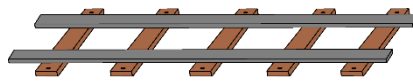


# On Track



Vol. 4, Number 11, November 2025

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, welcome to the fold! We continue to catalog our visitor logs, 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 to visit us in person 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](mailto:nmheritagerail@nmheritagerail.com) or to your humble editor, [John Taylor](#).

**NEW MANAGEMENT!!** A new Board of Directors was elected during our All-Hands meeting on October 11. As per the bylaws, the new board met to determine which of the lected members would fill each of the positions. The results of that determination are as follows:

President: Matt Casford  
Vice President: Chris Rosol  
Secretary: Spencer Lotz  
Treasurer: Michael Castillo  
Director: Bill McSweeny  
Director: Henry Roberts  
Director: Phil Jacobus  
Director: Kooch Kacobus  
Director: vacacnt  
Immediate Past President: John Roberts

Note that one director slot is still open. If anyone is interested, please contact one of the new Board members. Congratulations to our new management team!

## FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Dear Members, Volunteers, and Friends of NMHR,

I'm honored to serve as President of New Mexico Heritage Rail (NMHR) while continuing my role as Chief Rail Operations Officer. I'm deeply grateful for the confidence and trust of our members, and for the dedication and passion that make this organization such a remarkable force for preservation and education.

Our mission remains steadfast — to preserve and operate historic railroad equipment, to educate the public about New Mexico's rail heritage, and to ensure that Locomotive 2926 and our entire collection continue to serve as living, working symbols of the state's rich railroading legacy.

In the months ahead, the Board and I will work to strengthen and expand NMHR's collaborations with organizations like the **Wheels Museum**, the **City of Albuquerque**, the **New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT)**, and the **New Mexico Rail Runner Express**. Together, these partnerships will help us enhance infrastructure, expand public access, and ensure that the Rail Yards continue to serve as a vibrant hub for rail heritage, tourism, and education.

As we prepare to begin additional upgrade work at the Rail Yards, our focus will remain on progress, safety, and partnership. The coming months will bring important opportunities to



coordinate with our partners, highlight our restoration work, and share the story of New Mexico's railroads with more people than ever before.

None of this would be possible without you — our members, volunteers, donors, and supporters. Your hard work, expertise, and belief in our mission keep NMHR on track. Every hour spent, every project completed, and every visitor inspired moves us closer to a lasting and sustainable future for rail heritage in New Mexico.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment. I look forward to working with all of you as we build the next chapter of NMHR — honoring our history, strengthening our partnerships, and keeping New Mexico's railroad legacy alive for generations to come.

Warm regards,  
Mathew Casford

President & Chief of Rail  
Operations  
New Mexico Heritage Rail  
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(Note: for those of you who would like to know more about our new president, please go to the website ([www.2926.us](http://www.2926.us)) and read his profile in the October 2023 newsletter under Archives.)

**Profile of a member:** So who's that guy with the striking grey moustache who always greets us with a smile when we arrive at the site? It's Ed Burggraf (a German name that can be roughly translated as "town mayor" or, better yet, just *el jefe!*) a long-term member and most appropriate veteran for this November profile.



Ed was born in San Francisco one week after VJ day (August 15, 1945) and attended Sequoia High School in Redwood City where he played water polo for the fighting Ravens (he claims that he was too skinny for other sports).

He enlisted in the Navy right out of high school. His enlistment test scores were so high that he could choose his field, and he decided to go into aviation (he was offered submarines and officer candidate school but he—wisely—declined both). He spent 19 years (4 on active duty and 15 in the Active Reserve) as a Navy flyboy with a rating of aviation machinist mate—jets. He flew as a crewman/navigator on Douglas A-3 Skywarrior bombers, the largest aircraft that were regularly flown from aircraft carriers. During the Vietnam War, Ed flew more than 145 combat missions over Vietnam from the aircraft carrier USS *Constellation* (CV-64), giving him the enviable moniker of “Centurion,” an airman who had flown more than 100 combat flights.

Ed’s family had moved to Denver during his teenage years, and he returned to that city after completing active duty. He joined United Airlines and flew as a flight attendant while continuing his active reserve service as crew chief on C-9 Skytrain II cargo and medical evacuation aircraft (C-9s are the military equivalent of the DC-9). As a result of his commercial and military flights, he managed to fly all over the world between 1980 and 2012 when he retired from both the Navy and United.

Ed met his wife, Patricia, in Denver in 1961, where they were next-door neighbors. They got married in 1968 and have a daughter, a son, and two grandchildren. Between his retirement in 2012 and 2017, he and Patricia toured the western U.S. in their motorhome. They liked Albuquerque and decided to settle down in the Duke City when their gypsy days were over.

Ed had been a railfan since he was 12 when his grandfather took him on the last Southern Pacific excursion to be pulled by a steam locomotive. He recalls that the fare was something like \$4. During his five years of wandering the west he also indulged in his railfan obsession, so it should come as no surprise that as soon as he got to Albuquerque he walked through our front gate and asked, “What can I do?”

