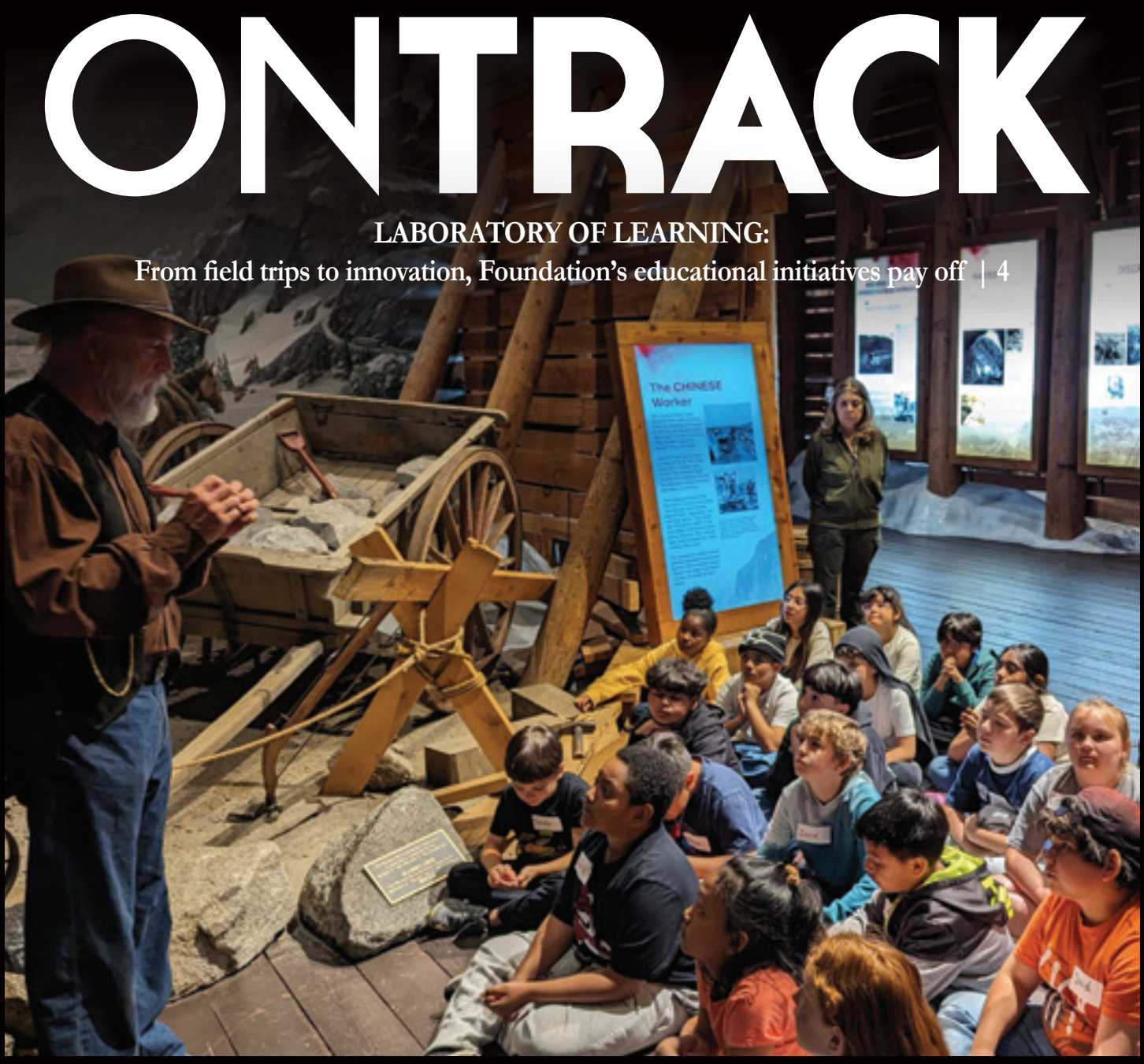
California State Railroad Museum

CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Railtown 1897 State Historic Park

FALL/WINTER 2024

ONTRACK



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CALIFORNIA STATE
RAILROAD MUSEUM
FOUNDATION

OnTrack, the official magazine of the California State Railroad Museum and Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, is published by the California State Railroad Museum Foundation. Distributed free of charge to Museum and Park members, OnTrack's purpose is to provide updates about programs and initiatives of the Museum and Railtown 1897 and to highlight fundraising activities of the Foundation.

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CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
RAILTOWN 1897 State Historic Park
CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FINE 1864
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

After three years of careful planning, discussion, and implementation, I'm thrilled to announce the launch of the Lemelson-MIT Rail Innovation in Action program! Our inaugural class boasts over 180 students, including several from international locations—a testament to the program's wide-reaching impact. I'd like to extend special thanks to Foundation employees Carly Starr and Alondra Moreno for their unwavering dedication in bringing this vision to life. This program is exceptional, and we are optimistic about scaling it up in the coming year.

In other exciting news, major track work has been completed on the Sacramento Southern Railroad between Miller Park and Baths, with the next phase slated for completion in early 2025. As part of our ongoing investment in infrastructure, the Foundation has also acquired a railcar, which will be configured as a fully accessible coach for the excursion trains. Set to enter service in 2026, this car will accommodate more than 50 passengers and ensure comfortable access for guests with limited mobility. I look forward to sharing further details in the Spring/Summer 2025 issue of OnTrack.

Speaking of railcars, the Foundation has leased the Southern Pacific 2979 "Neil Vodden" from our friends at the Golden Gate Railroad Museum. The car will be in reserve for Polar Express 2024 and will enter regular service in 2025 as a first-class option on our excursion rides. It's an exciting addition that will enhance the guest experience for the next three years.

Our Sacramento diesel shop has also been buzzing with activity. We were proud to debut the Sacramento Northern 402 locomotive this summer, and the tunnel motor, SP 6819, was successfully tested in late September. I can't wait to stand trackside and watch the mighty V20 engine roar past. The 6819 has deep ties to the Sacramento shops, and we're eager to explore the rich interpretive opportunities this locomotive will offer.



At Railtown, I'm happy to report significant progress on the Sierra No. 3. This summer, Sean Berry-Kelly rejoined the team, and his efforts have been instrumental in moving this project forward. We're optimistic that the Sierra No. 3 will be ready to help pull the Mother Lode Cannonball by April 2025, just in time for the start of the excursion season.

Lastly, I'd like to introduce Karen Bradley Follette, who joined our team in May as our new Director of Development. Karen brings a wealth of experience and has already made a noticeable impact in our development and membership efforts. You can reach her at kfollette@csrmf.org or by calling 916-445-5995.

None of this would be possible without your generous support. Whether through donations, memberships, Polar Express ticket purchases, or including us in your estate plans, you fuel our expanding slate of initiatives. Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Together, we are creating exciting opportunities and fostering meaningful change in the communities we serve.

Foundation President and CEO

Tim Schroepfer

A CLASS ACT *Foundation support enables tens of*

The California State Railroad Museum Foundation has more than 66,000 reasons to be grateful for its members and donors.

That's approximately how many schoolchildren were able to participate in the Museum's educational programs over the 2023-24 school year, with the Foundation and California State Parks absorbing the cost for all school groups who attended. The Foundation also absorbed the cost for all students, teachers and chaperones who rode school trains on the Sacramento Southern Railroad; these trains carried 8,000 students and adults over the school year.



