

Fun Time

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Having fun not only makes you happy, it makes you healthier too. For your health, longevity, and enjoyment, it is better to retire *to* something rather than just retire *from* something. Even better, you don't need to wait until retirement to find a fun hobby; I didn't. In fact, I may have too many hobbies. But let's talk about some things you may find interesting.

Like many men of the Boomer generation, as a child I got a train set for Christmas and had a lot of fun with it before work, college, family, and other interests took my time and attention. A few years ago, while searching for a train set as a Christmas present for someone else, my dormant train interest was revived and I got back into it in a much bigger and more focused way.

Why Trains?

But first, why would one be interested in trains? Railroads changed the world and have had a dramatic impact on our national history and culture. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that trains built this country, especially the West; the basic shape and location of our towns and cities was once determined by where the railroads ran. For decades railroads were America's glamour industry and employed millions of people over the years. So the cultural, economic, and historic impact of railroads was dramatic. But most of all, exploring the railroads in different ways is fun, and that is the real reason to do it. So what are the possibilities?

There are many different activities for people interested in trains. For some, museum visits are great fun, and the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento is one of the very best. Others want to work and play with full-size trains, and the Pacific Locomotive Association does so in Niles Canyon, near Fremont, CA, where you can ride these historic trains. Or you can get your own railcar and tour the rails with the Pacific Railcar Operators based in San Jose, CA.

Various railroad-oriented tours are also available, and I personally enjoyed a wonderful tour put on by Trains Unlimited Tours, LLC. Those with a serious historical interest have a tremendous number of railroad-related books and videos available. Finally, and perhaps most well-known, one can model trains.

So, if any aspect of railroading is of interest, you have many local resources to explore to help you determine if you want to pursue this interest further.

Next time we will discuss the model railroading aspect in more depth.

Resources

- ❑ California State Railroad Museum (www.csrmf.org)
- ❑ Southern California Chapter, Railway and Locomotive Historical Society (www.trainweb.org/rlhs)
- ❑ Pacific Locomotive Association (www.ncry.org)
- ❑ Pacific Railcar Operators (www.pro-online.org)

- Trains Unlimited Tours, LLC (www.trainsunlimitedtours.com).
- The National Model Railroad Association: www.nmra.org