

## Joseph Nelson – An Engineer’s Engineer

By Diana Manchester

You may have noticed the name “Nelson” at the Club – most notably on one of our three tunnels that connect the East and West divisions. And more discreetly – “Nelson Summit” – printed on a small sign on the Mountain Division where the bridge and watermill meet. Who was Mr. Nelson and why was he honored?

Joseph Foster Nelson is best known for his book, “So You Want to Build a Live Steam Locomotive”, published in 1974. Village Press claims it is the “most popular live steam railroading book ever written.” Initially started in 1966 as a series of articles for the LALS Booster newsletter, the very comprehensive “how-to” guide was scooped (with permission by Joe and the Club) by “Live Steam Magazine” editor, William Fitt. The series became a regular feature of the newly-launched publication, appearing first in

1966 and spanning six years.

Many of the book’s articles were written by Joe, and others by live steam modelers from our Club. These down-to-earth articles were eagerly anticipated by subscribers at a time in America when written guidelines on live steam modeling were scarce. The book contains 161 pages, 324 drawings, 84 photos and 26 tables. Our own Jim Kreider took the photo used on the front cover. Chapter titles include: “Tools Required to Build a Live Steam Locomotive,” “The Boiler: Safety First, Last and Always,” and “Fuel and Combustion.” We have a copy in our Library, and the book is still available for purchase online from Village Press and Amazon.

### From steam to sea to air to schoolroom

Joe was practically born into steam, with both sides of his family involved in

(Continued on page 5)

## Charles Phoenix Signs Book at Barn

By Carolyn Hoagland

Public Day at Walt’s Barn, March 18th brought showman, tour guide, and food crafter, Charles Phoenix to visit and sign copies of his newest book, “Addicted to Americana”. The book focuses on the pop culture of the 1950-1960’s. Charles loves all kitschy Americana things, especially cars and diners. You can experience his shows and guest appearances on YouTube and on his Facebook page: [facebook.com/charlesphoenix.usa/](https://www.facebook.com/charlesphoenix.usa/)

The Barn was quite busy that day and many came in Americana-inspired clothing to say hi to Charles. At noon he gave a short presentation, reading from his book and telling stories about his childhood. He recalled growing up on his father’s used car lot: his first sentence was, “What type of car is that?” He also shared memories of going to Disneyland during his childhood.

As usual Bob Gurr (retired designer of Disney amusement rides) arrived with his tour group of about 40 people. He enjoyed meeting Charles. Margaret Kerry (model for Disney’s Tinker Belle) showed up with her book and was seen flitting around chatting with guests.

## Public Service

### March

25 Public Rides

### April

1 Public Rides/*Easter*

8 Public Rides

15 Public Rides; Disney Barn Open/Steam Plant operating

22, 29 Public Rides

# SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

By Christie Edinger, Secretary



March 2018

The Board of Director met on March 5.

**Party requests:** Approved: Ron Bergman, April 14, 50 guests; Mark Vreeken and Peter Bowen, May 11-12 (overnight event) for 35 Boy Scouts and fathers.

**Budgets:** Tim Lagaly reported on budgets. Budgets are the same as last year except for additional projects including electrical upgrade, O'Brien Moore Bridge painting, UP caboose remodeling and for technology. Board approval is required for all expenditures other than maintenance issues, even if an expenditure is within the approved budget.

**Membership:** Wayne Crabb reported that Ryan Hechinger completed his probation and is now a full member. Wayne introduced new probationary member Don Donaldson.

**Tickets:** The Board approved no longer having separate child and adult tickets since prices are the same. We will also move ticket sales to the other window which should work better. Fred Lack will consult with Robert Guzman about building a display cart for souvenirs.

**Rail and Road Event:** Diana reported on the Rail and Road event coming April 29. Several car clubs will be displaying vehicles. New groups include Western Antique Power Associates which should be a good fit for us. They have stationary engines, old tractors and Farm Machinery. Walt Disney Barn will be open that day. Terry will be making Steam Cream and will need a few helpers. The kitchen will serve a simplified menu. We need kitchen helpers, docents and parking coordinators.

**Superintendent:** Ted Merchant is building 3 10-ft. steel flat cars in his garage for maintenance use. He will fabricate hampers that will sit on the stake beds that will hold leaves and be easy to dump.

