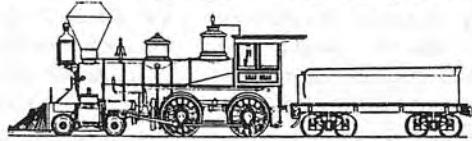




# CAROLWOOD CHRONICLE



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CAROLWOOD PACIFIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ISSUE 5 - FALL 1998

## BARN UPDATE

*The agreement to rebuild Walt Disney's Carolwood Barn at the site of the Los Angeles Live Steamers is nearing final approval by all parties including the City of Los Angeles Division of Recreation and Parks, the Live Steamers and the Walt Disney Family Foundation. A long process of drafts going back and forth between the attorneys representing each party has delayed the much anticipated barn project.*

*Back in April, CPHS assisted the Disney Foundation by organizing the removal of the barn by a general contractor skilled in historic restoration, William Abel. After creating numerous photographs, videotape and physically marking the structure, it was carefully dismantled and moved to its current location at the LA Live Steamers site in Griffith Park where it is secured inside a shipping container.*

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## MARCELINE TO HOST WALT DISNEY'S GALA 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Marceline, MO—On Sept. 11, 12 and 13, Marceline welcomed Carolwood Pacific Historical Society members, government officials, members of the Disney family and a host of visitors and townsfolk for the renaming and dedication of Kansas Avenue as "Main

*"...more things of importance happened to me in Marceline than have happened to me since."*

*—Walt Disney, 1938*

Street U.S.A." It was the highlight event during a weekend of programs, pageants and a parade celebrating Walt's memorializing Marceline's

business street at Disneyland.

As Disneyphiles are well aware, the small town of Marceline (pop. 2,650) became an influential and indelible memory for Walt Disney.

When asked in 1938 by the *Marceline News* to report his impressions of his childhood hometown, he responded with the following missive: "To tell the truth, more things of importance happened to me in Marceline than have happened since—or are likely to in the future."

Marceline is located in central Missouri off Route 36 about 120 miles northeast of Kansas City, along the railway of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. It was one of many towns developed by the railroad to provide housing and

restaurants for crews and passengers, and coal and water for its steam engines. The presence of coal deposits and abundant water in Marceline made the location an ideal train stop. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Marceline had developed into

**MISSOURI'S GOVERNOR  
MEL GARNAHAN AND  
MICKEY MOUSE DEDICATE  
MAIN STREET USA**

a thriving community of five-thousand surrounded by hand-some farms with productive orchards and livestock. A school was built along with a hotel and post office. Eventually, a string of stores opened in buildings along Kansas Avenue, which became the busi-

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## FESS PARKER WINERY, THE SEQUEL

Fess Parker Winery in Los Olivos north of Santa Barbara will again be visited by CPHS members. This year's event on Nov. 21 will be designed to provide members with many options for lodging, dining, touring, golf and other amenities in the Santa Ynez Valley including the Danish

town of Solvang. Since last year, CPHS member Fess Parker purchased the elegant Los Olivos Grand Hotel near his winery and renamed it Fess Parker's Wine Country Inn. Members will meet at the hotel by 1:30pm having had lunch and carpool to the winery. At 5pm we will meet

back at the hotel for a screening of "Old Yeller" starring Fess Parker. That evening and the rest of the weekend will be open for activities as each member wishes to participate individually or in groups. A souvenir hat will be available. A reservation form is in this Chronicle.

## Call Board

Marceline to host Walt Disney's 100th Birthday Celebration / Fess Parker Winery Sequel

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Diane Disney Miller at Disneyland

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Railway Museums to honor Ward Kimball

3

Remembering Richard Thompson

4

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ness district.

In 1906, Walt's father Elias Disney visited his brother Robert, who owned 500 acres outside of the rural town. Liking what he saw in contrast to the clutter and clatter of Chicago, later that year he loaded all of the family's possessions onto a railroad boxcar and moved to a 45-acre farm that had been developed by a Civil War veteran named William Crane.

