
THE DESERT WIND

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Winter 2006

The Span is Up!



The 40' main span is up - thanks to Ole's loader!

Photo by Tom Arnold

The 40 foot main span of the Jack's Gap Bridge is now up, we hope to have track across this structure by Spring 2006. This crossing has been a major GSD stumbling block for many years. Now thanks to the efforts of many dedicated individuals including Rick Mugele, Dick Pantoja, John Zitrick, Lars Tenpas and Roger Stabler this long-term goal is soon to be met. Once completed this achievement will be ceremoniously dedicated to our departed friend and

long-time JT&S member Jack Sessums.

The November work weekend was our best to date, with progress taking place on several fronts. A huge thanks go to Bill Shepherd, Tom Arnold and Ken Eells who diligently dug the roundhouse foundations by hand over the course of the week prior to the Fall Meet weekend. Ken's heroic electric jackhammer helped out quite a bit.

Thanks also to Rita Allan, Candace Mugele and the tireless teenage crew who fed us Saturday night in the Dining Car. Rita and her Dining Car Department lend a bit of urbane class to our rustic desert environment.

Our gratitude to everyone who donated to the Roundhouse Buy-a-Block fund. The donors list to date is inside this issue. And a big welcome to our newest members, Roger and Gloria Stabler of Woodland, CA., Michael, Layna, Joseph & Joshua Brehm of Phoenix, AZ., and Glenn "Ole" Olson of JT.

-Chris Allan, GSD Coordinator. ☀

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President's Message for January 2006

The Year 2005 brought us a lot of joy and sadness. We lost our beloved Jack. Rudy has not been able to join us while he fights to get healthy. One of our founding members, Chuck Barnes passed away early in the year. We think about them often and are grateful for all of their contributions.

2005 also brought a great deal of progress and wonderful events:

Our Narrow Gauge meet in March was a huge success. Al Ratliff and family worked hard work to organize this annual event. We're looking forward to this year's meet.

Rita Allan and team put on another great dinner in the diner. This oversold event was terrific and introduced us to some new folks who have decided to join and get involved.

Paul Lavacot and many others made some significant progress on the redesigned wye. We hope to be turning trains again soon.

Bill and Mary Shepherd spent many weeks at JT&S this year. We have been the benefactors of Bill's many talents and endless energy. He has had an instrumental role in many of our major projects and still manages to help out on the smaller ones as well.

Chris Allan, Ken Eells, Bill Shepherd and the Grand Scale Division have done a terrific job on the roundhouse and bridge. Ken Kukuk's work on refurbishing our Shay was nothing less than spectacular. Expect to see a lot of continued progress this year.

Al, Greg & Brian Ratliff continued to make improvements to the Narrow Gauge line as well as the campground and other facilities. We appreciate their vigilance and efforts to keep things working well in many areas.

We are still benefiting from the hard work Gary Conley and Terry Watson put in to organizing the shop car. You can actually find things and work in that space now.

Gary Conley has been busy organizing the books and magazines in the library and preparing a new exhibit area in the museum. He has also been diligent about cycling new ties through the preservative tank. It's very dirty and thankless job.

Kevin and Liza Kane have quietly cleaned up the area in the campground near the wash. Kevin has been busy helping on a variety of projects and keeps our electric and gas powered carts working.

One of our newest members, Glenn "Ole" Olsen, spent many hours with his tractors repairing our roads and providing earth

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Proceeds go to worthy Museum projects!

moving services to the Grand Scale project. His wonderful generosity has saved us a lot of work and money.

The expertise and donation of materials by Jack Cleary and friends made it possible for us to replace our existing power line to the museum cars. The new will provide more power and allow us to remove the old polls and external wires that connect to the caboose.

I'm sure I have overlooked some things so please forgive me. But as you can see that it has been a busy year at JT&S. Chris Allan has done a terrific job keeping our web site current and full of information. Make sure you check it out and see what's new from time to time. www.jtsrr.org We're looking forward to a fantastic 2006. Puts some dates in your calendar so you can join us.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the Museum this past year. Your hard work and dedication is appreciated more than you'll ever know.

Tom Arnold
President



Bill Shepherd surveys for the new wye layout at the Depot.

Roundhouse Construction Fund Donors

A grateful thanks to one and all!

Lasseter Family Foundation
Tom Arnold and Kathy Ladd
Roger Colton
William Williamson
The Gaszi Family
Bill and Mary Shepherd
Alec Binnie
Lars Tenpas
Ray Bjerrum
Dick Miller

Beverly Sessums
Kevin & Liza Kane
Roger and Gloria Stabler
Mark Josephs
Hubert Wetekamp
Jack Beauchamp
Berthel Henning, Jr.
Dick and Shirley Pantoja
The Allan Family
Ken & Judy Eells

Doings on The Real Narrow Gauge, the 7 1/2"

- from Brian Ratliff

Halloween weekend on The Real Narrow Gauge, the 7 1/2"

The season of work and play on the 7 1/2" started on Halloween weekend, October 29 and 30, 2005. The weather was Indian summer, t-shirts in the daylight hours and a decent Pendleton was all that was needed after dark.

The first order of business was track and brush clearing the right of way. Cat's claw tends to thrive quite well after August thunderstorms. A gigantic weed over four foot in diameter was well entrenched in the center station track. By mid day Saturday a complete run could be made; from station, to end of track on the high-line.

