



Preserving "The Feather River Route"

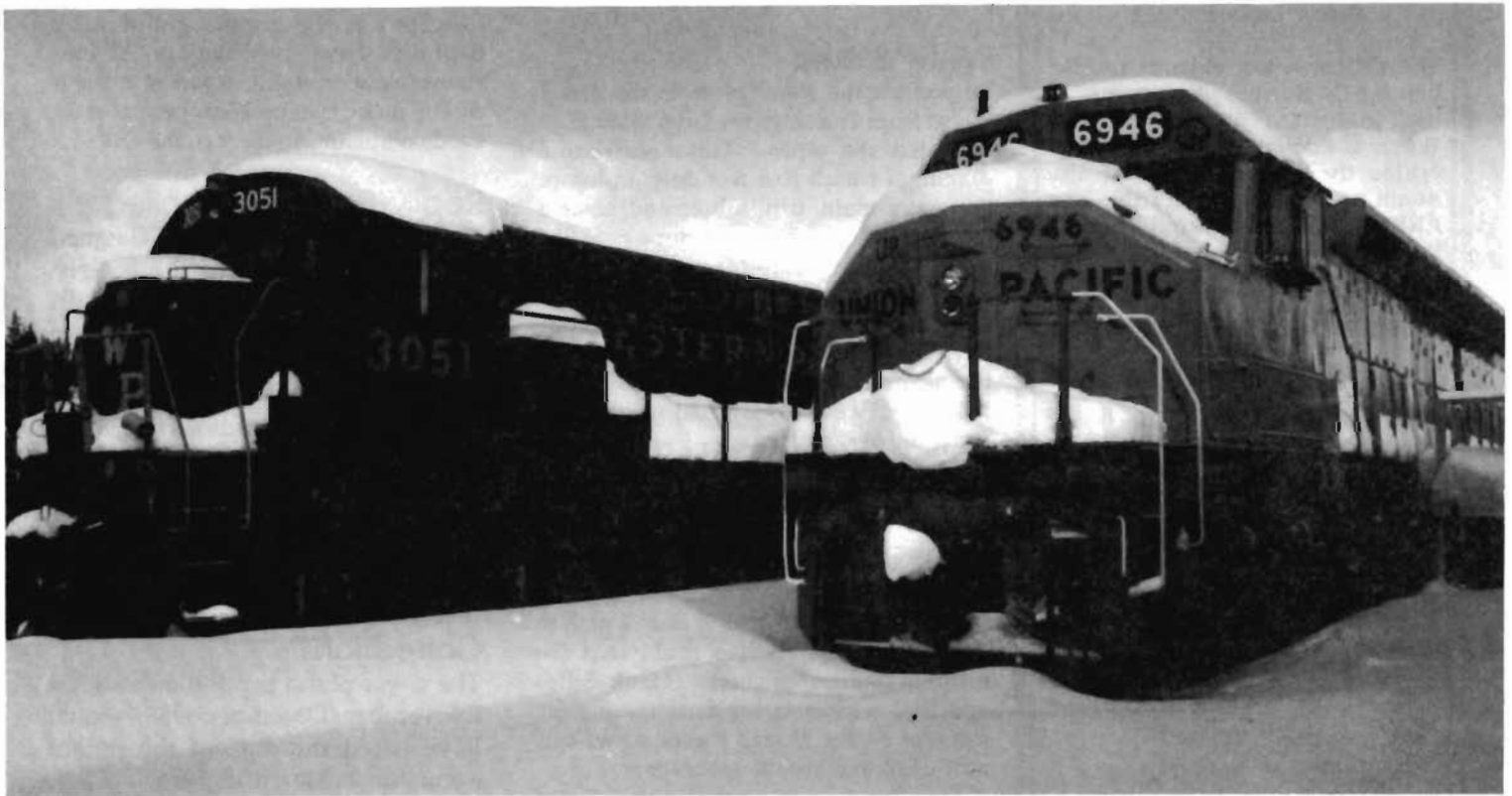
# The Train Sheet

January/February 1989

Issue No. 35

\$1.50

## *Winter In Portola*



### This Issue...

High Ties In The Sky

Feather River Route News

We Didn't Get The 1298

**UP Centennial No. 6946 and WP U25B No. 3051 while away the early hours of 1989 under a mantle of snow.**

A late December storm left 3 feet of snow at the museum and the surrounding area for a few weeks. The snow creates an appearance not often found in railroad facilities, since our equipment rarely moves during the winter.

