

# The Train Sheet



Preserving "The Feather River Route"

...news from The Feather River Rail Society and The Portola Railroad Museum

Issue No. 80

July/August 1996

## 1996 Railroad Days Event is a Success



Workers at Railroad Days 1996 are shown posing in front of GP-20 WP 2001 and FP-7 WP 805A in the bright afternoon sun. Photo taken by Zahra Anise-Lavine.

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- A steam engine for Portola.
- Complete reports of Railroad Days 1996.
- Formation of Western Pacific RR Historical Society.

# The Feather River Rail Society

## The Portola Railroad Museum

Preserving the Memory of

*"The Feather River Route"*

P.O. Box 608  
Portola, California 96122  
(916) 832-4131

The museum is open daily year round from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM except Christmas Day. Entrance to the museum is free, however, we have a suggested donation of \$2.00.

*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 Tourist Railway Association Inc.

The Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society (WPRRHS) is a division of The Feather River Rail Society. The Train Sheet is the newsletter of the FRRS. The Headlight is the Western Pacific RR historical and modelling publication of the WPRRHS.

### FRRS Board of Directors

Norman Holmes; Founder and Museum Executive Director  
(916) 832-4737; 76043.741@compuserve.com

Steve Habeck; President  
(916) 283-3396; 102054.637@compuserve.com; FAX (916) 283-5810

Vic Neves; 1st Vice Pres.--- (510) 352-4373; 103157.3067@compuserve.com

Clyde Lippincott; 2nd Vice Pres.----- (702) 882-4529

Gordon Wollesen; Treasurer----- (916) 832-5311

Wayne Monger; Secretary--- (707) 426-5510; 73563.2652@compuserve.com

Doug Morgan----- (916) 893-1862

Bruce Cooper----- (916) 832-1002; suecoop@psln.com

Hank Stiles----- (916) 363-8572; 103344.2501@compuserve.com

Sue Cooper----- (916) 832-1002; suecoop@psln.com



### FRRS Membership

Associate----- \$15  
Historical----- \$22  
Active----- \$30  
Family----- \$35  
Sustaining----- \$75  
Life----- \$300  
Family Life----- \$450

These are the dues for one year for ASSOCIATE, ACTIVE, FAMILY and SUSTAINING. LIFE and FAMILY LIFE memberships are a one-time payment. HISTORICAL membership dues shown above are for 4 issues of the Headlight.

ASSOCIATE memberships do NOT have a vote, do NOT receive the Headlight, receive only the Train Sheet, and are for one person only.

HISTORICAL memberships receive only the Headlight, do NOT have voting rights, do NOT receive the Train Sheet, 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 and may include all members of one's immediate family, but there is only one vote.

SUSTAINING memberships receive both the Train Sheet and the Headlight, and are for a maximum of two people and two votes.

LIFE memberships receive both the Train Sheet and the Headlight, have voting rights, and are for one person for life.

FAMILY LIFE memberships receive both the Train Sheet and the Headlight, and are for a maximum of two people and two votes for life.

### The Internet

FRRS web page: <http://members.aol.com/cyborgsam/frrs>  
WP web page: <http://www.calweb.com/~fbrehm/index.html>

**WPRRHS Administrator**  
John S. Walker  
c/o WPRRHS  
P. O. Box 608  
Portola, California 96122  
(916) 671-9584  
76362.167@compuserve.com

**Headlight Editor**  
Bill Shippen  
P.O. Box 7261  
Chico, California 95927  
(916) 892-9609  
102144.267@compuserve.com  
FAX (916) 894-7359

**Train Sheet**  
Ed Warren  
110 Date Palm Drive  
Sparks, Nevada 89436  
(702) 425-3610  
71251.2705@compuserve.com

**Chief Mechanical Officer**  
W.H. (Hank) Stiles  
(916) 363-8572  
103344.2501@compuserve.com

**Restoration Specialist**  
David Dewey  
(916) 534-3676  
djdewey@ecst.csuchico.edu

## Available Back Issues of the Headlight

- Issue 2 Joint issue with the Freight Car Journal; WP freight car roster; color. 28 pages, \$5.00.
- Issue 5 The Reno branch; M-K remanufactured GP35s and GP40s; the Charles O. Sweetwood car; mill gons. 48 pages, \$4.00.
- Issue 6 M-K remanufactured GP40s, part 2; Budd RDCs; cupola cabooses; 1970 freight car roster. 52 pages, \$4.00.
- Issue 7 Western Pacific FT 50th anniversary issue; color cover. 48 pages, \$5.00.
- Issue 8 Working the Sperry Rail Detector Car on WP; GP 35's; modeling WP ex-MILW boxcars. 36 pages, \$4.00.
- Issue 9 WP History; Merger 10th Anniversary; Complete Western Pacific steam and diesel locomotive roster; color on cover and interior. 96 pages, \$12.95.
- Issue 10 War time, Beer cars, Shafter, GP-35's. 36 pp. \$6.00.
- Issue 11 Train dispatching on the WP, Fifty foot single sheathed automobile box cars, WP employee magazines. 36 pages, \$6.00.
- Issue 12 Burlington Northern Pool Power on the WP in the 1970's, part two of "Taming the Canyon," modeling a WP "Recreational Vehicle Carrier" autorack. 36 pages, \$6.00.

Headlight issue #12 is the most current issue as of August 23, 1996;  
it was mailed on August 5 and 6, 1996.

