

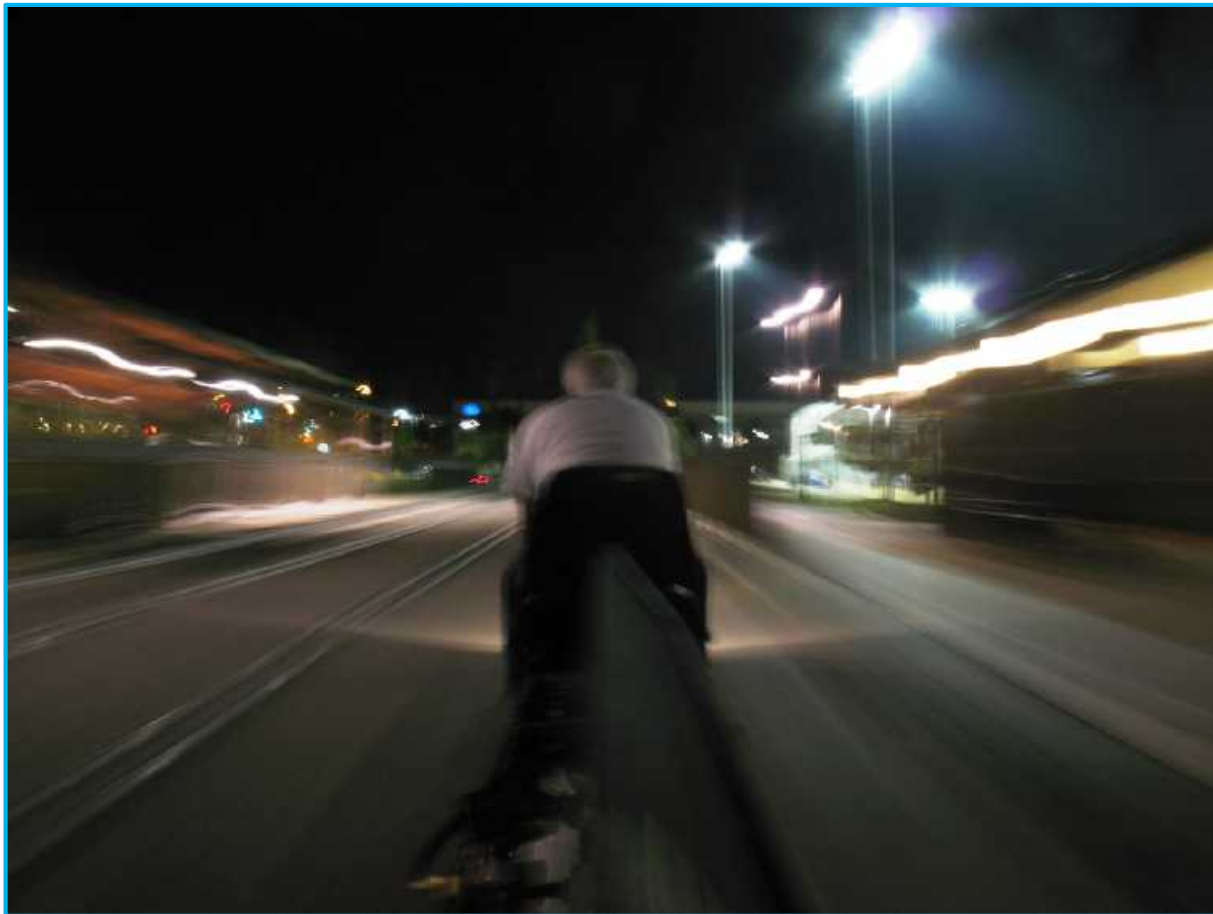
THE RLS CHRONICLE

News of the Riverside Live Steamers



September 2012

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Run Days and a whole lot more



Late night passing through Iowa Yard

Night running. It is the quintessential "must" for all in our hobby to experience. There is something magical about riding behind a steam locomotive while looking at a star-filled sky and feeling the cool, evening air blow across your face. Just such an evening was experienced on July 28, where Larry Jongerius eases Ron Wilkerson's big 2-8-2 through the Iowa Yard.



Lots O' Night Runs

Over the past month, RLS had four night runs. The more, the merrier! Beginning with July 28th and ending on Sept. 1st, we had a night run practically every other Saturday. Because of the heat during this time of the year, it makes perfect sense to fire up around 5:00pm or 6:00pm and run until midnight or later... much, much later! (Just ask Randy and Jonathan Chase who were generally out until 2:00am or so).



