



CALLBOARD

Late Winter 2021

Website: www.pcrnmra.org/redwood/

Points of Interest

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Life at Shafter
by Bob Battles

FALL 2020 CALLBOARD

Welcome!



Zooming with the RED!

Welcome to the Late Winter 2021 Redwood Empire Callboard. My apologies for the late issue. I hope everyone is safe and well and looking forward a better Spring and Summer.

The Winter 202 RED meeting, which took place online, Saturday, February 20th. Twenty people attended the Zoom meeting including four from other PCR. A big thanks to Al Merkrebs for hosting the meeting and to Ed Merrin for acting as meeting emcee. As in previous meetings Show & Tell was the theme. After the attendee introductions, Denni Baumer updated us on the 2022 PCR Convention activities. Nominations were opened for a new Superintendent. There were

no nominations. We proceeded to the Show & Tell part of the meeting with four presentations. A full description of the presentations can be seen on pages 11, 12 and 13. A video of the meeting is available below and on the RED Facebook page. Thanks to Al Merkrebs for hosting the event on Zoom and Ed Merrin for emceeing the Show & Tell part of the meeting.

And finally, we have a special treat courtesy of member Bob Battles. Bob published a story In Western Railroader Magazine titled **Life at Shafter, Nevada - 1947**. His father was an agent with the Western Pacific Railroad and the family all lived in railroad housing in Shafter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qkgjE8e0tE&t=2672s>

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Scott Lockhart
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Director's Report - Giuseppe Aymar

PCR election results are officially tabulated : Chris Palermo is elected for a second term as President as well as Frank Markovitch as Vice President.

Division's member of the Year nomination has been submitted by the Director (yours truly) to PCR's President. Who, who will it be?

As you all know by now the PCR's 2021 Convention in Fresno has been officially cancelled and plans are under way to create a virtual convention in its place.

The 2022 RED's sponsored Convention will kick off in full stride this upcoming April. Typically we used to conduct advance registrations at the ongoing Convention a year ahead. This has always benefitted the Convention Committee by putting necessary monies into the Convention's treasury; I want to remind all members that we will not have the ability to start the registration as usual due to the cancellation of the Fresno Convention, so it becomes of utmost importance that we, RED members, sign up early and give the Committee a sense of potential participation and a budget to work with. I will bring up at the BOD virtual meeting in April the potential for PCR to make an exception and credit RED more funds upfront (to be repaid after the Convention ends) to help us in this unusual time to make up for the lost ability to conduct early registrations. Wish me luck.

Additionally we encourage all RED members to become active in advertising OUR Convention by any means possible since, as already stated, we will not have the typical information booth so prevalent at the prior year's Conventions. The 2022 Convention Committee is looking into ways to establish a strong advertising campaign, but one- on-one word of mouth is still the best way to advertise. If only one person in RED brings in one registrant we will need a second Hotel. So let's pull our sleeves up and go to work to achieve our goal of one registrant per member. Are you with us?

Go RED, Go RED

**Giuseppe Aymar, DDS, MMR
 RED Director**

Superintendent's Report - Scott Lockhart

Dare I say that there is light at the end of the tunnel and it is not an oncoming train? Until we can meet again in person we will continue meeting via our electronic devices. As mentioned previously, the online meetings have allowed members of both the RED and other PCR divisions to attend meetings that they could not have attended without traveling great distances. I have attended online events at both the NMRA and division level and have found them to be very interesting and enjoy watching them from the comfort of my home with, depending on the time of day, enjoying a favorite beverage and snack. Kind of like going to the movies in the good ole days.

Continued on next page.

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I belong to other organizations that have been meeting online and are seriously considering adding online meetings as a normal part of their division meetings throughout the year. I hope to see more clinics, layout tours and other model railroading presentations online. Of course, while this year's PCR and NMRA conventions are going to be online, we hope that by next year we will be able to hold our PCR convention in person.

Nominations are still being accepted for the RED Superintendent position. We have tentatively scheduled online elections this month, with the election results announced in April. The new superintendent will formally take office at the Spring meeting in May.

Take care of yourselves and I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Scott Lockhart
RED Superintendent

Membership Report - Gus Campagna

Based on the January 2020 NMRA report RED membership stands at 115.

Chief Clerk's Report - Dave Grundman

The RED currently has a balance \$5,429 in the division checking account.

Superintendent Nominations

It is time to elect a new Superintendent. If you are interested in becoming the RED Superintendent or would like to nominate someone for the position, please contact me or any of the other RED officers. Be sure to ask the person you are nominating if they are willing to be nominated for the Superintendent's position.

Responsibilities

You will work with the RED staff and members on the quarterly RED meetings, including the summer picnic and four quarterly staff meetings. The RED staff has done a great job moving the division activities online. Everything is in place to continue working online until we get the okay to meet in person.

Please consider becoming the Redwood Empire Division Superintendent! I believe you will find it a highly rewarding experience and a great way to support the model railroading community in the North Bay.



Convention Updates

Rails by the Bay

2021 NMRA National Convention Update



The 2021 NMRA National Convention is now an online event. Visit the website and Facebook page for the latest information.

<https://www.nmra2021.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NMRA-2021-Rails-By-The-Bay-468420130594709>

View the introductory slide show.

<https://www.nmra2021.com/convention-introduction/>

Sugar Pine Centennial 2021

2021 PCR Convention Update



The 2021 PCR Convention has been canceled as an in-person event. Plans are in progress to move to an online convention. Check the convention website for further details.

Sugar Pine Centennial 2021 Convention Website

<http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2021/>

PCR 2022 Convention Update



Mark your calendar! Registration for the 2022 Convention, *Return to the Redwoods*, will open April 21, 2021. Sign up early and get a \$20 discount on a Full Fare Registration. The convention will be held April 21-24, 2022 at the beautiful Doubletree Sonoma Wine Country in Rohnert Park. With ample room for clinics and displays and easy access from Highway 101, this is the perfect spot for PCR/NMRA members to gather once more.



Back by popular demand is an excursion to Sturgeon's Mill, a working sawmill located in western Sonoma County.

RED Member Introductions

Our meetings have traditionally opened with introductions by all members and guests in attendance. We also do this in our online meeting. I thought it might be a good idea to include member introductions as part of the Callboard as many members are not able to attend meetings. Here are our first round of introductions listed in alphabetical order. If you not have submitted an introduction for this issue of the Callboard, please consider doing so in a future addition.

Cliff Baumer

I'm Cliff Baumer, I've lived in Benicia for over 45 years, I model in HO scale. Currently I'm working on getting a layout designed and built in my purpose build train room, a 20 x 20 building in our back yard that I'll call the "West Benicia Station." The layout will be a short line (The Anchor Bay Railway) which interchanges with the SP. It will include a coastal area, a mountain logging area and other features and set in the last 1940 to early 1950 era.



Dave Croshere

I grew up in the coastal towns of Southern Cal. In the mid 80s I was coming up to Sonoma county for business pretty regularly. One day as we were flying home I looked down at the beautiful rural country side and thought what a neat place to live. As we reached the LA area with the mass of humanity and the smog it became a strong desire to move up here. In 1989 that happened and we settled in Sebastopol. We are still in the same hillside house 31 years later.

I have always been interested in modeling hobbies; planes, trains, boats ,cars. Sometime in the mid 90s my brother called and asked if I wanted my old train stuff. A friend and I had small HO layouts in our early teens. At about the same time my father-in-law wanted me to take his small HO collection. I can see now I was going down this model train path but the desire hadn't caught on yet.

I had been creating a storage room under my house and later found a space for my youngest son's train next to the garage. Not surprisingly I was becoming more and more interested in this hobby. My father had always had a subscription to Model Railroader magazine and he had built a couple of HO train cars. I started to buy current issues of MR. I had know about NMRA and considered joining to receive their magazine. Unknown to me by joining NMRA I became a RED member also. Reading the Callboard I was interested in going to quarterly meetings but it always seemed there was conflict that required a father's attention. One notice about a picnic at the Western Railroad Museum caught my eye and I decided to go. I met Gus and Steve and Ron and Ed and Verne. I had no idea there were so many interested in model trains in this area. As I was driving home from that picnic I decided I was going to expand the area devoted to trains and build a layout under my house. That was sort of my intro into this model railroading hobby that has happily usurps so much of my time.

