



# THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 736

Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

December 2024

## 1960's vintage Griswold crossing gate signals



*Curt Hoppins photograph*

Jacques Verdier guides the top as Steve Knoeck lifts it with tie handler.

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Our classic 1960's vintage Griswold crossing gate signals have been reliable guardians of Kilkare crossing for many years. One signal has a counter which indicates over 30,000 operations. They originally had "wishbone" wooden gate arms that we eventually replaced with the current aluminum/fiberglass versions due to deterioration of the wood.

This type of pedestal signal was once popular with both the SP and WP,

and could be found throughout the Bay Area. Over time they have been replaced by more modern signals that have the gate mechanism mounted to the mast. We use this type of signal at both Bond St. and Verona crossings.

The gate mechanism for the Griswolds is housed in a sheet metal covered pedestal with doors on the front and back. The lights are mounted on a steel mast which is supported by a casting

**Signaleros continued on Page 8**

**OUR MISSION:** To be an operating railroad museum for standard gauge railroading, past, present and future, with emphasis on the Western United States and special emphasis on Northern California.

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## MEETINGS

### General Members Meeting

**NO MEETINGS  
IN DECEMBER**

In-person & Teleconference  
at the

**Veterans Memorial Hall**  
37154 2nd St, Fremont, CA  
(Corner of 2nd St. and E St. in Niles)

=====

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
follows the Members Meeting

**NOTE: Next meeting**  
**January 8, 2025**

## CLUB CAR SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for submitting articles  
and photos for next month's issue  
of The Club Car is the

### 20th OF THIS MONTH

Submit articles in Microsoft **WORD**.  
Submit photos in jpg format.

The photo should have a description  
and / or identifying the people in it.

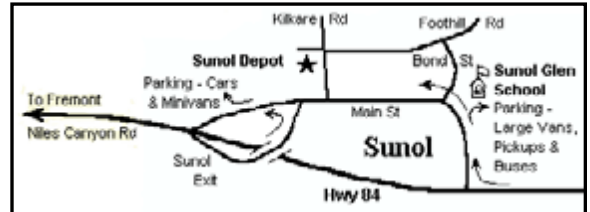
Send email to:  
**clubcar@ncry.org**

The editor reserves  
the right to hold or edit  
material as necessary.

## BOARDING LOCATIONS

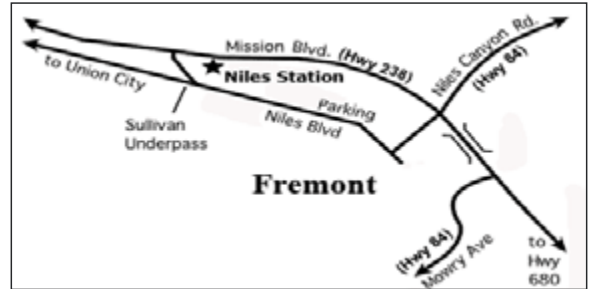
### SUNOL DEPOT

6 Kilkare Road  
Sunol, CA 94586



### NILES STATION

37029 Mission Blvd.  
Fremont, CA 94536  
(Niles)



### ===== BOARD OF DIRECTORS =====

President.....	Tim Flippo.....	(650) 575-3341
Vice President.....	Jim Evans.....	(650) 697-9033
Recording Secretary.....	Matt Petach.....	(925) 860-4296
Membership Secretary.....	Rich Alexander.....	(510) 508-0503
Treasurer.....	Pat Stratton.....	(650) 888-8619
Director-At-Large.....	Justin Legg.....	(510) 717-4944
Director-At-Large.....	Warren Haack.....	(650) 726-7952
Director-At-Large.....	Patrice McDonald.....	(408) 772-9278
General Manager.....	Stephen Barkkarie.....	(510) 368-1733

### ===== DEPARTMENT HEADS =====

Brush Cutting.....	Mark Whitman	New Member Orientation...Glenn Fountain
Car Department.....	Dennis Mann	Operations Manager.....Dexter Day
Charter Agent / Docents.....	Jim Evans	Public Relations.....Henry Baum
Chief Engineer.....	Mike Strider	Road Foreman of Engines..Kent Hedberg
Club Car Editor.....	Barry Lependorf	Security Department.....Jim Evans
Commissary.....	Doug Debs	Signal Department.....Curt Hoppins
Crew Caller.....	Jackie Vlasak	Station Agent - Sunol.....Donna Alexander
Gift Shop.....	Patrice McDonald	Steam Department Head....Alan Siegarth
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Member Communication.....	Linda Stanley	Train Master.....Mark Miller
Museum Curator.....	Dennis Mann	Volunteer Coordinator.....Ed Best
		Yardmaster.....Stephen Barkkarie

The Club Car is an official publication of the Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc., P.O. Box 515, Sunol, CA 94586-0515 .

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General Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month except December at 5:30 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Hall in Niles at 37154 2nd St (corner of 2nd St and E St). Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.

