

Caboosing Around the Museum

- John Walker, Museum Manager

6.30-7.09

Linda Knudson did Yeoman duties in the gift shop while Kerry Cochran, Paul & Ken Finnegan, Don Nelson, Norman Holmes, Jack Zygnier, Loren Ross, Ken Iverson, Bill Parker, Charlie Spikes and others kept the trains rolling at the museum. Paul "Yard Dawg" Lanyi and Kevin Caldwell did odd jobs around the museum. Alan Hirasawa finished repairs on the UP 849 and got it running again. Dave Pires also worked for several days in the Archives car.

7.13-7.15

"Brutally HOT". Record temperatures registered around the region. Linda and John sweltered in 103 temperatures in the gift shop while Ken Iverson, Norman Holmes and Jack Zygnier seated out several long days filled with RAL's. Jim Cooper and Frank Beavers worked in the Archives car.

7.16-7.17

Short on crew again this weekend. Norman and Andy Anderson ran RAL's while Pat Brimmer, Eddie Chase, Ken Iverson and John Walker crewed the caboos trains. Charlie Spikes, Tom Andrews and Bill Parker helped on Sunday. Rod McClure even took a few turns as passenger engineer in the afternoon. Steve Habeck directed after hour switching and setting up some new engines for RAL's.

7.18-7.22

John Manter has been working on setting up a new web cam over the weekend. The camera was finally made operational and tested locally around the museum. Pat Brimmer began a project to repair and repaint the benches on the Mopac caboose. Linda Brimmer volunteered to sort through eleven boxes of assorted magazine donated to the Archives. Dave Novarina of Salinas is back for his annual workweek here at the museum. Dave has started a project that we talked about last year, to whit, rewiring the cabooses used on the annual Santa Trains with permanent power cords which will make the whole process of stringing lights much more easier this winter. Dave will install permanent flex cable and sockets to the cars, which will greatly speed the installation of Christmas lights and decorations in December. The wiring will also allow the cabooses to be plugged into regular 110 volt current and be lit inside when stationary. Dave is also donating the entire cost of the project and will work with his suppliers for additional donations of electrical equipment

for the museum's future wiring projects! Bruce Yparreguire of Chico brought up a pair of nice display cabinets for use in the gift shop.

7.23-7.24

John Walker and Hank and Janice Stiles went back up to Oregon to do drink and snack concessions on another excursion train for a two-day trip from Eugene to Coos Bay Oregon. This trip was run by Tom Horstmann of Rails Northwest. This was a great trip down a very scenic line. The folks in Coos Bay turned out for a huge welcome party, which coincided with a "Show and Shine" antique car show! Apparently, this was the first passenger train over the line since 1953! Special thanks to Mr. Horstmann who purchased our entire supply of snacks and drinks, decided to give them away to his passengers and gave a nice \$3,000 donation to the FRRS! This was the first rail tour that Tom as done in many years but with this kind of special treatment to their customers and commitment to running a first class operation, we suspect his company will run some great trips in the future.

Meanwhile....back on the farm, restoration work on WP caboose 484 was begun under the supervision of Steve Habeck and Doug Morgan. Our capable crews handled RAL's and train rides while Linda ran the gift shop.

7.25-7.31

Restoration of WP 484 was the main focus of attention for the week. Raymond Franklin primed and painted the caboose on Sunday. Charlie Spikes, Loren Ross, Ed Powell, Ken Iverson, Norman Holmes and Andy Anderson ran caboose trains and RAL's. John Manter finally got the web cam working and transmitting while Eugene Vicknair and Dave Epling battled software and web link gremlins from home. Seth Adams is working on the SP 4404 again.

8.01-8.05

Gift shop doing inventories and rearranging merchandise and fixtures. Hank Stiles working on the SP 2873, which had a broken water, line. Charlie Spikes repairing waste oil pump. John Manter working on the web cam.