RED Member Introductions

Joan Fleck

I have been a model railroader since the summer of 1996, when my eight-year-old son and I encountered the modular club, Coastal Valley Lines at a public show. We enthusiastically joined, and enjoyed many years of fun together. I have been an active member since, and am also working on an HO scale home layout, which is a fictitious, and eclectic mix of road names and sceneries.

Dave Grundman

I currently serve as the Chief Clerk/Paymaster for RED, however there has not been much to do during this pandemic.

I was born in Wisconsin, my father in Minnesota, and my mother in Iowa, where I spent some of my early years near the railroad in our little town of Duncombe, Iowa.

I model the Great Northern, belong to the Great Northern Railroad Historical Society, attend their annual conventions held somewhere along the original route, and hear some of the most outrageous railroading stories from many of the past employees.



I even met the great-great grandson of James Hill who started the GN. They did a survey once and found the about 80% of the members are really model railroaders with the balance being past employees.

Why the GN? As an Army brat, I often spent my allowance etc. on models. One day I saw a GN Athearn train set in the PX. I put it on layaway, paid it off and the rest you know.

My layout takes a lot of liberties in terms of authenticity, however some of the structures are accurate for GN as are a number of locomotives and rolling stock. The pandemic has provided me with more time to work on the layout and other hobbies (Packard car/clubs, plastic models, and engineering projects for our church. There is always something to do when time is available.

Ron Kaiser

Hi, I'm Ron Kaiser, an HO modeler of the Western Pacific Feather River crossing in 1952. The 1200 square foot train room allows lots of room for operating sessions. The current layout was first built in 2002 and after, but was cut apart, moved and expanded into its current space in Western Santa Rosa in 2013. I enjoy the modeling and scenery activities and rely on friends for the technical and electrical stuff.



RED Member Introductions

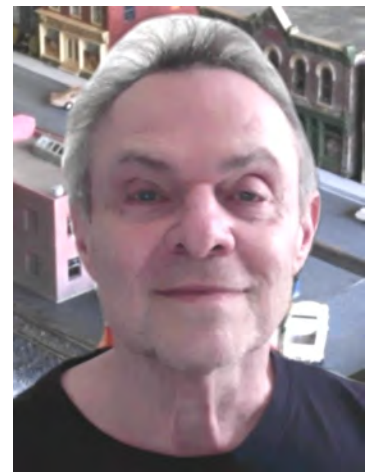
Scott Lockhart

I am interested in Santa Fe power, primarily the diesel locomotives wearing the Warbonnet color scheme. Streamlined steam engines are another interest. I do not have a layout and rely on the charity of others for permission to run "foreign" power on their layouts. As the picture the picture shows, my interests in model trains started fairly early. I really become an active model railroading during the late '90s as a member of the Sonoma County Model Railroad Society. Since then I have taken part in Redwood Empire Division activities as Superintendent and working on RED convention activities. My current project is modifying an On30 Bachmann 2-6-0 steam engine to a Camelback design.



Al Merkrebs

I had a Lionel 027 4 foot x 8 foot set in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when I was 10-14 years old. I moved to Santa Rosa from Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1976. I found and joined the Coastal Valley Lines (CVL) modular HO railroad group in 2011. I installed three CVL modules, measuring 12' x 2 1/2', in my one-car garage and I'm operating an HO industrial switching layout on it, using car cards and waybills. I joined the NMRA in 2014. I am currently the Activities chair for the Redwood Empire Division, and the Clinics chair for the Pacific Coast Region 2022 convention.



Dan Obermeyer

Dan Obermeyer from Glenhaven on the Northshore of Clear Lake. I model in HO the Northern Pacific and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific (it wasn't call the Milwaukee Road officially until after my era of the early 1940's). I'm building my multi-deck layout in a 27' by 31' room over the garage. The first level has the mains down and running. The region I model is western Montana from Logan to Garrison with both NP mains through Helena and Butte, with Milwaukee paralleling from Lombard to Garrison through Butte. I'm into prototype modeling and operations. I lived in and around that region for 40 years before moving to California.



RED Member Introductions

Bob Osborn

I am an HO scale modeler with a main interest in operations. I model the Chicago & Mackinac Railroad (C&M), which is a proto-freelanced railroad following the ex-GR&I/Pennsylvania Railroad line from Grand Rapids to Mackinaw City Michigan in the summer of 1967. The C&M is an operations oriented railroad, (hosting well over 100 operating sessions over the years) and began in a Michigan basement back in 1978. It substantially reduced in size upon my move to California in 1988 and further diminished in size in subsequent moves and current exists only in my memory.

I have been a member of the PCR, Coast Division for many years and currently hold the position of PCR Treasurer. I moved to RED territory (Rio Vista, Solano County) last summer, where I am planning a final iteration of the C&M, smaller, but hopefully better than its predecessors.

Neal Rogers

Born in the Bay Area and raised in Windsor, I have been a railfan as long as I can remember. My most memorable trip was in 1969, as a Boy Scout, riding overnight from Oakland to Seattle, then to Idaho on the Southern Pacific. I have been modeling more than casually for the past 4 years. My primary scale is HO, with an emphasis on the Northwestern Pacific in Sonoma County. I have also recently started modeling in N scale, with an emphasis on the Southern Pacific. In addition to RED, I belong to the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Historical Society and the Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society. I have a special fondness for the Espee, as my great grandfather was a brakeman for the SP in Oakland in the 1880's and '90's, and my nephew worked for the SP and UP for over 30 years.



Doug Smith

I'm a transplanted Coast Division member, joining RED when I moved to Santa Rosa in September 2019. I had to take down my HO scale transition era railroad for the move, but I get to re-create it in a new and different space – eventually. The modeled location was where Norfolk and Western and Southern Railways hand off to each other at Bristol on the Tennessee/Virginia border. So operations included steam and diesel, main and branch lines, yard and engine terminals. With Coast I was Superintendent for 3 years, stepping back when I moved here. Also co-chair of the 2020 PCR convention which almost happened. Retired since 2012. NMRA member since 2014. My wife Kathy and I live in the Oakmont area of Santa Rosa.



RED Meeting Show & Tell

Dave Sheber

I model HOn3 and HO around the WWII era. From Coastal California to the High Sierras using a lot of loaned Colorado equipment. My layout is a double decked pike with a small helix for the narrow gauge hiding behind and under the sawmill. There is about 87 feet of HOn3 mainline 20ish feet of standard gauge. I run DCC via Digitrax and JMRI, when I can get the computer working. The layout is located in a small depot in my backyard in Windsor and is always available for visitors to enjoy.



RED Member Introductions

Tom Swearingen

I'm Tom Swearingen, and I model the Southern Pacific, circa 1967, from Martinez to Oakland, in HO scale. I use Digitrax DCC, and the layout was designed for group operations. I just recently began adding scenery, and I welcome visitors (post pandemic!).



David Turner

David Turner, of Santa Rosa, models the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway, as well as, its parents, GN and NP; writes the modeling column for the SP&S Historical Society's Quarterly Journal; works in the archive of the NWP Historical Society; maintains the NWP display layout at Santa Rosa Visitors Center; is the Company Store Manager of the 2022 PCR Convention Committee; has no layout only a test track at home; enjoys operation sessions whenever possible. (Photo taken at an op session in San Jose.).



Paul Weiss

I have been a modeler since my teen years and am currently working on a bucket list project, a large operations focused layout based on the Central Vermont RR in southern New England circa 1956. When the project began in 2016, we hadn't identified a prototype, so this is all new territory to me and my many collaborators. The layout building is in Novato. We had the good luck of being featured in the Jan 2021 NMRA magazine. More at www.cvrailroad.com.



RED Meeting Show & Tell

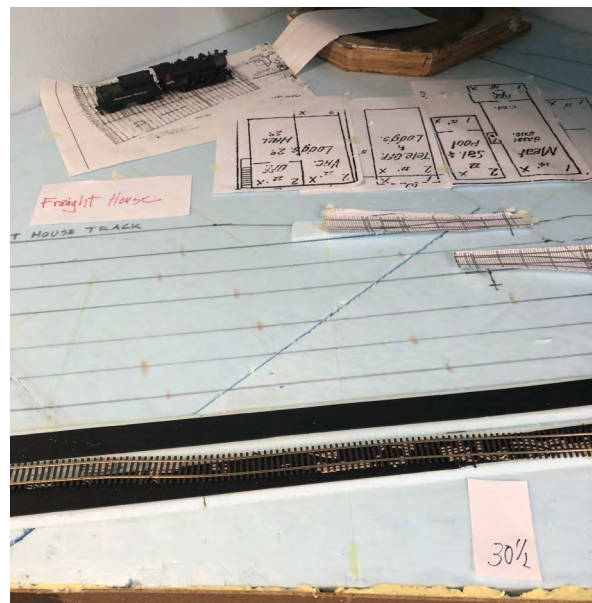
David Norris

Front Range GP7 NWP 426 decorated as if NWP had their own rolling stock painted in same green as steamer NWP 112. As with my switch engine SW7 NWP 399, it also shows "what if" NWP had their own roster in their own colors. If you look closely, you may notice that the engineer is female. Once when NWP 426 was pulling a lumber train, a little girl saw it passing by and shouted, "Look, a girl pulling a train!"



