

# THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 656 Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

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

April 2018



*The California Western M-200 has been painted back to the correct shade of yellow and black scheme it had when acquired by the PLA in 1975. The color match was done by sanding through multiple layers of paint to find the original shade of yellow. Greg Houle is our painting contractor who did the prep work, sanding, priming and finish coats. Photo by Dennis Mann*

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The rail motorcar M-200 has been a part of the Pacific Locomotive Association collection since 1975 when it was purchased from the California Western Railway.

Built in 1927 by the Skagit Steel and Iron Works of Sedro-Woolley, Washington for the Longview, Portland and Northern Railway. The rail bus was designated Model 6-46.

The car was powered with a six-cylinder Buda 150 horsepower engine, equipped with Westinghouse air brakes and a two cylinder Westinghouse

compressor.

The body is of steel with an all steel underframe. Its length is 44 feet with a width of 10 feet. Interior as built was finished in wood and seated 50 passengers. One hopper toilet was located at the front of the passenger section. Fully equipped the rail bus weighed 41,590 lb.

The car was acquired by the Trona Railway (operating in the Mojave Desert) and later sold to the California Western Railway in 1941. The CWR rebuilt the car before putting it into its passenger operation. A baggage section was added to the rear of the railcar, replacing some of the seating and the toilet was moved into that section. The M-200 joined the M-80 and M-100 motorcars, which were affectionately named the 'Skunks' by the locals. In 1955 the Buda gasoline engine was replaced with a 165 hp Cummings Diesel engine.

This motorcar was first run by the Pacific Locomotive Association on the Castro Point Railway by the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and was moved to Niles Canyon when the PLA obtained the lease of the abandoned Southern Pacific right-of-way from Alameda County. The M-200 was the first passenger vehicle used on Niles Canyon Railway when the first section of rebuilt track was opened to the public in 1988.

**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 CALENDAR

April 4, 2018 MOW 7:30 - 4:00 pm	April 14, 2018 Speeder Runs	April 22, 2018 Regular Operations
April 7, 2018 MOW Building East	April 15, 2018 Regular Operation	April 26, 2018 10 am Niles School Train
April 8, 2018 Regular Operation	April 18, 2018 MOW 7:30 - 4:00 pm	April 28, 2018 Brush Cutting 7 am - 5 pm
April 12, 2018 10 am Sunol School Train	April 21, 2018 Ride the Rails Relay for Life	April 29, 2018 Regular Operations

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**

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

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Vice President	Dennis Mann	(650) 726-0167	vice-president@ncry.org
Recording Secretary	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033	secretary@ncry.org
Membership Secretary	Peter Midnight	(510) 483-5395	membership@ncry.org
Treasurer	Paul Veltman	(510) 792-7394	treasurer@ncry.org
General Manager	Dexter Day	(408) 234-4956	plancrygm43@gmail.com
Director-At-Large	Jim Stewart	(510) 796-2810	james.stewart4@comcast.net
Director-At-Large	Kent Hedberg	(415) 608-3812	hedbergs@sbcglobal.net
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## ===== DEPARTMENTS =====

Brush Cutting	Steve Jones	(510) 289-3559	fcocompost@aol.com
Car Department	Dennis Mann	(650) 726-0167	dmann@coastside.net
Charter Agent/Docents	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033	charter-agent@ncry.org
Chief Engineer	Mike Strider	(707) 318-2633	michael.strider@hdrinc.com
Club Car Editor	J.T. Ellington	(510) 260-7967	clubcar@ncry.org
Commissary	Bob Bradley	(510) 910-7024	ncry.commissary@gmail.com
Crew Caller	Patrice Warren	(650) 369-0414	traincrews@comcast.net
Gift Shop	Gail Hedberg	(510) 207-5524	giftshop@ncry.org
Hazmat Manager	Doug Debs	(650) 704-1487	dougdebs2472@yahoo.com
Insurance	Roger McCluney	(510) 489-4114	insurance@ncry.org
Legal	Steve Wood, Esq.	(925) 938-6100	wood@wcjuris.com
Member Communications	Linda Stanley	(510) 579-6300	membercom@ncry.org
Museum Curator	Dennis Mann	(650) 726-0167	dmann@coastside.net
New Member Orientation	Glenn Fountain	(510) 793-0270	grfoun10@aol.com
Public Relations	Henry Baum	(925) 447-7358	pr@ncry.org
Road Foreman of Engines	Gerry Feeney	(408) 739-9347	SPB-Gerry@comcast.net
Security Department	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033	fivechime@aol.com
Signal Department	Curt Hoppins	(408) 723-1154	curt@ncrysignal.com
Station Agent - Niles	John Fenstermacher	(510) 522-7949	johnnsherif@aol.com
Station Agent - Sunol	Donna Alexander	(510) 996-8420	station-agent@ncry.org

