

# Santa Clarita Valley Garden Railroad Club



## NEWSLETTER

Santa Clarita, California

October, 2015

### October Meeting

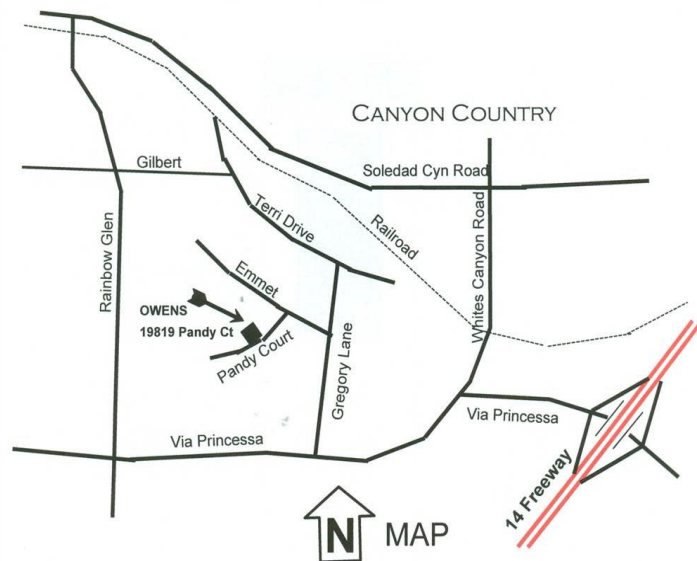
**At home of Jim & Sandi Owens**  
19819 PANDY COURT, CANYON COUNTRY, CA

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2015  
7:00 PM

#### DIRECTIONS

Traveling north or south on 14 Freeway, exit at Via Princessa. Turn west on Vis Princessa and continue to Whites Canyon, Via Princessa continues to the left. Turn right on Gregory, go to the second street, Emmet, and turn left, then left again at Pandy Court. It will be the 4th house on the right.

Traveling east or west on Soledad Canyon, turn at Rainbow Glen and cross the railroad tracks to the four-way stop. Turn left onto Gilbert and go to Terri Drive. Continue to Gregory and turn right, then right again at Emmet. Turn left onto Pandy Court and it will be the 4th house on the right.



This is a Halloween themed meeting featuring Jim's "ghost train".  
Jim & Sandi's decorations will certainly get you in the Halloween SPIRIT!

**SPECIAL EVENT**  
**TAKE A RIDE ON THE GHOST TRAIN**  
**AFTER DINNER IN BURBANK**

**Sunday, NOVEMBER 1 after dark**  
Dinner at 6:30 pm at 524 S. Orchard Drive, Burbank, CA  
This is the home of Paula Brand, (Carla's sister)

**GO TO PAGE 3 FOR MORE DETAILS AND DIRECTIONS**



# The Presidents Corner

By Grant Sweer

Hello all!

Well, we did it! We had our first SCVGRC mobile layout at Los Angeles downtown DEAFestival 2015. Special thanks to Patrick Miller, Gene Rizzardi, Carla Breitner and Gary Woolard for pulling together to get the tables and generator, then building the layout and setting up the trains. It was a great day with plenty of interest and we all had a lot of fun. One amazing accomplishment was to be able to get three tall, well fed men and a complete train layout with a table full of trains into a sports car. Not quite a clown car, but close. See Gary and Carla's article in this issue.

Would like to welcome new members, Dale and Carolee Newman who live in Tarzana. Although Dale has had his garden railroad layout for 30 years, he is in the process of retiring and will have more time to devote to this hobby.

We are looking forward to seeing all of you at Jim & Sandi's meeting and the Ghost Train at Griffith Park.

