



THE

# CALLBOARD



OF THE REDWOOD EMPIRE DIVISION

Visit RED at Website: <http://home.earthlink.net/~campgus/>

July – September 2007

## August Meeting

Summer Picnic  
at the

Western Railway Museum  
Rio Vista Junction

The Redwood Empire Division will meet on Saturday, August 18 at the Western Railway Museum, 5848 State Highway 12 at Rio Vista Junction. We will hold our annual summer picnic outdoors under the trees. The museum and railway facilities are open from 10:30 AM to 5 PM. The admission cost is: adults \$10, seniors \$9 and children 2-14 \$7. Unlimited 10 mile round trip railcar rides are included and depart every hour, on the hour, from 11 AM to 4 PM.

Please bring your favor picnic lunch; cooking facilities will not be available. Sodas, bottled water and ice will be supplied by RED. There are picnic tables, lush green grass and full grown shade trees; bringing some lawn chairs is suggested.

The Western Railway Museum collection consists of vintage steam, electric and diesel locomotives as well as a large number of restored passenger cars. A main feature of the museum is their operating overhead wire trolleys.

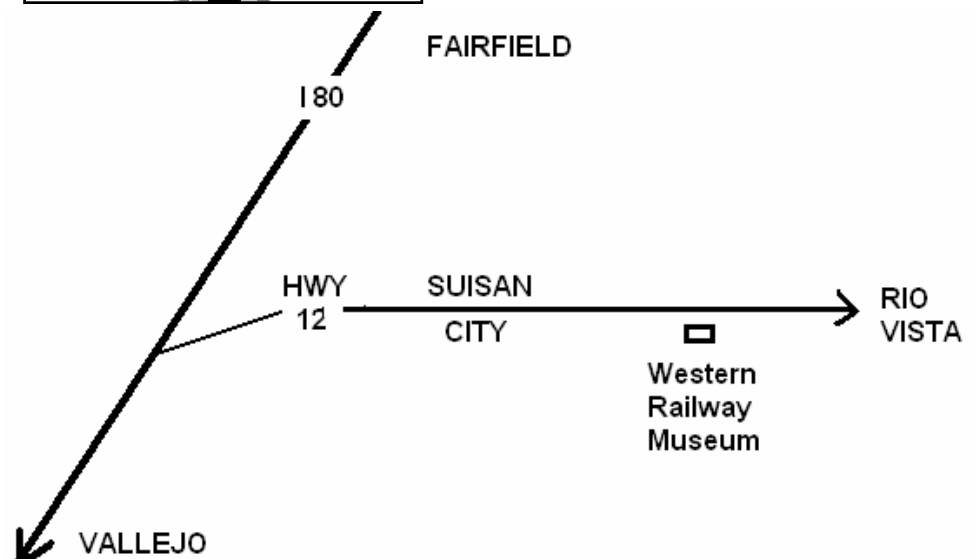
Trolleys and diesel powered trains operate along a portion of the former Sacramento Northern (SN) mainline.

The 12,000 square foot visitor center, which opened in March 2001, displays various photographs and smaller artifacts. The \$1 million cost of the building was raised entirely through donations of members and friends of the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association, a not for profit,

educational organization devoted to the preservation of western electric railroad history. The building is loosely designed on similar California railroad stations built in the 1915 – 1925 period.

Work on the Western railway Museum began in 1960 with the acquisition of the original 21 acre site at the Rio Vista Junction Station of the Sacramento Northern railway. The once high speed electric interurban railway, running from San Francisco to Sacramento, opened in 1913 and last carried passengers in 1940. The site is located on Highway 12, **midway** between Suisun City and Rio Vista.

We hope you will join us to visit part of California's railway history.



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## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### BY STEVE SKOLD

I have now changed hats from Conductor to Engineer or, more correctly, from Chief Clerk/Paymaster to Superintendent. We have just had a successful PCR Convention in Santa Cruz highlighted by incoming Vice President Pat La Torres marrying the love of his life, Veronica (Ronnie). There was an interesting article about the wedding in the August **Railroad Model Craftsman** magazine by Bill Schaumberg. Redwood Empire Division member RON PLIES was installed as President for the next two years.

