

modelers to educate, and museum visitors to include in our interest in trains and the rich history of how railroads affected the economy, development, and social activities of our community. To me, the MMR comes as recognition of the modeling efforts and diversity of the past and a commitment to sharing enthusiasm with others in the future.

Looking back, my modeling and railroad interests started at an early age, which not only included the Christmas Tree O-27 tin-plate train, but also growing up in Riverside, Southern California with Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, and Santa Fe (one steam engine still on a local) all visible from the back yard. The Pacific Electric was not far away. As my interests and observation of the world about me broadened, the geography, engineering, and architecture aspects were integrated into my early layouts. Trains served a purpose and went through country with more terrain than the carpet in my bedroom.

Distractions intervened: High school and college, majoring in architecture and urban planning, starting a family and generating an income, raising three children. Fortunately, my parents had located to San

Luis Obispo, California, during my high school years. The Southern Pacific Coast Line, still a busy place in the late 1950s was a few blocks from home. However, it was in graduate school in New York

City that the scale modeling bug really bit. I found a used copy of the April 1966 *Model Railroader*. Wow, I could build the HO scale switchback railroad Gum Stump and Snowshoe railroad in my city apartment. Built as standard gauge; it was then narrow-gauged. I still have the original wood truss bridge and my first brass engine bought at the Hobby Shop on 45th Street. The whole thing fit into a bookshelf in the living room and could be fitted with Masonite covers when guests came over.

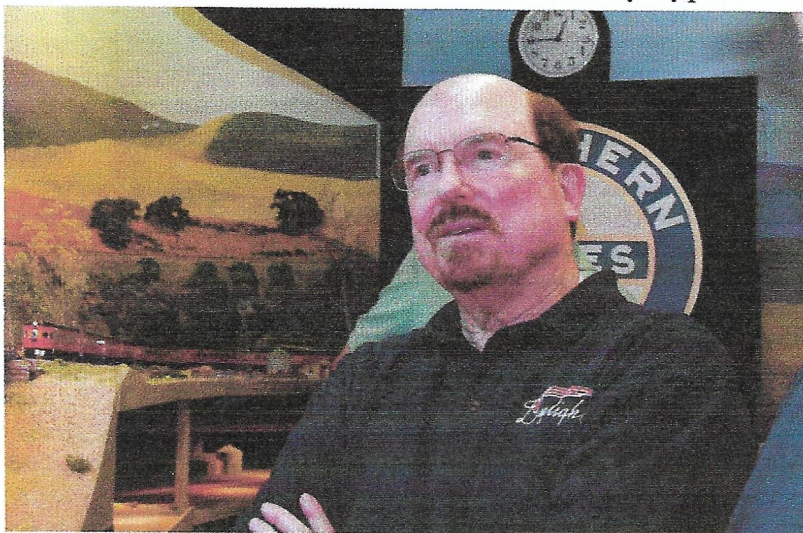
The surprises and delights of modeling were not to end there. I became employed in San Luis Obispo as an associate professor at Cal Poly, a planning professional and then established my own architectural firm. In the process, I met a man working for the Probation Department who had a model railroad. Would I be interested in visiting it? (Or maybe I was pushy and asked if I could visit it.) Anyway, the man turned out to be Peter Thorp — one of the founders of Detail Associates and owner of the Los Osos Railway. Pete became a mentor and good friend. He also opened my eyes to observing details of construction, incorporation of prototype and historical contexts, and railroad operations. A whole new chapter of friendships, activities, and hobby opened.

So now here I am some 35 years later with four personal model railroads not counting the Gum Stump and Snowshoe version, under my belt, including my current personal effort — a loop-to-loop bi-level representation of the Southern Pacific Coast Line. My efforts include working on the Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society (SPH&TS) convention, visits to NMRA conventions and layouts, writing articles on the Pacific Coast Railway, and presentations to school children and entry-level hobbyists.

It is early morning. It is silent at the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. The model railroad incorporating the Pacific Coast Railway (HOn3) and the Southern Pacific coast line also is the culmination of my personal efforts. It both satisfies my 60 years of fascination with railroads, large and small, and provides opportunities to meet the public and share railroad history and insights on the fun of model railroading. Soon the morning *Surfliner* for Los Angeles and San Diego will depart from the yard outside, and fellow modelers will arrive to install more switches and paint blue backdrops. Children, parents, and interested tourists are not far behind.

AP Certificates - Andrew Merriam

- Master Builder - Prototype Models
- Master Builder - Cars
- Master Builder - Scenery
- Master Builder - Structures
- Model Railroad Engineer - Civil
- Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical
- Model Railroad - Author



ANDREW MERRIAM EARNS MMR 533

The room is half-filled with benchwork. It is 2014, and the Central Coast Model Railroad — part of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum — is emerging from the interior shadows of the 1,200 square feet allocated to modeling the Central Coast in the 1894 Southern Pacific Freight House. My railroad and modeling life is overflowing. There are details to refine, work to be done, ideas to discuss, new