



Preserving "THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE"



# The Train Sheet

News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Portola Railroad Museum

ISSUE 122

November/December 2003

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**- The Train Sheet -**

News from the Feather River Rail Society  
and the Portola Railroad Museum

Editor – Frank Brehm (916) 334-4470 or  
email at frsvp@comcast.net

Contribution Deadlines: Last Day of  
February, April, June, August, October and  
December.

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**- Portola Railroad Museum -**

P.O. Box 608  
Portola, CA 96122-0608

Museum: (530) 832-4131  
Fax: (530) 832-1854

The museum grounds are open to the public from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. daily the first Saturday in March through the first Monday of November. The museum building is open from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. daily. Train operations begin the last Saturday of May and continue through the first Monday of September. The museum grounds are closed to the public from the first Tuesday of November through the first Friday of March except for special events in which arrangements have been made in advance. If you wish to visit during the closed period it is advisable to call in advance and find out if the museum grounds will be open.

Entrance to the museum is free, although a suggested donation of \$5.00 is greatly appreciated.

*The Feather River Rail Society, a tax-exempt public benefit California corporation, is the historical society for the Western Pacific Railroad and operator of the Portola Railroad Museum in Portola, California.*

***The FRRS is not associated with the Union Pacific Railroad.***

FRRS Tax ID number is 68-0002774  
Member of the Association of Railway  
Museums and the Tourist Railway  
Association, Inc.

**- Board of Directors and Officers -**

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*Published January 2004*

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*Cover Photos:* Ex Western Pacific 705 is shown at Longmont, Colorado in Arizona Central paint. - Thom Anderson

1946 found Western Pacific 165 switching in Winnemucca, Nevada. She will soon be home in Portola. - Robert Hanft

*Back Cover:* Cliff "Cactus Head" Cox demonstrates how to operate the dump doors on a SP ballast car to Aaron McClure while spreading ballast around the ballon earlier this year. - Frank Brehm

***Web Pages of Interest***

**Feather River Rail Society (Official Site) [www.wplives.org](http://www.wplives.org)**

Central California Traction	<a href="http://www.trainweb.org/tractionco">www.trainweb.org/tractionco</a>
CZ Virtual Museum	<a href="http://calzephyr.railfan.net">calzephyr.railfan.net</a>
Tidewater Southern	<a href="http://www.tidewatersouthern.com">www.tidewatersouthern.com</a>
PRM	<a href="http://www.oz.net/~samh/frfs">www.oz.net/~samh/frfs</a>
WPRRHS	<a href="http://www.wprrhs.org">www.wprrhs.org</a>
SN Page	<a href="http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ggg9y">www.people.virginia.edu/~ggg9y</a>
WP Virtual Museum	<a href="http://wpmuseum.railfan.net">wpmuseum.railfan.net</a>
Tidewater Southern	<a href="http://www5.pair.com/rattene/WP/TideIndex.htm">www5.pair.com/rattene/WP/TideIndex.htm</a>
Western Pacific	<a href="http://www.wplives.com">www.wplives.com</a>

## - FRRS Membership -

<i>Yearly Dues</i>		<i>Single Life Membership</i>		<i>Family Life Membership</i>	
Associate	\$20.00	Birth-17 years of age	\$1200.00	Birth-17 years of age	\$1800.00
Active	\$40.00	Age 18-39	\$900.00	Age 18-39	\$1350.00
Family	\$60.00	Age 40-61	\$600.00	Age 40-61	\$900.00
Sustaining	\$100.00	Age 62 and above	\$300.00	Age 62 and above	\$450.00

These are the dues for the duration of one year, with Life and Family Life being a one-time payment. Five year payment plans are available for life memberships.

**Associate** memberships do not have a vote, receive The Train Sheet but not the Headlight and are for one person only.

**Active** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, have voting rights and are for one person only.

**Family** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, have one vote and include all members of ones immediate family.

**Sustaining** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, are for a maximum of two persons with one vote each.

**Life** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, have voting rights and are for one person only for life.

**Family Life** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, are for a maximum of two people and have two votes (one per member) for life.

