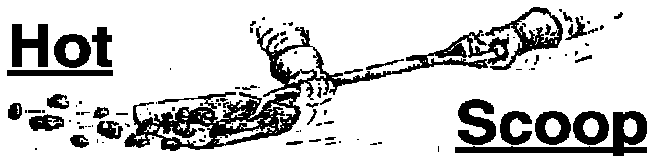


Hot



Scoop

HotScoop Shovel Logo by Larry Rose

A publication dedicated to San Diego Railroad Museum volunteers

December 2002

MUSEUM NEWS

VOL XV NO V

***** RPO Inaugural Run ***** *Ted Kornweibel, Superintendent of Restoration*

A Day Stamped in Memory, Enveloped in Good Will
All Doubts Canceled; Restoration Superintendent Doesn't Go Postal

The inaugural run of Santa Fe RPO #74 on Saturday, November 23 was a spectacular success. This event, the culmination of a 10-year restoration effort, was certainly the Museum's greatest hour since the inaugural of SP #2353.

It took a great deal of work to do the final preparation of the RPO car for actual service. This included cleaning, touch-up painting, creating displays, installing diaphragms, last-minute electrical work (repairing old wiring that shorted out; rebuilding the ceiling fans), mechanical fine-tuning, and practice runs. People who gave a lot in the final weeks included Frank Stites, Harold Whalen, Ken Kahan, Troy and Joe Shelley, Brian Hammond, Darren Apedaile, Mike Reneau, Jim Baker, Mike Retz, Rich Borstadt, Terry Clark, Randy Gibson, Arn Hunsberger, Dick McIntyre, Don Getz, Ted Kornweibel, and others, I'm sure. Larry Rose did the beautiful lettering job.

While this was going on, Mark Brown, of Postal Impressions, designed both cachets (souvenir envelopes) and had them printed. He also designed the absolutely stunning cancellation, which is now historic, as the post office destroyed it after 30 days. In addition, Mark also designed and manufactured the commemorative T-shirts, which are magnificent. All souvenir items sold well on the day of the inaugural. T-shirts and cachets may still be purchased at the downtown and Campo depot gift shops.

Last minute details almost overwhelmed us in the final week. One of the major tasks was to meticulously stamp and cancel 2,000 envelopes! Two work parties on two days put in many hours to accomplish this. The worker-bees included Harold Whalen, Frank Stites (2 days), Corrine Gallagher, Don & Elaine Getz, Tom & Linda Walker, Dick & Lois McIntyre, Bob Haney, Herb Kehr, Dick Ruppert, Bob Schussler, Catherine Kornweibel, and Ted Kornweibel. It was very time consuming, but the envelopes looked wonderful.

The inaugural day went very smoothly. The weather was perfect. Retired RPO clerk Herb Kehr, SDRM Life Member #1, made four perfect catches with the RPO's catcher arm as the train swept passed the mail crane mounted trackside at the depot. Herbie hasn't lost his touch, even though it had been three decades since he caught mail on the fly. Frank Stites efficiently mounted new bags on the mail crane as the train backed up for the next run. If you didn't see these run-bys, you missed a truly historic event. Don Getz ran the locomotive on the run-bys, with Randy Houk serving as brakeman.

Both paying riders and VIP guests had a great train ride, thanks to on board personnel. Trainmen were Beverly and Herman Hodges, Don Getz, Jim Baker, and Duane Dubke. Special thanks to Corrine Gallagher, who reconstituted the old Excursion Committee to serve as car hosts: Elaine Getz, Corrine Gallagher, Rita Cloud, Larry Williams, Ann and Dick Ruppert. Passengers were given fliers describing the history and functions of the RPO car written by Bill Schneider and Frank Stites.

The gift shop, set up and staffed by Denise Winslett, did a brisk business all day long. At a critical time, Elaine Getz volunteered to assist her, as sales got busier and busier.

Rod and Alma Gilbert and their daughter-in-law Jennifer did an absolutely splendid job of preparing food and beverages and serving it in First Class Style to VIP guests in AT&SF 1509. Rod and Alma even printed up special menus and souvenir cards, at their own expense. This was truly a generous contribution to the event.

