



# THE CLUB CAR



**Bulletin 743**

**Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.**

**July 2025**

## Prodding East Near Castlewood



*Mike Pechner photograph*

Freshly ballasted and tamped track west of Castlewood Bridge, June 7, 2025.

### **IN THIS ISSUE**

- 3** July Schedule
- 4** Brakeman Training Class
- 5** Treasurer's Report
- 10** Tales of the Past
- 13** Beer on the Rails

The East build crew on Saturday June 7th was 15 strong during the day and much got accomplished. Ballast was dropped up to the last laid panel (just past the 14th Tee of the Castlewood golf course) on Friday June 6th with volunteers Steve Barkkarie, Rick Cory, Pat Stratton and Mike Strider. This allowed enough ballast to finish most of the track raise on Saturday. Most all of the track to the last panel was surfaced (raised) to final grade. The tamper

followed the guys with the track jacks over the Castlewood bridge (MP 39.20) until the forks on the tamper slowed down and didn't squeeze properly under the ties. We got most of the track set to final grade but will need to pass one more time to check any slippage of the track. There are only a few items to finish before we can move the red flag further east including finalizing the grade, shifting the horizontal alignment

**East Build 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

**FRIDAY  
JULY 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**  
after 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 **WORD** format.

Submit photos in **jpg** format.

The photo should have a caption/  
description identifying the people  
or item in it. A photographer credit  
should also be included.

Submit in **WORD** format.

(All photo captions on one page)

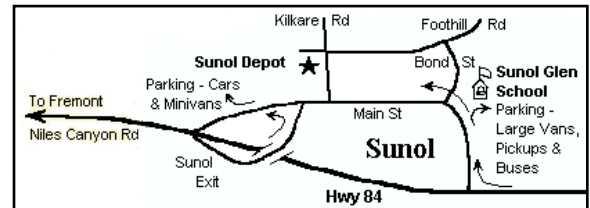
Send email to:  
**clubcar@ncry.org**

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

## BOARDING LOCATIONS

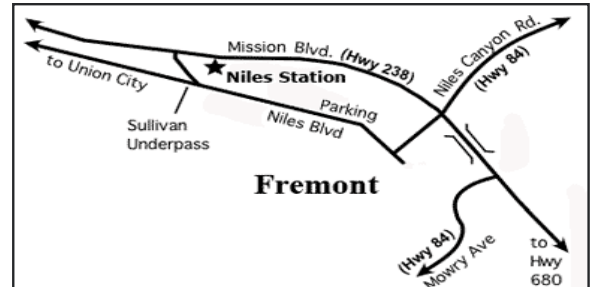
### SUNOL DEPOT

**6 Kilkare 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	Museum Curator.....	Dennis Mann
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
Maintenance of Way.....	Ron Thomas	Technology.....	Matt Petach
Marketing Manager.....	Chris Hauf	Train Master.....	Mark Miller
Member Communication.....	Linda Stanley	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 Street,  
(corner of 2nd St and E St). Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.

Items in this publication are Copyright © 1962-2025, Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc. and may be reproduced only by permission with credit to the source.  
Views expressed herein are those of the author unless specifically noted by the editor as official policy.

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

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## JULY SCHEDULE

July 4	Friday	Members 4th of July Picnic	Sunol	10:30 am	-	Doug Debs
July 5	Saturday	Track Building East	Brightside	8:00 am	-	Steve Knoeck
July 11	Friday	Summer Train	Niles	10:00 am	-	The Alexanders
July 11	Friday	General Meeting	Veterans Hall	5:30 pm	-	Tim Flippo
July 12	Saturday	Regular Train Operations	Sunol	10:30 am & 1:00 pm		
July 13	Sunday	Regular Train Operations	Sunol	10:30 am & 1:00 pm		
July 16	Wednesday	Summer Train	Niles	10:00 am	-	The Alexanders
July 19	Saturday	Regular Train Operations	Sunol	10:30 am & 1:00 pm		
July 20	Sunday	Regular Train Operations	Sunol	10:30 am & 1:00 pm		
July 21	Monday	Steam Charter	Sunol	3:00 pm	-	Jim Evans
July 25	Friday	Summer Train	Sunol	10:00 am	-	The Alexanders
July 26	Saturday	Brush Cutting	Brightside	8:00 am	-	Mark Whitman
July 31	Thursday	Summer Train	Niles	10:00 am	-	The Alexanders

