CALLBOARD

SPRING 2023

RED Website: https://www.nmra-red.org/

Points of Interest

In This Issue

Welcome to the Spring 2023 issue of the Callboard. As you can see, this is a jam packed issue. Please enjoy and feel free to get back to us with comments or suggestions.

- **Officers Reports**
- **RED Member of the Year Award to Al Merkrebs**
- **Spring RED Meeting Report**
  - *38* people attended the meeting
  - *16* Show & Tell participants
    - John Huckaby - $75 cash prize winner
    - Jason Schoenmann - $25 cash prize winner
  - Free lunch for everyone!
  - 2024 PCR Convention "Tech Line" update by Phil Edholm
  - Giuseppe Aymar's presentation about the planning and building of his Southern California Railroads layout
  - Door Prizes for Everyone!
- **Bob Battle's Red Rocket Funicular Railway**
- **What do a model railroad club, hackers, and the first video game have in common?**
- **Redwood Empire Division Facebook Page**
- **Redwood Empire Division Website**
- **Clubs in the RED**
- **Summer Meeting Announcement**
- **2024 PCR Convention**
- **2023 NMRA National Convention**
- **The Caboose**
  - Shakespearean Sonnet to Model Railroading Courtesy of ChatGPT

We are very sad to announce the passing of Carol Alexander. Carol was involved in all aspects of the local and regional model railroading scene. Her obituary is on page 4.

Past issues of the Callboard are available for viewing on the **RED website**.

Board of Director's Report - Giuseppe Aymar

I was unable to attend in person and the zoom connection failed due to problems at the venue. Ed Merrin, kindly, acted as my proxy.

The following are excerpts from the PCR's BOD meeting on April 27,2023 sent to me by the PCR's secretary.

Meeting started on April 27,20023 at 1:00pm

Treasurer Bob Osborne reported there is good cash flow - about $8,000 from the convention and $3,000 from Sigs and other events.

The Regional Advisory Committee RAC) reported that only 10 percent of the Railpass members upgrade to a full NMRA membership.
Also, $300 per division per year is available for member events - such as Niles Canyon rides or Amtrak rides to Sacramento. (Bear in mind any division event is open to any member, not just that division.)

Question: is it possible to buy AV equipment - and not use hotel stuff. (Hotels won't let you rent from outsiders).

We need volunteers to take over for Pete Birdsong and Dave Grenier.

We need a Marketing Group.
- Contests - have been slow
- AP has been slow
- Non Rail chair is vacant
- Storekeeper - all equipment accounted for and in good condition

Next Convention (Coast) in Milpitas, then 2024 (Daylight) In San Luis Obispo. SLO - need to work around Cal Poly schedule and hotels filling up.

PCR Board Meetings can be more than twice a year - Zoom OK.
April a bad month - PCR Board meeting moved to March or June

Next Meeting (Zoom) Tuesday November 14, 2023, 6PM
Meeting recessed at 3:00pm

Giuseppe Aymar, DDS, MMR
Director: Redwood Empire Division

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Superintendent's Report - Paul Weiss

With a very successful Spring Meet under our belts we now turn to planning for the highlight of our year of events, the Summer Meet which will be held on a Saturday August 19 at the Golden Gate Railroad Museum in Schellville. Final details aren't yet known but we hope you will save the date while we work out the details of what will certainly be a very worthy picnic and railfan event. Many of you know the museum backstory, this from their website:

In early 2017 the GGRM announced that the organization would be moving to a new home in Schellville on the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. Restoration work shifted to the task of preparing the entire collection for the mainline move to Schellville which was completed in early 2020.

The Museum collection include the very well-known SP 2472 (a Baldwin P-8 4-6-2) and some great diesels as well. We are very excited to have our meet there, and between now and then I hope you have a wonderful modeling summer.

Paul Weiss
Superintendent: Redwood Empire Division

Chief Clerk's Report - David Grundman
The current RED bank balance is $7134.26 which includes the two Show and Tell prizes of $75 and$25.

Membership Report - Gus Campagna
As of May 2023 Redwood Empire Division membership stands at 109 members.

Wanted: RED Program Chair
Do you want to take a more active role in the Redwood Empire Division? The Program Chairperson position is open and looking for someone to help put together program presentations for three meetings. You would work with other staff members to find interesting topics and people for meetings. If you are interested in the Program Chair position, please contact Paul Weiss at paulbweiss@mac.com.

Carol Alexander
November 29, 1949 – March 8, 2023

Carol Alexander, a longtime member of the Pacific Coast Region in the Redwood Empire Division, passed away in love, peace and comfort at her home. Her spouse, Janette, and her four-legged family members were with her.

Carol had a long career (including serving in the USAF for nearly 10 years, working in special effects for movies, and being the IT manager for a local company) before completing her career by working for the County of Sonoma. She always had great stories to tell about her various tenures in the different places.

She served as editor of the Callboard (the Redwood Empire Division news bulletin), as well as the Superintendent and Director of the RED. She was the PCR Vice-President from 2015 to 2019, as well as participating in various activities for her own and other divisions. (This included – and perhaps featured – recording and printing a DVD of the banquet entertainment from the 2008 PCR convention, as she was taking a class in video editing at the local community college at the time.) She was also chosen as RED's Member of the Year in 1992.

Carol was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in March of 2020, and she fought bravely as she continued to participate in as many activities as she could. She was always friendly, even at times when she was "not feeling at her best"; and she always enjoyed visiting with friends. When time grew short, she made a point of telling her friends and colleagues how much it had meant to her that they had been part of her life.

She is survived by her spouse, her three children and their families, and various other family members.

RIP, Carol. The members of the PCR (and especially the RED) will always be grateful for your service.

RED Member of the Year
Al Merkrebs

RED Director Giuseppe Aymar presented the **RED Member of the Year** award to Al Merkrebs for his outstanding work as program chair and supporting the division's Zoom meetings during the pandemic. Congratulations Al!

2023 SPRING MEETING

What a meeting! We had **thirty-eight** model railroaders in attendance with **sixteen** people presenting in the **Show & Tell** part of the meeting. **Everyone got a door prize** and **a free lunch was provided courtesy of the RED**. Superintendent Paul Weiss welcomed everyone to the meeting and asking for business or club You can view a brief overview of Dick's presentation staring on page 13. Cash awards were picked with Giuseppe Aymar winning the $100 Show & Tell prize and Gus Campagna winning the $75 door prize. The meeting started with comments from Superintendent Paul Weiss, followed by short introductions of all attendees, Show & Tell, lunch, Phil Edholm's 2024 PCR Convention update, and Giuseppe Aymar's and Blaine Hendrix presentation of the planning and building of Giuseppe's Southern California Railroads layout. The meeting closed after the awarding of Show & Tell prizes and distribution of door prizes to everyone who attended the meeting.

