



SPCRR's Hotbox

Monthly

activities and work events

The Railroad Museum
at
Ardenwood

May 2015 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

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.

It's not that far away! Volunteers needed for Rail Fair and the Haunted Train

It isn't too soon to start thinking about volunteering for the annual Rail Fair on Labor Day Weekend, which is followed very shortly by the annual Haunted Train.

Rail Fair needs volunteers to prepare the railroad in the weeks before the event (cleaning trackside weeds and brush, track work, painting fences, tidying cars, etc.), setting up for the event, and volunteering at the event (train crews, crowd control, handcar rides, hands-on restoration, manning the store, and more). Rail Fair is held annually on Labor Day Weekend - this year the dates are September 5th, 6th, and 7th. Contact Barbara Culp at (510) 785-1343 or general-manager@spcrr.org for further information, and watch for the on-line sign up in future *Hotbox* editions.

The Haunted Train also needs volunteers to set up the ghost town and decorate the woods before the trains, ghosts, pirates and witches to haunt the woods, volunteer train crew, crowd control, ghost-protector sales, and nightly cleanup. After the event we need crews to put everything away. This year we are looking also for youth groups to help. Again, watch for the on-line sign up, with a link coming in *Hotbox*. The Haunted Train will run on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, October 16-18, and October 23-25.

Watch *Hotbox* for an announcement of a kick-off meeting in July or August. Contact Andrew Cary at (510) 794-8536 or hauntedtrain@spcrr.org if you are interested in helping out or know of a youth group who would be interested in volunteering. / Andrew Cary

Meet Berkley Tack

For twenty years, artisan and blacksmith Berkley Tack has manufactured replica railway parts for The Railroad Museum at Ardenwood. You've probably never met Berkley. He lives and works in Rainier, Oregon, west of Portland on the Columbia River. But his work is one of the reasons our museum is special.

Most of his work can be found in the grab irons, end railings and specialized fittings used on our rolling stock, for example, the beautifully tapered end railings on Combine 1010.

Berkley is one of the reasons our restorations are authentic. Berkley creates his iron masterpieces



using a forge, power trip hammers, and traditional blacksmith techniques exactly as the parts were created when our cars were originally built. Most recently he has begun work on iron parts for caboose 6101, under a grant from the Candlelighters of Fremont.

This work will include another set of beautifully-tapered end railings, as well as an extensive set of grab irons and ladders.

Membership

Membership Update! The annual membership renewal campaign is targeted for May. Annual Members - please watch your mailbox for our mailing - and thank you for your continued support! - John Goldie / membership@spcrr.org

Calendar Update - May and June

May

Sat. May 2, Work Day (nut house cleanup, track)

Sat. May 9, Work Day (car restoration work day)

Sat. May 16, Rail Adventure (train rides), NMRA/PCR Visit

Wed. May 20, EBRPD Volunteer Recognition Dinner

Dinner at Cull Canyon; for more information, contact
Barbara Culp, general-manager@spcrr.org

Sat. May 23, Work Day (subject, tbd)

Mon. May 25, Park Open House, Free Day (train rides)

Sat. May 30, Work Day (subject, tbd)

June

Sat. June 6, Work Day (track work day)

Sat. June 13, (car restoration work day)

Sun. June 14, Historic Hay Harvest (train rides)

Sat. June 20, Rail Adventure, (train rides)

Sat. June 27, Work Day (track work day)

Calendar contact: Ken Underhill

building-coordinator@spcrr.org

Common Passenger Questions – F.A.Q.

By Bobby & Jamie Goldie



Bobby and Jamie Goldie, handcar crew, Rail Fair 2014

When working on-board our public trains, it is common to get questions from the passengers about the railroad, the motive power, and also about the farm. Here are a few questions from the past operating season that are good to share with prospective crew members. Working on the operating crew is a great way to interact with the public, run the trains, and perhaps locate new members for the Railroad Museum at Ardenwood.

Q – When was the railroad (at Ardenwood Park) built?

A – The railroad was constructed in the early 1980s on the farm before it was opened to the public, as a park, in 1985. It recreates the nearby Centerville Branch that was horse-powered and ran three miles from Newark to Centerville (Fremont). This branch was operated from 1882 to 1909 as part of the South Pacific Coast Railroad (SPCRR) and later as part of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Q – Are these tracks original?

A – No, they were constructed in the 1980s on the farm, by our group's volun-

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teers. Portions of the South Pacific Coast are in service today. The line in front of the park, now part of the Union Pacific, was once narrow gauge and part of the South Pacific Coast Railroad. Roaring Camp also operates the SCBT&P Railway on the original SPCRR line between Felton and Santa Cruz. The SPCRR originally extended from Alameda (with ferries to San Francisco) to Santa Cruz.

