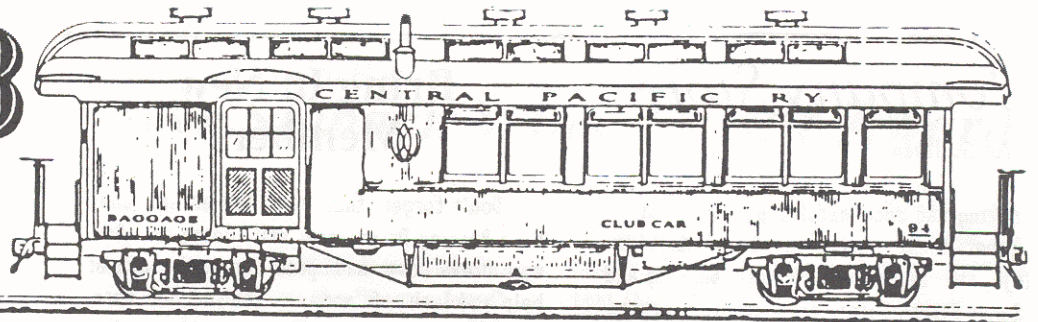


# THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin #292

Pacific Locomotive Association

October, 1987

## Childs' Play At Vallecitos

By Mike NeSmith

Making mountains out of molehills is child's play compared to what a PLA "Gang of Ten" did at the Vallecitos Nuclear Center on September 19. As a matter of fact, some of what happened really was "CHILDS' play".

The drama began at Brightside, where a group of hearty volunteers assembled shortly before 9 AM. Under the leadership of General Manager FRANK PRESLEY (hereafter known as "Fearless Leader"), the little band drove over to Vallecitos, there to be shown a slide show on various aspects of radiation hazards. Some of the party were required to take a short ride, flat on their backs, through a radiation detector. The idea was to get a background count to establish a base line for the people involved. Only about half the group went through this wonderful device before it was decided that it would take too long for everybody to go through. Oh well, the ride would never sell at Great America.

As soon as the entire group was assembled, work commenced. The first order of business was to lay panel track in front of the #103. As moving #103 to its new location meant it would have to be swung through 95 degrees of arc, it rapidly became apparent that it was almost impossible to build a curve of the small radius required. That's when PLA genius once again showed its face. With GEORGE CHILDS' Chevy pickup chained to the track aft of #103, and Fearless Leader's Ford to the fore, the locomotive was pivoted around so it was facing the correct direction. PLA created a turntable where none had ever existed!

With the turning of #103 completed, the area around the Chryscolla (0-4-0 Porter's passenger car) was cleared, and another



## PLA Wins Sunol Award

By Ed Ryan

PLA was represented in the Sunol Street Faire and Parade on September 26. LIZ REIMERS arranged the participation of a float and the Company Store.

The float consisted of PLA's circa 1935 ex-WP S26 Section Track Motor Car riding on BOB GRAHAM's flat bed trailer. A red skirt decorated the trailer which was pulled by FRANK PRESLEY and LISA McCREA in his truck. On the float were members FAY DISHONG (a Sunol resident), FLO and JIM NOBLE, CHAD and RENEE TIMMERMAN, and MATT MAKSEL who distributed candy to the children along the parade route. CAROL SULLIVAN and Liz ran the Company Store and were assisted by Jim and Flo and Matt after the parade.

The float won the "Choo Choo Award for Most on Track" and a \$25 gift certificate from Sunol's Whistle Stop Antiques. The gift certificate was quickly converted into stock for the Company Store.

turntable created. Then there was a "drag" race between the Ford and the Chevy. That is to say, both vehicles were chained to the panel track on which the Chryscolla sat, and the entire assembly was dragged to the new location.

Following the "drag" race, most of the rest of the job involved "snaptracking" #103 into position. Prior to laying the next to last panel, it was discovered that #103 needed to be brought around slightly to port (that's left for you non-nautical types). This time, however, something went wrong. The Heavy Chevy created its own "snap" track by breaking a rail. Another method had to be tried. When the next to the last panel was in place, #103 was used as an anchor, while the Childs' Chevy was used to create a slight

curve in the panel. #103 was then moved forward to hold the panel in place.

With victory in sight, it was discovered that the rail joints of the last panel wouldn't line up with the track whereon the Chryscolla resided. The right hand rail fitted perfectly, but the left was about 9 inches too long. Once again Ol' Leadfoot George came to the rescue by pulling the left rail of the Chryscolla panel until the rails lined up. The rest was easy, and with #103 secured, all that was left was cleanup.

Before this writer signs off, he'd like to make a couple of observations. The first is that now he truly knows what a drag race is all about. The second is that sometimes a seemingly heavy task is "CHILDS'" play. Ask George, he knows.

# Company Store

By Carol Sullivan

Having had successful appearances at the September Great American Train Mart in Vallejo, the September general meeting and the Sunol Street Faire, we're looking forward to the year's remaining monthly meetings, the October 25 GATM at Vallejo, and the gigantic Great American Train Show at the Oakland Coliseum on December 19 and 20. There may also be forays to the Ohlone Flea Market by LIZ REIMERS.