Back issues of the Train Sheet are available  
for \$1.00 each postpaid.

Send all orders to: FRRS Gift Shop at P.O. Box 608, Portola, CA 96122.

## From the Desk of the President



The 14th Annual Feather River Railroad Days was a great success this year, and the Portola Railroad Museum was a major player in this city-wide celebration. Railroad Days is always our biggest weekend, as far as visitor counts and activities are concerned, and it is to our advantage to pull out the stops and put on a good show. Once again our volunteers rose to the occasion, many of them spending several days before the weekend helping prepare the Museum for the large crowds. In particular, a few people need to be singled out for honorable mention for their extraordinary efforts: Don Borden, who spent three days in and around locomotives on the oil pan with the Hotsy pressure washer wand in hand; Jack Palmer and Kerry Cochran, who worked on whatever needed to be done; Ken Iverson and FRRS Directors Clyde Lippincott and Doug Morgan, who tackled the messy job of cleaning up the oil pan; Peter "Doc" Lyman, for his invaluable direction and assistance in troubleshooting & repair, primarily on WP 2001; and FRRS Director and CMO Hank Stiles, who spent the entire week before Railroad Days working at the Museum. Restoration Specialist David Dewey also responded well under pressure by completing the external painting on WP 2001 in time for the weekend. Many others volunteered hours and days of their time, all of which contributed to the success of the event; everyone's contribution of time, money, and sweat is very much appreciated.

It was a silver-and-orange weekend at Portola. Pulling our three-car ex-VIA passenger train (2 coaches and the lounge) was our A-B-A set of WP F-units, 805-A/925-C/921-D. Although 805-A was not running due to the stubborn cylinder liner leakage problem, it was used as the controlling unit, and a generator/battery setup was employed to operate the Mars light, to everyone's delight. The Railroad Days Honorary Trainmaster, Brigadier General Chuck Yeager, operated the F's on one of the backup moves, and then rode the cab during a revenue run, looking over my shoulder and watching my every move with interest. I believe he was impressed with our facility. Also very impressive was the motive power for the caboose train; it was the debut of WP 2001 in stunning silver and orange. A check of the records confirmed that 2001 had last been used in revenue service at the Museum on August 23, 1987; its return to service on August 17, 1996, makes almost 9 years as a hangar queen; never again!

With the success of Railroad Days behind us, it's time to look ahead to Railfan's Day. This year, with the first annual WPRRHS convention taking place in conjunction with Railfan's Day, I believe we are offering a full and well-rounded day of entertainment and activities; I hope you are planning to join us. Once again, I thank you all for your continued support of the FRRS.

Steve Habeck

## Preservation Column...

### What's Important?

By David Dewey

Each of us has a unique vision of what is important to save and to display at the museum, or what facilities are important to have there. Most of this is based on our own personal interests. This is part of what makes the collection so diverse. It is also why we have so many things needing attention! What we all need to agree on is why we have the museum, and then go from that point to work together for everyone's benefit.

We call the place a "Museum" because we claim to want to show and share with the general public the importance of all this stuff we have saved. If we didn't care about sharing it, we could be a private RR club, open to members only. There are some advantages to being a private club; you don't have to worry about people wandering around, possibly getting hurt, or having to explain what stuff is, or even making sure they're having a good time. The disadvantages are that you don't get much public support to help save stuff or have stuff given to you, and, when the membership ages, fewer and fewer people are interested in saving the stuff so it eventually rots away.

So, since we are open to the public, it is as important to us to make things as convenient for the public as we make it convenient for ourselves. This can be as simple as not parking one's automobile where it blocks a walkway, to designing a work space so visitors can watch work in progress without getting in the way or exposing themselves to a potentially dangerous situation (like watching an arc weld without protection, for example). It sounds simple, but it is a profound difference in one's thinking process, and results in giving our visitors a much more pleasant and interesting visit! Happy visitors means more visitors, and more visitors means more support for getting or fixing more stuff -- and I think we can all agree that we want to encourage greater support for our pet project(s).

On a slightly different note:

We have finally succeeded in acquiring a steam engine. I know some of you think we should stick to diesels and WP stuff only. However, if we ignore steam, we fail to tell the whole story of WP history. Without the steam engine, railroads would still be local haulers using mules, etc. to move stuff like ore within an industrial complex. The steam locomotive made long-distance train travel possible, which fueled the industrial revolution. The WP itself was built with steam engines. The engine we are getting is most appropriate in a yard situation, which our museum trackage is. True, a WP engine would be nice, but the only existing ones are ensconced in their present display sites, and are unavailable. Also, steam will attract some different volunteers to the museum to augment our volunteer work force. This should help us get more stuff done, and enlarge our "Portola Family." I personally look forward to the new challenges and opportunities this project brings.

Hope to see you at the museum!



### YOU! Can Operate a Diesel Locomotive

for one hour with your own private instructor included.

*Fulfill your wildest dream!*

A handsome certificate suitable for framing is awarded after each rental. Rentals by appointment.

Our popular "Combo" rental package includes VIA Rail Canada 6776 MLW/ALCo FPA-4 Covered Wagon-style locomotive. Call for details. Phone number for appointments: (916) 832-4532.

### FRRS Member Benefit

All FRRS members in good standing receive a 10% discount on all items purchased in person or by mail from the FRRS Gift Shop.

### FRRS Life Members

Everyone who was a Life Member prior to October 1, 1995 may upgrade to Family Life AT NO CHARGE and AT ANY TIME simply by writing a letter to the Society requesting the upgrade.

