

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

November 2017 Newsletter

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A portion of Dick Dorn's signal equipment collection visited during the fall field trip. See summary on page 2 and more photos on page 3. Jim Wood photo

Scheduled Events & Notices



Nov 16 Board Meeting Prior to the Potluck Dinner Meeting – 5:30pm

**Nov 16 PSRHS Potluck Dinner Meeting 6:30pm Dinner & Socializing
– Program – Peter Hills – SP Narrow Gauge from Laws to Keeler**

Nov 8-11 SPH&TS 2017 Annual Conference – Santa Rosa www.sphts.org/convention/

Nov 11-12 Roseville Railfair, Placer Co. Fairgrounds www.internationalrailfair.com

**Dec 9 Colfax Winterfest 4:30pm-8:30pm – Downtown Colfax
– Colfax Caboose will be Open**

Jan 25 PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation – 7pm

No meeting in December



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Potluck Dinner Meeting 6:30PM Thursday, Nov. 16th, Auburn Airport Pilot's Lounge

Our annual potluck dinner meeting will be held the third Thursday in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The main entree and drinks will be provided. You are invited to bring a favorite side dish to share. Family members and guests are welcome to attend.

A board meeting will precede the potluck dinner.

November Program: Peter Hills will present a slide show on the Southern Pacific narrow gauge line that ran from Laws to Keeler. For those not familiar with the area, Laws is just east of Bishop on the east side of the Sierra. Peter reports that many of the images date from the early 1950's.

October Program recap: Roger Staab presented his slide show outlining railroad-related changes that have taken place in Colfax through the years. He used published records of construction of buildings and features in town and losses due to fires to help pinpoint dates of many of the old photos included in the show.

Attendees then reconvened across the tracks for a tour of the newly renovated Colfax caboose. Features and operation of a typical caboose were discussed.

Canned Goods Donation

Don Brown has submitted the following suggestion:

My name is Don Brown your board member for the Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society. I talked to our group at the last board meeting about a canned food drive. My idea is that everyone that comes to the November **Potluck dinner/meeting bring two cans of food** that will be donated to a family needing help feeding their family for the holidays in the Auburn/Colfax area or to a food bank in Santa Rosa for the families that lost their houses in the recent fires.

I thought it would show that members of a small railroad group like ours do care about people in need and it is good Public Relations. I will see that the donated items get delivered to an appropriate charity.

Thank you. Don Brown

Election of Board Members

The terms for the following board members expire at the end of 2017:

Chuck Spinks; Shirley Belleville; Paul Greenfield

An election will be held at the November meeting to fill the three positions for 3-year terms. Additional nominations can be made at the meeting.

Caboose Open for Colfax Winterfest

The Colfax caboose will be open during Colfax Winterfest December 9th from 4:30pm-8:30pm. If you can help staff the caboose contact Ken Young at

Colfaxcaboose@gmail.com

Information on the Winterfest event can be found at
<http://colfax-ca.com/event/winterfest/>

PSRHS Fall Field Trip

Our Fall club field trip on October 28 offered 16 of our members a rare opportunity to see two very unique private railroad memorabilia collections. Dick Dorn's collection focuses principally on vintage signaling equipment. His fully operating pieces straddle a section of track that gives an attractive context to them. His full size replica of an SP #23 depot resembles the one in Yuba City. It houses an extensive collection of depot and trackside signs and switch lamps.

Les, Cindy and Casey Wilmunder welcomed our group with a BBQ while viewing their unique collection of prototype narrow gauge locomotives and freight cars. The anchor of their collection is the restored and operable Porter locomotive and the Heisler (under restoration). Both engines operated years ago at the tourist railroad at Camino in El Dorado County by Les's late father, Hal, and our own Ken Yeo. This eclectic collection also includes an original San Francisco Cable Car and a Central Pacific velocipede, plus a plethora of other fascinating pieces too numerous to mention.

Both collections were quite engaging and an opportunity to see rare one-of-a-kind vintage railroad equipment. See selected photos from the field trip on page 3.

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Fall Field Trip

Dick Dorn
Collection



Les Wilmunder
Collection

Photos by Jim Wood

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

October Mystery Photo (right): This circa 1911 photo was taken from the top of the west portal of newly completed Tunnel 18 looking west toward Newcastle. The double tracks cross the ravine on a new fill. The old curved roadbed (former wood trestle covered with fill) can be seen to the left of the new tracks. The original tracks crossed above the new grade in the foreground while the tunnel was being constructed. The Newcastle depot is visible beyond the fill. *Photo courtesy of Art Sommers.*



November Mystery Photo (left): Where was this photo taken, what is the building in the center, and what is the significance of the track alignments on each side of the building? *Photo courtesy of Art Sommers.*

This is another of the 200 photos featured in the new Arcadia book, *Railroads of Placer County*, by Art Sommers and Roger Staab, to be published Jan. 15, 2018. The book provides a short history of 14 railroads that operated in Placer County through the years, some for only a short time or distance, others for many years, with a major one still operating today.

Accidents/Other Incidents. Heroic Brakeman Prevents Wreck – John Horen Stops Runaway Cars on Colfax Grade and Saves Train. DUTCH FLAT (Placer Co.), June 13. – The steady nerve and heroism of John Horen, a freight brakeman, probably prevented a disastrous wreck last night, when the caboose and several cars of local freight train No. 210 ran down the grade at Toll (sic). The cars were left uncoupled at that place and started down the grade, gaining momentum. Horen stayed with the train and succeeded in stopping it on the Colfax grade after it had attained a speed of more than 60 miles an hour.

Conductor Smith was in charge of the train. It was feared that the cars would collide with No. 2, the limited passenger train. Fortunately the train was a few minutes late. *Sacramento Union, 14 June 1913*

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:

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