



# THE TRAIN SHEET

News from the Feather River Rail Society



## Preserving "THE FEATHER RIVER ROUTE"

Issue - 202

July/August/September 2024

### President's Pin

Greg Elems

This is a tough message to write for the *Train Sheet*. There have been some changes at the museum. We are losing two volunteers and the other item with the collection is, the WP 165 will be not steaming again for awhile. On to the details and if you go to the web page you will notice there have been changes.



Our CMO is resigning at the completion of the SP 2873 project. David is working to complete the work on the SP 2873 and finish the paint job. He isn't sure what his work schedule will be in the future, and felt that stepping away now would be better than later with other projects started and leaving with them uncompleted. He has been a valuable volunteer and we all need to thank him for the work he has done. His work on QRR 1100, SP 2873 and WP 1503 have those engines in good shape mechanically. Thank you David and good luck with your travels down the road of life with your employment.



The next bit of news is, Roger Stabler resigned at the September board meeting. Family health problems was one of the factors in his decision. Also he feels he has the WP 165 in good shape

and now is the time to step down from the

(continued on page 8)

### Attention Associate Members Who Receive Paper Train Sheets

Due to the increasing costs of printing and mailing *The Train Sheet*, at the August 2024 FRRS Board Meeting, the board voted to discontinue postal mailing of the newsletter to Associate Members. This will become effective with the October/November/December 2024 issue.

If you receive *The Train Sheet* in paper form, to continue to receive the newsletter you can either upgrade your membership to active or above online at [WPLives.org/membership.html](http://WPLives.org/membership.html), or send an email to [membership@wplives.org](mailto:membership@wplives.org) indicating you want to get *The Train Sheet* by email.



### 2024 Portola Railroad Days

Just as this issue of the *Train Sheet* is going to press, in partnership with the Lost Sierra Chamber of Commerce, we are excited to bring back the 36-year-old tradition called "Railroad Days" including vendors, a children's area and live music on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The caboose train, face painting and more were planned for the event at the museum.

We will have more about it in the next issue of the *Train Sheet*.

**-THE TRAIN SHEET-**

Issue 202 - July/August/September 2024

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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](mailto:trainsheet@wplives.org)Contribution Deadlines: Last Day of March, June,  
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

RAL Reservations: (530) 832-4532

2024 Hours until October 6<sup>th</sup>:

Thursdays &amp; Fridays Noon - 4 PM

Saturdays &amp; Sundays 10 AM - 5 PM

Pumpkin Express Days in October

Santa Trains in December

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.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  
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Member of the Heritage Rail Alliance

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[president@wplives.org](mailto:president@wplives.org)

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Eugene Vicknair -Secretary, Director

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[treasurer@wplives.org](mailto:treasurer@wplives.org)

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[cspikes@wplives.org](mailto:cspikes@wplives.org)

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[kcochran@wplives.org](mailto:kcochran@wplives.org)

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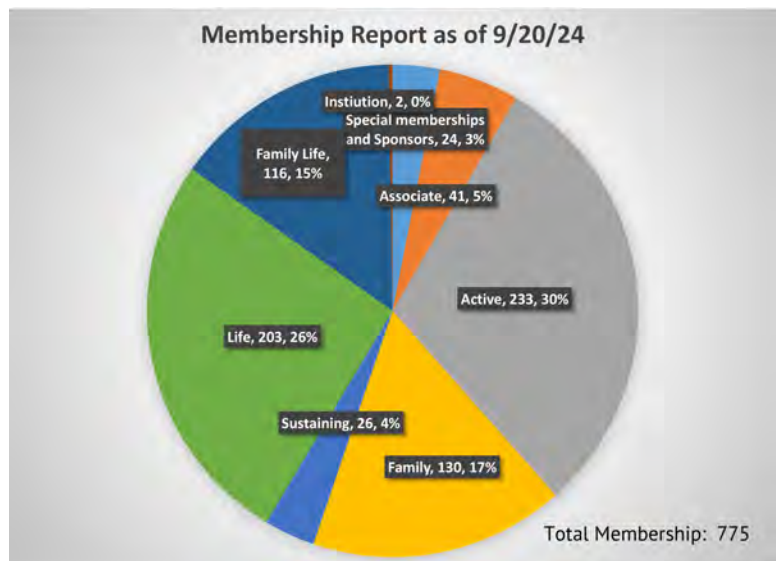
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[jsteeper@wplives.org](mailto:jsteeper@wplives.org)**Table of Contents – Issue 202**

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**- WEB PAGES of INTEREST -**

