



THE CLUB CAR



BULLETIN 692

PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

APRIL 2021

Along the Right of Way



Photo by Doug Vanderlee

Our repowered Burro can really "Rock & Roll".

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This time of year can be taxing for many folks, cooped up all Winter (and then some this past year), we all look forward to nicer weather and the opportunity to get out and enjoy the wonderful Bay Area environs. As in normal times, the PLA starts out the Spring by bringing on the Steam. Our first two weekends Special trains were very well received and sold well through the on-line ticketing. We will continue to run second and third weekends in April and

May as well and hopefully we will sell those trains out also.

The PLA mission is to preserve history for future generations, but on occasion we also make a little history for the present. Case in point, MoW and the Steam Department teamed up to advance our efforts to relay the track toward Pleasanton by using Robert Dollar #3, a flat car, and a Burro crane to ferry track panels to the current end

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

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
APRIL 10
2:15 PM

Teleconferencing service

General Meeting

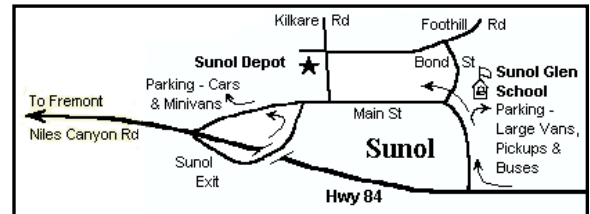
Saturday
APRIL 10
3:30 PM

Teleconferencing service

BOARDING LOCATIONS

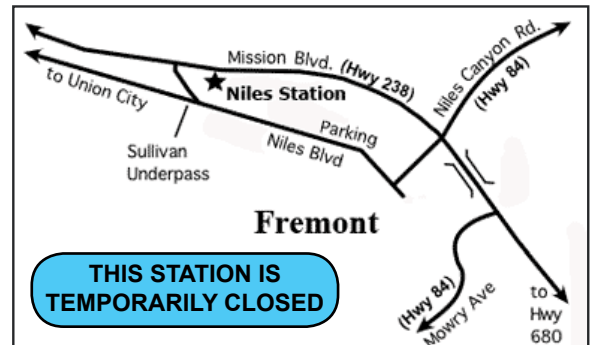
SUNOL DEPOT

6 Kilcare Road
Sunol, CA 94586



NILES STATION

37029 Mission Blvd.
Fremont, CA 94536



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

President	Henry Baum	(925) 447-7358
Vice President	Mike Strider	(707) 318-2633
Recording Secretary	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033
Membership Secretary	Linda Stanley	(510) 579-6300
Treasurer	Pat Stratton	(650) 888-8619
General Manager	Stephen Barkkarie	(510) 368-1733
Director-At-Large	Jim Stewart	(510) 796-2810
Director-At-Large	Kent Hedberg	(415) 608-3811
Director-At-Large	Gail Hedberg	(510) 207-5524

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
to the Club Car Editor

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.

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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Views expressed herein are those of the author unless specifically noted by the editor as official policy.

The Pacific Locomotive Association is a member of the HeritageRail Alliance (HRA).

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

April Activities

April 3	1st Saturday	MoW Building East	-	Mike Strider
April 7, 14, 21, 28	Wednesdays	MoW, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm,		Ron Thomas
April 10	2nd Saturday	Special Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
April 10	2nd Saturday	Board of Directors Meeting, 2:15 pm (Teleconference)		
April 10	2nd Saturday	General Meeting, 3:30 pm (Teleconference)		
April 11	2nd Sunday	Special Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
April 17	3rd Saturday	Special Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
April 18	3rd Sunday	Special Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
April 24	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 reported a total of 1,855 volunteer hours supporting your railroad in February. 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. 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
Donna Alexander
Ed Best
Jackie Vlasak
Mark Miller
Mary Asturias
Rich Alexander
Steve Jones

ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

Brian Hitchcock
Linda Stanley
Steve Jones

CAR DEPARTMENT

Chris Hauf
Dennis Mann
Henry Baum

CAR DEPARTMENT

Howard Wise
Rich Alexander

ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Curt Hoppins
Jim Stewart
Paul Veltman

FACILITIES

Bob Bailey
Bob Bradley
Bob Pratt
Doug Debs
John Zielinski
Kurt Olsen
Matthew Petach
Rich Alexander
Steve Coon
Steve Jones
Wesley Van Osdol

GIFT SHOP

Donna Alexander
Gail Hedberg
Rich Alexander

MECHANICAL

Adam Weidenbach
Alan Siegwarth
Bill Ross
Bill Stimmerman
Charles Franz
Chris Hauf
Chuck Kent
Dee Murphy
Gerald DeWitt
Gerry Feeney
Henry Chandler
Howard Wise
Jeff Haslam
Justin Legg
Karl Swartz
Kurt Olsen
Linda Stanley
Matthew Petach
Steve Jones

