

THE

# TRAIN SHEET

News from the Feather River Rail Society



Summer/Fall 2016  
Issue 171

**-THE TRAIN SHEET-**

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

Editor – Matthew Elems  
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Contribution Deadlines: Last Day of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

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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

The museum grounds are open to the public from 10:00am until 5:00pm daily from the last Sunday in April through the first Monday in November. The diesel shop is open during this time.

Train operations begin the last Saturday in May and continue each weekend through the first Monday in September, as well as on major holidays between these dates.

Museum grounds are closed to the public from the first Tuesday in November through the Friday before the last Saturday in April except for special events for which advanced arrangements have been made. 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, details are inside this issue on the inside of the back cover.

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 Association of Railway Museums and the Tourist Railway Association, Inc

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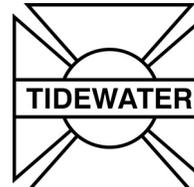
**On the Cover**

*SP 2873 reverses back to the lead to head around the balloon after dropping the caboose train at the loading platform on 9 July 2016. Crew was abundant on this weekend.*

*Matt Elems photo.*

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**- WEB PAGES of INTEREST -**

FRRS Official Site	www.WPLives.org
CZ Virtual Museum	calzephyr.railfan.net
California Zephyr	californiazephyr.org
Western Pacific Pages	www.WPLives.com
WP Virtual Museum	wpmuseum.railfan.net
Sac Northern On-Line	www.WPLives.org/SN
Tidewater Southern Pages	www.TidewaterSouthern.com
Tidewater Southern	www.5.pair.com/rattenne/WP/TidelIndex.htm
Central California Traction	www.trainweb.org/tractionco/

**Vice-President's Report – July 2016***Steven J. Habeck – Vice-President, FRRS***WP 917-D**

We had another battery failure on the 917-D two weeks ago. This required us to replace the failed battery with the one good one we took out at the last failure. This resulted in a mis-matched set of batteries in the engine, which is really not an issue, given the age and condition of our batteries. This work had to be done quickly, since we had an RAL scheduled the next day with the 917-D, and Fritz, Ethan, 1L, and myself got the work done in a great example of teamwork and expediency, and the RAL went on schedule.

**Mechanical Work/RAL's**

High praise to the Mechanical Department for performing above and beyond even my expectations last week. In order to support a special RAL, the holiday weekend, and our special event, this group managed to place WP 707, WP 2001, WP 805-A, and WP 1503 in service in one week's time. This allowed us to use WP 2001/ WP707 on the holiday weekend caboose trains (too bad we had little to no crew all weekend), and use WP 2001 on a special RAL (WP 805-A was made serviceable due to doubts about WP 2001, but 2001's radiators managed to hold water better than expected).

**Mark Jon Bluth**

Life Member Mark Jon Bluth, from Saratoga, CA, requested to do a special RAL with WP 2001 when he and his family came up for the holiday weekend, which prompted us to get the engine in service. Mr. Bluth comes up every year, and always asks what supplies we need. This year, he brought a case of large CFL's for the shop, and office supplies for the Gift Shop (totaling over \$360). When he booked the RAL, he paid the \$25 hold fee, as usual, and when I told him about Rod, he sent a donation check for \$500, so I had Elise mark his RAL as paid, which she did. Yesterday, I received a very nice note from Mr. Bluth, thanking us for the work we did to make his RAL happen, with another check for \$500, and he says he's looking forward to renting the 805-A next year. We will accommodate his request.

**"Christine" (SP 4706)**

In my continuing efforts to improve and enlarge the caboose train, we have been assisted greatly by the work of new member Ken Chapin, who was touring the western railroads while furloughed as a shop foreman for Norfolk Southern. He landed here last month, liked what he saw, and became a member, and has been

using his skills assisting us in various projects. Currently, we have SP 4706 ("Christine", due to the female graffiti figure that was on the car) in the shop with all windows removed for replacement, and in process of being sanded and painted. This caboose was picked up by us in San Jose on the first return trip from GGGM as a parts source for our WP 483 and 484, since it is built to the same basic plans as ours, and is very similar. However, upon investigation, we found it has 9 seats in it, plus a bunk, making it useful for the caboose train. It can still serve as a parts source for our other cars to a large degree, and can still see service in the caboose train. It is missing its stove and conductor's desk, but we have plans to re-do these areas and then paint the interior. At this point, I am covering the costs of this project out of my pocket, which looks like it may run to around \$2000. I will gladly explain the details of this project to anyone who wants more information. Next up: UP 25049, recently rescued from its long-time spot behind the sleeper.

**DRGW 01414**

Bill Parker's caboose, DRGW 01414, is very close to being added to the caboose train, as well. I have worked out a deal with Bill to remove and re-do his seat backs in the cupola that have the Rio Grande monograms, and replace the broken window in the cupola (I already have one on hand), and I have waived his rental fees on the caboose for 2017 (he has already paid for all of 2016) for use of the caboose in the caboose train. He will maintain his insurance on the caboose, and we have agreed that we will keep the car locked during the week, when caboose trains are not running. He also retains the right to stay in the caboose when he comes to the Museum, with the understanding that the car may be in use on the weekends.

**UP9532/UP9282**

The two UP GE's we have had on display in the Museum for 16 months are now back on the West Pass, per the request of Ray Breedlove, the new head honcho in Sparks. The 9282 has a leaking fuel sight glass, and, although I offered to remove the fuel to allow repair, Ray turned me down, and requested that both engines be taken out of the Museum, at least for the time being, which was done this week. Ray is not comfortable with some of the things his predecessor did, and is being very conservative as he settles into the job. He is a solid ally for the Museum, and will work with us, on his terms.

