

# CAROLWOOD CHRONICLE



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CAROLWOOD PACIFIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issue 23

## AUCTIONING WARD KIMBALL'S COLLECTION

Fall 2004

<i>Ward Kimball Auction</i>	1
<i>Letter From the Editor</i>	1
<i>Walt's Barn - The Fifth Anniversary - Chugging Along Full Steam Ahead</i>	2
<i>Mickey's Toontown Fair</i>	3
<i>Fort Wilderness Railroad Gone But Not Forgotten</i>	4
<i>The Mail Car</i>	5
<i>Board of Governors</i>	6
<i>Rare Appearance By Bill Justice</i>	6
<i>Event Calendar</i>	7
<i>Disneyland Alumni Club</i>	7
<i>View From the Cupola</i>	8

### A Global Event

It's one of the most anticipated auctions to occur in many years: The extensive model train and toy collection of Ward Kimball. It will be divided and auctioned to highest bidders on Nov. 19-20, 2004, in Philadelphia. According to wishes he conveyed to his family, Ward's collection will be shared with fans, hobbyists and train aficionados throughout the world.

Assembled over the course of 88 years (his first model train was a gift from an uncle when he was 11 months old), the eclectic collection is considered to be one of the most important in the world. Models include cast iron from the 1800's, live steam, tin, brass and one-off prototypes.

Due to the vast content of quality, quantity and diversity, it will require two events of approximately 800 lots each to auction the entire collection of trains, station buildings and toys. The second session is scheduled May 27-28, 2005, also in Philadelphia.

Conducted by veteran auctioneer Noel Barrett, who usually operates in Lambertville, NJ, Philadelphia was selected because the Ramada Hotel is near Philadelphia International Air-



Ward Kimball

port, has a large ballroom and is easily accessible by free airport shuttle.

"The hotel has ample parking for those choosing to drive," says Barrett, who knew Ward. "Also, there's no sales tax on single-owner estate sales in Pennsylvania," Barrett noted; "Which successful bidders will appreciate." Early estimates of potential value run in the \$4 to 5 million range, but there's always the chance of a bargain. Such is the exciting and unpredictable drama of auctions.

Both sales will feature items from Ward's European trains and stations, early tin and cast iron engines plus classics by Marklin,

Lionel and American Flyer. For serious Disneyana collectors, Ward's collection of vintage Disney toys and dolls will be offered only in the November auction. The May auction will feature more trains and selections from his extensive railroadiana collection, much of which was displayed in the Grizzly Flats Depot.

Members of the Carolwood Society, who attended the Steam-Up Party at Ward and Betty's Grizzly Flats Railroad in 1997, recall seeing the contents of the 25 by 60 foot building that was literally lined floor to ceiling and wall to wall with scale models of every period, scale and material.

A color 16-page brochure previewing the auction is available free to Society members who send a self-addressed 9 x 12 envelope with 83 cents postage to the Society office in Thousand Oaks. Or, send \$2 and the Society will handle the envelope and postage. They are available while supply lasts.

A \$45 full-color 100-page catalog for Auction One, including a preview DVD, will be available around Oct. 20

Please see Kimball Auction, Page 8

### Moving?

We don't want to lose touch! Please be sure to update us on your mailing information. Also, don't forget to inform us if your email address changes. We don't want you to miss out on anything!

### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR . . . .

BY STEVE DEGAETANO

This past Sunday, my wife, son and dog took an early evening stroll. It was only 7:30, but the sun had already set, and it was getting dark. So endeth another summer.

Two new efforts by Carol-

wood members, however, should keep you busy during the autumn months.

