

THE RLS CHRONICLE

News of the Riverside Live Steamers



October 2009

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RLS Run Days Are Back!
Elections Are Coming
Missed It By Thirty Minutes...
Plus so much more...



We're Back!!!

After six months of waiting, we're finally back on track! Even though temperatures hovered around 104 and 105 throughout our operating hours, the queue line to board our trains remained full... and that's with four trains pulling the public! Bringing out their "big gun", the Casford's 4-8-4 pulls the Hunter train on one of many laps.



Dave Bunts' Words O' Wisdom

I am tickled, as are all of you, that the railroad is back in operation. We have had our fun run day, and then on to the business of hauling the public. Both days went well, and nobody seemed to have many problems with the track work that we put in. We will have to go back and fine tune and tweak all of it, but that is standard procedure for any track work that we have done.

Along with the trains running comes the public, and part of what I want to talk about. We all have had problems with the soccer player's rocks, and people walking out in front of your train as you round the corner. It's most annoying and does tend to sour one's disposition. What we have to remember, however, is that we know a lot about what we are doing, and we know a lot about the trains we run, and we are a link to an age that has past. We, therefore, are ambassadors, if you like, to the steam age. Most of the people that come ride our trains have small children in tow, and the kids are fascinated by Thomas the Tank Engine. They recognize the trains as being similar to the ones they watch on TV, and so they like them. The adults are either tolerating the kids desire to ride a train, or are interested on a myriad of different levels, everything from "How much does it cost?" (If you count frustration with a recalcitrant mechanical beast as currency, more than the national debt of Bolivia, thanks for asking) to "How do you get it to run?", to "How do I get involved in your organization, it looks like it might be some fun?" Each time we interact with the public we leave an impression of the hobby.

We recently had a letter left on the RLS website by a woman who felt that she had been mistreated during a visit. Unfortunately she had come on the first day of operations, the one we ran to make sure we still knew how to do what we do, and was denied a ride for herself and the 4 grand children she brought. She claims that she was rudely ignored, and she was unhappy with the reception she got. I am going to be willing to bet that the truth is someplace between the lines she wrote, and not worry too much about it. However, I am going to worry about her perception of the reception she received from RLS.

I fully understand the things WE want from the hobby: I want the same. On the other hand, we have to recognize that the public has some expectations as well, and we need to address those as politely as we can. Yes; the questions get repetitive, yes; we want to answer it once, and not all day, yes; waving at the people standing trackside is sometimes irritating and we would rather not do it. BUT, if we don't try and accommodate some of those things, we begin to lose riders, and prospective members. Neither are good for the long term survivability of RLS. We need to share this hobby with everyone. We have all seen that Bill McLaughlin is willing to share his engine with new engineers. He waves at pretty much everyone who is around while riding the rails. He doesn't say much to them, but he recognizes they exist, which goes a long way towards creating a favorable impression of RLS as a group. We all ought to follow his lead. In the long run, we all benefit from it. Bunts



September 13 Run Day

FINALLY! After six months of tearing out and rebuilding our main line, September 13th was the first official run day for the RLS! This day was a trial run to ensure the railroad is ready to begin hauling the public on Sept, 27. Taking full advantage of the glorious weather and an open railroad, 11 locomotives fired up and began to put the polish back onto the head of our rails.

Out for the day was Casey Farwick running Ron Wilkerson's ten wheeler; one of our new members, Josh Klaske, brought out his 4-6-4 for its inaugural run (Josh has been rebuilding his locomotive for the past 9 months); out with his high-steppin' Atlantic, Randy Chase made laps all morning and well into the afternoon; Dean Willoughby fired up his trusty Northern (Randy and Dean double headed for a good portion of the day); Bill McLaughlin stoked the fires of his ten wheeler (Bill turned over his locomotive to John Young for several laps... John's first time behind the throttle of a locomotive!); Larry Jongerius took the club's C-16 out for a spin (he reports the locomotive is running fine!); Moana the Shay (the Parrotts) hit the rails for many laps; Bob Cummins fired his beautiful 2-8-2; the Casfords brought out their big 4-8-4 (towards the end of the day, Bob's 2-8-2 and the Casford's 4-8-4 were double-heading with a nice sized train); Brook Adams fired the Denault Atlantic; and Ryan Turley fired Paul Quick's shiny 4-4-2 (Ryan shared the engineering duties with A.J. Benson throughout the day).

By the end of the day, the last four trains out making laps decided to run bi-directional to add that final big smile to a delightful first-run for the RLS.



The Club's C-16 got to see the light of day thanks to Larry Jongerius. Ron Wilkerson gives his nod of approval.



