



# The Fire Door

The Official Publication of the Southern California Live Steamers, Inc.

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September 2009

The Southern California Live Steamers, Inc. has been in existence since 1948. The **mission** of the Southern California Live Steamers is to educate and promote interest in railroad history by building and operating a miniature railroad facility.

New members are always welcome to join the club; just show up at Wilson Park, 2100 Washington Street, on run day (the first Sunday of the month) or at a regular meeting (the third Sunday of the month). Member support is especially needed on run day! The September run day is **September 6, 2009**, so please come and support the club.

Regular meetings of the club are held on the third regular Saturday of each month in the club house at Wilson Park, Torrance, California beginning at 10:30 AM. The next club meeting will be **September 19, 2009**.

## 2009 SCLS Officers:

President:	Tim Brothers (310) 618 - 0674 TTBrothe@lasd.org
Vice President:	Rudy Guajardo (310) 984 - 9550 xcitedgoats@yahoo.com
Treasurer:	Kelley Smith (562) 598 - 4090 choochookelley@earthlink.net
Secretary:	Lynn Fielding (310) 533 - 8627 lfielding@elcamino.edu

## August 15, 2009 Minutes

The meeting opened at 10:45 AM by President Tim Brothers. Minutes from July were published in the August newsletter and approved with no corrections.

Guests present: none.

## Old Business

### Club Engines and Safety

The Atlantic is currently being worked on by several members, Tom Downinf is presently working on an engine. Last run day members worked well together during the derailment. Junior members must always operate under adult supervision.

## New Business

### The 300,000<sup>th</sup> Rider

On Saturday, August 15, 2009, the Southern California Live Steamers will celebrate the 300,000<sup>th</sup> rider. The 100,000<sup>th</sup> rider happened on November 1997 and the 200,000<sup>th</sup> rider occurred on July 2005.

### Container Project

The container area construction project is moving forward due to donations by members.

### Photographic Inventory

Bob Bryant suggested that the Club make a photographic inventory of Club holdings.

### Video Display at the Station

Mark Jordan suggested having a video running for riders to watch in the station while they are waiting to ride. Bob Bryan motion to accept this request. Heather Ambler seconded. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 PM. There were 21 members present at the meeting.



Run Day - **August 2, 2009**  
2,264 Riders

It was a clear and sunny day with a cool breeze developing from the west in the afternoon. The monthly visitors as well as the first time visitors enjoyed their August train ride.



## Of Interest:

### 2009 Election of Officers

The election of Southern California Live Steamers officers for 2009 will take place at the October Business Meeting which will be held on October 17, 2009.

## Another Early Club Member

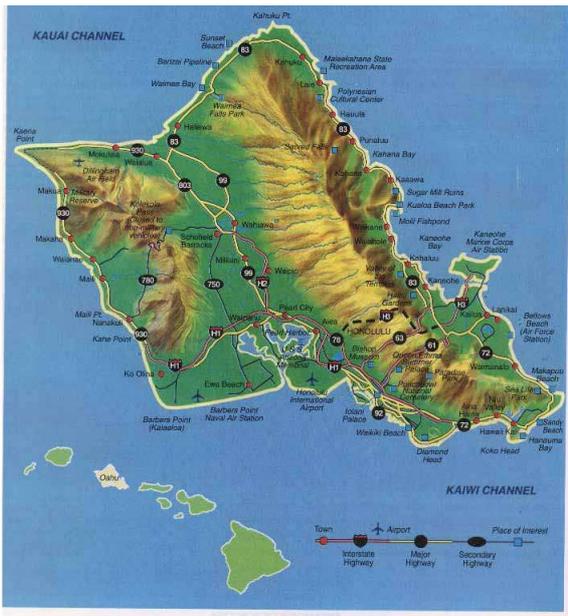
By Harlan Hiney

Gerald M. Best (1895 – 1985) grew up in Port Jervis, New York, and was a Cornell Graduate in Electrical Engineering. He worked for Warner Brothers as a sound engineer beginning his career just as talking movies were being introduced.

