The Harvest Festival Comes to the BJWRR

Francesca B. Alexander
Chief Executive Officer

Ah fall, the leaves turn colors and fall from the trees, and pumpkin suddenly invades all of your favorite drinks and snacks. One thing you may have come to expect is a Halloween event at the BJWRR, and this year we are unveiling a fun new event for everyone to enjoy. Join us on Saturday, October 19th for the first annual BJWRR Harvest Festival. Costumes are encouraged!

The Harvest Festival will feature a variety of sausages that will pair with our selection of local beer and wine. The festival area will feature our beer garden, as well as a pumpkin decorating area, and lawn games available for all to enjoy. Of course, our train and carousel will be running as well.

The Train and Carousel will be open for extended hours starting at 10:30am with the last train leaving the station promptly at 7:30pm. Tickets pricing will be $4.00 for the train, and $3.00 for the Carousel. Group rates will be available for purchase of 30 or more tickets, and each ticket will be $2.50. This is a fundraising event for the BJWRR so this is special pricing to raise extra funds as we move into the winter season. All proceeds made from this event will go into our rainy day funds, and if we have a winter season like last year we will need every penny we get!

The festival area will be set up right next to our Carousel and will be open from 12:00 to 8:00pm. Our snack shack and BBQ will also be open from 12:00 to 8:00pm. Please note all alcoholic beverages must be consumed in the festival area. This area is reserved for BJWRR consumption only.

As you know, the BJWRR is a certified 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. We receive no outside funding, and rely solely on the generosity of our patrons and supporters. These events are a great way for us to raise extra funds, so that we may continue to keep pricing to ride affordable for the community of Los Gatos and beyond.

If you would like to donate or sponsor an event please contact us at info@bjwrr.org or by calling 408-395-7433. All donations are tax deductible.
Getting to the Root of the Problem

CJ Vargas
Shop Assistant

Nearly every element of keeping a railroad safely operating is integral to its longevity. One of the components that is most critical yet almost always underappreciated en masse is track work. Though our railroad is host to only about a mile of track, we are provided with similar challenges big railroads face in maintaining their right of way. One of our most significant challenges is somewhat new to the railroad. During any trip around the railroad one might take note of a rather large and healthy Redwood tree just a couple feet off our right of way as we parallel one of the park’s vehicle roads. The tree is estimated to be more than 50 years old and as such in the last five to ten years, began pushing its root system into our roadbed, thus sliding our track out of alignment as well as lifting one side of our track. This past winter and following spring the tree had pushed our track structure nearly 6” out of alignment and had lifted the track up about 3”. The subsequent result was then deemed a significant enough issue we needed professional help.

With the partnership of the Santa Clara County Park maintenance staff and arborist, and a team of five railroad employees, we spent two days rectifying the Redwood tree issue. We first unbolted the track section that was within the affected area and picked the track section up so we could crab-walk it over towards the large field so we had adequate working space around the affected area. Next, we excavated the roadbed and sub-road bed of our track. Ultimately, our objective here was to expose the root enough to provide a clear assessment of the severity of the issue. Redwoods are surface root trees so in our context, there really is not a good environmentally friendly alternative to stopping or redirecting the root’s path. With the blessing of the County’s arborist, we brought in a stump grinder and ground the root pack down to the level at which we could lay our track structure back on top, once again level, and align our right of way. To provide some perspective on a root pack big enough to push our railroad track, the root pack was roughly 3’ deep (under our track structure which in this area is about 15” deep from the railhead) and nearly 6’ across.

A big THANK YOU to Vasona Maintenance for their help on this huge project!

After we ground the root pack down to our desired level, we again excavated all of the wood chips produced from grinding the root pack down. We needed to excavate this material because wood chips do not provide a stable sub grade roadbed for our track to sit on. Once excavated, we

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brought in a few bobcat loads of drainage rock to stabilize the hole we just dug as well as bring the elevation of the hole up to a level where the track section could be lifted back into its place and not sag. We then carefully backed our ballast hopper over the skeletonized track section, after that section had been bolted back together, and ballasted our way from one end to the other of the affected area. We then began the process of leveling and aligning the track section, which included a significant amount of tamping and several more loads of ballast. All said and done as you enjoy a smooth ride through the area, the redwood tree remains healthy today and provides some larger than life scenery for our passenger to enjoy.

Though big railroads may not have this issue specifically, our intent given these circumstances is to preserve the scenery around our railroad as best as we can. It is not without a strong and diligent team that our track remains operable and enjoyable – if you or someone you know is interested in track work or learning more about how they can benefit the railroad, please reach out. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the County Parks team and arborist, and all of those that had a hand in rectifying the redwood tree issue as well as the ongoing railroad maintenance.

Join us for the 18th annual The Holiday Train

Opening week: December 12th to the 15th (Thursday through Sunday)

Closing week: December 18th to the 23rd (Wednesday through Monday)

Rides begin at 6:00pm and the last train of the evening Departs at 9:00pm.

The entrance to Oak Meadow Park will close at 8:45pm And tickets will not be available for purchase after this time.
Looking for a Great Gift? Adopt a Horse!

Francesca B. Alexander
Chief Executive Officer

The Holiday Season is right around the corner, and gifts for loved ones weighs heavily on our minds. Looking for the perfect gift this year? Adopting a W.E. “Bill” Mason Carousel Horse is that gift! Not only are there special perks that come from some of our adoption packages, but you will also be helping a non-profit organization in the process!

