



The Train Sheet

ISSUE 114

July/August 2002

News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Portola Railroad Museum

Portola Railroad Days 2002

By Norm Holmes

The 20th annual Feather River Railroad Days is history. Because of conflicts with other events in August, the date was changed to July 27-28. The parade usually held on Saturday was scheduled for Sunday at 1PM. These changes did little to bring people to town. Advertisement about the date changes was minimal, the parade lasted all of 20 minutes and half of the vendors in the City Park backed out because of a last minute cancellation of the carnival rides.

However, the volunteers at the Portola Railroad Museum put on a great show. A visit to the City Park revealed few visitors with a majority congregating at the museum to ride the caboose trains and view the displays.

The Donner Pass Gandy Dancers brought their modular HO gauge model train layout from Carson City, the Truckee Meadows Ntrak group brought a N gauge layout and Gary Van



Old and new share space side-by-side as our GP7 707 and brand new UP SD70M 4775 are prepped for Railroad Days. -Frank Brehm

Treese brought his G scale live steam equipment to set up on the dock area. Ken Finnigan ran the donated N gauge layout. The traditional western "shootout and train robbery" was put on by Truckee's "Regulators." We really appreciate these fine folks helping us to put on a great show.

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Santa Trains 2002 - Planning Begins

By Pat Brimmer

Believe it or not, it is time to start planning for the Santa Train. This has always been a great time at the museum as we share the Holiday Spirit with our friends and neighbors in the City of Portola and the surrounding areas. So, below, you will find everything that I can think of that needs to be done for the Santa Train weekends. The dates for the Santa Train this year are November 30, December 7 and December 14. Notice that we will be running on three Saturdays this year as opposed to the two Saturdays in the past. This is due to a joint effort by several

organizations to try and provide activities for all of the people who come into the area to cut their own Christmas trees. I understand that about 15,000 permits for tree cutting are issued each year. We will plan on running the first train about 5:30pm. We will run until everyone has had a ride. Normally, we conclude operations about 8:30pm. This is always a fun time for museum volunteers and also for the community.

Now, what I really need are lots of **VOLUNTEERS** that will take responsibility for each of the things listed below. If you would like to volunteer, please e-mail me ASAP so that we can

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Portola Railroad Days 2002

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During Saturday and Sunday Charles Grimes volunteered his "Hooligans" group and entertained us with Chicago style blues music. Train Rides in our caboose trains ran with capacity crowds both days. Union Pacific graciously loaned an almost new EMD SD70M for display. This was a big hit with the visitors who could compare the new diesel-electric technology with our earlier models. Our new Society President, Rod McClure made the arrangements for this exhibit. This unit was hand washed after arrival by FRRS volunteers so made an impressive display.

Our Gift Shop has been moved to much larger quarters, now residing in the former Beanery/Meeting room. Hot dogs, sandwiches and soft drinks were available along with gift shop merchandise.

Train crew participants for the event were, in no particular order: Paul and Ken Finnegan, Lew Barnard, Jack Palmer, Loren Ross, Dave Kantoff, Pat Brimmer, Charlie Spikes, Chris Juzwiak, Ron Nehr, Tom Andrews, Don Nelson, Rod McClure, Steve Habeck, John Walker and Norm Holmes. My apologies if someone was left off.

Recent Donations

Don Beale has donated a N gauge model railroad layout to the museum. Since we do not have room to permanently display the layout, Don gave us permission to sell it. We have put it up as a silent auction with the bids closing September 22. The layout is about 16 feet long, 4 feet wide, with a 8 foot "L" leg. It has a ore loading dock and a roundhouse.

Several locomotives and ore cars are included along with all the power packs etc. It is ready to roll. If you would like to bid by phone call the museum (530-832-4131) and someone can give you further info.

Norm Holmes' son Steve was able to obtain the donation of four fire hydrants and valves that were being replaced near his home in Incline Village, NV. These are only a few years old and will be used to replace the ancient hydrants we have at the museum.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The November Board Meeting for the FRRS will be held in Sacramento, CA. All interested members are invited to attend.

When: November 2, 2002. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM.

Where: The Stanford Gallery of the California State Railroad Museum, located in the Big 4 Building at 111 "I" St., right next to the Railroad Museum Building building.

Map:

Computer Networking

By Frank Brehm

Over the several years, many volunteer hours have been spent putting together a plan to integrate computers and a networking system at the museum. We have purchased two Compaq Servers that will be the center of the new network. Envisioned in the "Information Technology" plan is the ability of volunteers to use the new system to log hours spent at the museum, track membership status, inventory control, as well as an interactive system for visitor use. We have been fortunate in receiving volunteer help from a network consultant who has agreed to evaluate our plan and make suggestions as appropriate. Site visits have taken place and more are planned. Installation of available computer systems should begin right after the first of the year.

Although we have, the basic plan in place much more is needed, with computer systems topping the list. A minimum set of standards for individual computer workstations has been decided upon and we are working on the wiring necessary to bring the system online. This will be a networking system comprised of computers stationed in appropriate areas for volunteer use and also in areas used for the day to day business of running the society.

Computers will be installed in the following areas as availability permits. Two in the office area, two in the operations office, one in the gift shop, two in the library car, two in the planned volunteer lounge area, and two in the planned library research area. We are also looking at having a minimum of two "touch screen" systems for visitor use which will provide historical information on our society, the museum, and the equipment preserved there.

Systems planned for use in the library will include scanners for transferring paper documents and photos to an electronic format that will be included in a database for easy retrieval by both members and visitors. This will alleviate the unnecessary handling of these documents and photos by those wishing to research historical facts concerning the Western Pacific and other railroads that we might have information on.

