

A high-speed train, possibly a Shinkansen, is shown traveling through a snowy landscape. The train is moving from the right side of the frame towards the left, curving into the distance. The ground is covered in snow, and the sky is filled with falling snow, creating a soft, white atmosphere. A traffic light on the right side of the train is illuminated with a green light. The train has a blue and white color scheme with red and yellow stripes.

all aboard  
for a **funtastic**  
winter ride!

## STORY AND PHOTOS BY SUSAN WOOD

I love to dance and a weekend of dancing with friends in Reno sounded great...but fighting the traffic out of the Bay Area and through the snowy Sierras on a Friday and back again on Sunday sounded like anything but fun, not to mention stressful.

Answer — the Reno Fun Train

The Fun Train's festive atmosphere combined with the mystique of riding the rails over the mountains creates an unforgettably unique experience. It's a party on wheels that begins the minute you step on board and gains steam with each passing station (Emeryville, Richmond, Martinez, Suisun, Sacramento, & Roseville) as cheerful travelers hop on with their weekend bags, picnic baskets, and ice chests.

At every stop, "Fun Rick" the Train Manager, hangs out of the train, welcoming guests with hat held high and a contagious smile on his face. On each platform, the FunAtics greet arriving passengers with lively Dixieland music as friendly cabin attendants direct you to your assigned car.

The Reno Fun Train is the only train in the world where you can dance, sing-along, conga line, relax and let loose all while making new friends and enjoying the romance of riding the rails over the magnificent Sierra Nevada Mountains on your way to exciting downtown Reno.

Fun themes and decorations add to the train's festive atmosphere, and strolling entertainers bring music, magic, and fun right to your seat. The train's staff is great, going out of their way non-stop to make sure every passenger is well taken care of.

The Dance Car is laughter-filled as dancers try to keep their footing while the train zigs and zags through the foothills-giving a whole new meaning to "Rock & Roll"! The live band and full bar make this car a very popular hangout.

The Piano Lounge is a comfortable car where you can relax and listen to music or visit with friends. If you're hungry, grab a snack at the Café/Bar and head up to the Dome Car to enjoy the incredible view. Or, if your money is burning a hole in your pocket, head to the Souvenir Shop where there is a good choice of mementos and gifts for purchase. And a Smoking Car comes complete with Cigar Lounge area.

As the Fun Train clickity-clacks along, the scenery constantly changes as we pass through small towns and the Sacramento valley, over bridges and through tunnels. Sunshine turns to rain and then into snow. Flat valleys turn into gently rolling hills and then into snow frosted mountain peaks.

The Reno Fun Train is all about "the journey" and this was one to remember. But we did also have plenty of time to enjoy

our weekend destination—Reno, "The Biggest Little City in the World."

On Sunday morning, refreshed but exhausted, we re-boarded the train for our return trip. Needless to say, this trip was a bit more subdued as many passengers were quickly lulled to sleep by the rhythm of the rails.

For me, there were still more pictures to take so I headed up to the Dome Car with my camera to enjoy the spectacular wintertime show as we peacefully wound our way back through the magical snow covered Sierras, down through the foothills, and back into the Bay Area. We arrived home just in time to watch the sun set—the perfect ending to a never-to-be-forgotten journey!

My friends and I give the Reno Fun Train 5 Stars!

The first Fun Train ran the rails from the San Francisco East Bay to Reno in 1963 when Southern Pacific Railroad and the Reno Chamber of Commerce devised a plan to stimulate wintertime business in Reno while, at the same time, keeping the Southern Pacific crews working during the off season. Over the years different tour operators have managed the train, but Key Holidays won the contract from Amtrak in 1993, and they have been running it ever since.

"Running these special charter trains to Reno has been a true labor of love," said Jade Chapman, President of Key Holidays. "Our family's passion has always been tied to travel and railroading. The Reno Fun Train and Reno Snow Train are the only trains in the world offering such a spectacular ride in the Sierra Nevada Mountains aboard a mode of transportation that is so totally unique not only in the Bay Area, but in the world."

Key Holidays, a family run business in Walnut Creek, was started in 1983 by Chapman and her (now retired) step father, Henry Luna who is a founding member of Niles Canyon Railway. Chapman's mother (also retired from Key Holidays) was a Fun Train Onboard Manager in the 1970's.

Will 2012 be the end to an era?

There is a projected Amtrak charter equipment shortage on the West Coast and, unless more train cars can be supplied by Amtrak, this will be the final season for the Reno Fun train.

"The Fun Train is going out with a bang one year shy of its 50th Anniversary," says Chapman, "and we're inviting all our old friends and new ones to take one last spin, and relive some of the epic times between here and Reno."

For more information or to book your Fun Train or Snow Train adventure, contact Key Holidays at 1-800-783-0783 or [www.keyholidays.com](http://www.keyholidays.com).



*Don't miss out.....*  
 Reno FUN TRAIN (Must be 21 or over)  
 February 10th - Mardi Gras  
 February 24th Hawaii "Aloha"  
 March 2nd - Mardi Gras  
 March 9th - 60's, 70's, & 80's

Midweek Reno SNOW TRAIN with  
 onboard entertainment,  
 live music, and historical narration for  
 those who can get  
 away midweek, families, and retirees.

February 14th - Valentine's "Sweethearts"  
 February 21st - 50's Sock Hop  
 February 28th - Fat Tuesday  
 March 6th - Classic Country



Photo p. 16: The Reno Fun Train moves through Sierra Snow—no chains required!  
P. 18 & 19, L-R: 1. “Fun Rick” makes the ride... more Fun!  
2. Approaching the Sierraas and hidden beauty you can’t see from Hiway 80.  
3. “FunAtics” get the ball rolling on the station platform.