Dave Waters photo



# FRRS

## Feather River Rail Society

Preserving  
"The Feather River Route"

PO Box 8  
Portola, California 96122

The FRRS, a tax exempt public benefit California corporation, is the historical society for the *Western Pacific Railroad* and operates the *Portola Railroad Museum* in Portola, California. The FRRS is not associated with or supported by the *Western Pacific Railroad*.

FRRS Tax id number is 68-0002774

member



Tourist Railway Association Inc.

### Board of Directors

- Bruce Cooper
- Norman Holmes
- Jim Ley
- Wayne Monger
- Hank Stiles
- Gordon Wollesen

### Train Sheet Editor

Dave Waters

### Membership

Associate	\$ 15.00
Active	\$ 25.00
Family	\$ 30.00
Life	\$300.00

Dues are paid for 12 months from time of receipt. All memberships have one vote, except Associate.

# Around

## The Museum

How many of you noticed that the first item under the 'Shorts' title last issue was about Tom Moore and his donated electrical work? Let's hope he doesn't have any!

### Baggage Car

Dean Hill has completed sand blasting old paint from the interior of our WP baggage car. Dean also purchased linoleum to be placed over the ceiling panels. A model railroad layout will be constructed inside the car when the interior is completed.

### Winter Strikes!

To prevent the water pipes in the diesel house from freezing, we have wanted to relocate the pipes. This necessitated digging a trench five feet deep to locate the water main, drill a hole and place a "saddle" over the pipe and run a new line to the building. Hap Manitt arranged for a friend with a backhoe to dig the trench and the gentleman did the job without pay. And then, as predicted, it snowed the next day. Heavily. Now we have a hole full of ice and snow and will have to wait until next spring.

### White Christmas?

Speaking of snow, a series of storms around Christmas gave the museum three feet of the white stuff. A dozer clearing the UP yard volunteered to clear a path to the diesel house so Hap could feed the resident mouse catchers. Hank Stiles and Phil Schmierer replaced the master cylinder on the Hough loader so we can now use it to move the snow about.

### Charge it!

Thanks to a scrap dealer's generosity and Norm Holmes' pickup we have a good supply of locomotive batteries. All our operable locomotives have eight batteries each and we have three extra sets for units that may see operation this year. Including our maintenance equipment, we have 138 batteries on the property. Unless the equipment is operated frequently, the batteries have a tendency to become discharged. To keep them charged, we have had three 6-amp charg-

ers with the capacity to charge the 64 volt sets. One of the chargers recently burned the transformer out. While these 6-amp chargers are adequate to maintain a charged set, we really need a higher capacity charger to bring up a set of dead batteries. Would any of our membership have any ideas of a better charger system?

### Editor's Note

Modern technology and life, being what they are, have caused this edition to be late. Two failed disk drives caused this editor to almost commit editorial suicide but a previously thought unusable hard disk drive saved the day. An infusion of new capital is expected to remedy the disk drive problem permanently. Send complaints to me, c/o the FRRS . . .

### Really Radio Controlled

On December 8, 1988 the FCC issued call sign WNND325 to the society. The frequency assigned is 161.01 megahertz. We will now be able to use portable radios to assist in communications for train operations at the museum. All radio use will be restricted to compliance with our operating rules. Thanks go to Gary Cousin who handled all the application forms and followed through with the necessary paperwork.

### Correction

The cover photo caption on issue 34 (November/December 1988) should have listed the date of the railfan excursion as March 18, 1956.

We were sorry to learn of the death of member George Lilley of San Jose, California. George was also a member of Vintage Railway - the "Santa Fe Boys".





## Diesel Doings

### Winter Work

Good December weather allowed some of our volunteers to work on equipment. Ervin Hartung did an evaluation on USA 1694 (81) and did some tune-up work on the 7376 (80). Jim Ley and Bruce Cooper checked filters on 7372 (512) and Norm Holmes installed a bell. An oil analysis on No. 80 revealed good oil with normal wear, while the analysis on 512 showed abnormal wear on rings and bearings. An oil change is necessary and we will have to keep a close watch on this problem. Wayne Monger worked on U25B No. 5057, placing a Milwaukee Road herald on the cab.

