

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

DECEMBER 2010

MILEPOSTS

By Marti Ann Draper

As 2010 draws to a close, PRS members gather with their families and friends to celebrate the holiday season. I personally want to wish all of you the very happiest of holidays.

During the last two years, we had started a new tradition of gathering at Joslyn Center in Story Park in Alhambra, enjoying the musical stylings of Craig Smith and a potluck dinner to which all of us could contribute and attend. This popular event was planned to continue this year. However, the City of Alhambra undertook in October to refurbish our meeting place.

The original projections called for the project to be finished in November. What has turned out to be a massive rebuilding, including a complete re-roofing, will continue well into December and may extend into January. This sent us scrambling. So, the board, at the gracious consent of the Museum Committee, has decided to hold a holiday "meet and greet" at our Museum in San Dimas on December 12. This open house style of get-together will give us all the chance to see our PRS friends, to enjoy holiday refreshments together, and to see the Museum all decked out in the park where the City's Christmas tree will be lit on December 4 and remain in its glory throughout the holidays.

2011 will be the year in which PRS celebrates its 75th Anniversary. As one of our railfan friends recently commented, "that's quite an achievement." Yes, it is remarkable that after all this time, PRS still exists as an unbroken chain of people who love railroads and who promote their study, preservation and documentation.

When the topic comes up, I often hear the comment, "I used to be a member of PRS! I remember the excursions, working on the private cars, the parties , , , " and then, they will start listing the friends they once planned activities with. With them, it's all about what used to be.

Being the troublemaker that you know me to be, I never resist the urge to say, "why aren't you a member now?"

I do that even though I know I will hear that they are too busy, or that they just forgot to renew and haven't been back, or that they joined another rail interest group that they like better.

If any of you belong to other organizations, I have to ask, which of them offers you the chance to be a supporter of a leading museum that archive the collections of, among others, Ralph Melching, Chard Walker, and Bill Farmer; that preserves over 15 pieces of historic railroad equipment, including an operational locomotive and the Amtrak-legal Pullman sleeping car, *National Forum*; that sends you a detailed and original publication every month; that provides you with the opportunity to share news and photography at monthly meetings; and serves as a vehicle for you to participate in excursions and other special events, all for dues of only \$35 per year?

I wonder if any of those former members realize that the one

basic thing that they need to do if they want to see PRS survive is simply to renew their memberships?

Here is my New Year's wish. I would like, if only for the next year, for each of us to reach out to our railfan friends and try to persuade them that there are benefits to becoming and staying a member of one of the oldest and largest railfan groups in the western United States, historically the preeminent railroad club of Southern California and the starting point for so many publications, enterprises, railroad employees, excursions, and friendships. Let's get railfans to join and renew their memberships in PRS. Won't you join me in celebrating this milestone year by making sure that all of PRS's friends are not just reminiscing about the fun they once had, but rejoining?

SWISS DIG WORLD'S LONGEST TUNNEL

Workers in Sedrun, Switzerland, hugged, cheered and set off fireworks as the huge drill broke through the last stretch of rock deep in the Swiss Alps. There was delight at the end of the tunnel, which is the world's longest, when it was completed. The \$10 billion, 35.4-mile tube will connect Europe's high-speed rail network and is part of a larger effort to cut in half the number of trucks – now at 1.2 million – that thunder through the Alps each year.

The joy and pride felt throughout Switzerland over digging the Gotthard Base Tunnel reflected the one cause that unites the country's wealthy city dwellers with those living in traditional villages: Protect the beauty of the mountains. "Together we risked a lot," said Swiss Transport Minister Moritz Leuenberger. "Together we achieved a lot."

Swiss voters approved the tunnel's construction in a series of referendums almost 20 years ago. Despite some criticism at the cost, which was almost \$1,300 for every citizen, the proposal passed by a wide margin. Leuenberger, who is also in charge of environmental issues, praised Swiss voters and took a swipe at neighboring Germany, where popular opposition threatens to halt the construction of new high-speed rail links and underground train stations. The Gotthard Base Tunnel should become operational in 2017.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

CANINES PATROL ON AMTRAK

From the end of August until September 10, dogs were riding Amtrak between Portland and Seattle. Dog patrols were conducted on trains and at Seattle's King Street Station and Portland's Union Station. The police canine teams were part of a national effort to increase patrols and handle random passenger bag inspections, authorities said, not a response to any threat or incident.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]



WHEEL CLICKS

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PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM is operated by Pacific Railroad Society at 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773. Telephone: (909) 394-0616. Museum e-mail: PRSTrainman@aol.com Open Saturdays: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays: 1-5 p.m.

