

Hot



Scoop

HotScoop Shovel Logo by Larry Rose

A publication dedicated to the volunteers of the San Diego Railroad Museum

December 1998

MUSEUM NEWS

VOL X NO XII

>>>Volunteer of the Month<<<

The VoM for November is Paul Lannen. We recognize Paul for his dedication and his generous help to Chris Ward for materials that he needs to manufacture specialized tools for #2353.

Congratulations, Paul, and our best wishes to you! The VoM will be selected at the combined Operations-Services meetings with input from the superintendents.

>>>Holiday Wishes<<< Pat Blackmore

My best wishes to everyone and their families for the Holiday Season. The next year looks to be one of our best; let's continue the teamwork and watch the magic happen!

Thanks to all who attended our Christmas party at the office! We had a wonderful response from the volunteers for our adopted family. The mother with 2 children picked up their gifts the next day and she cried from joy.

>>>Mountain Empire Community Train<<< Roger Challberg

December 12, 1998

Over 200 residents of the Inland Empire joined the crew of the second annual Community Train to travel to Miller Creek along with Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus. Also nicknamed the "Cookie Potluck" after the "admission" of a plate of cookies. The tables of the baggage car were overloaded with delicious cookies and treats for all to share. Santa and his beautiful bride toured the train as locals greeted them with songs and smiles. The gleam in the eyes of the children made all the effort worthwhile.

To all the individuals who made this special trip possible the community wishes to express its appreciation. To name each and every person that gave above and beyond the call of duty would entail a list quite long. Some of the important tasks that needed to be done included wiring the cars so lights were available, getting the extra crew members needed, providing entertainment before and during the trip, making sure there was coffee, hot chocolate, & cider, cleaning the cars after the trip, and of course setting up the train for the Sunday runs. Extra help from the Kiwanis Key Club of the local high school was important to the success of the event.

Already we have offers of help for the third train in December of 1999. We have some musical talent that we are looking forward to seeing on the train next year and we are sure there are others who will want to join us with their Thespian or musical skills.

>>>Campo News<<< Lew Wolfgang

Mike Reneau Steps Down

Operations Superintendent Mike Reneau has tendered his resignation effective January 1999. Mike has been the Ops Sup since 1990 and has contributed countless hours to our organization. He has been at Campo almost every weekend since I joined the organization in 1989 and has attended countless meetings over the years. I can't think of anyone who has dedicated more to the Museum than Mike Reneau.

Mike indicates that he will still be volunteering, but he wants to stay away from the crucible that the office of Ops Sup can become.

Mike, I want to thank you personally for your many years of dedicated service and I'm sure that I will be joined by a chorus of your many friends at Campo.

Ross Bryan has agreed to serve as Operations Superintendent on an interim basis until a permanent replacement can be found. Let's all give Ross our vote of confidence and give him a hand in getting started.

SATURDAY MILLER CREEK TRAINS CANCELLED Mike Retz

Starting with the New Year, there will no longer be scheduled Miller Creek trains on Saturday. This decision was agonized over for several months, since we started running to Tecate every week. But it became obvious that we did not have the number of volunteer crews to continue both, and the Tecate train has proven very popular with tourists. Volunteers were asked to crew more often than they really wanted to for the last few months, but this could not continue indefinitely. Hopefully, in the future, new volunteers will discover how much fun we are having at Campo and join our crew ranks. At that time, Miller Creek on Saturday may be run again. This change in scheduling will not affect the steam weekends. We still plan to run 2353 to Miller Creek on both Saturday and Sunday. Steam weekends will be treated as a special event and advertised as such.

Drug Testing

The Museum has received notice that it will have to institute random drug testing of all volunteers subject to the Hours of Service law. Engineers, Conductors, Brakemen and Dispatchers will be subject to this requirement. The organizational policy is being developed at this time and should be ready for publishing in the January HotScoop. The law requires a thirty-day notification period after the policy statement is published, thus it is anticipated that the tests will commence in February, 1999.

An outside testing service will be contracted to administer the program to preserve the privacy and rights of our volunteers.

This requirement is being imposed by Federal Law (DOT) and the Museum doesn't have any choice in the matter. It is hoped that everyone will support the program in the spirit of increased safety for our passengers and volunteers.

A personal note from Lew Wolfgang

Since I joined the Museum in August of 1989, some common refrains heard 'round the Campo coffeepot were "We Need More Passengers", and "We Need to Advertise". Everyone knew that unless we could increase our passenger volume we would never be able to fund our restoration and interpretive goals.

