



# SHORT LINE

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



The World's Greatest Hobby!

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## NOTHING IS GOOD ENOUGH By Mike Hamm

### Scratch Build a Church

One structure missing from many model railroad layouts is a church. My own layout, the Glacier Mountain Railroad, served by the Great Northern, is set in October 1948 - 1949. These are the years my wife and I were born, right after World War II, when church attendance was probably at its highest level because people were so very grateful for what they had because of what they had just been through. I decided my model railroad would need a church and I added it to my list of structures to be built.

There were many fine kits of churches on the market, but when "nothing is good enough", I decided to build my own from scratch. What did I want it to look like? This church would go halfway into the deepest scene on the layout, which is about five feet in from the fascia. The Glacier Mountain is O scale, so I chose HO scale for the church to use forced perspective to give the illusion of depth. Likewise, I use

N scale models at the very back, about nine feet from the foreground. This was my very first HO scale structure and while completing it I gained great respect for you HO model railroaders. This was also a tough project because of the amount of detail I wanted. I wanted the church to be huge by HO standards, but I still had no clue as to what I wanted it to look like until one day, going through a stack of old newspapers, I spotted an old archival photograph of a church that was exactly what I was seeking (*See photo*). It was ornate with a Victorian look, aesthetically beautiful, and had wedding cake style steps going in. This old photograph was all I had to go by to build the church, and only a few changes would be necessary. One was the size. I wanted my church to be larger and taller with more steps and a steeper pitch to the roof to give it a Gothic look. I also wanted the church to look very old and weather-beaten to let everyone know it had withstood the test of time.

A larger structure meant I could have more human figures inside the church as well as out front and on the steps. A larger church would also mean more vehicles in the parking lot. I wanted it to be full to capacity, reflecting the era of the 1940s. Also, I wanted the scene to be very busy with lots of activity.

I did not draw up plans for construction but, rather, winged my way through the whole project which made me thankful to be a freelance modeler.

See "Church" page 5

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

[chipmeriam@comcast.net](mailto:chipmeriam@comcast.net) If e-mailing put EDITOR in the subject line.

# From the Superintendent

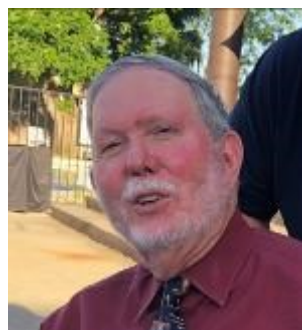
## On March 18, The Following From The PCR President:

*"Management of the Crowne Plaza Hotel Concord, the planned site for PCR's 2020 convention, informed us earlier today that the Crowne Plaza organization has ordered cancellation of all events at the Concord property in April and May based on public health orders now in effect. We investigated postponement, but it proved untenable, and the PCR Board of Directors met earlier today and voted to cancel the 2020 convention. PCR's next convention will be in 2021."*

So that's it. No convention in late April. Kaput. Finis! At this writing it seems the next PCR convention will be in Fresno during the spring of 2021. We're disappointed, to be sure, but we certainly understand.

Meanwhile, Sierra Division has a meet planned for May 9 in Oroville. See the Time Table on page 3 for details. We are hopeful that cancellation will not be necessary, but for now the meet remains tentative. We'll keep you posted.

You may recall we had an election in February. The divisions of the PCR voted for a new slate of directors. On March 22, the results were announced and our new Sierra Division Director is Jim Collins. Jim also serves as the Sierra Division Membership Chairman, has recently served as our Division Superintendent, and Co-Chaired the 2019 PCR Convention. This may be proof of the old adage, "If you need something done, ask a busy person". Congratulations, Jim. We're looking forward to your representation on the PCR Board.



**Newly Elected Sierra Division Director, Jim Collins** Speaking of elections, we have division officer nominations and elections in our near future. We're looking for candidates for Division Superintendent, Chief Clerk, and Paymaster. Nominations can be made at any time, but our August 2020 meet is our target date for the process to be complete. The actual voting will take place at the October 2020 meet.

