



A publication for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum members

December 2024

FALL HAS ARRIVED IN CAMPO





Pacific Southwest Railway Museum
Association, Inc. WWW.PSRM.ORG

619-465-PSRM (7776)

Museum and Train Operations

Campo Depot

Highway 94 at Forrest Gate Rd, Campo

619-478-9937

La Mesa Depot Museum & Office

4695 Nebo Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941

PSRMA Board of Directors

Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of the month except Dec at 6:30PM. A link to join the Zoom meeting will be provided on our website at members.psrn.org.

Museum Directors

President: Stephen Hager

Vice President: Colin Atwood

Treasurer: Hector Gonzalez

Secretary: Jenn Brooker

Equipment Dept: Robert Smith

Facilities Dept: Frank Denison

Museum Services Dept: Travis Clark

Operations Dept: John Canker

Museum Staff

Archivist: Bruce Semelsberger

Asst Dir. Of Facilities: Jim Lundquist

Asst Volunteer Coordinator: Colin Atwood

Fundraising: Donna Spevack

Gift Shop Manager: Alex Fiori

Hot Scoop Editor: Jim Lundquist

Membership: Carl Brooker

Social Media Mgr: Jason Drenkow

Station Master (La Mesa): Timothy Miller

Steam Foreman: Jim Baker

Volunteer Coordinator: Jenn Brooker



Special Events:

NORTH POLE LIMITED TRAINS WITH SANTA WILL OPERATE:

November 29 & 30, December 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 & 21 - North Pole Limited trains depart Campo at 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Reservations are required.

MUSEUM REOPENS TO PUBLIC FEATURING GOLDEN STATE EXCURSION TRAINS ON JANUARY 11, 2025.

February 28 - Membership Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at La Mesa Police Dept Community Room. The speaker for the evening will be Jim Price speaking about his adventures of restoring his caboose located in Nevada.

Regular Schedule:

At our Campo Facility

Wednesdays and Saturdays - Library open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call Bruce Semelsberger at 619-264-7282 for an appointment.

MUSEUM OPEN FOR VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES.

La Mesa Depot Open:

Tuesday & Thursday Noon - 3 p.m. Saturday: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Volunteers are at both locations during the week as well. For more information, please email: volunteer@psrm.org

Experience the Magic of the North Pole Limited!



Don't be left out. Order your tickets NOW!

North Pole Limited Tickets are on-sale

Our most popular event each year is the North Pole Limited. The evening trains feature caroling, cookies and hot chocolate and, of course, a visit with Santa Claus all while travelling by train to the North Pole!

Don't be left out, as many trains are sold out each year. Tickets are available for sale at:

<https://www.psrma.org/npl/>



The *Hot Scoop*® is a publication of
the Pacific Southwest Railway
Museum Association, Inc.

The opinions expressed in the *Hot Scoop* are those of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc., (PSRMA) its officers or staff.

PSRMA Mission Statement:

PSRMA is dedicated to preserving the physical legacy and the experience of rail transportation. Programs address the historical, social, economic and technical impact of railroading with particular emphases on railroads of San Diego County and the systems with which they connected in the United States and Mexico.

PSRMA is a non-profit educational organization operating under section 501(c)3 of the tax codes. Donations may be tax deductible.

PSRMA is a member of the Heritage Rail Alliance.

Submission guidelines: All articles should be single spaced and submitted in Microsoft Word format. Photographs are also welcomed. Please include photographer and date of photo. Send all submissions to Editor@psrm.org

The *Hot Scoop* is available in color via email. To receive the electronic version in PDF format, send an email to editor@psrm.org and include your name, membership number and email. Note that if you opt for the e-mail version, you will no longer receive the printed copy.

Comments are always welcome. Send your feedback to:
editor@psrm.org

Membership News

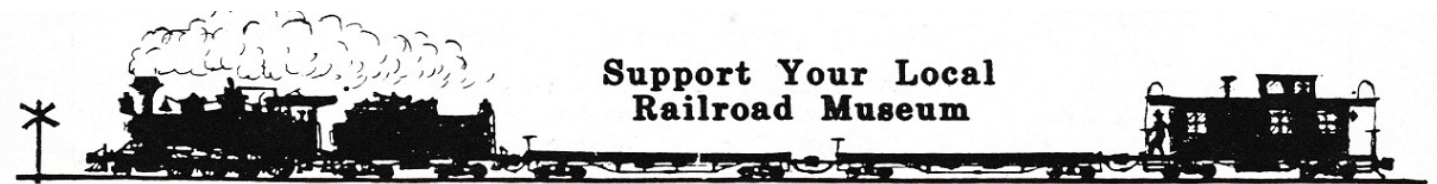
by Carl Brooker, Membership Coordinator

Train enthusiasts and history buffs alike, lend a hand (remotely!) to the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum! We're seeking a volunteer to take on the rewarding role of Membership Coordinator. This fully remote position is perfect for someone who wants to support the museum from the comfort of their own home. As Membership Coordinator, you'll play a vital role in processing new memberships and renewals, ensuring our valued members receive their welcome packets promptly while also helping the museum generate a stream of much needed revenue. It's a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference for the museum, all without needing to travel to Campo. If you're pas-

