



The TURNTABLE

September 2011

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

Upcoming Events

September 1st

Railtown Ladies Luncheon at the Standard Pour Restaurant 11:30am

September 3, 4 & 5

Labor Day Weekend
#2 Saturday & Sunday
#3 Monday
Starlight Serenaders Entertain under the Tulip Tree Noon-3 Saturday & Sunday
Entertainment On Trains Each day w/ Dave R.

September 17 & 24

Sierra #3

September 22

Volunteer Field Trip To New Melones Dam and the Sierra Logging Museum

September 28

Volunteer Potluck BBQ At Pinecrest Lake

October 6

Ladies Luncheon Black Oak Cafe

October 8

Full Moon Train w/ Sierra #3 & 2901

October 9

#3
Harvest Haunt Trains Begin for October

Congratulations !!

To Lisa Smithson and Ron Delacy. Their baby girl 'Lily' was born early Sunday, August 28 7lbs 8oz

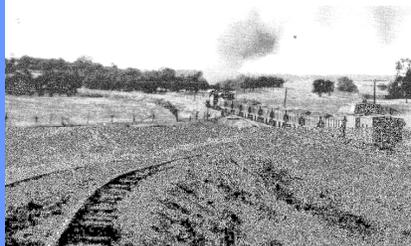
September Activities

The hot summer season is drawing to a close, meaning cooler weather and my favorite time of year at Railtown! In September we have two weekends with the Sierra No. 3 (17th & 24th); the small engine club will be back (10th); another speeder club will visit (17th) and all sorts of picnics, tours, birthday parties and other private affairs that are bringing visitors to Railtown. In October, the "Skeleton Crew" returns (more later on how to purchase your t-shirt), and we'll be running the No. 3 each Saturday during the month! But, for me, the most exciting day in October will be our Member Day on Saturday the 8th. We will have music and activities during the day, but in the evening, we will be running our first-ever Full Moon Trains with the Sierra No. 3 and the 2901. This will be a Railtown Members-only event. Invitations to all members will be going out in the mail soon, with instructions on how to make reservations for these trains which will be free to members. Railtown's membership has now exceeded 1,200, so it's a way to say thank you to all of our great supporters. Remember, depending on ticket availability, visitors can become members at any time prior to October 8th to be eligible to ride (even the day of the event itself).

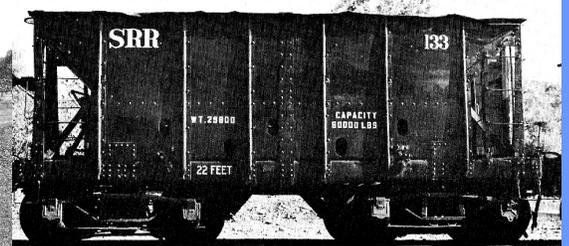
Our last regular train of the season will run on October 30th, and then we'll be busy readying for the Santa Trains and Starlight Express. All tickets for these trains will be available online this year, starting on September 1st. We will have a few changes from last year. We plan to have the No. 2 pull the consist, and put the Sierra No. 3 and caboose on display at the station, which will provide the rare treat of having both steam locomotives operating at the same time.

So, as you can see, there is a lot to keep us amused and challenged into the end of the year, hope you will be "On Board."

Kim



Gravel Trains Near Cooperstown



Sierra Railroad Hopper Car

Branches of The Sierra Railway (Part 1)

By Dave Connery

Today we often think of the Sierra Railway as two streaks of rust between Sonora and Oakdale, but at one time there were a number of branches of the railroad in addition to the mainline running between Tuolumne City and Oakdale. The miles of branch lines reached their peak in the 1920's, the very era we concentrate our interpretation on. Several of these branches were built

(continued from page 1)

for specific short term use and then were removed while the Angels Branch provided both passenger and freight service from late 1902 until 1935.

