

SHORT LINE

Sierra Division * Pacific Coast Region * National Model Railroad Association



The World's Greatest Hobby!

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Fall Creek Branch Portable Switching Railroad

by Robert and Sylvia Pethoud (layout photos Gary Ray)



Fall Creek is an imagined small town in the Northwest U.S. at the end of a branch line of a class 1 railroad. Which railroad? It depends on my mood that day—usually SP, GN, or NP.

tributor, and/or some of the other businesses providing livelihoods to Fall Creek's residents. The train crew has the enviable job of setting out the inbound cars, picking up the outbound cars, and re-spotting

Each weekday before noon an old locomotive (2-8-0? SD7? RS-1? Again, it depends) clatters into town dragging a motley string of freight cars for the packing shed, grain elevator, oil dis-



Fall Creek Branch | Page 4

Follow this link for the expanded digital color issue of the Short Line:
<http://www.pcnmra.org/sierra/index.html>

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SHORT LINE

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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**, 6601 Ray Family Lane, Magalia, CA 95954 or by email to gerber1926@gmail.com.

From the Superintendent

WANTED

A FEW GOOD MEN AND WOMEN

**A PROMISING EXPERIENCE WITH
THE SIERRA DIVISION OF THE NMRA**

**IMMEDIATELY HIRING FOR THE
FOLLOWING POSITIONS**

Clinicians and Presenters

Division Meeting Hosts and Sponsors

Assistant to the Superintendent

**ALL INTERESTED APPLICANTS
SHOULD SEND AN EMAIL TO**

SCOOTER923@ATT.NET

Minimum Qualifications Include Enthusiasm and Follow Through

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS
APRIL 16, 2013**

Spring Division Meeting

Saturday May 11, 2013

First Christian Church Fellowship Hall

3901 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento CA

9:30—2:00

Coffee and Donuts

Flat Car Modeling Contest

PCR Convention Review

Strategic Planning Meeting

Annual Calendar

Volunteers

Social Events

Clinics

Contests

Budget

International Railfair

Membership

Challenges of Geographic Spread

Bring Your Lunch With You

From the Editor

One of the purposes of our **May 11 meeting** is to help determine the direction our Division is headed and what you, the members, want from the Division. We are an all volunteer organization and are only as good as our members. **I hope that many more than usual can attend.**

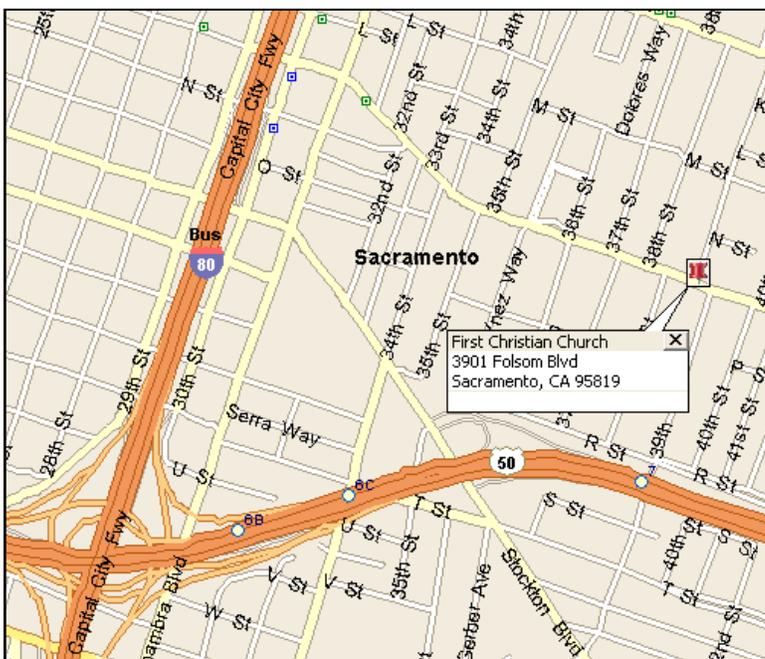
Since I volunteered to be editor of the **Short Line** a little over two years ago, I have tried to generate more interest in attending meetings through the pages of this newsletter. Some went fairly well such as the car weathering contest and some of the clinics and picnics that **Jim Long** planned. Other ideas such as the flat car scratch building contest and laser kit contest did not fare so well. After a year of having the kits, only six of the 42 distributed have been shared with the group which was to be a commitment when you picked up your \$5 kit. **It's still not too late to bring them to the next two meets.**

I realize part of the problem is the distance we need to travel because I believe we have one of the largest geographic divisions in **NMRA**. Another problem is offering something that members will spend the time and money to attend.

Superintendent Scott McAllister is seeking your help and input to help make our division stronger by discovering your needs (social, clinics, contests, hands on) and securing some additional help.

Hopefully I will learn more about the direction I should take in finding articles for the **Short Line** that match your interests. I really appreciate those that have submitted material and am already putting together the next issue. I try to keep articles in the ten printed pages and photos in the color digital edition. I'm considering putting more articles in the digital edition and will seek your input at the meeting.

See you Saturday, May 11.



Fall Creek Branch FROM PAGE 1

any cars that were off spot from the previous day's work before blocking the train for the return trip to the main yard, many miles distant through the conifer forest.



Measuring just 15 inches by 144 inches, our HO scale portable switching layout has less than half the area of a standard 4' x 9' sheet of plywood, yet is designed to offer challenging and prototypical operation. The six switches create a small yard featuring a run-around track and four spurs, which serve a total of nearly a dozen different industries.

We've created a sequence of switching puzzles, each of which consists of setting out two cars, picking up two others, and perhaps moving a car that was left off spot from the previous puzzle. Experience has shown that for most people a 4 car puzzle is plenty challenging without becoming tedious. After the pick-ups and set-outs, the train is blocked for the return trip in the opposite direction along the branch. To set up the next puzzle, all that is

required is to back the train to the end of the layout. Completing the last puzzle in the sequence set up the first puzzle again, so an unlimited number of train crews can work the yard any given day.

Control is with the **NCE Power Cab** system with RJ12 connectors that plug in on the front panel. **Blue Point Turnout Controllers** are mounted under the track and actuated by **Du-Bro** pushrods and clevises. The control knobs are plastic drawer pulls which I fitted with 4-40 brass set screws.

Fall Creek Branch is complete and self-contained. Nevertheless, a railroad could join with Fall Creek Branch or more modules could create a larger switching district. Imagine the possibilities!

(Robert had his layout available for all to try during the last **Railfair**.)