Show & Tell

Sixteen! Yes, **sixteen** members shared projects and memories for Show & Tell during the Spring meeting. Cash prizes of $75 and $25 were awarded based on voting for the best presentation a member. Congratulations to John Huckaby ($75) and Jason Schoenmann ($25).

Steve Skold's Photographs

Steve Skold showed photos he took of the Durango and Silverton narrow gauge railroad. The top photo one third place at the PCR convention.
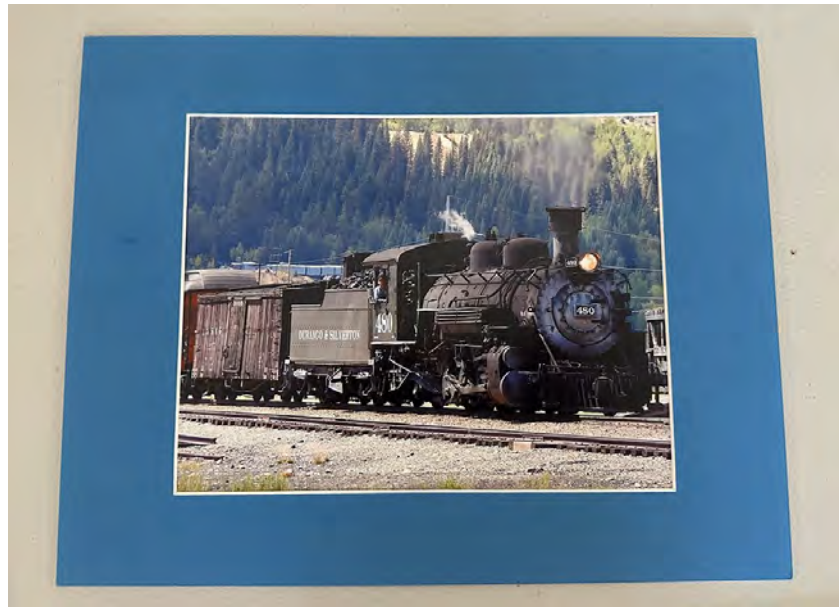
Show & Tell

Mike Davis's Diesel Electric Locomotive Upgrade

"I recently had the fortune of picking up a bowser AS616 lettered for the Pacific Electric with the roof mounted trolley poles, a model I've come to learn is on the rare side despite being plastic. When I got the engine, it was a little worse for wear missing some detail parts that thankfully I was able to get replacements straight from bowser themselves. In addition to the fixes, I also gave the new engine the same treatment I did to the trolley pole equipped VO-1000 in the I replaced the cheap looking plastic trolley poles with working trolley pole for an improved look. Lastly under the hood I hacked a keep alive into the older Soundtraxx decoder for improved running quality."

Show & Tell

Rich Mossholder's Build & Send Project

This was a project "build and send" project.

"During the Covid lockdown a friend and I decided to work on two projects together. We would each start a model of a structure and then exchange them for the other to finish. The models had to fit in a USPS medium flat rate shipping box. Neither of us knew what to expect, since we kept the projects secret. When the package arrived, it was a total surprise. The model I brought was started by Peter Loughlin and I finished it by adding another structure and all of the details. It's called Viglico (Very Important Generic Lineside Industry Company)."

Show & Tell

Gary Pischke's First Layout

"My presentation was based upon my review of NMRA articles that mention past layouts. I noticed that most , if not all, do not show any photos of the layouts. I've included photos of the my first O gauge layout followed by the two HO layouts. My photo of the O gauge layout from the mid 1960s period is included below. It seems like it would be nice to see folk's progress over the years on their layouts. Life paths change and our interests change. We sometimes have photographic proof of the past."

Show & Tell

David Turner's Great Northern Boxcars

Dave presented about a project to model several versions of a series of Great Northern boxcars built n the period of 1938 to 1942. Dave described how the cars fit into his SP&S freight car fleet, the research materials that he used; what models and decals were used, how the decal choices helped show the passage of time, and some modeling techniques.
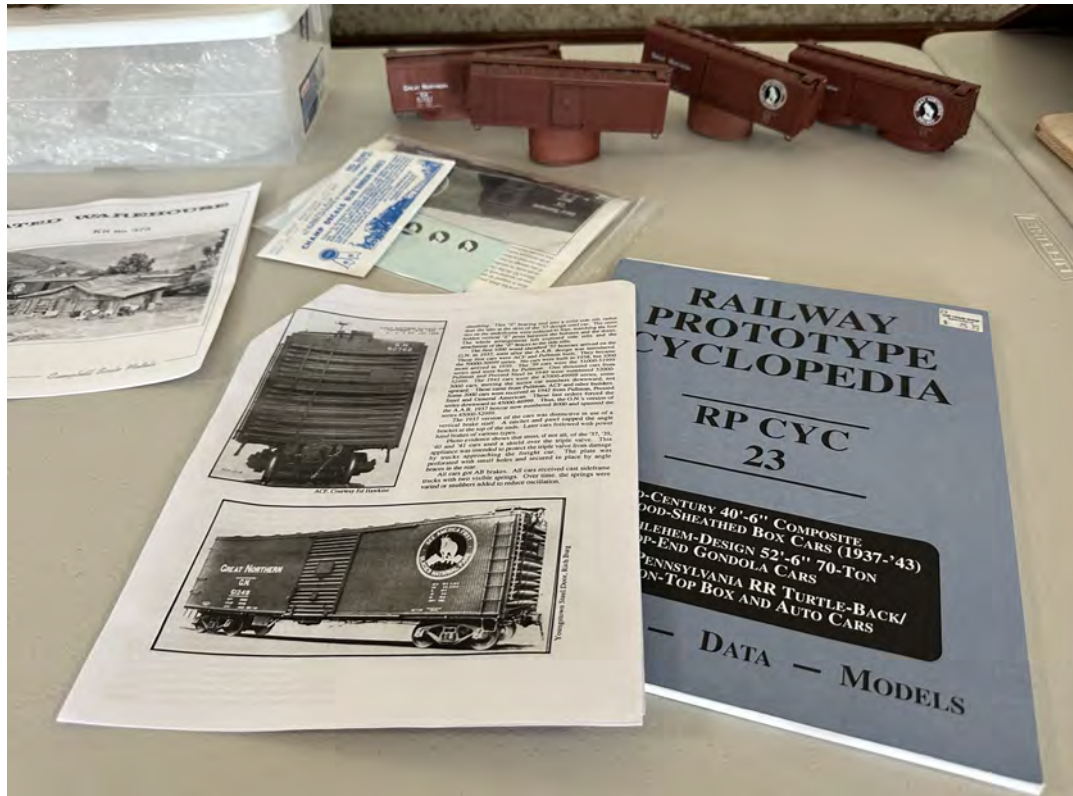
Show & Tell

Giuseppe Aymar's Double Slip Switches

"Double slip switches are an interesting mechanical contraption used by the railroads to cram 4 possible routes into a single switch, thus saving space in a complicated and often restricted approach to a busy passenger terminal. Such is the situation at the LAUPT (Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal) in the prototype and also on my own layout. The prototype employs six of them while i scaled down to three. Still itis, in my eyes, a beautiful visual effect of complicated trackwork in action.

