



THE

# CALLBOARD



OF THE REDWOOD EMPIRE DIVISION

Visit RED at : **NEW** [www.pcrnmra.org/redwood/index.html](http://www.pcrnmra.org/redwood/index.html)

January—March 2010

All railroad enthusiasts are welcome to enjoy an afternoon of model railroading fun on Saturday, February 20th.

*There is no charge to attend.*

## February Meeting

at the

### Napa Valley Northern RR

The next meeting of the Redwood Empire Division will be held in Napa on **Saturday** February 20th starting at 1 PM. The hosts for this meet will be the Napa Valley Model Railroad Historical Society, operators of the Napa Valley Northern Railroad. They are located in Napa on the grounds of the Town & Country Fairgrounds, at the Third Street gate.

Doors open at noon. Sandwiches, snacks, coffee & tea will be available for purchase, furnished by MARY MOORE-CAMPAGNA.

The Napa Club invites you to bring your pet locomotives and rolling stock to run on their layout. The only requirement is that the equipment meets NMRA standards and has properly aligned Kadee type couplers. The decision on any questions will be at the discretion of the Napa Club.

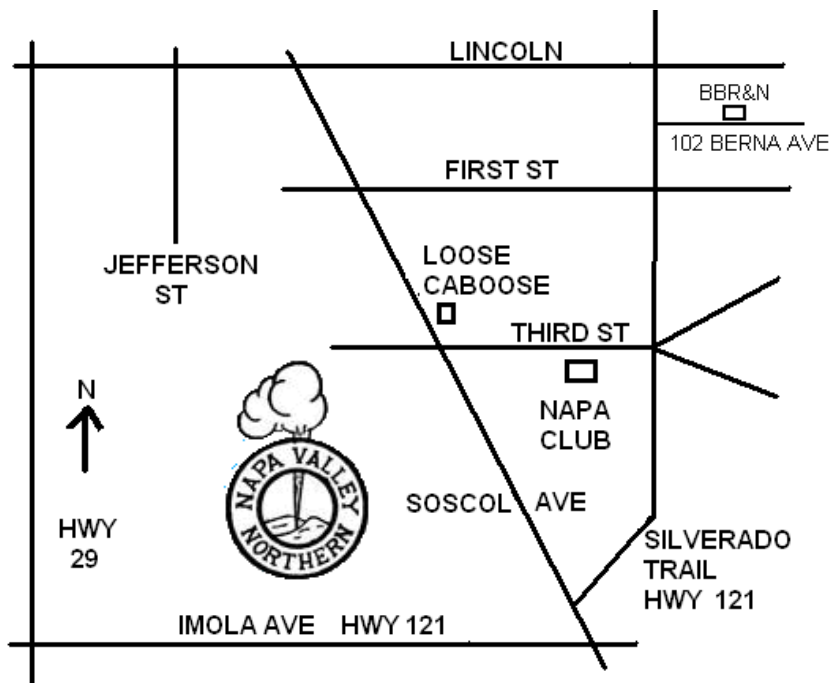
Napa Valley MRHS member Dave Hammaker will be presenting a clinic on weathering.

As usual, everyone will get a free door prize ticket. If you are wearing your Division name badge, it will be worth an additional free ticket, as will bringing at least one guest and/or a model for the show & tell or contest display. See the article on page 7 for details. Tickets can be purchased (3 for each dollar) for the special door prize, which will be a \$25.00 gift certificate donated by **The Loose Caboose Hobbies** store in Napa. They are located at 820-A Third St., on the corner of Soscol Ave.; the store entrance is on Soscol. The phone number is (707)258-1294. They will be open on Saturday from 10 to 6, so drop by and say hello to RAY

DAHLGREN and his crew and thank them for the day's special door prize.

To finish off the day, HAROLD MENTZER's HO Gauge railroad layout, the *Bellena Bay Railway & Navigation Co.*, will be open one last time from 4 to 5:30 PM. The BBR&N is located at 102 Berna Ave., just a few blocks from the Fairgrounds, off Silverado Trail, a block north of First Street.

The map below shows the Napa Club, Loose Caboose Hobbies and the BBR&N layout location. We hope to see you on Saturday February 20th before 1 PM.



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**DIRECTOR'S REPORT  
BY CAROL ALEXANDER**

Once each quarter I have the task of writing something for the Callboard. Every now and then I am inspired and know what to write right away; most times I am looking square into the eyes of my deadline and haven't got a clue. This issue, I am inspired.