## The Club Car

The deadline for submitting articles and photos for next month's issue of The Club Car is the 20th of the current calendar month. Simply submit articles by e-mail in MS Word™ text format. Send email to: clubcar@ncry.org. Digital photos may also be submitted on digital media or by email. Electronic images should be saved as PC format . Jpg files with minimal compression. A text file with the photo number, description of the photo, and identifying the people in them is required. To send documents, articles or photos by U.S. Postage, contact the editor at (510) 260-7967 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 The Club Car is distributed monthly to members, sponsors, and friends of the Pacific Locomotive Association. The Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc. is an IRS 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, 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, and Guests are welcome. Items in this publication are Copyright 2018, Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc. and may be

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## President's Report

I'm still wound up about next year's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. And I am getting smarter by the minute, especially when I learn something I knew for decades is wrong.

First I have discovered that in 1869 the scheduled time for travelling from New York City to Sacramento, a distance of 3353 miles, in 7 days not 10. I learned that a Record Setting Run was attempted on June 04, 1876 and completed the trip in just 83 hours. This took enormous coordination across several competing railroads to accomplish. It is also interesting that the current best scheduled time for this trip via Amtrak is 75 ½ hours. Long-time member Henry E. Bender Jr. straightened me out on the Golden Spike:

Do not write that "the Golden Spike was driven at Promontory Point." That's the wrong place! Promontory Point, Utah, is not the same place as Promontory, Utah, where the gold spike was driven to complete the Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 1869. Promontory Point is on the Lucin Cut-Off, which was completed across Great Salt Lake—30 miles from shore to shore—on March 8, 1904. It's about 32 miles south of Promontory, which was where Leland Stanford and

Thomas Durant drove the final spikes about 35 years before rails reached Promontory Point.

I blame my 4th grade Chicago Public School teacher Mrs. Lyons for the bad info. She told us it was at Promontory Point, and that stuck with me. I have also heard it reported at Promontory Summit as well, but I



*George R. Aplington* knew that was wrong, because it was at Promontory Point!

Henry Bender is one of our long-term members who wrote the definitive book *Southern Pacific Lines Standard-Design Depots* describing the various styles and histories of

the many depots SP constructed. He is also an expert on a number of other railroad subjects.

I spend many paragraphs discussing the various volunteer opportunities and thanking the many hours provided by our volunteers. I want to take this opportunity to focus on our 1000+ members. We always need to remember that the members of the organization ARE the organization. We have many illustrious long-term members such as Mr. Bender, who are well known in the Railroading community. We also have a number of members who are just big fans of the PLA and the Niles Canyon Railway.

Many of our members spend many hours volunteering. We also have many members who just enjoy being members. Once such member is the late George R. Aplington, who passed away on September 17, 2017 at the age of 81. From his obituary:

*George is survived by his sisters, Mary Claire Tipton and Catherine Doyle and his nephews, William and James Doyle. George was born on*

*Continued on next page*

## NILES CANYON RAILWAY

*May 13, 1936 in La Salle, Illinois to William and Elizabeth (La Vanway) Aplington. He was the youngest of nine children. His parents, five brothers and one sister predeceased him. George served in the US Army in 1958 as a company clerk and a trained medical corpsman. After his service in the Army, George moved from Texas to California. During his career, he worked for Hiller Aircraft in Menlo Park and Raychem Industries. He loved to travel and made many motorcycle road trips with his friends, camping along the road and swapping stories besides the campfire.*