Integration with a new phone system is also being looked at that will allow many "voice mail" boxes as well as forwarding of calls to an appropriate department head during certain hours of the day. More information will be made available as plans are finalized.

Saturday, Nov. 2, 2002

1:00 PM * Board Meeting

Questions Call
(530) 832-4131

CSRM Turntable

Discovery Museum



CSRM Main
Entrance

Stanford Gallery

Sacramento River

I-5 and Amtrack Station

Santa Trains 2002 - Planning Begins

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get started with the details. When you e-mail me, please indicate what area(s) you would like to help in and whether you want to take responsibility for that area(s) or just help out in that area. My email address is brimmer@wwdb.org and is also listed at the end of this article.

If you see something that I have missed, please e-mail me immediately so that I can add it to the list and start searching for volunteers to cover it.

Operations Crew – Engineer, Fireman, Brakeman, Conductor, 5 car attendants, 2 or more crossing guards, supervisor/dispatcher. **CURRENTLY, THIS AREA IS REALLY IN NEED OF VOLUNTEERS.** Without an operating crew, the Santa Train doesn't run. They will also be responsible for any switching that must be done prior to and after the Santa Train runs. At this time, the following people have signed up for the operating crew:

November 30 – Kerry Cochran

December 7 – Kerry Cochran, Pat Brimmer, Lew Barnard, Dave Kantoff, Loren Ross

December 14 – Pat Brimmer, Dave Kantoff, Loren Ross

Charge Radio Batteries – Responsible for making sure that all radios have fully charged batteries on each Santa Train night.

Refreshments – Responsible for making sure that all of our guests and volunteers have a full, warm tummy during the evening. Cookies, Hot chocolate, hot spiced cider, coffee. The hot chocolate and spiced cider come in individual packets. We just add hot water. We need to check on the supply of sugar packets and powered cream packets. We will use a lot of these.

Christmas Tree and Decorations – Responsible for purchasing a nice tree (6 foot minimum) and whatever decorations we need, lights included. They will be responsible for setting up the tree, decorating the tree, and then taking it down and disposing of the tree and putting away the decorations.

Santa – Santa gives out candy canes to all of the kids. These are about 6 inches long. I think we may have some in the supply room to see what size we need. Santa is responsible for purchasing the candy canes. Check with Norm to find out about how many we need.

Switching the yard before and after Santa Train – We will need a train crew to switch the yard before the cabooses are decorated and again after the decorations have been taken off of the cabooses and locomotive.

Putting lights on the fence in the parking lot – Last year we had funds to buy half of the lights that I wanted to decorate the fence between the parking lot and the museum. Hopefully, we can get the rest of them this year. Power must be run from the shop building out to the ticket booth area in order to provide power for the light strings. I have a diagram as to how the lights might be strung on the fence. The lights have to be taken down and stored along with the caboose and locomotive lights after the Santa Train finishes the season.

Decorating/Undecorating the train – Responsible for getting the lights on and off the train. It is the largest effort for

the Santa Train. We need to line up generators to run the lights on the train. We need to have one big light on the rear car to act as a headlight during the backing movement.

Engine Preparation/Winterization – Responsible for making sure we have a locomotive ready to go each weekend. The 2873 worked out well last year with the large cab for cab riders, the gyra-light in the front and the MARS light for when we are backing the train.

Initial Checkout of train lights – We need to get all of the lights out and check each string. Thanks to Tom Graham, Judy McGrath and Melissa McGrath, all of the caboose and locomotive lights from last year were carefully wound around pieces of cardboard and stored in plastic containers marked by caboose number. We also need to determine if we have enough lights for all of the cabooses and the locomotive as the light strings do deteriorate due to the weather. All of the caboose and locomotive lights and heralds are stored in the MOP.

Caboose heaters – We need to have heaters in each caboose. These need to be checked out ahead of time to make sure they are working and they are safe during train operations. We don't want any of our customers burned accidentally.

Gift Shop – They will be responsible for running the gift shop each evening of the Santa Train. The shop should be open and ready for business by 5:00 pm. They are responsible to make sure that there is plenty of money in the register to begin each evening. When the evening is over, they will count the register and make a note of the amount that they began with and finished with. They will then turn this money and information over to the President who will handle the deposit. If possible, it would be nice to keep a tally on how much of each item we sell, what people wanted that we didn't have and what we sold out of. This will help us in our planning and ordering for next year. NOTE: A scanning register sure would be nice to help gather this information. Maybe we can consider upgrading our register next spring.

Decorate/Undecorate Beanery – Responsible for decorating the beanery, including the Christmas tree. Last year, Gail McClure and Stephanie Sprague bought a lot of new decorations. If money is available, maybe we can add to that this year. Also, last year, Gail packed all of the decorations in plastic containers that are well marked and will protect our investments.

Heaters for the Beanery – Responsible for making sure that the beanery is a warm gathering place for our customers. If they feel that other heaters are needed in the building for comfort, please contact the President with your ideas.

Christmas Music inside the main building – Responsible for setting up a sound system and playing Christmas music each evening. I don't think we have done this before and we may or may not be able to do it this season (time is short).

Refreshments for volunteers: – Maybe the President's discretionary fund would have enough money to buy pizza for all of the volunteers and have it delivered to the beanery right after we finish with the last train of the evening (delivery about 9:00 pm ?).

Snow removal (if necessary) – They will be responsible for clearing away snow and spreading snow melt if needed.