Many of our members were able to attend the memorial service for our friend, HAROLD MENTZER, and will remember that a gentleman, who met Harold in the hospital when they were both receiving treatments, got up to speak. He read a poem that he had found inspiring and when he finished, he gave the text to Shirley, Harold's wife. I found the reading to be very apropos to me and thought I'd share with all of you who could not be there. Read it now and I'll share some thoughts with you after you're done.

***The Station***

*by Robert J. Hastings*

*Tucked away in our subconscious is an idyllic vision. We see ourselves on a long trip that spans the continent. We are traveling by train. Out the windows we drink in the passing scene of cars on nearby highways, of children waving at a crossing, of cattle grazing on a distant hillside, of smoke pouring from a power plant, of row upon row of corn and wheat, of flatlands and valleys, of mountains and rolling hillsides, of city skylines and village halls.*

*But uppermost in our minds is the final destination. On a certain day at a certain hour we will pull into the station. Bands will be playing and flags waving. Once we get there, so many wonderful dreams will come true and the pieces of our lives will fit together like a completed jigsaw puzzle. How restlessly we pace the aisles, damning the minutes for loiter-*

*ing - waiting, waiting, waiting for the station.*

*"When we reach the station, that will be it!" we cry. "When I'm 18" "When I buy a new 450SL Mercedes Benz!" "When I put the last kid through college." "When I have paid off the mortgage!" "When I get a promotion." "When I reach the age of retirement, I shall live happily ever after!"*

*Sooner or later we must realize there is no station, no one place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip. The station is only a dream. It constantly outdistances us.*

*"Relish the moment" is a good motto, especially when coupled with Palm 118:24: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." It isn't the burdens of today that drive men mad. It is the regrets over yesterday and the fear of tomorrow. Regret and fear are twin thieves who rob us of today.*

*So, stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles. Instead, climb more mountains, eat more ice cream, go barefoot more often, swim more rivers, watch more sunsets, laugh more, cry less. Life must be lived as we go along. The station will come soon enough.*

It is so easy with so many things vying for our attention and time to let the important things remain undone. In my own case I've been putting the hobby aside waiting "until..." Wait until the garage is ready. Wait until I have everything I need to start. Wait until I finish this novel. Wait, wait, wait.

The next RED meeting will be in Napa and we will be having a contest and show and tell. If you want

(Director's Report Continued from page 2)

your model judged, you can have that. If you just want a critique on how well you did, you can have that. If you want to know how well it satisfies the Achievement Program requirements, you can have that. If you just want someone else to see your work, you can have that too. I built two Atlas water tank kits and I'm going to bring them to show off. I didn't wait this time, I set up the card table in the family room and built something.

I've stopped waiting for the station; I'm going to enjoy the ride. I hope you will too and we'll see an example of your modeling this time.



## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

BY STEVE SKOLD

We are all saddened by the passing of HAROLD MENTZER on Thanksgiving morning. Harold and I had been close friends since we met at an RED meeting at the old Santa Rosa Savings building in 1969. We worked together on several PCR Conventions and in many jobs in RED and PCR. He was one of the

original members of the **Sonoma County Hi-Ballers** that is celebrating its 40th Anniversary as a round robin group. We have enjoyed many hours and years operating on several layouts in the North Bay.

The **Loose Caboose** hobby shop donated a G Scale Caboose (shown below) to SHIRLY MENTZER as an Urn for Harold's ashes. RON BUCKWALTER and CLARK STEWART painted and lettered the caboose for Harold's Bellena Bay Railway and Navigation Company.

Our next meeting is February 20th at the Napa Valley Northern model railroad club in Napa. We are trying to get SHIRLY MENTZER to make up a bunch of her great chocolate chip cookies we have come to love on operating night at Harold's.

In the recent PCR **Branch Line** issue, there is a ballot for RED Director. Please take time to vote and mail to JIM PROVIDENZA. The winners will be announced at the PCR Convention in Sparks, Nevada and at the RED meet in Santa Rosa on May 15th.

Sometime later this year, RED is combining with Coast Division for a layout tour. At this point, we have 5 layouts scheduled and are working to get several more. ERNIE SIMARD is in charge and may be calling on you to participate. Maps will be provided at one of the layouts or on line.

## CHIEF CLERK'S REPORT

BY DR. ED MERRIN

Last November 21<sup>st</sup>, on a clear Saturday, 21 members and guests of RED gathered at the Lake County Fairgrounds for the fall meet, courtesy of the Lake County Model Railroad Club.