Museum docents and guides lead students through Horses to Horsepower, which tells the story of the Central Pacific Railroad's creation and construction from Sacramento to Promontory Summit, and the impact the railroad had on the communities it served. Photo credit: Carly Starr

thousands of schoolchildren to visit Museum

"We are proud to support the Museum's educational programs in a way that expands access to students far and wide," said Foundation President and CEO Tim Schroepfer. "These programs are a critical part of the Museum's mission, and we want to remove as many barriers to access as humanly possible.

"Thank you to all of our members and Polar Express passengers," Schroepfer added. "Without you, we would not be in a position to help to this extent."

Jake Jennerjohn, a California State Parks guide who helps oversee education programs at the Museum, said expanded access "would not have been possible" without the Foundation's help.

"From supplies for our education programs to the bus subsidy program, the Foundation's support has helped expand access to the Museum for our community members," Jennerjohn said. "Without this support, the Museum would not be able to reach nearly as many students."

The Museum's main school programs are Horses to Horsepower, which took 3,707 students through the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad this school year, and Westward Bound, in which almost 320 students learned about traveling to California in the late 19th century, including a ride on the Sacramento Southern Railroad.

In addition, 250-plus students participated in Homeschool Day, while over 37,000 took self-guided tours of the Museum. In addition, 19,000 students took part in the Museum's digital programs.

The Foundation's new bus-subsidy program enabled 41 groups that otherwise might not have been able to afford the trip to visit the Museum in person. The program, launched in 2023, reimburses eligible schools for their transportation costs.

"The bus-subsidy program is a big part in creating an avenue for accessibility to the Museum and our educational programs," said Kim Whitfield, the Museum's chief of interpretation. "Without transportation support many schools would be unable to visit the Museum or participate in our enriching programs and missing out on valuable, formative experiences that foster inspiration and create lifelong memories."

This past school year, the Museum saw 14,337 Title I students from Title I schools visit in person. A Title I school is one receiving federal grants under the Every Student Succeeds Act to help students at risk of falling behind academically. California distributes these grants according to the number of students from economically disadvantaged homes.



LET'S GET INVENTIVE

The Foundation also has partnered with the Museum and the Lemelson-MIT Program to launch Rail Innovation in Action, a free online class for high school students who are interested in tackling and solving challenges facing railroads in the 21st century. This year's class, which runs from late September to early November, focuses on motive power, with topics including improvements to diesel-electric locomotives; electrification; and alternative fuels.

Carly Starr, the Foundation's special projects manager, said applications were received from high school students in 20 states and seven foreign countries. Of those, 180 students are actively participating in the program.

The course features guest speakers from BNSF Railway, Brightline, California High-Speed Rail Authority, Caltrain, MobilityData, MxV Rail, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission and Siemens Mobility. A full report on the first Rail Innovation in Action class will appear in the Spring/Summer 2025 edition of *OnTrack*.

Continued on page 6



A Museum docent leads a class through Horses to Horsepower, which explores the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad and the impact the first Transcontinental Railroad had on the people and communities it served.

Continued from page 5

FINDING FELLOWSHIP

In addition to undergraduate internships, the Museum now also offers postgraduate fellowships. Melanie Tran, the Museum's curator, worked with Emma Silverman, cultural resources program manager for the State Parks Capital District; Museum Librarian Chris Rockwell; and Claire Phillips, a Museum archivist assistant.

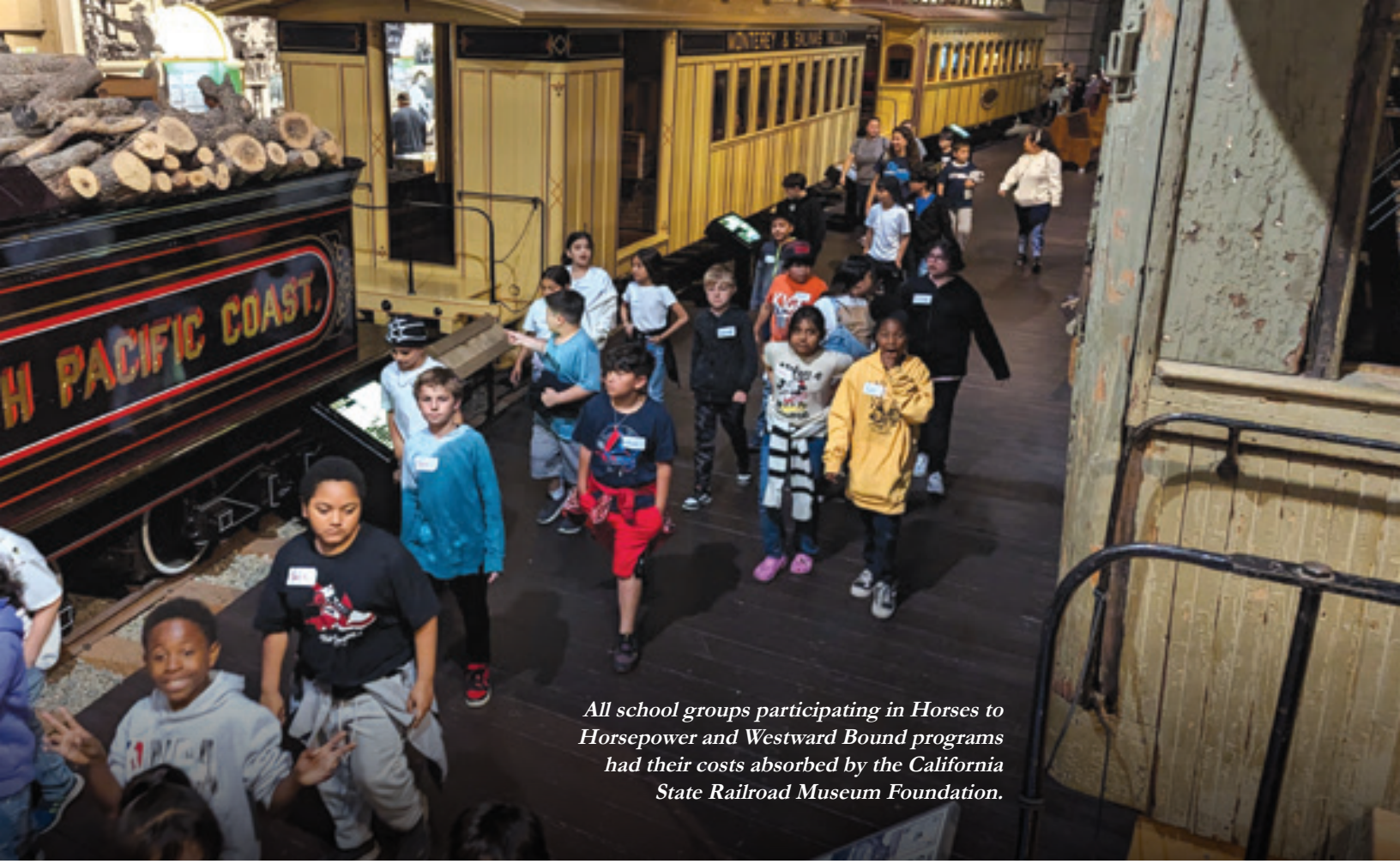
"The four of us got together and developed this program because there was a need to provide professional experience for people," Tran said, noting that the program is intended for early-career professionals; graduate students; and recent graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher in museum-related fields such as museum studies, history, art history, library science or the humanities.

