



THE CLUB CAR



BULLETIN 693

PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

MAY 2021

Steam Operations for 2021 in full swing



Photo by Alan Siegarth

Student Engineer Gerald DeWitt in the cab of the Robert Dollar #3 on the first day of steam operations for 2021.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3** Activities Calendar
- 4** Presidents Message
- 6** Along the Right of Way
- 10** Tales of the Past
- 15** Treasurer's Report

The past few months have been busy in the shop working on the Skookum's annual inspection. With COVID-19 travel restrictions easing, we were also privileged to have Steve Butler, Troy James and Eli Mosher come down for a week and continue to repair/finish work that has been discovered during last year's operation in Niles Canyon. Steven worked on the power reverse, more taper bolts, wrist pin wedges and several boiler repairs. Troy and Eli worked

on cellar pins, jacketing and the rear sanders among other items. While we have enjoyed having the Robert Dollar #3 operating again this Spring, we are excited to have the Skookum running for the May Steam Operations to test out these improvements. The Skookum still has fewer than 50 days of operation after her 14 year rebuild from a pile of parts in Oregon, so the locomotive is still being broke in and issues continue

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

MAY 8

2:15 PM

Teleconferencing service

General Meeting

Saturday

MAY 8

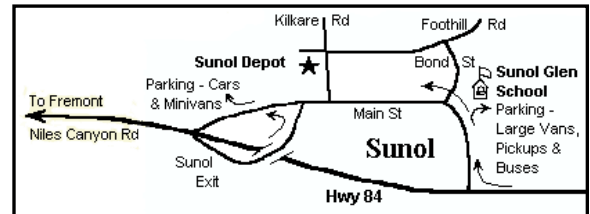
3:30 PM

Teleconferencing service

BOARDING LOCATIONS

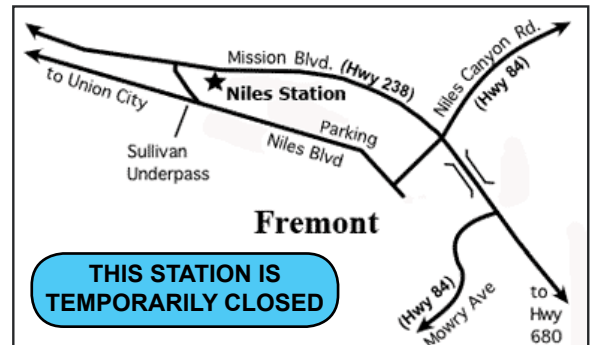
SUNOL DEPOT

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
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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
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.

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.

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

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

May Activities

May 1	1st Saturday	MoW Building East	-	Mike Strider
May 1	1st Saturday	Photographer's Special. 9:00 am, Niles to East EOT.		Steam Department
May 8	2nd Saturday	Special Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
May 8	2nd Saturday	Board of Directors Meeting, 2:15 pm (Teleconference)		
May 8	2nd Saturday	General Meeting, 3:30 pm (Teleconference)		
May 9	2nd Sunday	Special Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
May 15	3rd Saturday	Special Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
May 16	3rd Sunday	Special Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
May 22	4th Saturday	Brush Cutting, 8:00 am (Brightside) -	Steve Jones	
May 30	5th Sunday	Charter, Sunol, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, 50 people		Jim Evans

ALL ACTIVITIES SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION

Volunteer Report

Ed Best - Volunteer Coordinator

The following is a list of the people who reported a total of over 3,000 volunteer hours supporting your railroad in March. All volunteer hours on projects related to the railroad need to be reported in order to be documented. 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.

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Jim Evans
Linda Stanley
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Steve Barkkarie
Jim Stewart
Kent Hedberg
Gail Hedberg
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Ed Best
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Mary Asturias
Rich Alexander
Steve Jones

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Marshall Williams
Steve Van Meter

CAR DEPARTMENT

Tom Crawford

DEPOT CREW & OPERATION

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Leanne Hamilton
Patrice McDonald
Rich Alexander

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Mike Pechner
Mimi Hamilton
Rob Giles

ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

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Joe Romani
Kurt Olsen
Matthew Petach
Paul Veltman

FACILITIES

Bob Bailey
Bob Bradley
Jack Harrington
John Zielinski
Ken Southwick
Matthew Petach

FACILITIES

Rich Alexander
Rich Gove
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Coon
Steve Jones
Wesley Van Osdol

GIFT SHOP

Donna Alexander
Gail Hedberg
Rich Alexander

MECHANICAL

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Bill Ross
Charles Franz
Chuck Kent
Dee Murphy
Dennis Mann
Derek Schipper
Gerald DeWitt
Gerry Feeney
Henry Chandler
Howard Wise
Jeff Haslam
Jeff Schwab
Justin Legg
Karl Swartz
Kurt Olsen
Linda Stanley
Rich Gove
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Jones