Congratulations to the Club for being great hosts and providing us with a wonderful experience. The meeting itself took place in a café like facility, which made it a pleasant place to eat lunch, provided by club members. For a small donation (not required) we got spaghetti, salad, and bread, with desert as well. To heck with diets!

The highlights of the program were two clinics, both delivered by DENNIS BURKE, aka president of the Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge Historical Society. The first told us all about the Society and some of the restoration work it has been involved with. The second was about a local fallen flag, the Prather Lumber Company. Some of the video included grainy old black and white films of the railroad in its heyday, almost like home movies. The primitive equipment in use and the down home ways of the people in the films were real treats.

We had some announcements, of course. Lake County Club member MIKE ERNST gave a good pitch for his group. They have been working diligently on their layout at the fairgrounds (more about this later), overcoming obstacles as they go. The club has a three-decade history and is always looking for new members. They meet on Wednesday evenings on a regular basis.

MARY MOORE-CAMPAGNA thanks those that helped out with International Railfair, held earlier in the month in Roseville. She also re-

(Continued on page 4)



(CLERK'S REPORT Continued from page 3)

ported a change in contest scheduling at the PCR Silver Rails Convention in Sparks this May. Because of the Saturday V&T tour, contest entries must be registered by Friday night.

STEVE SKOLD showed us the NWP Historical calendars, on sale as a fundraiser for RED. The calendars feature reproductions of photos from the collection of Dusty Miller. Each month has a different NWP steam locomotive from the 1930s. They come with a CD case that folds out as a stand. These calendars sell for \$8 each or two for \$15. If you don't have one, contact Steve so you can help support our organization.

There was the usual Show & Tell, including a giant bridge from RED Contest Chairman GIUSEPPE (aka Joseph) AYMAR and an O scale station built by STEVE SKOLD for his On3 Whiskeytown & Shasta. Steve explained how he used double-sided tape to attach shingles and printed signs for the structure with his computer.

Finally, came the giveaways, or door prizes as we usually call them. Door prizes were graciously donated by Clifford Mestel of Classic Miniatures (Oregon stock car kit), Jim Saylor of the SP Narrow Gauge Society (Loco #9 book), David Mull of Carson and Colorado, Inc. (mugs, can coolers, DVDs, SP calendars), and Jim Blain (Westside Lumber DVD). We kept drawing tickets until all the prizes were gone. Winners included GIUSEPPE AYMAR, GUS CAMPAGNA, FRANK GEORGE, AND STEVE SKOLD (twice!). Sorry about the rest of you; I didn't have time to write all the names as we went along. If you feel slighted, please write to the editor and he'll give me heck.

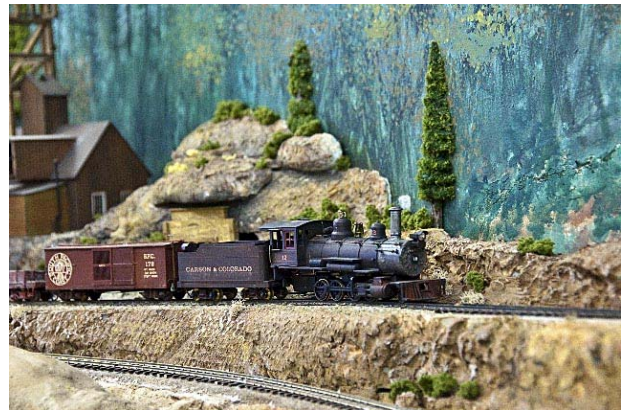
The special door prize, donated by MIKE ERNST, was a photo of SP #18 taking water at Kersage, mounted beautifully on a wooden plaque. The winner was Dave "Flying Sailor" Croshere. Enjoy, Dave.

After the formal meeting we made our way up the hill to the old National Guard Armory to visit the club's layout. This was a real treat. The goal of the club, in designing the layout, was twofold. First, they wanted to portray a number of California scenes in the transition era. Second, they wanted a layout that deviated from the usual spaghetti bowl display yet would still be something the general public could visit. So far, it seems that they have succeeded very well.

