



THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 719

Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

July 2023

Clover Valley Lumber Company #4



Chris Hauf Photograph

Clover Valley Lumber Co. #4 pulls out of Niles Station with a sold out load of happy passengers.

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The past few months have been busy ones for the steam department with the Clover Valley Lumber Company #4 operating spring train operations. The #4 operated well with no issues and the highlight of the spring was operating out of Niles on May 20 & 21st for the Niles Charlie Chaplin Days. It has been over 3 years since we have operated out of Niles and it was exciting to be running out of there again. Even Charlie Chaplin was excited with steam

being in Niles as he was seen walking the tracks around the train in Niles!

However, the lack of facilities in Niles, specifically the lack of water, means a lot of extra effort for the steam crew as we need to bring water with us to Niles. The NATX #8502 tank car that our department has used for years and is set up with a pump for water service is currently out of service for replacement of the oak block tank supports. We

Stacktalk continued on Page 8

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

JULY 14

5:30 PM

In Whitehouse @ Brightside
In-person & Teleconference

General Members Meeting

JULY 14

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
ncry.org

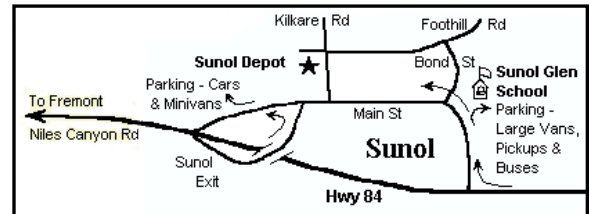
or by check mailed to:
Membership Secretary

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

BOARDING LOCATIONS

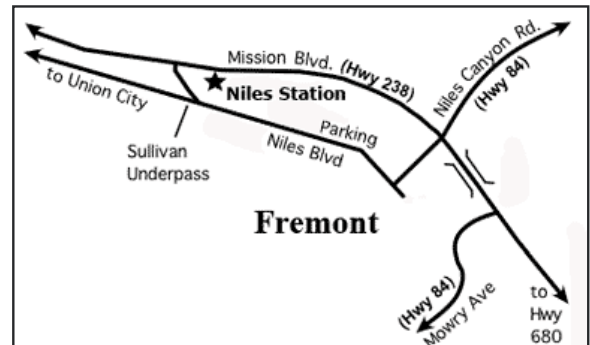
SUNOL DEPOT

6 Kilcare Road
Sunol, CA 94586



NILES STATION

37029 Mission Blvd.
Fremont, CA 94536



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

President	Henry Baum	(925) 447-7358
Vice President	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033
Recording Secretary	Matt Petach	(925) 860-4296
Membership Secretary	Rich Alexander	(510) 508-0503
Treasurer	Pat Stratton	(650) 888-8619
Director-At-Large	Justin Legg	(510) 717-4944
Director-At-Large	Warren Haack	(650) 726-7952
Director-At-Large	Patrice McDonald	(408) 772-9278
General Manager	Stephen Barkkarie	(510) 368-1733

===== DEPARTMENT HEADS =====

Brush Cutting - Mark Whitman	Operations Manager - Dexter Day
Car Department - Dennis Mann	Public Relations - Henry Baum
Charter Agent/Docents - Jim Evans	Road Foreman of Engines - Kent Hedberg
Chief Engineer - Mike Strider	Security Department - Jim Evans
Club Car Editor - Barry Lependorf	Signal Department - Curt Hoppins
Commissary - Doug Debs	Station Agent - Niles - John Fenstermacher
Crew Caller - Jackie Vlasak	Station Agent - Sunol - Donna Alexander
Gift Shop - Patrice McDonald	Steam Department Head - Alan Siegwarth
Hazmat Manager - Doug Debs	Steam Hosteler Training - Jeff Schwab
Member Communication - Linda Stanley	Technology - Matt Petach
Museum Curator - Dennis Mann	Train Master - Mark Miller
New Member Orientation - Glenn Fountain	Volunteer Coordinator - Ed Best
	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.

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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

July Activities

July 4	1st Tuesday	Members 4th of July Train,	10:30 am - Sunol - The Alexanders
July 8	2nd Saturday	Regular Train Operations,	10:30 am & 1:00 pm - Sunol
July 9	2nd Sunday	Regular Train Operations,	10:30 am & 1:00 pm - Sunol
July 14	2nd Friday	Summer Train,	10:00 am - Niles - The Alexanders
July 14	2nd Friday	Board of Directors Meeting,	5:30 pm - Brightside - Henry Baum
July 14	2nd Friday	General Member Meeting,	7:00 pm - Brightside - Henry Baum
July 15	3rd Saturday	Regular Train Operations,	10:30 am & 1:00 pm - Sunol
July 16	3rd Sunday	Regular Train Operations,	10:30 am & 1:00 pm - Sunol
July 19	3rd Wednesday	Brush Cutting,	7:30 am - Mark Whitman
July 22	4th Saturday	Brush Cutting,	7:30 am - Mark Whitman
July 28	4th Friday	Summer Train,	10:00 am - Sunol - The Alexanders

Volunteer Report

Ed Best - Volunteer Coordinator

The people listed below reported close to 2,500 volunteer hours for the month of May. Please continue to report your volunteer hours to me by e-mail at volunteers@ncry.org. Train Crew hours are collected directly from the log sheets.

