



SHORT LINE

Sierra Division * Pacific Coast Region * National Model Railroad Association



The
**World's
Greatest
Hobby!**

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The Cab Control Curmudgeon

By Chip Meriam

will freely admit that I am well behind the cutting edge when it comes to technological gadgetry. I know my way around Excel better than most. I compose, edit, format, publish and illustrate in Word, Publisher and Power Point with ease. I can even accomplish a complicated mail merge without wasting several reams of paper. But I have no idea how to text or access the internet with a hand-held device. I still use a Stupid Phone that flips open. All I know about an I-Pad is that it seems to help my wife ignore me. AND....I still operate my model railroad with old-fashioned direct current.

It's true. My first and only direct exposure to digital command control was our January 2015 visit to the Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society. I stayed busy taking lots of photos and generally stayed out of the way until the operating session was nearly over. Then one of the Sacramento Club members asked me if I wanted to run a train as he plopped a throttle in my hand. I took one look at the slim black box and was instantly flummoxed. I'm used to rotary knobs and slide switches, not miniature buttons and LED read-outs! I sheepishly asked my host how to use it while uttering some sort of apology for my ignorance.

I did manage to take the train from West Sacramento up through the Feather River Canyon, across the wye trestle at Spanish Creek, and into the Keddie yard. When I marked off I knew I had accomplished something, but I also knew I could not repeat the same run without someone's help.

I must say I was quite fascinated with the sound and the independent control for the locomotive lights. It was really cool to see the head-lamp dim when we came to a stop in the hole for a meet. The rumbling of the prime movers as they revved up before we started rolling was equally impressive. And, as I have read, headlights and sound are only a small portion of the DCC repertoire. Bringing similar features to my home layout might well be worth exploration, but.....

See "Curmudgeon" pg. 4

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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**, 2260 Cherry Glenn Ct., Chico, CA

From the Superintendent

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The holidays are here! I hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas and New Year and that 2016 will be a terrific year for all of us.

The International Railfair (IRF) in Roseville was a great success. If you didn't attend, you missed a great opportunity to see and talk trains, modeling, and railroads. The crowd on both days was good (total of 1,751 adults and 266 kids) and folks everywhere were very friendly and helpful. Many Sierra Division folks answered the call and volunteered their time. While I have personally thanked each of them, I would like to thank all of them publicly here. IRF would not have succeeded without your help – a big THANK YOU to Mary Moore-Campagna, Scott McAllister, Dave Bayless, Paul Mendez, Tom VanHorn, Jim Dieckman, Joan G., Steve Mahnken, Chip Meriam, John Berg, Jim Firehock, Ed Powell, Donald Yungling, Larry and Judy Champlin, Steve Miller, John Caramagno, Greg Hamway, Dick Klammer, Dan Mahoney, Jean Friedman, Larry Beardsley, and Gary Ray. As I said, attendance was good and so Sierra Division will receive about \$2,200 as its share of the gate.

Now we have another event coming up that will also require the help of many folks as volunteers. I'm speaking of the 2016 PCR Convention in Modesto, of course. It will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Modesto from April 20 to 24. Dan Evans (mod2016volunteer@pcrnmra.org) is the volunteer coordinator. For certain we will need people to help at the registration desk, most likely a couple to help other coordinators such as clinics and contests, and I would think at least a couple people each day to be on call as "go-fors" for anything that comes up. Also, Bob Schott will need volunteers for judging the contest. I did this at the convention this year in Newark and found it highly instructional. When you judge, you learn a lot that can help improve your own models and photography. More info as we determine it.

If you have not yet already, be sure to visit the convention website to register (<http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2016/index.html>). Hotel reservations should become active in January. There is also a convention car (ME&T 50 foot box-car) that looks fantastic and is a great deal. Those are also available to order now and can then be picked up at the convention (no shipping). So NOW is the time to plan and reserve the dates; come attend the convention and help out for a while – it will make it even more rewarding.