MEETINGS

Bob Bradley
Charles Smith
Chris Hauf
Curt Hoppins
Dan Mills

MEETINGS

Dee Murphy
Dexter Day
Don Gholson
Donna Alexander
Doug Debs
Doug Vanderlee
Ed Best
Gail Hedberg
George Childs
Henry Baum
Jeff Haslam
Jim Baber
Jim Evans
Jim Gilmore
Jim Stewart
Joe Scardino
John Zielinski
Karen Kadaja
Kent Hedberg
Kurt Olsen
Leslie Smith
Linda Stanley
Mark Miller
Marshall Williams
Matthew Petach
Mike Strider

MEETINGS

Pat Stratton
Patrice McDonald
Paul Veltman
Peter Midnight
Randy Johnson
Rich Alexander
Rob Giles
Roger McCluney
Sally Mills
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Jones
Steve Slabach
Thomas Libbey
Tim Flippo
Tom Crawford
Tom Eikerenkotter
Warren Haack
Zona Fowler

MOW & TRACK

Adam Weidenbach
Bob Pratt
Chris Campi
Dee Murphy
Ken Southwick
Linda Stanley
Matthew Petach

MOW & TRACK

Mike Strider
Ron Thomas
Steve Jones
Wesley Van Osdol

OTHER

Barry Lependorf
Chris Hauf
Dee Murphy
Ed Best
Eric Wright
Jim Stewart
Kurt Olsen
Linda Stanley
Mark Miller
Matthew Petach
Patrice Warren
Steve Jones
Steve Slabach
Tom Crawford
Zonker Harris

SWITCHING CREW

Gerry Feeney
Mark Miller
Rich Anderson

President's Message

Henry Baum - President

Trains are running again on the Niles Canyon Railway, as Alameda County has returned to the Red Tier. We are still running at reduced capacity to support social distancing, and everyone is still required to wear masks. We are carrying passengers, bringing in revenue, and based on what I have seen, the passengers are enjoying themselves tremendously. The weather has been pretty good also. Hopefully we will move into the Orange Tier sometime in April, and we can plan on having the May membership meeting in person rather than digitally.

Change is something we have all learned to deal with during the pandemic, and change can be for the good. Sometimes change is necessary because not changing is bad. You will notice that the directory of Board Members and the Department heads contact info has been removed from the Club Car where it has been readily available for decades. It was recently moved to the inside back page in the Club Car and will now disappear completely. This is because nefarious and unscrupulous people have picked up copies of our Club Car and used this information for 'pfishing' activities where they contact people using email addresses from the list, and pretend to be someone else on the list, usually me. In an attempt to thwart this we have removed the list from the Club Car and replaced it with a printed version that came with your Club Car this month. We will update and remail it as necessary at least once a year. We will also have the PDF available on the Member's website which you can download and keep on your mobile phone or home computer.

Our Club Car, as a monthly newsletter about our activities, is considered by many to be one of the finest in the Railroad Museum community, if not all museums. The fact that it is printed in color and not just available electronically is considered to be exemplary. That does not happen without a lot of

hard work by Barry Lependorf, the Club Car editor, the members who write the articles and keep the information up to date, and member Brian Schott whose company AdMail Express, Inc. in Hayward, CA provides the printing and mailing services to get the newsletter out every month. In fact he is helping us with the inserts and unusual mailing for this month's Club Car. The Club Car is more than a newsletter, as it is also the official notification of certain activities of the Pacific Locomotive Association. Just like we needed to change how we hold meetings during the pandemic, the organization needs to update its Bylaws to reflect additional methods of getting information to our members. The Club Car is a monthly publication and we need to be able to react quickly in this day and age, so we need to develop a more efficient means of making notifications to our members. Our Member's Website has features that enable us to get information quickly and directly to our members, without being unnecessarily annoying.

We currently have a committee that is going through the process of updating the Bylaws. A number of minor changes will be included in the new Bylaws proposal that will be presented to our Voting Members for approval. Cleaning up how we hold meetings will be done to clarify that electronic meetings are as good as in-person meetings and will allow us to move to 'hybrid' meetings where some attend in person and some attend electronically. This allows meetings to be much easier to attend than they have been in the past and hopefully will increase participation. We won't be able to do that immediately as there is some equipment that needs to be acquired and some technology that needs to be worked out so full video can be supported at these meetings. We will also be modifying the requirements regarding how official notifications are handled by the organization, again using a hybrid technology where

electronic and mail options are available to members. We want to ensure that these changes are implemented across the board. In most actions the Bylaws do not specifically forbid alternate methodologies, but some articles in the Bylaws mandate US Mail, and that is no longer practical or necessary. In an organization as large and diverse as ours, and pretty spread out geographically, these changes will allow us to service all our members equally. These are considered to be trivial changes.