I scratch-built mine using the "fast track" assembly jig. It is a labor of love and meticulousness to put one together. Everything, and i mean everything, has to be assembled precisely for it to work well. No room for error (sloppiness). Basically it is two "Y" switches oriented points to points with the frogs toward the outer edges which are then brought together and superimposed over one another reducing the overall length.

Visual example:
Take your hands, palms facing up toward you, keep the fingers spread apart and the fingertips on both hands touching. Now slowly interdigitate the fingers by sliding them past each other until the knuckles of the opposing hands touch. The fingertips are now superimposed on the palm of each opposing hand. The wrist area represents the points and the fingertips represent the frogs. Now, here is the catch: The points on the left hand control the distant frog located on the right hand, vice versa with the points on the right hand controlling the distant frog on the left hand.

If this is confusing to you do not despair as it took me awhile to grasp it myself. Building one is the way to understand it. So, "go to where you have never gone before" and build yourself a double slip switch , I will even help you. After all, model railroading is FUN !!!!! "

One of Giuseppe's scratch built double-slip switches

Show & Tell

Peter Barnes' Bummelbahn

"I want I want to introduce my European operating HO layout to RED members with a display of rolling stock and loks that are somewhat different in both appearance and details such as 3 rail power pick-up, couplers and size.

The operating scheme I use is different in some ways too. I do use the Micro Mart car cards, but as European car numbers are too small for operators to see easily. I have a picture on the back of the car card which is a good help. My small two level layout consists of a N -S route and E-W route which meet in the helix joining the upper and lower decks. Each of the 4 legs of the layout terminates in a staging yard. Each of the 4 legs also has a color designation which I use on the car cards and on cars in some freight trains to assist sorting and moving mixed designation traffic. Freight is moved around the layout by four interchange trains N<->S and E<->W and and two of the 6 yards on the layout which have dedicated tracks for interchange traffic. Yard loks assist in spotting and pulling cars for the interchange traffic.

Coupling is another difference. Hooks and rings are used to couple cars a crude rendition of the prototype. Car connect fairly easily when the rings slide up over the hooks. Un coupling requires lifting the hooks either with a small paddle placed under the coupler and lifted or a solenoid driven platform lift as part of track system. This can be tedious.

I enjoy my layout and the operational part of model railroading. I am persistent but also challenged with quirks of the European model railroads for operators."
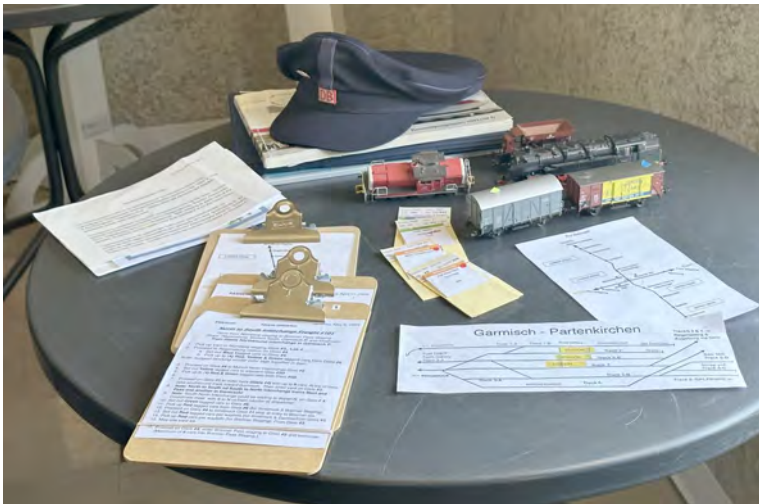
Show & Tell

Dan Obermeyer - Making Trees

"A friend wanted to help me on my layout. She and I started making twisted wire deciduous trees. I got my florist's wire from Michael's. Starting with a bundle about the diameter of the tree trunk you want to create and about twice as long as the height you need, twist all the wires together to start the trunk. I use the Audubon Society field guide book for the shapes of various species of trees. The book is great because it shows the shape of the branches as if there were no leaves.

When you reach the height where you want to start branches, separate out some wires to create the branches. YouTube has several great videos on techniques. You can run wires back into the branch to create additional branches. I leave the wire loops at the end of the branches until the paste is dry for better control. Keep going until you used all the bundle of wires. As I told my lady friend, there are no bad trees. Just some have had a harder life than others.

I use modeler paste to then brush on the frame to cover up the twisted wire pattern. I got the paste from Amazon. Fiberpaste is too thick and Modge Podge gel is too thin.
I spray the frame with camouflage paint, which is very flat. I cut any loops of wire at this point and straighten out all the branches for its final shape.

I cut some sisal rope into 1/2" pieces and separate them into "static grass" like material. You can also use 12 millimeter static grass. I brush on Modge Podge matt medium on the tips of the ends of the branches and sprinkle on the fibers. You can build up layers of the fibers to create the fine branches at the ends of the bigger branches. Let dry and spray the camouflage paint. This creates a fine bunch of tiny branches. Keep adding until you get the appearance you want.

Then you can apply the foliage from ground foam to build up leaves. If the tree has large leaves, you can use Noch's leaves for more detail. Fiber fill material can be used to give more structure to the foliage. I use cheap hair spray to fix it all in place.

Now you can plant your tree!"

A full tutorial on making trees will be available in the Summer 2023 Callboard.

Show & Tell

John Huckaby's Who Has the Right-A-Way

30 years ago, John entered RED contest to build a 3x5 inch diorama. Delays were caused by feasibility study, land survey , land grant, and hiring a construction crew. The picture shows the day train right of way established.

David Croshere's Water Tank

Dave talked about his water tank model and model building process that included repairing

mistakes and personal modifications he did to the basic kit.

Show & Tell

David Norris' Diesel Locomotives

The top picture is a model of an EMD F39C locomotive #2356 with 12V-645E engine. Chassis is from an early Atlas (Roco or Concor) SD35 with kitbashed body from an Athearn F45. The Loco has its original Roco motor with added non-sound DCC and rooftop revolving amber light. Note the see thru fans with the Nathan K3 horn.