☞☞☞ SCHEDULE OF EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE ☞☞☞

## Volunteer Report

**Charlene Murrell - Volunteer Hours Coordinator**

The people listed below reported 2,747 volunteer hours for the month May. Volunteer hours should be reported to Charlene Murrell at [volunteer-hours@ncry.org](mailto:volunteer-hours@ncry.org). Train Crew hours will continue to be collected from the log sheets in Blake's Palace. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY on the LOG SHEETS. If I can't read your name you will not get credit for your hours.

### ADMINISTRATION

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

### ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

Brian Hitchcock

### CAR DEPARTMENT

Bob Moore  
Bob Pratt  
Bruce Burke

### CAR DEPARTMENT

Bruce Heron  
Dean Valentine  
Dennis Mann  
Jacques Verdier  
Joan Weber  
Lou Bradas  
Marshall Williams  
Norm Fraga  
Rob Giles  
Steve Brown  
Steve Meyer  
Steve Van Meter  
Tim Flippo  
Tom Crawford

### COMMISSARY

Bonnie Harrington  
Dan Mills  
Jack Harrington  
Jacques Verdier  
James Baber  
Marian Wetzel  
Roger McCluney  
Ronald Hook  
Sally Mills  
Sue Thomas

### DOCENT

Jim Evans

### DOCENT

Tom Stone

### ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Curt Hoppins  
Dan Lilot  
Gary Walter  
Henrick Lilot  
Jacques Verdier  
James Stewart  
Joseph Romani  
Michael La Bine  
Sarah Fritz  
Steve Fox  
Steve Knoeck

### FACILITIES

Bob Bailey  
Bob Pratt  
Brad Jones  
Chuck Kent  
Doug Vanderlee  
Gerald DeWitt  
Jack Harrington  
Jacques Verdier  
John Zielinski  
Linda Stanley  
Matt Petach  
Steve Brown

### FACILITIES

Steve Jones  
Steve Meyer  
Wesley Van Osdol

### GIFT SHOP

Charlene Murrell  
Patrice McDonald

### MECHANICAL

Charles Franz  
Chuck Kent  
Gerald DeWitt  
Henry Chandler  
Howard Wise  
Jeff Haslam  
Jeff Schwab  
Karl Swartz  
Kent Hedberg  
Sarah Fritz  
Wesley Van Osdol  
William Stimmerman

### MOW & TRACK

Bob Bailey  
Bob Pratt  
Chris Hamilton  
Dee Murphy  
Garrett Hall

### MOW & TRACK

Gregory Gleeson  
James Moon  
Jordon Hamilton  
Matt Petach  
Michael DeChenne  
Mike Strider  
Pat Stratton  
Ron Thomas

### OTHER

Barry Lependorf  
Bob Bailey  
Bob Pratt  
Curt Hoppins  
Dee Murphy  
Gary Walter  
James Baber  
Jim Evans  
Kent Hedberg  
Linda Stanley  
Michael LaBine  
Patrice Warren  
Roger McCluney  
Ron Thomas  
Steve Brown  
Steve Jones  
Tim Flippo  
Tom Eikerenkotter  
Zonker Harris

### TRAIN CREW

Alyssa Cantz  
Charles Navarro  
Chris Chisom  
Chris Hamilton  
Chuck Kent  
Colin Snow  
Dylan Olson  
Ed Best  
Gabriel Gadzikowski  
Gabriel Gleeson  
Garon Michaelis  
Gerald DeWitt  
Henry Chandler  
James Moon  
Jason Pate  
Jeff Schwab  
Jorg Linke  
Kent Hedberg  
Liam O'Leary  
Mark Miller  
Mason Denton  
Michael Stockwell  
Ron Thomas  
Sanjay Bhandari  
Stephen Fares  
Stephen Knoeck  
Tim Flippo  
Warren Haack

