

NCRy Signaleros

NCRy at the NMRA Convention

The National Model Railroad Association held their national convention in Sacramento this year. Our Signaleros friends at the Sacramento Southern Railroad invited us to participate in a tour they were conducting. The tour consisted of transporting groups of model railroaders by train to three different grade crossings where the modelers could see an actual grade crossing control system along with other displays. The NCRy Signal Department had two displays at the Capitol Mall grade crossing; one on coded track circuits and the other on grade crossing bells. Each group was given a five minute presentation at each display before being moved on to the next display or the next crossing by train. In the photo below, James Stewart and Dave Lion demonstrate how grade crossing bells work.

It was a well organized fire drill that was fun for all that participated.



Signal Bridge

You know that saying "If you believe that then I have a bridge to sell you". Well, we believed it and ended up buying a bridge. Actually we paid scrap value for a very old classic cantilever style signal bridge. It was saved from being scrapped thanks to the dedicated efforts of former Santa Fe conductor Randy Driskell and Craig Cherry of DC Metals. Without these guys, and the help of the BNSF, this bridge would be on its way to becoming a lamp post or park bench.

The bridge was located in Gateley, Ca. on the BNSF (MP 1186.2) and has been a feature of many railfan photos over the decades. There's a platform at the end of the bridge where a semaphore signal was once mounted. This elegant all-riveted construction style of bridge was once very common during the steam era. Railroads are removing these old relics as signal systems are upgraded and it soon will be a fixture of the past.

Ironically, we had been looking at another bridge located near us on the UP between Pleasanton and Livermore which we hope to someday acquire. But news of the Gateley bridge's fate got us jumping, and within a week we had approval from the Collections Committee thanks to George Childs and a loan from Steve Rusconi to pay the scrapper. Since then we've gotten a couple of generous donations from David Ernest and Doug Debs. More donations are welcome.

Our current plan is to locate the bridge just east of the east Brightside yard switch on the south side of the track. Eventually the siding entrance and exit signals will be placed on top. But before it can be erected we need to do some fabrication work. The basic structure is in good condition but the mast was sectioned by BNSF before it was transported, so we need to weld it back together and perhaps add some bracing. The ladders and handrails were bent during transportation, so they'll need to be straightened. A new base plate will be fabricated and attached.

So, if you have the skills or know of someone that does, and would like to help put this 4,580lbs classic back together, please contact the Signal Department. Once erected, we believe this will be a photographer favorite, like Farewell bridge and the semaphores in Sunol.

For the latest Signal Department news check out our website at: www.ncrysignal.com.



Written by Curt Hoppins. Photos, bottom left: Still standing tall after decades of service. Randy Driskell photo. Right: Waiting to be transported to Mt. Flippo for storage. Curt Hoppins photo.