



Celebrating our 64th Year

Winter 2012

THE HERALD eZine

Official Publication of the Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society, Inc.



THE HERALD eZine Returns

Welcome Back Old Friend

Prototypical Operations

On the Sierra Central

THE HERALD eZine Returns

Welcome Back Old Friend

After a long absence, the SMRHS's official publication, *THE HERALD eZine* is back in print. Well, sort of. We are keeping the format suitable for reading on your computer screen, eliminating the need for making a hard copy. This saves us the costs of printing and postage, and saves the natural resources of our planet while reducing the number of discarded copies that just take up space in landfills.

This is YOUR publication and will live and die by the material we put into it. I am looking for all types of articles from major histories, to trivia, to modeling how-to's and so on. If you have a thought you wish to share with our readers, then this is the place for it.

THE HERALD eZine will maintain a quarterly publication schedule starting with this "Winter 2012" issue. Deadlines for submission for the next issue will be the end of April.

If you have any questions, suggestions or ideas for articles, I am always available to chat with.

Dave Good - Editor

Cover Photograph provided by Joe Minor: UP 7675 leads a K train east through a break in the clouds at Soda Springs. Most of the fresh snow came from the day before and even though it only dropped a foot it sure made for a great scene. May 11, 2010

NMRA Sierra Division

&

SMRHS Meet

February 4, 2012

10:30am



This is a co-sponsored event located at the church on the opposite corner of the intersection across from the SMRHS clubhouse.

Clinics:

- Joe Melhorn's presentation on LED lighting and signals on SMRHS's HO standard gauge Sierra Central RR.
- Bob Schott will describe prototypical operating sessions on the Sierra Central.

There will be a \$5 burger lunch followed by an operating session open for all attendees.

SMRHS NEWS

The HERALD eZine Staff

As we begin 2012, there are many activities that the Society will be involved with. Right off the top, we will be co-sponsoring the NMRA Sierra Division meet the first weekend in February. For information please see the notice by [clicking here](#).

Shortly after that, we will be running our first Theme Night of the year on the Standard Gauge layout. It's time to bring out all the F units you have to inundate the layout with these "covered wagons". See the notice for this and future planned Theme Nights on page 4 or [click here](#) to be taken to it now.

In April, we will be holding our Spring Open House. This is our time to strut our stuff and show off what we have accomplished. See this year's poster, newly designed by Bob Schott, on the back cover of this issue.

This is just some of the fun things we have planned for 2012. Clinics, workshops, tours and the like are all on the menu to help improve our skills as modelers, enrich our minds as historians and to make our experience at the SMRHS more enjoyable. Watch for announcements for special events through your e-mail, by attending our weekly meetings, or by watching the calendar on our website [here](#).

Work on both layouts continues. President Ron Fritz proclaimed 2012 to be the "Year of Operations" on the Standard

Gauge layout. As we have concentrated our efforts over the past few years to the construction of the layout, it's now time to enjoy the fruits of our labor with some much deserved running time and regularly scheduled prototype operations. The majority of the trackwork is done and what is left, along with the needs of the electrical systems and scenery/structure work can all be done in smaller work periods, leaving the layout fairly accessible for running and operations. Let's have some fun but don't forget there is still work to be done. Get involved and ask "how can I help out?" every chance you get.

The Narrow Gauge layout will be seeing some serious action this year regarding change. At the annual Narrow Gauge Planning Meeting held on January 14, the members decided that it was time to convert the layout over to DCC. With advances in the narrow gauge modeling market, as well as DCC technology in general, there was no reason to limit themselves any longer to analog power control. From now until the April Open House, they will be developing their "battle plan" with intentions of beginning the conversion shortly thereafter.

There will be opportunities to learn more about DCC, how to convert Shinohara switches to be DCC friendly as well as to learn how to *hand lay* track when some areas of the layout receive alterations. If you are interested in lending a hand see Dave Good, the NG Supervisor, for guidance.



PROTOTYPICAL OPERATIONS ON THE SIERRA CENTRAL

Robert Schott

As we enter our sixth year of prototypical operations on the HO standard gauge layout, it's quite appropriate to take a look back to see where we've been and then a look forward to see where we're headed. Early in 2007, construction of the layout had progressed to the point where the idea of having proto ops became a real possibility. Our current "Proto Ops Sessions" on the Sierra Central Railroad has evolved since our first session on December 8, 2007. This first session, however, came about after several meetings, conversations and planning.

