



THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 749

Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

January 2026

Where it all started - Castro Point



Dexter Day photograph

Last send off at Castro Point after last operation.

INSIDE THIS MONTH

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This month's TALES OF THE PAST will not be present in the Club Car as usually written due to a lot of outside activity that comes with Christmas on the NCRY and the holidays itself.

I am cutting back from researching and writing an article for TALES OF THE PAST this month. But replacing it with some pictures of the past that I have taken over time. For those that were at Castro Point or were around in the early days of building the NCRY, it

will be fun to see where we were at one time not that long ago. For those who were not around at the time we were at Castro Point or around at the early days when the NCRY was being constructed. A few pictures of that era will be interesting to see what it looked like to build the Niles Canyon Railway.

You will see some photos of the Castro Point Railway and what we faced in building the NCRY. With that

Tales of the Past 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 MEETING

**FRIDAY,
JANUARY 2
7:00 PM**

GENERAL MEETING

**FRIDAY
JANUARY 9
7:00 PM**

BOARD MEETING

**FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 6
7:00 PM**

GENERAL MEETING

**FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 13
7:00 PM**

All Meetings are:
In-person & Teleconference
Veterans Memorial Hall
37154 2nd St, Fremont, CA

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.

Each photo should have a description identifying the people in it, and the photographers credit.

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 7:00 p.m. in the Veterans Memorial Hall in Niles at 37154 2nd Street, (corner of 2nd St and E St). Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.

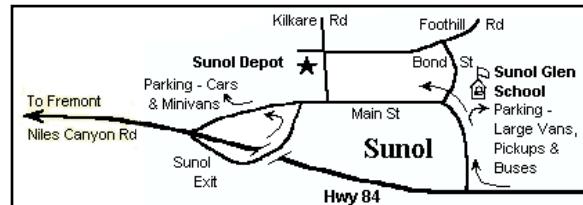
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The Pacific Locomotive Association is a member of the HeritageRail Alliance (HRA).

BOARDING LOCATIONS

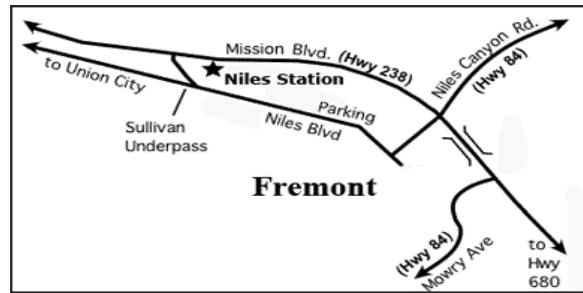
SUNOL DEPOT

**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.....	Sarah Fritz.....	(510) 754-0355
Acting Treasurer.....	Pat Stratton.....	(650) 888-8619
Director-At-Large.....	Doug Vanderlee.....	(209) 832-0332
Director-At-Large.....	Mark Miller.....	(510) 502-8521
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

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

JANUARY EVENTS

DATE	DAY	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME	CONTACT
January 2	Friday	Board Meeting	Veterans Hall	7:00 pm	- Tim Flippo
January 9	Friday	General Meeting	Veterans Hall	7:00 pm	- Tim Flippo

OUR REGULAR TRAIN OPERATIONS BEGIN IN MARCH

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

Volunteer Report

Charlene Murrell - Volunteer Hours Coordinator

The people listed below reported 4,465.5 volunteer hours for the month of November. Volunteer hours should be reported every month to Charlene Murrell at volunteer-hours@ncry.org. Train Crew hours will continue to be collected from Train Crew 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
Curt Hoppins
Dexter Day
Doug Vanderlee
Ed Best
Henry Baum
Jackie Vlasak
Kent Hedberg
Mark Miller
Matt Petach
Mike Strider
Rich Alexander
Sarah Fritz
Stephen Barkkarie
Tim Flippo
Tom Eikerenkotter

ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

Brian Hitchcock

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Bruce Burke
Bruce Heron
Dean Valentine
Dennis Mann
Dexter Day
Donna Alexander
Doug Vanderlee
Jacques Verdier
James Baber
John Bourbin
John Link
Karl Swartz
Linda Randolph
Lou Bradas

CAR DEPARTMENT

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Matt Petach
Peter Barnett
Steve Brown
Sue Thomas
Tom Crawford
Uwe Reimer

