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**WINTER 2017**  
130th Edition

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**THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
An Agency of the Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs



**NEWSLETTER OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**

**Special Santa Trains in Carson City Bring Christmas to Children Battling Cancer**

*By Molly Moser from the Nevada Appeal*

Logan Smith was so excited to hop aboard the special Santa Train at the Nevada State Railroad Museum, that he couldn't stop humming a happy tune. It was the first time the 4-year-old got to tour a Santa train. It also was a celebration that his scan results were clear. Logan has been battling neuroblastoma — cancer found in certain nerve systems.



*Santa arrives aboard the Special Santa Train. Photo courtesy Off the Rails Photography.*

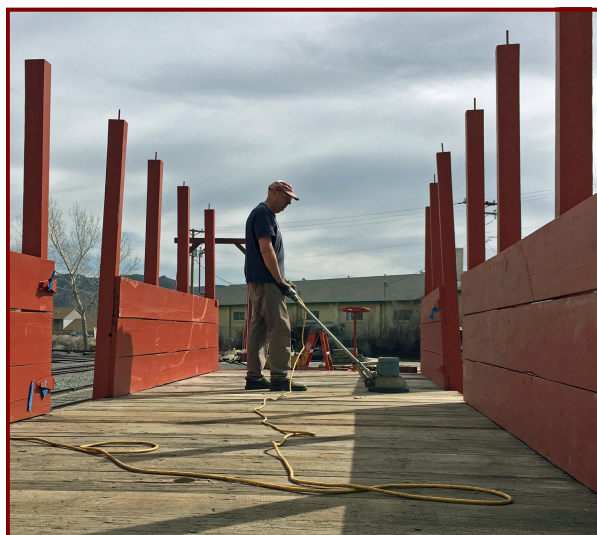
However, the ride was an experience Logan will cherish forever. "We can only do so many things," said Nancy Smith, Logan's mother. "We are so grateful for this opportunity."

The Special Santa Train is the heartbreak for the demographic museum's newest ride and is dedicated to children battling cancer. One local mother Rebecca Bevans, a psychology instructor at (continues on page 6)

**Restoration of Tunnel Car No. 53**

*By Peter Mires*

In 2016 I had my first NSRM volunteer experience; I got to help with the restoration of Tunnel Car No. 53. As a recent retiree living in Carson City, I was looking for something meaningful to do in the area. The NSRM, I discovered, has plenty of volunteer opportunities, including what you might call hands-on history. After successfully completing the safety review and orientation, I joined this Friends-of-the-Nevada-State-Railroad-Museum-sponsored project which, thankfully, did not require any prior (continues on page 7)



*Volunteer Mike Allgaier sands the decks during the restoration of Tunnel Car No. 53.*

## VISIT THE MUSEUM

Open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Thursday through Monday  
(closed Tuesday & Wednesday)

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

### Museum Admission:

Adults 18 & Over - \$6.00  
Children (Under 18) - FREE  
Museum Members - FREE

## STEAM TRAIN & MOTORCAR RIDES

Rides run every weekend May through September with select dates in October, November and December.

The complete 2017 operating schedule will be available this winter at: [museums.nevadaculture.org/nsrmcc](http://museums.nevadaculture.org/nsrmcc)

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## Message from the President of the Friends of the NSRM, Barry Simcoe

We wound up 2016 with what just might be our best Santa Train season ever. We ran three weekends in December this year and in spite of wind, torrential rains, and cold weather the trains ran on time, the volunteers performed admirably, and the public loved it. In addition to the regular Santa Trains, Friends member and volunteer Rebecca Bevans arranged special trains at the end of the day for children with compromised immune systems. Volunteers wiped down the cars prior to boarding to prevent the children from becoming sick. The tickets were paid for by Artsy Fartsy Art Gallery and the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation. A story about this event ran in the Nevada Appeal and was picked up nationally. This is what the Friends are all about. I want to thank Rebecca, the Nevada State Railroad Museum, and the entire Friends organization for making this possible.

2017 promises to be an exciting year at the Railroad Museum. We are planning to expand on the special events that were held in 2016 to have an even better season. Our Events committee, chaired by Rebecca Bevans, will begin meeting soon to plan these events. Meeting dates will be announced in the Monday Morning Line and I encourage as many of you as possible to attend and help make these the best events ever.

