



Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum



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www.slorm.com

LaCondesa is at the Museum!



Here is the latest arrival at the Museum. The LaCondesa was donated to the museum in 2006 by Gordon Crosthwait, a retired teacher who lived in Los Osos and worked in the Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo schools. It was stored and used by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad until it was moved to the display track in May, 2014.

The car was built by the Pullman Company in 1926 for the Santa Fe Railroad as a diner/lounge observation car. It was purchased from the Santa Fe in 1959 by Tad Finlay, who owned Finlay Fun Time Tours. Tad Finlay converted it to a private car with 3 bedrooms. Gordon Crosthwait purchased the car from Finlay in the early 1970s.

The car will be used for Museum events such as the member's mixer held last July. It was great to have almost 50 members stop by for wine and appetizers. For many members this was the first time seeing the car. The car is also open for display during normal museum hours. In the future we plan to rent

the car for catered lunches, dinners, meetings, birthday parties and wine tastings.

The Santa Fe did not name the car, only using its number 1512. Tad Finlay named it Margareta del Oro. Gordon renamed it La Condesa. We hope to have a contest and change the name to reflect the Central Coast.

We are fortunate that the car has a large lounge. We can use the car now but plan to convert it back to a diner lounge. All the original fixtures are in the car. As you look around the car, you can see the original light fixtures, curtains, even a lower berth built for the crew. The open platform is great for selfies and we even have period costumes available for a nominal charge to take a vintage looking photo.

It will take work and money to fix the car up, but right now it's fun to have the car around and see that it is being used.

Reported by Dave Rohr

Photos by Dave Rohr and Gary See



Amtrak Surfliner trundles past the Museum's speeders on its way south.

Train Day 2014

Saturday, May 10, 2014 was Amtrak sponsored National Train Day. The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum was open to the public. Docents were on hand to explain the many exhibits. The gift shop was open and speeder rides were available. *More pictures on page 7*



Above: Visitors line the rail as the northbound Coast Starlight approaches.

Below: Dennis Thurman and Lynn Maddy check the speeder passengers.



E-MAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED!

The Board of Directors of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum wants to be sure that all members are notified of Museum events and operations in a timely manner. The best way to do this is by using e-mail. Using US Mail is not affordable.

Please e-mail your name and e-mail address to media@slorm.com



Mission Statement

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum is a non-profit educational institution founded to preserve and present the railroad history of California and specifically the Central Coast. Collecting, restoring, and displaying relevant railroad artifacts, photographs and documents is its goal. This effort is supplemented by creating models, displays and graphics as well as operating historic railroad equipment to facilitate a better understanding of how railroads have affected our areas social, cultural and economic history.

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TIMETABLE

The following is a list of future meetings of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. Business meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Freighthouse, 1940 Santa Barbara Street, San Luis Obispo. Meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are open to the public.

- October 14. *Business Meeting*
- November 11. *Business Meeting*
- December 9. *Business Meeting*
- January 13, 2015. *Business Meeting*
- February 10. *Business Meeting*
- March 10. *Business Meeting*
- April 14. *Business Meeting*

BY-LAWS AVAILABLE

Every member in good standing is entitled to a copy of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum By-laws. For the sake of economy, we have not distributed them to all members automatically.

2 To get a copy, send a #10, self addressed, stamped, envelope to SLORRM, Post Office Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

Renew your membership

The last line of your mailing address on the envelope is the current expiration date of your membership. Please check this date each time you receive a mailing from SLORRM. If the date is within a month or so of your receipt of the mailing, your remittance of the amount to renew your membership will be appreciated. Changes to your contact information should also be included. This will help assure that your membership is always current. Should your mailing address or e-mail address change, prompt submittal of updated information will help achieve this same goal. Thank you for your diligence and cooperation.

Become a Member

Membership in SLORRM provides an outlet for anyone interested in railroad history, train travel, railroad oriented entertainment and the value of railroading to the community.

Membership is designed for those who love trains and wish to educate others, young and old, and who share an interest in railroad history and the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.