RED member GIUSEPPE AYMAR won the convention attendees and peer's award for his string of Union Pacific TOFC's. STEVE SKOLD received first place for his color photo of the Quincy and Torch Lake Mason Bogie. CAROL SKOLD took first place for her quilted table runner. There may be more RED winners but the copy of the results I have are confusing but should be posted in the next PCR **Branch Line** newsletter.

Carol and I are looking forward to the RED picnic at Rio Vista Junction in August. Carol would like the ladies attending to bring a comfortable chair and knitting while some are taking the available train rides. Some of our children and grandchildren are joining us.

The Fall meet will be at Monroe Hall on November 17. There will be a hands on clinic on dry transfers. HO scale 40' boxcars and appropriate dry transfers will be available. If you would rather bring your own car to letter, that will be fine too. More details will be in the next **CALLBOARD**.

We are looking for more clinics to put on. If you want to do a clinic or

have an idea for a clinic, let me know. My phone number and email address are on page 2.

I hope you are having a wonderful summer building your layouts and constructing buildings and rolling stock.



RED Director Nolan Alexander with Ron Plies (on the right), who received the RED member of the year award at this year's PCR convention. Ron also was elected PCR president.



## EDITOR'S NOTES

Future **CALLBOARD** schedules are:

**October – December CALLBOARD Staff Meeting:** 7:30 PM, October 16  
**Text Deadline:** October 23  
**Mailing:** October 30  
**Meeting:** Saturday, November 17

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

Attention CALLBOARD readers:

## CHIEF CLERK'S REPORT BY DR. ED MERRIN

For those of you who weren't able to make it I've done my best to recreate some of the good times we had at the last RED Meet in May.

The Meet (who invented that term anyway?) took place at Monroe Hall in Santa Rosa. This is a great place to gather, very comfortable and roomy, with attached kitchen facilities and plenty of parking. RED is fortunate to have access to this site, thanks to special connections to the management enjoyed by our long-term RED member DON CABRALL.

Of course, we started out with the usual business oriented stuff. Fortunately, outgoing Superintendent NOLAN ALEXANDER knows better than to prolong the agony so we can get to the stuff we really like, so the formal proceedings went quickly and smoothly.

This business included the announcement of the ballot counts for election of a new Superintendent and Chief Clerk/Paymaster. As you know, this was a hotly contested election accompanied by smear campaigns and charges of ballot box stuffing. Now that the results are in we hope everyone can put their bad feelings behind them and "move on." For the record, the new Superintendent is that well known swimmer/kayaker/sailor STEVE SKOLD. He also likes trains, which is how he got into this situation in the first place. The new Chief Clerk is yours truly. Hopefully I won't screw up and disappoint you all.

Yes, there were door prizes. Most of these door prizes come from secret sources that you don't find out about until you become Chief Clerk. Winners of these items included a number of dignitaries – JOHN ROLSTON (your CALLBOARD editor), HAROLD MENTZER (President of our sister organization and fellow Monroe Hall tenant, the NWP His-

torical Society), MICHAEL SHRUM (you need to be elected to something, Michael), RON PLIES (the new PCR biggest of the big shots), and myself. Do you smell a rat here? At least Steve didn't win one.

And of course, there were "Special" (i.e. expensive) door prizes as well. Following the pattern of corruption, NOLAN ALEXANDER won an Atlas U-23-B. Pretty nifty, although I think he prefers big steamers. The other winner was VERNE ALEXANDER. Since Verne doesn't hold any office he was given something he already had anyway, a book on Railroads of the Coeur d' Alenes (whatever they are).

Finally, we got to the highlight of the Meet. Pulling one of his many PCR strings, Steve arranged for Don Fiehm to come up from the Peninsula and give us a slide presentation on the basics of DCC. This is part of our efforts to drag the RED membership, kicking and screaming if necessary, into the 21st Century. Don is a qualified expert. He has written a long series of articles for RMC on DCC worth tearing out and putting in a binder (which I have done). He is also in the process of authoring a DCC book for Kalmbach. In addition, his expertise extends to Decoder Pro, the free computer program that can simplify all that programming of decoders that you have to do. To supplement the talk, members were invited to bring in their DCC equipped locomotives for consultation and for just plain showing off. There were test tracks from which locomotive sounds were emanating. Don's accomplice, Jim Betz, brought along a Decoder pro demo set up as well. New Superintendent Skold managed to get Don to fix the sound volume on one of his problem locos and left happy.

