

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

MAY 2015

## A MOVIE TRAIN

By Brian Black

Back in the late 1990s or early 2000s, I was working a pool turn on the UP Los Angeles-Yuma Long Pool. While at home one afternoon, the phone rings.

"Hey Brian, this is Stan Lewis, do you want to work a movie train tomorrow?"

"Sure," I replied. "Where and when?"

"They are making a grade crossing safety film for Operation Lifesaver, be at J Yard at 6:00AM. I'm going to try to get Jim Guerin for engineer. I'll show you in OS status (other company service) so you can get paid for your turn." Stan Lewis was one of the terminal officers at East Los Angeles Yard. He was a former SP engineer, and we'd been friends for many years. Regretfully, he has since passed on. Jim Guerin, otherwise known as "Dagwood," was a former SP San Joaquin Division hoghead, and he and I had been partners in crime many times on the old LA-Bakersfield Pool. Also, he was active with Operation Lifesaver, so he was a good fit for this job.

We all showed up at J Yard, and guess what! No locomotive! Stan gets on the phone, and after a time, here comes our engine. It was an SD-70M that looked like someone rolled it in the dirt! Not a suitable situation for an engine to be used in a movie. Also, one of the front ditch lights was burnt out.

Stan went ballistic! He gets on the phone, hollers at someone, and after some time, here comes a roundhouse truck with a power washer. They get right to work, and after awhile, the unit is starting to look somewhat presentable. We stole a ditch light bulb off of a switch engine, so that problem was solved. As they were winding up the job, an evil plan begins to take shape in my brain. Like I said, Stan and I were good friends.

I walked over to him and said, "Hey Stan, we've got another problem."

"What now?"

"That unit only has about a hundred gallons of fuel in it." (Nowhere near enough for our purposes).

We were standing about 100 feet from the engine, and I don't think his boots hit the ground as he made a run to look at the dial gauge on the fuel tank. When he saw the unit actually had about 2500 gallons of go-juice, he said, "G-----t, Brian, don't do that to me! You about gave me a heart attack!" We all had a good laugh.

The camera crew mounted their gear, we coupled into about 6 cars we were going to use as a train, made an air test, and we were ready for come what may. The plan was to simulate a near miss with a truck on a crossing by J Yard. The truck was ready and waiting, and had been instructed to pass in front of the moving train close as possible consistent with safety. My job was to ride the rear car so I would be in position to protect the reverse moves between movie takes.

Back and forth we went, until the camera crew was satisfied with what they'd shot. The next move was to film the train going over several crossings west of where we'd been previously shooting at a place called Nadeau. They were going to use a camera mounted on the front of the engine. This would have meant I would have had to ride that rear car again over all those crossings in one of the worst neighborhoods in Los Angeles. I flat refused.

"What are we going to do," the Director asked. "We need these shots."

"Let's cut the cars off at the top end of Nadeau. Leave them there, and we can make your scenes with the light engine. That way, no one has to ride the point when we back up," I said..

So done, and after about 6 passes, the camera dudes were happy. We picked up the cars, went back to J Yard, and by then, our 12 hours was about up. Stan informed us that a yard crew was going to come over and get the engine. While we were still there, the yard crew showed up, and you should have heard that yard engineer whine about how their quit was getting screwed up.

Another word about Stan Lewis. Sometime after this movie job, Stan and some UP higher official got on my westbound train around Cabazon to ride with us. He introduced this UP guy, but he wouldn't even shake our hands. He just nodded curtly. Obviously, he was way above talking to us minor peons. Pure Missouri Pacific attitude.

He looked at my conductors logbook and could only see three lines, which wasn't very many, considering we'd come all the way from Yuma. He just pointed at it and raised his eyebrows.

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## PROPOSED RICE AVENUE AND UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD GRADE SEPARATION IN OXNARD

A project to build an overpass where Rice Avenue in Oxnard crosses the Union Pacific Railroad right of way, the site of the deadly February 24 Metrolink accident, was considered as long as 15 to 20 years ago, but was delayed due to a lack of funds.

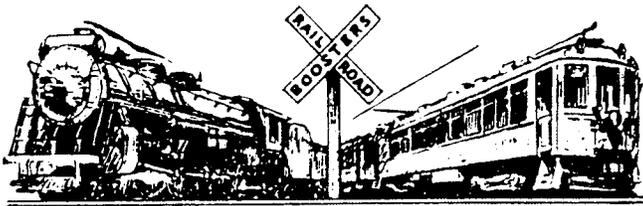
The estimated cost of the overcrossing is \$30-million to \$35-million.

Environmental reviews and preliminary engineering for the bridge project are underway and should be finished by 2016.

