

SAN DIEGO ELECTRIC RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



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

June 2008

Check us out at our
web site:
www.sdera.org

TROLLEY LINES

Steam Returns to San Diego!



Participants in San Diego's Rock and Roll Marathon had an interesting opportunity to see a sight not seen since 1953 - a real steam engine pulling passenger cars towards the Santa Fe Depot. Local railfans had to negotiate closed streets and marathon-filled parking to get anywhere near the tracks.

Santa Fe locomotive 3751 had the distinction of leading the last steam train out of San Diego on August 23, 1953. This Baldwin 4-8-4 engine, built in 1926, was retired from service in 1957 and was kept as a static display in San Bernadino until 1986. The San Bernadino Railroad Historical Society restored it to operating condition in 1991 and has done special runs to Bakersfield, Williams (Arizona), and even as far as Chicago. Engine 3751 is now stored at the Amtrak/Redondo Junction Roundhouse just south of L.A.'s Union Station. Unfortunately, Amtrak dismantled the old roundhouse, and the locomotive must be stored under a tarp.

Bringing steam to San Diego has taken several years to come to fruition. In 2003, an excursion was cancelled when insurance was not available and the North County Transit

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

<i>Steam Returns to San Diego</i>	1, 4
<i>PCC Car Project Update</i>	2
<i>President's Message</i>	3
<i>Donations Needed For New PCC Car Wheels</i>	5
<i>New DVDs in the Bookstore</i>	5
<i>BNSF Crossing to be Repaired</i>	5
<i>Streetcar and Railroad</i>	Insert
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	Back

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.

Cover Photo: ex-Santa Fe locomotive 3751 prepares to leave downtown San Diego on its return to Los Angeles. One of the San Diego Trolley's Blue Line trains peeks around on the left.

Photo - Paul McGregor

San Diego Electric Railway Association

- David Slater, President
- George Geyer, Vice President / Bookstore Manager
- Chris Higgins, Secretary, Webmaster / Newsletter Editor
- Tom Matson, Treasurer
- Directors: Jim Price, Tom Carnes, Gary Sweetwood, Mitch Beauchamp, Jeff Trimble



PCC Car Project Update

- Dave Slater, Project Manager

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

The rehabilitation of the windows in car #529 is nearly complete! This has been an arduous task indeed! The only thing left is the reinstallation of one exterior panel. Windows are being removed from car #530, and #531. Chuck Bencik is my sub-manager of this portion of the project. He has taught classes to Tom Carnes, Dennis Frazier, Ron Sutch and Paul McGregor, who are diligently at work making this happen. Many thanks also go to CityWide Auto Glass Company, and owner Mark Delia, for the donation of the reglazing of many broken and cracked windows! Ross Robinson, our "snow bird" member from Ottawa, Canada, fabricated many buzzer and chime covers in his shop and mailed them to me. This after working in the car barns with us for the two months that he and his wife, Gee Gee, were here in the States. Art Aydelotte has been installing these covers with some repair of the buzzers and chimes.

Larry Hall, our Chief Electrician, and his Assistant, Anthony Carideo, have been meggering (electrical testing) and chasing opens and shorts in all three cars. Larry and Anthony got all the electric doors operational. No small task! They are presently working on the string of dome lights in #531, with great success.

John Hopperton is providing much valuable technical assistance with regard to the dome lights, as he is the one who designed this system as a former employee of General Electric!

Bob Recks is my sub-manager for the portion of the project comprised of the fenders and body catcher apparatus being fabricated for all three cars. Bob works steadily at this task both from an area at the National City Depot, since he lives in Chula Vista, as well as many days and hours at the car barns. Bob has contracted with foundries on SDVT's behalf. He is a Master machinist and he is on faculty at Southwestern College in the Industrial Arts Department. Bob also got the services of Blacksmith Todd Caffo of the Old Town State Park for this work

after the foundry cast the new parts necessary for the rebuilding of these components. Chuck Bencik made a special return trip to Old Pueblo Trolley at Tucson to recover an original catcher from former MUNI car #1121 that was donated to us for this purpose. Bob also consulted with Gene Calman, another Master machinist on our crew, and he has a device that will lift the completed parts up to the bottom of the cars for fastening with new hardware.

