

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



www.psrhs.org

June 2019 Newsletter

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A "local" is performing switching at a roadside business on Peter Hills' model railroad layout. See the feature article on pages 5-6 for more details.. Photo by Peter Hills

Scheduled Events & Notices



Jun 27 PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation – Keith Pattison
– Mapmaking and tips for finding old railroad grades

Jul 3 Colfax Caboose open for July 3 event

Jul 25 PSRHS Monthly Meeting & Presentation – Program TBA

Sep 4-7 39th National Narrow Gauge Convention – Sacramento www.nngc2019.org/



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PSRHS Monthly Meeting 7PM Thursday, June 27th, Auburn Airport Meeting Room

June Program: Keith Pattison will speak about mapmaking, with many mapmaking tips and tricks he has learned along the way, and ideas for sources for finding old railroad grades and planning trips to the field.

Pattison, a 1979 California State University Sacramento graduate with a degree in Electrical Engineering, has had an interest in railroads from an early age. He started researching railroad history and finding old railroad grades and artifacts in the mid-1990s. Over time, his interests expanded to include many other facets of industrialization in the old West, including mining, steamships and lumber mills. With interests in understanding and documenting the big picture, he turned to mapping his findings. This has resulted in several dozen maps of old logging railroads, water systems and flumes. He will have many of these detailed 24" x 36" **maps available for sale at the meeting.**

May Program Recap: Paul Greenfield discussed his recent trip to Denver and back aboard the private railcar, Silver Iris. He described the history and features of the car, and included some figures on what it costs to operate private cars today. Paul also showed photos and videos he took of UP's 4014 Big Boy in action on its western run with UP 844 from Evanston, Wyoming to Ogden, Utah.

Golden Spike 150th Transcontinental Railroad Sesquicentennial Celebration

There are still some events and exhibits taking place as part of the Golden Spike 150th anniversary celebration. See last month's newsletter for a listing of events.

Feature Article in This Issue

It has been my objective for some time to include occasional expanded feature articles in the monthly newsletter. This month such an article presented itself after I viewed a special operating session of Peter Hills' HO-gauge model railroad layout.

The article appears on pages 5-6 of this issue. Take a quick peek at this elaborate layout and the realistic railroad operations Peter is aiming to simulate.

If you have ideas for future feature articles for the newsletter let me know. I anticipate including these articles every 3-4 months, and will continue to produce Donner Crossings issues about once a year that include more in-depth studies on topics of local railroad interest

Anyone Longing for a Caboose?

Many of you may recall a presentation several months ago about PSRHS member Carolyn Carter's caboose. Carolyn has decided to sell her property in rural Colfax where the caboose resides. She is looking for a buyer for the caboose, which is set up as a complete living quarters, with toilet and stall shower, small kitchen, living room and sleeping areas. There's a catch, though. The caboose property is at the top of a hill. It was a challenge getting the caboose to the property, and will be a similar challenge moving it to another location.

If you are interested in the caboose or know someone who may be interested, call Carolyn at 530-346-1091

Colfax Caboose Open July 3 Volunteers Needed

Speaking of cabooses, the City of Colfax has asked that the Colfax caboose be open and staffed for the City's July 3 event. We will likely have the caboose open from around 2pm until fireworks start (conditions permitting) at 9:30. If you are willing to help staff the caboose for a few hours contact me at rsrr@exwire.com

Fall Field Trip

A return visit to the many historic sites at or near Donner Summit is being planned for our fall field trip. Watch for details in future issues of the newsletter.





Passing Scene – Modern Passenger Trains

This month's passing scene photo is not so much what has been seen on the Donner Route, but what will be seen on many future passenger trains throughout the U.S. and Canada. A group of hardy PSRHS members made the drive to South Sacramento and a tour of the Siemens Sacramento plant on May 16. Word is that they did a lot of walking to see all the projects Siemens currently has underway in their expanded plant, with equipment being produced for AMTRAK, VIA Rail in Canada, and several urban lines. Siemens Charger locomotives are beginning to appear in AMTRAK service. While California's high speed rail project appears to be in financial jeopardy, a line proposed for the I-15 corridor serving Las Vegas from LA appears to be gaining momentum. Siemens is already a major producer of new passenger equipment and will likely be a player in numerous future rail projects including AMTRAK runs on the Bay Area to Reno corridor. *Photo courtesy of Paul Greenfield*



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

May Mystery Photo (right): This caboose was spotted next to Bowman Lake Road above Fuller Lake. It has a deck built around it and appears to be a work in progress for a summer retreat. One side has been painted with lettering "The Forty Niner", "Nicasio Valley Railroad" and "Kunst Est. 1849". The other side is unpainted. If you drive a short distance downhill from this location the UP mainline is visible as it traverses Smart Ridge east of Emigrant Gap. *Photo by Roger Staab*



June Mystery Photo (left): This should be an easy one. Where was this photo taken and what is the approximate year? *Postcard image courtesy of Jim Wood*

Accidents/Other Incidents. As noted last month, 1899 was a bad year for local railroad accidents. Here are two gruesome incidents to add to those reported in the May newsletter and a reminder of the dangers involved.