Send all applications, renewals and address changes to:

**Feather River Rail Society  
Membership Dept.  
P.O. Box 608  
Portola, CA 96122-0608**

Address changes may also be sent to [memberships@wplives.com](mailto:memberships@wplives.com)

## A Message From the FRRS President

By Rod McClure

By the time you read this, the Holiday will be over and hopefully Santa left everyone something other than a lump of coal in your stockings. Santa left me with the usual pile of bills but at least I was home with the family instead of out working for Uncle Pete. As I promised all of you in the last issue, Santa has left the FRRS a very nice present that we can all enjoy. I am happy to announce that the FRRS has traded the UP 737 4-4-0 steam locomotive for the Western Pacific 165 0-6-0. We have been working on this deal for a long time and it has finally come to fruition. To keep it short, we traded the UP 737 4-4-0 to the Double T Agriculture Museum near Modesto for the WP 165 currently stored at Niles Canyon RR. The Double T Ag Museum purchased the WP 165 from the Niles Canyon / Pacific Locomotive Association right after they acquired the locomotive from the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton, CA. We will store the WP 165 at the Niles Canyon RR until they get their connection with the Union Pacific completed and at that point work to get her loaded on our flat cars for the trip to Portola. We have also sold the AT&SF caboose 900414 to the Double T Ag Museum for cash. The details of this agreement will be published elsewhere in this issue, but I want you all to know that part of the contract with the Double T Ag Museum stipulates that the locomotive will be cosmetically restored and displayed in a covered location. I have no doubt that the folks at the Double T Ag Museum will take good care of this locomotive.

*We, the Feather River Rail Society now own one of the 5 remaining Western Pacific steam locomotives left in existence. It is sure great to say that, isn't it?*

Now, what do we do with her? As many of you know, the condition of the WP 165 is not the greatest. It has been abused and ignored for years but that is a familiar statement that has been said about many pieces of equipment acquired by many organizations in the past but it has not stopped them. I have no doubt that we can and will restore the WP 165 to its past glory but it will take lots of time and lots and lots of money. I would have to say that we should first deal with any asbestos issues that might remain. From there, we need to decide if we want to even think about restoring the locomotive to operation or keeping it as a static display. We have to get her home to Portola and evaluate her condition before we go any further with these thoughts. I will keep you all informed as to the status of the WP 165.

The Santa Trains were very successful and even though the weather did not cooperate at all we had many smiling faces at the Museum on both nights. The second Saturday nights train was the busiest and required the train to operate on a load and go basis for most of the night. It was estimated that we had over 400 people at the museum enjoying the festivities on that night. Norm and Steve both stated that this was the biggest crowd we have ever had at Santa Train. I want to thank all of you who helped decorate, bake cookies, serve hot cocoa and cider, operate the trains and keep the lights on.

As we start the New Year, our finances are in good

shape, we have some historic equipment trades and acquisitions happening, the physical plant is in better shape than it has been in a long time and the gift shop is really beginning to take off under the expert guidance of our Museum Manager John Walker. One place we are lacking is volunteers. We have had the appearance of some new faces this year and seen some old ones reappear but we need more of our members to show up and help do the dirty jobs. I know that driving 4 hours or more to come to the museum for an enjoyable weekend of shoveling gravel or cleaning out a boxcar is not anyone's idea of a good time but it is some of the things that we have to do to get the place in order. We have all kinds of wonderful jobs that need to be done. Weeds to be mowed, fences to be built, track to be repaired and built, locomotives to be repaired, boxcars to be cleaned out and shelves to be installed, journal boxes to be oiled, brake shoes to replace. The list seems endless but with enough help we can keep these things checked off and concentrate on bigger things like truck swaps and equipment restoration. RAL's and Caboose Train operations help pay the bills but like all railroads the small stuff has to be handled also. Try and bring a friend up the next time you come to the museum and see if they are interested in getting involved.

More good news is coming soon. Stay tuned for more exciting announcements.

## PRM Facilities Report

By Eugene Vicknair, Facilities Manager

Many small items have been taken care of in the last two months.

Museum Manager John Walker recently reported the completion of repairs to the Beanery sink. He has also engaged in and overseen several small projects around the Diesel Shop including texturing and painting the bare wall leading to the Women's Restroom, repainting several railings and warning sandwich boards and improving the look and layout of the Gift Shop. The desks that once sat next to the restrooms have been removed and the surrounding area cleaned up. The REA Baggage Wagon now resides in the area next to the Operations Office and the improvement in the area's appearance has received rave reviews.

John and I are also coordinating the restructuring of the shop bays and the general cleaning of the work spaces. A new tool room is being designed and John has taken the lead on organizing the parts bay with new shelving acquired by CMO Hank Stiles. Hank, Doug Morgan, Dave and Vicki Epling and others have been assisting in this work.

Work on the volunteer deck ramp and stairs continues with David Epling and Tom Carter recently assisting me in sinking several new posts. I am hoping to get one more good weekend on the project before winter. With luck, we can actually be decking the ramp before the freeze.

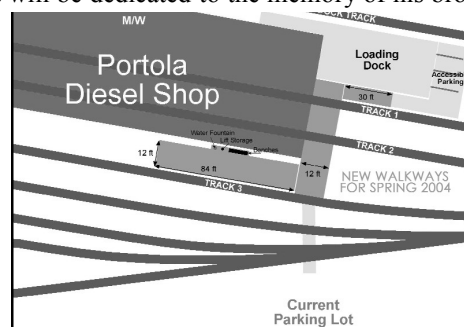
Several big changes are on hand for the Museum facility come next Spring:

### ADA WALKWAYS

The FRRS Board has approved the installation of the first permanent, ADA compliant walkways on the property.

