



THE TRAIN SHEET

News from the Feather River Rail Society



Preserving "THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE"

Issue - 201

April/May/June 2024

UP STEAM

AT WPPRM

BIG BOY

The World's Largest Steam Locomotive is coming to Portola
JULY 10, 2024
 9 AM - 6 PM

WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM
 Caboose Train Rides • Motorcar Rides • Model Railroads • Food Trucks • Exhibits
 Admission: \$20 general - \$10 discount online - \$25 / \$15 at the gate - go to www.WPLives.org/BigBoy
 700 Western Pacific Way - west of Old Town Portola - 530.832.4131
all proceeds benefit the non-profit Feather River Rail Society

More information on page 4

-THE TRAIN SHEET-

Issue 201 - April/May/June 2024

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News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Western Pacific Railroad Museum at Portola

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FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD

MUSEUM at PORTOLA

PO BOX 608, Portola, CA 96122-0608

Museum Phone: (530) 832-4131

Fax: (530) 832-1854

2024 Hours until October 6th:

Thursdays & Fridays Noon - 4 PM

Saturdays & Sundays 10 AM - 5 PM

If you wish to visit during the closure period, it is advisable to call in advance and find out if the museum will be open.

Entrance to the museum for members is free. Non-members are required to pay an admission fee.

The Feather River Rail Society, a tax-exempt public benefit California corporation, is the historical society for the Western Pacific Railroad and operator of the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California.

The FRRS is not associated with the Union Pacific Railroad.

FRRS Tax ID number is 68-0002774

Member of the Heritage Rail Alliance



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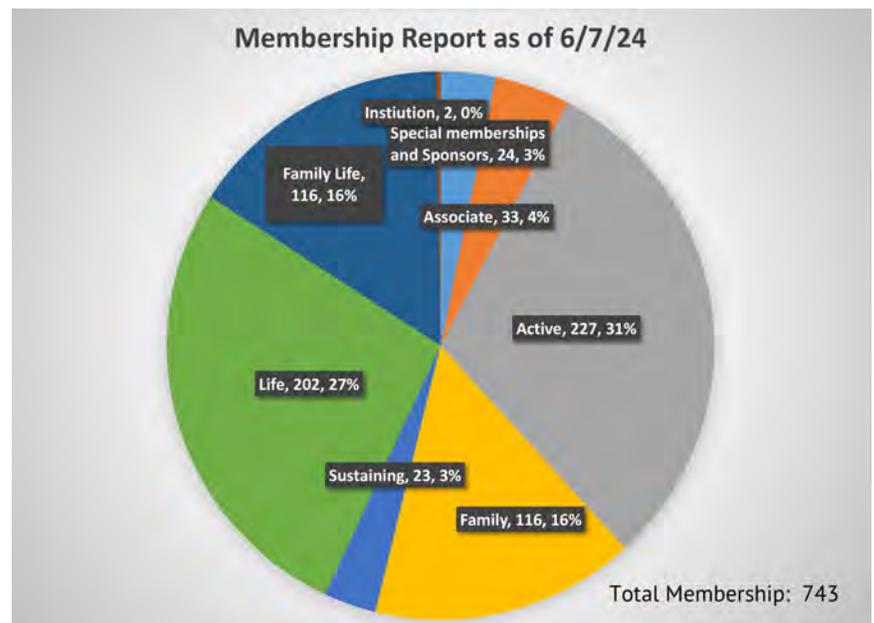
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President's Pin

Greg Elems

It has been a busy start to our open season. A celebration of Life for Barbra and Norman Holmes brought some long time members back. Recounts of Norm's exploits in the early days of the society reminds us that we have come a long way. From one WP F7 to our current collection of 159 pieces of equipment, we continue to tell the WP story.



Following the celebration of life, our open cab days event was a success and we need to thank Nicholas Manos, David Elems, Logan Beers, Steve Habeck and Ethan Doty. I hope I didn't forget anyone else. A lot of hard work, cleaning of engines and the diesel shop brought a lot of positive comments.

From that, we moved right into our preparation for the visit of the UP Big Boy. If you have questions, check out Paul Finnegan's work on the museum web page. Current plans are to have the WP 165 run the caboose trains out to the event area.

If you don't make it to see the Big Boy, I hope everyone has a good summer. Keep cool and be fire safe.



Opening Weekend's Sunday morning brought a typical spring day at Portola!

- Photo by Kerry Cochran

2024 FRRS/WPRM Opening Weekend

*Kerry Cochran
General Superintendent*

The Feather River Rail Society opened its doors for the 2024 operating season on Memorial Day weekend May 25th, 26th and 27th. While the museum opened on May 2nd for the public, the caboose trains started Memorial Day weekend and will run through Labor Day weekend. This led us into the summer weekends running the caboose trains for the public.

