



From the President



Have you ever seen a year that won't go away without kicking and screaming? *"These are the times that try men's souls"* was the opening line in Thomas Paine's *"The American Crisis"*. Originally published on December 19th, 1776. In 2020, that line couldn't be truer than if we were back in 1776 regardless of what side of the political persuasion you may lean towards. A crazy election year that might not end for weeks, if not months after the November 3rd election. Now add to that craziness a pandemic that appears to be on the rise again, and we have a year that is, at best, break-even for some of our operations (fingers crossed). For many though, it's a complete bust. With November 1st being daylight savings, the good news, you get an extra hour of 2020. Yeah.

There are some operations out there that are going forward with Polar while following their own state and local restrictions. I do not doubt that it's a difficult decision that continues to keep those organizations up at night. For some, they're out of options, as their ability to stay in business, is in question.

So what do we look like on that backside of 2020 and potential part of 2021? How do we keep the lights on, volunteers engaged, insurance premiums paid, cars maintained, locomotives in compliance, track in a safe condition, and the many other cogs in this gear that encompasses our industry?

Personally, I'm looking forward to a good reset in March of 2021 as we come together in person, virtually, or both to begin the process of climbing out of this hole. It will be a time to come together to share in our struggles and solutions and for many of us, it can't come quick enough.

As we start this month, I want to remind you as I do every year to take the time to Honor our Veterans. The sacrifice of our men and women deserves our love and admiration. November 11th is their day and as Mark Twain once said, *"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear-not absence of fear"*. I believe that sums up the character of our Veterans, *resistance to fear, and the mastery of that fear*. I believe we all can learn from that as we enter into this month of Thanksgiving of 2020.



Be Safe My Friends,
W. Roger Fuehring
President, RPCA



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

2021 RPCA CONFERENCE SCHEDULED MARCH 4-7 IN GEORGIA! HOSTED BY SAM SHORTLINE EXCURSION TRAIN



Thank you if you responded to our survey of attendance to the March Conference. If you have not submitted your survey Please do so. We are working on finalizing plans.

We will be staying at the Lake Blackshear Resort located at Georgia Veterans State Park, just down the road from the SAM Shortline Excursion Train, in Cordele, GA.

Current Plans Include:

- Friday Excursion Train to Plains Georgia
- Friday night Banquet, Hospitality area
- Saturday night Dinner Train Ride on Rare Mileage
- Hands-on Mechanical Sessions at the SAM yard
- Seminars and Workshops
- Vendors
- Members Meetings, Elections

*The resort is so large that we can maintain social distancing. The conference will be held in compliance with all Georgia Covid-19 rules and regulations at the time of the event.

The Atlanta airport is roughly 2 hours from the resort (and plane tickets are a great deal right now). Rental cars are available.

More details on pricing, registration, schedules and transportation will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

Chris Lockwood
Manager, SAM Shortline

Host Hotel - Lake Blackshear Resort

located in Georgia Veterans State Park Cordele, Georgia

The room rate: \$119.00 Per Night with an additional resort fee \$15.00 per night. There are 25 rooms on hold for the start of reservations. We can add more rooms along with cottages. Right now RPCA is the only event scheduled. Cancellations or changes received 7 days or more before arrival date will be accepted without charge.

Reminder of Nomination and Election of Directors

Nominations of candidates for Director begin November 4, 2020 and will end on January 18, 2021. Directors are elected for a three-year term beginning March 7 and ending at the Annual Members Meeting in 2024. Normally Directors meet in person twice a year. The main mid-year BOD meeting has a compensation arrangement for all directors and officers attending of up to \$500 to help defray travel and lodging expenses. There is no financial arrangement for the Annual Conference BOD meeting or virtual meetings. There are three seats up for election: those held by Judy Gray, Ray Kammer and Jon Clark. All have indicated they will seek reelection.

Please consider running for Director, particularly if you believe you have the talent or expertise to benefit our Alliance.