We are so lucky to have such great talent and such a harmonious group! Thanks to all for all you are doing!

We work Tuesdays and Thursdays and every other Saturday from 10:00-2:00 at the car barn ("A" Shop, Track #3) at 12th & Imperial Avenues. We can always use more volunteers! This is a very interesting, relaxing project with lots of camaraderie and good fellowship. No special skills are required. It is a true labor of love, giving back to our community skills we have spent a life time acquiring. We will teach you all you need to know. Please give me a call. (619) 222-5442. Please help us "**Restore The Magic**".



Upcoming Work Party Dates: Work Sessions are now being held Tuesday and Thursday from 10am to 2pm. Saturday Work Parties will be held June 14 & 28 and July 12 & 26. *Due to security requirements, please contact Dave Slater / 619-222-5442 for authorization to be on the Trolley grounds.*

President's Message

Dave Slater

Our museum is moving forward at a very good pace in many arenas. Many thanks to all of our volunteers who staff the Depot Museum, the PCC Car Project, Community Relations Development, our newsletter, our wonderful website, our 3 rail model railroad, which is a magnet for kids of all ages. Also thanks to our Vice President / Gift Shop Manager, Treasurer / Director of Special Events / Docent Coordinator, Secretary, the Curator of Special Collections, as well as our Board of Directors. None of our activities would be possible without our volunteers as we have no full time paid staff at this time. We may well in the future.

I am currently in the process of signing SDERA up with DGS - the Department of General Services, also known as the General Services Agency. Once all the huge amounts of paperwork and on-site inspections have been completed, we will be able to get access to Federal and State property declared surplus for pennies on the dollar; including things like forklifts and anything else you may have ever heard of that will promote our mission. DGS requires, among many other things, that we be open for at least 1,000 hours per year, and we are currently open for 1,984 hours per year (Thursday-Sundays + 10 Holidays per year). This is very exciting to have these resources available to us.

Thanks also go out to our donors this month: Roger Jenkins, Nancy Hardick, Bobby Becker, John Hopperton, Dave Slater, and Art Aydelotte. I also wish to thank all those renewing members. There are also many donors who prefer not to be named. Thanks to our website, our membership in The Tourist Railway Association, Inc. (TRAIN), The Association of Railway Museums, (ARM), and The Congress of History, we are known world-wide, and that is a huge plus! We are currently in production in the Hollywood studios of a movie and slides that depicts our namesake, and our DBA: The San Diego Electric Railway Co. (We own the name of the Company) from the early days up to the present San Diego Trolley, Inc.. I am told that this documentary will be "in the can" and available for sale in our Gift Shop and at our Railroad and Trolley Swap Meet held on the south end of the Depot property on July 12 and 13, 2008. I am told by the world-wide street-car community that there is NO other film like this available anywhere. This is the reason that I decided to go into production, as this will be a hallmark piece of merchandise for us! The film is comprised of a vintage movie that George Geyer has, as well as movie footage from Gary Johnson plus some slides. It will be available in DVD format with a color label depicting Class 5 and PCC cars. The narration will be done by our own Vice President and Gift Shop Manager, George Geyer. Watch for it in the Gift Shop!

Thank you for all your support as your President. As with any President, I could not be effective without the support of all our people.
(Ed: Thanks, Dave!!)

Railroad and Trolley Swap Meet at the National City Depot!

San Diego Electric Railway proudly announces our upcoming Swap Meet at the National City Depot. What more appropriate location than a former Santa Fe Depot to hold this Railroad and Trolley Swap Meet! Come on by between 8am and 1pm in the South Parking Lot and find Collectables, Memorabilia, Photos, Spare Parts for Model Railroads, Garden Railroads, Modern and Historic Trains and Trolley Equipment and related artifacts, etc. . Sellers \$5, Buyers \$2. Contact Dave Slater for information and reservations (sellers) - dslater@sdera.org or 619-222-5442. A flyer for the event has been included in this newsletter.

