



Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum



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www.slorm.com

Hard Work Builds a Museum



Chris Hurd, Aron Kahn, Brad LaRose and Ted VanKlaveren unload the rails at the Museum's Emily Street storage yard.



Howard Amborn, Duane Powell and Mark VanKlavern use the improvised forks on Howard's tractor to move track hardware.

On the Saturday, January 9, 2010, workday, museum volunteers got an early start at 8:00 a.m. Superior Crane and Transport Co. owner Damon Meeks, was waiting with his truck, trailer and crane, to move rails from the California Men's Colony (CMC) prison to the Museum Display Track near the freight house in San Luis Obispo, and the Museum's Emily Street storage yard. Museum members Howard Amborn, with his handy John Deere tractor, Tom Cooper, Karl Hovanitz and his trailer, Chris Hurd, Aron Kahn, Ted VanKlaveren and his son Mark, Brad LaRose, Duane Powell and Glen Matteson took part.

Aron, Brad, Ted and Chris mainly worked with Damon to move all the remaining rails that had been taken up from the spur track, which once connected the Southern Pacific main line with Camp San Luis Obispo. The first load was stacked between the rails at the southern end of the display track. This rail will be used to add a third rail, forming a dual gauge track, standard 56 1/2" and narrow-gauge 36", and a curb rail along the adjacent walkway to retain ballast. Some previously stored rails were moved in the yard to improve access to equipment.

Tom Cooper put lots of effort into removing a couple of rails that were still spiked down next to the CMC entrance-road crossing. Duane, Brad and Damon with a fork lift, came to his rescue. This was very hard work.

Duane, Glen, Howard, Karl, Ted and Mark gathered ties and pallets of track hardware from the CMC property.

Pallets with piles of tie plates, joint bars, and broken buckets of spikes and bolts, were a challenge to load, transport, and store. Using the museum trailer and Karl's trailer, all the remaining hardware was moved.

During the course of the day, the crew moved numerous pallets of track hardware, totaling approximately 4000 pounds. We moved 83 rails totaling approximately 74,000 pounds of steel. Actually, the rails and hardware were moved twice; Once from the ground

to the waiting trailers at CMC, and a second time from the trailers to the designated storage areas in the Emily Street Yard.

The day involved very hard, labor intensive work to retrieve this extremely valuable donation. It was well worth the effort as this is an investment in the future of the museum. It is not likely that the Museum will receive a donation of rail again.

Photos and report by Glen Matteson

Boxcar Moved, Yard Cleaned



December 19th, Boxcar 706 is lifted off trailer in Emily Street Yard. Full story on page 4

Spring Train Festival Fundraiser

Sunday, March 28, 2010 • BitterCreek Western Railroad

Go to www.slorm.com for more details



Mission Statement

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, founded as a non-profit, public benefit educational museum, will preserve the railroad history of California and the Central Coast by collecting, restoring, displaying and operating historic railroad equipment.

SAN LUIS OBISPO RAILROAD MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brad LaRose *President*
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TIMETABLE

The following is a list of future meetings of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. Business meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Quality Suites Hotel, 1631 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo. They begin at 6:00 p.m.

The Program Meeting locations and times will be announced in advance. All meetings are open to the public.

February 9 *Business Meeting*
 March 9 *Business Meeting*
**March 28 . . . Spring Train Festival
 at BitterCreek Western Railroad**
 April 13 *Business Meeting*

BY-LAWS AVAILABLE

Every member in good standing is entitled to have a copy of the By-laws. In the interest of economy, we have not automatically distributed them to all members. To get a copy, send a #10, self addressed, stamped, envelope to SLORRM, Post Office Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

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Become a Member

Membership in SLORRM provides an outlet for any person interested in railroad history, train travel, railroad oriented entertainment and the value of railroading to the community.

Membership is designed for those who love trains and wish to educate others, young and old, and who share the dream of building the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum in the 1894 SP Freighthouse, at the San Luis Obispo railroad station.

Single members pay \$36 per year. A family can join for \$60 annually, and a sustaining member pays \$100 per year. Mail to SLORRM, P.O. Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3260. Go to slorrm.com to download an application form.

Life Members receive an embroidered patch, enameled pin, the Coast Mail newsletter, and have voting rights for one person for life. *Use current age to calculate amount due.*

0-17 years \$1200 or 5 payments of \$280
 18-39 \$900 or 5 payments of \$220
 40-61 \$600 or 5 payments of \$160
 62 and older \$300 or 5 payments of \$100

Family Life Members receive two enameled pins, two embroidered patches, the Coast Mail newsletter, and voting rights for life for two people residing at the same address. *Use the age of youngest family member to calculate amount due.*

0-17 years of age \$1800 or 5 payments of \$420
 18-39 \$1350 or 5 payments of \$330
 40-61 \$900 or 5 payments of \$240
 62 and older \$450 or 5 payments of \$150

If making payments the life membership card will be sent upon receipt of final payment. Until such time as the life membership is paid in full, the member will receive a yearly membership card. All payments made toward a life membership are non-refundable and failure to make a scheduled payment by the due date will result in forfeiture of all funds paid toward the life membership. Payment plans include yearly member dues.