*Don't forget the:*

11th Annual  
**Railfan  
Photographer's Day**

at the Portola Railroad Museum

>plus the<

1st Annual  
**Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society  
Convention and Railroadiana Show  
and Swap Meet**

**Saturday, September 14, 1996**

Gates open at 9:00 AM  
various events run until midnight

This year's event theme:

**"A Celebration of  
First Generation EMD Hood Units"**

This year's featured photographer:

**John E. Shaw, Jr.**

**"Plumas County Logging Railroads  
of the 1950's"**

Advance ticket sale price \$12 per adult.  
Date of event ticket price \$14 per adult.

FRRS members get 50% discount on ticket prices.  
All children under the age of 17 are admitted free.  
For advance ticket sales or event information, contact  
Wayne Monger, 1409 Tillman St., Suisun City, CA 94585  
(707) 426-5510

*The FRRS presents:*

The 7th Annual

**Southern California  
Regional Meet**

and

**Western Prototype  
Modeller/Railfan Meet**

Saturday, October 12, 1996  
10 AM to 5 PM

Location: La Habra Clubhouse  
200 Greenwood, La Habra, CA

Western Pacific fans and modellers, and fans and modellers of connecting Western roads...

Bring your models, photos and memorabilia for displays and model contest.

**Guest Speakers:**

Mike Hopkin, Contemporary Detail Oriented Diesel Modelling

Joe D'Elia, Prototype Modelling

David Casdorff, Editor and Publisher of Freight Car Journal

"Diesel" Dave Smith, Union Pacific Engineer, Los Angeles Subdivision

(Bring your contest or display models.)  
Fare: \$8 (\$5 if you bring display or contest models!)

Cash Award for the best of show model contest winner. Raffle prizes donated by local hobby retailers and manufacturers.

Call (310) 691-4139 for additional information.

*Announcing...*

**The 26th Annual V&T Railroad History Symposium**

Friday-Sunday, October 18-20, 1996

The Nevada State Railroad Museum and the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum are pleased to announce the 26th Annual V&T Railroad History Symposium, to be held on October 18-20 at the Nevada State Railroad Museum and in the meeting rooms of the Nugget in Carson City, Nevada. This year's Symposium focuses on motor cars, with special recognition of the two recent donations to the Railroad Museum; Virginia & Truckee Ry. McKeen car #22 and Nevada Copper Belt RR Hall-Scott car #22.

Papers will be presented in morning and afternoon sessions, held at the Nugget on both Friday and Saturday. On Sunday morning there will be a presentation on the McKeen and Hall-Scott, held in the Museum's Restoration Shop, wrapping up the official Symposium program. Steam trains will be operating on the Museum's trackage during Saturday and Sunday.

There will be a Friday evening reception at the Railroad Museum featuring a slide presentation of the Museum's year in review. On Saturday evening the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum annual dinner will be held at the Nugget.

For registration forms and information, contact:

Nevada State Railroad Museum  
Capitol Complex  
Carson City, Nevada 89710  
(702) 687-6953

# Railroad Days 1996

By Gordon Wollesen

Portola's 1996 Railroad Days has come and gone. This year was the 14th annual Railroad Days event and was the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Portola.

The FRRS prep work started several months ago. Norm and Steve represented the FRRS on the Railroad Days Committee. As the big weekend got closer, our work became more intense. The "Big Push" began the week before the event. The Restoration Department put the final touches on the 2001; the Mechanical Department put 2001 in operating condition and set up our three F7's for operation. 805A (dead) was the controlling unit with the 925C and 921D providing the power. The Operating Department switched out and set our VIA coaches and lounge cars for the second train. During this time, all hands assisted, as available, in setting up the house for the model railroad displays and general cleaning. By 7:00 PM (Friday, August 18, 1996) everything was just about ready. The final touches would be taken care of Saturday morning.

Day 1 started with a pancake breakfast beginning at 6:30 AM for the working crews (the public breakfast started at 7:00 AM). Crew Call was 7:30 AM and the first train out at 9:00 AM. The Train Crew assignments were made; the Mechanical Department went to work getting the locomotives running and working properly. All the final touches were taken care of as crew members were available. By 9:00 AM all was ready and the first train pulled out on the advertised. The train rides were set up for a train to depart every 20 minutes. Each train made 12 trips (a total of 24 train rides each day). As the morning progressed, more and more people arrived on the property to join in our festivities. The community Railroad Days parade started at 11:00 AM and ended about noon. After the conclusion of the parade, a mass of humanity converged on the museum. Most trains were nearly filled to capacity on every run. The last train ran at 5:02 PM. After the day's operations were finished, 2001 and 805A were spotted (side by side) for a photo session. What a sight! The afternoon sun was perfect. Both units glowed like GOD. EMD and Western Pacific intended.

About 3:00 PM, Brigadier General Chuck Yeager (USAF Retired) visited the museum. General Yeager had been invited to visit us and to run the A-B-A set of F7's. The original plan was to let him run at 5:30 PM, (after operations) but a change of his plans required us to change our plans. No problem. General Yeager ran the light engine move (under the expert instruction of Steve Habeck) around the balloon back to the passenger train. He then rode the engine (805A) on the next scheduled trip to observe the operation of the train. As General Yeager prepared to leave, I asked him what he thought about operating a railroad locomotive. He said, "These things are big and heavy, impressive." General Yeager thanked us for letting him do this. As he started to leave, General Yeager turned to me and briefly told me about the changes that have taken place in the Air Force (mainly Germany). Note: General Yeager and I served in the 12th Air Force (Germany) at the same time. He was the commander of the 417th Interceptor Wing at Hahn and I served in the 86th Interceptor Wing at Landstuhl (40 miles away).

