

July 2015

The RLS Chronicle

NEWS OF THE RIVERSIDE LIVE STEAMERS



In remembrance...

It is again with sadness that we note the passing in June
of another long-time Live Steamer, Harry Haas.

Please read the wonderful tribute to Harry written by
Brian Ratliff inside.

M E S S A G E F R O M T H E P R E S I D E N T

Ah - choices, choices. I can either drag an old moldy "Summer is here, watch yourselves in the heat" Presidents message, or regale you all with all new witty prose. How about neither? I go with neither. BUT, I will tell you a story, and no, it does NOT involve a man named Jed. It does, however, have a man named Ken Ames.

It all started on a dark and stormy night - not really but it sounds good in the who-done-it novels I've been reading of late. It actually begins on a Thursday with Randy Chase up in Train Mountain. I got a phone call from Randy sometime while I was sleeping, and boy, oh boy is Randy excited on the voice mail. I finally called him back, and during a standard Randy phone call (Some of you may not have had that joy yet. The boy is as excited as a 4 year old on Christmas morning, and possesses all the organizational skills of a Chinese fire department on most of the phone calls I've had with him.) In any event, he was telling me that he has had the pleasure of meeting 'this old guy' who ran the Big Boys when they were still operational. Well THAT would be cool to listen to his stories of the most advanced steam engine ever built. Randy goes on to tell me that the old guy is being squired about Train Mountain by two of his sons, and they want to drive down to RLS to see the model that we are lucky enough to have on our home rails. I tell Randy to give the guy my phone number and we can talk. I was thinking Train Mountain to RLS just to see a model? Even I'm not that nuts.

The next day (Friday) I get a phone call from Arlo Ames, Mr. Ames son. They are now visiting the California Railroad Museum in Sacramento, and they would sure like to see the Big Boy on Saturday if at all possible. I'm thinking if they're crazy enough to drive to Riverside from Sacramento, I'm crazy enough to go out and open the gate so they can see it. Arrangements are made and they arrive around 2 in the afternoon Saturday. I had arrived at the compound before they did, and found Gary Mocko and Bill Hesse puttering about getting ready for the run day the next day. When the Ames contingent arrived, it was all smiles and stories for a couple of hours while they examined the engine in all it's glory, and we (the RLS folks) just listened to the stories and enjoyed the sight of someone reliving a fond period of his life. There was discussion about how they really would like to see it run, but they had to drive onto Albuquerque. I suggested that he next day was a run day, and the sons Arlo and Harold went onto conference and decided that they could stay the night, then make a power run to New Mexico the next day so Dad could see the thing in operation. I called Bob Smith and asked him if he was coming down to run, and he allowed as it was hotter than he wanted to be out in and hadn't planned on it. I explained what was going on and he agreed he could run in the morning before it got too hot.

Once that was set, Gary suggested the Comfort Inn motel on University has a RLS room rate, and then he left. While I was putting things away and locking up, Gary called the compound and confirmed the room rates, and the RLS discount was still in effect for them if they wanted it. I finished locking up, and the Ames family suggested that they would buy lunch, so off we went to Farmer Boys for lunch. At lunch, it came out that Mr. Ames had ended his career with the railroads and had gone on to designing and building rocket motors for the Apollo program. How cool is that? From the engineering peak of one phase of history right into the next peak of engineering prowess. The next day the family was on site early, and then rode behind the Big Boy (crewed by Bob and Gary) until Ken was about done in by the heat and sun. They left about noon as happy as a kid with a new puppy, even with the endurance run into New Mexico ahead of them.

Continued....

The point to all this rambling is that we as a club came together to share our hobby, on very short notice, with people we may never see again, because that's what we all like to do. Ken Ames (and his sons) seemed to enjoyed it very much, as did the people who were running the trains. There is a reason that we are known as a friendly bunch of railroaders, and this is it. From Randy and Dean in Train Mountain to the membership here on the home road, RLS members went out of their way to make the Ames family feel as welcome as a long lost cousin. This kind of response from the membership makes me proud to be a member here and you ought to be as well.

Bunts

To clarify...

Just a quicky note to set some folks straight, and get this off my chest. Rumor has it that I fired Dave Parrott from the Board of Directors of our wonderful organization. I suspect that I did, but let me 'splain that as Ricky Riccardo said once upon a time. I was feeling Trump-like that morning at the meeting, but without the bad comb-over, several Russian ex-wives (they were probably KGB spies anyway), mostly bad looking double breasted suits and not nearly enough money in my pocket, and it just seemed to fit the mood. I did NOT fire Dave, although those words may have been used.

What actually has occurred is Mr. Parrott has taken the department chair of the program that he teaches at Mt. San Jacinto College and has flat run out of time for anything other than trying to take care of that program. As we all know, Dave may not have been the first to arrive at RLS on run and work days (Lord knows I hate getting out of bed, and 7 am seems a really good time to GO to bed, not be getting out of it...) but he was ALWAYS there when you needed something to keep the railroad running - party train - "sure", crossing guard - "you bet", brakeman - "sure"; he was always up for any task.

