

HOT *SCOOP*

A publication for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum members

January 2024



WORKING HARD IN CAMPO - ALL YEAR LONG!





**Pacific Southwest Railway Museum
Association, Inc.**
WWW.PSRM.ORG

Museum and Train Operations
Campo Depot
Highway 94 at Forrest Gate Rd, Campo
619-478-9937

La Mesa Depot Museum & Office
4695 Nebo Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941
619-465-PSRM (7776)

PSRMA Board of Directors

Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of the month except Dec at 6:30PM. A link to join the Zoom meeting will be provided on our website at members.psrn.org.

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Happy New Year - Welcome to 2024

We hope you enjoyed the holidays. This issue of the *Hot Scoop* will review the highlights of 2023 and look forward to 2024, plus the usual news that went on during the past month.

Certainly it was very busy at your railroad museum for the past month. The top picture on the front page shows a few of the volunteers who were present on November 25th running the North Pole Limited when Dave Tomeraasen took this photo at the Campo Depot.



From left to right are: Bryon Anderson; Mike McIntyre; Tim Wamsley; Colin Atwood; Hector Gonzalez; Stephen Hager; Carl Brooker; and Ben Lazerson.

The bottom picture taken by Jason Drenkow shows the RailWorks contractor crew installing new ties on the SD&AE Railway near Chicken Ranch.



These two photos are directly related and worthy of being jointly featured. The volunteers who worked so hard putting on the North Pole Limited raised the funds required to hire the track crews, while the track crew installed new ties on the railroad which allowed the operation of the NPL trains.

Why not join with us in 2024 as we continue to build our railway museum together? It's easy. Email: volunteer@psrm.org to get started.

MEMBERS

UPCOMING EVENTS



The *Hot Scoop*® is a publication of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc.

The opinions expressed in the *Hot Scoop* are those of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc., (PSRMA) its officers or staff.

PSRMA Mission Statement:

PSRMA is dedicated to preserving the physical legacy and the experience of rail transportation. Programs address the historical, social, economic and technical impact of railroading with particular emphases on railroads of San Diego County and the systems with which they connected in the United States and Mexico.

PSRMA is a non-profit educational organization operating under section 501(c)3 of the tax codes. Donations may be tax deductible.

PSRMA is a member of the Heritage Rail Alliance.

Submission guidelines: All articles should be single spaced and submitted in Microsoft Word format. Photographs are also welcomed. Please include photographer and date of photo. Send all submissions to Editor@psrm.org

The *Hot Scoop* is available in color via email. To receive the electronic version in PDF format, send an email to editor@psrm.org and include your name, membership number and email. Note that if you opt for the e-mail version, you will no longer receive the printed copy.

Comments are always welcome.

Send your feedback to:

editor@psrm.org

In Campo:

Museum open to public Saturday and Sunday, 9AM to 5PM, starting January 6th.

NOTE: The excursion trains operated under the name "SD&A Golden State" will run on Saturday only.

Saturday and Sunday: volunteer work days at Campo.

Wednesday and Saturday: Library open from 9AM to 5PM. Call Bruce Semelberger at 619-264-7282 for an appointment

In La Mesa: Depot open:

Tuesday & Thursday Noon - 3PM

Saturday: 11 - 2

Volunteers are at both locations during the week as well. To be included on these days, please email: volunteer@psrm.org



A note from fundraising for December 2023 – Donna Spevack

Merriest of Holidays to all our railfans, members, volunteers and PSRM Board! The NPL is running smoothly and colder days are settling in, but our great volunteers continue to restore equipment and make upgrades at PSRM.

This year has been a wonderful year for PSRM, as we welcome all of the visitors to the Museum. Always nice to see everyone and catch up on 2023 happenings.

Renewing your Commitment to PSRM for the New Year!

What a great time to volunteer or renew your membership at PSRM for the upcoming year. Our member contributions help to empower our work to save historical railway equipment, memorabilia and buildings and to make upgrades at the museum.

