

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

November 2014

A MUST READ LETTER to the PRS Membership

BY ED SAALIG, PRS DIRECTOR

I have now been a new director for eight months and I have some serious concerns that I would like to share with the membership.

In eight months I have received only one Financial Statement and that was dated March of 2014. Since then I have no idea how much income and expenses we have had. Our current Treasurer does not have an understanding of our current financial status. Myself and one other Director have voted NO on any new expenditures while others have continued to vote YES without knowing our financial status. The *National Forum* has been stored on Amtrak property and we have not seen a rental bill in over a year. The PRS could be served with a bill of between 15 to \$20,000. Renewal membership checks have been misplaced or lost. This is a terrible state of financial affairs. We are now going on two months after a request made to hire a bookkeeper to set our books in order. No actions has been taken. We need volunteer with bookkeeping or accounting experience to help us out

Our Rolling Stock Committee is no more. Will Walters now oversees the disposition of all our rolling stock. Because the membership of the committee has fallen to one or two, our rolling stock can no longer be worked on. Therefore, it has been decided to find new homes for all our passenger equipment. If Will could get 5 to 10 members to volunteer to work on Saturdays then the Board could be persuaded to take another look at the disposition of this equipment.

Our Special Events Committee is one person. It has been Larry Aandahl who has arranged our outstanding Christmas parties. He has found the locations, set the menus, programs, door prizes and promoted this event. And every year the attendance has declined. How long can one man continue to schedule this event, regardless of any other event? He needs your support and attendance.

Our Museum Committee has fallen to 3 dependable volunteers. This puts the Museum in serious danger of closing. If we cannot find at least 5 new members to volunteer their time it seems that within the year the Museum will close and 1,000s of volumes of books, photos, and railroad artifacts will all be given to other museums.

Our Excursion committee has undertaken not only the organization and promotion of excursions but also the repair, cleaning and general maintenance of the *National Forum*. This is an impossible task with only two or three active members. Many other members only become active when there is an excursion and volunteer to help so that they don't have to pay for the cost of the excursion. It seems a conflict of interest exists when the

Excursion Committee also takes on the duties of the Rolling Stock committee, which is no more. This makes losing the *National Forum* a real possibility.

We need to send Wheel Clicks to you by e-mail. It is hoped that this can be done by early spring. For those with no computers you will still receive the standard Black & White Wheel Clicks by mail. By e-mailing Wheel Clicks we can have more pages, pages in color, faster announcements of upcoming events and excursions and copies of board minutes sent to you quickly. We need volunteers to help us set up this system.

I present all of these serious concerns to you the membership to make it clear that the Pacific Railroad Society needs YOU to volunteer your time. Without your help there will be no more rolling stock. Without your help there will be no more excursions.

A MUST READ >> Page 4

NATIONAL FORUM – HELP NEEDED URGENTLY

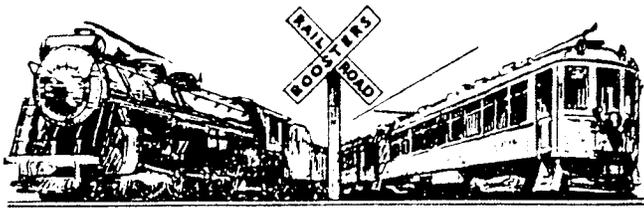
By MARTI ANN DRAPER, EXCURSION DIRECTOR

The *National Forum* is currently PRS's only Amtrak-legal operating car. It is now at Amtrak's facilities in Los Angeles. The board of directors has recently put the operation of the *Forum* under the jurisdiction of the Excursion Department. That means that as Excursion Director I need to get the work force together to do those jobs.

We recently passed a required ultrasound testing of all our wheels and axles. An extensive 10-year inspection as required by Amtrak is next on our list of things to accomplish. We hope to meet soon to put together an action plan for the car.

We will be running the *Holiday San Diegan* trip to San Diego on December 20. We will ride in the *National Forum* joined by the beautiful dome lounge, *Silver Splendor*. The purposes of this trip are to verify to our members, to Amtrak, and to the railfan community at large that the *National Forum* is an operational car; to give our members a brief and exciting excursion opportunity during the holiday season, at moderate cost; to raise money to do some needed refurbishments; and to reward those of you who have supported our recent activities with a chance to ride the car. There are several big-ticket items that need to be completed so that we can continue to run the car during the next two years, and showing the *National Forum* on the rails is the best way to publicize its existence. If you can make this excursion, please do; invite your friends and family for a really unique seasonal adventure! Your support right now is more vital than ever.

Please contact Marti Ann at prsexcursions@live.com if you are interested in helping out in any way on the *National Forum*, or in planning and putting on our excursions for next year.



