

# *SAGEBRUSH* HEADLIGHT

VOL. 19, NO. 1, 74th Edit.      NEWSLETTER OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

WINTER 1998



*Nevada Copper Belt Locomotive No. 5 and train in the canyon, December 4, 1946. Al Phelps Collection, Nevada State Railroad Museum.*

## AROUND THE MUSEUM

The Railroad Museum is pleased to introduce two new staff members; Dan Thielen, Curator of Education, and Dirk C. Davis, Program Coordinator.

Dan was born and raised in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and is the fourth of six children. An enlistment in the United States Navy introduced him to Katherine

Taber of Riverside, California. After a brief (5 year) long distance courtship they were married in Los Angeles in 1988.

Dan received his Bachelors degree in Secondary Education from Utah State University in 1993. After some teaching experience Dan returned to Utah State

University to complete a Masters Degree at the Ronald V. Jensen Living Historical Farm in Logan, Utah. Dan's work included the restoration, operation, and interpretation of a Case 1911 Traction Engine.

Dan and Katherine reside in Carson

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

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#### NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

2180 South Carson St.  
 Carson City, NV 89701  
 (702) 687-6953

Open Daily 8:30 to 4:30  
 Admission \$2  
 Children under 18 FREE

The *Sagebrush Headlight* is  
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*Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge, Kearsarge, California, August 18, 1939.  
 Photograph from the Al Phelps Collection, Nevada State Railroad Museum.*

### NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM 1998 REVISED OPERATING SCHEDULE

#### STEAM UPS

May 16 (Saturday) .....	Armed Forces Day
May 23, 24 & 25 (Saturday, Sunday & Monday) .....	Memorial Day Weekend
June 20 & 21 (Saturday & Sunday) .....	Father's Day Weekend
July 3, 4 & 5 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) .....	Fourth of July Weekend
July 18 & 19 (Saturday & Sunday) .....	
August 1 & 2 (Saturday & Sunday) .....	
August 15 & 16 (Saturday & Sunday) .....	
September 5, 6 & 7 (Saturday, Sunday & Monday) .....	Labor Day Weekend
September 26 & 27 (Saturday & Sunday) .....	Symposium Weekend
October 31 (Saturday) .....	Nevada Day
December 12 & 13 (Saturday & Sunday) .....	Santa Train

Steam Train operates 10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
 Fares: Adults, \$2.50, Children 6-11, \$1.00, 5 and under FREE

#### MOTOR CAR

**May:** Saturday & Sunday 12:00 - 4:00  
**Memorial Day - Labor Day:** Friday, Sat. & Sunday 10:00 - 4:00  
 (except during steam ups)  
**September:** Saturday & Sunday 12:00 - 4:00  
 Fares: Adults, \$1.00, Children 6-11, .50, 5 and under FREE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends-

*I have often used this space to comment on the volunteers. As a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the Museum, these people are very important to the Friends and the Museum. The Museum recently held the annual volunteer recognition reception. It's during these events we find out how much of an impact volunteers make. And this year had some amazing facts! Membership is at an all time high. 14% of the membership are active volunteers. And the number of hours volunteered increased 29% over the previous year. These are incredible figures that make me proud of our members and volunteers. To every one of you that has donated your time and talents I say thank you. It's because of all of you that the Nevada State Railroad Museum has grown into what it is today. And, as a volunteer myself, thank you to the Museum for giving us all a chance to participate and help.*

*As the days get warmer, another operating season is coming up soon. That means more opportunities to volunteer. We'll need crew for steam train and motor car operations, as well as museum services. Even with the increases we've seen, there's more work to be done. If you have the time and interest, we can use your help. Contact the museum or myself for more information.*

*Thanks for your continued support.*

- Joe Torsitano, President

*Joe Torsitano is on the Internet. His e-mail address is: joert@bigfoot.com*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 15 - July 10, 1998**

"Industrial Archaeology"  
Photography Exhibit  
by Jim Galli

**May 2, 1998**

Motor Car Operating  
Season Begins

**May 9, 1998**

Porsche Club Car Show  
Gibson Park  
FREE

**May 13, 1998**

Wednesday Evening Program  
"Industrial Archaeology in Nevada"  
Jim Galli and Kelly Dixon  
7:00 PM  
FREE

**May 16, 1998**

Armed Forces Day Steam-up

**June 4, 1998**

Friends Board Meeting  
6:00 PM

**September 25-27, 1998**

28th V&T Railroad  
History Symposium

## Around the Museum

*Continued from page 1*

City with their boys, Patrick, Joshua and Adam, and Mrs. Lyman the cat.

