

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

November 2013 Newsletter

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One of the gems Peter Hills will tell us about in his November presentation on his trip to England and Wales.

Scheduled Events & Notices



Nov. 14 3-5pm – Fall Field Trip – Siemens Sacramento – Tour of Siemens' facility in South Sacramento. Details on page 2. Attendance limited to PSRHS Members.

Nov. 21 Monthly Meeting & Program – 6:30 pm
– Annual Potluck Dinner Meeting
– Recap of Colfax Railroad Days and Planning for 2014.
– Peter Hills will show pictures of his summer trip riding England's rails
– NOTE LOCATION - Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg

No Monthly Meeting in December

*****Don't forget to renew your PSRHS membership for 2014*****
(see bottom of page 3 for renewal information)

Jan. 23 Monthly Meeting & Program

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Next member meeting Nov. 21.

Annual potluck dinner Nov. 21, 6:30pm.
Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg, New Airport Rd.

Shirley will bring ham. Bring your favorite side dish, salad or dessert to share. Note early start time.

Program: Peter Hills will treat us to a slide presentation of his July 2013 train trip to England and Wales, including the National Railway Museum's LNER "A4" Display - "The Great Gathering", plus the "Mallard's 75th Anniversary of the World Speed Record" Exhibition. Also, pictures from the Blue Bell Railway (Sussex), and several standard and narrow gauge railways in North Wales including the West Highland and Ffestiniog Railways. Don't miss Peter's showcase of Britain's historic and operating railroads.

Nomination and election of board members:

The terms of board members Dave Ferreira, Malcolm Frost and Ken Yeo expire in Dec. 2013. Nominations for the three-year positions will be taken at the November meeting, followed by election of board members.

Fall Field Trip to Siemens Nov. 14

A reminder that our PSRHS fall field trip to Siemens Rail Car Manufacturing Plant in South Sacramento has been rescheduled for Thursday, November 14, 3-5pm. This is a reprise of our tour of the Siemens Plant a couple of years ago which was wildly popular by our members. **If you would like to attend, please RSVP by Nov. 9 to Jim Wood via email at greenstonemaker@gmail.com**

Again, this tour will be led by Kevin McGrew of Siemens and will focus on the new Amtrak electric locomotives that Siemens is manufacturing for the US Northeast Corridor. The locomotive is called the American Cities Sprinter 64. Read more about it here:

<http://w3.usa.siemens.com/mobility/us/en/rail-solutions/locomotives/Pages/amtrak-cities-sprinter.aspx>

Kevin reported to us that safety is key for any visitors to the shop floor and all people who wish to go into the shops are **required to wear steel-toed shoes/boots**. For those of us who don't own any and can't beg/borrow/steal a pair from someone that they know (please try), a very limited number of pairs may be available at the Siemens plant. Shoe sizes will need to be noted ahead of time so they can be rounded up.

Attendees, please **make sure your name is on an attendance list being compiled by Jim Wood by November 9th so those names can be provided to the Siemens front office** for admission into the facility. Those who wish to request a pair of safety shoes to borrow will need to note that to Jim Wood as early as possible so he can forward the request to Siemens.

Only one member of our group will be allowed to take photos in the plant at the discretion of Siemens. We'll have plenty of photos to share with the group in the end, we're sure.

Email Jim Wood for further questions and place your name on the list. Jim's email is greenstonemaker@gmail.com

As this is a very popular trip, please only Society members for this one.

Board Meeting Nov. 4

Your PSRHS board met on Nov. 4. Election of board members at the November member meeting was discussed, along with several other items. Please contact a board member or the newsletter editor if you interested in serving on the board or in any of the capacities noted below.

Stewardship of Colfax Caboose: The board agreed to send a letter to the City of Colfax proposing that PSRHS assume responsibility for and control of the Colfax caboose.

Webmaster: A webmaster is being sought to assume the daily care and feeding of the club's web site.

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Membership Committee Chair: Membership is now being handled as an adjunct duty of the newsletter editor and the club treasurer. The board would like to establish a membership person or committee to focus on soliciting and retaining paid memberships.

