



# Goleta DEPOT DISPATCH

Newsletter of the South Coast Railroad Museum

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## Depot Day Arrives Sept. 29

The 31st annual “*Depot Day*” will be held at the museum on Sunday, Sept. 29. Hours for this year’s event are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*Depot Day* is the museum’s oldest community event. It commemorates and celebrates Goleta Depot’s history, including the successful campaign to save the landmark building, and its importance as a community treasure.

Goleta Depot is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources, and has also been designated a Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark.

### Silent Auction Has Great Buys

*Depot Day* is also important as a museum fundraiser. The key to that fundraising is the silent auction, which offers bidders the chance to go home with some terrific goods and services, usually at great prices.

The 2013 auction will include about 150 items, including hotel stays, Disney and Magic Mountain adventures, performing-arts tickets, winery tours, dining at fine restaurants, sports and recreation, garden and household items, and a lot more. A partial list is posted online and updated regularly on the museum website, [goletadepot.org](http://goletadepot.org).

*Please* support the museum by attending this year’s event,

*Train meets and passes have become a popular ride feature during Depot Day and other museum events.*



visiting the auction tables, and placing bids on your favorite items. You don’t need to register in order to bid.

### Donation Requested At Door

Everyone will be asked to make a \$1 donation to support the museum and continued landmark preservation work.

### Unlimited Rides, One Low Price

*Depot Day* will be the only day during 2013 when you and members of your family can ride on *three* different types of rail vehicles. These include **Bob Mahan’s** inspection “speeder,” which served for many years on the Ventura County Railway, as well as the museum handcar and Goleta Short Line miniature trains on the museum’s tracks.

There will be two trains operating on two different tracks — a one-third-mile run starting at the Main Station, and a one-sixth-mile route based out of the Westside Station. One result will be frequent opportunities for trains to meet and for riders on passing trains to wave and greet one another.

For only \$3, *Depot Day* attendees can buy a wristband that will be good for unlimited rides on all three conveyances. (Train & speeder riders must be at least 34 inches tall; 48-in. minimum height for the handcar.)

### Yummy Food, Too!

In the “Club Car,” you’ll find a variety of food items for purchase, including Depot Dogs and sausage sandwiches, snacks, soda, bottled water, and juice.

### Landmark Open House

*Depot Day* will also be the only time this year for the public to visit and view the agent’s apartment, which occupies the entire second floor of Goleta Depot. The station agent and any family lived there and the space is being refurbished to re-create that home atmosphere.

## South Coast Railroad Museum Institute for American Research

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Phyllis J. Olsen, Assistant Director

## Welcome To Our New Members

Longtime museum member **Ed Winnewisser** has upgraded his membership to the Associate Life level. Other renewing members who have decided to become Life members are **Merlyn and Helen Cummings, Dondra, and William Stancer.**

**John and Toby Riedinger** are new Contributing members. **Tim and Mindy Petter** are new Sustaining members.

Welcome to all our new members!

## Museum To Help With Central Coast Railroad Festival

There will be museum guides aboard a special vintage rail excursion from Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo taking place on Thurs. Oct 10. The excursion is part of the 5th annual *Central Coast Railroad Festival*, scheduled for Oct. 10-14 in San Luis Obispo and neighboring communities.

Also aboard the train during the northbound leg of the journey will be Grammy award-winning musician and storyteller **David Holt** and **Robert C. Van Camp**, producer of the Emmy award winning series, *Great Scenic Railway Journeys*.

For more information about the rail excursion and festival, visit [ccrrf.com](http://ccrrf.com)

## Auction Donations Are Needed

If you or your business have new items, collectibles or valuable services that you would like to donate to the *Depot Day Silent Auction*, please call Asst. Director Phyllis Olsen at the museum (805/964-3540).

Auction donors are publicly acknowledged in the museum website and on *Depot Day*, itself. You will also receive a separate acknowledgment for tax purposes and for your records.

This Issue Sponsored By

# Wilson Printing

## A Special Chance To Share

Do you or another family member have a favorite stuffed animal, a toy locomotive, or a model railcar or train that you would like to share during the holiday season with other museum members, visitors and friends? If so, we'd like to invite you to participate in this year's "Toy Trains and Teddy Bears!" exhibition that will occupy the Waiting Room display case starting Nov. 29 and continuing through the end of December. All loaned items will be returned following the close of the exhibition.

