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The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad & W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel

"Billy Jones Day" Will be Special This Year

BJWRR has much planned for this annual celebration

Peter G. Panacy
Chief Executive Officer

The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad started celebrating "Billy Jones Day" back in July of 2005, coinciding with the return of the 2-Spot after a ten-year hiatus. There were speeches, proclamations, music and fun for everyone. In the years since, the railroad continued to observe the special day honoring the man who created this railroad on his orchard back in 1943.

It is the one day of the year when guests of the railroad can name their own price to board the train. Riders can pay one dollar and ride ten times if they see fit. On many occasions, patrons will often donate twenty dollars and ride only once, fully appreciating the fact that the railroad and carousel is a non-profit organization relying on donations and contributions.

While Billy Jones Day is a memorable event each year, this year's celebration figures to be even more special, perhaps only surpassed by the original Billy Jones Day in 2005 when

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Billy Jones Day Celebration / Arrival of the 5-Spot
- 2 Billy Jones: The Man Behind the Name
- 3 The Diesels of Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad
- 4 Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad Memorial Wall
- 5 The 2-Spot at the Venice Miniature Railway
- 6 Calendar of Events / Contact Information

The 5-Spot Is Here

BJWRR #5 arrives at its new home at the railroad

Peter G. Panacy
Chief Executive Officer



CEO Peter Panacy and SPA Brandon McCracken pose with the newly-arrived 5-Spot shortly before unloading. Photo by Doug Sporleder.

It is finally here.

Those words easily sum up the feeling and emotion surrounding the nearly seven year process involved in bringing a new steam locomotive to the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad. The concepts and designs were initially discussed back in 2006 and construction of the new locomotive took place three years later.

The trip to pick up the locomotive was nearly an epic saga itself. The railroad's Safety Program Administrator Brandon McCracken elected to make the trip back to Marshall, Wisconsin where Merrick Light Railway Equipment Works is located. Using his personal vehicle, McCracken secured all the necessary paperwork, licenses, permits and fees to legally allow him to transport the locomotive back to the railroad. In addition, the railroad purchased a trailer, big and tough enough, to handle the 5-Spot and the trip back to California.

After nearly ten days, including there and back along with time spent in Marshall, McCracken arrived back in Los

continued on page 3

the 2-Spot returned to the active roster. This time however, the newly constructed and delivered 5-Spot will be debuting to the public and taking its place alongside the remainder of the railroad's locomotive fleet.

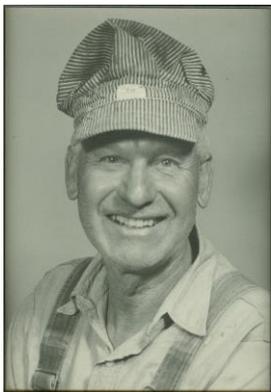
Like the first Billy Jones Day, there will be speeches, music, and pomp. Patrons will also be able to name their own price. However this year, there will be two steam locomotives to ride behind as both the 2-Spot and 5-Spot will share the workload over the course of the day. In addition, the train and carousel shall be open a little later than usual. Instead of closing at 4:30pm, the train and carousel shall stay open until 8:00pm in what promises to be a fun and historic day in the long history of the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad. ♠



Big crowds turned out for the first Billy Jones Day on July 24th, 2005. Photo by Jim Koski.

Billy Jones: The Man Behind the Name

Excerpt from an article written by Albert Von Damm



Billy Jones was known for his love of children and railroads. Photo courtesy of the BJWRR collection.

Billy Jones was born in 1884 in Ben Lomond, California, son of a lumberjack and ox-team driver. His parents had come west from Missouri with the Donner Party branch that went to Oregon.

He completed his formal education at age 13 so he could work to help support his struggling family. His only employer was the Southern Pacific Railroad where he started as a roustabout. In 1901 when Billy was 17 he boarded a locomotive as a fireman. At 21 he advanced to engineer, a position he worked until his retirement in 1950. He ran "helper" engines over Cuesta Grade near San Luis Obispo, work trains, *The Daylight* and *Lark* passenger trains and commuter trains up the San Francisco Peninsula.

