



# THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 641

Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

[www.ncry.org](http://www.ncry.org)

January 2017

## The historic spur off the mainline in Verona



Photo by Doug Vanderlee

The switch at Verona.

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*Paul Veltman*

The switch at Verona is now in place! We will update the Valley Division map to reflect this new change. Jose and the gang from H & H started on December 13 and completed December 15. The historic spur off the mainline accommodated William and Phoebe Hearst guest's private rail cars for Verona Station. The switch is a No.10 with 136 lbs rail. The spur will help tremendously with building East to switch MOW equipment around and NOT have to cross Pleasanton-Sunol Road (NO gates yet) and back a mile to Hearst Switch. MOW will also start keeping some equipment and

supplies on the spur once the spur is extended. That will make Verona our Saturday starting point to cut down on the commute time (1 hour each way) to Brightside.

I hope the Right-of-Way (R.O.W.) from Sunol to end of track East, once crossing gates are installed, can run the M200 for paying passengers for a new adventure out on NCRY to keep public enthusiasm up and 'spur' more excitement to get to Pleasanton (donations and volunteers).

**Doug Vanderlee**

(See more photos on Page 14)

**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.

# ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

January 7	1st Saturday	East Track Building, 8 a.m (Brightside Yard)
January 14	2nd Saturday	Board of Directors Meeting, 3 p.m. (Sunol Depot)
January 20	3rd Friday	General Meeting 7:30 Op.m. (Sunol Glen School)
January 28	4th Saturday	Brush & Tree Trimming 8 a.m. (Brightside)
February 4	1st Saturday	East Track Building, 8 a.m (Brightside Yard)
February 11	2nd Saturday	Board of Directors Meeting, 3 p.m. (Sunol Depot)

All General Meetings take place at the Sunol Glen School in Sunol, meetings are held in January, March, May, June, July, and October, but can be subject to cancellation.

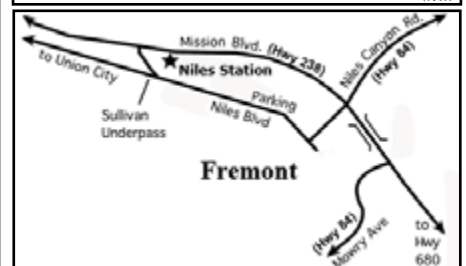
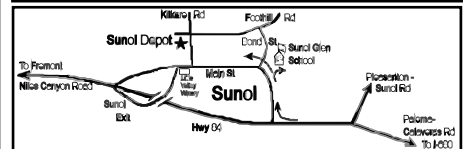
Every Wednesday and Saturday is a WORK DAY at the Brightside Yard

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

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## The Club Car

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 MS Word™ text format.

Send e-mail to:  
**clubcar@ncry.org**

Digital photos may also be submitted on digital media or by e-mail. Electronic images should be saved as PC format .jpg files with minimal compression (i.e., average to excellent quality). A text file with the photo number, description of photo and identifying the people in them is required.

To send documents, articles or photos, by snail mail, contact the editor at (510) 431-3401 for mailing instructions.

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.

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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, March, May, June, July, and October, beginning at 7:30 p.m. 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 Association of Tourist Railroads and Railway Museums. (ATRRM)



## President's Report

Another year begins. And another Train of Lights season ends.

TOL was very successful this year. And like always, this year was better than ever. I am always amazed at what we can accomplish. And I realize more than ever that it's the volunteer effort that makes it happen. While we always seem to pull it off, I know it is not easy to get enough people to volunteer. I know that the call for volunteers is constant and becomes especially onerous for those who are already volunteering too much. But bless their hearts, for they are the ones who make the TOL successful.

There are volunteers who are out there almost every night for TOL. (Rich and Donna Alexander, Kent and Gail Hedberg, Bob Bradley, Bob Bailey, Steve Jones and Linda Stanley, and I'm sure at least a half dozen more). Some volunteer in the same job, others bounce around and fill in where needed. Some do it because they want the organization to succeed. Others do it because it makes them feel good. Some do it because they enjoy the feeling of family that exists. Some do it because they feel obligated. It really doesn't matter knowing why you do it. It is important though, that you know why you do it.

Over the years, I have done many of the jobs on TOL. Brakeman, Conductor, Fireman, Engineer, Parking, even Santa. So I understand the operations, and I know they are constantly evolving. When I started with TOL we didn't have first class cars or caboose charters, we didn't even have commissary on the trains. This year, we even have a mini-gift shop on the train. These additions have truly made the TOL better than it ever was. And this year, the passengers have really made these extras financially successful.

This year, I looked at the volunteer sign-up sheet and saw there was a need for electricians on the train. And while helping decorating the train the last couple of years, I did hear a lot about the entire electrical system, and



*Photo by Dan Sarka*

### **Santa and Henry.**

how it needs to be improved, and how sketchy it sometimes is.

And it doesn't matter how many strings of blinking lights you hang on a quarter mile of train, if we can't provide power, we have a Train of Darks.

While some of you may know I have made my career as a Mechanical Engineer in the Telecommunications Industry for the last 40+ years, few know that I also have a degree in Electrical Engineering. I run into a lot of DC power measured in watts in my line of work, but the principles are pretty much the same for the AC power measured in kilowatts that we need for the TOL. So I signed up, and was trained to do what needed to be done by Rich Alexander.

