



Letter from the Railroad

Since the downtown rail yard and facilities were not part of the purchase of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, we are moving our operations west of Santa Maria to be closer to our customers.

I would like to thank the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad for all of their support of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Unfortunately as a business, we destroy some history as we move forward to preserve our future. With an organization like Friends, this organization preserves history as we move forward as a very relevant transportation system in the 21st Century.

Friends have assisted in special events and excursions for the almost two years of activities since forming. These special events can really tax the railroad's resources as we are a freight railroad. Putting on these events would not have been possible without the volunteer assistance of Friends.

We will be moving our operations out of the downtown rail yard as both the Miller Street and McClelland Street rail yards were not part of the sale. With the upcoming move, we did not feel that we have the resources to put on the Rail Fair this year. Looking forward as we near the 100th anniversary of the SMVRR in 2011, we hope to work with the city and the Friends to find a suitable location and resources to put on an event.

The Santa Maria Valley Railroad thanks the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad for your continued support. To all of the new members, welcome aboard. To all of the original members, we hope that all of you will continue to renew your memberships to an organization committed to preserving the history of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad.

Rob Himoto, President
Santa Maria Valley Railroad



Volunteers

Our very successful volunteer program has assisted the SMVRR with public and private events. The volunteer program started as providing assistance with special events and excursions for the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. The mission of the volunteer program is to provide a railroad experience for participants.

The Volunteer Program is expanding to include eventual train operations and staffing and serving the excursion trains.

There are also many other opportunities for volunteers. Archiving, preservation of artifacts and documents, commissary for Friends events, mailings, etc. are some of the needed volunteer positions.

Friends Volunteers assisted in many events for the year including the April Speeder event, private excursions, and Friends programs.

On March 15th the first Friends Orientation Training Class required for volunteering was well attended, as well as several other smaller classes.



Friends members who completed the initial training program and have been certified by the SMVRR are: William Baldwin, Greg Benson, Dale Blakey, Ernie Blakey, Jamie Foster, Harry Harlow, Karl Hovanitz, Patti LaRose, Cathy Larsen, Hal Madson, Mike Orcutt-Clenard, Dini O'Roark, Kevin O'Roark, Matt Regusci, Mark Riese, Gary See, Dennis Thurman, and Gary Van Aken.

Thank You!

- Anthony Torres** – Linens for excursions
- Star Automotive** – Printing newsletters and flyers
- Kevin O'Roark** – Display boards and display materials
- Foster and Regusci Family** – Hot dogs and food for lunch at Bitter Creek with the Speeder group
- Weyrick Lumber** – Display materials
- Santa Maria Valley Railroad** - Major sponsor
- Cambria Estate Vineyards & Winery** - Auction item
- Coastal Custom Basket** - Auction item
- Robert Wayne Designs** - Auction item
- Rhonda Norton** - Auction item

Programs

Friends Programs hosted by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad have been very popular as subjects range from history to present day railroading and also the future of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Next month (August), the program is cancelled as the Santa Maria Valley Railroad will be moving out of the downtown location. We will have a new location in September at Heritage Square thanks to Friends member and historian Hal Madson.

Our March 13th program featured Friends member Bill Schertle with a presentation "All About Speeders". Bill talked about the origins of speeders and their uses, why they are no longer used, how to go about owning your own speeder, speeder excursions, the national organization North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA) and NARCOA western chapter Motorcars Operators West (MOW).



Our April 10th program featured Friends member Jamie Foster with a presentation on the Alvin Elementary School program about railroads that was put together by Jamie's wife Lynn who at the time taught 3rd grade at Alvin Elementary School in Santa Maria. The program ran from 2001-2003 and integrated many



subjects including history, mathematics, geography, spelling, and art into a railroad program where students learned about the history of American Railroads and the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and what railroads play today. Projects included building a model of the downtown SMVRR rail yard and facilities where students learned about model building and after completion switching cars. Field trips included a tour of the SMVRR

engine house and a trip to Santa Barbara on the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner. This highly successful program resulted in students learning and having an appreciation of the SMVRR and the railroad industry.

