

ZEPHYR PROGRESS

- Eugene Vicknair, Zephyr Project

A lot of work has been happening our on *California Zephyr* equipment over the past year. While there has been no major single event, a lot of repairs, improvements and restoration steps have been made toward the goal of getting our Zephyr items into reliable operation.

Our FP7, WP 805-A, has been receiving much tender loving care from the crew led by Dave McClain. A leaky cylinder has been repaired, the recently installed dynamic brakes have been getting wired in and several lingering issues are being taken care of. Special thanks to Dwight Whetstone and Larry Hanlon, as well as Steve Habeck and Seth Adams for their help on the 805-A. (And everyone else who has pitched in.)

One non-mechanical feature receiving attention has been the bad scarring of the stainless steel side panels. I have spent many years looking for and researching ways to restore those panels without resorting to the cost and expense of replacing them. Thanks to a company in Los Angeles that developed an amazing scratch removal system for stainless, we have finally made some progress on this. They were kind enough to



sell us a large quantity of their products at cost to be used on our stainless steel and the results have been encouraging. Over several weekends, Tom Carter and I, with some help from Tim Carter and Alicia LaBreque, sanded, polished and regrained one side of the 805-A. Everyone commented that the improvement was dramatic. One key has been the use of a special, non-circular, reciprocating sander (costing \$400! Thankfully, this tool was donated to the Project), which keeps the cutting of the abrasives completely in line with the stainless grain.

The electrical system on the "Silver Plate" diner has also been receiving a lot of work, thanks for Steve Habeck, Seth Adams, Justin Nelson and Erik McKay (with a little help from me at times). A lot of electrical bugs have been tracked down and repaired, with just a few lights still being out. The major repair still to do electrically is the lights over the Steward's Station. At some point after the WP retired the car, someone severed the conduit and wires at one of the bulkheads. This will require some rebuilding to repair.

Thanks to Dave Roth of Golden Gate Railroad Museum, we found a professional shop to look at restoring the original dining car seats we have from the car. The cost is high (about \$350 per chair) but would completely rebuild each seat. We have also located material to resurface and rebuild the tables. Several are damaged to the point where a complete rebuild / replacement will be required.

Also, thanks to everyone who has pitched in on car cleaning duty, including Alicia, Vicki Epling, Cheri Johnson and Mary Ann Vicknair.

Our biggest needs right now are money and manpower. If you would like to donate to the Zephyr Project, please go to donate.WPLives.org or send a donation to FRRS – Zephyr Project, P O Box 608, Portola, CA 96122.

If all goes well, we will have a major announcement concerning an important donation to the Project in the coming months.

The 805-A in the Diesel Shop to receive some mechanical and cosmetic work.

- Eugene Vicknair photo