



# Coast Dispatcher #211

## March 2021

Coast Division Web Site: <http://www.pcrnmra.org/coast>

Pacific Coast Region Web Site: <http://www.pcrnmra.org>

Click [HERE](#) for Officers, Directors and Chairpersons of the Coast Division



### NO March MEETING

**See The Superintendent's Report on page two for important information on future Coast meetings.**

**PHOTOS: Thanks to Craig Matoza**



Playing with LED lighting in the SP engine, A lot better than stock LED light.—Craig M.



San Leandro G&O new Golden Gate Bridge installed. O scale and G scale rail roads combined. Will be a nice center piece for depot. —cCraig M.

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## Super indent's Report

By Phil Edholm

March, 2021

### Divisional Update

#### Superintendents Report



It appears as if spring is here, at least by the temperature on the day I am writing this. The good news is that Covid cases are down, vaccines are up, and the end finally appears to be in sight. A couple of counties in the Division have moved to a more lenient tier and clubs and layouts are re-opening. But, with the cancellation of the physical meetings of both the PCR convention in Fresno and the NMRA convention in Santa Clara, the end is still a way off. Of course, both conventions will proceed virtually, but not physically this year.

Until face-to-face events return, we will continue to have our semi-weekly Coast Virtual Events and there are great virtual events being planned for both the PCR and NMRA conventions. If you are interested, there are several volunteer roles available in the on-line convention and opportunities for doing clinics and a tour of your layout.

Looking forward, while the end is in sight, the timing of returning to in-person events is a bit murky. The optimistic view is that we might be able to have in person meetings in Q4, the pessimistic view is probably early 2022. In either case, the in-person event world we will return to is going to be very different than before. Even prior to Covid, there were changes that were driving the division to rethink our event strategy. Several issues have emerged with our pre-Covid quarterly physical events and auction program.

1. The need to host the auction as a "for profit" event limited the venues we can use and increases the venue pricing dramatically. We were fortunate to have two great venues for the last years. Unfortunately, the Elks were already increasing the monthly rent before the pandemic. This combined with a general decrease in the auction revenues and Coast percentage had made the Elks events unprofitable and the Boy Scouts only slightly profitable. Unfortunately, the quality and value of items at the auction has decreased on average as higher priced items went to eBay for sale. The auctions have traditionally paid for the quarterly events and returned some cash to the Coast reserve fund. Prior to Covid, rather than the auctions and events adding to our reserve fund, we were rapidly approaching a point where we would be funding the events from the reserve, decreasing it over time. Running a deficit budget is not something the board believes is a good path forward.

2. Another issue is the auction team and software. We have been able to run our auctions as a rapid-fire stream of items based on a combination of a dedicated team of auctioneers and accounting volunteers as well as a custom software package that enables the process. Unfortunately, the software is aged and needs maintenance/rewriting at some point. It is a Visual Basic program (if anyone is interested in volunteering to take it over). The other issue is the auction team. Multiple members of the team have served faithfully at Coast events for many many years, arriving for every event early and leaving late, working throughout the event to make the auction work. The division thanks the auction team for their service. However, due to a combination of advancing age and extended time doing the role, the auction team is going to lose many/most of the members soon. To continue with the same auction format will require a new set of volunteers.

3. The third issue that emerged in 2020 is the impact of the Boy Scout bankruptcy. As part of the bankruptcy and the liquidation of assets, the Boy Scouts are selling their San Leandro headquarters. This removes this facility as an option for future Coast events, leaving us with only the Elks for auction events. We will have to research new venues for both an auction and potentially non-auction events.

