



July 2009

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

Important Dates

July 11th

Kim Baker presents slide show of the history and work on the Sierra #3, and the future of the project. 8:30 to 9:45 in the truck shed.

July 13th-9am

Special Event Committee Meeting, Carriage Room.

July 6th

Craft Meeting in the baggage car 10am.

July 13th

Railroad Operations Management Group Meeting 3pm.

July 22nd

Pinecrest Potluck– BBQ starts at 5:30, but arrive anytime!

July 18th

Music in the Park- Lori Brandon Fundraiser from 4-9. Open donation. BBQ 5-7.

The State of the State Parks

At this writing, we have no new information on the status of the park closures. There has been much in the media lately, and www.calparks.org has been an excellent source of information. We have heard rumors that the response of the public to the park closures has been enormous, and has exceeded that of all other issues, which is remarkable, considering the relatively small portion of the statewide general fund budget that California State Parks consumes.

If, in fact, the General Fund portion of the State Parks budget is eliminated, and parks must close, it is projected that they would be closed after Labor Day weekend. Due to the public-private partnerships involved in the restoration of the Sierra #3, you can be assured that all efforts will be made to keep the project “on track” through completion.

Music in the Park– Lori Brandon Fundraiser July 18th

They say that “great minds think alike”. Several groups of community members, Railtown volunteers and musicians converged to coordinate this fundraiser in support of Musician (and CSRMF employee) Lori Brandon. Some of you may recall that we were going to have a volunteer party on July 18th, but we reasoned that it would be appropriate to displace our party with this one.

In order to keep the costs of the event low, we need volunteers to assist with the BBQ, as well as event set up (and clean-up), and donations of items for a raffle. Music will include The Black Irish, The Rose Creek Ramblers, Accordion Moods, Fiddlers Etc, Chris Miller, Ryan Richelson & Debbie Patterson, Dean Markley, and Ron L. Dean Group. What a lineup!

Admission will be by “open donation” and everyone is invited to attend.

All in the Family

Our thoughts are with John Still who has been battling cancer.

Marge Lovingfoss is recovering from an illness and hasn't been able to visit the park in a while. We miss her friendly face!

Backtrack— Railtown in History

FINE HOTEL DESTROYED *The Union Democrat, August 28, 1915*

The Picturesque Hotel Nevills at Jamestown Becomes Food for the Flames

A blackened spot marks the site where stood the Hotel Nevills in Jamestown. The attractive hostelry was reduced to ashes between 9 and 10 o'clock last Sunday morning by fire supposed to have originated from a defective kitchen flue.

The fire evidently caught between the roof and ceiling of the first floor and spread throughout the attic and had been burning sometime before the flames emerged from the roof. It was not discovered until the flames shot through the roof, and then simultaneously by a dozen persons in the vicinity. Service was prompt but the fire fighters were unable to cope with the situation in getting water on the blaze, and within a few brief moments the entire roof of the large structure was a seething mass of flames. With the failure to get water on the fire when first discovered and the rapidity with which it burned, it was soon realized that the handsome structure was doomed, and within 25 minutes from discovery it was practically leveled to the ground.

With all energies bent toward saving the structure little or no attention was devoted to recovering its contents, and many personal effects were consumed. The greatest single loss of personal property was the destruction of John Murphy's extensive and representative collection of minerals, woods and pictures, depicting Tuolumne County's resources and scenic beauty- This loss is a community loss, since Mr. Murphy, who is a great booster, maintained it exclusively to emphasize the merits of this section. L.S. Rosenthal, who conducted the bar, suffered the loss of his stock of goods. H.H. Smith, traffic manager of the Sierra Railway Co., and his wife, who made their home in the hotel lost all their effects. A number of railroad employees lost considerable in wearing apparel. The loss sustained by the destruction of the hotel is variously estimated at \$25000 to \$35000.

The office building and freight sheds of the Sierra Railway Company were saved from destruction largely from intervening tree growth, and the fact that a slight wind from the south inclined the flames and heat in the opposite direction. A few cottages in the vicinity and some grass ignited by sparks from the burning building but all were speedily extinguished before creating any damage.

