



RAIL NEWS

December, 1994

Number Five

The 'Prez' Sez:

by
DAVE WILKINSON, President

During this, only the second year in the existence of the Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society, we have accomplished a great deal. Our contributions to railroad awareness in Ventura County have exceeded even our most ambitious expectations.

Through the generosity of Short Line Enterprises, Ltd. (SLE) who owns and operates much of the rolling stock, we as a group were able to learn a great deal about railroading. We packaged that knowledge in an ever increasing professional way, and shared what we have learned with the community at large.

Through the ongoing development of our Car Attendant training, we increased the safety factor aboard SLE

Thank you VCTC!

and Metrolink passenger runs. We also took the opportunity these runs presented to educate the public about rail transportation and the essential role it played in the development of both the Santa Clara River Valley and Ventura County as a whole. We even were 'paid' for our service! The Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) hired our Car Attendants as Ambassadors aboard the Metrolink



SCRVRHS President Dave Wilkinson presents Ventura County Transportation Commission Executive Director Ginger Gherardi with a token of SCRVRHS's appreciation for their support.

California Beach Party and Ventura County Fair special trains. For our County Fair assistance, I am pleased to announce, VCTC donated \$2,500.00 to SCRVRHS. Thank you VCTC!

Speaking of awareness, the Santa Paula Union Oil Museum has a special 'Our Railroad Heritage' display sponsored by the Society. If you haven't seen it you're missing out. But hurry, it has only been held over through January!

Thanks to all the SCRVRHS Associates who participated this year. You make the Society what it is!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

City of Fillmore Pledges Support For Turntable and Interpretive Center

The City of Fillmore, through its Redevelopment Agency, has committed its support for our vision of a Railroad Interpretive Center (RIC). First, by discussing a favorable lease arrangement to locate the project and second, establishing a possible matching fund program. Under matching funds, the Redevelopment Agency would match, dollar for dollar, up to \$50,000 monies raised by the Society.

The RIC Committee has approached Harison and Associates in Ventura, a noted professional fund raiser and Nick Deitch of Mainstreet Architects and Planners also of Ventura to possibly assist on the project. Mr. Deitch agreed to donate a portion of his fees for the project. Both are familiar to the City and Redevelopment Agency. Plans have begun for a formal public presentation to the Fillmore Redevelopment Agency.

The 90 foot turntable for the RIC, donated by the Gateway & Western Railroad, sits in the ground in the mid-west. We need to get it to California soon then install it in Fillmore. Therefore, we still have a need for considerable outside funding to complete this major capital project. Since the Society is a 501 (3c) non-profit organization, all donated funds can be tax deductible. Please contact Pat Askren or A.J. Farrar if you have any funding leads or can lend assistance that could further the overall cause.

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Harvey House: Life and Times

by
Sheila Hoffman,
SCRVRHS Historian

Most of us are familiar with the roles played by the advancing railroads and the United States Army Cavalry in the taming of the west. Fewer of us may know what effect the introduction of fine dining establishments and the accompanying importation of young women to staff these enterprises had on this civilizing process.

Prior to the mid-1870's there were no restaurants in the empty miles between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Coast of California. Cooking was done over open fires or in barbecue pits. Iron cookstoves were not even introduced into the United States until the 1830's and, prior to the onset of rail service, were much too heavy for efficient overland transport. In fact, iron cookstoves were frequently jettisoned and left behind to rust along the trail by emigrant families and their trek west.

New towns sprang up a 100 miles apart between water stops — hence the term 'tank towns'.

Meals, usually consisting of freshly killed meat, few (if any) vegetables, and sourdough bread or biscuits, were primitive and generally not very palatable.

As the railroads moved west, new towns sprang up at approximately 100 mile intervals (the distance between water stops -- hence the term "tank towns") along the railroad routes. With the establishment of rail service came passengers, and passengers, had to be fed. The average trains top to take on water was about 20 minutes, and fast food had not yet been invented. Passengers were usually required to pay in advance for

meals that might not get to be consumed before the train left. Uneaten and half eaten food might also be recycled for passengers on a following train.

In 1875, an Englishman named Fred Harvey approached the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Line (his employers), about opening a system of

restaurants along their railroad line to provide passengers meal stop service. Harvey also proposed that the railroad supply fresh food stuffs to each establishment. He was turned down. Next, Harvey pitched his idea to the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway (ATSF). He happened to be in the right place at the right time.