*George didn't require a lot in life. His needs were basic and he kept his life simple. George's motto was "Make do". He had a great sense of humor and was always ready with a witty saying and a twinkle in his eyes. He had a passion for fast cars, old airplanes, motorcycles, Hiller helicopters, and was a historian of WWII military machinery. Before retiring, George worked at Raychem Telecom Division Model Shop. The model shop provided support for Raychem product development and manufacturing equipment. George was an all-around support guy, building automatic assembly machines, troubleshooting them during startups and then supporting them by maintaining and modifying them. He was a jack of all trades, fabricating, welding, wiring and repairing complicated machinery.*

*George was a kind, quiet man who loved trains and animals. He would sit for many hours on his porch feeding the squirrels who would come and take peanuts out of his hands. George was a good friend and neighbor. He will be missed.*

What his obituary failed to mention was George's love of riding on the NCRy. George could be found riding the train on many operating days. And apparently, most people just knew him as George. He was a true friend of the PLA, and apparently got a lot out of his membership.

George had mentioned to many of the train crew and Depot staff that he had put PLA in his will. Everyone thought that was great, and thanked him for that. George never mentioned to what extent he had done that. Nobody thought it would be a big deal.

Shortly after his passing, Joe Scardino, the chairman of the PLA Endowment, received a letter from Mr. Aplington's attorney. Aside from a few minor bequests, Mr. Aplington had left his entire estate to the PLA Endowment. Needless to say, the Endowment Committee members were all shocked by this. We had received some fairly large bequests in the past, which were the actual foundation of the Endowment. We never expected to receive something like this.

Perhaps, though, we should have. Even though the PLA Board passed a resolution several years ago that directed all bequests to the PLA be immediately turned over to the Endowment, George ensured it by bequeathing his estate directly to the Endowment.

*Continued on Page 6*



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY



## ALONG THE RIGHT OF WAY

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

The month of March saw a mixed bag of weather patterns roll through the canyon. The rains finally showed up which slows down outdoor activities. But there was plenty of inside work being done. Along with the rains, we had cold spells which did not help painting the M200 any easier. But there were enough good days where Greg was able to spray the black finish followed by the yellow. The M200 now looks like a school bus again. The skunk? It remained as is. Linda Stanly and Steve Jones have been doing some mechanical work on the Car. The fuel tank was taken off and sent out to get cleaned out and checked over. It will be returned reconditioned. Other parts that were taken off will be reinstalled shortly. Dennis Mann is to do the roof on the car and then it will be ready to show off the new looking M200. Like the WP713, the M200 is bright. The honey bees will love it.



M200 in her new paint job. Photo by Dexter Day

side the articulated coach. It has heat and air conditioning. No matter what the weather is outside, it is nice inside.

The Clover Valley No. 4 is undergoing some major repairs that really needed to be done and it was decided by the steam Dept. that the time had come to get it done. The work is being contracted out. Chandler and DeWitt have been helping out where needed. The side rods have been pulled to be shipped out for reconditioning along with the pony truck. After looking at a few parts that were pulled off the engine, you can see why the engine leaned slightly to the left. The lube box on the driver needs to be firmed up. The upgrades will really help this engine

The restroom work on the articulated coach continues to move forward and is supposed to be done by the end of April or early May. This month the wall repair was completed by Carlo and Jim Green got the tile selected that will be installed in April. The same company that will be doing the tile work will be installing the new floor. The walls will be painted by Greg who will be returning to Brightside to paint the SP1195 switcher. Rich Alexander is working on the wiring and light fixtures in the cars. Gerald DeWitt and Dan Loyola have finished putting in the new window shades in both articulated cars. The work crew says it is really

great to work in-



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Gerald DeWitt relaxing in the darkness with the new shades installed in the articulated coach  
Photo by Jim Green

## NILES CANYON RAILWAY

I want to request all of our members to be like George. While I do not think there are many members who can bequeath their entire estates, it is easy to provide something to the PLA when doing your Estate Planning. Personally, since I have children and grandchildren, they will get first crack at my estate. If things don't work out the way we plan, the PLA is the final beneficiary of my Estate.