Two Athearn SW7 locomotives are kitbashed bodies with one having smaller can motor installed in such a way to create a lower profile in contrast to unit with original Athearn motor. Both locos have DCC with LED headlights. Both have Leslie horns; one with an A200 and the other an S3L. Loco 1217 was inspired by a Baldwin S12 receiving a GP7 hood and engine. The model has a shortened Tyco GP20 hood grafted to Baldwin S12 cab and sill made deliberately shorter than in real life by Athearn to fit its EMD SW7 chassis. Loco 1302 was inspired by a Canadian National kitbash of its SW1200s each with a GP9 hood. The model has a shortened Front Range GP9 hood grafted to EMD SW7 Athearn sill with original hood removed.

Show & Tell

## Ed Merrin's Photography with Focus Stacking

Using 25 separate photos from of an electric locomotive parked by the Innsbruck signal tower on Peter Barnes' Bummelbahn, Ed used focus stacking software with to create a more realistic view of the locomotive and signal tower than would be possible by just using a single photograph. In brief, focus stacking is a technique used in photography to achieve greater depth of field in images. It involves taking multiple photos of the same subject, each with a different focal point, and then combining them to create a final image that is sharp and in focus from front to back. By blending the in-focus areas of each photo, the resulting image can have a wider range of sharpness than what would be possible with a single photo. See more of Ed's amazing photographs on the **Redwood Empire Division Facebook Page**.

Show & Tell

Ron Kaiser's Vacation Kits

"It was all because of a winter RV trip. There was to be no modeling on the picnic table outside, so I brought a kit of three small sheds from Bar Mills. Not only were they great projects to experiment with, they turned so neat that I had to find a place up front on the layout. That led to finishing out some overlooked bare plywood spaces. Pretty fun!"
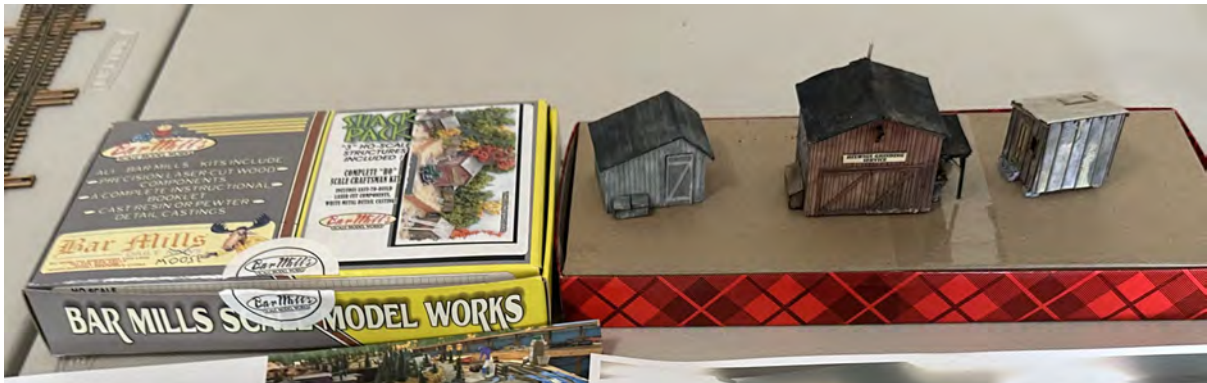
Show & Tell

Phil Edholm's 3D Printed Buildings

Phil showed two award winning buildings, created using 3D printing, for a module he is currently building .

Moss Landing Reimagined

The two buildings are part of an On30 module that is an imagineered version of what Moss Landing might have looked like in the early 1900s if the Salinas River had not been diverted in the 1906 earthquake and a wharf area was dredged inside the harbor.

Moss Landing – Spreckels Sugar Warehouse

Imagineered warehouse to ship sugar from beet processing in Spreckels to the refining facility in San Francisco. The wall and roof framing are 3D Printed Framing. This model one best structure and innovation awards.

Moss Landing – Daniel's Express Warehouse

Imagineered local warehouse named after a business that operated in Santa Cruz and Monterey area in 1900-1910. The structure uses an acrylic box with wood sheet and shapes. The view through the windows is through 1/8" acrylic sheet. This model won a best in show award.
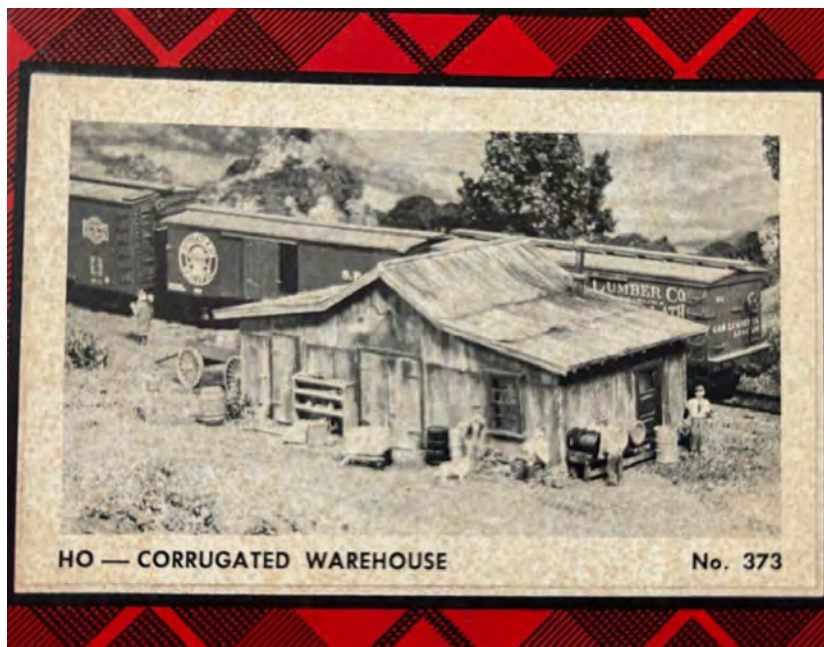
Show & Tell

Al Merkrebs Scratch Built Kit

"My building was a Campbell Scale Models #373 HO Corrugated Warehouse Kit, made of wood and corrugated metal. It's the only kit I've built completely from scratch. I mostly use pre-built or do kit-bashing. I built the warehouse in in the 1970swhen I was in college in Ann Arbor and whenever I was bored with studying. It was part of a layout I built in the basement of the house I was sharing with other students. At the time, I was dating my wife Lin Kaplan. When Lin and I got married in Ann Arbor, I decided to name the building the "Merkap Metal Co.".

I bought the kit because I fell in love with the idea of painting a lot of rust on all the metal."

Show & Tell

Jason Schoenmann's Model Railroading Journey

Jason gave a wonderful talk about his model railroading journey and how he's returned to model railroading and becoming involved with local model railroading operations.

Lunch Courtesy of the RED

The Redwood Empire Division provided a delicious free lunch to everyone at the meeting, A big "Thank You!" to Mary-Moore Campagna for providing and serving the lunch with gracious help from Marilyn!

