



# SPCRR's Hotbox

Monthly

activities and work events

The Railroad Museum  
at  
Ardenwood

**October, 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](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.



## The Magic of Rail Fair

It is the museum's signature event, and after 15 years of conjuring up the image of 19th century steam railroading, the event has not lost its magic touch with crowds. This year, the crowds number over 6500 people, filling Ardenwood Historic Farm over Labor Day weekend. This issue of *Hotbox* highlights what makes Rail Fair special, and invites us to see it through the eyes of others- including the children who may come back in another 15 or 20 years, and bring their own children.

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*Faces in the crowd: fans watch the Ann Marie pull into Ardenwood Station during Rail Fair*



# IT'S NOT ABANDONED- IT'S HAUNTED!

Every October the SPCRR's normally tranquil run through Ardenwood's North Woods changes. A ghost town appears among the Eucalyptus, giant spiders move in, a graveyard materializes along the track, and Jack-o-Lanterns pile up.

It's time once again for . . . The Haunted Railroad!

This is one of our major fund raising events of the year and it will only happen if we have lots of volunteers. The Haunted Train runs Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights on the last two weekends before Halloween (Oct.16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25).

We will haul 5 to 6 trains a night behind Katie—each car carrying up to 100 riders into the haunted North Woods of Ardenwood.

This event requires many hands to set up:

- Crew to operate trains, generators, and special effects
- Folks to sell tickets and Ghost Catchers
- Denizens to occupy the woods (talent is welcome but not required!)
- Crews to set up, take down, and store sets and props



The kick off workday is Saturday October 3rd with another on Monday Oct 12th to get the scenarios set up and the ghost town set erected. Meet at the Car Barn at 10:00 AM (or so) on both days, and bring gloves.

Signup sheets are available online on the SPCRR web site at <http://www.spcrr.org>, or you can email the event coordinator (Andrew Cary) at [Haunted-Train@spcrr.org](mailto:Haunted-Train@spcrr.org) or by phone at 510.794.8536.

Andrew Cary, Head Ghoul.

## Rail Fair Redux

I again would like to thank all of you who volunteered and helped with set up and take down for Rail Fair 2015... You are all fantastic!!! Without you we would not have been as successful as we were! I loved watching a lot of people laughing and having a great time; and the kids dancing to the calliope with their parents, riding the trains, playing with trains, and generally having a good time! It is always a rewarding feeling to see all the happiness that goes on at Rail Fair and it is a wonderful feeling to me. THANKS TO EVERYONE!!!

This year's totals of guests for all three days were Adults 3,245, Seniors 433, Child 1,274, and under 4 years 1,125. Including the 474 free passes (which includes all volunteers and exhibitors), the grand total was 6,551. Congratulations to all for a great show!!!

Barbara Culp, Rail Fair Coordinator and GM



## SPCRR Draft Horse Update

As reported in the August issue of the Hotbox, Will Snyder, a passionate draft horse owner and one of the proprietors of the Empire Horse and Carriage Company in Grass Valley, picked up Stella in late July and transported her to his ranch near Grass Valley. His goal was to determine what she could do in the way of pulling a wagon, getting along with other horses, etc.

Soon after she arrived, it became obvious that Stella had some behavioral problems. Will was ground-driving her when they encountered some gravel. She spooked and took off for her corral with Will barely hanging on. Also, Stella loved seeing the other horses but when she was put into the same pasture she got into a big kicking match. Will concluded that she was not usable or sellable as a driving horse without a lot of training.

Fortunately Emily Nikzat, who worked with Stella at Ardenwood after her arrival, received a Facebook inquiry in mid-September asking if she knew of anyone with a Belgian mare for sale. Emily put the woman in touch with Will and they concluded the deal a week ago after the woman visited Stella.

Stella's new owner wants to ride her, not use her as part of a team. Therefore, after a checkup by a veterinarian, Stella will be professionally trained until she is ready to go to her new home. Stella will then get to live her life on a 200-acre hay farm in Oregon with seven other horses and her own corral.