MEETINGS

Bob Bradley
Bob Pratt
Charles Gullo
Charles Navarra
Charles Smith
Chris Hauf
Curt Hoppins
Dan Mills
Dave Burla
Dave Ernest
Dave Hipple
Dee Murphy
Dexter Day
Don Gholson
Donna Alexander
Doug Debs
Doug Vanderlee
Ed Best
Gail Hedberg
George Childs
Henry Baum
Jacques Verdier
Jason Kazarian
Jeff Haslam
Jim Baber
Jim Evans
Jim Gilmore
Jim Stewart
Joe Scardino
John Zielinski
Jorg Linke
Karen Kadaja
Kent Hedberg

MEETINGS

Kurt Olsen
Leslie Smith
Linda Stanley
Mark Miller
Matthew Petach
Mike Strider
Pat Buder
Pat Stratton
Patrice McDonald
Paul Veltman
Peter Midnight
Rich Alexander
Rob Giles
Ron Peterson
Sally Mills
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Jones
Steve Slabach
Thomas Libbey
Tim Flippo
Tom Crawford
Zonker Harris

MOW & TRACK

Adam Weidenbach
Bob Pratt
Chris Campi
Dan Mills
Dee Murphy
Doug Vanderlee
Gerry Feeney
Hal Brier
John Pelmulder

MOW & TRACK

John Zielinski
Ken Southwick
Linda Stanley
Mark Whitman
Matthew Petach
Mike Strider
Rhonda Dijeau
Ron Thomas
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Buscovich
Steve Jones
Wesley Van Osdol

OTHER

Barry Lependorf
Bob Bailey
Carlo Borlandelli
Curt Hoppins
Dennis Mann
Ed Best
Eric Wright
Gail Hedberg
Gerry Feeney
Kurt Olsen
Linda Stanley
Mark Miller
Mike Strider
Patrice Warren
Paul Veltman
Peter Midnight
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Slabach
Zonker Harris

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Gerry Feeney
Mark Miller
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TRAIN CREW

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Brad Jones
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Chuck Kent
Derek Lyon-McKeil
Don Nelson
Doug Vanderlee
George Mednick
Gerald DeWitt
Jackie Vlasak
Jeff Schwab
Jim Stewart
John Sutkus
Jordan Hamilton
Jorg Linke
Justin Legg
Kurt Olsen
Mark Miller
Nick Anderson
Ron Quilici
Steve Barkkarie
Warren Haack

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

President's Message

Henry Baum - President

Happy days are here again! Well, almost, but looking better every week. Alameda County should be moving into the least restrictive Yellow Tier soon, and most restrictions should be gone by mid-June. That is the extremely optimistic viewpoint, anyway. With vaccinations going like gangbusters, and the vaccine seems to be able to suppress the disease, we may be able to put the last year behind us.

We will take things slow here at the Niles Canyon Railway. We have decided to stick with the current operating schedule through October, two weekends a month, special trains only. We will increase the allowable passenger count, but we also want to minimize the impact to our volunteers. We should be able to ramp up our volunteer projects with fewer restrictions. Maintenance of Way activities, building East, Wednesday Warriors should all be able to resume to their pre-pandemic levels. The only real requirement we expect everyone to follow is the mask requirement, at least until the FRA rescinds their Emergency Order.

We are so confident that things will improve to where we need them to be that we are beginning the planning process for our Annual 4th of July Picnic/train ride/60th anniversary celebration. Our Commissary Department has not worked out all the details yet, but we should be able to handle carrying passengers and feeding them safely. We will also be honoring the people we could not honor last year for the Volunteer of the Year Award and the Whistle Award along with this year's recipients. I will have the official certificates for the Lifetime Achievement award honorees (suitable for framing) to be distributed to all recipients (or their family members) in attendance. It will be different than in past years but should be just as fun and exciting. I am sure you are all eager to hear me speak in public again.

In a true fit of optimistic enthusiasm, the PLA will now be counting on run-

ning our traditional Train of Lights this upcoming holiday season. The whole shebang – first class cars, cabooses, hot cocoa, hot cider, cookies and Member's trains. Decorating beginning around Labor Day. Hopefully the idle year has not had too disastrous an effect on our decorations. We will have to replace the ones we were intending to replace last year, but our financial position should be able to handle that.

Both the picnic and the TOL will not be successful without the necessary volunteers coming out to help. While so far it does not seem that we have suffered any significant reductions in volunteer efforts, TOL is really where we need to have an all-hands-on-deck approach. After losing a year, regaining momentum is something with which we are going to be needing everyone's help with.

As part of regenerating community excitement for our operations, I have been meeting with various city and county officials to keep them abreast of where we are going and what we are planning to do in order to garner their support. We have a new District 1 Supervisor, David Haubert, formerly the mayor of Dublin and a new Mayor of Pleasanton, Kathy Brown, who was a City Council member for many years. I have met with both of them and want to report a positive experience with both. We continue to work with Alameda County and the East Bay Regional Parks District with regard to the Niles Canyon trails.

Speaking of politics, I wish to announce that David Burla has agreed to chair the PLA Nominating Committee for the upcoming Board elections. Voting members should expect hearing from the committee members in the coming weeks to see if they are interested in running for any of the Board positions opening up. Vice-President and Membership Secretary as well as two At-Large Director seats will be coming up for reelection. If you are considering

running for a Board position, I would highly recommend you speak to the Incumbents (Mike Strider, Linda Stanley, Gail Hedberg and James Stewart, respectively) to find out more about the position, how much work it entails, and how to make it fun.