Thank you to all of our donors for 2023 and to all who contributed to our Giving Tuesday Campaign:

Carl Brooker, Dennis R. Crile, Mike Retz, Michael Riemann, Thomas B. Evans, Manley A. Golson, Richard Paulus, Joann Chew Cudras, Colleen J. Conaway,

James Caestecker, Keith Giebelman, Robin Becker, Barry E. and Eugene Randolph Hager, Tyler J. McMillin, Steven Gelschuneff, Bruce E. Semelsberger, Jim Lundquist, Glen Rogers and Patricia J. Filicicchia, Judith Kemp, Dave Tateosian, Daniel J. Marnell, Daryl Leininger, Tim Smith, Francis Pruett, Sean R. Okamoto, William B. Dyke, Christian Mergliano, Evan I. Samuda, Dean Yager, Francis C. Witkowski, David P. McMannus, John Sikes, Daniel Sather, Matt Preston, Ronald G. Ranson Jr., Norman Anderson, Constance E. Hillyer, Renee Huerta-Choy, Richard Martin, Ronald McQuilliams, Bruce Henderson, Richard C. Martin, Carol Mandra, Warren H. Schmidtman and Tamara Shirazi.

Donate Today!

To make a donation go online at www.psrn.org and click on our donation page or mail in a check addressed to PSRM, 4695 Nebo Dr., La Mesa, CA 91941-5259. Please specify if you would like to contribute to a special project, in memory of a loved one (table with a plaque) or just a general donation.

If you would like to explore more ways in which you can help PSRM, please feel free to contact me for more details: fundraiser@psrm.org Thank you!

Happy New Year!



Find Your Passion by Mark Landguth

Starting with my *North Pole Limited* program manager hat, I can report another successful eight night run of trains: Joseph Jolly III, hot chocolate, cookies, elves, reading of *The Night Before Christmas*, Santa, Mrs. Claus, bells, decorations, and the two dozen museum volunteers each night which make this all possible. I was struck this year by the passion of all the participants which makes the *North Pole Limited* such a unique and special experience for our passengers. It is

no wonder that approximately 25% of our passengers are repeat customers as it has become part of their Christmas tradition. Looking back on 2023, I have experienced passionate volunteers in administration, facilities, equipment, museum services, operations, track maintenance, and the gift shop. Each person is unique and they bring their unique skill into the passion of making the *Pacific Southwest Railway Museum* what it is. If you are not already a participant, join us in 2024, find and experience your passion, and next Christmas, come home on the *North Pole Limited*.

North Pole Limited's (NPL) a big success story this year for our museum

As the above article by NPL event coordinator Mark Landguth foretold, our NPL trains were a huge success story for the volunteers this year. Our public LOVED them, as almost all sixteen trains over eight nights were close to being sold out. That is extremely good news for us, as these trains are a substantial source of revenue for our museum at a time when we were required to invest a large sum of money on track maintenance. Thank you to all the volunteers who assisted in putting these trains on - not just the crews or the



cast members, but also the mechanics, treasurer, facilities crew, behind-the-scenes members ... actually, every active volunteer played a roll in the success. Observing the public enjoying themselves with friends and family is extremely rewarding for your editor. This issue of the *Hot Scoop* will feature many photos submitted by many members and our visitors with the hope that "Pictures are worth 1000 words." Enjoy - our public did!



Photos by
Dave
Tomeraasen



The Campo Depot has never looked better. Thank you to the volunteers who both put up the Christmas decorations and then took them back down. *Photos by Dave Tomeraasen*





NPL patrons. Of course you can't have a successful Christmas event without people! Thousands rode with us this year. Our thanks to member Kim Stangl for sharing these family photos with us. They have been riding every year with us since 2019. We hope to see you next year. We encourage you to find your pas-



sion within our railway museum: your passion for people, history, fun, Christmas or

trains. Become involved with something bigger than yourself and join us this next year. So many projects, so many skill sets, so many needs. Why not join with us and become involved with your railway museum? I believe you will also find it richly rewarding - especially during the Holiday season.

Merry Christmas - and let's have a great New Year!

