



Preserving "THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE"

Issue - 182

July/August/September 2019



- Eugene Vicknair

In late 2018, the FRRS learned that the long time Portola Railroad Days organizers were not planning to return for 2019 and that no one had taken up the role. As it looked more and more likely that there would be no Railroad Days in 2019, discussion among the regular museum volunteers turned to what the society could do to maintain an event in August and continue the tradition.

The city council had asked if the FRRS could take over the entire event, but after much discussion, it was decided that we would not have the volunteers or budget to handle the events that occur within the city and off the museum grounds. In years past, it was all we could do to handle the events on the WPRM site. With this in mind, we respectfully declined taking over the entire event.

However, we felt that the tradition of a railroad history event in August, which stretched back 36 years, should be maintained. To that end, Greg Elems and Eugene Vicknair offered to spearhead a Western Pacific themed event in early August. It was dubbed the Western Pacific Celebration to separate the event from Portola Railroad Days and to preserve that name for an eventual restart of the PRD event.

Despite some bumps along the way, the WP Celebration event was held on August 3-4 and proved to be very popular and our volunteers consider it to have been a great success. We received a great number of compliments from visitors and no substantial complaints. The volunteers and crew members on hand talked to several people who had not been to the museum in years, or ever, but heard about the event and decided to come. This included some long time and lapsed members. Portola City Councilmember Pat Morton also attended and was very complementary of the event.

The visual centerpiece of the event was Western Pacific SW1500 1503, which had received new green and orange paint just the week before. Big thanks to Roger Stabler, David Elems, Greg Elems and everyone else who worked so hard to

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Upcoming Special Events ...

Pumpkin Express Trains:

October 19th, 20th, 26th & 27th!

Santa Trains:

December 7th

December 13th & December 14th

December 20th & December 21st

(more details on page 17)

-THE TRAIN SHEET-

Issue 182 - July/August/September 2019
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 News from the Feather River Rail Society and the
 Western Pacific Railroad Museum at Portola

Editor - Paul Finnegan
 Email: trainsheet@wplives.org

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 September and December.

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FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

**WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD
 MUSEUM at PORTOLA**

PO BOX 608, Portola, CA 96122-0608

Museum Phone: (530) 832-4131
 Fax: (530) 832-1854

The museum is open:

April: Thursday - Sunday

May - September: Daily

October: Thursday - Sunday

Hours: 10 - 5, weather permitting.

If you wish to visit during the closure period, it is
 advisable to call in advance
 and find out if the museum will be open.

Entrance to the museum for members is free. Non-
 members are required to pay an admission fee, details
 are inside this issue on the inside of the back cover.

The Feather River Rail Society, a tax-exempt public
 benefit California corporation, is the historical society for
 the Western Pacific Railroad and operator of the Western
 Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California.

**The FRRS is not associated with the
 Union Pacific Railroad.**

FRRS Tax ID number is 68-0002774
 Member of the Heritage Rail Alliance



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- WEB PAGES of INTEREST -

FRRS Official Site	www.WPLives.org
CZ Virtual Museum	calzephyr.railfan.net
California Zephyr	californiazephyr.org
Western Pacific Pages	www.WPLives.com
WP Virtual Museum	wpmuseum.railfan.net
Tidewater Southern Pages	www.TidewaterSouthern.com
Central California Traction	www.trainweb.org/tractionco

President's Pin

- Greg Elems



Hello fellow FRRS members.

I have been appointed president by the FRRS Board in the August board meeting.

I've been VP since Rod went into the hospital and I hope I've learned something in that time. Hopefully the board's confidence in me isn't misplaced.

I look forward to working with the board, members and the museum store staff in the next year.

Many thanks go out to everyone who have stepped up to the plate and given me a hand in this new job. The plan is to keep people in positions that Steve appointed since it seems to be working just fine.

We are in high gear planning the *Pumpkin Express* weekends. KC Dunn, Ali Doty, Patty Clawson and Eugene Vicknair are well into planning of details. Thank you Pumpkin Express Crew! We are looking for help in all areas so please volunteer and join in the fun.

Our *WP Celebration* the first weekend of August went well. Prior to that we had a steam work week and a major push in getting the WP 1503 prepped and painted. Roger Stabler was a huge help and leader for those projects. Thank You Roger!

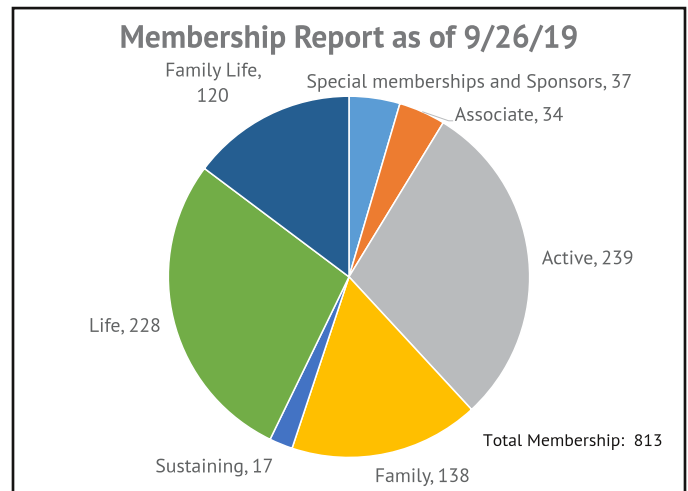
Planning for the *Santa Train* weekends has also started. We'll need help for that too. Besides train crews, we'll need help in the baggage car with Santa and the museum store.

Last but not least, Steve Habeck had surgery on September 3rd. He is back home and once again able to stop by the museum. I'm sure I speak for everyone Steve, glad you made it through the surgery and are on the road to recovery. Take your time, get your rest and get better. We look forward to having you feeling like your old self again.

Over and out.

