

# SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT

VOL. 25, NO. 2, 88th Edit.

THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM  
An Agency of the Division of Museums and History  
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs

SUMMER 2004

## Gordon Sampson and *The End of Days: Part II*

By Bryan K. Berry, Collections Volunteer

*The following is the second part of a letter written by Gordon A. Sampson to Leslie H. Moore, President of the Virginia & Truckee Railway on September 22, 1948 (the first part of the letter appeared in the Spring 2004 Sagebrush Headlight). Sampson was Vice-President, Director, and General Manager of Operations for the Virginia & Truckee Railway during the railroad's final years. Sampson refers to Duncan A. McLeod, Director and Secretary for the Virginia & Truckee Railway, and Roy C. Gasser, Chief Counsel, for the Mills Estate. The letter discusses the condition of the railway and the attempts to abandon or sell the railway. This letter is part of the **Sampson Collection** purchased for the Nevada State Railroad Museum by the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum in 2003.*

2. Sale of our properties to outside parties.

Mr. McLeod's visit to Reno on Wednesday, August 18, 1948 was to inform me for the first time as to negotiations he had conducted with Bennett and Blitz for the purchase of our entire properties. I, as

- Continued on page 4



**Gordon Sampson at the Nevada State Capital in Carson City**  
Photo: Sampson Collection NSRM.

*Sagebrush Headlight* newsletter is published by the Nevada State Railroad Museum and the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum and distributed to the membership as part of their annual dues.

The museum is an agency of the  
**State of Nevada**  
Kenny Guinn, Governor  
**Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs**  
Scott K. Sisco, Interim Dept. Director  
**Division of Museums and History**  
Wally A. Steffan, Division Administrator  
**Nevada State Railroad Museum**  
Chris DeWitt, Acting Director

FRIENDS OF THE NEVADA STATE  
RAILROAD MUSEUM  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
**Executive Committee**  
President: Ron Allen  
775/882-4904  
Vice President: Bob Pence  
775/884-9164  
Secretary: Bill Kohler  
775/265-5365  
Treasurer: Russ Tanner  
775/884-3207

Correspondence to the FRIENDS may be sent to:  
Friends of NSRM  
P.O. Box 1330  
Carson City, NV 89702

**NEVADASTATE  
RAILROADMUSEUM**  
2180 South Carson St.  
Carson City, NV 89701  
775/687-6953  
**www.nsrn-friends.org**  
**www.nevadaculture.org**

Open Daily 8:30 to 4:30  
Admission \$4  
Children under 18 FREE

The *Sagebrush Headlight* is  
printed by  
*PIP Printing*  
Carson City, Nevada

## Symposium 2004 Yerington to Wurm: Building and Preserving the Past

The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum invites you to attend the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Virginia and Truckee Railroad Symposium held at the Carson Nugget, October 14-17, 2004. Symposium topics will include Nevada and regional narrow gauge railroads, an update on the V&T re-build project, and a tribute to Ted Wurm. This year's special event on Thursday, October 14, is a night photography session featuring the V&T No. 27.

For an application please contact Merna Tanner at 775/884-3207;  
*tannerruss@aol.com* or John Frink at 775/687-6953; *jfrink@clan.lib.nv.us*.

*Plan to attend Symposium 2004!*

### NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM 2004 OPERATING SCHEDULE

#### STEAM UPS

July 3-4-5, (Saturday, Sunday & Monday).....Independence Day  
July 17-18 (Saturday & Sunday) .....Steam Up  
July 31/Aug. 1 (Saturday & Sunday) .....Steam Up  
Aug. 14 & 15 (Saturday & Sunday).....Saturday--Guide Dogs  
Aug. 28 & 29 (Saturday & Sunday).....Steam Up  
Sept. 4-5-6 (Saturday, Sunday & Monday) .....Labor Day

Steam Train operates 10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
Fares: Adults- \$4.00, Children 6-11- \$2.00, 5 and under FREE  
**SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

#### Past Issues of *Sagebrush Headlight* Now Available Copies Are Limited

32 <sup>nd</sup> Edition, Vol. 7, No. 1	February 1986	40 <sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. 8, No. 3 June-August 1987
33 <sup>rd</sup> Edition, Vol. 7, No. 2	April 1986	41 <sup>st</sup> Edition, Vol. 8, No. 4 Sept-Nov 1987
34 <sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. 7, No. 4	September 1986	42 <sup>nd</sup> Edition, Vol. 9, No. 1 January 1988
36 <sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. 7, No. 5	October 1986	44 <sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. 9, No. 3 June 1988
39 <sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. 8, No. 2	April 1987	47 <sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. 10, No. 1 April 1989

Also available for \$1.00:

1<sup>st</sup> Edition V & T Restoration Co. News 1972

If you are interested in purchasing a back issue, please call 775/687-6953.

