

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

SEPTEMBER 2006

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES COAST STARLIGHT

From July 28 through Aug. 28, 2006 Union Pacific conducted a tie replacement project between Klamath Falls and Chemult, Ore. The work was scheduled in the morning to avoid the hottest part of the day. During that time the Coast Starlight schedule was adjusted again. [Passenger Train Updates July 2006]

The *Starlight* (Tr. No. 14) returned to its usual schedule, departing Los Angeles at 10:15 a.m. and operating on the schedule shown in the April 24, 2006 timetable through its arrival at Klamath Falls at 8:25 a.m. the following morning. At Klamath Falls, the train held until 11:00 a.m. It then resumed its journey on the following schedule: Chemult, Ore. 3:19 p.m.; Eugene, Ore. 3:19 p.m.; Albany, Ore. 4:05 p.m.; Salem, Ore. 4:38 p.m.; Portland, Ore. Ar. 6:15 p.m., Dp. 7:14 p.m.; Vancouver, Wash. 7:30 p.m.; Kelso, Wash. 8:08 p.m.; Centralia, Wash. 8:51 p.m.; Olympia/Lacey, Wash. 9:16 p.m.; Tacoma, Wash. 10:05 p.m.; Seattle, Wash. Ar. 11:39 p.m. All stations from Eugene, Ore. north are discharge only due to the uncertainty of the *Starlight* operating on the published schedule.

While the *Starlight* operated on the above-mentioned schedule, Amtrak Thruway bus connection schedules were adjusted to match the train's schedule.

For many month the *Starlight* has not operated on time due to numerous slow orders on the UP tracks over which it operates, as well as UP dispatching practices.

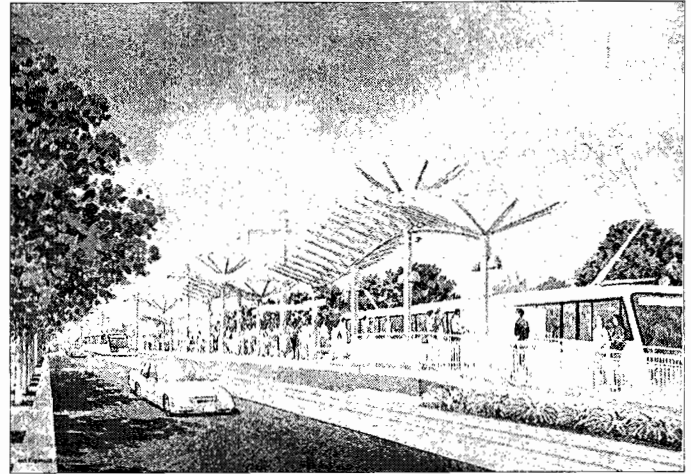
The *Starlight's* poor on-time performance caused Art Lloyd and Paul Bendix to write an opinion piece which appeared in the San Jose Mercury-News on July 25 suggesting that the states of California, Oregon, and Washington form a "regional affiliate" to operate the train in conjunction with Amtrak's national system. Both authors have railroad connections. Lloyd has had a long career in the railroad passenger business, is a vice-president of the Rail Passenger Association of California, and a Caltrain Board member. Bendix is the San Mateo County representative on the Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee.

The Train Riders Association of California (TRAC) held a well-attended press conference at the Sacramento station on July 27 to call attention to the *Starlight's* poor schedule keeping. The press conference generated articles in several major California newspapers. It also generated a dozen calls to the TRAC office from reporters, bloggers and journalists throughout the state for follow up stories and quotes.

Press coverage included an editorial in the *Sacramento Bee* on July 3, and a front-page article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on Aug. 8.

SUNSET LIMITED

Sightseer Lounge cars have returned to the *Sunset Limited*. The lounges were removed from the train when it resumed operation following Hurricane Katrina. The *Sunset* which



East LA Civic Center Station will be at 3rd St. and Mednik Ave. In addition to county facilities and services, the 28-acre East Los Angeles Civic Center will include a lake, pedestrian mall, central plaza, bus transit plaza, landscaping, security lighting, picnic shelters, and public artwork. Rendering by Metro

departed New Orleans on Aug. 7 was the first post-Katrina train reequipped with a *Sightseer Lounge*. Lounges 33029, 33028, and 33021 are operating on the *Sunset*. The fourth trainset still has the coach café.

During the first week of August, the El Paso, Tex. region was subjected to extremely heavy rain and flooding. As a result the UP *Sunset Route* between El Paso and Tucson was damaged. Due to the track damage and freight train congestion the *Sunset* which departed New Orleans on July 29 arrived in Los Angeles 8 hr. 57 min. hours late. The *Sunset* which departed Los Angeles on July 30 arrived in New Orleans 22 hr. 20 min. late. The *Sunsets* departing New Orleans (Tr. No. 1) and Los Angeles (Tr. No. 2) on Aug. 2 and 4 were suspended, with no alternate transportation provided. The *Texas Eagle* (Tr. No. 421 Aug. 1) en route from Chicago to Los Angeles was terminated in San Antonio on Aug. 2 with alternate transportation to destinations west of there provided for passengers already aboard the train. The *Texas Eagle* (Tr. No. 422 Aug. 2 and 4) was canceled between Los Angeles and San Antonio with no alternate transportation provided.

PACIFIC SURFLINER

Again this year, during the Del Mar racing season one *Pacific Surfliner* trainset was reequipped with *Horizon* cars. The cars from the reequipped *Surfliner* were distributed among the other *Surfliner* trainsets to increase capacity on those trains during the racing season. The 2006 racing season runs from July 19 through Sept. 6.

[Continued at **PASSENGER** on Page 4]



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.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR LINDSAY SMITH

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

- Sep. 1 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Sep. 2, 9, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 16, 23, 30 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting: 23.
- Sep. 2, 9, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes & 16, 23, 30 Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 2, 16; Extra Sats. day: 23; OERM day: 9, 30. Committee meeting: 16.
- Sep. 8 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Sep. 15 Slide Night, 7:00 p.m., Saunders Yard, Noakes & Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome. Bring slides and your refreshments.
- Oct. 6 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Oct. 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 21, 28 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting: 28.
- Oct. 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes & 21, 28 Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 7, 21; Extra Sats. days: 14, 28. Committee meeting: 21.
- Oct. 13 Exc. #527 "Golden Gate Express" Leave LAUS at Fri. 10:45 a.m.

- Oct. 13 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Oct. 15 Exc. #527 Return LAUS at 6:40 p.m.

MEETING PROGRAMS by RUSS DAVIES

September 8: **Mystery Presenter revealed! It's Hal Rothenborg** with a triple header. We'll revisit **Railfair '99 in Sacramento** followed by a **Union Pacific spectacular**. Hal has recently returned for the **Union Pacific Historical Society Meeting in Omaha and Council Bluffs** and will share some images with us. He'll also take us **on the road with Challenger 3985** in 2000, including some **Las Vegas** scenes. **Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

October 13: This will be the annual **Burt Draper Memorial Slide Contest!** Find your **three all time greatest slides, and you may be the winner!** **Be there, and it's particularly important to bring slide briefs, to be shown while the contest votes are being tabulated.**

MEMBERSHIP

At the Board meeting on August 4, Alvin C. Wright was voted into PRS membership.

SYNOPSIS OF BOARD MINUTES—JULY 7, 2006

CALL TO ORDER—7:52 p.m. in Valencia Room of Joslyn Center.

