



February 2009

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

Important Dates

February 3rd 10-12

Interpretive
Committee meets-
Carriage Room

February 7th & 8th 9am-4ish GCOR Training

February 10th 10-12

Training Committee
meets-Carriage
Room

February 15th

Docent
Appreciation Dinner

February 21st- 10-1

New Volunteer
Open House

March 7 & 21 9-3 PM

Docent Training
(schedule coming
soon!)

April 4th

Opening Day!

Committees Help Get Programs on Track

A committee structure is being re-introduced at Railtown to better coordinate the park's programs. At the All-Hands meeting in January, we developed a series of committees.

If you are interested in participating in helping Railtown to reach its full potential and have some time to spare, please consider joining us! Committees are being formed to address the following issues: Special Events Planning, Interpretive Activities improvement, Docent Training, Work Day Coordination, Public Relations, and Hazmat Best Practices improvement. Other committees will be formed as needed.

Railtown Volunteer Open House- February 21st, 10-1

Lets show our prospective volunteers what the Railtown Volunteer Program is all about! On February 21st, we'll be hosting an open house for potential volunteers, who will be able to get an inside peek of Railtown. We need volunteers to lead tours, operate the machine shop, host in the cars at the station, server snacks at the Carriage Room, and more. We also need you to encourage your family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances to come down and find out what Railtown is all about. It'll be a fun day, with no strings attached, so send out the word! If you'd like to volunteer to help out, please give Dave Rainwater a call at 984-4408, or email darainwater@parks.ca.gov

Sierra No. 3 Restoration Update

On Monday, January 26th, the lead truck was reinstalled, after being completely overhauled, 10 days ahead of schedule. There was a brief moment of celebration as the crew posed for photographs before moving on to work on the pistons and driving boxes. The work on the Sierra No. 3 continues to progress. In November, the old boiler was transported to Washington State to the Chelatchie boiler works, for use as a pattern for the replica boiler. By the end of February we anticipate the arrival of the driving wheels, while work progresses on the frame, tender and cab at Railtown. Later this year, the No. 3 will be transported to the Sacramento shops (which are equipped with an overhead crane--a necessary piece of equipment) to be united with its new boiler.

We know there is a lot of interest in the progress of the No. 3, and in February and March, tours will be offered, to provide the public an opportunity to observe the restoration work. As part of our March volunteer training, a session will be presented on the restoration of #3, so keep your eye out for the schedule coming soon to your mailbox. The team is also interested in volunteers who might be available to help with some of the many details that need attending to. If you are interested, please contact George Sapp, Railtown project lead.

Back Track– Railtown in History

Hidden Treasure on Gus's Special

Another Tale from the *Legends of the Roundhouse*
By Dave Tadlock

On May 13, 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt took the United States off the Gold Standard and called in all of the gold coins. Within the next few months the Sierra Railway was tasked to transport \$24,440 in gold coins from the banks in Calaveras county to Oakdale and then to the San Francisco mint. After some debate between General Manager J.E. Taylor and Angels Branch Engineer Gus Swanson as to how to handle a high risk load, and it was decided to hide the gold coins under the water of locomotive #30's tender. At 5:45 a mixed train #21 departed Angels arriving without incident in Jamestown at 7:16 am, nine minutes ahead of schedule.

If you'd like to learn more: Short Line Junction by Jack Wagner, pub. 1956.

Important February Dates-In History (from out of print Sierra Railway calendar)

Feb 1, 1897– The Sierra Railway formally incorporated

Feb 1, 1900 Sierra's first train arrives in Tuolumne (City)

Feb 1st 1991– Shay #2 pulls the first excursion to Cooperstown of the Railroad 1897 State Park era

Feb 15th, 1925 The Hetch Hetchy Railroad ceases operation as a common carrier

This newsletter is emailed, and distributed at the first Tuesday work day each month. It is mailed out later in the week to everyone else. Let us know if you are not on our email list and would like to be!

Depot Difficulty

It Will Be In All Probability Straightened Out
From *The Union Democrat*, September 19, 1903
Submitted by Craig Konklin

The order of the Board of Supervisors last week directing the District Attorney to commence proceedings to compel the Sierra Railway Co. to remove its depot and freight shed off the county road was undoubtedly offensive to Manager T.S. Bullock who is considering the advisability of removing the sash and door factory of the Standard Lumber Co. from this place to Oakdale and thus providing plenty of room for the highway purpose upon the depot reservation.

