

IRON HORSE QUARTERLY

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

Carousel Round and Round

Rosie Balistreri
Chief Operating Officer

The W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel has been a part of the Los Gatos community since July 4th, 1991, when it first opened (fun fact: since opening day, it has had more than 1,200,000 riders). Our wonderful carousel has such a rich history, and one that we work hard to preserve.



As it was stated in our April issue, after we had our annual routine inspection on March 20th, 2017, a problem was found. Our organization along with our carousel enthusiasts, were heartbroken to find that the carousel would not operate until it was resolved. Since it is a 107 year old carousel, it was difficult to know how to take on such a repair project. We did not know what to expect in terms of what kind of work it required, or how much it would cost us. As a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization, all the money generated through ride tickets, retail, and food sales, goes back into preserving the organization. We were determined to get this repair taken care of as quickly as possible. A sense of hopelessness fell upon us when the hours of research on how and who could repair our carousel kept leading to dead ends. Being a 1910 Savage Carousel that used to be steam powered, there were none around like this one. Or so we thought...

BJWRR Board member, George Shannon, made another attempt at finding that hope and he did! Bradford Perrone and his mechanic, Clinton Childs, from Historic Carousel flew out from Oregon to get the job done. They've worked with other carousels and have had the joy of working with a 1910 Savage prior to ours. This was going to be a big project, but one they felt they could get done quickly.

The job wasn't easy. The deficiency was found in the main shaft of the carousel. Just getting to this shaft

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was going to be difficult, so there were many steps to take before any repairs could get done. First, 25 wooden beams were used to hold up the carousel by cross bracing it so the platform of the carousel wouldn't move.



The beams were placed around the carousel to support it, so when they main shaft was disconnected, the carousel platform wouldn't fall.

Once the carousel was supported by the beams, Perrone and Childs removed all the rods connected to the carousel's main support shaft. After the shaft was free of the rods, they chained and unbolted the main support shaft which gave them access to the collar- where the repairs were needed. Most of the time was spent getting the platform secured so work could begin on the collar. Once Perrone and Childs were able to get to the collar, the work went fairly quickly and smoothly, albeit still a bit complicated.

The overall project took four days to complete. Perrone and Childs worked day and night to ensure that the project would get done on time. A big thank you goes out to them, as well as George Shannon for overseeing the project from start to finish. The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad and W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel are thankful to have found such a great,

hardworking duo to take care of our precious carousel.

A multitude of thanks also goes out to some local businesses for their continued support of our organization. A big thanks to Economy Lumber and A-Tool Shed for helping us with materials, and to Chris Benson and CB Hannegan's for feeding our crew. We would also like to thank all of our donors and guests who donated to the project. We are so grateful for all the help we received during this project. ♠



Sadly, the disco ball did not make it through this project.



Pictured is the collar that is the main support shaft of the carousel.

4th of Brew-ly at the BJWRR

4th of July celebration includes first ever BJWRR Beer Garden

Francesca B. Alexander
Chief Executive Officer



The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad celebrated the 4th of July in style this year with the first ever 4th of Brew-ly Beer Garden. What better way to celebrate our nation's birthday than riding the rails and enjoying an ice cold beer with your favorite bbq item? Not much, really!

The Town of Los Gatos usually hosts a big 4th of July outing in Oak Meadow Park. This year they decided to split up the festivities since the 4th landed on a weekday. The Town held a big block party on the Saturday before the 4th in downtown Los Gatos, and then hosted the San Jose Wind Symphony concert in Oak Meadow on the 4th in the late afternoon. To coincide with their celebration, the BJWRR opened the train and carousel from 10:00am to 4:00pm, a half hour earlier than normal hours, so we wouldn't make too much noise for the concert. The Snack shack and

BBQ were open from 11:00am to 6:00pm to ensure all concert goers could enjoy a bbq item or one of our famous sno-cones. The first ever 4th of Brew-ly BJWRR Beer Garden served up a variety of California beer and wine from 12:00pm to 6:00pm. Guests were able to enjoy the concert while sipping on an ice cold beer, and snacking on a lovely cheese platter. We also had a great BJWRR themed souvenir pint available for guests to take home.



*Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad Pints.
Guests were able to enjoy refills in these glasses at a quarter of the price!*

If you missed your chance to pick up a railroad pint they will be available for purchase during our End of Summer Night Ride Pasta Dinner on August 19th.

All in all, it was a great day. The train and carousel were enjoyed by guests of all ages, and our beer garden was a hit for those who could enjoy it. Definitely another exciting event added to our schedule, and one that we look forward to providing in the future. ♠

Special Events at the BJWRR!

Rider appreciation month and pasta dinner!

