



Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo
Railroad Museum

Issue Number 86 – Winter 2023 San Luis Obispo, California slorrm.com

Open Saturdays from 10:00 to 4:00. Other times for groups by arrangement. 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue.



During the festival, restoration lead Brad LaRose discussed options for providing access from the Freighthouse platform to the boxcar interior. The festival helps the Museum provide information for the community while we learn of resources and personal stories that enhance our efforts.

Exhibit progress: Boxcar moved

On September 7 we moved our former Southern Pacific wood-sheathed boxcar from Emily Street Yard to the display track. Coordinated by Equipment & Restoration lead Brad LaRose, Bragg Crane Service, Dwight Peterson Trucking, and a large team of volunteers provided traffic control and lifted the car onto a flat-bed semitrailer for the short but challenging trip around the neighboring building contractor's facility and hardware-plus-garden store. The boxcar will house an exhibit on Southern Pacific workers as well as some storage space. Donations of time, skills, and funds are needed to complete this effort.

Below, the highly professional team from Bragg Crane Service based in Santa Maria lifted the 40-foot-long car over a fence and other obstacles. See more moving news on pages 4 and 5.

Central Coast RR Festival



Guitarist and singer Ted Waterhouse of the local group The QuadraTones provided railroad themed tunes with a blues flavor, from the platform of 1926 Pullman car La Cuesta. See more photos on page 2.



Our Mission

Promote California Central Coast railroad heritage through community participation, education, and historic preservation.

Contact

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 (newsletter@slorrm.com)

The museum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, educational organization, staffed entirely by volunteers.

Documents Available

Anyone may access the Museum's *Bylaws, Collections Policy, Development & Operations Plan, Code of Conduct*, and other documents at slorrm.com. Or request a paper copy via the contact information above.

Museum Store

To raise funds, the Museum offers several items for sale on-site and online: T-shirts, hats, belt buckles, mugs, enameled pins, embroidered patches, and engineer hats.

On the website click on About, then Gift Shop.

Coast Mail is published quarterly by the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.
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Timetable

Board of Directors meetings are scheduled for December 12, January 9 and February 13, at 6:00 p.m. They are held at the Museum. Online participation can be arranged. Contact info@slorrm.com for help with on-line participation.

Santa on the Surfliner: December 2 at about 12:30.

Become a member

Membership provides opportunities for anyone interested in today's railroads, railroad history, train travel, railroad artifact restoration, or model railroading.

Individual members pay \$36 per year, a family \$60, and a sustaining member \$100. Junior memberships (ages 12-18) for the model railroaders are available (see our Model Railroad Superintendent for details).

Application forms can be downloaded from the Museum's website and mailed with payment, or you can join online by clicking [Membership](#) and using PayPal. (Mailing and web addresses are in left-hand column.) Membership benefits include free admission to the Museum.

Parlor Car Chats Online

Jamie Foster hosts 30 episodes with 11 presenters, which cover train trips, equipment restoration, technical information, and more: slorrm.com/parlor-car-chats.html



More Coast Mail Online

Caboose moving, biodiesel Surfliner, water robot, and more.

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Railroad Festival



October 7 found two boys not shy about their affection for railroads. Francisco, age 3, above, worked for hours carefully assembling and moving trains around the Museum's play table. The fellow below, age six, was quite the conversationalist, engaging adults with his observations on historical and contemporary locomotives. (Girls enjoyed the trains too, but did not announce so on their clothes.)





Gary See photo

Holiday wish list

With our former Southern Pacific boxcar on the display track, we're ready to install exhibits on railroad workers in the south end and storage space in the north end.

The library and archives have used all the space available in the Freighthouse and will benefit from having more room for items that don't often need access, such as files on past museum activities and back-up copies of books. If you have, or know of, a surplus bookcase with widely spaced and deep shelves, or adjustable shelves, it would be much appreciated.