Our next meet will be in Sacramento at the First Christian Church on Folsom Blvd on Saturday, February 13, 2016. Currently there are two presentations scheduled. One by Klaus Keil on military railroad cars and one by Jim Zeek on Placerville history/railroading. I'm still looking for at least one more, hopefully a clinic on some aspect of modeling. Please contact me (jimcol@charter.net) if you have something you'd like to present on. Don't worry about it being a "polished" presentation; we're not critical.

Tentatively, the August meeting will also be in Sacramento. I have an unofficial agreement with the Sacramento Historical Society to have an operating session at their place again. It was loads of fun last year and I'm sure it will be again.

Also tentatively, we will be meeting in Chico in October again. There will likely be a tour of a prototype facility plus the regular meeting and hopefully at least one clinic/presentation.

I am still looking for a location for our May meeting. Anyone wish to volunteer to host/help organize one near their place?

I hope you and your family have had an enjoyable year and that everyone has a very merry and blessed Christmas and a safe and happy new year. See you in February!

From the Editor

The First Year Is Almost In The Books

Or at least “In The Pages” of The Short Line. It has been nearly a year since our Editor Emeritus, Gary Ray, sent out the plea for a successor. This is the fourth quarterly issue that I’ve had the pleasure of editing since answering that plea. I can honestly say it’s been a blast! I’ve been blessed with some great contributing authors and a lot of good feedback from many of you. I am looking forward to another enjoyable year and I hope you will also enjoy what I put together.

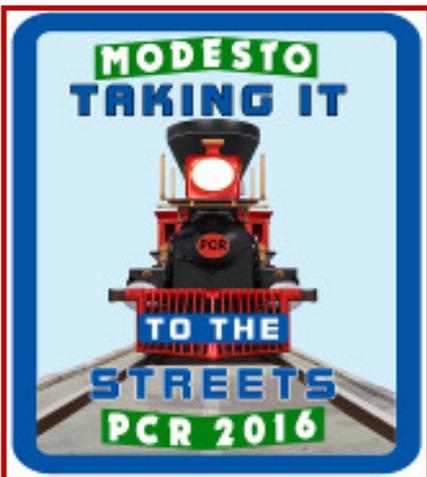
In this issue we have a recap of the October meet with numerous photos of the afternoon layout tour, a quick report on Rail Fair 2015, and a small collection of tips we’ve managed to gather over the past few months. Special features include a bit of World War II rail history from Klaus Keil, and another vignette from Tom Milam of the Wolf Creek Railway.

Beginning with this issue, the printed version of The Short Line has been shortened to a single sheet. It is designed for those who only wish to read the quarterly message from The Division Superintendent and to be informed of upcoming events. This shortened, mail-only newsletter will continue to be sent through the final issue of 2016. Thereafter, it will ONLY BE MAILED UPON REQUEST. If you’re receiving a written newsletter and also reading this digital version, we strongly encourage you to become part of our on-line subscription list. It’s easy to do. Just email the editor at chipmeriam@comcast.net, put “Short Line” in the subject line, and leave a brief message that you want to be added to the list. It’s really that simple!

As always, we welcome contributions from the readers; particularly articles, stories, and photos. Please don’t be bashful! Just send me an email at chipmeriam@comcast.net with “Short Line” in the subject line. I can’t wait to hear from you!

See you in Sacramento in February.....

Chip Meriam



April 2016 Doubletree Inn
Modesto, CA

Volunteers Needed
Contact Scott McAllister—916-812-8767
scooter923@att.net



“Curmudgeon” FROM PAGE 1

There are lots of buts:

Such an undertaking does not come without measurable expense. My track work likely has all sorts of hidden DCC demons just waiting to strike a modern control system. Disassembly and reassembly of my locomotive fleet, for the purpose of installing decoders and mini-speakers, seems a lot like trying to remove my own gall bladder. Did I mention the expense?

Besides, I fully understand my home-built control system, reverse section wiring, polarity indicators, etc. And, it works! After all, it wasn't that long ago that I was “state of the art”.

So for now, I'll just remain a Cab Control Curmudgeon.



