

SHORT LINE

Sierra Division * Pacific Coast Region * National Model Railroad Association





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SCRATCH BUILDING CAN BE SIMPLE AND EASY By Mike Hamm

For you modelers who have never scratch built anything, here is an idea that might help you get started. This is a simple structure that is perfect for first time scratch builders or beginning modelers: a grain elevator. Don't let the huge size (50 to 100 scale feet tall and 30 to 40 scale feet square) scare you off. Grain elevators are magnificently simple buildings to construct. Most grain elevators are simply a very tall rectangular box with a square base and easy to calculate angles for the roof line. The grain elevator shown in the photograph is modeled in 0

scale, 1:48, and occupies a prominent spot up front on my Glacier Mountain Railroad.

Grain elevators simply store grain such as wheat, corn, or soybeans, housing them for protection from the elements at an elevated height. The grain can flow freely through a large diameter pipe into a boxcar or hopper car when ready for shipment to the mill for processing. The type of grain elevator I built for my Glacier Mountain Railroad is served by the Great Northern Railway. It is a classic, all wood building, as was common at the turn of the century and beyond. These elevators could be seen along railroad tracks in farming areas, on the prairie, near small towns, and even big cities everywhere in America. My layout is a freelance design set in Montana, circa 1948-1949, where wheat was the king of



crops. A grain elevator would be much needed from a prototypical standpoint.

Classic grain elevators of this era were mostly wood, or at least wood framed, and had wooden corncrib or clapboard siding. Eventually they had corrugated sheet metal siding to prevent fires, but corncrib style gave the most air circulation and helped to prevent spoilage. I chose corncrib siding with very tedious hand laid board-by-board construction using nails and glue with interlocking log cabin style corners. My model was to sit near the entrance to the train room in the foreground, so I wanted it to have good detail for visitors who would probably notice it first due to its great height. Your grain elevator will probably be one of the tallest structure on your layout.

Back in those days, some grain elevators had brightly colored billboard logos painted on their front, side, or back walls which, if modeled carefully, can turn a plain model into a show piece.



October 2019

Sierra Division Callboard

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SHORT LINE is published quarterly by the Sierra Division of the Pacific Coast Region of the National Association. Material may be reprinted with permission.

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**, **2260** Cherry Glenn Ct., Chico, CA 95926 or by email to :

chipmeriam@comcast.net If e-mailing put EDITOR in the subject line.

From the Superintendent

It Seems As If I just got home from the August 10 meet and now I'm already in the final planning stages of the October meet. Perhaps it was my trip with my wife to the Twin Cities to see children and grandchildren that broke up the normal routine and accelerated the clock. Which reminds me, our editor, with whom I share an office, promised to find space in the next issue for me to share some photos from the Minnesota Museum of Transportation in St. Paul. And speaking of the editor, he has a few things to say in his column which you will find following this one.

Back to the October meet.....

We'll be in Chico on October 12. Actually the meet will start with a visit to Mike Hamlin's layout in Orland, which is west of Chico by about twenty minutes. The appointed start time is 9:00 AM. From Orland we will travel to Chico where there are two more stops: Chip Meriam's layout and Loren Dunlap's WP memorabilia collection. Due to space limitations, we will split into two groups with half going to Dunlap's and half going to Meriam's. We'll have roughly 45 minutes at each place and then we'll trade spots. Lunch and the meeting will be at Round Table on Mangrove Avenue.



Night Scene on Mike Hamlin's Layout



Lorriton on Chip Meriam's Layout



A Small Bit of Loren Dunlap's Collection

We'll have an opportunity to eat lunch at Round Table before we start the afternoon meeting which will feature a Show And Tell session, the usual contests, and a clinic that is being confirmed at this writing.

After the conclusion of our meet, Walt Schedler will have his Colusa Shasta Division Railroad open for visitors and possibly operators, so if you're heading

south to go home, be sure to take the short detour through Colusa to enjoy the opportunity. Also, Walt's store will be open with 30% off.

Walt holds regular operating sessions quarterly. He has a standing crew but there are always several job assignments open. What's more, there is always homemade lunch available for a nominal fee—and Carolyn is a great cook!

From the Editor

In His Column for this issue, our Division Superintendent mentioned that he and I share an office. In fact, we also share the same office with the editor of the PCR *Branch L*ine. What's really unusual though, is that our wives are all named Lorri......