**Committee Assignments:** Committee assignments were approved and posted on the bulletin board in the kitchen.

**Ghost Train:** The Board approved additional money to Show Development for more than expected 2017 Ghost Train clean up.

The Ghost Train committee had its first meeting in February to discuss matters. The 10 nights of running have been selected: October 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 30 and 31. The committee discussed pre-sale and preferential ticketing issues. Family and friends will be limited to 10 tickets per member. There will be another Ghost Train committee in April.

Miles emphasized the need for volunteer help during setup and tear down.

**New Club-Owned Riding Cars:** Miles Kristman reported on converting two club-owned gondolas to engineer riding cars with draw-bars and compressors.

**Ludwig Projects:** Peter noted the need to submit the first progress report due April 30 to the Ludwig Family Trust on the projects they agreed to fund. Projects include the O'Brien-Moore Bridge, the new electrical drop and UP caboose refurbishing. We already have the forklift that was listed in the grant.

The Smith Valley Line must be made usable prior to the bridge painting so we can continue public rides to the west end.

**Other:** The Garden Railway reports they need new transformers, and will provide an estimate. Members going to Train Mountain this summer can check out new electric locomotives for possible purchase by the Club.

Miles reported on the new security camera monitor which shows all existing cameras.

The Board approved the purchase of souvenir wood train whistles for sale at the souvenir stand.

The Club's Santa Fe electric locomotive awaiting replacement parts from England. The train should be available for Halloween. The UP locomotive being worked on by David Holman is coming along nicely and will be ready for testing soon.

Steam Day was a big success and will be held again next year.

## President's Message



By Peter Fuad, President

We appear to be operating on all cylinders. A number of projects are being developed so the Board can consider them. Volunteers are helping out (see page 8). With the massive rainfall this week, I expect we will need further help in cleaning up the premises.

We are having issues with buses dropping off crowds at the Disney Barn. They are not crossing our track safely. We will address that at our next Board meeting.

A note that Martha Figueroa, our tireless and indispensable member, will be undergoing major surgery in early April and will be out for an extended period of time. She has resigned from the Board. Our bylaws provide that the member who had the next highest vote count will take her place, and that is Andrew LaGaly, who has agreed to come on the Board. Our prayers and best wishes go out to Martha, Garibalde, Ronald and the rest of her family.

Jay and Roger Bacon are also recovering from major surgery. Our best to all for speedy recoveries!

Peter asked that during Sunday public running trains don't linger in the station. The recorded safety announcement should be played frequently, eliminating the need for conductors to repeat the instructions. Conductors need only make sure passengers are seated safely.

Ted Merchant will have the chain link fence west of the Nelson Tunnel between the container and track removed as a maintenance chore since it serves no purpose.



Left: Bear Mustoe takes out a train of public guests shortly after he received his engineer’s certification. Above: Scott and Carolyn Hoagland meet “Ambassador of Americana,” Chares Phoenix with his new book at Walt’s Barn on Sunday, March 18.



## FOR SALE

### 1-1/2” Scale Nickel Plate Berkshire

This engine is owned by Gil Beard and has been seen quite frequently at the Los Angeles, Riverside, and Sacramento live steam clubs. It was completed in 2005.

All of the parts were provided by Jim Kreider except the tender frame, which is fabricated instead of the one-piece casting. It has the Kreider conical boiler and tender tank.

- Oil fired with Bagley burner
- Dave Moore Power Reverse and Worthington feedwater
- SuperScale injectors and safety valves in addition to valves and fittings

It is a great runner as can be verified by the many people who have run it over the years.

The locomotive currently resides at the Riverside Live Steamers and can be fired up and run for serious inquiries.

Contact Jim Kreider @ 909-307-2311 or Gil Beard @ 530-320-0687 for more information.

## Under the Weather

These members have had surgery. We send our best wishes for their full recovery. If you think of it, give them a call or send a card or text.