And we can always use more help, such as that provided by the boxcar moving crew shown at left, from left to right: Bob Wilson, Howard Amborn, Dwight Peterson, Ted Van Klaveren, Michael Burrell, David Rohr, Greg Jackson (in blue hat), Mike Adams, and Brad LaRose. Not pictured, Gary See.

Photo contest winners

Here are the winners of this year's Central Coast Railroad Festival photo contest. Thank you to all the entrants, the judges, and especially Jamie Foster for coordinating the overall effort.

At right. Nathan Campbell's first place image of a caboose in Lompoc at night.



At left, Stenner Canyon Trestle by Ralph George, second place.

Below, Michael Schmiechen caught the southbound Starlight crossing Stenner Trestle, third place.



Boxcar moved (continued from page 1)



The self-propelled crane must be positioned stable and level, with weight properly distributed. The operator extends and adjusts outriggers, which bear on separate pads (above). Its tires are not touching the pavement.

At right the car moves carefully past a railroad-themed building on Santa Barbara Avenue, preparing to turn onto High Street. Gary See photo

Standard Steel Car Company built this car in 1923, one of thousands like it owned by the Southern Pacific. Withdrawn from service about 1956, it's likely the only survivor of its B-50-13 class. Such cars were the workhorses of the railroads, carrying everything from lumber and grain to canned food and bagged cement.

Retired railroader Bill Walther donated funds for its restoration and installation of exhibit material. Museum member volunteers working on the move were Mike Adams, Mike Burrell, Stephen Cake, Greg Jackson, Brad LaRose, Glen Matteson, Gary See, Ted Van Klaveren, and Bob Wilson. Mr. Peterson himself of Dwight Peterson Trucking in Atascadero helped with crane setup and drove the semi-truck carrying the caboose, at a generous reduction from his usual rate. AJ Welch of West Coast Auto and Towing in Atascadero drove the truck carrying the wheel assemblies.



The boxcar's trucks (wheel assemblies) had to be moved separately. Above, the second truck is lowered into position on the display track.

Below, the car body is lowered onto the trucks. Relatively small pins on the tops of the trucks' bolsters (cross pieces) fit into holes in the car's frame. All clicked together on the first try, thanks to careful work by all involved.

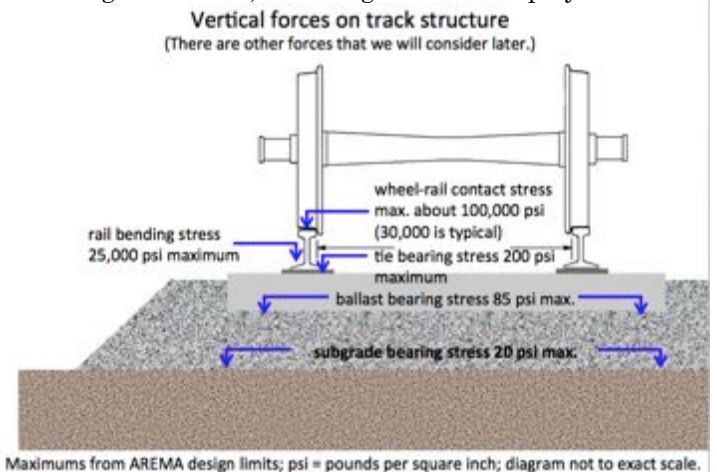
In November, a narrow-gauge boxcar, a 20-foot container, and four signals were removed from Emily Street Yard. Louie's Crane Service generously donated work. West Coast Auto provided a tilt-bed truck at no charge.

More railroad nostalgia, and a request

Seeing the weight distribution pads being set down by the crane service (photo at top left) recalled a lecture (image below) in the Railway Engineering course your editor taught at Cal Poly from 2018 through Spring 2023. It was a whirlwind tour of all things rail, mostly for civil engineering majors focusing on transportation. Transfer of weight from wheels to ground is key, along with keeping in place dirt and rocks next to and above the track. The course will not be offered again until a new instructor can be found. If you are interested in teaching the course, contact gmatteso@calpoly.edu.