We also have determined that, for an organization such as ours, it is time to update our Bylaws to follow a more standardized format. We have identified a number of excellent templates for Bylaws for a non-profit organization such as ours. Bringing the Bylaws into the 21st Century from a format standpoint is the first step in bringing our organizations' governance into the 21st Century. So we will be 'transcribing' our current Bylaws into the new format, but maintain the specifics of the current Bylaws. There are several areas in our current Bylaws that are not common practice, and these areas will be addressed in the next decade or 2 to bring the PLA more in line with our contemporary organizations. One of the major areas for FUTURE discussion is how we handle elections to our Board of Directors. It is unique for this day and age (not going to say archaic) but does create situations that make it difficult to refocus the Board of Directors into concentrating on the financial aspects of the organization and not the day-to-day running of a railroad museum. Our current system can make it difficult to apply for grants and other financial packages as it is not what potential benefactors expect to see.

So, changing the Bylaws format is the first step in allowing the potential for future changes. Bear in mind, our current Bylaws are fine, and are perfectly legal. We do not HAVE to change anything,

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

President's Message

Henry Baum - President

but we recognize the need to begin working on this now. While the format change is a significant change, it is not a substantive change, as we are just taking the current Bylaws and adapting them into the new format. The only substantive change we are considering for this Bylaws update will revolve around how we change regular members into Voting Members. This revolves around establishing a set of Voting Member requirements that are quantitative and ensure that the members who wish to become Voting Members have demonstrated the appropriate efforts and desires, which is what the current Bylaws are really trying to achieve.

Prior to taking these Bylaws changes to the Board and the Voting Members, we will be holding a discussion of these changes for any member who wishes to find out more about what we are proposing, and the whys and what-fors behind the changes. This will be important due to the format changes. We want and need everyone to understand what is changing. Part of this discussion will be to get feedback on some of the parameters we are dealing with, and to provide some insight into the logic behind the future changes we may want to make. 10 or so years ago we had a survey done by the American Association of Museums, and there were several recommendations regarding our organization structure that should be addressed. We will discuss some of those changes as well.

In your Club Car you also received a flyer about a matching grant for refurbishing our Great Northern Ranch Car. This flyer talks about The Farwell

Family Matching Gift Challenge, where all donations to the Ranch Car fund will be matched by the Farwell Family dollar for dollar. Our thanks to the Farwells for this magnificent donation and others they have made in the past.

Let me fill you in on the Farwells. First, to the best of their knowledge, they are no relation to whoever it was that Farwell (as in Farwell Bridge) was named after. Since acquiring the ranch that parallels our tracks from Brightside crossing to Palomares Road about 10 years ago, they have become a most friendly and generous neighbor. Being ranchers, they were instantly enamored by the Great Northern Ranch Car and were eager to help us get it restored.

Nick and Gail, along with their son Garrett, have had numerous discussions with me on what they can do to help the railroad out. They really want to take a pro-active role in helping us tell the story of Niles Canyon and the railroad. They have named their ranch Brightside Ranch after the Brightside station stop at the main entrance to their property. They have made numerous improvements to the ranch including the installation of an air quality monitoring station and an extensive Wi-Fi network that covers their entire ranch. They have also made numerous improvements to the ranch proper, as we have not had a visitor from their ranch at Dead Cow Curve since they took over. We thank them for that, and I am sure the cows do also. Having good neighbors means they look out for us and we look out for them. We are pleased to have the Farwell Family as members and friends!

It is still vitally important that you notify Ed Best at 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.

Respectfully submitted
Henry Baum

RWP CLASS

to be held at
Brightside

on

May 1 & May 8
9am - 12 noon

at the
Whitehouse

Contact:
Jackie Vlasik
traincrews@gmail.com



E-COUPLING INFORMATION

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

Email: To Join Members Email List, send an Email to: 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

Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

Welcome to April in the Bay Area. There has been much concern about rainfall levels, but today I am more concerned my roof might leak. It has rained steadily all day. But to business.

The PLA is doing well financially. On the income side we received the CA Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant for \$25K. Free money if used over an unlimited time frame for rent or utilities. No problem there. On the expense side we are controlling expenses - probably because our volunteers are not working as they would be if the pandemic hadn't given them pause. Still, we budgeted for a significant loss this fiscal

year, and current indications are that will not happen.

Also, last weekend we got back to operating revenue trains, similar to last fall. Those four trains were sold out; next weekend is almost there. We will be exercising the Robert Dollar #3. Thankfully we were able to find the necessary train crews to make this happen. I hope to be back on a train crew myself in a few weeks, after my second vaccination shot has kicked in.

The balance sheet shows cash available. The Endowment funds have hit new highs. Cash invested in our stock account is up a bit, and accruing divi-

dends as planned.

Donations to the General Fund were \$2,330; to restoration of the SP1744, \$1,470; to Steam Operations, \$952; to restoration of the SP9010, \$5,175; and to a New Loco Shop, \$100; and there were In-kind Contributions for \$174. We also received another \$105 from Amazon Smile - keep up the good work! Sign up at Amazon if you haven't already

Thank you,
Pat Stratton
650-888-8619

Sunday, July 4th, 2021

*** * * SAVE THE DATE * * ***

Members, Family & Friends
Socially-Distanced Train Ride & Picnic

If Alameda County is in the "Yellow Tier", we should be able to celebrate together again with a special train ride, followed by a BBQ picnic in the Sunol Depot Gardens

To meet social distancing requirements, please if possible;
bring a folding table & chairs for your group

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS! JULY 4TH PLANNING MEETING

At Brightside, Saturday, April 17, 10 am.