Q – Who runs these trains?

A – We are “The Railroad Museum at Ardenwood,” a volunteer historical group with a focus on regional narrow gauge railroad history. We collect Carter Brothers and California narrow gauge equipment to restore and operate as well as to re-enact the SPCRR horse-drawn branch line operation for the public. Our group is known as the Society for the Preservation of Carter Railroad Resources and shares the same initials as our host railroad the South Pacific Coast Railroad (SPCRR).

Q – How many cars can the horse pull?

A – We normally pull a single car with a draft horse. Historical pictures typically show two- or three-car trains, and sometimes even a seven-car train with a three-horse hitch.

Q – What kind of horses do we operate?

A – Typically Belgian draft horses, which weigh in the neighborhood of 2000 pounds. Our current horse is Stella. She joined us last summer and is currently in training.

Q – When do you operate the trains?

A – Our normal operations are Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays from April to November. We also operate trains on select Saturdays and for special events. These multi-car trains use our gas locomotive. On Labor Day weekend, we typically have visiting steam locomotives pulling trains for the specific event. We also offer night operations in October for Haunted Train.

Q – What does the farm grow?

A – The farm is run by a separate operation, Joe Perry & Sons, which grows all organic crops. Depending on the season, passengers may see corn, broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes, or even pumpkins.

Q – What are the trees by Ardenwood station?

A – They are English Walnuts grafted onto Black Walnut trunks.

Q – Where can I find more information?

A – Check our website at www.sperr.com, or take an information packet (packets are typically available on the train).

A Message from The Mercantile

The Hunt for Railroadiana

Kathleen MacGregor

Check out this photo of what we found in two boxes in our garage last weekend. Lots of things to donate to The Rail Fair Mercantile! Bruce and I searched everywhere for the Thomas the Tank engine items last year, before we came down to Railfair, but couldn't find them. How does this happen? In our garage things appear, disappear and then reappear with frightening regularity. This time we're putting our donations in a special, non-disappearing box with a very large label.

Hope you are having some luck locating railroadiana items in your garage, closets and cupboards. Once you've found them, putting them in a non-disappearing box should definitely be your next step. Donation forms are included as an attachment in this issue of *Hotbox*. Alice Everts and I will be at the Car Barn on Saturday, June 20 from 10:00-1:00 to receive your donations. Contact Alice (afevarts@comcast.net) with any questions about this event or to make special arrangements for dropping off your donations.

Thanks to Andy and Ken who have already located items for us to sell, including back issues of the *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette*.

We're going back into the garage again this weekend. This time we'll be looking for duplicate prints of historic South Pacific Coast photos to donate. Did I mention that last weekend, in addition to the items in the photograph, we also found a drawer full of sweet little field mice? We won't be donating those. I think Bruce put them in a special, disappearing box./ macgregork@aol.com



In the boxes, we found the following:

- *one Thomas the Tank engine figurine, dated 1995
- *one Thomas the Tank engine, Brio
- *three decorative wrought iron finials
- *various HO die cast, vintage vehicles and locomotives
- *plastic *C.P. Huntington* model, 1/4" scale, Wen-Mac
- *Railroad hardware manufacturer sales models, including a bottle jack
- *historic railroad prints (copies)

Have You Been Working On the Railroad?

If you have, you might be in the market for a new denim work shirt. Here's a link to a Dickies work shirt for \$20.62: http://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B002ZIZMVW/ref=oh_aui_detail-page_o01_s01?ie=UTF8&psc=1

In addition to being good looking and inexpensive, this shirt comes in a wide variety of sizes. Shipping is free if your order comes to a total of \$35 or more. Unfortunately, this item is not eligible for an Amazon Smile donation to SPCRR.

Thanks to Paul Harr from Orange Empire Railway Museum for sharing his source for these shirts with Alice and me when we admired the one he was wearing at last year's Rail Fair.

The President's Box

Regarding April and near-term activities:

Operations have commenced, albeit without getting our draft horse Stella into service. Alex is looking for volunteers to help with training, which must be done outside of park open hours. This requires at least three people: someone on the brake wheel who knows how to stop the car quickly if Stella balks, someone on the car to handle the reins and provide standard voice commands, and someone Stella trusts to walk at her head and show her what to do. There has been some ongoing difficulty in getting all four together at a suitable time. Potential volunteers should contact Alex at alex.oberg@gmail.com . Our thanks to EVERYONE who comes out to help.

