

# Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society News Letter



## Fire Works Booth Ignites Bank Account

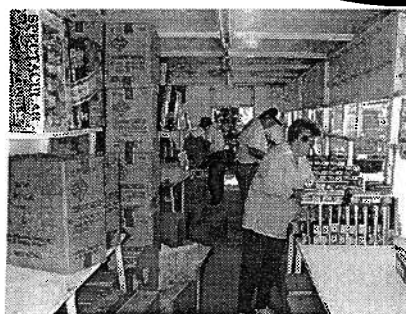
After several years of prodding by our Vice President & Fillmore Fire Chief Pat Askren, the Society takes on a fireworks sales booth and helps Turn Table Fund by five digits.

The Society can't thank those of you that helped enough. Special mention goes to the Morgan family again. It turns out Mike was on medical leave the week proceeding the 4th and recouped

in the booth, almost full time. Sales started noon the 28th and ended noon the 5th however, we decided to shut the booth down late on the 4th to have fun, all except Mike & Ken Shaner that is. Sales went mad and they sold almost every thing in stock. The vendor said we should get an award for the least returns.

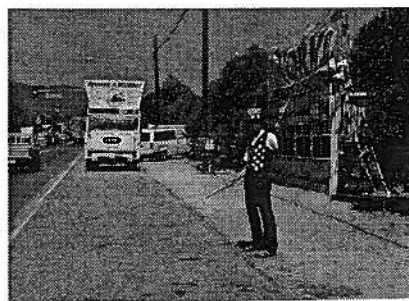
Don (Abe Lincoln) Ansel & wife covered most

Don (Uncle Sam) Ansel dragging customers off the street.



Joyce & Mike Morgan with Bill Victor in the background.

afternoons and can be seen in his Uncle Sam outfit dragging the customers off highway 126.



## Interpretive Center Steam Pump? Continue on pg. 2

A turn of the century steam powered pump located on Ranch Sespe, has been made available to the Society. Discussions have been under-

way as what to do with it. It is agreed it would be quite an attention piece however, the board voted that all energies and money be devoted to

the Turn Table. Bob Mahan is lead man in an effort to dismantle and re-assemble in Ventura County. The Board has agreed to allow the relo-

### Inside this issue:

- #10 switch & Frog 2
- 1119 Restoration 3  
Speeder runs
- A Sweet Steamer 4
- Mile Markers 5  
For Sale
- Rail Gauge 6  
Rail Bull
- The "Prez Sez" 7
- Fair Train 8

### Special points of interest:

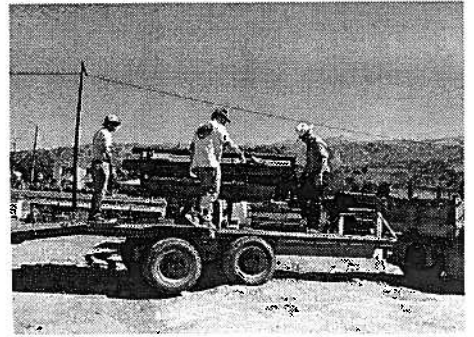
- Membership is up.
- Live Steamers to lay track in Fillmore.
- Donors for installing the Turn Table are lining up.
- F & W owner Dave Wilkinson is in Texas loading cars for addition to his train set.
- Rail cars make seed business by City Hall.

## OST Donates Switch

The project for Saturday July 11th was moving the #10 switch built in 1942 to the SCRVRHS yard, next to Caboose 1119. How was it that a big hunk of iron was cast during W.W.II? Did our switch have anything to do with the step up in security after the Japanese Submarine shelled Rincon Beach and artillery guns were placed along the

shore?

The quiz of the day is what is a #10 switch & how does it get its rating? Have the answer? Write to Troy R. Helton, Jr. P. O. Box 609 Santa Paula, CA 93061, or email world-flyer@vcol.net or fax (805) 933-2524. The answer will be published in the next issue.



