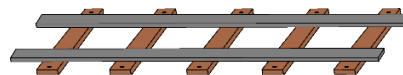


On Track



Vol. 3, Number 8, August 2024

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, welcome to the fold! We continue to catalog our visitor logs (some from several years past!), and your email appeared! If you wish to be taken off our list, just let us know, but we hope that you will stay with us, follow us online, and return as a visitor sometime soon. **Additional financial support will never be turned down (maintaining and operating a steam locomotive is expensive)!** Previous editions of this newsletter may be found on our [website](#). If you have comments on the newsletter, please send them to nmheritagerail@nmheritagerail.com or to your humble editor, [John Taylor](#).

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

This wouldn't be a proper newsletter if we didn't ask for your financial support. Please donate and help us complete our numerous projects and continue our movement along the tracks. Thank you!

The newly elected board members are Henry Roberts, Chris Rosol, and Bill McSweeney. Give them a hearty welcome!

A reminder that NMHR's 2nd Annual New Mexico Railroad Days is coming in September. See the flyer at the end of the newsletter for more information. In preparation for the event, a few NMHR personnel met with Albuquerque Convention Center personnel as they are in charge of scheduling and approving any and all activities at the Rail Yards.



Capital Outlay Corner:

NMHR personnel met with a variety of city personnel to discuss the plans and path forward for the turntable work, with particular emphasis on potential environmental-health concerns. NMHR will work through Albuquerque's Environmental Health department to determine the scope of work for cleaning the turntable bridge of dirt, grease, oil, and paint. This work is necessary to prepare it for repainting. Yes, we will have to use our capital outlay funds to cover this cost, which leaves less for completing the mechanical restoration. NMHR continues to think about our needs for the 2025 capital outlay season. Mr. Roberts met with a city official to discuss a list of projects for their consideration. NMHR is waiting to hear whether it's early in the process and we will be looking to the city for their feedback and buy-in for the Rail Yards projects we are considering.

NMHR had its first meeting with the New Mexico Tourism Department's social media partner, HeyOrca. A team at HeyOrca will be helping us with our social media content and presence. They have an aggressive year-long schedule so NMHR will need to stay on our toes!

As teased in last month's newsletter, NMHR was awarded a \$100k "Destination Forward" grant from the New Mexico Tourism Department to work with the University of New

Mexico's Bureau of Business and Economic Research to develop an economic impact study. This will help NMHR and city and state officials understand the benefit of having a tourist railroad operation based out of Albuquerque.

Profile of a member: Do you want some business advice from a couple who ran an extremely successful business for over 40 years and has forgotten more about the 2926 than most of us will ever know? Well, you are in luck because Bob and Karla DeGroft are still going strong after more than 20 years of faithful service!

Bob was born in Chicago but moved throughout the upper-Midwest, following his father's career as a traveling salesman and new product development manager for the Sanford Ink Co (the Sharpie pen was his creation). He graduated from Grosse Pointe High School (home of the Blue Devils) and enrolled in Michigan State on a mechanical engineering track. Defeated by chemistry and advanced math, he changed to Business Administration, a truly fortuitous choice given his amazing future in the business world! While going to school, he held down many odd jobs—caddying, delivering newspapers, mowing lawns, etc., eventually ending up as a ticket-taker on a steam-powered ferry boat that ran between Detroit and an amusement park on a nearby Canadian island. He characterized this as the “coolest job in Detroit” for two reasons—there were lots of girls with short skirts and big smiles, and he got to play in the engineering spaces where the ferry's enormous steam engine introduced him to what would become a future pastime.

Leaving MSU after four years, Bob went to work for the Lazarus Department Store in Columbus, Ohio. Over the next seven years at Lazarus he was introduced to sales and business management and found that he liked that field and was good at it.

Growing tired of the Midwest, Bob moved to Salt Lake City where he got a job hawking school supplies and church furniture for Brunswick. The sales bug caught, and he moved around the west—from Salt Lake to Phoenix, to Palo Alto, and eventually to Albuquerque where he was hired by PBSW School Supplies in 1971. His job at PBSW was to clean up the mess left by an earlier (and largely incompetent) salesman, but, more importantly, this was his introduction to their drop-dead gorgeous (and extremely efficient) receptionist and girl-Friday, someone named Karla!

Karla McCreary was born in Iowa and was brought to Albuquerque as a baby when her parents, aunt and uncles, grandparents all decided to move to better a climate and opportunity. She was in one of the first classes at West Mesa High School but moved to Del Norte for her senior year when her parents relocated. She attended UNM on a scholarship majoring in education with a minor in music.

She played in the Albuquerque Youth Symphony, All-State Orchestra, and the UNM Symphony. The violin comes out occasionally, but mostly her musical interests are singing, especially performing in the East Mountain Community Chorus's performance of The Messiah every December. After three years at UNM (and in the middle of the Vietnam war protests), she decided that income would be better in the business world and worked full time at PBSW for eight years.



