



# TRAIN ORDERS

Volume 2004, Number 2

March 2004

The Santa Maria Valley Railway Historical Museum

P.O. Box 264, Santa Maria, CA 93456-0264; (805) 714-4927

The Museum: Santa Maria Town Center Mall, Sat./Sun. 1-4:30pm

<http://www.smvrhm.org/> School/Club groups by appointment.

## Annual Member Meeting Draws Well

A Museum-full of people attended the Annual Member Meeting held at the Museum on February 5, 2004.



Many thanks to the catering crew headed by Ginnie Sterling for providing some great finger foods. In addition to electing new Board members (see article page 2), members had a chance to “dream and

scheme” about the future of the Museum. 🚂



## “Freemo” Train Show is Fabulous Success

Over 2000 people attended the February 21-22, 2004 “Freemo” Train Show at the Mall hosted by the SMVRHM, the Santa Maria Chamber of Commerce, and the Santa Maria Town Center Mall. About 66 HO modules were strung together to make the second largest Freemo layout ever assembled in California.



With some good advice from Chris Palomarez, co-founder of U.S. Freemo and one of SMVRHM's HO modelers, the SMVRHM model of the downtown yard was built to Freemo standards and thus was able to “hook into” the day's layout.

About twelve individuals representing three Freemo groups (SLO, LA, and northern CA) contributed to the layout. Also present was the SMVRHM gift shop and Central Coast Trains from Atascadero. 🚂

## Meetings

**General:** first Thursday of the month, 6:00pm, at the Santa Maria Inn.

**Museum Development:** Thursdays (except first Thursday of the month) at the Museum, 6:00pm

**HO Modelers:** Fridays at the Museum, 7:00pm.

**Caboose Crew:** Saturdays at the caboose, 8-11am. 🚂

## Rail Bosses

**Gary Van Aken**, President, [gary.vanaken@verizon.net](mailto:gary.vanaken@verizon.net)

**Dick Miner**, Vice President, [BoothR8@aol.com](mailto:BoothR8@aol.com)

**Phil Goble**, Treasurer, "CaBoss", [Phil.Pam@Prodigy.net](mailto:Phil.Pam@Prodigy.net)

**Jamie Foster**, Secretary, "Train Orders" Editor, Webman, [jamie@jf2.com](mailto:jamie@jf2.com) 🚂



## New Board Members Elected February 5

Five new SMVRHM Directors were elected at the Annual Member meeting on February 5, 2004:

Rob Himoto  
Barron Smith  
Chuck O'Hern  
Gary Van Aken  
Wayne Petersen  
Congratulations! 🚂

## Business Sense, Logic, and Realism

by Hal Madson

As some of you know I'm an amateur railroad historian. Many of you have a copy of my book, and a few of you know I'm working on another about the beet sugar refinery and town of Betteravia. This article is aimed at all you modelers out there.

I have played at building about three model railroads. The first was probably the best and was point-to-point around three walls of a two-car garage and so had a scale mile of main line. The next was also point-to-point but was more of a switching layout because of the way the garage was laid out. The last one was the most juvenile since it is built on a 4x8 sheet of plywood and was intended to be some entertainment for my grand kids. When it started to get in the way of my book by competing for time, I put it away.

So, I'm not much of a model railroader, but like they say, those that can, do and those that can't, teach? Well, now that I've laid those cards on the table, I hope that you don't get too upset with me, for it is not my intention to nit pick anyone or criticize in any way. What makes the hobby fun is that you can do any thing you want and not have to justify it to anyone. Hey if you're modeling present day but you love beer reefers, why not?!

The point of this article is to list some subtle things you can do on your railroad to give it a greater sense of realism. When I built my first layout I wanted to convey that there was a past to the area. I was modeling present day and so included some track that was disconnected from the main, and some that was paved over. The depot building in Sisquoc was being used as a restaurant and numerous small industries no longer used rail. On the 4x8 I even found room to model some abandoned narrow gauge track in the middle of a street. It took no more room and suggested that there was once another railroad in town. I also had some steam era equipment still sitting around. I know a lot of you do that, too.

I grew up in a business family; Dad owning a dry cleaners. I remember the whole production line being set up in a logical manner to make the best use of every move

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## Choo Chew Saturday, May 1, 10am-4pm

Here's the scoop on this year's Choo Chew Saturday, May 1, 2004 at the Bitter Creek Western Railroad...

**Saturday, May 1, 2004**

**10:00am to 4:00pm**

(BBQ served Noon-2pm)

**Tickets:**

\$12/adult and \$6/child under 10

Make checks payable to "SMVRHM" and mail to:

SMVRHM, P.O.