Operations Volunteers for November 20 to December 17, 2023

by Rich Paulus, Chief Operations Officer

Train Service - those who are qualified train crew members, speeder operators/crew, and trainees who have helped us run 16 North Pole Limited trains, and the number of days they have volunteered through December 17: Colin Atwood 4, Alyssa Andersen 1, Jim Baker 4, Carl Brooker 3, Ken Brown 2, Mark Brown 1, John Cenknier 1, Travus Clark 1, Thomas Deen 5, Hector Gonzalez 1, Stephen Hager 3, Randy Houk 1, Jim Lundquist 1, Bryson Medlock 1, Christian Mergliano 1, Mike McIntyre 2, Shaine Neale 4, Rich Paulus 2, Duke Schweikert 2, Tom Ulrich 4, Will Vanni 2, Tim Wamsley 8.

MOW - maintenance of way volunteers who have assisted Roadmaster Glen Rogers and Track Foreman James Caestecker in maintaining tracks and right-of-way this period: Stephen Hager 1.

There were a total of 55 volunteer-days this period. Of note, Tim Wamsley was on crew all 8 nights of North Pole Limited trains.



Trackwork continues at Campo

Our contractors continued the job of track improvements during the month. Our thanks to Jason Drenkow, James Caestecker and Frank Denison for these photos of “Men at work” along the SD&A mainline west of Campo.





Buy a tie!

**Donate \$75 to buy a tie.
Help us overhaul
our SD&A(E) Track**

www.psrn.org/donate or send a check to 4695 Nebo Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941

From the Back Platform

by Stephen Hager, President

Another year in the books! 2023 was a time of great progress at the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association. There were many noteworthy events and accomplishments in the past year that are worth looking back upon. In 2023, we hosted four quarterly members lectures at the La Mesa Police Department. These lectures covered a wide range of interesting topics relating to local railroad history. The lectures can be attended in person or live-streamed via Zoom. The three most recent lectures were also recorded and are available to view at any time on the museum's YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/@psrmrailway>

Speaking of YouTube and social media, we have been taking full advantage of the power of social media this year, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Social Media Lead, Jason Drenkow. Jason actively maintains our Facebook page, Instagram account, and YouTube channel. Jason has been amassing a large collection of pictures and videos taken at our museum showing volunteers at work, museum visitors, regular museum operations, and special events. These, in combination with our extensive photographic collections housed in the Southwest Railway Library, have provided more than enough material for Jason to keep a steady social media content pipeline going. Although social media content is no substitute for an in-person visit to our museum, it is a great form of outreach. Interesting and well-curated social media content can reach a much wider audience than many traditional forms of advertising, all for very little if any cost. Some of our posts on Instagram have garnered tens of thousands of views from around the world, with some even getting over 200,000 views. If even a fraction of the viewers decides to visit the museum in the future, then the social media posts will have been worth it! We have already seen great results from posts promoting our special events.

2023 was our second year of membership in the San Diego Museum Council. This organization is an alliance of museums and cultural organizations from around San Diego County and our membership includes direct benefits for you! In February, members of the general public were able to pick up passes that grant 50% off admission at all participating museums including ours.

Remember that as PSRMA members, museum admission and Golden State train rides are always free for you! In the first half of May, PSRMA participated in the Museum Council's Big Exchange. This program granted free reciprocal admission to members of all participating museums. This meant that PSRMA members were granted free admission to nearly 80 museums in San Diego County! PSRMA will be participating in both Museum Month and the Big Exchange again in 2024. Don't miss out on this chance to receive free or discounted admission to the many other wonderful museums located throughout our county!

In February, we invited museum members and the public to ride behind Coaster 2103 on its official inaugural run and gave a short talk on the locomotive. The event was well-attended and we operated 2103 many times again throughout the year. In early 2024, we plan to do a members lecture on Coaster 2103 in conjunction with another run day with the locomotive. In April, we operated our annual Bunny Trains and a chartered memorial train for our departed friend and local railfan-turned-railroader, Will Ayers.

