

SAN DIEGO ELECTRIC RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



Trolley Lines

August 2014

RIDE & RELAX



This however may not been on the minds of the motorist following PCC Car 525 on the old wooden double track bridge at the 30th St as it crosses Switzer canyon. The "wig-wag" signal warned operators that only one streetcar was allowed on the bridge at a time.

by
Douglas Ian Duncan

Ride And Relax On A Fifty Cent Pass

The San Diego Electric Railway Company in the mid-1920s offered its home town the best public transportation in the nation. Lines extended to the edges of the town and sometimes beyond.

After 1930, only a few blocks were outside the City Limits. Today, city bus lines cover much the same area, but the electric car had a character and a proudness all of its own. There was something about the backward turning of the trolley wheel,

the singing of the wire, the sound of the wheels, the clicketyclack of the wheels on the track, the high pitch of the motors at speed, the throbbing of the air pump, the hiss of the brakes, and the folding door and step which always bid you a warm welcome.

Yes, this is romance, and it is fond memories too. There was something about the streetcar that made each ride a joy.

Continued on page 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dave Slater

Last May, I was informed by my Doctors that I have Stage 3 Small Cell Lung Cancer. Accordingly, I have turned the presidency over to Vice President, Tom Carnes who will function in this capacity until the November elections.

Now is the time for anyone who is interested in this position should begin thinking about running for this office. I had surgery to remove 2 small spots in June. I was in the hospital for 11 days.

I am now recovering at home, and will begin radiation and chemotherapy on or about 21 July.

That said, I ask that you keep me in your thoughts and prayers for a full recovery. Obviously, I am now a non smoker. I am told that I have an excellent chance at full recovery. As you know, I have been in this office since 2006, and together, we have accomplished a very great deal of positive growth and changes for our Museum.

You also know that I have put my heart, soul and money into our organization. I recently had a conversation with our contractors, Painting Specialties, Timothy and Denise Llanes. They said that they expect to have the outside of our PCC #539 completed by the end of this month! It has been a very painstaking process. After that, they will paint the inside, from the bottom of the windows to the floor, a dark green, just the way SDERY cars had originally been. They will be pulling off our job for a short time to finish a long time client's home in Solana Beach, and then return. I said that's fine, as they are a small company, and always provide great results.

As an overview, I must say that were it not for our wonderful cadre of volunteers, little of our progress would be possible, and for that, I am very grateful. When my recovery is complete, I will be back as an active member, as well as providing advice if asked, to the new President during my recovery as I am able.

Good news for our parade ("herbie") car # 1031. The 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation has Issued an open grant for this car in the amount of \$ 6,000 on the condition that it is to be matched by a donations of \$4,000 from the SDERA. This is the total of the \$10,000 that is the sale price of the car that is currently on the table. I had two potential donors, and they both backed out. The grantor's mandate is that the car stay at the museum permanently, and that is no problem.



San Diego Electric Railway Association
DBA San Diego Electric Railway Co. Inc
922 West 23rd Street
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
- ❖ Mitch Beauchamp - Director
- ❖ Eddie Mc Cann - Director
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- ❖ Sam Judd - legal Counsel
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- ❖ Tom Sapien - Librarian
- ❖ Jim Anderson - Curator of Special Collections Gift Shop Manager/
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
 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
 Missy Cheeseman
 Anthony Carideo
 Sean McColgan
 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!**

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.

Training and support are provided by our docent coordinator and other experienced docents. Reference material is on hand, including talking points for the tour, 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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

All members and the general public are invited to attend the Board of Directors meetings at the National City Depot. The meetings begin at 7:00 PM on the second Monday of each month. The meetings for the next 3 months will be held on August 11, September 8, October 6.

HELP WANTED!

Currently, The following volunteer positions are available:

1. Assistant Treasurer-

working with Treasurer, Jeffrey (Jeff) Trimble. Candidate should have an interest in learning accounting. (I learned the program Quick Books at the depot, and this has allowed me to get a job, which I have now held for almost 2 years.)

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!*

Editor's note:

"Ride And Relax On A Fifty Cent Pass" is reprinted from the June 1964 issue of the "Dispatcher" news letter of the Rail Historical Society of San Diego.