In my spare time I am finishing up my restoration of the Deep Fat Fryer that was an integral part of the Ranch Car kitchens. I have successfully rebuilt the burner assemblies, and am now polishing the stainless steel parts. I thought my years designing telecommunication products for outdoor environments taught me everything I needed to know about Stainless Steel, but I am learning a whole bunch of new information through my efforts. I learned Stainless Steel absorbs oil into its micro-structure. Who knew? I learned it isn't easy to get it out, and that maybe I don't want to. I do intend for it to look showroom new when reinstalled. While we never expect this appliance to be put back into service in the Ranch Car Galley, it will be great to know we could.

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. Though restrictions are easing, this is still vitally important.

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

May 1 & 8

9 am - 12 noon

at the Whitehouse

Contact:

Jackie Vlasak

traincrews@gmail.com

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

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 Sunol Depot Gardens.

Details in next issue of the "Club Car"
To meet social distancing requirements,
please if possible,
bring a folding table & chairs for your group

★ ★ ★ Volunteers needed!

Sat July 3rd: Set up canopies & tables
Sun July 4th: Prepare & Serve Lunch; tear down

Contact Doug Debs 650-704-1487
dougdebs2472@yahoo.com.

 **We will also be celebrating
PLA's 60th Anniversary!** 



Photo by Mike Pechner
Chief Engineer Mike Strider checking
gauge before spiking.

RWP CLASS

to be held at
Brightside
on
May 1 & 8
9 am - 12 noon
at the
Whitehouse

Contact:
Jackie Vlasak
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
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/NilesCanyonRailway>
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NilesCanyonRailRoad>



NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

Spring has only just arrived in Niles Canyon and the verdant hillsides are already blushing with the yellow gold of summer. We have seen temperatures in the eighties already and the folks riding our trains are enjoying the beautiful wildflowers and gorgeous scenery. Attendance has been great, and we look forward to an active season, as requirements ease and we all feel better about our safety.

Spring is the time to clean out the clutter of a long winter and to look ahead to things to come. At Brightside, we are sorting through long neglected materials with an eye on using what we can and finding a new home for stuff we do not need. For instance, the crew working to upgrade the "Welcome Center/ Security office" at the front gate needed insulation behind the new drywall and found a large supply of surplus foam hiding above the tool room. (Warren B. would be glad to know we found a use for the stuff finally) Now we have the makings of a climate-controlled building that will serve for years.

Also, we have found a home for the defunct boiler we purchased years ago, for the Steptoe Valley #3, which has been taking up space on the Whitehouse roadside. We used our trusty Hyster 30-ton forklift to load the boiler and extra parts on a flatbed headed for Ohio. The folks at Youngstown Steel Heritage will now be the custodians of that piece of history and we wish them all the luck with it.

After several months of work the pile of dead ties is nearly gone. We are down to the bits and pieces. All this wood was used to fill in voids behind the South side mainline walkway before I cover it with a thin layer of walking ballast. With luck we should be able to get through until next year before we must send any ties to the landfill.

Work on the new MOW container addition has begun in earnest with the hillside excavated and holes drilled for the rail and crossing panel retain-



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Doug Vanderlee monitors the refill of spray truck.



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Spray truck loaded for the first time.

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

ing wall. Once the wall is in place, two shipping containers will be brought off the hill, and placed end to end, parallel to the original, forming a workspace in between. We are even looking at putting an "at-grade" track in for servicing MOW equipment. (Maybe with a pit, hey a guy can dream, can't he?) I know many volunteers are waiting for the extra space.

Another activity that typically goes on in Springtime is weed spraying. Here at the NCRY we are up to ten miles of ROW that needs to be cared for and kept weed free. In the past, we have had the county spray team bring out a portable spray unit we can put on an MOW flat and push down the track with a motor car or Mongo. You may recall I mentioned last month our plan to "up our game" by using the newly proven Heavy Hauler to take the whole spray truck down the mainline. So, the date was set, and a train crew called together. (Unlike the old method, a locomotive is needed to move the fifty-thousand-pound combination of truck and carrier.)

On the morning of the inaugural run, our own Trainmaster, Mark Miller, volunteered to show Engineer Jim Stewart the ins and outs of the #7348 center cab which was chosen for its excellent visibility. The county crew showed up in the morning, ready to try out our idea, with spray heads they could mount directly on the bed of the hauler and remotely control from the air-conditioned cab of their fancy new truck. All the pieces were in place, but unfortunately, Mother Nature was not in the mood. She was blowing a good 10 mph breeze at 9:00am with a forecast for building winds. That pulled the plug on spraying for the day, but we decided to load the truck on the trailer, tie it down, and set up the spray heads, so that when we could actually spray, we would have some experience at loading and unloading. The truck drove



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Jim Stewart joins the few engineers to reach MP 39. Note the sign over his right shoulder.

right up the ramps like nothing. Doug Vanderlee had a very satisfied smile on his face. (I'm fairly sure, 'cause he had a mask on, and I surely wore one) While he and I figured out the chain down arrangement, the spray crew affixed their custom remote sprayers and coupled the hoses. A test of the sprayer worked great. All we needed was calm weather. That was not to be, so we unloaded the truck, and the crew went off to work elsewhere. Our crew came up with a plan "B".

