



# SHORT LINE

Sierra Division \* Pacific Coast Region \* National Model Railroad Association



The World's Greatest Hobby!

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## MODESTO & EMPIRE TRACTION CO.

by Mike McReynolds (photos by Gary Ray)

The **M&ET** had its humble beginnings in 1911 as a four mile passenger trip to bring people from several points in Modesto to the **A.T. & S.F.** depot in Empire. It was originally called the **Modesto Inter-urban Railroad**. Its first motive power was a battery powered "street car" type vehicle. By the end of 1911 the railroad had been incorporated as the **Modesto & Empire Traction Co.**

The first locomotive was a **Hall Scott** gasoline powered unit that looked like a flat car with a cab in the middle. In the early 20's, they began buying steam locomotives. These ranged from 0-4-0's to 4-6-0's. Most were purchased second hand from the **Santa Fe**. In 1947 the line bought its first **General Electric** 70 ton switcher. These nimble little workhorses developed 600 horsepower and were ideally suited for the sharp curves and 40 ft. boxcars of the day. These locos became the mainstay of the railroad, eventually becoming the largest fleet of 70 tonners in the country. After the **GE's** arrived, the steam engines were used as auxiliary steam generators for

some of the canneries on the line before they were scrapped or sold.

In the early 2000's the company began looking for more powerful locos. The increasingly heavier loads and bigger railcars were taxing the little **GE's** and spare parts were getting extremely hard to find. They tested several types of power including battery powered "green kids" before settling on **Railpower's** 2000 horsepower "genset" locos. These engines are



Inside the new "genset" locos.

## Sierra Division Callboard

PCR business or questions:

### PCR President

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Sierra Division business, questions, or  
to volunteer to give a clinic, for mem-

bership problems,

### Superintendent

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[scooter923@att.net](mailto:scooter923@att.net)  
(916) 351-9885

To volunteer your layout for a tour or  
"Timetable" entries:

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Articles, photos, tips, or ideas are heartily encouraged and will be enthusiastically accepted! The preferred format would be in Rich Text Format (RTF), with photos as JPEGs, but we will accept any format (from a PC or Mac; MS Word, Simple Text, typed, or handwritten). Send it to your editor by regular mail to **SHORT LINE**, 6601 Ray Family Lane, Magalia, CA 95954 or by email to [gerber1926@gmail.com](mailto:gerber1926@gmail.com).

## From the Superintendent

The days are getting longer and the rain still continues to chase the sun, but we are gradually entering into glorious spring here in northern California. After a wonderful meet in Modesto, I am excited about our **next meeting on Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, in Ione, CA.** I have been working with **Larry Beardsley, Dan Evans, and Grant Vogel** to put together a day of fun for you and your families. We will be holding a 1-2 hour meeting in Ione in conjunction with the annual **Ione Railcar and Motorfest.** If you would like to take a ride on the rails of the **Amador Central Railroad** between Ione and Martell, please plan to come early and purchase your tickets for a memorable experience. (**Ticket sales begin at 7:00 and sell out quickly so be there early if you plan on riding.** 3 runs including a twilight run —ed.)

Speeder rides begin around 9:00-9:30 Saturday morning and cost only \$ 25.00 for over a two hour ride from Ione and return. Many activities will be available for you in addition to the Speeder Rides and the meeting: **Antique Cars, Craft and Railroadiana Vendors, California Department of Forestry, Live Music, and Operating Model Railroads.**

The address is **426 S Mill St, Ione, CA.** Parking is Free. Sierra Division is organizing a BBQ lunch from **Dickies BBQ.** **If you are interested, please drop me an email at [scooter923@att.net](mailto:scooter923@att.net), or leave me a message on my cell at 916-812-8767 no later than May 17<sup>th</sup> so that we can get a proper headcount.** The cost for a fabulous BBQ lunch with water or a soda will be only \$ 5.00 per head. Please bring cash. **Lunch will be**

**served between Noon and 12:30, with our Meeting beginning around 1:30 PM in the Gymnasium.** If ordering lunch, come to the gym at 12:00 and see Bob Warner or myself. Don't be Left Out! **Please contact me by May 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Our meeting will include a presentation on the history of the newly formed railroad and the status of the restoration of the old depot in Ione. My hope is to also have a "How to Clinic" along with our Door Prize Drawing and our contests (see page 8). The **Sacramento Modular Railroaders** will also be operating their layout and they have invited any of you to participate in operations after the meeting.