Maria Castillo-Curry spent many hours in the weeks before the run in Tecate, arranging for the caterer, and working with Mexican postal officials to gain their participation in the philatelic side of the event. Three individuals from the Mexicali post office rode the train and canceled the Mexican stamps on the cachets with a specially-designed cancellation commemorating the RPO's rebirth. Without Maria's sterling efforts, the international aspects of this event simply wouldn't have been done. Thanks are also due to Campo postmaster Jan Minor and her assistants Gail Pinto and Lorna Troup, who also rode the train and kept custody of the cancellation stamps. Also along for the ride were San Diego postal employees Jan Broomfield and husband George, and Mike Cannone and wife Debbe; Jan and Mike helped gain postal approval for the event.

The operating crew was magnificent, adjusting to our particular needs for schedule and boarding. Conductor Ansara Gilbert ran the train in an extremely friendly and competent manner, ably assisted by brakeman Greg Perrin and mechanical troubleshooter Mike Reneau. Bob Nickles was engineer, and I don't know who the fireman was, but they ran a problem free trip.

Others deserving thanks include Alan Alvarez and a colleague, who provided security; and Gordon Jones, who put out press releases. It is unfortunate that not one of the local TV or print media sent reporters or crews to cover this historic event.

Finally, we owe a great debt to Carrizo Gorge Railway. Months ago, when I broached the concept of a special trip to raise funds for future restoration projects, Gary Sweetwood was immediately enthusiastic and agreed to waive all costs of the trip: crew, fuel, etc. As we got nearer the event, CGRy employees (who are also museum members) frequently performed repairs on the RPO car or gave other assistance while on CGRy company time, again gratis. When I requested that the sand train be out of sight on the big day, Gary immediately pledged that it would be done. CGRy also did an efficient job of handling ticketing and customs procedures. I could list other examples, but this is enough to indicate my great gratitude to the Carrizo folks for helping make this a success.

Thanks again to everyone. I'm enormously proud of our group effort. This was truly one of the Museum's finest hours, with people from all sides pitching in to make it happen. To answer Rodney King, yes, we CAN all get along. And perform a useful service. And have fun doing it.

***** Rule Of The Month: 8.20 Derails ***** *Randy Houk*

This is CZRy General Order No. 3, dated November 22, 2002:

"Effective November 23, 2002 the mainline derail just west of the west switch at the Campo yard is out of service. This derail will remain OFF RAIL, and locked in that position. To protect the mainline from possible run-aways no equipment will be left unattended on the mainline. This will require all run-around and switching movements to be done with the equipment tied down on the siding or house track. This General Order will be in effect for all movements performed by both CZRY and SDRM (SD&A Ry) crews." (We are planning to incorporate this into the next SDRM general order.)

It's pretty unusual to have a derail on a main track. It has been taken out of service, so equipment left unattended needs to be set onto one of the sidings. We will continue to leave the derails on the sidings lined to ground when not passing through them. Miller Creek trains #2 and #4 will continue to load on the main. As has been our practice, during the runaround two handbrakes should be set while on the skate. On Saturday night Museum trains should be parked on the house track just east of the depot. After Sunday's operations the train should be taken to the yard.

***** The Christmas Train ***** *Charlie Coval*

The San Diego Railroad Museum will sponsor the sixth annual Christmas Train to Tecate, Mexico on Sunday January 5, 2003.

The Christmas Train is an annual event to bring gifts to the children of Tecate, Mexico on The Day of the Three Kings. The Day of the Three Kings is a traditional Mexican Holiday much like our Christmas Day when presents are given to children.

The train is made up of historic rail cars and volunteers all to help brighten the holiday season for the children. In Tecate more than five thousand children look forward to the day, when they will hear the whistle blow and the Christmas Train arrives in town.

Work for The Christmas Train 2003 began last March with meetings in San Diego and Tecate, planning for the day the train travels into the town. In Tecate the sponsors are The City of Tecate, Tecate DIF, Tecate Police and the Tecate Brewery.

Throughout the year volunteers from cities and throughout the county work with businesses, clubs, organizations, friends and family, to tell them what is needed to make up the gift bags. As donations arrive, they are delivered to the warehouse of Specialty Produce in the Morena District of San Diego. And on New Years Day the packaging of the gifts begin.