Well, after 10 years of wondering what to do we finally have what we've been asking for. Under the new office administration we have an ambitious advertising program and an increased excursion schedule. Passenger counts and revenue are up.

Alas, our volunteer requirements have also gone up to meet the ambitious goals we have set for ourselves. This volunteer shortage is the reason why we are forced to discontinue Saturday Miller Creek trips. Trust me, no one is happy about having to do this, but we are forced into the position of having to do something. If we cancel the Tecate trips, we are back into the doldrums we have been stuck in for the past thirteen years. If we had an infusion of new volunteers, it would still take significant time to train them to operate our excursions. If our existing volunteers increase their commitments we risk burning them out and losing them permanently. If we hire people to replace the volunteers we also risk losing our dedicated folk and would adversely affect the tone of our Museum. Bottom line is that we need people to run our trains, people that we don't currently have.

As I see it, our only salvation will be to increase our volunteer base over a period of time to a point where we can resume Saturday Miller Creek Trips. Maybe we will be able to attract new volunteers if we get caught up with our cosmetic equipment maintenance and we can take pride in our operation again.

I hope you will all continue to support the Museum and work for the day when we will be able to safely increase our operating schedule and resume Saturday Miller Creek runs.

Thanks for listening to me.

Lew Wolfgang

Baggage Car Cabinet

Mike Retz has installed a new cabinet in the baggage car to contain all those little things that we all hold so dear, like toilet paper, hand wipes, excursion brochures, car numbers, membership applications and such. A key has been added to the Conductor's Key Ring and more will be added to the key locker when additional duplicates are made. Thanks for the extra effort, Mike!

Electric Lights

A start has been made on wiring up the Lackawanna and Observation Cars for AC power, fed from the Baggage Car generator. This is a work in progress; so far three Lackawannas, 1509 and the Perry have connectors installed. Please note that this is the first pass at the problem and that the car-to-car jumpers will get better in the future. For now, please remember to remove the connections before uncoupling the equipped cars. If you don't the cable will pull out of the connector and you will have to report to operations that you were a dunderhead.

The eventual goal of this project will be to install interior lighting in all excursion cars, with duplex AC power jacks inside all the coaches, including the Observation cars, to facilitate cleaning. Another goal includes mounting floodlights on each end of the Lackawanna cars to enable nighttime boarding in unlit areas.

If anyone wants to help with this project, please give me a call at 553-3106.

>>>FROM THE TRAINING OFFICER<<< *Jim Baker*

NEW CERTIFICATIONS

The Qualification Board recently certified Steve November as a Brakeman.
Congratulations, Steve!

ANNUAL TESTING

All certified crewmembers are required to take an Annual Rule Review Class and written exam. These are required by our submission to the FRA. For 1999, these classes will be given at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 3902 Kenwood Dr, Spring Valley, on the following dates: Jan. 5, 11, 20, and 25. Starting time is 7 PM, except for the 20th, which will start at 7:30. All classes will last for about 2 hours. The Jan. 5 Class will be held in the Ward Education Center; the other sessions will be held in Williams Hall at the Church. The church is located near the intersection of Hwys 94 and 125. Exit onto Campo Rd., at the 94/125 merge, go east on Campo Rd. one block, turn right onto Kenwood; follow Kenwood up the hill to the church entrance, which will be on your right. (Do not take the Kenwood Dr. exit off of Hwy 94 in Casa de Oro; this is the opposite end of Kenwood from the church.) Bear left in the parking lot, Williams Hall will be on your right; Ward Center will be at the far end of the parking lot, on your left. For those who are interested, I MAY be able to arrange a viewing of the newly restored 1920's theater pipe organ.

Classes will also be given at Campo on Jan. 15, 16, 29, & 30; Friday nights at 7:30, Saturday mornings at 9 in the crew lounge in the car barn.

Since the Training Officer doesn't want to waste too much time if nobody is going to go to a particular session, he will wait for 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time. If nobody shows up by then, he will consider the class canceled, and leave.

You must attend one of the classes listed above, then attend a second session to take the written test. You must score a minimum of 80% to pass the test. One repeat of the test is allowed. If you don't take the test at one of the sessions listed above, you must make arrangements with the training officer to take the test. All testing must be completed by the end of Feb.; persons not passing the test by that date cannot run in a certified position until they pass the test.

>>>BACKCOUNTRY BACKGROUND<<< *Mike Retz*

How often, as a trainman, were you asked about the large "bird bath" on the hill north of our Miller Creek train? Too many times to count. Recently, I read an article written by Vincent Bittle in the MOUNTAIN VIEWS that sheds a little light on the tower. With the approval of Joe Skrzypek, publisher, parts of that article follow.

