



# THE CLUB CAR



**Bulletin 734**

**Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.**

**October 2024**

## Our Volunteers at their Best



*Chris Hauf photograph*

Gerald DeWitt shares a smile as he gives this young man a tour of the cab of #3 between runs at Sunol. This shows our volunteers at their best sharing our mission with a new generation. Gerald answered questions and allowed the young man plenty of time to take his videos and photos.

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It is always fun to catch your fellow volunteers at their best and in moments you really identify with. On Sunday, September 15th during our first weekend steam train rides of September, Fireman, Gerald DeWitt, invited this young railfan into the cab of our Robert Dollar Co. #3 during the layover between the 10:30AM and 1:00PM departure. With Dylan Olson tending the fire as student fireman, Gerald was able to give this young man

his full attention. He spent a good five minutes letting him take photos/videos around the cab while answering his questions about the #3. As he left the cab, he enthusiastically gave his father, who was on the platform, a big thumbs up.

As a kid, steam engines were a magical beast and the cab was a place you only dreamed of being invited up into. I did not grow up where there

**Our Volunteers 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

### General Members Meeting

**OCTOBER 11**  
**5:30 PM**

In-person & Teleconference  
at the

**Veterans Memorial Hall**  
37154 2nd St, Fremont, CA  
(Corner of 2nd St. and E St. in Niles)

=====

Board of Directors Meeting  
follows the Members Meeting

## CLUB CAR SUBMISSIONS

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 Microsoft **WORD**.  
Submit photos in jpg format.

The photo should have a description  
and / or identifying the people in it.

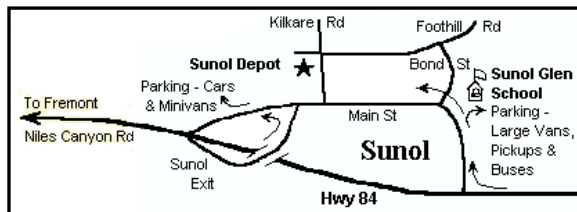
Send email to:  
**clubcar@ncry.org**

The editor reserves  
the right to hold or edit  
material as necessary.

## BOARDING LOCATIONS

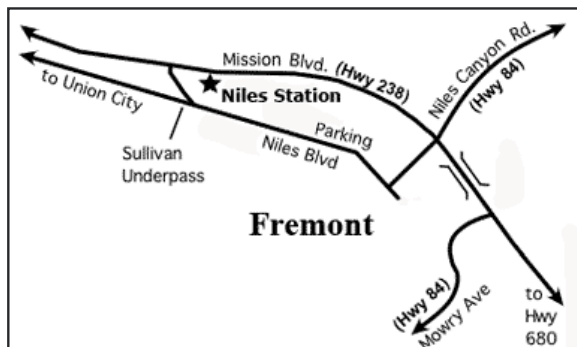
### SUNOL DEPOT

6 Kilcare Road  
Sunol, CA 94586



### NILES STATION

37029 Mission Blvd.  
Fremont, CA 94536  
(Niles)



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

|                      |                   |                |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| President            | Tim Flippo        | (650) 575-3341 |
| 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     | New Member Orientation...Glenn Fountain   |
| Car Department.....          | Dennis Mann      | Operations Manager.....Dexter Day         |
| Charter Agent / Docents..... | Jim Evans        | Public Relations.....Henry Baum           |
| Chief Engineer.....          | Mike Strider     | Road Foreman of Engines..Kent Hedberg     |
| Club Car Editor.....         | Barry Lependorf  | Security Department.....Jim Evans         |
| Commissary.....              | Doug Debs        | Signal Department.....Curt Hoppins        |
| 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     |
| Marketing Manager.....       | Chris Hauf       | Technology.....Matt Petach                |
| Member Communication.....    | Linda Stanley    | Train Master.....Mark Miller              |
| Museum Curator.....          | Dennis Mann      | 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.

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 each month except December at 5:30 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Hall in Niles at 37154 2nd St (corner of 2nd St and E St). Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.

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

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## OCTOBER SCHEDULE

|                   |                 |                                |               |                               |                |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| October 2         | Wednesday       | Maintenance of Way             | Brightside    | 7:30 am                       | - Ron Thomas   |
| October 5         | Saturday        | Building Track East            | Brightside    | 8:00 am                       | - Mike Strider |
| October 9         | Wednesday       | Maintenance of Way             | Brightside    | 7:30 am                       | - Ron Thomas   |
| October 11        | Friday          | General Meeting                | Veterans Hall | 5:30 pm                       | - Tim Flippo   |
| <b>October 12</b> | <b>Saturday</b> | <b>Regular Train Operation</b> | <b>Sunol</b>  | <b>10:30 am &amp; 1:00 pm</b> |                |
| <b>October 13</b> | <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>Regular Train Operation</b> | <b>Sunol</b>  | <b>10:30 am &amp; 1:00 pm</b> |                |
| October 16        | Wednesday       | Maintenance of Way             | Brightside    | 7:30 am                       | - Ron Thomas   |
| <b>October 19</b> | <b>Saturday</b> | <b>Regular Train Operation</b> | <b>Sunol</b>  | <b>10:30 am &amp; 1:00 pm</b> |                |
| <b>October 20</b> | <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>Regular Train Operation</b> | <b>Sunol</b>  | <b>10:30 am &amp; 1:00 pm</b> |                |
| October 23        | Wednesday       | Maintenance of Way             | Brightside    | 7:30 am                       | - Ron Thomas   |
| October 26        | Saturday        | Brush Cutting                  | Brightside    | 7:30 am                       | - Mark Whitman |
| October 30        | Wednesday       | Maintenance of Way             | Brightside    | 7:30 am                       | - Ron Thomas   |