Day 2 started out the same as day 1. All was ready for the first train departure at 9:00 AM. The day's ridership was a little less than the first day. Again, train operations ended with the last train at 5:02 PM. The units were again spotted for a Vic Neves photo session. After the photo session, the rental locomotives were spotted for the next day. All other switching was deferred to Monday because all operating personnel were at the threshold of being unsafe.

Continued on page 6

# Feather River Railroad Days No. 14

By Norm Holmes

The fourteenth annual Feather River Railroad Days is history. Due to the leadership of Betty Heck from the Eastern Plumas Chamber of Commerce, this year's event was back on track with a larger attendance than was experienced the previous year. Train ride tickets, a weathervane of attendance, brought in \$1760 compared to \$1153 last year.

Saturday's parade lasted nearly an hour; our M60A3 tank won first place in the Novelty class! The tank flattened the competition - so to speak. Bruce Cooper was the driver and Sue Cooper the navigator. A number of museum members' children rode on the tank.

At the museum everything was ready. Clyde Lippincott constructed 3 8x10 units, 12" high with railings for use as a stage. This was placed on the dock area. Four office space dividers that we obtained from government surplus were placed at the rear of the stage to provide a "shell." A camouflage net was placed over the area to provide a little shade. On Saturday afternoon Dorothy Patterson, who at one time had a piano bar east of Portola called the Mouse Trap, played piano accompanied by Raleigh Fish on drums. On Sunday afternoon two performances of a puppet show entertained the visitors. Both entertainers enjoyed the new location. Previous years entertainment was on a flat car in the shop building, however the acoustics in the building are terrible, hence the decision to relocate.

A group of seven Buffalo Soldiers camped overnight at our picnic area and a train robbery was enacted on Sunday. The Portola Rotary Club had a booth selling burritos and drinks and several other groups sold drinks, ice cream and snow cones. This took some of the load off of the Beanery. Jack Hathaway came down from Butte, MT to run the Auxiliary Gift Shop while Ken Hitch helped Barbara Holmes in the Gift Shop.

Three model railroad clubs and a small layout by Jim Druckmiller filled the shop building. Operation Life Saver had a booth informing the public about railroad safety. A pancake breakfast was served Saturday and Sunday and the regular lunch fare was available both days.

As usual, a lot of work was done prior to the event with several members spending anywhere from a few days to a week helping. The "locals" just cannot do all the work to get our facility in shape for an event such as this and we really need and appreciate any and all help from other members.



Engineer Steve Habeck is backing out the passenger train with A-B-A set of locomotives lead by FP-7 WP 805A on Railroad Days 1996. Photo by Norm Holmes.

## Conclusion of Railroad Days 1996 By Gordon Wollesen

Overall, Railroad Days 1996 was a good and safe event. Everyone in the Operating and Mechanical Departments performed in a professional manner. Well Done!

### The Operating and Mechanical Departments:

Engineers: Hank Stiles, Steve Habeck, Norm Holmes, Jack Palmer, Vic Neves.

Firemen: Jack Palmer, Tom Graham, Steve Habeck, Kerry Cochran, Gordon Wollesen.

Conductors: Don Borden, Terry Decottignies, Dave Bergman.

Brakemen: Dave Bergman, Ken Iverson, Don Borden.

Car Attendants: Judy McGrath, Melissa McGrath, Don Clark, Art Young, Jeff Palmer, Ed Powell, Zahra Anise-Lavine, Paul Finnegan, Gary Mackay.

Switch Tenders: Tom Clabaugh, Bob Carr, Bob Lindley.

Crossing Guards: Clyde Lippincott, Dick Woods, Tom Andrews.

Train Tickets: Judy Whitaker, John Whitaker.

Special Helpers: Jordan and Zahra Anise-Lavine.

Mechanical Department: (Black shirts) Hank Stiles, Tom Graham, Peter Lyman, Jeff Palmer, Ed Powell, Doug Morgan.

Police Department: Jim Malkson and friends.

Supervisors: Kerry Cochran, Gordon Wollesen.

Gift Shop: Ken Hitch, Barbara Holmes. Jack Hathaway ran the Gift Shop Annex (baggage car).

Beanery: Skip Englert, David Dewey, Linda Dewey, Janis Peterson, Lolli Bryan, Edna Ede and others.

Special note: Every time a mechanical problem occurred, a radio call to Hank Stiles resulted in an immediate swarm of "Black Shirts" attacking the problem. A mechanical problem didn't stand a chance. A very impressive sight. I think the public was impressed with our expertise.

A big thank you goes to all who put Railroad Days together and made it happen. If I forgot to mention your name, or forgot your name, please forgive me.

Thanks for making my job easier.

## Railroad Days Grand Marshall Brigadier General Chuck Yeager



*Brigadier General Chuck Yeager is shown at the Museum standing next to WP 805A talking to Gordon Wollesen with Skip Englert in the background. Photo by Norm Holmes.*

# Railroad Days Related Story

Lolli Bryan, the FRRS Archivist/WPRRHS Conservator, opened our UP 105 business car during Railroad Days 1996 for public viewing from 3-5 PM. She had a beautiful display of Western Pacific and California Zephyr memorabilia for all the visitors to enjoy, topped off with a fresh carnation on the table. She had California Zephyr place settings, a full WP service, and WP awards for years of service, 5-year, 10-year, etc.

