



# TRAIN ORDERS

Volume 2003, Number 4

July 2003

The Santa Maria Valley Railway Historical Museum

P.O. Box 264, Santa Maria, CA 93456-0264; (805) 714-4927

The Museum: Santa Maria Town Center Mall, Sat./Sun. 1-4:30pm

<http://www.smvrhm.org/> School/Club groups by appointment.

## Another Great "Choo Chew Saturday"

Another super "Choo Chew Saturday" came and went on May 17, 2003. About 160 people attended this major annual fundraising event for the Museum.

Kevin O'Roark's new SMVRR No. 1801 (seen at right above) was hard at work hauling folks around the 1+ mile long, 7.5" gauge mainline of the Bitter Creek Western Railroad along with about a dozen other trains.

Many Thanks! to Karl Hovanitz (pictured below) and all the good trainmen and trainwomen who make the Bitter Creek Western Railroad run so well.



## Meetings

**General:** first Thursday of the month, 6:00pm, at the Santa Maria Inn.

**Museum Development:** Thursdays (except first Thursday of the month) at the Museum, 6:00pm

**HO Modelers:** Fridays at the Museum, 7:00pm.

**Caboose Crew:** Saturdays at the caboose, 8-11am. 🚂

## Rail Bosses

**Dan Alves**, President, [aiim@juno.com](mailto:aiim@juno.com)

**Dick Miner**, Vice President, [BoothR8@aol.com](mailto:BoothR8@aol.com)

**Phil Goble**, Treasurer, "CaBoss", [Phil.Pam@Prodigy.net](mailto:Phil.Pam@Prodigy.net)

**Jamie Foster**, Secretary, "Train Orders" Editor, Webmaster, [jamie@jf2.com](mailto:jamie@jf2.com) 🚂

## New Layout Pics

Here are some new photographs of the HO layout of the railroads of the Santa Maria valley:



Ice house, foreground; and enginehouse beyond



Depot



The fields 🚂

## Logo Shop Online

An online shop for SMVRHM logo items is now available!

Items include t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, clocks, tiles, teddy bears, BBQ apron, baby items, and the like.

Here's the web address:

<http://www.cafeshops.com/smvrhm> 🚂



# Telegraphing

(Letters to the Editor)

## Acquisition of the Right of Way (ROW)

by Hal Madson, Museum Historian, June 2003

There are some important lessons to be learned from the ROW experience. The issue as far as the Museum was concerned was simple; gain ownership or control of the ROW for Museum purposes. On the other side of this issue was the railroad company whose goal is to make their operations more efficient. The farmers are involved to the extent that they don't want public access through their farmlands, which is their place of business.

I was totally in favor of the museum gaining access to the ROW through legitimate means so long as the business interests of the farmers or the railroad were not harmed. The important thing here is the railroad. A lot of us lamented the disappearance of the cabooses, box-cars and the "fallen flags." Railroads have had to make changes to remain competitive in their marketplace, and this meant operating with smaller crews, eliminating certain types of expensive hardware, and merging into mega-systems for efficient operation.

Like the big boys, the SMVRR continues to make changes to remain competitive in its niche. When the sugar plant closed, they lost most of their railroad related revenues. The purchase of the SP by the UP added short-term problems. The railroad until recently has been running at a loss. In order to make their operation more efficient, they are cutting off the dead and unproductive branches, as it were. We rail buffs may not be happy with the business decisions they have made, but it is important to remember that the SMVRR will continue to exist only so long as it is financially viable.

I believe that the most important "asset" that our museum can have is an operating short line railroad like the SMVRR that attracts rail fans and could be available for fan trips. We should do everything we can to help insure the viability of this resource. I believe that it would be a grave error for the museum or individual members of the museum to interfere in any way in the operations of or the business decisions made by the railroad. The abandonment of the ROW was a sound business decision, and for the museum to have interfered was contrary to the interests of the railroad.

It is important for the museum to maintain a sound relationship with the railroad, all the while respecting the fact that the railroad to the operators is a business and their livelihood. We should treat that livelihood as we would our own. As a businessman and operator of commercial real estate interests, I know that I would resent any encroachment by a government entity or other well-meaning individuals upon my business operations. Given similar circumstances in the future, we should enlist suggestions early on from the railroad itself as to how our ambitions might be achieved instead of doing an end-run on them.



# SMVRR Cabooses

Where are they? Well, here are the whereabouts of three of them...



No. 180 is in the Museum's possession and is currently being restored.

SMVRR Caboose #200 is located at Train Mountain near Chiloquin, Oregon. We got permission to use their picture and text only in the printed version of this newsletter, not any web version. You can see it all at this web page (combine all three lines without a break):

<http://www.trainmountain.org/RollingStock485Detail.aspx?Railroad=Miscellaneous&Mark=Misc&Details=>



No. 210 is on display at the Amtrak station in Guadalupe (in the parking lot right out by the street). 🐰

## Be a docent

It's easy, it's fun, you meet lots of people, and you get to run trains as much as you'd like! The afternoon rally does fly by. Contact Dan to sign up! 🐰