US ARMY TRANSPORTATION CORPS EQUIPMENT EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS WORLD WAR II

On July 20, 1940, Howard G. Hill, a reservist Captain in the Railway Branch of US Army Quartermaster Corps, was directed to develop designs for steam locomotives and rolling stock to be used during a potential United States involvement in the then already occurring World War II conflict. Soon it became apparent that critical supplies and equipment would have to be supplied very early in substantial quantities to the nations friendly to the aims of the United States.

Captain Hill faced many challenges: light wheel loading in French Morocco, Egypt and Iran; reduced English clearance limitations; inexpensive and rapid construction in short time by many producers; and simple maintainability and operability by inexperienced personnel under primitive conditions in drastically differing climates.

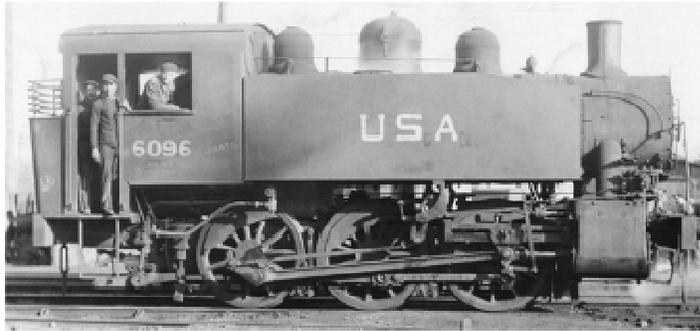
In the search for a domestic 2-8-2 locomotive that might serve as a prototype, it was found that a 20 mile coal railroad, the Montana, Wyoming & Southern, operated a locomotive built by Baldwin in 1924. It could serve as a base line model for the engine required by the War Department. The design was finalized and orders were awarded.

During the first five months of 1942 a total of 200 2-8-2 engines, designated as S-160, were built and delivered to the newly created Transportation Corps.



Concurrent with the development of the S-160, Howard G. Hill, now promoted to Major, also managed the design of a switcher for use on the British Isles, on the Continent, and in North Africa.

The basic model for such an engine was found to be in a WW I 1917 0-6-0T. Suitably modified to incorporate new American design and European operating concepts, contracts were awarded in late 1941 to satisfy desperate need in the field. During 1942 nearly 450 06-0T engines, designated as S-100, were produced.



Major Hill also directed the development of two axle freight cars designed for a single identical chassis, wheel, brake, roof, European coupler and bumper systems, and varying super structures. They were built in kit form to conserve oceanic shipping space, and made suitable for assembly and maintenance in the field overseas. Types consisted of caboose/guard cars, short flat cars, low and high side short gondolas, box cars, as well as four axle flat cars, long high side gondolas, and tank cars. All rolling stock had to conform to British, North African, and Middle East clearance limitations.

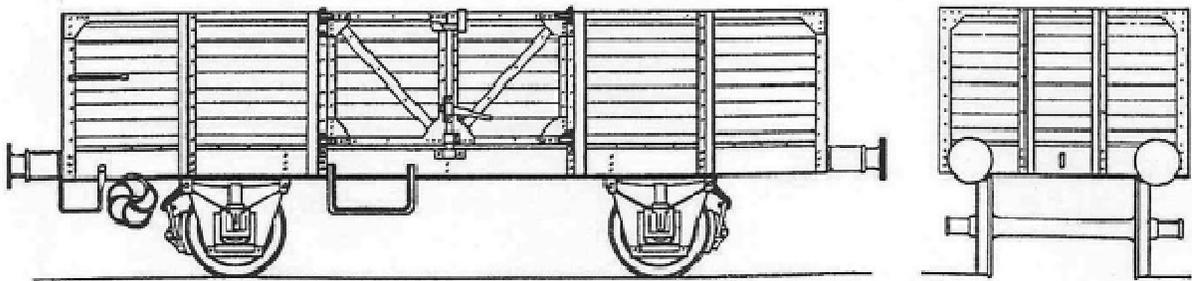
The following pictures are representative of the rolling stock:



Assembly of boxcars somewhere in England



Landing of high sided gondolas on a beach during the 1944 Normandy invasion



Outline of high sided short gondolas



A high sided short gondola on my layout

Several European model railroad manufacturers produce accurate 1:87 two rail direct current models of USA TC equipment. A major source of such items is WWW.ROCO.CC.