Dan Obermeyer

Dan Obermeyer gave an update on the work he has been doing on his Northern Pacific/Milwaukee Road layout located in Montana. He showed the research and beginning work on the Logan Montana part of his layout and on to the staging areas.



RED Meeting Show & Tell

John Huckaby

John Huckaby gave a brief overview of his layout, his operations and including descriptions of many of his great modified and scratch built buildings.



Online Model Railroading

National Model Railroad Association

The NMRA provides a vast source of model railroading resources for it's members.

<https://www.nmra.org/>

NMRA Video Library

A comprehensive library of videos covering all facets of model railroading. You must be a member to access this website.

<https://www.nmra.org/members/videos>

National Convention Clinic Videos

A source for 147 videos presented during National Conventions. You must be a member to access this website.

<https://www.nmra.org/clinic-videos>

Special Interest Groups

Information about railroad and model railroad organizations which have chosen to join the NMRA Special Interest Group Program.

<https://www.nmra.org/special-interest-groups>

Forums

Discussions about the NMRA and its organizational structure, Education and Standards, model railroading, prototype railroads and more. You must be a member to access this website.

<https://www.nmra.org/forum>

NMRA Data Sheets

One of the benefits of membership in the NMRA is access to the series of Datasheets which have been compiled over the years. You must be a member to access these website.

<https://www.nmra.org/members/legacy-data-sheets>

<https://www.nmra.org/members/data-sheets>

NMRA Turntable

The NMRA's Turntable is a monthly publication which, like a railroad turntable, will lead you in several directions on the internet. This e-publication is a collection of railroad and model railroad videos, podcasts, websites, and/or other information freely available on the internet that may be of interest to members.

NMRA Partnership Program

A list of companies that give NMRA members discounts for buying their products when using a special discount code. Members can visit the Partnership Page to view the list of companies participating in this program.

<https://www.nmra.org/partnerships>

(continued on the next page)

Online Model Railroading

National Model Railroad Association

NMRA Live Programs

The NMRA presents live video programs that cover a wide variety of topics. As a member of the NMRA, you will receive notification of the live programs. Many of the video programs are recorded if you missed the live presentation.

Social Media

The NMRA is available through many social media platforms.

NMRA Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/NMRA.org/>

NMRA YouTube Page

<https://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGModelRailroading>

NMRA Twitter Page

<https://twitter.com/nmraonline>

NMRA Instagram Page

https://www.instagram.com/nmra_online/

NMRA Pinterest Page

<https://www.pinterest.com/nationalnmra/>



Pacific Coast Region—NMRA



The PCR has also moved to more online activities, especially staff meetings. All indications are that online meetings are working well and will continue until the pandemic finally subsides. The Pacific Coast Region website provides links to all PCR Divisions as well as all PCR documentation, contact information, Branchline newsletter access, PCR calendar, and convention clinics.

<http://www.pcrnmra.org/>

PCR - Clinic Presentations

The PCR provides a broad selection of clinics from PCR conventions going back to 2013. Presentations are available to download as PDF files.

<http://www.pcrnmra.org/pcr/clinics/clinics.shtml>

PCR Branch Line Back Issues

Branch Line back issues going back to 2001.

<http://www.pcrnmra.org/pcr/branch/branch.shtml>

PCR Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/pcrnmra/>



The Coast Division hosts interactive Saturday Morning Virtual Zoom Meetings at 9:00 am, Saturday mornings twice a month. The meetings will generally include one or more segments of Layout Tours, Clinics, Show and Tell, or general Discussion. Please visit their website for more information.

Website: <http://www.pcrnmra.org/coast/>



Daylight Division - PCR DaylightDivisionPCR@groups.io

The Google group supports discussion, image, and file-sharing activities of the Daylight Division of the Pacific Coast Region of National Model Railroad Association, Inc., a California nonprofit corporation dedicated to promoting education, social activities, achievement, and contests the hobby of model railroading.

Google groups: <https://groups.io/g/DaylightDivisionPCR>

Website: <http://www.pcrnmra.org/daylight/>

Pacific Coast Region—NMRA



The Redwood Empire Division has started hosting Show & Tell Zoom meetings. Thanks to Al Merkrebs for taking the initiative to host the first meeting. We have had online two meetings and will continue with them until we can meet in person.

A RED Facebook page has been created to provide another online venue for members to share their modeling activities. This site is available to all NMRA members.

RED Facebook page: [Redwood Empire Facebook Page](#)

RED Website: <http://www.pcrnmra.org/redwood/>



Website: <http://www.pcrnmra.org/sierra/index.html>

Other Resources

Online resources are growing every day. Here are just a few.

YouTube

YouTube provides videos covering every conceivable model railroading topic, including tutorials by many manufacturers. There are many amateur tutorials as well, some better than others, so be prepared to do a bit of searching to find the answer to your question. YouTube also provides access to museums, tourist railroads, etc.

Hobby Magazines

Most hardcopy and online magazines provide access to information and tutorials. A few are free, and some require a subscription. Don't limit yourself to just model railroading publications. Other modeling magazines are a gold mine of information, especially in painting and finishing techniques, dioramas, tools, photographing models, and the list.

Modeling and Historical Societies

Many model railroad and historical societies provide a wealth of information particular to a specific railroad.

They also offer access to many museums and private archives, many of which continue to move their documentation and photos to digital format for online access.

Public Model Railroad Layouts

Many large public model railroad layouts may also have archived information on their layouts' building, design, and operation. For example, the Golden State Model Railroad Museum provides information about their layout and links to prototype layouts and museums.

Redwood Empire Division Facebook Page

The RED has a Facebook page. If you have contributed to this issues Show & Tell section please consider contributing your modeling activities to the Facebook page. This is just another way to share model railroading with other model railroader. The web page is open any NMRA member.

Redwood Empire Division - PCR/NMRA

Private group

About

Discussion

Rooms

Members

Events

Photos

Watch Party

Moderate Group

Group Quality

Search this group

Shortcuts

Redwood Empire Divisi...

About

Discussion

Rooms

Members

Events

Photos

Watch Party

Moderate Group

Group Quality

Search this group

Shortcuts

Redwood Empire Divisi...

Write Post

Create Room

Photo/Video

More

Write something...

Photo/Video

Create Room

Watch Party

More

NEW ACTIVITY

Scott Lockhart

2m

The Union Pacific rostered GTEL (gas-turbine electric) locomotives from 1949 until final retirement in 1970. Built by GE, the locomotives used Bunker C heavy fuel oil to fire the GE Gas Turbine prime mover. Athearn produced models of the second and third generation gas-turbines. The second-generation locomotives were called "Verandas", because of the open walkways on each side of the car body. I am updating the model with a Tsunami2 decoder that includes UP gas turbine specific sounds with a Tsunami Current Keeper. I am replacing all of the bulbs with LED's, adding marker and number board lighting, and a new speaker.

UNION PACIFIC

POPULAR TOPICS IN POSTS

Manage

Show & Tell (0)

INVITE MEMBERS

Embed Invite

+ Enter name or email address...

INVITE FRIENDS

Ask your friends to join the group and add to the discussion.

Karen Lockhart

Invite

Giuseppe Aymar

Invite

Gus Campagna

Invite

MEMBERS

24 members

DESCRIPTION

Edit

First things first. This is a private group. Only members can see... See More

GROUP TYPE

General

LOCATION

Edit

Petaluma, California

RECENT GROUP PHOTOS

See All

Clubs in the RED

**Due to COVID-19, please contact the listed clubs before planning a visit.
The RED is not responsible for changes to listed schedules.**

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 Railroad

It is the purpose of the Eel River Valley Model Railroad 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 Schellville and Eureka, California. Our goal is to preserve the rich heritage of the railroad and the North Coast through these representations of the past. Please go to the club's website for information on visiting the layout.

