



# THE CLUB CAR

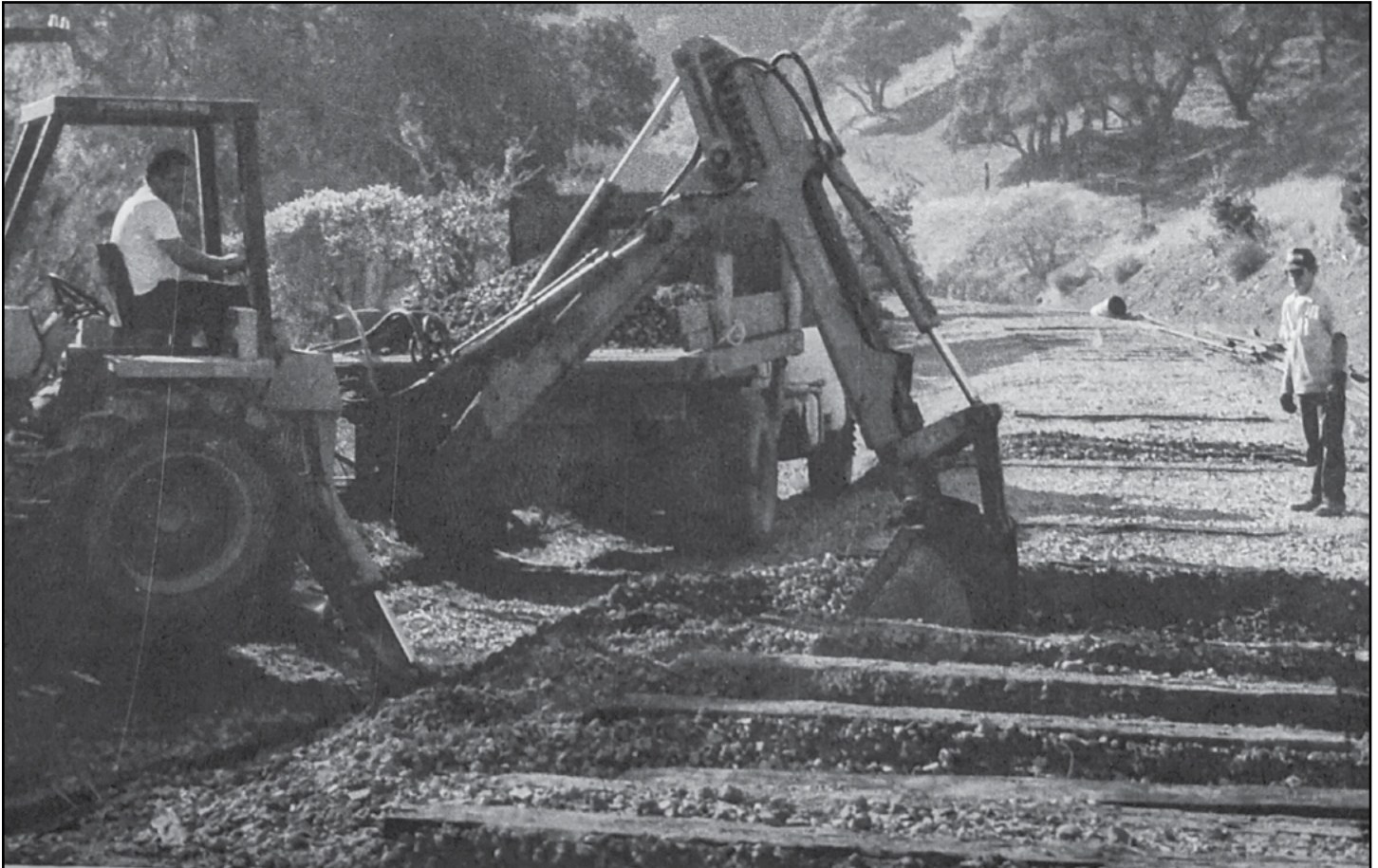


BULLETIN 690

PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

FEBRUARY 2021

## This Month's Tales of the Past



*Photo from Club Car collection*

Mark Whitman on backhoe digging out tie holes in advance of rail gang.

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This month's Tale:

### "A BRIDGE AFAR OFF"

It was June 1989 at Brightside with the Track Crew headed up by Jeff Otto trying to get ready to step off on a Westward track build that would scare any nonprofit railroad. The railroad which was completely intact when we took it over, did not end up that way. The County bought the ties on the right-of-way from the S.P. The rail was removed by the Southern Pacific to be

re-laid in Southern California. This left the railroad open to theft, which was widespread. If you could get a pick-up truck or trailer onto the right-of-way, 12 to 24 ties would go down the road. We had no way to protect the right-of-way at that time.

Jeff Otto and I had been trying to get started on the Westward track build. It seemed every time we had a date set, it was back to playing catch-up with something else. This would end some-

**Continued on Page 8**

**OUR MISSION:** To be an operating railroad museum for standard gauge railroading, past, present and future, with emphasis on the Western United States and special emphasis on Northern California



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

To our Members:

Our cash position is good coming off December which featured more income than expense. We are in a good position to weather this Covid storm - as long as we are allowed to run our trains like we did last fall, and then our successful TOL later this year. Keep your fingers crossed.

Overall revenue for half our fiscal year (that is 50% through our budgeted year), including donations, we have made 75% of what we budgeted for the entire year - that is GOOD! On the expense side, we are doing a good job controlling our costs and getting work done while staying within our budgets. Our biggest expense this month has been the repairs to the Brightside gate.

In mid-November we received a distribution from the PLA Endowment Fund of \$25,000. With those funds we 1) Purchased a used Pettibone Hydraulic rubber-tire 15T crane with \$10,000, to be used as equipment around the railroad. Using on-the-job testing we found it to be just as good a rig as we hoped. 2) Were given a DRGW Stock Car # 39210 by the City of Sonoma, to add to our historic car collection. We budgeted \$15,000 to lift, transport, and make initial minimum repairs and restoration. Much of that work has already been done, and it will fit very well in an historic freight train. Imagine it pulled by a steam locomotive!

December was a good month for contributions to PLA and its various projects. Many of our members are renewing their memberships ahead of the new calendar year and also choose to make a donation to one of our cur-

rent projects. It is the end of the year, so donations to the PLA is a tax reduction tool folks often can use. In mid-December we also launched a fundraising drive centered on the restoration of our newest steam locomotive, SP1744.

As icing on the cake, the Ranch Car, GN1242, has found a benefactor, a couple who donated \$30,000 to spur on the complete restoration of this car in time for the TOL this year. So, total donations for December were just under \$74,000.

This is the detail by restoration project or Fund:

General Fund - \$11,340  
SP1744 - \$24,496  
SP9010 - \$2,734  
ATSF1129, Gothic Peak - \$1,100  
GN1242, Ranch Car - \$30,275  
Signal Dept. - \$64  
Pleasanton Extension - \$208  
MOW Second Shed - \$564  
New Loco Shop - \$100  
Brightside Car Storage Bldg - \$505  
Various In-kind Contributions - \$2,428

Thank you to all of you who gave generously to these projects. Your donation not only helps fund these efforts; it also is a vote of confidence in that project's importance and value to the Niles Canyon Railway. If you see a project in which you would like get involved in, let us know and we'll help you get hooked up with the crew.