Administration

Henry Baum
Mike Strider
Matt Petach
Rich Alexander
Pat Stratton
Steve Barkkarie
Justin Legg
Warren Haack
Bob Pratt
Chris Hauf
Dexter Day
Don Gholson
Donna Alexander
Ed Best
Jackie Vlasak
Joe Scardino
Kent Hedberg
Mark Miller
Mary Asturias
Steve Slabach

Archives

& Library
Brian Hitchcock

Car Department

Bill Stimmerman
Bob Moore
Bob Pratt
Bruce Burke
Chris Goodman
Dee Murphy

Car Department

Dennis Mann
Doug Debs
Howard Wise
Jim McDaniel
John Link
Linda Randolph
Marshall Williams
Nick Zamora
Norm Fraga
Phil Stone
Steve Van Meter
Tom Crawford

Commissary

Bonnie Harrington
Dan Mills
Doug Debs
Jack Harrington
Matt Petach
Sally Mills
Sue Thomas

Depot Crew & Operations

Bob Bailey
Donna Alexander
Rich Alexander

Docents

Jim Stewart
Mike Pechner

Electrical & Signals

Curt Hoppins
Jim Stewart

Facilities

Bob Bailey
Doug Debs
Gerald DeWitt
Rich Alexander
Wesley Van Osdol

Gift Shop

Charlene Murrell
Patrice McDonald

Mechanical

Bill Stimmerman
Brad Jones
Charles Franz
Chuck Kent
Dylan Olson
Gerald DeWitt
Gerry Feeney
Henry Chandler
Howard Wise
Jeff Haslam
Justin Legg
Karl Swartz
Linda Stanley
Rob Fern
Steve Jones

Meetings

Bob Pratt
Charlene Murrell
Chris Hauf
Curt Hoppins
Dan Mills
Dave Burla
Dee Murphy
Derek Schipper
Don Gholson
Donald Kirker
Donna Alexander
Doug Vanderlee
Ed Best
Gail Hedberg
George Childs
Henry Baum
Jason Pate
Jim Baber
Jim Evans
Jim Stewart
Jon Williamson
Justin Legg
Karen Kadaja
Kent Hedberg
Leslie Smith
Liam O'Leary
Linda Stanley
Lou Bradas
Mark Miller
Matt Petach
Mike Pechner
Mike Strider

Meetings

Pat Buder
Pat Stratton
Patrice McDonald
Paul Veltman
Peter Midnight
Rich Alexander
Rob Giles
Roger McCluney
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Jones
Thomas Libbey
Tim Flippo
Tom Eikerenkotter
Warren Haack
Zona Fowler

MOW & Track

Bob Bailey
Bob Pratt
Brad Jones
Chris Campi
Dee Murphy
Doug Vanderlee
Jason Pate
John Zielinski
Jorg Linke
Mark Whitman
Matt Petach
Mike Strider
Pat Stratton
Ron Thomas
Steve Barkkarie

MOW & Track

Steve Hill Steve
Knoeck

Other
Alan Siegwarth
Barry Lependorf
Bob Pratt
Curt Hoppins
Dan Mills
Dee Murphy
Donna Alexander
Ed Best
Karl Swartz
Linda Stanley
Matt Petach
Mike Strider
Patrice Warren
Steve Jones
Tom Eikerenkotter
Warren Haack
Zonker Harris

Train Crew

Alan Siegwarth
Bent Christensen
Bob Pratt
Brad Jones
Charles Franz
Chris Chisom
Chuck Kent
Don Shaffer
Doug Vanderlee
Dylan Olson

Train Crew

Ed Best
Eric Wright
Henry Chandler
Jackie Vlasak
Jeff Schwab
Jim Stewart
John Sutkus
Jon Williamson
Jorg Linke
Liam O'Leary
Mark Miller
Mason Denton
Matt Petach
Michael Stockwell
Nick Alexander
Nick Zamora
Peter Savoy
Roger Skinner
Ron Quilici
Sanjay Bhandari
Steve Barkkarie
Steve Coon
Ted Unruh
Tim Flippo
Warren Haack



President's Report

Henry Baum - President

Well, the election of officers for the 2023-2024 fiscal year has been successfully completed, and I am relieved. Two people stepped up to run as write-in candidates for the Vice-President position, which made it a horse race. If either person had been willing to be nominated, they probably would have run unopposed, and at PLA, that almost always means you win. Rich Alexander ran unopposed for Membership Secretary and, as expected, won the popular vote. With two write-ins, it is a more democratic process, but running is definitely chancy. Jim Evans won the Vice-President position and will be returning to the PLA Board. Warren Haack will be returning as a Director-At-Large. I want to welcome Patrice McDonald to the Board, as she won the second Director-At-Large position that was available. For those who don't know (because you rarely ride the train as a volunteer or a passenger) Patrice works tirelessly at the depot and manages our gift shop along with her mother Charlene Murrell and the Alexanders (who are always there it seems).