If funds were available, and everything went smoothly, the engineering could be done in five years and construction could begin two years after that.

The project depends on non-county funds because Ventura County has no sales tax to raise funds for transportation projects. Therefore, construction cannot begin until adequate funding can be secured from the state, U.S. government and Union Pacific Railroad, which controls the crossing.

Source: The Los Angeles Times



## Railroads-The Backbone of America

### WHEEL CLICKS

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Pacific Railroad Society, Inc. is a non-profit 501 (e)(3) social organization staffed by volunteers. The Society supports rail car preservation and restoration; railroad excursions; a museum which preserves and displays railroad literature, photos, artifacts and a resource library; railroad related education; social events; and publications. The public is welcome to participate in the Society's events, operations, and facilities. The Society is funded by membership, donations, grants, and fundraising activities.

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### PRS MAY EVENTS

May 2 PRS Excursion 551. *Springtime in San Luis*  
 Saturday *Obispo* featuring PRS own *National Forum*  
 May 2, 9, Saunders Yard Open Saturday, 8:30 a.m. - ?  
 16, 23 Noakes St. & Herbert Ave., Commerce  
 May 2,9, PRM Open Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
 16, 23 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas  
 May 4, 11, PRM Open Monday, 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
 18, 25 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas  
 May 6, 13, PRM Open Wednesday, 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
 20, 27 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas

May 6 PRS Board Meeting, Wednesday. 7:30 p.m.  
 PRM. West Room. 210 W. Bonita Ave.,  
 San Dimas  
 May 8 PRS Membership Meeting. Friday. 7:30 p.m.  
 Alhambra Room. Joslyn Center.  
 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 May 27 Wheel Clicks Mailing., Wednesday. 10:00 a.m.  
 1240 Dominion Ave, Pasadena.  
 (626) 794-0783

### MAY MEETING PROGRAM

By Russ Davies

Thanks to a lead from Andrew Novak, we'll have architectural historian, Mr. Jean-Guy Dubé with us for a presentation, "Southern Pacific's Standard Depots." Mr. Dubé's talk will include PowerPoint images, and will conclude with, to quote him, the "unique and misunderstood history of the Soldiers Home Depot." Be there, and bring digital briefs!

### FROM THE EDITOR

The editor is beginning to receive both postal mail at the Pacific Railroad Museum and email at [wheelclickseditor@earthlink.net](mailto:wheelclickseditor@earthlink.net).

Articles or photographs have been received from Brian Black, Ted Creveling, Carolyn Hobson, and Michael Palmer. Thank you for your contributions.

### JOHN ALLEN LEE 1929-2015

Pacific Railroad Society mourns the loss of member John Lee, John rarely missed a PRS membership meeting, and often shared his photographs of railroad activities occurring in the Los Angeles area at meetings.

In addition to his PRS membership, he was a member of several other railroad and historical societies.

He was born and grew up in Richlands, Virginia. Following his service as a U.S. Army military policeman in Germany, he relocated to Los Angeles, where he was employed by Lockheed Aircraft for 42 years.

John was always pleasant, and will be missed at PRS events.

### MARCH MUSEUM REPORT

By David Housh, Curator

March was another successful month for our train museum. We continue to have visitors come in and cite our added signage and ongoing advertising as what prompted them to drop in and check us out. It is also gratifying to see them being impressed enough with our museum and the tour to donate generously.

Several months ago I addressed the Glendora Girl Scout Council at its request to promote our museum as a possible destination for outings. Several troops have since come over and seemingly enjoyed my tour. You may recall that I offer private group tours on Friday by appointment. This month I welcomed the third grade girls of Brownie troop 15024 for their tour. I am always amazed at how responsive and inquisitive youngsters are when exposed to what we have on display and discuss during these tours.

I reported some time back that I had been interviewed for an article in the "Foothills Reade" section of the Sunday L.A. Times after giving the reporter my "deluxe tour." Well it finally paid off. The article appeared in the March 29 edition on the front page

above the fold. It was quite long and full of both historical and current information, and I have to say that it was nicely done. It also included photos from past and present. It has provided the museum with some ever needed publicity, and the Monday after publication was significantly busier with several visitors citing the story as the reason for their visit.

I was pleased with the help I received on Saturdays in March. I thank Steve Crise, Dave Abbott, Virginia Grupp, and Larry Aandahl for their support. But I need visitors to sign on for April and May. Don't be bashful! You can contact me at busteach24@hotmail.com or 626-914-9599. I hope to see you soon, even if it is just for a brief visit.

### **FOOTHILL GOLD LINE NIGHTLY TRAIN TESTING BEGUN**

Nightly train testing for the 11.5-mile Foothill Gold Line light rail project from Pasadena to Azusa began Friday, April 17, 2015 and will continue thru early June 2015. Testing will occur Monday thru Friday, and take place nightly from 4 p.m. to 1 a.m.

