

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

February 2017 Newsletter

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Rotary snowplows are highlighted in two ways this month. Our February presentation will feature video footage of rotaries in action (page 2), while a display at California State Railroad Museum features this rotary along with other snow-fighting methods (page 3).

Scheduled Events & Notices



Feb 23 PSRHS Board Meeting 5:30 pm prior to monthly member meeting

Feb 23 PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation

– Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge

– Presentation – Sonja Conklin – Air Ambulance Service Plan

– More of Brendan Compton's Rotaries Part II including rebuilding SPMW #207

Mar 23 PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation

– Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge – Peter Hills – Topic To Be Announced

Through March Rotary Display at California State Railroad Museum – see page 3

Please Renew Your Membership for 2017



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Monthly Meeting 7PM Thursday, February 23rd, Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge

February Program: Sonja Conklin will give a brief presentation on an insurance plan for Air Ambulance service should the need arise. **Brendan Compton** will then preview the second half of Rotaries part II. Like last month, this will be the Rotary in action as well as the rebuilding process for the SPMW #207 (SPMW = Southern Pacific Maintenance of Way). He will again be showing it using the club's new HD projector.

January Program Recap: Brendan gave a preview of footage he has compiled so far for his next video on Rotaries Part II. He expects this version to focus more on the rotary in action and less on preparations. Brendan asked for and received feedback from the attendees on features that worked well with the footage he previewed, along with suggested improvements.

Election of PSRHS Board Officers

At the board of directors meeting on January 26 Paul Greenfield was appointed by the board to fill the remaining term vacated by Lonnie Dickson. Paul joins Don Brown and re-elected members Malcolm Frost and Dave Ferreira on the PSRHS board. Officer positions were then filled by vote of the board:

Malcolm Frost	President
Chuck Spinks	Vice-President
Shirley Belleville	Secretary
Peter Hills	Treasurer

Treasurer Peter Hills reported that the club has purchased a new HD projector for meeting presentations.

Ken Young noted that rules for access to historic structures such as the caboose allow the alternative of an equivalent experience for handicapped visitors. Sources of fund grants were also discussed.

The board voted in favor of purchasing a Southern Pacific Signal Bridge. It will be offered by PSRHS as an outdoor display for the Southern Pacific archives and museum proposed for Rocklin when it is built.

The board voted in favor of hosting a Colfax Railroad Days event in 2019, the 150th anniversary of completion of the transcontinental railroad. There was much discussion about whether to hold a 2017 or 2018 event leading up to 2019. The club has lost money hosting the event for each of the last three years the event was held. A meeting was set for Feb. 11 to discuss options pro and con for holding an event this September.

The board of directors will meet at 5:30pm Thursday, February 23 prior to the regular monthly meeting. PSRHS members and visitors are welcome to attend board meetings.

Further Weather Woes For UP

The Feather River Canyon was taken out of service by slides and washouts. A dam failed in Nevada sending water across the tracks. A train derailed south of Sacramento due to heavy runoff from recent storms. Potential failure of an emergency spillway at Oroville Dam threatened to send a wall of water toward the tracks near Oroville. The Donner Route has somehow stayed open but UP is having to do some serious juggling of rail traffic to keep its trains moving, resulting in service disruptions and delays including cancellation of the AMTRAK Zephyr for several days.

As I write this, more rain and snow are on the way late this week putting the day-to-day status of local rail travel very much in question. One thing is certain -- it is not business as usual for UP western operations. And you thought you had a bad week!

Membership Renewal Reminder

If you have not already done so it's time to renew your membership in PSRHS for 2017. Payment of dues is a major source of revenue for club activities including field trips and other special events, restoration projects, and publishing documents on regional railroad history. Tax-deductible donations are also welcome.

You can mail your payment to PSRHS, or renew or join on line at our web site www.psrhs.org. Membership details can be found in the box at the bottom of page 4.

Passing Scene

Historic 1920s Rotary Snowplow from Railroad Museum's Collection Goes on Public Display Starting January 30

*Plus, New "Clearing the Way" Exhibit will Showcase Various Snow Removal Methods
Used by the Railroad Then and Now*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. For the first time on public display, visitors to the California State Railroad Museum will have the opportunity to see a 251,000-pound rotary snowplow from the Museum's impressive collection along with an exhibit titled "Clearing the Way" that highlights various snow removal methods used by the railroad. The SP MW205 (formerly known as SP 715) snowplow was built in 1920, converted to electric in 1958, retired by Union Pacific in 2004 and was donated to the Railroad Museum in 2008. Since then, the historic snowplow has been housed in the Shops in the Sacramento Railyards.

The newly repainted snowplow and new "Clearing the Way" exhibit will give Museum visitors an understanding of the various snow removal methods used by the railroad to allow for year-round locomotive use. In addition, guests will get a glimpse about how cumbersome, arduous and dangerous snow removal on the railroad can be and how the preferred methods have changed over time.

Rotary snowplows were often used by the railroad as a very last resort due to the incredible expense involved because of the time consuming nature of the equipment (that only moved five to ten miles per hour), high fuel costs and the elite crew that was needed to operate the plow. It is estimated that less than 200 rotary snowplows still exist throughout the world today.



The rotary snowplow and the companion "Clearing the Way" exhibit will be on display in the Museum's Roundhouse at least through March 2017 and

are included in Museum admission: \$12 for adults; \$6 for youths ages 6-17; free for children ages 5 and under. For more information about the snow plow, exhibit or the California State Railroad Museum in general, please call 916-323-9280 or visit <https://www.californiarailroad.museum/>

Amazon Smile Fund Raising

We are now part of the Amazon Smile fund raising campaign. We receive a donation to the society based on your purchases. Please feel free to copy and paste the link below and include it in all your emails.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0488569>

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From the Archives

January Mystery Photo (right): There were no responses to last month's mystery photo. This building's trackside location thus remains a mystery. *Photo courtesy of Art Sommers*



February Mystery Photo (left): Here's an easy one. What is the location and what features can be seen in this view? For extra credit what is the approximate time frame for the photo? Answers next month. *PSRHS Collection*

Accidents/Other Incidents. Editor's Note: Since April 2011 this column has highlighted in timeline fashion key construction and operation tidbits of Donner Route history from 1863 to the present. To view the aggregate list visit our web site www.psrhs.org and select the CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline page under the "On the Hill" tab.

The focus of this column will now shift to random listing of accidents and other incidents of note that have occurred through the years on the Donner Route. You our readers are invited to submit brief articles or ideas for items to be included in future issues. I can help research details if they are lacking. Please send your articles or ideas to roger.staab@psrhs.org. **Thanks Phil Smith** for already submitting a few ideas.

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

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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:

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