As it stands now we have one current officer who has clearly indicated his desire to step down. Al Rowe, our Paymaster for the past eight million terms, does not want to serve again. We certainly understand and respect Al's wishes, and we thank him for his years of top notch service. Our current Chief Clerk has agreed to stand for re-election. Our current Superintendent, which happens to be me, would prefer **not** to continue in the same capacity. My reasoning is simple: I invest a lot of time as editor of the Division and the Regional newsletters, and I serve as the Regional Secretary. Furthermore, there are many other capable candidates in our midst.

So please, consider this an invitation to "throw your hat in the ring".



## SIERRA DIVISION

Next Meeting: May 9  
Oroville

10:00 AM  
Northern California Museum of  
Transportation  
5666 Baggett Marysville Road  
(see link at right)

12:00 Noon - 4:00 PM  
Round Table Pizza  
1124 Oro Dam Blvd

SEE MAPS BELOW

**SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION**  
**STAY TUNED**

## TIMETABLE

May 9, 2020  
Oroville, CA

August 8, 2020  
To Be Scheduled

October 10, 2020  
To Be Scheduled

## SHORT LINE

June 10 for the July Issue

Sept 10 for the Oct Issue

Jan 10 for the Jan Issue

Mar 10 for the Apr Issue

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

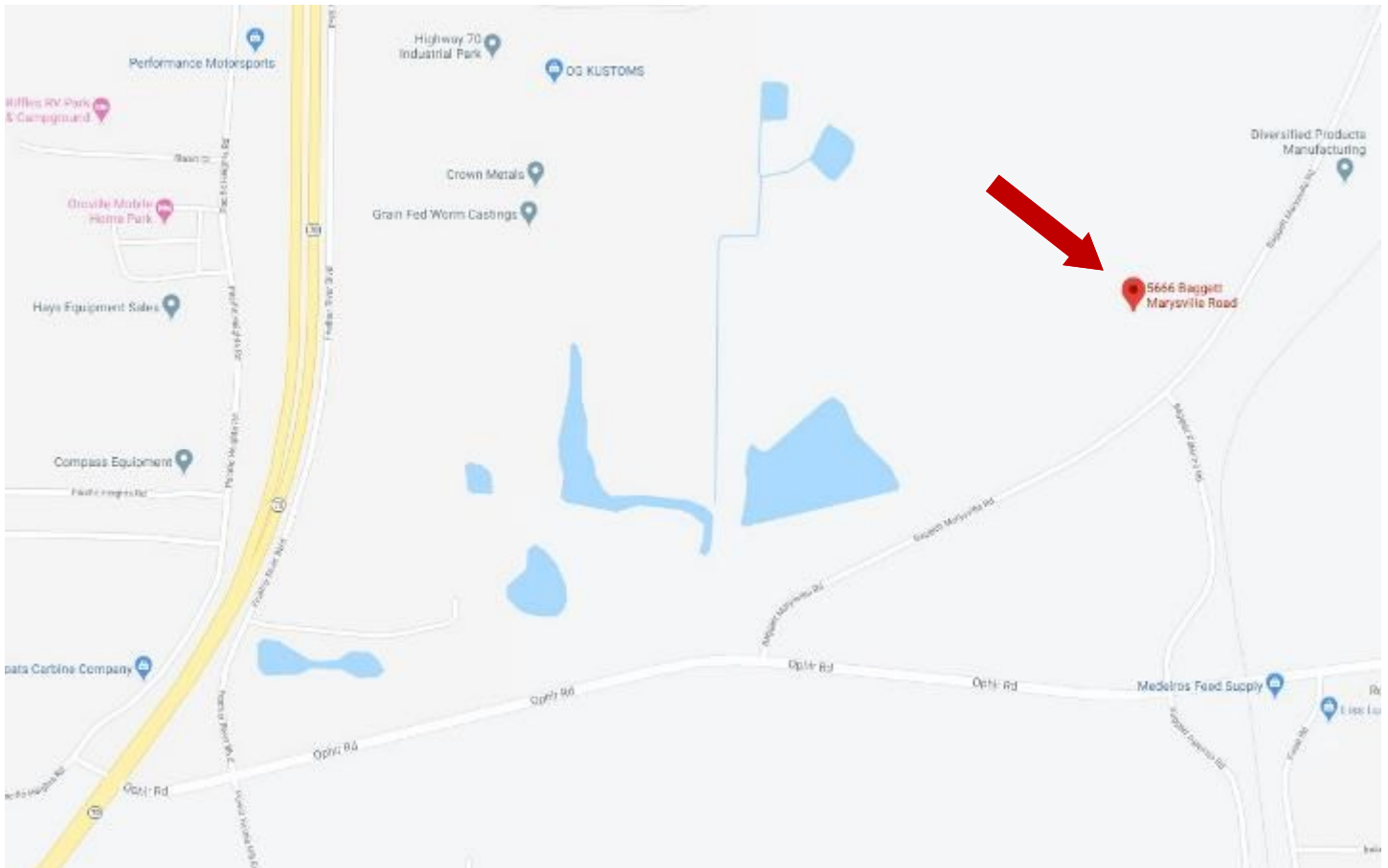
<http://ncmot.wordpress.com>

### May Contest Categories:

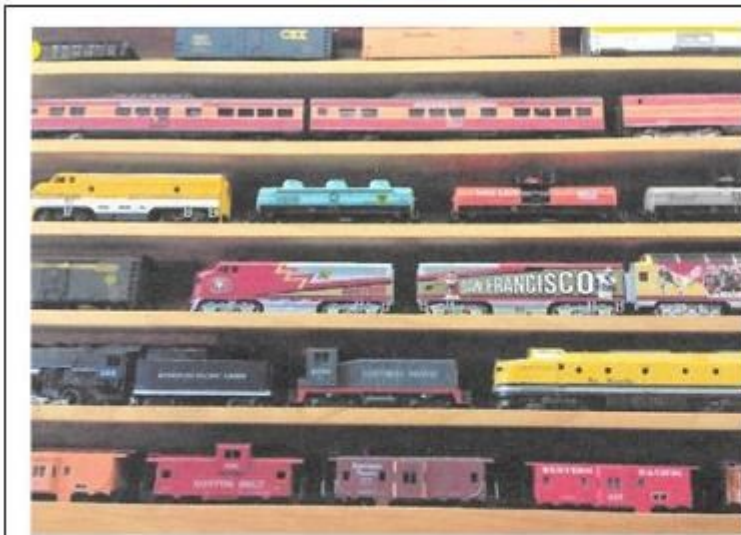
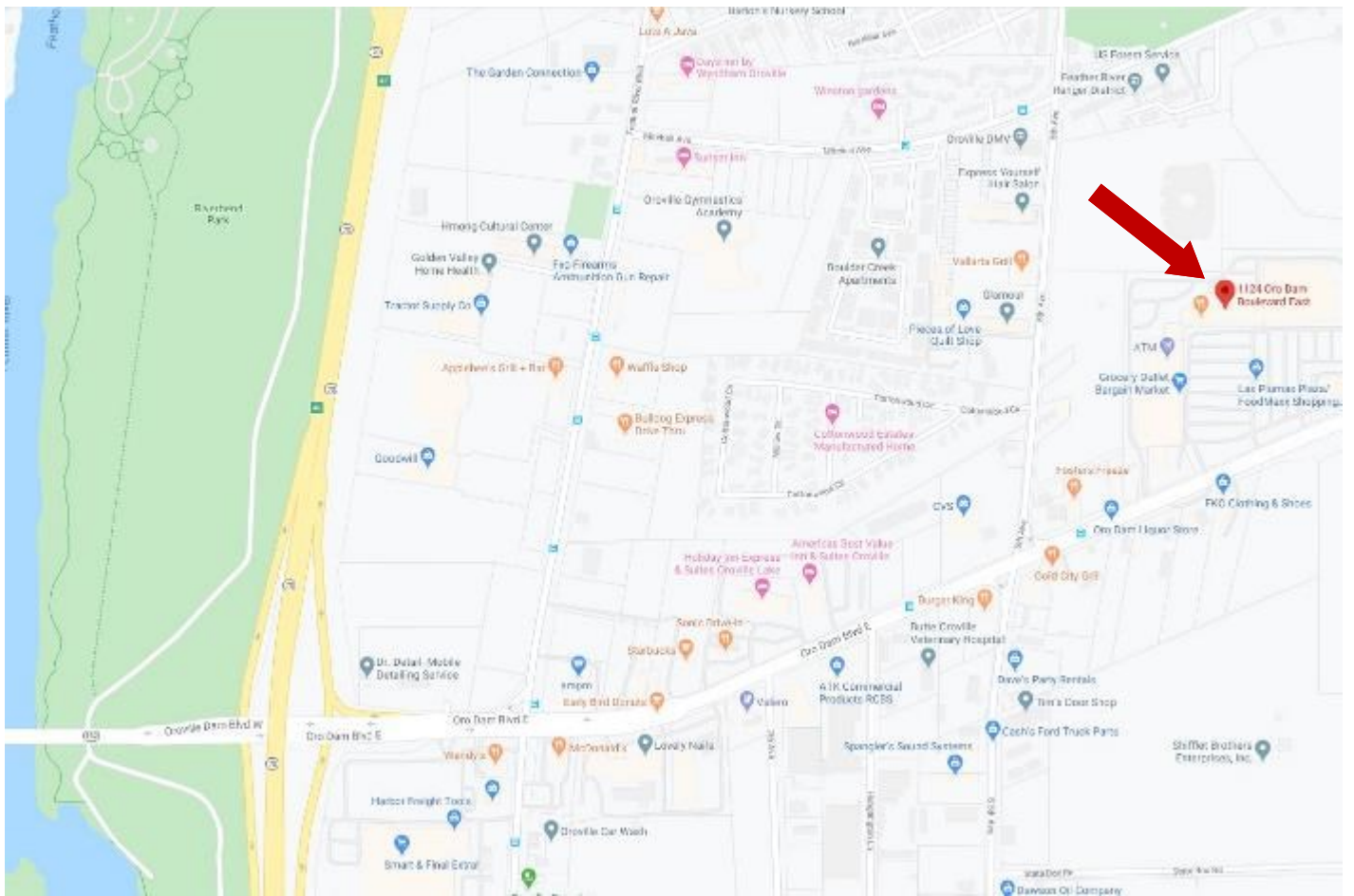
**Modeling: Motive Power**

