

Goleta DEPOT DISPATCH



Newsletter of the South Coast Railroad Museum

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16th "Depot Day" Is Almost Here

The 16th annual *Depot Day*, the South Coast Railroad Museum's big annual celebration, will be held Sunday, Sept. 27. For all of the exciting details, see the special full-page *Depot Day '98* coverage on page 4.

Be sure not to miss this special fall event at the museum!

Goleta Amtrak Grand Opening Will Be Sept. 19

The weekend of Sept. 19-20 has been earmarked for the opening of Goleta's new Amtrak station. The opening ceremony is scheduled for the afternoon of Saturday the 19th. Revenue service will commence the following day, with the departure of Train 774 from Goleta at approximately 7 a.m., bound for San Diego and intermediate points.

Plans for the grand opening are still being formulated, but those in attendance should be treated to a few extra touches beyond the standard fare found at the typical station opening.

Amtrak and CalTrans have approved the South Coast Railroad Museum's suggestion that the inaugural ceremony include free train rides for the general public between Santa Barbara and Goleta. Amtrak plans to use its existing San Diegan schedule and equipment for this purpose. People will be able to come to the opening from Santa Barbara with a free ride aboard Train 759, which is scheduled to arrive in Goleta about 12 noon, and then return free on Train 792 about 1:40 p.m., after the ceremony has concluded. Or, Goleta attendees can enjoy a roundtrip to Santa Barbara, riding down on Train 792, then coming back on Train 773 at

about 2 p.m.

The opening ceremony will also feature live music, food, drawings and giveaways, testimonials, and a ribbon-cutting featuring the Train 792 equipment.

Starlight Guides Going Strong; Program Reopens For Volunteer Applicants

Implementation of the museum's interpretive program aboard Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* train is now well under way. Program volunteers began assuming the responsibilities of narrator and lounge guide in June, and are now organizing their own guide teams, and usually traveling without staff supervision.

We have now conducted the program more than 20 times between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, serving a total audience of perhaps 1,000 or more train passengers. One of the most rewarding aspects of the program is the audience, which can include rail travelers from across the nation and around the world.

The program narrative covers the natural and cultural history of the area, and things to do along the way. Point Conception, the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, and Vandenberg Air Force Base are just a few of the special points of interest encountered during the program.

Museum narrators tell about the modern country estates of the Hollister Ranch, and about Cementerio, where the Southern Pacific Railroad finally "closed the gap" that had left the S.P.'s Coast Route incomplete for more than a decade at the end of the 19th century. Passengers also learn about the wildlife of land, sea, and air that are commonly seen from the *Coast Starlight* trains, and about the tragedy at Honda, site of one of the worst peacetime disasters in

the history of the U.S. Navy.

New applications for the guide program are now being accepted once more (The volunteer program had been closed since the end of 1997.). Persons interested in becoming *Coast Starlight* guides should contact the museum office and request an application packet. New guide-trainees can expect their training to include both meetings and on-the-job experience aboard the *Coast Starlight*, working with museum staff and current guides, beginning in late October.

Sponsors of the interpretive program include California State Parks, Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce, Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau, and Santa Barbara County Parks.

Museum Grounds Projects Near Completion

Work is almost finished on the various improvements to the museum grounds that were begun this past spring. The new entrance, sidewalks, fencing, and group-picnic area all are finished — save for some signage and (continued on page 2)

Reminiscent of Goleta Depot, itself, a new entrance now welcomes museum guests.



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railings for step and ramp areas.

We have received many positive comments from visitors about the changes, especially the entrance, which pays tribute to Goleta Depot with its matching color scheme and reminiscent architecture.

The entrance also honors Goleta's other, 19th century railroad stations at La Patera and Ellwood. Riders on the Goleta Short Line now see two station signboards atop the entrance roof — one that proclaims "La Patera" to out-bound trains and another, "Ellwood" signboard that can be viewed from returning trains.