[Eel River Valley Model Railroad](#)

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](#)

Napa Valley Model Railroad Historical Society

The Napa Valley Model Railroad Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit organization that operates a 4600 square foot scale model railroad exhibit representing the Napa Valley's agricultural and industrial heritage. Check their Facebook page for open house dates and times.

[Napa Valley Model Railroad Historical Society](#)

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](#)

Continued on the next page.

Clubs in the RED

**Due to COVID-19, please contact the listed clubs before planning a visit.
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Redwood Empire Live Steamers Interactive Museum

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

[Redwood Empire Live Steamers Interactive Museum](#)

Sonoma Short Line Modular Group

The Sonoma Short Line modular group is loosely based on the Southern Pacific branch line from Sonoma through Glen Ellen and Melitta Station to the old Santa Rosa Depot on North Street. They are currently looking for new members. Contact Steve Lewis for more information. Phone: 707-527-0396,

Email: sdlewis@csl1.net

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 located in Sonoma County and Marin County. Contact the club for public tours and shows.

[The Redwood Empire Model Railway Society](#)



WESTERN RAILROADER

A Publication of the Pacific Coast Chapter, Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc.

FOUNDERS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

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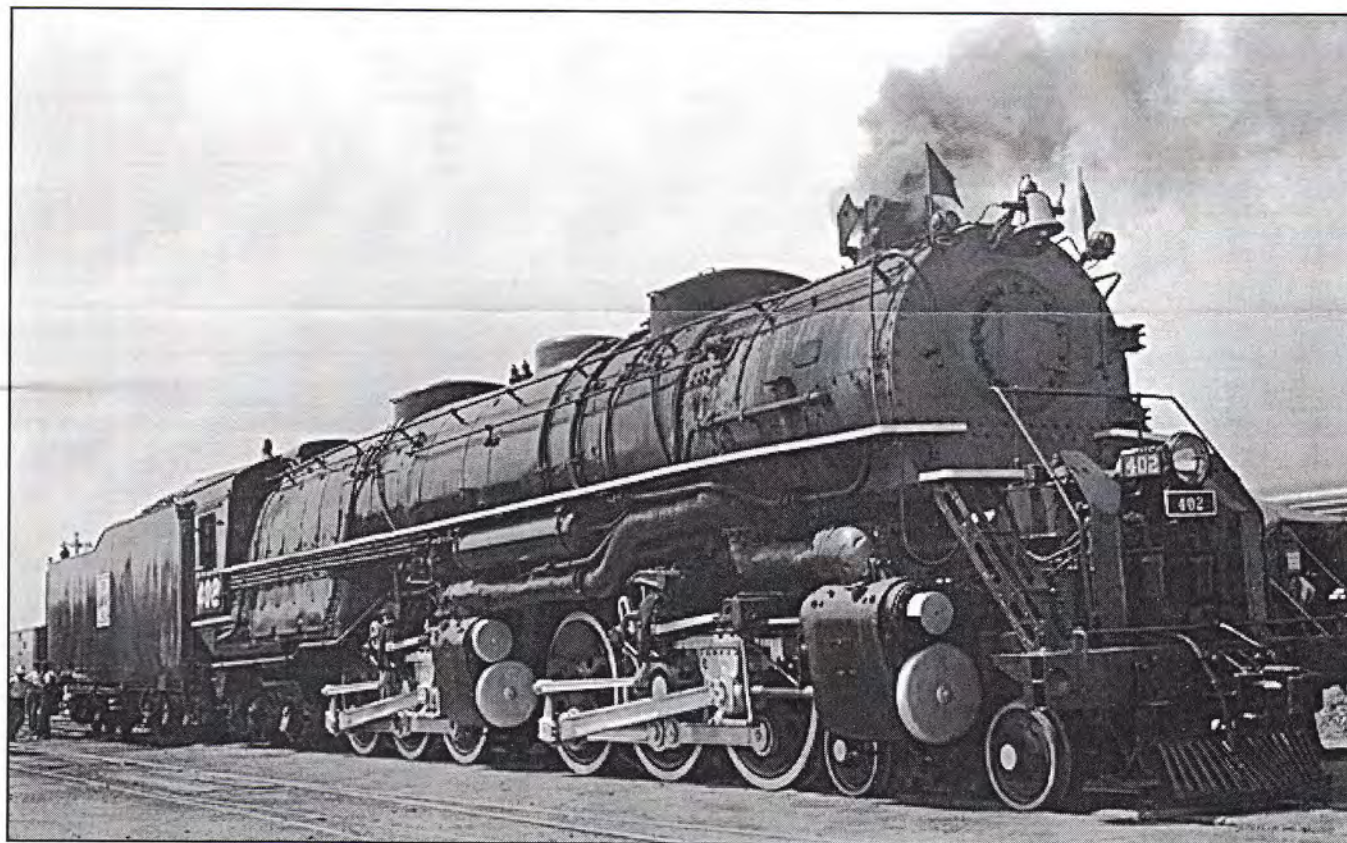
THE SAN FRANCISCO CABLE CAR MUSEUM

March / April 2010

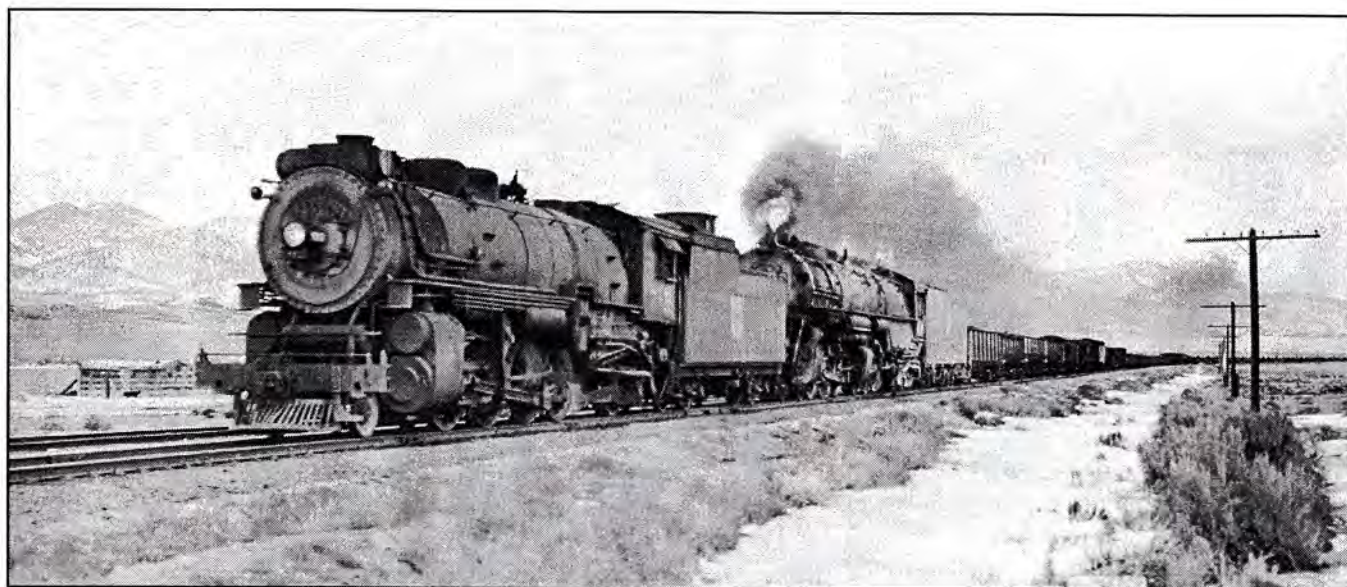
Number 694

LIFE AT SHAFTER, NEVADA—1947

By Bob Battles



Western Pacific No. 402 is seen on display at the Chicago Railroad Fair in June 1949 to participate in the pageant "Wheels-a-Rolling." The WP purchased seven of these 4-6-6-4s, No.s 401-407, from Alco in 1938. Basically, they were essentially copies of early UP Challengers. These coal burners were used in freight service on the Eastern Division between Salt Lake City and Elko. Shafter was where the Nevada Northern connected with and crossed the WP as its line continued north to it's SP connection. The WP last used them August and September, 1950. All but the 401 were leased to the Union Pacific where they worked until they were returned to the WP in late November 1950. The WP tried to lease them to other Western railroads but to no avail. All were removed from WP's roster by June 1952 and scrapped. Virgil Staff collection. PCC Archives.



