



# THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 717

Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

May 2023

## NCRy concept for development in Niles



Turntable view.

### President's Report

I have been sharing information about our concept for development in Niles with important outsiders, and now I want to share it with you. Remember, this is a CONCEPT only, nothing is cast in concrete, and we are a long way from breaking ground. But I know it is in the PLA's best interest to get support for what you are trying to do from the people most likely to put up roadblocks,

and so far, everyone who has been shown the concept is excited about it. The feedback generally is WOW. Our Alameda County Supervisor and our agent at Alameda County Public Works are excited. We belong to an ad-hoc group of museums in the Tri-City area (Fremont, Union City, Newark) who saw this a couple of weeks ago. Again – WOW. The Economic Development Department – City of Fremont is equally enthusiastic. I always make sure they understand that I am not asking them for financial support, but only political support to allow us to move ahead. In other words, don't say NO. So far, not even the slightest hint of concern about our ability to pull this off. The dedication of our members over the years has earned us the reputation of getting things done for the benefit of our community.

Now I need our members to also support this plan, so I need to share this with you, through the Club Car. I will make the full PowerPoint presentation

available on the member's website for your review, but Chris Hauf will be helping me turn it into a series of Blogposts for our website.

When we did our Master Plan over twenty years ago, the Niles section was showing our desire for a roundhouse and turntable to be built in Niles. We had even designed it based on the 5-stall Lenzen Roundhouse and turntable, which had been deconstructed and donated to Santa Clara County. But it was a good size to put on our drawings. Let's skip ahead to 2022. Working with Santa Clara County, California Trolley and Railroad Corporation, and PLA a deal was made to transfer the Santa Clara County owned assets to PLA for use in Niles. Besides the deconstructed roundhouse, turntable and water tank, the deal also included the SP2479, a big Pacific-type steam locomotive, sister to the SP2467 and the SP2472. The locomotive has been undergoing restoration at CTRC for over 20 years,

**President's Report continued on Page 4**

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**OUR MISSION:** To be an operating railroad museum for standard gauge railroading, past, present and future, with emphasis on the Western United States and special emphasis on Northern California

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## MEETINGS

### Board of Directors Meeting

**MAY 12**  
**5:30 PM**

In Whitehouse @ Brightside  
In-person & Teleconference

### General Members Meeting

**MAY 12**  
**7:00 PM**

In Whitehouse @ Brightside  
In-person & Teleconference

## CLUB CAR DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting articles and photos for next month's issue of The Club Car is the  
**20th OF THIS MONTH**

Submit articles in **WORD** text format.  
Submit photos in jpg format

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

## JOIN THE PLA

Yearly Membership Dues:  
**Primary \$48.**

Second adult \$24, Child (under) 18, \$12

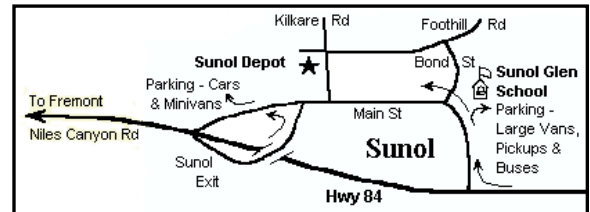
Payments can be made on-line through  
[info@ncry.org](mailto:info@ncry.org), or by check mailed to:

Membership Secretary  
Pacific Locomotive Association  
P.O. Box 515  
Sunol, Ca 94586-0515

## BOARDING LOCATIONS

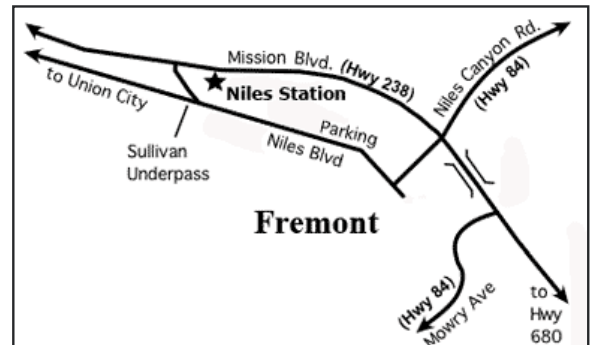
### SUNOL DEPOT

6 Kilkare Road  
Sunol, CA 94586



### NILES STATION

37029 Mission Blvd.  
Fremont, CA 94536



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

President	Henry Baum	(925) 447-7358
Vice President	Mike Strider	(707) 318-2633
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Membership Secretary	Rich Alexander	(510) 508-0503
Treasurer	Pat Stratton	(650) 888-8619
General Manager	Stephen Barkkarie	(510) 368-1733
Director-At-Large	Justin Legg	(510) 717-4944
Director-At-Large	Warren Haack	(650) 726-7952
Director-At-Large	Bob Pratt	(510) 421-7483

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Museum Curator - Dennis Mann	Volunteer Coordinator - Ed Best
New Member Orientation - Glenn Fountain	Yardmaster - Stephen Barkkarie

The Club Car is an official publication of the Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc., P.O. Box 515, Sunol, CA 94586-0515 .

The Club Car is distributed monthly to members, sponsors and friends of the Pacific Locomotive Association.

The Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc. is an IRS Code 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The PLA's Federal Tax ID is 94-6130878, the State of California Tax ID is 0501445.

General Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of January, March, May, June, July and October at 7:00 p.m. in the Whitehouse at Brightside Yard. Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.

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



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## May Activities

May 7	1st Sunday	Beer on the Rails, 1:00 pm - Sunol
May 12	2nd Friday	School Train, 10:00 am - Niles - The Alexanders
May 12	2nd Friday	Board of Directors Meeting, 5:30 pm - Brightside - Henry Baum
May 12	2nd Friday	General Member Meeting, 7:00 pm - Brightside - Henry Baum
May 13	2nd Saturday	Regular Train Operations, 10:30 am & 1:00 pm - Sunol
May 13	2nd Saturday	M200 Charter, 5:00 pm - Sunol - Jim Evans
May 14	2nd Sunday	Regular Train Operations, 10:30 am & 1:00 pm - Sunol
May 19	3rd Friday	School Train, 10:00 am - Sunol - The Alexanders
May 20	3rd Saturday	Regular Train Operations, 10:30 am & 1:00 pm - Sunol
May 21	3rd Sunday	Regular Train Operations, 10:30 am & 1:00 pm - Sunol

## Volunteer Report

**Ed Best - Volunteer Coordinator**

The people listed below reported over 2,300 volunteer hours for the month of March. Please continue to report your volunteer hours to me by e-mail at [volunteers@ncry.org](mailto:volunteers@ncry.org). Train Crew hours are collected directly from the log sheets.

