



THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 701

Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

January 2022

Stacktalk – A busy December during the Christmas Season

This report will be short as it has been a busy month and like everyone else, when we aren't at the railroad we need time to shop and wrap presents! The Steam Department had a whole bunch of projects to complete despite having a good portion of the crew supporting the Train of Lights operations. Work continued on removing tires from the SP 1744 and as of December 19, all six tires are removed. The next step is getting the wheel centers machined and new tires ordered. We should have more news on this in next month's Club Car. Stockton Locomotive Works has made substantial progress on the boiler by completing 95% of the mud ring rivet installation this month. Completing the mudring riveting means the firebox sheet installation work is nearly complete. The next phase of the boiler project is a big one with nearly 1500 staybolts needed to be fabricated and installed along the caps/sleeves for the flexible bolts – please donate to help continue to fund this work.

In addition to the 1744 work, we had repair work to complete on the Skookum. Chris Baldo, Troy James, Steve Butler along with Steam Department volunteers spent a good part of two

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Photo by Alan Siegwarth

The ring of fire is lit off to start the removal process.

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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

Board of Directors Meeting

**Saturday
JANUARY 8**

2:15 PM

In Whitehouse @ Brightside

In-person & Teleconference

Membership Meeting

JANUARY 8

(Following BOD Meeting)

3:15 PM

In Whitehouse @ Brightside

In-person & Teleconference

(Email will be sent on how to access meeting by phone or computer).

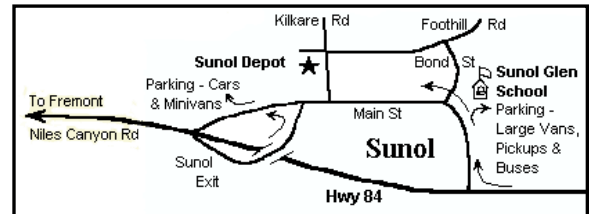
General Meetings

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

BOARDING LOCATIONS

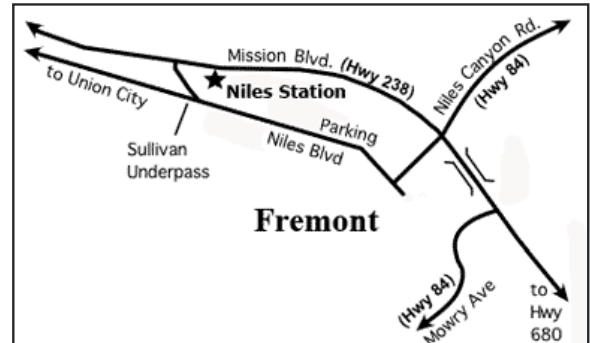
SUNOL DEPOT

6 Kilcare Road
Sunol, CA 94586



NILES STATION

37029 Mission Blvd.
Fremont, CA 94536



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

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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!

Submit articles by e-mail in **WORD** text format. Digital photos may also be submitted by e-mail.

Digital photos should be saved as PC format .jpg files.

A **WORD** file with the photo number, description of photo and identifying the people in them **IS REQUIRED**.

Send to the Editor, Barry Lependorf at clubcar@ncry.org

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

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

January Activities

January 8	2nd Saturday	MoW Building East	8:00 am - Brightside - Mike Strider
January 8	2nd Saturday	Board of Directors Meeting,	2:15 pm - Brightside
January 8	2nd Saturday	General Meeting	3:15 pm - Brightside

NOTE: DATE CHANGE FOR BUILDING EAST

**The Niles Canyon Railway
Wishes you a
Happy New Year**

Volunteer Report

Ed Best - Volunteer Coordinator

The people listed below reported close to 3,800 volunteer hours for the month of November. Please continue to report your volunteer hours to me by e-mail at volunteers@ncry.org. Train Crew hours are collected directly from the log sheets and meeting attendance by teleconference is reported to me by the Membership Secretary.