Saturday and Sunday operation was a Push-Pull train operation. The operation was arranged this way because a display train was occupying the lead track in front of the museum near the pedestrian entrance with a three car train (WP 653, Gondola and WP 645 Caboose) set up for the Norm and Barbara Holmes' celebration of life on Saturday May 25th after the museum closed to the public. Operations returned on Monday the 27th to full operation around the balloon track and back to the loading platform.

For a three day weekend, the public turnout was somewhat better than in the past few years. Weather was good for all three days and we had good ridership on the caboose train. We have posted several photos of the opening weekend on the FRRS website and can be viewed in the Around the Museum 2024 gallery.

I would like to take the time to thank all of the FRRS friends and members for helping make this another great opening weekend. Our museum store personnel, Ann Cary, Breckyn Shirley and Jackie Habeck, kept the museum store running along great.

WPRM News in your email's inbox

Sign up to receive email News Updates on events and happenings at the WPRM! Subscribe from our society's website

WPLives.org

About Us --> Subscribe

The FRRS is pleased to announce that on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, we will be hosting a visit by Union Pacific's famed Big Boy No. 4014, the world's largest steam locomotive!

The "Big Boy Westward Bound" tour will make a stop on July 10, in Portola, California providing a unique opportunity with the locomotive for viewing from the Western Pacific Railroad Museum.

This will be a rare chance for you to see this awesome locomotive in person. In addition, the WPRM will be providing several special activities on that day, including:

- Caboose train rides - pulled by the museum's Western Pacific 0-6-0 steam locomotive 165, the only operating WP steam engine.
- Motorcar rides
- Tours of historic equipment
- Model train exhibits
- Food trucks and more!



The museum will open at 9 AM and close at 6 PM the day of the event. Parking is limited at the museum. **FRRS Sustaining and Life members will get advance access to the museum on event day, July 10. Any Sustaining or Life / Family Life member can get in between 8:00 AM and 8:30 AM pre-event and get an early chance to see the Big Boy.**

Access to view the "Big Boy" requires admission to the museum. Admission includes caboose train and motorcar rides. Pre-event, tickets can be purchased online at WPLives.org/BigBoyTickets or in the WP Museum Store at the museum. The day of the event, you will present your online receipt or ticket voucher at the entry gate to receive a wristband(s) and car pass, or purchase at the entry gate. Admission will require wristband.

Tickets can be purchased online pre-event. They are \$20 general admission and \$10 for those 5-18, 65 and over, and active military. Children 4 and under are free. At the entry gate on event day, prices will be \$25 and \$15 respectively. Feather River Rail Society members are free with their membership cards.* Members must bring their membership cards to get entry wristbands.

Don't miss this rare chance to see the world's largest operating steam locomotive!

Keep Safety Top of Mind

Stand back at least 25 feet from all railroad tracks.

No coolers or oversize bags, and no chairs, step ladders or any other standing platforms will be allowed in the Big Boy viewing area.

Railroad tracks, trestles, yards and right of way are private property - do not trespass.

Never assume tracks are abandoned or inactive - ALWAYS expect a train.

* - FRRS members with individual memberships (Associate, Active, Life) get 1 free admission, Sustaining members receive 2 free admissions and family levels (Family, Family Life) get 2 adult and 3 youth admissions.

NOTE: Schedules and events subject to change. The FRRS is not responsible for any changes to the event caused by outside factors such as mechanical breakdowns or schedule changes.

UP's Big Boy 4014 schedule:

Arriving late afternoon/early evening July 9th, 2024

On Display with paid admission July 10th

Leaving Portola for Oroville/Roseville July 11th at 8:00 AM

**Historical/Archive Department
News: Spring 2024**

*Kerry Cochran
Archive Manager*

Our society's mission statement is: "The Feather River Rail Society is dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and education of the public as to the history and people of the Western Pacific Railroad."



While we have been closed for the winter, we reopened the archives department on Memorial Day weekend. We are processing several donations that had come in while the museum was closed for the winter.

Several of the donations contained various WP magazines and related WP materials. One of the donations still in progress is from Helen Webb (former Zephyrette) and her late husband. We will have more on this donation as we inventory the donation and get it ready to display in our museum display room.

Another great recent donation is from Doug and Patty Peterson. It contains several signals, a semaphore masts signal cabinet along with a Wig-Wag mast from Locust Street on the east side of Lodi, a Derail Frog, (WP) Terminus Junction, and several other railroad artifacts.

Phil Schmierer donated a headlight display, an M3 air horn, some diesel engine connecting rods and one original WP 3071 number board.

Several other donations have been coming in, and during the summer, we will be inventorying them and getting them ready for either a display or having them available for research.

There is still a lot of work that needs to be done in the archives and several of the archive staff have been busy behind the scenes working on cataloging, scanning and preserving our collection.

Thank you to all the members of the FRRS/WPRM who contribute to the society and the archives.

Should there be any questions about the archives, please do not hesitate to contact us.



