

# LINEUP

Motorcar Operators West Official Magazine

**Western Railroad Museum BBQ**  
**Skunk Work Party**  
**Fillmore Western**  
**Joseph Alpenfest Excursion**

Volume 25, No 2

Spring 2020

# Motorcar Operators West

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Motorcar Operators West Documents  
Are Available At [www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)

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### Cover Photo Credits

Front cover: California Western Railway #64 East passes work party motorcars at Summit siding.

Back cover: C-5 On Approach to Travis AFB near Rio Vista Junction, CA, on the way back to the Western Railway Museum.

2020 MOW Membership and Renewals and new membership applications are now being accepted. All current memberships expire on December 31. Please download the printable form on the MOW website ([www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)) and fill-out all requested information. Mail the form along with a \$24.00 check to: Motorcar Operators West, c/o Harry Fischer, Membership Coordinator, 28819 Shadow Valley Lane, Santa Clarita, CA 91390

The Line Up is the official publication of The Motorcar Operators West, Inc. which is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the safe and legal operation of railroad motorcars as excursion vehicles. Motorcar Operators West excursion schedules, documents, items for sale, and past Line Up issues are available at [www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org). Membership is \$24 per year and includes a Line Up subscription. The Line Up is copyrighted and permission to reproduce any portion of the newsletter must be obtained. All rights reserved. Submitting Photos and Captions: Members and guests are encouraged to contribute to the Line Up Photo Journal magazine by sending their excursion photos, accompanied by who, what, when, and where captions to: **MOWLineUp@gmail.com**. When submitting, please change photo file name to the caption text, or place caption text in the email body and photos as .jpg attachments. Front and back cover photos should be submitted in a portrait orientation at a high resolution

# President's Message

Jim Culbertson

Greeting from the Roundhouse!



Motorcar Operators West kicked off the New Year with two great runs to begin the 2020 motorcar season. First, we had the annual Napa Valley Wine Train run with our friends at PRO. EC Carl Shellhorn had a firm talk with mother nature and came to an agreement which produced a wonderful run with outstanding weather. Everyone should understand that the success of the Napa Valley Wine Train has led to this limited window for a motorcar run. The following week found MOW hosting a run on the Fillmore & Western in Ventura County. EC Wayne Parsons secured the opportunity but gracefully passed the baton to one of our new EC's John Martin, who did a fine job and was also treated with good weather.

Following up on our Board of Directors meeting held in November at the Western Railway Museum, the Board recognized that many issues explored needed further discussion. In the interest of time and convenience, a Board meeting was scheduled on Sunday following the Fillmore & Western run. I would like to thank Karl Hovanitz and the management of the Fillmore & Western for providing a unique opportunity to hold our meeting in a F & W historic dining car within their Fillmore yard.

Of the agenda items under discussion, three main objectives occupied most of the discussion. Item one was the safety concern posed at all motorcar runs with the seton and setoff procedures. While most operators unload and load in a safe manner, it was felt that the time had come for formally defining the proper equipment and procedures.

This will be outlined in a separate article in this issue.

Item two was a comprehensive look at proper flagging procedures at road crossings. While it seems like a simple process, observations have shown that safety issues exist for both flaggers and the motorcars when the procedure is not handled properly. The use of sign paddles and proper positioning along with proper training prior to the run is a portion of this safety discussion. This too is outlined in this issue of the Lineup.

And last but not least is an ongoing discussion of the Motorcar Operators West By-laws which when studied with a fine-tooth comb reveal minor conflicts that are outdated with how the club operates currently. Following an extensive Board discussion, it was moved to form a By-law Review Committee to discuss and draft potential By-law changes that will be circulated to the



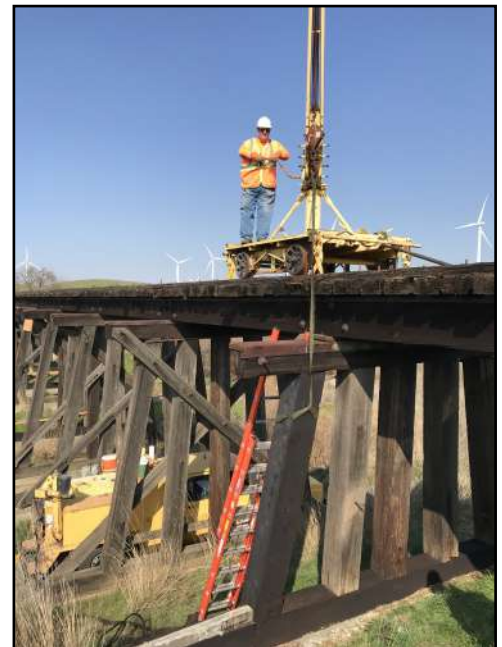
MOW Board Meeting at the Fillmore & Western

membership in late summer of 2020. Following any input and additions, the proposed changes will be placed up for a vote at our Annual Meeting held in November. All of the membership can have input on this process and the Board welcomes your comments.