## Volunteer Report

**Charlene Murrell - Volunteer Hours Coordinator**

The people listed below reported 2,991 volunteer hours for the month of August. Volunteer hours should be reported to Charlene Murrell at volunteer-hours@ncry.org. Train Crew hours will continue to be collected from log sheets. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY on the LOG SHEETS. If I can't read your writing, you will not get credit for your hours.

### Administration

Bob Bradley  
Bob Pratt  
Charlene Murrell  
Chris Hauf  
Dexter Day  
Don Gholson  
Ed Best  
Henry Baum  
Jackie Vlasak  
Joe Scardino  
Kent Hedberg  
Mark Miller  
Mary Asturias  
Matt Petach  
Pat Stratton  
Rich Alexander  
Sarah Fritz  
Stephen Barkkarie  
Tim Flippo

### Archives & Library

Brian Hitchcock

### Car Department

Bob Moore  
Bob Pratt

### Car Department

Bruce Burke  
Cynder Niemela  
Dennis Mann  
Dexter Day  
Ed Best  
Gregory Gleeson  
Jacques Verdier  
Jim Evans  
Joan Weber  
John Link  
Linda Randolph  
Marshall Williams  
Matt Petach  
Norm Fraga  
Steve Van Meter  
Sue Thomas  
Tim Flippo  
Tom Crawford

### Commissary

Bonnie Harrington  
Cheryl Dougherty  
Colin Snow  
Doug Debs  
Jacques Verdier  
Joseph Romani

### Commissary

Mary Perez  
Sally Miles  
Sue Thomas

### Docent

Jim Evans  
Tom Stone

### Electrical & Signals

Bent Christensen  
Jacques Verdier  
James Stewart  
Joseph Faria-Poynter

### Facilities

Bob Pratt  
Doug Debs  
Doug Vanderlee  
Jack Harrington  
John Zielinski  
Linda Standley  
Matt Petach  
Steve Jones

### Gift Shop

Charlene Murrell

### Gift Shop

Patrice McDonald

### Mechanical

Charles Franz  
Henry Chandler  
Jeff Haslam  
Joseph Faria-Poynter  
Karl Swartz  
Linda Standley  
Sarah Fritz  
Steve Jones  
William Stimmerman

### MOW & Track

Adam Weidenbach  
Bob Pratt  
Brad Jones  
Chris Hamilton  
Gregory Gleeson  
James Moon  
John Zielinski  
Mark Whitman  
Matt Petach  
Pat Stratton  
Preston Venenciano  
Ron Thomas

### MOW & Track

Sarah Fritz  
Steve Meyer  
Wesley Van Osdol

### Other

Adam Weidenbach  
Barry Lependorf  
Bob Pratt  
Brad Jones  
Dee Murphy  
Jack Harrington  
James Moon  
James Stewart  
Karl Swartz  
Mark Whitman  
Patrice Warren  
Sarah Fritz  
Tom Eikerenkotter  
Zonker Harris

### Train Crew

Brad Jones  
Chris Chisom  
Chuck Kent  
Curt Hoppins  
Doug Vanderlee

### Train Crew

Dylan Olson  
Ed Best  
Gabriel Gleeson  
Garon Michaelis  
Gerald DeWitt  
Jackie Vlasak  
James Stewart  
Jeff Schwab  
John Link  
John Zielinski  
Jon Williamson  
Jorg Linke  
Joseph Faria-Poynter  
Justin Legg  
Kent Hedberg  
Liam O'Leary  
Logan Rubasky  
Mark Miller  
Mason Denton  
Michael Stockwell  
Patrice McDonald  
Ron Thomas  
Sanjay Bhandari  
Sarah Fritz  
Steve Barkkarie  
Tim Flippo  
Warren Haack



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## President's Report

**Tim Flippo - President**

Another busy month has gone by. Due to a previous commitment I was not able to go to the September Meetings. Jim did a great job filling in for me, thank you Jim.

We have finished polishing the TOL cars for this year, it really does make a difference. Dexter Day and crew are hard at work decorating the inside of the cars and Tom Crawford and his crew are busy decorating the outside. If you have time and want to help, they decorate on Wednesdays starting at 9:00 AM in Brightside.

The Board had their off site get together, it was to be very informative. There were some things we found we all agreed with and others that we do not.

One thing we did decide on is that one Saturday in January we will have a meeting between the Department heads and the Board of Directors.

It has been five years since the last time the Lifetime Achievement Award has been done.