I am sure everyone now wants to know how much the Aplington Estate is worth. We don't have the final figures, because his property in Redwood City still needs to be liquidated. Last month the Endowment did receive a check for the liquid portion of the estate, and that was for \$500,000. It is expected that the final figure will be over \$1.5 million.

Remember that everything that ends up in the Endowment is there forever. The PLA has access only to the investment return on the monies in the Endowment (the gain). The PLA can borrow against the monies in the Endowment, but those loans must be quickly repaid with interest. The annual return on a \$2.2M Endowment will be 3X the return on the \$700K Endowment. The PLA right now does not need to touch the gain either, so we will benefit from leaving it in the Endowment, making money.

Speaking for the PLA and the PLA Endowment, we are eternally grateful to George for his generosity and the love of what we are trying to accomplish. Thank you George for ensuring we can continue along this path.

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



***Want to volunteer with the Niles Canyon Railway? START HERE !***

**YOUR 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 MAINTENANCE** - 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)

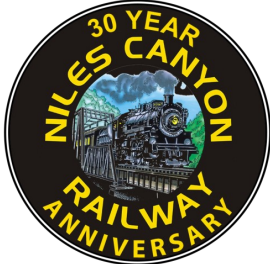
**SIGNALS** - Install/Maintain signal systems - Curt Hoppins - [curt@ncrysignal.com](mailto:curt@ncrysignal.com)

**STATION - (NILES)** - Work parking, ticket sales, set-up, etc. - John Fenstermacher - [johnnsheerif@aol.co](mailto:johnnsheerif@aol.co)

**STATION - (SUNOL)** - Work parking, ticket sales, set-up, etc. - Donna Alexander - [station-agent@ncry.org](mailto:station-agent@ncry.org)

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO HELP US CELEBRATE 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF NILES CANYON RAILWAY



### CALIFORNIA WESTERN M-200 FOUNDERS TRAIN RIDE

The Pacific Locomotive Association is commemorating the M-200's first revenue run on the reconstructed right-of-way from Sunol to Brightside. The inaugural day was Sunday, May 21, 1988. It took volunteers two years to build the first 1.6+ miles of track by hand.

The PLA is celebrating this notable event, by recognizing the tireless work efforts from members who obtained the materials, built the track, transported equipment from Castro Point, and supported the "Gypsy Camp".

**WHEN: SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2018 (OPERATING DAY)**

**WHERE: SUNOL DEPOT**

**TIME: CEREMONY TO BEGIN: 11:00 AM, FOLLOWED BY LUNCH IN THE SUNOL GARDENS, AND RIDES ON THE M-200.**

30 Minute round trip east of Sunol.

DVD - Limited edition reproduction of historic video film of opening day ceremonies filmed by Steve Slabach. Also included, footage of early Brightside Yard and track work toward Sunol. Cost: Complimentary to returning *Brightside Pioneers*. Donation of \$5.00 to all others while supply lasts.

Photo displays and memorabilia of the early days, circa 1986 & beyond.

To assure your space for the above ride and lunch, please **RSVP** to Gail Hedberg at [marketing2@ncry.org](mailto:marketing2@ncry.org), (510) 207-5524 or Linda at [membercom@ncry.org](mailto:membercom@ncry.org)



### E-Coupling Information

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

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

Twitter: [@toots4ncry](https://twitter.com/toots4ncry)

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

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



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Wednesday Maintenance of Way Update

There are ghosts along them thar tracks and they are an ornery lot! How else can you explain a milepost number plate being ripped off the pole and tossed down the hillside? This wasn't one of the easy to get to ones; it was close to 40 feet up a steep hillside! Or the whistle post near the Spot switch being snapped off within inches of the ground? Has the White Ghost of Niles Canyon invited friends to come play along our Right-of-Way?

