

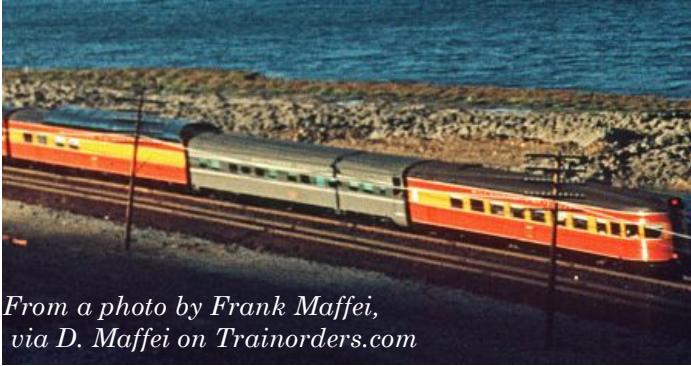


Coast Mail

News from the San Luis Obispo
Railroad Museum

Issue Number 84 – Summer 2023 San Luis Obispo, California slorrm.com

Open Saturdays from 10:00 to 4:00. Other times for groups by arrangement. 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue.



From a photo by Frank Maffei,
via D. Maffei on Trainorders.com

The far left car in this view near Bayshore is almost certainly the dome-lounge ridden through San Luis Obispo by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in 1959.

Hospitality for Mr. Khrushchev

The Fall 2019 *Coast Mail* showed part of a menu from Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's 1959 train trip through San Luis Obispo. Thanks to a recent donation by Cindy Nicolds, the Museum now has another menu and some details to go with it. Ms. Nicolds' grandfather Anthony L. Domingos, a Southern Pacific clerk, had the document with notes recording some of Mr. Khrushchev's statements. It's not clear whether the notes reflect conversations while riding or remarks at one of the stops. Following is a transcript of the notes.

Asked about mood in LA. He said he thought he "was becoming a burden on my hosts." He said a good guest knows when he is becoming a burden and should leave 5 minutes before he is asked. [Henry Cabot] Lodge [Jr., U.S. ambassador to the United Nations at the time] who accompanied K[hrushchev] on tour of train said he was no burden & was [a] most welcomed guest.

He said he enjoyed the train ride very much –gave him chance to get out & meet people –glad to be liberated from [end of statement]

We don't know if he made comment in any case about passing Vandenberg which was well photographed by photographers.

Pool photog[raper] did take pics of K in dome lounge car after leaving S. B. & prior to Vandenberg.

Premier K walked through the train en route SF today greeting all reporters for first time on tour – stopping in each car to make remarks.

He said he was pleased with reception at Santa Barbara. "I'm very glad," he said, "to have been liberated from my cell." This was comment in response to quest[ion] on his leaving train for some 15 min[utes] to go up to crowd to shake hands w/ Mayor & citizens of town. He said the mayor & wife were very friendly & represented peaceful expression he hoped to find.

New fence for Railroad Safety Trail

The City of San Luis Obispo has been developing a route for walkers and cyclists, generally free of road traffic, to extend from the Edna Valley to Cal Poly. Part of the trail parallels the Union Pacific tracks opposite the Museum. With no safe and legal direct routes between the Sinsheimer School neighborhood and the Broad Street area, trespassers often risk life and limb crossing the tracks, using damaged spots in the fence that was originally installed. In May Central Coast fencing, under city contract, installed more durable fencing from the Jennifer Street Bridge area to Orcutt Road (photo below).

City transportation plans call for an eventual east-west, grade-separated bike and pedestrian connection near Sinsheimer Park. Local sales tax, state gas tax, federal grants, and the efforts of many all help bring these long-term projects to completion. (See also page 3.)

On the Central Coast deaths of people trespassing on railroad tracks are sadly common. They occurred: during 2016 on January 4, January 9, and February 16, all in the San Luis Obispo area; during 2018 on August 29 in San Luis Obispo; during 2021 on August 24 in San Luis Obispo; in 2022 on February 7 in Paso Robles and on December 5 and December 27 in Grover Beach. The latest deaths were April 11 in Paso Robles and April 21 at Gaviota.

Museum volunteers often remind parents walking children on the Museum's display track that young ones may not realize the difference between that track, where rolling stock rarely moves, and active tracks where a train may approach *on any track, in either direction, at any time.*



In May a crew from Central Coast Fencing unloaded new fence posts between the Railroad Safety Trail and the Union Pacific Railroad siding in San Luis Obispo. Old posts have been removed and holes augered.

