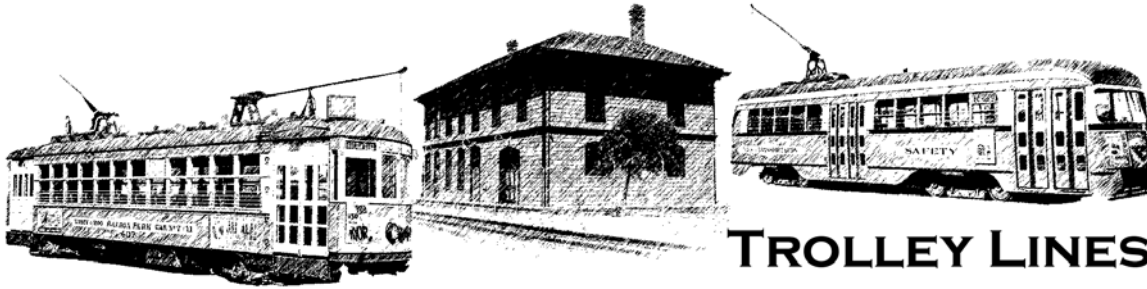


SAN DIEGO ELECTRIC RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



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

March 2010

Check us out at our
web site:

www.sdera.org

FOUND IT! Depot Restaurant's Little Tank Engine That Could ...

By Chuck Bencik



Photo by Larry Rose

She's now in Santa Maria, newest addition to the Santa Maria Valley Railway Historical Museum. Lost her oil headlamp, her sand dome, steam dome, bell, tender, builder's plate ... and her new museum's lost its lease. She's the little Depot Restaurant tank engine that could ... be worse off. Well, at least she's back at one of the places where she worked: near the old Union Sugar Company.

Her story begins 'way back in 1884, when the Chicago Rock Island & Pacific Railroad home-built this 0-4-0T standard gauge tank engine, No. 82, with a coal tender, at their Silvis, Illinois shop. [Toward the end of the story, she was at National City from 1960, and from 1973 until about 1976 she was on display as the front end of a 2-car consist at the NC Depot's front entrance. If it's possible to make a long, long story short: well ... here goes.]

After 20 years as a Rock Island yard goat in Illinois, sold to the Union Sugar Company in 1904; worked as a beet car plant switcher at the Betteravia, CA plant; re-numbered Union Sugar No. 1. Sold to Chadwick and Sykes (now she's No. 11) for work building the Chowchilla Pacific Railway. Converted from coal to oil, getting a new ten-

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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: Jim Price, Mitch Beauchamp, Jeff Trimble, Jim Anderson, Steve Bovee
- Gift Shop Manager: Jim Anderson

PCC Car Project Update

- Dave Slater, Project Manager

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

Our project is moving along very well. I have a lot of new and interesting things to report for this issue! Our very first PCC car, #529, is still in the process of re-assembly. #529 is currently in the C Shop. This past week, I called in our Window Master, Chuck Bencik, to lead the final installation of the remaining windows. He is alternately joined by Aaron Donovan, Paul Burshiteyn, Dennis Frazier, Dan Kelly, and Ron

Sutch. The accomplishments since the last issue of *Trolley Lines* include the installation of all of the advertising panels, other metal panels and brake light assemblies. Sal Carini and Gilbert Cavasos have run electrical cables and have finished installing the new rubber matting on the floor as well as front door hardware. Our Chairman of the Board of both SDVT as well as MTS, Harry Mathis, tells me that the rebuilt trucks, traction motors, and new railroad wheels should arrive at the end of March 2010. Lee Summerlott, Superintendent of Trolley Maintenance, LRV (Light Rail Vehicle) and his Assistant Superintendent, Andy Goddard, Jr., along with Ed Lindstrom, Project Coordinator for San Diego Trolley, Tom Tupta, Superintendent of San Diego Trolley, and his Assistant Superintendent, Fred Kroner, have been most helpful in all that we do. Thanks so much for this!

Continuing thanks to Carlos Guzman, owner of CG Guzman Industries, our body and paint contractor and all his people, Mark Delia, owner of City Wide Auto Glass and all his people, and George Toth, our upholstery contractor. The newly upholstered seats are arriving and in wonderful condition! Refinished seat frames and upholstered seats are getting installed.