**UP 849/boxcar (Morgan)**

Although our attorney has agreed to go to the Court, as the Board requested, and get the Court's determination that Morgan has "failed to

comply with the agreement, and abandoned his equipment” (the words our attorney says will hold up in Court), he has not yet been able to get a time with the judge, so we are still waiting. Morgan must be hearing things are in the works, because he has been sighted outside the Museum several times, looking to see if we have spotted his boxcar outside the gate (which isn't going to happen), so he can get into it “and get my stuff out” (his words). In the meantime, the 849 has been moved to track 4 with our Centennial, 6946, in the absence of the 2 GE's.

## Museum Web Page Update – January 2016

–Paul Finnegan, Webmaster

With the coming of the New Year, the Western Pacific Railroad Museum at Portola has an updated web site. We have a new menu system and a collection of new web pages to serve and inform our members and visitors. A few pages have been moved to the dead line; but the overall content has been expanded while keeping the best features of the past. There is a link on the home page ([wplives.org](http://wplives.org)) to a presentation showing the new features and highlighting the things that have moved. Find it in the “*Latest Museum News Update*” box.

The biggest change has been to the “Members” pull down menu. Previously it had only a single entry for I-Volunteer. The “Members” menu now has nine new entries. Several are related to general museum events and documentation. Some are focused on the Operating Department activities.

In addition to the new material added, most of the existing pages have been reviewed and updated. For example, our visitors now have an interactive map to help plan their visit which replaced an out-of-date local attraction map. The train schedule has also been updated. The Membership page now shows the 2016 election information. There are many more updates scattered throughout the site.

A new entry under the “About Us” menu, “WPRM Video & Photo Gallery,” is a place where we can keep and share the WPRM/FRRS family photos

and videos. If you have a collection of museum-related photos or a video that tells a story about a WPRM/FRRS event, please submit it so we can share it. Submission instructions are on the gallery webpage.

Four new sign-up tools are now on the web site. There is one for volunteering to help at general museum events, such as the Membership Meeting, RR Days or Santa Trains. There is another to sign up for the annual Operating Department Crew Training. A new sign-up tool for the *Extra Board* for working on the train crews has been implemented. The last is an online reservation request system for getting a room in the Endenwold sleeper while working at the museum. The tools are all designed to be easy to use and will help us coordinate activities at the museum.

There are several new web pages to help keep everyone informed and on track at the museum. One page has all the museum policies that have been approved by the board of directors. Another has printable copies of museum forms and documents, such as the General Release form used for RALs. A similar web page has the forms and documents used by the Operating Department. Now everyone will have immediate access to the current version of all the forms we use at the museum. If you use a form that should be, but isn't, on one of those pages, please contact me at [webmaster@wplives.org](mailto:webmaster@wplives.org).

A special effort was made to collect all the material used by the Operating Department's annual crew training. It is being reviewed and updated for the spring training classes. It is under the Operating Department's main web page titled “Crew Training Materials.” Additionally, a new video is being added this year to demonstrate the hand signals we use at the museum.

I invite you to visit the web page and explore. I hope you find things that will be useful to you as a member and enticing to potential visitors. If you have suggestions, comments, or questions about the website, please contact me at [<webmaster@wplives.org>](mailto:webmaster@wplives.org).

## Museum Web Page Update – Feb 2016

–Paul Finnegan, Webmaster

Santa Trains 2015 was a huge success. If you were unable to attend and want to see what you missed, or if you were able to attend and want to relive the moment, there is a new “Santa Trains 2015” photo gallery on the wplives.org web site. Use the “About Us” pull down menu to visit the “WPRM Photo and Video Gallery” page. If you have photos or videos of FRRS/WPRM events or activities you would like to share with the rest of us, I invite you to contribute them. Guidelines and the procedure to get your contributions posted are on the gallery web page. Contact me at <webmaster@wplives.org> to explore seeing your photographs online representing the society and the museum.

There are two new entries under the “News” pull-down menu on the wplives.org web site. The first is titled “Train Sheet Archive” and the other is “Notes from the webmaster...”

With the help of Frank Brehm, Eugene Vicknair, Kerry Cochran and Matt Elems, I have collected almost all the old society member newsletters, *The Train Sheet*, as Adobe PDF files. The collection goes all the way back to issue #1. I created a web page with the files organized by year to make any individual issue easy to find and view. New issues will be posted one year after publication. We are confident we have the missing issues, so after they are scanned and posted, this will become a complete collection.

I am also working on a Master Index for the archived newsletters. There is a link to the Master Index on the Train Sheet Archive web page. Once the index is created it will be relatively easy to maintain; but it is taking significant time and effort to glean the information from the 33 years of issues to populate the index. I joined the museum in 1992 and am amazed at the articles from the early issues about how the museum was created. I recommend taking some time to read about how your society and museum were formed and how your favorite artifacts were acquired.

On the “Notes from the webmaster...” page, I will post news about new features or items of special interest on the web site. I also will use this as a place to share some background and more information about the web site in general.

A new feature recently added to the Operating Department page is a photo directory of the

Operating Department members. You can view it from the “Operating Department” web page under the “Museum” pull down menu. If you are in the Operating Department, but not in the photo directory, please send me an appropriate photo of yourself to post.

