

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

DECEMBER 2011

HISTORY RIGHT ON TRACK by J. D. VELASCO

Staff Writer of San Gabriel Valley News

San Dimas is a city that actively embraces its history. And it doesn't get much more historic than the Pacific Railroad Museum. The museum is housed inside a former Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway depot built in 1934 and is operated by the Pacific Railroad Society, a group dedicated to memorializing the role railroads played in Southern California's history.

Dave Housh, museum curator, said San Dimas owes much of its early success to the railroads, which brought settlers in and shipped citrus out. "This would have been a hub of commerce to the town," he said. Eventually though, the importance of the depot waned and it was shut down in 1967. In the intervening years, the depot was used as the headquarters for the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce and, later, as a senior center.

In the mid-1990s, the city built a new senior center and the Pacific Railroad Society jumped at the chance to have a home for its museum. "San Dimas is a good place to be," said Marti Ann Draper, PRS president. "They're a historic-minded community."

Draper is a second-generation member of the society, which was founded by her father, uncle and six other men in 1936. The group now claims roughly 450 members. Draper has never strayed far from the railroads. In her younger days she worked as an attorney for the ATSF Railway. She later moved into private practice, but found herself drawn back to the industry. "I was lonely for the railroad," Draper said.

So 13 years ago, she became a conductor for Amtrak, a position she holds today. "I tell the little kids I'm the boss of the train," she said. When she's not working, Draper joins Housh and other volunteers manning and maintaining the museum.

Visitors to the depot are greeted by historic photos, model trains and antique railroad equipment, including a restored and operational mechanical flasher once used at railway crossings. Upstairs, the museum holds a library of several thousand railroad-related titles – more than the museum can easily store. "One of our problems is space," Housh said. "We're selling books at a reduced price."

But railroads aren't just an academic pursuit for group members. They also ride the rails in a number of historic train cars they've obtained and restored. The group purchased its first railcar in 1940 and now owns nearly 20, including Pullman sleeper cars, a funeral trolley and a tiny 1941 diesel locomotive once used by the armed forces.

None of the cars are kept at the San Dimas depot, but every now and then the group hitches cars to an Amtrak train to go on

an excursion. Draper said the next excursion, which has been only partially planned, will be in December. "It's open to anybody," she said.

The museum is also open to anybody, free of charge, three days a week. It is open Mondays and Wednesdays from noon to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Housh said he's also willing to show people around outside of normal hours if they call ahead. "Anyone who wants a tour, I'm game to set one up," he said.

The Pacific Railroad Museum is located at 210 W. Bonita Ave. For more information, call 909-394-0616 or visit www.pacificrailroadsociety.org.

PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY, THEN AND NOW

A Book Review by Lindsay Smith

"Comparing our present to our past is how we understand our history"

Our members Steve Crise and Michael Patris have just published with Arcadia Publishing a wonderful collection of photographs. They have used photographs from the libraries of the several collections in our area and digital photos they took at the same spot. There are 96 pages in a paperback book on a 5" x 8" format. It is a study of the Pacific Electric Railway using historic images and comparing them to contemporary views of over 90 locations on the system. For example, 11 Ralph Melching photos appear in the book. It is also a presentation of photography evolution from early film to digital photography. The text is a fascinating history of the spot rather than short captions. The old photographs have been carefully restored for this publication and the new digital photos were taken at times so the light is "perfect." The book is professionally authored by the gentlemen who enjoy preservation of the Pacific Electric Railway history. Although I read the author's first copy, I plan to enjoy this book for many hours after I get my copy.

Michael A. Patris is familiar for his work to preserve the memories of the PE Mount Lowe Branch. Steve Crise is a professional photographer and author. Steve recently showed *Cajon Pass Signals* in the Yahoo Group Cajon Pass. He is already working on additional books.

Additional information on this work can be found on the Arcadia Publishing web site at:

<http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/9780738575865/Pacific-Electric-Railway>. They have a book signing event planned for Dec. 9th at the Original Whistle Stop in Pasadena from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

ISBN: 9780738575865 MSRP \$21.99 from the publisher.



WHEEL CLICKS

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PARTICIPATING MEMBER \$35.00 per year
 SUSTAINING MEMBER \$50.00 per year
 CORPORATE MEMBER \$100.00 per year
 LIFE MEMBER \$500.00

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.; Mondays: 12-5 p.m.; Wednesdays: 1-5 p.m.

MUSEUM CURATOR DAVID HOUSH

EXCURSION DIRECTOR MARTI ANN DRAPER

WEBMASTER RUSSELL HOMAN

INTERNET Home Page: <http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org>

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PRS NEWS ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Dec. 2 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at PRM, 210 W. Bonita Ave. San Dimas.
 Dec. 3, 10, 17 PRM Saturday work party, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Closed Dec. 24 & 31.
 Dec. 3, 10, 17 Rolling stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?. Saunders Yard, Noakes St. & Herbert Ave., Commerce. Closed Dec. 24 & 31.
 Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26 PRM Monday work party, 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28 PRM Wednesday work party, 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Dec. 10 PRS Holiday Dinner, See Flyer.

