

September 2015

The RLS Chronicle

NEWS OF THE RIVERSIDE LIVE STEAMERS



A look back...

Here is a picture from 2002 of Charter Member, Ron Wilkerson arriving at the Columbia Station. Columbia Station, which was dismantled for the Hunter Park restoration, was replaced with the new Hunter Station on Iowa. This new station has room to queue up four times more passengers than the old station, and on the Run Days it's usually pretty full.

Along the Track – Roadmaster Rich Casford

August was NOT July this year at RLS!!!!

Once again the RLS work crews set a new record. As you may recall we consumed 3 pots of Coffee in July due to the rain storm. In August our small crew of 10 drank 4 cases of water before 11 AM due to the extreme heat!!! We expected a small turnout due to the TV reports that record breaking heat was going to hit Riverside on the work day.

No matter the weather work always has to be done on the Railroad and Saturday, August 15th was nothing different! We took care of all the weeds in the compound as the sun was getting higher and hotter in the sky. The track crew raked the leaves and tree trash from the July storm off the engine lead, the entire Columbia Yard and part of the Vandenberg trackage in the Palm Garden.

Meanwhile in the compound SMP Bunts and John Gurwell installed the remaining tracks tools and re-rail equipment on the work truck. We now have a complete track and rerail truck available with all the tools mounted ready for easy use and proper storage.

Another team of RLS members started to clean out the Caboose of obsolete items and making new storage areas for items from the Caboose. See next article about the pending move of the Caboose to a new home away from RLS.

The Hunter was serviced by the SMP and everyone found shade and an early lunch.

When the Roadmaster left the compound after the Board Meeting the temperature was 108' at 3:00PM.

Our next FUN (work) Day will be Saturday, **September 19th**, **starting at 8:00 AM**. Lunch to the workers at Noon and Board Meeting at 1:00PM open to all. The Fall Meet is only two months away. We will continue our free Breakfast both Saturday and Sunday October 24th and 25th at the Fall Meet. Due to lack of demand and high cost, the RLS Board of Directors voted to NOT do lunch or dinner Saturday, October 24th. Lunch and Dinner will be on your own to allow for continuous train operations into the night on Saturday Night of the Meet.

See you on the Railroad,

Rich Casford, Roadmaster
Radio Call Sign- Road 2



(Dave Bunts with the new updated track and re-rail truck)

CABOOSE LEAVING RLS COMPOUND – Rich Casford, RLS City Liaison

The Southern Pacific Caboose #899 has been a fixture at RLS since 1966 when the RLS organization was founded. Everyone thinks it belongs to RLS but it is owned by the City of Riverside along with the park, the Railroad, and the train equipment that the City has purchased.

Originally the caboose sat west of the park on the Marlborough Ave. side of Hunter Park. The founders of RLS (including Charter Member Ron Wilkerson) moved the caboose by snap track over to the current location with a station wagon as motive power. After going from the Marlborough side of the park to the Columbia Ave side, the RLS track crew turned the caboose 90' and move into the compound area next to the engine house. They were TOUGH track workers back then!! They had to build up a crib of ties to raise the caboose to the level of the compound which was several feet higher than the grade level of the park.

Several years ago RLS Member John Noble presented an idea to the Board about building a patio outside the Enginehouse. In John's normal style he had a drawing showing how we could move the caboose closer to the entrance gate and pick up 7 ½ feet of additional patio space. John went over to Orange Empire Railroad Museum and got rail and ties, installed the track, and rolled the caboose west. We built the current patio cover.

The extension of track however was only built on one set of railroad ties. If you stand and look back at the caboose it has a definite tilt towards the BNSF Mainline!! Next time you're at the railroad take a look at the trucks under the West end and see the bearing oil on the wheel set from the tilt.

Over the years RLS crews have worked on the windows and doors replacing broken panes when kids would throw rocks. We installed a new metal roof with the help of RLS Member John Thorpe who worked at Hunter Aluminum in the late 70's.

No matter, the Caboose is getting older by the day. The City of Riverside and RLS do not have funds to restore the Caboose. RLS has the experience in maintaining the live steam equipment and the railroad track but we are not a Full Size Railroad restoration organization.

Attempts were made to reach out to organizations that might want the caboose. Most Railroad museums understand the high costs of maintenance of a wood caboose and declined any interest.

Over two years ago I started working with a professional railroad equipment dealer in Oklahoma City to get the caboose exposed to a larger market. The outcome of those meetings were an agreement between the Equipment Dealer, the City of Riverside and RLS to get the caboose sold to a good home. RLS will be compensated for replacing the fence across the front of the compound property to be of similar design as the station fence.