As reported in my last column, we have four new sign-up tools on the web site. Recently I added a major security enhancement with the addition of Google’s reCAPTCHA anti-robot tool to all of our sign-up tools. If you use one of the tools, be sure to check the “I am not a robot” check box before you submit the form. The reCAPTCHA tool uses a very sophisticated set of algorithms to make sure the user is not a web-bot. If it can’t tell for sure, it presents a set of pictures that the user must select from that match the stated criteria. Since putting it online, no robot has made it past the front door for any of our sign-up web pages.

I continue to make incremental improvements to the collection pages. Recently I have been working on the Boxcars, MOW and Locomotive pages. I created a new tool that inserts links to articles in the *Train Sheet* archive so now some of the locomotive pages have links to the articles about that particular locomotive. I expect this to grow over time.

I am always looking for feedback, content and new ideas. If you have some, please don’t hesitate to contact me at webmaster@wplives.org.

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## Museum Web Page Update – April 2016

– Paul Finnegan, Webmaster

On Monday March 7<sup>th</sup> the WPLives.org web site went mobile. A set of six web pages designed for the mobile smart phone or tablet user went live. The pages contain the high priority information a mobile user is anticipated to value about the museum. Major content includes directions to the museum, museum hours of operation, the FRRS calendar, admission and train ride fares, RAL information and society contact information. The main WPLives.org web address has been enhanced to immediately redirect a mobile user to the mobile home page. However, the mobile user also has easy access to the full WRPM/FRRS web site on each mobile page.

The online archive now has almost all The Train Sheets issues going back to the formation of the FRRS in 1983. The archive is under the “News” pull-down menu on the web site. Train Sheet #167 was added to the online archive and the master index on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The master index is designed to help the user easily find specific articles or topics in the archive.

Our collection of rolling stock is one of the strengths of our museum. The web site has a large number of photographs and information about many individual pieces. Under the “Museum > Museum Rolling Stock” pull down menu is a set of pages showing many of our locomotives, passenger cars, freight cars, etc. Some of the items in our collection (e.g. WP 805A) have their own “mini” web page. I have enhanced the revision control system I developed for managing our web site to now search the Train Sheet archive and insert links into the collection web pages to the individual Train Sheet articles about the item. The revision control system will automatically update the article links each time the Train Sheet archive is updated. I hope the users will find this very helpful when researching a particular piece of our collection.

I created a new passenger car web page for the WP 106. I found a large pdf file, *A HIGHER CALLING – the story of Western Pacific’s “Charles O. Sweetwood”*, prepared by Eugene Vicknair that did not have any links to it. The history is very well done and tells a tremendous story. To share this document I created the web page for the car and added it to the passenger car web page under the “Museum > Museum Rolling Stock” pull-down menu.

Ethan Doty, the Assistant Roadmaster, called a work day for March 26<sup>th</sup> to work on the west 1/2 switch. I added this to the Museum Event Volunteer Sign Up system. He took some photos at the event and sent them to me so I could create a new “Track Work” gallery on the WPRM Photo & Video Gallery web page under the “About Us” pull-down menu. Ethan also wrote captions for each of the photos. Take a look to see what the team did. If you weren’t

there this time, please feel welcome to come join in next time! Watch the Museum Event sign up and *Latest Museum News Update* on the home page for future opportunities.

We used the newly developed Crew Training Material web page for our annual rule training and exam sessions on April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. We had fourteen students (and three instructors) on Saturday and eleven students on Sunday. I created a down-loadable, static copy of the appropriate sub-set of the web site to use at the training. It can be loaded on a memory stick or disk drive and functions just like the real web site. We used it at training and therefore the training class did not require internet connectivity. All the material we used is available on line on the Museum > Operating Department > Crew Training Materials page.

We showed the new “*Use of Hand and Lantern Signals for Train and Engine Movements*” training video produced by the Operating Department at the training. You can view it on the Crew Training Materials page or on the “About Us > WPRM Photo & Video Gallery” web pages. It was filmed on site at the museum.

With very short notice, the Operating Department learned a school group was coming to the museum on Thursday April 21<sup>st</sup>. It was added to the “Operating Dept Crew Sign Up” tool which helped pull a crew together so we could run a caboose train for the visitors. I am always looking for feedback, content and new ideas.

If you have some, please don’t hesitate to contact me at [webmaster@wplives.org](mailto:webmaster@wplives.org).

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## Museum Web Page Update – June 2016

–Paul Finnegan, Webmaster

In early June an extensive suite of web pages about the history of the Western Pacific was released. Some of the material is from the old WPRRHS web site, some of it is new. It is under the Historical/Archive Department on the Museum pull-down menu. Eugene Vicknair gave an overview of the new pages at the 2016

Membership Meeting at the museum on June 4<sup>th</sup>. There are several more web pages under development that will be added when they are ready.

Are you interested in past articles from the *THE WESTERN PACIFIC Headlight*? The expanded Historical/Archive Department web page has information about all the issues of *THE WESTERN PACIFIC Headlight*, the Feather River Rail Society's journal of WP history. There is a web page showing the list of articles for each of the 49 issues and which back issues are available for purchase from the museum's gift shop. Peter Arnold is working with me to create a Master Index of the articles from all of the *Headlight* issues. The index is a work-in-progress and will be released as progress is made.

While exploring the museum, have you had questions about a piece of rolling stock you were looking at? An extensive set of equipment and railroad information signs have been created and are being installed around the museum. Additionally images of these signs are now posted in the *Train Sheet* Master Index. Find them on the web site via News -> Train Sheet Archive -> Train Sheet Master Index under "Signs." They are also listed under the name of the related equipment, e.g. "WP 123 Sign."