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

- Dec. 1, 8, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.,
15, 22, 29 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
- Dec. 3 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m, **Pacific Railroad
Fri. Museum**, 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
- Dec. 4 **HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**
Saturday See article below.
- Dec. 4, 11, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
18, 25 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
Sats. Committee meeting: 25.
- Dec. 4, 11, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
18, 25 Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce. Regular
Sats. days: 4, 18; Extra days: 11, 25. Com. Mtg.: 18.
- Dec. 10 **SAN DIMAS HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA**
Friday See article below.
- Jan. 5, 12, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
19, 26 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
- Jan. 8, 15, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
22, 29 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas
Sats. Committee meeting: 29.

- Jan. 8, 15, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
22, 29 Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce. Regular
Sats. days: 8, 22; Extra days: 15, 29. Com. Mtg.: 22.
- Jan. 7 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn
Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Jan. 14 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Jan. 21 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes
Fri. & Herbert, Commerce. All welcome, bring slides.

MEETING PROGRAMS

by **RUSS DAVIES**

December 10: **HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE** at the **Pacific Railroad Museum** from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. There will be **beverages and light snacks**. There are **restaurants nearby**.

January 7, 2011: The program, and more importantly, the location, **will be posted in the January Wheel Clicks**. The completion date for the Joslyn Center facility renovation is **unknown** as we go to press. **Watch for it!**

SAN DIMAS HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

by **DAVID HOUSH**

The city of San Dimas is holding its annual tree lighting ceremony on Saturday, December 4, 2010, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. In the interest of being a good civic citizen, we at the PRS Museum plan to be open throughout the festivities. We have invited the City Council to come for a visit and will be open to the public.

In order to welcome visitors to the Museum, we would hope for the participation of any members willion and able to come out and help.

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

by **DAVID HOUSH**

This year our annual holiday celebration is changing location and format, because the Joslyn Center rehabilitation will not yet have been completed. On Saturday, December 10, 2010, all PRS members are invited to an Open House at our own Museum in San Dimas. Come on time between 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. for light refreshments and good company. We will have light sandwiches, veggies, cookies, punch, coffee and water on hand — but don't count on a full meal. Local restaurants are available for that. But a good time should be had by all. See you there.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

Last month there were two late member renewals, who were assigned numbers 419 and 420. New members voted in at the November 5 Board Meeting were Marlene Osborn with number 421, and William Otis with number 422.

The new convenience store at LAUS is **FAMIMA**.

JOSLYN CENTER BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

The Joslyn Center in Alhambra's Story Park is undergoing energy-saving upgrades and other improvements, while public services are being continued at other sites. "The energy-efficient upgrades are the work that actually had us ending up closing the center," said Cynthia Jarvis, Director of Community Services Department for Alhambra. "The roof will be removed completely and we are going to put in a 'Cool Roof' that helps keep the heat in during the winter and cold in during the summer."

Other green improvements will be new heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems, Jarvis said, as well as replacing windows and exterior doors with energy-efficient materials. The mens rest room had some major remodeling and a new wood dance floor is being put in place to comply with the American with Disabilities Act.

Three different grants are paying for the \$769,000 renovations at the center. Of that amount, \$534,450 in energy conservation improvements came from the federal government. The Joslyn Center expects to re-open its doors again in mid-December, but only after major renovations are completed.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News* on November 10.]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

As Caltrain reduces service and raises fares to close a multimillion dollar budget deficit, administrative salaries continue to grow. According to a story in the October 6 issue of the *San Jose Mercury News*, Caltrain's administrative payroll has grown 14 percent over the past three years. When benefits are added in, total compensation jumps 34 percent to \$6.32 million. The extra money would be enough to keep weekend service running, as well as Gilroy service and some midday trains.

