

# The Train Sheet



Preserving "The Feather River Route"

...news from The Feather River Rail Society and The Portola Railroad Museum

Issue No. 51

September/October 1991



Snow Plow Train from Railfan Day 1991. This was one of the many trains that were made up and run just for Railfan Day. Photo by Dennis Thompson.

## Statement of Our Mission...

The Feather River Rail Society is dedicated to preserving the history of the Western Pacific Railroad, railroad history of Northern California and the history of the evolution of the diesel locomotive in North America over the past 50 years. To this end, the Feather River Rail Society now has at Portola, one of the largest and most historic collections of diesel locomotives in the United States.

### Inside This Issue:

- Upcoming events of interest.
- Updates on Museum Projects.
- Arrival of Military Locomotives.



# Feather River Rail Society

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Portola Railroad  
Museum

Preserving

*"The Feather River Route"*

P.O. Box 608

Portola, California 96122

(916) 832-4131

Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day -- open seven days a week 10:00AM to 5:00PM. Fall, winter and spring hours: Open weekends 10:00AM to 4:00PM.

The Feather River Rail Society, a tax exempt public benefit California corporation, is the historical society for the Western Pacific Railroad and operates the Portola Railroad Museum in Portola, California. The FRRS is not associated with the Western Pacific Railroad.

FRRS Tax ID number is 68-0002774

Member of Tourist Railway Association Inc.

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## Membership

Associate	\$15.00
Active	\$30.00
Family	\$35.00
Sustaining	\$75.00
Life	\$300.00

Dues are paid for 12 months from time of receipt. All memberships have one vote except for Associate. Associate members also do NOT receive the The Headlight.



# From the Desk of the President

After a very busy year, putting in 10 hour days, 7 days a week, Barbara and I needed a vacation. We decided to visit England and parts of Europe. We took two escorted bus tours, rode trains on our own and visited several railway museums and tourist railways. In England we rode on the 15" gauge Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch line, operated as a full size working railroad. It is mostly double tracked for its 14 miles. Both steam and diesel locomotives are used. We also rode the Keighly & Worth Valley. They have 30 steam locomotives and 6 diesels. As in our country, diesel preservation is just now becoming important. Most railway equipment has been purchased instead of being donated, however local governments have realized the tourist drawing power of the railways and have made generous grants toward their preservation. We were indeed fortunate to have two WW II USA locomotives in operation on the K&WV on the day we were there. A 2-8-0 had recently been brought over from Poland and an 0-6-0T. Both were coal burners and had hook couplers and buffers, but were unmistakably American. With certification, steam locomotives can operate occasionally on the British Railway system.

We visited the National Railway Museum at York and although a large part of their collection is in storage pending completion of the main hall rebuilding (expected to open Easter 1992), they had a very impressive display of equipment. Several of the trains we rode to and from London operated at 125 mph. Britain operates more 125 mph trains than any other country. They operate diesel and electric locomotive pulled and self propelled trains. America should be so lucky. Freight trains operate mostly at night and seldom exceed 15 cars or 1500 tons.

At a suburb near Amsterdam on October 5, 1991, we chanced upon a "steam parade." About 10,000 people were waiting for the steam engines to show and soon they did. Nineteen different steamers appearing in age order from 1838 to modern 2-10-0's and a streamline 4-6-2. Also at the site was a railroadiana flea market in a tent; but it was so crowded we could not move about.

The French National Railway Museum in Mulhouse was a pleasant surprise. The main hall has 12 tracks - 500 feet long displaying steam and electric locomotives, the oldest was built in 1844, the newest in 1953. Freight and passenger cars and self propelled motor trains were also on display. Track structure, tools, signals and everything else associated with railways was very nicely displayed. A steam powered Alco rotary snow plow and a 1945 Baldwin 2-8-2, one of 1340 built for France after the war, were included in the collection. This museum has to be the finest railway museum anywhere. We got a lot of good ideas for Portola here.

Some of the French trains we rode were equally as fast as those in England. One can go anywhere almost anytime in Europe and they are continually improving the system. Amtrak officials and our politicians should go over for an eye-opening ride.

After 30 days of travel, however, it is good to get back home.

P.S. If the person who "borrowed" my Radio Shack scanner from the Gift Shop last summer will contact me, I'll give him the instruction booklet. I have no need for it now!