Ken Roller is removing all the old cracked paint from the cab of No. 80.

Norm Holmes hauled a set of junk batteries to Sacramento to exchange for a set of used batteries from scrapped locomotives. On yet another trip Norm removed a water pump from an NW-2 which is to be scrapped to replace a leaking pump on the 608.

Vic Neves and Wayne Monger obtained numerous parts from Alameda Belt Line's Alco S-1. It had died and the parts were no longer needed. With our collection of obsolete equipment, any spares we can acquire will help us in the future.

### Don't Forget !

The Portola Railroad Museum Gift Shop has a full range of merchandise with your favorite railroad logos.

**Call or mail in your order today!**

*All proceeds benefit your society.*

## WP-PFE Reefer Acquired

Norman Holmes

We now have another wooden WP-PFE refrigerator car body. The car was found along Highway 101 in Redwood Valley by member Ken Meeker who asked about it's donation nearly two years ago. It was one of a number of WP-PFE car bodies once located at the Tracy Railcar Co. yard, most of which have now been scrapped. PFE 55333 arrived the evening of December 9th on a low bed trailer belonging to Terisi Trucking of Lodi, California. Norm Holmes and Gordon Wollesen unloaded it the next day using the museum's Little Giant crane. The car differs from our other reefer in that it has a rebuilt body. PFE 52138 has the original 1924 body, while the 55333 has a 1953 body. The latest repack date noted was 1962.

The car was donated by Scott Gibbs. We only had to share in the trucking cost, and this was done at a reduced rate by Teresi. The car is in fairly good condition, except for the flooring which will need to be replaced. After this is done, it can be placed on one of the UP tank car frames and we will have another complete car.

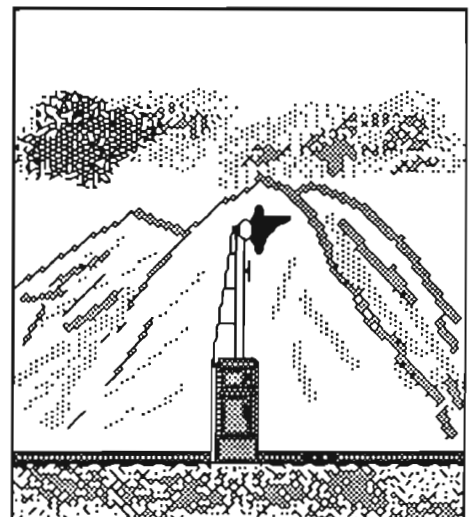
## Why We Didn't Get The 1298

Norman Holmes, UP engineer, retired

Several years ago, after spending nearly 24 hours in beautiful Winnemucca, Nevada, I was called for the SST (Salt Lake - Stockton local) at 12:30 pm. The train arrived in Winnemucca earlier, but was held for a "window" (space-age railroad talk to describe a time when no trains are run so as to perform track work). Our train had four UP SD40-2 units, with 81 cars for a total of 5597 tons. On the head end there were four cars of tie plates, nine cars of rail and 13 propane tank cars. This was followed by some general freight and about 40 empty mechanical refrigerator cars. The makeup was such that severe slack action occurred whenever the brakes were set, the train was going through a sag or when a change was made from power to dynamic brake and vice-versa.

Our first work was at Gerlach, where we had to pick up a water car (WPMW 1298) and set out two cars of coal for the gypsum plant at Empire. We stopped at the east end of Gerlach on the siding, cut the engines off, picked up the water car, set it over to No. 2 track on top of five plaster cars and came back to our train. We pulled to the west end, cut the power off, ran back two rail, picked up the plaster and water cars, put them back on the train and after an air test were ready to depart. The dispatcher informed us we would have to wait "a few minutes" for a broken rail to be replaced. That few minutes became an hour. Our next stop was Reynard, 22 miles west. Here we were to pick up a crew that had "died" on the hours of service law. They had been dumping ballast since 4:00 am - it was now 6:30 pm. I stopped the train to pick up the crew and when restarting the train, the entire end sill and drawbar was pulled from tank car 1298. This 1928 vintage, 12,000 gallon tank car was the regular water car for Sand Pass for many years and old age finally caught up with it. The rivets holding the end sill to the center sill had long ago rusted through and all that held it together was two small welds. It was lucky that this happened when the train was stopped, because if it had given way while the train was moving, the parts probably would have derailed the car and part of the train following.