Best regards,

Grant



## SANTA CLARITA VALLEY GARDEN RAILROAD CLUB Serving the Santa Clarita and San Fernando Valley's in California

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## SPECIAL EVENT

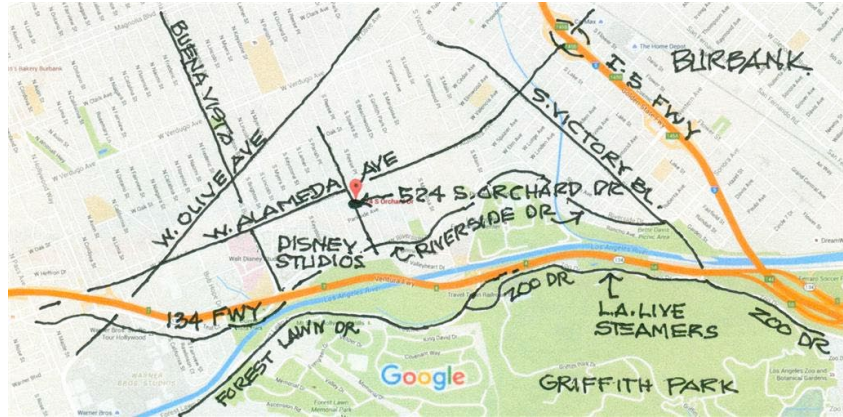
### DIRECTIONS

**FIRST STOP: 6:30 pm**

From southbound Interstate 5 exit at Alameda Ave. turn right onto Alameda and go about a mile and turn left onto S. Orchard. (look for the two streets before Orchard – Sparks St. & Reese Pl.) Look for number 524.

If coming on the 101 or 170 freeways transition to the 134. You can exit at Pass Ave, turn right and go a block to Alameda. When you pass Disney Studios it is about 4 blocks to S. Orchard where you will turn right to get to 524.

You can also exit at Buena Vista, follow the signs to get headed north on B. V. to Alameda Ave, turn right, then to S. Orchard.



**6:30 PM: Dinner at 524 S Orchard Dr, Burbank CA 91506**

Paula Brand: 818-842-9165

**About 8:00 PM: Ghost Train Ride, (\$15/person)**

L.A. Live Steamers, 5202 Zoo Dr, Los Angeles CA 90027

Leaving the house you may go back up to Alameda Ave, (turn right) or down Orchard to Riverside Drive (turn left) and proceed to Victory Blvd. (turn right). Victory continues over the 134 freeway to Zoo Drive. (turn right). L.A. Live Steamers is about a quarter of a mile along and on your left. At dinner we will discuss the anticipated parking situation.

# LOS ANGELES LIVE STEAMERS

## 15TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

# GHOST TRAIN

There's no light  
at the end of  
our tunnel!

**FAMILY-FRIENDLY  
FUN FOR ALL AGES!**

**RIDERS MUST BE AT LEAST 34" TALL  
& UNDER 350 LBS.**



**2015 SCHEDULE**  
**Hours: 7pm to 10 pm**  
**Fri., Sat. & Sun. -**  
**Oct. 16, 17, 18; &**  
**Oct. 23, 24, 25;**  
**Thurs. & Fri. Oct. 29 & 30**  
**Sat. Oct. 31 & Sun. Nov. 1**

**Tickets: \$15 per rider**

**Museum / Track Location:**  
5202 Zoo Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90027  
**Website:** [www.lals.org](http://www.lals.org)

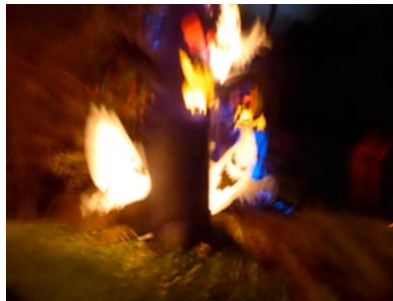
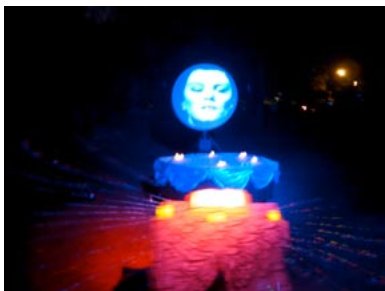
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## SPECIAL EVENT

Last year, Carla Breitner and Gary Woolard rode the LALS Ghost Train encouraged by Carla's sister, Paula. We were so impressed, we thought the whole club would enjoy the ride. There are ghosts, spooks, haunted bridges, movie references and even a nod to Disneyland's Haunted Mansion. Here are a few photos taken carefully while riding on the train last year.