Last but not least, remember to use Amazon.Smile, directed to the PLA, or Niles Canyon Railway, when shopping at Amazon. It's painless for you, and every once in a while they send us a donation check. In particular, all you members purchasing materials and

supplies for your projects on the railroad, use Amazon.Smile.

Thank you,  
**Pat Stratton**  
650-888-8619

**TAX DEDUCTIBLE:** The Pacific Locomotive Association is qualified under Internal Revenue Service code section 501 (c) (3) as a tax exempt organization. Thus, donations to the PLA are tax deductible as CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS to the extent allowed by law. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 515, Sunol, CA 94586-0515. The PLA's Federal ID is: 94-6130878, CA ID is: 0501445.



Photo by C G Heimerdinger  
Cal Western M-200 in maroon paint heading southbound from Molate Beach.



### E-COUPLING INFORMATION

Website: <http://www.ncry.org>

Email: To Join Members Email List, send an Email to: [info@ncry.org](mailto:info@ncry.org)

Twitter: [@toots4ncry](https://twitter.com/toots4ncry)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/NilesCanyonRailway>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NilesCanyonRailRoad>



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## = = = = = February Activities = = = = =

February 3, 10, 17, 24	Wednesdays	Maintenance of Way, 7:30 am (Brightside) - Ron Thomas
February 13	2nd Saturday	Board of Directors Meeting, 2:15 pm (Teleconference)
February 27	4th Saturday	Brush Cutting, 8:00 am (Brightside) - Steve Jones

= = ALL ACTIVITIES SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION = =

## Volunteer Report

**Ed Best - Volunteer Coordinator**

The following is a list of the people who volunteered supporting your railroad in December. All volunteer hours on projects related to the railroad during these restricted periods are eligible to be registered. Please send your hours to me by e-mail at [volunteers@ncry.org](mailto:volunteers@ncry.org). One member of a working group can send me the data for all members of the group. Meeting attendance by teleconference is reported to me by the Membership Secretary.

### ADMINISTRATIVE

Henry Baum  
Mike Strider  
Jim Evans  
Linda Stanley  
Pat Stratton  
Steve Barkkarie  
Jim Stewart  
Kent Hedberg  
Gail Hedberg  
Chris Hauf  
Don Gholson  
Donna Alexander  
Ed Best  
Jackie Vlasak  
Joe Scardino  
Mark Miller  
Mary Asturias  
Rich Alexander  
Steve Jones

### ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

Brian Hitchcock

### CAR DEPARTMENT

Bob Moore  
Dee Murphy  
Denis Murchison  
Dennis Mann  
Jim McDaniel  
Pete Goodier  
Phil Stone  
Steve Van Meter  
Terry Stokes

### CAR DEPARTMENT

Tom Crawford

### COMMISSARY

Dee Murphy  
Doug Debs  
Matthew Petach  
Sally Mills

### DEPOT CREW & OPERATIONS

Bob Bailey  
Donna Alexander  
Rich Alexander

### DOCENTS

Henry Baum

### ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Curt Hoppins  
Jim Stewart  
Steve Jones

### FACILITIES

Bob Bailey  
Bob Bradley  
Chris Campi  
Doug Debs  
Jack Harrington  
John Zielinski  
Kurt Olsen  
Mark Whitman  
Matthew Petach  
Rich Alexander

### FACILITIES

Rich Gove  
Steve Barkkarie  
Steve Jones  
Wesley Van Osdol

### GIFT SHOP

Donna Alexander  
Gail Hedberg  
Rich Alexander

### MECHANICAL

Bill Ross  
Bill Stimmerman  
Chuck Kent  
Connor Schwab  
Dee Murphy  
Doug Vanderlee  
Gerald DeWitt  
Gerry Feeney  
Howard Wise  
Jeff Haslam  
Jeff Schwab  
Karl Swartz  
Linda Stanley  
Lou Bradas  
Peter Bradas  
Steve Jones

### MEETINGS

Alan Siegwarth  
Bob Pratt  
Chuck Gullo  
Curt Hoppins

### MEETINGS

Dan Mills  
Dave Burla  
Dee Murphy  
Dexter Day  
Don Gholson  
Donna Alexander  
Doug Debs  
Doug Vanderlee  
Ed Best  
Gail Hedberg  
George Childs  
Gerald DeWitt  
Henry Baum  
Jeff Haslam  
Jim Evans  
Jim Gilmore  
Jim Stewart  
John Zielinski  
Justin Legg  
Karen Kadaja  
Ken Southwick  
Kent Hedberg  
Kurt Olsen  
Linda Stanley  
Lou Bradas  
Mark Miller  
Matthew Petach  
Mike Strider  
Pat Buder  
Pat Stratton  
Patrice McDonald  
Paul Veltman  
Peter Midnight

### MEETINGS

Rich Alexander  
Rob Giles  
Sally Mills  
Steve Barkkarie  
Steve Jones  
Steve Slabach  
Thomas Libbey  
Tim Flippo  
Tom Crawford  
Tom Eikerenkotter  
Zona Fowler  
Zonker Harris

### MOW & TRACK

Bob Pratt  
Chris Campi  
Dee Murphy  
Ken Southwick  
Linda Stanley  
Mark Whitman  
Matthew Petach  
Mike Strider  
Pat Hafey  
Pat Stratton  
Ron Thomas  
Steve Barkkarie  
Steve Jones  
Wesley Van Osdol

### OTHER

Barry Lependorf  
Chris Hauf  
Curt Hoppins

### OTHER

Dennis Mann  
Ed Best  
Gerry Feeney  
Karl Swartz  
Kent Hedberg  
Linda Stanley  
Patrice Warren  
Paul Veltman  
Steve Jones  
Wesley Van Osdol  
Zonker Harris

### SWITCHING CREW

Ed Best  
Gerry Feeney

### TRAIN CREW

Bob Pratt  
Charles Franz  
Chuck Kent  
Curt Hoppins  
Derek Schipper  
Doug Vanderlee  
Jeff Schwab  
John Sutkus  
Justin Legg  
Kurt Olsen  
Tim Flippo  
Warren Haack

## President's Message

Henry Baum - President

I am sitting here watching the various activities associated with the Inauguration of our 46th President Joe Biden and I wish him and Vice-President Harris all the best. As President of the Pacific Locomotive Association I know how difficult it can be to balance the desires of our members and volunteers with the needs of the organization. I am not equating PLA President to President of the United States, but both jobs require an ability to be diplomatic but also the strength to stand up for the organization to ensure that we are always protected and able to pursue our Objectives and Mission.

