



Coast Dispatcher

#199

March 2018

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

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

Next Division Event
 March 4, 2018
 Alameda Elks Lodge
 2255 Santa Clara Ave, Alameda, CA

9:00 AM.....Doors open. Free Door Prizes.
 9:30 AM.....Get Auction Cards.
 10:00 AM.....DIY White Decals; Richard Brennan
 11:00 AM.....Build a Memory Layout at Home; Mike Blumensaadt & Frank Markovich, MMR #514
 11:00 AMModeler's Roundtable - You bring questions... We'll have a discussion, and probably some suggestions!
 12 Noon.....Business Meeting
 ~12:30 PM* ...Model/Photo Contest Results
 ~12:45 PM* ...Auction starts, Roundtable continues

3:30 PM.....Timesaver Results, Door Prizes– afterward Auction continues if required

9:30 AM – 12:15 PM:

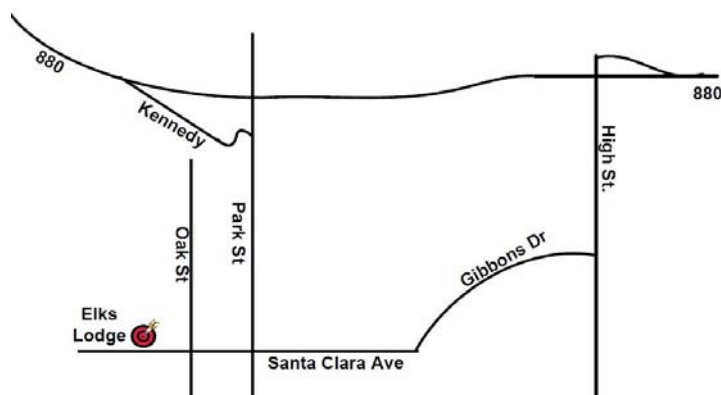
Model Contest– Steam, Traction, MOW/Non-Revenue and Structures

Photo Contest– Trains in Action

Allen Fenton Timesaver Switching Contest (until 3:15)

* Contest results immediately after business meeting. Auction actually starts immediately after contest results.

Directions to the Alameda Elks Lodge



From the North:

Take Highway 880 south.

Take exit #39B/23Rd Avenue/Alameda onto Kennedy St.
 Turn right onto 23rd Ave and then bear right onto 29th
 which becomes Park. Turn right on Santa Clara.

From the South:

Take Highway 880 North

Take Exit 38, High St. Turn left on High St.

Bear Right on Gibbons. Turn right on Santa Clara.

The Elks Lodge is on the right just past Oak St.

There is parking in the back.

Coast Call Board

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Editor's Notes

This is issue 199 of the Coast Dispatcher. The next one will be issue 200, 50 years after the first one in August 1968, and we are planning to do a history of the Coast Dispatcher as well as other interesting little tid-bits (Remember the Railettes?)

I will be working with Richard Brennan, who was the editor for Issue 100.

It will be my swan song—my 53rd issue—the longest run of any Coast Dispatcher editor.

If there is anything you would like to see in the 200th issue, let me know and I will see what I can do.

Tom Crawford
Editor

“Enduring Rails” 2018 PCR’S unbelievable Convention

Ok, Ok, what do you get when wine country meets trains? “Enduring Rails” of course. Our favorite California County will be hosting PCR’s yearly salute to everything trains. RED and the NWPRRHS (Northwestern Pacific RR Historical Society) have joined forces to create one of the most memorable Conventions in decades. The NWP steam trains of old are morphing into the Smart trains of today under the banner “Enduring Rails” which will take place April 4th to the 8th, 2018 at the stylish DoubleTree Hotel in Rohnert Park. You will be treated to private tours of the “SMART” facility and shops, not generally open to the public, the ancient steam operated “Sturgeon’s mill”, open and fully operational that day for our amusement; you will be standing next to a giant saw blade cutting through humongous logs; awesome!, and lastly the Korbel champagne cellars with its iconic building that started life as a railroad structure. But we cannot live on dessert only, oh no. We will be treated to a meat and potatoes program of many brand new, never seen before clinics conducted by PCR and NWPRRHS members covering a smorgasbord of topics and pictures. You will have the choice to visit and operate on a vast number of very fine layouts, many the envy of our railroading community. A full Design SIG and OP SIG program is imbedded in the schedule all day Thursday. Our non-rails will be entertained by a variety of fun activities. The Contest room promises to be at its peak and will introduce a new category, “special event, kitbashing” just for this Convention. Very little paperwork is required; read the details in the website. So bring your models, pictures, arts and Craft to fill the room for us to enjoy. At the Company store you will find one-of-a-kind NWP cars specially made for this event; they are a beauty! The award Banquet, besides offering great food, will feature a special keynote speaker: Dr. Ty Smith, Director of the California Railroad Museum. An excellent speaker with a fine sense of humor he has been known to delight his audiences. What a way to end a wonderful week.

