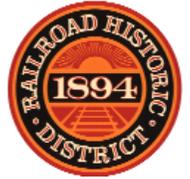




# Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum



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www.slorm.com

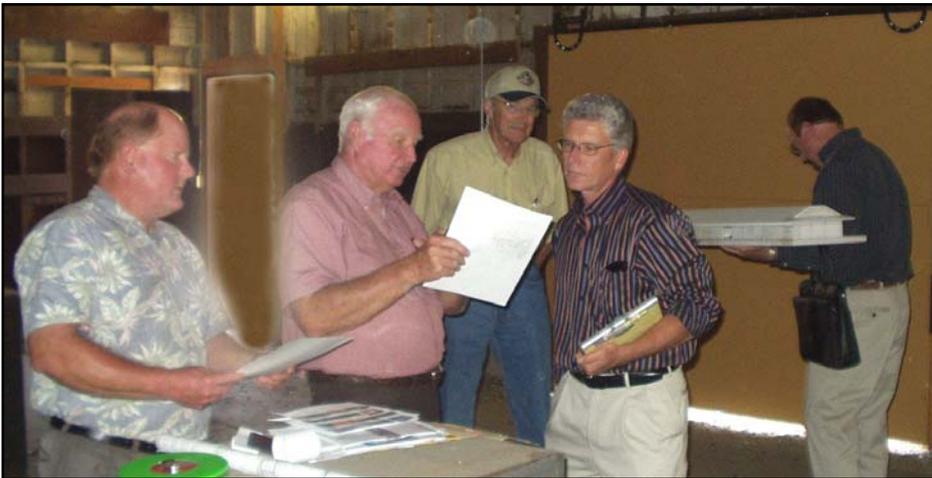
## Display Track Nearly Complete



Howard Amborn uses his tractor to place rail on the ties laid for the extension of the display track. The Railroad Square warehouse building is in the background. Red banners placed on the light poles by the City proclaim "Welcome to the Historic Railroad District."



On Saturday, July 11, 2009, Museum members Curtis Rheinhart, Glen Matteson, Aron Kahn, Walt Griffin, Tom Cooper and Howard Amborn (on tractor) place ties for extension of the display track toward the Jennifer Street Bridge.



Karl Hovanitz, Dick Ross, Arnold Jonas, Aron Kahn and Andrew Merriam inspect the inside of the Freighthouse and go over plans for the interior displays.

## Planning the Inside Displays

Thursday, July 9, 2009, SLORRM Directors Arnold Jonas, Aron Kahn, Brad LaRose and Karl Hovanitz and Museum member Andrew Merriam met with museum display designer Dick Ross of Paso Robles, California. The Board Members gave Dick a tour of the 1894 ex-Southern Pacific Freighthouse which will be the main museum building. He was impressed with our ideas, and the opportunity to work in such a unique setting.

Dick has an extensive background developing displays for railroad museums in California, Colorado and Europe. He is willing to work with our museum to develop historic artifact and interactive displays. Dick visits many museums in the course of his work and is able to see which types of displays are successful.

Although the City of San Luis Obispo owns the building, SLORRM is solely responsible for the displays.

## Making Tracks

On Saturday, July 11, 2009, a work crew made up of Museum members Howard Amborn, Tom Cooper, Aron Kahn, Brad LaRose, Curtis Rheinhart and Walt Griffin laid ties and rail, extending the display track toward the Jennifer Street Bridge.

## Extra Work Session

On Sunday, June 28, 2009, Museum members Howard Amborn, Glenn Matteson and Brad LaRose held an "Extra Work Day" to move 900 pound pieces of rail from the Museum's Emily Street storage yard, to the display track location in front of the Southern Pacific Railroad Freight House.

The rail was stock piled near the rail-head for use by Museum members on the next track work day. This "extra" work day really enhanced the work on the regular day as it saved time, speeding up the work. Howard brought his John Deere tractor to the project site and used it to lift and carry the rail.

The members worked in the hot sun for over 5 hours. Their hard work will payoff by helping to get the display track completely spiked down in the next several months.



## Mission Statement

The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, founded as a non-profit, public benefit educational museum, will preserve the railroad history of California and the Central Coast by collecting, restoring, displaying and operating historic railroad equipment.

