

Special Events at the Museum

By Steve Habeck

After the Museum's regular operating season ended on the weekend of September 9-10, 1995, a series of special events were held which effectively extended the season well into October. The first of these was the annual Railfan Day (see separate article), which was again successful. On the afternoon of Saturday, October 7th, the Museum hosted a visit by a small group of financial people, who arrived in Portola aboard a UP business train. UP Manager-Administration Kathy Petersen and her assistant brought their guests over for a brief Museum tour and train ride before they went to dinner at the Iron Door Restaurant in Johnsville. As usual, WP NW2u 608 pulled our "merger train" of cabooses (MP 13878, WP 428, UP 903005). Switching in progress for the SP event to be held the next day was briefly put on hold for the caboose train, and the yard job crew, consisting of Vic Neves, Gordon Wollesen, Marty Anderson, Ken Iverson, and Yardmaster Steve Habeck, assumed operation of the caboose train, along with Executive Director Norm Holmes. Norm and Steve conducted the Museum tour, and escorted the visitors back to the UP yard office.

Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society

On Sunday, October 8, 1995, the Museum hosted a group from the Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society (SP H&TS), which was having its convention in Sparks, NV. Over 60 members of this group were treated to photo runbys of SP SD9E 4404 and Kodachrome SP GP9E 2873 pulling a freight train of SP equipment, and also a train of wood-sided beet racks with SP cupola caboose 1060 carrying the markers. (An heroic effort to reassemble the air compressor on the GP9 by Tom Graham and CMO Hank Stiles on Saturday, the 7th, was thwarted when 2 of the compression rings broke while being installed. The air compressor on this locomotive suffered major freeze damage last winter, due to a clogged drain line preventing the air compressor from draining completely when the engine was winterized. The air compressor was completely rebuilt over the summer months as Hank's schedule and parts availability allowed. With the air compressor down, SP 2873 could not be run, but was taken along as the 2nd unit, dead-in-consist.)

The Beanery was open for lunch, and did great business, as did the gift shop. After lunch, most of the SP group took advantage of the opportunity to take the throttle of the SD9 and make trips around the balloon under a pre-arranged special group rent-a-locomotive operation, which took over 3 hours to complete.

Also during the afternoon, several other locomotives were started up for the benefit of the SP fans, including WP GP7 707, ALCO FPA4 6776, WP F7A 921-D (coupled with WP F9Bu 925-C and WP FP7 805-A, forming an A-B-A set), WP ALCO S-1 512, and WP NW2u 608. We made a very favorable impression upon the SP fans, most of whom had never been to Portola before. Many comments of high praise and amazement were received on the condition of the facility and equipment, and on the extent of the collection.

Credit is due to Directors Wayne Monger and Vic Neves for bringing up the idea of having this group visit the Museum in conjunction with their convention, and for setting it up with the SP H&TS. At the Museum, things flowed smoothly due to the efforts of many people, including Bruce Cooper, who handled the rentals from the cab of the 4404, and the following: Steve Habeck, Gordon Wollesen, Vic Neves, Don Nelson, Hank Stiles, Tom Graham, Judy McGrath, Ken Iverson, Marty Anderson, Jim Malksen, Norm & Barbara Holmes, Sue Cooper and Lolli Bryan in the Beanery, and, of course, Hap Manitt.

This event was a big public relations and financial success, thanks to a very impressed and appreciative group from the SP H&TS. Well done.

Buick Car Club Visited the Museum

On Saturday, October 14, 1995, the Buick Car Club visited the Museum. This group of about 120 people, and dozens of beautifully-restored automobiles, spent most of the day at the Museum. They were scheduled to come in two groups, for scheduled special train rides at 10 AM and 2 PM, but many of them came early and stayed late. We made two runs of the caboose train, powered by WP ALCO S1 512, in the morning, and one run in the afternoon. The train crew consisted of Steve Habeck, Gordon Wollesen, and Don Nelson, with Bruce Cooper assisting when he wasn't showing off the M60A3 tank. Sue Cooper, Lolli Bryan, and Hap Manitt were on hand as well, staffing the Beanery and gift shop.

Another Item of Note

The train rides and switching activities that took place on these Saturdays had to be coordinated with the locomotive rental program under Skip Englert. On each of these Saturdays (10/7 & 10/14), Skip conducted 6-8 hours of locomotive rentals, which required constant coordination between Skip and Yardmaster Steve Habeck to keep things running smoothly.

BIG Muscles

On three separate occasions in late September and early October, the Museum was used as the location for photo sessions for a muscle magazine.

Two men and four women, in excellent physical condition and wearing distractingly little clothing, used various Museum equipment and locations as props for the photo layouts. The photographers used many different setups and locations, even getting us to hold up our switching on October 7th in order to shoot a layout using Vic Neves' SP caboose 1060 as a backdrop, and getting Bruce to fire up one of the tanks for another set.

While we did not expect the Museum to be used as the location for a muscle magazine layout, we welcome this and other opportunities to showcase our facility and collection.