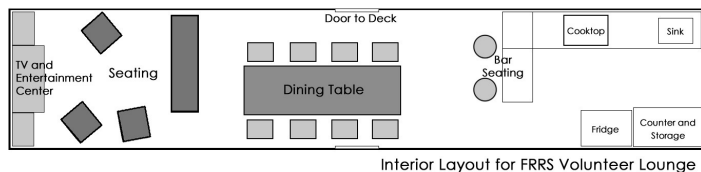
These walkway additions will begin across the east end of the Diesel Shop and will include the first segment of the Caboose Loading Gallery. In conjunction with this work, the walkway to the end of the loading dock, now the location of our accessible parking, will be refurbished. Once this work is complete, a portable wheelchair lift will be acquired for use in the loading gallery area. This will, for the first time at the PRM, allow paved wheelchair access into the building and eventually access to the caboose train. Currently, our Missouri Pacific transfer caboose is being evaluated for modification to allow wheelchair tie-downs to be installed on the car.

Still to be funded are the installation of benches, lighting and a drinking fountain along the gallery walkway. To complete all the phase 1 work, we still require about \$5000. As reported in the previous issue, longtime member Ed Wagner has donated \$15,000 to begin this work and, in thanks, this first segment of walkways will be dedicated to the memory of his brother, Joe.



### VOLUNTEER LOUNGE and FACILITIES

Work is also progressing on the new Volunteer Lounge, to be housed in the Silver Debris bunk car. Currently, Mickey ??, a local contractor, is removing the former interior and preparing the car for its new role. With funds newly approved by the Board, the lounge car will be insulated, rewired and eventually have a kitchenette and seating installed. The deck between the sleeper and shower cars will also be extended to allow access to the Silver Debris, creating a centralized complex of facilities for our volun-



teers. Work is also progressing on the new ramp and stair access to the deck.

We hope to have all this work complete in time for the opening of operations season in 2004. HOWEVER, it will not happen without assistance from our members. As mentioned, monetary donations are needed to complete the walkway work and donations of funds and labor are needed to complete the Silver Debris and the deck.

If you wish to donate to the facilities improvements, please send a check or money order to Feather River Rail Society, P O Box 608, Portola, CA 96122, ATTN: Facilities Fund. Make the check out to the FRRS and note FACILITIES FUND on the memo line.

*FRRS IS Preserving the Western Pacific*



# DOMES TO RENO

## THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR RETURNS

### APRIL 15-18, 2004

By Chris Skow

The California Zephyr made her final runs between Chicago and Oakland over the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, Denver & Rio Grande Western and Western Pacific Railroads March 21-22, 1970. It took some time getting used to the fact that the wonderful "Silver Lady" was gone and the Western Pacific was now a freight only railroad. As the hard facts took time to accept and sink in for the Western Pacific fans, the DRGW kept alive the "CZ" tradition by running the Rio Grande Zephyr between Denver and Salt Lake City three times a week, which turned out to be the one bright spot left in the United States passenger service as Amtrak accepted the operation of the nationwide rail passenger service. To the benefit of railfans and California Zephyr lovers all over the world, the Rio Grande decided to go it alone without Amtrak. The loss of the California Zephyr was not quite as hard to accept, because we could all travel to Colorado and Utah to ride and photograph a mini-version of the Silver Lady.

They say that all good things must end and as time took its toll on the Rio Grande Zephyr equipment the rumors started flying that the Rio Grande was looking for a way out of their popular passenger train. Meanwhile folks started making plans to book space on the last true passenger train in this country, just in case the rumors were true. Railfans from all over the world took no chances and scheduled their vacation time to the Rocky Mountain States with plenty of film packed. As time went on the rumors turned out to be true and on April 23-24, 1983 the Rio Grande Zephyr made her last runs. Now there was nothing left to remind us of "The Most Popular Train in the Country", as the California Zephyr was once called. Now the hard facts really started to sink in.

As time marched forward both California Zephyr and Rio Grande Zephyr passenger equipment and motive power was sold to the highest bidders or donated to railroad museums. As the CZ rolling stock started to be sent all over the United States, Canada and Mexico hope of ever seeing a CZ train set run again was fast fading. Then California Zephyr fans were shocked with the word out of Mexico that some of these beloved cars had been scrapped. Yes, there was talk about bringing back the California Zephyr for a special anniversary excursion but it never developed. But an interesting trend was taking place across America in the late 1990's as more and more "CZ" cars were being bought and rebuilt by private car owners and put back into full service under Amtrak specs. The turning point came in 2002 when rumors surfaced that there would be three California Zephyr passenger cars in charter operation based in California with more on the way.