Once again I thank all of you for the time and effort you do to support our Museum. With your dedication, support, and Dan Thielen's vision I believe 2017 will be the best year ever for our Museum.

If any of you have any ideas, issues, or concerns please let me know and we will try to work them out.

Email: [barrysimcoe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:barrysimcoe@sbcglobal.net)  
Phone: (775) 379-1353

*Thanks,  
Barry*

## Boy Scouts Railroad Merit Badge Program Comes to NSRM

By Adam Michalski

On November 5, 2016, the museum hosted the Railroad Merit Badge program. The Railroad Merit Badge started as an elective badge of the Boy Scouts of America in 1952. According to meritbadge.org, "By earning this [Railroad Merit] badge, Scouts can learn about the history of railroading, its place in modern society, careers in railroading, and hobbies related to railroading." Museum staff and volunteers teamed up to provide local Boy Scout Troop 140 with the information and experience to earn their Railroad Merit Badge.

There are several requirements to earn a Railroad Merit Badge. Among them identifying ten types of modern railroad cars; plan a trip on Amtrak; discuss opportunities in railroading that interest you; explain the purpose of Operation Lifesaver; explain the appearance of grade crossing warning devices; visit a railroad museum; and ride a train. The Railroad Museum is an obvious choice to learn about and experience these requirements.

Since this was the first time the museum hosted a Railroad Merit Badge program, staff and volunteers decided to start out with small group. A group of eight Boy Scouts participated in the initial event. Several stations were setup throughout the museum. One was dedicated to learning about



Operation Lifesaver. Another was dedicated to identifying modern railroad cars using model trains. The group spent approximately 20 minutes at each station with a total of five stations. The event culminated with a steam train ride behind locomotive 25 and pizzas for lunch.

The program was very successful. Every Scout in the group earned a Railroad Merit Badge. The Scouts walked away with a greater knowledge and understanding of railroads and the Railroad Museum. In addition, the museum staff and volunteers gained some insights

into what made our Railroad Merit Badge program successful and areas that needed improvement. Using this information will help us refine our Railroad Merit Badge program and provide it to a larger audience in the coming year.

The museum thanks all of the staff and volunteers who assisted with the inaugural Railroad Merit Badge program. Also, the museum extends a special thanks to Gordon Taber of the Orange Empire Railway Museum for visiting Carson City to guide and participate in the museum's first Railroad Merit Badge program. 🚂



## Lara Brown Takes Over as Museum Store Manager

The museum has hired a new Museum Store Manager. Lara Brown was appointed to the position in November 2016, taking the place of John Walker who became the Administrative Assistant at NSRM Boulder City. Lara worked as the Museum Attendant since March 2015, before moving into the Museum Store Manager Position. Lara looks forward to bringing fresh ideas to the museum store and contributing in a new role at the museum.

*Congratulations Lara!*

## Air Systems Explained on V&T No. 25 and Coach 17

By Chris de Witt

Occasionally an opportunity arises wherein one learns something about those things with which they have been intimate for years. One also learns a little about one's self.

On Monday, October 3, 2016, Mike Collins of the V&TRR Historical Society wrote via e-mail;

*"I have a question for you regarding the Air Brake valves on the 25. Is the engine brake separate from the train brake? Other words, no distributing valve between the two like on our GR 10 at CSRM."*

This doesn't get to what he really wanted to know.

I responded later with;

*"The #25 has a 6ET set up with options. The automatic will set up the engine brake as well as the train brake if the selector valves are set up that way. Upon application you can bail the engine brake while keeping the automatic set on the cars with the foot valve. Or you can isolate the engine from the automatic and set engine brakes with the independent. There isn't a distributing valve as such. There is however a double check under the engineers seat which controls the actions of the brake valves. The tender is either part of the train or part of the independent."*

which isn't correct. The air system is more correctly identified as a G-6, A-1.

I follow shortly with an e-mail which says,

*"My bad. We have a G-6 valve with C-8 feed valve and a C-6 feed valve on the independent, not a 6ET."*

Mike then wrote;

*"Thanks Chris. The SW-8's are*

*that way; you bay (sic) off the engine brake when you apply the train brakes. The reason I was asking is that there will be a talk on the Ice flanger. There were two air lines and hoses to the flanger, one for the train brake and the other for the blades. The blades air cylinder didn't have a reservoir, so it was straight air. How would you control the blades from the engine?"*

I replied,



Coach 17 undergoing stabilization work in the NSRM Shop.

