



*The Santa Clara*  
**B L O C K**



**JOHN D. (JOE) HOFFMANN**

**December 6, 1943 - July 3, 2017**

Joe Hoffmann, as he was known to all of us here, passed away on July 3, 2017 after a lengthy illness. Joe was a longtime member of the Society, joining it in 1993. He was a major contributor to every facet of the SBHRS. Joe served in each and every Board position at one time or another. Joe was the publisher of this periodical for nearly 20 years. At the time of his death, Joe was still active, serving as the Museum Curator. The museum's Waiting Room is a splendid example of Joe's attention to detail as well as authenticity. The following page includes comments from many individuals who knew and worked with Joe throughout the years.

### Joe Hoffmann Comments From SBHRS Members

*From Bill Burket:*

Since I joined SBHRS in February 2012, I cannot count the number of conversations that Joe and I had about railroading on the Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, Santa Fe and Amtrak. Joe had a tremendous thirst for first hand Western railroading experiences. Our conversations were so enjoyable and mostly about actual working on the railroad experience. We covered everything from prototype railroad operating practices to prototype correctness on models. It was always a pleasure for me to listen to Joe's historical railroad knowledge. He was a true student of Western American railroad culture. He understood that the railroad was not just a job but a lifestyle and culture unto itself. He never could get enough of my stories of my experiences on the railroad. Joe would have made a great rail. He always showed that twinkle in his eye of the little boy who wanted to grow up to be a locomotive engineer.

Joe's pride and joy are the railroad artifacts that we are sitting amongst at this very moment. He always had a big smile when I brought in something to add to the museum display. As Curator, his single goal to preserve our local railroad history has been accomplished to the highest degree. Joe knew that every item I brought in had a story behind it. Just a few examples are the Byron and Urgan station signs, a UP Conductors hat of which the owner was known, who had worn it on the Portland Rose, the picture of the last day of SP commute operations by Ted Benson, the Daylight step box in the passenger waiting room, UP Milepost sign from North Platte, Nebraska and many others. Through items such as these, Joe brought our museum alive for generations to come.

Joe was not just our curator or a model railroader. Joe lived, breathed and felt the daily life and pace of the railroad as it was and is in its place in American History. Truly a rare individual who I was honored to have the privilege of knowing. A gentleman who I will miss very much but whose memory will always live on in all these wonderful railroad artifacts on display in our museum.

Joe is one who I consider to be an honorary rail in the fraternal Brotherhood of Locomotive engineers and Trainmen. And so, Joe has taken the final call from the great dispatcher. I wish him God Speed on that first class Santa Fe El Capitan to eternity. May Joe rest in peace. Thanks Joe for letting me know you!

Bill Burket – July 11, 2017

*From Linda Renner:*

Joe was my Oregon Duck buddy. I loved the WAZZU Cougars and he loved his Oregon Ducks. We always would talk about our PAC 12. We always bet a lunch on the Oregon WSU game and I would always lose until this last year when I finally won, Joe I owe you many lunches. I will miss you this football season. Who will I have to give a bad time to? The day we play your ducks I will look up to heaven and say may the best team win. Go COUGS!

I will miss calling you when I drive through Eugene to tell you I just saluted your school.

When I drive through Oregon the next time I will stop in Eugene get out of my car and salute Oregon in honor of you, my friend.

*From Giovanni Rossi:*

When I think about Joe Hoffmann, I'm reminded of the monthly meetings we have and he was always ready to give the museum reports and that motivated me to volunteer for any projects that were available at the time, especially since he was in charge of the Waiting Room and would've wanted anyone to participate.

*From Mike Taime:*

I only spoke with Joe a handful of times over the years. He was always friendly, ready to talk train shop and helpful if you needed a hand or idea on something you were working on.

### THE “DIRTY DIRT” TRAIN

While the Caltrain route up the peninsula to San Francisco is mostly a passenger/commute route, freight service is still operated on a near daily basis by the Union Pacific Railroad. This train originates in the San Francisco area with a lengthy string of hopper cars containing dirt elements excavated from San Francisco and close-by sites. On some occasions, the train may exceed 100 cars. The train has no hard and fast schedule, and is informally referred to as “the dirty dirt train” by the operating personnel. On a recent Saturday, members of the SBHRS were alerted that the train with a string of empty cars, would arrive in Santa Clara in the early afternoon, while the museum was still open. The loaded train runs over the Sierras to a disposal area in Nevada.