# Restoration

## Northwestern Pacific Caboose 6101



by Kevin Bunker, Interim Project Coordinator

Where are we now in this unique restoration project? In a very interesting spot! Since our last basic report, the 1968-made grooved plywood siding has been removed from the car body, and the interior has been braced to allow the old structural wood some relief. The plywood had been a strengthening agent as much as a cosmetic component. Once the plywood came off, a host of historic information came to light.

It needs to be said that when the caboose body—or what was left of it, heavily tattered and weather-worn—came to the hands of the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society in 1968, it was barely complete and wholly unsound after sitting outdoors at both Point Reyes Station and Samuel P. Taylor State Park (near Lagunitas) for 30-plus years. Bethlehem Shipyard in San Francisco was about to give this carcass a massive renewal as part of a larger contract the R&LHS let in order to get more than a dozen 19th century cars and locomotives in a more eye-pleasing condition. The Pacific Coast Chapter had big reasons for this: they were about to begin wooing the State of California, seeking to establish a large-scale, all new railroad museum in Old Sacramento. In short, the wooing worked, and then-Governor Ronald Reagan and the Legislature cooperated in backing a special bill placed before the voters that would prospectively fund an enormous overhaul of the State Parks system and also establish the California State Railroad Museum. California voters overwhelmingly responded and the state's railroad museum was a “go!” But that's another story altogether.

The tired-out narrow gauge caboose body was gone over from bottom to top, albeit hurriedly. Some beautifully executed renewals were made—a pretty much correct replica roof structure and end platform/step assemblies, and a semi-decent set of interior furnishings were made from scratch from solid lumber and were expertly installed. Other elements were less well-accomplished: steel pipe and weldments—rather than solid forgings—served to recreate missing end railings. The new cupola was somewhat misinterpreted from a worn out (perhaps) original one then still teetering on the body. The trucks and couplers were simply salvaged ex-West Side Lumber Company components, not really correct for the caboose but at least semi-functional. A missing pair of underbody truss rods were completely forgotten and not installed, for reasons yet unknown.

Fast forward to last August. With Bethlehem's grooved marine plywood “siding boards” removed, the car body structure revealed itself to be not hard pine or fir, but—yes!—coastal redwood. This would be a very peculiar material choice anywhere else, but in Marin County where the caboose was undoubtedly “born” (at what date we still don't know for sure, perhaps circa 1894-95), local redwood was a common material... cheap to buy and reasonably strong for use as studs, plates and nailing girths. Doubtless the original tongue-and-groove siding boards were almost certainly redwood too. Sadly, though, we could now see that the nailing girths were badly decayed or too heavily punctured by long gone nails. It appears the caboose was resided at least twice in its operating lifetime, if not three times. (The 1968 plywood siding not included!) So, sistered girths will have to be added by us. We can also now easily see rot in the outer ends of the front “A” end body bolster. This must be properly remediated.

The reason we opted to expose the body framing was extremely important. In order to take the car back to its circa 1914 appearance, an “interpretive period” that best suits our museum's general nature and function—we would necessarily have—to replace the plywood siding and make other changes. Part of that effort demands a complete structural engineering assessment and detailed architectural plans. Those plans are now being drawn up under contract by Daryl DiBitonto of V&T Enterprises. Daryl is a skilled AutoCAD draftsman and

was especially willing to come to our aid when no one else was available. We tasked him with a request for two complete sets of drawings. The first set will permanently record the 1968-69 to 2014 “restored” caboose as PCC/R&LHS and Bethlehem provided. The second set of drawings will merge what we have learned from the car itself with details found in a few historic exterior photos from circa 1912 and 1928, and add in certain critical details such as the extra pair of truss rods, proper trucks, a remodeled (and more historically correct) cupola, and more accurate interior furnishings. We have come to understand that somehow, NWPRR (and perhaps its predecessor North Shore Railroad) emulated Southern Pacific Company CS-series wooden cabooses, although in a smaller, narrow gauge scale. The tapered cupola with train and engine number indicator boxes is one piece of supporting evidence, but so too are ghost images left on the inner walls for CP-SP type sleeping bunks and other furnishings. Why this was done so early and on a line with little direct SP influence is still a puzzle we need to solve, but the evidence remains strong and relatively clear. By next year we will have a lot more to report on this tantalizing caboose restoration project!