- Norman W. Holmes

# HEY!



Even though fall is here, the weather is colder, and summer activities are over, there is still plenty to do at Portola. Don't think that the museum closes up in the off season.

**No Way!!**

There are people at the museum and things going on every day. Even in the coldest of the winter, the regulars of the Portola gang are at the museum to greet you. You are all encouraged to come to the museum and pitch in on restoration work and any of the other activities going on in the fall, winter and spring.

Support your museum.

# WANTED!

Fairbanks-Morse Model 28 or 30 motor car or Adams motor car for restoration. Finders fee. Hollis Button, 1028 West Parr Ave., Campbell, CA 95008. Phone 408-378-0436.

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Mr. Hollis Button further writes, "When I was in my early teens, I used to walk along the right-of-way of the Milwaukee Road in Aberdeen, South Dakota, gopher hunting. Every now and then, a kindly telegraph repairman would give me a ride on his speeder for a few miles out and back -- what a thrill! I am now 78, and I sure would like to get one of those particular types of motor cars which were direct driven and had a two-cycle engine, and had to be pushed to start. Maybe someday I will locate one."

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## On Still Another Note...

**6,500 miles**

FRRS Vice President Bruce Cooper has logged even more rail miles than were reported in the last Train Sheet. Without ever leaving Portola, Bruce, as the director of our locomotive rental program, has logged over 6,500 rail miles going around our balloon track with locomotive "renters."

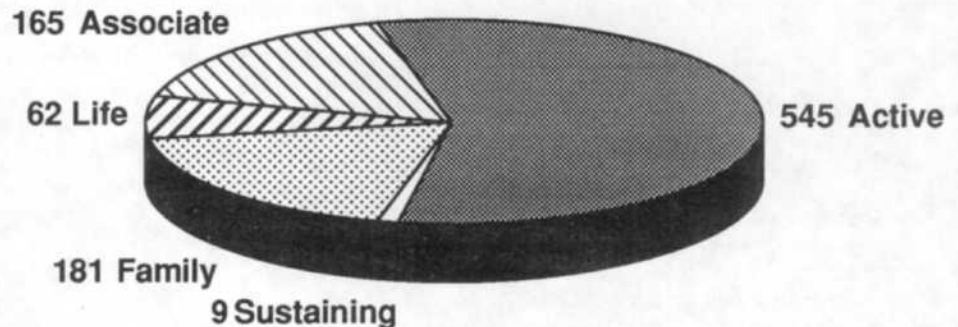
## Where to Send Things...

Membership Renewals, donations, requests for membership applications, requests for back issues of the Headlight or the Train Sheet, merchandise orders to the museum gift shop, general questions, changes of address to:

**Feather River Rail Society**  
P.O. Box 608  
Portola, California 96122

## Membership Report

*as of October 23, 1991*



*Total FRRS membership is 962.*

*...Of these, 29 are Charter members.*

# Remember the enjoyment and satisfaction of the Steam Excursion trains that the FRRS sponsored this last May?

The Union Pacific Railroad will operate a steam powered excursion train next July from Cheyenne, Wyoming to San Jose, California and return to participate in the NRHS convention. The FRRS is once again being asked to participate. The westbound train will leave Cheyenne July 11, 1992 and arrive at Portola on Thursday July 16, 1992; and it will layover in Portola for the following day. It will arrive in San Jose on July 19, 1992. It will leave San Jose on Sunday July 26, 1992 and return to Cheyenne on August 3, 1992. There will be NO daytime layover in Portola on the trip east.

The FRRS is working with the other involved groups regarding the details of the trip. The other groups are: Union Pacific Historical Society, Promontory Chapter NRHS, and Central Coast Chapter NRHS. We are working out at this time the details regarding which group will sponsor which segments of the excursion. All FRRS Active, Family, Sustaining and Life members will be notified by special mailing of the details of this excursion when the details are finalized. This is expected to be around the beginning of 1992. Tickets will be available for the entire trip, or for specific segments of the trip. The details of this will be explained later.