### SAN LUIS OBISPO RAILROAD MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brad LaRose ..... *President*  
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Telephone 805-544-6531  
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 web site: www.slorrm.com  
 Mail to: P.O. Box 13260  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

## TIMETABLE

The following is a list of future meetings of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum. Business meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Quality Suites Hotel, 1631 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo. They begin at 6:00 p.m.

The Program Meeting locations and times will be announced in advance. All meetings are open to the public.

August 11 ..... *Business Meeting*  
 September 8 ..... *Business Meeting*  
 October 13 ..... *Business Meeting*  
 November 10 ..... *Business Meeting*  
 December 8 ..... *Business Meeting*

## BY-LAWS AVAILABLE

Every member in good standing is entitled to have a copy of the By-laws. In the interest of economy, we have not automatically distributed them to all members. To get a copy, send a #10, self addressed, stamped, envelope to SLORRM, Post Office Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.

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**New Members** Vincent Cipolla, Bill Cochran, Chuck Fellows, Walt Griffin, James Keene and Bill Kluss have joined the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum since the last edition of *Coast Mail* was published.

John Falkenstein has joined as a **Sustaining Member**.

## Become a Member

Membership in SLORRM provides an outlet for any person interested in railroad history, train travel, railroad oriented entertainment and the value of railroading to the community.

Membership is especially designed for those who love trains and wish to educate others, young and old, and who share the dream of building the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum in the 1894 SP Freighthouse, at the San Luis Obispo railroad station.

Single members pay \$36 per year. A family can join for \$60 annually, and a sustaining member pays \$100 per year. Mail to SLORRM, P.O. Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-3260. Go to [slorrm.com](http://slorrm.com) to download an application form.

**Life Members** receive a special laminated membership card, embroidered patch, enameled pin, the *Coast Mail* newsletter, and have voting rights for one person for life. *Use current age to calculate amount due.*

0-17 years . . . . . \$1200 or 5 payments of \$280  
 18-39 . . . . . \$900 or 5 payments of \$220  
 40-61 . . . . . \$600 or 5 payments of \$160  
 62 and older . . . . . \$300 or 5 payments of \$100

**Family Life Members** receive special laminated membership cards for all family members, the *Coast Mail* newsletter, two enameled pins, two embroidered patches, and voting rights for life for two people residing at the same address. *Use the age of youngest family member to calculate amount due.*

0-17 years of age . . . . . \$1800 or 5 payments of \$420  
 18-39 . . . . . \$1350 or 5 payments of \$330  
 40-61 . . . . . \$900 or 5 payments of \$240  
 62 and older . . . . . \$450 or 5 payments of \$150

If making payments the life membership card will be sent upon receipt of final payment. Until such time as the life membership is paid in full, the member will receive a yearly membership card. All payments made toward a life membership are non-refundable and failure to make a scheduled payment by the due date will result in forfeiture of all funds paid toward the life membership. Payment plans include yearly member dues.

## New Family Members

Gary Wollard and Carla Breitner, Ed and Donna McCauley, and Dennis and Patty Thurman have joined the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum since the last *Coast Mail* was published.

## Family Renewals

Neil and Virginia Heaton, William and Kim Ryan, Bob and Pam Seeley, and Bob and Willie Zilkey have all renewed their family memberships since the last *Coast Mail*.

## Individual Renewals

Bob Del Pesco, Elaine Dutra, Mark Evans, Jamie Foster, Marian Gregory, Chris Hurd, Tom Mitchell, Michael Reneau, Bob Sandel, Dennis Stuart and Charles Van Northwick have all renewed their membership in the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum since the last *Coast Mail* was published.

## Donations

The Rotary Club of San Luis Obispo and George "Smokey" Bass have made monetary donations to the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum.

## Correction . . .

In the Fall 2008/Winter 2009 edition of *Coast Mail* we reported that the *Railroad Square* warehouse, near the Museum building was going to be called *Depot Square*. That is incorrect. The following is correct: The restored building, will still be called *Railroad Square*. The new owners formed a company to restore and manage the building and they call that company *Depot Square*.

## Company Store

San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum has a variety of items for sale to raise money and for your enjoyment. All the goods listed below are available for purchase at any time. To order, send a check to SLORRM, P.O. Box 13260, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. Local orders will be delivered. Outside of SLO County please include \$8.50 for shipping and handling.

