
THE DESERT WIND

Volume 11, Issue 2

A Publication of the Joshua Tree and Southern Railroad Museum

Spring 2007

Spring Meet Reports.

Fun, Sun and Steam in the High Desert.

2007 JT&S Narrow Gauge Meet.

- From Brian Ratliff

This year's narrow Gauge meet might have been lighter in attendance, but it certainly made up for it in Quality. As usual Al and Lynn Ratliff opened up the digs early in the week and people started rolling in after Wednesday.

Burns' and Beard brought RGS 41 down from Salinas and also in the trailer was the stable of RGS equipment. The reefer car was a big hit after operations. That 2-8-0 can pull the house and sounds good doing it.

Bruce and Mike Thompson brought out C&S 13 and his Westside flat and Caboose from Corona and it spent the weekend happily steaming. Bruce is enjoying his new abode and plans to use it very often.

Three Companies had the usual plethora of 24' Westside flats. The Plymouth spent quite a few hours running either in work service or recreational. The Heisler was unloaded but never steamed up as there was plenty of action going on all weekend.

The Portola Valley boys, Ron Schmidt and Peter Moseley brought down D&RGW 268 and tested out the new air brake system on both the engine and Ron's newest project a 41' D&RGW flat car. The flat was deckles so as to observe operation of the brake rigging. Room was left in the trailer on the trip down for new 'Gramps' Schmidt's new purchase. As a new

...continued on page 2

Inside This Issue

- 1 2007 Narrow Gauge Meet.
- 1 Grand Scale Division Spring Workmeet Report.
- 2 Presidents Message.
- 3 Calendar of Events.

Grand Scale Division has it's First Steam-Powered Spring Workmeet.

Rail is spiked down and a cut is dug out...

- From Chris Allan, GSD Coordinator

The weekend of April 14th-15th saw a flurry of activity on the Grand Scale Division. Track was being laid both on the Roundhouse Loop grade as well as east from Jack's Gap Bridge. Shay 6, crewed by Rick Mugele and student fireman Mike Brehm shuttled track materials and ballast back and forth. Lars and Don lead the lining and leveling crew, and a significant amount of work on the loop cut was being wrapped up by Brendon and Bill Hilton, after a week of literally "chipping" away at the rock.

One week prior, a rather sizable excavator was rented in Indio. This project was coordinated by Brendon, and funded by many of our generous members including the Hiltons, Lars Tenpas, and Roger and Gloria Stabler. Brendon himself deserves kudos for sticking tenaciously to the project through wind, breakdowns, numerous fuel runs, and vibrating constantly during hammer operations for a whole week prior to the Meet.

Persons from as far away as Utah joined us for this well-attended Meet. I counted as many as 30+ persons on hand Saturday. That evening we shut down the locomotive and enjoyed each other's company while feasting on Beer

...continued on page 3



*Brendon Hilton with his excavator "toy" during cut digging.
Tom Arnold photo.*

JT&S President's Message for Spring 2007.

If you haven't been in the Museum Depot lately, please take a look on your next visit. Gary Conely and Terry Watson have been very busy remodeling the interior. It looks spectacular. They have worked hard to reorganize and secure the displays and make room for more exhibits. The back room has been completely redone and now houses the steam engines. Because of their efforts, we have been able to bring the rest of the exhibits out of storage and we still have room for more.

In fact, if you have any museum quality railroad memorabilia you would like to donate, we would love to have it. We are specifically looking for 2 Lionel freight cars and 1 HO caboose. If you've been wondering what to do with some of those keepsakes you have in storage, we have a place for you to put it. Next time you see Gary or Terry. Make sure to thank them for their great work. It's very nice to see the Depot looking so great!

Esther van Wingen is prepared to sell her trailer that resides in the campground. It's in a great spot and has been extensively renovated. If you are interested, give her a call at (626) 796-2259.

In recognition of their extraordinary contributions to the Museum, the Board of Directors elected to convert annual members Ken Eells and Dick Pantoja to regular members. As regular members, they can nominate, vote on and serve as a Board of Director. Congratulations Ken and Dick!

It was great to see our friends from Northern California at the Narrow Gauge Meet in March. There were lots of trains running during the day and much fun around the campfire at night. Brian and Alan Ratliff were able to install the compressor in the track shed and put together a temporary delivery system for the meet. It made it much nicer in the steaming bay and everyone appreciated their work. Brian captures it well in his report.

The Grand Scale Meet in April was a tremendous success. I was great to see the Shay fired up and pulling cars. More track was installed on both sides of the bridge by a very large and enthusiastic group. Some folks came all the way from Utah.

Hat's off to Brendon Hilton who spent a week on an excavator breaking through the loop cut. He worked nearly non-stop until he hit rock so hard, even this big machine couldn't get through. There's not much left but a different method will have to be used. Brendon also did a heck of a job cleaning up around the Reefer car. With help from the Ratliff clan, they relocated the coal bin closer to the 7 1/2 gauge track. For more on the Grand Scale, check out Chris' report.