"The projects that they're working on are really in-depth projects that are focused on one topic," which is a "luxury" staff doesn't really have, Tran said.

Miranda Bello joined the program in July 2023 after hearing about it through an alumni group from the University of San Francisco, where she earned her master's in museum studies. She's been working on digitizing accession records, which detail what is being donated to the Museum and by whom; these records often include correspondence between the donor and the institution.

"The California State Railroad Museum is very into people stories, and who owned these objects beforehand," Bello said. As part of her work, she researches names to learn who people were and where they were in life when the donated object took on its importance.

"It brought, for me at least, the objects to life, because I didn't necessarily look at objects first," Bello said. "Usually, collections are your object first, and then you're looking into the backstory of it. But instead, I looked at the people in the backstory, and then the object."



All school groups participating in Horses to Horsepower and Westward Bound programs had their costs absorbed by the California State Railroad Museum Foundation.



SCHOOL PROGRAMS & FIELD TRIPS

HEY TEACHERS

We have a wide variety of programs for your students, from Westward Bound to Horses to Horsepower, both of which tell the story of the Transcontinental Railroad and how it changed the country. School train rides are available on selected days. Self-guided tours are also available.

Scan to learn more!

If transportation costs are an issue, we can help!
All classes who register for field trips will have a chance to apply for a transportation subsidy. Can't be here in person? Virtual programs are available.

CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM FOUNDATION

THIS IS A BIG DEAL

Big Boy's California visit brought out the crowds

Union Pacific's legendary steam locomotive, Big Boy No. 4014, made a historic visit to Roseville in July, drawing tens of thousands of train enthusiasts, families, and history buffs to witness one of the most iconic locomotives in railroad history. This rare appearance marked the first time the massive engine traveled through Northern California since its restoration and was part of Union Pacific's celebration of America's rich rail heritage.

California State Railroad Museum and Foundation staff and volunteers, along with representatives from other railroad museums, helped manage the crowds and provided information on their museum and happenings during Big Boy's July 14-15 stop in Roseville, just northeast of Sacramento. The Foundation is proud to have been a part of this event.

Big Boy arrived in California on UP's former Western Pacific Feather River Route. Pictures taken trackside show thousands of spectators getting a rare glimpse of this locomotive. In Sacramento, Big Boy turned east toward the former Southern Pacific yard in Roseville.

At Roseville, thousands came out in searing heat—at times reaching 115 degrees in the shade—to witness the rebirth of this engineering marvel. Guests were able to tour the Union Pacific Experience car and hear from Ed Dickens Jr., Union Pacific's Steam Team director.

The Foundation is grateful to have been selected to be a community partner with the Union Pacific Museum in helping to publicize and support UP Museum's special charter, on which 150 lucky individuals got to ride behind the Big Boy on a run over Donner Pass from Roseville to Sparks, Nev., largely following the route of the Central Pacific Railroad. Foundation President and CEO Tim Schroepfer was invited to ride along on the historic journey; for his firsthand report, see Page 10.

No. 4014 is one of only 25 Big Boys built by the American Locomotive Company between 1941 and 1944, designed to haul heavy freight trains over the Wasatch Mountains. Weighing 1.2 million pounds and stretching over 132 feet long, the locomotive earned its name for its immense size and power. After being retired from service in 1961, No. 4014 spent decades on static display at the Rail Giants Museum in Pomona before UP undertook a meticulous restoration effort, returning it to full steam operation in 2019.





Karen Bradley Follette, left, and Carly Starr (in safety vests) helped represent the California State Railroad Museum Foundation at Union Pacific's public display of No. 4014, the Big Boy, at J.R. Davis Yard in Roseville on July 12-13.

Photo credit: Kevin Hecteman

Flying the flags of the United States and of California, UP No. 4014 came into California via the former Western Pacific line through the Feather River Canyon and headed back east on the former Southern Pacific line over Donner Pass.