8.06-8.07

BIG WORK WEEKEND! Dave and Vicki Epling, Tom and Tim Carter, Kevin Caldwell, Matt Parker, Kerry Cochran, Charlie Spikes, Loren Ross (and "A-Bomb") and Bill Parker all pitching in on train crew. Jack Palmer and Andy Anderson ran RAL's. Doug Morgan, Steve Habeck, Hank Stiles and Ed Powell working on replacing worn out wheels

on WP 484 caboose. Eugene Vicknair and Tom Carter working on the ramp next to the sleeper car and, along with Raymond Franklin, relettered the 484 caboose. Raymond is also working on preparations to paint the Pullman Troop Sleeper. Everyone pitched in to replace a worn out switch, which connects the museum to the UP's "West Pass" siding out in the yard. John Walker, Kevin Caldwell, Charlie Spikes and John Manter working on renovations to the gift shop. Alan Hirasawa finished repairs to UP 849 only to find out we didn't have any fuel to test run it. Board meeting that evening with Wayne and Linda Monger, Gail McClure and Norman Holmes joining the directors already in attendance.

8.08-8.09

Touch up work on WP 484 continues. Charlie Spikes and Rod McClure cleaning up the oil house and other areas around the museum. Gift Shop renovations continue. Dave Pires working in the Archives car. Bob Lindley made a surprise visit-good to see Bob again.

8.10-8.12

Assistant Yardmaster Loren Ross, Charlie Spikes and Bill Parker switched the yard. Doug Morgan, Hank Stiles, Bob Lindley and Howard Hanson changing wheels under 484 caboose. Craig Simmons and Loren Ross with gift shop renovations. Dave Pires finished a lot of sorting work in the Archives car.

8.13-8.19

Nice Days. The weather has cooled somewhat with temperatures in the low 90's during the day and low 60's at night. Now that we're on the backside of summer, this is the most enjoyable time of year in the High Sierras. Renovations to the gift shop are completed with expanded display areas and a freshly painted floor. Work has started on cleaning up the shop and grounds in preparation for Railroad Days. Don Hammack and his crew of kids have been cutting weeds and picking up debris from the grounds. Don Keller has been a big help raking the grounds, picking up rocks and pulling weeds. Don has to be the hardest working guy in Portola! Seriously, he puts some of us young bucks to shame at times. Charlie Spikes continuing his work to repair water outlets and various repair jobs around the museum. Norman Holmes started preparation work on the recently acquired "Steel Gon" in hopes of getting it painted soon. Raymond Franklin painted the Troop Sleeper with a new coat of Pullman Green.

Rod McClure and Steve Habeck taking a special "hospital train" east from Portola with several

cars which we have been storing at the museum for the UP Heritage Fleet in Cheyenne. Our freshly painted 484 caboose brought up the rear of the train.

8.20

Pat Brimmer, Paul and Ken Finnegan, Ed Powell and Terry Decottignies (I spelled it right this time) operated caboose trains. Seth Adams and Josh Delp (visiting from Washington state) worked with Hank Stiles on mechanical issues. Linda Brimmer helping with cleanup around the museum. Julie Anderson is back in the gift shop after spending time taking care of an ailing sister. Thankfully, everything went well and we're glad to have Julie back with us. Raymond Franklin doing touchup work on the Troop Sleeper.

8.21

Tom Andrews and Norman Holmes joined the operating crew. General cleanup continues. Seth and Josh working on replacing a broken cylinder head on SP2873. Hank Stiles and Ken Finnegan sorting out GE 44-ton locomotive parts, which are going to our friends at BAERA in Rio Vista. Good crowds despite the high gas prices.

8.22-8.26

Charlie Spikes and others completed the relocation and repairs to two water outlets near the oil house. Finally, after 22 years, we can actually drive or push something around the oil house without running into the fire hydrant, which was always right in the middle of the sidewalk. The repairs also give us two additional water outlets so that we will not have to run garden hoses all over the place to water and wash locomotives. Good job everyone! Long days and good weather gave us plenty of time to get a lot of last minute preparations and cleanup done around the museum in preparation for Railroad Days. With the renovation of the gift shop, Linda Knudson was busy checking in and pricing a lot of new merchandise. Lots of nice comments on the "new" gift shop. Pat Brimmer has been handling RAL's this week, which has given our local RAL instructors some well-deserved time off. Pat, Loren and Craig Simmons making last minute adjustments to the yard.