### Relive the Magical Journey of THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride

The California State Railroad Museum Foundation proudly presents  
THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride at two locations -  
Sacramento and Jamestown, California.

#### Ticket Policies

All memberships must be purchased and active by September 5, 2017 to qualify for Member Advance Ticket Sales. Sales begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at midnight each day. Each membership may purchase up to a maximum of eight individual tickets or two tables of four, per location during Member Advance Ticket Sales. For a full listing of ticketing policies, visit [www.californiarailroadmuseum.org](http://www.californiarailroadmuseum.org) or [www.railtown1897.org](http://www.railtown1897.org).

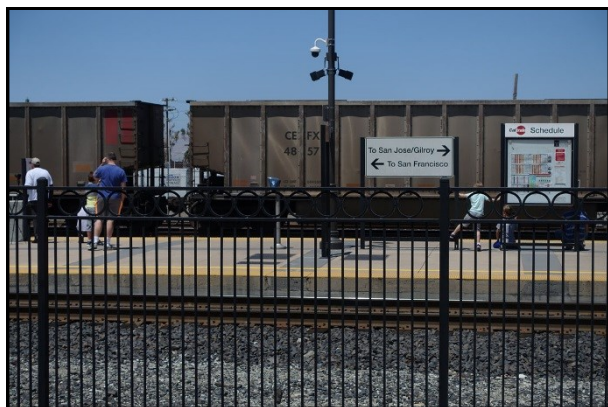
#### California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento

#### MEMBER ADVANCE TICKET SALES

- **September 26** - First Day of Sales for Engineer, Trainmaster, Freight Agent, Yardmaster and Transcontinental Railroad Club Members
- **September 27** - First Day of Sales for Conductor, Telegrapher, Fireman



*Waiting*



*The Train Arrives*

### Front Deck Replacement

On the weekends of June 3 and 4, and June 10 and 11, members of the SBHRS completely replaced the wood and associated timber from the front deck facing Railroad Avenue. Led by Chris Ewing, the project was completed on time.

Members who worked during those two weekends include: Chris Ewing, John Dietrich, Jack Morash, Guenther Hossner, Linda Renner, George Bratton, Bob Marshall, Vance Johnson, Lloyd Darknell, Michael Stockwell, Janna Hathaway, Larry Helling, Owen Huang, John Wiley and Douglass DeLong.

Many components under the surface timber also required replacement. There are four sections of floor joists running the

*(Continued on page 4)*

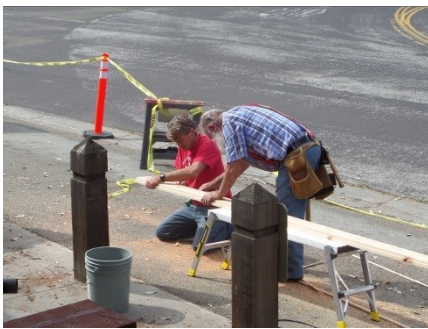
**Deck Replacement Project, Continued**

*(Continued from page 3)*

length of the deck. Many sections of the third row of floor joists were rotted out as a result of water dripping down from the overhanging roof edge, and required replacement.

Members took a midday meal break inside the Museum Room where tables and chairs had been set up.

Each piece of timber for both the floor joists and other underpinning as well as the deck surface itself, had to be trimmed to size before being put in place. After all surface timber was put in place, uneven ends were trimmed to uniform length. Most of the timber used was purchased new.



*Chris Ewing and Larry Helling Prepare Lumber*



*The Last Nail Goes In on June 10th*



*Complete!*

**SCALE TRAINS MANUFACTURERS WORKSHOP**

*By James Von Rittmann and John Wiley*

On Friday, June 16th, the first SBHRS Manufacturers' Roundtable was held. SBHRS members and guests packed the house for a rousing evening and informative presentation by [ScaleTrains.com](http://ScaleTrains.com) co-founders Mike Hopkins (Vice President of Product Development) and Paul Ellis (Executive Product Development Manager). With temperatures in excess of 100°, the museum and layout rooms were air conditioned with portable AC (as opposed to DCC units for the event (shown below).



Due to the success of this event, plans are already in the works for future Manufacturers' Roundtable events, as well as educational lectures, and several workshops designed to enhance the SBHRS member experience. For example, the California State Railroad Museum has been contacted for a proposed talk to be held early this fall.

Something new to the SBHRS is in the works: SBHRS Movie Night, with popcorn, and other traditional favorites to delight every movie buff. This may occur later in August, where SBHRS members may bring in and show their own movies on any rail-related subject. Film or video sources can be accommodated.