After the liberation of major French ports, typical US design flat, box and refrigerator cars were also furnished to the European Theater of Operation.

Large quantities of liberated and captured rolling stock were utilized to augment the very substantial fleet of USA TC equipment when additional equipment was required to satisfy the enormous demand for cargo carrying capacity.

After the cessation of the hostilities in 1945, the US Army Transportation Corps engines were donated to most of the European railways, Germany exempted, to aid in the reconstruction of their ravaged economies. Some were still operating 30 years thereafter. The rolling stock, likewise, was given away to almost all European carriers, Germany included.

Although these freight cars had been designed for only a 5 year utilization period, many were still in use in the 1960's.

Major General Carl R. Gray, Director General Military Railway Service 1943 -1945, stated that in excess of 28,000 such freight cars were assembled and utilized in the European Theater of Operation.

In 1943 Lt. Col. Hill was awarded the Legion of Merit for his contribution as Manager of the US Military Railway during the Sicilian campaign in 1943. He retired as Colonel in 1946

Klaus G. Keil

October Meet—Paradise, CA

The fall meeting of the Sierra Division was held October 10 in Paradise, CA. The morning session was held at Mt. Mike's Pizza where a short business meeting took place. The primary topic was the upcoming International Rail Fair to be held in Roseville.

With the business completed, Klaus Keil offered a fascinating presentation on rail car interior lighting circuits. Klaus demonstrated a circuit using track power and a circuit using battery power. The track power circuit featured a capacitor to eliminate "flicker" produced from intermittent rail gaps. The battery circuit featured latching reed switches that were toggled on or off with a magnetic wand. The schematics for both circuits can be found in the April 2015 edition of **The Short Line**, the Sierra Division Newsletter.

Ben Hughes from Red Bluff swept the contests with his 1st place entries for prototype photo, modelling – rolling stock, and modelling – structures.

Along with the members in attendance we were joined by a very young model railroader, 5 year old John Heike, Jr. John enjoyed his morning with us and the pizza lunch that followed. He certainly got a kick out of the afternoon layout tours and a special surprise that popped up later.



Ben Hughes Offers a History Lesson



Klaus Keil Illuminates the Group

Photo Contest Winners—Modeling



1st Place—Ben Hughes



2nd Place—Ben Hughes



3rd Place—Ben Hughes

Photo Contest Winners



First Place
Ben Hughes



Second Place
Ben Hughes



Third Place Tie
Ben Hughes
left

Ben Hughes
right

October Meet—Paradise, CA (ctd.)

After lunch at Mt. Mike's, we caravanned around the Paradise area to visit four layouts. The first stop was Phill Simpson's Sugar Pine Creek Railroad. Phill is modeling a circa 1939 short line with connections to the A.T. & S.F. One of the ingenious features of Phill's layout is the swing up double-track truss bridge that allows access to the interior aisles.



Truss Bridge in the Open Position



Oakville

The next stop was Gary Ray's Gerber Subdivision, which depicts the Southern Pacific in far Northern California in 1926. Gary is busy constructing this expansive HO scale layout in a 24' X 60' outbuilding designed specifically for the railroad. His design is a walk-in "mushroom" style affair that promises to be a real kick to operate. Gary surprised our young visitor with a starter train set. Gary was quick to note that the train set had been given to him by Phill Simpson to be passed on as Gary saw fit. With the addition of some track donated by Gary, John, Jr. and his dad are now starting out on a new layout together. This, ladies and gentlemen, is ambassadorship!



Sierra Division Arrives at Gary Ray's Layout Building



The Sprouting of a New, Young Model Railroader



Gerber

October Meet—Paradise, CA (ctd.)

Stop number three was hosted by Norm Morris who models the Southern Pacific without any geographical constraint. Despite Norm's intentional lack of specific location, the layout looks and feels Espee through and through.



No Mistaking This Prototype!