The last missing *Train Sheet* issues have been acquired, scanned, indexed and added to the *Train Sheet* archive. Now all 167 *Train Sheets* more than one year old are online. Special thanks go to Frank Brehm, Kerry Cochran, Matt Elems and Eugene Vicknair for providing copies of the old issues. As new issues reach their one-year publication date anniversary, they will be added to the archive and the index.

Have you recently moved, changed your phone number or email? If so, a new "Membership Change of Address" online tool is available for your use to inform the membership team of your new information. You can find the tool on the "Members" pull down menu or from the "Membership" or "Contact Us" web pages.

Is it time to renew your FRRS membership?

There is a new tool on the Members pull-down menu and Membership web page that will let you renew your membership online. It also allows you to indicate your areas of interest so we can help you find out more about various volunteer opportunities where you can participate. Did you know you can receive a color version of the *Train Sheet* via email? The online renewal page lets you specify if you want to receive your *Train Sheet* by email instead of by traditional mail.

We continue to post new photos and videos on the WPRM Photo & Video Gallery under the About Us pull-down menu. Check it out to see what's happening at the museum.

I am always looking for feedback, content and new ideas. If you have some, please don't hesitate to contact me at [webmaster@wplives.org](mailto:webmaster@wplives.org).



### **Caboose Trains**

*Ken Finnegan is seen here on the rear of UP25732 on one of the early runs of the day. Ken was the conductor for the caboose trains on 9 July 2016.*

*-Matt Elems Photo*

## Museum Web Page Update – August 2016

–Paul Finnegan, Webmaster

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, a major web site release was made that added mobile friendly versions of almost all of our web pages. As the browser loads a page, it examines the user's device, if it is being viewed on a mobile device; it automatically redirects the user to a mobile friendly version of the web page. If the mobile user really wants to see the full desktop page, there is a link on the mobile friendly page to the full desktop page that does not redirect. A few pages (e.g. the volunteer sign up pages) will need more development and testing before the mobile friendly version can go online.

I have been enhancing the locomotive, caboose and passenger car collection pages. I am bringing the pages up-to-date, adding more information and photographs. Additionally, mobile friendly pages are being created for each piece of equipment. Every piece of equipment in our collection has a story to tell. If you would like to adopt a segment of our collection, or even just a single piece of equipment, research its history and write its story, I would be happy to include it on the appropriate web page. I would really appreciate the help!

Our museum has web cams again! After a very long and challenging project, the WPRM web cams went live on August 12<sup>th</sup>. It was a team effort with Kerry Cochran, David Elems, Kenneth Finnegan, Eugene Vicknair and me that took almost a year to execute. Kenneth configured a computer donated by Eugene. Kerry donated the funds to acquire the video capture card. Kenneth and I wrote the software to capture and forward the web cam shots to our web host site. Kerry, David and I installed the cameras at the museum. The new cameras have a much wider angle of view and we snag just a little of the sun shades from the camera weather housings, but the night vision is outstanding compared to the old cameras.

A News Archive web page has been added to the News pull-down menu. This web page will have links to the various press-releases and short-term special announcement web pages. The items posted as of today are:

- New Web Cam Cameras Installed August 12, 2016
- Union Pacific Historical Society Visit July 28, 2016
- Getting Ready for 2016 RR Days at WPRM
- FRRS at Mohawk Valley Independence Day

Festival July 3, 2016

- Rod McClure June 11, 2016
- Media Day May 27, 2016
- Santa Trains 2015

Work continues adding material to the Historical/Archive Department web pages under the Museum pull-down menu. Peter Arnold and I are creating an index for the material in the *Headlight* magazines. The objective is to make it easy to do research using the society's journal of WP history. The *Headlight* includes articles of interest for modelers and those wishing to know more of the historical aspects of the Western Pacific and subsidiary roads. Note: The *Headlight* articles are not published online. However, there is a list of back issues available for purchase in the Museum Gift shop on the web page "List of articles in THE WESTERN PACIFIC Headlight magazines" on the Historical/Archive Department main page.

In support of the society's fund raising efforts, I have added material for our Sponsorship program to the website. You can find more information on our Sponsors and the Sponsorship program via the Sponsors link on the Visit Us pull-down menu.

Peter Hinckley provided me with a complete rewrite of the SN web page *SN Operation through the Oakland Hills*. I posted the update on August 20, 2016. A large collection of web pages about the Sacramento Northern can be found on the Museum > Sacramento Northern pull-down menu entry.

### Ron Huey, a Celebration of Life

–Richard Gruninger

As many may already know, our "Crusty Curmudgeon", Ron Huey passed away in his sleep on 4/2/16. Ron was a larger than life figure around the Museum. Ron was a very generous contributor to the FRRS, in money, time, and ideas.

Ron's Celebration of Life was attended by FRRS members on 4/16/16 in Shasta Lake City, CA.

The Ceremony was a very nice tribute to a great man and life. Our condolences to Ron's wife Ann, his good friend Matt Shuman, and Ron's entire family and their friends, who we appreciate sharing Ron with us.

**August CMO Report**

–Bil “1L” Jackson, CMO

Well another summer has come and gone and our caboose and RAL season is about to end. Since my last letter we have completed a lot of good work.

The SP4706 caboose has been completely stripped of the graffiti and repainted inside and outside by Ken Chapin with the help of Matt Parker and Ethan Doty. The paint colors were matched to photo graphs obtained from the internet. We tried to keep the original scheme. Some inside murals were kept intact for nostalgia. The windows were removed by Steve Habeck with the help of David Elems and myself. After new window glass was obtained the frames were repaired and painted by Steve and the installation was completed by Steve, Ethan, Burr Wilson and myself.