So, with Justin Legg continuing as the third At-Large Director, Matt Petach continuing as Recording Secretary, Pat Stratton as Treasurer, Steve Barkkarie as General Manager, and myself as President, we have a fully staffed Board of Directors. The new Board takes effect at the July Board of Directors meeting on July 14th. Shortly thereafter we will have a one-day informal Board Retreat where the Board members get together to talk about any changes or projects we would like to see concentrated on. We also review the Board Policies to make sure the organization is under proper control.

One of the things we will be planning for is the formation of the Niles Canyon Museum, which was announced in the May Club Car. This concept actually grew out of a discussion that occurred at last year's Board Retreat, which proves how valuable these can be.

Just like the Niles Canyon Railway

has a number of departments that focus on the safe running of the railroad, the museum will need a structure. Departments will be formed to focus on the different aspects of running a brick-and-mortar museum. One such scenario requires having an Executive Director (which we have never had before). Executive Directors are responsible for the success or failure of the business and act as a figurehead for the business. He typically works externally to the operation, meeting with politicians and potential donors to benefit the organization.

Another scenario is more like how our railroad runs, with the General Manager in control. For museums that position is normally called Managing Director. The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring that a business's performance is moving in the right direction, and they work with the departments to identify areas for improvement.

There is even a third scenario where one has both. We certainly don't need to start there, but it should be part of our long-term strategy.

Especially in the early days, it probably will be beneficial to us to have an Advisory Committee to maximize our benefits to the community, which is truly the objective of creating this museum operation. This committee would meet regularly to discuss the proposals being adopted regarding the museum's development. Typically, the Committee would be made up of the Managing or Executive Director as well as people from outside the PLA. Civic leaders (such as Mayor of Fremont, County Supervisor), representatives from business associations (such as Fremont Chamber of Commerce, Niles Main Street Association), representatives from other neighboring museums and the Fremont Rotary Clubs, as well as owners of other local businesses would be invited to participate and provide their expertise.

I am just spit-balling ideas here, no serious discussions have taken place at any level regarding actually forming

this new division. I hope the Board will be able to concentrate on this in the coming year. While I am pleased that some long-time members have shown support for this new concept and manner, I would really like to hear from more of you about these plans. The last line in my articles always asks for you to let me hear from you, but few people ever do. You can usually find me at Brightside Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, in-person discussions are always the best. If you wish to write a manifesto about the formation of Niles Canyon Museum, send it to me and I will read it.

We will still always need your help. No matter what it is, 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. I REALLY want to hear your thoughts on what we should be doing to move the organization forward.

Respectfully submitted

Henry Baum

JOIN THE PLA

Yearly Membership Dues:

Primary \$48

Second Adult \$24

Child (under 18, \$12)

**Payments can be made
on-line through
ncry.org**

or by check mailed to:

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

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

2023 Election Report

I'd like to start out by saying a big thank you to all our voting members who participated in the 2023 annual election cycle. The nominating committee, consisting of Dave Burla, Ed Best, and Mark Miller canvassed the voting members to put together our slate of candidates for the board. The slate of candidates presented to the voting members consisted of Richard Alexander, running for Membership Secretary, Warren Haack, Dee Murphy, and Patrice McDonald running for the two open Director-at-Large positions, but with no candidates running for the open position of Vice President. After the slate of candidates were finalized, Henry reminded the voting members that write-in candidates have won positions in the past. When the ballots were collected and counted by Dave Burla, it turned out he was correct. We had several write-in candidates for the open position of Vice President, with Jim Evans receiving the most write-in votes.

Now that the election process has concluded, I'd like to extend a special thanks to our outgoing officers, Mike Strider and Bob Pratt for their service to the organization. And a huge welcome to our new board members, Vice President Jim Evans, and Director-at-Large Patrice McDonald, as well as returning board members Warren Haack and Richard Alexander. Congratulations to our new board members, and thank you to everyone who participated in the election, as candidates and as voters. We depend upon you as active voting members to guide and shape the leadership of this organization. We wouldn't be where we are today without you—thank you!

Matt Petach



Chris Hauf Photograph

The Skookum stares down Happy Valley Bridge.

SEED BALL FUNDRAISING

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

WILDFLOWER SEEDING PROJECT

THE BOY SCOUTS WILL BE LEADING THE PROJECT TO
SPREAD WILDFLOWER SEEDS ALONG THE NCRY RIGHT OF WAY

WE ARE SEEKING SPONSORS TO FUND THE PURCHASE
OF SEEDS APPROPRIATE FOR THE
ALAMEDA CREEK WATERSHED



A FUNDRAISING PAGE HAS BEEN SET UP
<https://gofund.me/08472c32>



All proceeds will be used to purchase seeds & supplies
for the NCRY Right of Way



E-COUPLING INFORMATION

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

Email: To Join Members Email List, send an Email to: info@ncry.org

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

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

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



Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

Strange as it may seem, July is the real start of the year for the Niles Canyon Railway. It is the beginning of our new fiscal year, and it is often when new projects get off the ground. We have reached a major landmark in our Eastward build and to the West our massive donation from the California Trolley and Railroad Corporation will begin to arrive at Niles Station. Car restorations are in full swing and track repairs from last winter's storms are in high gear. We've elected new board members and the annual Fourth of July members picnic takes place as well. Special events like the Beer train, public speeder rides and photo specials are on the calendar, and we have taken on a healthy charter schedule on top of regular operations. To support all that activity annual crew recertification and railway workers reviews have taken place. A new Brakeman training class will take place soon, as advertised in the previous issue (July 29th & 30th). We are set up for another banner year.