Sacramento Daily Union, 11 Oct 1899. Terrible Death – Brakeman Davide Cadwallader's Sad Fate on the Hill. Late on Monday night a railroad brakeman named David Cadwallader whose home was in Dutch Flat, lost his life at the New England Mills Station, near Colfax. Deceased was standing on a flat car, and the sudden starting of the train threw him off his balance. He fell in front of the next car and was shockingly mangled. Death ensued in less than an hour. He was a native of Dutch Flat and 24 years of age.

Sacramento Daily Union, 2 Jun 1899. Unknown Tramp Killed. While a freight train was pulling out of the yards at Roseville Junction Wednesday night, the king bolt of one of the cars broke, causing the derailment of the forward trucks. The end of the car jammed into the one ahead of it, literally smashing to a pulp an unknown man who was riding on the bumpers.

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



Railroad Operations Beside the Rails – Peter Hills’ N&W Op Sessions

In March and May 2019 Peter Hills hosted a series of Op Sessions on his Norfolk and Western HO-scale model railroad layout. This is not your typical model railroad where trains chug around and around on a loop. Peter has built a fully detailed point-to-point operating railroad, located in his large garage within spitting distance of the Union Pacific mainline in Applegate. Normally when we view a full-scale railroad in operation, we see only a small portion of a much bigger operational picture. During Peter’s Op Sessions a visitor or train operator can view and participate in an entire railroad’s operations – mainline running, yard switching, local service drop-offs and pickups, and the complex interactions among them. Train motion and sounds are realistic, and signals must be obeyed. Engineers must yield to other trains or orders to avoid bottlenecks, collisions or track and equipment malfunctions. In short, it is as close as one can get to full scale railroading, yet all visible in one room.

A detailed operating session doesn’t just happen by inviting friends over to run trains. Peter spent a tremendous amount of time and effort preparing train orders for complete train movements, freight waybills for movement of individual cars, along with maps and track identifiers to help train operators negotiate the complex layout. Of course there are also the many hours (years!) Peter spent building the track layout itself, still a work in progress. The following photos and captions attempt to capture some of the sights from those Op Sessions.



Above – Left – First comes the briefing for the new train crews, orienting them to the track layout and supporting paperwork. Peter explains the train orders and the information they contain. Right – He then describes the routing of mainline tracks and the layout of the Bluefield Yard. Mainline tracks are in the foreground and yard tracks nearer the viewers. Note the diagonal track bisecting the yard. It provides a reversing loop but adds complexity to yard operations.

At left are samples of freight waybills, describing status and scheduled movements of individual cars that may currently be on sidings or in one of the yards.

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Norfolk and Western Railway

Train Order: Steam Manifest #3
– Norfolk Yard to Bluefield Yard

Road Power: Road Power and Caboose as assigned.
(Typically N&W Y6b)

Train Orders:

Pick-up Train on Norfolk Passing Siding No. 3
Depart Norfolk Yard W/B
Via New River Mine Jct.
Via Whitehall Branch
Via Radford Jct.
Via Elkhorn Jct.
Via Stuarts Draft
ARR Bluefield Yard
Terminate ARR/DEP Track No. 1 or No. 2
Return Road Power to Bluefield Roundhouse

Special Orders: Maximum 16 Cars, plus Caboose



An engineer receives his train orders for the N&W Steam Manifest #3 “local” and a description of its scheduled route and stops. The train then departs the Norfolk yard which is housed on a lower level of the layout. “Local” photo below by Peter Hills. Other photos by Roger Staab



Above left - This “local” has left its caboose on a siding as it picks up loaded cars and drops off empties at a roadside business. Switching has to be coordinated with main line operations.

Above right – After completing its stops at several sidings along the route, the N&W Manifest Local arrives at the Bluefield Yard on the arrival/departure track at the center of the image. Its cars will soon be combined with others in the yard into new trains for delivery to their destinations. The yard is a busy place with switching activities, train arrivals and departures.

Left – A small portion of the wiring that powers track blocks, switches, signals and other accessories.

If you are interested in participating in future Op Sessions contact Peter at hillspr@msn.com