The WP2001, WP707, WP805 WP1503 were all set up and running for the media day and used successfully for that occasion. What a show that was and you can watch it on our web site at [wplives.org](http://wplives.org).

The 1857 is still in process of being completed by David and myself. Tools have to be made and used to remove the injectors for inspection. A new pre-lube oil system is to be installed and parts obtained for completion. This new pre-lube oil system will ensure proper lubrication of upper and lower crankshaft bearings. This is

what is done to the EMD and GM engines in the spring before they are put into service. Those pre-lube systems were installed at the factory and upgraded with hydraulic fittings for easier accessibility last year.

Yesterday a surprise visit from Rodger Stabler, he arrived to fix the Derrick. He brought the starter back which we have been waiting for 6 months to see, and installed it. With the help of a half case of wasp spray he was able to obtain access to the interior and lube the pulley's and cables, not to mention how many tubes of grease was needed. He drained some more water from the fuel system then checked the oil and radiator water and electrical system. After charging the batteries again he was able to complete his work. The unit started right up and he began testing the various systems for proper function. All is well and he will be providing his expertise in the proper use and operation of the crane. The crane is to be used again to assemble the water and oil tanks to the WP165 tender.

The seat backs on the Rio Grand caboose that have an embossed logo on them were placed into the CMO car for safe keeping. New seat backs were constructed by Barbara Jackson and installed by D. Elems and myself. They match the caboose and look original. We hope to be able to repair the seat bottoms and various cushions in all the cabooses this fall. This will require the approval from the board. Well that's it for now see you in the spring.

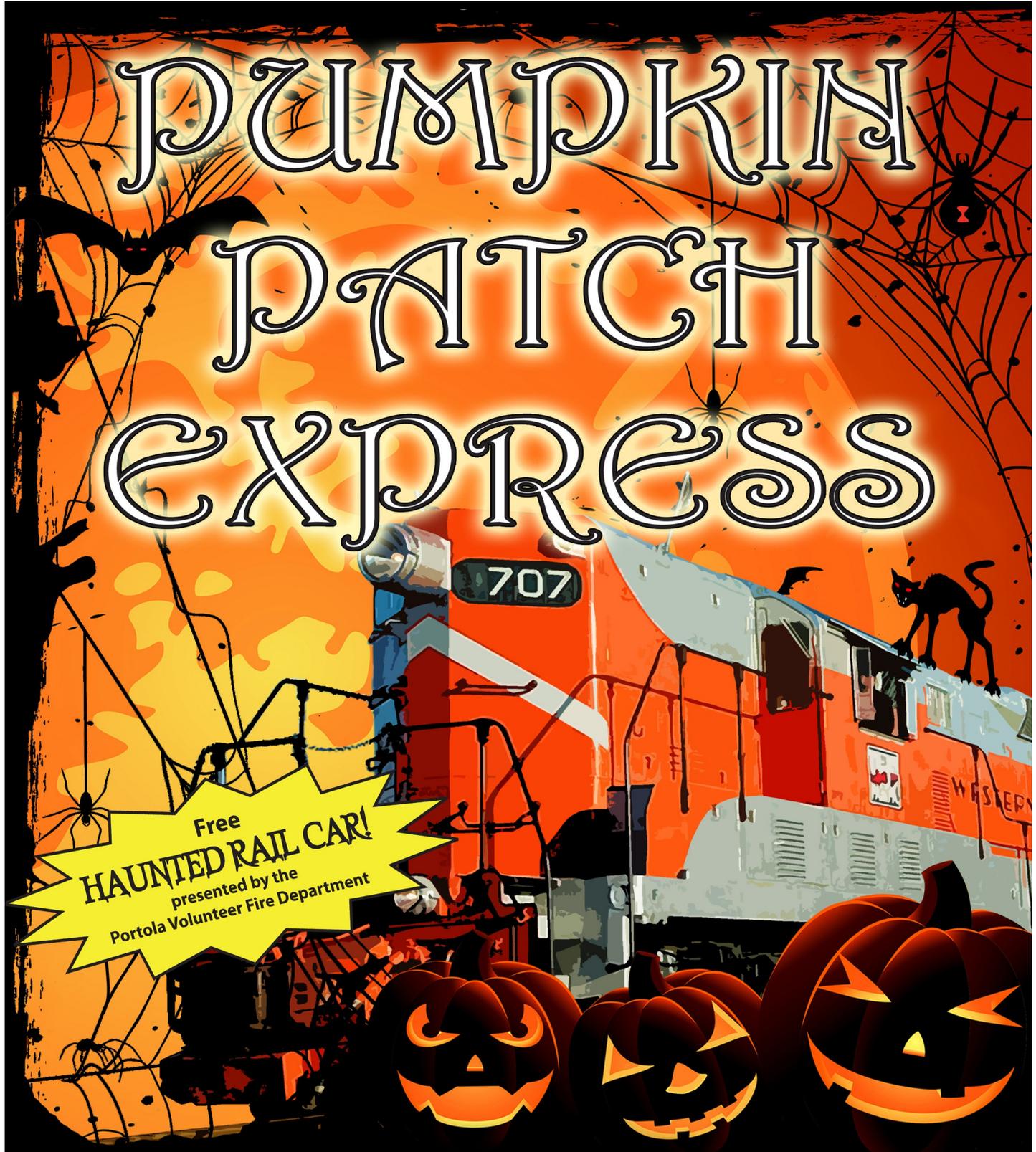
**Fritz on the Job**

*Fritz is seen here discussing with "Burr" Wilson the finer points of the handbrake assembly from the Fairbanks-Morse 1857 (seen in the background). The handbrake assembly is in need of some work to ensure optimal operation.*