As a four-year-old, Walt was greatly impressed by his new surroundings of woods, streams, ponds and meadows. Tall for his age, Walt quickly adapted to a farmboy's life with chores such as feeding dried corn to the flock of chickens, pigeons and ducks, picking apples and slopping the pigs. It was rigorous, but Walt loved everything about it. He and his sister Ruth found time for play, especially in the red barn where hay was fun to roll in and the opened doors created a stage for Walt to present pretend pageants with animals dressed in Ruth's doll clothing.

His youthful experiences served as story material for a host of Disney animated cartoons and feature motion pictures. Most significant was the inspiration the town provided for Main Street U.S.A. at Dis-

neyland. Walt was candid about his symbiotic connection with small town America. He strongly believed that the people who lived and worked in small communities across the country were the solid backbone of the nation and the core audience for his unique brand of family entertainment. On several occasions, Walt took time from his hectic schedule to visit Marceline. He enjoyed the friendship and mid-western hospitality of Rush and Inez Johnson, who, along with their daughter and son-in-law Kaye and Wally Malins, have been instrumental in creating the revitalization of Marceline.

Another key influence Walt later acknowledged began in Marceline was his life long passion for steam railroading. In the summer of his 15<sup>th</sup> year, Walt was hired by the Van Noyes Interstate News Company to work as a news butcher on the Missouri Pacific Line. It was his first job outside the family. Walt learned the hard facts about operating a business (he went broke) and how to run a steam engine (he bribed the engineer and fireman with apples to teach him how operate the controls). Later he enjoyed operating his miniature live steam train on his Carolwood Pacific Railroad.

After Disneyland opened in 1955, and without the knowledge of the passengers on board, he

would slip into the cab of one of the engines and take over the duties of the operating engineer, whom he would send off to take a break. Many are surprised to learn that Walt personally owned the Santa Fe & Disneyland Railroad through his private company, Retlaw Enterprises, and financed its construction and operation with his own resources.

Walt Disney's remarkable life will be celebrated with a 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party in 2001. In preparation for this major event, the town of Marceline and the State of Missouri are launching an international awareness campaign to notify the public that the town will host this historic milestone with a series of events and programs. Earlier this summer, The Walt Disney Company selected Marceline to host the premiere of its new home video release, *The Spirit of Mickey*. By all accounts, the July 14<sup>th</sup> event, which included a parade of Disney characters and a special screening at the refurbished Encore Theater, exceeded all expectations of attendance. The well-produced event drew deserved praise for the community's leadership. A repre-

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*Diane Disney Miller at Disneyland*  
Walt's only surviving daughter, Diane Disney Miller, will make a rare public appearance at Disneyland on Oct. 23 to sign editions of the new CD anthology about her father. Long concerned about myths and outright false information published about Walt, Diane undertook the production of this state-of-the-art, computerized history of Walt Disney. The opening sequence features an introduction by Diane and two of her sons, Chris and Walter. Moving through a virtual "Disney Museum," visitors have many choices of topics including the Carolwood Pacific Railroad featuring rare family home movies made at the estate in Holmby Hills. In fact, much of the visual material is never-before seen home movies and still photos combined with material provided by The Walt Disney Company. For tickets to Diane's Disneyland appearance, call Disneyland's Special Events at (714) 781-4000.

## Disney Barn Project Update

*(Continued from page 1)*  
In the meantime, a landscaping plan was developed under the direction of Disney Legend and CPHS member Morgan "Bill" Evans, who was responsible for the initial landscaping of Carolwood, Disneyland and all Disney Parks. A new concrete foundation will be installed and

approximately 80% of the original wood will be used to recreate the building. Fire regulations require that the old shake roof be replaced with a new fireproof material. Several of the old shingles were saved for color and texture match. Members of the CPHS will assist in designing the interior display of

Walt Disney railroad history and memorabilia. All CPHS members and their guests will be invited to join Diane Disney Miller and other members of the Disney family at the dedication ceremonies.