Dirt was flying on the wye expansion, with the final grading being done on the tail tracks. Dirt that washed over the rails from the summer rains was transferred to low spots and eroded rights of way, buy rail of course! Flat cars and five gallon buckets.

A late Saturday night wind brought down an old and rotten Joshua Tree across the high-line above the Tedder complex. The offending stump was taken care of in true narrow-gauge style. Cut the trunk at the width of clearance and leave the rest be. It's still up there take a look next time you're up there.

The railroad was ready for the November Meet.



Congratulations to Greg Ratliff for winning second place in the Discoverlvesteam.com photo contest with this shot titled: Clearing the snow at Joshua Tree. Greg won in the "Realistic" category.

The Fall Meet on The Real Narrow Gauge, the 7 1/2"

Veterans weekend, November 11-13, 2005 was well attended as eight steam locomotives were out, as were five other engines. A total of 24 narrow gauge cars were shining the rails over the weekend. The weather cooperated and even though it was cool at night the days were friendly and bright. Plenty of on going projects covered the picnic table at the shelter and it was good to see a great turn out. The railroad got plenty busy on Saturday with radio dispatchers keeping the traffic to a minimum.

Thanksgiving weekend on The Real Narrow Gauge, the 7 1/2"

For the last few years the Three Companies family has spent the four day weekend operating and working on the railroad, this year was no different. Last year was snow, no such luck this year, plenty of sunshine. Allan and

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Lynn Ratliff were first out earlier in the week and Allan took to cleaning out the tool shed as the Pack-rats had taken over. Friday a concrete slab was poured for the shed to set on and the holes were filled from the inside so that the only way something was getting in was through the doors. Now we just have to get everyone to remember to keep them shut when you're not getting something out, just like the refrigerator, open and shut.

Kevin Kane had found two 7 1/2" switches via a yard sale and had placed them by the Tedder compound. Upon close examination and speculation Brian and Greg Ratliff found the perfect location for one, on the engine house/turntable lead. Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning later a switch and twenty feet of track connected



Brian on the new siding during the Fall Meet.

to the old car barn track with the result of two tracks to the turntable. Thus eliminating the bottleneck at the point. Now you can return to the steaming area while someone is trying to get out to the track, or drop your train and do some maintenance without plugging up the works.

Of course there was plenty of running going on that weekend too.

New Years Weekend on The Real Narrow Gauge, the 7 1/2"

What a better place to hide from the crystal ball dropping in Times Square then out at Joshua Tree. The work and play weekend for Three Companies got off to a windy start, Saturday was a bit blustery. Yet Mike Thompson ran his C&S Mogul and the Heisler and Plymouth of the Ratliff's put in plenty of track time too. Mike Polinsky visited from Arizona and kept the Heisler steaming all weekend.

Sunday was post card perfect, clear, warm and calm. By mid day track work began on the switch for the station bypass on the wye expansion. All that remains on that project is points and guard rails, as the trains can't reach there due to the drainage bridges not finished, no fear of engine trouble there. Monday morning the light rail on the old car barn track was replaced with heavy rail, making the trip alongside the engine house pit safe and smooth. By mid day Monday the rain that the world saw pelting the Rose Parade made it to JT, all the track work got a good soaking, the rain was heavy enough to run down the roads but not the river beds. ☀



Calendar of Events

•*Workday Schedule:*

February 11, 2006

March 11, 2006

April 8, 2006

May 13, 2006

•*Run Weekend*

February 18-20, 2006

•*Narrow Gauge Meet*

March 24-26, 2006

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

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

Depot Wye Relocation.



One of three new crossings at the Museum entrance - ready for concrete. This is part of the new wye relocation. When complete the new alignment will facilitate turning of larger longer-wheelbase equipment. A new storage yard is also planned behind the Depot for visiting equipment. Thanks to Bill Shepherd, Paul Lavacot, Tom Arnold, and the Three Companies et al. -ed.

Local Members Provide Security

- from Tom Arnold

Thanks to our local members, security at JT&S has greatly improved. Ron & Lauren Bastrup, Gary Conley, Cheri Palmer, Dick Pantoja, Terry Watson, Dick Miller, Dave Henley, & Jeff Dieckhoff make it a point to patrol the Museum on a regular basis. Dave & Jeff are Sheriff Deputies in the area which adds a level of professionalism to our neighborhood watch program.

Early notification of water leaks, malfunctioning equipment and other problems help prevent damage and reduce costs. The frequent and irregular visits are a great deterrent to potential vandals and thieves. It also gives our members a chance to get some exercise and just get away for a while.

Members frequently make contributions to our organization. Some are easily observed and others can go unnoticed. This patrol activity takes place when no one is around so you may not be aware of what happens when you're not here. This contribution is essential to keeping our property safe and secure. Next time you see one of our local members, let them know how much you appreciate what they do for us. ☀

- Board of Directors and Officers for 2006 -

Tom Arnold - President, Director
Paul Lavacot - Vice President, Director
Chris Allan - Treasurer, Director
Cherie Palmer - Secretary
Allan Ratliff - Director
Bill Shepherd - Director

Congratulations to our newest Regular Members:

Kevin and Liza Kane
Terry Watson
Gary Conley

Some photos from Fall Meet 2005...

- Submitted by Peter Moseley



George and Peter breaking in the 278.



Ken mixes mortar for the roundhouse.



The Newlyweds.



Ron takes a turn around.



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