



THE SAN LUIS OBISPO MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

SLO TRAINS

Drawing By Norm Hammond



Volume 15, Issue 12

December 2003

Upcoming Events

- 2003
- Dec 12 Christmas Party @ Margie's Diner, 6:30 PM
- 2004
- Jan 16-19 Bitter Creek Western Live Steam RR MLK Weekend Run
- Jan 17-18 GEHAMS Train show in Bakersfield 10-5 Sat & 10-4 Sun
- Feb 7-8 joint Layout Design/ Operations Special Interest Groups meet in Santa Clara
- Feb Daylight Division PCR Meet in Fresno
- 13 Mar Winterail in Stockton
- Apr 16-17 WP Convention in Reno
- Apr 29-May 2 PCR 2004 Convention in Napa
- 22 May Daylight Division PCR Meet in San Luis Obispo
- 4-11 July NMRA Convention in Seattle
- Aug Daylight Division PCR Meet in Merced?
- 1-4 Sep 24th Na Ga Convention in Santa Clara
- Oct 1-3 SLOMRC 15th Annual Train Show @ Vets Hall in SLO
- Nov Daylight Division PCR Meet in Santa Barbara

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Round Trip From San Luis Obispo To Oakland (A Trip In the Fog)

By David C. Crammer

Editors Note: This article originally appeared in the January/February 1997 issue of Rail Classics and is used with permission from the copyright owner. To subscribe to Rail Classics call 1-818 760-8983.

At the San Luis Obispo station it's 5:30 pm on a cool December evening with a full moon rising over the nearby sugar-loaf shaped hills. Lights from the station illuminate three units at are currently working as helpers. All are SP units, numbered 8279, 8562, and 8506. The work crew that has been modifying the platform to prepare for Metrolink that will be operating out of here have put away their jack hammers and are now using a back hoe to remove the slabs of concrete that have been broken up.

From the north is the sound of a horn from an eastbound that has made it over the hill without helpers and is headed our way to pick up a new crew before continuing on to Los Angeles. As it slowly descends into the yard a determined bicyclist carries his bike across the tracks in front of the three six-axle locomotives (9376, 9393, 8606). This is the WSWCM (Warm Springs to west Colton Manifest). The

relief crew is already at the depot to take it on east and it pulls through to take the units from in front of the depot under an agreement with the city. It continues down, after dropping of its conductor, until it has cleared the station and the blinking red eye of the ETD flashes east of the depot giving the westbound a clear space for the crew to board.

Even though they are not actually called for until 6:10 pm the crew for the CIBAT (City of Industry to Bay Area Trailers pronounced See Bat) has arrived to check on the computer for its location. They also are there to try to avoid the second, slower train called for 7 pm which will be the WCKFM (West Colton to Klamath Falls manifest).

Conductor Willy Witzel goes through the paperwork. The sheet in front of him reads: OUTBOUND CALL SHEET / Train ID: 1CIBAT1 04 / POOL:SLO-Oakland / Division: Los Angeles terminal / Pool: SLO Scheduled / To depart: 1840

Willy lives in San Jose and has worked all of his 30-year railroad career with the Southern

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PCR NMRA Coast Div. Meet & Auction 7 Dec.

By Pat LaTorres & Bob Ferguson

Just an update for those of you from outside the Coast Division (and those inside who've been gone for a while), there will portions of at least two estates going on the block at the next meet on Dec. 7th. There will be at least 125 items from the estate of Sheldon King (one of the co-authors on the S.P.H.T.S. Book Committee); he wrote most of the Heavy-weight captions in Vol. 1 of the Passenger car book.

At this point we're looking at some 50 brass items (both locomotives and passenger cars), 25 books or so, and 50 other lots of kits, assembled rolling stock and various detail parts. So my advice is plan to attend and bring your friends and money with you. As of this time, all of the Sheldon King items will be run in the regular auction, not as a separate estate grouping and the Coast Div. will be receiving its ten percent from the sales. As one who's been

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Presidents Message

By Dave Wilding

Hi Everyone

Well December is now here and our club's Christmas party will be at Margie's Diner on December 12th at 6:30.

I hope everyone will enjoy a good meal. We will have a short meeting to elect new officers for the year 2004. Then a gift exchange which



is always fun (Only one exchange gift per person please).

Next we will sing Happy Birthday to Jim J. But be careful about any cabooses you may bring as Jim has been known to be a notorious caboose napper. ;>)

I hope to see you all at the party.
Dave W.

November Club Meeting Minutes

By Terry N Taylor

The SLOMRC Club Meeting was called to order by President Dave Wilding at about 7 pm on 11 November at Terry Taylor's house. In attendance were Jim Jonte, Tom Kolby, Terry Taylor, and Dave Wilding.

We discussed some missing items from the train show but were relieved to find that they were mostly at Dave W's house with the clip board at Jim's house. Dave W showed some photos from the Train Show which we all admired.

We next discussed our Christmas dinner & gift exchange at Margie's Diner (near Los Osos Road and the freeway) which starts at 630 on the 12th of December. Of course our next club meeting will be at here on the 9th of December.

The gift exchange is simple. Each person who brings a gift (wrapped) will in the randomly assigned order get to either choose a gift from the table or take an already opened gift from a person who then gets the same choice. Gifts can be humorous or serious as long as they are rail oriented. Normally they are of the value of a good kit.

Jim will set up a new post office box next year for our club mail that will be more convenient to get to and we discussed the dates for the train show next year finally deciding to hold it the first weekend in October instead of the last. So mark your calendars for 1-3 October and we have again reserved the downstairs of the Vets Hall for early access for the Free-Mo groups.

Side Note: Jim just sent me an email stating that our new address is **Post Office Box No. 4547 / San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-4547**

About 8 pm Dave adjourned the meeting and we retired to the train room.