Company Store

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum has a variety of items for sale for your enjoyment and to raise money for the Museum. T-shirts in both adult and children sizes, baseball hats, belt buckles, coffee mugs, enamel pins, embroidered patches and engineer hats are all available by going to the Museum website, www.slorrm.com and click on **Company Store**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Beginning with the previous issue of the Coast Mail, the last line of your mailing address on the envelope states the current expiration date of your membership. Please check this date each time you receive a mailing from us. If the date is within a month or so of your receipt of the mailing, your remittance of the appropriate amount to renew your membership will be greatly appreciated. Any changes to your contact information should also be included. This system will significantly reduce the Museum's costs associated with membership renewal and record maintenance, and will help assure that your membership is always current. Should your mailing address change for any reason, prompt submittal of updated information will help us achieve these same goals. Thank you for your diligence and cooperation.

New Life Members

Russell Sperry and Stephen Young have become Life Members of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum since the last Coast Mail was published.

Individual Renewals

Bonnie Adams, Howard Amborn, Angela Bruckart, Jack Cashin, Dennis Cementina, Willie Chambers, Richard Dickey, Charles Dockstader, Thomas Ennis, Beverly Hardy, James Holmes, Curt Johnson, Kent Kenney, Charles Kinzer, Glen Matteson, John Miramon, Steve Mott, Beverly Murray, Mike Palmer, Paul Pedroni, Dominic Perello, Curtis Rheinhardt, Dave Rohr, Gary See, Patrick Sullivan, John Turrill, Ted VanKlaveren, George Wilson and Stan Wilson have all renewed their membership in the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum since the last edition of Coast Mail was published.

Family Renewals

Gordon and Manetta Bennett, Luther and Betsy Bertrando, Jon Paul and Jenny Curzan, Ron and Louise Milot, and Dwight and Joyce Peterson have all renewed their Family Memberships.

Sustaining Members

John Feliciano, Henry Myers, Pierre Rademaker and Kenneth Schwartz have all renewed as Sustaining Members

Donations Beverly Hardy, Charles Dockstader, Dominic Perello and Patrick Sullivan have all made monetary donations to The Museum.

Art Laidlaw Makes Great Donation

On November 1, 2009, Brad LaRose, Duane Powell, Howard Amborn and Glen Matteson traveled to Pahrump, Nevada and met with SLORRM member Art Laidlaw.

Art moved to San Luis Obispo County in the 1950's. He began working for the Southern Pacific Railroad in the San Luis Obispo yard as a switchman, moving up to engine service as a fireman and then locomotive engineer. He ran trains in and out of San Luis Obispo for many years. During his career with the railroad, he saw the last years of steam and the railroad's conversion to diesel.

During his career Art photographed many trains, locomotives and yard buildings. Many of his photos were published in books about the Southern Pacific Railroad and it's "Coast Line." Art retired from the railroad in the late 1980's.



Art Laidlaw in 1991.

Art lived in Santa Margarita for many years. He is well known for his live steam 7 1/2" gauge railroad in his Santa Margarita back yard, next to the Southern Pacific tracks. Art and Arnold Hoffman, were early pioneers in miniature railroading in northern San Luis Obispo County. When Art moved to Pahrump about 5 years ago, he took his railroad with him. He rebuilt the pike around his house in the desert, including track, car barn and other structures.

Art made a huge donation of numerous artifacts, which he had collected over the course of many years, to the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.



Most noticeable of these items is a round, four-foot diameter sign that had hung on the Southern Pacific round house in San Luis Obispo. The sign shows the Southern Pacific Railroad emblem of the sunset, with radiating sunlight and track, with the words "Southern Pacific Lines."

Art also donated the throttle quadrant and lever, and the Alco type Gpower reverse quadrant and lever, from the Southern Pacific Railroad "Daylight" locomotive #4454. This model GS-4 locomotive and it's passenger cars were called "The most beautiful train in the world."

The largest donated item is a Magnetic Flagman brand "Wig Wag" signal, which includes the box mechanism, target arm and battery/relay box base with the attached mast. This Wig Wag operated in Art's Santa Margarita back yard next to his miniature railroad for many years.