## Read the following regarding our steam acquisition plan...

The FRRS Steam Acquisition Plan was written by board member Kent Stephens based on discussions with other FRRS members, and was introduced as an Introductory agenda item under New Business at the February 1991 Board of Director's meeting. A revised version was discussed at the May 1991 meeting, then it was held over pending some more revision and then it was approved by unanimous vote at the June 1991 meeting.

The FRRS board and management has been actively pursuing the acquisition of a steam locomotive (or locomotives) for the museum since January 1991. A common question from museum visitors is, "Do you have a steam engine?" The plan was developed as a policy guide for the ac-

quisition of steam, just as FRRS has an acquisition plan for acquiring diesel locomotives. In brief, the Steam Acquisition Plan is a policy guide to acquire one (or more) small steam locomotives suitable for operation at the museum. It is also planned to acquire a geared locomotive to reflect the lumbering heritage (logging railroads) of Plumas County and the Sierras.

Stay tuned for more exciting information on steam in the coming months! And if you know of an available steam locomotive that the museum could acquire, please call Norm Holmes or any of the board members. We may not know about it!

## The upcoming 1992 TRAIN convention...

The first weekend of November, 1992, the FRRS will co-sponsor with the Friends of the Nevada State RR Museum the convention of TRAIN, (Tourist Railway Association, Inc.) of which FRRS is a member, at the Nugget in Sparks, NV. There will be seminars on various topics of interest. Although the details are still being worked out, a typical schedule of events for a TRAIN convention include Thursday and Friday tours of local railroad attractions, a Friday night

banquet with opening ceremonies, a Saturday morning breakfast, business meeting and seminar, and a Sunday breakfast and Board of Directors meeting. The registration fee covers seminars. Banquets and tours are optional extras. We will need extensive staffing by FRRS volunteers at both the Nugget in Sparks and at the museum in Portola. We will keep you up-to-date on the planning of this convention here in the Train Sheet. Keep it in mind.

## Your update on the Baldwin AS-616's...

Your Society is currently working with the Union Pacific and the Morrison-Knudsen "Boise Locomotive Facility" in determining the final details for moving our two ex-SP/ex-Oregon & Northwestern Baldwin AS-616's home to Portola. Both locomotives are now at the M-K facilities in Boise (Hillcrest, Idaho), where M-K personnel will handle the loading of the locomotives onto flatcars for the 1,062 mile journey to Portola. O&NW #3 (ex-SP 5274) was moved on its own wheels the 219 miles from Hines, Oregon to Boise, Idaho over the Oregon Eastern Division of the Wyoming-Colorado RR and the Union Pacific on July 19-23, 1991, with no problems. Air brake system problems on O&NW #4 (ex-SP 5253/ex-McCloud River 34) were fixed by Dan Robards, and FRRS members Wayne Monger and Ken Meeker, allowing this locomotive to move to Boise on September 4-9, 1991.

Both locomotives remain in very good to excellent mechanical condition as a result of their six years of inside storage at Hines, Oregon following the halting of operations on the Oregon & Northwestern in March 1984. Due to the scope and length of the project to save these two historic

California locomotives by the FRRS, the entire story of this project that started in July 1990 will be published in the Train Sheet once both locomotives are safe in Portola. We thank everyone that has so far contributed their time, effort, experience and money to what has so far been a very successful project.

We have three more people who have generously donated to the fund to move these very historic locomotives to Portola for everyone to enjoy.

They are:

**Erik Frodsham (donated twice)**

**Dan Ogle**

**Richard Severance**

We sincerely appreciate all of the donations that have been made to this cause. It's this kind of support from the members that help make the museum a success.