Braving the elements and the supernatural this month were: Ron Thomas, Bob Pratt, Jim Stewart, Gregg McNaughton, Greg LaFramboise, Pat Stratton, new member Joe Shaw, Doug Vanderlee, John Zielinski, Steve Jones, Joe Romani and yours truly.

Progress was made on the spacers for the Sunol loading platform, patches were installed on the Dresser walkway, more planking was removed from the lowboy trailer, the last of the tie detritus was removed from between Farmer's and Sunol and all the dead ties have been removed from the Brightside pile.

We watched Mongo's motor drive out the gate to be re-furbished so he can return to duty.

Jim worked with the roofer to get the White House roof fixed up and it got a good testing in the following days.

While cleaning up around the MOW shed, sending several self-dumping hopper loads to trash bin, a pair of glasses were found in a Foster Brookes case. If you lost same, they are now in Blake's Palace.

And we left the Chipper Train aligned for Steve J.'s Bushwhacking Saturday extravaganza. This is something very important that needs to be done so the tree limbs are kept away from our equipment and passengers! Unfortunately, couldn't find the umbrella car ;-)

Progress continues on the old Burro chassis that will supply the braking for the low-boy trailer. One very useful combination for hauling equipment and supplies around the railway.

In between rain showers we moved nearly all the MOW equipment and old Burro carcass to replace the track mat material at the east end of the MOW lead. The old oil (and water) soaked material was placed in two open top drums behind the hazmat shed. We installed five of the recently built wooden spacers along the track at Sunol. We also assisted Steve B. with installing the newly rebuilt radiator for the Hyster forklift and Steve J. installed and improved the starter motor mounting on Big Bird. John continued his tire maintenance efforts.

We must be doing something right to attract UP track gang members to come help out on their days off! Thanks to Mike Winkler for lending a hand to his brothers in ballast.

So there you have it! Another fine month on the Right-of-Way chipping away at all the projects, both old and new. Until next time, stay safe and have fun! Better yet, come out and join in the efforts to keep your railway running!

Joe Peterson





## NILES CANYON RAILWAY

out. First major work to be done on under carriage since it left the logging railroad.

Doug Vanderlee continues to work on our heavy hauler rail trailer. Let's say Army trailer being converted to heavy hauler rail trailer. We now have the axles that will be used on the trailer which came off another old piece of M of W equipment that has been laying around the back forty for years.

To get ready for the Founders Motorcar Train on May 20, 2018. Work will be underway in this month of April in back head work on a culvert and three rails changed out. Some tie up grading will get done along with some grooming of right of way.

The Recertification classes will continue into April. The last class is scheduled for April 8<sup>th</sup>. Like in past years, I end up giving a make up class at a given date. So, if you haven't taken this year's class, sign up with the crew caller by sending an email to: [traincrews@comcast.net](mailto:traincrews@comcast.net).

That should do it for this month, have a good month and don't rush to get something done. Play it safe and have a good day. I hope to see you along the right of way.

Dexter Day



*While Ron Thomas, on the left, assembles the panels, Bob Pratt cuts more spacers. Notice his appropriate end block Photo by Joe Peterson*



*Invoking the "we do everything" clause, Gregg McNaughton, Bob Pratt and Joe Shaw transport a work bench to facilitate the construction of the wooden spacers for the loading area in Sunol. Photo by Joe Peterson*



*Steve Barkkarie prepares to lift Mongo's diesel motor for its trip to the repair facility. Photo by Joe Peterson*



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY UPCOMING EVENTS !

