



# RAIL NEWSLETTER

THE SANTA CLARA RIVER VALLEY  
RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

448 Sespe Avenue, Fillmore, California 93015  
805-524-1201

SEPTEMBER, 1994

NUMBER FOUR

## THE PREZ SEZ

by  
DAVE WILKENSON  
SCRVRHS PRESIDENT

I would like to thank all of the volunteers for their outstanding performance in support of this past summer's events. My special thanks go to Rick Swanson and Chris Robson for their extra efforts in organizing the Car Attendants for the 4th of July weekend, Hot August Nights, and the Ventura County Fair Metrolink trains. Also special thanks to Troy Helton for his superb job of organizing and executing our very successful fund raising barbecues. And for all of those who put in a double effort in support of these events, thanks to you too!

Speaking of events, we calculated that during the 4th of July weekend, the Car Attendants alone put in over 300 hours. This is not to mention the hours that were put in to schedule the Car Attendants; support the food and promotion; The Car Attendants, not counting the coordination of nearly 600 hours of the trains. All of the created a very awareness of the Ventura County communities.

Although no activity is planned have a couple of events planned. we will join with Paula, The Santa Anita Fund and Chamber of sponsoring the Depot Days and Autumn Rail Festival. Plans are also underway for a Christmas Party. Several restoration project are also getting started.



Car Attendant crews for trains 1 and 2 prepare for the Metrolink Ventura County Fair Specials: (from l to r) Phil Bronner, Mike Flaherty, Dean Francuch, Carol Wahl, Paul Staubach, Chris Robson, Paul Haase, Joe Galante, Rick Swanson, Troy Helton, Frank Wahl, and Tim Mason.

further train ac- for 1994, we do fund-raising On October 1st the City of Santa Paula Commu- the Santa Paula Commerce in First Annual

Again, a warm thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped make this, our second year a stupendous success. To the rest of you, come join the fun!



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September, 1994      Number Four

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448 Sespe Avenue, Fillmore, California 93015  
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Edited by  
**Rick Swanson and Chris Robson**

with contributions by  
A.J. Farrar, Troy Helton, Steve Icanberry,  
Larry Jensen, Steven Pierce, Russ Sperry,  
and Dave Wilkinson

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

It is the purpose of this organization to assist in the preservation of the railroad corridor between Montalvo and Saugus, California, so as to maximize the economic, educational, environmental and recreational value of this unique historical asset to the residents of the Santa Clara River Valley and the surrounding area. To this end it is the intent of this organization to acquire, preserve, restore, exhibit and operate historic railroad equipment, and to acquire, preserve display, and make available for study, artifacts, information and photographs pertaining to railroad equipment, structures and operations in the Southern California region.

The Society is a 501 (3c) non-profit organization, all contributions are tax deductible.

### **Board of Directors**

Dave Wilkinson, President  
Pat Askern, Vice President  
Russ Sperry, Secretary  
Joseph Kern, Esq., Treasurer  
A.J. Farrar, Troy Helton,  
Sheila Hoffman, Carol Rock, Rick Swanson

**Board Meetings are held at 7:00 PM the  
first Wednesday of each month at 351  
Santa Clara Avenue in Fillmore**

## **TRAIN SAFETY**

### **NO SUCH THING AS "ABANDONED TRACKS"**

If there are rails on the railroad ties, say train experts, assume the track is still being used. Even if the track is rusty, or if there are weeds, assume the track is still active.

If a railroad company is not using the track, it will take up the rails. (Only a few small private industry rails are not taken up.)

Some tracks only carry trains once or twice a day so they may look "unused." These tracks have some of the highest accident rates, because people are not expecting a train to come.

### **FREIGHT TRAINS DO NOT RUN ON SCHEDULES,**

and can go in either direction on a track in no particular pattern. Even if you think that a train comes down a track at such-and-such a time every day and not at other times, or even if you think a train goes in such-and-such direction, you never can be sure that will always be the case.