Dave had sent a letter to the board when he resigned from the Chron editors position, explaining that he didn't have the time to devote to the club newsletter that he thought it deserved, and was asking for advice from the board members about resigning his position on the board because of the time crunch he was facing. Free advice was happily distributed to him, and we all know what free advice is worth. In any event, it became apparent that Dave has temporarily shed some of the things he loves to devote his time to making a living, and like his efforts at RLS, do the best he can in his new position. The down side, for us anyway, is that Dave is missing from RLS. RLS needs a strong board of directors, so Larry Fisher, who had just barely missed being elected to the board during the last election was asked to step in for Dave to ensure that the club business will continue. Accept this fact - RLS IS a business, and needs to be run like one to ensure that we will continue for another 50 years running steam in Hunter Park. I miss Dave, his silliness was infectious, he does have a clever mind and sees things we don't, and most of all he was able to keep Ron Wilkerson in line...

Dave will be back when he gets some breathing room, the steam bug is too well entrenched for him to stay away any longer than he needs to. I look forward to that day.

In Remembrance...Harry Haas

Live steam lost one of those old guys that had been around forever.

Harry Haas.... Heck, back in the 70's he had been around since rocks were soft.

A San Diego motor cop in the days of oil dripping Harley's, as a Harley guy he would tell stories of the day. One that he told more than once was about the day he got his new 1956 Pan Head and made a traffic stop on a hot summer day on a crowned road. He parked the scooter, but the crown on the road was pretty high. He thought that he was far enough over when he dropped the jiffy stand (on Harley's by real riders they are not called kick stands, those are on those Japanese models). As he was talking to the gal explaining the wrong of the day he looked back in time to see his brand new bike roll slowly over to the right and over the edge of the road. He let her go, hoping to this day she didn't tell a soul.

Harry had a live steam track in Jamul, now even San Diego people call that the sticks. And this was in the days way before Chula Vista had a track so all the live steamers down there would go visit him. In the mid-seventies he built a 2 1/2" Mogul with a string of passenger; a Colorado & Southern engine and about four yellow passenger cars to pull behind. Growing up we would see it at Riverside during meets. It wasn't the first narrow gauge engine but it was an early one. That engine went to a guy named Thorpe and now belongs to Ray Bjerrum in the Fresno area, it still is around.

Harry had an electric Heisler and it resides at Bitter Creek these days. He built two, 2, Santa Fe 2900's (2925, 2926). One is at Riverside and the Casford clan owns that one. For the longest time Harry ran a 1 1/2" 4-4-0 of Gene Allen design. He built a few engines and they all seem to be around somewhere, a good testament to a builder.

As I said before, Harry had a track in Jamul, but most will remember his track in Tehachapi more. From the late 70's to into the 90's the first weekend in August was a trip up to cool off at the 4000' elevation of Tehachapi at Harry's track around his acre and a half; a loop with a crossover to a figure eight. Enough sidings to run bi-directional for the brave hearted with working signals to boot. The 90 degree crossover in the middle had semaphore's that raised and lowered as one passed; right next to the full sized windmill. My favorite spot was Iron Springs. The original 'Bad Boys of Live Steam' made our annual pilgrimage to Harry's and if you ever hear any stories of a group of guys riding a freight train through town in front of a railway police caboose, they are true. So are stories of a pile of beverage containers under a stake-bed truck.

Harry was quite a guy, I knew him a way most didn't. He had an infectious smile and a hearty handshake. I can imagine him standing at a steaming bay talking to a few old timers once again. Till we meet again, keep the water in the glass and a clear track ahead.

George and Linda and all of us who knew Harry want to thank Brian from Joshua Tree RR for his remembrance above. Brian you said it well.

Harry Hass...He was a long time Live Steamer and will be missed. —Bill Mac

2015 City Lunch

Thanks to Bill Hesse and Ted Johnson for being the train crew on the Hunter, George Bartlow for photos, Ron Wilkerson, Glenn and Mac for hospitality and Jim Kreider compound security, and our famous leader Prez Bunts. We had a wonderful lunch with the City Council, Mayor, Park Director, Park Superintendent, Park Supervisor, Recreation Director, Randy McDaniel Park Planner and various Park Commissioners and City Attorney and staff assistants. Everyone came early and stayed late enjoying the food and wonderful weather in Hunter Hobby Park with several Train Rides!!

Road 2/City Liaison Rich Casford



1 to 1 Scale News...The Other Hunter Station

Six months from now, local officials expect the Perris Valley Line to be up and running. The \$248 million Metrolink construction project will add four stations and 24 miles of track to a regional commuter rail system that already connects Riverside and San Bernardino to downtown Los Angeles, Orange County, Ventura County and beyond.