#### **Correction:**

The Spring 2004 issue of the *Sagebrush Headlight* was incorrectly identified as the 86<sup>th</sup> Edition. It should have been the 87<sup>th</sup> Edition. Please also note: there is no 83<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dear Friends-*

Here's hoping that everyone is enjoying a wonderful springtime. The museum has been busy already with tours and special groups. A big thank you to the volunteers who have been attending to those groups and tours. You have been doing an outstanding job. The steam train season is well underway and appears to be off to a great start. Memorial Day weekend steam up was busy and successful.

The recently completed motorcar training and operation class was a huge success and has provided a fine class of operators and volunteers. For those of you who missed it, stay tuned and watch for the next one. The class provides training on the operation of the motorcar, but in addition, it provides the crucial training in general train operations. Many of the recent graduates have already started their training on the steam train crew. A big welcome to all to the graduates and thank you for your interest in the programs at the museum.

The museum is in the midst of displaying a series of temporary exhibits of railroad-related art that everyone who enjoys trains will certainly not want to miss. The artists are mostly local, and most of their work has not been widely displayed. There are some real winners. Please keep the schedules in mind and view these fine changing exhibits.

The Board of Directors has asked me to send a special invitation to all members to attend our bimonthly board meetings, as this is our organization and you should be an essential part of it. The main point to remember is that we are here to serve the museum and all your support and ideas are welcome. The meetings are held on the first Thursday of every other month. Please see the schedule elsewhere in the *Headlight*.

Here's looking forward to a very busy, but fun summer season at the museum. Hope to see everyone soon and thank you all for your hard work and continued enthusiasm.

*- Ron Allen, President.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Steam Ups**  
 July 3-5  
 July 17-18  
 July 31/Aug. 1  
 Aug. 14-15  
 Aug. 28-29  
 Sept. 4-6

**Wed. Evening Program**  
**(7:00 p.m.)**  
 July 14 & Aug. 11:  
 None

Sept. 8:  
*Interesting Trolleys-Unusual Tracks*

**Spark's Farmers Market**  
**Hand Car Rides**  
**(4:00 to 9:00 p.m.)**  
 July 22  
 August 26

**Friends' Board Meeting**  
 August 5

**Symposium**  
 October 14-17

**Oasis Conference**  
 April 5-7, 2005

*For information about any of the events,  
 please call 775/687-6953.*

## In the Spotlight by John Frink

When Thelma Williams and her husband Rollie used to visit Carson City on vacations they always stopped at the State museums. Thelma, not being one to retire easily, knew that someday she would want to volunteer at them. In fact, when they finally moved here after Rollie's retirement in 1991, Jack Gibson got her to volunteer at both museums before they had even finished unpacking!

Working in the museums' gift shops simply was not enough to keep this "dynamo" going. Consequently, she volunteered to be the Friends' membership chairman shortly after arriving. To say that the membership "system" was a mess is

putting it mildly. Thelma being Thelma, turned "the mess" around in no time at all and had it working as smooth as silk. She continued to take care of it for eight years, finally handing it over to a successor. Currently, her smiling face graces the museum store every Thursday morning. During the operating season from May through September she works at the depot as well. In her spare time, she schedules volunteers for the State Museum store and fills in there as needed.

At least once a year, Rollie drags her out of here kicking and screaming to go on a cruise. They have literally been all over the world on cruises. And, incidentally,

there is no truth to the rumor that Rollie has to restrain her from volunteering in the cruise ships' gift shops!

With over 3,000 volunteer hours at the end of 2003, this tireless volunteer is a real asset to the museum's operation.