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## President's Report

**Tim Flippo**

Another month has gone by. I want to first thank Rich Alexander for his time as Membership Secretary and his helpful guidance. I am sure Rich will be working on all sorts of projects for the railroad. Also, a thank you to Pat Stratton, he was a very good treasurer. He did a great job of keeping us in budget. I expect to see Pat on the Wednesday MOW crew. I want to thank Warren Haack for his time on the Board and his continuing work on committees. A congratulations to the new and returning Board members: Jim Evans, Vice President (returning), Jim Stewart, Treasurer (new), Sarah Fritz Membership Secretary (new), Patrice McDonald, At-Large Director (returning), Mark Miller At-Large Director (new). Please give them a congratulations when you see

them. Thank you to Linda Stanley for volunteering to be the head of the Bylaws committee. She has good ideas and she will be looking for help on the committee. The July General Meeting and Board meeting will be held at their usual day and time. I am going to change the time of the General meeting and the day and time of the Board meeting but not until August. Currently for the Board Meeting in August I am looking at the first Friday of the month at 7:00 PM, my final decision will be in the next Club Car. My last bit of business is the announcement that I am proposing a Bylaw change at the next meeting.

The reason for the change is to make the Bylaws a little more clear. Currently there is the word "may". I would like to make it a little more definitive by adding

new verbiage. This will only apply to an appointed position.

We ran the M200 for passengers on June 14th and 15th. We had good crowds on the first run of the day and lite loads on the second run. We ran east to the end of track. We also ran the next weekend but I am writing this before that so I do not know the turn out. My feeling on this is it will not happen every operating day but we will do this a month or two a year.

**Tim Flippo**  
*President*

## Membership Secretary

**Rich Alexander**

In June James Moon and Michael Stockwell were approved to be voting members.

### New Members:

Aayan Bachu; Napoleon Batalao; LaVerne Dolandolan; Kathy Fields; Alexander Haken; Rishi Haken; Sheree Jordan; Michael LaBine; Jack Nelson; Jeff Norris; Shantha Ramagopal; Allison Smith; Anthony Smith; Calvin Smith; Douglas Thompson; Maxwell Young.

As many of you already know we had elections for new officers in June. Sarah Fritz ran unopposed for the Membership Secretary position because I was stepping down after 4 years in that position. It has been my pleasure to serve you as Membership Secretary these past 4 years. I will be helping Sarah with the transition

going forward. I will be spending more time doing ticketing and setting up the volunteer pages.

**Rich Alexander**  
*Membership Secretary*

### 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**

## BRAKEMAN TRAINING CLASS

\*\*\*\*\*

**HELD AT BRIGHTSIDE  
IN THE  
WHITE HOUSE**

**0900 AM**

\*\*\*\*\*

**SATURDAY: SEPTEMBER 6  
&**

**SUNDAY: SEPTEMBER 7**

\*\*\*\*\*

**CLASS ROOM STUDIES WITH LECTURE**

**WRITTEN TEST WILL BE GIVEN**

**LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED AT NOON**

**HANDS ON TRAINING WILL BE GIVEN**

**MUST BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE  
DUTIES OF A BRAKEMAN  
WHICH ARE REQUIRED**

\*\*\*\*\*

**SIGN UP FOR CLASS**

**traincrews@gmail.com**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton

All is well with our books and records. We have received an unqualified audit opinion on our FYE June 30, 2024 financial records; today we start preparing documentation for the audit of FYE 2025's records.

This month I am going to make a few comments related to our financial health. Between the end of our last

FYE 6/30/24 and today (6/20/25) our cash position has improved by \$273k; and our liabilities are effectively zero. That is a fine outcome for our volunteer organization, which uses its funds to celebrate and preserve railroad history and the equipment and culture which made it possible.

I am still trying to convince our bank to reimburse the \$13k we lost to fraudulently cashed checks very early this fiscal year. BMO Bank is generally willing to cover this for an individual, but not so much for a business.

Despite whatever the current economy seems to look or feel like, our Endowment Fund investments are up 9.5% from this time last year. For the right project and motivated project manager we are well positioned financially to plan and implement needed improvements.

Our Summer and School Trains, while not big money-makers (but not losers), are very popular. I wonder if we might be able to do more of them next fiscal year. We may have to do some marketing, maybe in senior assisted-living homes or city Senior Centers as well as public and private schools. However, I consider these low-cost weekday trains the biggest way the PLA as an organization "gives back to the community".