We continue to have difficulty staffing several times a month. If you can help, even if for just a few hours, please contact Tom Matson (tmatson@sdera.org) or 619-275-0216. Training is available.

Steam Returns to San Diego!

(Continued from page 1)

District - the agency responsible for the old main line tracks in northern San Diego County - was notified that several key bridges needed repairs before the heavy locomotive would be allowed to pass. While the bridges may have handled the weight back when 3751 was a regular on the line, years of decay have left them weakened.

This year's event was sponsored by the Central Coast Railway Club and the Pacific Locomotive Association. Tickets sold out quickly to fill the 10 Amfleet cars - including the Silver Lariat dome car at \$249 each! Both of these organizations have had to plan this event for years to get coordination between the railroads (BNSF and North County Transit District) and the operators (Amtrak and Metrolink). Bridges along the line were strengthened by the railroads and inspections made. Typically, more than one sizable insurance policy is required. The San Bernardino Railroad Historical Society must address security, fuel costs, insurance, required inspections of the engine, cars, and track, water stops, protection locomotives, and contingency plans prior to a trek of this size.

Railfans lined the tracks from Los Angeles to San Diego. In many spots along the line, cameras and their owners stood ready waiting right at the edge of the right-of-way (give or take a little!). As soon as the train passed, photographers and fans, many with scanners in hand, poured out of train stations, crossings, weeds, and under bridges only to get back in their cars to chase the smoke down the line.

Patience was the key for everyone involved. Initial plans for a water stop at Stuart Mesa fell through so a water stop was made at the Carlsbad Poinsettia Coaster station. The train arrived at San Diego's Amtrak Station almost two hours late due to a late departure from L.A.'s Union Station. The locomotive and its Amtrak diesel helper (for Head-End Power) were supposed to be backed to the Miramar Wye but took much longer than expected and even longer to get back to Downtown. Instead of leaving at 2:20pm, the train departed closer to 6pm. The coordination required to move this around an already busy railroad required additional wait time but great opportunities to get shots of Amtrak Surfliner trains in action. Riders ended their excursion at 10:30pm at Union Station - 4 hours behind schedule.

There are several websites with great pictures from the excursion - and even a few videos. Check our website for links to these sites! If you missed this chance to see 3751 under steam, watch for it at the next Fullerton Railroad Days typically held in May.



3751 waits at the Santa Fe Depot as crowds look on. The mix of Light Rail Vehicles to the right and classic steam made for a unique photo opportunity.

Photo by Paul McGregor



Donations Needed For New PCC Car Wheels - Dave Slater

The wheels on our SDVT PCC cars were not designed to run on a Class 1 Railroad. The flanges are too short (streetcar rail systems have lower height rail than Class 1 systems such as the San Diego Trolley) thereby requiring new, deeper flanged wheels to prevent derailments at switch frogs and crossovers. We received a donation for the truck and traction motor overhaul. This has been completed. The donor thought they had arranged for a set of 8 new wheels to be donated. The sub-donor has now said they will not donate these wheels. The wheels cost \$4,500.00 each. Each car has 8 wheels in two sets of 4 wheel trucks. We have three PCC cars and an extra set of trucks as a standby. In order to get our cars on the streets of San Diego as a part of "Restoring The Magic." This means we need 32 new wheels for a total of \$144,000. San Diego Vintage Trolley (SDVT) is an unfunded 501 (c) (3) California Non Profit Corporation, just like SDERA. SDERA and SDVT are sister organizations "joined at the hip" by virtue of a Memorandum of Understanding, where SDERA provides all the volunteers for the restoration work with yours truly as the Volunteer Restoration Project Manager.

It has been decided that I will get photocopies of all the donation checks once a week so that we can keep track of all incoming donations. Please give generously for this most worthy cause and to help make your mark for this restoration project. All donors who wish to shall have their names engraved on a brass plaque mounted on the cars to memorialize their generous contributions.

So far, over nearly the 3 years the project has been underway, I have been able to get nearly \$300,000.00 in donations of very rare PCC car parts and in kind donations to keep the project rolling. Our volunteer SDERA crew has logged over 3,500 volunteer hours of restoration, internationally.

