

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 2011

Check us out at our
web site:

www.sdera.org

Under Her Own Power!



Photo by Ron Sutch

January 7, 2011 is a date that will be a lasting memory for the volunteers of the San Diego Vintage Trolley project. For the first time since the restoration began, car 529 had power from the pantograph and traction motors ready to roll. After a marathon session by MTS electrical crews, Vintage Trolley leaders were surprised by the announcement that 529 was ready for a test move. This major restoration involved so many systems that it has taken much longer than originally anticipated. None of that mattered once power was applied and the car started to move!

Electricians resolved a small problem with reversing but this was minimal to what was overcome in reconnecting the motors to the car's electrical system. In the initial rush to get the car restored, cables to the truck motors were cut and new wiring had to be installed before 529 could ever be operational again. The body on the beautifully restored car was ready long before the newly refurbished trucks were available for reinstallation.

Congratulations to the entire crew working on the Vintage Trolley! Between MTS staff, SDVT volunteers and donors, and organizations that have provided guidance on the project, all deserve to feel proud of this big accomplishment!

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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
- Gift Shop Manager: Jim Anderson

PCC Car Project Update

- Dave Slater Project Manager

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

Our first car that is nearing completion is #529. She ran for the first time under her own power on Friday, January 7th! The crew worked 24 hours straight because they were on a very successful roll. When I drove through the Newton Avenue Gate that morning, I saw her outside the southeast side of the C Shop with the pantograph up to the wire and the head light on. I immediately drove over and asked Sal Carini if the wire was "hot" and he and Ed Lindstrom said "Yes!" They had just

run her outside the shop for the first time. When I got out of my car, I heard the motor generator set running for the first time with high line power. Harry Mathis had been notified and arrived shortly afterward. There was a flurry of photographs taken and then we all got on board and went for a short ride. She was smooth as silk.

What a thrill it was for all of us! There is still much electrical work

left and now she is back in the Paint Shop for interior spot painting including the new Masonite ceiling as well as several areas, both inside and out, that got scratched during work sessions, and some that needed initial painting due to new metal being installed. She will be in the paint shop for about another week. Prior to that, Chuck Bencik and Dennis Frazier had been working on some of the window mechanisms and mostly got them working. There are still one or two that need some work. Gene Calman has been manufacturing special parts for these windows. Then, the FRA (Federal Railroad Administration) and CALPUC (California Public Utilities Commission) Certifications will take place for her to operate on the Main Line. Prior to this time she will be run around the Yards for testing of all systems.

Meanwhile, at the A Shop, which is the home of # 530,



Sal Carini operating 529 on Jan 7th!

Ron Sutch photo.



(#530 will be the next car to be restored) #531, and #532, the routine work of battery charging and complete low voltage system operation is done on a regular basis to prevent seizing up of the mechanisms due to lack of operation. #532 has a bent window track on the left rear side, near the end. We have been working on this with some success. Chuck Bencik, Dennis Frazier, Dan Kelly, and Aaron Donovan have also been working on some window mechanisms that had "frozen", and these have been repaired. We have many sets of dummy destination signs, that depict the routes that these cars will run on that we change often as well as cleaning the windshields of both #531 and #532 to keep up the gloss as these cars are used for fund raising tours as well as TV stand ups of these two separate models of the St. Louis PCC car. Cars 529 through 531 are 1945 models and 532 and 533 are 1947 and 1948 models and are equipped with more things that the first three cars do not have. These equipment upgrades are a result of Customer Surveys by St. Louis Car Company to discover what innovations car buyers would like to have for the next year models.

We are in the process of acquiring our sixth car which will be #534.

Car 533 is up on jacks as her trucks are being reworked to standard gauge. This car came to us from Philadelphia, where they use wide gauge trucks. We go through that car also on a regular basis.

I am currently searching our PCC friends for more window cranks, and that too, is a work in progress. I must remind everyone that all this is being accomplished with volunteer labor, in kind donations, as well as donated funds. We are currently up to \$750,000 on PCC #529. More funding is needed and we ask that readers consider donating to this cause to help "Restore The Magic". Work being accomplished by this method takes longer than sending the cars to a commercial street car restorer which would currently cost between \$1.5 to \$2 Million. This project currently gets no government monies so there is an opportunity for you to "Make Your Mark" in this restoration process. Send your check to "San Diego Vintage Trolley." Contact Dave Slater for details.

