



Coast Mail

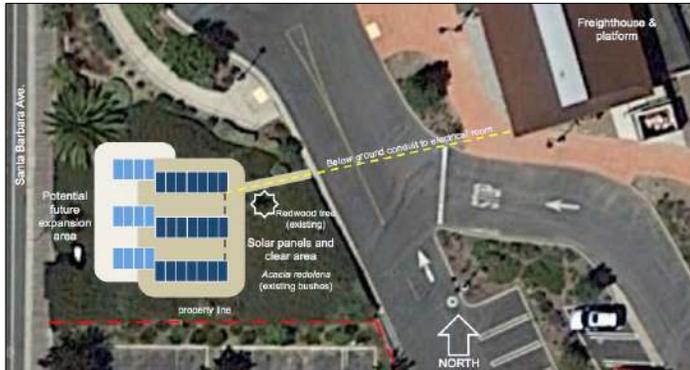
News from the San Luis Obispo
Railroad Museum

Issue Number 69 – Fall 2019

San Luis Obispo, California

slorrm.com

The Museum is open every Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm. It opens other times for groups by arrangement. Contact media@slorrm.com.



Concept aerial view of the Museum's proposed solar electric installation, showing initial phase and potential future expansion.

Solar power will produce savings

Following receipt of a generous grant from the Harold J. Miossi Charitable Trust, the Museum is pursuing a contract and city approval for its long-planned solar electric installation. The panels are expected to offset all the Museum's electricity usage on an annual basis. This will allow funds that would otherwise pay utility bills to be used for educational exhibits and programs. Along with changes to lighting, sealing around doors, and efforts to reduce, re-use, and recycle, solar power will reduce the Museum's environmental footprint. *Below, a street view simulation.*



Membership chair needed

If you'd like to help our more than 200 members stay in touch with Museum opportunities, and encourage more people to join, have we got a job for you! Our previous membership chair needed to take a break for health reasons, opening this great opportunity for someone who's comfortable with computer lists.

Events coordinator needed

If you like working with people and schedules, have we got a job for you! The only pay is satisfaction. But you don't need to know anything about trains or history. Our previous events coordinator needed more time for her child and business, opening this great opportunity for someone to get to know our community and to help its members discover us.

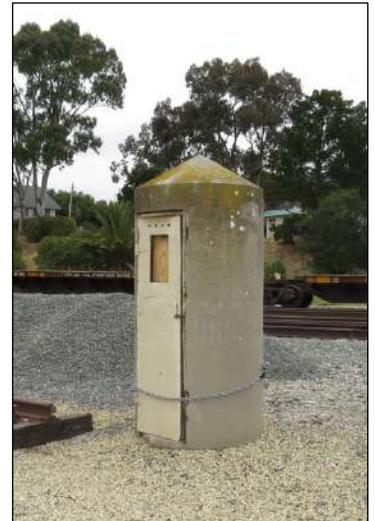
Publicity chair needed

If you're interested in print, broadcast, and online media, have we got a job for you! Publicity was previously part of the events coordinator's role, and will continue to work closely with that person. Can you believe there are still some area residents who don't know about all we offer? Help us change that!

Restoration Progress Telephone booth

Curator Brad LaRose acquired and arranged transportation for this example of Southern Pacific Railroad's "bullet style" cylindrical, concrete telephone booth. It's now near the south end of the display track. It likely was made at SP's Oakland facilities. The version stored nearby has a narrow eave and a flare at the base.

Before radios and wireless telephones, train crews used phones in these



shelters, connected by the railroads' own lines, to report problems and to resolve movement issues.

You didn't dial the instrument. You threw a switch to connect the battery, listened for any party-line conversation to end, and announced yourself to the office assigned to your track division. This booth came from northern San Luis Obispo County.

Central Coast Railroad Festival

Join us at the Museum on Saturday, October 5, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., for the annual event: swap meet, food vendors, operating model railroad, passing trains, tours and special presentations. For the schedule, see slorrm.com/191004.html.

Admission is free for members; you can join at the entrance. For information on activities at other places and times, such as miniature train rides at Bitter Creek Western, see ccrrf.com/schedule.



If you're a Museum member interested in any of these positions, contact us at info@slorrm.com or at 805 548-1894.

**Preserving California's
Central Coast Railroad History**

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum is a non-profit educational institution. Founded to preserve and present California Central Coast railroad history by collecting, restoring, displaying, and operating relevant railroad artifacts, photographs, models, and documents, its goal is to facilitate a better understanding of railroads' impact on our area's social, cultural, and economic history.