Also on display was a golden hammer that had been used to drive the final spike at the joining of the rails of the WP at Spanish Creek Trestle (Keddie Wye). Also there were assorted WP pictures for the visitors to enjoy.

Jerry Gervais had on display his conductor's cap from the California Zephyr, as well as his ticket punch and his passenger service lantern.

Along with Lolli, in the UP 105 business car was Mary Lou (Woodward) Zasso, who had been a CZ Zephyrette in 1953. She answered visitors' questions about the California Zephyr. A Zephyrette was a lady that was on each California Zephyr train to assist passengers, such as helping mothers who may have needed help with an infant, or to help passengers who needed first aid.

Jerry Gervais drove his Model A in the Railroad Days parade. He even had a fresh carnation in his boutonniere.

Lolli issues a special thank you to Gordon Wollesen for providing power to the 105 car for lights. During Railroad Day, she will again have the UP 105 car open with CZ and WP memorabilia on display.

## A Real Friend

By Gordon Wollesen

To get the museum entrance road and parking lot ready for Railroad Days, Tobe Smith was hired to water the road and parking lot Friday evening (dust control). Friday evening Tobe brought his water truck and started the job. Suddenly, the water truck stopped moving. Tobe determined that the rear end had seized up and refused to move. Now what to do. The only other water truck in town was out of service (driver fatigue). Tom Graham to the rescue. Using the backhoe, Tom pulled the water truck while Tobe steered and pumped water. The job got done.

Tom Graham (the real friend of this article) came to the rescue. Tom had a complete rear end for an International truck of this vintage. Tom told Tobe that he would give (free) the rear end to him. All Tobe had to do was go to the Santa Rosa area and pick it up. It was his. Tobe and Ken Iverson went to Tom's on Tuesday and brought the rear end to Portola. Tobe used our shop building to perform the necessary repairs. Thursday (8-22) Tobe finished the repairs and again the truck moved under its own power.

I'm sure that Tobe is very grateful to Tom for his generous gift.

On behalf of the FRRS, I will say to Tom, YOU ARE A REAL FRIEND. Thanks, Tom.

*Announcing the formation of...*

# *The Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society*

The new Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society is accepting applications for membership. Operating as a separate division of The Feather River Rail Society, the WPRRHS is dedicated to serving as the "Historical" wing of the FRRS.

## **Our Mission Statement:**

1) The collection and preservation of documents, photographs, memorabilia, oral history and other artifacts of, and pertaining to the history and operation of the railroad company known as the Western Pacific Railroad. This would include subsidiaries, connecting short line and industrial railroad operations.

2) The dissemination of said information through FRRS and WPRRHS publications, library services, historical seminars, conventions, guest lecturers and FRRS/WPRRHS social functions and public events.

## **Our Staff:**

**Administrator:** John S. Walker has been appointed by FRRS President Steve Habeck to take charge of getting the WPRRHS up and rolling through the convention in September. John, an avid WP historian, has written articles and columns for Trains, CTC Board, Pacific Rail News and The Lark. A past member of the FRRS Board of Directors, John is a member of several railroad historical societies and other non profit volunteer organizations.

**Librarian/Archivist:** Kent Stephens. Kent is the author of Matches, Flumes and Rails: The history of the Diamond Match Company and numerous historical articles. He is a tireless researcher and has long been a friendly source of information and assistance to authors and historians. Kent has also served on the Board of Directors of the FRRS and is currently employed as a librarian for California State University at Chico where he is working on a new railroad book.

**Conservator:** Lolli Bryan. Lolli will be responsible for the day to day care and maintenance of the FRRS/WPRRHS Library in addition to her volunteer work at the Portola Railroad Museum.

**Editor:** Bill Shippen. Editor and publisher of Shasta Rail Group which publishes Filmsies, Filmsies Northwest, SP Review and several upcoming books.

**Convention Director:** John S. Walker will be in charge of the 1st Annual WPRRHS Convention in Portola on September 14, 1996 which is in conjunction with Railfan Day. Peter Solyom will be in charge of the FRRS Southern California Regional Meet on October 12, 1996 in La Habra, California.

The WPRRHS is now producing the FRRS' historical publication, "The Headlight," which was founded in 1990 by John Ryczkowski. The new Headlight staff has completed issue #12 which was mailed on August 5 and 6, 1996. Issue #12 includes articles on the Burlington Northern Pool Power which invaded the WP in the 1970's, part two of "Taming the Canyon" an article written by WP dispatcher Peter Josserand which was originally printed by Railroad Magazine in November 1946, an article on modeling a WP "Recreational Vehicle Carrier" autorack and a feature on WP GP7 707 which is preserved at the Portola Railroad Museum. We think you'll like the new format.

## **The Headlight Editorial Staff:**

Editor: Bill Shippen.

Associate Editors: Peter Solyom, John Ryczkowski,  
John S. Walker.

Technical Editor: Thom Anderson.

Research Specialist: Kent Stephens.

Production Manager: Mike Mucklin.

