



Goleta DEPOT DISPATCH

Newsletter of the South Coast Railroad Museum

Vol. 36, No. 1 — Spring 2016



In Memoriam: Phyllis J. Olsen

The railroad museum lost one of its most beloved and devoted leaders with the passing of Phyllis Olsen on Dec. 9.

Phyllis was born in Seminole, Oklahoma. Her parents were farmers, who moved the family to Stanwood, Wash-

ington in the 1940s. Phyllis was an excellent student who loved reading and writing. She attended Twin City High School, where she served as editor of the school newspaper and was chosen homecoming queen in her senior year.

She married Philip Olsen in 1955 (divorced in 1982). Together they had three children — Pamela Renée, Kari Elizabeth and Todd Christopher. Phyllis loved to travel, especially to visit historical places and gardens.

When her children were young, she was a stay-at-home mother. Later, after the family had moved to Goleta, she began to work for La Patera Elementary School, both as a yard-duty and classroom aide. She had a natural gift for working with children. She took that talent with her when she became assistant director of the railroad museum in 1980.

Phyllis would hold that position for 35 years, until her death. During that period, she was responsible for planning and implementing most of the museum's principal community events, including *Depot Day*, which began as a *Goleta Valley Days* event in 1983, and the *Easter Bunny Express* and *Candy Cane Train*, both first held in 1993. She was the museum's principal fundraiser, supervised the museum store, and had a long list of other responsibilities during her long tenure with the organization.

Olsen was fundraising chair of the Goleta Depot Project to preserve the much-loved historical landmark. For her dedication and successes in that effort she received the

Golden Deed Award, "For Service Above Self," the precursor of today's "Goleta's Finest" person-of-the-year awards.

During her years as the museum's assistant director, she saw Goleta Depot placed on the National Register of Historic Places, our country's official listing of properties deemed worthy of preservation, and the California Register, and also be designated a Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark.

When Amtrak's extended its *San Diegan* train service to Santa Barbara in 1988, Phyllis was selected to join State Senator Gary Hart in launching the inaugural train by breaking a bottle of "champagne" over the front of the Amtrak engine. In 1993, she was Amtrak's guest aboard the inaugural cross-country run of the *Sunset Limited* train. She was interviewed by CNN during the trip and was one of only two passengers, along with Museum Director Gary Coombs, who would ride America's first true transcontinental train all the way from LA to Miami and back.

On Feb. 20, a Celebration of Life ceremony for Phyllis was held at the railroad museum, attended by family, friends and members. During the event, the Westside Station of the museum's Goleta Short Line miniature railroad was renamed "Phyllis" in her memory. At the same time, it was announced that the museum's board of trustees had established the Phyllis J. Olsen Memorial Fund, a part of the Museum Endowment. Proceeds from the Fund will be used to support the museum

and programs that Phyllis held so dear. Persons interested in contributing to the Fund may send their tax-deductible donations to South Coast Railroad Museum, Attn: Olsen Memorial Fund, 300 N. Los Carneros Rd., Goleta, CA 93117.



Phyllis Station

EASTER BUNNY EXPRESS

COMING MARCH 26

The *Easter Bunny Express* is for most people the single most popular day on the railroad museum's annual calendar. For local families, as well as many others from farther afield, "EBX" has become an essential springtime thing-to-do. This year marks the 24th celebration of this unique annual family event at the museum. It will be held Saturday, March 26, barely a week away as this newsletter goes to press. Event hours are from 11 am until 4 pm.

The oversized, egg-shaped souvenir tickets have become an event icon. Pink for children and yellow for adults, the colorful tickets are also a promise that there are lots of fun activities ahead. Each activity is listed on the ticket as a "station." These station stops include:

- **Wabbit-Twacks Station* — where you'll take a six-minute ride on one of the festively-decorated trains —
- **Easter-Bunnyville* — to meet the Easter Bunny, where children each receive an egg-filled surprise while parents take advantage of this unique opportunity for photos —
- **Jack-Rabbit Junction* — to enter a drawing for some great prizes, including a large selection of adorable stuffed animals (The drawings will be held every hour, at 12 noon, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, and 3:45.) — and
- **What's Up Dock* — to collect another

Welcome New Museum Members

We are pleased to bid welcome to the museum's newest members. **Steve Wagner** is a new Life member. **Gabriel Anderson** and **Ron Busch** have both upgraded their memberships and are also now Life members. New Milepost 100 members include **Raphaella Banholzer**, **Don Kebort** and **The Rode Family**. **Joe Heumphreus** is a new Sustaining member. **Robert Groeling** is a new Active member.

