

SAN DIEGO ELECTRIC RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



TROLLEY LINES

San Diego Electric
Railway Association
DBA San Diego
Electric Railway Co.
PO Box 89068
San Diego, CA 92138
(619) 474-4400

July 2011

Check us out at our
web site:

www.sdera.org

Scouts Do A Good Turn At The Depot



Photo by Ron Sutch

"Do A Good Turn Daily" - Boy Scout Slogan

The highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America is that of Eagle Scout. Part of attaining this rank is to demonstrate leadership skills by planning and carrying out an Eagle Scout service project. Tim Lewis (son of Scotty Lewis) chose to do his "good turn" (a good deed) for our National City Depot. Tim had to plan and organize the purchase of materials, construction, and painting of new picnic tables for the Depot. On Saturday, May 14th, Tim and scouts from Troop 151 set up an assembly line to assemble, caulk, and paint the tables that will become an important part of making the Depot a welcome place to visit.

Scouting fosters this kind of involvement between scouts and their parents. Thankfully, Scotty Lewis is a big volunteer with our organization and SDERA is proud that Tim followed in his Dad's footsteps and chose the Depot to do his Eagle Project. These tables will be a lasting reminder of just what makes an Eagle Scout and how scouting is an important part of our community. Congratulations and Thank You Tim!

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Psst! Wanna Know a Secret?

This newsletter is available **in color** on our website. See www.sdera.org and look on our Newsletters page.

SDERA operates the historic National City Depot museum which is open Thursday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone 619-474-4400.

San Diego Electric Railway Association, Inc.

- David Slater, President
- Tom Carnes, Vice President
- Chris Higgins, Secretary / Webmaster / Newsletter Editor
- Tom Matson, Treasurer / Docent & Membership Coordinator
- Directors: Gene Calman, Mitch Beauchamp, Jeff Trimble, Jim Anderson, Mike Reneau
- Corporate Counsel: Sam Judd
- Gift Shop Manager: Jim Anderson

PCC Car Project Update

- Dave Slater Project Manager

Now on the web at www.sdera.org/sdvt

PCC car 529 has been laterally transferred to MTS for the San Diego Trolley and has now been incorporated into the fleet as originally planned. She is now undergoing certification testing by the California Public Utilities Commission (CALPUC) as any historic rail vehicle must undergo in order to return to full time revenue service on any transit system. I am told that earlier the Federal Railroad Administration did an inspection and signed off, with the proviso that this car passed all CALPUC testing. I am further told that if all goes well, and we have no reason to think otherwise, she will be in revenue service in just a few months on a segment of the Orange line known as the Downtown Loop. This new service will be known as the Silver Line. She will always be parked inside the C Shop for safe keeping when not running on the line to keep vandals in check. A big "Thanks" to MTS for recognizing the value of this car and keeping it safe!

A decision was made that we would not use strictly a coin fare box so I contacted my friend Dave Morgan, retired from the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). It turns out that Dave had just what we need and offered to donate this to us along with a key. Long story short, we have the box and member Dan Kelly used Mother's Metal Polish and it is now gleaming. I had two extra keys made and then decided that it would look very nice painted the Kelly Green like our cars. Dennis Frazier accomplished most of this and should finish up long before you read this. The fare box was manufactured by the TTC as there were no boxes available that fit their needs at the time. Dave tells me that these boxes were used from 1920-1995 which is a very long run. Visit www.yahogroups.com and type in sdvintagetrolley to see photos of it mounted in PCC #531.



Harry Mathis and I have been making videos of #529 in action, one especially for Life Member Dr. John Hoperton. We will re-shoot several segments to be used as promos. The main filming will be completed at the unveiling, sometime in July 2011. I just got word that there will be another on-location shoot next week. We are waiting for a set of stabilizers to be installed to abate the traditional sway of PCC cars and a few other minor items prior to the final QA inspection. Operators are being trained on an estimated 1/4 mile stretch of yard track on the C side of the Yards. Meanwhile, back at the

A Shop, we keep the batteries of 531 and 532 charged, the windshields sparkling, and the destination sign rotated on 531 - one of our two "Show Cars" for the media and occasional tours. Rebuilt brake light assemblies are being installed on car 531, so there is always something interesting going on.

Chuck Bencik, Dennis Frazier, and Gene Calman did a great amount of work to make this happen. Industrial Archeology at its finest! Aaron Donovan pitches in when he is able, as he is a college student. Ron

Sutch is, as you know, our Staff Photographer and does an excellent job. Eddie Herold comes in from time to time as a consultant, as he was a PCC Car Instructor, and put the last car away in the car barn on Adams Avenue on April 24, 1949.