I will close by outlining our ongoing relationship with the Western Railway Museum. Besides the two annual runs which this past season included two-night runs and the barbeque picnic in April, Motorcar Operators West continues to support the efforts of the Museum. Last summer three special motorcar opportunities made a large impact on the hobby and our supportive relationship. The museum promoted a special family day which included motorcar rides for the public out to Creed Road. Erika Hunt, Event Planner, for the museum reported they had very good attendance with many happy riders. Later in the summer came Membership Day with motorcar rides provided once again to Creed Road. Museum members came from long -distances to enjoy this fun day and experience the track east which few have ever ventured on.



WRM Check Presentation, WRM Chairman Alex Wahshi, Dave Balestreri, and Jim Culbertson



WRM Board Member Greg Ockander handles crane duty at the Birds Landing Trestle repair

A final tidbit was entertaining the Maintenance of Way crew from the California State Railroad Museum with a motorcar ride at the WRM.

At the November MOW Board meeting, the board voted to support the WRM effort to rebuild the Birds Landing Trestle. Once completed, plans call for the extension of the overhead electric lines and trolley access to Molena. Yours truly and Dave Balestreri attended a Board Meeting of the Western Railway Museum and presented a check for \$5,000 to support the project to Board Chairman Alex Mahshi. Joel Cox, Superintendent of Track Maintenance for the WRM commented to their board that the contribution represented 25% of the rebuild cost and was significant in moving the project forward. The museum has continued to maintain and support our use of the line east which sees only motorcar activity so the trade off is good for all concerned.

See you on the rails.

Jim Culbertson, President, Motorcar Operators West

## Editor's Message

Hello to all,

As you enjoy the upcoming excursions, please remember to send a few of your favorite pictures to me for possible inclusion in the Line Up. Unfortunately, I can't include all your pictures, but I try to include at least one picture from each contributor. The Lineup magazine is one of the benefits of being a MOW member, hopefully you enjoy reviewing the good times you had on the many excursions offered by MOW, and also see what you missed on other runs, so you can plan to attend them next time they are offered.

Please send your pictures with a short caption to:

MOWLineup@gmail.com

Thanks and hopefully see you on a future excursion.

Andy Limon, Lineup Editor



## Membership Message

MOW would like to WELCOME 7 new members to our group. They are:

Norm and Shelly McKeen, Kimberling City, MO

Mike and Liz Steiner, Sacramento, CA

Darrol and Carole Stanley, Los Angeles, CA

George and Marcelle Carey, San Mateo, Ca

David and Susan Klein, Redding, CA

Dan and Jackie Skahill, Costa Mesa, Ca

Adam Weildenbach, Crockett, CA



Become a MOW Membership Ambassador and share your speeder experience. Offer this application to a friend or purchase a membership for them.

See you on the rails! Be Safe, Harry, Membership "Dude"

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Motorcar Operators West Membership Application Form

Here is my \$24 dues check made payable to Motorcar Operators West . Please mail to:

Harry Fischer, MOW Membership, 28819 Shadow Valley Lane, Santa Clarita, CA 91390-1265