Dirk C. Davis was born in Chicago, grew up in New Mexico, and came to Nevada via Southern California. He's a 20-year travel industry veteran, and spent a significant amount of time during those years as a volunteer at the Cunningham Auto Museum in California and most recently as a volunteer coordinator at the National Automobile Museum in Reno. Dirk graduated from Cal Poly University Pomona.

### In The Restoration Shop

Restoration nears completion on V&T locomotive No. 27. The new jacket is mounted on the boiler, the domes are

- Continued on page 4

The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum are proud to announce the publication of

### "Virginia & Truckee Railway McKeen Motor Car No. 22 Restoration Feasibility Investigation"

By Stephen E. Drew

This fully illustrated 124-page report is the most comprehensive document compiled to date on the McKeen Motor Car Company and the V&T McKeen Motor Car No. 22.

\$39.95 plus \$3.00 shipping

Friends members receive a 15% discount

All proceeds support the restoration of the V&T McKeen Motor Car

## Around the Museum

*Continued from page 3*

installed, and the running boards are up. Plumbing for the injectors is in place, most of the locomotive brake rigging is now installed and the rods are back in place. Only a few minor parts need to be installed and the locomotive will be ready for final paint and lettering. The Museum is planning to hold a reception to celebrate the restoration of V&T No. 27, announcements will be mailed out to all members.

In addition to the ongoing restoration work on No. 27, new tires have been ordered for locomotive No. 8. Restoration Specialist Rick Stiver fabricated a "ring of fire" that allowed the old tires to be heated and removed. The new tires should be installed in time for the seasons first steam up on May 16.

### Summer Steam Operations

Please note the 1998 steam operating schedule on page two of this issue. The most significant change is the annual V&T Symposium which will be held in September instead of the traditional October.

### Behind the Scenes

Through the generous financial support of the *Friends*, the Nevada State Railroad Museum has acquired a collection of 388 medium format negatives from the collection of Al Phelps. This is the portion of his extensive collection that covers Nevada railroads. Included are spectacular images of the Nevada Northern, Nevada Copper Belt, V&T, Nevada Central, and others.

### Volunteer Reception

The annual volunteer appreciation reception was held February 27 in the Interpretive Center. Over 100 people

attended the event, enjoying the excellent catering from John Hurzel and Grandma Hatties Restaurant. Remarks were made and thanks were given by Department Director Joan Kerschner and Museums Administrator Scott Miller to all the volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

It was announced that for the first time, there are now over 100 active volunteers. During the last 12 months, volunteers at the Railroad Museum have worked 14,745 hours - the equivalent of 368 forty-hour work weeks!

Certificates of appreciation were presented to every volunteer who worked in 1997, and a new placard was presented and hung at the front door of the museum listing each active volunteer. Many thanks to all who gave so generously, and a big thank you to Paul Lajti who coordinated the evening event.

## 28th V&T Railroad History Symposium

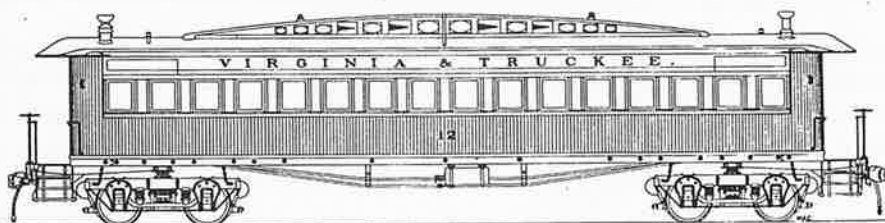
September 25-27, 1998  
Carson City, Nevada

Speakers will include:

Stephen Drew  
Charlie Siebenthal  
Michael Collins

Dale Darney

Jack Gibson  
Kelly Dixon  
Kyle Wyatt



### V&T History Symposium

Due to scheduling conflicts, the 1998 V&T Symposium will be held earlier than usual: September 25, 26 & 27, 1998.

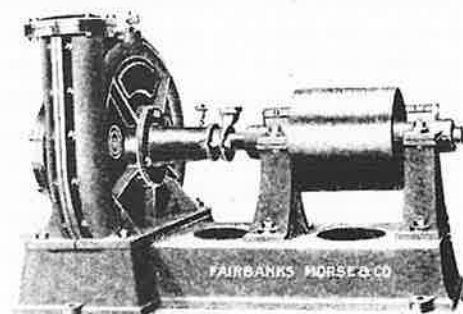
### New Exhibit

The exhibit: "Industrial Photography" by Jim Galli will show in the Interpretive Center through July 10. The color and black-and-white images are all done using existing light to create striking statements on the human-environmental interaction during Nevada's mining past. Mr. Galli, along with Comstock Historic District Administrator and Archaeologist Kelly Dixon, will speak on Industrial Archaeology in Nevada at the Wednesday Evening Program in May.

