

THE RLS CHRONICLE

News of the Riverside Live Steamers



September 2010

**Bill Hesse's "Words O' Wisdom"
Run Days and Work Days
State of the Park
RLS Travels
Plus so much more...**



Three of Eight

The August 22nd Run Day, surprisingly, saw quite a bit of action. Why "surprisingly"? It was 102 degrees; we were running short loop, and the park isn't as attractive as it once was. But there we were, with eight locomotives making the best of it! Above, from left to right, the Abrisz family and the Zupke Family riding behind "Moana" the Shay; Wesley Peterson is tending to the Nevada Western 4-6-0; and taking turns stoking the fire of "Betsy" are Brook Adams and Scott Horgan.



Bill Hesse's Words O' Wisdom

Some of us who receive the Chronicle by electronic distribution were accidentally sent the August 2009 edition instead of the 2010. It's amazing how much things have changed since then. Larry Jongerius was working on the Hunter, The Park was torn up due to construction, a dedicated group was relaying track in 100 degree heat, a new station yard was going in.... Aren't you glad all that stuff is finally behind us? We could have simply changed the date at the top of the page and substituted pictures facing South instead of North. The only real difference was that the 'Words of Wisdom' were submitted by some guy named 'Dave', whoever that was.... His opening paragraph is as apropos today as it was then: *"It's not that I'm counting, but you will only have to read this drivel for another three months, then it's somebody else's drivel that you will be forced to pound through. Hopefully theirs' will make sense. I have often questioned mine. "*

So, that brings us to yet another bit of railroad history: I don't think there was an RLS Chronicle for March of 1907, but if there had been, it would surely have contained some words of wisdom about the newly passed 'Hours of Service Act' that limited how much fun train crews could have in a day. It appears that even way back then the big railroads had discovered that once a live steamer gets his hand on the throttle, nothing short of an act of congress would get him out of the cab. Back around 1966, the founding fathers of RLS were faced with the same dilemma. Our bylaws limit board members to two years of service, followed by at least one year of mandatory rest time. Around this time last year we were expecting the park renovation to break ground within weeks. If it had, we'd be nearing completion by now. The board elected last year thought we'd be the driving force behind that historic event. While I think we've gotten off to a good start, it will be the NEXT board that will get the honor and the glory of steering the club in to the 'NEW' Hunter Park.

How time flies when you're having fun! The time to elect the board for 2011 is fast approaching. By the October meeting, we will need to get the ballots out to elect the board that will have to make some of the most critical decisions in the history of RLS. There's a lot of great talent out there. Almost every member I ever get to speak to during run days, or comments from the floor during meetings, has something good to add to the plan. We may not agree on every detail, but it's the boards' responsibility to pick out the 'best of the best'.

Four of the board members, including three of the officers, will be stepping down in November. Now it's your turn. It does take a little time, but we all know that the time spent servicing the locomotive is as important as what we do out on the main. O.K., admit it! Have you ever said to yourself (and everyone within ear shot) *"I could do better"*? Or know someone who has the '*Right Stuff*' to be a board member? Let the campaign season begin!

Meanwhile, you're stuck with me for a couple more months, so I better close by saying something presidential; if you haven't returned your roster information yet, please get it to Ken A.S.A.P. One of the goals of the 2010 board was to publish a new roster (and you know we presidents always keep our campaign promises!)



A Dark Piece of RLS History (by Ken Casford, Road One)

Back in 1966, when RLS took over the operation of the Hunter railroad, the tunnel was a topic of discussion almost from day one. In fact, one of the first requests RLS made of the City was to have the tunnel sprayed to kill all of the black widow spiders before trains could operate through it.

The 128 degree tunnel was 165 feet long and built out of 6' diameter concrete conduit. By the time a bed of ballast, ties and rail were placed on the bottom, the overall height inside the tunnel was less than five feet. It was dangerous and a back-breaker to work on the track!

In late 1966, because of the rough track, plans were made to build a tunnel by-pass. Come early 1967, the track within the tunnel was improved to the point that the Directors opened it up for use on run days and the by-pass was pulled up.

One of the immediate problems with the tunnel was vandalism. Even though we had large, locking steel doors installed over both portals, vandalism continued several times throughout the few years the tunnel was used.

