



The TURNTABLE

March 2010

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

Important Dates

March 6th & 7th

Operating Rules class required for covered service staff, who are required to attend and pass exam. If you can't make it please make alternate arrangements by calling Kim Baker 209-984-4622.

March 20th 9am

New Volunteer orientation and workshops. Second offering in case you missed the first one.

March 27th

"Getting ready for prime-time" Pre-Season Workshop for Car Hosts, Ticket Agents, Tour Guides, Fire Patrol, etc

March 17th & April 17th

Final 2 behind the scenes tours for the Sierra #3. Reserve.

July 2, 3 & 4

Premiere Event, The Return of The of #3! Mark the Date!

Message from the Superintendent-Kim Baker

The winter season is coming to a close, and we are gearing up for Opening Weekend on April 3rd & 4th. (This is also Easter Weekend, so this year there will not be an egg hunt.) I want to personally extend a thanks to the volunteers who have been diligently preparing the Shay #2 for its annual inspection. In particular, I'd like to thank Joe Siemons, Ron Sloan, Dan Maher, Dave Tadlock and David Ethier. And I'd also like to thank Stan Eggink who has been working very hard to ensure that we have a reliable back-up diesel this year. And Mike Warzee, who is going to paint it for us, if it ever stops raining! To say that the paid staff is overloaded with the Sierra #3 project would be an understatement. We literally could not be doing all that we are if it wasn't for all of your hard work. Thank You.

Volunteer Training has begun. We have a record number of new volunteers queuing up to be a part of our program. It's a very exciting time! Please join us in welcoming our new volunteers!

Many of you made it to the Advanced Volunteer Training on January 30th, and I want to thank you for your participation. Railtown is unusually dependent upon its volunteers, and always has been. However, it is generally not part of the usual volunteer training program to explain "how the sausage is made" so to speak. The more our volunteers understand how the system works, the more we are able to work the system to our advantage. I feel strongly that we need to move forward and work productively within the sometimes complex state government framework. Being respected both by our railroad peers, the public we serve, and our park colleagues is a common goal we all strive for. Together we can develop a better understanding of how to accomplish our goals within this framework. Please come by the office and take a couple minutes to pick up a copy of the slides presented which will better aid all of us in working together.

There are a few items that everyone should be aware of. For the 2010 operating season, George Sapp and Kevin Zimmerman will be sharing the duties of Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers. Our Railroad Operations Management Group (comprised of a team of our experienced Engine Crew) is currently reviewing and revising our policy documents to ensure FRA compliance and safe operation. Anthony LaNotte is now the trainer and crew caller for our Fire Patrol. Marty Gerbasi is now the crew coordinator for the Tuesday work days, and is assisting in orienting new maintenance volunteers.

The Sierra #3 will Premiere on 4th of July weekend, beginning with an appreciation ride and BBQ for all of the paid and volunteer staff who have been working on the restoration. After the holiday weekend, the #3 will be running on the first weekend of every month, in conjunction with the #2 (2 steam trains at once!). Tickets for the #3 will be at a premium price, and pre-sold online.

Thanks for helping to share this special place! Kim



Meet Eighteen

Meet the newest member of our visitor services "staff". Eighteen loves to greet visitors at the freight shed dock on sunny days, when she is not sitting in the Plymouth in the Tri-Dam shop, overseeing the restoration of the Sierra #3. She is named after our other famous "Movie Star Locomotive", the Sierra #18 which saw many years of service in the movie industry prior to retiring in the late 1930s.

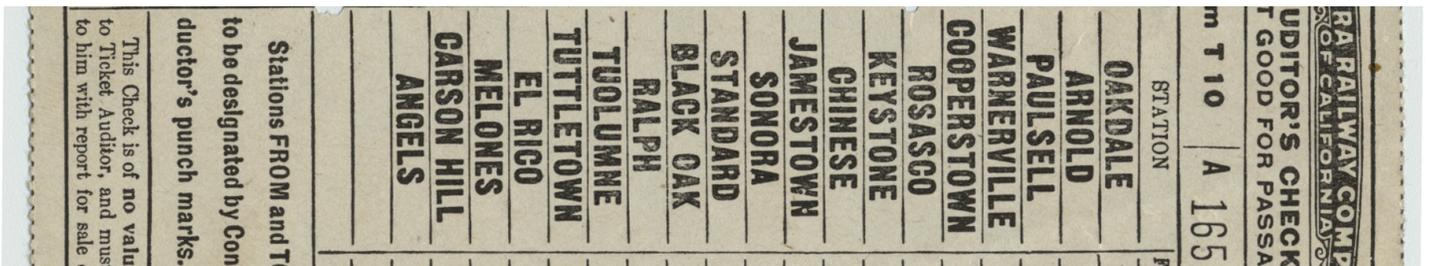
If you see Eighteen, say "Hi" and give her a pat on the head. She is scheduled for a special surgical procedure on March 12th. We all wish her a quick recovery.