529 with pantograph at the end of another work day in the C Shop
Chris Higgins photos

Last week, I scheduled a complete move of all of the three cars we have at our home car barn, MTS's A Shop. We stripped #530, making her ready to go into body and paint next. Needless to say, she looks very forlorn. I want to have all of our cars there in good marching order. So, Sal and Gilbert and a cast of many from the C Shop came with Big Red, the tow motor, and moved #530 around the building and put her in the very back, out of sight. Cars #531 and #532 are now in the front area of this shop and we are in the process of re-assembling some of the things we had taken apart earlier. #531 still needs the most body work. Both front and rear ends have been washed and dried, and now sparkle! These two cars will be our "Show Cars" for the tours that I conduct as fund raisers for the project. We recently hosted Dave Chalmers of the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) who made a special trip from Toronto, Canada to see our entire project! He was accompanied by long time friend George Geyer.

In other Project news, I have been working for some time to acquire another PCC car as a donation from Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). This is car #2785 currently located at the Elmwood Yards in Philadelphia. This new car will be SDERY road number #534. I've arranged for a donation of \$15,800 for transportation. This very generous donation is one of many from one of our SDERA members. This car has wide gauge trucks currently installed and I have been going all out to secure a donation of standard gauge traction motored trucks. My goal is to have 6 PCC cars in our fleet because this number will give us spares to use in the event of breakdowns or maintenance.



Car 529's rear doors. C. Bencik photo.

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 many of you may know, we are still - and will be for a good part of this calendar year - enmeshed in the demolition of the old and building the new in the heart of the National City Redevelopment area. The Depot Museum and our grounds are going to become a diamond in the crown of this entire redevelopment area. The work is progressing smoothly. It takes time. I have been working with the Project Manager, Barbie Tipton, from the City of National City. I am in the process of getting a lot of the rail and accessories that were removed from both Cleveland Avenue as well as the "Alley Track" - the original route of the Coronado Belt Line that ran between the neighboring buildings that are now MSI - donated to the San Diego Electric Railway Association. This donation needs to be approved by City Council and should proceed smoothly. This and other equipment will be reinstalled on two tracks with a switch running from south to the north end of our Yards.

The next step will be for streetcars numbered #357 (the Birney car), and #6891 (our Vienna display car) to be moved to that new area of our track so that they are very visible to the guests at both the new Marina Gateway Hotel and Buster's Beach House restaurant. Then, with a good part of Track #1 available, we can operate some of our track inspection cars over that section of our track. Of course, these pieces of historic rolling stock will be a magnet to attract more visitors to our Museum.

I have been gathering switches, track, and signals for the last couple years with this very part of our project in mind. Should ANY of you learn of track and track parts that may be available to us as a donation, please contact me immediately. As your President, myself and my fellow Board members will be calling for volunteers to help with the above work from time to time. As you may know, I am quite well known in the railroad community, and have numerous friends that will also help with this, when the time comes. However, this is a Team Effort, so please get on board when we make that call for volunteers. Those of us who may be physically unable to help with grunt work can offer valuable assistance by writing a check. Money is always in short supply with non-profit corporations, and ours is no exception. This part of the project is going to be hard work, a lot of fun, and will make a huge difference to our visitors, as well as greatly enhance our Museum. Won't you help by making your mark in whatever way you can to make the dream a reality?

Donations Needed to Paint Depot

In our last edition of Trolley Lines, we put out a request for help in repainting the National City Depot. Almost immediately, we received a message from Lori Kaye offering to donate 40 gallons of primer for the task! She is a professional contractor who specializes in historic building restoration with jobs in the U.S. and Europe. The cost to do the work - including scaffolding, scraping, caulking, and applying primer and final coats - is estimated at \$3,500.

We are required by our long term lease agreement with National City to maintain the exterior of the building. Our harsh climate on the waterfront and several years of Southern California sun has finally taken its toll on the sides of the building. The west side has several areas where paint is peeling and will cause damage to the structure if we don't take care of this as soon as the rains end for the season.

Please send in a donation to help defray this necessary expense. As you have likely noticed, we are deep in construction in the Yard and will quickly eat into our reserves without additional donations. As a California non-profit corporation, your donation may be tax deductible. Mark the memo line on your check "Depot Painting Fund." Thanks for your help!



Car 352 was one of two American Steel cars acquired in 1938 from the Glendale and Montrose Railway. Seen here at the car barn in Coronado on August 18, 1940. Photo by Harold F. Stewart from San Gabriel, CA



Work Car 028 at the Imperial Ave. Car Barn. Ex-car 99 was converted to a track sander and trolley greaser in 1923. Photo July 9, 1939 by Harold F. Stewart.



SDERy Crossing over the Santa Fe at Witherby and Barnett - May 30, 1940 Photo by Harold F. Stewart



Santa Fe 3756 pulling the American Express Banner Tour train at Linda Vista.
Photo by Phil Middlebrook from the Stan Kisler Collection.

FOUND IT! Depot Restaurant's Little Tank Engine That Could ...