Vice-President, a Director, and General Manager of the operations of this Railway, had not been consulted either directly or indirectly. At our Reno conference Mr. McLeod informed me of some of the details. He stated the sales price was \$350,000.00. In reply to my question he stated that Coldwell Banker's brokerage fee was \$10,000.00. He stated that you had no knowledge as to the negotiations over the preceding [sic] months. I wish to correct these statements made to me by Mr. McLeod in the following manner.

1. I phoned Mr. McLeod on June 9th, 1948 asking him whether the cash position given the previous day by our auditor, Miss P. Emery, was satisfactory. He replied it was then informed me our New York office had received an offer to dispose of the Railway. The latter statement was not correct as the offer originated with Mr. McLeod at San Francisco.

2. On June 9, 1948 Mr. McLeod sent this telegram to Roy C. Gasser at New York.

"I have offer of \$340,000.00 gross for all stock of Railway. We keep all cash on hand amounting to approximately \$40,000.00 and also keep a balance of about \$14,000.00 due to us because of sale of Transit Company. We also keep all receivables and pay all bills owing. Receivables and payables usually balance. If deal is concluded we are to pay Coldwell banker \$15,000 brokerage fee. If deal is concluded we at our own expense must secure order to abandon. Deal also subject to buyers having thirty days to ascertain if title to land is satisfactory. Employees' reasonable severance pay estimated at \$25,000. I suggest fee to me for negotiating sale and obtaining orders to abandon at \$30,000. Offer to purchase identical with one previously forwarded to you except price to be paid is increased by \$40,000. Offer subject to acceptance by June 18, 1948 but I believe time can be extended if necessary. Mr. Moore agrees with me that price offered is reasonable and sale should be consummated. He of course has not been requested to pass upon severance pay or fees. I believe continued operation will become increasingly hazardous unless we spend large sums of money for new rails, maintenance and locomotives. Prospective business does not warrant such

expenditures. Letter of explanation to be approved by Mr. Moore will be sent to you tomorrow."

This telegram also states the correct sales price as \$340,000 and the correct Coldwell banker's brokerage fee of \$15,000. All this information was in my possession when Mr. McLeod made his mis-statements to me on August 18 and 19, 1948.

On June 15, 1948 Mr. McLeod sent this telegram to Roy C. Gasser as [sic] New York.

"Replying your letter June 14th such compensation as may be agreed upon for my services in connection with negotiating the sale and proceedings for abandonment. Intended to be in full payment of all services heretofore rendered by me in receivership proceedings and subsequent thereto."

4. On June 10, 1948 Treasurer's No. 9253 was issued in favor of Mr. McLeod in the amount of \$9,000.00 and which was cleared through the Crocker First National Bank, July 14, 1948. Mr. McLeod endorsed this check as payment for legal services rendered for the period January 1, 1945 to December 31, 1947. It was during our long distance telephone conversation on June 9, 1948 that Mr. McLeod requested that payment be made him in the above sum. He stated that before wiring our New York office the current cash position, he desired to reduce it as much as was possible and by sending him this check such reduction would be accomplished. The correct approximate cash position as of June 9, 1948 was \$48,000.00 as furnished by Miss Emery. Mr. McLeod's wire to Mr. Gasser stated the cash position was \$40,000.00, which means he took into consideration the check of \$9,000.00, then in transit to San Francisco.

Prior to the payment of this check in the sum of \$9,000.00 Mr. McLeod had received payment for legal fees as follows:

Date Issued	Amount
1/18/1940	\$2,500.00
8/15/1941	1,500.00
8/31/1941	1,500.00
5/28/1942	3,000.00
10/6/1943	3,000.00

6/16/1944	3,000.00
4/12/1945	3,000.00

A total of \$26,500 has been paid to Mr. McLeod for his legal services covering the period November 1, 1938 to December 31, 1947.

5. The following telegram was addressed to Mr. Gasser at New York by Mr. McLeod from San Francisco, under date of August 25, 1948.

"I hope I have been able to break through the Iron Curtain surrounding the Public Service Commission and Highway Commission in connection with our proposed sale of the railroad property. I shall know the early part of next week whether I have been successful. I have had interesting and possibly very profitable conferences with the State Officials which may result in our obtaining more money for this property in an entirely new deal. Have held Edwards proposal in abeyance pending new developments. Should you be contacted by any body representing former offer do not disclose new prospect but keep pending offer by advising you are considering the offer."