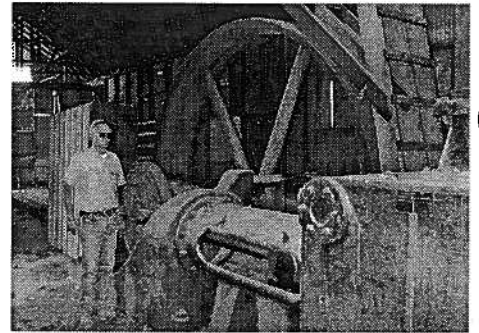
Moving the Switch – Court Gosserand, Rick Swanson & Tim Mason with Paul Haase on his tractor.

## Steam Pump Continued

cating at the Interertive Center site. TTT engineer Roy Payton has preliminary scale drawings with the boiler, pump, & drive fitting nicely in the building. A letter is underway to all county farmers in the hopes of generating enough interest and money to allow Bob to proceed. It is quite a historical ma-

chine and we would hate to see it leave the area. It was first hoped the machine would find a home at an agricultural museum which was to be built years ago.

Please comment, the board would like to hear from the membership for guidance. Send to Troy.



President Paul Haase next to the pump. Is it big or is he small?

## Bicycle Giveaway from the Society

Part if the fireworks promotion was a drawing for a small bicycle shown being assembled by Mike Morgan with Steve Pierces tools. The rest of us were tired of trying to interpret the directions. We gave up and walked away. The lucky win-

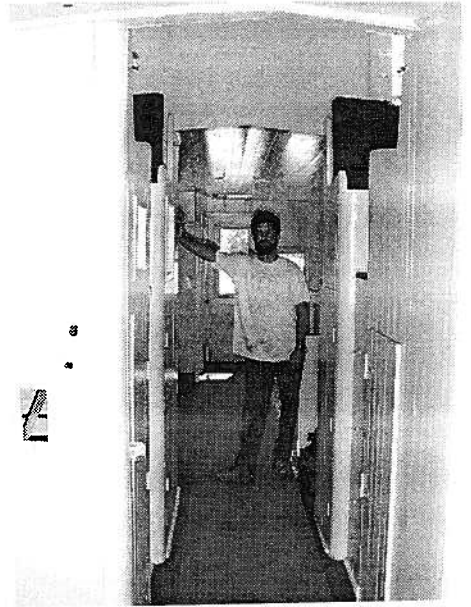
ner was Celistino Soliza III 20, of Oxnard. A press photo was to be taken for the local paper. The rules were one had to be 16 to buy fireworks but 18 to enter the drawing. Is Red Devil Fireworks Selling the list?



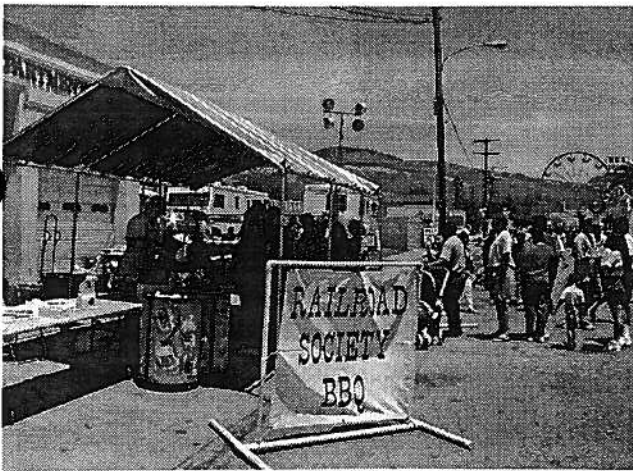
## End of Caboose restoration nears

The inside of Caboose 1119 is nearing completion as shown with project manager Steve Pierce. The inside looks better than it ever could have while in use. The car belongs to F&W President Dave Wilkenson. The car is on loan to the Society for use as a meeting place and to satisfy members with a

desire for restoration. Show up just about any Saturday morning about 9:00 AM. And join the fun. It is located on jump tracks at the SCRVRRHs yard next to the upside down Turn Table, and a 1942 #10 switch stamped on a frog. Those who attended the potluck saw the improvements.