*Bil "1 L" Jackson and Fritz have been working steadily on the inspection and maintenance of the 1857 which needs special tools machined to easily removal of injectors for inspection purposes.*

*Photo by Matt Elems*

# PUMPKIN PATCH EXPRESS



Free  
**HAUNTED RAIL CAR!**  
presented by the  
Portola Volunteer Fire Department

**OCTOBER 8-9, 15-16, 2016 • WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM, PORTOLA**  
**Museum open 10:00 AM to 6:30 PM • Trains depart hourly 1:00 to 5:00 PM**

Ride the train to get to the Pumpkin Patch (pumpkins extra price) . Special Exhibits . Halloween Fun  
Food Sales by Portola High School: Chili and Cornbread, Baked Potatoes, Desserts and Drinks!

Admission: \$10 per car or \$5 with 3 cans of food for the EPCAN Food Bank • web: [pumpkin.wpives.org](http://pumpkin.wpives.org)

## Our Run-A-Locomotive Program

— Jack Palmer

*This article was originally published in The Timetable, the newsletter of the District of Columbia Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and has been reprinted with permission.*

I am one of our Charter Members and volunteers who never had any railroad experience prior to formation of the Feather River Rail Society. Consequently, I had much to learn—from the ground up.

The Run A Locomotive Program is very special in many ways because you are acting on your own and it becomes necessary for you to draw upon all the knowledge and training you have acquired through operating our various equipment in accordance with our General Code of Operating Rules.

Our Run A Locomotive Engineers are now required to participate in our training program especially designed for this function and are officially certified upon completion.

Bear in mind that those who come to run a locomotive are visitors and must be given every courtesy and respect during their visit because YOU represent our organization.

### AS SAFETY IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE, EVERYONE MUST BE CONCERNED.

This is like “show and tell” as your instructions to the one operating the engine should be given briefly and clearly. You say and receive “Clear my side” BEFORE and move and using the bell. Always be alert and watch for anything unusual on or near the tracks and again say and receive “Switch Lined” as you approach a switch if it is safe to proceed. If not, call out “Bad Iron” and stop.

In most cases after two round trips the visitor becomes confident. At that point I begin explaining the benefits of becoming a volunteer or member.

I would like to share with you one visitor’s official report to his rail-oriented organization describing in detail his experience as a Run A Locomotive Engineer July 8, 2004:

As an active volunteer of the FRRS for more than 20 years, it was a pleasure for me to also be a Run A Locomotive Engineer and very rewarding to see others enjoy operating an engine and, in some cases, become one of us.

As an instructor in the Run A Locomotive program it was my personal goal to provide every client the utmost enjoyment and satisfaction from the experience.

There were many times I had five (the limit) people in the cab at the same time and everyone received the same training in the duties which our own engine crews are required to routinely perform.

If the first rental was scheduled for 10:00am it would be easy because at 8:00am I would get my radio and go to the WP608 which would be spotted east of the crossing entrance to our museum. I would perform a complete inspection of the engine. If two engines were to be used (combo) I would locate the WP921 and do a preliminary inspection of it (we used a lot of combos).

Shortly before my client was due to arrive, I would start the WP608, complete my inspection report and then wait at the entrance to greet my client, which sometimes was more than one person. (In this case I will be working with a group.)

Following a customary greeting and exchange of introductions while approaching the WP608 I would tell them: “Always remember to face the locomotive when going up or down – the same as using a ladder”. Once everyone was in the cab I would present a short orientation along these lines:

“Again, My name is Jack. “SAFETY” is the magic word and our main concern. This is an operating railroad museum so you should always expect

the unexpected. Look in both directions before crossing tracks and do not step ON the rail- Always OVER. We encourage you to walk around and look at our equipment and even climb up onto the engines if you wish, but we respectfully request your cooperation that you do everything safely. We want you to enjoy your visit and ask any of our volunteers for any assistance you may require.”

Now we are going to run this engine the same way our regular crews do, so one of you can be the Fireman. My plan is for each of you to take a turn at both positions before we run the road engine. This engine is smaller and has much better visibility and therefore easier to learn the basics. We will be coming to a road crossing and several switches which you must “call” and reply to each other as we near them so we know that is it safe to proceed. (I will assist you with that shortly.) I will be standing beside our engineer most of the time, particularly during the starting and stopping, and constantly oversee that we do everything SAFELY. You will each receive a certificate after operating both engines.

Okay Engineer and Fireman, are you ready? Let’s go! I will make the first move. Fireman, are we clear on your side? The answer is Clear and I repeat it back, set up everything and move to the end of the fence of the Parking Lot, explaining the controls as we went, and stop.

Okay Engineer, (depending on which way the engine is facing) put the Reverser in our direction of travel. Turn on the Headlight the same way. Now, you and the fireman look down outside your windows to see that no one is near or in front of the engine. If the area is clear Engineer, you call “Clear my side” and fireman, if the area is clear you repeat “Clear my side” so you both know it is safe to proceed.

Engineer, turn the Bell on and give two toots with the horn if we are going forward, or three toots if we are going back. Release the Brake and put the throttle in Run 1. You both must continue to look ahead of the engine from now on to see that our track remains clear.