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, there are a lot of things going on at our Museum. Our Grant Committee, chaired by Vice President Tom Carnes has had several meetings of which yours truly attended, not as a Committee member, but as an ex-officio officer in an advisory capacity. The purpose of this body is to get grants to fund the ongoing requirements of our lease at the Depot property. The grant application being assembled at this time is to the BNSF Foundation. The process is going very well, and the grant application should be ready for submission in the near future.

Soon, there will be another committee formed for Planned Giving. These are also very important for all museums, as funding, both long and short term, is the life blood of any non-profit corporation such as our 501 (c) (3) California Corporation. All donations of whatever kind or nature are tax deductible. Simply put, planned giving is that of a share, or in total, of trusts, wills, mature stocks, or other valuable assets that allow the Museum to be funded over the long term. Up until now, our organization has not had this in place. NOW is the time to consider making us a part of your Estate Planning. Until the Committee is formed, you may contact me at either Davesugi@cox.net or (619) 222-5442 for more information about this.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteers for their many hours of dedication and hard work to keep all of our missions moving forward. We could not function without the help of all.

On a different note, in the past weeks, Vienna car #6891 suffered graffiti damage. I brought a special remover solution and removed most of this and contacted the National City Graffiti Abatement Team, and they removed the paint on the southeast side of the truck frame. I had Director Jeff Trimble and our member/tenant Robert Baxter take photos that I forwarded to the National City Police Department (NCPD).

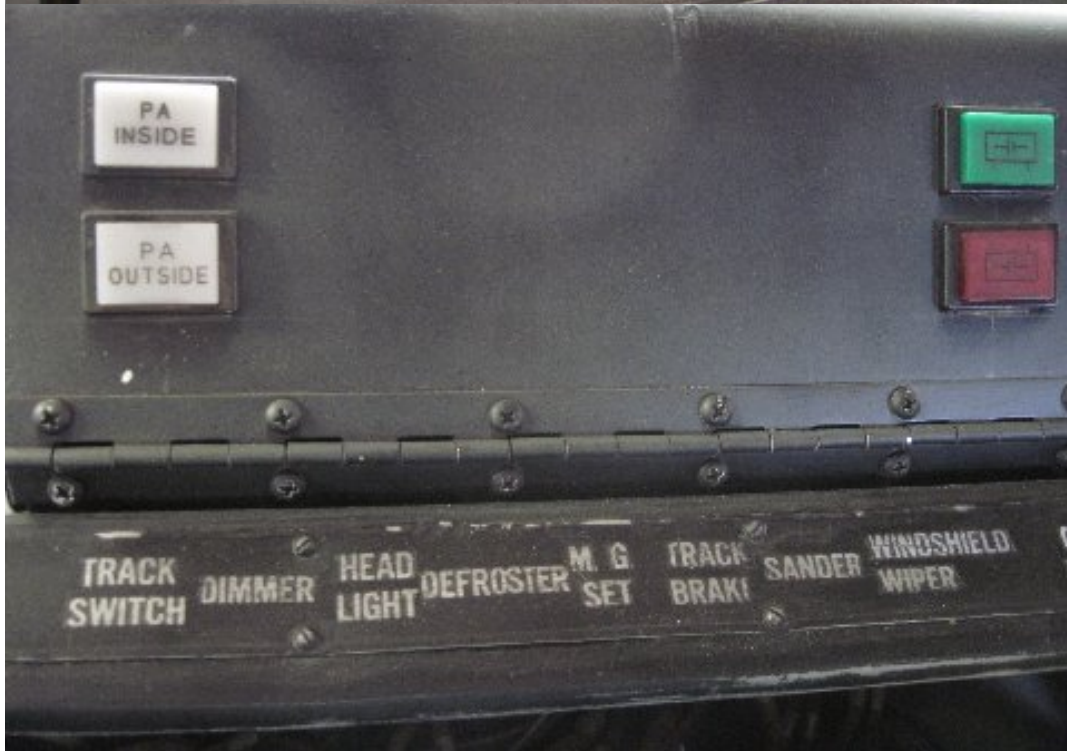
On January 22, we had another incursion, where all of our track plates, spikes, and other track related materials and some short sections of rail were stolen, most likely to be sold as scrap. I cannot say any more at this time as there is an ongoing investigation by both BNSF Railway Police, and NCPD. The loss was over \$8,000 in value but likely sold for pennies on the dollar.