We will be outdoors

Contact Doug Debs at 650-704-1487
dougdebs2472@yahoo.com
for more info.

WE WILL ALSO BE CELEBRATING PLA'S 60th ANNIVERSARY!

Stack Talk

Alan Siegwarth

Progress on Southern Pacific #1744 Boiler Work at Stockton Locomotive Works!

Stathi Pappas and crew have made a lot of progress on re-installing the firebox sheets in the SP #1744 boiler in the past month. The door sheet has been fitted, lifted in place, joint edges squared up, ground, mud ring rivet holes reamed and bolted in place. The same work was completed on the rear tube sheet to get it up and bolted in place in the boiler. The crown sheet is in the process of having all the staybolt holes predrilled in preparation for it to be lifted in and installed in between the door and rear tube sheet. Once this is completed, all the sheets we acquired will be up and fitted in the boiler.

The next step will be installing the two side sheets to complete the firebox fitting in preparation for the sheets to be welded together and riveting the bottom of the firebox to the mud ring. PLA did not acquire the side sheet material when the locomotive was purchased (it had been used for another Iowa Pacific steam locomotive project) and needs to purchase the sheet material. We had applied for a grant to help with this purchase but learned this week that PLA will not be receiving this funding. The Steam Crew requests help for this purchase by asking for \$4,000 in DONATIONS so we can purchase the side sheet material to keep the firebox installation moving forward.

The steam crew wants to thank everyone who has donated toward the SP #1744 project as donations are essential in these difficult times to keep the SP #1744 project moving forward. PLA members have been extremely generous in donating to this project. If you can, PLEASE DONATE to keep the project on schedule this year. Donations can be mailed, made online at 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



Photo by Stathi Pappas

Throat Sheet showing drilled/reamed rivet holes through the sheet/mudring and rear tube sheet. Note the bolts to hold the three components together until the mudring rivets are installed.

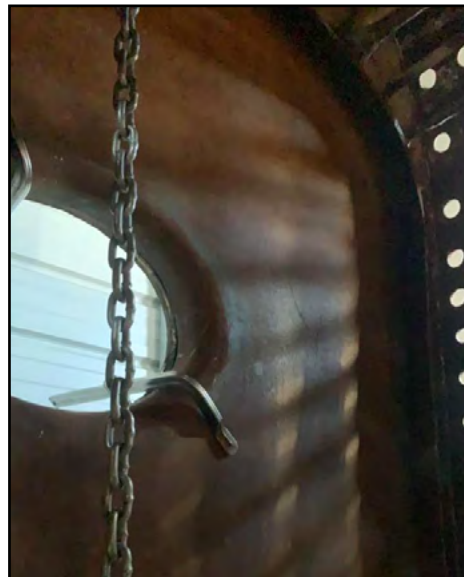


Photo by Stathi Pappas

Firedoor opening ground, fitted and clamped ready for tack welding and final weld.



Photo by Stathi Pappas

Rear Tube Sheet up in place ready for mudring rivet holes to be drilled and reamed.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

Continued from Page 1

of track a mere 150 feet from the Happy Valley Bridge. It reminded me of old B&W photos of how the line was built with a steam engine pushing materials right to the end of track as the line advanced foot by foot. There are few people who can recall witnessing the last time a "steamer" was on track at MP 39, but now that number is increased (even more than we anticipated). On that day, over 600 feet of track was poised for installation, ready for stabilizing the bridge and relocation of the utility line. After that, next stop, Castlewood Golf course.

Another historic first took place mid-March. For the first time, Niles Canyon Railway mainline was ultra-sonic tested for imperfections in the rails themselves. This is a procedure that is required of Class 3 and above railroads, on a bi-annual basis, to allow for greater track speed. It is just like a pre-natal sonogram, which uses sound waves to view an unborn fetus, the process looks for internal flaws in the metal itself. Although this is not required, having it done will really show the FRA/PUC that we go the extra mile to ensure our track is safe. I am sure that this work is not cheap if it is required by regulation, but we are fortunate enough to have the company offer their service at no charge. Smith & Emery has been in business since The Transcontinental Railway was laid and they currently scan track on the Peninsula and throughout California. We have not received the data as of this writing. The crew let me know that no glaring flaws were evident, and the equipment is sensitive enough to "see" the bolt holes at every joint even when passing over it at 20 mph! I had them scan every foot of mainline from Niles all the way to MP 39 and they have a pushcart that scanned all the sidings and yard tracks. The reason for the service donation is that the company just purchased this unit for their fleet and wanted a place



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

NCRy track gets internal scan by Smith & Emery Co.

to field test the equipment before going out on a paying customer's job. We do not know if this is a one-time deal, but I offered them the opportunity to test their equipment here anytime.

