial with many return entrants, and the articles are gorgeous. So there you have it, the whole enchilada. There are so many awards and plaques and categories and competitions that literally enough activities to do to keep them straight. We, the contest staff, honestly want you to come to the room, choose the events that appeal to your interests and philosophies (a little competition, a lot, or none at all) and go for the gold. I will personally pledge to you that my staff and I will do our darnedest to treat your entry, whatever it might be, with fairness and respect and to the events that are judged by my staff to render the fairest and most uniform score we can, so as before come on in, the water’s fine.