From now until January the Christmas Train volunteers will be asking for donations of toys. This year learning toys have been requested for the children. In addition small toy cars, boats, planes (no battery operated toys please) dolls, stuffed toys books and school supplies will help fill the gift bags. The gift bags are made for infants, boys and girls to age ten. For infants socks mittens and baby blankets are especially useful. All items must be new.

All donations are tax deductible, please ask for a Receipt for Contributions.

For further information contact the San Diego Railroad Museum at (619) 595-3031 or visit our web site at: <http://www.sdrm.org/events/3kings>

***** The Polar Bear Train ***** *Terry Clark*

On October 23, 2002, our group of four, Judy and Jack Costello, Randy Gibson and I set off by Amtrak to Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. The train to Los Angeles was the first and last leg of the journey that left AND arrived on time! But, that is a whole story in itself.

We boarded the Surfliner in Los Angeles and proceeded north along the magnificent California coast before turning inland at Santa Barbara, arrived in Oakland after sunset. We had a pleasant night aboard and spent the next day traveling through Oregon and Washington. That is an entirely different kind of magnificence. We were treated to our first glimpse of snow-capped mountains and mighty volcanoes, lying quietly to the east. We were very late arriving in Seattle and were glad to see the shuttle to our hotel. We spent the night in beds that did not sway and with the sounds of the city, rather than the train.

Early the next morning we took the train to Vancouver, British Columbia. The train travels along Puget Sound for a long distance, giving us views of the water and the islands, sea birds and tiny villages nesting close to the sea. We debarked in Vancouver, were processed through customs and entered Canada for the first of many pleasant hours to SHOP! Vancouver's downtown public library has a huge number of little shops and they were also having a book sale. I bought a couple of paperbacks at ten cents each to read and leave on the train! Too soon, it was time to board the VIA-Rail train for Jasper.

We were welcomed aboard with a champagne reception in the lounge car and had our first chance to see the domed area where we all spent many hours the next day. After a night aboard, we awoke in the midst of some of the most spectacular scenery on earth, the Canadian Rockies! We were treated to old-fashioned service and delicious food in the dining car for all of our meals. We met some fascinating people as the train keeps up the custom of filling each seating area, first come-first-served for each seating. We met a lovely young lady from South Africa who was on her way to run in the New York Marathon. She had great stories to share and she and Randy compared information about the siege of Mafking. (Ask Randy for details!)

By afternoon the next day we had arrived in Jasper. We spent two nights in a lovely hotel immediately across from the train station. Because they have about forty trains a day, mostly freight, the hotel vibrated to the tempo of diesels straining, most of the time. They did not blow whistles, but all of the train buffs really "felt" every train! We had two days of private tours through the Jasper area. By late October, most of the attractions had closed for the break between the summer visitors and the snow/ski visitors. Our guide was usually a hunter, so he was able to show us some stunning close-ups of Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep, elk and moose, as well as vistas of lakes surrounded with snow-capped peaks. The second day he took us to the Columbia Ice Fields and the Athabasca Glacier. The wind came up and it was well below zero, but that was Celcius! Regardless, it was very cold! Judy asked the guide as we were returning when the serious snow would begin. Within a minute, the first flakes began to fall!

The next morning we all awoke to a sparkling world covered with a fresh coat of pristine snow! It was time to reboard VIA-Rail and proceed to Winnipeg. Every afternoon, we were guests at a cheese and cracker event in the dome car and free wine tasting was part of the pleasures of the day. The scenery changed dramatically as we left the Rockies and proceeded across the Canadian plains. This is Canada's bread basket and they grow (and ship by train) vast quantities of wheat. Winnipeg is visible for miles in the open plains.

We were fortunate to be able to stay in the historic Fort Garry Hotel, one of the original railroad hotels. During our two days in Winnipeg, we toured the Canadian Mint (no, no samples!) "The Lej" as they call their legislative building and the wonderful Museum of Science. We also went to the Forks, a shopping area and restored historical site where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet. It was the site of native people trappers, and hunters converging from the earliest times. Our time was quickly gone and we again boarded VIA-Rail and headed west and then north, almost a thousand miles to Churchill.