Alameda County has moved to a less restricted condition that allows for track work to get going again and for resto-

rations to begin again. We still must mask up for the FRA order and social distancing is still required, but vaccinations are picking up to the extent that our Wednesday Warriors are fully protected and plan to return to repairs to the All Day Lunch car. Howard has the generator working on the Ranch car

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Happy Valley before tree cutting East of bridge.

and Jeff Haslam keeps plugging away, one piece at a time, on the West steps and West end of the Gothic Peak. Kurt Olsen and Matt Petach have completed the back-up camera installation on the M-200, and I have done an under-car inspection and function test of the brake system. The only thing that is not working are the sanders, which I will attempt to resurrect as well. Work on the #1744 continues, annual on the RD#3 is completed, super heater flues are being installed on the CV#4, and the Skookum has been re-hydro tested (with the help of our newly acquired Pettibone crane providing the lift they needed). The car mover hi-rail gear hydraulic cylinder has been rebuilt by

Doug Vanderlee and me. We disassembled the unit, ordered the seals (for all four cylinders) and rebuilt the cylinder for less than it would have cost to order one seal from the manufacturer. Doug and I also took the "Heavy-hauler" (what I like to call the "Vander-hauler") out for a mainline test by placing 20 tons of concrete blocks on it for a move to the Hearst crossing. (We are using them to try to thwart illegal dumping that threatens to block access to the loading zone). The hauler performs great, and we look forward to weed spraying this year because, for the first time, we will have the whole spray truck on-railed to avoid using the smaller spray unit on a pushcart and refilling numerous times.

Prior to running the first Special trains of the Spring, work crews discovered a joint that sheared off two bolts and pulled apart almost 2 inches West of Sunol. MoW sprang into action the following Wednesday, and despite the cold temperatures, closed the gap, replaced the bolts and avoided us having to issue a "slow order" for the area and a crew member having to stand and watch trains cross the defect.

MoW cleaned up the bad ties scattered around the Happy Valley area and the mainline East of Verona station. This gave member Dee Murphy and Matt Petach a chance to get practice time using the tie crane. Thanks to Bob Pratt for setting up this training session.

Steve Jones and Mark Whitman have been leading a major assault on the tree tunnel East of HVB with several workdays devoted to cutting and chipping tons of encroaching vegetation. Materials to reinforce the bridge for track are being gathered (those we have already) and prices are being quoted for the two timbers we must purchase. Ballast on the remaining 150 feet to the bridge is being screened and excess is getting moved West to low spots identified by the track profile provided by Mike Strider's former employer HDR. With some luck, we should be past this obstacle by summer and setting our sights on the stretch above Castlewood Golf course.

We have scheduled the first Saturday in May for this year's first RWP re-certification session which is May 1. Once again Peter Schulze will provide his professional services for this and we will have to see what level of restrictions are in place for groups of people before deciding if the class is indoors or perhaps in a window coach as a classroom. Of course, a second class is always needed because someone always has a schedule conflict. That date is Saturday, May 8.

Stephen Barkkarie

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

Finally! Is this “NILES”?

It was the Spring of 1997. The Port of Oakland rail and material recovery program was done. That meant that we had enough rail and material to finish track work into the Niles Station area and build a run around, plus start the wye. This would not be finished for years to come. The word was out on plans to widen Mission Blvd. The PLA needed to capture the Mission railroad bridges so new replacements could be built when the project started.

The bridges were not part of the original lease. We needed to make sure that the bridges would be part of the rebuild agreement at Mission Blvd. This is where this month's tale begins.

It was July 1997. There was no property agreement between the UP and the County yet. The Niles Main Street Association imagined the arrival of the Niles Canyon Railway into Niles as a very important event in the economic growth and development of the Niles community. To that end, it organized an event intended to bring together various business and Government representatives with the goal of explaining issues and concerns. Of course, the key items were obtaining property rights for a track extension into Niles, and satisfactory replacement of the bridges across Mission Blvd. when the highway was widened. On June 28, 1997, the PLA provided a special train for a ride through the canyon to the Niles bridges. On board the train were special guests: the Niles Main Street Association, Alameda County Public Works Chief of Real Estate Division, John Fenstermacher, Government officials and staff members, along with representatives of Cal-Tran which included the bridge engineer and contractor. At the Mission Bridges, guests left the train to have a better look. Speeches were made and the train was reboarded and headed back to Sunol with a stop at Brightside for a short look at what we had done



Photo by Pat Warren

The section of one of the South bridges in place. Widening Mission is well underway.