When you see the road crossing, look to see that there are no people or vehicles near our track. As before, you both must look before and if clear, call “Crossing Clear”. Engineer, turn the bell on and give two Long, a short, and another long with the horn as a warning, and turn the bell off after clearing the crossing.

I then tell everyone that this is called a Balloon Track, which was used for turning engines around and that we soon approach a number of switches that would normally be locked in the proper position for continuous running. Nevertheless, we are required to call “Switch Lined” to each other to confirm it is safe to continue. (If there is silence I would say “I can’t hear you” and remind them to do so.) If the switch is not safe to proceed then you must say “Bad Iron” and stop. When they first see our sign “Malfunction Junction” THAT gets their attention and lots of laughs. If necessary I remind them to call the switches. I then tell them to look ahead for the switch with the number three and to come to a complete stop short of the switch. This is the end of our trip and to set up all the controls to go back to the place we started.

After the first complete round trip I suggest that two others run the engine, and so on, so that everyone has run the engine. While running I also inject the explanation for differences in our speed due to dips in the rail and to put the Throttle in Run 2 and back to Run 1 to compensate for the differences. Also, that we judge our speed by looking directly below the window to see how fast we are passing over the ground. Further, that we have a speed limit of 10mph on the property and that if they set the engine on the ground, they are required to set it back on the rails. (They all like that one.)

At the end of the hour we spot the engine where it was east of the crossing and walk to the WP921. If we are lucky, someone in our crew had it ready for us, so we all climb up and walk to the cab. I promptly tell them that NOW they can understand why they learned the basics before running a road engine.

I tell the Engineer, Okay, check out the controls

and we can go whenever you are ready. Fireman, watch your side and both of you call everything the same as you did with WP608. When you are ready I will release the handbrake. In this engine I find it much easier to stand behind the engineer so I can also see my side of the engine as necessary and monitoring the Fireman that he is alert and watching his side of the engine too. I watch to see that we are lined out and that they called the switch. If we were not lined out I would tell the Engineer to stop short of the switch and I would throw the switch so we could proceed and in that case would remove the Reverser, line us out, return the Reverser to the control stand, continue our same routine which now requires a minimum of instructions.

At the end of our second hour we return the WP921 to its original location and shut it down.

I then lead our group into the Gift Shop and prepare a certificate for each individual while our client settles his account. I again express my thanks for their cooperation and excuse myself and go to meet our next client. Some days we were fully scheduled with back-to-back rentals all day, including walk-ins.

On Operating weekends, we operated much the same way without interfering with the Caboose Train schedule which began at 11:00am until 4:00pm each half hour.

Within 5 minutes of departure time of the Caboose Train, the Conductor would call and ask me for our location and advise me of their departure. I would reply and tell him where we were and that we would be clear of the mainline. At that point we continued running until we reached and went through the 4 Rail switch and stopped in the pocket, clear of the mainline. (This last part of the move was easy when you had one of our members there to line the switch over to the mainline for you, after you were in the clear in the hole.)

I would then remove the Reverser, go down and back to the switch, throw the switch and call and tell the Conductor we were in the clear in the hole and the switch was lined for the mainline, and then I waited for the Caboose Train to go by and cleared the switch before I lined us out. Then I would return to the cab, put the Reverser in the control stand and tell our crew that it's now safe to run whenever you are ready.

That is the way most of us worked with out rentals for a number of years until we now have established our official training procedures for which out RAL Engineers must be certified.

As a footnote I wish to add that of all the people that ran the RAL with me as their instructor, I had but ONE elderly woman of a group at that time who REFUSED TO RUN THE ENGINE. SHE BROKE MY RECORD! (Yes she got her certificate.)

## Ask the Editor

**Q:** I visited Portola briefly on July 16, and was intrigued with the many stored UP locomotives north and northeast of the museum. How about a list of them in Train Sheet (in numerical and/or "geographic" order), plus perhaps some of the following background:

- How long have they been there?
- Does the collection fluctuate over time? And, if so, how has it fluctuated?
- Any semi-official UP guess as to whether the units would remain in Portola during mid-winter '16-'17?

*Submitted by Steve VanDenburgh*

**A:** They started arriving for storage in April 2015, and we had two on display inside the museum for some time. The size of the collection (once at 28 units) has remained fairly stable, but has been slowly shrinking lately. Some of the GE's sitting in storage have already been retired and sold to Larry's Truck Electric back east for scrapping, and their numbers have been reused on newer GE's. Nobody is quite sure how long they will be sitting in Portola. I have not been able to come up with a comprehensive list of units in storage at Portola, or their order.

## **DIRECTOR REPORT – WP 1503 PAINTING**

–Tom Carter, Director

I have had a lot of questions recently about the status of the paint job on WP 1503. Hopefully, this report will clear up where we currently stand on it.

Immediately upon 1503 arriving on the property, Rod asked me if I would be willing to paint it. I had never painted anything bigger than an old Army Jeep at the time, and had never used an air sprayer bigger than an airbrush on a G Scale model at that point. I had always had an interest in learning to paint, but, no experience. When I informed Rod, he asked me if I thought I could do it if I had the proper instruction by experienced professionals. I felt I could, so I said “No problem”. I was really looking forward to learning to paint so that in the future, we could eliminate the large expense of hiring painters. As a volunteer at the museum, I’m pretty cheap (but not easy!)

