



# The TURNTABLE

October 2014

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

## Upcoming Events

### **October 2**

Informal meeting discussing Interpretive Plan Themes in advance of October 3rd 1-3pm Carriage Room (all invited!)

### **October 3**

Interpretive Master Plan 'Brainstorming Session' with all volunteers and staff 9am-4pm at the Jamestown Community Hall

**Harvest Haunt** trains begin!

October 4,5,11,12,18,19,25,26

### **October 6**

Volunteers & Staff Polar tickets purchase day

### **October 7, Tuesday**

Ladies Luncheon @ Covers Apple Ranch

Call Marge @ 533-4595

\*Railtown members Polar tickets purchase day

### **October 8**

CSRM members polar tickets purchase day

### **October 9**

Polar tickets open to the general public

### **October 22**

Finalized Polar Express schedule due

### **November 4**

Ladies Luncheon @Applebee's, 11:30am call Marge @ 533-4595

### **November 8**

Polar Express Training & Rehearsal Day 9am-2pm

### **November 11**

Veterans Day, special trains at 1, 2 and 3pm, Veterans ride free!

**\*NOTE:** There will be no trains this year on Thanksgiving Weekend, but we will have demonstrations (belt shop) and speeder rides

## **Interpretation: Why Do We Do It?**

I felt the need in this issue of the Turntable (and perhaps in future issues) to take a look at the business and art of interpretation. Thinking about these things in advance of us attending the Master Interpretive Planning meetings might remind us all of what it is, why it's important plus, spark new ideas. I've excerpted the following information which is found in our California State Parks Interpretation manual. We are mandated under the Public Resources Code (5003) as follows: "The Department shall administer, protect, develop and interpret the property under its jurisdiction for the use and enjoyment of the public." "Through interpretation, we help visitors find the meanings in park's resources that have relevance and importance to them. This connection is the seed of stewardship. California State Parks encourages staff and volunteers to interpret to park visitors because our state's most valued natural and cultural resources are at risk of being damaged or destroyed, and the challenge to protect them seems to become more difficult with each generation." "When visitors care about your resource, they are less likely to damage it."

"From the Department's standpoint, interpretation and education are valuable because they can help achieve several worthwhile ends. They can reduce resource management problems through better informed visitor use.... They can promote a sense of pride in the richness and diversity of California's natural and cultural heritage..... Interpretation's best benefits are reserved not for any organization, but for the individual. Through interpretation, the receptive person will see seemingly ordinary objects, events and places come alive with meaning. A broader view of scenic and historic landscapes will come to light, and one's place within them will be better understood. Through an attentive, systematic, and skillfully presented approach, interpretation can have an impact that is powerful and lasting."

*Please consider attending the Interpretive Master Plan meetings next week. Your experience and ideas on the best ways to interpret Railtown 1897 are needed. Once the master plan is drafted, we will be asked to implement the themes and ideas it presents in the next year. The plan will guide us all and help us to become more effective interpreters to our visitors.*



## Recapping The Wilder & Roaring Camp Field Trip

Our annual volunteer field trip this year to Wilder Ranch State Park and the Roaring Camp Railroad turned out to be a great success. The weather was great and the fellowship with volunteers made it a



Railtown staff and volunteers participating in the field trip were: (standing left to right) Bill Baum, Ken Steele, Gary Kerr, Di Kerr, Nancy Bull, Bob Ide, Janet Montano, Jeannie Teschke, Dieter Teschke, Hal Montano, Railtown coordinator Dave Rainwater, Karen Ethier and David Ethier. In front are Craig Peterson, Railtown curator Lisa DeLacy and daughter Lilly. Not shown in the photo was Columbia docent Bob Lippert, who took the picture.



After our train ride, Conductor Kent Jeffreys gave us a special tour of their locomotive shop where we were able to view the Tuolumne Heisler. Named "Tuolumne," Roaring Camp's Heisler Engine No. 2 was ordered by the Hetch Hetchy & Yosemite Valleys Railroad in 1899 to operate at the West Side Flume & Lumber Company Sawmill near Tuolumne City, California. When she was saved from the scrap heap and purchased in 1962 by Roaring Camp & Big Trees for \$7,000, the engine was the last operating steam locomotive of the Old West Side Lumber Company. It holds the distinction of being the last steam engine in commercial lumber service in Tuolumne County.

special time. It's nice to know that with all the hard work and dedication from all of you, that we can take a break sometimes to do something fun and educational together. I've asked everyone who went on the trip to recap what was the most significant and meaningful thing they experienced on the trip and what interpretive value they may have received. Below are some of their comments. At Wilder we had a great tour given to us by Steven Ellmore, Pat Kennedy and Ken Sievers. Seeing a Pelton water wheel in action, much like the one originally used here at Railtown was very special. I was particularly impressed by the inventiveness of Melvin Wilder who capitalized on using 'green energy' to produce profits from his dairy farm. At Roaring Camp we were treated to an excellent ride with the #1 Shay 'Dixiana'. Senior conductor Kent Jeffreys gave us excellent commentary along the route and a great guided tour of their locomotive shop.