A Painting Workshop Series is being launched for this fall, and we are delighted to announce that Tru-Color Paint will be donating all the painting kits. Other manufacturers proposed for future workshops include Atlas, Athearn, Kato, Märklin, and many more.

The South Bay Historical Railroad Society expresses its deep appreciation to event organizers John Wiley and James von Rittmann, as well as the numerous volunteers for all their hard work. The SBHRS also thanks ScaleTrains.com for its wonderful presentation and extraordinary generosity.

Have questions about, or suggestions for, future events? Please contact John Wiley at [jwiley@sbhrs.org](mailto:jwiley@sbhrs.org).



**Book Review**

***Southern Pacific Freight Car Painting and Lettering Guide***

*By Dick Harley & Anthony W. Thompson*

(Including Pacific Fruit Express Equipment)

For all SP freight car modelers and operators, this book will be helpful in detailing and adhering to the prototypes, as described herein. The book covers SP Standard Practices from the 1880s through 1996.

This glossy page book includes color photographs as well as extensive black and white photos of the car types that are covered. Over one half of the book is dedicated to Pacific Fruit Express freight cars. However there are sections on SP double stacks, Golden West Service, Hydra-Cushion and Golden Pig Leasing Services, as well as many others. SP cabooses are also covered in color. The TOFC sections are arranged chronologically, 1953 to 1961. There are even a few color photos of actual SP-owned trailers. The TOFC service featured its own cabooses, which are also covered.

The book is arranged chronologically, and there is no index. The Table of Contents does list each chronological section. However, if one is looking for a specific car type, it will speed up locating that car, if the date range during which the car was active is known in advance.

Some color yard photos are scattered throughout the book, illustrating exclusive SP-owned rolling stock in color. Page 10 has a timeline diagram showing various lettering styles and fonts, and the time periods they were used on the SP.

This book is available in our library for checkout. It was published by the Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society in 2013. They can be viewed on the web at [www.sphts.org](http://www.sphts.org).

*Reviewed by Norman E. Spaulding*

**OTHER RAILROAD-THEMED PLACES TO VISIT IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

*Looking for a change scenery? Here is a list of places both very near and not very far away that will interest rail-oriented members of your family:*

<b>San Jose History Park</b>	<a href="http://historysanjose.org">historysanjose.org</a>		
streetcars	donation		San Jose
<b>Billy Jones Railroad</b>	<a href="http://losgatosca.gov">losgatosca.gov</a>		
Steam/Diesel	\$		Los Gatos
<b>Roaring Camp</b>	<a href="http://roaringcamp.com">roaringcamp.com</a>		
steam train	\$\$\$		Felton
<b>Niles Canyon Railway</b>	<a href="http://ncry.org">ncry.org</a>		
steam train	\$		Sunol
<b>Tilden Park, East Bay</b>	<a href="http://ebparks.org">ebparks.org</a>		
steam trains	\$\$		Berkeley
<b>Western Railway</b>	<a href="http://wrm.org">wrm.org</a>		
Streetcars, Interurbans	\$		Rio Vista Junction @ Highway 12



**Internet provider for SBHRS**

**Article Error**

*In the last issue of this newsletter (Spring, 2017), we reported incorrectly on some graduations at the end of this school term. Ankur Gupta graduated from Wilcox High School, not Oak Grove, and Giovanni Rossi graduated from Oak Grove High School, not Lincoln High School.*

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The South Bay Historical Railroad Society is located at the Santa Clara Caltrain Depot, in the Museum building adjacent to Caltrain, at 1005 Railroad Avenue. Effective June 7th, the Museum is open to the public Tuesdays from 5 PM to 8 PM, and Saturdays from 10 AM to 3 PM. Museum exhibits, the Library, and Train Room all provide many items of interest to a wide variety of age groups. The Train Room features both an HO and N gauge operating model railroad, and members can operate their equipment during those times.



**THE TRAIN SHOP**  
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 FAX: 408 • 985-2423

# THE SANTA CLARA BLOCK



*South Bay Historical Railroad Society, Inc.*

**EDITORIAL COMMENT**

*Leave a recorded message at the phone number listed below if you have any suggestions, or if you have inputs, comments, or ideas for this newsletter.*

**SBHRS at Santa Clara Depot:**

**1-408-243-3969**

**Website:**

[www.sbh.rs.org](http://www.sbh.rs.org)

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Newsletter Editor and Publisher

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