



AMERICAN SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 39846 - GRIFFITH STATION

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90039

323-668-0104 • [www.traveltown.org](http://www.traveltown.org)

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Glendale, CA  
Permit No. 6

# The Travel Town **TENDER**

A Publication of the Travel Town Museum Foundation

Volume 6, Issue 3  
November 2008

## Greetings from Travel Town!

It was great to see so many of our Travel Town Museum Foundation members at Depot Day on October 12th! I was excited with the great turnout we had this year and want to express my enormous thanks to the many hardworking volunteers who came together to make the event such a big success.

This was our fourth Depot Day celebration and each successive year we have tried to enhance the event's program offerings. For 2008, we welcomed back our good friends from *CalTrans*, *Operation Life Saver*, and *Women in Railroad-ing* as well as some wonderful new participants including wood carving artist Jackie Hadnot and Bob Crone of the *Los Angeles Live Steamer!* Jackie displayed several of his incredible base-relief steam locomotive carvings, including one that was over eight feet long! Bob brought over his 1880s-era Baldwin 2-6-0 "Mogul" steam locomotive and shared information with visitors about our Griffith Park neighbors, the *L.A. Live Steamers Museum*.

This year, we were also able to increase our musical offerings to FOUR different groups! Building upon Depot Day veteran Jim Starr "*The Singing Cop*" and Glendale's own *Hoover High School Jazz Ensemble*, we were also fortunate to feature two locally-renowned folk groups: the *Hollow Trees* and *The Conduc-*

*tors*. All four were great hits – especially with the kids! *The Conductors* even used Depot Day to their kick-off event for premier of their new CD release, "*Navigating the Spectrum*."



Besides Depot Day, Travel Town has been a hoppin' place all summer. Our volunteers have been making great strides on several restoration projects: the "S.P. 219" steam locomotive is now completely torn-down to the basic under-frame and the Foundation's 1945 Railway Express Agency delivery truck is now running and ready to be licensed and repainted!

Our annual Polar Express Pajama Party is coming soon, on December 5th, so get your RSVPs in! You can click on a link at our website: [www.traveltown.org](http://www.traveltown.org)!

Have a great Holiday Season and I'll look forward to seeing you at the Park!

Greg Gneier, President  
Travel Town Museum Foundation  
November 2008

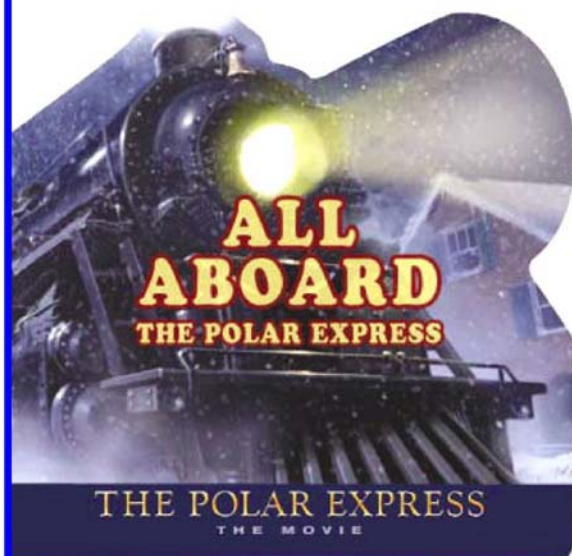


## Polar Express Pajama Party!

for our Travel Town Museum Foundation Members

**FRIDAY • December 5th • at Travel Town**

**Come in your pajamas and join us for a cup of cocoa and a special screening of *The Polar Express* movie! There'll be games and fun activities for the kids. plus the Museum Gift Shop will be open late with a special selection of Polar Express books, music, t-shirts and toys.**



### SCHEDULE FOR THE EVENING

- 5:30 - Exhibit Hall open for arts & crafts, Thomas & Friends playtime.
- 6:00 - Reading of *The Polar Express*.
- 6:15 - Hot Chocolate and cookies.
- 6:30 - The Movie begins!

**Space is Limited - Reservations are Required**  
**Please R.S.V.P. before Dec. 1st**  
**on-line at [www.traveltown.org](http://www.traveltown.org)**  
**or by telephone at 323-668-0104, ext. 12**

**The Santa Train Ride will also be running!**  
Tickets for the Santa Train are \$7 each.

A color copy of the *Travel Town Tender* is available on our website at [www.traveltown.org](http://www.traveltown.org): Click the "Hours & Activities" button.

If you would like to sponsor color printing, please contact  
Nancy Gneier at 323-668-0104. Thanks!