At Norm and Barbara Holmes Celebration of Life - President Greg Elems accepting locomotive bell from Steve Holmes from Norm's RR Collection

-Photo by Kerry Cochran 5/25/24



WP Portola Diesel House January 1981 - FRRS Archives, Norm Holmes Collection

2024 Operating Department Crew Training

Kerry Cochran
General Superintendent

The Operating Department held its annual crew training on May 4th at the museum.

This year's crew training day was very well attended as we had 21 new and returning crew members attend. This is one of the largest group of crewmembers to attend in one day in a number of years.

To the three new members joining us, welcome to the Operating Department. We later had another two new members join us after the crew training day.

Please reach out and welcome the new members: Drew Adkins, Yingshi Feng, Eric Manos, Joey Rossini and Charles White.

We started out with our classroom presentations and required form session, checking qualification cards and answering questions. Once all of the formal classroom materials were covered, a few of the members went out into the yard for some hands on training and orientation.

I would also like to have all of the Operating Department crew members check their calendars and see if they can volunteer at least one or two days a month during the 2024 operating season. *"Many hands makes light work"* certainly applies to running our museum. By working together we can provide a safe, enjoyable experience for our guests and other members.

All of our time is valuable and I certainly appreciate all your help. However, we need to staff the caboose trains for our visiting public and we need to make sure that we can operate with a full crew each summer weekend.

There may be questions along the way so please send email to me at operating_dept@wplives.org and tell me what weekends you may be able to commit to volunteer. If you have any other comments, please tell me so I may be able to address them.



Student Brakeman Drew Adkins and Instructor Lew Barnard checking caboose train
-Photo by Kerry Cochran 6/8/2024

Museum Sponsors

The Western Pacific played a major role in developing the economy of Plumas County and the surrounding region. The Western Pacific Railroad Museum is proud to be a part of that heritage and to hold a position in supporting the ongoing economic health of our community. We welcome the support of that community in return. We ask our members and visitors to support our business sponsors, companies who have generously contributed to the museum and its mission to preserve the Western Pacific family.

H & R Block - David Hansen

2850 Main St Ste 7, Susanville, CA 96130
Tel: 530-257-9339



WP 165 Work - April/May 2024



*Jacket work completed in the cab. Work done by Roger Stabler and Logan Beers.
- Roger Stabler May 2024*



*Roger Stabler working on the boiler of WP 165
- Greg Elems 5/15/24*



*Left: WP 165 jacketing work by Roger Stabler, Logan Beers, Duane Vander Veen, David Elems and Kirk Baer.
- Roger Stabler April 2024*

Catch the Early Train!

*Get your Train Sheet by email and you will get it before the post office even receives it and it is in COLOR!
(and you save the FRRS money too!)*

Send an email requesting email delivery to membership@wplives.org with your name and email address.



Our Railroad Collections and Collectors We Know

*Kerry Cochran
Archives Manager*

The expertise and enjoyment we gain from a lifetime of collecting, organizing, building, modeling and writing will die with us if we are unwilling to share. Over the past few years, (actually over 20 years) I have been exposed to several people that had very large collections of photographs, slides, modeling, models and Railroad artifacts in their collections. Unfortunately, deteriorating health conditions have temporarily prevented these people from working on their projects from time to time. However, their collecting continued and in some cases they were able to continue to work on their hobby. In other cases the person was unable to care any longer for their collection, and the sad fact was that they had to dispose of their collection in order to move, or return to their home or passed away.

One thing that I have noticed during these events is the enormous amount of the collection and in some cases new products and materials, many still in the original boxes and stored without any amount of work done on them. Another thing that I have noticed was most were stored without any type of inventory so neither the person knew what they had or a way to account for the collection. Digging through a massive amount of a collection requires an enormous amount of patience and skill, let alone the time, to be able to arrange the collection for passing on to a family member, a sale or a donation to an organization.

I have unfortunately had to do several of the above things in order to help with an estate. Sometimes it can be overwhelming. All too often we see and know someone like what I am describing. If so, what can you, and possible we, as a community of interest do now to avoid a similar situation?

First, do not assume that a family member (even immediate family) knows what the person has,

how much it is worth or where it should go. Even if they do know, they may not care and may not go to the trouble of sorting through a lifetime of collecting, preferring instead to sell is as a lot or toss it in a dumpster.

Second, document what you have and store it in a manner that facilitates packing for movement and possible sale.

Third, keep an inventory of all of your collections, assign a value to individual items. While we all think our collections are priceless, everything has a price provided there is an interested buyer. Books and brass models will sell, however do not expect to recover the cost unless the item is exceedingly rare.

An inventory is a great way to help you know what you have and in the event you are not able to pass along your collection, it gives others a means to help dispose of the collection.

One final note I would like to mention is the expertise and enjoyment we gain from a lifetime of collecting, building, modeling, reading and writing will die with each of us if we do not share it with others.

Please think about helping your society by writing articles, giving presentations, talking to other members and making documents about your experiences.

Please consider the fate of your collection while you can. I assure you that those who can help, will and your lifetime of hard work will be available for the next generation to enjoy.

