

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

November 2014 Newsletter

In this issue:

November Potluck Dinner Meeting and Presentation Page 2

Colfax 2015 RR Days Planning. Page 2

PSRHS Project Fundraisers. Page 2

Passing Scene. Page 3

From the Archives. Page 4



Railfans of all ages enjoyed the live steam model railroad, one of several model layouts on display at Colfax Railroad Days 2014.

Scheduled Events & Notices



- Nov 18** **Railroad Days 2015 Meeting with Colfax Non-Profits – 7:00 pm**
 – Colfax City Hall Council Chambers
 – Discussions on Colfax 150th Anniversary Celebration and
 Plans for Outdoor Railroad Equipment Museum
- Nov 20** **PSRHS Annual Potluck Dinner Meeting – 6:30 pm (Note Early Start Time)**
 – Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg
 – Program - Chuck Spinks – “Civil Engineers over the Sierra”

No Meeting in December – Happy Holidays!



Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

November 2014 Newsletter

**Next meeting *6:30PM*, November 20th
Auburn Airport Terminal Building**

Annual Potluck Dinner Meeting. Bring your favorite side dish, salad or dessert to share. Family members and guests are welcome to attend.

Program: Member Chuck Spinks' presentation on "Civil Engineers over the Sierra." Judah, Montague, Clement – well-known names of some of the key players in construction of the first transcontinental railroad over the Sierra. Chuck will enlighten us on the countless others who were on the front lines, surveying the actual route, laying the roadbed, designing bridges and tunnels, and overseeing the day-to-day construction. Join us for this look at some of the others who helped shape this great engineering achievement.

Colfax Railroad Days 2015/ Colfax Sesquicentennial Celebration

As mentioned in the October newsletter, our 2015 Colfax Railroad Days event will also mark the **Colfax Sesquicentennial**. In September 1865, the Central Pacific Railroad tracks reached the new town and Colfax officially assumed its role as a stop on what would become the nation's first transcontinental railroad. In 2015, Railroad Days will be celebrated on Sept. 12-13, 150 years and 7 days after the first trains began serving the then fledgling town.

Because of the added significance of 2015 RR Days for Colfax and the surrounding region, participation of area service clubs is being sought to assist with planning and execution of the event. **A meeting will be held with interested groups on Nov. 18 at 7 PM in the Colfax City Council Chambers.** Purpose of the meeting is three-fold:

1. Seek involvement/support from local civic groups
2. Begin identifying tasks and responsibilities
3. Promote the event as a fundraiser for an outdoor railroad museum in Colfax

All are invited to attend the Nov. 18 meeting.

There will be an increased need for volunteers to help make the 2015 event a success. It's not too early to start thinking about how you can help. Opportunities to excel include fund raising, advance planning, and volunteering time on the days of the event for the myriad of venues and tasks that need to be staffed to ensure that visitors have a fulfilling and safe experience.

Planning meetings will resume after the holidays.

PSRHS Project Fundraisers

Chili Cookoff

A Chili Cookoff fund raiser was held on November 2 in Colfax, sponsored by Colfax Moms, with proceeds donated to the Colfax Caboose renovation project. Our thanks to Britni Fitzgerald and Colfax Moms for raising over \$2000 for the caboose project.

Towle Brothers Book

To date more than 350 copies of the PSRHS-published book on Towle Brothers have been sold, with over \$3500 net earnings to the club. The club directors have authorized the printing of an additional 100 copies.

PSRHS makes about \$10-\$12 on each copy that is sold. This is an easy opportunity for you our members to get involved in club fundraising. If you know of a place where copies of the book could be sold, please contact the newsletter editor and we will arrange to get copies of the book and an invoice to you for placement. The books can either be purchased outright by a potential vendor or sold under a consignment agreement.

The book also makes a good holiday gift for your friends and family members interested in local history.



Passing Scene



Your editor grew up in NW Montana, Great Northern country, so it was a pleasant surprise in 2007 to see GN-1196 City of Spokane rolling through Colfax on westbound AMTRAK. What is not apparent in the large photo is the observation car configuration, seen in the smaller photo. The buffet parlor lounge observation car #1196 Port of Vancouver was delivered to Great Northern in 1950 for its International service. The car was sold to AMTRAK in 1971 as #3771 Port of Vancouver. The car was retired in 1975, and eventually acquired by Spokane resident Larry Milsow and renamed City of Spokane.

Large photo by Roger Staab. Small inset photo from Al Ahlgrim collection, rrpicturearchives.net



Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

November 2014 Newsletter

From the Archives

November Archive Photo:

How to get a locomotive from point a to point b without tracks. This photo from Ken Yeo's PG&E Spaulding collection shows crews transporting a locomotive to the Spaulding Dam construction site, where the height of the original dam was raised to increase reservoir storage capacity.



October Mystery Photo: No responses were submitted to the editor regarding the October photo. The photo was originally provided by Art Sommers for possible identification of the location. While the terrain looks like Donner, the siding and buildings were not familiar. Recently while scanning some of Ken Yeo's slides, the same photo was found in a slide show on PG&E's construction of the increased-height Spaulding Dam. A siding at Smart (on the mainline near Emigrant Gap) served the construction site. Perhaps some of our intrepid Donner explorers could verify or refute the location of this scene as the former location of the Smart siding. *Photo from Art Sommers and Ken Yeo collections.*



CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline: In 1909 SP began grade modifications and double-tracking between Rocklin and Colfax. Two contracts were awarded for the work, one contractor working between Rocklin and Clipper Gap, the other between Clipper Gap and Colfax. To reduce grades, the new roadbed at times deviated from the original tracks, and at other times paralleled or crossed the original mainline, creating major challenges for contractors to ensure daily rail traffic was not interrupted during construction. The new grade resulted in left-hand running on portions of the new mainline, with eastbound traffic using the new #2 track.

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

PSRHS, P.O. Box 1776, Colfax, CA 95713
www.psrhs.org

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:

Roger Staab (530) 346-6722 roger.staab@psrhs.org