### **AN OPTICAL ILLUSION HAPPENS WITH TRACKS**

When you see a train coming, it looks as if it is traveling half as fast, and is two times farther away from you than it really is. For example, if it is going 60 mph and is half a mile away, it looks as if it is traveling 30 mph and is one mile away

## **PROJECT #1119 BEGINS**

The Society's first railcar renovation project, Southern Pacific caboose #1119, begins this month. Plans are to refurbish the late 1920's cupola type caboose inside and out as well as install a work area for Society use.

"The caboose is nearly complete and in remarkably good condition," said Project Coordinator Steven Pierce. "There is very little major work to be done as most is cosmetic. There is lots of woodworking needed, some welding and stair straightening, and lots of prepping and painting. This can really be a class 'A' caboose if we all pitch in and help."

Interested Associates should call Steven Pierce at (805) 644-6169 with your availability

## A TALE OF TWO SIGNALS

by Russ Sperry

Where do most people go on the week-ends? Not the beach. Not the mountains. But the mall! So when SCRVRHS was asked by the Buena Ventura Mall to do a Father's Day week-end display around a railroad theme, how could we refuse? What an opportunity to enlighten people about railroading while at the same time promote the Society and our upcoming events.

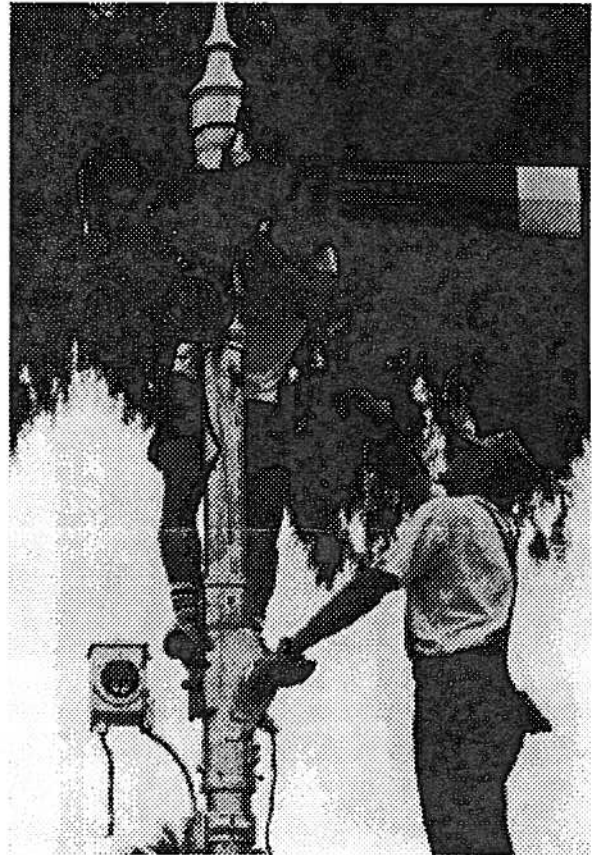
Many Society associates offered pieces of railroad history for display. President Dave Wilkenson agreed to the use of items from his personal collection of railroad equipment and memorabilia including a working semaphore signal. Dave, with the assistance of his friend Rupert Holcombe and SCRVRHS associates Jim Treloar, Jerry Henslee and Dave Jeffrey began to clean-up and restore the double-flag (near and far block) semaphore to working order.

To ensure it would fit inside the mall, and to make installation easier, it was decided to lower the height from its original 32 feet to "only" 20 feet. After disassembling a mast, the distance between the two flags was reduced by two (2) feet, and another ten (10) feet was cut from the main section. The various metal parts were then given a fresh coat of aluminum paint.

The following week-end, the lenses were removed from the aspect holders (which counterbalance the flags in addition to holding the lenses), and the flags were separated from the holders for cleaning. The aspect holders were sandblasted by 'Dave and Dave' and painted with black enamel. The flags themselves are porcelain enamel over steel, and slightly porous. They resisted cleaning efforts until the suggestion was made to use oven cleaner!

