



# Goleta DEPOT DISPATCH

Newsletter of the South Coast Railroad Museum  
Volume 12, Number 3 — Fall 1992

## Author Myrick To Be November Speaker

**David Myrick**, one of America's foremost railroad historians, will speak at the Nov. 18 museum meeting. His topic will be "Railroads of Nevada." The second edition of his two-volume *Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California* will be off the press in October and copies will be available at the meeting for purchase and signing by the author.

A Santa Barbara native, Myrick worked for many years in Southern Pacific's financial department. Among his other major works are books on the railroads of Arizona and New Mexico, and *Montecito and Santa Barbara*, a general history in two volumes.

The program will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Goleta Library, 500 North Fairview Ave.

## Depot Day Celebrates 10th Anniversary On Sunday, Oct. 18

See page 4 for all of the details on the South Coast Railroad Museum's biggest annual event.

## Steaming Summer Update

We're only three-fourths of the way through Steaming Summer, but we've already carried more riders than during the 1991 event.

The old one-day Steaming Summer record of 301 riders, set two years ago, was smashed on June 27, when 481 passengers rode, up a whopping 60%. Total annual miniature-train ridership through the end of June was 2,071, almost double last year's six-month total of 1,158 riders.

## Federal Grant Awarded

The museum has received a \$11,450 General Operating Support Grant from the **Institute of Museum Services**, the Federal agency serving the nation's museums. The South Coast Railroad Museum at Goleta Depot has received this prestigious award for five consecutive years.

IMS grants are awarded annually on the basis of a nationwide competition open to museums of all sizes and types. The South Coast Railroad Museum is one of only three 1992 grant recipients among transportation

museums (rail, air, marine, automobile) with operating budgets under \$300,000.

Two years ago, Director Gary Coombs represented the museum at the IMS awards ceremony, hosted at the White House by **First Lady Barbara Bush**.

## Amtrak Plans for Goleta Discussed

**Michael Powers** of the County Association of Governments gave an interesting May 20 presentation on plans for the development of a new Goleta Amtrak station. His talk emphasized the eight alternate sites being considered for the project.

About 25 members and other local residents attended the museum-sponsored event.

## Sept. Meeting To Examine Depot Future

All the talk about bringing passenger trains back to Goleta has been cause for a lot of dreaming among local residents. One of the more sensational musings would have the Goleta Depot return to the tracks to serve as part of the new Amtrak station.

No lesser authorities than **Alexandra Cole** and **David Shelton**, leading local architectural historians and preservation planners, suggested the idea recently, first in a conversation with Museum Director Gary Coombs, then in a letter to the Board of Trustees.

While not advocating the concept, trustees felt that it might have merit and asked the director to discuss the idea further with museum constituents, especially volunteers and other members, and to investigate its feasibility and implications.

There will be a meeting for this purpose on Wednesday, Sept. 16, at the Goleta Library, 500 North Fairview Ave., beginning at 7:30 p.m. We will be discussing what a move would mean for museum programs and for the preservation of Goleta Depot. Members are urged to attend.

## Fund for New Engine Grows

A generous donation from Trustee **Craig Schmidt** and his family gave a starting boost to the New Engine Fund. Contributions have also been received from **Sally Gane**, **Al Volkman**, and **Isabel Friend Newman**. The fund, to purchase a second diesel-prototype locomotive for the miniature-train

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ride, now has a balance of \$500. A total of \$4,800 is needed for the engine purchase.

Members and friends wishing to contribute to the fund should make their tax-deductible checks payable to the railroad museum, with a notation that the donation is for the "New Engine Fund." Or, use the contribution form on page 4 of the *Depot Dispatch*.

## Regatta A Big Success

A total of 217 people — members, museum volunteers, trustees, staff, and others who cared — came out on May 2nd and 16th, giving their valuable time to



*Regatta drew more than 200 participants.*

help raise much-needed funds to keep the museum going. Of those, 14 devoted souls came out **twice**, to ensure that we didn't fall short of the 200-participant target! The result was a Regatta which had **three times** as many participants as in any previous year.

Pledges were received from 171 organizations, businesses, families, and individuals. Total pledges have reached \$9,194 — up more than 50% over last year's \$5,843.

The museum ran an advertisement in the *Santa Barbara News-Press* on Sunday, June 26, listing the 35 major Regatta sponsors and acknowledging all who took part, as participant or financial supporter.

## Wednesday Rides Now Permanent

In July, Wednesday miniature train rides became a regular part of the museum's year-around schedule. The weekday program has been highly successful since testing began in March, with daily ridership averaging about 25 passengers. The rides have also helped overall museum attendance; Weekday visitations during the second quarter rose a remarkable 63% compared with a year ago.

