

SOUTHERN PACIFIC NEWSLETTER
Edited by Bill Fowler
April 2022



Stephen L. Newman
1947 ~ 2021

Stephen L Newman, 74, of Los Osos, California, passed away peacefully in his sleep at home on December 29, 2021 after a valiant eight-month battle with pancreatic cancer.

Steve was born and raised in California. After graduating from high school, he was hired by Southern Pacific where he worked as a brakeman until joining the US Army in 1966. He was stationed at Fort Ord, California, Fort Stewart, Georgia, Viet Nam, and Fort Campbell, Kentucky. After his honorable discharge, he returned to the railroad where he worked as a freight conductor for 42 years until his retirement in 2007.

Steve was a man with many talents. He was an excellent gardener who could grow anything from seed. His legacy includes many bonsai trees that were cultivated for years with love. He was a builder who fabricated beautiful fences, gates, and outbuildings for his family. He had an artistic side that came out in his wood working skills. He was an auto enthusiast who always kept his cars in immaculate condition. He exercised regularly by riding his bike to town several days a week to buy his lottery tickets: one Mega, one Power, one Super, and one Scratcher. Though he never did hit the big jackpot, he surely tried.

Steve is survived by his wife of 55 years Bonnie; his daughter, Jennifer Newman and son, Stephen (Pamela) Newman; grandchildren Zackery DeLong and Hannah Newman; brothers, Larry

Newman and Doug Newman; and brother-in-law Dallas (Delane) Allen. He was preceded in death by his father and mother, John and Dorothy Newman.

Steve lived a good life; he was an honorable man who loved and cared for his family. Rest in peace my love, until we meet again.

Editor's note: Bonnie Newman added the following about Steve's Southern Pacific career. Steve was employed in 1965 by Southern Pacific upon graduating from Mt. Diablo High School in Concord, California. He was a brakeman on freight trains and worked out of Oakland on the extra board, but sometimes had hold downs. He was promoted to conductor and worked 42 years until his retirement on April 1, 2007.

He most often worked from Oakland to Roseville, but he would sometimes be assigned as a flagman at various locations, which he liked, because he knew what his hours would be. I remember he once worked on a local in the Napa area when trains still had a caboose. The guys would bring part of the meal each night and they would cook on the caboose.

Harvey Breen
1954 ~ 2022

Harvey Breen, 67 years young, crossed over into the arms of our Lord at his home in Tucson, Arizona on February 12th, 2022.

Harvey was born in El Paso, Texas and came from an extensive family of rail men dating back to

the 1800s. He retired as a conductor for the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific and worked on the rail lines owned by both companies throughout Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

Harvey held a tremendous faith and took immense pride in his family, and this great country. He was one of the last true cowboys, known for his unwavering commitment to his word, truth, patriotism, and love of (almost) all animals.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Debbie Breen; son, Christopher; daughter, Marie; two grandchildren, Cassidy and Juston; and great-grandson Logan. His trusted sidekick Lucy, his beloved Great Dane, still searches for him in his recliner every day.

His family takes extraordinary pride in Harvey and his teachings of family, honor, and country. He will be missed by all who were blessed to have known him, and his stories of a life well lived.



Joe Ben Munn
March 5, 1937 ~ March 9, 2022

Joe Ben Munn, 85 years old and a resident of Ennis, Texas, went to be with the Lord on

March 9, 2022.

Joe Ben was born March 5, 1937 in Ennis. He was the son of W.T. Munn Sr. And Elsie J. Wheeler. He graduated from Ennis High School in 1956.

He worked for 15 years at Munn's Building Supply in Ennis as a home builder and land developer. He also worked for Southern Pacific and Union Pacific as a brakeman and conductor for 34 years.

He was a member of the Tabernacle Baptist Church of Ennis and The Independent Order of Odd Fellows of Ennis.

He is survived by his wife Nell Munn for 63 years. Two sons, Scott Munn and his wife Donna and Joey Munn and his wife Amenias; two grandchildren, Jessica and Hudson; and many nephews and nieces also survive him.

