

# LINEUP

Official Newsletter Of Motorcar Operators West

**Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay Railway  
Western Rail Museum Excursion  
2013 New Years Skunk Run  
Fillmore & Western Railway**

Volume 21, No. 1

Summer 2013

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## **LINE UP**

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**COVER PHOTO CREDIT** Howard Cohen  
Front Cover: Motorcars leaving the Santa Cruz Boardwalk.

Back Cover: Crossing the spectacular La Selva Beach railroad trestle.

## **Welcome To Our New Members**

Karl Beilstein, Sierra Madre, CA  
Glenn Boatman, Benicia, CA  
Stuart & Cathie Edmonson, Columbus, OH  
George Kolby, San Mateo, CA  
Harold Leach, Bend, OR  
Lynn Maddy, Los Osos, CA  
George Mickelson, Sandy, OR

Richard Mills, Phoenix, AZ  
Scott Murdock, Pleasanton, CA  
Jon Nagel, Livermore, CA  
Todd Peard, Rough and Ready, CA  
Bill Phoenix, Idaho Falls, ID  
Bruce Rowe, Grass Valley, CA  
Ric Schertle, San Jose, CA

## **2013 MOW Membership and Renewals**

Membership renewals and new membership applications are now being accepted. All memberships expire on December 31, 2013. Please download the printable form on the MOW website (<http://www.mowonline.org/>) and fill-out all requested information along with your \$24.00 check. Mail to: Harry Fischer, Membership Coordinator, 28819 Shadow Valley Lane, Santa Clarita, CA 91390

**The Line Up** is the official publication of The Motorcar Operators West, Inc. and is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the safe and legal operation of railroad motorcars as excursion vehicles.

**Membership Fee** is \$24 per year. This includes a Line Up subscription. The Line Up is published three times a year; Spring, Summer, and Fall issues. The Line Up is copyrighted and permission to reproduce any portion of the newsletter must be obtained. All rights reserved.

**Submitting Photos and Captions:** Members and guests are encouraged to contribute to the Line Up Photo Journal by sending their excursion photos and accompanied by whom, what, when, where captions to: deerail@embarqmail.com. Place caption text in the email body and photos as .jpg attachments. Cover photos are to be submitted in a portrait orientation at a high resolution.



# Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Railway

May 4 & 5, 2013

By Bill Schertle, Excursion Coordinator

Photos Courtesy of Howard Cohen

It was the dream of every California motorcar operator for years – run the Santa Cruz Branch of the old Southern Pacific Railroad. On May 4th and 5th of this year, that dream finally came true, and what a run it was!

It all began in October 2012 with the sale of the Santa Cruz Branch by Union Pacific Railroad to the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, who in turn selected Iowa Pacific Holdings Company to operate the rail line. Iowa Pacific has



Excursion Coordinator Dave McClain is about to leave the Roaring Camp depot to lead the group to Santa Cruz.

with Tom Sharratt, the Iowa Pacific motorcar liaison. I also contacted Doug Stivers, President of Pacific Railcar Operators to see if they were interested in co-sponsoring this excursion since it promised to be a very big event. With their partnership we settled on the dates of May 4th and 5th. We had 41 motorcars running on the 4th and 34 motorcars on the 5th.

The plan was to set on at the cement plant in Davenport and motor south to Watsonville and return. But as is the case in many excursions, we



Early morning motorcar set on at the Santa Cruz, Big Trees and Pacific Railway rail yard in Felton, California. This begins the Motorcar Operators West and Pacific Railcar Operators shared Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Railway excursion.

always been friendly to the motorcar hobby so I contacted Dave McClain, our Iowa Pacific contact and excursion coordinator who spoke

After several phone calls among the excursion coordinator's and the railroad, it was decided to contact the Santa Cruz and Big Trees RR and ask them if we could set on at Roaring Camp in Felton, go through the Mission Hill tunnel to the wye and connect with the SC&MB there. They were happy to accommodate us and the schedule was re-set to include the new itinerary.

Most of us have run the Santa Cruz and Big Trees RR but we have always stopped and turned at the Mission Hill Tunnel. This time, however, we were able to go through the tunnel and run sev-

en blocks down Chestnut Street to access the wye and the SC&MB right of way in Santa Cruz – a first for motorcars. The

always plan to expect the unexpected. The unexpected in this excursion was a burned bridge about 3 miles north of Santa Cruz that would not allow the motorcars to set on in Davenport and essentially shut down the northern 10 miles of the 30-mile line. This occurred about a week and a half before the excursion was to happen. What to do?