FRRS Official Site	<a href="http://www.WPLives.org">www.WPLives.org</a>
CZ Virtual Museum	<a href="http://calzephyr.railfan.net">calzephyr.railfan.net</a>
California Zephyr	<a href="http://californiazephyr.org">californiazephyr.org</a>
Western Pacific Pages	<a href="http://www.WPLives.com">www.WPLives.com</a>
WP Virtual Museum	<a href="http://wpmuseum.railfan.net">wpmuseum.railfan.net</a>
Tidewater Southern Pages	<a href="http://www.TidewaterSouthern.com">www.TidewaterSouthern.com</a>
Central California Traction	<a href="http://www.trainweb.org/tractionco">www.trainweb.org/tractionco</a>



## 2024 Pumpkin Patch Express

Eugene Vicknair

The annual *Pumpkin Patch Express* trains are coming up October 19-20 and 26-27. Come ride the decorated train and find your perfect gourd in the Pumpkin Patch. Saturdays will feature Super Spooky Night Trains and we may have some Bigfoot sightings!

For the first weekend, October 19-20, the "We Cook For You" food truck will be on hand serving up tasty treats.

Members get in free, for non-members the admission is \$15 per car or \$10 when you donate 3 non-perishable canned food items for the EPCAN food bank. So tell your friends and neighbors! Bring the whole family.

The museum opens at 10:00 AM. Train rides operate from 1:00 – 5:00 PM each day, plus the night trains from 7:00 – 9:00 PM on Saturdays.

We also need some help with decorating, set up and operating the event. If you want to volunteer, please email [info@wplives.org](mailto:info@wplives.org). For train crews, be sure to sign up on the crew board at [WPLives.org](http://WPLives.org).



2023 Pumpkin Express photo by Michael Clawson



## SANTA TRAINS 2024

All aboard for Santa Trains at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California. This family tradition returns again this year.

Enjoy rides aboard a festive holiday train covered in lights. Free homemade cookies, hot cider, coffee and hot chocolate. And the kids get to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus!

Museum opens at 4 pm with train rides starting at 5 pm and continuing until everyone has a turn! (Usually about 8:00 pm)

### 2024 Santa Trains Friday and Saturday Evenings:

Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup>

Friday & Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>

Friday & Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>

Admission is \$15 per carload, or \$10 per carload with 3 cans of non-perishable food for the EPCAN food bank.

## General Superintendent's Report Operating Department

Kerry Cochran

As our 2024 operating season comes to an end, I would first like to thank all the volunteers who helped out this summer with our caboose trains.



I would also like to thank the Mechanical Department for keeping the locomotives in good running shape so far this year. While Nick Manos has stepped up and has become the assistant CMO, and all the other volunteers who have helped give David Elems a hand, we still need to have some work done on other locomotives to return them to operating condition.

We used the WP 1503 for 140 hours, QRR 1100 for 31 hours, the SP 2873 for 28 hours and the WP 165 for 12 hours year-to-date. This shows the hard work the Mechanical Department puts into keeping the fleet up and running so we can operate the caboose trains and other movements at the museum.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all the volunteers who came out and helped out with the UP Big Boy event. This event could not have taken place without all the support from all the volunteers.

While we were still short on crew members on most weekends, the officers of our society stepped up and provided the much-needed support throughout the operating season. Our President, Greg Elems, put in 67.5 hours and the Vice-President, Steve Habeck put in 96.5 hours to keep things running when we were short on crew.

Several other members stepped in as well and the total number of hours will be shown in the year-end Operating Department report in January 2025 after all the other events are over.

We had a total of 33 members give us a hand with the caboose trains this season. A couple of new members joined late in the season and we hope to see them at the coming events and into next year.

There are also 11 inactive members of the Operating Department and I hope to see them return next year so they may regain their operating qualifications and join us during the regular season.

As I write this column, several events are still on the calendar for the rest of this year. Railroad Days will return as a one-day event, and then Pumpkin Express and the Santa Trains. Please consider volunteering for these events.

Thank you all and have a great rest of the year.



*Phil Schmierer and Greg Elems worked on the two big brush piles in the parking lot. At this point, they are 3/4 done.*

*- Greg Elems 6/27/24*



## 2024/2025 FRRS Officers

The following members were appointed as FRRS Officers at the August 2024 FRRS Board of Directors meeting:

### Officers for 2024-2025

President: Greg Elems

Vice-President: Steve Habeck

Secretary: Eugene Vicknair

Treasurer: Desmond Powers

### Meet the New FRRS Treasurer

Hi. I am Des Powers and I am the new Treasurer for the Feather River Rail Society. I have been a member of FRRS for close to 40 years. I became an active member last year, following my retirement, and joined the Operating Department where I'm currently a Student Brakeman. The FRRS Board of Directors recently voted me in as Treasurer. I am a certified public accountant currently licensed in California and Nevada. I spent approximately 35 years of my career auditing in public accounting and corporate internal auditing. I had my own accounting firm for 14 years. I have a very strong and wide background in auditing, internal controls, accounting and financial statements preparation.