**FRRS Leadership Team
2019/2020**

President	Greg Elems
Vice-President	Steve Habeck
Secretary	Eugene Vicknair
Treasurer	Bart Hansen
General Superintendent	Kerry Cochran
Archives/Historical	Kerry Cochran Frank Brehm
CMO	Vacant
Asst. CMO	David Elems (Acting CMO)
Facilities	Charlie Spikes
Funding	Eugene Vicknair
Headlight	David Pires Mike Mucklin
Membership/Admin	Eugene Vicknair
Museum Store	KC Dunn
Museum Store Staff	Jean Danielson Tajanae Yager
Operations	Loren Ross
RAL Scheduler	Ethan Doty
Restoration	Steve Habeck
Roadmaster	Greg Elems
Asst. Roadmaster	Ethan Doty
Shop	Bil Jackson David Elems
Signal Department	Kerry Cochran
Steam Lead	Roger Stabler
Train Sheet	Paul Finnegan
Yardmaster	Steve Habeck
Asst. Yardmaster	Loren Ross
Webmaster	Paul Finnegan
Zephyr Project	Eugene Vicknair



WPRM WiFi Upgrade July 2019

- Kerry Cochran

Over the last few years, the WPRM WiFi system has not been reliable at the museum for the use of our staff and volunteers.

A few months ago, Kenneth Finnegan investigated the connections, routers and other network systems at the museum. Once he completed this task, he discussed with Paul Finnegan and me (the Signal Department) the shortcomings of the way this system was configured.

During one of the Signal Department meetings that followed, the three of us discussed several options to make the WiFi system more robust and remove some of the equipment that was causing problems. I made the decision to fix the existing WiFi system, and directed Kenneth to purchase the required equipment.

On Friday July 12th, Kenneth brought the new equipment with him and after the museum closed, installed the new WiFi system. On Saturday morning July 13th, I tested the new system and advised Kenneth to decommission the old system. (Well not all of it. There is still one WiFi router working so if something did not work out, the old system would still be in limited operation.)

The new WiFi System is installed and access

points are located around the museum. One is in the main shop area, one in the window in the southwest corner of the shop building and one in the members' lounge.

This should give coverage in most of the building and the lounge. There is limited coverage in the sleeper car at this time with discussions about the possibility of adding another node to get better coverage there. However, this is dependent on donations to purchase the equipment. During the FRRS Board of Directors meeting on Saturday July 13th, I advised all members and directors (that were present) that the new system had been installed and it was working. The new network name and password is in the same location as the old one and/or can be found by asking one of the officers or directors.

The equipment costs to date have been covered by Kenneth Finnegan and Kerry Cochran.

Questions on this system should be directed to the Signal Department.

Signal Department Technical Notes of July 2019 WiFi Upgrade

- Kenneth Finnegan

This WiFi deployment at the museum has been one of the most challenging network deployments I've worked on as a networking

consultant. Not only are steel buildings and rail equipment very good at reducing WiFi coverage, the harsh weather in Portola made me hesitant to deploy any access points or cabling outdoors.

During this work on the museum network, the following ranked priorities were identified for the museum Internet service:

continued next page....



New Museum WiFi installed by Kenneth Finnegan & Kerry Cochran. Access points are now in the Silver Debris (crew lounge), southwest corner of diesel shop and near the Museum Store - photos by Kerry Cochran

1. Internet for the Museum Store for their point of sale and inventory systems
2. Internet for FRRS groups such as the Mechanical Department, Operating Department, Historical/Archives Department, etc. to enable and support their activities
3. Internet as a convenience for museum staff and volunteers to make their time spent on museum property more enjoyable

After a survey of the existing network, I proposed the best current option for the museum's network was to deploy three Ubiquiti UAP-AC-M mesh access points. These access points are special in that they don't all require being hard wired back to our Internet router with Ethernet cables, but can form a wireless mesh to extend coverage beyond the range of a single access point. As long as at least one of these access points is connected to the Internet, and all of the access points can see each other, they will function as expected.

The first access point is mounted on the north wall of the shop, with an Ethernet cable running down to the museum's router in the storage room and is the main uplink for the whole mesh. The second access point is mounted at the south-west corner of the shop, with an Ethernet cable run down to an outlet only for power. It can see the first access point from across the shop and relies on the first access point to be able to serve the Internet to users. The third access point is mounted on the interior wall of the member's lounge, again using an Ethernet cable only for power, and relies on being able to see the second access point across #3 and #4 rail for Internet. The system also includes a UniFi Cloud Key installed in the storage room; the UniFi Cloud Key is a small device which acts as a supervisor over all the Ubiquiti devices deployed across the museum to configure and monitor the access points.

This WiFi deployment should be an improvement on what the museum has had before, but does have some known deficiencies:

1. Users in the members' lounge rely on their traffic hopping from the third access point, to the second access point, to the first access point. This is generally not recommended to have traffic take multiple wireless hops since it decreases network performance, but was deemed acceptable since the museum's Internet connection is currently 6Mbps down/0.75Mbps up, so this slower WiFi mesh topology is still faster than the museum's connection to the Internet at large. It would be possible to correct this by running a CAT5e cable from the storage room to the second access point, but this would require running a cable through the rafters of the shop, which would require significant effort.
2. Since the network connection between the shop and member's lounge is wireless, a poorly positioned piece of rail equipment on #3 rail has been observed to degrade the network performance. This could be corrected by running an Ethernet cable between the shop and the lounge, but this would add a significant expense to the deployment since this would require fiber optic Ethernet equipment to go between the two buildings, and either an aerial cable strung or a significant amount of trenching effort to get between the two buildings.
3. WiFi coverage is still not satisfactory in the Edenwold sleeping area, due to it needing to penetrate both the metal walls of the member's lounge and the Edenwold itself. An additional access point installed in the Edenwold is a possible solution, but until the funding and labor to correct this is secured, it is recommended that members either book rooms on the north side of the Edenwold or stay in cabooses if they would like to have Internet access from their sleeping accommodations.

During this WiFi install, I also discovered that the current core Ethernet switch used by the museum has been the source of the radio interference likely experienced by any members who have tried to use the museum's radios around the shop. To correct this, I replaced the noisy 3Com switch with a new Netgear switch from my personal inventory, which has corrected the issue.

What the heck is an INDEPENDENT BRAKE?

- WP Operating Department Training Manual - 1974

In the last issue we examined the automatic brake, this time we turn to the independent brake.

A simplified version of the independent brake on a multiple unit diesel locomotive consist is shown in applied and released position. The "independent" brake control is the brake control for locomotive units only. Note that the disadvantage of having all air furnished by the lead locomotive is overcome by the use of air operated relay valves so that each unit supplies air for the actual application from its own main reservoirs.