We are still digging out from the winter's wild weather and our beautiful track will need attention over the summer. Many ties are coming to the end of their service life. They have given up the ghost and will need to be replaced. Our inspection team has been very busy and has located a couple areas that where trains will need to obey a precautionary "slow order" (that is something we have not had to implement in many years but is what happens when you get tons of water and things then dry out). What happens is the roadbed gets "spongy" when wet and then, when the track dries out, a gap develops between the base of the rail and the ties. The fix is to replace bad ties, tamp up the rest and add ballast as needed. We can handle the repairs, as our East building team will have time to lend a hand because there will be a pause in the Eastward expansion until we can finish surfacing



Dexter Day Photograph

Crew Recertification class.

the mainline up to Happy Valley Bridge. We will hire professionals from Rail Works (formerly H&H engineering our long-time contractor) to bring in a production tamper to complete that section from Verona crossing to HVB.

Down West in the Niles Yard preparations for storage containers that will hold bricks, and other parts for the Lenzen roundhouse given to the PLA by CTRC, are done and the containers are set. Now we will undertake the job of sorting out all the track material brought over from Shinn Street yard closing and begin assembly of switches for display tracks. The plan is to dispose of the excess asphalt grindings donated to us years ago and fortunately our neighbors, the Farwell's, have need of materials to repair storm damaged roads on several of their properties. They have generously offered to take all the surplus material and pay for the trucks to haul it. It is nice to have friends.

June is later than usual for annual crew certifications and Roadway Worker Protection reviews but by holding them



Stephen Barkkarie Photograph

Bill Stimmerman and Carl K. rig the KM turbo.

on successive weekends, everybody had a chance to sign up even if they were volunteering for an operation or

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

had other commitment. In the classes I attended, I saw many familiar faces (none of them looking as young as years before) and a few new ones (I wish there were more). Our volunteers go through frequent review, and I am proud of our record of safe operations.

So far this year we have hosted several wedding charters in association with the Casa Bella event center in Sunol. I have been involved in these events and I can tell you they are a lot of fun. The event center handles the catering of refreshments and clean up, and they do a great job. Everyone is dressed up (our crews included), having a good time, and celebrating a happy occasion. Many are scheduled after regular operations, so it makes for a very profitable day. We just switch crews onto an already assembled train and, with the longer days, runs are finished well before sunset. This relationship is growing into something special to us as well as Casa Bella and is great for fostering good will in Sunol.

We also hosted another charter for emeritus family members of Bud Barlow. This time they took advantage of the CW M-200 for a reunion of four generations (35 people) from all over the country. They had a tour of the canyon and a stop in Brightside yard to tour the SP10040 "Diner" (which was the last project Bud worked on) and once again had a tour of the SP121 "Western" business car that was once used as a rolling office by their grandsire Oren Barlow who was a regional superintendent for Southern Pacific. I informed them that we recently attained full ownership of the car which prompted offers to help in the restoration. They ended the event with a buffet lunch at Bosco's restaurant in Sunol and even invited the crew to join. At the conclusion, they made a very generous additional donation to the PLA. That's what I call icing on the cake for that charter.

Last month I mentioned being ready



Steve Barkkarie loads NCRY Dump truck with storm debris.

to mount the turbo charger on the Krauss-Moffet, and to that end I ran our Pettibone crane to remove a working turbo from the inoperative engine for paint and installation on the number two engine. The leaky turbo was remounted on the number one engine and the intake hood and stack bolted on. The running engine now has two good turbos and will put out full power. I got ahead of things when I said restoration was nearly done. I learned that currently it has no charging system (removed when de-commissioned) and it has no cooling fan drive system (its hydraulic drive, of course), and must be re-invented. Well, I guess you do learn something every day.

These things are just the cream that rises to the top of the bucket. There are many more irons in the fire around the yard like equipment repairs, facility upgrades, volunteer recruitment and promotion of our museum. We are constantly chasing possible donations like track materials, and some donations require weeks of preparation before they can be moved (like the steam powered wrecker from state museum). So, if you ever wonder "what should I do tomorrow?", reach out to



Stephen Barkkarie Photograph

Howard Wise guides the turbo charger onto the engine.

the Niles Canyon Railway, I guarantee we have something new and different for you to try.

Stephen Barkkarie
General Manager

Stack Talk

Alan Siegwarth

Continued from Page 1

have been slowly working on this project, but it has turned into a much more complicated and time-consuming project due to difficulty in obtaining the correct wood and lack of proper wood working tools at Brightside. With the water car out of service, we ended up using the AOX #848 Flying A tankcar for water service in Niles and hand carried another pump on the locomotive to set up for use in Niles. Supporting the operations in Niles requires a LOT of logistics behind the scenes because we need two full tank cars – one for water in Brightside and one in Niles. We attempted to use the well at Brightside when we can but as the water system is not set up with level controls yet, we still end up having to go to Sunol to fill the tankcars. Going forward, a little work on the Brightside water system (or even better actual water service in Niles!) would really help with steam operations out of Niles. We are looking forward to another full weekend of steam out of Niles scheduled in September!