Box 264, Santa Maria, CA 93456-0264.

Tickets may also be purchased at the Museum Gift Shop.

Your tickets and a map to the location will be sent to you via the USPS, so please allow sufficient time.

**Enjoy Unlimited Train Rides, and BBQ!**

Don't miss all the fun! 🚂



## Please track your volunteer hours

Please remember to log your volunteer hours for all SMVRHM activities. This helps to document the contributions by all of you, and supports our requests for grants and other funding.

An Excel spreadsheet is available on the web site for those of you who would like to do this electronically. Visit the Museum page: <http://www.smvrhm.org/museum.html>

Paper forms are also available at the Museum. 🚂

## 2004 Dues are Due!

Please submit your 2004 dues to the Museum at your earliest convenience. 🚂

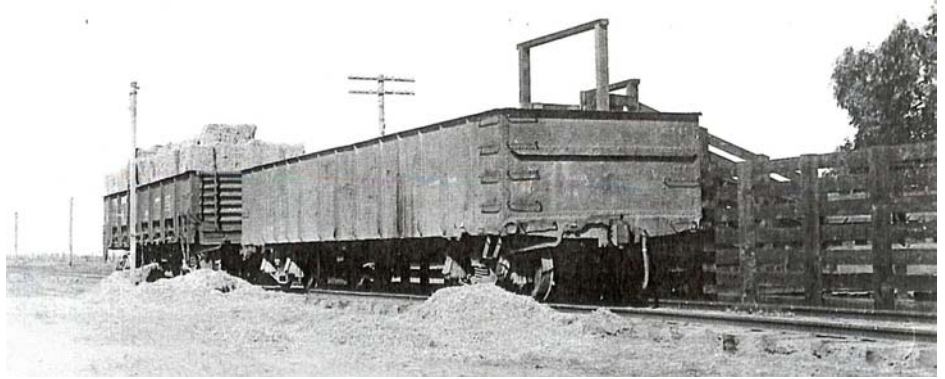
a production worker made. I learned these principles in business school at Cal Poly and when I worked for Model Linen in San Luis Obispo. Every move a worker made cost the company money – keeping costs down maximizes profit and that is the name of the game in business, profits; their bread and butter.

When you model a railroad, you are modeling a business. I always thought of my pike not as a model railroad, but a model of a railroad. A railroad must operate as efficiently as it can to maximize earnings and stay competitive or it will fail. Those of you that have been around awhile have personally witnessed much change in the rail industry. Pre-merger short lines like the SMVRR are especially challenged.

You may notice that track is maintained differently on heavily trafficked routes as compared with lightly traveled lines. This has everything to do with the return expected by the railroad on a route or branch. Many railroads were built as narrow gauge to maximize the return on investment especially in mining areas, which investors knew would be played out in a few years. Short lines like the Santa Maria Valley RR were often built by a company for a certain purpose (the SMVRR to haul oil) and done so at minimum investment by owners that were more interested in maximizing profits from the industry served, in this case an oil company. Original track was laid on untreated redwood ties without tie plates. It wasn't until Capt. Hancock bought the SMVRR that it was completely rebuilt. He considered the railroad as part of a vast development plan for the Santa Maria Valley, and the rail line served several of his business enterprises. He had a financial stake in its upkeep and efficiency.

One thing that not all of you may be aware of is the fact that a railroad doesn't own all of the track on which they operate. In the case of the SMVRR the line between Guadalupe and Betteravia is owned by the Union Pacific and leased to the SMVRR and the track that is between Blosser Road and McClellan Street is laid on a city granted franchise. In most all cases individual industries own and are responsible for the maintenance of their spurs and sidings. Could this be why so many spurs have that neglected look, is it that their owner's are more interested in other aspects of their business?

In many cases, the railroad will be restricted as to the type of equipment that may be operated on certain tracks. According to SMVRR work rules published in an employee timetable dated August 1958, (see appendix in my book, Railroads of the Santa Maria Valley), there were two local spurs upon which steam locomotives were prohibited. In other cases cars couldn't be spotted or stored on certain spurs beyond that point where railroad ownership ceased and another entity's ownership began. A reason for this is that sidings are often leased or rented for storage purposes and are a source of revenue for the owner. In some cases sidings are leased by a company and only



**Photo believed to be of the Rosemary Stockyard taken about 1925 to 1935. Notice the bailed hay load in the second gondola. Photo: author's collection**

certain types of cars will be seen stored such as that time that Holly Sugar leased numerous sidings and over a mile of unused main line track east of Rosemary to store hundreds of beet gondolas. Don't forget that taxes, insurance and maintenance continue as expenses on all types of railroad property not the least of which is track.