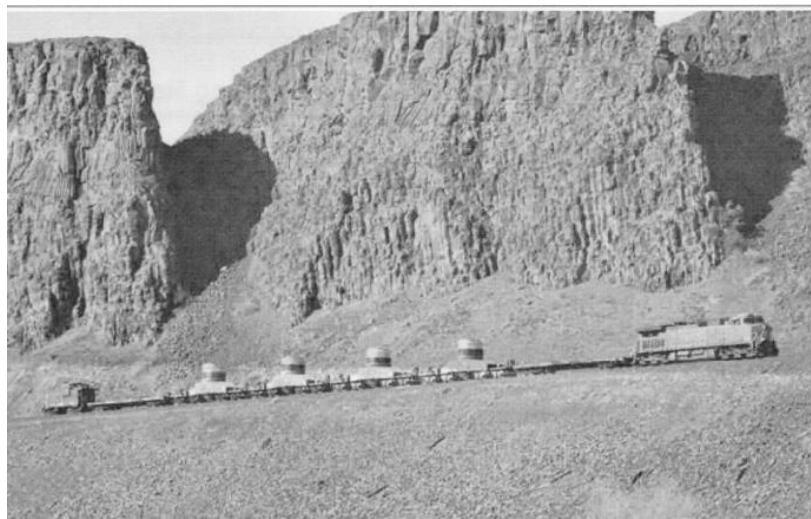
He was put to work renovating the boiler jacketing by making cardboard templates from the rusty scraps that had been removed earlier. In fact, he is directly responsible for about 80% of the gorgeous sheathing that now covers our boiler. Unfortunately, he got sick during this phase and had to sit out for a year or so, but he is back and a resilient cancer survivor.



When not guarding our gate or putting up with the doctors' pokes and prods that many of us experience, Ed still enjoys motor-homing and railfanning. He has also restored several classic cars. His proudest baby is a 1966 Chevelle Super Sport.

So, the next time you come through the gate at the site, tip your hat to one of our stalwart members and proud veterans. You can call him *el jefe* if you are so inclined!

**A short historical note:** Your humble editor spent several years as a reactor control officer on the first nuclear submarine, USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571). Therefore, this note is about a connection between submarines and trains. Although older nuclear subs required periodic refueling, modern ones go for their entire life on one reactor core. So what happens at the end of life for the finally depleted cores? Well, they are (very carefully!) removed as the submarine is being dismantled in one of the Navy's specialized shipyards. The core is then transferred to a 350,000-pound M-140 cask made of 10-inch thick stainless steel and placed on a specially certified flatcar. The flatcar or cars are then placed in a consist that includes an escort car (that looks a lot like a caboose) and two idler cars. The special train is carefully monitored as it takes the used cores to a dedicated location at the Naval Reactor Facility in Idaho where they are buried. The image shows one of these BNSF special trains passing through the Columbias River Gorge.

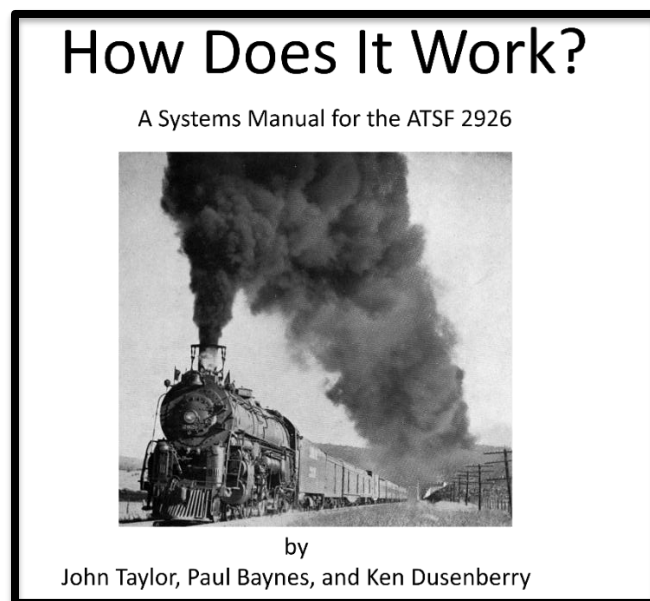


**How does it work:** Hidden deep in the morass of hoses, wires and pipes between the tender and the engine are two really important pieces of equipment—the drawbars. These massive pieces of cast iron keep the engine and tender securely hitched together (as the wise sage said—"Every locomotive has a tender behind!"). There are two drawbars—one primary and one backup. They weigh 737 pounds and 967 pounds, respectively and are held in place by 90-pound pins that rest on metal plates. During the restoration we sent them out to be cleaned, checked for cracks, and annealed to restore their original strength. Most recently, it was discovered that the support plates were worn and incorrectly installed, so John Cekala and his minions had new plates made so that these critical items could be properly installed to keep the locomotive safely connected!





**Speaking of “How Does it Work,” we offer you a new opportunity:** After considerable work, we have produced a comprehensive systems manual for the 2926. This document diagrams each of the major systems on the locomotive and provides an explanation of how the systems work. We encourage everyone, especially those who regularly work at the site, to purchase a copy. The cost is \$5 for regular workers (those who have taken the safety course), \$15 for other members, and \$25 for the public. Drop by the store, take a look, and buy a copy!



Several of you have noticed that our online store is not currently functional. We are working to get it back online. In the meantime, if you are interested in buying one of the three books we sell through the store, please send John Taylor an email ([jtlymtnest@aol.com](mailto:jtlymtnest@aol.com) or [j.taylor@nmheritagerail.com](mailto:j.taylor@nmheritagerail.com)) with your name and mailing address and a check or money order made out to New Mexico Heritage Rail. The prices are:

- “A Love Affair with Big Boys Toys—a history of the restoration project with over 500 images--\$50 (includes \$5 shipping and handling);

- “How Does It Work”—the systems manual noted above--\$20 for members, \$30 for the general public (includes \$5 shipping and handling);
- “The Great Train Robbery, Almost”—a story/coloring book for children with original art by Gayle van Horne--\$15 (includes \$5 shipping and handling).

**Great ideas for Christmas, Anniversaries, or Birthdays for ferroequinologists of all ages!!**

**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](#), [Rio Metro](#), and activities at the [Albuquerque Railyards](#). Please see our Membership page to discover our other volunteer opportunities.

**REMEMBER OUR VETS WHILE YOU FEAST ON TURKEY!**