Steve Burns, proprietor of the famous "Burnsland" Disney train internet site ([www.burnsland.com](http://www.burnsland.com)), unveiled a Forum/Bulletin Board on the site in early

July. If you've ever had a hankerin' to talk with other fans and Carolwood members about any—and I mean any—Disney train subject, this is the place for you! It can be accessed at <http://www.burnsland.com/railroads>, or through the

(Continued on page 2)

## Walt's Barn: The 5th Anniversary. Chugging Along Full Steam Ahead

By Damien Montanile

Sunday, July 18th was a landmark day for the Carolwood Pacific Historical Society. The five-year anniversary of the dedication ceremony for Walt Disney's Barn to its new home in Griffith Park, CA neighboring the L.A. Live Steamers facility.

The weekend was quite a busy weekend for Disney fans throughout Southern California. Between pin releases and their accompanying occasions, it's a wonder that anyone had any rest this weekend. Saturday was obviously Disneyland's 49th birthday which still focused more on the 50th announcements.

Sunday, July 18th just happened to be the third Sunday of the month and the Barn volunteers/caretakers and members of the Carolwood Pacific Historical Society, did their dedicated routine of opening Walt Disney's Barn and Museum for its monthly public viewing, but again, this was no ordinary weekend for Disney fans. Hosting a celebration/remembrance that numbered more than 400 guests was the Historical Society itself on behalf of the Walt Disney Family Foundation. The occasion? Celebrating the five-year anniversary of the Barn's dedication on July 19, 1999. For the last five years, CPHS volunteers have been opening the Barn to railroad and Disney enthusiasts alike on the third Sunday of every month, giving tours of the facility located at 5202 Zoo Drive in Griffith Park. Several noted Disney personalities and legends have previously graced the Barn with their presence including but not limited to **Roy E. Disney, Tony Baxter, Bob Gurr, Bobby Burgess, Rolly Crump** and **Sam McKim** to name a few.

Upon walking into the facility, it was quite evident that anyone visiting on July 18th was not experiencing a typical day at the Barn. With cake and complimentary refreshments for the day's guests, an event demonstration tent featuring z-scale model train presentations (for those of you needing layman's terms...that means really, really small) as well as a presentation direct from Marceline, Missouri, and an autograph booth brimming with excitement, ivory teeth were visible throughout and we haven't even made it into the Barn yet!

On hand for this occasion were several familiar faces to the Barn itself; **Margaret Kerry** (the original model for Tinkerbell), authors, **Kendra Trahan, Bill Cotter** and **Michael Broggie, Kaye Malins** (ambassador from Marceline, Missouri). All inhabitants of the event tents had a ball speaking with and educating day guests and even Disney aficionados alike with their broad collective knowledge.

The Barn housed more festivities than your local "Great American Party Store." Upon entering after first waiting for a path to materialize from underneath many a curious shuffling guest, it was something akin to sensory overload. FOR MORE OF DAMIEN'S VIEWS ABOUT THE BARN PLEASE GO TO [UTILIDORS.COM](http://UTILIDORS.COM).

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR . . . . .

BY STEVE DEGAETANO

(Continued from page 1)  
main site.

After only a month of operation, the board has over 40 members and over 1,000 posts on a variety of topics, including discussions about the *Ward Kimball* locomotive, the Walt Disney World backstage Steam Train Tour of their roundhouse, and the Euro-Disney and Tokyo Disney steam trains. Several of the members are conductors, engineers, and firemen on the Walt Disney World RR, and their expertise and knowledge are always available to answer any and all technical questions you may have about the trains. The site is free, so pour yourself a cup of coffee and stop by for a spell!

The other news I have stems directly from discussions on Steve's site. It became apparent through these discussions that several members thought it might be fun to get together at Walt Disney World, where members could meet each other, maybe get a personalized roundhouse tour, and then put their "Indiana Jones" hats on to explore the lost archaeology of the Fort Wilderness trains, led by expert **David Rose**. The idea caught on, and Carolwood Webmaster **Rodney Recor** has pulled the laboring oar in putting the program together.