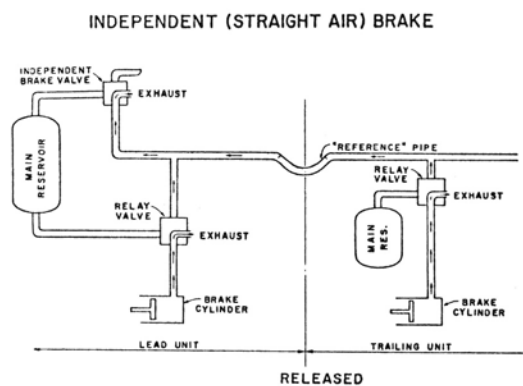
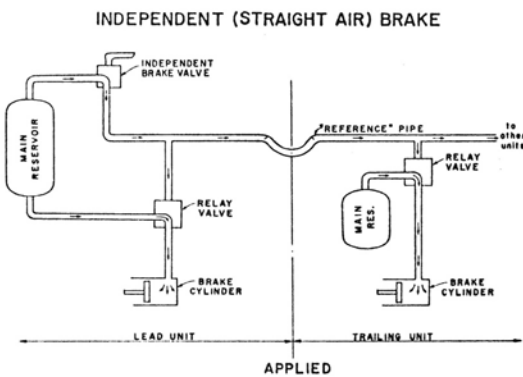
The "reference pipe" between units is necessary for this brake and a separation of the pipe would cause loss of independent brake on units behind. Separation between units rarely occurs and if it did, the units behind the separation would still have braking ability due to the automatic brake portion of the locomotive unit brake system.

In addition to the brake pipe, there are other air

pipes on locomotives that the engineman should be familiar with. These pipes are used to control locomotive brakes when locomotive units are coupled in multiple, forming a locomotive consist. These pipes run the length of the unit with a cut-out cock, a hose and gladhand on each end. These pipes are smaller than the brake pipe and are usually identified by badge plates at the hose connections at the ends of the unit. In order to have proper control of the consist, these pipes must be connected by the hoses and the cut-out cocks open between units. Main reservoir equalizing is usually a 1" pipe that serves, as the name indicates, to equalize main reservoir pressure between units. This is done to aid in synchronizing compressors and also to furnish air to a unit with an inoperative compressor. Another smaller pipe serves as a "reference" air pressure pipe to control the brake cylinder pressure on the trailing units to correspond with the brake cylinder pressure on the lead unit. This pipe is used with the "independent" brake control, which is the brake control for locomotive units only. This "reference" pipe is identified by two different names, being called *brake cylinder equalizing pipe* on No. 26 equipment, and *independent application and release pipe* on older No. 24 equipment. Although these pipes are identified differently on the locomotive, they should be coupled together between units of a consist having mixed brake equipment.

Also running through and between units is another small pipe identified as "actuating pipe." This pipe is used to transmit air from the lead unit independent control to release all locomotive unit brakes without releasing train brakes, or in other words, for independent release of an automatic application.

Another feature of the braking system is the "Independent Release". Using this feature the engineer can hold off or release the automatic application on locomotive units only while leaving train brakes applied. This is also known as "bailing off" the locomotive brakes.





Above: This set of eight lead-acid batteries is similar to what is found in each diesel locomotive here at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum (and on the railroads). Each 4-cell battery in this set produces 8 volts and they are all connected in series to produce 64 volts for the electrical systems on the locomotive, which is the industry standard.

Below: Alan Hirasawa installing batteries.
- photos by Paul Finnegan

**Things Around the Museum:
Locomotive Starting Batteries**

- Data for **each** battery:
- 11" wide x 18" tall x 29" long
- Wet weight: 440 lbs. (set of eight batteries weighs 3520 lbs.)
- Contains approximately 4 gallons of electrolyte (1 gallon per cell)
- 8-hour rating: 565 amp-hours
- Cost for a set of 8: approximately \$10,000

The batteries are connected by 3/0 and/or 4/0 cables and are capable of producing a momentary initial engine starting current in excess of 3000 amps to start the diesel engine.



Debbie Shuman, Congressman Doug LaMalfa, Ann Morningstar in the booth.

- photo by Matt Shuman

FRRS at Graeagle Independence Day Celebration
- Matt Shuman

The "Team Minion's" consisting of Ann Morningstar, Debbie and Matthew Shuman setup a booth for the WPRM at the Graeagle Park Sunday July 7th for the "Graeagle Independence Day Festival" on an overcast beautiful morning. We manned this booth from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. when we broke down the booth and returned all but the tablecloths which Debbie took home to be washed for the next event. They were getting pretty dirty.

During this time in the park we addressed many people and questions. Several had questions about train rides and how to make contact with someone about them. I took their e-mail addresses and e-mailed them all on Monday the 8th with "Trains & Travel" contact information for Chris Skow. We also made many contacts about the upcoming "Western Pacific Celebration Days" event in August including a vendor that was next to us that was selling zipper pulls to support disabled vets & families of fallen heroes. She will tentatively be at our event in August.

It was a great turnout at the booth with many adults and children. The best part of the day though was when Congressman Doug LaMalfa stopped by and chatted for 30 minutes with us. We talked a lot about trains, the museum and both full-size and toy trains we have at home. He loves trains.

Departure Julia Angela Rigutto Pagan

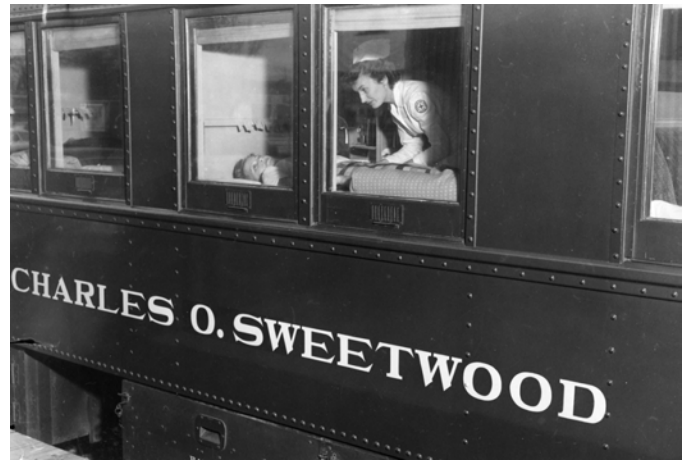
- Eugene Vicknair



During the ceremonies in Salt Lake City, UT, Julia takes a blood donation from J. Francis Fowles, President of Utah State Senate. January 29, 1951

during the blood procurement drive. She also touched on her time as a Navy nurse.