This car had been on my "wish list" for the museum, but it was now beyond economical repair. The remains were towed back to Gerlach and sold to US Gypsum. They removed the tank and used the frame for a flat car to haul replacement rail on their six mile industrial line.



# Replacing High Ties in the Sky

## A S a f e t y A c t

*EDITOR'S NOTE- This letter was written in March 1986 soon after the Great Flood in February 1986 and was published in the Feather River Division Chronicle. Joe Steffanic is the Signal Maintainer at Tobin.*

Someone told me the other day that working in the Canyon is a real circus. I think that is the most accurate description I've heard. A Circus. A twenty ring circus! Ten acts in one ring, one section of track, one block from West Camp Rogers to East Merlin.

The work trains just have to be the elephants. Loading and then unloading the gray Tobin rip-rapp and moving slowly and ponderously back and forth. The Morrison-Knudsen contractors were the jugglers; jugglers of dynamite. The front end loaders, dangerous and strong, were the lions. The Third Sub Dispatchers were the ring leaders, unseen but in control.

With Track Inspectors, Track Section crews, Track Extra Gangs, Tamper operators, Ohio Cranemen, Engineering Inspectors, Surveyors, Relief Train Crews, Signalmen and Communication men, fiberoptics construction gangs, Mechanics, and of course, an almost infinite number of white hats... They all had a vital role to play and all were forced, by the circumstances of nature, to play in the same ring.

But stop!... Let's zoom in and have a closer view of just one of the many entertaining acts:

High, high above Rock Creek, in the middle of the Feather River Canyon, we find the most dangerous occupation of them all, the high wire act: the B & B Gang working on Rock Creek Bridge. This is an Open Deck Bridge, no hand-rails, and it runs with curve elevated track. The B & B Gang is changing ties. This is, without a doubt, the High Wire act.

Like the other performers in a circus, the high wire act performs its act time and time again. They stay in practice, they keep their balance and must consider each of their fellow gang mem-

ber's next move.

The performers in this act are:

The leader of the gang, the foreman, is Jeff Lynch. He is rather easy going but don't call him Ray. He sets the pace and keeps the act together. He knows his men and his men know him.

Next in charge is Daryl Josephson, known far and wide as "Hardrock", or even "The Rock". He is the type of guy legends are made of. Some of the tales about him are true, some are not so true. For sure, the Rock has a lot of heart.

Then there's Dave Riley. When the day is indistinguishable from cow droppings, Dave is usually able to remain above the depression. He seems to have a contagious effect on the rest of the crew...

Gary Legg is always up on history and current events, as well as the new jokes, books and even philosophies of life.

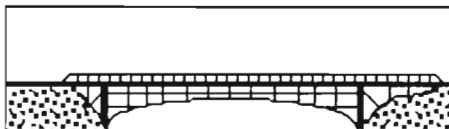
Mark Pinkard looks like a brother you never had. Even when he's not smiling, he seems to be contemplating some sort of mischief.

Gary Baland is probably the easiest to talk to and is interested in just about everything.

You may know these guys personally but in some parts of the railroad they are just numbers, numbers on a computer database. But numbers don't do work and numbers don't work safely.

These are real people doing real work in one of the most dangerous acts of all. After they leave Rock Creek Bridge a few people will look at it and say: "Hey, remember when Jeff and Rock and Gary and Dave and Mark and Gary were changing the timbers of this bridge and the middle of the circus? For an act well done with safety and class that makes us all look good... "this one's for you!".

