



NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLETA DEPOT RAILROAD MUSEUM

Volume 7, Number 2

Summer 1987

Published Quarterly by the Institute for American Research

Editor: Gary Coombs; Circulation: Phyllis Olsen

Photos by Bonnie Adams and Gary Coombs; Illustration by Perry Adams

Santa Barbara Rail Centennial --

This year is the 100th Anniversary of the coming of the railroad to Santa Barbara. Perhaps no event since that phenomenal year of 1887 has had such a profound impact on the development of the city and the area as the completion of the original Southern Pacific line to Santa Barbara.

The great event was marked by the arrival of excursion trains from the south, pouring into the city on August 20, the day of inaugural service, carrying passengers from Los Angeles and nearer towns, in numbers rivaling the entire Santa Barbara population.

To coincide with the Centennial, the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum will be completing its own rail line, the long-awaited 1/8-size live-steam track around the depot property. And, in celebration, we will be offering rides

Also for the Centennial celebration, the museum will have a display in the main hall of the Santa Barbara Public Library throughout August.

Readers who want to learn more about the railroad's coming may wish to follow Stella Rouse's daily "In Old Santa Barbara" column in the News-Press. The "100 Years Ago" segment has been carrying much historical information on the progress of "the road."

School Excursion Completed -- We are proud to announce that the museum has successfully organized and guided a special railroad trip for students from La Patera Elementary School. Passengers on the 100-mile journey to San Luis Obispo were Phyllis Olsen, Gary Coombs, and 53 students, teachers, aides, and parents, representing John Strickley's third-grade class and Donna Nelson's Special Education class. Readers may have seen news of the trip reported on TV Channel 12.

The April 23 excursion was a first step toward the development of a program which we hope to make available to schools throughout the South Coast beginning next year. The trip followed about 18 months of planning by museum staff and Goleta Union School District personnel.

The purpose of the program is to acquaint young people with the history and adventure of railroading, as well as to achieve other educational goals established by the individual teacher. The pilot effort included a field trip to Goleta Depot, an in-class presentation by museum staff, onboard activities (covering natural science, history, geography, and reading and writing skills), and follow-up classroom exercises. Eventually, we hope to add a teacher's guide as well.

Much of our planning was aimed at preparing Amtrak for our trip, and the effort certainly paid off. While we waited for the train at Santa Barbara, Ticket Agent Vicki Voss, who many members met at our Annual Dinner, came and met the children personally, handing out complimentary Amtrak engineer hats. Once on board, Attendant Steve



SP Engineer Jim McEntire gives his son, Doug, a turn on Depot Day '86.

to the public every Saturday afternoon in July and August from 1 to 4 p.m. We hope that all members can join in this momentous occasion and will bring all of their friends.

Free tickets for the 1/3-mile ride will be available, beginning July 6, at local businesses, including Joe Redford Toyota, Hobby Depot, Century 21 Coast Properties (Montecito), Oak Depot, Pendulum Faire, Bennett's Educational Materials, Goleta Chevron, Forevergreen (Santa Barbara only), and La Tienda del Presidio. No purchase is necessary, but you must be 18 years of age. Limit one ticket per visit.

Dallgaier showed us every courtesy, allowing us to use the PA system to point out historic spots, like the old Naples Depot watertower, and other noteworthy features along the way.

Chief of Onboard Services Ron Perkins was most kind, giving a train-wide welcome to "the children from La Patera Elementary School" on the PA



Phyllis Olsen shares the museum with children before historic rail trip.

and taking extra time to talk with the kids when he visited our car (Phyllis had made certain that he received a rousing cheer when he entered).

The children especially seemed to enjoy the opportunity to explore the train and to see the Space Shuttle Launch Complex at Vandenberg AFB. The only problem we had was with the bus chartered for the return trip, which broke down near Atascadero.

Deepest thanks are extended to La Patera teacher and Institute member John Strickley, who worked very hard on this project, to make it as productive and successful as possible. We hope that John will be able to work with us over the coming months on the further refinement of this important educational program.

History in the Making -- One of the unique features of our rail trip were the tickets, which were issued at Goleta Depot -- something which hasn't happened here since 1965, when the last passenger train to serve Goleta, the "local," was discontinued.

Like today's Coast Starlight, the named passenger trains of yesterday -- the Daylight, Lark, and others -- stopped only at the principal cities, while the slow-moving local trains attended to Goleta and other small communities. They carried mail, milk, and other goods -- as well as passengers -- from one town to the next.

The April 23 adventure had many historical antecedents, particularly during the local's last days, when several school groups booked passage on the vanishing mixed trains. On May 19, 1965, the day before the final run, a group of 35 children, parents, and teachers from Montecito Nursery School took a farewell trip, flagging the train at Goleta and traveling to Carpinteria. The previous day, second-

graders from Adams School in Santa Barbara made the same 18-mile journey.

A Drawing for Kids to Color -- Hilda Volkman spent a recent Spring day preparing a lovely ink sketch of the depot. Then, Husband Al supplied the finishing touch, adding block lettering, "Goleta Depot," and another museum project was almost ready.