Linda Stanley will be working on this project starting in January.

**Tim Flippo**  
President

### Pacific Locomotive Association

**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**



*Jim Evans photograph*

**PLA President Tim Flippo, Sue Thomas and Dexter Day working in ADL on first day of interior decorating.**

## 2024 Student Brakeman Training Class



**Alyssa Cantz, Stephen Fares, Joseph Faria-Poynter, Gabriel Gadzikowski, Jack Harrington, Mathew James, James Moon, Colin Snow, Andre Thom, Colin Woodward, Alastair Young, and class instruction team members Kent Hedberg, Sarah Fritz, Jorg Linke and Mark Miller.**

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

During August you and many of the other volunteers for the PLA and Niles Canyon Railway kept the trains running on time. We ran our two weekends of diesel trains and two specials – the evening Hot August Nights and our second Beer Train. September held a third Beer Train, a Charter, and two weekends of trains including steam locos. We carried a private wedding charter early in the month, and we hosted the CA Short Line Association.

We also got our turn-of-the-Century steam crane and tender moved from the CA State Railroad Museum in Sacramento to its home here in Niles. Maintenance on structures, locomotives, rolling stock and MOW equipment is taking place in Brightside during the fine weather we experience in the Canyon this time of year. Restoration of steam locomotive SP1744, diesel-hydraulic SP9010, and

Ranch Car GN1242 continues as well. And the M601 small railbus has moved into its new home-with-a-dome at the east end of the yard; now restoration can begin.

Along with all of that, the most noticeable change is the availability of parking at Brightside, due I am sure to all the volunteers engaged in preparing the Train of Lights for prime time in mid-November. Our Test Train is scheduled for November 18 and our first TOL revenue train four days later. Our primary goal is now preparing ourselves and the train for 6 weeks of almost daily Holiday entertainment of our public TOL customers.

The PLA has received a donation of \$2,000 in memory of PLA member Carlo Borlandelli. I knew Carlo as an active and experienced woodworker who enjoyed restoring our old railroad equipment and did a beautiful job.

The PLA recently received another donation of \$500 in memory of Gail Hedberg. Besides her involvement with PLA's gift shop, marketing projects, and Board of Directors, Gail was active with Safari West in Santa Rosa.

I redeemed two of our CD's to maintain the ready cash necessary for operations until the cash flow from our main funding source, the TOL, begins in mid-November. And preparation of documentation for the FYE June 2024 financial audit picks up steam.

A word to any of you who have made authorized purchases of materials or supplies on behalf of the PLA: As an important cost control measure, fill out and sign the proper "Volunteer

Expense Reimbursement Request" form (available in the Treasurer's mail box at Blake's) and submit it within 15 days of the end of the month of purchase. If you can't do that, or don't need the money, please consider it a donation.

If you have questions or comments, let me know. Email: [treasurer@ncry.org](mailto:treasurer@ncry.org). Phone: 650-888-8619.

**Pat Stratton**  
Treasurer

**You may not know this, but if you contribute appreciated stocks, bonds or mutual funds to the PLA, the total value of the security on the transfer date may be tax-deductible to you. Also, you won't be required to pay capital gains taxes on any appreciation. Significant contributions of securities will be placed in the PLA's professionally managed Endowment Fund, where the principle is invested, and the earnings are only available for non-operational expenses – mainly restorations, ROW improvements, and development of facilities. This can be done easily and securely via electronic transfer to the PLA's account with Wells Fargo Advisors. Contact Treasurer Pat Stratton at [treasurer@ncry.org](mailto:treasurer@ncry.org) for additional information.**

**If your employer has a matching gift program for donations to charitable organizations, you may be able to double the impact of any contribution you make to PLA. Because conditions and criteria for gift matching vary by employer, check with your HR department for details. If details of the PLA as recipient are needed, contact:  
Treasurer Pat Stratton at [treasurer@ncry.org](mailto:treasurer@ncry.org).**

## 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>





# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

Well hard to believe but Train of Lights tickets go on sale in a few days, and it will be "ready, set, go!" again on the website. Walking around the yard there is no mistaking we are getting the train ready for the season. Decorations are going on both inside and outside, restorations are wrapped up for the year, and I actually heard a Christmas song on the PA system when it was being serviced. Jingle Bells in September, only at the Niles Canyon Railway.

There is always a mad dash to get things done this time of year. MOW must fix ties, clear culverts and ditches, as well as clear trees from the right of way. Both stations have to get set up for parking and loading passengers, gift shop stocks up, commissary orders supplies and instructs the army of volunteers who help on the train and the operation department prepares ticket sales, market advertising and arranges crew schedules. Everybody has a job to do just to get ready to do the job.