Anyway, the *Branch Line* editor discovered a new contributor and he offered me some copy and a photo to use in the *Short Line*.

Mike Hamm, from Cottonwood, submitted a mound of photos, most with captions, and two written manuscripts. One of the manuscripts is reproduced in the lead story of this issue, " Scratch Building Can Be Simple And Easy". The article describes Mike's methods for building an O scale grain elevator along with a few observations about scratch building in general. We plan to run another story on several other structures Mike has built over the years. Look to a future issue for that feature.

Meanwhile, the *Branch Line* has plans to feature the other manuscript from Mike. It's about scratch building the "Witches Hat" depot as a tribute to the late John Allen.



We call your attention to the story on page 15 about the PCR convention coming up in late April 2020. The featured activity will be a day-long excursion to the Western Railway museum in Rio Vista. We visited the WRM ourselves this past April, and the visit was well worth the price and the time. If you're planning to attend the Clear To The Coast convention next year, be sure to make the trip out to Rio Vista if you possibly can. You will not be disappointed. October 2019

Our Superintendent also mentioned a trip he took to the Twin Cities with his wife. While there, he reports, he visited the Minnesota Transportation Museum in downtown St. Paul. Here is one of the many photos he shared with me.



He promises to pen an article about his visit and provide some more photos. We'll see what comes of his promise. I hope he follows through because I am always looking for ways to "fill the white space."



If you are interested, please call Vern Cowan at (714) 686-71.65 or email at f3santafevern@gmail.com http://www//sjvtoytrainoperatorsinc.com

SIERRA DIVISION

Next Meeting: October 12 Chico

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Mike Hamlin Home Layout Orland, CA

10:30 AM - 12:00 NOON Chip Meriam Home Layout Loren Dunlap—WP Memorabilia

12:30 Lunch Meeting Round Table Pizza—Mangrove Ave. (see map below)

October Contest Categories:

Modeling: Caboose & Passenger Cars Photo: Any Photo You've Taken in the Last 6 Months (limit of 3 photos - at least 5 X 7 but not over 8 X 12) Railroad Arts & Crafts