Like with most fires, the water question was a vital factor in this one, and the statement has been given publicity that there was a lack of water. This fact is vehemently denied by the supplying company, and by many others who visited the high pressure reservoir on the hill above the destroyed hotel at the time it was burning. The reservoir was not only full, but overflowing, and the company, through its representatives, are prepared to demonstrate this fact at any time. However, it is also an established fact that efforts to get water on the fire were abortive. A system for the protection of the hotel was completed the day before the fire and tested and worked admirably. Two monitors were installed at either end of the hotel and a stream of water was thrown clear over the roof, and everybody in the vicinity felt easier to know that adequate protections had been afforded in case of fire. These monitors were connected with a 2-inch lateral which run from a 4-inch main which tapped the big 9-inch pipe carrying the water to the main portions of the town. When he fire broke out and it was sought to play the stream on the roof, the water only reached the gables, and the fire had things its own destructive way.

The Hotel Nevills was originally the property of the late Captain W. A. Nevills of the Rawhide mine, and was built under agreement with the Sierra railroad people that Jamestown was to mark the termination of the railroad in this county. Subsequently the property was acquired by the Jamestown Improvement CO., composed of persons interested in the Sierra Railway CO., and the railroad was continued on to its present terminus at Tuolumne. The structure was started in the fall of 1897 and completed and opened to the public early in the spring of the following year. The hotel cost about \$40,000, and with its porch pillars of ore from the Rawhide mine, and its marble wainscoting, together with its pure Japanese style of architecture, was the acme of picturesque perspective and quality redefined beauty. Its destruction will be a source of regret to the traveler who viewed its pleasure, the guest who enjoyed its many hospitalities, and generally to the people of the county who regarded it as a potent asset to attracting people in the Mother lode section.



July's Volunteer of the Month



We will be starting a new volunteer feature in the Turntable.

This month, meet Bill Gillespie from Douglas Flat. Bill has been Volunteering here at Railtown since 1993 and has an incredible total of 13,750 hours of service to date! Bill moved to California From San Antonio, Texas when he was 10. He calls himself a 'Texafornian'. Bill served 3 ½ years in the National Guard and 23 years in the United States Air Force. Bill gives Roundhouse Tours every Friday and does Car Hosting almost every weekend. Each Tuesday Morning he can be found cleaning the passenger cars and working on the Caboose #7 restoration project in the afternoons. When asked What he loves most about being at Railtown, he simply says "playing with the big trains". When asked what he'd like to see more, he says "just see the #28 running again". Many thanks from all of us to Bill for all you do!

Pincrest Potlucks

A Railtown summer tradition. July 22nd, August 26th and September 23rd. Bring item to BBQ, place setting, chair and dish to share. Arrive anytime, BBQ starts at 5:30. On the left, after the 2nd bathroom.

First Class All the Way!

To remain consistent with our sister operation in Old Town Sacramento, and to provide the best possible service for the visiting public, effective July 4th, we will be running the 2901 car every weekend. The workload for the operation of this car has fallen mostly on the shoulders of Darryl and Linda Bramlette the last few years, and they have done a wonderful job. In order to be successful with weekly operation, however, we need all car hosts to learn the safe operation and interpretation of the 2901, and will be rotating car host duties to allow for cross-training. We are also in need to "assistant" car hosts to act as observers and ensure the protection of this historic resource.

Volunteer Opportunities

We are still looking for more Car Host help on Sundays. Newer volunteers are encouraged to join us, even if you are not entirely ready with your interpretive dialogue. Car Hosts fill the all-important role of safety monitoring our passengers during the trip, especially during the boarding and disembarking. Then you can gradually mingle with our visitors and add your interpretive script as you gain more confidence. Also, if you're inclined you can try your stand-up comedy and one-liners! As a Car Host you are in effect, an entertainer, but to which degree is entirely up to you. As a State Park representative, you are the all important ambassador providing our history to visitors who come from all over the US and many international countries. The other opportunity is for roundhouse Tour Guides during the week. Remember, you can always 'shadow' our more experienced Hosts and Guides until you are confident. call Dave Rainwater if interested and would like more information.





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State Historic Park

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Return Service Requested

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