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**All FRRS Active, Family, Sustaining,  
Life and Family Life members are  
automatically members of the  
WPRRHS.**

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Membership in the new WPRRHS is \$22.00 for four issues of The Headlight. WPRRHS members do NOT receive the FRRS' "The Train Sheet" which is the museum newsletter, nor do they vote in FRRS elections. But for all other purposes, WPRRHS members are considered to be full fledged FRRS members and are entitled to the same privileges (half off special event fares and 10% member gift shop discount) as regular FRRS members.

All FRRS Active, Family, Sustaining, Life and Family Life Members are considered to be WPRRHS members and will receive The Headlight, The Train Sheet and are eligible to vote in FRRS elections and to participate in the Museum's various departments.

If you have questions or comments regarding the WPRRHS, The Headlight, WP modeling or history.....or would like to contribute to the library or to The Headlight, please contact us at WPRRHS, P.O. Box 608, Portola, CA 96122. We are looking into establishing a WPRRHS World Wide Web site, but until then E-Mail us at:

**76362.167@compuserve.com**

If you would like to converse with a real person you can phone John Walker at (916) 671-9584 in the evenings. Questions and comments regarding the FRRS or the Portola Railroad Museum should be addressed to FRRS, P.O. Box 608 Portola, CA. 96122 (916) 832-4737.

WP Lives!

# **A Steamer For Portola**

By Norman Holmes

The long search for a suitable small steam engine for our museum ended August 20, 1996 when the Kings County Board of Supervisors approved our acquisition of Southern Pacific 0-6-0 No. 1215 to be removed from Burris Park, near Hanford, Washington. We have the UP 737/SP 216 at the museum, but it is very old and probably would need a new boiler to make it operable; and there are no WP steam engines that are available to us, so this seems like a good acquisition.

I "discovered" this engine several years ago and was impressed with its completeness and overall condition. It took several years to convince the public works department that they wanted to give the engine a new home. When it looked like the engine might become available, we sent an inspection team, Dave Dewey and Hank Stiles, to Hanford to do a thorough inspection to see if we really wanted it. The inspection report was very favorable indicating the engine was in good condition especially considering that it had been in the park since 1958. We were told that it was run under its own power to Hanford, trucked to the park and moved under steam to its display track. It has not been vandalized to any extent, not like some of its counterparts in other locations.

The 1215 is one of 16 SP steam switchers donated by SP and now is one of four that may be placed back in operation. The others are: 1233 restored and running on the Yolo Short Line near Sacramento, 1251 under restoration at Virginia City, NV and 1269 awaiting restoration, again, for PLA at Niles Canyon. The 1215 is also the oldest SP 0-6-0 in existence, being built by Baldwin in May, 1913.

A work party will be organized to prepare the engine for transfer by truck to Portola. We would like to have the engine here before winter. We would be interested to have photographs of this engine in service.

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# **Pacific Limited Report**

By Steve Habeck

A complete report of the PLG trips running in August and September will appear in the next TS, as the deadline for this issue was the same day the first trip started.

In mid-July, Norm Holmes and I, representing the FRRS, attended the PLG Board of Directors meeting held in the UP Superintendent's office in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Steve Lee, representing the UP, brought us up-to-date on the UP's handling of excursions and the passenger car fleet, and what the future may hold in that regard, to assist us in our planning for future trips. The PLG Board then analyzed, in detail, the status of the trips scheduled for 1996, including ticket sales, sales projections, advertising, marketing, and response from tour operators. In light of the debt stilled owed to UP from the 1995 trips, and evidence of slow sales, we agreed to cut five cars from the consist of the Branson Scenic trip. We lost much of the tour operator support we expected on this trip. The tour operators claimed they needed even more advance notice than we were able to provide. The cutting of the consist also resulted in cutting about 20 car host positions from this trip, the disappointing aspect of the cuts. However, PLG must operate like a business if it is to stay in business, and the Board determined these actions were necessary. My apologies go to those who were looking forward to participating on this trip, but had to be cut with the consist reduction.

The outlook for the Iowa trips is much better; most segments will probably run at or above 90% capacity, with some segments sold out. Norm will be on most of these trips, and will have a first-hand report.

Plans for 1997 and beyond were only briefly discussed, due to PLG's focus on making enough on this year's trips to retire the debt owed the UP, and provide seed money for future operations. With the UP-SP merger taking effect, we must wait and see what UP's position will be regarding excursions and the passenger car fleet; however, the possible excursion routes added with the SP acquisition are very attractive.

# **Lady of the Lake**

By Norman Holmes

Last May we received a phone call from member Marty Anderson, District Manager for PG&E at Quincy, with the announcement that a locomotive had been found in Butt Lake.

There have been rumors over the years about hunters who found an engine in the woods, but could never find their way back to it and of the engine that fell off a barge into a lake or river, but could never be found. But this time a real engine showed up that no one knew about.

Butt Lake Dam was constructed in 1923 and when the job was completed this little lokey was left behind. Evidently it was not worth the trouble to bring it out of the lake area. After the lake was filled the engine was forgotten.

Seismic studies found a potential for disaster if the dam would break should an earthquake occur in the area. PG&E decided to drain the lake and rebuild the dam. As the water receded the little engine made its appearance. An immense amount of interest was generated with news stories in local, Sacramento and San Francisco papers and on several TV stations. PG&E's archaeologist was called in to evaluate the discovery and to recommend what should be done with the find. Marty Anderson invited Steve Habeck and Norm Holmes to inspect the engine from a boat to see if we were interested in having it for our museum.