PROGRAM FOR JANUARY by RUSS DAVIES

January 13 Another great DVD from Tom Grose. "High Speed Trains" we'll ride at speeds up to 150 MPH on the fastest trains in North America! Be there, and bring digital briefs!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by VIRGINIA GRUPP

New members voted into PRS at the Board Meeting on November 4, 2011, and their seniority numbers were Richard Nelson, 438; Tenny Ford, 439; and Thomas Northrop, 440.

CORRECTIONS and ADDITIONS

Nov.-Page 1, Col. 1: Photos by Charles Varnes

Nov.-Page 2, Col. 2: Fred Knox was married to Mary Anne Knox.

Nov.-Page 6, Col. 2: Expo Line Phase 2 Ground Breaking was attended by PRS Director Ken Ruben.

ORANGE EMPIRE RAILWAY MUSEUM DEDICATION

OERM has announced a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Library and Research Center on December 10 at 2:00 p.m. The Library will be named for Thomas F. Grose, PRS member.

The Library Plaza will be named for Thomas A. Nelson, PRS member no. 12. Tom Nelson served PRS for years as President, Vice-President, Board Member, Publications Manager, and *Wheel Clicks* Editor and Writer.

Additionally, he edited and wrote two books for PRS. Mary Anne Nelson, his wife, will be one of those with a golden shovel breaking the ground.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMMUTER RAIL

NEW TRAIN CARS CONTINUE TO ARRIVE

Metrolink's collision-absorption-equipped new cars are arriving regularly. As they roll in, the fleet is put through a rigorous testing program designed to ensure that they perform safely and smoothly before being put into service.

We perform proof-of-design tests of the new cars while stationary, and we take them out on the rails to test them in motion. During nighttime hours at specially selected sites on the Metrolink system, we test cars in both directions at four different speeds (twenty, forty, sixty, and eighty miles per hour) – first empty, and then filled with sandbags to simulate a loaded car. We check acceleration, movement, and brake rates. In addition, at station test runs, we open and close the doors to ensure that all automatic announcements play as designed. We also run crucial emergency-braking tests.

Each of the new stainless-steel cars features crumple zones on each end to absorb energy in a collision. Interior safety features include higher seat backs, bolted-in seat cushions, and energy-absorbing tables. They will be the first in the United States to be equipped with all these features.

HEAT RESTRICTIONS

Excessive heat in July and August 2010 resulted in record-setting outdoor temperatures throughout Southern California that made it necessary to place heat restrictions along sections of Metrolink track. These restrictions are put in place when outdoor temperatures exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit for the first time in sixty days, outdoor temperatures exceed 110 degrees, or the actual rail temperature measures above 140 degrees.

Metrolink trains must slow down in extreme temperatures when operating on continuously welded rail (CWR), which is produced in quarter-mile-long lengths. When these quarter-mile rails are laid on ties in the track bed, the lengths are welded together to create continuous rail. This eliminates the "clickety-

clack” sound of traditional thirty-nine-foot rails. Welded rail results in a smoother ride and requires less maintenance.

NEW GUARDIAN FLEET RAILCARS

The first of our highly anticipated new cars – dubbed the “Guardian Fleet” by Metrolink and manufactured by Hyundai Rotem in South Korea – are rolling into service immediately after a seven-city whistle-stop tour. The December 6 through 9, 2010 tour introduced them to the public, stakeholders, and communities. The first ten cars of the Guardian Fleet are being deployed in pairs with the existing Sentinel Fleet, built by Bombardier, across the Metrolink system.

Metrolink’s train and engine crews have been trained on the new cars, including being familiarized with new equipment and component configurations, learning to operate all controls, and being prepared to respond in any emergency.

These stainless-steel Guardian Fleet cars built with crumple zones in each end to absorb energy in any collision are the future of commuter railroading. Metrolink is proud to welcome their customers onboard to enjoy the ride!

WATCHING THE CLOCK

Metrolink’s systemwide on-time performance has risen steadily over the past year of 2010. Excepting delays caused by external forces, the percentage of on-time trains has risen from the low 90s to the high 90s. One of Metrolink’s singular focuses is on-time performance because that’s what customers want – to be on time.

“We continue to look at opportunities to improve,” explains Bob Berger, Metrolink’s service design manager. Berger explains that Metrolink improved on-time performance by attending to key issues that impact performance, in an initiative that began in May 2010. These fall into five primary categories.

Mechanical conditions: Staff identified locomotives prone to breakdowns, and spent extra time inspecting them and fixing any issues. On passenger cars, doors are the most likely culprit in delays, so mechanics zeroed in on that mechanism.

