



# Goleta DEPOT DISPATCH



Newsletter of the South Coast Railroad Museum

Vol. 28, No. 1 — Spring 2008

## EASTER BUNNY EXPRESS COMING MARCH 22

The 16th annual *Easter Bunny Express* comes to the museum grounds on Saturday, March 22. Regarded by many as the most enchanting event on the museum calendar, the *Easter Bunny Express* treats attendees to a number of fun activities, each of which is listed as a “station” on the special super-sized, egg-shaped ticket. These include visits to *Wabbit-Twacks Station* (to ride the decorated trains on the newly expanded half-mile-long track!); *Harvey’s House* (for a delicious cookie and lemonade); *Easter-Bunnyville* (to meet the Easter Bunny, where children will also receive an egg surprise); *Jack-Rabbit Junction* (to enter a prize drawing); and *What’s Up*



*At left, a mountain of stuffed bunnies await lucky winners of the Jack Rabbit Junction drawing during a recent Easter Bunny Express. Behind the table, volunteers Judy Blue and Claudia Worthen help event attendees prepare their drawing entries.*

*Easter Bunny Express* train passengers are greeted by colorful signs with festive messages like “Support Rabbit Transit” and “Happy Spring.”



*Dock* (to collect another event souvenir).

Event hours will be 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be Jack Rabbit Junction drawings held every hour, at 12 noon, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, and 3:45 p.m.

The cost is \$4 per person, adult or child. For those who will not be riding the miniature train, the cost is only \$2. Tickets are available in advance at the museum. They will also be sold during the event until 3:30 p.m.

For those wishing to have lunch or an afternoon snack, museum volunteers will be serving hot sandwiches, snacks, and refreshments throughout the event.

The 2008 *Easter Bunny Express* promises to be another “hare-raising egg-sperience” for the whole family. Don’t miss it! (rain date: March 29). The museum will be closed Easter Sunday, March 23.

## South Coast Railroad Museum Institute for American Research

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## Large-Scale Trains Come To Museum Store

The museum is now an authorized dealer for **USA Trains** and **Aristocraft**, leading manufacturers of G-gauge (1:29 scale) model trains, the same size as the suspended railroad in the Visitor Center.

Initially, the store selection will be limited to starter train sets and a few other items. Both companies' catalogs are available for purchase in the store and we are accepting special orders.

## June 21 Will Be Rotary Day

The 8th annual *Rotary Day* will be held at the museum on Saturday, June 21. The event, which features an afternoon of free train and handcar rides, is sponsored by the **Rotary Club of Goleta Noontime**. Club members will again be on hand during the event to greet visitors and assist with the rides.

We hope you will come out for *Rotary Day*, enjoy the rides, and let the Rotary representatives know how much you appreciate their support of the museum and its public programs.

## Super Saturday Had Super Sponsors

We gratefully acknowledge all of the friends and supporters in our community who helped to make possible this year's *Super Saturday!* on Feb. 2. The 2008 event sponsors included **Bartlett Tree Experts \* Circle of Friends Children's Center \* Dal Pozzo Tire Corp., Goleta \* Friedlander & Associates Insurance Services \* Michael J. Gartzke, CPA \* Grace Baptist Church \* Joan Hanna \* Robert B. Locke, Esq. \* MacMechanic \* Mission Wealth Management \* Montessori Center School \* Bruce and Andrea Morden \* Dick and Wendy Shelton \* Peter Tiersma.**

Thank you all so very much for your encouragement and your support!

## Welcome New Members

The newest museum members include **Margaret Connell** (Contributing), **Janice Strobach** (Active) and **David Eldridge** (Volunteer).

The latest additions to the Junior Engineers Club are **Gavin Jimerson, Brookln Kennedy, Peyton Kennedy, Conan Ruisi, and Walter Ruisi.** Welcome one and all!

## "Name The Museum Store" Contest

We're holding a contest to pick a new name for the museum store. Located inside the Visitor Center building, which opened in late 2006, the store has been receiving a lot of attention, thanks to its expanded merchandise selection and lively appointments, including the operating large-scale train (see the Page 3 story about plans to expand the train) and the "Information Station" electronic kiosk.

Readers are urged to submit one or more proposed store names, either by email (send your name choice(s) to: [museum@goletadepot.org](mailto:museum@goletadepot.org)) or by U.S. Mail (SCRM, Attn: "Store Name," 300 North Los Carneros Road, Goleta, CA 93117). All entries must be received by May 1, 2008. The winning entry will be selected by the Board of Trustees, with the submitter receiving his or her choice of 20 miniature-train ride tickets or a \$30 museum-store gift certificate.

## "National Train Day" Sparks Museum Rail Trip

The museum is planning a May 10 rail trip to Los Angeles to attend the first *National Train Day* celebration. Amtrak is organizing *National Train Day* "to raise awareness of the vital role rail plays in our nation's transportation system."