In 1917 he purchased "The Ranch," a nine-acre prune orchard at Daves Avenue and Winchester Road in Los Gatos. The following year, he married Geraldine McGrady, a school teacher from Wrights Station. They had four children, two sons and two daughters.

In 1939, Billy was in San Francisco and noticed the little 2-Spot locomotive on the docks. He purchased the locomotive just hours before it was to be loaded on a scrap metal ship bound for Japan. With help from friends and coworkers, Jones repaired the locomotive.

In 1943, his son Robert, an Army Air Corps pilot, crashed in the Aleutians and was killed. Billy's other son was also killed during World War Two. Billy, finding solace in the company of children, began to run his railroad. What started as an irregular and short trip, eventually turned into the Wildcat Railroad that would thrill children until 1968.

On March 22, 1956, a fire gutted the engine house and the 2-Spot was severely damaged. The railroad had become such a part of the community's life that the response was immediate. An outpouring of people and tradesmen made repairs, often without charging for their time. Local banks accepted donations to cover costs. Southern Pacific donated parts and assisted in repairing the engine. As a result, the train was running in one month instead of the four to six initially anticipated.

Billy died in 1968, having lived pretty much in harmony with nature and with the world in general. He sincerely liked people, loved to participate in their activities, and being full of enthusiasm, was willing to try anything. He loved nature and enjoyed the outdoors. He started with very little, asked for very little, and yet in a rich lifetime, achieved quite a measure of success in many ways. ♠

BJWRR Diesels: #2502 & #3502

The diesel locomotive fleet has its own unique history at the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad

Peter G. Panacy
Chief Executive Officer



#2502 & #3502 pull much of the weight during winter and summer weekday schedules. Photo courtesy of BJWRR.

With much of the recent attention being given to the newly arrived BJWRR #5, fans of the railroad cannot forget two members of the locomotive fleet. #2502 and #3502 are just as much a part of the railroad's history and legacy. Furthermore, both play an integral operational role.

#2502 is the senior member of the diesel tandem. It was originally purchased by the late Al Smith, a man who loved the railroad, and wanted the organization to have at least another locomotive to back up the #2. Built by Custom Locomotive in Chicago and painted in the unmistakable Southern Pacific "Black Widow" scheme, #2502 was delivered to the railroad before the 1992 operating season. When the #2 went down for repair two years later, #2502 took over the role of primary locomotive for more than ten years.

#3502 made its arrival in 2005. The late Larry Pedersen raised a sizable portion of the funds for its purchase from Merrick Light Railway Equipment Works in Marshall, Wisconsin. #3502 was initially constructed at Custom Locomotive Works, yet when that company went out of business, Merrick took the job over and was able to finish the job and deliver the locomotive in January of that year. The "green and gold" paint allows it to stand out from all the other locomotives on the roster.

The need for the new locomotive was mandated by the fact that #2502 had logged over 10,000 hours use at the railroad

Gatos on April 29, greeted by a crew of eager employees and volunteers ready to unload the nearly 16,000 pound locomotive from the trailer.



The 5-Spot was unloaded using a series of ramps along with both BJWRR diesel locomotives. Photo by Doug Sporleder.

The process itself was relatively seamless. After roughly three hours, the 5-Spot was completely off the trailer and ramp and onto the mainline track. At that moment, the ownership of the new locomotive became official. The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad now possessed a brand-new steam locomotive.

Now, the 5-Spot will have to undergo a series of tests, inspections, and certifications before being officially debuted to the public. Engineers shall be trained and there are plenty of preparations necessary. Yet the excitement is brewing and fans of the railroad cannot wait to experience their first ride behind BJWRR #5. ♠



For the first time, BJWRR #5 takes its place alongside the 2-Spot within the railroad's engine house. Photo by Doug Sporleder.

Honoring the Memory of the Railroad's Own

The new Memorial Wall shall remember staff and volunteers who have passed

Peter G. Panacy
Chief Executive Officer

If there is a single element that the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad is known for, it is that the railroad remembers its past. The same can be stated for those who have dedicated so much of their time and yet are no longer with us.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of people have reached out with helping hands over the railroad's history. Sadly, many of those have passed on. Yet their contributions shall never be forgotten.