After a two or three hour soaking, the accumulations of decades' worth of steam loco exhaust and diesel grime was mostly removed. A couple of chips and cracks were touched up with paint. Once the flags were up in the air the flaws were undetectable. The glass lenses were also given the 'oven-cleaner' treatment and came out looking almost new. It should be noted that glass lenses are getting to be quite rare. They are often used for target practice on the relatively isolated Siskiyou line. Most of the remaining lenses have been replaced with plastic where the semaphores themselves haven't been replaced with newer signals.

The deadline was fast approaching to get the semaphore ready for display. Just when the crew was ready to reassemble, Dale Wyant, assistant manager and signal maintainer for the Ventura County Railroad, was unexpectedly called out of town. The guessing game began to figure out how to and where to re-connect the proper wiring to the motor and relays of the control mechanism. (If you didn't inspect the mechanics of the semaphore at the mall, on the 4th of July weekend, or at other recent display locations do it the next time it is available. Rube Goldberg had nothing on the guy who designed these things!)



Jim Treloar (below) and Dave Jeffries (top) at work assembling the semaphore.

Next came a careful measuring and cutting of the control rods down to match the reduced height of the mast. With only hours to go before display time, John Hall (Tom's brother) was pressed into service late Thursday night, June 15th, to hoist the mast with his backhoe so the semaphore could be reassembled, tested, and disassembled for shipment to the mall.

(See TWO SIGNALS on Page 7)

## RIDING THE RAILS CAR ATTENDANTS' UPDATE

by  
RICK SWANSON

As Crew Chiefs, Chris Robson and myself would like to extend another well deserved 'thank you' to the over 30 individuals who volunteered their time and energies this summer to the car attendant program. It can't be repeated often enough. Not only do these men and women pay for their own uniforms and equipment, they take part of their week-ends to undergo classroom training and then volunteer hours on-board our various train runs. Thanks again!

Being on-board is not necessarily easy. It's like being constantly on stage. Each Car Attendant represents the entire Society to the public. Therefore everyone must look sharp and be sharp. On each run, Car Attendants interact with passengers in a cheerful and personable manner while looking out for public safety. It's a delicate task to counsel passengers while maintaining a positive feeling about their train experience. Our Attendants do their jobs so very well.

Speaking of a job well done, Chris and I would like to recognize both Larry Bull and Joe Galante. They created and conducted an advanced car attendant training course on dealing with drunk and/or disorderly passengers that is invaluable. But special recognition must go to Joe. This man worked 12 round trips and several extra hours, day and night, over two week-ends on the Metrolink County Fair trains. Chris and I even 'deputized' him as acting Crew Chief on trains that we could not cover. He pitched in where we were light on coverage without hesitation. Great work Joe!

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## LOOKING SHARP OR WHAT?

What do Amtrak and Metrolink crews lack, that SCRVRHS Car Attendants have? Outstanding uniforms! According to Conductors and crews of both lines, our Car Attendants look sharper and more like railroad people than those who actually work the rails for their living! The navy blue ties, suspenders and traditional conductor's style cap did the trick! As we gathered on the Ventura and Moorpark station platforms for Metrolink service, many Amtrak crew members from various trains, complimented our attire and offered to swap hats. But there were no takers! Once, when we refused to trade with an Amtrak San Diegan, they referred

to us on the radio as they left the station as 'looking as though the Pittsburgh Pirates were in town'. Maybe so, but they left town with the same hats they rode in with.