On May 10, Amtrak will host events at four of its largest stations, Washington, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, where visitors may enjoy a variety of activities, including live musical performances, exhibits, VIP appearances, and trip giveaways.

The museum group, which will be led by Museum Director Gary Coombs, will travel aboard Amtrak's *Pacific Surfliner* trains 774 (southbound) and 785 (north). Group members will be able to choose their boarding location, selecting from Santa Barbara, Goleta, or Carpinteria – as well as at train stations in Surf/Lompoc or Guadalupe, or in Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties.

Boarding times and costs will vary depending on the station of origin. For those boarding in Santa Barbara, for example, the departure time will be 9:20 a.m., returning home at 9:38 p.m. The trip costs for a Santa Barbara passenger will be, for adults, \$41.50 (\$39.50 for museum members) and, for children age 2-15, \$22.50 (members, \$21.50)

Group members will have about seven free hours in Los Angeles to attend the *National Train Day* event, explore nearby historic Olvera Street and Chinatown, ride the LA Metro Rail System, or enjoy other downtown activities and attractions. The museum is also planning to offer a limited itinerary of optional activities for those wishing to remain with other group members during parts of the day in Los Angeles.

The date of *National Train Day*, May 10, holds special significance, marking the anniversary of the completion of the first transcontinental railroad at Promontory Point, Utah in 1869.

To make your reservations, or for more information, contact the museum office, 805/964-3540.

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## Major Addition To Visitor Center Train Is Underway

An addition to the suspended train in the Visitor Center is now being planned. Like the existing train, which will not be removed or changed, the addition will be in 1-to-29 scale. Its main features will be a diesel-powered Southern Pacific Daylight passenger train and a new loop, with about 100 feet of track, which will run the entire width and breadth of the Visitor Center. There will also be a track siding,

*Kathy and Ed Leska pose with the 3-foot-long Daylight dome car that they donated for the Visitor Center train.*



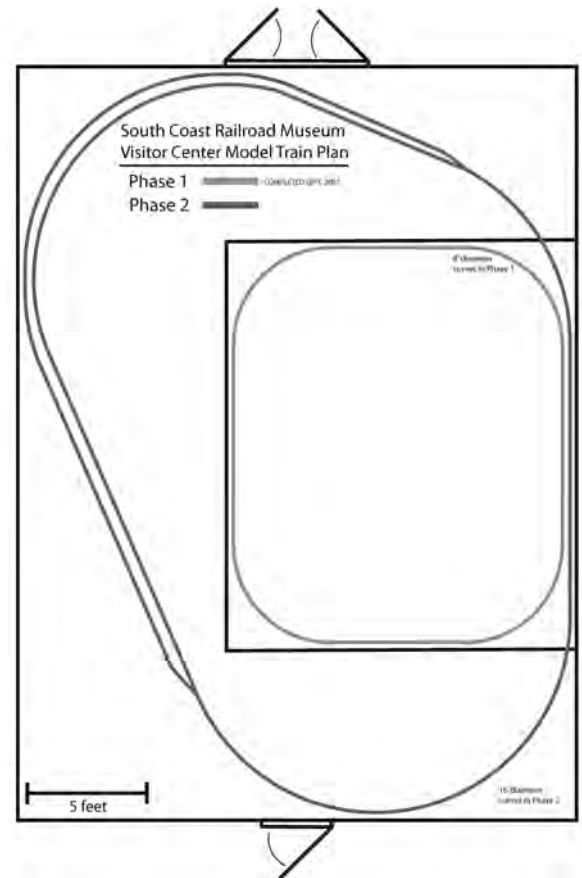
about 40 feet in length, long enough to hold a long train.

A number of museum members and friends have already contributed locomotives and cars to create the Daylight train, including **Marc Bradley** and **Steven Grimaud**, (each donating locomotives); **Ed and Kathy Leska** (dome car); **Seth, Barbara and Ian Oltzky** (observation car); **Al Turnbull** (dining car), **Wally Waldau** (mail car), **Noel and Peggy Langle** (coach car), and **Douglas Winter** (sleeping car). Also, **Rich Thom** has donated a Southern Pacific tank car, which has been added to the freight train that runs on the existing track.

A sketch of the Visitor Center train plan can be seen on the left. A full-color, full-page version of the plan can be found on the museum website. The address is: <http://www.goletadepot.org/PDF/Visitor-CenterTrain.pdf>

For more information about the Visitor Center train proj-

ect, or to make a donation, please contact Museum Director Gary Coombs ([gcoombs@goletadepot.org](mailto:gcoombs@goletadepot.org) or 805/964-3540).