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

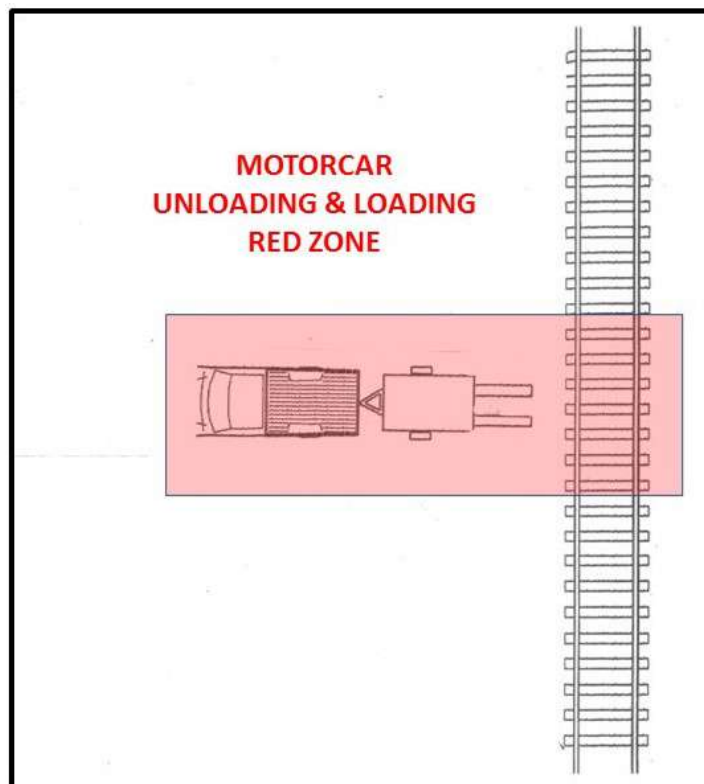
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

# The "RED ZONE": Safe Motorcar Loading and Unloading

Dave Balestreri and Glen Ford

The "RED ZONE": Safe Motorcar Loading and Unloading

- The purpose of the RED ZONE Special Rule is to guard against injuries and damage during the transfer of a motorcar to or from the rails. The general concept is to restrict access to the space behind a motorcar while it is being transferred.
- The RED ZONE restrictions apply to operators and bystanders
- The RED ZONE is the area beginning at the back of the tow vehicle and extending to the tracks, and in some cases beyond. In direct- to- rail transfers and downhill set on locations the RED ZONE distance would be extended according to conditions.
- In the RED ZONE all vehicles, while being transferred, must be under positive mechanical control. Transferring a motorcar by freewheeling of the winch or unrestricted rolling or driving off or on a trailer is strictly prohibited
- Unsolicited help or other distractions of an operator in the process of transferring a motorcar should be avoided so that they may maintain their attention to their technique while transferring their Motorcar.
- The RED ZONE restrictions also apply to operators staging their tow vehicles in preparation for their turn to transfer their motorcar. Park in a safe location and wait for directions from the EC before entering the set on/set off location



# M O W Introduces The Stop/Slow Paddle and New Flagging Guidelines

**Dave Balestreri**

At the Motorcar Operators West Board of Directors meeting in Fillmore, Ca held on Jan.12, 2020 there was a discussion on improving safety while crossing roadways with motorcars. The Board has discussed this topic at its past couple of meetings. Currently M O W and North American Railcar Operators (NARCOA) require the use of a red flag to control highway traffic. M O W Excursion Coordinators have recently included the use of STOP/SLOW handheld traffic paddle boards to manage traffic. These are the type of paddles typically used to control traffic on highway construction projects .The M O W board recommends the use of the paddles and reasons that the STOP/SLOW paddles are what automobile operators are expecting to see and will more readily conform to their message due to their universal usage on highway projects across the nation.

The State of Florida's Department of Traffic safety experts prepared a video on the use of Stop/Slow paddles in traffic management. A link to the FDOT video is <https://youtu.be/wMCJkMsLVYE>. It is a very informative 10 minute video and you can easily see how the motorcar hobby could adapt FDOT's procedures for our use. One difference in Florida's procedures and NARCOA's rules is the use of a hand motion to the autos to proceed after the motorcars have completed their crossing. While M O W believes this hand motion completes a safe crossing procedure it is not at this time recommending abandoning the NARCOA rules but, in light of the professional Florida video, believes NARCOA should reconsider its procedures whether using STOP/SLOW paddles or flags.

Several M O W Board members ,past and present, including those with traffic management experience have prepared a document with guidelines that outline recommended procedures for motorcar highway crossings. It includes and recommends the use of the STOP/SLOW paddles. The M O W Board has approved the document as an addition to the documents on the [www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org) website and it is included below. MO W's recommended guidelines parallel FDOT procedures. Please review the guidelines. Your comments on the guidelines would be most welcome, please send them t o M O W President Jim Culbertson [CCAB@softcom.net](mailto:CCAB@softcom.net) or Dave Balestreri [dbalestreri@softcom.net](mailto:dbalestreri@softcom.net) .