The #4 is now out of service for her annual inspection. We are planning on

operating the Skookum the rest of the year, but as is typical with all things Skookum - we have found something else that needs repair. During our June operation, one of the journal bearings started heating up. The locomotive made it back to Brightside but we now have something else to look into and repair. Unfortunately, it is not an easy repair and as such the Skookum will be sidelined for a while and will unfortunately not be able to operate in July as scheduled.

In addition to all the operations support, we are lucky that Art Randall

and John Blaine have been available to work on the SP #1744 suspension. They have the two spring packs back together that we have been working on for the past six months. Additional work is being done on the suspension along with frame repairs and painting. The work on the #1744 has slowed a little bit with everything else going on but there will be some big progress in the next several months with the wheel work so keep your eyes open for more news in future issues of the Club Car!

Alan Siegwarth



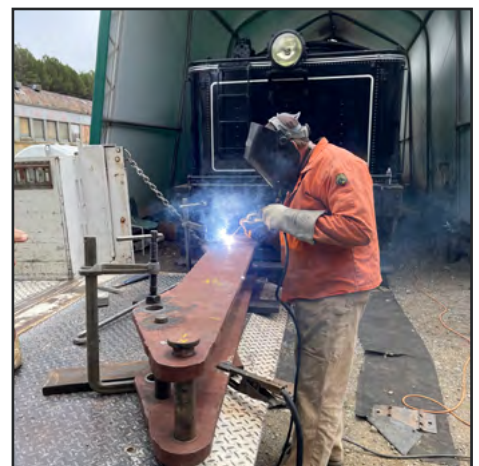
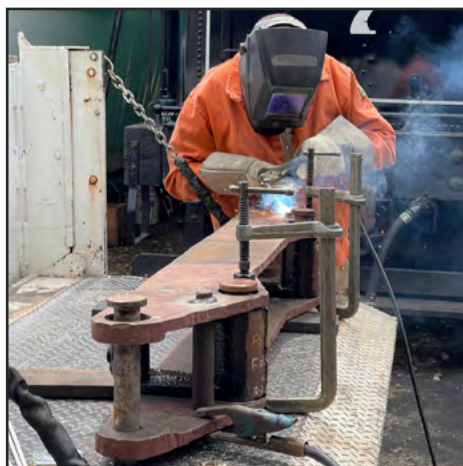
Chris Hauf Photograph

On the way back, a photo run-by for the crew was held at Arroyo de la Laguna Bridge. The heavy rains removed a lot of the brush and trees.



Chris Hauf Photograph

Going to work. The #7 heads east early in the AM to pick up another day's worth of passengers on another sold out steam day.



Chris Hauf Photograph

Steam Department welder, John Blaine, works on welding up the re-machined spring packs for Southern Pacific #1744.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Passion For PLA – Your new Vice President

My name is Jim Evans, newly elected Vice President of the Pacific Locomotive Association. For those who don't know me, I have some background with our organization.

As a voting member since 1968, I've got great memories of the early days of the group.

We started with a small conglomeration of hard core railfans that had a lot of fun running varied main and shortline excursions and pulling together a few locomotives and cars on abandoned track at Point Molate in Richmond we called The Castro Point Railway. Then young now passed on guys like Henry Luna, C. G. Heimerdinger, and Karl Koenig were active participants.

I've chartered our NCRy trains for my wedding, 70th birthday, and most recently, retirement from BART where I worked as an administrator for 43 years.

Since 1968, I've served on the PLA BOD in every position except VP and At Large Director. I was President in 2000. Enough on my PLA background and pleasant memories.

The organization has greatly changed since 1968 when our annual budget was around \$900. We are currently doing very well thanks to our very skilled and dedicated volunteers. However, it is clear to me that we are maxing out on our ability to prosper as an organization dependent solely on volunteers. This is becoming more evident each year as we are all aging and many of our key members are no longer able to help as in the past. This is especially evident in the maintenance and restoration of rolling stock.

PLA has been very successful in retaining a contracted General Manager and there are many challenges ahead, related to among other tasks, expansion of the facilities in Brightside Yard and development in the Niles wye utilizing the turntable, roundhouse, and water tank recently donated to us by Santa Clara County.

To help address these issues, a Mas-



One of my first train rides was ironically behind our now restored SP GP9 5623 in 1957 on the San Francisco – Felton Suntan Special Excursion train. Photo is of my mom and me in front of 5623 at Big Trees near Felton in the Santa Cruz Mountains.



Photo of the late Carol Sullivan and me staffing PLA information booth in 1982.

ter Plan group has been working for the past year and will soon have a comprehensive document to share with our membership. In addition, At Large Director Justin Legg is also working on a Strategic Plan to help guide our future.



2021 photo from my BART retirement train on the NCRy with 5623 as power.

Finally, I appreciate the opportunity to be your Vice President for the next two years and welcome any comments.