**Embroidered Patch, 2" dia.** \$5<sup>00</sup>

**Enameled Pin, 1" diameter ...** \$5<sup>00</sup>

**T-Shirts \$17<sup>00</sup>** Adult sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL, Childrens' S, M, L.

**Baseball Hats .....** \$20<sup>00</sup> Adjustable

**12 oz. Coffee Mugs .....** \$10<sup>00</sup>

**Engineers Hat w/button ...** \$8<sup>00</sup>

**Belt Buckle .....** \$25<sup>00</sup>

## Bill Kluss Wins Rod Aszman Print



New Museum member Bill Kluss (left) poses with artist Rod Aszman after winning one of Rod's prints in a drawing at the Pacific Coast Railroad Roundup on May 9th.

A long-time active Museum member, Rod has generously donated several of his prints for raffles to benefit the Museum. A renowned oil painter, Rod has had many of his paintings used as covers for railroad books. Three of his railroad paintings are prominently displayed at the *California State Railroad Museum* in Sacramento.

Prior to becoming a full-time artist in 1988, he worked as a Trainman and Conductor for the *Southern Pacific Railroad* from 1972 until 1988.

Please visit Rod's website at:  
[www.rodaszman.com](http://www.rodaszman.com)

## Museum Members Volunteer at Election

For the Special California Election held on May 19, 2009, San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum members staffed a polling location in front of the new San Luis Obispo County Government Center.

This was the second year that Museum volunteers have staffed this location on Monterey Street in San Luis Obispo. It was done as a community service and fund raiser. The County pays the volunteers a small amount of money for staffing the voting location. The Museum member volunteers in turn have the county send the money to the Museum. The county recruited our Museum and other non-profit organizations several years ago to staff polling locations throughout the county. It has worked out very good for all involved.

Museum members Agatha Reardon and Duane Powell covered the morning shift from 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Brad LaRose and Aron Kahn worked the afternoon shift from 1:30 p.m. to 8:00 that evening.

The members on duty were able to meet many community supporters and friends of the Museum. That



Brad LaRose, Agatha Reardon and Duane Powell at the San Luis Obispo County polling place on Monterey Street.

included many local television and radio personnel who were covering the election.

This was truly a win win situation. Julie Rodewald, County of San Luis Obispo Clerk/Recorder was very happy to have our members staffing a very busy and visible polling place. The Museum will receive payment for the volunteers' work, and we were able to promote Museum good will. All in all, this was a fun and worthwhile event and we will be back here for the next election.

Reported by Brad LaRose

# La Condesa Used for Chapel Car Experience



On June 6, 2009, the SLORRM's La Condesa was used by the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad to operate a "Chapel Car Experience" for the First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande.

The 25 participants arrived at the headquarters of the SMVRR by 9:00 am that Saturday morning.

The first item on the agenda was a slide show presentation by Jamie Foster and Barry Hague on the history of chapel cars in the United States. Chapel cars were used mostly from the 1890s through the 1920s, although some activity remained into the 1950s. Chapel cars were mobile churches that traveled throughout the American

West spreading the Gospel for Baptists, Episcopalians, and Catholics. Most of the 13 chapel cars were built by the Barney & Smith Car Company and the rest by Pullman. It was fitting that La Condesa, a 1926 Pullman observation car, be used for this event.

Following the slide show, everyone boarded La Condesa for a 2-hour ride along the SMVRR to Betteravia Junction, downtown Santa Maria half way to Guadalupe and back and down to the sugar mill. Locomotive power was provided by SMVRR Switcher #70 for this trip.



During the first hour of the train trip, a worship service was held onboard, reminiscent of the days when chapel cars would not only hold



worship services, but also Sunday School, weddings, funerals, and other church functions. For the balance of the outing, participants were free to simply enjoy the ride, during which La Condesa's observation platform was the favorite spot.

Those interested in learning more about chapel cars might start with the book: *This Train Is Bound for Glory* by Wilma and Norman Taylor, 1999. Jamie and Barry will present their slide show and talk at the August 13th meeting of the Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. You need not be a member to attend this meeting.

Consult the web site for details:  
[www.friends-smvrr.org/program.html](http://www.friends-smvrr.org/program.html)  
Report and Photos by Jamie Foster

# Arnold Hoffman, Museum Pioneer



Arnold M. Hoffman, 92, was born in Chicago in September 1916, and passed away April 25, 2009.

Well-known throughout San Luis Obispo County, Arnold had many varied interests including local history, politics and environmental issues.

