



# RAIL NEWS

March, 1995

Number Six

## THE 'PREZ SAYS'

# HOLD ON: EXCITING TIMES AHEAD!

## Turntable, Interpretive Center, Line Purchase, Steam Runs & Much More

By  
Dave Wilkinson, SCRVRHS President

You can't imagine everything that has and is going on with the Society this year! Here's a quick run down of the major items. Much of the detail is covered in articles contained in this issue:

The Fillmore Redevelopment Agency overwhelmingly supported the Society Turntable and Interpretive Center Project as the anchor to their railroad property. A sub-committee will review our financial protocol for consideration of a very favorable property lease and up to \$50,000 in matching funds for money we raise in support of the project.

A team of Society members flew to St. Louis Missouri to inspect the turntable, arrange for removal, and prepare for its transportation and installation in Fillmore.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority is giving consideration of a donation of rail, crossing signals and other equipment from the soon to be dismantled Chandler Branch Line in the San Fernando Valley. The Society will need to remove, load and transport the material to Fillmore.

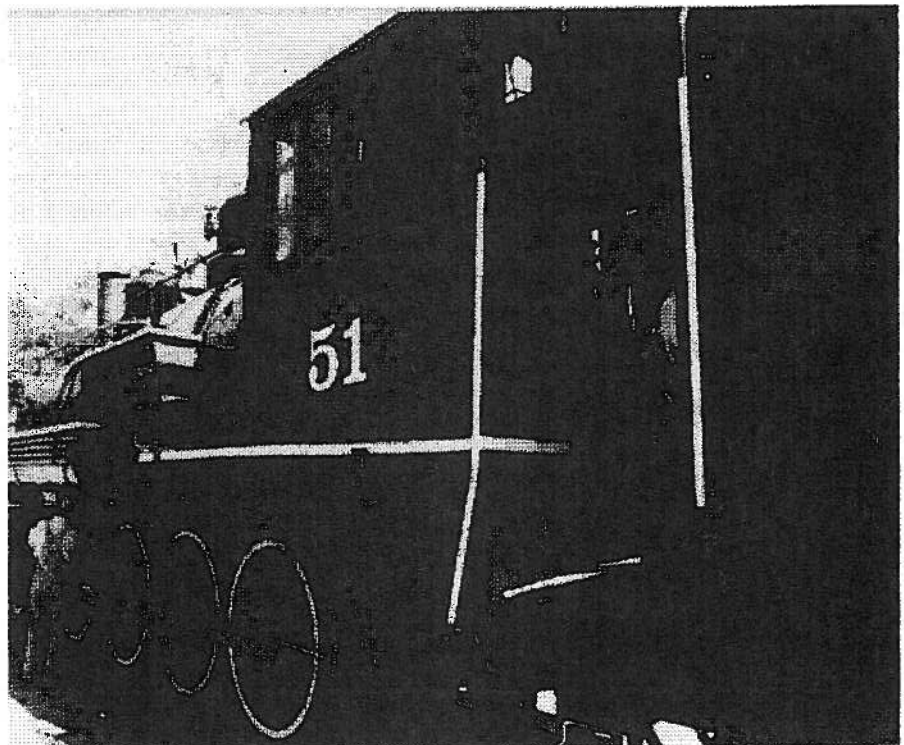
Car Attendants are preparing to begin the 1995 excursion season with the first train runs set for March and April.

Negotiations are underway for the Society to occupy all or part of the Santa Paula Depot for meetings, fund raisers, and train excursion ticket sales.

Finally, the Santa Paula Branch Line is very close to being sold. Caltrans will reinstate

the crossing at Hopper Creek and service to Piru can be reestablished.

Yes, many members have been busy but we can use your help! Get involved. Come to a meeting. Make a donation. Don't let this 'express' pass you by!



