

SAN DIEGO ELECTRIC RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



Trolley Lines

April 2014

**Car 54.... Where Are You.....
Going to now?**



Richard Finch photo

On Wednesday March 5th, in a collaborative effort of the San Diego History Center, The San Diego Electric Railway Association, and Whillock Contracting Company of El Cajon, the oldest piece of San Diego's transit heritage was moved from the History Center in Balboa Park to the San Diego Electric Railway museum located at the historic Santa Fe train Depot in National City.

Street car number 54 was built in 1903 in the Kettner Boulevard shops of the San Diego Electric Railway. The Car was constructed by combining two retired cable cars that used to travel along the 4th Avenue cable car line. The San Diego cable Railway Company ran from foot of 6th Avenue and L Street to the Mission Cliffs

Gardens at Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue in the mid to late 1800's.

Some native San Diegan's may remember it displayed in the 1960's and 70's alongside the Whaley House in Old Town. It is the intent of the San Diego Electric Railway Association to have the car on public display at their museum later this summer. It may also be noted that the volunteers of this organization were instrumental in the restoration of the 1946 PCC car #529 that runs on the downtown MTS loop on the weekends.

There is more information about car #54 in the June 2012 issue of the "Trolley Lines" at San Diego Electric Railway web site at : SDERA.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dave Slater

As you will see elsewhere in this publication, we have acquired what I am told is the oldest street car in California (1889), SDERY #54. This acquisition was two years in the making, and came from The San Diego History Center in Balboa Park.

Cosmetic restoration has begun on our large 1946 St. Louis Car Co. PCC (President's Conference Committee) street car.

The former St. Louis Public Service #1717, former MUNI (Municipal Railway of San Francisco) #1170, former Tahoe Valley Lines, Former San Diego Vintage Trolley #531, soon to be San Diego Electric Railway #539. This car was donated by the San Diego Vintage Trolley (MTS) last September.



The craftsmanship of a bygone era is quite evident in this interior photo of San Diego Electric Railway Car # 54

Our 1917 single truck Birney street car, San Diego Electric Railway #336 suffered storm damage in the form of having the southeast bifold doors blown off and shredded. Both sets of bifold doors were slated for replacement in any event, as they were coming apart from weather damage. A contractor is currently working with me for the best materials and end product.

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San Diego Electric Railway Association
DBA San Diego Electric Railway Co. Inc
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National City, CA 91950
(619) 474-4400

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SDERA operates the historic National City Depot museum which is located at 922 West 23rd Street, National City, CA 91950 and is open Thursday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Or visit us on the web at:

www.sdera.org

San Diego Electric Railway Association, Inc

- ❖ **Dave Slater** - President
- ❖ **Tom Carnes** - Vice President
- ❖ **Jody Surowiec** - Secretary
- ❖ **Jeff Trimble** - Treasurer
- ❖ **Jim Anderson** - Director
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Facilities Director
- ❖ **John De Lalla** - Special Events/
Docent Coordinator/
Membership Director
- ❖ **Bill Steinmetz** - Groundskeeper

A Salute To Our Volunteers!

They are as follows:

Dave Slater
 Tom Carnes
 Chris Higgins
 Amanda (dog)
 Jim Anderson
 Jim Price
 Chuck Bencik
 Randy Butler
 Robert Butler
 Mitch Beauchamp
 Jeff Trimble
 Mike Reneau
 Richard Finch
 George Geyer
 Dan Kelly
 Gary Johnson
 Sergio Lopez
 Mike Reading
 Eddie McCann
 Jody Surowiec
 John DeLalla
 Robert Baxter
 Samantha (dog)
 Missy Cheeseman
 Keeper (cat)
 Anthony Carideo
 Yuki (dog)
 Kainoa (dog)
 Sean McColgan
 Sandy (dog)
 Patrick McColgan
 Scotty Lewis
 Tim Lewis
 Tom Sapien
 "Pete" Pearson
 Mike Quigg
 Matt Zacharzuk
 Bill Steinmetz
 Conrad Gomez
 Hubert Jansen
 Steve Mitton
**WE COULDN'T
 OPERATE WITHOUT
 YOU!**



Car # 54 settles in at its new home at track 1 North.

Mitch Beauchamp photo

Continued from previous page

Board member, Eddie McCann is in the process of changing engines on our two place home built motor car. The engine was donated by long time member, Carl Lewis. Some pullers were loaned by member, Sean McColgan.

