



# THE CLUB CAR



Bulletin 740

Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc.

April 2025

## Ride the Rails for Relay for Life



*Christopher Hauf photograph*

The American Cancer Society Relay for Life Train heading to Niles Station.

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The Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc. the operators of the Niles Canyon Railway in conjunction with the American Cancer Society are hosting the 14th Annual Niles Canyon Railway Team Event Fund-raiser on Sunday, April 27th, 2025. The train and crew are being donated by the Niles Canyon Railway once again for this event where all proceeds from ticket sales will benefit the American Cancer Society.

Come ride our rails in support of the

Relay for Life for this one day special set of diesel powered excursions.

Niles Canyon Artisans will be set up and offering their hand crafted creations at our Sunol Depot. Local artists helping to make this a fun and worthwhile event.

Snacks, hot dogs, and beverages are available for purchase on the train or at our Sunol Depot. Riders may also feel free to bring a picnic lunch to eat on the

**Relay for Life 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

**FRIDAY  
APRIL 11  
5:30 PM**

In-person & Teleconference  
at the

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

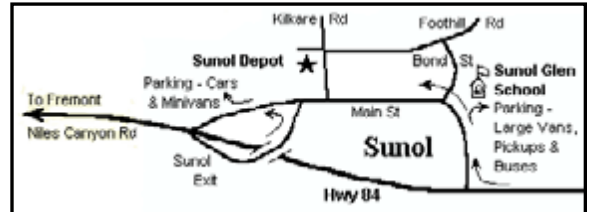
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**Board of Directors Meeting**  
following the Members Meeting

## BOARDING LOCATIONS

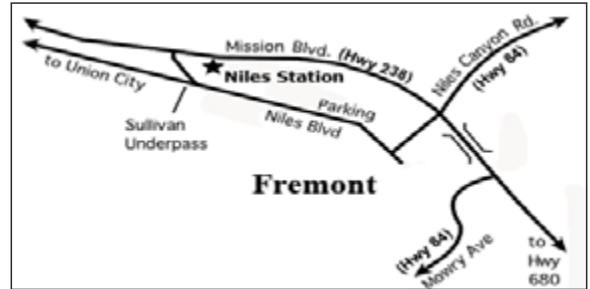
### SUNOL DEPOT

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	Museum Curator.....	Dennis Mann
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 Siegwarth
Hazmat Manager.....	Doug Debs	Steam Hosteler Training.....	Jeff Schwab
Maintenance of Way.....	Ron Thomas	Technology.....	Matt Petach
Marketing Manager.....	Chris Hauf	Train Master.....	Mark Miller
Member Communication.....	Linda Stanley	Volunteer Coordinator.....	Ed Best
		Yardmaster.....	Stephen Barkkarie

## 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 **WORD** format.  
Submit photos in **jpg** format.

The photo should have a caption/  
description identifying the people  
or item in it. A photographer credit  
should also be included.

Submit in **WORD** format.  
(All captions on one page)

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

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

The Club Car is an official publication of the Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc., P.O. Box 515, Sunol, CA 94586-0515 .  
The Club Car is distributed monthly to members, sponsors and friends of the Pacific Locomotive Association.  
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The PLA's Federal Tax ID is 94-6130878, the State of California Tax ID is 0501445.  
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 Street,  
(corner of 2nd St and E St). Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.  
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The Pacific Locomotive Association is a member of the HeritageRail Alliance (HRA).

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## APRIL SCHEDULE

April 5	Saturday	Track Building East	Brightside	8:00 am	-	Mike Strider
April 4	Friday	Education Train	Niles	10:00 am	-	The Alexanders
April 8	Tuesday	Washington Hospital Charter	Niles	10:30 am	-	Jim Evans
April 11	Friday	Education Train	Sunol	10:00 am, 12:30 pm	-	The Alexanders
April 11	Friday	General Meeting	Veterans Hall	5:30 pm	-	Tim Flippo
April 12	Saturday	Regular Train Operations	Sunol	10:30 am & 1:00 pm		
April 13	Sunday	Regular Train Operations	Sunol	10:30 am & 1:00 pm		
April 18	Friday	Education Train	Sunol	10:00 am	-	The Alexanders
April 19	Saturday	Regular Train Operations	Sunol	10:30 am & 1:00 pm		
April 20	Sunday	Regular Train Operations	Sunol	10:30 am & 1:00 pm		
April 26	Saturday	Brush Cutting	Brightside	7:30 am	-	Mark Whitman
April 26	Saturday	M200 Charter	Sunol	12 Noon	-	Stephen Barkkarie
April 27	Sunday	American Cancer Society	Sunol	10:30am, 12:30pm, 2:30pm	-	Bob Bradley

## Volunteer Report

**Charlene Murrell - Volunteer Hours Coordinator**

The people listed below reported 1,996 volunteer hours for the month of February. 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 the log sheets in Blake's Palace. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY on the LOG SHEETS. If I can't read your name, you will not get credit for your hours.