*Former Great Northern R.R. #51 will again be fired up and ready to ride in Fillmore on March 25 & 26 and Santa Paula on April 22 & 23. — Photo by Claudia Shrode*

### Inside This Issue:

**Membership Report: How You Can Get Involved!**  
**Turntable and Interpretive Center Project Update**  
 — Conceptual Plan Diagram  
**What Started it All**

page 2  
 page 4  
 page 5  
 page 6

# OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED AROUND: Right-of-Way 'Parties', R.R. Education, Restoration, Just A Few

by A.J. Farrar

Our membership efforts are still paying off! During the last few months, we have printed and distributed a variety of recruiting literature about the Society. The focus of our effort has been at fixed locations such as the Santa Paula Union Oil Company Museum where "Our Railroad Heritage" exhibit has been very well received (and extended through April 30th in a partially configured display format).

We have also taken our materials on the "road" for special events such as the Metrolink Holiday Special train in December. Thanks to Crew Members **Jeff Trimble, Jim Treloar, Steve Icanberry** and **Mike Flaharty** who not only worked as Car Attendants, but also took time to hand out our literature and talk with Metrolink passengers about our

**Keep RAIL NEWS  
at your house.  
Join or Renew Your  
Membership Today!**

Society. If you know of others who would like information about the Society, please call **A.J. Farrar** or **Phil Bronner** at (805) 385-5657. We would be pleased to send them a packet of information about our organization.

**ACTIVITY RECAP:** During the past few weeks, while Shortline Enterprises (SLE) has suspended their excursion schedule, our members have been active with caboose restoration work; committee functions such as the Railroad Interpretative Center (RIC) Project with the City of Fillmore; and, most recently, emergency right of way (ROW)

maintenance work due to the torrential rain damage along the line. (Note: **Bob Seghi** took photos of the 1/14/95 ROW Party; a proof sheet should be available for your review. His phone number is 805 985-7351)

By now, you should have received a separate mailer alerting you to the need for volunteers to help with these on-going work parties. The assignments are being coordinated by Director **Paul Haase** and Crew Chiefs **Rick Swanson** and **Chris Robson**. These are weekend work parties and may be physically challenging, but very rewarding. For additional details and to confirm your participation, please call Paul at 805 524-1607; Rick at 805 492-5921; or Chris at 805 388-0311.

But we didn't just work all the time! During the early part of December, you may recall an invitation extended to take part in an evening event to reflect on our accomplishments and socialize with each others at a terrific holiday potluck dinner and railroad media party at the Santa Paula Depot. Early railroad and, movie promotional films featuring railroads, were shown. **Jim Clark** ran an early 1930's movie trailer starring clips of John Wayne. **Dave Wilkinson** 'premiered' a 1958 16mm color home movie, purchased site unseen at a garage sale, that depicted a celebration of steam event at the Santa Paula Depot. Thanks to all our members and guests for a very enjoyable event and great food.

**PLANNED EVENTS:** In addition to the ROW parties mentioned above, on-going restoration work, RIC Committee and administrative tasks, our membership meeting concept will continue in 1995. As you will recall, the winter membership meetings are currently scheduled for 7:00 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of every month

(Continued on page 7)



## RAIL NEWS

Published quarterly by The Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society, Inc., a 501 (3c) non-profit organization  
Annual Dues \$25 per Individual; \$50 per Family

### EDITORS

Rick Swanson Christopher Robson

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

A.J. Farrar Russ Sperry Jeff Trimble  
Roy Payton Claudia Shrode

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

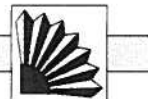
RAIL NEWS  
448 Sespe Avenue  
Fillmore, California 93015

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dave Wilkinson, President  
Pat Askren, Vice President  
Russ Sperry, Secretary  
Joseph Kern, Esq., Treasurer  
Sheila Hoffman, Historian  
A.J. Farrar  
Paul Haase  
Troy Helton  
Dave Jeffrey  
Christopher Robson  
Rick Swanson