Single members pay \$36 per year. A family can join for \$60 annually, and a sustaining member pays \$100 per year. Mail to SLORRM, Post Office Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3260. Go to <http://www.slorrm.com> to download an application form.

Life Members receive an embroidered patch, enameled pin, the Coast Mail newsletter, and have voting rights for one person for life. *Use current age to calculate amount due.*

- 0-17 years \$1200 or 5 payments of \$280
- 18-39 \$900 or 5 payments of \$220
- 40-61 \$600 or 5 payments of \$160
- 62 and older \$300 or 5 payments of \$100

Family Life Members receive 2 enameled pins, 2 embroidered patches, the Coast Mail newsletter, and voting rights for life for two people residing at the same address. *Use the age of youngest family member to calculate amount due.*

- 0-17 years of age \$1800 or 5 payments of \$420
- 18-39 \$1350 or 5 payments of \$330
- 40-61 \$900 or 5 payments of \$240
- 62 and older \$450 or 5 payments of \$150

If making payments, the life membership card will be sent upon receipt of final payment. Until such time as the life membership is paid in full, the member will receive a yearly membership card. All payments made toward a life membership are non-refundable and failure to make a scheduled payment by the due date will result in forfeiture of all funds paid toward the life membership. Payment plans include yearly member dues.

New Members

The following people have joined the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum since the last Coast Mail was published. Lee Barnett, Paul L. Edwards, Peter Faxon, Stephen Hager, Rob Himoto, Matt Hoffman, June Ivey, Roger Ivey, Thomas Knapp, George R. Mach, Rex Miller, Richard Neufeld, Joseph Paulsen, Gloria "Kathy" Rios, John Smith, James Stalworth and Jim Trask.

New Sustaining Member

Linnaea Phillips

New Family Members

Kevin and Gina Axsom and Gordon and Carol Searle.

New Life Members

Tom Cooper, Jamie and Lynn Foster, and Charles Kinzer.

Family Renewals

Howard and Sandy Amborn, Robert and Kathleen Copeland, Carl and Robin Dudley, Laura Frank and Eric Wier, Robert and Olga Harway, Bernie and Susan Kempker, Ron and Louise Milot, Michael and Virginia Orcutt-Clenard, Tom and Carolyn Peterson, Dennis and Patti Thurman, Matthew Vurek and Peggy Haynes.

Individual Renewals

The following have renewed their membership in the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum since the last issue of the Coast Mail was published: Bonnie Adams, Warren Bebout, Manetta Bennett, Kathleen Gardner, William Cooper, Brian Dunn, Thomas Ennis, Roy Gammill, James Cashin, Ralph George, Cody Casteel, Jack Chedister, Jim Chernoff, Martin Gombert, Robert Gordon, Marian Gregory, Bruce Hebron, James Holmes, Karl Hovanitz, Chris Hurd, Curt Johnson, Hilding Larson, Lynne Maddy, Paul Marcotte, Michael McGinley, Mike Palmer, Roland Pautz, Nicolas Price, Paul Pedroni, Gary See, Rick Somers, Robert Stewart, James Taylor, John Turrill, Alan Upshaw, Ted Van Klaveren and Stuart Young.

Reported by Arnold Jonas

Company Store

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum has a variety of items for sale for your enjoyment and to raise money for the Museum. T-shirts in both adult and children sizes, baseball hats, belt buckles, coffee mugs, enamel pins, embroidered patches, engineer hats and videos are all available by going to the Museum web site, www.slorrm.com and click on **Company Store**.

Where's my artifact?



Charlie Hepperle, right, receives donated items from Glen Matteson as part of a transfer from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum to the Santa Fe Railway historical group.
Photo by Chris Hurd.

By Glen Matteson

Your museum survives and grows on donations of time, money, and especially artifacts that help tell the story of Central Coast railroading. But suppose you donated something and it never appeared on display, or among the stored items? Where did it go?