Following the Santa Fe trail west from Topeka, Kansas, the ATSF line had reached the Colorado border by 1872 and by 1878, extended to Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1876, to celebrate the completion of the railhead to Pueblo, Colorado, the ATSF decided to run an excursion train, filled with dignitaries, from Topeka to Pueblo. The return train to Topeka was filled with angry and hungry VIP's. This embarrassment resulted in the ATSF being very amenable to the idea of a meal stop system of first class restaurants. Fred Harvey was hired.

Harvey insisted that his establishments be provisioned with the best Irish table linens, fine silver, china and crystal -- all set in spotless, attractive surroundings. The food served was of the highest quality. Even coffee was blended to adjust for taste variations in local water supplies. If the local water was of poor quality, fresh spring water was brought in by tank car. Chefs, trained in fine cuisine, were imported from Europe and they in turn trained American chefs.

Harvey's restaurants were not only popular with rail passengers -- which the ATSF appreciated-- but also came to be considered, by the communities leading citizens, the best place to dine. By 1883, there were 17 Harvey Houses between Topeka and Albuquerque. Harvey had the exclusive right to operate all of the ATSF line restaurants and hotels west of the Missouri River by 1889. Resort hotels, such as the Montezuma at Las Vegas, New Mexico and

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EDITORS

Rick Swanson Chris Robson

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Sheila Hoffman A.J. Farrar
Russ Sperry

Contributions are welcome! Send articles (preferably on computer disk), photographs, or information to:

RAIL NEWS

448 Sespe Avenue
Fillmore, California 93015

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Harvey House: Life and Times

the El Tovar at the Grand Canyon, attracted royalty and aristocrats from around the world. Fred Harvey had strict rules concerning the deportment and service of his employees. Training for Harvey House staff in both kitchen and dining room was standardized, enabling any employee to move to any restaurant along the line and begin work immediately. A Harvey House staff had between 20 and 30 minutes to feed 60 to 100 people in fine style and so had to rely on discipline and organization. A system of complex signals both from the approaching train and in the dining room was employed to accomplish this task, making highly trained serving people an absolute necessity.

The first Harvey House employed male waiters. However, because of "too much fighting and other activities which rendered them unfit for duty", Harvey refused to use the term waitress, which was considered a lower class occupation. In the Victorian Age, the notion of "working women" frequently carried a different connotation than we think of today. The tradition of employing male waiters continued at stops in California's Mojave Desert, for example places like Needles or Barstow, where the climate was deemed too harsh for sensitive young females. Later, railroad dining cars would also exclusively employ male waiters.

To attract suitable young women, Harvey placed advertisements in eastern and mid-western newspapers seeking "young women between the ages of 18 and 30 of good character, attractive and intelligent". The selection process was rigorous, but the pay (\$17.50 per month plus tips) was considered good for the 1880's. Room and board was also included, and the Harvey girls ate very well.

Memberships' on a Roll!

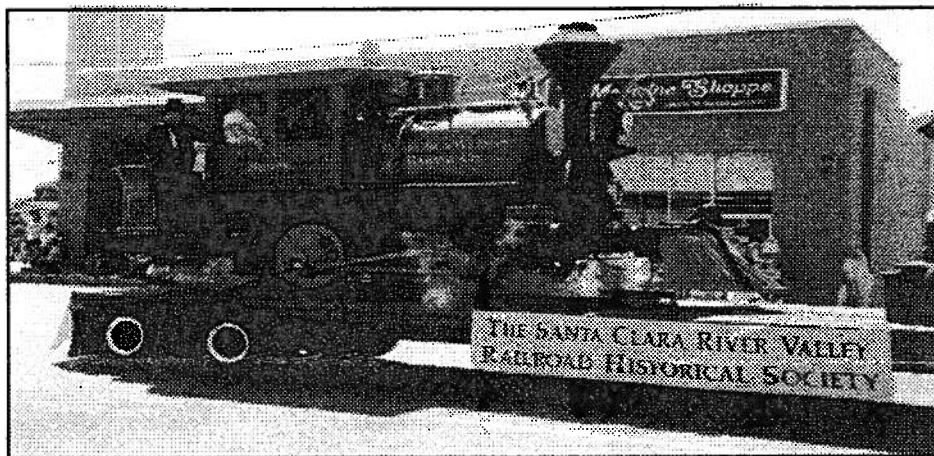
by A.J. Farrar

We now have 140 Associates spread between various categories of active membership. Our recruiting efforts are paying off. We continue to get inquiries about the Society from all over the country. Active members are the key to our success. Tell your friends about us, share literature with them (especially the new color brochure from the Santa Paula Museum), and talk

about our activities. So many people are train fans. Let them know what connections you have with an exciting