## Reaching Carpinterians

Museum Director Gary Coombs spoke to a group of about 40 members of the Carpinteria chapter of the

**A.A.R.P.** on June 8. His presentation with slides to the seniors' organization included a brief history of Goleta Depot and information about the railroad museum and its programs.

## Miniature Train Boarding Area Improved

Dramatic improvements to the boarding area for the train ride were made in June, thanks to the efforts of **Gene Allen**, who prepared the design and spearheaded the construction effort. The miniature train's "station" now includes a level, track-height platform of decomposed granite protected on three sides by Polecraft fencing (to match that used around the grounds by the Park Dept.), with entry and exit gates. Materials were provided by the **County Park Dept.**

The new boarding area offers improved safety and security, as well as adding to the visual aesthetics.

## Norris Shares Pacific Coast Ry. History

**Jim Norris**, chairman of the County Landmarks Committee, provided our June meeting audience with an excellent talk and slide presentation on the Pacific Coast Railway. Among the images he shared was a large assortment of rare historical photographs depicting P.C.Ry. scenes — locomotives, trains, personnel, and stations.

Meeting attendees received a sampling of Pacific Coast Railway commemorative souvenirs and a *Historical Santa Ynez Valley Coloring Book* — all compliments of Mr. Norris.

## Exterior Painting Completed

After more than 13 weeks of effort, Goleta Depot's new paint job is finished. The painter's began Tuesday, May 5, spending the better part of a month on the meticulous removal of flaking paints; because the depot is a historical landmark, it was important to preserve the original paint wherever possible.

The depot briefly turned "white as a sheet" over the Memorial Day weekend, as two coats of primer were applied. To complete the job, the painters used Goleta Depot's now-familiar colors: Southern Pacific's traditional "Colonial Yellow" with brown trim and white for the window sash. Thursday, Aug. 6 marked the completion of all work.

The project was underwritten by a \$12,776 grant from the **Santa Barbara Foundation**, supplemented by an allocation from **County of Santa Barbara Special District Augmentation Funds**.

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Page 2 photo by Jon Bartel.  
Printing courtesy of Kimberly Press, Goleta.



## Rummage Sale Will Be Oct. 10

The museum's "Unclaimed Freight and Baggage Sale" is drawing near. It will be held Saturday, Oct. 10, from 11 a.m. 'til 4 p.m., in conjunction with Goleta Valley Days, which this year has been reduced to a one-day event and renamed the "Lemon Festival." Appropriately, the sale has been retitled "It's A Real Lemon" in honor of the occasion. Miniature-train rides will round-out the museum's role in the festivities.

This is the last call for rummage, furniture, collectibles, appliances, antiques, or railroadiana for the sale. If you have something to add, please call Reda at the museum any weekday afternoon. Let her know if you'd like your items picked up. Volunteers are still needed to help with the pricing and selling.

Last year's sale earned about \$600 in support of museum operations and programs.

## Staff Attend Preservation Meeting

Museum Director Gary Coombs and Asst. Director Phyllis Olsen participated in a first-ever Southern Calif. Railway Preservation Conference, held June 13 in the City of Industry. Most of the region's railway museums and preservation groups were represented.

Among the speakers, Gary provided an overview of programs and activities at our museum.

## School Amtrak Trips Mark Hectic May

Another season of Amtrak trips for school groups came to a climactic close in May, the busiest month in the six-year history of the educational program.

On May 5, **Gene Austin's** fourth-graders from **Foothill Elementary School** journeyed to San Luis Obispo. Now retired, Austin took another class on a museum trip to Glendale back in 1990.

The museum's first-ever group trip to Oxnard was completed on May 12. **Pam McCabe's El Rancho Elementary School** kindergartners took the maiden voyage, accompanied by their "big buddy" helpmates from **Monica Bilski's** sixth-grade. This was also a second museum-escorted train trip for Bilski, whose 1990 class participated in a San Luis Obispo excursion.

**Meridith Scott's** kindergarten class from **Vieja Valley Elementary School** made an Oxnard trip on May 19. Nine days later another class of Vieja Valley kindergartners, taught by **Lynn Vail**, followed suit.

In all, the museum's May trips included 142 school children, accompanied by 60 parents and teachers. Escorting all four groups were Museum Director Gary Coombs and Asst. Director Phyllis Olsen.

## Aug. Meeting Featured McNeel's Depots

**Robert McNeel** has known railroad stations most of his life — as a Southern Pacific fireman, Amtrak ticket agent, independent travel agent, tour escort, and docent at Goleta Depot. At the museum meeting on Aug. 19 he shared some of those experiences, including more than 100 slides of depots from throughout the U.S. and the world — all taken by Bob over a span of more than a quarter-century.

## Hill Remembered In Tree Ceremony

About 45 members and friends gathered at the museum on Aug. 8 to honor the late **Earl Hill** in a tree-dedication ceremony. Program speaker **Steve Sullivan** paid tribute to his longtime friend, reminding those attending of "... the gifts of time, energy, and resources he gave to the valley he loved..."