<b>Administration</b> Henry Baum Mike Strider Matt Petach Rich Alexander Pat Stratton Steve Barkkarie Justin Legg Warren Haack Bob Pratt Chris Hauf Curt Hoppins Dee Murphy Dexter Day Don Gholson Donna Alexander Ed Best Jackie Vlasak Jim Evans Joe Scardino Kent Hedberg Mark Miller Mary Asturias Rich Alexander  <b>Archives &amp; Library</b> Brian Hitchcock  <b>Car Department</b> Bill Stimmerman Bob Moore Bob Pratt Bruce Burke Dee Murphy Denis Murchison	<b>Car Department</b> Dennis Mann Howard Wise Joan Weber Linda Randolph Marshall Williams Phil Stone Steve Van Meter Tom Crawford  <b>Commissary</b> Bonnie Harrington Jack Harrington Sue Thomas  <b>Depot Crew &amp; Operations</b> Donna Alexander Rich Alexander  <b>Docents</b> Jim Evans Jim Stewart  <b>Electrical &amp; Signals</b> Curt Hoppins Jacques Verdier Jim Stewart Kurt Olsen Rich Alexander Steve Knoeck  <b>Facilities</b> Bob Bailey Bob Pratt	<b>Facilities</b> Brad Jones Jack Harrington John Zielinski Matt Petach Wesley Van Osdol  <b>Gift Shop</b> Charlene Murrell Patrice McDonald  <b>Mechanical</b> Alan Siegwarth Bent Christensen Bill Stimmerman Charles Franz Chuck Kent Dee Murphy Dylan Olson Gerald DeWitt Gerry Feeney Henry Chandler Jeff Haslam John Blaine Karl Swartz Kent Hedberg Kurt Olsen Rich Gove  <b>Meetings</b> Bob Bradley Bob Pratt Charlene Murrell Chris Campi Chris Hauf	<b>Meetings</b> Curt Hoppins Dan Mills Dave Burla Dee Murphy Derek Schipper Donald Kirker Donna Alexander Doug Debs Doug Vanderlee Ed Best Gail Hedberg George Childs Henry Baum Jim Baber Jim Evans Jim Stewart John Link John Zielinski Jon Williamson Jorg Linke Justin Legg Karen Kadaja Kent Hedberg Kurt Olsen Leslie Smith Liam O'Leary Linda Stanley Lou Bradas Mark Miller Marshall Williams Matt Petach Mike Strider Pat Buder Pat Stratton	<b>Meetings</b> Patrice McDonald Paul Veltman Peter Midnight Rich Alexander Roger Skinner Sally Mills Steve Barkkarie Steve Coon Steve Jones Steve Slabach Tim Flippo Tom Eikerenkotter Warren Haack Zona Fowler  <b>MOW &amp; Track</b> Bob Bailey Bob Gilbert Bob Pratt Brad Jones Brandon Stone Bryan Hackett Chad Linke Chris Campi Chris Hauf Dave Ferguson Dee Murphy Ed Best Jim Stewart John Link John Zielinski Jorg Linke Matt Petach Melanie Smith	<b>MOW &amp; Track</b> Mike Strider Pat Stratton Patrick Wan Paul Bartz Paul Smith Ron Thomas Ryan Tan Steve Barkkarie Steve Hill Steve Knoeck Steve Meyer Tom Anderson Wesley Van Osdol  <b>Other</b> Alan Siegwarth Barry Lependorf Bob Bailey Bob Pratt Curt Hoppins Ed Best Jack Harrington John Abatecola Linda Stanley Matt Petach Mike Strider Patrice Warren Steve Jones Tom Eikerenkotter Warren Haack Zonker Harris  <b>Switching Crew</b> Gerry Feeney Kent Hedberg	<b>Switching Crew</b> Mark Miller Rich Gove  <b>Train Crew</b> Alan Siegwarth Bob Pratt Brad Jones Charles Franz Chuck Kent Curt Hoppins Don Shaffer Doug Vanderlee Dylan Olson Ed Best George Mednick Gerald DeWitt Gerry Feeney Henry Chandler Jeff Schwab Jim Stewart John Link Jon Williamson Jorg Linke Justin Legg Kent Hedberg Kurt Olsen Liam O'Leary Mark Miller Mason Denton Michael Stockwell Peter Savoy Ron Quilici Steve Barkkarie Tim Flippo Warren Haack
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# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## President's Report

Henry Baum - President

### Continued from Page 1

but the inability to run it was making it difficult for CTCR to continue to pour effort into a locomotive they didn't even own. Restoration was very slow.

This deal could not have moved forward without the powers that be at Santa Clara County realizing that, due to the massive size of the items being donated, the transportation costs would far outweigh the value of the items being donated. Realistically, the items being donated have zero value where they sit but will garner huge value once on-site at NCRy. The County recognized the need to and agreed to pay for the transportation costs.

As you know, the SP2479 and the Turntable bridge have already been relocated to our property. The remaining items will be moved in the coming year, under the control of CTCR/PLA member Ken Middlebrook.

Now that we have the assets, we need to think about how best to use them. Working with PLA member and architect Randolph Ruiz, we have put together a concept plan that places the various donated items in the Niles Wye. Check out the image on Page 7. This plan has been reviewed by our Niles Planning Committee members and is felt to meet our needs from an Operations standpoint. This plan is still flexible and might change as we add additional details.