I am told that we need \$100,000 to begin the restoration of the next car, #530. We feel that once #529 is out and running, we will be able to get this amount from new corporate sponsors that have been waiting to see her doing what we say she will do. They will be very pleased! Donations, large and small are needed.

Upcoming Work Party Dates: Work Sessions are now being held Tuesday and Thursday (Saturday sessions have been suspended for now) from 10AM to 2PM. *Due to security requirements, please contact Dave Slater / 619-222-5442 for authorization to be on the Trolley grounds.*

President's Message

Dave Slater

As usual, a lot is going on with our museum. By the time you read this, we should have all the bids in for the body repairs and painting of both cars 6891 (Vienna car) and 357 (the Birney car). The clock is ticking. Our deadline to have this work completed, three track panels moved to the south lot and dug-in 15" to make the rails flush with the surface, is September 10, 2011. This is when our lease comes up for it's 3-year renewal. We have 5 three-year leases, with automatic renewals, PROVIDED that we meet the mandates of each of the segments. This first one calls for the completion of the display lot which is the south end of our 1.1 acre parcel that our Depot Museum sits on. Potential volunteer/donors for the heavy equipment work are former board member Gary Sweetwood, who owns the Maintenance Of Way (MOW) equipment on display, Mark Whillock, his business partner and donor of the move of the CONEX box and track panels as well as the MOW equipment (ballast regulator and ballast tamper) and member John Talbot, who, among other things, has a company that installs railroad sidings.

We also are at the point where we will need to bring in professional sign contractors to analyze and repair our marquee sign at the south end near Bay Marina Drive. My fellow board member, Mike Reneau, has been working diligently on this sign, first, getting power to it, identifying a breaker in our power room to connect it to, checking the sizes of the ballasts, and they all have checked good. We need a truck mounted man lift to explore the top of the sign, which I estimate to be 15-20' tall. There are exterior lights on that and some very large fluorescent tubes inside, and we don't know the proper method of getting these tubes out and installing new ones. I feel that having the marquee sign lit during the hours of darkness will increase our visitor rate by at least 15%. Once the track, cars, and floral pots and irrigation are installed, add another 30%!

We have our many other volunteers to thank for keeping our museum in operation, and moving forward in a positive direction. Fellow board member, Gene Calman, installed another clutch cable on our parade float #5227 and Mike Reneau and member Rod Gilbert adjusted same. Mike also donated and installed a solar panel to keep the starting battery charged. Charles Smith and yours truly got her running with a couple shots of ether in the throats of the carburetors. I got her running some weeks ago and drove her to the northwest side of the Depot so I could use engineer's marking paint and flags to mark off the three areas where the digging is to be completed and the track panels set into place. This car, aka "Herbie," needs to have the white paint sanded and repainted as we plan to take her to the National City Car Show in August. VOLUNTEERS please! Member Robert Baxter has been a great help to us, in that he and I work closely together as do most all of our volunteers. Robert has gotten men to perform both weed abatement on the south lot, which he and I paid for from our personal funds, as well as cleaning up the slag from the torching of scrap rail on the north side. Robert has also gotten some men to come and give me estimates to paint car #357. Charles Smith is a very diligent volunteer as well, filling 3 days per week, when Tom Matson can't get the schedule filled. We also have Mike Quigg, Pete Pearson, Scotty Lewis, and Patrick McColgan as our engineers, running our model railroad for visitors. Charles and Mike also work as docents, along with Jody Surwieck, George Geyer, Jeff Trimble, Jim Anderson, and several others that are new, and I have yet to meet. Our Librarian Tom Sapien is doing a pristine job of getting our library in tip top shape. Hubert Jansen also comes down from San Jose regularly to docent as well, and I work every Sunday afternoon. Bud Sonka is our Community Relations Development person, and he and I work closely together, attending meetings, and collaborating on

(Continued on page 7)

New Donations Shed Light on Old Santa Fe Depot's Restaurant Years

Chuck Bencik

National City's historic Santa Fe depot is getting better known every day. While young people in many recent school tour groups have been introduced to the 1881-built, two-storey wooden structure, their parents and grandparents who remember it back as far as World War II are showing up as well. And some of them come with surprises and puzzling questions.

