



The Train Sheet

Issue 98

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News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Portola Railroad Museum

Vista Dome-Buffer-Dormitory Car "Silver Hostel"

On Nov 19, 1999, the Feather River Rail Society welcomed home its newest family member as the WP California Zephyr Dome-Lounge car "Silver Hostel" arrived at the Portola Railroad Museum. The "Hostel" joins our CZ locomotive 805A in representing the proudest chapter in the history of the Western Pacific.

Built by the Budd Company under lot number 9657-021, the "Silver Hostel", WP 832, rolled out of the Red Lion Plant in November, 1948. The car is one of six Vista Dome-Lounge-

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Awaiting movement onto the property, WP 832, the Silver Hostel arrived at Portola on November 18, 1999. - Norman Holmes

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WP Heavyweight Coach 320 Donated to PRM

A long time desire for a WP coach was fulfilled on November 30, when WPMW 37-8 was brought into our museum grounds. When we started our museum in 1983, all of WP's heavyweight cars, except for 37-8 were retired and off the property. From a private owner we were able to purchase a former baggage car, converted to a MW kitchen/diner, but it had been extensively modified. This was the only coach that we had any chance of getting.

This car had an interesting history on the WP. Pullman built it in November 1923, as an 80-passenger coach, No. 320, the last in the series. In May 1950, the car became Instruction

car No. 110. In that service the seats were removed and folding chairs substituted. It would be sent to various terminals on the railroad and used as a classroom for rulebook and safety rules review.

When the car was no longer needed for that purpose in 1972 it was assigned to the Oroville derrick outfit and made into a kitchen/dining car. It was given the number 37-8 and first painted gray, then dark blue. It is now silver, UP's MW color scheme. (Should we name it Silver Coach to match our Silver Hostel?)

Our plans are to eventually restore the

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Harry *HAP* Mani 1916-1999

We lost a great man and a loyal member of our Society when on October 31, 1999, Harry "Hap" Mani passed away at the age of 83.

Hap was born in Loyaltown June 10, 1916, and moved to Portola at a young age graduating from Portola High School in 1933. He was a lifetime member and former commander of the Portola America Legion Post. He went to work for the Western Pacific Railroad in 1937 and retired in 1976. He was a "mud hop" (yard clerk) and crew caller when he retired. He had lots of stories to tell about his experiences. He was featured as the second in a series of member portraits in issue No. 94 of the Train Sheet.

Hap joined the Feather River Rail Society in 1983, soon after the organization was formed. A very ardent supporter he was always available to help with the gift shop sales, would conduct tours for seniors and school children and every spring, a few days before Railroad Days, would get a hose and squeegee to help wash down the diesel shop building. He was an inspiration to all of us.

Hap was a collector. Anything that he or we might want to use in the future or just want to save for whatever, Hap saved. He got a lot of ribbing about this, but when someone wanted some hard to find part or

tool, Hap could usually find it. Once when we were re-cabbling our 200-ton derrick, we needed the end of the cable leaded in. Hap said "I think I have what you need". Soon he returned with a supply of "socket lead."

For a number of years the Train Sheet carried a column titled "Caboosing with Hap Mani." Hap, I suppose because of his work as a clerk, kept a daily journal about everything that went on at the museum. We gleaned items from the journal to report minor activities at the museum.

Hap developed cancer a few years ago and passed away peacefully at home. His wife of 53 years Evelyn "Sug", sons Larry and Mike as well as sister Thelma Epper and four grandchildren survive him. He was preceded in death by one brother. No services were held at Hap's request and his ashes were spread over the mountains he loved.

Hap had a wealth of memories about the history of the area, the railroad and the people who worked here. Unfortunately we were not able to record these recollections.

The family requests any donations in his memory be made to the Portola Railroad Museum c/o Fehrman Mortuary and Crematory, P.O. Box 53, Quincy, CA 95971.

WP Heavyweight coach 320 Donated to PRM

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car as much as possible like it was as a WP coach. Coming along with the coach was a former TS box car also used in the Portola Derrick outfit.

The entire Oroville derrick outfit was moved to Portola in 1990, when the Oroville car facility was closed. We now have most of the Oroville derrick outfit: 200 ton derrick No. 37, boom car 37-1, flat car 37-2, Supply car 37-6, Pullman sleeper 37-7, cable storage car 37-10 and cabooses 37-10.

Of the 20 WP heavyweight coaches owned by WP, 6 exist: 302 donated to City of Oakland, now on loan to Western Railway Museum at Rio Vista Jct. In service. 309 sold and now an office in Oroville. 314, 316 sold and now retail stores at a station complex in Calistoga. 315 sold to Norman Holmes in 1975 and donated to Pacific Locomotive Society, in service on Niles Canyon Railway. 320 donated to the Feather River Rail Society, Portola.