ADMINISTRATION

Henry Baum
Mike Strider
Jim Evans
Rich Alexander
Pat Stratton
Steve Barkkarie
Kent Hedberg
Warren Haack
Gail Hedberg
Bob Pratt
Chris Hauf
Don Gholson
Donna Alexander
Ed Best
Jackie Vlasak
Joe Scardino
Mark Miller
Mary Asturias
Rich Alexander

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Brian Hitchcock
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CAR DEPARTMENT

Bill Stimmerman
Bruce Burke
Chris Campi
Dennis Mann
Henry Baum
Howard Wise
Tom Crawford

COMMISSARY

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Dee Murphy
Doug Debs
Sierra Murphy

DEPOT CREW & OPERATIONS

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Rich Alexander

ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Curt Hoppins
Jacques Verdier
Kurt Olsen

FACILITIES

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John Zielinski
Rich Alexander
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GIFT SHOP

Charlene Murrell
Donna Alexander
Gail Hedberg
Patrice McDonald

MECHANICAL

Bill Stimmerman
Dee Murphy
Dennis Mann
Derek Lyon-McKeil

MECHANICAL

Gerald DeWitt
Gerry Feeney
Howard Wise
Jeff Haslam
Karl Swartz
Kent Hedberg
Kurt Olsen
Linda Stanley
Rich Gove

MOW & TRACK

Adam Weidenbach
Bob Bailey
Bob Gilbert
Bob Pratt
Chris Campi
Dan Colley
Dee Murphy
Doug Debs
Doug Vanderlee
Ed Best

John Sutkus
Jorg Linke
Ken Southwick
Matt Petach
Mike Carter
Mike Pechner
Mike Strider
Pat Stratton
Ron Thomas
Steve Barkkarie

MOW & TRACK

Steve Hill
Warren Haack
Wesley Van Osdol

OTHER

Barry Lependorf
Bob Bailey
Bob Pratt
Derek Lyon-McKeil
Ed Best
Kent Hedberg
Mike Strider
Patrice Warren
Paul Veltman
Sally Mills
Zonker Harris

SWITCHING CREW

Gerry Feeney
Kent Hedberg

TRAIN CREW

Bent Christensen
Bob Pratt
Brad Jones
Charles Navarra
Curt Hoppins
Dave Burla
Dee Murphy
Dennis Mann
Ed Best

TRAIN CREW

Eric Wright
Gary White
George Mednick
Gerald DeWitt
Gerry Feeney
Jack Starr
Jamie West
Jim Stewart
John Sutkus
John Zielinski
Jon Williamson
Jorg Linke
Justin Legg
Kurt Olsen
Mark Miller
Matt Petach
Mike Carter
Pat Stratton
Rich Anderson
Ron Quilici
Ron Thomas
Sanjay Bhandari
Scott Crislip
Steve Barkkarie
Warren Haack

TRAIN OF LIGHTS

Alison Wright
Bev Barkkarie
Bob Bailey
Bob Gilbert
Bob Moore
Bob Pratt
Bonnie Harrington

TRAIN OF LIGHTS

Brian Schott
Bruce Burke
Charlene Murrell
Cynder Niemela
Dan Mills
Dave Best
Dave Hipple
Denis Murchison
Dexter Day
Donna Alexander
Florence McAuley
Frankie Ross
Gail Farwell
Gail Hedberg
Gary White
Gerry Dewees
Gerry Feeney
Glenn Fountain
Gretchen Knutsen
Hal Briar
Henry Baum
Jack Harrington
Jacques Verdier
Janet Smith
Jim McDaniel
Joan Weber
Joe Romani
John Link
Ken Southwick
Kent Hedberg
Kylie Montgomery
Laura EnglandWitt
Liam O'Leary

TRAIN OF LIGHTS

Linda Best
Linda Stanley
Madeline Briar
Mark Whitman
Marshall Williams
Matt Petach
Mike Pechner
Nancy Dewees
Norm Fraga
Pat Buder
Paul Davison
Pete Goodier
Peter Midnight
Phil Montgomery
Phil Stone
Ray Freeman
Rhonda Dijeau
Rich Alexander
Richard Smith
Rob Giles
Roger McCluney
Ruchit Shah
Sally Mills
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Coon
Steve Jones
Steve Van Meter
Terry Stokes
Tom Crawford
Vicki Witt
Wayne Stoddard
Wendy Cooper

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

President's Message

Henry Baum - President

The 2021 Train of Lights is almost finished. When you take into account that we sat out all last season, I am really pleased to say that the season has gone by without any serious issues. I want to thank everyone who has come out and volunteered at the railroad to make this one of our best TOLs ever. All the trains ran as promised. The Gift Shop has had sales that almost completely wiped out their inventory. When you take into account the supply chain issues most retailers are dealing with, you can assume our gift shop stock has also taken a hit. Many popular items were not delivered as expected, but that made the items we had more desirable. The sales report will reflect that this was a most impressive year for the Gift Shop. I was recruited to work in the gift shop, and apparently I did pretty good as they allowed me to come back and do it again. I put the skills I learned working in a drug store when I was 12 years old and was proud to see I hadn't lost any of them. I could ring up sales, run the Square credit card do-hickey, restock sold items, and schmooz with the passengers, upselling whenever possible.