Since we had the crew for the day, I decided to use them for a couple chores. First, the steam department requested a water tank run to Sunol and I had a need for some base rock for the MOW

container project. A scheme came together to take the tanker to Sunol, and while it was filling, we could run out to East Sunol, pick up a side dump car, take it to Bonita station (MP 37.2), fill it using the backhoe and take both cars back to Brightside. The engine crew suggested we use a little more muscle, so they fired up the SP #1423 to do the job. Everything worked just as we planned and, after putting the tanker to bed, the crew brought the side dump to the West end of the yard for unloading. That process is tricky, but we have a lot of practice, so all went well, and the train crew returned the car to East Sunol spur.

Unfortunately, Mark was not free for the following day, so Jim Stewart had the honor of pulling the first locomotive spray tour. We had to work out a last-minute crew substitution but got on the track by 10:30 ready to battle the vagrant vegetation. As we headed West out of the yard it was apparent that we had a hit on our hands. The rig could cover both shoulders and the track with ease and the powerful pump on the truck could really put out the juice allowing us to travel at about ten miles an hour! The truck tankful made it all the way to Niles in one shot. Then we returned to Brightside to fill up again. (from our own well, yet another first). The second tank was then pushed out to Milepost 39 and spraying continued back to Brightside. Job completed in less than five hours! It usually takes two days with small sprayer and multiple fill-ups. That is what I call an upgrade, and a real confirmation of Doug's original idea for the Heavy hauler. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this effort and I think the weeds should think twice about invading our turf.

Spring has sprung and the trains are running. So get vaccinated and come on out and volunteer.

Stephen Barkkarie

Stack Talk

Alan Siegwarth

Continued from Page 1

to be found. However, we've worked through many issues over the past few years on the Skookum and thanks to everyone's efforts she has become a really good running locomotive.

Stathi continues to make good progress installing the new firebox in the #1744 boiler. The door sheet, rear tube sheet and crown sheet are all in place and are in the process of being tack welded together. The sidesheet material mentioned last month has been ordered and should be at the Stockton Locomotive Works shop by late April. On the mechanical side of the restoration, the steam crew has not done much work on the frame this month with preparations for operations occupying most of our time. We have big plans for work this summer – stay tuned for more updates!

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

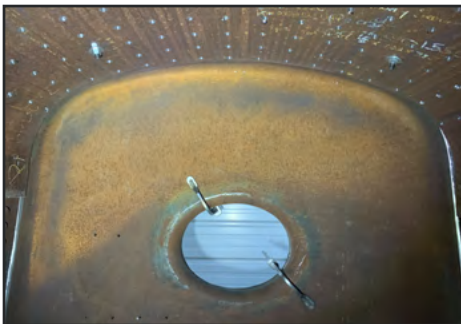


Photo by Stathi Pappas

Looking towards the rear of the firebox at the door sheet with crown sheet in place.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Justin Legg working on installing new journal pads in the cellars of the SP #1744 lead truck axle.



Photo by Stathi Pappas

Rear tube sheet rigged up and ready for lifting up into place in the firebox.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Derek Schipper firing the #3.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Chris Hauf continuing his ongoing odyssey of lettering on the Union Pacific Gondola.



Photo by Stathi Pappas

Raising the crown sheet up into place. Notice the rear tubesheet is drilled, reamed and bolted in place along the mudring.

Brush Cutting Report

Steve Jones - Sawdust Manager

On Saturday March 27th, the Brush Cutting Gang concentrated on clearing the vegetation encroaching on the ROW East of the Brightside Yard Limits. The gang consisted of John Pelmulder, Mark Whitman, John Zielinski, Hal Brier, and the undersigned. That part of the ROW had been cleared years ago, but the stumps regrew, and spread more acorns giving rise to even more scrub. Mark Whitman removed the stumps with the Case backhoe, so those encroachments will not return. The following Wednesday, Ken Southwick and Matt Petach assisted me in gathering up two truckloads of stumps which were taken to Niles for disposal in our green waste dumpster. We never chip stumps or roots as the sand and stones they often hide are harmful to the knives (chipping blades) inside the chipper.

The embankment, North of the Track

Shed in Brightside, has been populated by a fairly dense profusion of young Coastal Live Oaks. When trees grow too close together, numerous bad things happen over time, and they will not thrive. This situation also creates a fire hazard. Over the course of several weeks in March and early April, the Chainsaw Elves thinned the hillside so that the remaining trees will grow straight and strong. My thanks to Doug Vanderlee for his help in chipping some of the slash produced by the hillside thinning adventure.