### My Love for the Western Pacific Railroad

My love of the Western Pacific Railroad is ingrained within me. I was born in Oroville. My grandfather was a machinist for the WP and worked at the Oroville Roundhouse for 32 years. The Oroville Roundhouse was WP's primary maintenance facility for decades. Each time I pass by our jewel, the 165, I always think of my Grandpa and that at some point in his career he had to have had his hands on the 165 when it was sent to the Oroville Roundhouse for maintenance. He hired out on the WP in 1924 in Elko and in 1926 was transferred to the Jeffrey Shops, in Sacramento. After a year of training he transferred to the Oroville Roundhouse. Grandpa was a "steam man". He had difficulty accepting WP's transition to diesels. He died when I was 5 years old.

I grew up in Reno. My dad and mom would occasionally get my sisters and me up early, sometimes along with my Grandma, to drive to Portola to catch the Zephyr and ride down the Canyon to Oroville. We rode the California Zephyr through the Feather River Canyon many times between Oroville and Portola. We would have breakfast in the diner. Perhaps on one or more of those trips we had breakfast in the Zephyr diner that is part of FRRS' Historical Collection.

Many times, while visiting Oroville, my cousins and I would walk from their house to the Oroville Depot. We would watch the WP crews exchange the FP7A and its two B units that brought the Zephyr down the Canyon with another set of similar units that had been serviced the night before at the Oroville Roundhouse. Quite likely on some of those occasions one of the beautiful FP7A Silver and Orange engines exchanged was another of our Historical Collection jewels, the 805-A. The exchange was a daily morning and afternoon ritual conducted on the west bound and east bound Silver Lady. What a thrill it was for us to watch men tend to the California Zephyr as they uncoupled, moved, and coupled up those massive and powerful machines to the Silver Lady. My Western Pacific memories run deep and are forever etched in my mind.

### Overview of the Non-Profit Treasurer's Role

This requested introductory greeting conveys to the Membership my view of the Treasurer's purpose, specifically in relation to FRRS, and the role of the non-profit organization's Treasurer position, in general. The FRRS's By-Laws describe the duties of the Treasurer. The definition below encompasses the essence of the duties described in the By-Laws.

I find this definition of the Treasurer quite descriptive and comprehensive.

**"The Nonprofit Treasurer** is the main financial expert on the Board of Directors, and the word to associate with the

Treasurer's work is **oversight**. Oversight includes communicating financial results and status to the Board and Organization members; instituting and maintaining internal controls; analysis and evaluation of accounting processes; revising internal controls when judged necessary; and developing and implementing new internal controls, when necessary. The Treasurer's duties also include approving the organization's financial policies and planning documents; reviewing and approving internally prepared financial statements; developing risk management strategies, and presenting recurring financial reports to the Board of Directors."

The role of the non-profit Treasurer is not limited to the foregoing definition. Financial matters directly or indirectly impact all activities of a non-profit organization and the Treasurer interfaces, directly or indirectly, with all of the non-profit organization's activities.

#### **Fiscal Discipline**

**"Fiscal Discipline"** is our "mantra" and will be emphasized. **Fiscal discipline** is defined as *"the act of setting financial goals and tracking their achievement"*. Through fiscal discipline, **financial priorities** are established; enhanced and expanded annual budgets are prepared; the budget as a guide for our decision-making processes is emphasized; budget variances are examined and revisions to financial practices are revised through the budget examination process; savings and an emergency fund are built up; goals are established and met; and through fiscal discipline progress is made toward a more **stable financial future**.

#### **Fiduciary Duty**

I take very seriously the **"fiduciary duty"** that the Treasurer of a non-profit organization, along with all Board directors and other officers, takes on when accepting a position on a non-profit organization's Board. **"Fiduciary duty"** pertaining to all members of non-profit organization Boards

includes three legal duties to the Organization they serve. This means that Board members take on statutory and common law responsibilities for the organization. These are: (1) Duty of Care; (2) Duty of Loyalty and (3) Duty of Obedience. Each of these three has an expanded definition. They are not provided here. Failure to comply with these legal duties could result in a Board member, or members, facing personal legal liability. I, as the other Board members, take these duties extremely seriously.

