

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

August 2017 Newsletter

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So you want to buy a railroad car – How about one of these? See page 3. Photo by Roger Staab

Scheduled Events & Notices



- Aug 24** PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation 7pm – Details on Page 2
– Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge
– Program – Mark Davidson – RR Land Grants and Gold Rush Real Estate
- Sep 9** Colfax Caboose Meeting & Work Session – 8:30-12:30 Colfax Caboose
– Meet Second Saturday of each month
- Sep 28** PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation 7pm
– Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge – Program – Bill George's New Video
- Oct 26** PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation 7pm – Program – TBA
- Nov 8-11** SPH&TS 2017 Annual Conference – Santa Rosa CA
– Theme will be NWP and RR's that connected with it
– Details on Page 2 and at <https://sphts.org/convention/>

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Monthly Meeting 7PM Thursday, Aug. 24th, Auburn Airport Pilots' Lounge

August Program: Mark Davidson will discuss the local gold rush-era real estate, historical land transactions, and the impact of the railroad land grants. Mark is a real estate title specialist and land historian. His goal is to share the "back stories" of the fascinating people and events he has researched from the early days of the area's colorful past. His "Mobile-Mini-Museum" provides visual support to his presentations.

July Program recap: Stan Kistler presented an excellent program titled "Chasing Trains for Fifty Years with a Camera." He showed some of his favorite photos from early in his career to more recent color photos. Railroads covered included SP, AT&SF, and some logging and shortlines. Stan pointed out those of his photos that had appeared on the cover of Trains magazine. *Recap notes provided by Chuck Spinks. Photo below courtesy of Paul Lanyi.*



Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society (SPH&TS) Annual Convention

The SPH&TS will hold its 2017 Annual Convention at Santa Rosa **Nov. 8-11**. This will be a joint event with the Northwestern Pacific Historical Society, and the theme of the presentations will be Northwestern Pacific Railroad and the railroads that connected with it. A complete list of presentations and registration information can be found at

<https://sphts.org/convention/>

For the **Wednesday, Nov. 8** sessions, Bill Fowler has organized a one day forum of former senior operating

officers of the Southern Pacific. They will speak about the **challenges and issues facing the Southern Pacific during the 1980s and 90s**. Bill says this will probably be a one-time event and should be very interesting.

Colfax Caboose Update

After a brief hiatus, monthly caboose meetings and work sessions have restarted from **8:30am-12:30pm on the second Saturday of each month**. A few items remain to be completed on the caboose itself. Emphasis of future meetings will be on planning for displays, staffing of the caboose for future events, and establishing a maintenance plan. Funds need to be raised, display layouts imagined, and equipment purchased.

As a trial run, **the caboose will be open on Saturday, Sept. 2 (Labor Day weekend) from 9am-4pm**. If you are able to assist in staffing the caboose that day, please contact Ken Young at colfaxcaboose@gmail.com. We hope to establish a regular schedule of weekend days that the caboose will be open to visitors, along with special events and school educational visits.

Member News

We got word shortly before our July meeting that **Ken Yeo** had passed away. **There will be a celebration of Ken's life on Sept. 9 at 12:00pm at the Auburn Elks Lodge, 195 Pine St.**

Ken was a founding member of PSRHS, and he had been interested in railroad history and operations all his life. Ken's stories of railroads and railroading were always entertaining and will be sorely missed. In November 2013 Ken was recognized by PSRHS with a Lifetime Membership Award. The Spring 2014 issue of Donner Crossings was a special tribute featuring Ken Yeo – PSRHS Lifetime Member.

James Bennett informed the editor that he has terminal cancer and is moving to Southern California. James is a charter member of PSRHS and has been a faithful attendee at monthly meetings through the years. We send our thoughts with you James.



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Passing Scene

It's not unusual to see former Western Pacific California Zephyr cars on the Donner Route. One or two may pass by on the rear of an AMTRAK train or several on a special train such as this 2004 railfan trip from Reno/Sparks that turned around in Colfax. This photo was featured in the July 2014 newsletter. It's being repeated this month because word is out that several of the cars are up for sale by their private owners. This makes the future of these cars uncertain for private runs or excursions. Here's your chance to own a luxurious piece of railroad history – but you may have to outbid Jim Wood. *Photo 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>

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From the Archives

July Mystery Photo (right): This photo shows the covered benches for passengers waiting at Lander, once a staff station located about 3 miles west of Colfax. Lander was the scene of the 1944 derailment of the SP Challenger passenger train mentioned in last month's newsletter. Nine people were killed in the accident and nearly 100 more were injured. *PSRHS photo from Art Sommers collection*



August Mystery Photo (left): What is this building and where was it located? Extra credit for which side of the tracks. *Photo courtesy of Art Sommers*

Accidents/Other Incidents. Early Sabotage? Turntable Accident in Colfax -- *Sacramento Daily Union, Jan. 24, 1879.* "Early yesterday morning, about 1 o'clock, some evil disposed wretch turned a switch at Colfax in such a manner that when the lightning express for Virginia City came along it ran upon the sidetrack leading to the turntable, and before the efforts of the engineer to avert the accident could avail the engine plunged into the turntable pit, smashing the turntable and doing considerable damage to the locomotive. The fireman, John Miller, had one of his feet crushed ... The turntable to which the accident occurred has not been used a great deal by the Central Pacific Railroad lately, except for the convenience of work trains, but the Colfax and Nevada narrow-gauge railroad had laid a track upon it, and used it daily."

The Jan. 27 issue of the same paper reported that Charley Johnson and ____ McNamee had been arrested for the crime. They had been seen in the vicinity and one had a railroad switch key in his possession when arrested.

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