The grounds-improvement work is being funded by grants from the **Wood-Claeyssens Foundation, Alice Tweed Tuohy Foundation, and La Vista Foundation for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.**

The museum is seeking an additional \$12,800, also in foundation grants, to complete the project.

Free Rides Given July 18; Nov. 7 is Next Free Day

Saturday, July 18 marked the museum's third day of free miniature-train rides for the general public in 1998. A combined total of 163 free rides were given on the train and handcar.

The day was made possible by more than 160 museum members and supporters who contributed to the *Great Goleta Rail Race* fundraiser, held in May.

The final free-ride day for 1998 will be

Saturday, Nov. 7 — also made possible by our generous *Great Race* donors.

Welcome New Members

It is a great pleasure to welcome the latest additions to the museum family. They include **Karen and Charley Burgett, Arthur Chard, Carlos Levi, and Mark Vehrencamp.**

New Junior Engineers Club members are **Myles Adams, Taryn Adams, Alejandro Chavez, Jr., Colleen Sweeney, James Sweeney, and Michael Van Wickle.**

Welcome one and all!

Toy Trains & Teddy Bears Needed For Holiday Display

The museum's annual *Toy Trains and Teddy Bears!* holiday display opens Nov. 27 and will continue into early January. Dozens of museum members, trustees, employees, volunteers, and friends help to make this festive exhibition possible each year by loaning stuffed animals and toy locomotives and rail cars to share with our visitors in the display.

Each year we try to increase the number of keepsakes that are displayed and always hope to include both new items and new members of the museum family. If you would like to add your own personal touch to this year's display, please contact the museum office (964-3540), any weekday afternoon, or leave a message with your name and phone number.

A Final Slap From El Niño

In the last *Depot Dispatch* issue, it was reported that much volunteer effort had gone into attempts to save one of the pepper trees that had toppled over in an El Niño storm early in the year. At the time, it appeared that these valiant efforts had been successful.

Sadly, we must now report that this tree also has been lost.

Jr. Engineers Celebrate With July Party

The 6th annual Junior Engineers Club Party was held on Thursday, July 16. Club members in attendance included **Robert Adams, Ben Adams, Vaughn Anderson, Daniel Hughes, Jay Larinan, Steven Hirschberg, Bjorn Lensander, Nicholas Lensander,**

Israel Carpenter, Christian Carpenter, Lane Fuller, and Jake Hirsch. Many members also brought family and friends to join in the festivities.

Attendees were treated to unlimited free rides on the Goleta Short Line, along with special showings of *Thomas The Tank Engine* videos, and some delicious refreshments, including a festive Junior Engineers cake and cupcakes.

Goleta Beautiful Donates Replacement Trees

Goleta Beautiful has donated two five-gallon pepper trees to replace specimens lost during one of last winter's most severe El Niño storms. The trees have been planted in the vicinity of the original trees, near the miniature-train boarding area and group-picnic area.

Goleta Beautiful is the local nonprofit group that spearheaded the successful effort to save Goleta Depot during the early 1980s. The organization's depot preservation committee was chaired by Gary Coombs (now SCRM director) and included Assistant Director Phyllis Olsen and longtime museum volunteer **Gene Allen**, together with **George Adams** and **Raymond Baird**, both deceased.

Steaming Summer ... Simply Stupendous

The 12th Annual *Another Steaming Summer*, held Aug. 1-2 at the museum, had something for just about everyone.

This year's circus theme — a *Steaming Summer* first — was enormously popular. People clamored for a chance to ride on the "circus train," which included four 7-1/2-inch gauge circus cars (complete with animals sounds) from the collection of **Ted Cheesman**. To reinforce the effect, a number of additional

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Ted Cheesman shared his circus-train cars during Steaming Summer.

circus-train cars were also on hand, on static display. Visitors marveled at the workmanship and attention to detail evident in this unique assemblage of miniature-train equipment.

Ken Weber did a great job of continuing the circus motif into the model railroad exhibit, where dozens of his HO-scale circus-train cars were kept in motion or on static display throughout the two-day event. For those who missed *Steaming Summer*, Ken's circus-train equipment will remain on display in the model-railroad exhibit through *Depot Day*, Sept. 27.