## Ride the Rails For Relay 2018

Saturday April 21, 2018

**Join the 9th Annual  
Niles Canyon Railway  
Team Event** ☆ ☆

Boarding from Sunol Depot  
6 Kilcare Rd., Sunol, CA

Departures:  
10:30am-12:30pm-2:30pm

**Adults \$25.00**  
**Kids \$15.00**

All proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society

Train and crews donated by Niles Canyon Railway

Tickets available at the ticket window that day  
or call or email for reservations: 510-996-8420,  
station-agent@ncry.org

## Niles Canyon Railway

**PRESENTS**

## Beer on the Rails

A Niles Canyon Railway Fundraiser

**\$50.00  
person**

**beer  
and  
lunch**

**2 hour  
train  
ride**

**June 16, July 21, October 14, 2018**

Departs Niles/Fremont Station at 1:00, returns at 3:00  
37029 Mission Boulevard, Fremont

**Tickets only available online at [ncry.org](http://ncry.org)**

**Must be 21+ when boarding; ID required at ticket window when tickets picked up**  
**No outside food or beverages allowed, no children, no pets.**  
**Non-alcoholic beverages available**

Info: 510.996.8420

Proceeds support Niles Canyon Railway fundraising activities.  
Thank You!  
Operated by volunteers of the  
Pacific Locomotive Association  
501(c)(3) not for profit

**ncry.org**

## NILES CANYON RAILWAY PRESENTS

# MEMORIAL DAY HONORING MILITARY

**Come Ride The Train With Us**

**If you served, or are serving, in the military,  
come ride the train for free**

**Sunday, May 27th, 2018**

**Roundtrip Departures**

**Sunol 10:30, 12:30, 2:30**  
6 Kilcare Road, Sunol

**Niles/ Fremont 11:20, 1:20**  
37029 Mission Boulevard, Fremont

**ADULTS \$14.00 SENIORS \$11.00 KIDS \$8.00, 2 & UNDER FREE**

**Snack bar on board**

**ncry.org**

**510.996.8420**

Proceeds support Niles Canyon Railway fundraising activities.  
Thank You!  
Operated by volunteers of the  
Pacific Locomotive Association  
501(c)(3) not for profit

## 2018 Livermore Valley Wine Tasting Specials

Enjoy wine & food pairings from one of California's  
oldest wine regions aboard a historic train.

**Saturdays:**  
July 14  
August 4, 18  
September 8, 29

**\$50.00/person**

**Departs Sunol Depot 1:00 p.m.**  
(returns 3:00 p.m.)  
**6 Kilcare Road, Sunol**

21+ please. No children, no pets.  
No outside food or beverages.  
Non-alcoholic beverages are provided.

Tickets only available online  
[ncry.org](http://ncry.org)  
Info: 510-996-8420

Proceeds support Niles Canyon Railway fundraising activities.  
Thank You!  
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# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## February Volunteers

by Paul Veltman

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 [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

Henry Baum  
Dexter Day  
Peter Midnight  
Joe Scardino  
Linda Stanley  
Paul Veltman

### Meetings

Donna Alexander  
Rich Alexander  
Henry Baum  
Ed Best  
Bob Bradley  
Jim Evans  
Don Gholson  
Jim Kearney  
Dennis Mann  
Peter Midnight  
Joe Scardino  
Linda Stanley  
Jim Stewart  
Paul Veltman

### Car Department

Bob Bailey  
Carlo Borlandelli  
Lou Bradas  
Tom Crawford  
Gerald DeWitt  
Norm Fraga  
Don Gholson  
Rob Giles  
Jim Green  
Ken Lippman  
Dan Loyola  
Dennis Mann  
Jim McDaniel  
Bob Moore  
Denis Murchison  
Cole Pennington  
Tony Peters  
Bob Pratt  
Joe Scardino  
Linda Schultz  
Terry Stokes  
Phil Stone  
Don Stuff  
Claudia Swift  
Wes Swift  
Steve Van Meter

### Commissary

Bob Bradley  
Doug Debs  
Bonnie Harrington  
Jack Harrington  
**Kim Lyon-McKeil**  
Bob Pratt  
Jackie Vlasak

### Special Events

Donna Alexander  
Linda Stanley  
Jim Stewart  
Sue Thomas

### Train of Lights

Donna Alexander  
John Burnside  
Dexter Day  
Norm Fraga  
Jim McDaniel  
Joe Shaw