The HO scale layout is quite large and is designed for walk around rather than centralized operation, all with Digitrax DCC. The main tracks are all in operation, and beside the extensive standard gauge mainline there is a narrow gauge operation as well (kudos to Dennis Burke). The track work includes some beautiful hand built switches). Scenery is progressing steadily, and what's there is absolutely gorgeous. Not the least of the eye candy are the fantastic backdrops down by

MIKE ERNST. How about a clinic sometime, Mike? RED members had an open invitation to run their own equipment on the layout, and our CALLBOARD editor operated a Sunset Models SP AC-12 cab forward that included Soundtraxx Tsunami sound.

The next meeting is on February 20<sup>th</sup> at the Napa Fairgrounds. We've got a good program set up for then, so I hope to see every last one of you there. Meanwhile, good railroading and stay out of the floodwaters.



## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

BY GIUSEPPE AYMAR

Let's talk "Golden Spike Award" requirements and how easy it is for most of you to achieve it. As part of the Achievement Program (AP), it awards you a Certificate from the NMRA and your name will be published in the NMRA Scale Rails magazine. For all of you who have built, or are in the process of building a layout, the certificate is well within grasp or might already have been achieved without you knowing it.

These are the requirements as listed on the NMRA AP Golden Spike Awards page:

1. Display six units of rolling stock (display, not achieve a minimum amount of points)
2. Construct a minimum of eight square feet of layout. Your typical 2x4 module will do.
3. Construct five structures (could be kits built).
4. Show three ballasted type of tracks (commercial track and turnout are permitted) i.e. turnout, crossing, grade elevation...
5. The layout is to be wired so you can operate two trains simultaneously (main line and siding will do).
6. Provide one additional electric feature like a commercial powered turnout with a switch machine

To earn the award, the layout does not need to be finished. It just needs to address each of these six key elements.

As you can see it boils down to NO SWEAT for most of you. John Sing, the Coast Division Contest chairman, is encouraging his fellow members to "Nominate your friend for the

NMRA Golden Spike Award". I feel this is a very worthwhile initiative and would like to hijack it (plagiarize it, if you will) and introduce it to RED. As John says; It is a gift of friendship It gives recognition of your friend's modeling achievements It's fun doing it It is a good excuse to get together and talk trains.



I am so pleased to announce that your very own indomitable RED Superintendent, the Honorable **Steve Skold**, has been awarded the "GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD" by the NMRA for the work on his "Whiskeytown & Shasta Trinity Southern. Look for his name to appear on the pages of the NMRA *Scale Rails* magazine. This goes to show you that an existing layout can receive an award during or after the construction phase. Even years after!

As of this writing, **Stewart Benson** has also been honored with the **Golden Spike Award**. Stewart has a nice shelf layout 2'x12' in his garage themed for the Milwaukee Road. Some of his buildings can be seen on the portable layouts of the CVL lines.

Please see me, Giuseppe Aymar, at our next RED meeting for more details or contact me by e-mail at [giuseaymar@aol.com](mailto:giuseaymar@aol.com) For those of

you, who have been thinking of starting a modest layout, this is your chance. **START NOW**. You will have people willing to help you with your endeavor and become a member of the Golden Spike Award Club.

Let's GO RED, let's move on to next level which promises a bunch of fun and camaraderie.



## EDITOR'S NOTES

### April -June CALLBOARD

**Staff Meeting:** 7:30 PM, April 13

**Text Deadline:** April 20

**Mailing:** April 27

**Meeting:** Saturday, May 15

### July -September CALLBOARD

**Staff Meeting:** 7:30 PM, August 10

**Text Deadline:** August 17

**Mailing:** August 24

**Meeting:** Saturday, September 11

### October -December CALLBOARD

**Staff Meeting:** 7:30 PM, October 19

**Text Deadline:** October 26

**Mailing:** November 2

**Meeting:** Saturday, November 20

**Submit all articles, calendar items, adds, comments and corrections to the Editor.**

### Attention CALLBOARD readers:

Please advise if you are willing to read future newsletters on-line at the RED web site (vs. reading a printed mailed copy). Any or all pages can be printed by you at any time.

Please send your "ok" by email to the Editor at: [jrolston@pacbell.net](mailto:jrolston@pacbell.net) List "Yes Notification" on the email subject line. No message is required **except** your first & last name.

\*\*\*\*\*

# THINK SMALL # 62

## Strange and Weird Non-prototype Cars That Make Model Railroaders Smile

Most of us have one or more “drag” cars. The car has a chunk of Masonite (rough side down) fitted with a pair of nails that slip into loose fitting holes in the floor of the car. The fiber board scrubs dirt and other gunk off the top of our rails so our trains run better and we spend less time with our track erasers.