The excursion is entering Santa Cruz, California on Chestnut Street after leaving the Mission Hill tunnel behind.

remainder of the run on new-to-motorcar tracks took us to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk where we enjoyed coffee and donuts. We continued southbound for an enjoyable ride over the Soquel Creek Bridge that looked out above the quaint historical Capitola Village neighborhood, through towering eucalyptus groves between Capitola and Aptos, along the Monterey Bay bluffs approaching La Selva Beach which included our lunch stop at Manresa State Beach. We then proceeded past the community of Rio Del Mar, traveled south across the Harkin Slough, passing the many strawberry fields and finally entering Watsonville. We turned our motorcars at the western edge of Watsonville on an industrial spur track just off Ohlone Parkway. The excursion returned to our set on site at Roaring Camp for a total of about 56 round trip miles.

The pictures in this article speak for themselves. I hope you enjoy them and if you could not make the excursion this year, we hope for a repeat in about a year or so, all the way to Davenport if possible.



After entering Monterey Bay Railway trackage, Tom Sharratt the Iowa Pacific Holdings representative, gives the excursion group railroad information and a safety briefing under the West Cliff Drive Bridge.



Motorcars cross Pacific Avenue and enter Beach Street for a run down to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk Amusement Park. Bill Schertle is flagging for street crossing protection.



The Santa Cruz, Big Trees and Pacific Railway Beach passenger train waits while the motorcars are ready to move towards Beach Street.

A brief mid morning comfort stop at the Boardwalk gave the excursion guests time to explore the amusement park. During the stopover Charles Canfield, president of Seaside Company who owns the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk Amusement Park made arrangements to serve trackside coffee and donuts to the group.







On the way out of Santa Cruz, the excursion passed over Soquel Creek and a look down on the historic Capitola Village.

Left, Motorcars cruising through the New Brighton Beach State Park eucalyptus groves.



Motorcars crossing the spectacular La Selva Beach railroad trestle framed by views of Rio del Mar, Capitola and Santa Cruz beach communities in the distance.





Motorcars crossing the Harkin Slough on their way into Watsonville.

Below, Doug Stivers and Tom Sharratt are leaving Watsonville for Santa Cruz during the track inspection trip.



While waiting at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk during the track inspection trip pause, Dave McClain looks in awe at the Big Dipper Rollercoaster as it thunders by.

On the return run to Felton a brief comfort stop was scheduled at the Boardwalk entrance.



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Jeff Weeks, Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Railway General Manager and Bill Schertle walk ahead of the motorcars. They are flagging down Beach Street to protect the excursion from oncoming automobiles and pedestrians.

Tod Hill, Dan Berg and John Helmuth emerge from the Mission Hill Tunnel on the return trip to Felton.



Before entering the Henry Cowell Redwood Park and the motorcar set off, the excursion awaits clearance for a safe move across Highway 9.

# Western Railway Museum Excursion

April 7, 2013

Dave Balestreri and John Haverty, Co -Excursion Coordinators

Article and Photos courtesy of Connie Haverty

Motorcar Operator West members had a beautiful Sunday morning to celebrate Spring and what could be described as the Wildflower Run on the Western Railway. April is wildflower month in the Sacramento Valley with the wildflowers making their appearance right on time.

The motorcar set on started at 7:30 am at the museum's Rio Vista Junction facilities. Set on was conducted by



The morning safety meeting being held on the Western Railway Museum grounds at Rio Vista Junction. Men facing the group from left to right: Phil Kohlmetz, Western Railway Executive Director and co-excursion coordinators Dave Balestreri and John Haverty.

Dave Balestreri, Jim Culbertson, Greg Ockander and John Haverty. The registration was organized by Carol Balestreri and accomplished with the help of Claudette Ockander and Connie Haverty. Operators had the option of setting on perpendicular or parallel to the rails.

Following the safety meeting Phil Kohlmetz, Western Railway Executive Director, riding in the pilot motorcar, led the 27 motorcar excursion south past

open fields of green grasses and vibrant wildflowers. The rails were nestled among the

grasslands awash with flowers putting on a show of yellows, blues, pinks; the colors of California poppies, goldfields, brass buttons, butter and eggs, clover, sheep's sorrel and lupine.

On the way to the turnaround at Bird's Landing, Mount Diablo could be seen to the southwest. The peak is a well known and impressive



Morning excursion leaving southbound from Rio Vista Junction and passing Mount Diablo Vista sign on their way to Bird's Landing.