Many thanks go out to County Supervisor, Greg Cox, for a \$50,000.00 donation (Neighborhood enhancement) for the acquisition of car #54, The construction of a pole barn structure to protect the car and some restoration as well.

The last known female San Diego Electric Railway Street car operator, Marjorie (Marge) Blanche McLaughlin, has died. She was 96.

She was a long time friend, SDERA member, and a member of my extended family, A photo article follows on the pages ahead.

A big Thank You also goes out to our many other patrons, and members who are giving generously toward our many ongoing projects.

HELP WANTED!

Currently, The following volunteer positions are available:

1. Assistant Treasurer-

working with Treasurer, Jeffrey (Jeff) Trimble. Candidate should be well versed in accounting, we work on a "Cash basis".

2. Assistant Web Master-

working with Web Master, Christopher (Chris) Higgins. We have a large website at www.sdera.org. Candidate should have this appropriate background.

3. Docents/Cashiers-

A very pleasant way to work a 4 hour shift on a rotating basis. Training provided by Docent Coordinator/Trainer, John De Lalla.

4. Assistant Librarian-

This candidate works with Librarian, Tom Sapien in our Reference Library at the Depot Museum Library.

5. A Welder-

Works with Dave Slater on various projects as needed. This candidate should have their own welder.

Interested parties, please contact Dave Slater, President @ Davesugi@cox.net OR (619) 222-5442

*Come visit,
 and enjoy all the improvements
 in your Museum!*

The Saga of SDERY Car 54 !

By Michael Reading

Way back in 2012, this misadventure began with a meeting with the Interim, now Executive Director of the San Diego History Center, Charlotte Cagan.

An intrepid group of SDERA members gathered to discuss with Charlotte the potential acquisition of SDERY Car #54 from the SDHC.

Charlotte mentioned her organizations change in plans regarding large permanent artifacts and displays, to small rotating, visiting displays and they were looking to de-access car #54.

Fast forward over the next 2 years, I kept asking SDERA President Dave Slater if he had any more contact with the SDHC regarding Car 54, “nothing yet” was the answer I got most of the time. I took it upon myself to contact the SDHC and Charlotte put me in touch with Oscar Urrutia, their Facilities Manager.



Richard Finch © 2014

I made arrangements to meet him and measure not only the car but also the facility itself, developing a plan to extricate the car from this building! The car had been moved on site in the 1980's and the building was built around it. At that time there was no plan to ever move car #54 again.

After another period of no contact with the SDHC, I sent an email to Charlotte and found there was another organization interested in the car, turned out to be the Save Our Heritage Organization, (SOHO) and Bruce Coons, their Executive Director contacted me and we met to discuss the car. He said he preferred to have SDERA acquire the car, as that is part of our mission.

Finally, after many messages back and forth, the SDHC decided to de-access the car to SDERA, lots more messages back and forth regarding insurance and other necessary paperwork flying back and forth, the car would be ours!



Out of the ashes of the old “Electric Building”; the new “ Casa De Balboa” is under construction in 1980.
Photo courtesy of the San Diego History Center



How do you move four and a half tons across a mine field of fragile Terracotta tiles ??
VERY carefully.

A tight fit, but no paint was lost. Can't say the same for the Facilities Manager's sleep.