Fall Creek Branch

Operations

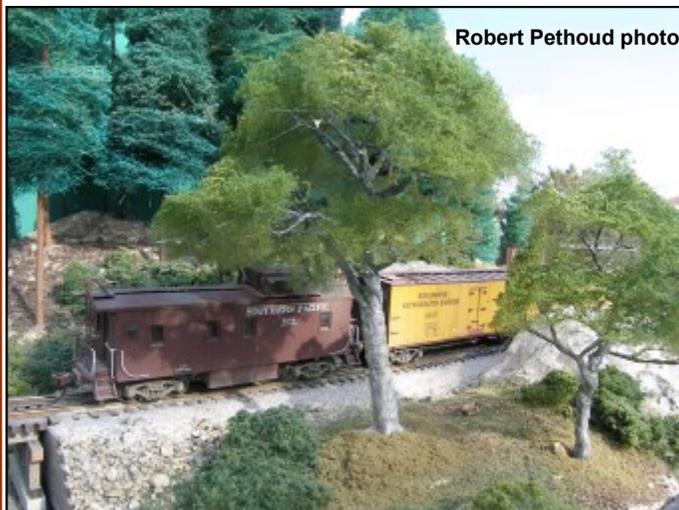
by Robert Pethoud

Reported by Gary Ray

Robert Pethoud presented a clinic on the **Fall Creek Branch** at the April 3-7 PCR Convention and generously allowed me to share parts of his clinic with you. For modelers having limited space for a layout, Robert is a real inspiration. His layout has beautiful scenery and interesting operations. Robert shared that his inspiration came from a December, 1974 **NMRA Bulletin** entitled "Which Switch is Which?" by **Hale Hammer**, who wrote how the **Fiddletown & Copperopolis** came to be based on John Allen's Timesaver layout. Robert stretched out the basic design and came up with 12 switching scenarios that set each new problem up.

The **Fall Creek Branch** allowed Robert to demo freight switching, promote model railroading, and test new ideas for use on his home layout. Robert's wife and father both enjoyed the operational challenges that the layout offers. Some of the buildings are scratch built, others kit-bashed. Robert says the layout is far from done with lots of detailing to be added.

Robert shared that one of surprises he had was when children at **Railfair** were given a chance to use the layout. It was his first time displaying it for public viewing and originally didn't plan on young participants. Their participation gave him an immense sense of satisfaction. I would think the layout would



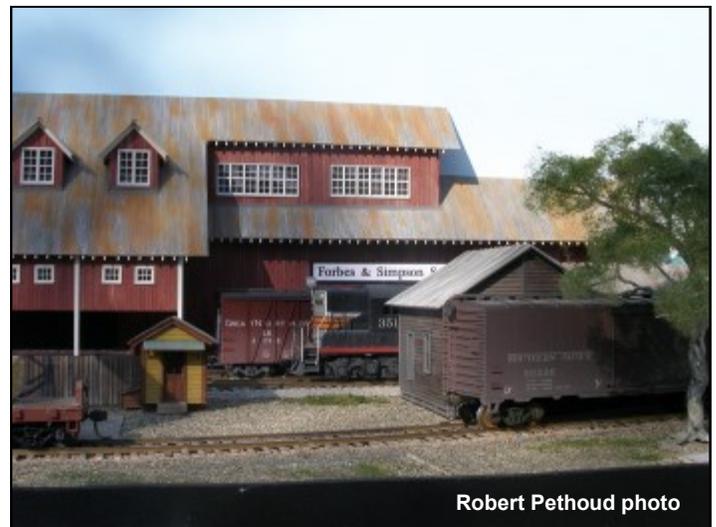
Robert Pethoud photo



Gary Ray photo



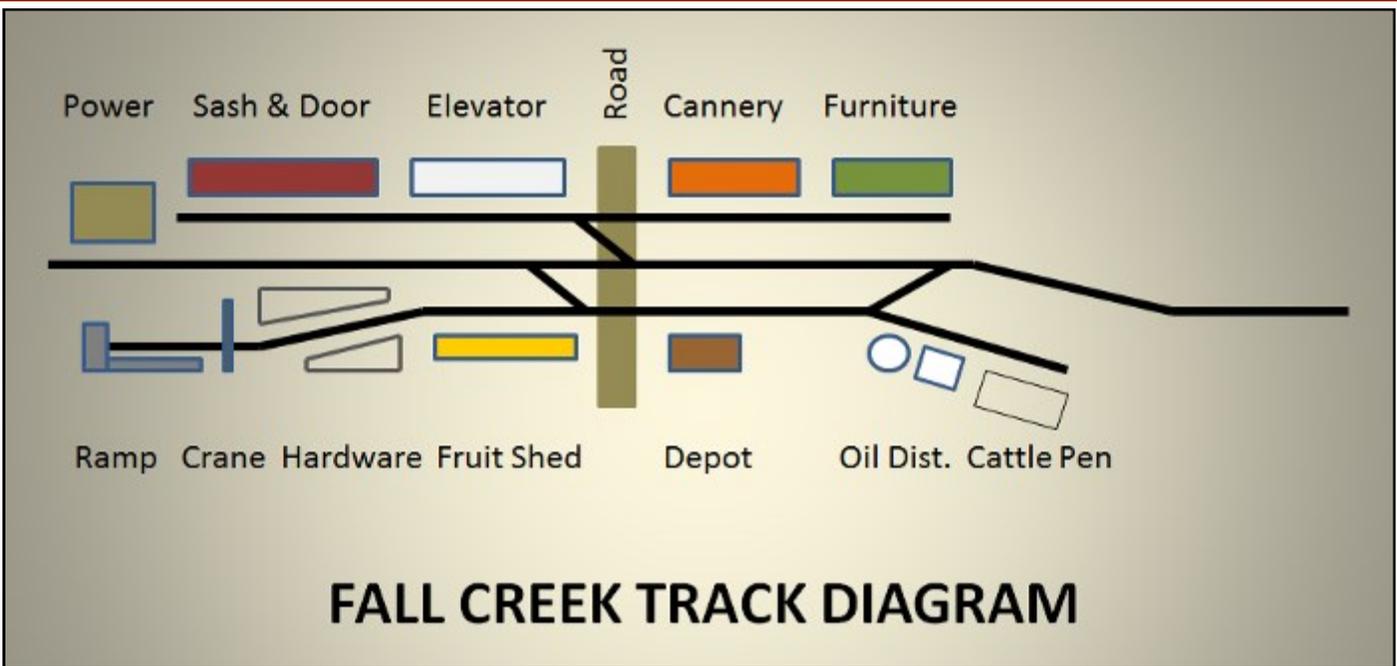
Gary Ray photo



Robert Pethoud photo

also lend itself to operations with switch lists or car cards to introduce other modelers who might be timid about learning to operate on a larger layout.