*"Let me think about this. Do you know if there was one engine that always pushed the flanger?"*

I followed with,

*"I don't know how the air was administered. As an example we ballasted the track at NSRM-CC and NSRM-BC with a bottom dump hopper. The doors opened via gravity however they closed with air. If you attempted to close the doors with air, the train brakes would set up and it took a long time to pump off the brakes. Accordingly we shut the doors where we loaded the hopper because we*

*were stopped there anyway.*

*A flanger operation wouldn't function very well that way. So the options would be: Install a separate valve for the flanger that drew air from the main reservoir or isolate the engine brakes and run the air through the independent air valve*

*There are brake beams on the flanger so there very well might have been automatic air on the car but it might just as well have been hand brakes only for spotting the*

*car when not in use. I am afraid that I am of little use in this discussion as you have probably thought of all of this. I will continue to think about this and if I have an epiphany I will send you my thoughts."*

This is a good question from Mike. In the image from 1916 of the flanger in the snow it is coupled to the coach 17 with a plow engine coupled to coach 17. So the question becomes how was the flanger controlled from the engine and how did the air get to the flanger through the

coach? The flanger can't be tied into the air brake system because manipulation of the flanger would cause a response from the brakes and an application of brakes would cause a change in the flanger.

Engine 15, formerly 13, had evidence of being a plow engine removed by virtue of a day one restoration performed in the late 1970's at CSRM. The 25 is a plow engine so I looked at it assuming that the air system on 25 would be similar to any other V&T plow engines. Under the engineer's seat box is the air brake system. There is a straight air system for the engine and tender. Also, there is an automatic air system (a triple valve on the engine) for the engine and tender. So in service, depending how the selector cocks under the seat box are set one can have straight air on the engine operated by the independent valve in the cab or automatic air on the engine operated through the automatic air stand in the cab. An application of automatic air can be selectively released without affecting the rest of the train with the foot bail valve situated on the floor in front of the engineer.

If both cocks under the engineer are closed then there is no mechanism by which the air brakes can be applied to the engine. The independent valve is still being supplied with air and it can be used to do other things. The 25 has a straight air connection to



The V&T flanger goes off the rails with Coach 17 during a snowstorm in Carson City, January 1916. V&T No. 25, Coach 17, and the flanger had a unique air system tying them together for plow train service. Photo: University of Nevada, Reno, Special Collections Department.

*and the flanger would provide train brakes to the locomotive to slow and stop as the locomotive would have no brakes when in consist with the flanger.”*

I conveyed this to Mike when he visited shortly thereafter. Had I ventured into a restoration of the coach 17 prior to this conversation I would most likely have removed the air line (not knowing its purpose) and not replaced it thereby losing some history or the evidence necessary to discover history.

I learned several things through this exchange. First, I have a new appreciation of the air system on 25. I wondered at various times why the system was designed this way, but did not have an answer until now. Second, now I have an understanding of the extra air line under 17. I may have discarded the air line if I started a preservation effort prior to this exchange. Also, I developed an appreciation of the flanger because of this discussion.

But most importantly this served to reinforce one of my goals as someone engaged in preservation. The lesson of greatest value to me was the reinforcement of my goal not only to preserve history, but also not to lose history. Two entirely different things, but with a common objective. Had I discarded the 17 air line without knowing the purpose some history would have unwittingly been lost. This causes me to wonder what I have missed throughout my career. Not too much I hope. 🚂

the tender and used to have a continuing air line to the end of the tender. That continuation is now missing. There is a provision for isolating the straight air line from the tender brakes. This means that you could control the air (apply and release) to the end of the tender through manipulation of the independent air valve without any action from the brakes.

With no air brakes on the engine and tender you would use the automatic to set brakes on the train to control your speed and stop with. Otherwise there are no air brakes available to the engine when both cocks are closed.

Now the question became one of how was the air carried through the train, that is, through 17? Examination of the 17 revealed an airline running from one end of the car to the other with no connection to the air brake system on the car. This could have been the air line that connected the engine to

the flanger and, as there is no other purpose for an air line like this. The air line is also the same diameter as the straight air line under the tender.

