



A publication for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum members

Campo Railroad Museum **January 2026** La Mesa Depot Museum

CELEBRATING OUR 40TH YEAR - CAMPO RAILROAD MUSEUM



January 4, 1986. Our first demonstration train departs the Campo Railroad Museum for Miller Creek on the San Diego & Arizona Railway. Volunteers (left to right) Dave DiGiorgio, Renee Scheuerman, Dave Slater, Geoff Scheuerman, Jim Lundquist and Dick Ruppert were the train crew on that historic day.

Photo by Ken Helm 1/6/1986



**Pacific Southwest Railway Museum
Association, Inc. WWW.PSRM.ORG
619-465-PSRM (7776)**

Campo Railroad Museum

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: Cass Witkowski
Treasurer: Carl Brooker
Secretary: Duke Schweikert
Equipment Dept: vacant
Facilities Dept: Frank E. Denison IV
Museum Services Dept: Jim Lundquist
Operations Dept: Colin Atwood

Museum Staff

Archivist: Bruce Semelsberger
Asst Dir. Of Facilities: Jim Lundquist
Fundraising: Donna Spevack
Gift Shop Manager: Sarah Fullum
Asst Gift Shop Manager: Roark Stump
Hot Scoop Editor: Jim Lundquist
Membership: Lena Ibarra
Social Media Manager: Jason Drenkow
Station Master (La Mesa): Timothy Miller
Volunteer Coordinator: Jenn Brooker
Acting Equipment Dir: Stephen Hager



Special Events:

January 10 - Special celebration for 40th year anniversary at Campo

February 14 - Wine Trains at 12:00 and 3:00 P.M.

February 27 - Membership meeting - 1875 Gun Fight in Campo

March 21 - Volunteer Appreciation Dinner train at 5:30 P.M.

March 28, 29, April 4 & 5 - Easter Bunny Trains

April 19 - Wine Trains at 12:00 P.M. and 3:00 P.M.

April 23 - Annual Dinner

Regular Schedule:

At Campo Railroad Museum:

Saturday & Sunday - Golden State train rides at 10:30 A.M., 1:00 P.M. & 2:30 P.M.

Saturdays and Sundays - volunteer work days.

Wednesdays and Saturdays - Library open from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Call Bruce Semelsberger at 619-264-7282 for an appointment

La Mesa Depot Open:

Tuesday & Thursday Noon - 3 p.m.

Volunteers are at both locations during the week as well.

For more information, please email: volunteer@psrm.org

Effort to Establish an Operating Railroad Museum Started in the Late 1950's



**SAN DIEGO & ARIZONA RAILWAY
IN BUSINESS!!**

35 YEAR PASSENGER SERVICE DROUGHT ENDS!

By Jim Lundquist, former President and current Director of Museum Services.

When the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway ran its last passenger train in 1951 from San Diego to El Centro, Eric Sanders purchased a ticket from San Diego to San Ysidro and rode the train south, with a return trip via city buses. He could see that history was being made and felt the need to preserve it. Eric started talking amongst other railfan friends about the idea of creating an operating railroad museum where visitors could experience old time train rides while actually riding on the train. In 1961, the group organized the museum, adopted the name Pacific Southwest Railway Museum and incorporated in 1963. From this humble beginning, our museum was created.

Twenty-two years later, that dream became a reality when we opened our gates to the public and offered our first demonstration passenger train on January 4, 1986. There were a few steps between dream and reality. As we celebrate our 40th year in Campo, I'll briefly review a few of those steps. Please recognize that condensing 35 years into a few pages involving over 100 museum members and many thousands of volunteers' hours do not do justice for the effort many put forth to make this dream a reality. The strength of our museum has always been our dedicated volunteers, which remains true today. I cannot over emphasize this fact. We owe a huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who made this possible with their donations of time, talents and financial support.



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

From 1963 until 1980, our museum looked for a place to call home. We recognized that we needed to be adjacent to an active railroad to allow us to acquire and move railroad artifacts to the museum. We also needed enough land to accommodate large railroad equipment, and to construct or operate upon tracks. Over the years, several places looked promising, but for one reason or other, didn't work out. Otay River was one that looked like a sure thing that didn't pan out. We started acquiring various historic equipment, which was stored in many locations: Perris, Poway, NAS Miramar, USMC San Diego, Del Mar, Embarcadero and La Mesa. We were an active group, restoring three railroad cars and running them behind Amtrak trains to Los Angeles and Las Vegas. We had two pieces of equipment on display with active docents onboard at the Embarcadero in downtown San Diego. We purchased and moved back to its original location, restored and staffed the La Mesa Depot. We restored locomotives and ran trains at NAS Miramar. We offered train trips throughout Mexico, including the famous Puerto Peñasco and Copper Canyon as destinations. But still, we had no home.

In 1979, I decided to run as President with the express pledge to find us a permanent home for our museum. Given the constraints we had to work with, these sites were identified as possible homes by were ultimately rejected:

Along the Escondido branch line from Oceanside to Escondido. This was rejected because we felt the land would be too expensive and that there was a good possibility that transit trains would use the track. (Turned out to be true - Sprinter.)