The new stations are Riverside Hunter Park, Moreno Valley-March Field, Downtown Perris and South Perris, which is less than 2 miles from the Menifee border.

JUST A NOTE

While sitting with Ron Wilkerson in the shelter at Panorama Point watching Pat O'Guinn push his engine back into the compound due to injectors that wouldn't pick up, Ron commented that he wondered what happened to the ultrasonic cleaner that he had brought to club for injector cleaning. If any of you have any idea where it is, or what corner it got pushed into during the course of cleaning the place up, do you think you might be able to find it and get it back onto the bench in the clubhouse where Mr. O'Guinn might be able to use it?

Bunts

June 14th Run Day

Summer doesn't officially start for seven more days, but with the day's temperature reaching the low 90's it felt like summer was already here.

Bill Hesse took his turn as Operating Superintendent of the day. There were five engines out on the railroad and 17 members helping out.

The Hunter Train duties were covered by Engineer Mike Gardner with Trainmen Curtis Claybrook and Ted Johnson covering Brakeman duties.

The Childhood Cancer Foundation of Southern California held their 2015 Family Picnic at Hunter Park. As in years past R.L.S. provided a party train for the "Candle Lighters". A double headed train with Jonathan Chase at the point on the Lannon 4-4-2 and Randy Chase at the controls of Dean Willoughby's 4-8-4. Connie Herd kept an eye on everything from the Hunter tender with Brakemen Dean Willoughby watching from rear of the train.

Rich Casford and his 4-8-4 Northern were out on the railroad taking care of the birthday train with Jim Wood as Brakeman. After the party Jim and Rich went into passenger service.

With 667 passenger for the day Station Master Glenn Maness had his hands full, helping out at the Station was new member Tina Shield at merchandise and Bob Roberts at the four track crossing.



June 28th Run Day

With a morning of overcast skies and monsoonal moisture from the South the day's weather promised to be uncomfortable... and did it ever deliver on that promise!

Throughout the day were a total of eight engines out on the railroad and 29 members on hand.

Manny Caldera checked the railroad, cleaned off the grade crossing and lubed the switches before the first public trains were at the station.

The First Hunter trains of the day were engineered by Mike Gardner with Trainman John Gurwell covering Brakeman duties in the morning. After some minor signal work Bill Hesse took over as Hunter Engineer and Brakeman Manny Caldera swapped seats with John Gurwell.

The 4-8-8-4 Big Boy made a rare "figure eight" Run Day appearance and run for three visiting guests – Harold Ames, Arlo Ames and Ken Ames. Ken Ames was a former Hostler and Fireman on the full size Big Boy locomotive in his youth. I would like to thank Ken and his sons for taking time out of their travel plans to stop by RLS to visit and share stories of the past. Once our visitors were headed on their way, Bob Smith and Gary Mocko grabbed up six passenger cars and went into helper passenger service at the station.

Mike Gardner and John Gurwell took over the Hunter train from Bill and Manny for the last half of the day.

Marty Berg was at the four track grade crossing making sure that those folks that braved the heat and humidity to enjoy Hunter Park did so safely. Junior Member Aiden Shields took care of the switch duties at the South end of the station yard, Bob Roberts taking over for the last half of the day. Our Station Master Glenn Maness had help the station provided by Leone Fisher and Tina Shields. Passenger trains were not alone on the railroad as the freight fleet and mixed consists were well represented by Gus Farwick, Casey Farwick and Ron Wilkerson on Ron's Mikado, Paul Quick and Cameron McMonigle running Paul's 4-4-2 Atlantic, Charlie Kennemer on his Mogul, Pat O'Guinn fired up his 2-6-0, Bill Phillips' Pacific made a lap or two at the hands of Cameron McMonigle, Richard Miller had his 0-6-0 out for a bit and Larry Fisher, David Weiss and Bill Mac took a couple laps behind Bill's narrow gauge Ten Wheeler to finish off the day.

A very large thanks to all the members that helped out today. It was hot, muggy and downright miserable outside and you all helped to make the day run smooth.



THANK YOU!! - Brook



Congratulations to the entire Berg family !

On April 24, 2015, my petition to formally adopt Jack was granted! In honor of his late father, Jack will use his former last name as his middle name. Officially he is now Sakda "Jack" Tabongtong Berg.

His mother, Somsong, returned to Thailand to bring him over after our marriage. He arrived in the USA on February 23, 2010. Since he was a small child he has been fascinated with trains. He pursued a membership at R.L.S. after we visited the Big Train Show in Ontario a few years ago.

- Marty Berg

Coming Events

July 12th: Run day

August 9th: Run day

July 18th: Work day & Board meeting

August 15th: Work day & Board meeting

July 26th: Run day

August 23th: Run day

Special Night Run Dates ... Aug 1st and Aug 29th

Come out and enjoy some cooler temperatures (hopefully) and some train fun in the dark !

For Work Day and Run Day updates, Visit: www.steamonly.org

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