Norm Also Plans A Sacramento Northern Interchange

The final tour stop was Klaus Keil's European theme layout. Klaus describes the purpose of his railroad as "Display, Experimentation, and Storage". Indeed, Klaus has a massive collection of European equipment on display – and he is constantly experimenting with DCC, lighting circuits, and catenary.



Klaus Keil's Display Layout



Klaus Specializes in Military Rail

Editors Note: Klaus will be offering a presentation on modeling European military rail equipment at the upcoming meet.

SIERRA DIVISION

Next Meeting: Saturday, Feb. 13

First Christian Church

3901 Folsom Blvd.—Sacramento

10:00 AM—Business Meeting, Contest
Judging

11:00—Clinic—Military Rail Cars by Klaus
Keil

12:00—Break for Lunch

1:15—Clinic—Placerville History /

Railroads by Jim Zeek

2:15—Clinic—to be announced

3:15—Wrap Up and Door Prize Drawing

4:00—Adjourn to Next Event

TIMETABLE

Feb. 13 ~ Sacramento

**April 2016
PCR Convention**

**May 2016 Neet
To Be Determined**

**August 2016
Sacramento**

**October 2016
Chico**

**Merry
Christmas!**

SHORT LINE

March 10 for the April Issue

June 10 for the July Issue

Sept. 10 for the October Issue

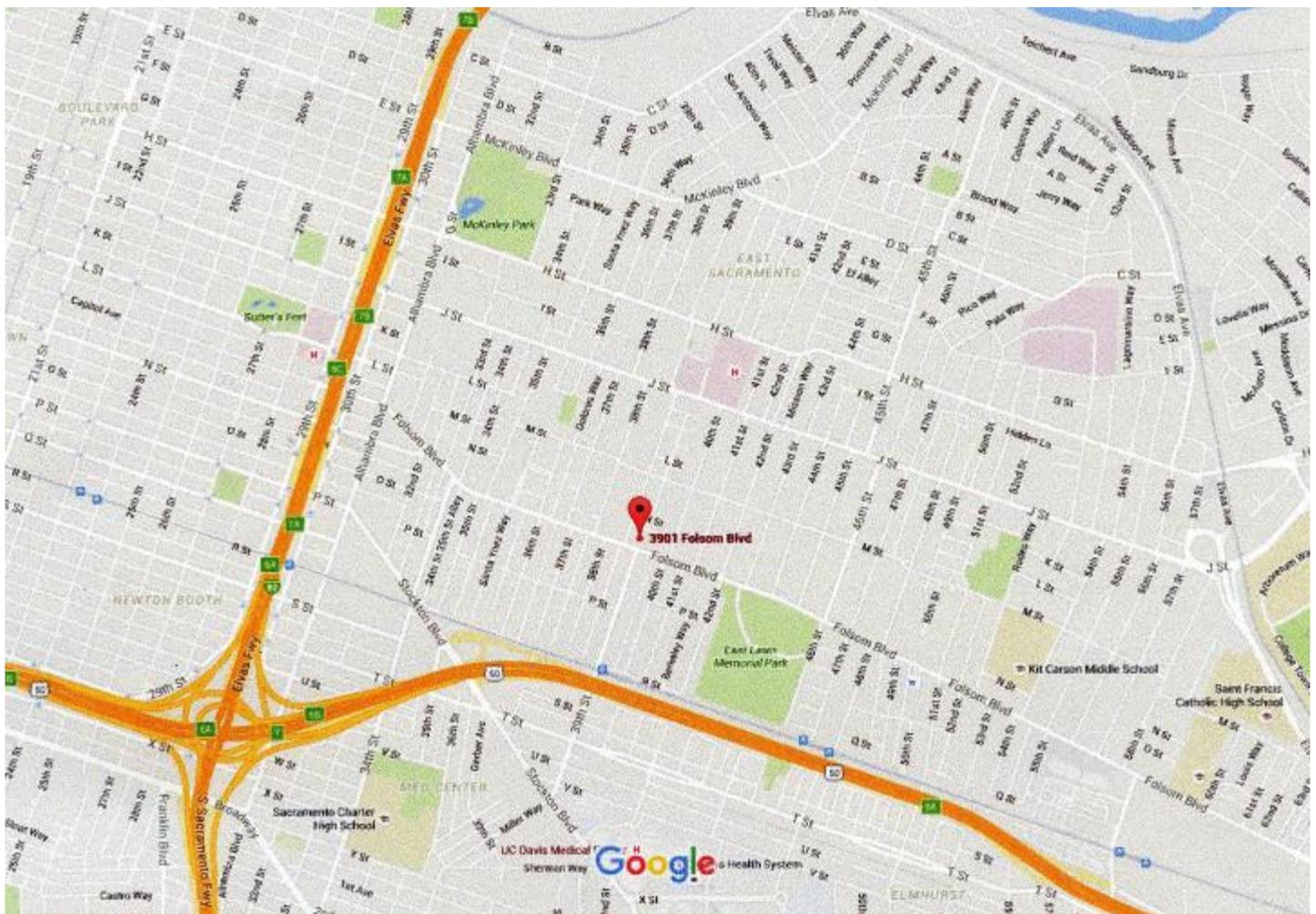
Dec. 10 for the January Issue

February Contest Categories:

Modeling— Freight Car

Photography— General Rail Subjects

*(limit of 3 photos—at least 5 X 7 but
not over 8 X 12)*





Early in November the Sierra Division, along with three other groups, sponsored and hosted the International Rail Fair at the Placer County Fairgrounds in Roseville. Unofficially, there were 57 vendors with 165 tables inside three exhibit halls. The Rail Fair was attended by a total of 1,751 adults and 266 children under the age of 12. Our thanks to all of the volunteers who helped pull off this wonderful event.



Entry Gate



The Crowd in the Main Hall



European Train Enthusiasts On Display

RAILFAN DAY ON THE WOLF CREEK RAILWAY

Of California

Wolf Creek, California- May 02, 1927- The arrival of the first Rail Fans started about 9:30am. A group of twenty hardy souls braved the treacherous dirt roads of the Sierra foothills to reach the town of Wolf Creek for their long anticipated trip behind steam. Some were concerned about the possibility of Indian raids, but they were assured that there is no reason to fear travel on the railroad. A rail fan pointed out a sign posted on the wall of the station and was worried about being scalped!



