



# Stack

# Talk

July 2020

Vol 28 Issue 7

*Gauge 1 elevated, 4 3/4 ground level and 7 1/2*



## The Legacy of Jim Jackson

How many times have you seen the name on the tower in front of the station and wondered just what that name represents? Have you ever wondered about the long building with two tracks leading into it? Where did that come from and why two tracks? For many members, Jim Jackson is only a name on the tower in front of the



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station. For those of us who were around in the early days of the club, he was quite a remarkable man. In spite of a handicap that

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## The Legacy of Jim Jackson

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would slow most craftsmen, he managed to form a one man company that produced museum quality models of railroad cars and fittings. He was a founding member of the club and had a live steam track in his back yard. The long building with the two tracks was his engine house and was donated to the club after his death. During it's time at Zube it has become a story in it's own right. More than once, bees have built huge hives under it which have had to be removed. That required moving the building off of it's foundation. It has been vandalized necessitating the installation of Lexan windows. Spence Gaskin has been taking care of it for several years now and has repaired the doors several times. But this isn't what Jim Jackson is best known for.

**Dennis Cranston has managed to capture the spirit of the man who was also one of the founding fathers of HALS in an article beginning on page 3 that tells the story of Jim's Railway Hardware Company.**

Doug B

## The Co-Op Corner

By Billy Noyer

Howdy HALS! Here is the latest update on the Co-Op. It appears the automatic oil pump is not working and has not for a while. Luckily, Chris Mears talked to Barry Tobias and he has offered one up from his stock, so hopefully it will work with the locomotive and will save us a few bucks and allow us to get it back running again. Dad (Bill Noyer) and I repacked the drive rod and D-Valve packings and then steamed it up to check our work and were happy to find not a leak in sight... at least not on what we worked on. There are plenty of other leaks that need to be fixed, but we are at least

## Monthly Timetable

The following dates are subject to the latest COVID-19 changes and regulations

### July

- 4 Open Saturday
- 11 Workday and Board Meeting @ 12:30pm probably with Zoom added
- 18 Public Run Day 9am to 1pm
- 25 Open Saturday
- 26 Sunday Public Run Day 2pm to 5pm

### August

- 1 Workday and 11 am Board Meeting with General Meeting @ 12:30 pm.
- 8 Open Saturday
- 15 Public Run Day 9am to 1pm
- 22 Open Saturday
- 23 Sunday Public Run Day 2pm to 5pm

The *Stack Talk* is the monthly publication of the Houston Area Live Steamers, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Submissions are encouraged and should be sent to :

**editor@hals.org.**

Deadline for submission is the 20th of the month.

getting it to a point where we might be able to keep enough of a head of steam to get to the next siding.

There are a few other mechanical issues (like the oil pump) that need to be addressed and Chris Mears has volunteered to work under Barry Tobias' tutelage to see if they can be fixed in a timely manner. We will be bringing the Co-Op back home to Houston in the next few weeks. Hopefully we will have it up and running on Run-Days sometime soon.

If you have a share of the Co-Op and have not contacted me, please do so as I am still trying to get a handle on the admin side of

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# Jim Jackson and the RAILWAY HARDWARE COMPANY

For many HALS members, the hobby started with the beginning of the Houston Area Live Steamers in 1991. However, there was much activity prior to that time. One of the more active live steamers was Jim Jackson. In the 1970s, he started a company called Railway Hardware Company. To quote an introduction to his 1983 catalog:

*We are pleased to offer to the 1 1/2" scale model builders an opportunity to construct highly detailed rolling stock using our moderate cost product line. You will note that the parts are principally designed for wood car construction typical of the 1890-1910 era.*

He was remarkably successful in this goal as one of his flatcars was entered in a San Jac model contest and was given 98 out of 100 points. Comments from the meet said that the reason for 2 points short was that the air lines could not pass air!

While he sold individual components, his objective was to produce complete

kits. He provided wood parts where there were wood parts in the prototype and metal parts to match the metal parts. For the metal parts, he would construct a master out of various materials, make a mold out of RTV or vulcanized rubber. Into the mold, he would pour a babbitt alloy. Babbitt alloy is a relative low temperature melting metal. Items such as grab irons were made from a soft aluminum wire pressed in a metal mold. His 1983 catalog listed over a dozen wooden parts and over 50 metal parts. The wooden parts were from cherry wood and were pre-cut including any slots and holes needed.

Some of the metal parts, he could not produce himself and went to commercial casting companies. The axle boxes were bronze castings, investment cast. The original turnbuckles, cast in babbitt, probably did not work too well, being too soft. So he had turnbuckles investment cast in brass complete with threads. Another area was square nuts. Early railroad cars used a lot of square nuts and Jim tried to provide them.

Jim was very active in early HALS and although he had a disabled arm, he could fire his oil fueled locomotive. It was not easy as he was known for setting the ties on fire while getting steam up. When he died, his shop equipment was offered to HALS members. With no offers for the parts inventory, Tom Herbert took them him with the idea of continuing the product line. After several years, he decided that he had lost interest and as Tom knew that I had done some RTV casting gave me the supplies.

By the time I got the RTV molds, most had deteriorated to being unusable and as I cast pewter, which needs a higher temperature RTV, I decided not to attempt to reproduce the items. As the Railway Hardware Company was known for its square nuts, there were several references to it in forums. I saw one from Dick Morris (Alaska) that I replied to and found he had a complete catalog. I swapped some nuts he needed for a copy of the catalog.