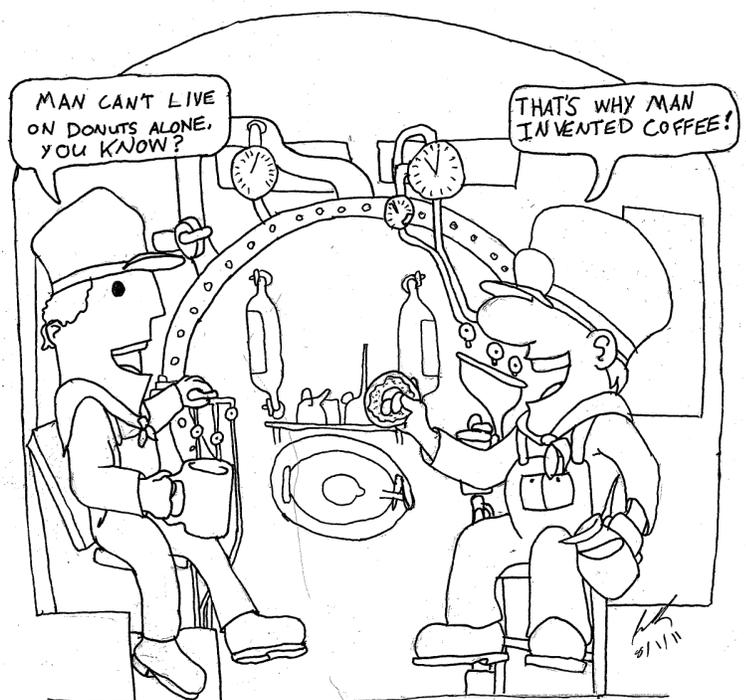
In early 1921 the Turlock and Modesto Irrigation Districts contracted with the Sierra Railway to provide rail transportation to the site of the Don Pedro Dam on the Tuolumne River. The railroad completed construction an 8 mile branch known as the Don Pedro Branch by mid-July of that year. This branch met the mainline at MP 25.4, near Rosasco. The railroad then constructed a 3 mile branch from a point about 1 mile east of Oakdale to a gravel pit on the Stanislaus River, which became known as the Atlas Branch. This was completed by the end of August of 1921. While numerous pieces of equipment and supplies were hauled to the dam site, the primary product was gravel. The gravel was loaded into hopper cars purchased by the Irrigation Districts and then hauled to Cooperstown in 16 car trains that required double heading. The trains were then broken in half at Cooperstown and trains of 7 to 9 cars at a time were hauled up to the junction and up and down the steep grades of the branch to the dam site, again usually requiring two locomotives. The dam was completed in March, 1923 and dedicated on June 25th of that year. Following completion of the dam the hopper cars were sold and the track removed.

During 1925 the Sierra built a branch from Jacks Siding (near Keystone at MP 31.5) to a spot on the Stanislaus River for the construction of the original Melones Dam for the Oakdale and South San Joaquin Irrigation Districts. Again, this branch was used to haul major materials to the dam site and especially gravel from Atlas. In this case the Irrigation Districts purchased 80 all steel ore cars from the Great Northern Railroad for use in hauling the gravel. Work on the dam started in late 1925 and the project was completed in 1929. During this project the Sierra added concrete piers to the wood bents of the Stanislaus River Bridge to protect the bridge from the waters of Melones Reservoir. At the completion of the project the 80 hoppers (painted black) were deeded to the Sierra Railway as part of the total compensation package for their support of the dam building. These are the Black Jack Hoppers we still have about a half dozen of at Railtown (usually stored on the Angels Branch).

In addition to servicing the gravel needs of the Don Pedro and Melones Dam projects the Atlas quarry also produced gravel for other purposes, including some shipments off the Sierra at Oakdale. The quarry was closed in 1941 and the branch abandoned.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

A special note of thanks to all the ladies who work our Ticket Window on weekends: Laverne Coon, Shirley Rainwater, Debby Ulrey, Belva Bristol, Charlene McAndrews, Judy Nordstrom, Jenny Cruickshanks and Karen Ethier. To John and Natalie Stier for assisting with Movie Nights. Ron Sloan, James Kennard, Joyce Presley, Nancy Bull, Alexa Melville, Jeanette Foster, and Anna Lewis for helping with Singing Rails. Also David Ethier for helping move the stage and Jerry Tannhauser for doing the Green Room. Marty Gerbasi, Gary Hosman, Mike Rainwater, and Cliff Hughes and for plugging away on the roundhouse doors. David Ethier, Dave Tadlock and James Kennard for going over the Shay with a fine-toothed comb, Trevor Chung and Sean Berry for cleaning the track cars, Hal Montano for weekly detailing of the cars and plumbing repairs, Ron White and Tom Keyes for "baby-proofing" the fence, and Janet Montano for painting it. Also Al Lehr, Darryl Bramlette and Hal Montano for getting the bathrooms in the 597 functional.