Gary See photo



Caboose moved

On October 20 nearly same team that moved the box-car (page 4) transported the former Southern Pacific wood-sheathed, cupola caboose from Emily Street Yard to the display track.

This caboose entered service in 1926 and spent several retirement years in the dry climate of the Mojave Desert. Improving the roof, installing windows, and sealing the exterior are all high priorities for its home here in San Luis Obispo.



Above, Bragg Crane starts the lift.
Below, moving along Santa Barbara Avenue.
Bottom right, lowered gently onto its wheel assemblies.



Gary See photo



Does your train smell like French fries, or nothing?

Amtrak/Caltrans' *Pacific Surfliner* locomotives will now burn biodiesel instead of fossil fuel, reducing carbon dioxide emissions and other pollutants. Used cooking oil is one source of biodiesel.

The California Department of Transportation has ordered hydrogen fuel cell trains for corridor services. Hydrogen produced by electrolysis of water using solar or wind power eliminates emissions. Trains powered by hydrogen will be used first in the Central Valley, but for some reason the publicity image shows one on the coast. Demonstration runs here are expected.



Image by Stadler



Gary See photo

Celebration in San Luis Obispo

The November 1951 *S. P. Bulletin* reported on a gathering to honor long-serving locomotive engineers. You'll have to wait for the Spring 2024 *Coast Mail* to see who they were and how long they served. But here are members of the Barbecue Committee, appearing at right: S. H. Blaine, C. K. Tisdale, R. D. Evans, M. Mink, A. Bittick, A. Selvage, R. Mott, Bob Umbertis, M. Mink, Bill Fisk, and A. Bittick. (Some husband-and-wife employees must have had the same first initials –confusing.)



SAN LUIS OBISPO BARBECUE COMMITTEE (see Coast Div. notes) included (front row, l-r): Mesdames S. H. Blaine, C. K. Tisdale, R. D. Evans, M. Mink, A. Bittick, A. Selvage. (Back row) R. Mott, Bob Umbertis, chairman, M. Mink, Bill Fisk, A. Bittick.



Far from the Central Coast

Rolling, sandy landforms, and sparse coastal vegetation. The scene above looks a lot like where the south-bound Coast Route regains the coast on Vandenberg Space Force Base. Instead, we're still in Croatia [Fall 2023 *Coast Mail*] climbing from a seaside city named Split to one on high plains called Knin. The view above is from a YouTube video by Rail Relaxation.

Below feels like the upper Salinas Valley, with flat agricultural fields bordered by low hills. But we won't find any catenary (overhead electrical power supply) for trains there. Instead, we have a locomotive engineer's view in Bulgaria, on the line between Kulata and Blagoevgrad, which passes through the impressive Kresna Gorge. As a European Union member country, Bulgaria embarked on building modern highways and replacing older track having wood ties and short rail pieces with concrete ties and continuous welded rail. This view is from a YouTube video by TC Rail.



Details please

The excerpt below from the November 1935 *Southern Pacific Bulletin* calls for more information. Can a reader provide details on what the device was? A submersible pump on a cable, with a float to activate it? Not a high degree of autonomy, but it was 1935. In the steam-locomotive era each railroad's Water Service was essential, obtaining, treating if needed, and delivering the water for boilers.

The pride and joy of the Water Service is a new well at San Miguel with an electric robot which goes down hunting for water. Ole Anderson, water supervisor, says the robot will even stand a ducking.



Caboose prepped for winter (above) We've secured the windows of the wood-sheathed caboose (page 5), with materials generously donated by Daniels Wood Land of Paso Robles, and covered it with a tarp.



Holiday gift ideas

Our Museum Store has an often-changing selection of books, models, and other items such as the train set (above) at very economical prices.