

signal department out of Oroville until 1976, when Norm bought it, and then restored it.

THE NATIONAL TRACK MOTORCAR CHAMPIONSHIP RACES are patterned after the International Handcar Championships that are held every year in front of the California State Railroad Museum at Old Sacramento. Like the handcar races we use a single 300-meter long stretch of track. In our case, we have used the track from the south side of our balloon loop to a point near the east end of our engine house, which is where the finish line is located. On Sunday morning, all of the motorcars and their operators were lined up at the finish line at 10:00, and since Norm's motorcar wasn't running, the job of announcing the motorcar races fell to him. Using the fabulous sound system that Vic Neves had assembled, and brought to Portola for the races, each operator and their motorcar were introduced to the crowd. After the intro all of the cars proceeded around the balloon loop to the starting line. In the meantime, members of the Wollensen family brought the museum's three-wheeled velocipede, and the handcar down the track in front of the crowd.

It was 10:30 by the time that the 1st car crossed the finish line for the 1st time. The crowds of people on hand to see the motorcars were standing behind rope barriers in the museum's parking lot, or were sitting on the flatcars and in the cabooses of our "passenger" train. Right from the start motorcars began to break-down at the starting line, but everyone except Vic was able to get in their three runs by 12:30. With all of the operators gathered at the finish line, Wayne made the presentations of awards and participation ribbons. By 1:15 the passenger train had once again began to operate. Motorcar rides to the public began around 2:30, six were run at once, running ahead and behind the train until after 4:30. The rides were a great success and many people liked the motorcars better than the trains. Many operators who had been having problems with their cars earlier found that the cars performed better as they were run more. I would like to extend to everyone that was involved with (and affected by) the Motorcar Races this year. A big "Thank you" needs to be extended to Norman Holmes for his wonderfully entertaining announcing abilities, plus for giving me a free hand in trying to set all of this up. Thanks also goes to members Steve Habeck, who manned the stop watch and the blackboard at the finish line, and to Dennis Clemens for taking the position of starting line judge. Another "Thank you" needs to be extended to the entire Wollensen Family, in helping with the set up of the announcers stand, running the handcar and velocipede, and many other items needed to make this event a success. A very special "Thanks" needs to be made to my longtime friend, Vic Neves, who brought up his fantastic public address system for use during the races, plus who put up with my badgering of him about this event over the past

year. Also special "Thanks" need to be extended to "Palmdale" for his support and assistance in trying to get us a proper timing system, plus in helping with the trophies, and to Brad Black of the Ventura County Ry in helping "Palmdale". And one more big "Thanks" needs to go to my Wife, Lynda, for putting up with me, and enjoying Railroad Days in spite of my pre-occupation with the races. If I have missed anyone, please forgive me, and let me know about it....

NEXT YEAR...

It is my hope that during next year's races we will have a turn-out of 30 cars. We know that we will probably have the Wollensen Family entered as they have taken on rebuilding the motorcar that we received from the Carson City Railroad Club. There are also new ideas already floating around about how this event can be even more entertaining. Eventually, I would like to see this event be able to "stand on its own feet", and be held on a totally separate weekend from any other operations at the museum. But until then, it will continue to be held on Sunday mornings on the weekend of Portola's Railroad Days.....

SEPT 28-29th OPERATIONS

The last operating weekend of 1985 was relatively quiet compared to the other dates. Good weather and fall colors brought a few visitors, but later there were more crew members than passengers on the trains. (Sounds like the way some "real" railroad passenger trains ran before Amtrak).

Our Hobo Stew Cookoff likewise was slow with only 30 people taking advantage of a delicious dinner. Four stew were submitted and 1st place was taken by Rosalie Canfield, in 2nd was Barbara Holmes, followed by Mary Ryczkowski, and Bev Moore a green salad, french bread and coffee filled out the dinner. Bev Moore and Charlene Marvin provided the great desert selections. We'll try again next year...so start planning.....

VIDEO'S OF THE RACES

by Vic Neves

Just a short note, El Cheapo Video Productions has about 1½ hours worth of the races, but Pentrex Video will have a video on the races, please write for details. Also Fred James helped me with the P.A. sound system.....

TRUE TAILS of the RAILS

Years ago the Western Pacific shipped significant amounts of livestock: cattle, horses, sheep and pigs were frequently found in stock cars, usually at the head of the train. The reason for this was that the livestock had to be unloaded, rested, watered and fed at regular times. The railroad constructed stock pens at every terminal and at other locations for this purpose. On one hot summer day, a westbound freight was waiting in the siding at Pulga. The first car behind the engine was a carload of pigs. The head brakeman, doing his duty inspecting the train

whenever time permitted, observed the pigs suffering from the heat which was radiating from the canyon wall. Near the west end of Pulga siding, a water hose was hooked up at a location where a spring flowed from the canyon. Thinking a nice cool shower would make the pigs feel better the brakeman proceeded to wet down the animals. When the train reached Oroville all the pigs were dead: the shock was too much for them. No one except the brakeman knew what had happened—as all the water had evaporated.

BURRO CRANE E-14

Here is a little info on the Burro Crane we now have at the museum, the trailer flat shown came with it and it has been converted to a diesel engine.....

