

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

March 2015 Newsletter

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One of Mike Haire's striking images of railroad-ing action. Mike will share his recent video clips of passing trains in the region and around the country as the speaker at our March meeting.

Scheduled Events & Notices



- Mar 21** Colfax Historical Society Meeting – 7 pm, Colfax Depot
– Architect Michael Kent Murphy on the Colfax Hotel History and Future
- Mar 26** PSRHS Meeting and Presentation – 7 pm
– Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg – Program - Mike Haire
– Year In Review video footage - Most on Donner Details on page 2.
- Apr 06** Colfax RR Days Planning Meeting – 7 pm – Colfax City Council Chambers
- Apr 23** PSRHS Meeting and Presentation – 7 pm
– Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg – Program TBA
- Apr 25** PSRHS Spring Field Trip – San Francisco Muni – see flyer on page 5
- May 05** Big Day of Giving (Big Dog) – details on page 2



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Next meeting 7:00PM, March 26th
Auburn Airport Terminal Building

Program: Mike Haire will show his "Year in Review" video of recent railroad action, most of it on Donner.

Speaking of Videos – Auburn Friends of the Library received a donation of 17 boxes of railroad videos and a few DVD's. Walt and Bonnie will bring the boxes to the March meeting, offering PSRHS members first choice of these videos. DVD's are \$2, videos \$1. Bonnie says bring cash and make the videos disappear so she and Walt don't have to carry boxes back home.

February Program: Roger Staab presented a slide show of a 1986 railroad trip to Mexico's Copper Canyon.

Spring Field Trip April 25

Jim Wood has put together a field trip to visit San Francisco's Muni and cable car systems. The event is open to all including family and non-members. See the flyer on page 5 of this newsletter for more information.

Colfax Railroad Days Sept. 12-13

Next Railroad Days planning meeting will be held on **Monday, April 6, 7pm, at the Colfax City Hall Council Chambers.** At the March 9 meeting, **Britni Fitzgerald** and **Malcolm Frost** reviewed a list of tasks and potential sources for railroad days activities.

- Kids Zone is big draw but costly. Sierra Vista Center may take this on if a bounce house is donated.
- People mover was another big expense last year but needed due to distance between venues. Alternatives are being explored.
- Assistance from high school students may include drama club members in period costumes.
- Sacramento Valley Live Steamers plan to participate.
- A fund raising dinner is being considered for Friday evening at the depot if a group is willing to sponsor it.
- Facebook page and twitter will focus on Big Day of Giving near term (see next article), then RR Days.

If you would like to help, Britni can be reached at
britni@colfaxrailroaddays.org

Big Day of Giving (Big Dog) May 5

PSRHS is a registered participant in this year's Big Day of Giving. This is an event that helps raise donations for local non-profits through a regional and national day of giving organized by GiveLocalNow. We are thankful for all donations to our club and its activities. If you are thinking of donating to PSRHS, consider waiting until the Big Dog event. Funds raised by individual organizations during Big Dog are enhanced by regional donations.

Check out our Facebook page, [facebook/placersierrarhs](https://facebook.com/placersierrarhs).

Caboose Project Donations

Project manager Tony Hesch reports that two sizeable donations have been received to support completion of the Colfax caboose renovation project.

- **Britni Fitzgerald and Colfax Moms** donated **\$2000** raised at the Colfax Chili Cookoff held late last year.
- The **Lioness Club of Colfax** donated **\$2000** toward the caboose project as part of their efforts to support projects that benefit the Colfax community.

Tony reports that the caboose project is still on track to meet or beat the original budget he set in 2004 for the total cost of the renovation.

In Memoriam -- Doug Ferrier

We were saddened to hear of the passing of member Doug Ferrier. Doug was a forester by profession and a strong supporter of local history. He was the go-to guy for information on the history of the western slope of the Sierra and its many secrets. He was a mainstay in the Dutch Flat Golden Drift Museum and helped research and catalog items in the Placer County Archives. Doug contributed his expertise on several PSRHS field trips, and was especially helpful as a resource to your newsletter editor in the research and drafting of the PSRHS-published book on Towle Brothers. Doug will be missed by all who knew him.



