



# SPCRR's Hotbox

Monthly

activities and work events

The Railroad Museum  
at  
Ardenwood

**June 2014 Edition.** *Hotbox* is a monthly bulletin of The Railroad Museum at Ardenwood, designed to update members and the general public about **activities, work events, and volunteer opportunities** at the museum. Questions or comments can be directed to Bruce MacGregor, editor, at [bruce.macgregor@comcast.net](mailto:bruce.macgregor@comcast.net)

The Museum's mission is the preservation, restoration and interpretation of regional narrow gauge railroad history, including Carter Brothers, a pioneer railroad car builder of California. The Museum is operated by SPCRR, a non-profit, 501 (c)(3) corporation of the State of California.

The Railroad Museum at Ardenwood is located at Ardenwood Historic Farm, in Fremont, California.

If you'd like to get *Hotbox* by email, please let our editor know. You'll get it faster, and save the museum dollars!

## The Road to Rail Fair

*Since 2001, Rail Fair has been the signature event of The Railroad Museum at Ardenwood. The event has featured visiting historic steam locomotives, our own collection of operating 19th century California cars, and model and garden railway exhibitors. It takes a lot of work to put this event on, and as the summer goes forward, we'll highlight work days dedicated to making Rail Fair 2014 the best ever. Our General Manager, Barbara Culp, starts us down the road to Rail Fair with an update on this year's event:*

Hi to everyone! Just want to let you know that all of our regular exhibitors will return for Rail Fair this year, which is great!! The Wilmunders will also be back with the Antelope & Western Porter, so we will again have two steam locomotives as Gary and Tom will be here with the *Ann Marie*....yeh! We will be looking for help for train crews, station loading persons, hand Car operators, and the greeters table, Hobo game helpers, you name it, the more help the better we do the job. Please save some time for us on Labor Day Weekend, August 30, 31, and September 1, 2014, and we will keep you up to date on any exciting changes that may happen between now and then. and if you have time for work days beforehand let us know as there is track work and maintenance work to be done before Labor Day. More announcements Next Month!

Barbara Culp. General Manager    **Contact:** [general-manager@spcrr.org](mailto:general-manager@spcrr.org)

## ***Car Restoration.*** Randy Hees, Curator.

**what:** caboose 5591; work continues on car floor and interior car walls.

**when:** Saturday, June 14, 10 am-5 pm. (plus many thursday afternoons, 2-5 pm; check with Randy for thursday schedule)

**who:** Randy Hees, Curator. **Contact:** [randyhees@gmail.com](mailto:randyhees@gmail.com)

A generous donation from Bruce Sorel has resulted in new finish flooring material, delivered on Saturday, May 17.

We will be continuing to work on painting the interior and installing the finish floor, as well as repainting the end platforms and steps.

You may want to mark your calendars for our upcoming monthly Saturday work days; July 12th and August 9th...

We will be working many Thursday afternoons... The schedule of which days varies but generally about 2:00 until we get tired... sometime near 5:00... sometimes later... if not working on the caboose we are likely working on track or organizing the stuff in the Car Barn.



## ***Restoration Planning Workshop***

Our core activities are historic railroad restoration, and interpretation for the public. Historic restorations means, simply, museum quality- requiring that our restoration projects be done with historically accurate materials, tools and techniques. Interpretation means, simply, operating what we restore for the public. In short, we are a living history museum because we restore 19th century railroad equipment to both accurate historic appearance, and to full operation.

**On a July date (to be announced) we will have a restoration planning meeting.** It will be our chance to talk about any or all cars in the collection, what work is needed for each, likely costs (both money and labor) and how we should organize and prioritize our restoration efforts. There will be food provided (menu not yet identified).

The goal (which will likely take more than one meeting) is to create short and long term restoration plans, to be submitted to the board for approval.

Come advocate for your favorite car or project... watch the July *Hotbox* for a date, and plan to RSVP to Randy at [randyhees@gmail.com](mailto:randyhees@gmail.com).

Of course questions are welcome... We will be sending out a list of cars and work identified in advance, to all who want to participate.



*South Pacific Coast caboose 47, the car that began our museum's collection in 1978. This is just one of approximately 20 cars requiring planning, and prioritization, in a master restoration plan.*

## **Membership John Goldie, Volunteer Coordinator**

**WELCOME** new member Paul Gardner of Alameda CA. And a thank you to James Holmes for a upgrading to Life membership status.

The SPCRR currently has 65 Life Members and 16 Annual Members. Please check your renewal mailer as we have 20 Annual Members from 2013/2012 that we hope will still renew up. Annual dues remain at just \$20 per year and are tax deductible.

### **DONATIONS and MATCHING GRANTS**

Please check for matching grant support when making a donation. Many employers now support 501.C (3) organizations with matching grants to double the impact of your donations. The SPCRR usually classifies under the “Cultural” category. Some even “pay out” for hours worked also under “VIP - Volunteer Incentive Programs”. If you are a retiree, some companies also match the donations of their retirees as well. The SPCRR has received a grant from the Microsoft Foundation and the Texas Instruments Foundation this year. Matching grants are in addition to direct gifts and grants which are also being applied for on specific projects such as the NWP caboose restoration. THANKS - It all adds up!