8.27-8.28

Railroad Days! With so many other projects going on this year, the late start this spring and so many of our members away on trips or simply staying home this summer, we did not do much this year. Hopefully next year, we will not have so many conflicting projects and moves,

find some new enthusiasm for the event and have more volunteers to pitch in and help. With the help of Frank Beavers, Bill Strahle (Operation Lifesaver), the entire Knudson family, Craig Simmons, Pat and Linda Brimmer, Hank and Janice Stiles, Matt Parker and Norman Holmes, Kerry Cochran and his operating crew, we put on a good show and everyone enjoyed themselves.

8.29-8.30

Paul Lanyi is a weed-cutting fanatic! Paul did a great job cleaning up the parking lot, inside balloon track and Malfunction Jct. Thanks Paul! Doug Morgan, Rick Edwards and Hank Stiles worked around the shop.

8.30

UP 3985 in town for a two-day layover. The 4-6-6-4 is on a public relations tour of the west coast and left Cheyenne with our WP 484 caboose in the consist behind the "water bottles". Dave Epling, Sam Herschbien, Charlie Spikes, Paul Lanyi and Pat Brimmer cleaned up the area in the UP yard where the engine was displayed, set up some barriers and helped with crowd control for the hundreds of visitors who stopped by to see the locomotive.

9.02

Everyone was pretty tired from all the recent activity, but John and Sam used the cool of the morning to cleanup the UP yard, take down the barriers and put everything away after the steam engine departed this morning. After that, everyone just kind of crashed and relaxed for the rest of the day.

9.03-9.05

Labor Day Weekend. Despite outrageous gas prices, we had a good crowd for Saturday and Sunday. Kerry Cochran, Lew Barnard, Don Nelson, Craig Simmons, Eddie Chase and Ed Powell ran the caboose trains while Terry Decottignies (did I get it right this time?) ran RAL's for three days. Alan Hirasawa and Hank Stiles worked on various mechanical items. To round out the end of the Operating Season, several steak dinners were consumed.

9.06-9.15

Visitors to the museum have dropped off dramatically with the end of the travel season and high gas prices. But, we're making good use of the time to get various projects done. Charlie Spikes and John Walker are working on repairs to tools and equipment, checking the roof in preparation for winter snow and rains, and getting a head start on winter preparations. John guided several tours around the museum.

Mary Leal of Portola has begun several painting projects around the property, including painting the eaves of the oil and battery house.

9-16-9.20

John took a few days off and Linda Knudson held down the fort. Still some good crowds on the weekends and we're still running RAL's. Rod and Steve still traveling with the UP 3985.

It was a short, hectic summer! Despite blazing heat and outrageous gas prices, we did a lot of things around the museum this summer! Three pieces of equipment painted, the gift shop renovated, the shop was cleaned and overhauled, we pulled off several special events, moved a lot of equipment and most importantly, we made our visitors and guests happy.

9.20 through 9.30

Charlie Spikes and John Walker sat down and planned out a healthy list of things that needed to be done before winter. The list was posted around the museum and on our web site and steady progress is being made on most items. Clyde and Linda Lippincott brought up their tractor and tools over two weekends and cleared nearly eight acres of sagebrush, weeds and grass from around the hospital and the museum. Clyde mowed down most of the inside of the balloon track and the picnic area where we found the old horseshoe pits. Clyde also filled in ruts in the access road to the picnic area and cut a new drainage ditch through the picnic area. Hopefully, this will eliminate a lot of mud puddles this spring let alone reduce our danger from grass fires significantly. It also makes the museum grounds look a lot better. Plus, we found quite a few relics out there in the weeds that have since gone to the dumpster or the scrap car.

Doug Morgan, Hank Stiles and John Walker jacked up the front end of the WP 707 to replace a worn center plate liner and do some adjustments to the unit. It was an impressive sight for our visitors to see a 125-ton locomotive doing a "wheelie" in the engine shop!

Doug, Greg Elams and John dug holes and set 9 piers for the deck extension behind the shower car. Jay Sarno moved the temporary electrical service to the volunteer lounge car into a service conduit alongside the newly installed piers for a more permanent installation. This will allow the car to be moved with the simple act of unplugging it from the service conduit.