Shortly the entire group of rail fans arrived at the Wolf Creek station and met the Superintendent, Mr. Thomas Milam and Will "The Shack" Hillier, the conductor on today's run. Many of the rail fans were busy looking around the yards, taking notes and clicking away with their box cameras. Some of the invited guest were touching and climbing around the equipment, something dangerous in a busy rail yard. The Superintendent called the group together to go over the events for the day. First was the safety issue of the equipment. If, by chance, someone is invited to be a student engineer they will notify the Superintendent of any problem. You are not to touch or push the locomotives or cars. Photos are OK to take as long as they remain within the train. Do not feed the bears!

Since it is a working railway, and the top engineer was running the rail fan train, the group was asked if they were any boomer engineers wanting to operate today. One hearty soul volunteered. Tom from Shingle Springs, California. He was given train orders for the "Grizz", an out and back move from Grizzley Ridge to Buffalo Creek and return. (Glizzley is not misspelled; this is how Champ decals spelled out grizzly on their decals, so it must be correct!) A review of the operation of a DCC steam locomotive was given and a quick test of Tom's experience at throttle was completed. Orders in hand, Tom was off to number 19, a three truck Climax. There was not a shortage of student engineers (foamers) giving him advice on operations. He slowly added cars to his train and after some help from Jasper, Wolf Creek's one legged brakeman, it was steaming towards Buffalo Creek at break neck speed. Jasper yelled to slow down as 30 miles an hour is over the speed limit of the Line and the gears may strip! It was noted by the conductor that Boomer engineer Tom ran the semaphore signal heading out of Grizzley Ridge.

See "Railfan" pg 15

“Railfan” from pg 14

Once in Buffalo Creek, locomotive 19 lost tractive effort. Busted Knuckles, Wolf Creek’s Master Mechanic inspected the locomotive to find the gears in the transfer box stripped. Off to the shops for repair.

