President’s Message: Happy Holidays from Travel Town!

Another holiday season is upon us and I’m hoping you and your family will have a few moments in your busy schedules to visit us at Travel Town. As always, we have lots of wonderful gift ideas in our Foundation Gift Shop – and, of course, your holiday purchases will provide a great boost forward in funding our 2014 volunteer programs. Sadly, our friends at GPRail have decided not to run their Santa Train this year; we will all certainly miss that fun holiday feature at the Park. But have no fear, we’re still expecting the Big Guy to drop by the Museum for a short visit on December 14th – in honor of Travel Town’s 61st Birthday! The one and only Santa Fe Claus will be helping us celebrate from noon ‘til 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 14th. Drop by the Museum and have a picture taken with jolly old elf and enjoy a special Members-only discount sale in the Foundation Gift Shop!

2014 promises to be a great year at Travel Town, one that will hopefully see the opening of our new Volunteer Center Library and Museum Store. TTMF and Rec & Parks staffs are working to put the finishing touches on an agreement that will bring about these long-awaited facility enhancements at Travel Town; all made possible through generous grants and donations from the Griffith Trust, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, The Ahmanson Foundation, NBC Universal, the Community Foundation of the Verdugos, the Los Angeles City Council, and TTMF Patron Members! As my good friend Bill would say: “We’re closer now than we’ve ever been before!” So stay tuned for further news – I am hoping to be able to invite you to the Grand Opening sometime next year.

In the meantime, all of us at Travel Town wish you and yours a very safe and festive holiday season! Hope to see you at the Park real soon.

Happy Holidays!

Greg Gneier, President
December, 2013
On the Platform: Where There’s a Will, There’s a WAY!

This feature of the Tender is devoted to four gentlemen, all named William! One of the greatest features about volunteering at Travel Town is that is often a “family affair.” We have had several great father-son teams who volunteered together in the past, and we currently have two sets of Williams! Bill Cosso began volunteering with his son Will about a year and half ago. Young Will has been very instrumental in helping Bryan Reese work in the M.177, and besides being a Boy Scout is a very eager learner who is curious about the Motorcar and other goings-on on the work platform. His Dad, Bill, has been fantastic in stepping up and helping lead the Docent Tours for the past several months, and was instrumental in running the tours for our most recent Depot Day, our most successful Tour Day EVER at the Museum. Bill is also talented on working in Photoshop, and has been very helpful in the Little Nugget Compendium of Comedy regeneration. Bill Cosso has helped with our Guided Instructional Sessions for school groups over the past six months, and our Program Manager Donna really appreciates his help and leadership in our endeavors.

The other set of Williams has been great, not just on the platform giving tours, but on the track doing some heavy work! William and Bill Brewington are another dynamic father-son team, and as William has gotten older he has taken on many track and gardening projects with the assistance of his Dad. Mom Heidi is a professional masseuse, who has brought her massage chair out to Travel Town much to the great happiness of all the other volunteers! William has single-handedly led the trimming and grooming of the tail track next to the mountain outside the fence at our Museum. This area is not regularly cared for by Recreation and Parks gardeners, so William’s efforts fill a very vital maintenance aspect for us and our neighbors, the Live Steamers. The Brewingtons worked tirelessly over the summer spreading the ballast evenly over the track – a very labor-intensive and tedious, yet necessary and exacting job that needed to be done. While William has the youth and stamina to trim and carry out overgrown plants and weeds, or move buckets of ballast and lead other youth volunteers, his Dad often helps out with tours in order to help out but stay out of the sun (and to protect his back!) In our Program office during the week we usually discuss upcoming work and the answer to “Who will do that?” invariably is “oh Will will!” and then we spend the next few minutes discussing which Will or Bill will fill the Bill. It often sounds like an Abbott and Costello routine! In these times where so many young men spend too much time in front of a video screen, being able to spend quality time with Dad and learn some leadership skills while giving back to the community has been beneficial to the young Williams. Needless to say, our Foundation staff is thrilled with these gentlemen’s dedication and enthusiasm for making things happen for the betterment of Travel Town.

BILL & WILL COSSO

At left, dressed up for Depot Day; at right, the Cosso men are ready to work on a regular tour day!

BILL & WILLIAM BREWINGTON

The Brewington Men receive their awards at this year’s Volunteer Recognition day.

Heidi and Bill Brewington enjoying the Depot Day Festivities with Nancy Gneier.

Heidi offers massages to Docents on a Tour day! Another great benefit to volunteering here at the museum!
New Gift Shop Status: Here We GROW!

For our loyal members and readers – here is the latest on our Gift Shop update:

We began the process of trying to get in a new Gift Shop Building and Volunteer Center over four years ago. Our current shop, while instrumental in providing gifts and toys for our Museum visitors, is rather small, and is often overcrowded on the weekends. Our Foundation has grown by leaps in bounds with more volunteers who want to serve at the Museum, and there has been a very real need for a library where our Project Managers and Volunteers can do research or study up on railroad facts and history.