## **MOTORCAR OPERATORS WEST GRADE CROSSING FLAGGING AND STOP PADDLE GUIDELINES**

This brief guide provides information on how best to meet the safety challenges of protecting motorcar operators, flaggers and highway vehicle drivers while motorcars cross high traffic roads using Red Flags and/or Stop/Slow traffic paddles to manage traffic. It is strongly recommended that Excursion Coordinators select volunteers with the most experience in flagging for this duty. It is also recommended that the Excursion Coordinator conduct a briefing with the flaggers to discuss flagging procedures before making the crossing. The use of Stop/Slow traffic paddles is preferred over Red Flags but the guidelines are interchangeable.

1. A Briefing with the EC in advance of the crossing procedure will be held to discuss the speed of traffic, size of approaching vehicles and blind curves amongst other issues that may be pertinent to the crossing. It will instruct the flaggers on how to approach the highway and cross to the other side safely. It will determine the number of flaggers and where each flagger will stand in relation to the crossing.
2. It is important during the grade crossing maneuver that flaggers communicate with one another by voice or hand gestures so that they may coordinate the raising and lowering of flags and paddles.
3. To begin the crossing procedure the flaggers will move to their predetermined positions on the road after there is a safe opening in the traffic. Flaggers should check their location for an emergency escape route in case it is needed.
4. The lead flagger will wait for confirmation from the Excursion Coordinator that all motorcars have arrived at the crossing and that the EC is ready to move the consist across the highway.
5. To begin the crossing movement the lead flagger will be certain that all flaggers are in place. The lead flagger will observe the flow of traffic and wait for an adequate opening in traffic before giving the signal to his crew members to raise their stop paddle/ flags.
6. Flaggers should move their flags up and down as the first vehicles approach to communicate the need for the drivers to stop. Flaggers are to hold their flags out and with their free hand raised to signal the vehicle drivers to remain stopped. If using the combination of a flag and a stop paddle the flag would be waved and the stop paddle would be raised.
7. The flag crew leader will give the "go ahead" signal to the excursion lead car when the flags/ paddles are up and traffic is controlled.
8. Flaggers must remain facing and observing traffic at all times during the crossing. Flaggers are not to look back at the motorcars moving across the highway, their eyes must always be on the vehicles stopping in front of them.
9. Flaggers will remain in position with their flags raised until all motorcars have safely crossed the highway. In the event that there is a large gap in the motorcar traffic the lead flagger can stop the motorcars from crossing and release the highway traffic. The lead flagger will then determine when it is again safe to resume cross the remaining cars.
10. When all the motorcars are crossed and the movement is completed and crew members have crossed the highway, flaggers can lower their flags. Flaggers should be sure they are safe as they cross or walk along the shoulder of the highway while returning to their motorcars.



# Spring BBQ at the Western Railroad Museum

April 7, 2019

**Dave Balestreri, Excursion Coordinator**

Photos Courtesy of Harry Fischer and Paul Greenfield

Motorcar Operators West conducted an excursion and BBQ at the Western Railroad Museum on Sunday, April 7, 2019. We were expecting a spectacular wild flower presentation on our trip through the Jepson Prairie Wildflower Preserve and we were not disappointed. The highlight of the day was a smoked sparerib lunch prepared by Mike Mitchel and Tirzah and Mitch Haik. And, that sumptuous meal was complimented by a member provided potluck dessert collection. What a great meal and great day!!



Malcom Frost, founding member, was one of the first to select his lunch.



Jepson Prairie Wild Flowers on the way to Dozier.

Speeders line up for the run to Molena and Bird's Landing



# Fillmore Western Railroad

Jan 11, 2020

## Wayne Parsons and John Martin, Excursion Coordinators

Photos Courtesy of:

Carol Balestreri, Harry Fischer, Jennifer Limon, Blair Van Vliet

### My First Speeder Adventure by Ivy Ransom

My first speeder adventure was very intriguing and educational and a ton of fun! First thing we got to see was how the speeders are loaded on to the tracks from the trailer. I was very impressed with how the club really has the method down and all seemed to go very smoothly. When it was time to depart we chugged down the track and I was really surprised how comfortable it rode. The sounds of the speeders moving along brought a smile to my face. Because the car is operated from the back seat, I got a front seat view the whole day and even got to use the flags to signal us slowing down or coming to a crossing. I felt like a kid again! The thing I found most interesting was how the cars are turned around on the track – a turntable on the car was used to lift it up a little and turn it around to face the opposite direction. I learned some speeders were not equipped with a turntable and they had to turn the speeder around manually using long levers to maneuver it. At the RR crossing where we had to stop and wait for the arms of the crossing gates to come down it was fun to see the expressions on peoples faces when they saw all the speeders waiting in a row or crossing over the tracks when it was clear.