It appears that the Supervisors and the Sierra Company were exceedingly careless in the surveys when the depot grounds were purchased by the people of Sonora and deeded to the corporation a few years ago. We are informed that the site deeded to the Sierra includes one half the street skirting the box factory and the freight shed on the west. However these conditions may be, the Sierra Company destroyed a road west of the depot by making a deep cut through it and it was verbally agreed at the time that its usefulness would be restored or a new road built. The necessity for the road did not become apparent until quite recently when the big door factory enterprise found it necessary to install a steam plant, and in doing so occupied a portion of the road leading to the depot forcing vehicles to pass around the south end of the freight shed. This of course awakened official investigation and the railroad people were consulted. They agreed to build a road from a point on La Cass hill across Blackleg gulch to connect with the old road rendered useless by the cut. The owner of the land proved to be the stumbling block in the way of speedy construction of the new road. He wanted \$250 for the right-of-way, the contract for building the road for \$1500, and six months to do the job in. The Sierra Company's representative wanted the right-of-way obtained and was ready on a day's notice to put a sufficient force of men to work to build the road in two weeks. The matter rested until the order was passed this week.



Additions to the Railtown Team



There are a few new faces around Railtown these days. This month Lisa Smithson, Tony and Elfie Taylor, and Dave Rainwater have joined the crew, each in a different way.

Lisa Smithson joins us in a part-time capacity as a Park Interpretive Specialist. She'll be assisting us in developing our park signage, This includes directional and orientation signs, as well as the permanent and mobile interpretive signs to accompany our new park brochure. Lisa is a long-time Tuolumne county resident, and currently works as a Curator for the County of Tuolumne at the Historical Society Museum. Prior to that, she worked in Columbia on the Tin Barn collections relocation project. She is also a musician, has been a teacher, printmaker, and painter.

Tony and Elfie Taylor are joining us as concessionaires, operating the new snack bar area in the carriage room. Tony and Elfie have many years of experience in the catering business in the Bay Area, and since moving to Jamestown several years ago, have been operating the Twain Harte snack shack, and also have a winter concession at Dodge Ridge. Tony and Elfie value the contributions our volunteers make, and are looking forward to working with all of us to help us serve our visitors better.



Last but not least, is our own **Dave Rainwater**, who is wearing a new hat as a State Parks Park Aid, assisting staff with coordinating the volunteer program. Dave has been working for many years at Railtown as our resident fiddler, a job which he hopes to continue. But, you'll also see him at work in another capacity as he helps to coordinate volunteer recruitment and training, and helps to implement our volunteer committees.

Please help us welcome the newest members of the Railtown Team!

**Please send newsletter submissions to
RailtownNews@parks.ca.gov**





RAILTOWN 1897
State Historic Park

PO Box 1250

Jamestown, CA 95327

Return Service Requested

TO:



Sierra #3 Crew, celebrating installation of lead truck.
Bob West, Erik Young and Norman Comer.

Railtown Paid Staff Contact Information

Newsletter submissions: RailtownNews@parks.ca.gov

Kim Baker , Park Superintendent	984-4622	kbaker@parks.ca.gov
George Sapp , Railroad Restoration Lead Worker	984-8739	gsapp@parks.ca.gov
Ryan Richelson , Maintenance Supervisor	984-3115	rrichelson@parks.ca.gov
Joe Bispo , Asst. Railroad Operation Manager	984-8718	jbispo@parks.ca.gov
Virginia Stamm , Admin Assistant	984-3953	vstamm@mlode.com
Rob Buchanan , Park Maintenance Worker I	984-3115	rbuchanan@parks.ca.gov
Danny Taylor , Park Maintenance Assistant	984-3115	dtaylor@parks.ca.gov
Dave Rainwater , Park Aid (and Docent Coordinator)	984-4408	darainwater@parks.ca.gov
Lisa Smithson , Park Interpretive Specialist	984-4408	lsmithson@parks.ca.gov

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