

THE RLS CHRONICLE

News of the Riverside Live Steamers



August 2010

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Plus so much more...



Threading the Crossover

Jonathan Chase eases the Lannon Atlantic through the Vandenberg Crossover on clear, warm July 25th run day. In the past, watching trains snake through our crossover wasn't a very common occurrence. However, as Hunter Park undergoes its renovation and trains are confined to the short-loop run for the next 15 months, our crossover will be getting a lot of use (Great photo opportunities!)



Bill Hesse's Words O' Wisdom

It's been another fast and furious month at RLS. After all the years of planning and waiting, it's amazing how fast things are moving on the park renovation. Within days after the contractor started, the park was fenced in, trees and weeds disappeared, the ball diamonds and light poles hit the ground, and the earth is starting to move. There was a little damage in the compound when the city took ownership of the old container, and a few minor problems with the fence being too close to the engine leads, but the park department and contractor have moved just as fast to correct the problems. They even came up with a reasonably good solution for providing a safe and secure, if somewhat small, area for the public on run days.

Amazingly, the passenger count last Sunday was close to what it would normally be. That may partly be due to the short loop making for a shorter ride, so more of our guests could ride several times. We also had our last birthday party for a while, but we were able to accommodate them in true RLS style in the valley. The city has ordered signs to go up all around the fence to let the public know we're still open during construction. The public had no complaints about the somewhat shorter ride, or the 'hobo camp' appearance of the substitute temporary station. Most of our guests seemed quite interested in hearing about the plans the city has for the NEW Hunter Park.

On the first of our three work days, we weren't quite ready to pull up track. That didn't stop the dozen or so members who showed up from demanding to put in a good days work. They hit the Marlborough station like a gang of geriatric soccer players, pulling up both sidings and stacking the track in the compound. Two more Saturdays saw the Summit and Iowa sidings come out almost as fast. In spite of the warm weather, everything got done by 11 O'clock each day. A few members, unable to restrain themselves between work days, snuck in to the park during the week to remove the track joiners and prepare the way for the Saturday crews to just dig out and carry away the track panels. Now that the park is fully fenced, we were able to simply stack the panels out on the main, and not have to transport them all the way to the compound. The contractor has found a rather ingenious way to strap the piles of track down so there should be little chance of damage or theft. Red cones have sprouted up at each grade crossing so all the sub-contractors will know where it's safe to cross.

Our one night run last month was a lot of fun. With all the lights out in the park, it was possible to see the orange glow under the cabs of the locomotives and headlights providing the only illumination on the track. We'll have to do that again.

Bill Hesse

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

Right in the middle of a proctology exam, you extol the virtues of live steaming and invite the doctor to ride trains at RLS.



Night Run!

Running or riding trains at the RLS is good (not so clean) fun. However, waiting for the sun to set and then firing up the locomotives becomes the perfect recipe for a great time at RLS! The month of July was kicked off in perfect fashion with our first night run of the summer season. Several members made the trek down to the club, bringing friends, family, food, and the innate need for “Steamin’ in the Evenin’” on July 3rd. Four locomotives ran bi-directional until nearly midnight as folks celebrated our hobby on what was to become the third-to-last time running full loop until next year.

Keeping the fires hot and the headlights burning bright were Al Bondesen on his 0-4-0, Kasey Farwick on Ron Wilkerson’s 4-6-0, Dave Parrott on Ron’s mogul, and Warren and Wesley Peterson with their 4-6-0.

There will be more chances to enjoy a night run at Hunter Park. Watch for updates here in the Chronicle or attend the monthly Board of Director’s Meeting to get the latest dates.



RLS Member’s Only T-Shirts

There is an idea being floated around that many RLSer’s might find enticing: A club-member’s only RLS shirt. On the front will be a small RLS logo on the shirt’s pocket and a large RLS logo on the back. What we need is a simple, “Yes I’m interested” call or email to Dave Parrott. This will be a preliminary tally for Ryan Turley (our main man of merchandise) so he can zero in on an exact price. As far as a possible cost: expect something in the area of \$15 - \$25 as long as we can get 40 to 50 (more is better) folks interested in these one-of-a-kind shirts.