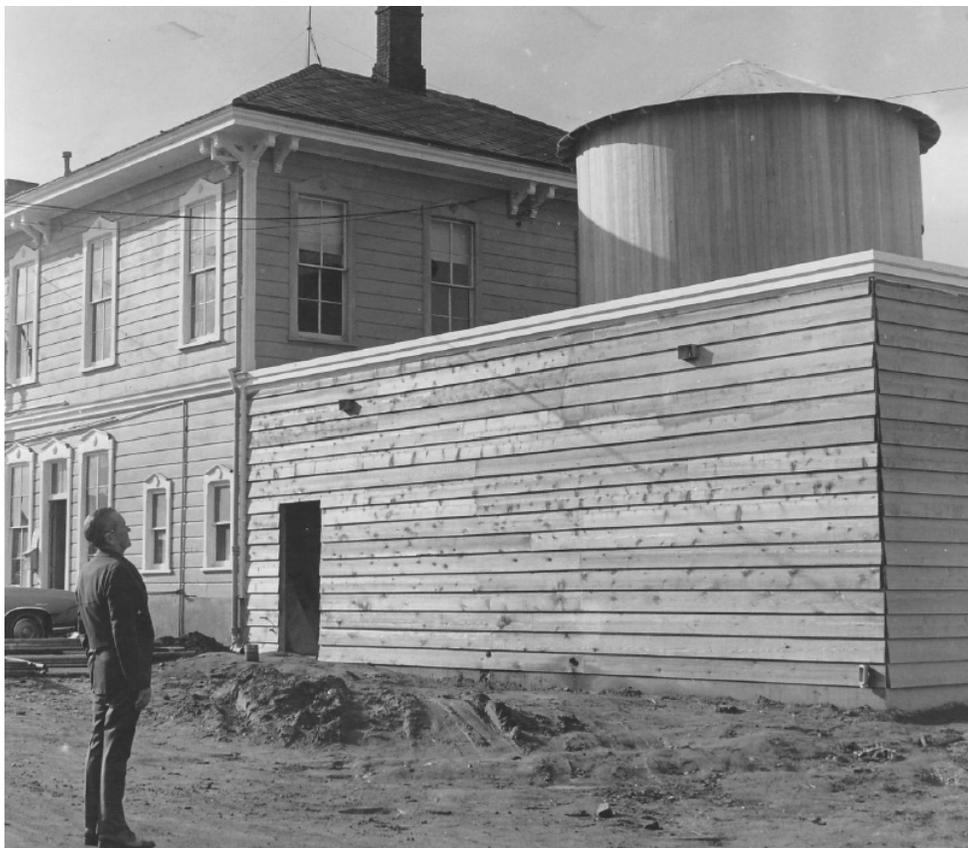
A couple visited a few years back and talked of a train - - locomotive, passenger cars, a caboose - parked not on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks behind the Depot, but instead RIGHT IN FRONT! At the entrance on Harrison Avenue and 23rd Street, in fact. The docent on duty was stunned. He had never heard of it! And nothing about it, either, in the docent manual!

But then the visitors said that someone had turned the Depot into a restaurant!!! This really told him: *it's time* to search the Depot's library files, and all the other libraries'. And the Internet. Sure enough, a brown menu cover turned up, decorated with art work showing an antiquated train, and a building with a water tank on top, which is no longer there! Soon, the story of those old train cars, and the man who mortgaged his house to make it big as a restaurateur started to appear in *Trolley Lines*, the newsletter of the San Diego Electric Railway Association. Milt Pollard, a retired executive of Friden Calculators, had invested grand sums to convert the Depot into a first class restaurant. At least two other managers had operated a restaurant there, but

it was Pollard who first came up with the idea, and paid for the necessary alterations and equipment.

Best of all, Pollard's son and daughter have recently visited and toured the Historic National City Depot. On June 16th, Gary Pollard, accompanied by his wife Sheila and his sister, Sharon Surber, arrived at National City to accept the thanks of SDERA President Dave Slater for donating to the Depot caretakers a spectacular collection of mementos Gary and Sharon had inherited from their father.

Luck was with the preservers of the 130 year old structure. SDERA member Chuck Bencik regularly writes historic



A proud Milt Pollard looks at the newly constructed kitchen for the Depot Restaurant in this January 1973 photo. Photo courtesy The Star News.



pieces for the organization's newsletter. He'd gotten impatient about the dearth of details about how the restaurant and the 81-foot-long lounge & bar car looked inside, what the menus were like, where and how food was prepared and stored, how many tables and chairs it held. When someone gave him the telephone number of Gary Pollard, who lives in Yuma, he called, introduced himself, and asked those questions. Luck indeed, because Gary and his sister, Sharon, a resident of Chula Vista, had worked in the restaurant for the two years their father ran it. Gary offered first to lend the scrapbook he'd inherited from his Dad, and then decided he wanted to donate it, and some other objects. He astonished us, by offering first to loan, then to make a gift of the 500 feet of motion picture film his father had made, showing the added structures being built, and the railroad rolling stock getting moved onto the Depot property. As if that wasn't enough, Gary convinced his sister to do likewise, with a Depot Restaurant scrapbook of her own, which included railroad operating documents dated 1908, as well as the restaurant mementos from 1973 thru 1975.