The job basically entails turning everything on at the start of a TOL day, and then turning it off at the end. Hopefully, nothing else is needed. We are not going to be able to do much to replace a burned out string of lights while the train is running, but if something goes wrong, the problem needs to be identified and corrected. So far, nothing like that has happened. Knock on wood.

If nothing is going wrong, then it affords the Electrician time to walk through the train and watch what is going on. It's always fascinating to walk through the train and talk to the passengers, and especially to be able to answer questions about the NCRY and the PLA. I even was mistaken by some little ones who thought I was

Santa sneaking around incognito. (This happened more than once, must be the beard (or the 'bowl of jelly gut')).

It also gave me a great chance to observe our volunteers at work. I was greatly impressed by the highest levels of effort exhibited by the folks working the train. Nowhere was that hustle more evident than in the snack bar cars. Just moving hot cocoa from the All Day Lunch to the Generator Car was something I was floored by. And when the demand peaked and the cocoa supplies began lagging, the staff was able to keep the passengers content until more arrived.

It's more than a serving job; it's a public relations job. Whether in the snack bars or the first class cars, it's all about keeping the passengers glad they came.

As a mechanical engineer, I know that we can come up with a less labor intensive means of moving hot cocoa from car to car. And perhaps a little Willy Wonka whimsy could be brought into it at the same time. I have already spent time thinking about this, but probably don't have the time to make it real. So for any budding Rube Goldbergs, plus any of my fellow engineers among the membership who would like to help me solve this problem, just give me a call.

As always, if you would like to discuss any topic in further detail, please contact me by phone at 925.447.7358 or by email at [president@ncry.org](mailto:president@ncry.org)

Respectfully submitted

**Henry Baum**

## NILES CANYON RAILWAY

# Along the Right of Way

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

WOW! The big bad number one Christmas train in the country, the Train of Lights, is out and running and is being received well by our passengers. The train is sold out and people line up for tickets on nights of the train. Of course, we are like any reserved activity, we have no shows. The people that show up will get a ticket to ride the train with no seat guarantee. Heck, who sits on this train anyway, that is if you are a true TOL rider. The train is doing very well in the Commissary Dept. Bob states that the snack bar is doing better this year than ever before. This must mean that they don't eat before they ride, or they love the Hot Chocolate, Hot Cider and Chocolate chip and Oatmeal cookies. Not the best diet, but it is Christmas and it is time to have fun and forget. This train will do this to you if you get involved in it. You can't help not to get the Christmas spirit. I hope our passengers enjoy this train and want to pass this on to their friends for next year. The train for 2017 will have some new features that this train did not have. Dr. Christmas wishes all a great Holiday season and thanks for enjoying and being part of this train. Our passengers also appreciate the efforts that all of our members put into this train to make it a success. Thank you for all your efforts and let me speak for all that were involved in setting this train up and making it work, great job and have a great New Year. Let's do it again next year. Before we leave the TOL, we had a Christmas tree donated to us by the Cliff Bar Co. that makes the Clif energy bars. The Clif Bar Co. had a Christmas tree decorating contest. The decorated Christmas tree that you saw in the Commissary Car was the winner of the contest. Also there was a cash prize that went with winning. It has been told that the cash prize will be donated to the PLA. We really like to thank the Clif Bar Co. for the prize-winning Christmas tree, it has had good

comments. The problem is, if it is a real tree, well it is a one season stand. If it is artificial, it will be back, same place same car. If it needs to be replaced we will keep the decorations for a new artificial tree. Maybe we could have the same department from the Cliff Bar Co. to do a new one if need be.

This year TOL has been a busy year for Jim Green. We first had a buffer problem on the 315 that was causing problem against the Diner. Wow! Walking over a wall for our passengers was just great, the Diner is stronger than 315's buffer which forces the plate straight up. Jim found the problem and had to cut and get hump out of buffer. This is not an easy task. But job got done and car is running fine now. NOW WHAT? You have a (7) pound air leak developed on BONES open car? I will get on it. Car cut out of train and repaired the next day. YOU ARE KIDDING! The BONES did what? Peeled an axle wheel brass. The car was cut out of train. Jim again was called to fix problem. Problem corrected, car back in train and running fine. Yes, I am still on property. Really, the ABD on Caboose 061 has taken a problem with initial airbrake test. The clock is running. After crew did several tests, they determined it was the control valve. Great! Is Jim Green still here? Go get him. JIM arrives to 061 and yes determines it is the SERVICE PORTION of Control valve that failed. He goes gets a new one with help of crew. Replaced and air tested. Get the train out of here. On time? Yes! For the TOL season, I have Jim Green phone number is next to the 911 number. He is their equal for our TOL train.

Howard Wise is moving forward with the KM 9010. What are those new shiny brass tubs coming from the injectors placed in the engine? The next step was to get the old diesel out of the tank so it can get cleaned out for the first time in many years. Question? What was the price of diesel in 1983?