Station issues: Staff investigated delays in passenger boarding and disembarking. For older loaner cars that require doors to be opened manually, Metrolink added conductors to help open doors quickly. Americans with Disabilities Act issues were reviewed to ensure efficient boarding of disabled passengers.

Rail coordination: Metrolink maintains close communications with freight railroads with which tracks are shared to help avoid conflicts that may slow Metrolink trains.

Track and signals: Metrolink increased efforts to evaluate construction projects and potential impacts on delays.

Schedules: Metrolink carefully scrutinizes their schedules, train by train, to address any conflicts and make adjustments.

Metrolink counts any train that arrives at its final destination within five minutes of its scheduled arrival to be on time. By November 2010, Metrolink hit an overall on-time performance rate of 96.75 percent. When delays caused by external forces such as trespasser incidents and extreme weather were deleted, on-time performance hit 98.09 percent.

December 2010 was drenched with record-setting rainstorms, so systemwide on-time performance dropped to 93.06 percent. The on-time rate, excluding delays due to the impact of storms and other external events, rose to 97.6 percent.

THE QUIET CAR

Head to the second passenger car next to the locomotive Monday through Friday to read a book, enjoy the view or simply doze off on the Quiet Car. Relax and enjoy your commute in a more peaceful and quiet atmosphere.

Just remember, when you’re on the Quiet Car, please refrain from: Phone Calls, Loud Conversations, and Other Noise or Disturbances.

[Info. for SCCR from *Metrolink Matters*]

RAILROADS ON SAN FRANCISCO’S WATERFRONT

There was a lot of talk in October during the 20th anniversary commemoration of the Loma Prieta earthquake about how the quake wrecked the old Embarcadero Freeway and made a glorious new San Francisco waterfront possible – a boulevard with palm trees, served by colorful antique streetcars and lined with spiffy restaurants. Very tres chic.

Back in the days when San Francisco was the busiest port in the West and until it folded in 1993, the Embarcadero was lined with railroad yards; freight trains chuffed and clanked along the waterfront 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Until 1945, the trains were pulled by husky-looking steam engines, which ran from one end of the waterfront to the other, right past the Ferry Building, sending up plumes of black oil smoke. Old-timers will tell you it was very colorful and romantic. Modern San Franciscans wouldn’t put up with it for five minutes.

The line was the State Belt Railroad, which in its heyday had 67 miles of track, went from what is now AT&T Park to the Presidio, and spur tracks that ran down some North Beach streets.

“The Belt Line is part of San Francisco’s history,” said Bill Kaufman, a retired Contra Costa schoolteacher who is fascinated by the railroad. “It was right in the middle of everything – the Panama Pacific Exposition, the 1934 water front strike, troop trains in World War II, even the Embarcadero Freeway, which ran over the top of it.

Kaufman has written a book called “The State Belt” to be published next spring. He thinks the book fills a blank spot in San Francisco history. “I realized,” he said, “that nothing was ever written about the railroad.” The newspapers of the day seldom mentioned the Belt Line, and the outfit’s records seem to have disappeared. “My guess is that when the railroad shut down, somebody threw them out,” Kaufman said. “Putting it all together was sort of a mystery puzzle.”

The Belt Line began in the 1880s to move freight from ships docked in San Francisco for transshipment by rail. Only one railroad – the Southern Pacific – had a direct line to San Francisco, but by World War I, there were three other railroads, all using tugs and barges to move freight cars. The Belt Line connected them all and served manufacturers, canneries and other industrial customers. Once upon a time, 2,000 freight cars a day moved in and out of the city.

The Belt Line had its biggest years in 1929, just before the Great Depression, and 1945, when it handled all the wartime freight it could carry, plus troop and hospital trains to and from the Presidio. By then it had modern diesel engines. And a substantial deficit.

When the city took over the port from state control in 1969, it inherited the Belt Line. By then the port was in decline and Cyril Magnin, then head of the city Port Commission, offered to sell the Belt Line for \$1. The perfect gift for the man who had everything. The only catch: The new owner had to operate it. There were no takers.

Gradually, nearly all the cargo ships went to Oakland and the Belt Line shut down in 1992. Remnants of the Belt Line still exist – the tunnel under Fort Mason, some rusty rails on various piers, the old roundhouse – now offices – at Sansome and the Embarcadero.

The biggest survivors are Engines 23 and 25, 65-year-old veterans and the main motive power of the San Francisco Bay Railroad, a half-mile operation that runs a single freight train a day near Hunters Point. The engines now burn biodiesel fuel made of used cooking oil and kitchen grease. You can't get more modern than that.

[Info. from *San Francisco Chronicle* by Carl Nolte]

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL

UNION PACIFIC DENOUNCES PLANS

California's bullet train project, already under attack from a giant farming operation in the state, has attracted another powerful critic – Union Pacific. The nation's largest railroad says the California High Speed Rail Authority's Central Valley route raises serious safety issues, disregards the company's property rights and would disrupt its freight operations.