Sincerely,
Jim Evans

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

This Month's tale:

A FORGOTTEN PLACE, "POINT MOLATE"

This month, this tale is going to go back to another time that was the formation of the railroads of the Pacific Locomotive Association. These railroads that gave them the opportunity to grow in size and into the organization that it has become today. In the beginning, finding a place to call home was the biggest problem. Land in the Bay Area was not laying around vacant. Especially, to build a railroad on. This was needed to give them the ability to rescue old railroad equipment that would have gone to scrap if not preserved. This is where this month's tale begins.

It seemed like it all fell together. The right place at the right time. Henry Luna, Charlie Heimerdinger, and three others were able to sign a lease agreement. "Henry Luna signed the agreement on a tail section of a West Coast DC 3 while working at the airport". This agreement would allow them to restore and run trains at a place called Point Molate in Richmond which was a track that extended through the Navy Military Supply Depot around the lagoon and cliffs to end of track at a location next to the San Rafael Bridge. There was an old quarry structure which was put into use as an engine house for the engine that they had. The big piece of property that was able to be signed for was the loading area of the Naval Supply Depot. This consisted of an upper and lower concrete loading dock area with a lower flat concrete pad area. Better yet, it was fenced in with gates. This was great for what we will use to store and restore equipment. The Pad as it was called, didn't have any structures, but it did have protection. It was better than what they had when they took over the quarry property. The best part is that the track that was given to them gave them



Satellite Photograph

Castro Point in Richmond is the founding place where the PLA named the railway. The ROW is now a road. You can still visit the location.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

a place to board passengers at Point Molate Beach Park next to the water overlooking the bay, the surrounding hills and mountains. The track ran right through the park area which was ideal for loading passengers onto the trains.

Better yet, the track continued East through the base which we were able to use to transfer cars to and from the portion of the railroad that we had to use. This track continued across a lagoon and connected up to the ATSF railroad. This gave us a way of getting equipment into the railroad as we were able to acquire them, except for not having any structures to protect equipment, you couldn't ask for a nicer setting at that time. As the Castro Point Railway grew, we started to become known for a fun afternoon by the water. The railroad also became known for running steam engines which people hadn't seen run in their lifetime. As the railroad grew, so did the crowds. This did create a problem with the parking. You have the main road that comes over the hill that runs by the park and parking area into the Naval Base. This had to be corrected as the crowds increased. So, we opened the lower pad area for parking. This formed the "Keeper of the Cones". We had the place lined out with cones to park the crowd and the crew helping people to park. The Point Molate Beach Park which was hardly ever used is now getting more attention from the Park Department in maintaining it. With the train ride and the sites that surrounded the Bay, it was the ideal spot to come for a Sunday outing. The kids really liked the park and they had a place to play and take a train ride along the bay. You couldn't ask for a better combination for an outing.

The equipment that we had was being reconditioned and repainted. We had some nice restored equipment and the park area had food service which we served out of the All-Day Lunch



Satellite Photograph

This is the pad area which was the home base for the PLA operation which was the old Naval supply area along with Molate Beach Park.



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph

The pad area at the Naval Supply area which was the home base for the PLA and the Castro Point Railway.

Car which is the last one of its kind left. Also, we had a nice little gift shop in the Combine Car. All in all, it was a fun operation and a fun outing for the day for our passengers. The biggest problem we had with the railroad was the maintaining of the right of way. We were not flush with cash, and



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph

Molate Beach was the loading area for the CPLY trains. The All Day Lunch was the snack bar and the Combine behind it was the gift shop.



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph

Molate Beach play area for the kids along with the beach area. Throw in a train ride, it makes for a good day outing.



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph

One of the trains arriving at the Molate Beach area after a run out around the lagoon to San Rafael Bridge.

maintaining the railroad was not an easy task at that time. Ties were the big issue. We couldn't buy them, so,

Continued on next page

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

Continued from previous page

we relied on donated relay ties that we got from the railroads in the area. When we got ties, Phil Orth and Bones Andrews would put them into the ground. The track did not look like what we see today on the NCRY. We only could attack the weak area with one or two ties to stabilize the track structure. Running logging engines helped with the poor roadbed. The speeds on the railroad reflected the track condition that we were running on. You might say that this was not a 20 MPH railroad. Over all, the railroad looked pretty good and the people really liked the area and the ride. But good things don't always last. We had to leave the Castro Point Railway when we lost the lease from the Navy. You would think that all was lost for the PLA at that point, the PLA lucked out. The railroad right of way through Niles Canyon was becoming available since the Southern Pacific railroad had abandoned the right of way and it has reverted back to the County. The PLA was able to sign a lease with the County for the use of the right of way. We would have to build our future in Niles Canyon, but we had a place to go and create our new home. Leaving the Castro Point Railway was a hard thing to do, but seeing what would become available to our organization in Niles Canyon made the transition a lot easier. But now the big

task begins for this group. We now had to build a railroad from the ground up. The only items that remain intact were the bridges with work required on all of them. We learned as we proceeded in



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph
Train heading through the interchange area heading toward Castro Point.



Dexter Day Photograph
Posed photo for the CPROY at the interchange tracks.



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph
One of the trains waiting to depart the Molate Beach area.