# Atten-hut!

## Military road switchers arrive...

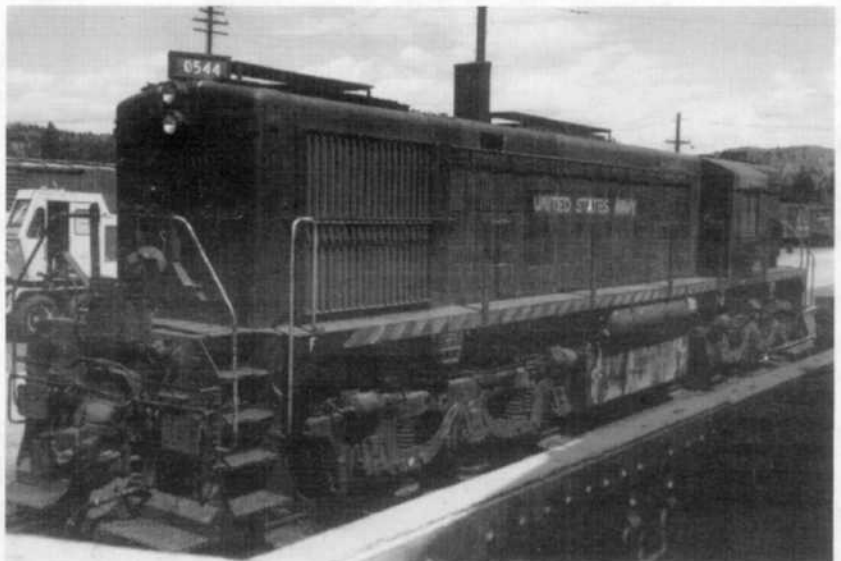
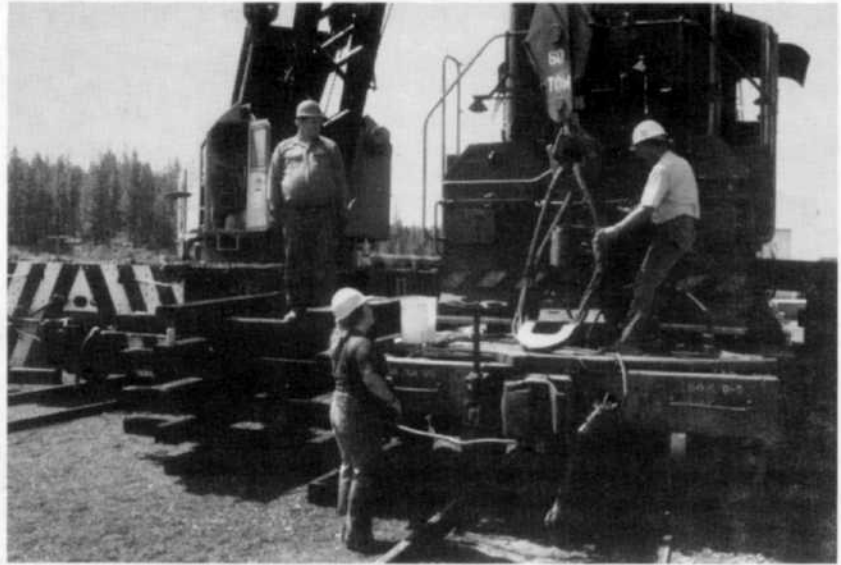
In June, FRRS president and general manager Norman Holmes was the "surprise" successful bidder for four Alco-built military MRS-1 diesel-electric locomotives that had been stored out of service at the Concord Naval Weapons Station (Port Chicago, California). The four locomotives are military numbers #65-00540, #65-00541, #65-00542 and #65-00544, all built in 1953. Norm is on the government's surplus property railroad equipment mailing list and when these units became available he placed a low bid with the idea that if he got the units some parts could be salvaged for use at our museum and possibly one or more could be made to run for resale or trade. Permission was granted from the FRRS Board of Directors to bring two of the units to Portola and the other two were sent to the LMC International Corp. scrap yard in Richmond. A deal was made with LMC to trade the units "pound for pound" for a recently retired Southern Pacific SD9E No. 4404 (see story elsewhere).

As the locomotives have friction bearing axles, Union Pacific would not move them on their own wheels to Portola. However, as a condition of sale the government would load the locomotives on a flat car. A favorable freight rate was received from the UP and a 60 foot flat and a 50 foot gondola car were ordered. Through the excellent cooperation from Gino Piazza, Transportation General Foreman at CNWS, a plan was formulated to have one of the units moved into their shop. Then the trucks were disconnected, the body was then raised up on Whiting jacks, the trucks pulled out and a flat car was moved under the locomotive. A cribbing was then constructed from railroad cross ties and the locomotive lowered onto the crib. The body was then tied down with cables. The trucks were picked up with an overhead crane and placed in the gondola car. It was necessary to remove the trucks from the locomotive because of both the lifting capacity of the Whiting jacks and the capacity of the flat car. The units weigh 120 tons complete.