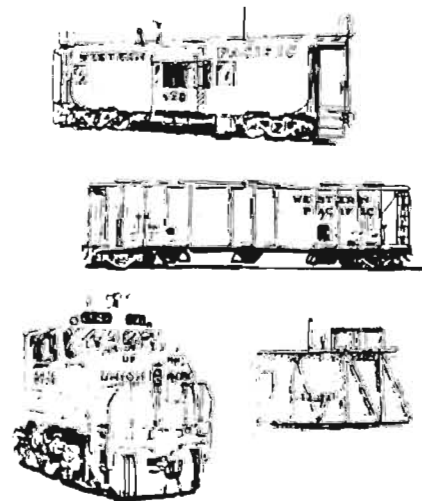
- Joe Steffanic



Sheet Four

## True Tales Of the Rails

Once upon a time, Canyon engineer Buz Cronin left Portola and when the train tipped over the hill at Mabie, he lost all the units except one. It would not load, but would idle to pump air. He chose to go on and refused to stop at Keddie where the roundhouse foreman could check the units. As the third subdivision is 1% grade all the way down to Oroville, he was able to take the train into Oroville Yard without power. The head brakeman, Don Ward, ran for the switch heading into the yard, but as the yard is on a slight incline, the train stalled halfway into the clear. Buz got off the engine and walked over to the roundhouse to tie up, while Oroville Terminal Trainmaster Bob Sherwood screamed over the radio for him to pull the train into the clear.



The Train Sheet

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# The President's Desk

Norman Holmes

On March 20, 1949, Western Pacific, along with Rio Grande and Burlington, inaugurated the streamlined, vista domed, California Zephyr. This train immediately became popular with travellers and became the "most talked about train in the country." Its existence and success put the heretofore little known Western Pacific Railroad before the public eye. March 20, 1989 will mark the fortieth anniversary of the train, and although the planned rebirth of the train with original equipment for one trip over the original route did not work out, we will never forget the Zephyr. Perhaps in ten years attitudes will change with the original route railroads so that we can have a golden anniversary of the Silver Lady. We are planning to have a small ceremony in Portola on March 20 commemorating the event and will have a special CZ booklet with photos and remembrances of this fine train.

We wish to thank those members who sent us Christmas cards this year. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated.

*Norman*

# Win!

A RAILFAN TRIP  
FOR TWO  
TO SOUTH AMERICA

Please help your museum out by buying the fund raising drive raffle tickets. Two lucky people will be going to Chile in November, 1989. It just might be *you!*

The Feather River Rail Society is sponsoring the 2nd trip giveaway raffle in order to help raise funds to help build the "Portola Railroad Museum Visitor's Center".

The winner of the September 5th drawing will receive an all-expense paid railfan tour for two people from Miami to Chile operated by Trains Unlimited Tours. The entire value is over \$5600. The two week tour departs November 12, 1989.

Tickets  
are \$3  
each, or 5  
for \$10

Co-sponsoring the raffle are:

Trains Unlimited Tours

Ladeco Airlines of Chile

Latour of Chile

# Donations

A number of our members have made cash contributions recently. Our expenses, utilities at the museum and printing, to name two, continue, even though museum activities are slower in winter time. We really do appreciate your help.

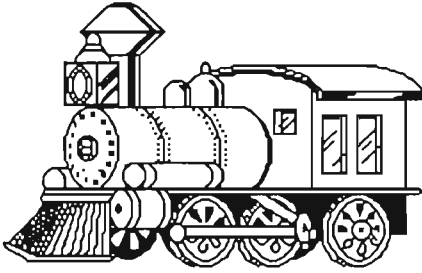
Those contributing were:  
Chas. Bach, Bob Beall, John Cone, Stephen Denno, Robert Dobbins, John Flower, Sam Girdler, Chas. Givens, Phillip Gresho, Fred Klyver, S.W. Little, Scott McAllister, Ken Meeker, Fred Morton, Tom Mounovan, Dave Richards and Larry Richards.

We'd like to particularly thank the *Sacramento Modular Railroaders* for selecting our museum as their "organization of the year" to receive a monetary donation.

Another special thanks goes to Mr. John Cone. In response to my request last issue, John has donated a "Thunderscan" device which will soon be used in production of this newsletter.

Also "Thanks!" to John Keith for offering the use of a different scanning device! He has graciously offered to digitize anything we need for use in our publications.