### ADMINISTRATION

Bob Bradley  
Bob Pratt  
Charlene Murrell  
Chris Hauf  
Dexter Day  
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

Bob Moore  
Bruce Burke  
Bruce Heron  
Dean Valentine  
Dee Murphy

### CAR DEPARTMENT

Jacques Verdier  
James Stewart  
Joan Weber  
John Link  
Lou Bradas  
Marshall Williams  
Norm Fraga  
Peter Bradas  
Phil Stone  
Stephen Van Meter  
Steve Knoeck  
Tom Crawford

### COMMISSARY

Jacques Verdier  
Joseph Romani  
Sue Thomas

### ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Bent Christensen  
Jacques Verdier  
James Stewart  
John Cavanaugh  
Joseph Romani  
Matt Cavanaugh

### ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Steve Fox  
Steve Knoeck

### FACILITIES

Alyssa Cantz  
Bob Pratt  
Doug Vanderlee  
Garon Michaelis  
Jacques Verdier  
John Zielinski  
Matt Petach  
Steve Meyer  
Wesley Van Osdol

### GIFT SHOP

Charlene Murrell  
Patrice McDonald

### MECHANICAL

Alastair Young  
Charles Franz  
Chuck Kent  
Gabriel Gleeson  
Garon Michaelis  
Henry Chandler

### MECHANICAL

Jorge Linke  
Karl Swartz  
Linda Stanley  
Mason Denton  
Steve Brown  
Steve Jones  
William Stimmerman

### MOW & TRACK

Adam Weidenbach  
Bob Pratt  
Brad Jones  
Dee Murphy  
Garon Michaelis  
James Moon  
John Zielinski  
Matt Petach  
Mike Strider  
Ron Thomas  
Steve Knoeck  
Wesley Van Osdol

### OTHER

Barry Lependorf  
Curt Hoppins  
Dee Murphy  
Jim Evans

### OTHER

Linda Stanley  
Matt Petach  
Patrice Warren  
Steve Brown  
Steve Jones  
Tom Eikerenkotter  
Zonker Harris

### TRAIN CREW

Brad Jones  
Curt Hoppins  
Dylan Olsen  
Gerald DeWitt  
Mason Denton  
Tim Flippo

## RECERTIFICATION CLASS

HELD AT THE WHITE HOUSE

9:00 AM

SUNDAY

APRIL 06, 2025

\*\*\*\*\*

BRING YOUR RULE BOOKS  
THERE WILL BE A TEST GIVEN  
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

\*\*\*\*\*

SIGN UP FOR CLASS

[traincrews@gmail.com](mailto:traincrews@gmail.com)

## President's Report

**Tim Flippo - President**

The 2025 operations have started. It started off with a School train Thursday the 6th of March and continued on both Saturday and Sunday with regular diesel operations. Due to a herculean effort on the part of Rich Alexander and Steve Barkkarie and their great helpers, the commissary car with the new working generator was finished just in time for the runs. This more powerful generator will take care of the

dimming lights when the refrigerator turns on.

There are plenty of things going on at the railroad between working around the yard, building track, to working on cars and locomotives. If you want to help we always can find a place for a volunteer. Whether it is light or heavy we have something you can do. We have a relatively full schedule of runs this year, between regular operations,

charters, school trains, Beer and Wine trains. I still hope to run the M200 going east starting in June. I should have the confirmation sometime in April that it will happen. It is a great experience to cross under the UP tracks and parallel Interstate 680. Each month we get a little closer to going under 680, a big Thank You to the track gang for making this happen. As said by Rich Alexander in his last article the elections are coming up. We are looking for volunteers who want to run for elected office. Our treasurer was kind enough to step up for re-election last time around now he needs to move on, but he is willing to teach the next treasurer. It will be a fill in term so it will only be for one year.

If you are interested in running for an office please contact me and I will get you in touch with a nominating committee member.

**Tim Flippo**  
President

## Membership

**Rich Alexander**

### New Members:

David Lindberg; Scott Martel; Scott Miner; Andrea Siebert.

Garron Michaelis will be voted on for becoming a voting member.

Many of you are still having trouble with Club Express process of renewing. When I receive confirmation from Club Express that you have renewed it is showing the type of payment you made. If you send in a check after completing the online process it will show complete but when I receive it shows "not paid". I then must wait for the check to show up. The Treasurer receives it then sends a copy to me which I then must enter in the system manually. This takes time and can slow the process of a check clearing in your account.