As some of you may know Jay and Adrienne Carsman moved to Solvang last June. While setting up his new shop Jay injured his spine attempting to lift a heavy machining vise, and required surgery. Unfortunately a serious infection set in, deteriorating bone and damaging the nerves to his hips, legs and feet. Antibiotics were ineffective. Surgeons at Cedars-Sinai Spine Center were able to treat the infection and reconstruct the vertebrae. Extensive therapy was started here in LA, and will continue at their home in Solvang. Jay is facing a long time of healing and rebuilding. He is very grateful for the support he has received. He writes, "I miss all my wonderful LALSRM friends very much. When I am able, I will surely visit our Club." Jay said to tell every one to take care of your bodies and be advocates for your own health.

Roger Bacon visited the Club on Sunday after a long absence. Three months ago he had kidney surgery and is still on the mend.



"Railroad Gothic" Roderick Fritz and Bill Schirmer take a pause from working in the tool shed which they just cleaned out. (Christie Edinger photo)

## Power Washing RR Crossings

Jeremy Steinert assisted probationary members Scott (dad) and Matt Carlin with cleaning out the dirt, leaves, and other debris that fills in between the rails and the plastic planks that we use in the crossing areas to protect the rails from vehicle tires.

These are the gaps where the flanges go when a train crosses a crossing. Those regions are particularly prone to building up material that then holds rainwater against the rails, rapidly eating away at the rail footer. Using the Club's power washer, they cleaned the crossings on both sides of the inner parking lot, as well as Sutchville station, and the crossing near the Disney Barn (where the photo was taken). They'll tackle the other sections of track on a different day, as they started to get rained out on March 10 (ironic, given the water spray from the washer).



A promotional graphic for the "5th Annual Rail &amp; Road Event" held on Sunday, April 29. The image features several classic cars, including a prominent green Volkswagen Beetle with its hood open. A black banner with yellow text says "SAVE THE DATE!". In the bottom right corner, there is a circular logo for the "LOS ANGELES LIVE STEAMERS RAILROAD MUSEUM" featuring a steam locomotive.

Calling all vintage and classic cars, trucks, motorcycles, trains, and collectibles to gather again for LALSRM's 5th Annual R&R Event the last Sunday in April.

Plan to bring your restored classic vehicle or collectibles, and/or run your trains (all scales). Gauge 1 will be running and Walt's Barn will be open. Terry Spahr plans to whip up butter pecan "Steam Cream" and will need a hand.



Volunteers are also needed:

- Kountry Kitchen Food Prep and Cashiers
- Gate Managers • Parking Coordinators
- Dedicated Trains, Engineers & Conductors
- Tour Hosts • Setup & take down

Please contact Event coordinator Diana Manchester (626) 222-7499 or dm.ad@verizon.net to reserve display space or volunteer.

# Joseph Nelson – An Engineer’s Engineer

(Continued from page 1)

the industry. His father, grandfather and three uncles were railroad men with the Pennsylvania Railroad. His mother’s brother built locomotives for 40 years at Baldwin Locomotive Works. As a boy his one ambition was to be a locomotive engineer. But his life path took a circuitous route across land, sea and air until he returned to his first passion.

Joe studied engineering in high school and junior college, and worked as a machinist mechanic in the luxury automobile industry. He earned his Ocean Marine Engineer’s license during a four-year stint on the high seas, came ashore and became proficient in truck brake, high vacuum, and pump design and manufacture. He taught in the Fremont High School machine shop class while attending college at UCLA and UC. When World War II intervened, he joined the Air Force as an officer and received technical training in aviation. He taught the Engineering and Practical Maintenance courses of the B-17, B-24, and B-25 to pilots. After the War, he worked as a senior mechanical design engineer, building radar equipment for the military. At night he taught advanced machine shop and toolmaking at LA Trade Tech evening school until he retired in 1964.

## Return to his railroading roots

In 1954 Joe got interested in live steam and built his first locomotive, a 1” scale PRR K-4s in 24 months. Later he built a Pennsy D-16a class 4-4-0, and express, mail, baggage, and combination cars.

Before joining LALS, Joe was an active member in the Southern California Live Steamers, from which some of our founding members came. He joined SCLS in 1955, and served as Vice President, President, and Chief Inspector, maintaining that membership until 1985. He joined LALS in the mid-1960’s and was elected Vice President in 1967. He also served as Membership Chair and Boiler Inspector.