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Brenda DuCharme
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Cheryl Dougherty
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Crystal Campisi
Dan Thomas
Dana Goldman
Danielle Lapre
Dave Hippie
David Bryson
David Juarez
Dawne Kittredge
Donna Schroder
Doug Debs
Elena Bryson
Greg Gleeson
Jack Harrington
Jacques Verdier
James Baber
Jason Brusaca
Jeanne Digel
Jesse Olague
Joanie Butler
Joe Romani
John Link
Joseph Romani

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Matt Petach
Mike Pechner
Nora Mosqueda
Oliver Lofek
Pat Bruder
Pat Labrie
Patrick Allaire
Phillip Montgomery
Richard Smith
Ron Hook
Ron Thomas
Sally Miles
Sheree Jordon
Stephanie Gracin
Stephanie Rubasky
Sue Thomas
Susan Soto
Tim Rumbolz
Walter Spector

DOCENT

Jim Evans
Tom Stone

ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Curt Hoppins
Dan Lilot
Henrik Lilot
James Stewart
Joseph Romani
Michael Labine
Raphael Mott

FACILITIES

Bob Bailey
Bob Pratt
Doug Debs
Doug Vanderlee
James Baber
John Zielinski
Peter Midnight
Steve Meyer
Steven Brown
Tim Flippo

GIFT SHOP

Charlene Murrell
Chuck Kent
Patrice McDonald
Stephen Barkkarie

MECHANICAL

Alastair Young
Armin Haken
Bob Pratt
Charles Franz
Chris Hamilton
Chuck Kent
Doug Vanderlee
Greg Gleeson
Henry Chandler
Howard Wise
James Moon
Jeff Haslam
Jeff Schwab
John Link
John Zielinski
Jordan Hamilton

Kent Hedberg
Matt Petach
Mike Strider
Nick Alexander
Ron Thomas
Whitney Haist

MECHANICAL

William Stimmerman

OTHER

Allison Wright
Barry Lependorf
Bob Bailey
Bob Pratt
Dee Murphy
Doug Vanderlee
Jacques Verdier
James Moon
John Zielinski
Kent Hedberg
Matt Petach
Patrice Warren
Paul Davison
Sarah Fritz
Steve Brown
Steve Hill
Tim Flippo

TOL PARKING

Alex Wernli
Bob Bailey
Dalip Bahati
Dan Mills
Henry Wernli
Marian Wetzel
Mark Whitman
Oliver Lofek
Steve Miller
Wayne Stoddard

TRAIN CREW

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Alyssa Cantz
Brad Jones
Chuck Kent
Colin Snow
Curt Hoppins

TRAIN CREW

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Ed Best
Gabriel Gadzikowski
Gabriel Gleeson
Garon Michaelis
Gerald DeWitt
Greg Gleeson
Henry Chandler
Jackie Vlasak
James Moon
James Stewart
Jason Pate
Jesse Olague
John Zielinski
Jorg Linke
Kent Hedberg
Kris Brandenburg
Liam O'Leary
Logan Rubasky
Mark Miller
Mason Denton
Matt Petach
Michael Stockwell
Michael Stiber
Nick Zamora
Ron Thomas
Ronin Carnia-to-Hirsch
Sanjay Bhandari
Scott Crislip
Stephan Fares
Stephen Knoeck
Tim Flippo
Warren Haack

**Want to see
your name
here? Just
Volunteer!**

Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton

You should be reading this in early January, 2026. Wow. The merry-go-round just seems to go faster and faster each year. We scheduled 26 days of public runs this year, there are 7 days left and I'll be working two of them. In the Parlor Car. I miss the Brakeman job - but not walking the 1/4 mile length of the train a dozen times or more. Mostly working the TOL is just plain fun with the passengers and camaraderie with your fellow volunteers. I hope you are all having a really good time supporting the PLA's major annual fundraiser.

In the back room we are taking in multiple daily deposits from ticket, commissary and gift shop sales, as well as income from membership renewals and donations. (I'll need to purchase another CD next week.)

On the out-go side, the TOL is a hungry beast while in full operation. There are many things to keep in stock that keep it going strong for 6 weeks including fuel, water, cookies, repair parts, toys, cleaning supplies, hot cocoa, getting the trash hauled, and - importantly - volunteers. So we continue to write checks to maintain the flow of these inputs.