Our original plan was to replace the current building with a new building in the same place, taking advantage of the space behind the gift shop for a bigger building. We had this idea priced out, and we were given quotes of $180,000 for a used modular building. Nancy Gneier worked hard to write grants for this project, and thanks to the Parsons Foundation, the Ahmanson Foundation and the Griffith Trust, we raised that $180,000 for that project. Unfortunately, over the past three years, permitting requirements, being in the park, and the location of the electrical hookups in the Museum proper have made us re-evaluate the initial idea.

We would like to now move a NEW building to the clearing next to the bathrooms where the old caretaker trailer pen is. This area of the Museum is under-used, and we want the new Gift Shop to bring life to this area. The current gift shop will be re-purposed to be a volunteer center and library, giving our volunteers a place to safely store their personal belongings while they volunteer, providing a meeting room and library for training, planning and research and a bit more office space for the Program staff. The current estimated cost for a new building that meets the strict fire-codes in the park is estimated at $260,000 to $275,000, depending upon permitting requirements.

We have recently received an additional $50,000 grant from NBC Universal, $20,000 from discretionary funds from Councilmember Tom LaBonge, and an additional $20,000 from the Griffith Trust. The Community Foundation of the Verdugos has also granted us $8,000 which should be enough to purchase the new building and have it installed. Our Members have donated around $2,800 toward this project as well, and this truly has been a fundraising project that has involved the community, community foundations and City Department partnerships.

As of this writing, the Department of Recreation and Parks is reviewing the Travel Town Museum Foundation’s donation of this new building and rewriting our work agreement so that we will serve Travel Town well into the next decade. The Foundation has initiated the Permitting and design process and has put down a $20,000 deposit for this new building. Here we GROW!

A draft elevation and floor plan of the proposed new gift shop.

Location of new building - fencing will be torn down, building placed, and dirt and rock area will be landscaped.
Depot Day

October 20, 2013
Depot Day

October 20, 2013
We’ve Been Working on the Railroad
Polishing Travel Town’s Jewel

What do light fixtures and Vaudeville actors have in common? Well, on “The Little Nugget” Restoration Project we’ve been looking for both for a very long time — and over this past summer our search for both took great leaps ahead!

Putting a Little Light on the Subject

Let’s talk about light fixtures first… Among the items that disappeared from “The Little Nugget” during Travel Town’s carefree era of the 1970s and 80s were several of the original Victorian-style “gaslight” wall sconces that once lit up the car’s ornate Club Lounge. From the earliest days of the Restoration Project, we recognized that replacement of these missing light fixtures would be one of the most challenging and costly aspects of the work. It was clear that the fixtures would have to be custom-replicated, but finding a vendor or shop that was capable of doing the required work proved elusive for years. And even if we could find a capable shop, we knew the job would require a significant outlay of money.

Like Kismet, the stars suddenly fell into line last year: First, one of our Foundation Members discovered a shop in nearby Montrose whose specialty is the restoration and fabrication of vintage light fixtures — Rinaudo’s Reproductions. The second shooting star came in the form of a generous grant from the Tom E. Dailey Foundation, specifically to help fund the reproduction of the light fixtures! In October, Joe Rinaudo and his group of talented craftsmen completed the work on the fixtures — having painstakingly repaired, rewired and refinished the surviving fixtures as well as completely recreating the three missing fixtures from scratch! This was no simple task — and the results are impeccable!

Compedium of Comedy

This past summer also brought some tremendous progress on another long-running challenge of “The Little Nugget” Project, the ‘regeneration’ of the Compendium of Comedy. The C of C was a collection of 108 photographs that artist Walt Kuhn had selected to adorn the walls inside “The Little Nugget” car. These photos were mostly ‘head shots’ of famous Vaudeville actors and performers who were popular in the early days of the 1900s — show business predecessors to the ‘movie stars’ who frequently road the train in the 1930s and 40s. The Union Pacific even had small souvenir booklets printed with the names of the performers corresponding to the numbered picture frames on the walls.

Like many things in “The Little Nugget,” the collection of photographs was removed from the car sometime in the 1970s and subsequently lost. By fate, a significant number of the originals were returned to the Museum several years ago. Unfortunately, many had suffered various degrees of light and/or water damage, and there were still gaps within the 108 pics that remained completely missing. The good news: Some ten years later, because of the great advances in Photoshop programs, computer scanning technology, and Internet search engines, the regeneration of this collection is now much more realistic. This past summer - with the help of a dedicated Summer Intern, Caitlyn Kerr, and four of our very talented volunteers, Steve DeVorkin, Bill Cosso, Bill Brewington and John Vertrees - over 60 of the recovered photos have been scanned and digitally restored.

