

IRON HORSE QUARTERLY

Volume 8, Issue 1

January 2017

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

From the President's Caboose

Doug Sporleder
President, Board of Directors

The Year 2016 ended with an exciting event at the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad and W. E. "Bill" Mason Carousel. On December 10th we dedicated our new passenger car built in house.

The car was funded by a donation from Phil Reader in memory of his grandparents. The car was built from the ground up by our Tuesday Crew group of volunteers, and named "Live Oak" after the neighborhood in Santa Cruz County where Phil was raised. The dedication was held on a rainy day which did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 15 to 20 members of Phil's family and others in attendance. The ceremony was lead by BJWRR board member John Lochner and included Santa Clara County Supervisor Mike Wasserman, Los Gatos Mayor Marico Sayoc and Vice Mayor Rob Rennie. Mayor Sayoc used apple juice from our snack shack to anoint the new car. All who attended were extremely impressed with the workmanship exhibited by the Tuesday Crew. The car is a real beauty, and will assist us in carrying more passengers and speed up the waiting time for rides on our train.

Pictured is Los Gatos Mayor Marico Sayoc anointing the BJWRR new passenger car Live Oak.



A project taking place early this year will be the construction of a new ticket booth near the Carousel. It will allow us to have two ticket sellers working together to speed up that process, and will allow us to expand our Carousel horse painting room. These improvements will greatly improve our capabilities. We are currently accepting donations to help with these projects.

Speaking of donations, The Los Gatos Afternoon Rotary Club donated two barbeques to us last year, and in the coming weeks we will be getting a gas line hooked up to them through the gracious assistance of A Tool Shed. They have been a great improvement to our food sales.

Maintenance work by our wonderful group of Tuesday volunteers is ongoing. Our rolling stock, track, and the rest of our infrastructure are getting a thorough going over to insure our operational readiness for our busy seasons.

I thank all of those who participate in the ongoing efforts to keep the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad and W. E. Mason Carousel a part of our community tapestry. ♠

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 From the President's Caboose
- 2 Chief Engineer's Corner
- 3/4 CE Corner cont. / CEO Year End Review
- 5 Join Our Team!
- 6 2016 Benefactors of the BJWRR & WEMC
- 7 Calendar of Events/Contact

Chief Engineer's Corner

Highlighting the railroad's accomplishments in 2016

Bill Church
Chief Engineer



*Steam engine #2 and Steam engine #5 being fired up at the same time.
Photo Courtesy of CJ Vargas.*

Here we are again the start of a new year. Last year was a busy time for the railroad continuing to serve the public per usual. There were a few issues, however that kept us on our toes –so let's dive right in.

Our steam locomotives ran well during their season. Steam engine #2 was quite reliable with only minor repairs, while steam engine #5 gave us a few problems but all were easily fixed. Diesel engine #2502 locomotive was our problem child for the year while #3502 was our main work horse. The #4, a seldom seen engine, has had a few problems. Our passenger cars have seen a new addition with a brand new passenger car. This addition will aid us as the original cars will undergo a much needed facelift.

Track work is always on going, and with our extreme weather the past year it will still be needing attention. Finally the Carousel has had us forced to lock down two rows of horses. As usual all issues have been addressed by our fine maintenance crew.

We extended our steam season to facilitate more training for our engineers to be qualified to operate all locomotives. So it wasn't until the end of the year that we downed steam engine #2 to overhaul its tender. New bearings, wheels and axles have been installed. The reserve air tanks which were thought to be DOT rated ended up being ASME

but since they were over 45 years old, it was decided to install new tanks. This was also a great opportunity to replace old and corroded plumbing and hoses for fluid exchange. The work is still on going and reassembly is progressing well.

Steam engine #5 has had a good season. We seem to be past our break-in period with few major maintenance issues. A new lubricator pump was installed on the engineers side. This is a mirror image of the pump on the Firemen's side and was designed to separate the cylinder oil and the bearing and sleeve oil. During our air vessel inspections it was found that our air tanks weren't up to standards. The locomotives side tank construction was in question. Dimensions and material used was obtained from the builder and is still under review. The tenders tanks are not ASME rated and will be replaced this year.



Work engine #4, Diesel Engines 3502 & 2502. Photo courtesy of Matt McCracken.

Diesel Engine #2502 has given us problem all year long. There seems to be an electrical short that intermittently kills the engine during operations. All attempts to repair the problem have failed. So it was decided to totally overhaul the electrical system. This will include modifying the dash with new gauges and updating the wiring, making it much more reliable and serviceable. If the problem still continues the next step will be to replace the entire wiring harness. During the electrical overhaul it was discovered that the radiator was leaking so the radiator along with the hydraulic radiator were sent out for repairs. Any other serviceable item found to be needing replacement will be done at this time.

The #4 is our in house built switcher engine used primarily for track work - was found to have damaged motor mounts. The problem is the three cylinder John Deere diesel engine was used in a generator and then a

Continued on page 3

compressor back in 1994, and the motor mounts aren't available. So the process of finding a substitute is on going.