Other significant donated artifacts include Southern Pacific Railroad caboose marker lanterns, SPRR steam locomotive classification lamps, a crank telephone of the same type that was used in the SP Freighthouse and 26 sets of blueprints of SPRR steam locomotives that were saved from destruction by another well known former SPRR employee from San Luis Obispo, Mac Gaddis. The railroad was throwing these blueprints away and Mac saved them, eventually giving them to his friend Art.

The Museum sincerely appreciates Art's preservation of central coast railroad history by donating these historic artifacts. It takes people like Art and his interest in railroad history to make our goal of a railroad museum in San Luis Obispo possible.

Thank you Art.

Photos and report by Brad LaRose

Pictured below L-R: Duane Powell, Art Laidlaw, Howard Amborn and Glen Matteson.



December 19th Workday Very Productive



Freight car trucks are shifted to make room for boxcar 706. Photo by Glen Matteson

On Saturday, December 19, 2009, museum volunteers knew they were in for a fun workday when president Brad LaRose arrived with a written work plan. He had scheduled a large boom crane along with a truck mounted crane and semi-trailer to be ready to work at 8:30 a.m.

Due to changing ownership of the Pacific Coast Home and Garden Center, next to the Museum's Emily Street Yard, the Pacific Coast Railway narrow-gauge boxcar #706, that had been on display in the Center's parking lot, had to be moved. That meant a Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) speeder (motorcar), trailer/push-car, and some SPRR freight car trucks in the museum yard had to be moved. An additional section of rail had to be laid on the narrow-gauge (36") alignment to accommodate the narrow gauge trucks of the boxcar.

Museum members Howard Amborn (with his handy John Deere tractor), Tom Cooper, Ted Van Klaveren, Duane Powell, Chris Hurd, Glen Matteson, and Gary See set to work. Damon and his assistant, from Superior Crane, added their rigging and moving skills. Soon the speeder had been moved and a section of track in the yard was ready to receive the boxcar.

The 706 has had a long, hard life, and there were some tense moments as it was lifted off its trucks and swung into position over the trailer. While one team was dismantling and salvaging the track and ties that had supported the boxcar, it was carefully driven to the yard and reset on its trucks, an operation that depended on aligning parts within fractions of an inch.

Volunteers formed new teams, one staying at the yard to organize materials and move "The Sullivan," a large air compressor, formerly used at a cinnabar (mercury) mine located near Highway 166. While it is a valuable historic artifact, it does not relate to the Museum

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mission statement and collections policy. Therefore, the museum board decided to sell it.

Can You Hear Me Now?



Photo by Brad LaRose

The second team drove to the Goldtree Ranch, between Cal Poly and CMC to retrieve an SP concrete phone booth. In the days before radios and cellular phones, railroads often placed land-line telephones along the tracks at locations where train crews could contact dispatchers concerning train movements. The Southern Pacific Railroad provided cylindrical concrete booths with conical tops, which were functional, durable, and very heavy (3000 pounds). At one time, the railroad location of Goldtree (west of Stenner Canyon) was a critical point for all trains traversing Cuesta Grade, as well as troop and materiel trains to and from the U.S. Army facilities at Camp San Luis Obispo.

Larry Smith donated the phone booth which was on his property near the location of the former Wye track that connected the main line with the spur to the camp. The Superior Crane crew, along with Brad LaRose, moved the phone booth to the Emily Street Yard, where it will be restored as a future Museum display. The Museum will eventually locate the booth near the display track, with some type of recording or interactive feature demonstrating how the railroad responded to the always changing flow of traffic, movements of helper engines, weather shifts, and mechanical complications.

Reported by Glen Matteson

Railroad History at Camp Roberts



My father read an inquiry on *Train Orders* from a man who had flown in a private airplane near Camp Roberts in 1947. On that flight he saw a figure 8 railroad track on a military base. He heard from a friend that it may have been a training area from WWII to teach soldiers how to derail trains.

Since I live near Camp Roberts, Dad asked me to go there to see what I could find out. The Camp Roberts Historical Museum seemed like the logical place to start. Camp Roberts, just north of San Miguel, was built in 1941, to train new recruits for WWII and is now an Army Reserve and National Guard training base. The museum has been in existence for about 15 years. Museum Curator Gary McMaster has been there for ten.

The troops were brought to the camp by train during WWII by the tens of thousands. There was a depot directly across Highway 101 from the main gate where troops arrived for training and shipped out to fight the war. Retired MSgt. Leonard Formosa built a beautiful HO scale model of the depot area, pictured above, which is on display in the museum.

The Camp Roberts Historical Museum is open on Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 am to 4 pm. The museum is on the base, so to visit you need to have a current valid photo ID, current vehicle registration, and proof of vehicle insurance. Visit their website at: www.militarymuseum.org/CampRobertsMuseum.html

Reported by Megan Pyper Brown