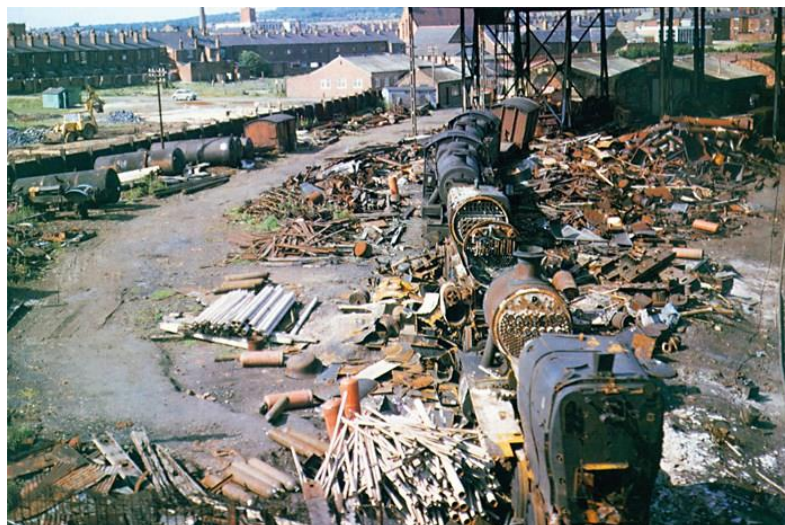
Bob left PBSW (not completely voluntarily!) in July 1977. Karla was working as the Sales secretary and supervisor of the typing pool at Gulton Industries at the time. Her department prepared proposals for telemetry systems for government contractors before the PC and when “cut and paste” was literally that. Bob and Karla got married, then opened their own business—Budget Desk Company, selling discount office furniture, in Sept. 1977. Karla ran the day-to-day activities in their stores (at one time they had three in Albuquerque plus a warehouse), and Bob did the marketing, thought strategically, and innovated their business model. Bob’s knowledge of financials and budgeting was passed on to Karla (on-the-job training for her bookkeeping skills later put to work for NMHR).

The DeGrofts stayed in business for 40 years, changing Budget Desk’s name to Source One Office Furnishings when the business model had to change for survival because of the influx of Office Depot, Staples, and other superstores. The focus became medium-grade office furnishings to include home office customers, as well as large and small business. Their company was one of the first in their industry to use a computer for sales, inventory control, sales analysis, budgeting, etc. Eventually, a change in government purchasing policies foreshadowed a bleak future for “Mom-and-Pop” businesses, so Source One closed in 2017. Bob held many positions in the National Office Products Association – District Governor, National Chairman, and was appointed to the Executive Board. He also served on the boards of the NM Adaptive Ski Program, Wheels Museum, was their homeowners association president for several years.

With the steam still in his veins from the Detroit ferry, Bob and Karla joined the 2926 family in 2001 while the locomotive was still on the Menaul siding. Since then, he has been the President, Vice President, a Board Member, and the Chief Mechanical Officer during the locomotive tear-down period. Karla has been our long-time bookkeeper, acting treasurer, liaison to our auditors, and investment manager.

Bob and Karla live in the East Mountains and spend vacations in their RV, cruising around the country with their cat, Ziggy. Bob enjoys four-wheeling jeep trips, woodworking, and painting/drawing, and Karla plays a lot of golf. He’s been a dirt biker, scuba diver, got a pilot’s license and actually enjoys driving the Million Dollar Highway between Durango and Ouray in their RV -- he is not faint-of-heart. So, for sage advice, always given with a smile—check them out—you won’t leave disappointed.

A short historical note: Where are They Now? As you probably know, the Baldwin Locomotive Works built 30 locomotives (engines plus tenders) in the 2900 class between 1943 and 1944 at their Eddystone, Pennsylvania facility. The boilers on these locomotives carry consecutive Baldwin serial numbers from 69788 through 69817. Of those locomotives, all but six were sold for scrap.



A locomotive scrapping facility

Of course, we are most familiar with our own 2926, but what of the other five: where are they and what is their condition today? The 2903 was built in 1943 and is on display at the Illinois Railroad Museum in Union, Illinois. It remained with the Santa Fe until 1961 when it was donated to the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. It stayed in Chicago until 1995 when it was moved to the Illinois Railroad Museum.



2903



2912

The 2912 is currently undergoing a cosmetic restoration by the Pueblo Railroad Museum in Pueblo, Colorado. She was retired from regular service on August 5, 1954, but remained on standby for peak demand until 1958. After logging 905,874 miles, 2912 was finally retired and written off the AT&SF books in April 1959.



2912



2921

The 2913 has been cosmetically restored and is on public display in Riverview Park, Fort Madison, Iowa. She was retired and donated to the city of Fort Madison in 1959.