In addition, previously unknown sources for some of the still-missing images have been located! We still have several rounds of printing and color adjustment that needs to be done, but the numbered buttons, glass, and gilt frames have all been cleaned up and are ready for the final picture mounting. If you went through “The Little Nugget” on Depot Day, you probably saw the frames and draft photos on the tables. There are a few images whose source is still eluding us, but the progress to date is very promising! But since Caitlyn had to go back to college, we are looking for a dedicated volunteer who would be willing to oversee and assist with the final coordination of this project — could YOU be the one? We need someone who is comfortable working with database files, meticulous in dedication to accurately reproducing the photos, and able to document their work so that the information is researchable in the future. If you are interested, please contact Nancy at the Foundation website.
All Aboard!

Travel Town Museum Foundation memberships are available in a range of levels, all of which include special benefits including gift shop discounts and invitations to members-only events! In addition, each issue of the Travel Town Tender lists new and returning Foundation members. If you’re interested in membership, please call us at 323-668-0104 or visit the Gift Shop for more information. A warm welcome to our new and renewing supporters of the Travel Town Museum Foundation!

New Volunteers

Ray Alonso
Mauricio Ampie
Kent Anderson
Geoffrey Bark
James Bartlett
Palin Bartlett
Meriam Bero
Andrew Bibee
Marissa Blanco-Johnson
Brayan Campos
Yajaira Carnes
Sean Kristopher Carpenter
Zoebeida Chaffee-Valdes
Ashot Chobanyan
Robert Cravens
Terri Cravens
Alvin Dela Paz
Sabrina Desjardins
Samantha Desjardins
Jaquelin Dezhra Peralta
Laura Drenth
Jeremy Duke
Rose Espinoza
Zachary Michael Fuhrman

Ani Galfayan
Edward Galfayan
James Giraco
Kenneth Lee Hansen
Sidney Jarillo
Katherine Juan
Sara Kim
Jarrod Lord
Jocelyn Males
Aanish Malik
Omar Melero
Ana Munoz
Bruce Pollock
Amber Ramirez
O. Roger Seward
Tim Seward
Andre Shakhandaryan
Brandon Shields
Eric Smith
Annie Strauch
Armand Tatvosian
Eden Thaw
Stanely Wu

Streamliners
Andrea Austin
Daniel Cole
Kenneth Hansen
Pete Hayward
Timothy Price

Junior Engineers
Meagan Canepa
Joshua Chae
Arturo Cuadrado-Guerra
Joel David Khalil Kuo
James Enney
Theodore Hooke
Aiden Loane
Mikah Luckaw
Kevin Patel
Anton Te
Andrew S. Warner
Samantha Wynans
Chance Ysaiss

Track Gang
Jeff Buuck
Mason Chandler
Lisa Eisler
Charity Finnestad
Gina Hamden
Brandy Healey
Lynn Higashi
Jennifer Huang
Albert Irwin
Lulu Lopez
Cheryl Lorenzo
Maldonado Family
Bridget McVerry
Cinthia Menjivar
Jack Miller
Jennifer Moser
Nolan Polley
Julie Ruedafloros
Ernesto Ruclus
Marika Tsircou
Amber Walters
Andrew Walzer
Jasper Wittliff

Adult Engineers
Mark Dodge
Tyler Piper
Edith Reuveni

Buy Groceries and Restore Trains – at the Same Time!

If you shop at the Ralphs, Vons or Pavilions, you probably use their "Club cards" in order to take advantage of their savings. If so, you can designate beneficiary organizations to receive contributions from these stores. All you have to do is link your usage with our Foundation, and Travel Town will receive funding at the same time you save on groceries! It’s super easy and can make a big difference!

1. Go to www.ralphs.com
2. Sign in if you have a log in account
3. Click on Community Contributions
4. Our organization number is 81111 or you can search Travel Town. Then click on our button, and be sure to save your changes!

Be sure to click on the little radio button when the Foundation comes up at the bottom, then be sure to "SAVE." When you make your purchases your receipt will say "Thank you for supporting the Travel Town Museum."

1. Go to www.escrip.com. If you are new to escrip, go to the "welcome" button.
2. Follow the simple directions there - the Travel Town Museum Foundation's Group Number is 1094834.

We earned over $250 in donations last year from our Travel Town friends' support. Please register, and THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
Travel Town Museum Foundation cordially invites you to

**Travel Town’s 61st Birthday Celebration with Santa Fe Claus**

Saturday, December 14
12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Travel Town Museum
5200 Zoo Drive
Griffith Park, Los Angeles
Parking Lot behind museum

- Bring your phone/camera for photos with Santa Fe Claus (donations appreciated)
- Bring a new unwrapped toy for Los Angeles Fire Department’s toy drive
- Tours through historic train cars
- Christmas Carols