After the official Meet we were all invited to bring raw meat (see what a difference one letter can make) to STEVE & CAROL SKOLD'S for an afternoon barbecue. The party was well attended and everyone finally left for

home full of food and railroad memories.

Don't miss the next one on November 17th, also at Monroe Hall.

Dr. Ed



Newly elected RED Chief Clerk Dr. Ed Merrin & Superintendent Steve Skold

### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE REDWOOD EMPIRE DIVISION

Date: May 19, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER TIME: 1:05 PM
2. APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (as published in the 4-6/2007 CALLBOARD). Moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.
3. TREASURER'S REPORT by Chief Clerk STEVE SKOLD. Current balance in the RED bank account is \$2129.85.
4. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS  
Ballot Committee Report by ED ZAKARECKIS. A total of 29 ballots were counted. STEVE SKOLD was elected by unanimous vote to the office of Superintendent, succeeding NOLAN ALEXANDER. ED MERRIN was elected, also by unanimous vote, to the office of Chief Clerk, succeeding STEVE SKOLD.
5. OLD BUSINESS. There was no old business discussed.
6. NEW BUSINESS.  
New officers installed; STEVE SKOLD as Superintendent and ED MERRIN as Chief Clerk.

ADJOURNMENT TIME: 1:10 PM

# THINK SMALL #53

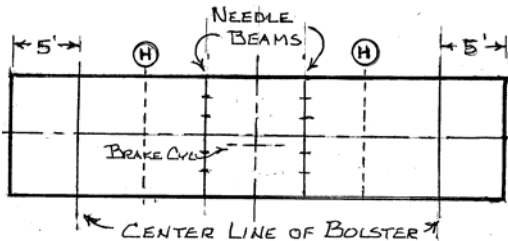
## That Special Boxcar Part B

**Part A update: Styrene #4037 is a better choice for sides and ends than #2037. I learned by doing!**

That block of wood, so handy as a mandrel in Part A of this exercise while we built the box, is the core we will use as the box progresses to boxcar. For starters, we need some lines on the bottom of that block of wood.

Truck centers of standard gauge

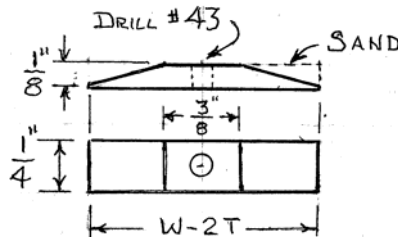
**H** TRUSS RODS HIDE BETWEEN SILLS



platform for their pocket that is just 29/64 inches above top of rail – no more, no less. NMRA RP 23 requires that HO freight car truck center bearing plates be 5/16 (20/64) inches above top of rail. A body bolster provides the 9/64 inches needed to meet KD's required 29/64 inches.

Years ago all train hobby shops sold cast body bolsters. Today such castings are rarer than solid silver dollars. You are faced with the task of fabricating two body bolsters for your car. If you prefer wood, 1/8 x 1/4 stripwood plus a thin washer will do the job. (1/8 = 8/64)

Find a #2 washer about 1/64" thick.

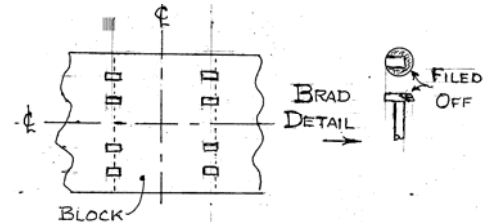


achieve 9/64 inches.

The center lines of your bolsters should be on the five foot line from the end of your block. A bit of adhesive will hold them in place. A couple of 1/2" by 20 brads will make the marriage permanent, whether the bolsters are wood or styrene.

Four truss rods were the norm for wood boxcars. Eight 1/2" x 20 brads with heads modified as shown, set in the needle beam pilot holes of your wood block, will be your queen posts and an important part of your needle beams.