I didn't have to swear an oath when I became President (pretty much just show up) but I still feel the need to protect and defend our organization against all threats and do everything I can to ensure we are always moving toward a more perfect Association. The job of PLA President is primarily focused on the financial aspects of the organization and to make sure we operate in the black. Our current financial position is far better than many other true non-profits in the country and we will continue to work on keeping it that way.

Being effective as POTUS or PLA President requires having a team sharing the workload and helping to connect all the dots. Our Board of Directors helps me greatly in keeping track of all the various little bits and pieces that go into keeping the PLA operating at peak efficiency. We do this by compartmentalizing the various tasks that must be performed and divvying up the workload. We also have a team of dedicated Department Heads who assist the Board by keeping track of their projects and budget. They are fully responsible for keeping their departments on budget and keep the planned work going forward.

I am very pleased with how well the organization is coping with the current situation regarding the Covid-19 pan-

demic. While we are still unable to operate trains for the public, we are able to perform minimum basic operations and activities to keep us from slipping backward. The current guidelines have even outdoor museums shut down, and we will tend to trail the reopening guidance in the interest of safety. I am hoping that we will be able to run charters as a warm-up when the Bay Area returns to the 'Red' tier and resume special train Ops like we did last fall when we reach the 'Yellow' tier again, hopefully in March or April.

Covid-19 continues to affect all of our lives. I have a socially distanced family member (four degrees of separation from my social bubble) who has tested positive for Covid-19 even after being vaccinated (she is a front-line medical worker), but the vaccination happened too close to the exposure. She is doing well and is not experiencing any serious symptoms. People need to realize that vaccinations are not magic. They take time to develop an efficacy, and you may still be susceptible, or can even spread the virus after being vaccinated. My family member, luckily having already been vaccinated, is one of the reasons she is doing so well.

It is rare for me to use the 'bully pulpit' being President of the PLA grants me, but I feel strongly enough about this to invoke it now. I do want to implore all of our members and volunteers to get inoculated with a Covid-19 vaccine as soon as you can. I know some already have, but it is imperative not just for your health, but for the health of the organization. It is important to understand

that a vaccine such as this can only work when a large portion of our community has been vaccinated. The virus that causes Covid is a parasite that needs a host to replicate efficiently. If it cannot replicate efficiently, it mutates or dies. Making it difficult to replicate is the vaccine's job, and it cannot do it if you don't have it. Herd immunity does not happen by itself; it requires the herd to do its part. We cannot control all the cows in the Bay Area herd, but if we control our own and impress the need to others, we can have an impact.

The pandemic and its restrictions is highly likely to continue until we get the infection rates down. That is a fact. If the infection rate is not under control by the end of summer, the PLA may have to deal with not running the Train of Lights for the 2021 season. That would have a disastrous impact on the organization, especially with regard to the many amazing projects we have underway. While the organization will survive, we will suffer a loss of momentum that could take years to rebuild. I don't want to see that happen.

I believe in science and the laws of physics. Toward the end of my career as a Mechanical Engineer I spent a lot of time teaching others about the fallacies and misinterpretations that had been developing in my field regarding the concept of tolerancing. Too many believed that if you put tight enough tolerances on something, you could guarantee a manufacturable product. Sadly, that was not true. A tolerance no one can achieve when manufacturing is useless. I had to show folks how to balance the odds inherent with the various manufacturing processes to ensure a cumulative window that would allow a product to function. While fascinating, I won't bore you with the details. Just understand that measuring couldn't solve the problem. It had to be balanced with a range of acceptability and the easy assurance that the product performs. I spent a lot of time reintroducing the





## President's Message

### Henry Baum - President

concept of gages and fixtures to my vendors, who eventually came to appreciate how effective and cost-effective these devices can be.

Not a perfect science, but if I build 100 parts and check them with an appropriate gage or fixture and they all pass, my manufacturing process is good. If 3 parts fail, all in the same direction (All Undersize? All Oversize?) I can determine what needs to be tweaked in the manufacturing process to get those numbers up. If I then build 1,000 parts and only 3 fail the test, I have a process that is good enough. It cannot and will not ever be perfect, but it will be good enough.

The vaccine is very similar. Is it 100% effective? Nobody knows. Does it make virus replication more difficult, the answer is generally yes. Is it safe? Nobody knows. Will it hurt you to have it, again the available information shows that it will probably not. The number of variables when dealing with humans and the process of manufacturing vaccines is huge, but only by building and tweaking can we tighten the process.

If everyone who reads this gets vaccinated, we will have a good start. If everyone who gets vaccinated convinces others to get vaccinated we will see a marked reduction in the virus spreading. If the virus spread slows, the TOL will become something we can again operate for the benefit of everyone in the Bay Area (lucky enough to get tickets, anyway).

It is still vitally important that you no-

tify Ed Best at [volunteers@ncry.org](mailto:volunteers@ncry.org) to record your hours worked, what you worked on, and where you were working. The new restrictions make this vitally important again.

As always, if you would like to discuss this opportunity or any topic in further

detail, please contact me by phone at 925.447.7358 or by email at [president@ncry.org](mailto:president@ncry.org).

Respectfully submitted

**Henry Baum**



The 1st Class bookshelf was installed on the Yosemite Valley Railroad observation car #330 in early January. Installation complete, next project up is top of wall trim work, which is receiving its 3rd coat of varnish as this is written. The trim completes the transition from wall to hip roof, and runs even with the top fascia of the bookcase, providing finishing detail.

**Wes Swift**

## Looking for a place to Volunteer? Department Contacts are listed below:

**BRUSH CUTTING** - Clearing the RoW of bushes and trees - Steve Jones - [fcocompost@aol.com](mailto:fcocompost@aol.com)

**CAR MAINTENANCE** - Maintenance and repair - Tom Crawford - [tom@thecrawfordfamily.net](mailto:tom@thecrawfordfamily.net)

**COMMISSARY** - Food service on the trains - Bob Bradley - [ncry.commissary@gmail.com](mailto:ncry.commissary@gmail.com)

**GIFT SHOP** - Work in the Sunol Gift Shop - Gail Hedberg - [giftshop@ncry.org](mailto:giftshop@ncry.org)

**MOW CREW - (WEDNESDAY)** - Work on track repair, etc. - Ron Thomas - [rsthomas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rsthomas@sbcglobal.net)

**MOW CREW - (SATURDAY)** - Work on building track East. Michael Strider - [mstrider67@gmail.com](mailto:mstrider67@gmail.com)

**SIGNALS** - Install/Maintain signal systems - Curt Hoppins - [curt@ncrysignal.com](mailto:curt@ncrysignal.com)

**NILES STATION** - Work parking, ticket sales, set-up, etc. - John Fenstermacher - [johnnsherif@aol.com](mailto:johnnsherif@aol.com)

**SUNOL STATION** - Work parking, ticket sales, set-up, etc. - Donna Alexander - [station-agent@ncry.org](mailto:station-agent@ncry.org)

**STEAM DEPARTMENT** - Work in all aspects of steam engines - Alan Siegwarth - [siegy667@hotmail.com](mailto:siegy667@hotmail.com)

**STEAM HOSTLER TRAINING** - Prepare a steam locomotive for service - Jeff Schwab - [jeffs@levintterminal.com](mailto:jeffs@levintterminal.com)



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

When I was growing up it was always considered a great honor to be asked to ride along, "into town" with one of the grownups. You got away from chores for a while, might get a chance to see one of your friends and would get to peek in the shop windows. It always felt like you were special. Like you deserved a treat, or were the "favorite" child. Recently, I have come to a new understanding of that time in my life.

