
THE DESERT WIND

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Winter 2007

Our Friends Remembered.

Jack Sessums and Rudy van Wingen Dedications take place at Fall Meet 2006 .

Van Wingen Car Barn Dedicated

- From Tom Arnold

Rudy van Wingen was the driving force behind the JT&S car barn. He developed the concept, worked with John Cook and Bill Shepherd on the design, and was the major financial contributor. It was his determination that made it possible. On Saturday, November 11, 2006 the car barn was dedicated to Rudy.

There were more people in attendance than we have ever had at JT&S. Rudy's wife Esther was there along with many of Rudy's long time friends. Tom Gazsi spoke to the group about Rudy's contributions and had a brass dedication plaque made that now resides at the entrance door. Paul Lavacot made and installed the handsome van Wingen signs now displayed at both ends of the car barn. Stuart Paul played Amazing Grace on the bagpipes which brought a tear to many eyes.

It was a great way to remember Rudy that day and the car barn will remind us of Rudy every day. He is missed. ☼



15" Gauge Jack's Gap Bridge Formally Dedicated to Jack Sessums.

The Fall Meet Weekend went quite smoothly, and featured the first 15" gauge steam on the property in 20+ years. The Sessums Family, Beverly, John, and Jeff along with Lars Tenpas graciously provided their Shay number 7 on Saturday afternoon for the dedication of the bridge to Jack. The #7 was the first locomotive to cross the Gap, shortly after Jeff and Beverly christened the bridge with bottles of Coors Light.

We are honored that one of Jack's locomotives was first across. Subsequent trips across were made with various guest engineers and many happy riders atop the JT&S flatcar featuring it's newly rebuilt trucks.



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The dedication ceremony was well attended. Thanks also to Rita Allan and crew who served Jack's Gap Cake and hot beverages to the gathered masses at the conclusion of the event. Rita also designed a commemorative Christmas ornament for the event, which was quite popular.

The memory of Jack's energy and charisma will continue to be an inspiration to all of us. - ed. ☼

JT&S President's Message for Winter 2007.

With a record crowd in attendance, our November meet was a huge success. The dedications to Rudy van Wingen and Jack Sessums were beautiful events. Esther van Wingen, Beverly Sessums, family and friends were all in attendance. Tom Gazsi, Paul Lavacot, Chris Allan, and Rita Allan were the primary people responsible for developing the presentations. We thank them and all of those who participated in these wonderful remembrances. Rudy and Jack were two special people we will never forget.

Special thanks to Rita Allan, family and friends for the terrific BBQ dinner they served in the dinning car. The food was great and dinning with friends is always enjoyable. I know everyone appreciates the hard work these folks put into this meal. They are always very special occasions.

Once again, I'm always amazed at how far folks come to attend our functions. This year's winners are Kevin and Mageeda Doe who drove 4 days from Georgia to be with us then drove 4 days home. They and many others travel great distances to be with us and we greatly appreciate it.

It's exciting to see all of the progress that is being made on both the Narrow Gauge and Grand Scale railroads. Greg, Brian, & Al Ratliff have been very busy with improvements on the wye, car barn tracks, engine house, and track shack. In December, Chris Allan and gang put some finishing touches on the bridge while Ken Eells, Dick Pantoja, Kevin Kane and I made the final electrical connections to the storage container. There is much to report so make sure you check out the Division Pages on the web site for regular updates. www.jtsrr.org

And finally, the JT&S Grand Scale Shay is returning to Joshua Tree. After a magnificent restoration by Ken Kukuk, our Shay is leaving its temporary home at Hillcrest Shops in Reedley, CA and making its way to its permanent home at JT&S. We are very grateful to Bill Shepherd for hauling it to us and the folks at Hillcrest for keeping it safe.

Check out the calendar of events and plan to join us for the 7 ½ Gauge President's Day Run in February and Narrow Gauge Meet in March. Then there is the Grand Scale Division Spring Meet and Track Construction Party in April. Or plan a camping trip anytime and enjoy our beautiful setting. There are plenty of open times available for members so see you in JT. - Tom Arnold ☀



New Years on the Real Narrow Gauge.