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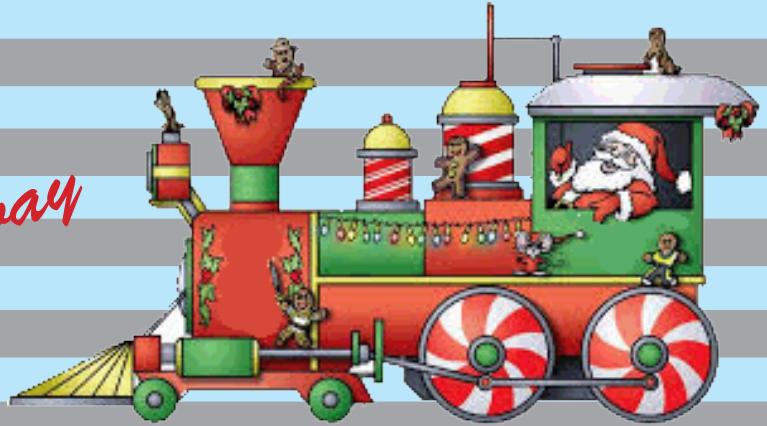
Views expressed herein are those of the author unless specifically noted by the editor as official policy.

The Pacific Locomotive Association is a member of the HeritageRail Alliance (HRA).

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## DECEMBER SCHEDULE

*Happy Holidays  
from  
Niles Canyon Railway*



## Volunteer Report

**Charlene Murrell - Volunteer Hours Coordinator**

The people listed below reported 3058.5 volunteer hours for the month of October. Volunteer hours should be reported to Charlene Murrell at [volunteer-hours@ncry.org](mailto:volunteer-hours@ncry.org). Train Crew hours will continue to be collected from log sheets. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY on the LOG SHEETS. If I can't read your writing, you will not get credit for your hours.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Bob Bradley  
Charlene Murrell  
Chris Hauf  
Dexter Day  
Don Gholson  
Ed Best  
Henry Baum  
Jackie Vlasak  
Joe Scardino  
Kent Hedberg  
Mark Miller  
Matt Petach  
Rich Alexander  
Stephen Barkkarie  
Tim Flippo

### **ARCHIVES & LIBRARY**

Brian Hitchcock

### **CAR DEPARTMENT**

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Bob Pratt  
Brenda Du Charme  
Bruce Burke  
Carol Combs  
Chris Hauf  
Cynder Niemela  
Dave Hipple

### **CAR DEPARTMENT**

Dennis Mann  
Dexter Day  
Doug Vanderlee  
Ed Best  
Ginger Brown  
James Stewart  
Joan Weber  
John Link  
Linda Randolph  
Lou Bradas  
Marshall Williams  
Norm Fraga  
Phil Stone  
Steve Van Meter  
Sue Thomas  
Sue Thomas  
Tim Flippo  
Tom Crawford

### **COMMISSARY**

Bonnie Harrington  
Jack Harrington  
Ron Thomas  
Sally Mills  
Sue Thomas

### **DECENT**

Ronald Hook  
Tom Stone

### **ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS**

Bent Christensen  
Curt Hoppins  
James Stewart

### **FACILITIES**

Bob Bailey  
Doug Vanderlee  
Gerry Feeny  
John Zielinski  
Linda Stanley  
Matt Petach  
Steve Jones  
Steven Brown  
Wesley van Osdol

### **GIFT SHOP**

Charlene Murrell  
Patrice McDonald

### **MECHANICAL**

Alastair Young  
Charles Franz  
Chris Hauf  
Gabriel Gleeson  
Gerald DeWitt  
Henry Chandler  
Howard Wise  
Jeff Haslam

### **MECHANICAL**

Justin Legg  
Karl Swartz  
Kent Hedberg  
Linda Stanley  
Sarah Fritz  
Steve Jones  
William Stimmerman

### **MOW & TRACK**

Adam Weidenbach  
Bob Bailey  
Bob Pratt  
Brad Jones  
Charles Navarra  
Chris Berwick  
Chris Campi  
Doug Vanderlee  
Greg Gleeson  
James Moon  
John Zielinski  
Mark Whitman  
Matt Petach  
Matthew James  
Mike Pechner  
Mike Strider  
Rick Cory  
Ron Thomas  
Sarah Fritz  
Steve Meyer

### **MOW & TRACK**

Trevor White  
Wesley van Osdol

### **OTHER**

Barry Lependorf  
Bob Bailey  
Bob Pratt  
Brian Hitchcock  
Dee Murphy  
Dennis Mann  
Kent Hedberg  
Linda Stanley  
Patrice Warren  
Robert Giles  
Steve Jones  
Tom Eikerenkotter  
Trevor White  
Zonker Harris

### **TRAIN CREW**

Alyssa Cantz  
Andre' Thom  
Andre' Thom  
Brad Jones  
Charles Franz  
Chuck Kent  
Colin Snow  
Curt Hoppins  
Doug Vanderlee

### **TRAIN CREW**

Dylan Olson  
Dylan Olson  
Ed Best  
Gabriel Gadzikowski  
Gabriel Gleeson  
Garon Michaelis  
Gerald DeWitt  
Jason Moon  
Jon Williamson  
Jorg Linke  
Joseph Faria-Poynter  
Justin Legg  
Kent Hedberg  
Liam O'Leary  
Mark Miller  
Mason Denton  
Matthew James  
Michael Stockwell  
Patrice McDonald  
Stephen Fares  
Steve Knoeck  
Ted Unruh  
Tim Zippo  
Warren Haack

## President's Report

**Tim Flippo - President**

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We should be about half way through the 2024 Train Of Lights. I would like to thank everyone who has helped put on the TOL. We still have the second half to go. I am sure there still are places to volunteer, please help us out if you can. The more hands makes for less work for everyone. There will not be a regular General meeting or Board meeting in December due to everyone working on the TOL.