From an operational standpoint, the tunnel, because of its curvature, was pitch black through the middle 40 feet. Combined with steam, smoke and noise, several of our riders did not like to go into the tunnel. Many engineers were equally unenthused. Locomotive derailments in the tunnel are stories all of their own. As I mentioned earlier, working on the track, in the dark, not being able to stand up straight, got old in a hurry. The tunnel became impossible from a track-maintenance standpoint.

On July 27, 1972, Rich and I asked the members to come out early for the monthly Board of Director's meeting, and afterwards, we would take them for a ride on the railroad to enjoy the early evening. When we took the train out to make certain everything was ok, we were met with a broken lock on the north portal: inside, all of the track had been destroyed, from one end to the other. On the July 23 Run Day prior to this tragedy, our #372 had been the last train through the tunnel. Sometime from that point until four days later, the tunnel chapter at RLS came to an inglorious end.

Fortunately, the Keith brothers (Jim and John) did not like running through the tunnel either, and in early 1972, they offered to build another tunnel by-pass. This by-pass was 80% completed by the time of the tunnel closure, and thanks to an outpouring of members, work was done on Wednesday afternoons, Saturdays and Sundays until the by-pass was completed. The mainline was reopened in September 1972. This by-pass (the trestle and track) is what we continue to use today.

During August 2010, the park contractor removed the tunnel, and after more than 50 years, its life ended: May the tunnel rest in peace forever.



The current tunnel by-pass begins just south of the Iowa siding, mid-way along the old tangent that headed into the North Portal (Upper left).



What used to be the South Portal of our tunnel is now a piece of RLS history.



August 8 Run Day (Photos by Joan Adams)

For most of the month of June and nearly all of July, Sothern California had been experiencing some of the coolest summer temperatures on record. Unfortunately, that cooling trend came to a blazing end the week prior to our August 8 run day. Temps hovering at or above the century mark made this particular Sunday the first “hot” run day of the year.

Only two locomotives fired up, the club’s C-16 and the Lannon Atlantic. At the throttles were Brook Adams (C-16) and Jonathan Chase and Dean Willoughby (4-4-2). Other than the heat, probably the biggest reason only a few RLS members came out to the park was due to the Bitter Creek Western holding their Narrow Gauge Meet during this same weekend (more on that in a different article). Pulling the Brakeman duties on the public train was Ryan Turley while Glenn Maness, our benevolent Station Master, safely loaded and unloaded the day’s passengers. In all, twelve members came down to enjoy our hobby on a swelteringly hot day.



Tally Time (Last Reminder)



Ken Casford reported at the last Board of Director’s Meeting that only half of the club sent in their RLS census for our new roster. With that said: PLEASE fill out your form and get it back to Ken. This is not an ASAP request: Take a moment, fill the form out right after you finish reading this edition of the Chronicle, and get it mailed in right away. This is the last reminder. If Ken does not receive a census, he’ll have to assume you haven’t moved, your phone number hasn’t changed, and you don’t have any new equipment.



Work Day and Monthly Board of Director's Meeting

Hot. It could have been worse. But it was plenty hot and we had a full list of jobs to be done. The day began at 7:00 with the hopes we'd beat the brunt of the heat. Out on the mainline, there were a few places in need of attention due to location of the temporary perimeter fences placed a touch too close to the tracks. Also, a few heat kinks had popped up and needed fixing. Inside the compound, three months of leaves were raked and bagged. Normally, leaves don't fall until... well... Fall. But because of the lack of regular irrigation during the Renaissance Project, the trees are shedding their leaves rapidly, most of which (oddly enough) make their way into the compound.

By 11:30, the temperature had risen to above 100 and the work crews had developed the usual appetite for nourishing sustenance and liquid refreshments. Curtis and Donna Claybrook whipped up a rousing BBQ of burgers, Donna's famous BBQ beans, lots of fruit, cold water and soda. Everyone ate, relaxed, chatted and enjoyed the company for about an hour. Though it started about thirty minutes early, President Bill called the Board of Director's meeting to order because the outside (and inside) temp was still on the rise.



Keeping a hungry crew well fed, Curtis flips a few more burgers and toasts a few more buns.