Set the brads in their pilot holes with small pliers so they do not fall



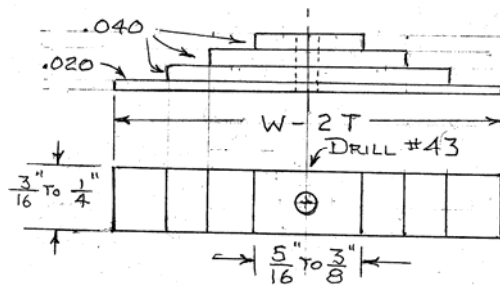
freight cars were almost always five feet from the end of the car. Verify this with the scale drawing of your car. The same reference will dictate the distance between needle beams and the location of the queen posts. Measure on the side view of your drawing to locate the line where the truss rods duck out of sight between the frame timbers. Mark these important lines on your block. Be certain that the center line is right on. You do not want a lopsided car.

This is a good time to drill pilot holes for the wood screw truck king, pins and the queen posts. Use a drill press if you have one. We want holes at 90 degrees. A 1/32" or any number drill #68 to 72 will do the job. The same drill in a pin vise will work just fine for boring loose fitting holes 3/8" to 1/2" deep for the ends of those four truss rods. The objective is to bore at the slope of the truss rod, so take your time as you twirl that pin vise between your fingers.

Drill the stripwood with a #43 drill on center, then taper on the sander and you will have a body bolster that meets standards. Make two and you are ready to move on..

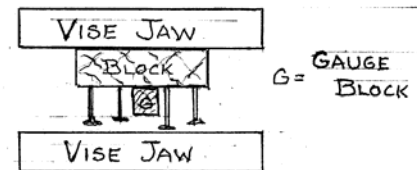
Addicted to styrene? Your bolsters will be a bit more complex. Also we need to translate 9/64" to decimals. (9/64 = 0.1406) Bonus, you are free to make the width of your bolster closer to prototype.

Caution: Sheet styrene is often a



out. Check that scale drawing for height of needle beam plus queen post. Now find or make a small wood space block that fits the desired measure. Tack glue that little gauge block in place between the two center brads of a row. You can press all four brads to the same height determined by that little block of wood. Your bench vise makes it easy.

Push slowly. If a wayward brad wants to lean, tweak it with your



long nose pliers. Your four brads should be lined up like a marine honor guard. Move the gauge block to the other row of brads and repeat the process.

Truss rods were usually about 1" diameter but those #20 brads are a bit over scale for HO queen posts.

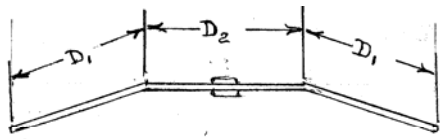
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KD #5 couplers require a mounting

(THINK SMALL Continued from page 4)

However, grab irons were usually 5/8" and that scales to 0.007 inches (a #80 drill is 0.0135".) We want truss rods that look stouter than the grab irons. Straight brass wire works and solders handily. Plus, it is available in assorted diameters. I suggest 0.014 for grabs and 0.020 or so for the truss rods. I like to drill pilot holes for my grab irons; .014" is a tad more than a #80 drill. This is a scratch building project. You are the boss.

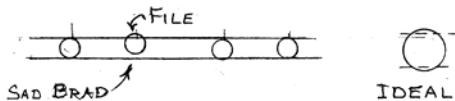
Cut four pieces of truss rod wire 2D1 + D2 long for truss rods. Two tiny lengths (ten or so scale inches)



$D_1 = 5/16" + \text{LINE } \odot \text{ TO NEEDLE BEAM}$   
 $D_2 = \text{SPAN BETWEEN OUTER EDGE OF BRADS}$

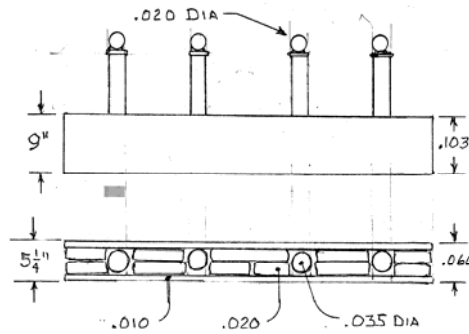
of the same wire soldered at the center point will simulate the turnbuckle for tightening the truss rod. Bend the wire to match the brads with the turnbuckle at center. Those oversize holes near the bolsters will make adjustments easy as you solder the truss rods to the tops of the brads. The center line on the block is a handy reference. Those should line up.