*Photo by Dexter Day*

**Jim Green correcting error found in buffer plate bonus 315.**

At least that is when we think the engine was last fueled. I have to get my check list out on all that is being done to this engine. All I can say, 2017 will be a very interesting year for this engine. What is taking place now and in the near future holds great interest here at NCRY but world interest. It is coming; someday you will be hearing noise coming from the car barn area. It won't be a recording. It will be a roar that will be heard around the world. Ok, I will get off my excitement. But it will draw great interest from Germany, Brazil, England and SEATTLE (USA) and other countries. The KM 9010 engine starting will be the restoration feat of the year in my book. Too bad we all can't vote on this matter. This crew has done wonders from bringing what all thought was



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

good only for scrap.

So the fix is in. It is way beyond chipping paint and prepping for paint. Sometime in the near future, they are going for a launch. Meanwhile work continues on the cooling section which has been removed from the engine. Stay tuned.

The Verona East project is well under way. It is now a serious push east. An almost new relay 136 pound rail switch was just installed to complete the set out track at Verona by H & H. Doug Vanderlee will have an article on this switch, but I am looking east of switch. Steve Barkkarie will be shaking ballast until the cows decide to come home. Just a saying. Give you an example. The switch by itself will be using 160 tons of ballast or seven truckloads of ballast at \$750.00 per truck. Ouch! See picture, not the switch but Eastward push. Steve's GRADALL along with our backhoe will be called into service to accomplish ballast and leveling. So if you are those asking, when are we going to build east? Well we are and that switch is an example of the money and effort to get the track to the point where it is now. When we get this portion to a class two status, all will have an opportunity to ride across the new track to the East. The Crossing gates are in County hands for review and once all approved, they will be installed. Verona will be back!

Have you seen our new crowd control maze gates at Sunol? Wow! Don't be late to catching the train and enter this maze. If it is foggy, your whole life could pass in front of you. Half way through, make sure you make contact with someone that you are coming the best you can. Disneyland has nothing on Sunol. Maybe we can hold annual crowd control races on the 4th of July. Oxygen provided at finish line. But it works! That is why we put it in. Keep the TOL riders off the platform while train is arriving into Sunol. But this maze is

cool looking, and it works. Passengers line up and await the arrival of the TOL.

Carlo and Warren continue to work on the storage car for the Diner. The bottom trim was done and even now along with the grab irons are reinstalled. Over all, the car looks good. The car will be taken around the wye shortly so that the windows on the other side can be next to the road so they can be sealed and worked on. They are shot as they sit. This car will be done soon and interior change can take place easier for the Diner.

For those new members that want to become part of our operation department and on train crew, keep this in mind. There will be a Brakeman class on February 25 & 26. Orientation at 0900 in Blake's Palace for equipment orientation and 10:00 AM at White House for Class room studies. Remember, this will be a two-day class. Plan on it!

This is the Big Event of the year. The one that is mandatory for all operating crews. That means, you must be at one of the recertification classes. These classes will be held in March 11 & 18th. The class will be held from 0900 AM to 1:00 PM at the White House. Pat Warren will take reservations like in the past. Hope you can make it. FYI. Make up classes are available if need be. Reservation will be needed also for these classes.

The TOL is coming to completion for 2016. It is time for all of us to think about on how we will be able to help in taking down the decorations off this big train. The train made the mark, Commissary did great, members got involved in making this train work, now, it is time for all of us to chip in and help in retiring this train for 2016. The train did well; Doug Debs will not have to apply for food stamps for next year. FYI, our organization eats very well, thanks to Doug Debs. We all like our Saturday lunches. It does take time to



Photo by Dexter Day

**Carlo and Warren push forward with this quick change car for dinner.**

feed you. Thank you Doug Debs and Commissary. Great effort and we all appreciate it.

Well that is it for this month. Hope you all had a chance to work or at least be involved in the enjoyment of the Train of Lights. But the train is behind us, we need help in the knock down and put away. Join in the fun if you can. Wed and Thurs at Brightside for the exterior group. FYI, the exterior group goes out to eat.

For the interior team, we work on Wednesday and Saturday and we work straight through but eat lunch together in the ADL or any car on train we want. Some go out with exterior group. But most interior group stays on board train. I hope all have a great new year and I am sure we will have a very good year on the NCRY. I hope to see you along the right of way.

**Dexter D. Day**

## NILES CANYON RAILWAY

### Crowd control barriers at Sunol Station



*Photos by Rich Alexander*

Above, the new crowd control barriers set up at Sunol.

Right, storage racks for stacking the barriers when not in use.



## WANT TO VOLUNTEER? START HERE!

### VOLUNTEER HELP IS ALWAYS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED

**BRUSH CUTTING** - Clearing the RoW of bushes and trees - Steve Jones - [fcocompost@aol.com](mailto:fcocompost@aol.com)  
**CAR DEPARTMENT** - Maintenance and repair - Tom Crawford - [tom@thecrawfordfamily.net](mailto:tom@thecrawfordfamily.net)  
**COMMISSARY** - Food Service on the trains - Bob Bradley - [ncry.commissary@yahoo.com](mailto:ncry.commissary@yahoo.com)  
**GIFT SHOP** - Work in the Sunol Gift Shop - Gail Hedberg - [giftshop@ncry.org](mailto:giftshop@ncry.org)  
**MOW CREW - (WEDNESDAY)** - Work on track repair, etc. - Joe Peterson - [wedmow@ncry.org](mailto:wedmow@ncry.org)  
**MOW CREW - (SATURDAY)** - Work on track repair, etc. - Michael Strider - [michael.strider@hdrinc.com](mailto:michael.strider@hdrinc.com)  
**SIGNALS** - Install / Maintain signal systems - Curt Hoppins - [curt@ncrysignal.com](mailto:curt@ncrysignal.com)  
**STATION - (NILES)** - Work parking, ticket sales, set-up, etc. - John Fenstermacher - [johnnsheerif@aol.com](mailto:johnnsheerif@aol.com)  
**STATION - (SUNOL)** - Work parking, ticket sales, set-up, etc. - Donna Alexander - [station-agent@ncry.org](mailto:station-agent@ncry.org)