### 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.



Fillmore & Western Railway

# 'STEAM' TRAIN EXCURSIONS



**BE  
THERE!**



**FOUR  
TRIPS  
PER DAY  
IN  
FILLMORE**



**FIVE  
TRIPS  
PER DAY  
AT THE  
SANTA  
PAULA  
DEPOT**

— #51 Photo by Claudia Shrode

# AS THE TURNTABLE STARTS TO TURN

by Chris Robson

Valentine's Day, marked a signal event in the history of our organization, joined by several Board members and associates, A.J. Farar made a stellar presentation of our turntable project to the Fillmore Redevelopment Agency at

City Hall. His well reasoned and professional verbal depiction of our project along with a reasonable request for the City's support, were well received. Architect Mark Deitch, aided with his full color renderings of the entire Interpretive Center project, helped make the pitch - as always - worth at least a thousand words. Each member of the Agency (all are City

Council members) lavished praise on SCRVRHS for our commitment and professionalism. While there will be some problems doing it, they will take "another look" at the city's present and future funding projects to find money in the budget to support our effort. They all agreed the working turntable will be the "centerpiece of the eastern end of the project," and "it will be a magnet for tourists coming to the general area". Everyone expressed the importance of getting the turntable here as soon as possible. When asked by the Agency how ready SCRVRHS was, A.J. responded "We have our evaluation team scheduled to leave for Kansas City tomorrow." The final action of the Agency was to appoint a sub-committee to work with the SCRVRHS Turntable Committee to review a financial pro forma. This committee will also review the SCRVRHS sources of needed project funds.

Our multi-talented turntable evaluation team (TTT) - consisting of President Dave Wilkinson; new board member and accountant Dave Jeffrey; associate Roy Payton, R.C.E., our engineering consultant; and associate Jim Trealar - conducted their review February 15-18. They reported their findings - complete with video, still photos and line drawings to a special meeting of the SCRVRHS Board on February 21.

The design dates from the turn-of-the-century, but the turntable was built in 1911 by the Toledo Bridge and Crane Company. It consists of the 91' by 15' sixty ton "box" type turntable, all rail (including the curved rail in the turntable pit), the motors, and all ties. The team found the condition to be excellent. Bids are being obtained for the Kansas City prep work, crane loading and shipment. Once the turntable arrives, members will have many restoration and finishing projects to participate in. Also, the Board is developing a fund-raising program for the turntable, the development of the roundhouse and the Interpretive Center. More details in future editions of RAIL NEWS.

## CAR ATTENDANTS' CORNER

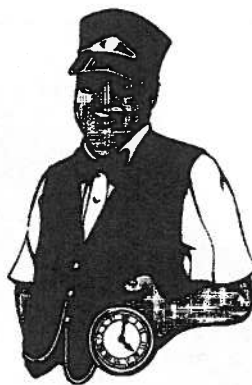
# Metrolink Holiday Special Keeps SCRVRHS Image High

by Jeff Tremble

Early in the morning on Saturday, December 17, 1994, there appeared several eager faces. On that day, our group staffed the Metrolink Holiday train. A special train that made a shopping trip between Oxnard and Union Station in downtown Los Angeles. As SCRVRHS Car Attendants, it was our job to make sure that the passengers had a safe trip, and to answer many questions about our fun railroad society. On this day the SCRVRHS crew consisted of Jim Treloar, Steve Icanberry, Mike Flaharty, and me, Jeff Tremble.

Decked out in our official SCRVRHS Car Attendant uniforms, the crew heard many stories about this run being the first train trip for so many of the passengers. This holiday excursion to downtown Los Angeles was just the excuse needed to try out Metrolink for the first time. But, the train also had a lot of regular Metrolink riders. The difference on this trip was that the 'regulars' had brought their families along to experience how they traveled to work. A little Saturday shopping downtown was an added attraction!