### Lisa DeLacy

What I loved about the park was its open space, and uncrowded environment. It was such a relaxed and pleasant place that it was hard to believe just 4 miles away was the bustling city of Santa Cruz. What a gem it was. I loved the fact that the land was still being farmed. I also enjoyed our tour because our docent was unrushed and very calm and approachable. She was obviously there because she enjoyed it, and that made us all feel good. We were not an easy crowd either, with so many of us being history buffs, she handled us well-even when we got sidetracked or too loud. I would have liked to have known more about the first farmer there, and I think a good tour guide should leave you wanting more. The next morning I got online and did a little research. That means I was piqued. The Roaring Camp excursion was great fun. Kent the conductor was so energetic and knowledgeable, and the open cars gave the whole trip a kind of holiday feel. The grounds were obvious fun! It was cool to contrast that theme-park atmosphere with our own site. It's like comparing fruits and vegetables. What is interesting to me is that I wasn't really sure that there was much history left to the site. The excursion went on newer track up the hill, added for tourist enjoyment. It was never clear to me what the old burned out trestle was about, and when I left, I didn't care. We had fun!

.....(comments on the Wilder & Roaring Camp field trip continued)

**Nancy Bull**

Wilder Ranch – I really appreciated seeing the actual buildings and having them interpreted. I also appreciated seeing the room in the Interpretive Center that showed a time line of the history as you walked around the room that included murals, pictures, and artifacts. I’m a strong believer in offering information in more than one way because people learn in different ways (consider this when developing our Interpretative Master Plan.) Roaring Camp – At Railtown, we talk about how effective the Shays were at working in the forests hauling lumber on narrow gauge rails. Well, we certainly experienced that at Roaring Camp even though their railroad was not built for that purpose. And, we had the added experience of switchbacks. This can certainly be compared to the Angels Branch Line. It was great to see the Tuolumne Heisler, as well. Kent, our conductor, was fabulous – very knowledgeable and a lot of fun. It was also very interesting to see a virgin forest. I also loved the tabby cat that lives there....purrrrr. I agree with Dave – the group really did sound good singing Happy Birthday to Bob!

**Di & Gary Kerr**

We particularly enjoyed the innovative additions to the Wilder Ranch buildings that were far ahead of their time, but served very useful purposes. The water powered pump in the machine shop facilitated belt-driven machines that were superior to machines operated by hand. The water powered pump in the yard that provided enough water pressure to operate the huge nozzle that could shoot water to any building on the premises was a valuable tool in fighting fire.

The additions in the large house facilitated things like not having to turn on a light when opening a closet door because a button was installed in the door facing, similar to a button in a refrigerator that turns on the light when the door is opened. The switch that was installed in the wood box that would open the door to the house so that entry could easily be made while carrying a large load on wood. A pass-through/china cabinet allowed the dishes to be accessed from both the dining room and the kitchen, as well as meals which could be served through this cabinet. The pictures on the walls of the house interestingly set forth the history of the house. The rifle cabinet in the dining room was convenient because in the time in which the house was first occupied, there was a need to have a gun handy. The Roaring Camp excursion train gave us an opportunity to see, first hand, how switch-backs are used. While we have heard of switch-backs being used in the early days of the Sierra Railroad, at Roaring Camp, we were able to experience the use of them. The trip was relaxing and fun.

**Hal & Janet Montano**

Thanks for the fun and informative trip last week. Two very different locations provided us with both entertainment and great information. The Wilder Ranch holds so much preserved history and their working machine shop was most helpful to understand how early tools were powered by water. The family

ranch house had all kinds of surprises and fun stories of life so long ago. Then a very pleasant visit to Roaring Camp and experiencing the much talked about switch back tracks was a real treat. Of course the ocean and all the activity there including great seafood was a bonus. All in all we had a great time!

**Jeannie Teschke**

The trip was really amazing. The docents at both Wilder and Roaring Camp made us all feel like VIPs. I took home a new perspective on how to be a more effective host. You must be fully into what you are interpreting and then what you say will convey to the fullest. Steve, Pat, the machine shop host, and Kent were the best!