January is just around the corner. If you like to plan ahead, the first part of the month we will take some time off to recover from the TOL. But the second half of the month we will need to undo all our hard work and take down all the lights getting ready for our regular trains season.

I am looking forward to 2025 and all the projects we can get accomplished with the help of our great volunteers.

**Tim Flippo**  
President



*Dexter Day photograph*

The long time lounge car greeter is back in lights again after his repair operation by John Link. John Link is securing "Manford" to wall with Jacques Verdiere helping.



## 2024 TRAIN OF LIGHTS SCHEDULE

**4:30 pm trains depart from Niles/Fremont Station and get back around 6:00 pm**

**7:30 pm trains depart from Sunol Depot and get back around 9:00 pm**

December 1, 4, 6, 7, 8: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**

December 9: **6:00 pm Special Train - Niles**

December 10: **4:30 pm Hiking Group Charter Train, 7:30 pm Church Charter Train**

December 11, 13, 14, 15: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**

December 16: **4:30 pm Rotary Charter, 7:30 pm Emma Smith School Charter Train**

December 18: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**

December 19: **4:30 pm PG&E Charter Train, 7:30 pm Girl Scout Charter Train**

December 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30: **4:30 pm Public Train, 7:30 pm Public Train**

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

In October our \$65,303 of operating revenue came from membership \$1,320; diesel trains \$8,950; steam trains \$16,923; and early TOL ticket sales \$39,430 (including revenue from two TOL charters not included elsewhere as Charters). We also had revenue from the Sunol gift shop of \$2,484; regular train commissary of \$1,667; donations of \$9,836; and other income of \$647. Total income for the month was \$81,257.

The \$9,836 of donations received were for the following funds: the General Fund, \$8,821; SP1744 restoration, \$400; Krause Maffei SP9010 restoration, \$265; Ranch Car GN1242 restoration, \$250; and a new Loco Shop, \$100.

On the expense side, our gift shop spent \$8,743; commissary \$7,461; and regular train operations \$1,092. The Steam department \$10,355; the Diesel department \$116; and the Car department \$8,706.

Other expenses included a roll-up door for the new M-601 shop; the usual utilities plus over \$5,500 in hazmat disposal and cleanup in advance of the County inspection; and an added bridge inspection using a drone at Dresser Bridge, \$5,000. MOW purchased both standard steel joint connecting bars and insulated bars for the signal joints, spending \$11,968, and paid for regular track inspections for \$3,330. Total expense for the month was \$46,645. Administrative expenses including liability insurance premiums and General Management were a predictable \$21,187 for the month.

So far in November we are spending time and money on final touches for the TOL operation. We are lucky to have our Sunol parking back, off restriction by the highway department. For our customers, we have moved in

additional toilet facilities and checked platform and parking lot lighting and other safety issues.

Now is the time for all of us volunteers to get signed up to help make this effort a success, for our customers and for our organization. Not surprisingly, of the many people who are aware of the Niles Canyon Railway many of them, maybe even most, are so because of our Train of Lights – either they have experienced it themselves, or their family or friends have done so and enthusiastically recommended it to them. It is up to all of us to help continue its value as a magical Holiday experience.

If you have questions or comments, let me know by email to [treasurer@ncry.org](mailto:treasurer@ncry.org), or call 650-888-8619

**Pat Stratton**  
Treasurer

If your employer has a matching gift program for donations to charitable organizations, you may be able to double or even triple the impact of any contribution you make to PLA. Because conditions and criteria for gift matching vary by employer, check with your HR department for details. If details of the PLA as recipient are needed, contact Treasurer Pat Stratton at [treasurer@ncry.org](mailto:treasurer@ncry.org).

### Annual Train of Lights Quilt Raffle

We are excited to announce our Annual Quilt Raffle! The 2024 beautifully handcrafted quilt is ready to find a new home, and all proceeds from the raffle will go towards supporting Niles Canyon Railway and the Piecemakers Quilt Guild of Southern Alameda County.

**Tickets: \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00**

**Raffle Date: December 30, 2024**

Purchase tickets in the gift shop onboard the train. Don't miss this chance to own a one-of-a-kind quilt and support a great cause!

For more information, contact: [giftshop@ncry.org](mailto:giftshop@ncry.org)

### E-COUPLING INFORMATION

Website: <http://www.ncry.org>

Email: To Join Members Email List, send an Email to: [info@ncry.org](mailto:info@ncry.org)

Twitter: [@toots4ncry](https://twitter.com/toots4ncry)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/NilesCanyonRailway>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NilesCanyonRailRoad>



## Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

'Twas the month before Christmas and all through the yard, volunteers were busy and toiling quite hard.