### NWP Caboose 6101 Candlelighter's grant project nearing delivery.

By the end of August, all the fabricated (blacksmithed) parts included in the 2015 Candlelighter's grant were finished. These include grab irons, ladders, end railings, brake staffs, pawl and ratchet fittings, and a few miscellaneous parts. By the first week in November, all will be delivered to the caboose project at Ardenwood.



*Hand-crafted: Berkley Tack, a traditional blacksmith working in Rainier, Oregon, demonstrates the art of reverse engineering the hand-forged replica grab irons to be installed on caboose 6101. At the upper right, Berkley holds the die used to shape the circular “eyes” of the grab iron. Below right, he drifts a punch through the center of the eye to create a hole for the bolt. The grab iron pictured here has not yet received the 90 degree bends that will give the part its well-known shape.*







# **Scenes from Rail Fair**



# **Boxcar 472 Emerges with New Paint and Lettering**



Just in time for Rail Fair, John Erdkamp completed a repainting and partial relettering of South Pacific Coast boxcar 472, a classic 10 ton capacity, single door car built by Carter Brothers in Newark. Here’s John applying finishing touches to the body color a few days before “show time” at Rail Fair. The paint was still wet when the car was hauled from the Car Barn to the front depot area, where it served as the “museum car,” displaying interpretive material. Available time only permitted lettering one side of the car (fortunately, the side that the public saw during Rail Fair). The opposite side will be completed over the next six to eight weeks.

# **New Member Update!**

Welcome new members: Evan Josa - San Carlos CA, Raymond Strong - Danville CA. and Tony Peters - Fremont CA

# **Front of Car Barn Grade Crossings**

In July and August the following improvements were made to the vehicle crossings in front of the Car Barn:

- \* Flangeway guard rails were spiked down for 30 feet in front of the Car Barn on tracks 1, 2 & 3. We used the worst of the worst bent rail and did a darn fine job straightening it for this non-critical rail application.
- \*Dirt & gravel fill was added between the rails in late July.
- \*On August 10 we received two dump truck loads of “ballast”—in this case it was crushed recycled asphalt.
- \*On August 13 this material was used to fill in the valleys formed between tracks 1 & 2, and 2 & 3. Additional material was used to raise the road level up and make smooth vehicular approaches to the tracks.
- Finally, on August 28 all leftover material was spread evenly between tracks 3 & 4 to make a smooth, level parking surface that should hold up well in wet conditions.

We now have a grade crossing and parking area that should be the envy of CalTrans!

Major Contributors: Project Manager John Erdkamp, Andrew Cary, Dave Fischer, Bruce Sorel, John Stutz, Ken Underhill, David Waterman, Scott Kennedy



# President's Report

First, hearty congratulations to everyone for a very successful Rail Fair. To both those who turned out prior to the event to make sure it could happen, and those who came to Rail Fair and made it go so well. Between SPC volunteers, the engine crews, and our exhibitors, there were far too many to name here. But special acknowledgment is due to Barbara Culp for her overall arrangements despite severe distractions, and to Andy Cary for organizing the operational side. Be sure to check out Barbara's article with the total number of Rail Fair attendees on page 3.