- From Brian Ratliff

The close out weekend for 2006 was one of those, Chamber of Commerce postcard perfect, weekends. The week proceeding was a miserable windy couple of days, as mom and dad Ratliff can attest since they arrived Tuesday after Christmas.

I pulled a convenient job on Friday in Desert Hot Springs, so I made it to the site by 11:30. After unhooking and unloading dad and I were off to the Lumber yard for supplies for the weekend. Thirty bags of ready-mix, some breathing masks for the dirty project ahead and something to use for a splint for the rapidly deteriorating stack on the fire place.

First thing to do was fix the stack on the fire place. The old schedule ten, nine inch pipe that constitutes the stack has had its share of hot/cold cycles, combined with no atmospheric corrosion protection, which would be paint or the like for us commoners. Or in what they call in laymen's terms, the damned thing has just about rusted through. Two eight inch diameter by twenty four inch long fire-place vent pieces were wired around the old stack so that the smoke would reach the top. And after the paint was burned off, they worked quite well.

Saturday was absolutely beautiful in the A.M., still, cloudless, and warming quite fast. Firing was commenced, the Heisler was ready to work and the first two projects went hand in hand. The dirt pile at the upper road crossing has been encroaching the right of way since the day it was put there and the back filling of the retaining wall for the engine house. Three flat cars and nine buckets made numerous trips from site to site. The new water hose can reach far enough so the fill could be compacted and in short order the two projects were off the to-do list.

After lunch, Greg and I tackled the completion of adding ties to one of the station crossing bridges. Seven specially cut bridge ties, one more item off the list. Saturday nights, feast-de-jour, a fourteen pound rib roast, baked and barbequed to delicious.

Sunday, carbon copy Saturday, great day. Project: Teddor Shed floor. The locals for the longest time have been using the shed as a very large dispensary for their winter stores, the pack rats have been running amok in there too long. They only have to dig through the tar paper floor and presto! A seven foot by twelve foot locked storage area, visited only about a dozen weekends a year by hairless apes. Well, those thirty bags of premix that have been in the truck since Friday made it to the 'team' track at the station about 9:00 am. They were off loaded to flat cars and at ten bags to a train load, they were hauled to the shed area for off loading at the JT 'batch plant'. As loads came up, the old floor dirt was hauled to the off loading site. The one thing we like to do is play trains while we get things done. The mixer was hauled from storage at the patio area and at about 12:30 the mixing was started. Nineteen bags later, half the floor was in concrete. Next time up, we'll finish it. No more pack rats through the floor. The only way they will be able too get in then is like you and me, through the door; keep it closed.

Monday, happy New Year, lets go fire up and have some fun. The Heisler ran great again, hauling things back to their respective places. The extra bags of concrete went to the car barn to be stored on the 1½" scale riding cars of mine so that they can be moved where ever needed without lifting again. What could be set in the Teddor shed without being on the new floor was placed in there. The ashes were cleaned up from the steaming area and sent to the designated place. House cleaning, the never ending chore. And after the dust settled from the morning run, the project of the day was to add trackage to the south lead of Rudy's barn. Thanks to the boys, Gary and Terry, who have

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Calendar of Events

•*Workday Schedule*

February 10, 2007

March 10, 2007

April 14-15, 2007

•*Presidents Day 7 1/2" Gauge Run: February 14-19, 2007*

•*7 1/2" Narrow Gauge Meet: March 20-26, 2007*

•*Fall Meet Spectacular:*

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

- Grand Scale (15" Gauge) Operations

November 8-12, 2007

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

New Years continued...

been rotating the tie soaking bin, ties were ready for making a few new track panels. With the four of us, Allan, Brian, Greg and Mike, twenty five feet of new track was made and the frog cut into the main lead to the car barn. Only the switch points and the approaches need to be completed to have two tracks accessible to the barn.