Jerry, as his friends called him, was a member of the Southern California Live Steamers during the early 1950's. A resident of Beverly Hills, he and his wife, Harriet, lived 7 blocks east of his good friend Dick Jackson. Besides the fact that both of these men were involved with railroad history, they both shared an interest in collecting steam locomotive builder's plates. Their collections were extensive and were finished to museum quality. Although Jerry did build some miniature railroad equipment, most people were more familiar with his full size sugar cane locomotive, the "Olomana".



This photograph shows the "Olomana" under steam on the Waimanalo Sugar Company track at the southeast part of Oahu, doing what she was built to do. She hauled cars of sugar cane from 1883 to 1948. Photograph provided from the Dick Jackson collection.

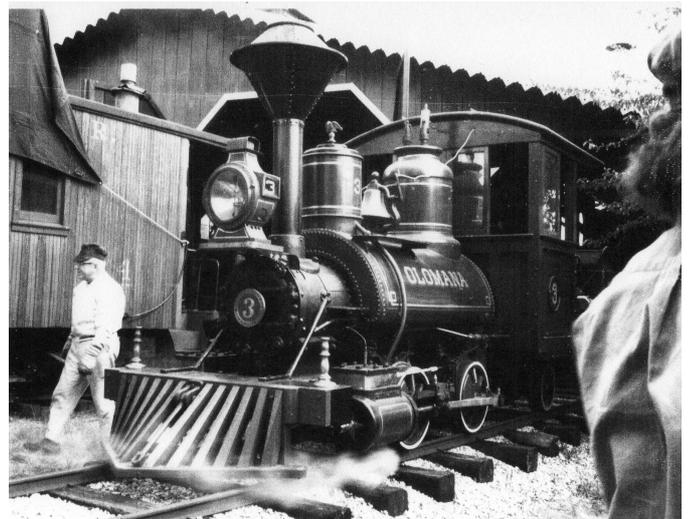


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In 1948, Jerry and fellow club member Ward Kimball purchased two 3 foot gauge, nine ton, tank locomotives from the Waimanalo Sugar Company in Oahu when the Hawaiian sugar plantation stopped using steam engines. Both were built by Baldwin in 1883 to the same specifications. Jerry's engine was construction number 6753. They had 24 inch drivers, 7 by 10 inch cylinders and were 0-4-2T Saddle Tank Engines with no rear bunkers for fuel. With only short distances to run, the fuel was stored on the fireman's side of the cab. Ward's locomotive was Number 2, the "Pokaa" (Poh-kah-ah), while Jerry's was Number 3. The name "Olomana" means "The Big Noise" in Hawaiian.



Friend Chad O'Connor helped to rebuild Jerry's engine and he kept it at Ward's Grizzly Flats Railroad engine shed in San Gabriel, California. He would fire up the "Olomana" on Grizzly Flats run days, filling the air with the smell of wood smoke. Ward's "Pokaa" underwent a more drastic change in appearance than Jerry's, with the removal of the saddle tank and being painted in 1880's red and fancy polished brass, while "Olomana" sported a more conservative dark green color. Ward's locomotive became the "Chloe", named after his youngest daughter.



Jerry Best Walks behind "Olomana" after pulling her out of Ward Kimball's engine house for a run day in 1969. A tarp covers the cupola on Ward's caboose in background. Photograph taken by Harlan Hiney.

Jerry was one of the foremost railroad photographers and helped many authors compile steam locomotive rosters for their books and magazine articles. Also an author, Jerry wrote eleven books on railroad history and Harlan Hiney was fortunate to do artwork for four of them. The first was in 1963 and was a pencil drawing for "Ships and Narrow Gauge Rails", about the Pacific Coast Railroad and Steamship Company. In 1969 Harlan did a casein painting of the "Jupiter" for the cover of his book *Iron Horses to Promontory*, portraying Stanford's train enroute to the Golden Spike celebration. Jerry was considered by many to be the foremost authority regarding the color scheme of the Gold Spike Locomotives, enabling the creation of an historically accurate painting.