2024 PCR Convention Report

Phil Edholm on The 2024 PCR Tech Line Convention

Phil Edholm traveled to the Spring meeting to give everyone an update on the 2024 PCR Tech Line Convention. The convention will take place in Milpitas, CA, from April 24-28, 2024. Phil emphasized that there are 30 layouts confirmed including Jack Burgess' Yosemite Valley, Bob Brown, Dave Adams and many more. At least 2 curated self-driving tours will be available each day. The convention will take place at the Sonesta San Jose Hotel. Room rates are $139 per night with no parking or other added resort fees. Click on the convention and video links below for more information and online registration.

NMRA/PCR Convention Site
https://www.pcrnmra.net/conv2024/

Announcing the 2024 NMRA/PCR Convention Video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQD9OYdQZAY

Building the Southern California Railroad

Giuseppe Aymar, with assistance from Blaine Hendrix, gave a presentation on the vision, decision making and what goes into the construction of a multi-deck layout occupying a 24"x42" space, what works and what can be a problem, and the tools and engineering needed to bring to fruition his dream. Thanks to Giuseppe for allowing the use of his PowerPoint presentation for this article.

Building the Southern California Railroad

The Building

Yeah!!! We are building the home for "Southern California Rails".

Planning

Bob Ferguson and I developed the plan to satisfy my ambitions
This is a point to point railroad (Fresno, Barstow, LA)
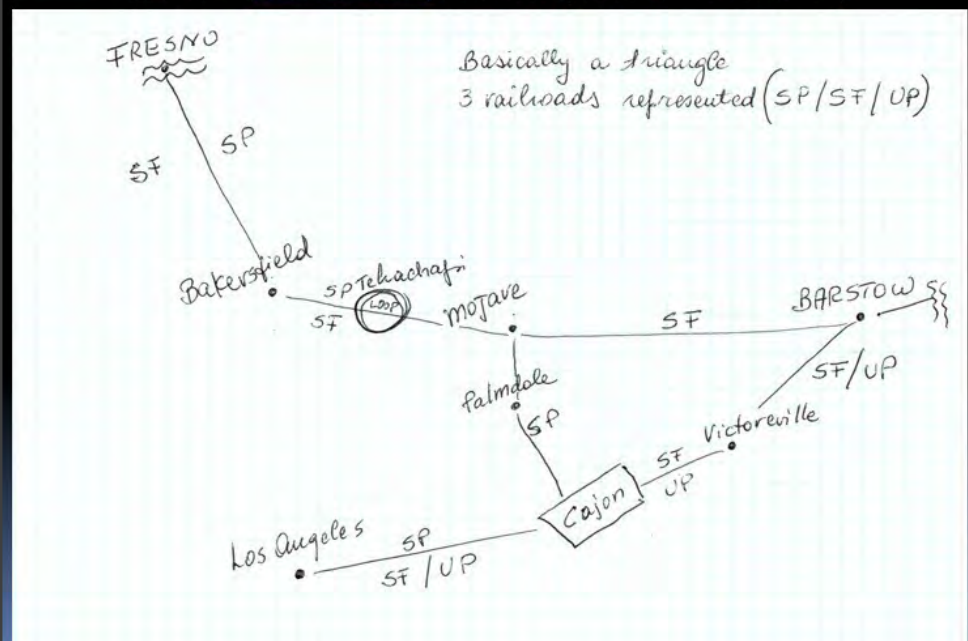
Building the Southern California Railroad

Planning

3D paper mock up
just one of many to get a feel of what we are working with.

Building

Beginning efforts of "on wall mounted" construction. Bracing is next

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Building the Southern California Railroad

Building

The beginnings

At this point I could envision the finished railroad. Scary!!!

end of peninsula; bottom level is Bakersfield yard, upper level is Cajon

markings on floor to denote track diagram at different levels
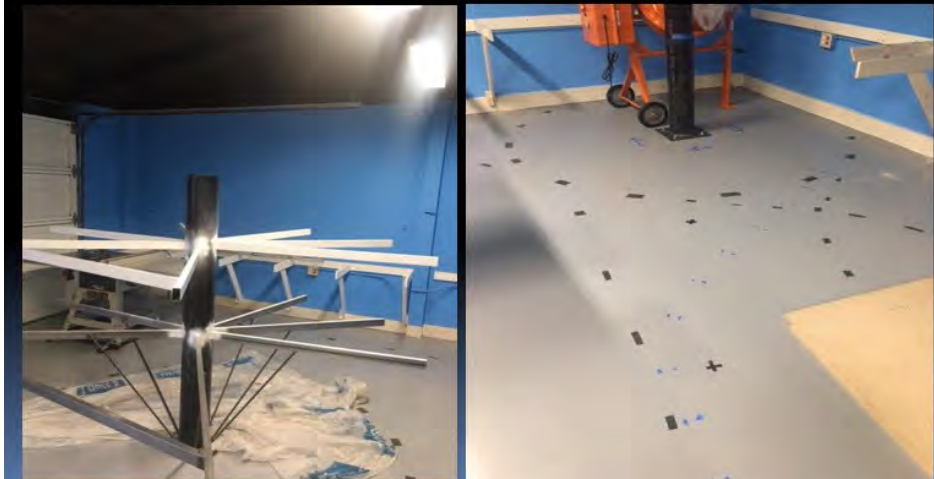
Building

Headache helix

Building the Southern California Railroad

Building

Spline construction allows for beautiful smooth curves of whatever radius we want plus allows longer unsupported spans.

5 bevels

TURNOUTS
Spline arrangement

1-800-687-8733
107 N. VIRGINIA ST., RENO, NV 89501

Building

Mike Davis installing electrical outlets alongside peninsulas

Electrician "par excellence"

Under the watchful eye of MARCO

Building the Southern California Railroad

Building

Sample of notes on track arrangement on the helix's entrance and exits on two levels. This is the only true helix on the layout.
I like to make drawings complete with explanations of what is in my head at the moment as surely I will not remember later on what I was thinking back then.
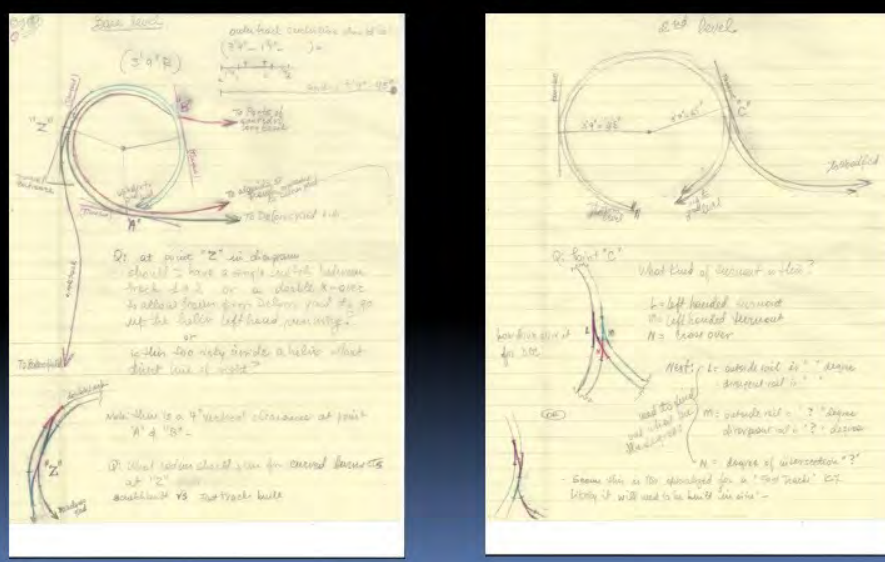
Building