For several months now, our automatic gate at Brightside has been out of commission, so every time you come into or go out of the yard, you must stop, get out, open the gate and drive through, stop, get out, and close the gate then, go on your way. Not bad if you only come and go once or twice a day, but if you are in and out all day, it can be very tedious. It was during one of these egress procedures that a bolt of lightning struck me; as a child, I was only invited along to open and close the gates! Well, maybe not just for opening gates, I also got to carry groceries or livestock feed. All kidding aside, once you get used to having a self-opening gate, you do not want to go without one, and with money being tight, we decided to repair the gate ourselves. Bob Bradley had studied the installation and discovered several things installed incorrectly, like the motor base way too close to the hinge, the arm attached in the wrong place on the gate, and even the motor installed facing the wrong direction! Our volunteers dove right in; jackhammered out the old base, poured a new one and remounted the motor. I welded a new support into the gate for the control arm and re-adjusted the arm itself. Matt Petach and Kurt Olsen, under the expert supervision of Rich Alexander, disassembled the electronic components and power system, and rebuilt it correctly with a weather-tight enclosure and new conduits. Do I need to tell you the outcome? Of course not, it works, and we have gained a thorough knowledge of the workings, with several people now qualified to identify problems if they pop up. Great job to all who had a hand involved.

Engine replacement for our Burro 40 crane is underway. Doug Vanderlee and I spent a day unbolting and removing the power plant, from the radiator fan to drive sprocket all in one piece. Previously Doug had spent several days excavating years of leaves, dirt, grease and rat droppings from every crevasse and nook amid the machinery. That is sure to improve the aroma of the operator's cab and will make further maintenance much easier (and less disgusting). We have found a couple of air control leaks that were heretofore undiscovered and can only be reached with the engine removed or otherwise by a double-jointed mechanic. These will be taken care of before the new engine is installed. As some of you may recall, a little more than a year ago, we had the engine from the second "parts" Burro, which was used to make the "Heavy Hauler", rebuilt to make this swap. The engine has been paid for already, so our costs



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

**Matt Petach on the jackhammer while Kurt Olsen and Rich Alexander look on.**



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

**Matt, Kurt and Rich reassembling the gate.**

to repower this asset will be kept to a minimum. Having this important machine back in tip-top shape will help us move forward with our Eastward extension as well as continued maintenance of the canyon.

Our intrepid tree trimming team of Steve Jones and Lin-



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

**Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager**



*Photo by Stephen Barkkarie*

**Doug Vanderlee guiding the old Burro engine out.**



*Photo By Stephen Barkkarie*

**Rancher and his cowboys secure the rescued cow on a flat car for transfer to waiting trailer.**

da Stanley went out for a weekend of woodcraft at Vallejo Mills cleaning up an oak tree that split apart. Saturday was spent cutting wood and Sunday was to be for chipping, but that did not work out as planned. On the way to Niles, at Mile Post 30.25 they came across a stranded bovine. The errant cow had taken a tumble off the hill and fetched up against some large rocks that prevented the poor animal from getting to its feet. Fortunately, Steve had made a list of the landowners who abut our line and was able to track down the ranch manager to whom the cow belonged. The rancher sized up the condition of the animal and found it basically sound, but exhausted. All that was needed was a rescue plan. The rancher went to round up some cowboys and a trailer. Steve Jones sprang into action. He got the rancher in touch with the new landowner between our ROW and the highway, reached me at home and with luck the CAT backhoe was in Brightside, so I headed for the yard to gather tools and get down the track. With luck, Doug V. was at Brightside when I arrived, and we grabbed a couple of hoisting slings, a pry bar and shovel, Hi-railed the backhoe and high-tailed it to the West. Upon arrival at the scene, all was as described. Cow was healthy, stuck, and unable to arise. The rancher was there with lots of hands, a truck and trailer near the track, and we had flat cars ready to transport the unintentional trespasser to safety. The cowhands deftly slipped the slings around the animal's legs and we gingerly lifted her out of the predicament with the CAT backhoe. She was laid on the flat car and hobbled to keep her calm. Three of the cowboys rode with her on the flat car to the transfer point, and shortly, all were headed for home. Another successful although unexpected, day on the NCRY.

At Niles, wells are being drilled in the environmental clean-up monitoring of Crist oil, around the area of our gate. Several are within our driveway access but are of the type already installed in the area and should not affect our interests.

Planning meetings have taken place with Caltrans, at the 680 underpass, and with Castlewood Golf Course Managers about the next mile of track to be built East from Happy Valley Bridge. Lots of work to do before we get there, and we must finish profile more than a mile of track behind us at our current end point at MP 39, but prospects are positive for progress toward Pleasanton.

Given the restrictions required to battle the pandemic, we have been able to find the ways to preserve what we have, as well as continue our mission. This is a direct result of the passion of our volunteers, and this is a contagion I would like to propagate. I hesitate to say "come out and catch the bug", because of the times, but I hope you get my meaning.

**Stephen Barkkarie**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

Continued from Page 1

day. It looked like we were looking at July for the start of the Westward expansion. At Brightside, looking West down a torn-up right-of-way, we could only imagine that our Track Crew would have one rough build laying ahead of them before reaching their goal on this portion of the build: "FARWELL BRIDGE".

To start off, the Brightside crossing was in place with some track extending to the West but it needed to be worked over with new ties and rail. A lot of ties in this area were stolen, which created some big holes with nothing in them. You could say this was going to be a slow start for a push to build West. What? We were going to get started building West on July 1, 1989. It was Westward, Ho! This is where this month's tale begins:

Preparation to start building this portion of the railroad had been underway for months. There was a lot of rail piled up destined for use in this build. Some rails looked new, while others were worn on the rail head. To make a smooth ride, they had to match. Jeff Otto and Ed Alley came up with a grading system. For instance, a new rail would receive the highest mark of 1.0 and a serial number.

Now, if the rail had a lip on one side which did not exceed 1/4", it would be given a rating of 1.1 or 1.2. Anything rated over 1.2 could not be used on the mainline on that side. On the other hand, if it had side wear, the rail would receive a rating of .9 or .8. Anything below a rating of .8 could not be used on the mainline on that side. Arrows were marked on the rails to show to which side the rating numbers applied. The rail was inspected for chips, cracks, or if the rail had been torch cut on the ends, at which time Ken Asmus and crew would have to saw cut the end and redrill the holes for bolting up joint bars.



Photo by Jim Evans

A few more of the holes the crew had to work through.



