



The TURNTABLE

August 2013

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PAID & VOLUNTEER STAFF OF RAILTOWN 1897 STATE HISTORIC PARK

Upcoming Events

August 3

4th Annual Singing Rails Music Festival featuring Sourdough Slim and Red Dog Ash plus a music competition with categories in vocal, guitar, fiddle, banjo, mandolin and miscellaneous, beginning at Noon

August 6

Ladies luncheon at Applebee's in Sonora, Call Marge @ 533-4595

August 7

Diesel train rides at noon and 2 pm

August 14

Diesel train rides at Noon and 2 pm

August 21

Diesel train rides at noon and 2 pm

August 24

Meals on Wheels Event In the park, special train at 6 pm.

August 28

Diesel train rides at noon and 2 pm

September 3

Railtown Ladies Luncheon call Marge @ 533-4595

September 10 & 11

"Railtown Gang" trip to ride the Virginia & Truckee Railroad in Virginia City Info: call Dave 984-4408

September 21

Mark Twain Train at 5 pm Starts at 4 pm under the Tulip tree



J. Earl Taylor

The Man That Quite Possibly Saved the Sierra

With the great depression hitting full stride in the early 30's, both of the lumber mills at Standard and Tuolumne had shut down bringing freight revenue on the Sierra to an all time low. Action needed to be taken by the Board to save the railroad from complete bankruptcy and closure. They had to look no further than Nevada City, California, the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad and James Earl Taylor, their President.

Taylor was born in Grass Valley in 1879. He was a very successful realtor in Nevada County until he took over as President of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad, a 22 mile 3 foot gauge railroad operating between Colfax and Nevada City in Northern California in 1928. Taylor was appointed General Manager of the

Sierra Railway in 1932 and immediately his style of management was felt. He started at the top by imposing a 10% salary cut for the 14 top managers of the Sierra. By June of that same year, an additional cut of 25% was imposed on all the managers including Taylor himself.

Within the next two years, he was able to make further cuts by eliminating six or more management positions resulting in huge financial savings. He also ordered recently purchased Engine #36 and passenger Engine #22 into storage for the duration of hard times.

By 1934, the mills at Standard and Tuolumne were starting to reopen, the City of San Francisco had plans to raise the height of O'Shaughnessy Dam, and Taylor was successful in getting the bid to reopen and run the Hetch Hetchy Railroad as a branch of the Sierra during this rebuilding, thus providing extra income. This was instrumental in seeing the Sierra through the dark days of receivership and quite possibly saved the Sierra Railway from abandonment.

J. Earl Taylor stayed on with the Sierra becoming Vice-President and General Manger of the Sierra Railroad in 1937 dying in office at age 66 on May 20, 1946.

Sources; *Nevada County Narrow Gauge* by Gerald Best, 1964; *Short Line Junction* by Jack Wagner, 1956; *A Tale of Two Cities and a Train* by Juanita Kennedy Browne, 1987; *Sierra Railway Records* (personal collection); *Rails to the Mother Lode* by Adolf Gutohrlein, 1969; *City of San Francisco Hetch Hetchy Railroad Records* (personal collection).
(article submitted by David Tadlock)



New Engineer Stephanie Tadlock



Ron Konklin training for Stationmaster



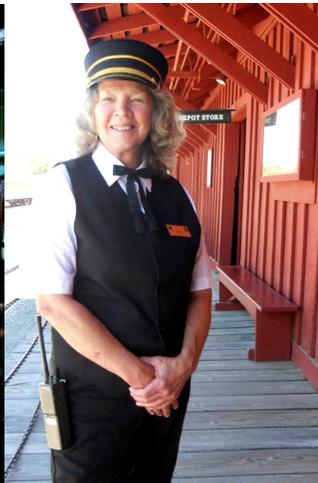
Waving the Passengers (from left: Alexa Melville, Anna Lewis, Nancy Bull and Janet Montano)



Tom Bullock (John Rand) with Prince Poniatowski (David Winslow)



No. 3 Steam Gauges (photo by Dave Rainwater)



Sandy Guitelli training for Stationmaster



Jessica Davila working hospitality for Sonora Photo Club



Welcome New Staff Member-- Karen Kling

Please welcome our newest staff member, Karen Kling, who joins us as a Park Interpretive Specialist. She'll be working primarily Thursdays through Saturday on event coordination plus some research and presentation work. A native of the San Francisco Bay area, she has a degree in geography from the University of Nevada. She has most recently worked as a naturalist giving tours through Yellowstone National Park out of Jackson Hole Wyoming. She also gave wildlife safaris to visitors at the Grand Teton National Park looking for moose, bison, wolves, antelope, beaver and other critters of the wild. Prior to that she worked for 12 years doing drafting and design for an engineering firm in Jackson, California.



In Memory– Tom Bispo

On Thursday, June 26, at the age of 40 Tom Bispo passed away from complications with cancer. Tom was a well-loved railroader and long-time engineer for our Railtown trains. He leaves behind two young daughters Taylor and Ana. His memorial was held July 13 in Fresno at Kearney Park.

He grew up around the railroad in Fresno with his younger brother Michael and sister Andrea, as their father Joe Bispo was a long time switchman for the Southern Pacific. Joe, Tom and Michael all worked for the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad in Fish Camp, California. At the early age of 15, Tom became a fireman. In 1988 Tom started volunteering at Railtown, first as a car host and tour guide, then as a fireman. Tom graduated from college in Fresno with a computer science degree. Michael remembers that “he was always disassembling things and trying to fix them, clocks, mechanical toys, computers and such, sometimes successfully and sometimes not!” Tom also loved the civil war re-enactments and went to many events in and around California. He was the supervisor for the entire American Civil War Association, and he also portrayed a colonel in the 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry.



I asked Michael what Tom liked most about Railtown: “The one thing about my brother is that he loved history and all the mechanical stuff and all that goes with it. Railtown has a concentration of all that together. Railtown became an extended family of like-minded volunteers and friends.”



Railtown News

Fun Field Trip To Virginia City

Join your fellow volunteers the “Railtown Gang” for a fun trip to Virginia City on Tuesday, September 10. Stay at the Silver Queen or hotel of your choice overnight. Then we’ll all ride the train on Wednesday, September 11 and return later that day. For information, call Dave at 984-4408 or email Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov

Congratulations to Stephanie Tadlock

Hooray for Stephanie who was just recently promoted to engineer. For the last six years she patiently worked her way up through our engine crew process from conductor, brakeman to fireman and now engineer. She is the first woman to become an engineer at Railtown !

The Railtown Gang Potluck at Pinecrest

Join the gang for food and fellowship under the shady pines at Pinecrest by the lake. It takes place the 4th Wednesday of each month starting at 3:30 pm and will continue until October. In October it will be a potluck brunch instead starting at 10 am. All dates are weather permitting. Bring something to share and something to BBQ plus your own utensils, plates and drinks. Call Dottie at 209-533-8483 for information.

Prince Poniatowski Returns To The Sierra Railway!

Welcome new volunteer David Winslow as he portrays Prince Andre Poniatowski. David teaches history at Sonora High and will be volunteering from time to time as the prince.



RAILTOWN 1897
State Historic Park

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Jamestown, CA 95327

Return Service Requested

TO:



Depot Store- (209) 984-3953

Volunteer Desk- (209) 984-4408

Volunteer Website- <http://railtown.team.parks.ca.gov/volunteers>

Railtown Blog- www.railtown1897.wordpress.com

Crew Caboose- (209) 984-0352



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