Two months later, on September 9, 2017, Julia again visited the museum and took part in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the WP 106 / "Charles O. Sweetwood" entering service as Pullman private car "Pioneer". She rededicated the car and received honors and thanks from the Red Cross personnel and other dignitaries who attended. Her daughter, Cynthia, later told us that these visits brought Julia great joy.



Julia takes a blood donation from Mrs. Frederika Peterson

- photos FRRS archives

On July 1, 2019, a very special member of the Western Pacific family left us. Julia Rigutto Pagan was one of the first group of Red Cross nurses who worked the Western Pacific's blood procurement car when it entered service in January 1951. The car was named after Charles O. Sweetwood, the first WP employee to be killed in the Korean conflict. Julia served on the car for most of 1951 and would later remember it as a very rewarding experience. She was the last of the Sweetwood nurses known to be living.

On July 8, 2017, we were honored to have Julia and her family make a surprise (for Julia) visit to the WPRM and the "Charles O. Sweetwood". On hand to greet her was Charles' nephew, Bill Sweetwood. Julia was thrilled to be reunited with "her" railcar and spent over an hour talking about the experience and people she had met



Almost a year after the proposal to donate one of our beet gondolas to the Arizona Railroad Museum was approved at the July 2018 FRRS Board Meeting, SP Beet Gondola SP 359247 is being loaded leaving the WPRM for Arizona.

- photo by Charlie Spikes

Lionel Collectors Club of America Visit*- Loren Ross*

On the week of July 15th, the Lionel Collectors Club of America (LCCA) held their annual convention in Reno, Nevada at the Atlantis Hotel and Casino. During the week the group had several area tours that included the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, the Nevada State Railroad Museum, a Lake Tahoe Dinner Boat cruise, and of course, a visit to the Western Pacific Railroad Museum at Portola, CA.

On two days, July 16 and 18, five tour buses arrived at the WPRR Museum with 108 total visitors each day. On the first day, Eugene Vicknair, Loren Ross, and Kerry Cochran were on hand to give the visitors a first-class organized tour of our main facilities. For the more adventurous, we offered instructions for our online Audio Tour and watched as they scurried all over the museum property, mostly to take photographs of our equipment.

On the second day, Eugene could not make it, and I ended up handling most of the visitors. Even though the guided tour was somewhat dismal compared to Eugene's excellent program, the visitors were not disappointed. The Audio Tour helped make up for the loss of Eugene, and we received many comments about the quality of our museum. Thanks and handshakes were the event of the day!

In addition to the museum tour, the groups also



Loren Ross greets Lionel Collectors Club of America visitors arriving at the museum 7/16/19

- photo by Kerry Cochran

took a guided tour to the home of Chris Skow in Mohawk Vista to see his excellent outdoor gardens and "G" scale layout.

Thanks to all the visitors who also took the time to stop by the Museum Store and help feed our coffers!

July 2019 Steam Work Session*- Roger Stabler*

I did not spend much time on the WP 165 during the work session in July. I was busy painting the WP 1503 for the museum with help from Greg and David Elems and Steve Habeck. I want to thank Channing Walker and Hank Stiles along with Steve Lee, for picking up the slack and making the summer steam workweek successful.

I showed up on Sunday afternoon July 21st with Mike Waters. After unloading my truck and setting the trailer I was towing with three radiators for the diesel fleet, I took the night off. On Monday morning, Mike Waters and I started prepping the WP 1503 for its paint job during the day and polishing the *Charles O Sweetwood* Pullman car in the evenings. I was met late Monday by Channing Walker and helped him get set up in the sleeping car.

For the week of July 22nd, Channing, assisted by Hank Stiles, seal welded the superheater flues front and rear and installed the superheater elements after making minor repairs to them. Channing and Hank were assisted by Dick Couden with this task.

David Elems operated the large material forklift and assisted the crew in installing the smokebox cover back onto the engine.

Parts for the buffer beam for the tender were located in the steam boxcar and will be installed in the September work session. I was able to install, with assistance from the crew, the engineer's injector and piping. The new injector supply valves have arrived on site and will be installed at the next work session.

Hank Stiles worked daily grinding the throttle

continued next page....

...July 2019 Steam Work Session continued.

back into a working valve and should be able to finish it at the next work session. The gauge cocks are on the engine and will be ground in and the stems repacked, one stem will need to be repaired. Mike Waters and I installed the lubricator in the cab after Mike replaced the missing parts and glasses.

In the September work session we plan to replace the four broken stays on the fireman's side and get the boiler buttoned up for the hydro testing in the spring.

**Operating Department
Report – 2019**

- Loren Ross,
Superintendent of Operations



I'm submitting this report as the Operating Season for 2019 has just ended. This year was another successful season with over 1,650 passengers taking rides on our caboose trains. This is 237 less than last year's total of 1,887 passengers. Throughout this season, we were able to conduct operations with only one minor mishap, and NO injuries.

In reviewing the conductor reports for the past two years, I noted some interesting facts. This year, we had two additional volunteers working the train crews, not counting special events. We also had 27 fewer Conductor Reports filed, so that indicates there was less yard switching work occurring this summer. But, this doesn't mean we weren't busy!! A lot of projects have been occurring that have taken MANY man-hours to complete. The most notable is the painting of the WP 1503. With new paint, and new radiators, the 1503 is now setup to begin operations and is planned to be the lead locomotive in this year's Pumpkin Trains. The steam crew did a lot of work on the steam locomotive this summer, and the front boiler plate has now been remounted. A boiler test is not far off, which puts us even closer to getting the old girl back in running condition.

