

WP 165 SUMMER PROGRESS

- Chris Allan, Steam CMO

Our first day of work for the summer session, Thursday July 29th saw the return of prodigal son Erin Swain, FRRS life member currently residing in Flagstaff, Arizona. Erin and I made ready to tackle the nastier tasks we have been putting off. Erin jumped in by getting himself into the firebox and continuing the grind on the rear tube sheet. The seal welds on the tubes at the rear were applied so as to minimize leakage when cold air was inadvertently sucked in due to the fire going out, or inattentive firemen etc. To replace the tubes these welds must be ground flush with the sheet and the small bit of tube end remaining must be driven out. Not the most glamorous job but one that needs to get done despite all the tiny grind burns we are both nursing.

Hank Stiles removed the rear cab brace sheet with a bit of help from all concerned and placed it out with the cab to hopefully be sandblasted later in the summer. In the process the buffer that bears against the tender front beam can

now be tightened up since it was integral with the cab brace. The brake cylinders were also disassembled. They are both in fine condition and will hopefully be reassembled with new seals in the fall.

After Erin's turn was done in the firebox he and Charlie (Welcome back Charlie!) spent the lion's share of the next two days needle-scaling on the valve gear arms and various other castings.

I would like to welcome new members Mike and Joseph Brehm from Phoenix, AZ. (Fun fact: Arizona was well represented this time, even the 165 started its career in Jerome, Arizona). Mike and Joe made their very first trip to Portola this time, and were immediately tasked with removing the cab woodwork in preparation for sandblasting the cab sheet metal. The T&G boards in the headliner and the ancillary wood was carefully removed, numbered and documented prior to storing it in our boxcar for future reference. New material will replace this woodwork, but the old will serve as a pattern for replacement. Thanks to both these guys for their perseverance and seeing the job through.



Did Chris see his shadow? Chris Allan and Norm Holmes confer at the rear of the 165. Norm is standing where the engineer's seat would normally be. The cab is off, revealing the details of the firebox shell.

- Mike Mucklin photo

By Friday we were in full force and were joined by Nathan Osborn and Mike Mucklin. More needle-gun work was the order of the day and the din was jarring, but progress was made. Mike continued his photo documentation of work on the project. Mike's fine work is featured in this article. More of this work session can be viewed online at wprsteam.blogspot.com.



Erin Swain checks the rigging for lowering the power reverse from the side of the boiler.

- Mike Mucklin photo

By Saturday, Erin was getting tired of chipping paint and decided to check out the power reverse, which has been overlooked up to this point. We are happy he did because on removing the rear drain plug he got over five gallons of water out of the cylinder. The little drains were of course plugged and we are lucky it didn't freeze up and crack something expensive to replace. One thing led to another and we decided that a proper rebuild was best done on the bench so it was dropped down and loaded in Erin's truck to be rebuilt in his home shop. We are confident it will come back to us in better-than-new condition.

Director Matt Parker finally made it on Saturday afternoon. It would have been sooner but the railroad had different plans for him. Matt spent a good couple of hours chipping away inside the boiler shell. Yet another task everyone hates but one that needs doing.

Thanks to everyone who came out this time. Each time we literally and figuratively "chip away" at the task, and one day it will lead to steam returning to Portola. Thanks to unsung hero Norm Holmes who made sure we had full welding bottles, and for finalizing the tube sale with the V&T, as well as our new FRRS treasurer

James Mason who is helping us figure out the steam department finances. James' efforts will allow us to finally bring our boxcar home from Rio Vista in September. Our friends in Cheyenne also deserve our gratitude for their continued assistance and advice.

Also, a big thanks to Bob Sims for his continued generosity. Bob donated another \$1000.00 to the cause, as well as some vintage WP oil and kero cans that will look great and be quite handy when we get steaming.

The cab and tender signage is just about done as of this writing. We could still use another \$500.00 to complete the funding of this sub-project. Sean of Starr Studios in Big Bear City, California has done an exemplary job of replicating the originals. These should be on display somewhere in the shop area by next spring. Thanks to all of you that have donated to this signage, your generosity will soon be on display for all to see, and will instill a great deal of pride in our WP heritage. A separate blog post outlining the entire process will be up soon, thanks to Sean who has been sending progress photos of the entire job.

Have a great summer! See you in the fall.



Steam CMO Chris Allan performs some welding work inside the 165's firebox.

- Mike Mucklin photo

The 165 needs your help. Steam engines run on 4 things: fuel, water, rails and money. We've got 3 of those in abundance, but your help is needed for the last one. To donate to the 165, you can post mail a check to Steam Department - FRRS, P O Box 608, Portola, CA 96122. Or go on-line to the WP Store: giftshop.wplives.org. Click on Monetary Donations and select 165 Donation to support the return of steam to Portola.