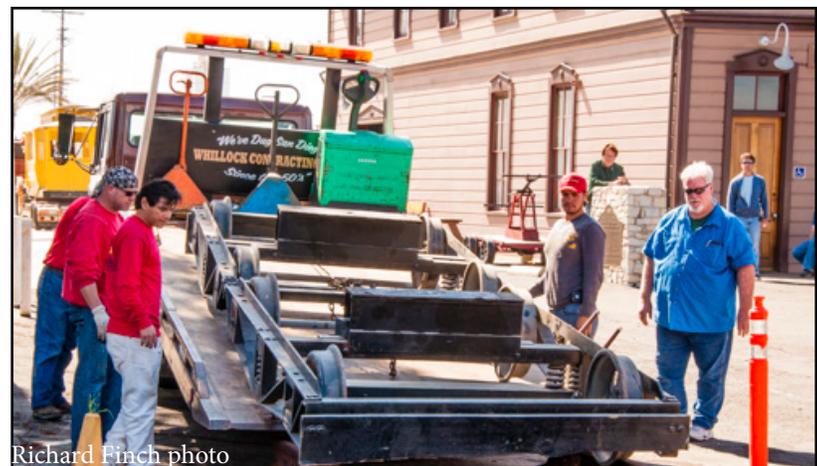
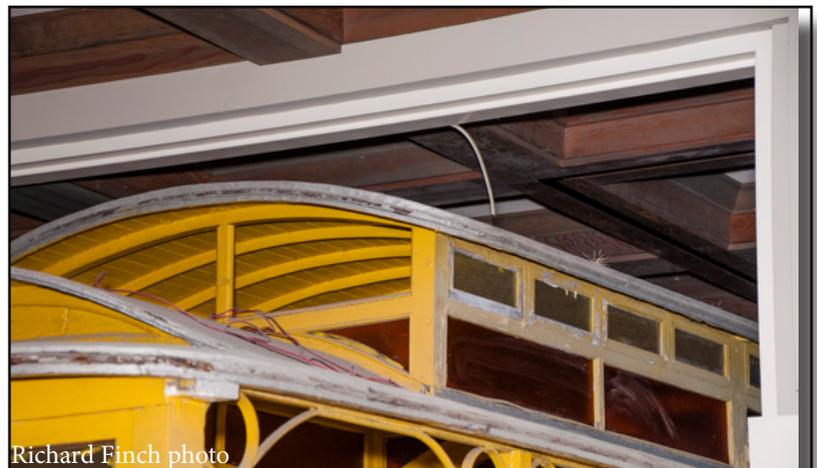
I contacted Mark Whillock asking for his assistance in prepping and moving the car, he gave us a very favorable quote to do this job and when his crew showed up, away we went!

We had 2 days to prep and move the car, with SDHC crews assisting in opening up 3 doorways and walls to provide a path out of the building.

Once outside, the Whillock crew jacked the car up and rolled the trailer underneath, set the car down on the trailer, tied it down and off it went on a journey to its new home at the SDERA facility at the National City Depot.

One interesting note, I routed the driver to take the car down Fifth Avenue, under the Gaslamp District sign at the foot of Fifth Avenue to Harbor Drive! In traveling down Fifth Avenue, Car 54 returned to a route it traveled many times as an electric car after 1903. This is also just a block away from where the cable car turntable at "L" Street and Sixth Avenue for the San Diego Cable Railway Company, (1889 and 1892) where Car #54 ran as two separate cable cars.

This 125 year old gem will be the centerpiece of the SDERA collection!



Project manager Mike Reading (right) looks on as the trucks for car #54 are placed on track #1 North.



Mike Reading (center), History Center
of Mark Whillock's collection



factory center staff, and members
now break for a group photo

HAPPENINGS AT THE DEPOT



Photo by Jeff T.

Eddie Mc Cann (left) gets ready for his 15 minutes of fame with Ken Kramer (center). Dave Slater (right)

About San Diego with Ken Kramer, a local show that spot lights the history of San Diego. Interview at the Depot.

“It went very well.” They arrived about 1:45, and we wrapped at about 3:30. I had Eddie come in to run trains, and Jeff was there as an observer. Ken tells me that this episode will air in May of this year. He will let me know exactly when it will be on so we can all watch.”

Ken’s show airs on KPBS on Thursdays at 8:00 PM.

Eddie Mc Cann (below) re-varnishing the West passenger doors is reminded of National City Depot’s heritage as a BNSF freight rumbles by.



Richard Finch photo

The painting of soon to be SDERA car # 539 has started



Photo by Jeff T.

WE CAN NOW ACCEPT ON-LINE DONATIONS!

You can now donate using your credit card
Safely and Securely on-line!

Click on the Donate button on the left center on the front page of our website (www.sdera.org)
You don't need a PayPal account to use this feature.

Near the bottom of the PayPal page, look for the “Don't have a PayPal account?” section. You can use any major credit card! If you would like to see how easy it is, try a donation towards the body work and painting of our new PCC car!



Thank you, Jeff Trimble, Treasurer, San Diego Electric Railway Association, Inc.



The 3 Raller News

Senator James R. Mills
 Coronado, CA
 February 23, 2014

Dear Senator Mills,

Chuck Bencik delivered your very kind and generous donation of model trains and accessories today. Inventory list attached. Many thanks! We will sell these for the benefit of our organization, and is Greatly appreciated.

It is because of you and people like you that we are able to move forward financially with our many projects and programs. We welcome any future donations of like equipment and or memorabilia that you may care to donate to our most worthy cause.

Cordially
 Dave Slater
 President

The following are 0 gauge, American Flyer tinsplate locomotives and rolling stock unless otherwise noted.