To participate, please contact Asst. Director Phyllis Olsen at the museum (email: [polsen@goletadepot.org](mailto:polsen@goletadepot.org) <or> phone: 805/964-3540).

## Fairview Car Wash Will Sponsor Free Train Rides Nov. 16

The next weekend day of free rides on the Goleta Short Line miniature train will be Saturday, Nov. 16. The afternoon of free train rides is made possible by a generous donation from **Fairview Car Wash**. The company also sponsors the weekly "Free Fridays" train rides at the museum, which take place from January until Thanksgiving each year.

The Nov. 16 rides will start at 1 p.m. and run continuously until the last train departs the station at 3:45. There will also be free handcar rides that day, thanks to the support of **Noel and Peggy Langle**.

## Ride Sponsors Benefit Our Visitors

The museum gave more than 700 free miniature-train and handcar rides to happy members of the visiting public during three recent afternoons — Sunday, June 16, which doubled as both *Father's Day* and the 12th annual *Rotary Day* and over the Aug. 17-18 weekend, when the 5th annual *Goleta Railroad Days* was held.

*Rotary Day* is sponsored by the **Rotary Club of Goleta Noontime**. Besides its financial support, club members also help give the handcar rides. This year, Rotarians **Mike Gartzke, Walt Stephens, and Dennis Trammell** shared in the handcar duties.

The **Bank of Montecito** and **The Towbes Group** pooled their resources to make the *Railroad Days* experience extra special for hundreds of attendees by sponsoring free train rides throughout the event. **Noel and Peggy Langle** completed the free-ride weekend by their sponsorship of free handcar rides on Saturday.



**“Candy  
Cane  
Train”**  
**Nov. 29-Dec. 24**  
**Don't Miss Out on  
All Of The Fun!**

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## Book Chapter Tells Of “Memorable Moments”

One of the chapters in the soon-to-be-released digital book, *Goleta Depot: The History Of A Rural Railroad Station*, by Museum Director Gary Coombs is aptly titled “Memorable Museum Moments.” It recounts some of the remarkable and noteworthy events and occurrences, many witnessed by Coombs firsthand, that stand in sharp contrast with the everyday routine at the museum.

Among the many experiences recounted in that chapter, Coombs describes one

“unforgettable celebrity encounter ...” that “...took place during a Candy Cane Train event...” years ago. On one “...particular trip, the train had barely left the station when I noticed from my rear vantage point as conductor that one of the passengers was using a camcorder to tape the ride. I blew my whistle, stopped the train, then stepped forward and spoke to the passenger.

I advised him that it was unsafe to use a camera, especially when it involved holding the camera off to one side, as he was doing, because he might lose his balance or strike a neighboring tree branch or fence post. He graciously complied.

It was only later I learned that I had busted someone who knew his way around cameras: It was Academy-award winning director and producer Robert Zemeckis!

Today, passengers are cautioned, as part of the conductor’s pre-trip announcement, to refrain from using cameras or cell phones during the ride. You can think of that as the ‘Roger Rabbit Rule,’ in honor of one of my favorite Zemeckis films.”

Many of the museum’s memorable occurrences involved the various wild animals that have shared the property with Goleta Depot and the museum over the years. For Coombs, the most notable of these was the “*Great Killdeer Encounter Of 1994*.”

“Killdeer are shorebirds that can also frequently be found inland. They lay a spotted egg and often build their nest in areas of small

gravel, where the varied colors of the rock can help to camouflage the eggs.

In 1990, some killdeer discovered the gravel ballast that the museum was using for the Goleta Short Line track. They decided it would be perfect for their needs. When the first killdeer nest was built in spring 1990, there was no strong conflict with human activity. The track had only been down permanently since the previous fall, and train rides were only being offered once a month. Even though the eggs were laid right between the rails, the locomotives and cars had sufficient clearance to pass safely over the nest without as much as touching the eggs.

But as the ride schedule intensified, first to a weekly routine, then even more often, the likelihood of a clash of species rose dramatically. It all came to a head in spring 1994.

