



A publication for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum members

Campo Railroad Museum

May 2026

La Mesa Depot Museum

NEW PLATFORM LIGHTS INSTALLED AT THE CAMPO DEPOT

THANKS TO PERRY ELECTRIC AND COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO FOR THEIR SUPPORT





**Pacific Southwest Railway Museum
Association, Inc. WWW.PSRM.ORG
619-465-PSRM (7776)**

Campo Railroad Museum
Campo Depot
Highway 94 at Forrest Gate Rd, Campo
619-478-9937

La Mesa Depot Museum & Office
4695 Nebo Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941

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.

Museum Directors
President: Stephen Hager
Vice President: Cass Witkowski
Treasurer: Carl Brooker
Secretary: Duke Schweikert
Equipment Dept: vacant
Facilities Dept: Frank E. Denison IV
Museum Services Dept: Jim Lundquist
Operations Dept: Colin Atwood

Museum Staff
Archivist: Bruce Semelsberger
Asst Dir. Of Facilities: Jim Lundquist
Fundraising: Donna Spevack
Hot Scoop Editor: Jim Lundquist
Membership: Lena Ibarra
Social Media Manager: Jason Drenkow
Station Master (La Mesa): Timothy Miller
Volunteer Coordinator: David Choy
Acting Equipment Dir: Stephen Hager
Gift Shop Manager: Vacant

MEMBERS

UPCOMING EVENTS



Special Events:

May 1 - May 18 - The Big Exchange (visit local museums)
May 2 & 3 - Campo Days

Regular Schedule:

At Campo Railroad Museum:

Saturdays & Sundays- Golden State train rides at 10:30, 1:00 & 2:30 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays - volunteer work days.

Wednesdays and Saturdays - Library open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Call Bruce Semelsberger at 619-264-7282 for an appointment

La Mesa Depot Open:

Tuesday & Thursday Noon - 3 p.m.

Volunteers are at both locations during the week as well.

For more information, please email: volunteer@psrm.org

Platform Lights at the Campo Depot

During our evening trains, we needed more lighting along the platform to load and unload our passenger trains. Complicating this need was that the lights needed to go over the historic equipment on display on the house track while keeping the Federal Railroad Administration clearance on both the sides and top.

Our request for a County grant to complete this work was approved. Then, local Campo contractor Perry Electric came forward to donate their manpower and equipment to complete the job! Perry also donated the light heads. We purchased the required poles, arms and concrete for the bases, then stepped back and let the professionals complete the job. The final wiring and lights were installed by Life member Jon Howard.

The lights look great and really improve our evening operations.



THANK YOU ALL.



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

CAMPO DAYS

— ★ ★ ★ —

MAY 2ND AND 3RD, 2026

CAMPO RAILROAD MUSEUM

750 Depot St., Campo, CA 91096

• TRAIN RIDES • VENDORS •
COMMUNITY ORGS • FOOD
HISTORICAL DISPLAYS
• RAIL CLUBS • LIVE MUSIC •
THE ATHEY MINE
BEER GARDEN!



www.PSRM.org/campo-days

From the Back Platform

By Stephen Hager, President

April has been another busy month for the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association. At the Campo Railroad Museum, we started the month off with the final weekend of our Easter-themed Bunny Trains. This was followed by our two-week brakeman class where we inducted five volunteers into our brakeman training program. Following this, we operated our second set of Backcountry Wine Trains for the year. Finally, we held our Annual Members Dinner at Mimi's Café in Mission Valley on April 23. Thank you to all the members and volunteers who attended the event.