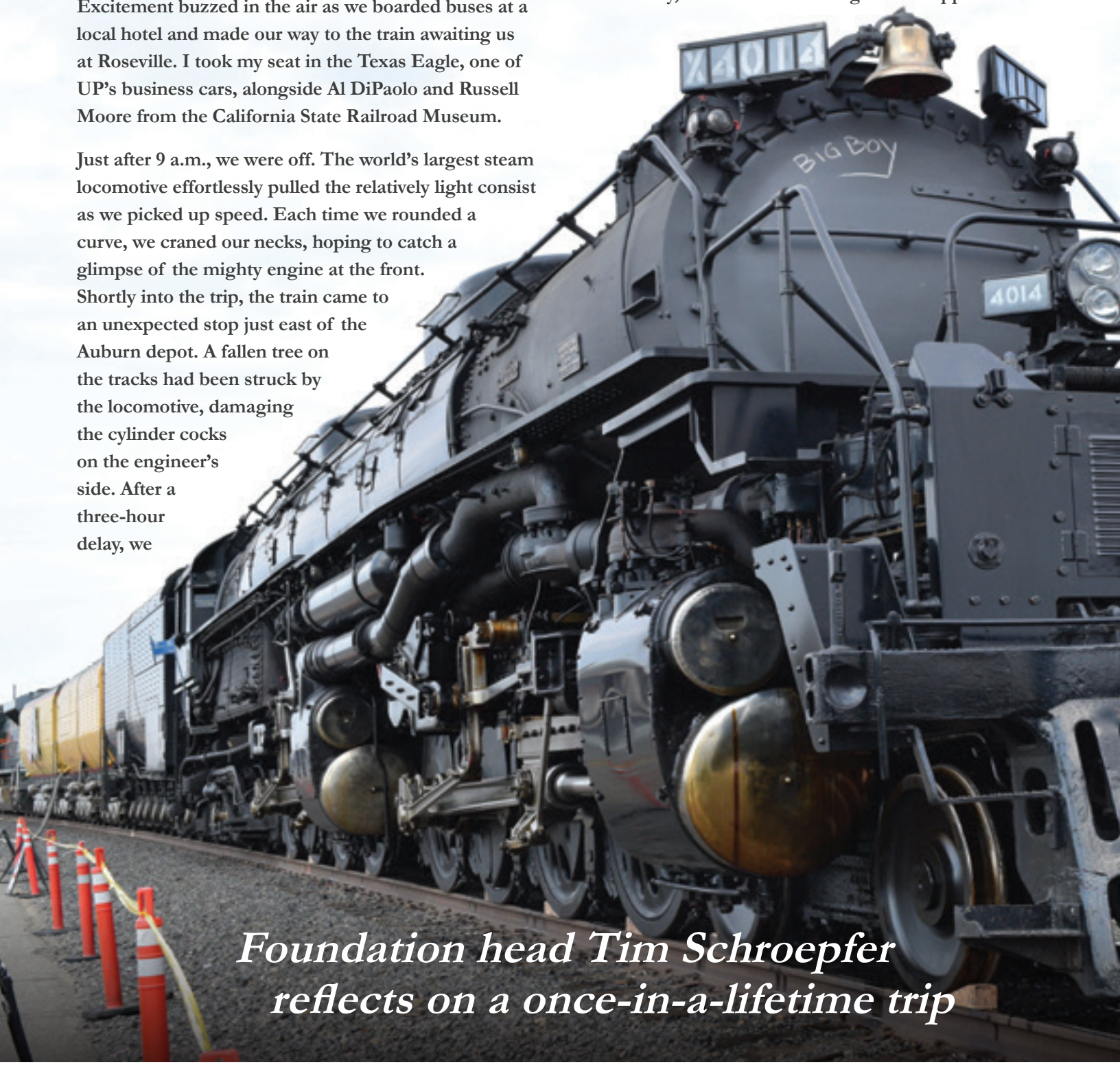
Photo credit: Alex Castro

NOT JUST ANY TRAIN RIDE

I was up at 4 a.m., unable to sleep. The anticipation of riding behind the Big Boy on its inaugural journey over the Sierra Nevada via the historic Donner Pass route was too much to let me rest. I didn't want to risk oversleeping and missing this incredible opportunity. Excitement buzzed in the air as we boarded buses at a local hotel and made our way to the train awaiting us at Roseville. I took my seat in the Texas Eagle, one of UP's business cars, alongside Al DiPaolo and Russell Moore from the California State Railroad Museum.

Just after 9 a.m., we were off. The world's largest steam locomotive effortlessly pulled the relatively light consist as we picked up speed. Each time we rounded a curve, we craned our necks, hoping to catch a glimpse of the mighty engine at the front. Shortly into the trip, the train came to an unexpected stop just east of the Auburn depot. A fallen tree on the tracks had been struck by the locomotive, damaging the cylinder cocks on the engineer's side. After a three-hour delay, we resumed our journey, with the onboard atmosphere undimmed by the wait. Passengers continued to enjoy the experience, and the mood remained upbeat.

A volunteer conductor shared an interesting tidbit: during the delay, Union Pacific management stepped in and



Foundation head Tim Schroepfer reflects on a once-in-a-lifetime trip



declared that nothing would hinder the Big Boy's passage over the Sierra. The train was given the highest priority in the system—nothing was to stand in its way.

The locomotive's magnetism was undeniable. Thousands, if not tens of thousands, of spectators lined the tracks, with some even causing traffic to come to a halt on Interstate 80, especially at the Auburn Ravine Bridge. Even California Highway Patrol officers could be seen from the train, phones out, waving as we passed.



After a brief stop at Emigrant Gap, we headed into the heart of the Sierra Nevada. Passing through snowsheds, skirting granite cliffs, and finally crossing Donner Pass itself, the train followed the path first laid out by Theodore Judah in the 1860s. A small hiccup occurred when the train paused just after emerging from the Big Hole tunnel near the summit, the realignment that eventually led to the retirement of the famed Tunnel No. 6. But the brief delay didn't dampen the spirit of the journey.

As we arrived in Truckee, the reception was overwhelming. It felt like we were aboard the *Orient Express*—people were everywhere. They crowded the streets, climbed on top of cars, and filled every possible vantage point just to catch a glimpse of the locomotive as it slowly rolled by.

Heading down into the Truckee River Canyon, a slight sense of melancholy settled in. We knew our journey was nearing its end. Arriving in Sparks about three hours late, we disembarked, boarding buses back to Sacramento. But none of us would soon forget this experience. For many, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that evoked the golden age of American railroading.

I am incredibly grateful to have been given a ticket to witness this firsthand. The restoration of the Big Boy is a masterpiece, a testament to the ingenuity and craftsmanship that helped build America into the powerhouse it is today.

Tim Schroepfer

President and CEO
California State Railroad Museum Foundation

OUT AND ABOUT



"Out and About with Lucius Beebe, Charles Clegg, and The Gold Coast" tells the story of the railroad historians and photographers, who were partners in life as well as in history. Photo credit: Kelly Huston

The California State Railroad Museum debuted a new exhibit, "Out and About with Lucius Beebe, Charles Clegg, and The Gold Coast," on June 15.

The exhibit focuses on the personal lives of Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg, famed railroad historians and photographers who donated their private railcar to the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society in 1954. The Pacific Coast Chapter used the car to make the case for a California State Railroad Museum by hosting then-California Gov. Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy, for dinner aboard the car in 1970. The chapter, in turn, donated The Gold Coast to the California State Railroad Museum. It has been a popular exhibit since the Museum's grand opening in 1981.

A lot has been written about their photography and the impact Beebe and Clegg have had on the railroad preservation movement. But what of their personal lives? As an LGBTQ+ couple, this aspect of their story is all too often glossed over. For this exhibit, the Museum wanted to focus on Beebe and Clegg as individuals, as a couple, and as a family who spent time living in *The Gold Coast*.

"If anything is worth doing," Beebe has said, "it is worth doing in style, and on your own terms..."† Lucius Beebe's style exuded confidence, class, and wealth. He was a true celebrity of his day. He met Charles Clegg in 1941 at a party given by Washington, D.C., socialite

Evalyn Walsh McLean. The two made what turned out to be a lifelong connection at that party, only separated by Clegg's World War II service from 1942-1944.

Whether they lived in New York City or the Virginia City, Nev., or resided in their private railcars, *The Gold Coast* or *Virginia City*, Beebe and Clegg were committed to each other, and their dog named Mr. T-Bone Towser. Their wealth and class enabled them to live openly as an LGBTQ+ couple. At the same time, other LGBTQ+ people were not so fortunate.

Representation matters. At the California State Railroad Museum and Foundation, we are committed to telling the stories of the railroad through the stories of people. Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg were more than their professional body of work. They were dynamic, intersectional human beings. Their railroad legacy was shaped by their personal relationship, weaving one thread in the rich tapestry of LGBTQ+ history.

Debbie Hollingsworth,
State Parks Interpreter,
California State Railroad Museum

† Clegg, Charles and Duncan Emrich, eds. *The Lucius Beebe Reader.* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1967), see pages 9-10.



The exhibit has physical and online components. Scan here to see the digital exhibit.

The Beebe and Clegg exhibit was dedicated June 15 with a ceremony featuring a performance by the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus. Photo credit: Kelly Huston

Visit our Digital Exhibit

A DROP OF HISTORY

Two new artworks

The California State Railroad Museum has taken on a bit of an artistic flair.

In partnership with the Sacramento Public Library and the Foundation, the Museum has installed two exhibits created by artists working with Parks and Tranquility grants.

The Museum's new artworks are a multisensory soundscape about water, "Chókim bètana wéeye (It Comes from the Stars)," created by Native American artist Amy Melissa Reed; and "Fieldnotes," in which Jessica Wimbley and Chris Christion use photos, old and new movie footage and graphics to tell how railroads affected Black Americans.

"Public art and public history go hand in hand," said Kim Whitfield, the Museum's chief of interpretation. "Public art, especially when informed by history, can say a lot through the voice of the artist in a way that connects to community beyond just words in an exhibit on an emotional level."

The new artworks were dedicated August 10 with an after-hours event featuring live music and performances. The new additions from the Parks and Tranquility team were funded by the state of California, administered by the California State Library.



THE SOUND OF WATER

The Fruit Growers Express refrigerator car houses Reed's artwork, which includes sounds of water recorded along rivers, at the ocean and inside Summit Tunnel.