There was no "iron curtain" for the reason that Mr. McLeod, while in my office on Thursday, August 19th, received a firm offer from Mr. Holcomb, State Highway Engineer, in the sum of \$210,000.00. The only further contact Mr. McLeod had with the Highway Department was his request of September 3rd, that the offer of \$210,000.00 be reduced to writing. This was done by the Highway Department on September 7th, with the consent of the entire Board of Directors of the Highway Department. Mr. McLeod has not directly nor indirectly contacted any official or Commissioner of the P.S.C.N.

3. The True [sic] valuation of our property in the event of a liquidation.

During the month of March, 1947[,] and while in conference with Mr. McLeod at San Francisco, he requested me to compile a valuation of our properties. He stated that this information had been requested by Mr.

- Continued from page 4

Gasser during a conference at Los Angeles, California. I, in due course, submitted a valuation of \$741,737.98. It is not claimed that this valuation is 100% perfect. To have produced absolute accuracy would have involved heavy appraisal fees by outside parties. Nevertheless it was and is a fair and reasonable valuation. On presenting same to Mr. McLeod his reply was that I was one-quarter of a million dollars short of the true valuation.

On Thursday, August 19, 1948, while at Carson City, Mr. McLeod canvassed with me the possibility of our reverting to the original plan, that of liquidating the entire properties ourselves. He asked my opinion as to what we, as a Corporation, could liquidate our property for at the present time. Taking into consideration the present market price of steel (\$35.00 a gross ton over \$20.00 a gross ton as stated in my 1947 valuation); a decrease from the high point of land values of 1946; and the expense in liquidating all our holdings; I gave the answer of \$600,000.00 net. I still stand by

this conservative estimate and I am certain such a sum can be realized by us over a liquidation period of approximately three years.

By my proving to Mr. McLeod that our Right of Way between Reno and Carson City would bring \$210,000.00 and that our rail, fastenings and miscellaneous steel scrap would bring us approximately \$225,000.00, it can be seen that the offer of Bennett and Blitz of \$340,000.00, recommended by Mr. McLeod and approved by you to New York, was entirely out of line.

I am ready to concede that any outside parties interested in purchasing our properties must offer a price that will permit of their obtaining a high profit. Otherwise, they would not be interested. As stated by one of the individuals who has negotiated with Mr. McLeod, "If I paid one half million dollars for your properties, I would want to realize three quarters of a million dollars or otherwise I would not be interested." For this reason any offer submitted by any group

to Mr. McLeod will be considerably below what we as a corporation, can realize through the sale of our assets. As to the persistency in disposing of our assets through this less remunerative method, is difficult to understand. Again quoting the same party as referred to above, "You people should liquidate your own properties off-setting the capital gain on prices received through the sale of your land against the loss to be taken on your capital stock of \$5,000,000.00."

As a Director holding a trust for the stockholders of this Corporation, I reserve the right to protest and vote against any proposed sale to outside parties at an amount which I do not feel consistent with the best interests of our stockholders.

Very truly yours,

G. A. Sampson,  
Vice-President

## In a Sad State of Disrepair

By Chris DeWitt

As the life of the fabled Virginia & Truckee Railroad waned and resources became scarce, maintenance of the infrastructure necessarily suffered. History recounts the insidious demise of the track and structures. Documents bear evidence to the death spiral of commerce and revenue. However, nowhere can we see a more blatant example of this wasting than in locomotive No. 27.

Although there was some deterioration and mistreatment of the No. 27 following the demise of the railroad, the majority of its problems could only have occurred during service. Not only was the locomotive worn out but there is also evidence of protracted deferred maintenance.

The condition boiler showed the most extravagant example of poor maintenance. Upon entry into the boiler, during restoration, it was immediately obvious that regular washings were less than diligently carried out. Regulation required that the boiler be washed every 31 days. This entails

the removal of all wash-out plugs and a thorough flushing with water. It was discovered that while the mud ring was as clean as it should have been the barrel was heavily encrusted with scale. The scale filled and covered more than half of the tube bundle. Incidental failure to remove the belly plugs could not have resulted in this condition. It resulted from years of neglect. It might be argued that this was evidence of laziness on the part of the shop staff however the annual inspection by the master mechanic would have uncovered this shortcoming. He either didn't care or didn't inspect annually as required by regulation.