- 1 ea) Milwaukee Road Hiawatha Locomotive, electric power, 4 wheel
- 1 ea) Locomotive tender, orange, red and black trim, for Hiawatha Locomotive, 4 wheels
- 1 ea) Flatcar with wood beams load, for Hiawatha Train set, 4 wheels
- 1 ea) Tank car, "Texaco", yellow, black trim, for Hiawatha Train set, 4 wheels
- 1 ea) Boxcar, "American Flyer", "311122", for Hiawatha Train set, 4 wheels,
- 1 ea) Caboose, for Hiawatha Train set, 4 wheels
- 1 ea) Locomotive electric motorized, "Commodore Vanderbilt", black, 4 wheels
- 1 ea) Locomotive tender, black, "New York Central", for Commodore Vanderbilt Train set, 4 wheels
- 3 ea) Passenger cars, Red, white trim, for Commodore Vanderbilt Train set, 4 wheels
- 1 ea) Passenger car, Red, white trim, observation car end, for Commodore Vanderbilt Train set, 4 wheels
- 3 ea) Passenger cars, Red, white trim, for Commodore Vanderbilt Train set, 4 wheels
- 1 ea) Type N transformer, 50 watt, 110-115 volts, 60 cycle, Lionel Corp., "Voltages 6-15 in progressive steps"
- 1 ea) Marx transformer, "For Alternating Current only", Model No. 709, 60 cycles, 110-120 volts, 45 watts.
 Louis Marx & Co., 200 Fifth Ave., New York. Black painted; primary 110 volts, 5 secondary 7 to 13 volts.
- 1 ea) Track Switch, 0 gauge, Lionel No. 1024, with straight track up/down, turns out to the left.
- 1 ea) Track Switch, 0 gauge, Lionel No. 1024, with straight track up/down, turns out to the right.
- 2 ea) Diamond, Lionel, 0 gauge/0 gauge. Plastic base.
- 17 ea) Curved 0 gauge track, light weight, short web, 3-rail electrical.
- 14 ea) Straight 0 gauge track, light weight, short web, 3-rail electrical
- 12 ea) Straight 0 gauge track, heavy weight, high web, 3-rail electrical
- 8 ea) Curved 0 gauge track, heavy weight, high web, 3-rail electrical.
- Misc) Connecting wire, various lengths; bottle of oil/lubricant.
- Misc) Track electrical connectors, for 0 gauge train sets.

Marjorie McLaughlin

Marjorie Blanche McLaughlin age 96 passed away February 13, 2014 from age related causes.

She was born December 14, 1917 in Salt Lake City Utah to Marjorie and Robert Coburn. Her childhood was spent in Robertson, Wyoming. She graduated from High School in nearby Mountain View Wyoming in 1935.

She married Myron William Widdop in 1936 and they had two children, Myron "Keith" Widdop born May 12, 1937 and Glen Lewis Widdop born October 11, 1940.

Marjorie and her two sons arrived in San Diego on her 24th birthday in 1941 (one week after Pearl Harbor was bombed) to join her husband who was employed in the aircraft industry.

They were the first family to occupy their apartment in newly built government housing in Linda Vista.



Marjorie and Myron divorced in 1945 and a few years later she was married for a short time to Owen "Red" McLaughlin. She went to work driving a bus at San Diego Transit System in 1945 as one of the first women bus drivers in San Diego.

Marge operated street cars from 1945 to 1949.

As a side note, she received her Street car training by Ed Herold who himself is a long time SDERA member.

She retired in 1980 after 35 years with SD Transit.

She lived in El Cajon until November of 2009 when she moved to Paradise Village in National City. She enjoyed many friends and activities at Paradise Village until she suffered a fall in June 2013 and went into skilled nursing.



Courtesy of Marjorie McLaughlin's Proud Sons



As Men put on the uniform of the US military in world War Two; So did the women that replaced them. Here is a look of the uniforms of the conductor and Motormen (in this case Motor-women) of the SDERY.

She belonged to the Seventh Day Adventist Church for many years; first in Lakeside and then in Tierrasanta, where she was a regular attendee until she suffered the fall in 2013.

She loved and was very proud of her extended family. She was especially proud of her 7 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren (one of whom predeceased her),

URGENT REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEER DOCENTS AND CASHIERS

Please consider sharing your interest in railroads and San Diego's historic streetcars with our visitors. Our dedicated group of docents needs your help to ensure that the Depot is properly staffed. Sunday mornings can especially use your help.

Docents guide our visitors through the depot and the grounds and handle book store sales.