### HIGHBALLING ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The Nevada State Railroad Museum is on the Web thanks to the efforts of Jim Bryant. People with Internet access (available through CompuServe, Prodigy, America Online and other service providers) can visit the Museum's home page and get current information on programs and special events. We are located at:

<http://pages.prodigy.com/jbryant/nevrr.htm>







*Tonopah & Goldfield No. 52, Klondike, Nevada, July 11, 1941. Al Phelps Collection, Nevada State Railroad Museum.*

## The Photograph Collection of Albert C. Phelps

*by Kyle K. Wyatt, NSRM Curator of History*

Al Phelps was a railroad man who lived and worked in the area of Auburn, California. He started his working career as a message boy for Western Union, but soon landed a job with Southern Pacific, working at both Roseville and Auburn.

Working for the railroad, Mr. Phelps used his railroad pass to travel many places, photographing the railroad scene in his travels beginning in the late 1930s. He made many trips to Nevada

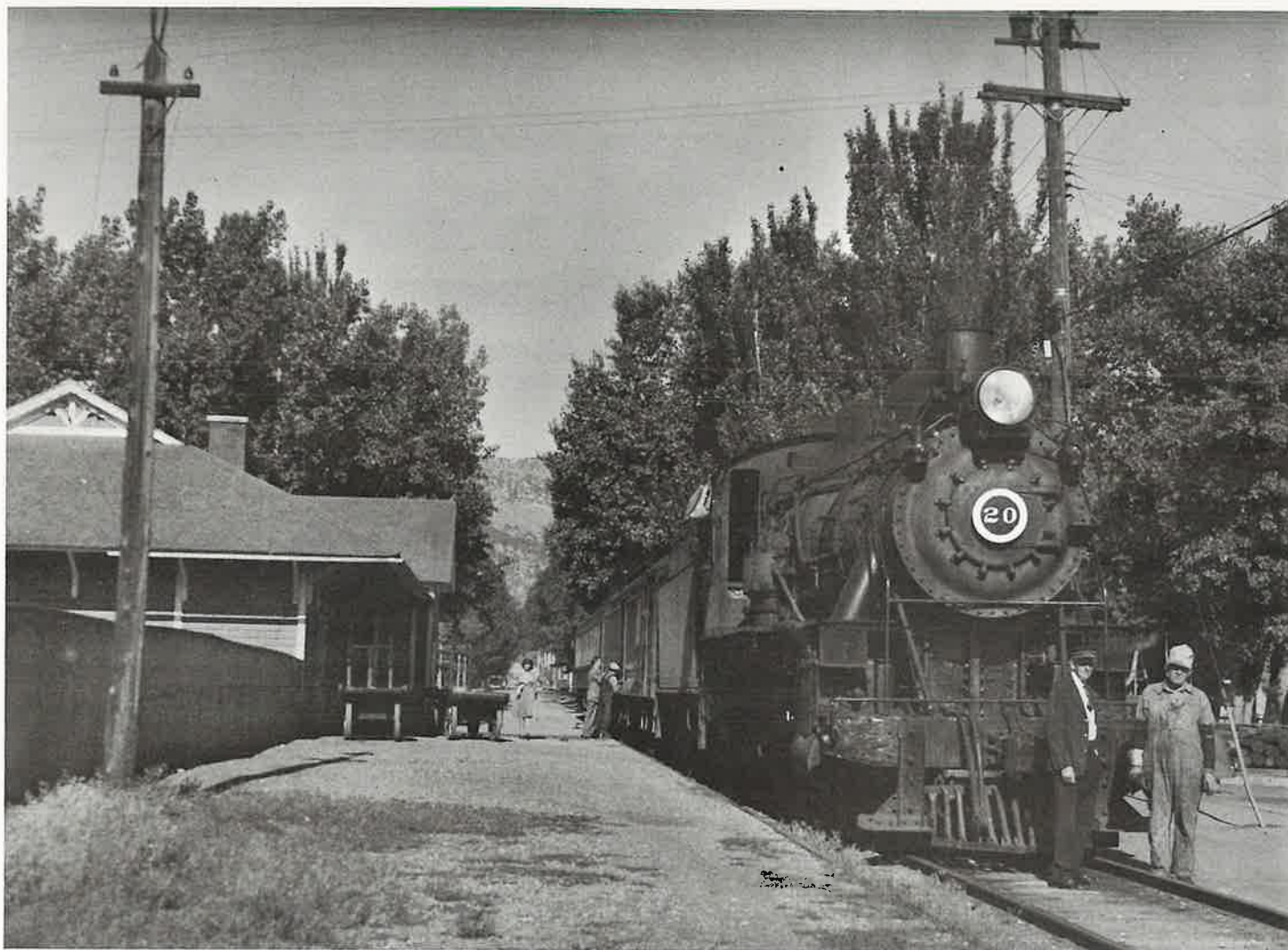
in the late 1930s and 1940s, photographing the short line railroads he found here, many of them in their last years of operation.