It is part of the Eric Sanders collection at Pacific Southwest Railway Museum, Assoc. Inc.



fifty cent pass Continued from page one

In the 1930s, during the twelve weeks of summer vacation, the company sold the Fifty Cent Weekly Pass for children under 18.

What a great reward such a pass was! It was good in four zones--and you could ride to Old Mission Beach, Coronado, down by the shops, or tear along through the trees and over the bridges of Balboa Park.

With a dime in your pocket for a Jumbo Malt at the Majestic, each day was filled with new thrills until the magic pass came to an end.

Some lines, of course, were more interesting than others, but, usually all were included in one's travel.

Lines 1, 2 and 3 were fun to ride after they were equipped with the new Presidents' Conference Committee cars.

Not only were the cars new, they had a bus-like look and smooth fast acceleration. They could stop on a dime, and they featured a quiet ride, and a sharp bright bell.

These three lines all had some special track work for the turning of the cars at the end of each route.

Line 1, for example, ended at the intersection of Park Blvd. and University and it was necessary for a car to use both North and Southbound tracks on Park to complete the "Y". With two other routes also using this spot, the Junction was a busy place.

In those days, the late thirties, the cars of

each line ran every six minutes at mid-day.

Number 4, the Imperial Avenue line, featured smooth, heavy rail from 16th to 32nd Streets and a short three block private right-of-way which ducked under the El Cajon Branch of the San Diego & Arizona Eastern

Railway Company and ended a foot or so from Wabash

Creek.

It was a lonely end of the line-- only a very few houses, no sidewalks nor paved side streets--usually the motorman rode these last few blocks alone.

This route also passed the main car house, and therefore, a ride on this line was a must.

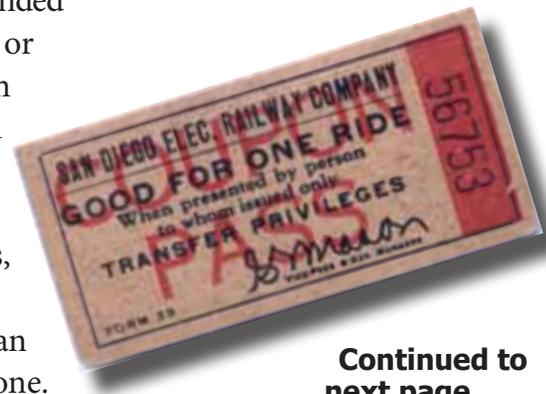
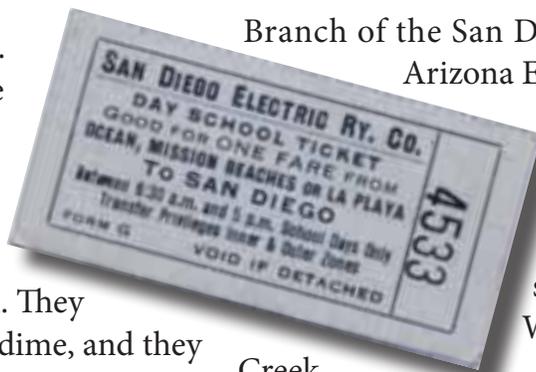
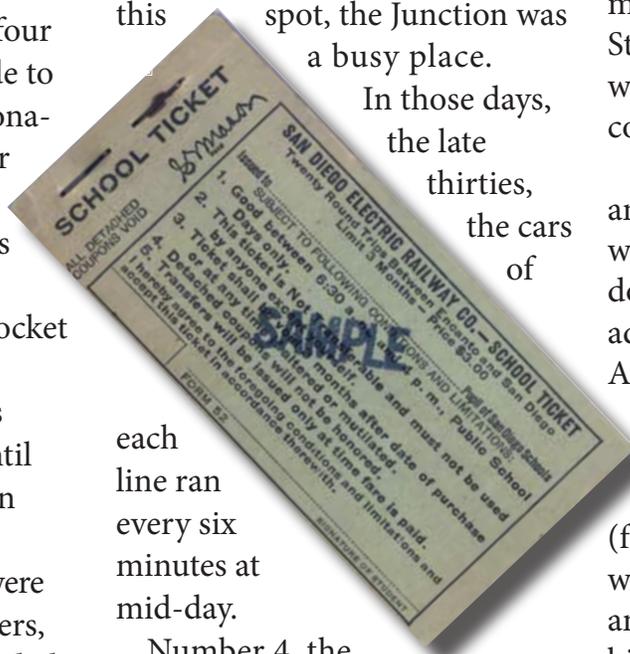
Line 5 was wonderful. For years the Class 1 (125- 148) cars, which were among the most unusual in the United States, used this route. They were rebuilt in house by the company.