(Author's note: This should not be taken as any legal advice and you should consult your attorney and tax professional for any legal matters.)

Should you have any questions on this subject, please contact Kerry Cochran, FRRS/WPRM Archives (Historical_Archive_dept@wplives.org).

Story of a Slide

Paul Finnegan
Archive Staff

When Norm Holmes, founder of the FRRS and our museum, worked for the WP, he routinely carried a camera with him all over the system. Several years ago, he donated his extensive slide collection to our Historical/Archive Department. I have been working on scanning the slides and posting them on our website in the Historical/Archive Collections section. To date I have scanned 4,801 of Norm's slides, and there are many more thousands in queue.



When I scan a slide, I try to transcribe whatever information is on the slide mount and it becomes the initial caption for the slide on the website. Recently I was working on a portion of Norm's collection that he had labeled "Wrecks." I came upon a couple slides that I could not confidently read the location of the photo. I have a WP timetable that I use to double check locations on the WP, and have corrected many spelling issues on the slide mounts.

It was really hard to read, but the best I could make out was "Rhoades" or maybe "Rheades". But I couldn't match anything in my timetable, so I turned to the rest of our Archive Staff for help.



Thom Anderson came back in less than two hours with an email that resolved the question: "Paul, out between Stockton and Tracy there's a station at MP 75.6 named Cochran (no relation to our Kerry Cochran). Cochran was formerly named "Rhodes." There was an ag shipper at that location named "Rhodes Bean Co.". One of the principals of Rhodes Bean (whose last name is Cochran) was on the WP board of directors back in the 1950s. At some point in the late 1950s, the WP renamed the location from Rhodes to Cochran in his honor. There was a big write-up about it in one of the issues of the WP Mileposts."

Our Kerry then added... "it was *Mileposts* May-June 1965 #163 Page 2". (I guess he would know!)

It now made perfect sense to me why I couldn't match it in my timetable, which is from 1982, long after Rhodes was history.

What impressed me the most about this event is how the Archive Staff worked together to capture information for our collection.

Mechanical Department Update

Nicholas Manos

You may recall from my previous Train sheet article that I joined the Mechanical Department last fall. Since that time, we have added members Logan Beers and Brian Waller. Logan has also joined the steam crew and has been working closely with Director Roger Stabler on an almost daily basis.

Thanks to the additional help, good progress is being made on the extensive work list. Here's your update for the significant work items that have been completed to date.

QRR 1100

The 1100 had a semi-annual service and inspection. During the inspection, carbon was cleaned from all the injectors and valve clearance and fuel rack settings were adjusted. These chores combined to significantly cleanup the exhaust of this locomotive. The roller bearings were all cleaned and lubed and the locomotive was entered into RAL, switching and caboose train service. Unfortunately, the locomotive has since been pulled from caboose train service due to the intermittent return of a problem with the automatic brake system. The locomotive remains in switching and RAL service.



CMO David Elems performing inspection under cab floor of SP 2873

- Photo by Logan Beers

SP 2873

Last fall, the new rear radiators and rebuilt water pumps were installed, along with a number of other repairs. The locomotive was returned to service leading the Pumpkin and Santa trains with satisfactory results. This spring, the locomotive was given a semi-annual service and inspection. During the service, carbon was cleaned from all the injectors and valve clearance and fuel rack settings were adjusted. Repairs were made to the rear headlight and signal light circuits, returning them to proper operation. Metal



CMO David Elems inspecting, repairing and lubricating cooling shutters on QRR 1100

- Photo by Logan Beers



CMO David Elems supervises Brian Waller during re-assembly on SP 2873

- Photo by Logan Beers



Securing fuel lines after injector cleaning and inspection on SP 2873

- Photo by Logan Beers

and cosmetic repairs have been made to various external panels that were damaged by rust. The locomotive was placed into switching and caboose train service for the open cab days event, with good feedback from the engine crews on its operational performance. The locomotive is currently removed from service while it is being prepared for new paint. The locomotive will retain its signature 'Kodachrome' paint scheme (we know a good thing when we see it). Once painting is complete, the locomotive will be returned to RAL, switching and caboose train service.



Adjusting valve lash on WP 1503

- Photo by Logan Beers

WP 1503

The annual service and inspection was completed on the 1503. The leaking brake cylinder mentioned in my last article no longer leaks as it now has a new seal installed. The same service was performed on two other cylinders that were likely to be trouble in the coming season. New sealant was applied all the way around the top deck to engine block mating surface to minimize oil leakage on the engine exterior. Sanding hoses were secured (again) and have not pulled free since. We have not yet restored operation of the speed indicator or procured the replacement bearings for the fan shaft. The locomotive is currently in RAL, switching and caboose train service.



CMO David Elems works to remove a damaged brake cylinder bolt on WP 1503

- Photo by Logan Beers

WP 165

The Mechanical Department, Logan Beers especially, has been putting in many hours with Roger Stabler to assist him with his efforts to return 165 to operation this year. I am sure Roger will share a detailed update once he has a moment, but I will say there is a good chance we will all be enjoying the sound of a steam whistle soon!