January will bring new developments to our administrative development. At the first 2026 Board meeting, voting members will vote on Steve Miller as a new voting member. If Steve is accepted, he will become a candidate (the only one I know of) to replace me as Treasurer. A priority job for both him and me will then become the search for others - volunteer or professional - to replace me as accountant and general financial manager. My goal for completion of this task is at latest June

30, 2026, our fiscal year end.

Our income at this time of year goes through large increases 5 or 6 days a week, so I am not going to quote any of those numbers now, but we certainly will make our revenue budget from operation of the TOL. I will say that our most recent budget report, which includes revenue through December 12, after completion of 54% of our scheduled runs, shows ticket sales are 56% of my conservative budget; gift shop sales are 83%; and commissary sales are 73% - all well above a theoretical 54% mid-course target.

In another stroke of good luck (and because we maintain an organized and

clean set of books), last week the PLA received a major donation from Garrett Farwell. Per his wishes, the transfer of \$81,700 is to be applied to our Endowment Fund accounts, to provide optimum long-term support for the PLA and its non-operating programs.

I hope you had a Merry Christmas and wish you a Happy and Prosperous New Year. And may the main rain hold off until we have made the last TOL run for this season!

Pat Stratton

Acting Treasurer

treasurer@ncry.org
650-888-8619



On the Dec 20th Train of Lights run, the entire NCRy traincrew, including Santa, assembled to recognize the promotion of two traincrew personnel. Garon Michaelis was promoted to Conductor and Alyssa Cantz received her license card and was promoted to Brakeman. Alyssa and Garon are at the center of the photo between Road Foreman of Engines Kent Hedberg and Trainmaster Mark Miller. Congratulations to both for a job well done !



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>



President's Report

Tim Flippo

From the President,

January is here, now is the time to rest up and take down the Christmas lights and garland for another season of regular operations. As I am writing this, we have made it through half the Train of Lights runs. So far, we have had a few problems, but nothing that our volunteers could not handle. Speaking of which, I want to thank all of our volunteers for the great job they did this year. Without you we could not have gotten it done! The Train of Lights is a beautiful train snaking up and down the dark canyon. It is no wonder that the public snaps up the tickets quickly. So far, all the reports from the public have been positive.

We have a lot of projects that are being worked on, from around the yard to track work. You can find a project that will help you work off the holiday dinners without having to go to the gym!

I am going to start this year with another Bylaws change proposal. I understand that not all voting members may be able to vote due to various circumstances. I am proposing that we make a change that would allow an amendment to pass by two thirds of the voting members that voted rather than two thirds of the voting members.

Current language:

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members of the Pacific Locomotive Association provided announcement of the intended amendment has been made in the regular announcement of the Association's meetings. At the first meeting to be held following the meeting announcement, the proposed amendment or amendments will be read by the Secretary and the Voting Members present will then vote on whether or not to place the proposed amendment, or amendments, on the

ballot. If the vote is in the affirmative to place the proposed amendment, or amendments, on the ballot, a vote will then be conducted by First Class United States Mail by having the Secretary forward to the last known mailing address of each Voting Member in good standing within seven (7) days after that meeting a copy of the motion amending the Bylaws. Such copy shall include a ballot and that amendment is to be voted upon by the recipient and returned to the Secretary at least one (1) day in advance of the next scheduled meeting of the Pacific Locomotive Association. The Secretary shall tabulate the votes and announce the results at the next meeting. The Secretary shall retain the ballots and present them on demand to the Board of Directors for inspection for a period of one (1) year after voting.

PROPOSED IN RED

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the **ballots returned by** Voting Members of the Pacific Locomotive Association provided announcement of the intended amendment has been made in the regular announcement of the Association's meetings. At the first meeting to be held following the meeting announcement, the proposed

amendment or amendments will be read by the Secretary and the Voting Members present will then vote on whether or not to place the proposed amendment, or amendments, on the ballot. If the vote is in the affirmative to place the proposed amendment, or amendments, on the ballot, a vote will then be conducted by First Class United States Mail by having the Secretary forward to the last known mailing address of each Voting Member in good standing within seven (7) days after that meeting a copy of the motion amending the Bylaws. Such copy shall include a ballot and that amendment is to be voted upon by the recipient and returned to the Secretary at least one (1) day in advance of the next scheduled meeting of the Pacific Locomotive Association. The Secretary shall tabulate the votes and announce the results at the next meeting. The Secretary shall retain the ballots and present them on demand to the Board of Directors for inspection for a period of one (1) year after voting.

The Pacific Locomotive Association needs this change so we can move forward with changes and updates to our bylaws as our organization grows.