**Photo: Color (Can be any layout, module  
or scene, but exposure must be by you)**

**Railroad Arts & Crafts**







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*"Church" from page 1*

Let's start with the foundation which is ¼" plywood. Another option would have been 1/8" plywood without stone sides, simulating a lower thinner foundation of plain concrete.

I used some plaster cast stones, but mostly real stones & mortar for the sides of the foundation. I attached the stones to the plywood base with white glue by putting the base on end until each side dried overnight. Then I applied one coat of clear flat polyurethane and let it dry thoroughly.

Mortar is the real thing, very carefully applied with an artist's spatula, used the way stone masons would use a pointed trowel.

If you build your own, you have a choice of materials for the walls of both the foyer and the main body: birch hobby plywood, 1/8" Masonite, 1/8" melamine, foam core board, cardboard or styrene (if you plan to use plastic siding). The dimensions of both the footprint and walls are up to you. I would recommend reinforcing the corners and possibly the tops of the walls with square dowels of at least 3/16" to prevent the walls from warping. The roof panels should also be reinforced with trusses, so they stay flat. The roof panels are more prone to warping than the walls. You can apply your siding of choice, board and batten or clapboard. I have done both. Trim is predominantly 1" x 4". I applied very ornate trim everywhere on the church which vastly improved its beauty.

Church windows are usually much larger than windows in homes, so I used O scale windows from Tichy Train Group®. Normally I prefer real glass windowpanes but, on this model, I decided to use the plastic panes provided with the Tichy kit. I secured them with liquid PSA from MicroMark®, item #84775.

My church was unpainted with natural wood but has a finish of three coats MicroMark® Age-It Easy brown wash part# 81528.

My roof is finished with shingles purchased from Miniatures Hobby Builders Supply® that are used on doll houses. These were used because of their shape. They were too large, so I cut them to half the size for HO use. The shingles could be left black to resemble tar paper. I chose to spray paint them with Rustoleum® multicolor texture paint and Krylon® stone coat paint. These two products have a gritty texture to them and, once applied, gave the shingles a mineral-topped appearance. I used a light coat of two different colors to be more prototypical.