The end of the Museum's reddish-brown sugar beet gondola appears in the distance at left center.

Our Mission

Promote California Central Coast railroad heritage through community participation, education, and historic preservation.

Contact

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The museum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, educational organization, staffed entirely by volunteers.

Documents Available

The Museum's *Bylaws, Collections Policy, Development & Operations Plan, Code of Conduct*, and other documents are available to all at slorrm.com, or as a paper copy via the address above.

Museum Store

To raise funds, the Museum offers several items for sale on-site and online: T-shirts, hats, belt buckles, mugs, enameled pins, embroidered patches, and engineer hats.

At www.slorrm.com click on Company Store.

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Timetable

Board of Directors meetings are scheduled for June 13, July 11, and August 8, at 6:00 p.m. at the Museum. Online participation can be arranged. Contact info@slorrm.com for help with on-line participation.

The Central Coast Railroad Festival returns October 6 through 8, with a swap meet, special presentations, and more. Check the website for schedule details:

<http://www.CCRRF.com>

2023 photo contest

Whether you're a pro or take photos just for fun, we want to see images that reflect the best of Central Coast railroading. Winners will be announced and displayed at the Museum on October 7. Details at:

<https://www.slorrm.com/2023-Photo-Contest.html>



2022 winning photo by Eric Peterson

Parlor Car Chats Online

Jamie Foster hosts 30 episodes with 11 presenters, which cover train trips, equipment restoration, technical information, and more: slorrm.com/parlor-car-chats.html



More Coast Mail Online

A long career; the value of smiles in 1926; rail lengths; safety choices; Honda or Hondo?

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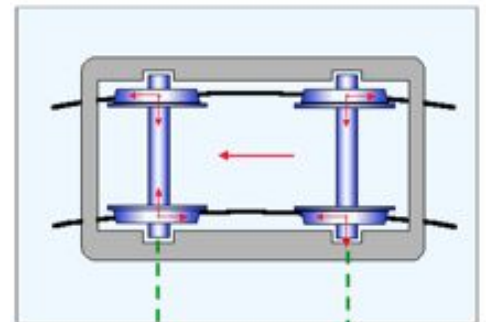
Become a member

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.



Slip slidin' clarification

The *Spring Coast Mail* article on rail lubrication said that, on curved track, wheels in rigid-axle trucks slide a bit on the outer rail. That's generally true if the train is going slower than the curve's design speed. Speed, weather, weight distribution on the rails, and track geometry all may produce wheel-rail interaction that differs from the general rule.

Above, a diagram of some effects on exaggerated curved track.

Recent history

In early February Union Pacific's contractor sprayed weeds using a truck that can operate on roads or rails. Vegetation is controlled to reduce fire hazard and to maintain drainage and sight lines (below).





Diane Marchetti photos



Above, some Central Coast Weavers Guild members relax in the Museum's 1926 Pullman car after installing 11 specially made curtains. Bottom right, a less dignified décor from a previous remodel.

It's curtains for La Cuesta By Norma Dengler

Lace curtains are now installed in *La Cuesta*, the Museum's café-lounge-observation car built in 1926 for the Santa Fe Railway. The Central Coast Weavers Guild accepted the Museum's request to hand weave the curtains. The Guild bought 18 pounds of cotton yarn to make 50 yards of fabric, at their cost of \$525.

Twelve Guild members wove 11 curtains in a Swedish Lace pattern called Mosquito Netting. Seven weavers cut, sewed, and installed the curtains on March 3.

This wonderful donation from the Guild greatly enhances the car.

ITE visit

Seven members of Cal Poly's Institute of Transportation Engineers student group visited the Museum on May 13 (photo below). Graduates of Cal Poly's city planning and civil engineering programs are likely to work on projects such as improved crossings of streets and tracks, replacing old bridges, or whole new transit systems.

The Museum provides opportunities for them to better understand the evolution of rail transportation.



Award for bridge over RR

The American Society of Civil Engineers has recognized the bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Union Pacific track near the Highway Patrol as this year's best bikeway & trail project in California. This City of San Luis Obispo project was covered in the Spring 2022 *Coast Mail*. City of SLO photo



Decades of details

We continue featuring Central Coast items from the old *Southern Pacific Bulletin* employee newsletters. Those below and at bottom are from the June 1922 edition. Drivers not respecting crossing lights, bells, and gates continue to be a problem.