Guests Ivy Ransom and Kathy Barris enjoy their first speeder ride



Wayne & Nancy Parsons man the check-in table before Wayne begins his Excursion Coordinator duties

Almost everyone waved at us very enthusiastically with big smiles on their faces. When we did make a stop there was lots of interest from the bystanders about the speeders. Some even traveled great distances to witness the run. One little girl who's mom brought her out specifically to see the speeders was allowed to sit in one and take a picture, which really seemed to make their day.

I feel very fortunate to have been invited to ride on one of the speeders and meet many of the members of the club that day who were all very nice and welcoming.

Overall, it was a great experience.



John Martin Excursion Coordinator in training



Passing the replica locomotive used in Back to the Future, Part III on the way out of the yard, headed to Piru



Comfort stop and turnaround in Piru



Sespe Creek Bridge built in 1902.



Picnic lunch in Santa Paula



Ross Kallenberger finds time for a quick nap in the Museum of Ventura County Agriculture Museum during the stop in Santa Paula.



Arrival of the train from Fillmore in the Santa Paula depot, means we have an open track back to Fillmore

# Skunk Train Work Party, Willits, CA

By Glen Ford

Photos Courtesy of Wayne Parsons

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) and the California Western Railway (Skunk Train) get together each year before fire season and develop a fire prevention plan for the railway. This year's plan concentrated on the eastern approaches to the tunnel at Summit. Receptive wildland fuels were removed from the right of way between the grade crossing at Highway 20 to Tunnel No. 2 at milepost 35.4.

MOW members Jim Culbertson, Dave Balestreri and Glen Ford met with General Manager Robert Pinoli and asked if the club could be of some help. Track maintenance crews were busy with cutting, piling and burning brush so the MOW work party concentrated on providing Defensible Space requirements for the railway track side structures.

The first really hot weekend of the summer dawned as 10 members with 8 motorcars met on a Saturday morning at the depot in Willits (MP 40) where we received our job briefing before heading westbound ahead of the 10:30 passenger train, taking the siding at Summit where we would work for the rest of that day.



Cleanup begins at Summit speeder shed with work party motorcars on siding.



Alex and Tina Backalbassis tackle brush at speeder shed.

Three structures at Summit station were treated by first removing all vegetation within 5 feet down to bare soil. A further 30 feet was either removed, modified or limbed up using weed eaters, chain and pole saws.



Before

Brush encroaching on Summit structures.

After

Telephone shack and Speeder shed at Summit after brush removal.



Tree down – L-R Jim Culbertson, Glen Ford and Mike Mitchell work to remove downed tree enroute to Northspur.

Skunk train passes Summit – Work party takes a break while CWR #64 West passes Summit with motorcars on siding.



Track maintenance supervisor Tim Lourash asked if we could replace or repair several milepost signs and whistle boards as part of our project. We got an earlier start on Sunday morning and completed those tasks and more defensible space work at Crowley (MP32.6) and Claire Mill (MP30.4) while making an inspection trip to Northspur (MP 21.5) and back.



Tony Peard and Wayne Parsons ready to assist replacement of damaged bridge marker while Mike Mitchell and Glen Ford come up with a plan.



John Allmen, Brian York (with saw), Mike Mitchell, Rick Smith

Pleased with what we had accomplished, we opted for an early set off Sunday afternoon to allow for homeward travel. Plans for the future include painting the buildings at Summit and spraying so that the vegetation, especially the poison oak, does not return.



L-R John Allmen, Tina Backalbassis, Jim Culbertson, Tony Peard, Rick Smith, Alex Backalbassis, and Glen Ford at repaired MP 38.

