

# Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

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## February 2020 Newsletter

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*If cabooses are gone from the railroad scene why is this highly decorated SP4669 featured in this issue of the newsletter? See the photos and story on page 3.*

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### Scheduled Events & Notices



**Feb 27** Tentative – PSRHS Board Meeting – 6pm Prior to Monthly Meeting

**Feb 27** PSRHS Monthly Meeting – 7pm  
– Program – Bonnie Potter - Women in Railroading – See Page 2

**Mar 26** PSRHS Monthly Meeting – 7pm – Program TBA

**Apr 18** Status update and BBQ at site of new SP History Center in Rocklin  
– time to be announced — see page 2

**Apr 23** PSRHS Monthly Meeting – 7pm – Program TBA

**Its time to renew your PSRHS membership for 2020. Member dues are the primary source of funds for our club's historic preservation activities, field trips, etc.**

**See page 4 of this newsletter for membership information.**

### **PSRHS Monthly Meeting 7PM Thursday, Feb. 27th, Auburn Airport Meeting Room**

**February Program:** Retired Navy Rear Admiral **Bonnie Potter** will present a program titled **Women In Railroading**.

Rear Admiral Potter was born and raised near Oakland, California, graduated from UC Davis with a BS in Animal Science, and received her MD degree from St. Louis University School of Medicine. She completed medical school on a Navy scholarship and came on active duty as a Lieutenant in 1975. Her impressive resume includes 20 years as a clinician and teacher of internal medicine, Chief of Medicine/Residency Program Director at National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, and Director of Medical Services, USNS Comfort during Operations Desert Shield/Storm. In 1997, she was promoted to Rear Admiral (lower half), becoming the first female physician in the military to be selected for “*Flag*” rank (Admiral or General). She served as Commander, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD, Lead Agent for Tricare Region 1, and Chief of the Navy Medical Corps. In 1999, she received her second star, and subsequent duties included Fleet Surgeon, US Atlantic Fleet, Command Surgeon, Fleet Forces Command, Command Surgeon, US Joint Forces Command and Medical Advisor to Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic. She retired from active duty in 2003.

Rear Admiral Potter has been involved at all levels in the Navy League of the United States and is currently the President of the Placer County Council. In 2012 she was awarded the Daughters of the American Revolution Ellen Hardin Walworth Medal for Patriotism and the President’s Volunteer Service Award for service on the Sacramento Medical Reserve Corps. In October 2019 she was honored for her military service with a bronze bust, created by world renowned artist Douglas Van Howd, which was placed in the Armed Forces Pavilion and Community Garden in Auburn. She is married to August Anema, and they live in Auburn, California where they raise alpacas.

**January Program Recap:** Scott Inman gave us a status update on the new 35,000 square foot Southern Pacific Railroad History Center to be constructed on the site of the original historic Central Pacific Railroad rail yards in Rocklin. The new museum will include the Southern Pacific archives and library, displays of Southern Pacific artifacts, a gift shop, and a massive railroad model of the SP line from San Francisco, over Donner Pass, to Ogden Utah, including simulated elevation changes. The archives will represent the most significant and comprehensive publicly accessible collection of SPRR data and documents. The SP-10 railcar will be displayed inside the building. Outside will be a display of other SP equipment, along with mock-ups depicting other Rocklin-area history. An equipment restoration area is also planned just east of the facility.

### **SPRHC Site Tour & BBQ**

Since our last meeting, Scott Inman has announced that a BBQ and site tour is being scheduled for **April 18** at the Rocklin site. Time for the event will be announced at a later date. Jim Mahon has agreed to cook for the BBQ.

Scott reports that purchase negotiations are proceeding smoothly with UP, and it appears that UP may agree to a lease-to-buy arrangement that will permit occupancy of the site while awaiting actual deed transfer. This will allow moving SP-10 and storage containers to the site and establishing a temporary restoration facility.

### **Board Vacancy**

The PSRHS board vacancy was not filled at the January 25 Board meeting. If you are interested in serving on the board or know someone who may be interested, let President Chuck Spinks or any board member know. You are welcome to attend any board meeting to see how the board operates and addresses PSRHS technical and policy issues.





### Passing Scene – SP 4669 in Colfax

This photo of SP bay-window caboose 4669 was captured in Colfax in February 2007. I don't recall the circumstances other than what the photo shows of the caboose connected behind a tank car on a siding in the Colfax yard. The inset photo shows the same caboose in 2009 in the South San Francisco yard. A clue as to its role in 2007 and 2009 can be found in one of the rail forums. A contributor writes "Cabooses (now frequently referred to as "Shoving Platforms" by the railroads) are used when union rules decree them to be used - usually it's when a train has to make a long backup move. It's safer for the conductor to ride on the platform of the caboose rather than hanging on the side of the last freight car. It's usually the case that the caboose interior has been gutted and the doors have been welded shut." *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

**January Mystery Photo (right):** Silva Bergtholdt's fruit packing shed and growers supplies was in Newcastle. The boxcars are on a spur track that was fed from the mainline a short distance behind the photographer. Just out of view at right were more fruit sheds and downtown Newcastle businesses. *Art Sommers Collection*



**January Mystery Photo (continued):** The circa 1909 photo at left was featured in a previous newsletter, and shows a side view of the same large fruit shed in Newcastle. At right westbound mainline tracks exit the new tunnel and cross the new fill before entering Newcastle. Town buildings can be seen beyond other fruit sheds including one that still exists today. Note the Newcastle passenger depot at upper right. *Art Sommers Collection*

Accidents/Other Incidents. *Sacramento Bee*, Jun 22, 1918. **2100 Feet of Snowsheds Destroyed by Fire – Women Heroines of \$100,000 Conflagration – Traffic is Tied Up for Thirty Hours – Train Nearly Plunges into Flames – Fire Fighters Strenuously Battle for Hours and Keep Conflagration from Spreading – Station, Section buildings, Water Columns and Cars also Destroyed; Repair Gangs Rushing Work; Fruit Traffic Delayed.** Cisco (Placer Co.), June 22. One of the most disastrous fires in the annals of Southern Pacific snowshed construction, started at 12:10 am at Crystal Lake, two miles west of Cisco, on Ogden route over the high Sierras, destroyed 2,100 feet of double track sheds, the station, all section buildings, five outfit cars and two water columns. Traffic, it is estimated, will be tied up for thirty hours. The cause of the fire has not been officially determined. **Women are Heroines** Mrs E.J. Reese, staff operator, who had just been relieved a few minutes prior by miss D.G. Knox, and Miss Knox proved the heroines of the day. Mrs Reese called all section hands, the agent and the men in the carpenter outfit, while Miss Knox stayed at her post receiving the fire call and saving their keepsakes from the station... Owing to the promptness of the Blue Canyon, Cisco and Summit fire trains arriving at the scene, a considerable amount of shed that would otherwise have been consumed before the breaks in the sheds would have been reached, was saved. The breaks are placed so that in case of fire the flames can be checked.

#### 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](http://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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