## Membership Report

The off season is on us. People who get nothing from their association but a chance to ride the train are out of luck for a couple of months, but not you! Everything else we do is still going on. And, if you act fast enough, you can even still get in on the Train of Lights. What goes up must come down, and that applies to Christmas decorations, too. For this and all the opportunities that await you, look through this issue of the Club Car and also go to [www.ncry.org](http://www.ncry.org) and click on Volunteer.

Our 28 new members who can do that this month are Robert McGeary, Margaret Hennigar, new family members Sandra, Carly, and Brian Jernigan, new family member Dianna Gertsch, the family of Derick and Sue

Sturke, the family of Lily, Katie, and Calvin Mei, the family of Andrea, Ken, James, and Joseph Balderrama, the family of Mark and Terry Tarte, and our largest yet family of Aldouscon, Maricel, Aldric, Victoria, Yana, and Zasha De Jesus, Tessie De Guzman, Marites, Nicole, and Patrick Dioquino, and Thelma Nejal.

Hopefully, those new members all have their membership cards by the time you read this. For the rest of you, if your renewal date falls near the end of the year, you will find yourself again in the log jam of year end renewals. 'Tis the season for taller piles of paper, dated and queued bundles of incoming mail, and hundreds of membership cards to be printed and mailed, each one individually specified to a computer that usually works, eventually. If you don't have your new card yet, do not worry. Just keep checking the date on your mailing label. Most of you will not see it changed on this issue, but if you paid your dues before the end of the year, that will probably be reflected on the next. Then you will know that you will have your new membership card soon, if you don't already.

That card will get you free train rides, but not until the trains are running again anyway. In the meantime, you won't have to show it for any of the other things you can do as a member of PLA. Find the activity that is most rewarding for you and the people you most want to do it with. You don't have to be just a passenger anymore. Get what you paid for. Be a part of the action.

And now, if you will excuse me, I have an opportunity to get back to, myself, here.

**Peter Midnight**

## Treasurer's Report

**Paul Veltman, Treasurer**

**November 2016**

In November, we received \$9,043.32 in donations. And we thank you.

\$277 was received for Ballast, \$52 for the Pleasanton Extension, \$52 for the combine, \$28 for the dining car, \$5,637 for the Emery Rail Heritage matching grant, \$1,450 for the General Fund, \$865.32 for the SP 9010, \$425 for the SP 2467 and \$157 for the Steam Department.

Donors were: Anonymous, George Aplington, Ken Asmus, David Barnhardt, Darrell Basore, Henry Bender, Wes Brubacher, Don Buchholz, Steven Buchner, John Bush, David Butts, Bambi Cask, Johnny Chao, Earl Cherne, Vivek Chokhani, Phil Copple, Robin Costa, Ray Crist, Doug Debs, Clement Dickey, Tom Eikrenkotter, Excel Graphics, Michael Flaherty, Glenn Fountain, Zona Fowler, Andrew Goodson, Peter Groom, Michael Hamer, Howard Harte, Kent and Gail Hedberg, Jerry Higgins, Ronald Hook, John Houghton, Michael Jacobsen, Charles Jellison, Harry Jenkins, Brad Jones, Craig Kauffman, Dave and Paula Lion, Al McCracken, Nancy McLean, Lily Mei, Craig Miller, George Moore, Bob Pratt, Glenn Riddervold, Manuel Silva, David Simmons, Steve Slabach, Mike Snyder, Linda Stanley, David Sylva, Susan Toussaint, James Tyler, Steve Van Meter, Walter Vielbaum, Jon Williamson, Barry Wilson, Randall Young, John Zielinski, Jean-Pol Zundel.

### **BRAKEMEN**

### **TRAINING CLASS**

**February 25 & 26 2017**

**Brightside**

**Report to yard office at 0900 AM**

**For orientation of equipment**

**Class room studies**

**will start at 1015 AM.**

**Class will go until 5:00 PM.**

**Those that apply should be able to climb up onto equipment and bend down to connect air hoses.**

**Those that are interested, contact**

**Crew dispatch at:**

**[traincrews@comcast.net](mailto:traincrews@comcast.net)**

**Give your name, phone number, and email.**

## **E-COUPLING INFORMATION**

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

**E-Mail:** [pla@ncry.info](mailto:pla@ncry.info)

**Twitter:** @toots4ncry

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

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



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## 2016 Train of Lights





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## 2016 Train of Lights





## A quiet milestone for SP 9010

Howard Wise and his crew of PLA Volunteers have been steadily preparing the long-silenced power train of our Krauss-Maffei diesel-hydraulic, getting it ready to run under its own power.

