



Goleta DEPOT DISPATCH

Newsletter of the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum

Volume 9, Number 1 — Spring 1989

Regatta Means Smooth Museum Sailing

The 8th Annual Asphalt Regatta will be held Saturday, April 15 at Goleta Beach Park, beginning at 10 a.m. As in the past, all of the money raised from the "walk-jog-bike-a-thon" will be used exclusively to support the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum.

In previous years, the Regatta has financed many successful projects, including construction of the standard-gauge track in front of the depot and development of the miniature train ride.

The Regatta is the Museum's main annual fundraising event and has become vitally important to Museum operations. **More volunteers are needed** to make the Regatta a success again this year. If you are able to help, as either a participant or an assistant on the day, please contact Phyllis Olsen (964-3540) any weekday afternoon to volunteer or for more information.

If you can't take part in person, please show your support by sponsoring one or more participants.

Volunteers Volkman and Shinn Win Golden Deed Award

Hilda Volkman and Bill Shinn, two of the Museum's most staunch supporters, were honored at a dinner March 4 as co-recipients of the Golden Deed Award, Goleta Valley's highest community-service honor.

Hilda is responsible for painting the scenic backdrop for the model railroad exhibit. She performs weekly docent duties as a Museum agent and is a regular helper during special events, including the Asphalt Regatta and Depot Day.

It's difficult to find a prouder Goleta Depot follower than Bill. He was the effective auctioneer on several early Depot Project fundraisers, and his miniature car, with the brightly painted "I love Goleta Depot" sign, is a regular attraction of the annual Goleta Valley Days

Parade. The Shinn family entry in the Asphalt Regatta, festively named *Bill Shinn and the Flying Shinns*, is a mainstay of the annual fundraising event.

Annual Dinner Rescheduled

The Annual Dinner of the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum and the Institute for American Research will be held Thurs., May 11 at the Holiday Inn, 5650 Calle Real, Goleta. The event was postponed from its original January date.

The social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with dinner planned for 7:30. Tickets are \$17, which includes the meal, dinner beverage, tax, and gratuity.

A pleasant evening is planned, so don't be left out. For reservations, please call 964-3549.

Video Equipment Acquired With First Endowment Income

The Museum has purchased a TV monitor and video cassette recorder using money earned from Endowment investments. This is the first use of income from the Endowment, which is a restricted fund established for the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum in 1988 by members Richard and Georgia Thomas.

"The video equipment is an important addition to the Museum's educational and recreational programs," according to Assistant Director Phyllis Olsen. "It is already being used to show railroad films to Museum visitors and special members-only film showings are also being planned," she said. "The equipment will also play a key role in the Museum's docent training program." Bev Casselman kindly helped in selecting the equipment.

Donations to the Endowment Fund may be made by individuals, families, organizations, or businesses. For more information, contact the Museum office.

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Sacramento Trip Set For Fall

Arrangements have already been made for the Museum's fall excursion to Sacramento. The trip will take place Sept. 14-18, to coincide with the 7th Annual U.S. National Handcar Races. This is the third consecutive year that the Museum will be entering a team.

The \$325 per-person package includes round-trip rail fare; four nights lodging; and admission to the California State Railroad Museum, including a VIP guided-tour of the state museum and, for the avid railfans in the group, a visit to the car-restoration shops. Not included are meals, road transportation, and gratuities.

Another Sunday brunch cruise on the Sacramento River is also planned. This year, however, the cruise will be an excursion option (\$25), so that persons wishing to watch the handcar race finals (as well as those of us who expect to be participating!) can do so. We will also be going back to the stern-wheeler, *Matthew McKinley*, which we enjoyed two years ago and which most felt offered a superior meal and shipboard appointments.

The group this year will be limited to 16 persons. Reservations are on a first-come first-served basis, so don't be left out! Call the Museum office, 964-3540, for further information and reservations.

New Handcar Squad Looking For Two Good Men

The Museum is considering the possibility of entering a second team in this year's handcar competition. The new entry would be a Masters Men's team, to go along with the Masters Mixed group that we've fielded the last two years. To complete the five-man roster, two able-bodied men, 40 years of age or older, are needed. If you qualify, or for further information, please contact Dave Hieter (967-3824) or the Museum office.

Goleta Depot Joins Rail Museum Group

Last fall the Museum was accepted into the Assn. of Railway Museums (ARM), an organization of more than 50 rail museums distributed throughout the U.S. and Canada. An affiliate of the American Assn. of Museums, ARM is devoted to "promoting the railway museum movement."

We look forward to participating in ARM and welcome the professional partnership and cooperation that ARM membership can provide.