Find your set of needle files. One or more of the brads may be a tad off



line. File flats are up to 15% of diameter to achieve a straighter line and slimmer beam. The needle beams will be a sneaky sandwich embracing the brads. The Car Builder's Dictionary's 36 foot box-car in Fig. 220 has 5 x 8 1/2 needle beams. 5 1/4 divided by 87 equals 0.060. I opted for 5 1/4 x 9 needle

beams. Two slices of .010 styrene cut nine scale inches wide and car width long



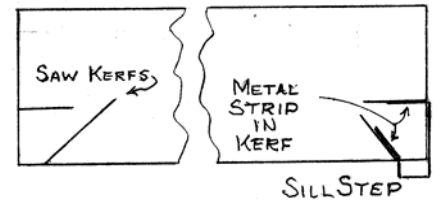
are the bread of the sandwich. Glue or clamp the long strips of .010 styrene to the brads. Then insert suitable bits

of .020 scraps into the void. A generous dose of Testor's Liquid Plastic Cement or MEK will give you a needle beam with projecting queen posts supporting your truss rods. Set the block on your work bench and go run trains. The fumes will be gone tomorrow. . A light smear of Squadron Green putty and some work with needle files does wonders. You will be happy with your needle beams.

Remember my tomato can lid? I wanted thin sheet metal to cut into strips to make rugged sill steps. The can stock measured 0.008" thick - strong but hard to cut. My sixteenth steel strip was my first keeper. 0.008" phosphor was easier yet. Use what works for you. Rugged steps merit a sturdy method of attachment.

Make the saw cuts in the core block with a thin razor saw or jewelers saw. The idea is to have the saw kerf just a tad tight for the strip of metal. If your strips have a slight burred edge smile;

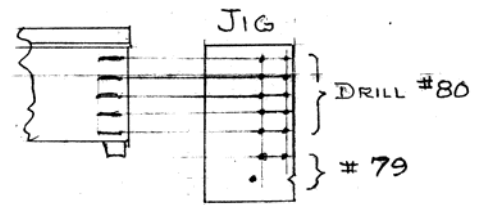
CORE BLOCK



that takes care of a wide slot. A touch of ACC or epoxy is just good insurance. All four corners or that wood block get the same treatment. These steps are easily bent back to shape when the unexpected happens.

Mount your brake cylinder on the center line and between the needle beams. Defer those couplers, it is time to put the slip cover back on the wood block for ladders and grab irons. House cars need lots of handles on sides ends and even the roof but there is a pattern. Look at the scale drawing or the car you are copying. A corner ladder sets the pattern. Grabs at the ends and the other corner of the side usually match the second ladder step. A simple drilling jig saves a lot of measuring.

Find a bit of half hard or hard brass, copper or nickel silver 3/4 to 1 inch wide and about 3/8 inch longer than



your car side is high. Scribe the eight lines on the jig with care and center punch the crossings. An #80 drill is tender -use a little drill press if you have one and be gentle. You want the 10 holes for the ladder to be at the intersections of the scribed lines. The three extra holes are the grab iron gauge and the bending jig for grabs. Ream them with a #79 drill, then file a small notch oppo-

(Continued on page 6)

(THINK SMALL Continued from page 5)

site the bottom hole

Make a 90 degree bend at the end of a piece of .014 straight brass wire, insert into the hole opposite the notch, then bend 90 degrees at the notch. The grab will be too long. Gradually deepen the notch until you bend a grab that fits the pair of reamed holes just above. Discard the misfits, then make a supply of grabs and deburr their legs.