SLOMRC Train Show 4 October by Dave Wilding; enhanced by David Chong.

SLOMRC Membership Information

By Terry N Taylor

We have two basic memberships, Regular (anybody) and Student (full time under 23 years old). Regular members pay a \$20 initiation fee plus \$10 per quarter dues while Student members pay the \$20 initiation fee but only \$5 per quarter dues.

All dues are due on the first day of January, April, July, and October. General meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 pm at locations to be announced.

If you would like to become a member, please either come to a general meeting; or complete the form below and mail it with your initiation fee and first quarter dues to: **SLOMRC / P. O. Box 4547 / San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-4547**. For more information; either write to the address above, phone the treasurer, Jim Jonte at 805-544-6333 or email the secretary, Terry Taylor at terryntaylor@charter.net.

Name _____	Age _____
Address _____	
City _____	State _____
Home Phone _____	Work Phone _____
Email Address _____	Type of Membership _____
	Date _____

Help The SP Frt. Depot In Monterey

By Dave Hambleton

As some of you have are aware, the Southern Pacific's historic Monterey freight depot is in serious trouble. After the City Planning Commission and the Preservation Society voted to save it, the Mayor and City Council have decided to demolish the freight depot.

After speaking with the archivist at the Monterey Public Library, he suggested that I write to the Mayor's office and the City Council to express how important the freight depot is. He also suggested that I get some friends to write in also(the more the better). I figure between my SP groups and the Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society, I have a lot of SP friends out there.

What he suggested was to write the Mayor and City Council and inform them of how important the freight depot is to both Southern Pacific history and Monterey history as well. I am asking as many people as possible to let the Mayor and City

Council know what a bad decision they are making if they tear down the depot.

Here is the contact information:

Mayor Dan Albert and the City Council
City of Monterey
City Hall
Monterey, Ca. 93940
(831) 646-3760
(831) 646-3799
Email suggest@ci.monterey.ca.us

Thanks for all your help! I hope that this little piece of the SP can be saved!

Dave Hambleton <kilroydiver2@hotmail.com>

A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 1)

Pacific. The engineer for the CIBAT will be Mont Gambier. Of course when railroad crews get together, especially when their train is not due for another hour, they end up swapping stories.

"Remember that old Hoghead Miller? Well, one day we were blasting around this curve and on the other side is a red signal and the road foreman of engines just standing there, legs planted and watching us. There was no way we were going to stop in time so Miller picked up a wrench, smashing it down on the brake handle breaking it off and walks back to the road foreman carrying it saying I did everything I could to stop it."



Engineer Mont Cambier working on his paperwork prior to the trip north out of SLO. Dave Crammer Photo Dec 96.

Mont, who lives in San Luis Obispo, dropped out of college in November of 1964 and joined the SP. Today's date is one he remembers because it was exactly 32 years since (December 4, 1964) he was drafted. In 1968 he was back working for the SP as a clerk and in 1970 entered engine service.

Finally from inside the depot we hear a low, rumbling sound and then the bell, meaning the CIBAT is pulling in with SP 7434, SP 9392, D&RGW 5377 and D&RGW 5334. With all of this power, the HPT



Conductor Willy Witzel checking on the location of his train from the SLO office. Dave Crammer Photo Dec 96.

(horsepower per ton ratio) is 3.9 and TPOB (tons per operative brake) is 103 which means that we will not need helpers to make it over the grade.

Willy and Mont climb on board with their gear and prepare to continue on west (on the SP anything toward San Francisco is considered west and away east). Willy is toting his old canvas satchel which is showing its age. In it he carries the tools that may be of use to a conductor on a two-man crew. These include wrenches, hammer, air hose plastic ties, nylon twine, etc. Of course on a stack train there are fewer things to repair than in the old days of box cars but the conductor must be prepared to walk the train even if there is a hard rain coming down at a 45-

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Layout Design & Operations SIG Meet Invitation

By Bob Jacobsen & Seth Neumann

We're extending an invitation to the prototype railroad communities (SP, UP, WP, Santa Fe etc.) to participate in our annual Layout Design and Operations SIG meet (jointly sponsored by the Pacific Coast Region). I'm am interested in clinic presenters who can talk about prototypical SP, UP, WP, Santa Fe etc. operations.

As we discussed in the last issue of SLO Trains, the Layout Design and Operations Special Interest Groups and the NMRA Pacific Coast Region are holding another joint Regional Meeting in Santa Clara, CA (approx. 45 minutes south of San Francisco) on Saturday February 7 and Sunday February 8, 2004.

A terrific two-day program is being developed. We expect the agenda will include clinics, operations discussions, track planning workshops, and visits to local layouts. We will also be arranging operating sessions at a number of nearby layouts for Sunday. Details will be posted on the meeting website as they become available: <http://homepage.mac.com/jacobsen/LORM2004/>

RSVPs Requested - In order to insure that we have enough seats for the meeting, please email Bob Jacobsen at jake@physics.berkeley.edu to let us know you're coming. Also mention where you're coming from, so we can put it on your name tag.

If you would like to present a clinic in any area of layout design or operations, please let us know. We're particularly looking for clinics that talk about how to go from a prototype to a design and then a layout.

The typical presentation will be 30 minutes long. Facilities will be available for viewing slides, overheads, and videotape if these are part of your presentation, but let us know ahead of time what you will need. My email is sneumann@pacbell.net

Of course there will be exhibits and displays, layout tours, layout planning help, a Birds of A Feather get together, and operation sessions. Hope to see you there.

PCR NMRA Coast Div. Meet & Auction on 7 Dec. continued

(Continued from page 1)

helping inventory this estate, all I can say is there's a LOT of stuff. With the brass alone, we're looking at running through at least three and possibly four auctions to move everything.

