NO. 4 ARRIVING Sunol with Charlie at the throttle.

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Along the Right of Way
FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

This month saw a lot of progress on projects. It does happen! Things do get done when it comes to projects. For instance, the KM 9010. You don’t see it, but it is taking place. The starting of the engine was a give me when the shaft to the starter showed up from Germany. Yes, the engine did run and no it didn’t overheat. Of course, they were watching it very closely since the radiators were not hooked up to cooling system. But that is where the progress is being accomplished this month. The holders for the radiators that were manufactured in Pleasanton are now showing up to be installed and the radiators that we have will be assembled to these water attachments that were built for that cooling system.

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July 1  1st Saturday  East Track Building, 8 a.m (Brightside Yard)
July 8  2nd Saturday  Board of Directors Meeting, 3 p.m. (Sunol Depot)
July 21  3rd Friday  General Meeting, 7:30 pm  (Sunol Glen School)
July 15  3rd Saturday  Wine Tasting Special, 1 p.m. (Sunol Depot)
July 21  3rd Friday  Education Train 10 a.m  (Sunol Depot)
July 22  4th Saturday  Brush & Tree Trimming 8 a.m (Brightside)

Most 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

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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.
Another June has passed, and that means we have had another election for Board Directors. As expected, Dennis Mann retains his seat as Vice President, and Peter Midnight retains his seat as Membership Secretary. It is good to have people you know you can work with. The two new At-Large Directors are Jim Stewart and Gail Hedberg. Gail will be joining her husband Kent who is also an At-Large Director. It will be interesting to see the family dynamic at work. I welcome Jim and Gail to the Board.

I also want to thank Curt Hoppins and Dave Lion for their service as At-Large Directors. Dave was very concerned with Volunteer Safety and was always looking out for ways to improve the Volunteer experience. Curt provided a lot of good insight into the pulse of the organization. When you are well liked, people just tell you things and ask your opinion. So that translated well into the Director’s experience. The organization appreciates everything they have done, and will continue to do for the PLA.

So we have new Board members and a new Budget going into the new fiscal year. The organization is in good shape financially, so things will be looking good for next year as well. That will give me time to wade through the ACEForward Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (who is the agency responsible for the ACE commuter service) is responsible for the document, which runs close to 2000 pages. I was shocked that the Executive Summary alone runs 140 pages (plus charts and figures). I’ve gone through less than half so far.

PLA representatives have worked with the consultants who assembled this massive document. Simplifying, ACE needs to run more trains every day. UP owns the rails they run on, and they won’t let ACE run more trains because they won’t hurt their own business for ACE. ACE has developed their whole program around increasing capacity for UP and therefore increasing capacity for ACE. Since this whole process began, ACE also wants to run additional trains that originate in Modesto and end in San Jose. $400M of California tax dollars has been made available to help ACE accomplish this in the next 3 years.

The EIR covers 70+ scenarios that cover improvement alternatives covering the entire ACE corridor. Of interest to PLA are the 5 scenarios that cover the Centerville-Niles-Sunol section of the Corridor. Two of the 5 scenarios involve moving UP freight traffic over onto the NCRy rails. The only difference between these 2 scenarios is where the UP crosses onto NCRy rails at the east end – either at Hearst (2A) or west of Sunol (2B). These 2 scenarios were added to the analysis as recommendations from a Metro Transportation Commission report generated 10 years ago that mentioned (as the 7th proposal in a list of 7) refurbishing the old SP line through Niles Canyon.

There are various projects associated with those scenarios. The Centerville project increases capacity along the Centerville branch. There is a project that adds a connection between the Oakland sub and the Niles Sub near Industrial parkway, and a project that puts a new bridge across Alameda Creek near the BART tracks that would take trains North through Union City. There is the Sunol Double Track project (which does what it says) and the Hearst Siding Extension project (which lengthens the Hearst siding by 1.3 miles) railroad east of the current siding. The 5 scenarios are made up of combinations of these projects.