ROLL CALL—Present: President Vic Carlucci, Secretary Bill Smith, Treasurer Marti Ann Draper, Directors David Abbott, Owen Danaher, Dick Finley, Chris Parker, and Lindsay Smith; **Absent:** Vice-President Rob Markowitz (excused); Also present: Vince Cammarano, Cecelia Ditlefsen, Ken Ruben, Barbara Sibert, and John Ulloth.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES—Approved as presented.

INSURANCE—Chair Ditlefsen is in receipt of policy on the *National Forum*.

EXCURSIONS—It was approved to hold an excursion to San Francisco on Oct. 13-15, 2006. Excursion Chair reported the *National Forum* performed quite well on trip to Washington, D.C. and return.

PUBLICATIONS—A mailing party was set for July 26, 2006. **MUSEUM—**Chair Smith reported a new estimate for roof work of \$25,000 due to increased fuel and insurance costs, which was approved by voice vote. Pete Balch is working at home while recovering from back surgery. Chard Walker has a 36" x 54" system map from 1939 (PE and LARy). Southern California Transit Advocates visited PRM on June 17.

ROLLING STOCK—Removal of graffiti from the ex-SP combine now at Orange Empire Railway Museum was reported. Barbara Sibert announced a donation of \$300 to the Excursion Committee from a passenger on the recent cross-country trip.

PUBLICITY—Chair Ulloth envisioned a classified ad for PRS in *Trains* magazine. The Board approved up to \$350 for an ad.

ADJOURNMENT—Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

WILLIAM A. FARMER

Bill Farmer, age 61, passed away July 27, 2006, after a long battle with cancer. He was born on June 16, 1945 in Los Angeles. Bill had a life-long interest in railroading, making it

both his hobby and career. He managed private railroad passengers cars and rode the rails all over North America, particularly enjoying riding trains in Mexico. Bill spent his final years producing videos about railroading and planning for his retirement at Train Mountain Railroad Museum in Chiloquin, Oregon.

For many years Bill was Membership Chairman for Pacific Railroad Society, keeping track and updating the membership roster and printing the monthly address labels for mailing of *Wheel Clicks*.

Bill is survived by his sister, Pat Ward, of Plainview, Texas, who cared for Bill during his later days. A memorial service for Bill is planned at Train Mountain. Contributions can be made to Pacific Railroad Society. E-mail condolences to www.ourfuneralservices.com.

SLIDE CONTEST RULES

1. Any member in good standing (verifiable by current year membership card) is eligible, with the exception of the contest chairperson and ballot counters.
2. A member in good standing may sponsor an entrant under the age of twelve.
3. All entries must be the work of the entrant.
4. Each entry shall consist of no more than three slides of railroad interest in 2x2 frames.
5. Each entry shall have the sequence of projection and the entrant's name written on the slide mount.
6. Slides will be projected in the order received by the contest chairperson.
7. Slides will be judged by ballot of the members present.
8. Suitable awards will be presented to the first, second, and third-place winners.
9. It is the responsibility of the entrants to pick up their slides at the close of the contest.
10. Entries will be accepted from members unable to attend, but slide delivery, description, and pickup after the contest must be arranged for by the member.
11. Photo choices will be given a number by the ballot counters: first choice, 3; second choice, 2; third choice, 1. All numbers for a photo will be added. The largest sums will be first, second, and third place winners, while ties are eliminated by coin toss.

PRS ROLLING STOCK AND SAN DIMAS DEPOT PHOTOS WANTED

Vince Camarano is preparing biography sheets for each piece of PRS rolling stock and the ex-Santa Fe San Dimas depot, home of the Pacific Railroad Museum.

If anyone has clear side views of the PRS rolling stock in its current paint scheme, or an unobstructed view of the depot, please contact Vince by telephone at (818) 445-8723, or by email at vcamarano@sunsetlimited.com.

PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM by LINDSAY SMITH

Have you looked at the PRS web site? (<http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org/>) Russ Homan has made it attractive and full of information. It has features on the collections and current data for joining and participating in our committees. Bob

Markowitz did the original pages and now they have been augmented and the site is characteristic of our society. If you are not yet a cyber head, ask someone to show you our site. You will like it!

John Thompson of Bellevue, Washington, is the moderator on the Yahoo Group CAJON. They linked to our PRS site. They recently showed text from 1940 copies of *Wheel Clicks*, reporting *Descanso* being unloaded at Summit, Calif. They are interested in our *Descanso* and our reporting of Cajon and San Bernardino events. Chard Walker is a hero for the Summit area news. There are several well-known railfan personalities, who are thankful for our participation. Since they are historical-event oriented, much of the interest seems to come from modelers. We mentioned the VHS tape, "For the Love of Trains" as well. In getting items out of the files, I noticed that Wayne Melching was making PRS pins in August 1949, which followed the change in the name from Railroad Boosters.

Ed Saalig of Upland became interested in the Santa Fe RDC cars for his model that will run at the LA Fairplex Garden Railway. He has worked with Dave Abbott and the Rolling Stock Committee, researching facts pertaining to the cars. He has given us a color-print document titled "The Amazing Story of Santa Fe's RDC Cars." The brochure-sized document would enhance the showing of our cars as we restore them. At the Board of Directors August meeting, the Library Committee will recommend publishing this item. After costs are recovered, surplus dollars can be applied to the restoration program, and prized by the modeler's who buy or own the RDC cars.

Dick Donat of Summit, New Jersey, wrote recently, offering his father's slides from 1956 to 1967. Dick creosoted the underside of *Descanso* one summer at Summit, Calif. We also received more material and videos from Ralph Melching's family. Helen Kirshman donated a significant collection of books. We have received AT&SF operating rules and operations publications from Marti Ann Draper. Tim Muck is in contact with another family who is offering items for our collection.

Help! I once talked to some members who were interested in the Etiwanda Pacific Electric Station History; I cannot find the names. We are invited to help the Etiwanda Historical Society develop appropriate uses for the depot within the property to be a part of the Etiwanda Historical District. The area will be a part of the City of Rancho Cucamonga parks. The right-of-way will have a bicycle trail and there are other historical residences in the complex. While the offer was complimentary, the current Museum Committee is insufficient to manage a remote facility. As this report testifies, we are busy and undermanned at the San Dimas Station. You can contact Lindsay Smith at the Museum or Mrs. Janice Hawes at the San Dimas City Hall, (909) 394-6224. She lives in Rancho Cucamonga and works on the San Dimas City Staff.

Mel Goyen has converted several of our commercial 8 mm movie strips onto a DVD. At first there was no audio. Mel's contractor added some music and now they are more interesting. We are reviewing this product and you may expect more publicity on these items in the future. Even with digital image manipulation, the pictures are often not up to the industry standards for clarity. Mel has converted our LPs and even old

records to DVD. We are concerned about the copywrite laws before we make copies for members or general sales.

We have repaired the older archive computer that has been supporting the flat scanner. An old hard drive was causing malfunctions, and it was removed. We upgraded an old CD writer so that we can handle DVD recording. We then have options of making DVDs to order, as well as making backups of our digitized images. A CD only stores six to nine months of *Wheel Clicks*, while a DVD will store more than a year of them. By completing an Index and scanning the *Wheel Clicks* files, our Society history can support researchers and authors of future railway publications. Our participation on the Cajon Yahoo Group proved the data is valuable.