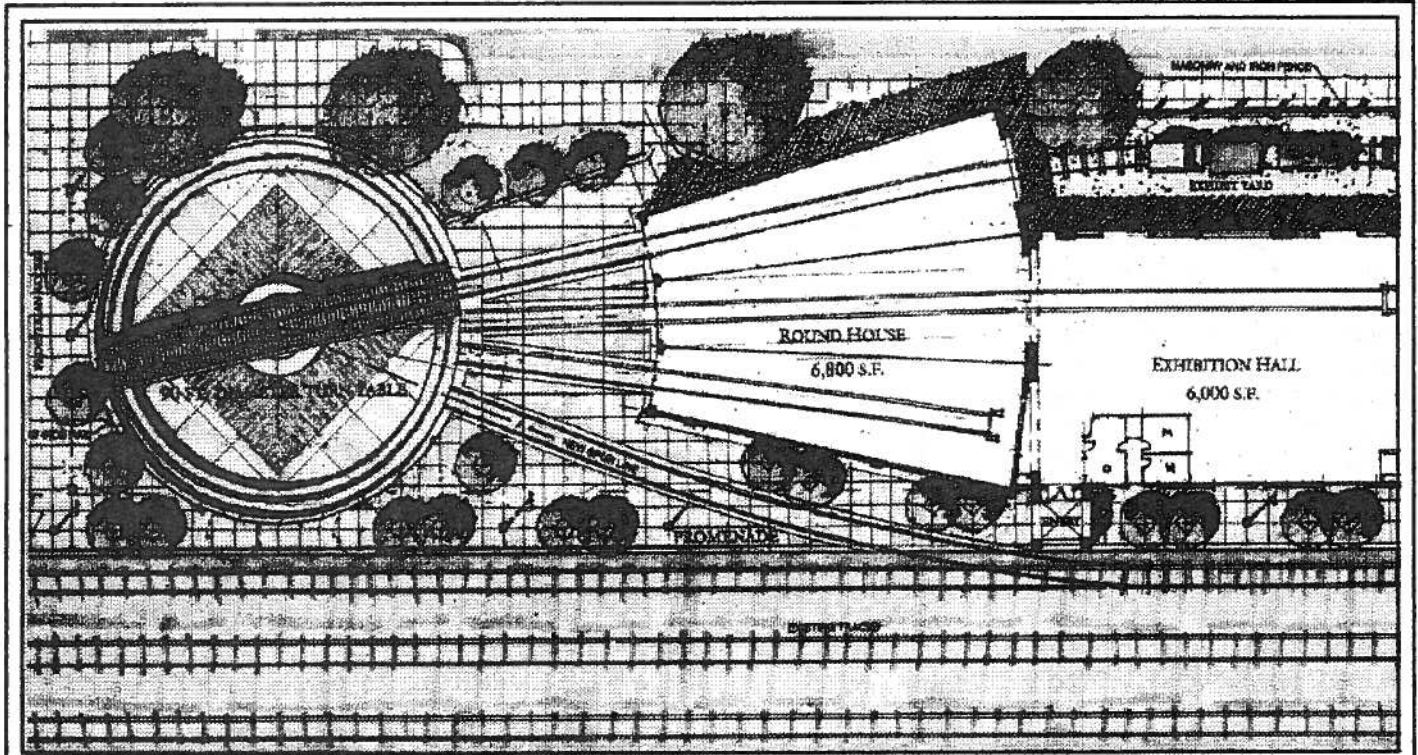
During lunch the Car Attendants took the opportunity to explore the Red Line subway. To our delight, every subway train we saw was almost full. We exited at the last station on the line, MacArthur Park, to find some lunch. What we didn't expect was the exceptionally high price for food. Nevertheless we quickly ate our pricey morsels realizing that our short lunch hour was beginning to run quite thin. With two minutes to spare, and several of out-of-breathe Car Attendants, we made it back to our posts on the Metrolink train!