Tim Flippo
President

THANK YOU GIFT SHOP VOLUNTEERS

A sincere THANK YOU to everyone who helped staff and support the gift shop during our Train of Lights holiday operations.

Your time and willingness to help, along with your friendly smiles created a warm and welcoming experience for our guests and played an important role in our success this year.

I truly appreciate the help and support!
Our holiday season wouldn't shine as bright without you!

Patrice McDonald
Gift Shop Manager

Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie

As we begin to celebrate the beginning of a new year, it is important to note that 2026 will see several of our historic cars and engines turn one hundred years old. Among that number, one of my favorite machines, the California Western M-200 Railcar, reaches its centenary celebration. To commemorate the occasion, I want to present an article from thirty years ago written by one of our legacy members about the history of this wonderful piece of railroad history. Enjoy.

Happy Birthday, M-200

by: C. G. Heimerdinger Jr.

The M-200 is one of the workhorses for the Pacific Locomotive Association. We acquired the car in 1975, and it was put into service about a year later. It was used regularly at Castro Point, and it was the first item of equipment to see passenger service at Niles Canyon in 1988, and has seen almost constant service since that date.

The M-200 was originally built for the Longview, Portland and Northern Railroad by the Skagit Steel and Iron Works. Skagit Steel and Iron was located in Washington State and although they built a few locomotives, the M-200 was the only motor car that they produced. The builder's date was 1-1-26. As built, the car was powered by a gasoline engine and had an observation area at the rear.

The Longview, Portland and Northern was owned by the Long-Bell Lumber Company, and the new railcar was used for local service on their railroad, out of Longview, Washington. A combination of the Great Depression and development of the automobile reduced the need for such items of equipment and in the late 1930's the car was sold to the Trona Railway.

The Trona was, and is, a shortline operating out of Trona, California, which is east of Mojave. The Trona is a heavy duty railroad compared to



Stephen Barkkarie photograph

CW M-200 as it appears today.

most of the shortlines in California, and today a number of rebuilt SD-45's handle the freight traffic. There are really only two towns on the railroad (Westend and Trona) and both are located at the eastern end of the railroad. The railroad itself is about 30 miles in length and connects with the Southern Pacific's Jawbone branch at Searlee. Today Southern Pacific's branch ends at Searlee, but years ago it extended beyond Searlee to Owenyo, where it connected with their last three foot operation. The narrow gauge was abandoned in 1960. Some years later the Standard gauge branch was cut back to Searlee.

I am not sure, but at Trona, the car was probably painted Pullman Green. I have no idea of the paint color on the Longview, Portland and Northern. There is a report that Trona painted the car a dark red, but there are no color pictures to prove just what the exact color was. The car's primary purpose

was to transport children from Westend to Trona, where they attended school. The car, however, had but a short life on the Trona before it was sold to the California Western in 1941.

The California Western is a well known shortline operating between Fort Bragg (on the California coast) and Willits, where it connected with the Northwestern Pacific (now the California Northern). One major product handled by the railroad in 1941 was fresh fish. The town of Moyo, directly south of Fort Bragg, was a major commercial fishing center, providing fish for San Francisco, via the California Western and the Northwestern Pacific. The motorcar, which the California Western numbered M-200, was bought to replace the train that moved the fish over their railroad.

The California Western already had two other motor cars when the M-200 arrived. These were the M-80 (Mack), which had been acquired new, and

Stephen Barkkarie

the M-100 (Edwards) which had been purchased from a railroad in Kentucky. The two handled passenger service over the railroad during daytime hours. Originally the night train had carried a number of passengers traveling from San Francisco, but by 1941, few such passengers were riding the railroad. With those facts in mind, the California Western rebuilt the interior of the car. The observation area (if it still existed) was removed along with most of the seats. A bulkhead was constructed, along with a toilet near the front of the car. Seats for only nine passengers remained after the rebuilding. Prior to the War, the California Western painted their motor cars a Pullman Green. It is known that both the M-80 and the M-100 were painted that color. But I have never seen any evidence as to whether or not the M-200 was painted Pullman Green. Shortly after the M-200 arrived, the railroad adopted yellow as the standard color for all their motor cars.