I have always wondered why so many modelers put a one or two car cattle pen at the END of a spur. One of the most intriguing (to me) industries on the SMVRR was a cattle pen at Rosemary that unloaded directly off the main line. (Don't you just love short lines?) The cattle were often trans-loaded into trucks as they came off the railcars and so many times the amount of stock unloaded exceeded the holding capacity of the yard. The stock trains were then backed into Santa Maria, a conductor on watch at the back of the caboose to signal grade crossings with an air horn mounted just above the roof, (see top photo on page 145 in my book). Modeling such a stockyard would be an easy way to create a lot of traffic using little space.

Speaking of unloading off the main, there are a couple of locations where provisions for unloading cars off the main are located. One is at the spot where west Jones intersects with Thornburg. There used to be an active spur at this location when an oil distributor was located here. In time the oil distributor stopped using rail and the connection to the main was removed leaving the rest of the spur

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in place. Remember, the railroad doesn't own the spur. Now an agriculture chemical company is receiving shipments in tank cars spotted on the main. The car can be unloaded in an hour or so. Why not reconnect the spur? Why go the expense? Think of what modeling this little feature suggests. The other spot is a lumberyard on the air base spur where an unloading ramp consisting of a paved area around the track is used by forklifts to access railcars. You could build that "structure" by just creating the paved area.

You will find no switching puzzles on a real railroad. Track is laid in with efficiency of operating and maintenance in mind whenever possible. Track will often go down the middle of a street or alley when there isn't room to do otherwise. Too bad we can't do a "flying switch" movement on a model railroad. It sure beats having to lay extra track at the end of the line to accommodate getting around a car when we have a facing point move.

If you incorporate some of these ideas into your modeling you will produce a scene that is realistic in subtle ways your visitor will notice but maybe not identify. They will just get the feeling that they have seen that before. Isn't that what you want them to feel? 🚂

## SMVRHM Board of Directors

Last	First	Serves Through	Officer
Alves	Dan	2004	
Couch	Ed	2005	
Foster	Jamie	2005	Secretary
Goble	Phil	2004	Treasurer
Hearn	Hardy	2004	
Himoto	Rob	2006	
Madson	Hal	2004	
Mininger	Dick	2005	Vice President
O'Hern	Chuck	2006	
Petersen	Wayne	2005	
Smith	Barron	2006	
Sterling	Ginnie	2004	
Van Aken	Gary	2006	President