All donations are tax deductible. Checks should be mailed to :
 The San Diego Vintage Trolley, Inc.
 ATTN: Harry Mathis, Chairman of the Board
 1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000
 San Diego, CA 92101-7490



New DVDs in the Bookstore

George Geyer, our Bookstore Manager, announces the addition of a new line of DVDs to our stock - Transit Gloria Mundi featuring Pacific Electric (3 volumes— Southern District, Western District, and Northern District) for \$39.95 each.

Charles Smiley DVDs now available include Key System Scrapbook (Parts 1 and 2) for \$28.50 ea, Electric Railways of Utah for \$29.50, Union Pacific Scrapbook for \$29.50, Empire of the North (covering Burlington Northern around the merger with Santa Fe) for \$29.50.

Highball Productions DVDs include San Francisco Cable Cars for \$24.95 and K-36 Over Cumbres Pass for \$29.95, and Highball Over Cajon Volume 2 (2 Hours!) for \$35.95.

Make sure you stop by the upcoming Swap Meet down at the Depot on July 12 and 13. Visit the Bookstore for some of our unusual items and see what goodies the vendors bring!

BNSF Crossing to be Repaired

The San Diego Union Tribune reports in its May 30, 2008 "Just Fix It" column that repairs to the railroad crossing just outside of the Depot are in the works. Burlington Northern Santa Fe has promised to make repairs to the crossing with the help of the Port District and National City. National City has committed to \$24,000 and the Port \$25,000 while BNSF covers the remainder of the \$90,000 repair cost.

The railroad is planning on starting the work at the end of June and expect the task to take 5 days. During this time, Bay Marina Drive will be closed and trucks going to the docks will need to detour around the closure.

The Union Tribune's "Just Fix It" column has featured this crossing three times now - twice with the Depot in the photo background. They typically highlight the problem and, after investigating, publish the name of the responsible party and then follow up a few weeks later to see what progress has been made.



San Diego Electric Railway Association
d.b.a. San Diego Electric Railway
PO Box 89068
San Diego, CA 92138
(619) 474-4400

**SDERA is at the historic National City Depot,
off I-5 at Mile of Cars Way — take Bay Marina
Drive West to Marina Way, then right.**

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 (858-538-
9743). Items need to be submitted by the 18th of the
month prior to publication.*

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Diego, CA
Permit No. 2606

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 7:30pm on the 2nd Saturday of the Month at the National City Depot.

Saturday, June 14 - Jeff Trimble presents "The California Southern: The San Diego Section" (part 2 of his series) with past and present views of relevant sites. We will have a potluck at the Depot instead of our usual Keith's. This month's suggested theme is **Summertime BBQ!** (BBQ meats, potato salad, beans, salads, chili, deserts) We have our propane BBQ grill tested and operational for limited number of people to cook or warm food. Come around 4:30 if you need to cook. Contact Tom Matson if you want to coordinate meals if you would like—619-275-0216. Table setup at 5:00pm, dinner at 5:30pm, and cleanup at 6:45pm. **Our raffle is back!** The drawing will be held promptly at 7:15pm. Jeff's program will start at 7:30pm.

Saturday, July 12 and 13 - Railroad and Trolley Swap Meet at the National City Depot - 8am to 1pm. Collectables, Memorabilia, Photos, Spare Parts, for Model Railroads, Garden Railroads, Modern and Historic Trains and Trolley Equipment and related artifacts, etc. **Buyers:** \$2.00. Snacks, hot and cold drinks, restroom available. Plenty of parking. **Sellers:** \$5.00. Table and chairs available on first-come first-served basis. For info and reservations, contact Dave Slater (dslater@sdera.org or 619-222-5442)

Saturday, July 12 - Program to be announced.

Next Board Meetings - June 9 and July 14 at 7:00pm at the National City Depot.

October 6 to 8 - American Public Transportation Association (APTA) EXPO at the San Diego Convention Center. This is the reason for the rush to finish the Vintage PCC cars! Register for free at www.apta.com/expo2008. You can't get in without a badge.