Francesca B. Alexander
Chief Executive Officer

As July rolls around the railroad, we are half way through the summer season. July is also special because it is our rider appreciation month. During rider appreciation month, guests get to choose the fare of riding on the carousel on July 9th on Carousel day, and on the train on July 23rd for Billy Jones Day! Getting to name fare on the train is something that Billy Jones did on his orchard, and on Billy Jones Day we get to do things as he did!

We will also bring back T-shirt Fridays in July! Guests wearing official BJWRR T-Shirts will get to ride the train for free every Friday in July



Visit our gift shop either in person or on our website to see all the t-shirts we have for sale! Remember all proceeds go back into the BJWRR!

Rider appreciation month has been a long standing tradition, and is a way to say thank you to all our wonderful guests who continue to support the railroad year after year.

Once August comes around, the summer season starts to dwindle down as school begins. To commemorate the summer, we end our season much as we started it with a special event! Summer comes to a close with End of Summer Night Ride and Pasta Dinner event which will take place on Saturday, August 19th. The Train and carousel will run from 5:30 to 8:30pm, and we will be serving dinner from 6:00 to 8:00pm. We will have beer and wine available during dinner service, and our awesome wine glasses will be available as well. This year we will also add the RR pint glass available for purchase!



Get the End of Summer Night Ride wine glass or the RR Pint for \$10 (each). Enjoy your favorite drink in either of these awesome glasses!

All proceeds made on these special days, and every day, will help keep the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad alive for future generations. Every penny we make goes back into preserving our train, carousel, and snack shack. From all of us at the BJWRR we would like to give our sincerest Thank You, and we hope to see you riding the rails soon. ♠

Locomotive Engineers Needed

Francesca B. Alexander
Chief Executive Officer

The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad would never be what it is today without the assistance of thousands of volunteers throughout the years.

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. Locomotive engineers have a unique responsibility, as we literally cannot operate without them.



Engines 2502 & 3502 are 1/3 scale diesel engines.

We find ourselves in need of locomotive engineers to build up our roster. Scheduling will be based on volunteer preference, but we do require a minimum of once per month to remain active on the roster. Locomotive Engineer shifts vary. Shifts are broken down per season, per engine, per available shift.

Diesel engines are fairly simple to operate, but it's important to note that anyone interested in becoming an engineer must be 18 years or older, and be able to sit for long periods of time.

Training begins with diesel engines, where engineers will need to accumulate throttle time before they can be signed off by proper personnel. Once engineer has been signed off, and has put in their hours on the diesel, they can begin training on steam engine #2.



Steam Engine #2 on a run on the BJWRR track.

Steam engines are bit more complicated than diesel engines, but also a lot more fun to engineer. Training on steam is quite extensive, as there are many moving parts on the engine. It's important that all engineers have to show a lot of competency in running this engine. Once engineers are signed off on engine #2 they may begin training on engine #5.



Persons interested in becoming a locomotive engineer can either call our shop at 408-395-2800, or visit bjwrr.org. Click on get involved for all the information. We look forward to adding *you* to our roster! ♠

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 23rd – BILLY JONES DAY!

In honor of the man who founded our railroad, the BJWRR will host open donations for the train all day. Guests can “pay what they want” to ride the train. All proceeds benefit the BJWRR. 10:30am to 4:30pm.

AUGUST 14-18 – SCHEDULE CHANGE

The BJWRR will extend the summer season one extra week!
Join us August 14th through the 18th for the last week of summer. Train and Carousel open from 10:30am to 3:00pm. Our snack shack will be open from 11:00am to 2:30pm, but our bbq will remain closed.

AUGUST 19TH – END OF SUMMER NIGHT RIDE” PASTA DINNER

Bring summer to a close with a delicious spaghetti dinner and evening train ride, all provided by the BJWRR. Dinner starts at 5:30pm. No reservation required. Ride tickets extra.

AUGUST 20TH –OFFICIAL START OF FALL SCHEDULE

Beginning on August 20th, the train and carousel will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 10:30am until 4:30pm. The carousel will additionally be open Friday from 10:30am until 3:00pm. All times are weather permitting.

SEPTEMBER 2ND – PARK DANCE

The train and carousel will run from 10:30am to 7:00pm, and the snack shack and BBQ will be open from 11:00am to 7:30pm to participate with the LG Park Dance in Oak Meadow Park.

SEPTEMBER 4TH – LABOR DAY

BJWRR will be open Monday, September 4th from 10:30am until 4:30pm in observance of Labor Day.

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:

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

Office line: (408) 395-RIDE

Shop line: (408)395-2800

EMAIL: info@bjwrr.org

Persons interested in volunteering in the machine shop may also call (408) 395-2800 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.