Sometimes members have forgotten to click the final button to make payment. This will then show up as processed but "not paid". If this happens, I then send out an email stating that it happened. Again, this slows the process.

If you can't remember your login and password, remember that I don't know your password. I can reset it for you or you can go to Club Express and reset yourself.

Things are underway for the new year. Please sign up for any of the volunteer slots on the operation days. It takes several volunteers to pull off the

needs for our operations, commissary, docents, tickets window, gift shop just to name a few.

As a reminder elections are coming up in June for the Board of Director. Please consider putting your name in for one of the positions that will be available. This is a wonderful opportunity for those who no longer have the physical ability to do the heavy lifting but still want to contribute. There are many opportunities for those who want to volunteer, we need back up volunteers for Department Heads and other areas could use back up volunteers such as ticketing, volunteer slots, public relations, and the list goes on. We are always in need for someone to learn the internal workings of the organization so they can step in and help out if needed.

It is not too early to consider submitting names for the Volunteer of the Year award which will be awarded at the 4th of July picnic.

**Rich Alexander**  
Membership Secretary



## Brush Cutting

**Mark Whitman**

On Wednesday February 19 the tree crew went to just east of the Arroyo Bridge and finished trimming the long tunnel section of trees in this area. Crew today consisted of Brad Jones, Pat Stratton, Sarah Fritz, James Moon, Ron Thomas, Steve Knoech, and Mark Whitman.

On Saturday February 22 the tree crew went to the area about 800 feet east of Bond Street. This is an area that we started several months ago. We continued to trim trees heading east all the way to the west end of the siding. The crew today consisted of John Zielinski, Brad Jones, Ron Thomas, Steve Knoech, Adam Weidenbach and Mark Whitman.

**Mark Whitman**

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Treasurer's Report

Pat Stratton - Treasurer

The Balance Sheet as of February 28, 2025, had a cash balance as a result of a successful TOL season. About 75% of it is held in bank and broker CD's earning on average over 4% interest until we need it for operations or restorations. Separately, our investments in the Endowment Fund accounts have continued to rise, gaining about 10% since the beginning of the fiscal year. February returns were very good but have recently been given up.

Our internal "securities" account of \$36,138 was originally kept in stocks, but those are such a gamble I have moved those funds all into one bank CD earning 5.35% until mid-June.

The Income Statement for February contained no revenue from train operations, so income was limited to non-operating sources including donations, storage fees and CD interest totaling \$6,500. It makes sense then that our expenditures exceeded revenues during the month, by quite a bit in fact. Two shipments of ties and other track materials plus the General Management fee and insurance costs make up most of the \$136,500 in expenses. Still, our net income for the fiscal year (8 months into it) is positive at \$657,000. Revenue operations in March have already begun adding to the great financial results delivered to us by our holiday Train of Lights operations.

Budgeted Revenue looks very good. Even without steam operations (they are waiting for the fuel depot improvements to be put in place before firing up again) we have covered 91%

of our estimate, with 4 more months to gain the rest. Adding all sources of income to include memberships, gift shop sales, commissary income, contributions, and interest, we have covered 95% of our estimate, just 5% to go.

Looking at Budgeted Expenditures, 66% of the way through the year and with the TOL behind us, we have only spent 53%. Good job, right? Wait - that is not what we are about. All of you current and potential volunteers, please report to Brightside. We have budgeted projects - small, medium and large - but need volunteers to carry them out. We have the projects waiting for the motivated people who can get things done for the good of the railroad. Examples:

Moving the overhead electrical feed to Sunol Depot underground; constructing the Brightside fuel depot project as designed; restoration of two steam locomotives and maintenance of two others; restoration or repairs to a half-dozen passenger cars; maintenance or improvements to MOW equipment; a complete redesign of Brightside's electrical system; complete the MOW shed roof between containers and storage racks; and how about a car shop, a locomotive shop, and a really big car and loco storage barn. These are just a few of the opportunities awaiting the right designer/manager/workers willing to volunteer time to the Niles Canyon Railway.

Now, I think this is a very interesting long-term project whose time has come. Many of you have thought about building out Niles with an

operating railroad museum, to include a museum, depot, and exhibition space for restored locomotives and cars, and a meeting place for PLA members and private parties. It could be an educational and cultural destination for all Bay Area families with interest in the part railroads played in winning the West. Santa Clara County gave us a real boost when they donated to us major historic structures including roundhouse and turntable kits, and steam locomotive SP2479 (also a kit).

Our in-house architect gave a presentation on our current vision at the February member meeting. I think the time has come to seriously consider hiring professionals to help us determine 1) the probability for financial success for such a venue; 2) the appetite of the PLA membership for supporting its start-up phase; and the best path for us to follow if we were to take it on. I think we should talk more about this soon. What is your interest? Let me know what you think; talk to other Board members too.