The comment was heard several times from passengers at the end of the day, 'Gee, I wish you would do these Saturday trips more often!' We do too! This special event proved to be another great opportunity to show the general public an alternative way to travel to work. We also appreciated the opportunity to pass out literature about SCRVRHS and spread the word about our group. Thanks again Metrolink and the Ventura County Transportation Commission!



# Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society



CONCEPTUAL PLAN  
RAILROAD INTERPRETIVE CENTER  
FILLMORE, CALIFORNIA

# What Started It All: A Brief History

## Santa Paula Branch Brought People, Oil, & Oranges

by  
RUSS SPERRY

From the 1850's until the 1920's and 30's, railroads were America's lifeline. Whether located on a main trunk line or a secondary branch, communities depended on railroads for their connection to the outside world. Towns bypassed by railroads often withered and died as their residents moved a few miles to be closer to these vital transportation links. It was not unusual for citizens in promising areas to band together to build a short line railroad to connect to the nearest main line, or to lobby the major railroads into building a branch to their communities. It was just such an effort in the mid-1880's, begun by Thomas R. Bard, which led to construction of the railroad from Saugus through Santa Paula and Ventura to Santa Barbara. (In 1890, Bard became the first president of the Union Oil Company, first headquartered in what is now the Santa Paula Oil Museum.) Eventually, Bard and other major landowners in the Santa Paula - Port Hueneme area convinced the Southern Pacific RR that sufficient traffic would be generated to warrant constructing a branch. Rights-of-way were secured, and grading crews arrived in Saugus in mid-April, 1886. After several interruptions, work on the line began in earnest by the end of August.

As construction proceeded westward, new communities sprang up at Piru, Fillmore and Sespe. Although promoted by the 'Big Four' owners of the Southern Pacific, Sespe never developed as expected. The depot was open only a few years, and the Post Office closed in 1932; by that time most of the residents had long since moved to nearby Fillmore or west to Santa Paula. Piru and Fillmore survived, however, and grew in importance as the citrus industry made possible by rail transportation thrived

in the valley. Santa Paula, already a major agricultural center, received a big boost from the arrival of the rails early in 1887. Rail service got off to a shaky start however, as unusually heavy rains disrupted traffic several times during the next few weeks. The Santa Paula depot, shipped in sections from Sacramento,

was ready for occupancy by its first agent, Fred Corey, at the end of March. Water towers for the thirsty locomotives were located in Piru, Fillmore and Santa Paula; the latter also boasted a new turntable and basic engine service facilities.

*(Continued on page 7)*

### 1995 Branch History To Show Line Changing Hands

January 1995 saw the California Transportation Commission approving \$3.5 million in funds to purchase the 32-mile Santa Paula Branch Line from the Southern Pacific Railroad. According to the Fillmore Gazette, the commission unanimously approved the funds at their January 19 meeting in Sacramento.

By securing the line, Shortline Enterprises' Fillmore and Western Railway could expand its operation beyond the current 16-miles of leased track provided by the City of Fillmore. Now operating movie and dinner trains between Fillmore and Santa Paula, the Fillmore and Western would be able to utilize trackage from Piru to Montalvo.

The purchase of the line is a joint venture between the City of Fillmore, Ventura County, the Ventura County Transportation Commission, and the cities of Santa Paula and Ventura. Together the agencies applied for grant funds to put towards the approximate \$8 million purchase price of the line.

Federal funds amounting to \$3.5 million administered through the Ventura County Transportation Commission will be added to the just approved \$3.5 million in State funds and contributions from the various cities. It is anticipated that the Santa Paula Redevelopment Agency will contribute \$500,000 and the City of Ventura is expected to add a similar amount. Fillmore has already purchased 13.4 acres from the purchase of the Fillmore Station Parcel. That land will be contributed to the overall acquisition as Fillmore's share.