## How it All Got Started — “way back in 1947”

In our ongoing effort to restore and preserve the many historic trains at Travel Town, we are constantly searching for old photographs and other research information concerning the Museum’s various artifacts. One such search, on eBay, recently turned up an early “press release kit” issued by the Recreation & Parks Department just after Travel Town’s founding in 1952. We’d like to share some excerpts from that release, which gives a wonderful picture of how Travel Town got its start.... way back in 1947!

### “Travel Town”

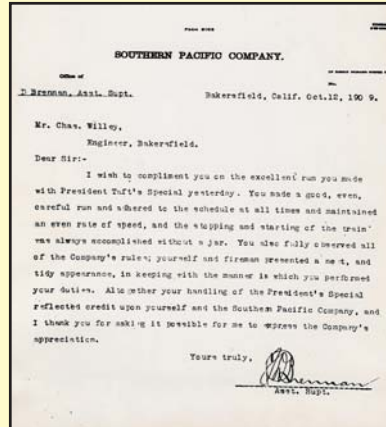
*Travel Town, the Los Angeles City Recreation and Park Department’s unique display of vehicles representing many modes and eras of conveyances, is visited each week by hundreds of youngsters and adults who are interested in the development of transportation.*

*Located on a 9-acre site at 5200 Hollingsworth Drive in Griffith Park, Travel Town is open to the public daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is no admission charge.*

*Displaying everything from a 104-ton locomotive to a one-horse shay, Travel Town offers its visitors what for most of them is the only opportunity they ever have to see and examine at close hand many different types of vehicles.*

*Credit for the idea which evolved into Travel Town goes to William Frederickson, Jr., the city’s superintendent of recreation. It was Frederickson who, way back in 1947, was struck with the realization that thousands of youngsters had never been close enough to climb into an airplane and get a look at the pilot’s cockpit and its myriad of controls and gauges. This was at a time when the federal government was disposing of large amounts of surplus war material, so Frederickson resolved to see if it would be possible to obtain a surplus plane to be exhibited at one of Los Angeles’ municipal playgrounds. George Hjelte, general manager of the City Recreation and Park Department, and the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners thought the idea was a good one and allocated the sum of \$700 for the purchase of seven planes which were stored in the Middle West. But by the time the necessary purchase orders had been properly channeled, the aircraft were unavailable. Although officially the project was dormant for several years, Frederickson continually mulled the idea of establishing an exhibit where youngsters could actually climb aboard various vehicles.*

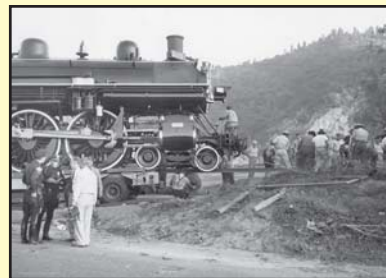
*Just a few months ago, in late September of 1952, Frederickson was able to start the*



1909 letter of commendation to Southern Pacific engineer Charles Willey, recognizing his fine work in driving locomotive 3025 on President Taft’s special train. Subsequent to that assignment, the big 3025 was displayed at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco!



3025 had a “flat tire” on the way over to Travel Town!



L.A.P.D. officers and newspaper photographers stay out of the way as a small army of workmen from Belyea Trucking, Recreation & Parks, and Southern Pacific rolled the “big chugger” into its new home in Griffith Park.

*project—his dream—toward reality. Enlisting the aid of Orin Wennersten, the Recreation and Park Department’s supervisor of maintenance, he set about the work of obtaining Travel Town’s first Exhibit. Wennersten assigned a member of his staff, Charles Atkins, the task of writing a letter to D.J. Russell, president of the Southern Pacific Company, in which the suggestion was made that the railroad company might be willing to donate an obsolete locomotive to the display. Russell heartily approved the donation and directed his staff to have Engine “3025” prepared for its emergence from “retirement” and its appearance as an honored exhibit at Travel Town.*

*With the donation assured, Atkins’ next problem was to determine how to move the gallant, oil-burning chugger from Glendale to Travel Town. The Belyea Truck Company agreed to tackle the ticklish task and, on October 10, the unprecedented hauling job was completed as a free public service. The Belyea Truck Company has since performed several other similar assignments in aiding the development of Travel Town.*

*The giant locomotive and its 25 1/2 ton tender, which in their heyday pulled several “presidential specials” during campaign sweeps across the nation, now stands on a strip of track at Travel Town, and visitors may enter the engine’s cab, examine the controls, and tug the cord which clangs its big brass bell.*

*News about Travel town spread like wild-fire, and almost immediately the display was receiving new vehicles and other exhibits in rapid, one after the other sequence. By the first of December, Travel Town had on exhibit a 44-passenger street car given by the Los Angeles Transit Lines; an historic 76-year old dray, presented by Paul J. Smith, president of the republic Van and Storage Company, a 50-year-old kerosene tank wagon, donated by Standard Oil Company*

continued on page 6

## On the Platform . . . John & Felicia Vertrees



On the Platform this issue we want to congratulate John Vertrees and his new wife, Felicia. John and Felicia were married on July 20, 2008, and, as many of you know, have relocated to the Pacific Northwest city of Portland, Oregon.

