

Pete Solyom



Pete Solyom, a member of the WPRRHS Headlight staff for many years passed away unexpectedly on November 20, 2003 from apparent heart failure at age 51. Pete was an active participant at PRM in the 1980s before he and his wife Sue started a family. They made their home in LaHabra, California where they celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary earlier this year. A memorial service was held at St. Andrew Lutheran Church on November 26th.

Besides Sue and their daughters Elizabeth and Stephanie, Pete's passions in life were the San Francisco 49'ers football team and the Western Pacific Railroad. Pete was a tireless promoter of anything involving the WP, authoring articles for the magazine and hosting the "FRRS Southern Division" meets, a one-day gathering of usually 70 to 80 people primarily from the southern California area who shared an interest in the WP. These meets eventually were spun into the Western Prototype Modelers Meet, encompassing all prototypes, the latest of which was held in October 2003. Pete also developed contacts with various manufacturers and served as a liaison to help develop and bring to the marketplace models of WP prototypes. To that end, Pete also compiled the WP Model Report that appeared in many issues of the Headlight. Pete attended all of the WPRRHS conventions. In addition to railroading, Pete enjoyed scuba diving and off-road 4x4 driving.

At the time of his passing, Pete was an account manager for a firm that supplied and distributed pharmacy items to assisted living and nursing homes. He also taught pharmacology and worked as a pharmacy technician.

In addition to Sue, Elizabeth and Stephanie, Pete is survived by his parents, Pete and Dorothy, a brother, Alan, and numerous relatives and friends. Pete and Sue chose to raise their daughters in a Christian environment. A trust fund to help pay for the girls' education has been set up through their church. Donations can be sent to St. Andrew Lutheran Church, 11345 Miller Road, Whittier CA 90604. Make a notation on the check that it is for the Solyom Trust Fund.

On a personal note, I've known Pete since 1987 when we were both standing in line for a tour bus at the UPHS convention in North Platte. After discovering we were both primarily WP people, we became close friends and shared many hours photographing, modeling and discussing the WP. He wasn't shy about letting you know what he thought, and was always a true and generous friend. He will be missed by many, myself included.

Thom Anderson, WPRRHS

Operating Department 2003 in Review

By Kerry Cochran

First off I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the members of the Operating Department for your help with the 2003 Operating Season.

I appreciate your support in the Operating Department this year and hope that you will consider returning and volunteering for next years season.

I would like to thank the three supervisors, Pat Brimmer, Paul Finnegan and Don Nelson, the Yardmaster, Steve Habeck and the Roadmaster Rod McClure who supervise the crew when I am not present at the museum. Without their help and the help of all the other museum volunteers, we would not be able to run the caboose train on the weekends.

It's a never ending challenge to get crew members lined up for each weekend during the operating season. There were a few weekends that all we had was a Push-Pull operation.

When crew members sign-up to work a weekend, I would ask at you check the FRRS WEB site, www.wplives.org and use the link to crew pages. Check to see what weekend that we are short on members and try to sign-up on that weekend.

There are many other volunteers who help the Operating Department out during the year and without their help we just would not be able to handle all that need to be done. THANKS to everyone.

Again thanks for the help, and should you have any questions on the Operating Department please contact me.

Email KC6KNT@Compuserve.com, Home telephone (650) 952-7127, Fax (650) 588-5490 or you can write me at 649 5th Ave. San Bruno, Ca. 94066-4517.

Promotions during 2003;

Qualified Brakeman: Dave Epling, John Walker, Rick Edwards.

Qualified Conductor: Tom Andrews.

Qualified Fireman: Loren Ross.

Qualified RAL Engineer: Terry Decottignies.

Qualified Yard Engineer: Lew Barnard.

Student Positions during 2003;

Student Brakeman: Fred Bechtold, Lonnie Miller

Student Conductor: Chris Jozwiak, Rick Edwards.

Student Fireman, Student Conductor: Dave Kantoff.

Student Passenger Engineer: Lew Barnard, Paul Finnegan.

Sure hope I did not miss anyone.

All the Operating Department Crew members work very hard through the year in volunteering their time to the museum. The time they spend working on the crew in their student positions or qualified positions helps us run the trains during the weekends.

New Members to the Operating Department:

Fred Bechtold, Lonnie Miller, Scott Chandler, Victoria Epling, Dave Epling, David Gard.

Welcome aboard, hope to see all of the new crew members in 2004.