A second front door was added and the center gate replaced with windows. The original door opened inward, but the added one opened outward. After 16th and Market, this

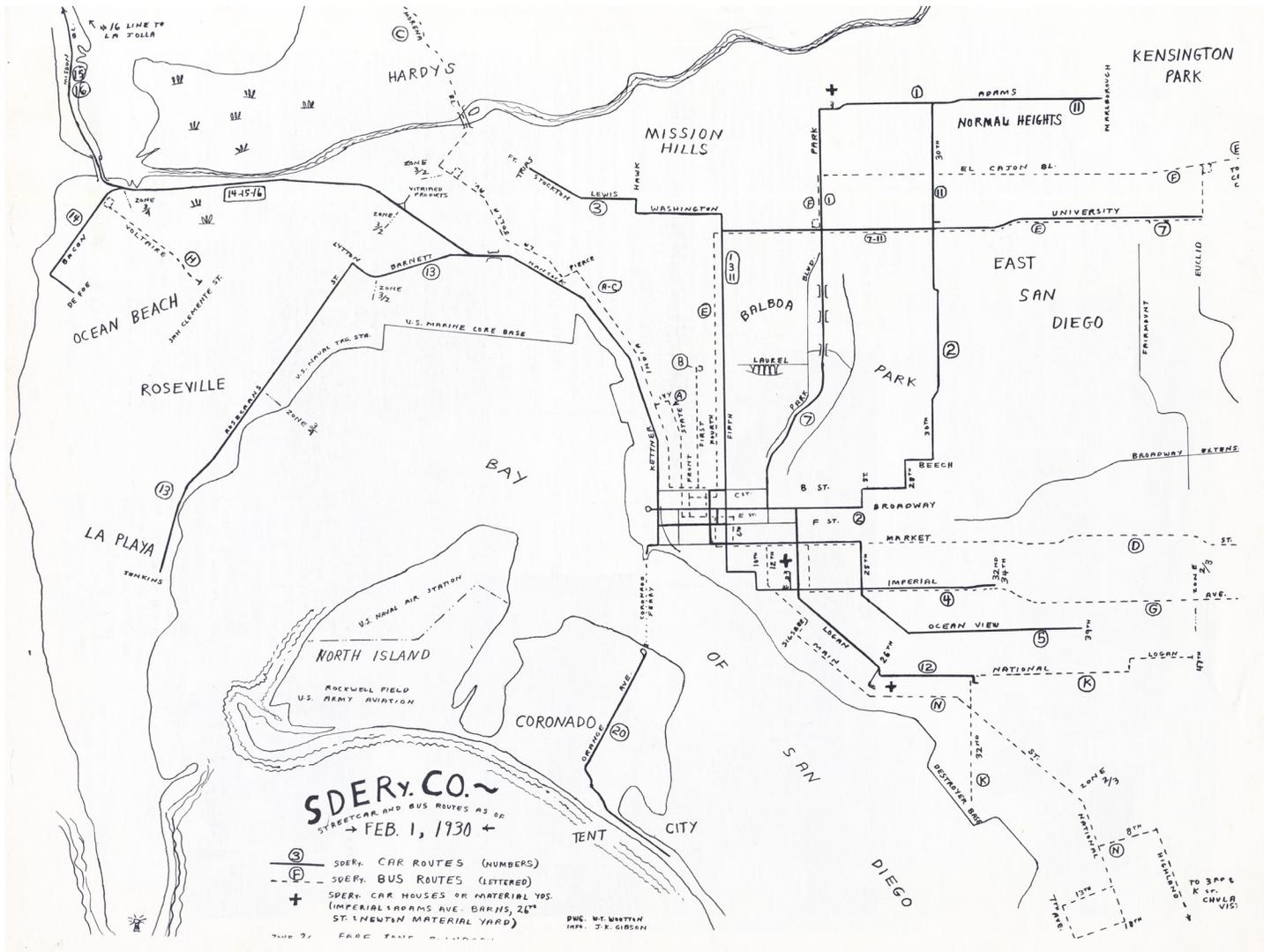
line was single track with a passing track about every mile. Ocean View Boulevard (formerly Woolman Avenue) was an up and down hill route and it was great fun to ride the big old lumbering cars as they would growl uphill only to gleefully coast down the other side.