**What makes a better
Christmas gift than a
Society Membership!**

and growing railroad society right in their own backyard. If you would like us to send literature to them for you,



The women had a 10:00 P.M. curfew, were under the supervision of a house-mother, and could wear no make-up. Uniforms consisted of a black waist and skirt (8 inches from the floor), white cuffs and apron, black shoes and stockings. Hair had to be worn in a net and tied with a white ribbon.

There were very few women in these new towns of the west and, of these, most were of "questionable character", making Harvey Girls very eligible as wives. Soon the girls were marrying and quitting so fast, it became difficult to train new recruits to keep up with the demand as new restaurants opened. This problem was somewhat mitigated by requiring the Girls to sign a contract

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please call either A.J. Farrar or Phil Bronner from the Membership Committee at (805) 647-7955 or 385-5657. Give us their name, address and telephone number so that we can get them on our interest list and mail them a packet of information. Better yet, what makes a better Christmas gift than a Society membership! Only \$25.

Even when the trains are not running this fall, we still have many opportunities to serve the society and have fun at the same time. Right-of-way work, maintenance tasks, caboose restoration projects, modeling, painting and writing an article for this newsletter are some of the things you can contribute. Pitch in!

SOCIETY BASIC TRAINING

Reservations are being taken for the next Basic Training class. These sessions are required to learn necessary

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SP Depot Days & Autumn Rail Festival

by
Russ Sperry

Anyone who didn't make it to our Santa Paula Depot Days on October 1st missed a GREAT little party! Troy Helton added chicken to his already superb Bar-B-Que menu for this event, and continued as the SCRVRHS leading fundraiser by bringing in a tidy \$933 for the day. Mike Morgan, Steve Pierce and Wayne Sellings deserve a lot of credit for this as well -- not only did they help Troy set up and cook or serve, they did an fantastic job of flagging down people driving by on Highway 150 to boost attendance and sales. But nothing would have happened without the support of front money by SCRVRHS Treasurer, Joe Kern. (A. J. managed to record some of their enthusiasm on video...).

Those who did join us were treated to a day of steam-era nostalgia. Noted photographer and slide distributor Tom Gildersleeve of Newhall lent us over 200 duplicates from his outstanding collec-

tion. From Santa Fe 4-8-4's and Warbonnet ALCO PA's on the San Diego line to early U.P. Challengers on Cajon Pass, the quality of the pictures was so good that it was hard to convince some of the photographers in the audience that these were dupes and not originals. Of course there were plenty of SP shots as well, ranging from 4-8-2's and 4-8-4's doubleheaded on the San Joaquin Daylight to Cab-forwards near Santa Su-

Those who did join us were treated to a day of steam-era nostalgia.

sana; one picture at Glendale even showed Pacific Electric red cars on the adjacent track in the background. Russ Sperry's shots of the very last Rio Grande narrow gauge freight in 1968, and early-seventies Cumbres & Toltec work trains and specials rounded out the early afternoon slide show.

Dave Wilkinson had rented a video pro-

jector, and during the late afternoon he treated those of us brave enough to try to eat in semi-darkness to a double feature of SP's steam-powered rotary snowplows in the Sierras along with the last run of a Cab-forward over Donner Pass. Others dined outside, or walked down to the Union Oil Museum for a sneak preview of the partially-completed "Our Railroad Heritage" display. (Short Line and SCRVRHS are guest curators for this exhibit, which officially opened October 9th. The Oil Museum is one of the finest small museums anywhere, and well worth a visit in its own right; the current special exhibit on the history of railroading in the Santa Clara River Valley makes it exceptionally interesting just now).

After wrapping up the Bar-B-Que and video show, we all trooped over to the Glen Tavern Inn for a reception hosted on our behalf by KVEN's Carl Haeberle. Carl has been a strong booster of SCRVRHS since arriving in Ventura last year. He introduced Dave Wilkinson, who presented plaques to George Real of OST, Charlie Goforth of Ventura Rock, and Victor Westerberg of SP Milling. These three companies have donated a great deal to us in the way of trucking services, ballast, etc. during the past two years, and deserve our appreciation and thanks. (A fourth plaque, recognizing Ginger Gherardi of the Ventura County Transportation Commission for her leadership in the efforts to preserve the branch, was presented to her aboard the Spanish TALGO tilt train the following Monday.) Troy then surprised Dave with a plaque of his own, recognizing the tremendous time and effort Dave has put in for our benefit, both before and after the Society was formed.

