



THE TRAIN SHEET

News from the Feather River Rail Society



Preserving "THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE"

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President's Pin

- Greg Elems

Well, we've come to the end of 2020 and started 2021. We missed a year of being open to share the WP with the public. Even though we weren't open, a core group volunteered and pressed on with maintaining the museum. We did get a lot accomplished. We dealt with some vandalism and Steve Habeck came up with a plan to rearrange the museum. Most of the cars and locomotives got moved. Things will look different and equipment that has been hidden will now be in view. All the cars that were spread out and becoming a hazard for numerous reasons have been placed in one area that will make the grounds safer.



We witnessed another year of wildfires in California. We also had some grounds cleaning take place with fire abatement in mind. Trees removed, others had their lower limbs removed, reducing fire hazards and opening up the view across the museum grounds. More fire abatement will need to be done though.

Equipment maintenance continues, with the rubber tire fleet getting some much-needed attention. Work also continued on our steel wheeled fleet. The SN 1642 got some attention this year also. Duane Vander Veen did some really nice carpenter work, fixing the floor, one end door frame and both end platforms and the steps. The windows once again open and have hardware to keep them open. More paint was removed, and wood patched along with DAP filling the cracks. Sadly, we didn't get the primer

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I remember the WP

- Jack Palmer

I often recall the earlier days of our activities at the Portola R.R. Museum and how I became involved with another great WP Engineer named George Oels.



On one of my trips to Portola, I was pleasantly surprised to see the WP921-D and our SN Caboose 1632 in operation and later as it made several trips around the balloon and return.

At one point, the officials decided to make a few changes with the crew and that I would be the fireman on the next trip. I couldn't believe my ears! Me? Fireman? (I had no idea of what I was supposed to do.)



EMD F7 WP 921D at Portola

- photo by Mike Mucklin

When I entered the cab of the 921-D, George Oels, WP Engineer (retired) was waiting for me. After introductions, he told me to sit over there in the Fireman's seat.

I began looking at everything, but there was nothing to see on my side of the engine, so I

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 applied, but plans are in the works to start that next spring when it starts to warm up. WP 705 is now sitting where we can start cleaning it up for primer and a new coat of green and orange paint. Along with everything mentioned, work also continued in the archive car.

While the COVID-19 placed us in a position of not being able to open, I am proud to say when we open up in 2021 there will be some changes for everyone to check out. The museum store will be getting some changes also. Part of it is due new state requirements to be open to the public, but rearrangement was already in the plans.

We hope to start the RAL program up again, if a few requirements can be met that make our engineers feel safe.

The board of directors have been having some long discussions about when and how we will open. Things are still up in the air in so many respects, a definite date is impossible to put out for our opening. We want to open safely, so keep an eye on the website.

As it stands now, we will gladly accept help with the myriad of projects to get the museum ready to open. PPE is still a fact of life for us, as is social distancing. If you want to see what we've done and pitch in, we'll more than happy to have you join in. We just ask that you let us know when and how long you want to volunteer.

For those of you on the operating crew, check the website for rules class. If you would like to join the operating crews, we'd love to have you come and give it a try.

Support the FRRS when you shop at Amazon!

Use the link on the society web page to join the Amazon Smile Program.

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 thought this would be boring with nothing to do. WRONG!

A few minutes later George asked me if I had fired before, I replied "No".

He very firmly said O.K. this is what we will be doing together for safety, because you will be my eyes on your side.

Before we move, you look to see that all is clear on your side and tell me "All Clear" and I will repeat it back to you. Then the same thing as we go around, you look ahead at the next switch and tell me "Switch Lined" if it's O.K. to proceed. If not say "Bad Iron". If you can't see the switch, you tell me "Can't see the Switch".

Now I had other thoughts – I do have an important job to do, and I was happy to follow his instructions. When we finished he said I did O.K. and I thanked him for the opportunity to meet and work with him.

I didn't realize at that moment just how much I owed to George for the proper training he had given me and that I would occasionally use over the next twenty years.

On my trips to Portola after that he would come to visit me at the museum. When he was no longer able to come to the museum, I would visit him at his home.

Although George is no longer with us, I have fond memories of WP and WP Engineers like him.

WP Lives!



*SN 1632 - a Single-sheathed cupola caboose, rebuilt from boxcar 15303 in 1938 by WP
 - photo by Brian McCamish*