## Train Photo Show at SLO store

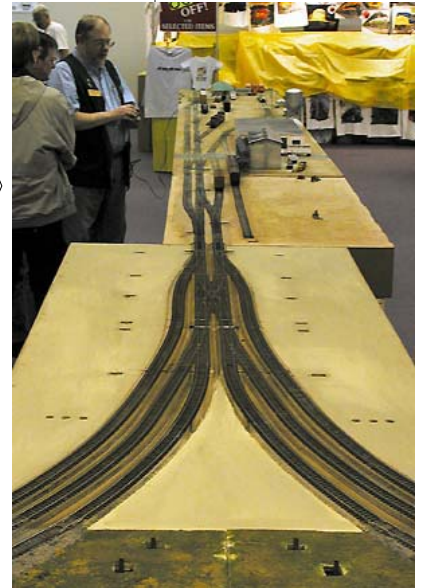
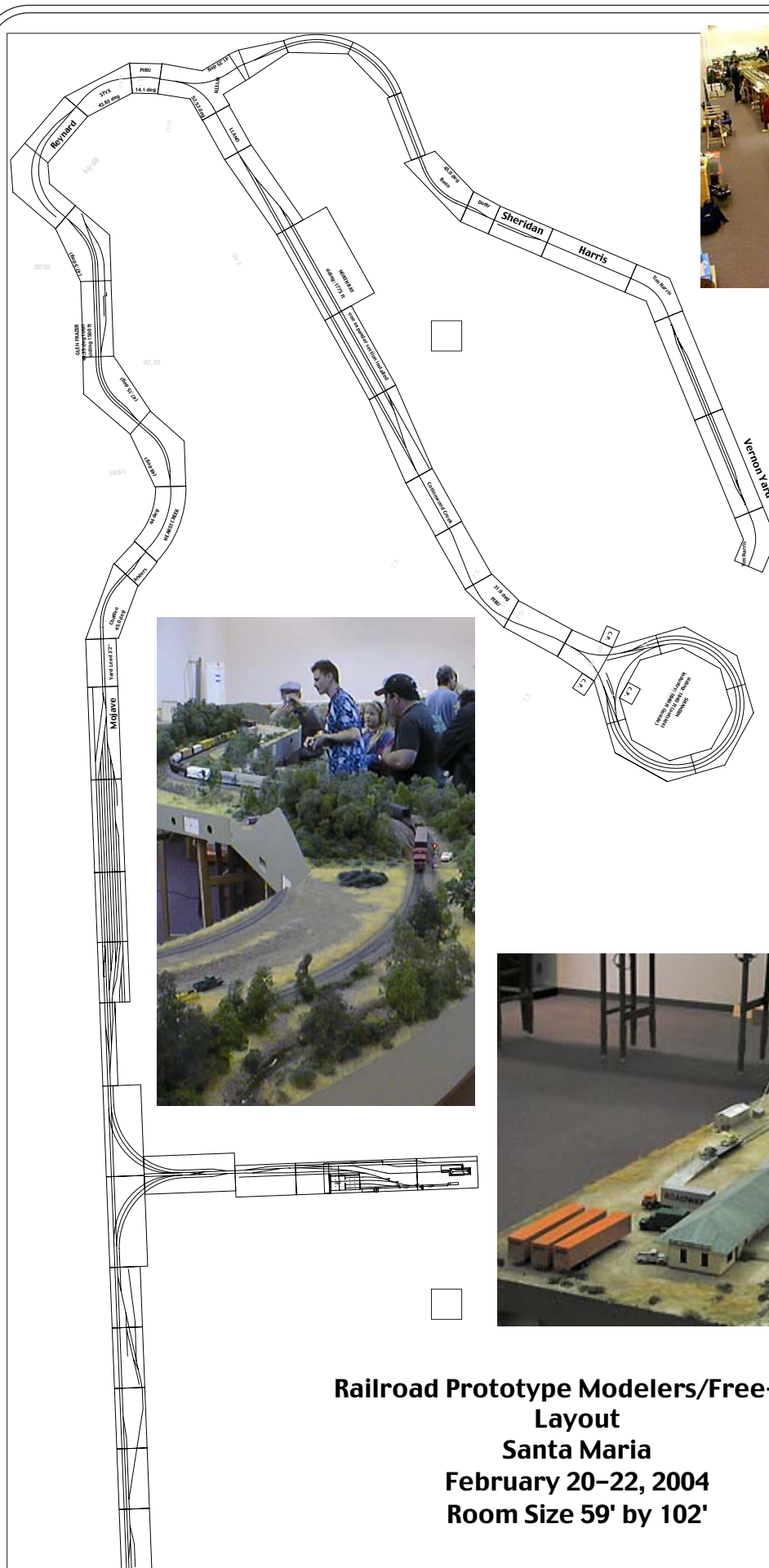
Local photographer Rich Hansen will be showing his train photos at The Photo Shop (1027 Marsh St.) in San Luis Obispo, from March 15 to April 14. Images in the exhibit will include steam, diesel, passenger and freight, shot throughout California from Needles to the Cascades. 🚂

## Visit the Museum with your class or organization

The Santa Maria Valley Railway Historical Museum welcomes groups and classrooms to the Museum. To schedule your trip, simply contact the Museum at (805) 714-4927.

Below, a third grade class from Alvin Elementary School visits the Museum. 🚂





**Railroad Prototype Modelers/Free-mo  
Layout  
Santa Maria  
February 20-22, 2004  
Room Size 59' by 102'**



Fourth Annual

# Choo Chew Saturday

at the

**Bitter Creek Western Live Steam Railroad**

7.5-inch Gauge on the Nipomo Mesa

**Enjoy Unlimited Train Rides, and BBQ!**

Saturday, May 1, 2004 - 10:00am to 4:00pm

(BBQ served Noon-2:00pm)

**Tickets:**

**\$12/adult and \$6/child under 10**

**Make checks payable to "SMVRHM" and mail to:**

**SMVRHM, P.O. Box 264, Santa Maria, CA 93456-0264**

**Tickets may also be purchased at the Museum Gift Shop**

**All proceeds benefit the Santa Maria Valley Railway Historical Museum.**

**Your tickets and a map to the location will be sent to you via the USPS, so please allow sufficient time.**

**Ride behind the 7.5" gauge model of SMVRR's No. 1801 (pictured at right).**



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