Mary Leal of Portola has been painting the eaves

Mary Leal of Portola has been painting the eaves of the battery house and oil shed. Somehow, this has been overlooked since the buildings were constructed. The new paint looks good and matches the trim on the main building. Mary also helped John prep and paint the floor of the Board Room (old gift shop). Wow! The room looks a lot better now that it is cleaned out and the floor is one color instead of five different shades of gray.

John and Charlie Spikes replaced the old wooden decks of the man lift cage. Now we have a safe platform on which to work on broken windows and for changing light bulbs.

Seth Adams and Jimmy Bryant are working on the interior of the SP 4404, getting it ready for a coat of new paint. Alan Hirasawa came up and worked on the UP 849 while Norman Holmes patched the roof on the WP camp car. John and Charlie also spent a day trimming sagebrush and trees around the balloon track.

10.01 through 10.07

Norman Holmes patching the roof of the Tidewater Southern outfit car. Doug Morgan and Jimmy Bryant working on locomotive parts in the shop area. Rick Edwards repaired various items on the museum vehicles, the pressure washer and reviewed Mechanical Department, locomotive inspection reports. Steve Habeck began winterizing some of our locomotives. Eugene Vicknair and Ed Powell worked on the interior of the volunteer lounge car.

10.08 through 10.13

Charlie Walls is back from Afghanistan and Iraq and everyone was very glad to see and visit with Charlie while he volunteered for a few days around the museum helping Rod McClure and Don Bordan unload some traction motors and reload them for transport to San Diego. Steve Habeck charging batteries. Don Bordon, Charlie Spikes and John Walker working on the wooden ramp to the sleeping car. Mary Leal continues painting. John, Rod and Charlie serviced RAL engines. Norman Holmes cleaning out the newly arrived (former UP) RPO car and patching some holes in the roof. The fall colors are out in force this year! This is a very pretty time of year in Plumas County and lots of visitors come up to Portola to see the fall foliage.

10.14 through 10.16

Don Bordan spent a week at the museum and ran seventeen hours of RAL's for us. Hank Stiles and Doug Morgan working on the WP 707 and loading GE 44 tonner parts to deliver to BAERA in Rio Vista. Hank also delivered the recently

purchased handicapped wheel chair lift. Don, Charlie Spikes and John Walker finished the ramp to the sleeper car. Charlie and John cleaned up all the scrap and left over lumber from "Fort Eugene" while Don Bordon began staining the deck with wood preservative. Seth Adams worked on the SP 4404. John oiled up some RAL engines and repaired the siphon tube on the oil pump.

We had a great visit with 30 members of the Butte College faculty and their families while Don Hamack and his crew of kids raked up the hospital grounds and picnic area in the hopes that we can burn off several piles of slash and trimmings before it snows this year. Norman Holmes boarded up the windows of the WP 614 caboose so that it can go outside this winter if we need more room in the engine house.

10.20 through 10.25

James Mason came up from Pasadena for the Big Work Weekend and helped John dig out, test and distribute all of the heaters, clean out the baggage car in preparation for the Santa Trains. Doug Morgan worked on locomotive parts. James and Charlie Spikes also repaired broken windows in the shop area. Mary Leal finished staining the ramp and deck behind the shower car. Mary also prepped and stained new shelves for the Board Room. Adam Mlarker has been trimming trees and cutting up old rotten wood and working with Hank and Doug on locomotive servicing and repairs. Norman Holmes has repaired the roof on the RPO car and painted out all the graffiti on the car. Andy Anderson running RAL's. Linda K. working in the gift shop while John, Dave and Vicki Epling and Kevin Caldwell staffed a GATS show in Reno.

10.25 through 10.27

John and Doug gave a tour for the Fernley Preservation Society. Rain with a few visitors. Norman Holmes entertained visitors from the new V&T project in Carson City.

10.29 through 10.31

Hank Stiles and Doug Morgan worked on various mechanical projects and made preparations to begin repairs to the WP 917, which has a big oil leak. Eugene Vicknair and his mom worked on the volunteer lounge car. Steve Habeck has begun pulling batteries while John Walker began packing things up for winter.