sionate about trains and have a knack for organization, we encourage you to inquire! Please email membership@psrm.org with any questions or to express interest!

PSRMA is pleased to announce that the following people have joined as either new individual, student, senior, or family members and we are grateful for their support – Jennifer Cavanaugh, Jorge de Anda, Heidy Hicks, Cameron Himaya, Heather Karpel, Pat Kelly, Fedor Kuzminov, Gina Lewis, Steven Puna, Magnus Ricards, Jaden Soroka, and Leanne Whalen. Welcome aboard all!

WELCOME ABOARD



Fundraising – Fall 2024 by Donna Spevack, Administrator of Fund Development

Wow! Hard to believe that November is over, but there is still time to become a valued supporter of PSRM. Now is a great time to set up a one-time gift, monthly, quarterly or annual contribution. Not only do your donations help with preserving railroad history, it helps us to grow and to be able to offer our members and visitors a place to learn and make family memories.

Did you also know that visitors to our museum help boost the economy of the small town of Campo by patronizing the shops, restaurants and venues around town. When new exhibits, restorations and upgrades to the museum draw in more guest, the town prospers and benefits, thereby making a positive impact within the community.

I would like to Thank all of our wonderful donors for September/October/November:

\$101-\$500 Category Donors

Jack O'Lexey – Mine Train (monthly donor)

Manley Golson – SP 3709 (monthly donor)

Tom Frankum – General Fund

Emily Bingham

\$1-\$100 Category Donors

Pat Kelly

Judith Kemp

John Dobyne

Rona Mandra

Ryan Hodge

Cameron Himaya

Manus Ricards

Jaden Soroka

David Choy

David Bender

Leane Whalen

Bonnie Crews

Anne Mendoza

Ed Sherman

Steven Cologne

Jenifer Brooker

Brian C. Sampson

David Goldberg

Kathy Houston

Pamela Bundy

Grace Brown

Cathleen Martin

Sam Wagstaff

Ivan Maric

Linda Copeland

Teri Garcia

Joseph Jolly

Judy Ford

Connie Danielson

Brittany Hendrix

Mary Mills

Frank Weller

Rebecca Ferguson

Jim DeMassimo

If I forgot anyone, please email me (fundraising@psrm.org) so that you will be added next month.

A few easy ways to donate:

Free: Microsoft Rewards Points can now be automatically donated to charity called Give with Bing. You can now donate your points tour museum by designating the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum.

Through December, Microsoft will match donations!

PSRM's "Giving Tuesday" Campaign

Donations on line at: <https://www.psrn.org/donate/>

Thank you for your valued support and remember that the NPL is running now – make your reservations now!

From the Back Platform

By Stephen Hager, President

Season's Greetings! It's the week of Thanksgiving as I'm writing this, which means that it's also the opening week of our 2024 North Pole Limited (NPL) Season. NPL is the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association's largest annual special event and our largest single source of income. The event requires coordination and cooperation between all of the departments within the organization. Year after year, I consistently feel immensely proud of the enthusiasm and dedication that our volunteers put towards the event. This year, management of the event is once again being done by NPL Project Manager Mark Landguth and Special Events Coordinator/Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Brooker.

Preparations for NPL start months in advance as we begin scheduling paid contractors and volunteers for the various key positions that need to be filled during the event. At the beginning of November, following the Pumpkin Express and the new Sip & Sunset Scare Special events in October, there is a mad dash to take down the Halloween decorations around the museum and aboard the trains and replace them with winter holiday decorations. This year, we were fortunate to have four weekends between the special events to make the transition instead of the usual three. Others have reported extensively on the decorating efforts, so I will focus on another major element of preparing for NPL: equipment work.

In late summer, the Equipment Department begins putting all of our operating locomotives and railcars through annual inspections and maintenance. With three operating locomotives and seven passenger cars, this process can take up to four months. This work has to be planned so that enough equipment will remain available for our regular Golden State train excursions through September and then the special events in October. This year, we took two of our locomotives, Southern Pacific 5119 and Southern Pacific 3873, out of service one at a time for air brake overhauls. This process involves removing all of the operating air brake valves from a locomotive, sending them to an air brake shop for rebuilds, reinstalling the brake valves, and testing the system for leaks and proper operation.