Contact

Telephone (message) 805 548-1894
 e-mail: info@slorrm.com
 Website: www.slorrm.com
 Mail: 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Become a member

Membership provides opportunities for anyone interested in today's railroads, railroad history, train travel, or model railroading.

Individual members pay \$36 per year, a family \$60, and a sustaining member \$100. Junior memberships (ages 12-18) for the model railroaders are available (see our Model Railroad Superintendent for details).

Application forms can be downloaded from the Museum's website and mailed with payment, or you can join online by clicking [Membership](#) and using PayPal. (Mailing and web addresses are in left-hand column.)

Membership benefits include free admission to the Museum and access to Members Only features of the website, including full current issues of *Coast Mail*.

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Anyone may access the Museum's *Bylaws, Collections Policy, Development & Operations Plan, Code of Conduct*, and other documents at slorrm.com. Or request a paper copy via info@slorrm.com.

Museum Store

To raise funds, the Museum offers several items for sale. T-shirts, baseball caps, belt buckles, mugs, enameled pins, embroidered patches, engineer hats, and videos are available through the Museum website www.slorrm.com. Click on **Company Store**.

Coast Mail is published quarterly by the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.
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TIMETABLE

Board of Directors meetings will be held Sept. 10, Oct. 8, and Nov. 12, at 6:00 p.m., at 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue, San Luis Obispo. For committee meetings, use the contact information at left.



Museum work days are held the fourth Saturday each month. If you're a member, come by and lend a hand.

Upcoming Events

- September 20 – Wine Rail Excursion to Fablest Wine Company (sold out)
- October 4 – Wine Rail Excursion to Fablest Wine Company (sold out)
- October 18 – Wine Rail Excursion to Fablest Wine Company
- December 7 – Santa arrives on Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner (2:15 – 5:00 p.m.)



Gary See photo

Many young visitors

In June, 12 Girl Scouts from the Central Coast and beyond spent the afternoon at the Museum, learning about railroad safety, whistle and hand signals, modeling, and more. This activity expanded the program the Museum has had for several years involving Boy Scouts. The same week, 21 local high school students in a special history class visited as part of their year-end activity.

Sometimes, learning hand signals makes you want to dance (at left).



Recent History – Ferrocarril Mexicano

In February this lone locomotive rested awhile at San Luis Obispo, on the spur track for locomotives kept ready to help heavy freight trains up and down Cuesta Grade. Ferromex operates about 7,500 miles of track in Mexico and connects with Union Pacific at several points in California, Arizona, and Texas. The former Southern Pacific water tank and palm trees have been the backdrop for several exotic visitors over the years [*Coast Mail* issues 55 and 57].

The helper spur is empty these days; virtually all long-distance freight trains use UP's San Joaquin Valley route. Los Angeles to Guadalupe still sees trains.

Board of Directors

Charles A. Jordan.....President
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Crew List

Museum Manager Diane Marchetti
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 Curator Brad LaRose
 Treasurer Dave Rohr
 LibrarianChris Hurd
 Webmaster Jamie Foster
 Operations Manager Stephanie Hovanitz
 Events/Publicity Coordinator: vacant
 Model RR Superintendent ...Andrew Merriam
 Membership Chair vacant
 Fundraising ChairFeride Schroeder
 Secretary, Archivist, Newsletter Editor
 Glen Matteson (newsletter@slorrm.com)

Free Books!

Thanks to generous donors, in addition to bargain books in the Museum Store, several are being given away at no cost. Help us spread the good fortune by taking some to a homebound neighbor, a neighborhood mini-library box, a sheltered living facility, or for yourself.

Our Plymouth switcher is small, but this is amazing.

Our 1941 Plymouth switching locomotive, originally used by the U.S. Army at Camp Roberts, now resides happily on the Museum’s display track. So, is the image below a digitally altered photograph?



No. That’s an HO model (1/87th full size), made for hobby supplier Walthers and provided by Museum member and model railroad docent Paul Edwards. Your editor was excited to imagine how much easier it would be to pose the HO model than the full-size locomotive, as illustrations are done for a planned Museum children’s book featuring *Danny the Diesel Locomotive*.



U.S. Navy photo - SLORRM Archives P10400.4

Right-of-way question: train or missile?

Thanks to a recent find and donation by Museum member Ted Van Klaveren, we have the image at left, and a news release, from the U.S. Naval Missile Facility, Point Arguello. While the documents have several numbers for form type, release sequence, and file, there’s no specific date. However, Fall 1963 can be inferred. The text attached to the photo:

A special plot board in the Surveillance Room shows the location of all Southern Pacific trains during missile operations. Impact limit lines will be drawn on the board just before launch time, and trains in the hazard corridor will be monitored by helicopter until they clear the impact limit lines.