The 2921 has been cosmetically restored and is on static display at the Modesto Amtrak station in Modesto, California. After retirement, the locomotive was donated to the city of Modesto and, with the help of members of the San Bernadino Railroad Historical Society (including Alex Gilman, one of our stalwart 2926 engineers) was preserved for static display in Beard Brook Park. Unfortunately, on New Year's Day in 1997, the area suffered major flooding and the 2921 was submerged to a level above her 80-inch drivers. In 2017, the city of Modesto and Pacific Gas and Electric company (PG&E) collaborated to move the locomotive to its present location and complete the cosmetic restoration.



2925



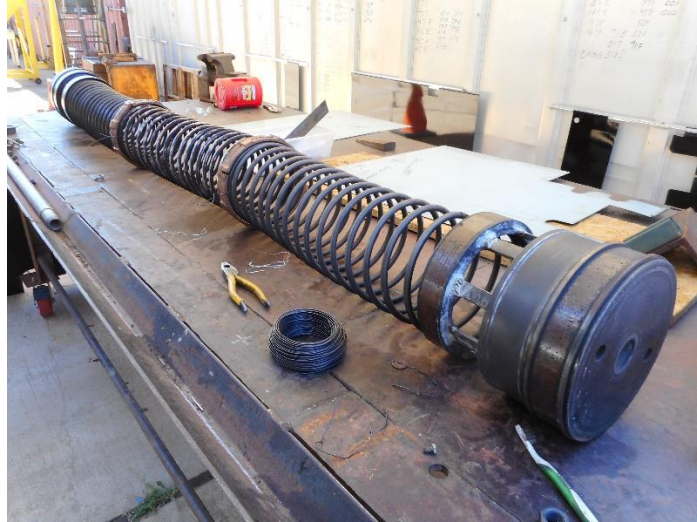
2926

The 2925 was retired in 1955 and laid up in the Belen roundhouse. In the mid-1970s, Santa Fe considered starting their own tourist steam program (a la Union Pacific), and the 2925 was moved to the shops in Cleburn, Texas, for evaluation. However, the plan was scrapped by the powers that be and the locomotive was returned to Belen and later Albuquerque. It was donated to the California State Rail Museum and moved to Sacramento by special train in 1986. Short of room in their collection, the museum stripped the sheathing and asbestos from the boiler, sprayed an anti-corrosion primer, welded her shut, and pulled her to a siding a mile or so south of the museum. There she still sits, the victim of “urban artists” (read graffiti vandals!), pending a decision on final disposition.

So, we can pat ourselves on the back knowing our 2926 is the only one of these magnificent 4-8-4 Northernns that is back on the mainline. However, the next time you pick up a razor for your morning routine, be a little reverent and consider that you may be using parts of her 24 sisters that went under the scrappers torch!

How does it work: There are three cylinders in the steam chest—the piston, the valve, and the Wagner drifting valve. The Wagner, also known as a bypass valve, was developed by Santa Fe engineers and was first installed on our sister locomotive, the 3751. Its purpose is twofold—to maintain lubrication in the valve and cylinder when the locomotive is “drifting,” (i.e., travelling with the throttle closed) usually when going down a long grade. The second purpose is to provide some backpressure on both ends of the cylinder to cushion the piston which, of course, continues to move, regardless of the throttle position.

The drifting valve senses steam pressure in the cylinder. When it drops to zero as the throttle closes, a set of three springs moves pistons in the drifting valve cylinder to shut off the steam inlet and to open a path between the two exhaust ports so that the oil-laden steam that is already in the valve and cylinder simply oscillates back and forth, keeping the mechanism lubricated and preventing the main piston from “ramming” the cylinder head at both ends of its cycle.



The disassembled 2926 drifting valve

What's new in the store: If you don't see something that you would like to see, let us know. Our online store went live—just go to our [website](#) and click the button in the corner.

How you can help and other tidbits: If you are interested in donating to our cause (because operating a steam locomotive is expensive!) go to our [GoFundMe](#) and [Venmo](#) links! Be sure to check out our [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#) pages as well! Other potential sites of interest: our friends at the [Wheels Museum](#) and activities at the [Albuquerque Railyards](#). Please see our Membership page to discover our other volunteer opportunities.



August 14 is National Code Talkers Day



Let's pause for a moment and recognize the important role these heroes played in winning World War II in the Pacific.

The Hottest Thing Since Chile! New Mexico Heritage Rail's 2nd Annual New Mexico Railroad Days



*At The Rail Yards Turntable Just South of 1100 2nd St SW Albuquerque, NM
Follow the signs. Free and open to the Public.*

Sat Sept 28th 9a-430p

See 2926 move at 930a & 4p
Food Trucks * Cab Tours * Vendors
Speeder Rides * 2926 Merchandise

Sun Sept 29th 10a-2p

Rails & Roadsters Car Show!

See 2926 move at 1030a & 2p
Cab Tours * 2926 Merchandise
Speeder Rides * Coffee Truck

Closed-toed shoes are required for walking the locomotive display area, cab tours, and speeder rides.

www.2926.us * Facebook: NMSX2926 * YouTube: @atsf2926 * Instagram: santafe2926