Another big event is the preparation of our Archives Car to be fully heated and air conditioned, which will protect the archives from environmental damage. A lot of work has gone into installing upgraded electrical wiring and the HVAC system in this car. A lot of other activity happened as well. The Sweetwood "Blood Car" was mucked out and brought inside the shop as a static display. Visitors have made many comments about this one, it's a popular exhibit! The WP 501 is almost restored to operational status. Seth Adams works on this one every chance he gets, and it may be up and running soon. David Elems has asked that the WP 512 be brought over to the shop so that work can begin on repairing/replacing the wheels and cleaning up the trucks. With some heavy elbow grease, this one may also be back in service next year.

I know that not everyone lives just around the corner from the museum, but I would like to take a moment to recognize some of the volunteers who have donated over 30 hours of Operations time this year:

Lew Barnard (38.5), Kerry Cochran (45.5), Greg Elems (56), Fred Elenbaas (33), Bil Jackson (71.5), Don Nelson (49.5), Charlie Spikes (63), and Janet Steeper (42).

These are just hours spent on train crew positions, and doesn't take into account the total hours spent on other projects around the museum property. Total hours for ALL volunteers on train crew was 662.5!! I can guarantee that total volunteer hours for the entire summer will be over 2,500!!! This is an amazing number, generated by an amazing group of dedicated volunteers. That's what we need to keep this museum up and running, and I want to extend a hearty THANK YOU to all the volunteers!!!! You guys are ROCK STARS!!!!!!

All we have left for this year is to make another successful run at the Pumpkin and Santa Trains. Both these events require a substantial number of volunteers, so please check your calendars and see if you can join us for the fun. Hope to see you all there!!

Our Collections and Collectors We Know

- Kerry Cochran



The expertise and enjoyment we gain from a lifetime of collecting, organizing, building, modeling and writing will die with us if we are unwilling to share.

Over the past few years, (actually over 20 years) I have been exposed to several people that had very large collections of photographs, slides, modeling and models in their collections.

Unfortunately, deteriorating health conditions have temporarily prevented these people from working on their projects from time to time. However, their collecting continued and in some cases they were able to continue to work on their hobby.

In other cases the person was unable to care any longer for their collection, and the sad fact was that they had to dispose of their collection in order to move, or return to their home or passed away.

One thing that I have noticed during these events is the enormous amount of the collection and in some cases new products and materials, many still in the original boxes and stored without any amount of work done on them.

Another thing that I have noticed, was most were stored without any type of inventory so neither the person knew what they had or a way to account for the collection.

Digging through a massive amount of a collection requires an enormous amount of patience and skill, let alone the time, to be able to arrange the collection for passing on to a family member, a sale or a donation to an organization.

All too often we see and know someone like what I am describing. If so, what can you, and possible we, as a community of interest do now to avoid a similar situation?

First, do not assume that a family member (even immediate family) knows what the person has, how much it is worth or where it should go. Even if they do know, they may not care and may not go to the trouble of sorting through a lifetime of collecting, preferring instead to sell as a lot or toss it in a dumpster.

Second, document what you have and store it in a manner that facilitates packing for movement and possible sale.

Third, keep an inventory of all of your collections, assign a value to individual items. While we all think our collections are priceless, everything has a price provided there is an interested buyer. Books and brass models will sell, however do not expect to recover the cost unless the item is exceedingly rare.

An inventory is a great way to help you know what you have and in the event you are not able to pass along your collection, it gives others a means to help dispose of the collection.

One final note I would like to mention, is the expertise and enjoyment we gain from a lifetime of collecting, building, modeling, reading and writing will die with each of us if we do not share it with others.

Please think about helping your society, by writing articles, giving presentations, taking to other members and making documents about your experiences.

Please consider the fate of your collection while you can. I assure you that those who can help, will and your lifetime of hard work will be available for the next generation to enjoy.

(Author's note: This should not be taken as any legal advice and you should consult your attorney and tax professional for any legal matters.)

Should you have any questions on this subject, please contact Kerry Cochran, FRRS/WPRM Archives (Historical_Archive_dept@wplives.org).

Membership Spotlight – Norm Holmes*- Kerry Cochran & old Train Sheet articles*

With the arrival of the NPOAZ (mail, pigs, autos) in Portola Sept. 28, 1987, Union Pacific Engineer and Feather River Rail Society founder Norman Holmes brought his railroad employment to a close. Having reached age 60, and with the incentive of an early retirement separation allowance, Norm figured forty-two years with the railroad was enough.

Norm loved trains and particularly the Western Pacific from as early as he could remember. At age 17, he went to work as a steam watchman in San Jose. As soon as he turned 18 (August 1945) he started on his student fireman trips "covering the road" from Oakland to Portola. His first pay trip as a fireman was on a steam switcher in Stockton, doubling through from an afternoon shift to a midnight job--16 hours. A brief stint in the Army in 1946 cut into his career and when he returned to civilian life he was cut off from his firing job. In 1950 and '51 Norm worked in Portola and Stockton, but it wasn't until 1953



"HAPPY RETIREMENT NORMAN" reads the banner on UP 3369, Norm & Barb (4th & 3rd from right) with all the well wishers that were on hand for his last run 9/28/87.

- photo from Train Sheet issue 27



Norman's accomplice in the creation of the Portola Railroad Museum was none other than WP President Robert G "Mike" Flannery, who became President and Chief Executive Officer of the Missouri Pacific Railroad after the merger. Norman and Mr. Flannery during the donation ceremony of WP 921 in Portola on August 27, 1983.

that year round employment was available. Norm worked switchers and locals in the Bay Area, made 90 round trips as a fireman on the *Zephyr* and was promoted to engineer in 1959.

In 1970 Norm decided to return to Portola with his family. They bought 15 acres of pine forestland, built a home in 1971 and lived there for 31 years. Norm's last assignment was in the freight pool between Portola and Winnemucca--211 miles.

Railroading has been important to Plumas County since the first rails were laid in 1887. Regular passenger was started in 1895 linking residents by rail to the outside world via Reno.

Western Pacific rail were being laid in 1908 with the first passenger train operated through the Feather River Canyon August 22, 1910. It wasn't until the advent of the *California Zephyr* in 1949 that tourists discovered the beauty of Plumas County from the vista-domes of this "most talked about train." While most earlier train schedules traversed the canyon during darkness, the *Zephyr* was scheduled for scenery. Unfortunately jet aircraft cut into passenger train travel and operating costs increased so much that the Western Pacific discontinued passenger on March 22, 1971.