The next obvious problem was the lack of water treatment. Proper water treatment would have mitigated the scale. But water treatment costs money and can be easily excluded as a cost saving measure.

Nestled in this cemented mass of scale were the tubes. The tubes were in deplorable condition. Four were collapsed, a result of overheating. Several were worn so thin that they would not support their own weight when removed. Regular removal for inspection was mandated by regulation. It was obvious that they had not been removed for many years. This condition only points to years of neglect.

Repair of the defects noted above were an accepted requirement for operation. In a healthy railroad, this required maintenance would have been executed in a workmanlike manner without second thought. Given the long and successful operation of this railroad and accordingly the awareness of the regulations, the V&T would only have resorted to this lack of action through desperation.



Portion of a scale-encrusted boiler tube from No. 27

## THE NSRM SEEKS YOUR TALENT AND SKILLS FOR THE SP WABUSKA DEPOT INTERPRETIVE PROJECT



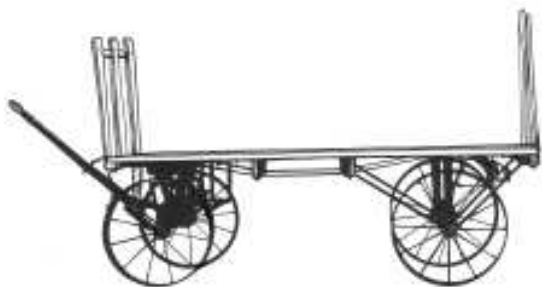
*By Loren Jahn, Project Coordinator*

The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum have set a goal to authentically furnish the original Southern Pacific Wabuska Depot to a 1910-1920 appearance. The focus will be to interpret the waiting room and office environments. Providing interpretation of the depot will broaden the museum experience for our visitors, and educate young and old alike in the important role the railroad depot played in Nevada communities.

The projects described below are only two of several projects planned for this summer and the coming winter months. These projects are time limited, and a great opportunity to “work with your hands” under the expert supervision and guidance of the restoration shop staff. If you would like to participate in one of these projects, please contact Chris DeWitt at the Nevada State Railroad Museum Shop, 775/684-8281. Thank you for your support!

### Baggage Cart Restoration

Project requires one to three people to gather, strip and clean parts as well as prime and paint. Basic woodworking skills, assembly, and finish work needed.



**THE WESTERN UNION  
TELEGRAPH COMPANY.**

### Signage for the Depot

Interior and exterior authentic reproduction signage typical to Southern Pacific Company depots. Project requires one to three people with skills in woodworking, painting, and assembly work.

## Motorcar Training Class

By *Bill Kohler*

Wow, what could be better? The first ever motorcar training class successfully concluded on May 2, 2004. Eight new Friends members completed their training and are now qualified as motorman/conductors on the museum's 1926 Edwards motorcar. They now can also give handcar rides and are eligible to volunteer as steam train crew members.

The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum sponsored and ran the training class with members Russ Tanner, Dave Squire and Bill Kohler serving as instructors for the rule book and motorcar portions of the training. Bernie Allen instructed the students on proper and safe handcar operation.

Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup> was filled with activity, commencing with a comprehensive tour of the Restoration Shop, including an in depth inspection of the McKen Motorcar that is currently undergoing restoration, given by Lee Hobold and Jeremy Harding. The tour was followed by a stint of "book learnin'" and taking the safety test, which all of the students passed with ease.

Saturday dawned bright and clear and the first order of the day was instruction by Bernie Allen in the proper and safe operation of the museum's handcars. The rest of the day was spent in hands-on motorcar training.

Each student received plenty of instruction on boarding and detraining, throwing switches, and proper hand and whistle signals. After putting the car away at the end of the day, Bev and Dick Harding, did a magnificent job of hosting a barbeque in the Gibson Park.

Sunday was the day the students put all their training together. After practicing moving the motorcar on and off the turntable (perhaps the most precise and scary

operation learned), the afternoon was spent carrying the public on revenue trips. This was what the program was all about and the students took to the jobs at hand with enthusiasm and by the end of the day were becoming comfortable with this new experience.

The success of the program has already been proven as many of the participants have logged many volunteer hours. When can we do it again?



