



San Diego Electric  
Railway Association  
PO Box 89068  
San Diego, CA 92138  
(619) 699-8990

June 2004

Check us out at our  
web site:  
[www.sdera.org](http://www.sdera.org)

## URGENT Help Needed for VW Trolley NOW!

By Jim Price

We're making progress restoring the "VW Trolley" but there's still lots to do, and we need more help and materials: woodworkers, mechanics, guys (and gals) who do wiring, painting, tinkering, even ad execs or commercial art types. And if you know anybody who's a real VW fixer, that would be the best!

Last year SDERA bought the 3/5 scale replica of a 1920s Brill trolley, custom built on a '72 VW bus chassis, with a stock drive train. **Gene Calman**, member of the

VW-Brill Trolley, 3/5 scale, runs again, thanks to Madison High kids, & can carry passengers. Help is needed so it can debut at Kimball Park August 1.



Board, has done a terrific job spearheading the restoration effort. But now we need to involve more people to get this project finished. Our goals: 1) use the trolley at public events (parades, fairs, etc.) to promote SDERA and the National City depot; 2) **run the trolley in the National City parade and display it at Kim-**

**ball Park on August 1.** And later, we can 3) carry fare-paying passengers as a source of income. Lots of issues with doing this, of course, but we need to get 1) and 2) done before we can even consider 3). Here are the jobs we need done: Rotted Exterior Windows and Window Frames: [go to page 2]

## Could Be a Beautiful Day in Our Neighborhood Soon?

By Stuart Rudick

It's certainly won't be "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood," but trolleys may be coming to the National City Train Station. Peter Tereschuck, President and General Manager of San Diego Trolley Inc., contacted SDERA to offer us the three 1960s-era Vienna trolley cars that have been parked in the downtown yard for the last 10 years. Now

the SD Trolley needs the track space to park new equipment arriving soon for the Mission Valley Extension. (See page 4)

A group of SDERA and Old Pueblo Trolley members led by President Jim Price inspected the cars in March. Intended for a loop service around the downtown area, they were later abandoned. We are working with Tiffany Lorenzen, MTS

legal counsel, to obtain clear title to the cars so that we can get possession.

SDERA'S Equipment Committee is working on a plan to move the cars to the yard in National City, initially for static display. Mike Reading, SDERA VP, is looking for a friendly trucker to move the cars for us.

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SDERA is at the historic National City Depot, off I-5 at Mile of Cars Way — take Bay Marina Drive West to Marina Way, then right. Open every Sat. and Sun., 12 noon — 4 PM.

Depot phone: call 619 474-4400

### San Diego Electric Railway Association

- Jim Price, President
- Mike Reading, Vice President
- Tom Matson-Secretary
- Richard Hamilton, Treasurer
- Directors: Gene Calman, Gary Johnson, Paul Pakus
- Chris Higgins, Webmaster
- George Geyer, Bookstore Manager
- Chuck Bencik, Editor



## Mini Trolley Fixup must be done by August 1 — All Kinds of help needed — C'mon down and Join up today! (continued)



Mike Wright, auto shop instructor at Madison High, and our renovated VW engine of our Brill.

(continued from page 1)

**Bob Recks** has volunteered to rebuild them entirely (thanks, Bob!!)

Woodwork interior: Various jobs inside.

**Gary Johnson** volunteered to start rebuilding the seats. (Thanks, Gary!!) Engine: rebuilt and runs (thanks to Gene, **Mike Wright** at Madison High School, and **Terry Ireland** of SDSU). Clutch: need a

VW mechanic who knows early '70s VW bus drive train. Either an independent to work at Gene's house, or a commercial garage to donate services in exchange for advertising. Brakes: replaced/rebuilt by Gene and neighbor **Tom Jenkins. Tires: need a new set of 185R14 (8-ply), about \$400 installed. A tire**

dealer might donate a set, for advertising. Doors: 4 electro-hydraulic folding doors with folding steps. None work, and steps need rebuilding. Need someone to reinstall all parts and get at least a couple of doors working. Paint: repaint the entire vehicle in correct SDERy colors – e.g. World War II green and [see page 3]

***“The Museum committee has been meeting every other Wednesday to flesh out the overall design for our museum – both inside and outside the Depot.”***

## The Prez Sez: SDERA Moving Ahead with New Committees for Trolley, Museum Projects!

by **Jim Price**

Greetings all! We have much going on within SDERA, and I will quickly summarize what our volunteers are doing.

