

Friends Valentine's Day Dinner Excursions

On Saturday February 12 the Santa Maria Valley Railroad ran two Valentine's Day Private Excursions for the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. The lunch excursion guests were served a roasted pork loin in a red wine reduction sauce. For a special Valentine's dessert was a chocolate raspberry torte. Dinner was a choice of Ambrosia Restaurant's whole roasted prime rib or fresh filet of salmon. Dessert was Inge's flourless chocolate cake with strawberries and whipped cream. Train crew for the day was Jim McEntire and Dennis Thurman. Car conductors were Jamie Foster and Kevin O'Roark. On board stewards were Patti LaRose, Leah Figaro, and Gary See. Over 20 Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and freight customers enjoyed the the Valentine's Day excursions.



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 rail-roading 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. 10% 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. Two consecutively paid memberships at this level is convertible to Trainmaster/Lifetime level.

Trainmaster/Lifetime Membership \$500

Includes everything in Conductor Membership 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!

Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad

Third Annual Central Coast Rails, Large and Small MOW Speeder Event

On Saturday, April 4, Motorcars Operators West hosted the Third Annual Central Coast Rails, Large and Small, on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. 24 speeders participated with one run in the morning and two runs in the afternoon. The entire railroad was open and the morning run the speeders went from Betteravia to Guadalupe, to downtown Santa Maria where they turned around on Jones Street.

Harry Harlow and Ray Himoto prepared the Santa Maria Style Tri-Tip and Chicken BBQ and Dave Jennings prepared the beans for lunch. Mary Harlow, Dini O'Roark, Leah Figaro, and Melissa Jennings set up, served, and cleaned up afterwards.

Kevin O'Roark, Dr. Marcus, Greg Benson, and Gary Van Aken flagged the crossings and Dennis Thurman and Karl Hovanitz served as pilots for the speeder event. Jamie Foster documented the event shooting pictures for the website.



Bitter Creek Western MOW Speeder Event

On Sunday, April 5, Karl Hovanitz opened the Bitter Creek Western Railroad to the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and the MOW Speeder participants. The Friends served over 120 hot dog lunches. Friends members running trains for Bitter Creek were Kevin O'Roark, Harry Harlow, Mike Orcutt-Clenard, Bill Rust, Aron Kahn, Dennis Thurman, Jack Bodenmann, Virlon Smoot, Patti LaRose, Bob Mowry, Dr. Marcus. Helping with the hot dog BBQ were Dini O'Roark, Mary Harlow, and Ginny Orcutt-Clenard.



Preserving the Betteravia Townsite

Betteravia, California was once a busy little town of several hundred residents, located adjacent to the now closed Union/Holly Sugar refinery, about 6 miles west of Santa Maria. The Santa Maria Valley Railroad has had a presence at this site for nearly a century, initially serving the sugar refinery and the town of Betteravia, and now as the rail yard and corporate office location. The history of the SMVRR and Betteravia are inseparable. When the property owner, Ed Sutti, expressed a strong desire to preserve the history of the town of Betteravia, that was a little more than interesting to some of us Friends!

Armed with author and Friends-member Hal Madson's book "Betteravia, a Modern California Ghost Town", several Friends - Dale Blakey, Kevin O'Roark, Nathan Paul, Gary See, and President of SMVRR, Rob Himoto - struck out into the field for a little amateur archaeology! Using some existing landmarks, such as palm trees and remnants of roads, we were able to locate several building sites.

Utilizing the knowledge gleaned from the field, and further scrutiny of the photos that appear in Hal's book, we nailed down the location of several of the major building sites, such as the Superintendent's house, the Men's Club and the two room schoolhouse. We have established about six sites thus far, and plan to continue! (Continued on page 2...)



**Santa Maria Valley Railroad
Historical Donations**

Recently the Santa Maria Valley Railroad has donated pictures from the 1950's through the 1980's, various documents, pamphlets, booklets, and steam locomotive parts. Some of the items included are caboose maintenance log books, steam locomotive stay bolts, boiler rivets, and signal relays.

The Santa Maria Valley Railroad endorses the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad as the official repository for the preservation of historical documents and items of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. The Santa Maria Valley Railroad encourages individuals with SMVRR artifacts wishing to donate to consider donating their artifacts to the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad.

In addition, the Santa Maria Valley Railroad will allow the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad to copy over 300 steam locomotive blueprints and plot maps of the system route from 1911 to 1931.

Employees of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad have donated items to the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Jesse Flores has donated a Santa Maria Valley Railroad rulebook from 1956 and various pictures. Merrill Haberman has donated a SMVRR issued railroad pass.

Thank you!