On July 30, 2006, the Pacific Railroad Museum was part of the San Dimas Car Show. We sold water and provided the rest rooms for Rhodes Park. Our parking lot was filled by the Western Farm Machinery show of old internal combustion engines attached to pumps, a cement mixer, orchard sprayer, grist mill, and other rural machines. In case you wonder, these engines were put—puts. At the end of the day Leroy West and I were stunned by the silence. Owen Danaher noted that 175 visitors signed our visitor's log.

We have ordered the new tile roof, but there is a six-month back order for the new tiles. There is so much construction in the Eastern Los Angeles area that a shortage of roofing tiles exists. Many of the old clay quarries have closed and few new sources have opened.

Russ Davies and Jim Baker are setting up a slide copy facility. Joe Bonino has two machines and we propose to buy and install one in the Museum. It is argued by experts in archiving slides that a clean photo slide may be the best way to preserve color images. As you may have noticed, the half life of digital storage methods may be less than a decade. We will have the capability of doing either analogue or digital. I hope the digital records will reduce the effort to prepare special programs and other documents in the future. Russ has inventoried over 29 boxes of 35 mm slides in an old fashioned narrative list. He can find the subjects in the stack but he has not listed every image.

[PASSENGER from Page 1]

The *Horizon*-car-equipped trainset was scheduled to start on Tr. No. 564 on July 17 and follow its cycle through the racing season.

The closest station to the Del Mar racetrack is Solana Beach. Both *Surfliner* and *Coaster* trains stop there. Del Mar provides a free double decker bus shuttle to and from the racetrack.

Pacific Surfliner trains were delayed on July 6 due to freight train congestion on the BNSF Ry. San Bernardino Subdivision. Several freight trains were tied down between Atwood (MP 40.6) and Buena Park (MP 160.3) creating a single-track condition. Delayed *Surfliners* (and their delays) were Tr. Nos. 573 (12 min.), 578 (50 min.), 579 (40 min.), 763 (6 min.), and 768 (30 min.).

The BNSF San Bernardino Subdivision extends from San Bernardino to West Redondo, via Fullerton. For historic reasons there is a discontinuity in its mileposts. San Bernardino to Fullerton Junction is MP 0.0 to MP 45.5, and Fullerton Junction to West Redondo is MP 165.5 to MP 143.1. Soto, MP 144.4, is

where *Surfliners* and Metrolink commuter trains connect with the Metrolink River Subdivision en route to Los Angeles Union Station.

SAN JOAQUIN CORRIDOR

A landslide in early May closed California Highway 140 east of Mariposa, requiring a detour for Amtrak's Merced-Yosemite *Thruway* motorcoach service and making same-day trips to Yosemite via Merced impossible. In July Amtrak began offering a daily *Thruway* motorcoach operating from the Modesto Amtrak station direct to Yosemite National Park, restoring "same-day" travel to and from the park. The new service will operate through October. The new *Thruway* service via Modesto is in addition to the Merced-Yosemite service, which continues to operate on its detour route.

CAPITOL CORRIDOR

A new *Capitol Corridor* timetable took effect on Aug. 24, 2006. On that date there was a major increase in train frequencies. With the new schedule, there are a total of 32 weekday trains, and 22 weekend/holiday trains.

There are 14 daily trains (7 each way) between Sacramento and San Jose, 32 weekday trains (16 each way) between Oakland and Sacramento, and 22 weekend and holiday trains (11 each way). There are still only the two daily trains (1 each way) between Sacramento and Auburn.

Joint ticketing with *San Joaquin* trains between Oakland and Martinez began at the same time the new timetable became effective. By arrangement with Caltrans (California Department of Transportation, Division of Rail), all passengers traveling between those stations can use any train using any valid *Capitol Corridor* or *San Joaquin* ticket. For riders in this segment of the corridor, this offers 20 trains per weekday in each direction, or 40 weekday travel choices. *San Joaquin* trains stop at Oakland, Emeryville, Richmond and Martinez. They do not stop in Berkeley. These *San Joaquin* trains will be shown in the *Capitol Corridor* Timetable.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Due to extreme heat in the northeastern United States on Aug. 1 and 2, Amtrak placed heat restrictions on the *Northeast Corridor*. Trains were limited to 80 mph, and slower in some locations. The reduced speed limits resulted in many trains operating late.

Acela Express

In July, Amtrak introduced wireless electronic credit card processing terminals to complete credit card transactions in all *Acela Express* café cars. Using the new devices, service attendants are now able to get instant authorizations from credit card companies. Previously, attendants needed to hand write ticket and passenger information on paper forms for credit card acceptance.

The processing terminals accept all major credit cards, and there are no minimum purchase requirements. For purchases under \$25, receipts are issued only when requested by the customer.

Plans are under way to place terminals on all *Northeast Corridor Regional* trains between Washington, D.C. and Boston by the beginning of October. Future plans call for expansion of wireless credit card processing terminals in all of the dining cars on Amtrak's long distance trains from coast-to-coast within the

next year.

During the pilot project of the new system on the *Northeast Corridor*, most transactions were completed in 15 to 20 seconds.

In early July Amtrak announced it temporarily disconnected the at-seat electrical outlets on its *Acela Express* trains, due to a problem with electrical shorts. The necessary repairs were completed by the first week in August. During the time the at-seat electrical service was unavailable, Amtrak provided power strips in its lounges to enable *Acela Express* riders to charge their portable electronic devices.

Boston-Washington, D.C. *Acela Express* Tr. Nos. 2172 and 2171 did not operate on Monday, July 3 due to extremely low advance bookings. Many people took that day as a vacation day, reducing ridership on those trains. The cancellation was a last minute change that did not appear in the timetables.

More Northeast Corridor Power Outages

There have been three more power failures on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor since the massive failure on May 25. (June, 2006 Passenger Train Updates NORTHEAST CORRIDOR POWER OUTAGE). The first occurred on June 2, lasting 45 minutes. Experts blamed it on an afternoon thunderstorm that caused low voltage problems. The failure was blamed on a falling tree that caused power outages between Philadelphia and New York. A failure of approximately 30 minutes duration occurred on June 21 when power was lost on one of the four Amtrak 138 kV transmission lines between Philadelphia and New York City. At the same time, a power substation at Kearny, NJ experienced multiple tripped circuit breakers, which isolated New York City from the rest of the electric power system.

CHECKED BAGGAGE

Passengers may check baggage prior to their day of departure when not all trains on their itinerary carry checked baggage, so that their baggage will be at their destination when they arrive. In some cases the routing of the checked baggage will be different from the passenger's.

FARE INCREASES

Effective Aug. 1 *Amtrak Cascades* and *Hiawatha* rail fares and accommodation charges were increased.

Amtrak Cascades rail fares (including multi-ride fares) were increased by approximately five percent. Business class seat charges in selected city pairs were increased by \$1. Sleeping car accommodation charges and bicycle charges were not increased.

Hiawatha rail fares (including multi-ride fares) were increased between approximately five and eight percent.

WALLA WALLA-PASCO THRUWAY SERVICE

DISCONTINUED

The Washington state decided not to renew its contract with the operator of the Walla Walla-Pasco *Thruway Bus* service. The service was discontinued following the last operation on June 30. The discontinued Bus Nos. are 8481, 8482, 8483, 8484, 8485, and 8486. With the termination of the bus service all Amtrak service to Walla Walla is discontinued. Passengers holding tickets for travel on July 1 and after received refunds.