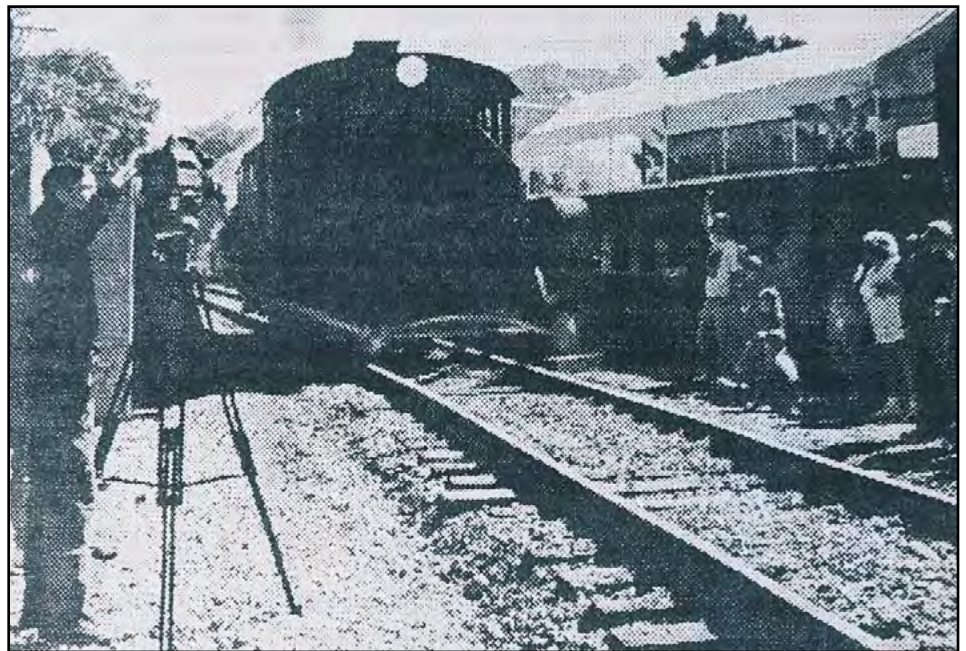


Photo by Jim Swofford

PLA crosses bridge for first time into Niles wye area for a little ways.

there. After Brightside, it was off to Sunol for a great lunch in the park. Sheryl Lindquist planned a luncheon from a 1928 S.P. Dining Car cook book. Niles, along with the Pleasanton food establishments also provided food and beverages. Yes, it was a great lunch.

A lot of clean-up jobs were set up

to improve the right-of-way just built into Niles. It was December 1997, and the word had just been received. The County of Alameda and the Union Pacific Railroad had negotiated a cost for the transfer of property at Niles which was 10.2 acres along with the Mission Bridges. I would say that was a good

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager



Photo by Pat Warren

Niles - where forward progress sometimes means going backwards. Removing rail Material for new Bridges.



Photo by John Pelmulder

Large slide at MP 32.8 closes railroad for a while.

Christmas gift for the PLA.

In January 1998, the PLA received a new lease from the County of Alameda. This allowed us to build track across the Mission Bridges and head in to Niles. In February 1998, tracks



Nov. 2004 (TOL) test train on new track into Niles boarding area. Merry Christmas Niles.

were built across the bridge and started down into Niles. Since this was going to be a new alignment, the surveyors were given the go-ahead to stake the alignment the rest of the way into Niles. Also, in March 1998, the PLA received

more rail and OTM from Stacey & Whitbeck Contractors from the Jefferson Avenue grade separation project which would help our Eastward build.

Storm clouds were on the horizon for the NCRY. March 1998 saw heavy rains hit the canyon with one storm after another. Yes, EL NINO was upon us. During March and April, the Canyon saw six slides with two of them being major. The biggest one was at MP 32.8 when the whole side of the hill let loose and fell into the creek. That slide buried our track in about 80 ft. of dirt rock and mud and extended for about 90 feet. The other big slide was at MP 30.5. with all the heavy rain, two hill-tops slid and formed a dam. During the night, the water pressure overcame the strength of the dirt dam. The water rushed down the hill taking every loose item with it. Two people sleeping in a tent said it sounded like a freight train coming at them. The wall of water and mud crossed our tracks and Hwy. 84 taking a car off the road. This slide was about 20 feet high and 80 feet across. These slides disrupted our operations beyond MP 33.0. Really!

In September 1998 the slides were behind us. The Track Crew was building track West of the bridges into Niles. On September 19, 1998, the Quincy Engine No. 2, with Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty at the throttle (under supervision), broke the ribbon across the West side of the Mission Blvd Bridge over-crossing. That event marked the official opening of the track section that would ultimately extend into downtown Niles. Citizens of the Niles District of Fremont turned out in force to welcome the Niles Canyon Railway. Speeches were made by officials of Fremont and the Niles Merchants Association.

Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty praised the PLA for its outstanding volunteer effort in preserving the vital and historic rail transportation corridor through the Niles Canyon. He

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

also commended joint efforts of the PLA and County personnel who cooperated to restore the right-of-way after the severe damage it received in last Winter's El Nino storms.

It was time to build track using the salvaged material that we received from Oakland.

The PLA still did not have permission to handle passengers at Niles from the City of Fremont. By June of 1999, track work was done for the time being. The Track Crew turned its energies East, building toward Hearst to provide an avenue to have our equipment delivered from Oakland. The hopes for a connection at Niles would not happen, but we were able to run trains into Niles. That was a big breakthrough.