Similarly, commissary sales have been off the charts. As it is harder to gauge the amount of cookies, cider and hot chocolate being handled, I can say that the number has been quite surprising. One of the big improvements for this year was the replacing of the Styrofoam cups with a specialized paper product that has ribs on the outside that makes it possible to hold with your bare hand, even when filled with hot beverages. The commissary volunteers love them, as do the passengers. The lids for the new cups are a little hard to put on, but even someone as dumb as me can learn to do it. I learned, because the first one I tried to put on when working in the dome car didn't want to go on so I pressed so hard I crushed the cup. Thereafter I discovered slow and steady pressure would put the lid on properly. I cleaned up the mess I made and chalked up another skill learned.

I did a turn in the parlor car and had



Photo by Don Buchholz

The TOL leaving Niles Station.

happy passengers. I did caboose host a few times, and got a \$60 donation on one trip! Passengers were very well behaved and did a good job cleaning up after themselves. One party left the caboose in better shape when they came on board, which made the clean-up job easy. I know some parties do get a little wild, but still there are rarely any catastrophes.

I knew it would be difficult to pull off a TOL as good as we had in past years, so I made sure to be out there for every train to help out where I could. I am happy to say that a lot of new volunteers came out to help out, and that was fantastic. Some new members did yeoman duty jumping in where necessary. A number of Sunolians volunteered to help out on the train, which is a fantastic response from the community we serve. They all said they had a great time and were really impressed with how professional and well oiled a production we put on, especially in the middle of a pandemic. Every new volunteer I spoke to said similar things. I am really proud of our organization and how well we do what we do.

I didn't run into any unhappy passengers. Everyone thanked us for bringing it back after missing out last year, and were pleased to see it was better than ever. Talked to a number of families who said it was going to be a new tradition, and a number of families who say it is already a family tradition, for

3 years, for 4 years, or the record (as far as I know) from Milena, who was my administrative assistant back in one of my prior lives, and who learned about the Niles Canyon Railway from me. She has brought her entire family out for 16 years! Her 4 year old granddaughter asked me some of the most well thought out and serious questions I have encountered, and I was impressed. I only lost her when I was explaining how knuckle couplers work (in answer to the question what holds the cars together) and she was distracted by Santa showing up.

The best comment came from a passenger from Santa Cruz named Shelly, who sought me out on the train to tell me how fantastic a job we are doing. She lives down the road from Roaring Camp and she said her family comes up to Niles Canyon several times a year because our volunteers do such a fantastic job, and are always friendly, courteous and well, happy.

And I agree. The NCRy is the place to come for happy, year round. I want to wish you all a happy holiday and even more happy in the new year.

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

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

2021 Train of Lights



Photos by Don Buchholz

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

Finally, 2021 is in the books and a new year is upon us. While there are many things to look back on, I prefer to meet the coming months with the resolve to continue improving our collection of equipment, the volunteering opportunities for our members and the offerings for our loyal ridership. We will also continue to foster growing relationships with local regulators, law enforcement, and generous vendors in our industry. All signs point to a banner year ahead. Challenges will come but working together the Niles Canyon Railway will remain the premier volunteer operated museum in our region.

The trials of the TOL are over and our comeback was a great success. Staffing shortages and equipment quirks threatened the effort but our members, both old and new, really rose to meet the need. The passengers showed great appreciation for our return and holiday spirit was the only thing infectious on board as everyone was responsibly mask compliant. Now we focus on undecorating the train, which starts this month, and getting ready for spring operating season.

Even though the TOL takes the center stage, the behind the scenes work of inspection, upkeep and restoration continue unabated both in the shops and on the ROW. Touring the car shop just the other day a new window has been installed in the cab of the KM9010. Resident machinist Bill Stimmerman successfully fitted the oddly shaped sliding glass into the angled, close tolerance frame to complete one side of the cab's restoration. Just one more to go. Also, Howard Wise has removed the last of the corroded steel siding on the North side of the BN "Ranch" and has tacked on most of the new metal. When he is finished you will never know the car had any damage. Next time you are in Brightside, you will see the Gothic Peak has a new grab iron and some fresh paint on the West end vestibule. Jeff's repairs on the end look great and, rumor has it, window work is making headway inside as well. As you know from last month's Club Car progress goes on finishing track Eastward and just yesterday the signals department came across an insulated joint that had loose bolts during the monthly circuit inspection. The issue was reported and resolved the same day in plenty of time for the evening passenger runs. It's that kind of teamwork that makes the dream work.