After Mr. Phelps passed away in 1997, his family asked noted photographer and friend Stan Kistler to help them in disposing of the photo collection. Stan called the Nevada State Railroad Museum in late November to ask if the museum would be interested in purchasing the photographs and

negatives relevant to Nevada. Staff approached the *Friends* Board who agreed to fund the purchase for the Museum.

The collection consists of negatives, mostly postcard size, from the Virginia & Truckee (36 prewar, 52 post war), Nevada Northern (50), Nevada Copper Belt (24), Tonopah & Goldfield (16), Southern Pacific narrow gauge (95),

*- Continued on page 6*



*Nevada Northern No. 20 at the station in downtown Ely, Nevada. July 8, 1941. Al Phelps Collection, Nevada State Railroad Museum.*

Nevada Central (18), Eureka Nevada (30), and Hobart Estate (15), plus some postcard prints for which there are no negatives in the collection. Mr. Phelps traded negatives with other photographers and a few of these are in the collection, but the vast majority were actually taken by Mr. Phelps.

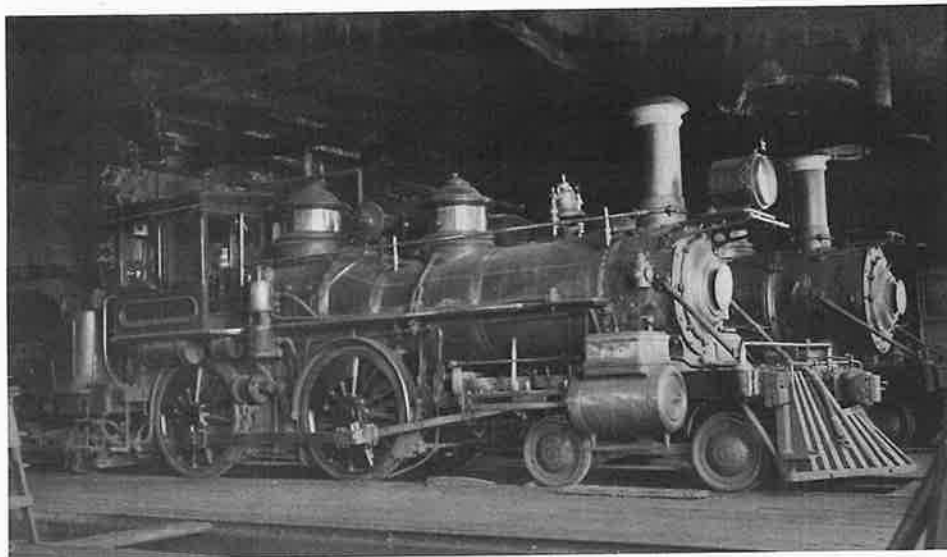
There were several trips that Mr. Phelps took that are of particular interest. In 1939 he spent two days riding the SP narrow gauge train



*Hobart Southern Railroad 2-6-2 No. 8. Hobart Mills, California. Al Phelps Collection, Nevada State Railroad Museum.*

between Laws and Keeler, photographing the normal day operations. He did the same thing on the Nevada Northern and Nevada Consolidated Copper Co. in 1938 and 1941. He visited the Virginia & Truckee in 1937, rode a fan trip in 1941, and returned to record the line's last years.

One of the strengths of the collection is Mr. Phelps' interest in more than just the locomotives on the various railroads. He documented rolling stock, and also recorded operations. The photos reproduced here give just a sampling.



*V&T Locomotives No. 11 and No. 20 inside Carson City Enginehouse. Al Phelps Photograph.*



*Nevada Central scrap train with locomotive No. 2 taking water at Battle Mountain. July 12, 1938. Al Phelps Photograph.*



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INDIVIDUAL/GENERAL:

Certificate, membership card, voting privileges, SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT newsletter, Nevada State Museum newsletter, Historical Society Quarterly (all members over \$25), free Museum admission, 15% discount in Museum Store.

Check one:

- ☐ Senior & Student ..... \$15  
☐ Single ..... \$25  
☐ Family ..... \$40  
☐ Sustaining ..... \$50  
☐ Contributing ..... \$100

CORPORATE: (Same as above with special framed certificate.)

- ☐ Regular ..... \$100  
☐ Fireman's Roster ..... \$250  
☐ Engineer's Roster ..... \$500  
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OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

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Thank you for your membership. You will be receiving your membership packet in the mail.  
(Not included with renewals)

In addition to memberships, the FRIENDS accepts tax deductible contributions towards the furthering of Museum activities and goals.