Four years had passed. It was January 2003. The PLA received word that the Mission Blvd. widening project would start soon. The Track Crew returned to Niles. That's where forward progress sometimes means going backwards. Track and ties were removed from where the tangent track ended all the way back to the East switch. This was because the position of the new bridges would be different from the old and the track alignment would have to change on both sides of the bridges. At least they gave us the word in sufficient time to get the work done before the deadline. The bridges were going to be pulled once we cleared which was March. The good news is that we wouldn't have to rebuild the North leg track. Industrial Rail would be doing the right-of-way and rebuilding the track with heavy rail. Our Track Crew returned to the Eastward build.

The old bridges were removed and the new head walls for the new bridges were built with the old ones still standing. This revealed how much bigger the new bridges would be. In Aug 2004, the new Mission Blvd. Rail Bridges for the NCRY were built in place. By the end of September 2004, the bridges were complete and were ready for rail.



Photo by: J. Evans

Golden Spike Ceremony at Niles. "I've been robbed". The Sheriff got it back and gave it to Henry Baum.



Photo by: Jim Evans

On 4/9/06 Henry Baum gets golden spike started. Other officials took turns in spiking the spike in. Track complete.

After completing the right-of-way grading to match the angle and elevation of the approach to the bridges, it was time for Industrial Rail to get us reunited as a railroad as we once were in this area.

The track was then complete to operate on and that is exactly what we did. Late in the afternoon of Friday Nov. 26, 2004, a spectacular event took place. We took the 2004 Train of Lights on a test run across the new bridges and into downtown Niles. It made its mark and let it be known that NCRY was back! It was a great way to kick off the TOL Season for 2004. That train had

something new on it. We had three converted RDC'S on loan from JPB PCS CALTRAIN. The following night, Nov 27, 2004, before the Niles Festival of Lights Parade even stepped off in downtown Niles, the TOL roared into town and stole the show, illuminated with more than 50,000 lights. The 14-car Christmas special became the first revenue train to cross the new bridges and enter into the Niles Historic District in style. There is no business, like show business.

In the Spring of 2006, the NCRY was getting prepared to open the new Niles Boarding area for train boarding of passengers. April 09, 2006 saw another history making day in Niles. The NCRY officially opened the Niles boarding area with a "Golden Spike" ceremony.

This was attended by Congressman Peter Stark, Vice-Mayor of Fremont Stephen Cho, and other special guests along with what seemed like most of the town of Niles. The Quincy No. 2 and the SP 5623 were nose-to-nose for the placement of the "Golden Spike". Al McCracken carried the spike to the site of the ceremony on a pillow. The Golden Spike didn't stay on the pillow very long. It was stolen by a Gunfighter of The Old West. Fortunately, a sheriff was there to collar the scallywag and the Golden Spike was returned to Henry Baum. After several speeches, it was time to get the job done. Henry Baum got the Spike started. It finally got spiked in after lots of hits from the special guests who were there. Even John Fenstermacher took a few hits at the spike.

After the ceremony, guests were loaded onto the train and a run to Brightside and back took place. Upon returning to Niles, a great lunch awaited them. Finally, Niles was open.

It took a lot of hard work to get there. Niles would play a major role in the growth of the NCRY. With that said, this tale finally ends.

Dexter D. Day

NILES CANYON RAILWAY



A special thank you to the Farwell Family for this 2021 matching challenge to raise money to restore our GN 'Hidden Lake' Ranch Car #1242 to full service on our Niles Canyon Railway.

All donations through May 31st will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$30,000.

Follow this restoration story and fundraising matching challenge progress at [NCRY.ORG](https://ncry.org)

MAKE YOUR DONATION TODAY

To make your contribution online, please visit: ncry.org/donate

We gladly accept donations by mail.

Please make checks payable to Pacific Locomotive Association (PLA)

P.O. Box 515

Sunol, CA 94586-0515

Att: Treasurer

Add a note on the check where it says "memo" in the bottom left corner "GN Ranch Car 1242".

If you have questions or need any additional information, please email marketing@ncry.org

The Pacific Locomotive Association owns and operates the Niles Canyon Railway.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Membership Report

Linda Stanley - Membership Secretary

Following the recent Covid reclassification upgrade to the 'Red Tier' (as of this writing) in Alameda County, things are looking up. The Pacific Locomotive Association (PLA) may be able to not only observe its traditional 4th of July BBQ and Train Ride this year, but hopefully combine it with its 60th Anniversary celebration of its founding as well! The planning committee has been formed and discussions are underway. One feature that may be nice to replicate from the "30th Anniversary in Niles Canyon" observance in 2018 is to have archives available for 'Pioneer' attendees to relive old memories, or for more recent members to learn of the PLA's past.

With this in mind, some 'Pioneers' who came from Castro Point to Niles Canyon were entrusted with PLA archives and they helped by keeping these items safe. Please consider contacting the Membership Secretary to return any PLA archives that may still be in your safekeeping to share at this occasion. Afterward the items will be inventoried and securely stored in our new climate-controlled facility. If preferred, your identity will not be disclosed as others who have already returned archives to me have found their anonymity has been safeguarded. You can reach the Membership Secretary at 510.579.6300. I look forward to your call and helping you return any items in your possession to the PLA archives for the education and delight of future generations.