FRRS members Dean Hill, Mike Kelsey, Wayne Monger and Vic Neves helped Norm in the parts removal, preparation and loading operations.

While waiting for the flat and gondola to arrive, some of the electrical, mechanical and body parts were removed from the two units that were to go to scrap. All four units were out of service for over 10 years and had been used as a parts source for the base's fleet of Alco units. Southern Pacific had agreed to move the two units the 30 miles to Richmond at a reasonable rate providing they would have a tight air line, all safety appliances were in order and the axle bearings were in good condition. Due to their long storage period, some of the axle journals had water in the boxes and the traction motor support bearings were dry. Air brake parts were exchanged between the units to obtain a tight

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Top Photo - Crane operator Bernie Coggin, Ken Roller, Mardi Vincent and Norm Holmes prepare to lift 544. Center Photo: The first of the trucks is being placed under 544. Lower Photo - 544 is whole once again. Engine 541 is a virtual look-alike. All photos on this page by Ed Warren.

# Railfan Day 1991

by Wayne Monger

September 14, 1991 was the date of the 6th annual FRRS "Railfan Day" event. In spite of the fact that other railroad-related events were also occurring the same date, such as SP 2472 operating an excursion train on the S.F. peninsula and the Grand Canyon Railway was holding their own "Railfan Day," we ended up with 83 paid attendees this year. This is a decrease from the 107 we had last year. It can also be reported that the gift shop this day had brisk sales and that the "Beanery" did a good day's business also.

As the volunteer train crews for the FRRS at Portola were getting very adept at following the somewhat complex choreography involved with Railfan Day, the 1991 event followed nearly the same plan as the previous two years, except for the fact that 11 trains were operated this year instead of the 12 of last year. Thanks to the suggestion of such people as Gary Cousin, Steve Habeck, Vic Neves and Hank Stiles, Wayne Monger planned to have some different consists than the previous years. The three most interesting consists of the day that were run for the photographers included a 1950's era freight train that was led by both SW1 501 and S-1 512, a tank car "unit train" of all four tank cars at Portola and the two recently repainted SP bay-window cabooses donated by Vic Neves and John Ford pulled by the Baldwin DS-4-4-660 NVR 51, plus the star consist for the night photo session, a UP snowplow train consisting of wedge plow UP 900002, GP30 UP 849 and the two UP cabooses. The other two train consists that were used at various times during the day were the F-unit team of F7A 921-D and F7B 925-C on a train of cabooses to move people back and forth at the start and end of each session plus the WP team of GP7 707 and U30B 3051 on a 1960's era freight train. As a special treat for everyone on hand at the museum following the end of operations that day, an important milestone was reached as the 805-A was pulled outside and fired up for the first time after 50 months of hard work by the people involved in that project.

Following a one and a half hour break for dinner, people returned to the meeting room for the evening entertainment. First event was Chris Skow supervising the drawing of the winner of the 1991 depot fund raffle. David Adams of Sacramento, California will get his choice of an expenses paid trip for two on one of the Trains Unlimited Tours private car trips

from Oakland to Reno and return or Oakland to Los Angeles and return. We took in over \$2,000 this year if raffle ticket sales. Thanks go to all those who purchased tickets, and to Chris Skow of Trains Unlimited Tours.

Following a slide show from Vic Neves, about 20 photographers headed out into the darkness around Milward switch for the night photo shoot put on by Vic Neves and Fred James. Upon returning, the slide shows continued until nearly midnight with more from Vic Neves. Wayne Monger gave a "photo report" on the moving of the O&NW Baldwins to Boise; Ken Meeker gave a rough cut version of his "Road to Omaha" show for the 1992 Winterail, and Rich Canino showed slides from the 1991 NRHS national convention in West Virginia.