The beautiful wedding cake steps were made from hobby plywood painted concrete gray and finished with a light coat of black wash.



Shingles and Tools



Wedding Cake Steps

*"Church" from page 5*

The bell tower was built with 1/16" birch plywood with basswood siding and trim. The louvered vents are functional. Behind them is a real bell. Just below the bell is a sound module and speaker which is activated by a switch on my control panel. My thanks to George at ITT Products® [www.ittproducts.com](http://www.ittproducts.com) who spent considerable time with me on the phone and played the many church bells he had available until I found just the right one. He recommended the largest speaker that would fit and would provide the best sound. His modules also have a sound control. I set mine to have a very resounding "bong-bong", calling the congregation to Sunday morning services.

I made the copper steeple from real copper sheet metal from Micro-Mark®. Looking at the original photo of the steeple, it appeared to have been fabricated from individual panels brazed or welded together. Because "nothing is good enough" I hand soldered all my copper panels together....

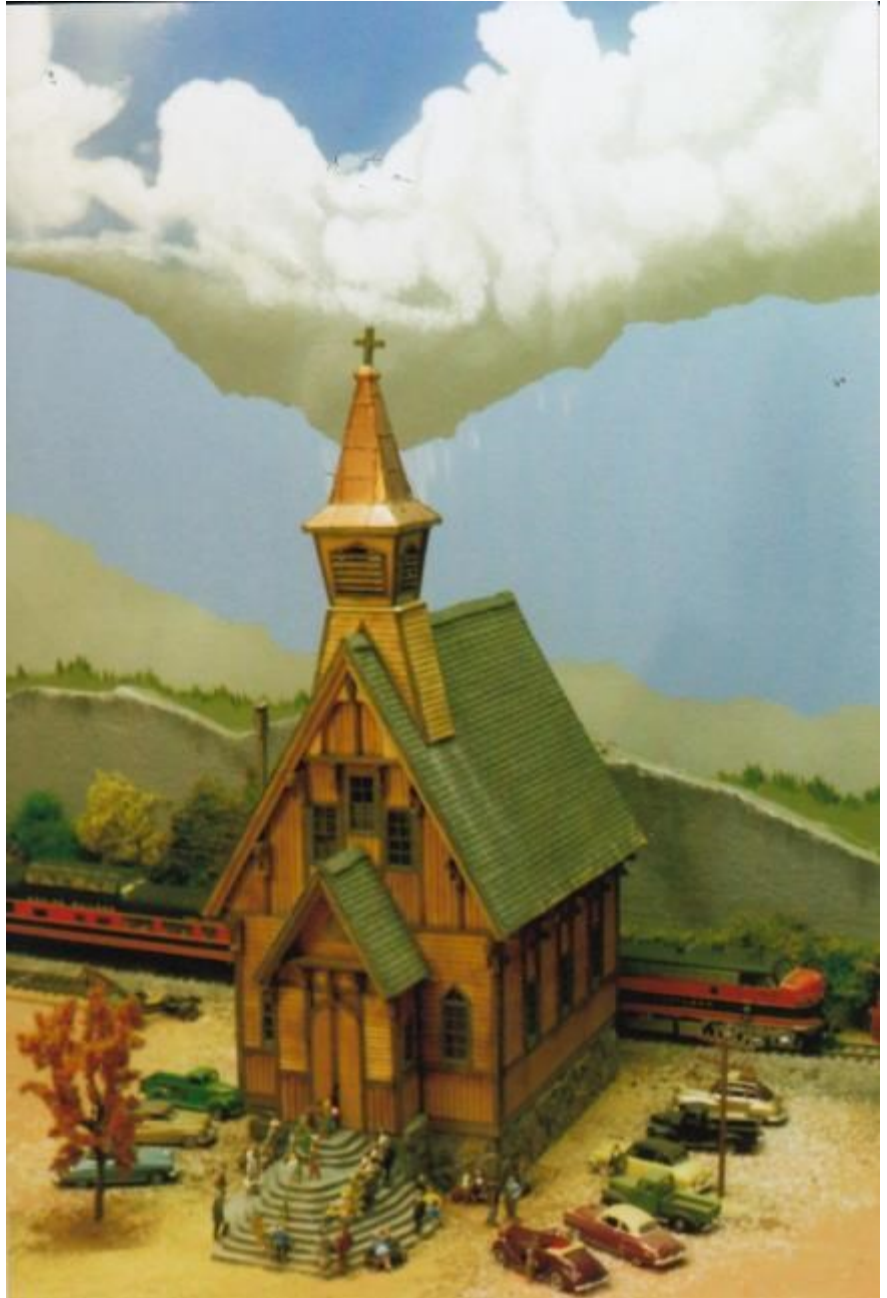
Gotcha! Just kidding folks. I did use real copper sheet metal. However, I did simulate the welded seams with E-6000 cement, dribbled on with a toothpick. Then I painted the cement only with antique copper acrylic paint from Wal-Mart®. This was "good enough" for me (my thanks to Allen McClelland).