If you want to sell, just show up with a valid NMRA Membership card and see me to get a bidder's card. Once you've got that, you then get seller's cards from the head table (up to 25 items per seller) and pray that people want to buy what you brought to sell. When you show up,

I'll get you a copy of the auction rules and help you through the process.

The Coast Division Quarterly Meet and Auction will be on December 7th at the California School for the Deaf in Fremont (39350 Gallaudet Dr.) starting at 9:30 am. Refreshments will be available. Hope to see you there. Enjoy, Pat LaTorres duhnerd@pacbell.net

Just to add to Pat's note, the qualifications for participating in the auction are a little more strict. NMRA members who live

within the geographic area of the PCR must be PCR members to participate. NMRA members outside of the PCR do not have to belong to the PCR. There must be some reason for NMRA members in the PCR area to join the Region, and auction participation is one of them. Bottom line, if you live within the PCR, join us and support the Region and the Divisions. There is an application form on page 4 below to join both the PCR & NMRA if needed or send me an email at BobPCRCD@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Pacific Coast Region / National Model Railroad Association

LAST NAME: _____ FIRST NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ NMRA # (if a member): _____

FAMILY MEMBER NAME (s): _____

I want to become a member of the National Model Railroad Association and the Pacific Coast Region of the NMRA. I have checked below the type of membership I desire and have enclosed the proper amount in a check payable to: PCR-NMRA. I understand that membership in the Pacific Coast Region requires membership in the NMRA.

- ☐ PCR and NMRA for one year \$51.00
- ☐ PCR and NMRA for five years \$240.00
- ☐ PCR \$6 and NMRA \$23 Affiliate at \$29.00 (No Bulletin)
- ☐ PCR and NMRA YOUTH at \$36.00

- ☐ PCR only (requires NMRA membership # above) \$6.00
- ☐ PCR only - five years (requires NMRA # above for 5 yrs or life) at \$25.00
- ☐ PCR Family at \$1.00 (Must have Regular PCR member as sponsor)
- ☐ Check here if this is a renewal. PCR # _____

Life Memberships in both the NMRA and PCR are available. Contact the NMRA Home Office for NMRA actuarial Life quote and the PCR Member Services Chairman for PCR actuarial Life quote. Send Application form and remittance to: PCR Member Services, 530 Fig Tree Lane, Martinez, CA 94553. Allow 3-6 weeks for processing.

A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 3)

degree slant...whatever it takes to get the train under way again. Also in the case are the 4 1/2 lbs. of rule book he must carry which includes rules for CalTrain on the peninsula.

"Whenever you're ready."

"Seven O'clock straight up."

They go over the train statistics again, "Well, we got a big red," referring to the signal in front of them. This means getting on the phone to Denver to WS58 who takes the train over here from WS60.

"SP 7434...thank you kindly, got a green...high ball." The signal on the ground in front of us has changed to green while that on the upper stand protecting the siding remains red. The signal on the stand also states "Begin CTC." Mont starts to move his train and the gates go down at the crossing ahead of us as a throttle setting of 3 brings us to 20 mph. Ahead the next signal (2509) is framed by a highway bridge and the fog that has been creeping in gives it a slightly dispersed look rather than the usual sharp sentinel. We start the climb out of SLO past rodeo grounds where riders are practicing on their horses. Behind us our containers are outlined by lights from the prison. Fog moves in and out in patches as we get a double yellow at signal 2483, placing us into the siding at CHORRO.

As the fog is now increasing, signals are important in knowing when it is safe to proceed. We take the siding, still in fog, to wait for the eastbound which is coming from Santa Margarita. Because its crew had died on the hours-of-service law (12 hours), the crew that brought in the WSWC was "dogpatched" back over the grade to bring it in. Halfway through the siding we break out of the fog into a clear night and can see the outline of the hills against sky. On top is a radio tower with four reds and a yellow flashing on and off. We finally pull up to the red signal just east of tunnel #11 which guards the west end of the siding. Since Willy keeps track of all delays to our "hotshot," he marks that we came to a halt at 19:15 and we sit back to watch for the eastbound. Finally above us the triple headlights swing around the side of the hill and as they appear broadside we make out the lights on the trucks. As they work their way down the units disappear and then reappear lower and closer.

Willy opens the door and climbs down to be in position by the signal for the roll-by, standing 150 feet from the tracks in case there is anything loose on the train which unseen (especially at night) which could cause injury. At night the roll-by is a little different than during the day due to decreased visibility. Dragging brakes may be detected by smell, sticking or dragging wheels by sound, the lantern may show open containers or metal straps not fastened, a dragging chain may be throwing off sparks. The light from his lantern appears next to the signal pole and then we see the headlight of the lead unit emerge from the tunnel. It dims and the lit number board shows us that it is GP60 9809. As it passes Mont turns on his headlight to

inspect the passing cars and, looking back, we see its headlight playing on ours. Each train calls out a good roll-by over the radio.

We receive our green, Willy climbs back aboard and we are underway at 19:30. Because we are on an upgrade, we start out slowly and enter the tunnel at MP 246. When we emerge on the other side, the constellation Orion the Hunter is rising above the hills as if lying on his right side and the three stars making up his belt are midway between the radio tower and a distant signal showing green over red. This signal guards the next siding and is visible in the dark since it sits in the shadow of the hill. In the daytime its glow would be invisible at this distance but here as we take the curve at what is called the "Small Horseshoe" we can see several ahead as well. Willy looks back through the engineer's rear window to check on his train illuminated by moonlight and its reflection is shining white against the grayer grasses.

As we continue the climb Mont, who usually makes the trip on the east side of the coast run, is looking forward to visiting his daughter who goes to college in San Francisco. When he was starting out in engine service an old engineer said to him on a trip up the coast, "Kid, can you believe they pay me to do this?" At the time the statement didn't make much of an impression but riding along here in the moonlight he now appreciates just what the old timer meant. There is something about bringing a train through the hills with patches of fog in the hollows that in the daytime looks like a glassy pond and at night like cotton candy.