Slated for October 19 – 21, 2004, highlights of this "Carolwood East Second Annual "Un-meeting" will include the

roundhouse tour, a barbeque, and a visit to the model railroad of the Orlando Society of Model Railroaders. Information and an itinerary can be found at [www.carolwood.com](http://www.carolwood.com), in the "Club 173" section, so mark your calendars for what promises to be a unique and very fun event.

In closing this issue, I would like to thank everyone for their support and orders for my upcoming book, "Welcome Aboard the Disneyland Railroad!" I have forwarded the files to the printer, and the 320-page book should be arriving on your doorsteps in late November or early December! Until then, I hope to see you on the Burnsland Forum!

## Mickey's Toontown Fair—Third in a Series by Steve Burns

For the first 16 years of its operation, the *Walt Disney World Railroad* only had two stations, Main Street, USA and Frontierland. But 1988 saw the addition of Mickey's Birthdayland to celebrate Mickey Mouse's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Because the new area was right at the railroad tracks, a new station was added to help bring guests in. On the Monorail from the parking lot, guests were even encouraged to board the train at Main Street Station to get to Mickey's Birthdayland. The trains were decorated with large birthday presents, and along the railroad different scenes showed the characters traveling along to get to Mickey's party. Special narration was recorded for the railroad to further promote the new area.

An additional station changed the operating procedures a bit for the railroad, but the addition also helped guests to get around the park as the new station gave easier access to Fantasyland and Tomorrowland. This made the railroad a little more of a transportation system as well as an attraction, and it gave guests with tired feet another way to get around the park.

The Mickey's Birthdayland station was a large, open-air structure, painted light blue, with a blue and yellow roof, to fit in with the cartoon-themed surroundings. The station featured a covered loading platform similar to that of the other two stations in the park to help keep guests dry during the normal Florida rain showers. Its open structure gave the station a much more simple appearance than the more elaborately themed stations found at Main Street and Frontierland.

Mickey's Birthdayland was originally said to be a temporary addition along with the rest of that land, however, the area turned out to be popular, mainly because it provided kids with a place where the characters could always be found. When Mickey's birthday celebration ended, the area remained with

very few changes and was renamed Mickey's Starland. This was also noted on the station signage.

More change to the area came in 1996. The area was heavily remodeled to become Mickey's Toontown Fair after the popularity of Mickey's Toontown in Disneyland. The station remained largely unchanged, except for the new name on the sign and a new coat of paint. During this time a walkway was added that runs from the station, behind the Tomorrowland Indy Speedway, and out to Tomorrowland next to Space Mountain. This walkway further adds to the station's functionality by giving even better access to Tomorrowland.

*The Mickey's Birthdayland station was a large, open-air structure, painted light blue, with a blue and yellow roof, to fit in with the cartoon-themed surroundings.*

The water tower for the Walt Disney World Railroad was originally located at Frontierland Station. Due to the area required for Splash Mountain, the water tower was moved from Frontierland to what was at the time Mickey's Starland. Like the station, the water tower has a color-

ful paint scheme to match the surroundings.

Originally intended as a temporary station, the structure was starting to show its age after more than fifteen years of service. Earlier this year the station was completely torn down and a new station was built in its place. The new station is almost identical to the original except that the canopy over the platform is shorter than the old one, at times leaving guests from the last two rail cars out in the rain.

In the evenings, Mickey's Toontown Fair is the last stop the trains make. Guests on the last train of the night have to disembark at the station, and they can then watch as the train is backed up on the spur track to the roundhouse, listening for the whistle at the service road crossings. Hearing the steam whistle make its way into the nighttime distance provides a great end to a day full of train rides on the Walt Disney World Railroad.

*Pictures of Mickey's Toontown Fair can be viewed at [http://www.burnsland.com/wdw/wdw\\_toontown.html](http://www.burnsland.com/wdw/wdw_toontown.html)*



# Fort Wilderness Railroad — Gone but not forgotten. . . .

By David Rose

**A**t some point during childhood most of us experience something that remains in our memory for good. For me that was riding the Fort Wilderness Railroad in WDW. Today, most people are not aware that once a fantastic 3 1/2 mile narrow gauge steam railroad once transported guests throughout Fort Wilderness Campground. This railroad put Fort Wilderness Campground in a class of its own, and gave campers the feeling that they were in the great frontier of the past.

