

Chief Mechanical Officer's Report

By Hank Stiles

Once again it is time to report to the membership on the latest news in the Mechanical Department.

It seems that just when you think that you are getting ahead things seem to jump up to impede your progress.

Our mechanical programs at the museum were moving along so smoothly and then that bump in the road came along. Since our last report we have had two big projects pop up. The WP 608 has developed a water leak in the engine; it seems that about a gallon of water per hour is leaking into the air box. It is probably a cylinder head gasket, but it could also be a crack in the cylinder liner or the head. Let's hope that it is the gasket.

The WP 725 is having some problems also, the crankcase is filling with vapors when it is cold. After it warms up it seems to clear up but I did not want to take any chances with it so I have taken it "out of service" until we find the problem and repair it. It's too bad, because that unit runs so strongly, but repairs will be made and it will be back.

Small problems that have come up include air compressor control problems on the VIA 6776. It would not keep enough air to operate safely so Steve Habeck took it "out of service." On my weekend at Portola (June 22 & 23) I looked at the problem and after a lot of work found that the problem was a rubber seal 1/4 inch in size. How can it be that a part so small can stop a locomotive so big? It is now running as ALCo intended that it should, making money for its owner; in this case for our museum.

The WP 707 went down; it would not load. It was our luck to have Peter Lyman who could get to work on it. After some work he found the problem, dirty interlocks on the start contactors. Now the problem we had with it sometimes not loading is history. It just proves what they say: On a steam engine it takes 5 minutes to find the problem and 5 hours to fix it. On a diesel it takes 5 hours to find the problem and 5 minutes to fix it.

Our Locomotive maintenance clinics have had the help of Chuck Barker, Ed Powell, Peter Lyman, Alan Dahl (a new member), myself and others. There is still enough room for any of you who would like to find out what makes a locomotive tick. So please come up to Portola the first weekend of each month and help out with our equipment, learn and have fun. Also I am at the museum on the third weekend of each month for work and the Board of Directors meeting. We would like all of you to come to the meeting and put in your two cents worth; the directors need your ideas.

Our new member of the board, Doug Morgan has kindly offered to give me his help to build our Mechanical Department into a more efficient operation. Doug, being a professional in running railroad repair shops, will be a big help in setting up standards and procedures to make our shop work better for our needs.

In the shop area things are really coming together, Tom Graham has worked very hard in fixing up the shop to make it easier and safer to work in. The wiring that the Bank of America gave us a grant to help pay for is almost done (thanks B of A). This will put a lot of extension cords out of business, maybe we will have enough cords for once. Thanks to many people's hard work we are close to being finished.

This will allow us to make better use of our time in the shop making the work easier and more fun. Thanks go to all who helped on this project.

See you in Portola

Hank

Pacific Limited Report

By Steve Habeck

In conjunction with the American Cancer Society, Pacific Limited sponsored a train, using Amtrak equipment, running from Sacramento to Dunsmuir and return on Saturday, June 15, 1996 for Dunsmuir's Railroad Days event. The train was a financial success, despite the removal of two cars from the consist due to unsold seats (marketing time for this train was very short due to late approvals). About 370 passengers were carried on the train, most of whom boarded at Sacramento and Chico. The resourcefulness of the Pacific Limited staff was once again called into play when the prestocked dinette car had its power shut off overnight in Sacramento, and much of the food was unusable. A quick call to Norm Holmes and Steve Habeck, preparing to line up passengers in Chico, resulted in a frantic sandwich assembly by a very cooperative and helpful crew of Safeway employees, and an equally frantic run to the depot on short time by Steve, with his truck full of sandwiches and hot dogs. Everything and everyone got on board the train with no delays, and Norm got his money back from Amtrak as soon as he showed the receipt (he paid for the food at Safeway). The rest of the trip was rather uneventful by comparison. A last minute surprise was the announcement by Amtrak the night before the trip that the train would go to Black Butte to turn on the wye, rather than have the power run around the train and turn the seats at Dunsmuir per the original plan. This was a disappointment in that the class FP40, Amtrak 200, was the trailing unit on the trip up from Sacramento, and would have been leading on the way back, had they run around at Dunsmuir. The silver lining on this cloud was that PLG was allowed to sell tickets for the Black Butte turn, and we did sell 75 tickets, at \$30 per, for the turn. These sales directly added to our profit, since PLG was not charged for the turn mileage. All in all, it was a good trip, since PLG and ACS will split the approximately \$7000 profit, and PLG made a very favorable impression with Amtrak.

By the time you read this, car host selection and notification for the Iowa and Ozarks trips should be complete. As of this writing, openings still exist on most of the Iowa trips, but more volunteers than available slots is the situation for the Ozarks trip. Priority was given to experienced hosts who could be with the train for the entire trip, for continuity. I played a minor role in the selection process, mainly due to the small number of FRRS members volunteering; my input went to PLG Vice President - Operations Hal Lewis and PLG Crew Chief Bob Harper. As always, my addresses are in the masthead of the Train Sheet, if you have comments or suggestions. Thank you.

Donations to the GP9 Fund

*Philip DeLozier, Allen Egbert, Steven Fauth, Barry Garrett, Philip Hackman, Errol Spangler, Gene Vicknair

* indicates a donation of \$100 or more.
Contributions so far: \$10,807.75.

Additions to this fund are still needed. We welcome all contributions, large or small.