Speaking of teamwork, the water district teamed up with Alameda County Sheriffs and the PLA to deliver vacate notices to the illegal camps in the canyon. The M-200 was brought out to provide transportation for the group effort and, despite the stormy weather, signs got placed at all the problem areas along the right of way. Both the water district and the Sheriffs have pledged their support to help keep



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Alameda County Sheriffs and Alameda Water Dept. ferry out to Joyland park site.



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Screen shot of sonic test display showing bolt-hole crack.

the canyon cleaned up and to fight the vandalism. PLA has pledged the rail equipment to make it happen. We have built a great relationship with both entities and look forward to continued cooperation. (I think they all really enjoyed the ride on our awesome railbus, and Gerry Feeney even gave one of the Sheriffs some throttle time. I wish I had a picture of the smile on his face.)

Out in the Valley subdivision, the company who performed sonic testing on the rail last year, Smith-Emery, paid us another visit. They needed to train some personnel and test some different equipment and were willing to test our Eastern track in exchange for access. It turns out our bolted track is a very effective training tool because it reports a greater amount of data per mile than welded ribbon rail used by their other clients. They were out for three days and tested all the tracks from Sunol station to the East EOT. They brought out not only the truck mounted system, but also a manual sled mounted tester and a handheld wand detector.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Doug Vanderlee takes the point as the Burro eases boom first over Farwell bridge shoving the Heavy Hauler.



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Sheriffs escort a trespasser and take advantage of a rare photo-op.

Using the truck scanner, they found a couple of minor cracks out near Hearst crossing. One emanating from a bolt hole behind a joint bar that we would never have discovered until the joint failed. Finding a crack like that while rolling over it at track speed is amazing. Take a look at the picture of the joint in question and you can “see” the two normal bolt holes on the left, then the cracked hole with the broken line on the scan, and then the other normal hole on the right. The scan crew marked the joint for us, and we will change out the rail before it has had a chance to cause an issue.

The sled mounted unit is used to scan tight radius turns and other places that the big scanner can’t go, like turn-out closing rails, self-guarded frogs and yard switches. Of course, they can’t test track that has equipment parked on it so there are some spots that are still a mystery, but most rail East of Sunol have been checked out.

I understand the wand detector was brought out at the Sunol siding to make sure it was working like it should. They run the big scanner over it first and then the wand and compare the results to calibrate the unit. The interesting thing about the hand-held unit is that is used for things like bolts, rivets and pins in structures. (Like the pins in the Farwell and Dresser bridges that our inspectors recommended be sonically tested.) Rueben, the Smith Emery lead, told me they recently tested over two thousand bolts in a stadium in southern California and found several that were broken and being held in place by just the paint. I would say that is a nice thing to know. I mentioned our need for that service and got a positive “just give us a call” response. I plan to take them up on that offer. We further discussed that the wand is often used to scan pressure vessels, like steam boilers. I think we will be staying in contact with this group and when they want to test equipment or train crews on their dime, we will give them all the track time they need. What great technology. This kind of proactive maintenance should really impress the FRA next time they pay us a visit.

On a final note, I would like to correct the caption from last month’s cover. It states that “track crew” raises track, when in fact, the picture shows three conductors (Warren Haack, Jorg Linke & John Sutkis), two engineers (Ed Best & Ron Thomas) and a brakeman (Bob Pratt) doing the job. My point is that at Niles Canyon no one does just one job and if you feel like trying something new, you can. So, in the coming year why not make a resolution to branch out, try on another hat, and do something new.

Stephen Barkkarie

Stack Talk

Alan Siegwarth

Continued from Page 1

weeks working on the #4 driving axle of the Skookum to repair bearing issues that occurred during the October operations. The driver was dropped, repairs made and the axle reinstalled using the NCRy drop pit (which required

a "little" welding repair work on the lift itself as well – thanks to Wyatt Thomas for doing the welding). We continue to resolve issues on the Skookum as they present themselves and hopefully the December work has repaired a nagging issue with the wedge adjustment

on the #4 driver that we have been dealing with since Skookum arrived in 2019.

Merry Christmas and may you have a Steamy New Year!