### Depot Crew/Operations

Donna Alexander  
Pat Warren

### Gift Shop

Gail Hedberg  
Patrice McDonald  
Charlene Murrell

### Training

Glenn Fountain  
Steve Hart

### Switching Crew

Ed Best  
Gerry Feeney  
Linda Stanley

### Train Crew

Rich Anderson  
Ed Best  
Dave Burla  
Chris Chisom  
Gerald DeWitt  
Warren Haack  
Jorg Linke  
Gregg McNaughton  
Mark Miller  
Dee Murphy

List continues on Page15

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## ***Eastward Track Construction Report***

Saturday, 3 March 2018 was a regularly scheduled "First Saturday of the Month" track construction day. Despite weather forecasts of rain and possible thunder storms, a small gang assembled at Brightside to push the NCRY a little closer to Pleasanton. Gang members were (in alphabetical order) Frank Fontes, Jeff Haslam, Steve Jones, Chris O'Gara, Mike Strider, and Ron Thomas. Most of the day was beautiful. Some drizzle set in toward the end of the day.

There were two objectives for the day:

- 1) "Harden up" the last two lengths of rail previously installed a couple of months ago
- 2) Set alignment offsets from the end of track to across Happy Valley Bridge.

Hardening up track consists of removing and replacing any rotten or broken ties, aligning all ties perpendicular to the rails, spacing them uniformly, hammering home any raised spikes, and tightening joint bolts and nuts in preparation for depositing ballast.

Setting alignment offsets is a way of guiding location of track to be laid in the future. Some time ago, Chief Engineer, Mike Strider, arranged for a professional surveying company to place special marker nails in the center of the right-of-way in the exact alignment as the original Transcontinental Railroad. I have seen this done in a straight line, and even learned how to do it myself, but how they do it around a curve is still a mystery to me. The special steel nails were driven into the compacted road surface every 25 feet apart.

There is only one problem with this alignment marking method. The current roadbed will be excavated to a depth of about a foot and a half. The overburden is then screened to extract the good ballast that lies buried under the surface. We call this "Mining for ballast". This good ballast will be redeposited in the roadbed to provide drainage and a base for successive sections of reconstructed track. When the road is excavated, the special marking nails are also excavated. To preserve the alignment work, "offset" markers must be hammered into the soil next to the right-of-way.

The offset markers are roughly 16" long segments of 1/2" steel rebar. They are pounded in exactly 10 feet to one side of the center markers. To ensure that the offset markers are exactly perpendicular to the ever-changing centerline of a curved roadbed, a 50 foot long string is spanned across three nails. Using a large T-Square aligned with the taught string at the middle nail location, the tape measure is aligned with the 90 degree arm of the square, and stretched out ten feet from the surveyor's nail. That's where the offset rod is hammered in and marked with an orange plastic ribbon. At this time, end of track is about .2 miles from Happy Valley Bridge. It took about 50 re-bar rods to mark the roadbed to be built upon in the near future.

*Report by Steve Jones*



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tea on the Rails 2018 Photos



The early morning at Brightside was cold and dreary as the train crews began preparing the train for the Spring Tea on the Rails. By the time the morning sun rose in the canyon all was ready for the special event. Locomotives fueled, tracks inspected, a few of the many tasks to be completed before departure to Sunol. As guests began arriving at Sunol, crews were busy there filling the dining car's water tanks, loading food and drinks, and giving the train a final inspection before the "All Aboard" call by the conductor.

Spring cuisine was especially prepared by the great food artisan Jacki Delduco and her daughter Jena Ruggeri and graciously served by Linda Best, Ruth Ebbert, Norm Fraga, and Bob Pratt.

Many comments were heard from guests about how nice the event was and for the super service.

*Photos by Dan Sarka*

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Treasurer's Report

Paul Veltman, Treasurer

In February 2018, \$2,177 in donations were received. Donations year to date for our fiscal year are \$78, 037.

\$52 was received for the Articulated Coach, \$80 for Ballast, \$50 for the Car Department, \$350 for the engine house, \$1,445 for the General Fund, \$100 for the Pleasanton Extension and \$100 for the SP 9010.