Union Pacific's comments as part of an environmental review assert that the authority, which is building the system, has made a "false conclusion" that the bullet train would not affect the freight railroad's operations during construction or later passenger service. Documents and drawings show encroachment onto the railroad's right-of-way in Fresno and Merced.

The rail authority said it has a good relationship with Union Pacific. "We are working to plan the state's high-speed rail system in a way that ensures their future growth potential is preserved and that the safety, security and reliability of their freight operations remain intact," said authority spokeswoman Rachel Wall.

Union Pacific's concerns come only weeks after J.G. Boswell, the nation's largest farm, asserted that the bullet train could destroy processing plants, irrigation canals, and a private airport when it cuts through Kings County. Boswell, which has a long history of fiercely defending its property rights, asked for a six-month delay in the environmental review process. Shortly after, the authority announced that it would issue a new environmental report in six months and allow parties to comment again. The rail authority released two draft environmental impact reports in August and has received an avalanche of comments, many harshly negative, from cities, schools, churches, homeowners and others.

Union Pacific does not detail the potential risks of derailments. But rail safety experts said a crash involving either a freight or conventional passenger train near a bullet train, which would travel up to 220 mph, could be serious.

The bullet train's plans would extensively utilize BNSF Railway property. In its comments to the authority, BNSF said it "remains willing to discuss and explore" allowing the bullet

train onto its right-of-way. But until the impact on its freight operations is known, the company said, it is not willing to agree that the plans are acceptable.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

RAIL SYSTEM MOVES TO A SLOW TRACK

For the first time since voters OK'd more than \$9 billion worth of bonds to pay for a high-speed rail system, linking all of California's major metropolitan areas, it appears the commission charged with building that system is getting realistic. In fact, you could say the entire idea of a bullet train in California is now on a new track – call it a backtrack or a slow track.

A new report to the Legislature from the High Speed Rail Authority (HSR), required by a new state law, puts the bullet train authority on record for the first time saying there are plausible, acceptable alternatives to 220 mph trains for spending the bond money and the billions of dollars already committed to this project by the federal government.

One possibility, the report says, would "reduce the scope or delay the next phase of system development until the performance of the existing system can generate sufficient revenues to support future expansion."

Later, the report adds that the new tracks it plans to build in the Central Valley could link with existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad tracks at its northern or southern ends, with Amtrak running its current San Joaquin train on the new tracks. "This will reduce travel times on the San Joaquin service between Northern and Southern California – already one of Amtrak's five busiest corridors in the nation – by approximately 45 minutes," the HSR said.

Rather than 220 mph, this change would see trains running at speeds up to only 125 mph – which still meets the federal definition of high speed rail. If the HSR system hooks up with the older BNSF tracks, the links would be paid for entirely with federal dollars and not state bond money, which is reserved for truly high-speed projects only. Some federal dollars could also be used to make safety and smoothness upgrades on the BNSF system, thus allowing trains to go much faster than they do now.

This amounts to a bait-and-switch on voters who were told they could get a real bullet train for about \$36 billion, with the bulk of the money to come from private investors and national government. The twice-delayed business plan now due to come from the HSR authority to the Legislature in early November explains the pullback very well.

As things now stand, there is no interest in the project from private investors without federal investment guarantees or proven high ridership. These things do not now exist, nor are they likely to be forthcoming as long as anti-high speed rail members or even a significant minority in either house of Congress.

The protesters who feared the effects of viaducts reaching as high as 40 feet while traversing suburbs of Los Angeles and San Francisco can rest a little easier now than in early October, for it no longer seems like anyone is dead-set any more on building a train to nowhere.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLAN HINGES ON RIDERSHIP

The new business plan for building California's \$98 billion high-speed rail project estimates that between 23 million and 34

million passengers will use the system by the time bullet trains traverse the state two decades from now. If those numbers fail to pan out, taxpayers could be on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars a year in operating expenses.

The latest ridership numbers for the voter-approved system already are well below the authority's projections from two years ago. At that time, planners hoped to complete the first full phase from Anaheim to San Francisco by 2020 and draw 41 million riders a year by 2035.

In its latest business plan, released the first week of November, the HSR has given a wide range of ridership predictions, underscoring the difficulty in determining how many people will want to ride what would be the nation's first, true high-speed rail line.

The first projection, for 2025, estimates anywhere from 5.9 million to 10.8 million riders on the first section of track completed, depending on whether the Central Valley line connects to northern or southern California. The gap between high and low ridership projections for the entire system grows to 11 million by 2035, two years after the first phase would be completed.

"I don't believe that these estimates are precise enough to say anything with certainty," said David Brownstone, an economics professor at UC Irvine, who co-authored a 2010 report that criticized the rail authority's previous ridership calculations. [[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

The Amtrak 40th Anniversary Exhibit Train will make two appearances in Southern California in December. The first will be at the San Diego Amtrak Station on Dec. 3 and 4; the second will be at the Los Angeles Union Station on Dec. 10 and 11.