Railroads-The Backbone of America

WHEEL CLICKS

NOVEMBER 2014

VOLUME 78, NO. 11

EDITOR. CHARLES VARNES
 MAILING COORDINATOR. DICK FINLEY
 MAILER. JOHN STALLKAMP

Opinions expressed in unsigned articles are those of the editorial board, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society, its officers or directors. Opinions in signed articles are those of the author only. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0043-4744.

Published monthly by PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.
 Address and telephone are the same as for Pacific Railroad Museum.

PARTICIPATING MEMBER. \$45.00 per year
 SUSTAINING MEMBER. \$60.00 per year
 CORPORATE MEMBER. \$110.00 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 Mondays: 12-5 p.m.; Wednesdays: 12-5 p.m.; Saturdays: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 MUSEUM CURATOR. DAVID HOUSH
 EXCURSION DIRECTOR. MARTI ANN DRAPER
 WEBMASTER. RUSSELL HOMAN
 INTERNET Home Page: <http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org>

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.
 PRESIDENT. VIRGINIA GRUPP
 VICE-PRESIDENT. WILL WALTERS
 SECRETARY. RICK REYES
 TREASURER. RICHARD WEIGLE
 DIRECTOR (2012-2015). DAVID ABBOTT
 DIRECTOR (2014-2017). STEVE CRISE
 DIRECTOR (2012-2015). MARTI ANN DRAPER
 DIRECTOR (2013-2016). ANDY NOVAK
 DIRECTOR (2014-2017). ED SAALIG

Starting November 5, 2014, the meeting of the PRS Board of Directors will be moved to the Pacific Railroad Museum in San Dimas, California. The time and date are as follows:: 7:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month.

PRS MEMBER MEETINGS

November 1, 8, PRM Open Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 15, 22, 29 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773
 November 1, 8, Saunders Yard Open Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – ?
 15, 22, 29 Noakes St. & Herbert Ave., Commerce

November 3, 10, PRM Open Monday, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 17, 24 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas. CA 91773
 November 5, 12 PRM Open Wednesday, 12:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 19, 26 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773
 November 5 PRS Board Meeting, West Room, 7:30 p.m.
 Wednesday 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773
 November 7 PRS Membership Mtg., 7:30 p.m., Alh. Rm.
 Friday Joslyn Center, 210 W. Chapel Ave., Alhambra
 November 25 December Wheel Clicks Mailing, 10:00 a.m.
 Tuesday 1240 Dominion Ave., Pasadena. 626-794-0783

PROGRAM

by RUSS DAVIES

November 14. Retracing the Route of the famed California Zephyr! We'll experience that with Harvey Laner's video of his July 2014 trip in the private car "Silver Lariat" trailing today's Amtrak No. 5. The "Silver Lariat" is a former California Zephyr dome car. We'll journey from Denver to Emeryville on America's mid-continental passenger route through the Rockies and the Sierras. Be there, and bring *digital* briefs!

AN INVITATION TO VISIT OUR MUSEUM

From David Housh, Museum Curator

Of late I have been negotiating with the city of San Dimas to place a sign in front of our Museum to let the public know we are there. Visitors all too frequently tell me that while they knew this was the old Santa Fe depot, they has no idea that there was a museum and library inside until they just happened to find us. But they always go away impressed. I have come to think of our Museum as the best kept secret in San Dimas, but I expect the sign to help change that.

And now to a similar concern. I feel our existence is also unknown to or overlooked by too many of our members, particularly our newer ones. I think it is time to change that, so let me extend an invitation to each of you to come and visit our facility in the heart of historic San Dimas. Even if you have been to the Museum in the past, you will be in for some surprises. We are constantly upgrading and improving both the Museum displays and the Library.

For the uninitiated, we occupy a 1934 vintage Santa Fe depot that operated until 1968. With recent renovations, it could still be 1934. We took over the site in 1995 and now occupy all five rooms. The front three rooms have been restored to approximate their appearance when the station was active. The freight room now houses our Research Library, and the former freight dock has been enclosed as our fifth room giving us more display space and a place for meetings.

I would now encourage you to consider the next step up from just a visit. That would be volunteering to help us with our many tasks. The Museum doesn't run itself, and we can always use some extra hands. There are many avenues you can take from leading tours to classifying photographs to processing newly received books. Computer skills are welcome but not necessary. You choose what you want to do. Our volunteers are invited to look around and find a task that best suits them and take it from there.

So if you are pondering what to do with that free Monday or Wednesday afternoon or Saturday, come check us out, either for just a visit, or to consider giving us a hand.

WHEEL CLICKS IN TRANSITIONby **CHARLES VARNES**

After editing Wheel Clicks for many years Dick Finley has chosen retire. Beginning with the November 2014 issue of Wheel Clicks Charles Varnes will assume the editorship. Dick is also retiring as Publications Chairman and Charles will assume that responsibility, also.