**Roundhouse Rambling**

This dusty corner is dedicated to unraveling rumors, squashing secrets and mulching myths. Cases on point concern two revered members of the railroad rolling stock at Disneyland: one of the original steam engines built at the studio machine shop, the "E. P. Ripley," and the VIP Presidential Coach, "Lilly Belle."

Let's take the coach first. Some meddling individual posted an Internet message stating that the coach was doomed due to rotting wood. It would never again be seen on the Disneyland railway--unless a massive campaign was launched to "persuade" Park management that they dare not restore the venerable coach named in honor of Mrs. Walt Disney. Enough information was posted to make it convincing that the source had inside access to information about Park operations. Needless to say, Park management was displeased. Fact is, the Lilly Belle will be restored to its former glory. Only unresolved issues are who will do the restoration and how soon it will be completed.

Next item. The 43-year-old Engine No. 2, named in honor of Santa Fe's first president, Edward Payson Ripley (1845-1920), had developed serious flaws in its drive mechanism. The average life of a steam engine is 25 years. Constant and meticulous attention to maintenance by the steam train crew in the facilities building (roundhouse) and the operating crew on the line has resulted in the Park's engines operating at peak performance well beyond the railroad industry's norm. When it became apparent that routine maintenance and repairs weren't going to be sufficient, Park management decided to spend the necessary money for a full mechanical and cosmetic restoration for No. 2. A company on the east coast was selected to perform the mechanical work and the Park's shops will handle the cosmetic restoration including a new wooden cab and complete paint and brass work. Doing it right takes time. When the engine is finished, it will have a rededication ceremony.

(Continued from page 2)

sentative from Disney's Special Events Group in Anaheim commented that it was the best company-sponsored event ever held outside a Disney theme park.

Following this major success, a full weekend schedule of activities was planned for Sept. 11, 12 and 13 under the direction of Mary Alice Hill, Executive Director of the Marceline Industrial Development Authority and Kaye Malins, Director of Tour Marceline. Visitors filled the Lamplighter Motel in Marceline and the overflow stayed at several hotels located in nearby Chillicothe, the Grand River Inn and Best Western about 40 minutes west of Marceline off Route 36.

Friday evening, following recognition of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Walt Disney Commemorative Stamp that was issued in Marceline by the U.S. Postal Service, a welcoming party and buffet was held at the Johnson Elk Farm in nearby Bucklin. Beyond the pilasters marking the entrance to the long driveway, the setting was right out of "Gone With The Wind" with towering willow trees, wide lawns and an imposing brick home. More impressive was the friendliness of everyone who made their guests feel like family.

The next day began early with a community breakfast in

Ripley Park. Even the weather cooperated with pleasant temperatures and a clear Missouri sky. The park, which was named for E. P. Ripley the first president of the Santa Fe, served as the center for an old fashioned craft fair offering a wide array of handmade goods for early Christmas shoppers. On a stage next to the park's Santa Fe steam engine that was completely restored for the event, two retired railroad engineers traded anecdotes in the style of Walt's "Uncle Mike." Mike Martin, who in fact was a cousin of Elias Disney, was a Santa Fe engineer operating on the line from Kansas City to Fort Madison, Iowa, with a stop in Marceline. Across the street from the park, two live steamers set up a loop of track and gave free rides on their one-eighth-scale miniature railroad. Throughout the day, pageants created by the townsfolk recreated myths and history from the fabled Jesse James Gang invasion to recounting stories involving young Walt, Ruth and oy Disney.

Reminders of the town's railroad heritage was evident about every 30 minutes as another freight or passenger train rumbled through the town with air horns blasting at every crossing. When the rails were quiet, amplified music provided by a deejay set on a makeshift stage in the center of

town maintained a festive tempo, while horse-drawn wagons laden with happy visitors clopped by.