Whether the meetings take place via teleconference or are held in person, the attendance of Voting Members (VM) at the Membership Meeting that will follow April's BOD meeting will be used to establish those VM's eligible to take part in the approval ballot for the PLA's latest Voting Member candidates, Karl Swartz, and to officially announce here – member/volunteer Robert Giles. Robert is eligible for this consideration, and to save resources the two mem-

bers' vote will be held at the same time. At the time this article was submitted, it was unknown how the meetings would be held. These votes will take place either in person by those Voting Members in attendance, or there will be a mailed ballot to those VM's who attended the Membership Meeting teleconference. In either case, if approved into VM status, these members will qualify to take part in this year's BOD elections that will occur in May with results announced at the June meeting.

The PLA needs you! It has been a pleasure to serve as the PLA's Membership Secretary the past two years and I urge Voting Members who have an interest how this non-profit is managed to consider running for the BOD. You can have a significant impact and 'new blood' is good for an organization to continue to grow and thrive. The PLA is on solid footing but there is always room for improvement. I hope you accept the challenge and run for the PLA

BOD in May 2021!

Speaking of 'new blood', the PLA is pleased to announce either the reinstatement or the new memberships of the following: David Coscia, Greg Smith, Thomas Rivette, Kristine Beebe along with her family members Chris and Noah Ewing, Bruce and Ariel Wooley, and Thomas Schultz. In addition, Joe Scardino has announced that wife Judy has increased her support for the PLA by joining Joe in becoming a LIFE member.

Much gratitude and appreciation to all who continue to support the PLA/NCRY. 2021 Operations continue with scheduled Specials in April and May with hopes of returning to regular Sunday operations (and complimentary member train rides) as soon as possible!

Keep hanging tough, wear that mask! Fingers crossed for the return of the TOL for 2021.

Linda Stanley



Photo by Don Buchholz

First Steam Train of the new season.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Brush Cutting Report

Steve Jones - Sawdust Manager

While Covid-19 Pandemic precautions compelled us to cancel our regular 4th Saturday of the month Brush Cutting Gang Work Day in February, significant vegetation clearing work was accomplished late February and into March. On Thursday, 25 February, Mike Strider and I hi-railed the Bucket Truck to Fluker Crossing just East of where the UP bridge crosses our ROW (about MP-38.5-ish) to clean up the sightline from our ROW to the driveway.

Fluker Crossing is a private driveway to the Fluker family residence on the other side of Highway 680. When the highway was built, it would have cut off access to the ranch, but the highway builders constructed a tunnel over the driveway. We can see the driveway disappear into a dark and mysterious tunnel in the hillside under the highway. We call the tunnel entrance "NORAD" because it reminds us of the North American Aerospace Defense Command Headquarters buried under a mountain near Colorado Springs.

As our activity increases East of the Verona Road Crossing, the risk of surprising a vehicle entering or exiting the Fluker driveway with a piece of our equipment becomes greater. Cleaning up damaged and densely populated trees and brush next to and just inside the fence bordering our Verona Compound to increase sightline visibility has been on the things-to-do list for a long time.

After tidying up the crossing area, we turned our attention to the Phoebe Spur, where the Ballast Car and the Burro Crane are often parked. Several trees growing next to the spur were crowding the tracks so much they were starting to scrape against the Burro when it moved into its parking space. Those trees were trimmed back and should not present a hazard for a few years.

In the first three weeks of March, we held six work days to clean up trees leaning over the ROW just a few yards East of the Happy Valley Bridge. The limbs were so dense across the ROW you could not see the sky for about 400 yards from the bridge. Now, that length has been "daylighted". This is important because the Burro Crane must have unimpaired vertical clearance when carrying track panels to the end of track for construction. My thanks (in alphabetical order) to Rhonda Dijean, Dan Mills, Dee Murphy, Matt Petach, Bob Pratt, Linda Stanley, Ken Southwick, Ron Thomas, Doug Vanderlee, Wes Van Osdol, Mark Whitman, and John Zielinski for their work on various days over the 3-week period to accomplish this progress.

The aforementioned work East of the Happy Valley Bridge marks a new phase in PLA/Niles Canyon Railway, Valley Division reconstruction history. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first organized work gang activity East of Happy Valley Road in my 21 years of volunteer experience. To access this work, we must drive the Bucket Truck and



Photo by Matt Petach

BEFORE - Happy Valley Bridge looking East.



Photo by Matt Petach

AFTER - Happy Valley Bridge looking East.

the Bandit Chipper over the road and through our gate at Valley Avenue in Pleasanton. The next site to clear of overhanging limbs will be the Pleasanton-Sunol Road Bridge.

Your Brother in Sawdust,

Steve Jones

Arboreros! Aaawwwaaaaaayyyyyy!

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Photo by Chris Hauf

#3 rolls through Farwell after just passing over the bridge on Sunday, March 14, 2021 on the second day of restarted public operations.