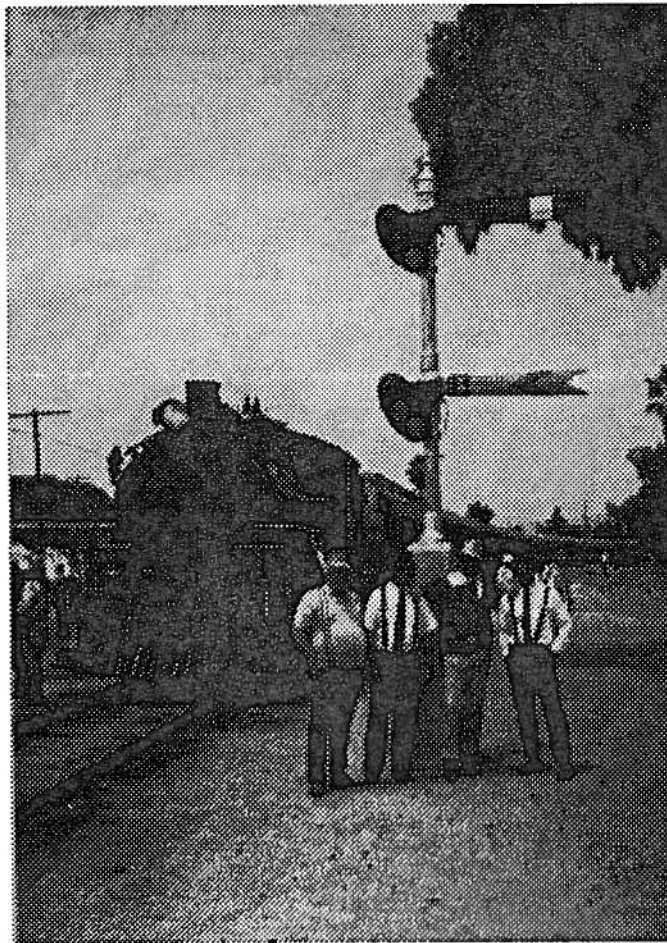
## 4TH OF JULY

A Celebration of Steam was the theme of three days of hour long excursions over the long 4th of July week-end in Fillmore. Sponsored by the Society, the Car Attendants alone put in nearly 300 total hours of work on thirteen round trips. As special entertainment, John Wayne (Ermal Williamson) and a band of cowboys kept the passengers and the Car Attendants, on their toes. The event was so popular that the last train on

Monday, the 4th was standing room only!

Thanks to Jim Clark of Short Line Enterprises, those Car Attendants who were able to work the event were given a ride in the cab of #51, the 1906 Baldwin steam locomotive! What a thrill to be up front and blow the steam whistle. What a view!

(See CAR ATTENDANTS on Page 5)



"John Wayne (Ermal Williamson), Rick Swanson, Dave Wilkinson and Dave Jeffries on July 4th with Engine No. 51

## HOT AUGUST NIGHTS

Always a fun event with dinner, dancing, 50's rock and roll, and of course a train ride, this year's event sponsored by the Fillmore Chamber of Commerce was a sell-out. Over 400 passengers and crew packed an eight car consist pulled to a Rancho Sespe orchard by the twin F-7 units. After a morning and afternoon on Metrolink, most of the Attendants selected for this special event were ready.

Although no incidents occurred, the advanced car attendant training conducted the week-end before was very helpful. The crowd was drinking both on the train to, and at the event. On the way back, you could tell that many passengers had 'enjoyed' themselves. Some production delays and shortages at the party site did cause some attendees to vocalize a little discontent but again, no incidents. Since the evening was late and the passengers tired, most fell asleep on the trip back to Fillmore.

Thanks to Jan Clark of Shortline, the entire crew managed to pull off a surprise birthday celebration in the dining car for SLE's Larry Jensen's 40th. Happy Birthday Larry. Although in Colorado filming, we also recognized the birthday of Jim Clark (he's the same age as the number on the Baldwin steam locomotive!) Happy Birthday Jim!

## METROLINK

After our success as 'Ambassadors' last spring on the Metrolink California Beach Party train, the Ventura County Transportation Commission asked the Society's Car Attendants to do it again. This time, to be Ambassadors on two separate trains per day for four days during the week-ends of the Ventura County Fair. What was nice was that we managed to convince VCTC to allow us to wear our regular Society uniforms as opposed to the purple T-shirts and Metrolink engineer hats from last April. As mentioned above, this was a hit.