Such a task was considered impossible for decades, but Howard, Dennis Mann, Gerry Feeney, Rich Anderson, Bill Stimmerman and other dedicated PLA members have been taking a more optimistic approach since this one-of-a-kind locomotive first rolled into Brightside Yard in 2008. The international coalition of individuals and groups eager to assist has been amazing and unprecedented.

For the last few months, things have seemed somewhat low-key in the Car Shop around SP 9010. After all, it's pretty hard to top the spectacle enjoyed last May, when the unit was lifted high off the ground by two 375-ton cranes so that a salvaged and reconditioned rear power truck could be installed. That truck, with a full set of axle gearboxes and driveshafts, would allow the KM's rear Voith transmission to apply power to the rails for the first time in over four and a half decades.

But a key element remained unattached: the No. 1 Cardan drive shaft between motor and transmission, built new to original KM plans and supplied at cost to PLA by Germany's The Welte Group.

During the week of December 19, 2016 the task was completed. The 975-pound driveshaft was carefully set into place by Howard, assisted ably by Dennis Mann and Rich Anderson. Bolts were hand-tightened, then brought to correct torque and locked to factory specs by Howard. This connection means that the Brown-Boveri BBC Dynastarter, which sits atop the rear Voith transmission, can now provide starting torque to SP 9010's rear 2000 HP Maybach Mercedes-Benz MD 870/1 V-16 turbomotor.

Quiet but constant work by Howard and crew have almost readied that dormant motor for a test spin, which Howard hopes to do sometime after the beginning of the new year. He's been working on the fuel system, and has installed sixteen freshly-rebuilt Unit Fuel Injectors, supplied by our friends at the Diesel Traction Group in the UK. Our fellow restorer/operators in the UK regularly run and maintain similar Maybach motors in excursion service very much like we plan for SP 9010, and their experienced help has been invaluable in reviving this complex and highly sophisticated but well-built motor. If they can do it, we can do it!

The Maybach has already been inspected, lubricated, and hand-turned to check for mechanical issues. The cooling passages have been filled with water and tested for leaks. Both turbochargers spin freely, and this May Howard and crew peeked inside the bottom end of the crankcase for the first time: the roller bearing crankshaft and connecting rods look brand-new. Once Howard has a



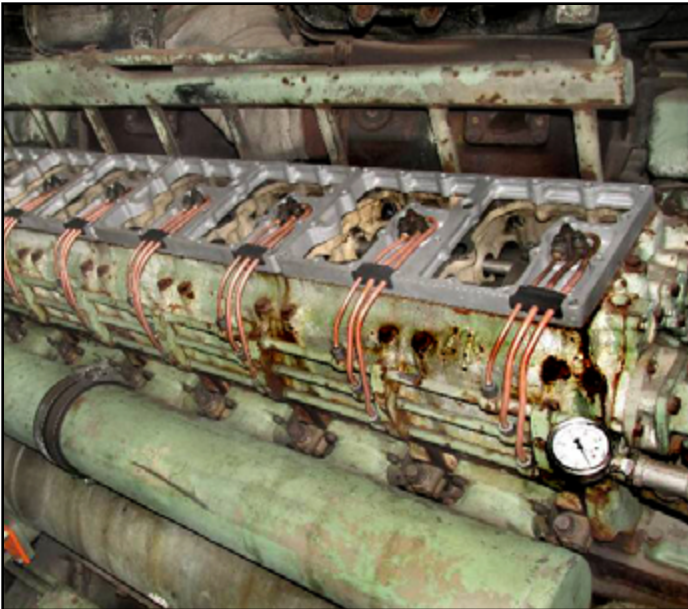
Dennis Mann carefully brings home the bolts securing SP 9010's new Cardan main shaft to its rear Maybach's resilient motor coupling. The coupling was remanufactured to original specifications by Maybach's successor, MTU Friedrichshafen.



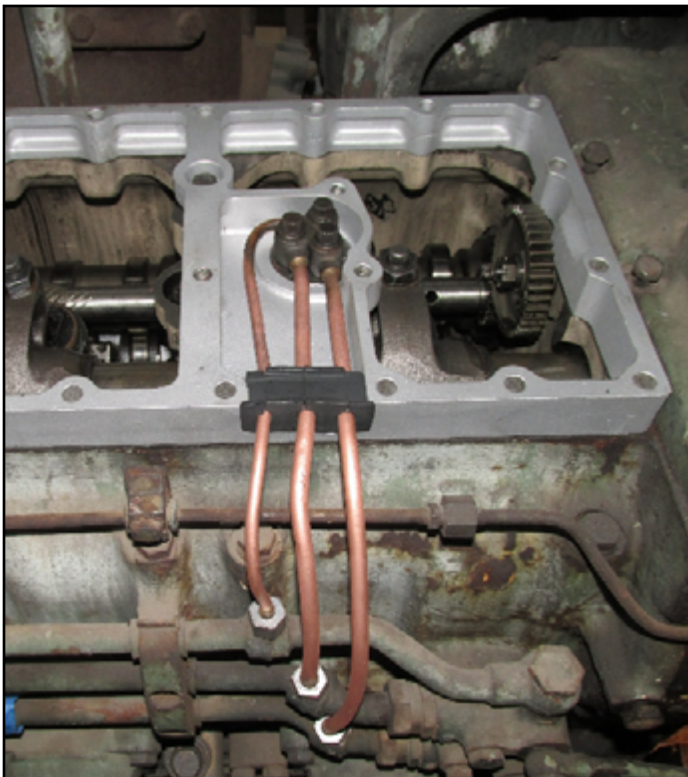
Rich Anderson fastens the new Cardan shaft to SP 9010's rear Voith L 830 rU three-speed turbo transmission. Besides completing the drive train, this connection will allow the Dynastarter to turn over the Maybach motor for starting.