Out for her first run: Josh Klaske made several laps behind his newly rebuilt 4-6-4.



Though it's difficult to see, Ken Casford snapped this shot with 8 locomotives in the frame. From left to right: J. Klanske 4-6-4, Double-headed is R. Chase 4-4-2 & D. Willoughby 4-8-4; Behind J. Klanski (just barely visible) is L. Jongerius C-16 (Way back behind C-16 is Parrott's Shay), Double-heading is G. Casford on B. Cummins 2-8-2 and R. Casford on their 4-8-4; and finally way off to the right on Party Siding is B. McLaughlin with his 4-6-0.



And the Winner is.....

Way back in April, shortly after the club tore up a large section of the mainline between Columbia Yard and Panoramic Siding, Ken Casford had an interesting idea: Why not have a 50/50 contest of who can come closest to guessing the day we'd have our first official run day? That sounded good to everyone else. With that, over 30 submissions were made as members added their best guess to the pool. As it turned out, the majority thought we'd be up and running in July, with a few putting their chances on the month of August. It can be officially known



Before you play the next lotto, it might be wise to consult with Chris "I Own Vegas" Enright first....

that the club has one true-blue optimist in the ranks, as his guess was for the beginning of May. But, there was one person who out-did us all (He even came within a 30 minutes of the actual time!): Be sure to congratulate Chris "Guess-it-right" Enright for his winning 50/50 estimate of Sept. 13 (If you don't feel like congratulating him, ask him to take you to lunch or dinner instead... after all, he won a pretty big prize)!

Wow!!

Ten years ago, RLS member Dave Moore decided it was time to build a locomotive. However, this wasn't to be "just any" locomotive. No.... Dave shot for the stars and completely nailed his target. Pictured here is his new pride and joy: Sierra Grande #398, a 1.6" scale 4-6-6-4! And what a beauty she is! Dave created and cast several of his own parts and details including (but certainly not limited to) a



power reverse system, dual air pumps, and the steam linkage for the front engine. On September 19, Dave brought his Challenger in a trailer (that includes a custom hydraulic lift system in order to match the height of nearly any railroad unloading area) to be unloaded, hydro'd, stored and run at the RLS. We look forward to seeing Dave and his stunning locomotive pulling long trains at many of our run days!



Pre-run days

After waiting six months to finally be able to run our engines on home rails, it felt good to be out and about on Sept. 13th. However, there were a few members who just couldn't wait for the 13th and absolutely had to fire their locomotives, because enough waiting is simply enough waiting! Within a couple of hours after tweaking the alignment and completing the tamping to the compound lead on Sept. 5th, Bill McLaughlin and Chris "Lucky Guess" Enright had fires in their locomotives in order to give the railroad a proper try out. From 1:00 (ish) to about 3:00, the two put in a few laps each during the 100 degree heat of the day. Both engineers said it was great to be able to make uninterrupted laps at the park.



The evening of Sept. 6th found Ron Wilkerson and the Parrott family firing up their locomotives for the first night run since the Fall Meet of 2008. After a fine BBQ featuring hamburgers and Nathan Hotdogs, each locomotive headed out at about 7:30pm to make three or four laps. Joining the fun was Bill Hesse ("Hey.... If there's food involved, I'll be there!"); Ron's wife Betty ("I've been waiting all year for another night run"); and Cody Gates ("It's about time!"). The night was warm, the fires were hot and the headlights were bright as the two trains made their way around the park in a bi-directional manner.

Election Day Cometh

November 21, 2009 is an important date for RLS as the four outgoing board members (Dave Bunts (President), Dave Parrott (Vice President), Bob Beard (Officer) and Bill McLaughlin (Officer)) are replaced by their elected successors. During the next few weeks, the current Board of Directors will be asking members to seriously consider running for the soon-to-be vacated positions. Hunter Park will be entering the Renaissance Project in January and RLS will need leaders who can guide the club through what could be some turbulent times. If you'd like to be nominated for the board, please contact any of the current Board of Directors.





The “Red-letter” September 27th Run Day

September 27th had quite a few firsts: it was the first run day that we pulled public trains since the railroad closed back in March. It was also the first time our new “temporary” Marlborough Station was put to use! Happily, there were very few snags to report. However, smiles were plenty as 369 people road our rails!

Equipment-wise, there weren’t as many trains as usual with only 6 locomotives firing up. This was most likely due to the weatherman forecasting a temperature of about 98 degrees.