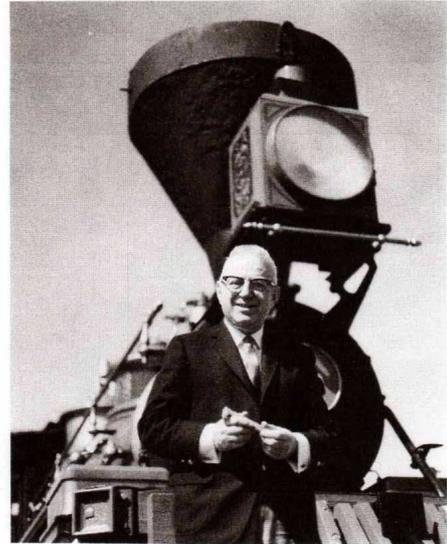
Photograph courtesy of [www.nps.gov/gosp](http://www.nps.gov/gosp).

A year later Jerry suggested that Harlan create a painting of the Union Pacific Number 119 to make a pair of lithographs to sell. By 1970, Harlan's 24 by 36 inch oil painting of the Number 119 along with the painting of the Jupiter were made into 12 by 16 prints. They were sold though out the United States in the 1970's and at the new Museum in Promontory, Utah.



Photograph courtesy of [www.nps.gov/gosp](http://www.nps.gov/gosp).

In the early 1970's, men from Disney's mechanical department took measurements of "Olomana" for a new railroad to run at Disney World's Fort Wilderness Campground Resort. While the new locomotive would be somewhat different than Jerry's, the cylinders and running gear would be identical. As Jerry told Harlan, they just sliced six inches out of the center and made them to run on 30 inch gauge track. By 1973, Disney had completed four 2-4-2T locomotives with a squared off saddle tank for more water capacity. Each engine would pull a 5 car train of 4 wheel open sided cars over a 3 ½ mile line. Unfortunately this venture had too many problems, and after only four years was discontinued in 1977.



*Gerald M. Best*

Gerald M. Best is a name well known in the blue book of railroad historians. On the basis of his locomotive research, books and personal participation in the great tradition of steam railroading, Best has long been considered one of the nation's leading authorities on the steam locomotive.

Gerald Best holds a replica of the Golden Spike in front of the ex V and T locomotive "Inyo" that was painted to portray the "Jupiter", as part of Union Pacific's exposition train in May of 1969. This photograph was used on his book jacket, *Iron Horses to Promontory*. Photograph provided by Golden West Books.

During the same year, Jerry, then 82, decided to donate "Olomana" to a museum. Her home is now the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. Before Jerry's death in 1985, his extensive collection of photographs, which included over 40,000 negatives, was donated to the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento.



Photograph from the Smithsonian Museum's account of *Moving Olomana* located at: [americanhistory.si.edu/collections/locomove/locomo.htm](http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/locomove/locomo.htm)

**Of Interest:**  
**Jean Fowler's Memorial Bench**



On August 22, 2009, the dedication of Jean Fowler's Bench took place at the South Coast Botanical Gardens. Jean's Bench overlooks the rose garden in which she loved and enjoyed working as a docent for many years.



The family held a picnic after the visit to the rose garden and "bench warming" and shared camaraderie and fond memories of Jean. Photographs taken by Lynn Fielding.



# Upcoming Club Events

Run Day September 6, 2009  
 Business Meeting September 19, 2009  
 and Mini Run Day

Run Day October 4, 2009  
 Business Meeting October 17, 2009  
 and Mini Run Day

# Comments, Ideas, or Suggestions

*As newsletter editor, I welcome your feedback, comments, corrections, and suggestions for material to include. Please contact me directly, at the address provided, by phone, or by e-mail.*

Lynn

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Steamers, keep on chugging along!

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



# Happy Labor Day!