Dick will remain involved with Wheel Clicks in his new responsibility as Mailing Coordinator, and he will continue to host the publication's mailing parties at this home in Pasadena. John Stallkamp will continue as the publication's mailer.

In addition to editing Wheel Clicks and serving as Chairperson of the Publications Committee, Dick has served the Pacific Railroad Society as president and director.

PRS thanks Dick Finley for his many years of service to the organization.

During the next few months expect Wheel Clicks to contain more news of PRS activities and events. The use of new publishing technology may bring changes to the appearance of Wheel Clicks.

FOOTHILL GOLD LINE TRACK COMPLETION CELEBRATED

The Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority – on Oct. 19 – held a Track Completion Ceremony which celebrated construction completion of the light rail track systems needed for the 11.5-mile Foothill Gold Line light rail project from Pasadena to Azusa. The event took place near the future Azusa Downtown Station in the City of Azusa with more than 300 community members, project stakeholders, and elected officials in attendance. The event culminated in the installation of the last of nearly 300,000 e-clips (e-clips permanently attach the steel rail to the concrete railroad ties), marking the permanent connection between the cities of Pasadena, Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Irwindale and Azusa, via this new light rail line. A sidewalk marker was also unveiled during the ceremony, recognizing importance of the day to these corridor cities

The track construction for the Foothill Gold Line Extension utilized 500,000 cubic feet of ballast, 75,000 concrete ties, 56 miles of rail welded together from 800-foot segments, 300,000 E-clips to secure the rail to the ties, and 620 overhead catenary system poles.

CALTRAIN NEWSby **MIKE GONDRO**

A major component of the San Francisco Transbay Transit Center, now under construction, could be in jeopardy if developers and city officials can't come to an agreement on funding. While the transit center itself is not threatened, a portion that would serve as the northern terminus for Caltrain and High Speed Rail trains could be in trouble.

Developers are now balking at a previously reached agreement and are threatening to sue the city. The transit center is scheduled to be completed by 2017, but improved rail access could be thwarted if the parties can't agree on how to tap into \$1.5 billion in federal and state contributions.

Caltrain's new public time table and fare structure took effect

on October 5. Changes were made to better reflect longer dwell times at stations due to increased ridership as well as for slower speeds now required through construction zones.

Fares for one-way tickets purchased at stations increased by 25 cents and by 50 cents for day passes. These increases can be avoided by using the Clipper card. The cost of monthly passes and 8-ride tickets remain the same.

On September 4, Caltrain announced plans to purchase Metrolink rail cars from the Southern California Regional Rail Authority. The cost for purchasing and renovating the cars is \$15 million. Caltrain says the cars will require extensive rehabilitation and have not set a timeline for placing the cars in service, though it could take up to a year.

In September, Caltrain began collecting public feedback on modernizing car interiors in preparation for the coming electrification of the system. Community members are being asked to weigh in on such things as the number of seats per car, restrooms or no restrooms, luggage racks, and bike racks.

Another issue being discussed is "level boarding." Many transit systems such as BART, have level boarding, where a passenger steps directly from the platform onto the train, or vice versa. With Caltrain, as with some other systems, passengers must step up or down 1-3 steps to get on or off a train. This process can extend boarding times and make it more difficult for bicyclists and people in wheelchairs. Caltrain says level boarding would require modification of all of its 27 station platforms and is therefore unfeasible.

Manufacturing of the new cars is expected to begin next year and take about three years to complete. Modernization should be completed by 2019.

UNION STATION ON A BOLD TRACK

The plan for Union Station by Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority acknowledges that making room for high-speed trains from San Francisco, building new towers around the station and forging new connections to the L.A. River and the Civic Center will depend greatly on forces beyond the architects' control. As a result, the plan is both deeply technical and highly speculative. Despite that uncertainty, the plan promises to bring significant changes to the station.

With landscape architect Mia Lehrer, the architects have proposed a new civic plaza – a forecourt at the foot of the building, filling the area between the building and Alameda Street and replacing a surface parking lot. Renderings show an attractively paved open space ringed by benches and café tables.

The plan also calls for remaking Alameda itself as it runs in front of the station, making it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to move about. Complicating this goal, the city's existing plan for Alameda anticipates widening the street to make room for the greater car traffic produced by a busier Union Station.

On the other side of the historic building, the plan calls for demolishing the existing Patsaouras Transit Plaza, where bus passengers now line up above a glassed-in semicircular entry hall, and moving bus traffic to a new linear terminal on the west side of the tracks.

In between will be the most dramatic change to the concourse itself. Today passengers leave the station's historic

main hall and walk into a very long and low hallway, with tracks reached by stairs on either side. In the revised plan, this space would be replaced by a largely open-air concourse, with sunlight filtering in from above and large landscaped planters with benches around their edges.