On the evening of July 28th, three locomotives made steam until “the cows came home” (Randy and Jonathan Chase on the Lannon Atlantic, Ron Wilkerson’s 2-8-2 and Dave Parrott on Ron Wilkerson’s 2-6-0). The August 4th night run saw five locomotives (Randy and Jonathan Chase on the 4-4-2, Larry Jongerius and Casey Farwick fired Ron Wilkerson’s 2-8-2, Mike and Mel Hitchcock brought out their 4-4-0, Bill Mac steamed up his ten-wheeler, and Dave Bunts fired Paul Quick’s 4-4-2). On the evening of August 18th, we saw four trains out (Chases, Hitchcocks, Wilkerson, and McLaughlin). The “coup d gras” culminated to our last night run (Sept. 1st) with 7 locomotives out for the evening run (Randy and Jonathan Chase [4-4-2], Greg Casford [4-10-0], Bill Mac [4-6-0], Casey Farwick on the Wilkerson 2-8-2, the Parrott family [Shay], the Hitchcocks [4-4-0], and Scott Morgan running his “Captain Joe” [0-4-0]).



The Sept. 1st night run was also the evening when the 3751 steam crew joined us for a night of barbeque and trains. Several times throughout the night, every track in Allen’s Valley had a locomotive and train sitting on them, while crowds of people hovered in the area enjoying each other’s company and all of the good food being served. It felt like some sort of a family reunion combined with the atmosphere of a country fair.

It is a delightful experience to sit in the dark at the Panorama Station while listening to the many locomotives steaming throughout the park as a background din of laughter and conversation emanates from Allen’s Valley. By the by: you haven’t experienced a night run until you’ve watched Scott Horgan’s “Captain Joe” make the climb up the Creighton Cut-off to Summit Siding. You’ll need to Ask Scott or Dana Adams why. (One word: “Chunks”).



August 12th Run Day

It's August. It's supposed to be hot in August. So, we won't dive into just how dog-gone hot it was this day. No sir. Not going to waste any ink (or electrons, depending on how you receive the Chronicle) by talking about it being 104 degrees... in the shade. Not going to talk about sweating ("glowing" if you're a lady), suffering, and that odd Doritos/oniony smell that some folks develop whilst working with steam engines... in the hot heat. Not gonna do it.

Instead, this will be about those brave folks who endured the heat, onions and Doritos, who fired those locomotives and who helped to bring another successful run day to the RLS. To start, locomotives and engineers out for the day were Bruce Moffat with his 0-4-4T, Tom Lawson with his big Berk, and Bill Hesse brought out the Hunter to pull the public train. Bob Smith was the relief engineer for the Hunter train and our brakemen were Jim Kreider, Manny Caldera and A.J. Benson. Glenn Maness was our Station Master and Bill McLaughlin was our Operations Supervisor. A few members (Richard Miller, A.J. Benson, Manny Caldera, Dave Parrott) also performed work on the mainline due to a couple big heat kinks that had developed.

Speaking of the Hunter train, we have been trying an experiment for the past few run days by adding a few extra cars to the train's consist. This allows for a higher "people per lap" count and lowers the wait time by a little bit (which, in the heat, that little bit means a lot. Did I happen to mention it was really hot?). However, it requires an additional brakeman at the front of the train as well as the brakeman in the back. The jury is out as far as its effectiveness (the additional strain on the Hunter to pull the added 9 to 12 adults per lap). But, it makes for a long, heavy train which parlays into the loud bark of the Hunter. Good times!





The Sage Brush Short Line Railroad's Fall Meet

Not but a few hours north of RLS, in the town of Ridgecrest, is one of our neighboring railroads, the Sage Brush Short Line Railroad. Owned and operated by George and Linda Pruitt, several of our members are also members of this great little railroad. Every year, they put on multiple meets and events to which RLS members are warmly invited to attend. The month of September is home to the SBSLRR's Fall Meet. This year's meet will be held on Saturday, September 29th



with a work day on the 15th. Friday, September 28 is "Meet Preparation Day" and a run day for those that are present. On the evening of the Meet, a wonderful barbeque dinner is served pot-luck style (So, be sure to bring something up to share with everyone else). Also, the Pruitts have worked out a special pricing deal with the local Marriott Suites Hotel. Anyone who is interested in attending the work day and/or the Fall Meet are asked to contact Linda to get further information about the pot-luck and Marriott room rates (the Pruitt's contact info is available in our membership directory).

Board of Directors Nominations

November is just around the corner and that means we'll need to be voting for new members to sit on the Board of Directors. The members who will be departing the BoD are Glenn Maness, Dean Willoughby, Dave Parrott and Dave Bunts. These four will be canvassing ("trolling", "stalking", "pursuing", "hunting" may be applicable) the membership for folks who are dedicated to upholding the by-laws and traditions that make RLS such a successful club. If any of the BoD approaches you and asks if you'd be interested in being a nominee, please, carefully consider what is being asked of you. Don't just say "no". Give it a good think. Then, get back to whoever asked for your consideration with an answer. If you'd like to skip waiting for a director to approach you and ask, then, by all mean, jump to the front of the line and toss your name in the hat (In other words, please see any member of the Board and let them know you're interested). We are always looking for that new "somebody" to help guide the RLS through whatever the future throws at us (good coal would be nice...).