## Orange Festival & Tri-Tips



John Gartman is at it again. Look close and you'll see the Morgans in the middle of the BBQ arena. Troy even helped, although they wouldn't let him near the beans with cut up carrots. Long time member and past classmate

Jessie Segovia of Segovia's Market supplied the trimmed & seasoned Tri-Tip. Couple this with Johns almost secret cooking recipe and the results are assured.

Johns BBQ is the most consistent & profitable fund raiser for the Society, having paid the liability insurance for the last few years.

## Speeders To Run Again

This fall is time to thank all the speeder owners and operators who have donated time & money selling rides at special events as a fundraiser for the Society.

It is rumored speeders are going to get free reign with a run

from Fillmore to Montalvo and return. The last stop will be at F&W's BBQ site for Tri-Tip the SCRVRRHs way. It will be a special day for rail fans from all over the South Western United States & Saticoy. Plan on attending.



Can you tell this speeder belongs to a Fire Chief?

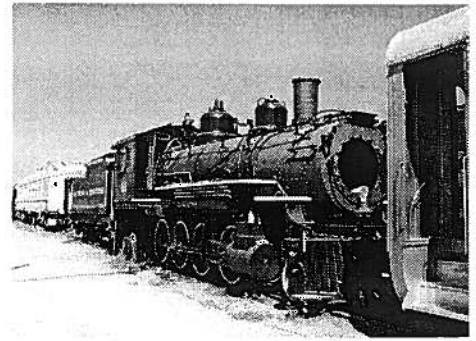
## Ole 51 Takes A Header

Did you ever wonder why the old 1906 Baldwin steam engine doesn't run every weekend? It has to do with economics which includes high maintenance & operating cost.

As seen here old 51 is in for preventive maintenance before the 1997 Rail Festival. It takes 5 men to run the steamer, only one on the diesel electric like

the #100, #101 F-7's, or 5009 Alco.

The 51 is owned by John Birmingham of Boulder Colorado. In order to operate the engine a member of his family has to be transported & lodged here. Water & #2 Diesel isn't cheap either, but what a crowd pleaser, and a sweeter ride one can only dream of.

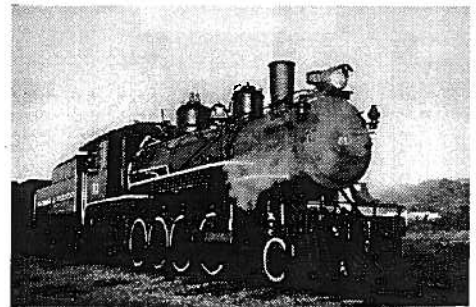


Getting ready for Rail Fest 97  
Carries leg is hanging out. It moved so he mustn't be asleep.

## Ole 51 – A Sweet Steamer

Ron Lewis, one of our long time members had a happy reunion in Fillmore. As a boy, he grew up on a Ranch in NE Colorado which had a Water Tower frequented by the many sugar beet trains. He befriended the crew, and they eventually allowed him to ride south in the cab. Years later

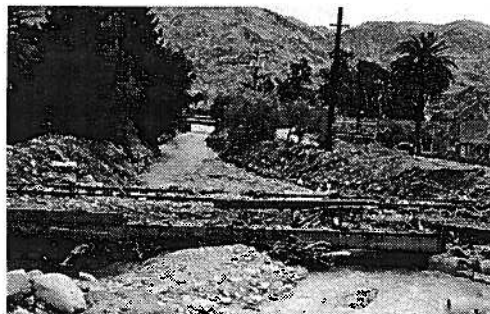
after establishing a successful insurance agency in Westlake, Ron popped over the hill to see all the comotion about the "Movie Trains" and go for a ride. What a surprise when he found an old friend and the same steamer he hitched rides on in Colorado. Ron is an active car attendant



Ole 51  
Some of the sugar rubbed off the beets it used to carry in Colorado.