On the downgrade we now glide out of the last tunnel in dynamics with a green signal and pass under the Highway 101 bridges. we are now in track warrant territory and have eleven blocks since nothing will be headed our way until the BACIT which won't be on duty in Oakland until 9 pm and a light engine set somewhere ahead. We expect to arrive between 1:45 and 1:55 am and we will be meeting Amtrak later in the night. We will be going up the Mulford side, a route totaling 246 miles from SLO to Oakland. There are actually four routes of which this is the fastest. Route 2 takes us through Hayward to Centerville before Oakland adding on an additional four miles. Route 3, Hayward through Milpitas would take us over 15-Mph track and yard congestion which usually adds an extra hour or more and route 4 through Milpitas to Centerville and then Mulford tacks on an extra hour and forty-five minutes.

"25 for the yellow." On the front sheet of his orders Willy has written out all of the restrictions to make them easier to spot. We have a yellow flag ahead for the Grover Crossing where Maintenance of Way is doing some track work so Willy calls it out in advance. Since this is night, the crew is not actually out there so that he will not be contacting a foreman (unless noted on the sheet which gives the work times for the crews).

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Cajon Tales: Part 43 (Winter Wine)

By Francis (Pancho) L. Post ex-Cajon Hogger

Editors Note: Recently there has been a thread on Shipping Beer & Wine on the SANTAFE@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU discussion group. The following tale from Francis was posted to that group on 29 November and collaborated by Don Ross.

Well, I've resisted this long but now I'll have to share. I had fired one year on the Milwaukee and then gone to the Santa Fe in June '48. Business fell off in the winters back then so I would go back to Milwaukee and put my feet under Mother and Dad's dinner table while I was cut-off.

One winter, either '49 or '50, I was back home when the phone rang. I answered. It was Dad working the Capitol Drive job. It was COLD. One of the fellows on the crew noticed a tank with a big "bad order" tag on it and the smell of sweet wine. (Probably Port or Tokay) He came back to shanty and told the boys about it.

Dad said, "perfect; it's already registered as a "leaker" so let's get us some wine." He called me at home and told me to get the two-wheel trailer on the car, load up a good funnel, some hoses of different sizes, a dishpan and buy lots of jugs at the hard-

ware store and get down to Swamp 17 without wasting time. I asked if the car was down on Swamp 17; he told me, "not yet".

As I said before, it was COLD. The car had been barely seeping wine but after a few "rough joints" against some coal cars that had been standing overnight and were like "the immovable object" the leak became just about right to harvest.

They shoved her down to Swamp 17 where it was hidden by high brush and I began one of the most miserable jobs of my whole life; catching wine in a dishpan under the car, then pouring it through the funnel into the jugs.

Pappy was the most popular switchman in Milwaukee that winter and the boys bought me a few beers, too.

F.L. Post, ex-fireman, ex-switchman, and ex-hogger, presently, an old geezer.

P.S. With all the roller bearings now, you younger lads will never have to break two or three cars at a time off a

track after they've been really cold. Those "friction" bearings REALLY locked up in sub-zero weather!

I can verify Francis' story. I was a clerk on the Milwaukee at the time. In the winter of 1949 I worked as crew dispatcher at the Mitchell Yard office and the next winter I was demurrage clerk at A O Smith at North Milwaukee (one morning it was 30 below). I well remember the story of the leaker as it went through the grapevine. There was another story about wine shipped in barrels in box cars where some of the guys used a brace and bit to drill a hole through the floor and into the barrel and then use the dishpan, funnel, and jug routine.

Another old coot from Milwaukee

Don

I had NOTHING to do with any brace and bit and neither did my dad. That was thievery; exploiting a certified leaker was just good sense! (But yes, I heard about the drilling myself.) F.L. Post

A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 5)

Mont begins to slow our train which is rated for 50 mph but of course must follow speed board restrictions. When we hit the green flag on the other end of the restriction Mont hits the counter so that when the rear of the train passes he can go back up to the maximum authorized. Ahead crossing gates start to blink, their red lights sparkling like fireworks as they descend.

This being December we start to see Christmas lights on the houses beside the tracks and, with a green at MP 222, we pass the siding at Templeton with notch 4 keeping us at 40 mph. Through downtown Paso Robles we get a "no defects" from the detector and hit the horn as we pass Mission San Miguel.

On the west end of the coast route there are less of the undulations that make for fancy train handling on the east end. Of course, with our short stack train with its articulated cars, there are less problems and the engineer does not have the concern of slamming the conductor around in the caboose since he is seated next to him in the cab.

"SP detector milepost one nine six...no defects." The full moon is really bright now and the grass on the hills looks more like snow under the dark sky. At MP 193 the dynamics that have been keeping us under control are switched over to throttle and then back to the braking. we begin the RIOS block with a 50-40 speed board and a green signal ahead. As we enter the WUN Post

block there are 14 articulated flat cars parked on the siding to our right along with a work train.

Mont refers to MP 186 as his rest spot as notch 1 keeps the train at 40 mph with a little dip at San Ardo, two little dips after San Ardo and then to San Lucas where the speed limit picks up to 60. We can see the dip as the second signal down the track appears below the level of the signal in front of it as if on a roller coaster.

Mont puts it back on throttle as our short train does not produce the momentum that the trailing end of a longer one would. AT MP 183 we pass the spot where Holly Sugar had its beet dump.

"7434 West for WS58."

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A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 6)

"WS58." Tonight our dispatcher will be James Foster.

"7434 West releasing authority 6 blocks, Santa Margarita through Wun Post."