TIMETABLE

October 12, 2019 Chico

February 8, 2020 Sacramento

April 30—May 3, 2020 PCR Convention Concord, CA

> May 9, 2020 To Be Scheduled



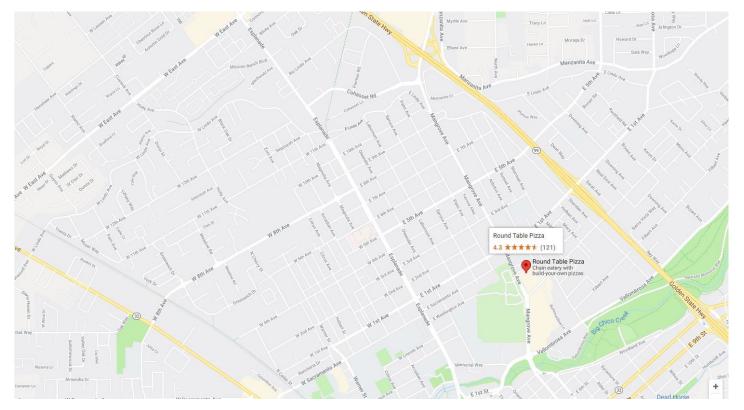
SHORT LINE

Dec 10 for the Jan Issue

Mar 10 for the Apr Issue

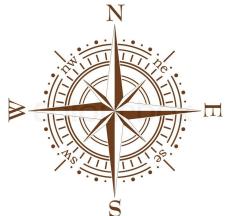
June 10 for the July Issue

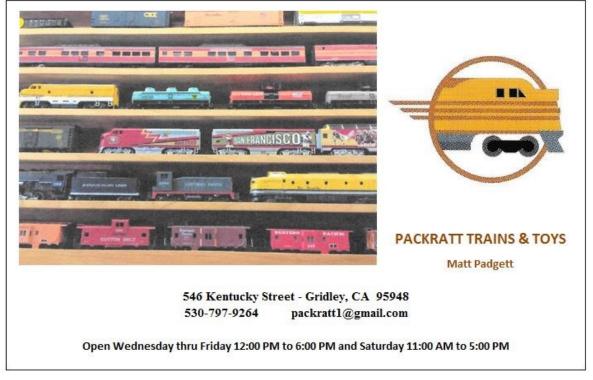
April 30 –May 3, 2020 Concord, CA



Round Table Pizza - 964 Mangrove Avenue - Chico

MAPS TO MIKE HAMLIN'S LAYOUT, CHIP MERIAM'S LAYOUT, LOREN DUN-LAP'S HOME, AND WALT SCHEDLER'S LAYOUT-STORE WILL BE EMAILED WITH THE AGENDA PRIOR TO THE MEET. N







LAST RUN - RUSS CLOVER

Re-printed with permission from the Redwood Empire Division Callboard.

We are sad to report the passing of Russell Clover. Many of you knew Russ through his model railroad business, Clover House. Russ was a lifetime member of the NMRA and the RED. The following is a copy of his obituary from the Santa Rosa Press-Democrat. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

With sad hearts, we announce that Russ Clover, our dear husband, father and friend has gone to be with the Lord after a long and joyous life. He died on July 28, 2019 at the age of 93.

Russ was a man of many talents that he used to the fullest. He joined the Navy right out of high school in 1944 and served in both World War II and the Korean conflict. Afterwards, he was in the insurance busi-ness in Santa Monica and Santa Rosa. During this time he started Clover Decals, creating custom decals to enable model train enthusiasts to letter and decorate their model train cars. Next, he worked as a technician at OCLI in Santa Rosa assembling optics that flew on spacecraft supplying information for both military and civilian use. He retired from that job to open his own model railroad business, Clover House, selling wood ties, lumber, dry transfer lettering and many other items. His latest projects included custom design work for the O Scale West Model Train Show in Santa Clara and for the Rohnert Park Retirement Community where he lived.

Other talents included building his adobe house west of Sebastopol, making cabinets and furniture for himself and his friends, designing tools and equipment to improve the efficiency of his Clover House op-eration, and designing and printing the various Clover House catalogs. He also updated and completed maps of the local railroads from the Alan Tacy collection for the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Historical Society. Russ felt he had been given much help from friends during his life and did his best to help others in need. He constantly looked for ways he could make another person's job or life easier.

Russ was predeceased by his first wife, Lois Mae (Smith) Clover. He is survived by his wife Jane Giles Clover, daughters Carolyn Aamot and Eileen Salsig, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He will be greatly missed, but we know he is resting in the arms of his heavenly Father, free of pain at last.



"Elevator" - from page 1

Grain elevators are a no-frills utility building with very few doors and windows. This is why they are ideal as a first time scratch build project. One of the greatest myths in model railroading is that you must be a genius or have above average planning and building skills to design and scratch build – which just isn't true. When your model is complete, it will be one-of-a-kind and unique.

Scratch building any model isn't much different from building from a kit, but you must first create the kit! In order to start you must first have a plan of some sort, or at least an idea or a photograph. I design all of my structures myself so they are original and unique. This is not absolutely necessary and not everyone can do it. What is really needed is a photograph or a rough sketch. In fact, studying many different photos of the type of building you are interested in modeling and combining them all into one idea, incorporating their best features, is what I do. Perhaps my designs aren't so original after all but, rather, a compilation of many designs by many other people.

After making a rough sketch of your project you need to make note of the approximate dimensions of the structure. You can use prototypical measurements from original blueprints, on-site measurements, or you can even estimate from photographs, as I have done. A scale rule is helpful but not necessary. After all, who's going to notice that your creamery, bank or feed store is six scale feet too long? Especially if your layout is freelanced! On the other hand, ceiling height, doors, and window dimensions should be and can be calculated with a rule as these features are more noticeable. Be sure to double check the footprint of your building with its location on your layout.

My grain elevator has many details such as interior wall studs and board-by board siding that aren't essential for your first scratch building project. For instance, you can purchase wooden clapboard, board and batten, or planked decking used in model ship building, in large sheets from Micro-Mark® or your local hobby shop. This will save a lot of time when building. You can also purchase scale corrugated metal siding and build a more modern grain elevator that appeared later on. Even the drive-through lean to for grain dumping can be eliminated in favor of a simple outdoor pit.

