

Snowshed

June, 2012

Volume 5 Number 2

Museum Status

Don Davis

Just a brief note this quarter, summer is into full swing, visitors are back in Truckee, preparations for the 4th of July parade are underway, Truckee Thursdays are happening, the weather is good, what else could I ask for? O. K. a few more docents would be great.

The roomette project continues to move along becoming one of our best exhibits. The TV is installed and the video is nearing completion. The mirrors, sink, toilet, fan, and most of the small bits are installed bringing us close to the finish line. The major remaining ask is to develop interpretive labels to help the visitor understand what he is seeing. We have ideas for content but could really use someone with graphic arts skills and

experience with Adobe Illustrator or similar graphics software to help put them together. If you would like to help, please shoot me an E-mail. (ddavis@ttd.com).

Among the several rewards we receive for working on the museum are the conversations we have with visitors. Nearly every week, someone comes with a story to tell. One of the more interesting recent visitors was a lady who had been the Baxter postmistress and whose grandfather had been the Boca station-master. Turns out she has become my neighbor just down the street so hopefully we can learn more. Check out Ron Mason's article elsewhere in this issue of Snowshed for another example. Lastly, please come see us and give us your feedback on how we are doing.



News Flash!

- ◆ Being a Docent is Fun and Rewarding
- ◆ Society to Participate in 4th of July Parade
- ◆ Society to Hold Membership meeting Saturday, August, 18
- ◆ Work Progresses on Interim Museum Sleeper Exhibit

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Why Become A Docent?

Ron Mason

Webster describes a docent as a teacher or a lecturer. Volunteering as a docent in the Truckee Donner Railroad Society Museum is an opportunity to share information, local history, and experiences with visitors in an informal manner. There are no tests or expectations, just a desire to relate to the visitors and promote the purpose and future plans for the museum. As a docent you will encounter all ages, interest levels, and personalities; some will eagerly listen to your presentation, others will look around, ignore the donation box and walk out without saying a word. Others will tell you about their railroad experiences and those of family members and friends. Visitors come from many varied backgrounds and places including foreign lands and states. Visitors I have met included an engineer with BNSF, an author and expert on railroad standard pocket watches, and local residents with ties to railroading back to the late 1800s. For the docent this is indeed a rewarding, informative and fun experience. At the end of the day after you have turned out the lights, locked the doors, turned in the keys, and think about it – who really was the docent – then you know it was a successful day.

President's Report

Jim Hood

The Truckee Donner Railroad Society (TDRS) plans to enter a float in the Truckee 4th of July parade again this year. We will be reenacting the signing of the Pacific Railroad Act which occurred on July 1, 1862 when President Lincoln signed the act that authorized the construction of a railroad from Council Bluffs, Iowa to Sacramento, California, thus, initiating the construction of the final link of a system of Railroads connecting the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast.

One of the purposes of participating in the 4th of July parade is to continue to raise awareness of TDRS in our "extended community". The parade is a very well attended event and affords us an excellent opportunity to introduce ourselves to a broad segment of the population. As we start a multiphase, multiyear plan to accomplish our objectives, we will need the support of a significant segment of our population, and building awareness of our organization at this time is critical to accomplishing our goal. We received very positive feedback regarding our float last year and plan to continue with this segment of our public awareness program at least through 2018; the 150th anniversary of the first "through" train arriving in Truckee.

We will be calling an annual meeting on Saturday August 18 at 4:00 PM at Jim Hood's to report on our accomplishments and to elect a board of directors for the next two years. All active members will be receiving an invitation to the meeting and we encourage you to attend. Info on the meeting and directions to Jim's can be found on the Society's web site. A nominating committee is at work to provide a recommended list of people for the Board and open nominations will be accepted at the meeting. The next two years is a critical time for our organization since we anticipate that we will start construction of the next phase of our museum project. It is imperative that we have a dedicated, "working" Board to be able to accomplish our objectives. If anyone would like to volunteer to be on the Board or knows of a person that should be, please email me at jim.hood7914@att.net.

Historic railroad tour at the summit tunnels ~ Saturday, September 1

Tales of the "City of San Francisco" buried in the snow and the building of the summit railroad tunnel.

Did you know it was Truckee's doctor who opened the bar for the snowbound passengers of the City of San Francisco? As Southern Pacific's physician for the Truckee area, Dr. Laurence Nelson was called out to assist the stranded passengers. He and a dog team, with their trainer, were taken by a rescue train out of Truckee close to the buried train. Unfortunately, the snow was such that the dog team could not go any further and Dr. Nelson was forced to snowshoe the rest of the way to the train.

When he reached it, he found that the only physician-passenger on the train – Dr. Walter Roehll had closed the lounge car bar. Dr. Roehll was concerned that alcohol would depress the body's ability to withstand the cold. To the delight of some of the passengers, Dr. Nelson thought the morale advantage clearly outweighed other considerations and ordered the bar reopened.