New and note to be missed: THOSE MAGNIFICENT TRAINS 1988 calendars, including the new desk-top style which has more, though smaller pictures. Pictures in one or the other are Sierra's Shay #2, snow plows, Cal Western #45, a 1955 Peninsula commuter, WP #94, and an eastbound California Zephyr leaving Niles Canyon. Nice! Among other contributors is our TOM MOUNGOVAN.

**WANTED:** A railroad lanterns information resource who knows at least a little about prices and sources for parts and can advise interested members. Contact Carol Sullivan (415) 341-0814 evenings.

**WANTED:** Buyer for small, old, mounted photo of CP #1715 (if I read it right).

## September Roll Call

By Brian T. Wise

For the month of September I have received only one roll call sheet. These people have worked at least one day in the canyon: Mike Bozzinni, Frank Presley, Jeff Otto, Dexter Day, Tim Flippo, Mike Price, Phil Orth, "Bones" Andrews, Steve Slabach, Bob Adam, Herb Norleen, Madeline Iverson, Jim Dinkey, Al Fowler, Rich Thorpe, Mike Biehn, Chris Holumbo (who has worked on more than one occasion without recognition), George Childs Jr., Mike Nesmith, Ray McAllister and Brian Wise.

# Bring In New Members

Don't forget that the Membership and Fund Raising Drives are still going on! Our work crews have had problems with lack of help and lack of money. The drives were initiated to alleviate these problems. We have only TWO months before our insurance and backhoe payments are due and winter begins! Please help the PLA through your donations and by bringing new people into the club.

A big 'Thank You' goes to Cliff Walters who was the first member to get friends to apply for membership in the PLA. By the deadline for this issue we received THREE applications sponsored by Cliff. He's now in the lead for our membership contest. Remember, the member who initiates the most applications gets \$50 of credit in our Company Store and the member who comes in second will get \$25 of credit. The contest ends at the December business meeting so have your friends get applications in soon!

Spread the word: RAILROADING IS FUN!

A special application (marked with a train beneath the PLA logo) for this contest went out in last month's Club Car. Make as many copies of it as you need or contact Membership Secretary Jim Evans for more copies.

**Notice to All Members:** Please check your membership card to see if it is time to renew your membership. Please send all renewals and changes of address to Membership Secretary Jim Evans, P.O. Box 451, Burlingame, CA 94011-0451. Please do not send renewals to our Niles Station mailing address or delays may result.

To be eligible for Active Membership one must have been an Associate Member for at least six months and have regularly attended meetings in that time. The number of Active Members is limited to ensure a quorum at club meetings.

General Manager's Report

# Help Wanted

By Frank Presley

I hate to harp on this, but we need help in getting projects completed. On several we've only had three to five workers show up. At this rate we may have operations in 1987, and we still we a lot of work to do.

You should be aware that preference and promotion to train crew and other activities will be given to thos who have helped in building the railroad.

I know I can count on you all to come out and help the club of reaching the goal of opening the Niles Canyon Railway in 1987. We can do it, but its up to you.

## FUND DRIVES

The following donated money to the PLA in September: Ray & Dee Myer, Richard Thorpe\*, William & Dorthy Gordon, Virgil Staff, John Wurster, David Sylva, Richard M. Smith, James A. Easton\*, Bones Andrews, Leland W. Langford, Alfred Lambourne, Raymond Pelot, Bud Owings and Richard B. Higgins\*.

Back-A-Hoe Fund: Ray McAllister.

(A \* denotes a donation of \$100 or more.)

Donating money is an alternative for those who do not have the time to work for the club. Richard Higgins, an associate member from Laguna Beach, enclosed this note with his very generous donation: "Keep up the good work and get that railroad going. Sorry I can't help with time or work, but at this distance money is the best I can do."

Well Richard, your help, and the help of EVERYONE on the above list, is greatly appreciated. Any type of contribution by any member will get us one step closer to opening the Niles Canyon Railway.

### PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President . . . . . Michael McQuaid, (415) 846-4082  
Vice-President . . . . . Madeline Iverson, (408) 727-7230  
Recording Secretary . . . . . Brian T. Wise  
Membership Secretary . . . . . Jim Evans  
P.O. Box 451, Burlingame, CA 94011-0451  
Treasurer . . . . . Burneda Koenig  
General Manager . . . . . Frank Presley, (415) 796-3094

### The Club Car

The Club Car is the monthly newsletter of the Pacific Locomotive Association and its members. All submissions will be considered for publication and will only be edited for space and clarity.

Editor . . . . . Alan Teruya  
744 Olivina Ave., Livermore, CA 94550  
(415) 455-1269

## Sept. Meeting

By Brian T. Wise

The September 18 Membership Meeting was called to order and proceeded straight to the first stop; the Planning Committee report. Chairman CRAIG WILSON is STILL waiting for more "Brightside Packets" to be returned to him so that the Committee can make decisions as to the configuration of facilities. Several months ago Craig handed out scale maps of the available area so members could propose designs.