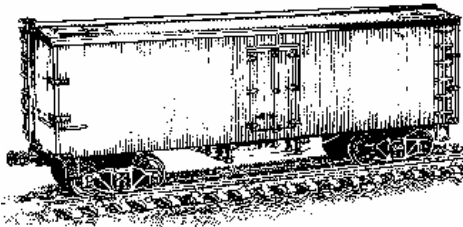
Put that #80 drill back in the pin vise. Hold your jig against the roof molding and even with the corner of the car as you drill #80 holes through the siding and 1/8" or so into the wood block inside. Push those grabs into place with small pliers. Soon the slip cover will be firmly attached to the block. With a scale drawing, or a sample car as a guide, a drilling jig makes adding a full set of handles to sides and ends

a quick, fun job.

Our lump of wood is looking more like a boxcar but still needs a bit of work. Part C, coming next time, should complete the job. Perhaps there will be space for an option or two.

Summer is here. Do some railfanning.

Bill Williams      The Ancient One



## 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 ad. 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 Ron Rogers (707)224-4040 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 Brad Squires (707) 568-4298 or Don Hanesworth 823-9615

<http://cvl.hobby-site.com/>

**Sonoma County Model Railroad Soci-**

## CLUB SCHEDULES

**etym (SCMRS)** is looking for members to help create a large permanent HO scale model railroad display to be located in Sonoma County. Modeling items are currently stored at the historic Healdsburg Railway Depot building. Contact Dave Gibbons at (707)526-2057 or email [rrgibbons@sonic.net](mailto:rrgibbons@sonic.net)

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

**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**, a Fort Bragg area group that promotes the hobby of model railroading. This group meets the 3rd Saturday of each month. At present, HO modules are being constructed. Contact Phil Miller at (707)937-3605 for more information.

**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 [rlplies@cox.net](mailto:rlplies@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

### NWP Centennial Exhibition Schedule:

June 1-Sept. 2: Mendocino County Museum, 400 Commercial St., Willits W-Sn 10-4:30

Aug. 1-Nov. 2: Clarke Historical Museum, 240 E St., Eureka Tu –Sat 12-4

Aug. 11-12: Heritage Days, Railroad Square, 15 Third St., Santa Rosa

Sept. 1- Dec. 31: Marin County History Museum, 1125 B St., San Rafael

Oct. 1- Dec. 31: Tomales Regional History Center, 26701 Hwy 1, Tomales F-Sun 1-4

August 4-5, Sept 1-2, Oct 5-6 : **Redwood Empire Live Steamers** will be running at Youth Community Park, 1725 Fulton Rd., Santa Rosa, CA across from Piner High School

#

August 4-5: **Coastal Valley Lines** run, Oakmont East Recreation Center, Santa Rosa #

August 8-12: **Napa Valley MRHS** open house, noon to 10 PM, Fair admission required. #

August 9-19: **Eel River Valley Model Railroaders** open house at the Humboldt County Fair, 12 noon to 9 PM each day. Fair admission required. #

August 11, October 6: **Sierra Division** meets. [www.pcrnmra.org/sierra/](http://www.pcrnmra.org/sierra/)

August 18: **RED** picnic meet at the Western Railway Museum, Rio Vista Junction. See page 1.

August 18: **Napa Valley MRHS** swap meet, 8-12, \$3.00 admission. #

August 26, Sept. 16 & 30, October 28: **Redwood Empire Garden RR Society** meetings #

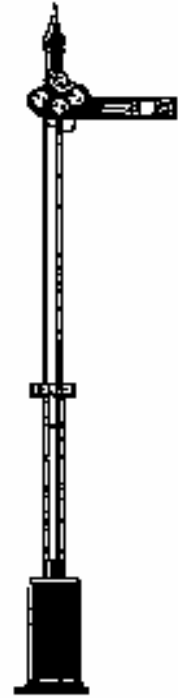
September 9, December 2: **Coast Division** meets. [www.pcrnmra.org/coast/](http://www.pcrnmra.org/coast/)

September 22-23, Oct. 6-7: **Coastal Valley Lines** runs, 2 different locations, Santa Rosa #

Sept 29-30: **Sturgeons Sawmill**, Sebastopol is running on steam! [www.sturgeonsmill.com/](http://www.sturgeonsmill.com/)

November 17: **RED** meet at Monroe Hall, Santa Rosa

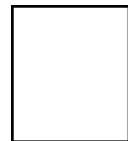
# Contact information is listed on page 6



*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)*

## CALLBOARD

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## FIRST CLASS