

WPRRHS 2003 Convention Report

By Thom Anderson

The WPRRHS annual convention was held at the Oakland Airport Holiday Inn on April 11-12. 112 people attended, and 87 of those people attended the banquet on Saturday evening to hear Harold Meeker speak about his experiences working for the WP, and view a film by Virgil Staff covering the WP Eastern Division in the 1970s.

Other presentations included various WP and related Bay Area subjects by Vic Neves, Dunston Fish, Thom Anderson, Dave Pires, Don Olsen, Ernie VonIbsch, Drew Jacksich, John McCormick, Bob Heywood, Tom Lawler, John Walker, Tony Thompson, Seth Neumann, Dudley Westler, and Evan Werkema. Several railroadiana dealers were present, along with the PRM gift shop to sell items to the attendees. Models and WP related items were also on display for viewing.

It appears that a good time was had by all the attendees. This would not be possible without recognizing the efforts of Vic Neves, Barbara Holmes, Steve and Norma Hayes, and Bob and Lois Mersereau. These individuals performed a lot of the behind the scenes work that is necessary for an event like this, and I would like to commend them for their efforts. It was also gratifying to note President McClure, Vice-President Brehm, and Directors McClure, Cochran, Habeck, Holmes, Stiles and Vicknair being present this year, some of whom were attending their first WPRRHS convention.

Now that the WPRRHS 2003 convention is history, it's time to start looking at the one for next year. Holiday Inn in Reno is the place, and April 16-17 is the date. Convention host Frank Beavers is looking for participants to make presentations, etc., at the convention. If you are interested, please contact him at P.O. Box 759, Westwood, CA 96137, or e-mail wp751@thegrid.net.

There are preliminary plans to have another dome car excursion following the 2004 convention, just like the very successful "Domes Down the Valley 2003" excursion. Apologies are extended to those who did not get the word in time to book space for the 2003 excursion. Steps have been taken to avoid this in the future and to get the word out to every FRRS/WPRRHS member. Watch your mailbox at home for further updates through direct mailings and announcements in the Train Sheet.

A recent arrival on the modeling front may interest those in HO scale. Branchline Trains released a "Special Edition" car in their "Blueprint Series", stock #9002. The car is a 50-foot plug door boxcar painted and lettered Tidewater Southern. The car is painted in boxcar red paint with an orange feather on the right side of the car and TIDEWATER SOUTHERN on the left side, and four different car numbers are available. These cars are not the ones with the cornucopia emblem.

A comparison to a photo of a similar car on page 45 in Jim Eager's book "Western Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment" reveals the model to be very accurate in detail and paint. The prototypes were built in 1957 and rebuilt with larger doors in the early 1970s. These cars were initially offered in four car sets through eBay, however they also recently appeared in late April at hobby dealers in the SF bay area available individually.

Contact your dealer for availability.

World Wide Western Pacific

By Eugene Vicknair, Part 4

The rise of the internet and the growing ease with which websites can be created has led to an explosion of information available to the world. Of particular interest to members of the Feather River Rail Society are the many sites devoted to the Western Pacific and related topics such as the California Zephyr and WP subsidiaries. In fact, a quick look at several popular search engines shows the WP family to be one of the best represented and documented railroads on-line. The following are some brief descriptions of several of these websites. They are grouped by railroad according to their primary focus, but many have information on related lines.

WESTERN PACIFIC Related..

Utah Rails.. utahrails.net

Don Strack's excellent website covering Utah railroading focuses very heavily on the Union Pacific, but has now added a section on one of the most overlooked sections of the WP. "East of Wendover" (utahrails.net/wp/wp-in-ut.htm) is still under construction, but currently includes descriptions of the WP line from the Nevada state line to Salt Lake City. Coming soon are photos and more information about this branchline rich section of the road. Also, the site includes Union Pacific rosters that chart those WP locomotives that went into UP service and information on UP engines leased to the WP prior to the merger. Rio Grande and Utah Railway sections are additional highlights of the excellent site.

Fallen Flags.. www.rr-fallenflags.org

Maintained by George Elwood, this site has hundreds of photos from railroads across the country, including some flags that still fly. There are sections for the WP and the Sacramento Northern, while some Central California Traction Company shots are located in the Miscellaneous "C" section. Photos include motive power, cabooses and freight cars. New images are added regularly, so this archive just keeps growing.

Western Rails.. www.trainweb.org/westernrails

Ron Jacox's Western Rails is a compilation of photos, links and information covering a wide variety of rail subjects from the western US. His page on the Alameda Belt Line has already been mentioned in this series, but there is much more here dealing with the WP family. A must see is the gallery showcasing the work of the photographer known by his Trainorders.com handle of "Yardclerk". One section is devoted to his WP shots, taken near the end of the orange and silver era. The "Switchers and Shortlines" section includes a page on the Yolo Short Line, operator of former Sacramento Northern lines.