"Releasing authority 6 blocks, Santa Margarita through Wun Post." It is such a clear night and straight shot that we can look back along our short train and see the signal turn from red to green as we clear it. At San Lucas we hit the speed board giving us an increase to 70-60. Between mileposts 176 and 235 the maximum freight speed is 40 and after 176 it increases to 60 mph. It lowers to 40 mph through the "S" curves at Sweetwater and then returns to 60. "Yellow flag 35." Well, there are exceptions. The yellow flag gives Mont a two-mile warning to reduce speed.

"Green flag."

"Looking good...green to the rear." Commenting that the signal behind us has cleared. At King City our luck starts to change. The marine inversion layer that inflicts itself over the valley has struck again and we get patches of fog around MP 162.

"Green on 2." On the sweeping curve at night we can easily see that both signals ahead are green. Willy also takes advantage of the curve to look back along the train from the engineer's side and then we enter tunnel #5 which curves to the right. The fog is getting heavier but we can still make out the green signal ahead. By the time we hit MP 151 with another "S" sign it is like pea soup. An owl flashes by our headlight in search of mice that have burrowed into the wall of the bank to our right. It's almost as if we were climbing through a snow bank with an occasional emerald light saying, "OK, you can keep on coming."

Mont continues to sound the horn. In this fog he must know his track and how the grade works because aside from milepost numbers that show between the strokes of the windshield wipers he is not going to be given a lot of visual clues. Another "X" and another blast of the horn for a crossing.

Since he can no longer see farther back than the third unit, Willy is relieved when the detector at MP 127.1 gives a call of no defects along with our speed of 58 mph. This is lowered to forty as we hit a 60-40 through Salinas from MP 122 to 118 and then back up to 60. As we pass through town Mont is liberal with the horn. This is especially important through Salinas because of the homeless that live beside the tracks.

"70-60."

"Green." As we leave the Salinas Block we are back into CTC territory and Willy calls and releases 7 blocks. While on the radio he gets the news that the BACIT highballed out of Oakland at 10:45 p.m. and we will also be meeting the Santa Clara Turn at Logan or Romas around MP 96.

At MP 108 we pass a spot where a local farmer likes to mix his silage for cattle feed and out of the fog emerges a rather pun-

gent odor. Riding through the fog we must have faith in the dispatcher who becomes for the short time of our passage our God and protector. We must have faith that the path is cleared in front of us, that the signals are true, and that the rails are properly aligned since all we can do is move blindly ahead while in his hands. Apparently Jim Foster has done his job correctly since suddenly we see a headlight appear out of the fog in front of us. The other train dims its lights as we do ours. As it passes on the track to our left, we see it is the light-engine set we have been anticipating.

By MP 90 the fog turns to wisps so we can see the stars above and more than 10 feet of track ahead. By the time we pass MP 86 and another beet dump we are completely free of the fog. As we round the curve at MP 83 the sky ahead is lit by city lights in the distance and we pass the CalTrain yard at Gilroy. A street sign beside us shows highway travel would put us 76 miles out of San Francisco and 28 miles from San Jose. Speed boards start to fluctuate giving us 70-60, then 60-55, and back up to 79-60. With a green over red we stay on the main and at MP 65 start to pick up fog again.

Approaching Coyote we drop to 40 mph with a green over red. We are on the north track with the green and the south track is a red. In the evenings freight runs on the south track and commutes on the north but, as we are now past midnight, this does not apply.

"Flash on the yellow."

"Flash."

MP 59: We pass the CalTrain station at Blossom Hill. "Hard Yellow." At signal 573, Mont is slowing the train, anticipating a red, and as we pass the Capital station, sees a red signal ahead. Mont brings us to a stop and dims the headlight. Willy gets down on the ground again with his lantern and we settle down to wait for both the BACIT and the Salinas Warm Springs Turn. A headlight appears from the west coming out of the fog. A mix of conventional freight cars along with COFC and TOFC, the train sets off the detector and gets an axle count of 258 and a speed of 40 mph.

Willy is still out there at the required distance to wait for the Turn and we see his lantern shining. A few minutes later we see another headlight and with #3086 on the point the Salinas Turn passes us at what the detector determines to be 39 mph. Willy comes back on board and we move off toward a green signal and back onto single track as well as more fog.

"Red over green."

"SP detector milepost five one point zero...three six miles per hour...no defects.

"Green over red." By milepost 48 the fog is thick again and Willy calls out, "We got a high green." We pass CP Cahill and with bell ringing pass through the CalTrain Yard.

"Green again."

(Continued on page 8)

A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 7)

"Again." The signal up here are the triangular type set in a circular shield with green on the upper left, yellow upper right, and red bottom center.

"Green on the overhead." The signal bridge gives us a green. Counting over tracks and then signal lights lets us know which one pertains to us. We pass the old SP roundhouse at Santa Clara.

MP 46 puts us under another signal bridge and at College Park Amtrak #48 is waiting. We get authorization for two blocks and coming out of Santa Clara have a 60-50 speed board, a green signal, and windshield wipers attempting to keep the moisture off of our windows. For awhile we are again in the soup, crossing over shrouded inlets and watching signals suddenly appear. As quickly as it appeared the fog is gone and we have a clear view, a 70-60 board, and green signals ahead.

"Double yellow." Coming into MP 15.



In the late afternoon, we head east through the streets of Oakland .
Dave Crammer Photo Dec 96.



SP SW1500 passing the now gone College Park tower in Santa Clara. Dave Crammer Photo pre December 96.

"Bottom green." Mont slows down and we pass the sign ending Milford block and switch over to the north track.

"What's your location?" Willy is talking to the West Oakland yardmaster.

"We'll be adjacent to the coliseum in 10 seconds."

"OK, in at 1:25."

We pull slowly past a green signal at MP 117.

"OK, I've got a plan." Advises the yardmaster.

"OK, go ahead." The plan is for us to double over our train.

The longest track at Oakland is only 3,000 feet.

"Hard Basile, Ken Wilson, Hard Yellow." This changes to green at MP 8.9.