Saturday, April 11 was our first monthly Rail Adventure days, when we volunteers get a chance to run our train ourselves. This turned out to be a very busy day at the Park, and many of the visitors bought all day tickets. Luckily we had a good turnout of volunteers and we had enough crew to operate the larger train. However there was a complaint about the schedule. When the train was not at Deer Park at the time of the last scheduled departure, some people assumed they had missed the last train. The train had been running off-schedule to accommodate all of the waiting passengers as well as the Park's late closing. We will need to be better organized in the future.

Saturday April 18 was Tartan Day, and we ran a partially volunteer crew with three cars on a double schedule, making 14 round trips due to the park's late closing. Passenger loads were moderately heavy, mostly going out in the morning and back in the afternoon.

On April 25, we were able to turn our attention to restoration questions on the NWP/NPC caboose, with several people finishing up measurements of ironwork for the handrail and grab iron order going in to Berkley Tack, our blacksmith in Oregon (see page 2). This will be the first of several ironwork orders to be paid by the Candlelighter's grant. While earnest discussion centered on the caboose, several of us started on cleanup around our "Nuthouse" in the old fort corporation yard, beginning with a couple dozen cans of old paint that had been left out by the forklift years ago. Some still had liquid contents. We got some use out of the caboose's old plywood siding by using it as a surface to dry out the old paint.

Sunday, April 26 was the park's Sheep Shearing day. This being a regular operating day, Alex and his crew, using a few volunteers, ran a back-to-back service instead of the usual hourly Sunday service.

The Thursday afternoon crew has been active working around the Car Barn. Most recently they took the heavy old tarp that for years covered Combine 1010, split it

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Engine crew, Rail Fair, 2014

down the middle, and spread it where we will be laying track 5 this summer. With the edges weighted with ties, this should do a thorough job of cooking the grass before we begin to put ballast down. Andy has been doing quite a lot of mowing just east of the Car Barn, where the grass and weeds have been pushing 3 feet high. We had almost lost sight of a couple of rail piles and had to go in with a hand mower to locate them.

Anyone who wishes to turn out on Thursdays will probably find the fire road gate unlocked (opposite Siward Avenue), though it will be prudent to first check with Ken Underhill at 925 373-6884 about work activities going on that day. Alternately we have permission to use the north or south fence line roads when the Park is open, but are expected to keep clear of the park interior when the public is present, say up to 5:00 PM on all days but Monday.

On the restoration front, we are in the process of arranging for a very complete set of drawings to be made of the caboose as it currently exists, and as it will be restored. This is expected to cost about \$3,000, so donations will be very welcome. Caboose restoration will be delayed somewhat while this is in process, but we still need to get the siding off of the remaining side, so this is expected to be a focus of near-term work.

On the track laying front, we still need to do some leveling and tamping along track four before we can top off the ballast and get started on extending track five. There was a hang-up on supplies of ballast, our old source in San Jose being no longer interested in delivering so far north. That has now been dealt with and we have about 24 tons on hand, with plenty of ties for track 5, albeit mostly 9 footers. I hope to re-activate track laying as soon as the weather gets really hot.

We do have more cleanup to do in and around the "Nuthouse," which has been effectively dead storage for the last decade or two. It is now something of a treasure hunt, if you like odd chunks of iron and old paint./ John Stutz president@spcrr.org

We've Got Wiggle Track!

Look for it on the brand new SPCRR Wooden Railroad Layout at this year's Rail Fair, September 5-7. The Layout will provide a free, hands-on opportunity for children (suggested ages 3-7) to push a wooden engine from Alameda to Santa Cruz, the route of the original SPCRR. The wooden engines and rolling stock featured on the layout will also be for sale at The Rail Fair Mercantile. Wahoo!

Please consider signing up to help staff the SPCRR Wooden Railroad Layout. We will need two volunteers for each of two shifts each day, 9:30-1:00 and 1:00-4:30. The first volunteer will welcome children and their parents at the Alameda round house and start them on their trip down the track. Twenty feet later, the second volunteer will pass out stickers (which say "SPCRR Engineer") to children who have completed their trip by parking their engines in the Santa Cruz Round House. To maximize your fun, volunteer with a friend or family member. Children ages 12 and up are welcome to volunteer with an adult. Shade and chairs will be provided for volunteers. **(electronic sign-up will be available in July for all Rail Fair volunteer positions)**



Wiggle Track and Redwood Trees, ready for the SPCRR Wooden Train Layout