As we look towards the rest of the year, we plan to visit a couple of great layouts in the Chico area in August, and have our annual business meeting on the docket for October. I hope to see a few of you in **San Luis Obispo** (see page 9) at the end of the month.

Until next time.....Happy Railroad-ing! Your Humble Servant,

**Scott McAllister**



Photo courtesy of Recreational Railroad Coalition  
Historical Society—Amador Central Railroad

# From the Editor

## THANKS TO THOSE WHO SHARE

An editor's job is made easier by those who volunteer to contribute articles. The past year **Jim Petro, Dan Carlin, Jeff Leonard, Russ Wood, Robert Pethoud, Mary Moore-Campagna, Mike McReynolds, David Mussatti, Dick Karnes, Len Raley, Norm Morris, Ryan Dora, Klaus Keil** and **Ben Cantu** have generously shared with us. I'm always looking for material, whether modeling or prototype. Never written before, no problem. I can help with your article to get it ready for publication. Just email me with your idea. Gary Ray at [gerber1926@gmail.com](mailto:gerber1926@gmail.com)

## FEBRUARY MEET

Our February 8 meeting in Modesto began with a tour of the Modesto and Empire Traction Company shop facilities. **Mike McReynolds** was our guide. **M&ET** employee **Harley Rice** was there to answer questions. Most members took advantage of being allowed to climb into the cab of two of their eight Railpower GenSets. **M&ET** was one of the first railroads in the nation to operate with 100% Eco-Motive GenSets thereby meeting current and future emissions standards. Members appreciated the **M&ET** patch, notebook, and pen souvenirs.

We had a short business meeting. The Sierra Division has a new, updated logo thanks to the helpful assistance of **Russ Clover**. The 23 members present voted and approved the new logo which has already been applied to name badges and contest ribbons. **If wish to order a name tag, bring \$10 to the next meet (or**



**any meet) and you will receive it in less than 3 weeks.**

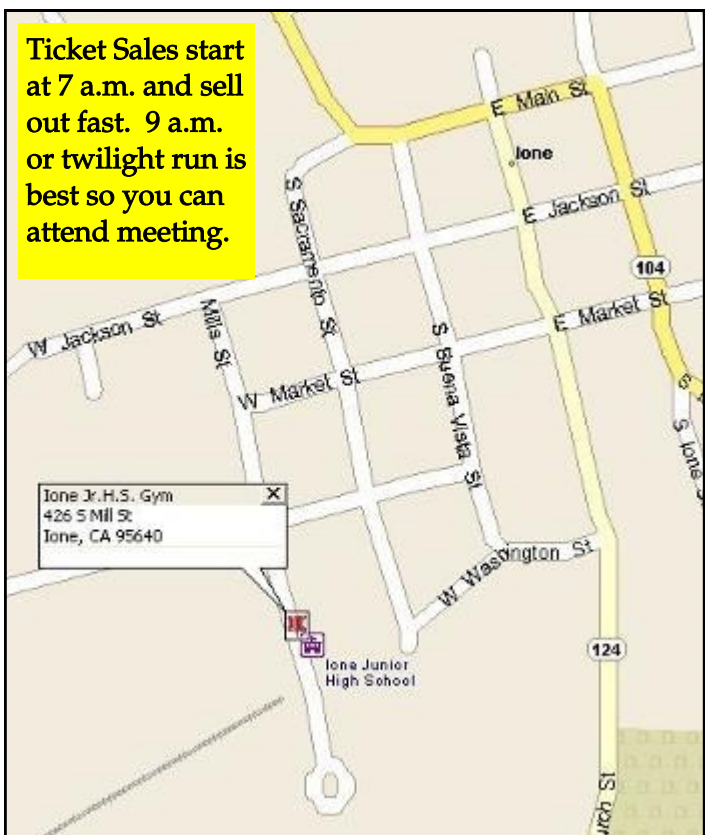
While the division made money with their one fund raiser, the International Rail Fair (IRF) in Roseville, we did pay out \$200 to another group because there were no volunteers to do our share of the clean-up.