Next issue I'll share Robert's other ideas for small switching layouts based on prototypical track alignments and how the **Fall Creek Branch** was constructed. I am very appreciative of Robert sharing his clinic with us.



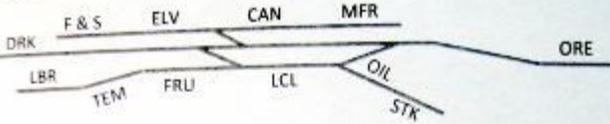
FALL CREEK TRACK DIAGRAM

Puzzle Train	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
G	F1	T	R1	S	R2	F2	X4	X1	X3	F2	R2	G	
X5	X1	X4	X3	X2	G	X5	F1	T	X2	R1	S	X5	
R2	G	F1	T	R1	S	R2	F2	X4	X1	X3	F2	R2	
S	X5	X1	X4	X3	X2	G	X5	F1	T	X2	R1	S	
F2	R2	G	F1	T	R1	S	R2	F2	X4	X1	X3	F2	
F & S	X2			G	G			X3	X3			X2	X2
ELV	X3	X3	X3		X4	X4	X4				G	G	X3
CAN	X1	X2	X2	X2		X1	X1	X1		R2	R2	R2	X1
MFR	X4	X4	X5	X5	X5	X5	R1	R1	R1	R1			X4
DRK		F2	F2		F1	F1	F1			F2			
ORE													
LBR				X1	X1				X5	X5	X5	X5	
TEM	F1			F2	F2	F2				F1	F1	F1	F1
FRU	R1	R1	R1					G	G	G		X4	X4
OIL	T	T				T	T	T			T	T	T
STK		S	S	S		X3	X3		S	S	S	S	
Set Out	F2: MFR2 R2: FRU2 G: F&S1 F1: MFR2 T: OIL R1: CAN2 S: STK R2: CAN1 F2: MFR2 X4: FRU1 X1: CAN1 X3: ELV1 S: STK X5: CAN2 X1: LBR1 X4: ELV1 X3: OIL X2: MFR1 G: TEM2 X5: LBR1 F1: TEM1 T: OIL 1 X2: F&S1 R1: FRU1												
Pick Up	F1: TEM1 X4: MFR1 X3: ELV1 X2: CAN1 G: F&S1 X5: CAN2 F1: MFR2 T: OIL 1 X2: MFR1 R1: CAN2 S: STK X5: LBR1 X1: CAN1 T: OIL R1: FRU1 S: STK R2: FRU2 F2: TEM1 X4: ELV1 X1: ELV2 X3: F&S1 F2: MFR2 R2: CAN1 G: F&S2												
Re-Spot	X2: CAN1 F2: TEM1 X1: ELV2 X3: F&S1 G: F&S2 X4: MFR1												

This matrix shows how the 5 boxcars, 2 reefers, 2 flat cars, stock car, tank car, and gondola are spotted. This is a turn with train coming from left, leaving to left. Engine and caboose have to swap ends.

Fall Creek Branch Switch List

1



Set Out

FM 2 UP 89 MFR 2
SM NP 30 STK

Pick Up

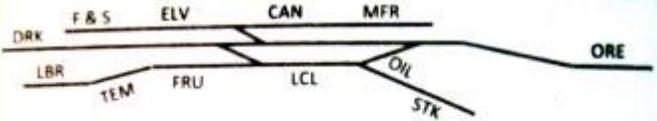
FM 1 SP 75 TEM 1
XM 1 PRR 84 CAN 1

Off Spot

XM 2 WP 91 F & S 1 CAN 1

Fall Creek Branch Switch List

2



Set Out

RS 2 NP 21 FRU 2
XM 5 SP 30 CAN 2

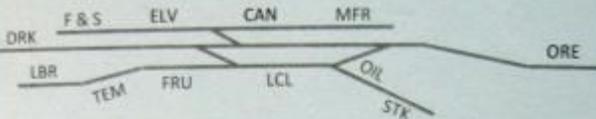
Pick Up

XM 4 CB&Q 11 MFR 1
TM GATX 39 OIL 1

Off Spot

Fall Creek Branch Switch List

3



Set Out

GA DRGW 27 F & S 1
XM 1 PRR 84 LBR 1

Pick Up

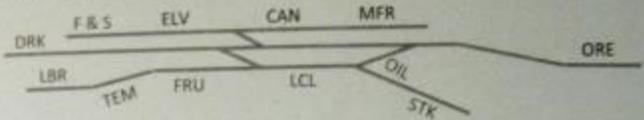
XM 3 GN 46 ELV 1
RS 1 BREX 70 FRU 1

Off Spot

FM 2 UP 89 MFR 2 TEM 1

Fall Creek Branch Switch List

4



Set Out

FM 1 SP 75 MFR 2
XM 4 CB&Q 11 ELV 1

Pick Up

XM 2 WP 91 CAN 1
SM NP 30 STK

Off Spot

These are the first four of twelve sequence cards.
Diagrams to left courtesy of Robert Petloud.

SIERRA DIVISION

Next Meeting: Saturday, April 11

Place: First Christian Church

3901 Folsom Blvd.

Sacramento, CA

Time: 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM

TIMETABLE

TBA

TBA

TBA

SHORT LINE

DEADLINES

July 8 for the Aug. issue

Sept. 6 for the Oct. issue

Jan. 7 for the Feb. issue

From the Contest Chairperson

One of my first duties as the new Contest Chairperson is announcing the **theme for our next division meet (May 11—members who attended received a flyer –ed.)**.



The theme will be "**Flatbed Loads**". A prize will be awarded for the **most unusual** and one for **most humorous**.

I would also like to bet some member input as to what contest themes you would like to see in the future. Let me know at the May 11 meeting or contact me.

Karen Keifer, kkkay@sbcglobal.net
(916) 408-0566

Contest Theme for August

Lots of time to prepare for our next contest.



Scratch-built or modified **Stock Cars**

There will be an award for each of these categories:

Scratch Built

Resin Kit

Weathered

Realistic Load

Hopefully everyone who attends the picnic will bring a model. Many choices for all skill levels.

February Meet



Karen Keifer shared many scratchbuilt N scale structures at the last meet along with this HO scale cabin.