"Flash on the yellow."

"Flashing yellow." Coming through Jack London Square there are so many Christmas lights it is hard to pick out the descending crossing gates.

"Flashing middle red." We diverge to the left and then Willy is off and running down on the ground throwing switches. All of those stretching exercises went through on the trip up are now put to advantage. We advance as he checks switch alignments making sure we head up the correct track, his bobbing lantern giving away his location. The headlight shines on the sign that reads, "Southern Pacific Transportation, Oakland Intermodal Terminal."

Willy is back on board using the phone to talk to the yardmaster as we have placed our flats on the designated tracks, disconnected the power which is then placed on the diesel service tracks between the tower and the one-spot facility. From there it is a trip to the office to sign in and then off to the Best Western Thunderbird Inn to get some rest.

The next morning the fog has turned to a light drizzle and the San Jose Mercury is reporting that the previous day commuter trips were hazardous. Of course they weren't on rails and didn't

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A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 8)

have Jim Foster watching their path. In the yard the containers we dropped off are already being worked.

Up in the 40-foot tower, Yardmaster Ken Basile and lead carman Ken Wilson are looking down. They can see all of San Francisco across the bay. Four switch jobs are handling the day jobs with SW1500s moving the cars in what amounts to flat switching. To the east and to the left of his desk is the new one-spot and passenger car inspection tracks, to the north and behind him is the Amtrak facility which has taken over the diesel service facility that used to take care of SP units. Daily inspections are now made in the yard and fueling can be handled by truck; any extensive work requires a trip to Roseville.

At the new One-spot, which became operational in the first part of November 1995, 15 to 20 cars can be repaired in the course of a day using four jib cranes plus hydraulic jacks which can lift up a car for

wheel changes which can be done in as little as 15 minutes for inspection. The cars are moved into place by a fork lift. A retarder system, similar to those used on a hump, is used to grip the wheels and keep the car in place while the work is being performed. The forklifts can also be used in combination with what is termed a "man lift" to raise a carman into a better working position. A pad on the lift plate under the car keeps it from shifting as it is lifted eliminating the need to block the wheels. West of the one spot are the three tracks used to hold SP's passenger cars.

By the early afternoon San Francisco finally begins to emerge from the clouds that have kept it covered all day and closer at hand we can make out the funnel of a K-Line ship. The trains being built this afternoon are the OANSF (Oakland to Norfolk Southern), the OAPTT (Oakland to Portland), and of course a BACIT.

It is 4:01 in the afternoon as #8563 leads the EUWSM (Eugene, Oregon to Warm Springs manifest) past the yard on the tracks to the north. Once it reaches Warm Springs, it will drop its cars and pick up a new consist before continuing south (east) becoming the WSWC (Warm Springs to West

Colton) but keeping the same crew that climbed aboard in Oakland and will be taking it as far south as San Luis Obispo. It is 4,845 feet including the units, 54 loads and 3 empties, and 5,998 tons. Today the engineer is Bill Montier III who has been with SP for 17 years and lives in Castro Valley. His conductor today is James Mebane who lives in Hayward and has been with SP 23 years.

"Low yellow," a red over yellow. We pass through Jack London Square, this time in daylight, past the newly rebuilt Oakland Yard where a single SW1500 is switching and then past the Coliseum where the new construction is going on has not helped the Raiders' performance over what it was in Los Angeles.

"No defects...no defects," as we start the single track an MP 14 on the Hayward Line and a speed board of 79-50. A reflection ahead looks almost like a headlight but it is merely the setting sun shining off a window. The signal at MP 16 has us at green and then a green over red framed by a bridge crossing over the tracks. At MP 23 we maintain our speed on the downgrade with the dynamics at 6 and hear another, "No defects."

"Flashing yellow."

"Flashing yellow." The throttle is now at 8 as we are on an upgrade at MP 25 with the speed down to 45 mph but we can see the track ahead starting to descend.

"Hard yellow."

"Hard yellow." We can hear over the ra-

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Engineer Bill Montier III taking the EUWSM towards Warm Springs. Dave Crammer Photo Dec 96.



Conductor James Mebane. Dave Crammer Photo Dec 96.

Line Art

Many of the line art items used in this newsletter are courtesy of Ken Houghton Rail Images or came from www.rhhistorical.com



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A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 9)

dio another crew switching somewhere out in the ether.

"That'l do."

"Back' em up." Bill has the throttle in setup at MP 27.5 and as we approach the UP/SP junction, a dynamic setting of 6 has the speed at 25 and we come into Niles and then cross the junction with yellow over red.

"SP 8563 East calling Warm Springs Tower...coming at you."

"Where you at?"

"Coming across the UP right now." We are down to 20 mph on the single track with a hard yellow shining out from the signal over a mile ahead at MP 32.4. A dog, busy sniffing the track ahead, climbs off the roadbed at the last second.

"SP detector milepost three one point one...two seven miles per hour...two four

six total axles...no defects...no defects." We hear the Warm Springs tower tell a second train that she will be sending us into #2 track.

"Red signal."

"Red signal."

"Warm Springs Tower...permission to enter yard...come on into track #2."

"Permission to enter the yard...OK." Off to our left is the UP main line toward Milpitas. Ahead a switch diamond reflects the headlight as bright orange lets us know that we are lined to the right track. Bill goes from dynamics to setup then off as we let the rear push us forward at 10 mph and then puts the throttle at 2. "Come on down James...all lined for 2." As another crew has made life easy for conductor Mebane.

MP 35 has auto racks standing to our left as we continue to move to the right and pass units #8064 and #8497 which are waiting for us to clear so they can head west.