Official grand opening of the Portola Railroad Museum in May 1984.



Norm at the Throttle of WP 921.

Western Pacific was absorbed into the Union Pacific System on December 22, 1982. In an attempt to preserve equipment from the WP, Norm Holmes organized the Feather River Rail Society and arrangements were made with UP to donate a "covered wagon" streamline diesel locomotive for preservation at Portola. The unit was formally presented to the Greater Portola (now Eastern Plumas) Chamber of Commerce at the Feather River Railroad Days in August 1983.

An agreement was reached with the Union Pacific and the City of Portola to lease the abandoned diesel shop to establish a railroad museum. A grand opening ceremony was held on Memorial Day weekend, 1985.

Under Norm's leadership, the museum grew from literally an empty building to what it is today.

In the early days, Norm and his wife Barbara operated the museum gift shop. If you ever needed to find him, you would just go to the gift shop and ask Barbara, she would know where he was at on the museum property. Both Norm and Barbara worked almost every day at the museum; you could find him working on equipment, painting locomotives and everything else that needed doing.

In the 1980's Norm met Ken Roller (Ken passed away 12/31/17), Norm invited Ken to the railroad museum and from that the rest is history.

Norm also wrote several railroad books, one of the more popular books was *My Western Pacific Railroad, An Engineer's Journey*.

In September 2012, Norm found it necessary to move out of Portola, looking for a better location for him and Barbara for health care reasons. They moved to Carson City Nevada, where he still lives today.

Over his career of railroad employment, Norm collected railroad artifacts and memorabilia; he was an avid photographer, taking several hundreds, if not thousands, of photos and slides.

Norm has recently donated his collection to the society and they are now in safekeeping for the membership to view as soon as we get them inventoried.



Norm - August 2019

WP 1503 Restoration Update

- Greg Elems

It has been a long process of work. Loren Ross and Greg Elems started the removal of the Union Pacific lettering, stripes and numbers in early 2013. Loren Ross spent a great deal of time on the class lights. Cleaning three coats of UP yellow off as well as repairing or replacing broken parts.

Seth Adams put in many hours on the electrical gremlins UP left when they removed the auto-start and shut-off system. Seth Adams did mechanical work plus radiator work with help from David Elems. Rod McClure and David Elems installed the first radiator that was repaired, only to have the second one give up the ghost some time later. David Elems put in many more hours with all aspects of mechanical inspection and repairing. Much work included the radiators and a new radiator was purchased after the tired one had too many leaks to make the repair a viable option.

It is sad to say but Rod McClure passed in 2016, never seeing 1503 in all her glory. To that end, in July 2016 Tom Carter and Eugene Vicknair applied green and orange patches on 1503 for the celebration of Rod's life. 1503 pulled the caboose train for that somber occasion.

In the late summer of 2018, work resumed on 1503 with the sanding of the UP lettering and numbers. Roger Stabler in the fall of 2018 primed the area that was to be painted orange and then put the orange on. Fast forward to July 2019, many hours were spent by several people in the removal and chipping off the flaking paint. To which more time was spent on the sanding of rust and lettering/stripping tape gum. Ethan Doty, Kenneth Finnegan, Jason Peterich, David Elems, Mike Waters, Roger Stabler, Loren Ross and Greg Elems had their hands full with the paint prep for the primer, orange and finally the green. Steve Lee got his hands dirty and ground a rough weld patch on the step on the fireman's side on the front walk way. Roger then put Bondo on it and sanded it smooth. Roger Stabler and Mike Waters then put in 40 hrs of



WP 1503 shortly after arrival at WPRM

February 2012.

- photo by Ed Wagner



WP 1503 almost ready for painting

July 26, 2019.

- photo by Greg Elems



Green again! September 28, 2019.

- photo by Kenneth Finnegan

painting time on the primer, green paint and finally the black on the trucks and fuel tank. Before the primer went on considerable time was spent by Mike Waters, Jason Peterich and Greg Elems applying the masking for the Western Pacific and numbers on the cab. Eugene Vicknair had made the stencils for the lettering. Between the primer and green paint Ethan Doty, Steve Habeck, Matthew and Greg Elems spent 10 hours on the masking of the orange stripes on the pilot. After the green paint was applied, David Elems, Ethan Doty and Jason Peterich masked the frame and steps so Roger and Mike could paint the black on the trucks and fuel tank.

With all the paint work going on, A1 Radiator in Reno was working to no avail on the radiator we had hoped was repairable. 1503 was mostly painted when David Elems, with the help of Phil Schmierer and Ethan Doty, dropped in the new radiator. Water was put into the system, a few minimal leaks were found and taken care of. 1503 was started, there is a video on the web page of that, and the temperature brought up to test the work. It was a success! With the radiator installed, David, Ethan and Phil put the front radiator shutters on with the protective wire grill. The protective wire grill for the radiators was then installed on the top of the engine hood.

The bell and a horn have been installed, with a proper five-chime horn to come after a service job on it. The last of the details were the number boards and the remaining green paint went on the handrails and stanchions on September 25 & 26. The work on 1503 is drawing to a close.

1503 will be the Pumpkin Express and Santa Train locomotive for 2019. On June 20th, 2020 will be the dedication of 1503 to Rod and Jack McClure. With the closing of the museum at 5 p.m. that Saturday in June, all members are invited to come to the dedication and partake in a potluck dinner. Ride the caboose train and remember Rod and all he did for the museum.

Former Morrison-Knudsen Rail Facility Closing

- Frank Brehm & Eugene Vicknair

The locomotive construction and rebuilding facility in Boise, Idaho, originally opened by Morrison-Knudsen construction company and currently operated by MotivePower, will be closing in the next few months. Operations will be consolidated at the former General Electric facility in Erie, Pennsylvania. GE's locomotive division was acquired by Wabtec / MotivePower in February 2019.

