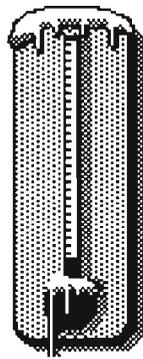


COLD!

A Cool Place to Work-
Come one, come all!
Come work in a real
"cool" place...

by Gordon Wollesen



Come and work at the Portola Railroad Museum during the winter. Come join Norm, Hap, Bruce and Ken and maintain the museum under the best working conditions anyone could ever find in Portola.

December 1990 came upon us with normal winter temperatures of mid-teens to the mid-twenties. Nothing unusual temperature-wise. The morning of December 19, 1990 came in with a low of +17 degrees. On the morning of December 20, 1990 the bottom fell out. A wonderful, warm low of minus 25 degrees. December 21, 1990 opened with an even warmer (?) minus 30 degrees. For the next nine mornings the lows remained below zero. During these warm and wonderful below zero mornings, the afternoon high temperatures ranged from minus 18 to plus 5 degrees. Summer returned to Portola on December 31, 1990 when the morning low was a balmy 0 degrees. WOW! A heat wave. We managed to adapt to the hot weather and keep things going.

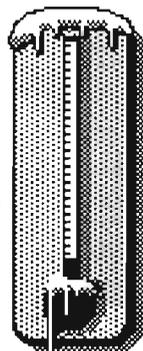
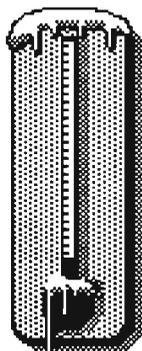
The extreme cold affected the museum in several ways. The engine house cats had to be fed, but we had difficulty getting frozen cat food out of the can. Bill and Bandit were very patient (?) waiting for their breakfast. A heat lamp cured that problem. Next the water system in the ladies' room froze nearly solid. The men's restroom survived because of no windows and a hard-working electric heater. Quick action by Hap, Gordon and a propane torch saved all the frozen plumbing in the ladies' restroom except one 3/4" valve. Very lucky. Finally a major source of winter concern. BATTERIES. So far, it looks like we lost 10 locomotive, 2 caboose, and 4 motorcar batteries. Too cold, too many batteries, and not enough chargers to keep up with the 150+ batteries. Gordon had the unique opportunity to actually watch 2 batteries break apart from freezing.

According to some of the local old-timers, it is nothing unusual for below zero temperatures sometime during December, January, and February. Usually these extreme lows last 2 or 3 days then return to normal low temperatures. This 11 day period of well below zero temperatures was very unusual. Also very, very cold.

Here are the unofficial low temperatures for the last 13 days of December 1990 and the first 5 days of January 1991.

12-19-90	+17	12-28-90	-5
12-20-90	-25	12-29-90	-5
12-21-90	-30	12-30-90	-1
12-22-90	-30	12-31-90	0
12-23-90	-25	1-1-91	+7
12-24-90	-30	1-2-91	+10
12-25-90	-10	1-3-91	+15
12-26-90	-8	1-4-91	+15
12-27-90	-5	1-5-91	+28

So, come one! Come all!
Join the winter festivities.
Have loads of winter fun.
Come to the Portola Railroad
Museum and freeze with us.



AROUND THE MUSEUM

Gordon Wollesen has been working nearly everyday through the coldest of days to upgrade our electric circuits. When WP abandoned the diesel shop building in 1974, vandals cut and salvaged much of the exposed electric wires. Several new circuits have been installed eliminating the need for numerous extension cords. Much work remains...Thanks Gordy!

Bruce Cooper replaced the fuel pump and made other adjustments so that our fork lift truck is now running better, thank you. Bruce also did tune up work on the International dump truck. Dean Hill and Norm Holmes drove the Dodge pick up and International truck to Quincy to weigh and register these vehicles so that they may be legally operated on California roads. We made a substantial contribution to the Motor Vehicle Department!

Ken Roller has completed laying a 250' extension of storage track No. 7. With the recent additional equipment arrivals, we need more storage tracks. As soon as ballast is obtained we will be able to use the track.

When our U.S. Army Troop Sleeper arrived from Alaska it had 30 twin bed mattresses on the bunk beds. The twin bed mattresses are 36" wide, the bunks are 30" wide. We have been looking for 30" mattresses and thought we found a supply through government surplus. Norm Holmes loaded his pickup and a rented trailer with all the old mattresses and took them to Stockton to donate them to St. Mary's Interfaith Dining Room for use of the needy. Then on to Rough & Ready Island to pick up the new ones only to find they were also 36" wide. Norm did pick up a high capacity water pump to mount on our new tank car to make it available for fire service, if needed.

Several years ago we were given an HO gauge model railroad layout. It operated well but improvements were needed. Ken Roller decided this winter was the time to redo the layout to allow continuous train operation and to change the scenery. The overall size is now 10x10 feet and has a "cage" built around it for hands off viewing. Ken is not only an artist with his paintings of WP steam, but he does a great job with a model railroad layout.

DISPATCHER'S BOARD

Early in March, 1991, Union Pacific will be transferring all dispatching operations from Sacramento to Omaha. The dispatcher's board, work stations and all related equipment will be surplus. As Union Pacific will no longer need this equipment, we asked for and received the donation of all surplus materials in the dispatcher's office. The dispatcher's board shows all former Western Pacific trackage from Oakland to Salt Lake City in graph form with all stations, sidings and branches. The board is nearly 50 feet long! We will have to remove all materials by April 1st. Upon movement to Portola they will be stored in a box car at our museum until a suitable location is selected for display.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

We welcome three new life members to our ranks. They are Frank L. Barajas, and Jack Hathaway who are both from San Diego CA; and our very own Vic Neves from San Leandro CA who lists his occupations as tools & parts clerk, photographer, editor, and general free-loader. Welcome guys!

CORRECTION

In the last Train Sheet, the business car, "The Pioneer," was said to be ex-SP business car 106, instead it should have been said to be ex-WP business car 106. The car is still at the museum on a temporary loan.

OBITUARY

FRRS member and retired Western Pacific engineer J. R. "Bob" Brown passed away last October. His wife, Ann, now lives in Ventura with their daughter.