Among the items given to SDERA were nearly a score of newspaper articles with photo illustrations from 1972 and 1973 National City and other community newspapers; Pollard family photographs; snapshots of exterior work taking place on the Depot grounds; four high-quality printed menus from the Pollard era (1973 to 1975); original pen-and-ink artwork showing the Restaurant entrance panorama, used to decorate menu covers and advertising; four 1908 Santa Fe working paper carbon copies, including telegrams, freight bills, and train orders; a 1953 Santa Fe Operating Department Rule Book, and the aforementioned 500 feet of 8mm motion picture film.

Among the prized donations is a copy of the July 5, 1973 issue of the *Bonita Valley News*. On page 8 of that newspaper is an article by Adelle Moeller, entitled "Unique and Elegant: The Depot Opening July 9th." It gives the most complete description of the new The Depot restaurant to be found anywhere.

SDERA moved into National City Depot in the early 2000s. They've been leasing it from the owner, National City, with the object of displaying, restoring, and preserving the surviving artifacts and history of the electric urban railways of the San Diego metropolitan area. Those sparking, growling, unreliable horseless rail cars began operating in San Diego in 1887. Under the leadership of John D. Spreckels, several railways were converted into city electric street lines, with some bus routes in remote areas. Electric streetcars soon overtook the horse cars and the failed cable car system. They were a transportation mainstay, during the lean years of World War II.

But the Depot's history is most bound up with the Santa Fe railroad. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe had intended National City to be the 32nd parallel transcontinental railroad terminal site. SDERA's home base occupies a retired railroad depot right next door to an active railroad's rumbling, clattering freight cars and the loud blasts of diesel engine horns. SDERA has realized that it needs to pay MUCH more attention to the Depot's own Santa Fe history.

One resident of National City has very strong ties to Depot history: Joel Jerauld. The city is home to Jerauld's Automotive and Muffler Shop, on National Avenue. Its original proprietor, Albert Jerauld, Jr., Joel's father, was born in 1918 at the Depot, upstairs in the 2nd storey family apartment of Albert Jerauld Sr., who had been the Depot agent from 1909 until 1944. Joel, who lives in La Mesa, has endowed the SDERA library with early photos of his grandfather and father, working the telegraph, and passing train orders to locomotive engineers. Joel's grandfather was Western Union telegram office agent, freight agent, and all around manager of the Depot. Joel was able to furnish several new images of the inside of the Restaurant, which his deceased father and Grandfather must surely have come to visit. The Bay area is fortunate, and the members of SDERA are grateful to these generous descendants of our historic forebears.

Street Faire/Get Together: Sun Oct 9, 2011

SDERA member and local historian Susan Walter is putting a call out for exhibitors to our first-ever Street Faire / Get Together. Thanks to our newly renovated yard and street area in front of the Depot, we can now host events like this! It's time to become a part of the neighborhood of National City!

We are looking for your historic, art, crafts, educational, or hobby group to come set up a table and distribute fliers about your interests—even if it is not railroad related. We want everyone to come see our museum while you are exhibiting because we want publicity and we figure you do too. There will be space for a table and 2 chairs per group (more available by arrangement with Susan) and pop-up shade covers are recommended. Children WILL be visiting your booth so have something child friendly. Bring fliers to give away. Items to be sold need prior approval as this is not a "Swap Meet".

Set up time is 9:00 -10:00. The event will run from 10:00-4:30 and tear-down is 4:30-5:00.

For info or reservations contact Street Faire Chair Susan Walter at sdwalter@cox.net, or Assistant Chair Tom Matson at 619 275-0216 tmatson@sdera.org.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED BY OCTOBER 5, 2011.

So far, we have historic museums, spinners, weavers, 2-3 speakers on rail history, blacksmiths, musicians, antique automobiles, tomahawk throwers, and train pictures for sale and we are acquiring more participants.

This is in addition to the regular exhibits at the Depot such as the 3 rail model trains & the four trolleys. We also will have refreshments for sale in the bookstore and may entertain having someone serving hot dogs & etc.



We Want YOU at the Street Faire!