Docent Training Planned

New docent training sessions will be held during the second half of March. The training is open to anyone who is interested in sharing the Museum with others.

Membership in the Museum Docents Association, which is bestowed on those who complete the training, is also the entry point for participation in all specialized Museum activities, including the live-steam and model railroad programs, and service as tour guides

and Museum agents.

Basic docent training involves one three-hour session. Additional specialized training is required of those who elect to become agents or tour conductors. Persons who are interested in further information about the docent program are urged to call (964-3540) or visit the Museum office.

Welcome New Members

The Institute for American Research is pleased to acknowledge and welcome its newest members: Alcast Foundry Inc., Lynn Alderman, C.B. Baldrige, Jon Bartel, Richard O. Bartel, Robert L. Bevier, Louise and Michael Caccese, Brian Cerny, Edward Delters, Carl Eppich, Orlyn Glover, Goleta Valley Paint, Nathan Gonzales, David and Jane Hieter, Dolores M. Howe, Lorraine Laabs, Joseph and Diane Lemons, Scott and Sue McKechnie, George Paine, Bruce and Ida Rickborn, Cathy Rudolph, Charles Sherlock, Mrs. William A. Smith, Vincent E. Stumpo, Dana Trout, and Edward L. Winnewisser.

And, special recognition is given to new Life members: Home Savings of America, Sergio De C. Pacha, and Hilda and Al Volkman.

Caccese Added To Staff Takes On Museum Shop Duties

Theresa Caccese, who donated many fall hours to get the Museum Shop going again after its expansion, has joined the Museum staff on a part-time basis. In addition to serving as Shop Manager, Theresa has been helping with the bookkeeping and other office duties.

Local Groups Put Depot To Good Use

Two local groups recently added two unusual new uses to the already long list of services that Goleta Depot has performed over its long and eventful history.

The County Sheriff's Dept. used the landmark building as the site for a training exercise in which a mock VIP visit was staged. To protect an imaginary dignitary from possible harm, the drill had deputies scaling the depot roof and searching for potential hiding places for bombs or assassins.

On a less serious, but equally tumultuous note, the Santa Barbara MG Club used the depot as a destination for one of its Sunday car rallies. The event was organized by Malcolm Alexander's son, Lawrence. On

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Published quarterly by the Institute for American Research
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Phone: (805) 964-3540 or 964-3549

Printing courtesy of Kimberly Press, Goleta

PORTRAIT OF A MUSEUM VOLUNTEER

Paul Conover has been a stalwart member of the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum's agent corps since the early months of 1985.

Paul was born in Amsterdam, New York, where his parents ran a lakeside summer camp. It was an ideal setting for a boy who loved swimming, boating, and fishing. His swimming skills earned young Paul an instructor's job at the YMCA.

Paul and Mary Conover began their lives together as husband and wife in 1941. Paul served as a Machinist 3rd Class during World War II, aboard the aircraft carrier, U.S.S. Bennington. He was on hand to witness the first strikes on Tokyo in 1944, and also survived a typhoon during his tour of duty in the Pacific.

After the war, Paul returned home to New York. In 1959, the Conovers came to California, where Paul landed a machinist's job at the Curtiss Wright plant in Goleta, where Delco is today. He held several other local positions as a machinist, retiring in 1985 from the Industrial Automation Corporation.

The Conovers have one daughter, Karen, who is a teacher and assistant principal at a parochial school in San Francisco.

Paul has been an active member of the Goleta Valley Railroad Club since 1960, another reflection of his love of railroading and train modeling. More recently, his skills and avocation have proven indispensable to the construction and maintenance of the miniature railroad at the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum. Riding his motorcycle is another of Paul's favorite diversions.

Paul says he enjoys volunteering at the Museum and getting to meet so many nice people there.



Paul Conover

duty that afternoon was Agent Ernest Thomsen, who was kept busy giving rally participants the secret code that freed them to begin searching for their next rally point.

Museum Projects

Al Volkman, husband of Museum Agent Hilda, was called into service recently to repair the old oak roll-top desk that highlights the depot freight office. The desk had been out of service for more than a year.

Gene Allen also enlisted Al's help in installing the scenic backdrop that Hilda painted for the model railroad exhibit. Gene has done a terrific job cleaning up and building new shelves for storage in the old baggage room area, with help from Eugene Boswell.

Dave Hieter and Gene Boswell also volunteered time recently to do some painting around the depot gutters and downspouts. More work on the gutters and downspouts, including construction as well as painting, is still needed.