## El Nino

In 1927 the St. Francis Dam broke wiping out miles of tracks attested to by the many 1928 date nails in the ties. In the winter of 97&98, God's dam broke wiping out a good portion of the tracks again. F&W crews worked frantically



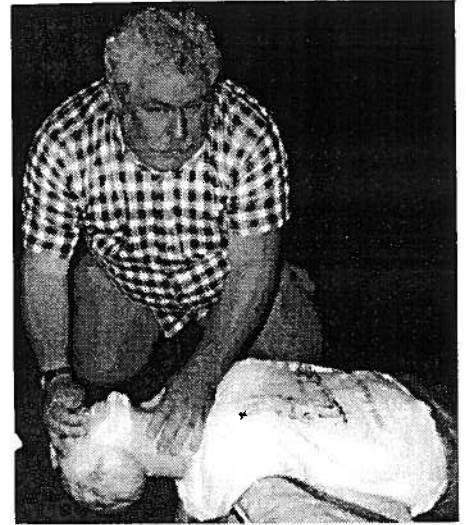
restoring service from Fillmore to Santa Paula. Funded by VCTC, the tracks are back in full service and approve for a whopping 15 mph, more in some places. A massive clean up effort by both cities have made it a pleasant 1 hour ride.

## CPR & The Railroad

Part of the requirements to becoming a SCRVRHS car attendant is training. Not only in the art of train etiquette, but mostly in rail safety. A training handbook was developed early on and is mandatory for all attendants to study. Part of any organization should be CPR which is valuable not only around the rail but statistics show most first aid & CPR is

performed on close friends or family members.

SCRVRHS is fortunate in that our Vice President & City of Fillmore Fire Chief, Pat Askren, has access to a qualified instructor who has made it convenient for members to receive the appropriate training & card renewals.



F & W owner Dave Wilkinson trying to revive a customer long enough to sign the credit card slip.

## Possible SCRVRHS Headquarters

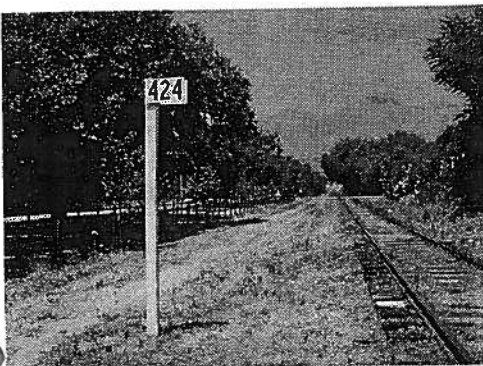
Rumor has it that Santa Barbara Savings & Trust would like us to use their building, since we aren't a competitive bank. It would be the start of an interpretive center and home for Fred Ervast which many of you know as the king of memorabilia sales. Fred has been selling patches, badges, t-shirts, etc at all the functions.

It would give the Society a place to display some of the materials we've accumulated and get us into the interpretive mode for the time will come when we can build a permanent IC on our property next to the Turn Table & Round House. We would also hold all board & general meetings in the SCRVRHS center.

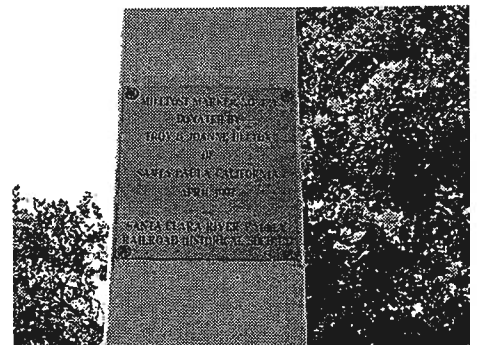


The Bank Building looking north from the RR tracks through Central Park.