Caltrain defends the pay increases, saying its staff is working longer hours to navigate its fiscal crisis, and because its sister agencies are billing Caltrain with more hours.

On January 31, 2011, Caltrain will complete the transition from paper to plastic for all monthly passes and 8-Ride tickets. A new electronic fare payment system called Clipper will be Caltrain's only method of selling these types of tickets. Paper forms of these tickets will no longer be sold. The Clipper payment system is also being phased in on San Francisco Muni and other transit systems in the Bay Area.

In 2011, Caltrain will bid out its operations and maintenance services. Currently, Amtrak provides these services to the tune of about \$60 million, but the contract expires next July, and given its budget situation, Caltrain will be shopping for the lowest bidder.

The 2010 baseball season is now complete, and Caltrain carried more than 417,000 riders to AT&T Park, which was an increase of 5 percent over last year.

No additional trains were added to Caltrain's baseball service for this year's playoffs and World Series games at AT&T Park in spite of the extra demand. No extra northbound trains were run, and there were only two extra southbound trains. The first left 15 minutes after the final out, or when full, ran express to San Carlos, then made all local stops. The second left 10 minutes later, or when full, and made all local stops. Both trains ran to San Jose Diridon station.

Caltrain and the California High Speed Rail Authority have formed a partnership, which protects Caltrain's operations and could provide billions of dollars to help fund the modernization and electrification of the railroad. It also begins a collaborative process with Peninsula communities to determine the configuration of the Caltrain and high-speed rail lines.

ALAMEDA CORRIDOR EAST

After nearly three years of construction, a closed portion of Sunset Avenue was slated to reopen November 12. The \$96 million grade separation project is aimed at reducing traffic delays due to freight trains, improving safety, and cutting emissions produced by idling vehicles.

The Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority (ACE), which spearheaded the project, dedicated the completed grade separation on November 5. Under a tent on the closed portion of the street, several elected officials spoke about the benefits of the project. Bassett High School's marching band also performed at the ceremony.

The Sunset Avenue project is the sixth of 20 grade separation projects completed through the ACE program. In addition 39 at-grade crossings have been renovated to increase safety. An additional eight projects will reach completion or begin construction next year, according to ACE officials.

Construction at the Sunset Avenue location began in January 2007. Workers built a 1.6-mile bridge structure over Sunset and Orange avenues to accommodate Union Pacific freight trains. Orange Avenue is expected to reopen by the end of the year. A loading track at Sunset Avenue and Valley Boulevard remains at-grade, with one train traveling the track every 24 hours, officials said. According to ACE, about 32,000 motorists drive the intersection at Sunset Avenue and Valley Boulevard daily, while 9,200 drivers travel the Orange Avenue intersection.

The project is funded by local, state and federal money, with the majority coming from the state and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, according to Rick Richmond, ACE chief executive officer.

Several elected representatives said the project is vital to the local, state and national economy. "In fact, all of the ACE projects, including this one, help maintain the economic vitality of the San Gabriel Valley by protecting 630,000 existing jobs and creating 192,000 new jobs by 2020," said Rep. Judy Chu, D-El Monte.

RAIL CROSSING PROPOSAL

The Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority is changing course after an 8-year stalemate with the city of Montebello. It is considering building a possibly \$100 million railroad bridge over Montebello Boulevard after city officials complained about an earlier plan.

ACE originally proposed an \$89 million project in 2000 that would have lowered Montebello Boulevard under Union Pacific tracks near West Olympic Boulevard. After initially approving the project, the city backed out in 2002 and asked ACE to build a \$363 million trench through most of the city. ACE officials said the agency cannot afford such a project.

"After having further discussion with the city it seems to make sense we look at the alternative of the flyover," aid ACE CEO Rick Richmond, referring to the bridge. "We want to add

it as an alternative.” Councilman Frank Gomez, who is an ACE board member, said the issue needs to be resolved in the near future.