The Boise facility originally supported M-K's construction projects, but in 1972 was set up as a separate entity called MKRail. The Western Pacific utilized MKRail for many repair and remanufacturing projects in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Most prominently, WP's surviving GP35 fleet and its first 15 GP40s were all rebuilt at the Boise plant during 1980. This rebuild process was covered in an article by Norman E. Anderson published in issues 5 & 6 of *The Headlight*.

MKRail also handled heavy wreck repairs for the WP during this time, including reconditioning F7As 917-D and 913-A. After the merger, some of the WP GP40s would return to MK Boise for rebuilding again, with some going to Kansas City Southern and others to St. Louis Southwestern (Cotton Belt).



Support the FRRS when you shop at Amazon!

Use the link on the society web page to join the Amazon Smile Program.

Running Maintenance on the RAL Fleet: QRR 1100

- Seth Adams



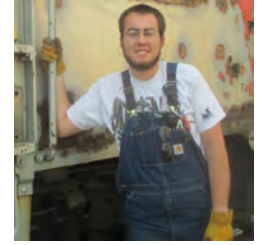
I came up to the museum for a couple days in August looking for some corrective maintenance items to perform on our RAL fleet (my WP 501 project is on hold awaiting fuel injectors). I had come up with a list and asked others (David Elems) what issues the locomotives had, and so set out to try and fix some of them. I worked on the 1100 from the night of August 19th through 20th. Phil Schmierer was on property and helped me with the air box inspection.

The after action report includes:

1. QRR 1100 Compressor Unloader Magnet Valve: Replaced magnet valve for compressor unloader with one from stock. Utilized old coil.
2. QRR 1100 Deadman pedal valve removal: Old spool valve under cab floor that was associated with a dead man pedal was removed from service. PCS type switch was bypassed for the time being. This should be set to trigger when the BP goes into emergency.
3. Installed new bell ringer cartridge.
4. Performed airbox inspection: Most cylinders looked smooth, and had evidence of glazing (brown stains). No cross-hatching was present (not great....) Rings looked to have decent life left in them, and most were springy. Pistons were wet, and oil was prevalent around nearly all compression rings. Blower discharge area had evidence of carbon, but no telltale sign of oil streaks from a blown seal.
5. Cleaned oil stain on fireman's side of hood, cleaned fireman's side of engine and engine compartment floor. Utilized kerosene to cut caked on oil on exterior of locomotive and Purple Power (Super Clean) on engine. I could likely have used the Purple for both.

Golf Cart Battery Replacement

- Ethan Doty



It all started back in late May when the Golf Cart had the first battery problem. The usual symptoms, wouldn't last long, sometimes wouldn't go after a charge and was sluggish. So it was temporarily pulled from service and I tested the batteries to find the problem; one battery was dead and the others was barely there. I went into the Battery House to our stash of replacements to see if any of those were any good, but only one held up to the battery tester. So the dead one was replaced and the weak one was told to soldier on, which it did till mid-July.

Mid-July rolls around and it's starting to act up again. Greg Elems and Eugene Vicknair try to use the cart. It clears the shop door and promptly dies; leading me to declare it out of service because there is no point trying to use it and we didn't have any more spares. In response to that email, six members came forward to donate money towards the batteries to return the cart to service without a cost to the society since it was declared that we were no longer will piecemeal the cart together anymore. Charlie Spikes, Greg Elems, Matt Elems, Bob Sims, Bart Hansen, Loren Ross all donated towards it, Thank you! Charlie and Loren handled the transport of the batteries for us. The cost of the replacement batteries was \$732 plus tax.

Vince Bonfiglio took on the installation work and in the process found out that the old batteries were installed backwards explaining why some things weren't working on the cart. Having found a proper wiring diagram for our cart, he proceeded to fix it properly and document all the work done in a file. Now the cart runs nicely, has working headlights, taillights and the turn signals at least light up steady when the headlights are on.





Rubber-tire Fleet - photo by Bob Sims

Help Give the Museum a Lift -

Everyone knows that trains are heavy, and so is almost everything associated with them! The museum has two forklifts that are critical to the operation of the museum. They are regularly pressed into service moving heavy objects around the museum, getting things into and out of boxcars and many other uses.

Both of our forklifts are getting very tired and need your help to restore them to full and safe operation. The rubber-tire mechanical team made a presentation at the September board meeting outlining work that needs to be done and estimated associated costs. Based on this discussion, the FRRS Board has authorized a "Forklift Restoration" fund raising campaign. On the campaign launch, members pledged or paid \$500. We are on our way!

You can give the museum a lift by making a financial donation to the project using the PayPal button on the website's Donation page (<https://www.wplives.org/donate.html>) or by sending a check with "Forklift Restoration" on the memo line to the Feather River Rail Society, P.O. Box 608, Portola CA 96122-0608.



H & R Block - David Hansen

2850 Main St Ste 7, Susanville, CA 96130
Tel: 530-257-9339

**2019 UPCOMING EVENTS!
Pumpkin Patch Express and
Santa Trains**

- Eugene Vicknair



Our seasonal special events are coming up at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum. To celebrate its restoration, it is planned to have Western Pacific SW1500 1503 pulling all trains for both events.

This year's Pumpkin Patch Express trains will be held October 19-20 and 26-27, Saturdays and Sundays. The museum will open at 10 a.m. all



four days. Trains will depart hourly from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for the Pumpkin Patch. On Saturday nights, our Super Spooky Night Trains will depart hourly between 7 p.m.

and 9 p.m. Gates close at 9:30 p.m. on Saturdays and 6 p.m. on Sundays.

In addition to the Pumpkin Patch, our Haunted Railcar will be open and we will also have an all-ages Haunted Car for the kids. Food and craft vendors will be on hand and a gunfighter performance group will be part of the entertainment. Some additional special things may also appear!

Santa Trains will operate December 7 (Saturday) and the following Fridays and Saturdays, December 13-14 and 20-21. The museum opens at 4 p.m. with rides starting at 5 p.m. and continuing until everyone has a ride. The festive holiday train will be covered in lights and decorations. Free homemade cookies, hot cider, coffee and hot chocolate will be served and we will have special exhibits and local vendors on hand. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on hand for photos with the kids!



Admission for both events is free for FRRS members. Non-member admission is \$10 per carload, or \$5 with the donation of 3 non-perishable canned goods for the EPCAN food bank.