We recrossed part of the plains and then headed north around Lake Winnipeg, as large as some of the Great Lakes. This is a "milk train" and stops at every little town and can be flagged by anyone. We were on board for two nights and a full day. It is the only means of surface transportation for the last five hundred miles of the trip. The scenery is through old-growth forest. As we went north, the trees became more and more sparse and finally we came out of the tree line just south of Churchill.

Churchill is a deep-water port during the open water season and we visited the port by school bus as soon as we left the train. We saw our first polar bear just off the dock, checking the ice and soon deciding to come ashore. He passed right in front of the bus. Later we drove through town and were able to go to an overlook and see the original fort across the river. It was cold, 15 or 16 below zero Celsius but the wind was very harsh. We toured the Eskimo Museum and some people began their shopping!

We checked into our hotel which was a set of converted apartments so everyone had a kitchenette, dining area, living room downstairs and bedroom and bath upstairs. That evening was very clear so we were treated to a wonderful show of the Aurora Borealis. While in town, we went to a slide show by a local artist and he had great photos! There were lots of little shops to visit before or after dinner each evening.

Our second and third days were spent on the Tundra Buggies. We went out every morning and drove in these huge vehicles (8ft. high wheels) out onto the tundra where the bears are waiting for the ice to freeze. We saw many bears, some sleeping, some wandering around, some alone, sometimes a mother and cubs. We also saw arctic foxes, ptarmigan in flocks and an arctic hare. The drivers are very careful not to intrude on the wildlife, but the bears are very curious. Because they have no natural enemies, they are fearless and come right up to the buggies, sometimes even shaking them a little! It was incredible! There is no way to do the experience justice in a few paragraphs!

Our last day, we went to the Arctic Research Station. We met a man who runs dog sled teams and were treated to a dog sled ride. There was a blizzard blowing. It was twenty-seven below zero Celsius and there was a fifty mile an hour wind! We went two on each sled with seven dogs pulling and it was a terrific ride! Randy said I made a wonderful wind-break. I am going to have to plan better the next time! All too soon, it was time to return to civilization and we flew off in the blizzard to Winnipeg and home!



***** Operations Reminders ***** *Randy Houk*

Our yard has some very tight curvature. Any crew who has attempted to couple to a passenger car parked on such a tight curve can attest to the difficulty. One recent Saturday morning, while I was in the cab of #1820, my brakeman and I were assembling the day's Miller Creek train. During the week some crew had thoughtlessly uncoupled the east car from #350 on one of these tight curves. We lost more than 1/2 hour in repositioning these cars onto straighter track so that the train could be assembled. This was the main factor in #2 departing 45 minutes late.

Please be considerate to those who will be re-coupling to a car in the yard when you uncouple. This means you should position the cars on the straightest possible track.

Also, in order to facilitate safer switching movements, especially when more than one train is moving in the area, please use hand signals whenever the engineer can see the person conducting the movement.

***** Web page update ***** Randy Houk

New this month is a page which includes several photos taken at the recent inaugural run of our beautifully restored Santa Fe RPO car. Kudos to Ted Kornweibel and crew! See the new page at: <http://www.sdrm.org/events/rpo/>.

Don't forget that our web page has a link for Volunteer Services. You can see old issues of the Hot Scoop and a link to the Code of Federal Regulations. The username is "volunteer" and the password is "2353".

If you're receiving this via U.S. Mail but have gotten **E-mail**, please send an email to hotscoop@sweet-haven.com so we can make you a 'member'. We save postage that way!

***** Year 2003 Dates of Note *****

	Jan	Feb	March
School Train	21	17	17
Brunch Train			2,16
Dinner Train		14	22
Campo to Tecate	11,25	8,22	8
Coronado Branch	4,5	1,2	1,2
Deadline for Hot Scoop articles	28	28	28

***** Article Submissions *****

Please submit articles in pure text (.txt) or MS Word (.doc) format. E-mail to hotscoop@sweet-haven.com is preferred. Send address changes to the editor.

*****PHONE NUMBERS and e-mail*****

Web page: <http://www.sdrm.org>

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