



# Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum



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San Luis Obispo, California, Fall, 2009

www.slorm.com

## Central Coast Railroad Festival

### at the Museum . . .



On October 10, 2009, San Luis Obispo Mayor Dave Romero reads a proclamation dedicating the Museum display track prior to driving the Golden Spike to finish the job. Photo by Aron Kahn



Mayor Romero and Museum President Brad LaRose prepare to drive the traditional Golden Spike to signify the completion of the Museum display track. Photo by Jamie Foster

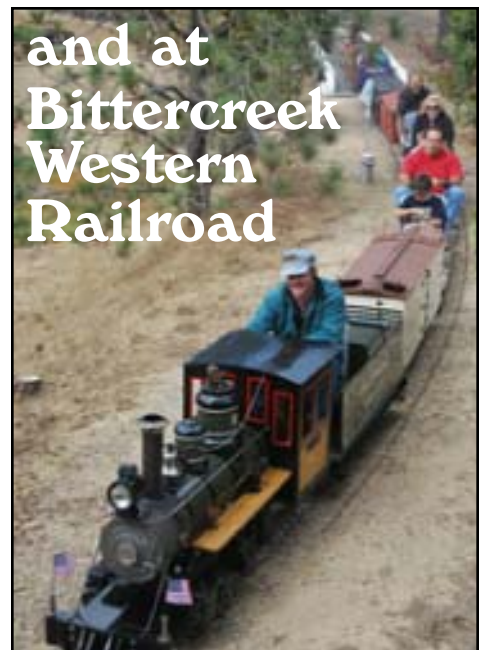


October 8 through 12, 2009 marked the first Central Coast Railroad Festival. Brainchild of Museum member Curtis Rheinhart, who acted as coordinator, the Festival featured events and exhibits by eleven groups and the sponsorship of five companies and organizations. The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum and the City of San Luis Obispo collaborated on the dedication of the Museum's Display Track and the driving of a *Golden Spike* to seal the deal. SLORRM also chose Sunday, October 11th to hold its Annual Fall Train Festival fundraiser at *BitterCreek Western Railroad*. It is estimated that the combined events attracted at least 500 visitors from out of town. *more on page 3*

Left: San Luis Obispo City Councilman "John Henry" Ashbaugh takes a swing at the Golden Spike during dedication ceremonies for the Museum Display Track on Saturday, October 10, 2009.

Right: Dale Blakey pilots steam locomotive at the BitterCreek Western Railroad hauling a load of happy visitors on Sunday, October 11, 2009.

Below: John Marchetti conducts a tour of BitterCreek Western grounds. All Photos by Jamie Foster



### and at Bittercreek Western Railroad





## Mission Statement

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, founded as a non-profit, public benefit educational museum, will preserve the railroad history of California and the Central Coast by collecting, restoring, displaying and operating historic railroad equipment.

### SAN LUIS OBISPO RAILROAD MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brad LaRose ..... *President*  
 Karl Hovanitz ..... *Vice President*  
 Aron Kahn ..... *Secretary*  
 David Rohr ..... *Treasurer*  
 Bill Pyper ..... *Newsletter Editor*  
 Arnold Jonas, John Marchetti,  
 Duane Powell

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 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

## TIMETABLE

The following is a list of future meetings of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. Business meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Quality Suites Hotel, 1631 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo. They begin at 6:00 p.m.

The Program Meeting locations and times will be announced in advance. All meetings are open to the public.

December 8 ..... *Business Meeting*  
 January 12, 2010 ..... *Business Meeting*  
 February 9 ..... *Business Meeting*  
 March 9 ..... *Business Meeting*  
 April 13 ..... *Business Meeting*

## BY-LAWS AVAILABLE

Every member in good standing is entitled to have a copy of the By-laws. In the interest of economy, we have not automatically distributed them to all members. To get a copy, send a #10, self addressed, stamped, envelope to SLORRM, Post Office Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

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## Director Retires

Frank Rheinisch, a member of the San Luis Railroad Museum Board of Directors since 2003, has retired due to health reasons.