Lights were all hung on the train cars with care, and goodies were stockpiled with plenty to share.

The wreaths did sparkle with green and with red, as sounds of the season rang out overhead.

Engineers in 'kerchiefs and brakemen in caps had practiced their routines and studied their maps.

When online, at Fare Harbor, there arose such a clatter, as folks vied for tickets, what day didn't matter.

Away in a flash the seats disappeared, and the worry of parking may be as we feared.

As the occasion loomed closer with no movement on-site, and with assurance that all would be gone by first night.

We offered for sale the last of the spaces, to ride on the train with other happy faces.

Out on the mainline, the rails had been blessed, and crews stood on the ready for any repair request.

All crossings were tested, and the mouse-maze set, the tickets are printed, I think all our needs have been met.

All were surprised how fast it had come, 'twas time for the "Bah-Humbug" to run; the one chance we get to test out our plans, and see if we're ready to meet the demands.

As the train was connected, and all the journals inspected, car hosts prepared, and duties selected; all the folks onboard, bore anxious smiles, as the conductor sang out "Highball to Niles!"

Pots of chocolate were brewed, 'neath a stove vent renewed, and down in the gift shop shelves brimming, are toys and gifts, and all the trimmings.

Parlor car was toasty with heater restored, and all on board bask in the calm 'ere the hoard, when scores of holiday revelers shuffle towards seats,



Niles Canyon Train of Lights at Sunol Depot.

and hungrily plan for a run for some treats.

Order is marshalled as cars flowed in for parking, and our volunteers stowed them neatly, without any barking, as hundreds of people did strive, a chance to witness the train arrive.

There's a buzz in the crowd as the lights came to view, all were excited both old friends and new, children shouted and squealed with delight, as Santa stepped off and came into sight. A hardy "Ho-Ho" preceded his advance, into crowds there for a chance, at getting selfie, with NCRY's resident Elfie, as he strode towards the station, giving joy to the congregation.

A fervor to be part must've been contagious, with off-duty members attending; outrageous! All dressed to the nines, in their holiday fines, and gave proof to the rest of us, which ones are the best of us.

After passengers loaded, both conductor and crew, jumped to the tasks each knew to do; all is secured, as engines trade control, and the conductor calls out "Highball Sunol!"

As the "Train of Lights" rumbled toward valleyed night, her majesty curving ahead into sight, pride swelled in my heart, and anticipation took hold, knowing full well all tickets have sold.

A third decade gone by bringing delight to all, started from an idea that was oh so small; "lets dress up an engine with some light, and take out members tomorrow night", as Dr. Christmas he's come to be known, could not have predicted how big this has grown.

Thanks be his due for the years of donations, and the renown we enjoy across the nation, that allow us to continue our preservations; and with awe throughout the years, is it all done by volunteers.

Many thanks to you all, who came out through the fall, day upon day, giving your time away to bring such mirth makes me feel quite contrite and leads me to say:

"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night."

**Stephen Barkkarie.**  
General Manager

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Build East Efforts Include the 14th TEE

If you play golf at the Valley Course of the Castlewood Country Club, and you Tee off of the 14th Tee, the adjacent scenery will be very different. Our Build East crew has cleared the way for our last 6 track panels and they were installed Saturday, November 2. It was the perfect day for building track as temps were in the mid sixties. We had 6 track panels left but only put down 5 as the last panel collapsed after the old crossties fell apart trying to lift them with the Burro Crane. The two rails from the 6th panel were at least placed on the ground for future construction. So it is safe to say that when playing off the 14th Tee, there will be a new railroad track staring back and waiting for the next phase of construction.

Our next effort, or phase two, will now be to harden the track from Happy Valley Road bridge eastward to a point just east of the 14th Tee. This work includes the replacement of defective crossties, and the spacing of all crossties. Phase 3 will be to drop ballast in the same area and bring the profile to final grade. Once this is all done, we plan to use the Spud Liner or other means to align the final profile.

Special thanks goes to all of the track crew volunteers who assisted in the placement of the track to this point including our General Manager Steve Barkkarie who operated the Burro Crane with demanding skill in placing the panels.

### Mike Strider



Mike Strider photograph

Lunchtime 14th Tee: Steve Barkkarie and Paul Bartz having lunch at the 14th Tee.



Mike Pechner photograph

Placing joint bars: last panel off Castlewood bridge: Joe Dougherty with Mike Strider holding impact wrench and Trevor White holding bolts in place.



Mike Pechner photograph

Burro on Castlewood bridge taken from south side of bridge.



Rick Cory photograph

Mike Strider holding shovel on 14th Tee.



Mike Strider photograph

Burro at 14th Tee: Panoramic view of Burro and Army Flat at 14th Tee.

## Signaleros Report

Curt Hoppins

Continued from Page 1

that bolts to the top of the pedestal.