The railroad was nostalgic to say the least, running through fields, woods, over trestles, by a log-cabin style general store, to a swimmin' hole called River Country and to Pioneer Hall, home of the Hoop-Dee-Dee Review. The main road entering the campground had tracks running parallel on *both* sides, appearing across small fields and running along the wilderness edge before disappearing into the wilderness again. The route was not committed to the constant right turn like the *Magic Kingdom Railroad*. It snaked through the campground turning left and right and it had a switch mid-route that could enable the train to run one-half the route. It wasn't uncommon to see a switch with track disappearing off into the woods somewhere.

The Fort Wilderness Railroad consisted of four Forney type 2-4-2T engines each pulling five coaches. These were constructed in 1972 by Mapo, a division of Disney in Glendale, California. The engines had red cabs and dark green saddle tanks featuring detailed yellow and

white scroll work on the sides. Shiny brass wrapped around the sand and steam domes and a scenic painting covered the sides of the oversized headlamps. The dark green coaches had "Wilderness Line" displayed along the side with scroll work surrounding it.

In 1973, the completed trains were transported via flatbed trucks from Glendale to Orlando where 3 1/2 miles of track laid by Buena Vista Construction waited. A golden spike ceremony took place in 1974 and the *Fort Wilderness Railroad* began operating daily as the primary source of transportation in the campground. The train ride was free to guests, and a \$1.00 ticket was good all day to visitors. A typical train could transport up to 90 passengers along the 3 1/2 mile 30" gauge route.

Once the trains began operation, like many attractions, issues arose that needed attention. One problem was the limited water capacity of the saddle tanks—only 225 gallons for a 3 1/2 mile trip. This was compounded by the fact that there was only one water tower on the Wilderness Line, located at the Outpost station. The train operators had to be very diligent about filling up *every* trip. This was often forgotten, and resulted in stranded trains. An additional water tower at the Settlement Depot would have been a big help, but it never materialized. Another problem was the way in which the track was laid: on the fly, with no precision rail bender, no tie plates, and ballast basically poured right over the tracks. Kinks formed

around curves and derailments occurred.

In August 1976, Magic Kingdom roundhouse chief George Britton headed a team that relaid the entire Fort Wilderness track, adding tie plates, 2,000 tons of ballast and gauge rods in problem locations. Conditions improved, but another problem came up, and this was not so easy to fix.

It's possible the ultimate fate of the Wilderness Line was due to the location of the train route itself. It ran across roads some ten times, and was dangerously close to campsites. Children and adults were permitted to ride bicycles throughout the campground, with some of the railroad crossings having only signs and no gates at all. Elsewhere there was no berm, barrier or fence keeping people away from the tracks, and blind curves were abundant. It was a favorite activity for guests to place pennies on the tracks, or to follow the track route at night with a flashlight. Whether Disney realized it or not, they had used an extraordinarily loud whistle on the engines. Although this seems like a help, guests complained about "that whistle," and it's possible the use of the whistle was discouraged.

With operational and liability issues present, Disney made the decision to stop putting resources into the Wilderness line and the railroad operation came to a grinding halt. The date the Fort Wilderness line and the trains stopped running is somewhat of a mystery. We know that the trains were running in February 1978 from several tickets *continued on page 6*

# THE MAIL CAR . . . .

I want to thank you for allowing me the experience of visiting the Animation Research Library. I was overwhelmed by the entire experience! Now I can say that I actually got to see some of Walt Disney's original animation art! It was one of the most memorable experiences of my life! Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

— Joseph Jamarillo  
Camarillo, CA

I just wanted to let you know that I received the Lilly Belle ticket in today's mail and am thrilled to add it to my collection of early Disneyland memorabilia. I want to thank you, also, for allowing me to sign up at the last minute to see the Animation Archives Research Library. The tour was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience and having Bill Justice as a surprise guest was great! It was delightful to hear Bill's recollections at the luncheon. I look forward to attending more Carolwood events in the future.

