

THE RLS CHRONICLE

News of the Riverside Live Steamers



October 2010

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Plus so much more...**



"Nathan, the trainer who trains..."

One of the great attributes of Riverside Live Steamers is that folks (adults AND kids) who don't own a locomotive are given training on other members' locomotives. Bill Mac, Randy Chase, Paul Quick, and Ron Wilkerson have always been the first to say, "Hey, let me show you how to run this thing." RLS even has the "Hunter Class" where members can learn to operate the club's 4-8-4, C-16 and Atlantic. Here, Nathan Parrott joins the trainers as he shows Cody Gates how to make "Moana" go.



Bill Hesse's Words O' Wisdom

The Hunter park project has reached the point where all the drain pipes and underground electrical conduits need to be installed before they can move on to the build up phase. The result is, the entire park is looking pretty barren, and there are still open trenches everywhere. The largest pipe had to run under our engine leads, at a depth of almost twenty feet, and another that will soon cut us off from the yard and car barn. Parts of the north loop look like the D&RG, with precipitous drop offs within inches of the right of way. There are several places where the contractor simply cut through the track, or tunneled under it, without bothering to let us remove the track first. Dave Bunts, along with the park department have been working overtime to try to limit the damage. There will be a lot of extra work to get the railroad back in working order. We've had to cancel the fall meet, and it may be another month before it is again safe to even enter the park. While the trenching continues, even RLS members are asked to stay away from the construction area. We still have access to the compound, so we can get started on building the new steel track sections for the road crossings and building track panels for the new station. Watch the web site for work day announcements.

It takes more than a few holes in the railroad to dampen the spirits of true live steamers. As luck would have it, we're right in the middle of the fall meet schedule, and living in southern California puts several other tracks within driving range. This gives us a rare opportunity to visit other railroads whose run day's conflict with our own.

Recently, a large contingent of RLS members made the trek up to Ridgecrest to visit the Sagebrush Short line. Over 90 people from clubs around the southland showed up to ride the rails of this small private railroad. With a main line about the same length as our north loop, it's amazing to watch a dozen trains running bidirectional at the same time. With nice warm weather, and lots of steaming friends, we all felt right at home. The most notable difference, of course, was that Ridgecrest has a lot more grass and trees than Hunter Park.

The good news is that the light at the end of the tunnel is probably an oncoming train. Before long we'll start to see the park move in to the construction phase and begin to look more like the drawings. By Thanksgiving we should have the north loop back in public operation, and we can start reinstalling the ball park loop as soon as there's a ball park to put it around. We can start building the Iowa station tracks as soon as there is an Iowa station. Think happy thoughts, there IS a railroad in our future.

You know you're addicted to live-steaming when...

You want to talk about a strange dream you had, and your confidant says, "If it's about small steam engines *again*... I don't want to hear it."



Officially Unofficial

Even though September was young, Summer 2010 began rolling into its last few weeks and the end of those warm wonderful nights was looming around the corner. There was also the prospect that the railroad might be shut down for a month or so while the contractor digs deep trenches for irrigation. So, what do RLS folks do? Why, the only natural thing live steamers like to do: come together for an impromptu night run and run trains! Sometime around September 4th an officially unofficial email went out to many of the RLS members informing them of an unofficial night run. It also instructed those members to inform as many other members that may not have received the unofficial invite to the officially unofficial night. Thus, on September 5th, quite a number of RLSers came together and officially made the best unofficial use of our railroad for an officially great night run!

Out for the evening was Randy Chase, Jonathan Chase, and Dean Wiloughby on the Lannon 4-4-2; the Parrott's and their Shay; Bob Cummings with his 2-8-2; Chris Enright on his 0-4-0; the Casfords with their 4-8-4 (although, it didn't make it out of the compound... more on that in just a few sentences); Bill McLaughlin with his 4-6-0; Ron Wilkerson with his 4-6-0, and Casey Farwick on Ron's 2-6-0.

Prior to the night run, Rich Casford did his customary walk-the-line to make sure everything was ship-shape. Unfortunately, he found an area just east of the wig-wag where a tractor/grader hit our tracks while scraping up the park's old grass. In doing so, our mainline was bent and lifted to the point that none of the trains (maybe not even the Shay) could have made a single lap. Also, two of the crossing pads were so completely covered with hardened mud from all the construction equipment that even if locomotives made it past the damaged track, they wouldn't have made it over the grade crossings. So, for a period of about 90 minutes, Rich fixed the damaged track then shoveled and swept out the grade crossings. Without this work, our officially unofficial night run would have officially come to a quick end. Thanks Rich!