ACE was created more than a decade ago to address 20 of the region’s most congested railroad crossings. The construction was projected to cost a combined \$910 million. Once all the projects are completed, ACE will dissolve. Most of the projects in ACE’s lineup are complete or on the way to completion. Six, including Montebello’s, haven’t started yet.
[ACE info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

AMTRAK

Historical On-Time Performance

The October 2010 historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

Route	October 2010	Last 12 Months
Sunset Limited	100.0%	87.6%
Texas Eagle	64.53%	65.8%
Southwest Chief	75.8%	75.5%
California Zephyr	45.2%	48.2%
Empire Builder	64.8%	76.3%
Coast Starlight	82.3%	90.3%
City of New Orleans	71.0%	83.6%
Pacific Surfliner	83.2%	76.0%
San Joaquin	91.7%	90.5%
Capitol Corridor	96.0%	93.6%
Amtrak Cascades	81.7%	72.5%
Illinois Service	79.3%	77.1%
Michigan Services	49.4%	59.6%
Hiawatha	82.5%	88.4%
Missouri River Runner	92.7%	90.9%
Acela Express	83.9%	80.1%
Northeast Regional	76.5%	74.6%

New Locomotives

Amtrak has awarded a contract to Siemens for 70 ACS-64 electric locomotives for service on its Northeast Corridor.

The six-year, \$466 million dollar contract calls for deliveries to begin in 2013.

The locomotives will be manufactured in Seimens Sacramento, Calif. facility. Some components will be manufactured at its plants in Norwood, Ohio and Alpharetta, Ga. Siemens expects to employ 250 workers at its Sacramento plant.

When in service the locomotives will operate at speeds up to 125 mph (201 kph) on the *Northeast Corridor* from Washington, D.C. to Boston and up to 110 mph (177 kph) on the *Keystone Corridor* from Philadelphia to Harrisburg, Pa.

As the new units come into service, Amtrak plans first to retire all current 20 DC AEM-7 electric locomotives in its fleet, followed by replacement of all 29 AC AEM-7 units. The remaining 21 locomotives of the order will be used to replace all 15 HHP-8 locomotives with the additional units supporting anticipated service expansion.

INTERCITY TRAINS

Some train schedules have been adjusted effective with the Amtrak Fall/Winter 2010 timetable which took effect on Nov. 8, 2010. The changes are shown in the following sections.

Southwest Chief

The Southwest Chief began operation over a new schedule last month that is 30 minutes longer westbound (Train 3) to Los Angeles and 45 minutes longer eastbound (Train 4) to Chicago, due to changes in BNSF Railway Co. track conditions between Albuquerque and Kansas City, MO.

The change in track conditions adds 40 minutes running time to the schedules of both trains between Hutchinson, Kan. and La Junta Colo. The additional 5 minutes is accounted for by adjusting en route recovery times and station dwell times.

Train 3 now departs from Chicago at 2:45 p.m. (30 minutes earlier). Train 4 now departs from Los Angeles at 6:15 p.m. (40 minutes earlier).

California Zephyr

Richmond was added as a station stop.

Empire Builder

The seasonal stop at Browning, Mont was reinstated and the East Glacier Park seasonal stop was discontinued..

Coast Starlight

Stops were added at the Richmond, Calif. and Burbank Airport stations.

WESTERN CORRIDORS

San Joaquin

The Amtrak Thruway bus stop sign, and schedule board, have been moved to the main entrance of the San Bernardino Depot, at 1170 W. Third Street, San Bernardino. Many of the drivers were already stopping at the main entrance before the sign was moved, in order for their passengers to use the waiting room, restrooms and snack shop.

Cascades

From Nov. 8 through Nov. 12, Trains 510 and 517 operated utilizing Superliner equipment while Amtrak Cascades trainsets underwent extensive exterior cleaning.

Superliner equipment offered bi-level seating, a food service car and a baggage car. Accessible seating was available on the lower level.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

MUSEUM OF RAILROAD TIMETABLES

If you have ever wondered about past Amtrak schedules the online Museum of Railroad Timetables can answer your questions. On its web page the museum describes itself as “a virtual exhibit of Amtrak passenger rail service through schedules and timetables issued since service began on May 1, 1971.”

The timetables are grouped by decades, the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s to facilitate navigation of the collection. The 1970s begin with the first timetable Amtrak issued dated May 1, 1971, the date it commenced operation and concludes with the October 28, 1979 timetable. The last timetable currently available is the one dated October 26, 2009.

Schedule Changes, Supplements and Thanksgiving Schedules will be added in the future.