BUS DRIVERS DEFEAT SAFETY EFFORT, SAYS ENGINEER

"It is the aim of the Southern Pacific Company and its employes that this shall be the 'Safety First' road of America," wrote G. W. Burbank, Engineer on the Coast Division, to the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors in urging that drivers of commercial buses be made to obey rules as to stopping at grade crossings.

Mr. Burbank had just gone through the experience of narrowly averting a probable fatal collision with a public school bus, when the driver made a dash to get over the crossing ahead of the engine. Due to the watchfulness of Fireman Perry Hinns, who promptly passed the stop signal to Engineer Burbank, the collision was escaped, but it brought to mind so forcibly the lack of precaution on the part of many drivers that Mr. Burbank addressed the Board of Supervisors regarding this incident, happening at Santa Margarita.

"The Southern Pacific Company has expended an enormous amount of money in safety appliances and the officers and employes hold monthly meetings for the purpose of devising ways and means for the safety of the employes and the public at large," he wrote, "however, we will in no small measure be defeated in our undertaking if motor drivers at railroad crossings will not take the necessary precautions for safeguarding themselves as well as others."

Bulletin Asks Home Owners Among Employes To Tell Others How They Did It

Series of Articles Will Deal With Problems Which Rent-payers Who Would Be Own Landlords Must Solve

The February 1923 edition also contained the call for advice shown above. One hundred years later, news media on the Central Coast are still covering the issue. The railroad realized that owners tended to stay in one location and be more bound to their employer if they owned their residence. Some quotes appear at right.

Form the February 1923 *Southern Pacific Bulletin*:

Bert Turnbow of San Miguel was recognized for a "business-getting tip" that resulted in the sale of 2½ tickets from Morrostown, Tennessee, to Los Angeles. Yes, it said 2½ tickets, presumably two adults and a child. And yes, it did say Morrostown. There is such a place in the northeast part of the state. The keyboard has "o" next to "i," so we had to check. (In the March 1923 edition Mr. Turnbow scored again, with one ticket from Harrisburg, Oregon, to Oceano.)

Atascadero's new depot (below) was completed in May 1922, closed in the late 1950s, and demolished in 1964.

NEW STATION AT ATASCADERO



Attractive station at Atascadero, Cal., which was recently dedicated with impressive ceremonies attended by over one thousand residents of that city.

THE Southern Pacific Company has just opened a new and attractive station at Atascadero. The station sets on three acres of ground at the head of the valley in which the Civic and Industrial centers of Atascadero are located.

Under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, formal dedication ceremonies were held May 6th, at which were present E. W. Clapp, Assistant Freight Traffic Manager and A. R. Anthony, Assistant Superintendent, Coast Division, who represented the Southern Pacific Company.

Mr. Clapp, in presenting the key of the station to Louis Cohen of Atascadero, stated that it was unnecessary to present the people of Atascadero with the key since the railroad company would be happy to take the lock off the door of the station or take the doors off the hinges of any of the stations along the lines, if the people would only crowd through them

in such numbers as to fill the trains.

Mr. Anthony responded to a set of resolutions expressing the appreciation of the people of Atascadero for the beautiful building which had been erected for their use.

There were considerably over a thousand residents and neighbors of Atascadero present at the celebration which included a parade headed by the Atascadero Band. Other interesting exercises by the school children and various organizations took place at the station itself. On the arrival of limited trains both north and south bound, the school children presented the passengers with bouquets of wild flowers.

The new station is a combination type, having both passenger and freight facilities under the same roof. It is constructed of stucco with a light brick facing harmonizing with the tiles of the roof and finished inside in light oak.

"As with the company itself so it is with the army of employes. The Southern Pacific is famous for the number of its employes who own their own homes. This fact has attracted country-wide attention."

"We want short stories of how you managed to build your own home—or to buy it. If you turned a good bargain tell us about it."

"The story of how you saved the money for the first payment is a good feature."



Artifacts needing explanations

We continue to process recent donations and those that have been stored a while. Above are both sides of an imitation leather key pocket with chain and safety messages [SLORRM Collection No. O2480.1]. It must have been intended for switchmen, who worked in rail yards, and brakemen who worked out on the line. The back admonishes, “Make safety number 1 in 71 – In personal safety – In safe switching.” So safety should be the top priority in 1971. The next lines make an editor cringe. Reformatted, they could appear

No more than four accidents per million man-hours;

No more than four mph coupling speeds.