We have a new addition to our passenger cars. Phil Reader a long time BJWRR honorary member has donated money to have a new passenger car built to honor his grandparents. The car was built as an exact replica of our existing 101 year old Pan-American exhibit cars. The construction was done solely by our talented and dedicated volunteers. With the addition of this new car, it will give us a chance to refurbish our existing cars. This will include painting the interiors, refinishing the seats, and updating the sound system.

The track has been maintained by our track crew throughout the year. Gauge and super elevation have been adjusted, and numerous ties have been replaced due to rot. This current rainy season has not helped especially when one of the storms left our outer loop under water.

Our 106 year old carousel has been showing its age. One of the upper gears that drive the 10 row of horses has worn down to a point where they jump gears. These gears are original and are now no longer in production. A gear has been sent back to Brass Ring in Illinois where a new gear is being fabricated. Two rows have been locked in position, and actually are enjoyed by those that don't particularly like the up and down movement.



This proves to be a busy year with many projects in various stages of completion with many still to come, and thanks to a talented and dedicated Tuesday group of volunteers the work will get done.

The railroad will continue to bring joy and education to our loyal fans. If any of our readers wish to join our work crew, visit bjwrr.org for more information. Inquires can be sent to info@bjwrr.org or by calling 408-395-RIDE. ♠

Oh What A Year It Was!

2016 recap of all the happenings at the BJWRR.

Francesca B. Alexander
Chief Executive Officer

I would first like to start with a big Thank You to all who have and continue to support our railroad. We are here because of you.



Let's dive right in, shall we?

2016 was an interesting year for us. The weather had a huge impact on our operations, and affected our overall ridership a great deal. All things considered, we had a good year.

Although our ridership was down overall, we still served 178,272 riders for the year. We also broke our sales record in concession, largely due to the addition of permanent barbecues. The Los Gatos Afternoon Rotary club generously purchased and donated two barbecues to the railroad and built a permanent structure to house them in right next to our concession stand. Because of these permanent barbecues we were able to extend our barbecue season year round. There is just something about having a hot dog after riding the train, and now you can at any point in the year.

The railroad once again hosted our traditional events with great turnouts. Flapjacks and Railroad Tracks Pancake Breakfast is our "kicks off to summer" event as well as our special event season opener. Although we didn't get as big of a turnout as last year, we still set a record for concession sales for the event.

July was rider appreciation month with Carousel Day providing free rides on the carousel at the beginning of the month, and Billy Jones Day closing out the month with free rides on the train. We also were able to hold a double header on Billy Jones Day with both steam engines fired up. Sandwiched in between carousel day and Billy Jones day,

we had T-shirt Fridays. Every Friday in July customers wearing original BJWRR t-shirts got free rides on the train. This year, T-shirt Fridays really took off. We had lots of customers participating, which helped double our retail sales for the month.

In August, we hosted our annual End of Summer Night Ride Pasta Dinner, and this year we introduced our commemorative BJWRR wine glass. Customers were able to purchase the glass and get cheaper refills throughout the night. This once again helped sales tremendously, and gave us our best overall income for the event.

The Pumpkin Train and the Holiday Train also came back this year, with amazing turn out. The Pumpkin Train saw huge crowds come through, but unfortunately we were rained out for 3 out of 9 days. All things considering though, we had great crowds and sold lots of pumpkins.

The weather continued to be a factor as we went into the Holiday Train. We were rained out a couple of days, but when it wasn't raining temperatures were in the 30's. There were big groups who still came out and continued their holiday tradition with us. During the Holiday Train the railroad accomplished something that it has never done before. On one of the busier nights during the Holiday Train, the Live Oak was connected to the train to give the railroad its first run with a 6 car train. It was an exciting and historical moment for our railroad.



The Holiday Train in Oak Meadow Park runs through the Fantasy of Lights spectacular in Vasona Park.

Speaking of the Live Oak-we held an unveiling of the new passenger car in December. As you've read above, the new passenger car was a passion project from Phil Reader in dedication to his grandparents. We held an unveiling for the car that was built in house by our wonderful Tuesday crew of volunteers. Although, it rained during the unveiling we were still able to give a nice dedication to the car and to Reader's family. At the unveiling, Santa Clara County

Supervisor Mike Wasserman, Los Gatos Mayor Marico Sayoc and Vice Mayor Rob Rennie shared some very kind words about our railroad that were very touching to us. As a community based organization we focus heavily on making sure that our patrons always have a wonderful experience. The positive isn't always shared, so when someone reminds you of what a gem it is to have the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad in the community; as staff members it makes us stop and think of what it is that we are doing. I personally, am very thankful to do what I do. This organization truly is a gem in our community, and one that many people will continue to support. We will put up with the ever changing permitting process, and we will continue to provide great events for our patrons. We will continue to provide a fun and wonderful experience for everyone who comes to visit us.