The museum has limited space to display and to properly care for and store the wide range of things that have been donated over the years. Therefore, occasionally museum volunteers identify as candidates for “deaccession” items that do not closely support the museum’s mission. With approval of the Board of Directors, such items can be removed from the collection. Typically they are allowed to be sold, traded, or donated, with any proceeds used to support the museum’s mission.

Recently the museum found that it had several items produced by the Santa Fe Railway, many involving the Midwest and Texas, and a few relating to California. They included track diagrams and manuals for locating freight cars at shipping points. To someone focusing on the Santa Fe, especially in those areas, they could be a treasure trove of information. While former competitors Santa Fe and Southern Pacific tried to merge in the 1980’s, despite painting some locomotives “SPSF” the deal was never completed. So there was no historical connection between our hometown railroad and the items that had been donated.

With board approval the items were offered for sale at recent museum events, so fans and modelers of the Santa Fe could obtain them. Few were sold, so the Museum’s Curation & Archives Committee judged that further efforts to sell them would not be good use of volunteer time, so they were offered to the Santa Fe Railway Historical and Modeling Society. That group has a reciprocal donation agreement with the Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society, so items most relevant to each group’s focus will go to the right home. The SPH&TS had recently made a generous donation to SLORRM of books published by the society. Trading and donations between museums and interest groups is a good way to steer resources to where they will be best used and appreciated, and builds goodwill among the wider railroad history community.

But how to get the heavy box of documents from San Luis Obispo to the SFRH&MS without either organization having to pay for shipping? (We’re always looking for ways to save.) Through a network of members and friends, arrangements were made for a party traveling in private cars attached to Amtrak’s Coast Starlight to pick up the items from museum volunteers while the train made its station stop in San Luis Obispo. The occasion was an opportunity for some enjoyable train watching and a brief tour through the private cars, and to introduce visitors to our museum.

Girl Scouts Tour LaCondesa



Girl Scouts imagine taking a midsummer whistle-stop tour on the LaCondesa with museum volunteer Glen Matteson.

The Museum had special guests on August 9th when some of the youngest members of **Girl Scout Troop 40300** visited, along with moms and some siblings. They learned about the major role that railroading played in San Luis Obispo, and the importance of clear communication and safety in railroad operations. Popular activities included ringing a big locomotive bell and operating the wig-wag crossing warning. They also used “scavenger hunt” work sheets to look for items ranging from a locomotive headlight to HO scale seals near the Port Harford pier.

Moving LaCondesa

Gary See took these shots of some of what went into moving LaCondesa.



The Mystery of the 1200 boxcar number



On Friday, August 8, 2014, Brad LaRose met with Battalion Chief Bob Visson from the SLO Fire Department at the freighthouse. They were there to use a Thermal Imaging Camera to determine the actual car number of the Pacific Coast Railway 1200 series boxcar from heat images created by paint layers where the numbers are located, or should be located.

In the past, Brad has tried sanding the white paint off, hoping to reveal the actual white painted car number. No luck with that. White on white does not work. They tried this camera and nothing appeared. Brad will make one last attempt with sand paper on other locations on the car.

Usually, the PCRwy had car numbers over the inside of each door. There are no numbers above the inside of this car. The rancher who owned it put 1" x 12" boards the length of the car on the inside, from the floor up to about 48" but the numbers would be up higher where freight would not cover them.

Painting the car will take place in the near future as we prepare the Museum for the 2014 Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society convention this coming October. We want to put on a very good appearance for that group, and we will be painting several different pieces of equipment.

*Reported by Brad LaRose
Photo by Bill Pyper*

Another Step Forward



On July 16, 2014, crews removed a large outdoor advertising sign from the parking area near the Freighthouse. The sign removal resolved a legal issue between the City of San Luis Obispo and the sign company that may have delayed city approval of a Museum request to locate additional displays in outdoor areas. Eventually, trackside signals and other items may be placed in planters or other spots where they would not interfere with parking or pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

In a related matter, Museum volunteers are working on proposals for signs that will better identify the Museum and its features, and direct Amtrak patrons to the station farther north.