A quick rundown on the cars' repairs sees the WP 315 windows done for this year (only a handful of frames to do next year and then the ceiling work and window latches can be done to finish the car). A new exhaust fan has been installed in the ADL kitchen. That should provide some much-needed air to the hard-working hot chocolate brewers slaving over the hot stove. It really does suck, both the hood and working over a hot stove. A long missing diaphragm has been installed on the East end of the SP1949 coach replacing the rolled-up mesh that has been basically a finger-trap for the last few years. Thanks to past car department purchase of replacement diaphragms some years ago, this vestibule now looks great and might even be watertight. Last year we had the AC repaired on the Parlor car which still works great, but we need the heat



Stephan Barkkarie photograph

**MOW crew replacing ties before TOL.**

to work also. (crazy California weather) After reports of the heater not working, we looked into the system but could not locate a wiring diagram to troubleshoot. So, with voltmeter in hand, I began the tedious process of manually tracing the wires. Eventually I was able to deduce the root of the problem. The thermostat had become disconnected from the circuit that turns on the heating coils. Once that link was re-established the system worked fine so no more chill in the air for the crew or passengers.

In August, our crews while doing maintenance on the Dresser bridge found a couple of areas of concern that required a second look by our professional bridge inspectors at American Rail Engineers. For that we requested an aerial inspection with drone for a close-up look at the underside of the structure. That also allowed them to look at the upper

structure that had some repairs done some years ago. The result is that the bridge is safe to use without restriction to speed or weight although their in-depth report suggests some minor repairs should be scheduled. This is why we contract with people who know more than we do, to give us the confidence to operate safely.

MOW has been out on the mainline repairing bad ties spotted by our track inspection team. Our new compressor really makes that job easier. It can drive a spike like crazy and runs the pneumatic tamper like never before. The last couple of outings we have changed around ten ties a day which is pretty good for an all-volunteer workforce and it's like riding a bike, it comes right back to you after not doing it for a while. A couple more spots and we are good for the TOL season. Then we can get on with making sure we can



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

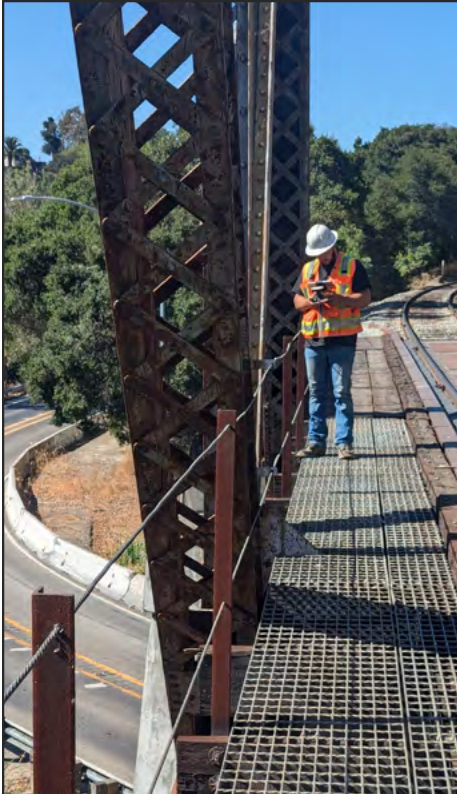
## Along the Right of Way

**Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager**

handle this winter's rains. I hope it is not like the last two years, but we have to be ready.

Operations department has had a good ridership last month, but the warm weather has brought a lot of yellowjacket activity, with several passengers harassed by the pesky buggers. So, we called in the county Vector control folks who came out to treat several known nests. I mention this because their response time was very fast, and they promised to return at any time we have a problem. That kind of support from the county is greatly appreciated and will help us ensure a safe enjoyable experience for the public and our volunteers.

Also in operations, the steam trains are back for October, pulling trains on Sundays. We also plan to use our RD #3 to do some track building hauling



*Stephen Barkkarie photograph*

**Tyler Meade from ARE inspects Dresser Bridge with a drone.**



*Stephen Barkkarie photograph*

**SP 1949 gets a new vestibule diaphragm.**

panels of track out to the East end as we cross the bridge at Sunol-Pleasanton Rd. It's a great way to get some training time in for student "steamies" and a unique way for our museum to expand our trackage.

This is your last month to enjoy the

canyon before we gear up for the Holiday season so check your calendar, sign up to volunteer, and come on out to Sunol. You won't regret it.

**Stephen Barkkarie.**  
General Manager



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Our Volunteers at their Best



*Chris Hauf photograph*

**Shiny...**The benefits of inside storage as Robert Dollar Co. #3 looks as nice today (after a bath of course) as it did when volunteer, Chris Hauf, did all of the paint and lettering on the engine in 2019.

### **Continued from Page 1**

was a railroad museum with steam running nearby our home when I was old enough to really care. By the time I was this young man's age, all of the steam that was in northern NJ had either had their fires dropped or moved to other places further away. Thus my interactions with steam engines were few and treasured on trips to visit railroads in other states, a good drive to another part of my home state of NJ, or came to visit during special festivals or NRHS conventions as Class I railroads still occasionally allowed steam to roam

their rails in the mid to late-1980s.

On a rare occasion, an invite would come. I still remember those including one very kind hostler late one evening on the Black River and Western Railroad that not only allowed my Dad and me to come up, but encouraged me to drag my tripod into the cab to shoot around under just the cab lights of BR&W #60. That night still makes me smile today, and I still cherish the photo of the #60's steam gauge I took that night along with a great night shot of the #60 my Dad and I did with flashbulbs afterward.