The basic track design is in the middle of a \$350-million overhaul that will soon end the inefficient practice of trains pulling in and then backing out of the station in favor of a so-called run-through setup. Making that switch will require raising the rail tracks by 5 feet, to allow them to clear the 101 Freeway as they move in a new loop around the station.

The change has direct implications, good and possible bad. Good: Raising the tracks will make the concourse feel open and much less cramped., since the ceiling above passengers heads will be 5 feet higher than it is now. Possibly bad: If lifting the tracks in and around the station requires lifting them along the L.A. River as well, that could mean that several historic bridges will need to be replaced.

Back inside Union Station, the old Fred Harvey restaurant will soon have a tenant after years of sitting empty. The downtown restaurateurs Eric Needleman and Cedd Moses have tentatively agreed to open a gastropub in the space, which was designed in a sort of Navajo Revival style by architect Mary Colter, the in-house architect for the Harvey company. It remains unclear what will happen to the other long-vacant space inside Union Station, the old ticket room just north of the main entrance.

There is even more uncertainty about what will happen on the eastern edge of the station property, where the master plan imagines a new skyscraper reached by one of two new pedestrian bridges above the tracks. On top of that there is the question of the state's bullet train project. The Union Station master plan calls for a high-speed station, largely built underground, on the east side of the tracks. Making room for it – and creating new connections from there to the banks of a remade L.A. River – would likely require demolishing the C. Erwin Piper Technical Center, a city-owned building that holds public archives.

Metro is by necessity hedging its bets when it comes to high-speed rail. Its staff report on the master plan backs the site near Piper Tech. but says the agency is “flexible and open to other station alignments.”

Over time the separation between front and back has eroded. The addition of the bus plaza and Metro office tower opened up the back of the station. The central goal of the new master plan, its main urban and civic idea, is to extend and refine this evolution, ultimately turning the station into a transportation hub in the round. A building that once clearly occupied an edge, backed up against an unlovely and highly engineered river, is ready to take up a literal and symbolic place in the middle of something new.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

SUBWAY PROJECT UNDERWAY IN LOS ANGELES

A downtown subway project designed to close a frustrating gap in Los Angeles County's growing rail network got underway September 30 near Union Station. During a brief ceremony in Little Tokyo, local and federal representatives said the 1.9-mile, \$1.4-billion downtown Regional Connector Project would help

unite a sprawling and congested region. The tunnels and tracks have been designed to provide a connection among three disjointed rail lines.

The project will enable Metro Blue, Gold and Expo lines to run through the urban core between the 7th Street subway station in the southwest section of downtown and Union Station on the area's northeastern edge. It is scheduled to be completed in 2020. For the first time, passengers will be able to travel from Long Beach to Azusa, or East Los Angeles to Santa Monica, without changing trains. Rail trips passing through downtown now require two transfers.

“This morning, we boldly go where no transit agency has gone before,” said “Star Trek” actor George Takei, the ceremony's master of ceremonies. “We go underground, under Little Tokyo.”

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority project will add three train stations in downtown: at 1st Street and Central Avenue in Little Tokyo; 2nd Street and Broadway; and 2nd and Hope streets. Officials predict the improvements will attract 17,000 new daily riders.

“Some people lose hours every week to transfer from the bus to a train, just to keep going in the same direction,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said. The new subway connector “will buy you time, peace of mind,” he said, “the chance to live your life and not just wade through it.” Another goal is to persuade more Angelenos that public transit can be faster – or at least less painful – than driving, said Los Angeles Mayor and Metro Chairman Eric Garcetti.

Earlier this year, Metro accepted a \$670-million federal grant and a \$160-million low-interest loan for the project. The remaining funds will come from state and local sources, including Measure R the half-cent sales tax increase Los Angeles County voters approved six years ago. The Metro board recently allocated \$4 million from the project's budget to build a pedestrian bridge linking a station at 2nd and Hope to the cultural attractions along Grand Avenue, including the Broad Museum and the Disney Concert Hall. Metro staff had said the bridge would be built if community leaders found the money.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, whose district includes parts of downtown, said September 30th that she and fellow Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas are working on ways to reduce the effects of Metro construction on local businesses.

Takei's involvement with public transit issues began in the 1970s, when he served on the board of the Southern California Rapid Transit District, an MTA predecessor agency that built the first phase of the Red Line subway.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

A MUST READ

FROM PAGE 1

Without your help there will be no more rolling stock. Without your help there will be no more excursions. Without your help there will be no more Christmas parties. Without your help there will be no Museum. Without your help our means of communication to our membership will continue to be antiquated. Without your help there will be no Pacific Railroad Society.

Ed Saalig

Director, Pacific Railroad Society