John is a charter member who was instrumental in the founding of the Association and Foundation and has contributed to the group’s success for over 25 years. Felicia is a new member and volunteered at Depot Day 2006 as well as attending the recent 25th Annual meeting held in Santa Barbara.

Their next big adventure is remodeling their home! Good luck and congratulations to John and Felicia!



**On Sale at the Gift Shop now!**  
The Movie, the Music, the Books

The ultimate in magical trains and Christmas stories:

***The Polar Express!***

Sweatshirts, Brio toys, books, and other memorabilia available.



Don’t miss the **Polar Express Pajama Party** on December 5!

RSVP at [www.traveltown.org](http://www.traveltown.org) before December 1, as space is limited.



## Depot Day 2008



## A BIG THANKS *to our Event Partners!*



Caltrans  
City of Los Angeles  
Department of Recreation and Parks  
The Conductors 🚂 Girl Scout Troop 7351  
Jackie Hadnot 🚂 The Hollow Trees  
Hoover High School Jazz Ensemble  
Los Angeles Live Steamers 🚂 Operation Lifesaver  
LA County Metropolitan  
Transportation Authority  
Providence High School Key Club  
Jim Starr - The Singing Cop  
Travel Town Staff and Volunteers  
Women In Railroading



## *We've Been Working on the Railroad!*



🔧 Tear-down work on the S.P. 219 steam locomotive is nearing completion. Here, volunteer Greg Ramsey inspects the multi-part steam seal from inside one of the locomotive's pistons.

🔧 Volunteer Bryan Reese welded up a myriad of holes and other anomalies on the REA Truck body.



🔧 The historic Railway Express Agency delivery truck made its public display "debut" at Depot Day in October, showing off its new (vintage-style) tires donated by the Coker Tire Company. TTMF volunteers have the 1945 International Harvester K-5 back in running condition and nearly ready for a much-needed paint job!



🗨️ Volunteer Docents, like Perla Melger, offer guided tours through the 1920s Union Pacific Dining Car.

🗨️ Boy Scout Eagle candidate Adam Goldman (left) has begun a tie- replacement and track-surfacing project on Track 4. The project addresses some track level issues remaining from the construction of the adjacent Locomotive Pavilion. Adam should finish up his leadership project later in November. We're so proud to have Boy & Girl Scouts involved in projects at the Museum!





## Termites, Take a Hike!

In an extraordinary step aimed at preserving some of Travel Town's oldest artifacts, the Museum was closed to the public for two days in October so that many of the wooden railroad cars could be rid of termites and other lumber-munching pests.

Wood-destroying pests have been a huge detriment to some of the Museum's most precious pieces of rolling stock, including the rare Southern Pacific narrow-gauge cars and the 1880s Union Pacific caboose. The voracious little critters have chewed their way through the aging wood in these cars at an alarming pace, bringing several of the artifacts to the brink of total loss. This month's action, along with future conservation measures, will help preserve these historic relics for the next generations of Travel Town visitors.



☪ Pacific Electric "Red Car" and Southern Pacific wood-sided boxcar were among the artifacts that received "the treatment."

☞ No circus tent here, just the venerable San Francisco Cable Car getting de-bugged.

## How it all got started (continued from page 2)

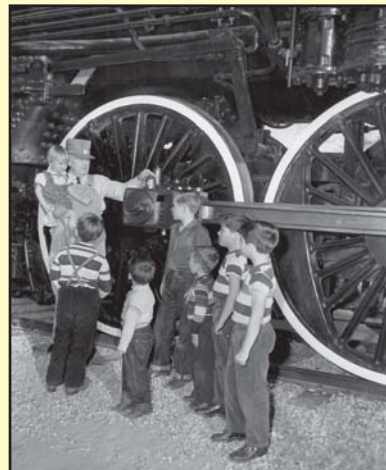
of California; a colorful old circus wagon, given by the Beverly Amusement Company; Caboose No 2117, a veteran "home on wheels" for nomadic trainmen, given by the Union Pacific Railroad Company; and a one-horse shay, the gift of Knott's Berry Farm.