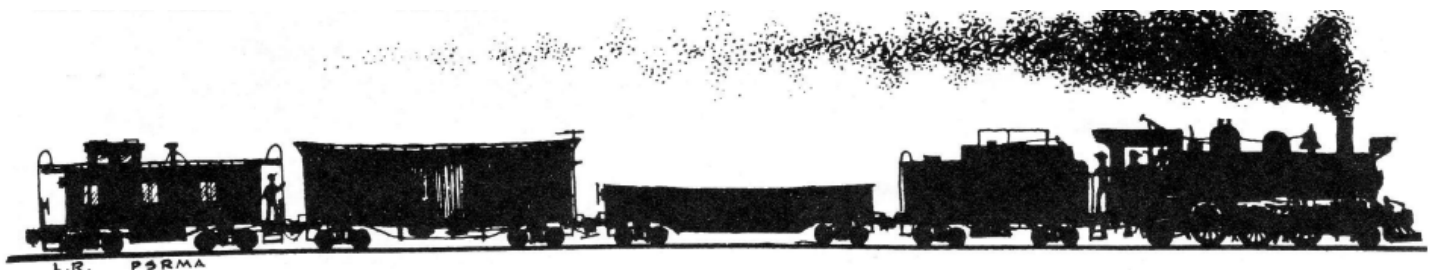
At the dinner, we handed out certificates to all volunteers who put in 100 or more documented volunteer hours during 2025. We also gave out our annual department awards for standout volunteers in Administration, Equipment, Facilities, Museum Services, and Operations. Congratulations to Stephen Sherman, Jaden Soroka, Richard Finch, Annie Field & Mike Acosta and Dave Little, respectively, and thank you for your hard work and contributions to our organization! I then had the honor of giving out the Railfan of the Year Award, the highest award that we bestow upon a volunteer for their service to the organization, to Jennifer Brooker. Jenn's wide-reaching hard work over the past few years is evident everywhere you look: the revitalized Campo Depot gift shop, many new and improved special events, media outreach, new partnerships with outside organizations, and a growing volunteer base. To close out the evening, we viewed the "2025 Year in Review" slideshow with photos submitted by volunteers of happenings at the museum. If you missed the annual dinner or would like to re-watch the slideshow, you can view it at this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/19YUuXb2QAM86u9NGZ7pkSe3AcaR47RwS/view?usp=drive_link

With these events and classes happening in the foreground, projects are also ongoing in the background.

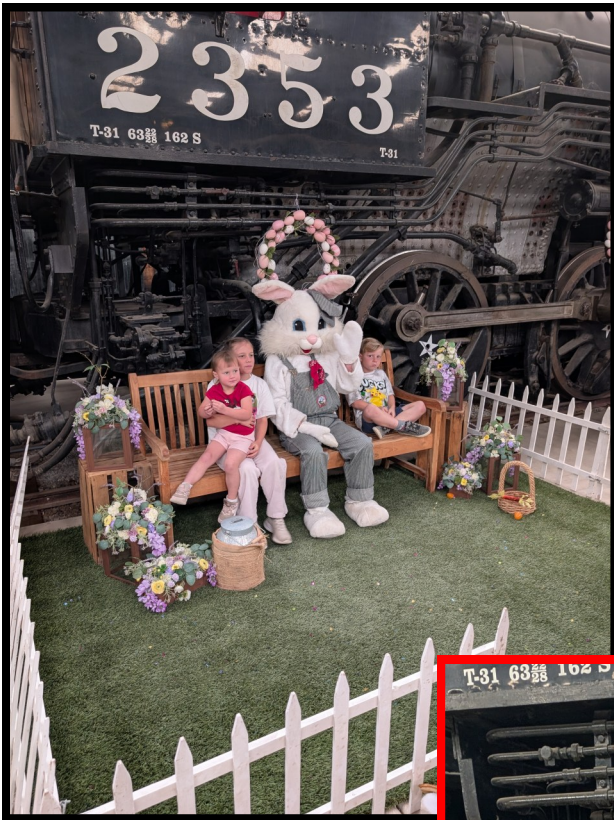
As you may recall, last year, we had the exterior wood siding of the Campo Depot replaced with new Hardie Board fiber cement siding. The Hardie Board came factory colored in the correct Southern Pacific common standard "Colonial Yellow" and "Light Brown" colors. Certain areas of wood trim and the doors were not replaced in that project and needed to be repainted to match the Hardie Board colors. The Facilities Department has been busy at work stripping and repainting these remaining areas to match the rest of the depot.

