



Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum



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www.slorm.com

PCRY Boxcar 706 will be Museum Display



Museum volunteers Chris Hurd, Ted VanKlaveren, Robert Evenson and Alvin Evenson labor to prepare the site for the Pacific Coast Railways boxcar #706 to be installed next to the Freighthouse. Photo by Glen Matteson



Pacific Coast Railways boxcar #706 as it appeared on April 8, 2012 in the Emily Street Yard. Ted VanKlaveren, with the help of Tom Cooper and many other volunteers have labored tirelessly on the rehabilitation of the car. Photo by Ted VanKlaveren

Museum workday, Saturday, June 2, saw the beginning of another effort to turn the Freighthouse into our Museum Home. We worked with **Ed Evenson of Evenson Plumbing** getting water and sewer installed in the building. Ed agreed to help us clear and grub the ground on the west side of the building. This will allow the laying of ties and rails which will support the Pacific Coast Railway

boxcar #706 as a display and as a sneaky way of adding restrooms to the Museum without using additional floor space inside the building.

Ed prevailed on his brothers, **Robert** and **Alvin** to donate their time and equipment to help with the job. Alvin operated the backhoe while Robert supervised on the ground. Key players for this project were Ted VanKlaveren,

who is heading up the boxcar reconstruction process and John Marchetti who did the grading and drainage plan for the area. Other Museum members helping out were Tom Cooper, Tom Grozan, Brad LaRose, Glen Matteson and Tom Mitchell. The Museum really appreciates this donation by the Evenson brothers. Volunteers enjoyed discussing old times in San Luis Obispo as the Evenson family grew up in the Edna Valley and remember the community as it was 50 years ago.

Supporters Donate Generously

Those of you who regularly receive the Coast Mail are well aware of our drive to raise funds to complete the restoration and interior improvements to the Freighthouse as the permanent museum. In March we began a special capital fund raising drive for this purpose. To date we have received gifts and pledges exceeding \$25,000. While we still have a way to go, this is a great start in these difficult times and these donations are sincerely appreciated. This funding allows us to keep the contractor working on repairing the floors, providing modern electrical and plumbing installations and to start framing the new walls for rooms that will house and exhibit our collections.

Thanks to those who have given or pledged to our Freighthouse construction fund. You now belong to a club of committed railroad museum supporters. The groups below are named after noted passenger trains that traveled through San Luis Obispo.

Lark Club \$5,000 - \$9,999

Andrew and Jutta Merriam Family Trust
Deborah Lyon and R. Jeffery Herten

Sunset Club \$1,000 - 4,999

Richard Alberts, Karl Hovanitz, Arnold Jonas, Aron Kahn, Brad LaRose, Don and Lynn Maddy, John Marchetti, Andrew Merriam, David Rohr, Ken Schwartz, Gary See.

Coaster Club \$500 - \$999

David and Lois Bruns

Starlight Club \$250 - \$499

Tom and Carolyn Peterson
Robert and Kathleen Copeland

Surfliner Club \$100 - \$249

John Benson, Angela Bruckart, Dyer Campbell, John Falkenstein, John Feliciano, Leslie McKinley, James Landreth, Arthur Ludwick, Cheryl McCollum, G. Fredrick Paap, Mike Palmer, Agatha Readron, Cheryl Steed, James Thornburg, R. Williams.

Report by Dave Rohr and Andrew Merriam

Freighthouse Progress



John Marchetti inspects the work on the interior of the Freighthouse.

RK Builders is continuing to work on the interior of the Freighthouse. It is amazing how much trenching and under floor conduit is needed to meet the electrical and communications needs for the Museum.

Photo and reports by Andrew Merriam



Mission Statement

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum is a non-profit educational institution founded to preserve and present the railroad history of California and specifically the Central Coast. Collecting, restoring, and displaying relevant railroad artifacts, photographs and documents is its goal. This effort is supplemented by creating models, displays and graphics as well as operating historic railroad equipment to facilitate a better understanding of how railroads have affected our area's social, cultural and economic history.

SAN LUIS OBISPO RAILROAD MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Brad LaRose *President*
- Karl Hovanitz *Vice President*
- Aron Kahn *Secretary*
- David Rohr *Treasurer*
- Arnold Jonas, John Marchetti, Andrew Merriam, Duane Powell, Gary See

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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. All meetings are open to the public.

- July 10 *Business Meeting*
- August 14 *Business Meeting*
- September 11 ... *Business Meeting*
- October 4-8 Central Coast Railroad Festival**
- October 6 Open House**
- October 9 *Business Meeting*
- November 4 Bitter Creek Western Fundraiser**

BY-LAWS AVAILABLE

Every member in good standing is entitled to a copy of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum By-laws. In the interest of economy, we have not distributed them to all members automatically.