He had joined the National Guard in the 1930s and was proud to have served in World War II. After the war, he attended Cal Poly.

Arnold married Marian Corob in 1942. In 1950 the couple moved to Atascadero and started an egg farm.



Arnold started his chicken ranch and backyard railroad, with a 7½" gauge steam locomotive and railroad. Eventually, he moved up in size, building a 15" gauge steam locomotive and railroad on his property. He modeled several of his railroad cars after Pacific Coast Railway cars. Train rides were offered with the purchase of eggs.

Arnold and Marian purchased land on Ontario Road, in the Avila Valley of San Luis Obispo County. Here, on what was formerly the Pacific Coast Railway station site known as Miles Station, Arnold intended to build a new 15" gauge steam railroad and passenger station. His plans were for it to run from Miles station to Avila Beach along the former Pacific Coast Railway right of way. After years of struggle with the county government, he abandoned his plans and sold the locomotive and cars to a person in Australia. However, his plans for a railroad did not end.

**4** Early in 1987, Arnold, with many other people formed a group to attempt to build a 3' gauge steam railroad over the

same right of way in the Avila Valley, terminating at Port San Luis. The group fell apart after approximately 2 months due to lack of political support and funding. Again, Arnold's railroad plans were not finished.

In 1989, Arnold brought together another group of people. Included in this group were Walter Rice, Brad LaRose, County Supervisor Evelyn Delany and others. Again, an effort was made to sell county government and local citizens on the idea of transporting and entertaining people through the Avila Valley, terminating in Avila Beach.

This new group decided to use the strategy of constructing a street car line from Miles Station to Avila Beach, which would carry people to the beach town, thus reducing traffic on the narrow Avila Beach Drive. This plan had great merit as the Summer season traffic on Avila Beach Drive was causing great congestion.

Arnold wanted the group to create a for profit, miniature railroad company to be called the Avila Light Railway. Funding for this project was an obstacle. As the group struggled to create an organization, Brad LaRose suggested the group create a non-profit museum, to be named the Avila Valley Railway Museum. As a not for profit organization, the museum could take advantage of grants and use of county owned land. On February 11, 1991, the Avila Valley Railway Museum, Inc. (AVRM) received non-profit status with the Internal Revenue Service. The first president of the museum was Walter Rice. Brad LaRose was Vice President. Over the course of the several years, many other people joined the museum, including board members Karl Hovanitz and Mary Rossi.

The Avila Valley Railway Museum planned to use right of way made up of 2 miles of property owned by Rob Rossi, son of Mary Rossi, and 1 mile of county property. The county property had also been planned for use as a bicycle path. Eventually, county staff became difficult to work with as their priority was building a bicycle path and not a railroad.

The museum downsized its plans from a 3' railroad to 15" railroad which could share the available right of way with the bicycle path. Ironically, this was the original intention of Arnold Hoffman when he purchased the Ontario Road property many years prior to the museum formation.

As entertaining, practical and spectacular as the railroad would have

been, the county staff prevailed and the bicycle path was built without any consideration for the construction of the miniature railroad. Eventually, Arnold and Marian sold their land to the county for use as a "Park and Ride" parking lot, mainly to be used by recreational bicyclists.

Arnold continued as a member of the Avila Valley Railway Museum as it changed its name to the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum (SLORRM). As he reduced his involvement with the SLORRM, he again began building another railroad, this time a G Scale model railroad at his home in Atascadero. He and others organized a G Scale Model Railroad Club. He would hold "steam ups" at his backyard railroad, where the center of interest was his model of the Pacific Coast Railway Roundhouse.

Arnold was an early pioneer of preserving railroad history and operating railroads of all sizes in San Luis Obispo County. He will be remembered by all those who knew him. All of us, who have an appreciation for railroads, are indebted to him for his active part in making our hobby, our passion, a reality on the Central Coast of California.



Arnold was a charter member of Temple Beth David in San Luis Obispo. He was an active member of many local organizations, including the VFW and Democratic Club. In 2007, Arnie and Marian were honored as King and Queen of the Atascadero Colony Days.

Arnie is survived by his wife of 67 years, Marian; son, Daniel of Atascadero; daughters Judy Hibbard of Portland, Oregon and Rachel Somars of Atascadero; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; sister, Emily McGinn; and numerous nieces and nephews.

*Reported by Brad LaRose  
Photos by Alfred Romine*