I encourage you to register early as that will help the Convention Committee with their budgeting and scheduling. The Registration fee was kept very low to enable members on a tight budget. For those driving back and forth, know that there is NO parking charge at the Hotel (typically \$20/day at many hotels in the Bay Area). We encourage attendees who want to rent a room to please stay at the DoubleTree as that will fill the quota on the room blocks we agreed so as to get free Convention facilities. We negotiated a room charge much less than the Hotel typically charges. Reservations will be accepted beginning in January 2018. Check the website, please. For those who prefer alternate bookings, I encourage you to make your reservations soon, as those rooms are quickly gobbled up by tourists.

The time to act is now, the place to be is at “Enduring Rails 2018”. We are all in this Hobby for varied reasons; “Enduring Rails” will satisfy every one of them. We want you to be proud to be a member of RED, PCR and NWPRRHS; we worked to make this Convention “one for the ages”.

With much hope for your support

“Enduring Rails” Convention Committee.

Superintendent’s Report Doug Smith

Welcome to 2018! It’s a new year and there’s a lot of modeling to do. Has your resolution list included some of those project you’ve been waiting for the right time to pick up again? I’ve already got one done and a few more prioritized. What’s on your list? Maybe host an operating session? Maybe bring some

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models to the meets to display? Learn a new technology like an Arduino, or finally get that vintage brass locomotive back on the rails? Whatever it is, jump in and give it a try.

One good place to start is participating in more meets and RR related functions. Our Coast Division meeting dates are follows:

March 4th at the Elks Club in Alameda

June 2nd at the Boy Scouts' in San Leandro

Sept 23rd at the Elks Club in Alameda

December 2nd at the Boy Scouts' in San Leandro.

Get those on your calendar. There are folks at most every meet who can help you with any of those 2018 goals.

Among the other events for your calendar is the PCR Convention in Rohnert Park. I understand that more clinics are being added to the program. There is already a good mix of regional prototype clinics and a strong operations track. Those are some of the fun things to learn when going someplace new for a convention. The contests promise to be very good as usual. And it's in Wine Country which means great places to eat and non-rail tours to take. Make this a vacation as well as railroading getaway.

A few auction thoughts since it has been the subject of much discussion lately. Our auction is a very complicated event to prepare for and to execute at each meet. It has been a fixture of Coast Division meets since long before I was a member. Folks get involved at many levels. The auction provides a place where members can sell items to clean out the layout area a bit, thin personal collections, or even sell off an entire collection, before or after it has become an estate. Some of our members help to sell items for other folks, and that makes a lot of great things available to Division members, the buyers. Some members buy a lot of items at the auction, which is a good thing for all of the sellers. The auction also has the big benefit of providing the monies to pay for the meeting facilities. Our division meets are free, which is not the case in most Divisions the size of ours.

The auction has changed a little here and there over the years, mostly for the good. But some little changes on top of other little changes have led to missing the mark in some cases. Your Auction committee and the Division Board of Operations has been working hard to bring some of these misses back closer to the target of something that is the most beneficial to most of the members. As you can imagine, hitting the target on the first try is an optimistic goal. Tune-ups are in the works. One of the first tune-ups is the distribution of auction cards. Revision A of the changes is discussed later in the newsletter. Like I said last time, this has been a lot of work on the part of many folks and it's for the best overall for the auction and for the Division members. Little changes can have larger unintended effects. So while we work to make things better please be patient. The auction report is included elsewhere in this issue.