On the old right-of-way of the Santa Fe in Rose Canyon. This was rejected because we felt the land would be too expensive and that the neighbors would not appreciate our collection of restored and unrestored equipment in their view.

The La Mesa Quarry between Lemon Grove and La Mesa. This was rejected because we felt the land was too small to hold our museum and that there was a good possibility that transit trains would use the track. (Turned out to be true - Orange line Trolley.)

The City of Imperial Beach maintenance yard. This

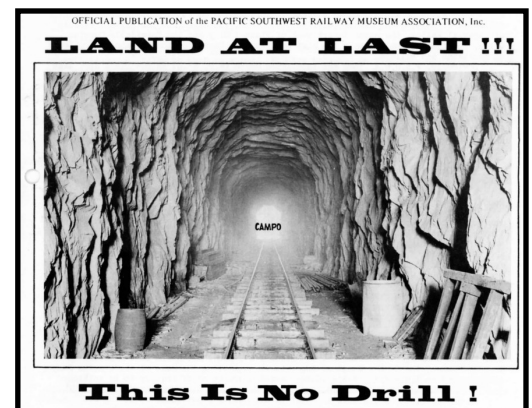
was rejected because we felt the land would be small to hold our museum and the salt water at the bottom of San Diego Bay would be corrosive to our equipment.

There were two more sites which we felt could work out for us:

Along the border in Jacumba Hot Springs. This was a real possibility as the SD&AE Railway could someday become available. It would require some type of bridge across the drainage channel, plus the fact that Jacumba Hot Springs gets really hot in the summer.

Along the tracks in the Campo Valley. This was a real possibility as the SD&AE Railway could someday become available. At this same time, I learned that the former gym building and surrounding almost four acres was to be sold by the County. An inspection told us that this was the place we needed to be. The County's Second District Supervisor was a real backer of this. My meeting with the Campo Kiwanis Club brought solid support to us moving there.

I focused in on Campo. The County agreed to a public auction of the site, with the requirement that a public benefit company which would be open to the public would only be allowed to bid. The museum's board authorized me to bid up to \$30,000, with a starting offer of \$22,500. It turns out we were the only bidders! Please recognize that our entire annual budget of the museum was less than \$10,000. This represented a huge leap of faith on our part. The County accepted a payment option over ten years for us. But wait! The site plan for using the property required that we acquire the four acres to the north to make it work! Turns out the land owner, Archie Leach, also supported our museum development, and we went further in debt for an additional \$40,000 to purchase the property we had to have.



With property in hand, the real work started. The lot was far from level. Member Joel Cloud brought out his large bulldozer and a paddlewheel loader for moving dirt. Dan Robirds manned the fire hose for two weeks, and soon the site was graded. Meanwhile, we started renovating the former gym building for our shop needs. After I made the last basket, I went up into the rafters and unbolted the backboard. The hardwood floor was removed, and restrooms and shower were installed.

While this work was ongoing, the San Diego Trolley was under construction. As part of that job, the original 60 lbs./yard track was replaced with 75 lbs./yard on the Coronado branch line. The old rail was lying in the dirt, along with joint bars and tie plates. At this time, I was working for the San Diego Trolley and borrowed their hyrail crane truck. After work, I would drive down the tracks, picking up the rails, loading them onto carts supplied by Wally Barber and took them to E Street in Chula Vista. This went on for a couple of months. Also, during this time, as the mainline of the SD&AE was being rebuilt for Trolley operations, the used ties were stacked up near the Sweetwater River in National City. Member Vern Cook arranged for his crews at SDG&E to transport the rails, material and ties to Campo – all at no charge.

After the grading was completed, I approached the freight operator for a switch to connect our property to the SD&AE in Campo. They required persuasion from the owner to allow this to happen, after which they installed a new switch off the House track at Campo. There was the matter of a drainage ditch to cross to make the connection, which involved a steel pipe, rebar cage and lots of concrete.

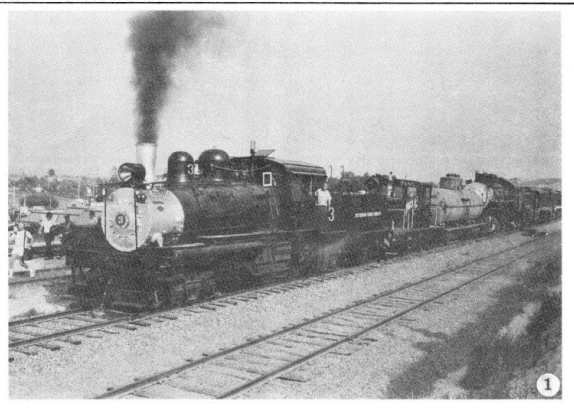
It was time to lay our first track. On that first weekend, my coworker from the Trolley, a professional track worker, came out to Campo. With about forty volunteers and his expert assistance, we laid over 800 feet of track on the first weekend. Now, we were ready to transport our equipment to Campo, but, alas, the line was washed out in Tijuana. It would be several more years before we finally moved out to Campo. That effort, called the “Great Freight” is a story all to itself. Read all about it here: http://sdrm.info/history/reports/REPORT_NO187_JULAUG830001.PDF