Volunteer Field Trips Planned For 2010

Our volunteer field trip last October, to the Sacramento Railroad Museum and Shops was a great success and wonderful time spent together. This year we are planning at least two. The first one will be held Wednesday, June 2nd. Mark your calendars for a wonderful field trip to the Western Railway Museum near Rio Vista. Long time volunteer Andy Alkema is also a volunteer there and will be our host and guide. Carpools will leave Railtown at 8:30am and arrive there by 10:30am. We will ride the very rare wooden interurban car (106 years old) for 45 minutes. Then tour through the rolling stock, see the library and archives, and tour through their maintenance and restoration shops. This will be day long field trip, so bring a bag lunch and plan on arriving back at Railtown at 5pm. If you'd like to sign up please call Dave Rainwater at 984-4408. Our second field trip will be later in the year visiting two of our district museums, Sutters Fort and the State Indian Museum next door. Date TBD.

Bits and Pieces

Congrats to the Lovingfoss's on the marriage of their son Jay. Thanks also for providing a free lunch to our Tuesday maintenance crew and the donation of a new microwave for the kitchen caboose.



Happy Birthday to:

Jan 5 Juanita Barron, Jan 18 Jack Allen, Jan 21 Anna Lewis, Jan 23 John Stier, Feb 6 Bob Gibson, Feb 17 Maureen McNertney, Feb 19 Karl Bitterman, Feb 19 Natalie Stier, Feb 20 Andy Alkema, Feb 24 Richard Davila, Feb 25 Joe Bispo, Mar 1 Mike Bispo, Mar 2 Jerry Redfern, Mar 2 Larry Miller, Mar 9 Laverne Coon, Mar 12 Bill Gillaspie, Mar 14 Virgil Lovingfoss, Mar 15 Frank Cimino, Mar 15 David Ethier, Mar 15 Ken Merritt, Mar 16 Gary Hosman, Mar 20 Robert Staggs



Volunteer of the Month--Al Lehr

If you haven't met Al, you will. He has the distinction of being around Jamestown and the Sierra Railroad the longest of any of us. But that's just the beginning of the story. His family moved here from Hayward in 1947. He was 6 years old. He has seen a lot of changes both in Jamestown and our park. As a kid delivering newspapers he used to swing by the roundhouse and hang out with the workers. He remembers Gus Swanson driving around in a lemon-lime Model A Coupe with yellow wheels. He also remembers when the highway went through the middle of town and 'kiddie' parades were held every 4th of July. 'They'd put baseball cards on their wheel spokes, just to hear the flappingsound.' From 1971 to 1982 Al worked for 'Charlie' Crocker (grandson of the famous railroad magnate) and the Sierra Railroad before it was acquired by State Parks. His many varied duties included selling tickets, giving tours, mowing the grass, repairing the steam engines, hostling, and working as a brakeman and fireman. He remembers the last train on New Years eve 1979. The facility closed after that and he worked as a caretaker for three years. In 2000, Al joined us as a volunteer. He's seen a lot of changes here, and can tell you many interesting bits of trivia. He's always willing to give a new volunteer a special tour. These days he works on the Tuesday maintenance crew and is often seen interpreting the blacksmith forge on school days and at special events. You might also catch him showing off his old-fashioned calliope which he built for special occasions. When asked what he likes best about volunteering at Railtown, he replied 'I like talking to our visitors and sharing our history and how things were done in the old days. I love the camaraderie of all the volunteers. To me, Railtown is not an organization, but a family.'



The First Steam Train Whistle

The first steam whistle was invented after a wreck in May of 1833 near Bagworth, England. A horse drawn cart loaded with eighty dozen eggs and fifty pounds of butter was hit by The Samson, an early steam locomotive. Railroad management hired a musical instrument maker to build what first was called a 'steam trumpet', which later on was replaced by the 'steam whistle'.