Andy's very detailed "Rail Fair Roundup - The Trainmaster's Perspective" was posted on the SPCRR Members list in Yahoo Groups. It goes into far more detail than I have room for here. It is an impressive list of accomplishments. If you have not seen this, do consider joining the group. (Editor's Note: We encourage everyone to signup for our SPCRR Members group on Yahoo Groups to receive the most current updates on projects and activities. You will need to setup a Yahoo account first if you don't already have one—it's free to join. Once you are logged in at Yahoo, click the "Groups" link at the top of the page, then type in "SPCRR Members" in the search box, and follow the instructions to join.)

There is one more weekend in September as I write this, and it is almost time to start setting up for Halloween. It will be a very busy month between the Haunted Train setup and operation, plus the Park's Harvest Festival on October 10 & 11. We will need volunteers to operate the train and be station agents on Saturday, October 10. Our paid crew will be running on Sunday, October 11, but we will still need some volunteers to be station agents and help out with the crowds.

The Haunted Train will be operating October 16-18 and 23-25. Our setup will kickoff on Saturday, October 3 with the village flats. See Andy's site setup schedule on page 2 for further information. I expect that, as usual, there will be much to do in the way of final setup on the first Friday the Haunted Train operates, so consider coming out early to lend a hand. We hope to see all of you out to help with the Haunted Train. The funds raised at this event goes toward the restoration of our equipment.

On the subject of Thursday work days, the work parties led by Ken and Andy have been meeting regularly and accomplished many small jobs that add up to a great deal of work. Ken has been very good about posting workday notices and reporting the results on the SPCRR Members list in Yahoo.

The Winter activity schedule remains very much up in the air while Halloween is bearing down on us, but I hope to get the calendar firmed up through December by month's end. Once Halloween take down is completed, I would like to concentrate on track and restoration. To access the official calendar go to [www.spcrr.org](http://www.spcrr.org) and click on "Calendar."

One significant part of our restoration effort will be to fumigate our cars to rid them of termites. Ken Underhill obtained a quote on doing the entire Car Barn at once, but due to the building's volume the cost was about \$15k. We might get the costs down by fumigating them separately, but we have several cars that are far enough decayed that their roofs might not survive direct tarping. Jack Burgess is working on a design to build modular components that will form supports so that the tarps don't rest on the cars. That will allow us to compare the costs of doing one or more cars at a time with the modular system, or fumigate the entire building. This could be done at any time, but we want to get all of our stock through the program almost simultaneously to prevent recolonization of the fumigated cars from those yet to be fumigated.

On other projects, Daryl DiBitonto has made a good start on measuring up Caboose #5591/6101. All who attended Rail Fair will have noticed John Erdkamp's superb repaint and stenciling of boxcar 472. However we did not have time to attend to the car's roof, which really needs to be made watertight; and Boxcar 10 could also do with a similar treatment. Several of our younger volunteers have taken on the task of repainting and winterizing our engines. They will begin on the "Rusty Mary" as a preliminary to repainting the "Katie" this winter, under Andy's oversight. So there is much to do this winter. We will definitely keep things active after operations close for the season!

# General Maintenance workdays



**Name of Work Event:** Weekday Workdays at the Car Barn

**Date(s):** Ongoing – Some Mondays & Most Thursdays (see Notes below)

**Time:** Email or Call (see below)

**Meet At:** Car Barn - See "Directions" on page 10 of this month's Hotbox.

**Special Abilities or Work Equipment:** N/A

**What to Bring:** Long pants, work gloves, and steel-toe boots if you have them. Water is provided. If we are working on an outdoor project, bring a hat, long-sleeve shirt, and sunscreen. We generally go off-site for lunch, but you are welcome to bring your own lunch if you prefer.

## Progress Last Month:

September 17, 2015: Ken Underhill, Dave Fisher, Andy Cary, David Waterman, Jay Martinez were out. Dave, Andy and Ken started removing the siding on one end of NWP 6101 so the framing details can be added to the drawings of the car. We also put away Rail Fair displays, stored the placards in SP 1010, and emptied trash. David and Jay worked on cleaning and freeing up Rusty Mary, then helped the operating crew bring SP 1010 back to the Car Barn.