In the Equipment Department, we have embarked on a major tear-down of Southern Pacific GP9 3709. Although the locomotive was restored to operation in 2023, it still needs significant work to fully complete its restoration. The first step of this process is body work to replace the sheet metal panels and framing in and around the cab and nose that suffered significant corrosion from the years that the locomotive sat next to the Pacific Ocean in Camp Pendleton. We were in for quite a surprise when we cut the sunshades off the roof-sidewall transitions on either side of the cab, only to find gaping holes in the sidewalls behind them! We have plenty of steel on hand to replace the sections we're cutting out, thanks to a grant received from the Emery Rail Heritage Trust for the project back in 2021. The Emery Trust awarded us another \$10,000 grant earlier this year to help pay for the next step in the restoration: reinstallation of the locomotive's dynamic brake system and various other mechanical and electrical components. Many parts for this phase of the restoration have already arrived, and the body work will transition directly into installing the new parts throughout the remainder of the year. As we continue work on the locomotive's body and systems, we'll also be stripping the old paint off and spraying on a couple coats of primer. Please enjoy the accompanying photos and stay tuned for more updates in the coming months as work progresses.

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!



BUNNY TRAINS PHOTOS



ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING AND AWARD BANQUET



Below: Left to right: Stephen Hager, Colin Atwood, Cass Witkowski and Jim Lundquist



RAILFAN OF THE YEAR AWARDED TO JENN BROOKER



Each year, our railway museum recognizes one volunteer who stood out that year as going above and beyond for the organization. This award is called the “Railfan of the Year” . For the year 2025, Jenn Brooker was recognized for her tireless efforts as Vice President, Giftshop head, co-leader of the Backcountry Wine Train, Easter Bunny and Pumpkin Express, Gift Shop leader as well as Campo Days Special events (amongst others). Jenn is a terrific, friendly person and is well deserving as being recognized as our MVV (Most Valuable Volunteer) this past year.

Photo by Jim Lundquist 4/24/26

Fundraising for March/April - Donna Spevack, Administrator of Fund Development

(fundraising@psrm.org)

Spring is here and so is the Big Exchange!

Just show your museum membership card to one of the reciprocal museums on the list, May 1-18 and you get free general admission. Visit [The Big Exchange | May 2026 - San Diego Museum Council](#) for details, participating museum list and restrictions.

Note: Campo Railroad Museum – (Applies to museum admission only, NOT excursion ride tickets or special events. Available in-person only).

Or if you are a member of PSRM you can get into any of the 50+ museums for free, just be sure to flash your membership card when you check-in.

Purchase or Renew your membership today and take advantage of the Big Exchange!



La Mesa Depot news: This past week the caboose was vandalized when a window was broken. It has been repaired. The La Mesa Depot is open for visitors on Tuesdays and Thursdays so stop on by and say *Hello* to Timothy, Jeff or Mark, who are not only proudly showing off the La Mesa Depot, but also busy doing restoration work on the Locomotive! Check out the restorations that are being done thanks to a generous donation from The Gerald W. Fackler Charitable Remainder Trust.

Thank you to our donors for March/April for their support: **YTD \$14,853.59**

\$100-\$5,000

Robert Stebbins; Cass Witkowski

\$1-\$99

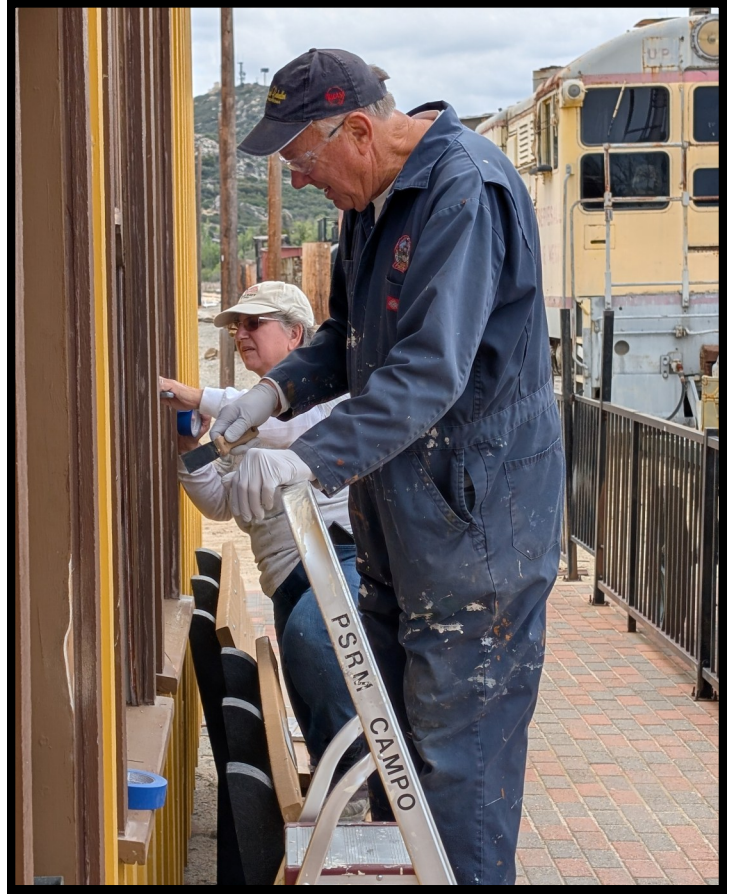
Rob Porter (Locomotive and Caboose Restoration); Jeanne Courval; Bryce Reynolds; Patric Vargas; Michael Hansen; Connie Hilyer; Adrian Gonzales; Carrie Crowell; Monicka Devine; Rosario G. Gandara; William Martinez; Paul Moore; Mark Peterson & Colleen Conaway; Diana Osborn