Students and instructors take a break during the three day motorcar training class. Students standing are (left to right) John Williams, Peter Pettler, Doug VanPool, Pinchos Andreen, Barbara Whitehead, Bill Volz, Ted Volz, and John Awl. Instructors kneeling are (left to right) Russ Tanner, Dave Squire, and Bill Kohler.

## A New Benefit for Active Volunteers

By *Stan Cronwall*

Thanks to many hundreds of volunteer hours, NSRM's Reference Library is now open! Active volunteers of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum, who have contributed 100 hours or more, may now check out books and VHS tapes.

The library contains close to 2000 books accumulated over many years, the result primarily of donations. The book collection is particularly

strong in the area of regional railroads. A limited number of VHS commercially-produced videotapes are also available. In addition, VHS tapes of most of the annual V & T History Symposiums and many, many of NSRM's Wednesday Evening Programs can be checked out. Periodicals should be cataloged and available for reference by January of next year.

A hard copy list of circulating library items will be maintained at the Admission's desk, as well as in the archives office. Initial library hours will

be from 8:30– 11:30 am and 1:30-4:00 pm on Wednesdays.

Active volunteers (and NSRM staff) may borrow up to three books and/or VHS videotapes at a time. The lending period is two weeks. If you would like a copy of the guidelines for borrowing, please contact Jane O'Cain via e-mail [jlocain@clan.lib.nv.us](mailto:jlocain@clan.lib.nv.us), in writing, or by phone at 775/ 687-8291.

Active volunteers are encouraged to use the library. It is a great place to expand our knowledge of northern Nevada railroads, railroading in general, and the local area.

## Collections Update

By Jane O'Cain

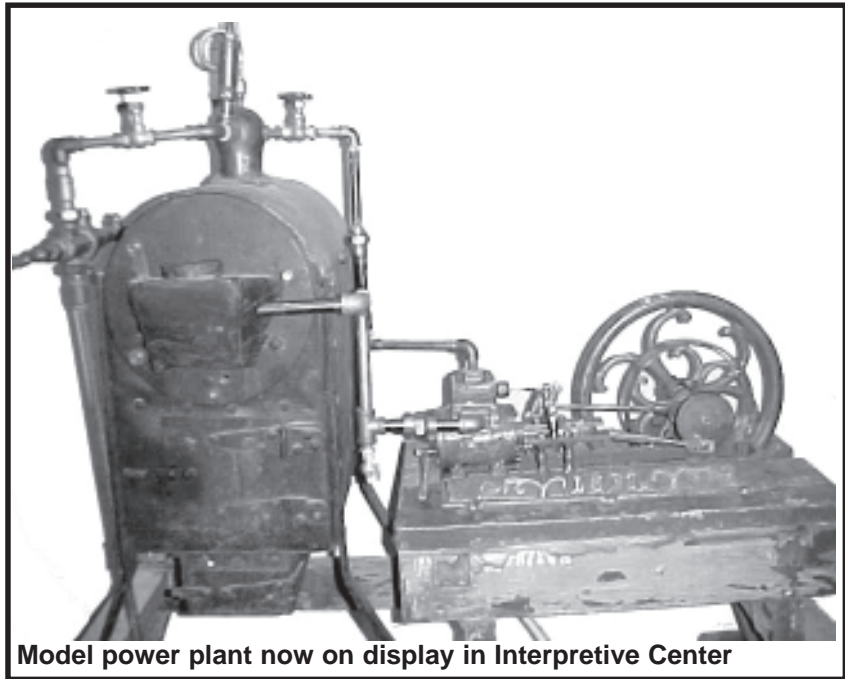
For several months collections volunteer Joe Bensinger, with assistance from collections volunteer Mark Holbrook and museum attendant Melissa Hogue, has been hard at work processing a large group of records donated by the Nevada Land and Resource Company. The records were made by the Southern Pacific Land Company. They document the Central Pacific Railroad land grants in Nevada, California, Idaho, and Utah, as well as the Oregon and California Railroad land grants in Oregon. Look for Joe's article in the fall issue of the *Sagebrush Headlight* about this collection of records.