Thanksgiving Travel

During the Thanksgiving holiday period Amtrak operated every available passenger rail car in its fleet and scheduled extra trains to accommodate additional passengers in the Northeast, Midwest, and on the West Coast.

Extra trains and/or added capacity to existing trains operated on the *Northeast Corridor*, the Chicago hub, the Pacific Northwest and in California with most of the additional trains and capacity running on the two busiest travel days, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Nov. 23 and the Sunday after, Nov. 27.

The heaviest single travel day of the year for Amtrak is the Wednesday before Thanksgiving which set a record last year of 134,230 passengers for the day. Amtrak also set a record last year by transporting 704,446 passengers for the holiday week.

A special Thanksgiving Holiday Timetable for the Northeast Corridor services was issued. All Amtrak trains in the Northeast required reservations – including the Harrisburg-Philadelphia *Keystone Service*, the New York-Buffalo *Empire Service* and the New Haven-Springfield Shuttles.

In addition, from Nov. 23 to 25, passengers traveling on Amtrak long-distance trains were offered a menu item of a traditional Thanksgiving meal featuring a fully-cooked turkey breast with gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce and side accompaniments. Pumpkin pie with whipped cream and maple walnuts was offered as a dessert option.

Historical On-Time Performance

The October 2011 historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

| Route | October 2011 | September 2011 | Last 12 months |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sunset Limited | 73.1% | 57.7% | 74.0% |
| Texas Eagle | 72.6% | 58.3% | 49.1% |
| Heartland Flyer | 62.9% | 33.3% | 67.0% |
| Southwest Chief | 72.6% | 76.7% | 68.9% |
| California Zephyr | 32.3% | 30.4% | 34.2% |
| Empire Builder | 63.7% | 57.5% | 42.9% |
| Coast Starlight | 82.3% | 91.7% | 78.1% |
| City of New Orleans | 82.3% | 81.7% | 79.0% |
| Pacific Surfliner | 77.5% | 72.8% | 77.2% |
| San Joaquin | 90.1% | 90.3% | 88.4% |
| Capitol Corridor | 93.6% | 93.7% | 94.3% |
| Amtrak Cascades | 82.7% | 77.5% | 69.8% |
| Illinois Service | 77.0% | 73.8% | 68.7% |
| Michigan Services | 42.3% | 26.8% | 27.0% |
| Hiawatha | 91.0% | 93.2% | 89.7% |
| Missouri River Runner | 77.4% | 90.0% | 83.7% |
| Acela Express | 87.9% | 87.3% | 84.9% |
| Northeast Regional | 83.3% | 83.6% | 80.5% |

WESTERN CORRIDORS

Amtrak Cascades

Amtrak added 11 trains along the *Amtrak Cascades* route between Portland and Seattle to accommodate the travel demand during the holiday week. The extra Amtrak Cascades trains operated Wednesday, Nov. 23, through Sunday, Nov. 27.

For a second year, rail passengers were able to take a Thanksgiving Eve express service on Nov. 23, to Portland from Seattle. The non-stop train was scheduled to depart one minute before midnight and arrive in Portland at 4:14 a.m. In addition, Amtrak operated three non-stop roundtrip *Thruway* motorcoaches between Portland and Seattle. Amtrak also added a *Thruway* motorcoach connection from Bellingham to Seattle for the *Coast Starlight* trains, 11 and 14, on Wednesday and Sunday.

DEPOT DOINGS

WASHINGTON, D.C. Union Station managers closed the main hall on Oct. 28 at 6:00 p.m. so that crews could conduct emergency repairs to its ceiling after a small piece of plaster fell from the ceiling and struck a restaurant worker, who was uninjured. The ceiling was damaged when a 5.8 magnitude earthquake struck the region on Aug. 23. At that time inspections were performed and temporary repairs implemented. The Oct. 28 incident prompted the closure of the main hall for the safety of visitors and workers. It was expected to reopen by 6:00 a.m. Oct. 31.

[[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]]

AAR NOVEMBER STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

by CHARLES VARNES

The Association of American Railroads reported that as of November 1, 2011, 261,695 freight cars were in storage, 1,378 more cars than on October 1 and equal to 17.2 percent of the North American fleet.

For the first ten months of 2011 the number of freight cars

stored (and the percentage of the fleet) was: January, 316,271 (20.8); February, 318,773 (20.9); March, 306,316 (20.2); April, 283,649 (18.7); May, 276,228 (18.2); June, 279,083 (18.4); July, 276,236 (18.2); August, 276,943 (18.2); September, 271,404 (17.8); October, 260,317 (17.1).

- In July 2009, 1.603 million cars were in the fleet. From July 2009 through October 2011, 51,691 new cars were installed, while 118,875 cars were scrapped or otherwise removed, yielding a net reduction of 67,184 cars in the North American fleet.
- 527,060 cars were in storage on July 1, 2009 (including cars that haven't moved since before 2005). By November 1, 2011, that was down to 274,261, for a reduction of 252,799. Subtracting the 118,875 cars scrapped or otherwise removed yields 133,924 cars returned to service.