(more in the [Digital Short Line](#))

February Meet | Page 12

Iron Horse Express 2013

One Person's View

by *Mary Moore-Campagna*

The PCR has long had a reputation for putting on great conventions; and this year was certainly no exception. Iron Horse Express in Dublin was an extensive combination of clinics, tours, layouts (including a wonderful garden layout built on a trailer and displayed in the parking lot of the hotel), food, frolic and fun. We achieved some remarkable metrics in many areas: there were 46 first-time attendees registered as of the first day of the convention, there were 124 entries in the contest, and there were some unique events (ask anyone who went on the Lawrence Livermore Lab tour: everyone I talked to about it was thoroughly impressed!).

One of the things I greatly enjoyed was that this year I got to participate in almost every facet of the convention – I went on one of the tours (my first speeder ride ever, which I loved), I saw some layouts (including the aforementioned G scale setup in the parking lot), I participated in a couple of the Non-Rail events, I judged some contest entries, and I applauded vigorously for all the award winners at the banquet. (OK, so I didn't do everything – I didn't enter anything in the contest. Next year for sure...) But what really stood out for me was the fact that almost every time I saw someone wearing a "First Timer" ribbon, they were actively involved. Either they were

attending clinics, or picking up door prizes, or asking questions about some aspect of the hobby, or just having a conversation with someone; but I never saw anyone standing alone and being completely ignored. We had been encouraged to make the First Timers feel welcome; and my observation was that everyone did a wonderful job.

And that, my friends and fellow railroading enthusiasts, is what it's all about. We've heard all about the graying of the hobby, and how everyone involved is getting older (which, I guess, beats the alternative in some ways); but it's up to us to do something about not just attracting new members, but keeping them engaged. It's long been an organizational truism that the reasons people join an organization – any kind of organization – are not necessarily the same reasons they remain in it; and one of the key reasons for people staying is that they feel welcome, useful and rewarded. Admittedly, there's more of a challenge in that fewer and fewer people are growing up with trains running past their backyards or relatives who work for the railroad; but there are still enough aspects of the hobby that there's something to attract everyone if we only provide a reason for them to find us, join us, and stay with us. Between brochures, websites, event publicity and plain old word of mouth, we've been making strides on the "find us" part...but now we need to emphasize the "welcome, useful and rewarded" part. People feel welcome when we talk to them and include them; they feel useful when they have an opportunity to participate; and they feel rewarded when they learn new skills,



Steve Cavanaugh's Western Pacific RR (Gary Ray photo)



Speeder Rides at Niles Canyon (Carol Skold photo)

Photos of the Quarter ~ Sierra RR #3 at Railtown 1897 at Jamestown, CA. (Dave Mussatti photo)



Nevada Northern #93 in East Ely, NV

(Dave Mussatti photo)

In Memoriam - Jim C. Long

by Gary Ray

The Sierra Division lost a good friend on January 19. Our past Superintendent, Jim Long (June 18, 1944 – January 19, 2013), passed away after a long struggle with pulmonary fibrosis. Jim was one of those special guys that would jump in and help wherever it was needed. Jim not only served as Division Superintendent until he was recently termed out, but wrote the newsletter when a volunteer could not be found. At our annual picnics, Jim donned a new hat as Chief Cook behind a flaming barbeque. Jim was responsible for designing a cross-buck sign kit for the 2000 National Convention and more were made for other conventions. Those cross-bucks are still at use all around the PCR. Jim also served as PCR Convention Chair, as the PCR Honors Committee Chair, and PCR Convention Registrar, and headed and did whatever was necessary for regional conventions. He had even worked as Registrar for the May, 2012, joint PCR/PNR convention until he felt he could no longer keep up with it due to his health. Jim also worked on collecting and building a PCR convention car collection for PCR that was first displayed at the Silver Rails Convention in Reno.

Before moving to Cameron Park, Jim had been the Coast Division president. Some of the many honors he received included Coast Member of the Year Award 2001, the PCR President's Award 2004, the John Allen Award 2007, NMRA President's Award presented at the 2008 National Convention, and the Sierra Division 2012 Member of the Year.



Comments from his railroad friends included phrases such as: "Jim will be greatly missed as I counted him as one of my close friends, both in and out of the hobby. Jim was one of the truly good guys. Jim was one of those special guys who were always such a great friend. Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful guy. He will be missed both as a great person and for his never-ending contributions to the PCR and the divisions. This is a real loss to everyone. For a guy who originally didn't want to 'get involved', he jumped in with both feet and kept going. ...I feel privileged to have known him...and to work with him over the years. Always a cheerful guy.

Jim was a class act and a wonderful guy. We are all diminished by his loss but how lucky we all were to have Jim as a friend. The NMRA family mourns the loss of a brother. He was an amazing person. I'm glad I can call him my friend. I miss him. I'm sure we all do."

Jim was also involved with other groups being active in the Star Touring and Riding Chapter 153 in Sacramento and heavily involved with the Boy Scouts and The Foothills United Methodist Church in Rescue, CA. Jim and wife

Marilyn volunteered their time and services to drive truck loaded with care packages that the church had collected to Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina.

Jim completed many leadership courses with the Boy Scouts and received one of the highest awards granted just days before his death. The Sierra Division is donating \$100 in his name to the scout group he worked with. Jim touched a lot of lives and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

February Meet from page 8

by Gary Ray

The February 9 Sierra Division Meet in Sacramento was the first meeting held by our new Superintendent, Scott McAllister. Scott and members discussed ideas generating more involvement in the division. We are working on getting all members on an email distribution list. The NMRA site has made it possible for members to notify them of email and address changes. Go to <http://www.nmra.org/member/content/member-info-update> to make changes.



After the workshop, members had lunch with the Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society and then participated on their HO layout depicting Sacramento to Oakland. Operation was by car card. A fun time was had by all.



Ideas such as combining our division meet with other divisions were discussed, as well as the use of Skype to host meetings in multiple locations due to our division being so spread out. It was decided not to have a fall meeting because the International Rail Fair which we co-sponsor is near the same time. Sierra Division Contest Chairperson Karen Keifer announced a new contest for the next meet: Flatbed loads with prizes for most unusual and most humorous. Karen shared her display of some of the N-scale buildings she has created from scratch.

Twenty-three members attended the February meet where Klaus Keil gave a slideshow and workshop demonstration on building cargo containers from computer printouts on heavy paper. Members took home over 100 designs on memory cards as well as a few sheets of containers already printed out. These only cost a few cents to make compared to \$6 to \$8 for one plastic container and are hard to tell apart.



Members learn how Klaus Keil creates paper shipping containers. This one even has a bladder holding cargo in place.

Karen Keifer's wonderful N scale buildings were shared at the last meeting.

If you have a model to share, please bring it to the next meet. We all benefit from each other's ideas.