We then went about acquiring and moving equipment to Campo. Track work continued in our yards. All the while, we kept our eye on an opportunity to run trains on the SD&AE. That opportunity came in 1985, when we approached the owner, MTDB (now MTS) for permission to run trains. They asked for additional information of how we would do that, what training, what insurance was available, etc. We were able to satisfy those requests, and they granted us permission! The dream was coming together. We started classes for crew members. We were removing weeds. Mike Reading, using a donated Hawthorne road grader, graded for a siding track at a location which has become known as Miller Creek. The summer of 1985 found volunteers laying two switches and 900 feet of track about eight miles east of Campo. We were ready.

On January 4, 1986, at 11:00 A.M., our first train left from our track one, we travelled west on the House track, ran around the train, stopped for a quick photo (front cover) and pulled it east to Miller Creek. There, we again ran around the train, went back west onto the House track and pushed the train back up track 1. That same trip was repeated again at 1:00 P.M. and 3:00 P.M.

The unbelievable dream that started 35 years earlier had become a reality. It took many volunteers working hard to make it happen, along with a bit of great fortune. The support of MTS and the Campo community has been unwavering. Now, 40 years later, we continue to live the dream. Thanks to our members’ support and hard working volunteers, we continue to operate trains almost every weekend of the year.

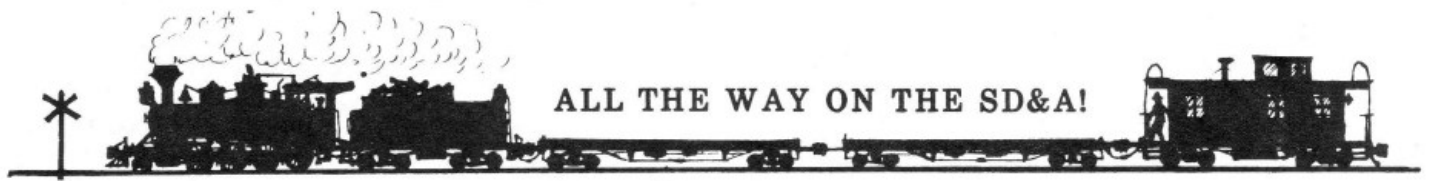
MUSEUM MOVES ITSELF TO NEW HOME



PSRM EXTRA 3 EAST !
800 MILES ON A MOUNTAIN RAILROAD !!

January 10, 2026 - Celebration Planned for our 40th Anniversary

Forty years ago in January, our Campo Railroad Museum was opened to the public. Volunteers ran our first train to Miller Creek and we haven't stopped since. Members are invited to join with us on January 10, 2026 at the Campo Railroad Museum as we celebrate the event onboard the AT&SF #1509 car as we travel over the San Diego & Arizona Railway to Canyon and back. We will be serving cake and non-alcohol drinks to our members. Train departures are scheduled for 10:30 A.M., 1:00 P.M. and 2:30 P.M.



Membership Meeting News

Our thanks to Russ Low on his presentation of his family members who participated in building the first trans-continental railroad. His book on the subject is available directly from him: rlow52@yahoo.com

Coming up on February 27th at 7 P.M. will be Byron Harrington talking about the great gun fight that happened in Campo in 1875. No reservations required. La Mesa Police Community Room.

Membership News

By Lena Ibarra, Membership Coordinator

Happy 2026! As we turn the page to a new year, I want to personally thank you for being part of PSRMA.

Welcome to our newest members:

Jenny Augh with a Supporting membership. Stephen Baker and Nelly Rojas with a Family membership. Nancy L Bernardi and Russell Schultz with Senior memberships.

The North Pole Limited: Another Year, Another Smashing Success!

By Jennifer Brooker, Special Events Coordinator

Each and every year, the volunteers at the Campo Railroad Museum work together to make our signature event, the North Pole Limited, even bigger and better than the year before. The 2025 season was no exception! From the newly refurbished common areas on the *Robert Peary*, to the addition of two extra ride opportunities on Sunday afternoons, and our new onsite coffee partner, Cowboy Coffee, there was something for new guests to experience and our repeat attendees to enjoy.

This year, over 5,773 passengers took a ride to the North Pole aboard the North Pole Limited, an increase

of 18% from last year's ridership (of over 4,881)! A special thank you goes to NPL Project Manager, Mark Landguth (as John D Spreckels), and his sidekick, Steven Sherman (as Joseph Jolly, III), for another successful year. And to the dozens of volunteers that dedicated countless hours to make the North Pole come to life, a heartfelt thank you for your service!

Did you know that ALL of our amazing special events are planned, organized, and executed by a team of dedicated volunteers? Want to join in on the fun? Email volunteer@psrm.org to learn more and get involved today!