The line will be jointly owned by the cities of Ventura, Santa Paula, Fillmore and the County of Ventura. All that is left is the actual purchase of the line and the determination as to how ownership and operation of the line will be handled. The close of escrow is anticipated within the next few months.



## BOARD EXPANDED AT 1995 ANNUAL MEETING

At the annual meeting of the Board of Directors on January 4, 1995, the Board voted to expand from nine to eleven

positions. The primary reason was to assist the Society in meeting the demands placed on it because of the many and varied activities and projects. Additionally, the vacancy caused by the recent resignation of Carol Rock was also filled.

barbeques is just one of his services. Paul works as a Car Attendant; heads up the Right-of-Way Parties to repair rain damaged roadbed; acted as a yard tour docent; and has been a local supplier of everything imaginable that the Society needed and didn't have for whatever project that was at hand.

## SP Branch History

*(Continued from page 6)*

The first locomotive arrived in Ventura by the end of April, 1887. Construction continued northward, with service established to Carpinteria on July 1st and the first train to Santa Barbara arriving on August 19th. The tracks were extended north to Ellwood, a ranching and oil center just south of Gaviota, by December. For the next fourteen years Ellwood was the end of the line, as rugged terrain and the depression of the 1890's put a halt to further construction for a time. Rails were eventually extended south from San Francisco through Salinas to Templeton and Santa Margarita by 1889, but it was not until early May of 1894 that trains reached San Luis Obispo from the north. This line was extended to Surf, where a branch heads off to Lompoc, in 1896. Four more years were needed to complete construction along the seaside cliffs south of Surf; connection of SP's Coast Line from Los Angeles through to San Francisco was finally celebrated with the driving of the last spike on the final day of December, 1900.

Added to the Board were associates Christopher Robson (3 year term); Dave Jeffrey (2 year term); and Paul Haase (1 year term). In a separate action, the board voted to maintain the current slate of officers.

Chris Robson has contributed to the Society as Car Attendant; Crew Chief; Co-Editor of RAILNEWS; Chairman of the By-Laws Committee; and many other projects. A resident of Camarillo, Chris is a frequent rider and fulltime supporter of Metrolink, which he takes to his new job in Pasadena. A medical marketer and Director of Corporate Special Programs, Chris brings his marketing skills and customer service expertise to the Society and Car Attendant program.

Dave Jeffrey is an accountant by trade. He has also been a Car Attendant; assisted with both the Buenaventura Mall and Santa Paula Oil Museum displays; was part of the TTT (Turntable Team) that ventured to Kansas City; and has worked several Society tri-tip barbeque fund raisers. A Santa Paula resident, Dave has unselfishly volunteered wherever the need has arisen.

Paul Haase is a citrus farmer in Fillmore. Supplier of wood for the tri-tip

## Opportunities Abound

*(Continued from page 2)*

at the SLE yard. This summer they will move to 10:00 am on the second Saturday of every month. Led by Director Rick Swanson, these sessions are designed to accommodate the desires of our associates who want to learn more about railroading, become acquainted with the various pieces of equipment and explore other avenues of interest. Plan on attending one of these meetings and let us know what you would like to see in 1995.

Additional training opportunities will also be announced soon. Basic Society orientation and training for Car Attendants for Fillmore and Western and Metrolink service will be scheduled during this quarter. Watch your mailbox for the announcement of basic training and refresher/certification for CPR card holders.