SACRAMENTO MODEL RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

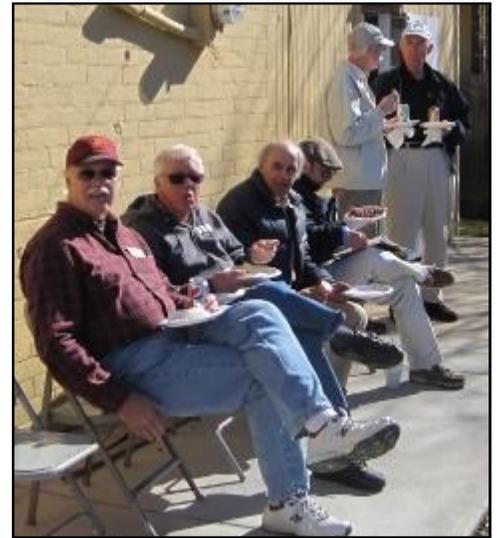


Klaus Keil, Phill Simpson, and Al Woods outside the newly repainted SMRHS clubhouse.

The Sierra Division had lunch and an operations session with the SMRHS. We teamed up with SMRHS club members to operate using car cards and Digatrax DCC throttles. All levels of operational experience needs were met from beginners to proficient and a good time had by all.

The Society is located at 1990 Grand Avenue and has regular meeting from 7:30 to 9:30 on Tuesday and Friday evenings. There are two layouts, HO and HO_n3. Visitors are welcome for a "behind the scenes" look at those times.

Membership dues are \$20/month. The Society provides an opportunity through clinics and layout construction to improve skills. For more information go to: <http://www.smrhs.com/>

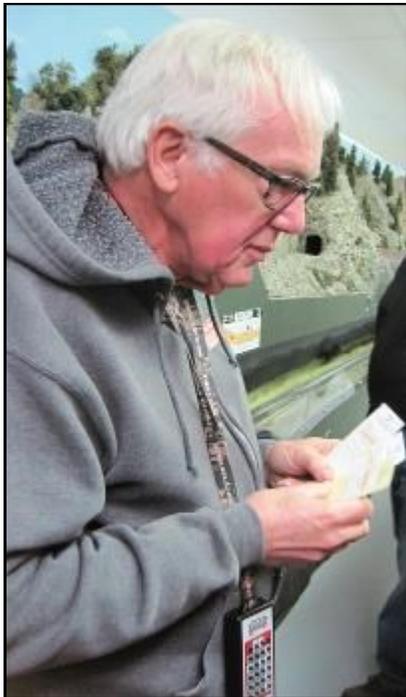


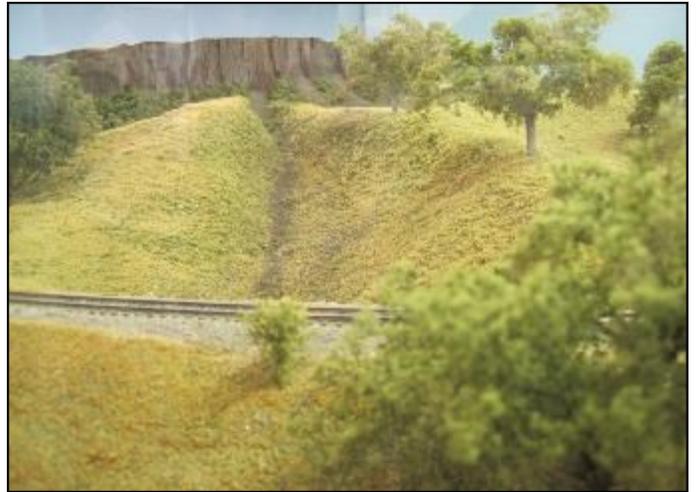


Al Woods, Dan Evans, Dick Witzens, and Larry and Judy Champlin concentrating on operations.

(bottom left)

Clinician Klaus Keil relaxes during lunch in the HOn3 layout room of the SMRHS.







The Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society is dedicated to advancing an understanding of railroading and its history and on the development of our nation, as well as developing an understanding of railroad operations and technical skills through model railroading.

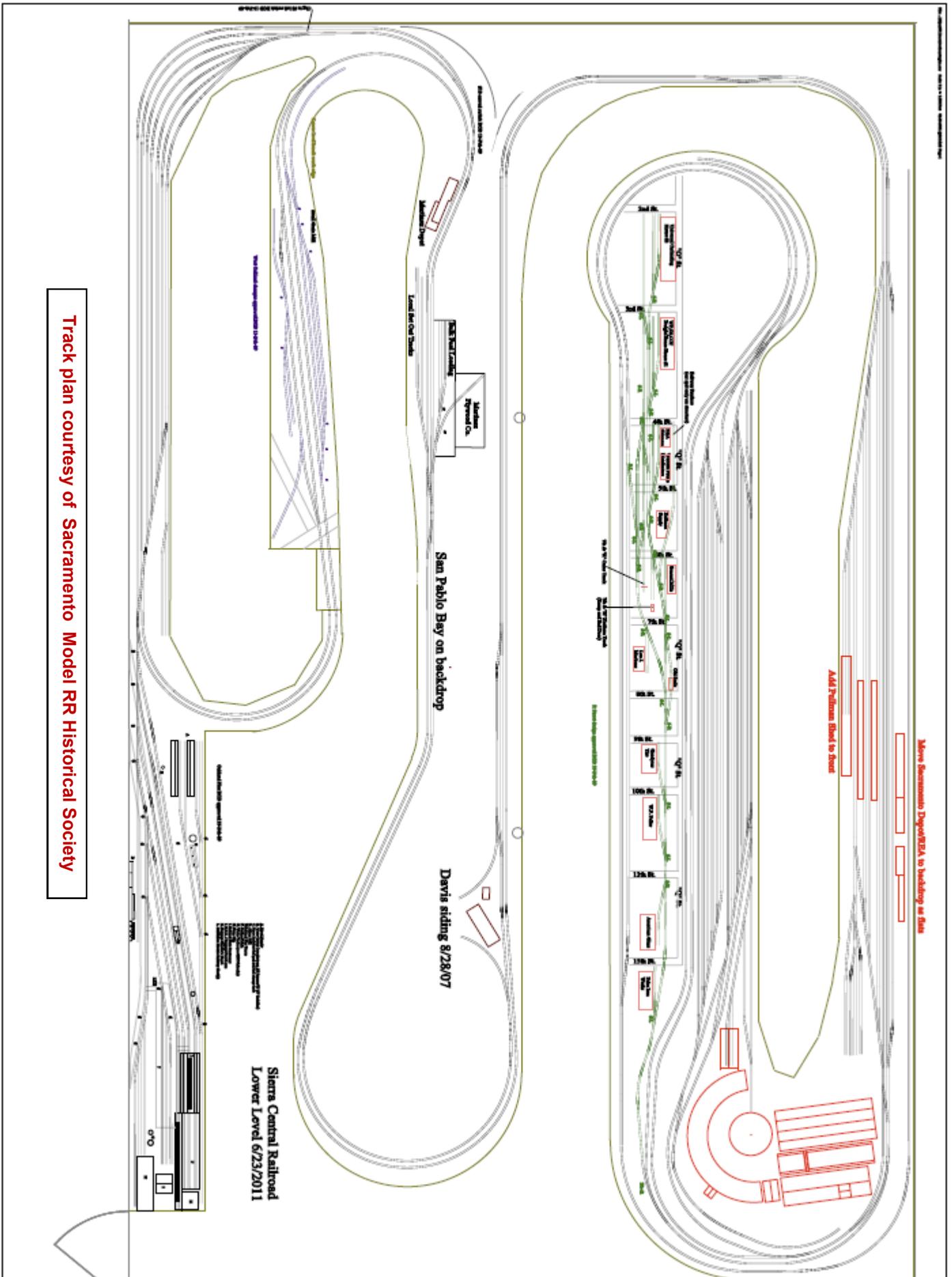
They are always looking for new members; experience not required but enthusiasm is!