My drag car is a favorite device for keeping my rail tops bright and shiny with minimum cuss or fuss. Just a few swipes on a sheet of sandpaper cleans the assorted gunk from that Masonite pad and it is ready for the next time. The track is ready for some railroading ! When a train cleans the track we score a true plus !

Rollers cars are another train based system that can change frowns to smiles. When a roller car, in front of the locomotive, is swabbing the rail

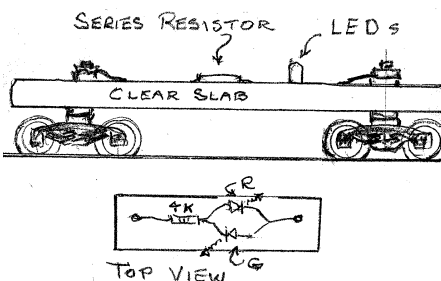


tops with mineral spirits, GooGone or other solvent and a following second roller car, is wiping the rail tops dry, we gain both shiny rails and wheels that are sparkly clean. We smile; we’re not lazy— just efficient !

There are other rail polishing systems, not so common, that do the job with a fancier delivery vehicle. You will find no absolutely best device that beats all the others all the time. Like finding a prototype -you have choices.

You may remember Joel Goldberg’s beautiful clearance and level car, built on a **Micro-Mark** clear plastic track inspection car, that was pictured on page 36 of the October, 2008 NMRA *Scale Rails* issue. Our local Round Robin group built “see thru” plastic slab cars before they were available from **Micro-Mark**. This simple car (consisting of a slab of clear plastic mounted on a pair of trucks) proved to be a most valuable tool. We can push it through troublesome trackage and find the exact spot where the trouble lies. The NMRA gauge is valuable but nothing beats actually seeing where the wheels stub their toes on a misgaged piece of rail.

Our Round Robin group could not leave this simple device unmodified. Polarity sensing LED’s were connected to the trucks. There was a bonus. We soon learned about the relationship between weight on the wheels and the reliability of rail to wheel conductivity.



The see thru car has a sibling. Mount a pair of small levels on a slab car

that can be either clear plastic or wood. You will be amazed at the unexpected tilts and humps you might find along your tracks. They can not be denied; the bubbles speak the truth ! Since I THINK SMALL, I have a four wheeler that carries one circular bull’s eye level.



The slab family has yet another member that (surprise) mimics cars used on some 12 inch to the foot railroads. *Scale Rails* pushed the idea of mounting a plastic version of the NMRA clearance gauge on a slab car. Just couple it ahead of an locomotive and run it by any changes or additions you make to or near the rails on your layout. I hate nasty surprises.



My slab car (shown above) has no couplers. It is finger pushed. Because of sharp curves on my layout Magic Mountain portion, a second clearance gauge is mounted mid ship on the clearance car. If you run 85 scale foot cars on a 4 x 8 layout, you might want to follow along.

This is the tale of the great grandfather who plays with PUSH TRAINS !

Bill Williams

The Ancient One

## CONTEST/DISPLAY REPORT BY GIUSEPPE AYMAR

Our Show and Tell at Lakeport was represented by six freight cars, one UP E2's diesel A-B-B set and a beautiful building from Steve Skold representing the completed station on his Whiskytown layout. Attendees were able to ask the builder questions about the techniques used and offered some of their own advice on shortcuts and methods that were very well received by the small crowd encircling the S&T table. This is what the spirit of S&T is all about: modelers helping each other.

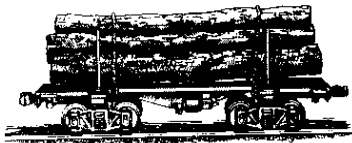
Our next meeting in Napa, Feb 20<sup>th</sup> will have both the customary Show & Tell and also the Contest. For the S&T all models in any scale as well as pictures, railroadians and crafts are welcome. The entry with the most popular votes will receive an award plus a gift certificate from Blairline. Awards will be offered to the second and third place also. Additionally you are reminded that you

will receive an extra ticket at the door for bringing models to display.

The Contest itself will be themed "structures", open to any scale and judged. No filling out of papers is required (unlike the Contest at PCR.) I encourage any of you who have **models to take to the Regional Convention, to bring the models so we can offer advice on how to improve the scores and how to fill out the necessary paperwork.**

The meeting in Santa Rosa on May 15, will be on the heels of the PCR Convention in Reno. Anyone who had models at the PCR Contest is encouraged to bring them to share their experiences with the rest of us and continue the fine tradition of displaying modeling the **RED** way.