When it came time to apply the finish on my bare wood grain elevator I first applied two coats of Micro-Mark Age It Easy® grey wash to the bare wood. On top of that I brushed on one coat of the flat white primer and then a light coat of Behr® Fiery Red flat paint. The window and door frames can be stained brown or left primer white. I sanded mine lightly with medium sandpaper to give a distressed weathered look. The red siding is weathered by chipping some of the paint off to let the primer show through. In other spots, particularly near the bottom, the paint was chipped off down below the primer to expose severe weathered darkened wood.

The main door is corrugated sheet metal with rust colored chalk applied near the bottom. The roof was done the same way. While digging through my larder one day, I found a flour sack with a vintage looking logo on it. I was surprised to see the word Montana; the location of my model railroad layout. What luck! The beautiful decal was applied on the front and side with white Elmer's Glue[®]. The power head for the electrical and the phone box were then installed. An outside light was added by the side door as well as a large utility overhead light in front so that grain can be loaded at night.

Give scratch building a try and I know you will be happy with the results. You will probably place your beautiful model right up front in the foreground for all to see and enjoy. There's nothing quite like getting inspired with an idea for a structure, hopping in your car with your material list, and coming home from the hobby shop with a huge stack of miniature lumber, a big bottle of Elmer's Glue®, some styrene and cement, and then turning it all into a gorgeous model. I know you can do it because if I can do it, it can't be that difficult!

Model kits of any kind, wood or plastic, are very expensive. After all, someone did draw up the plans, measure the subject, tool up to make the parts, and package and promote the product, so the prices the companies charge are probably justified. Wouldn't you want to get paid for your hard work? I've peeked inside the boxes of these kits and I'm amazed at the quality and detail of many of them. They are a great value. My hat is off to all who have created model kits! My huge grain elevator is O scale. It is 80 feet tall and 35 feet square – not counting the lean-to drive-thru at the rear, and yet it cost me less than thirty dollars to build.

You could substitute melamine or plain Masonite® and no one would know. If board-by-board corncrib or clapboard siding is your choice, you could slice strips from scrap lumber on a panel saw and save a bundle. But individual board construction can be time consuming. With all the money you save on scratch building your structures you'll have enough cash left over to buy some of that newly released rolling stock you've been wanting, not to mention having fine models everywhere on your layout that are different from structures other modelers have. When your friends ask you where you got them, you can tell them you designed and scratch built them yourself. Also when they ask if you would build one for them, you can be flattered and say, "Yes." I know I would.



Wow! Did you know there's a <u>new</u> NMRA Member Benefit?

It's the NMRA Partner Program!

Model railroad manufacturers are partnering with the NMRA to offer discounts to NMRA members.

Current members log in to <u>www.nmra.org</u>. At the Members Menu, go to the NMRA Partnership Page to see who's on the list, discounts offered, and how to order. New Partners are coming on board every month, so check back often.

If you're not yet a member, here's another <u>great reason</u> to join and get <u>more</u> fun from your hobby with a membership in the world's largest model railroad organization.

www.nmra.org



August Meet - Fair Oaks and Rancho Cordova, CA ^{By Chip Meriam}

SIERRA DIVISION MEETING

August 10 was the date for the summer meet of the Sierra Division, PCR-NMRA. The meet followed a familiar format with a brief business meeting followed by model and photo contest judging and a show-and-tell session where we had several interesting presentations. The show-and-tell is proving to be a popular segment of our meets lately and our thanks go to the Redwood Empire Division for sharing the idea and to Dave Bayless for overseeing it. As usual, the modeling and photo contest winners were announced and we held the door prize drawing at the end of the morning session. The photo contest (Track & Structures) winners were Joan Giacomelli with First Place, Walt Schedler with Second Place, and Ben Hughes & Tom Van Horn tied for Third Place. The model contest (Structures Built During The Last Six Months) winners were Walt Schedler with First Place, Ben Hughes with Second Place, and Michaels Eldridge with Third Place.