Alan Siegwarth



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Chuck Kent, Jeff Schwab and Henry Chandler working on setting the ring of fire to remove another SP 1744 Tire.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Chuck Kent and Charles Franz working on tire removal.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Chris Baldo (owner) and Troy James (Roots of Motive Power) working on the rear driver of the Skookum.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Henry Chandler, Dee Murphy and Justin Legg wait for another tire to be heated for removal.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

The SP 9010 locomotive update

SP 9010 PLA volunteer crew Howard Wise, Bill Stimmerman, and Karl Swartz have been immersed of late in the rebuilding of the big KM's Maybach V-16 turbomotor. But other details are receiving equally meticulous attention.

When we got the unit in the Summer of 2008, the cab windows had been removed, and the set was hardly complete. (The saga of restoring SP's radical window modifications to KM's original pristine framing is another chapter in the unique difficulties of restoring a mainline locomotive built 6,000 miles away!) We were fortunate to have both slider panes in the dusty, delaminating collection — including their distinctive clear KM pull handles.

Howard created molds from the best of two parts, and cast new handles in durable clear acrylic resin. Bill installed them on new glass panels, which will be installed in sliding bearing channels which Bill also machined for the job, replacing the worn originals.

Slowly but surely, SP 9010 is returning to its unique appearance and operability, as if fresh off the boat in 1964!

Bob Zenk/Seattle



Above: Volunteer Bill Stimmerman uses adhesive and clamps to set newly-cast handle reproductions. Below: original SP 9010 part was copy-cast in clear acrylic by PLA restoration crew chief Howard Wise.



The original clear inside pull handle, at leading edge of sliding glass panel.



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>



Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

This month's tale:

"IN THE BEGINNING, THE TOL STORY"

It is early Fall of 1991, we were preparing the railroad for a normal wet rainy stormy season. Up to now, the right of way had handled the winters well. As Rich Gill and I were talking over the shape of the canyon, he said to me that we should do a night operation this winter. My response was no. "I said our crews are not ready for that type of operation yet". Also, we do not have proper lighting on the ground or on the train. We do just fine with day operations, however, operations as we knew it were heading for a change. This is where this tale begins. The canyon is getting close to being ready for winter. Rich Gill is still trying to convince me into having a night operation. I thought about it. With some lights installed in Sunol and get some lighting on the train, it would be fun to have a Christmas gathering on the train for our members and guest. This would include a pot luck with cheers. I asked Rich Gill if he could attach a generator to the deck of the ATSF 462. Rich said he would take care of it. He said I should plan on getting a lot of electrical cords. The BOD Ok'd the operation. Rich is going to get his wish for Christmas, a night run. The timing was just right. We were able to get the word out to our members to sign up for one of three trains at 5 pm, 6 pm, and 7 pm. By the time we operate these Christmas trains, the track should be built to MP 32.5 which is just West of the "Big Turn". Decorations were starting to be donated by our members. Thanksgiving was approaching, so we decided that the weekend following Thanksgiving would be a good time to hold a meeting on decorating the cars that we had for the train. That was one coach, two open cars and a caboose. Yes, for us at that time, it was beginning to look a lot like Christmas, and we had no idea what this train we were looking to decorate would turn into in 30 years. For the first go at decorating a railcar, we were armed with a lot of attaching material. Gorilla Duct tape, bailing wire, tie wraps, cutters, plyers and few ladders. We were ready to decorate. Also, it was decided to decorate only one side of the train which faced the highway. The decorating really didn't take that long. Of course, we didn't have that many decorations to put onto the train. But, there's nothing like the sound of stretching Gorilla duct tape, ripping it and sticking it on the side of the car over the light string. However, there was no guarantee that the car arriving back in Sunol would look like it did when it departed. The bailing wire was used where we could. We soon found out that the use of duct tape wasn't the best choice for attaching decorations. We have improved our methods on how to decorate since railcar decorating 101 took place. Also patterns for the



Photo by Warren Benner

Early open car decorations. Only on one side and nothing on the interior.



Photo by Warren Benner

Hand made decorations with light strings on car to back it up.



Photo by Warren Benner

These are home made figures that were applied to side of cars.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager



Photo by Warren Benner

Decorations as it was. Polar Express decorations made a big hit. Very little lights.