A thank you also goes to the Glen Tavern Inn for our use of their historic building and for the coffee they donated, and one to the Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce for the lemon-

Membership

(Continued from page 3)

things such as: safe behavior on and around the trains and equipment; the Society as an organization; and Short Line Enterprises, Ltd. (SLE). A segment of the training provides basic Car Attendant information for those who wish to volunteer in the operation of passenger train events both upon SLE and Metrolink equipment. Sessions are generally offered once each quarter, conducted in the SLE yard in Fillmore and take approximately three (3) hours on a Saturday morning. The sessions also provide useful background information for the other volunteer assignments such as Yard Tour guides or concession workers.

Although currently unscheduled, we will be offering another Advanced Car Attendant training course early next year. This course gives experienced Attendants training on dealing with disorderly passengers, emergency and disaster preparedness, and Metrolink customer service. For more information about the program or to place your name on the call list for future training, again, call either A.J. or Phil.

VISIBILITY AND VIABILITY

As art of our goals and objectives, the Society has been appearing at a series of community events throughout the county. From Saticoy to Santa Paula to the Ventura

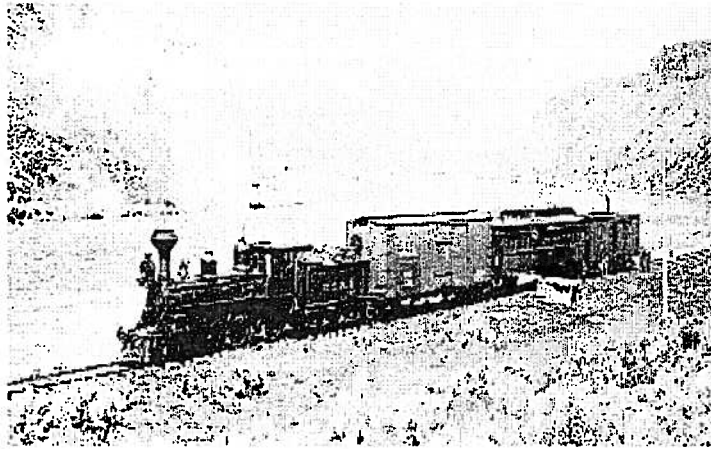
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Harvey House Girls

promising to work for one year or forfeit half of a year's pay should they marry before the year was up. The Harvey Girls tended to marry community leaders and became instrumental forces behind the development of such cultural accouterments as libraries, churches, and schools in the new western towns. The Harvey Girl tradition continued well into the twentieth century. Over 5,000 young women, many from farms, mid-western factory and eastern mill towns came west as Harvey Girls and stayed to become the social leaders of their communities. They, perhaps as much or more than any other single factor, played a leading role in taming the west.



References - Foster, George H. and Peter C. Weiglin. THE HARVEY HOUSE COOKBOOK, Longstreet Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1992. Pp. 1, 3, 23-24, 35-39, 76-79, 100, 127.

SPECIAL NOTE:

SCRVRHS has in the planning stages an authentic Harvey House Dinner evening. Headed by committee chair and the author of the above article, Sheila Hoffman, plans call for a recreation of Mr. Harvey's atmosphere and menu at the historic Glenn Tavern in Santa Paula in early 1995. If you enjoyed the article, you'll enjoy getting in on the ground floor of this project. Drop Sheila a line c/o SCRVRHS and express your interest in what plans to be a unique railroad related experience.

RAILROAD SAFETY TIPS

When crossing a track on foot, look both ways, cross the track, and then walk 25' away from the track. If you want to walk parallel to the track, stay 25' away on either side. Never ever walk down a railroad track itself. It's not only illegal, it's dangerous. Experience shows that people who do this often start day-dreaming, or are concentrating so much on stepping on the railroad ties, they do not hear the train coming in time to jump off. Many times they look back, see the train then freeze in fear. Remember - the train 'outruns' its sound - which means that by the time you hear it, it is virtually on top of you!