Photo by Jim Evans

Putting finishing touch on the alignment before crab car puts tie plate down and spikes the tie.



Photo from Club Car collection

Lining rail just West of Brightside in one of the holes. No tie plates yet.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

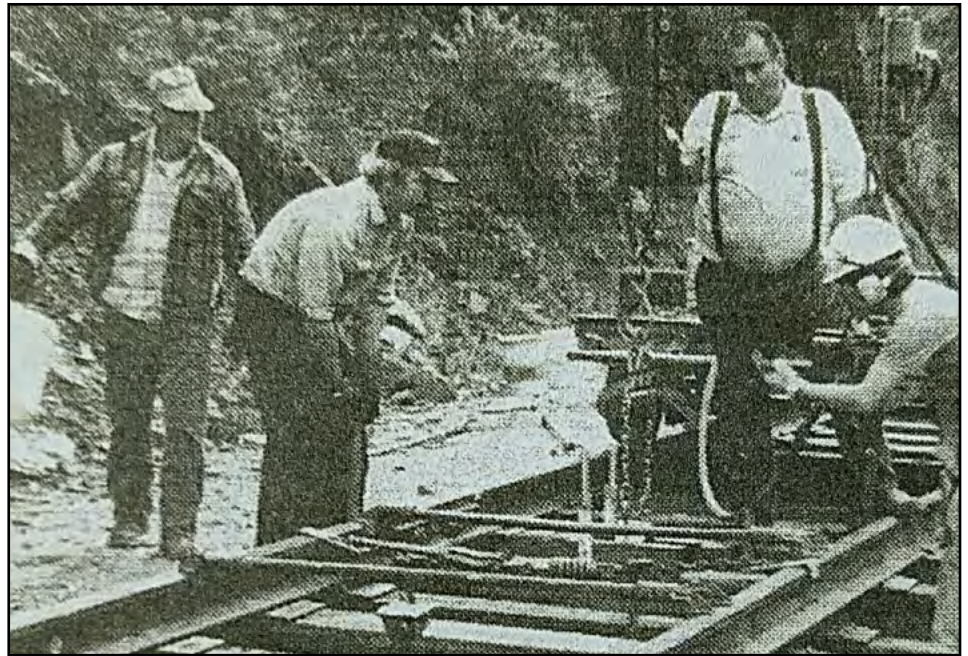
**Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager**

The rail was then measured for length and marked along with where it could be used. For instance, depending on its rating, condition, defects, rail length, it was determined if it could be used on the North or South rail or both. This is where the serial numbers came into play. Since all the rails were logged, they could pre-plan where each rail would go and know what the condition and profile of the next rail to butt up would be.

This method Jeff worked up improved the crew's working efficiency and kept the quality of the built track very high. There we were, looking West with nothing to really build on but dirt. This means that Mark Whitman had to carve out a right-of-way so we could put ties into the trench and place rail on top and attach, lift and ballast, then line the rail and set elevation. This was Railroad Engineering. Remember who we were (volunteers). Well, track was leveled and super-elevation placed in the turn.

This was straight out of the gate at Brightside. Jeff knew engineering, but wow! Next time you are at Brightside, stop at the driveway crossing and look West. Imagine all rail and ties removed to the bridge. You will see what the early crews were up against. It took a little more time than expected, but the dreaded gaps in tie spacing were behind us. The crew was working on a good portion of the right-of-way. They were in a, "Put missing ties in, lay the rail, bolt it up, tie plate it, drive the spikes in, ballast, tamp and move on", mode.

Next goal: MP 33.0. Except for some rocks and a few bad ties, along the ridge was an easier build. Mark Whitman and Ed Alley stayed ahead of the Track Gang getting the right-of-way set up for laying track, then they came to "The Big Turn". It looked like a B-52 carpet bombing raid hit it. It looked bad. You could have said, "That's it. Let's go home". That is what you would think, but you know, track continued being



*Photo from Club Car collection*

**Approaching East Farwell (The Spot).**

built West, slowly.

They found enough ties that were left in place (we call them "Golden Ties") to establish the super-elevation in the big turn. Good luck on our part. We didn't have to survey the turn. The right-of-way was there, along with motorcycle jump ramps and more. Once again Mark Whitman and Ed Alley went to work ditching and prepping the right of way for the Track Crew which was finishing the track along the ridge beyond MP 33. At this time, we had a "Buy-a-Tie" program going, and a donation drive to buy lots of ties and ballast. We did have ties that we salvaged from ripping up rail sites, but we were a little thin on mainline ties versus branch line ties which are smaller. You have to put the NCRY in the same status as many other early railroads that were cash strapped when they started. Well, we were there to represent what it was like in the early years of railroading. This is what it was like. In fact, the first Western Pacific went broke in the same



*Photo by Jim Evans*

**Jeff Otto adjusts A tie in one of the holes.**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

area where our build along the ridge was taking place. If you donated many years ago to build track, thank you! The track was heading slowly toward Farwell. Along with culvert cleaning, the big turn was slowly taking shape.

A lot of long days went into that turn, but it was starting to look like a Class II Right-of-Way. Next goal would be the East Farwell switch and spur track. "THE SPOT" is what it is called today. The planned spur track would relieve pressure at Brightside for storage track space. Enough track was laid on the spur for storage and the switch was complete. It was time to head West again.

Except for the rocks, the right of way was in pretty good shape. All was going well until we approached the cut in the right-of-way created by repair work that was done by Gallagher and Burke construction. They agreed to return to the property and correct the damage and reinstate the right-of-way. To help us out, they paid for some ballast to be delivered. That was a great gift. As our crew worked through this long turn and came out of the cut, there it was; Farwell Bridge, sitting there cold and with no activity. That condition would be corrected shortly. The push was on toward Farwell Bridge.

The Track Crew reached their goal. Now they were building across Farwell Bridge and beyond.

The next phase would be heading down the hill toward Dresser Bridge, but for the time, the Farwell Bridge was now part of the NCRY. The dedication of the bridge was under way. It was time for a picnic to dedicate the accomplishments of our volunteer Track Crew. They met the challenge and overcame the problems that went with it. Not many volunteer track crews would stick it out like they did and got it done. The dedication was held at Farwell Bridge on November 08, 1992, and trains were run from Sunol to the Bridge. It was a great dedication with



Photo by Warren Benner

Finally Farwell group shot with me holding the cake.

good food and speeches, of course.

The Track Crew put on a live track laying demonstration and the "Golden Spike" was pounded in by Mark Whitman. The train was loaded up. The first train with passengers broke through the banner across the track, "FINALLY FARWELL", and proceeded across the bridge to E.O.T. (end of track). The railroad then ran from Sunol to just West of Farwell Bridge at "JOYLAND Park".

There we were, at Farwell. Great accomplishment. But it was just the beginning. From Sunol to Farwell, this railroad was insular, that is, no public crossings and we didn't span any State roads.