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Passing Scene



Many interesting photo opportunities surfaced while we were working on renovation of the Colfax Passenger Depot. In this photo from September 2006, UP's Western Pacific Heritage Locomotive 1983 is clearly visible on the point of an eastbound freight, followed by UP 8336 with the winged UP shield on its nose, reintroduced by UP in 2000. Not so easily identified in the photo is the third locomotive, UP's Southern Pacific Heritage Locomotive 1996. See next month's newsletter for another photo of this threesome taken that same day. *Photo by Roger Staab.*



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From the Archives

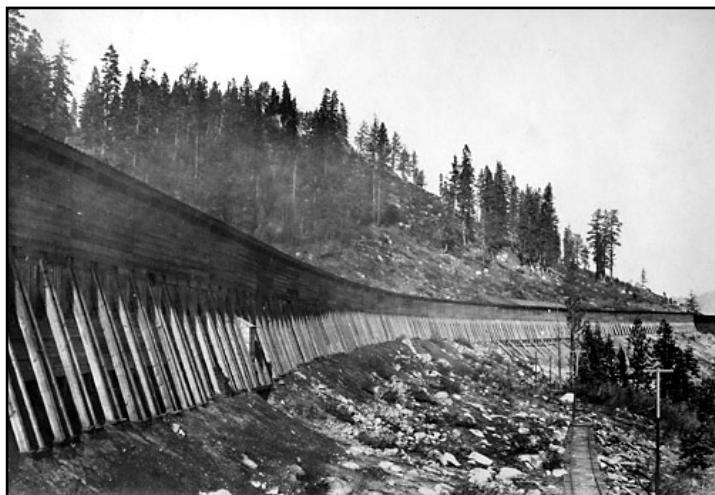
February Mystery Photo:

Joe Halton provided the February photo, taken from a book on the Farallon Islands, located 30 miles outside the Golden Gate off the coast of San Francisco. The railroad on Southeast Farallon Island consisted of a 1-car train that carried supplies from a dock to houses near the top of the hill where the lighthouse keepers resided. Motive power was a donkey. At one time the donkey was the oldest resident on the island. The lighthouse was automated in 1972.



March Mystery Photo:

This snowshed photo has appeared from time to time but without identification as to its location. One source has attributed the photo to an album kept by an SP employee assigned to fire train duty near Donner summit. Shed construction is similar to early shed photos near Blue Canyon, Emigrant Gap, Cisco and Summit. Note what appears to be tracks in the lower right, outside and below the snowshed. Does anyone know the location for this photo? *Ken Yeo Collection*



Note: Info below on the Staff System is repeated from the August 2014 newsletter that was never published

CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline: Staff System -- Prior to double tracking, control of trains on the single track became a growing issue as traffic increased on the Donner Route. To avoid the expensive track circuitry needed to convert to automatic block signals, a manual "staff" system was implemented in 1905 from Rocklin to Truckee. Manned staff stations were located about every 3 miles. At these stations the engineer picked up a wooden or metal staff that gave that train the right-of-track between that and the next staff station. The staff system was gradually phased out as double tracking was completed over the next two decades.

Membership Information

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

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

PSRHS, P.O. Box 1776, Colfax, CA 95713
or join/renew online at 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

San Francisco Municipal Railway and Cable Car Trip

Saturday April 25

This day trip into San Francisco will give the opportunity to learn about the history of the San Francisco Municipal Railway and Cable Car systems

Highlights and Itinerary:

Round trip ride on BART into the City and back from the Pittsburg Station

Cable Car Ride on the California Line

Board at California and Market St

Cable Car fare is \$6.00

San Francisco Cable Car Museum

See the mechanics of the cable system and underground cable/pulley systems

Free Admission to the museum

<http://www.cablecarmuseum.org/>

Return to Market Street either on the Cable Car, bus or on foot

Lunch options include the various shops and street vendors on Market St

Market Street Railway Museum

Focuses on the San Francisco Streetcar Heritage — Free Admission to the museum

<http://www.streetcar.org/museum/>

San Francisco Municipal Railway streetcar ride (optional but recommended)

Special one hour tour of the San Francisco Waterfront on the historic Boat Tram at 1pm, Fare is \$20.

Participants should book their individual tickets online ASAP at the following website to assure seat availability as tickets sell out fast

<http://www.streetcar.org/product/grandparents-day-april-25-2015/>

Trip Logistics:

Car pool from Auburn and Roseville to the Pittsburg BART station. Depart Auburn area about 7:30am

Board BART at the Pittsburg Station and exit at the Embarcadero Station approx 50 min trip (\$12.60 / \$4.70 seniors for Pittsburg to Embarcadero RT)

Following the street car tour, board BART at the Embarcadero Station to Pittsburg for the return home. Return to Auburn area approx 5pm. Call Jim Wood to confirm attendance and car pool arrangements. 530 320-1276 or greenstonemaker@gmail.com