By the early 1950's, the fish were gone, and the M-80 was showing her age, so again the M-200's interior was rebuilt to the one that exists today. It was also at this time that the gasoline engine was replaced with a diesel. Together, the M-100 and the M-200 became the regular cars for handling the passenger traffic. By the late 1950's, tourists had discovered the railroad and traffic increased dramatically. The M-80 was returned to regular service, and another motorcar (the M-300) acquired. Still, the four motorcars could not meet the demand. The railroad began to resemble a streetcar system during the daytime hours. In 1964, two of the motorcars, the M-80 and M-100, were involved in a head on accident resulting in the M-80 being scrapped. It was clear that there was just too much motor car operation on the railroad, and that a regular passenger train was needed to handle the tourist traffic

during the tourist months. In 1965, California Western acquired a small - 2-8-2 and four passenger cars. What the motorcars had replaced was now replacing them.

With the return of the passenger train, the operation of the motorcars was greatly reduced. Only one car was really needed for the regular operation. Both the M-100 and M-300 had been rebuilt, and could handle more passengers than the M-200. With the railroad unions receiving a large wage increase in 1971, it just wasn't worth retaining the M-200 in service, and it was put in storage.

Within a week of the M-200 going into storage, the Pacific Locomotive Association made a request to obtain the car. At that time the California Western was owned by the Boise Cascade Corporation, and they did not want to make a decision concerning the car. In 1974, Georgia Pacific took over the railroad, and shortly after that, they decided to sell the car to us. During the years in storage, little had been removed from the M-200.

An inspection revealed that all that was missing were two handrails, and the air compressor. However, the cold damp weather had not been kind to the car, and the roof was in sad shape. I felt that should the car remain at Fort Bragg another year, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to repair. We had obtained the car in the nick of time. In 1975, a week after our annual July 4th operation, the M-200 arrived at Castro Point on a Southern Pacific flat car. A week earlier the Business Car 139 had arrived. It was a big month for the Association. Howard Wise and George Childs immediately started to work on the car, and in short time had the diesel engine back in operation. In honor of its former days on the Trona, the car received a coat of dark red paint, and in 1976, the M-200 was back in service. In 1980, the car was



Yours Truly at the controls.

returned to the yellow paint that it still retains today.

The name "Skunk" really comes from the Southern Pacific McKeen cars. The McKeen cars had been the first gas cars on Southern Pacific. Their exhaust system ran along the underside of the car just like an automobile. In time these exhaust lines began to leak, as did the floorboards of the cars. In short, they stunk, and the passengers began to call them "Skunks". The name then passed onto all railcars, and thus the California Western cars also became "skunks". So there you have it - a short history of the M-200. A few weeks ago the car reached her seventieth birthday. Who would have thought in 1926, when the only motor car Skagit ever built would still be handling passengers at the turn of the century? A McKeen car should have had it so lucky.

Stephen Barkkarie
General Manager

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day

Continued from Page 1

said, I hope all of you had a good Christmas and the Holidays were good to you. We can now look forward to having a good year on the Niles Canyon Railway.

Another TALES OF THE PAST comes to an end.

Dexter Day

Operations Manager



Dexter Day photograph

Last double header on the Castro Point Railway.



First time No. 3 was put under steam at Castro Point. The triple dome tank is still with our collection.