The Niles Planning Committee has created a planning document that lists the things we need to have in place to make this all work. Again, a flexible document. We know that proper infrastructure will be required to move forward. This infrastructure covers bringing water onto the property, taking sewage off of the property, and stormwater control. We need to have solid designs in place for these items before going too far on the rest of the build-out, as the County has rules and guidelines we must meet. And we are working on ways to satisfy the County



Reconstructed Niles Depot.



Roundhouse model.

and make friends with our neighbors. In the meantime, we can plan, as that costs next to nothing.

The roundhouse itself is pretty basic. It was not seismically safe which was why it was deconstructed. We will not be able to rebuild the roundhouse as it was, but we can build a seismically

stable version of the roundhouse, using the original elements from the old roundhouse, primarily the bricks and wooden members, to create a structure that looks like the original. The original roundhouse was a 12 stall roundhouse but SP cut it down to 5 stalls and closed off the cut side with



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## President's Report

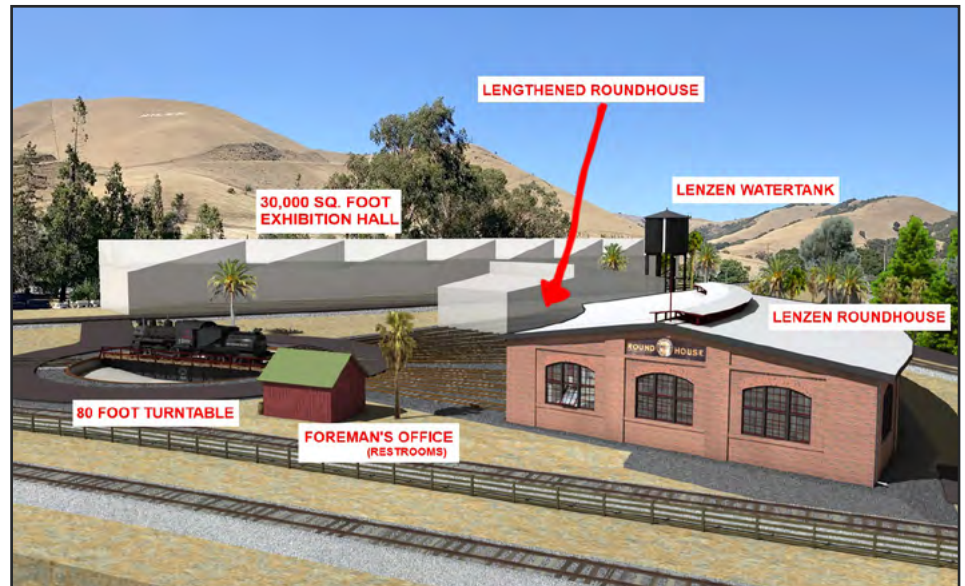
**Henry Baum - President**

corrugated steel. We will recreate that version (as we don't have bricks for the original 12 stall). This new version of the roundhouse will also need doors, as we will want to secure the items stored in the roundhouse. We will need to design a solution for that, but Randy has some ideas. While not intended for repair, we will be able to fire up steam locomotives in the roundhouse and prep them for use.

The turntable is similarly basic. We need to create a concrete-walled turntable pit at the correct size. The critical element here is the vertical positioning of the turntable bridge, as everything else has to be positioned to be in that plane. Once we determine that plane, the entire wye site must be brought up and/or down to fall in that plane. The surveyors in our membership will love setting those stakes! The turntable is large enough to handle the SP2479.

One of the 'short' comings of the existing roundhouse is the fact that it is short, lengthwise. The SP2479 will not fit in the roundhouse! We want to have a storage location for a working locomotive such as the SP2479 that can be closed off and used for prepping the locomotives stored there for use. To this end, we will build a new 3 stall roundhouse that simulates the architectural style of the Lenzen Roundhouse but can handle longer locomotives. All of these items will need to have infrastructure designed to support them.

The last donated structure is the water tank. This behemoth is 23 feet in diameter and 29 feet tall. That's just the tank. The support structure will raise



**Wye buildings.**

the tank by at least another 30 feet. We are not positive we can afford to build a structure that can seismically support the full weight of the tank and water as originally designed (although it did survive numerous earthquakes in its lifetime), as it will need to be brought up to modern codes to do so, and then it will not look correct. We may be better served with underground water storage and a pump rather than actually use the water tank to store water. Water for steam locomotives will probably be delivered through a standpipe, which is how it was done at Niles originally.

We also intend to follow up on Randy's decades-old proposal to build a recreation of the original Central Pacific depot at Niles. This design is pretty well thought out and will fit on the site approximately in its original

location, across the tracks from the current Niles Depot which is owned by the City of Fremont. This is perfect for our long-term plans for the area. More on that to come.

Lastly, in the area to the North of the wye, we want to design and build a 30,000 square foot Museum Building, to be used as an exhibition hall to display our restored show pieces from our roster. Again, since these items are huge, it needs a huge space to display them. Luckily, this space also can be shared for other activities, as the equipment needs space in order to appreciate it. If you have ever tried to photograph a locomotive on a middle yard track you know you can't get far enough away to even get a portion of the locomotive in frame. Our design

**Continued Next Page**



### E-COUPLING INFORMATION

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

Email: To Join Members Email List, send an Email to: [info@ncry.org](mailto:info@ncry.org)

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

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

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



## President's Report

Henry Baum - President

Continued from Previous Page.

takes that into account using widely spaced curved tracks and other tricks. We have several ideas for how that building should look, thanks to some of Randy's architecture students who designed similar concepts for a design contest a few years ago.

These are the primary elements that make up the Niles planning project. From the images you can see that this development will give us an extremely state-of-the-art railroad museum complex right in the heart of the Bay Area. As I said in the beginning, the community members who are interested in our success have greeted this concept with enthusiasm and offers of political support.