Unfortunately, a common failure point for these signals is the interface between the mast and the casting. The material used to seal this area eventually cracks allowing water to seep in. Over time the casting and mast begin to rust, and as the rust expands it exerts pressure on the casting causing it to crack.

The top casting on our north signal was severely cracked. There is a cantilevered arm supporting an additional set of lights that puts added pressure on the casting.

Our attempts to acquire a replacement casting have been elusive, so we decided to fabricate our own top out of plate steel and a standard signal base. We replaced the steel mast and cantilevered arm with aluminum pipe making the top substantially lighter.

We have completed the installation of the new top on the north signal and we plan to do the same on the south signal, though the top casting is in much better condition.

To learn more about the Signal Department check out our website at: [www.ncrysignal.com](http://www.ncrysignal.com)

Curt Hoppins



Curt Hoppins photograph

Joe Romani, Steve Knoeck, and Tim Flippo removing original signage.



Curt Hoppins photograph

Tim Flippo and Jacques Verdier installing new top.



Curt Hoppins photograph

Testing signal operation.



## TOL Volunteer Appreciation Party Sunday Feb 2, 2025, 3 - 6 pm

Niles Veteran's Memorial Building  
37154 2nd St (corner of 2nd St and E St)  
Fremont, CA 94536

For all TOL volunteers & family/guest! (Everyone who helped make TOL a success: car decorations, car/loco repair, brush cutting, MOW, parking, depot, ticketing, commissary, train crew, gift shop, photos/PR, Santa & Mrs. Claus, foodies, caboose hosts, etc).

### We will provide:

Ham, Roast Turkey, Roast Beef, Artisan Cheeses, Sourdough Bread  
Paper plates, knife/fork/spoon, cups, napkins  
Coffee, water, hot tea

### Potluck:

Bring a salad, side dish, dessert, or drink to share,  
and serving utensil if needed.

### Cost:

FREE if you RSVP by Jan 31  
\$10/person at the door or after Jan 31.

### To RSVP:

Contact Doug Debs, cell 650-704-1487,  
email <dougdebs2472@yahoo.com  
with your name, phone number & number of people

### You can also sign up online

Go to [ncry.org](http://ncry.org) --> Member's website --> Calendar --> February -->  
click on TOL Volunteer Appreciation Event

### Setup & Teardown:

We need helpers at 2:30-3:00 to set up folding tables & chairs,  
and 6:00-6:30 to put them away.  
Please help with one or the other!

Thanks!

Doug Debs

Commissary Manager

cell 650-704-1487

email <dougdebs2472@yahoo.com>

## Membership

**Rich Alexander**

As a reminder there are no meetings in the month of December because of the Train of Lights operations. The meeting would normally fall on a Friday night which happens to be a TOL operations night. Most if not all board members are involved with the TOL operations.

### **New Members:**

Timothy Becker; Mario Enriquez; Raymond Freeman; Heela Gafari; Mona Gafari; Taha Gafari; Tuka Gafari; Kyle Ibrahim; Adam Openshaw; Luke Openshaw; Joe Osborn; Melanie Openshaw; Robert Openshaw; Eliza Perkins; Mary Peters; Joshua Quinn; Adrienne Wonnacott; Alexander Wonnacott; Bruce Wonnacott; Charles Wonnacott; Katherine Wonnacott; Rebecca Wonnacott.

If you have tried to renew online using Club Express, there is a problem with the credit card process. Club Express switched credit card providers on October 15, 2024. Somehow, we did not receive notice about this. So, they have not been processing transactions using credit cards. It shows as pending payment on our end when we are notified of the transaction. As soon as Pat is finished working on getting this fixed it can be used online again. In the meantime, I will be sending out emails to those with pending payments asking if you would like to pay over the phone using Square or by ending in a check. I estimate that there are around 20 members affected by this at this time. Some of you I have talked to on the phone and you have sent in checks, if you still get the notification ignore it. Others just be aware what is happening.

By the time this Club Car issue gets to you we will be in full TOL mode. There is still a need for volunteers for some spots. If you have time please fill those positions. Remember this is our big fundraiser and it takes a village to pull it off.

**Rich Alexander**

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

### This Month's tale:

### A 10-2 SURVIVING HEAVYWEIGHT SLEEPER, ATSF 1129, "GOTHIC PEAK"

This month's tale is about a sleeping car that is rare in itself for still being operational and mostly intact as far as heavyweight sleeping cars go. This Tale begins at the Pullman Co. It was December 1926 and a new 80' 10 section and 2 drawing room sleeping car was being built by the Pullman Company as Lot 6031 under plan 3584A to be used in Pullman pool of sleeping cars which was assigned to the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railway. The section was the top of the line of Pullman accommodation of the heavyweight sleeping car era. Developed in the 1860s it remained the standard measure of Pullman service, as well as fare structure, throughout the first half of the 20th century. The name that was assigned to this car was the "Gothic Peak". The name comes from a 6,213 foot high mountain peak located East of Seattle, Washington.

Each section consisted of two seats that could seat four during the day which were converted into two beds at night. For nighttime use, the two seats that faced each other were moved together to form a lower berth. It was capable of sleeping two people if desired, but single occupancy was the norm. The upper berth was lowered into place from the wall above the seats.