A freight car is "in storage" if it has had a loaded revenue move since 2005, but not in the past 60 days. Rail cars are stored when they are not needed due to lack of demand; they come out of storage when demand improves. 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

| August 2011 | Red Line | Blue Line | Green Line | Gold Line |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Weekday Ave. | 159,302 | 82,189 | 43,373 | 39,598 |
| Saturday Ave. | 100,728 | 57,645 | 23,058 | 24,460 |
| Sunday Ave. | 80,785 | 47,924 | 18,901 | 20,868 |
| Monthly Total | 4,389,998 | 2,312,624 | 1,165,424 | 1,092,062 |

[Info. from Metro via Ken Ruben]

RIDERSHIP

| September 2011 | Red Line | Blue Line | Green Line | Gold Line |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Weekday Ave. | 152,706 | 83,385 | 44,831 | 37,938 |
| Saturday Ave. | 96,760 | 58,990 | 23,040 | 24,050 |
| Sunday Ave. | 76,175 | 48,791 | 18,313 | 18,959 |
| Monthly Total | 3,974,747 | 2,230,998 | 1,125,183 | 987,691 |

[Info. from Metro via Ken Ruben]

PORTLAND, OREGON

Historic Steam Engines

Portland Parks & Recreation broke ground October 21 in Southeast Portland for a home for three historic steam engines. The engines eventually will be housed at the Enginehouse & Rail Heritage Center. It will be built near the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and is expected to open late next summer. The engines will be maintained by the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation.

Streetcar Bridge Closure

The Broadway Bridge was closed to motorists 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. October 22-23. The scheduled closure was for the ongoing construction of the Portland Streetcar Loop Project, a 3.3-mile track extension of the existing streetcar system from the Pearl District, across the bridge to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

SOUTH BAY

Light Rail Work to be Sped Up

The Obama administration announced October 11 that it will cut red tape to shorten the approval time for the Crenshaw/LAX light rail line by several months. The 8.5-mile project will extend the existing Green Line closer to Los Angeles International Airport with the construction of a new station at Aviation and Century boulevards. Construction is expected to start in 2013.

The project, which will receive "additional targeted technical assistance" from the Federal Transit Agency, was one of only 14 nationwide to be expedited through the permitting and environmental review process, federal officials said.

County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said the announcement was "wonderful news" and noted it came two weeks after the Metro Board approved the final environmental analysis for the transit line.

It also came a day after Metro appointed a 21-member board of Los Angeles and Inglewood residents to "support and promote neighborhood involvement" during construction.

Lomita Railroad Museum lays off its Director

The only employee of Lomita's city-run railroad museum is losing her job, a move that will save the city about \$100,000 a year. Lomita, like many other cities, has been forced to make budget cuts in recent years because of the tepid economy. Museum Director Faith Bilyeu has been director of the museum since the position was created in January 2006; she also assumed the responsibilities of a full-time special events coordinator, a position established in 2001.

Built in 1966, the museum was the first of its kind west of the Mississippi River, according to its website. Dedicated to the era of steam engines, it has locomotives and cabooses among its displays. But the endowment provided by the donor – the late Irene Lewis – ran out about four years ago, City Councilman Don Suminaga said.

The Museum on 250th Street has long-term plans to expand, which would require a fund-raising campaign.

[South Bay info. from *The Daily Breeze* by Nick Green]

Panel Backs Subway Under High School

A team of engineering and seismic experts announced October 19 that a controversial proposal to build the Westside subway extension under Beverly Hills High School is safer than a fault-ridden route beneath Santa Monica Boulevard. The panel, assembled by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to analyze two possible alignments through Century City, also concluded that tunneling can be done under the campus and nearby homes without endangering or disrupting the community.

"Tunneling will be safe through potentially gassy areas and the soil is suitable," said Harvey Parker, a tunneling consultant with 45 years of engineering experience. "There will be little or no impact on buildings, including Beverly Hills High School."

The findings were immediately criticized by opponents in the affluent city, who want the line to run farther north under Santa Monica Boulevard.

If approved by the MTA early next year, the proposed route would pass about 70 feet beneath one building at the high school before it curves under Constellation Boulevard, where a station is planned at Avenue of the Stars. The team of experts con-

cluded that it would be unsafe to tunnel or build a station along Santa Monica Boulevard because the active Santa Monica fault zone lies beneath.

The Constellation route would cross the Newport-Inglewood fault to the east, but the panel said it would probably receive minor damage in an earthquake because the line would be perpendicular to the fault, putting only a small of the tunnel at risk. The MTA took no action on the report.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

Gold Line Foothill Extension

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority approved a funding change on October 27 to keep the planned Pasadena and Azusa schedule, officials said. Metro elected to give the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority access to \$208 million, more than doubling the original terms of the agreement, Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension CEO Habib Balian said in a written statement. The construction authority previously had access to \$103.6 million.