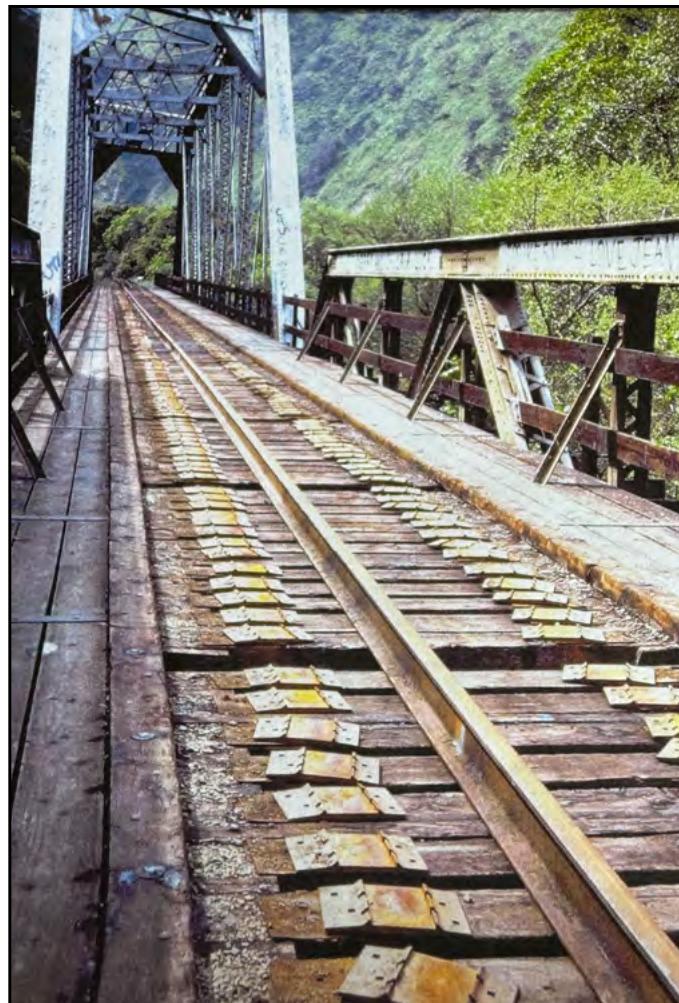
Dexter Day photograph

The only time the Pickering No. 12 was doubled headed with the Pickering No. 5 on the last runs at Castro Point.



Dexter Day photograph

The first walk on the new right of way just West of Sunol which would be removed by the SP.



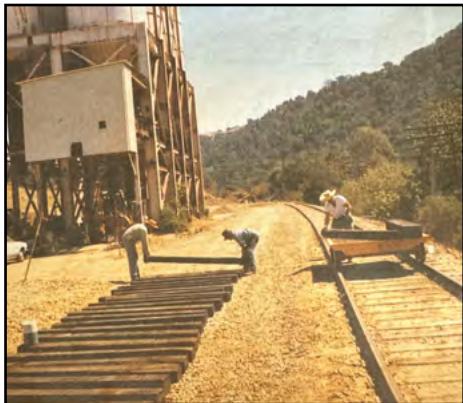
Dexter Day photograph

SP having rail removed from the right of way. County bought the ties. It will be a long rebuild.

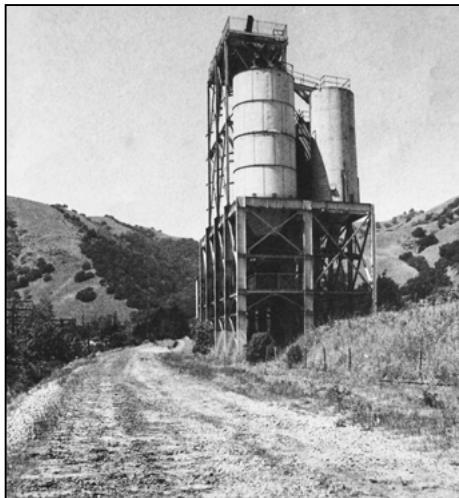
NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

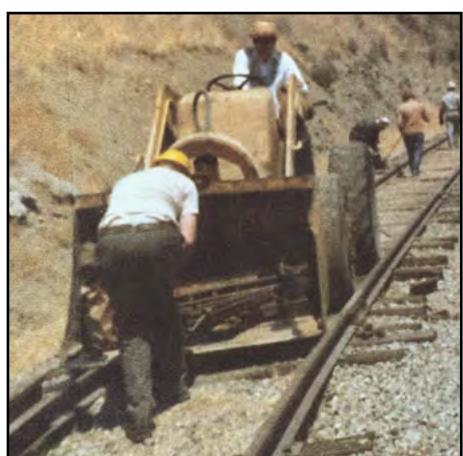
Dexter D. Day



Dexter Day photograph
Tim Flippo and Bones laying out ties for Brightside Siding.



Dexter Day photograph
The only thing standing on right of way after rail removal from right of way. The burn was going to be a problem.



Dexter Day photograph
Tim Flippo on Hough distributing rail material at MP 34.5 on building the NCRY.



Dexter Day photograph
It wasn't much, but it was the beginning. Tent City in Sunol and an early operation with M200 and No. 3.



Track crew lining rail West of Brightside on the Westward push.



Dexter Day photograph
Mark Whitman and Bones Andrews digging out ties at MP 30.5. Nothing was easy.



In the beginning, it was to rebuild the railroad. Here is a crew hard at work putting in the passing siding at Brightside.



Here is Mark Whitman at his best in dismantling the old Tipple at Brightside which is now our engine house.



Early shot of the Western Pacific Bridge area with the little Castro station.