#### **Critical Financial Records**

Maintenance of financial records is critical to all organizations of any size and type. The single most critical financial record of all organizations is the General Ledger. The General Ledger is our master document that records all of our business transactions – cash, inventory, accounts receivable, property, accounts payable, revenue and sales, expenses, net assets and more. It is from the General Ledger that the financial position of the organization is determined and presented in the organization's financial statements. Why is financial position a critical metric? Because the financial position of any organization is the status of its current financial well-being.

The basic financial statements are the balance sheet, income statement and statement of cash flows. The balance sheet, also known as the statement of financial position, summarizes the assets, liabilities and net assets of the organization. Net assets is the term used to describe the equity of a non-profit organization. These three factors are the essence of financial position. Financial position governs the FRRS' ability to obtain increased revenue opportunities and expanded growth. Financial position communicates to sources of revenue and donations the state of our financial stability which is critical information for funding sources who may consider providing revenue to FRRS through grants, donations and other sources of funding. Financial position communicates whether the Organization is financially stable and determines if the organization has the ability to survive.

The General Ledger is the living, breathing most critical document of any organization within which financial position lives. The individual accounts in which transactions are recorded can be thought of as trees. The General Ledger is the forest.

One of the first revisions to FRRS's financial procedures that I am initiating is to have a backup copy of the General Ledger made available to me. One of the advantages of this additional procedure is that we will have timely access to our General ledger when financial activity needs to be reviewed. I will review the backup copy of the General Ledger on a monthly basis. Our business relationship with Susan Scarlett, our Bookkeeper, will remain intact. Susan, and her assistant Cheryl Kolb, do a good job for FRRS. They maintain our General Ledger, but having a backup copy of the General Ledger immediately available to us will reduce the risk of catastrophic loss of our most critical business record, the heart of our financial activity, the General Ledger.

**Thank You for the Opportunity to be Your Treasurer**

In my role as Treasurer of FRRS, I, along with fellow members of the Board of Directors and all members, want to help the Western Pacific Museum continue to thrive and grow.

I look forward to serving as your Treasurer and working with our outstanding Board of Directors and Department Heads. We will all continue to move forward and help the Feather River Rail Society and the Western Pacific Museum to continue to thrive and grow. Please let me know if you have any questions. My cell number is: (415) 497-4398. My email is: treasurer@wplives.org. I look forward to working with everyone. I thank the Board of Directors for the opportunity to help keep the memory of the Western Pacific alive. **WP Lives!!**

Sincerely,  
Des Powers, CPA



*Thirty photographers got a chance to photograph Union Pacific Big Boy 4014 and Western Pacific 0-6-0 165 together as the sun set for the day on July 10, 2024. It started at 7:15 PM, participants were able to photograph the Big Boy and WP 165 together from the viewing area, getting a chance to capture these Alco built locomotives as the light rolls from Golden Hour through Sunset into Blue Hour and finally evening. More photos are available at [https://wplives.org/gallery/2024\\_Big\\_Boy\\_Photo\\_Event.html](https://wplives.org/gallery/2024_Big_Boy_Photo_Event.html).*

- Nick Stewart



*(President's Pin continued from page 1)*

board. Again Roger has been a valued volunteer and with his hard work and dedication the WP 165 was successfully steamed for the UP 4014 Big Boy visit in July. We all need to thank him too. Without Roger's dedication and work we wouldn't have the WP 1503 painted and the WP 165 completed. Thank you Roger for your contribution and hard work. Good luck with your family health issues.

So where does this leave us? Nicholas Manos has stepped up to take on the CMO's job for the time being. Nicholas has set about making a plan on work to be done in the shop and locomotives to be inspected and serviced next year. There will be some changes made and it will fall upon us to help Nicholas and support his plan. Roger's position on the board will need to be temporarily filled and his seat will be coming up for a vote next year. We will have his position filled and made official at the next board meeting. Roger will help with the WP 165 in that he will mentor and help train his replacement.

While all this isn't great news, we can get through the changes of personnel. This is a good time for us to work on our culture and move forward. Culture you say? Yes, there are changes across the board and if we are going to see our society survive the next few years and beyond we have to let our new volunteers learn and do their job. No more of the *"we didn't do this or that before, why change now?"* Well, we have the FRA and insurance industry forcing changes and if we are going to continue with our mission, we will have to make the changes. Also, these engines are old and tired and we have to take care of them if we are going to continue to be an operating museum.