As you may have read before, the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad & W.E. “Bill” Mason Carousel is a 501 (C) 3 non-profit organization and relies solely on the generosity of our patrons and supporters. Adopt a Horse Fundraiser was born out of a need to raise extra funds for the carousel specifically. All funds raised from Adopt a Horse will go back into the carousel for horse restoration and general maintenance. The 100+ carousel has lived quite an interesting life so far, and given its age, finding parts for the carousel has gotten increasingly harder. When we do find the parts, given their rarity, they are a bit on the priciest side. The Adopt a Horse Fundraiser helps with the costs of parts when the need arises.

How can you adopt a horse you may ask? There are a few ways. Visit us at bjwrr.org and click on the Adopt a Horse Fundraising page. On the fundraising page you will find information on each horse, and which ones are available for adoption. Once you have made your selection download the adoption form and send it in to the address provided along with your check payment.

If you would prefer to pay by credit card please call 408-395-7433 or email info@bjwrr.org to make an appointment. You may also get a carousel tour in the process!

Currently, there are 16 horses available for adoption. Two of those horses are undergoing restoration, but are still available for adoption under the Dobby and Galloper package. Below are the Adoption packages to choose from.

**Dobby Adoption Package $100.00**
- Tax deductible letter of donation noting that you have not received any goods in return for the full amount of your donation.
- A certificate of Adoption & picture of your horse.

**Galloper Adoption Package $250**
- Tax deductible letter of donation noting that you have not received any goods in return for $215 portion of your donation.
- A certificate of adoption, and picture of your chosen horse.
- 10 ride tickets to be used on train and or carousel.
- Carousel plush toy.

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**Jumper Adoption Package of $500**

- Tax deductible letter of donation noting that you have not received any goods in return for $200 portion of your donation.
- A carousel tour and picture with your chosen horse & a certificate of Adoption.
- A ride card to ride your horse during normal hours of operation for the full adoption year for you and 1 guest.
- 10 ride tickets to be used on train.
- Carousel plush toy.

If you would like to make a donation but don’t want to adopt a horse, you may do so by using the **Friends of the Carousel (Donation Only/any amount.)** Also included on the adoption form. You will receive a tax deductible letter for your donation.

As mentioned before, we currently have two horses under restoration, Pegasus and Ella. The restoration typically takes about a year per horse, and depending on the damage, it may take some time to fix the areas that need it the most.

*Ella before restoration*

Lovingly referred to as our cow horse, Ella’s signature look are cow spots all along the body. Not to worry, the cow spots will remain after the restoration is complete, as that is a favorite feature of all who visit Ella! A lot of damage was found on Ella once the paint was stripped back, which has caused our restorer Cheryl to find better ways to make the repairs that will last for the next thirty years or so. Once the repairs are made, then Ella will receive a coat or two of primer before she will get a fresh coat of paint, and a beautiful makeover.

This is what Ella looks like currently, stripped down getting some much needed care, before the primer and paint go on. Ella is available for adoption under the Dobby or Galloper package.

We know it’s always difficult looking for Holiday gifts for loved ones, and we know there are many places and things to choose from. An adoption of one of the Carousel horses will make a great gift for family and friends, and will help a historical carousel in the process.

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**Winter is Coming!**

The Winter Season is coming to the BJWRR on November 2nd. The Train and Carousel will be open Saturdays and Sundays only. And at a new start time of 10:30am and close at 3:00pm. Hours of operation change during the winter due to Daylight Savings ending on November 3rd.

Snack Shack will be open from 11:00am to 2:30pm

BBQ will be open from 11:00am to 2:00pm where we will be serving Hot Dogs and Polish only.

As always, all times are weather permitting. Check on our Facebook page for day to day updates!
**Calendar of Events**

**October 19th – BJWRR Harvest Festival**
Enjoy a day at the Park with the first annual BJWRR Harvest Festival. Train and Carousel will run for extended hours form 10:30am to 7:30pm. Snack Shack & BBQ will be open from 12:00 to 8:00pm. The BBQ will feature a sausage menu that will pair with local beers from the Beer Garden! The festival will also feature pumpkin decorating, as well as lawn games.

**November 2nd – Start of Winter Season**
The train and carousel will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 10:30am to 3:00pm. Snack Shack will be open from 11:00am to 2:30pm. BBQ open from 11:00am to 2:00pm. All times weather permitting.

**November 29th – Special Open**
The train and carousel will be open the day after Thanksgiving from 10:30am to 3:00pm. Snack Shack will be open from 11:00am to 2:30pm. BBQ open from 11:00am to 2:00pm. All times weather permitting.

**December 7th – Los Gatos Children’s Christmas & Holiday Parade**
The BJWRR will remain closed due to participation in the Los Gatos Children’s Christmas and Holiday Parade in downtown Los Gatos. The BJWRR will remain closed on December 8th as well due to Fantasy of Lights walk through.

**December 12th – The Holiday Train Starts**
The Holiday Train will kick off on Thursday December 12th and run through Sunday December 15th. Closing week will be December 18th through the 23rd. Train and Carousel will run from 6:00 to 9:00pm. All times weather permitting.

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**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

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.