### GO RED, GO RED



## CLASSIFIED ADS

This is where we run classified ads from members and non-members. There is no charge for Redwood Empire Division members to place an add. Non-members will be asked to pay a nominal charge of \$2.50 for each 4 lines.

Permanent clip-on RED nametags are available for \$8.00 each. Please order yours from Chief Clerk Ed Merrin at the next RED meeting or contact him using any of the methods listed on page 2.

**YOUR  
FOR SALE  
OR WANTED  
ADD  
GOES HERE**

**Redwood Empire Garden Railway Society (REGRS)**, No. 1 gauge, various scales. If you are interested call Ken Brody at (707)526-0195 or email [westie@sonic.net](mailto:westie@sonic.net)

**Napa Valley Model Railroad Historical Society**, HO layout. Meets Fridays 7:30 PM at Napa Fairgrounds, 575 Third St., Napa. For information call: Clubhouse (707)253-8428 or John Rodgers (707)226-2985.  
[www.nvmrc.org](http://www.nvmrc.org)

**Lake County Model Railroad Club**, HO layout. Meets Wednesday at 7:00PM in the old National Guard Building at the Lake County Fairgrounds on Martin Street, Lakeport. Call Mike Ernst at (707)263-4949

**Coastal Valley Lines**, HO modular. Meets 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM at Sam's For Play Café, 2630 Cleveland Ave., Santa Rosa. Call Steve Lewis (707) 527-0396 or

## CLUB SCHEDULES

Blain Hendrix (707)528-8655  
<http://cvl.hobby-site.com/>

**NPC Operators.** An On3 operating group meets one Sunday each month. Contact Steve Skold (707)539-1782 or email [sandcskold@att.net](mailto:sandcskold@att.net)

**Redwood Empire Live Steamers.** A new group is forming with the goal to build a 7 1/2 inch track facility in a local park. For information, call Don or Ann Bruner Welch at (707)578-4414 or write to PO Box 4594, Santa Rosa, CA 95402  
[www.redwoodempirels.org](http://www.redwoodempirels.org)

**Bay Area S Scalers.** Contact Lee Johnson at (925)943-1590.

**Mendocino Coast Model Railroad & Historical Society** is running its G-scale layout the 2nd & 4th weekends, each month, in the botanical gardens at Fort Bragg. This outdoor operation will ulti-

mately expand trackage to cover 6100 sq. feet. The group meets at 1:00 PM on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Contact Phil Miller at (707)937-3605.

**North Coast Live Steamers**, a group, from the Fort Bragg-Willits area, that promotes the hobby of large-scale railroading and other steam related history. Contact Bill Shepard at (707)961-0329.

**Eel River Valley Model Railroaders**, HO Scale layout. Meets each Friday evening at 7:30 P.M. at the Humboldt Co. Fair Grounds, Ferndale, CA. Write to P O Box 950 Fortuna CA 95540 or contact Ron Plies at (707)725-9063 or email [rplies@cox.net](mailto:rplies@cox.net) for more information. [www.eelrivervalleyrr.org](http://www.eelrivervalleyrr.org)

**Humboldt Bay & Eureka**, HO layout, Eureka, CA. Contact David Berriman, PO Box 915 Arcata, CA 95518. (707)825-7689.

**COMING DOWN THE LINE**

February 20: **RED** meeting in Napa. Details are on page 1.

March 7: **Coast Division** meet at Buscher Middle School, Santa Clara

April 28-May 2: **Pacific Coast Region** Silver Rails 2010 Convention, Sparks, NV  
Web site: [www.pcrnmra.org/conv2010](http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2010)

May 15: **RED** meeting in Santa Rosa

July 10 to 18: **NMRA 75th National Convention and Train Show**, Milwaukee, WI  
Web site: [www.nmra75.org](http://www.nmra75.org)

September 11: **RED** summer picnic meeting in Willits.

November 20: **RED** meeting in Santa Rosa.

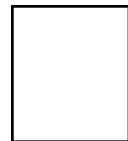


*Many of the art items used in this newsletter are courtesy of Ken Houghton Rail Images or came from the web site: [www.rrhistorical.com](http://www.rrhistorical.com)*

Visit **RED** at: **NEW** [www.pcrnmra.org/redwood/index.html](http://www.pcrnmra.org/redwood/index.html)

**CALLBOARD**

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**FIRST CLASS**