Donors were:

**Michael Brilliot**

**Robin Costa**

**Tim Flippo**

**Andrew Goodson**

**Ronald Hook**

**Charles Jellison**

**Jorg Linke**

**Dan Mills**

**Doug Minor**

**David Silva**

**Jean-Pol Zundel**

***We thank all of you for your generosity in helping the Niles Canyon Railway and its many projects.***

## Membership Report

Voting Members please take notice: Jackie Vlasak has applied to become a Voting Member of the PLA. She has met the requirements spelled out in the bylaws. A vote on making Jackie a Voting Member will be taken at the General Meeting on May 18. Please see the Activities Calendar in this issue.

Last month we had 12 new members, Chuck Sted, Charles Day, the family of Ian, Stacy, Ada, Grace, Isaac, and Marie Baird, and the family of Shuai Xiang and Kesong, Ruyi, and Yinuo Hu. This month we have 19 more, Andrei Svensson, Rose Marie Everett, Bruce Allen, Brian Pepper, new family member Linda Bennett, the family of Nishta Jain, and Pankaj, Anusha, and Aarnav Kulkarni, the family of De Wang, Jing Chen, and Eric Wang, the family of Balakrishnan Natarajan, Priya Kumar Ashok Kumar, and Aditya Balakrishnan, and the family of Sheila Castilla, Ted Liu, and Donovan and Marina Castilla-Liu.

Even 30 years after relocating to Niles Canyon, your railroad and the PLA are still going strong and still growing in every respect. Be sure you make the most of whatever your membership in this exciting organization can be for you.

Peter Midnight



*SP 1423 departing Niles on 3/4/18 for a Regular Operations morning with the following crew: Ed Best (Engineer), Justin Legg (Student Brakeman), Adam Martinez (Brakeman), Mark Miller (Conductor), James Stewart (Fireman), and Jon Williamson (Brakeman). Photo by Dan Sarka*



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Bob Pratt

Jim Stewart

Pat Stratton

John Sutkus

Ron Thomas

Ted Unruh

Jackie Vlasak

Jon Williamson

John Zielinski

## Docents

Jim Evans

Fred Krock

Derek Lyon-McKeil

## Bridges and Buildings

Rich Alexander

Gerald DeWitt

Chuck Kent

Linda Stanley

Jim Stewart

Paul Veltman

## Electrical & Signals

Ed Best

Bent Christensen

Curt Hoppins

Fred Krock

Derek Lyon-McKeil

Joe Romani

Jim Stewart

Paul Veltman

## Mechanical Dept

Rich Anderson

Henry Chandler

Dexter Day

Doug Debs

Gerald DeWitt

Gerry Feeney

Jeff Haslam

Chris Hauf

Curt Hoppins

Steve Jones

Chuck Kent

Justin Legg

Dennis Mann

Scott Martel

Dee Murphy

Tony Peters

Derek Schipper

Jeff Schwab

Alan Siegwarth

Linda Stanley

Bill Stimmerman

Howard Wise

Eric Wright

Bob Zenk

John Zielinski

## MOW / Track

Tom Anderson

Bob Bailey

Steve Barkkarie

Henry Chandler

Tom Crawford

Frank Fontes

Steve Hill

Steve Jones

Greg LaFramboise

Gregg McNaughton

Dan Mills

Dee Murphy

Sierra Murphy

Chris O'Gara

John Pelmulder

Joe Peterson

Bob Pratt

Jim Stewart

Pat Stratton

Mike Strider

Ron Thomas

Doug Vanderlee

Eric Wright

John Zielinski

## Other

Zonker Harris

Brian Hitchcock

**Jerry Ellington**

Josh Ellington

Paul Veltman



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**Time Sensitive Material**



*Kent Hedberg and Rich Alexander came to the rescue on 3/4/18 during Regular Operations. SP 1423 had mechanical difficulties in route to Sunol so Kent and Rich went to Brightside and put RPR 1195 into service which saved the day. Photo by Dan Sarka*