## Own an authentic Mile Post Marker



Speaking of "Fire Ball" Fred Ervast, he is selling mile post markers between Santa Paula & Fillmore. 423,424, & 425 are taken. 423 by the Hurst Family, 424 by Troy & Joanne Helton, & 425 is a memorial to the late Mark Dees who donated the first \$5000 to the IC.



## Rail Gauge “Tails”

The US Standard railroad gauge is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and the US railroads were built by English expatriates. Why did the English people build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways. The people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing. Well, if they tried to use any other spacing the wagons would

break on some of the old, long distance roads, because that's the spacing of the old wheel ruts. The first long distance roads in Europe were built by Imperial Rome for the benefit of their legions. The roads have been used ever since. The initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagons, were first made by Roman war chariots. Since the chariots were made for or by Imperial Rome they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Thus, we have the answer to the original questions. The United

States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman army war chariot. Specs and Bureaucracies live forever. So, the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's ass came up with it, you may be exactly right. Because the Imperial Roman chariots were made to be just wide enough to accommodate the back-ends of two war horses.

## Rail Bull by Troy R. Helton, Jr.

I started reading a book entitled “The Railroad, what it is and what it does” by John H. Armstrong, distributed within the society by A. J. Farrar.

The thought occurred to me, as a board member I have been voting on issues having to do with the turn table location with access to the main line and I don't have a clue what some of the terms discussed by Dave Wilkinson, past president and current owner of Fillmore & Western Railroad, and Roy Payton, engineer and present board member were talking about. I knew there was a frog in the rail yard but I thought it was green and croaked at night. After reading chapter three of the book, I find out I was wrong, that frogs are part of the switch rail and they have numbers.

Great, rail parts have names and numbers. The best part is to find out the reason for the parts, the

names, what they are, and why they were designed they way they are.

It's all interesting and the next time Dave & Roy engage in debate on frog sizes, switch types, rail weights, etc. I'll have a bit of an idea why the discussion. After all, we don't want Jim Treavor and “Boris” jumping the tracks with a #6 when he should have had a #8, or #12. This correlates to a 10, 15, or 25 mph speed limit assigned to the different designs.

It is interesting to note, 260 feet of track consist of 11.5 tons of steel rail held in place with 600 lbs. of spikes, resting on 3.1 tons of tie plates, resting on 16.7 tons of treated wood cross ties, resting on 130 tons of crushed rock ballast, which in turn is resting on the subgrade and right of way. All this is held in place until El-Nino comes along and washes it away, which is another subject.

Dave Wilkinson is rumored he would not play with his toy trains unless the stack had a nipple on it. He has been involved with scale or full size trains since birth and is now CEO of F&W RR. Roy Payton comes from a long line of railroaders in Argentina. He is now Chief Engineer (as well as a Civil Engineer) of the TTT (turntable team) and a Director of SCRVRHS. He refuses to tell us why he left the country, hiding out in Fillmore, but we think his grandmother knew Butch Cassidy. In any case they know how to install the Turntable. And are well acquainted with the appropriate jargon.

If anyone thinks the Turntable just falls in place with out a lot of work, just show up on Saturday mornings and watch the dedicated members.

**This is an invitation.**

## The Prez Sez by: Paul M. Haase President SCRVRRHHS

Since our last newsletter, we have had multitudes of successful projects.

The Rail Festival of March 14th & 15th were a complete success. We did it all – from running speeders the leadership of Wayne Parson to Ken Shaner running the live steamers to John Gartmans crew doing the band up Bar-B-Que. People came from far near to participate in these various events.

On the 20th of April your Bar-B-Que crew put on a luncheon for the “Associated Historical Societies and Museums of Ventura County”. The folks seemed to love the day which started with a general meeting in the Fillmore Theater, adjourned to the Fillmore Museum and then tour our SCRVRRHHS site. Then they boarded the train for the luncheon at the BBQ site. After lunch, and a short trip back to Fillmore everyone gabbed about how great the day had been. We really want to thank our Sheila Hoffman and Husband LaVerne as well as Johnny G. and the whole crew for taking the day off and doing a bang up job.

