

# IRON HORSE QUARTERLY

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

### Orange you glad it's October?!

Francesca B. Alexander  
Chief Executive Officer

When October chugs around our neck of the tracks it only means one thing: Pumpkins! The 4<sup>th</sup> annual The Pumpkin Train is here!



There have been a few changes to the event recently as we used a new pumpkin vendor for the first time in four years. These pumpkins were a bit larger than we anticipated which threw our whole pricing system out the window. Pumpkins this year were sold by weight as some of the pumpkins were just too large; we even

had one pumpkin weighing in at 55 pounds!

We also added a lot more decorations around the station area, and put up Halloween lights in Vasona Park. The few criticisms that we have received over the years have been that we don't decorate in Vasona and that we need to decorate more around the station. We tried our very best to add more decorations in the station, that included a skeleton scene in the garden area. This year we were able to do some decorating in Vasona Park by adding Halloween lights around squirrel hill. It is a bit difficult to set up elaborate decorations in Vasona as we can't keep an eye out there 24/7, and things tend to grow legs and walk away. This year, we lost some decoration in our own area by that mysterious growing legs and walking away thing, so we are sometimes a bit limited by what we can do.

The event kicked off on October 6<sup>th</sup> to great crowds. Our ridership numbers are through the roof, which is a welcomed sight since this year things have been a little rough for the railroad. The first and second weekend of the event saw record setting crowds, and we hope for our third and final weekend those numbers will continue. On behalf, of the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad I would like to say a big thank you to everyone involved in making this event a success! We are happy that our little railroad can provide you with all the pumpkin spice your fall needs. ♠

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## We Need You!

### *Locomotive Engineers needed at BJWRR*

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. .

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 an 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 all steamed up!  
Photo courtesy of Greg Reiter.*

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 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](http://bjwrr.org). Click on get involved for all the information. We look forward to adding *you* to our roster! ♠

## How Does BJWRR Do... Special Event Pricing

Francesca B. Alexander  
Chief Executive Officer

We state often that the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad has been a non-profit organization since 1968. Mainly because we are stating a fact, but also because being a non-profit organization affects everything that we do.



*Trying not to get burned by extra fees!*

What does it mean to be a non-profit? Non-profit means exactly as it sounds, not to make a profit. All income generated through tickets, retail, and food sales go back into the organization. The railroad does not receive any outside funding, and only sustains itself through those sales, as well as the generosity of donors. For example, A Tool Shed has been a huge supporter of the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad for many years. They donate

countless tools that help us fix the tracks, fix our buildings, as well as put on special events like the Pumpkin Train and The Holiday Train. If it were not for their generous support, the railroad would not be able to put on such events, as we would have to charge way too much to just break even.



*A Tool Shed has many locations all over the bay! They have great equipment for any project!*

Special events are a fundraising tool for the railroad, as that is how we raise extra funds as we move into the slower and usually rainy season. If we have to overcharge our guests then there is really no point to put on the event. Pricing has been a bit difficult as of late, because we want to ensure that our pricing is fair for guests, but we also have to make sure that we are at least making some extra funds. Pricing for the last few events has had to increase because the cost to put them on continues to go up year after year. Just as an example, to put on evening events, the railroad must obtain permits through the town of Los Gatos for Oak Meadow Park as well as the County of Santa Clara for Vasona Park. Those permits are not an umbrella price as you may imagine, but instead we are charged per every night that we decide to host the event. We begin

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the events already at a deficit, and when you include stock, decorations, and sometimes labor, we are just trying to dig ourselves out of the hole and not lose money on an event that is supposed to be a fundraiser.

The main reason for this article is not to make excuses, but to really try to explain why we do what we do. There are many factors involved when dealing with pricing, and at the end of the day we just want to ensure pricing is fair for us and especially for the guests who keep our railroad running. Our main goal is to never overcharge, so if you feel that our pricing on certain events may be too high think about what that ticket is funding.