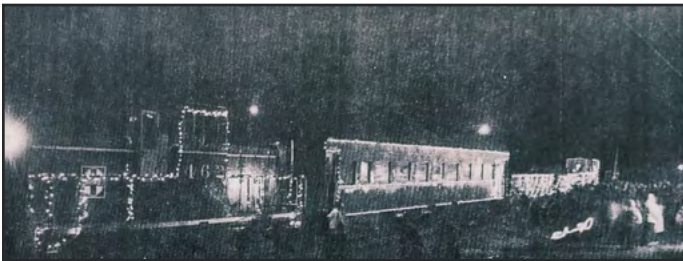


Photo by unknown

1993 return of the 6pm train. A sea of people. This was the beginning of the TOL. We just didn't know where it was going to be in 30 years.



Photo by Warren Benner

Cars are getting to look better. Cars are getting more figures.

lights were chosen on how easy the decorations can be attached. On the coach, we found some screws that were substituting for rivets. All decorating was done at low level. On the coach, the decorations were below the windows. We had some decorations where the food table will be. We decorated around the entrance of the open car with steps. This was not the TOL yet. This was a member's train which was tagged "Polar Express" by one of our members. December 21 was the big night for our first Christmas member's train. Jeff Otto had the platform lights up and working. Rich Gill had the generator on the deck of the 462. The electrical cords were strung out and the interior of the train had lights for safety. Connie Luna, Henry Luna, Peter Hartman, Allen Ramsey handled the train food service. Juanita Richardson led passengers in Christmas Carols. We had a good train crew which all did a good job on our first night operation. The train departed Sunol with lights glowing in the night. For us, it was nice looking and cars on Highway 84 were honking their horns at the train in approval in what they were seeing. It turned out great and it was a fun trip. The members that were on board for the runs thought this train should be a yearly event. It was talked over and was decided that we would do the train again next year. During the year, some decorations were made for the train and better lighting was made up for the platform in Sunol. The 1992 train looked a lot like the one the year before. The train did have more lights and some new figures and signs on the side of the cars. After two runs that year for the members, the 1992 season came to an end. In 1993, NCRY was going to be in for a shocking surprise that awaits them on the "Polar Express". Dec 19th was a regular operating day for the railroad. We added two extra runs, a 5 pm and a 6 pm. That will allow our passengers to enjoy the sights of this train all aglow. To make this operation work, we had to call double crews so that we would not violate the Federal hours of service law for railroad operating personnel. This became interesting for our passengers when the train pulled into Brightside at 2:30 pm and we did a complete crew change. Charlie Heimerdinger made a comment, "This place is beginning to look like Watsonville". Allen Ramsey did our standard press release for the local newspapers for these extra trains. It got carried away. A radio station picked up on this event. Before it was over, we were listed as one of the top four things to do in the Bay area that weekend. On the return of the 6 pm run and approaching the platform, you could see there was a sea of people waiting for a ride. We operated 7 pm and 8 pm runs to accommodate everyone that showed up. The "Train of Lights" as we know it was born and there was no turning back. It was talked over and it was decided

Continued on Next Page

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager



Photo by Warren Benner

TOL was coming out of the dark ages. New approach to decorating. Metal cages with screen with decorations attached to screen.

Continued from Previous Page

that we would do Christmas trains for the public every year. By 1994, the "Polar Express" was up to six cars. Of course, the decorations increased from the year before. In 1995, the train grew to 8 cars with one being the generator car which was rebuilt from a WP split flat by Jeff Mann and team. Steve Slabach worked hard at getting the diesel generator to work properly. Pat Lewis took care of the new electrical cables that ran beneath the train car body. That year we operated 18 trains which 15 of them were for the general public. 1995 was the first year we had steam on the "Polar Express". It was used on the trains for members and guests and residents of Sunol. In 1996, change took place on how we decorate the train. Charlie Blake made steel cages and then we decorated the cages. They then were attached to the side of the train. The cages were stored in a container during the rest of the year. That method really improved the way we decorated the train. In 1997, the train grew into the train that we are familiar with today. That year,

the whole train was decorated inside and out. The train PA system also improved along with onboard service in the way of hot cider and cocoa. The train continued to grow in size over the years. In a year, this train will be called the "Train of Lights". The title "Polar Express" has a copywrite attached to the name. If we continued to use that title, we would have paid a good price to do so. We have come a long way from our first attempt in decorating a train for Christmas in 1991. The 2021 TOL celebrated our 30th year doing Christmas Trains. The 2021 is also the best train we have decorated in several years. For our 30th year, we wanted the train to really impress our passengers that will be riding with us. From the feedback we get, we believe that the NCRY TOL is the finest Christmas train in the country. We should all be proud of what we have accomplished over the years in making this train as great as it is today. With that said, another tale comes to an end.