Only one of the 5 scenarios will be implemented in the 3 year timeframe that ACEForward covers. The favored scenario (1A) is the one that includes all the non-NCRy projects (Hearst, Sunol, Alameda Creek Bridge, and Centerville). The Environmentally-Superior Scenario (1C) leaves out the Alameda Creek Bridge project to Union City. Not surprisingly, UP actually favors scenario 2A, because that gives them something they don’t have today, which is a connection at Niles that allows them to go directly North on the Niles Sub.

As someone who has ridden the ACE train daily for over 18 years, the idea that increased capacity through Niles Canyon will solve the issues ACE faces is ludicrous; I know it won’t. The bottlenecks are at the Altamont (not enough passing room on a laborious route) and Niles Junction (too many trains converging on one junction). ACE rarely has to yield to UP travelling through Niles Canyon, and there is plenty of capacity for all the trains on the current tracks, with appropriate scheduling. But once you hit Niles Junction, there is no easy solution to increasing capacity. And the EIR expects the UP traffic through Niles Canyon to only increase from 4 to 8 trains a day by 2040 (because running freight through Niles Canyon is already a less than desirable solution for UP).

This all boils down to ‘bang for your buck’. The NCRy options are some of the most expensive; with an estimated price tag of $144M (my guess is closer to $200M). This is due to the fact that to meet UP’s requirements, all the bridges and culverts need to be completely replaced (from below ground up). The proposal requires that the new bridges recreate the look of the historic bridges destroyed with this plan. Scenario 1A is only $90M, and destroys nothing (except maybe the view from the Alameda Creek trail, looking at a new bridge instead of the Mission Boulevard Bridge).

PLA is similar to UP in that we think it would be great to have someone else use their own money to upgrade our ROW. New track. New bridges. New rock walls and debris fences. But it just doesn’t accomplish nearly enough to make it worthwhile. Without this, though, the burden of maintaining the existing bridges remains on our shoulders, and it is getting pretty heavy.
Along the Right of Way

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

We don’t have all the radiators, but we have enough to keep that engine cooled. Remember, we don’t run at run 8. This engine will not get out of run 5 or 6. Cruise control! The unit that houses the radiators is being rebuilt at this time. You will not notice the difference in this engine until the rear unit is placed back on engine. Hidden behind those doors of the car shop is the most interesting rebuild taking place in the United States. Maybe I should expand the territory to world interest in rebuilding of KM 9010. Howard Wise has everyone that likes this engine in on it. There are no boundaries for this engine. Support for this project keeps coming in from worldwide. If this engine does a solo run, can’t wait to see what that will bring in support. Stay tuned. This will happen, just don’t know when.

Now let’s turn our attention to the WP 315 coach. Another hidden project. You notice the car placement? Of course not, we move stuff all the time to different locations. But this location placement was to get the seats out of the shop and place them into the 401 for storage until they can move into the WP 315. But wait! Can’t do that until floor is chipped and smoothed. Then two coats of paint to be applied on floor. Jim Green got that accomplished with crew. Ok, break out the crystal ball that you acquired from sending 2 box tops and .25 cents to Battle Creek Mich. Look into it. The seats that were redone and ready to go into car for final mount will be done by the time you read this Club Car. In fact, it will be done within two weeks from this writing. Oh yes! They are comfortable.

Ok! You like to wax your car? Try this on for a drill on a given day. Wax the nose of an E.M.D. F7. Yes, Gerry Fenney did just that! He waxed the nose of this engine since he thought it was getting a little dull. Nice call, it looks great now. Maybe we should do a Hollywood on the WP 713. Not a bad idea.

The combine is getting closer to painting. The sanding has shifted to the other side and the Wed crew is getting it done. There are a few welding jobs to be done by Howard Wise and the car will be ready for Chris Hauf for painting. Carlo has designed the counter for the...
Along the Right of Way

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

July 2017

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

baggage area and that will also be the new train on board gift shop that did very good last year with Gail Hedberg running it. Keep the faith, the combine will be the last item to join the TOL. Tom Crawford and Wed. bunch will get the seats and stuff together when the car is ready. It will be close.

I have to hand it to the Wednesday M o W crew that does what needs to be done. Track, tie pick up from H & H tie replacement on the right of way. Taking care of track violations as they appear. No problem! They also do Graffiti paint removal on the bridges, which is happening more these days.