Following registration, Claudette and Greg Ockander sit listening to the morning safety meeting presentation.





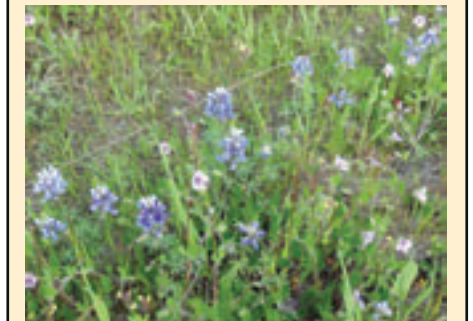
Leaving Bird's landing northbound motorcars passing patches of California poppies.

California land feature. The Mount Diablo meridian, established in 1851, is the main land surveying reference point for establishing boundaries

the shaded picnic grounds. Before the afternoon run, included in the excursion fare, was a ride on the Western Railway's restored vintage trolley.

In the afternoon the group headed north across the Jepson Prairie toward Meridian Road. Among the interesting sights along the right of way is an area of abandoned structures where munitions were assembled at the end of World War 2. The site resembles a ghost town with metal structures spaced far apart and built above ground level on stilts. It was explained that the layout was a safety precaution due to the volatility of the explosive products. To the

west of the rails, the Travis Air Force Base air traffic control tower can be seen. In the pastures east and west the group was treated to more signs of spring, and what can be said



Views of the beautiful Jepson Prairie wildflowers.



Left, The excursion passing the wind turbine farm.

in much of Northern California and Nevada. To the east, probably the most spectacular landmarks of this run are the towering wind turbines. These 360 feet tall, three bladed turbines generate electricity in what is sometimes referred to as a wind farm.

Returning to Rio Vista Junction after the morning's run, Operators and guests were on own for lunch, picnicking in the motorcars or at

Below, Motorcars reaching the end of track at the Union Pacific junction. The junction is located between Fairfield and Vacaville, California.



about spring more profoundly than the appearance of playful lambs and kid goats. These spring babies and herds of cattle watched with interest as the excursion traveled past.

For the afternoon trip Phil Kohlmetz obtained approval to take our group to the end of track at the Union Pacific Railroad rail junction. He said that he had not traveled on this last section for the past six years. The grand finale came when, the group exited their motorcars to pose for a group photo, an eastbound Amtrak Capitol Corridor passenger train sped past. Then, after the motorcars were turned for the return trip another Amtrak Capitol Corridor train raced past in the opposite direction. It was fun to exchange waves and greetings to the fellow travelers.

Operators and guests want to express their thanks and appreciation to all those individuals who made this excursion possible, to the folks who always offer their assistance in many ways and to all the safety minded members who took part in this excursion. Finally, a special thank you to the always gracious Western Railway Museum staff.



Bill Schertle joins the group to enthusiastically wave at the passing eastbound Amtrak Capitol Corridor passenger train.

Moments later another Amtrak Capitol Corridor passenger train passes the group in the opposite direction.



Bill and Rick Schertle arrive at the end of track.



# 2013 New Years Skunk Excursion

Chris Baldo, Excursion Coordinator

Introduction and photos courtesy of Carol Balestreri

**A**lthough we didn't run into snow this year as we did in 2010 and 2011, it was pretty darn cold on this Skunk New Year's run. We drove to Willits the night



Noreen Evans, Bobbie Yokum, Bruce Evans and Glen Ford gather in the Willits depot office. Noreen and Bobby are attending to the excursion paperwork.

before set on and it was 27 degrees when we rolled into town. The next morning it was a little foggy at set-on but the fog burned off as we approached Summit and made our way down to Fort Bragg. Rest stops were made at Delmar, Clare Mill, and we held our lunch stop at North Spur. Since the Skunk train was waiting there, the lunch counter was open and I believe we bought out the rest of their food. It was

nice to have something hot to eat on such a cold day. Arriving in Fort Bragg, Whitey and Cathy Brown made dinner reservations for the group at the Bistro. After dinner it was too cold for some of us to even walk across the street with a group of folks to enjoy ice cream! Ice cream, I ask you? I don't know if anyone stayed up to ring in the New Year.

I think you could call this the



A foggy New Year's Eve morning motorcar lineup in front of the Willits depot.