He is preceded in death by his parents, three brothers, Clinton and James Nichols, Billy Munn, and sister Betty June Munn.

A Lufkin, Texas area Southern Pacific retiree luncheon will be held at the Golden Corral in Lufkin on April 21, 2022.

It has been said that the attendees of this event always have a wonderful time and many are expected to be there. So, take the short drive to Lufkin and meet and have a great lunch with your fellow "Rabbit" employees.

The Golden Corral is located on US-59 North on the right, just before the Loop in Lufkin.

The event starts at 11:00 am on April 21, 2022.



David Ragar
November 12, 1938 ~ March 9, 2022

David Ragar, age 83, of White Hall, Arkansas passed away on March 9, 2022.

Born William David Ragar on November 12, 1938 at Warren, Arkansas, he was a son of the late Hurley Gibbs Ragar and Uldean Thomasson Ragar. He grew up in Warren and attended Warren High School. He then served in the United States Navy on the aircraft carrier USS Bonne Homme Richard and then in the reserves for a total of five years.

Mr. Ragar worked for the Cotton Belt, retiring as a conductor after 32 years of service. He was a member of First United Methodist Church of Warren.

Also predeceasing him are his brothers, Fletcher Ragar, and his twin, Donald Ragar.

Survivors include his wife of 59 years, Lou Ann Pierce Ragar, whom he married on January 20, 1962 at Pine Bluff; his children, Hurley Ragar (Jamie) and Stacy Linder; four grandchildren, Chasidy Weatherford, Kristen Johnson, Emily Linder, and Reid Ragar; three great-grandchildren, Jaxson Robertson, Gavin

Robertson, and McKenzie Hines; and three nephews, Will Ragar, James Ragar, and Patrick Ragar.



William Edward Kramer
November 12, 1943 ~ February 9, 2022

William Edward Kramer was born on November 12, 1943 in Seattle, Washington to George and Dorothy (nee: Funderburk) Kramer. He died in Eugene, Oregon on February 9, 2022 at the age of seventy-eight to natural and age-related causes.

Bill was a graduate of Sutherlin High School, Class of 1962, and attended the University of Oregon from 1966 to 1967 and Umpqua Community College in 1970. He served in the US Air Force from 1962 through 1966. For 33 years, he worked as a telegrapher and clerk for the Southern Pacific, twenty-two of those years in Eugene.

His favorite things in life were gardening, gambling, and the array of UO Ducks sports, including football, basketball, and softball.

Bill is survived by his siblings, Jeff Fox and Georgia Peterson.



Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society Collection, courtesy of Peter Diurni.

Shown above is one of Southern Pacific's premier passenger trains, No. 28, departing Colfax, California eastbound circa 1950. The primary power is two new diesels, with a cab-forward in helper service for the grades ahead. Cab-forwards used to provide primary power for Southern Pacific passenger and freight trains over Donner. This image clearly shows diesels claiming the future on the route.

If your breakfast or luncheon group would like to have pictures posted similar to those for the Victoria or San Antonio Divisions (<https://www.southernpacificjourney.org/press>) please contact Bill Fowler at billfowler@southernpacificjourney.org.



Ronald Steven Williams
November 9, 1949 ~ March 12, 2022

Ronald Steven Williams, age 72, of Willis, Texas passed away on Saturday March 12, 2022. Ronald was born in Houston, Texas on November 9, 1949 to Mozelle and Louise Williams.

He attended Reagan High School in Houston where he met the love of his life Glenda, whom he married on September 21, 1967. They were married for fifty-four wonderful years. Ronnie was drafted into the U.S Army in August 1969 and was stationed in the Black Forest area of Germany. Glenda later joined him and they were able to travel and visit beautiful and memorable European countries.

Ronnie returned to Texas and went to work at Southern Pacific in its Houston Shops and eventually went into the engine service. He was a locomotive engineer for several years.