What an experience to travel by rail at 70 m.p.h.; go from the main to sidings dodging Amtrak, Southern Pacific freights and our own Metrolink trains; listen to dispatch operations; and work in air conditioned comfort! What a sight to see a train pull into the station and a crew of uniformed Car Attendants step off simultaneously and greet passengers. Metrolink and VCTC had nothing but praise for the way we conducted ourselves. All those who participated

should be very proud of themselves.

Two Metrolink trains with identical consists of two (2) engines and six (6) cars were used. 21,000 passengers were transported to the Fair on Metrolink. Twentysix (26) Car Attendants volunteered and were scheduled at various times of availability day and night. Our Attendants put in over 500 total hours. They worked each day from at least 8:30 AM to nearly midnight! That's a lot to ask when most have regular jobs to go to on Monday morning.

Talk about dedication, recuperating from a recent hospital stay, Carol Wahl helped out two ways. First she was a Car Attendant onboard Metrolink but secondly, she created on her computer a simple, easy-to-follow, pocket train schedule. It had train #1 on one side and #2 on the other. Carol made enough for each Attendant's use. What a help.

Finally, to look our best for the public, a dozen conductor caps were purchased for the occasion by Attendants. Thanks to some quick action due to supplier difficulties, they all managed to be delivered by the first day of operations.

Our very special thanks goes to the Ventura County Transportation Commission for 1) their support of the Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society; 2) giving us the opportunity again to assist and experience Metrolink as crew members while having fun at the same time; 3) making admission passes available for all the working Car Attendants and especially; 4) providing a fabulous lunch to each of our Car Attendants each day of the event. We really appreciate everything and look forward to working with them again on future events.

No further train events are scheduled for this calendar year. Chris and I thank each and every one of the people involved in the Car Attendant program for all that they have done this year. Although room doesn't permit mentioning each and every person who participated in one way or another, believe us, you are all very important and we recognize that. We hope to share the fun and experience of 'riding the rails' with you again soon.

**THANKS TO ALL OF YOU!**

## SCRVRHS GETTING BIGGER AND BETTER

by A.J. Farrar

There are now over 125 Associates in various categories of active membership and we are growing each month. Our interest list is over 1,500 people and organizations spread all across the United States. Active participation is very important to us. Please tell your friends and associates about us and our activities. You'd be surprised how many people are train fans!!

The response to our interest questionnaire in our last issue of RAIL NEWSLETTER was very positive. We have responded to those expressing interest in different categories of activities including excursions, yard tours and membership. If you know of someone who is interested in the Society, please pass along their name, address and telephone number to either Phil Bronner or A.J. Farrar from the Membership Committee. They'll receive a packet of information about our activities and the last issue of the RAIL NEWSLETTER.

We still have many opportunities to serve the organization such as tour guides, car attendants, concession workers, maintenance-of-way workers, modelers and other skilled crafts people. Society membership is a requirement. Encourage your friends to come join us.

### SOCIETY BASIC TRAINING

Several more active associates have completed Society Basic Training to learn more about the organization, Short Line Enterprises and safe behavior on and around the trains. These required sessions also cover basic car attendant information for those who wish to volunteer for those duties. Sessions are generally offered once each quarter (or more frequently if needed), conducted at SLE's yard in Fillmore and last approximately three hours on a Saturday morning. The sessions provide useful background information for any of our volunteer opportunities. The following active associates have recently completed the training:

April Henslee	Steve Icanberry
George Roberts	Mike Flaharty
Larry Bull	Joe Galante
Mike Morgan	Richard Sussex
Paul Haase	John Kiley
Theresa Stringer	Sue Herman

Many of our current Car Attendants have also been certified and have worked Metrolink Special Excursion Runs such as the City of Ventura California Beach Party trains, and Ventura County Metrolink Fair Trains.

In addition, both Rick Swanson and Chris Robson have been trained and performed duties as crew chiefs during this period. There's still room for you! Please call A.J. Farrar at (805) 647-7955 if you have any interest in these positions or need more information.