— Mary Waring  
Chula Vista, CA

I have an interest in Disney because I was the engineer on the Walt Disney World Railroad which was the first attraction at WDW to carry a paying passenger on October 1, 1971. My family and I have had the great thrill in being able to ride Disney steam trains at Disneyland, the Magic Kingdom, Fort Wilderness and Disneyland Paris. We have also taken advantage of the chance to see and ride steam trains in Tennessee and Colorado. I also worked for Disney in human resources for 30 years before I retired.

— Fred Threadgill  
Orlando, FL

As a new member to the Carolwood Pacific Historical Society I want to thank you for organizing the tour of the Walt Disney Animation Research Library. As a long time fan of all things Disney it was truly the chance of a lifetime to be on this wonderful tour. I never would have believed that I would have the opportunity to personally see the actual drawings of "Steamboat Willie" and so many other Disney classics in such an intimate setting, and hosted by such a gracious staff at the Research Library. They answered all of the questions asked of them with an obvious knowledge and love for their work.

My wife and I were fortunate enough to ride to and from the research library with the "E Ticket" magazine's Jack Janzen. Quite a coup for me, an avid reader of the fine fanzine for years. It was great to finally meet him, and I was happy to hear that he was going to continue the magazine after the untimely death of his brother, Leon, earlier this year. The lunch after our tour was very good. You and all the members that we met were very kind to us, and enthusiastic about the event. The big surprise at lunch of course, was that the long time Disney animator Bill Justice was in attendance with his wife, Kim. After lunch, Michael's interview with Mr. Justice and the staff from the animation research library was very informative and entertaining. Driving back home to Fresno that afternoon I was on "Cloud 9" as my wife and I discussed the days events. What an awesome way to start an association with such a fine organization. Please accept my heartfelt thanks again for putting together a first class event.

— Charlie Arnold  
Fresno, CA

Greetings from New Jersey! My wife, Betsy, and I recently attended the "steam-up" for the Iron Acres Railroad in Jackson, NJ. We would like to send a BIG THANK YOU for Michael Broggie's excellent video presentation that evening. We spoke very briefly at the event, however, we were so "blown away" by the talk that we just had to write and say "thank you" again. We were very surprised at the length of the presentation. We could have sat there until the "wee hours" just listening to those stories! Thanks to folks like Michael, Sharon and this great organization, we can look back to the "golden age" of Disney theme parks. We can get a glimpse of what it was like in the days when the quality of the experience was more important (or at least as important) as the money going into the cash register. Through organizations such as CPHS, Savedisney.com, and publications, Persistence of Vision and E-Ticket, we can see what the great men and women who build these [fantasy] lands were trying to do. My wife and I like to think we "get it." We enjoyed the trip back in time. It is people like you, the legacy of Roger Broggie, Walt, Roy and the countless folks who have enriched all of our lives that, with their hard work, Disney will always be remembered.

— Mark & Betsy Scheidegger  
Kenilworth, NJ

## Got Something To Say?

Please send your comments, suggestions, questions, etc. to the Society: 1032 Amber-ton Lane, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320. Or simply email [scbroggie@msn.com](mailto:scbroggie@msn.com). We always appreciate hearing from our members.



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## Gone But Not Forgotten. . . . .