I have just begun a review of the financial audit for our last fiscal year. I'll get it to the Board in a week or so; and we should be able to release it soon along with the president's Annual Report.

Thank you for your attention. And contact me right away if you would like to run for Treasurer in the coming election. I can help make that happen.

**Pat Stratton**

Treasurer

treasurer@ncry.org

650-888-8619

### 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

Well, they say April showers will bring May flowers, but they forgot to mention that March showers result in mud puddles, and that is a pain when you are trying to do Spring cleanup around Brightside. We are working hard to dispose of old ties and other dead wood accumulating around the property and stray bits of metal laying around. Better organization leads to better use of space and a better appearance. Unfortunately, nature abhors a vacuum and places that were cleaned up last year tend to get filled with new things. Also, many areas of our property are soft during wet weather and the forklift will chew up the ground if you're not careful. One thing about being non-profit is people tend to donate anything and everything thinking that we can turn it into funds for preservation, which may be true to some extent but a hunk of old metal takes more valuable volunteer time away from projects to gather into the scrap bin than the few pennies we get from the recycler. Point being, something useful brings value,



Stephen Barkkarie photograph

### Brand new ties for the canyon.

but useless items tend to lay around until someone takes the initiative to scrap or otherwise dispose of it.

As I mentioned last month, we get out on the track for repairs again this time of year. To support our efforts, we have purchased replacement ties including a rarely afforded load of brand-new hardwood mainline ties. The reasoning for those is they last twice as long as relay ties (which have been previously installed on a track but are still in good condition). We plan to install those between the Farwell and Dresser bridges where it is harder to access. That way we won't have to return there too soon. We also purchased several truckloads of number one relays for the Eastward build which as you may recall has crossed the bridge at Sunol-Pleasanton Road and is back to stick building track after placing the last panelized section. MOW troops have been going out replacing bad ties most Wednesdays, rain or shine,

and we have even tackled changing out headblock ties at East Niles. (Headblocks are the ties that support the switch stand and control the point rails on a turnout.) They can be tricky to replace because they are twice as long as regular ties, larger in dimension, and are often installed in tight quarters. It is critical to proper point closure that the headblock and stand be placed just so. A couple of techniques can make the job go smoothly, but a mistake can make getting it right an ordeal where you must adjust many of the metal components. The East Niles switch was originally set up for remote/automatic operation with extra hardware for attaching an electric switching machine and that makes it even harder to deal with. It was great practice for our team and they did the job with great proficiency. Hats off to you gents.

As the operating season gets going, we also must schedule annual recertification classes for all train crews

## RWP CLASS

RAILWAY WORKER PROTECTION

\*\*\*\*\*

HELD AT THE  
WHITE HOUSE  
9:00 AM

SATURDAY  
APRIL 12, 2025  
&  
APRIL 19, 2025

\*\*\*\*\*

SIGN UP FOR CLASS  
at  
traincrews@gmail.com

**Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager**

and railway workers. The Operations department along with the Trainmaster team up to review train operations and go over any new procedures with everyone who is qualified to crew on trains. They are tested on the materials and, as required by the Federal Railroad Authority, the test scores are kept on file. Two classes are usually scheduled to give folks an opportunity to fit into their busy lives. The same goes for anyone who works out on the track with MOW, signals, brush cutting, track inspection or any other non-operating activity. Each year the rules for safe occupation of railroad property must be reviewed, understood, and proven proficient by each person who then is certified and recorded for reference. We take pride in our level of safety and the quality of training, and it is often stated in the sessions that “the skills we learn here would apply to any railroad in the country”.

In other news around the NCRY, we are hiring a contractor to underground the electrical service at the Sunol station and finally eliminate the unsightly overhead wires over Kilkare Road. This has been a long time coming and



*Stephen Barkkarie photograph*

**Changing ties on a misty day.**

will improve the looks as well as the capacity at Sunol. Also, we are taking bids for the construction of our state-of-the-art fuel depot which the county recently approved. Things are looking to change at the Nilés end as well

because this year we are to receive the remainder of the items donated from the Santa Clara County relating to the Lenzen roundhouse. More on that later.

Fremont Fire Department has reached out to us for a “meet and greet” with their new battalion chief and a tour of our facilities. To prepare for this we performed a major brush clearing project on the South end of the wye where overgrowth has created a hazard as well as a habitat for the unhooded. The whole area now looks clean and like we care.

The new year has begun with a full slate of education trains, many charters, and weekend operations. We should be seeing a banner year for wildflowers. They can be enjoyed either from the train, or from a little closer while working on the track. Whichever way you prefer to enjoy nature we can help you out. So, drop by, or log on for an application and be sure to stop and smell the roses.