DEPOT DOINGS

SUISUN/FAIRFIELD, Calif. The station, on the *Capitol Corridor*, will remain open following the relocation and departure of the Greyhound ticket vendor. It will be opened and

closed by City personnel. The hours will remain unchanged. They are Monday-Friday: 5:45 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Saturday: 8:40 a.m.-12 p.m., Sunday: closed. The station serves *San Joaquin Route* trains via *Amtrak Thruway Bus* connections at Sacramento, also. Southbound departures (and their connecting trains) are at 5:10 a.m. (Tr. No. 702), and 2:45 p.m. (Tr. No. 704). Connections from northbound *San Joaquin* trains are via *Thruway* buses from Stockton, or *Capitol Corridor* trains at Sacramento.

MINEOLA, Tex. The depot, on the *Texas Eagle* route, was rededicated on June 10, following a five-year, \$780,000 renovation which recaptured the depot's original appearance. The former Texas and Pacific depot was built in 1906 and remodeled in 1951. The *Eagle* is scheduled westbound at 11:10 a.m., and eastbound at 6:05 p.m. Mineola is approximately 80 miles east of Dallas.

STURTEVANT, Wis. On Aug. 14, Amtrak moved to a new station. It is located at 9000 E. Exploration Court, about one mile north of the former Sturtevant station. The new station has an enclosed waiting area, shelters on both platforms, and an overhead bridge (with stairs and elevators) connecting the two platforms. Parking is available at a cost of \$2.00 per day. The station and surrounding area will be maintained by the city. Sturtevant is a station on the *Hiawatha Service* route, 24 miles south of Milwaukee and 62 miles from Chicago.

AMTRAK VACATIONS

The Amtrak Vacations brochure is now available. It features 30 destination packages. The packages include rail travel, hotels, transfers, car rentals, sightseeing, events, and meals. The package prices are valid through March 2007.

Brochures were distributed to Amtrak stations during the first week on August. They may be ordered at: AMTRAK VACATIONS.COM, also.

Amtrak vacations may be booked directly with Amtrak Vacations at 1-800-AMTRAK-2, or through your local travel agent. Amtrak Vacations is managed by Yankee Holidays, located in Beverly, Mass.

EXPLORE AMERICA FARES

Amtrak still offers its Explore America fares. The fares allow for up to 45 days of coach travel within one (or more) of four geographic regions in the United States. Peak and Off-Peak fares are offered. The fare permits a maximum of three stopovers while traveling. Travelers may upgrade to Business class or Sleeping Car accommodations upon payment of the applicable accommodation charges.

The four regions are the: Western, the Pacific Coast, from San Diego to Vancouver, BC, eastward to Wolf Point, Denver, Trinidad, Albuquerque and El Paso; Central, from Wolf Point, Denver, Trinidad, Albuquerque and El Paso to Port Huron, Detroit, Toledo, Cincinnati, Atlanta and Pensacola; Eastern, from Detroit, Toledo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and southward to Atlanta and Savannah to the Atlantic Coast; and Florida, east from Pensacola and south from Savannah to Miami, Tampa, Orlando, and Jacksonville.

Peak fares apply to travel that begins during the following periods: May 26, 2006 through September 4, 2006, and Dec. 15, 2006 through Jan. 2, 2007.

Travel Within	Adults	Children	Seniors & Disabled
1 Region	\$331.00	\$165.50	\$281.35
2 Regions	\$441.00	\$220.50	\$374.85
3 or 4 Regions	\$551.00	\$275.50	\$468.35
Florida Region Only	\$143.00	\$71.00	\$121.55

Off Peak fares apply to travel during most of the spring, fall, and winter seasons.

Travel Within	Adults	Children	Seniors & Disabled
1 Region	\$308.00	\$154.00	\$261.80
2 Regions	\$397.00	\$198.50	\$337.45
3 or 4 Regions	\$474.00	\$237.00	\$402.90
Florida Region Only	\$121.00	\$60.50	\$102.85

Passengers traveling to or from a point outside a given region, may add a local fare between the last point inside the region and that outside point if this is more advantageous than using the next higher Amtrak Explore America fare.

Some restrictions apply. Check with Amtrak for details.

The columnist, and his family, have made at least a dozen, long-distance, sleeping car trips using Explore America fares.

DIGEPLAYER

Amtrak passengers may now enjoy personal, on-board entertainment with the use of the digEplayer™. The digEplayer is a portable, digital entertainment device system from Railway Media® and digEcor™. It is pre-loaded with 12 movies, ten television shows, music, and music videos. The content is updated every 30 days. All movies are rated G, PG-13 or edited to PG-13 to comply with Amtrak's current standards for on-board movies.

The digEplayer is about the same size and weight as a portable DVD player and has a built-in 40 gigabyte (or larger) hard drive. Utilizing the latest in digital technology, each unit is capable of delivering an estimated 8 to 10 hours of digital entertainment. Additional batteries allowing for longer use of the player, will be available at the time of rental.

DigEplayer may be rented at Railway Media kiosks in the Amtrak Chicago, Emeryville, Cal., Lorton, Va., Los Angeles, Portland, Ore., Sanford, Fla., and Seattle, stations. Later in 2006, Railway Media will open rental kiosks in the New York, N.Y., Philadelphia, Penn., Boston, Mass., Miami, Fla., New Orleans, La., and Washington, D.C. stations. Rental fees range from \$12 to \$29.95 depending on trip length. Longer trips include a digEplayer bundle bag with extra batteries.

The units may be returned to the Railway Media kiosk at the passenger's destination station. If the passenger arrives at a station without a kiosk, Railway Media will provide a pre-paid shipping envelope to return the player for an additional charge. Amtrak is also installing digEplayer drop boxes on trains in order to provide customers another convenient way to return the players.

The nationwide digEplayer rental program follows a test on the *Auto Train*® which began in mid-November 2005.

[Info. from Caroline Hobson, Ken Ruben, and Ed Von Nordeck]

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of June 2006, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 311,958. This was a 4 percent decrease from last month.

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDRON

On July 22, three Amtrak employees joined 1132 other participants in a 20-mile walk to raise awareness of, and money for, suicide prevention. The three raised \$7700 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, much of which was donated by Caltrain employees and passengers. Nationally, the overnight walk raised \$1.7 million.

Ironically, earlier that day, Caltrain suffered its tenth fatality of the year, when a man committed suicide in front of Train #422 in Palo Alto.

A bill by Norwalk Assemblyman Rudy Bermudez could benefit Caltrain and other transit agencies by providing an additional \$300 million for the construction of railroad overpass projects, eliminating many street level crossings. The bill, which Caltrain supports, has passed the State Assembly and is making its way through the Senate.

Stanford University has selected Caltrain to help advertise the debut of its new football stadium by "wrapping" three cars with an 8700 square foot advertisement. The "wrapping" began a 100-day countdown to the stadium's grand opening on September 16, when Stanford plays Navy. As usual, Caltrain will be making special stops at Stanford Stadium on game days.

A major construction project near the Santa Clara station is nearing completion. The project, which involves Caltrain, Capitol Corridor, ACE, and Union Pacific, will move freight tracks, add crossovers, and improve the signal system, resulting in a new Control Point, known as CP DeLaCruz.

The Santa Clara area has been a point of congestion for a long time and this project will help alleviate that. It will also allow for the addition of three more Capitol trains in August and one additional ACE train in September.

Once the signal and track work is completed, construction could begin on improving the Santa Clara station. This would include building a wide center platform, a pedestrian tunnel from the west side of the station to the new platform, and other improvements. Work could begin by next summer.