Access to the berth was by means of a ladder which was placed by the sleeping car porter. There was a reminder on the wall of the upper berth that read, "TO GET IN OR OUT OF THE UPPER BERTH, PLEASE USE THE LADDER. RING THE BELL AND ASK THE PORTER FOR IT".

At night the section was closed off from the aisle by use of a curtain designed to open and close for each berth. The lavatory and smoking room for men and women were located at opposite ends of the car. The two drawing rooms at



*Dexter Day photograph*

"GOTHIC PEAK" ATSF 1129 looking good in its old age.

the end of the car were deluxe private rooms with seats, table and your own private washing facility and toilet.

These open section sleepers were the most commonly used sleepers before World War II and during WW II. After the war, the railroads were receiving new equipment that were

streamlined light weight passenger cars compared to the old heavy weight steel sleepers used in the past. After Pullman Co. released the heavyweight sleepers from standard service on regular trains, the Gothic Peak was purchased outright by the ATSF in May of 1953 and it was renumbered at that

**Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager**



*Dexter Day photograph*

**One of Gothic Peak's sections. Most of this car's interior is in good shape for what the car has gone through.**

time to 1129 and was used as a coach. Since there were no modifications really needed to the open-section floor plan, it made it possible for use as a coach without modification so the interior was unchanged from Pullman service when they operated in revenue service as a coach on secondary trains. Removed from passenger service, the car was renumbered by ATSF to M of W 194286 and assigned as a Foreman Sleeping and Shower Car for use by maintenance of way crews. The drawing rooms were converted to showers but the rest of the car retained its open sections as used in Pullman service. The car ended up in work trains in Southern California around the San Bernardino and Bakersfield area. In the 1980s, the ATSF put the "Gothic Peak" up for sale.

The car was purchased by the Golden Gate Railroad Museum and was moved to their museum at Hunters Point in San Francisco, California. At Hunters Point, the car was cleaned up and was used as an overnight motel for their volunteers working on the steam engine SP 2472.



*Dexter Day photograph*

**This is how the sections look today being restored at Brightside. They are in good shape per se.**

When GGRM lost their lease at Hunters Point, the Gothic Peak was one their cars that they put up for sale since they really had a lot of equipment to move and it would be very hard to find a place to put it along with the expense to move it. So, in December of 2005, the Pacific Locomotive Association purchased the "Gothic Peak" and moved it to Niles Canyon on February 26, 2006. After arrival on the NCRY, the car was placed in storage since there is plenty of work that will be needed before the car will be considered for revenue service on the NCRY. The car has been under restoration at Brightside by Bruce Burke, Jeff Haslam and Steve Barkkarie.

That is good news since the car is one of 38 sleeping cars of its class to serve on the ATSF as a sleeper. The

*Continued on next page*



*Photo from car book*

**Sections as they looked when the car was in its prime.**



*Photo from car book*

**This shows an upper and lower berth made up with curtains pulled for others down the aisle.**

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

*Continued from previous page*  
restoration of this car is taking shape. All new windows have been ordered and other parts will need to be acquired if all the upper berths are going to work again. Along with a lot of metal restoration work, the interior is in pretty good shape taking what the car has been through in the past several years. What is being done at this time is what is really needed in restoring this rare car back to an operating restored state to the good old days of yesteryear when the car was in its prime and roamed the rails of the ATSF. For our display of this car in operating condition it would be great to have one section completely made up for night use display including curtains. Also, have one bedroom made up for day use and one bedroom made up for nighttime use. The rest of the car could be open for passenger service as needed. Along with a lot of metal restoration work, the interior is also in need of restoring to the way it was when it was in operation as a Pullman sleeper. The two bedrooms will be the hardest to bring back to the way they

were when the car was in service and most likely will be closed off. With the dedication that the crew working on this car is putting into it, the car will be a fine example of what it was like being in a sleeping car of that era.

With that said, another tale comes to its end.

**Dexter Day**  
Operations Manager



Dexter Day Photograph

This is a picture of Steve hooking up a night protective strap which were on upper berths.



Dexter Day photograph

This is an upper and lower in an almost made up status. Notice condition of material.



The two bedrooms at end of car made up with door between rooms open.



Dexter Day photograph

This is how the two bedrooms sit today. You can dream what they could look like.



This is what they are making the Gothic Peak interior to look like. Stay tuned, it is coming together.



Dexter Day photograph

You can see what the car was in the past and where it is today.

## Hazmat

**Doug Debs - Hazmat Manager**

On October 3, Brightside yard and hazmat documentation were inspected by Alameda County Dept. of Environmental Health. This is normally done every 3 years.

Many thanks to everyone who made the hazmat inspection a success! All the areas that folks worked on looked GREAT.

The inspector identified several small action items, plus a few new surprises. Some of these took a lot of work! Every action item was completed within 30 days of receiving the inspection report, as required. Thanks to Steve Barkkarie, Bob Bradley, Steve Brown, Henry Chandler, Gerald DeWitt, Rhonda Di-jeau, Brad Jones, Justin Legg, John Link, Chuck Kent, Matt Petach, Ron Thomas, Doug Vanderlee, Jacques Verdier, Mark Whitman, Alastair Young, and John Zielinski.