We Had A Full House At The Fair Oaks Library



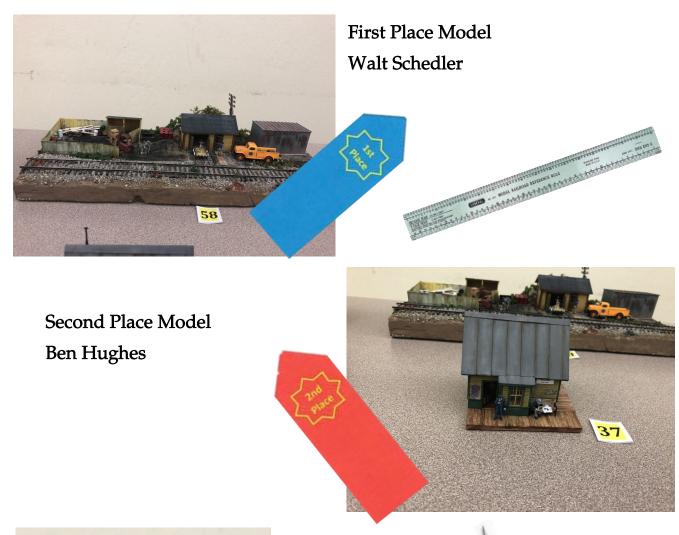


Dick Witzens With A Whimsical Rendition Of His Circus Train

Joan Giacomellt Poses With Her First Place Photo Entry. (This was her first - ever contest entry!)

August Meet - continued

CONTEST WINNERS



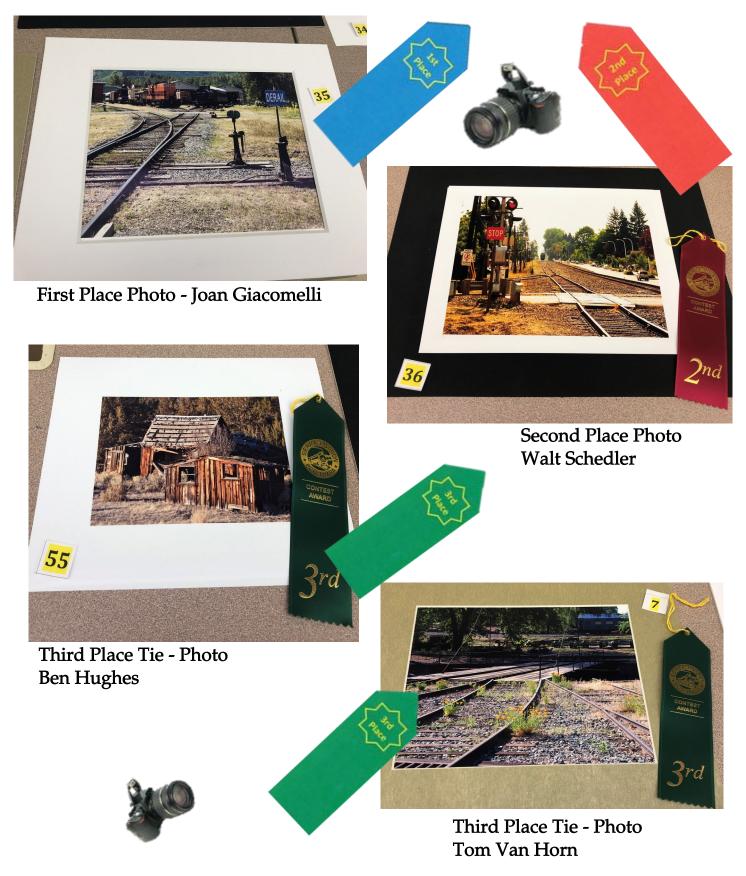


Third Place Model

Michael Eldridge

August Meet - continued

CONTEST WINNERS



August Meet - continued



After the morning session in Fair Oaks, we drove the short distance to Hagen Park Rancho Cordova, home of the Sacramento Valley Live Steamers. As the Live Steamers prepared for our visit, we had and excellent quali-



Dan Moody. Our Chef For The Day

ty barbecue lunch consisting of Mesquite Grilled Chicken, Tri-Tip, and several side dishes including, but not limited to, ranch-style beans and potato salad. This all prepared by fellow member Dan Moody.

As lunch was wrapping up, the steam trains began their first trips with Sierra Division members aboard. There was also a G- Scale loop set up with several interesting locomotives including a Shay side-geared logging engine.



G Scale Shay Chugging Around The Loop



An Impressive Addition Since Our Last Visit



The Live Steamers Welcome Sign



The trains took several round-trip excursions across the vast campus of the Live Steam park. Everyone has a chance to ride at least once. A good time was had by all.