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL

by DICK FINLEY

CLARIFICATION

The Metrolink railcars on order from Rotem Co., one of which appears on Page 1 of the August issue of *Wheel Clicks*, is a cab car with the sloping end for the motorman at one end. In the April issue of *Wheel Clicks*, it was stated the base quantity of 87 cars was 54 trailers and 33 cab cars. It is assumed the 54 trailers on order will be vertically flat at both ends of the car.

In the August issue of *Metrolink Matters*, it was said that the 87 cars and 11 locomotives now on order will start to arrive sometime in the next 30 months. Also, another 20 cars and four more locomotives would likely be added to the order in August.

RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence during June decreased 2% from May to 93%. The Inland

Empire/Orange County Line with 84% southbound and the 91 Line (Riverside/Fullerton/Downtown LA) with 85% inbound had the most percentage of trains not arriving within five minutes of scheduled time.

Trains during June carried an average, weekday, systemwide ridership of 42,090, a 2% decrease from May. Total system ridership was an 8% increase over June 2005. Metrolink marked a ridership milestone in May, when the agency registered one million trips for the first time in its 14-year history.

FINANCES

If the electorate approves the plan's core of \$37.3 billion in new borrowing in the Nov. 7 general election, the state will make the most concerted investment in infrastructure since the 1960s. The largest of the bonds would allot \$20 billion to transportation projects. Los Angeles County would receive at least \$1.9 billion, including \$1 billion for public transit, such as buses, Metrolink, and the subway system. The last time Californians approved borrowing for transit needs was in 1990, with a comparatively meager \$3 billion for rail.

Orange County

The Orange County Transportation Authority authorized \$63.4 million to buy more Metrolink trains and increase service on the commuter railway in Orange County, starting at the current Fiscal Year on July 1, 2006. Seven locomotives, 59 rail cars and other equipment for Metrolink would be purchased, in addition to adding a second set of tracks in Santa Ana. At that stretch of track, trains heading in opposite directions can not pass at the same time.

Ventura County

Legislation passed June 14 by the House of Representatives includes \$500,000 to install active warning devices at five rural crossings along the Metrolink line. The crossings, which are used by farm and passenger vehicles, have been the site of a number of accidents over the years. More than 30 Metrolink, Amtrak and freight trains pass through the area on an average day.

UNIVERSAL HIGH PLATFORMS

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority board of directors has authorized CEO David Solow to file comments with U.S. DOT opposing a proposed new rule requiring level-entry boarding along the full length of every commuter rail and intercity station platform. If a full platform would not be feasible, a mini-high platform must be placed adjacent to each train car.

Metrolink estimates it would cost about \$85 million to build high platforms at all of the stations, while installing mini-high platforms for every car at all stations would exceed \$25 million. In a summary of his comments, Solow called the proposed regulation "... an unreasonable costly and unworkable solution to an issue that Metrolink has solved throughout its operating history by other reasonable means." He called the proposed regulation "technically infeasible" because Metrolink's rights-of-way must be shared with freight carriers that frequently move oversized loads. "Reconfiguration of platforms to meet the new requirements ... will violate both the federal laws governing rail operations and Metrolink's obligations under the agreements its member agencies signed with those railroads when they acquired ownership or the right to use the lines over which

Metrolink trains now operate."

WEEKEND METROLINK BEACH SERVICE

On June 3, the Orange County Transportation Authority began offering weekend Metrolink service with face-painting, raffles, games and live entertainment at stations in San Juan Capistrano, Irvine, Orange, and Fullerton along the inaugural ride. Metrolink's weekend fare will be half the price of an adult weekday rate from Los Angeles or San Bernardino to Oceanside through Dec. 31.

In addition to discounted fares, as many as three children, 5 years or younger, can ride free with each paying adult, said Denise Tyrrell, a Metrolink spokeswoman.

On Saturday, Metrolink is offering three round trips from L.A. to the beach. Sunday service of three round trips began July 2. On July 15, the Inland Empire-Orange County Line started rolling with two round trips from San Bernardino to Oceanside and one from Downtown Riverside (Saturday only) to Oceanside. Now there are six round trips on Saturday and five on Sunday to Oceanside. The beach trains are planned to run year round.

PUSH-PULL OPERATION

State legislators on June 27 rejected a proposal to ban the practice of pushing passenger trains from the rear with locomotives – a technique called into question after a Metrolink crash near Glendale killed 11 people in Jan. 2005. Committee members said they wanted research that was independent of two studies by the Federal Railroad Administration. Those studies indicated that passengers in cab cars are more vulnerable in crashes, but that there was little difference in safety between pushed trains and trains pulled by locomotives.

Since the 2005 crash, Metrolink has banned seating in the front third of cab cars. The line is also involved in programs to eliminate dangerous railroad crossings and recently purchased 87 passenger coaches with the latest safety measures.

VENTURA COUNTY FAIR

The Ventura County Fair started on Aug. 2 and ran until Aug. 13. Metrolink trains provided weekend service from Chatsworth on Aug. 5, 6, 12, and 13. The weekend service was a special charter by the Ventura County Transportation Commission in cooperation with Seaside Park, which hosted the fair.

LOS ANGELES UNION STATION

Metrolink has begun a major improvement project that will help streamline train service and minimize passenger delays. Funded by the state Traffic Congestion Relief Program, the \$7.4 million project will include the installation of an additional track as well as upgrades to the train control/signal system that will allow trains easier access to Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) platforms. The improvements will also replace the most heavily utilized turnouts between tracks that make up the approach to LAUS. These turnouts are the connections between tracks that when activated allow a train to move from one track to another. Construction began in May and is expected to be complete by the end of December 2006.

EQUIPMENT

At the SCRRA Board meeting on July 28, Rail Cars 113, 174, and 608 were declared to be scrap, and the CEO was authorized to donate the cars to the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (NTSC). It would use the cars in its on-going

safety research program.

In April 2002 Rail Car 113 was involved in an accident that took place in Placentia. Rail Cars 174 and 608 were involved in an accident in Jan. 2003 that took place in Burbank. NTSC has agreed to reimburse SCRRRA for the costs to prepare the equipment and will accept them in an "as is condition."

[Info. from *Railway Age*, *Los Angeles Times*, and Metrolink publications]

LUCERNE VALLEY NEWS by **CHARD WALKER**

On July 7, BNSF Railway's Lucerne Valley Local had one pair of wheels on an empty covered hopper car derail shortly after entering the branch at Hesperia. The dragging wheels sparked several small fires along the track, which were extinguished by the local fire department with little damage done.

The 29-mile Lucerne Valley branch was built in 1956, when a new cement plant was built at Cushenbury. PRS ran a special train from L.A. to Cushenbury on May 19, 1957, using an ATSF four-unit Warbonnet pulling heavyweight cars, with Observation Car 1509 on the rear. On May 4, 1985, PRS ran another excursion to Cushenbury, using two Amtrak units pulling Superliner cars.

PACIFIC ELECTRIC INLAND EMPIRE TRAIL

The City of Rancho Cucamonga adopted a master plan for the Pacific Electric Inland Empire Trail and the plan has identified the Etiwanda Depot as a signature trailhead. Based on the proximity of the station to the planned Trail and its historical significance, the City expressed interest in developing the property into a museum and trailhead. The long, narrow, four acre property consists of the depot structure, a scale, and the remaining railroad siding tracks.