Frank has been a highly valued member of the museum. Through his personal efforts and the use of the resources of his company, Alpha Fire Sprinklers, much has been accomplished for the Museum. He will be sorely missed.

## Become a Member

Membership in SLORRM provides an outlet for any person interested in railroad history, train travel, railroad oriented entertainment and the value of railroading to the community.

Membership is designed for those who love trains and wish to educate others, young and old, and who share the dream of building the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum in the 1894 SP Freighthouse at the San Luis Obispo railroad station.

Single members pay \$36 per year. A family can join for \$60 annually, and a sustaining member pays \$100 per year. Mail to SLORRM, P.O. Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3260. Go to [slorrm.com](http://slorrm.com) to download an application form.

**Life Members** receive an embroidered patch, enameled pin, the Coast Mail newsletter, and have voting rights for one person for life. *Use current age to calculate amount due.*

0-17 years . . . . . \$1200 or 5 payments of \$280  
 18-39 . . . . . \$900 or 5 payments of \$220  
 40-61 . . . . . \$600 or 5 payments of \$160

**Family Life Members** receive two enameled pins, two embroidered patches, the Coast Mail newsletter and voting rights for life for two people residing at the same address. *Use the age of youngest family member to calculate amount due.*

0-17 years of age . . . . . \$1800 or 5 payments of \$420  
 18-39 . . . . . \$1350 or 5 payments of \$330  
 40-61 . . . . . \$900 or 5 payments of \$240  
 62 and older . . . . . \$450 or 5 payments of \$150

If making payments the life membership card will be sent upon receipt of final payment. Until such time as the life membership is paid in full, the member will receive a yearly membership card. All payments made toward a life membership are non-refundable and failure to make a scheduled payment by the due date will result in forfeiture of all funds paid toward the life membership. Payment plans include yearly member dues.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Beginning with this issue of the Coast Mail, the last line of your mailing address on the envelope states the current expiration date of your membership. Please check this date each time you receive a mailing from us. If the date is within a month or so of your receipt of the mailing, your remittance of the appropriate amount to renew your membership will be greatly appreciated. Any changes to your contact information should also be included. This system will significantly reduce the Museum's costs associated with membership renewal and record maintenance, and will help assure that your membership is always current. Should your mailing address change for any reason, prompt submittal of updated information will help us achieve these same goals. Thank you for your diligence and cooperation.

**New Members** Dwight Hudson has joined SLORRM since the last Coast Mail was published.

Jeff and Paula Hook have become family members.

**Renewals** Warren Bebout, Martin Gombert and Brad LaRose have all renewed their membership. Michael and Laura McGinley, and William and Jacqueline Burnette have renewed their family memberships since the last edition of the Coast Mail was published.

**Donations** George "Smokey" Bass and Dyer Campbell have made monetary donations to SLORRM.

## Public Art Dedicated

On Saturday, October 10, 2009, San Luis Obispo Mayor Dave Romero also held a Ribbon Cutting ceremony for the dedication of *Icons of an Era*, a public artwork created by John Trask and installed in the round-a-bout in the public parking lot near the south end of the Museum.



# More Railroad Festival



On Saturday at the Museum, the most popular activity was Speeder rides. Aron Kahn, Karl Hovanitz, Roy Gammill and Charles Shearon, who are certified by the North American Rail Car Operators' Association, took visitors for rides in their Maintenance of Way Motorcars (Speeders) including the Museum's newly restored car, on the newly laid Display Track. Photo by Agatha Reardon



Event Coordinator Curtis Reinhardt did an amazing job publicizing the event and convincing so many organizations and groups to cooperate.



Old meets new as museum member Glen Matteson takes a ride on the Museum's Sheffield Velocipede and meets the southbound Amtrak Coast Starlight as it pulls out of the San Luis Obispo station. Photo by Jamie Foster



Visitors riding in a speeder driven by Roy Gammill. Photo by Jamie Foster



Brad LaRose addresses a group of interested visitors during a tour of the Museum's Emily Street Storage Yard. Photo by Agatha Reardon



The Mud Skippers provided the music. Photo by Agatha Reardon



Andrew Merriam displayed his scale model of the Freighthouse as it will appear as the Museum.