Railroad Days 2014 Volunteers Needed: At a meeting on Nov. 4, your PSRHS board voted to again host Colfax Railroad Days in 2014. A Railroad Days planning committee is being formed and

will begin meeting monthly in January. Volunteers are being sought to serve on this committee.

Selecting a date for the 2014 event will be an agenda item for the first committee meeting, along with club participation in National Train Day in May. These events will serve as a prelude to the 2015 celebration of the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad's arrival in Colfax, all building toward the ultimate goal of establishing a permanent PSRHS outdoor railroad museum and displays.



Passing Scene – Chesapeake & Ohio “Chapel Hill” passed through Colfax on eastbound AMTRAK on Oct. 6. This car was built in 1922 for Post Cereal heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post and banker/broker E.F. Hutton. In 1937 the car was sold to the C&O after the Huttons divorced and Marjorie remarried. At C&O it was known as Office Car #3. It was purchased by Dewitt Chapple, Jr., in 1971, and renamed Chapel Hill after his alma mater. *Photo by Mike Haire.*

Membership Information

Individual Members = \$25.00/yr
Each Additional Member Card = \$5.00/yr

- Monthly Meetings (4th Thursday) and Newsletter
- Member Activities, Presentations and Field Trips
- Display and Restoration Projects

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Reader comments, additional details, etc., are invited on any newsletter items or photos. Please forward comments, suggestions or information for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter to:

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From the Archives

November Photo and Mystery: This month's photo is part of an ongoing mystery. Towle Brothers operated 5 narrow gauge engines on Texas Hill near Emigrant Gap until selling to Read Lumber in 1902. Read operated there until 1920 when they sold the operations to Lake Valley Lumber. The 5 narrow gauge engines were listed in the 1920 sale documents. The photo at right was taken in 1937 by Al Phelps, and labeled Read Lumber Co. No. 2, taken at Burnetts Mill on Texas Hill. The photo below it shows Towle Bros. Porter locomotive No. 2. Note similarities in boiler shape, bell bracket, piping near top of boiler, and platforms on each side.

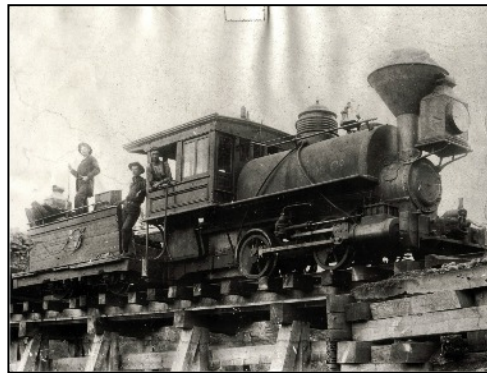
Fast forward to persistent rumors that an engine was left in the woods, and has been spotted by several people over the years. Could this Al Phelps photo be the basis of the rumors, and is the engine boiler still out there?

Local trails expert Ron Gould, author of North Fork Trails, offered to lead a small group of us to a boiler he had found in one of the canyons near Texas Hill. We made the trek on Oct. 31, and found a boiler, but not of the same size and shape as a narrow gauge engine. Photos of the longer boiler found near a stream bed are shown below. It appears to be a stationary boiler, but its use and history are not known. An ensuing but brief exploration around the Burnett Mill site failed to turn up other evidence of the engine featured in the Al Phelps photo.

On our trek we did find portions of the old grades for both the steam wagon road and the old narrow gauge roadbed from Fulda Flat to Texas Hill. Photos of the visit and the roadbeds and artifacts we found will be the subject of a future PSRHS member meeting.

Meanwhile the mystery deepens.

Top two photos courtesy of Herman Darr. Lower photos by Roger Staab.



CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline: In his Chief Engineer's report in 1877, Montague reported "The most important permanent improvements made upon your road during the year 1876 have been the filling of all the high trestles remaining on the Sacramento division" including trestles at Newcastle, Auburn, Lovell's Mill, Clipper Gap, Long Ravine, and Secret Town. He further stated "This completes the work of this kind on the mountain division" except for possible replacement of the Howe Truss bridge at Long Ravine with an embankment, but the bridge should not need renewal for 12-15 years.