To add still more charm to the transportation array, the Pacific Electric Company donated its old Sierra Vista "waiting station," which had sheltered "big red car" commuters over a period of several decades. With that impressive slate of exhibits cleaned and polished for the occasion, Travel Town was officially dedicated on Sunday, December 14, (1952)

Since then, several new vehicles have been added to the display, including an obsolescent Japanese "zero" fighter plane which was captured on a South Pacific island during World War II; and an ancient petroleum field fire truck, which was donated by the Shell Oil Company. And still more exhibits are being planned and will take their places of honor at Travel town in the near future, according to Frederickson, whose "pet project" has blossomed into a popular attraction for Southlanders and tourists of all ages. The unique facility is particularly a "Mecca" for transportation hobbyists.



Charley Atkins (far left) and Bill Frederickson (holding the booklet) and Union Pacific Railroad officials welcome "The Little Nugget" car at Glendale depot. The historic club car is already loaded onto the Belyea Co. truck for the short road trip to the Park in 1956.



One of Travel Town's original 1952 "engineers" shows off the 3025's massive driving wheels to a group of attentive young museum visitors. Designed for fast passenger service, the wheels on this 115-ton iron horse are 81" in diameter! Many of these youngsters probably returned to Travel Town with their own children decades later.



Now here we all are, sixty-two years after Bill Frederickson's wonderful idea; Travel Town is still open daily at 10:00 AM, free of charge, and kids are still climbing in the cab of the majestic Southern Pacific 3025! I wonder if that unused \$700 p.o. is still available?

## All Aboard!

A warm welcome to the newest members and renewing supporters of the Travel Town Museum Foundation.

### RESTORATION PARTNER

Don & Peggy Gustavson  
Charles Russell

### LITTLE NUGGET CLUB

Timmy Berry  
Fred Glienna  
Francine Oschin

### STREAMLINERS

Hayden Cass  
Larry Thomas

### TRACK GANG

Maxx Almaraz  
Susan Beach  
Steven Blye  
Kashka Bryson  
Luana Giffen  
Jack and Sherrie Jessup  
Theresa & Craig King  
Eric Liljestrand  
Linkhorst Family  
Don & Rosanne Longtain  
Cat Paulk  
Willeen Platt  
Margot Riemer  
Dr. & Mrs. Dave L. Sell

### ADULT ENGINEER

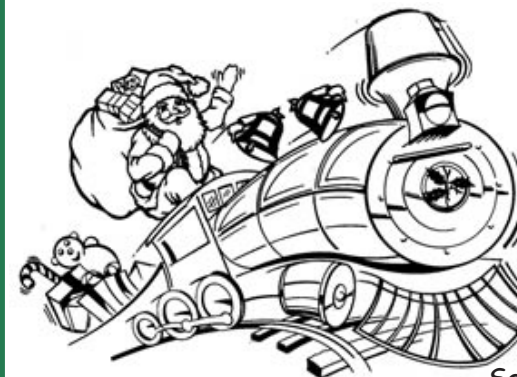
Stevan Dumas  
Rennie Hunter-Walz  
Jack & Jill Miller  
Norman Moline  
Dorothy Shepherd

### JUNIOR ENGINEER

Noah Almaraz  
Bailey Ewan  
Erica Fischer  
Robert Fox  
Mark, Melanie & Jay Gragnani  
Sammy Kellman  
Michael Malach  
Susan Marion  
Gladis Marina Ortiz  
Lisa Marie Richardson  
Janet Richman  
Gabriel N. Sandoval  
Kensuke Shimojo  
The Sigala Family  
Wesley Soter  
Jude Stacey  
Anetta Stark  
Walter Threlkeld

*Come join the fun!*

*To join or for further  
membership information,  
call 323-668-0104.*



### Travel Town Railroad

In cooperation with the Travel Town Museum and the  
Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks

Presents:

## Train Ride to Santa!

Board the Santa Express at the Travel Town Station for an exciting trip to Santa's North Pole Village! There, young and old alike can visit with Santa and tell him their Christmas wishes.

Santa will have a special little gift for each child. Mrs. Claus will be there to greet you and talk about life at the North Pole. Santa's Elves will happily take your picture with Santa for purchase as a keepsake of your visit. Upon Leaving Santa's Village, the Santa Express will take you through a wonderland of Holiday lights and scenery before returning to the station.

**Beginning Saturday, November 29, 2008 at 5 pm**

November 29 & 30 • December 5, 6, 7 • December 12, 13, 14 • December 17 through 23

Train operates from 5 pm until approximately 8 pm each day.

*On Saturdays & Sundays space may be limited - so arrive early!*

**Tickets \$7 per person**

**Includes one round trip - 18 months and under free  
Photos with Santa will be available for \$5.00 each**

**We are operating on fewer days this year and capacity is limited, so please buy your tickets early! Tickets can be purchased at the Travel Town ticket booth beginning November 1.**

For information & directions call 323.662.9678 or 818.881.2586 or visit [www.traveltownrailroad.com](http://www.traveltownrailroad.com).