## A quiet milestone for SP 9010



Howard Wise has systematically inspected, cleared, and/or renewed the fuel lines to each of the Maybach's sixteen cylinders. Motor No. 91168 was originally installed in SP 9010's sister unit 9009, and was set into place in Sacramento in 1966 during a major rebuilding.



Each injector is also its own fuel pump, and must be precisely timed. Howard devised a method using a video camera to allow him to check timing as the crankshaft was hand-rotated. More info can be found at: <http://sp9010.ncry.org/mechanical4.html>

chance to spin the motor with compression relieved, he'll know more about its general readiness for a test-firing. Should all go well, the Maybach could soon enjoy a smoky awakening. There will be more assessment and certainly more work, and even if the motor is able to be started, there's still more top end and cooling system work to be done. But to be on the cusp of a running Krauss-Maffei ML 4000 C'C' in the year 2017 is a remarkable achievement by the PLA and Howard's team. We're not quite ready to crack the Bavarian Schnapps yet, but we're closer now than ever before, and closer than most anyone ever thought possible. We look forward to more reports from Howard's team during the coming year — and perhaps to a little bit of imported diesel exhaust in the Canyon!

Bob Zenk

### Mid Week Winter Charters

Last Summer we had some requests for business charters where our railroad was to be used as a venue for groups to escape from the office and meet in a unique setting - on our train.

Since our railroad is generally free of traffic and weekday crews seem to be readily available, I'm going to test the potential for small midweek charters from the end of January to the beginning of April with a special notation on our public PLA web page.

If you know of any groups that might want to charter a small train during the week on the Niles Canyon Railway please put them in contact with me.

A two car charter with less than 100 people goes for \$1000 while groups over 100 people get the entire train for up to 220 people for \$1800.

We try to run the charters out of Niles and one gets the train for two hours.

Jim Evans, NCRy Charter Agent

## PLA has record sell out for the Train of Lights

What a season!! I think we had a record sell out this year for our Train of Lights tickets in October, and had many riders who were new to our operations, thanks to social media. We knew well before our Train of Lights season what our 2017 schedule would be, so we printed the schedule along with flyers for our Wine Tasting Specials and Beer on the Rails, and included all in the envelopes with our passengers' tickets. Yes, we streamlined the ticket pick up process by printing envelopes for all of our passengers with their name, date and time of ride, and how many tickets they purchased. Rarely did we have a line at either of our ticket windows this year. Ask their name, look up their envelope, and give it to them....easy peasy!!

Because we've been handing out the 2017 schedules, we already have some tickets sold for our Valentine Wine Tasting Special, and people are asking about the wine and beer events, and someone sent an email asking how she can purchase Mother's Day Tea tickets! We're ahead of the game for 2017! Bob is in a rush to get all tickets online as soon as possible, and if these inquiries are any indication of passenger interest, we should have a

good year for our other events.

So many Train of Lights passengers said they didn't know we did anything besides Train of Lights! We also gave away many Membership Applications, so maybe we'll have some new volunteers next year.

I'd like to give a great big thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Train of Lights the event that it was. Please stand up and take a bow! Without everyone taking a job we couldn't have done it, so no matter if you worked one day or all 24 days,

thank you very much. Your help was greatly appreciated!!

Please make notes as to what worked/ what didn't, good/bad, yes/no, need/ don't need, and come to our wrap-up meeting on Saturday, February 4th at 10:00 a.m. at the Whitehouse in Brightside. We will have a 2017 Train of Lights planning meeting later in the year, this will just be a pro and con meeting for Train of Lights 2016.

Thanks again for your help, and Happy New Year,

**donna**

## Clif Bar Christmas tree

A few weeks ago I received a phone call from Jane Moore, the executive assistant at Clif Bar and Company in Emeryville. They had a Food Supply Holiday Challenge within their departments and it was a contest for decorating trees and then donating them to non-profit organizations. One team said they were going with a train theme. "In keeping of the spirit of getting our finished goods from co-packer to distribution, we are thinking of train theme. We are challenged with moving 500 loads over the rail this year, so why not choose a rail theme!!"

At the end of the contest, they contacted us to ask if we would like their train decorated tree. The team leader and his assistant delivered it to Brightside, and Rich and I met John and Casey, happily received the tree, and showed them our decorated train. We walked through the entire train, and they were very impressed, and at the end of the visit I invited them to ride with us during the season. Clif the tree now takes up residence in the snack bar/ generator/gift shop car where our palm tree used to stand. The tree topper is an engineer hat that was made by John's wife, and tracks are used for garland. The decorations are train cars of various sizes, railroad signs, and Clif Bar decorations. We also received a



tree skirt and a little foam train to add under the tree.

Another donation we received was from Drazil, an herbal tea infused with fruit juices for the children on our trains. If companies contact us, we will gladly accept whatever they want to donate.