Liftall 4000# Forklift ('Big White')

The truck developed a large hydraulic oil leak that was determined to be the clutch slave cylinder. A new cylinder was obtained and replaced. Fluid was added and the system bled, restoring leak-free operation.

This lift is currently in service.

Yale 8000# Forklift

The Yale had not run for a few years. Initial diagnosis indicated a failed (and improper) coil. Given the overall condition of the ignition system, it was determined a full tune up was in order. New plugs, cap, rotor and coil were installed along with a new air filter. Engine oil and filter were changed. Once the battery was charged and the fuel supply primed, the motor fired up and ran satisfactorily. Upon shutdown, however, the engine would 'diesel'. The timing and carburetor idle speed were adjusted and the engine now runs properly.

The steering cylinder had previously been resurfaced and rebuilt, but it was leaking profusely. It was determined that the seal kit used for the last rebuild had aged beyond service limits. A new, fresh kit was obtained and the cylinder rebuilt. The Hydraulic filter was changed and the system was filled with fresh fluid. No leakage was noted during or after operation.

A new keyed starter switch was installed and several electrical issues were eliminated, including an intermittent connection in the backup alarm.

This lift is restored to service.

Towable Air Compressor

The museum's towable air compressor had not run properly for many years. The reported problem was oil in the air discharge, indicating a leaking seal and/or failing oil separator. The unit was stripped of exterior parts and the compressor was separated from the engine. New seals

were installed and the two components were joined again. The carburetor was cleaned and various fuel and oil plumbing repairs were made. The unit was reassembled and the cooling system was flushed of dirt and rust. Some fresh fuel was added and the unit started up but ran very rough. After a time, the rough operation disappeared (a stuck valve is suspected). Following adjustment, the unit starts and runs well with clean air output.

This unit is restored to service.

Upcoming Work

We are often asked 'what's next?' There is a list of projects, but we have to be careful to qualify any answer with 'it depends'. Our first responsibility is to keep equipment running. Given the age of this equipment, frequent repairs are to be expected and these routinely derail even our best plans. We also wear many hats about the museum and may be called to work operations, facilities, cleanup, event support, etc. With those caveats, here is a brief view into our work schedule:

Our present focus is to support the Steam Department, as needed, in preparation for the Big Boy event. Second to this is the painting of the 2873. Once these two projects have wound down, we will be working to restore the 805A to operation with a goal of returning it to service this summer.

In the fall, we plan to give our attention to the 1100 to make repairs to the brake stand and install a working load regulator (will it even be the same engine after this??). Full annual inspections will be made on 1100, 1503 and 2873. Stay tuned to the Train Sheet for future updates.

A Personal Note - *I wanted to publicly thank Director Roger Stabler for all he does for the museum and for those of us in the Mechanical Department. Roger's skilled hands were instrumental in many of the projects listed above. Roger freely shares his extensive knowledge and wisdom with an abundance of patience, even when he has to stop his work to help with ours. He is a highly valued source for that essential knowledge that isn't written in the manuals. Thank you, Roger.*

Open Those Cabs! Event

Nicholas Manos

Our first open cab days event was held June 8th and 9th. This event was intended to showcase the museum's locomotives and give our visitors an experience the museum used to offer where they could climb aboard the engine and take the engineer's seat.

To prepare for the event, CMO David Elems and Yardmaster Steve Habeck designed a layout for display of the locomotives along with switching plans to make it happen. Switching was complex (nearly 7 hours) but the result was well worth the effort. The public areas of the shop building were cleaned extensively, removing all the clutter and random storage to assure a clear floor for the exhibits. The east doors were both opened wide to give visitors a perfect head-on view of the 805A and 165. The locomotive cabs were all cleaned and the F unit engine rooms, which we displayed for the visitors to walk through, were cleaned of debris, oil and grease.

We had multiple complements from visitors and volunteers alike on how well the museum was presented. I believe we had a display you can all be proud of.

Volunteer turnout was fantastic, allowing us to include eight engines in total for open cab display: 165, 501, 608, 707, 805A, 925C, 1503 and 2001. Volunteers for docent included Logan Beers, Director Kerry Cochran, CMO David Elems, Director Greg Elems, Director Steve Habeck, Gus Paoli, Ed Powell, Des Powers, Loren Ross, Craig Simmons, Director Charlie Spikes, Duane Vander Veen, Director Eugene Vicknair and Burr Wilson.

Our caboose trains ran both days and were crewed by Drew Adkins, Lew Barnard, Director Greg Elems, Bill Parker, Jackson Parker, Loren Ross, Director Janet Steeper and Brian Waller.