Excluding TOL, we have completed only 3 train charters (plus two M200 Railbus charters) this fiscal year. We make money on these trains; the logistics are simple; and I think many new riders are introduced to our organization and its presence in the lovely Niles Canyon through these

charters. Also, we have great flexibility in scheduling them to the convenience of our volunteers. We may need to put in marketing efforts beyond just our relationship with Casa Bella.

Be thankful for the success of our TOL at raising money, because we aren't that great at inviting donations. Two years ago in FYE 6/23 we received \$228k in donations; last year in FYE 6/24 they were \$138k; and so far this year - except for one glorious \$100k unsolicited donation - we have received only \$111k. We simply are not trying. That might be OK for a "club" but based on the size of our member base as well as our financial assets and operations, I think we should act much more like a business these days. As such, all of us, but especially our Board members, should be actively soliciting major donations to fund development projects in Niles, Brightside, and along our right-of-way.

We may have already started our next fiscal year by the time you read this. What better way to kick it off than with our Fourth of July train ride (we'll be going east from Sunol this year!) and the following BBQ. I hope you can join us.

I am retiring from the Treasurer position effective at the next Board meeting when newly-elected Treasurer Jim Stewart will take on the maintenance of our financial records. He and I are currently working on the transition.

**Pat Stratton**

**Treasurer**

treasurer@ncry.org

650-888-8619

**If you are above age 70½ and your IRA, 401(k), or other retirement plan requires that you make taxable "required minimum distributions" (RMD's), you can contribute directly to the PLA from your plan using a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). Your QCD will reduce the taxable amount of RMD on your tax return by the amount of your contribution. Contact your Plan Administrator to initiate a contribution to PLA 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)**

### 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

Happy Independence Day to everyone. My personal favorite holiday of the year, and not just because of the annual PLA picnic and train ride, but because of the fantastic weather and all of the activity around Niles Canyon. This month we have scheduled five summer education trains, we have two weekends of regular operations, there will be a steam charter later in the month and our restorations are in full swing. The canyon will be jumpin' every week, although last month was only slightly less active.

June started with another blockbuster "Beer on the Rails" event (always popular and well attended) and a wedding charter. Then, regular operations with the M-200 Railbus running East to Happy Valley (Ticket sales were strong for both weekends and in both directions). We had repairs going on no less than seven different cars and five engines as well as track building East and upgrades in the canyon.

To get the M-200 ready for its 2025 debut we checked and lubed the undercarriage but there is still a long-standing issue with greasing the front truck bolster. The rear truck has a fitting mounted on the side of the body for lubing, but the line for the front truck has been removed/broken and can't be repaired without jacking the body to get access. We are fortunate to have a large forklift for doing just that, and with the aid of some heavy lifting slings under the coupler shank, that job became an easy job. We could not repair the remote line, but the bolster was inspected and greased for the season, and we can come back to the repair another time. We have the technology.

We got a call about some SP freight trucks that were being scrapped at Simms Metal in Richmond and were offered the chance to salvage parts before they went to the torch and to



Stephen Barkkarie photograph

**#139 being worked on inside and out.**

that end a group of four of us spent half a day pulling bearing brasses, shims, brake linkage parts and springs for replacement inventory. The brasses alone are a major score as they are expensive and hard to find anymore, and our supply was meager. Now, we have twenty 5 1/2" X 10" in stock on the shelf to compliment the few already there, not to mention some spare springs and brake links. Good work guys.

MOW got into full swing averaging ten ties changed each time out. The new bucket we bought for the CAT backhoe really made the job so much easier and faster. It handles the ties and cribs so much better being narrower and having longer teeth. By making three small teams we can work on several sites simultaneously. The backhoe taking lead removing ties, preparing cribs and inserting new relays followed by the



Stephen Barkkarie photograph

**Savaged bearing brasses.**

spiking team and lastly the ballast and tamping crew finishes. Working like this a lot gets done.