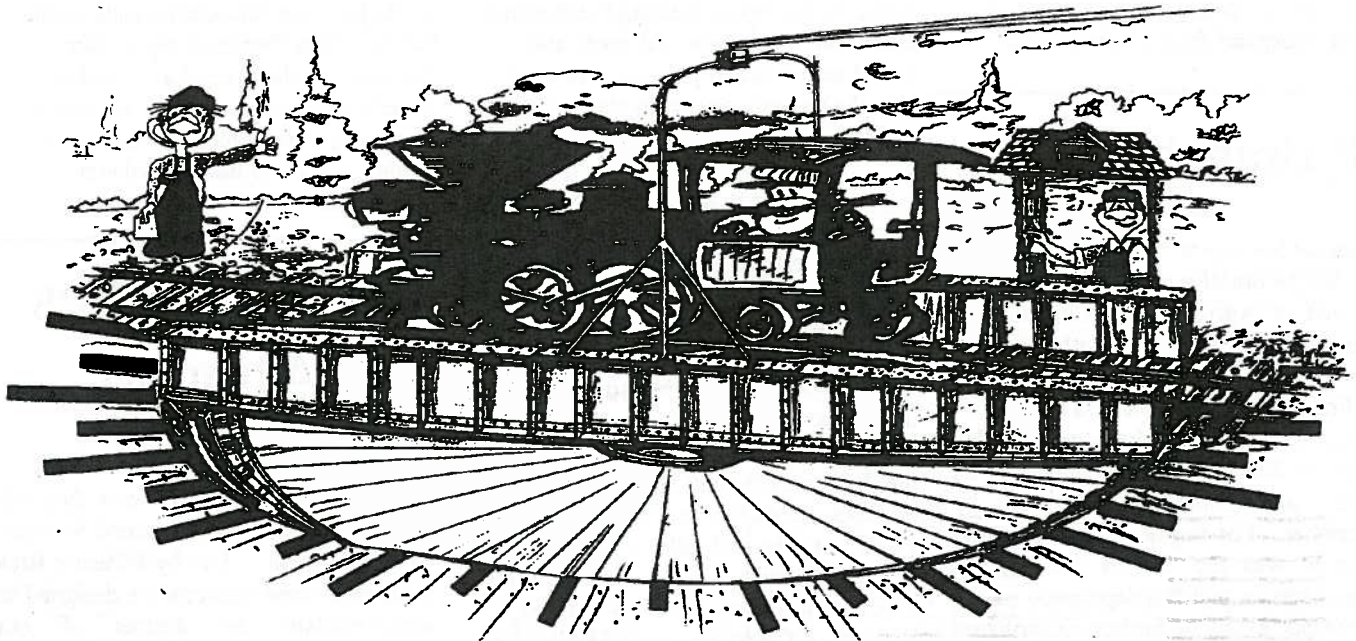
## RAILROAD SAFETY TIPS

Why do cars stall on tracks? Cars with stick shifts tend to do this more often than those with automatic transmissions. When the driver shifts to make it over the railroad bed, the car stalls. If your car stalls on a track and a train is coming, get out of your car immediately and run *toward* the direction of the train, and *out and away* from the tracks. If you run in the same direction of the train, and the train hits your car and drags your car along with it, you could get hit by your *car*, not the train.

In about 25% of car-train collisions, cars have hit the train. This happens when people daydream while driving. Or, if a person seldom sees a train at a particular crossing, he or she may not pay attention to the flashing crossing signals. Another reason: when the train is slow moving, drivers try to beat the train, but don't make it. Not convinced? Ask any Metrolink engineer. In Cars vs. Train: the Train *always* wins!

**MEMBERSHIP DATABASE:** During the past few months, we have worked on the Society data base and attempted to update and correct any errors that it contains. You will be receiving a membership status and data base information letter and, if appropriate, Society renewal notice in the mail very soon. Please take time to respond to that correspondence and help us maintain the accuracy of our records. Your continued involvement with the Society is very much appreciated. Thank you for your support during 1994.

# JOIN THE SCRVRHS TURNTABLE TEAM!



**SEND A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION TODAY!**



## RAIL NEWS

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



Steve D. Pierce  
 P.O. Box 7025  
 Ventura, CA 93006

### Inside This Issue:

Membership Report: How You Can Get Involved!	page 2
Turntable and Interpretive Center Project Update	page 4
— Conceptual Plan Diagram	page 5
What Started It All	page 6