**Stephen Barkkarie**

## Sandhouse Gossip



**Wandering Builders' Plate Returned.** Long after some sticky fingers liberated it, it appears that the builders' plate for our beloved 918 had traveled all the way to San Antonio, Texas. It turned up in the Karol Miller Collection, which was donated to the Western Rail Museum Archive in February. Mike Strider said next time I was up there to check into it. Allen Fisher had Wayne Monger call me, I picked it up and delivered it to our President at the last Board Meeting. Indeed, a circuitous route back home.

**Warren Haack**

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Ride the Rails for Relay for Life



*Christopher Hauf photograph*

The Ride the Rails train sits at Sunol Depot waiting to depart with the artisans and food service on the station platform.

### Continued from Page 1

train or in the Sunol Depot Gardens.

A wheelchair lift is available for those needing it or for those where the steps of our historic cars are challenging.

The train will run in any weather and includes open cars, covered open cars, and enclosed coaches. Our train is equipped with two full bathrooms onboard including one with a baby changing table. Porta potties are available at our Sunol Depot.

Trains depart only from Sunol at 10:30am, 12:30pm, and 2:30pm for this



one day event.

It is a 1 hr. & 20 minute round-trip.

No one will be able to get on or off the train in Niles/Fremont.

Our Sunol gift shop will be open for your shopping pleasure.

#### **Ticket prices**

**Adult: \$25**  
(13+ years old)

**Child: \$15**  
(Ages 3-12)

(Children 2 years of age and under do not need a ticket, but must sit on a lap.)



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Train of Lights dates set for 2025

Our 2025 Train of Lights dates are set and signups for volunteering this year will be online soon. The dates will begin with November 15 for the commissary training for snack bars, dome, and parlor cars. This worked out well last season with those who have worked as captains coming for a very short refresher course and then the new volunteers, or those who worked as helpers last year, coming for a helper refresher course a little later that day. The times will be given closer to the class. Then Monday, November 17 at 6:00pm departing from our Niles/Fremont Station will be our Test Train to make sure all lights and decorations are working. The public dates will be November 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, December 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, and 30. If we have any charters, they will have to be on Mondays or Tuesdays, and if a Monday is reserved, then that next day on Tuesday will not have a charter. And if a Tuesday is reserved then the Monday before will not have a charter. This will make sure that we are not running more than 4 days in a row for

our volunteers' health and sanity. Thank you to all who helped last year and I hope everyone will look forward to volunteering again this year. Last year there were so many thank yous and words of appreciation for our volunteers who make this happen every year. The

public sees your enthusiasm and eager helpfulness and that makes great memories for our riders. Our continued success and our passengers' happy memories depend on you!

**donna alexander**

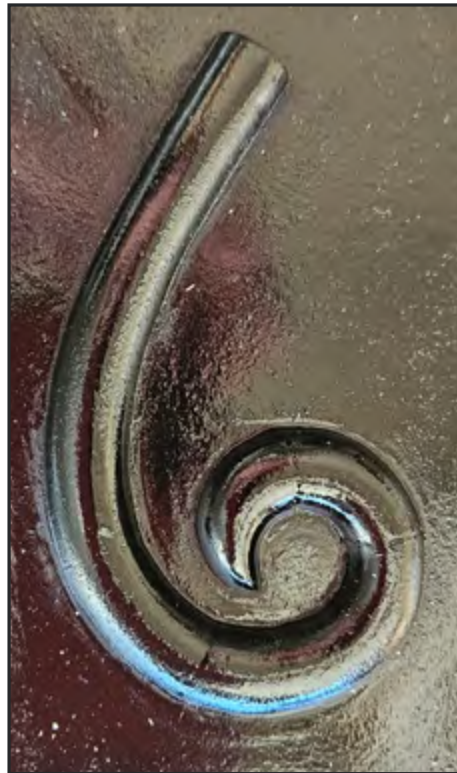
## Casting class at Knight Foundry

It was such a productive day that I signed up for a casting class at the Knight Foundry.

The 3 photos show the completed pattern, the mold, and finally the polished piece ready to be brazed onto the broken piece, possibly by Knight.

They were casting bronze today, very fortunate as they usually are doing aluminum. Bronze polishes up very close to brass, just a little closer to yellow than brass.

**Wes Swift**



### RWP CLASS

RAILWAY WORKER PROTECTION  
\*\*\*\*\*

HELD AT THE  
WHITE HOUSE  
9:00 AM

SATURDAY  
APRIL 12, 2025  
&  
APRIL 19, 2025

\*\*\*\*\*

SIGN UP FOR CLASS  
at  
traincrews@gmail.com

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

This Month's tale:

### TANK CAR PSPX 7501, IT HAS BEEN AROUND FOR A WHILE

After writing last month's article on retrieving our single dome tank car from Ashland Chemical, I got looking at the other tank cars that we own. Which I found the history interesting. This month's tale starts here.