September 19, 2015: Gene Arrillaga, Ken Underhill, Tony Peters and Andy Cary were out. Gene worked on freeing up a couple of donated track jacks. Then we all worked on removing the rest of the plywood siding on the A end of NWP 6101. That has now been completed.

**Contact:** Ken Underhill  
Email - [kcunderhill@yahoo.com](mailto:kcunderhill@yahoo.com)  
Phone – 925-373-6884

**Notes:** Everyone over the age of 14 is welcome.

-Thursdays are more common and often include restoration work. Mondays have been focused on maintenance issues in the Park's public areas.

-Call or email me in advance so I know how many to expect. That way I can have jobs ready for you when you arrive, Please include your name, cell number, and email so I can contact you if I have to cancel the date or change the time.

## Calendar Look-Ahead for October/December

Oct 3 (Sat) Haunted Train setup—meet at Car Barn at 10:00 am, work till dark (bring gloves!)

Oct 10 (Sat) Special Event operations, Harvest Festival—meet at Ardenwood Yard (Station) at 9:30 am-5 pm

Special Event operations, Harvest Festival– Paid crew scheduled, but need volunteers for Station Agents and crowd control. Meet at Ardenwood Yard (Station) at 9:30 am-5pm

Oct 12 (Mon) Haunted Train setup—meet at Car Barn at 10 am, work till dark (bring gloves!)

Oct 16 (Fri) Haunted Train Setup—meet at Car Barn at Noon; in North Woods at 3 pm

Oct 16, 17, 18 (Fri, Sat, Sun) Haunted Train Operation:  
Station & Operating crew meets at Ardenwood Station at 5 pm  
Woods crew meets at ghost town in North Woods at 5 pm

Oct 23, 24, 25 (Fri, Sat, Sun) Haunted Train Operation:  
Station & Operating crew meets at Ardenwood Station at 5 pm  
Woods crew meets at ghost town in North Woods at 5 pm

Oct 26 (Mon) Haunted Train takedown—meet at Ghost Town in North Woods at 10:30 am

Oct 31 (Sat) Haunted Train takedown—meet at Car Barn at 10:30 am

Nov 22 (Sun) Last Day of Regular Operations

Dec 6 & 7 (Sat & Sun) Special Event Operations: Ardenwood Christmas—meet at Ardenwood Yard (Station) at 9:30 am-5 pm. Need volunteers to operate train and be Station Agents

### Directions For All Workdays:

Volunteers cannot drive beyond the regular entrance parking lot when the Park is open to the public (between the hours of 10 am-5 pm, every day except Monday). When the Park is open, we must use the gate at the end of Siward Dr. at Ridgewood Dr. (near the Car Barn).

#### From I-880:

Take I-880 to the Dumbarton Freeway/Route 84 West toward the Dumbarton Bridge. Exit at Newark Blvd/Ardenwood Blvd and turn right onto Ardenwood Blvd. Continue 1 mile (past the Ardenwood entrance) and turn right onto Paseo Padre Pkwy at the traffic signal. Continue 1 mile on Paseo Padre Pkwy and turn right at the traffic signal onto Siward Dr (just before the I-880 overpass). The gate into the Park is at the end of Siward Dr at Ridgewood Dr. Once you enter the gate, proceed on the gravel road toward the left and park your vehicle at the Car Barn.

#### From Highway 101 on the Peninsula:

Take Highway 101 to Route 84 East over the Dumbarton Bridge. Exit at Newark Boulevard/Ardenwood Blvd and turn left onto Ardenwood Blvd. Continue 1 mile (past the Ardenwood entrance) and turn right onto Paseo Padre Pkwy at the traffic signal. Continue 1 mile on Paseo Padre Pkwy and turn right at the traffic signal onto Siward Dr (just before the I-880 overpass). The gate into the Park is at the end of Siward Dr at Ridgewood Dr. Once you enter the gate, proceed on the gravel road toward the left and park your vehicle at the Car Barn.