## Conference Session Focuses On Unique Museum Resource

One of the sessions at the 2008 meetings of the **California Association of Museums** on Feb. 25-27 was devoted to the South Coast Railroad Museum's unique "Online Staffing and Information System," a resource tool that is used by the museum's volunteers and staff. Session presenters/discussants included Board of Trustees president and museum volunteer **Noel Langle**, volunteer and former-trustee **Bruce Morden**, Museum Director **Gary Coombs** and Assistant Director **Phyllis Olsen**.

The online system was developed by the museum's staff and volunteers, with a "Museums For America" grant from the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**.

## John Hutchinson Added To Board Of Trustees

**John Hutchinson** has been elected to the Board of Trustees for a two-year term. Hutchinson was born and grew up in Amherst, Massachusetts. He graduated in 1989 from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA with a degree in electrical engineering. In 1994, he received his Ph.D. from U.C., Berkeley.

*John Hutchinson*



Today, John is a staff scientist with Intel Corporation. He lives in Santa Barbara with his wife of 14 years, **Carol Higgins**, their nine-year-old son, **George**, and four-year-old black lab, **Bo**. The Hutchinson family moved to

Santa Barbara in 2001, but they spend several weeks each year visiting family in New Hampshire and Vero Beach, Florida.

After enjoying HO-scale trains as a child, John rediscovered his fascination with trains as an adult thanks to his son. John now enjoys O-scale model railroading, live steam exhibits, and visiting museums of almost any kind.

He volunteered as a *Depot Day* cook four years ago and has thoroughly enjoyed helping at the museum ever since. Why did he agree to serve on the Board of Trustees? "The museum is a great community asset," he says. "I look forward to being an active member of the museum board and helping to further the museum's mission."

# “Great Race” Means A Great Deal Both To Museum & Goleta Depot

The museum’s 27th annual Spring Fundraiser will take place on Saturday, May 17. Held on the museum grounds, the event features unlimited free miniature-train and handcar rides for all museum visitors.

The 2008 event will use the “Great Goleta Rail Race” theme that has been applied since 1997. The Great Race pits the museum’s people-powered handcar against the Goleta Short Line miniature train, in a timed competition to determine which conveyance can complete the greatest number of passenger-miles over a 150-minute span.

For the museum, the Great Race is a critical source of operating revenue. Each year it generates about 10-15% of the money needed to keep the museum going. For museum visitors, the Great Race means lots of free rides from 1:15 ‘til 3:45 p.m., on both the handcar and train, with both vehicles operating continuously over that period. All riders must meet the minimum-height requirements for the mode(s) of travel they select: 34 inches on the train and 48 inches on the handcar.

Careful record is kept of the total passengers carried and the distance completed by each vehicle, with the winner determined using a handicapping system based on the actual vehicle performances over the entire history of the event, excluding the first year, when the handicap was determined by calculations made by math teams from local high schools.

The inaugural Spring Fundraiser, which for many years was known as the “Asphalt Regatta,” was held at Goleta Beach on April 24, 1982, less than six months after a worn and dilapidated Goleta Depot (see photo on right) had been moved from its trackside site to a new home at Lake Los

Carneros County Park. That first event raised about \$1,500 for the campaign to save and preserve the historical landmark. This year’s goal is to raise \$14,000.

Members are urged to take part by helping with the fundraising leading up to the May 17 event, either by obtaining pledges or by making a pledge of one’s own. Please support this important museum fundraiser by making a tax-deductible donation using the pledge form that accompanies this newsletter. For more information about the event and how you can help, please contact the museum office at 964-3540 or [museum@goletadepot.org](mailto:museum@goletadepot.org).

*Goleta Depot was saved from the wrecking ball and preserved to become the railroad museum’s home, thanks to the caring and support of countless Spring Fundraiser donors and other museum and Goleta Depot Project contributors.*



Photo by Paul Henston

*A New Home: November, 1981*

## VIP Visitors Recreate Historic Goleta Depot Photograph

The museum had some special visitors on March 1, when **Marc and Natalie Rodrigue** and their daughter, **Emily**, dropped by to take a unique photograph.

More than a century ago, Marc’s grandmother, **Frances Brown**, posed



*Frances Brown at Goleta Depot, 1903.*

for a family snapshot behind Goleta Depot. Little Frances was the daughter of **Harry Brown**, one of the depot’s first agents, and his wife, **Ida Mae**. That 1903 photograph is also one of



*Mom Natalie takes the 2008 version starring Emily.*

the earliest to show any part of the landmark building.

The purpose of the Rodrigue family visit was to recreate the 105-year-old photograph, with Emily in her stroller, placed in the same spot as her late great-grandmother. The photos here tell the rest of the story.



*After a successful shoot, Marc, Emily, and Natalie Rodrigue pose for the museum camera.*