Preserving the Best of the Past for the Future— Lisa Smithson, Railtown Curator

In a nutshell preservation planning is a process that “helps us determine when an area should be examined for historic properties, whether an identified property is significant, and how a significant property should be treated”. We all recognize that historic properties can’t be replaced if they are destroyed. “Preservation planning provides for conservative use of these properties, preserving them in place and avoiding harm when possible and altering or destroying properties only when necessary”. These quotes are from the National Parks Service website on the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation.

So, what can we do at Railtown 1897 SHP to ensure preservation and conservation of our historic properties? In my opinion, the first thing we can do is to look at our park through eyes that are born one hundred years in the future. I always try to imagine everything here to be one hundred years older than it is (excluding staff, visitors, and volunteers, of course). If you have experienced the feeling of awe at observing petroglyphs, or pyramids, then you can understand that feeling of being connected to a distant time and the feeling of gratitude for the ability to have that experience. Just as a trip to the Holy Land, or the Eiffel Tower can be inspiring, so too can Railtown 1897 State Historic Park. If we preserve our park correctly, taking care not to make unnecessary alterations, trying to keep the park as much as it was during its Sierra Railway days, we can leave a legacy of information and tangible transcendence for future generations.

I encourage all staff and volunteers to make an effort to look at the park and all its collections with new eyes, as if it were your first time here. That will give you the same experience as a first-time visitor. Can you remember the way the park touched you the first time you came here? Didn’t you know right away that this place was special, and incredibly interesting? Remember seeing all the tools in the roundhouse and blacksmith shop for the first time? Remember the first smell of oil, ash, iron, and dust? Even Al Lehr remembers that! Those are the reasons for preservation planning. If you didn’t understand Railtown on your first visit, if you didn’t “get it” as Kim Baker honestly admits. Well, what then? (And, that proves our need to help visitors “get it” through interpretation).

Can you imagine how many historic places have been destroyed from a lack of understanding? Haven’t you seen refinished Stickley furniture on “the Antiques Roadshow” that would have been worth \$500,000.00 and was reduced to a mere fraction of the value by someone who didn’t take the time to understand what they had in hand, and how best to preserve it? We have to plan on preserving Railtown 1897 even before we fully understand why it is the way it is and we have to use all the available information we have to make responsible decisions for its preservation. Sometimes we have to wait for more information to come to light. I just spoke with a gentleman last week who knows an older man who grew up right down the street from our park and is believed to have many old photos in storage. We never know when more information will come to the fore to explain what we are looking at. So let’s remember to handle our park with care, document changes we have to make, and avoid making small cumulative changes that can have a big impact over time.



Volunteer Training

Our 2010 volunteer training program is well underway. Upcoming training dates include: A second Orientation Day for new volunteers on March 20th, from 9am-2:30 PM in the Carriage room. Topics include– Introduction to State Parks, A Brief History of the Sierra #3, History of the Sierra Railroad, and individual workshops introducing volunteers to Engine Service, Tour Guiding, Car Hosting and more. Veteran volunteers are welcome to attend as well.

Fire Patrol Training is two days, and is for veteran and new volunteers. March 27th, from 9am–4pm, and May 8th at the same times.

GCOR (The General Code of Operating Rules) training for current and aspiring engine crew members will be on March 6th & 7th from 8:30– 5 both days. Meeting at the Jamestown Community Hall.

March 27th will be the “Mother of all Training Days”, as we will be conducting simultaneous trainings for Fire Patrol, Tour Guides, Car Hosts and Ticket Agents! Furthermore, we’ll be doing our first run of the season, as a training run, on this day at 2pm. This day will help us dust off the cobwebs and prepare for a busy opening weekend the following week. March 27th is the start of Easter Vacation, so we will be selling unadvertised tickets to visitors in the park that day, as well.



Some of our new volunteers join veterans John Rand and Darryl Bramlette for a tour!





RAILTOWN 1897
State Historic Park

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Jamestown, CA 95327

Return Service Requested

TO:



Docent Hotline- (209)-984-4408

Docent Site- <http://Railtown.team.parks.ca.gov/volunteers/default.aspx>

Railtown Blog- www.railtown1897.wordpress.com



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Newsletter Available in Alternative Format on Request