“Having access to the funds allows the Authority to provide {contractor} Kiewit Parsons Joint Venture an interim notice to proceed for the Pasadena-to-Azusa design and preconstruction work, maintaining our current schedule of construction completion in 2015,” Balian said.

The funding amendment, which was requested by the Gold Line Construction Authority, allows preconstruction work to begin while officials work to finalize funding agreements for other aspects of the project, he added.

“The city of Monrovia has been barred from considering the Authority’s terms of purchase until after the state Supreme Court rules on pending lawsuits surrounding state redevelopment agencies,” Balian said. “A decision is expected in January.” Meanwhile, construction workers continued working on the foundation of the project’s 210 Freeway bridge.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

BEIJING-SHANGHAI HIGH-SPEED TRAIN

Opening to the public on June 30, 2011, the landmark high-speed train connects China’s two biggest cities, Beijing, 100 miles from the Gulf of Chihli in the north, and Shanghai on the East China Sea, 800 miles to the south.

The project cost \$32.5 billion. Criticism abounds, mostly on the Internet, over the project’s high price tag and the steep price of tickets. The cheapest fare for the Beijing-Shanghai line is \$86, equivalent to one-tenth of an average urbanite’s monthly salary.

The Beijing-Shanghai line is now the crown jewel of a rail system that stretches nearly 5,000 miles. The plan is to double the size of the network by 2020, taking riders everywhere from the southern factory hub of Guangzhou to the frosty northern outpost of Harbin in Manchuria to the western frontier city of Urumqi in Sinkiang.

The sleek blue-and-white trains known as the Harmony Express take less than five hours to commute from Beijing South Railway Station to Shanghai Hongqiao Railway Station, which crosses the same distance as a trip from Los Angeles to Albuquerque but takes more than three times as long on Amtrak.

Ninety trips in each direction are scheduled daily in a trip so smooth and steady that beverages on board barely register a

ripple. The mega-project was marred by a major corruption scandal in February that led to the dismissal of Railway Minister Liu Zhijun. Liu was accused in local news reports of taking \$225 million in kickbacks that allegedly led to shoddy construction and safety hazards, including on the Beijing-Shanghai corridor.

The controversy was heightened when Zhou Yinun, a former lieutenant of Liu, said in media interviews in the end of June that the former chief wanted to push the trains faster than they were capable of going. Zhou, who has left the Rail Ministry, said the trains owed more to European and Japanese engineering than to Chinese, and also worried that the project was being constructed dangerously fast.

“Most of the high-speed trains in other countries need three to five years of testing before being operational commercially,” he told the 21st Century Business Herald, “But what about our . . . project one or two years, and it already went into mass production.” Current officials have dismissed the concerns, but skepticism ran high in April when the ministry announced that it would reduce the train speeds from as much as 236 mph to cut costs for passengers and increase safety. The reduction meant the trains would run no faster than their Japanese and European counterparts.

Some scholars and economists maintain that the sprawling system will provide immediate benefits to the country. For one, commerce will flow faster and more freely between nearby cities, especially urban centers in the isolated west. The high-speed trains also will free up space on traditional tracks, providing an additional 50 million tons of badly needed freight capacity each year. Adding more room for passengers is also welcome in a country that seizes up with congestion during its national holidays.

At the Beijing South station on June 30th, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao delivered a speech and boarded the first train for Shanghai, the “G1” that left at 3 p.m.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

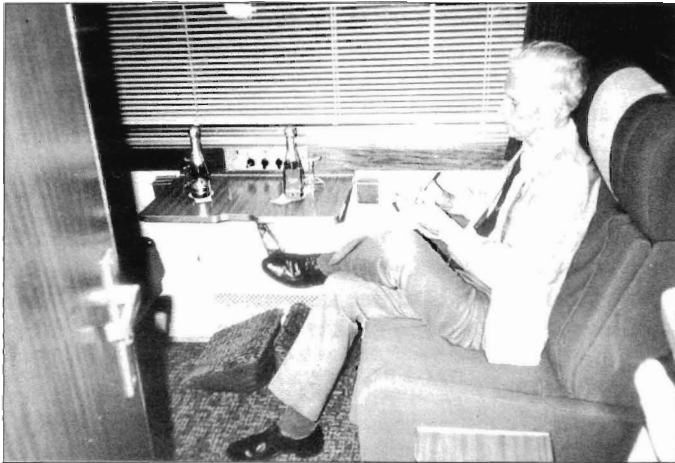
TRANSIT SHOULD TOP STATE AGENDA

As the California High-Speed Rail Authority was staging a made-for-television event the first week of November to ballyhoo its latest plan – or pipe dream – for a bullet-train system, an equally dense document that paints a more ominous transportation picture was quietly circulating. It’s an update of the California Transportation Commission’s periodic snap-shot of transportation services and needs, state and local, public and private.