Help Wanted, a little or a little more: There are always opportunities to help out the Division and have a little more fun in the process. I am working towards having a backup for each of the functions listed on The Callboard on our web site. This doesn't mean that you are on the hook to take over the function soon, though that's a possibility if you're interested. We have turnover like any other group. And most everyone listed could use a little help somewhere. So if you're on the Callboard, be open to offers for help. Tap someone on the shoulder if you like. If you're not on the list yet, find someone who is and have a chat. I know many members have volunteered for many positions in the past, and the thanks of everyone goes out to you. New members, long time vets, and everyone in-between, don't be afraid to something out. Remember though if just coming to meets every quarter makes you happy, we're happy to have you do that.

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There's much more than this happening at the Nation and PCR level. Our PCR on-line calendar is a great resource. Also of course check out the PCR Branchline. The NMRA Turntable is in its second year and getting better. Lots of helpful on-line links this month. Too much info in those places to repeat here, so off you go.

That's all for now. Hope to see everyone at The Elks in March.

Director Report ***Frank Markovich***

Not much to report but following are some highlights:

Elections starting now will be online – if you don't have a valid email with the NMRA you will get a paper ballot. Hopefully this increases the percent of people voting. In other divisions it has increased the numbers significantly.

There are going to be some changes to the auction. This will be discussed further at our upcoming meet.

Lots of model train activities coming up:

PCR Enduring Rails April 4 – 8 in Rohnert Park.

West Side Reunion – April 28th Sonora – contact me frank@frankmarkovich.com or website <https://www.westsidereunion.com>

Sierra seminar – April 29th also in Sonora. Contact Glenn Sutherland glennsutherland@sti.net.

Nevada County Narrow Gauge Conference June 7th – 10th. <http://www.ncngmuseum.org> for more information.

This is now modeling season and I hope to see some models at our Coast Division meet!

Clinics for March ***Richard Brennan***

10:00-11:00 DIY White Decals; Richard Brennan

The ability to print small quantities of white decals is one of the most sought-after capabilities for modelers. This clinic will discuss three technologies for digital printing in white; ALPS, UV-LED, and Laser, and some suggestions on preparing lettering artwork.

Participants who bring a computer or digital file will be able to get a white laser sample of their lettering printed on-site immediately following the clinic!

11:00-12:00 Modeler's Round Table Discussion

You bring questions... We'll have a discussion, and probably some suggestions!

11:00-12:00 Build a Memory Layout at Home; Mike Blumensaadt & Frank Markovich, MMR #514

You too Can Build a Build a Memory! Frank and Mike will continue the Build-a-Memory series with discussion on how the techniques used for building the display layouts can translate into your own home layout.

Registrar's Report

By Ronnie LaTorres

Here is the Meeting Attendance from the December Division Event 2017

Coast Division 75
 Daylight Division 0
 Redwood Empire Division 5
 Sierra Division 5
 Guests 1
 Total Attendance 85
 First Timers 2

Money in:

1 Badge @\$5 \$5.00
 Total Money In \$5.00

Expenses:

Prizes -\$50.00
 Total Expenses -\$50.00
 [Prizes Paid back +50.00

Auction Committee Report

John Ameling

Here is the Auction Committee report for the Dec 2nd, 2017 Division Train Event and the Board of Operations meeting on Jan 15th 2018

Total Items Sold	434
No Bid Items	124
Auction net	\$ 745.10

Numerous discussions were held at the December Coast Division Event and at the January BOO meeting regarding the new auction rules. We are waiting for the final comments from a few people but fully expect to have the new set of rules in effect as of April 1st..

This means that the March auction will be the last of its kind.

Going forward there will be 6 people identified for advanced card distribution and any one identified as a large volume seller. All other sellers will be able to get auction cards from the Auction Committee chair or his aide at the meet.

No changes have been made to the manner in which we'll handle the execution of the auction
 Copies of the new Rules document will be available AT THE MARCH MEET.

As always, we encourage people who want to improve the auction, please get involved. We always need more help.

Thanks

John Ameling
 Auction Committee Chair

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Model and Photo Contest Report December 3rd, 2017

Jim Eckman

Diesel and others

No entries.

Caboose

1st Place – Kenneth Martin's CB&Q passenger waycar, built from a wood kit, funky and nice!



Display

No entries.

Freight Cars

1st Place – Kenneth Martin's SP boxcar, built from a wood kit.