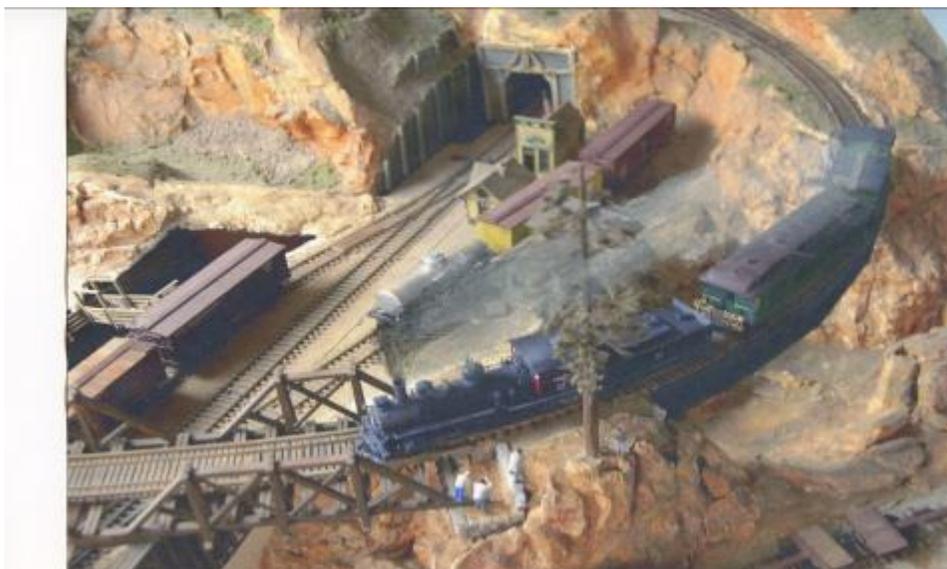


**“Jasper and Busted Knuckles Holding Court
At the Buffalo Creek Shop**

The Rail Fan Special

Ace reporter, Luther Haig, from the Wolf Creek Gazette, for a trip along the line. The train would terminate at Empire City for a special treat of cookies and carbonate waters. The train slowly pulled from the station at Wolf Creek, traveling to the first major attraction on the Line, the bridges and trestles crossing Turnback Creek. The Shack stopped the train on the trestle and Rail fans were offered to climb down (at their own risk) to take pictures of the area. The train was backed up for a photo run by. Thick black smoke billowing from the stack, the train roared over the series of bridges. What a sight to behold!

boarded passengers and the



The Run By at Turnback Creek

“Railfan” from pg 15

The train then continued through Colfax and a short stop in Snakepit to add water to the locomotive’s tender. Funny, no one dared leave the train at Snakepit. Odd. Appears a nervous soul used the hopper at the station stop! With the tender full of fresh spring water the train is soon traveling past Charity Mine and across Wolf Creek over the highest bridge on the line. Another photo stop was asked for to photograph the deep canyon carved by Wolf Creek. Far below a gold Miner is working to find his fortune in gold at the creek’s edge. The next stop is Hangtown, site of the infamous DD tank episode of the Sierra foothills history. *(Sorry this story was published by the Wolf Creek Gazette and promptly banned from general publication. Not soon forgotten by the citizens of the area however.)* One rail fan asked how Hangtown got its name. Shack’s reply was that a diesel locomotive salesman came to town and, well, you know the rest of the story.....



Entering Hangtown

The train would stop in Hangtown for sightseeing and photos of the engine facilities. The group was also invited to the bar for drinks with the IBOIGDTL (International Brotherhood of Irish Gandy Dancers and Track Layers) Hangtown Local. must have been all tea totalers as no one accepted the offer to drink spirits with the red headed Irishmen.

Underway again, the train traveled past the huge Pamela Mine just outside of Hangtown. To the right of the train is a small group of foamers protesting the reported scrapping of Modesto & Empire Traction locomotive number Four. Blasting the whistle, the train begins the steep four percent descend to Tuolumne City. This is where the three foot gauge Yosemite (Yo-Se-mite) Lumber Company interchanges with the Wolf Creek Railway. There is no YLCo equipment to photograph in Tuolumne City so the train continued on to Frog Flat.