Growing up with Berkshires by Jim Kreider

The Nickel Plate was known as a fast freight hauler with many perishable commodity trains headed to Buffalo every day with origins or connections from Chicago, St. Louis, and Peoria, in addition to four daily passenger trains between Chicago and Buffalo. Most of the fast freights were pulled by modern 2-8-4 Berkshire locomotives normally operated between 60 and 70 miles per hour, except for a 1.4 mile stretch of street running down the center of 19th street in Erie, PA., through which all this traffic had to go.

I was fortunate enough to have grown up in the fifties along this stretch of street running. In addition to having a paper route along a good portion of 18th and 19th streets, my dad was an NKP crossing watchman and worked all five of the elevated crossing towers (three were on the 1.4 miles of 19th Street running) where, very often, I was assigned the task of taking him dinner when he worked second trick. Dad would very often let me operate the crossing flashers or gates under his careful supervision. What a thrill it was to see the often occurring sight of a massive 700 coming down narrow 19th street at its "official" speed of 15 mph (a speed they rarely got down to) contrasting with their mile-a-minute pace at other locations. Sometimes a wary motorist would find the train a little bit wider than anticipated with the car being no match for that big pilot beam on the locomotive. One was usually very alert while driving and facing an oncoming NKP freight.

Since I was in my mid-teens when the photos you see here were taken, my rail fanning was mainly confined to what I could do on my bicycle.

In this first photo, it's August 1957 and the eastbound 726 is just entering the 19th street trackage. Dad is in the tower and I probably just brought him his dinner in this late afternoon scene. The Marx Toy Company building is on the right and the local bread baking company is just behind the locomotive. You could smell the bread baking for quite a distance. This photo was taken by Tom Gerbracht who was also rail fanning via his bicycle at the time.





On the left is a photo by Paul Prescott. Here, an eastbound 700 is about halfway through the street trackage. I delivered the "Erie Times News" to the house on the right. The Erie Cemetery is on the left. Mom had an inexpensive plastic lens camera that she would use to take family pictures or other non-interesting, non-train-related stuff like that. She would often say that she had a couple of pictures left on the roll before she could have the roll developed. That was my queue to ask if I could be a nice son and do her the favor of finishing the roll down by the track.



In the next photo, the 726 is accelerating westbound out of town about to cross Greengarden Rd, and about a half mile past where the photo on page 4 was taken. If the wind was right, you could lie in bed at night and easily hear the engines accelerating westbound. What a sound!



Left; The 763 is also accelerating westbound out of town. It just crossed Greengarden Rd. It is fall, 1957.



Here, a fast moving eastbound has just past Erie airport and under the Powell St. overpass, about 6 miles to 19th street. It caught me by surprise.



What's in a Name, Part 3: **SUMMIT SIDING**, by Rich Casford

As your engine pulls hard up the Creighton Cut-Off (named after Dr. John "DOC" Creighton, first President of RLS), you will pass over the Summit grade crossing and swing into the curve headed towards Summit Siding and then the Straightaway.

This is actually the third location for Summit Siding or spur track. When RLS was formed in 1966, the initial steaming area was located outside the park on the property



of Joe Hunter's experiential farm and engineering buildings west of the park property.

Our first RLS members had to move the steaming area off Hunter Property and located the new temporary steaming area in the West corner of Hunter Park along Marlborough Avenue about where the new West Gate and road is now located (More on the early steaming area at a later date).

The current Summit Siding was the result of the park remodel and addition of the road along the west boundary of Hunter Park. RLS crews had to move the mainline and siding back into the park by 45 feet. The switch closest to Marlborough Avenue is almost in the original location of the stub track that was used in loading of the first passengers in the early days of RLS. There was no station area in the park when RLS started. Look on the RLS website for some early photos of the open park area and dirt fields!

The original Summit Siding used to start just past the Summit Grade Crossing and proceed around to where the current switch is now located. This was a test for engineers if they were running up hill and had to stop to open that first switch, and then start the train with it stretched out down the hill! The length of the siding did not change with the movement of the mainline or siding during remodeling the park. We just moved the siding closer to Marlborough and re-installed the track at the same length. You might call it a slide job around the corner!

On many early operating days, Summit Siding was a favorite spot for helpers to tie up prior to proceeding down to Noble Junction to help another train up the hill. Summit Siding is also a great place to stop and look over the entire railroad as it is the highest point in Hunter Park. Before all the buildings were built west of Hunter Park you could also enjoy the Santa Fe and Union Pacific action on the full size tracks.