 **WP LIVES**



*Feather  
River  
Short  
Line*

# News

Betty Boynton  
Sec. Treasurer  
FRSLRR

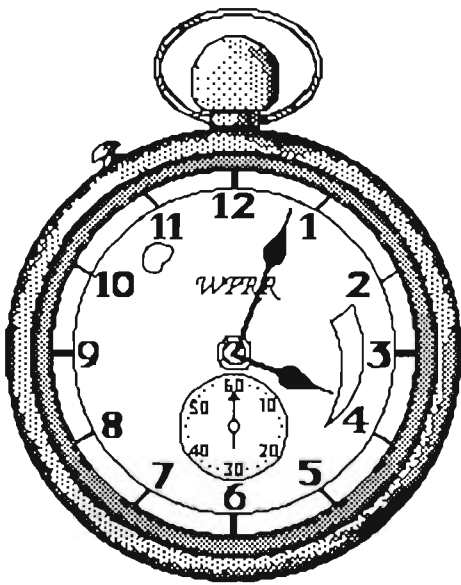
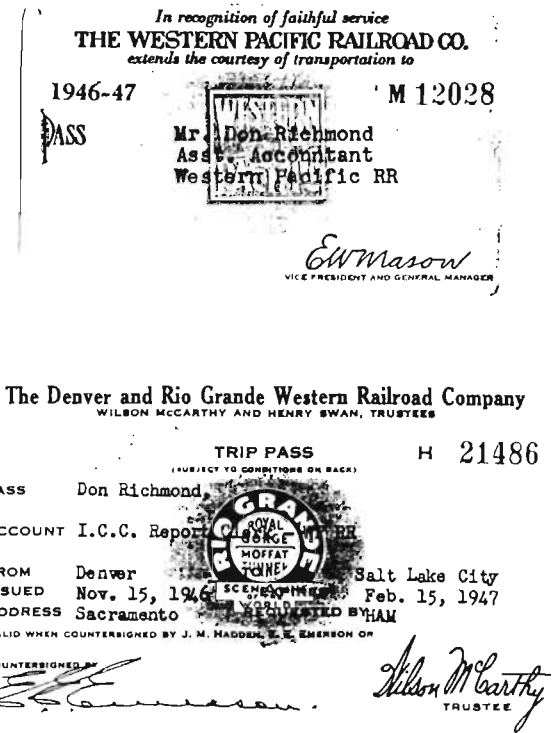
Engine No. 8 has been drained and "bedded down" for the winter, but plans are under way for the 1989 season. Arrangements are being made with the FRRS for us to operate #8 on a regular schedule starting in May. This will make it possible for anyone travelling a long distance to plan their trip to see operating steam.

Jim Boynton has had much success in locating those "hard to find" parts for the engine and tender thanks to the generosity of several railroad museums. The tender work holds top priority for the new season and Jim Boynton will be upgrading the air brake system. John Marvin is also making plans for the completion of the woodwork in the cab.

In November 1988, Engine No. 8 was eighty-one years old. The engine arrived new at Truckee in 1907 and bore the names Sierra Nevada Wood and Lumber Co. 8, Hobard Estate Co. 8, Hobart Southern RR 8, Clover Valley Lumber Co. 8 and since 1958, The Feather River Shortline 8. A special gift for the occasion was the donation of a WP headlight and flag brackets from the Ted Benson family. Jim Boynton will use the headlight as a backup light on the tender. Engine 8 spent all her years within a hundred miles' radius of her point of arrival and is indeed "history in action".

## WP Railroadiana Donated

Below are reproductions of some of the passes donated by Mr. Don Richmond, a retired WP employee. Don started work for the Tidewater Southern in March 1930 and retired from the WP in 1975. Among other things, Don also donated a WP steam engine headlight, which is awaiting display space.



TIDEWATER SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY									
TRIP PASS					SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS ON BACK				
PASS <input type="checkbox"/>					Don Richmond				
ACCOUNT					Trucker T.S. Ry				
VALID WHEN COUNTERSIGNED BY R. I. Kearney					REQUESTED BY J. P. H.				
COUNTERSIGNED					MANAGER				
GOING TRIP					RETURN TRIP				
ISSUED June 19 1930					EXPIRES July 31 1930				
FROM STOCKTON					FROM MODESTO				
TO MODESTO					TO STOCKTON				
INDUCTOR HONORING WILL PUNCH IN ROTATION IN SPACES PROVIDED BELOW									
GOING TRIP					RETURN TRIP				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

