
THE DESERT WIND

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Meet Tim Poppell.

Our new caretaker is settling in...

The Museum has a new caretaker! Please make it a point to introduce yourself to Tim the next time you are out. Tim is a local who grew up in the area. His parents live just a short way south of the Museum in Joshua Tree. Tim is well known to Cherie Palmer as a sometime actor in the JT Playhouse and came well recommended, so we are hoping for a long and mutually beneficial association.

Tim currently is living in the large Alpha Gold trailer at the east end of the campground in the site previously occupied by the other Alpha Gold taken over by the Kanes. Tim wanted to find a place of his own as living at home was no longer something that appealed to him as an independent young man.

He is an actor, waiter, caterer and chef. When not actively rehearsing for or acting in a play at one of the local playhouses in the high desert, Tim is employed as a waiter at one of the finer restaurants in the Palm Springs area. He works late hours serving dinners, hence the late sleeping and early afternoon departure time. When acting, he frequently has rehearsals in the late afternoons and evenings, and when a play is being presented he usually works Saturday evenings and Sunday matinees, with rehearsals during the weekdays.

His background is varied, having also been a Navy Seal Medic. Tim does catering for high desert and low desert venues, doing most of the food preparation and presenta-

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Uncle Bert's "Legacy"

An epic in every sense of the word...

-from Rudy Van Wingen

After several of our members attended Bert Henning's Memorial service at the Palm Springs Air Museum (where Bert had been a docent for many years), I had an opportunity to discuss the disposition of his shop and equipment with his widow Irene Henning. Irene promised to call me when things had settled down in a few months. True to her word, Irene called me in late March and we began to make plans to move the items that Bert had bequeathed to the Museum.

A group of us got together on Friday, April 30th and made the "trek" up to their home in Mountain Center high above Palm Desert. Allan Ratliff, Kevin Kane and I each drove separate pickup trucks up the grade, with Paul Lavacot along as a helper.

When we arrived, we found a much larger collection of items than we could possibly handle in one trip, but we set to work moving the smaller items. After hours of moving, hauling and loading we had both Allan's and Kevin's big pickup beds loaded almost to overflowing, and the back of my little Tacoma was filled to the top of the camper shell. A final survey of what was left was a sure indicator that it was going to take more than three pickups to finish the job, so the four of us headed down the hill for a late lunch in Palm Desert and the hours' trek back to the Museum, there to again move and unload all the goodies.

My initial reaction was to hire some professionals to move the remaining "big pieces", but that proved to be easier said than done. After asking around and doing some research Richard Pantoja came up with the solution: he knew of United Rentals in Cathedral City where we could rent a big stake bed truck with a hydraulic lift gate. I polled the available members and finally Terry Watson, Gary Conley, and Tom Arnold volunteered to help Richard and I, and a date was set.

On the day of the second move, Friday June 18th, it was agreed to meet at the Pantoja's house and caravan to United Rentals from there, and thence up to the Henning residence. Tom Arnold was not with us; his work had interfered and he promised to join us as soon as he could get away. Since we knew we had several hours of work ahead of us, we met at Richard's at 6:00 AM and arrived at United Rentals at 7:00 AM. By the time we got through with the paperwork and arrived at the Henning's it was 8:30 AM. Terry and Gary got "antsy" and decided to forge on ahead of us but left without getting really clear directions or telephone contact info

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New Caretaker...from page 2

tion himself. We recently got a taste of his capabilities when he catered the Narrow Gauge Meet Banquet. Tim prepared the food in his mother's kitchen and then brought it up in chafing dishes.

He is not mechanically or electrically inclined, so please don't ask him to fix a problem in that area. He is a good organizer and makes sure that the Museum property is secure and clean.

Tim is not a paid employee of the Museum. He lives on the property rent free in exchange for his supervisory functions of the Museum property, and he does some maintenance and repair work when called upon by the BOD. Tim pays his own electrical and telephone expenses, and sees to it that visitors are given tours or set up in campsites they have reserved.