The Goleta Short Line engineers and conductors had come to know the nesting killdeer’s behavior very well. When the nest is approached by a potential predator (or train!) one of the nesting pair will attempt to distract attention away from the nest. This is often done with much drama, by limping around a few yards away, as if they had a broken wing and would therefore be an easy alternate prey.

During the early days of the nesting cycle, the sitting bird would quickly abandon the nest whenever a train approached, returning as soon as the train had passed. But as hatching time approached, the birds’ protective behavior escalated spectacularly. Eventually, the killdeer would stay, as if challenging the approaching locomotive to a fight, daring the 300-pound vehicle to push it off the nest.

I’ll never forget the standoff between the killdeer and engineer Al Jaramillo. The killdeer won – its



*Two killdeer eggs were laid between the rails of the Goleta Short Line miniature-railroad track in Spring 1990.*

bluff forcing Al to bring his train to a halt only a few feet before the intransigent bird.

The Great Killdeer Encounter of 1994 peaked on April 2, just a few hours before the *Easter Bunny Express* began carrying a record 549 passengers across these same egg-bearing tracks, on one of the busiest days of the museum calendar. With little hope of success but no clear alternative, I used a soup spoon and little else to move the nest, eggs and all, a few yards out of harm’s way.

Miraculously, Mrs. Killdeer accepted the new situation and returned to the relocated nest. For the next couple of weeks, the killdeer and the riders on passing trains enjoyed one another’s company, without further incident. The youngsters hatched during the week of April 18.

The killdeer returned for brief visits over the next few years but never built another nest on the grounds after 1995. That has always been a relief to me — but one touched with a dash of disappointment.”

Free copies of the digital book, which will be completed by the end of the year, can be reserved, online only, at: [www.goletadepot.org/book](http://www.goletadepot.org/book)

Those interested in looking over a draft version of the book may view or download a copy now at:

[www.goletadepot.org/draftbook.pdf](http://www.goletadepot.org/draftbook.pdf)

# "Family Fun Train" Slated for Nov. 9



The museum is busy crafting an exciting new rail excursion, the "Family Fun Train," which is designed for our own members, as well as other families with young children. Our goal in developing this new rail trip is to enthuse young people about train travel and to make trains and railroads a more meaningful part of their everyday lives.

To make the trip as much fun as possible, especially for young riders, we have booked the extraordinary Vista Dome car, *Silver Splendor*, to carry us on this special daytrip up our beautiful coastline and through the inland valleys to San Luis Obispo. Riding in the dome is a unique, unforgettable experience because of the commanding 360-degree views that it gives its passengers. All riders will get to spend one half of the trip in *Silver Splendor's* dome.

Museum Director Gary Coombs will be our guide for the trip, using the dome as his platform for sharing the spectacular sights and points of interest along the route. These include the breathtaking Gaviota Coast, Hollister Ranch, Point Conception, the launch sites of Vandenberg AFB, state and county beach parks, a wealth of aquatic and other wildlife and botanical wonders, and a lot more.

Light snacks and soft drinks are included with the fare. Passengers are responsible for their own lunches and any additional food. Two food options are available: You may bring your own food and use the tables found throughout *Silver Splendor* <or> Get off the train at the Grover Beach stop, enjoy lunch at one of the nearby restaurants, then reboard *Silver Splendor* during its return trip from San Luis Obispo.



*Vista Dome cars, like Silver Splendor, are a unique breed, designed for panoramic viewing.*

Thanks to a generous contribution from **Bill and Debbie Hatrick**, the museum is able to offer a special *Family Fun Train* rate for children ages 2 to 12 of only \$39. The fare for all other passengers will be the standard \$69 rate. There is a maximum of two child fares for every adult. The trip is limited to ages 2 and above.

Passengers may board in either Santa Barbara or Goleta. Travel times are as

follows: Depart Santa Barbara (SB) at 10:22 a.m. (Goleta 10:34). Arrive San Luis Obispo (SLO) at 1:00 p.m. Depart SLO at 1:55 p.m. Arrive SB at 4:32 p.m. (Goleta 4:17).

The *Family Fun Train* is co-sponsored by **ParentClick.com**, the online resource guide for local families.

For more information about the trip, or to book your seats, visit the museum's online store: [goletadepot.org/ride](http://goletadepot.org/ride)

*The coastline is spectacular from Silver Splendor's dome.*