The 60-foot microwave dish, located off La Posta Road, was used from 1968 to 1981 for testing satellite communications. Signals were sent from the La Posta tower to the moon, then bounced back to earth to a similar microwave tower located in Waldorf, Maryland. (It's also been reported that the signals were bounced off large aluminum-coated balloons placed into orbit.) It was also used for the Navy's Microwave Space Relay (MISER) Program and NASA's ATS-3 satellite for propagation measurements in the upper atmosphere. Later the facility was used by the University of California at San Diego, which erected hundreds of antennae stakes for communications testing. The Border Patrol took the site over in 1981 and used it sparingly till 1992. Unused for many years, the microwave station was extensively vandalized. Illegal immigrants camped at the site and teenagers used the site for skateboarding.

The US Navy SEALs have spent considerable time, effort and money upgrading the facility, removing toxic materials and complying with EPA environmental rules. They have added safety lights to the tower and perimeter, which are now visible at night. The SEALs, in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry, have re-established three large water holding tanks for emergency fire fighting. The SEALs have been using local contractors to improve the facilities and have opened the rifle range to local law enforcement groups.

Some of you may remember a fire that started at the site and burned down to and across the tracks one hot August weekend about three years ago. CDF was able to stop the fire at the Legacy Ranch, but not until it had burned many ties and ranch fence posts. Many ranch hands on horseback were kept busy that day - some keeping the cattle on the other side of the ranch and others replacing burned poles with steel posts and then re-attaching the barbed wire.

Undaunted by the smoldering ties and activity of the ranch hands and CDF, our noon train crept through the area and up to the run-around at Miller Creek. As it crept through the fire scene on its return leg, a bush alongside the track suddenly burst into flames. Seeing this, a woman in the car I happened to be in exclaimed, "Did anyone see Moses?!!" The tension of the moment was broken by laughter. I've told that story many times since and it always gets a chuckle from the riders.

>>>November 98 crossword puzzle solution<<<

Across	Down
1. Rail	2. Articulated
6. Pilot	3. Lap
7. Cupola	4. Glad
9. Crosshead	5. Sander
11. Car	7. Case
12. Flange	8. Variable
13. AAR	10. EMC
15. Truck	12. Frog
18. Broken	14. AR
20. Diesel	16. Rule
	17. Cab
	19. Nil

>>>January 99 Dates of Note<<<

4	Ops. Meeting
5	Rule review class, Spring Valley
9	Tecate
11	Rule review class, Spring Valley
15/16	Rule review class, Campo
16	Tecate
16	Dinner Train
19	School Days
20	Rule review class, Spring Valley
23	Tecate
25	Rule review class, Spring Valley
29/30	Rule review class, Campo
30	Tecate

>>>Article Submissions<<<

Please submit articles in pure text (.txt) or MS Word (.doc) format. Please don't send typewritten pages, since retyping may be required. E-mail to hotscoop@train.sdrm.org is preferred, but floppy disks are OK.

>>>PHONE NUMBERS and e-mail<<<

SDRM ADMINISTRATION

@train.sdrm.org

Museum Phone (La Mesa Depot).....	697-7762	
Business Office, Pat Blackmore.....	595-3030	office
Business Office Fax.....	595-3034	
HotScoop Editor, Randy Houk.....	672-0111	hotscoop
La Mesa Depot.....	465-8444	
Campo Depot.....	478-9937	
Campo Car Shop.....	478-9451	
Campo Caretaker, Thomas Lee Braginton..	478-9344	

DEPARTMENT HEADS

@train.sdrm.org

Facilities, Thomas Lee Braginton.....	478-9344	
Director of Museum Services, Rich Borstadt..	294-9321	borstadt
Research, Bruce Semelsberger.....	264-7282	
Director Railroad Ops, Denby Jones.....	279-2419	jones
Deputy Railroad Ops, Lew Wolfgang.....	H-662-1963	wolfgang
Chief Trainman, Mike Retz.....	466-8808	retz
Safety Officer, Lew Wolfgang.....	H-662-1963	wolfgang
Library, Roy Pickering.....	462-3392	pickering
Operations, Ross Bryan.....	478-9451	
Operations Assistant, Jack O'Lexey.....	274-4449	olexey
Restoration, Ted Kornweibel.....	461-0098	kornweibel
Steam, Bob Miles.....	280-8529	bob
Training, Jim Baker.....	670-7441	baker
RoadMaster, Allan Dillane.....	582-4264	dillane

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Please send address changes to:

San Diego Railroad Museum
C/O Santa Fe Depot
1050 Kettner Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92101

SDRM TIMECARD

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