Random 2025 North Pole Limited Photographs - Campo Railroad Museum



Our beautiful Campo Depot with new siding.



Conductor Dave Little.

Our biggest event of the year. With the most visitors and the largest impact on next year's budget. It's our North Pole Limited trains transporting happy families from Campo to the North Pole. There, Santa and Mrs. Claus board the train to entertain our visitors. What makes this all possible? Our dedicated volunteers. Here are just a few photos from our first night. **THANK YOU** volunteers! *Photos by Jim Lundquist 11/29/25*



Annie Field preparing meals for the volunteers who work thru the dinner hour.



Delivering the hot Chocolate to the train.



Left: Roark Stump greets our visitors and gives them their tickets.

Right: Bruce Semelsberger as “the Hobo” with Kerry Hebert.

Below: Renee Choy, Jenn Brooker and Sarah Fullum in the giftshop.





Above left: Mark Landguth as John D. Spreckels - the builder of the San Diego & Arizona Railway.

Above right: Pat Filicicchia and Glen Rogers brought the grandkids to enjoy the evening.

Below: Passengers onboard the train enjoying the evening. On the left, in the dining room of the *Robert Peary*. On the right, inside one of the *Classic Coach* cars. Santa is coming!





Above left: Jim Lundquist in the Robert Peary (Photo by Jenn Brooker)



Above right: Santa & Mrs. Claus with another happy family

Below left: Family and friends traveling together to the North Pole.

Below right: Joseph Jolly III (Steven Sherman) entertains the crowd inside the UP #576.





Upper left: "Hobo" Bruce Semelsberger with visitors at the campfire.

Upper right: Mr. and Mrs. Claus awaiting the train arrival at the North Pole

Lower: Morgan Snyder and Mike Acosta set up and take down the North Pole every night.



From the Back Platform

By Stephen Hager, President

Happy New Year! Another year is in the books and it's time to look back on some of our accomplishments in 2025. This past year, we inaugurated our Backcountry Wine Train. This was an achievement roughly two years in the making which started with our application to the State of California for an alcoholic beverage license in 2023. The Wine Trains have been well-received and we've scheduled them to operate on three dates in 2026. We're continuously evaluating the market and demand for these trains and we're keeping the door open to further scale them up if demand keeps pace.

In early 2025, the board of directors authorized the rebrand of our museum facility in Campo as the Campo Railroad Museum. The intention of the rebrand is to improve the location and name recognition of our museum facility. In case there's any lingering confusion about our various names that you may hear tossed around, here's a quick breakdown; the name of our nonprofit organization remains as Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association. The organization operates the La Mesa Depot Museum and the Campo Railroad Museum. We also own and operate the Southwest Railway Library, located at the Campo Railroad Museum. PSRMA maintains several additional fictitious business names which may be used from time to time such as San Diego & Arizona Railway.

In late spring and early summer, we completed an exterior restoration of the Campo Depot, thanks in part to a \$50,000 Neighborhood Reinvestment Program grant from the County of San Diego. Our contractor, Stutzman Siding, replaced the exterior cladding of the depot with Hardie Board fiber cement siding and boxed the building's eaves. The siding came pre-colored from the factory in the correct Southern Pacific common standard yellow and brown, closely matching the repaint of the La Mesa Depot that we completed in 2023. The new siding is expected to give us decades of low-maintenance service, a vast improvement over painted wood which struggles to survive more than a few years in the harsh sun and temperature swings in Campo.

Between January and September, we replaced the wheelsets on our baggage car, SD&A 6700, and on two

of our coaches; SD&A 253 and SD&A 254. Our third operating coach, SD&A 252, is scheduled to get its wheelsets changed in the first quarter of 2026. This was a project nearly a decade in the making. We've known for some time that the wheels on several of our regularly used passenger cars were nearing the ends of their useful service lives. The project started years ago with us establishing a restricted fund to purchase jacks for lifting railcars and locomotives. In 2018, we purchased four 35-ton electric screw jacks second hand from a railroad in Florida and had them trucked to Campo. This was followed in 2019 by the installation of an 18" thick concrete jacking pad under Track 11 in the Campo Yard and in 2020 by the installation of a covered storage building and power supply for the jacks. In 2023 and 2024, the jacks got their first true tests lifting passenger cars for maintenance. Also in 2024, we began searching in earnest for a supplier for new wheelsets for the baggage car and coaches. We eventually found a supplier in Pennsylvania who could supply both wheelset types. The wheelsets arrived in December 2024 and January 2025, and we've been busy at work installing them since then. This project has added decades of life to our passenger cars and has also been a great opportunity for new volunteers to learn railcar maintenance and restoration.

To close out, I'll report briefly on the 2025 North Pole Limited Trains. As I covered in my article last month, we increased our service offerings by 50% this year by adding two Sunday trains. While these figures are still preliminary, I'm happy to report that we carried approximately 5,770 riders over the course of four weekends and grossed just shy of \$290,000. This was our highest ridership and highest grossing NPL season on record going back 20 years! The income from this event will play a critical role in funding our ongoing restorations, facility upgrades, and interpretive programs in 2026. I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to all the volunteers who made this event and all of our events in 2025 a success. Here's to an even better 2026!