To navigate the site click on the *Catalog* link on the left hand side of the home page. This opens the decades page. On the page select the desired decade, click on it and the dates timetables were issued appears. Clicking on the date brings up

the timetable. The timetable is presented in groups of 12 pages with a next page link below the images. Clicking on the image of a page enlarges it. At the top of the enlarged page is a link to a full-size image.

The Museum of Railroad Timetables is located on the Internet at <http://www.timetables.org/>.
[Info. from Bob Johnson via Charles Varnes]

AAR NOVEMBER STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT
by CHARLES VARNES

The Association of American Railroads reported that on Nov. 1, 2010 318,275 freight cars, equaling 20.8 percent of the fleet, were stored. This is a decrease of 12,799 cars from Oct. 1, 2010.

In its November 2010 Rail Freight Cars in Storage report the AAR stated that "Since peaking in June 2009, nearly 185,000 freight cars have come out of storage."

For the first 10 months of 2010 the number of freight cars stored (and the percentage) was: January, 448,555 (28.7); February, 439,631 (28.2); March, 418,552 (26.9); April, 387,029 (25.0); May, 369,090 (23.8); June, 368,343 (28.3); July, 365,279 (23.7); August, 359,471 (23.4); September, 348,712 (22.7); October 331,074 (21.6).

The first report stated the number of cars stored on March 1, 2009. It showed 437,547 or 27.5 percent of the fleet was in storage. The greatest number of cars stored during the year was 502,853, equaling 31.9 percent of the fleet, reported on July 1. By Dec. 1, the number of cars stored had decreased to 451,096 cars, or 28.8 percent of the fleet.

Figures are for the entire North American rail freight car fleet and include rail cars owned by railroads, leasing companies, shippers, and others. The total freight car fleet changes from month to month as new cars are added and old cars are scrapped.
[Info. from AAR Rail Time Indicators]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by DICK FINLEY
LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL
RIDERSHIP

September 2010	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	148,214	82,542	42,273	35,649
Saturday Ave.	100,936	52,018	24,171	24,195
Sunday Ave.	81,065	49,006	18,303	19,507
Monthly Total	3,921,561	2,186,484	1,075,925	942,949

[Info. from Metro via Ken Ruben]

RIDERSHIP

October 2010	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	143,174	77,528	40,385	34,440
Saturday Ave.	93,780	49,469	24,079	21,960
Sunday Ave.	76,831	43,710	17,254	18,495
Monthly Total	3,859,706	2,093,990	1,054,743	925,502

[Info. from Metro via Ken Ruben]

WILSHIRE ROUTE PICKED FOR SUBWAY

Development of a long-awaited subway link from downtown Los Angeles to the traffic-tangled Westside took a giant step October 28 when county transportation officials approved a general route along Wilshire Boulevard. The 10-0 decision by

the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority board was hailed as "historic" by First Vice Chairman and L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, perhaps the foremost advocate for building a so-called subway to the sea.

The action sets the stage for the even trickier business of going block by block to establish the precise path from the existing Purple Line Wilshire-Western station to the veterans hospital in Westwood. Residents of Beverly Hills, in particular, showed up at the board meeting to underscore their concerns about having trains pass beneath their homes and businesses. If all goes as planned, construction will begin in 2013 after an environmental impact review.

The project, estimated to cost \$5.15 billion, will be paid for by a combination of federal funds and Measure R, a half-cent sales tax for transportation approved by voters in 2008 just before the global recession struck.

MTA staff members had recommended the 9.5-mile Westside route along Wilshire – past Hancock Park, Beverly Hills, Century City and UCLA to the Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles Medical Center – because of higher ridership projections. Stations were approved at Wilshire and Fairfax, La Cienega, Century City, Westwood/UCLA and the veterans hospital campus.

The immediate losers on October 12 were advocates of the four other subway options that had been under consideration. Those were: a nine-mile extension from the Wilshire-Western station to Westwood-UCLA; a 12-mile alignment to the beach in Santa Monica; a route to the veterans hospital campus plus a spur to West Hollywood; and a 12-mile link to Santa Monica plus the West Hollywood spur.