Air brake valves are composed of a combination of cast iron, aluminum, or brass bodies and covers; springs; lapped slide valves; spool valves; pistons; check valves; rubber gaskets, O-rings, and diaphragms; chokes; filters; and fasteners. Some air brake valves perform single, simple functions while others perform multiple functions. Air brake valve rebuilds usually involve disassembling and cleaning the valves inside and out, replacing all of the rubber components, re-lapping slide valves, and lubricating parts as the valves are reassembled. After valves are received back from rebuild, they are reinstalled with new rubber mounting gaskets and the locomotive is started to pressurize and test the system. Problems, if they exist, will usually present themselves fairly quickly. Improperly mounted valves will leak audibly from their mating surfaces. Small leaks are located using a low tech but effective method – spraying the mating surfaces with a mixture of water and dish soap; any bubbles generated will indicate a leak. Usually, these leaks can be fixed just by tightening the mounting nuts and bolts.

This year, we ran into a problem once we received the valves for SP 5119 back from rebuild – the automatic brake valve had developed an internal leak that was preventing it from operating correctly. After having our contracted valve rebuilder disassemble, inspect, clean, and reassemble the valve two more times, we concluded that the cast iron valve body had developed an invisible internal crack which was allowing air to seep between two adjacent passages. Fortunately, we were able to take an identical valve from one of our non-operating locomotives and use it instead to get SP 5119 working again. Crisis averted! The rebuild of the valves on SP 3873 was completed successfully and uneventfully.

In October we lifted our Pullman business car, the Robert Peary, off of its trucks to lubricate its center plates. Like the coaches and baggage car that we did last year, this car had not received this particular lubrication since 1988! We also spent some time tracking down and fixing several parasitic draws in the car's electrical system. As a business car with numerous separate rooms with their own lighting, its electrical system is power-hungry and places a strain on its batteries. The car is equipped with a Waukesha propane engine that's designed to turn a generator to power all of the car's electrical systems.

From the back Platform, continued

Unfortunately, electrical and mechanical problems forced us to stop using the generator about 10 years ago, which makes the car completely reliant on battery power. In the coming year, volunteer availability permitting, we hope to begin repairs to the electrical system and eventually get the Waukesha engine working again.

The remainder of our equipment efforts focused on the usual annual maintenance; single car air brake tests on the passenger cars, lubricating all moving parts, and generally making sure that all components are in good working order. Most of our operating passenger cars are between 90 and 100 years old and they certainly aren't getting any younger! Each piece of equipment requires tender loving care to repair and maintain so that they can be enjoyed by future generations. If you want to play a part in keeping these cherished pieces alive, there's no time like the present to volunteer. Please send a note to volunteer@psrm.org to get started!

For now, it's time to spread some holiday cheer! I look forward to seeing many of you out at Campo over the coming month aboard the North Pole Limited. As always, if you would like to get in touch with me, please send a note to president@psrm.org. Until next time, keep it on the high iron!

Operations Volunteers by Rich Paulus, Chief Operations Officer

Train Service - those who are qualified train crew members, speeder operators/crew, and trainees who have helped us run 6 Pumpkin Express trains and 1 Sip & Scare Special (finishing up the October events) and the number of days they have volunteered through November 25: Colin Atwood 1, Alyssa Andersen 1, Mark Brown 1, Ryan Hodge 1, Randy Houk 1, Dave Little 1, Jim Lundquist 1, Mike McIntyre 1, Rich Paulus 1, Tom Ulrich 1

MOS – maintenance of signal volunteers who conducted electrical and mechanical maintenance and testing of highway crossing signal systems this month: Chad Baker 1 and Christopher Baker 1.

Yard switching - these are the volunteers who have worked in PSRM yards this period: Colin Atwood 1, Stephen Hager 1, and Ryan Hodge 1.

MOW - maintenance of way volunteers who have assisted Roadmaster Glen Rogers and Track Foreman James Caestecker in maintaining tracks and right-of-way this period:

Colin Atwood 3, Mark Brown 1, James Caestecker 1, David Choy 4, Linda Eskin 1, Jared Green 2, Stephen Hager 2, Kerry Hebert 1, Ryan Hodge 3, Mark Landguth 1, Dave Little 1, Rich Paulus 1, Glen Rogers 2, Duke Schweikert 2, Raine Schweikert 1, Morgan Snyder 1, Jaden Soroka 1, Will Vanni 1, Tim Wamsley 4.