Tim Lewis and volunteers put the finish coat on new picnic tables. Thanks to Tim and the Scouts (and SDERA friends), visitors will have a comfortable place to enjoy lunch!

Photo by Ron Sutch.

Baggage Cart Restored

Jeff Trimble

Located at the entrance to the National City Depot is a beautiful Southern Pacific Baggage Cart. This cart is on long term loan from the San Diego Maritime Museum. The cart was in great need of maintenance and paint, and for the long term survival of this piece of history, it needed help. Since I had never done any type of restoration, I relied on advice and tools from both Dave Slater and Bob Recks. After sanding and puttying, I put on a couple of layers of white primer as an undercoat.

My next problem was getting the right colors for the cart. I had DuPont numbers for the colors, but they had long since been retired. One of the colors

was obtained by buying a 1 oz. bottle of model paint, and taking a sample to the paint store. The sample was analyzed by the computer, and which formulated the gallon of paint. The other color was found under a new name in the paint color pallets.

Today, we have a good looking display piece at the entrance to the museum; this is preserved for years to come.



The restored baggage cart now sits in front of the Depot in Southern Pacific colors.
Photo by Jeff Trimble.

The President's Message

(Continued from page 3)

correspondence to the various entities that can support us such as The Unified Port of San Diego, The City of National City, and many others. Vice President Tom Carnes and former President Jim Price are also regular docent and volunteers. Many thanks!

A big thank you to Jeff Trimble for taking on the assistant Treasurer role for us. Founding member Tom Matson has been Treasurer for several years along with his other duties. Jeff's assistance will help Tom have some extra time with Membership Chairman duties.

Again, thanks to our many volunteers!

Fallen Flag: Harlan Hatz

Long-time member and train fan Harlan Hatz died on March 7 this year. Often seen in his cart with wagon attached and doing the rounds at every train event, Harlan was a dedicated railfan that did not let his physical limitations stop him from experiencing what he loved most. He will be missed by all.

Thanks to Hydrex Pest Control! A wood structure like the Depot is always a target for pests that want to reduce the place to dust. Hydrex was kind enough to give us a great price to get rid of drywood and subterranean termites when we were doing the external restoration *and* we didn't have to tent the building.



San Diego Electric Railway Association
d.b.a. **San Diego Electric Railway**
PO Box 89068
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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

Visit us on the Web! www.sdera.org

To submit items to the Newsletter, contact Chris Higgins via e-mail (webmaster@sdera.org) or phone (858-521-0895). Items need to be submitted by the 18th of the month prior to publication.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Attention Members: Please look carefully at the mailing label. If your membership has expired, or will expire soon, please send your dues, and your tax deductible contribution, to SDERA, PO Box 89068, San Diego, CA 92138-9068. Thank you.
Life: \$400, Regular \$25, Family \$35 (please include names), Regular \$25, Senior (60 +) \$15, and Juniors 17 and below \$15.

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 Barbeque Pit Restaurant** - 920 E.Plaza Blvd, National City at 5:30PM about 1 block east of Highland Ave. and Plaza Blvd. (Except March, June, and September when we do a potluck). Plan to arrive at 7PM to see the Gift Shop, chat, and buy raffle tickets. The raffle starts at 7:15 PM.

Saturday, July 9 - The west coast premier of the Milt Pollard film production, "From Train Depot to Food Depot," together with music videos capturing the film highlights of this exciting show. This drama of the trials and tribulations of a dashing, sophisticated, budding restaurateur, determined to create a Gay 90s atmosphere in a spectacular rail depot setting, and serving exquisite haute cuisine will be introduced by Charles (Chuck) Bencik. Filmed by Friden Calculator executive Milt Pollard, in Super Eight Millimeter! This showing made possible by Gary Pollard and Sharon Surber, heirs to the Pollard fortune.

Saturday, August 13 - Don Brown, Part 1: 80 slides on the San Pedro line of Pacific Electric red cars; and, after the break, Part 2: 80 slides on the Los Angeles Railway narrow gage yellow streetcars featuring the H and U lines. These were shot prior to these lines being abandoned on August 3, 1947.

Saturday, September 10 - Tom Carnes will cover the life of one of San Diego's most significant pioneers and developers: John D. Spreckels. We know him mostly in the rail community as the prime developer of the San Diego Electric Railway and the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway. He was however into many more things. Tom will cover these with past and present pictures of many of his more noteworthy accomplishments.

Sunday, October 9 - Street Faire / Get Together at the National City Depot (Details in this newsletter)

Next Board Meetings - August 8, September 12, and October 10 at 7:00PM at the National City Depot.