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!

BACKCOUNTRY *ValenWine* Train

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S ONLY
WINE TRAIN EXPERIENCE**



Join us for a special Valentine's Day edition of the Backcountry Wine Train! Bring a special someone or celebrate with friends as you indulge in a curated selection of 6 San Diego County wines, nibble on a charcuterie platter, and enjoy a decadent dessert, all aboard vintage train cars on this one-of-a-kind journey. 21 and over only.

Member's Only Presale Begins January 1.

Password: ValenWine

psrm.org/winetrain



A NOTE FROM FUNDRAISING — Donna Spevack (fundraising@psrm.org)

The year is shortly coming to an end and we'd like to thank all of you who have made 2025 special through your visits to the Campo Railroad Museum, memberships and donations. With your generous donations our volunteers were busy with upgrades and restorations. We thank you!

Special thanks to our donors for the month of December: YTD \$103,877.96

\$100-\$30,000

Maria E. Ibarra; Thomas E. Turk; Joseph Duff

\$1-\$99

Mike Palmer; Nancy L. Bernardi; Michael Cosgrove; Benjamin Smith; Russell Schultz; Reid Sasaki ; Stephen Baker; Jenny Augh; Nelly Rojas; Todd Moore; Rick Rowe

If I forgot to mention your name and you would like a tax receipt, please let me know.

SPECIAL KUDOS to our volunteers who have worked tirelessly or should I say until they were tired making everything perfect for our guests. NPL and Wine Train Volunteers-Thank you!

For **2026** the same donation options are available to our members and friends:

- ◆ Please go to our website at <https://www.psrn.org/donate/> you would like to support our efforts in maintaining railway history for future generations. Thank you so much for your donations, either monetary or volunteer time, even the smallest contribution makes a difference.

And of course, you can always make a difference by exploring our free or low-cost donation giving options:

Three free/low-cost and easy additional ways to donate are:

- ◆ **Free:** Volunteering your time is a great way to give back in 2026.
- ◆ **Free:** *Microsoft Rewards Points* can now be automatically donated to your favorite charity (PSRM) as part of a new initiative called, **"Give with Bing"**. The points that Microsoft Rewards users earn by searching the internet via Bing will be changed into money when it's donated to one of more than a million non-profits organizations. You can automatically donate your Microsoft Rewards points to charity, just designate the ***Pacific Southwest Railway Museum*** when registering, it's free, so keep browsing!
- ◆ There is also a **Matching Gift** option whereby many companies double (or even triple) your contribution. Find out if you work for, or are retired from a company that matches donations by visiting <https://www.matchinggifts.com/> or ask your Human Resources Department if your place of employment participates.

Thank you!

One New Board Member. Cass Witkowski ran unopposed and replaces Jenn Brooker as Vice-President for the term 2026-27. Colin Atwood ran unopposed and remains Director of Operations while Frank Denison also ran unopposed to remain Director of Facilities. There were no candidates for Treasurer and the Board appointed the current volunteer Treasurer Carl Brooker for another term.

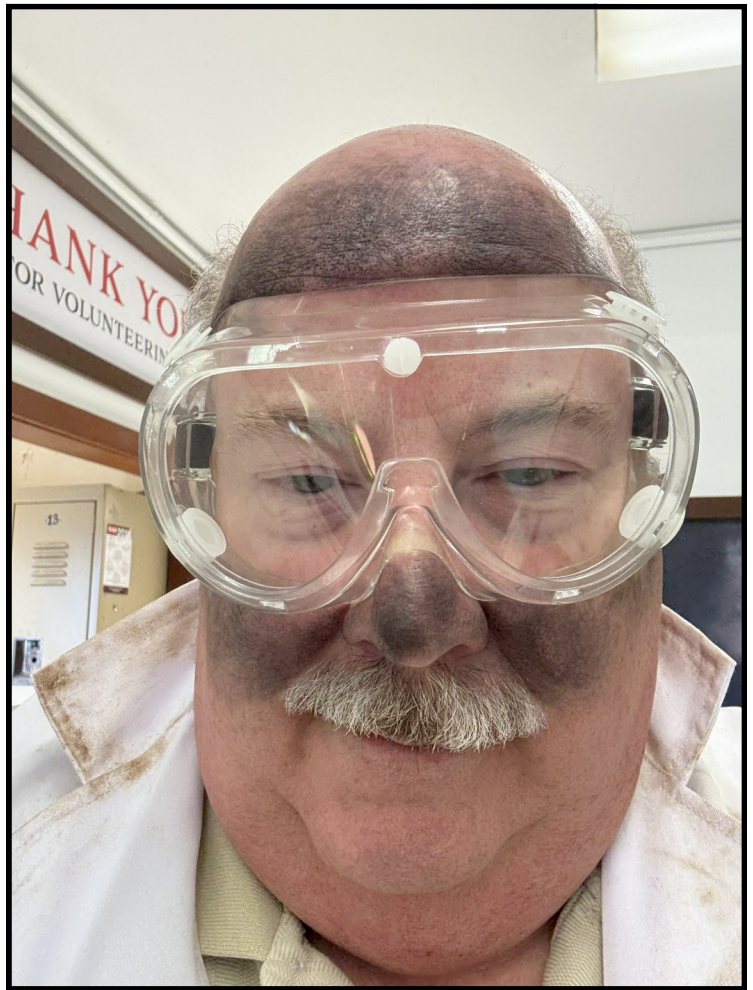
Meet Cass Witkowski. Cass writes:

