

HIGHLIGHTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
October 27, 2007

By Rich Kolm, PCR Secretary

The Board met on October 27 at the Ramada University in Fresno, which is the location of the 2008 PCR Convention. Board members present were President Ron Plies, Vice-President Pat LaTorres, Secretary Rich Kolm, Directors Mary Moore-Campagna (Sierra) and Nolan Alexander (Redwood Empire), and Director-proxy John Houlihan for Doug Wagner (Daylight). Also present were various department managers and committee chairpersons. The agenda is available at the PCR website.

• **The future of the NMRA.** President Ron Plies summarized the report he sent to the NMRA Secretary prior to the NMRA Board meeting in July. He said the NMRA needs to adjust to the significant changes occurring in the hobby, recognizing that today's model railroaders have different needs than in the past. We need to take a hard look at why other model railroad groups are successful in meeting the needs of their members, especially for younger modelers that are the key to the future of the organization. One concern is the cost of attending conventions.

His report also pointed out the success of the "show and tell" alternative to formal model contests at the last PCR convention and at division meets. There is more participation than with the old style NMRA contests because there is no judging and no big write ups; everyone simply enjoys and learns from each others' work. On a policy matter, he expressed concern that the NMRA has not produced on-line access to membership data that was promised when the new NMRA Regulations were voted in 2004.

• **Apparent lack of interest.** Jim Long represented President Plies at the annual meeting of NMRA's Regional Advisory Council (RAC) during the NMRA Convention in July. Of the 17 regional presidents, Jim Long and one regional president were the only ones who showed up, along with NMRA Director Bob Ferguson who represents the RAC.

• **Coordination of regional activities.** Vice-President Pat LaTorres said he is starting to make progress in coordinating the activities of the PCR, the divisions, NMRA, SIGs, clubs and other model railroading events in an attempt to minimize scheduling conflicts.

• **Finances and budget approval.** Treasurer Larry Altbaum submitted a financial report including a Budget for FY 2008, which the Board approved. The finances of the Region have remained stable since the changes brought about by the NMRA single dues system.

The Board discussed the various financial accounts and assets maintained by PCR and the interest they produce. The Directors asked the PCR officers to review and decide what changes are prudent and then implement their decision prior to the next Board meeting.

In July, the NMRA Board of Directors increased the annual rebate to regions for non-acturial life members from \$0.50 to \$2.00, thanks to NMRA Director Bob Ferguson.

• **PCR Conventions.** Dennis Stokely, Convention Department Manager, described the "roaring success" of the 2007 convention and reviewed the status of upcoming conventions.

– **2007 Convention “Suntan Special” at Santa Cruz:** Chairperson Kevin Hurley submitted his final convention report to the Board and he described the special features that made it a unique event.

– **2008 Convention “Sierra Memories” at Fresno:** Chairperson John Houlihan described the upcoming convention activities, April 30 to May 4, 2008. Brewster Bird described a Boy Scouts railroading merit badge program to be offered at the convention.

– **2009 Convention at Fremont:** Dennis Stokely presented a proposal for a convention at the Marriott Hotel in Fremont, which was approved by the Board. The Chairperson is Chuck Mitchell who is putting together a convention committee.

– **2010 and 2011 Conventions:** Redwood Empire Division cannot find a reasonable convention facility for 2010. Manager Stokely said alternatives are being explored— maybe switch with Coast Division for 2010 and then do a stripped down convention in 2011 just ahead of the NMRA Convention in Sacramento. There is also some interest in a joint convention with PNR in Oregon which could involve Redwood Empire Division’s support.

- **Non-Rail Activities.** Mary Moore-Campagna, Non-Rail Activities Department Manager, said planning for the 2008 Convention in Fresno is well underway. She plans to continue to offer a quality convention program to attract new people. Sally Bird will be in charge at Fresno.

- **PCR website.** Director Alexander reported on a review of the PCR website and it’s links to the Division websites. Improvements and updating need to be considered. An ad-hoc committee will continue the review and bring back a list of options and alternatives to the next Board meeting.

- **LDSIG and OpSIG meeting.** As in past years, PCR will co-sponsor the joint Layout Design SIG and Operations SIG meeting in Santa Clara on January 26-27, 2008.

- **NMRA Rail Pass will include the *Branch Line*:** Vice-President Pat LaTorres proposed that the one-time 6-month Rail Pass memberships include two issues of the *Branch Line* paid for by PCR, which was approved by the Board. This is important to inform and encourage these temporary members to continue as regular members.

- **The next Board Meeting** will be on Wednesday, April 30, 2008, in Fresno during the “Sierra Memories” Convention. **The Annual Business Meeting** for members of PCR will be at the end the Convention, on Sunday morning, May 4. The agendas will be posted on the PCR website prior to the meetings.