As we receive our vaccinations and inch toward "normalcy", and look for ways to participate in maintaining your favorite railroad, remember that regular tree trimming days are 4th Saturdays and 2nd Wednesdays.

Arboreros!! Aaawwwaaaaaayyyy!!
Steve Jones

Dexter Day retires from his day job

After working many years as Senior Conductor and Trainer, former PLA General Manager and now PLA Operations Manager, Dexter Day has retired from Cal Train. We wish Dexter the very best in retirement and hope to see him more often in Niles Canyon.



East build track-work progress continues on first Saturdays

After several months of Covid-19 shut down and County social distancing limits, the 1st Saturday of the month East build work days are back on track. April 3rd had a crew of 7 volunteers that hardened approximately 250 feet of track. The crew included Chris Campi, John Zielinski, Matt Petach, Jorg Linke, Charles Navarra, Mike Pechner and yours truly.

The work included the spacing of cross-ties (at 19-1/2" spacing), and the gauging of rail using every 5th tie spiked in place to hold gauge. Since that work involved track in the curve, the gauge tolerance is to set slightly wide to 1/8" to 1/4" beyond standard 56-1/2". After we spaced the ties and set gauge, we were going to spike all intermediate ties using the spike jackhammer with air from the compressor. However, the compressor had a hydraulic leak and couldn't be used. So next time we will spike again once the compressor is repaired. (Steve Jones has currently repaired the compressor).

There is approximately 500-feet of track that has yet to be hardened to end of track before we can surface and line to final grade with ballast. Once all of the track is hardened to east end, the next task will be to set top-of-rail stakes (called Blue Tops) so that we can raise the track to final grade. The final grade was recently designed by member Chris O'Gara at HDR Engineering under my direction. The design includes the mainline from Verona to Happy Valley Bridge. Once the track is raised (surfaced with ballast), the final task will be to line (align) the track horizontally using our 10 ft. offsets.

We hope to see more volunteers on the East Build Crew in the coming months (1st Saturdays).

Mike Strider
Chief Engineer

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

This month's tale: "CONNECTED"

We have a way in and out, finally.

The time was November 1999. The track crew was getting ready to head East from Bond Street. The West end track build, was done for the time being as of June 1999, since we did not have permission to board passengers in Niles and the Mission Bridges were slated to be removed. With that in mind, the new goal was to build to Hearst so we would have a connection with the Union Pacific Railroad which would allow the PLA to move equipment in and out of the Canyon by rail instead of by truck which was the existing method for getting equipment onto the NCRY. By getting connected, this would afford the PLA considerable cost savings and expand operations on the NCRY in years to come. This is where this tale begins.

The building of the track East, was like it was building the track West. The ties for the first thousand feet had been stolen from the ROW leaving empty cribs, and we did not have a big stockpile of rail material on that end of the railroad. What we needed was to bring rail material from other parts of the railway to the East end rail head by flatbed truck. I remember getting a phone call from Mike Strider telling me that the supplies for the first phase of the track build had been delivered to Bond Street by flatbed truck trailer, and I should go out there and check it out, so I did! As I turned the corner at Bond Street, there sat the trailer. It was piled with supplies. I couldn't believe that you could get that much stuff onto one 40 Ft. flatbed. I've got to say, the track crew did a great job in gathering up all the supplies they would need to start the build East.

The flatbed was unloaded and the ties were spread out along the right of way. The rail was then unloaded and placed on the ties waiting to be bolted together. Once everything was in place, building this portion of the railroad went fast. In a few weeks, the track disappeared from sight looking East from Bond Street. Transporting track materials for the East build was done differently than the track being built West. Trucks could be used to drop supplies onto the right-of-way along with bringing supplies in from other parts of the railway by flat car.

The track build was done in sections. The curve just East of the Arroyo De La Laguna Bridge was already built and paid for by member Randy Johnston. This portion of the railroad is known as the "Johnston Track" in recognition of Randy's generous donation. It really was a great help in building rails to Hearst.

By the end of February 2002, the track build East from Bond Street was put on hold until the ROW at the Shoofly could be restored. The Shoofly was a temporary cross over connection built to enable the near-by Union Pacific to run over SP tracks while they built their new bridge over the County road by Johnston's Curve. Once the bridge was



Photo by Mike Strider

Anything else going to Bond St. for Eastward build?



Photo by John Pelmulder

Eastward build from Bond St. It is a long way to Hearst.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager



Photo by Mike Strider

County road crew re-establishing right-of-way at Shoofly.



Photo by Jim Swofford

Track does not have to look good when trying to make a deadline for Hearst.



Photo by Jim Evans

A concrete slab is being built to protect the SP pipeline.

completed, the temporary track connection was removed including ballast and a couple feet of subgrade. As a result, we did not have a road bed to build upon.