My first experience with the railroad museum was many years ago when the Shay #3 and the Coos Bay #11 were on a little spur line next to Crosby Street under the Coronado bridge. It's now Cesar Chavez Parkway. It was late on New Years Eve, and they had the Shay fired up and were giving cab rides back and forth on the spur. I think I was nine years old at the time. This was my first experience with a life size locomotive, let alone a steam locomotive. It's hard to describe the experience. The heat from the boiler, the thumping of the air compressor, the whirl of the steam generator powering the lights, and the whistle sounding like a living creature. Several years later I got the chance to drive the Shay. To pull the throttle. It was only for a minute or so since the track was so short. I remember one of the members filming it. There is probably some Super8 film somewhere.

When I was 14 (1974), I went on the train ride down to Puerto Peñasco. This was the Museum's main fund raiser back then. I went by myself with 600+ other rail enthusiasts. I'm pretty sure I did this ride twice. Thinking back on it now, I don't know if I would let my 14-year-old son travel 150 miles south into Mexico alone. Times were different back then. I was working the roof of the 1509, chipping off the old roofing. It was on a siding at the Marine Corp Recruit Depot, in San Diego. [see Report #108 December 1974 page 2]

Over the years I would come out to Campo and ride the Golden State with friends and family. One time the train was being pulled by the 2353 on a cold weekend in May. At Miller Creek we warmed our hands from the heat of the 2353 as it passed by us on the siding.

A few years back I started volunteering more. I volunteered a few times in the gift shop during the North Pole Limited. I was on the Steam gang working on the



Coos Bay #11. Removing parts off the locomotive so we could gain access to the boiler to be able to measure its thickness to see if it would handle the 200 PSI pressure.

Lately, I've been working in the mechanical department keeping the rolling stock running. I've been on the MOW crew replacing worn-out ties on the track and making sure the gauge is correct. I'm also maintaining the Museum's current website and working on the new website that we plan to have operational in early January. Most recently my wife and I took the Responsible Beverage Server training so we could serve alcohol on the Sip-N-Scare and Wine Trains. My wife volunteers at the Southwest Railway Library at the Campo Railroad Museum.

Editor's Note: *I also started my museum experiences in 1969 running the Shay locomotive on the spur track along with fond memories of the Puerto Peñasco trips. Always happy to have long term volunteers stick with us through the years, and now serving on the board.*

New Video for the North Pole Limited

Member Joseph Davies spent the night filming our North Pole Limited train. He then pieced together a nice 2:45 minute video which allows our visitors to experience what to expect on the train and the various seating options available to them. The video can be found at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GGIFPAsSu9scnSZz7ZnY7fkeuH5f7Z-g/view> **THANK YOU JOSEPH.**

Photo on right: Joseph Davies is set up at the North Pole awaiting the arrival of the North Pole Limited on the dark and chilly evening on November 28, 2025. (Photo by Jim Lundquist)



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 24 North Pole Limited trains and the number of days they have volunteered through December 21: Colin Atwood 7, Alyssa Andersen 1, Jim Baker 3, Carl Brooker 3, Ken Brown 7, James Caestecker 2, David Choy 1, Greg Flores 8, Stephen Hager 5, Ryan Hodge 4, Randy Houk 3, Justin Hyland 1, Dave Little 6, Jim Lundquist 1, Mike McIntyre 3, Bob Nickles 3, Will Vanni 3.

MOW - maintenance of way volunteers who have assisted Roadmaster Glen Rogers and Track Foreman James Caestecker in maintaining tracks and right-of-way, specifically, a short notice repair of track defects

just prior to the last NPL weekend: EIC Tim Wamsley 1, Jim Lundquist 1, Geoff Patrick 1, Jaden Soroka 1.

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

Yard switching - these are the volunteers who have worked in PSRM yards this period doing switching: Ken Brown 1, David Choy 1, Stephen Hager 1, and Jim Lundquist 1.

David Choy and Bob Nickles also worked a day of switching in the previous period that did not get reported at that time.

There was a total of 70 volunteer-days in Operations this period.

Down at the La Mesa Depot

by Timothy Miller, Station Master

As the year comes to a close, I reflect on what an incredible year 2025 has been for the La Mesa Depot:

Southern Pacific caboose #1058 sports a new banner advertising the Back Country Wine Train.

