

2013 WESTERN MINI-MEET

On February 16, 2013, the Western mini-meet was held in San Bernardino, California at the historic Santa Fe Depot. Approximately 125 were in attendance on the sunny (73 degrees) Southern California day. There was a steady stream of BNSF trains going by seventy-five feet away on the Transcon and some Metrolink activity.

Again this year, we were graced with a clinician staff second to none. Mitch Alderman, Director of Transit and Rail Programs for the San Bernardino Associated Governments detailed the progress of the extension of the Metrolink line to Redlands from San Bernardino, and the associated building and track work that is expected.

Steve Sandifer was kind enough to come all the way from Houston, Texas to present two clinics on modeling Santa Fe stockcars and Santa Fe Stock Operations. Both were excellent presentations and well received by our audience. Should anyone have questions on either, Steve is your man to see.

Jeff Staggs did a great presentation on Kaiser Steel at Fontana, which included facts about the actual steel making, its use and about how Santa Fe serviced this large complex. Several trains per day from both Santa Fe and Southern Pacific serviced the plant, which was built to aid the war effort during World War II and Henry J Kaiser's ship building business. Because of this activity, Kaiser maintained a large rail yard and his own railroad for use in the plant.

Michael Gross did a clinic on weathering of freight cars that was of great interest. Having heard a few hundred such clinics in my sixty-five year model railroad history, I can easily say it was the most interesting and informative I have ever heard. Michael will be doing this at our convention in Flagstaff later this summer, and if you are attending, you don't want to miss it.

Lastly, Ed Saalig of the Pacific Rail Society gave a very interesting clinic on Santa Fe's RDC's. Pacific Rail Society has one of the two units, which will be restored in due time. Ed's video is very interesting and if you get a chance to sit in on one of his presentations, you will miss something great if fail to take it in.

As always, we had a wonderful group of volunteers, directed by Charlie Schultz, who made the event possible. We had attendees from Oregon, Nevada and Arizona besides the California contingent.

In all, it was an informative day, and also gave everyone a chance to catch up with seldom seen friends.

Gene Rutledge - Coordinator