Dexter D. Day

Membership Report

Rich Alexander - Membership Secretary

New and returning members:

Ken Asmus, Charles Cisson, John Fenlon, Trevor Fenlon, Katy Hsueh, Rudy Kelly, Dan Mitchum, Doug Reynolds, Jeffrey Weeks, Victor Wong.

The renewal process is coming along. The snail mail notices have gone out to those who do not have email and we are still getting responses. If you are still having trouble renewing online, remember that you can also send your dues in by mail.

PLA

**Attn: Membership Secretary
PO Box 515
Sunol, Ca 94586-0515**

As always you can contact me at membership@ncry.org or by phone 510-508-0503.

I have found a few issues with Club Express that we need to address after TOL. The biggest issue is that they do not state that we are the Pacific Locomotive Association. All of their communications refer to us as Niles Canyon Railway.

I am still getting emails and phone calls from Life Members asking about the renewal notice. Club Express sends out automatic renewals to everyone including Life Member. This has good and bad features. Bad is that you get a notice saying you are expiring. The good is that we get to hear from you and know that you are still with us.

I have gone in and updated the renewal date to next year on your anniversary date. I may have missed a few so bear with me on this.

As we continue into next year, I hope to have most if not all the issues resolved with Club Express. Unfortunately, some of them just can't be changed because of the way their system is set up.

Switching gears now. I would like to thank everyone who stepped up to help out with this year's Train of Lights. It was great to see so many old faces come back out to help along with many new ones who were first time volunteers. From what I observed it seems that everyone had a great time renewing old friendships and making new ones.

The TOL had its moments this year. The biggest one on my plate was when I got the call saying that the big generator had a water pump leak and had to be removed from service. Not as bad as it sounds. We have a back up generator under the SP2101 that can carry the load. But that meant that we didn't have another back up generator. I would like to thank Linda Stanley for taking the lead on the repairs and tracking down the necessary parts to repair the Generac unit. We are still waiting on their arrival. The second biggest problem was a mix up on the Santa sched-

ule when one didn't show up. At the last minute one of our new members who had a Santa suit in his car stepped up and saved the day. This is not the first time this has happened. I used to always carry my Santa suit in the truck just in case and on a few occasions had to step up. Overall, the season went very well, at least up to now as we still have 5 more operation nights left as I write this article.

Rich Alexander



Station Agent

Donna Alexander

Well, as I write this we are one hand away from the end of the Train of Lights! Only five more days, one hand, and it's over for another year. And as you read this we will be done for this year. What a fantastic season it has been!

I want to thank everyone who volunteered this season. It was amazing that we had so many people sign up, seasoned (I won't say old) and newbies. Everyone worked together on the big return of the Train of Lights this year, and it showed. I didn't have to send out many emails asking for help, and people went online on their own and saw an empty spot and signed up! It was such a happy time for our volunteers and our passengers. I heard from so many of our passengers as they picked up their tickets at both Niles and Sunol that they are so happy to have us back and to be able to ride with us again. And after their ride they stopped in the Sunol Depot gift shop to tell me in person, or in emails, how great the train ride was, how beautiful it looked, how happy they are to be able to ride our trains again, that everyone was so nice and helpful during their ride, and to thank all of the volunteers for doing what we do. I even tried to get some to volunteer next year, with positive replies, so we'll see what happens.

Again, thank you, thank you, thank you for your efforts to put on a terrific Train of Lights, and what a way to end 2021!!

donna alexander

Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

Happy New Year!

Our TOL trains are running as scheduled, and from my direct experience being on a few, everyone is having a great time, volunteers and riders alike. As a reward, our ticket seller is sending us funds from ticket sales after each day of operations. Therefore our cash position is good and growing, to provide funds for our operations and, in particular, restoration and protection projects, for the next year and longer.

On the other side of the ledger, it is costly to run these long trains day after day, providing support and amenities for up to 400 persons per train. Fuel, sanitary services, train cleaning, food and gift shop inventory, extra lighting, administrative services - all of these we cover with the revenues.

It also takes huge volunteer resources which no revenues can cover. Please help out, even one or two shifts - if you spread out the load, the work is lighter for all, right? I'm sure your mother told you that at some time.