You may self-nominate or someone else may nominate you by contacting Burt Hermei, Vice President at cbhermei@pacbell.net or 714-264-9167.

SAFETY



FADING DAYLIGHT

Deep down I am a sun worshipping westerner. Born and raised in Pueblo, Colorado, I love the sunshine. Pueblo's motto: 320 days of sun and 365 days of fun. I am also a fan of daylight savings time. My preference is to have the late afternoon sunshine at 6 PM as it has a warming effect on me, rather than a setting sun at 5 PM. The first Sunday of November is the date for setting our clocks back one hour as those states with DST return to standard time. This year November 1st is the end of DST.

Sounds pretty innocuous as we have performed this ritual for many decades now. However, there are some considerations to keep in mind. First, with the onset of darkness earlier in the afternoon, our commutes and drive time coincides with this fading daylight. This means that we need to be more attentive as we start using the headlights to shine our way home in the evening. As the natural light is fading and we turn to the lamps in the headlights, we should be aware of the distances and limitations of these artificial light beams.

Other factors come into play when we lose this daylight for our commutes. Weather can come into play as snow and rain can cut down the distance we can see ahead. Likewise, a dirty windshield from slush and mush can cut down this line of sight.

Our circadian rhythm can also kick in about this time of year. As darkness starts to fall, we might feel some drowsiness setting in just in time for our drive home. One study has shown that about 60% of drivers experience drowsiness while behind the wheel. This can be severe enough to have the equivalent effect of approximately 3 beers.

As we switch from DST to standard time, please be aware of some of the factors which can make all of us more vulnerable to accidents. Stay awake, alert and let those headlights light the way home safely. In the meantime, please continue to social distance, wear a mask and wash those hands. Staying safe is everyone's job.

Gary Carter



In a letter to Congress, Amtrak has requested up to \$4.857 billion for fiscal 2021 — an increase from its previous request for pandemic-related aid to supplement its usual funding — and warns of more cuts without such aid. Without additional funding, it says, potential impacts include the reduction of corridor train service and deferred capital spending, which could lead to the loss of an additional 2,400 jobs.

Amtrak is projecting fiscal 2021 ridership of just 9 million, a 72% decline from 2019's record 32.5 million passengers, CEO William Flynn told members of the Senate Commerce Committee, who expressed skepticism and concern over the move to three-day-a-week service for most long-distance trains. Flynn qualified his estimate by saying that the assumptions are based on an effective and widely-distributed vaccine becoming available by the middle of 2021.

At that low passenger level, revenues would come in at just \$598 million, 75% below 2019's \$2.4 billion. Without drastic cuts to schedules and staffing that Amtrak has begun to implement, Flynn said the railroad would burn through \$250 million a month in cash. He says that Amtrak was on a path to insolvency if that continued.

That it has been 15 years since the *Sunset Limited* last ran east of New Orleans due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina, in what was supposed to be a temporary discontinuance, haunts members of Congress, raising fears that recent service cuts may also become permanent.

Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) worries that in the absence of reliable, daily train service, people would choose other travel modes and may not return to Amtrak when full service is restored.

Flynn said the company would evaluate ridership and finances in February to make any adjustments in schedules for the May timetable and insisted Amtrak would restore daily long-distance service "when financially possible."

Lack of funding for capital projects could cause a further 700 layoffs, with 1,600 more due to lose their jobs without additional funding to maintain state services. Amtrak is currently furloughing 2,000 union workers and 100 managers, bringing the potential total to 4,400.

C.U.P.S.

Cab Unit Preservation Society



On November 7th, 2000 I was working in Moorefield, West Virginia. The company that Cathy and I owned had been awarded a contract to do a significant amount of work to former CSX F-unit, 116. The work was part of a grant to return the locomotive to service as C&O 8016. Work included new wheels, rebuilt brake rigging, injectors, blowers, air brake work, and its new paint/lettering. 8016 retained that paint scheme until November of 2017 when it was returned to its Clinchfield 800 heritage. The work we did was with the help of the Potomac Eagle Crew who utilized the locomotive for many years after the work was completed.