2 To get a copy, send a #10, self addressed, stamped, envelope to SLORRM, Post Office Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

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 <http://www.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 offers a variety of Museum souvenir items for sale for your enjoyment and to raise money for the Museum. T-shirts in both adult and children sizes, baseball hats, metal belt buckles, coffee mugs, enamel pins, embroidered patches, engineer hats, buttons, DVDs and videos are all available by going to the Museum website, www.slorrm.com and click on **Company Store**.

New Members Josiah Jenlins has joined the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum as a **Sustaining Member** since the last Coast Mail was published.

David and Lois Bruns, Harry and Mary Harlow, Cheryl Steed and son Eric Viovode, and the James Stitt Family have all joined as **Family Members**.

Renewals Angela Bruckart, Willie Chambers, Jim Chernoff, Ray Craig, Ed DeLeonardis, Brian Dunn, Chuck Fellows, Roy Gammill, Bruce Hebron, Karl Hovanitz, Charles Kinzer, Hilding Larson, Jane Maxwell, Guenther Meyer-Harnisch, Nathan Paul, Roland Pautz, Nicholas Price, Gary See and James Taylor have renewed their memberships. David Olenik, M.D., and Pierre Rademaker have renewed as **Sustaining Members**.

Thomas and Deborah Grozan, Robert and Olga Harway, Ron and Louise Milot, Bob and Dodie Williams have renewed their **Family Memberships**.

Life Members

Longtime member Iran Spradley has become a Life Member.

Donations

Ed DeLeonardis has made a monetary donation to SLORRM.

Renew your membership

The last line of your mailing address on the envelope is the current expiration date of your membership. Please check this date each time you receive a mailing from SLORRM. If the date is within a month or so of your receipt of the mailing, your remittance of the amount to renew your membership will be appreciated. Changes to your contact information should also be included. This will help assure that your membership is always current. Should your mailing address or e-mail address change, prompt submittal of updated information will help achieve this same goal. Thank you for your diligence and cooperation.



The next Bitter Creek Western Live Steam Railroad SLORRM fundraiser will be held on Sunday, November 4, 2012. To purchase advance tickets, log on to www.slorrm.com.

Crowd Enjoys Disney's Love of Trains



Left: Guests enjoyed rides in the ex-Disneyland coaches.
Above: Crowd listens to presentation by Michael Campbell of the Carolwood Pacific Society in the Asistencia at Santa Margarita Ranch.
Photos by Jamie Foster

On Saturday, April 14, 2012, enthusiastic Museum supporters, railfans, and Disneyfiles, gathered at Rob Rossi's Santa Margarita Ranch for an evening of train rides, food, wine and entertainment. Train rides began at 4:00 pm and ran until 6:00 pm when *Michael Campbell*, President of the *Carolwood Pacific Society* narrated a multimedia

Artifacts Donated



The donor is Alex Woronovich, former Southern Pacific Railroad engineer. He operated freight trains out of Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo. The donated items displayed in front of him are: A hand operated Car mover, given by SP crews to an oil company in Ventura. A Southern Pacific switch stand lantern from the ground throw switch for the locomotive storage/service track in the Oxnard yard and the bell from a Southern Pacific Railroad SD9, unknown road number, possibly built in 1955 (based on a casting mark on the bell mounting bracket). The bell is approximately 11" high, is solid brass and weighs 30 lbs. Compressed air from the locomotive operates the clapper to strike the bell. It will be exhibited in the Museum connected to an air compressor and tank so that it can be operated as an interactive exhibit. Restoration of the bell has been completed by Brad LaRose, President and Curator of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.

Photo and Report by Brad LaRose

presentation titled *Disney's Love of Trains*. He spoke about the development of the Disney Railroad and Walt's love of trains. Troubador *Don Lampson* performed railroad songs. *Central Coast Brewing* sold beer and rootbeer by the glass or bottle. Wine tasting and wines sales were available.

Modeling Port Harford for the Museum

Part of the City of San Luis Obispo's requirements for the Museum was to create an operating model railroad that represented the history of our City and County. While the model area will ultimately represent five of those railroads, the Pacific Coast Railway, Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, Santa Maria Valley and Amtrak, probably the most picturesque and least known was the narrow gauge Pacific Coast Railway. This railroad was the first connecting the cities of San Luis Obispo County and northern Santa Barbara County to Harford Pier at Avila. First constructed in 1874, it was also the first to perish in 1941 when its rails and equipment were sent to Hawaii and Alaska in support of World War II. But the Pacific Coast Railway will live on in our museum as a major display. Coming up the stairs into the model area, the first major scene that will be visible is the 14-foot long Port Harford Pier (still in existence today). The tracks will turn past the historic Marre Hotel, traverse the old right of way past what today is Olde Port Beach and into the town of Avila Beach.