Early plans for the Wilshire subway literally went up in flames with a 1985 methane explosion in the Fairfax district that led to concerns about tunneling through an oil-field zone with pockets of the explosive petroleum-related gas. Until several years ago, an underground subway was contrary to federal law because of the ban engineered by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Los Angeles). Another hurdle was the voter-approved initiative that cut off such projects from a key funding source. But safety studies, entreaties from Villaraigosa and others, and worsening traffic prompted Waxman to agree to a repeal of his ban.

In the months ahead, contention is likely to occur over exactly how the subway goes through communities such as Beverly Hills and Century City. Citing a huge sinkhole and methane gas problems associated with construction of the Red Line subway two decades ago, the city of Beverly Hills and the Beverly Hills Unified School District expressed opposition at the board meeting to any subway route under homes and the city's high school.

Possible routes run along Santa Monica Boulevard or Constellation Avenue with a station at Constellation and Avenue of the Stars, a major commercial area and job center. Beverly Hills residents and officials support a route and station along Santa Monica, although it might have seismic problems because of an earthquake fault.

On a motion from Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, the MTA board approved further study of the alignments, including the risk of tunneling through areas with gas and oil deposits. "Lots of legitimate issues have been raised about the routing," Yaro-

slavsky said. "We need to know the pros and cons of both routes."

Dave Sotero, a Metro spokesman, defended the transit agency, saying it has not received any noise or vibration complaints from subway operations for at least 15 years. Nor, he added, have there been any substantiated claims for property damage. "There's lots of experience building in this environment," Sotero said. "The oil fields are much deeper than the subway tunnel, which will run about 50 to 70 feet below the surface. We will also use established practices to ensure safety."

LOS ANGELES REGIONAL CONNECTOR

On another 10-0 vote, the MTA board approved a \$1.37-billion regional connector that would run beneath downtown L.A. to unite existing light-rail lines. It would allow rail users to travel across the county without time-consuming transfers. The 1.9-mile connector would proceed underground via 2nd Street and beneath 1st and Alameda streets. It would include three stations, at 2nd and Hope streets, 2nd and Broadway, and 2nd and Central Avenue.

The MTA board also heard concerns from residents and businesspeople in Little Tokyo, who feared that construction efforts of the connector would disrupt commerce and tourism in a culturally significant area of Los Angeles. "Little Tokyo is not a big place. It's a gem of a place, a big part of the downtown scene," said Kenji Suzuki, a local businessman. "Many stores have been there a long time. The construction will devastate those stores, which are what Little Tokyo are all about."

[Board info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL

The first segment of California's proposed \$43-billion high-speed rail system might not be built in the highly populated coastal areas of the state, but in the Central Valley, officials said November 4th. The federal government indicated on the 3rd that it wants all of its initial funding of the project – nearly \$2.5 billion – directed to a single segment, either between Fresno and Merced or Fresno and Bakersfield.

The Central Valley portion of the route would form the backbone of a system linking San Francisco and Anaheim, and passing through Los Angeles Union Station. Eventually the system would connect to Sacramento and San Diego. Rob Kulat, a spokesman for the Federal Railroad Administration, said the focus on the Central Valley was made in collaboration with the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Many observers had expected the Los Angeles-to-Anaheim segment to be the first built because engineering on that section was further along.

Under the proposal, a total of \$4.3 billion in federal and state funds would be targeted for one of the Central Valley sections of the bullet train. That would be much of the funding currently approved for the project.

Officials apparently want to pump the first few billion dollars into the economy as fast as they can and build an operational piece of the system quickly. There is less political opposition in the Central Valley compared to the Bay Area and fewer complications presented by the heavily urbanized route between Los Angeles and Anaheim. "We want to get people working," Kulat said.

It is not yet clear how or when the California High-Speed Rail Authority would secure the tens of billions of dollars needed to finish the first phase of the project. The route between Bakersfield and Fresno would run west of California 99 for 113 miles; the section between Fresno and Merced is 60 miles. Planners estimate that the trips would take 37 and 21 minutes respectively.

Critics say the Merced-to-Fresno route has been complicated by potential resistance from Union Pacific Railroad, which is concerned about the impact on its right-of-way, and opposition by farmers and Madera County cities to proposed routes. They also question whether either segment would generate much ridership considering that Amtrak already serves the region.