Back in 1952 the streamliner "City of San Francisco" was the luxury way to travel from Chicago to San Francisco. Airplanes were still a bit cramped and most flew low and gave a bumpy ride. A number of the passengers were on the way to the Republican National Committee meeting in San Francisco that nominated Eisenhower for president. In addition, there were a number of soldiers bound for the Korean war.



When you join us for our tour of the summit tunnel on September first, Barbara Czerwinski, who has researched these stories, will relate these and others during our tour. Jerry Blackwill will also describe the efforts to drill through the Sierra granite and construct the first United States transcontinental railroad. As we walk through the tunnel, we'll hear the story of the most dangerous explosive – nitroglycerin. Then we'll see "the Chinese Wall," what's left of the Lincoln Highway, and the remains of Truckee's "great turkey theft."

Please join us. We will meet at 10AM in the parking lot across from Donner Ski ranch off old highway 40. Bring flashlights for the tunnel walk.

Come Explore the Archeology of Truckee's Logging railroads

Joint Truckee Donner Railroad Society/ Truckee Donner Historical Society tour

Saturday, August 18

Did you know there were four logging railroads north of Boca reservoir? Come with us and see the traces of the Sierra Nevada Wood and Lumber Company, Boca & Loyalton, and the Verdi Lumber Company logging rail roads. The first, The



Sierra Nevada Wood and Lumber Company had narrow gauge tracks laid principally on the west side of the Little Truckee valley. The tracks and locomotives were moved to Hobart Mills in 1896 after all the available timber in Incline Village had been harvested.

Nelson Van Gundy will show us the remaining vestiges of these railroads including the old locomotive shops at Hobart Mills, the trestles of the Sierra Nevada Wood and Lumber Company.

This narrow gauge railroad hauled logs down to the Hobart Mills sawmill. The timber was cut to size, and then the standard gauge Hobart Southern railroad hauled the wood to the Southern Pacific railroad connection near the present rail yard in Truckee. Many remnants of the railroad trestles still exist and we will stop and inspect them. We will stop and see the foundations of the Hobart Mills locomotive shops. Not far from these shops, we will also see remains of the flat bed logging cars. As we explore the valley, we'll come upon evidence of other railroads.

The third, the Verdi Lumber railroad came from the east out of Nevada. The track wound up the Dog Valley old emigrant route and then crosses the other two railroads near the center of the Little Truckee River valley. The steep grades up and over the pass from Verdi required the low gears of Shay locomotives. The Verdi Lumber Company operated this railroad from 1900 until the forests were exhausted in 1927.

The last logging railroad was the Boca & Loyalton railroad. It ran from what's today the base of Boca dam north for 46 miles through the Little Truckee valley past the town of Loyalton. The railroad was opened in 1901 and by 1908 all the useful timber between Boca and Loyalton had been cut down. We will end our trip viewing the ice house and railroad foundations of Boca.

We recommend hiking gear: good boots or hiking shoes are a minimum. This is a backwoods adventure, so come dressed comfortably and prepared for an expedition. We will hike a couple of miles [broken into smaller segments], and the trip will cover 40-50 miles of paved highway, USFS system roads, some 4 wheel drive trails, and old railroad roadbed.

Cameras are recommended. This trip usually takes from 4-6 hours, depending on road and trail conditions, questions, photo opportunities, debates, wildflowers, serendipitous finds, etc., and is never the same twice. We will never be more than 30 miles from Truckee. Meet at 10 AM at the Truckee RR Museum next to the Depot.

Truckee Donner Railroad Society

Society Mission:

To preserve, interpret, and educate the public about rail-roading life and history in the Truckee region including its contribution to Truckee and the Nation. Specifically, depict railroad involvement in local industry through the acquisition, preservation, and restoration of relevant equipment, documents, and artifacts all to be part of a permanent museum facility in downtown Truckee.

Board of Directors:

Jim Hood—President

Bob Bell—Vice President/
Treasurer

Ed Czerwinski—Secretary

Nelson Van Gundy —
Historian

Jerry Blackwill

Don Clukey

Don Davis

Steve Disbrow

Ted Owens

Truckee Railroad museum Vision:

Keeping Truckee railroads alive!

Railroads of the Truckee area played a significant role in founding and developing the town of Truckee.

From the blasting of black powder in the granite over Donner Lake, to the hissing of the first steam coming in to town, to whistles of lumberjacks in the mountains, to the crack of ice being loaded in the reefers, and tourists flocking to share the beauty of the area, the Truckee Railroad Museum tells the story.

- ◆ A place to Discover
- ◆ A place to Enjoy
- ◆ A place to Interact

Truckee Donner Railroad Society
P.O. Box 3838
Truckee, Ca 96160

www.truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.com
501(c) 3 non-profit organization

Current Projects Seeking Support

- ◆ Caboose Museum Interior
- ◆ Crane Rehabilitation
- ◆ Rotary Restoration
- ◆ Sleeper Restoration
- ◆ Switcher Operational repair
- ◆ Internet Book Sales

If you are able to support any of these projects with your time, talent or dollars, please contact us.

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