*Reported by Glen Matteson
Photo by Andrew Merriam*

Southern Pacific Doctor invented Medic Alert Bracelet

Many people have medical conditions that are not obvious but which can be life-threatening, ranging from diabetes to severe allergy to bee stings. Medic-Alert bracelets are an effective way to tell first responders and caregivers about such conditions, when a person is unable to speak, sign, or write, or to dig through a purse or wallet to find clues. Did you know that the bracelets were invented by a Southern Pacific Railroad doctor?

Through the 1950s railroads were a labor-intensive business, with dozens to hundreds of employees in many of the towns and cities they served. In addition to the general ailments of the day, workers dealt with items that were heavy, hot, sharp, and fast moving, in a wide range of weather conditions and locations. In response, and in common with several other railroads, the Southern Pacific had its own medical-care system, including hospitals in major cities and physicians in many smaller communities.

The museum's document collection includes the July 1959 issue of the Southern Pacific Bulletin, a mini-magazine for employees. According to an article in that issue, Southern Pacific's physician in Turlock, California, Dr. M. C. Collins, came up with the idea for the clearly labeled stainless-steel bracelets after his daughter Linda nearly died when given a dose of tetanus anti-toxin serum, to which she was allergic. In 1941 M. C. Collins had succeeded his father, J. A. Collins, as the Southern Pacific surgeon in Turlock; the senior Collins had served in that capacity since 1919. The article goes on to say that the younger Dr. Collins established a foundation to produce the

bracelets, and that all hospitals in the United States and Canada, and every police chief in a city of more than 10,000 residents, were sent notices of the bracelets.

Railroads don't directly affect as many lives these days. But the legacies of many past railroad workers continue to touch us in ways that we might not know about without these small pieces of history.

Reported by Glen Matteson



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Don't stop here . . .

Go online to www.slorm.com and click on Newsletter for more pages of Coast Mail. Read . . .

Notes Along the Pacific Coast Right-of-way by Andrew Merriam. Stories and pictures of The Pacific Coast Railway. See more pictures from the Grand Opening.

If you don't have internet access, send a #10 SASE to Bill Pyper, PO Box 885, Salem, OR 97308 for printed copies of pages 5-8.

Notes Along the Pacific Coast Right-of-way

By Andrew Merriam

Critters, Dinkies and Electrics

Do these words apply to a small narrow gauge railroad in a rural area? In the case of the **Pacific Coast Railway** they did. There were four electrics and three internal combustion locomotives (as distinguished from another six railcars of distinctly motley heritage). In fact the electrics E-1 and E-2 were also from diverse parentage (meaning they were cannibalized from other locomotives) and built in the company shops in San Luis Obispo.

How did a company with five beautiful Baldwin 2-8-0s and two hefty Baldwin 4-6-0s come to need all this miscellaneous powered flotsam and jetsam? (And aren't we lucky to see pictures of these mechanical marvels?) Actually the PCRy operated one of the very few electric lines in the United States. The original ideal appears to have been to get passengers from Santa Maria to Guadalupe in one or two passenger car trains on a scheduled basis.

This was not a paying proposition with steam. This was also the era when small electric lines were springing up all over the United States. An electrified line of just under 8.5 miles in length was built from Santa Maria to Guadalupe to carry passengers as well freight. There was also a 2.5 mile extension from Betteravia Junction to the Betteravia sugar factory. At the **Union Sugar** plant there were photographs of dual gauge track under trolley wire!

The first electric was truly a dinky. It had a small wooden cab built on a four-wheel power truck with footboards on each end and a trolley pole on top. It was sacrificed in 1907 to get the power truck for the new E-1 (Figure 1). The E-1's cab and lead truck came from steam locomotive #2, a small 4-4-0 burned in the Los Olivos fire of 1896. The lead truck was later changed for an arch bar freight truck. While well enough proportioned, the E-1's mix-and-match trucks made for an odd looking locomotive.

The E-2 had all homemade trucks and four 40 horsepower motors (See Figure 2). It too, had a steam cab, this one from locomotive #103, a mogul. The more powerful E-2 was used to haul sugar beets and E-1 hauled the single passenger car on the regular run.