Trains Unlimited, Tours started the ball rolling by bringing the Silver Lariat Vista Dome Coach and Silver Solarium Vista Dome Observation together to be on display in Oakland for the Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society 2003 National Convention on April 11-12, 2003. Also in conjunction with the convention a sold out "Domes Down the Valley" excursion from Oakland to Bakersfield roundtrip was operated on April 13. During the summer of 2003 more excursions using the "CZ" cars were to follow including a special "Feather River Railroad Days Vista Dome Express" from Oakland to Sparks in conjunction with Feather River Railroad Days in Portola August 22-24, 2003.

Arrangements are still being made for California Zephyr cars to be part of this historic set of excursions in April 2004. The plan calls for these excursions to be made up of approximately eight passenger cars and even a couple of Western Pacific F units. Six cars have been confirmed as of December 1 with two other cars pending 100% confirmation account they are being sold and a new owner is scheduled to take title in late January. As to the F units, it will all depend upon their repair work progress and availability by April of 2004.

Trains Unlimited, Tours now felt that the time was right to bring back a mini California Zephyr for the Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society 2004 National Convention which will be held in Reno, Nevada on April 16-17, 2004. The Feather River Rail Society was asked to take part in these historic excursions and in turn share in the projected profits. But most important of all this would bring a California Zephyr train set to the Reno area for the 2004 convention and for display plus offer a convention excursion and several other excursions not only to conventioners, but to the general public.

Under agreement with the Feather River Rail Society Trains Unlimited, Tours is handling all arrangements, reservations and ticket sales for five California Zephyr excursions that will run April 15-18, 2004. Trains Unlimited, Tours started accepting reservations in late October and ticket sales has been very brisk.

For reservations and a special California Zephyr information packet you can call the Trains Unlimited, Tours reservation office in Reno, Nevada at: 800-359-4870, 800-266-8751 or 775-852-4448. Email: [tut@PSLN.com](mailto:tut@PSLN.com) or on the web at [www.trainsunlimitedtours.com](http://www.trainsunlimitedtours.com)

### Correction, PRD Dates

The correct dates for Portola Railroad Days are August 27, 28, 29, 2004. Please disregard the dates printed in the calendar last issue.

# SCHEDULE OF "CZ" EXCURSIONS FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2004 NATIONAL CONVENTION RENO, NEVADA

## APRIL 15, 2004 THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR RETURNS\*\*\*TRAIN 18\*\*\*

Our private charter train will run eastbound from Oakland, California to Sparks, Nevada over Donner Pass on the old Southern Pacific "Overland Route". You ask, Why over Donner Pass? There are several reasons, but the best answer we can give you is the fact that this is the only route available for this charter at this time and of course the fact that the Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society 2004 National Convention is being held in Reno, Nevada. Passengers may board at any station where Amtrak makes regular train stops.

## APRIL 18, 2004 THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR RETURNS\*\*\*TRAIN 17\*\*\*

Our sleek California Zephyr runs westbound Sparks back to Oakland, again over Donner Pass.

PRICES	OW	RT		OW	RT		
COACH SEAT.....	\$249	189	\$459	339	LOUNGE CAR SEAT.....	\$259	\$499
PULLMAN ROOM.....	\$269	\$519	\$289	\$559	DOME SEAT.....	\$289	\$559

\*Ticket includes lunch-drinks-snacks

## APRIL 16, 2004 CZ WESTERN PACIFIC CONVENTIONEERS SPECIAL

This will be a morning breakfast charter from Sparks to Truckee and return reserved for the Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society 2004 National Conventioneers, their invited guests and the general public. Departure from Sparks is scheduled for 8:00AM with an arrival back in Sparks at 1:00PM, with plenty of time for the afternoon and evening events at the convention. Passengers may also board in Reno.

PRICES	
COACH SEAT.....	\$189 159
PULLMAN ROOM.....	\$239
DOME SEAT.....	\$289

\*Ticket includes a full gourmet Breakfast and drinks.

## APRIL 17, 2004 CZ DONNER PASS EXCURSION

This excursion is open to everyone and will travel from Sparks to Emigrant Gap on Donner Pass and return. This will be a all daylight trip and perfect for the entire family.

PRICES	
COACH SEAT.....	<del>\$139</del> 119
PULLMAN ROOM.....	\$189
CHILDREN AGES 4-12.....	\$-39
LOUNGE SEAT.....	\$179
DOME SEAT.....	\$259

\*Ticket includes no limit open bar for all drinks & snacks

## APRIL 17, 2004 CZ GOURMET DINNER TRAIN EXCURSION

This excursion is open to everyone and will travel from Sparks to Truckee and return in the evening serving a California Zephyr gourmet dinner. To add to the mood and experience there is a full moon on this evening.