### SOCIETY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

During the last quarter, the Society was fortunate to have the volunteer professional services of Mr. Carl Haeberle of KVEN Talk-Radio in Ventura. Carl has a rich and diverse radio background, but has superior skills in event promotion, organizational management and planning. Under the sponsorship of KVEN, Carl was permitted to volunteer his training skills and management assessment background to assist the Society during its first year of existence. In a series of executive sessions, the Board worked with Carl in identifying its goals and objectives for the immediate and long-term future. These goals are being refined and addressed this year. Future sessions with Carl will involve further refining the goals and objectives and assigning responsibility for accomplishing tasks. We are grateful to KVEN Radio for allowing Carl to work with us this year. You can thank them by listening to his radio program from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. each weekday on 1450 AM and by patronizing his sponsors and thanking them for advertising on local talk radio. Look for Carl to appear in person at many of our activities during the year.

### SOCIETY FUND RAISING

An outgrowth of our goals and objectives sessions was an immediate need to seek outside funding for our proposed Fillmore Railroad Interpretative Center, roundhouse and turntable. Despite having a very supportive city government and cooperative relationship with Short Line Enterprises, we have a significant need for grant funding to begin this major capital project. A suitable turntable has been located in the Midwest and is available for donation to the Society. We face large costs involving removal, dismantling and shipping to

(See BIGGER AND BETTER on Page 7)

Special Event

# FIRST ANNUAL SANTA PAULA DEPOT DAYS AND AUTUMN RAIL FESTIVAL

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1994**

PRESENTED BY

The City of Santa Paula  
The Santa Paula Community Fund  
The Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce  
The Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society

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SCRVRHS Membership Meeting at the Depot.....1:00 - 2:00 PM  
Railroad Video and Slide Shows.....2:00 - 10:00 PM  
"Gandy Dancer" Barbeque.....3:00 - 8:00 PM  
Sneak Preview of New "History of Railroading in Ventura County"  
Exhibit at Union Oil Museum.....4:00 & 5:30 PM  
Reception at Glen Tavern Inn with KVEN's Carl Haeberle,  
Master of Ceremonies.....7:00 - 9:00 PM

And much, much more....

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( BIGGER & BETTER Continued from Page 6)

(TWO SIGNALS Continued from Page 3)

California to accept this donation. We have begun an aggressive campaign, led by Pat Askren, A.J. Farrar and Larry Jensen of SLE, to identify local, regional and national sources of funds. Working with the Fillmore Historical Society, we will contact these sources and present our justification for the funding.

If you know of organizations or groups willing to donate to this project, please contact Pat, A.J. or Larry. They will handle the follow-up that is necessary. If you have skills in fund raising or grantmanship, please let us know.

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cludes old advertising brochures and other relics from the golden age of rail travel. In addition, more than 1,500 flyers for the Society's Independence week-end train excursions were distributed. The Society gained a few new members and a lot of new friends because of the total display. It was a hit!

This is an example of how things can be accomplished when associates have both dedication and a goal. President Wilkenson has given the Society an opportunity to work on two additional projects: 1) the restoration of both Southern Pacific caboose #1119 and 2) an upper quadrant wigwag crossing signal complete with lights and a bell!

## Membership Meetings

Please let us know when you would like to have membership meetings. These would be sessions scheduled in addition to monthly Board of Directors meetings. Please select an option below and send back to the SCRVRHS office:

- The week following the Board Meeting, on Wednesday at 7:00 PM
- The second Saturday morning of the month
- The second Saturday afternoon of the month
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate below your interest in specific activities of the Society. If you are not yet an Associate of SCRVRHS but wish to receive information from us in the future, please complete this questionnaire and return it to our office with a self-addressed stamped envelope:

- Family oriented excursion trains
- Adult oriented excursion trains
- Our Yard Tour Program
- Joining the Society, please send an application

**SANTA CLARA RIVER VALLEY  
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448 SESPE AVENUE  
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