In 1912, the PCRy purchased the E-3 from the Cincinnati Car Co. for regular use on the Santa Maria to Guadalupe run. This car was 55 feet

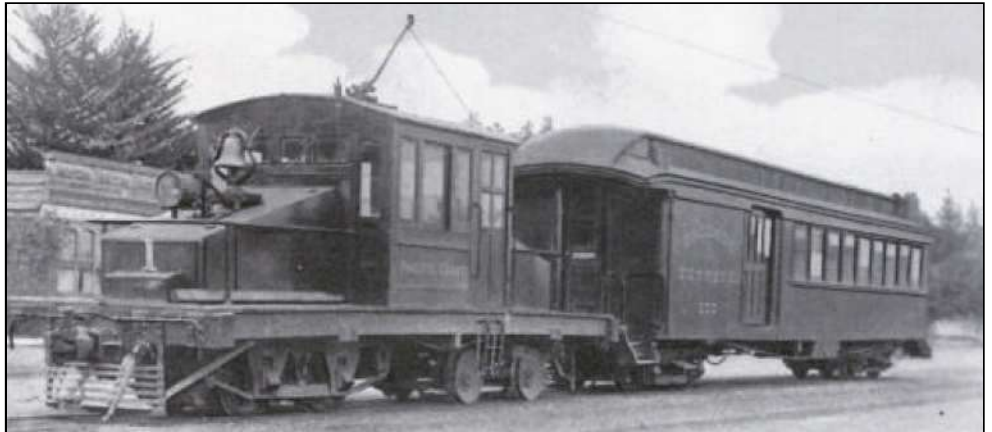


Figure 1: *Pacific Coast Railway E-1 electric locomotive in Santa Maria to Guadalupe service with combine #300. From a postcard in the collection of Mitch Holland.*



Figure 2 (above): *PCRwy E-2 electric was used mostly for hauling narrow gauge sugar beet cars but is seen here with a passenger car in front of the Hart House in Santa Maria on April 17, 1909. Photo from the collection of Ed Stowbridge.*

Figure 3 (below): *PCRwy E-3, a center-loading interurban was purchased from the Cincinnati Car Company in 1912. Photo from the Bennett-Loomis Archives.*



long, equipped with Baldwin traction trucks and had center opening doors for passenger loading (See Figure 3). The interior had wood paneling and, in the words of the author of the *Pacific Coast Railway*, Kenneth Westcott, "was far from austere." For those interested in scale drawings of these electric critters, please refer to the excellent doc-

umentation prepared by Kurt Johnson in the book mentioned.

Unfortunately the days of Santa Maria trolley service did not survive the Depression and all three of the electrics were cut up or sold for scrap between 1938 and 1942 with the general abandonment of the railroad.

On the previous page we looked at the electric oddities of the Pacific Coast Railway. But the greatest variation was in its more extensive collection of gasoline fueled internal combustion engines.

These ranged from the cute but respectable #120, to an outrageous and anything but respectable assembly of open rail cars powered by rejects from the world of the highway. "Road-kill" was the comment made by one of my friends. There was even a rail bus constructed in the San Luis Obispo shops but sold to the Portland Cement Company at Davenport, California.

Number 120, shown in figure 4, came to the PCRwy second hand in 1936. Constructed by Plymouth at an unknown date, it started life as a conventional four-wheeled job. The wheel diameter was 33 inches set in the Model HL frame, which was composed of a heavy girder beam supporting the journal boxes below and the cab and engine housing above. Frequently there were additional cast weights bolted to the frame as was the case with #120.

The HL was a standard Plymouth model with possible variations at the discretion of the buyer. The standard gauge model was 9 feet wide and the narrow gauge version was 7 3/8" wide. This width variation was achieved by changing the width of the front and rear castings.

Based upon information provided by Jay Reed, author of Critters, Dinkeys and Centercabs, there were 190 HLs (including variations A through C) built between 1925 and 1941. They ranged in weight from 18 to 25 tons with the #120 being at the lower end and probably powered by a 127 h.p. Climax engine. The notched rear cab corners and the extra frame counter-weights indicate that some of the standard gauge options were utilized.