Due to the rain, the dedication was moved in our shop. Pictured are (L) Board President Doug Sporleder, Board member John Lochner, (R) Los Gatos Mayor Marico Sayoc, and Phil Reader's family and friends.

The railroad will continue to provide a great day out on the rails, and will always strive to keep pricing affordable. As you know, with current economic changes there may come a time in the near future when pricing will have to increase slightly. We are a non-profit organization so any increase will only ensure that we can still afford the costs of running the organization. Of course any changes will be shared with our loyal followers.

Once again, we would like to extend a very warm thank you to all our benefactors for their continued support, as well as all of the families who come and visit us throughout the year. Happy Rails! ♠

Give us a follow on the major Social media platforms. Facebook, Twitter, and now on Instagram!



Join Our Team!

The BJWRR is always looking for enthusiastic people to help run the railroad!

Francesca B. Alexander
Chief Executive Officer

Whether your passion is volunteering, railroads, history, or working with children, the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad has something to offer for persons interested in getting involved within the community.

The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad offers employment that is perfect for students looking for a low maintenance job. With flexible hours and competitive pay, the railroad offers great training for persons joining the work force for the first time.



The Railroad operates mostly on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays), and weekdays during the summer season. Weekend availability is required, and there are always opportunities to pick up extra hours during the week.

Our employees will gain experience in money handling and retail sales, as well as customer service, teamwork, and time management. Staff will also get the chance to work with real steam engines, and a historical carousel.

Our employees get to work outdoors, with children and historical equipment as they gain knowledge and understanding of what it takes to succeed. Parties interested should visit bjwrr.org to print out an application, and of course they can visit us Saturdays and Sundays to see first-hand what we do.

The Railroad is also looking for locomotive engineers for diesel and steam. Locomotive engineer shifts will vary, but will mostly be on the weekends. Scheduling is flexible, and

will be based on volunteer preference. How many people can say that they can operate a 106 year old 1/3 scale real steam engine? Don't you want to add that to your resume?



If engineering isn't really your thing, then let us know and we will find something that is more tailored to your talents. We are always looking for maintenance workers, gardeners, barbecue cooks and event catering. Don't have these skill sets? No worries! There are many ways to get involved at the railroad. It is a great way to be involved in the community, as well as be part of a historical landmark.

Volunteers are the life-blood of this organization. They make up nearly three-quarters of our entire staff, and are responsible for a number of elements that keep both the train and carousel running. They also get to do cool stuff like build new passenger cars from scratch.

If you don't have time but have resources, all donations are tax deductible. As you know, the railroad is 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, so any help goes a long for this little railroad.

For more information visit our website at bjwrr.org or if you would like to chat we can be reached at 408-395-RIDE. ♠



We hope to see you soon at the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad & W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel.

Notable Contributions from 2016

The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad and W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel would like to thank the following benefactors for their contributions and continued support to the railroad:

A Tool Shed Rentals
Robert Butterfield
Jerry Clouse and Kimball Midwest
Kay Mason Duff
Paul Gardner
John Hannegan & C.B. Hannegan's
Susan Kankel
Jeffrey Lochner
Los Gatos Community Foundation
Los Gatos Lions Club
Los Gatos Meats & Smokehouse
Los Gatos Rotary Club
Glenn McGhee
Ed Newman and Newman Steel
Olander Family Foundation
Geraldine Peters
Virginia Peters
John Miles & Priscilla Peters
Phil Reader
John & Rena Saunders
Rino Sclipa
Janet Shultz
Marshall Smith

Without your continued generosity we could not do what we do!

Thank you!

The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization and contributions are tax deductible. If you are interested in making a contribution to the railroad, please contact us by writing to BJWRR, P.O. Box 234, Los Gatos, CA 95031-0234 or calling (408) 395-RIDE. You may also email us at info@bjwrr.org for donation information. Your contribution will help ensure that the railroad and carousel continue to serve the community for future generations.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 15th – START OF SPRING SEASON

The Train and Carousel are open Saturdays and Sundays from 10:30 to 4:30. The carousel is also open Wednesdays through Fridays from 10:30 to 3:00. All times are weather permitting.

APRIL -- STEAM SEASON RESUMES

Engine #2 and Engine #5 take on the bulk of weekend operations. Check on our Facebook for daily updates of what engines will run.

JUNE 10th – FLAPJACKS & RAILROAD TRACKS PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Help us kick off summer with early morning rides on the train & carousel, and a delicious pancake breakfast. Our 11th Annual Flapjacks & Railroad Tracks Pancake Breakfast is set for June 10th from 8:00am to 10:15am.

JULY – RIDER APPRECIATION MONTH

We take the whole month of July to thank you! Carousel day and Billy Jones day will serve as bookends to our rider appreciation month, with T-shirts Friday right in between. More info to come.

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 EMAIL: info@bjwrr.org

Persons interested in volunteering in the machine shop may also call (408) 395-7433 or by visiting bjwrr.org

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. All contributions are tax deductible.