Since the FRA has been brought up, this is a good time to explain why the WP 165 will not be under steam again this year. The FRA has taken issue with a couple of items and we are sorting those out. Eugene Vicknair and I will be responding to the FRA with Roger's help. Hopefully we can put them to rest and move

forward with steam operations next year. In the meantime we will continue with the WP 165 on display for our photography event on the evening of September 28<sup>th</sup>. Once the FRA issues are cleared up, we will be free to tell the whole story, so I'm asking for your patience on that. If you are up at the museum and one of the directors is there, feel free to ask them and hopefully we can fill you in on some more of the details.

In closing, we ran the caboose train for the Portola Railroad Day on September 28<sup>th</sup>. We had a lot of visitors to the museum that Saturday. We will have more details in the next *Train Sheet* about how the event went.

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### **Museum Sponsors**

The Western Pacific played a major role in developing the economy of Plumas County and the surrounding region. The Western Pacific Railroad Museum is proud to be a part of that heritage and to hold a position in supporting the ongoing economic health of our community. We welcome the support of that community in return. We ask our members and visitors to support our business sponsors, companies who have generously contributed to the museum and its mission to preserve the Western Pacific family.

### **H & R Block - David Hansen**

2850 Main St Ste 7, Susanville, CA 96130

Tel: 530-257-9339



**H&R BLOCK**

DAVID HANSEN - SUSANVILLE



## Mechanical Department Update

Nicholas Manos, CMO

As mentioned in my last update, Mechanical Department progress is always subject to interruption, and boy have we had some interruptions.



Support of WP 165's return to service for the Big Boy event was the main focus and I am happy to say that Roger Stabler pulled the team and the engine together to have it ready just in time for a flawless performance on the big day. It was a real treat to hear its whistle echo through the valley.

Mechanical personnel were also tasked to perform grounds clean-up and setup for the event, yard switching to prepare the train and clear the tracks, fence repair, grading, parking lot repair, etc. This is a long way of saying we were exhausted and didn't get to any other locomotive repair work.

Painting on SP 2873 is in progress, with all metal repair complete and the majority of the engine prepped and cleaned. Black paint has been applied to the top and the yellow coating is in process with red following. The plan is to have all painting complete by the time you see this report.

During the Big Boy event, the Case backhoe and the Liftall forklift went out of service due to various failures. They will be evaluated for repair at the end of the month.

## CMO Resigns

After many years of service to the museum, CMO David Elems has decided to resign and focus his time on other pursuits. We thank David for all his efforts and commitment to the museum and wish him well. He has generously agreed to finish the painting of SP 2873 and to provide additional training and consultation to help assure I

am capable of continuing the maintenance programs he has worked so hard to establish. Best wishes, David.

## CMO/Shop Changes

As is always the case with the new guy, I will be making some changes in the way the department and shop operate. Given the limited resources we have (specifically volunteer time), don't look for too much in the way of locomotives restoration next year. Instead, our initial effort will be documenting and creating a system around David's annual maintenance program. Our ongoing focus will be keeping our three locomotives in service and fully operational while we rebuild the department.

It is my desire to increase the efficient use of volunteer time. When a mechanic arrives to work, I want that person to be able to go to work immediately. I don't want them wasting time having to hunt for tools, hunt for supplies, clear space to work or work around random clutter. I don't want them to have to spend hours fixing tools or machines that were misused and/or abused. I want them to be working in a safe environment.

To that end, expect to see complete cleaning and re-organization of the shop (the west half of the museum building). Once complete, the shop will no longer be available to store anything not related to the maintenance, repair or restoration of museum rolling stock or support equipment, even on a transient basis. The shop will be run as a separate business that is generally restricted to use by the Mechanical, Restoration and Facilities departments. All volunteers are welcome to pass through these areas, as needed, but are kindly asked to refrain from depositing any items, removing any items, relocating any items or using any tools or equipment unless they are performing work at the direction of the CMO, the facilities manager, the car foreman, or the restoration manager.

I hope for your understanding that volunteer time is so precious we must use it as efficiently

as possible. There have been many previous efforts to organize and clean the shop but it keeps falling back to its present state, so we need to address the cause and eliminate this cycle. Cooperation with this request will help facilitate the completion of more work, lower supply costs and provide a clean, orderly and safe environment for all our volunteers and the public.