In April of 2002, the Alameda County Road Crew, using the spoils from our ditching, rebuilt and graded the right-of-way at the Shoofly at MP 36.5. Also, something new arrived for our track build East. The ROCCLA Corporation donated 200 plus concrete ties for use on the NCRY. There wasn't a better place to put them than on the new grade at the Shoofly. It became very important that we get to Hearst as soon as possible. The PLA, in cooperation with Alameda County, had obtained a grant to install a connection track between the Union Pacific and our railroad crossing over the County road (Pleasanton-Sunol Road) at Hearst and replace the crossing at Verona Road. The grant only covered the road crossings. We were on the hook for all track work on each side of the crossings. Before we qualified to receive the grant, we needed to have a railroad in place at Hearst and Verona Road waiting to cross the road. The funds for this project ultimately came from the State of California. Our ETA for Hearst was then May 25, 2002.

In early April 2002, rail was up to the Arroyo De La Laguna Bridge and preparing to get rail across the bridge and to Johnston's curve. At that point, you could see Hearst up the cut. The ties that were in the right-of-way had rail laid on them and bolted up, placed on tie plates, gauged and spiked. The rail was being spiked every fourth tie and sometimes every sixth tie if there was a tie to hold the gauge, but there were areas where they had no ties because they had been stolen.

Without ballast, you could not level the right of way. In those large sections of missing ties, they made a bridge out of ties. In some places, ties were double stacked. To be on the safe side, the track crew put an MOW flat out in front of the work train as a rolling gauge. Yes! Track was being built at a record pace. The goal? We had to get a connected railroad to Hearst by May 25, 2002, and have a work train on it to show that we were connected with the rest of the NCRY railroad. That was accomplished.

Now that we were at Hearst. The switch for the connection to UP needed to be built. Switch ties were put in place, and in September 2002, the 119# spring frog which we got on a rail swap from Rio Vista was positioned (point of frog). The switch on West side of the crossing would be built by our crews. At the time, the rail was in place to protect the ties. The Hearst Crossing and track build along with the switch on UP side would be contracted out to H & H Engineering Construction.

The street crossing was being done through a grant. Also, the grant covered putting back the Verona Road crossing which was removed by mistake on a miscommunication when they realigned the road through that crossing area. So, the next goal was to get to Verona Road as soon as possible.

Although most of the ties were in place, many were in real bad shape. Except around Thompson's crossing, the ties

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had been stolen. There were other major problems that lay between Hearst and Verona. Part of the right of way had sloughed off leaving a large hole on one side of the right-of-way. Also, there were slides that had taken place in the years that the right-of-way sat with no track structure. Even with all that laying ahead, the track crew started the rails moving East. It wasn't pretty, but it was going in and they could run an MOW train on it slowly. Rail was being delivered by truck to Verona Road. The heavy rail was in place and bolting it up was taking place. Extra rail was being laid out so they would have it when the crossing was going to be put back.

It was January 2003. The Track Crew had to return to Niles to rip up the track so the Mission Bridge project could get started. After track and tie removal at Niles, it was back to the East end to finish the Hearst Switch. In March, 2003, the Hearst Switch was being readied to be lined. By May 2003, the Hearst Switch on the NCRY was finished and ready for the contractor to put the road crossing in. The rail from the shoofly was connected to the Hearst switch and rail was heading East toward Verona Road. At this point, some backtracking was done to complete what wasn't accomplished on the original push to Hearst. By June 2003, track build toward Verona road was back underway.

In July 2004, the crossing at Hearst was being constructed and the track work across the pipeline area was being readied by building a concrete crib with rebar to protect the old pipeline from increased weight on it. The switch and track on the UP side of the crossing was also being built. Finally, all the rail was connected and finished.

Then, on July 27, 2004, after years of discussions, false starts and false hopes, the Niles Canyon Railway was finally CONNECTED to a nationwide railway system. Heavy rails were laid out at Verona road. The track crew spiked several lengths of rails to the West of the crossing awaiting the rail build from Hearst. The track crew had several pieces of rail laying loose awaiting the installation of the Verona crossing. To build the Verona crossing, the road was cut and trenched. The track was built in the trench and lifted to road level. Then, in August 2004, the Verona Crossing was completed. Now we could have an Eastward build (to Pleasanton) once again, when we were ready.

The new crossings were built with upgraded features. They incorporated flexible rubber fillers in the flangeways so bicycle tires wouldn't get jammed in the flangeway and spill the rider. The last five months of 2004 saw the Track Crew tackle several large tasks completing their goals. It wasn't always text book style in the way of building track, but the job got done. After they did some clean-up work on the East End, the crew went back to Brightside to work on the yard tracks. Our equipment would be arriving in the near future and we needed to be ready.

With that said, this tale comes to a close.

Dexter D. Day



Photo by Pat Warren

Connecting Hearst crossing to UP spur extension.



Our track crew reaches Hearst. Crew out front checking skel-ton track 1 mph? Flat in front to check gauge.



Photo by Mike Strider

Verona Road crossing being built.

PLA Member #7 - In His Own Words

Ed. Note: With the promise that current members of the PLA/NCRY will be allowed to come together this July 4th and celebrate the 60th Anniversary of its founding, this kicks off a short series of insightful reminiscences about its early days. Much has been said about the 'Original 6' members of the PLA. Member #7 was active before the Castro Point Railway at Molate Beach in Richmond, California became the PLA's first base of operation in the 1960's.