Once again this year, there are certain people that need to be thanked for their nearly tireless hands-on efforts over the weeks before Railfan Day that made sure that the event could be a success. At the top of this list are the people that switched the entire facility to put together the trains as specified by the plans for the event. These people are Steve Habeck, Hank Stiles, Jim Gidley, Sr., Mardi Vincent, Ed Warren, and Gordon Wollesen. Hank and Steve also spearheaded the necessary repair work on the 51 and the 849 to get them ready to operate for the event. Thanks!! We would also like to thank all of the volunteer train crew members for the day, including Vic Neves, Hank Stiles, Gordon Wollesen, Jim Gidley, Sr., Steve Habeck, Ed Warren, Dave McClain, and Fred James. Bob Lindley and Errol Spangler and Nick Tynan worked as switch tenders. Rich Canino, Deborah Canino, Kent Stephens, Mardi Vincent and Wayne Monger worked the ticket booth at the gate, Gary Cousin worked as dispatcher for the day, Pat Cousin and Emery Goddard worked in one of the most important areas of the museum - the Beanery; Hap Manitt was his usual productive self and made sure everyone had what they needed at their positions and he kept track of who was doing what. Norm and Barbara Holmes handled the crowds in the gift shop. And we wish to thank everyone else that participated to make this event a success again that I may have forgotten to mention. Special thanks go to Vic Neves for finding the very scarce flashbulbs and supervising the night photo session once again this year.

## Next First Sub Club Meeting...

The final 1991 meeting of the First Subdivision Club of the Feather River Rail Society will be held Friday night, November 29, 1991. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM and will once again be held at the Niles Depot in Fremont, California.

This meeting will consist of discussions of progress at the museum, deciding on a calendar of meetings for the First Sub Club for 1992 and presentation of slide shows from members in attendance. Because this is the "Holiday" meeting, we request that all members who attend please bring a dessert to share as well as their own utensils.

If you need more information, or if you would like your name placed on the First Sub Club mailing list, contact Rich Canino, 1749 Valley View Avenue, Belmont, CA 94002-1939; 415-591-4997.

## New Lifers

The following people are now life members of the FRRS:

**Robert Hanft**

from Paradise, CA

**Dennis Gilkey**

from Granada Hills, CA

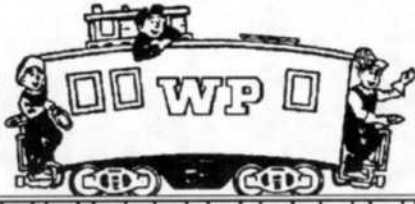
**Stephen Carr**

from Salt Lake City, UT

**Steve Harrison**

from Sparks, NV

**Thanks and welcome!**



# Caboosing with Hap Manitt

The museum's diary...

August 21, 1991 Steve Habeck, Gordon Wollesen, Mardi Vincent and Jack Palmer pulled the engines under restoration out of the engine house so that Ed Crary, Ken Roller, Hap Manitt and Dean Hill could wash the floor and prepare the engine house for Railroad Days. This preparation was ongoing from this date until Railroad Days.

August 22, 1991 Gordon Wollesen, Steve Habeck, Mardi Vincent and Jack Palmer used the new high pressure washer to wash the exterior of engine 921D. They used the fork lift so as to reach the top of the engine.

August 24-25, 1991 The museum was very busy with Feather River Railroad Days. The two days were a great success.

August 26, 1991 Bob Blanch stripped the old paint off of several areas of engine 608.

August 27, 1991 Steve Habeck, Gordon Wollesen and crane operator Hank Stiles used derrick 37 to lift engine 512 so as to lube center plates. Hank Stiles gave an AARP group a tour of the museum and a train ride.

August 28, 1991 Gordon Wollesen worked on electrical work -- a continuous thing for him. Hank Stiles worked on the Baldwin switcher repairing water leaks.

August 29, 1991 Norm Holmes worked on brakes of engine 512. Norm Holmes, Barbara Holmes and Dean Hill prepared the Train Sheet for mailing.

August 31, 1991 Sue and Bruce Cooper worked in the Beanery. John Ryczkowski, Larry Hanlon and Dave McClain worked on engine 805A. Eddie Chase worked on paint removal of engine 608.

September 2, 1991 Wayne Monger returned from Hines, OR after preparing O&NW 4 for shipment to M-K in Boise.

September 3, 1991 MRS-1 65-00544 was unloaded at the museum by Norm Holmes, Ed Warren, Nick Tynan, Mardi Vincent, Ron Turner and crane operator Bernie Coggin from Oroville.

September 4, 1991 Norm Holmes, Dean Hill, Mardi Vincent, Ken Roller and Gordon Wollesen switched engine 501 into the house over the pit. Norm Holmes and Mardi Vincent drained fuel tank and cleaned out sludge which had been causing engine to shut down.