The sketch was reproduced on heavy white paper and we began giving them away for children visiting the museum to take home and color. In less than two months, several hundred copies of the coloring page have been passed out. The response from kids and parents alike has been terrific.

Work Days -- Much progress on museum projects and maintenance has been made during recent Work Saturdays. Those who have given of their time to keep our program on track include Malcolm Alexander, Ray Baird, Ralph Moore, Gary Coombs, Bob Burtness, David Hackleman, Phyllis Olsen, Perry Adams, Gene Boswell, Scott Moore, Gene Allen, and Al Jaramillo.

Harbor Faire -- The Institute was one of three dozen local non-profit organizations participating in the inaugural Santa Barbara Harbor Faire. The May 16 event was an excellent opportunity to share our programs with visitors as well as local residents, and also to sell books from the shelves of the Museum Shop. Staffing chores at our booth were shared by Judy Pritikin, Diana Mina, Phyllis Olsen, and Gary Coombs. Thanks also to Gene Boswell for making himself available as a replacement volunteer.

Caboose Restoration Gets Head Start --

Last fall we were contacted by two local men, Ron Robinson and Steve Heller, who had developed a new product for cleaning large commercial vehicles and equipment, including jet aircraft, buses, and railroad cars. They were interested, they said, in using our caboose as a demonstration for their as-yet-unnamed "goop" and offered to clean the car in exchange for a few "before-and-after" photos.

Ron performed the actual work, between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The ease with which the jelly-like compound seemed to melt away years of accumulated pollutants, oxidized paint, and baked-on grime was truly remarkable. The most impressed were those who had tried in vain to improve the caboose's appearance through the vigorous application of "industrial-strength" cleansers, spot removers, harsh detergents, and other commercially-available products.

The end result was even more incredible. Once a dark, dingy, dusty brown, the caboose came alive with a bright new brick-red lustre. Indeed, several people who had seen "before" and "after," but not "in-between,"

told us what a nice paint job the caboose had received!

Train-Order Hook-Post -- The old train-order post from the Santa Barbara passenger depot has been installed. The 12-foot silver pole, complete with ladder and brackets, was given to the museum by Southern Pacific in 1985, when written train orders were discontinued on the coast between Los Angeles and San Jose.

Perry Adams dug the foundation, then Gene Allen poured the concrete, prepared the base, and, assisted by Glenn Apers and his son, Glenn Apers II, raised the pole.

Paul Conover and other museum agents have been posting order-laden hi-speeders on the pole as a demonstration for depot visitors. A companion display on train orders, prepared by Gary Coombs and using photographs by Bonnie and Perry Adams, now hangs in the freight office.

Speeder Restoration -- Ed Lebeck and Warren Johnson have made an initial effort toward rejuvenating the Santa Fe speeder which Warren recently donated to the museum. Ed rewired the electrical system, while Warren rebuilt the seat platform, using oak and walnut to produce a handsome, natural-wood finish.

Asphalt Regatta -- Much gratitude is owed to those who took part in the Fifth Annual Asphalt Regatta on March 14. Participants included Gene Allen, Bob Burtness, Nellie Casselman, Anna Dato, George Adams, Diana Mina, Gary Coombs, Phyllis Olsen, John Marshall Starr, Kip and Steven Kramer, Bill and Janis Shinn, Ron and Christine Negus, Marie Harden, Eugene Boswell, Amanda and Timothy Chavez, and members of the Ralph Moore Family, the largest group to join in the fun and fund-raising.

This year's event was relatively uneventful. There were no crashes and no one got lost. Diana introduced roller skating to the event -- one of the few modes previously untried.

In support on the day, Kari Olsen Adams served as official registrar and "guardian of the food," while Judy Savage and Hilda Volkman were indispensable as dispensers of water and directions along the route.

Caboose Project -- More than 300 sponsors have pledged \$5,900 toward the renovation of our caboose. Work on the old "crummy" should begin in earnest following our busy summer schedule.

Persons who were not asked to make a Regatta pledge may still make a tax-deductible donation to the caboose project. Checks should be made payable to "Goleta Depot Fund" and mailed to: "Caboose", Goleta Depot RR Museum, 300 N. Los Carneros Road, Goleta, CA 93117.

Agents/Docents to Meet -- The next meeting of all agents and docents is

scheduled for Saturday, June 20, beginning at 11 a.m. at the depot. Anyone interested in becoming a docent or agent, or in learning about these volunteer programs, is encouraged to attend, or to contact the Institute office (964-3549).

New Track Laid -- The mainline track in front of the depot has been extended 33 feet, the length of one standard rail. This is the track addition that was included at our request in the Lake Los Carneros Park Master Plan. While short, the extension is crucial because it will allow the inspection speeder to clear the house-track switch more easily and safely.

The track materials came from the old Sears warehouse spur, on the west side of La Patera Lane, across from the Lemon House. They were a gift of the property owner, Mr. Lewis Storrs.