I am scheduling mechanical work sessions well in advance to give our mechanics ample time to plan for attendance, where possible. The scheduled work sessions for 2025 are:

Mechanical Session 1: April 4-14  
Locomotive Annuals and repair

Mechanical Session 2: May 19-23  
Locomotive Annuals and repair

Mechanical Session 3: October 4-5  
Locomotive winterizing

#### Here are your equipment status updates:

##### **QRR 1100**

The locomotive is currently in RAL, switching and caboose train service.

##### **WP 1503**

The locomotive is currently in RAL, switching and caboose train service.

##### **SP 2873**

Once painting is complete, the locomotive will be returned to RAL, switching and caboose train service.

##### **Liftall 4000# Forklift ('Big White')**

The lift is currently out of service due to clutch issues.

##### **Yale 8000# Forklift**

The lift is currently in service.

##### **Case 580CK Loader/Backhoe**

The tractor is currently out of service due to a thermal start issue and a hydraulic stall issue.



*Nicholas Manos pressure washing the Kodachrome (SP 2873).*

*- Greg Elems 8/10/24*



*Painting SP 2873 - Some of the masking removed and Yellow paint applied.*

*- Greg Elems 9/16/24*



### 1910 Livermore Western Pacific Railroad Depot Mural

*Thomasin Dewhurst*

A mural that commemorates the 1910 Livermore Western Pacific railroad depot - part of a public art and youth community-art workshop project, initiated and led by local artist and arts educator, Thomasin Dewhurst - was completed in 2023. The mural serves to document Livermore's historic Western Pacific depot, which was demolished in the 1950s, and recreates an important and forgotten aspect of Livermore's history.

The mural also depicts the first passenger train to stop at the depot - a #94 Western Pacific steam train that traveled along the Western Pacific Feather River route from Salt Lake City, Utah to Oakland, California. Crowds of people out to greet the train, and celebrating the opening of the Livermore depot, take center stage in the mural painting. Their clothes, and the flag flying above the depot, flutter in the breeze of a Californian summer's day.

The mural is situated almost exactly where the original depot building stood. It is painted on the east-facing wall of Allen's Towing, in the parking lot of the Tri-Valley Haven food pantry / CommonPoint Non-profit Center at 1111 North L Street in Livermore. The mural lies between the L-Street Astronaut mural and the current Livermore railroad tracks.

The painting style of the train and the depot is a clear and detailed realism, depicting historically educational images. The third subject of this mural – the central crowd of people – with its sunny, breezy outdoors scene, lively brush marks, simplified realism, and snapshot feel of people in early 20<sup>th</sup> century clothing, is painted in a style reminiscent of American Impressionism, which was prominent in the 1900s.

The mural explores and celebrates the concept of time and timelessness, bringing history out of the archives and into contemporary life. The mural is a virtual stage on which a celebratory day in 1910 is re-enacted, and re-experienced by today's people in the bustling parking lot of Tri-Valley Haven's Food Pantry. Passing trains are greeted by the image of the #94 WP steam train emerging from the mural's dramatic perspective. This perspective, too, symbolically brings past events out of the misty vanishing point of history into the life-size actuality of the present day.

*(continued on next page)*



Careful portraits were painted from historic photographs of the celebrations, honoring actual people alive in Livermore and nearby areas in 1910. Several prominent historic Livermore figures from the same date feature in the mural too.

The mural was one component of a two-part public art project. The second component comprised a youth workshop that offered an art-education opportunity for young artists to learn about mural-making and public art. The aim was to give the students a real-world opportunity in painting a mural of their own design. Around 15 Livermore art students, ages 10 to 16, participated in the workshop, learned about the making of the 1910 Livermore Western Pacific railroad depot mural (some of whom added their work to the mural), and then created a youth-led donor wall mural for the Tri-Valley Haven (<https://www.thomasindewhurst.com/tri-valley-haven-donor-name-mural.html>).

The mural and workshop were sponsored by Alan and Mary Burnham, Allen's Towing, Livermore Valley Arts, the Livermore Heritage Guild, Community Health and Education Foundation (CHEF), the Western Pacific Railroad Museum, and the Tri-Valley Haven. These organizations gave financial support, supplied research materials - photographs and historical information, and gave classroom space and project opportunities for the youth workshop. Special thanks are given to Alan Frank for his very helpful discussions, and to Alan Burnham for his information, help and tireless search for historic photographs.

This mural is featured as part of the Rails Connect art exhibition: A Livermore-Pleasanton Railroad Journey through Art and History. The exhibition runs through October 6, and is located at UNCLE Credit Union Art Gallery, Bankhead Theater in Livermore and Harrington Art Gallery, Firehouse Arts Center in Pleasanton.