Due to the Hunter's drivers in need of replacement, last month the BoD okayed the purchase of new drivers from Ed Yungling. We took delivery of the new wheel-set and Dave Bunts (Superintendent of Motive Power, etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. etc) requested permission to build a drop table into one of our steaming bays. This way, instead of removing the boiler to access the drivers, he and Larry Jongerious could drop each driver out from below the locomotive without removal of the boiler. Permission was granted, and the two began drawing out plans and making a list for supplies.

As for the Park's reconstruction project, we're still in the deconstruction phase, but things are moving along rapidly. The Contractor has already finished about 60% of our new access road from Marlborough Ave., and has done the majority of the grading for our new parking lots and new Iowa station. However, before much more can happen, several large drainage pipes, electrical conduits, and irrigation pipes have to be installed. Whenever possible, the construction crews will utilize a tunneling machine when needing to pass under our mainline. But, there will still be times we will need to remove a panel or two so they can pour the concrete pathways. We will be building about 20 new, steel-rail panels specifically for these crossings and will work closely with the contractor during their placement.



It reads, "Building Corner, Train Station". It's happening, folks!

Also a topic of discussion was our upcoming Fall Meet. No, it hasn't been completely cancelled. But it won't be anything like a usual Fall Meet where everyone from across the fruited plains is invited for our three-day steam-fest. As it stands, it will only occur on Saturday and Sunday, October 23 & 24, and will be open to RLS members and a limited few other. The fact is we don't know what the condition the railroad will be in come those dates, so we must play it by ear. Stay tuned for more info on our website (www.steamonly.org) and here in the Chronicle.



RLS Travels to the Bitter Creek Western



Nathan Parrot was privileged to pull the throttle on this coal-burning, 4.5" scale 2-4-4t for a couple of laps.



While Moana is picking up a logging train in a siding, Greg Ratliff eases D&RGW #268, a highly detailed C-16, through the main on his way upgrade to the main yard.



Just a small sample of the locomotives that showed up to the BCWRR Narrow Gauge Meet. Carl Hovanitz (lower-right corner wearing a ball cap) has something pretty special.

If there is such a thing as a pilgrimage, the long haul up to the Bitter Creek Western Narrow Gauge Meet became so for 21 RLS members. Besides being an escape from the heat of the August 6-8 weekend (temps for most areas of So Cal were well over 100), the Bitter Creek Western railroad is an absolute treat to visit.

Situated on a large mesa in Arroyo Grande (just a few miles south of Pismo Beach), the BCWRR is about as charming and enchanting as they come. It sports

over a mile and a half of mainline, lots of sidings, three tunnels, several trestles [one being about 25 feet tall], a fully equipped steaming area with 14 bays and a round table, and a track plan that, on that first lap around, will have you wondering where in the heck you are and how will you get back to the beginning. It is a mountainous railroad (with several grades reaching nearly three percent) that climbs and descends several times before bringing riders back to the beginning. As one travels the layout, the tracks weave and bob in and out of thick oak, pine, cedar, redwood, and deciduous forests.

The motive power that showed up for the meet was just as impressive as the railroad itself: 44 locomotives, most of them steam, put on an impressive display of artistic and machine mastery.

A special thanks to Carl Hovanitz, owner of BCWRR: Thank you for opening your railroad to all those who love this hobby. The friendships and memories that have been created through your generosity will last for many, many years.



August 22 Run Day

Lots of action and several RLS members made it out to Hunter Park (or... what's left of it) for the final run day of August. Yes, it was hot (about 102) and yes, we ran short loop, but to have eight locomotives under steam was quite a treat!

First out was Rich Casford on the club's C-16. Along with A.J. Benson and Bill Hesse acting as brakemen, Rich ran the public train all day. The crowds, handled with care by Glenn Maness, Station Master extraordinaire, started off rather heavy. But by the time the cool air of the morning succumbed to the day's heat (right around 11:30), the public riders sought their air-conditioned homes, and left the railroad open to all the other locomotives.

Steamed up and putting the polish on our mainline were Ryan Turley on Paul Quick's 4-4-2, Chris Enright with his 0-4-0 beam engine, Bill McLaughlin on his Rio Grande mogul, Dave Parrott on his Shay, Jonathan Chase and Cameron Lannon on the Lannon's Atlantic, Brook Adams with Scott Horgan taking turns running Ron Wilkerson's 2-6-0, and Wes Peterson on the Nevada Western 4-6-0.