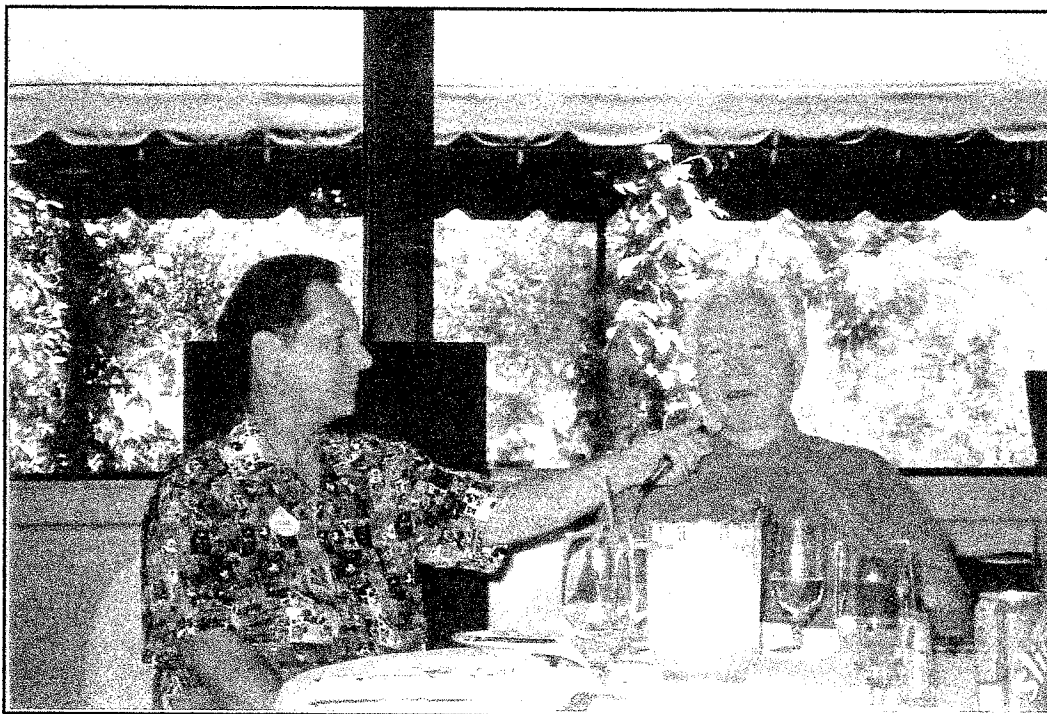
*Continued from page 4 —*

Michael Campbell was able to locate with the date stamped on the back, and I have received emails that point to November 1979, but there is no conclusive evidence yet. The trains were stored in a warehouse for some time, and then moved to outside storage where the elements got the best of them.

In the early 1990s, plans were drawn up for the Wilderness lodge that was to include a place called Wilderness Junction. This entertainment and shopping complex was to be located somewhere between the Wilderness Lodge and Fort Wilderness Campground. The plan was to utilize the existing Fort Wilderness trains on a new route that would transport guests from the Wilderness Lodge to Wilderness Junction, then on to the Campground and back again. The trains would now run through an uninhabited area of the woods, eliminating many of

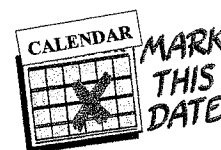
the risks the Campground route posed. Unfortunately, the Wilderness Junction plans were scrapped from the Lodge plans, and once again the Fort Wilderness trains faced an uncertain future.

In 1995, Michael Broggie was conducting a research trip in Walt Disney World for his book, "Walt Disney's Railroad Story." When he asked his guide, Dan Chesnicka, "What happened to the Campground trains?" he was shown a storage yard where four lifeless steamers and twelve coaches sat decaying. Saddened by the sight, Michael met with various Carolwood members and negotiations began with Disney lawyers to save the trains. After five long years of negotiating, Disney released the remaining trains to Carolwood members, Michael Campbell, Bill Dundas and Jim Zordich, from whom they are receiving much-needed attention.



The second tour to the Animation Research Library, in July, was attended by 75 Carolwood members who were treated to Bill Justice's humor. Bill and his wife, Kim, joined the CPHS members for lunch at Pickwick Gardens, signed the commemorative "Duck on the Train" pin, and regaled the audience with his wry wit and anecdotes about working with Walt on animation and as one of the early Imagineers creating animation for the Audio-Animatronic figures.