In the world of real railroading, I need to keep our fleet of equipment up to operational condition. Jim Green and others do that. To do that, I need to keep him certified for air brake sign off. Jim is getting recertified. Except for major railroads, not many hold these certificates. To do this, he has to fly back to Cleveland to recertify with Pittsburgh Air Brake. This is a one day course to get a car air braked and inspected. The same thing he does around our place, but this time he is watched. Wow! Jim does our air brake sign offs and other small railroads.

People are killed each year as a volunteer. Yes, that is you. We want our people working on track to be heads up status. That means all qualified and if not, you are sheltered by those that are. Peter Schulze holds Railway Protection Classes each year and sometime twice. Bottom line, our track and signal workers get up grade training on track safety information each year.

Steve Jones needs help. Brush, tree limbs, trees, have to go when it comes to fouling the right of way. I don’t care how it is done. Right of way clearing crew? Steve is not getting the turn out he needs to get the job done. Those that do the job when called upon, Thanks! Steve Jones has the permission to hire help if he does not get volunteer help.

If you don’t respond to his request, he will have to hire. He has my approval to do this. The bottom line is the job will get done one way or other. The railroad is a class two railroad for track. But there are Federal rules when it comes to brush touching the train and bridges. The job has to get done. We also just received a new Chipper to help in grinding the spoils up. This chipper can run on the rails or be pulled on the highway. Neat stuff is taking place.

Now that the double articulated coaches are air conditioned, we bought a new generator for these units to make them able to operate independent from the train. That means it could power the Diner and the Commissary car or the Dome car. Throw in an open car and Voila! Nice train!

For this month, that is it. Always work safely. I hope to see you along the right of way.

Dexter D. Day

Photo by Dexter Day

Gerry Fenney polished the nose of the engine. Wow, looks great.
Continued from Page 4

I believe the Hearst extension project will get approved, and probably the Centerville parts of Scenario 1A (no NCRy, no Sunol double track).

The EIR took years to develop, so it is also loaded with inaccuracies. It lists 3 impacted businesses in Sunol, 2 of which no longer exist. It also states that Alameda County owns the NCRy, which is not correct. The errors will be noted in the PLA official response, as well as our opinions on the various scenarios.

As a long time ACE rider, and a somewhat knowledgeable "railroad insider", I believe the ONLY solution to this problem (and several others plaguing Bay Area transit) is for the regional transportation authorities, under a joint umbrella, to take over ownership of the UP rails in the affected areas (effectively the Niles, Coast and Oakland subdivisions). As long as UP negotiates good trackage rights, they should be able to deal with scheduling their train movements around the passenger trains. And they would no longer be responsible for maintenance (although UP may be contracted to perform said maintenance).

PLA's official position has always been that we will support the proposals for improvement in Niles Canyon, although they are quite damaging to the environment. Since we don’t own the ROW, we don’t have a lot of clout, so we will strive to ensure our interests are positively supported by highlighting the negatives. While we do not see any practical benefit to moving UP freight onto NCRy, we do believe that the ability to move ACE trains onto our ROW will be great insurance for keeping the route open in the event of catastrophe on the Oakland sub side (landslide or tunnel collapse). UP can always route around, but ACE would be thoroughly screwed.

I intend, personally, to start a grassroots effort to see that the UP ROWs in question come under regional government control and the problems are solved through effective control. Long-term, many of the projects outlined in the EIR that have minimal impact should be undertaken, and the money spent will not go to benefit a private business.

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

Respectfully submitted
Henry Baum
What a rare and fortuitous gem our railroad is! First, there’s a section of the original Transcontinental Railroad that was not abandoned until 1986. Then when it was, it did not just turn into more housing and commercial buildings, as so much historic right of way has. Instead, it remained one of the islands of natural beauty that the Bay Area is known for, despite the explosive growth all around us. Add to that an already well established organization that just happened to be able to move right in with a collection of operating, historic railroad equipment. Mix in a lot of hard work by some very dedicated people, simmer for thirty more years, stirring in even more dedicated people all the while. This sort of thing just does not happen every day! You won’t find anything quite like it anywhere else.