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day



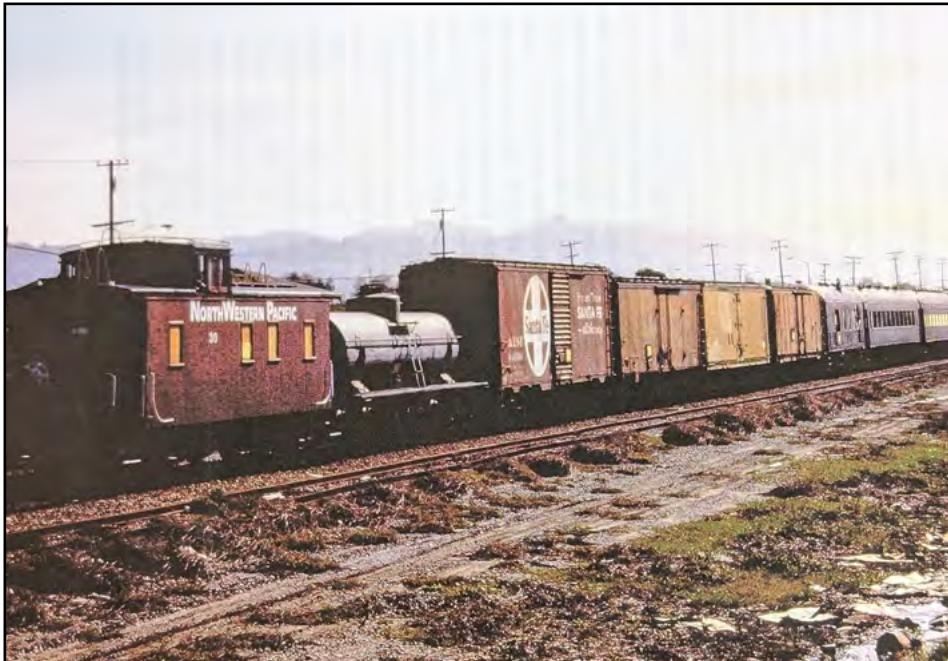
Early train stopped at Joy Land Park.
Farwell Bridge is behind train.



Dexter Day photograph
Home sweet home. The county got the
NCRY these construction trailers and
our crew went ahead and made them
into our club house for several years.



Early train at Castro Point Railway. The
first passenger built car is seen on train.



Dexter Day photograph
Here is the last train from Castro Point Railway heading to Oakland Terminal Railway
for storage.



Dexter Day photograph
The freshly rebuilt SP 1269 in the first operation for the public at Castro Point.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day



Dexter Day photograph

SP 2467 on its return from Sacramento Rail Fair.



No. 4 at Point Molate waiting departure.



Dexter Day photograph
No. 3 making a charge for Sunol under full head of steam.

Another ToL Season over

Wow, it's January already; what a fast holiday season! The Train of Lights came in with a roar and is now gone for another few months, except now we have to undecorate the train cars.

We wish to thank all of our volunteers who contributed their time and talents for this big event. It really could not have happened without YOU helping. We had a super great outpouring of volunteers this year.

I hope everyone had as much fun as I did, minus getting sick. It's so exciting to be a part of this special event, and see all of the people who come and ride, and some have been doing it for many years. I heard stories of how long families have been coming to ride, first bringing their kids and now bringing their grandkids.

I loved seeing the train going through the canyon as I traveled from the Niles/Fremont Station to the Sunol Depot every night we operated. The colored lights were bright and popping, and to see it travel behind the trees and over the bridges was awesome. And it even slowed traffic down a bit, since after the cars passed the train, the traffic sped up on Highway 84. We definitely had an effect on the commute traffic in the canyon.

Just one more big thank you to all of you for everything you do for the railroad; and now we can rest a little before moving on to our 2026 schedule.

Thank you for your volunteer hearts,

donna alexander

Fairmont Speeder donated to NCRY



In early November, one of our Facebook followers reached out and told us about a local woman who wanted to donate a Fairmont Speeder along with its trailer after her husband's passing. They had enjoyed it for many years on excursions in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska.

The two person, fully enclosed speeder was originally built for the Canadian National Railway.

We connected with her and picked the speeder up on Wednesday, November 19 where it was then taken on its trailer to Brightside yard.

After replacing the battery, we started it up, and it purrs like a kitten.

We are looking forward to using it after Train of Lights in both maintenance-of-way service and our public speeder runs.