Getting to share our passion for railroad history and railroad operations is also in part why we volunteer. It was nice to capture another moment of our volunteers fulfilling our mission to share the railroad history we work so hard to preserve with new generations. The kindness of our volunteers is remarked often in reviews on the Internet, in interactions with our riders, and via social media, and it was again apparent on this day as it is every day we interact with the public.

**Chris Hauf**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Our Volunteers at their Best



*Chris Hauf photograph*

Gabe Gleeson and Dylan Olsen both helped to fire up and prepare RD#3 for its service. It is great to have some very dedicated new hands around the steam shop.



*Chris Hauf photograph*

Rounding the curve... Robert Dollar Co. #3 rounds the curve as it heads upgrade toward Brightside yard.



*Chris Hauf photograph*

Over Farwell. Robert Dollar Co. #3 with Jeff Schwab as engineer, Gerald DeWitt as fireman and Dylan Olsen as student fireman storms across Farwell Bridge on its first return trip east from Niles.



*Chris Hauf photograph*

Photographed in the cab of Black River & Western Railroad steam locomotive #60 in 1988 after an kind invite from the night hostler to a then teenage, Chris Hauf, to both view and do any photography he wanted. This was the days of tripods and Kodachrome 64, but this was one of several photographs taken that night thanks to the kindness of the hostler.



## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

This Month's tale:

## STUB YOUR TOE, GO STRAIGHT TO SCRAP

This is a tale about a caboose that was retired way before its time.

Today, this caboose sits down in Niles in a barbed wire compound in retired status with other retired equipment. This is a tale about that caboose. The only thing that this caboose did wrong was being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This caboose was built by the Pacific Car & Foundry in April of 1979. The car was built as a C-50-8 caboose in a lot of 49 cars ranging in number from 4670 to 4699. Our caboose number is 4691 of that lot. The next series of cars built for the S.P. in 1980 were with car numbers 4700-4774 which consisted of 75 cars.

The numbers show that the caboose that we have was 83 cabooses from the last road cabooses built for the S.P., except for a C-40-10 which there was only one which was a S.P. Sacramento rebuild (short body design) Bay Window Caboose. Now that we know that our caboose was eight from the last caboose built for the SP that had side windows on the car.

Next, let's look at the classification and some of the features which were on the C-50-8 series of caboose that we have. Looking at the class of caboose. The C stands for Caboose, the next set of numbers is the trucks capacity 50 ton and the following are the sequential order number (8). The cars had a welded underframe which were fabricated and placed on trucks prior to the attachment of sides and ends. You might say that these were actual size caboose kits which were the top of the line when it comes to modeling a S.P. Bay Window Caboose. As far as caboose class goes, the C-50-8



Dexter Day photograph

This is the orphan caboose SP 4691 showing the wounded bay window.



SP photograph

This is SP 4667 in its as-built photo which was in the same class as our caboose.

cabooses were very similar to preceding class cabooses except for a few minor changes that were noticeable. One of the major noticeable changes were the

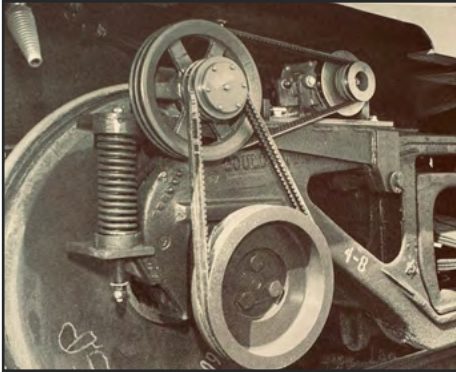
battery box doors which now only have two instead of four doors and the trays slide out for easy access. The roof was very similar to the preceding class,



**Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager**

except the "boxed" roof end was also discontinued. The single-light marker had become standard, replacing the two-light marker used for years (the frog eyes style). The smoke stack is now a diagonally braced smoke-jack. Also, minor upgrades to what was a new arrangement for on-board electrical generation was the belt drive which was introduced on the (7) series cars, and operating off of one axle journal at the (A) end of the car. The window screens that were introduced on the (7) series of cabooses were carried over to the (8) series.

The last series caboose built (9) series didn't have to worry about screens for protecting windows. There were no side windows except for the side bay and end windows. After entering service in 1979, Caboose 4691 served several



