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## **Paul Gordenev from Western Pacific Railroad RIP**

Stephen Ferrari

Paul Gordenev was born in San Francisco in 1939, and grew up riding, and became a fan of the San Francisco Municipal Railway. He was an early rider of excursions and became involved with the Northern California Railroad Club in San Francisco where he was president in the 1960's. He set up excursions on the McCloud River Railroad using 2-6-2 #25. Excursions that he also ran included one such as going to the Franzia Winery on the Tidewater Southern RR where everyone came home quite happy after much tasting. Another notable excursion in the early '60's was the joint railfan club Suntan Special Excursion riding on the Southern Pacific RR from San Francisco to Santa Cruz and Big Trees. He recounted that the last such trip was so popular that the Southern Pacific office that sold the tickets begged him to stop advertising as they could not put on any more cars for the train to handle the crowds. The most famous ride that he took as a teenager was riding behind the last cab forward SP 4294 over Donner in 1957. He snuck out and rode a good portion of it on top of the tender. As the late Western Pacific and Amtrak veteran Arthur Lloyd who ran the trip for the R&HS said, "Some of us had a better ride than others."

Paul also worked for the Western Pacific Railroad in many positions. He worked at the headquarters at 526 Mission Street in San Francisco. At times he also worked for them in the Traffic Department in Pittsburgh, PA, was a brakeman in Oakland and San Jose, and worked as Public Relations Manager writing and editing the Western Pacific magazine, Mileposts. He staged the famous photo of the 2 Bicentennial diesels on the Keddie wye bridge in 1976 that did not bode him well with the higher ups at the WP as they said that 2 locomotives could never be on the bridge. He made it happen anyway. He stayed with Western Pacific through the merger and retired from Union Pacific in Customer Service in St. Louis.