# SLORRM Board Visits Santa Clara Museum

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum Board of Directors took a road trip Saturday, September 5, 2009. The destinations on this trip were the **South Bay Historical Railroad Society** in Santa Clara, California and the home of Jack Burgess in San Jose.

The trip started from San Luis Obispo at 6:00 a.m. Much too early for our board members. However, they persevered and picked up additional board members in Atascadero. Beside the board members on this trip, were two special guests, Dick Ross, a professional museum display designer with experience in creating railroad museum displays, and Darlene Roth, a professional museum developer, who has experience designing many museums in the eastern United States. Both Dick and Darlene are highly regarded by the board members and their professional opinions and ideas are greatly appreciated.

The group arrived at the museum in Santa Clara at 9:45 a.m. and were soon greeted by their hosts, SBHRS CEO Bob and Secretary Joe. The main museum building is a former Southern Pacific Railroad depot built between 1863 and 1877. In later years it was moved across the tracks and attached to a large freight house. We entered the museum through a large sliding door in the freight house section of the building that also serves as a public meeting room. As we stepped into the large inside open area, we saw many artifacts. There were small items, lanterns, locks, etc. There were also larger items such as a velocipede and signals. Many colorful signs and maps adorned the walls.

The hosts then walked us through a larger area of the freight house that housed a very large HO and N gauge model railroad. A railroad switch stand display lined the wall on one side of the room, while the model railroad filled the remaining area. This is a very active and vital operation of the museum. Several times each year a model train show brings hundreds of people to the museum to view the model trains. This is a good revenue source for the museum.

**4** We were shown the Board Room which had a large table in the center and walls adorned with railroad photographs and maps.



*Left to Right: Aron Kahn, Andrew Merriam, Duane Powell, Dave Rohr, John Marchetti, Arnold Jonas, Gary See and Dick Ross at the Santa Clara Museum. Photo by Brad LaRose*

Sitting at the table, we asked Bob and Joe numerous questions. We explained to them our purpose was to view a museum containing elements that were common with the SLORRM. Since our museum was in the planning stages of display and interior design, we were interested in seeing what worked, how it worked and if we could use information from this museum that might help SLORRM in it's development.

SBHRS has many similarities to SLORRM. Each organization has a freight house museum, a model train layout, some similar artifacts, display track next to a live railroad mainline. SBHRS also has the Santa Clara control tower that operated many of the switches in the former Santa Clara yard. We toured this tower with its complicated switch machine in the upper portion. We also viewed nearby motorcar (speeder) sheds on the museum property. .

We toured a railroad observation car on the museum display track. Ralph Demenici, owner of the car, told us that it was originally built for the Oregon & Washington Railroad and Navigation Company. It is presently undergoing a major restoration.

We ended the museum tour with many questions being answered and having acquired many more ideas on how we can begin design work on the SLORRM museum building and displays. Next stop: the Yosemite Valley Railroad, as constructed in model form by the great modeler, Jack Burgess.

We arrived at the San Jose home of Jack Burgess in the early afternoon. A gracious host, Jack invited us into his home and "waiting room." Here, among numerous Yosemite Valley Railroad (YV) artifacts, including an actual YV mail bag and lock, Jack explained to us how he built the railroad model. He started building this layout in the 1990's and has worked on it almost every day since. Jack is a "purist," and his absolute attention to detail, historic accuracy and authentic operation is evidence of this. His model layout, located inside his former garage, has elements including stations (EI Portal is neat), residences, out buildings, a fascinating incline railway and the best model trees and hills that were ever constructed and painted. This is top shelf, A#1 modeling. There are so many things to see, we could have spent hours there. It was just fantastic.

We concluded our return trip home to San Luis Obispo County, having plenty of time to talk amongst ourselves about the things we saw during the trip. We greatly appreciated the invitations from the SBHRS and Jack Burgess to view their special displays. Our board members will use this informative trip to work with our greatly appreciated museum designers, Dick Ross and Darlene Roth. This was a working field trip that was both fun and highly valuable. The end result will be the development of a great San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.

*Reported by Brad LaRose*