The evening of November 7th became a long and sleepless night as that was election night between George W. Bush and Al Gore. I remember staying up late in the hotel waiting for the election results before I went to sleep. The next morning we were lifting the locomotive in the SBVR shop and rolling the trucks out. I don't drink coffee but, I was that morning as we headed off to work. After all, this was four individual air jacks that we operated independently. No two jacks ran at the same speed. We had to raise the locomotive high enough to roll the trucks under the fuel tank for removal. There were a few scary moments but all turned out well. What did I learn? Don't stay up late waiting on election results. Besides, working on cab units is more exciting, you want to be awake for the experience. I'm looking for a volunteer that might have a little more time than I do to take over an important project. We would like to put together a list of all the cab units out there (regardless of condition) much like the old passenger car index guides of the late '70s and early '80s. Pamm & Dan have given me some information in addition to what I've found through internet searches but it's a small dent in the

information that we need. I would like to start with all E's, F's, PA's, FA's, BL2's, and sharks. The last two are pretty easy but the others will take a lot of research. This would include CF7's. If you are interested, please send me an email at wwrogerf@aol.com.

Thank You
W. Roger Fuehring
CUPS

UMLER REPORT



Anyone who is a certified air tech member of the RPCNB CATs needs to update their records here at the office if they recently re-certified their training. Please send a scan of both sides of the card. Rules reminder: RPCNB can only upload air dates for the RPCNB CATs, except in the case of an Amtrak inspection. Many of the Amtrak Inspectors are RPCNB CATs, but not all. The tale out there is NOT true that we can do it for anyone. It is also not true that we can upload for a RPCNB CAT whose training was not PABCO or Amtrak! If your last Amtrak inspection was done by

an Amtrak trained and certified inspector that refused, or is in an Amtrak shop and not allowed, to join the RPCNB CATs, send us the signed, dated and fully filled in Amtrak air test form, and we will upload it at your cost.

Don't forget to start collecting the CID code from freight car/loco common parts that are now required. If your passenger unique parts have a code on them, capture that and send it also.

Umler is still changing. Now that car cushion gear is a required field, and starting in January 2021 the component ID (CID) will be required, along with other passenger car components, more needs to be done. If you have one of the few passenger cars that has a Freightmaster or similar in one or both ends, need the data! Now there is room for the next change with this one finishing out. We have faith that they will NEVER stop making changes. Job security if nothing else.

Communication notes:

1. Please if calling us, have your phone provide caller ID. We get between 30 and 80 crap calls a day that if we don't recognize the number or name, we don't answer. RPCNB is a company, and everybody out there wants to sell us something, provide employees, or provide a loan to expand. If you are calling from a phone that uses a computer to generate the call, it shows us a "V" number on the caller ID, and we don't answer it because 99.999999...into infinity percent of the time those are spam robo calls. If we don't answer you immediately, please leave a clear message. We do call back.

2. If you are emailing, please make sure your return email address is not a bunch of numbers, because we get about 100 day, including weekends, from spammers with addresses like that and who don't follow the regulations and provide an opt out. Please use your name.

3. And, be advised, USPS (snail mail) that used to take 3-5 days now takes 2-3 WEEKS! Even far worse if from a foreign address!! If it is something important and time critical, like your fee so your car doesn't get deleted, take that into account!

Take care, stay safe.

Pamm and Dan Monaghan

RAILROAD NEWS

This is a synopsis of Railroad related news culled from various sources including Trains Magazine, Progressive Railroading, Railway Age, and various web sites. Please submit your railroad news as well.

Museum and Excursion Trains



Join the Nashville Steam Preservation Society and NC&StL 576. For Rhythm of the Rails On November 8. A group of GRAMMY-winning Nashville musical legends are teaming up to help raise funds for the restoration of one of Nashville's cultural touchstones – Steam Locomotive No. 576.