The train will be operating nightly between the cities of Pasadena and Irwindale. With the beginning of this nightly train testing, the previously-extended construction work hours within these cities will cease.

To limit noise during the night testing, the grade crossing bells will be disconnected and Metro train operators will use their optional "quiet-zone" horns, which will sound similar to buzzers and are commonly used in residential areas. Sheriff Deputies will be supporting the effort.

Source: Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority

### **FOOTHILL GOLD LINE CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY GOLD LINE OPERATIONS CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES**

As part of Earth Month, the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority announced the sustainability features built into its 24-acre Gold Line Operations Campus. The \$265-million campus, located in the city of Monrovia, was designed and built to meet U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Gold standards, one of the highest levels available.

The Gold Line Operations Campus is one of the only facilities of its kind to meet the Gold Standard.

The Gold Line Operations Campus is an integral part of the six-station, 11.5-mile Foothill Gold Line light rail project from Pasadena to Azusa currently nearing completion. The full-service, state-of-the-art facility will house up to 84 light rail vehicles and nearly 200 employees over several shifts a day. Features built into the facility will reduce water and electricity consumption, as well as capture 100% of the rainfall from the site and infiltrate it into the groundwater aquifers below. Here are highlights of the features.

**On-Site Solar Power Array will Generate 22,000 Kilowatt Hours/Month:** A 714-panel, 178.5-kilowatt solar panel array has been installed at the campus that will generate enough electricity to meet one-third of power needs of the 132,000 square foot Main Shop Building. If not immediately used on-site, the electricity generated by the solar panel array will be made available to the local electric grid.

**Smart Technology and Reclaimed Water will Reduce Fresh Water Consumption:** Water-reduction measures in the Main Shop Building (such as high efficiency fixtures and infrared sensor faucets) were employed to help achieve a 35% water reduction level. Smart sprinkler technology, and planting of a variety of drought-tolerant plants, will reduce landscape water consumption at the campus by 50%. The large carwash facility, with average usage of 60,000 gallons of water a day, will use only recycled, reclaimed water.

**100% of Stormwater will be Captured, Treated, and Infiltrated into the Groundwater Aquifers:** To better capture stormwater, the Construction Authority has installed a specialized stormwater management system at the Gold Line Operations Campus designed to capture the first ¾-inch (112,000 gallons) of a 100-year storm event. The stormwater is captured through an extensive drainage system, treated, and then sent to large subterranean chambers built below the facility with open bottoms.

**Recycled Materials Make Up Nearly 50% of the Material Used on the Campus, and Materials were Locally Sourced to Reduce to Reduce Environmental Impacts of Long-distance Transport.**

The Operations Campus provided the construction authority a unique opportunity to find ways to reduce water and energy usage, without significantly impacting the project schedule and budget. It beeves its efforts here will become a model for other, similar facilities around the county and the nation.

Source: Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority

### **SAN PEDRO WATERFRONT RED CAR'S UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

The San Pedro waterfront Red Car is scheduled to cease operation in September for 18 months to make way for the needed realignment of Sampson Way leading into Ports O' Call Village.

Its return is uncertain. Because the realignment cuts through the southern part of the 1.5-mile rail line, it would require a new track and modified, street-level cars — running parallel to the new Sampson Way — to be built at a cost of \$40 million.

As of now, what happens to the Red Car attraction after the 18-month construction is finished is up in the air due to costs and design conflicts.

The Red Cars will continue to run up through this year's lobster festival in September and then shut down sometime soon after that.

[Source: Daily Breeze via Michael Palmer]

### **CALTRAIN NEWS**

**By Mike Gondron**

In February, the Palo Alto city council voted to study establishing a quiet zone that would prohibit trains from routinely sounding their horns for grade crossings as they pass through the quiet zone. The zones would be established at Alma, Churchill, East Meadow, and Charleston crossings. Of course, supplemental safety measures would have to be put in place, and these could cost as much as \$1 million per crossing. Caltrain has said it is willing to work with cities who want to establish quiet zones, but that they would not be liable for any accidents that occurred within them. No date was set for a final decision.

The Sunnyvale city council has big plans for the Lawrence

Caltrain station. The latest plan proposes developing the surrounding land for mixed use purposes including apartment homes and business space within a half mile of the station.

When the Lawrence station opened between Sunnyvale and Santa Clara, it was projected to produce huge numbers of boardings for the many high tech companies nearby. Those numbers never really materialized and today Lawrence is number 17 out of 29 Caltrain stations for average total boardings. The council is hoping the development plans will help increase the number of people who use the station.

