

## STRATEGIC METALS

WITH RON LIMBAUGH

A list of commodities affecting the safety and prosperity of America today and for the future would include oil, gold, or water. A century ago tungsten might have headed the list. On Thursday, January 12, Ron Limbaugh will discuss the vital role strategic metals such as tungsten have played in the last century and may play again in the 21st.

As a historian, he will address the fundamental question of how the United States was able to avoid a strategic metal crisis in the two major wars of the 20th century and keep our economy strong. This question is more complex today than at any previous time in history because of multinational corporate cartels and global environmental issues.

The expanded use of rare earth metals in 21st century technology and America's dependence on Chinese sources highlights what concerns policymakers today.

History may not repeat itself, but it has lessons for the

Thursday, January 12, 2012, 7:00 p.m.  
Admission is \$5

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current generation. Few consider the role played by tungsten in steelmaking, electronics, and military technology.

Even fewer can explain the importance of cerium or europium that make our high tech world possible from cell phones to catalytic converters.

His 2010 book *Tungsten in Peace and War* won the Clark Spence biannual award in May 2011 for the best book on mining history. From its background he will focus on the past, but will raise questions about the political, economic, and environmental ramifications of this complex subject in lucid terms that a layman can grasp.

Limbaugh taught history for 34 years at the University of the Pacific specializing in regional history, environmental history, and the history of technology. He wrote *John Muir's 'Stickeen'* and the *Lessons of Nature* as well as *Vacaville: The Heritage of a California Community* and *Calaveras Gold: The Impact of Mining on a Mother Lode County*.



Thursday, January 19, 2012, 7:00 p.m.  
Admission is \$5

Anyone who has played with model trains or seen mammoth steam engines hauling long lines of freight through Sierra mountain passes will enjoy Alan Ramsay's lecture on Thursday, January 19. He will focus on the explosive expansion of the rail fan movement as the rail era waned beginning with the Great Depression through the post war years.

During the depression, owners abandoned many short line railroads and non-profitable branch lines of major links. Those who lamented the passing of the steam era wanted to save their history and began photographing and riding trains before they disappeared. Many set up associations to preserve engines and rolling stock in city parks and museums.

Learn where visitors may still see a working steam engine pounding down the tracks, blasting out plumes of steam. For example, both the Niles Canyon Railway in the East Bay and the Western Railroad Museum are within easy reach of Mendonoma Coast residents.

After retiring in 1991, Ramsay pursued his avocation that combined his love of photography, history, and railroads. For fourteen years he was Director of Public Relations for the Pacific Locomotive Association in Alameda County. He continues to collect railroad memorabilia including artifacts from the Gualala Mill railroad behind the Milano Hotel. Revisit a fascinating time that many can still remember and one that can be relived in tourist excursions.