



## Templeton Caboose Moved To SLO Museum Site



Story by Arnold Jonas • Photo by Steve Mott

by the current construction activity on the Cuesta Grade. Given the size of the caboose and the truck that would transport it, Highway 101 between Templeton and San Luis Obispo could not be used. Consequently, the load had to take a roundabout route moving westward from Templeton to Highway 1, and then southerly past Morro Bay, eventually reaching the museum site in SLO shortly after 1:00 p.m.

Sixty feet of temporary track installed by Museum members adjacent to the end of High Street on museum right-of-way, is the interim location for the caboose until permanent trackage is constructed. This location was easily accessible to the transporting truck, and the crane used to off-load the caboose and its trucks. That operation went very smoothly, and within an hour of arrival the truck and crane had departed, leaving the caboose sitting serenely near the main line tracks on which it had once rolled. This is the first piece of rolling stock to be installed at the museum site, and thus represents a significant step in the evolution of the facility.

The next order of business includes some detail clean up, restoration, and painting. It is anticipated that the caboose will serve as office space for the museum organization until permanent quarters become available.

On Tuesday, January 29, Internet e-mailboxes were brimming with reports of sightings of a bay window Southern Pacific caboose making its way toward San Luis Obispo from the north. Where's it coming from? Where's it going? Who's moving it? Is it from this area, and are we losing it? Where are the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum (SLORRM) people when you need them?

Obispo, the need to find a new home for the veteran railcar became imperative. Based on what little historical evidence is currently available, the car was apparently part of a group of 30 Class C-40-3 cars built in 1942 and serving originally on the Texas and New Orleans Railroad. Prior to being moved to the park, between 1981 and 1984, the caboose saw service as a train order office in Santa Margarita.

Fortunately, Pete Jenny, representing the County Parks Department, a railfan and G-scale model railroader himself, recognized an ideal solution. With cooperation and coordination between Pete, the management of the Templeton Chamber, and Brad LaRose, SLORRM President, the donation to the museum was finalized. Moving the hack to its new home still had to be addressed, which was not an insignificant matter. With the able and professional assistance of a north county crane company, the touchy chore of loading the waycar onto a large flat-bed trailer was accomplished without incident. The trip south was hindered

Concerns were dispelled, and the mystery quickly solved, as more information became available. The Museum was in fact the instigator of the move, having been the recipient of a generous donation by the Templeton Chamber of Commerce. The caboose had most recently resided in Templeton Community Park, having been donated to the community by Southern Pacific Railroad in 1984. It was originally intended to be converted into an historical museum, and office for the Chamber. Despite good intentions, those plans never materialized. With the recent expiration of the 15-year use permit from the County of San Luis

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# History of Caboose SP 439

by Steve Mott



## Mission Statement

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, founded as a non-profit public benefit educational museum, will preserve the railroad history of California and the Central Coast, by collecting, restoring, displaying and operating historic railroad equipment.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO RAILROAD MUSEUM/  
AVILA VALLEY RAILWAY MUSEUM**

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Joe Burns

## New Color Nametags Coming Soon

by Joe Burns

Thanks to Pierre Rademaker Design, museum members will soon have a custom designed nametag they can wear with pride. Each nametag will feature the elaborate SLORRM Logo, originally designed by Rademaker, in full color. To allow all of the small details of our logo to be visible, a new nametag shape was crafted. This new design allows our circular logo to be about 15% larger than logos usually featured within a nametag.

The company manufacturing our new official nametags also create all of the identity tags for Disneyland. Members can order the traditional pin and lock nametag or a magnetic version. Exact costs are not available at the time of this printing deadline, but individual pins will probably sell for around \$12.00.

The steel bay window caboose donated to the museum by the Templeton Chamber of Commerce has been identified as the SP 439. Built by American Car & Foundry of Chicago, Illinois in 1947, it was originally assigned to the Texas and New Orleans Railroad and later transferred to the SP. The numerals 101 appear to be spurious, as they are neither the size nor the style used by railroads over the years. The code for this model type is C, for caboose, 30 for the number of tons on the trucks, and 4 for the design style.

Initial identification was made by observing the caboose during midday sun where the sun strikes the west side of the caboose at a very low angle. In the upper left hand corner the outlines of the Southern Pacific block letter logo and the serif style numerals 439 can be barely seen underneath the present overcoat. This has been confirmed by a photo taken in 1981 by Karl Hovanitz when this caboose served as a yard office at the west end of Santa Margarita.