**Over 275 photos from the Big Celebration are in the 2024 Big Boy Celebration photo gallery on the WPLives.org website at:**

**[https://wplives.org/gallery/2024\\_Big\\_Boy\\_Celebration.html](https://wplives.org/gallery/2024_Big_Boy_Celebration.html)**

## **Big Boy Celebration**

*Eugene Vicknair*

In April 2024, the FRRS received word to expect a very special visitor during the summer. The Union Pacific Railroad was planning a western journey for the UP 4014 "*Big Boy*", the world's largest operating steam locomotive, and a stop in Portola was in the planning. Thus began a flurry of planning, work and improvements that would culminate on July 9, 2024, when the locomotive rolled into Portola Yard.

Not enough can be said about the volunteers who made this possible. Many worked long hours to make sure the museum and its equipment would be ready for this event, as well as those who worked to promote it and make it an exciting time for the attendees. Coordination with the Union Pacific was high and regular calls, meetings and emails were held to nail down the details. We also received tremendous help from the City of Portola Public Works Department.

The WPRM Steam and Mechanical Departments worked overtime to have WP 0-6-0 165 and our caboose train in top operational shape. A plan was developed and approved by the Union Pacific to have a viewing area outside our north fence and to bring visitors in via the caboose train, operating it from the usual loading area but then running outside the interchange gate and then reversing into the yard tracks, offloading visitors on the Ramp Track and allowing them to walk east toward the viewing area with the Big Boy facing them. This was intended to both meter the crowds entering the viewing area and provide various views to the visitors. They could exit the viewing area either by using the train or walking through an opening in the museum fence back onto the main museum site.

The event itself attracted an estimated 2,600 to 2,800 visitors to the museum on July 10, the main event. In addition to our operations, the West Coast Railroaders Group brought several motor cars and gave rides to visitors and members. The crew included several joint WCRG / FRRS members including Gail McClure, Matt McClure, Ken Marty, Steve Elkins and Chris Meesel. The Wandering Railroad and the Diablo Pacific Short Line brought their outdoor, large scale model trains to show off. And *Roen BBQ* and *We Cook For You* provided food service.

Thanks to a grant from the Union Pacific Foundation, we were able to complete two major accessibility improvements for the event: an expansion of our accessible parking spaces with 5 new spaces in the main parking lot, and an ADA-compliant water fountain and bottle fill set providing filtered and chilled drinking water. These were both heavily used during the event and have proven popular since. Thanks to Eric McKay, Tim Steeper, Janet Steeper, David Elems, Eddie Powell, Matt Elems, Nick Manos, Brian Waller and everyone who worked to make sure these projects were ready in time. We also worked out a deal with a local company in Reno to provide mobility scooters for free use during the Big Boy visit. This too was used by many visitors and greatly appreciated.

A secondary store area was set up selling drinks and snacks, which proved useful on the hot day. This was placed in the FRRX baggage car which also acted as a raised viewing platform for those wishing to see the locomotive from a different perspective.

Western Pacific 0-6-0 165 handled caboose train duties for the day and worked flawlessly thanks to the incredible work done by the team working on it. Special thanks to Roger Stabler, David Elems, Logan Beers and the whole stream crew for overcoming several challenges and making it possible for our 1919 Alco steam engine to go out and greet her 1944 Alco big sister.

A raffle was also held with awards ranging from gift baskets to RAL certificates raising additional

funds to support the FRRS. The raffle ticket sales were combined with an information table where visitors could learn about the WPRM, FRRS and how to support and / or join the Society. Ann Morningstar and Matt Shuman took on this task. The Museum Store, both the main store and the “*snack shack*” did non-stop business. Thanks to the team who handled the hundreds of guests wanting to buy stuff: Michael Coen, Kelly Manos and Jackie Habeck were in the baggage car snack shack and Ann Carey, Breckyn Shirley, and Janet Steeper handled the main store. Those who worked the gate, handling all the admissions, also deserve special mention. Thank you to everyone who took a spin at the gate, including Olivia Simone, Bryn Shirley and a wonderful couple whose names I wrote down but can't find as I write this!!!