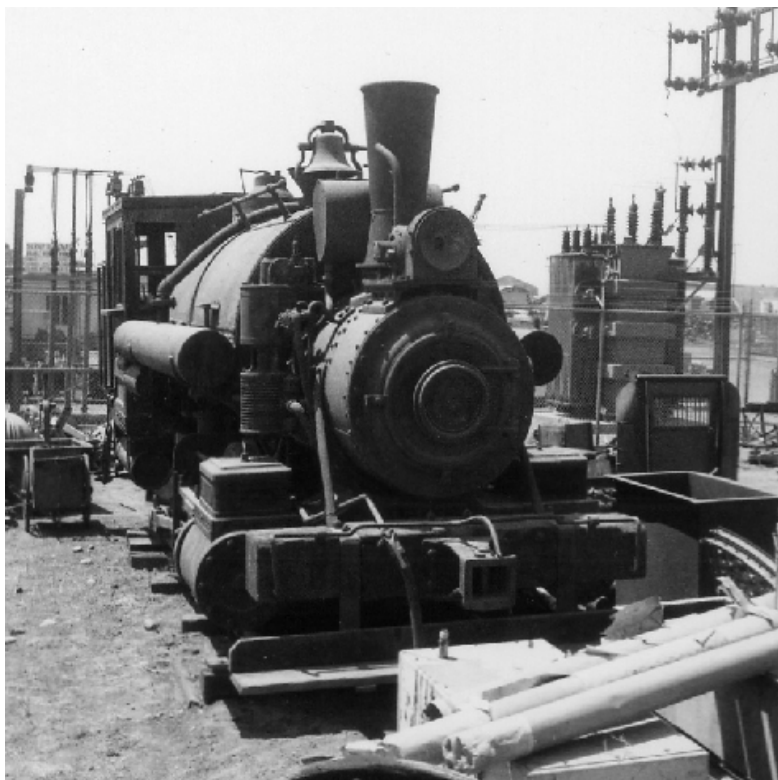
(Continued from page 1)

der around 1915. Later sold to Pacific Gas and Electric (becoming No. 5), possibly for the Pitt River Dams construction project in Bartle, CA. Sold in 1929 to Tracy Rock & Gravel Co., Tracy, CA and then in 1937 to Shanahan Brothers of Maywood, CA, for work scrapping the Pacific Electric's interurban line from Long Beach to Seal Beach. In 1940, sold to A-1 Iron and Metal Co., Los Angeles, where she lost her 2nd tender. A-1 Iron probably moved its business to National City in 1958, taking the name Scrap Disposal Inc., and bringing the old, inoperable 0-4-0T with them.

Donated to Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association in 1960. It was moved onto the National City Depot property in 1973. She looked pretty overwhelmed, pulling that 81' long lounge car and Santa Fe caboose. The restaurant owner glassed-in the engine's cab: she was fairly complete in there (gauges, firing valve, lubricator). Returned to PSRMA in 1976, and swapped for 2 antique railroad cars, to Shortline Enterprises, Los Angeles, who supplied railroad trains for the film industry. Sold to 4 unknown persons in 1988, who loaned her to Railtown 1897 (Sierra Railway), in Jamestown, CA. Officially loaned to the California State Railroad Museum in 1995 when they took over Railtown 1897. And on July 2, 2009, she was trucked back to Santa Maria. Home again.

Let's wish Dan Alves, president of SMVRRHM, lots of luck with his museum's new home, wherever it may be. And many thanks to Steve Bovee, Larry Rose, and especially to Dick Pennick of Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association for sharing their files and memories, to make this article possible.

Editor's Note: This article continues Chuck's investigation of "The Legend of Nellie Belle" from our June 2009 issue of Trolley Lines. Copies of this issue can be found on our website and a limited number of copies at the Depot.



Chicago Rock Island & Pacific Railroad No. 82 sits in a junkyard in a photo likely from 1940's. Thanks to Steve Bovee for sharing this treasure!

SDERA Welcomes Susan Walter - Tour Presenter

SDERA has entered into an agreement with Susan Walter to arrange and lead tours with local schools - especially the charter and home schooled groups. The tours will include local history, details of the National City Depot and the surrounding area, and San Diego's historic streetcars. Unlike our normal volunteer docents, part of her charter is to go out and actively bring in tour groups. Susan has been doing this successfully for other venues in the National City area.

Much of Susan's experience has been focused on National City history so she is now educating herself on the streetcar systems that ran just a short distance from the Depot. Dave Slater recently spent several hours with Susan taking in the interesting details of our operation and looking at areas that she will need to investigate in more depth. As she continues with her efforts, please offer her your support. So many of our members have details on many of the artifacts at the Depot that will make these tours more interesting and meaningful. She has asked to attend our Board meetings to better understand the dynamics of our business and will start right away.