Federal Electric Corporation technicians are assigned to maintain and operate the surveillance equipment at Point Arguello.

In the image, the ocean is to the left, but to the technician’s right. Is this a non-functional backward pose for the camera? The railroad siding at Tangair is at the end of the diagonal line extending from the technician’s forehead. Surf, the current Amtrak station for Vandenberg base and Lompoc, is just above the knuckles of his right hand. And Honda, site of the 1923 naval disaster, is near his right elbow.

Some sources say that all trains nearby were stopped when missiles were about to be launched. That may have been for Air Force ICBMs, or during later years. Retired Southern Pacific signal supervisor Sid Marques, in his Museum oral history account, remembered finding burning debris on the tracks from *something* falling out of the sky.

Peace Train Soviet Premier's 1959 Trip

Sixty years ago this September, leader of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev visited California. He was disappointed that, due to security concerns, he did not go to Disneyland. But maybe even better, he rode Southern Pacific's Coast Route from Los Angeles to San Francisco. According to one anecdote, American officials wanted him to be impressed by the intercontinental ballistic missiles stationed at Vandenberg Air Force Base, but he spent that time admiring the ocean views.

The special train stopped briefly at Santa Barbara and at San Luis Obispo.

Below are parts of the menu available on that trip, which had Russian on the left-hand panel and English on the right. The Soviet premier probably didn't need to dig in his pocket for rubles, but members of the press corps may have.

And there's a chance that Khrushchev's pleasant train ride along the coast helped prevent the cold war from becoming hotter.

LUNCHEON COFFEE SHOP	
<i>Please write each item on meal check. Waiters are not permitted to accept orders given orally.</i>	
1. GRILLED FILLET OF SEASONAL FISH, PARSLEY BUTTER, VEGETABLE, POTATOES.	2.50
2. FRIED SELECT YOUNG CHICKEN (HALF), GARDEN PEAS, CREAM-WHIPPED POTATOES.	2.50
3. BAKED SUGAR-CURED HAM, CHAMPAGNE SAUCE, VEGETABLE, POTATOES.	2.50
INCLUDES:	
GRAPEFRUIT AND AVOCADO SALAD	
HOT DINNER ROLLS	
ICE CREAM WITH WAFERS PRESERVED FRUIT IN SYRUP	

ЗАВТРАК КАФЭ	
1. ФИЛЕТ ЖАРеноЙ РЫБЫ НА РАШПЕРЕ ПО СЕЗОНУ ПЕТРУШКА В МАСЛЕ, ОВОЩИ И КАРТОФЕЛЬ	2.50
2. ЖАРЕНый ЦЫПЛЕНОК (половина) ЗЕЛЕНый ГОРОШЕК, ПЮРЕ	2.50
3. ЗАПЕЧЕНАЯ ВЕТЧИНА, СОУС ШАМПАГНЕ ОВОЩИ, КАРТОФЕЛЬ	2.50
цена включает:	
САЛАТ ИЗ ГРЕЙПФРУТА И АВОКАДО	
ГОРЯЧИЕ ВУЛОЧКИ	
МОРОЖЕНОЕ С ВИСКВИТАМИ КОНСЕРВИРОВАННЫЕ ФРУКТЫ В СИРОПЕ	
СЛОЕННЫЕ ПИРОЖКИ С ЯБЛОКАМИ	
КОФЕ ЧАЙ ГОРЯЧИЙ ПЛИ СО ЛЬДОМ МОЛОКО	



Gary See photo

The Museum's former events coordinator Saphya Lotery does her best to follow Glen Matteson's explanation of one of his paintings. Other displays were inside the Freighthouse.

Art After Dark

On the pleasant evening of August 2, the Museum again hosted Art After Dark. This is a monthly activity involving many venues, sponsored by ARTS Obispo, and focused on downtown San Luis Obispo. It features a changing roster of local and regional artists using a wide range of media.

The Museum participates about once a year, offering an open house with free admission, and free treats. This year it was ice cream samples from McConnell's Fine Ice Creams of Santa Barbara. Visitors could buy cartons if they wanted more than samples.

Work by eight artists was displayed, including painting, experimental video, a traditional slide show, and small metal sculptures incorporating items from railroad and other sources.

Check the Museum's website regularly or subscribe to "From the Freighthouse" emails to see when future events like this are scheduled.

Mystery Photo

Where are we? Answer will be in the next Coast Mail.



Brad LaRose photo