# Carolwood Event Planner



October 17 — Walt Disney Barn open 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

October 19, 20, 21 — Carolwood East Second Annual Un-Meeting — Walt Disney World Visit [www.carolwood.com](http://www.carolwood.com)  
"Call Board" for details

November 19-20 — Ward Kimball Auction of trains and Disney toys — Philadelphia (see story page one)

November 21 — Walt Disney Barn open 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

December 11, 12 — World's Greatest Hobby on Tour—Train Show — Edison, New Jersey — Presentation by Michael Broggie and display of Disney railroading and Bob Olszewski's miniature Disneyland

December 19 — Walt Disney Barn open 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. — Engineer Santa for the kids

January 8, 9 — World's Greatest Hobby on Tour — Train Show — St. Louis, Missouri — Presentation by Michael Broggie and display of Disney railroading and Bob Olszewski's miniature Disneyland

February 20 — Walt's Barn Salute to the Disneyland Monorail featuring Disney Legend Bob Gurr

February 19, 20 — World's Greatest Hobby on Tour — Train Show — Long Beach, CA — Presentation by Michael Broggie and display of Disney railroading and Bob Olszewski's miniature Disneyland

February 26, 27 — World's Greatest Hobby on Tour — Train Show — Denver, CO — Presentation by Michael Broggie and display of Disney railroading and Bob Olszewski's miniature Disneyland

## DISNEYLAND ALUMNI CLUB

The Disneyland Alumni Club was founded in 1983 by Van France. Since then, many former cast members have joined the Club to keep alive their "once-in-a-lifetime experience" working at the Disneyland Resort. The Disneyland Resort Alumni Club offers its active members many benefits. Some benefits included are:

- A newly designed membership card
- A subscription to the Alumni Club newsletter (three issues per year)
- Special travel packages of-

ferred by Walt Disney Travel Company

- Access to Partners Federal Credit Union
- An exclusive cloisonné pin
- Exclusive Alumni Club Reunions
- Exclusive Alumni Club Merchandise
- Additional benefits exclusive to Alumni members

The membership fee for new members is \$25.00 with annual

renewal fees of only \$15.00. To join, please mail your payment and include your current mailing address, phone number and email address to:

Disneyland Resort  
Alumni Club — Membership  
P. O. Box 8015  
Universal City, CA 91618-8015

Anyone whose friends or family members were cast members in the past are encouraged to please pass on the information about the Club's existence.

Carolwood Pacific Historical Society  
1032 Amberton Lane  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Email us: [scbroggie@carolwood.com](mailto:scbroggie@carolwood.com)

***We're on the Web!***  
***www.carolwood.com***

*"We don't have boring meetings  
~ we just do fun events!"*

*Kimball Auction, continued from Page 1*

from Noel Barrett Auctions. The \$45 purchase (\$50 Canada and \$55 overseas) includes two admissions to the preview on Thursday, Nov. 18 at 11 am and the sale beginning Friday, Nov. 19 at 6 pm. Only catalog buyers will be admitted. Advance bids, bids by Internet (LiveAuctioneers.com) and telephone bidding will be accommodated.

The entire contents of the catalog will be posted at [www.noelbarrett.com](http://www.noelbarrett.com) two to three weeks prior to the sale or call (215) 297-5109. Email: [toys@noelbarrett.com](mailto:toys@noelbarrett.com). Write: Noel Barrett Antiques & Auctions,

CAROLWOOD CHRONICLE

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Ltd., P.O. Box 300, Carversville, PA 18913. To make reservations at the host hotel call the Ramada at 610-521-9600. Special rates are offered for reservations by Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> and by mentioning Noel Barrett Auctions.

Ward was a founding member of the Board of Governors of the Carolwood Society. His genius lives on in his music (Firehouse 5 Plus 2), cartoons and feature animation, television, Imagineering projects, fine art, kinetic art, sculpture and endless stories of gags and practical jokes.