Museum committee. We have resurrected this group with **Richard Hamilton** as the interim chairman. **Larry Ochiello** is back with us, providing a key tie with the Santa Fe Historical Society. And a number of other folks are helping out, including **Bruce & Alana Coons, Stu Rudick, Mike Reading, George Geyer, Chris Higgins, Tom Matson, and Jim Anderson.** The group

has been meeting every other Wednesday to flesh out the overall design for our museum – both inside and outside the depot. The output from this committee will be a key ingredient in our upcoming proposal to National City.

Equipment committee. We have formed a new Equipment Committee (formerly the Trolley Committee), under the leadership of new member **Stu Rudick**, and Board member **Gary Johnson.** The goal of this group is to identify and evaluate currently available options for acquiring some sort of vehicle that runs on steel rail (as opposed to rub-

ber tires). We may start with only static displays, but eventually we want something we can use for passenger rides. Again this committee's product will be a key element of our proposal.

VW Trolley. As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, considerable progress has been made on restoring this trolley-on-wheels, thanks in large part to **Gene Calman.** But, oh so much more needs to be done to get this vehicle ready for the August 1 parade and car show in National City. Please read the VW trolley article carefully and volunteer to help where you can. (Prez Sez continues on page 3 ...)



Wouldn't some nice VW Dealer like to adopt this cute li'l trolley?  
[Photo: Gene Calman]



## Ideas, Workers, Donors wanted August 1 National City Parade

[from p. 2] yellow, as on our web page... Other "little things" such as: Adjust throttle mechanism. Drain and refill transmission. Grease wheel bearings and steering gear. Hook up the alternator. Remove and clean gas tank. Rebuild fuel pump with a new kit. Extend exhaust pipes. Replace bad interior wood. Sell some ads

and display them inside (above windows). Fix the trolley bell (it's a nice one, but the "clanging" mechanism is broken). **The bottom line:** we've invested \$6,000 on this trolley-on-wheels. Gene Calman's given countless hours getting it to where we are. With an August 1 deadline, we need lots of help from talented

folks like you or your friends and associates. **Call Gene Calman at 858-565-2076 or Jim Price at 619-286-3255** (or e-mail [jprice@sdera.org](mailto:jprice@sdera.org)). Tell us how you can help. The trolley's at Gene's home in Kearney Mesa, and is available at any time for work. Let's pull together and fix this little beauty!



**Feels like the real thing inside — a bit of fix-up and she'll be a fun ride!**

## The Prez Sez (continued from page 2)

San Diego County Fair (a.k.a. Del Mar Fair). SDERA will have a table alongside other businesses from National City at the Fair on Tuesday, June 22 – which happens to be National City day. Table sitters will be **Jim Price, Chuck Bencik, Richard Hamilton, Jim Papulas, and Stu Rudick.** But anyone's welcome to take a turn for a while. Not sure where we will be located, but we'll get the word out.

Donations. As you're probably aware we have a lovely new 36" television in the depot. We have already used it during 2 monthly meetings. A DVD player is

next. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to **Art Jones** and **Peter Matthews** who each made *significant* contributions toward this purchase. Thanks to you both!!

Monthly meetings. And thanks again to **Peter Matthews.** He not only fleshed out our April meeting with videos of streetcars in Toronto and other locations, but at the May meeting he showed a fascinating collection of still photographs and film footage of London's trolleys – historic and contemporary. It was one of the most seamless jobs of editing still photos and old film into video we've ever seen!

As listed in this newsletter, Tom Matson has done his usual fine job of lining up interesting meetings for June and July, **so please plan to attend on June 12 and July 10** (as well as every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month!)

Then I'll close with my monthly pitch for help: **we really need people to docent at the depot** – even just 1 day per month, please! Contact Tom Matson at 619-275-0216 if you can help. We are getting a lot of publicity out there, and our plan for growth of the museum is coming together. So this is really a great time to get involved.

**... "The [VW] trolley's at Gene's home in Kearney Mesa, and is available at any time for work. Let's pull together and fix this little beauty!"**



**Transmission end of VW engine still needs clutch work & fluid**



**Birney Car 333** shuttled passengers to Mission Beach from the Ocean Beach line in 1924. SDERy bought 35 of the one-man single truck "Cooties" to lower costs on the Point Loma Railroad routes. [Photo from R. V. Dodge, *Rails of the Silver Gate*]

**"...90 feet long over anti-climbers with seating for 68 passengers and room for up to 236..."**

## SDERA Says No to Gaslamp Restaurant Birney Car -- too much trouble & money for this "Cootie"

San Diego's SPAGHETTI FACTORY says their historic 1917 BIRNEY CAR, a unique restaurant feature, will be removed in the future. The March announcement raised considerable interest, according to Megan Gianotti, Design Coordinator, OSF International, Inc. and Erich Lehmbeck, General Manager of the Gaslamp Quarter restaurant. President Jim Price asked about their plans. The offer has proved unacceptable.