"Someone gave me this freedom in this space, this creative freedom here, to do an installation that is based on sound," Reed said. "You don't have the opportunity very often."

A Museum tour that included the tunnel diorama and the stories of the Chinese workers who built the Central Pacific Railroad inspired Reed to visit the Summit Tunnel near Donner Pass.

(While trains still use the majority of the original Central Pacific right-of-way, the Summit Tunnel has been trackless since the early 1990s.)

Reed was impressed with the way the Museum went to the descendants of Chinese workers "to retrieve those stories, and to remember those stories of the men that had worked on that tunnel."

"That was so beautiful to me, that exhibit," Reed said. "There's a merging of the past and the present and the future happening here in this space."

At the Summit Tunnel, Reed recorded the sound of dripping water from melting ice in between winter storms. "One drop of water, and then it goes into the rivers, and then it goes into the ocean," Reed said. "To me, that's just a profound story."

Whitfield noted that sound is used throughout the Museum, including steam-locomotive sound effects

showcase connectivity, community in Museum



Artists Chris Christion and Jessica Wimbley (next to each other at the podium) and Amy Melissa Reed (in black top and skirt, to the left of Wimbley and Christion) were celebrated at the opening reception for their artwork August 10 at the California State Railroad Museum.

and the celebrations of the Golden Spike ceremony.

"The thing that makes Amy's piece unique, and the placement of it really unique and special, is that their work connects us to the environment … and connects us to each other," Whitfield said.

RAILROADS AND BLACK HISTORY

Wimbley and Christion's art is presented on one of the trestle pillars in the Museum roundhouse. They used photos and movies from the Museum Library and Archives and other sources, along with new footage of Wimbley and Christion filmed in the Museum.

Besides photos and movies showing Pullman porters, Jim Crow-era railcars and other aspects of Black life on the railroads, Wimbley and Christion incorporated quilt codes—used on the Underground Railroad to help enslaved people find their way to freedom—and hobo codes, used by people riding the rails to help each other find food and work and avoid danger.

"Both the quilt codes and the hobo codes talk about mobility and migration of different groups of people with pictures instead of words," Wimbley said during a training session for Museum volunteers.

Wimbley also drew inspiration from the book *Riding Jane Crow*, about the experiences of Black women and railroading—especially the story of a Black woman who sued a railroad in 1879 after being kicked out of a train's ladies car.

"Black women were in this interesting position where they're dealing with the intersection of race and gender, and what it meant to occupy and move publicly and be within these spaces, and to have mobility," Wimbley said.

At one point in the loop, Christion—dressed as a railroad worker—can be seen talking, but the viewer can't hear what he's saying.

"Part of that is a nod to that history that has been lost," Whitfield said, "but then also the African-American oral history tradition is very strong in that community."

Whitfield is hoping these two artworks are not the last.

"We'd absolutely like to see more arts in the Museum," she said. "Art and history speak to each other. History is about remembering, and so is art."

For more information about the Sacramento Public Library's Parks and Tranquility program, please visit www.saclibrary.org/tranquility.

IN ART, TRUTH

Sojourner Truth African Heritage Museum mural coming to Museum

It may be that someone reading this magazine right now helped paint the new mural being installed this fall on the second floor of the California State Railroad Museum.

The Museum and the California State Railroad Museum Foundation are teaming up with the Sojourner Truth African Heritage Museum, or SOJO, in Sacramento to create a mural for the Museum's second-floor STEM area. The mural celebrates people whose innovations have shaped railroading and seeks to inspire the next generation to keep moving forward.

Alpha Bruton, an artist and development consultant for SOJO, said the idea started when Carly Starr, special projects manager for the Foundation, reached out to SOJO. Starr then met with SOJO Executive Director Shonna McDaniels.

"We ended up talking for two hours about the different possibilities for a partnership between our two museums," Starr said. "Finding projects that benefit both museums is essential. This mural is the first big undertaking that has come out of that conversation. We have talked about a couple more ideas, so we will see what the future brings."

Bruton said that, in talking to Railroad Museum Director Ty Smith, he mentioned being more engaged with the community and bringing a more diverse crowd and age range.

"That's why they wanted to engage us," she said, noting that part of SOJO's business plan is public art and placemaking projects. "It's a big deal for us because it's on not only our city level, but it's a state level" with the Railroad Museum.

Two community listening sessions were held in July at the Museum to gather opinions and ideas about what to include. A team of artists drew on that information, along with tours through the Museum and the archives at McClellan, to come up with a design.



Members of the public help paint the new mural for the California State Railroad Museum in Old Sacramento State Historic Park.

Once the outline was ready, members of the community were invited to help paint the mural, with elementary school students picking up brushes on Sept. 13, followed by a public event Sept. 14-15 at Old Sacramento State Historic Park. After that, artists went to work finishing the mural, which is expected to be installed on the Railroad Museum's second floor by the end of October.

Bruton said the mural will incorporate virtual-reality components.

"That's how we're trying to incorporate all of the conversations, all of the stories, into the mural beyond just the visual part of it," she said.



Right: Shonna McDaniels (in hat), executive director of the Sojourner Truth African Heritage Museum, works with elementary school students who helped paint a new mural for the California State Railroad Museum. A team of artists came up with the mural's design, which the students and members of the public then painted in paint-by-numbers fashion.



Left: Artist Judah Pimentel pours paint for the mural event in mid-September at Old Sacramento State Historic Park.



Above: Artist Markos Egure works with people who came to the Community Mural Paint Days in mid-September to help paint the new mural for the California State Railroad Museum.

Above: Artist Henry "Fisko" Fisk touches up paint.

TRACKS THROUGH TIME

One of the artists, Markos Egure, is the son of a career railroad man. John Egure hired out with the Southern Pacific in 1961 as a laborer ("my dad pushed a broom around") and later became a machinist at SP's Sacramento shops, retiring nearly 40 years later from the Union Pacific shops in Roseville. (SP was merged into UP in 1996.)

"The railroad has been in my life my whole life," but "I didn't have to indulge into its history as much as I've had to today," he said. "Looking at the life that so many people live through this industry has been just amazing."

Egure said his ideas for the mural centered on the experiences of Pullman porters because of how their work life was, and how the job allowed porters to travel and come home with information.

"A person goes away on this train and comes back with stories or newspapers, or some item that they had to contraband in, because it doesn't seem like they had a lot of rights to do much but work," Egure said.

"I'm a storyteller, and I want to convey the storytelling of the image that we put together," Egure said. Of the mural, he added, "It deals with historic innovations, showing some people that are not widely seen in the industry and where it's going in the future."

Egure said his father would sometimes bring him to work to see what was involved.

"It's been an honor," Egure said, "to just know that I'm about to paint something—and not just my father's life, but I know his friends that I met that used to work at the railroad."

TO YOUR HEALTH

New Museum exhibit honors traveling nurses



Arlene Blum donated her Santa Fe nurse's uniform to the California State Railroad Museum, which made it the centerpiece of an exhibit about nurses on American passenger trains.

"Hi, I'm Arlene. I'm the nurse aboard. If you need me, the chair car attendant will find me, or the conductor will find me."

This is how many Santa Fe passengers met Arlene Palczyk Blum, who for a time in the mid-1960s served a vital role on two of the Santa Fe's streamliners. She was a courier nurse, an RN who would make the entire round trip from Chicago to the West Coast looking after the medical needs of the passengers.