Panorama view

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Building the Southern California Railroad

Building

Love my double slip switches

Building

Tehachapi loop

prototype   model

Building the Southern California Railroad

Building

View of Cajon from above

Building

Installing the DCC turntable In Bakersfield -
easy peasy (when someone else is doing it)

Building the Southern California Railroad

Coach Yard

Future

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Building the Southern California Railroad

Electronics

You want to do WHAT? …and expect me to make it work digitally? Thank you very much!!! (Blain's famous words).
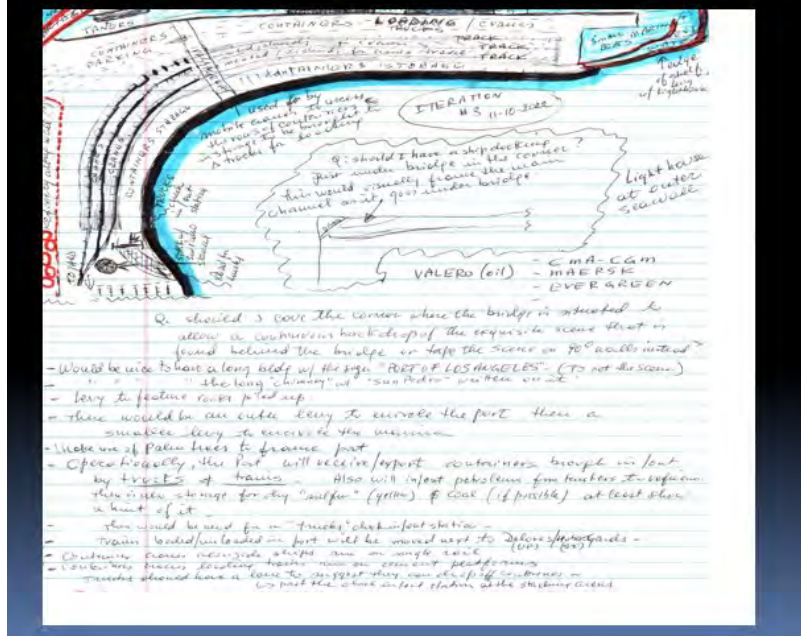
- Run a model railroad of course.
  - Lots of trains: up to 7 locomotives per train, lighted passenger cars for all passenger trains.
  - Multiple operators – a dozen or more.
  - Hundreds of feet of mainline, multiple yards.
  - Separate Dispatcher office, with dispatcher control, computerized.
  - DCC, with something like an LCC network for signals, detection, etc.

- High Reliabilty

Electronics

What Hardware?

- DCC System - NCE.
  - Well known system
  - CS02 Command station
  - 5 amp boosters
    - PB105: legacy, Transformer power supply, variable output voltage set at booster
    - PB5: New, Switching power supply, 2 fixed voltages of 13.8 / 12 Volts set at power supply
  - Wireless, wired throttles
  - Multiple Throttle options

- Short circuit protection
  - Internal overload protection with booster
  - DCC specialties: circuit breakers, autoreversers

- LCC System – RR CirKits
  - Dominant manufacturer using NMRA compliant system
  - Separate from DCC running trains
  - Detection, signaling, etc
  - New to all of us

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Building the Southern California Railroad

Electronics

Control Panels

- **Dispatcher option**
  - Switching related to mainlines
  - Eventual hook up to LCC
  - Operate locally or by dispatcher

- **Local only**
  - Yard switching
  - No dispatcher involvement

- **LED indicators for selected direction**
  - Double slip switch challenging

Electronics

Turnout Control

- **mtb MP5 Switch Machines**
  - Linear actuation, can motor. End of limit switch.
  - Two Internal SPDT switches (as Tortoise)
  - Adjustable travel, X and Y positions

- **Powered frogs**
  - Use Internal switches of MP5
  - Tam Valley Frog Juicer (double slip switch)

Building the Southern California Railroad

Industries

List of industries

- Oil refineries
- Agricultural district at Edison with multiple loading platforms
- Winery at Edison
- Cement plants at Tehachapi and Victorville
- Borax plant near Barstow
- Cattle ranches and loading platforms at Bena
- Tank Train loading at Seco and unloading at Carson (LA)
- Carghill silos at Verdemont with in house switcher
- Small industrial spurs at Tehachapi and Victorville
- Icing platforms at both Bakersfield yards
- Trans-loading facility from truck to train

In memory of Wally Long

My original cheerleader

Raffle & Door Prizes

The meeting closed with the raffle and door prizes. Every person attending the meeting received a door prize with the first four raffle prize winners getting first choice. As you can see from the picture, there was a lot to choose from. A big thanks to Dave Grundman for storing and bringing the door prizes to the meeting. Dave say's that he would like to have more model railroad train equipment (engines, rolling stock, kits, etc.) to round out the offerings.

Real Names
for
Old-School Train Puller Parts
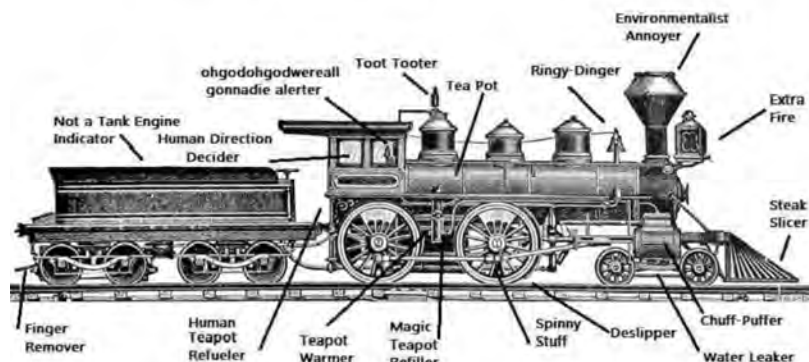
Bob Battle's Red Rocket Funicular Railway

The Red Rocket

It all began about 3 or 4 years ago when I purchased an Arduino Microprocessor starter kit, after hearing several friends extolling its virtues and all the neat things it would do. But I wanted it to do something no one else had ever done so it sat on a shelf for a couple years. Finally in January 2022 it hit me-- use it to power a Funicular Railway, something I do not recall ever seeing on a model railroad layout! A Funicular Ry. is normally cable-operated and runs up a very steep incline hauling passengers from one level to the other. My HO layout has a standard gauge main and an Hon3 narrow-gauge line that do not intersect and the std. gauge line is about 8 or 9 inches above the Hon3 main, so I figured the Funicular Ry. could run from one level to the other.