Joe had found the satisfaction he was seeking. He wrote, “To many of us in our youth, the locomotive engineer in the cab of his locomotive was absolutely the top of the universe... But as the best of plans oft times go astray, we get sidetracked into other lines of endeavor. Later, when HO became popular, I joined the ranks of other frustrated “would-be engineers” and built my own layout.... Live steam locomotive building and owning is a means by which

the frustrated “would-be engineer” can become unfrustrated by having his own steam locomotive.”

Joe helped countless live steam modelers in their construction projects. Not only did his vast knowledge of the subject and years of experience earn him a place of respect in the hobby, but also his heartfelt desire to assist anyone who truly wanted to learn. Members who knew him said Joe was a walking encyclopedia, “but only offered his knowledge if you were willing to listen” (Larry Fisher). Matt Swain said, “Joe is one of those guys that comes to mind when I realize that I should have listened more and talked less.”

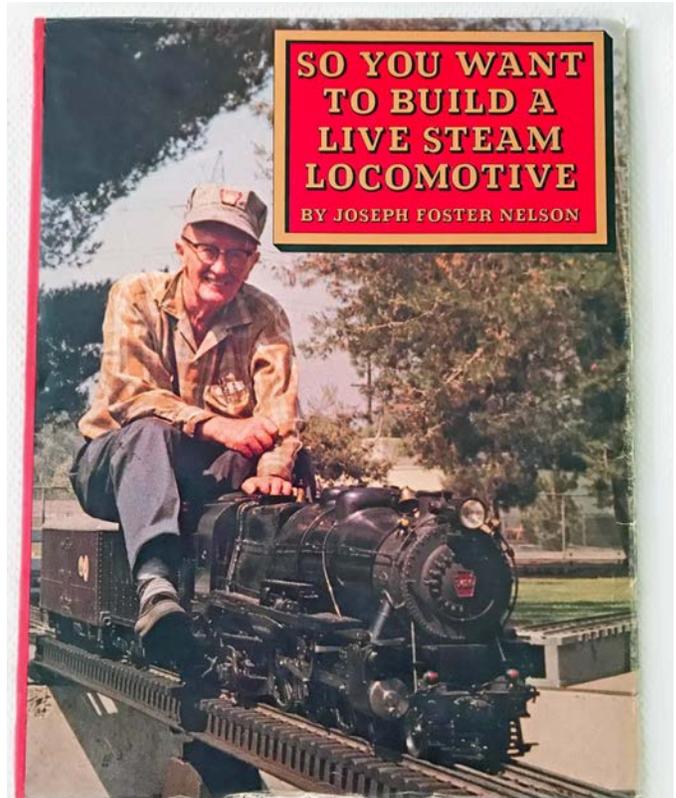
## A mentor and friend to many in the hobby

Longtime members at the Club recall him being rather rigid — “you can’t join until you have an engine or at least are building one.” But he would come around when he saw that a young railroader was respecting the equipment and diligently learning the ropes. Some of the young members he has- sled in their early years became very good friends of his later.

In the 1975 Rooster he is listed as an Honorary Member. Brian Ratliff remarked, “You don’t make it to that level without some [serious] input.” Jim Kreider affirms that Joe’s name was given to the tunnel and summit in recognition of his many contributions to the Club and live steam hobby.

By the 1980’s Joe began experiencing health issues and he passed in 1986.

Services and burial, with our members as pallbearers, were held at Forest Lawn, Hollywood Hills — just a short distance from the people and place where his locomotive engineering dreams had finally come full circle.



▲ Cover of Joe’s 1974 book “So You Want to Build a Live Steam Locomotive.” ▼ Joe Nelson on his PRR K-4s in 1971.



# Trains and Christmas Go Together – Part 2

By Diana Manchester

Another LALS RM member who got a train for Christmas is Tristan Fritz. Santa brought a refurbished 7.5" gauge speeder and trailer (A and B unit) all the way from Nacogdoches, Texas. Tristan and his father Roderick showed up at the Club the day the delivery was due and waited and waited, but no speeder. It was finally discovered at a loading dock at the LA Zoo. With some help from Mel Bresee and a kindly Zoo forklift operator, the errant crate was loaded into Mel's pickup truck and brought to its rightful destination at the Club. Don Kallgren assisted Mel, Tristan, and Roderick with the unloading, and with uncrating the heavier A unit, which contains the two deep-cycle batteries.

