



# The TURNTABLE

August 2010

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

## Important Dates

### Ladies Luncheon

First Thursday of Every month. May 6th at Papa's New Roost. 12 Noon

### Pinecrest Picnics

August 25th & September 29th. Meet after 3pm near the second set of restrooms. Bring your own meat to BBQ, place setting, chair, and a potluck dish. Dinner at 5:30 PM

### August 21st

First Annual Railroad Music Festival 4:30 PM

### Oct 9 Memorial for Virginia Bispo

Potluck BBQ in the picnic area after the last train. Bring your photos and memories to share.

### Happy Birthdays!

5	Jim Mullin
7	Phil Hard
9	Ginny Ross
11	Kim Baker
14	Dottie Bolander
19	Ray Azevedo
21	Shirley Rainwater
26	Robert Lanini
28	Darryl Bramlette
31	Susan Eller
28	Ron Pratt

## Making Friends When Things Go Wrong

I have a confession to make. Sometimes I actually enjoy work more when things don't work. Don't get me wrong, I'm not looking to monkey-wrench things, but on most days, visitors arrive, purchase tickets, ride the train and then leave. They expect that the train will run on time, and take little notice of what it takes for that to occur. But, when we have an equipment failure, all of a sudden, things get exciting! Visitors get antsy on the dock and wonder what is going on. They start to focus intently on the activities of the crew. When we step in and explain the activities to the visitors, they watch, intently. While the engine crew is working hard to solve problems, the visitors are fascinated to learn what it really takes to run a train. This is when our crew gets to show off their competency and professionalism. (And this is also why it is very important for the conductor to explain the situation to the stationmaster as soon as possible, so they can pass it on to the car hosts). *Studies show, when customers have a problem and you fix it, they're actually going to be even more satisfied than if they never had a problem in the first place.* So equipment failures can have a silver lining. Keep that in mind next time things don't go according to plan. In addition to a clear explanation by an articulate guide, a free upgrade to first class, free tickets to return on another day, even a free bag of popcorn, or just a friendly face, can lead to loyal, dedicated visitors who will rave about the great experience they had, even when you least expect it. Because, lets face it, there was a reason diesels replaced steam. . .

## Keep Calm and Carry On A Note About Staff & Volunteer Parking

On the weekends, please leave the main lots for park visitors. Volunteers and staff should park in the Conklin Trucking lot (which is state park property—across the street), at the Tri-Dam, along the fence, or along the north side of the tracks. It is disheartening to see the upper lot half-full with paid and volunteer staff vehicles, and then watch park visitors struggle to unload families, strollers, etc and have to haul them down the road. Visitors are not aware they can park across the street, so please take those spots and help us provide the best public service we can.

## Sewing Car

The sewing car is undergoing a change in use. A great deal of hard work was put into setting it up for use as a resource for costuming for our volunteers. However, over the years its has been underutilized, and it is not being converted for use as a collections work space. It will still be used for lunch storage, and there will also be a work space for volunteers, including the docent library. Curator Lisa Smithson will be using half of the car for collections work space, which will also make the parks document files more accessible for work project reference. Volunteer Coordinator Dave Rainwater will then move into Lisa's current office at the freight shed.

## **Train History Inspires Songs and American Folklore**

Perhaps there are no two greater events mentioned in song and the annals of American folklore than Casey Jones and The Wreck of The Old 97. This month on August 21st we are celebrating our first annual 'Singing Rails' Railroad Music Festival. The event should attract more park visitors and nationwide attention by it's very nature.

### **'Casey' Jones**

John Luther Jones (March 14, 1863 - April 30, 1900) was originally from Cayce, Kentucky where he later acquired his famous nickname. He had worked his way up to engineer with the Illinois Central Railroad before he died at the age of 33. Jones was famous for his peculiar skill with the train whistle. His whistle was made of six thin tubes bound together, the shortest being half the length of the longest. Its unique sound involved a long drawn out note that began softly, rose higher and then died away to a whisper, a sound which became his trademark. The sound of it was variously described as 'a sort of whippoorwill call' or 'like the war cry of a Viking.' People living along the Illinois Central right of way between Jackson, Tennessee and Water Valley, Mississippi, would turn over in their beds late at night upon hearing it and say 'There goes Casey Jones', as he roared by. On April 30, 1900, he alone was killed when his passenger train, the Cannonball Express, collided with a stalled freight train at Vaughn, Mississippi, on a foggy, rainy night. His dramatic death trying to stop his train and save lives made him a folk hero who became immortalized in a popular ballad sung by his friend Wallace Saunders, an African engine wiper for the Illinois Central. Due to the enduring popularity of this song, his life and legend have been celebrated for over a century.

### **The Wreck of The Old No. 97**

The 'Old 97', a Southern Railway train officially known as the 'Fast Mail', was enroute from Monroe, Virginia to Spencer, North Carolina when it left the track at Stillhouse Trestle near Danville, Virginia on September 27, 1903. The wreck inspired this famous railroad ballad. Engineer Joseph ('Steve') Broadey, was at the controls of engine #1102, operating the train at high speed in order to stay on schedule and arrive at Spencer on time (the Fast Mail had a reputation for never being late). The engine that was pulling train No. 97 that day was locomotive #1102, a ten wheeler (4-6-0) engine, built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia. The route between Monroe and Spencer was rolling terrain and there was numerous danger points due to the combination of grades and tight radius curves. Signs were posted to warn engineers to watch their speed. However, in his quest to stay on time, engineer Broadey rapidly descended a heavy grade that ended At the 75 foot high Stillhouse Trestle, which spanned Cherrystone Creek. He was unable to sufficiently reduce speed as he approached the curve leading into the trestle, causing the entire train

to derail and plunge into the ravine below. Nine people were killed, including the locomotive crew and a number of clerks in the mail car coupled between the tender and the rest of the train.



(Left) The #1102 rolled out of the factory in early 1903, less than a year before the wreck. After the wreck, the engine was rebuilt and served for nearly 30 years before being scrapped July 9, 1935.



(Right) John Luther Jones from Cayce, Kentucky was famous for his train whistle, which many came to recognize as he rolled down the Illinois Central line. He was 33 when he died April 30, 1900 as the engineer of the Cannonball Express.

### Volunteer of the Month– James Judnich

This month’s volunteer is James Judnich. James joined us in May of 2009 and from the start showed a great love for trains and a willingness to help on any project on Tuesdays. His dedication and work habits were noticed and he was invited to work on the No. 3 restoration dream team. He just finished a one year tenure with the project and is now back to volunteering, working on the Fire Patrol crew. He is the son of Albert and Anna Judnich, born in Mountain View, but he’s lived most of his life in the mother lode. He works with his father in the family gardening and maintenance business. They also grow and sell Bonsai plants. James has been a train fan since 2 years old and is also an avid stamp collector and history enthusiast. He has followed the restoration of the No. 3 closely and truly enjoys

getting to know all our volunteer staff. Thank you James for joining our Railtown family !





**RAILTOWN 1897**  
State Historic Park

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**Jamestown, CA 95327**

**Return Service Requested**

**TO:**



**Depot Store-** (209) 984-3953

**Docent Hotline-** (209) 984-4408

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

**Railtown Blog-** [www.railtown1897.wordpress.com](http://www.railtown1897.wordpress.com)

**Railtown Paid and Volunteer Staff Contact Information**

*Newsletter submissions: [RailtownNews@parks.ca.gov](mailto:RailtownNews@parks.ca.gov)*

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