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph
No. 4 heading toward the end of track at the Quarry next to San Rafael Bridge.

laying track and getting our equipment into the canyon and onto the new railroad. We still hold fond memories of the nice settings of the Castro Point Railway, but now we are reconstructing another railroad through a different setting in the Canyon with the hills and creek that runs through it. We really couldn't ask for a nicer setting since we had to leave another beautiful place, the Castro Point Railway at Point Molate.

With that said, another tale comes to an end.

Dexter Day



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph
Double header No.12 and No. 5 going through Red Rock next to Bay and are heading toward the EOT at the San Rafael Bridge.



Buford (Biff) Shreeve Photograph
Train with No. 5 heading back to Molate Beach going through Red Rock cliffs and along the Bay on CPROY.

Membership Report

Rich Alexander - Membership

New members in the last 30 days:

Joseph S. Chavez; Ryan Davis; Larry Dong; Ryan Dong; Dominic Fawver; Anthony Fernandez; Jacob Goldsmith; Kelly Goldsmith; River Goldsmith; Desiree A. LeVeira-Ferguson; Garon Michaelis; Jeremy S. Mills; Albert Ou; Anthony Rodriguez; Dennis E. Stone; James Stone.

Policy Change:

In light of the new meeting arrangements that the board has enacted I proposed that the record keeping be updated.

I proposed that in all future meetings that are held online with both Board and Membership meetings taking place on the same date, with meetings being held consecutively, that those members attending the meetings only get credit for attending one meeting. Also, to streamline the record-keeping process we are eliminating

the process of counting hours for the meetings. One reason for this is that attending meetings is not the same as volunteering on a project in the yard or doing physical activity for the PLA.

The board agreed and approved the new policy below.

A New Policy will start on July 1, 2023, that at all future meetings members will only be given credit for attending one meeting if the meetings are concurrent and that credit for hours are not given for attendance. This shall apply to all members including board members.

Just a reminder to all members who are renewing their membership online. The last step in the process is to click the confirmation button. If you forget to finish your membership processed, I still get a renewal processed letter from Club Express stating you renewed. The database still shows dues not paid and I am sending out a letter asking you to check to see if you have got confirmation from your bank showing the payment was made. This is a time-consuming process.

Paul Veltman maintains a semi non-official email list that he monitors. A lot of information is passed around on this list. There are a few simple rules for using the list. Most of which pertains to PLA/Niles Canyon Railway topics only. Leave personal agenda and political items for other means of communication. If you stray from the rules Paul will let you know. If you want to be included on the list, contact Paul at: stumpie1@sbcglobal.net he can add you to the email list. This is especially important if you would like to volunteer because our Department Heads send out emails when someone is needed, especially during Train of Lights.

Rich Alexander
Membership Secretary

Brush Cutting

Mark Whitman

On Wednesday, May 24 we started out in the vicinity of Mile Post 32 to continue trimming heading east. When we went to start the chipper, we realized that the battery was dead. Bob Pratt went back to Brightside to get the portable battery charger and jumper cables.

We finally got the chipper started and it probably only ran for about 10 minutes, when we realized that one of the shives for the main drive pulley was coming off the shaft. This was caused by the fact that we had just replaced the belt and probably it was not aligned properly. Not knowing how long it would take to get the chipper repaired we picked up and headed back to Brightside. Once at Brightside we decided to take the chipper off the rails, and it was early enough to deliver the chipper to Cal-Line Equipment in Livermore. It was a frustrating day since we had a large crew and yet were unable to accomplish our goals.

The crew today consisted of Matt Petach, John Zielinski, Ron Thomas, Brad Jones, Steve Knoech, Jason Pate, Joe Romani, Bob Pratt, and Mark Whitman.

On Friday, May 26 I called Cal-Line Equipment, they told me that the chipper would be done mid-morning. Brad Jones and I went to Livermore to pick it up, brought it back to Brightside, and put it back on the rails. This was done early enough that we had time to head to Mile Post 32 with the bucket truck to do some trimming prior to Saturday's brush cutting crew.

On Saturday, May 27 we went back to Mile Post 32 and got a lot done as everything went smoothly.

The crew today consisted of Matt Petach, John Zielinski, Ron Thomas, Brad Jones, Steve Knoech, Chris Campi, and Mark Whitman.

Mark Whitman

NILES CANYON RAILWAY **BRAKEMEN CLASS**

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

**CLASS ROOM STUDIES WILL
BE AT THE WHITE HOUSE
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

Regarding our financial results for the month and YTD through May 31, 2023: Our Balance Sheet looks good. We have no long term liabilities; and most of our short term liabilities - Charter Deposits Held - have become revenue in June upon completion of those charters. Our cash will take a heavy hit later this month when we pay what is always our largest bill, for annual insurance premiums. But even after that our cash position will remain very good.

Our train operations brought to our Income Statement almost \$40,000 in May, including steam and diesel runs, School Trains, speeder rides, and a Beer Train. We won't know how successful the beer train was at covering its costs until I have seen all its costs. Gift shop and commissary sales were \$3,100 and \$3,600 respectively. Contributions added another \$3,900 to revenue.