There was no banquet following IRF because it was changed to a no-host event and not enough people signed up. **Dick Witzens** is stepping down as IRF treasurer and the Sierra Division needs a replacement. There are six meetings per year in Roseville plus the event itself.

**Klaus Keil** presented a very interesting look at 100 year old American steam used on Cuban sugar plantations from his 2001 visit. **Ben Cantu** presented PowerPoint presentation that looked back at the history of the Tidewater Southern Railway.

Many door prizes were given away. They were provided as a gracious gift from Reno member **Roger Johnson**. The date of the Ione meet was moved from May 8 to May 24 to take advantage of the Ione Rail Fair and Vintage Motorfest.

**Superintendent Scott McAllister** is looking for hosts for 2015 in February, May, and August. All one needs to do is secure a location, plan lunch, and contact members in your local area for activities. He'll be happy to assist you. If you can help with meets or would volunteer to be IRF treasurer, please email Scott at [scooter923@att.net](mailto:scooter923@att.net).



# M&ET FROM PAGE 1

much more environmentally friendly than the old diesels. The engine has 3 small diesel generator sets that are computer controlled to operate as the load demands on the loco increase so there is no big prime mover running all the time. The railroad is looking into new technology that will make these units even easier on air quality. The fleet is treated with TLC by the shop crews. They are washed by hand every week and kept showroom clean. The shop is clean enough to hold company gatherings in and is a good indicator of the care taken of all the company's equipment.

From its simple 4 mile beginnings, the line has grown to about 40 miles of yards, sidings and industrial trackage. At one time the customer base included the world's largest winery and cannery.

There are currently about 30 industries being served with products including cattle feed, paper products, lumber, and syrup for the canneries. The line handles in excess of 2000 carloads a month and today connects with the **Union Pacific** and **Burlington Northern Santa Fe** in Modesto and Empire. There are usually 6 crews per day working around the clock to keep this volume of freight moving.

It has been said that **M&ET** stands for "Modern Efficient Transportation" and this certainly describes this thriving railroad. One other attribute I can attest to after 28 years of employment with the company, is the "family" feel to the operation. Employees are made to feel like an integral part of the company and are treated like family by the management, making for a friendly and loyal workplace environment.

For more information go to [www.metrr.com](http://www.metrr.com).



**M&ET 1501 built 1968, purchased used 2006 and retired 2009.**



**A very clean shop area. Locomotives are just as clean—washed regularly.**

# A Record Bridge Replacement on the Tidewater

by Benjamin J. Cantu, Business Agent Historian  
Tidewater Southern Railway Historical Society, Inc.

(historical photos provided by author ~ unknown photographer)

A record bridge replacement took place in early January 1955 with the replacement of the **Tidewater Southern Railway** mainline bridge crossing at Meyers, located on the mainline approximately 2.5 miles south of Escalon. The record setting project (for even a major railroad) involved removal of the two steel Warren type bridges and installation of two box-girder replacement bridges in one day at the Stanislaus River crossing.



Project viewed from the east showing girder spans on temporary placements, awaiting movement of truss spans onto temporary wooden falsework.

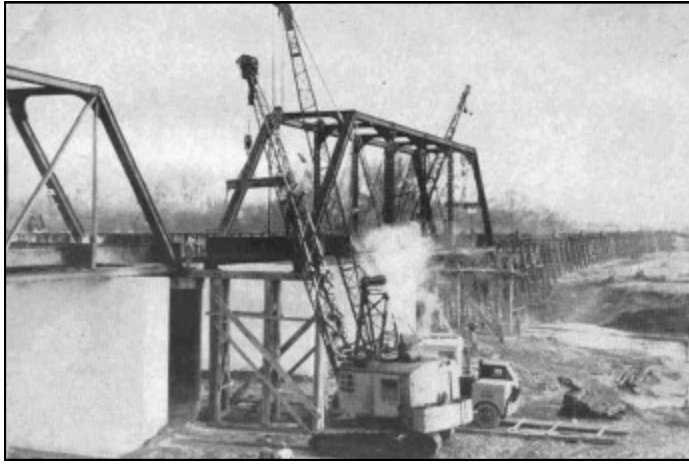
The old wooden truss and Warren bridge crossing (originally built in 1889 by the **Union Bridge Company** for another railroad) was installed on the **Tidewater Southern** in 1912, several months before the October 8 opening of the main line between Stockton and Modesto. Members of the **American Bridge Technicians** determined in 1954 that the two 125-foot steel through-truss spans of the old bridge structure were stressed and would not permit a greater load limit than 169,000 pounds per car. **Tidewater** car loading requirements of the day called for a minimum load capacity of 220,000 pounds. This meant increasing the load capacity by approximately 30 percent with minimum disruption to train operations.