**Donated in memory of
Kenneth R. Bilodeau
11/5/1947 – 9/28/2025**

Membership

Sarah Fritz

New Members:

Alexander Haken, John Bourbin, Brittni Hart, Nancy Johnson, Robert Johnson, and Wendy Nunn. Welcome new members!

As mentioned in the December Club Car, Steve Meyer and Steve Miller have met the requirements to become voting members and the board has approved their requests. Voting for Steve Meyer and Steve Miller will take place at the January 9th General meeting.

By the time this Club Car comes out, it will be January 2026! Happy New Year, everyone! That also means we are at that time of year where many membership renewals are due. The easiest way to renew your membership is online. If you chose to renew your membership by mail, please remember that it can take a couple of weeks from the time you mail your check to the time it reaches our mailbox, gets sorted, gets deposited and then processed for your renewal.

For those renewing by mail you can send in a check to:

**PLA Membership Secretary
PO Box 515
Sunol, CA 94586-0515**

Dues are \$48.00 for primary member, \$24.00 for secondary member, \$12.00 for youths (under 18 years of age). If you experience any problems while renewing your membership online, please send me an email at membership@ncry.org and I will assist you.

Life Members, you may also receive a renewal notice. This is usually due to a Life member being the primary member on a family account. Club Express does not differentiate between Life members and Regular members.

**Sarah Fritz
Membership Secretary**

ToL Volunteer Appreciation Party Sunday Feb 1, 2026, 3 - 6 pm

Niles Veteran's Memorial Building
37154 2nd St (corner of 2nd St and E St)
Fremont, CA 94536

For all ToL volunteers & family/guest! (Everyone who helped make ToL a success: car decorations, car/loco repair, brush cutting, MOW, parking, depot, ticketing, commissary, train crew, gift shop, photos/PR, Santa & Mrs. Claus, foodies, caboose hosts, etc).

We will provide:

Ham, Roast Turkey, Roast Beef, Artisan Cheeses, Sourdough Bread
Paper plates, knife/fork/spoon, cups, napkins
Coffee, water, hot tea.

Potluck:

Bring a salad, side dish, dessert, or drink to share,
and serving utensils if needed.

Cost:

FREE if you RSVP by Jan 30
\$10/person at the door.

To RSVP:

Contact Doug Debs, cell 650-704-1487,
email: dougdebs2472@yahoo.com
with your name, phone number & number of people

You can also sign up online

Go to ncry.org --> Member's website --> Calendar --> February -->
click on TOL Volunteer Appreciation Event

Setup & Teardown:

We need helpers at 2:30-3:00 to set up folding tables & chairs,
and 6:00-6:30 to put them away.
Please help with one or the other!

Thanks!
Doug Debs
Commissary Manager
cell 650-704-1487
email: dougdebs2472@yahoo.com

2025 Volunteer Train of Lights



Train of Lights 2025: A Magical Night with Poppa and Westin Chisholm

By Anna Rath, age 11
(Granddaughter of NCRY member & volunteer Rob Giles)

We're friends from our neighborhood in Seal Beach. This year we were so excited to ride the Train of Lights together with Anna's grandfather, Poppa, and it was one of the most festive nights ever. This was Westin's first time riding on the Niles Canyon Railroad and my third! The whole train was covered in holiday decorations and lights, and every car felt a little different and special.

Our favorite part of the whole ride was seeing the Christmas lights. They were really pretty, and every car had something unique. I took lots of videos because the decorations were so bright and colorful. Westin especially liked getting hot chocolate and cookies because it made the ride feel extra fun, and he liked seeing all the cows along the way. Poppa said, "My favorite part was seeing all the volunteers and saying hello. It takes a lot of volunteers to make it all happen."

We also each had our favorite places to sit. Westin liked the Dome Car because you sit higher up and can see everything around you, not just the ground. I really liked the turquoise lounge in the Dome Car since you get to sit at little tables like a restaurant. There are only a few tables, so it wasn't loud, and we had a great view of the lights. Poppa liked the Parlor Car best because it has been restored with so much care. He told us, "The poppies on the ceiling were hand painted by a Niles Canyon Railroad volunteer."

The lights, decorations, and treats made the whole experience feel like Christmas magic. We both agreed it was fun, festive, and unforgettable, and we hope to ride again next year.

Anna and Westin

NILES CANYON RAILWAY

2025 Volunteer Train of Lights



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The California Western M200 decorated for the Holidays.

Ron Hook photograph