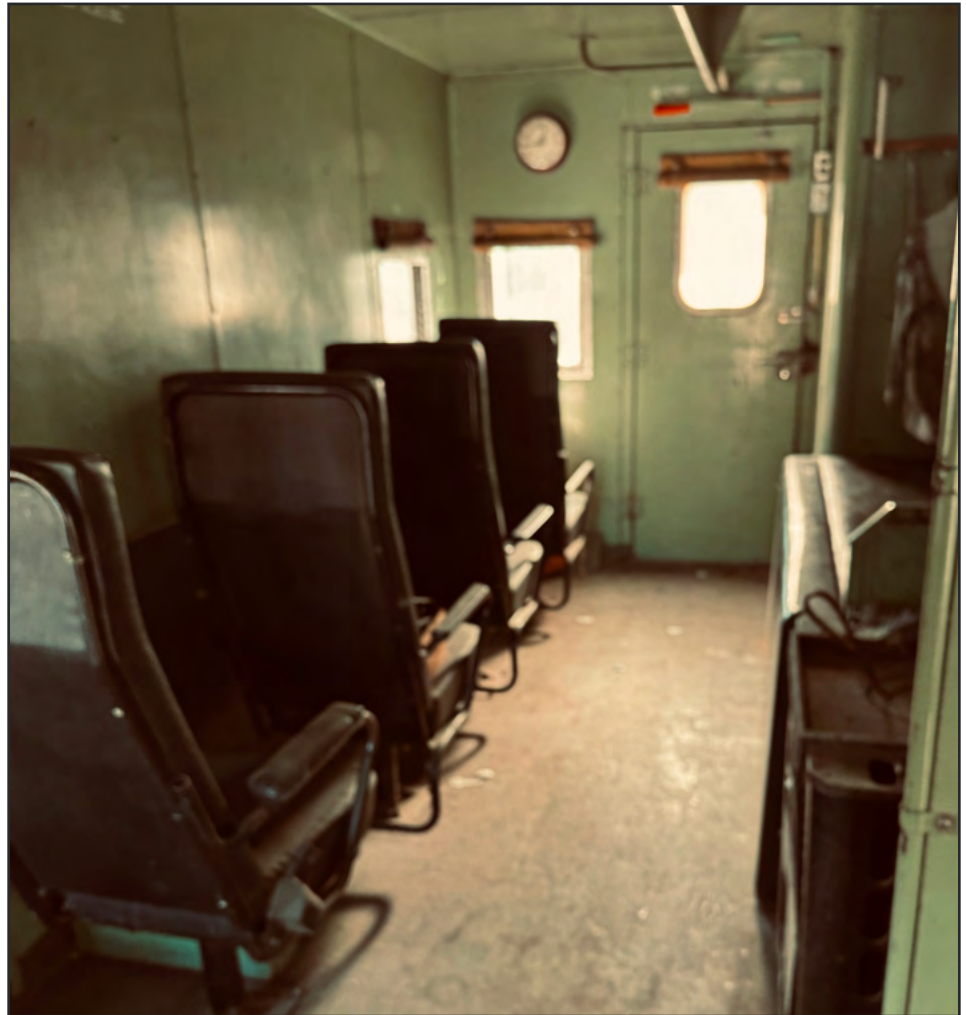
*SP photograph*

**New arrangement for on board electrical generation off of axle at A end of car.**



*SP photograph*

**One noticeable change was the battery box doors which now have 2 instead of 4 doors and batteries slide out.**



*Dexter Day photograph*

**Interior looking toward the B end of the car with the stove, bunk, and toilet on the right side.**

years in the West running over various routes. But all good things must come to an end. One day in 1987, the caboose somehow ended up in the wrong place at the wrong time and was involved in an accident which it received severe damage from the accident to one of the bay windows. Although looking at the caboose, it doesn't look damaged. But if you look carefully, you will see that the sliding window is missing and it does show that it is caved in a little.

Shortly after the accident, the Caboose era was starting to wind

down on the railroads. Southern Pacific Railroad put 4691 up for sale along with several other cabooses which time had run out on. George Adams, a PLA member, was looking for a caboose around that time. He was able to look over what was available for sale. Here sat this new-looking Bay Window caboose with a built date of 1979 and had minor damage. So out of all that was available at that time, George took this fairly new damaged Bay Window Caboose. Why not, all specs were

*Continued on next page*



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

### *Continued from previous page*

dated and the only damage was to one of the bay windows. So, we now have this almost new caboose with low time on it and now it sits in retirement down at Niles in the compound wondering if it will ever run again. Newest piece of rolling equipment that the PLA owns sits in retirement. Why? It does not have an upper cupola for the kids to climb up and sit in for birthday parties. But it has what the other cabooses don't have: an operating toilet with water and holding tank.

Maybe we could take one of the ATSF cabooses and combine it with the S.P. Bay Window Caboose with connecting safe walkway and sell it as a package. The adults would go for that. More room to spread out between cars and it would have something it doesn't have now, an operating toilet. What else could you ask for?

With that said, another tale comes to an end.

**Dexter Day**  
Operations Manager



*Dexter Day photograph*

The fully intact toilet and washing station is in good condition. The car has a working water system along with a holding tank with dump valve.



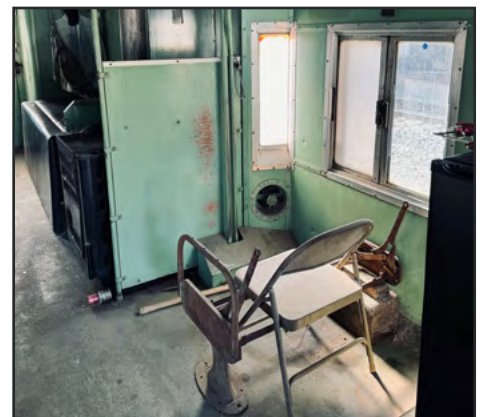
*SP photograph*

Picture shows roof arrangement on caboose series C-50-8. Notice that frog eyes has been replaced for rear marker light.