The next event was “TRANES, PLANES, & AUTOMOBILES”. Yes, on that rainy weekend we traveled to Santa Paula to set up shop under the Morton Bay Fig tree. The take wasn’t all that great, but it seems that where ever we go we have fun, fun, fun. That’s our Bar-B-Que crew.

The Orange Festival in the middle

of May was another bash. We cooked, cooked, and cooked those tri-tip sandwiches until we were all cooked out by Sunday afternoon. The Festival was a whopping success as was the Bar-B-Que.

On June 24th Mayor Don Gunderson chartered train. This time we BBQ’d dinner for the guest on-board and then went for a train ride. Joyce Morgan with two of their three daughters were at the forefront. Shelly and Michelle helped us with the Bar-B-Que while daughter Susan and dad Mike were in or around the train. Mind you folks, Mike had just gotten out of the hospital that morning only to come and help. What a guy! Fire Chief/SCRVRRHHS Vice President Pat Askren backed the bar-B-Que trailer on to the grass only to seemingly ignite the sprinkler mechanism after the fire was going good. Thanks to Jim Treelore for saving our fire. Anyway, thanks to all, including my lovely wife Linda for getting us through that one.

This year we started something different as a fund raiser. As a prelude to our fireworks sales headed by board member, Troy Helton, we had a really neat Saturday afternoon Bar-B-Que at our SCRVRRHHS Park over by Caboose 1119. Johnny G. did the honors as cook and we all had a good time. Thank You John.

The Fireworks Stand was a great success. Thanks to the whole

Morgan Family, Troy Helton, Ken Shaner, Don Ansel, and a host of others, we have made some memorable dollars to help with the turntable project.

The turntable seems to be progressing nicely. We received a #10 90 lb. Rail switch from OST Crane Service in Ventura. It has been moved to the SCRVRRHHS yard in hopes of being installed at the turn table site soon. Ken Shaner, Roy Payton, and Bill Victor has offered to help install it. As soon as the City installs the water meter we can get back to water/sand blasting the rest of the table. A new offer just came in from Larry Price who wants to help Paul Hofmeister Construction and Sam Bennett Construction with the excavating. Welcome aboard, Larry.

Earlier in the year, financial help from Fruit Growers Supply and Sunkist Growers allowed us to buy a PACIFIC FRUIT EXPRESS car #11403.

After the switch is installed, you guessed it, another BBQ for those who helped along with the projects to date (*Anything for a party*).

Remember nearly every Saturday morning we have a work party meeting at the SCRVRRHHS’s yard across from Richards Market. Come “**Join Us**” in our fun & toil. PH. (805) 524-1607.



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**Were on the web. See  
[johngart@fishnet.net](mailto:johngart@fishnet.net)**

- Get Connected – Be an active member.

## Ventura County Fair Train 1998

Yes, It's almost time for the Metrolink Fair Trains to run again. Those of you that have helped in past years are aware the Ventura County Department of Transportation (VCTC) makes a nice little donation to the SCRVRHS's coffers. Anyone wanting to spend an interesting time aboard Metrolink can sign up for the specific Fair Train Car Attendant training. Contact Mike Martin @ (805) 484-0618 for more information. In 1997 Chatsworth was added to the stops with

crews originating at the Moorpark Station. Two train sets and floating crews allow just about any schedule criteria. Lunch is provided by way of a coupon good at the Fair. Ample time is provided during the mid-day lull to visit the exhibits. Attendants count riders, answer questions, and of course hand out "Join Us" brochures. VCTC is impressed with the professionalism of our program and customers love to see us.



Unloading at the Seaside Park front gate. It must be a mid-day train with the small crowd. Car Attendant hats, white shirt & suspenders stand out for crowd control. Kids love to cross the yellow line.

**BECOME A MEMBER – SIGN UP OR CALL 805-524-1201**