The latest additions to the museum's Junior Engineers corps are **Lucas Christensen** and **Lukas Kvikleval**.

Easter Bunny Express souvenir.

Ticketholders have their choice of two train rides, either the **EBX Thunderbunny** or the **Lop-Ear Local**. Each train will operate on its own 1/3-mile-long route. Or, ride both trains for just \$2 more (The museum's standard 34-in. minimum-height safety requirement applies to all train riders.)

For those wishing to have lunch or an afternoon snack, **Judy Connors** and her volunteer crew will be serving hot sandwiches, snacks, and cold beverages throughout the day.

Easter Bunny Express tickets are \$4 per person, adult or child. For those who will not be riding the miniature trains, the cost is just \$3. Tickets are available in advance at the museum, or you may make your purchase through the online store (see right) and receive a discount on every ticket! Tickets will also be sold during the event until 3:30 p.m.

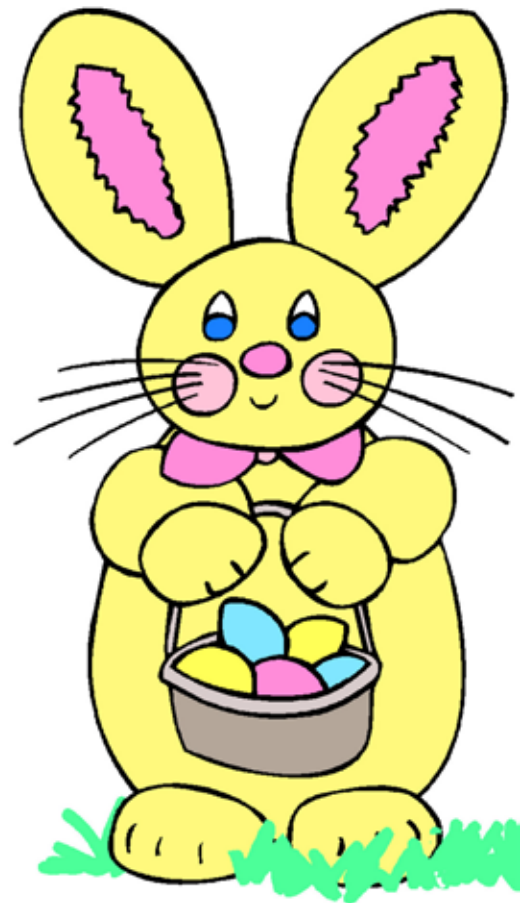
The 2016 *Easter Bunny Express* is sure to be another "hare-raising egg-sperience" for the whole family. Don't miss it. Hop aboard on March 26! (rain date: Sat., April 2). The museum will be closed Easter Sunday, March 27.

Your Spring Fundraiser Donation Keeps The Museum Going Strong. Please Help!

The museum's 35th annual *Spring Fundraiser* is underway. This event supports a day of free miniature train and handcar rides, which has become known as the *Great Goleta Rail Race*. The 2016 *Great Race* will be held Sat., May 21.

The *Spring Fundraiser* provides crucial operating support for the continued operation of the museum, producing about 10% of the money needed each year to keep the museum going.

Please support the fundraising effort either by obtaining pledges or by making a pledge of your own. Support this critical museum fundraiser with your tax-deductible donation by using the card included with this newsletter. For a pledge form or more information, contact the museum at 805/964-3540



Buy your tickets through the online store & save!

Scan the code at the right into your phone or type the following address into your browser:

<http://ow.ly/iKXT2>



or send us an email at:

museum@goletadepot.org

COMING EVENTS

Easter Bunny Express, Sat., Mar. 26
Amtrak Sampler rail trip, Sat., Apr. 2
Great Goleta Rail Race, Sat., May 21
Goleta Railroad Days, Aug. 20-21

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