Now mix in another 28 new members this month alone. They are Rohan Kapuria, Richard Otter, Mark Kelm, Steve Griswold, the family of Aswini Kumar Panth Karra, Lakshmi Gayatri Ganti Venkata Naga, and Saketh Ram Karra, the family of Naveen Kodali, Balabhаратhi Tummula, and Anish and Arshik Kodali, the family of Guido Bertoli and Nicole Werner, the family of Lisa and Evan Pelletier, the family of Gustavo, Marra, Brandon, and Christopher Valencia, the family of Matthew, Abbie, and Christian Herman, the family of Jane, Anthony, Carson, and Emerson Davaranky, and the family of Michael and Samuel Wallace. Somewhere among these grateful passengers and financial supporters of the railroad are the ones who will get so much more out of what they have just become a part of, because they will take the time to put something more into it.

Was that you in that list or in one like it sometime in the past? If not, will I get to name you here sometime soon? Either way, you need to know what a rare and remarkable opportunity you have come upon. Come to the canyon. Ride the train. As you will hear our announcer say, “Everyone you see working here today is a volunteer.” So are a lot more people you don’t see. That does not mean we are working for nothing. It means the rewards of these jobs are something beyond what money can buy. And they can be yours, too. You don’t have to find your place on the railroad just to be a member, but if you don’t you are missing out on what makes the Niles Canyon Railway so much more than what you find at any ordinary railroad or museum, even if they will sell you a membership.

Or you could just sit at home and read about it every month. Whatever works for you.

Peter Midnight

Photo by Dan Sarka

Ruth Ebert is at the “Dads Only” special treat table while being visited by Niles passenger Gloria Green during our annual Father’s Day excursion.
It’s nice when people of different backgrounds combine to make something special happen. The PLA is such a place, where people of various backgrounds work together to create a living history of Northern California railroad history. Where else could you have the Bay Area commute fleet survivors pulling artifacts from short lines of the Sierra over a defile in the coast range that was the final link in the Transcontinental Railroad?

A recent group of visitors, 17 in all, dropped by Brightside yard hoping to see some of the collection. PLA members John Sutkus, Doug Debs, Henry Chandler, Rich Alexander and Chris Hauf combined to give the group an impromptu cook’s tour. Apparently the tour made quite an impression, and one of the highlights was the Yosemite Valley 330, which the group asked about. The results of this tour were several new members, some donations to the PLA from the group, and one member of the group in particular has asked the Marin Community Foundation to transfer $20,000 from his advised fund to the Association. Sometimes it seems like we’re treading water, but when the group leader Bob Hansen contacted us with this news, it washed away a lot of the sweat equity we put into the PLA. It’s not just the money, but knowing folks get what we’re doing and support our efforts. It means all the world.

I thought I’d share an YV330 update as well. Over the last year, the Mid-Continent Railway Museum has been doing seat castings for their Hicks built car Lake Superior and Ishpeming #64. Not wanting to miss out on a chance to correctly build out our 2nd class forward section, I piggy backed on their order to provide for 12 flip over seat casting sets. The 2nd class seating also has 4 fixed seats, making a capacity of 32 people in that section alone. Bill Buhrmaster, an excellent restoration specialist volunteering just like the rest of us, only 2000 miles away, has
collaborated with us on stained glass and builders plates in the past. On the home front, life has been extremely busy, luckily much of it is train related. Besides volunteering for the push east to Pleasanton, I’ve been laminating up the panels that go between the windows in the 1st class section. These consist of mahogany trim with walnut paneling that forms four arches that extend from the window sill, across the 3 ceilings, and terminated on the opposite window sill.

As you can see in the picture, the result is quite stunning and is the result of 4 sandings with finer grit each time in between varnish coats. These panels are screwed into the wall studs, and capture a mating mahogany side trim that seats flush with the window side. There are 8 to create, and as you can see it’s a production line. I had a custom router bit made to create the 2 inch wide mahogany base. The panel is 3 layers of laminated 3/8” plywood with a resin backed walnut veneer. The edge had to be trimmed and sanded with thin strips of walnut glued to the edges.