Double header making good time crossing the desert with "Mike" 312 and Challenger type 404 on train No. 61 near Delle, Utah on January 1949. The 312 was the only engine of the 311-315 class to receive a brakeman's "doghouse" on its coal tender. Steam would be gone on the Eastern Division in less than a year and a half. Albert C. Phelps photo.

My Dad, Ben Battles, was a one-time boomer telegraph operator who joined the Western Pacific Railroad in 1941 shortly before the War broke out. In 1942 we joined him in Elko, Nevada after my Mother, Beatrice, twin brother Bruce, sister Rosalie and I moved there from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After Elko, he worked at headquarters in San Francisco, was Freight Agent in Reno for a year and then did a short stint at Garfield, Utah. He bid on the Agent's job at Shafter, Nevada in 1946.

Shafter was the junction of the Nevada Northern Ry. and the WP and had a population of about 30. It was located about 30 miles west of the Utah-Nevada line and the town of Wendover. All WP trains had to stop at Shafter because, we were told, the NN rail line had been laid there first, and therefore their line was superior.

The actual crossing was about 80 yards west of the depot. There was a large coal chute for engines to take on coal and two big wood-

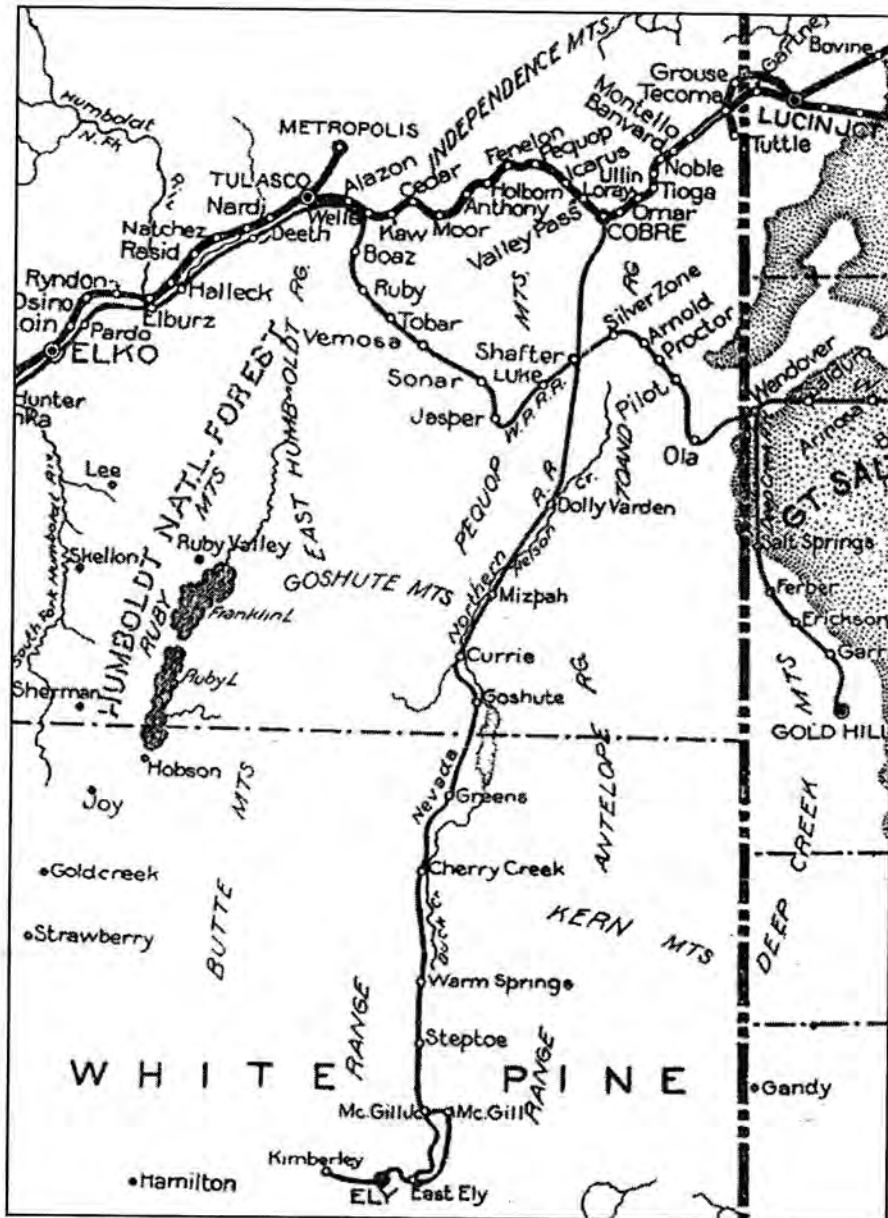
en water tanks, which were used by both railroads. There was also a wye for turning WP helper engines and some stock pens on the tail of the wye. A long passing siding was east of town and of course, an interchange lead. As I recall, the NN trains came up from Ely on Mondays and Thursdays, dropped off some cars and went on to their connection with the SP at Cobre, about 18 miles north. There, they would lay over for the night. They went back to Ely on Tuesdays and Fridays. These were the days of steam power although the WP had purchased a dozen 4-unit FT diesels and they were used on priority freights. More about steam operations later.

As a 13-year old, my life at Shafter was different from any other place we had ever lived, but if you liked trains and didn't mind the desert and periods of solitude, it wasn't a bad place to spend some time. Luckily my twin brother, Bruce and I kept each other company, we had our bikes to ride and were seldom

lonely. My Dad was Agent from early 1946 thru the summer of '47, so while we kept a residence in Salt Lake City for most of this period, we spent a lot of time at Shafter. We lived in the depot quarters, which consisted of two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen.

One of the bedrooms faced towards the tracks so needless to say, this was where my brother and I slept--our folks slept in the back bedroom that was somewhat quieter. There was a sink in the kitchen fed by a company water supply; the sewage was handled by a septic tank out in back which was rather smelly. There was also a shower off the kitchen heated by a separate wood/coal-fired heater. The only toilet was the two-holer outhouse about 20 yards behind the depot. It smelled of Lysol (among other things) and was serviced by the Section gang who occasionally dumped a good dose of lime down the holes.

There was a cook stove in the kitchen along with an icebox. The



stove burned either wood or coal that, along with the ice, were furnished free by the WP. The ice was kept in a semi- underground dirt-covered bunker across the track and came in 25 lb. blocks. Coal and mill blocks (short pieces of 2 x 4 and 2 x 6 finished wood) were also stored in a building nearby. It was one of our chores to keep the wood, coal and ice laid into the kitchen for my Mother to use.

With the huge coal chute for the locomotives, coal was plentiful. As I recall, the depot was of rather crude but sturdy construction with small tongue and groove on the walls and diagonally-laid 1 x 8 flooring covered with linoleum. There was also a rather tall square wood or coal stove in the living room used for heating.

Lighting was by kerosene lamps and Coleman-brand lanterns. We had a large Coleman in the living

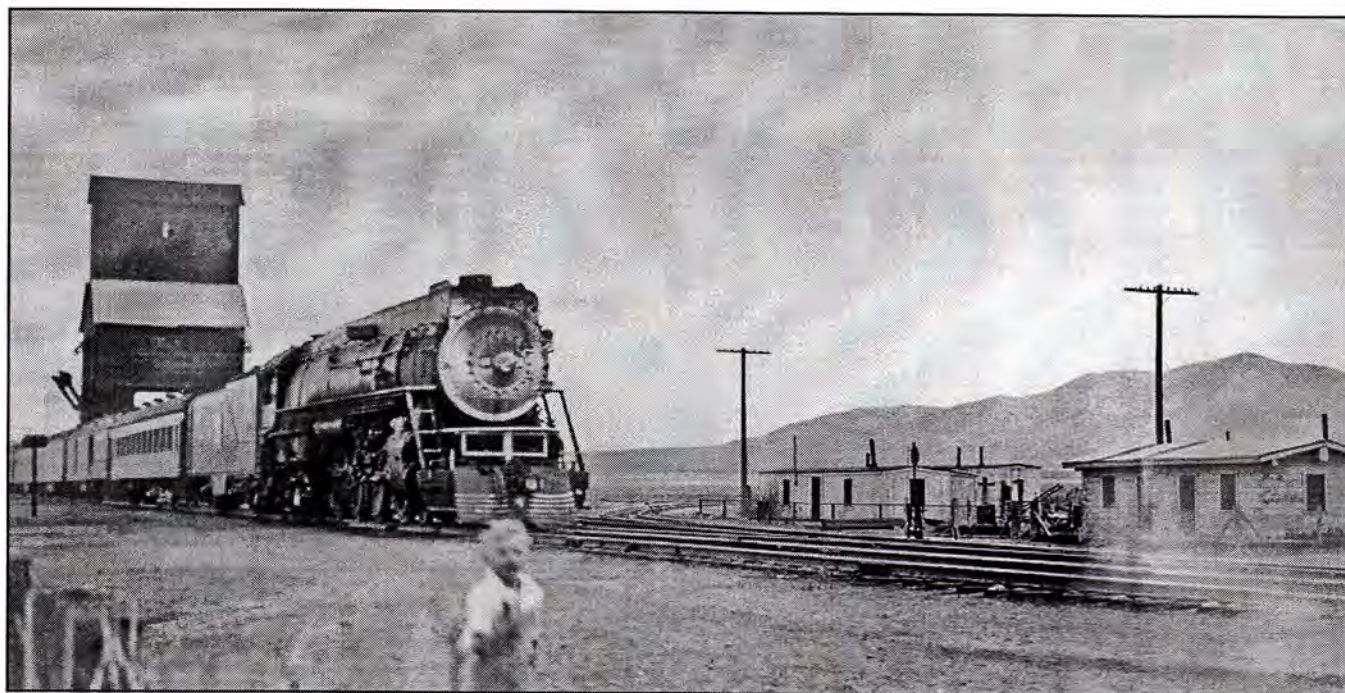
room that gave off plenty of light. There was also a similar one in the depot office. We had several smaller metal kerosene lamps with the glass chimney that were used wherever needed, including trips to the out-house at night.