Recently, the railroad's board of directors conducted a campaign to raise funds to help pay off the final amount of the new 5-Spot. Donors could make contributions in memory of family and loved ones. Many did and a sizable portion of these contributions were in memory of persons who had previously dedicated so much during their lives to both the railroad and carousel. It only seemed fitting that something be set in place where their memory could be inscribed forever.

The board decided to dedicate a memorial wall, honoring the names of associated persons that have passed on. This wall shall be installed right in the train depot. The names of family and loved ones who have given so much to the railroad and carousel shall be memorialized for all to see.

In addition, families will continue to have opportunities to make contributions and participate in memorial giving which shall help preserve both the railroad as well as the legacy of friends this organization has lost over the recent years.

While the names of people on this new wall may be gone to us in person, the fact that their names remained inscribed at the railroad is an indelible reminder of their dedication and service. Their memory shall not be forgotten. This wall shall serve as a continuing reminder that these people played a significant role in perpetuating the railroad and carousel.

Yet in a larger sense, the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad and W.E. Mason Carousel exist as a monument to their memory. The train and carousel still provide smiling faces to youth of all ages and that legacy is worth remembering. ♠

and was in need of a complete overhaul. #3502's arrival allowed the overhaul to take place and #2502 was rebuilt during the winter of 2006-07.

The number schemes for both locomotives also have an interesting story behind them. Smith, who ran another railroad at his Swanton ranch north of Santa Cruz, numbered his diesel locomotive #502 after a Boy Scout troop that he supported. When he purchased BJWRR's first diesel in 1992, the railroad numbered it #2502, or the second "502." #3502 falls into the same tradition as being the third 502.

In addition, the #4 switcher engine was constructed by Tom Waterfall, a BJWRR volunteer, who worked on the locomotive for nearly four years before its completion in 2007. While not used for pulling passengers, the #4 is often seen fulfilling its role as a yard switcher as well as handling the majority of track maintenance projects.

Both #2502 and #3502 are 1/3-scale models of a GP-60M locomotive. In addition, both feature a direct drive to four axles through a hydrostatic drive to hydraulic motors. Both are also powered by an Isuzu 4-cylinder C-240 PW engine.



#2502 & #3502 on the railroad's mainline. Photo by Greg Reiter.

The diesels are primarily responsible for operations during winter schedule and into early spring. In addition, both diesels are also featured during summer weekday operation. #2502 and #3502 are also often used during "excursion" trains as well as a multitude of special runs that take place throughout the year. The engines are often rotated to give passengers a chance to ride behind either locomotive over the course of a couple of days.

While the majority of BJWRR's legacy revolves around steam, one cannot forget that the railroad's diesels have played a vital role in forging the organization's history. Without them, the railroad would not be where it is today. ♠

The 2-Spot at the Venice Miniature Railway

Edited from an article by Arthur W. Line from a 1909 edition of "The Model Engineer and Electrician"



The 2-Spot at Venice, circa 1906. Photo courtesy of BJWRR collection.

The Venice Miniature Railway came into being at the bidding of Mr. Abbot Kinney, creator of Venice, who, hearing of John J. Coit and his Eastlake Park Railway, invited him to design and build a miniature railway for the city of Venice. There is about 7,500 feet of main line right-of-way, as well as about two miles of 18" track, including switches and side tracks.

The two locomotives [1-Spot & 2-Spot] are of the 2-6-2 or "Prairie" type, with eight-wheel tenders, and cost \$4,150 each. They are very handsome and are finished in black, with brass rails and trimmings and silver lettering. The comparatively small driving wheels give the appearance of a freight rather than a passenger engine. Speeds of 30 miles per hour have been made with a good load, and 20 miles per hour is commonly made. The total weight empty is 9,260 lbs. and in working order it is 11,027.