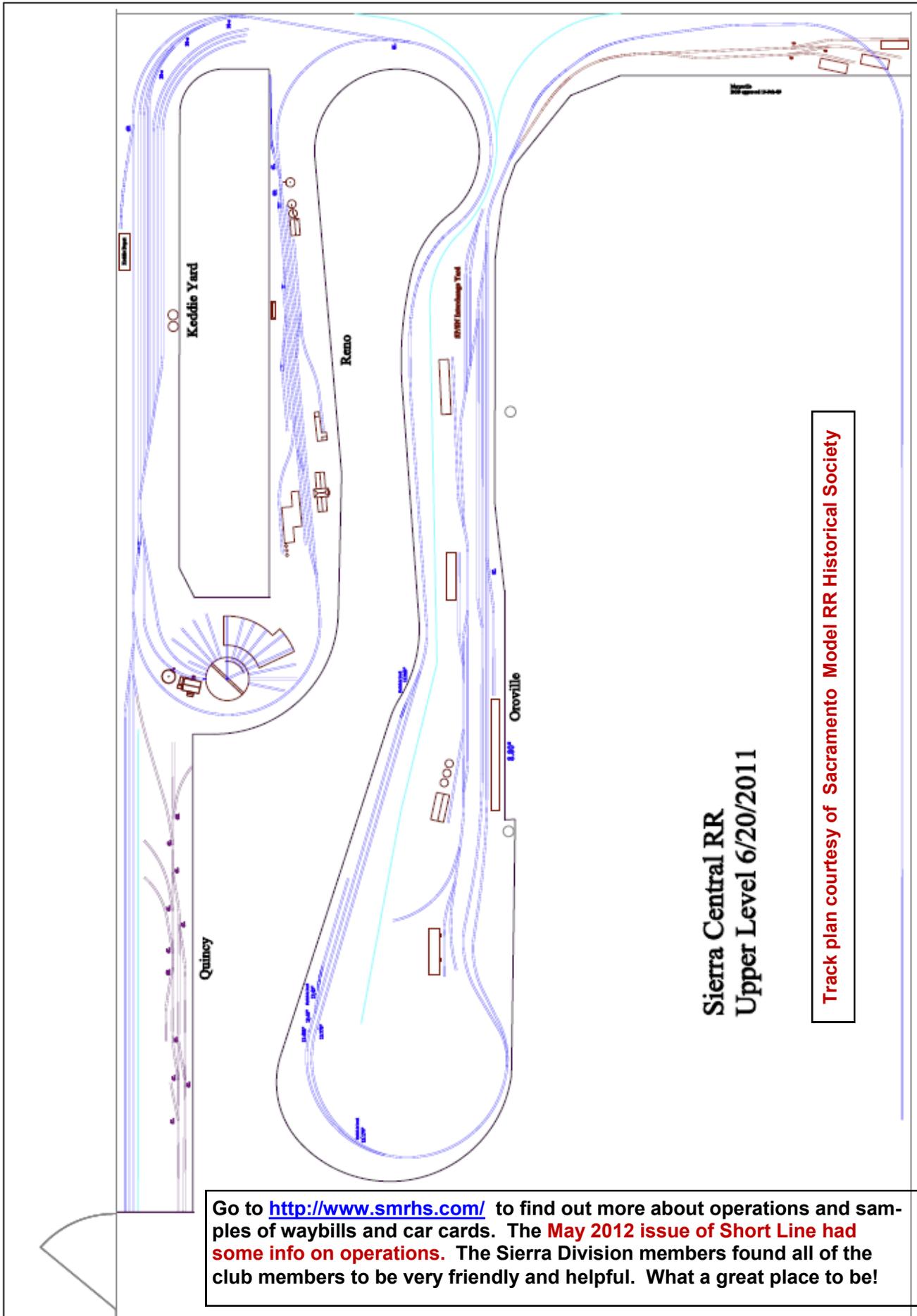


Proto ops session on the standard gauge layout are held on the first and third Friday evening of every month. These session focus on moving freight using four position waybills. Occasional track warrants are issued. Typically, proto op sessions will have a trainmaster, dispatcher, three yardmasters, and six local and road engineers.