### Doug Debs



L to R: John Zielinski, John Link, Justin Legg, Matt Petach – Tired, dusty, and triumphant!



SiltSoxx erosion-control booms. John Link & Ron Thomas in distance.

## Brush Cutting

**Mark Whitman**

To get a better perspective of how close trees were getting to the train, I decided to take a ride on the locomotive on October 19, a regular operating day. I was surprised at the number of trees that were getting close to the train. This may be because the number of acorns this year significantly adds weight to the limbs causing them to drop lower.

Brad Jones and I went out on Tuesday October 22 with a bucket truck and a flat car and worked our way east from Niles. We loaded everything that we cut on the flat car and hauled it east of Dresser Bridge for the crew to chip on Wednesday. We moved the brush in anticipation of Steve Barkkarie having a crew out on Wednesday to do tie replacement and tamping on the approaches to the Dresser Bridge.

On Wednesday, October 23 the crew headed out to work on the brush generated the day before while Brad and I continued working our way east trimming with the bucket truck. We finished in the vicinity of Mile Post 32. The crew today consisted of Brad Jones, Ron Thomas, Pat Stratton, Chris Campi, Sarah Fritz, Steve Meyer, Greg Gleeson, Steve Knoech, and Mark Whitman.

Saturday October 26, we started just east of Estates Bridge working our way east. We trimmed trees at Estates Crossing, the pine tree at the west gate

of Brightside, trees along the fence line at Brightside, and other locations all the way to Sunol. We then crossed over Kilcare Road to chip brush generated by the Friends of the Sunol Garden. The crew today consisted of Brad Jones, Ron Thomas, Adam Weidenbach, John Zielinski, Steve Knoech, and Mark Whitman.

On Saturday, November 2, Brad Jones and I tackled a small project reported to me by Mike Strider. I have wanted to tackle this for a couple of months. There was a limb that had broken off a white oak tree and tangled up in the old signal wires at the east end of the UP overcrossing of our tracks at Verona Road. As the Building East crew takes the work train for their operation, we put the chipper behind the bucket truck and went out to Verona Road to take care of this limb. We also removed the signal wires because the limb had caused them to be hanging low over Norad Crossing. This project only took three hours, so we decided to go further east to clean up the homeless camp just west of where we park for work at Happy Valley Bridge. On the way back to Brightside we also picked up two plastic car bumpers abandoned along our right of way near our crossing to Hearst Siding.

**Mark Whitman**

## Train of Lights Parking Protocol Staff & Volunteers

I usually assist with Train of Lights parking at Sunol, which has always been tight in the past. I am asking that all staff and volunteers park on Foothill Road or better yet ride the train from Brightside if possible. This year parking may even be worse because the contractor working on the washout repair on HWY 84 has opted to use the auxiliary lot across the street from the Sunol Station for their dirt storage. At this time, it does not appear that they will be done by the start of Train of Lights. This means we have lost over half the parking in the auxiliary lot. Your cooperation and help in this matter would be appreciated.

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## The Yosemite Valley Railroad

The Yosemite Valley Railroad was founded in 1905 in an era of equine transportation. The grandeur of Yosemite was accessible only by an arduous journey of multiple days by crude wagon roads. The new railroad would cut travel time to four hours, eliminating highwaymen, bumps and dust. As part of the railroad construction, the end of the line saw the railroad construct a road to connect with the Big Oak Flat road. This is now the Arch Rock entrance to Yosemite. The road from the end of line, aptly named El Portal, would add another hour and a half to the journey, most of it through spectacular scenery.

The YVRR took two years to see completion, opening in May of 1907 that saw two daily round trips to handle demand. Rolling stock was ordered from Hicks Locomotive and Car Works as a 3 car passenger set, a combine, coach and observation car to augment the YV fleet. Yosemite Valley Observation 330 was part of the new order. Upon completion of the set, it was shipped from Chicago west, crossing the three year old Lucin cutoff of the Great Salt Lake. The new passenger car set was immediately pressed into service to meet demand on the line. Operation was Merced to El Portal, where the 330 and combine would be turned individually on the 65' gallows turntable for the return trip. Turning facilities in Merced were simpler, using the wye.

In 1909, President Taft rode the 330 to visit the park. The National park service chose to honor his visit by naming a peak on the south and west side of the valley Taft Point. This is now a relatively short hike off the Glacier Point road, although it will take your breath away with glimpses of yawning depth through fissures near the edge and the 600' straight down from the peak.

Operations continued this way until 1912 when an incline was put into operation to haul logs at El Portal. A wye was constructed two miles west



**President Taft at the Merced station of the Yosemite Valley Railroad. While not in view, a crowd of onlookers has gathered at the rear of the YV330 hoping for a speech in October of 1909. YV boxcar #652 is spotted on the adjoining house track for loading with LCL deliveries.**

of El Portal as part of the lumber operation, and of course was used for the passenger train as well. Normal operation would see the passenger train turn on the wye at Moss Canyon, and back the remaining two miles to El Portal. It was most likely that time that a "tail" was added, consisting of a caboose style whistle and dump valve and gauge on the rear railing to allow the conductor to control the backup movement. Other improvements to the 330 were its conversion to electric lighting visible by the unsightly conduit laid on the roof and replacement of the oil lamp fixtures with pedestal electric lights.