PRICES	
DOWNSTAIRS.....	\$129
DOME SEATING.....	\$169

\*Ticket includes no limit open bar and all drinks & snacks plus full five course gourmet dinner. Also there will be a full moon to enjoy your dinner excursion.

## RESERVATIONS & INFORMATION

\*\*\*SPECIAL CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR INFORMATION PACKET AVAILABLE\*\*\*

800-359-4870  
800-266-8751  
800-752-1836 from Canada  
775-852-4448  
530-836-1748 fax  
email: [tut@PSLN.com](mailto:tut@PSLN.com)  
[www.trainsunlimitedtours.com](http://www.trainsunlimitedtours.com)

## Pete Solyom



Pete Solyom, a member of the WPRRHS Headlight staff for many years passed away unexpectedly on November 20, 2003 from apparent heart failure at age 51. Pete was an active participant at PRM in the 1980s before he and his wife Sue started a family. They made their home in LaHabra, California where they celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary earlier this year. A memorial service was held at St. Andrew Lutheran Church on November 26th.

Besides Sue and their daughters Elizabeth and Stephanie, Pete's passions in life were the San Francisco 49'ers football team and the Western Pacific Railroad. Pete was a tireless promoter of anything involving the WP, authoring articles for the magazine and hosting the "FRRS Southern Division" meets, a one-day gathering of usually 70 to 80 people primarily from the southern California area who shared an interest in the WP. These meets eventually were spun into the Western Prototype Modelers Meet, encompassing all prototypes, the latest of which was held in October 2003. Pete also developed contacts with various manufacturers and served as a liaison to help develop and bring to the marketplace models of WP prototypes. To that end, Pete also compiled the WP Model Report that appeared in many issues of the Headlight. Pete attended all of the WPRRHS conventions. In addition to railroading, Pete enjoyed scuba diving and off-road 4x4 driving.

At the time of his passing, Pete was an account manager for a firm that supplied and distributed pharmacy items to assisted living and nursing homes. He also taught pharmacology and worked as a pharmacy technician.

In addition to Sue, Elizabeth and Stephanie, Pete is survived by his parents, Pete and Dorothy, a brother, Alan, and numerous relatives and friends. Pete and Sue chose to raise their daughters in a Christian environment. A trust fund to help pay for the girls' education has been set up through their church. Donations can be sent to St. Andrew Lutheran Church, 11345 Miller Road, Whittier CA 90604. Make a notation on the check that it is for the Solyom Trust Fund.

On a personal note, I've known Pete since 1987 when we were both standing in line for a tour bus at the UPHS convention in North Platte. After discovering we were both primarily WP people, we became close friends and shared many hours photographing, modeling and discussing the WP. He wasn't shy about letting you know what he thought, and was always a true and generous friend. He will be missed by many, myself included.

Thom Anderson, WPRRHS

## Operating Department 2003 in Review

By Kerry Cochran

First off I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the members of the Operating Department for your help with the 2003 Operating Season.

I appreciate your support in the Operating Department this year and hope that you will consider returning and volunteering for next years season.

I would like to thank the three supervisors, Pat Brimmer, Paul Finnegan and Don Nelson, the Yardmaster, Steve Habeck and the Roadmaster Rod McClure who supervise the crew when I am not present at the museum. Without their help and the help of all the other museum volunteers, we would not be able to run the caboose train on the weekends.

It's a never ending challenge to get crew members lined up for each weekend during the operating season. There were a few weekends that all we had was a Push-Pull operation.

When crew members sign-up to work a weekend, I would ask at you check the FRRS WEB site, [www.wplives.org](http://www.wplives.org) and use the link to crew pages. Check to see what weekend that we are short on members and try to sign-up on that weekend.

There are many other volunteers who help the Operating Department out during the year and without their help we just would not be able to handle all that need to be done. THANKS to everyone.

Again thanks for the help, and should you have any questions on the Operating Department please contact me.

Email [KC6KNT@Compuserve.com](mailto:KC6KNT@Compuserve.com), Home telephone (650) 952-7127, Fax (650) 588-5490 or you can write me at 649 5th Ave. San Bruno, Ca. 94066-4517.

### Promotions during 2003;

Qualified Brakeman: Dave Epling, John Walker, Rick Edwards.

Qualified Conductor: Tom Andrews.

Qualified Fireman: Loren Ross.

Qualified RAL Engineer: Terry Decottignies.

Qualified Yard Engineer: Lew Barnard.

### Student Positions during 2003;

Student Brakeman: Fred Bechtold, Lonnie Miller

Student Conductor: Chris Jozwiak, Rick Edwards.

Student Fireman, Student Conductor: Dave Kantoff.

Student Passenger Engineer: Lew Barnard, Paul Finnegan.

Sure hope I did not miss anyone.