Gene Allen put together one of the best collections of visiting equipment in the history of *Steaming Summer*. Steam locomotives that pulled passenger-carrying trains during the event included Gene's own coal-burning 4-4-0 American, **Ed Winnewisser's** 0-6-0 switch-engine, a pair of 2-6-0 moguls owned by **Bill Hoey** and **Michael Zuker**, and another 4-4-0 American operated by **Jay Carsman**.

Other visiting 1-1/2"-scale engines included a Climax geared logging locomotive, two electric "Little Mack" helper locomotives. Also on hand were the museum's own 4-4-0 American and both of our S.P. diesels, which spent most of the weekend in an unusual way — gladly resting on the sidelines.

Art and Barbara Reiter were also here to share their 1"-scale wrecking train, featuring an operating steam-powered wrecker.

Jim Higman kept his tabletop display of miniature stationary steam engines and steam-driven tools and devices operating, using power from **Jim Marchiando's** steam plant. Young and old enjoyed sounding the various steam whistles that are an integral part of Jim's wood-burning contraption.

Total ridership for the two days reached 1,021 — the third consecutive year in which more than 1,000 rides were given during *Steaming Summer*. The weekend's 301 handcar rides was a *Steaming Summer* record.

Special thanks are owed to everyone who

Volunteers Needed

The shortage of volunteers at the museum continues unabated.

Volunteer docents are critical to many of the activities and services that our visitors enjoy. Some volunteers are engineers, conductors, and crew on the miniature-train and museum handcar. Others are clerks in the Trackside Shop, operate the Gandy Dancer Theater, or share Goleta Depot and the model railroad exhibit with our guests.

Many of our volunteers are generously giving extra hours each month to fill the existing gap. They are waiting and hoping that the cavalry will soon arrive.

Get on your horse! Please consider joining this terrific group of dedicated members. If you have at least one afternoon (only about three hours) available per month to give to your museum and would like to share our wonderful historical landmark and activities with museum guests, please give Assistant Director Phyllis Olsen a call at 964-3540. She will be happy to tell you more about the rewards and benefits of the museum's volunteer program.

helped to make this year's event such a success. Assisting the equipment owners with the train-ride operations were **Brendon Hoey**, **Steve Kramer**, **Bob Mowry**, **Dan O'Brien**, **Lavonne Sanchez**, and **Kenneth Shaner**.

Members of the **Goleta Lions Club**, ably organized by **Jack Rutten** and **Tom Tucker**, were hard at work throughout the event, barbecuing and selling hot sandwiches.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the regular docent-volunteers who put in valuable extra staffing time over the weekend: **Joel Bingham**, **Ed Leska**, **Bruce Morden**, **Hilda Volkman**, and **Carolyn Weber**. Members of the **Board of Trustees** who helped out, at the admissions table and on the handcar, included **John Locke**, **Noel Langle**, and **Rich Thom**.

To protect the equipment left on the grounds, **Bruce Morden** and **Michael Morden** camped over at the museum on Friday night.

Finally, a very special thank you to event sponsor **Toyota of Santa Barbara** and owner **Denny Franks** for their generous financial support again this year!

Ken Weber showed his circus cars in the model-railroad exhibit.



Groups Tour Landmark

A number of groups have made recent visits to the museum, touring the historical landmark under the guidance of Asst. Director Phyllis Olsen. These include kindergartners from **Santa Barbara YMCA**, ladies and gentlemen from the **Santa Maria Senior Travel Group** and **Vista Del Monte** retirement community, two groups from the **First Presbyterian Church Preschool**, and another two groups from **Franklin Children's Center**.

South Coast youth groups also receive free train rides, compliments of **Cox Communications**, as part of their tour experience.

Memorial Gifts Received

A donation in memory of **Ernest Thomsen** has been received from **John Marshall Starr**. **Nellie Casselman** has made a gift to the museum endowment in memory of her late husband, **Bev Casselman**.