from the  
**Membership Officer's  
Desk**

*Joe Way*

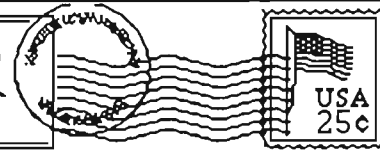
Membership in the Feather River Rail Society has increased quite a bit since the 30-odd charter members gathered in the spring of 1983 with the purpose of preserving western railroad history. We now have 531 Associate members, 193 active members, 82 Family members, and 31 Life members for a paid total of 837. Two people hold honorary memberships in return for the many contributions they have made to the society and the museum. The members are spread over 39 of the 50 states and five foreign countries. The vast majority reside in California as is to be expected considering the location of the headquarters. Nevada is the next most populous state for us, with the other northwestern states of Oregon, Utah and Washington providing homes for many more.

Railfans come in all ages. Our youngest member is 3 years old, and our oldest is 95. Most are married men, but many are single and quite a few are women. We make our livings in a great number of ways, but the single largest group by far is active and retired railroaders.

I keep all this information in a computer database. The program I use is cleverly written to allow my computer to work with more information than it can fit in its small memory (64k, or about 64,000 characters). That's good, since the main data file alone is currently 240k. It makes for a relatively slow operation, however, and I have an ultimate limitation in the size of my disk drive, which has room for about 300k of information. This means that the day is coming when my computer won't be able to handle the Rail Society's membership list.

I wonder, accordingly, if there might be someone among the members, possibly an executive or owner of a business, who might have

**Letters to  
the Editor**



An open letter to the FRRS museum staff and members:

I recently had the chance to visit the museum after being away for a number of months. While there, I checked on the condition of the Santa Fe cabooses, and I am sorry to say I was very disappointed. It seems some individuals have no idea what trash cans and brooms are used for. Both cabooses were littered with trash and cigarette butts, and the bunks in 99197 had been used and not made back into seats. We had to clean up these cabooses after they had been out on the railroad and were targets for hoboes, I never thought we would find the same kind of mistreatment while at the museum.

As you may be aware, the Santa Fe cabooses are on loan to the museum on a no cost, friendly arrangement which benefits both our organizations. These cabooses, as are the other cabooses at the museum, are available for members' use while in Portola on a first come, first served basis.

One of the joys of belonging to the FRRS is the chance to get our hands on some real railroad equipment. Where else can you crawl in and around F-7s, RS-1s, box cars, cabooses, etc., unless employed by the railroads (and then the glamour goes out and it becomes just another job)?

This is, however, a privilege and not our right. And, as with all privileges, it is something which we have to earn and maintain or we lose it. It is up to each of us, when at the museum, to remember the equipment is there for all of us to enjoy. Don't let acts of vandalism (and I believe leaving your mess behind for someone else to clean up is just as much an act of vandalism as painting graffiti) force us out of the museum to close and lock doors on the equipment.

One of the greatest traditions of the Boy Scouts when on outings is to "leave the area in better shape than it was when you arrived". Let's all keep that in mind when we visit the museum.

Thank you,  
Errol Spangler  
Vintage Railway Equipment  
"The Santa Fe Boys"

upgraded his or her computer system and therefore has surplus equipment which might be suitable to our needs. Tremendous amounts of inexpensive software is available for IBM-XT compatible computers, so that's what we would prefer, but I'd be happy to talk to anyone about anything they might have available. I would be glad to pay a reasonable price (which couldn't really be too high, considering the current compatible price wars) or perhaps someone might like to make a tax-deductible donation of equipment to the society. Either way, any response to our problem will be appreciated. You can contact me directly on this matter at:

3494 Chandler Road, Quincy, CA

95971-9628. My phone number is (916)283-4034. Thank you.

This issue of *The Train Sheet*  
is dedicated to

**George L. Waters Jr.**

1912-1989

A man of faith and wisdom,  
to whom I am greatly indebted for both.

*Dave Waters*





Address correction requested.....Dated do not delay

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**THE TRAIN SHEET**

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above: l to r Ken Roller, Wayne Monger and Matt Parker place xing sign on lead.  
right: Doug Jensen sanding 2001 in preparation for paint this summer...