The writer surely did not intend workers to choose between the two goals, or to aim for coupling speeds less than a million mph. Goals should be realistic. But one wonders what 4 per million was based on, as opposed to 3 per million worker-hours.

Below is an “Old style wheel defect, worn coupler limit, worn journal collar and journal fillet gage – 1942,” made by Pratt & Whitney and hand engraved “S. P. Co.” on the back. It is made of metal and about five inches wide [SLORRM Collection No. O2570.1; and yes, that’s “gage” without the “u.”]. Wheel flanges that have worn thin are at risk of breaking or of “picking” conflicting routes at a track switch. Flat spots on wheel treads subject the wheels and rails to impacts that can damage both. The YouTube videos linked below, produced by the Transportation Technology Center, Inc., show how some of the gage’s features are used:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dE_tgoXSEYg
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaJb8J5BtEA>



More decades of details

The item below and the essay on page 6 are from the August 1926 *Southern Pacific Bulletin*.

One of our newest and most advantageous pieces of work was the laying of new rail in Tunnel 6 between Santa Margarita and San Luis Obispo. This tunnel is on a tangent and is 3610 feet long. In order to lessen the number of joints in the tunnel, 66-foot rails were secured, and therefore the number of joints in the tunnel has been cut to exactly one-half the number that existed with old rail, which will reflect in the riding qualities of the track.

Tunnel 6 is Cuesta Grade’s longest and contains the summit. Tangent means straight when projected on a horizontal plane, as for a construction plan; the track can and in this case does have a vertical curve. Until the 1920s, sections of rail were 27 to 33 feet long, reflecting the ability of rolling mills to produce consistent quality and the common flatcar length of about 33 feet to carry them. With the advent of 40-foot flatcars soon after, the standard length grew to 39 feet. By the 1980s, 80-foot rails were the norm. You guessed it, flatcars about 83 feet long.

But that was for jointed (“stick”) rail. Increasingly, those 80-foot pieces were field-welded into lengths of one to two miles, limited only by track electrical circuit gaps for block signals, switches, and grade crossings. Now special trains carry plant-welded rails 1,320 feet long, to be further welded in the field. Compared with 39-foot pieces, a mile of continuous welded rail (CWR or “ribbon rail”) avoids 270 bolted joints, each one a potential source of weakness and rough riding.

The longest continuous welded rail on the Southern Pacific was probably on the Palmdale Cutoff, built in 1967 and un-signaled at the time, which was continuous for 20 miles.



A train of special-purpose cars carrying welded rail at San Luis Obispo in February 2022. One imagines the workers and observers of 1926 being impressed with the lengths, weight (probably 136 rather than 90 pounds per yard), and mechanized handling of today’s rails.

Five decades of impressive details: Coast Division engineer served 57 years

The February 1927 *Southern Pacific Bulletin* reported the retirement of Roger Trewick (left), which was remarkable on several counts. Mr. Trewick had turned 70, the railroad's mandatory retirement age, on the first day of that year. He had started working for SP progenitor Central Pacific as an apprentice coppersmith at Carlin, Nevada, in the historically significant year 1869. He became a full-fledged blacksmith by age 18, and soon after was persuaded to leave the shops and become a locomotive fireman. In that era, locomotives were fueled with wood, lots of wood, that was thrown into the firebox.

"While on a visit to San Francisco in 1893," the article says, "he took a trip down the Coast line, construction on which he understood would be resumed soon. The weather was beautiful at San Luis Obispo and he fell in love with the oranges and flowers and sunshine. He asked for a transfer, and, in March 1894 took a train on the Coast Division. The line was being extended south from Santa Margarita and Roger continued at the 'front' until the terminus was established at Surf." (continues in left-hand column)



SLORRM Archives 2640 series

Roger Trewick at the throttle.

After construction ended Trewick ran passenger trains between San Francisco and San Jose. In 1899 he went to San Luis Obispo as roundhouse foreman. He worked here in that job and as yardmaster, blacksmith, coppersmith, machinist, and locomotive engineer. After those roles he went back to handling "fast passenger trains between San Francisco and San Luis Obispo" until about 1916, when he transferred to the Monterey Branch.