How did you find out about the PLA? Did you need a sponsor(s) and if so, who?

In Fall 1961, I met Bart Gregg while attending San Francisco City College. As I recall, he sponsored me for membership in the PLA.

What was the status of the PLA when you first joined – what were they doing?

Mostly member get-togethers at member homes to share stories and photos; with some "field trips" as described in Tom Eikerenkotter's 'Early History' (Ed. Note: This history from one of the PLA's 'Original 6' was shared in the July and August 2020 editions of the Club Car). The group remained as an "association" until incorporated as a "General Non-profit Corporation" under the laws of the State of California in 1965.

How did the move to Castro Point occur? Who spearheaded the effort?

Some of this is described in Tom's history. But the move of the Pickering #5 & #12 was a huge undertaking for us; they were our first locomotives at the C.P.Ry. The plan was to move the locomotives to a S.P. railhead in Stockton from Connell Brothers Trucking by truck; then load them aboard flat cars prepared by Charlie Heimerdinger and others. Things were well under way to load the locomotives when word came to us that the S.P. car department was rejecting the plan. This put us in a bad situation!

Eventually, I think it was Karl Koenig (Ed. Note: Another one of the 'Original 6') who was able to arrange with Sheedy Drayage to move both locomotives all the way to Richmond for us. Dan Ranger and I (and others) were heavily involved with the preparations and execution of this effort. Avoiding "over load" penalties wasn't entirely successful. The tenders had to be put on separate trailers at the CHP weigh station. As a result, the #5's tender arrived at the C.P.Ry. backwards. Later, turning the #5's tender around using a large front-end loader borrowed from Quarry Products Co., our landlord in Richmond, was another big challenge.

What projects have you personally been involved with over your 60-year membership?

- Preparations for movement of Howard Terminal Ry. #6 (aka Sierra Railroad #30) to Crow Canyon Park in Alameda County (before C.P.Ry.); and later to C.P.Ry.
- Move Pickering #5 & #12 (see #4 above).
- Construction of "engine house" at C.P. Ry. (under the old



quarry two bay tippel).

- AT&SF #462 cab floor and repaint with Howard Wise.
- Cal Western M-200 engine and torque converter rework to make operational at C.P.Ry. with Howard Wise.
- Purchase and total restoration of Plymouth locomotive #103 with Howard Wise.
- Purchase and interior restoration of AT&SF caboose #999081 with Howard Wise.
- Roof repairs and coating to SP#2101 and Pullman "Gothic Peak".
- Rebuild of "smoke chaser".
- Design and construction management of fence around Brightside compound.
- Assist at Railtown 1897 when the PLA managed
- Preservation of WP #M-601.
- Assist with preparation of SP#10280-82 (triple unit diner), SP #6235, Pullman "Gothic Peak" and other equipment from Hunters Point to N.C.Ry.
- PLA President and GM in C.P.Ry days.
- Chair of Collections Committee.

Do you have a favorite project, or the one you are most proud?

Collections Committee.

What friendships/collaborations have you made ?

Howard Wise, Dave Burla, Steve Slabach, Karl Koenig, Henry Luna, Connie Luna and many others.

What 'old time' member would you like to see remembered/honored?

There are many deserving individuals who have contributed to the success of the organization.

What would you most like to see the PLA accomplish going forward?

Ensure the permanence of N.C.Ry. through long term legislation.

Ensure long term management of PLA.

Thanks to PLA Member #7 – **George Childs** – for agreeing to this interview and sharing this early history of the PLA. Appreciation for what the members of this organization have accomplished over the past 60 years continues to grow – truly amazing!

Linda Stanley

Membership Report

Linda Stanley - Membership Secretary

With the opening of more entertainment opportunities, the PLA is cautiously optimistic it may be able to present for the community its premier event, the 2021 'Train of Lights'! Leading up to this potentially busy time of year will be the latest voting member approval ballot, developing the ability to hold hybrid in-person/teleconference meetings, the continuation of second and third weekends for special passenger train operations, PLA Board of Directors elections, the July 4th Members' BBQ and train ride, along with celebrating its 60th Anniversary as well! These activities encourage volunteers to participate, and as more of us receive our vaccinations, the volunteer ranks continue to grow. It is gratifying to see fellow volunteers returning to a routine many have missed and can enjoy participating in once again.

May's membership meeting will be the opportunity for any member of the PLA to nominate any voting member for a position on the BOD. Up for election this cycle is Vice President, Membership Secretary, and two Directors-At-Large. Make your voice heard!

The PLA has been fortunate to see its membership numbers stabilize the past few months after an initial drop at the start of the pandemic shutdown of operations a year ago. With the return of volunteers it is time once again to select this year's 'Volunteer of the Year'. The pandemic prevented last year's honoree – John Zielinski - from receiving this accolade at the canceled July 4th BBQ. An article highlighting his volunteer contributions was featured in the Club Car and the PLA wishes to thank John once again. Have someone extraordinary in mind to be this year's recipient? Contact the Membership Secretary anytime with your suggestions. The honoree will be announced at the July 4th BBQ.