The cross on top completed the church. This was made from real wood and stained brown.

I have a tidy investment wrapped up in human figures and vehicles. Although I could build the cars from kits, my thanks go out to Mini-Metals® for their fantastic cars and trucks in HO scale. I just can't make my kit-built ones look as good. I just take them out of the box and put them on the layout. (GOOD ENOUGH!)

That's it for this project. I hope more modelers will decide to add a church to their layouts - either prototypical or freelance. Even without dimensions or drawings, only as little as one photograph can help most any modeler build almost any structure.

Mike







NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION, INC.

**Wow! Did you know there's a new  
NMRA Member Benefit?**

**It's the NMRA Partner Program!**

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with the NMRA to offer discounts to NMRA  
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**Current members log in to [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) .  
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# February Meet - Sacramento

By Chip Meriam



*Photos by Chip Meriam except as noted*



**Mike Roque Greets and Briefs the Guest Operators**

## Our Annual Visit To Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society

(SMRHS) took place the morning of Saturday, February 8. At 9:30 AM we were briefed by train master and dispatcher, Mike Roque. Crews were assigned to complex jobs at locations around the system, and a call board/line up of the day's trains was posted. Throttles were assigned and operation began at about 10:00. For the next two hours, about twenty Sierra Division members, with guidance from SMRHS regulars, operated through trains, out and back turns, locals, haulers, and yard jobs across the Sierra Central Railroad. This has always been an enjoyable op session, and this visit was no dif-



ferent. The two hour session passed quickly and, before we knew it, our barbecued cheese burger lunch was ready - courtesy of SMRHS!



**Ed Zeiss Demonstrates the Proper Use Of the 0-5-0 Switcher As He Readies the 12th Street Yard For the Days Operations**



**Jim Collins Builds His Train At West Oakland. He Is Bound For Martinez.**

*Continued on page 9*



# February Meet - continued



Steve Harvath With His Train, Rounding Table Mountain ,  
Approaching Oroville



Spectacular Table Mountain



Jim Smyrak and Tom Van Horn Switching The Local At  
Oroville



The California Zephyr Departing Oroville Eastbound



# February Meet - continued



Klaus Keil and Dusan Petras Take A Break



Gary Ray Works Quincy



Walt Schedler Holds Court In The Crew Lounge



Our Host, Mike Roque, At The Dispatcher's Desk

Our heartfelt thanks to the Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society for graciously hosting the Sierra Division, PCR-NMRA.

*Continued on Page 11*



# February Meet - continued

## SIERRA DIVISION MEETING

**After The Morning Op Session** we convened at the First Christian Church for the Winter Meet. Two of our guests were PCR President, Chris Palermo and Vice President, Frank Markovich, who were on hand to discuss the April PCR Convention, some changes in the modeling contest, and increasing participation in the Achievement Program. Jim Dieckman filled us in on changes to International Rail Fair, which will be held a month earlier this year, and at a new location in Sacramento. We had a brief break in the program to cast votes for our contest entries (see next page for results), and we were treated to a clinic by Brian Witt. Brian put together a comprehensive discussion of the role of the dispatcher. Per tradition, we held the door prize drawing and concluded the meeting before 4:00 PM.



