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**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- Friends Annual Dinner Gala  
Santa Maria Fairpark  
POSTPONED
- Friends Presentation  
"Heart of the Valley Talks"  
in Shepard Hall at the  
Santa Maria Public Library  
POSTPONED
- Annual BBQ at SMVRR  
Saturday, August 22, 2020  
11 am to 3 pm

## COVID-19 Results in Postponement of Programs

Using an abundance of caution and to protect our members and the community, we are postponing all tours, presentations, and our upcoming Annual Dinner Gala until further notice. We will continue to monitor guidance from local, national, and world health organizations and officials and will reschedule when it is safe to do so.

In the meantime we are continuing to work remotely researching new articles for upcoming newsletters and planning future events. We are also performing research for several projects, designing future exhibits, etc. So even though our member activities are postponed, we continue to work behind the scenes. We encourage all of you to continue to support the Friends and renew your Friends membership if you have not done so yet.

The Santa Maria Valley Railroad asks that we convey to all of our members and the general public that the railroad continues to fully operate and is making every effort to keep their employees healthy and the trains running. Freight transportation is critical during these trying times and the railroad office and yard facility is closed to everyone except critical train operations personnel and transload personnel. Please do not visit the railroad at this time. The railroad thanks everyone for their cooperation.

Despite all of the recent challenges as the COVID-19 Virus has disrupted our lives in unimaginable ways, we are so grateful for all of the support from our members with a great many of you renewing your memberships and to continue your support and your donations towards our new scholarship fund. Thank you all for your continued support!

## In Memoriam Betty Himoto



The Santa Maria Valley Railroad announced the passing of Director Betty Chiyoko Himoto on Wednesday January 22, 2020 at the age of 95. She was described as a tireless advocate for rail transportation on the Central Coast and an unwavering supporter of reinvestment for the company.

The Santa Maria Valley Railroad was purchased by the Coast Belle Rail Corp from the descendants of the Hancock Family on October 1, 2006. Betty assumed a position on the Board immediately following the ownership change, a position she held until the day that she passed. She was a tireless advocate for rail transportation, and an unwavering supporter of reinvestment in the company. Betty helped revitalize the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, increasing freight traffic five times while rebuilding its track infrastructure and customer base.

Through the years Betty was an active behind the scenes volunteer for the Friends. Betty made the salads and helped prepare and

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# New Scholarship Fund



The Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad is pleased to announce an annual scholarship for eligible students within Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. We have established the **Betty Himoto Memorial Scholarship Fund** with charitable donations made to the Friends of SMVRR in memory of Betty Himoto, Director of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad.

An annual scholarship of \$1000 will be awarded to a qualifying student pursuing a degree or technical training in the Industrial Arts with a career goal in the rail industry. More information about qualifications and the application process will be available on the Friends website.

We had planned for this year's Friends Dinner Gala and Silent Auction Fundraiser to be the primary funding source for this scholarship fund, but due to COVID-19, the Gala has been delayed and possibly cancelled. If you would like to contribute directly to the scholarship fund, you can go to [www.friends-smvrr.org/scholarship](http://www.friends-smvrr.org/scholarship) or mail your check to Friends of SMVRR, P.O. Box 1031 Santa Maria, CA 93456-1031. Please make your check payable to Friends of SMVRR and designate it for the "Betty Himoto Memorial Scholarship Fund".

## Betty Himoto - In Memoriam (continued from page 1)

serve the food at many Friends BBQ's and functions through the years. Betty loved to pitch in tirelessly during events and cleaned up afterwards always one of the last to leave.

Betty was born in Burbank, California on July 4, 1924. She was the 4<sup>th</sup> of 6 children born to Kameto and Tschiyō Hori. Betty grew up on a hardscrabble farm in Burbank and later Ryde, California. During World War II the family was sent to Tule Lake Relocation Center, part of the 110,000 Japanese Americans who were relocated out of the West Coast.

In 1950 Betty married Roy Himoto and they had 4 children, Lester, Raymond, Nancy, and Robert. In 1996 she moved to the Central Coast and became increasingly more active in railroad industry investing, ultimately leading to her 2006 involvement with the Santa Maria Valley Railroad led by her sons Robert and Raymond Himoto. The company remains committed to carrying on her legacy and carrying on her vision for the future.