If you would like to make a donation for general support or for a specific project or program, please go to: [Donate - Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association, Inc.](#) or www.psrn.org/donate. We have multiple projects to choose from or if you are a person who likes to volunteer, PSRM is always looking for great volunteers to assist with various tasks at the Campo Museum.

Thank you!

FINAL PAINTING EFFORT FOR THE CAMPO DEPOT (FOR NOW!)

The Campo Depot had new Hardie board installed on the outside to the Campo Depot. The remaining exterior wood needed to be painted, which included all windows, doors and some skirting. This sanding, taping and painting project was undertaken over four weeks by Frank Denison, Dawn Lundquist, Steve Pohjola and Jim Lundquist. Mission Accomplished.



Most of the Facilities Department projects occur during the week when we have no public visitors. In this way, we do not interfere with our visitors enjoying our museum nor do we have to worry about protecting them from our activities.

Because of this fact, we have a limited number of volunteers who can assist, most of them are retired. Each of our schedules vary from week to week, so our planned days to work at the Campo Railroad Museum also flex each week. If you can assist during the week, please

contact Jim Lundquist, who will contract you in advance of our work day. Jim's email is Jim@psrm.org Our hard working volunteers would love to have you join us.

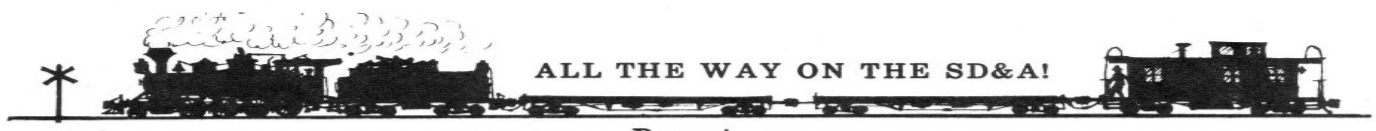
Operations Volunteers by Rich Paulus, Chief Operations Officer

Train Service - those who are qualified train crew members, speeder operators/crew, and trainees who have helped us run 12 Bunny Trains, 9 Golden State trains, 3 School Trains, 2 Wine Trains, and the number of days they have volunteered through April 19: Colin Atwood 3, Alyssa Andersen 1, Jim Baker 1, Carl Brooker 2, Ken Brown 2, David Choy 1, Jaxon Dixon 3, Greg Flores 4, Stephen Hager 2, Ryan Hodge 3, Justin Hyland 6, Dave Little 4, Jim Lundquist, 1, Mike McIntyre 3, Bob Nickles 3, Rich Paulus 1.

MOS – maintenance of signal volunteers who conducted monthly maintenance and testing of highway crossing signal systems this month: Chad Baker 1.

Brakeman class - these are the volunteers who have worked the Spring Brakeman Class at Campo and the number of days they volunteered this period: Jim Baker 1, Ken Brown 1, and Stephen Hager 2.

There was a total of 45 volunteer-days this period.



Membership News By Lena Ibarra

The list this month is short and sweet. Impactful, though, you won't believe!

Please welcome our newest members: Jeanne Courval with a Senior Life membership, Monicka Devine with a Contributing membership and Adrian Gonzalez with a student membership. Thank you for your generosity and welcome aboard.