[Info. from Etiwanda Historical Society via Lindsay Smith]

SANTA CLARITA RAIL LINE

Tourists visiting Santa Clarita on vintage railroad cars would be fine but extending a rail line so freight could pass through from a more active Port Hueneme would not, say City of Santa Clarita officials. City Council members backed off supporting a plan to extend tracks from the Fillmore and Western Railway in Fillmore into the western Santa Clarita Valley for a picturesque rail line

"It is Port Hueneme's intention to vastly expand the port and to compete with the Long Beach and San Pedro ports who currently import 45 percent of all the imports throughout the entire United States," said Connie Worden-Roberts, chair of the local chamber of commerce transportation committee and Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich's appointee to the North County Transportation Coalition.

Extending the line from Port Hueneme to Santa Clarita could cost \$300 million to \$500 million. The commission's draft study is due in Sept., but Kerry Forsythe, the commission's deputy director, said no more than one or two trains would likely run a day. He disagreed that Port Hueneme aims to rival ports to the south, saying it is not a container destination. Hueneme handles mostly autos and bulk products like fertilizer and produce, he said.

Another option under study is running small Metrolink trains

on the line, connecting the city to the sea and to the Antelope Valley. Forsyth said the Santa Paula branch line needs to be a Union Pacific main line.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Daily News* via Ken Ruben]

TSA EXPLOSIVE DETECTION CANINE TEAMS

On June 28, 2006 the Transportation Security Administration announced the graduation of 24 members of its National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program. The teams are assigned to mass transit systems in Washington, D.C. (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority); Chicago (Chicago Transit Authority) and San Diego (San Diego Trolley, Inc.); and airports in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Dayton, Ohio, Ft. Myers, Fla., Buffalo, N.Y., Washington D.C., Norfolk, Va., Seattle, San Francisco, and Oakland, Calif. The program has grown from 189 teams at 39 airports in 2001 to 412 teams at more than 75 airports and 11 mass transit systems currently.

During training, officers were provided instruction on handler skills and explosives safety along with the safe handling and accountability of explosives canine training aids. Teams spent much of their time searching for explosives in specialized indoor and outdoor training labs that included an aircraft fuselage, a terminal area and a cargo warehouse. The teams also practiced searching luggage and a parking lot filled with vehicles.

Once the teams return to their airports and mass transit systems, they will undergo several hours of proficiency training each week that includes all the sights, sounds and smells associated with these busy environments. Within the next few months, the teams will also undergo a rigorous on-site certification process.

[Info from Transportation Security Administration via Charles Varnes]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by **DICK FINLEY**
LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL
RIDERSHIP

June 2006	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	137,583	80,411	37,487	18,771
Saturday Ave.	86,590	61,669	22,535	7,320
Sunday Ave.	71,584	48,985	17,347	7,541
Monthly Total	3,669,517	2,211,665	584,239	472,383

BOARD ACTION

At the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) board meeting on July 27, 2006, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was approved between Metro and the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority (Expo) for funding of the project through completion to Santa Monica. This action was required by state law.

The board approved a contract with Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. (CTS) to purchase Universal Fare System (UFS) equipment for fare collection use on the Exposition Light Rail Project (LRT) in the amount not-to-exceed \$5.2 million. The Exposition LRT project requires 38 Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) and 39 Stand-Alone Validators for installation at its eight new stations. While the equipment is not scheduled for installation until late 2009, purchasing it now with the bid prices

that currently applies for procuring the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension (MGLEE) UFS equipment will save 10 to 20 percent of the cost of this equipment.

SAN DIEGO

At the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) board of directors meeting on July 13, 2006, it was approved that painting/bodywork rehabilitation be done on eight U2 light rail vehicles (LRVs) and extraordinary bodywork services on LRVs on an as-needed basis, for a total cost not to exceed \$308,000 and \$175,000, respectively.

The Grossmont Trolley Station Joint Development Project has a ground lease for a full term with options for 99 years. Paul Jablonski, MTS CEO, reported the revenue for the first year will be \$381,000 and for the full 99 years will be \$635 billion. It was approved that the CEO execute and sign any other documents necessary to complete the transaction.

Performance Indicators

In May, the MTS system carried 6,732,412 passengers with 2,844,360 passengers traveling on trolleys. MTS rail reported 98.0 percent of its trips as on time. There were no major failures on MTS rail. MTS rail reported three collisions at a rate of 0.42 collisions per 100,000 miles.

NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT

In late April the North County Transit District announced that construction on the SPRINTER Light Rail project had reached the halfway mark of its \$385.6 million budget. More than 11 miles of new track had been installed for the line between Oceanside and Escondido. The first of 12 Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs), being constructed by Siemens Transportation Systems in Germany, has come off the production line. The first two vehicles were scheduled to arrive in Escondido this August for final assembly and testing.

[NCTD Press Release via Charles Varnes]

BART

The California Transportation Commission has approved \$380 million in new transportation funding for 134 projects throughout the state, including the Bay Area Rapid Transit extension in Santa Clara County. The proposed BART line, from Fremont to downtown San Jose, received \$11 million in funding. Elsewhere in the Bay Area, \$9 million will go to extend San Francisco Muni's Third Street LRT to Chinatown.

[Info. from Railroad Newsline via Ken Ruben]

PORTLAND, OREGON

Portland Streetcar

A plan to extend the Portland Streetcar across the Willamette River to create a loop through the east side has TriMet's approval of the concept with the choice of streetcar as the best way to provide the service. The streetcar under the "locally preferred alternative" would go over the Broadway Bridge and then on the one-way couplet of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Grand Ave., initially terminating at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. Final plans call for it to eventually cross the river at the south end of the loop on a yet to be determined new bridge.

Milwaukie officials made clear they fear the streetcar will eclipse their long-awaited light rail transit (LRT) line. They expect LRT on McLoughlin Blvd. to be next in line after adding LRT on Interstate 205 to the Clackamas Town Centre and the

downtown Portland transit mall.

The streetcar and Milwaukie LRT are linked because both need a new Willamette River crossing. TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen said that the agency can afford to operate one new large project in the next decade or so if TriMet provides the operating revenue. The westside streetcar was built without federal money, but its nonprofit board wants to apply under a new federal "small starts" program for the eastside line.

The Portland Streetcar was five years old on July 20, 2006. The total cost so far is \$88 million, and it has provided an estimated 10 million rides since it opened. A party was scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on the 21st.

Commuter Rail

TriMet hosted an open house on July 21 from noon to 2:30 p.m. at Bridgeport Village shopping center in Tigard for the Washington County Commuter Rail Project. Visitors to the open house saw drawings of the self-propelled diesel passenger cars – diesel multiple units (DMU) – as well as the five stations along the route. The project is planned to run from MAX light rail at Beaverton Transit Center to Wilsonville with stops near Washington Square Mall and in Tigard and Tualatin.

TriMet also was to provide details on construction, which is expected to begin in September. Tracks and bridges along the route will be rebuilt and the five stations will be added. The line is set to open in fall 2008. The \$117 million cost includes all past planning, environmental work, equipment acquisition and finance costs. The federal government is picking up half of the tab. The remainder will come from the Oregon Lottery, Washington County, and TriMet bonds backed by regional funds.

The commuter rail line will serve the heavily traveled Interstate 5 and Oregon 217 corridor. Average daily ridership is estimated at 3,000 to 4,000 trips by 2020, with half of the riders new to mass transit. The trains will run every 30 minutes during the morning and evening rush hours.