In May, we co-hosted the second annual "Campo Days" event in Campo alongside the Motor Transport Museum, Mountain Empire Historical Society, and Camp Lockett Event and Equestrian Facility. PSRMA brought numerous outside vendors and performers onto the property and hosted many fun family activities in addition to our regular train rides. We also experimented with bringing local food vendors onto the property, which was a great hit! We subsequently brought the food vendors back onto the property a few times during the summer and the Pumpkin Express Season. This has been a great collaboration as it helps local businesses and gives museum visitors more food options during their visit to Campo. In 2024, we intend to make Campo Days an even bigger event. In particular, we want to make this a railfan-oriented event. We plan to roll out as much of our restored equipment as possible and either put it on display at Campo Depot or operate it on the Golden State Trains.

I already detailed our progress on the restoration of SP 3709 in last month's edition of the Hot Scoop so I won't rehash that again this month. The other major restoration project in 2023 was the reupholstery of the seats in our Chair Car, UP 576. This project could actually be classified as the tail-end of a restoration project

From the Back Platform - continued

that started over ten years ago. Those of you who have been museum members since then may recall that UP 576 underwent a two-year restoration project during 2012 and 2013. During that project, the steel car body underwent extensive repairs to cut out and replace rusted out sheet metal panels and corner posts. Water damaged interior walls and insulation were replaced. The car's electrical system was overhauled. The air brake system was rebuilt. And finally, the car was partially repainted. The major items left untouched during that restoration were the seats.

Due to their complexity and the costs involved, the seats were left unrestored so that the car could be pressed into service in time for the 2013 North Pole Limited season. However, the seats' old foam and horse hair stuffing was deteriorating and they had to be sheathed in seat covers to make them presentable to the riding public. In 2022, museum volunteer Mark Landguth embarked on an extensive project to research and scope out the materials needed to reupholster the seats. With input from the Board, he eventually settled on custom fabric that is as close to the original material as possible. In 2023, PSRMA received a \$50,000 grant from the County of San Diego for the reupholstery project. Over a six-month period, a couple seat pairs were removed at a time and sent into town to be reupholstered. The metal footrests and trim on the seats were also separately removed and sent in to be re-chromed. Mark wrapped the project up just in time for the car to operate on the 2023 North Pole Limited trains.

Speaking of the North Pole Limited, this year's season went exceptionally well! Over the course of eight nights, we operated 16 nearly sold-out trains full of happy families on a journey to visit Santa Claus! We carried just over 4,200 passengers for the season and grossed over \$200,000! The income from NPL gives us a strong financial foundation going into 2024. Thank you to the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this season a success, especially those who were at Campo every single night of the event! If volunteerism in 2024 permits, we hope to offer even more North Pole Limited and holiday-themed trains.

Lastly, we kicked off a major track rehabilitation project late in 2023. I've already detailed the scope and

necessity of that project in the previous two editions of the Hot Scoop. As of writing this our contractor, RailWorks, is nearing completion of the rehabilitation project between Campo and Canyon. Although it's not looking like we will be able to include the rehabilitation of the track between Canyon and Division onto this project, we have a much better idea of the costs involved in getting trains back to Division. In 2024, we will be exploring funding options to make that project a reality.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are planning to expand our special event offerings throughout the year. In addition to our regular annual holiday-themed trains and Campo Days, we plan to begin operating beer and wine trains, pending approval of our on-train alcoholic beverage license. We're also looking to offer some more railfan-oriented events.

Are you still trying to come up with some New Year's Resolutions? How about becoming a volunteer at the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association? We have needs for volunteers in all areas including administrative work, equipment maintenance and restoration, facilities work, curation and exhibit building, docents, special events, train operations, website maintenance, and more! Many volunteer activities are performed at the museum in Campo or at the La Mesa Depot. Others can be done from the comfort of your own home. Sound appealing? Email us at volunteer@psrm.org to start your volunteering adventure!

Thank you all for a wonderful 2023. I look forward to seeing what 2024 has in store for us. As always, if you would like to get in touch with me, please send a note to president@psrm.org. Until next time, keep it on the high iron!