The replacement bridge sections were constructed from turntable girders from the **Western Pacific** roundhouse at Elko and Winnemucca, Nevada. The girders were modified by the **Moore Ship Building Company** of Oakland into one 30-foot and two 110-foot sections, with a combined weight of approximately 98 tons.



Northerly view from wooden trestle shows first truss span already moved onto falsework.

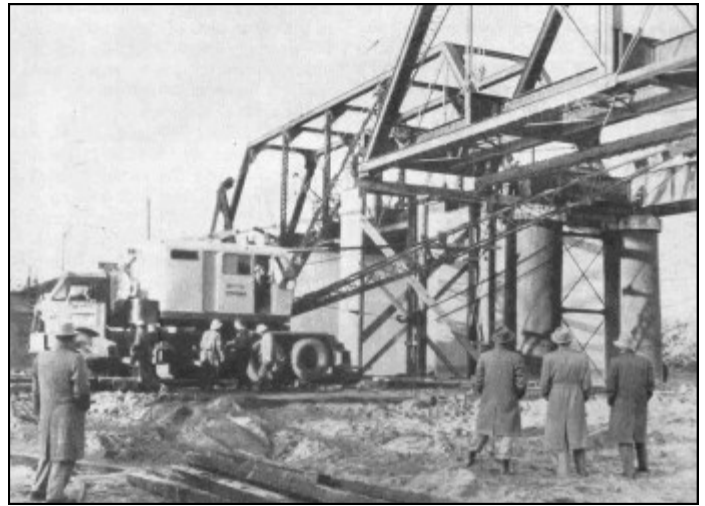
Groundwork began in November of 1955 with the changing of the course of the Stanislaus River by the **Ben C. Gerwick Company** of San Francisco, so that the river-bottom work could be accomplished without the use of coffer dams. Thousands of yards of fill were brought to the project site from various nearby areas with the intent of returning the fill to its original locations after the high water receded. Once the river had been diverted the task of placing pilings for new piers proceeded. The setting of the pilings was in itself a rather unique engineering feat because the existing bridge structure was not disturbed and train operations continued. Twenty-six steel "H"-beams 100 feet long were driven in approximately 80 feet for the four new concrete piers, which measured six feet by thirty-one feet in size. Since the new piers were to be offset from the existing piers, it was possible for the steel beam pilings to be driven into place through openings in the existing bridge structure. The forms and concrete followed, again working around and through the existing bridge structure. A record bridge replacement took place in early January, 1955, with the replacement of the **Tidewater Southern Railway** mainline bridge crossing at Meyers, located on the mainline approximately 2.5 miles south of Escalon. The record setting project (for even a major railroad) involved removal of the two steel Warren type bridges and installation of two box-girder replacement bridges in one day at the Stanislaus River crossing.



**Southerly view of the cranes and truss span on wooden framework.**

In order to accomplish the removal and replacement of the bridge with minimal disruption to trains, temporary wooden piers were constructed along the west side of the existing bridge structure to support the old truss spans when lifted from the old piers. Additionally, the new concrete piers were constructed slightly wider than required for the new bridge structure, to allow for temporary placement of the new girder spans adjacent the east edge of the old bridge structure. Once all the preparatory work was completed the actual bridge movement was rather simple. As illustrated by the accompanying photographs, utilizing three large cranes the old truss spans were lifted onto the adjacent temporary wooden piers, followed by the moving of the new girder spans onto the new concrete piers.