The history of tank cars traces back to 1865 which is more than 150 years. In today's railroad operations, tank cars are used for a variety of liquids and gasses. Their products include petroleum products, chemical, and food grade substances. Sometimes tank cars, depending on what they are used for, are called "one-way" cars because they could be so specialized that it is difficult to find an appropriate load for its return trip, if the tank car isn't owned by the railroads. "Most tank cars were owned by shippers or leasing companies". The reporting marks on these tank cars end with the letter "X" meaning the car's owner is not a common carrier. It seems we own a rare tank car as far as tank cars go.

The triple dome tank car was built new in 1925 for Associated Oil Company as No. 494. Last owner of the car was Phillips Petroleum Co. which the car number was changed to (PSPX 7501). This car was donated to the PLA in December 1969. Since the car was received by the PLA, the tank car is in full operational condition today. This rare tank car is a triple dome car which has three separate compartments which allows it to carry more than one product at the same time.

Looking back in history, in 1865 crude oil was discovered in Pennsylvania which led to a way to transport this new product. The tank car was invented and started carrying crude oil by rail. At first, they used what was available at the time. Three wooden tubs secured to a flat car was the standard mode for hauling this new product. Then came



*Dexter Day photograph*

Tank car PSPX 7501 now in storage at East Sunol waiting for a fuel containment at Brightside.

the single cylindrical wooden tank mounted horizontally on the flat car. It even had a dome to allow for product expansion. In time, these cars also were built to haul pickles in brine and even oysters packed in ice. However, these wooden tank cars shared a common flaw. They were prone to leaking. In 1869, the Empire Transportation Company designed a much superior riveted iron tank mounted on a wooden underframe. Private tank car lines appeared in 1888.

Pre-1903: Most tank cars are made of iron or steel in 6000- to 8000-gallon capacities and increasingly riding on steel underframes. In 1903, the first tank car construction standards are

published by the Master Car Builders Association. The older designs become known as Class 1 cars are allowed to continue in service with more stringent inspection requirements. The stronger



Tank car PSPX 7501 providing the necessities to steam up the new No. 3 at Castro Point Railway.

### Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

new cars are called class 2s. In 1917, new rules were set. Class 1 and Class 2 cars with relatively weak 40 psi designs may be used only for nonhazardous cargo.

A new general-purpose specification, the 300-psi Class 3 is announced. The Class 4 rules for cars designed for hazardous shipments appear in 1918. Cars of this type are forged welded, not riveted. In 1927, the Interstate Commerce Commission takes over tank car regulations. From that point forward, tank cars have continued to improve in safety through rule change, design and material. Our triple dome tank car PSPX 7501 is fully operational and within specifications. The only problem we have at this time with this tank car is providing a spill containment for it to be used for holding fuel oil for our steam engines.

With that said, another tale has come to an end.

**Dexter Day**  
Operations Manager



*Dexter Day photograph*

Tank car PSPX 7501 showing faded hazmat sticker and Philips emblem on side of car.



*Dexter Day photograph*

PSPX 7501 at Brightside as No. 3 under steam passes by.



*Dexter Day photograph*

Tank car PSPX 7501 providing fuel for No. 4 on its steam up.



*Dexter Day photograph*

The long line of dreams at Castro Point. Tank car PSPX 7501 is in middle of string.



*Dexter Day photograph*

Tank car PSPX 7501 sits right in the middle of the collection at Castro Point providing needed fuel for engines.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## YV330 - Past, Present and Future

We celebrated the centennial of President Taft visiting Yosemite (1909 to 2009) during which Taft Point was named. This event can be purchased as a post card in our gift shop. One year the 330 was on a second Train of Lights. The two TOL trains met at Brightside, the 330 snuggling up the yard lead to make the meet. I took a count of the rear platform and came up with a count of 27 souls on the rear deck alone, albeit some were kids.



**Celebrating Christmas in style! Even the marker lights are in holiday colors. The 330 awaits boarding time at the Sunol station during its stint on our world famous TOL. We built in under floor outlets during restoration for just such an occasion. Even on the coldest of nights the rear deck was crowded with spectators.**

While touring the California Railroad Museum back shops, I was introduced to one of their restoration specialists. He inquired if the restoration was indoors, to which I replied "no". He made the sage comment "it won't last". No truer words have ever been spoken! During work to make the 330 ready for the 150 year transcontinental railroad celebration, I swore never again! Working with the board we found a spot on the end of track 2 for a shelter for the 330. Several days of prep work went into providing a base for the shelter, again the MOW crew were indispensable in "gittin' er done", and I owe some more volunteer time with them! The shelter went up in a day, and stands as a bookmark for what the PLA needs for our collection.