Photo (not recent) of the Wilder Ranch belt shop

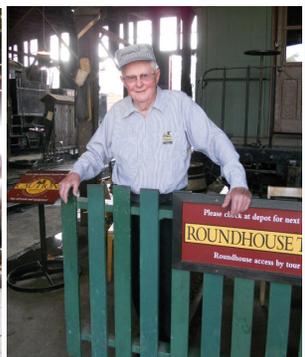


### Volunteer Profiles: Bill Baum

"I love interfacing with the great variety of people who visit Railtown. I always try to connect in some way." That's not very hard to do for Bill who has lived and worked in numerous places around the world. "I've either lived and/or worked in almost every continent in the world, including Europe, South America and Africa. I've never worked in China, but have been to New Zealand, Niger, Kuwait, Laos and at least 40 states in the U.S." He was born in Brooklyn, New York during the Great Depression where his family lived in a cold water flat. He graduated from Brooklyn PolyTech University and started his career as a civil engineer. He gave that up for a career as a project manager and scheduling consultant. He is recently retired from the profession after 50 years. He moved to Sonora from Atlanta with his wife Kate (of 11 years) in 2008. "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for my wife Kate." You can still detect his Brooklyn accent, which 27 years in the Deep South couldn't erase. They both began volunteering and working in our community. Kate, who is a past president of the Tuolumne County Genealogy Society, volunteers often at the Sonora Hills Social Club and also runs a side business specializing in German genealogy. She is known as 'The German Genie'. Bill became a state park volunteer both for Columbia and Railtown in 2009 and has logged many hours since. He works as our Wednesday tour guide and often fills in on other days when needed. They both volunteer for the Sierra Repertory Theater often providing housing for traveling actors, actresses and costume designers or driving them to and from the airport. All in all, at 85, Bill is one very active volunteer! This month, we'd like to say a special thanks to a very special volunteer, Bill Baum!



The Sierra Railway Workers Reunion event by all accounts was a success and established itself as an important interpretive event for our park. Pictured on the right with Kim Baker is David Kelley and Frank Cottle, both of whose grandfathers worked as engineers in the 'old days'. Also above right is our newest maintenance park aide Zach Heine. Above left is Matt Sagaser's side kick "Chief", pictured working on Fire Patrol. He had no problem signing his VSA!



Volunteer Anthony LaNotte (top left) brought a very effective display on our Reunion Day to share the importance of railroad safety. Also pictured is Kim Baker, Karen Kling and Nancy Bull cutting the cake to celebrate the event. Don Slifert (pictured in the Belt Shop) worked with Robert Williams demonstrating the 19th century technology. Above right is long time volunteer Jerry Redfern, having rejoined us recently after a long absence and is happy to work as a Roundhouse Host most weekends.

## Railtown News

### **PUMPKINS! Help Needed**

As previously mentioned, we lost our source of pumpkins from the Del Osso Farms in Manteca. Thank you to Mike & Roberta McReynolds who have generously purchased as many mini-pumpkins as we need to get us through the month of October. We'll need greeters on duty to help the kids decorate their pumpkins each Saturday and Sunday until the end of October. Call or email if you can help.

### **Halloween Decorators Needed**

Starting next Tuesday, September 30, we'll begin decorating in and around the Freight Shed, the Caboose, #599 and #14 cars. The plan is to pull out the decorations from the Tea & Silk car on Tuesday and begin decorating each day and complete by Thursday, October 7.

### **Skeleton T-Shirts**

The shirts are ordered and should arrive by October 3rd. We will have sizes medium, large, extra large and 2X available for \$25 each.

### **Interpretive Master Plan Meetings**

The Interpretive Master Plan is moving along. Several drafts have been circulating, and thank you to those who have taken the time to comment. I realize it takes time, and we are all so busy, but this is time well spent, and will help define our program direction for the years to come.

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

Thursday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>- 1-3PM- This will be an informal discussion of the proposed themes. Since most of this work has been done via email, it would be good to discuss them in person and have some time to hash out concepts and ideas, ahead of the Friday's meeting.

Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>- 9am-4pm (half hour for lunch). This meeting will be the FUN one, where we get to brainstorm interpretive goals and methods—all of those wonderful concepts you have brought up over the years for activities, signage, etc, this is where we will capture them, to help us demonstrate and interpret the themes of the park. Please RSVP to Dave Rainwater [dave.rainwater@parks.ca.gov](mailto:dave.rainwater@parks.ca.gov) if you will be able to participate. I hope that you can come. We will have more internal meetings over the plan as we proceed, but this will be the final meeting with Ron Thomsen and Jennifer Rigby, the contractors writing the plan. If you are not able to attend, but would still like to comment, contact Dave for a copy of the most recent draft themes. (Kim Baker)

### **Polar Express Ticket Sales**

Just a reminder, ticket sales begin next week and are available as follows: Monday, October 6/ tickets sales to volunteers and staff; Tuesday, October 7/ ticket sales to Railtown members; Wednesday, October 8/sales to CSR members; Thursday, October 9/ sales to the general public



### **Did You Know?**

The American Locomotive Co. in Schenectady, N.Y., built 25 monster locomotives known as 'Big Boy' for the Union Pacific's between 1941 and 1944. These legendary engines were the largest steam locomotives ever to work the rugged terrain of the American West, and by most standards the largest anywhere in the world. Seventeen Big Boys were scrapped when they were pulled from service, but eight survived and are on display around the country, including one in Cheyenne's Holliday Park. Union Pacific chose the 4014 for restoration because it spent more than 50 years in the friendly climate of Southern California, at the Rail Giants Train Museum at the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds



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**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](http://www.railtown1897.wordpress.com)  
**Newsletter Editor—** [Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov)  
**Crew Caboose-** (209) 984-0352



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