Speaking of Wes Peterson, this run day was the first: He drove himself down the RLS, fired up and ran his dad's ten-wheeler all day, blew down and put away the locomotive all by himself. He was excited and proud to be given the responsibility. Ahhh... yet another of our RLS family is growing up.

There were a number of members who came out to enjoy the day that we haven't seen for a little while. Among them were the Abrisz family (new members as of four months ago), the Zupke Family (new members as of two months ago), and Josh Klenski (he didn't fire his Hudson, but had a good time visiting).

As the day wore on, the heat didn't let up. But that didn't stop a number of members from running well into the early evening... cooking their brains and bodies in the process. It was a good day for the RLS... thus, another good day for steam.



Wes Peterson and Scott Horgan double-heading the grade out of Allen's Valley. For a hot day, it was a busy one.



Cory Kelly, a brand-new RLS member, pulling the throttle on Bill Mac's ten-wheeler. Photo by Joan Adams.



Remember: It's Your Club

Fall is around the corner and Board Member elections are a few short months away! Per the Club bylaws - *"Each year the Board of Directors shall appoint a nominating committee consisting of three members. The announcement of this committee shall be made no later than the September meeting"*(Section 4.03). Historically this committee has been the four outgoing board members.

Serving on the board will give you a unique perspective of the Club and its operations, as well as give you an opportunity to help guide the Club for the next two years. If you are interested in serving on the board, you can contact Bill Hesse, Tamiann Parrott, Bill Gardner or myself and let us know. We'll get you on the list for the November election.

Brook Adams, RLS Secretary



Member's T-shirts

The idea of having an RLS Member's Only t-shirt has caught on and several have shown interest or have promised to purchase one (at least) when they become available. These shirts will have an RLS logo printed on the front pocket and a larger logo will be on the back. As it stands, the cost of each shirt seems to be settling in at \$20. If you'd like to add your name to the list, simply contact Ryan Turley or Dave Parrott at one of our run days or work days. Hurry, though: Once we have the shirts printed, it'll probably a year or so before we get to print them again.



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

You realize there is a curious similarity between a large bug that's attracted to a blue zapper-light and your unwavering magnetism to a steamed-up locomotive.



CONSTRUCTION AND COMMON SENSE

For all of us that have been to the railroad lately, we can see the major remodeling of Hunter Park is well under way! A fence has been placed around the entire park with major dirt work progressing in several areas.

As part of the project, RLS was granted permission to continue operating the railroad on our normal 2nd and 4th Sunday Run Days and to hold our Work Day / Board Meeting third Saturday of the month activities. Trains are to be operated only on schedule days during the construction period. Most projects of this scale would have shut down the area completely. Because of our unique history of service to the public RLS was permitted to keep operating. With this permission comes responsibility.

Please keep out of the construction zone during the normal Monday–Friday work week. This will allow the contractor to do his job. We have permission to be inside our compound however we need to limit our work in the balance of the park for the two Run Days and the Work Day. Please do not wander around in the park area while the park is under construction. There are many construction hazards that can cause injury if you are not careful. Stay within our railroad right of way.

Towards the end of the project, the entire park will be closed even to RLS activities while the new grass takes hold in the park. When we post the closure PLEASE be respectful of the rules and allow the project to be completed.

With Common Sense we will have a wonderful new park to operate our railroad. It is up to all of us to make everyone remains safe during the construction.

Safety First!

Rich Casford, Vice President & Safety Inspector.



We were worried that we might lose our trestle. But the city and contractor assure us everything will be okay.



This is what is left of the Columbia Station awning.



One year ago: It's almost hard to believe that a year has passed since several members added the finishing touches to the temporary Marlborough Station. One week after this photo was taken, the first train ready to pull the public eased into the station track.

COMING EVENTS:

Sept 12: Run Day: Eastbound, short loop

Sept 18: Workday and Monthly Board Meeting

Sept 26: Run Day: Eastbound, short loop

Oct. 10: Run Day: Eastbound, short loop

Oct. 16: Workday and Monthly Board Meeting

Oct. 23-24: Sorta Fall Meet thingy... Run Days

Visit the RLS Website: www.steamonly.org

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OFFICERS

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

DIRECTORS

Bill Gardner
 Al Bondesen
 Dayna Adams
 John Lytle