Greg Benson – 4" x 4" posts for Betteravia Walking Tour

Kevin O'Roark – 4" x 4" posts, paint, and stenciling for Betteravia Walking Tour

Santa Maria Valley Railroad – Hot dogs, chips, and sodas for MOW Speeder Lunch

Dave Jennings – Beans for MOW Speeder Lunch

Rob Himoto – Donuts for Friends Work Days

Gary and Pam See – Friends Program Dinner

Greg and Robin Benson – Friends Program Dinner

Dale, Ernie, and Tammy Blakey – Friends Program Dinner

Gary and Stella Van Aken – Friends Program Dinner

Virloon Smoot – \$5.00 Cash Donation towards Forging Founders

Aron Kahn – \$55.00 Cash Donation towards Forging Founders

Alice Simas and Michael Quinette - \$75.00 Cash Donation towards Forging Founders

Betteravia Townsite (continued)

Ellen Griffin, who is a relative of one of our member families, the Blakey's, was a resident of Betteravia from 1944 to 1966. She graciously came down and gave us some interesting insight to growing up in Betteravia. She not only confirmed some of our research, but also provided us with the locations of houses she

March 14 Work Day

On this work day, Friends spruced up around the headquarters building, did weed abatement out on the mainline, and cribbed up the old passenger coach that sits on the Betteravia Industrial Park property.



lived in and the names of other residents and locations of their homes! One of the interesting things she shared was how she and the other kids would run to see the train Capt. Hancock was running, as it came into Betteravia. "We would run up the street, he would blow the whistle, all the steam would come out, and we would wave and he would wave back at us," she fondly recalled.

On the Friends work day at the railroad in March, members Ernie Blakey and Kevin O'Roark placed markers (numbered 4x4 posts) at a half dozen locations and established a path for a self-guided historical tour of Betteravia.

Richard D. Chenoweth, Museum Director of the Santa Maria Historical Museum, assisted Friends members Jamie Foster and Kevin O'Roark with copying historical photos of Betteravia which now, thanks to Jamie, appear in a nice brochure for the walking tour. One of our other members, Gary See, took the whole project "high tech" and set up a Google Earth account where you can see aerial imagery with a map overlay of Betteravia. He has placed "thumb tacks" at various locations that you can hover your cursor over and get a pop-up with a description of what was there! We'll make it available by a link on the Friends website.

This first phase of the walking tour has been interesting and educational for all of us participants. Ed Sutti, the townsite owner, expressed his appreciation of the Friends effort to help preserve the history of this interesting piece of California history. Anyone who wishes to take the tour can contact Kevin O'Roark or Rob Himoto for a private tour.

Upcoming Events

Friends Dinner Excursion June 6

We will be running a special dinner excursion for Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad aboard the La Condesa on June 6 at 5:00. We will be running a special price of \$125.00! Tentative dinner menu will be a choice of chicken or pork loin. Hurry, space is limited.

The morning of June 6, the United Methodist Church will be running a chapel car excursion aboard the La Condesa. Contact Jamie Foster for more information.

**Santa Maria Valley Railroad 98th
Anniversary Celebration July 12**

On Sunday July 12 the Santa Maria Valley Railroad will have a Friends BBQ picnic and open house in celebration of the 98th anniversary of the founding of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Plans are in the works for train rides from Betteravia to Guadalupe and back, special exhibits and a BBQ lunch. Train rides will be \$10/person. This is another exclusive Friends event! Be sure to tell all of your Friends to become members of the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and don't miss out on these exclusive events!



New Members

New members who have joined since the last newsletter at the **Individual Level**; Stanley Wilson, Bob Mowry, Amy Gardiner, Stephanie Bishop, Michael Byrne, Edward Morse, Virloon Smoot, and Frank Veloria. At the **Family Level**; Martin & Isabel Thruston, Arredondo Family, Esmeralda Mendoza, Michael Byrne, Lynette Cummins, Ken and Brooke Bradley, Bill Rust, Phil and Karrel Reader and John Marchetti. Joining at the **Engineer Level** is Edward Morse.

Renewing Members

Renewing members since the beginning of the year at the **Individual Level** are; Aron Kahn, Sergio Silva, Mark Riese, Dave Jennings, Leah Figaro, Jesse Flores, Anthony Torres, Rafael Sanchez, Jim McEntire, Merrill Haberman, Jeff Karsh, Sarah Smith, and Linda Rodrigues. Renewing at the **Family Level** are Gary See, Alice Simas & Michael Quinette, Mike & Heidi Christianson and Family, Liz & Rob Nast and Family, and Ken & Karen Emigh and Family. Renewing at the **Gandy Dancer Level** are Tom Murray and Rob Himoto.

Programs

Monthly programs are now held at the SMVRR corporate office located at the Betteravia Industrial Park, 2820 W. Betteravia Road, Santa Maria.

May 14, 2009

Maintenance of Way Equipment. Tour of the MOW equipment used by the SMVRR to maintain and build railroad track. Demonstration of MOW equipment by the SMVRR MOW Gang.

June 10, 2009

SMVRR Locomotives. Tour of the SMVRR locomotives, featuring a talk about how a locomotive works and explanation of the mysterious machinery behind the doors of the GE 70 ton locomotive.



**Working on the Railroad
2nd Saturdays, 9:00am
Friends Work Party
(Exception: May is the 23rd!)**

Message from the President

We often thank our volunteers for their help, and deservedly so! These Friends members who can participate directly in various events and work parties are vital.

There's another group of members, in fact all members, who support our efforts financially through their annual dues. Many of you have joined at the higher levels of membership, and we thank you! Some of our members have contributed directly to specific projects, like the purchase of the Blacksmith Shop contents. Your generosity is greatly appreciated! We have members who have contributed materials for projects, again thanks.

It takes more than the "regulars" who show up to work the events and help out on our work days, as important as they are; it also requires the rest of you. Many of you I have met, and many more of you I hope to meet. Your continued membership and direct contributions make possible everything else we do! We have some interesting projects and activities planned, and with your support we'll make them a reality!

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