Let's say we have all of these elements ready to go and we are ready to serve the public. The all-volunteer operation known as the Niles Canyon Railway will be able to benefit from this, but we will not be able to truly serve the community if we are only open two weekends a month. A concept was presented to the Board of Directors that shows how, under our current charter and structure, the Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc. which already operates the Niles Canyon Railway as a wholly-owned subsidiary, can also form a new division, the 'Niles Canyon Museum'. (This is a working title, but we will spend more time determining the best name for this important new division.) It was agreed that a 7 day-a-week operation would be the best solution to maximize our ability to serve the community. Instead of school groups and others having to go to Sacramento to learn about railroad history in the Bay Area, they would come to us for similar exposure and interpretation. Our education trains already show us that there is demand for this kind of experience in the Bay Area. As an all-volunteer operation, we can barely handle the current workload for running trains; there is no way to increase that, which is why we have to limit our Train of Lights operations as

well. And nobody is proposing changing any of that as part of this new plan. The sharing of PLA resources will be the only real impact and will be virtually invisible to the PLA membership for quite some time.

This new division would need to be eventually funded with a paid staff, under the direction of an Executive Director, who would be responsible for developing the site plan, raising the money required, overseeing construction and preparing the various exhibits for the public. It is expected that these efforts will be self-supporting financially once the plans become a little more concrete, and only a small amount (\$500K?) of seed money will be required to get this project going.

This development will also have to be done in stages, with the various buildings being designed, approved, permitted and constructed in a sequential manner. Which thing first? Maybe the exhibition hall. Maybe the turntable. As stated earlier, once the turntable elevation is established, grading and track construction can get under way, allowing us to show rapid progress. The roundhouse tracks can go in before the roundhouse is erected around them. So there is a lot of flexibility here. As with all of our expansion plans, we expect to benefit from the skilled volunteer labor force we already have available to make this all happen. Or at least get it under way. If economically feasible, we can also contract out some of this effort to speed things up. We do not want to have employees doing construction tasks, as that opens up all kinds of liabilities. Trains will operate some weekends out of the museum depot. Once the museum is truly up and running, we will have to have an operating staff that includes a mix of Volunteers and paid staff needed to support Ticket sales/membership, a Gift Shop, docents and Tour Guides. If you want to see how this would look, just go to California State Railroad Museum and look at the



Lenzen Water Tank.

operation, not the exhibits. The model for this operation is well established and has been around for years.

We have shown what we can do as an organization over the years, and we have no desire to disrupt what we have (if it ain't broke, don't fix it). But our resilience and flexibility will be challenged as we move into (for us) uncharted territory.

We will still always need your help. Whether helping dig out culverts or planning train events, we need volunteers to make it happen. Make 2023 the year you come out and volunteer.

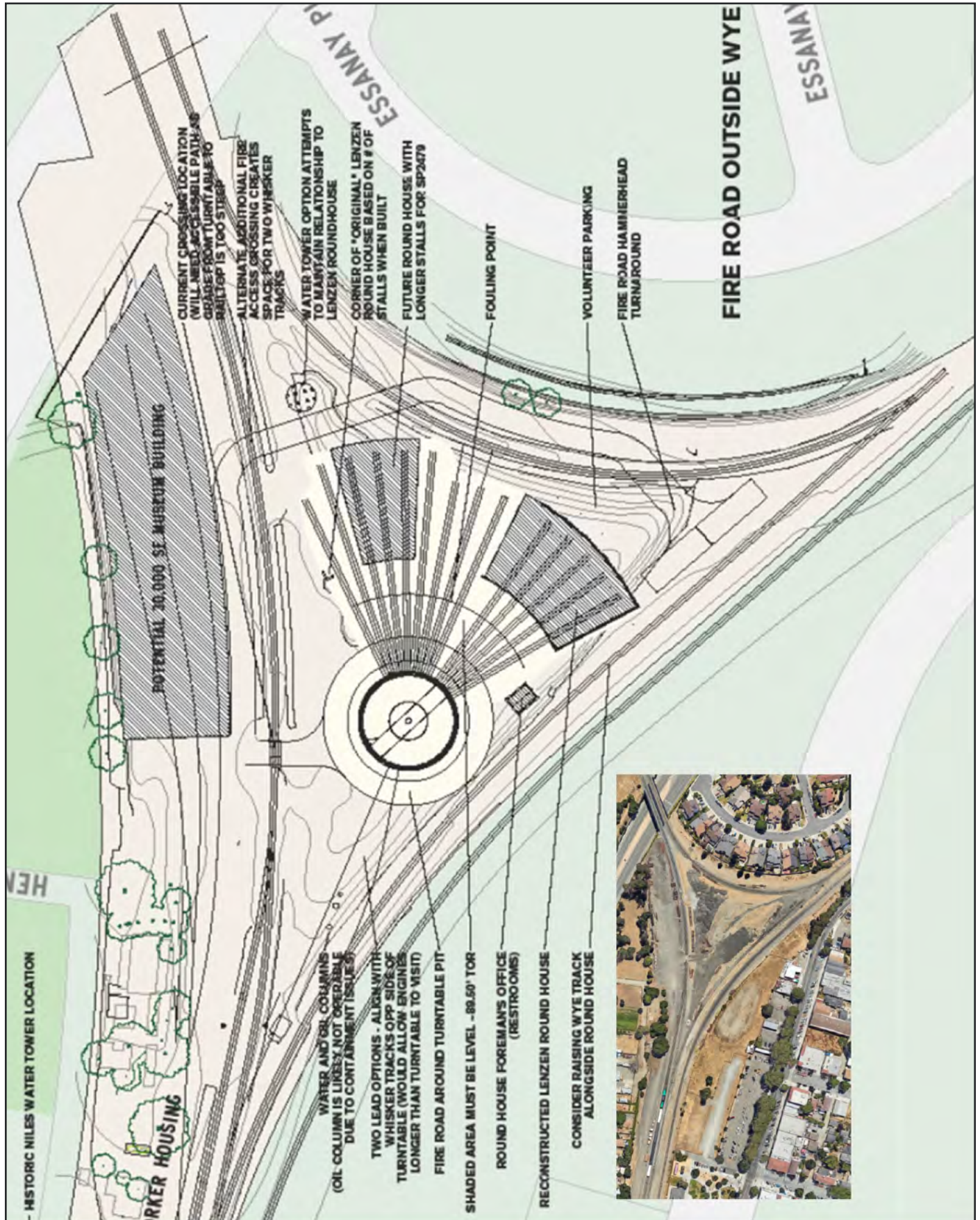
As always, if you would like to discuss this opportunity or any topic in further detail, please contact me by phone at 925.447.7358 or by email at [president@ncry.org](mailto:president@ncry.org). I REALLY want to hear your thoughts on what we should be doing to move the organization forward.