For the first time MOW received a charter request of sorts. Our neighbor Kinder-Morgan had scheduled



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

**Stephen Barkkarie**

maintenance on a section of line with limited access, because of the new track we laid East, and needed help to get their equipment to the site. The PLA offered to give them a ride on our "Heavy Hauler" rail transport trailer (I like to call it the VanderHauler, after its builder). In exchange they made a generous contribution to our efforts. It was the first time I recall a freight charter for anything other than a photoshoot. Another first for the Niles Canyon Railway.

I would like to go into detail about the work going on the numerous projects in the yard, but it would go on for pages and pages. (The Club Car editor would have to put out a special addition ....Hmmm, there is an interesting idea.) The Diesels are getting maintenance, the Steam locos are taking steps forward, plans and parts for Niles are coming together, the yard is getting cleaned up, the passenger fleet is being either serviced or restored, the track is being upgraded and the brush is being battled. It would be best to see for yourself, so this is an open invitation to come and join the fun (and the Association).

**Stephen Barkkarie**  
General Manager



*Stephen Barkkarie photograph*

Pat, Steve, Garrett and Jim change ties in the yard.



*Stephen Barkkarie photograph*

**MOW ballasting new ties.**



*Stephen Barkkarie photograph*

**Doug V. uses a rail bender to take a kink out of a rail.**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## East Build

Mike Strider

### Continued from page 1

to final using the spud liner (thanks to Garrett Hall for his efforts to spearhead the rehabilitation of the spud liner), and then dressing the ballast and shoulders.

The next phase of track building will be the old fashioned stick building method of laying cross-ties and rail. More to come.....go EAST!

**Mike Strider**  
Chief Engineer



Mike Pechner photograph

Mike Strider consulting with Steve Hill at current end of track, June 7, 2025.



Mike Pechner photograph

Track crew lifting downed tie during tamping, June 7, 2025.



Mike Pechner photograph

Raising track near Castlewood 14th tee Saturday, June 7, 2025.



Mike Pechner photograph

Raising track just west of Castlewood Bridge, June 7, 2025.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## East Build

Mike Strider



Build East MOW train approaching Happy Valley Road Bridge, June 7, 2025.  
*Mike Pechner photograph*



Tamping track approaching Castlewood Bridge, June 7, 2025.  
*Mike Pechner photograph*



Track jacks positioned to raise the rails ahead of the tamper.  
*Mike Pechner photograph*



Steve Rusconi removing track jack as tamper advances, June 7, 2025.  
*Mike Pechner photograph*



Track and ballast weigh a lot and it takes a lot of muscle to raise track.  
*Mike Pechner photograph*



## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day

### This Month's tale: "FROM SIZZLING STEAKS TO FILLING MAIL BAGS" MAIL CAR SP 5045

This month's tale begins in the 1930's when Southern Pacific was experimenting with placing air condition units under their dining cars to make eating a meal more enjoyable. Although air condition was still fairly new at that time, it was a gamble that Southern Pacific took when they placed an order with Pullman for 14 dining cars (SP 10138 – SP 10147). These cars were going to be equipped with Pullman's mechanical air compression system during mid-1932. Pullman was not anxious to make these installations, not being confident that the apparatus was sufficiently perfected to give satisfactory service. Pullman Mechanical A/C was augmented with sub-coolers installations in 1939. However, on the urgent request of Southern Pacific, the installations were made.

The Pullman and Southern Pacific A/C programs were greatly expanded during the years 1935 and 1936 and by 1937 all Pullman lines, with the exception of a few, were converted to air-conditioned cars. This car (SP 10141, class 77-D-9) saw plenty of service as a dining car on the Southern Pacific. But in 1954 with newer dining cars coming on line with the upgraded streamliners now becoming the norm in passenger travel, several of the heavyweight dining cars were being retired and sent in for rebuild. Which was the case with diner SP 10141.

It didn't take long before the once elegant dining car that served the S.P. for all those years was going through a transformation into what will be its new role for the railroad, carrying the mail for the government. In January of 1954, SP 10141 went into the Southern Pacific Sacramento shops for the last time as a Diner. The car now (SP 5045)



Mail car SP 5045 in all its color.

Dexter Day photograph



Another and better overall view of the car.