Blum recently donated her uniform, badge and business card to the California State Railroad Museum, which used the items—along with an oral history from Blum—to create an exhibit telling the story of women who worked as nurses on America's railroads. The exhibit was unveiled June 7 with a small surprise party for Blum.

"I'm representing not only myself," she said, "but all the decades of the nurses who were aboard."

As a Santa Fe nurse, Blum worked the *San Francisco Chief* between Chicago and Richmond, across the bay from the train's namesake city, and the *El Capitan* between Chicago and Los Angeles. She was the only nurse aboard; if a doctor was needed, the conductor would have to wire ahead for one to meet the train at the next station.

Most of the cases Blum dealt with involved motion sickness or children falling and scraping knees. On one trip, three passengers suffered heart attacks. Another had a happy (and early) ending for a passenger who had to leave the train in New Mexico while in labor. "She had her baby on the way to the hospital," Blum said.

Trains to and from L.A. often carried Hollywood stars, some of whom Blum got to meet, such as Richard Widmark, star of many Westerns (and the 1974 adaptation of *Murder on the Orient Express*). "The most nice person I ever met," Blum said. "He was as interested in me as I was in him. He had a cold, and he was asking for suggestions about how to make him feel better."

Blum enjoyed being able to meet people and help them as much as possible—along with the social aspect.

"I was fine in the hospital, but I was so terribly shy," Blum said. "It brought me out of my shell, just being able to talk to the people. You got nervous getting on, but then as soon as you got onto the train, you were relaxed."

MUSEUM AS UNIVERSITY



Rail Innovation in Action part of Museum's expanding education mission

One of the great things about being a museum director is that no two workdays are ever the same. If you crave routine and do not wish to work evenings and weekends, this is not the career for you.

On Saturday, Sept. 28, I fired up my laptop, clicked a few buttons, and the next thing I knew I was connected to 180 high school students from all over the nation. They all logged on to be a part of something special: In partnership with the Lemelson -MIT program, the California State Railroad Museum and Foundation launched the inaugural run of the Rail Innovation in Action program.

Although we are introducing them to a large dose of history, the purpose of the course is to use history as a springboard to solve the problems of today and tomorrow. Through invention learning, students in this first program will seek to find ways to revolutionize motive power—that is, how to power locomotives in the most efficient, sustainable, and environmentally responsible manner. The students will meet for six consecutive Saturdays and will be guided by museum staff, Lemelson-MIT educators, and railroad industry insiders.

As this edition of *OnTrack* details, Rail Innovation in Action is just one of many ways that the Museum is moving closer to the heart of formal education.

Over the past seven years, we have worked hard to turn the Museum into not only a field-trip destination, but a larger laboratory of learning. We have well exceeded our initial vision related to the Museum and education.

As with everything we do, this is a product of a community of incredibly dedicated staff and volunteers, partnerships near and far, and supporters at every level. All give generously of their resources, time, and expertise. As I often say, the next generation of railroad enthusiasts and experts will not exist unless we make them.

At the California State Railroad Museum, the next generation learns by doing.

Museum Director
Dr. Ty O. Smith



Field trips are just one way the California State Railroad Museum aims to be a laboratory of learning.

FUN TIMES AROUND THE MUSEUM



The Great Wall Youth Orchestra performs outside the Big Four Building during the California State Railroad Museum Foundation's annual Spike Reception on April 26. The reception coincided with the Golden Spike Monument's visit to Sacramento. The orchestra later performed for the public in the Museum roundhouse.

From a monumental visit by a 43-foot-tall Golden Spike to fun for the whole family, the California State Railroad Museum Foundation hosted a variety of events for members this year.

Photo credits: Kelly Huston and Kevin Hecteman



California State Parks Ranger Matt Pasquarella and his K-9, Hugo, demonstrated their skills for Family Summer Fun Night guests. Hugo is a German shepherd born in 2018.



Martin Caestecker, the Foundation's director of railroad operations, serves as bartender at the Spike Reception. Looming in the background is the Golden Spike Monument, in town for the weekend.

Owney, canine mascot of the U.S. Postal Service, was on hand to entertain the crowds.



Foundation Finance Director Jennifer Colindres helps young people learn the art of origami at Family Summer Fun Night in late June. The members-only event is designed for families with young children.

A HAPPENING PLACE

New Superintendent Bart Grant reflects on a busy 2024

As Railtown's 2024 regular operating season begins to wind down, and the fall special events season spins up, I wanted to recap the activities that have taken place this year since April and a few things we can look forward to next year.

Early in the season, Railtown hosted several K-12 schools, providing guided tours and train rides. Students witnessed a working railroad in action, including demonstrations of various aspects of steam locomotive maintenance, such as the fire ring demonstration heating locomotive wheels for fitting on wheel hubs, and demonstrations of the forging of metal tools and parts.

On Memorial Day weekend, living history trains included volunteers portraying Mark Twain, Jamestown namesake George James, John Boyden "Grizzly" Adams, Gary Cooper and others.

State Parks week was celebrated the second week of June with a 1950s theme. Volunteers dressed in 1950s attire, and period music played throughout the depot. Narrators aboard the trains described the Sierra Railroad's conversion from steam to diesel locomotives in the mid-1950s and the history of the Sierra Railroad's preservation of the Jamestown shops and steam locomotives to serve the movie and film industry.

June through August, excursions expanded to include Wednesday trains, which proved very successful with high attendance.

The July heat wave caused the annulment of a small number of trains, but generally we were able to run the morning through noon excursions on most days.

An exciting event that occurred in July was the return of filming to Railtown. The Sherlockian troupe Baker Street West from Jackson filmed at Railtown for a total of four days in July and August. Their film, *Sherlock Holmes and the True Believer*, premiers in December and features scenes filmed aboard coach No. 6 and at the Jamestown depot. The cast and crew were terrific to work with and all the staff and volunteers at Railtown thoroughly enjoyed watching the filming process. (See story on Page 22.)

Railtown offered a few events featuring adapted interpretation for groups with accessibility needs such as trains and tours for visually impaired students and for adults with intellectual disabilities. We are planning to increase the capacity of these events next year.

During the summer, the pace of the restoration of the Sierra No. 3 locomotive really picked up and good progress has been made. We are hopeful that the winter months will include trial and test runs of Sierra No. 3, and steam crew training and qualifying. Sierra No. 3 may be back in service during the 2025 excursion season.

The Tales of the Roundhouse event in late September was well attended and is a unique event featuring the retelling of gruesome incidents that occurred on the Sierra Railway in the past. Upcoming this year at Railtown are the Skeleton Starlight events in October and the Polar Express in November and December.

Coming up in 2025, the year will start with a focus on training new volunteers, train crew qualifications and certifications, and track maintenance. The annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is scheduled for January 25 at the new Chicken Ranch Resort in Jamestown.

Special themed trains for the 2025 season include trains on Valentine's Day, Easter Sunday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Armed Forces Day. During spring, there will be several wildflower excursion trains. During the summer, a photo train is planned, as well as a themed July 4 train, and night trains in August. We will also be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Sierra No. 34.