September 8, 1991 Hank Stiles and Mardi Vincent worked on fuel pump on truck crane, and worked on traction motors of engine 51.

September 9, 1991 Hank Stiles worked on engine 512 to replace the belts which had broken.

September 10, 1991 Vic Neves and John Ford cleaned and washed cabooses SP1337 and SP4107. They repainted lettering and replaced broken glass.

September 12, 1991 The train crew consisting of Steve Ha-

beck, Vic Neves, Hank Stiles, Jim Gidley, Sr., Mardi Vincent, and Ed Warren switched the yard in preparation for Railfan Day. 16 engine batteries were removed from 2 of the KCC Alcos.

September 13, 1991 Dan Ogle worked on motor control of compressor. Bill Evans says it is now working fine. Dan also worked on wheel slip controls of engine 849.

September 14, 1991 Railfan Day took place on this day. Dave McClain and Larry Hanlon had big smiles after they had just successfully started engine 805A.

September 15, 1991 Dan Ogle studied blueprints of engine 805A. Bill Evans cleaned up tools. Brian Challenger worked on backup lights on FRRS dump truck which has now been painted. Bob Lindley and Bob York worked on O&NW caboose.

September 16, 1991 engine 849 was placed over the pit for an inspection. Hank Stiles cleaned oil filter on engine 501.

September 18, 1991 Some extra excitement occurred when a brush fire next to the west end of our balloon track was first spotted by the Grizzly Forest Lookout Station. Doug Jensen finished 20 hours of work on engine 2001.

September 22, 1991 Hank Stiles and Jim Ley inspected brushes on traction motors of engine 849 and found many that needed to be replaced.

September 24, 1991 Bruce Cooper worked on our various roads with the loader.

September 29, 1991 Don Ogle and Nick Santana were troubleshooting brushes on engine 707.

October 2, 1991 28 people from the Golden Age Club of Reno, NV toured the museum.

October 3, 1991 Hank Stiles, Jim Ley and Dave Anderson travelled to Sacramento to retie MRS-1 onto flat car.

October 6, 1991 Pete Langdon measured locomotive exhaust stacks so as to make covers for them for the winter months.

October 12, 1991 MRS-1 65-00541 was unloaded at the museum by crane operator Bernie Coggin with help from Hank Stiles, Jim Ley, Dan Ogle, Brian Challenger, and Dan Turner from Oroville. Marion Rice and son Ken worked on repairing track tamper.

October 14, 1991 Gordon Wollesen, Hank Stiles, Hap Manitt and Mardi Vincent worked with the UP environmental supervisor and moved well houses off of their pads so that the pipes could then be pulled from the wells.

October 18, 1991 Gordon Wollesen started work on electrical conduit to bring more power to Hap's desk and the east end of the building.

### *New in the gift shop*

Have you enjoyed the packages of assorted magnetic RR logos? We now have Western Pacific magnetic logos that measure 1 1/2 inch square which would look great on your refrigerator. They are \$1.95 (CA residents add sales tax) plus \$.50 for postage. Also we have new gray T-Shirts that feature our engines 921D, 707 and 512. The price is \$8.95, or \$9.95 for XXL plus \$1.00 for postage.

### **YOU! Can Operate a Diesel Locomotive**

for one hour with your own private instructor included. A handsome certificate suitable for framing is awarded after each rental. Rentals are done by appointment. Help support the Society. Phone number for appointments: (916) 832-4532.

### *Back issues of the Headlight*

Issue 1 California Zephyr Anniversary Issue  
Issue 2 Joint issue with the Freight Car Journal; WP freight car roster; color  
Issue 3 F3s in freight service; AAR box cars; WP tank cars; index to historical articles in back issues of the Train Sheet  
Issue 4 A tale of 2 engines; PC-WP box cars; GP40s....a guide to types; circus specials  
Issue 5 The Reno branch; M-K remanufactured GP35s and GP40s; the Charles O. Sweetwood car; mill gons

Back issues of the Headlight are available for \$4 each postpaid. Back issues of the Train Sheet are available for \$1.50 each postpaid. Send your order to the FRRS Gift Shop at P.O. Box 608, Portola, CA 96122.