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4. Clearly, the division must decide how to proceed when we can. We have multiple questions to decide about returning to in-person:

- Do we have 2 or 4 auctions per year?
  - 4 auctions as before with a new venue?
  - 2 events including an auction at the Elks, 2 events at other locations in the Division without the auction stipulation? Locations can vary for each non-auction event.
- Where will we hold our events in the future beyond the Elks?
- Do we continue with the current auction process or move to another live auction mechanism (silent auction, new tool, )?)
- What other activities should we have at our physical events?
  - More Clinics and sessions?
  - Local layout tours?
  - Operating sessions (both active and observers)?
  - Modular groups?
  - ??
- How do we reconcile facility costs with auction revenues and other costs? Options include:
  - Increasing auction lot minimums (from \$1 to \$2-5)
  - Increasing the Coast fee percentage at auctions
  - Use low-cost facilities (library, community center) for two events per year without an auction
  - Having a suggested donation at events
  - Institute a paddle charge

While the virtual events have proven their ability to keep us together, I believe in-person events are the backbone of the NMRA and the general fellowship of Model Railroaders. The ability to share our efforts, see models/photos and interact and see details in clinics and in-person cannot be replicated virtually. Ours is a physical and detailed hobby. For these reasons, I believe we need to define our path forward to enable the largest percentage of the Coast membership to have the option to attend an in-person Coast event and the right programs/clinics/tours/etc. to make it worthwhile.

The good news is we have some time to plan how we emerge from the Covid lockdown. To plan for our future, I would suggest we convene a committee of Coast members to consider the options and make a recommendation to

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the Coast Board. The focus will be how we should organize and the processes/activities in our in-person events and also our virtual events post-Covid. I am hoping we can get a reasonable sized group to participate and work on the planning and research (where can we meet?, what auction options are there?. etc.). I am proposing to begin the committee meetings in late April (after the April Board Meeting and Tax Day !).

If you would like to participate in defining the future of Coast in-person events, please contact me by email. I will build a list of committee volunteers to review with the board in April and we will begin our discussions and planning in late April. Any member interested should join in. This should give sufficient time to develop a strategy and review with the Coast board for new in-person events in late fall/2022. For all Coasters, this is your opportunity to be heard about what excites you and participate in planning our future events. Please participate.

Finally, if you have not joined one of our Saturday Coast Virtual Events, do drop in. On March 6<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM we will be having the Coast Division elections, but more importantly, Frank Markovich and Mike Blumensaadt will do an eClinic on the layout they built for the NMRA exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum. They will discuss the goals, the challenges, and how they made it all happen. Their layout is intended to show the process of building a model railroad and feature commercially available products that show how easy it is to get started and still build amazing results. This is a great Coast eClinic topic to join for the first time. It will be a great preamble to a visit to the NMRA exhibit when the Museum opens later this year. Also, other Coast members have worked on the exhibit and may discuss what is happening. Not to miss for sure!!!! BTW, if you miss it, a recording will be on the Coast Division YouTube channel here:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpKgBn\\_Dcaf1gOA8nGvWDGQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpKgBn_Dcaf1gOA8nGvWDGQ)

In closing, I hope your modeling is going great, you are close to or through getting vaccinated and that everyone in your world is doing well.

Stay Safe and Keep Modeling

Phil

**Director's Report  
By Lisa Gorrell, MMR  
March, 2021**



Our next PCR Board of Directors meeting will be held on April 22, 2021 at 11 a.m. If you have any issues you wish to be brought up, please bring it to my attention. I would like to give thanks to Phil Edholm for his work with the bi-monthly Zoom Coast meetings. It has been a great way to keep Coast members in touch. Lisa

### Vice President Frank Markovich

March, 2021



Not much news but there are a few items:

The PCR convention for 2021 in Fresno has been cancelled

You most likely know that the NMRA convention in Santa Clara is cancelled. The committee is planning a virtual convention. I am helping with clinics. I will also be doing at least one and more likely two clinics. Besides clinics there will be video tours of layouts and of local RR's. Please go to the website and see what is

planned.

As I write this the NNGC (National Narrow Gauge Convention) is still planned for September in Hickory NC. I won't be able to go but it looks good.

Nest years PCR convention is Rohnert Park. I can't wait for that convention as this pandemic should be over.