Bart Grant
Park Superintendent
Railtown 1897
State Historic Park

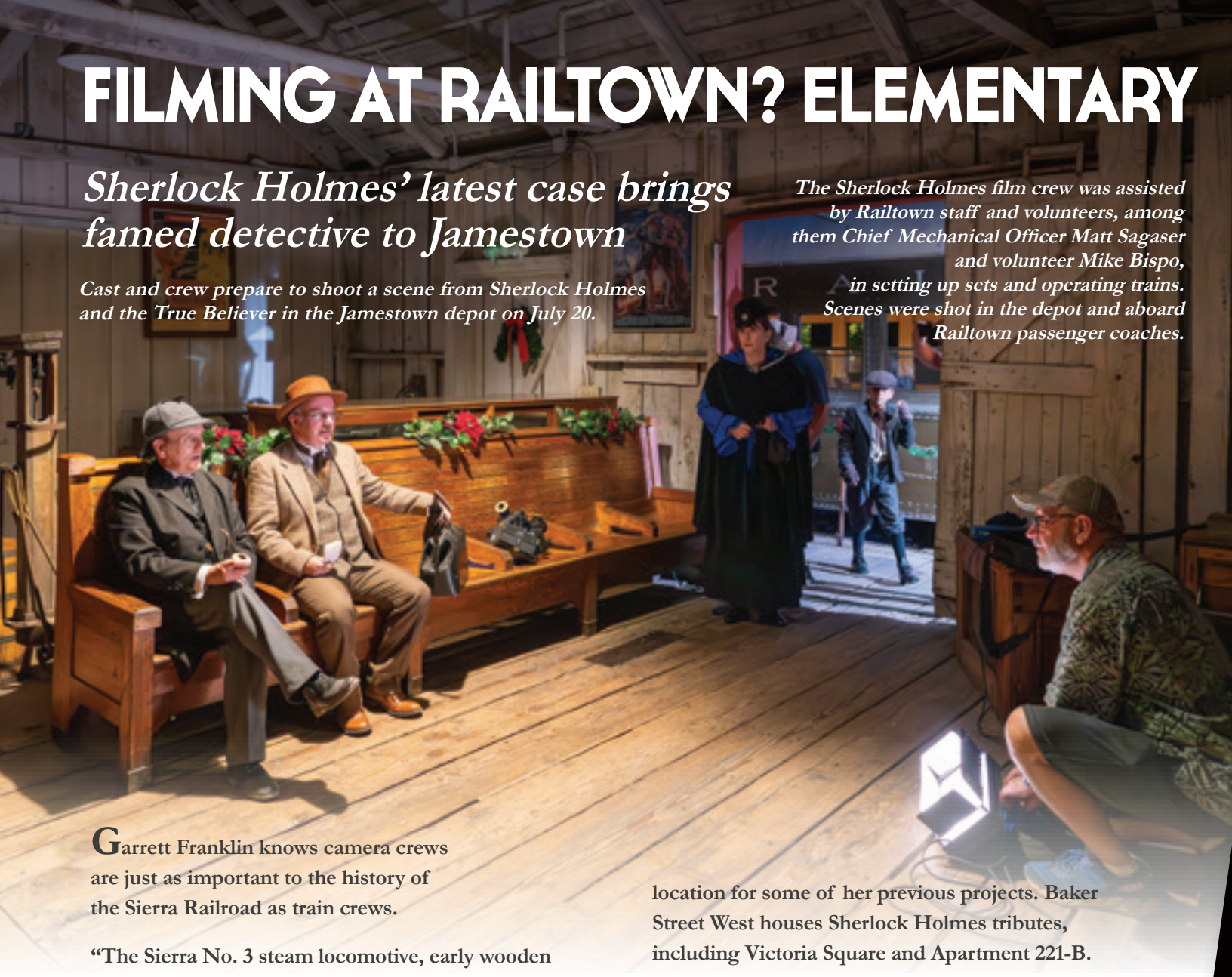


FILMING AT RAILTOWN? ELEMENTARY

Sherlock Holmes' latest case brings famed detective to Jamestown

Cast and crew prepare to shoot a scene from Sherlock Holmes and the True Believer in the Jamestown depot on July 20.

The Sherlock Holmes film crew was assisted by Railtown staff and volunteers, among them Chief Mechanical Officer Matt Sagaser and volunteer Mike Bispo, in setting up sets and operating trains. Scenes were shot in the depot and aboard Railtown passenger coaches.



Garrett Franklin knows camera crews are just as important to the history of the Sierra Railroad as train crews.

"The Sierra No. 3 steam locomotive, early wooden freight and passenger equipment, and most importantly the shop complex at Jamestown would not be here today for us to enjoy if it weren't for Hollywood," said Franklin, who works for the California State Railroad Museum Foundation as Railtown's chief operating officer.

Hollywood might not be making Westerns in town anymore—the last one, according to Larry Jensen in his book *Hollywood's Railroads Volume Two*, was *Shaughnessy* in 1996—but filmmakers still have Railtown on their radar.

The latest is Dänna Wilberg, who filmed scenes for *Sherlock Holmes and the True Believer* at Railtown over the summer. Wilberg's movie is a fundraiser for Baker Street West, a longtime Jackson landmark in the process of moving and a filming location for some of her previous projects. Baker Street West houses Sherlock Holmes tributes, including Victoria Square and Apartment 221-B.

For her newest movie, Wilberg needed a location with an 1890s appearance for the railroad scenes. Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, of course, fit the bill.

"It had everything we needed—it had the modern day, it had the old cars, and it was just perfect," Wilberg said.

Wilberg said the plot revolves around a young boy who receives a book called S*herlock Holmes and the True Believer* and can't put it down. He later goes on a class field trip to a railroad museum, where he finds himself pulled into the book and becomes one of its characters.

"The whole gist of it is that Moriarty has kidnapped Santa Claus, and this young boy named Danny is going to help them find him," she said of the boy teaming up with Messrs. Holmes and Watson. "It



goes from present day back into the 1897 era."

Wilberg filmed scenes in the Jamestown depot and aboard Sierra coach No. 6, which was staged outside the roundhouse for modern-day scenes and inside for nighttime Victorian scenes. Filming also took place aboard Railtown's excursion train out on the line.

Coach No. 6 was built in 1902 by the W.L. Holman Co. of San Francisco for service on the Sierra's long and winding Angels Branch. The coach has appeared in a number of movies and TV shows, among them *High Noon* and *Back to the Future III*.

Wilberg had nothing but praise for the Railtown staff, beginning with the park's new superintendent.

"Bart Grant is probably the biggest sweetheart I've ever met," Wilberg said. "He's just wonderful. He is so accommodating and kind and gentle, and just makes everything so comfortable and so easy. It made the filming there just a breeze."

Yeah, a breeze would have been nice. This is a Victorian-era Christmas story filmed in the midst of a long, hot summer.

"Filming in a train car when it's over 100 degrees in Victorian costumes was kind of brutal," Wilberg said, but Grant and the park were prepared with cooling areas for cast and crew.

"They just really took such good care of us," Wilberg said. "It was amazing. It's still amazing."

Franklin returned the compliment.

"This production group was great to work with," he said. "I could tell that they too had an interest in the Sierra's movie history and desire to keep it alive. Some of our staff and volunteers even got a chance to be a part of the history, whether it was working on the train crew for the shoot or filling in the background as an extra. It was a cool experience all around."