On May 8th, Rob Himoto, President of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, gave a presentation on the cur-



rent operations of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad including commodities hauled in the Santa Maria Valley, and the role rail freight transportation plays in the Central Coast. Looking to the future the SMVRR plans to move to an industrial park facility where transloading could be expanded and potential rail served businesses can be located.

The program on June 12th Friends historian Hal Madson presented a talk on the electric lines in the Santa Maria Valley. What is becoming a not so known fact is that there were electrified railroads in the Santa Maria Valley. The Pacific Coast Narrow Gauge Railroad electrified some of their lines including the line from Santa Maria and Guadalupe and a line at the Union Sugar Mill in Betteravia.

The program on July 12th marked the last program at the SMVRR Freight Depot as the SMVRR



will be moving out of the downtown rail yard facilities. Friends member Jamie Foster presented the history of the Freight Depot and its role with the railroad and the community as it served as the Railway Express Agency station.

Annual Board Meeting

The Annual Friends of the SMVRR Board Meeting was held on June 20, 2008 at Ambrosia's Restaurant. Jamie Foster, Gina Keough, and Kevin O'Roark ran unopposed and were reelected to the Board. The Board reelected Kevin O'Roark as President, Jeff Karsh as Chairman, and Jamie Foster as Treasurer. The Board elected Gina Keough as Secretary.

New Members

New members who have joined since the last newsletter, Patti and Jarrett LaRose, Jonathon Coutu, Cliff and Grace Dennell, Bob and Mary Ellen Orach, Al Scheff and family, Joel Bingham and Laura Ruiz, Sergio Silva, and Julie Smith.

Second Annual Speeder Run

On Saturday April 5, Motorcars Operators West hosted the Second Annual Central Rails, Large and Small, on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. 25 speeders participated in this historic event with SMV Railbus No. 9 leading the way. The Railbus was purchased from a scrap yard in Santa Maria in 1965 and was restored by the Pacific Southwest Rail Museum. Jim Lundquist and crew brought the Railbus up for this special occasion as it touched its home rails for the first time since 1962.

Jesse Flores, MOW Foreman for the SMVRR, and crew prepared a Santa Maria Style Tri-Tip BBQ for lunch. Lunch must have been good as it was sold out. Dave Jennings, VP and GM for the SMVRR, and Engineer Merrill Haberman were busy all day dropping gates for the speeder excursion. Rob Himoto and Leah Figaro hosted the speeder participants.

Friends volunteers headed by President Kevin O’Roark served lunch, gave shop tours, secured the rail yard, and made sure that the event ran smoothly. Friends volunteers included Dale Blakey, Ernie Blakey, Jonathon Coutu, Jamie Foster, Harry Harlow, Mary Harlow, Karl Hovanitz, Cathy Larsen, Mark Riese, Mike Orcutt-Clenard, Dini O’Roark, Matt Regusci.



Future Excursions on the SMVRR

Future excursion operations will be handed over to the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Since the Santa Maria Valley Railroad is a freight railroad and small numbers of employees, the SMVRR is discontinuing excursion operations with the exception of business and customer specials. With a growing pool of qualified volunteers, the SMVRR decided to hand over the excursion operations to Friends. Also next year’s excursions will not be open to the public, they will only be open to Friends members. Another reason for joining the Friends! Anyone who is interested in volunteering for Friends excursions contact Kevin O’Roark. Not only the day of the event, volunteers are needed for planning and preparation of the excursions.