Run Days at Neighboring Railroads

We are fortunate to live in an area with some many railroads close-by. As our railroad remains closed, here is a collection of dates for run days and special events that will be happening at other railroads:

Joshua Tree Southern	October 29-30, Open Run Day November 11 – 14, Rudy Run
Orange County Model Eng	October 16 and 17 Run Days November 20 and 21 Run Days
Chula Vista Live Steamers	November 13 and 14, Public Run Days
So. Cal Live Steamers	November 7 and 20, Public Run Days
Los Angeles Live Steam	Run Days on every Sunday



Bigger Engineers!

Once again the training and experience of RLS members operating steam locomotives and running our railroad in a professional manner has paid off.

Andrew Martin and Greg Casford are both finishing their final days of training for Amtrak engineers in the Los Angeles pool. These two RLS members join the ranks of Matt Casford (BNSF) John Gero (BNSF) Brendon Hilton (BNSF) George Lavacot (P&W) who get run trains for their day jobs!

Ridgecrest Fall Meet

About a month ago, a special invitation went out to all RLS folks to head out to Ridgecrest for the Sagebrush Short Line fall meet. As our railroad is undergoing massive changes, it seemed like the perfect change-of-scene to head out to the deep desert and fire up some locomotives.

The Sagebrush Short Line is owned by George and Linda Pruitt, who are both fine examples of good people and gracious hosts. Beginning on Sept. 24, people from all over southern and central California began to arrive for the annual run. Come Saturday, twenty-five locomotives (steam, gas and electric powered) and one half-scale Case tractor had arrived to put on quite a showing! Of the folks who attended, 27 RLS members made the trek to the Pruitt homestead, some bringing locomotives, others bringing rolling stock, and still others coming simply to renew old friendships.

If you missed this run, there will be another very special Christmas run on December 4th and 5th. Contact George and Linda for more information.





State of the Park

The construction/deconstruction at Hunter Park continues... sometimes at a snail's pace and other times frantically. However, the work certainly seems to be progressing forward towards our "new" park (15 months away... or so.... ish)

If you happen to take a peek at the park (which we're not supposed to go anywhere in the park other than our compound), the first thing you'll notice are deep trenches running and crisscrossing everywhere. And deep they are: the trench just outside of the compound measures about 8 feet across and some 25 feet deep! These trenches will carry conduit and piping for weather drainage, sewage, irrigation and electricity. One member asked, "Why can't we still run the trains? The tracks will keep us out of the trenches." That is only semi-true: Currently, one trench was dug right across our mainline, just west of the Wig-Wag crossing and thus a panel of track had to be removed. Other trenches come right up to and within inches of our right-of-way. One wrong step and it will be a trip to the hospital with *at least* a broken ankle. Right now, the park is a dangerous place for anybody, even for the construction workers. It's a good thing we aren't running, or worse, pulling the public.



Other big changes that have happened over the past few weeks concern our pond and the top of the Vandenberg grade. The pond is now mostly gone. Only the far eastern side remains and is about 12 to 14 feet deep, about the same in width, with relatively steep sides. Currently, it's not known if the pond will remain this way or if it's only a temporary "catch-all" for the up-coming rainy season. It's recommended that you do not walk down into it because of the steep sides. As far as the Vandenberg grade goes, there are big changes to the area right around the cross-over. Where we used to cross a large fill with the grassy park below is now mostly level: the construction crews filled in the park as they ready to make the new play area and basketball courts.

To stay up-to-date with all the changes happening, keep an eye on our website, the Chronicle, and attend our monthly meetings.



September 12 Run Day

A warm (okay... down-right hot) day was met by those who wanted to run their locomotives on this run day. Even so, we had seven locomotives come to life and polish the rails of our short loop. However, this wasn't a run-of-the-mill run day: Joining us was a local producer for Time Warner Cable. More on that in a bit.

Making sure the producer had good content to videotape were Bill McLaughlin (4-6-0), Chris Enright (0-4-0), Greg Casford (4-8-4), Randy Chase (4-4-2), Josh Klenski (4-6-4), and the Parrott Family (Shay). Pulling public on the club's C-16 was engineer Brook Adams with brakemen Bob Smith, Nathan Parrott and A.J. Benson. In the compound, but not fired up were Dave Moore (4-6-6-4) and Bill Phillips (4-6-2).