In preparation for the move of two of our street cars to the south lot, the cars need to be painted. The cars to be moved, when finished, are Vienna N1 car #6891, and Birney car #357. This move and many other things are a contractual agreement for the renewal of our lease on the property in July 2011.

Car #6891 will stay in the same colors she ran in and #357 will have a rust colored roof and a bright yellow body with black trucks. This is the color scheme that The San Diego Electric Railway Company was using about 1916, when single truck Birney cars were running in San Diego County for a short time.

Of course, the usual paint prep work must be completed before the fresh paint is applied. This includes sanding, calking and a bit of roof work on #357, south side. The destination signs will be fabricated to show destinations that were accurate for that time period. The car will also be renumbered to be in line with the road numbers of similar cars found in Dr. Harold Cox's book, "The Birney Car" as it is a very good source of accurate information.

It is also my plan to have the cars lighted by use of a large power inverter (2000 watts that surges to 4000 watts) that I am willing to put on permanent loan. We will install solar panels



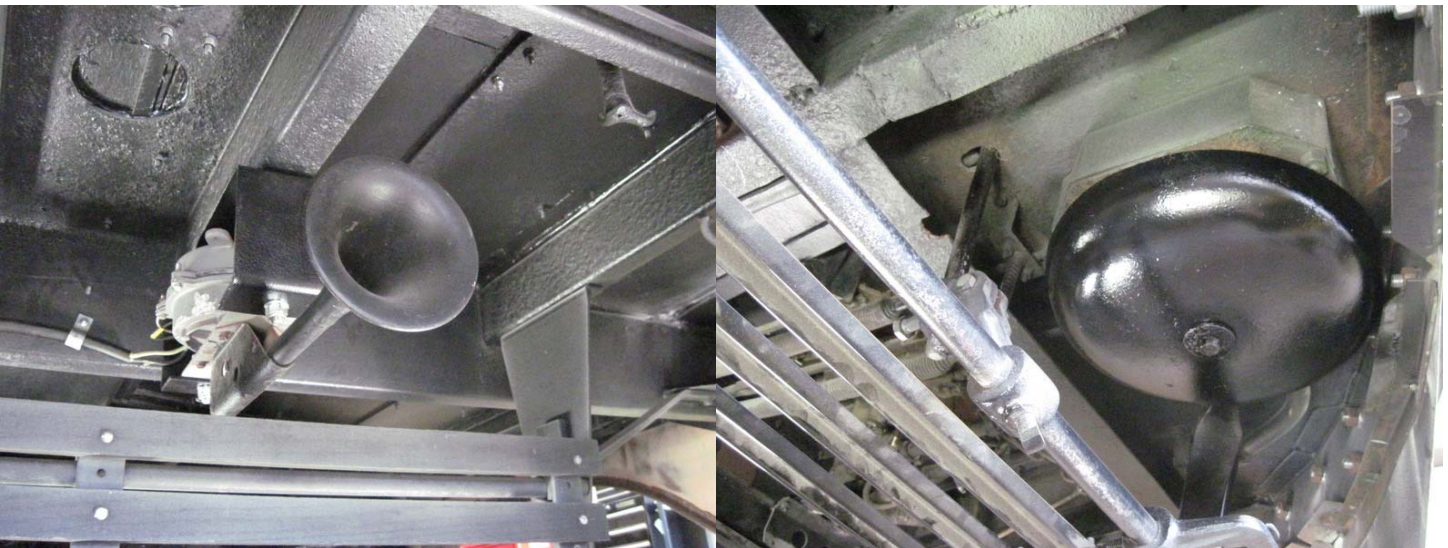
Car 529 (above) with pantograph up and skirt painted around the base of the pantograph.