Members meeting well attended

Our thanks to member Jim Price for his talk on *Railroad Stations of San Diego County* on December 7th. Jim, along with Bruce Semelsberger, documented the various existing and a few past railroad stations in San Diego County (and Tijuana & Tecate). It was well received by the large crowd of members in La Mesa.

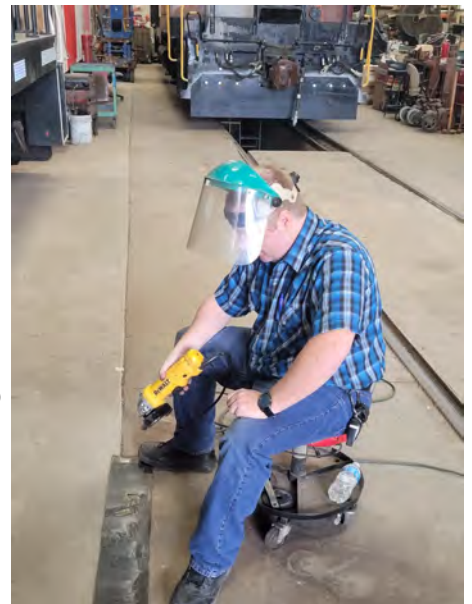
Photo by Jim Lundquist 12/7/23



U.S. Army 1401 returns to SP 3709

Work continued on the GP-9 even while volunteers were busy operating North Pole Limited trains. On the left is John Cenker who sanded off the old military number, primed the side of the cab and stenciled the locomotive's original number 3709. John was part of the crew that night but has some time to get this job done. The same goes for Shaine Neale in the photo on the right. Shaine drove over from east of Tucson to work on cleaning up the locomotive prior to being that night's Engineer.

Photos by Jim Lundquist 12/1/23



Looking Back by Decades - Museum History

50 years ago January 1974 - San Diego Unified Port District approves museum display on Embarcadero. DODX G-10 (Kitchen car) acquired. <https://www.psrn.org/trains/passenger/us-army-g-10/>

40 years ago January 1984 - Pullman "Commandant" donated and transported to Campo. <https://www.psrn.org/trains/passenger/pullman-commandant/>

1917 SP caboose #644 donated and transported to Campo. <https://www.psrn.org/trains/caboose/sp-644/>

30 years ago January 1994 - SD&A #7285 donated. <https://www.psrn.org/trains/diesel/sda-7285/>



Love a parade

On a beautiful sunny day on December 3rd, our museum float took to the streets in La Jolla as part of their Christmas parade. As usual, many smiling faces and good words of cheer were heard as "Hank the Handcar Monkey" powered the

float down the street (well, actually, the Nissan truck and a battery powered it, but...). Helping to get the word out about our museum were Jim & Dawn Lundquist that day. You can assist by either volunteering to take the float out to other parades and events or telling us about opportunities in your neighborhood. Contact Jim@psrn.org



Facilities Projects – Looking back on 2023, looking forward to 2024

We are always thankful for the many volunteers who assisted in keeping our site in Campo plus the La Mesa Depot looking good while making improvements to the plant. The members also stepped forward to financially back that effort this year well.

In February, and again in October, members purchased new plastic park benches for Campo. Steven Pohjola, Brian Elmore, Jim Lundquist, Pablo Martinez & David Choy assembled them.

March found Steven Pohjola, Jim Lundquist and Glen Rogers reinstalling the western portion of track 1 at Campo as well as Pablo Martinez and Jim replacing panels on the Shop Building which had blown off.

In April, Frank Denison, Timothy Miller and Jim Lundquist sanded the La Mesa Depot in preparation for painting.

May had contractors painting the La Mesa Depot while volunteers Frank Denison, Jim Lundquist and Dawn Lundquist replaced emergency lights in the Exhibit Hall.

In July, we hired contractors to replace the clear panels on the roof of the Exhibit Hall.

September found the installation of drainage near the horse barn by Brian Elmore and Jim Lundquist with assistance from Roark Stump after Glen Rogers had spent much time construction a driveway around the barn.