The locomotives were built from Mr. Coit's designs by Johnson Machine Works, Los Angeles, California. The boilers of these locomotives are of simple but very strong construction. They were designed by Mr. Coit and built by Pacific Coast Boiler Works in Los Angeles. The steam dome and the ash-hole are formed of solid rings of steel, long rivets passing through the rings and boiler plates. The operating pressure is 175 lbs. and the heating surface is 113 square feet.

Each tender, mounted on two four-wheel trucks, is of the massive design usual in America. The oil space is located above the water tank. At the front end is the engineman's seat, and under it is the battery for the conductor's signal

bell, also an acetylene generator supplying gas to the cab light, headlight, and markers. The tenders are painted black, with silver lettering, according to the usual American practice.

The air pumps are located on the right side of the boilers, and were designed by Mr. Coit, ball valves being used instead of the usual type.

There are five kinds of tickets used – adults' and children's round-trip tickets, residents' commutation tickets, season tickets and annual passes. The round-trip fare for adults is 10 cents and for children 5 cents, the tickets being green and red respectively. They are painted in rolls, consecutively numbered, and are good until used. Annual passes are complimentary. The writer is fortunate in possessing an annual pass for himself and lady. Theodore Roosevelt is also an annual pass holder.

On public holidays it is usual to run two trains of three, four or five cars each, and occasionally a double-header train of eight, nine, or ten cars has been run, service being maintained for twelve to eighteen hours. Six cars is the maximum load for one locomotive at high speed.

There is a third locomotive [3-Spot] somewhat smaller than the other two. This is the property of the Eastlake Park Scenic Railway, Los Angeles, and was also designed by Mr. Coit. When the Venice Railway was first built and before engine No. 2 was delivered, it became necessary to have another engine for relief and helper work. With the advent of No. 2 it was relegated to construction work and later returned to Los Angeles.



The 2-Spot with its builder John J. Coit (left). Photo courtesy of BJWRR collection.

The busiest day the railway has ever had was on July 4th, 1907. This was Independence Day, the great American national holiday, and no less than a total of 5,395 passengers rode. ♠

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 7TH - - W.E. MASON CAROUSEL DAY

Celebrate the W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel at Oak Meadow Park. Rides shall be an open donation all day.

JULY 28TH - - BILLY JONES DAY / BJWRR #5 PUBLIC DEBUT

Celebrate the memory and legacy of Billy Jones and his railroad. Rides aboard the train shall be an open donation. In addition, the long-awaited debut of the new 5-Spot shall happen at noon. Trains shall run from 10:30am until 8:00pm.

AUGUST 1ST - - "FIGHT FOR THE TRAIN" SHOW

BJWRR & the Los Gatos Shakespeare Festival present the second annual "Fight for the Train" featuring medieval and renaissance fun for the entire family. The train and carousel shall run until 7:30pm and the show starts at 8:00pm.

AUGUST 28TH - - END OF SUMMER NIGHT RIDE & PASTA DINNER

Help bring summer to a close by joining us for a memorable twilight train ride along with a delicious spaghetti dinner. Dinners cost \$8.00 per person and train tickets cost \$5.00 per person. The carousel is free. The event runs from 5:30pm until 8:00pm

SEPTEMBER 2ND - - LABOR DAY / END OF SUMMER SCHEDULE

The train and carousel shall be open Monday, September 2nd in observance of Labor Day. Hours are 10:30am until 4:30pm. After Labor Day, the train and carousel shall begin the Fall Schedule: train and carousel open Saturday and Sunday from 10:30am until 4:30pm. Carousel open Wed. – Fri. from 10:30am until 3:00pm.

Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad
P.O. Box 234
Los Gatos, CA 95031-0234

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad & W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel, Inc.

General inquiries and correspondence to the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad & W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel, this newsletter, or its Board of Directors should be addressed to:

BJWRR
P.O. Box 234
Los Gatos, CA 95031-0234

(408) 395-RIDE office (408) 354-2841 fax
EMAIL: info@bjwrr.org

Persons interested in volunteering in the machine shop may also call (408) 395-6269.

Visit our website at www.bjwrr.org for further updates and information.

The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization working with the cooperation of the Town of Los Gatos and the Santa Clara County Parks Office. Contributions are tax deductible.

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