Gioanotti said the "biggest obstacle ... will be removing

the streetcar from our restaurant." She estimated that sometime between the end of this year and the first few months of 2005 they would be willing to donate the car to SDERA if we would pay for the removal of the streetcar from the building, approximately \$10,000 - \$15,000 depending on "how this would happen logistically." Trolley Committee Chairman Stuart Rudick and Vice President Mike Reading inspected the car on May 1, with a view to its value as a static display. The car, originally from Bellingham, WA, is essen-

tially a shell sitting on axles and railcar wheels. At the May 10 board meeting, Rudick reported a list of 14 deficiencies, including missing operating equipment and body sections, sagging and falling structural components, and inappropriate modifications (air conditioning and sprinklers) to be corrected.

Rudick noted that the building "has wood support columns ... from the basement to the second story roof" that prevent the dilapidated trolley from being removed.

## Make way for New S70 Low-Floor LRVs: European Glamour Spotlights Mission Valley East Extension

Eleven new Siemens AVANTO/S70 low-floor light rail vehicles have been ordered by San Diego's Metropolitan Transit Development Board (now called MTS) to operate on the existing San Diego Trolley system along with 123 Siemens LRVs

already in revenue service. The new San Diego vehicles are designed to operate in chorus with the existing Siemens-built vehicles. San Diego is Siemens' largest light rail customer in the U.S.

Delivery is expected in time for the opening of the Mission Valley East extension in late 2004. The 6-mile extension will go through San Diego State University to the existing Orange Line in La Mesa. It will connect the present Blue Line through the Mission Valley with the Orange Line in Grossmont via San Diego State University and will include San Diego's first tunnel and tunnel station underneath the University. Revenue service for the new

line is planned for 2005.

Each AVANTO/S70 vehicle boasts enhanced safety, comfort and speed. The vehicles have a 70 percent low-floor section that eases accessibility for all passengers, particularly those with mobility issues. The vehicles are capable of speeds up to 65 miles per hour. The car shells are constructed of low-alloy, high-tensile (LAHT) steel with a composite fiberglass covering. This modern construction method produces a higher structural efficiency and reduces energy consumption during operation. Siemens' Sacramento, Calif. manufacturing facility will construct the car shell and complete the final vehicle assembly. The S70 LRV is currently in use in Houston, Texas.

The vehicles will be bi-directional three-section, 90 feet (**go to last page**)





Photos: top, R. V. Dodge, *Rails of the Silver Gate*. Middle: Chuck Bencik

## 1910 San Diego Electric Car Makes Neat Beach Home

By Chuck Bencik

It's a neat, small cottage on Mission Boulevard, overlooked by practically everyone passing in cars and on foot, headed for the beach. Sen. Jim Mills pointed it out; I'd been driving by it for years.

Look closely. That's a 1910 California trolley there, hugged by shrubs and trees, near the Pacific Beach ocean front. Forgotten is the San Diego trolley history lovingly preserved as someone's home. Few San Diegans remember when trolleys ran right past the house. The La Jolla trolley line, Route 16, that crossed the Mission Bay channel, from Kettner and Broadway, to La Jolla, was discontinued in September of 1940.

Bob and Gerry Davidson bought the little car on the lot at 3916 Mission Blvd., in 1968 or '69. Someone else had lived in it before them, but it had gotten rundown. They built an addition to it, (toward the back), increasing the living space.

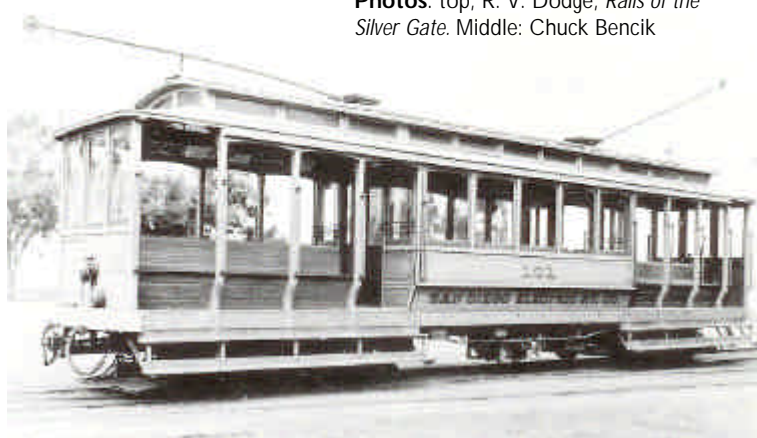
The structure has painted the number "98" on the north side. Mrs. Davidson con-