*The Museum thanks the following individuals and organizations for donations of artifacts to the permanent collections in April and May:*

**Tunnel signal light;** donated by Webb Varnum, Reno

**V&T RR-manufactured wheel** from Sutro Tunnel, V&T RR crossbuck, Carson and Colorado track; donated by Bernie Allen, Carson City

**Early 20<sup>th</sup> century maps and drawings** of Nevada railroads/towns (three on display



Model power plant now on display in Interpretive Center

in the Interpretive Center); donated by Jeanne Hollingsworth, Roseville, California

**1893 Hand-crafted model power plant;** donated by Peter Schade, Fresno, California

**McKeen postcard;** donated by Steven Watson, Carson City

**Southern Pacific Railroad tools and equipment;** donated by Floyd Flanary, Sparks

**1881 Nevada-Oregon Railroad cash account book;** donated by Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum

**Ten lanterns** from the V&T RR and the SPCo, a V&TRR lock with key and chain, seven V&TRR shipping bills, and a payroll voucher from October 1877, for Ah Jack, Chinese Camp 1; donated by Brett and Clifford Colter, Chula Vista, California, and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## A Tough Old Horse

By Rich Pitter

The Virginia & Truckee Railroad used about 100 horses and carts on its construction from Carson City to Virginia City in 1869. The company's first inventory on July 1, 1870, reports 61 horses, of which 42 are in teams at Virginia City, and 103 carts. An account by Mark Twain in *Roughing It*, which describes an episode that took place in the early 1860s, indicates that hay and barley for horses were expensive in Nevada, so the railroad company probably sold dozens of horses as soon as its heavy grading was finished. The decommissioning of one of the railroad company's horses made the *Gold Hill Evening News*. "A TOUGH OLD HORSE.—An old scrub of a dump cart horse, working at the grading of the railroad on the high, rocky hill just south of Crown Point Ravine, last Friday evening, getting excited probably over an extra allowance of barley, or a repugnance to

night work, took a notion to get rebellious, and started to run away." The newspaper story was published in November 1869, shortly before the first train rolled over the Crown Point trestle and into Gold Hill. The account continues. The horse, sloshing about in the dark, plunged over a 16-foot-high wall, rolled 60 feet down the hill, fell into an open cut 30 feet deep, and then plunged down a 125-foot-deep mine shaft, leaving the cart sticking fast in the mouth of the shaft.

The next day, laborers spotted the cart and found the horse lying on his back wedged between rocks at the bottom of the shaft. Miraculously, he was in fine shape except for a few scratches and bruises. The railroad gave him to two boys who rigged up a windlass and hoisted him out of the shaft. As they led him back to their house, they told the reporter that they wouldn't sell him for a thousand dollars.

A week later, after treating his wounds, the lads decided to hitch him up and take him for a ride. A second article in the

*Gold Hill Evening News* relates that episode: "As soon, however, as they got the tent-hipped old rascal hitched up he suddenly gave a plunge, and broke down Main Street, through town, at a terrific rate, kicking himself clear of the cart as he passed the News office, and away he rushed, headlong, evidently looking for that old shaft again. Being headed off, he dodged into a stable where he was arrested before he could hang himself to a beam overhead with a halter, or leap out of the back window. The boys will sell him to a circus company."

In 1869, power tools were unavailable for leveling the grade and boring the tunnels along the line. Men built the Virginia & Truckee Railroad with picks, shovels, black powder—and horses.





## Short Lines

### Paintings by Archie Burnett First in New Series Featuring Local Railroad Artists

Six paintings of Virginia and Truckee Railroad locomotives by Reno artist Archie Burnett are now on display at NSRM through October 1, 2004. The artist's oil paintings include the *Reno*, *Inyo*, *Columbus* and No. 26 (see below). The Burnett display is the first in a series of exhibits showcasing local artists who have interpreted northern Nevada railroading in their work.

Burnett, a Reno artist, did not begin fine art painting until the 1990s. However, as a former billboard sign painter he was very experienced in design and composition. His art demonstrates an appreciation for and understanding of the trains and their historic settings. He creates his paintings by researching existing locomotives and studying historic photographs. He also captures native landscapes with exacting detail. Burnett hopes to eventually paint all the locomotives of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad.



### Administrator Hired for the Division of Museums and History

Wally Steffan was recently appointed Administrator of the Division of Museums and History and began his duties on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Steffan came to Carson City from the West Valley Art Museum in Phoenix. He has over 35 years experience in museum

administration and teaching museum studies at the university level. The museum staff welcomes Dr. Steffan and looks forward to working with him.