Using scrap items on hand I settled on a wooden roadbed about 18 inches long and laid the track on it. I then mounted a pulley at each end in a slot to carry the cable between the rails to each end of the car. I cobbled up the car from an old SF Powell St. cable car body and a truck off a streamlined passenger car. I wanted to have lights in the car so I powered them thru the track, making pickups on each wheel for interior lights plus a red beacon on top. And since the car was lit up, I installed seats and 4 passengers inside-- 3 adults and a child. To

Bob Battle's Red Rocket

drive the cable at a slow speed I got lucky-- over the years I had saved a defective Elapsed Time Meter which had a wonderful set of big plastic gears with something like a 200:1 ratio. The kicker here was, I had to use the little 6-volt motor sent with the Arduino kit, so I dismantled the E/T meter and used just the gear cluster and frame; I then had to make a motor mount and I even found a gear in my junk box with the right sized teeth to drive it all. I made an output pulley and covered it with sandpaper to drive the "cable" to the car, which is a heavy-duty black thread wound one turn around the pulley. The motor and gear drive assembly, is hinged so its weight keeps the cable tight, but if it hits an obstruction the cable will slip and not break anything. The pulleys at each end have very little friction-- one even has ball bearings-- so it happily takes very little effort to move the car with the cable and it moves very smoothly.
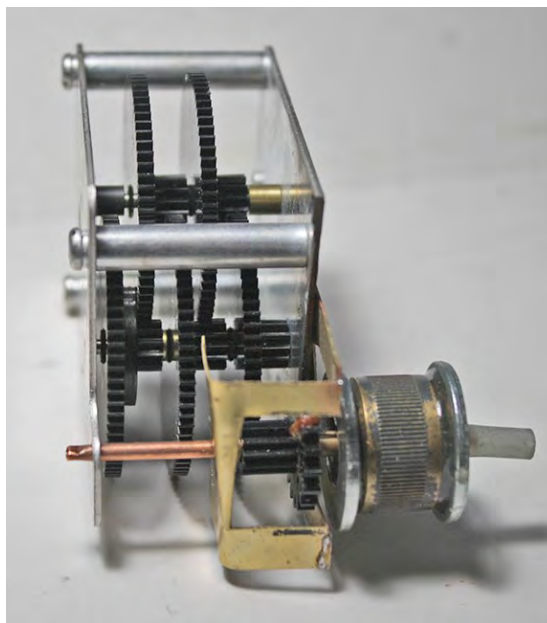
I also wanted to have some sort of sounds on the Rocket and I thought a bell would be nice, to ring twice when the car is about to start, and one bell when it reaches the other end. I had a couple solenoids in my parts box but they just did not have enough "sock" to ring a bell loud enough, so I settled on a Piezo-electric buzzer, to resemble a Klaxon-type horn. You will hear it in the video if you turn up the volume in your speakers. I'd still like to have a bell on it so we'll see.

Now that I had the "hardware" done it was time to start programming the Arduino. Now, I spent over 30 years working on computers for IBM and other companies but the programming language the Arduino uses often made no sense to me at all! I had some ideas on how I was going to enable the car to run up and down the track but I soon found that it wasn't going to be as easy as I thought. Basically, the program format is in two parts-- the Setup portion which runs once at the beginning, then the Run portion which gets repeated endlessly until you turn it off. This conflicted with what I was trying to do: I wanted it to make one pass thru the program and stop, but I could not see how to do this. Finally I joined an Arduino Forum on the Internet and eventually learned that I could write the whole program in the Setup portion and just a do-nothing loop in the Run portion, which I did. I also wanted to use Hall Effect sensors at the top and bottom of the run to stop the motor but that quickly became more complicated than I thought necessary. I eventually did some accurate timing and found out it took exactly 17 seconds for the car to go from one end to the other, either way, so I just wrote the program to start the motor, run a Timer for 17 seconds, and when it times out, turn the motor off. I tried to

Bob Battle's Red Rocket

code it so it would recognize where the car was-- top or bottom-- but I got into Interrupt subroutines and it quickly got so complex that I felt there had to be an easier way. I ended up with the car making one trip and going into an Idle loop; I put a reversing switch to the motor, UP or DOWN-- that I set first. The Arduino has a RESET input that when grounded, will Reset the program so it starts from the beginning. After the first trip, I just set the DIRECTION switch to the way I want to go, then press the RESET button, the program restarts itself and the car makes another trip. This is what I did in the video.

As you can see, this project is not finished--- I still have to make some scenery, platforms & walkways around it-- but that will come soon. I have had some serious health problems recently and I am in my 80s, but it will be a nice summer project and I will send more pictures when it is finished. I have not seen a Funicular Ry. on a layout before so maybe I am a pioneer, but it has been an interesting project and you may see more of it soon.

To View the Red Rocket in Action Click on the Link Below the Picture

https://youtu.be/s1mYAqw-WH8

Bob is retired and lives in the Santa Rosa area. He has been a modeler since 1964 and did contract repairs and decoder installations for Just Trains Hobbies in Concord for about 14 years. He presently does volunteer work at the NWP Railroad Historical Society and was a Motorman/ Instructor at the Western Ry. Museum from 1978 until 2004.

What does a model railroad club, hackers, and the first video game have in common?

Model Railroading and Hacking

In 1946 John Fitzallen Moore & Walter Marvin formed the TMRC (Tech Model Railroad Club) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Club members immediately knew that they wanted some way to control their layout electronically. They salvaged old telephone relay-operated switching equipment and automated their model railroad with modifications to said equipment. The TMRC use of the term "hacker" was applied to someone who used ingenuity to create a clever solution to a problem and was a benevolent term for the person doing the "hack." Members of the club, specifically the "Signals and Power Subcommittee," became proficient at modifying shared, loaned, and acquired equipment to operate the TMRC.

TMRC member using a DEC PDP-1 at the club's layout.