Should you wish to contact Tim, you may call him on the Museum phone (760) 366-8503 or email him at tpoppell@earthlink.net. ☀

Uncle Bert...from page 1

from yours truly. When Richard and I arrived, they were nowhere to be found; the next time we saw them was back at the Museum late that afternoon; Richard and I had the dubious honor of doing the whole job by ourselves.



Thank goodness for the lift gate! Richard worked the truck bed and I worked the gate. We wrestled each piece of equipment onto the gate, lifted it, and then Richard tried to keep it from going over the

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Three Companies Construction Erects Car Barn Bay.

-from Brian Ratliff

Over the Easter weekend the Three Companies Construction firm delivered, set up, and installed the track for the new car barn that spans the center-drop section of the building. As it would be almost impossible to erect the prefabricated bays in a finished building they needed to be installed before the building was put up.

When the Hoover Dam project was started a company was formed of many (six) to get the job done. As no one company was more important than the other the name Six Companies Incorporated was their working entity. As with our family, we felt that we needed a name that fit us that we agreed to be called. And when that it was brought up that Six Cos. Inc had a Shay. We had a Heisler, so we could be Three Companies Construction. Which is very fitting for our engines, for, both the Heisler and the Plymouth have many surviving prototypes because they were used in construction and mining.

As Allan Ratliff arrived earliest, that would be Thursday; the job of preparing the ground for digging fell upon him. Getting the sand wet enough to stay together while digging the holes for the legs of the bays. Simple, yet very important, as in sand we didn't need a three foot diameter hole for a two inch piece of tubing.

On Friday, just past noon, Brian Ratliff pulled in for the weekend. First order of business was a trip down to the lumberyard to pick up an ample supply of concrete and other assorted supplies. Seem the locals down in Yucca Valley have been driving mini-trucks too long, as it caused quite a stir when we loaded 3600 pounds of ready mix in mom's grocery getter.

Next order of business was to unload the workhorse, the Heisler, and the rest of the consist. The rest of the afternoon was spent deciding which local eating establishment we were going to frequent that night and whether to have an impromptu night run or enjoy the beautiful evening just relaxing. We did a little of all while waiting for the third member of the trio to arrive. Greg Ratliff showed up as usual right about 9:30.

Saturday morning dawned clear and seasonally warm. After getting up around four all week, sleeping in till six feels like a slack day. Everyone else starts stirring after the engine is fired up and stirs up the silent stillness. Final preparations are made collecting the necessary equipment for the day's task. A string of flatcars comes in handy transferring buckets, mixers, bags and blocks to the work site.

At exactly nineish, just as planned, Dave and Mary Evans from Circle City Trucking arrive with the prefabricated bays that were welded up at Corona Machine Shop. In record time the metal work is unloaded and carried to their destination. A few last minute calculations and digging and they are placed in the pit. False work is put in place to hold the bays in their proper spot. Adjustments made and rechecked all pay off as the lift out sections work freely as designed.

With everything just so, the concrete mixing commenced with help from Gary Conley and Brian's cousin Ryan Low. The right consistency was agreed on by the pour crew, the mix crew made it and the delivery crew strained as the mix was transferred in five gallon buckets to the edge of the pit. As each lot was poured in the holes the align-

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It's that time again!

Dues are due- Regular **\$60.00** / Associate **\$24.00**

Make your check out to: **JT&SRR Museum**

Mail to:

**JT&S Railroad Museum
PO Box 475
Joshua Tree, CA 92252**

Please write "2004/2005 DUES" in the memo line.

Thanks for your continued support!



Calendar of Events

•*Work Weekend Schedule:*

September 11-12, 2004

October 9-10, 2004

•*Fall Meet Spectacular*

Nov. 11th - 14th, 2004

Dinner in the Diner Saturday night only.

Contact **Rita Allan** for more dinner info:

wslfco@earthlink.net

•*Narrow Gauge Meet*

March 18-20, 2005

Contact **Rudy van Wingen** for more info:

dmmcomo@sprintmail.com

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



Grand Scale Division Report

A busy close to the season!