The company also furnished the kerosene, called "Pearl Oil," and it was stored in a small tank down near the Section House. We also had a big battery-powered radio but evidently there were very few stations near because all I remember was country and western music coming in very faintly and the south-of-the-border stations XTRA, XERB and XEMO.

Since Shafter was around 5000 ft. elevation the climate could be pretty cold in the winter but I don't recall any snowfalls of more than a few inches. I do recall that the wind always seemed to be blowing. It was located in the middle of the fairly flat Steptoe Valley, maybe 15 miles wide east to west, but stretching almost to the horizon to the South. When there were no trains in town, Shafter could be pretty quiet, especially at night.

About the only sounds were the steady mutter of the light plant engine on the side of the Shafter Store, the only building in town with electric lights. The oil lamps in the switch stands and the order board were visible for amazing distances at night, easily 3 or 4 miles. During the day the noisy diesel pump engines used to fill the water tanks or occasionally the coal chute. The Operator fired up the big one-cylinder engine that was used to run the conveyor to fill the coal chute.

The Shafter Store was more of a bar than a store and consisted of one large room with the bar at one end, but it did stock some basic grocery items. The owner and his fam-



Train time at Shafter. The arriving westward Exposition Flyer, No 39, is powered by one of six 4-8-4s the War Production Board allocated to the WP. They were taken from an order for sixteen GS-6s the SP had placed with the Lima Locomotive Works in 1943. The WP numbered them 481-486. Note the WP's coaling tower and one leg of the wye seen just to picture right of the GS-6's pilot. The house is for the section formen's and the other dwelling is for the coal shute operator. The coach ahead of the regular express car was deadheading. Another young resident of Shafter got into the picture.!

ily lived in the rear. From what I saw it also catered to the railroad crews who usually needed lunch or some sort of meal on the run. It also had a pool table in the middle of the room and it was there that my brother and I learned to shoot pool.

There was also a very small Post Office, but all mail came and left on trains 39 and 40, the Exposition Flyer. The school was a small one room building near the water pump with eight kids taught by Miss Lear.

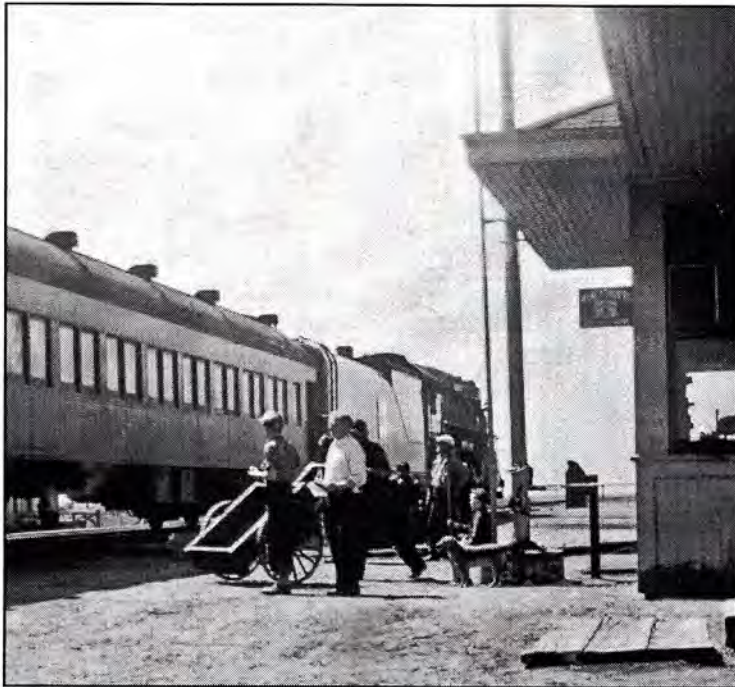
Shafter had no paved roads so driving in the area could be a gamble after a long period of wet weather. The road north was graded as was the one that wandered off to the east towards Silver Zone Pass. Shafter also had its share of drunks and I remember more than one tipsy soul who figured they could make the 12 miles over to the bar at

Oasis on Highway 40 but evidently forgot to check the road conditions. The alkali soil when wet could be like molasses and they usually didn't get a quarter-mile out before they'd be hopelessly mired up to their hubcaps.

A couple times there were cars that sat out there for quite a while until the mud dried and they could either get back to town or continue on their journey. The deep ruts they left in the road lasted for months afterward and were a hazard to other drivers. At times like that the only way into and out of town was by rail. Nevertheless, several people in town had automobiles, but most of them knew when not to drive. One of the vehicles, an old Army Jeep owned by one of the Operators, was the first car my brother and I ever drove.

Living in the depot was interesting for me at that age, and I dare say I learned a lot about railroading there. My Dad worked the day shift but was often pretty busy, so he would not tolerate us playing or messing around in the office, especially when a train had stopped and the crew came in to sign orders, etc. Still, there were quiet times when we could explore the office a little and learn how things worked. For instance, the Nevada Northern had an ancient "crank and holler" telephone system that used an array of wet cell batteries, which sat behind a partition along the west wall of the office.

My Dad had to periodically fill these batteries with some liquid or the NN phone would get so weak no one could hear it. When on rare occasions the NN phone did ring he had to really shout into it and every-



My mother took these three photos (here and on Pg 4). She was at the east end of the depot where our family's living quarters were, seen at the right. After the shot of "39" approaching, she turned around and took the view of the train coming to a stop. That's me by the cart, and my Dad, Ben, is pushing it, as he expected some express to be unloaded. Once he got the express, the train was immediately on its way. The big 23,200 gallon tender did not need replenishing at this stop! The Nevada Northern crossing is about 80 yards ahead of the locomotive.

one in the room had to be quiet so he could hear what was being said. The telegraph sounders chattered their Morse code signals on and off all day and occasionally my Dad would get a telegram he had to type out onto the Western Union form. He could be sitting doing some clerical item and suddenly turn around and start copying down a message or telegram that was coming in. He had that ability to sort of "half listen" to the sounders all the time but ignore all but what was relevant to Shafter.

Sometimes it clattered a lot and when asked, he would say that two Operators at stations miles apart were chatting about something, or there was some domestic trouble somewhere or that the Brass Hats were in the area. (They had some code words for that event, and I wish I had written them down).

There was sometimes talk about the weather when it was out of the ordinary, such as extreme temperatures, rainfall and snow.