Respectfully submitted  
**Henry Baum**

(See Roundhouse photo on Back Page)



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY





# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

May just may be my favorite time of year. The day starts earlier, and the mornings are still cool but often warm to a comfortable sunny afternoon. Nature brings out her spring glory and we have rolled out our trains with two open cars sporting glorious new paint. Both the "Brightside" and the "Park" cars were painted before the Train of Lights, but you couldn't appreciate how nice they look under all the Xmas decoration. Let me tell you, on Easter Sunday, pulled by the Clover Valley #4, steaming through the morning light, they really are dazzling, and have me very motivated to continue the trend of repainting our fleet. Next up in the paint shop is the "K. C. Bones" and I can't wait to see our in-house painter and new marketing guru Chris Hauf transform this caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly.

Speaking of beauty, Howard Wise is putting his magic touch on the GN 1242, the car we call the "Ranch" car. The car's true name is the Hidden Lake, and the color scheme going on as it appeared on the Empire builder, a dramatic striping of orange, gold and gray with pullman green ends and roof. If you have never seen this livery in person, you are in for a surprise. Howard is working his spray gun overtime to have the car ready to swap sides of the shop with the KM 9010 in order to get the repairs done on the other side. It's a real before and after scene to see one side fresh and eye popping, and then walk over to the other and see rusty spots on the roof, and lower panels cut out exposing ribs. The big push is to time the move with a visit from Rob Fern, a great enthusiast and contributor to the KM project from England. They also plan to do some turbocharger swapping while the engine is outdoors.

Elsewhere in the yard repairs continue on the WP 315 windows (the heavy rains revealed several leaks in the roof as well), brake testing on cars,



Stephen Barkkarie Photograph

FRA and PUC inspect an historic artifact at the Big Curve.

and steps are being taken to bring the WP918D back into service (keep your fingers crossed we can solve the mysterious brake stand leak, wish me luck Gerry). Rich Alexander has been working hard at repairing the power cable for the train (many of which have welded themselves together due to running at rated limit for weeks). We are looking at power upgrades and procedure changes for next year to avoid this problem. MOW has brought the Electra Mark tamper into the yard for repairs, have still been cleaning silt off ties up and down the line, and changing out ties that didn't survive the winter.

Right in the middle of all this going on we get a request for a visit from the FRA and the PUC bridge inspectors. So, we decided to kill two birds with one stone and schedule them together. Mike Strider (our resident track engineer) had worked with the FRA inspector before on other projects and member Steve Hill worked as a bridge engineer

### NILES CANYON RAILWAY **RAILWAY WORKERS PROTECTION CLASS**

WILL BE HELD ON  
**JUNE 10 & 17**

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

**9:00 am**

**Sign up online  
like for crew call.**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

**Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager**



*Stephen Barkkarie Photograph*  
**A sneak peek at the Hidden Lake.**

for CALtrain, so both were asked to attend. With myself, Mike, Steve and two inspectors that made five. Too many for our executive speeder, so it was decided since the CW M200 had a charter coming up, that would be a good choice to use for the inspection and to blow the dust off after sitting out the winter. We set up a 10 am meeting in Niles with the inspectors. On the day of the event as I arrived Brightside, I was followed through the gate by two pickups and out of these trucks came six men flashing badges and IDs. The lead man exclaiming "Good morning, we would like to take a little jitney ride to look at your railroad". To which I told them "You guys are two hours early and in the wrong place, but no problem" and I continued "We were expecting only one of you. That's okay, the more the merrier and if you all would sign in, we will go prepare our ride". With that they donned their very official safety vest and notebooks while Doug Vanderlee and I ran the railbus through its startup procedure. After a quick

safety briefing, we all piled aboard to make the rendezvous with Mike, Steve and the FRA inspector in Niles. They must have been pleasantly surprised by our reception because the mood was light and cheery on the way down the canyon. When the whole group was assembled and introductions went all around, we held a second job briefing and motored off to Mission Bridge.

I stayed with the railbus, along with the PUC Operations compliance officer, as the rest of the team walked and looked at each of the bridges from one end to the other. When they reached the far side, they would wave us forward to collect them up and on to the next bridge. We made a couple extra stops at important sites to explain the history of the line, until we reached the Arroyo De Laguna, where they decided to call it a day. On the return we offered to stop in Sunol for a bite to eat at Bosco's, but they declined because several had long drives home. So, we dropped the PUC folks in Brightside and delivered Aziz Amin, the FRA inspector, back in Niles and headed back to Brightside satisfied we put our best foot forward. An online conference followed a week later where the FRA gave us good marks for our Bridge Management Program and pointed out a few places we could improve. Overall, a positive visit in all respects.

The subsequent week the M-200 had a charter for a birthday celebration for a young boy with me, Ed Best and Jim Stewart crewing the two-hour tour. Our crew helped hang decorations in the railbus as the mixed group of adults and children held a celebration in the depot garden. They brought aboard snack banquet for the cake cutting in the canyon and about 24 friends and relatives of three generations enjoyed Ed's narrations while pointing out the sites. We stopped in the middle of Farwell Bridge to have cake and sing Happy Birthday. At the Station in



*Stephen Barkkarie Photograph*  
**Jim Stewart and Ed Best tidy up the M-200.**

Niles, we paused to let the children burn off some sugar energy and get a group photo alongside the M-200. Upon return to Sunol Station the boy's mother beamed at the success of her plan and rewarded the crew with hugs and a promise to bring their youngest as soon as he was old enough. (I'm not sure how old that would be as the birthday boy was but three and his mother explained that he was born just as Covid hit and never had a party before.) I say never too young to ride the rails.