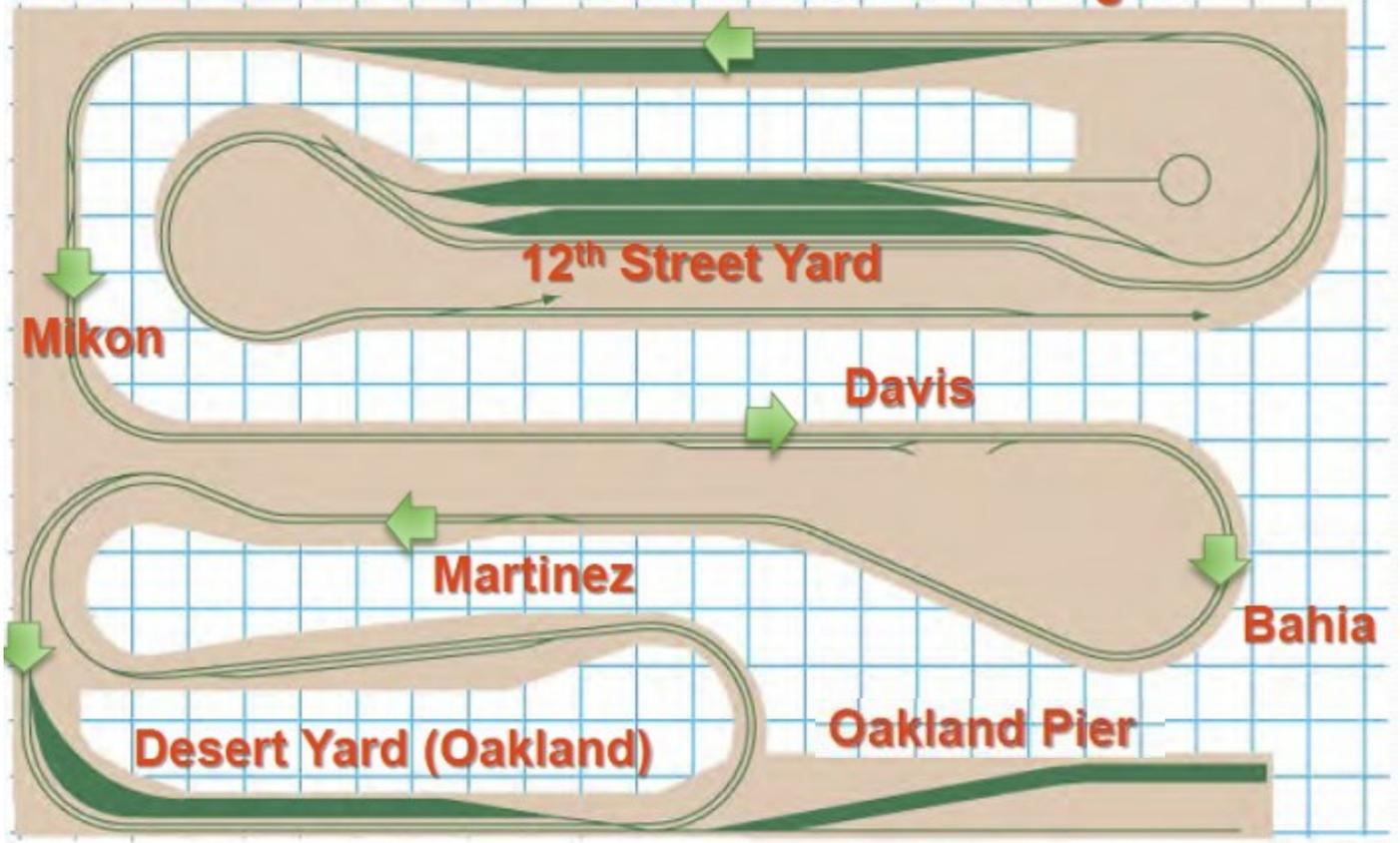
Track plan courtesy of Sacramento Model RR Historical Society



Go to <http://www.smrhs.com/> to find out more about operations and samples of waybills and car cards. The **May 2012 issue of Short Line had some info on operations.** The Sierra Division members found all of the club members to be very friendly and helpful. What a great place to be!

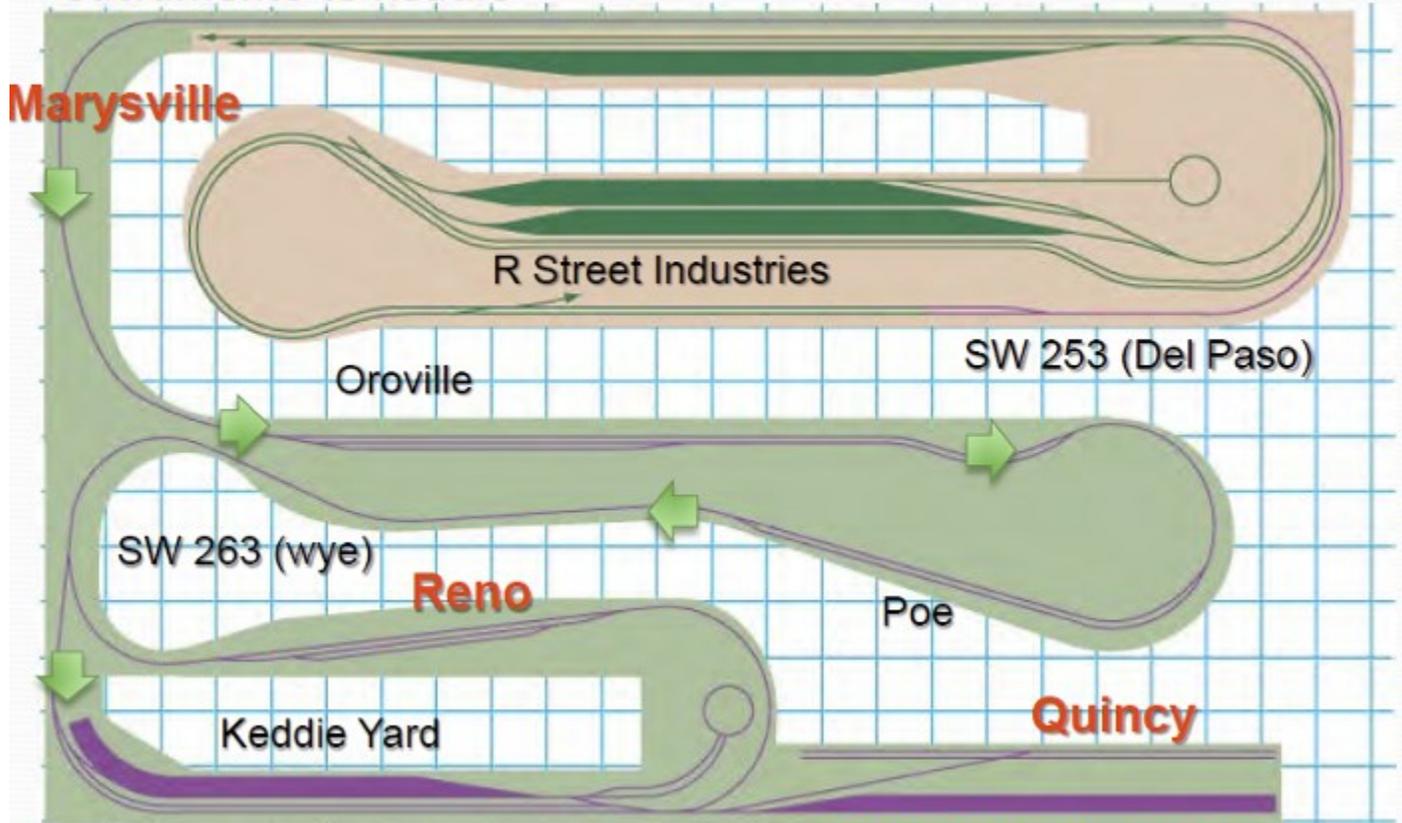
Sacramento to Oakland

Sacramento Passenger



Sacramento to Keddie

"the Grade"