The election for PCR President and Vice President should be over. Thank you to all who voted.

I am really enjoying the virtual Coast meetings every other Saturday. Phil is doing a great job.

If you have any questions or need to contact me my email is: [frank@frankmarkovich.com](mailto:frank@frankmarkovich.com)

### Editor's Notes

March, 2021



We continue to depend on virtual media for our communications. Thanks to Phil for continuing to conduct the bi-weekly Zoom meetings, and for his planning for the future, as explained in his article.

For those of you who have been participating in the virtual events by showing your modeling projects, or for anyone else. please send those same photos to me for inclusion in the newsletters.

Thanks.

Pete Birdsong

**Registrar's Report  
By Ronnie LaTorres  
December, 2020**



There was no June meeting, so nothing to report

**Publicity Report**



Until local Train Shows and other in person train events can resume again, there is not much need to advertise for volunteers.

Meanwhile, keep in touch with what is happening by attending Coast Division Zoom virtual meetings, and other virtual venues like the upcoming virtual Santa Clara NMRA convention.

Check the Coast, PCR and the NMRA websites for more details.

Happy Trains to you, until we meet again!

Steve Wesolowski

**Auction Report  
By Craig Matoza  
No auction.**



**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

No new members came on board this period. We will report subsequent additions in later issues of the *Dispatcher*.

**CONTESTS**

No Model and Photo Contest



# WITLESS vs CLUELESS

*The adventures of Rivets O'Reilly  
and Larry Loungear*

As originally published in the Mid Central Region Division 10 Newsletter, *The Lantern*.  
Created by Pete Birdsong and sustained by Mike Armstrong



## "PRIORITIES"

**Rivets:** Hey, Larry, you're looking pretty glum! Somethin' the matter?

**Larry:** You bet somethin's the matter, Rivets.

**Rivets:** Well, tell me about it.....

**Larry:** Did you know I had to paint my house?

**Rivets:** No. Did somethin' go wrong, or what?

**Larry:** Naw, Rivets, nothin' went wrong, but it took eleven gallons of paint at \$35 a gallon, plus drop cloths, and hooks, and brushes, and a ladder, and you name it, and I've spent almost 500 bucks!

**Rivets:** Well, that doesn't sound like too much to me to paint a house.

**Larry:** Rivets, you don't know nothin', do ya? For that money, I could'a bought a new Bachmann G scale Climax, and some track for my garden railroad. I could'a been sittin' in my engineer's chair out under the walnut tree watchin' that Climax move timber. I could'a been happy, Rivets! Now all I got is a freshly painted house. And on top'a that, it took me three weeks of spare time to do it, Rivets. That's three weeks I could'a been watchin' that Climax, or layin that track, or whatever!

**Rivets:** I see whatcha mean, Larry. It would 'a been much better to have your house an eye-sore and own the Climax, right?

**Larry:** Thanks, Rivets. I've finally found someone who understands.

**Rivets:** Larry, you are a real dope

## ***The Coast Division 50 Years Ago***

*Excerpted by Pete Birdsong From Issue #10, February, 1971, of the Coast Dispatcher*

- ⇒ ***Meeting was held at the Golden Gate Model Railroad Club in San Francisco***
- ⇒ ***Clinic on Trackside Signs by Don Fiemann***
- ⇒ ***A “New Directions in Model Railroading” movie was shown***
- ⇒ ***A quote: “Faithful railettes will be on hand with fine drinks and snacks—pretty girls and low prices (on refreshments). Door prizes, as usual, plus an auction, contest and raffle.”***
- ⇒ ***Bios for officer candidates were published: Bob Dupont, Jim Bolla, Ralph Marcus, Mike Wood***
- ⇒ ***Almost 500 items were offered at the previous auction, the largest ever, clearing \$150***
- ⇒ ***Contest category were kits for steam, freight, cabooses, structures and unpowered rolling stock***