*Dexter Day photograph*

Conductor station on good side of caboose.



*Dexter Day photograph*

Conductor seat on other side of caboose where the large seat has been removed.



*Dexter Day photograph*

This shows the build date and other stats.



## Brush Cutting

**Mark Whitman**

Due to a report from engine crews stating that west of Dresser Bridge, trees in several locations were getting close to hitting the trains. On Tuesday August 20, we took a small crew and started working our way east from Vallejo Mills to just east of Mile Post 30 trimming and chipping as we went. Crew today consisted of Brad Jones, Sarah Fritz, and Mark Whitman.

On Wednesday August 21, due to the important work needed to clean and inspect the rust damage to Dresser Bridge the Warrior crew needed the work train to tow the compressor and other tools to the bridge. Our tree crew hooked the chipper to the bucket truck and set out ahead of them to just west of Dresser Bridge and worked our way west to Mile Post 30. We finished this section a little early and decided to go to just east of Vallejo Mills to clean up the remnants of a homeless camp. On the way back, as the Warrior crew was still working on the bridge, we decided that we had time to cut up the large log that had been jammed against the pier of the Dresser Bridge since the huge 2023 New Years Eve storm. The crew today consisted of Brad Jones, Sarah Fritz, Pat Stratton, Steve Meyer, and Mark Whitman.

On Saturday August 24, we went to an area just west of Farwell Bridge to do extensive trimming from there back to Farwell Bridge, this included a couple of small trees that were coming up under the bridge. We also trimmed trees at the east end of Farwell Bridge and stopped

at several locations back to Mile Post 32. The work crew today consisted of John Zielinski, Chris Hamilton, Ron Thomas, Preston Venenciano, Sanjay Bhandari, and Mark Whitman. A special welcome to Preston and Sanjay who joined us today for their first time on the Brush cutting crew. Their help is much appreciated.

Another project that I have been wanting to do for a long time is the removal of the old signal wires from above both the road crossings at Happy Valley and Pleasanton Sunol Road. We had already done Happy Valley last month, but Pleasanton Sunol Road were going to be a little harder to do. It required an extensive set up of four Road Work Ahead and three Flagman Ahead signs. Two of these signs had to be set up on the Southbound off ramp of HWY 680. After setting up the signage we moved the bucket truck to the north side of Pleasanton Sunol Road. The first wire was hung up in a Eucalyptus limb. We had to cut the limb to finish removing the wire. We then proceeded to remove the rest of the wires which took us only one-half hour. We then picked up the limb debris, rolled up all the wire, picked up all signage, returned to Brightside, chipped up limb debris, and disposed of the wire. This project took approximately four hours. The crew consisted of Brad Jones, Matt Petach, Mason Denton, Mark Whitman and Garon Michaelis.

**Mark Whitman**

### Train of Lights Parking Protocol – Staff & Volunteers

I usually assisted with Train of Lights parking at Sunol, which has always been tight in the past. I have asked that all staff and volunteers park on Foothill Road or better yet ride the train from Brightside if possible. This year parking may even be worse because the contractor working on the washout repair on HWY 84 has opted to use the auxiliary lot across the street from the Sunol Station for their dirt storage. At this time, it does not appear that they will be done by the start of Train of Lights. This means we have lost over half the parking in the auxiliary lot. Your cooperation and help in this matter would be appreciated.

**Mark Whitman**

## TOL Decorating



*Jim Evans photograph*

**Tom Crawford, head of external TOL decorating crew.**



*Jim Evans photograph*

**Norm Fraga on ladder decorating outside of ADL on a 95 degree September day.**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Membership

**Rich Alexander**

### New Members:

Anna Brambilla; Marco Brambilla; Matteo Brambilla; Gabriel Gadzikowski; Bruce Heron; Matthew James; David Krone; Mary Krone; Mary LoPresti; Chloe Olson; Heather Paul; Emanuel Petrisor; Elizabeth Squiers; Preston Venenciano; Aaron Williams

### TOL:

The forms for the Volunteer Trains have been sent out. The number of tickets are based on the hours that you have turned in. If you don't turn in your hours, you don't get credit for tickets. This is a problem every year. I base the tickets on the report I got from the Volunteer Hours person (Charlene Murrell) at [volunteer-hours@ncry.org](mailto:volunteer-hours@ncry.org). If you didn't report your hours, you don't get credit. This is a tedious process to log in the hours for over three hundred

volunteers. Once the numbers are logged in and the forms are printed, going back to redo everything just delays the process. In order to get the form out and give the volunteers time to return them takes time which runs out fast before TOL. The bottom line is if you forget to turn in your hours, it is too late.

Volunteer Opportunities are online for you to sign up for different positions. Please sign up early. This helps us by letting us know what spots are left to be filled. Remember, if for some reason you must cancel or change your slot you can do that online. We need to cover all the slots in order to give our passengers the experience they have come to expect from us.