"Come see me up in my office when you get in." This to Jim from the yard clerk. He climbs down with his lantern and radio as we prepare to come to a stop. As he heads for the office we hear over the radio #8064 getting its authorization to proceed. With our head end at the east end of the yard we can look to our right at the hills which are still outlined in Orange from the setting sun and the lights of incoming planes that appear as bright stars. Finally in accordance with our instructions, we cut off our cars and then back down into the yard to pick up our new consist.

"That'l do, back'em up when ready...ten to a joint."

"Three to go."

"You're looking good...you got a good long two there."

"Long one."

"OK, can you see me?" This refers to the lantern this time as the sun is now gone.

"Yeah."

"OK, take'em ahead...that'll do, 8563.

OK, back'em up, 8563."

As we back through the yard, the curves on the track are illuminated by the overhead yellow lights reflecting off the shiny surface and the roadbed outlines them in black.

"OK, just come on back, everything is lined up."

"OK, about ten to a hook."

"Five to go."

"OK, about 3-1/2 to a joint."

"Two to go."

"One more."

"...and a half." We are below the "tower" now since this portion of the yard is below the mainline. However we have plenty of power and with a HPT rating of 4.8 will not require helpers to get over the final grade after Santa Margarita.

"Back'em up, 8563...about 15 to 18 to a joint." Having picked up the first cut, we must now back down against the second. Switching back and forth over the highway, we have to our left the UP bridge.

"About nine to a hook."

"Five to a hook."

"Two now, 8563."

"One more."

"That'l do, 8563."

"OK, air time, 8563, air time." The ETD goes onto the rear and after the required test we pull out with the car department doing the roll-by. We are now the 1-WSWCM-5 with five loads, 38 empties, 1844 tons, 2758 feet and are rated at a top speed of 55 mph with a green signal ahead.

"Good roll-by, little engine that could."

We pass empty auto racks to our right with logos for CSX, GT, SF, UP, NS, and CP Rail at MP 37 and hear over the radio, "That'l do, 7126," for the Hayward



With a yellow over red we will be staying on the main track rather than diverging to the right ahead as we approach Warm Springs.
Dave Crammer Photo Dec 96.

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A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 10)

Turn working ahead of us. Jim calls the dispatcher, who tonight is Amelia Boone, for block authority and she calls #7126 to see if they can release the Milpitas Block.

"...apply rule 6.322 at MP 41.11 Eastward one block Milpitas." This means that we are to check to see if the gates are broken at this location and if they are not working to report it. With the authorization, we get up to speed as a gull flaps in front of our headlight. We pass the gates, observe them operating properly, and call Amelia in Denver to let her know.

"SP 8563 east calling Amtrak San Jose Control." Unlike earlier this morning there will be passenger trains out there.

"San Jose Control."

"This is SP 8563 coming your way via Milpitas."

"Are you there now?"

"Not yet."

"OK you'll be following #62 (CalTrain) out of Tamian." We hear #4827 (San Jose switch job 721) talking to control from the Cal-Train Peninsula Line and let him know that #75 is past him.

"#4827 has permission to come out of Lawrence and make reverse move." We are down to 10 mph through here and ahead of us someone has just placed an object on the track and then walked away as we approach. When we reach the end of the Milpitas block, Jim is down with his keys to change the switch, which if left alone would have sent us to the right. Unlike the other two legs of the wye that were once controlled by the now closed College Park Tower, this has always been a manual switch.

Coming around the curve the high signal is green and the bottom 2 red. We will remain on our north track and watch as a CalTrain in shove mode meets us headed west on the next track over with its cab car illuminated in red and white reflective tape from our dimmed headlight. We pass the classic Cahill Street San Jose depot, now the Amtrak and CalTrain station, and another CalTrain is shoving back toward us and then Jim releases the Milpitas block.

"Green." At MP 48.

"Green."

At Tamien Station we are at 35 mph and Jim announces it is coffee time, producing his special brew of hazel-nut with an aroma that fills the cab as he passes it around. This keeps things occupied until a flashing yellow at Blossom Hill (59A) and hear a detector go off ahead of us with a speed of 7 mph indicating that an Amtrak may be headed our way.

"Hard yellow."

"Hard yellow."

"Green."

"Green." This change means that the detector must have been reporting on the eastbound out of San Jose and then we hit single track again with the speed board upgrade to 70~60.

Amelia calls to check on our maximum train speed and on learning that we have a top of 55 asks, "Do you think you can make it to Gilroy?" "OK." We continue on into the night as Amelia watches over us from her screen in Denver. MP 67 at 55 mph.. MP 69.755 mph and a no defects. past Morgan Hill with the at 3 where a heavier train would have had us in dynamics. Over the radio we hear Amelia talking to #7126 East, the Hayward Turn, as she gets him ready to depart Warm Springs.



Dispatcher Amelia Boone. Dave Crammer Photo Dec 96.

"Flashing yellow."

"flashing yellow." At MP 78 and we get a speed board dropping us to 50 and then 35 mph.

"Yellow over yellow." We pass the CalTrain yard at 35 mph and then go back to our max at the next board.

"Red over green."

"Red over green." We go off onto the siding and hear the detector go off ahead of us telling us Amtrak is headed our way. As we move through the siding we see its dimmed light and we make the meet at 55 mph. Amelia has hit it on the button.

Then a 25 mph speed board gives us two miles to slow down. "Hard yellow." At MP 852. "Red." We pull up to the signal, dim the headlight and wait to see if this is for the Rock Train, the CIBAT, or Just the timing device. Over the radio we hear a westbound coming into Sergeant and Jim gets down to give the roll-by. While he is on the ground Amelia calls to let us know she will be taking us to Watsonville and then hold us for the CIBAT. Ahead a headlight appears under the bridge and a train rockets past.

"Lookin' good and FRED is blinkin'."

"Green signal." We go back on the main and face a 35 speed board and go past the beet loading platform. To our left Highway 101 has taillights and headlights streaming past.