There were a total of 46 volunteer-days this period.



LIBRARY REPORT by Bruce Semelsberger

It has been quite a year, this 2024. This report will pretty much be the year's end wrap-up as December will mostly be taken up with NPL. Previous regular library workdays were taken up with decorating coaches with garlands and lights as part of the all-hands effort and restoring the hobo camp; subsequent days will likely go in the same vein.

As previously discussed, there were several large donations this year encompassing large numbers of books, papers and artifacts, all of which take time to bring into the collection or sell off or trade. The books have now largely been accessioned, which means put into the data base noting the title, author, size, provenance, published date and condition. Each was also assigned a call number which determines the shelf location and in most cases that requires a judgement call as to where the subject best fits into our basically Dewey system. Now those books need to be actually placed on the shelves which often requires a certain amount of juggling to move books that are already there and consumes a fair amount of time. Much of January will likely be needed to handle this task.

Many people showed up to take advantage of our free book giveaway and we managed to divest ourselves of a good number of duplicate books, but there are still many others looking for a home. If you are short of reading material for the long winter days, come by on a regular workday and browse. If things go as expected, we may be sending most of the surplus books off to a new owner early next year so get them while you can!

The artifacts also require a lot of time to process, beginning with identification and often research, then some patience and careful cleaning, accession, tagging and photographing and finally placement on a shelf, in a drawer or on the floor in the case of large and heavy items. The recent acquisition of several such items from Richard Pennick persuaded us to ask the Board for more storage space outside of our regular climate controlled areas and purchase of two additional 40 foot shipping containers was authorized at a total cost of \$6200.00. Those containers were received and

placed on a new foundation just north of the present library thanks to Jim Lundquist of the Facilities Department who did the ordering, receiving and placement using the large forklift currently on loan to PSRM. Thanks, Jim!

Some of the large items such as the water tank spout and wood coach door frame were moved into the new quarters just in time for the beginning of the rainy season. Many other items that don't require a stable environment will be relocated in 2025, freeing up much needed space inside the library proper. The eventual plan for many of the objects in the collection will be to create new exhibits in the additional display buildings that are part of our long range plan. One of my personal hopes is to recreate at least a portion of the railroad offices circa 1920 for a behind the scenes look at railroad management and planning as well as communications.

On another topic, our Past Perfect software is aging and will soon need to be either replaced or upgraded, so if there are any software engineers among our cadre of volunteers, we could use some of your expertise to determine the best way to proceed. We already found a problem with data that is not transferring properly to the browse field after our last hardware upgrade and we had to spend three entire work days to manually update the field information, otherwise the accession process would be slowed to a crawl. The problem, however, still exists and will continue to require periodic updating unless we can identify the specific instruction that is missing from the software.

Lastly, a big "thank you!" goes out to all of the hard working volunteers for their many hours of work this last year. 2024 is my 40th year with our library and the success and recognition we have achieved in the museum community is entirely due to the effort of all of the volunteers over the years and the support of all of PSRM. Each time we give a tour of the archive to a prospective volunteer or others of the library and museum community we are greeted with "I had no idea this was all here!" and "Wow, this is incredible!", so give yourselves a big pat on the back, volunteers; you deserve it!

LAST CALL: FREE BOOKS OFFERED TO MEMBERS

WHAT A GREAT CHRISTMAS PRESENT

The Pumpkin Express and Sip & Scare Sunset Special Chug to Success: A Spooktacular Season for Pacific Southwest Railway Museum

By Jennifer Brooker, Special Events Coordinator

The Pacific Southwest Railway Museum recently concluded its annual Pumpkin Express event, a resounding success that hosted nearly 2,000 passengers. This year's event captivated guests of all ages with its vintage train rides, pumpkin patch, and spooky decorations.

The Pumpkin Express, a beloved tradition at the PSRM, offers a unique Halloween experience for all ages. Passengers aboard the historic railcars are treated to a spine-tingling journey through the scenic San Diego County backcountry, encountering ghoulish surprises, and eerie sights along the way.

This year, the PSRM introduced a new adults-only themed train, the Sip & Scare Sunset Special. This unique experience offered passengers a chance to enjoy a uniquely spooky train ride while sipping on craft beers, wine, and cocktails. The event was a huge hit, with over 300 passengers escaping the wrath of the Campo Killer and surviving a trip through the spine-tingling haunted house.

The success of the Sip & Scare Sunset Special demonstrates the PSRM's ability to adapt to changing

trends and offer innovative experiences. By catering to a more mature audience, the museum was able to attract a new demographic and generate additional revenue.