Roderick and Tristan found the speeder and trailer via the online "Discover Live Steam" sale page. It had been built by Thomas Artzberger, and was refurbished by seller Ron Canfield (Windy Ridge RR) after years of enjoyment by a live steamer family. It got a new 4QD controller, which is a 24-volt regenerative recharge/braking system, and was completely rewired by J&S Railcar. It is powered by two AGM (absorbent glass mat) gel batteries. It has a hand-held controller, digital voltage read-out, manual brakes, rear coupler, L.E.D. light, and a horn. The speeder and trailer are powered by a vertical gearhead motor. The speeder can operate without the trailer by disconnecting the power pole connector and the drawbar.

## Ready to roll

Tristan taught himself the switch system at the Club by manually pushing a riding car around the tracks and trying out the different functions. As a result, he had a solid understanding of the track and sidings by the time his speeder arrived. "He knows the track better than I do," says Roderick.

## From model trains to live steam

Roderick shares, "We were familiar with LALS but didn't know you could join. I had come here for train rides in

1968-69 as a young boy." Tristan liked trains from a very early age and had model trains at home, so Sunday visits to LALS RM became a family thing once he was big enough to ride. Tristan was constantly thinking of how he and his dad could build a live steam railroad in the backyard. "Let's go to LA Live Steamers and find out how we can do this," he would say. Roderick knew the subject would get no rest, so one Sunday in late March 2017, he and Tristan drove over to the Club. They met Wayne Crabb who was Stationmaster, got a tour, learned about membership, and ended up joining the Club that day. With an attitude of joining in and working, Roderick has finished his probationary hours and Tristan has only a few more hours to go. Tristan has a garden-scale train, which he had been running on the Club's G-scale layout. He now enjoys powering up his speeder, adding a riding car or two, and treating family and friends to rides. Someday he hopes to graduate to an EMD F-7 diesel locomotive with a Santa Fe paint scheme.



Above: Tristan Fritz and Diana Manchester on Tristan's speeder. Below: Tristan and Dad Roderick unpack the speeder. (Glen and Diana Manchester photos)



# Who's been Working on the Railroad

Joseph Clow	Les Kovaks
Jay Hawver	Jim Baker
Lucas Hawver	Tom Lang
Larry Tighe	Jeremy Steinert
Jack Streit	Roderick Fritz
Matt McGinnis	Tristan Fritz
Luke McGinnis	Bill Schirmer
Karl Strauss	Diana Manchester
Steve Sauber	Glen Manchester
Don Kallgren	Christie Edinger
Stevo Brock	Doug Young
Charles Rhoades	Tracy Snow
Mel Bresee	Les Kovacs
Mark Vreeken	Miles Kristman
Scott Hoagland	Peter Fuad
Dave Clark	Ted Merchant
Ted Merchant	Aaron Emmer



## Renew Your Membership!

Don't forget to renew your membership! Remember there is a penalty of \$25 if you pay after April 1. You also may not be listed in the Roster.

Even if you owe no dues, please send the form back anyway so we know we are up to date with your information.

Contact Wilbur Dong or Diana Manchester with any questions.



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Associate Editors—Diana Manchester, Christie Edinger  
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# SUNDAY EXTRA BOARD

February

Engineers		Conductors	
Tom Harwood	Francis Barnes	Bob Quinn	Will Walker
Paul Liu	Mel Bresee	Andy Blake	Darrell Payne
Greg Pschaida	Bear Mustoe	Scott Carlin	Roderick Fritz
Jeremy Steinert	Andrew Chaves	Bear Mustoe	Ryan Hechinger
Bill Walker	Christie Edinger	Tristan Fritz	Robin Walsh
Brian Webster	Peter Fuad	Nels Nelsen	Seamus Walsh
Mark Vreeken	Mel Bresee	Ron Nelsen	Vincent Whiteley
	Harrison Hitchcock	Greg Pschaida	Jack Streit

Locos		Ridership and Max Temps		
City of LA—Fuad	SP 2468—	February 4	633	82°
SP PA1—LALSRM	LALSRM	February 11	509	73°
ATSF 940—Bresee	#8—LALSRM	February 18	1005	67°
CSRR #73-Edinger		February 25	914	68°