The San Diego Fine Woodworkers Association has agreed to help build a new cab and replace other decayed items for the Mojave Northern #3.

A complete HO scale model railroad was donated

and installed in the baggage room.

A coal stove removed years ago from the Depot was returned and reinstalled in the waiting room area.

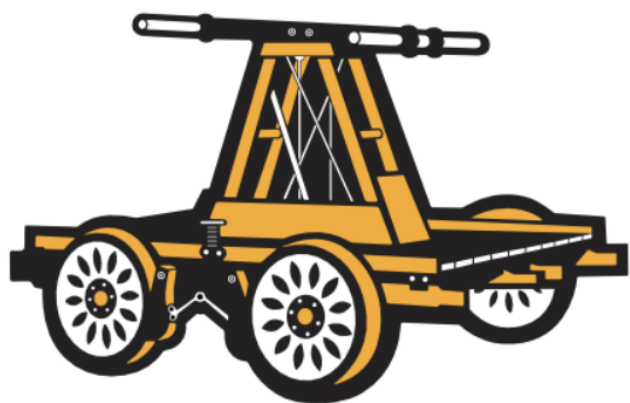
During the La Mesa Village Halloween celebration dozens of PSRM brochures were distributed to the public.

We have lost and gained volunteers over the year but always welcome anyone interested in helping out at the Depot. Please consider joining us, next year is shaping up to be memorable.

FIRST EVER OFFER – NAMING RIGHTS

As the final touches are being made on the double-wide trailer located west of the Campo Depot, we are offering a first for our museum. We are soliciting a donor to place their name on the building as a donation to the museum. The intended use of the building is to have a theater available to educate our visiting Boy Scout Troops, school groups and our own volunteers with videos on the history of railroading. Volunteers have been working months to completely refinish the outside and clean the inside. Dawn and Jim Lundquist found chairs this past month, travelled to east Hemet, transported them home and cleaned every chair. Meanwhile, Frank Denison and Jim water blasted and painted the building this past month.

Not including the value of the volunteer labor, we have invested around \$10-15,000 for new siding, doors, paint, chairs and television. The Board approved the solicitation of a donor to help offset these costs. We will recognize your donation with your name on the building. We have several names in consideration and will be able to work with you in selecting a proper name. If you are interested in making the donation, please contact Jim Lundquist at 619-417-7059 or Jim@psrm.org and let's discuss. THANK YOU.



SAN DIEGO
++++++
HANDCARS

Coming soon to the Campo Railroad Museum!

We have partnered with members to offer handcar and railbike trips from Campo to Division starting this Spring. This is an exciting opportunity for us to offer this to our visitors while also teaching them about handcars and their importance to the railroad maintenance history.

The next issue of the *Hot Scoop* will present additional details on the dates and where reservations can be made.



LIBRARY UPDATE by Bruce Semelsberger

We will be continuing our inventory of treasures next month, but for now we would like to review some of the events of 2025. We began the year with a large backlog of donated items in almost every category to process including eleven boxes of newspapers and clippings saved over a period of thirty years. We had in our archive areas a number of large wooden and metal objects which took up considerable space. We were using cataloguing software created over twenty-five years ago and there was no outside back-up for the data. An organized paper copy of all of the PSRM newsletters was in boxes but there was no index to aid in searching.

Each and every library staff member undertook to tackle some part of this using their own talents and a huge amount of time. Richard Finch took responsibility for researching ways to modernize the data system and all of us attended some seminars and began to try using product demonstrations. His persistence paid off as we made valuable contacts with other organizations with similar problems. We are now on the brink of choosing the cataloguing system we will be using for at least the next decade and purchasing the equipment needed. We have a new donation from museum member Robin Becker that will go a long way towards purchasing the new equipment and software and some potential grants that had been frozen are reopening according to Donna Spevack, PSRM grant writer. Richard has already made good strides forward using the equipment we have to enable remote access by the staff to a large portion of the records.

Mike Rella took on the task mid-year to inventory and scan all of the paper newsletters for PSRM and our predecessor, the Railway Historical Society of San Diego. This task is completed and those files should be available to all of our members when Cass Witkowski rolls out the newest version of the website in 2026. Eventually, additional photos will be added to go along with each newsletter as time permits. We need help from our senior members to identify as many of the people from those days as possible, then facial recognition may be able to assist us going forward.