Volunteer of The Month– Cliff Hughes

The duties of a Stationmaster involve keeping all the activities between the Engine Crew, Fire Patrol, Car Hosts and the Ticket Window flowing and on time. He makes sure the proper paperwork (reports, time sheets and track warrants) are filled out and submitted. This month, say hello to Cliff Hughes, our volunteer of the month. You can find Cliff almost any Sunday as our Stationmaster (he has been working this position for the last three years). He was first invited to volunteer on Tuesdays at Railtown by Al Lehr in 2004. They have been friends since their high school days in Sonora. He first worked with Al Lehr on the #28 putting cladding on the boiler. The next few years he also worked various projects including Fire Patrol, our movie exhibit, the "Back To The Future" façade and the #7 caboose.

He was born in San Francisco and when he was 12 moved to Moccasin. His father worked for the City of San Francisco for the Hetch Hetchy Dam. He was the general maintenance foreman and oversaw the construction of most of the stucco houses in Moccasin used for the employees and their families. Cliff graduated from the University of San Francisco as a business major. He worked for three years as an Army 2nd Lieutenant,

stationed at the Presidio in SF. He retired after 37 years with the University after holding many managerial and directorial positions. He lives with his wife Ruth of 33 years, in Twain Harte and says "between hers, mine and ours" we have 6 kids, 16 grand kids and 1 great grand child. Although he owns an HO scale model train layout, his main hobby interests are divided between his kids and Rail town. "I really have fun working on our railroad and appreciate all the nice folks, especially those who don't take things too seriously and have the attitude of just wanting to get things done." Thanks Cliff !

Photographs Wanted:

Photographs for Railtown Calendar. Do you have an amazing photograph that you'd like to submit for consideration for the 2012 Railtown Calendar? We are looking for current photos of Railtown scenery or equipment. You must be willing to sign over permission for use, including posting online. Submit photos to Kim Baker

New Melones Dam Field Trip—September 22

We still have plenty of seats available for our next exciting field trip to the New Melones Dam and Sierra Logging Museum. We'll hop aboard Linkline's 25 seat tour bus at 8am and visit the New Melones Visitors Center for a guided tour. Along the way we hope to view some of the historic locations of the Angels Branch in Angels Camp. We'll have a bag lunch in Arnold by Noon and then visit the Sierra Logging Museum in Arnold for a guided tour at 1pm. We'll also view their Shay Locomotive which is currently under restoration. The cost is \$25 per person. Seating is limited, call Dave Rainwater for your reservation, 984-4408.



(above)
Field Trip
August 17 at the
Hetch Hetchy
Dam

(right)
Sierra Logging
Museum's
Shay Locomotive

(opposite page)
Cartoon by
James Kennard





RAILTOWN 1897
State Historic Park

PO Box 1250

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>

Railtown Blog- www.railtown1897.wordpress.com



Railtown Paid and Volunteer Staff Contact Information

Newsletter submissions: RailtownNews@parks.ca.gov

(all area codes are 209)

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| Kevin Zimmerman , Asst. Railroad Operations Manager | 557-0294 | kzimmerman@parks.ca.gov |
| Lisa Smithson , State Park Curator I (DER) | 984-3119 | lsmithson@parks.ca.gov |
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| Dave Rainwater , Park Aid & Volunteer Coordinator | 984-4408 | darainwater@parks.ca.gov |
| Kevin Zimmerman , Engine Crew Caller | 557-0294 | kzimmerman@parks.ca.gov |
| Ron White , Stationmaster and Asst. Crew Caller for Car Hosts | 551-7087 | rbarryw@att.net |
| Carl Rudolph , Crew Caller Fire Patrol | 586-9905 | cakr@sonnet.com |
| Laverne Coon , Special Decorations and Ticket Agent Caller | 984-4408 | |

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