Museum modelers, John Marchetti and Andrew Merriam have started fabrication of the pier and some of the scenic elements as seen in the following photographs. The top photograph shows the 1917 built warehouse (still in existence today). In addition to the railroad on the pier, the scene will show a



lumber schooner and a tug boat as well as over 350 piles, waves, seals and even some barnacles.

Photo of the turntable to be installed at the base of the pier illustrates John Marchetti's fantastic skill at modeling in wood. Visible are the features of the



weathered wood grain, dozens of bolt heads and rusty truss rods and rails as well as the large wooden handles that were used to rotate the "armstrong" turntable as the engines were reversed for a return trip from Avila Beach to San Luis Obispo.

Photos and report by
Andrew Merriam

1907 Railroad Newspaper Found in SLO House Wall



Walter Cushing built this house at 1225 Pismo Street in 1907. It is better landscaped today.

Walter Cushing was a Southern Pacific Engineer working out of San Luis Obispo in 1907 when he built his family home at 1225 Pismo St. It has been suggested he brought the building materials down from San Francisco on a train that he engineered. While constructing the walls of the house newspapers were stuffed between the studs as a plentiful and economical material serving as insulation, a common practice in those days.



The Trackman, June 26, 1907

The current owner of the house, Bill Casella, is doing a grand job of restoring the house. While installing a gas line for the fireplace, he discovered many old newspapers in the living room wall. One of these is a yellowed and crumbling June 26, 1907 edition of *The Trackman*, the official organ of the *National Union of Railway Trackmen*. Bill has donated this fine artifact to the Museum. It seems to date the construction period of the house. He has also found many historic artifacts in the attic, under the floorboards, and while digging for a new flowerbed. He has framed some of these and has them on display in his home.

Casella applied to the San Luis Obispo City Cultural Heritage Committee for this house, one of the earliest examples of the Craftsman Bungalow style in town, to be placed on the Master List of Historic Resources. Museum President Brad LaRose wrote a supporting letter to the Committee for the application. The application has been approved.

4 Cushing was an important member of the railroad community, serving in the Brotherhood of Railroad Engineers, attending meetings around the country.



The Southern Pacific had a siding named Cushing in the Garden Farms area between Santa Margarita and Atascadero that included the current grade crossing to the rock quarry. This siding lasted until the 1960s when the Santa Margarita siding was extended railroad west and absorbed Cushing.



Walter Cushing with one of his kids.

In an interesting coincidence, ex-Southern Pacific caboose #409, located on the display track south of the freight house, has a connection to the Cushing Siding. In the 1980s, the SP needed a *train order office* to provide information to the trains traveling over the Cuesta Grade, between San Luis Obispo and Santa Margarita. The railroad built a panel track next to the mainline, opposite the Cushing siding. The caboose was placed on this unconnected track and used as the train order office, with a single employee per shift.



About 150 yards north of the siding and caboose was a concrete telephone booth that train crews used to talk to dispatchers before the introduction of radios and cell phones. That booth was identical to a

poured concrete railroad telephone booth that the Museum owns and plans to restore for an exhibit. Located behind that booth is a house that was occupied by Museum President Brad LaRose at that time.

Railroad history is interesting and has many connections to the past and present. If you enjoyed this story and the preservation of historic artifacts, please donate to the Museum so that railroad history can be preserved. You are an important part of the historic process.

Reported by Steve Mott and Brad LaRose
Old photos courtesy of Bill Casella

Ludwick Train makes debut at Bitter Creek



Brad LaRose explains the workings of the steam engine to a visiting family as John Marchetti guards the throttle.

Photo by Gary See

In 2009, **Art Ludwick**, a Life Member of SLORRM, donated an entire 7½" gauge trainset to the Museum. The train, consisting of a steam locomotive and five cars, has been kept at Bitter Creek Western Railroad.

On Sunday, April 1, 2012, the train made its public debut at the SLORRM fundraiser. Though not used on this day to carry passengers, it was displayed and used to educate guests on the workings of a steam locomotive.

Prior to being used, the locomotive, known as the *Easley Pacific Railroad Number 1*, received new batteries and some repairs to the cars, all donated by Karl Hovanitz, Museum VP.

The Ludwick family is known for their generosity on the Central Coast. They funded the restoration of the WWII vintage recreation center on Santa Rosa Street in San Luis Obispo, which is now known as the Ludwick Center.