- Norman Holmes



November 30, 1999 found our newest acquisition on the property. Donated by the Union Pacific, this car helps round out our collection of ex WP heavyweight equipment.

- Norman Holmes

Vista Dome-Buffer-Dormitory Car "Silver Hostel"

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Dormitory cars built as part of the original CZ car order.

The dome is its most noticeable exterior feature. An icon of the CZ, this 24 seat "penthouse" would be one of five on a CZ consist, trailing immediately behind three dome coaches. The car resided near the middle of the train, leading the diner, sleepers, and the fifth dome, belonging to the rear observation car. Sitting in the upper deck of the "Hostel" travelers were given 360 degree panoramas of the dramatic scenery the train traversed.

The buffet lounge occupies one end of the car, with the kitchen located under part of the dome. Here, passengers ordered snacks, drinks, and light lunch items. In the early 1960's, all six cars were remodeled as "The Cable Car Lounge", designed around a San Francisco theme. This variant would become nationally famous as the subject of many well-remembered ad campaigns.

The dormitory section provided quarters for members of the CZ crew, including bedrooms for the Zephyrette hostesses. All crew members shared a full bathroom located under the dome.

The "Silver Hostel" was the lounge-dorm car on the very first westbound CZ and served until the end of CZ service before being sold off. After passing through many owners, the "Hostel" was purchased by the FRRS May 12, 1999, for restoration and display. This month, the Society launched an ambitious fundraising program for restoration of the car and the 805A called the Zephyr Project.

The "Hostel" has come to us missing many of its interior components, but retains its basic configuration, one of only two existing CZ dome-lounge-dorms which can claim this. Several important items have already been acquired for the car, including the distinctive dome area speaker grille, some of the lounge seats, and seats for the dome area. Overall, the condition of the carbody is excellent and much of the original mechanical equipment remains and is serviceable. The first major restoration item, expected to occur this summer if funds are available, is the installation of glass throughout the car. Particularly difficult will be the special curved glass in the dome, through which thousands of travelers have viewed the splendor of the Feather River Canyon. Once re-glassed, the exterior of the car will be returned to its original condition, including the reapplication of missing side skirts, reattachment of the California Zephyr name boards, and repair of the end diaphragms.

This acquisition and the proposed restoration stands as one of the largest undertakings the FRRS has ever attempted. However, the potential of the "Silver Hostel" is tremendous. With time, diligence, and the efforts of our members and volunteers, we can restore the "Silver Hostel" to take its place as one of the "crown jew-

els" of our collection, ranking besides such favorite and historic items as the 805A and the WP GP20 2001.

Due to the importance of this artifact, and the 805A, the FRRS is also reaching out to corporate sponsors and other historical societies to help return these CZ items to life. Already members of the Gold Coast Railroad Museum, Monad Railway Equipment, and Illinois Transit Assembly Corporation have been helpful in supplying us with fixtures and information to aid our efforts.

To help save this historic car will take time and dedication. If you would like to help financially, please send donations to: Feather River Rail Society, "Zephyr Project", P. O. Box 608, Portola, CA 96122-0608. If you would like to volunteer your services for the effort, please contact Eugene Vicknair by mail c/o the museum, or by e-mail at TSRY@aol.com. In addition, any information on the car, photos or diagrams, or memories to share would be appreciated. When completed, it is planned that part of the dormitory section will house a graphic and audio presentation on the history of and life aboard the CZ.

Finally, several images of the "Hostel" taken during the initial car inspection can be seen at Alan Radecki and John Wilson's excellent California Zephyr website at <http://calzephyr.railfan.net>. Look in the "Ghosts" section under "Dome-Buffer".

- Eugene John Vicknair and Frank Brehm

Notes from the Chairman

GREETINGS TO OUR MEMBERSHIP AND BEST WISHES FOR A GREAT AND PLEASING YEAR 2000.

Our museum has been a very busy place this past year. Our summertime visitor corps was very heavy and the Rent-A-Locomotive program was very busy.

We were fortunate in acquiring several pieces of rolling stock. The arrival of the California Zephyr Silver Hostel was especially exciting and we all look forward to its restoration.

The loss of one of our inspirational members "Hap" Manit leaves a void but the memorabilia he left will be a pleasant reminder of what he meant to the museum.

The near completion of the Library Car under the guidance of John Walker is a tremendous step forward in providing a safe haven for the historical possessions that have accumulated over the years through the generosity of many.

As the year progresses we hope that more of our members will become involved in our operating and mechanical departments. These activities are fun and rewarding and very beneficial to our museum.

In closing, I would again wish everyone a Glorious New Year. Hopefully, we will see you at the museum early and often.

HAPPY RAILS,
Andy Anderson