From that income we spent \$9,000 on train operations; \$26,500 in the mechanical department, mostly on the SP1744 boiler rebuild; over \$20,000 on facilities, the largest expense there being design fees for our Brightside Yard fuel storage system; \$3,400 on shop tools and supplies; and \$13,000 on administrative costs.

Our budgeted revenue for this fiscal year was \$1,315,900; and our actual revenue for the past 11 months was \$1,498,000. So, we are ahead of our projection with another month to go. This is primarily due to besting our TOL revenue projection by almost \$250,000. Our revenue projections overall were quite conservative. Covid didn't present any problems for us; and we were lucky that the rainy weather let us finish our TOL season before doing its damage - we'll be the rest of this year working on those problems.

Our budgeted expenditures were

high, but they included large projects that didn't get off the ground this year (Track 4 Shed) or had schedule slippage (SP1744 Restoration) so our actual costs were significantly less than those budgeted. Our administrative expenses will end up right in line with our projections.

If you can help us as a volunteer craftsmen or manager on any of the variety of projects we are planning, have budgeted, or have in process, contact any Board member for further information. We have interesting work to do; we can use more talented people. By the way, my term as Treasurer ends this time next year. If you can help us keep our financial records and oversee our financial dealings, contact me for details.

If you spent your own money for an authorized purchase on behalf of the PLA, you should request reimbursement by July 15. The proper request form (available from me by email, or on paper in the Treasurer's mailbox in Blake's), signed, with

receipts attached can be put back in that mailbox in Blake's or emailed to me as pdf's. These expenses need to be recorded prior to closing our fiscal year-end books for our Financial Audit. Our accounting fiscal year ends June 30, in about 2 weeks.

To control costs the PLA needs to know what it has spent in a timely fashion, so requests for reimbursement must be timely. As an example, we can't approve another popular Beer Train for August if we don't know both the revenue and the expenditures resulting from the last one, in May. If you have expenditures, make your request for reimbursement monthly so our cash flow and budgets are up to date. Requests with receipts older than 60 days are likely to become In-kind Contributions.

If you have questions or comments on these or other topics, write or call.

Pat Stratton

Treasurer

treasurer@ncry.org

650-888-8619

SEED BALL FUNDRAISING

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

WILDFLOWER SEEDING PROJECT

THE BOY SCOUTS WILL BE LEADING THE PROJECT TO
SPREAD WILDFLOWER SEEDS ALONG THE NCRy RIGHT OF WAY

WE ARE SEEKING SPONSORS TO FUND THE PURCHASE
OF SEEDS APPROPRIATE FOR THE
ALAMEDA CREEK WATERSHED



A FUNDRAISING PAGE HAS BEEN SET UP
<https://gofund.me/08472c32>



All proceeds will be used to purchase seeds & supplies
for the NCRy Right of Way

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

The McCrackens leaving NCRy and California

Al and Ethelyn McCracken are in the process of moving to Tennessee to be near their son and his wife and family. Their children had a going away party for them on June 3rd and several of our members attended to say thank you and good bye to them.

Al is the reason Rich and I joined the Niles Canyon Railway. We met them at their home one Sunday over 20 years ago when we were visiting the Open Houses for BAGRS, Bay Area Garden Railroads, before putting our G scale train layout in our backyard. Rich was talking to Al and decided to help out at the Sunol Depot a few Sundays in June when Al took his trains and tracks to the depot for kids to operate the trains while waiting to ride the big trains with their parents on Sundays. Al would set them up on the floor in the baggage room of the depot and the kids would take turns operating the controls. An adult was needed to make sure every child had a turn at the knobs. Rich would leave in the morning and tell me he'd be back in a few hours, and he would be gone all day. After several Sundays of this I decided to go with him and see what was going on at the depot. After several times of helping Al, he gave Rich a membership application and said "you seem to be enjoying this, here's an application to join." We've been "enjoying this" ever since and still don't have our garden railroad in our backyard!

We remember helping with Train of Lights operations in Sunol that first year of joining when we didn't have the depot functional yet and worked out of the little building in the parking lot, directing people on where they could park, and boy did it rain that season. And ahh, those good times when several members met at Al and Ethelyn's home to help stuff TOL tickets into envelopes when Al used to send them through the mail to people who bought tickets after calling him up to buy them. Everything was over the phone. We've come a long way to now having people book



Ethelyn and Al McCracken.

Al & Ethie McCracken
401 Princeton Rd, Apt 203
Johnson City TN 37601
(423) 975-1922

Ethie and I are moving to Tennessee to in order to keep our independence, stay together as a couple, and enable family to visit and care for us. We have out grown our ability to remain independent here due to California medical standards/laws. Tennessee also offers 60% of the cost and 100% of the medical care.

tickets online!

We wish you both a happy retirement in Tennessee and we will miss you and thank you for all of your hours of volunteering with the Niles Canyon

Railway.

God bless and take care. I'm sure you'll find some railroads back there.:)

donna alexander

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Time Sensitive Material



Chris Hauf Photograph

On May 27th, the Steam Department took Columbia River Belt Line Railway #7, the Skookum, out for a test run with some of the museum's historic freight cars. Flags were added to allow for some marketing photography and were then removed at Sunol for the run east. The #7 is seen here running along Highway 84 west of Sunol.