And don't forget about the BIG EXCHANGE happening from May 1 – 18, with over 50 museums participating. Your railway museum membership card gets you in.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Our effort to get the word out about our great museum involves many different activities.

Morgan Snyder has a booth set up at the Campo Environmental Protection Agency Fair on April 18, 2026.

If you become aware of other outreach opportunities or can staff a booth yourself, please contact the Director of Museum Services Jim Lundquist by email at Jim@psrm.org



LEFT: Jenn Brooker spent several hours of hard labor to remove graffiti off several boulders in the railway right-of-way.

We hope this doesn't have to become a common effort.

BELOW: Stephen Hager instructs Engineer Trainee Carl Brooker in SP #3873.

We currently have several volunteers in Engineer Training.



Down at the La Mesa Depot by Timothy Miller, Station Agent

Jeff Devenberg and I have been progressing slowly but surely with our work on the Mojave Northern #3 cosmetic restoration. In the photo you can see the progress on the engineer's side. Most of the fittings we need to disconnect have not been touched in 70 years! So it is a struggle. We prep with a penetrating solution and try and remove any paint or rust on the threads of the item several days before we start disassembly. Then we heat the item with a propane torch. Sometimes it takes several days to get the action we



want. But we aren't giving up, and we wouldn't be as far as we are in the process without Jeff's dedication.

The San Diego Fine Woodworkers Association sent us a few photos of their progress on the complete rebuilding of the #3's cab. Very impressive!



Work days on the #3 are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00 to 3:00PM. You are welcome to join Jeff and me anytime!



WORK PROGRESSES ON SOUTHERN PACIFIC GP-9 #3709



Cutting out the rusty metal and welding in new steel plating is the current effort on our low-nose General Purpose (GP-9).

Track Maintenance Days by James

Caestecker

Work Days:

Saturday, May 30 - Work Train - MP 63 Cut

Friday, June 26 - PSRM Yard - Prep work for Saturday June 27.

Saturday, June 27 - PSRM Yard - Yard Lead Bal-lasting/Repairs

Saturday, July 18 - PSRM Yard or Main Track at Campo TBD

Saturday, August 1 - PSRM Yard or Main Track at Campo TBD



Things to bring: Work Gloves, Work Boots, Sunscreen, Water (Also provided), Lunch (Please bring your own), Safety Glasses/Sunglasses/Regular Glasses, Safety Vest (if you have one, we have others).

We will provide hearing protection (ear plugs) while we're working with machinery.

No prior experience is required for this work. We will teach you everything you need to know! Please let me know if you have any questions.

If you're able to make it to any of these work days, **please RSVP** to me at jcaestecker@psrm.org.

Brakeman Class

Was just completed at the Campo Railroad Museum.

TOP (left to right) Will, Justin and Jaxon

BOTTOM: Chloe, Leo and Instructor Stephen Hager,



LONG TIME VOLUNTEER AND LIFE MEMBER KEN HELM PASSES



Ken Helm passed away on December 20th of last year. Ken spent many decades as an active volunteer with our museum, holding down a Board position while head Mechanic. Ken was involved in every activity for the museum from the mid-1970's until his health failed in the 2010's.

Ken's family had a farm in Chula Vista where he self-taught himself mechanical skills. His interest in trains started early in life as he watched steam locomotives travel down L Street in Chula Vista to a citrus packing plant. After graduating from San Diego State University with a Master's degree in Science, Ken took a job and lived in Glendale. That didn't stop him from volunteering for our museum. He would drive down every weekend to make Board meetings and to work for our museum. Ken was involved in getting equipment ready for Amtrak excursions (AT&SF #1509, Robert Peary, Union Pacific #576), as well as making everything ready for the many great freights to relocate our museum to Campo. Ken made himself even more available when he took a job at the San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant and purchased a home in Carlsbad. Ken was very active in the start-up of our excursion trains on the San Diego & Arizona Railway. His last job took him away from us to Louisville, Kentucky where he taught at the University of Louisville.

Rest in Peace, Kenneth Steven Helm. Born September 24, 1948, passed away December 20, 2025.
Not forgotten.



Campo Depot at night. Looking good!

Photos by Jon Howard 4/16/26





Southern Pacific 1385 at Yuma Jct on the east side of the LA River, Los Angeles, CA. December 26, 1949. M.C. Banks collection