## **Track. John Stutz.**

**what:** work continues on the Car Barn spur tracks

**when:** most Saturdays, May 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28, 9:30-4:30

**who:** John Stutz, Track Manager **Contact:** [john.stutz@spcrr.org](mailto:john.stutz@spcrr.org)

**details:** continue work on car barn storage switch and spur



## **President's Report. John Stutz.**

### **May 17 Rail Adventure**

The May 17 Rail Adventure Day was lightly attended, as was the Park, with only 346 one way rides. This was a considerable contrast with April when we carried over twice as many. We only once came close to filling both cars that were in service, and needed no extra trains. It was a pleasant day to be running trains, fairly warm in the morning and cooled by a moderate breeze in the afternoon. I actually found it a bit on the cool side for the last two round trips, which was unexpected. My thanks to Gene Arrillaga and Ken Underwood for conducting the train.

Randy Hees led a restoration day at the car barn, enhanced with a couple excellent crock pots of Randy's own Chile. Bruce MacGregor was down on a mixed family and rail trip, and coordinated with Randy on our funding proposal for the NPC caboose with the Fremont Candlelighters (stay tuned for the results in the July *Hotbox*). I am not sure who all was helping, as I only got over for lunch and after the park closed. I do know Woody Ballard was working on the caboose and Bruce Sorel was ballasting the Car Barn sidings switch. Randy had one special guest, Justin Freitas, who came by to examine the horse car which his grandfather once purchased for his Oakland car line.

### **May 24 Track Work**

We had Bruce Sorel, John Goldie, John Erdcamp, and I on the track, with Ken Underhill cleaning out tools and supplies from boxcar 10. Rails for the switch between the twin outside storage sidings going in west of the Car Barn have been completed through the frog. We still need to fire up the forge and stretch the tie and throw bars, which were made for smaller rail. Special thanks to John Goldie who arranged to use a friend's milling machine to open the jaws out to fit the heavier rail we are now using. On the 31'st we will be curving the tight lead rails between the switch frog and the straight tracks.

John Erdcamp located some magnetic base lamps that will prove very useful for lighting the work areas along the walls this winter.

### **Free Memorial Day:**

I would like to thank everyone who turned out to make the Memorial Day free park opening's train operations such a success. Alex was conducting and coordinating initially, and took over the locomotive for the latter runs. We had Ken Underwood, Jack Burgess and Jacob on the train most of the day, with help from Bob Dyke and John Goldie. I drove most of the day, then spelled John Erdcamp on the handcar. John Goldie and Andy Cary manned the Ardenwood platform and were quite effective in organizing the crowd and soliciting donations.

Those lines were comparable to what we see at Rail Fair, and all three flat cars were full on almost every trip. Total one way rides were approximately 2400.

Out at Deer Park siding, John Erdcamp, his wife Sharon and their friend Deann were giving handcar rides for most of the day, and collected \$76 in donations. Bob Hertz manned the store in boxcar 472, but sales were disappointing for such a large crowd. Incidentally, Bob is looking an assistant or two to help with store operations.

## **Horse replacement**

Red's death triggered something of a crisis, with much debate among the board and managers. Part of the problem is that our contractual relation with EBRPD has, over several decades, evolved from that of de facto partner to that of a mere concessionaire providing a service for pay. Part is that our contract with EBRPD has never taken into account the full costs, in money, manpower and supervision, of maintaining a horse drawn railroad operation. Part is that the SPCRR has never sat down and worked out what those full costs are, which go well beyond just horse care and feeding, to the entire life cycle of a draft draft horse, including the unique training for railroad operation. Part is that our horse facilities are going on 30 years of age, and need extensive repair, with concurrent costs in money and volunteer effort. Part is that over the last decade operations staffing shifted from largely volunteer to largely paid. Part is that over that same decade the board's attention has been very largely focused on getting the Car Barn financed, erected, and equipped to keep our more weather sensitive rolling stock out of the weather. Thus our restoration program had largely gone to the wayside, while our operation costs are exceeding our income. Which quite dismayed our new board members, and has sensitized our older ones, to ongoing problems that had grown too familiar.

Thus the debate: Can we maintain horse operations over the long term without bankrupting ourselves, either financially or in volunteer efforts, and simultaneously reinvigorate the railroad restoration program that was once the core element of our organization?

Understand that simply replacing Red is not the problem. Alex Oberg and Emily Nikzat have been very proactive in their search for a replacement, and have located what they think would be a very well trained draft horse, one that could simply step between the rails and walk off with our cars. The question is if we can afford to keep the horse operation up, in a situation where no one else, neither EBRPD nor several quite competent commercially oriented concessionaires have succeeded. And if we can keep horses in reasonable training and under reasonable physical conditions, especially over winter, unlike recent years. This last requires considerable, consistent and frequent attention from someone, who needs to be reasonably well paid.

The board will be meeting early in June to reopen these questions. Your input will be very welcome.