About a month prior to this run day, Diane Schram of Southern California Time Warner Cable contacted the club hoping to do a travel-log piece about the RLS. Even though the park was in the deconstruction/demolition stages of the Renaissance Project and looking pretty sad, the BoD felt that any good press about us is... well... good press about us! Therefore, arriving at the Compound early, Diane joined us while members fired up their locomotives. She filmed footage through the morning and well into the afternoon: walking the entire right-of-way four or five times and then filming while riding several of our trains. In fact, even when the heat of the day had reached 108 degrees, she stuck with us, grabbing footage until 3:00! As it stands, the broadcast is available only to Southern California (local) Time Warner Cable customers on their "Video on Demand - Channel 1" within a show called "So Cal's Best" under the title "Train-ride Steamers". However, she will be sending us a DVD copy of her production and will be available through the RLS library for check-out.





WORK DAY NOTICE

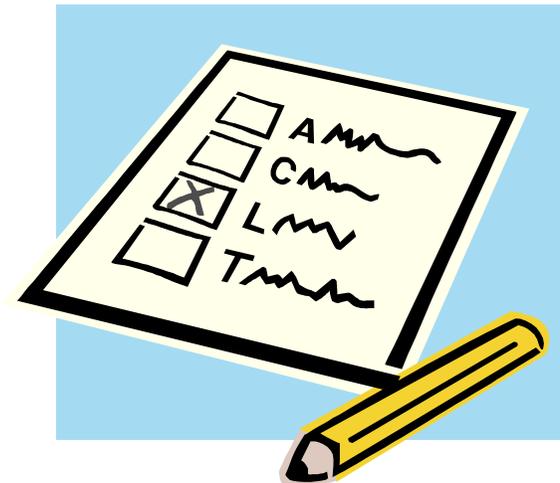
Even with the Railroad closed due to construction of the storm drain we will still hold our regular Work Day and Meeting on Saturday October 16th starting at 8:00 AM. We have many projects to catch up on in the compound: installation of tool racks and rail storage racks in the container plus Compound-area general maintenance. If we are allowed back into the park construction zone (pending at press time), we have track cleaning to start in Allen's Valley and the Station Area. Come on out and enjoy the fun with your fellow members. Lunch will be served to the workers at Noon followed by the monthly club meeting at 1:00PM

See you Saturday! Rich Casford, Road #2

PS: Railroad will be closed October 24th due to construction. Check website for updated information as it becomes available.

Are You Ready?

Very soon, all RLS members will be receiving their annual Board of Director's ballot. On it will be several names for who you will be voting to replace the four outgoing board members: Bill Hesse, Tamiann Parrott, Bill Gardner, and Al Bondesen. Our hats go off to them who served us well during some pretty tough and turbulent times (BNSF Overpass Project and the beginning of the current Renaissance Project).



This next year promises to be very trying for RLS as our mainline is essentially going to be closed on and off over the next 15 or more months. Ponder well those names that appear on the ballot as these four will be joining forces with the remaining four (Brook Adams, Dayna Adams, Rich Casford and John Lytle) to help guide... and quite possibly fight for... the RLS in, through, and out of the Park's rebuilding program.

Once you've marked your ballot, please return it in the marked envelope right away. All ballots will be counted on November 20th.



This picture comes with a melancholy twinge: On October 25, 2009 our park was green; it was the third day of the best Fall Meet we've had in 20 years; we were running westbound, figure-eight, full loop; Dean Willoughby's big 4-8-4 was steaming strong; Andrew Martin regularly ran his big Columbia (background right), and the Renaissance Project was only a topic of discussion at our monthly Board of Director's Meeting.

COMING EVENTS:

Oct 10: Run Day Cancelled

Oct. 16: Workday and Monthly Board Meeting

Sept 26: Run Day Cancelled

Nov. 14: Run Day *possibly* cancelled

Nov. 20: Workday and Monthly Board Meeting

Nov. 28: Run Day... maybe...

Visit the RLS Website: www.steamonly.org

The R.L.S. Chronicle is published by The Riverside Live Steamers, Inc., P.O. Box 5512, Riverside, CA. 92518. The railroad is located at Hunter Park, 1496 Columbia Ave., Riverside, CA. Call (951) 779-9024 during scheduled activities for more information. Public run days are the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month. Work days (Fun Days) are the 3rd Saturday followed by the Monthly Board of Directors Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at Hunter Park.

OFFICERS

President: Bill Hesse
Vice President: Rich Casford
Secretary: Brook Adams
Treasurer: Tamiann Parrott

DIRECTORS

Bill Gardner
 Al Bondesen
 Dayna Adams
 John Lytle