Operations continued but started diminishing as roads and automobiles started impacting railroads nationwide. Another limiting factor was accommodations in Yosemite itself, as well as the seasonal nature of tourist traffic. Completion of the "all year highway" across the river from the YV and utilizing the road the YV itself

had built as the Arch Rock entrance cut deeply into passenger revenues. One good aspect of the highway construction was an accidental creation of an Indian Head rock formation where a chief appears to be gazing at the sky with a feather headband. Conductors would point this out on Yosemite bound trains from the deck of the 330, and it is still visible to this day.



**A view of the Indian Head rock formation shot from the former YV right of way. This can be viewed by turning off highway 140 to Foresta Road about 2 miles west of El Portal. Cross the river and turn left onto Incline Road. About 1 mile down the paved road look across the river at a left bend in the road.**

Freight revenues propped the YV up until the depression, although peak periods still could be busy, boosted by tour charter groups. YV331, another observation car was put into operation and can be distinguished by its curved end roof line, steel sheathing and lack of stained glass windows. This car and combine 105 from the original 3 car set were lost in a 1938 fire in Merced. The trucks from the 331 were transferred to the 330, which had wood trucks with steel sheathing. Half of the 105

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## The Yosemite Valley Railroad

became a tool shed in Merced, and the 330 became the only observation car again.

President Franklin Roosevelt visited Yosemite by train in 1938, however he did not ride the 330. B&O supplied an observation car with a wheelchair ramp to accommodate the president's polio. The 330 did see some notable celebrities though. Ansel Adams and John Muir are confirmed passengers, but it is probable that Winston Churchill, Prince Albert and Fatty Arbuckle may have boarded the 330.

The YV had pared back service to one passenger train a day, and winter months saw the 330 have a lunch counter added in 2nd class. After the loss of combine 105, a steel 40' baggage/RPO was purchased from Southern Pacific (T&NO) and became YV107. This in combination with the 330 became the "winter train" until the mail contract was lost in 1943. All good things must come to an end, except at museums. The YV couldn't make a go of it when the lumber mill shut down in 1942, the cement plant in 1944, and it had to subsist on local freight alone. Two last fan trips in 1944 and 1945 brought the curtain down on the YV. What a journey it had been, and rail fans were crushed by its loss. Enough so that the PLA eventually made the YV107 one of its first purchases.



The morning winter passenger train eastbound near Lake McClure crossing bridge 29A. While the locomotive is gone forever, thanks to the PLA, and the author and his wife Claudia, the train still exists in Sunol, YV107 and YV330.

The 330 was to have a longer journey. At some point it probably transited Niles Canyon on its way to the Bay Area. It was offered for sale at the Bay Shore yards for \$4,500 without takers. The scrapper Al Schader who owned both the 330 and the 107 eventually converted the 107 into a travelling work office, while the 330 was shipped to Yreka to serve as a residence while he managed the Yreka Western Railroad. Shoved to the end of a spur next to and perpendicular to the main street in that town, it was home to Al when in town. When Al passed away in 1954 and the construction of Interstate 5 cut the spur, the 330 became a diner noted for its hamburgers and a favorite spot after local high school football games. It was popular so much so that during the Vietnam War, stories of the burgers prompted war buddies to travel there after returning stateside.

The property owner was set to develop the site, and offered the car to the city, who accepted on the proviso that the owner move it to the corporation yard. Armed with a Willys tow truck, a sketchy dolly and with water barrels and workers on the bumper of the tow



The YV330 journey included several decades as a diner. While not as glorious as traveling to Yosemite, it was a community fixture in the northern California town of Yreka. The rear deck was the most sought out tables, especially after a local football victory. On several occasions, errant motorists bumped the car while parking, causing consternation to patrons inside! But for its diner era, the 330 might not have lived to see a brighter future.

truck as counterweights, they pulled the 330 over the curb where virtually every window shattered onto the street. The cleanup shut down Main Street for 3 hours, but at the end of the day the 330 was parked in a field on the south side of the yards, sans trucks, the railing and with doorways cut into the middle. There it would sit for 20 years until the author and his wife Claudia stepped into the picture.

### Wes Swift



Shorn of its dignity, and in desperate need of some TLC, this is the first view of the 330 by the author and his wife. The blue tarp is left over from an earlier attempt to resurrect the car as a diner again. Ironically the tatters of the tarp wisping through the rear window on a breeze influenced our decision to save the car. It was a haunting whisper that lasted all the way back home for us. For all the blue sky in the picture, it rained just up until our visit and resumed shortly after our departure.



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*Jim Evans photograph*

**Brakeman volunteer PLA Member Mason Denton on 9010 during October test run on the mainline in Brightside Yard.**