Our express thanks to the Sacramento Valley Live Steamers and, especially, their president, Andy Berchielli.



First Group Out After Lunch



It's Amazing How Big These Models Are



Dave Bayless Offers Professional Advice To One Of Our Host Hog Heads As Ben Hughes And Ed Powell Look On



Tips of the Trade Hobby

By Chip Meriam

Full Disclosure:

When I prepare chicken for a meal, I generally purchase a whole chicken and cut it up myself, something I learned to do years ago. It's a little extra work, but the price per pound is so much lower than the pre-cut packages that is well worth the effort. However, a month or so ago I was in a hurry (and also a bit lazy) so I bought a package of chicken thigh filets.

Despite the extra expense and self-imposed guilt, the serendipitous result was the discovery of some very sturdy, conveniently sized project trays.





It seems that Foster Farms® started using sturdy, clear plastic trays to package their chicken pieces.

Previously, they had been using some sort of Styrofoam stuff that made a loud **SNAP!** when you tried to bend one in half. Below is a shot of one of my new project trays in service.





The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Concord is now accepting room reservations for the Clear to the Coast 2020 PCR Convention at the convention rate of \$134 plus taxes, single or double. Use this link <u>https://book.passkey.com/gt/217581248?</u> gtid=1bf9f94e0da801ab3b8e966e844714b8 or by phone at (925) 825-7700. While you certainly can reserve your room before registering for the convention, all the room block can sell-out. We have no intention of limiting convention registration. Why wait? The deadline for the early-bird rate of \$130 is November 30th. After that it goes to \$150. Repeat: The cost goes up if you don't register by November 30th - SO WHY WAIT? If you have not attended a PCR Convention previously, or at least in the last five years, your rate is only \$110. So how about giving it a try in 2020? And with the \$40 savings, bring your spouse. Non-rail registration is only \$40. The non-rail fare does not include the awards banquet or PCR meeting breakfast, but does include the non-rail lunch.

Registration can be done using the registration form in this issue of the *Short Line* or online on the convention website <u>www.pcrnmra.org/</u> <u>conv2020.</u>

So what do you get for the registration fee besides a buffet dinner at the awards banquet and breakfast at the Sunday morning PCR meeting? There are clinics on modeling techniques, local railroad history, DCC, operations and layout design. You also get the opportunity to visit local home and club layouts and participate in operating sessions on some of those layouts. We'll cover those in more detail in the next issue of the *Short Line -* along with a couple of activities not final enough to discuss yet. For now let's focus on some of our other activities:

WESTERN RAILWAY MUSEUM

Our premier activity is a full day at the Western Railway Museum in Rio Vista. They are opening for us on a day they are not open to the public,



and allowing access to things not available to the general public.

Highlights of the day include a visit to their archives and restoration shop which are not open to the public. With a trolley museum, obviously there will be rides. The rides will include 15 minute streetcar rides and a 50 minute ride on an interurban car. The interurban ride will be on either Sacramento Northern 1005 or 1020, cars not normally in service.

In addition to car barns one and two, which you can explore on your own, there will be a docent led tour of car barn three, which houses the museum's prize pieces. Cars in car barn three include WP 653 the car used in the movie "Harold and Maude".

Of course an all day trip needs a lunch. We'll have a catered barbecue. This trip is an extra fare of \$45 and is self-driving on Friday, May First.

CALIFORNIA CENTRAL COAST MODULAR LAYOUT



The California Central Coast Modular Club is an On30 layout. Plans are for their set-up to be configured as an H in a 25 X 35 foot space. The club will host convention attendees to run in 30 to 45 minute easy "low stress" operating sessions. Unlike traditional operating sessions, there will be minimal road time, although you could have some conflicting traffic between the yard and your switching area. Pick-ups and set-outs will be by use of a switch list. Plans are for four trains to be operating simultaneously.

Also unlike other full blown operations sessions during the convention, sign-ups will be on-site rather than weeks in advance. Considering the short duration of each run and the number available you can probably even run without advance scheduling. So stop by and run one, or more, of the switching problems.