Susan's tours are scheduled to start in early August 2010. She plans to schedule these tours during our normal business hours so that we have a docent on staff to handle non-tour related visitors, the gift shop, and normal day-to-day activities. Please introduce yourself to Susan and help her with this exciting effort!

Mystery Haunts Historic Station Sign

By Chuck Bencik

Railroad historians and local rail buffs know the name "California Southern Railroad." It stood for the railroad that was started in 1880 at National City, and connected San Diego by rail to the States north and east. The name went out of use when the CSRR rights-of-way and properties became part of the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe in 1893.

SDERA is privileged to have, in its artifacts collection, what appears to be a sign that was mounted on a CSRR building, possibly on a railroad station. According to PSRMA's Steve Bovee, a proprietor of Reed's Hobby Shop in La Mesa, the sign was from the old, original AT&SF depot in downtown San Diego: "I believe that the sign was taken down after the Santa Fe formally took over the control of the railroad. Someone must have stashed it then in a safe place long before 1915." When that depot was torn down in 1914, it's possible that the sign was put into the attic spaces of the new Santa Fe depot in 1915 or 1916. In 2000, the San Diego Railway Museum – predecessors of PSRMA – were obliged to move out of the Santa Fe depot.

Bovee, currently serving as a Director on SDERA's Board, has recently suggested hanging the sign up inside the gift shop: "[I] did not even know the sign existed until it showed up at the National City Depot." As the station's ownership and the City of San Diego decided against the SDRM's continuing presence in the Santa Fe depot, the sign passed to what surely should have been its most appropriate home, the National City Historic Depot.

Two parts of the sign join together with an intricate dovetail joint. The name of the sign-maker is very clearly painted at its lower right end:

"Richardson." Bovee says it "appears to have faded some in the past ten years. I have photos of it back ten years ago ... "



But why the sign is in three pieces, and why a two-foot long section of it is missing, is not clear. Finally, we still haven't located a photograph showing this sign mounted on a building that stood during the 13 years of the California Southern Railroad Co.

We wouldn't be able to tell you all this, were it not for Missy Cheeseman, whose art studio is in the top story of the National City Depot. It was Steve Bovee who helped her find our historic building for her life's work; and it was Missy who told us Steve Bovee knew what we needed to know about the California Southern Railroad Sign.



This is a stitched-together panoramic of three photos of the 2 foot high by 20 foot long "California Southern Railroad Co." sign, which is in pieces (3 of 'em) upstairs at the Depot. Part of the sign is missing: the part which includes the letters "RN RA" which is in the words "CALIFORNIA SOUTHERN RAILROAD".

Photo by Chuck Bencik



San Diego Electric Railway Association
d.b.a. San Diego Electric Railway
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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
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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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, March 13 - Tim Saylar will cover the Western Railway Museum near Sacramento. He will show some of his slides and introduce a very good 1 hour DVD on the museum. He also will slow down the presentation and show us the two San Diego cars that are there (the Sacramento Northern Birney Car made by American Car and Foundry in 1922 and the SDERy car 1043 from New York's 3rd Ave made in 1905 by Brill).

This will also be a potluck night with an Italian theme. Bring a dish or pay \$6 (\$7 for guests / non-members) for meat sauce spaghetti. Please call Tom Matson home 619 275-0216 to make your reservations for the spaghetti or say what you want to bring. Dishes could be spaghetti marinara or meat sauce, salad, garlic bread, soft drinks, cups and plastic silverware.

Saturday, April 10 - George Geyer will show two DVDs. The first one will cover both Pacific Electric (including passenger and electric freight motors) and Los Angeles Railway from about 1950 to the end in the early 1960s. The second one will cover PE's early days with some good scenery including Bunker Hill and Hill St. with the 2000s.

Next Board Meetings - March 8, April 12 at 7:00PM at the National City Depot.

Saturday, May 1 - S.D. Model Railroad Museum's Swap Meet - Balboa Park at the Model RR Museum's rear entrance - 7AM to 11AM. Sellers \$5, Buyers \$2. Sellers set up at 6:30AM - Bring Your Tables. Contact Jim Anderson at 619-224-1041 or SDMRM office at 619-696-0199.

Docents and Cashiers Wanted

Despite the construction in the area, visitors are still coming to the Depot. Even on days where we have regular docents, an alternate docent lets the regulars have a break. Even if you cannot make a whole shift, working as cashier allows the docent to spend more time with visitors. Contact Tom Matson for information (tmatson@sdera.org) or 619-275-0216. Training is available.