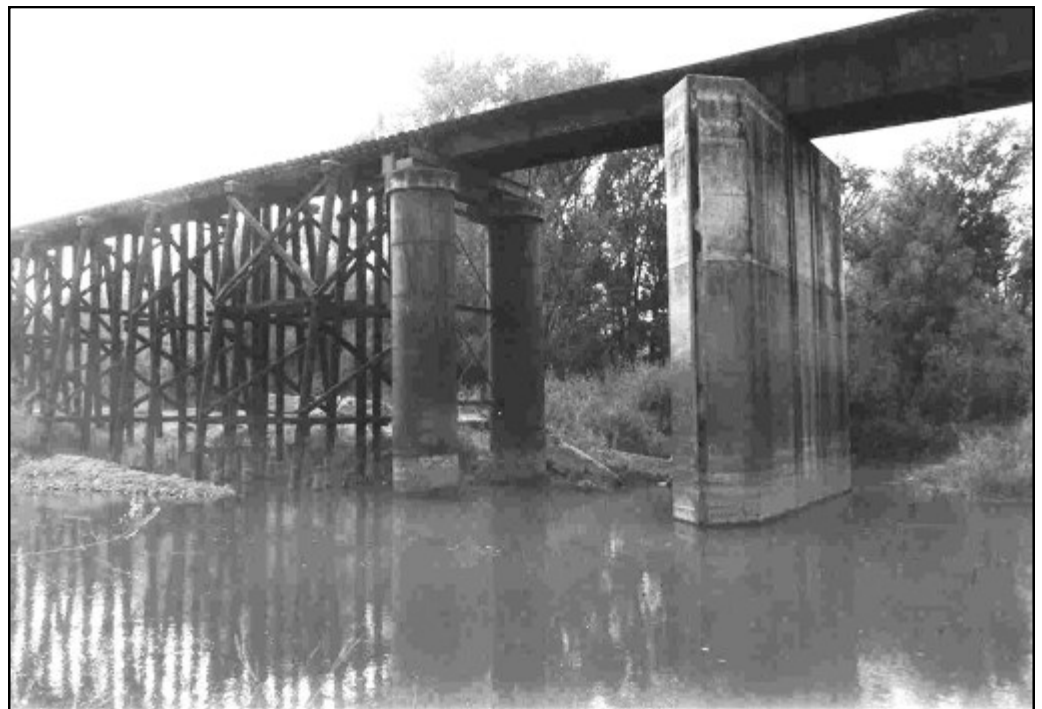
The \$150,000.00 engineering fete was accomplished with only a 30-hour delay to trains. Such a well-planned and executed accomplishment can only be attributed to the men involved: Project engineer Arthur W. Carlson, Engineer of Bridges and Structures, Western Pacific Railroad; Norman McPherson, retired **Western Pacific Railroad** bridge and building superintendent (resident engineer); and C.B. Rush-



**J.T. Kenady, A.W. Carlson, H.C. Munson, and F.R. Woolford view the relocation of the first truss span. Three cranes were required for the movement.**

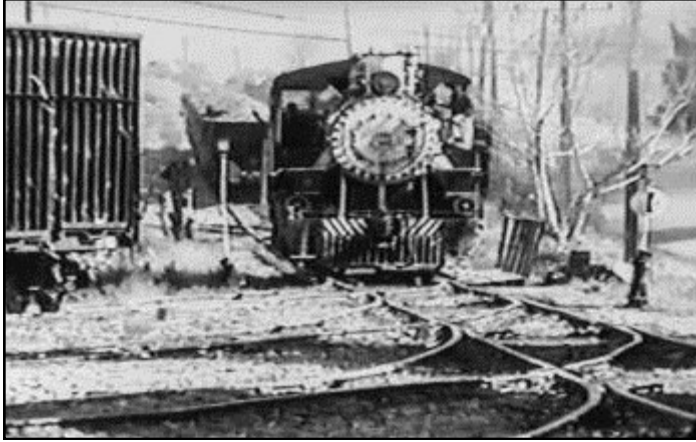
mer, designing engineer (preparer of all plans and drawings.)

Today, the bridge remains in exceptional condition as evidenced by the following photograph. Although the **Union Pacific Railroad** has removed trackage from McHenry station through Modesto to the Tuolumne River basin, the old mainline trackage is still operational from Ortega to the Stanislaus River crossing bridge.



**1991 view of south end as it exists today. 30' girder spans, wooden trestle, original round piers set in 1911 and new 1955 piers. (Ben Cantu photo)**

## February 8th Modesto Meet



Klaus Keil presented a video he took on his 2001 trip to Cuba to document the many 100 year old steam locos still in use on sugar plantations. We hope to see Part 2 in the near future. (Jim Collins photo of screen converted to black and white—video was in color.)