PG&E officials, bombarded by requests to obtain the engine, decided to donate the engine to Plumas County. Supervisor Bill Dennison, in whose district the engine was located, wanted it given to the Chester Museum. We agreed that the engine should stay in the area. We also agreed to assist PG&E with the move and to that extent Doug Morgan and Norm Holmes made two trips to Butt Lake to remove the remains of the cab and to oversee the loading and movement. The engine is now stored safely inside a warehouse at Collins Pine Co. in Chester. That move was made on August 2nd.

No serial number has been found to positively identify the engine. The words "EUREKA" appear on the saddle tank in gold leaf. It is presumed to have come from the Eureka Mill Railroad which was located near the V&T in the Carson River Canyon. Its Specifications are as follows: gauge 30", driver dia. 23", cyl. 6"x10", weight in working order 12,000 lbs. A photo appears in Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California, Vol 1, page 164.



# CMO Report

By Hank Stiles

It is again my pleasure to report to the membership on the Mechanical Dept.

Things are moving ahead in our Mechanical Dept. The shop is more like a working railroad shop everyday. Things are more organized; this makes the shop easier and more productive to work in. We hope that by making the operation more professional, that we can get more members to come and work on our collection. The net result is that our equipment gets better care and that makes everyone happy.

We have removed the cylinder head from the cylinder that is leaking water on the WP 608; unfortunately the gasket does not seem to be the culprit. That means that we must remove the cylinder liner and piston as we must find the cause of our water leak to make the proper repairs. This has had to wait because of time restraints placed on us by Railroad Days. This is one of those jobs that will take some time and some help.

The WP 2001 is a different story. With a lot of help, this engine has had a lot of effort put into it and it shows. With its shining new paint, it stole the show at Railroad Days. With a few minor problems, she ran like a top the whole weekend. It is indeed fortunate that we did NOT try the dynamic brakes until Sunday night as when we did we had to push it back to the shop. It now has a problem in that it will not load (make power to move). Despite the best efforts of myself and Peter Lyman, as of the Monday afternoon after Railroad Days, we had not yet found the problem. Anyone with ideas is more than welcome to come and help.

The Mechanical Department shirts are in and they look great. They are black -- a good choice with the grease on a locomotive. They have our logo and the WP logo on the front and say Mechanical Department on the back. It looked nice on Railroad Days to see us in our black shirts jumping on to a problem and solving it as a team. People knew that we were on the job and many visitors remarked on how good we looked.

We are still having Maintenance Clinics the first weekend of each month, through October. Why not come on up and join in on the fun? Help the museum and learn at the same time.

Until next time, Hank.

## Facilities Report

By Gordon Wollesen  
Facilities Manager

The electrical upgrade is progressing as planned.

Phase I -- Shop bay wiring is complete.

Phase II -- Shop bay lighting to start August 25, 1996.

Phase III -- Increase voltage and amperage to the facility. Engineering being worked on for 480 volts, 600 amps, 3 phase. Plan to implement by 1997.

Phase IV -- Upgrade house lighting to Metal Halide. Plan to implement 1997.

## Restoration Dept. Report

By David Dewey

**2001:** Exterior cosmetic restoration is now complete. The last two weeks before Railroad Days were busy ones. The grills and handrails were sent to Oroville for sandblasting by Pat Solderberg; armrests and other parts were re-upholstered. Silver, black and orange paint was applied, then a long day of hoisting parts in place using the overhead hoist with much physical labor by Meg Evans, Ken Iverson, Clyde Lippincott and Dick ? (sorry, lost my notes--if you read this, drop me note!). The Mechanical Department hooked up the disconnected traction motor blower and fixed some leaks, so it was running for Railroad Days. Since then, the cab interior has been cleaned (two days of simple green application by Meg Evans and myself). While not pristine, it is much more presentable. The hangar queen has left the hangar!

**Ingersoll-Rand:** This historic locomotive is finally getting some regular attention. Kay and Mike Johnson and their children Mickey and Kathleen, and also the Whitakers, Judy and John, have begun cleaning out all the stuff, including dead birds, that has accumulated inside the carbody. Mike has also done lots of research into the engines and thinks there is hope!

**805A:** We still haven't found cab side windows, but we are still looking. We will begin installing the door seals and the door windows the first of September. Also, one batten strip is falling off, and it will also be repaired then.

**SP 1215 (0-6-0 steam engine):** We are planning the move preparation work project the middle of September, probably the 18th to 22nd. We need mechanically minded, able bodied workers for this. It won't be much fun, working outside in the sun on old rusty dirty stuff, but you'll help save a big piece of railroad history. If you can help, please call the museum and leave a message!

## 1996 FRRS Crew Training

By Jim Gidley, Sr.

1996 has started off big. We had 28 people at the training session on 4-27-96. The rules exam was given in shifts as we did not have enough test booklets for everyone. On 5-5-96 we had 10 people for training. The people who took the classes are:

Ken Anderson, Dave Anderson, Julie Anderson, Marty Anderson, Tom Andrews, Chuck Barker, Dave Bergman, Don Borden, Pat Brimmer, Bob Carr, Eddie Chase, Kerry Cochran, Chuck Dunlap, Paul Finnegan, Jim Gidley, Sr., Tom Graham, Steve Habeck, John Hittner, David Hulsey, Ken Iverson, Mickey Johnson, Sharrell Lantz, Harold Lantz, Jim Ley, Peter Lyman, Judy McGrath, Melissa McGrath, Michael Mucklin, Vic Neves, Jeff Palmer, Ken Roller, Hank Stiles, Charlie Tronoff, Ed Wagner, John Whitaker, Judy Whitaker, Gordon Wollesen.