Dexter Day photograph

was changed into a new configuration as a U.S. Post Office on rail. The car received new underbody equipment and of course the side panels were all new configuration. The interior of the new rebuilt car would make you think that you were in the back working area

of a small-town U.S. Post Office. This new car created by the Southern Pacific to Post Office specifications was 77 feet long and was designated class SGS, 77-BP-60. The car was assigned to the SP Owl, but it was used on several of the routes of the Southern Pacific



**Dexter D. Day**

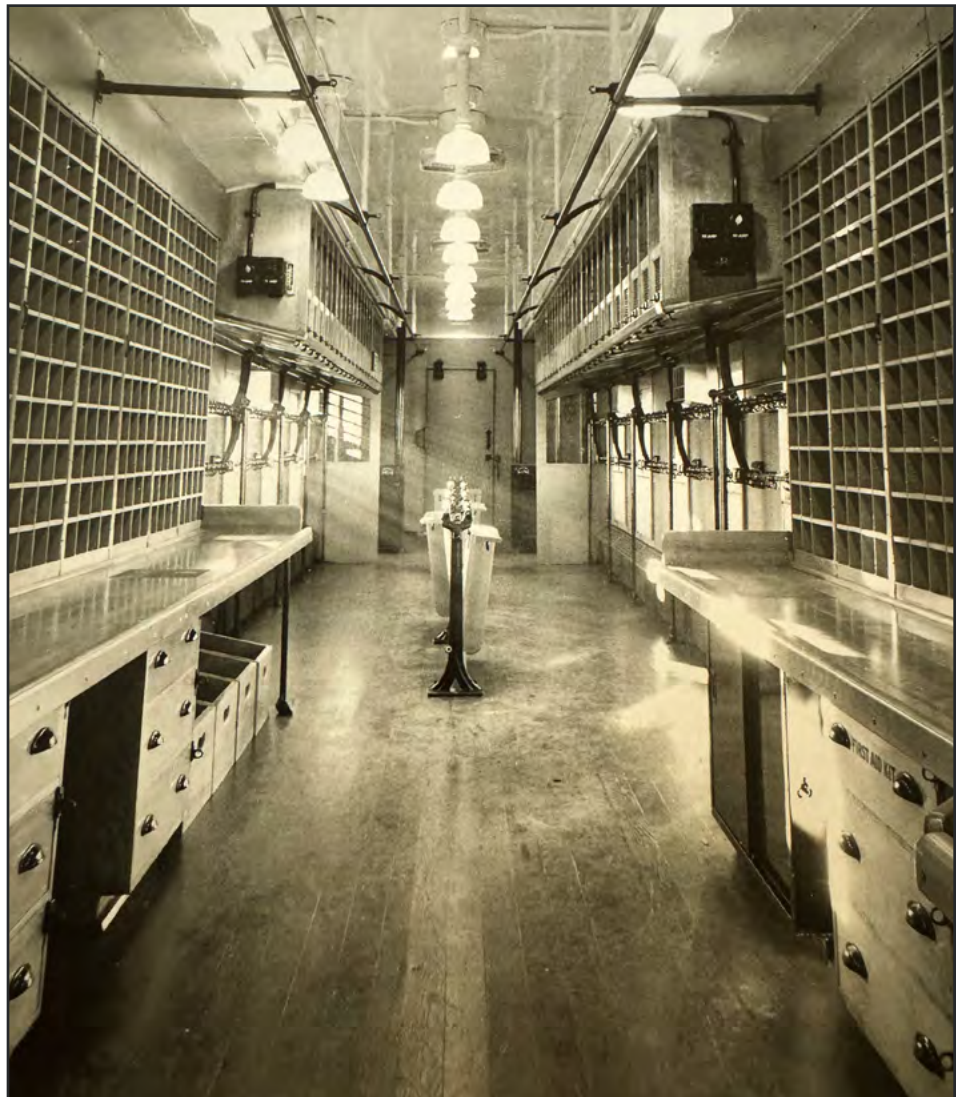
Railroad. Dark clouds lay just over the horizon for mail service by rail. After WWII, the Post Office Department was starting to place less reliance on rail to carry the mail and looking at highway and air transport as the beneficiaries. Where a lot of the mail was sorted in the Post Office Cars of the railroad are now being done at Central Post Offices by new automated sorting machines. First class mail which moved by air on a space available bases, began to move more regularly by air as the aircraft got larger and could carry more volume and weight by the 1960's. By the end of May, 1965, the MB&E trains were gone from the Shasta, San Joaquin, Coast, Sunset Routes, leaving just No. 21-22 on the Overland Route and No. 39-40 on the Golden State Route. RPOs still ran on a number of named SP Passenger trains.