"There's no real market there," said Rich Tolmach, director of the California Rail Foundation and a critic of the project. "The train won't even go between Amtrak stations and the people just elected to Congress are talking about cutting funds for high speed rail. We could end up with another bridge to nowhere."

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

PALMS DEPOT by LATE-MEMBER RALPH MELCHING

The cluster of low hills lying about midway between Los Angeles and Santa Monica obstructed the alignment of the first railroad built between these cities. It was where the line was deflected from its east-west alignment, to the northwest, that the new railroad station stood, resplendent in yellow and brown paint, overlooking a newly laid out grid of streets. The year was 1687, and the brave little subdivision called The Palms was the only sign of urbanization between Los Angeles and the sea.

The railroad, later to be known as the Santa Monica Air Line, was constructed in 1875 as the start of an ambitious venture by local businessmen and was called the Los Angeles and Independence Railroad (L.A.&I.). The silver and lead mining boom, which hit the Owens Valley in the late '60s, helped to transform Los Angeles from an adobe village to a young city. Not only did most of the exported bullion pass through the city, but Los Angeles became the principal source of supplies for the mines and miners. It was this business that the L.A.&I.'s backers coveted, but alas, Southern Pacific (S.P.) preempted this in 1875 by establishing a railhead at Mojave and completing the line through to Los Angeles the following year. The L.A.&I. never got beyond Los Angeles and was acquired by S.P. in 1877. The line was extended in 1893 to one-half mile northwest of Santa Monica Canyon and onto a pier extending 4720 feet out to sea. For a number of years Port Los Angeles, as it was called, was the principal port for this area, and most of the sea-borne commerce passed over the Air Line.

In 1908 the line was leased by the Los Angeles Pacific Company and was partially electrified. It became part of the Pacific Electric Railway system in 1911, and the electrification was completed the next year. The Palms Depot provided passenger and freight service until 1933 when the agency was transferred to Culver Junction, a mile to the east. The Big Red Cars continued to stop at Palms until the one remaining round trip over the Air Line was discontinued in 1953. The building

served as a private residence for many years and was later used in many ways. It was vandalized and fell into such a state of disrepair that it was finally condemned by the Fire Department.

In 1975 a grass roots movement to save the station took shape, and a "stay of execution" was obtained. It was apparent that the building had to be moved to another location, if it were to be preserved for posterity. A home was found at Heritage Square, a haven for endangered landmark structures, lying along the Pasadena Freeway at Avenue 43 in Los Angeles. A feverish fund-raising campaign ensued, including staging our first silent movie show at San Gabriel Civic Auditorium. Proceeds from the show, many contributions, and a generous loan finally succeeded in rescuing the little station. The morning of February 12, 1976, found it safely at Heritage Square after an all-night journey across the city.

["Palms Depot" by Ralph Melching appeared originally in *Wheel Clicks* in April 1982.]

A CONSTRUCTION DATE FOR PALMS DEPOT

by LATE-MEMBER DAVID G. CAMERON

The construction date for the Palms Depot has long been a mystery, since Southern Pacific Railroad's extensive corporate records, which must have included such information, were all destroyed in the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. I have recently succeeded in uncovering some newspaper references which appear to provide a basis for determining the date.

"The Palms" as a real estate subdivision dates to 1886; on December 24 of that year Messrs. Curtis and Sweetser filed a tract map with the County Recorder reflecting a survey by E.T. Wright, County Surveyor. The map shows a "station" there within the 100-foot right-of-way of SP's Santa Monica Branch (built in 1875 as the Los Angeles and Independence Railroad), but it seems improbable that this was any more than a shelter for passengers (or perhaps it was the LA&I "section house" referred to as "Grasshopper station" by Luther A. Ingersoll in his 1908 book, *Century History: Santa Monica Bay Cities*). Furthermore, the Palms Depot we know was located off the 100-foot right-of-way on land designated "Depot Grounds" on maps as far back as the turn of the century.