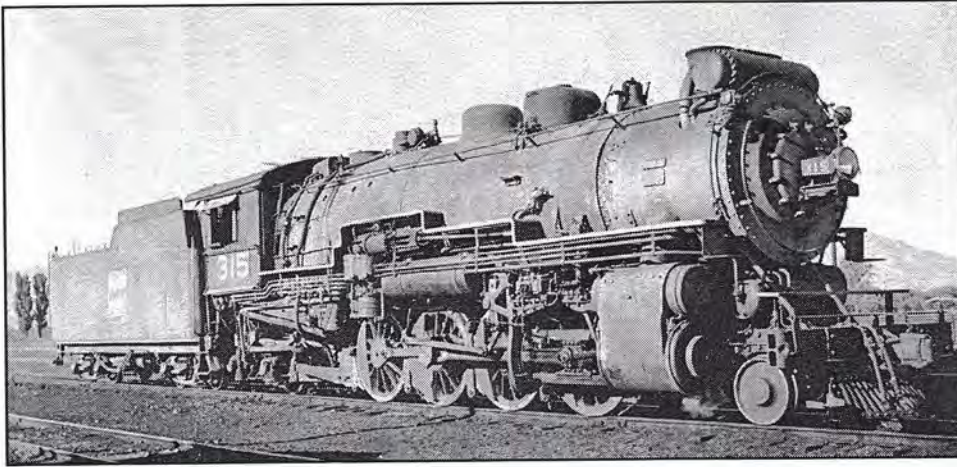
My Dad used a Vibroplex "bug" that was operated horizontally by thumb and forefinger instead of pushing down on it like a regular sending unit. When properly adjusted they could send Morse code at a ferocious rate and when someone on the wire gave him a hard time he didn't think he deserved he would unleash the "bug" on them.

Dad once worked for Western Union relaying telegrams by Morse code all day and later taught school for telegraph operators under the GI Bill, so he was a very fast Morse code operator. Only the best Operators could copy his Code when he went full speed, but I do recall him thoughtfully going slow for some new operator just breaking in.

The WP Dispatcher by then was on a phone line, so train orders were given verbally and copied onto the flimsies on the typewriter, not by Morse code unless the phone line went down. It demanded accurate typing-- if you made a mistake you started a new Form 19 or 31! I soon learned the procedure for filling out train orders, clearance cards, and understanding weightbills.

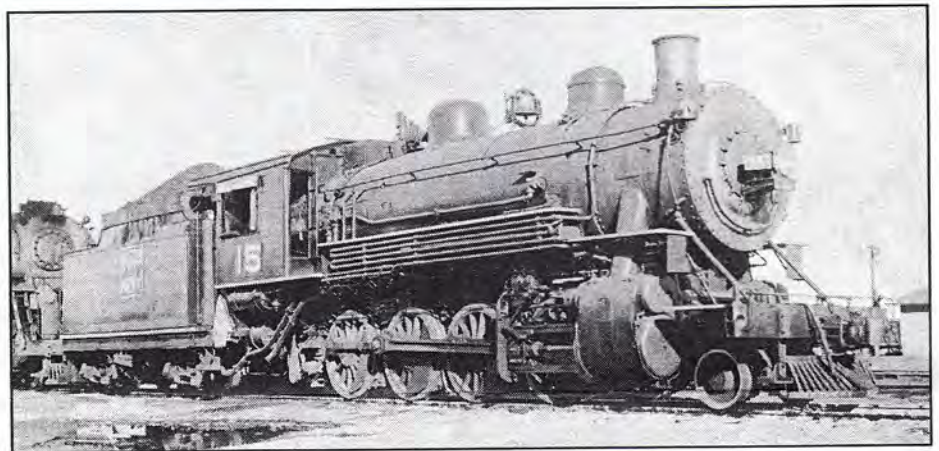
My brother and I also helped out by occasionally riding our bike down to the NN yard and copying down car numbers and noting what track they were on. Sometimes cars for the NN would get "lost" or Dad would need to know what order they were sitting in.

But probably the most exciting and dangerous job he had me do was filling the signal lamp on the order



The WP purchased 2-8-2 MK class Mikados from between 1918 and 1929. They were the mainstay of freight power. No 331 was in the batch built as coal burners and delivered in April 1921. The WP favored the Elesco type feedwater heater seen here. This was the type of steamer I "almost" got a cab ride in. See text. Wendover May 1940. Fred A. Stindt photo.

Consolidation No. 15 was in the first batch of 21 such 2-8-0s received from Baldwin in 1906. It was also a coal burner for use on the Eastern Division where it was used in helper service from Wendover or Elko to Shafter, where they turned on the wye to return to their home terminal. No. 15 had just been shopped at Sacramento when Wilbur C. Whittaker shot it at Wendover in May 1938.



board when the section gang forgot to do it and the flame went out. It was about 20 feet up, and I had to climb the ladder to remove the lamp assembly, climb down and fill it, light it and then climb back up, put it in place, close the door and climb back down. It took a little bit of balance and presence of mind, but I did it and possibly saved my Dad from unnecessarily stopping a train because his signal light was out.

Dad had contracted polio in 1944, so he was rather unsteady on his feet and could never have climbed that far. Two large handles and rods in the bay window inside the office controlled the order signal semaphore blades.

The depot had a waiting room, although it was always kept locked,

by orders from some Brass Hat. One cold winter night some hobo tried to break into the freight house to get warm but the night Operator heard him. He didn't know what to do so he called my Dad and they decided to let him sleep in the waiting room, which had a stove in it. I think he built a fire and got some sleep eventually. They had said he was drunk, but the next morning he was gone, probably on a westbound freight that came through around dawn. Being a hobo in northeastern Nevada in the winter could be a dangerous way of life—you could freeze to death riding in an open freight car! Below-zero temperatures in Elko County were nothing unusual and the winters sixty years ago were noticeably colder than they are now.

Each morning the DS would send out a "Line-Up" to all stations informing them of the trains scheduled for that day, including extras, and about what time they would be called. The two daily passenger trains, numbers 39 and 40, the Exposition Flyer, both came through Shafter during daylight hours and were almost always on time. No. 39 westbound came through around 11 am, and no. 40 came through eastbound around 2 pm. They were always pulled by either a big Lima 481-class 4-8-4, duplicates of the wartime SP GS-6s, or by one of the 170-class 4-8-2s the WP purchased used from the Florida East Coast in 1936. The 481-class engines had considerably more power than the 171-class, but the 4-8-2s still seemed to make the schedule.

Freights were pulled occasionally by a new A-B-B-A set of EMD FT's but mostly by a coal-burning 2-8-2 "Mike" or one of the 4-6-6-4 Mallets of the 401-class. Heavy trains would need a helper sometimes, but there were really no hard and fast rules as to what was used as a helper engine and where. It was not uncommon to see a Mike helping a Mallet or vice-versa or even seeing a 2-8-0 "Hog" get into the act. Many times a helper worked up from Wendover, about 30 railroad miles away and then turned on the wye and went back light, but occasionally they worked clear through to Hogan or Sonar which were near the highest point on the WP, about 15 miles west of Shafter.

I don't recall ever seeing a steam helper with one of the freights heading east. I do remember seeing an occasional westbound with a pusher on the rear. At night, when we would sometimes watch trains out our bedroom window, we could tell if it had a pusher or not by how fast the train was accelerating. Experiencing one of the big Mallets blasting by at about 25 mph with a full throttle from about 30 feet away was a sight and sound not soon forgotten!

Yet all too soon we found ourselves sleeping the night through and even asking our Dad the next morning why no trains went by. He would always answer, "There were (1, 2, 3, some number) that came through!" and we felt cheated that we missed them. I never would have believed we could sleep through a train whistling off and starting up right outside our bedroom window but we did!

The Nevada Northern was an interesting operation. The locals called it "the N and N" but I never saw a locomotive with "NEVADA NORTHERN" painted on it— they all were



No. 907 has an experimental paint job, solid aluminum sides, orange nose with black roof and underbody. Note white stripes on pilot. A track worker on a Fairmont speeder waits to take off after 907 clears Shafter. Author's photograph.

lettered "KCC" on the side of the cab (for Kennecott Copper Corp.) with the big number on the tender. Business was good then and they always came up from Ely with a pair of husky low-wheeled 2-8-0s.

They would bring empties plus lots of hoppers and drop-bottom gondons full of the pungent greenish copper concentrates usually headed for the Garfield Smelter near Salt Lake City. The copper and some of the empties were dropped off at Shafter, but they usually also took some cars up to the SP interchange at Cobre as well. The next day they would bring back more cars from the SP and then pick up loads of building materials, food, coal, oil, general merchandise and whatnot at Shafter going to Ely. They would get coal and water from the WP at Shafter, and yes, almost all of those 2-8-0s were hand-fired.