# The Joseph Alpenfest Excursion

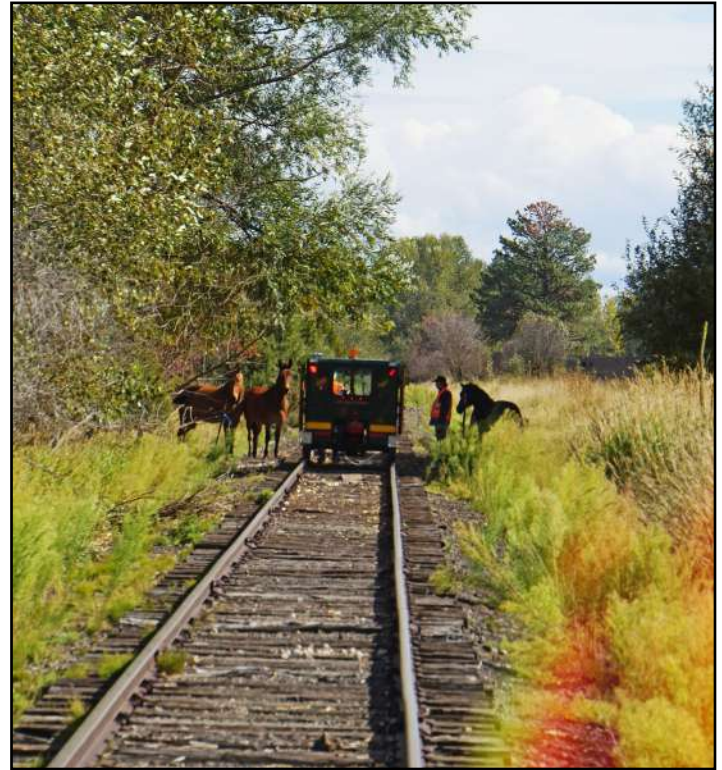
September 27-29, 2019

Dave Balestreri, Excursion Coordinator

Photos Courtesy of Carol Balestreri



Beautiful country along the Grande Ronde River



A little extra horsepower never hurts

Great photo op on the bridge crossing the Grande Ronda and Wallowa rivers.



Running along the banks of the Wallowa River heading towards Joseph







It's always great to have dinner with friends

Thanks to our crossing helpers



A little snow at the Wallowa Lake Lodge and along the tracks made for a chilly event, but didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the participants



# Napa Wine Train, Napa, CA

By Dave Balestreri

Photos Courtesy of Carol Balestreri

When all the Holiday excitement is over we begin looking for a way to get back on track and begin the new year with a bang or, in this case with a clickety clack. Motorcar Operators West members found a way to get on a roll in the new year with an excursion through California's famous wine grape region, Napa County. Carl Shellhorn, a Pacific Railcar Operators excursion coordinator arranged a run on the Napa Wine Train rails on January 12, 2020. Carl has been servicing Napa Rail equipment and has maintained a great working relationship with the railroad's management. They have allowed NARCOA to have rail access during the busy operation's maintenance period at the first of each year. We set on in the downtown Napa railyard and began our journey alongside the Napa River and on through town. Our consist was safely guided through the 80 crossings by Summit Signal Co. They maneuvered us through the city streets out of town and into the vineyards seamlessly using several sets of shunts.

We traveled through the vineyards that climb the foothills of the Coast Range mountains. Along the way we passed scenic vistas and wine estates with Victorian homes. The region has a rich history of viticulture and early California developments. Although January usually is a rainy month, Carl, great Boy Scout Leader that he is, used his almanac to choose a sunny dry day for the excursion. We arrived in St. Helena right in time for a noon Lunch in the city's historic center. With their cars tied up the excursion participants headed for their favorite kitchens for lunch but were able to return on time for our return trip to Napa.



Napa Station in fog.

Glenn Boatman checkin





Vineyard coastal range view

I don't know why but the return leg of our trip seemed like we were traveling through a different area. Perhaps it is because there are just a lot of unique things to see. One of the traditions of the Napa excursion is to stop on the return leg and take a group photo at the "Welcome to Napa" sign. It is in a vineyard along the track on our return to Napa. Many tourists also stop here to take their picture with the sign. Again on the rails back to Napa we were aided by Summit Signal Co., who took us across the very busy diagonal highway 26 crossing safely and on through town. Set off was easily completed by dusk. Our thanks to Carl Shellhorn and his assistants, Rick Smith, and Glen Boatman for a smooth and enjoyable day!



St. Helena Station

Returning to the yard  
passing the Wine Train





For membership information, please visit our website at  
[www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)