Private crossings don't count. Although we had two crossings East of Sunol, they didn't count since we weren't using them, but Farwell bridge crosses HWY 84 and that counts. That put us under 49 CFR & 234.3: "Application and Responsibility for Compliance". The PUC and FRA had suddenly taken great interest in the NCRY. My phone lit up like a Christmas tree. Remember, our crossing of the Farwell Bridge was not a secret. I received phone calls from the FRA and PUC.

What did this bridge mean at this time? Track Crew accomplishments? Yes, but it went further than that. The NCRY just entered into the world of real railroading. We had become a Non-insular Class II Railroad. We fell under the umbrella of the Federal / State regulations. Welcome to the real world of regulated railroading! We suddenly gained track inspections, car inspections, signal inspections, engine inspections, recertification inspections, testing of crews, check rides for operation compliance and drug testing. We also were signed up by the PUC for the "RAILROAD CROSSING MAINTENANCE FUND". That means we would be paid to maintain Kilcare Rd. and Bond St. crossing signals when we got there. Crossing HWY 84 at FARWELL BRIDGE changed the scope of this railroad and how we would operate it.

Now, we can look back at our Track Crew that got us to where we were at that time. The Track Crew was looking at their next goal, "Dresser Bridge", which is another tale to tell. Look forward to next month. With that said, this month's tale comes to an end.

**Dexter Day**



## Stack Talk

Alan Siegwarth

### No chance to take a break for the holidays in the Steam Department!

The last month has been a busy one with organizing and operating the "Ride the #7 for the #1744" photographers freight train special, work on the #1744, to annual work on the Robert Dollar #3 and Skookum #7 which has kept our department extremely busy before and through the holidays. The photographers charter the first week of December was a great event with all except 3 tickets selling meaning we had almost a full train of photographers on both Saturday and Sunday. The photographers really enjoyed the trip and the PLA received many compliments for the operation. Many photographers noted and were impressed with our freight car consist which is especially rewarding as the Steam Department has lovingly restored and maintained these cars in service for many years.

In addition to the charter, we continued with ongoing maintenance on the locomotives and work on the running gear of the #1744. As soon as the charter was over, the Steam Crew started work on locomotive annuals. During the annual process, a superheater flue was found to be leaking on the Clover Valley #4 which will require the flue to be replaced. The repairs on the #4 will take a while so it was decided to perform annuals on both the Skookum and the Robert Dollar #3. Boilers were prepared for an FRA hydrotest in early January and many other inspections were completed or are ongoing. The inspection work on the #1744 is being done as time allows. The frame is being needle scaled, inspected and repainted. Running gear inspection continues and tramming has been started to determine the extent of any repairs required.

The Steam Crew wants to thank everyone who has donated toward the SP #1744 project as donations are essen-



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

**Freight Cars:** A lineup of restored freight cars for the "Ride the #7 for the #1744" photographers special.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

**Charles Franz and Justin Legg** painting primer on a #1744 driver.

tial to allow the SP #1744 project to continue moving forward. PLA members have been extremely generous in donating to this project throughout 2020. If you can, PLEASE DONATE to keep the project on schedule in 2021. Do-



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

**Justin Legg** needle gunning the paint off of the #1744 drivers.

nations can be mailed, made online at [www.ncry.org/donate](http://www.ncry.org/donate) or on our Steam Website page at <http://plasteam.ncry.org> which you can also visit to keep up with the progress of the restoration.

**Alan Siegwarth**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Brush Cutting Report

Steve Jones - Sawdust Manager

Out of an abundance of caution, spurred on by the post-Christmas spike in Covid-19 infections, we called off the "4th Saturday" Brush Cutting work days in December and January. We did have a 2-person Social Bubble Team survey the Right-of-Way from Niles to the Verona Crossing inspecting and measuring clearance along the way, and stopping to remove any branches that would actually strike the train, if one were to travel out on the main. A half dozen or so strike points were detected and eliminated. There is a very large bifurcated Oak tree that cleaved off half of its mass near Mission Bridge. Cutting up and chipping the failed portion is in progress.

The volunteers who operate and maintain the railroad appreciate the scenic rural beauty and the freedom from high density living, just minutes away. The railroad passes by a very few homes, and a lot of ranch land. Because of its isolated nature, the railroad volunteers are the first to observe and report hazardous conditions on adjacent properties such as fallen trees, power lines, plugged stormwater culverts and the occasional backyard brush fire. They also encounter stray sheep, goats and cattle that have snuck through fences and wandered onto the right-of-way. A list of contact information was created by the MOW Department to enable us to call neighbors to report any dangerous conditions we observe.

On Sunday, January 17th, two volunteers set out from Brightside to clean up the broken Oak tree near Mission Bridge. On their way, around MP-30.25+, they spotted an adult cow that had slid down the hill, under a barbed wire fence and lodged itself between a couple of solid rocks at the base of the slope, 15 feet from the tracks. The animal was alive, alert, and laying on its side. Because of its position, was unable to get itself up. Using the neighbor contact list, we were able to locate the correct cattle rancher and direct



Photo by Linda Stanley

Cow being hoisted out of the ditch.

him to the site. The ranch foreman arrived to assess the situation. It was a cattleman's worst nightmare; a downed (and possibly injured) animal weighing many hundreds of pounds in a place inaccessible to trucks and trailers or horses and cowboys to deal with the scenario using the traditional methods. Short of air-lifting the cow using a helicopter, there were no easy solutions to the problem.

Luckily, NCRY GM and professional heavy equipment operator, Stephen Barkkarie, happened to be at home in nearby Sunol enjoying a well-deserved Sunday off. He was contacted and soon arrived on scene along with volunteer Doug Vanderlee and the railroad's Hi-Railed Caterpillar backhoe. Minutes later, the cattle owner and a crew of 4 cowboys arrived. Two of them were wearing rowel spurs. These guys were the real deal.

In short order, the ranch hands threaded a couple of nylon soft slings provided by the railroad under the cow,

and attached them to the bucket of the backhoe. The cow was hoisted onto a railroad maintenance "pushcar", then transported on the tracks 1/4 mile to the adjoining property owner's access gate. Luckily, the owner was working on the lot at the time and facilitated getting a truck and trailer through his property to the gate where the cow was hoisted off the railroad equipment and onto the awaiting trailer. All indications are that the cow was not severely injured by the accident and will make a full recovery and will be suckling a little calf of her own in the late Spring.

At a time when we are increasingly socially isolated from our neighbors, it is heartening to know that there are those who watch out for each other, and will take time out to lend a hand or backhoe . . . when the need arises.

We have exciting plans to report for near future projects. Track construction to the East has brought the end of track to within 175 feet of the Happy Valley Bridge. Just beyond the R/R East side



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Brush Cutting Report

**Steve Jones - Sawdust Manager**

of the bridge, there lies a 200-yard-long tree "tunnel" which must be thinned and trimmed back in order to allow the Burro Crane to travel the ROW building track. Up to now, we haven't known how we would get our tree trimming Bucket Truck and Bandit Chipper (on its highway tires) over to the East side to do the work. Recent surveys of the ROW show that the East side of the Happy

Valley Bridge is accessible from Valley Avenue, and there are wide spots near the bridge to turn the Bucket Truck and Chipper around to leave. To date, we have only put the highway tires on the chipper 3 times in 3-1/2 years. In the coming months, we will be able to take full advantage of this road travel capability with assistance from Mark Whitman and others with heavy-duty pick-

up capacity. I am pretty excited about working in new territory where we have never worked before. I hope you will be able to join in!