We didn't see the number of customers we would have preferred, but we did see an increase in visitors who appeared to enjoy themselves thoroughly. As for visitor numbers... Saturday (June 8) saw a clear boost in atten-



Craig Simmons and Duane Vander Veen greet museum visitors while Burr Wilson tends WP 1503

- Photo by Nicholas Manos

dance, with paid admissions 158% above the previous Saturday (June 1) and 67% above the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend (May 25). Train ticket sales were even better, increasing 231% and 96%, respectively. Sunday, however, saw no significant change in admissions or ticket sales compared to the previous Sunday (June 2) and was down when compared to the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend (May 26).

This article had to be written shortly after the numbers were in, so a full analysis isn't complete but we will look to see what can be done to improve those numbers if we are to repeat this event. My initial thoughts are the large number of graduation events locally and regionally may have suppressed turnout and we had a short time to advertise given the early scheduling.

That's the story of the numbers, but let me provide some anecdotal data. Sunday afternoon, a young man in the cab of 707 shared with me that 'this museum is so cool' because we let him climb into the engine and sit in the seat. He directly compared this to other museums where he has to stand back from the rope line. I smiled, knowing that is exactly why this museum was (is) my children's favorite. Yes, this story is anecdotal, but let me assure you it was not singular. I

2024 Western Pacific RR Historical Convention*Eugene Vicknair*

The 2024 WP Convention was held over April 11 to 14 at the Feather Falls Casino and Resort in Oroville, California. The event started on Thursday afternoon with a show by Chris Skow called Work Trains of the Western Pacific, followed by a talk by Eugene Vicknair on scanning and retouching of photos.

The evening tours included the Northern California Transportation Museum (NCTM) in South Oroville which presented an exhibit of motorcars and other equipment they have acquired. Layout tours were provided by Walt Schedler in Colusa and Gene Kuhn in Yuba City.

Friday's programs began with the photo essay "Tidewater Southern Freight Trains" by Alan Barrett and Greg Elems, showcasing the variety found on the TS in the 1970s and 80s. A video showcasing the Western Pacific in the early 1980s put together by Mark Freiberg, Larry Goss and Greg Elems followed. Dale Sanders closed out the morning with a show on the railroads affected by the construction of the Oroville Dam.

We returned for the afternoon with the show "SN Freight Operations in the 1970s" by Jeff Asay,



Dan Vargas describes some details on the layout as WP SW1 503 rests on a spur in the Oroville section of Mike Andrews' massive O scale pike.

- Photo by Eugene Vicknair



Open Up Those Cabs!

Visitors entering WP 805-A

- Photo by Kerry Cochran 6/8/2024

heard many such conversations over the course of the weekend. We should never forget how fundamental open cabs are to this museum's identity.

My original intentions for this event were anchored in promoting visitor enjoyment of the museum. Over the course of the weekend, I was able to see that enjoyment in the reactions of our visitors, but I also saw it in our volunteers as they interacted with the public and each other. It struck me that I had neglected to think of how to energize the membership in the same way as the public, but looking at the fantastic locomotive display that had been put together, it was clear we had a successful formula for both, even if it was arrived at by luck. I thought about this and realized it shouldn't be a surprise. We all started as visitors. I have no doubt a big reason we each became volunteers was so we could keep climbing into those cabs.

To the members of the FRRS, whose generosity makes this museum possible: On behalf of myself and all our visitors, thank you for a great weekend.



Walt Schedler layout – Dunsmuir Roundhouse is a major focus on Walt Schedler’s Southern Pacific Shasta Division layout. This highly detailed line takes up the entire attic of his home.

- Photo by Eugene Vicknair

followed by Nevada Northern Executive Director Mark Bassett presenting a pair of shows discussing first the relationship between the Western Pacific and the NN, followed by the intriguing “Western Pacific Tricked the Nevada Northern at Shafter”. Jim Atkins finished the day with a presentation about his first five years of service on the WP.

The evening tours again were visits to the NCTM and Walt Schedler and Gene Kuhn’s layouts.

The FRRS’ April Board Meeting opened the day on Saturday. At 10:30 AM judging for the photo and model contest began. We saw a marked uptick in models and photos this year compared to recent conventions and many positive comments were made about the quality of the models on display.

The day’s first presentation was given by California State Railroad Museum Archivist Claire Phillips, who discussed the CSRM archives and how researchers can use them. Stuart Swiedler brought us a locally focused show discussing the Sacramento Northern’s operations in Oroville.

After the lunch break, two shows discussed the

Nevada-California-Oregon Railway, with Gus Paoli giving a history of the Western Pacific’s relationship with the narrow gauge, followed by N-C-O Ry. President Shane Starr sharing recent events by the group to preserve this interesting line. The presentations closed with Eugene Vicknair giving an updated version of a program on the history of Western Pacific’s SW1500 fleet.

The closing banquet featured a talk by former WP employee and FRRS charter member Chris Skow, who talked about his railroad career and the early days of the Feather River Rail Society. The convention attendees were given a sneak peek at the Big Boy Celebration which would not be formally announced for over a month.