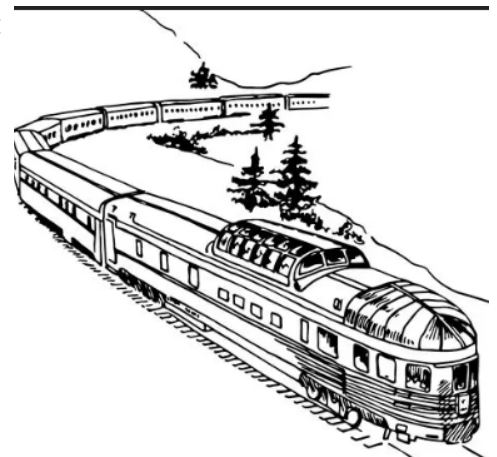
Mike and Bruce Semelsberger then took up the formidable task of sorting those eleven boxes of news clippings. Initially, we tried to identify and eliminate duplications while sorting the clippings into boxes of

broad categories; PSRM, SD&A, trolley, etc. Each of those boxes will then be gone through to further reduce duplicates and then organized chronologically. Step three is to scan all of the clippings into a total searchable database, after which all of the hard copies will be saved if possible. As of this date, ten of the eleven boxes have been processed in phase one with some help from Maureen and Pat.

This activity is taking place physically in the area vacated by the processing and accession of years of backlogged donations that Bruce spent much of the year accessing with Richard doing the photographing of the objects. The process of sending deeds of gift to be signed and returned by the donors is also completed. We hope that this can eventually be done digitally using the new software, saving the physical need of mailing an SASE to each donor.

In addition to all of this activity, the general upkeep of the facility and its contents needed to continue. With the aid of Jim Lundquist we purchased two new storage containers and weatherproofed the roofs so that the larger wooden and metal objects could be stored outside of the insulated and conditioned areas. We also relocated all of the model railroad track and buildings stored for a future exhibit into the area vacated by the donation and transportation of duplicate books and magazines to a fellow museum arranged by Jim Lundquist. Additional duplicate books that may be acquired are now offered for free to members and the visiting public on a bookshelf located in the Campo depot waiting room. Richard Finch found and donated two new (used) ergonomic office chairs to protect our aging staff backs while working at the computers. Lastly, we remodeled the photo processing area to be more accessible and added a shelf to hold the materials waiting to be processed.

If you haven't yet paid a visit to the library, please come out to Campo, take a tour and be sure to call on us at the library! Have a happy and productive new year!



Last Images of 2025 at our Campo Railroad Museum by Jenn Brooker



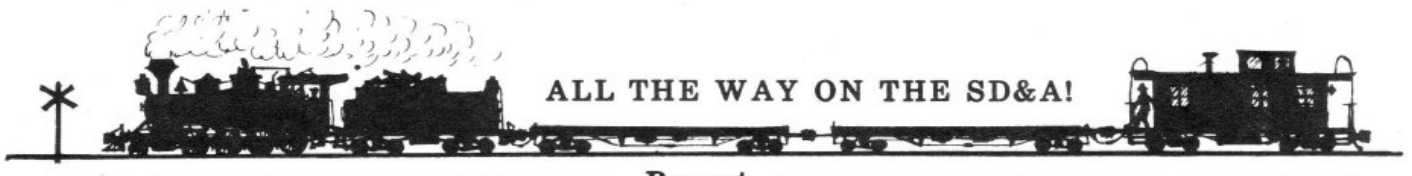
MEMBERS CELEBRATION DAY FOR OUR 40TH ANNIVERSITY

You are a valuable member of our museum. Please come out to the Campo Railroad Museum on Saturday, January 10, 2026 to help us celebrate our 40 years of being open and offering real train rides to the public.

We have reserved our AT&SF #1509 Café-Observation car just for members for our three trains we operate that day. Those departure times are 10:30 A.M., 1:00 P.M. and 2:30 P.M. No reservations – first come, first served. We will be serving cake and sodas to our members only. If there is space available, non-members may join us in the car with a coach ticket. That determination will be made by the Conductor moments before departure.



We are extremely grateful to our members and the hard-working volunteers who built and continue to keep making improvements to our museum. Join us to celebrate our efforts. See you there.



The Last Word by Jim Lundquist, Editor

A quick reflection as we celebrate our 40th year of being open to the public at the Campo Railroad Museum. Our museum is here today because of our volunteers. No other reason. We took an old gym and a weedy patch of land and turned it into a terrific museum. Yes, I am proud of our accomplishments, and, as a member, you should be also. Let me invite you to participate in your museum. Each month, we offer opportunities to you to become an active member. While every department could use additional assistance, there are three openings I would like to highlight for your consideration:

* There is a board level position currently open as Director of Equipment. This is a hands-on position with the responsibility of organizing the volunteers to keep all of our railroad and support equipment operating. This large responsibility is currently filled by our President, Stephen Hager, who could use help in this department.

* We have a need for a docent to open the La Mesa Depot additional times. Specifically, we would like it open on Saturday's at a minimum in addition to the Tuesday and Thursday we already have covered. Timothy Miller will train you in opening,, closing and speaking to our visitors who stop by.

* We have a need for someone who can stay at home, working on a computer, to organize our listing of equipment, which includes history and facts. Over 95% of the information is already available, it just needs to be formatted and presented in a uniform way. Jim Lundquist will work with you to get this project moving forward.

There are many more volunteer needs, but these three give you a variety of options: large responsibilities and time commitments in Campo, working in town with our visitors in La Mesa and working separately at home. If you are interested in any of these, please contact me at 619-417-7059 to get you started. **Thank you.**