Continued lobbying efforts by the airlines finally won over government policymakers who decided that mail sorting on trains was inefficient and outmoded. The Post Office Department terminated all RPO runs on the SP in September and October of 1967, leading to discontinuance of SP's last lingering MB&E train No. 21-22. In November 1967, SP retained a good deal of the mail business other than first class mail by substituting expedited freight trains to carry bulk mail and express. Post Office Regional Sorting Centers with automated scanners to sort mail, this method of handling the mail went over well. After 1967, SP 5045 was sold. In fact, it was sold a few times before Golden Gate Railroad Museum acquired the retired mail car in the early 1980's. The PLA acquired the car from them in 2005 and was moved to the Niles Canyon Railway in 2006. The car now sits out in East Sunol at the end of the storage track awaiting a restoration plan and date. The car is in pretty good shape. Rust has not taken

*Continued on next page*



Mail car SP 5045 in Pullman green on layover LAX.



Interior of SP 5045 as it was when in service. Could we wish it was still the same.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day

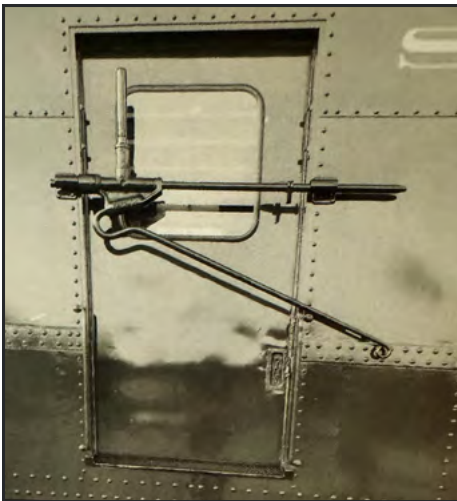
*Continued from previous page*

over this car, it keeps getting fresh paint in the form of graffiti. It also makes a good condo for the local deer that have been seen camping out under the car. This is another heavyweight SP car to fit into our future SP train that we wish for and to run through Niles Canyon.

With that said, another tale comes to an end.

**Dexter Day**

*Operations Manager*



Mail pick up on the move device attached to the small door on SP 5045.



Packing the mail in the storage section.



Mail sorting within SP 5045 as it was.



Mail car SP 5045 in the valley stopped at station.



Here is SP 5045 in its lark paint scheme.



When mail car SP 5045 was SP Diner 10141. Picture is of SP 10138 which was built in same order.



# **BEER ON THE RAILS**

**August 3 & September 7, 2025**

**NILES CANYON RAILWAY**

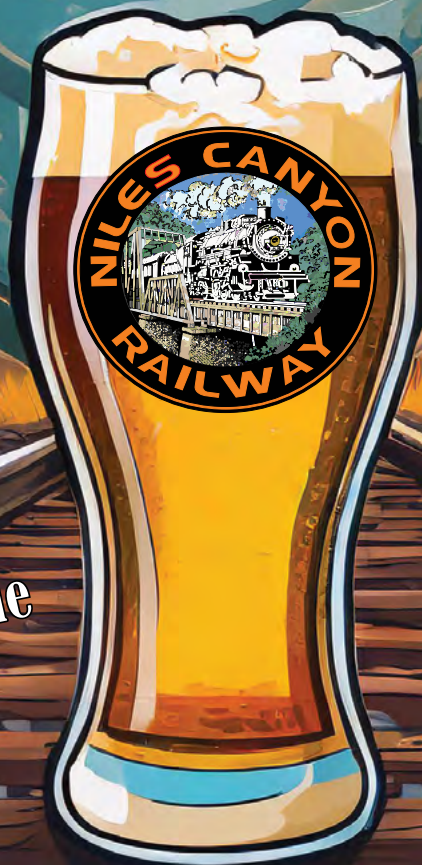
**Departs Sunol Station at 1:00PM & returns at 3:00PM**  
**6 Kilcare Road, Sunol, CA**