All the Operating Department Crew members work very hard through the year in volunteering their time to the museum. The time they spend working on the crew in their student positions or qualified positions helps us run the trains during the weekends.

### New Members to the Operating Department:

Fred Bechtold, Lonnie Miller, Scott Chandler, Victoria Epling, Dave Epling, David Gard.

Welcome aboard, hope to see all of the new crew members in 2004.



## IMPORTANT NOTICE – CREW TRAINING DAYS FOR 2004

Please watch the Trainsheet for more information on Crew Training Days in early 2004.

The dates for the 2004 training will be May 1st and 2nd, 2004. Held at the Portola Railroad Museum, starting at 9 AM each day, lasting until about 4 PM.

Crew members and prospective crew members are encouraged to attend the training weekend. You only need to attend on one day (NOT both).

Operating Season for 2004 will start on Saturday May 29th 2004 at 11 AM. Crew Call will be at 10 AM.

Should you have any question, please be sure to contact me.



The operating crew for Railfan Day 2003

Top Row: Sam Hershbein, Loren Ross, Ed Powell, Dave Bergman, Dave Epling. Ground: Steve Habeck, Kerry Cochran, Vic Neves, Don Borden, Charlie Spikes, Dave Kantoff, Eddie Chase. Seated: Zephyr.

Photo by Frank Brehm

## More WP Equipment Coming to Portola

### Western Pacific Steam Finally Comes to the Portola Railroad Museum

It is with great pleasure that the Feather River Rail Society announces that we have just completed a deal that brings a Western Pacific steam locomotive into our collection at the Portola Railroad Museum.

Western Pacific 165, an Alco 0-6-0 and one of the last steam engines in regular, revenue service on the WP, is now owned by the FRRS. Currently stored at the Pacific Locomotive Association museum in Niles Canyon, she will be transported to Portola sometime next year. Upon arrival at the museum, work will begin to restore the appearance of the locomotive and lay the groundwork for an eventual return to full operation.

As part of this trade, the Union Pacific 4-4-0 737 and Santa Fe caboose 414 have been given to the Triple T Agricultural Museum in the Central Valley. These pieces will undergo cosmetic restoration and become public, indoor displays relating to the role of railroading in California Agriculture. In addition to the 165, the FRRS receives general fund money and other assets.

WP 165 was built in 1919 for the United Verde Copper Company. The engine came to the WP in 1927 and served until set aside in March 1953. She worked many yards on the railroad, including Portola.

More details concerning the 165 will be printed in an upcoming issue of the Train Sheet, along with restoration and fundraising plans.

WP STEAM LIVES!

### EMD GP7 705 Joins Three Others in Portola

In the early 1950s deciding that each new locomotive should have a cab and control stand WP went looking for additional power. EMD offered WP the newly designed GP7, which sporting a high short hood, were virtually identical both mechanically and electrically to late model F7's with a 567B 16-cylinder

motor producing 1500 horsepower. Authorized for purchase by the Board of Directors in February 1952 units 701-709 began the practice of equipping hood units with dual cab controls and PyleNational "Barrelstyle" headlights that socharacterized later classes of WP power.

Costing \$171,000.00 each, delivery of these nine GP7's, under EMD order number 5197 was in October and November 1952.

Colors were the then standard Zephyr paint with the road name spelled out on a single line. Handrail stanchions were cast and a winterization hatch covered the forward rear radiator fan. Five chime Nathon M5R24 horns were mounted above the generator on the long hood. A spotting feature was the 3 sets of under cab louvers on the equipment doors.

Of the thirteen units on the roster two, 711 and 712 would be transferred to the Sacramento Northern in 1971. The original headlights gave way to both EMD standard twin sealed beam units and inserts for the original barrel headlights in the late 1970's.

Number 705 was completed by EMD on October 10, 1952 and delivered to WP on October 29. Carrying serial number 17029 and frame number 5197-5 the 705 stayed on the roster until after the merger with UP. It was sold by UP to Mountain Diesel Transportation on July 15, 1987. Mountain Diesel in turn sold it to the Great Western in August 1987. It was repainted and lettered Arizona Central 705 in May 1989. It was later acquired by OmniTrax. Earlier this year it was declared excess and scheduled to be scrapped if a purchaser could not be found.

Several members stepped up and pooled their money to purchase the 705 in July of this year and donate it to the Feather River Rail Society. Donors included Lew Barnhard, Dave Bergman, Kerry Cochran, Norm Holmes, Hank Stiles, Eugene Vicknair, Don Nelson, Wayne Monger, Ed Wagner, Paul Finnigan, Jack Palmer, and Jay Sarmo. Once on the property plans are to repaint the unit back into WP livery in an as yet undetermined scheme.

The Feather River Rail Society currently preserves four GP7 units. The 705, 707, 708, and Sacramento Northern (ex WP) 712.