The overall success of the Pumpkin Express and the new Sip & Scare Sunset Special can be attributed to the events' immersive atmosphere, a core group of truly dedicated volunteers, and the enduring appeal of train travel at PSRM. The over \$77,000 net profit will be used to support the museum's ongoing preservation efforts, educational programs, and future special events.

PSRM looks forward to hosting more exciting events in the coming year, including the North Pole Limited and our new wine train!



FREE BOOKS OFFERED TO MEMBERS - WHAT A GREAT CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Do you have a friend or family member, or yourself, who is interested in trains and history? We have just the gift for you, just in time for Christmas - your selection of duplicate books in our library! All that is needed is to arrange to meet our Librarian, Bruce Semelsberger, at Campo and select the books you are interested in. Bruce is normally in the Library on Wednesdays and Saturdays. These books are duplicate to our collection and we are happy to find good homes for them. Call Bruce at 619-264-7282 to arrange your visit.

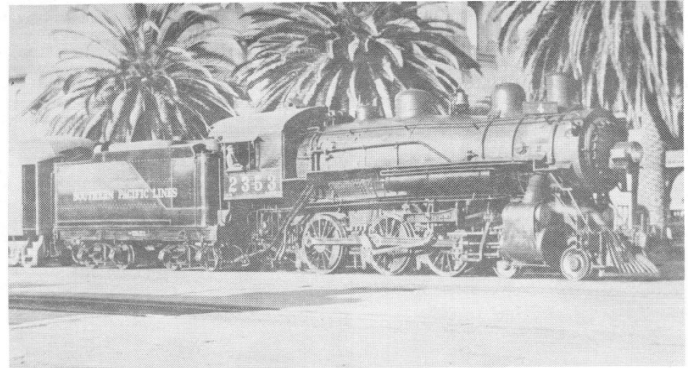
Happy reading and Merry Christmas to you and your friends!



Looking Back - Museum History by Decades:

1984

- * SP #2353 and a Harriman coach from Imperial Valley were donated to our museum.
- * MRS-1 Locomotive (SD&A) #1809 was started which became our power for excursion trains in 1986.
- * RS-2 (ATSF #2098) and SP #1351 bay-window caboose were delivered to La Mesa by rail.
- * Eagle Mountain caboose (Kaiser Steel #1905) was trucked to Campo.



2004

- * A donation of \$210,400 was received! This allowed the museum to pay off all debts and add electricity to the Exhibit Hall.
- * ALCo locomotive RS-32 (SP # 7304) acquired.
- * A wildfire in Mexico came over the hill at Division and burnt tunnel #4 portal and trestle.



Membership Meeting News

November's guest speaker was Dr. Sandra Bonura speaking on "Mister San Diego", John D. Spreckels. The meeting was well attended both in person in La Mesa as well as on Zoom. Mr. Spreckels was involved in almost everything in San Diego in the early 1900's until his passing in 1926.

The next meeting has been set for February 28th at 7:00 p.m. in the La Mesa Police Community Room. Our speaker will be Jim Price talking about his adventures of restoring his own caboose located in Nevada.

Be sure to save the date for this interesting case study of all that is involved in the efforts of saving history.

See you February 28th.

Dave Tomeraasen caught Jim Lundquist maintaining the trees on a beautiful Fall day in Campo. It was a weekday on November 21st, but that didn't stop Dave and Alex Flori from working in the giftshop. Nor did it stop Jim and Kerry Hebert from working on the property. It is sad when a tree dies, but, it needed to be removed.



Down at the La Mesa Depot by Timothy Miller, Station Agent

November has been full of surprises. On the first Tuesday in November after parking on Nebo Drive, I noticed a shopping cart displayed around the stack of Mojave Northern #3! It needed to be removed. With my recent history of being on top of a steam locomotive, I had not yet ventured on to this territory. The shopping cart was safely removed. Since I had not previously inspected the top of #3's boiler I started checking things out. The sand dome has no lid, so a weatherproof cover will need to be created. The water tank lid was securely bolted down. The steam dome is also open at the connection where the safeties and whistle were threaded in. The cover on the oil tank was not bolted down and could be opened. Looking inside I was surprised to see someone had taken up residence inside! What appeared to be bedding, and all manner of trash was visible inside. Plans are underway to clean up the mess and secure the oil tank so there are no repeat occurrences.

For the rest of November, Christmas decorations have been the focus. Hopefully you will be able to drop by and see our display for the community.





Both the old and new Santa Fe Depots in San Diego are shown in this photo of San Diego in the 1910's.