Check out the document section of Club Express, there is a lot of information there about the railroad.

Some of the information includes documents on docent material, TOL, electrical, brakeman training notes that have been issued over the years. There is a wealth of information located there.

As a reminder, I will be issuing a new release form for those who work on the TOL. I know that many of you have filled them out and signed them already. Please bear with me on this. I also use this to update any information that may have changed during the year. I also use this for making name badges.

As a reminder to the members who are volunteers only, please renew your membership. This is how we track your hours for the TOL volunteer train.

**Rich Alexander**

Membership Secretary



*Michael Strider photograph*

The remains of the grass fire at MP 39. This occurred at the beginning of the month. The only thing that was affected on the railroad was the bottom of the MP 39 post got burned and they spread red retardant on the track.



## Train of Lights Volunteer Sign-ups Now Open!

How-to-do-it session for commissary is on Saturday, Nov 16.

For our commissary volunteers, there will be a training session on **November 16**. Training will be at Brightside yard. This year, we ask **ALL returning captains to come at 9:30 am**, meeting at the commissary shed in the east end of the yard for a refresher and update on our procedures. **All volunteers who are new to TOL commissary come at 10:00 am, meeting right outside the Dome car on the main track across from Blake's palace (west end of the yard).** If you are a returning volunteer and want a refresher, you are welcome at the 10:00 am session too. After the training, we ask those who are able to please stay and stock the train. We expect to end by noon.

The 10:00 am training includes a walk-through of all the commissary locations on the train, description of each job at each location (from experts who have done it successfully and have maybe learned the hard way). Plus we will look at the location of all commissary supplies in the yard, and we will learn how to provision the train (by doing it!). The TOL will start with the test train on Nov 18 and end with the last runs on Dec 30. For all evenings except Nov 18, there will be two trains. Dinner is served on the train between revenue runs for all volunteers who are volunteering for the entire shift.

All volunteer spots for TOL are now live on the NCRY web page. If you forgot how to sign up to volunteer, instructions are below. We hope you enjoyed working on the TOL so much last year that you are eager to sign up and do it again this year.

For commissary jobs: The commissary and all captain volunteers sign up for one shift each day which includes both trains, 2:00 pm to 9:30 pm, starting and ending at Brightside. Dome and parlor car volunteers, sign up for one train at a time: the 4:30 (be at Brightside at 2:00 pm) or the 7:30 (be at Sunol depot at 6:30 pm). If you want to work the dome

or parlor car for both trains that day, make sure you sign up for both trains, and you will start and end at Brightside.

For caboose hosts, sign up is for one train at a time, but no need to report to Brightside. Report to the starting depot (Niles at 3:45 for the 4:30 train or Sunol at 6:45 for the 7:30 train).

For parking lot people, sign up is for one train at a time. For working at Niles, your hours are 2:30 to 6:30. For working at Sunol, hours are 5:30 to 9:15 pm.

For other opportunities like docent, electrician, Santa and Mrs. C, and ticket staff, see the website.

### How to Sign up to Volunteer

- Go to [ncry.org](http://ncry.org).
- Click on **Members' Website** under **About**. **You do not need to log in and for commissary opportunities, and you do not need to be NCRY member.**
- Click on **Volunteer Opportunities** under **Volunteer**. You'll see the

volunteer spots. Look for the "TOL" items. Hide or scroll past the "search" button. Note that there are several pages of opportunities: yours may be on page 2 or 3.

- When you see somewhere you want to sign up, click on **Volunteer** by the **green** button. The three dots will allow you to see all slots for that opportunity, as well as who has already signed up.
- Choose which date you want to volunteer, and check the box on that date/dates, and put in your name, email address, and phone number.
- Scroll to the bottom and click. **Add this Volunteer.**
- Check the dates you signed up for, and click **I'm done adding Volunteers**. Then click **Finish** and **Save**.
- Record your sign up dates on your personal calendar so you don't forget!!!

Need help? Contact one of us and tell us which date/dates you want to volunteer and we'll help sign you up. Dave Hipple 925-321-5958 or Donna Alexander 510-996-8420.



## 2024 TRAIN OF LIGHTS SCHEDULE

**4:30 trains depart from Niles/Fremont Station and get back around 6:00 pm**  
**7:30 trains depart from Sunol Depot and get back around 9:00 pm**

November 18: Test Train 6:00 pm, Niles/Fremont Station  
 November 22: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**  
 November 23: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Volunteer Train**  
 November 24: **4:30 pm Volunteer Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**  
 November 25, 30: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**  
 December 1, 4, 6, 7, 8: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**  
 December 10: **4:30 pm Hiking Group Charter Train, 7:30 pm Church Charter Train**  
 December 11, 13, 14, 15: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**  
 December 16: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Emma Smith School Charter Train**  
 December 18: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**  
 December 19: **4:30 pm PG&E Charter Train, 7:30 pm Girl Scout Charter Train**  
 December 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**

# **PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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*Chris Hauf photograph*

Robert Dollar Co. #3 rolls along Highway 84 with long time Steam Department volunteer, Jeff Schwab, as engineer as it heads to pick up its first load of passengers.