Around two o'clock in the afternoon in front of an assembled multitude, Missouri Governor Mel Caranahan officiated at the dedication, with Mary Alice Hill as the master of ceremonies. The governor, who was accompanied by his family and a contingent of city and state officials, declared Marceline as "the official site for the centennial celebration of Walt's birthday, Dec. 5, 2001." During the ceremony, CPHS member Terry Lynn presented a special gift to the town's railroad museum on behalf of the LA Live Steamers, of which Terry also is a member. It was a section of Walt's original Carolwood Pacific track handsomely mounted in a frame complete with ballast. Then Michael Broggie presented the Governor with a boxed copy of his book, "Walt Disney's Railroad Story" and a CPHS hat. Michael also congratulated the town for restoring the old locomotive and tender in Ripley Park, with its unique designation as the "Santa Fe & Disneyland R.R." Walt recommended that the name be applied to the engine after seeing it on one of

(Continued on page 5)

**WARD KIMBALL TO BE HONORED BY ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD MUSEUMS**

Disney Legend, artist, animator, filmmaker, musician, toy collector, prankster, raconteur, railfan. These are a few of the descriptive titles that appropriately apply to CPHS Board member Ward Kimball. With an illustrative and Academy Award®-winning career spanning over 65 years, Ward's talents seem drawn from an endless resource. Besides his skills at the animator's board, which created such enduring characters as Jiminy Cricket,

Ward's longest passion has been his trains. He still owns his first set of trolley cars given to him when he was only five--eighty years ago. Throughout his life, Ward added to his collection of miniature and toy trains, which has become one of the world's most complete histories of model railroading. He didn't stop with miniatures. In 1938, Ward and wife Betty became the nation's first private citizens to own a full-sized steam engine, an 1881 Baldwin mogul, *Emma Nevada*. Later, Ward added a plantation

locomotive to his Grizzly Flats Railroad, naming it *Chloe* after one of his three children. All of this and more will be presented and discussed by Ward and Michael Broggie at the national convention of the Association of Railway Museums at their banquet on Saturday, Nov. 7 in the historic Mission Inn in Riverside. Reception begins at 6:30pm and dinner at 7:30pm. A limited number of tickets are available to CPHS members and may be ordered by calling Suzie Davis at (909) 943-3020.

## RICHARD L. THOMPSON

1945 - 1998

This is a tribute to the life and achievements of our friend Richard Thompson, a member of the CPHS Board of Governors, who died suddenly on Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> of a stroke at the age of 53.

Richard was well known among Southern California railroad live steamers as a meticulous scale modeler. His attention to detail was evident in his beautiful one-eighth scale steam engines: *C. K. Holiday*, *E. P. Ripley* and *Walter E. Disney*; and in his prized *Lilly Belle* presidential coach, a scaled-down replica of the Disneyland icon. All who saw them marveled at their precise crafting, which was in the best tradition of Walt Disney, whom Richard admired as a great steam railroader and American patron.

As a variation on an old adage about acorns: "An orange never falls far from its tree." In Richard's case this has never been a truer statement.

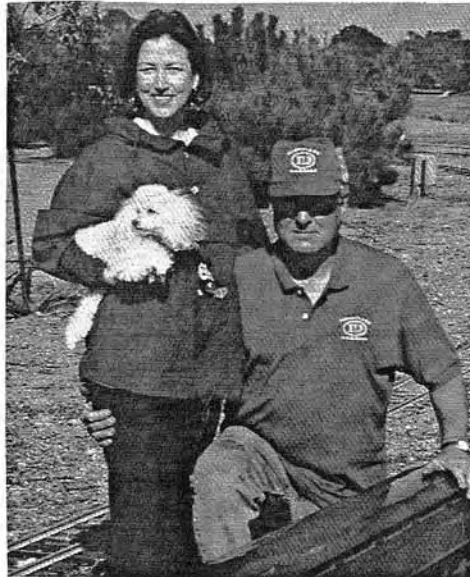
He was born March 2, 1945 in Orange, California, to Gladys and Alfred Thompson, and attended schools in the City of Orange and graduated from Orange High School.