July 28, 2015 the City Council of Riverside approved the agreement between the three parties. The Riverside Press Telegram, TV stations ABC, NBC, and CBS all did stories with Mike Gardner and Ron Wilkerson. This increased awareness has resulted in several inquires but as of this writing nothing formal has been accepted by for the Caboose.

So sometime in the months ahead, the Caboose will be lifted on to a lowboy trailer and moved to a new home someplace. The RLS Board of Directors will be reviewing changes in the compound once the Caboose has left the property.

August 9th Run Day

The Mid-Summer Run Day with Operating Superintendent Bunts at the helm.

Hunter passenger train was crewed by Engineer John Gurwell with Brakeman Bill Hesse in the morning, Brook Adams and Jim Wood covering the afternoon shift running the Eastbound Outside Loop.

The Birthday Train was handled by Rich Casford on his Santa Fe Northern #2926 with help from Brakeman Brian Stephens. When the Birthday Train was finished the Casford 4-8-4 went into passenger service. Curtis Claybrook provided Brakeman service in the afternoon.

Out on the railroad were Ken Mitsch, David Lazarus, Richard Ronne and Ryan Briggs all taking turns at the throttle of Ken's Pacific. Cameron McMongile was running Paul Quick's 4-4-2 Atlantic, Bill Philips and Charlie Kennemer were out on Charlie's 4-6-0.

New member Andrew Akers brought his model of The Best Friend of Charleston out to show. Dave Bunts and Larry Jongerius spent some time with him, tinkering and talking about this unique looking steam train.

Points of interest...

September 9, 1905 - Construction begins on the Nevada Northern Railway in Ely, Nevada.

September 17, 1901 - Grand Canyon Railway made its first journey to the Grand Canyon.

September 22, 1900 – Harry C. Grant and Joshua Lionel Cowen file incorporation papers in New York creating toy train manufacturer Lionel.

September 27, 1825 - British engineer George Stephenson's Locomotion No. 1 (originally named Active), the first steam engine to carry passengers and freight on a regular basis, hauled its first train on the United Kingdom's Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR). The S&DR was the first publically subscribed passenger railroad.



August 23rd Run Day

Covering the Operating Superintendent duties of the day were Joan Adams with her assistants Dayna and Scott Horgan.

With SMP Bunts at his side, Larry Fisher received training on the Hunter Engine running the Eastbound figure eight. Rich Casford fired up his mighty Santa Fe Northern #2926 and with the help of Brakeman Scott Horgan provided morning train rides for Make-A-Wish kid Justin and his family. After Justin's family had departed, #2926 went into passenger service for the remainder of the day.

At Hunter Station, Station Master Glenn Maness had plenty of help with Cindy Caldera covering the merchandise cart, John Gurwell and Manny Caldera working the loading platform and helping the new Brakeman with their Trainman duties, Marty Berg once again taking care of the four track crossing and Curtis Claybrook tending the South turnout into the station.

Out on the railroad were Bill Hesse and Charlie Grisham running Bill's Mogul, Bob Cummings on his 2-8-2 with David Weiss riding as Brakeman, A.J. Benson fired up Ron Wilkerson's Mikado with Ron getting some cushion time as well, Richard Miller made a lap on his 0-6-0, MAC and Brian Stephens took a couple of end of the day trips on MAC's narrow gauge 4-6-0.

New Brakemen had the opportunity to practice what they learned in the Saturday training class. Our Brakemen for the day on the Hunter Train were Ken Long and Ken Mitoma. Special Train and Public Service were Scott Horgan, Bob Roberts and Curtis Claybrook.

Our last regular Run Day in August went along smoothly, thanks to everyone that came out in the heat to help out.





Congratulations...

Congratulations to our 5 new Brakemen who completed the class on Aug 22nd. Kenneth Long, Ken Mitoma, Kevin Chung, Aiden Shields and Bob Roberts.

And a big thank you to our Brakeman Instructor Manny Caldera.

The next Brakeman class will be coming up in a few months.

Coming Events

Sept 13th: Run day

Sept 19th: Work day & Board meeting

Sept 27th: Run day

Oct 11th: Run day

Oct 17th: Work day & Board meeting

Oct 25th: Run day (Fall Meet)

The Sagebrush Short Line RR Workday and Fall Meet, Sept 25th & 26th

The RLS Fall Meet...October 23rd, 24th & 25th

For Work Day and Run Day updates, Visit: www.steamonly.org

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