The donation included additional ties, rail, and a pair of car stops. The latter were positioned at the south end of the mainline, ostensibly to prevent any wayward motorcars or cabooses (heaven forbid!) from plunging into the adjoining park lowlands.

A crew of five depot volunteers installed the additional trackage on



Gandy dancers pose during track-laying.

April 18. Track gang members were Perry Adams, Malcolm Alexander, Gene Boswell, Ralph Moore, and Scott Moore. Ballasting is yet to be done.

Week-Day Museum Program -- Bob McNeel and Hilda Volkman are now serving as museum volunteers on selected weekdays. In addition to his regular monthly turn as a Saturday agent, Bob has been putting in one day a week, generally Friday, as agent since the beginning of April. May 14, Hilda started greeting museum visitors on Thursdays on a trial basis.

For the past two years, the museum has been managed on weekdays by staff members Phyllis Olsen and Gary Coombs. As visitor numbers have risen, however, it has proven more and more difficult for them to watch over the museum and perform their other duties.

The addition of volunteers to assist on weekdays has already noticeably improved the museum's ability to serve the visiting public,

and it is hoped that an expansion of this program will be possible. Anyone who is interested in devoting at least one weekday afternoon each month to help staff the museum is urged to contact Phyllis or Gary.

Handcar Team Members Needed -- If you are interested in joining a 5-member Goleta Depot Railroad Museum team which will enter the National Handcar Races, Sept. 18-20 in Sacramento, please contact Gary Coombs (964-3549) as soon as possible. The event is open to men and women of all ages. No experience is necessary.

Volunteers -- In March, we began to keep track of the number of hours that our members and friends were giving to the museum. An amazing total of 360 donated hours were recorded that first month. Let it never be said that volunteers aren't crucial to the success of the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum!

Count is being kept of the time contributed by agents, docents, model railroaders, or persons participating in organized activities, including meetings, Work Days, and special events. If you are doing volunteer museum work in your home, away from the depot, or on your own, please report your hours to Gary Coombs at the end of each month. Easy-to-use forms are also available for anyone doing frequent volunteer work.

New Members -- Welcome to our newest members: Home Savings of America, Bev Gilliland, Douglas G. Abbe, Robert A. Gilroy, and Mr. and Mrs. Homer Dahms.

Annual Dinner -- As always, the Annual Dinner on April 28 made for an enjoyable and eventful evening. Many of those present commented on what a nice job the Holiday Inn staff had done in readying the room and preparing and serving the meal.

Those in attendance were treated to a televised presentation of news features and other video-taped items pertaining to the depot, compiled by Bob Brown. Another highlight was a memorable snap-shot history of the depot project and museum, prepared over many off-duty hours by Phyllis Olsen. Included were hundreds of personal color photos going back to 1980.

Service Awards -- A number of awards were presented at the Annual Dinner, in recognition of volunteer efforts by members. Receiving awards were Perry and Bonnie Adams, for giving train rides on Depot Days, for many hours of assistance on various projects, and for photographic services; Hilda and Al Volkman, for help with the Asphalt Regatta and for preparing art work for the museum; Bob McNeel, for faithful service as a museum agent, and for helping with the model railroad exhibit research; and Malcolm Alexander, for his contributions to Work Satur-

days and the model railroad, and for his exemplary attitude as a volunteer.

Michael Glassow received a framed commendation from the board of directors, in recognition of his years of service to the Institute, as president, board member, and volunteer.

Sterling Award -- The Annual Dinner also marked the third presentation of the Sterling Award for Voluntary Service to the Institute for American Research. The recipient was Ralph Moore, familiar to anyone who reads the Depot Dispatch, whose pages are filled with accounts of his deeds.

The symbolic sterling silver pin was presented by Eugene Allen, chairman of the Goleta Depot Committee and last year's recipient. In his presentation speech, Allen related how Moore "first became involved with the depot project at the beginning of 1982, shortly after the building had been moved to Los Carneros Park."

Allen went on to describe how Ralph "and students in his Apprentice Carpenter's class were chosen 'Depot Friend of the Month' for February 1982, in recognition of the valuable work they were doing to strengthen the Depot's aging wooden framing. The group would devote many Saturdays in early 1982 to the project, performing most of the carpentry during this critical period.

Moore "was one of the museum's first docents. He served from December 1982, when regular Sunday afternoon tours were started, through the end of 1984." Allen said. "He was added to the Depot Committee in July 1983.

"If you visit the depot, you can see signs of his woodworking skills everywhere that recent carpentry has been done. A partial list of projects involving his carpentry includes: the 'Goleta' signboards on the depot eaves; the four benches gracing the building perimeter; the express counter and cabinets in the freight office; and several museum exhibit cases and frames.

"In between carpentry projects, Ralph finds time to contribute to other depot activities, including the laying of the standard-gauge track in front of the depot. He and family members have been in the Asphalt Regatta since 1985, raising hundreds of dollars for major museum projects.

"Ralph is always ready to help on special event days like Depot Day or the Fourth of July, and it is a rare Work Saturday or Depot Committee meeting that he is recorded absent."

Congratulations to Ralph for this well-deserved honor!