## John "Jack" Grasso

John Joseph "Jack" Grasso II, of Union, New Jersey passed away on Dec. 19, 2003 after a long illness. Many of you may recognize Jack's name as the one behind the Zephyrette Project. We first 'met' Jack on November 25, 2000 when he sent an email that contained a question.

*"The Western Pacific is one of my four favorite railroads. The others are the CB&Q, New York Central, and Erie. I am a great RDC fan and I loved the Zephyrettes. This is an aspect of WP history that doesn't seem to be covered that much.*

*One more thing. Does the museum have any plans to acquire an RDC-2 and restore it as a WP Zephyrette?"*

After exchanging emails and phone calls Jack adopted this as a project for the FRRS and over the next three years made many contacts and followed up on leads that could possibly get us an RDC.

Although Jack had cancer it had been in remission until earlier this year when he let us know he would have to start chemo therapy. On September 15, 2003 Jack updated us with the following news;

*"My chemo is doing well, but it makes me sick from time to time. My last treatment should be in October.*

*Sorry to say that my lovely wife Louise passed away in July. If it wasn't for my children and grandchildren, I don't know what I would have done. Because of them, I am trying to get back to normal which means working on the Zephyrette Project. I should be going to Danbury in a few weeks to look at the*

*RDC.*

*One piece of good news. My book "Operation CUT—The First 30 years" (Cleveland Union Terminal) is coming out in a few weeks. I will be keeping in touch."*

The last email we received from Jack was on December 2, 2003.

Jack was the beloved husband of the late Louise Anne, who passed away on July 11, 2003 the devoted father of the twins, Roseanne J. Petocz (Steve) and John J. Grasso III (Jennifer), loving grandfather of Kayla, Lucas, Steven and Alexandra Petocz, dear brother-in-law of Demitri Morabito. He is also survived by grandnieces and nephews. Jack's funeral was held on Monday, Dec. 22, 2003 at The Union Funeral Home. Interment followed at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

## Santa Trains 2003

By "Dynamite" David Epling

Myself and Spencer Walker arrived at Portola Friday evening. The night got interesting as the pitter patter of rain began falling on the Edenwold's roof, and didn't stop until 8:30 pm Saturday night.

Santa Train was scheduled to get under way at 5 pm but Mother nature intervened and the Museum (and the entire south side of Portola) lost power. We decided to wait until 6 pm and if it was still in blackout conditions, we'd cancel the night. At 4:55 pm the lights came back on and despite the heavy rain, the crowds were plentiful.

8 pm comes around and it's time to put the train to bed, disconnect the 707 and pull'er over the oil pan then shut'er down. It stops raining, thanks Mom. Pizza party in the crew lounge.

Bed down in the Edenwold and light rain returns. I laugh to myself as I think of a Jeff Foxworthy joke.

The next morning I slide open the blind on my compartment. The sun is out and the sky is blue. I'm hoping Mother Nature will be more compliant for next weeks train. I guess it could have been worse, it coulda' snowed.

Well, Santa Train round 2, It was cold and overcast, but the rain held off for us, the result? Multiple trainloads of people, When the morning started out, there was about 2 inches of snow on the ground. By train time, the snow at the shop was gone, but it was still in force around the balloon track so it made for some good effects.

I mentioned trainloads of people, I mean literally. I was assigned Brakeman and parked my tush on the UP 25283 at the head end. Near as I can tell I had about 30 people per trip on my caboose. Later at the end of the evening. While the crew was huddled around the Pizza, It was mentioned by consensus that this had been the largest crowd ever for the Santa Trains.

2003 is over, it was a good year from where I sit after volunteering for my first year. 2004 is only 17 days away and a New Year dawns for the PRM.

A lot of good things are happening at the PRM, if you have not been there in a while, if you keep saying "Ya know, I'm a member and I have been meaning to visit" NOW is the time to do so. Ok well not now, the museum is now closed for the winter. but March is just around the corner. Even if you can't come and help with the projects. Just come and say hello and bring a friend.

## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The February Board Meeting for the FRRS will be held in Sacramento, CA. All interested members are invited to attend.

When: February 7, 2004. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM.

Where: The Stanford Gallery of the California State Railroad Museum, located in the Big 4 Building at 111 "I" St., right next to the Railroad Museum Building building.

Map:

**Saturday, February 7, 2004**

1:00 PM \* Board Meeting

Questions Call  
(530) 832-4131

CSRM Turntable

Discovery Museum



CSRM Main  
Entrance

Sacramento River

*Stanford Gallery*

I-5 and Amtrack Station

## Summary of Recent Board Meetings

Any member in good standing may request a complete copy of the transcript of board meetings from the Society. There is a nominal charge for each copy which covers postage and administrative costs. Full minutes are posted on the FRRSlist hosted by Yahoo Groups.