I’ve also been busy running trains. We had a wet year, and even though the temperature outside is 108 degrees, we did get some flooding this year, in this case the weir in the photo diverts Sacramento River flood waters away from the city.

Wes Swift

Seat castings: 12 sets of flip over seat castings with “FM Hicks” logo incorporated ready to ship from the Mid-Continent Railway Museum west to California.

Photo by Wes Swift
Wednesday Maintenance of Way

Another fine month of progress on the Right-of-Way is in the can! The intrepid players involved were: Jim Stewart, Dee Murphy, Bob Pratt, Ron Thomas, Gregg McNaughton, Greg LaFramboise, Pat Stratton and yours truly.

Graffiti was dispatched from wherever it was found, the flange lubricators were filled and are functioning to specification, more dead ties have been replaced and moved, along with the remains of H. & H.’s on-site work, to piles that will soon be sent on their way to Hazmat Heaven. Lots of heel blocks have been tightened as per the FRA inspection report.

On going maintenance has kept Mongo’s brakes in tip top shape. It’s amazing what trouble a little air hose can cause! Steve Jones and Linda Stanley are working on getting a proper oil pressure sender unit for the Tie Extractor. We have a leak to discover and fix so the TE can be taken out and used as designed. Should make replacing ties a lot easier. Keep your fingers crossed!

The culvert next to the Stairway-to-the-Stars needed its guard rail replaced.
and Bob P. is heading up that project. By the time you read this, it should be back to normal.

While traveling along the ROW, Team WEDMOW picked up some of the garbage and deposited it in the dumpster in Brightside. It’s amazing what can be found out there! Come out and join us anytime you have a free Wednesday!

Until next time, may you have clear blocks!

Joe Peterson

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Greg Laframboise observes Pat Stratton hand tamping ballast under replacement tie.

Members use every available space to attend the May 20th, 2017 Railway Worker Protection (RWP) class presented by Peter Schulze.

With support from Pat Stratton, on the hose, and Ron Thomas, holding the tie up, Dee Murphy gains experience at hand tamping.
On June 3rd, the Saturday MOW crew installed 3-1/2 more rail lengths of 136-lb rail using the stick building method. This brought us to well within the tangent portion of track near MP 38.7. From there the crew installed 3 track panels with 132-lb (head free) rail. That gets us into the tangent by over 120-ft. Those 3 panels were removed from a pile that had to be cleared to make way for the new Verona station spur where contractor H&H recently installed the new switch off the mainline. There is yet more clearing and grading to be done to prepare for the remainder of the spur. When fully built it should be long enough to hold several cars, plus this will save MOW from having to cross back over Pleasanton-Sunol Road when switching equipment. The next Saturday MOW push will be July 1 where we plan to install more 132-lb panels. If all goes well, by August 5th, we should reach the beginning of the next curve with track. The next curve will take us to Happy Valley Bridge, a major milestone, just past MP 39. In addition to track being built east this month, we are preparing for the installation of conduit and foundations for the new automatic warning devices on the crossing of Pleasanton-Sunol Road. USA has been called to have the utilities marked at the crossing from digging activities. We hope to see the conduits installed within the next few weeks.

Mike Strider

Photo by Dan Sarka
Michael Strider supervising Steve Barkkarie on the backhoe.

Photo by Dan Sarka
Michael Strider at Mongo’s ballast chute.
Another day backstage in keeping NCRy running smoothly. Gerry Feeney and Eric Wright are returning to Brightside with a tank of water for Clover Valley #4 steam engine to use on its next regular ops. With the water tank being topped off several cars near the Bond Street siding were switched using Richmond Pacific #1195.
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Proceeds support Niles Canyon Railway fundraising activities.
Thank You!
Operated by volunteers of the Pacific Locomotive Association
501(c)(3) not for profit
The following is a list of the people who helped run your railroad in May. 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.

Note that if I can’t read your writing, you may not get credit for the hours you worked.
Time Sensitive Material

Michael Strider at Mongo’s ballast chute, Frank Fontes on Mongo’s throttle continuing the legend… to Pleasanton!

Photo by Dan Sarka