"...MP 86.8 two eight miles per hour.. no defects." We continue with green signals and tonight the reflected foliage is remarkably still indicating there is no wind but we have started to pick up some haze and 1 MP 92 the signal head is wrapped f-fog. We pass rock car (for ballast) sitting on the siding around 92.5, hit horn and see the red flashing of crossing gates descend in the mist.

Jim calls the Salinas job to find out where the best place will be to stop him in Watsonville since, with all of this fog, plan-

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A Trip In the Fog continued

(Continued from page 11)

ning ahead is a safety precaution well worth implementing. Tonight it can be especially crucial since with a speed board of 75-55 we are essentially visually blind as to what is happening around us and must rely heavily on the radio to communicate with other trains and the dispatcher. In this case another train has to pass in front of us.

"We're on the west end of Watsonville." Jim is communicating our location to all interested parties. We can see the window wipers sweeping across the glass in front of us but the rest is opaque. Over the radio the necessary moves are coordinated. Amelia makes sure we are stopped and contacts the other train.

"We Just need you to stop." From the other train. We are talking to Eddie Mesa who is the regular conductor on the Salinas-Warm Springs Turn.

"OK, Eddie, we stopped." Amelia is contacted so that she can give the actual permission to cross. "Permission to cross over into the yard and call in clear." We sit in the fog and wait for them to cross over and report clear.

Finally, "8563 East...seven blocks Salinas through San Ardo." "SP 7621 straight shot to San Jose and no work.. is that correct?" "Straight shot." At 966 with a green signal we are at 10 mph and make the roll-by in the fog. Clear now, we proceed and then stop at the east end of Watsonville and then hear over the radio, "MP102A. . .two zero miles per hour.. .no defects." This is the westbound we are waiting for. There is the sound of a horn and then around the corner a headlight appears to our left with a GP60 on the point of the CIBAT which glides past and then our headlight is back on to display the TOFC and COFC cargo and make the roll-by. After the roll-by Jim goes into the office and over the phone calls Amelia who lets him know that we will be meeting another westbound, which is just leaving San Luis Obispo, somewhere down the line.

"Green signal."

"Green signal." And it is back into the soup. This holds until we come over the top at MP 108 and can see lights on the horizon and escape the feeling of traveling through a tunnel. At Salinas the speed board goes back down to 60-40 where we end CTC and enter the Salinas Block. Above us is that full moon we saw last night and we pass the Spreckels Block, Chualar Block, and then are back to 70-60.

Finally we come to a halt at MP 196 as the crossing gates ahead of us went down and then returned to an upright position with its detectors sensing no movement. Ahead the signal now displaying green is bright enough to give the ground a greenish cast while we sit on the siding at the end of the block. Under wide open spaces with the moon overhead turning the hills to silver and a feeling of isolation as not even the lights of houses are showing up as distant sparks. Our lights are on dim and somewhere out there in the night the CIBAT is headed our

way. Bill takes advantage of the wait to climb down and inspect his units. The signal changes to yellow and then red meaning they are getting nearer though their headlight has still not appeared. After consultation with the dispatcher and the CIBAT, Jim lines the switch to run them around us on the siding since we are sitting on the main. His lantern is bobbing up and down as he walks along the roadbed and, after making the switch alignment, calls the CIBAT to let them know they are lined into the siding at Bradley.

"We do appreciate it" Their headlight is now visible. Jim's lantern crosses to the north side. Crossing gates illuminate and descend as the CIBAT goes from three glaring headlights to one dim one and units #8493 and #8634 glide toward us trailing Maersk containers. As he is passing' Bill is on the phone to the dispatcher to see if he can get block authority as soon as he clears.

"She looks good.. .she's flashing. "As they pass our rear end. Bill gets permission for three blocks, McKay through Santa Margarita, and, as the CIBAT's rear end passes, the signal turns to green.

"How about a roll-by on the flasher?"

"Highball on the flasher."

"Thank you."

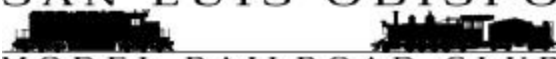
"And you have a real good trip."

As we pull forward, Jim is at foot of the signal to our left and climbs aboard. Bill brings us back to 45 mph by the time we clear the next signal and Jim gives an arrival estimate in SLO of between 12:45 and 1 am. We should have a straight shot now with only green signals and soon are past the San Miguel Mission. As we climb toward Santa Margarita, the trees appear as ghostly apparitions that seem to want to reach out and touch the cab and then we are into the tunnels that will help us make the grade. There is the squeal of flanges on the curves and, with a 40 mph speed-board, a detector gives us 39 mph. Owls have replaced the gulls and we get the El Camino Block from WS-58.

Once again we enter San Luis Obispo city limits as Eucalyptus leaves are flying past like snowflakes. We can see all the way down the grade toward the ocean. The helpers we didn't need are sitting west of the depot and the crew that will take the train the rest of the way is already waiting at the depot. Starting out in Eugene the units have become a second train at Warm Springs. After a service stop at Colton, they will continue somewhere else across the Southern Pacific system. After they have had their rest, the crew that brought it down from Oakland will be ready for another train. That is the business of railroad-ing.

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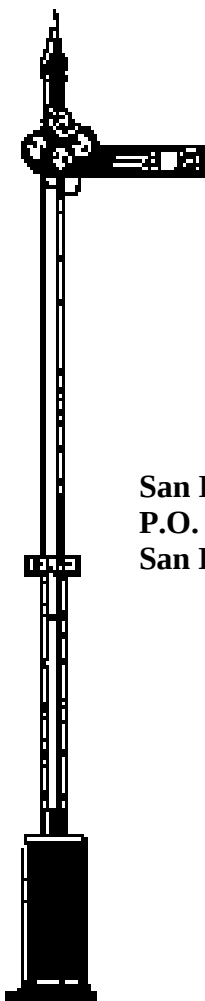
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