**donna alexander**

**TRAIN AND  
ENGINMEN  
RECERTIFICATION  
CLASS  
MARCH 11 & 18 2017  
Report to the White House  
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
Bring with you  
Rule Book  
Time Table  
Tests will be given  
Reserve your spot at  
[traincrews@comcast.net](mailto:traincrews@comcast.net)**



## The Benefits of Volunteering and keeping the PLA running

Every month, on the Club Car back page, you will find a list of folks who volunteered their time in some fashion for the railroad. The names in bold print are folks who volunteered for their first time that month. All of our volunteers should be (and are) appreciated, and our newest volunteers should be applauded for making the time to come help us.

Not all PLA members joined the organization to become volunteers. I didn't. I had many questions about the rolling stock, and about training for various tasks. I started out thinking that I'd contribute time by making web pages to document things. Until one day, Dexter Day saw me taking photos at a PLA lunch, and said that I should be out at Devil's Curve (the "Shoo Fly" area East of Bond Street crossing in Sunol) where the track gang was installing our first concrete ties and super-elevating the curve. I walked the track until I found them, and I took video and photos until I'd captured it all. But I was in awe of the progress that a small group had made in the hour I had been there. That's when Steve Jones asked if I wanted to give it a try. He and Gerry DeWees each let me take a turn, putting tension on a spring clip, or swinging the small sledge hammer to seat the clip. Henry Baum worked a "track jack" while I learned to use a Spike Maul to shove ballast rock under the newly-raised ties. At every step, they explained how to do these tasks, safely, before I ever had the tool in my hand. That day, I became part of Maintenance of Way. And there was no better feeling than riding the train over a section of track that we had rehabilitated, knowing that I had helped make that ride so smooth.

Volunteering is all about doing a job safely. From cooking cocoa over a gas flame, to building track, to working on a locomotive for regular maintenance, to removing decades of paint from a coach in order to make repairs and then put on a fresh coat properly, all of these tasks start with a safety briefing

to remind us of the risks, and what to do if we have a problem. And all of that focus on safety reduces the chances of problems doing the tasks. Volunteers of all abilities are welcome, and we don't want folks to work beyond their abilities. You don't have to "keep up" with folks who have been doing this for years. Gradually your endurance will improve, as you learn and practice.

Volunteering is about learning new things. Most of our volunteers didn't work for a railroad in a past life. They are here, doing the jobs because they wanted to do them. You don't need to be as strong as John Henry (the Steel Drivin' Man) in order to help build the track. If you can carry a couple tie plates from a work train to where they need to be placed, and then go get a couple more, you can help us lay track to Pleasanton! You don't need to know how, because you can LEARN how to do these things. The folks doing the work are enthusiastic about it, and they've learned a lot along the way. By helping, and talking as you work, you can learn a LOT as you are getting useful things done!

You can volunteer in a group, or you can work alone. Most tasks can be done at the railroad, with a small group, because many hands make light work, but also many heads can watch out for each other, and teach each other. But there are some tasks that you can do while away from the railroad. Helping with the website, taking photos or video for YouTube to help our Marketing/PR efforts, maybe help us to write a grant or two, help plan for future events like Taste of Spring, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc. are examples of efforts that largely come from individuals, who eventually pool their efforts as events get closer to running. (There are safety rules and training for "Lone Worker", if you want to do things alone like paint over graffiti along the line, or to take a small work train out on the line. But training is available, for those who want to learn.)

Over the years, I've learned that we

have some great members, with a vast wealth of knowledge and experience. Working side by side and talking while we do some jobs, I've learned SO MUCH, I can't begin to explain it in a small column. But I can tell you that I've now worked in Commissary, Signal and Electric, Brush Cutting and Track Building, and I even helped the Car Department restore the 2101 coach and put a slurry seal on the roof of some coaches. I worked in the Sunol parking lot during the Train of Lights for three years before I decided that I wanted to be a Brakemen aboard the train, and since then I've been aboard the ToL for a decade, volunteering for half of the nights each season. I can tell you that all of the folks I worked with have been safety conscious and great to work with, and I've learned a bunch in each of those roles. As a result, I know more about THIS railroad than I ever expected I could learn when I started.

With all of this good news about volunteers, what's missing? YOU! Don't be a member who joined, read the newsletter, and then didn't renew! This is MY invitation to YOU, to make 2017 the year that YOU become a volunteer. Start small, and pick a single department from the Volunteer Opportunities section on page 6, and email the leader on the list. (You could even come out in January to help undecorate the coaches and store them properly. (It's dry inside the coaches, even on a rainy day. Did you know that we have a hot lunch served at noon at Brightside on most Saturdays, for just \$5? Of course, a volunteer (usually Doug Debs) prepares and brings that food...)

Please commit a few Saturday's this Winter or Spring to come to Brightside Yard and let us meet you, and show you what we can teach you, and I hope you'll be convinced to keep coming out. Please feel encouraged to email me (rrmb@ncry.org) if you have questions.

**Zonker Harris**



## NILES CANYON RAILWAY



*Photos by Doug Vanderlee*

The Verona switch being built and the finished product.





# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

The following is a list of the people who helped run your railroad in November. Names in Bold are new members, first timers, or the first time in a long time. If you are new to volunteering on the railroad, please print your name clearly on the sign in sheet so it can be read. You can also send hours by e-mail to Paul Veltman at: [stumpie1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stumpie1@sbcglobal.net).