July 11th Run Day

What was to be the first run day where trains would travel only on the short loop, surprisingly turned out to be the final day on our regular loop. As the sun rose on July 11th, there were no perimeter fences in sight (which were scheduled to be erected on July 8th). It was quickly decided by our benevolent Operations Supervisor, Tamiann Parrott, that we'd take advantage of the delay and run full loop one last time.



As the morning continued and locomotives were warming, several members headed up to Columbia Station (our former-permanent, post-temporary, temporary, pre-permanent station). The task ahead of these brave souls was to raise the "Not-So-Easy-Up" shade tent for Glenn Maness, Station Master extraordinaire. Forty-five minutes later, the six souls "high-fived" each other in celebration for the newly erected, pull-through, Not-So-Easy-Up Columbia Station (that smelled oddly of spilled Gatorade, old paint and grease). Promptly at 10:00am, the first of many passengers showed up and stood in line for a ride around our railroad. Many of the folks present knew this would be the last time to ride on the full loop. They chatted and reminisced with Glenn, and look forward to the new Hunter Park being finished.



The day itself was quite warm during our unseasonably cool summer thus far, with the high temperature hovering just under 100 degrees. Even though it was warm, that didn't stop six locomotives (and their engineers) from making steam all day long. Dave Bunts fired the C-16 and pulled the public all day (Nathan Parrott tirelessly performed Brakeman duties and Brook Adams was the relief engineer for Dave); Dave Parrott fired Ron Wilkerson's ten-wheeler and pulled the Birthday Train (stationed in Allen's Valley) with Jonathan Parrott as Brakeman; Ron Wilkerson brought out his "Grand Canyon" mogul for a lap before exhaust problems hampered the locomotive's ability to make steam and, therefore, had to be towed back to the compound; Ryan Turley brought out Paul Quick's Atlantic, Jonathan Chase and Cameron Lannon made laps all day on the Lannon's Atlantic; and Bill McLaughlin and Richard Mueller brought out Bill's Rio Grande ten-wheeler and polished our rails with several laps.

At day's end, each train made that "one last trip" around the park. It was a bitter pill to swallow knowing we wouldn't be on the southern half of our railroad for about fifteen months. However, it was sweet because we also know that a new, beautiful park awaits us and our railroad.



Work Days and Monthly Board of Director's Meeting

RLS members arrived early on our regularly scheduled workday of July 17th and were greeted with the new perimeter fence in place, completely cutting off all public access to the park (Honestly: Can you say, "No more soccer games!", without breaking into a song and a dance... or at least a smile?). Thus, we began the painful process of removing about 500 feet of track at Summit Siding. Not only was Summit pulled, but also another 150 feet towards Big Pine was taken up. This will make way for our new access road from Marlborough into Allen's Valley and our compound. Only a few days prior to this, the Parks Dept cut down most of the trees on the southern half of the park. Ken Casford said it now looks much the way it did back in 1965 when our club was created.

By 11:00, the temperature had climbed to 100 degrees, so most of the track crew made their way back to the compound for a terrific BLT, fruit salad and cold drinks thanks to Donna and Cutis Claybrook. Again, due to the heat, Bill Hesse began the montly BoD meeting about 40 minutes early. A recap was made of all the work that has been done and what still needs to be done prior to the contractor's big push to revamp the park. Ken Casford then announced we would need an extra work day on the 24th to take up track between our trestle and the top of the southern Vandenberg leg. This is the area that will become our new Iowa Station.

Dave Bunts gave a report on the condition of the Hunter Locomotive, stating that it would either need its new tires or new drivers. Ron Wilkerson found a set of Little Engines 4-8-4 drivers and axels that had been machined by Ed Yungling from the Sacramento Live Steamers (Ed is famous for the Cab Forward locomotive he built). The price was right and the Board promptly approved funds for their purchase.