The control panel inside Car 529 (left) with some current technology for PA system control and to show pantograph and battery status.

Photos on both pages by Ron Sutch.



(Left to right) MTS Chairman of the Board Harry Mathis, Sal Carini (operating the car), Project Manager Dave Slater, and Michael Ballard along with photographer Ron Sutch (not shown) get a ride on 529 on January 7.



New horn—required to meet FRA regulations (left) and clean and polished bell (right) to make sure these restored PCCs aren't missed!



SDERA Needs You!

- SDERA Secretary Chris Higgins

In the last issue of Trolley Lines, I announced the newly elected Board members and mentioned that the Executive Board would be due for election in 2011. We thank Mike Reneau and Gene Calman for stepping forward and joining the SDERA Board. This is an important role that is key for the operation of this organization.

Even though the end of 2011 seems so far away, we are faced with a daunting task. Both Dave Slater and I will not be running for the Executive Board at the end of our terms. We've been extended past the normal 2-term limit by votes of the Membership per our Bylaws and feel that it is time for someone else to step in and take on the roles of President and Secretary. While I don't mind continuing to serve in a lesser role, I believe it is time for new leaders to continue the growth that this organization needs. Dave Slater has been instrumental in so many of the changes here at the Depot and, at the same time, at the Vintage Trolley project. Much of what he has accomplished will be useful in other restorations that we may choose to do here at the Depot. SDVT still has several cars to restore and Dave has a desire to travel.

Having said this, we need new leaders. SDERA is a vital organization with room to grow, thanks to its members as well as its leaders. We need a few members to become leaders. Leading this organization is, thankfully, a team effort. Past leaders aren't disappearing, just stepping back to allow a fresh set of eyes with new energy to look forward and guide us through the next few years. The President's role is not a "do-it-all" position. We look to the President for guidance and direction but do not expect a day-to-day presence. The Secretary handles correspondence and taking minutes of the meetings. This role is separate from "Newsletter Editor."

The Board of Directors for SDERA meets once a month at the Depot. If you'd like to sit in and see what it involves, please join us. The schedule of meetings are shown on the back page of this issue.

We are also looking for Committee Chairs and Members to sit on some of the working committees. One area with a large opening is the South Depot Lot Improvement Project. While National City has done their job, we need to do our part. We have commitments from Eagle Scout Candidates Tim Higgins and Tim Lewis to do landscaping and tables. We still need to paint and move cars as Dave described in the President's Message (this issue, page 3).

As members of this organization, you are needed to help us do what we need to do to preserve the history that is entrusted to us. Large tasks are made easier with more hands and running and maintaining the Depot can be made so much easier with YOUR help. We need Docents, volunteer workers, Committee members, and leaders to continue. I've heard complaints that we don't seem to have professional displays, trained docents, or (insert your favorite concern here) but it all comes down to "What do you do to help?" Tom Carnes and Chuck Bencik just went through a grant application process and are doing their part to help us get funding. Soon, I expect a call for volunteers to actually get the work done before July's deadline with National City. Now is the time to make that commitment - get involved, get active!

For the volunteers that are active, THANK YOU! Mike Quigg, Charles Smith, Robert Baxter, Scotty and Tim Lewis, and Sean McColgan for securing the library shelves, Tom Sapient for re-organizing the library, Jim Anderson for the Gift Shop and general Museum maintenance tasks, docents for staffing the depot (Jody Surowiec, John De Lalla, Susan Walter, George Geyer, Randy Butler, Jeff Trimble, Jim Price, Mike Reneau, Dave Slater), 3-Railer members for keeping the young ones (and young at heart) entertained... Seems like it is always the same names



Gift Shop News Break

We have many very interesting, and sought after items available in our Gift Shop. The Shop as well as the Museum is open Thursdays through Sundays from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. As you may know, we are Atlas Model Train Dealers, and as such, offer both a single Class One Street car or, the complete set, made up of track, transformer, a station, and a street car. These cars are under license by us, who own the name of the San Diego Electric Railway Company and are painted in our color scheme. This is a great value! These are 0-27 scale, three rail models that will run on your existing layouts or on included track should you decide to purchase the set. They are attractively priced. Get yours today!