The best contemporary documentation of progress at The Palms during its first year is found in the *Santa Monica Outlook*. On June 1, 1887, that paper reported:

"The proprietors of The Palms, a new townsite five miles from Santa Monica on the railroad to Los Angeles, are making some fine improvements. The streets are all graded and the sidewalks planted with palms and shade trees; several parks are laid out and planted; a large well has been dug, which has an abundance of water, and steam pump-works erected to send water into a 150,000 gallon reservoir which has been placed on a high point overlooking the town site. The Railroad Company are building a neat depot, and about twelve dwelling houses and one store have been erected. An air of good taste and permanency prevades (sic) all the improvements. The Palms at a time not remote in the future will be a choice residence spot."

And on August 10 the *Outlook* noted:

"Mr. Curtis, one of the owners of 'The Palms' tract, is building a handsome two-story residence. A number of houses, including a depot and two story buildings, have been erected at that point, which goes to show that pleasant locality is steadily growing in popularity."

The depot came in for high praise from the *Los Angeles Times* in its *Annual Trade Number* on January 1, 1888.

"The Southern Pacific Railroad depot at 'The Palms' is one of the most attractive in Southern California, nestled in a beautiful park, or rather, cluster of parks, with its nicely-graveled approaches, and its green lawns, inclosed by fences, with fountains, to give an air of refinement in the general combination of taste with business requirements."

Since Ingersoll also refers to this depot and does not indicate its later replacement with another, it seems reasonable to conclude that the depot built in the summer of 1887 is the one which has survived to the present.

Recently, staff of the History Division of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History drew my attention to the following item in the *Los Angeles Times* for September 9, 1906:

"The Southern Pacific is rebuilding its passenger station at The Palms."

No further details are given. This "rebuilding" cannot have been very drastic, however, since the Los Angeles County Assessor lists the value of the "improvements" on the depot site as \$450 in March 1906, and \$600 a year later. Also, Ingersoll, who goes into some detail on Palms developments of this period, does not mention any work on the depot. Perhaps SP did some interior remodeling at this time. We can only hope that photographs will turn up which can be dated with certainty to before 1906.

["A Construction Date for Palms Depot" by David Cameron appeared originally in *Wheel Clicks* in June 1983.]

PASADENA STREETCARS MIGHT BOOST BUSINESS

A \$100,000 study commissioned by business interests and the city found that a streetcar line through downtown Pasadena could bring about an economic boon, though pricey. A trolley system would require the city secure as much as \$75 million to compete for federal funds. The study focused on a possible 2-mile route.

Streetcar projects are usually funded through a mix of local, regional and federal sources. "It's currently a very popular activity in urban centers," said Frederick Dock, the city's transportation director, noting that large amounts of federal funds are now available for such projects.

It wouldn't be the first trolley car system in Pasadena. In 1895, the first electric streetcar system, the Los Angeles and Pasadena Electric Railway, ran through Pasadena to Los Angeles, said Sid Gally, a volunteer at the Pasadena Museum of History.

That system later became the Pacific Electric System, with lines running through the region until it went out of business in 1951. Pasadena also had a streetcar system that ran within the city until 1941, Gally said.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]



The former Pacific Coast Railway station in Los Alamos, CA shows the west facing facade and south along the removed road-bed. This was mainly the freight house of the three-foot narrow gauge operation which was abandoned in December 1941. The PCR ran from San Luis Obispo to Los Olivos, CA crossing the Southern Pacific at Hadley (south of Edna). It had branches to Port San Luis and to Guadalupe. Photo by John Petros



The north end of the ex-PCR station in Los Alamos, CA, now occupied by private businesses, once housed the railway's passenger office. PRS operated an excursion on the line 14 months prior to PCR's abandonment. Both photos were taken on July 31, 2010. Photo by John Petros



View is north at point where the "Canada Line" goes underground in cut-and-cover along Cambie Street in Vancouver, British Columbia. Photo by John L. Whitmeyer



Car 105 (with 205 behind) of "Canada Line" approaching Templeton station to the west on way to Vancouver Airport. The end window allows great views. Photo by John L. Whitmeyer



Northerly view in Richmond, British Columbia, where the "Canada Line" splits with one route to Brighouse station to the south, and the other showing the Vancouver Airport train dropping down to ground level to the west to pass under the flight approach. Trains cross the Fraser River on a cable-stayed bridge in background. Photo by John L. Whitmeyer