Looking Back

Although many of the names have changed on the Sierra Central, back in 2007, the mainline was complete along with the yards at Keddie and Desert-Oakland. Half of 12th Street yard was built with the second half underway. With Oakland Pier, West Oakland, Oroville and Sacramento in place, doing operations was not an "if" but a "when."

Our earliest conversations on operations centered on what we wanted the sessions to provide and the best way to get this accomplished. Consensus was reached on the following goals and objects:

1. The operating system ought to be easy to learn and teach.
2. The sessions should involve as many members as possible.
3. It must be flexible to accommodate the skills and numbers of operators, the available equipment, and the progressing construction of the layout.
4. It should emphasize freight forwarding but allow for passenger service.

...continued on next page

F-Unit Fun Run Night

February 24, 2012

7:00pm



For this one night, the Society's HO standard gauge layout will be overrun with FTs, F3s, F7s, and their various siblings and cousins for the first theme night of 2012. If you have an F, doesn't matter what road, bring it to run. If you don't have one, bring your E-units or other locomotive that can be called a covered wagon. FL9s?-OK; PAs?- OK; CF7s?-No!; BL2s?-Ugh!

Future theme nights:

June 29	UP's Big Yellow
Aug 31	TBD
Oct 26	TBD

PROTO OPS ...continued

The organization of the sessions fell into two camps: card-based and computer-based. The card-based system was seen as more forgiving and flexible as well as being easier to implement. The computer-based system while having many desirable features was rejected as being too labor intensive to maintain considering the dynamic nature of a club layout. Card systems, like those used on a few local layouts and described in the model railroad press were less tedious and more self-correcting than the computer systems.

The color coded, card-based system used on the Sierra Central is essentially the same as we used in 2007 but has seen several revisions. This system uses car cards with color coded four position waybills to control freight car movement. Blue train cards are used to inform crews of train actions and movements. All train movements outside of the yards are coordinated through the Trainmaster and Dispatcher.

Several revisions have been made including shifting away from timetable based schedules toward running all freight trains as extras. We have implemented green locomotive cards to inform engineers of the DCC commands for the individual units. Yard cards and staging cards help organize the yards.

Looking Forward

Prototypical Operations has become a popular and regular activity of the Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society. We were able to share this activity with nearly 40 guests during the NMRA 2011X National Convention when hosted "Proto Ops sessions on both of the Society's layouts. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive even though there were some complaints about July's heat.

Going ahead in 2012, we have sessions planned for the first and third Friday nights of every month from 8pm to 10pm with set-up from 7-8pm. These nights were selected as they would not interfere with scheduled meetings of the membership or board of directors. With just two sessions per month, there are nights for clinics, theme events, and plenty of opportunities for free-running.

In the short term, we hope to enlarge our freight fleet by about 100 cars. This could be done by adding to the SMRHS owned "Core" fleet. Preferably, members will "lease" suitable cars to our operations efforts. The immediate need is for freight cars but passenger equipment would greatly enhance our operations. We also expect to enlarge our crews and develop operator skills with training and clinics.

In the long term, one might expect better fast time clocks, deeper card boxes in the yards, and several more passenger trains to run. The yard activities could be enhanced by adding more yard industries such as locomotive servicing to be switched. This could include adding a "hostler" to maintain, service, and supply road power to the yard classification crews. For the road crews, there is a real possibility of adding "chance" cards to simulate hot boxes, weather conditions, out-of-service track, etc. We are exploring options for rotating equipment on and off of the layout through the interchanges or other methods.

All in all, Prototypical Operations on the Sierra Central RR is solid and is heading for a bright future. Proto Ops is very popular with some of the members and interest is growing.



Spring Open House
Saturday, April 28, 2012
Sunday, April 29, 2012
10 am to 4 pm



Train Show

Admission:
\$3 Adults
\$2 Ages 6-12
Under 6 Free

Spring Open House presented by the Sacramento Model Railroad Historical Society. See HO and HO_n3 Layouts. Located at 1990 Grand Ave., Sacramento, CA. Take the Winters exit from Hwy 80.

Details at www.smrhs.com