As was the case nationwide after WWII, Espee was faced with a steady increase

in freight car height up to 15'6" and it soon became plain that trainmen couldn't oversee their trains from cupola cars. Height restrictions prevented building them any higher so the bay window was a logical result. Southern Pacific placed its first order for this new type on October 19, 1946 with the American Car & Foundry to produce 50 cabooses: SP #1235-1269 and T&NO #500-514. All 50 were cranked out in a three week period in AC&F's Chicago plant with the first entering service on May 29, 1947 and the last on June 7th.

The T&NO was merged with the Espee in 1961 and this car was renumbered to fill holes in the roster.

The welded windows were plated over as a result of vandalism, unfortunately eliminating the bright and airy character these cars originally possessed. As protection for the crews against rock-throwing vandals, heavy screening as well as Lexan polycarbonate windows were installed even though they were prone to scratching.

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## In Memorium Clyde Davis

Retired railroader Clyde Webster Davis, 88, a lifelong resident of San Luis Obispo, died December 23, 2001.

Mr. Davis was born September 1, 1913, in San Luis Obispo. He attended schools in the San Luis Obispo Coastal School District and later attended Cal Poly, earning a newspaper printing diploma. He set type for The Tribune until 1936. He also worked for Preuss Press. He then followed in his father's footsteps and became a brakeman for the Southern Pacific Railroad. He was promoted to Conductor in 1941. He married Bernice Neva Rector four years later. Mr Davis retired from the freight and passenger service in 1978. He was an avid photographer and golfer. He was

## Schedule of Meetings

We meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm in the Embassy Suites Hotel on Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo.

Meeting dates for 2002 are:

March 14th  
April 11th  
May 9th  
June 13th  
July 11th  
August 8th  
September 12th  
October 10th  
November 14th  
December 12th



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a member of several organizations, including the Elks, where he was assistant editor of the "Elk's Yell" newsletter for many years, Shrinners, Masons and Eagles. Mr. Davis is survived by his wife of 56 years, Bernice; one niece; and two nephews.

# SP FREIGHTHOUSE UPDATE

by Brad LaRose, President SLORRM

On August 8, 2000, Mayor Allen Settle on behalf of the City of San Luis Obispo signed an agreement between the city and the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum for the use of city property, specifically the former Southern Pacific Railroad Freighthouse.

The Freighthouse was built in 1894, the same year that the first Southern Pacific Railroad train arrived from the north. Tracks at that time did not go south past the city. It wasn't until 1901 before "the gap" in the coast line tracks closed near Gaviota. The closing of the gap completed the North/South "Coast Line" for trains traveling from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

Museum Board members have participated in several meetings with Peggy Mandeville of the City Public Works Department and Kyle Harris of RRM Design. The purpose of these meetings has been to determine how to maximize the use of the Freighthouse as a museum, while maintaining the historical integrity of the building. Included in the Freighthouse will be a small lounge for the transit bus drivers who use the surrounding parking lot for layover parking during the day.

Some of the features that will be included within the building are restrooms

for the public and the transit drivers, an office and research library, museum gift shop and reception area, an operating model railroad layout depicting the San Luis Obispo County area, and a large general exhibit area. During the research of the building, RRM Design discovered the missing Freighthouse scale. It has not been seen for many years. However, it was found in a hole in the foundation below the building. It apparently had been placed or dropped there, and the floor covered over for additional storage space. This original feature of the building will assist us in telling the story of how the building was used.

The review process will continue with discussions and approvals of the City Cultural Heritage Committee, Architectural Review Commission, Planning Commission and the City Council. It is our hope that this design phase will be completed this Spring and a subsequent contract for the actual restoration work be awarded soon thereafter.

The museum directors are pleased with the partnership that has been formed with the City of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department and RRM Design. The interests and needs of each entity involved has been met and we are looking forward to having a first rate

museum in the City of San Luis Obispo. Our railroad history will finally have a central location where it can be enjoyed by all.

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Railroad Prynters of San Luis Obispo, has produced a replica of a World War I poster designed to inspire railroad workers. The message is as appropriate today as it was in 1916. These posters measure 12" x 18" and can be purchased for \$6.00, plus tax, from Foothill Hobbies, at 973 Foothill Blvd. SLO.

## San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Membership Levels:  \$60, Family  \$36, Individual

Complete form and mail with your check to:

**San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum (SLORRM)**

Post Office Box 15260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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I will help the museum by volunteering to: \_\_\_\_\_



Join the Fun! Bring the kids and grandkids!

# Spring TrainFest

to benefit the

## San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum

at the

### BitterCreek Western Live Steam Railroad



**Saturday, May 5, 2002 • 10 am - 4 pm**

\$5 Adults, \$4 Children under 13

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No refunds, however, tickets are transferable.

For more information call

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