Project Grants

The Oregon Transportation Commission on July 19 approved a \$99.5 million list of projects designed to improve the connection between highways and other transportation modes, such as railroads, airports, port facilities, and public transit. Money for the 43 projects will come from lottery bonds approved by the 2005 legislature. Transit projects, totaling \$14 million, include extension of the Portland Streetcar to the South Waterfront area. Railroad projects, totaling about \$40 million, include a rail switching yard in Tigard, and relocation of the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad yard out of Rosebud's commercial district. [Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

NEW MEXICO RAILRUNNER

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) agreement with the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is structured in three phases that involve the purchase of nearly 300 miles of rail line from Belen, N.M., to Trinidad, Colo., for \$75 million.

- Phase One is effective Jan. 10, 2006, and includes the \$50 million purchase of 51 miles of mainline track between Belen and Bernalillo for RAILRUNNER commuter service.
- Phase Two involves the \$20 million purchase of 48 miles of mainline track between Bernalillo and Lamy, N.M., which will go into effect Jan 10, 2007.

- Phase Three involves the \$5 million purchase of 200 miles of mainline track between Lamy, N.M., and Trinidad, Colo., which will go into effect Dec. 5, 2008.

NMDOT also signed an agreement with BNSF to buy 13 acres of rail yard property near Downtown Albuquerque for \$1 million. This will be used for a maintenance and storage yard for rail cars and locomotives. Also included in this transaction are several miles of spur lines and some additional land.

In addition to these agreements, the NMDOT and BNSF signed a joint-use agreement that allows BNSF to use the tracks for its freight operations.

[Info. from Charles Varnes]

UP 844 STEAMS TO COUNCIL BLUFFS AND OMAHA

by CHARLES VARNES

UP 844 was on public display at Council Bluffs, Ia., on Saturday, Aug. 5 through Monday, Aug. 7 and in Omaha, Neb., on Tuesday, Aug. 8 through Thursday, Aug. 10, 2006. The display was presented in conjunction with this year's Union Pacific Employee Club annual convention which was held in Council Bluffs.

The *Union Pacific Employee Club Express*, as the operation was named on the UP Steam web page, operated on the following schedule eastbound: Thursday, Aug. 3, Cheyenne, Wyo. to North Platte, Neb., with a service stop at Lodgepole, Neb.; Friday Aug. 4, North Platte to Council Bluffs, with service stops at Grand Island, Neb. and Blair, Neb. Following the displays, the *Express* operated from Omaha to North Platte, with a service stop at Grand Island, on Friday, Aug. 11, and completed its return to Cheyenne, with a service stop at Sidney, Neb. the following day.

The *Express* is the fourth outing for UP 844 this year. The first was the *South Central States Heritage Express Tour*, a 35-day, ten-state tour which departed from Cheyenne on Apr. 27. The *Heritage Express Tour* was followed by two special trains which operated from Denver, the *Denver Post Frontier Days Special* on Saturday, July 22, [Passenger Train Updates May 2006] and a special train sponsored by the Lionel Collectors Club on Monday, July 24.

UPP 814 WATER CAR REFURBISHED

by CHARLES VARNES

Union Pacific (UP) excursion tender UPP 814 was recently refurbished by Wasatch Railroad Contractors. The tender is one of the two which accompany UP 844 on excursions pulled by the steam locomotive. It was built by the American Locomotive Company in 1937 as a part of the railroad's first order of 4-8-4 locomotives. Its as-built capacity was 25 tons of coal and 25,000 gallons of water. When the UP converted its 4-8-4s from coal-fired to oil-fired, the tender's coal bunker was replaced with an oil bunker.

After the end of steam locomotive operation on the UP, the tender was modified into a fuel tender for use with one of UP's gas turbine-electric locomotives. The modification involved the removal of its oil bunker and modification of its ends. A heater for the heavy Bunker C turbine fuel were installed, and the tender received an exterior layer of insulation, which was covered by a jacket.

The refurbishment, which began in December 2005, included the removal of the heater, jacket and insulation. The beveled ends of the tender were squared off, necessary repairs to the tank were made, and new safety appliances were added. The tender was painted in the traditional UP Armour Yellow and Harbor Mist Gray colors, with the customary red stripes and lettering. The trucks were painted silver.

The tender carries the name *Joe Jordan*, who was the past pipe fitter to work with the steam crew. It was named to honor his work in keeping UP steam locomotives running.

The removal of the heater and "turbine" modifications increased the water capacity of the tender by 3,000 gallons. In steam terms, this amount of water equals some 30 miles of water for the 3985 and some 60 miles for the 844.

The tender refurbishment was completed in July 2006 in time for use on the *Denver Post Frontier Days Special*. [Passenger Train Updates. May 2006]

UP HERITAGE LOCOMOTIVES by CHARLES VARNES

In June 2005, the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) began introducing a series of *Heritage* locomotives honoring the railroads which comprise today's UP.

The latest, and last in the series, is the *Heritage* locomotive honoring the Southern Pacific Railroad. It was unveiled at the J.R. Davis Yard in Roseville, California on Aug. 19, 2006.

The first *Heritage* locomotives, honoring the Missouri Pacific (MP) and Western Pacific (WP) railroads were unveiled at Omaha on July 30, 2005. They were followed by a Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad (MKT) *Heritage* locomotive which entered service during September, a Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (DRGW) *Heritage* locomotive unveiled in Denver on June 10, 2006, and a Chicago & North Western Railroad (CNW) *Heritage* locomotive unveiled July 15, 2006 in Chicago.

The UP locomotive numbers (and heritage) are: 1982 (MP), 1983 (WP), 1988 (MKT), 1989 (DRGW), 1995 (CNW), and 1996 (SP).

The *Heritage Series* locomotive's livery incorporates historic colors and design elements from the railroads being honored. The paint schemes are not reproductions of those actually used on MP, WP, MKT, DRGW, CNW, and SP locomotives.

The locomotives painted in the *Heritage* liveries are all new SD70ACs delivered directly from EMD in primer paint to the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) paint shop in Horicon, Wisconsin. WSOR's Horicon facility was chosen because it had the space and time to accommodate the Heritage units' demands; something that UP's own Jenks Shop paint booth in North Little Rock, Arkansas, did not.

The *Heritage Series* marks the eleventh time in company history that the UP has painted locomotives in colors other than the traditional UP "Armour Yellow" paint scheme. Previously, locomotives were custom painted in 1991 to honor UP employees serving in the Persian Gulf War, in 1994 to call attention to the United Way Campaign, in 1996 for the Atlanta Games Olympic Torch Relay Train, in 2002 for the Salt Lake City Games Olympic Torch Relay Train, and in 2005 to pay tribute to President George Herbert Walker Bush.

PRS member Bob Johnson assisted in the preparation of this article. CV

MEMORIES OF RALPH MELCHING – 45 YEARS AGO by DICK DONAT, PRS #14

Heading into its 25th year, Pacific Railroad Society had a membership above 500 and was characterized as one of the largest and oldest railfan organizations in the west. In addition to the regular publication of *Wheel Clicks*, the club was operating about six excursions per year with several multi-day trips. This high level of excursion activity, even after the demise of steam, had bolstered the PRS treasury and provided significant funds for operations and a healthy reserve. PRS planned on celebrating its Silver Jubilee, 1936-1961 with a year of special events: excursions, publications, and an anniversary banquet, all planned and organized by a Silver Jubilee Committee chaired by founding member Ralph Melching. Ralph had been relatively inactive in PRS for the preceding five years and the Silver Jubilee marked his return to a more active role.