On Sunday, July 18th, the Phantom Track Crew took up lots of track screws and all of the rail joiners between the Iowa Trestle and Vandenberg in preparation for the track's removal. The following Saturday, July 24th, several members lifted, moved and stored the panels at the top of Vandenberg.

Currently, the park looks pretty stark: there is little to no irrigation happening, most of the grass has been plowed into huge piles, the ballpark restrooms and stadium lighting have been knocked down and our old Columbia Station awning (which was moved to the temporary Marlborough Station) was knocked down on 7-30-10.

Yes, it seems bleak... and one might ask, "Why should I even go down to the RLS now?" The answer is simple: To play trains! Even running short loop is still far better than not running at all. See you next run day... right??





July 25th Run Day

Ahhh... the short loop: yep, it's half of what we're used to; yep, it's basically a figure eight operation; yep, it seems very short. But, dang, what a blast we had! If you weren't there, then you missed out. Six locomotives, about 20 members, and (get this) 416 rides given to the public!

Some of you are, no doubt, wondering how it's possible for the public to ride our trains when the park is completely fenced off... essentially closed to everyone except RLS members. It just so happens the during talks with the City and Park Dept, we were able to convince the powers-that-be to install a gate on Columbia St. that we are allowed to open only on run days. We also had to promise not to allow any public to have access to the park other than the grassy area between our station and Columbia St. (other than having them firmly seated while riding the train). And so it was: the public showed up... a whole lot of them... and none of them seemed to mind the shorter ride or the condition of the park. In fact, many rode the train so they could see how things were progressing.

Rich Casford (who didn't take a break) pulled the public on the club's C-16... and was still smiling by day's end. Braking for Rich were Bill Hesse and Nathan Parrott. The 1st Shift Birthday Train was engineered by Jonathan Chase with Randy Chase as Brakeman. The 2nd Shift Birthday Train was engineered by Bill Hesse on the DeNault Atlantic and braked by Jonathan Parrott. Also out were Bill McLaughlin and Richard Mueller on Bill's spiffy 4-6-0; Warren and Wesley Peterson on their spotless ten-wheeler; and out for their first run day on their newly acquired mogul, Robert and Arlene Butler from Tehachapi. Steamed up but not out on the main line was Bill Phillips with his big coal-burning pacific (Aided by Randy Chase, Bill is fine tuning the locomotive and should be out polishing our rail heads by next run day). Playing the part of Station Master, Tamiann Parrott (aided by Cody Gates and A.J. Benson) made sure everyone was safe, happy, and donating to our little yellow boxes. Last, but by no means least, the whole day was held together by Brook Adams, Operations Supervisor.





Tally Time

Not long ago (about a week or so) everyone in the club received an RLS census in the mail. Because of so many new members over the past couple of years, it was decided that we need to update and re-print our club's roster. With that said: PLEASE fill out your form and get it back to Ken Casford. This is not an ASAP request: Take a moment and fill the form out right after you finish reading this edition of the Chronicle. Then, put it in the provided envelope, slap a stamp on that puppy and get it in the mailbox. Reprinting and updating our roster is an arduous undertaking compounded by a print-time deadline. Ken Casford thanks you!



Take a Look

Here are some more pictures of the work-progress inside our park. Remember: don't be discouraged! Come on out to a run day: Enjoy the camaraderie and ride trains!





It's almost ironic that one year ago, in the month of August 2009, RLS members carried, placed, connected and ballasted the compound lead, thus ending a six month period of no trains at Hunter Park. Fortunately, during the current Renaissance Project, we at least get to run the short loop during the next 15 months.

COMING EVENTS:

Aug 8: Run Day: Eastbound, short loop

Aug 14: Workday and Monthly Board Meeting

Aug 22: Run Day: Eastbound, short loop

Sept 12: Run Day: Eastbound, short loop

Sept 18: Workday and Monthly Board Meeting

Sept 26: Run Day: Eastbound, short loop

Visit the RLS Website: www.steamonly.org

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