

# Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

P.O. Box 1776

Colfax, CA 95713

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April 2009



[www.psrhs.org](http://www.psrhs.org)

To:

## *PSRHS Activities & Events...*

Editor's Comments:

### **NOTE:**

UP Steam locomotive 844 will be passing through the area on April 17, 2009. Information included herein.

**Spring Field Trip:** Saturday, May 23, 2009.  
Colfax and Cape Horn areas.

Please forward any comments, suggestions or ideas for trips or other activities to me for consideration and information.  
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## *In this Issue...*

### ***Monthly Meeting...***

The next PSRHS meeting will be held at 7:00PM Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. in the Multi-purpose Senior Citizen Center on D Ave. at the Dewitt Complex in Auburn. Call (530) 346-9607 for more info.

### **Membership Information**

Individual Members = \$20.00  
Family Membership = \$25.00

- Monthly Newsletter
- Member Activities, Presentations and Field Trips
- Display & Restoration Projects

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## Monthly Newsletter – April 2009

### March 2009 Meeting Minutes

#### New Business:

Spring Field Trip: Saturday, May 23, 2009 – Historical exploration of Colfax and Cape Horn

#### Announcements/Updates:

Historic Caboose restoration in Colfax –Volunteers gather on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 9 am to work on the caboose. Contact Jim Wood for more information.

The UP steam locomotive No. 844 will be in Roseville April 18 – 20 and April 24 – 30 for Roseville’s Centennial celebration.

**Photo Shoot** - Sheldon Campbell needs volunteers to help with taking photos of the No. 844 on April 17. Information is enclosed below.

Jim Wood shared an interesting antique book documenting local history; Geological Guide to the Overland Trail, published in 1916.

Visitor Ted Anderson from Illinois left some brochures about the Illinois Railway Museum, America’s largest railway museum, located in Union, Illinois. For more information, their website is [www.irm.org](http://www.irm.org).

#### March Program:

Club member Walt Wilson (retired SP Conductor) reviewed highlights from the February Meeting documenting the

Roseville Yard bomb explosion on April 28, 1973. The remarkable photos showed the destruction and bomb craters along with plumes of smoke as the bombs and adjacent propane tank cars exploded. The bombs were in route over Donner Summit on their way to the Navy Depot in the Bay Area.

Club member Dave McClain shared his eyewitness story of being the only individual to see the train prior to the explosion. He was camped near the tracks in Alta, and as the train passed by, he noted some of the wheels appeared red hot and throwing sparks from overheated journal boxes. Dave was interviewed by newspapers, US Naval Intelligence, the FBI, radio and TV stations, and eventually by SP legal staff. During the months of court inquiry and investigation, Dave was taken back to Alta, to “reenact” the circumstances of his observations. It just so happened another train went by and also exhibited hot, smoking wheels. The point was well taken by the investigators.

The outcome of the investigation, based on Dave’s observations, resulted in a settlement out of court, with fault attributed to the Department of Defense, the Navy, and Southern Pacific for failure to follow various required procedures when transporting explosives by rail.

Evidence pointed to hot, smoldering oil from the overheated journal boxes ignited the wood flooring of the boxcars. The boxcars were found to not have the protective metal shielding under the wood flooring. The extremely high heat from the smoldering floor of the boxcars caused the bombs to detonate. The train containing explosives should not have been parked next to the propane tank cars. Soon after the

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conclusion of the investigation, the wheels on all boxcars carrying explosives were changed from journal boxes to roller bearings.

Thank you Dave and Walt for a fascinating program. (Shirley Belleville, Secretary)

### New Business:

Spring Field Trip Discussion – Ideas were presented for our Spring Field Trip. A possible destination is the Bowman area. Some Club members scouted the area, exploring the original right-of-way for old trestles that have been filled in.

### Announcements/Updates:

Historic Caboose restoration in Colfax – All the boards for the caboose siding will need to be replaced. We are looking for a suitable source. Volunteers gather on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month at 9 am to work on the caboose. Contact Jim Wood for more information.

### Union Pacific Steam...The 844 Over Donner Summit:

The UP 844 steam locomotive will be pulling a train of the classic UP Yellow Business Cars through Placer County on April 17 on its way over the Hill for a tour of Central California. Member Shelton Campbell is organizing a group of railfans who wish to participate in a photographic effort to capture the train passing over Donner Summit in picturesque locations. Shelton is inviting any of our members who

wish to participate with him to contact him by email: [ccamp@wavecable.com](mailto:ccamp@wavecable.com)

The train will probably stop in Colfax for a short time to give locals the opportunity to view the steam locomotive close up and photograph it. Our members who have ties to UP personnel will confirm that stop. Watch our website for last minute details of the train schedule.

### Currant Schedule

Thursday, April 16

Layover and Public Display - 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Sparks, Nev.

UP Yard – 643 Nugget Ave.

**Friday, April 17**

Depart 8:00 a.m. Sparks, Nev.  
PDT

UP Yard  
643 Nugget  
Ave.

Arrive 10:30 a.m. Norden,

Depart 11:30 a.m. Cal.

Arrive 1:30 p.m. Roseville, Cal.

UP Yard  
500 W.  
Atlantic St.

Saturday, April 18

Layover and Public Display - Noon - 3:00 p.m.

Roseville, Cal. – UP Yard  
500 W. Atlantic St.

### April Program:

For our April meeting, we'll host the photos of our volunteer photographers to share their efforts with the rest of our members who won't be able to get out to see the train when it passes our way. Come to the meeting to see this rare event whether in person or to see the photos at the April meeting.