Meanwhile, until we can work together in small groups again, stay healthy, stay safe, and stay strong.

**Arboreros! Aawwwaaaaayyyyyyy!**  
**Steve Jones**

## Membership Report

**Linda Stanley - Membership Secretary**

In the past, PLA membership expiration dates were moved to the end of the year. Renewal letters go out and those renewing have their Liability Releases checked, new Interest Forms followed up on and membership cards processed and mailed back to the member. A number of these renewing members have been PLA members since the 60's, 70's, and 80's and renew faithfully year in/year out. They live in every corner of the country. There are names that are recognized as past active volunteers and there are those whose names are not familiar. In each case, gratification is felt when it is seen the member has supported the PLA for 40/50/60 years. The Membership Secretary of the PLA has attempted to thank every one of you for your long-time faith in the PLA and its ongoing mission and will do so again publicly here: The volunteers of the PLA who do the work to restore, maintain and operate the vintage Steam, Diesel and Passenger Cars that 'Pioneers' have so faithfully supported – over the decades - feel a deep appreciation in the knowledge of this unwavering support that allow us to continue to preserve historic equipment and a historic right-of-way....even during a pandemic! Thank you. Your continuing support is well placed and not taken for granted.

The Covid pandemic - halting 2020's

TOL and greatly limiting passenger operations- has financially impacted the PLA and other cultural non-profits. In addition to the membership renewals mentioned prior, increased support received from Regular Members converting to LIFE Member status and generous donations from our members toward their favored project have helped the PLA/NCRY weather this continuing storm. Eyeing the future, the PLA plans to step-up effort to supplement members' support with grants from sources that support the mission of this preservation-focused non-profit. Please contact the PLA if you have knowledge of any group, organization or foundation that may be a source of this kind of grant support, thanks for our members assistance!

New, re-instating and LIFE memberships continue at a steady pace with the addition of the Bowman Family of Sonya, John and son David, long-time NCRY supporter and photographer Alice Tidwell has become a new member and LIFE member to boot! Keith Duwel, Edward Beckman, Michael Charles, Stanley Wilson and Don Sullivan join the ranks of new PLA members as well. The good news continues with members Peter Midnight, Leslie Smith and J. Bar Houston converting their Regular to LIFE Member status. Welcome to these new and returning members and

a heart-felt thanks to all for your amazing faith and support!

Following December's Membership Meeting ballots were mailed to those eligible Voting Members to approve Kurt Olsen, Justin Legg and Steve Coon into Voting Member status. Nominating Committee Chair Dave Burla announced the results of this secret ballot at the January BOD meeting and the PLA is pleased to report that these three dedicated members/volunteers have been welcomed into Voting Member status – Congratulations to All!

To the PLA's 67 Voting Members: In order to continue voting status, the current Bylaws mandate that in the qualifying period from July 1st to June 30th of each year that Voting Members: 1) Volunteer and report a minimum of 96 hours -or- 2) Attend 4 teleconference meetings; either BOD or Membership. If unable to fulfill these requirements, a Voting Member may seek Emeritus status from the BOD. For further information, the Bylaws can be found on the Members website. Click on 'Members Only', then 'Documents' and then 'Corporate Documents' to locate Bylaws.

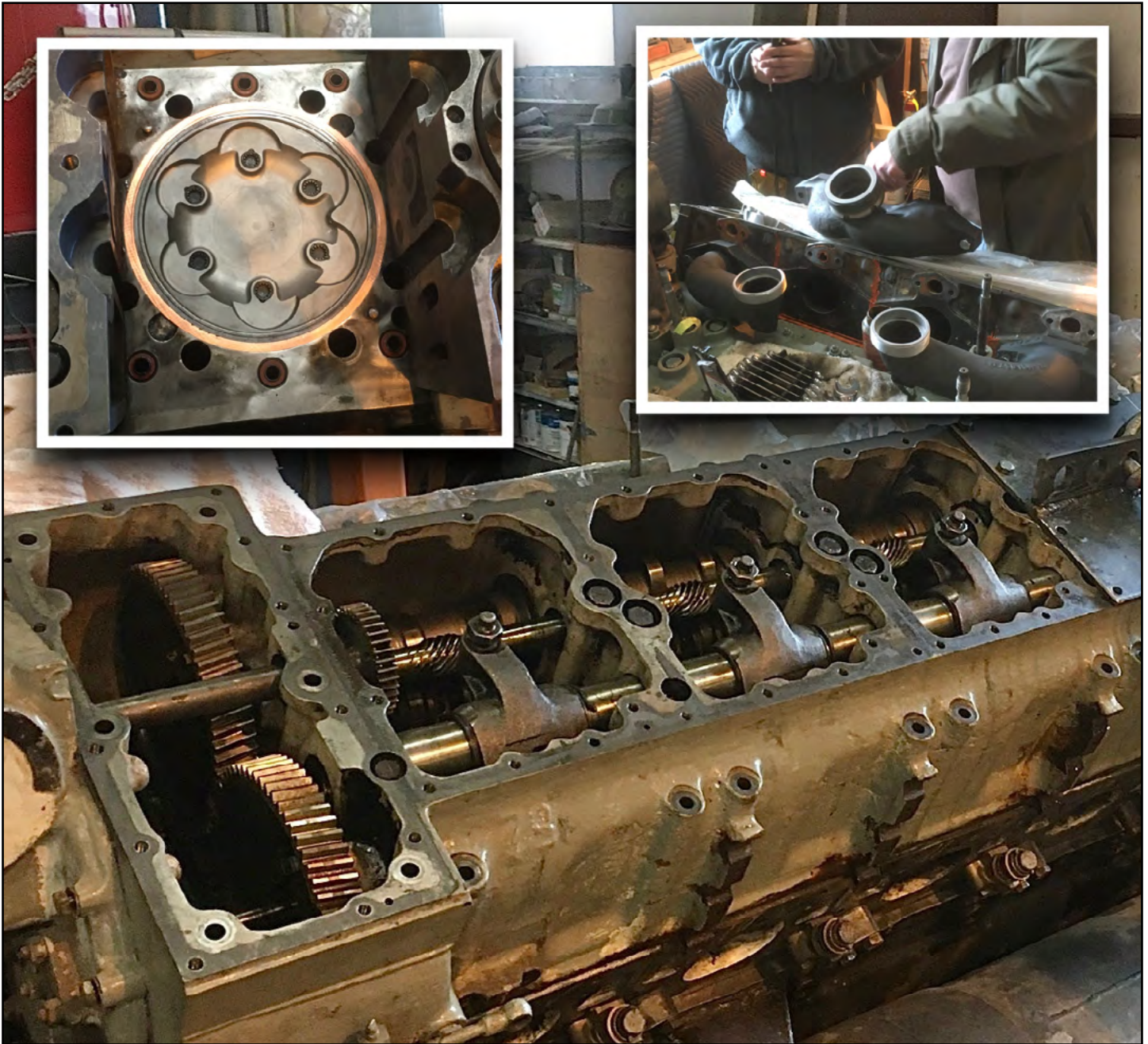
**Good Health and Fortune in 2021!**  
**Stay Safe**