Those are the highlights from last month, but I need to wrap up by reminding everyone that it is the time of year for renewal. Crew certification classes are coming up in the first weekend in June and Railway Worker Protection reviews are needed for all who work on track. We have scheduled two classes, one on June 10 and one on June 17. Look for the ad in this month's issue and sign up on the members website.

Remember, Blue Flag is a rule you can live by.

**Stephen Barkkarie**  
General Manager

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

### This Month's tale:

## NOW IT IS A MAINLINER FOR WHAT WAS ONCE FORGOTTEN

This month's tale is a revisit to an article written by George Wassmann several years ago on a car that has been a big part in making the operations on the NCRY what it is today and it provides the everyday service that is required to have substantial equipment to operate this railroad.

This Tale begins by taking a look at the ex-SP 2101 coach. The coach was built by the Pullman Co. in 1923. It was a 72 ft. interior length steel interurban car class 72-IC-1 weighing in at 119,900 pounds with a seating capacity of 96 which included the side seats opposite the restrooms. The seats in the subs, as they were known as, were two inches closer than what was in other coaches of the SP, because of the angle of the backs which were in a more vertical position of the seats. The knee room was the same. The California State Railroad Museum got five of these cars from the Southern Pacific Railroad. Although they were saved from being scrapped, the cars' condition deteriorated.

The cars were left out in an abandoned yard area at the State Museum with very little protection for twenty years which left them open to vandalism, stormy wet weather along with the extreme heat which are the summers in that area. About the same time, the Niles Canyon Railway was beginning to have growing pains. It is 2004, and the NCRY is growing in size and our operation is expanding to the point that the railroad needs bigger and sturdier equipment.

The "Train of Lights" at Christmas has become a big money maker for the NCRY, but there is a slight problem. We need more equipment, especially enclosed cars to accommodate the popularity of this train. So, the search



Henry Luna Photograph

The PLA crew that prepared the two cars for the move to NCRY. From left, Red Hadler, Sac. Northern RFE, Steve Drew, CSRM Curator, George Wassmann, Hugh Tebault, Dennis Mann. Sticking out of windows, Chris Holombo, Les Fisher, and Errol Ohman.



Henry Luna Photograph

Loading Sacramento, now CSRM, ex-SP 250-ton ex-Roseville yard DSL crane and ex-McClellan AFB crane lifts #2114 and places it on truck trailer.

for enclosed cars started. That became harder than you would think. During that period, tourist railroading was in full swing throughout the country. Cars were hard to find especially with our

budget. The State Museum had some coaches that were out in the weather rusting away. It would be great if we could get a few of them. Maybe some sort of deal or swap could be made



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

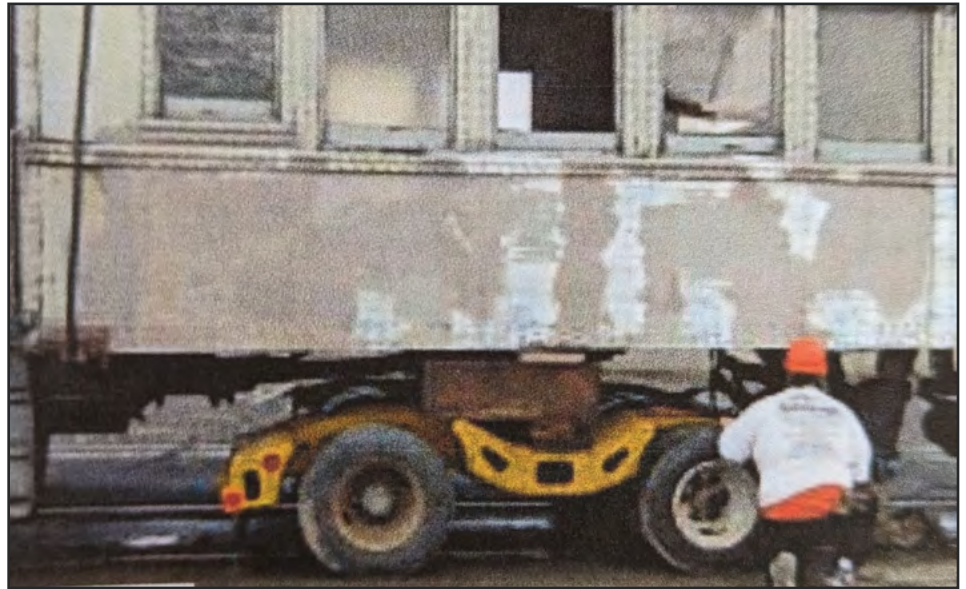
## Tales of the Past

**Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager**

where the cars would not break our budget. We know the cars are not ready to roll into service right away, but they are coaches that we can handle within our budget. We were looking at getting one coach, but it now seems we will be getting two coaches which will be the ex-SP 2101 and the ex-SP 2114 which were in the first order by the SP from the Pullman Co. Arrangements for trucking and loading at the Sacramento State Museum were made. It seemed that the state had a truck driving program for ex-convicts which would be put to use for moving these cars. Not often did they get this type of opportunity and training experience like this move would provide. The CSRM provided two cranes for lifting.

One was a crane from McClellan AFB which was donated to the State Museum, and the other rail crane is an ex-SP 250-ton Roseville diesel crane. This crane today sits at Niles within the NCRY Compound at Niles and in fully operational condition. The move of these cars from Sacramento to Brightside took two days. There was a crane at Brightside to unload the cars and place them back onto their wheels. When the two cars were unloaded, they were shoved into their holding tracks at Brightside. It was now time to decide which of the two cars we want to get into service first. After the cars were looked over and some measurements were done, the SP 2101 was selected for getting into operational condition first. The interior was reworked and new panels were put in place where needed. Enough overhead lights were gotten to do the car. The seats were swapped out so we had a complete set of seats that looked good. The painting of the interior took place after new bus windows were bought to be put into the car so the windows would open. The exterior was prepped for painting, but did not turn out the way

*Continued on next page*



*Henry Luna Photograph*

The front of the car is now loaded on the trailer, now inspection on how the car #2114 is sitting on the rear dolly. Car #2101 was moved the day before.