See “Railfan” pg 17

“Railfan” from pg 16

With whistle blasting, our train exits the tunnel and we find ourselves at the bottom of Wolf Creek Canyon, crossing under the high bridge and across the wooden king post bridge Underway again, the train traveled past the huge Pamela Mine just outside of Hangtown. To the right of the train is a small group of foamers protesting the reported scrapping of Modesto & Empire Traction locomotive number Four. Blasting the whistle, the train begins the steep four percent descend to Tuolumne City. This is where the three foot gauge Yosemite (Yo-Se-mite) Lumber Company interchanges with the Wolf Creek Railway. There is no YLCo equipment to photograph in Tuolumne City so the train continues to Frog Flat.



Out of the Tunnel Into Wolf Creek Canyon

The exhaust from the smokestack is blasting as the train moves upgrade to reach Frog Flat. Slowly, we enter the siding of the Yosemite Lumber Company. Here the rail fans find another engine house full of steam locomotives and equipment. The large sawmill and mill pond lies just ahead of our train. The group is asked to go to the Dispatcher’s office for visitor’s passes and to remove all matches from their person. No smoking is allowed on the property. Several fans notice the old station sign on the Dispatcher’s office for the Hetch Hetchy and Yosemite Valley Railroad. The fans scatter to take photos. One visitor tries to run Shay number five from the turntable, only to run a turnout and derail the locomotive. See what happens when the Superintendent is not looking? It was quickly put back on the rails, but delayed the departure of our train to Empire City by several hours. It was nearly 12:00 before we arrived in Empire City, too late for any more photos. Seems most of the Rail fans were going to Church later that day also. The refreshments were handed out in the picnic area and everyone talked about the thrilling journey over the Scenic Wonder that is the Wolf Creek Railway of California. One noted comment was that “The scenic beauty of the Wolf Creek Line bankrupts the English language”.

**By Tom Milam, Wolf Creek Railway of California—Modesto, CA
(Inspired by a visit from The Sierra Division in May 2015)**

Tips of the Trade-Hobby

The past few months the editorial staff here at **The Short Line** has run across several useful tips from our own Sierra Division members and at least one from elsewhere. These are all fine ideas that just might aid you in your modeling efforts and spawn your creativity. We think this would make a great quarterly column—and we hope you do too. As always, however, the tips need to come from somewhere. So please come forward with any cleverness you may have been concealing. There are few greater compliments than seeing someone use and benefit from your ideas. Lest I remind you: Please reach me at chipmeriam@comcast.net

As noted elsewhere in this issue, Klaus Keil has developed two useful rail car interior lighting circuits. In addition to the parts sources cited by Klaus, Gary Ray has a few more to add:

Jameco at www.jameco.com/

Mouser at www.mouser.com

All Electronics at www.allelectronics.com (Editor's note: All Electronics ships out of Van Nuys. Usually takes 2 days!)

H&N Electronics at <http://www.ccis.com/home/hn/>

At our October meet, Ben Hughes introduced us to a specialty casting and detail supplier, Rusty Rails. Take a close look at Ben's First Place modeling entry and you'll see what they have to offer

<http://rustyrail.com/September2015NewsletterPage.htm>

rickenmary@rustyrail.com

Finally, our editorial staff discovered this useful idea while reading a recent issue of **The Family Handyman** :

A reader with years in the trades as a cabinet maker had, apparently, become fed up with the various "improvements" to wood glue bottles. It seems that the "new and improved" dispenser caps, designed to seal the bottle and keep the glue from setting during non-use, became a hinderance to actual every-day use. The reader's solution?

A simple squeeze bottle designed for mayonnaise, mustard, of catsup. I found mine (in a pack of six) at a Cash and Carry Outlet for no more than pocket change. They come without caps, but a large wire nut seals the squeeze bottle just fine!



Send us your tips!
chipmeriam@comcast.net