Bitter Creek Event for Speeder Participants



Friends member Karl Hovanitz graciously opened up the Bitter Creek Western Rail-

road for the speeder participants the day after the speeders ran on the SMVRR. About 150 speeder participants, guests of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, and Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, enjoyed a day of riding trains at Bitter Creek and a fundraiser hot dog lunch. Bitter Creek railroaders (who are all Friends members by the way) operating their trains were Joel Bingham, Dale Blakey, Ernie Blakey, Harry Harlow, Mary Harlow, Patti LaRose, Ginny Orcutt-Clenard, Mike Orcutt-Clenard, Kevin O’Roark, and Dennis Thurman. Volunteers for the lunch included Jamie Foster, Cathy Larsen, Dini O’Roark, and Matt Regusci.



Message from the President

Preserving the history of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad is one of the primary goals of the “Friends” organization. Currently one of our members is busily scanning photos and documents related to the railroad and we welcome any material you may have access to. That being said, it occurs to me that the history of the SMVRR is being played out daily. The rail bus #9 returning to its home rails is a perfect example. It was exciting to document, and be a part of this historical event! There have also been significant changes for the railroad, such as the removal of the East Yard.

The eventual move from the yard downtown will begin a new era of operations for the railroad and present a major growth opportunity for them and their customers. It’s a dynamic time for the SMVRR, as it celebrates its 97th anniversary! I foresee many opportunities for the “Friends” to not only chronicle, but be an active participant in this ongoing story. I look forward to the future of the railroad and the “Friends” with anticipation!

Kevin O’Roark, President
Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad



Final Excursions and Tours

The final excursions out of the McClelland Street yard was a success on Saturday, July 26. A lunch train was fully manned by Friends volunteers with Conductor Dennis Thurman, Car Mechanical Officer Karl Hovanitz, Car Conductor Jamie Foster, Steward Patti LaRose, and Assistant Stewards Harry Harlow, Mary Harlow, and Gary See. On the ground was depot docent and steward Kevin O'Roark.



Final tours of the engine house and blacksmith shop were given in the afternoon between excursions. Friends tour docents included Kevin O'Roark, Jamie Foster, and Karl Hovanitz.

The dinner train was fully catered by Ambrosia's Restaurant. Friends volunteers included Conductor Dennis Thurman, Car Mechanical Officer Karl Hovanitz, and Car Conductor Kevin O'Roark. On the ground were depot assistants Patti LaRose and Gary See.

Dave Jennings, Leah Figaro, and Rob Himoto from the SMVRR were on hand throughout the day.



History Archiving

Gary Van Aken has been scanning photos and historical documents as we continue to build our archiving library. Gary and Jamie Foster have taken many photos of the engine house and rail yard facilities.

Join Friends of the SMVRR

Join the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad! Our mission is to preserve, improve, and interpret the historical aspects of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. We will provide our members and the public with railroading experience and educational opportunities such as dinner train excursions and open house events. We also preserve and interpret the historical, economic and cultural impact of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad on the Santa Maria Valley and California.

Membership Program

To fully participate in the activities surrounding the railroad, one must be a member of the Friends. This includes the opportunity to buy tickets for excursions, volunteer for railroad work, tour railroad facilities, etc.

Basic Membership is \$15

First notification of SMVRR events. 5% discount on any regular purchase at the Santa Maria Valley Railroad Company Store.

Family Membership \$25

Includes all family members living in the same household.

Gandy Dancer Membership \$50

Includes everything in Family Membership and an 8" x 10" SMVRR color picture.

Engineer Membership \$100

Includes everything in Gandy Dancer Membership and a SMVRR t-shirt.

Conductor Membership \$250

Includes everything in Engineer Membership and an SMVRR hat and 10% discount on two tickets to a dinner train excursion.

Trainmaster Membership \$500

Includes everything in Conductor Membership and a discount on the use of the rental of the freight depot facility and a private group discount on a lunch or dinner train excursion.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip Code: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email address: _____
 Level of Membership (amount): \$ _____
 Additional Donation: \$ _____
 Total: \$ _____

Send form and payment to:

Friends of the SMVRR
P.O. Box 1031
Santa Maria, CA 93456-1031

Thank you!