All in all, a great weekend with family. A productive and pleasant time was had at the track. Kevin Kane has been working at cleaning up the dead brush in the lower property area, and it shows nicely. The boys, Gary and Terry, have been hard at work in the museum, reorganizing and cleaning up the display area. With a donation of some real 'Buddy L' rail they are placing the whole train in one line along the south wall, an impressive sight. And, building a shelf for the other scale trains to be displayed as well. Stick your head in the station while they are there, they would love to show you the progress that has been achieved so far.

Had a great time, as usual, at the digs. See you there in February, presidents' weekend, Brian ☼

Grand Scale Division Update.

We're across! Jack's Gap has been spanned! Thanks to everyone who fought to get the steel in the air, and to everyone who believed in us and supported us along the way. Although there are numerous tasks to complete before we can consider the bridge "finished", having rail across the Gap is a big morale booster.

Now that this physical and psychological barrier is behind us, we can concentrate on getting our rolling stock back, and tuning up the track structure. The shipping container is in place, thanks to Ole's loader. We now have 40' of secure storage for rolling stock, the Sessums air compressor, the new rail, and the lubrication barrels. Brendon Hilton is coming up with a way of getting track access to the container so we can use it as a temporary enginehouse until the first couple of roundhouse stalls are lockable. Tom Arnold, Ken Eells, and Ole have buried conduit from the Shop Car up to the container and have pulled wire. The conduit and water line run was accomplished during mid-summer, on a typical scorching day, so we owe these three guys a big debt of gratitude.

In the days prior to the Meet, Rick Mugele built the temporary center pier in the wash from timbers, which gives us a nice warm fuzzy feeling when you are out in the middle of the 40' center span. All vibrations and bounce have been eliminated. Thanks Rick!

Bill Shepherd and Tom Arnold continued the block laying on the roundhouse foundation the week prior to the Meet. We now have all the cinder blocks on site. Bill will return in February and finish up the foundation walls, at which point we will be able to start the timber framing. Ken Eells is designing the framing and roof structure. Thanks to Bill, Tom and Ken for keeping the momentum on this project rolling.

Roger and Gloria Stabler of Woodland, California once again joined us for the Meet. Roger deserves a BIG pat on the back for spending all day Saturday lying under Ole's loader, welding a patch over the hole in the transmission case that was accidentally poked into it by a disorderly rock. Roger also got the bridge bent on the shop slab welded up to the point that it could be removed, once again freeing up the space in front of the Shop Car. Gloria helped out in the Dining Car, cleaning and other miscellaneous chores. We are always happy to have these two down, a lot seems to get done when they are around! Thanks also to Roger for spending a week at the end of October welding the Jack's Gap bridge deck down. As I have mentioned before, we are years ahead of schedule because of his efforts. Thanks also to Ole for clearing a lot of dry brush prior to the Meet, which had become a fire hazard, and had to go.

Brendon Hilton has moved our 15" gauge speeder (or "pop" car as it is known to the older members) to his shop in Hesperia. This car was formerly in storage in Lake Elsinore. Brendon is planning on remotoring the drive, and adding a belt-driven air compressor so that this piece will lead a more useful existence as a MOW work car. Brendon is donating a new power plant. As it was, the small 2hp motor barely had enough compression left to move the car around at all. Thanks go to Brendon for taking this project by the horns. And thanks also to him for letting us use his golf cart at the Meet for running around in, it made everything easier.

- Chris Allan, GSD Coordinator ☼



Jeff and Beverly Sessums take a ride across the Gap.



Bill and Mary Shepherd out for a run.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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JACK'S GAP BRIDGE DEDICATION - NOVEMBER 11TH, 2006
JOSHUA TREE AND SOUTHERN GRAND SCALE DIVISION



LIVE OAK
CANYON
RR

JACKS GAP
ELEV 3450'





**RUDY VAN WINGEN
CARBARN DEDICATION**

**JOSHUA TREE AND
SOUTHERN
RAILROAD MUSEUM
FALL MEET
NOVEMBER 2006**