Accordingly I responded to Mike:

*“I have spent the last little while under the #25 (and the #17). The #25 was a plow engine so it might be reasonable to assume that it could pull or push the flanger. Now the question becomes if it was coupled to the flanger how did the flanger operate from the cab of #25.*

*Under the engineer’s running board are the equalizing reservoir, a triple valve with reservoir, a double check, and two air cocks. If one cock is open and the other closed then the engine brakes are controlled (applied and released) by either the independent or automatic air stand depending on the orientation of the cocks. The double check isolates the triple if the independent is controlling. If the automatic is controlling then the double check isolates the independent.*

*If both cocks are closed then*

*there aren’t any engine brakes. There are however tender brakes. The tender is fitted with a double check, triple valve with reservoir, cutout cock and stuff. Depending on how the cocks under the engineer are set the tender is either automatic or independent. There is also a “mountain” valve on the tender up near the flare sheet on the engineer’s side where the engineer can bail the tender if he is so inclined. The last part of the system that allows flanger operation from the cab is the air cylinder cutout cock under the tender.*

*This system allows air to be put into the straight air line to the rear of the tender without setting brakes on the engine or tender and without affecting the automatic system. There would need to be a straight air line through any car between the engine and flanger. Your photos show the #17 between the #15 and the flanger. An inspection of the #17 this morning revealed an air line under the #17 not associated with the air brake system on the car. It is a pass through air line. So the #25 could have passed air through the #17 to the flanger giving the engineer the control of the flange from the cab.*

*Having the #17 or another car*

## Santa Train (continued from Page 1)

Western Nevada College and Southern New Hampshire University, is a volunteer for the Nevada State Railroad Museum. Her colleague, who also is faculty at WNC, has a 3-year-old daughter. When she asked him if he was going to take her to the annual Santa Train ride at the museum, he told her he couldn't because his daughter has leukemia.

Currently, the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation is serving seven families in Carson City diagnosed with cancer. In Northern Nevada overall, the foundation is serving 124 families with an age range between 1-3. Typically, they have 40 new diagnoses a year, according to the foundation.

The original Santa Train is a risk for children with compromised immune systems as their bodies cannot handle an open environment.

"I don't think people realize we have a lot of kids in this community who are going through cancer and other health battles," Bevans said.

As a volunteer at the museum for the last six years, Bevans took action. She pitched the idea to have a Christmas train ride dedicated to children battling cancer. For three Saturdays in a row, the historic Virginia & Truckee No. 25 steam locomotive toured sick children and their families in the evening. The ride served at least 12 families per weekend.

The train is fully sanitized before and after each ride. The depot also is closed as displayed artifacts pose a risk for compromised immune systems.

"Lots of sick kids miss out on things

during the holidays because they're sick," Bevans said. "This is our way to give back to the community and to kids who need it the most."

Businesses in the area also united to make this event possible. Tickets were paid by Artsy Fartsy Art Gallery and the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation. Gifts and books also were donated by Artsy Fartsy Art Gallery, John Hancock Investments and Webster Wealth Management.

"From our families' perspectives, it's wonderful to give them a unique experience," said Debbie Strickland, executive director of NNCCF. "This is an event that is usually excluded from family outings and this experience is a special moment for them to share.

"One mother brought her four children and one of them just finished chemotherapy. The oldest sibling of the group gave me a hug and told me they haven't been able to do the Santa Train in a long time. It meant so much to me."

Danton Williams, 10, also attended the Special Santa Train with his parents and two younger siblings. He finished chemotherapy a year ago, battling lymphoma. Not only does Danton love trains, but the museum allowed him to engineer a ride for his birthday, which falls on Dec. 24.

"It's special for us as a family," said Vanae Williams, his mother. "It's the only thing we could have him do. He's also a very proud fighter and he loves to meet other kids who are going through the same thing. He's uplifting."



Four-year old Logan Smith receives a candy cane and a whistle on the Special Santa Train. Photo courtesy Off the Rails Photography.

Bevans said the Special Santa Train tradition is guaranteed to continue. She also said 2017 will be a good year as Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum will be creating more events.

"I think we're going to start coming up with programs to represent people in our community who don't have the privilege like we do," she said.

Bevans' son, Alexander, 11, helped out at the event by greeting children and families as they board the train.