Twenty One Members and Four Guests Present  
*Jim Collins Photo*



PCR President, Chris Palermo and Vice President,  
Frank Markovich Pay Us A Visit  
*Jim Collins Photo*



Jim Dieckman Discusses The Future Of  
International Rail Fair  
*Chip Meriam Photo*

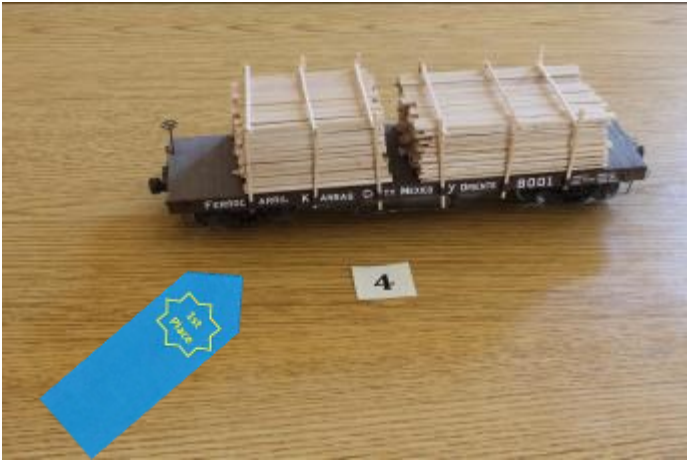


Brian Witt Gives A Clinic On The Dispatcher  
"Not Just Another Body In The Room"  
*Jim Collins Photo*



# February Meet - continued

## CONTEST WINNERS - MODELS



1st Place Model: *Steve Harvath*



2nd Place Model: *Steve Harvath*



3rd Place Model: *(tie) Walt Schedler*



3rd Place Model: *(tie) Chris Palermo*



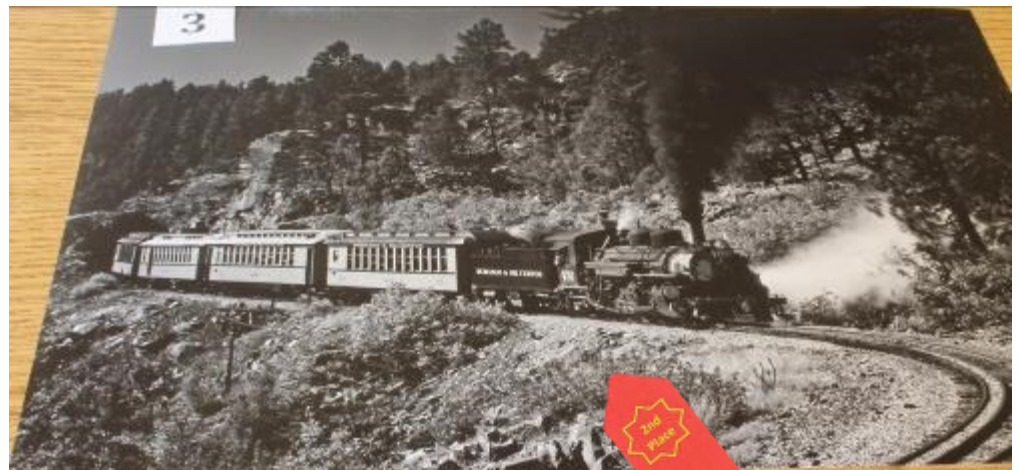
*"Continued on Page 13"*

# February Meet - continued

## CONTEST WINNERS - PHOTOGRAPHY



1st Place Photo: *Gary Ray*



2nd Place Photo: *Gary Ray*



3rd Place Photo: *Walt Schedler*

# Around And About



**Back In July 2019 I Made A Run Down To Point Richmond** to deliver about twenty file boxes full of old *Model Railroader*, *Trains*, and *Railroad Model Craftsman* magazines to the Golden State Model Railroad Museum. I've made many such trips to the Bay Area, and I can recall taking similar rides with my parents when I was a child. Some of the "features", of what was an otherwise boring three-hour journey, were the De Pue Warehouses that dotted the Southern Pacific West Valley Division main line that paralleled US 99 W, now the route of Interstate 5.

Up and down the central valley, most of the De Pue Warehouses have disappeared. Of the few that remain, one of the more colorful structures can be found in the small city of Williams. On my return rip from Point Richmond, I stopped in Williams and made this photo.

Ripe subject for a scratch building project? You bet!