We also held a special joint event with the Union Pacific for local officials and dignitaries. This went very well and was well received by those who attended. They included:

Pam Grant -- District Representative for  
Congressman Kevin Kiley (CA-3)  
Shane Starr – Modoc County Supervisor  
Tasha Weaver -- Representative for Office  
of Senator Brian Dahle  
Pat Morton – Mayor City of Portola  
Jim Murphy – Mayor Pro Tem of Portola  
Susan Scarlett – Portola City Manager  
Jeff Engel – Supervisor District 5  
Kevin Goss -- Supervisor District 2  
Paul Roen – Supervisor of Loyalton  
Barbara Sokolov -- Eastern Plumas  
Health Care Executive Assistant/Clerk  
of the Board  
Doug McCoy – CEO Eastern Plumas  
Health Care

We also had quite a media presence, including:

Jadon Urban – KTVN News 2 Reno  
John Bartell – Sac ABC News 10  
Jeff Martinez -- KTVN Reno  
Nick Stewart - NPR/KUNR Reno  
Lindsey Schuck - The Plumas Sun  
Nichole Johnson - Sierra Booster

Our train crews handled the crowds with professionalism and answered many questions about the museum, its collection and the event. As mentioned, in this case the caboose train played a vital role in handling the crowds and everyone pulled together to make it work. We even had our own volunteers helping with event security, with Tom Mueller and David Hosmer handling those duties.

Running everywhere and handling so many things that cropped up both during the event and leading up to it was David Elems. Thank you is insufficient. Also, huge thanks to everyone who helped plan, promote and set up the event, including Ed Dickens and the UP Steam Crew, UP Senior Director of Public Affairs Peggy J. Ygbuhay, Patty and Michael Clawson of Big Fish Creations, webmaster Paul Finnegan, and the City of Portola. In particular, City Works Administrator Todd Roberts and his crew who came handled some last minute earthworks and helped us prepare to handle all the cars and walk in traffic.

The day was capped off with a special photo session where WP 165 came out into the yard pulling WP wood caboose 645, formerly owned and later donated by FRRS Chief Founder Norman Holmes. The crew brought the cab hop onto the UP Yard West Pass and came down toward the Big Boy, the first time a WP steam locomotive was operated in Portola Yard in about 70 years. About 35 donors were joined by WPRM volunteers and many members of the UP Steam Crew, including Ed Dickens, to experience

and photograph this historic locomotive meet.

We also had several sponsors donate supplies, food and drink, and labor and materials to make this event possible. They were:

Smiths, Eastern Plumas Health Care, Kunsmen Fencing, Union Pacific, We Cook For You, Driven Innovation, Roen BBQ, Feather River Food Co-Op, United Rentals, Plumas Sanitation, City of Portola, Grocery Outlet Bargain Market - Quincy, Graeagle Store.

And a final thank you to all the volunteers who made this happen:

Greg Elems, Kerry Cochran, Janet Steeper, Roger Stabler, Erin Swain, David Elems, Matt Elems, Charlie Spikes, Steve Habeck, Nick Manos, Kelly Manos, Eric Manos, Logan Beers, Craig Simmons, Bill Parker, Fred Elenbaas, Drew Adkins, Clark Ackerman, Des Powers, Tom Mueller, Dave Hosmer, Olivia Simone, Matt Shuman, Debbie Shuman, Tim Steeper, Ann Carey, Breckyn Shirley, Bryn Shirley, Jackie Habeck, Michael Coen, Patrick Coen, Ann Morningstar, David Hosmer, John J, Gus Paoli, Paul Finnegan, Ed Powell, Duane Vander Veen, Eric McKay, Eugene Vicknair, Mary Ann Vicknair.

## ***Catch the Early Train!***

*Get your Train Sheet by email and you will get it before the post office even receives it and it is in COLOR!  
(and you save the FRRS money too!)*

*Send an email requesting email delivery to **membership@wplives.org** with your name and email address.*





**- 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* by email 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](mailto: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 2, 2020)****Admission**

- Adult (ages 19 - 64): \$10.00
- Youth (ages 5 - 18): \$5.00
- Child (age 4 and under): free
- Senior (65 and up) and Active Military: \$8.00
- Family (defined as 2 adults plus any related children 18 and under): \$25.00

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 (all day)**

- Adults 19 - 64: \$4.00
- Youth 5 - 18: \$2.00
- Child 4 and under: free
- Senior (65 and up) and Active Military: \$4.00
- Family (defined as 2 adults plus any related children 18 and under): \$10.00

**Cab Rides**

- Adults 19 - 64: \$20.00
  - Youth 5 - 18: \$10.00
  - Senior (65 and up) and Active Military: \$20.00
- 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](mailto:trainsheet@wplives.org).

## The Train Sheet

Feather River Rail Society  
P.O. Box 608  
Portola, CA 96122-0608

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*The "Big Boy Westward Bound" tour made a stop on July 10, in Portola, California providing a unique opportunity with the locomotive for viewing UP 4014 from the Western Pacific Railroad Museum.*

*- Michael Clawson*