**Safety Coordinators** - Doug Young, Ron Hitchcock, Wayne Crabb

**Souvenirs and Tickets** - Jack Streit., George Becker, Brenda Garcia

**Station Masters** - Wayne Crabb, Roderick Fritz, Ted Naimy, Larry Mitchell, Joe Crow, Mark Vreeken, Matt McGinnis, Bear Mustoe, Bill Walker

February 2018 — 3,061

Total 2018 — 6,110

Total 2017 — 4,794

## Member Schedule

### March

25 Public Rides

### April

1 Annual Dues Past Due/add \$25

1 Public Rides/*Easter*

2 BOD Meeting 7:00 p.m.

8 Public Rides

15 Public Rides; Disney Barn Open/Steam Plant operating/ Small Scale Sunday

21 Work Day/General Meeting

22 Public Rides

29 Public Rides/Rail & Road Event (Car Show)

30 Shed Credit Earning Period



## Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum

In Griffith Park  
5202 Zoo Dr., Los Angeles, California  
Mailing Address—PO Box 2156,  
Toluca Lake, CA 91610  
Phone (323) 661-8958

Website - [www.lals.org](http://www.lals.org)

### 2018

#### Officers and Directors

<b>President</b>	Peter Fuad
<b>Vice President</b>	Doug Young
<b>Secretary</b>	Christie Edinger
<b>Treasurer</b>	Fred Lack

#### Directors

Wayne Crabb	Christie Edinger
John Garcia	Peter Fuad
Andrew LaGaly	Fred Lack
Diana Manchester	Doug Young



**Minden-Hillside Cleanup** Robin and Seamus Walsh and their two boys jumped in on March Work Day to clean up landslides, debris and buildings in the small town of Minden. Working with miniatures is a specialty of this family.



**Signal Crew Repairs Signals** Left to right: Wayne Crabb, Mark Vreeken, Stevo Brock (kneeling) and Charles Rhoades.

**Replacing rail at crossing to inner parking lot** Due to poor drainage, the base of the rails in the crossing had rusted away, leaving the rails untethered. Left to right: Bill Walker, Doug Young, Miles Kristman and Bill Schirmer do the repairs. ***Inset below:*** Miles drills screws into the tie plate.



**Spring Has Arrived!**  
Magnolias in front of our Meeting Car.  
*All photos this page by Christie Edinger.*



## From the SUPER



By  
Ted  
Merchant

### Hello Train-Fans!

We are initiating several projects around the Club and need all the volunteer help we can get:

The electrical supply to the light pole between the Richardson and Alkire Sheds must be restored. This will allow us to mount a new light source in the pine tree opposite the steps leading up to the Mountain Route. I can use feedback from anyone aware of the electrical grid that once fed this area. The help of members that like to dig trenches and work with 110-volt current will also be appreciated. Email is the best way to reach me.

The West End water supply is unregulated, delivering 135 psi to our newly restored sprinkler valves. This is harmful to the new sprinkler system and needs to be corrected, probably by a professional since it involves a two-inch pipe. Feedback from anyone familiar with the water sources in this area will be important. We can use the skills of an in-house professional plumber if one exists, otherwise we will need to pay for it. The cost should be well worth it considering the hard work our irrigation team has directed toward this area. Please send me an email if you are willing to work on this project.

We are removing the fence between the new olive-green storage container and the main line west of the tunnels. This will require dismantling the fence with wrenches and bolt cutters then removing the posts with the tractor. Anyone interested in joining me,

any day, are invited to send me an email.

Lastly, we need to repair the border fence that was dismantled to place the new storage container west of the tunnels. That will be more than a day's effort. Anyone interested in helping or leading that project can contact me any time.

Once again, we thank the many members who have come out and helped on these projects every day of the week. We do our best to name them in "Who's Been Working on the Railroad", but I'm sure we, regretfully, miss many of you. Please be sure to thank these people when you see them at the Club.

And that's the way it is. Work hard, have fun and never lose your steam. Your feedback is always welcome.

EdwardBMerchant@gmail.com

**Large photo below:** Christie and Dinger Belle haul guests on the west end. **Inset photo:** Les, Doug, Aaron and Tracy prep and paint the green storage container on the west end just beyond Nelson tunnel.