There were two sidings in the NN yard and they had some complex ways of putting their train together. Eventually it was all in one piece and then the air test was

made, with all air compressors panting steadily. By this time they were north of the WP crossing and the caboos was close to a half-mile away; bear in mind that their trains were often 70 or 80 cars long. When they were ready to go, the real show would start! With the firemen baling coal, the hoggers would back up one or two car lengths to bunch the slack and then with much chuffing and drivers spinning and smoke belching skyward they would attempt to get the whole works moving in the same direction.

It must have been as one slam-bang of a ride back in the caboose as the hoggers alternately bunched and then yanked out the slack. It usually took two or three tries to get it all moving. This was before cushion underframe cars so you could hear the rapid-fire bang-bang-bang of the slack running in or out at least twenty car-lengths away. Eventually the two engines got everything moving and were working wide open blasting towards Ely, but even then I remember seeing the caboose



The Western Pacific was one of the first roads to order diesel freight units from EMD to help relieve war swollen traffic. It took delivery of twelve A-B-B-A sets of FT units between December 1941 and November of 1944. Here a full set, resplendent in its original green and yellow livery comes up to stop at the Shafter Depot in 1947. The fence in the foreground was our "yard." Note the water well and pump house to the left. Author's photograph.

go by so slowly I could have hopped on with no trouble! That must have been a long 123 miles down to Ely and those NN crews obviously put in some long hard hours.

Having a bike to ride gave my brother and I some personal freedom although there was always the chance of a flat tire and there was no service station in town. We rode all around the area, made some trails of our own and would sometimes take some pretty long exploration trips. Once I rode down to the end of the passing track, about a mile, just to see a 2-8-0 "Hog" head back to Wendover after a helper trip. I was not disappointed. He went charging by at a good 35 mph and accelerating!

About the only wildlife we had to contend with were jackrabbits and an occasional lizard. The owner of the store, Joe Thomas, had a couple whippet dogs that would chase, catch and terrorize the jackrabbits just for sport. The water tanks would get huge icicles down the side from leaks in the cold weather, so we would amuse ourselves by throw-

ing rocks at them to see if we could knock any of them loose. Once in a while we would succeed and when the huge icicle hit the frozen ground it would shatter and sometimes we got hit with the fragments. Some were huge and must have weighed over 100 pounds. So life was simple for us in such a small town, but we found ways to have fun.

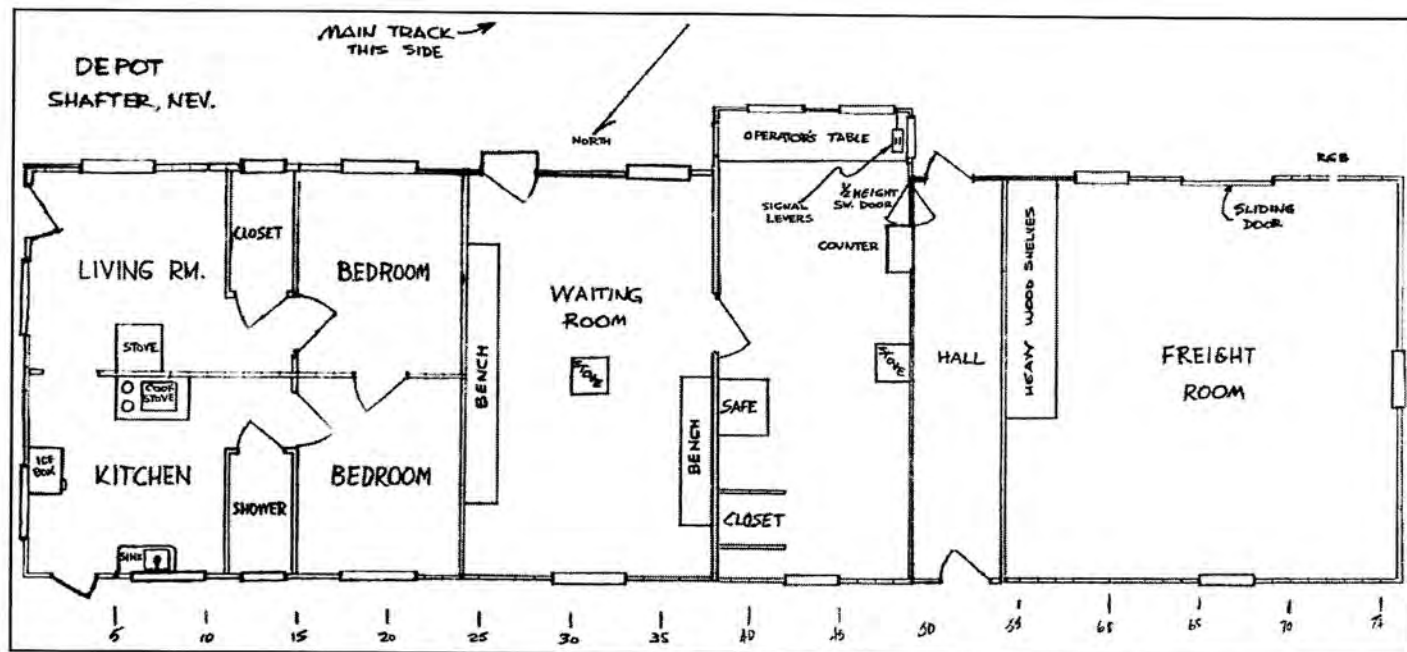
I remember the WP employees as being friendly and helpful almost without exception. Whether this was because my Dad was the Agent, I don't know, but I suspect it wouldn't have mattered. One time I was standing next to an FT diesel on a westbound when the Hogger asked me if I'd like to see inside. "Sure!" I replied, and I climbed up the ladder. He then asked if I'd "like to see a big Chevy engine", but when he opened the door into the engine room the noise was so deafening I only went in a couple steps and came back out!

Another time a crew asked me if I'd like to come up in the cab of their 2-8-2 helper engine. I climbed up and looked around, feeling the heat

from the backhead and gazing at the array of gauges, valves and levers. My Dad was on the ground next to us, so the Fireman said I could ride up to Sonar and back if I wanted, to which Dad and I nodded YES.

But before we could leave, my Mother got wind of it and emphatically vetoed the whole idea, an act for which I never forgave her. She ruled the roost and would not have HER son riding off to parts unknown in a dirty dangerous ramshackle steam locomotive! Needless to say, I was totally crushed.

My Dad bid on the Agent job in Reno in July 1947, so we left Shafter and moved there, again. By then we were starting the 9th grade, and I'm happy to report that we stayed in Reno and my brother and I were able to graduate from Reno High School. We even renewed a few friendships that we had made from the first time we lived there. Dad had to spend a year or so "commuting" to Hawley around 1951 and to Elko in 1953 and then got on as Agent in Gerlach, NV in 1954. We maintained a house in Reno until 1956 when my brother and I both went into the Navy.



I drew the plan of the Shafter depot to show its layout and the relative size of our small living space, about one-third of the building. As I recall, the station was dark yellow-gold with brown trim. Bob Battles.

Dad retired from the WP at Gerlach in June 1958 after seventeen years and they moved to Florida. He passed away in Sept. 1968 at age 75. Railroading in that era was a hard life and every year or so you usually were bumped from your present job and never knew where you would be living next. My Dad didn't seem to mind it much, but my mother grumbled about it quite often.

By the time I was out of the Navy in 1960, I briefly considered hiring on as a Signal Maintainer, but op-

portunities for a less nomadic indoor job were available elsewhere and I took them.

I wouldn't have missed living in Shafter for anything as a youngster, but we moved many times, and my brother and I went to nine different schools in twelve years. We never seemed to get any "roots" or make long-term friends--living in Reno from 1947 until 1956 was the longest we had ever lived in one place.

Nevertheless, maybe we tend to forget the bad and remember the good,

but the memories I have of growing up around the WP seem mostly good. Except for that time my Mother killed a good cab ride in a big Mike!

We want to thank Bob Battles for putting together this fascinating look at railroad history as seen from a different perspective. The photographs are also very rare. In looking through many books about the WP, I found no photos at this isolated station in the post war steam era. Actually seeing the buildings is interesting. Rare material indeed. Bob Church.



Cobre Then. Its July 7, 1941 and the *Challenger*, Train No. 87, has stopped at Cobre, Nevada, for a connection with Nevada Northern's Train No. 4. That train and NN's ten-wheeler No. 40 are at the south side of the depot. Cobre was about 18 miles north of the NN's crossing with the WP at Shafter. The GS-3 still has its *Daylight* livery. A 2-20-2 is point helper for the climb westward to Valley Pass to gain the summit of the Pequop Mountains. Albert C. Phelps photo.