

## 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](mailto: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