Rust Pile Run, especially on the way back from Ft. Bragg on New Year's Day. The guys had great fun as we stopped at some pretty good rust piles so they could inspect what was lying around. As the first day of the New Year progressed, it got a bit warmer and it was very pleasant to make multiple stops along the Route of the Redwoods. Thanks to the efforts of Chris Baldo we had two really nice days on the rails.



Heading for the Summit tunnel the excursion encounters a very frosty right of way.



Above, Clare Mill rest stop.



Chris Baldo wielding a chainsaw clears a fallen tree from the rails.



Right, Bobbie Yokum helped move limbs from the fallen tree.

Below center, Glen Ford, Renee & John McAmis watch the Skunk train leave North Spur for Fort Bragg.

Bottom left, Operators and guests begin arriving at their motorcars on New Year's morning in Fort Bragg for the return run to Willits.

Bottom right, The folks are inspecting abandoned gravel hoppers at Rock Pit.







Another "rust stop" at Alpine.



Bud Thompson is sharing his Trains Magazine with John Martin, Chris Baldo, and Terry Devine.



At each stop there was always a group of folks heading for the nearest sunny spot. Charlie Johnson, Sandy Martin, Alicia Shaw and Pamela Thompson soak up the afternoon warmth.

Traveling amongst the redwood trees.





# Fillmore and Western Railway

November 17, 2012

Lonnie Hughes and Bill Schertle, Co-Excursion Coordinators

Introduction By Bill Schertle

Photos Courtesy of Blair Van Vliet

The day started out in Fillmore with a cold drizzle, unusual for Southern California. With the help of Debbie Hughes with registration, hot coffee, and sweet rolls, Jim Groover and Wayne Parsons with traffic control and Excursion Coordinator Lonnie Hughes with set on, we were ready to go by 9:00 am.

Following the safety meeting, it was time for the lineup to start moving east towards Piru, California a distance of about 8 miles. This being “The Movie



Debbie Hughes, wearing the blue hoodie is registering operators and guests in the early morning drizzle. She also prepared coffee and sweet rolls for the excursion folks.

Railroad”, there were many unique pieces of equipment all around. Two crossings of busy Highway 126 were protected by the

railway’s signal maintainer who activated the lights and gates. Other crossings were of the farm road variety and were slow and go. Arriving at Piru, the end of track, the cars were turned and it was time to head west. Along the way a stop was made at Bennett’s Honey Farm widely known for many varieties of honey. After tasting and buying some of their products it was back to the motorcars for the return trip to Fillmore where a delicious hobo lunch including tri-tip or chicken sandwiches was available at the Movie Train Café across from the depot. It was still cold and driz-



Harry Fischer unloading his car in the Fillmore rail yard.



Dan Phipps said his grandson Ethan Lindsey, who just turned 5, has been waiting nearly 3 years for his first speeder ride.

zling a bit, so instead of lunch in the park as planned it was lunch in the umbrella-covered patio.

It was soon time to gather at the motorcars again to begin the second half of our journey, this time towards Santa Paula, 10 miles to the west. Our first stop was for photos at the 1901 Sespe Creek Bridge. It was easy to imagine old Southern Pacific steam engines and “black widow” diesels rumbling across this span pulling long loads of old refrigerator cars loaded with oranges and lemons. We continued to Santa Paula for a rest stop at the old Southern Pacific Railroad station where the tourist train was waiting to depart east towards Fillmore. After a short break we continued west through the orange groves about 6 more miles before turning to motor back to our set off in Fillmore. We arrived after dark and experienced several miles of night running, something we do not do very often.

All 22 cars set off smoothly aided in part by the clearing weather. Many thanks go to Excursion Coordinator Lonnie Hughes and his wife Debbie for handling all the registration and paperwork. Thanks, also, to member Dan Phipps, a volunteer with the Fillmore and Western, for setting up the contacts. All in all it was a good day.



Ron Mayer from Julian, California is arriving at the Piru depot.



Glen Ford attending to his popper at Piru.



The excursion is in the process of turning the motorcars for the returntrip to Fillmore. Piru, California is the east end of the old Southern Pacific Railroad's Santa Paula branch.



A photo stop at the 1901 Sespe Creek Bridge.



After lunch the motorcar lineup is ready to depart Fillmore for Santa Paula, California.



The restored Southern Pacific Railroad depot in Santa Paula.

The Fillmore and Western tourist train ready to depart Santa Paula for Fillmore.







During the Santa Cruz Excursion, John Helmuth waits to cross Monterey Avenue in Capitola.