Lots to report on this time. Perhaps the most exciting news is that the Santa Ana Zoo transferred to the JT&S enough relay materials for 1000' of railroad, 8# and 12# mixed, along with the better pressure treated ties and OTM. In late Spring it was torn out and moved to the Property. Thanks go to Rita Allan, Kevin Kane (our heroic Gradall operator), Tom Arnold, and Ken Eells. The Zoo has since relaid 1750' of track with new materials.

The Grand Scale Meet held in April was a great success, with persons in attendance from all over California, including Randy Jones, CMO of the 19" gauge Swanton Pacific. Our first turnout was finished, along with the first 100' of track. Thanks again to the Live Oak Canyon track gang, Jack, Lars and Don. Shay #6 has moved down to Ken Kukuk's Westside Locomotive Works for cleanup, inspection, and a tune-up. Thanks to Brett Minor for hauling it to LA and hauling a load of rail back up.

Saturday evening moved to the Shelter where all were treated to Beer Braughts, Grand Scale Chili, and sheet cake. Randy graciously entertained us with many of his 8mm sound movies of various operations, including the now defunct Calistoga Steam Railroad, and the formidable Romney Hythe and Dymchurch 15" gauge Railway in Britain. I hope to see one and all for even more fun on September 11th, our first workday of the new season!

-Chris Allan



Kevin Kane loading track panels in Santa Ana.

Bert's Legacy...*from page 2*

cab of the truck since the truck was parked facing downhill at about a thirty degree slope....

Also, fortunately, Richard had a full arsenal of moving equipment including dollies and other heavy-duty tools. We worked from 8:30 until 2:30 and finally had the flat bed and Richard's pickup filled to the brim with stuff, and the only thing left in Uncle Bert's shop were his trains and the other tools that Irene Henning had elected to keep for their grandson Tommy who has expressed an interest in having them.

There are still drawers full of tools and small items that Irene Henning would like us to clean out, so I will be looking for at least one volunteer to aid me then.

After stopping for a bite of lunch, Richard and I headed back up

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Uncle Bert...*from page 3*

to the Museum and upon arrival; lo and behold we found Gary, Terry and Tom waiting for us, eager to unload! Needless to say with the three extra hands the truck was emptied in no time and the concrete pad outside the shop car looked as crowded as it has ever been! The more valuable items were put inside the shop car for safekeeping. Racks, metal stock, and benches were left outside on the pad.

Everything that was donated has been photographically cataloged. I will be preparing a list for Irene Henning to use for a receipt from the Museum for income tax purposes. Some of the items we received are duplicates and will be put up for sale, with Museum members getting first choice (a couple of items are already spoken for). One "jewel" we received was a large 60-gallon vertical air compressor with a 7HP motor and cast iron pump. It appears brand new and has been stored in the auxiliary steaming bay shed. It will be permanently mounted and plumbed up to supply air to the steaming bays; volunteers and donations for plumbing are needed.

A big thank you is in order for Irene Henning for making this wonderful addition to our Museum shop available to us and to all who helped in the move: Allan Ratliff, Kevin Kane, Paul Lavacot, Richard Pantoja, Gary Conley, Terry Watson, and Tom Arnold. *Thanks folks!* ☀



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Editor: Chris Allan

Three Companies...*from page 2*

ment was rechecked over and over. Eyeballs, tape measures and clamps kept things plumb and when all was over it looked pretty good.

By Sunday afternoon the clamps and false work were removed and the alignment checked for final approval. Each had to try for themselves the lift-out sections at both the middle and the front of the building they worked just as planned. A Locomotive somehow appeared on the bay to grab the first crossing achievement and another project by Three Companies Construction can be considered complete. Thanks again to Allan Ratliff, Brian Ratliff, Dave Evans, Gary Conley, Greg Ratliff, Ryan Low and Tom Wilson ☀



Greg Ratliff "load testing" the new elevated bay track.