**Note that if I can't read your writing, you may not get credit for the hours you worked.**

## ADMINISTRATIVE

Donna Alexander  
Henry Baum  
Dexter Day  
Jim Evans  
Don Gholson  
Peter Midnight  
Joe Scardino  
Paul Veltman

## MEETINGS

Donna Alexander  
Rich Alexander  
Dave Burla  
Glenn Fountain  
Gail Hedberg  
Kent Hedberg  
Curt Hoppins  
Dave Lion  
Paula Lion  
Dennis Mann  
Peter Midnight  
Mike Pechner  
Steve Slabach  
Doug Vanderlee  
Paul Veltman  
Pat Warren

## CAR DEPARTMENT

Warren Benner  
Carlo Borlandelli  
Lou Bradas  
Dexter Day  
Don Gholson  
Jim Green  
Jeff Haslam  
Dennis Mann  
Joe Scardino  
John Senf

## ORM PROJECTS

Bob Bailey

## TRAIN OF LIGHTS

Donna Alexander  
Rich Alexander  
Paul Anderson  
Rich Anderson  
**Mary Asturias**  
James Baber  
Bob Bailey  
Ed Best  
Linda Best  
Lou Bradas  
Thomas Bradas  
Hal Briar  
Pat Buder  
Dave Burla  
John Burnside  
Tom Crawford  
Scott Crislip  
Ray Crist  
Dexter Day  
Gerry Dewees  
Nancy Dewees  
Fred Elenbaas  
Gerry Feeney  
Tim Flippo  
Mike Ford  
Glenn Fountain  
Norm Fraga  
Don Gholson  
Rob Giles  
Armano Giovacchini  
Pete Goodier  
Chuck Gullo  
Warren Haack  
Nancy Harden  
Bonnie Harrington  
Jack Harrington  
Zonker Harris  
Gail Hedberg  
Kent Hedberg  
Jerry Higgins  
Curt Hoppins  
Steve Jones  
Fred Krock  
Greg LaFramboise

## TRAIN OF LIGHTS

Dave Lion  
Paula Lion  
Ken Lippman  
Dennis Mann  
Al McCracken  
Jim McDaniel  
Bob McGearry  
Peter Midnight  
Mark Miller  
Tom Miller  
Dan Mills  
**Thomas Milvie**  
Bob Moore  
Sharron Morrison  
Denis Murchison  
Charlene Murrell  
**Vicki Newcommer**  
Lorentz Nilsen  
Mike Pechner  
Tony Peters  
Joe Peterson  
Bob Pratt  
Joe Romani  
Mike Roque  
Dan Sarka  
Joe Scardino

## TRAIN OF LIGHTS

Brian Schott  
Linda Schultz  
Roger Schultz  
Wayne Shull  
Charles Smith  
Leslie Smith  
Linda Stanley  
Jack Starr  
Jim Stewart  
Phil Stone  
Pat Stratton  
Don Stuff  
John Sutkus  
Jacqui Szymanski  
Ron Thomas  
Sue Thomas  
Ted Unruh  
Steve Van Meter  
Paul Veltman  
Pat Warren  
Jon Williamson  
Pete Willis  
Travis Zupo

## DEPOT CREW/OPERATIONS

Pat Warren

## GIFT SHOP

Gail Hedberg  
Jim Jernigan

## SWITCHING CREW

Rich Anderson  
Gerry Feeney  
Kent Hedberg  
Eric Wright

## BRIDGES AND BUILDINGS

Al McCracken  
John Senf  
Doug Vanderlee

## ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Curt Hoppins  
Steve Jones  
Joe Romani  
Linda Stanley  
Jim Stewart

## MECHANICAL DEPT.

Rich Anderson  
Henry Chandler  
Steve Coon  
Doug Debs  
Gerry Feeney  
Jim Green  
Chris Hauf  
Kent Hedberg  
Steve Jones  
Chuck Kent  
Dennis Mann  
Bill Ross  
Jeff Schwab  
Alaan Siegwarth  
Linda Stanley  
Bill Stimmerman  
Howard Wise  
Bob Zenk  
John Zielinski

## MOW / TRACK

Bob Ackerman  
Tom Anderson  
Steve Barkkarie  
Hal Briar  
Chris Campi  
Dexter Day  
Dave Fontes  
Frank Fontes  
Steve Jones  
Greg LaFramboise  
Steve Lowe  
Gregg McNaughton  
Charles Navarra  
John Pelmulder  
Joe Peterson  
Bob Pratt  
Jim Stewart  
Pat Stratton  
Mike Strider  
Wes Swift  
Ron Thomas  
Doug Vanderlee  
John Zielinski

## OTHER

Zonker Harris  
Barry Lependorf  
Ray Strong  
Paul Veltman

## Niles Canyon Railway wants you!

It's not often we have a variety of Positions available at the same time on the Niles Canyon Railway from M of W, Commissary, engine wiper or qualify for train or engine crew. A Broad spectrum of jobs and the interest and talents of our many members are looking for a match. If you are interested, Contact:

**Kent Hedberg**  
(Volunteer Coordinator)  
[hedbergs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hedbergs@sbcglobal.net)  
510-793-7153

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Train of Lights at Niles Station after the rain.

*Photo by Dan Sarka*