But let's back up a bit. Mr. Trewick was born on New Year's Day 1857 at Newcastle-on-Tyne, England. His family emigrated to Australia when he was eight. Soon after his father went to America, and Roger began working at a cracker factory in Melbourne. After a 63-day steamer trip the family rejoined Roger's father in California, landing at San Francisco and continuing by riverboat to Sacramento where Trewick senior had a job as blacksmith (it ran in the family) for the newly organized Central Pacific Railroad.

Mr. Trewick retired from the Monterey Branch, living in Pacific Grove at the time. A grand banquet was held at San Francisco's Palace Hotel in his honor. His safety record was praised, his tobacco-chewing habit was noted, and his wife of 44 years was recognized. The mayor of San Francisco and San Luis Obispo's mayor L. F. Sinsheimer spoke. Mr. Trewick was given "a large radio set with all the accessories."

Said Mr. Trewick: "To tell the truth, I have gotten old and didn't realize it. Now that I am off the run I find that I really am tired, and am going to take a little rest. We may visit some of our friends, and then I am going back to work again. I've got several good years ahead of me and the best way to keep fit will be to keep busy. I regret that my railroad days are over..."

Miss Champlain (right) had a sunny outlook. She won a prize of \$5 for her entry in Southern Pacific's 1926 system-wide essay contest on courtesy. Depending on which inflation factors one uses, that would be worth \$85 to \$135 now. The Museum's People Tracker database lists F. Champlain (engineer, S.L.O.) and J. F. Champlain (engineer, S.L.O., seniority date July 1941). The frequency of typos and spelling variations in original sources implies that the multiple listings could be for the same person, likely the father or an uncle of the essayist. (The lack of contrast for the text results from digital manipulation to enhance the reproduction of the photograph.)

Essay contest winner

Coast Division

First Prize

By MISS JULIA M. CHAMPLAIN
Stenographer, San Luis Obispo

THE world is like a pool of clear water—smile in it and it will smile back; frown, and it will frown to you.



Did you ever see a child at play and, as you pass by, smile at it? And see how quickly the child responds with a sunny smile and oftentimes will say to you, a perfect stranger, "I like you,"—just because of the

smile.

And so it is with everyone. They may not be as frank as a child, but they will be drawn by your smile; that is, if the smile is a genuine, friendly, interested smile. In other words, the smile must come from the heart. It must be genuine and interested and have a little love in it. You can not really be courteous if you do not mean it, and if you really feel courteous you can not help but show it.

Smiles and good words make friends; frowns and bad words make enemies.

So why not benefit ourselves by making as many friends as we honestly can, especially when it can be done so easily by a smile and a good word.



Far from the Central Coast

This time we’re back in the United States, but still far from the coast of California. This mural is in Tucumcari, New Mexico. The painter of this rendition of a Southern Pacific *Daylight* train was not identified. The sun may have faded the original colors, but the spirit is there. Let’s hope it has a caretaker and that it’s never marred by graffiti.

In this remote town Southern Pacific interchanged with the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific (the “Rock Island Line,” which never reached the Pacific). Usually whole trains, freight and passenger, were handed from one railroad to the other. When the Rock Island went bankrupt, SP acquired and rehabilitated the line to Chicago. Union Pacific Railroad now owns the whole route.

R. A. Durfee took the photo above and shared it in May 2022 on the rail interest website TrainsOrders.com.

*Right: trestle components; piling depths are not obvious.
Below: Google base image spanning about 35 miles, with Cañada Honda (La Honda Canyon) and Arroyo Hondo, where there is a Highway 101 vista point, plus two more widely recognized coastal locations, Point Conception and Gaviota.*

Honda bridge clarification

The *Spring Coast Mail* noted damage to the bridge at Honda caused by January rains, and asked about the age of pilings that were exposed by erosion. An article in a 1981 *Railroad History* journal, “Closing the Gap,” reprinted by the Institute for American Research (affiliated with the railroad museum in Goleta) provides a clue. Referring to the 1899 construction, as reported in newspapers of the time: “The piers themselves might be thirty or forty feet high (with perhaps only five to ten feet visible above the ground), and in many cases piles beneath the piers were driven into the ground another twenty or thirty feet.”

The article explains that accounts of the time could be garbled due to eagerness to publish and misunderstandings. “The problem is that viaducts span both Cañada Honda and Arroyo Hondo, and the two are confused to this day.”



Jeff Stein photo