**\$69 per person**

**\$37 Designated  
Driver**  
**Lunch & Ride only**

**Beer from three  
local breweries**

**Non-alcoholic  
beverages available  
on board**



**Two hour train ride**

**Live music on board!**

**Lunch included**  
**No outside food or beverages  
allowed**

**21+ with ID**  
**to pick up tickets &  
to board**  
**No Children / Pets**

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

**Info: [ncry.org](http://ncry.org) 510.996.8420**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## NEED PHOTOS FOR MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Tom Eikerenkotter, MP Team Chief

While the Master Plan team is currently working to refine the narrative and graphics to ready the document for review by the BOD, voting members & department heads, we still need support in the form of photographs from as many members as possible. Our list of needs was outlined in the April Club Car but we are especially looking for photographs of both steam and diesel operations and would like a

photo of trains on each major bridge if possible along with photos from all departments of personnel working on projects - locomotives, cars, signals, track, structures, etc. Please include a short narrative with each photograph stating what is occurring along with the photographer's name & date. We need photos by September 1, 2025 and the good weather in the canyon during the summer months should provide plenty

of opportunities. Send your jpg or tiff high resolution version of the photo(s) to Warren Haack and the team at this address:

[master-plan-submissions@ncry.org](mailto:master-plan-submissions@ncry.org)

If you are submitting several photos at one time, consider sending through a file sharing program like "wettransfer".

**Mike Strider**  
*Chief Engineer*



*Sarah Fritz photograph*

On June 14th, upon the completion of the second run of the day, trainmaster Mark Miller recognized student brakeman Colin Snow's hard work and dedication by promoting him to full Brakeman. A job very well done. Colin, third from the left in the photograph is congratulated by the train crew.



## Hazmat Shed

Doug Debbs

We use the loft above the hazmat sheds to store empty 55-gallon drums and big rolls of TrackMat. Moving these up and down the stairs wasn't easy. So... Bob Bradley designed a swinging jibboom crane and safety railings, made from UniStrut donated by Steve Rusconi. Jacques Verdier helped Bob with the installation. The crane has a small electric hoist.

**Doug Debbs**  
*Hazmat Manager*  
cell 650-704-1487



## Beer on the Rails

A sellout crowd of happy passengers enjoyed the June 1st train. The weather was perfect. Devil's Canyon Brewery and 21st Amendment Brewery served a total of seven different beers, plus chapter 11 callers served two ciders. Everything was dangerously delicious. The Commissary crew did a great job making and serving lunches, keeping the condiments table well stocked, serving cider and sodas to the designated drivers, etc. Many thanks to everyone who made this a success!

Beer on the Rails trains will also run on Sunday Aug 3, and Sunday Sept 7.

**Doug Debbs**  
*Commissary Manager*  
cell 650-704-148



## BRAKEMAN TRAINING CLASS

\*\*\*\*\*

HELD AT BRIGHTSIDE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

**0900 AM**

**SATURDAY: SEPTEMBER 6 & SUNDAY: SEPTEMBER 7**

CLASS ROOM STUDIES WITH LECTURE / WRITTEN TEST WILL BE GIVEN  
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED AT NOON / HANDS ON TRAINING WILL BE GIVEN

MUST BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE DUTIES OF A BRAKEMAN  
WHICH ARE REQUIRED

\*\*\*\*\*

SIGN UP FOR CLASS at: [traincrews@gmail.com](mailto:traincrews@gmail.com)

## July 4th Train Ride and Picnic

If you took family photos on the July 4th Train and /or Picnic please send them to the Club Car. If I get enough I will make a photo page.

Also Whistle Award and Volunteer of the Year photos of the recipients.

Thanks  
Barry / Editor  
NCRY Club Car



# **PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Post Office Box 515  
Sunol, CA 94586-0515

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Hayward, CA  
Permit No. 188

Time Sensitive Material



Old meets new. Amtrak passing by The Robert Dollar #3 at the Niles Station.

*Ron Hook photograph*