As always, there's a lot happening at JT&S. Hope to see you at the workday on May 12th. - Tom Arnold ☀

Narrow Gauge Meet 2007, continued...

proud Grandparent he made a deal with Ken Johnson for his 'Gramps' tank car. Congratulations gramps.

The Tolans, Jeff and Kevin brought out their Chloe and ran the wheels off of it. Paul Lavacot brought his out too.

The new air compressor and air manifold to the bays was a huge success with all that steamed up or was around the steaming area during the weekend. No more tripping over small compressors and their noisy operation. The new air system worked well and was well appreciated.

Somewhere during the weekend a plan was hatched and Saturday afternoon it came to light and by Sunday Afternoon not much needed to be done to finish it off. A new spur was graded, track built and graded and the switch was laid past the frog. This new addition to the infrastructure is a welcome addition and is parallel to the main line up the line from the passing siding below the campground. It just happens to be alongside the camping space that the Burns' use and the train can be set out after operations without having to walk all around the area to get to it. A darned good idea, and now it's just about finished, thanks for all that helped in making it happen.

The weather is certainly warming up in the desert and the working season is rapidly drawing to a close. Easter is coming up and Three Companies is going out to enjoy the weekend. Seven switches need to be finished and the car barn tracks completed and graded. Work is then going to be focused on the Engine House and steaming area, as we have been graciously endowed with a

...continued on page 3



Bill Shepherd finishes the concrete floor in the Tedder Shed.



Calendar of Events

•*Workday Schedule*

May 12, 2007

September 8, 2007

October 13, 2007

•*Fall Meet Spectacular:*

November 8-12, 2007

- *Rudy van Wingen Memorial 7 1/2" Gauge Run (aka the "Rudy Run")*

- *Grand Scale (15" Gauge) Workmeet*

Annual Dinner Saturday Night - details TBA

Email tomamailbox-jts@yahoo.com for more info and member camping reservations.

Logon at www.jtsrr.org for all the latest!



Greg Ratliff inspects the new lead tracks into the carbarn.

Narrow Gauge Meet 2007, continued...

grant in large enough proportion that it can be started and completed in the near future. We also have an offer for materials to enable us to do the masonry necessary. We are fortunate to have such generous and thoughtful members and donors, thank you. See you after Easter, Brian. ☀

Grand Scale Division Update, continued...

Brats and a host of dishes brought for the potluck. After sunset Brendon fired up again and we had night runs across Jack's Gap until everyone was ridden-out.

Sunday of the Meet most of us were content to sleep in, however Rick Mugele and Mike Brehm were busy laying out the formwork for the Mule's Relief Line center bridge support in the wash. This support will be placed on a huge rock discovered at just the right spot in the middle of the wash, thanks again to Brendon and his excavator.

As a side note: Thanks to Hillcrest Shops for loaning us their powered rolling railbender, which made quick work of curving the rail for the roundhouse loop.

During the Meet we welcomed new members Bill Hilton (Brendon's Dad), John Gritz and Kelly Eyre from Anahiem, and Danny and Marles Oldroyd from Mt. Pleasant, Utah. All pitched in and had fun during the work activities. Everyone also enjoyed taking a spin on the Hilton Family's Go-Devil battery-powered ore cart, which provides a quick tour of the 15" gauge line.

The 40' shipping container is now completely wired and lit, inside and out, thanks to Bill Shepherd, Tom Arnold, Kevin Kane, Dick Pantoja, Bill Souder, and Brendon Hilton. The air compressor donated by Lars has the new single phase motor donated by Ken Eells, and new pulleys, belts and a starter switch. A nifty hose reel donated by the Hiltons provides the air. A workbench inside allows us to not always have to make the walk down the hill to the Shop Car.

Another side note: Our beloved tractor operator Ole Olson recently underwent triple bypass surgery. I would ask that you send him some good thoughts and/or prayers. We look forward to his speedy recovery and his getting back into the mix.

Bill Shepherd finished and filled up all the foundation blocks for the Roundhouse before he left in March. We can't thank Bill enough for his hard work. We hope to start framing the structure in September. Ken Eells is developing the framing plan, and Lars Tenpas is getting the windows going, so hopefully by this time next year we will have at least a couple of stalls lockable. Ken is soliciting donations for this part of the build. If you can help please let me know. As always I can be reached at (562) 809-7455 or by email at wsflco@earthlink.net

Have a happy and safe summer. I look forward to more exciting progress when we start up the 2007-08 season in the Fall! ☀

Notice: Rita Allan is looking for an old-fashioned wood cookstove/oven for use at the Pullman picnic shelter . If you have any leads please contact her at: troop138@earthlink.net



Mike Brehm enjoys firing the #6.



Greg makes a run at the Highline.



Tom Arnold relaxes after a day of tracklaying.



Grand Scale track crew Saturday evening of the Meet.



P.O. Box 475
Joshua Tree, CA 92252

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Phone (760) 366-8503
Email: tomamailbox-jts@yahoo.com
Website: www.jtsrr.org
Editor: Chris Allan