**The 330 rolling into her new home. This was the first time the car had seen permanent shelter in her life. El Portal at the eastern end of the YV provided some relief midday during her operation, but the 330 had over a century of enduring the elements. Comparing the 330 to our beautifully restored diner tells the tale. Shelters save volunteer time.**

The future holds great promise for a long and active life for the 330. One of the future events the 330 is likely to participate in is the next Railfair in Sacramento. Previous CSRM administrations had expressed interest in seeing the Yosemite Valley 330 on the grounds, it would be an appropriate homage to the car that helped develop America's most famous National Park with which she shares a name.

Another pending event would possibly be the opening of the California High Speed Rail, slated for phase one to run from Bakersfield to Merced. The 330 called Merced home for nearly 40 years, and the SP depot she routinely picked up passengers from still stands. Imagine the 330 posed next to a sleek speedster. The 330 has traveled over 70 miles per hour, but not on rails.

Perhaps the most promising venue for the 330 would be a dinner train. Combining it with the O&C SP diner, a restored YV107 set up as a commissary car between the two and traveling west after departing Pleasanton, what a grand time to sample cuisine while traveling down the canyon! In Niles, turn the 330 on the wye and the locomotive if steam, then eastbound

up the canyon in twilight. The 330 can handle 48 dining spots, and if we serve great food, no reason the 330 and diner couldn't generate \$10,000.00 per run, and not seasonal. My choice for a test run would be a garden salad to start, followed by prime rib, twice cooked potato wedges, and chili oil string beans for the main course. Berry cream pie would cap off the dinner. Why go above and beyond on the food? It's the best advertising we have. We could also run it through the TOL season dressed in incandescent bulbs.

Another on my wish list is a charitable dinner train for families facing a life changing crisis. Working with local hospitals we could make a night for kids (they come in all ages!) and their family facing cancer or other life threatening ailments. A magical train ride could change their lives.

Projects left to do on the 330 include building two bathrooms, trap doors in the vestibule, install clerestory windows, finish the 2nd class, install finished floor and plumbing.

In closing, one of the best lessons I've learned from this project is that while the results are gratifying, the greatest gift is taking the journey. I've been rewarded with many friends, mastered a lot of skills, and shared the experience with my wonderful wife Claudia. What more could you ask for?



**Dare to dream big. A little motivation goes a long way. The 330 from start to the present is a graphic demonstration of what a can do attitude will manifest. The 330 is on the cusp of completion in a couple of years. Retirement frees up enough time to make this feasible.**

**Wes Swift**

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

**For those truly special occasions, charter the whole train!**



*Christopher Hauf photograph*

**Steam train charter.**

Enjoy the scenic Niles Canyon from open and covered viewing cars and a fully-enclosed coach pulled by a classic locomotive. Bring your own food and beverages on board, or enjoy a public picnic area near the station. Our friendly and helpful train crew will do everything possible to see that you and your guests experience train travel from a bygone era.

As Charter agent for the Niles Canyon Railway, I've had the pleasure of coordinating a variety of unique train charters over the years, many were wedding charters beginning with mine in August of 2002.

If you are interested chartering our train on the NCRy, two hour diesel



*Christopher Hauf photograph*

**Railbus M-200 charter.**

charters are \$3,000 and steam \$4,500. The Railbus M-200 with only 32 seats goes for \$720. We try to run NCRy train charters during periods when no work is underway on the railroad and that is generally, after 5PM on non-operating Saturdays & Sundays. Weekdays except for Wednesdays are ideal.

PLA members get a 25% discount on



*Christopher Hauf photograph*

**Diesel train charter.**

NCRy charters.

Here are some photos of Niles Canyon Railway charters we have run over the years.

Please contact our Charter Agent, Jim Evans, at [charter-agent@ncry.org](mailto:charter-agent@ncry.org) for reservations or for more information.