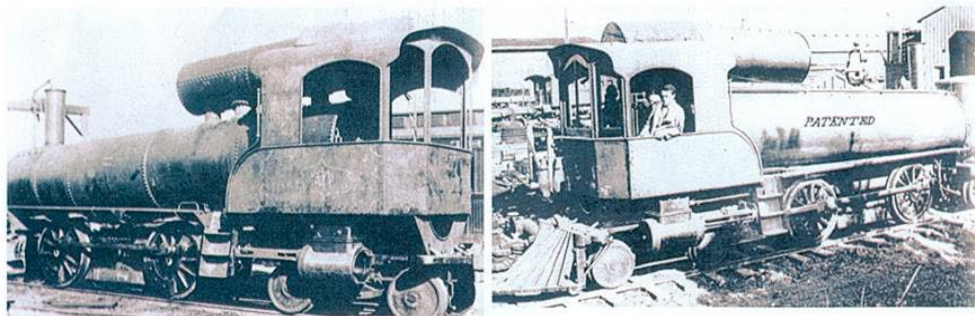
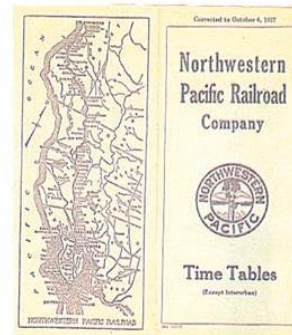
# RAILROAD HISTORY

Grant Sweer copied this online when he was working on his own cab forward engine.

## THOMAS STETSON 4-4-0 CAB FORWARD

Most folks don't realize that the first cab forward was a narrow gauge engine for a road whose total mainline length was under 100 miles. The North Pacific Coast which ran from Sausalito to Cazadero, CA had its share of tunnels. They ran paddle wheel car ferries out of San Francisco to Sausalito, so had experience with both railroad and marine steam engines. One of the first engines obtained by the road in its first order from Baldwin was No 5, the Bodega, a Baldwin 4-4-0 American. The Bodega was wrecked and scrapped around 1897.

Bill Thomas, the NPC's chief engineer was one very creative guy. He built a cab forward 4-4-0 from the remains of the Bodega. If you look at Bob Baxter's model of NPC No 21, the Thomas Stetson, you can see the 4-4-0 drive train, backwards under the Thomas Stetson.

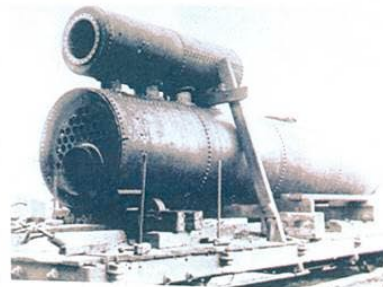
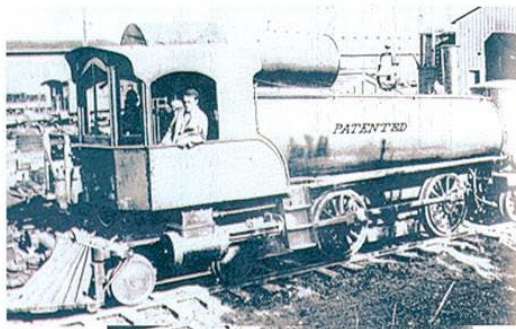
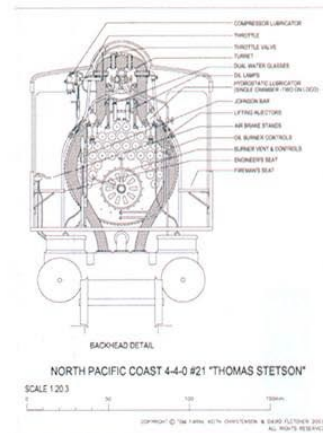


notice that this engine has no 'steam dome'? That's because Bill Thomas fitted a marine boiler. Let's see:

1. First cab forward
2. First engine designed as an oil fired engine.
3. First steam locomotive to sport a marine boiler.

Innovative? I'll say. Well executed? Not exactly. According to Harlan in "Those Amazing Cab Forwards" the steam tubes were installed too close to the burners causing them to blister. When the damage became apparent, she wasn't worth fixing, so she was scrapped.

The next major generation of cab forwards, those of the Southern Pacific, were successful. But the Thomas Stetson led the way for the cab forwards that followed.





In past years, SCVGRC members have undertaken all sorts of different train-related adventures, from riding the last red cars in Long Beach, sandwiches at Phillipps, touring the narrow gauge shops at Knott's Berry Farm. But last month we did something a bit different -- Instead of playing tourist at somebody else's venue, SCVGRC volunteers went to DEAFestival LA 2015 at Grand Park, downtown Los Angeles, to show hundreds, if not thousands, of perfect strangers how we play with trains.