Selected by the BOD, longtime General Manager and volunteer Dexter Day was honored as this past year's recip-

ient of the prestigious 'Whistle Award'. An article in the Club Car highlighted his decades of contributions to the PLA. After a challenging year, the BOD and the volunteers will have their work cut out for them in this year's selection of honorees. Fortunately for the PLA/NCRY, there is no shortage of volunteers who deserve recognition for their exceptional individual contribution and participation.

The Niles Canyon Railway Wednesday Warriors

There is some debate when the term Wednesday Warriors came to apply to the team that works in the Car Department on Wednesdays. Some say that it was there in 2007. Some say earlier. In the fall of 2008 I was invited to help people in the PLA decorate the cars for the Train of Lights. When I showed up, Joe Scardino welcomed me and invited me to help with the exterior decorating. I joined the group and Dexter Day was running everything. We did decorating every Wednesday from the 1st of September until the start of TOL in November.

After TOL, we undecorated in January through early March. After we finished un-decorating in the Spring the people split up to work on their various projects. I ended up working with Steve Van Meter on the interior of the 139 El Paso.

We met up for lunch at the Depot Café in Sunol. At lunch we would talk about our various projects. At one point we decided that we would do better if we all worked together on one project. Our first group project was the Articulated Coach which we started on in 2010. This was the beginning of the year round Wednesday Warriors team.

Once we were in sync working on the same projects as a team, the Wednesday Warriors grew in size.

At some point the Depot Café was too small to meet our needs, so we start-

Wrapping it up on another high note, the PLA welcomes the following 12 new or reinstating members: Matt, Steve, Wyatt and Abby Thomas, Ann & Terry Dowdy, Martin Spear, Gage Robinson, Sanjay Bhandari, Mark Evanoff, Hanh Vu, and Phil Gosney – welcome to the PLA and promising times ahead!

Keep hanging tough and wearing your mask – we all thank you!

Linda Stanley



ed eating lunch at Jim's in Pleasanton. That is now our tradition.

In 2011 to 2014 we transitioned from Dexter being in control of all decorating to Tom Crawford and the Wednesday Warriors being responsible for the exterior decorating, with Dexter handling interior decorating. At that point the team became fully functional as a complete team both during Train of Lights season and during the rest of the year.

Since the team was formed, it has restored the interiors of the Articulated Coach, the 3176 Combine, the 315 and the 1949. The team is currently working on the All Day Lunch. We need to have it back together by the end of August for the start of TOL decorating, although we suspect the wall and ceiling painting will be in 2022.

There are currently 15 active members of the Wednesday Warriors, including Bob Moore, Denis Murchison, Don Gholson, Jim McDaniel, Joan Weber, Joe Scardino, Marshal Williams, Pete Goodier, Phil Stone, Robert Giles, Steve Van Meter, Terry Stokes, Tony Peters and Tom Crawford.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

To our Members:

Welcome to May. March and April have passed with no downside surprises from the State or County. We ran trains both months on the second and third weekends, all filled with passengers. Made good revenue. There was maintenance and repair activity by volunteers up and down the right-of-way, and restoration work is underway again - this is, after all, what we are about - both preserving and running a railroad.

Looking at the Balance Sheet, all is well. The month used up some of our cash, more than in recent months - but we are back in operation again. We put \$15k aside with FareHarbor, our ticket seller, as insurance against the forced cancellation of sold-out trains by Covid-19 rule changes - it could happen at any time, right?

The P&L shows we earn about \$9k each weekend by running 2 trips a day, each day. If we can continue this through June, with a couple of charters thrown in and continued good performance of online sales through the Gift Shop, we will come reasonably close to our making our budgeted revenue of \$419k.

Donations during March were directed toward:

General Fund, \$2,895

(This covers all projects not listed separately.)

SP1744 Restoration, \$1,450

SP9010 Restoration, \$50

GN 1242 Ranch Car Restoration, \$475

MOW Dept., \$100

New Loco Shop, \$125

There is another form of donation that is making a big difference for us. So, from Justin Legg, Linda Stanley, Rich Alexander, Steve Jones, Mike Strider, and Tom Crawford the PLA received products, materials or services in the amount of \$2,042 during March. So far this fiscal year there have been In-kind Contributions in the amount of \$19,117. This is a huge benefit to the PLA programs. Thank you all!

We will soon need to tackle a budget for the coming FYE June 2022. There is still a great unknown there - whether we will be allowed to run our full-experience Train of Lights. It is over 6 months away, so reasonable to assume we probably can - but anything can happen, right? To cover the bases we will

prepare a full budget, with the TOL, and make any necessary adjustments as the actual scenario is revealed.

Thank you for your membership and support. Contact anyone on our contact list to get involved as a volunteer.

Pat Stratton

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Visit... [NCRY.ORG/DONATE](https://ncry.org/donate)

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.

PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Time Sensitive Material



Steve Barkkarie uses the Hyster 30 to move boiler for transport to Youngstown, Ohio.

Photo by Doug Vanderlee