(below) Good turnout on a rainy day. Rain stopped after shop tour and we were able to outside to the yard to view new and old equipment.

See more photos in the Digital Edition of [Short Line](#) including many pages of Cuban Steam.



Members are always encouraged to share—whether it is something they are building or in this case; a new model of a Chinese DF4B.



Walt Schleder receiving a M&ET notebook and patch from host Mike McReynolds.



## SIERRA DIVISION

Next Meeting: Saturday, May 24

Place: Lone Jr. High School Gym  
426 S Mill

lone, CA

Time: 1:30 AM to 3:00 PM

Or 12:00 to 12:30 if ordering lunch

### TIMETABLE

May 24 ~ Lone

August 9 ~ Chico

Oct. 11 ~ Sacramento

### SHORT LINE

#### DEADLINES

April 11 for the May issue

July 3 for the August issue

Sept. 5 for the August issue



Walt Schleder won first place for his weathered gondola. All contestants received our new award ribbons that will be presented at the end of each contest.



Dave Bayless won 2nd and 3rd place.

Many thanks to Russ Clover who helped me design the new logo and award ribbons.

(Gary Ray ` Editor & Contest Chair)

### May 24, 2014 Contests

**MODELING ~ Trees** — any type from a single to a whole forest.

**NEW**

**MODELING ~ Caboose** — bring your favorites

**PHOTOS ~** Prototype subject in black and white. 3 entries per person. Same rules as always. Pictures need to be at least 5" x 7" but not over 8" x 12" .

### Future Contests for August 9

**MODELING ~ Buildings** — Enter one of your favorite buildings; can be kit, kit-bashed, or scratch-built.

**PHOTOS ~** Prototype track and/or structure in color. 3 entries per person.

### Future Photo Contest for Oct. 11

**PHOTOS ~** Prototype trains in action.





**LAST CHANCE**

**PCR/NMRA  
Coast Rails 2014  
PCR Convention  
April 30 - May 4, 2014  
Sands Inn & Suites  
1930 Monterey Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA**

**RETURN FORM AND PAYMENT TO:**

Coast Rails 2014  
c/o Doug Wagner  
14008 Tierra Blanca Ave.  
Bakersfield, CA 93314

E-mail: [CoastRails2014@pcrnmra.org](mailto:CoastRails2014@pcrnmra.org)  
Website: [www.pcrnmra.org/conv2014](http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2014)

Visit the website to pay by credit card

Please Print

**Registration Form**

Hosted by: Daylight Division, PCR / NMRA

Last Name		First Name		First Name (for Name Badge)		
Address			City		State    Zip Code	
Home Phone		E-mail Address		NMRA # or SLORRM (Membership Required)		
Registration Type (Please check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Model Railroader <input type="checkbox"/> Non Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Youth				NMRA Region (if other than PCR)		
Available to Volunteer on <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Times: _____						
I can help more. Have a Volunteer Coordinator contact me <input type="checkbox"/>						
Primary Scales and Interests		<input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Z <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow Gauge <input type="checkbox"/> SLORRM <input type="checkbox"/> Other:				
Will you attend the Hobo Breakfast at the Apple Farm? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, How many Hobos? _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No						
ADDITIONAL REGISTRANT LIVING AT SAME ADDRESS (Use another form for more than 1)						
Last Name		First Name		First Name (for Name Badge)		
Registration Type (Please check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Modeler <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Youth		E-Mail (if Different)		NMRA #		
Available to Volunteer on <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Times: _____						
I can help more. Have a Volunteer Coordinator contact me <input type="checkbox"/>						
Primary Scales and Interests		<input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Z <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow Gauge <input type="checkbox"/> SLORRM <input type="checkbox"/> Other:				
<i>All Fares include Clinics (except MWTM Clinics), Layout Tours, and Saturday Night Awards Banquet Ticket. Day Fares do NOT include Saturday Night Awards Banquet.</i>						
FARES: Please fill in QTY and Total				QTY	Unit Cost	Total
Full Fare Registration					89.00	
First Timer - PCR Members who have not registered for the past 5 conventions.					69.00	
Non-Rail or Spouse Registration (spouse can be modeler)					69.00	
Youth Registration (12-18 years old or student)					50.00	
Additional Saturday Night Awards Banquet Ticket (Included in all Registrations except Day Fares) (For non-attending spouses/SOs coming to nothing else and not otherwise registered)					20.00	
Day Fare <input type="checkbox"/> Wed <input type="checkbox"/> Thurs <input type="checkbox"/> Fri <input type="checkbox"/> Sat					35.00	
Non-NMRA member must either join the NMRA or SLORRM to register. *Student is any person 18 years and under or student 19-25 years old.		6 month Rail Pass (allowed one time only)			9.95	
		NMRA membership with NMRA magazine			66.00	
		NMRA membership without NMRA magazine			44.00	
		* Student membership with NMRA magazine			32.00	
		PCR Branch Line newsletter subscription			8.00	
		SLORRM Individual Membership			36.00	
		SLORRM Family Membership			60.00	
Swap Meet Half Table					5.00	
Swap Meet Full Table					10.00	
<b>For information on clinics and tours, go to website.</b>						
Payment by <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check** <input type="checkbox"/> Cash    (Use website for credit card)				<b>TOTAL</b>		
** Make Checks Payable to: "Coast Rails 2014" <b>No Refunds After April 9, 2014</b>						