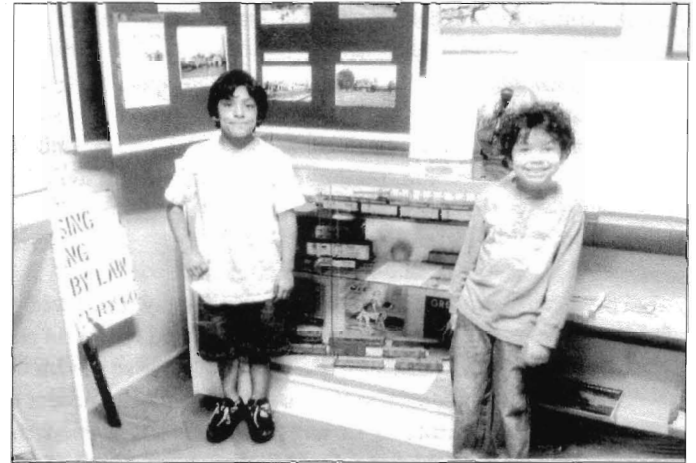
The CTC’s bottom line: What we have is falling apart from heavy use and much-neglected maintenance, and as population and travel demand increase, we must add more capacity to handle both human and goods movement or face increasing gridlock and economic decay. Bullet-train cheerleaders claim that building it will negate the need to spend \$170 billion on highway and airport expansion.

The CTC report says that even if we have a bullet-train, we need to spend three times that much over the next 10 years on transportation but can count on less than half from current revenue and capital sources, leaving a net gap that approaches \$300 billion.

[Info. from *Sacramento Bee*]



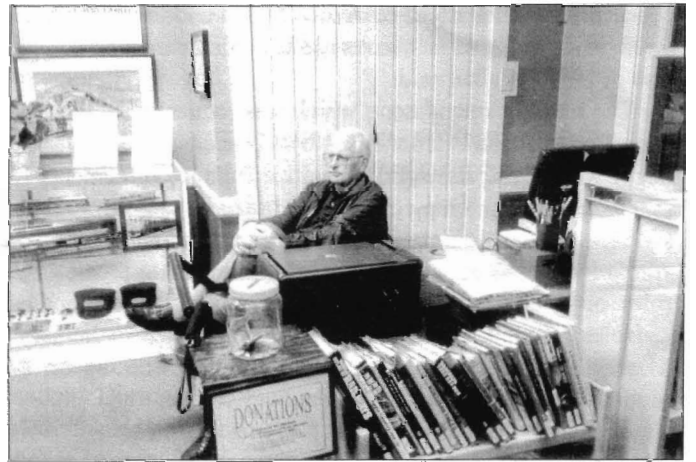
Tom Nelson in our compartment on the Blue Train in South Africa in October 1984. Photo by Mary Anne Nelson



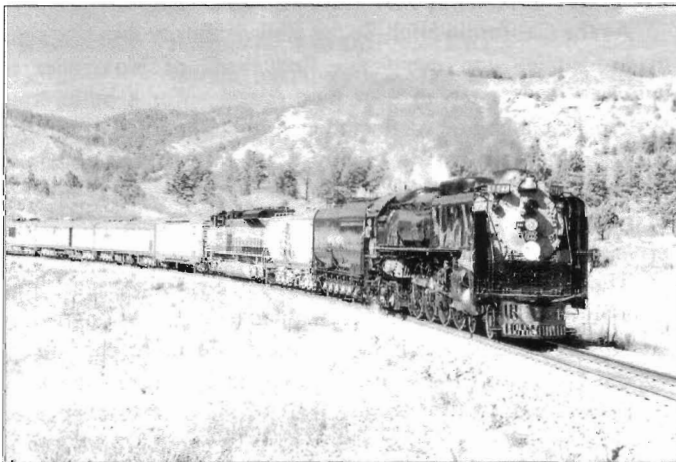
Tesai Torres (left) and Derrick Breedlove at the Pacific Railroad Museum during the Holiday Party in 2010. Photo by Marti Ann Draper



Dick Donat and E. J. Sackett dedicating monument at Summit, California in July 1962. Photo by Chard Walker



Pete Balch at his desk in the Pacific Railroad Museum during the past year. He works on archival material, the company store, and as a docent. Photo by Marti Ann Draper



Union Pacific 844 heading south near Palmer Lake, Colorado, October 30 en route to Arizona and New Mexico for both states Centennial celebrations. The "drumhead" underneath the headlight bears the emblem of both states. The train will return to Cheyenne, Wyoming, its base, via Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, and Rock Springs. Photo by Brian Black



May 10, 1869 reproduction of Central Pacific's Jupiter, #60, and Union Pacific's #119 at Promontory, Utah. The locomotive replicas were built at Costa Mesa, California. Photo by Herb Iske