*Stan Bringer Photograph*

The #2114 is lifted off the bogie by the crane to hold it until trucks are ready to be placed under car. Rich Alexander, Steve Coon and Al Fowler assist.



*Stan Bringer Photograph*

The West truck is pushed under the West end of the # 2114 coach. To assist are Carlo Borlandelli, Dexter Day, Doug Campbell, Steve Coon and Al Reynolds.



*Patrice Warren Photograph*

Don Pomplun sweeping paint off the ceiling of #2101 in prep of repair work to start.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

### *Continued from previous page*

they wanted it. Primer was put on the car to be painted at a future time. That was 11 plus years ago. Hopefully, the car will be scheduled for a paint job sometime soon. After continuous use of the original interior for several years the car was scheduled for an interior redo which was just completed last year. The SP 2101 car is still the coach that is used on every train on NCRY operations. Most likely it is on the wish list. It would be nice to get the SP 2114 reconditioned and back into operational condition. That would give the SP 2101 some down time for finishing work that is needed.

With that said, this is the end to this tale.

**Dexter Day**



*Patrice Warren Photograph*

Al McCracken and Henry Luna continue clean up on the 2114. There was a lot of cleaning required before rebuild could start.



*Patrice Warren Photograph*

The beginning of the work that will be required starts. Ray McAllister, Carlo Borlandelli, Dennis Mann and George Wassmann.



*Patrice Warren Photograph*

The two Subs that just arrived from CSRM will need a lot of exterior work to ready them for ops.



*Dexter Day Photograph*

Car #2101 with interior that has been refurbished last year. The car has come a long way from when we first got it.



*Dexter Day Photograph*

Exterior of 2101 as it sits today with its 10 year old primer on it with touch up. The roof was done over five years ago.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Membership Report

**Rich Alexander - Membership**

### New Members:

(13 members this past month)

Belinda Barlow, Kevin Burns, Brenda DuCharme, Jade Fasang, Mary S. Fasang, Debora Flavetta, Robert B. Olds, Jason F. Pata, Michael J. Spolini Jr., Ducan Taylor, Betty Hom Yau, Gregory Yau, Hunyue Yau

I am still getting calls about how to renew even after the information was put in the Club Car. I guess our members don't read everything published in the Club Car.

This past month we have had problems with our PA system on the train. We lost the amplifier, which now needs to be replaced. Based on the problem we have been having with the piecemeal PA system we have I have contacted a audio visual company to get quotes to completely replace the system. This should allow us to control

the volume correctly between each car. One of the problems that we had was that our current amp wasn't large enough to handle the number of cars we have during TOL. I am still waiting for the quote to come in. I am also working with the installation company to see what kind of discount we may be able to get. Once we get the quote back and if the board approves the cost and we go forward it should take about 4 to 6 weeks to install the new system. During the installation time we will need PLA members to monitor their work and answer any questions that may come up. Keep this in mind as I will be asking for help.

Also, the generator in the commissary car is only 10kw which is small compared to the load that we are putting on it. You can see this every time one of the refrigerators or water pumps come on and the lights in the car dim. I have contacted Northwest Rail Electric about the cost of a new under car Stadco generator. The only sizes that are approved by the EPA are 40 and 80kw. The cost of a 40kw unit is about \$40,000. If the board approves this expenditure we will have a new project which will require help from the membership to install.

As many of you know, after the last TOL was over and we took the train apart we had problems with the main electrical connections. I have been replacing or repairing them as I go along each car. At last month's board meeting the subject came up and there was some discussion about what we could do to fix the problem in the future. There are several ways to correct the problem. One way is to change the train line from 208 volts to 480 volts. This requires the installation of a transformer under each car. We have the transformers. They need to be installed first. We can then proceed to

change to a 480 volt train line. I have also contacted Northwest Rail about the cost of using an Amtrak connector for our train line. Those connectors are rated for 400 amps. Our current connector is rated for 100 amps. The cost of Amtrak connectors are a little less than the current connectors we are using.

I bring all of this up because if we keep increasing the load requirements for electricity on the train, we will have to make some adjustments and changes or we will continue to have electrical problem in the future.

Most of these projects are high dollar items, but they need to be considered if we want to continue to grow and provide a quality product for our customers.

**Rich Alexander**

### NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## RECERT TRAINING CLASS

WILL BE HELD  
**JUNE 3 & 4**  
**8:00 am to 1:00 pm**

AT THE WHITE HOUSE  
BRIGHTSIDE

BRING YOUR RULE BOOK  
AND TIMETABLE

TESTS WILL BE GIVEN TO  
ENGINEMEN AND TRAINMEN

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

### NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## BRAKEMEN CLASS

WILL BE HELD ON  
**JULY 29 & 30**

CLASS ROOM STUDIES WILL  
BE AT THE WHITE HOUSE  
FROM

**9 am to 4 pm**

HANDS ON WILL FOLLOW  
THE NEXT DAY

TO QUALIFY, STUDENT MUST  
BE A CURRENT MEMBER AND  
MUST BE ABLE TO PERFORM  
THE DUTIES OF A BRAKEMAN.

INTERESTED MEMBERS E-MAIL  
plancrygm@gmail.com

## Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

On the PLA Balance Sheet we have significant cash in our bank accounts and four CD's that are earning an average of 4.25%, or about \$3,500 last month. The value of our Endowment Fund increased a bit. The smaller Stock Account is holding its own, earning dividends of \$100 per month. With total assets of over \$7.5 million, our largest liability is \$12,470 in prepaid deposits being held until our charter guests have had their train ride. That is a very strong assets-to-liabilities ratio.

Our Profit & Loss shows a very good revenue stream. Most of our trains are at or near full, and everyone seems to be very happy with their experience. There is unfulfilled demand for steam trains; how can we run more of them? Our post-pandemic school trains are full; we have quite a few charters in the pipeline; and the M-200 will come into the schedule this Summer. We have an exciting year of operations ahead. We could use some kind of a "hook" to generate more interest in our regular diesel trains - maybe run the dome car in place of a coach? Maybe you have a suggestion...

Our commissary is doing well under the newer pricing structure. Our gift shop is also doing well, but imagine how a sales counter on our regular

trains would add to that. I think our riders would like that.