Bill Parker, Charlie Spikes, Adam Mlarker, Greg Elams and his sons pitched in to help with winter preparations.

11.01-through 11.06

11.01-through 11.06

Cold and windy most of the week with some rain. Ken Iverson still ran some RAL's. Board Meeting in Stockton. Charlie Spikes and Steve Habeck working on facilities and batteries.

11.07 through 11.11

Nice weather but few visitors and no RAL's. John, Charlie, Doug and Norm working on various projects. Norm got a second coat of black paint on the "steel gon". The tool room was totally cleaned and reorganized. Repairs made to shower car. Model A moved back inside the building. Various equipment moved inside for winter storage. Broken windows repaired. Howard Hanson working on wheel chokes and tie downs for WP 165. Steve charging batteries. A lot of work done this week!

11.12 Saturday. Ken Iverson ran RAL's. John Manter ran CAT-5 DSL cable inside the building. Jay Sidney of Portola used a wheel magnet to pick up nails and metal out of the gravel roads and parking areas. Howard Hanson working on wheel chokes.

11.13 through 11.14

John Manter wiring the Board Room, Office Car and Operations Office for DSL service. Jim Halliwell and Duane Vanderveen of Graeagle working on Santa Train lights while Steve Habeck ran the power cords. Jay Sidney picked up a pallet load of scrap metal out of the storage area inside the balloon track. Jay found a big piece of rail and the remains of an old car out there in the weeds! John Walker sanded and painted metal lockers in between visitors. Norman Holmes ran an RAL.

11.15 through 11.19

The weather remains very nice! Charlie Spikes and John Walker working on various projects around the museum. Steve Habeck and crew working on batteries and Santa Train preparations.

11.20 through 11.23

Charlie Spikes changed a leaky gate valve under the shower car and drained the west end of the car. Duane Vanderveen repaired a broken light fixture on the east end of the building. John And Charlie patched a hole in the roof.

11.25 Raining. Surprising amount of visitors today.

11.26 through 11.27

Work continues on Santa Train. Charlie Spikes and John Walker running RAL's. Steve Habeck supervised some yard switching.

11.28

SNOW! Don Bordon called from Hawaii to tell John that it was 85 degrees and sunny on his porch (Gee-Thanks Don). John hosted a tour for 5th graders from the Portola Elementary School.

11.29 through 11.30

John Walker and Norman Holmes decorated the WP caboose located in the parking lot in town with Christmas lights. This is our contribution to the City of Portola's annual Christmas Tree Lighting Festival on December 1st. Steve Habeck continued Santa Train preparations.

12.01 through 12.02

Steve Habeck and Rod McClure worked on the Santa Train while Dave Epling and Duane Vanderveen worked on some electrical improvements around the facilities.

12.03 SANTA TRAIN! Over 400 people attended and a good time was had by all.

12.04 through 12.09 Cold with some rain and snow. Surprisingly, the weather has turned unusually warm. Lots of paperwork, phone calls and odds and ends to catch up before the end of the year.

12.10 SANTA TRAIN! WOW- we had a huge crowd. Maybe 700 people! Charlie Spikes, Loren Ross, Pat & Linda Brimmer, Rod & Gail McClure, Duane Vanderveen, Craig Simmons, Dave and Debbie Epling, Kerry Cochran, Wayne Monger, Eugene Vicknair, John Manter, Heidi Miller, Linda Knudsen, Dave Rudolph, Norman Holmes, Ed Powell, Eric Stephens, Frank Brehm, Jim Halliwell, Vicki Krois, The Portola Soroptimist club and the entire Habeck family did a great job! With money rather tight this year, many Portola and Plumas County merchants and citizens pitched in with over \$1,300 in cash donations to help us out this year. Our heartfelt thanks to the community for helping us continue this great event.

12.11 Pat and Linda Brimmer, Ed Powell, Loren Ross and Steve Habeck gathered Sunday morning to help take down lights and pack up decorations.

12.12 through 12.20

John Walker and Doug Morgan continued cleanup and winter preparations. The last orders were packed and shipped, answering machine messages changed, water systems drained, signs changed and the museum closed up for the winter.

All in all, not too bad.