JON SIRRINE from the Finance Committee made a motion to have a "1/2 Price Sale" on Life Memberships. The motion was EVENTUALLY carried. The new price will be \$250 for members (\$125 for Seniors 60 and older) until the current membership drive ends (12/18/87).

G. M. FRANK PRESLEY announced that the big event of the weekend would be the move of the #103 and Chrysocola at Vallecitos. He also announced the creation of the position of Station Agent. Talk to him if interested.

DEXTER DAY reported that the new Rule Book for operating equipment is 99% done.

RAY McALLISTER reported that the air brake piping on the boxcar at Brightside has been completed. He now has a new connection with the Southern Pacific regarding the move of #4, #5, and #7 from Richmond.

From the Company Store, CAROL SULLIVAN reported that \$414 was taken in at the Great Western Train Mart.

With regards to our agreement, the County legal staff has placed in a clause allowing the County to order us out with 180 days notice. President MIKE McQUAID has since contacted Alameda County Supervisor ED CAMPBELL through his Administrative Aide CHRIS GRAY. The PLA Board of Directors is withholding signing the agreement until further word from Supervisor Campbell.

McQuaid reported another situation that is stirring up. The SP wants to remove the rail from Vallejo Mills Park to the Dresser Bridge. Mike has sent a letter to the SP proposing that we pull up the rail so we may lay our own immediately to protect the ties.

Three new Associate Members were voted in: RICHARD ANDERSON, MIKE BIEHN, and STEPHEN FERRARI. Also voted into Active Membership was MIKE SNYDER.

HENRY LUNA reported he had 112 participants for the Cariboo Steam Special. He had said we needed 200 to make it work,

People Who Make it Happen

## Steve Slabach Wins Whistle Award

By Madeline Iverson

Fortunately for the PLA, Steve Slabach, this year's recipient of the "Whistle Award" for outstanding contributions to the PLA, does not join his colleagues on the golf course every weekend. Steve can usually be found doing much of our organization's dirty work (and I'm not even talking about his involvement as the club's chief counsel). Almost every weekend, Steve can be found in Niles Canyon, Shinn St. or anywhere else the club needs his help.

The weekend that I am writing this article, Steve has been in three places driving the White truck that he picked up from Santa Rosa and fixed up. (This is the truck that Bill Andrade was able to get donated to us.) In the morning he picked up a load of fencing for Brightside and scrap ramps for the bin at Shinn Street. After this was unloaded, he headed up to Pleasanton to pick up some donated railroad car stairs. He laughs and says, "Who has time for golf?" I think to myself, "Thank God you don't."

Steve seems to be as at home driving this classic 1959 vehicle as he does sitting behind the desk of his legal office in Burlingame, where he has handled the club's legal affairs since joining the organization in 1974. (He also has a law practice when he isn't handling PLA business.) In addition, he recently got a Class 1 driver's license, a dream he has had for years.

No, Steve was not born with a silver spoon in Burlingame. He was born with... well, let's just say on his parents' chicken ranch in Oklahoma in 1934. At one point his family owned the largest chicken hatchery in the state. He was glad they got out of the chicken business and chuckles when telling me this. The family moved to Arkansas where

but B.C. Rail made a few concessions, so the trip was still on.

JIM NOBLE announced the donation of a 12 ft x 24 ft metal building. Thanks are in order to REDGWICK CONSTRUCTION COMPANY.

To finish off the evening the "Whistle Award" was presented to STEVE SLABACH for his outstanding contributions to the PLA for the last year. Congratulations, Steve!

The entertainment for the evening were slides of Railfair at San Francisco and a cross-country trip on AMTRAK.

his father had a service station along Highway 66. He stayed there through his first year in high school and then spent the next three years in school in St. Louis.

Law was not always his goal and four years later he graduated from Northwestern with a degree in mechanical engineering. He worked during the day and attended law school at night in Washington, D.C. for one year before transferring to Stanford where he finished law school. While in Washington he married Elizabeth Cartwright, known to the PLA as his lovely wife Betty.

During his first year out of law school he worked for a judge in San Francisco. He spent the next 13 years learning the profession and sharpening his skills as a trial lawyer for two law firms in San Francisco. In 1975 he opened up his law practice in Burlingame. It is fortunate for the PLA that he did this the year after joining, perhaps not so fortunate for him that he did so. (Are you chuckling again, Steve?)

Steve and Betty have two sons and a daughter; the elder two are married. As Steve adds laughingly, "they're still in school." So far, none of them have chosen to follow in their dad's footsteps. Perhaps they're afraid if they are too much like Dad they'll get hooked on the PLA too.

Thanks for everything Steve. As you so often have said to others, "We couldn't have done it without you."

## CARIBOO STEAM

There wasn't time to include any details of the PLA's Cariboo Steam Special behind British Columbia's Royal Hudson #2860 in this issue of the Club Car, but here are a few notes:

The trip was a huge success, with everyone on board having a great time.

The Canadians were wonderful. The train crew and the people of Lillooet made the whole trip fun.

There was a diesel for dynamic braking and a little bit of helper service, but it didn't detract too much from #2860.

Everyone wants to go again.

Next month The CLUB CAR will carry a report on the trip, possibly written by a guest author.