### Nevada State Railroad Museum, Boulder City Offers Excursion Trips

*By Greg Corbin, Museum Director*

Nearly a full year has passed since the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Boulder City began offering excursion rides on the newly refurbished and rebuilt coaches that make up the Nevada Southern Railway. It was on July 4<sup>th</sup> of 2003, that the very first paying passengers boarded the train for their seven mile, 45-minute excursion trip between Boulder City and Railroad Pass.

Thanks to the emerging partnership with the Southern Nevada Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, the Nevada State Railroad Museum has been able to increase the operating schedule of the Nevada Southern Railway to the general public. During monthly operations in March, April and May we have handled nearly 1600 passengers.

If you are in the Boulder City area, please stop over and ride the train. Trains will be operated on Saturday, July 3; Saturday, August 14; Saturday, September 11; and Saturday and Sunday, October 2 & 3.

### New Photographic Exhibit at the East Ely Railroad Depot Museum

*By Sean Pitts, Museum Director*

The East Ely Railroad Depot Museum opened the exhibit *The Nevada Northern Railroad, a Photographic Journey through Time* on June 11<sup>th</sup>. The exhibit features artist Greg Dahlgren who has been taking large-format photographs of the Nevada Northern Railroad complex and rolling stock for the past decade.

This photo exhibit differs slightly from others that have been shown in Ely because the images are all printed from high quality digital printers. The result is a dramatic series of images that capture the best of the Nevada Northern yards and rolling stock.

The East Ely Railroad Depot Museum is located on the Nevada Northern Railroad Complex at 1100 Avenue A in Ely, Nevada. Further information is available by calling (775) 289-1663.

### Nevada Historical Society Celebrates Its 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

*By Robert Harmon, Department of Cultural Affairs*

The Nevada Historical Society in Reno, the state's oldest museum, was founded on May 31, 1904. One hundred years later, the museum is celebrating its centennial with a year full of special exhibits, public programs and community events. Highlights include an exhibit honoring the life and work of the museum's first director, Jeanne Elizabeth Wier, Family Fun Day on July 17 and a street carnival in the heart of Reno on September 18. For a complete list, please call the museum at (775) 688-1190 or visit the department's website at [www.NevadaCulture.org](http://www.NevadaCulture.org).

The first stated mission of the Nevada Historical Society was to collect the memories of the state's earliest pioneers before they passed from the scene. As the Historical Society begins its second century, collecting and caring for the heritage of the people of Nevada, the Great Basin and the West, and using that heritage in educational programs, is still the key to the society's mission statement. The Historical Society receives visitors and corresponds literally with the world from its current location in the blue building across from the Fleischmann Planetarium which opened in 1968. We invite you to visit.

### Websites Updated

The Museum's state webpage [www.nevadaculture.org](http://www.nevadaculture.org) (click on Division of Museums and History) and the Friends' webpage, [www.nsrn-friends.org](http://www.nsrn-friends.org), have both been improved and updated. Thanks to volunteer webmaster Geoff Brunner it is now possible to renew membership and register for the annual symposium on the Friends' website. Plan to visit both!

Address Service Requested

2180 South Carson Street  
 Carson City, Nevada 89701  
 (775)687-6953

**NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**

PRSRRT STD  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Carson City, NV 89701  
 Permit No. 15

**FRIENDS OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM  
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**Please select desired membership category (membership is renewable annually)**

Certificate, membership card, voting privileges, SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT newsletter, *Railroad History* (for all memberships over \$35), free Museum admission, 15% discount in Museum Store.

**INDIVIDUAL/GENERAL**

- Senior (62+) or Student.....\$20
- Senior Couple.....\$40
- Individual.....\$35
- Family.....\$50
- Sustaining.....\$100
- Contributing.....\$250

**CORPORATE**

- (includes above with framed certificate)
- Regular.....\$100
  - Fireman's Roster.....\$250
  - Engineer's Roster.....\$500
  - Conductor's Roster.....\$1000
  - Lifetime.....\$1200

**Name**(Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_ **Spouse**(if family membership) \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ **Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Check here if renewal** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to: FRIENDS, PO Box 1330, Carson City, NV 89702 or**

**Credit Card No.** \_\_\_\_\_ **Expiration Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Last Three-Digits From Credit Card Number On The Reverse of Credit Card** \_\_\_\_\_