Trackplan courtesy of Sacramento Model RR Historical Society

GN / SLC Staging

Iron Horse Express 2013

by Gary Ray

The PCR Convention "Iron Horse Express 2013" was held May 3rd to the 7th in Dublin, CA. There were 260 registered attendees including 46 first timers. They were treated to 65 different clinics, 2 hands-on clinics building switches and foam scenery, speeder and steam train rides in Niles Canyon, Lawrence Livermore Lab tours, a movie night featuring the Emperor of the North and Sacramento Northern, 5 display layouts at the convention center, and 45 layout tours.

volunteered their time and especially to the organizers of this year's convention. A special shout-out to Dave Connery as clinic chairman and the presenters for such inspirational clinics.

There was always time to catch up with friends and enjoy the food. The Hobo breakfast was well attended and the convention culminated with a delicious dinner buffet and awards ceremony. Sunday morning there was a buffet breakfast offered to the 54 members that attended the PCR Membership Meeting.

If you haven't been to a PCR convention, consider going next year April 30 to May 4 in San Luis Obispo, CA. Again, there is a special "First-Timers" fare of \$69 available to those who have not registered for the past five conventions. More information is at:

<http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2014/index.html>



Clover Valley Lumber Company #4 at Niles Canyon during PCR Convention (Carol Skold photo)



Speeder Rides at Niles Canyon (Carol Skold photos)

Non-Rail activities include having a room with sewing machines set up, puzzles, cards, bingo along with the Tao House Tour, talk on the Women Spies of the Civil War, card making clinic, and the Quilt Shop Hop.

I participated in the SWAP Meet by selling and buying some items. I also volunteered in some new areas for me; working at the Registration table and judging photos. I didn't feel qualified to judge models, but after listening to the instructions on how each team of judges does a different component and the fact there is an experienced team leader, I plan on volunteering to judge models next time. I think it would help make me a better modeler. Many thanks to all who



Joe Melhorn shared how to install LED lighting in locos, cars, and buildings.

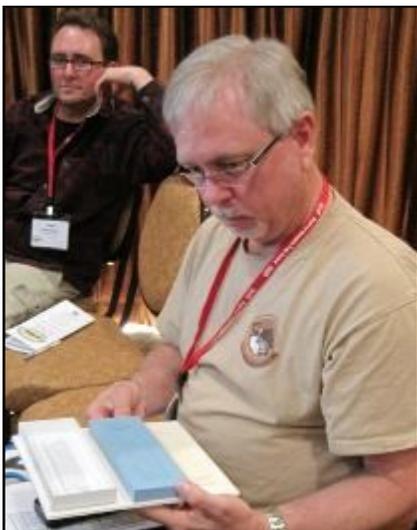


Tom Vanden Bosch demonstrated the steps involved with resin casting.

(above right)

Rick Barton examines one of Tom's castings.

(left)



Brad Lloyd (above right) and **Darrell Dennis** (right) presented a clinic on all types of trees. Some 45 were displayed along with lots of innovative modeling tips.





Paul Ingraham and Steve Wesolowski workshop on “Rubber Layouts” was well attended as were all clinics.



Robert Pethoud presented a clinic on his modular switching layout that was displayed at the convention.



Barry Rick and Tom Van Horn (left) are assembling turnouts in Jim Petro’s (orange shirt) Fast Track clinic.



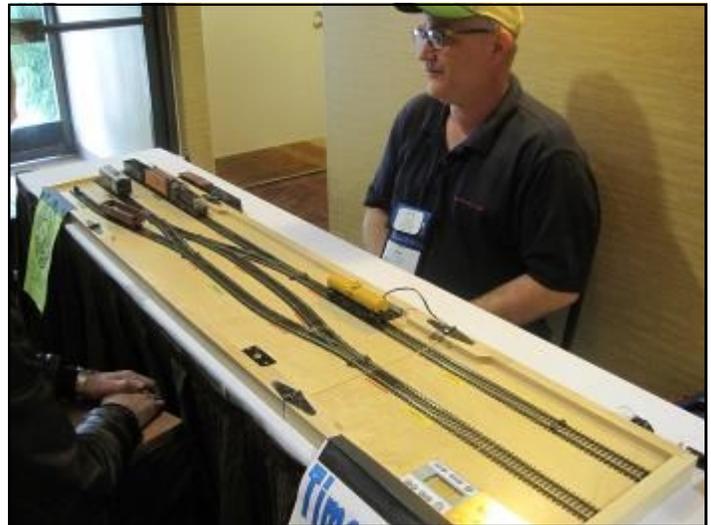
**George Pisching’s hands on clinic allowed participants to construct foam scenery.
Petro and Pisching’s clinics were part of the Modeling with the Masters program.**



The Saturday night buffet featured chicken and prime rib. This was included with the registration fee.



Robert Pethoud demonstrates his switching layout.



Eric Moe oversees the PCR's Timesaver switching contest.



A display of non-judged models that prototype models provided in the contest room.



Hobo breakfast at IHOP.



Tom Knapp's Nn3 operating model of Pacific Coast Railway's San Luis Obispo facilities between 1916 and 1941 was on display. WOW!





Steve Williams is part of the Silicon Valley Free-moN, an informal group of folks in the S.F. Bay area. He also gave a clinic on how Free-moN allows space to model prototype scenes.



Lee Johnson is part of the Bay Area S Scalers. Operating layout visiting rotating members homes.

Views from the Contest Room

Rules for all PCR contests can be found at: <http://www.pcrnmra.org/pcr/contest/contest.shtml>

Note that there is a novice category. Consider entering at the SLO convention.

This year there were 45 entries not including photos.

Pictured below are only one half of the photo entries.











Scenes on right were all one module.







My apologies if your contest entry is not pictured here. A few were out of focus.

Hopefully you have a good idea of what the PCR convention was all about. It is just two days after it ended that I finished this and needed to get it published.

The next issue will have pictures and descriptions of many of the layouts available on tour.

It was a fabulous convention. Hope to see you in San Luis Obispo in 2014.