He began working full-time at the age of 18 as a construction laborer, under the direction of his father, a distinguished Orange County building contractor, who taught Richard to value honest, hard work.

To many he was a dependable friend, and for 35 years, a trusted professional builder, engineer and estimator, who could lay eight-foot concrete drain-pipe as true as a line of miniature railroad track. With his beloved wife, Samma, he operated RLT Construction, Inc. a respected name in the building trades.

While Richard may have worked hard throughout his adult life--he also knew how to play hard--and fast.

As a boy, he shared a rather moderate hobby of model railroading with his dad. But, as a teenager, he discovered the thrilling power of a highly tuned automobile engine, so he sold his trains to buy and build his first in a series of Ford roadsters. He became a fixture among the polished chrome and hand rubbed lacquer of custom car meets around



Southern California. Typical of Richard, he became active as a member and then in the leadership of the LA Roadsters. Counted among his collection of vintage Fords at the time of his death, were a 1932 three-window coupe, a pickup and a highboy.

In 1984 he bought his first competition boat: a KR Class runabout. By 1992 he held the American Powerboat Association's National Championship in his class. He also loved to fly fast, and he took up airplane racing and owned a Beechcraft Baron.

His pursuit of active recreation, and engaging organizational ability, often led to presidencies of local clubs and national leadership positions.

When elevated blood pressure grounded him as a pilot, he rekindled his passion for trains; but this time he keyed on a passionate interest that he shared with Samma: Disneyana and Disneyland. As annual passholders, they could be found on any given evening, enjoying a stroll hand-in-hand down Main Street U.S.A., towards Sleeping Beauty Castle, enjoying the music, a parade, and endless assortments of people. Of course, true to the only standing rule of the CPHS, their visit always included a ride on one of Walt's live steam trains that encircle the Magic Kingdom.

The Thompsons' home in Anaheim Hills was selected because of its location near a busy freeway, so their neighbors

wouldn't complain about his noisy trains, boats and automobiles. He built a 3,500 square foot shop and installed a thousand feet of track to run his railroad.

Richard made a special trip all the way to Walt Disney World just to get good pictures of the paintings on the sides of the headlamp to use on his *Walter E. Disney* model. This is easy to believe, if you also knew that Richard was only 11 years old when he placed a telephone call directly to Walt Disney at the Studio...and got him on the line! Years later, Richard couldn't recall what was said, but remembered he had just seen an episode of the *Disneyland* TV show and wanted to know more from Walt about the Carolwood Pacific miniature railroad he'd seen on the program.

Richard and Samma were deservedly proud to show their collection of railroad equipment and did so throughout Southern California, at Disneyana conventions, live steamers meets, and last fall, a special exhibit in the Disney Art Gallery at Disneyland.

To honor the memory of Richard and his exemplary participation, the Board has directed creation of the *Carolwood Pacific Spirit Award* to be given to a Society member "whose conspicuous actions contribute to the preservation of Walt Disney's railroad legacy."

While Richard may have worked hard and played even harder, he never lost sight of the important values in his life: love of God and country, his role as a beloved stepdad, caring for his father, and his devout love for Samma. But it didn't end there. True animal lovers know how important our pets are, and Richard had a special place in his heart for their little white Poodle, Sparkle, who misses Richard just as we do.

*To one who has answered the last "all-a-board," Richard, we wish you green lights and clear track, until we meet again.*

If you would like to write to Samma, please address correspondence to the *Carolwood Chronicle*.

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his visits.

Following the ribbon cutting with the assistance of Mickey Mouse and official dedication by the Governor, a rousing parade snaked through the town, down Main Street U.S.A. and through an adjoining residential neighborhood. Classic automobiles, horses, bands and dignitaries made up the colorful procession, which received warm response from the crowd along the circuitous route.