One of the families they recall boarding was Bevans' colleague with his 3-year-old daughter.

"I'm really proud of what the museum is doing for the community and getting it done together," Bevans said. 🚂

## Restoration of Tunnel Car No. 53 (continued from Page 1)

experience. I used to own an old Gothic Revival Victorian home (built in 1874), so I knew how to do things like sand and paint, but I soon found out that the restoration of rolling stock is a lot more technical.

Tunnel Car No. 53 originated in the Carson City V&T shops. Built in 1891, its design—flat car with platform-like roof—allowed crews to maintain the various tunnels, and other framework structures along the route of the V&T, hence the name tunnel car. After the car's last service in 1949, it was either on display or stored at various Carson City locations, becoming part of the original collection of the NSRM in 1985. It served as a passenger car at the Museum for nearly 20 years. After a decade-long hiatus where the car sat outside storing firewood, falling prey to the elements, the decision was made to bring the 125-year-old V&T flat car back to life.

Working alongside a team of dedicated volunteers—Mike Allgaier, Jack Bell, Loren Jahn, John McCall, Jack Rodkey, Tom Tabacco, and Peter Van Bommel—was half the fun, and they were incredibly patient with me while I

learned new skills. We salvaged most of the original hardware and made it serviceable again by sandblasting layers of rust and old paint and rethreading stubborn nuts and bolts using a tap and die set. Restoration also meant replacing a lot of rotten wood, and hats off to Peter Van Bommel for his amazing carpentry, followed by coats of primer and paint. It was a slow and me-



ticulous process which amounted to approximately 1,255 volunteer hours. In retrospect, the time went quickly. In May 2016 Tunnel Car No. 53 returned to service. The following month, on Father's Day weekend, it was a thrill and a privilege to be a member of the train crew assigned to this piece of history I had helped restore. 🚂

## A Message from the Museum Director

By *Daniel Thielen*

I am so happy to be back at the museum. Reconnecting with old friends and working together with staff and the Friends of NSRM on accomplishing the Museum's mission is the most rewarding part of my career. Thank you for the support and well wishes.

This year has started with some terrific challenges. Those of us who live in Northern Nevada are very grateful for the rain. However, those of us at the museum are feeling like we have had enough. The Museum suffered some significant damage from a rain storm on January 10. Carson City's storm water drains were plugged and the runoff from two canyons found its way onto the facility. Mud, rock and

water flowed from the western hills through the museum. The Restoration Shop and rail crossing by the shop suffered the most. The Annex got pretty muddy, too. A great deal of water infiltrated the Interpretive Center, as well. Operations are not possible on the railroad at this time. Clean up begins now and we will be open soon.

The museum received some good news, too. In December, the Museum was named as a recipient of the Vera Silberstein Gift Trust. Vera Broder Silberstein was a fixture in Hope Valley and the Tahoe Region. She was a gifted writer and storyteller. Vera's \$68,000 donation will be used to promote the rich history of Nevada's railroads and their im-



pact on immigration and settlement of Northern Nevada and the Sierra Nevada. NSRM will accomplish this through restoration, interpretation, collections, and education development. If you value the NSRM, consider remembering the museum through planned giving. I am happy to discuss how your wishes can be realized. 🚂

# “Your Hand on the Throttle”

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amichalski@nevadaculture.org  
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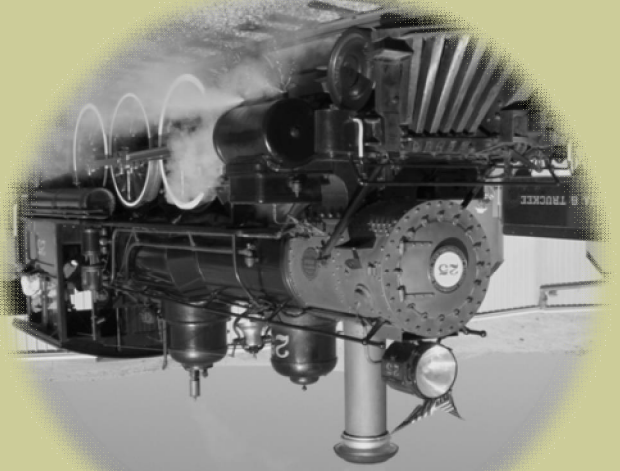
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