Training and support are provided by our docent coordinator and other experienced docents. Reference material is on hand, including talking points for the tour, cash register procedures, and general procedures for operating the depot. Shifts are for 4 hours: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, and 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

Please contact John DeLalla at docents@sdera.org or 858-847-3138 for additional information and to join our group of docents.

Thanks to our Donors

Jeff & Karen Arnett

San Diego, CA

Many thanks for the donation of HO scale model trains, comprised of a GP9 Diesel-Electric locomotive and a string of freight cars.

Mr. Edwin Herold

El Cajon, CA

Many thanks for the donations of your American Flyer model trains, street car models.

Mr. Robert Fuson

Spring Valley, CA

Many thanks for the vast donation of model railroad items, trains, tools books, magazines

Mr. Carlton "Carl" Lewis

Chula Vista, CA

Gas engine for SDERA #02 track car

Making history; Preserving history.

At first glance it would look like these two statements are at opposite ends of the spectrum. But as is proven by the move of Car #54, the two concepts can be very much the same.

We seldom think of history being made in our everyday lives.

History was being made that day, and I was fortunate enough to witness Car #54's six hour, 300 foot dash to freedom. No longer would it be a cumbersome, quaint artifact in a storeroom seen by few. After 34 years of hiding, Car #54 has once again seen the light of day. To once again be seen, touched, and experienced in people's everyday lives.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR



It is through the efforts, large and small, by our members, volunteers, and supporters that we are able to make history by preserving it. We can all be very proud in that. I know that I personally felt pride as I watched Car #54 slowly make its way down Fifth Avenue much as it had a century ago, when it was just a part of everyday life.



San Diego Electric Railway Association
d.b.a. San Diego Electric Railway
PLEASE ADDRESS ALL WRITTEN
CORRESPONDENCE TO
922 WEST 23RD STREET, NATIONAL
CITY, CA 91950

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SDERA is at the historic National City Depot,
off I-5 at Mile of Cars Way - take Bay Marina
Dr. west, right on Cleveland, go one block and
left on W. 23rd St and straight into the Depot
Open Thursday through Sunday, 9 AM — 5 PM.
Depot phone: call (619) 474-4400

To submit items to the Newsletter, contact : Richard Finch via e-mail (editor@sdera.org)
Items need to be submitted by the 10th of the month prior to publication. -- Next issue in June
Please send all photos in the largest size as possible. 2 or 3 meg file (about 1000 pixels on the longest side)
also include the names from left to right of people in the photos.

Attention Members: Please look carefully at the mailing label. If your membership has expired, or will expire soon, and you wish to renew your membership, or become a new member, we offer the following levels: Life, (for a single member) \$400; Family, \$35 (please include names); Regular (or Individual) \$25; Senior age 60 and up, \$15; Junior for ages 17 and below, \$15.

Checks can be made out to, SDERA and mailed to
SDERA, 922 West 23rd Street, National City, CA 91950

Upcoming Events

Monthly meetings are normally held at 7:30 PM
on the 2nd Saturday at the National City Depot.
Optional no host dinner at The Barbecue Pit
Restaurant - 920 E. Plaza Blvd, National City at
5:30PM about 1 block east of Highland Ave.
and Plaza Blvd.

Plan to arrive at 7PM to see the Gift Shop, chat,
and buy raffle tickets. The raffle starts at 7:15 PM.

April 12th

SAN DIEGO STREETCARS IN THE 1940'S

Harvey Laner will present a video that he
compiled featuring 57 minutes of movie scenes
of San Diego streetcars taken by various rail fans
during the last years of streetcar service.

Starting in Coronado in the early 1940's the
program provides a comprehensive overview of
routes and equipment right up to the April 29th,
1949 abandonment. Eight and 16 mm films
have been professionally converted to digital vid-
eo with about 35 minutes of narration provided
by SDERA member Allen Copeland.

YOU CAN NOW FIND US ON:



[https://www.facebook.com/pages/
San-Diego-Electric-Railway-Association/
241154262614173](https://www.facebook.com/pages/San-Diego-Electric-Railway-Association/241154262614173)

May 10th

THE WORLD OF PRIVATE RAIL CARS

Ron Milot will present a program on a
personal look into the world of Private Rail Cars
also known as Private Varnish or PV, touching
on traveling on cars, looking at some of them
in action, PV in San Diego, history of PV, and
owning & operating them. Ron has been
interested in PV from the time he was a teenag-
er. He a member of AAPRCO for 25+ years, and
I also a Member of RPCA.