After the parade, an assembly of Disney authors was presented in the high school gym including Steven Watts, author of "The Magic Kingdom," and a history professor at University of Missouri; Robin Allan, author of a soon-to-be-published work on the European influence on Disney animation, who visited from England where he earned a Ph.D. in Disney; and Michael Broggie. They discussed the role Walt played in shaping entertainment in America and the world, and took questions from the audience about Disney history. A larger gathering of Disney authors is planned for Walt's centennial in 2001.

That evening, Kaye and Wally Malins hosted a barbecue at their Disney farm. The highlight of the visit by CPHS members was Kaye's personally guided tour of the farmhouse she and Wally restored. Of particular interest was the second story bedroom shared by Walt and Roy. It is furnished in antiques dating from the turn of the century including a brass bed. Kaye is an antiques expert and operates a store in town for the benefit of youth charity. Years later, while addressing an audience of company employees in Walt's presence, Roy recalled that his younger used to wet the bed they shared in Marceline, finishing with the line: "...and he's been pissing on my leg ever since." Which, of course, was greeted by howls of laughter--especially from Walt.

After the barbecue, CPHS member Dan Viets gave one of his outstanding presentations on Disney history at the Encore Theater highlighting Walt's close connections to Marceline.

After the service, CPHS members and others were invited to a luncheon presentation of Marceline's vision for the future presented by Mary Alice Hill from the Industrial Development Office. One of those in attendance, Terry Lynn, later expressed his desire to return to Marceline to open a railroad-themed restaurant on Main Street U.S.A.

On Sunday morning, under cloudy skies, many of the townsfolk were joined by visitors for a nondenominational service in Ripley Park conducted by clergy representing the churches of Marceline. At the beginning of the service, Michael Broggie gave a dedication of the steam engine in memory of "all Santa Fe workers who lost their lives working on the railroad." A new brass plaque on the engine notes the memorial--the only one of its kind.

After the service, CPHS members and others were invited to a luncheon presentation of Marceline's vision for the future presented by Mary Alice Hill from the Industrial Development Office.



At a prior meeting with Marceline officials, Michael Broggie suggested as a fundraiser, that the second story windows on Main Street U.S.A. be leased to individuals and families who want to create their own "Window on Main Street" like the ones at Disneyland and other Disney Parks. He said that the window designer could create a small copy of the design suitable for framing as a commemorative. If the lease period was ten years and 100 windows were leased at the cost of \$100 each per year, \$100,000 would be generated for town improvements. Broggie committed that he would be the first to lease a window if the project is approved.

The event in three years will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to share Disney history as the entire town, the Governor, NFFC and Carolwood Pacific Historical Society members and friends gather to honor Marceline's most famous resident, Walt Disney.



# Carolwood Chronicle

1032 Amberton Lane  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91230-3514

Mailing  
Address  
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## CAROLWOOD CHRONICLE

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## View from the Copula

Most significant was the call received from Downs Prior informing that Richard Thompson had died of a massive stroke. He was only 53.

His wife Samma has suffered the unthinkable for a loving couple but she is coping a day at a time. She appreciates all of the support and outpouring of concern expressed by CPHS members.

The Board is creating the Richard Thompson Spirit Award, to be awarded to the member who demonstrates significant support for CPHS activities. This is appropriate, since Richard and Samma were the most active members of the CPHS.

This has been one of those years. Everything was going

fine last spring, the Barn at the Disney's Carolwood estate was dismantled in a few days under the direction of the CPHS by a very diligent crew headed by Bill Abel, a general contractor from the Flintridge area.

Then the lawyers got into the act and everything seemed to shift into slow motion. The City of Los Angeles, the LA Live Steamers and the Disney Family Foundation all had their agendas. Finally, we're close to signatures on the final edition of the agreement and can get on with construction.

It was fortunate the barn was removed. The new owners of the estate tore down the house—after they said they wanted to live in the “home of Walt Disney and

raise their children there.”

The folks in Marceline know how to throw a party. We were disappointed that more CPHS members couldn't attend. The town is strongly recommended for your itinerary and certainly in 2001 when we celebrate Walt's centennial there.

We're always looking for member stories to print in future editions. —Ed.

