

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

July 2017 Newsletter

In this issue:

July Meeting and Presentation Page 2

Colfax Caboose Grand Opening. Page 2 & 3

Passing Scene. Page 3

Amazon Smile Fund Raising. Page 3

From the Archives. Page 4



A family checks out the interior of the renovated caboose and photo displays prior to the grand opening ceremony. See article and more photos on pages 2 & 3. Photo by Roger Staab

Scheduled Events & Notices



- Jul 27** **PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation 7pm**
 – Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge
 – Program – Stan Kistler - "Chasing Trains for 50 Years with a Camera"
- Aug 24** **PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation 7pm**
 – Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge – Program – TBA
- Sep 28** **PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation 7pm**
 – Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge – Program – TBA

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

July 2017 Newsletter

Monthly Meeting 7PM Thursday, July 27th, Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge

July Program: Stan Kistler will present a program titled "Chasing Trains for Fifty Years with a Camera." Stan started as a teenager in San Diego in 1944 and has been a photographer/author/railroad historian all his life. His principal occupation was professional photographer and graphic arts specialist. He is a native Californian and moved to Grass Valley from the San Gabriel Valley in 1979.

June Program Recap: Don Anderson gave an interesting presentation on construction of the Auburn-Forest Hill Bridge, 1969-73. He offered many insights from his role as the Resident Engineer for the Bureau of Reclamation from start to finish of the bridge project.

July 3 Colfax Caboose Grand Opening Or How NWP #28 became SP #863

The month of June saw a flurry of activity at the Colfax caboose, putting the finishing touches on the project in preparation for the grand opening of the caboose at the Colfax July 3 event. The remaining catwalk was assembled and installed, external hardware mounted, steps and platforms painted, and lettering applied.

The caboose committee made the decision to reletter and renumber NWP caboose #28 as SP #863. Maintenance records and further research clearly established

that Colfax caboose #28 was built in 1924 at Tiburon, CA, for the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. It was built to SP standard caboose design C-30-1. The caboose is known to have operated near Willits in NW California.

SP built a number of cabooses to the same design in the same time frame. In particular, SP #863 was built in the same year (1924) and to the same design (C-30-1) as NWP #28. Photographs show that SP #863 operated on the Colfax Local and was dubbed the Colfax Caboose, operating on the tracks that pass next to the caboose now displayed in downtown Colfax.

While records and displays clarify that the caboose in Colfax is indeed NWP #28, the caboose now proudly displays the Southern Pacific name and #863.

During the week before the grand opening, the City of Colfax completed a city-funded project to pave the area around the caboose. The work was very nicely done, with gray textured concrete covering the main area inside the fenced enclosure, surrounded by a border stamped to simulate red brick. Kudos to **Tony Hesch** for overseeing the caboose renovation project and coordinating the paving work with the city.

The photos below contrast the condition of the caboose before renovation, and the renovated Colfax wood-sided caboose sporting its new lettering and surrounding concrete apron. Photos of the July 3 grand opening can be found on page 3.



Contrast the photo at left taken by Tony Hesch in 2012 and the photo at right taken by Roger Staab in June 2017 after lettering was applied and concrete completed in the area around the caboose.

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

July 2017 Newsletter

Passing Scene

Caboose Grand Opening at the Colfax July 3 Event *Photos by Roger Staab*



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>

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

July 2017 Newsletter

From the Archives

June Mystery Photo (right): This photo of Colfax was taken in or after May 1915. The Colfax Hotel and Passenger Depot are behind the trees at right. The tall white building near the center is the Marvin Hotel just beyond Grass Valley St., with the quartz monument in front of it. The hillside beyond the hotel has been removed and some tracks laid on the new track alignment. The freight depot is no longer in front of the Marvin Hotel. It was moved to its present location in May 1915. *Photo courtesy of Art Sommers*



July Mystery Photo (left): Where was this railroad-related building located and what was its purpose? Hint: It may be connected to information elsewhere in this newsletter. *Photo courtesy of Art Sommers*

Accidents/Other Incidents. Early in the morning of Nov. 8, 1944, the first section of SP's westbound Challenger passenger train No. 87 derailed on a curve at Lander about 2 miles west of Colfax. The cab-forward locomotive, two baggage cars and seven coaches left the tracks in a jumble of twisted metal. At least 9 people died in the incident and nearly 100 more were injured of the 800 on the train. On board were many Army and Navy personnel on furlough along with their dependents and other passengers. Survivors credited military personnel with rescuing trapped passengers and assisting with their care until help arrived. Investigators found no evidence of sabotage. The roadbed had apparently been weakened by recent heavy rains, allowing the tracks to spread causing the lead cars to derail and spill down a bank. The engineer was among those killed when he was trapped in the overturned locomotive. *Oakland Tribune, 11/9/1944*

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