**Jim Evans**



## NCRy Master Plan Update

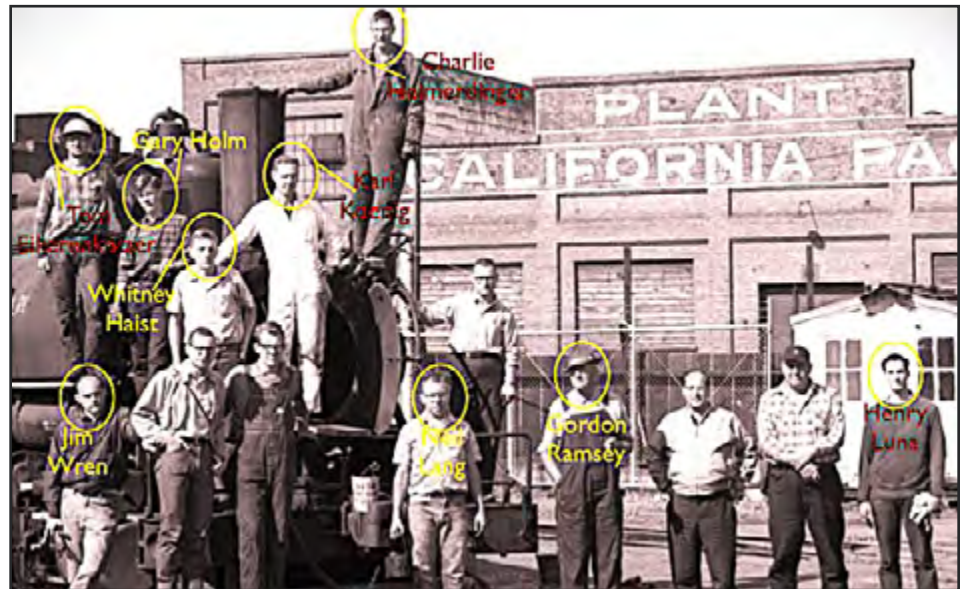
Tom Eikerenkotter, MP Team Chief

Our current effort to update the plan is moving forward. The plan has been rewritten with more details on requirements. We are getting close to having the document ready for BOD review, then to Department Heads and finally to voting members. We have folks working on graphics. BOD review will occur when the graphics are completed. Our hopes are that we will be ready for review in the third quarter of this calendar year. A timeline and further instructions will be provided when the review commences.

Once we have photos included and club approval, then we must go through the review effort with local communities and agencies – which could take quite some time and be an interesting process. We will keep you apprised and ask for assistance as necessary.

Our first request for assistance is for a variety of photos from around NCRy to choose from for the plan and taken by a variety of photographers. Photos from recent years are also appropriate. If you provide photos, include a narrative for each which includes date, photographer's name, and a description of what is going on. Try to get permission from club members in the photos. The photographer will be credited. Provide a jpg or tiff high resolution version of the photo(s) to Warren Haack and the team at this address, [master-plan-submissions@ncry.org](mailto:master-plan-submissions@ncry.org). If you are submitting several photos at one time, consider sending through a file sharing program like "wetransfer". Submitting photos indicates your agreement that they can be used in the Master Plan. We need all your photos by September 1, 2025 to keep our effort on track so to speak.

1. Track crew working - both build East and Wednesday crew.
2. Signal crew working.
3. Brush cutting crew working.
4. People working on cars (passenger & freight) with more than one person



Don Hansen photograph

**PLA Work Party At Howard Terminal In Oakland on Locomotive #6, March, 1963.**

in the photo, like the Ranch Car, stock car, window work on passenger cars, M-601 restoration.

5. People working on locomotives (steam & diesel) - several working on #1744 and a good one of ring of the fire. Working on #2479. Heavy or routine work on diesels.

6. Train crews working steam and diesel trains.

7. A good TOL picture.

8. Any before and after restoration shots of both cars and locomotives. Such as #9010 as received and now.

9. A few pictures of equipment in need of restoration, like the white Fruit Growers reefer car, an ex-SP suburban coach, either the NWP or WP caboose. Some good photos of cars or locomotives showing deterioration due to lack of covered storage.

10. Photo of Sunol station from east with crossing, with station and train in photo.

11. Shots from top and down on Alameda Creek of the original stone walls at Mayborg. There are a couple of good ones of the wall from the creek in the National Register of Historic

Places submittal if we could find the originals in PLA files.

12. Shots of one of the original wood culverts and one of a stone culvert. (There was a Club Car article about these in Dec 2010, plus in the National Register of Historic Places submittal if we could find originals of these.)

13. We need train pictures, but we also need bridge pictures so if they can be combined with a train or work equipment on Mission Blvd, Dresser, Farwell, Estates, Sinbad Creek, Arroyo de la Laguna, Happy Valley Rd, and Pleasanton-Sunol Rd.

14. We are also looking for the original graphics that are someplace in PLA files that we know exist – SP steam powered passenger train at Sunol Depot, either a broadside or ¾ shot of the original 1870 Niles Station – specifically the originals of the photos that appeared on page 6 of the Sept 2007 'Club Car' or page 8 of the January 2008 'Club Car.' As stated above, we are also looking for the originals of the pictures that appear in the National Register of Historic Places submittal document if anyone knows where the files are.

**PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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*Christopher Hauf photograph*

Rolling along Highway 84 with more wildflowers in bloom.