Well, he was wrong: it was 103... in the shade! Out on the rails were the Casfords, with their big 4-8-4 pulling the Hunter train. Shortly behind them was Brook Adams who fired the DeNault 4-4-2 and also pulled the public. Randy Chase was next with his 4-4-2 which was also used to pull the public. The Parrott’s Shay left the compound last (typical) and also pulled the public! Josh Klaske brought out his 4-6-4 and polished the rails with numerous laps around the park as he worked on his locomotive’s timing. Glenn Maness and Tamiann Parrott took care of all the station duties while Brakeman duties were handled by Rich Casford, Jonathan Parrott, Nathan Parrott, A.J. Benson, and Ryan Turley.

Out for the first time ever was Dave Moore and his mammoth 4-6-6-4. Dave and his locomotive made it up to the Columbia Yard where, unfortunately, a few small problems developed with the power reverse system. After a number of attempts to fix



It can get downright hot sitting behind a steam locomotive while its 105 degrees outside. Randy Chase had the right idea of cooling down for a little bit... as far away from the firebox of his locomotive as he could get!



Matt Casford readies to pull the throttle on the first public train RLS rails have felt in six months.

the trouble, he finally had to bring the engine back in to the compound for repair. As Dave Bunts commented, “Hey, it’s a brand new locomotive. There will probably be lots of small “bugs” that’ll need to be worked out. Not bad for its first day!”

Even though the heat was pretty stifling and the first public train pulled out of the station 90 minutes late, folks continued to line up for the chance to take a ride on our rails. Overall, it was a darn-good day to be out at the RLS!



Work Day & Board of Directors Meeting

Even though there was a work day on September 5th where the finishing touches were made to the new lead, the official work day (Sept. 19th) concentrated on Marlborough Station. Twelve members showed up and put in a hefty effort on the yard leads and station tracks in order to be ready for the following run day. Switches were adjusted and lubricated; track was leveled, straightened and tamped; and the finishing touches were made to the queue line. Back in the compound, the bays were cleaned, the club house was dusted out, and the floors were mopped. With the timing of a fine Swiss watch, Donna and Curtis Claybrook served up piping hot BBQ burgers right when the hungry crew needed them the most. For about an hour, everyone rested and ate to their heart's content.

One o'clock rolled around and Dave Bunts called to order the monthly Board of Directors meeting. Taking up a large portion of the time was the topic of our Fall Meet and the City's upcoming Renaissance Project to Hunter Park. Bill Gardner reported the project to improve Hunter Park will go to bid within the next couple of months and work is scheduled to start in January or February of 2010. Other than a few minor changes, the city will follow the outline that was printed on page 3 of the July 2008 Chronicle. One of the best additions since that time is a driveway that will extend from the back of our compound all the way out to Marlborough St.! Bill also reported that we'll soon be getting back the portion of our parking lot that was temporarily given to the industrial complex to the west of our compound. So, for the time being, things are looking pretty good for the RLS.

As for the Fall Meet, it's right around the corner! In keeping with the theme of making the RLS a more sociable place to visit, we are trying something new. By now, most RLS members have received a flyer in the mail informing everyone about the Fall Meet Dinner. It will be happening on Saturday evening of Oct. 24. A very tasty meal (including tri-tip, chicken and all the fixings) will be catered in Allen's Valley by South Fork Caterers. These folks specialize in a fantastic chuck-wagon style BBQ. Afterwards, right there in Allen's Valley, railroad themed movies will be shown until everyone is just too darn tired. The dinner costs \$15.00 but the movies are for everyone. Also, the dinner is limited to 50 seats and, as of this writing, 15 spots are already sold! Don't miss out: Simply mail a check for the correct amount according to the number in your party to "RLS, P.O. Box 5512, Riverside, CA. 92518", on or before October 19th.

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

You hire a new employee so you can stay home to work on the building of your steam locomotive.

True Story!



Keeping the weeds under control along our right-of-way could actually be a full-time occupation. Staying on top of “the job nobody likes to do” for the past few months has been Dayna and Brook Adams, as pictured here on September 19, 2009.

COMING EVENTS:

Oct. 11: RUN DAY!!!

Oct. 17: Work Day and Monthly Meeting

Oct. 23 – 25: FALL MEET!

Nov. 8: RUN DAY!!!

Nov. 14: Work Day and Monthly Meeting

Nov. 22: Run Day!

Visit the RLS Website: www.steamonly.org

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OFFICERS

President: Dave Bunts
 Vice President: Dave Parrott
 Secretary: Brook Adams
 Treasurer: Tamiann Parrott

DIRECTORS

Bill Gardner
 Bill McLaughlin
 Bob Beard
 Bill Hesse