If a train engineer sees you on a track, he or she will blow the whistle. Often it takes more than one blast to get the average person's attention, say train engineers. But trains can't stop the way motor vehicles can. A freight train has about 100 cars, weighs 12 million pounds, and takes a full mile to stop. **THINK ABOUT IT!**

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County Fair Parade, we have displayed our banners and "tooted" our horn. In keeping with our long term goals, we informed and recruited new members for the Society.

One of the 'vehicles' we use to introduce ourselves to the community is food sales. Director Troy Helton and his band of associates have been extremely successful in generating interest and income for the Society by selling 'hobo chili' and 'brakeman tri-tip sandwiches' at special events. To continue the progress, Troy needs a dependable and available food service vehicle. CBH Design of Ventura has graciously donated conceptual designs for a food service/display wagon (trailer). The Board of Directors has given approval to pur

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Depot Days

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Hoffman arranged the reception and also provided the homeade cookies. Following the reception, the die-hards among us returned to the depot around 9 pm for what many believe was the high point of the day. Dave Jeffre, one of our most enthusiastic members, put on a 3-D slide show that was absolutely stunning. Dave's pictures, showing the clean and colorful diesels of many northern and eastern railroads as well as the Santa Fe and the Union Pacific, were calendar quality even in two dimensions; in three dimensions, with the tracks and engines jumping out of the screen, they were overwhelming. If enough members are interested, we may be able to set up a second showing of Dave's slides (and perhaps Tom Gildersleeve's as well) sometime next year...

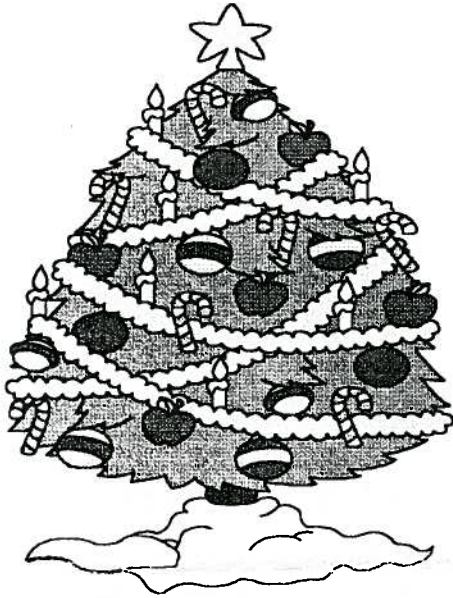
A fundraiser Depot Days wasn't, because of rental cost for the video projector and the Glen Tavern, we didn't quite break even. But in terms of fun, friendship, and the enjoyment we shared, the day was a great success. We even gained three or four new members!!



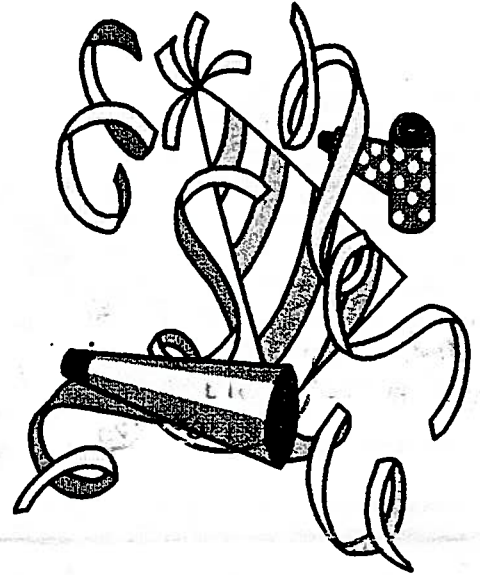
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sue the project. Troy could use your help to bring this wagon to life. Call him at (805) 933-1199.

Finally, our inaugural membership meeting began in November with nearly twenty (20) associates in attendance. Associates shared ideas, stories, and viewed a video on SP's steam-era Coast Daylight. Led by Director Rick Swanson, this series of monthly meetings will focus on both hands-on information and demonstrations by Short Line staff on topics such as rolling stock mechanicals; diesel engine operations, track basics, and many more ideas generated by associates like you. If you have ideas (such as establishing a tape library of railroad videos for Associates to share) call the Society or drop a note for information about the next meeting in January, 1995.



**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS
TO
EVERYONE
FROM
'SCRVRHS'**



RAIL NEWS



**Santa Clara River Valley
Railroad Historical Society, Inc.
448 Sespe Avenue
Fillmore, California 93015**



STEVEN D. PIERCE
P.O. BOX 7025
VENTURA CA 93006-7025

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