Later, sometime shortly after the 1935-1936 Exposition, Class 3 cars were used.

On New Year's Day 1938, the roller coaster came to an end but most of tracks remain in full view until early in the 1950s.



Continued to next page



The 7 Route was a busy one-- it began at the Union Depot, featured a colorful ride through the Park, darted over three impressive steel bridges and jogged along busy and narrow University Avenue.

For almost a quarter of a century, the writer rode this line to and from town. No line extended farther to the East and the end of the 7 was at the edge of town. Beyond were hills, vacant land adorned with sage, bare subdivisions, and very few houses.

A large unfinished hotel and the Naval Radio Station didn't seem to populate the lonesome space between the end and La Mesa. For a few years before the Second War, PCC cars were used at night, but mostly, the ride was the good old Class 5 (400-449) cars. Development of the city came too late or this line might have been extended out the Chollas Valley to La Mesa.

The Number 9 car had several features which made it different from other San Diego runs.

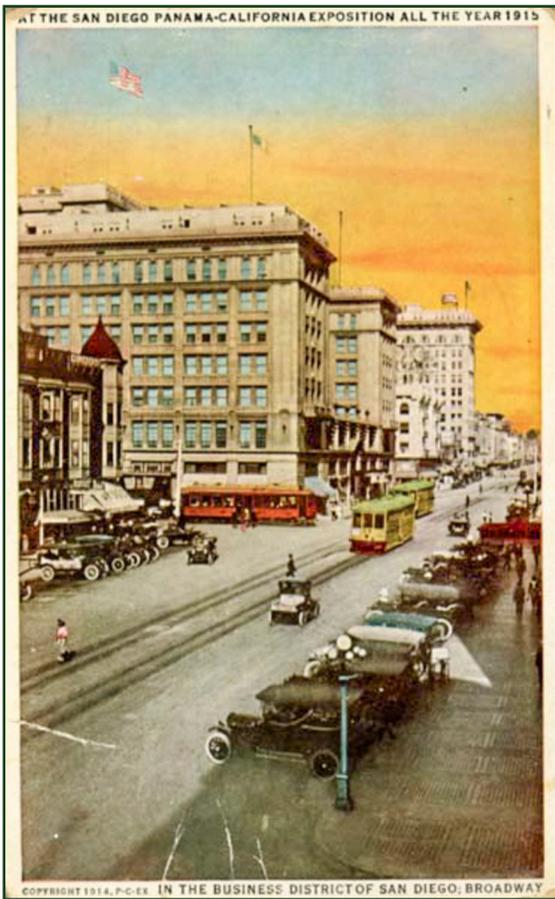
It was a downtown loop line, car 411 was assigned and

carried special signs telling of the schedule. It was the last local car to have two man operation, and the motorman and conductor earned their pay with three round trips each hour.

The track below Kettner Blvd. was made double early in the 1940s and delays became much less of a problem.

This line ended operation with cars brought from New York City (Class 9) which, while colorful, somehow never fit into the San Diego picture.

Continued to **fifty cent pass** on page 10



Seeing S





San Diego



HAPPENINGS AT THE DEPOT

We need 2 parts for our PCC # 539

St Louis builder plate and headlight trim needed for the PCC car # 539 restoration project.

