

up through the overbearing layer of ballast so we can inspect/replace ties/gauge/repair/retamp it. We will also continue to put back in the 2 inch superelevation into the Balloon Loop track to help reduce the outward stresses on the outer rail.

If you have any questions, let me know. Until Later!



Some views from the Oct 24 - 25 track session. Our hardworking crews jack, align and reballast the balloon loop, aided by some of our locos and heavy machinery.

-Wayne Monger photos



THE MINI ZEPHYR

- Eugene Vicknair, Zephyr Project Manager

For the 100th anniversary of the completion of the Western Pacific mainline, a very special train was operated with assistance from the FRRS. Dubbed the "Mini Zephyr", three authentic *California Zephyr* cars now used in charter service ran a special routing tracing the path of the original CZ from Oakland, California to the museum at Portola via the Feather River Canyon.

On October 30, an Amtrak engine pulled into Jack London Square Depot in Oakland, just blocks from the now abandoned WP route on Third Street and the still standing WP Oakland Depot. The train consisted of Chicago, Burlington and Quincy dome-coach "Silver Lariat", Pennsylvania Railroad CZ sleeper "Silver Rapids" and CBQ dome-observation "Silver Solarium". From the looks, even non-train riders walking by sensed this small consist was something unusual. As we rolled down the short stretch of SP line to reach "home" rails at Niles Junction, scores of people stood at crossings and Amtrak platforms waving to our 21st century salute to the "Silver Lady".

From the time we crossed over at Niles, we rode WP rails all the way to Portola except for a brief detour around the now abandoned section through Stockton. The ride through the Feather River Canyon was absolutely amazing, with beautiful sunlight dancing off the canyon walls and a small cadre of fans enthusiastically following us the whole way. I had been asked to ride as the on-board representative of the FRRS, answering questions about the Society, the WPRM and WPRRHS, and the CZ and WP in general. It turned out to be a very pleasurable job as the passengers were all very engaging and interested riders, asking many detailed questions about our current operations and the historical aspects of this train and our route.

Reaching Portola during an excellent dinner (actually, all the food was top notch), we found the volunteers had pulled out all the stops. Waiting for us in the yard was an A-B-A set of Western Pacific F-units, led by the queen of the fleet herself, WP 805-A. As detailed later in this article, two teams of volunteers had spent two weekends making sure she was in her finest look and the engine positively glowed. Just

behind the power set was WP NW2u 608 waiting to act as terminal switcher. With a coupling so soft no one eating even saw a ripple in their wine glasses, FRRS President Rod McClure tied the 608 on to the "Silver Solarium" and pulled the cars onto the museum grounds.



WP Zephyr engine 805-A awaits the Mini-Zephyr.
- Mike Mucklin photo

On Saturday, October 31, the show got even better. With the exception of the "Silver Hostel", every CZ car on the property, plus guest car "Magnolia Grove" (SP sleeper of a type often seen on the Zephyr), were tied behind the F-units and given a run around the balloon track. WP 805-A led the dome-coaches "Silver Rifle", "Silver Lodge" and "Silver Lariat", diner "Silver Plate", sleepers "Silver Rapids" and "Magnolia Grove" with the dome-obs "Silver Solarium" rightfully bringing up the rear. It was an extremely proud moment for all our volunteers and members. This was likely the largest congregation of CZ cars in over 30 years.



The Zephyr train on the balloon track.
- Mike Mucklin photo

November 1, Gold Spike Day for the WP, was another beautiful day in the Canyon. In honor of

the 100th Anniversary, the Mini-Zephyr paused on the Keddie Wye for a toast to all the men and women of the Western Pacific, past, present and future. Norm Holmes was on hand with a mini spike maul and gold spike for a honorary recreation while back at the museum the volunteers held their own Gold Spike Centennial at Malfunction Jct. As the final miles rolled away heading back to Oakland, everyone on board was thrilled and amazed to have been part of this wonderful trip.



The train pauses on Keddie Wye.
- Mike Mucklin photo

Of course, making it happen was no small undertaking. I'd like to thank the people who spent many many hectic hours making this Centennial Excursion possible.

First off, none of this would have been possible without the work of Chris Skow of Trains and Travel International and Bert Hermey of California Zephyr Railcar Charters, as well as Roy Wullich, owner of the "Silver Solarium" and the on-board and back office staff for both companies. The on-board staff in particular did the heritage of "Silver Lady" proud with their skill and attention to detail.

At the museum, there were dozens of people who worked tirelessly to make sure the grounds and equipment were ready. Ops crews put in extra time getting cars lined up for the special Saturday train and making room to clear space for our three guests. Other volunteers cleaned the grounds, prepped engines and worked on track to make sure nothing would be overlooked. I wish I had a complete list, but it was long and everyone worked double time. Thanks!

In particular, I need to acknowledge those who



Some of the ops crew working Centennial weekend (from L to R): George Sousa, Bil Jackson and Jeff Glass.
- Ken Finnegan photo

worked on the 805-A. At some point, two panels on the fireman's side were subjected to a die grinder or some other nasty device that left deep circular scars in the stainless panels. This blemish has been on the engine since we acquired her and the Zephyr Project team decided to see what could be done. We came up with a combination of belt sanding, scotch-brite work and polishing to remove most of the scars and regrain the panels. It is not perfect, but it is far far better than the previous damage. Just to regrain those two panels alone ultimately took three days from October 23-25.

As part of that work, we also reapplied the classic Western Pacific lettering to the engine, using the original Zephyr Gothic lettering custom made for us by Tom Carter. In addition to Tom and myself, Cody Wilson, John Morehouse, Scott Walker, Tom (sorry, Tom! I am having a brainfreeze and forgetting your last

name!) and Larry Hanlon (who has also been working on the engine and electrical systems with Dave McClain) spent days grinding and regraining the panels and applying the new letter. At the same time, the 805-A's horn was retuned by Phil "Evil Dr. Cornbinder" Schmierer and reinstalled by a team of Rod McClure, Bill Parker, and Cody "da Noodle" Wilson.

The following week, a team consisting of Steve Habeck, Cody Wilson, David Epling, Matt Stentz, Mike Mucklin, and Kevin Arendt (L to R in the photo below) washed, scrubbed, polished, waxed and even repainted some parts of the 805-A to ensure that she was ready for the big show. Thank you, everyone! You did an amazing job on short notice.



The Wash 'n Wax crew.

-E. P. photo

Hopefully, this is just a prelude to future CZ trips down the Canyon. Our eventual goal is to have the 805-A and our own CZ cars mainline capable. Perhaps in the not too distant future, the FRRS can give our members a chance to ride our own "Silver Lady" on home rails.

September 2009 Board Meeting Motions and Actions Summary - continued

Director's Reports

Monger – Jim Atkins was at RR Days. He works for UP Signal Dept. and will oversee WP Dispatcher's Office at WPRM. Said Tommy Holt has offered use of his development people to design software to run our Dispatcher's panel.

Holmes – Yard sale at RR days, 3 tubs and 4 or 5 boxes of leftovers, took in \$99.70.

Brehm – Re-designing the WPRM brochures. Spikes

asked if we can change cover from current WPRM logo to image of WPRM Billboard.

Habeck – Quincy borrowed our jacks to fix a bearing on QRR #5. We should also get our jacks back in better condition than we sent them down. They will hire Seth Adams to help with the heavy repairs.

Department Reports

Mechanical - EMD Ring Compressor missing – Habeck will check with Quincy RR to see if they have one that may even be ours.

Advertising – Report on latest programs – Consensus to