Country Music Hall of Fame 2020 Inductee Marty Stuart, his longtime band mate Harry Stinson, and Old Crow Medicine Show will perform a virtual concert in support of the World War II-era steam locomotive that sat in Centennial Park for more than 65 years before being relocated to the Tennessee Central Railway

Museum for restoration in early 2019. Earlier this year, lead project supporters The Candelaria Fund joined with the Wick Moorman Foundation to issue a \$300,000 challenge – they would match any donation in 2020 over \$1,000, potentially providing \$600,000 to the project. Then, The Candelaria Fund upped the ante, offering an additional \$50,000 bonus if the challenge is met by December 31, 2020.

The virtual concert, will be hosted on NSPS's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#) on Sunday, November 8 at 5 p.m.

Running again

The Grand Canyon Railway will operate Polar Express excursions on select dates from Nov. 7 to Jan. 3, 2021, with departures from the Williams, Ariz., station In addition to its regular rides, the railroad is also offering the Ultimate Polar Express experience, which allows families or groups to charter private cars.

The Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, shut down since September because of the closure of Sierra National Forest resulting from a wildfire, has resumed operations after receiving special permission to do so.

The Pacific Locomotive Association and the Niles Canyon Railway will operate railfan photo specials featuring “Skookum,” Columbia River Belt Line 2-4-4-2 No. 7, on Dec. 5-6 to benefit restoration of recently acquired Southern Pacific M-6 steam locomotive No. 1744. Both days will feature a historically accurate freight train, while ticketholders will ride in a separate chase train pulled by Southern Pacific SW900 No. 1195 will feature multiple runbys at exclusive locations, with return to Sunol set for about 4:30 p.m. There will also be a visit to the Brightside Steam Shop for a tour of No. 177 and an overview of the restoration effort.

The New Hope Valley Railway, operated by the North Carolina Railway Museum in New Hill, N.C., reopened with Halloween trains and also plans to operate Christmas trains. The railroad is opening for the first time this year thanks to North Carolina's decision to move to Phase Three of its COVID-19 reopening.

The Reading & Northern has announced trips in late fall that will be pulled by the railroad's F9 locomotives. The Nov. 14 excursion will run round trip from Reading, Pa. to Jim Thorpe. These represent the first public outings behind the former Norfolk Southern executive cab units after a pair of all-day specials planned for earlier in the year were cancelled. Reading & Northern purchased the cab units – F9A 270 and F9B 275 – late last year from NS and modified the paint scheme.

Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies



Amtrak's next-generation Acela spent several days testing in the Boston area . While in Boston, it made several test runs into Rhode Island during daylight. The first Acela “Avelia Liberty” trainset was sent to the test track in Pueblo, Colo. in February where it is undergoing high-speed FRA testing. The second set – with power cars 2102 and 2103 – [made its way from the Alstom plant in Hornell, N.Y. to Philadelphia this spring](#). It has been testing north and south out of 30th Street on weeknights over the summer. Amtrak has ordered 28 of the nine-car sets, which are expected to enter revenue service on the Boston to Washington Northeast Corridor next year,

according to Amtrak. All sets should be in service by 2022..

Some train-watching and rail photography could be considered security threats under new Transportation Security Administration regulations. A late 2020 deadline is approaching for railroads and transit systems to submit plans on how they plan to comply with new Transportation Security Administration rules on security training. Railfans should note that watching railroad or transit operations, or taking photographs, may in some instances be considered a security threat. Part 1570 of the regulations includes as examples “taking photographs or video of infrequently used access points, personnel performing security functions (for example, patrols, badge/vehicle checking), or security-related equipment (for example, perimeter fencing, security cameras).” “Loitering near conveyances, railcar routing appliances or any potentially critical

infrastructure” may also trigger the interest of security officials. “Observation through binoculars, taking notes, or attempting to measure distances” are cited in the regulation as suspicious activities.