We are restoring the Ex Muni 1170, and need the parts pictured in the above photo to complete this cosmetic restoration. We are willing to pay a reasonable price, but donations would be happily accepted also.

We are the San Diego Electric Railway Association, Inc. a 501-C-3 group, operating the National City Depot. Our web site is www.sdera.org We are located in National City, California in San Diego County.

Should you have any leads on where to get this material, please call. If you have any of the pictured items to sell at a reasonable price or donate, please contact either:

Dave Slater, president, 619-222-5442 or
Jeff Trimble, treasurer, 619-587-4127

Thank you, Jeff Trimble, treasurer

Thanks to our Donors

Mr. Roger Beckman

Baton Rouge, L A 70809-7291

Dear Roger,

Many thanks for the donation of your 1948 era Lionel model railroad collection of 3 rail equipment. This will further enhance our Museum's ability to prosper and grow.

Mr. Glen Brose

Chino Valley, Az 86323

Dear Glen,

Thank you for your cash donation to help fund the replacement of the Bi-fold doors for our 1917 Birney streetcar # 336. To see color photos of this work in progress you can go to the web site at [WWW sdera.org](http://WWW.sdera.org) and download the June 2014 Issue.

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

Coming or Going,

Car # 539 is going to be a real looker as the final colors and artwork are starting to appear.



Look closely at the bottom half of the car and see that high gloss automotive finish is being applied. The Plum (Roof), Carnation Cream and dark green colors were adapted about 1930. Car #539 was built in 1946 by the St Louis Car Co with this color scheme

fifty cent pass from page 5

Line 11 was important. It went by the Nation's most modern car barn at Adams Avenue and Florida streets, passed over five bridges, and was the only line after 1930 to leave the City limits.

It passed by the Mission Cliff Gardens, carried both freight and passengers, and led to the development of a large area along the South Bank of the Mission valley.

Like Number 7, the Adams Avenue line used Class 5 cars with night time PCC units for a few years before and after the War.

Number 12 ended at a tree! a fact which was written up in a national publication as a very strange way to end a street car line!

For the trolley bug, there was the SDER storage yard, a two block walk was made to the SD&AE engine house, and then too--this line came near the main barns and shops of the railway. During the war years, the company brought 14 big cars from Salt Lake City and these, called Class 8s, were used on this line. Thousands upon thousands of service men from the near-by Naval Station rode to town on the big block busters. Before the war, Class 3, and later Class 5 cars were operated on this route.

The beach lines were really wonderful--in the 1930s the area served was sparsely built up, there were open fields, low wooden trestles over the salt marshes, and long fast rides.

The runs originated at the Plaza, ran down Broadway to the Depot, and along Kettner and Hancock to a high wooden trestle over the Santa Fe tracks, and across Pacific Highway to La Playa Junction where the route thirteen car branches from the other lines.



Color photo postcard from the Tom Matson collection

The 13 served the bay side of Point Loma. Much of the right-of-way was between the Naval Training Center and Rosecrans St.

A long single track at the edge of the Rosecrans street-and below Canon Street, continued through an area of beautiful homes, winding at street center until it reached the gate of Fort Rosecrans. The 13 Car also served as the Kettner Blvd. Local.

Line 14 continued on across the marshes on the South edge of Mission Bay until Ocean Beach Junction, where it turned Southward on Bacon for a fifteen block run to the end of the line.

This line was single track and entirely in the street after it entered Bacon--the last two blocks were on Santa Cruz Street.

It was only a short walk to Sunset Cliffs Park or a much longer walk up the hill and

along the streets of vacant subdivisions to the Theosophical Institute.

The writer once spent a pleasant day on a hike from the end of the 14 line over the hill to La Playa and the Rosecrans route.

The Mission Beach car was No. 15--it usually ran

only in the Summer and continued Northward from Ocean Beach to the Amusement Center, where there was a multitrack station, and then on to Old Mission Beach.

The 16 car continued Northward on Mission Boulevard, a block from the ocean in Pacific Beach, Electric Avenue to the Spanish-Colonial Sub Station at La Jolla Hermosa, and on up Fay Street to Prospect where the SDER had constructed a beautiful Spanish-style terminal building built within a loop.