Restoration of WP F7A 918-D..

www.trainweb.org/wp918d/index.html

A nice site covering the restoration of WP 918-D, owned by the Pacific Locomotive Association. While highlighting the ongoing work to bring this classic locomotive back to life, the site also includes a history of the 918, a WP F-unit photo gallery and

information on all 6 surviving WP freight F-units.

Yesteryear Depot WP Database..

www.yesteryeardepot.com/westpac.htm

A collection of WP related photos, mostly from the Fred Stoes collection. A wealth of steam engine shots, along with CZ and diesel views.

There are, of course, many more websites that touch on the Western Pacific family of roads. This has been just a small sample of some of the major ones. New sites are appearing all the time and several e-mail groups can be found that deal with WP related subjects, including the FRRSList, WPList, SacNorthern, BayAreaRailHistory and DomecarList on the Yahoo system.

WP Lives in Cyberspace.

Zephyr Project Progress

By Eugene Vicknair

With winter slowly releasing the High Country, the Silver Hostel is again showing signs of progress. Eric McClure has been the prime mover of work in recent months, almost single handedly completing the dome and bar area removals and evaluating the reusable materials and undersurfaces of the car. I can't thank him enough for his dedication and energy.

We have had the first dome window purchased! Wayne and Linda Monger are now the proud "owners" of a side dome window. They will be enjoying a dinner trip on the McCloud Railway and, some day, a trip in the Hostel next to their window.

The "Buy A Window" program has undergone some revision. Donors will still receive a dinner train trip and their name(s) on a plaque in the car. Now they will also receive their name and dedication on a CZ/Silver Hostel seat back cover. Each cover will have three lines of text, allowing for names, dedications, nicknames, etc. These covers will remain in the car for 3 years after the completion of primary restoration. At that time, they will be given to the donors as a gift for their donation. The plaque will remain permanently.

Also, there have been requests for group donations to a single window. This is possible and can be arranged by contacting me at eugene@zephyrproject.com and setting it up. A dinner train trip is not given for a group donation (group being defined as more than two unrelated people or more than a single family) and the seat cover will be given to a recipient designated by the group. This has been requested so far as a way to dedicate windows in memory of someone. For more details, drop me an e-mail.

Down in the Bay Area, I've been working with Robert McNeal of Studio Red on the tooling needed to reshape the damaged trim pieces on the carbody. We have acquired more lights for the car, including the lights needed for the Zephyrette's and Porter's bedrooms and most of the remaining hallway.

During the Domes Down the Valley excursion, I had the pleasure of meeting Silver Lariat owner Burt Hermey and speaking again with Silver Solarium owner Roy Wullich. Both men have graciously agreed to share information with us concerning details of their cars and any information that will aid the Hostel restoration. Thanks to my conversations with Mr. Hermey, we are

working with the window supplier on ways to lower the cost of the windows and create more visually accurate reproductions.

The grand Parts Scavenging Trip is now planned for early June. Some of us will be traveling to the Midwest to evaluate a trove of CZ dome-lounge-dormitory parts that are available for the Hostel. Hopefully, we'll have some good news on that next issue.

Recent donors;

Clyde W. Brehm, Jr., Malcolm Church, Lloyd Cornell, Frank Hendricks, Wayne & Lynda Monger, David F. Myrick, John Whitehurst, Harold Wardley.

Fire Safety

The following safety tip is brought to you as a service of your society.

Gas Grills & Propane Tanks

Propane is heavier than air, if a leak occurs the gas vapors will follow the contour of the area and seek its lowest level eventually finding an ignition source flashing back to the tank. If a fire or leak occurs, leave the area and immediately notify the Fire Department.

Storage of tanks are to be away from residence (not in garage or basement). Storage of tanks, even in single family residence is not legal. Store tanks in an upright position and never assume that a tank is empty. Store tanks in cool areas, avoiding direct sunlight.

All connections of the tank should be tested for leaks using a soapy water solution. Tiny bubbles will indicate a leak. This should be done when first connected and periodically thereafter.

All connections must be tightened with a proper size wrench. NOTE: flammable gas cylinders have a left-handed thread, a reverse of the normal threading. It must be tightened by turning counter clockwise.

Cylinder valve plugs (CPV) are required to be installed on all full and empty cylinders when they are not connected or being transported.

Also close the cylinder valve when not in use.

Cylinders must be painted and in good repair. They must be tested at an LPG plant after 12 years of service and every five years thereafter.

A gas-fired barbecue must NEVER be used inside any structure.

Gas-fired barbecues are to be utilized by adults only and NEVER by children.

It is advisable to keep a flame retardant padded mitt nearby so that it is possible to shut the cylinder valve off at any time.

When disposing of empty propane gas tanks, it is recommended that they be returned to the facility that refills the tanks. Propane filling stations are capable of removing the valve. They will store the tank outdoors in an upright position for several months, allowing any residual gas to dissipate.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, SHOULD THE CONSUMER TRY TO REMOVE THE VALVE AND/OR TRY TO DISPOSE OF THE TANK.