Walt Schedler won first place in Model Photos by using this prototype photo (left) to recreate the scene in Dunsmuir on his layout. It is accurate right down to the kneeling employee in a t-shirt.

Seen at the front truck of the lead F-unit)

# CUBAN STEAM 2001 OR 1901

by Klaus Keil (as shared with Gary Ray)

**Klaus Keil** went to Cuba in 2001 in a group of railway historians, operators and academicians that were given complete access to the 90 year old (or more) steam locomotives still being operated on sugar plantations today. His group was the very first ever to be licensed by the U.S. government to visit Cuba for that purpose.

Klaus shared less than a third of the video he took at our February meeting. I have taken clips from all the videos. They are not as sharp as we are used to because of older technology, **Hi8** conversion; but are very interesting just the same. Great weathering ideas for hard working locomotives.

I really appreciate Klaus sharing these with us.





1920 Baldwin



1924 Baldwin



1917 Baldwin





1920 Vulcan



1907 Baldwin





1920 Baldwin



The mill in the background was the staging area for Castro's troops to repel Bay of Pigs invasion.



Bay of Pigs Memorial



1915 Baldwin frame now powered by diesel.





19209 Baldwin



This plantation had over 40 miles of main line and another 20 of branches.

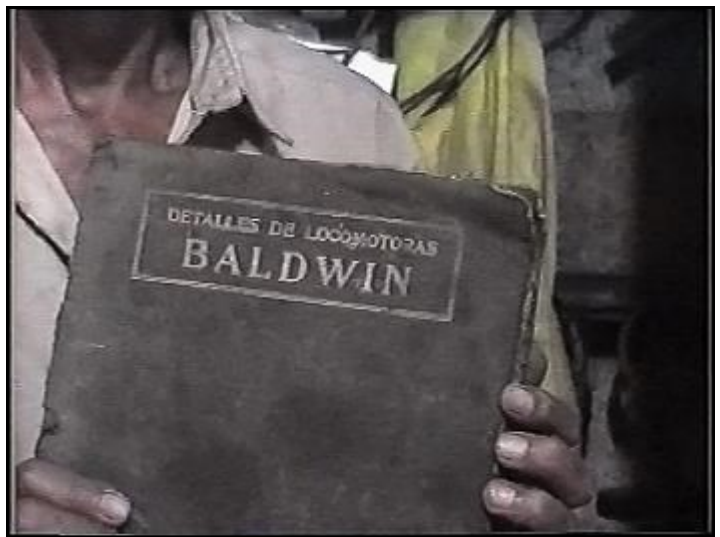


Farmer using old tire to transport plow to field.









Baldwin repair manual. Locomotives are kept in good running condition.



Sign at Australia Sugar plantation. One of many visited.



Many of the plantations have shops.



Incidents happen.....



There are no brakes on the sugar cane cars.



.... But no problem.



And the cattle are happy with the spilled sugar cane.



Another method of hauling sugar cane.



Hot box!



**Worker unlatches side.**



**Platform tilts to unload cars.**



**Single hold-down clamp on far side.**



**No safety regulations....**



**Nor environmental regulations. Sometimes pools of bunker oil flowed 1/2 mile from track.**



We block or chock cars. This is called "twigging".