Sunday featured a tour of the Lake Oroville Visitor Center and Dam along with a history talk given by Gabby Parmentier of the California Department of Water Resources. Following the dam tour, Eugene Vicknair led a walk on the former WP and Oroville Dam Construction Railroad right of way along the Feather River from near downtown Oroville to the tunnel south of the dam and the site of the tragic head on collision between two Oro Dam trains. Other Sunday events included another open session at NCTM, Walt Schedler’s layout in Colusa and a



Gene Kuhn layout – Gene Kuhn had a line of his Sacramento Northern models out for our viewing. His layout is sprawling and goes up to a second story viewing balcony.

- Photo by Eugene Vicknair



*Chris Skow talked about the early days of the Feather River Rail Society and some of his adventures with Norm Holmes at the banquet.
- Photo by Eugene Vicknair*

tour of Mike Andrews' huge O scale layout in Yuba City. Special thanks to Dan and Armando Vargas who hosted the tour of Mike's layout and discussed its construction.

The vendor and exhibit room was quite popular this year. Aside from the photo and model contests and the Museum Store table, the N-C-O Railway group and CSRМ had tables to share information about their organizations. There was an exhibit of artifacts from the FRRS archives and a wide screen TV showing films from the Virgil Staff collection. Vendors included Steve Ferrari, Bob Watson and Chris Skow selling a variety of paperwork, scale models, photos and artifacts. We also had the door prize raffle which brought in decent amount of money to support the archives. Thank you to all who donated raffle prizes, including White River Publications, Four Ways West Publications, Kerry Cochran, Chris

Skow, Bob Sims, Walthers, Woodland Scenics, Bowser, Eugene Vicknair and artist Marc Desobeau.

A special exhibit was provided by Steve Elkins and Chris Meesel who brought their Western Pacific motorcar to share with the attendees and the public. The Feather Falls staff went above and beyond to provide an exhibit space right at the entrance to the casino where everyone could enjoy this historic motorcar.

Thank you to everyone who staffed the event, in particular the planning committee of Kerry Cochran, Bob Sims and Eugene Vicknair. Greg Elems and Janet Steeper helped with set up, tear down and keeping everything moving, along with several members and attendees who kindly pitched in. This year we had nearly 100 attendees, including several single day visitors and quite a number of ex-WP employees and family members of WP employees. Numerous comments were received that this was one of the strongest line-ups of shows for a WP convention and that everyone very much enjoyed the event. Huge shout out to the Feather Falls staff who were amazing and helped in many ways to keep the event running smooth.

Next year will be a joint convention with the Rio Grande Modeling and Historical Society. The decision has been made to hold the convention in Sacramento, California. Venue and dates will be announced soon. Keep an eye on the website and the museum Facebook page.

2024 Membership Dinner and Annual Meeting

Eugene Vicknair

The 2024 Membership Dinner and Annual Meeting were held on June 8, 2024 starting at 5:30 PM. Due to the Open Cab Days event, the Board and Member meetings were combined into a single event starting at 7:00 PM.

We had a great turnout of volunteers for the Open Cab Day on Saturday (and Sunday) and many remained for the Membership Dinner. The dinner was held outside and featured catered



*Members' Dinner - Dinner time Come and Get It!
- Photo by Kerry Cochran 6/8/2024*

sandwiches and some homemade desserts brought by members. Those in attendance shared stories and discussed recent developments at the museum.

During the Annual Membership Meeting, Ann Morningstar made the official report from the election committee, certifying we had a "white" or non election ballot in 2024 and congratulating the returning directors. There was discussion about the upcoming Big Boy Celebration and the society's hope that this will encourage a new relationship with the Union Pacific. Several future projects were also discussed, including the Whitman Event Building, possible expansion of the museum's property, our increased working relationship with the California State Railroad Museum and its archives, as well as our relationships with the Nevada-California-Oregon Railway and the Rio Grande Modeling and Historical Society. It was noted that the FRRS provided assistance to the Utah State Railroad Museum in their restoration of Western Pacific GP35 3002, sharing paint specifications, creating drawings of text and graphics and donating the WP logos for the cab sides.

Kerry Cochran shared the ongoing progress and expansion of the FRRS Archives. He noted that more and more materials are being made available online and thanked Dale Sanders and Paul Finnegan for their work scanning and cataloging.

David Elems gave an overview of progress and upcoming projects in the Mechanical Department, including planned mechanical and cosmetic work on SP Gp9 2873, WP FP7 805-A and WP GP7s 705 and 707. He commented that we now have a good size crew in the department working on getting our operating fleet back up to past levels in good operating condition. It was noted that Brian Waller wants to start working on WP coach 302:1 and WP business car 106, the "Charles O. Sweetwood".

President Greg Elems noted a recent influx of new members and volunteers who are helping us with work and ops around the museum. He thanked them for their efforts, in particular Nick Manos and Brian Waller. We have also had some long time past volunteers returning to work at museum. He commented that we are looking for more Run-A-Locomotive engineers.

