

## April Traction Action!

### Orange Empire Spring Rail Festival

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April 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> were the dates for the Annual Spring Rail Festival where the museum tries to run almost everything that will move safely under it's own power. Thousands of local visitors enjoyed the weekend of train and trolley fun! There were three Los Angeles Railway narrow gauge streetcars for the public to ride in service on the loop line accompanied by ex-Pacific Electric Railway single truck Birney #332, now painted in green and cream and numbered 10. In the photo below, The first Los Angeles PCC 3001, which was the first narrow gauge PCC car, is in the background.



On the main line, there was one passenger train pulled by OERM 1956, an ex-U.S.Army diesel; another passenger train pulled by Southern Pacific U-boat 3100; and a caboose train with Yakima Valley Transit Electric Locomotive 297 on the point. But the star of the show this festival was the return to service of Pacific Electric "Blimp" 418 after some major repairs and recent refinishing. The return to service was marked by the sale of HO and large-scale 40' boxcars lettered for the museum and the return of the 418.

### A Swap Meet Every Weekend! Rules for Securing Your Treasure!

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Instead of the usual conflicting dates, April was a month when there was a different one in a different place every weekend.

On Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> the first swap meet was hosted by the Los Angeles Model Railroad Society (LAMRS), formerly known as the Pacific Coast Train Club. Their clubhouse is located in Hawthorne, CA about 1 1/2 mile south of the Hawthorne Airport and the Green Line Crenshaw Station. We found great line poles here.

On April 10<sup>th</sup> another great fun swap meet happened in Pomona, downtown on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. This Pomona swap meet was great for two basic reasons. The first reason for this is that it was **NOT** held at Pomona-Fairplex and the second reason is that it was held on 1<sup>st</sup> Street adjacent to the Union Pacific and Metrolink tracks so train watching is added to the usual fun! The Union Pacific cooperated with plenty of train activity. Sunday morning.

April 18<sup>th</sup> was the day of the All Aboard Model Railroad Emporium Spring Swap Meet and Sale in Torrance, CA. This one was hosted by the hobby shop in its parking lot and the store is open early for the shoppers. We found two great structures for the club layout here.

April 24<sup>th</sup> was the Foothill Model Railroaders Club Swap meet in Sunland. This one is held in the Sunland K-Mart parking lot on the fourth Saturday in February, April, June, August and October. We found several detail items for the club modules here. We have found so many treasures, including rare items, over the years at each of these swap meets, so we never miss them.

May 15<sup>th</sup> will be the semi-annual swap meet held by the Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society. This one is



For the last two years the museum has hosted Thomas the Tank Engine. The crowds that rode these trains for six days each of those years has enabled the museum to make some capital improvements long needed. First, the entire length of Broadway has been paved as shown in the next photo, eliminating a major source of dust when the wind was a factor.



Also the approach to Car Barn One, which houses the Los Angeles Railway narrow gauge streetcar collection. Eliminating a lot of the dirt that caused so many problems when moving cars in and out of the barn.



But the major addition will be the addition of the final leg of a wye that has been planned for years. This will enable the museum to turn all of the standard gauge locomotives and rolling stock most of which has never been turned since their arrival.

held adjacent to the Union Pacific Coast Line tracks so there is both freight and Amtrak passenger train traffic to enjoy plus a tour of their model railroad in the Santa Susana Depot nearby. If you miss this one, the next is September 18<sup>th</sup>. We have found a few rare trolley models here also.

For you new model railroaders, there are a few rules for success at these meets. Most of these swap meets are outside in parking lots with a specific area roped or blocked off. They are run by model railroad clubs most of which are nearby if not adjacent to the swap meet. Some of them charge admission and some do not. The first rule is to [1] get there early. I have seen early birds out at meets checking vendor tables with flashlights as the sun had not come up yet. Whatever the start time is listed on the flyers, get there at least one hour before that. Assuming that you get in to the vendor area early, [2] check out the entire area quickly, keep moving until you have seen everything once and then locate yourself in a central area where you can see most of the action. Another [3] rule is to watch for "shark feeding sessions" where there are several people crowding around a table. If you see a vendor with a lot of the things that you like, [4] ask him to be on the lookout for any items that you desire. Vendors love repeat customers as they produce sales on those "slow" shows. When we told one vendor that we were looking for Philadelphia Nearsides cars, one vendor showed up in Redlands with one at a very good price. After you have secured your first treasure, resume cruising and selecting treasures again until your money runs out! Happy shopping!

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## Custom Traxx Offer

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The Times has learned that Custom Traxx desires to place pictures of cars lettered with their decals in their catalog. So if you have a good clear photo (jpeg) of a car that you have painted or have had painted using Custom Traxx decals and such a picture is NOT currently in their catalog. If you send the picture to Custom Traxx and it is placed in the catalog, the sender will get one free set of Custom Traxx decals (Senders Choice). The



So mark your calendars for November 2004, when Thomas The Tank engine visits again, and April 2005 for the next Rail Festival. One last thing that many visitors overlook, stop in the Bookstore and check their extensive inventory of railroad and traction books and periodicals along with their T-shirt collection. You won't be disappointed! The refreshments on site are great!

sender will get credit for the photo in the catalog if the photo is used.

## **"Pomona Fairplex - Not Recommended for Model Train Clubs & Vendors"**

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In the April 2004 issue, we told you of negative experiences with Pomona-Fairplex. We also told you that a letter was written to the Event Coordinator, Curtis Noffsinger, and detailed those experiences. Conversations and letters were exchanged with both Great American Trains Show and On Track Productions about those same experiences. During the first week of April, Pomona-Fairplex (Curtis Noffsinger, Event Coordinator, and Linda Gonzales, Account Executive, Event Sales and Sponsorship) responded to the electronic correspondence. Basically, their answers could be placed in three categories, economic considerations, "out-of-their-control" or not answered at all. What Pomona-Fairplex management has failed to understand is that their patrons also have economic considerations. With gasoline costs now approaching \$2.50 per gallon and parking costs ever increasing, patrons must chose their entertainment dollars wisely and these patrons **MUST** be made to feel welcome and must not be irritated by customer unfriendly activities. On top of this, on March 1, 2004 this same Pomona-Fairplex management has evicted an excellent model railroad club from the facilities they enjoyed under the grandstand at Pomona-Fairplex for over 50 years. This layout was a local treasure with many, many hours of loving attention devoted ton it for over half a century. One thing is definitely under **OUR** control, however, and that is our decision to not support such a management team and not attend activities at Pomona-Fairplex after our current obligations are met. 'Nuff Sed!

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