

Pacifica Tribune



Jean Bartlett photo

Some of the working fans of Car 1409, (l-r): Jerry Crow, Deidra Kennedy, Maxine Hines, Kathleen Manning, Eric Hough, Paul Cowan and Scott Lindner.

She built Pacifica

By Jean Bartlett

Tribune Writer

You can see a lot looking out a train car window. You get an idea of the lay of the land, the prospects of business and all the hopes that new dreams can buy. That's what riders in the early 1900s saw as they sat in Passenger Car 1409 of the Ocean Shore Railroad and traveled south from San Francisco down the coast into what is now modern day Pacifica. Sure, some stayed on board, keeping other stops further south in mind as the train made its run to Tunitas Glen, 26 miles north of Santa Cruz. But many got out at station names that today's Pacifican will recognize: Edgemar, Salada, Brighton, Vallemar, Rockaway and San Pedro-Terrace by the Sea. Riders like San Francisco attorney Henry Harrison McCloskey. He liked what he saw from Car 1409 and he built a castle in Sharp Park to prove it. Pretty soon Car 1409's station stops became the building blocks for all the areas of our coastal hometown.

In 2004, Car 1409 was discovered by two railroad experts, Jeff Millerick and John Schmale, in a backyard in Sebastopol. She was nearly gone. Decades of abandonment and weather had taken their toll. But she was not beyond hope. The Pacifica Historical Society raised money to: stabilize her roof and walls, put her on the back of an 18-wheeler and bring her home. She's remained protectively hidden, particularly while the PHS fundraised to save and restore the City's historic Little Brown Church and turn it into a museum. That took 10 years and more than \$500,000. But it's done. Now the PHS has turned its focus to Car 1409.

This Saturday, October 27 at noon, all lovers of trains and history are invited to the Pacifica Coastside Museum at the Little Brown Church for a presentation/discussion. The topic is "Help Us Restore Car 1409."

"The car is currently located on the grounds of the Calera Creek Water Recycling Plant," said Kathleen Manning, PHS President Emeritus. "We have this generously-donated site until August of 2019 and then the car will have to be moved. Within that time frame, we have specific reconstruction to complete and have raised \$100,000 to do so. That is being put out to bid. But so much more is needed. We need ideas, input and involvement."



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Gary Smith lines up a piece of history to its former place in the window frame.

Coastsider Gary Smith who does set construction for the Pacifica Spindrift Players came out to have a look at the old Holman passenger car. He spoke with master carpenter Scott Lindner who has been a longtime advisor on the project's restoration needs.

"All this custom work has to be duplicated," Smith said. "There is a lot to do and the skeleton needs a fair amount of work. Some of what's needed can be done in a workshop. It is definitely an interesting project."

Along with the work put out to bid, individuals who can provide answers to any of the following questions are a must to save our car. What are all the jobs needed to complete the exterior? Who should be hired to do various jobs? When the car needs to be moved in August, how can it secure a place near the Little Brown Church? Where is that place? What about the area around the car's new location? How can it be landscaped? Should it be a park? What type of shelter should be built to support Car 1409? What should the train car's interior design be and how can the things needed be acquired? How can 21st Century virtual reality be utilized? How can events and progress be publicized? How can the needs of the handicapped be recognized to access the train car? Once Car 1409 is placed in its permanent location, what security issues should be considered and addressed? What other ideas are there for raising money to complete the car's restoration? Is there a grant writer available? Where can the working model of the Ocean Shore Railroad, currently housed in a local business warehouse, be permanently placed?

Major undercarriage work on the car that was needed has been completed except for the couplers and trucks. The latter is essentially the train car's "wheels." Right now a temporary shelter is being placed over the car and a new \$3,000 tarp is being purchased to make it waterproof.

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Public planning meeting to get the job done on the restoration and to secure a permanent site for OSRR Car 1409 is Saturday, Oct. 27, noon, at the Pacifica Coastside Museum, 1850 Francisco Blvd, Pacifica. Refreshments will be provided. Railcar restoration expert Jeff Millerick and railroad historian John Schmale will be on hand. This is a two-hour meeting. Contact Deidra Kennedy, 650-303-1670, or Kathleen Manning, 415-509-6685, for further information. Visit Car 1409's website at: <http://pacificahistory.org/osrr-car-1409/>.

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