In "the story that never goes away department", Caltrain has announced that it is committed to adding a third bike car to all trains equipped with Bombardier equipment. That would increase the bicycle capacity to 72 per train from the current 48. The move is in response to a 121% increase in bicycle commuters between 2010 and 2014 and to pleas from the cycling community to increase bicycle capacity on trains.

Caltrain has announced the appointment of Jim Hartnett as its new CEO. He will replace the recently retired Mike Scanlon. Mr. Hartnett has served on the Redwood City city council and the Caltrain Board of Directors before being elected to the state Senate, where he was appointed to the high speed rail authority. He has resigned that position to return to Caltrain, and it is hoped his experience there will help blend Caltrain with future high speed rail operations on the Peninsula.

Caltrain is not having a good year involving trespasser fatalities. So far, through March 25, there have been eight fatalities, after twelve in all of 2014. The most recent was a fifteen year old high school student struck near Churchill Avenue in Palo Alto on March 9. The death was ruled a suicide and seriously disrupted Caltrain operations for hours afterward.

#### **PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES** **By Charles Varnes**

Amtrak will offer passengers a lower-cost option for travel in sleeping cars on one of its routes between New York and Miami. This offer will be available for travel between July 1 until the end of January 2016 on the Amtrak *Silver Star* (Trains 91 & 92), which operates daily between New York City and Orlando/Miami, via Washington, D.C., Columbia, S.C., and Tampa, Fla.

Traditionally, Amtrak has bundled the cost of dining car meals into its charge for the sleeping car. Under this pilot program, these costs will be un-bundled to allow passengers to travel at a lower cost between the northeast, mid-Atlantic and Florida.

All food service will be provided in a Café/Lounge car instead of a dining car. Passengers can purchase a selection of hot and cold sandwiches, snacks and other items in the Café.

Passengers will continue to have the option of choosing traditional dining car service aboard the Amtrak *Silver Meteor* (Trains 97 & 98), which duplicates much of the *Silver Star* route. Dining car meals aboard the *Silver Meteor* are included in the sleeping car charge.

Passengers with sleeping car accommodations on all Amtrak trains with sleeping car services, including the Star and Meteor, are provided complimentary morning coffee, chilled water and juices, meals delivered to their rooms upon request, turn-down

service for their bedrooms and roomettes, private restrooms and access to shower facilities. At stations with ClubAcela<sup>®</sup>, sleeping car passengers also have same-day lounge access and pre-boarding privileges.

Savings from typical sleeping car upgrade ("accommodation") charges during this trial on the *Silver Star* schedule are between 25 and 28 percent for bedrooms and roomettes, including popular stops such as Orlando, Tampa and Ft. Lauderdale. For example, the charge is about \$140 lower for a bedroom and \$65 lower for a roomette than previously between New York City and Miami.

Since the upgrade charge is based on the size of the sleeping compartment, rather than the number of occupants, cost savings for passengers traveling alone can be significant.

Over the next few months, Amtrak will closely watch customer reaction and market response to this service, as well as the cost consequences of this new service concept.

#### **BNSF PLANS \$141 MILLION CAPITAL PROGRAM IN CALIFORNIA**

The BNSF Railway Company's (BNSF) 2015 capital program for its operations in California will be an estimated \$141 million for rail capacity improvement projects and maintenance.

BNSF's 2015 capital projects in California include the construction of three miles of double track and a siding as part of the Tehachapi Rail Improvement Project along the Mojave subdivision. It also plans to expand the parking capacity at the Stockton Intermodal Facility.

BNSF's maintenance program in California will include 880 miles of track surfacing and undercutting work, the replacement of nearly 54 miles of rail and close to 118,000 ties.

The planned capital investments in California are part of BNSF's record 2015 capital commitment of \$6 billion, which is the company's largest planned capital expenditure in its history. The investments include \$2.9 billion to replace and maintain core network and related assets, nearly \$1.5 billion on expansion and efficiency projects, \$200 million for continued implementation of PTC and \$1.4 billion for locomotives, freight cars and other equipment acquisitions.

Source: BNSF Railway

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#### **A MOVIE TRAIN**

##### **From Page 1**

By now, I was on to his game, and I just folded the pages over revealing that my log was on its third page. I just pointed to it and raised my eyebrows, never saying a word. He didn't appear to like this at all.

While stopped at Hinda in San Timeteo Canyon to meet eastbounds, I raised a question about action to be taken during a flash flood warning. As I was getting off the train to roll an eastbound, Mr. Personality got off with me. When we got back in the cab, Stan asked him if he answered my question. He told Stan, "No," as in how he couldn't be bothered discussing anything with a mere conductor.

A few days later, I ran into Stan, and he apologized for the guys attitude