November 2003 Board Meeting  
**Motions and Actions Summary**

### Motions Passed

Consent Motions – Motion 03-11-01

Minutes – Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held October 4, 2003.

Financial Reports – Approval of Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet through Oct 31, 2003.

Motions

### Motion 03-11-02.. Magnolia Tower

Affirmation that the will of the Board is to negotiate with Coots Construction for the disassembly and transport of Magnolia Tower to Portola, per original contract with same. Motion made by Director Vicknair, seconded by Director Brehm. All Directors present voted in favor – Motion carried.

### Motion 03-11-03.. Silver Derbis/Volunteer Lounge

Acceptance of report and authorization to proceed on remodeling of former “Silver Debris”, per layout agreed upon by the Board, and with an additional budget of \$6,000 on a funds available basis, and with funding from budget line item 70020 – Facilities—Lounge, Sleeper and Shower Car. Motion made by Director Brehm, seconded by Director McClure. All Directors present voted in favor – Motion carried.

### Motion 03-11-04.. 2004 Calendar

Acceptance of 2004 Calendar as presented, with inclusion of additional September Locomotive Clinic and with Railfan Day to be determined later in the meeting. Motion made by Director McClure, seconded by Director Stiles. All Directors present voted in favor with the exception of Director Brehm who abstained – Motion carried.

### Motion 03-11-05.. Urgency Item Addition

Addition of demonstrated item of urgency and need for immediate action on the part of the Board with respect to Elections Committee and nomination/election of FRRS directors. Motion made by Director Cochran, seconded by Director Vicknair. All Directors present voted in favor – Motion carried.

## PRESERVING “THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE”

### WP Lives, in Portola!

#### Mission Statement

The mission of the Feather River Rail Society is to preserve the history of the Western Pacific Railroad. The secondary mission is to preserve the history of the subsidiary and interchange railroads within the territories it served.

#### Mission Goals

To preserve and interpret the history of the WP, the “Willing People” as a vital link in the development of the rail industry on the West Coast, including the steam and diesel evolution, WP’s influence in the passenger tourism industry, the impact of freight competition between neighboring railroads. WP’s influence in the lumber, mining and agriculture industry from Plumas County throughout California, Nevada and Utah

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### Motion 03-11-06.. 2004 Election Committee Chair

Confirmation of Ed Wagner as Election Committee Chair. Motion made by Director Vicknair, seconded by Director Cochran. All Directors present voted in favor – Motion carried.

### Actions and Notices

There was discussion about correspondence concerning the WPLives.org website not being updated and the WPRRHS.com website being unavailable. Directions were given to remedy these situations. President McClure advised he was working with Treasurer Dan Brady regarding a draft budget to present for finalization at the December or January meeting.

Thom Anderson, Manager of the Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society provided a summary report of the activity of the WPRRHS. The latest edition of The Headlight was out and they were working diligently on getting their third edition out prior to the end of the year. Also discussed were advertising in the Headlight, the Display Room and issues concerning the 2004 WPRRHS Convention.

One tank has been removed from the property and has been delivered to its new home with a Military Museum at the City of Pittsburg, CA. Tankcom reports they are working on paperwork to transfer ownership of the remaining tank.

Under consensus direction of the Board, Railfan Photographer’s Day will not be held during 2004 season, but will be scheduled for Spring 2005. Schedule will be determined next year.

Director Cochran reminded all that if any safety issues of a serious nature is discovered at the museum, please let John Walker know right away. He has noted a marked improvement regarding some of the housekeeping issues. It is important that everyone take steps to mitigate any safety/hazard issues.

### Closed Session

Moved up on agenda due at the consensus of the Board. Meeting adjourned to closed session at 2:35 p.m. and re-convened to open session at 3:02 p.m. President McClure reported that equipment issues were discussed, however no action was taken. Consensus direction regarding same was provided to the President by the Board.

respectfully submitted by Eugene Vicknair, secretary  
December 2, 2003

## Upcoming Events

### February.. Grounds Clean-up

7 Board Meeting - 1 PM Sacramento  
29 Train Sheet Deadline

### March.. Museum Opening Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM

1 Election Withdrawal Deadline  
6 Museum Open to Public, Board Meeting - 1 PM Portola  
13 Winterail Stockton  
20-21 Facilities Work Weekend  
27-28 Track Work Weekend

### April.. Prepare for Operating Season Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM

3 Board Meeting - 1 PM Portola  
3-4 Locomotive Maintenance Clinic, Facilities Work Weekend  
16-17 WPRRHS Convention Reno, NV  
20 Election Ballots mailed to membership  
24-25 Track Work Weekend  
30 Train Sheet Deadline

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**The Train Sheet**  
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P.O. Box 608  
Portola, CA 96122-0608

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