He also was the consummate railroad enthusiast—being the first in America, with wife Betty, to privately own a full-sized steam locomotive, the *Emma Nevada*, an

1881 mogul that ran on the Nevada Central Railroad. Ward, his family and friends, took it all apart and rebuilt it. It has a beautiful bell Ward delighted in ringing. It's now on permanent display at the Orange Empire Railway Museum near Parris, California. The *Chloe*, a narrow gauge wood-burning Hawaiian plantation engine he restored and named for one of his three children, is being kept in the Kimball family. A 1904 Baldwin named *Ward Kimball* is scheduled to be completed as Engine No. 5 for Disneyland® Resort's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Ward painted pictures of Jiminy Cricket for the headlamp.

—Michael Broggie

## VIEW FROM THE CUPOLA BY MICHAEL BROGGIE

### Remembering Sam and Frank

This kind of story is the hardest to write. As I type words on the screen my mind wanders back over a lifetime of memories. I think about the first time I met Sam McKim and Frank Thomas, two Disney Legends who passed away recently; Sam on July 9th and Frank on Sept. 8th.

Both brought unique talents and quiet humility to their work for Walt Disney. They shared unbridled passion for their respective areas of expertise. Sam, an Imagineer, designer and artist, whose work is evident in Disneyland and the first official "fun" map of Disneyland. Frank, a master animator and Dixieland jazz musician whose keyboard skills contributed to rousing music of the "Firehouse Five Plus 2."

As a child, I recall my mother playing Firehouse records while housecleaning. She called it "her working music." I also remember watching "Our Gang" comedies and Western serials starring Gene Autry. Years later, at Sam's 75th birthday celebration, I made the connection when clips of Sam's child acting days were shown.

Sam was never one to draw attention to himself. He let his craft speak for him. Long interested in becoming an artist, Sam used his

benefits earned in the Army during WW II and Korea to attend advanced art classes at the Chouinard Art Institute (now California Institute of the Arts). He continued his acting but actually turned down a major role in a John Ford feature, "The Long Gray Line," to focus on his art.

His skill is seen in concept sketches created for shops along Main Street and in Frontierland and the Golden Horseshoe Revue. For the 1964 World's Fair, he sketched designs for Great Moments With Mr. Lincoln, It's a Small World, Carousel of Progress and Magic Skyway. The Monorail and Haunted Mansion were visualized by Sam as was the Hall of Presidents at Walt Disney World.

Sam, who was 79, is survived by his wife Dorothy and sons Matt and Brian and grandchildren.

~ ^ ~

Frank Thomas's collaboration with Ollie Johnston is (literally) the stuff of Legends. Frank met Ollie while both were attending Stanford University. Following graduation, Frank joined the animation department at Disney Studios in 1934. Ollie followed three months later. Thus began a 43-year odyssey that generated a body of work considered the benchmark by which all feature animation is

measured. Every Disney classic from "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" through "The Jungle Book," have the indelible mark of his talent for movement, drama and subtle detail that imparted life to pencil drawings.

Perhaps his greatest contribution was his mentoring. He delighted in lending guidance to succeeding generations of Disney animators such as John Lasseter, now creative head of Pixar Animation Studios, who said, "Frank was a giant in our field, and he meant everything to me and to all of us who loved the art of animation."

Frank and Ollie retired in 1975 and turned their collective talents to writing. Their collaboration resulted in the defining book on animation, "Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life." They produced others including "The Disney Villain."

Frank's son Ted, a talented filmmaker, who, with his wife, Kuniko, wrote and directed an excellent documentary in 1995, "Frank and Ollie." It's a must-see for anyone who marvels at the magic of their enduring friendship. It's now available on an expanded DVD.

Frank was 92 and is survived by his wife Jeanette and children Theodore, Doug, Gregg and Ann and grandchildren.