A Model Railroader and *Spacewar!*

Steve Russell, a Tech Model Railroad Club member, started to explore the new DEC (Digital Equipment Corporation) PDP-1 computer that had just arrived at the MIT computer lab. The PDP-1, one of the first minicomputers, had a large oval cathode ray tube and keyboard input. In addition to model trains, Steve loved science fiction novels. One day Steve proposed to other members of the TMRC that he write a video game set in outer space. With the help of other members of the TMRC *Spacewar!* became the first interactive video game. And it was free! Next came the first gamepads. The game spread throughout computer labs at other schools. It wasn't until the 1970s that *Spacewar!*

Steve Russell

migrated commercially to coin-operated video games and eventually home computers. On March 12, 2007, the New York Times reported that *Spacewar!* was named to list the ten most influential video games of time. If so inclined, you can see the original *Spacewar!* video game running on one of the only DEC PDP-1 minicomputers at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California.

Redwood Empire Division Facebook Page

Please check out the RED Facebook page. For more information about the RED Facebook Page, please contact Bill Kaufman (bill@statebelt.org).

Redwood Empire Division Facebook Page

Photo by Ed Merrin

Redwood Empire Division Website

Redwood Empire Division Website

The NMRA Redwood Empire Division

Home | Member Layouts | CALLBOARD | RED Officers | About the NMRA | Contact Us | RED Blog

We are a membership organization of model railroading enthusiasts, part of the National Model Railroad Association which has 18,000 members around the world spread across 5 Regions. The Pacific Coast Region includes California,

Our Division is comprised of NMRA members in Northern California from the following counties:

Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte in the state of California.

Webpage Contents
- List of RED clubs, member's layouts, and nearby attractions
- Access to past issues of the Callboard
- RED Officers and Staff
- About the NMRA
- Contact Us **Redwood Empire Division Website**

Get Past Callboard Issues Here!

Clubs in the RED

Please check the club's websites for information on holiday activities.
Please observe club's COVID protocols.

Coastal Valley Lines Modular Railroad
The Coastal Valley Lines Model Railroad Club of Sonoma County, LTD (CVL) is an association of novice-to-expert model railroaders from around the Sonoma County, California area. We operate our HO modular railroad at public and private events and gather for clinics, work sessions, and regular monthly meetings. Visit the website for additional information. **Coastal Valley Lines Modular Railroad**

Eel River Valley Model Railroaders
It is the purpose of the Eel River Valley Model Railroaders to preserve the rich history of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad and the history of the North Coast of California. The club has a series of modules depicting several areas of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad between Schellvile and Eureka, California. Our goal is to

The Humboldt Bay and Eureka Model Railroad Club
The Humboldt Bay and Eureka Model Railroad Club is the largest, most active model railroad club in Humboldt County. It has existed in the same location for about 40 years. The large layout is freelanced but with many scenes based on NWP locations. The club typically meets each Saturday at 7:30 pm. Visitors are welcome. Open house occurs during Veteran's Day and Rhododendron Days Weekends. The club is located at 7th and A Streets in Eureka, CA.
The Humboldt Bay and Eureka Model Railroad Club

Mendocino Coast Model Railroad and Navigation Company
See logging history brought to life at this walk-around large G-Scale layout representing a history of logging and the railroads located in the Redwood Empire. Over 1300ft of track - equivalent to 6 miles - with views of a mill, logging camp, town, pier, bridges, and trestles.
Hours:10:30 - 2:30 pm: every day except Tuesdays and Thursdays.
Mendocino Coast Model Railroad and Navigation Company

North Coast Historical Model Railroad Society (NCHMRS)
The club operates an HO scale layout based on the Northwestern Pacific Railroad as it ran in the 1950s through Sonoma County to Ukiah. The club is building the layout as a display for the Depot Museum and will be located in the historic Healdsburg Freight Depot. Stop by on the 3rd Saturday of each month as we open the doors to the depot. **North Coast Historical Model Railroad Society**

Redwood Empire Live Steamers Interactive Museum
The Redwood Empire Live Steamers is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Sonoma County's Railroad history through re-creation, railroad equipment, and historic landmarks in miniature.
Redwood Empire Live Steamers Interactive Museum

Continued on next page.

Clubs in the RED

**Please check the club's websites for information on holiday activities.
Please observe club's COVID protocols.**

The Redwood Empire Garden Railway Society
The REGRS is a loosely knit club of garden railroad enthusiasts from areas north of the famous
San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge who share an interest in model trains. Our members are primarily locat-
ed in Sonoma County and Marin County. Contact the club for public tours and shows.
The Redwood Empire Model Railway Society

Our Next Meeting
RED Summer Picnic
Golden Gate Railroad Museum
Saturday, August 19, 2023, Schellville, CA

We have plans to hold this year's picnic at the Golden Gate Railroad Museum in Schellville, CA.
Their collection includes SP 2472, a Baldwin P-8 4-6-2 steam locomotive, SP 3194, an EMD GP-9
diesel locomotive, SP 1487, a Fairbanks-Morse H-12-44 diesel locomotive and SP 6378 and SP
6380, two EMD F-7A diesel locomotives. More to come.

2024 PCR Convention

THE TECH LINE

The 2024 PCR Convention - Silicon Valley, California

Wednesday, April 24 - Sunday, April 28, 2024

Sonesta Hotel, Milpitas, California

Over 30 Layout Tours

75 Clinic Slots

Operating Sessions

Contests

Excursions

Convention Website

https://www.pcrnmra.net/conv2024/

Registration

https://pcrnmra.regfox.com/pcr-2024-convention

2023 NMRA International Convention

Welcome to the 2023 Texas Express

The NMRA International Convention
"Things are always bigger and better in Texas"

August 20 (Sunday) - 26 (Saturday), 2023

Hosted by Divisions 1 & 3 of the Lone Star Region

Convention Location
Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center
1501 Gaylord Trail
Grapevine, TX 76051
Phone: (817) 778-1000

Online registration
https://www.2023texasexpress.com/registration.html

Printable mail-in registration
https://www.2023texasexpress.com/forms/
Printable_Registration_Form-v5A.pdf

The Caboose!

Shakespearean Sonnet to Model Railroading
Courtesy of ChatGPT

You've probably heard of A.I. (artificial intelligence) and the various apps that let you "play" with A.I.. I'm always up for something new so I downloaded ChatGPT on my phone. Type in a question or a command and let ChatGPT do the rest. How about a Shakespearean sonnet about model railroading?

Fair model trains, thy tiny wheels doth roll,
Upon the tracks, in miniature delight,
Thy locomotives, engines of the soul,
Bring joy and wonder, capturing our sight.

In splendid scale, thy landscapes do unfold,
Majestic mountains, valleys vast and wide,
Thy craftsmanship, a tale that's often told,
A world within, where dreams and hopes reside.

With steady hand, we guide thee on thy course,
Through tunnels dark and bridges high above,
Thy whistle's call, a sweet melodic force,
Ignites imagination, fills with love.

Oh, model trains, thou art a cherished art,
That captures youthful dreams within our heart.

William Shakespeare