Thanks are extended to Steve, to **Nancy Ried** for providing the refreshments, to **Hilda and Al Volkman** and **Phyllis Olsen** for donating the lovely jacaranda tree and commemorative plaque, and to members of **Goleta Beautiful** and the **Breakfast Optimist Club of Goleta** for planting the tree.

## Museum Group Enjoys Disneyland

Our June 15-17 rail trip to Disneyland was a big success. A group of 17 participated, making good use of the discount admission tickets. Amtrak proved a convenient mode of travel, with the hotel providing complimentary shuttle service for the short run to and from the Anaheim station.

## New Members

Welcome wishes are extended to all of our new members, including Sustaining Member **Cliff Sponzel**; Active Members **Bertha W. Immel**, **Rolla Norton**, **Patricia Osborne**, **Ken and Deborah Pontifex**, **Richard B. Shelton**, and **Earl White**; and Corresponding Member **Bonnie Blair**.

New Junior Engineers include **Derrick Light**, **Travis Lyon**, **Erik D. Purinton**, **Kira Rose Purinton**, **Brian Romofsky**, and **Jonathan Romofsky**.

## Museum Hosts Museums Conference

The South Coast Railroad Museum served as co-host of the 1992 Annual Meeting of the Calif. Assn. of Museums, held in Santa Barbara July 9-10. Following the conference, our museum joined other local institutions in holding an open house for meeting attendees.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(IF THIS IS A GIFT, PLEASE USE RECIPIENT'S NAME HERE, GIVER'S NAME BELOW)

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Please enter/renew my membership (mark desired category):

Active - \$10 ( special rate for Docent Assn. members only - \$5)

Sustaining - \$25

Contributing Member/Corporate Member - \$50

Life Member - \$175

Jr. Engineer's Club - \$10 ( w/adult member at same address - \$5)

GIFT. Giver name for gift card: \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN COMPLETED FORM WITH CHECK, PAYABLE TO:  
SOUTH COAST RR MUSEUM, P.O. BOX 2125, GOLETA, CA 93118

South Coast Railroad Museum is an educational program and business name of the Institute for American Research, a local nonprofit organization. Contributions are deductible from state and federal income taxes.

# DEPOT DAY is Coming Oct. 18

The 10th Annual Depot Day will be held Sunday, Oct. 18. Hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event, which is made possible by members and friends, is the museum's big fall celebration and fundraiser.

## Rail Rides

Miniature train, handcar, and inspection car rides for all ages will again be event highlights. Tickets are \$1 for the train and 50¢ for the other rides.

## Donation Requested

A \$1 donation per person will be requested upon admission to Depot Day. Members may elect to make this donation or not.

## Tri-Tip Barbecue

The Native Sons of the Golden West will again be preparing their delicious tri-tip barbecue.

The meal includes tri-tip, green salad, toasted french

bread, and ranch beans.

Advance tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children 12 years and under. Tickets may be purchased at the museum's Trackside Shop or from Kinko's Graphics at 451 Lopez Road, Goleta. Purchases of three or more tickets can be made by major credit card, at the Trackside Shop only.

Everyone is urged to buy their barbecue tickets before Depot Day. This will earn you the advance price discount and it will also help planners estimate the number of meals to prepare.

## Other Refreshments

If a full meal isn't to your liking, museum volunteers will also be serving hot dogs, soft drinks, baked goods, and ice pops throughout the day.

## Silent Auction

During Depot Day, don't forget to stop by the Silent Auction tables and place bids on your

favorite items.

This is an important revenue source for the museum. Participants usually come away with some real bargains.

We'll have a wide variety of items in the auction. If you have a business or personal donation you would like to make to the auction, please call the museum office.

## "Great Pumpkin" Drawing

When you visit the museum before Oct. 18, be sure to pick up a Depot Day flyer. On the back is an entry form for this year's "Great Pumpkin" drawing, which will be held during the event.

## Music

Depot Day musical entertainment will include a strolling barbershop quartet and railroad tunes galore.

## Steam Engine Display

One of Depot Day's most popular annual attractions, the steam display, will be expanded this year. Bob Alexander of Lompoc will be bringing his exciting steam plant, which will power all of the exhibit's stationary engines, plus an assortment of whistles and other steam gadgets. The display will be coordinated this year by Ernest Thomsen and Jim Higman. Don't miss this one!

## Children's Activities

We are also reprising the popular Children's Area, which last year included train-building projects, a story time, and other fun things.



### DONOR CONTRIBUTION FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find my check, made payable to South Coast Railroad Museum, in the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my contribution for \_\_\_\_\_

Return completed form to: SOUTH COAST RAILROAD MUSEUM,  
P.O. BOX 2125, GOLETA, CA 93118

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