About expenditures, we continue to keep them under control. On the plus side, our volunteers are very good at making every dollar count. On the other hand, we could afford to do so much more if we had additional volunteers to manage or assist with the many available projects. We have cars and engines to paint; we have restorations ongoing that could move faster, and others that need planning and start-up; we have equipment maintenance and improvements needed; and we have development projects for both our Brightside and Niles yards looking for project managers. If we have the volunteers, we have the funds to really make a lot of additional forward progress.

With the success of our TOL season operations our revenue for this fiscal year has easily exceeded our budget

forecast; and with the cost discipline our volunteers have exercised, we have stayed within our budget. Our revenue exceeds our budget and our costs are much lower than budgeted.

Looking ahead, there are 3 months left under the current budget - time to start working on the next. I encourage all project managers and department heads to think of the next fiscal year.

### Want Ad

- Plastic 12" x 12" x 10" sturdy milk containers. We can use them to store many things, including OTM (Other Track Materials) for MOW. If you have any to donate, contact us or bring them to Brightside Yard.

Let me know if you have questions or comments.

**Pat Stratton**

Treasurer

treasurer@ncry.org

## Brush Cutting

Mark Whitman

On Wednesday, March 22 we got a report of a tree brushing the train east of Farmers Crossing. So, we started just east of the Farmers Crossing and worked our way toward Sunol and took care of the offending tree. Unfortunately, the tie handler managed to break two more hydraulic lines, and we had to feed the chipper the old fashion way, by hand.

Doug Vanderlee has spent a lot of time trying to troubleshoot the problems with the grapple on the tie handler. We determined that the only way to fix this permanently is to modify the mount where it attaches to the end of the boom. Doug Vanderlee and Steve Barkkarie fabricated a four-inch extension for the mount and welded it on before Saturday's brush cutting. It worked fine all-day Saturday. Many thanks to Doug and Steve for this permanent fix.

Saturday, March 25, we got a report of two trees down west of Dresser Bridge. We headed down there to take care of both downed trees and worked our way east using the bucket truck to remove the higher limbs that may impact the train. Wednesday's crew consisted of Bob Pratt, Steve Meyer, Pat Stratton, Wes Van Osdol, Steve Knoech, and Mark Whitman.

Saturday's crew consisted of Chris Campi, Ron Thomas, John Zielinski, Brad Jones, Dave Ferguson, Steve Knoech, Matt Petach, and Mark Whitman.

**Mark Whitman**

### GOOD NEWS!

There is one tax break remaining for regular people:

If your IRA, 401(k), or other retirement plan requires that you make "required minimum distributions" (RMD's) that are taxable, you can contribute directly to the PLA from your plan using a Qualified Charitable Distribution. Your QCD will reduce your taxable RMD by the amount of your contribution. Contact your Plan Administrator to initiate a contribution by QCD. They can be **one-off or periodic**. If details of the PLA as recipient are needed, contact Treasurer Pat Stratton at [treasurer@ncry.org](mailto:treasurer@ncry.org).



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Nostalgic Ramblings SNAKEVILLE

Midway between Decoto's Central Pacific Depot and the old adobe Mission at the foot off Mission Peak, and not far from the mouth of Canyon where Jose Vallejo built his water powered flour mill once stood the mythical little village of Snakeville. Well, I should say that it was quiet until all bedlam broke loose when Alkali Ike, Mustang Pete and Slippery Slim tried most everything to get the attention of the town sweetheart, Sophie Clutts! Beginning in 1913 and the madcap Snakeville Comedies cast of the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company created endless slapstick chaos in dozens of silent one reel films on the stage of the state-of-the-art glass roofed studio, in the streets of the one sided railroad town of Niles, down the dusty road at the old mission, up the hill at the imposing Masonic Home, and in and around bucolic Niles Canyon. While G.M. Anderson's western cast was cranking out as many as five Broncho Billy western's a week, former vaudevillians Augustus Carney, Harry Todd, Victor Potel were roughhousing and taking pratfalls in the mythical village of Snakeville to gain the affection of actress Margaret Joslin. Ben Turpin and dozens of other characters including Fred Church as Coyote Simpson and David Kirkland as Dr. Dopeum appeared in the popular Snakeville Comedies often directed by Wallace Beery. Essanay's international reputation as the "House of Comedies" was enhanced with the arrival of Charlie Chaplin in 1915 and the making of five classic films and the creation of his iconic "Tramp" character. The Snakeville unit was popular in town with many of the cast and crew living and raising families in Niles and participating in community activities including the company's Indian's baseball team. Essanay is remembered mostly for Charlie Chaplin's short stint in Niles and G.M. Anderson's Bronco Billy cowboy character that set



the stage for all movie westerns that followed, however for three years over a century ago the fanciful little town of

Snakeville was the comedy capital of the world....no kidding!

**Bill Ralph**

### Niles Canyon Railway Docent Help Needed

Each time our regularly scheduled trains leave the station it should have a docent aboard to inform passengers about the area's history and great accomplishments of our unique volunteer organization. Passengers often assume volunteers are paid to run train on tracks that were constructed by Southern Pacific.

At this time we need docents. It's a very easy and rewarding volunteer position.

All that is required is learning a little background information about the PLA and Niles Canyon Railway and then sharing that with our train passengers who often assume we are all paid to run our trains and that the tracks on which the train runs were constructed by a historic rail company long ago.

Most of our passengers are amazed to learn that all our crews consist of volunteers and volunteers constructed the Niles Canyon Railway on an historical ROW of the final link of the first transcontinental railroad.

With a little background knowledge and riding with an experienced NCRy docent for a few trips, you will have all you need to be a docent and help spread the PLA's unique story to our riding public.

If interested, please contact me, Jim Evans, Docent Coordinator at [FiveChime@aol.com](mailto:FiveChime@aol.com).

I've been a PLA docent since 1969 and never tire of it since there is always exciting information to share regarding our amazing past accomplishments and future plans on our historical railroad!

Sincerely,  
**Jim Evans**

# **PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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