

CMO Report

just shovel snow and try to stay warm. In a few short months it will be time once again to start gearing up for the spring season, my favorite time of the year.

This year we hope to start working on the WP 921-D. This engine is one of the favorite locomotives in our locomotive rental fleet. We have used this engine in, I will bet hundreds of locomotive rentals with that and the three million or so miles that the Western Pacific put on it contributed to its present condition. It was painted before the Union Pacific donated it to the museum almost twenty years ago. Can you believe it has been almost twenty years since we started the museum? That is about the life expectancy of a paint job when it is exposed to the elements such as it is in Portola. The locomotive needs painting and body repair for the most part although some mechanical work is needed also.

Locomotive Maintenance Clinics (L M C) will start the first Saturday in April and the first Saturday and Sunday through the month of October. Please do the museum a favor and plan to come up for one or more of those weekends. We have a great time and we perform a service for the museum that helps preserve what was the Western Pacific. There is little cost involved as we have facilities to support our membership, sleeping car, shower car, lounge area and cooking facilities. Everything you would need or want. (Bring your latest videotapes to share) If only one percent of the membership came to the clinics we would have nine or ten people, think of all that would be accomplished.

See you in Portola!!!

Tidewater Southern Crossbucks Preserved by the FRRS

By Eugene Vicknair

On November 23, 2002, the ad-hoc FRRS Crossbuck Liberation Team occurred on the streets of Modesto. Reporting for duty were Wayne Monger, Derick Sturke, Ted Benson and Eugene Vicknair, joined by Doug Morgan who also drove the flatbed truck.

The team converged on the new Old Mill Café (the place ANY good day along the Tidewater Southern should begin) and made plans over hearty plates of hot breakfast. After many stories and much coffee, we embarked for our first target: the corner of 9th and B Street.

This crossbuck proved to be an early replacement, but was dutifully removed and tucked onto the waiting flatbed while scores of motorists rolled by giving quizzical glances. Onward to C Street and 10th where a lovely original buck awaited. With much grunting and groaning, she came free from the soil and was wrestled into the truck.

The next three were classic, original TS bucks that had stood guard since wire graced 9th Street. These were set in concrete and required cutting free from the ground. As the base of the crossbucks were cut through with a battery-powered Sawzall, the smell of cutting aged redwood provided a welcome break from the dust and exhaust fumes of central Modesto. At L Street, Ted Benson took time out to capture an image of the rest of us reenacting the flag raising at Iwo Jima in reverse with a no-armed buck. To the amusement of our team, the sight of 5 guys wielding powered cutting equipment and plucking big wooden posts

Tidewater Southern Crossbucks Preserved

from the pavement caused nary an eyebrow to raise among the passers-by.

The final acquisition was located at Princeton Avenue, site of the old TS siding of Aurora. Ted Benson even found a Road Closed sign the TS had made out of an old station sign and planted at their one-time access road. At this point, a concerned citizen appeared to quiz us on our business. He was informed we were preserving the Tidewater Southern and official documents were offered for his inspection. He kindly declined, stating that, with all the weirdness in the world, he wouldn't be surprised that grown men would go around rescuing old railroad signs!

With the Princeton buck removed and secured, the total for the day was 5 originals, 1 early replacement and 1 road closed sign. Doug Morgan made good time back to Portola and the bucks are now safely stored in a boxcar awaiting resurrection, restoration and display.

Thank you to everyone who helped out, to the Union Pacific for its generous donation and assistance and to Eric Stephens for the loan of his cordless Sawzall. Hopefully, before too long, these crossbucks will once again see the light of day and trains rolling past under their watchful protection.

Rare Western Pacific Construction Car Preserved by FRRS

By Eugene Vicknair

On November 13, 2002, an extremely rare artifact from the construction days of the Western Pacific Railway arrived at its new home. Acquired by the FRRS in 2000, the car had been stored in Oroville, California until its final movement to the museum.

Located by FRRS member David Dewey, the car had been used as a small cottage in Oroville. When Mr. Dewey noticed it bore Western Pacific markings, a hunt began to determine what the car was. Research of photographic evidence in the FRRS and other archives by Eugene Vicknair confirmed that it (or at least visually identical cars) was used during the construction of the WP from 1903 to 1909.

The car appears to have been what is known as a camp or outfit car, used to house the workers as they built the line. It is unknown how many were used by or who built them, but it is likely they were converted from older cars, probably from the Denver and Rio Grande, which financed the construction of the WP. In early 2000, the FRRS Board approved its acquisition and negotiations with the owner were successful.

No restoration plans are currently in place, however the car is being weather protected and more research is occurring to determine an appropriate plan for its conservation. Special thanks go to FRRS member Doug Morgan, who conducted the negotiations that led to its purchase and donated time to aid in loading and moving the car, and to Bob Hayes and John Martin of Martin Crane who provided storage of the car in Oroville and movement to the PRM.

In addition to acting as pilot for the move, Doug Morgan also negotiated the transport and loading of the car. Meg Evans also helped pilot the movement of the car up the Feather River Canyon to its new home. Thanks to all who helped.