August 26 Run Day (photos by Joan Adams)

Someone must have found the “Heat” switch and set it to low. This run day was warm, but nothing like the Aug. 12th run day. Also, someone found the button for the big fan in the sky and turned it to the “Pleasantly Light” setting. It was actually a nice day, which made it even better to run trains!!

We had a full line-up of locomotives as Josh Klenske (4-6-4), Dean Willoughby and Randy Chase (4-8-4), and Dave Bunts (Hunter locomotive) took on the passenger train service while Paul Quick and the Battelo family (Nick, Vince and Sam) pulled a freight train behind Paul’s immaculate 4-4-2.

First out of the steaming bays was Paul Quick who took advantage of the cool morning air and an empty park to make a number of laps on the mainline. Dean and Randy came out next as their train was reserved for the day’s birthday party. Shortly afterward, Dave Bunts and Josh Klenske eased their locomotives onto the mainline.

Our brakemen for the day were Bob Smith (Josh’s train), Charlie Gresham and Manny Caldera (Hunter train), and Bill Hesse, Randy Chase and Dean Willoughby

took turns braking for the Birthday train. Bill Hesse also doubled as relief engineer for the Hunter train. At the station, Glenn Maness was our Station Master and was assisted by Jim Wood and Cindy Caldera. The railroad ran smoothly as our volunteer switch tenders made sure trains were routed to the correct tracks in both the Iowa Yard and Allen’s Valley. Keeping everything running like a fine conductor’s watch was Brook Adams.





Traveling Riverside by Rail in 1896

by James Wood

A variety of interesting rail travel options existed in Riverside in 1896 according to the Press-Horticulturalist newspaper of the time. Horse or mule drawn Riverside Railway cars operated daily between 4th, Brockton, University, and Park Ave. The Arlington Street Railway cars departed downtown on Main St. several times a day running along Brockton and Magnolia Ave. to Buchanan St. also using horse or mule power. This eventually became part of the famous Pacific Electric Railway, as did the little Halls Addition Street Railway, a mule powered car from Main St. along 14th and Park Ave. to near where Victoria Country Club now sits. This little car made eight round trips daily.

Southern California Railway steam trains, later Santa Fe and now BNSF, left the existing Riverside Depot at 7th St. for stops in Ontario, Pomona, Pasadena, LA, Santa Monica, Santa Ana, San Diego, Elsinore, Temecula, Perris, San Jacinto, Colton, San Bernardino, Redlands, and Highland. In addition, the Chicago Limited and Chicago Express steam trains provided service to points east during these years. The schedules were ambitious and significantly boosted the region's growth. Southern Pacific Company steam trains, now Union Pacific, traveled from Riverside to LA, Colton, San Bernardino, Redlands, Banning, and points east.

Not listed in the 1896 paper was the Southern California Motor Road which, based on old maps, ran from near Market and Houghton Ave. east to Massachusetts Ave. then across to Northgate St. into Highgrove and north to Colton. These tracks still exist. It was a one or two car train with a steam engine disguised as a trolley to be more appealing to horses and the public. By the 1920's, this and animal powered routes had disappeared, and new local Pacific Electric "red cars" would depart daily to Corona, to Rialto via Market, Cedar, and Bloomington Ave., to Colton via La Cadena Ave., and to San Bernardino and Redlands. It is odd to realize that rail service a century ago was this extensive and offered so many options. With Metrolink Trains now, we may slowly catch up to our past.



All Hands on Deck: Extra Works Days are Coming!

The Fall Meet is just around the corner (October 26-28). Keep an eye on the club's website, your email account, and/or the October edition of the Chronicle for announcements concerning extra work days. With the summer heat and constant irrigation of the park's new lawns, the mainline has suffered. Plus, there are a number of other big jobs we're hoping to have completed prior to the meet.



It Didn't Seem Real...

We had waited for 14 long months to arrive at this moment: The date was September 11, 2011; the time was right about 12:36pm: Ron Wilkerson brought the first train into the Iowa Yard and thusly ushered in a new era to RLS. In just a few short months, the station would be filled with excited voices, steam engines and their trains would traverse the entire outer-loop and Hunter Hobby Park would become Riverside's pride and joy. For the few happy folks who witnessed this historic moment, it simply didn't seem real.

COMING RLS EVENTS:

Sept. 9: Run Day

Sept.15: Work Day and Monthly Board Meeting

Sept. 23: Run Day

Oct. 14: Run Day

Oct. 20: Work Day, Board of Directors meeting

Oct. 26 – 28: FALL MEET!!

Visit the RLS Website: www.steamonly.org

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Riverside Live Steamers' Board of Directors

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Treasurer: Dean Willoughby

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Chris Enright

Dave Bunts

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