Franklin is pleased that Railtown has earned itself another in a long line of movie credits.

"I'm proud to say that we are still carrying on the tradition of filmmaking at Railtown 1897 and on the Sierra Railroad," he said.

Sherlock Holmes and the True Believer will premiere December 6 at Jackson Cinema in Jackson. For more information, go to www.bakerstreetwest.com.

ANOTHER LOCOMOTIVE RETURNS

'Tunnel motor' 6819 emerges from Sacramento shop—again

For the second time, Southern Pacific freight diesel No. 6819 has emerged from the historic Sacramento shops with a new lease on life.

Technically an SD45T-2, No. 6819 is better known as the tunnel motor. It was tested on the Sacramento Southern Railroad in late September and has been certified ready for service.

The locomotive gets its "tunnel motor" nickname from the placement of the radiator cooling intakes at the bottom of the frame, rather than the top, to help keep the locomotive from overheating in tunnels—of which SP's famous Donner Pass line has plenty.

No. 6819 was built by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors in La Grange, Ill., in 1972. It left the factory as SP No. 9193 and took on its current number after SP rebuilt it at the Sacramento shops in 1987. Union Pacific, which merged with SP in 1996, donated the locomotive to the Museum in December 2001.

Look for a full story about the return of the tunnel motor in the Spring/Summer 2025 edition of *OnTrack.*



No. 6819 runs around its train at the Baths siding on its test trip. Sacramento Southern Chief Operating Officer Ilias Athanasiou, who acted as conductor for the trip, is standing on the front steps. In the cab are Foundation diesel mechanics Jim Bays, who served as engineer, and Robbie Smith. Bays and Smith worked to get the tunnel motor operational.

No. 6819, preparing to leave Old Sacramento with a test train, shows the lower radiator cooling intakes intended to bring in cooler air in mountainous territory, an arrangement that gives tunnel motors their nickname.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Matt McCracken

Young volunteer makes transportation his profession and his avocation

When Matt McCracken was growing up, trains large and small pointed the way to his career—and his passion.

"I've loved trains since I was a young kid," said McCracken, who grew up in Santa Clara. As a youngster, he'd often ride Caltrain to visit his grandmother in San Francisco; he also remembers many visits to the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad, a miniature live steam railroad in Los Gatos.

McCracken joined the California State Railroad Museum volunteer ranks in 2017, going first to maintenance of way, which repairs and maintains the Sacramento Southern Railroad's tracks. Once he became a full-fledged docent, he became a car attendant. He's now a brakeman and conductor, and is learning to be an engineer.

Being on the Sacramento Southern is almost a busman's holiday for McCracken, who works for Regional Transit, Sacramento's main public-transit agency. He started out as a bus driver in 2019, became a light rail operator in 2020 and promoted to a supervisor's post in 2023. ("I like to joke that I have my fun trains and my work trains," he said.)

What keeps the "fun trains" fun for McCracken? The trains themselves—and the people on them.

"I'm more of an introvert kind of person," he said, "but it does give me the warm fuzzies to see all the children enjoying themselves, and during Polar (Express), all the families having a really good time. While my personal enjoyment is obviously the trains, it also gives me enjoyment to be able to do this for the public."

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SACRAMENTO SOUTHERN RAILROAD

Opportunities abound for volunteers at the California State Railroad Museum! From working with school groups to being part of the Sacramento Southern Railroad to the Polar Express, there's a place for you!

CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM FOUNDATION

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STEAM BY THE NUMBERS

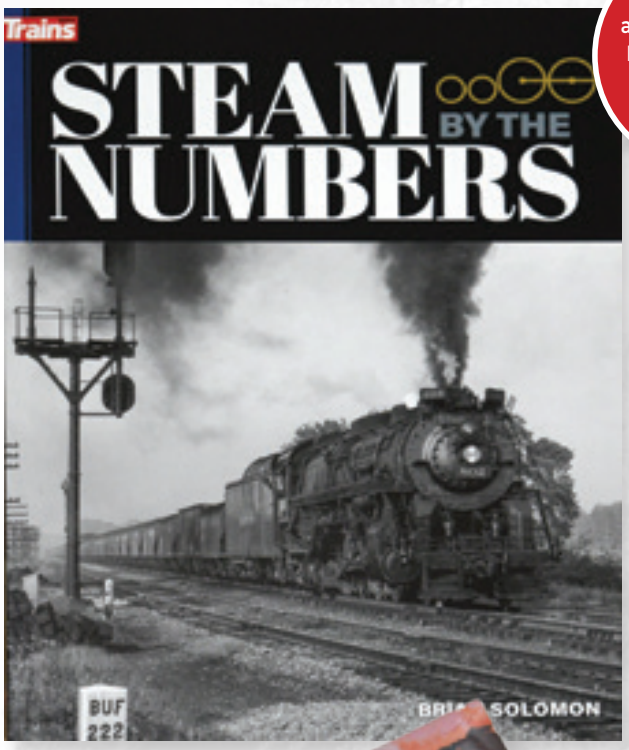
Author Brian Solomon explains the history of steam locomotives through wheel arrangements, uncovering the history, development, and operational significance of each arrangement and shedding light on why locomotives varied based on duty, geography, and era. $28.99 (Member price $26.09)

All Items shown are available in the Museum Store, at Railtown's Depot Store & Online

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Wheel arrangements for 16 types of steam locomotives wrap around this best-selling mug. The mug features a black matte finish inside and arrives in its own colorful gift box. Microwave and dishwasher safe.
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As seen in the final moments of the film. This 2-inch bell comes gift boxed with a note from Santa.
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"BACK TO THE FUTURE III" DELOREAN MODEL

"Back to the Future III" was filmed in part on the tracks of the Sierra Railroad. In the film's climax, the DeLorean time machine was pushed by Railtown's Sierra No. 3, disguised as Central Pacific No. 131. This 1:24 scale die cast collectible model car comes with a battery-operated light up feature, opening doors, and a detailed interior. Available in 1955 (whitewall tires) or 1885 (rail wheels) versions. $39.99 (Member price $35.99)



HOBO CODES TEE

During the Great Depression, hobos developed a shared code directing others toward meals or jobs and away from dangerous situations. This T-shirt reflects the symbols and signs used in that era. This black pre-shrunk cotton shirt is available in adult sizes S – 3X.
$19.99 (Member price $17.99)

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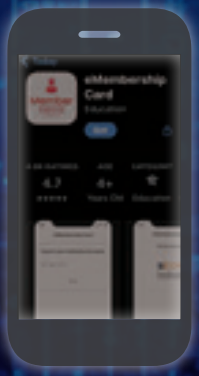
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WE'RE GOING PAPERLESS!

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The California State Railroad Museum Foundation is moving over to digital membership cards!

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Besides taking up less space and saving trees, digital membership cards update automatically after renewal and contain your membership benefits, membership support and integrated maps, all in one spot.

To set up your phone, go to the Apple or Google store and download the *eMembership Card* app. Once it's installed, select the California State Railroad Museum or Railtown 1897 State Historic Park tile, then select "Find My Membership Cards." Enter your last name and membership number or phone number, and you're in business. Present the card at the front desk any time you visit.

Questions? E-mail info@csrmf.org or call 916-445-5995.