On the morning of October 3rd, club president Grant Sweer, along with Pat Miller, Gene Rizzardi, Gary Woolard and Carla Breitner, unloaded several cars worth of trains, track, and power supplies directly in front of City Hall, at the invitation of Carla's cousin, Candy Scott. For the last several years, Candy has been running a children's play-booth at the festival, where kids could color & paint, and play with dozens of animated hamsters and other stuffed toys.



This year, she decided to 'branch out' and asked us to demonstrate our hobby to 'kids of all ages.'

Set-up was a little bit tricky. Grant knew that he wanted both



an inside- and an outside- loop when he was designing the layout; but he also knew that this would take just a bit more room than our assigned tables' combined width of 5 feet. And THAT meant spreading the tables just a leetle bit apart. But how far was safe?

But in record time, Grant, Pat & Gene had the layout to-



gether and running. An outer loop, an inner loop with a bit of a 'dog-bone', and a switchyard composed of a ladder track with three 'fiddle' tracks.



And immediately, we got fans! There were signers & speakers, children, adults & families, gray haired 'boomers' and downtown hipsters, in all combinations.







and lots of fascinated little children.. their heads popping up across the table like Kilroy cartoons.



It was very interesting seeing the pro's and cons as signing and speaking 'interfaced.' It was actually very noisy, and sometimes I couldn't hear what somebody was saying across the table. Yet I witnessed a couple 'signing' to each other, very clearly, fifty feet across a crowd.



Even with the help of our two translators, Ivy & Tiffany, we occasionally ran into communication problems, but this was often because they were translating across not just two, but three languages -- Spoken English, ASL (American Sign Language) and a language new to them -- 'Trains.' A conversation about railroad ties vs. concrete 'sleepers' caused some confusion -- not about 'sleepers', but how to sign 'concrete!' Ivy couldn't understand what one fellow was saying about "Zero Gauge", and neither could we, until we realized that he was telling us about the "O" gauge trains he had as a kid.

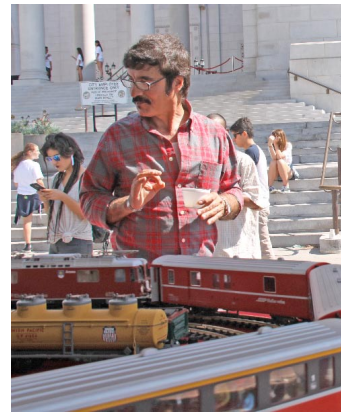
"I grew up with trains" was one of the most common comments we had. Candy said that one of the guys (probably Pat) told her that, although he couldn't sign ASL, he'd grown to easily recognize the signing for "I had trains as a child."



Ivy translates. From left, Ivy & Tiffany. Seated: Grant, Pat, Gary.



One surprise was a man who was clearly excited by Gene's heavily modified Hartland-based "No.3" engine. There was a lot of signing about "Cuba" and "plantation", and we eventually understood that this engine reminded him of the sugar plantation engines that his father had worked on in Cuba.





We generally tried to enforce a 'look but don't touch' policy. But for one gentleman, who was both deaf and blind, touching was looking. With the help of an assistant, he touched the cars very lightly as they passed beneath his fingers, and there was never a danger of a de-rail.

He was absolutely delighted, and (also with his assistant's help) we got into a conversation about toy trains and real ones. He was very excited about the expansion of metrolink services across the counties, and I grew to realize that rail transportation had become a vital part of this man's life.

By 4 PM, we started to wrap up, along with the rest of the DEAFest exhibitors. It had been a warm, noisy day, and we'd been drinking water like camels. But we packed up with smiles on our faces.

It had been fun to introduce friendly and enthusiastic strangers to our hobby, to remind some of their childhood, and to witness the wide-eyed fascination of children who had never seen a model train before. Already, we were talking about what we might add to be better prepared if we were asked back.

Somehow Grant, Pat and Gene fit trains, track, transformers and themselves back into Grant's car to head back to Santa Clarita while Carla and I packed the circus train for a trip to her sister's for Ghost Train dinner. See you there!

Thanks to Candy Scott and the folks at DEAFest LA 2015 for having us!