...WP Celebration continued from front cover.

get that project done. We also had performances by the Nevada Gunfighters, Model-T rides and motorcar rides provided by Charlie Spikes, Janet Steeper and Matt Shuman, with assistance from Ann Morningstar and Debbie Shuman. Visitors loved seeing the speeders and our Model T operating and asked if this could happen more often.

Locomotive cab rides proved to be very popular and we sold out on those by 11 a.m. Saturday. Our locomotive crews provided great rides for the visitors. The demand was so great that Steve Habeck had Southern Pacific GP9 2873 added to the trains for Sunday to provide extra cab rider space. This resulted in doubleheaded trains for the Sunday operations.

We raised start-up funds for the event from five sponsors: (Jim Dobbas - \$250, Plumas Sierra Rural Electrical Coop - \$250, Cal-Sierra Title - \$100, Sierra Motel - \$50, Nicole's Café - \$50). We also had several craft and food vendors at the event. The kids face painter was especially popular. Eugene Vicknair and Patty Clawson handled the sponsorship mailing and managed the vendors. A big thank you to Janet Steeper who made phone calls to the potential sponsors who received request letters. Eric McKay did great in the FRRS information booth. He was responsible for 90% of the raffle ticket sales and also got some new memberships.

We also had 1 hour guided walking tours, all led by Eugene Vicknair. These tours took guests around the diesel shop and provided in-depth histories and background stories on about 20 of our most prominent historic pieces as well as information on WP history, the museum facility and our archives collection. Many of the visitors asked us to expand on these tours and make them a regular event feature.

Our store staff (KC Dunn, Jean Danielson and Taj Yager) did a great job handling a lot of visitors, particularly a crush on Saturday morning. David Elems also stepped in to help with the early demand.



WP Celebration Saturday August 3, 2019

- photo by Michael Clawson

The prep work for this event also involved a lot of hard work. In particular we need to thank the Hansen family who came out and spent a weekend cleaning the diesel shop and several pieces of equipment. Bart Hansen continued this into the first day of operation by cleaning the Union Pacific 105 business car and several of the cabooses on the excursion train.

We are already looking forward to next year and have heard that some local residents are considering a revival of Railroad Days. We look forward to working with them to fold the new and improved WP Celebration into a revived Railroad Days or, if that does not come together, continue the tradition with the Celebration itself.

Thank you to everyone who made this event possible! This includes those who worked on prep before the event as well as during the days it ran. If we missed anyone, please let us know!

WP Celebration Crew: Kirk Baer, Lew Barnard, Vince Bonfiglio, Robbie Campbell, Patty Clawson, Kerry Cochran, Jean Danielson, Ali Doty, Ethan Doty, Kristina Dunn, David Elems, Greg Elems, Matt Elems, Fred Elenbass, Paul Finnegan, Steve Habeck, Bart Hansen, David Hansen, Susan Hansen, Bil Jackson, Ann Morningstar, Don Nelson, Jason Peterich, Debbie Shuman, Matt Shuman, Bob Sims, Charlie Spikes, Roger Stabler, Janet Steeper, Eugene Vicknair, Mike Waters, Tajanae Yager

- FRRS Membership -**Yearly Dues**

Associate \$25.00
 Active \$50.00
 Family \$80.00
 Sustaining \$150.00

Single Life Membership - \$1800.00

Family Life Membership - \$3000.00

Institutional - \$60.00 (annual membership for 501(c)3 groups)

Renew or change your information on
 the FRRS website! Go to:
<https://membership.WPLives.org>

These are the dues for the duration of one year, with Life and Family Life being a one-time payment.
 Five year payment plans are available for life memberships.

Associate memberships do not have a vote, receive *The Train Sheet* but not the *Headlight* and are for one person only.

Active memberships receive both *The Train Sheet* and the *Headlight*, have voting rights and are for one person only.

Family memberships receive both *The Train Sheet* and the *Headlight*, have two votes and include two adults and all minor children residing at the same address.

Sustaining memberships receive both *The Train Sheet* and *Headlight*, have voting rights and are for one person only.

Life memberships receive both *The Train Sheet* and *Headlight*, have voting rights and are for one person only for life.

Family Life memberships receive both *The Train Sheet* and the *Headlight*, include two adults and all minor children residing at the same address, and have two votes (one per member) for life.

Send all applications, renewals and address changes, including email changes, to:
 Feather River Rail Society - Membership Dept. - P.O. Box 608 - Portola, CA 96122-0608
 Address / email changes may also be sent to membership@wplives.org

Mission Statement

"The Feather River Rail Society is dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and education of the public, as to the history and people of the Western Pacific Railroad."

Mission Goals

To preserve and interpret the history of the WP, the "*Willing People*" as a vital link in the development of the rail industry on the West Coast, including the steam and diesel evolution, WP's influence in the passenger tourism industry, the impact of freight competition between neighboring railroads, and WP's influence in the lumber, mining and agriculture industry from Plumas County throughout California, Nevada and Utah.

WPRM Admission and Train Ride Fares for non-members (effective April 1, 2011)**Admission**

- Adults 19 and over... \$8.00
- Youth 4 - 18... \$4.00
- Children 3 & under... free
- Family... \$20.00
 (2 adults plus any related children 18 and under)

Admission and train ride tickets are good all day.

Admission and train rides for FRRS members are free.
 Cab rides are extra fare with member discount.

Train Rides

- Adults 19 and over... \$4.00
- Youth 4 - 18... \$2.00
- Children 3 & under... free
- Family... \$10.00
 (2 adults plus any related children 18 and under)

Cab Rides

- Adult 19 and over... \$20.00
 - Youth 4 - 18... \$10.00
- Cab rides are for one (1) ride only.

***The Train Sheet* needs your photos and articles!**

If you are working on projects for the Society, volunteering on restorations, performing archives work, helping out at off-site events, etc., or if you get some nice photos of FRRS or museum happenings that you want to share, please contact us to have them printed in *The Train Sheet*.

Photos should be at least 5" high by 7" wide and 300 dots per inch.

Articles should focus on FRRS related events, people or your own personal experiences with the Society.

To contribute, contact the editor - Paul Finnegan, by email at trainsheet@wplives.org.

The Train Sheet

Feather River Rail Society

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