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Photo Contest – Trains as Art
1st Place – Bob Warner's *Greasing It Up*



Other entries
Stanley Keiser's
Semaphore Signals

Bob Warner's *SRS 124*



Show and Tell

None.

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Arduino in the Coast Division

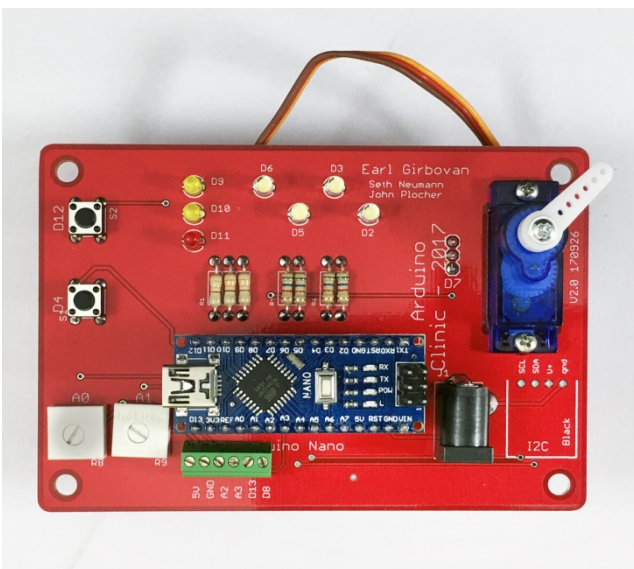
Earl Girbovan

Over the past few months, Seth Neumann and I (with an assist from Chuck Catania) have given a hands-on Arduino Clinic to three groups of PCR members. These clinics have all been very successful. We have a couple more sessions being scheduled for February, will give the clinic at the Rohnert Park meet and most likely at the National Meet in Kansas City this summer.



San Jose Arduino Clinic
Seth Neumann Photo

The Arduino is an inexpensive programmable controller that is easily interfaced to LEDs, servos, motor and various sensors. As part of the clinic, we provided an assembled and tested printed circuit board with a number of LEDs, potentiometers, switches and a servo. We also provided a number of pre-written programs that the attendees typed in, ran, and/or modified themselves to flash lights, simulate fire, sweep a servo and they finally tie it all together with a grade crossing simulator.



Arduino Clinic Circuit Board
Seth Neumann Photo

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One of the benefits of the Arduino is their low cost. The Nano we used in the clinic is less than \$5.00 from various internet sellers, making it an inexpensive addition to your layout.



Arduino Nano

For example, with a Nano, a few lines of code, two amber and one red LED you can put together a campfire simulator for much less money than buying one of the commercial versions. The code is very simple, and looks like:

```
int ledPin1 = 9;
int ledPin2 = 10;
int ledPin3 = 11;

void setup()
{
  pinMode(ledPin1, OUTPUT);
  pinMode(ledPin2, OUTPUT);
  pinMode(ledPin3, OUTPUT);
}

void loop()
{
  analogWrite(ledPin1, random(135, 255));
  analogWrite(ledPin2, random(135, 255));
  analogWrite(ledPin3, random(135, 255));
  delay(random(1, 100));
}
```

The flickering is much more random and more realistic than a dedicated, commercial effects module. If you change the LEDs to blue and white, with the same code you can simulate an arc welder, or if installed in a building the flickering of a TV set. Additional code can be written around the above example to randomly turn the effect on and off for a welding simulator, and this was provided in the clinic as well.

We've used Arduinos past to randomly turn lights on and off in a building to simulate occupancy. Seth's layout has working factory gates with Arduino-controlled servo motors. Some simple code and LEDs provided working aircraft warning lights on a number of buildings. If you were at the Bakersfield meet last year, you saw an Arduino controlling a stepper motor to randomly move an elevator to various floors in a contest structure. These effects are not the repetitive type you've seen in the past that quickly become boring. The software's random function allows for truly random realistic effects.

The Arduino is not just for lighting or animation. Chuck and Seth have used them to build working interlockings, staging yard controllers and CMRI nodes. There is a model railroad specific Arduino group on Yahoo Groups hosted by Seth Neumann called Arduini, just search for "Arduini" on Yahoo Groups and mention that you read this article and he'll add you to the list

Hopefully this brief introduction has got you interested in Arduinos and how they can bring life and functionality to your layout. If so, I invite you to attend an upcoming clinic.