Ronnie is preceded in death by his parents, Mozelle (Ray) and Louise Williams. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Glenda; his son Brian, his daughter Laura (Mitchell) Osina; grandchildren Cade and Kara Osina; sisters Teresa Miller, Debbie Hoot, and Suzanne (Shea) Robinson; brother Timothy Williams; and many nieces, nephews and friends.

Ronnie had a love for fishing, boating, and hunting.

Harriet Lucas
1927 ~ 2022

Harriet passed away in Stockton, California on February 23, 2022. She was 95 years old.

Born in Manteca, California and the child of Greek immigrants, she learned the value of hard work, determination, and her Orthodox Christian faith became the center of her life.

She was a graduate of Manteca High School and then took exams where she was acknowledged for her efficiency and extraordinary typing speed.

Southern Pacific hired her as the secretary to the district freight agent in Stockton, California and she retired after 42 years of service.

Harriet was a member of Women's Traffic and Transportation Club, Republican Women, and St. Basil's Philoptochos Society.

After retirement, she enjoyed helping the Philoptochos Society and working at the annual food festival. Her favorite place was to be at church on Sunday and she said that going to church makes your week perfect. She never went to an appointment empty-handed - there was always candy or cookies in her purse ready to hand out. Cooking and entertaining brought her immense joy and she was exceptional at both.

Harriet met the love of her life, Jerry Lucas, in Stockton. They were married in 1954 and had two children, Jim and Helen. During their retirement, they had the opportunity to travel to their favorite destinations. They loved spending time with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Harriet loved being called pro-yiayia (great grandmother) and felt truly blessed.

She is predeceased in death by her husband Jerry, sister Ruby, and brother James.

She is survived by her son Jim Lucas of San Francisco, California; daughter Helen (Aaron) Garner of Galt, California; grandson Dean (Tara) Xanttopulos of Lodi, California; granddaughter Leah (Stephen) Bonnesen of Stockton; and great-grandchildren Nico Xanttopulos, Alex Xanttopulos, and Taso Bonnesen.

From the Lafayette, Louisiana Daily Advertiser of February 28th, 1947 (courtesy, J. C. Moreaux):

THREE VETERANS OF S. P. LAUDED AT RETIREMENT

Three veteran employees of the Southern Pacific Railroad can take it easy tonight, with a combined 136 years of service behind them, and the well-wishes of officials and fellow workers launching them into the comparative quiet of retirement.

Local railroad officials were on hand Thursday to greet the retiring trio and wish them continued good health and full enjoyment of their pensions. They were lauded for their many years of faithful service on for Southern Pacific.

Engineer Wilfred Bourgeois, Engineer William B. Babin, and Conductor E. L. Logan are the three, all of the Lafayette-New Orleans passenger service. Mr. Babin took his last train out of Lafayette at 2:38 p.m. today, the Alamo. Crewmates Bourgeois and Logan made their last run out of Lafayette at 3:35 a.m. Thursday aboard the Argonaut.

The veteran conductor, well known to residents of this area, entered the railroad's service on May 5, 1904, as a supply man in the shops. He transferred to train service on September 5, 1904 as a brakeman. On March 5, 1913, he was promoted to conductor, and has been on the New Orleans to Lafayette passenger runs since April 1, 1922. He is a resident of Lafayette.

Mr. Bourgeois became an employee of the Southern Pacific in the Algiers shops on February 1, 1901. He was transferred to the position of fireman on April 21, 1906, was promoted to locomotive engineer November 22, 1912, and has remained at that post ever since. He resides in New Orleans.

Mr. Babin started out as an iron worker in the Algiers shops. He was transferred to the position of locomotive fireman on October 3, 1904 and won promotion to locomotive engineer on November 13, 1909. He has been at the throttle on the New Orleans-Lafayette runs ever since. He, too, is a resident of New Orleans.

Editor's request: When changing email addresses, please send your new address to billfowler@southernpacificjourney.org.