Ernie Thomsen and **Bev Casselman** were longtime volunteers and supporters of the museum.

Museum Hosts Birthdays

Those celebrating recent birthdays with parties on the museum grounds include **Steven Hirschberg**, **Sam Katz**, and **Alex Ozdemir** (in June); **Willie Butler**, **Justin Hart**, **Daniel Plaisted**, **Colin Rohm**, and **Dana Walker** (in July); and **Cameron Coyne**, **Joshua Goldwasser**, **Ethan Harter**, **Rory Urschel**, and **Michael Van Wickle** (in August).

DEPOT DAY is Museum's Big Annual Event!

Don't Miss Out!

The 16th Annual *Depot Day* will be held Sunday, Sept. 27, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Depot Day is held each year to commemorate and celebrate the preservation of the historic Goleta Depot. The event, which is made possible by our members and friends, is also the museum's main annual community fundraiser.

Donation Requested

A \$1 donation per person will be requested upon admission to *Depot Day*. Members are encouraged to join with other event attendees in making this donation.

Silent Auction

You're sure to find some great buys on items for yourself or gifts for friends and family at the *Depot Day* silent auction.

This year, the tables will be jammed with almost 200 items going up for bid, including luxury hotel stays, golf, admission to Disneyland and Magic Mountain, a Getty Museum day trip, tickets to regional performing arts productions, and winery tours.

Fine restaurants represented in the auction include the five-star Citronelle, Four Seasons Biltmore, Beckham Place in Pasadena, and Maxi's at Fess Parker's Doubletree Inn.

Among the collectibles in the auction is "Princess," one of the harder-to-find members of the popular "ty Beanie Babies" series of stuffed animals.

The auction also includes round-trip rail transportation for two to San Diego, from Santa Barbara or Goleta. The lucky bidder will enjoy Amtrak's new "Pacific Class" service, which includes food, beverages, and many other amenities not found in the coaches or the earlier "Custom class."

The auction is an important revenue source for the museum. Please help the organization and yourself by stopping by the tables and placing bids on some of these wonderful items.

If you have new items, collectibles, or valuable services to donate to the auction, please call Assistant Director Phyllis Olsen in the museum office (964-3540).

Musical Entertainment

The youth group, Showstoppers, and the Monte Vista Elementary School Choir, both under the direction of Radu Azdril, will be on hand to help make *Depot Day '98* another lively and music-filled occasion.

Tri-Tip Barbecue

Depot Day attendees will be able to dine on a delicious barbecue meal, including sliced tri-tip, green salad, toasted french bread, and ranch beans. Ticket prices on the day are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children under 12.

BBQ tickets can also be purchased in advance, which includes \$1 off the regular price. Advance tickets are available at the museum's Tracksides Shop, (purchases of three or more tickets can be made by major credit card), or from most museum trustees, volunteers, and staff members.

You are encouraged to buy your BBQ tickets before *Depot Day*. In addition to saving \$1 on every ticket, you'll be helping event planners to estimate the number of meals to prepare.

Other Refreshments

If a full meal isn't to your liking, our volunteers will also be serving hot dogs, soft drinks, and other refreshments throughout the day.

Rides, Rides, Rides

In addition to miniature-train and handcar rides, we expect Bob Mahan to be here, giving rides on his Ventura County Railway inspection speeder. Tickets are \$1 for the train and 50¢ for the handcar and speeder.



Train Films

Films on a variety of railroad topics will be shown throughout the day in the museum's Gandy Dancer Theater.

Operation Life Saver

A new addition this year will be representatives from "Operation Lifesaver," who will distribute literature and talk with attendees about the safety of pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles when in the vicinity of trains and railroads.

Operation Lifesaver is a volunteer group, funded by Metrolink, Amtrak, and others in the business of railroading.

Steam Display

This year's steam display will feature a tabletop array of operating steam-driven machines, demonstrated by Jim Higman and powered by Jim Marchiando's steam plant.