We also offer mouse pads with the image of our San Diego Vintage Trolley PCC cars that will soon be operating on the San Diego Trolley's Downtown Loop. Another featured item are towel sets from the great passenger trains of yesteryear including several famous named trains. We stock a line of both tee shirts and sweat shirts emblazoned with the logo of San Diego Vintage Trolley and San Diego Electric Railway. We also have ball caps in black that don't show dirt for both venues, as well as hickory striped engineer's hats and some pink ones (Hey, trains aren't just for guys!).

Next, a variety of rare, out of print books, and video train and streetcar films. Also, our current 2011 San Diego Electric Railway Company calendar (deeply discounted) with never before seen views of the lines, cars, and buildings, some of which have been unfortunately lost to re-development. One of my favorites is the shot of the car coming into Ocean Beach from Pacific Beach. The tracks are still visible there in Ocean Beach. Another is the shot from the top of the Belmont Roller Coaster, looking down at the line and the cars. Shots of La Jolla High School and the station at La Jolla are remarkable. These photos are circa 1940. We also offer an array of photos from that era. These are just a few of the "not available anywhere else" items in your Gift Shop! We accept cash, checks, and "magic plastic" for orders over \$10.00. The fee we pay for this service is high, so if you can use the first two, we appreciate it. All of the items offered are a fund raiser for our organization so please shop with us. We also offer a variety of hot and cold snacks and drinks as well! See you at the Depot!

- Dave Slater

The President's Message

(Continued from page 3)

to keep the deep cell battery charged. It can also be used for needed 110 volt electricity for that area for vacuuming, etc. In any event, the lighted cars at night will be an attraction for the hotel and restaurant patrons from across Bay Marina Way, and thus bring a lot more visitors to our facility. Someone once said that it pays to advertise and this is a method that we will use.

I am asking for several volunteers to work on the body prep and painting effort for the cars. Five people working together would be ideal. Please contact me should you be interested in this particular project.

Library Progress

The seismic retrofit is nearly complete for our library. This task has involved a lot of planning and carpentry work, as well as a lot of heavy lifting.

It is such a pleasure to look at the very professional placement of books and papers that are priceless records of times gone by for historians, far and wide to use. Providing this service is the essence of charitable non profit organizations, such as ours. The library was in total disarray for a long time, due to lack of a professional Librarian. We are extremely fortunate to have Tom Sapien, and our cast of ready, willing and able volunteers to help make all this happen.



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
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 12 - George Geyer presents slides on Los Angeles Railway narrow gauge (3½ ft wide) streetcars and work equipment. The shots are from March 1963 at the end of the system with 5 lines left going back to the early 1940s when the system was much bigger with many more lines and cars.

Note this program will be preceded by a optional no host Mexican theme potluck. Our new librarian Tom Sapien will be bringing chicken enchiladas. Setup 5:30 PM, Please call Tom Matson (619-275-0216) to see what you can bring. Also, side items will be appreciated from non-alcoholic drinks, sides, and deserts. Those not able to

contribute food can pay \$5 at the door. Please do call so we can get a reasonable number on how many to prepare for. Potluck starts 5:50-6:45, 7:30 PM announcements and program.

Saturday, April 9 - Chuck Bencik will give us a program on the National City Depot history. Chuck has researched this topic at various times in the past. Chuck is a very entertaining presenter and promises us a surprise or two in the process, to emphasize the long 120+ year history of our Depot.

Saturday, May 14 - Reena Deustch, author of "San Diego and Arizona Railway: The Impossible Railroad" discusses her new book and the rugged countryside where the railroad crosses our local mountains on a series of bridges and tunnels. Copies of the book will be available for purchase in the Gift Shop for \$21.95 (10% discount for current members).

Next Board Meetings - March 14, April 11, and May 9 at 7:00PM at the National City Depot.