### New 1996 Qualifications

Passenger Engineer: Jim Gidley, Sr., Doug Morgan, Jack Palmer.

Fireman: Kerry Cochran, Don Borden, Dave Bergman, Don Nelson, Marty Anderson.

Conductor: Marty Anderson, Tom Graham, Terry Decottignies, Pat Brimmer.

Brakeman: Pat Brimmer, Bob Carr, Ed Wagner, Tom Andrews, Chuck Dunlap.

## Equipment Sold

Sometimes it seems that we just keep getting equipment. Sometimes equipment that was important or easy to get at the time no longer fills a need in our collection. Two such pieces are the Long Island FA-2 purchased some years ago in a bid sale and donated to the Society by Norman Holmes. After the purchase of the VIA ALCo FPA-4 and FPB-4, the FA-2 no longer filled the need for that type of locomotive. The VIA engines were in running condition, the FA-2 needs extensive work. As the FA-2 was a former L&N engine, the Illinois Railroad Museum wished to purchase it. They have now paid for it and we are awaiting instructions as to shipment.

We purchased three Baldwin S-12 switchers from USS-POSCO in Pittsburg, CA several years ago. No. 16 was purchased because it was a former McCloud River RR engine. The other two, No. 17 and No. 20 were purchased mainly to keep them from being scrapped. No. 17 was sold to the Turlock Western and now the No. 16 has been sold to the McCloud Railroad. No. 20 will be retained to represent that model of diesel switcher.

## Material Donations

Dick Patterson donated 8 large boxes of books on California History including railroad books and magazines that a library was discarding. We will evaluate what we need and donate or discard the remaining material. Grant Vogel donated about 50 issues of "Railroad Magazine" and a stack of "Western Railroader" from the late 40's to mid 50's. Jack Hathaway donated a large number of railroad books to our archives.

## Thanks Wayne

Wayne Monger donated the \$96 cost of numberboard materials for GP9's WP 725 and WP 731, plus more for the 2 cans of black spray paint and the full day of labor that went into the production of historically accurate new numberboards for the 2 GP9's. Thanks Wayne.

## Baldwin Parts at Portola

Wayne Monger delivered a pick-up truck load of Baldwin locomotive parts donated to the FRRS by USS-POSCO Industries of Pittsburg, CA. These were more spare parts and extra repair manuals for the B-L-H S-12's USS 16 (ex-McCloud River 30) and USS 20 (ex-Oliver Mining 933) and the S-8 USS 17 (the one FRRS sold to Turlock Western RR) that had been forgotten and scattered around the steel plant when the FRRS purchased all of what we thought were the available spare parts 3 years ago. So this time, we got around \$10,000 of additional spare parts and most importantly - a complete specialized tool set for working on B-L-H prime mover manifolds and power assemblies. Additional items were a valve grinding tool set for the Baldwins, a nearly complete set of rebuilt 6SL brake valves and components, oil filters and (now very rare) fuel filters. The USS-POSCO garage personnel, who are headed up by Rich Nicholson (the person who initially contacted Vic Neves to let us know they had found more parts for us), mentioned that there were some more stuff that we could have in the future, but they just could not find out where it was all moved to and stored. If and when they find it, they will give us another call so we can come over and pick it up.

## From the Office of the 1st. Vice-President Vic Neves

At the recent board election I was re-elected to a two-year term. I am grateful for your support on my re-election, but my fellow board members elevated me to the position of 1st vice-president. I had every opportunity to deny the nomination, but I didn't. Even though I sit in a precarious position as an officer of the Feather River Rail Society, I do not feel compelled to be silent anymore. I have been associated with the Society since its early days. I missed out being a charter member because of procrastination on my part. Probably, I was too busy photographing the last remnants of the Western Pacific RR as it was being swallowed up the Union Pacific.

Now I witness this event all over again as the mighty UP swallows up another railroad; my favorite, the Southern Pacific. So now I sit inside the rustic remains of caboose SP 1060, now at the museum, and contemplate the future of our museum. Well, now that the SP is part of the UP, does that put our SP collection into higher category?

Probably not, but its nice to know that other roads beside the Western Pacific can find a resting place to avoid the scrapper's torch. One of my all-time goals for the Society is to improve the museum grounds into a clean and well kept-interpretive display. With the formation of the Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society, we are on our way to seeing our neglected archives and priceless collections preserved for future generations. One of the biggest problems is the utilization of manpower, primarily the volunteer help. It just doesn't exist at the speed that we want to make the changes. We have made great strides on behalf of the members by addressing their wants. My biggest challenge, besides improving the grounds, is to unite the local members that virtually live at the museum, with the total membership that makes up the majority of the Society. The Feather River Rail Society inherited a unique situation, one that no other museum has. Most of its members live outside a 100 mile radius of the museum. This puts an incredible load on its local volunteers. I have a lots of ideas that I eventually would like to see implemented at the museum, but I feel each idea must be weighed against the already over utilized resources of the volunteers who will ultimately be the ones to do the lion's share of the work. Do you have any ideas? I want to hear from you.



6-ton locomotive is being lifted from its resting place at Butt Lake. Photo by Norm Holmes.

# Railroad Days 1996





*Waiting patiently for its next passenger run on Railroad Days 1996, GP-20 WP 2001 looks great after its recent restoration. Photo by Norm Holmes.*

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PORTOLA RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
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