Wood for tie replacement is not available. New concrete ties have rebar anchors.



Mainline track.



This little piggy went to market.



Klaus Keil talks with Cuban children. Thanks for sharing with us.

# PHOTO TOUR OF FEBRUARY MEET MODESTO & EMPIRE TRACTION CO.

*Photos by Gary Ray (unless otherwise noted)*



Inside shop. (upper and photo below by Jim Collins)



Jim Collins took this photo in the yard.



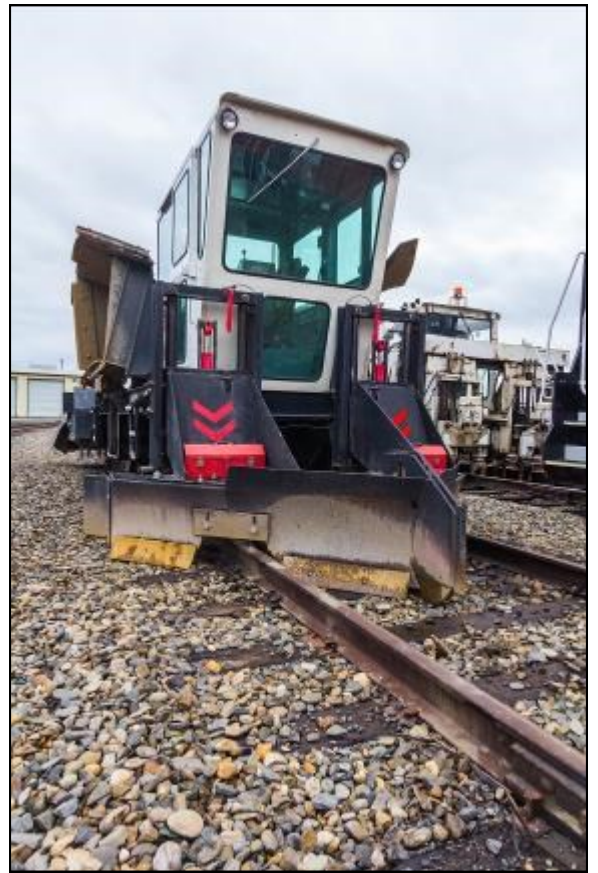
Tour guide Mike McReynolds talks to group.



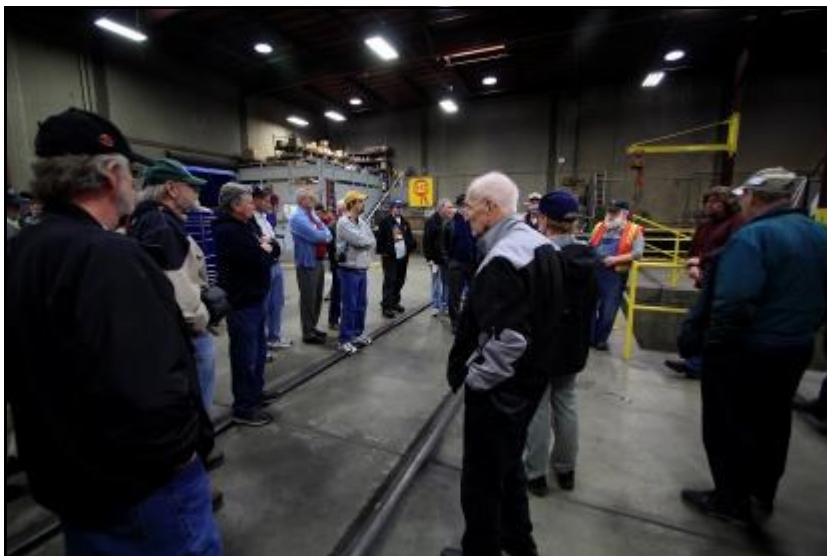




Superintendent Scott McAllister.







M&ET employee Harley Rice (in blue) gives technical details.



**Scott McAllister draws numbers for door prizes.**



**Hope to see you May 24 in Ione.** (Photo courtesy of Recreational Railroad Coalition Historical Society—Amador Central Railroad)



**Membership chair Jim Collins.**



**Short Line Editor & Contest Chair Gary Ray.**  
(Jim Collins photo)