NON-RAIL PROGRAM

Off-site events for the non-rail program are the non-rail lunch on Thursday, the Ruth Bancroft Garden on Friday and the traditional shop-hop on Saturday. At this time, the non-rail lunch is planned to be at The Old Spaghetti Factory, a group favorite from prior years. The Ruth Bancroft Garden is a world renowned 3.5 acre drought resistant garden in Walnut Creek. The assortment of plants in the garden is such that something is always in bloom. The shop-hop of fabric and quilt stores is a Saturday event that the group has done for several years now. All off site events are self drive.

In addition to off-site events the non-rail room will be the scene of a rock painting evening on Friday led by Suzy Madsen, a frequent attendee from the Pacific Northwest Region.

COMPANY STORE

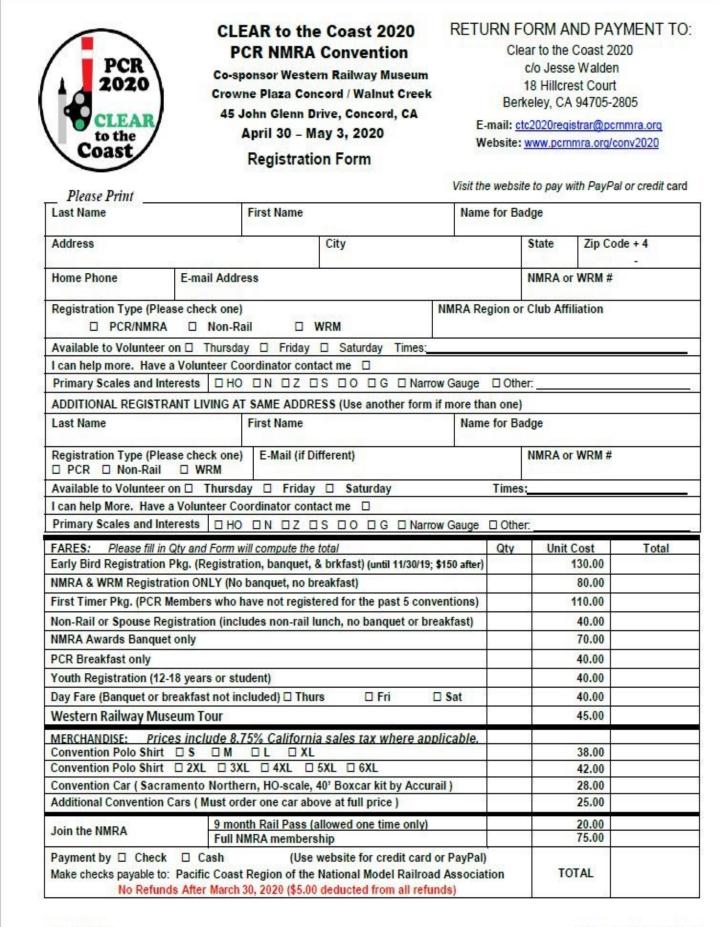
Use the company store on-line to purchase activities or merchandise you did not include with your initial registration, or stop by the physical store at the convention. Please note that Convention Shirts are only available for pre-order. The deadline for ordering shirts is March 15, 2020. Convention Cars will be available in three numbers, but in limited quantities, so you may want to pre-order your car, or cars, as well.

OTHER ITEMS

Details of Clinics, Layout Tours and Operating Sessions will be covered in the next Branch Line. If you are interested in presenting a clinic contact Richard Brennan at <u>ctcclinics@pcrnmra.org</u>. If you are interested in opening your layout for visits or operations Mike O'Dorney at <u>ctclayouts@pcrnmra.org</u> or Dave Parks at <u>ctcoperations@pcrnmra.org</u> would love to hear from you. If you are not inclined to public speaking or don't have a layout ready for visitors, but still want to help, please contact our volunteer coordinator Dave Connery at <u>ctcvolunteers@pcrnmra.org</u>.

The convention is about to start sending e-mail updates and reminders to keep you abreast of changes, but you can always see the most recent information on the convention website <u>www.pcrnmra.org/conv2020</u>, so check it periodically.

FIND A 2020 CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM ON THE NEXT PAGE



Around And About



2007 AND 2011 Are Together at The WES (Westside Express Service) Yard - Wilsonville, OR July 26, 2019 Budd RDC's built in 1952 & 1953 originally for the New Haven