Rail Festival At Orange Empire Slated

The weekend of April 29-30 is the occasion for the Orange Empire Railway Museum's annual Rail Festival. The \$6 admission price (\$4 for children 6-11, under 6 free) includes all trolley and train rides. Of special note: Rail Festival offers a rare opportunity to ride a train from the museum to the historic Perris Depot. Other diversions include a vintage auto display, music, and refreshments.

The Orange Empire Railway Museum is located at

2201 South "A" Street, Perris, Calif., 17 miles south of Riverside on Highway 215.

Members and other *Depot Dispatch* readers who would like to look into sharing rides to Rail Festival may call our Museum office (964-3540), which will serve as a clearinghouse for putting interested persons in touch with one another.

Museum Attendance On The Rise

Attendance at the Goleta Depot Railroad Museum through the first eight weeks of 1989 is up 28% over the same period last year.

Some of the increase can be attributed to a rise in special group visits to the Museum, which have grown 76% over 1988 figures. Group tours have included students from Mrs. Jefferson's Vieja Valley School kindergarten class, and children from the YMCA after-school program, and from the Westside Boys and Girls Club.

Local 3rd Graders Enjoy Rail Adventure

The Museum took 51 students from Kellogg Elementary School on a railroad fieldtrip aboard Amtrak's *Coast Starlight*. The March 8 excursion included children from two third grade classes; their teachers, Betty Galusha and Diane Lemons; 10 parents; and Museum staff members Phyllis Olsen and Gary Coombs.

Amtrak provided us with an unscheduled stop in the town of Guadalupe, which is the only way that a one-day northbound round-trip can be made. The Museum also made special arrangements for members

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of the Amtrak and train crews to meet and talk with the children.

On all of its school fieldtrips, the Museum provides handout pages, worksheets, and other on-board activities which enhance the learning experience for the children by relating railroading and the train trip to current classroom subjects.

Two more railroad adventures are scheduled for the remainder of this school year.

Information On Historic Poem Sought

A friend of Goleta Depot has been trying to find the words of a poem that his grandfather learned as an Iowa schoolboy back in the 1890s. An offer has been made to donate \$100 to the Museum in the name of anyone who can supply the words to the missing poem.

The poem concerns a farmer's wagon trip and his rough encounter with the railroad along the way. The man was "hauling a load of corn" for "Ebenezer Cline", when he came upon the railroad tracks. Stopping "that there team o' mine," he commenced to read the crossing sign. Among the words: "L - double-O - K was *look* and I was looking all the time and spelling like a book."

If you know of the verse or can help reconstruct the full text, please contact the Museum office.

"Sweetheart Special" Had Lots of Heart

The Museum's Feb. 11-12 excursion to San Diego, the "Sweetheart Special," proved to be one of our most popular rail trips to date. Everyone in the group of 32 seemed to have a pleasant time, with many of the non-



Museum took another large group to San Diego.

members asking to be notified of future trips.

The train ride featured games and contests with a St. Valentine's Day theme, and our portion of the custom coach was decorated in agreement, with hearts and colorful balloons. Camarillo residents George and Helen Adams, who joined the excursion at Oxnard, were voted "Sweetheart Couple" by the group.

Upon arrival at our hotel, we were greeted with a

wine and cheese reception. Located only about three blocks from the Amtrak station, the Hotel San Diego provided transportation to and from the trains, as well as to nearby sights, shopping, and restaurants.

Most of the group members had Saturday dinner at nearby Seaport Village, dividing into two large parties



Tour members line up for Sunday San Diegan return.

which patronized two of the center's fine restaurants. Sunday was devoted to a wide range of individual pursuits, although brunch was a fashionable choice for many. Riding the San Diego trolley, visiting the Maritime Museum, and shopping at Horton Plaza and Seaport Village were other popular diversions for the weekenders.

Amtrak kept us guessing about the Custom Class accommodations aboard its *San Diegan*. On the trip south, the train did not turn around in Los Angeles, but rather was pulled over the entire route. A faulty signal in Santa Fe territory caused us to arrive at our destination about an hour late.

Northbound, our train did reverse directions in L.A., but the seats in this particular Custom Coach car were fixed in place -- removing one of the nicer benefits of securing first class passage on the *San Diegan*.

New Items Offered In Museum Shop

The Museum Shop has greatly expanded its inventory of books and other educational goods related to railroading, local history, and Americana.

Back by popular demand is an even wider selection of paper doll books depicting the American Family of different historical periods. We have also expanded the cut-and-assemble series of HO-scale towns and other American historical scenes.

A number of railroad magazines is now available, including the full lines from Interurban Press and Kalmbach, among others.

Pentrex and Interurban railroad videotapes, which can be previewed at the Museum Shop, can also be purchased there.