Although a PRS member since 1952, I had been out of Southern California for a number of years before returning in mid-1960. After attending a few meetings, I found myself “cornered” by Ralph and was asked to be a member of the Silver Jubilee Committee. As chairman, Ralph had added such respected names as former officers Nolan Black, Gene Glenn, Reynold Blight, and Robert Carlson. Why he wanted to include an “unknown” like me didn’t make much sense, but I was happy to sign on. Working with Ralph over the next couple of years left me with some great experiences, and a few that still make me laugh.

The Silver Jubilee Queen

The committee’s brain trust had concluded at an early stage that publicity for the Silver Jubilee events (and thus for PRS) was an important objective and their collective wisdom knew that a press release with a picture was much more likely to be published than one without. Carrying it one step further, they figured it had an even better chance of publication if the picture included a pretty girl (We weren’t too politically correct in 1960!) Thus was born the idea of a PRS Silver Jubilee Queen.

The brain trust spent some time visiting and interviewing model agencies and their clients before selecting Lynn Michaels as the Silver Jubilee Queen. Shortly after the first photo shoot Ralph explained that my services were required to escort the queen to and from photo shoots and Silver Jubilee events, and that as a bachelor in my mid-twenties, I was the only “qualified” committee member. I’ve often thought that “assignment” followed closely on the heels of a look at the first pictures of the queen by a couple of the committee members’ wives and the strong suggestion that “you’d better get someone else to drive that girl around ...” It was a tough job, but someone had to do it!

The 25 Year History

Working with Ralph on the project was an education in the early history of Railroad Boosters and the people and personalities that made it work. Our narrative account was to be combined with photos of club events and the local railroad scene for each year. As a result we knew the subjects and frequently the location we wanted, the challenge was to find people who had the photos. Ralph could probably have covered 90 percent of the subjects from his own photo files, but felt strongly that the book should carry the work of many photographers. So with Ralph’s list of known PRS photographers in hand, the staff

wrote descriptions of the desired photos and mailed requests to those, who might have taken such photos, to check through their files. The published history contains the work of Al Haij, Richard Fleming, Allan Youell, Don Tibbetts, Lewis Harris, Jack Whitmeyer, Carl Blaubach, Bill Henry, Nolan Black, Chard Walker, and a host of other names that read like the history of PRS.

On a number of occasions we asked L.T. Gotchy to check through his files for specific photos. For example, we asked for a picture of the haystack that blocked the PE Redlands line during Excursion 37 in 1941; or we asked for a picture of the GM Aero Train passing through Summit in 1957. Following each of our requests we would receive a postcard from Gotchy that would say “After checking through my files, I find I have no photos of (the subject we asked for) at (the location we mentioned) in (the time frame we wanted).” Turning the postcard over, we would find a great black and white print of exactly what we wanted ... Such was my introduction to the humor of *The Desert Phantom*. This went on with such frequency that the phrase “After checking through my files ...” was reduced to ACTMF, a salutation that Ralph and Gotchy were still using in correspondence in recent years. The 25 year history was late in meeting its publication date, grossly over budget, and a failure in the market place, but for Ralph it was a labor of love, a product that gave him great pride, and a historical record of the first 25 years. See if you can find a copy to look at; I think you will agree his pride was justified.

The San Clemente Turkey Trot

That was the pet nickname that Ralph assigned to Excursion No. 137 in August 1961. To everyone else it was the Picnic at San Clemente. This was an excursion operated by the Silver Jubilee Committee with cars tagged on to regular San Diegan service. Ralph was looking for a “gimmick” to add some novelty to the trip and came up with the idea of a “Gay Nineties” theme. Period bathing suits, a barbershop quartet, and a watermelon eating contest soon became part of the plan. Early reservations came in from a group of square dancers who offered to put on a demonstration and include all comers in some simple figures. It sounded like a good idea to Ralph and he accepted their offer.

Unfortunately it didn’t occur to him at the time that square dancing on beach sand would present a problem for even the most light afoot. About a week before the trip one of the square dancers asked how big the dance floor was. Realizing the problem, Ralph casually remarked, “Oh, about 12’ by 12’.” Ralph then borrowed a trailer, picked up \$50 worth of lumber from his favorite construction salvage yard, grabbed a couple of younger committee members for muscle, and headed south to build a dance floor. Six hours later the dance floor was complete; not bad work in those days before battery operated tools and portable generators. It’s possible that Ralph had studied the local tide table before selecting the location for the floor, but I noticed that his face showed a bit of relief when he detrained the next day and saw that the floor hadn’t gone out to sea at high tide. You can find a picture of The Flat Wheel Four quartet singing “The Wreck of the Old 97” in the PRS 40 year history. Look closely and you’ll see that they are standing on the dance floor.

The Real Agenda?

Those who have followed the course of PRS over the years would probably agree that one of the most dramatic changes in club leadership occurred in the fall of 1961. Through the efforts of Chard Walker and L.T. Gotchy, the general membership was informed of issues and board actions that the membership at large did not support. Within a short period three officers, two of five directors, the Editor of *Wheel Clicks*, and the Excursion Director resigned.

Although the events that led to these resignations occurred within a period of about three months, the underlying issues had been brewing for several years. Ralph, Nolan black, and others had recognized that a major blowup was going to occur and

realized that when it did, the entrenched leadership was likely to leave en masse, taking with it the experience and knowledge of such areas as publications and excursions that could effectively cripple the organization.

In retrospect the main purpose of the Silver Jubilee Committee may have been to involve some new individuals, give them experience in the nuts and bolts operations of the organization, and to have them prepared and able to step in and fill a void in club leadership. Ralph led the committee and PRS to a successful Silver Jubilee year and in the process played a major role in assuring that it would continue strongly into the next 25 years.



Lynn Michaels, Queen of Pacific Railroad Society's Silver Jubilee, rehearses a scene to be enacted on the night of April 8, when the last of the "Big Red Cars" ends its final run from Long Beach to Los Angeles. Present plans of the Metropolitan Transit Authority are to substitute bus operations, commencing April 9, for the rail service, thus eliminating the last line of an electric interurban network, which only two decades ago, effectively linked Los Angeles with no less than fifty towns. PRS, a non-profit hobby group, will hold its annual banquet on the night of April 8 at the Wilton Hotel in Long Beach, and the members will make the trip from Los Angeles and return on a chartered train of "Red Cars." Photographer unknown



25th Annual PRS Banquet
Wilton Hotel, Long Beach — 1961

The PRS Annual Banquet celebrating 25 years was held at the Wilton Hotel in Long Beach on April 8, 1961. Seated (l. to r.) is Dick Donat, Queen Lynn Michaels, President Owen Knapp, Sally Knapp, Vice-President/Wheel Clicks Editor Edith Hounsell, and Treasurer Vic Hounsell, while standing (l. to r.) is Director/Descanso Custodian Mart Sabransky (1960), Grace McKenzie, Director Bob McKenzie (1960), Margaret Walker, Director Chard Walker, Secretary Dorothy Birr, Director/Excursion Director Dave Todd, Mrs. Todd, Director Art Townsend, and Mrs. Townsend (?). Photographer unknown



The Flat Wheel Four, (l. to r.) Owen Knapp, Ralph Melching, Dick Donat, and Cap Parker, was taken on Excursion 137 at San Clemente in August 1961. Photographer unknown