For ten days in October, Frank Denison and Jim Lundquist rebuilt the lunchroom exterior wall with new windows and supporting studs.

The final project for 2023 started in November and continued into December with the replacement of the walking path over a drainage ditch from Railroad Museum to the Exhibit Hall. Brian Elmore, Gabe Larson, Jim Lundquist, Frank Denison, Bruce Semelberger, Dawn Lundquist and Steven Pohjola worked on this project, the photos of which are in shown below.

In addition to these specific projects, there are always ongoing efforts, like the weekly clean-up of the grounds by Pablo and Roark; tree trimming by Jim Lundquist, Steven Pohjola and Frank Denison and dragging the driveways and parking lots by Glen Rogers.

In 2024, plans are underway to restart work on the Early California History mine train, major tree trimming and continuing to remove junk from our property. As always, funding is an issue for these projects, but, one improvement we know will happen are new picnic tables at the Campo Depot. There is a very large drainage project which will move forward once grant funds are released. We hope that the planning effort for a new building could start as well.

Thank you to all the volunteers which made all these and untold other projects move forward. If you would like to become involved, please reach out to Jim Lundquist via email at Jim@psrm.org or give him a call at 619-417-7059. **HAPPY NEW YEAR.**



Hot Scoop



January 2024



Welcome new members by Carl Brooker.

The museum could not keep trains running, the tracks repaired, the lights on, fuel purchased, insurance paid and the North Pole operational without our members. The Benefactor level of membership is the highest tier of membership we offer – the museum is extremely excited to announce that Dwight Couch of Santa Maria, CA has become our newest museum benefactor! Hopefully Dwight will make it down to take a ride on the Santa Maria Railbus once we get it finished this spring!

It was also a great month for the exclusive life membership club, Lee Huntington joined the museum as

Down at the La Mesa Depot

by Timothy Miller, Station Master

As 2023 winds down, I want to review the year and share with you, the Membership, some of the events that have shaped the past year:

During this year, BG Miller, Colin Atwood, Donna Spevack, Paul Falk, and I were able to decorate the depot and keep it open and accessible to the public.

Most La Mesa community events this year saw the depot open and hosted by museum volunteers.

The depot was also enhanced this year when the City replicated the drinking fountain that had been long missing, offering cool relief on hot days.

New paint covers the depot, thanks to Frank Denison and Jim Lundquist, as well as the painters who were funded by a City grant.

Thanks to the efforts of Bruce Semelsberger and others, advertising for our weekly and special events trains have been hung so that the motoring public and transit riders are kept up to date with our events.

Due to my accident mid-year, we didn't make as much progress with the model railroad display in the baggage room as hoped, but it was covered nicely for our Christmas display! Check out the photo.

our newest life member. The museum is fortunate to have such dedicated members who commit to financially supporting the museum. Lee hails from even further than most with his home station in Huntsville, AL – its great to see support coming in from such far locations.

And as always, PSRM is excited to welcome the following seven new family, individual, senior, and student members of our museum: Renee Choy, Barney Evans, Ryan Hodge, Annette Kowerski, Blake Marnell, Alex Syktich, and Michael Wendorf.

W E L C O M E

Unfortunately, this year saw an increase in homeless encampments around the depot, which required clean-up afterwards. Also, our most viewed steam locomotive, the Mohave Northern #3, is 100 years old this year, and the wood is showing its age. It is starting to be viewed as a nuisance by our neighbors, since it is targeted by climbers, taggers and used as an outhouse by the homeless.



Thanks very much to all those who have helped PSRM continue to be an important part of the La Mesa community scene. I look forward to 2024 and new ways to improve our presence in La Mesa. Paul Falk and Bennett Spevack pass out candy at our award winning restored 1984 La Mesa Depot ([https://](https://www.psrn.org/visitor-information/la-mesa-depot/)



www.psrn.org/visitor-information/la-mesa-depot/). Paul is a regular staffer at the depot on Saturday's while Bennett was helping out that day.

Goodbye See



you next year