The Ocean Beach-Mission Beach-La Jolla cars were operated as a train--each one being automatically uncoupled to continue on its own or turn back. The Ocean Beach conductor, for example, became the motorman for the local street operation. There is no doubt--the schedules were fast the cars attractive and comfortable, the service excellent, and the ride as interesting as any other in Southern California. For the street car bug--on a 50 cent pass--it was the greatest!

Line 20 was the number assigned to the Orange Avenue line of the Coronado Division. The number was never carried by the trolleys but was listed on street maps and used by the company. The cars met every other Ferry, swung around a picturesque setting with a short view of the bay, followed by the car barn, and then across First Street and the SD&AE Coronado Branch for a run up Orange Avenue to the Hotel del Coronado. For years, two Class 1 cars made the trip, going beyond the Hotel to Tent City.

The round trip took 40 minutes and there was a long wait at the end of the line.

About 1937, the SDER bought two double truck Birney cars from the Glendale and Montrose, and extensively rebuilt them for Route 20 service. The line was cut back to the Hotel and a Birney could make three trips each hour. In the morning and afternoon rush hours, both cars were used.

Repairs were always made in San Diego--the cars being trucked around the Silver Strand --and one of the six older cars would again trod the tracks set in the planted meridian strip. The War years saw much heavy use of all the equipment, but then in 1947, the most beautiful city served by the SDER was lost to rail service. And with the War years the 50 cent Pass came to an end--and shortly after the War, the dollar adult Pass went up in price--but what a chance it was to explore --to thrill to another ride on the green and cream cars, and just "Ride and Relax"

OUT TO THE END OF THE LINE ON ROUTE 7 AND BACK



The tower at Euclid and University has been a long-time fixture as seen in this 1940s photo with Car 433 (above) at the end of the #7 Line. The place where poles were changed and seats flipped for the inbound run to the Santa Fe Depot downtown.

The Euclid tower stood for years until termites finally forced its demolition in 1999.

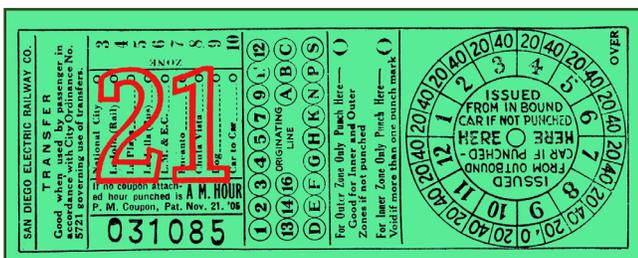
Built in 1932, the original spire loomed above what was then a drive in soda fountain and has hosted several businesses over the years.

The Tower originally consisted of two parts: a spire sitting on top of a two-story, octagon shaped building. The 110-foot hollow monumental pylon was built to resemble the Empire State Building, but it was shortened by four to six feet so it could be more easily maintained.

There were clocks on the four sides of the tower but they were removed due to children shooting out the plate glass clock faces with pellet guns and sling-shots.

The photo to the right shows the new structure rebuilt in 2009 that is today the Tower Bar.

In front of the tower, SDERy installed a Wye late in 1936 or early 1937 so operators could turn the new single-ended PCC cars around.





San Diego Electric Railway Association
d.b.a. San Diego Electric Railway
PLEASE ADDRESS ALL WRITTEN
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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 October
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.

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)

August 9th.

Don Brown will present a program on the
PE San Bernardino division and the A, F, P,
and Birney shuttle lines of LA Railways.

September 13th.

“ THE HERNIA GAUGE, 1 ½ INCH
SCALE RAILROADING “

Dan Williams, President of the Chula Vista
Live Steamers will be giving a presentation
which gives a short history of miniature live

steam railroading, a history of the Chula Vista
Live Steamers and a look at the operations of
the Chula Vista Live Steamers today.

The Chula Vista Live Steamers is a
non-profit educational organization interested
in building and safely operating scale model
railroad equipment.

Also the Chula Vista Live Steamers is
celebrating its 40th year of providing service
to the community of Chula Vista and the
San Diego area.