Charlie Spikes thanked everyone who has been covering the facilities issues while he has been down with knee and surgery. He announced that he is passing on Facilities Manager title to someone new and requested suggestions on a new manager. He closed by thanking everyone who helped him over the last 15 years, in particular Duane van der Veen and Ed Powell.

The meeting closed with comments from the membership, where several noted that they were happy with and proud of the changes and actions over the last few years and looking forward to the future. Some constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements were also made and will be incorporated into future discussions. Some members expressed how much they enjoyed the Open Cab Day event and want to see it continue.

Thank you to those who attended. Apologies if I missed anyone:

Bill Gilbert and wife, Ann Morningstar, Ed Powell, Nick Manos, David Elems, Kerry Cochran, Steve Habeck, Greg Elems, Gus Paoli, Drew Adkins, Eugene Vicknair, Craig Simmons, Charlie Spikes, Eric and Trish McKay and Loren Ross

Grants and Fundraising

*Eugene Vicknair
FRRS Funding Chair*

We are pleased to announce that our Spring Fundraiser brought in over \$6,600. Thank you to everyone who donated to the fundraiser! Your contributions have been helpful in work that has been occurring on Western Pacific 0-6-0 165 to get it ready for the season and preparing Southern Pacific GP9 2873 to reenter the Run-A-Loomotive program, as well as other projects around the museum.

During May 2024, we were the beneficiary of the Feather River Food Co-Op's "Round Up at the Register" program. The Co-op's shoppers donated \$307.89 to the FRRS during the event. Thank you so much to the FRFC and we encourage our members to visit their stores in Portola and Quincy.

Work is underway on ADA and drainage improvements funded by grants from the Union Pacific Foundation and Plumas County respectively. In addition, work on the seats and booth cushions in the California Zephyr diner "Silver Plate" that was delayed by COVID-19 is getting back underway. This work is funded by a grant from the Emery Rail Heritage Trust. We will have complete reports on these projects as they are completed.

The final items are being worked on the release the \$1 million grant provided by the Department of Agriculture to being work on the Whitman Event Building. A major aspect of this work was a three year internal audit review and report to be provided to the Department of Agriculture. This audit was led by Desmond Powers with assistance from David Hansen. Thank you to them and everyone else who assisted in this audit. The funding for this grant was made possible by assistance of the office of our former representative Congressman Doug LaMalfa (CA-1), before the redistricting moved us to CA District 3. These funds will allow us to start groundwork, complete the building purchase and do other preliminary foundation and structure work on the building. We are already in discussion with our new representative, Congressman Kevin Kiley

(CA-3) about obtaining the additional funds needed to complete this large project.

We also recently applied for funding from the North American Railway Foundation (NARF) to complete needed work on the Diesel Shop roof. This work will include repairs and applying an insulated foam layer over the roof to seal and protect the aging steel panels. This will greatly improve the conditions in the shop, particular during wet weather.

Finally, in the past few years, the FRRS has been honored to receive bequeathments from some members and even some community members who admired the museum. When you are considering estate planning, please ask your financial planner or planning assistant about making a bequest to the Feather River Rail Society. This would greatly assist our efforts to keep the Western Pacific heritage alive.



WP 805-A in the east end of the diesel shop with the lights on at closing.

- Photo by Greg Elems

Motorcar Rides – May 5, 2024

Eugene Vicknair

On May 4, 2024, members of the West Coast Railroaders Group, a motorcar operating organization, ran a series of rides on the Quincy Railroad as a fundraiser for the High Sierra Animal Rescue. The following day, the group brought four motorcars to the WPRM to operate for our visitors on Sunday, May 5, to close out the opening weekend of our 2024 season.

The weather made things a bit interesting, as we were treated to a late season snow. During the night after the motorcars arrived on Saturday, over six inches of snow had fallen, covering both motorcars and the track. Despite the weather, we saw a steady flow of visitors during the day who enjoyed free rides on the group’s historic motorcars.

Thank you to all the WCRG members who brought their cars and graciously gave rides, including Ken Marty, Matt Parker, Steve Elkins, Chris Meesel and Adam Weidenbach. We were also very pleased to see former FRRS Director Gail McClure, who came with her brother Matt and handled the insurance release forms for the riders.

It is always a treat when the WCRG joins us at the museum. Their next runs will be during the

Big Boy Celebration on July 10. Please be sure to come enjoy their cars and thank them for their tremendous support of the WPRM.



Morning of the event finds a thick layer of snow on the ground and the cars.

- Photo by Ken Marty



With a full load of riders, WCRG President Ken Marty checks with the lead car before the little fleet heads out around the Portola balloon track. Many visitors were so enthralled by the motorcars they opted for multiple rides.

- Photo by Eugene Vicknair



WCRG 335 in snow – West Coast Railroaders Group motorcar 335 waits for tomorrow’s event as snow starts falling after sunset at the museum.

- Photo by Eugene Vicknair



Reaching the far end of the run, the operators put their cars into reverse and get to show the riders how to run backwards.

- Photo by Ken Marty

The Train Sheet

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