And as always, the railroad is a certified 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization so all donations are tax deductible. Don't be afraid to ask for a receipt to show that you donated to your local non-profit! ♠



## Winter at the BJWRR

*December sees a lot of schedule changes for the month.*

Francesca B. Alexander  
Chief Executive Officer

As the weather changes, and the days get shorter this will have an effect on the operating schedule at the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad.

Starting November 4<sup>th</sup>, the train and carousel will move into the winter season; open Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00am to 3:00pm. Of course all times are weather permitting. Apart from the schedule change, everything runs pretty standard in November with the exception of opening one extra day on the Friday after Thanksgiving on the 24<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am to 3:00pm.

December will see a lot of schedule changes due to events and where the Holidays fall. The railroad will remain closed on December 2<sup>nd</sup> due to our participation in the Los Gatos Christmas Parade at 11:00am. In the evening we will also be participating in the Fantasy of Lights Walk Through Event starting at 4:00pm. Due to the walk through event, Vasona Park will remain closed on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, therefore the railroad will remain closed on those dates as well.

As a special treat we will be extending steam season until the end of the year. Engine #2 is set to finish off the steam season on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am to 3:00pm.

## Winter Steam at the BJWRR

*Steam season gets extended*

Francesca B. Alexander  
Chief Executive Officer

Steam season at the BJWRR for the last few years always ran April through October. Once the winter season hit, both steam engines went down for maintenance and various projects. Last year, with the prospect of new steam engineers finishing up training- we decided to extend the steam season until the end of the year to ensure those engineers became qualified. The BJWRR had not seen winter steam since the 1990's, and it was quite a welcomed sight.



Winter steam. Picture taken on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2016

This year, we will be extending steam season once again. Engine #2 will take on runs both in November and December, with the last run taking place on December 16<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am to 3:00pm. Both months will see a combination of steam and diesel days as we are training a few engineers both on diesel and steam. We hope the weather will cooperate so we can run all steam days as scheduled. ♠



### DECEMBER SCHEDULE

M	T	W	TH	F	Sat	Sun
					2	
			7	8	9	10
			14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	
					23	

**Train & Carousel Open**  
11:00am to 3:00pm

**The Holiday Train**  
6:00 to 9:00pm

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Train will kick off on Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 9:00pm. The event will run Thursdays through Sundays until the 17<sup>th</sup>, and closing week will be Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. All times 6:00 to 9:00pm, and all times weather permitting. We will be closing the main entrance of Oak Meadow Park at 8:45pm during the event, and tickets will stop selling by that time as well. Tickets for the event will be \$6.00 and include 1 train ride & unlimited carousel rides for the night. Our snack shack will also be in operation from 6:00 to 8:30pm and will serve snacks, sweets, and hot beverages. For more information on the event please visit [bjwrr.org](http://bjwrr.org) or like us on facebook.

Due to the Holidays falling on weekends again, the railroad will remain closed December 24<sup>th</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup>. Regular operations will resume on Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup> 2018. ♠

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **November 4<sup>th</sup> – Winter Season**

The train and carousel move into the winter season with change of hours. Train and Carousel open Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 – 3:00. All times are weather permitting.

### **December 2<sup>nd</sup> – Los Gatos Christmas Parade**

The railroad will participate in the annual Los Gatos Children's Christmas Parade in downtown Los Gatos which starts at 11:00. The Railroad will remain closed for the day due to our participation in the parade.

### **December 7<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> The Holiday Train**

Partnering with Vasona County Park's Fantasy of Lights, the railroad will host the annual Holiday Train featuring music and light displays viewed from the train. The event opens Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 9:00pm. The event will run Thursdays through Sundays, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> -17th. And closing week will take place Monday through Saturday Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Hours of operation are 6:00pm until 9:00pm, all dates and times are weather permitting. Visit [www.bjwrr.org](http://www.bjwrr.org) for more information.

## **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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Los Gatos, CA 95031-0234

Office line: (408) 395-RIDE

Shop line: (408)395-2800

EMAIL: [info@bjwrr.org](mailto:info@bjwrr.org)

Persons interested in volunteering in the machine shop may also call (408) 395-2800 or by visiting [bjwrr.org](http://bjwrr.org)

Visit our website at [www.bjwrr.org](http://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.