Respectfully submitted,

**Linda Stanley**

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## SP 9010's Maybach V-16 recently took a giant leap forward



*Photos by Howard P. Wise*

There's been milestone progress for the world's sole surviving USA Krauss-Maffei ML 4000 C'C. Renewal to factory standards of SP 9010's rear Maybach V-16 recently took a giant leap forward, as the righthand cylinder bank camshaft box was re-installed over eight of the motor's sixteen cylinder heads. The 9010 restoration team, led by Howard

Wise and assisted by PLA volunteers Karl Swartz and Bill Stimmerman, used factory original parts and procedures to renew the cylinder liners, pistons and rings, valve train, and all seals and gaskets. The large photo shows the cam box in place, while the small photos depict the installation of the exhaust port outlet elbows, and show a top view of

one of the steel piston crowns, with a fresh copper crush gasket in place on one of the Maybach's cylinder head assemblies. Work progresses smartly under Covid-19 protocols, and the day when 9010 once again runs on its own is drawing closer.

**Bob Zenk**



## MEETINGS

Most General Meetings take place at Sunol Glen School in Sunol.

Meetings are held in January, March, May, June, July, and October, but can be subject to cancellation.

### Board of Directors Meeting

**Saturday**

**FEBRUARY 13**

**2:15 PM**

Teleconferencing service

### General Meeting

**No Meeting  
Scheduled  
This Month**

## CLUB CAR DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting articles and photos for next month's issue of The Club Car is the **20th OF THIS MONTH!** Submitting articles is easy by e-mail in **WORD** text format.

Send e-mail to:

**clubcar@ncry.org**

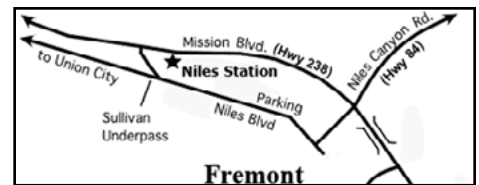
Digital photos may also be submitted by e-mail. Electronic images should be saved as PC format .jpg files with minimal compression (i.e., average to excellent quality). A **WORD** file with the photo number, description of photo and identifying the people in them **IS REQUIRED**.

The editor reserves the right to hold or edit material as necessary.

## BOARDING LOCATIONS

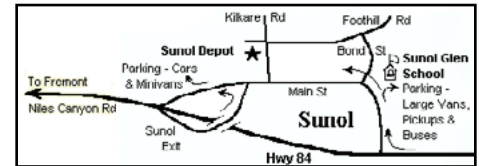
### NILES STATION

**37029 Mission Blvd.  
Fremont, CA 94536**



### SUNOL DEPOT

**6 Kilkare Road  
Sunol, CA 94586**



### ===== BOARD OF DIRECTORS =====

President	Henry Baum	(925) 447-7358	president@ncry.org
Vice President	Mike Strider	(707) 318-2633	vice-president@ncry.org
Recording Secretary	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033	secretary@ncry.org
Membership Secretary	Linda Stanley	(510) 579-6300	membership@ncry.org
Treasurer	Pat Stratton	(650) 888-8619	treasurer@ncry.org
General Manager	Stephen Barkkarie	(510) 368-1733	sbarkkarie@comcast.net
Director-At-Large	Jim Stewart	(510) 796-2810	james.stewart4@comcast.net
Director-At-Large	Kent Hedberg	(415) 608-3811	hedbergs@sbcglobal.net
Director-At-Large	Gail Hedberg	(510) 207-5524	marketing@ncry.org

### ===== DEPARTMENT CONTACTS =====

Brush Cutting	Steve Jones	(510) 289-3559	fcocompost@aol.com
Car Department	Dennis Mann	(650) 726-0167	dmann@coastside.net
Charter Agent/Docents	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033	charter-agent@ncry.org
Chief Engineer	Mike Strider	(707) 318-2633	mstrider67@gmail.com
Club Car Editor	Barry Lependorf	(510) 431-3401	clubcar@ncry.org
Commissary	Bob Bradley	(510) 910-7024	ncry.commissary@gmail.com
Crew Caller	Jackie Vlasak	(510) 582-2648	traincrews@gmail.com
Gift Shop	Gail Hedberg	(510) 207-5524	giftshop@ncry.org
Hazmat Manager	Doug Debs	(650) 704-1487	dougdebs2472@yahoo.com
Member Communications	Linda Stanley	(510) 579-6300	membercom@ncry.org
Museum Curator	Dennis Mann	(650) 726-0167	dmann@coastside.net
New Member Orientation	Glenn Fountain	(510) 673-1084	grfoun10@aol.com
Operations Manager	Dexter Day	(408) 234-4956	plancrygm@sbcglobal.net
Public Relations	Henry Baum	(925) 447-7358	pr@ncry.org
Road Foreman of Engines	Kent Hedberg	(415) 608-3811	hedbergs@sbcglobal.net
Security Department	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033	fivechime@aol.com
Signal Department	Curt Hoppins	(408) 723-1154	curt@ncrysignal.com
Station Agent - Niles	John Fenstermacher	(510) 522-7949	johnnsherif@aol.com
Station Agent - Sunol	Donna Alexander	(510) 996-8420	station-agent@ncry.org
Steam Department Head	Alan Siegwarth	(408) 515-4602	siegggy667@hotmail.com
Steam Hosteler Training	Jeff Schwab	(510) 734-6890	jeffs@levinterminal.com
Train Master	Mark Miller	(510) 502-8521	mmiller510@aol.com
Volunteer Coordinator	Ed Best	(925) 998-8743	volunteers@ncry.org
Yardmaster	Stephen Barkkarie	(510) 368-1733	sbarkkarie@comcast.net

The Club Car is an official publication of the Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc., P.O. Box 515, Sunol, CA 94586-0515.

The Club Car is distributed monthly to members, sponsors and friends of the Pacific Locomotive Association.

The Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc. is an IRS Code 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The PLA's Federal Tax ID is 94-6130878, the State of California Tax ID is 0501445.

General Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of January, May & July at 7:30 p.m. and the 3rd Saturday of March, June & October at 3:30 pm at the Sunol Glen School, two blocks east of the Depot on Main Street in Sunol, CA. Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.

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*Photo by Chris Hauf*

**#7 moves out of the engine house lead on the way to go to work on the first day of two of the 'Ride the #7 for #1744' photographers' specials.**