firmed that the car was originally car no. 98. "The number was still showing on the car. It was only on the back." It appears to be a San Diego Electric car body, a 1910 vintage, 40' California type. Street sides are restored, window frames are original style and in excellent condition. Clerestory deck is essentially in original style. On the south a "porch" has been added, in the style of an open operator's platform. The back (west) side has a widening addition added on. Overall exterior condition is excellent.

According to Mrs. Davidson, "What we tried to do is maintain as much of the original car as we could. The three sections of the original car are still there... We went down to the Historical Society and found some pictures of the cars..."


"When we did do the major addition, we tried to retain the major parts of the original." Mrs. Davidson said they tried to paint the car in the original colors.

The Davidsons' trolley home has been featured in at least one previous publication.



Along with the clerestory, the distinctive shapes of the original center section windows on the 1910 California car have been preserved and moved. [Photos by Chuck Bencik]



 Mark your calendar for these coming events ...

### Board Meetings

7 p.m. Richard Hamilton's office. For directions call (858)-836-0106

**June 8 - July 13 - August 10 - September 14**

### Special Events

**June 22—Del Mar County Fair:** SDERA table at the National City Booth

**August 1** — National City Parade & Car show, Kim-

ball Park

### Membership Meetings, National City Depot, 7:30 P.M.:

**June 12** - Mission Valley East Line and other MTS topics update -- Bill Prey, SANDAG Chief Construction Engineer.

**July 10** - History of the National City Depot -- Bruce Coons, SOHO executive di-

rector, SDERA past president; Larry Ochiello (Santa Fe Historical Society); and (hopefully) families who lived in the Depot.

**August 14** - Historic slides of Los Angeles Transit Lines [lines 8 & 9 narrow gauge system yellow cars] and Pacific Electric [Hollywood Blvd. standard gauge red cars]-- Don Brown, Orange Empire founding member .

***"What we tried to do is maintain as much of the original car as we could. The three sections of the original car are still there..."***



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## Coming soon: New S70 Low-Floor LRVs: Sleek Styling to Spotlight Mission Valley East Extension

[continued from p. 4] long over anti-climbers with seating for 68 passengers and room for up to 236. There will also be spaces for up to 4 wheelchairs. They will operate with a nominal line voltage of 600VDC. Propulsion will be provided by two roof-mounted Siemens IGBT inverter units powering two bi-motor power trucks utilizing Siemens integrated AC drives. The vehicles will also utilize an MVB (Multi-Vehicle Bus) network based on the TCN (Train Communication Network) system for vehicle monitoring and diagnostics.

The operator's cab will be 5' 3" in length and therefore much shorter than the modern sloped front end of

the Houston S70. Nonetheless the San Diego S70 cab will utilize the same wrap-around console design and cabinet arrangement as the Houston S70 vehicle. San Diego will be also be using the more traditional external side mirrors.

The San Diego units will use the fiberglass body side panel "pultrusions" (forms produced by pulling the reinforcement fibers through a bath of liquid resin and into a heated metal die) of the AVANTO/S70 platform. As with the current fleet of vehicles the AVANTO/S70 is designed to negotiate a minimum operating curve radius of 82 feet.

Among many updated features, the passenger

information system will provide automatic voice and visual messages. The interior and exterior LED destination signs will provide the passengers with upcoming station information. The vehicle will be fully compliant with the U.S. Americans with Disability Assistance (ADA) regulations. Unlike the bench seats of today's trolleys, new individual seating will be on the new S70s.

To best use the low-floor design and fit the existing system infrastructure the cars will use four extendable bridge-plates at the center door openings. Sliding plug doors at each door will be installed, instead of the existing bi-folding doors in the current fleet.



New S70 Low Floor cars

San Diego's low floor trolley represents the second order to Siemens of its AVANTO/S70 low-floor light rail vehicle platform after the Houston contract in 2001. Unique for the San Diego order is the decision by the MTDB to stay with a vehicle front-end design resembling the current fleet of Siemens SD100 vehicles. Plans exist to gradually modernize the entire fleet with these new low-floor vehicles of the twenty-first century.