The audit of PLA financial processes and records is complete. It remains for the Board to digest the results, and for us to file the resulting information returns with the IRS and the state of California. As busy as all our volunteers

are with TOL, we may not complete the audit review until the January Board meeting. No problem, as the deadline for filing information returns is May 15.

On board the TOL, our Gift Shop is a star - it is bustling every night with excited kids and adults alike. We (the Board, and involved volunteers) want to explore options to get this car into our regular and special run consists. It will add measurably to our funds for important projects.

Likewise, our commissary cars are putting out the most delicious hot chocolate (not too hot, just the right temperature) and cookies. Here we need to consider raising our blanket \$1 price, perhaps to \$2? We want to stick with round numbers easy to add in our heads; but costs have risen over the past many years and we need to take

those increases into consideration. Again, we as an organization will take that up next year.

Most of our members are currently renewing their memberships. At the same time many are making donations to their favorite projects. For November these included the General Fund for \$9,800; SP1744 and Steam Operations for \$1,790; SP9010 for \$1,810; a New Loco Shop for \$100; and In-kind Contributions of over \$2,300. Thank you all for supporting of these projects.

That's it for now. I'm on train crew this afternoon, have to leave for Brightside in a few minutes. We only have 5 days of TOL to go. It looks as if they may be wet, but will still be fun for us, and much appreciated by our paying guests.

Pat Stratton

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



Inside decorations on the TOL.

Photo by Don Buchholz

Cleaning Up The Canyon - A Coordinated Effort

As Emergency Coordinator for the Niles Canyon Railway, I am responsible to assure that we have current information and good relations with emergency service providers with jurisdiction along our ROW in Niles Canyon, Alameda County Sheriff's Department, Cal Fire, and CHP, plus Fremont Fire and Police in the western part of our railroad. I assumed this position in 2009 when most of our locomotive horns were stolen from our engines at Brightside.

When I recently learned we had a new Alameda County Sheriff's Sergeant in charge of the Niles Canyon Area, I immediately set up a meeting to introduce him to our railroad and General Manager & President. A very productive meeting resulted and when we mentioned concern about the transient camps along our ROW, he mentioned that the San Francisco PUC also had concerns about camps set up on their property in the former Joyland Park area bordered by our ROW and Alameda Creek between Farwell and Dresser Bridges. Sgt. Petrini immediately expressed interest in helping PLA and The Water District identify the trespassers settled along our ROW, and having them removed.

As a result of a few Zoom calls between PLA, Alameda County Sheriff's

Office, and SF PUC, it was decided to survey the camps, post eviction signs, then a few days later, return to deal with lingering inhabitants and begin to



Photo by Jim Evans
ACS Deputies & SF PUC Staff riding on M-200 to survey camps along our ROW.

clean up the areas.

Once the survey of the transient camps was completed it was clear that a lot of material had accumulated over time and removal was going present some challenges. A coordinated plan was developed and SF PUC staff was made available to help PLA with the clean up and Alameda County Sheriff deputies were available to deal with lin-



Photo by Jim Evans
Doug Vanderlee loading junk into the lift box with SF PUC workers bringing more material in the background.



Photo by Jim Evans
Bob Pratt, Henry Baum, and Mark Whitman and deputy survey the situation.

gering trespassers.

Getting the vast amount of accumulated junk from the large camp located along Alameda Creek between the bridges presented a challenge since the camp was located in a large area below our ROW and there was no easy way to move the material up to our track for transport out by rail. Nor was there road access to this area.

Our General Manager Steve Barkkarie accessed the situation and developed a good solution which involved bringing our Burro Crane to the site pulling the heavy hauler car constructed by Doug Vanderlee. A lift box modified by Steve Barkkarie was lifted from the hauler by the crane down to the camp area and easily loaded by PLA volunteers and SF PUC workers. Once the box was loaded, it was craned back onto the heavy hauler and run back to Farwell where the junk was transferred into a SF PUC trailer for shipment to the dump.

Continued removal of junk from these camps along our ROW will be an ongoing effort but we got a good start and developed efficient methods on Thursday, December 16th.

PLA member participants in this project were: Steve Barkkarie, Doug Vanderlee, Mark Whitman, Henry Baum, Gerry Feeney, Kurt Olsen, and Bob Pratt.

Jim Evans



Photo by Jim Evans
PLA President Henry Baum with ACS Deputies surveying transient camp and posting eviction signs. Notice pile of junk in the background clearly visible from our passing trains.

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Time Sensitive Material



Photo from old Club Car

Very early operation Sunol. We have come a long way since then.