At Betty's Memorial Service, her son Rob talked about how his mother Betty despite experiencing many hardships in her life never had bitterness or malice about her past. When Betty was young, she had to sit in the back of the rail car because of her race, and during World War II she and her family rode the train to Tule Lake with all of the blinds turned down so they could not see where they were going. In 2000 she rode in a private rail car Silver Lariat behind Amtrak, and was now a director of a railroad company. Only in America.



## OUR SPONSORS:

We welcome new sponsors to expand our programs and tours and fund educational activities.



**G. A. Hancock  
Family**



# Where Are They Now?

## Steam Locomotive No. 1000

The locomotive was built in 1920 by Alco for the Hetch Hetchy Railroad and went to work as No.4, supporting the construction of the O'Shaughnessy Dam on the Tuolumne River. The Hetch Hetchy Reservoir would supply San Francisco with power and water. In 1924 with the bulk of the dam construction complete, No.4 was sold off along with other motive power. It was sold to the Newaukum Valley Railroad in Washington State and renumbered 1000. There it went to work hauling for the Carlisle Lumber Co. After 20 years on the Newaukum Valley it was acquired by the Santa Maria Valley Railroad in 1944 and retained its' No.1000. This was the largest steam locomotive ever acquired by the Santa Maria Valley with 20"x28" cylinders, 48" drivers, and weighing in at 188,000 lbs. The Santa Maria Valley Railroad donated No. 1000 to Travel Town in Griffith Park in 1958 where it was put on static display. Still proudly wearing "Santa Maria Valley" on its' tender it remains on display there today.

Details on SMVRR No. 1000:

2-8-2 Drivers 48" Weight: 188,000 lbs. Tractive Effort: 35,700 lbs.

Builder: American Locomotive Company (Alco) Builder No. 61535 Build Date: Jan-1920



SMVRR #1000 in Santa Maria Yard in the 1940s



SMVRR #1000 boarded up in the 1950s



SMVRR #1000 in Griffith Park Travel Town in Los Angeles as it looks today



## Oceano Depot Tour

A group of Friends members toured the Oceano Depot on Saturday Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>. To view the story and pictures, visit the Friends website at [friends-smvrr.org/200229.html](https://friends-smvrr.org/200229.html). For more info about Oceano Depot, visit their website at [www.oceanodepot.org](https://www.oceanodepot.org).

# SMVRR Trendsetting Female Railroad Directors

The Santa Maria Valley Railroad has been a trendsetter in the railroad industry as far as the role of women in what is traditionally a male dominated industry, especially in the board room. In the 1950's the SMVRR had the first female dispatcher among American Railroads. Marian Hancock was one of the first female presidents of a railroad company when Captain Hancock passed away in 1965. Shortly afterwards the SMVRR became one of the first railroads to have two female directors at the same time with the addition of Sue Sword. Later Sue Sword became the first female director of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, paving the way to participation by some of the most influential women among short line railroads to serve on the ASLRRA Board including Maggie Silver, President of the Pinsky Railroad and Judy Petry, President of Farmrail.



Marion Hancock

The Santa Maria Valley Railroad may have the record for longest continuing female directorship for any railroad company in the nation. Marian Hancock became a director in the 1950's. Sue Sword followed as she became a director and shortly after was appointed General Manager of the Railroad in 1965. Sue Sword remained on the board until relinquishing her seat when the Rosemary Trust took over the railroad in 1999. At that time Patricia Brennan, granddaughter of Captain Hancock, and Jane McGovern, great granddaughter of Captain Hancock, became board members.



Marion and Allan Hancock

In 2006 when the Coast Belle Rail Corp purchased the Santa Maria Valley Railroad from the descendants of the Hancock Family, Betty Himoto became director at the age of 81. She served as director until her death in January at the age of 95, at the time the oldest railroad director in the nation. In December 2019 Betty's daughter Nancy Nungesser was installed as director anticipating the retirement of Betty. Nancy continues the legacy of continuously held seat by a woman for almost 70 years. The Class I railroads did not see their first female directors until the 1990's. Rob Himoto, President and Chairman, stated that it is really just a coincidence that the Santa Maria Valley Railroad has had a female director for almost 70 years. These women were and are the best possible people for the board as they all shared the vision of putting the railroad first for its customers, employees, and the community. They all had to make tough decisions regarding the future of the railroad and it is because of their legacy the railroad survives and thrives today.



Sue Sword



Patricia Brennan



Jane McGovern



Betty Himoto and Nancy Nungesser



Betty Himoto

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All photos are from  
the archives of the  
Santa Maria Valley  
Railroad unless  
otherwise noted.