Rod and I had set it up a little over a year ago to have Henry Krenning, formerly of the UP Steam Crew in Cheyenne Wyoming come out to Portola and work with me on the 1503 paint, during a visit by Henry and Steve Lee to the museum. Henry had previously painted UP 3985 and UP 844 a couple of times, as well as the 6936 Centennial, the E9’s, the shop switcher, and the auxiliary water tenders for the steam engines. The 4 of us went over the 1503 very methodically where Steve and Henry pointed out various techniques and issues that will need to be dealt with as well as answering the many questions Rod and I had regarding painting. Henry planned to return this Spring to get the 1503 done. Unfortunately, a sudden tragedy in his family a couple of days before his trip prevented him from coming out with Steve. Fortunately for us though, Steve delivered a nice surprise; a high volume, low pressure turbine painting system, complete with brand new spray gun, courtesy of Henry. This equipment was donated specifically to paint 1503, and then whatever we want to paint in the future, with the understanding that I would be mentored by Henry on the 1503 to get us started.

I understand that many folks are excited about the prospect of having another locomotive

painted, especially Rod’s engine; I am too. Personally, I can’t wait. However, I felt an explanation is in order to you, the membership as to why it hasn’t happened yet. The bottom line is that I don’t want to just jump in and get in over my head with this. The fact of the matter is, if I tried to just “wing it”, that is exactly what I fear would happen and having been entrusted with a very important artifact by a very close personal friend, on an engine VERY near and dear to him, I take that trust and responsibility VERY profoundly. It is one thing to get into a mess over ones head when painting something like a model, but this is 100 tons of trouble if ill prepared. What kind of paint will we use? What are the PPE requirements for it? What are the shop requirements and how will we schedule it around visitorship? (we will undoubtedly have to close up the shop while the painting takes place). And when is Henry available to come back out to Portola to work with us on it? If not Henry, is there someone else that can mentor me to do it?

These are important considerations that I felt prudent to get squared away first for the good of this important artifact. This is a huge project; one that will be done RIGHT if I am to attempt it. I only want what’s best for the pieces in our collection and am confident that I will be a great painter and am willing to do whatever it takes to learn everything I can to be as good a painter as the best in the rail restoration business. In the mean time, I ask for your continued patience and assistance if you can help. I would like to give a BIG heartfelt thank you to recent donors John Ryczkowski and Larry Hanlon for their significant donations, Henry Krenning for the paint system and related equipment and for all of his assistance so far, to Steve Lee for transporting it and making the arrangements, as well as technical expertise, and to each and every donor and supporter for all of your financial contributions and encouragement, and above all, patience.

We’ll get there. I just want to make sure we do once I am prepared to do it RIGHT. It’s a promise I made to my friend to return “his engine” to its former glory and a commitment to you, the stewards of this treasure of the Western Pacific.

**- FRRS Membership -****Yearly Dues**

Associate \$25.00  
 Active \$50.00  
 Family \$80.00  
 Sustaining \$150.00

**Single Life Membership** - \$1800.00

**Family Life Membership** - \$3000.00

**Institutional** - \$60.00 (annual membership for 501(c)3 groups)

These are the dues for the duration of one year, with Life and Family Life being a one-time payment.  
 Five year payment plans are available for life memberships.

**Associate** memberships do not have a vote, receive The Train Sheet but not the Headlight and are for one person only.

**Active** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, have voting rights and are for one person only.

**Family** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, have two votes and include two adults and all minor children residing at the same address.

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**Family Life** memberships receive both The Train Sheet and the Headlight, include two adults and all minor children residing at the same address, and have two votes (one per member) for life.

Send all applications, renewals and address changes, including email changes, to:  
 Feather River Rail Society - Membership Dept. - P.O. Box 608 - Portola, CA 96122-0608  
 Address / email changes may also be sent to [membership@wplives.org](mailto:membership@wplives.org)

**Mission Statement**

"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."

**Mission Goals**

To preserve and interpret the history of the WP, the "Willing People" as a vital link in the development of the rail industry on the West Coast, including the steam and diesel evolution, WP's influence in the passenger tourism industry, the impact of freight competition between neighboring railroads, and WP's influence in the lumber, mining and agriculture industry from Plumas County throughout California, Nevada and Utah.

**WPRM Admission and Train Ride Fares for non-members (effective April 1, 2011)****Admission**

- Adults 19 and over... \$8.00
  - Youth 4 - 18... \$4.00
  - Child under 3... free
  - Family... \$20.00
- (2 adults plus any related children 18 and under)

**Train Rides**

- Adults 19 and over... \$4.00
  - Youth 4 - 18... \$2.00
  - Child under 3... free
  - Family... \$10.00
- (2 adults plus any related children 18 and under)

Admission and Train Ride tickets are good all day.

**Cab Rides**

- Adult 19 and over... \$20.00
  - Youth 4 - 18... \$10.00
- Cab rides are for one (1) ride only.

Admission and Train Rides for FRRS members are free. Cab ride is extra fare with member discount.

***The Train Sheet needs your photos and articles!***

If you are working on projects for the Society, volunteering on restorations, performing archives work, helping out at off-site events, etc., or if you get some nice photos of FRRS or museum happenings that you want to share, **please contact us to have them printed in The Train Sheet.**

Photos should be at least 5" high by 7" wide and 300 dots per inch.

Articles should focus on FRRS related events, people or your own personal experiences with the Society.

To contribute, contact Editor Matthew Elems by email at [trainsheet@wplives.org](mailto:trainsheet@wplives.org).

The Train Sheet  
Feather River Rail Society  
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*SP 4706 sits at the loading platform attached to the caboose train in preparation for Railroad Days 2016. Look for an article on this caboose's transformation in the next issue of the Trainsheet!*

*—Ethan Doty Photo.*