

Train Fan Times



October 2020



Let's Stay Connected

Poway-Midland Railroad operations remain suspended during COVID-19 health and safety mandates. While we wait for everything to re-open, we want to hear from YOU, our incredible volunteers, and our thousands of devoted Fans of the Baldwin Steam Locomotive, Number 17 Cable Car, the Fairmont Speeder, and all parts of our wonderful railroad that is the heart of Old Poway Park.

What is your funniest, or most inspiring story about adapting to these challenging times?

Tell us a favorite story about how your visit to Poway-Midland Railroad thrilled the kids, or warmed your heart, or changed your life!

We'll include stories like these in future editions of the Train Fan Times.

[EMAIL YOUR STORY TO TRAIN FAN TIMES](#)



Cable Car

Back in Action Soon!

Jeff Arnold, VP Operations for PMRRV, tells Train Fan Times about the return of Number 17.

"A dedicated team has worked tirelessly for nearly two years to coordinate the manufacture of new wheels, reconstruction of the 'trucks' where axles and wheels support the superstructure, and then reassemble everything."

"The Cable Car's wheel sets came back with all-new wheels at the end of January", continued Arnold.

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Cable Car (continued from page 1)

..."To improve safety margins, we redesigned the profile of the new wheels with a slightly deeper flange. This, in turn, required us to modify the trucks to raise the height of the car by 3/8" and move some wiring under the car. That work was just getting started at the time of the pandemic shutdown and is now nearing completion. We expect to install the new wheel sets in the next few weeks; once we have a date, we will send out a call for volunteers to help with the installation."



Trolley Sold, Shipped to New Owner

Chuck Cross, President of the Poway Midland Volunteers, shares the exciting details of this beloved favorite's next adventure.

"Yesterday, September 3rd, 2020, the 1894 Los Angeles Yellow Car Trolley departed Poway for the Samuel Slater Museum in Webster, Massachusetts. I encourage everyone to visit the website for their Museum, <https://samuelslatermuseum.org/> "

"While it was sad to see the Trolley depart, she is scheduled to play a prominent role at her new home. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all the Volunteers who worked so hard on the Trolley and made her into a shining jewel! Since the railroad has had such a high volume of riders for the last several years, the Trolley could not keep up with demand and was sitting in the Barn awaiting the occasional charter. She will now be in the public eye whenever the Museum is open and I'm sure she will be appreciated on a daily basis!"





In Memoriam Richard Cross

“The most generous friend,
and wizard among machinists”



In late September, PMRR Volunteer Richard Cross succumbed to injuries sustained in a motorcycle crash. He's survived by stepson Joel, brother Gary, parents Chuck and Mary Cross, and dozens of cousins, aunts, and uncles.

As we mourn his loss, our thoughts turn also to all the wonderful things Richard did for his family, friends, and for our Railroad.

“We're so grateful for all the support from everyone.” Chuck told *Train Fan Times*. “It was amazing to see everything he did for anyone he knew, whenever they needed him. He had so many friends, and Richard was always right there to help them out. Whether it was repairing a car or any other piece of machinery, or helping to clean out a yard or barn or room; whatever the task was, Richard would pitch in all the time. All of his friends were the best of friends, and they considered Richard a brother.”

“We were blessed,” Chuck continued, “Mary and I adopted Richard at age 5, and early on he showed tremendous aptitude for working on all things mechanical. He was hard-wired to be a machinist, mechanic, welder, and fabricator. Look at all the things he made or fixed around the Barn: the 3-way switch assembly, the Rattlesnake Creek coach frame, the heat shield for the new Boiler; they're all as good as they are thanks to Richard.”

“One afternoon, the Speeder engine started running very rough. Over the next two hours, Richard tracked down the problem to a cracked distributor rotor, found the replacement rotor, discovered the new rotor was slightly tall for this model distributor, so he fabricated a chuck to hold the rotor in place, then used the mill to shave off two millimeters from the base so the whole thing fit properly. Now the Speeder runs like a top!”

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(In Memoriam, Richard Cross, continued)

“He also worked on all the piping and linkages on the Baldwin Locomotive when the new boiler got installed,” Chuck said. “I remember one afternoon when Brad Anderson and others came in to help work on the piping, and after an hour, Brad came up and asked me ‘how does he do it? This stuff is really hard!’ “

Richard learned his craft well by graduating from WyoTech in Laramie, WY. “He could build a car from the frame up “, continued Chuck. “Chassis work, drive trains, engines...he could do it all”. Richard worked over the years for Seabreeze Glass, and an Escondido auto shop that built hot rods and restored antique cars. “Everyone who saw him work, including John Ohler, said they’d never seen a better welder”.

PMRRV benefits from that skill to this day. “Richard served for over a quarter-century; I’m looking at a Certificate of Appreciation from City of Poway, dated 1994. His final project was a tough one: raising the height on the Cable Care by 3/8” to accommodate the new wheels’ taller height. That involved carefully raising the bolsters just the right amount.”

“To him, there were no problems, only solutions to be worked out. He reminded me of the saying ‘while some people curse at the darkness, others light a candle’. That was Richard.”

Richard’s love of welding and machining was reflected in his collection of tools, Chuck noted. “His place was filled with tools, including two rolling cabinet-sized toolboxes, and a huge assortment of others he’d collected. He never met a tool he didn’t like!”

Richard was also a loving father and brother. He’d bring Joel to the Barn, and everyone saw the affection he held for the young man. It was the same with brother Gary. “He came to us, also age 5, two years after Richard. They formed a strong bond, and were especially proud of the Baseball Card and Comic Book collections they’d built over the years. Those will comfort Gary a lot.”

So, the next time you’re conducting on the Rattlesnake Creek, or are thankful the heat shield in the Baldwin’s cab works so well, or see a father hug his child, remember Richard Cross, a wizard among machinists, welders, mechanics, and fabricators, and a most generous friend.