The Pacific Coast Railway felt that tracking capabilities could be improved, so they added 16-inch diameter front and rear trailing trucks - thus we have the 2-4-2 seen in the photograph of #120 in figure 4.

The marker lights on the front of the hood and rear of the cab and the steam type bell were not standard Plymouth components and may be PCRwy additions as well. While the HL model was typically used for industrial switching, the three extra air tanks on the 120

6 must have been added to facilitate running on the mainline. The locomotive was painted a pale yellow-orange with a darker roof,



Figure 4: Engine 120, a Plymouth HL in San Luis Obispo in 1941. W.C. Whitaker

perhaps boxcar red. The original numbers were white, but later changed to black. The Car Works imported an On3 model of the #120 last year.

Railcar 4000 was built from a 1918 Ford touring car. It was also used in a tongue in cheek publicity photograph apparently pulling four flatcars loaded with Model T's arriving in San Luis Obispo in 1926. It had a matching trailer numbered 4001 seen in Figure 5, with another critter that is sort of reminiscent of a buckboard. It seems the PCRwy shop forces were good at fixing almost anything - got to love the addition of a horn to the running board and the cylindrical sand storage and pipes just behind the cab door. If the PCRy

forces were good at fixing things, it was also true that they were good at stripping vehicles down to bare essentials shown in the next figure. Figure 6 shows PC officials on an inspection trip at Port Harford. While the date is unknown, it is known that the wife of Reginald Simpson, wharf master at Port San Luis, is at the wheel.

As a closing comment, I thought the guy in Figure 7, wheeling through the mud near Port San Luis says it all "Are we having fun yet?" So whether you want to model truly unique critters or just be amazed at the contrivings of engineers and mechanics, the Pacific Coast Railway is a great place to start.



Figure 5

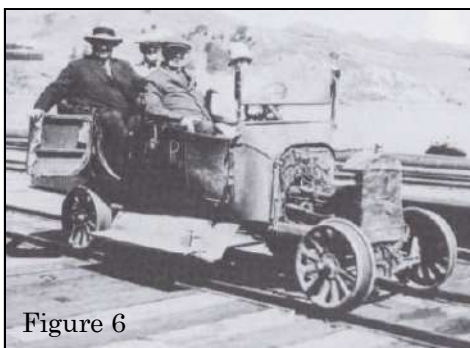


Figure 6



Figure 7

Train Day, Saturday, May 10, 2014



Above: Restored Southern Pacific handcar is part of the Museum display.



Above: Museum visitors listen to talk about 19th Century San Luis Obispo city fathers and their influence on local railroading.

Below: Museum President Brad LaRose leads a group of visitors on a walking tour of the Museum grounds, heading



Above: Speeders scoot along the display track giving Museum guests a ride on Train Day, May 10, 2014.

Below: Brad LaRose entertains visitors to the Museum with a discourse on railroad history while on a walking tour of the Emily Street storage yard.



Above: Part of the Museum's outstanding collection of railroad signs.



Khrushchev Visits San Luis Obispo, September, 1959

One of the big news items in September, 1959 was Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's visit to California. He visited Hollywood, where he had a heated discussion with a movie mogul, then was quite annoyed at being refused a chance to visit Disneyland. He left Southern California went up to the Bay Area on a special Southern Pacific train, which followed the westbound Coast Daylight.

I was a student at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo at the time, and had just loaded my Minolta model A camera with Kodak's new Tri-X ASA 200 black and white film. When news of the Soviet leader's passage through the college town reached the populace, a large crowd gathered at the SP station, which still serves Amtrak.

Bob Davis
San Gabriel, CA

Top: A local police officer clears the platform. Any (really) old timers recognize this man?

Middle: The crowd is assembled, note the peace placard.

Bottom: A large helicopter precedes the train; the crew is most likely checking for any possible security concerns.

Below: Mr. Khrushchev mingles with the crowd.