A good set of pictures of the cars from kits is on the IBLs site. [http://ibls.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Railway\\_Hardware\\_Company](http://ibls.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Railway_Hardware_Company)

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## Railway Hardware Company

(Continued from page 3)

The flatcar and gondola 'lived' with David Hannah III until they were sold, the gondola to a person in Kansas. The disposition of the flatcar is unknown. The refrigerator cars may still be around HALS,. I would like anyone with information on the cars or persons who bought the kits to contact me. I am planning on putting a copy of Jim's catalog and drawings on HALS website.

Dennis Cranston

### *Another way to access the Members Only site?*

Hidden in plain sight for some?

Was it a change to the HALS website for accessing the members only area - or wasn't it?. For several days last month some members , including myself, were stumped on the procedure for accessing the *members only* section of the HALS web site. The little flashing banjo had disappeared and it didn't seem there was any access.

Human nature being what it is, some of us have apparently become so used to looking for the little 'secret symbol' that has been there since the creation of our website, that our cognitive insight completely ignored the new access point which is a BIG BOX right out in the open.

When our VP of Communications, Greg Moore, first took over the site, he supplemented the flashing banjo signal with a regular sized box that says "Members Only". Maybe we can blame our oversight on the abundance of rich content the website contains since Greg has improved it.

Doug B.



### Changes to the Board

Due to recent passing of several board members, the board has approved the following changes and appointments.

Loren Miller is now VP of Track and Right of Way

Bill Courtwright is promoted to Sr. Director

Mike Alexander has accepted the position of Jr. Director

### Quick looks at maintenance on the railroad

**The Boy Scouts** have completed work on the water tower and cooling tower at Sweetwater. Jim Cash led this project for the club to a successful conclusion.

**Chris Mears** and **Jim Cash** have continued their efforts at clearing brush from the various rights-of-way on the track. Chris managed to clear the brush under the trestle to Phase 4 so that welding of supports be completed for safety reasons.

**Mike Alexander** and **JB Cason** have been keeping up with the mowing and weed eating.

**Chris Mears** has been working on an aerial survey of the HALS track.

**Greg Moore** added lettering to the new passenger cars that Rick White completed.

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our little engine.

We went to Barry's house Saturday before the Public Run Day and did some work on the Co-op. The automatic oiler was not pumping, so we disassembled it (again, as we had a few times at home before) and figured the only part that could be causing the problem was the O-ring on the pump. Barry went to his storage room and returned with more O-rings than I have seen in a hydraulic pump rebuild facility. After some digging, we found the exact one. I reassembled the oiler and we put it back on the locomotive.

One of the other things we discovered was the actuating arm was too long and was not moving the pump cam far enough for the one-way bearing to reliably push it through the down stroke of the pump. So we clamped the arm down to Barry's mill and added a few threaded holes closer to the point of rotation. We put it back on the oiler, ran it on air and it worked like a champ.

Finally we discovered that the locomotive was losing way too much steam when the brakes were applied due to the bleed holes on the actuating cylinders being too large. We tapped the holes, drilled smaller holes in some set screws, and put them back in place.

It was a great day at Barry's. If you have not had a chance to work with Barry at his shop, you are missing out. He is a wealth of knowledge and a hoot to boot. Thank you Barry for your tutelage; I just wish I lived closer. *Billy and Bill Noyer*

## OF INTEREST TO LIVE STEAMERS

### Mogul 527 Returns to Museum

June 16, 2020 - By Doug Blodgett



Sam Christensen, museum curator, with assistance from museum employee is ready to roll 527 back into the museum.

After several months of restoration work on the 1" scale M-21 class Mogul that went underwater for several days during Hurricane Ike back in 2008, Doug Blodgett has returned the locomotive to it's home at the Galveston Railroad Museum in Galveston, Tx. The locomotive, originally built by Robert E. Jones during the late 70's and early 80's, was heavily damaged by seawater during

it's submersion and subsequent 11 year storage at the museum.

Although the tender had suffered severe corrosion, and required a new fuel tank, it was rather easy to restore compared to the locomotive.

During the restoration, I found that front of the locomotive's cylinders were filled with a thick green goo. Under the goo I discovered heavy layers of rust that firmly locked the pistons in place along with heavy pitting on the exposed bores. Because of

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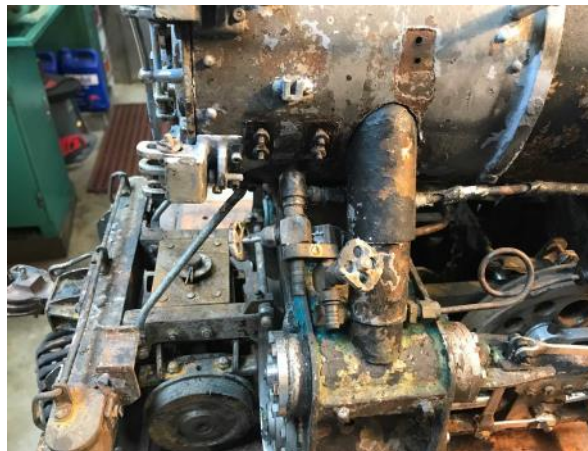


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**Above:** Mogul 527 after restoration. **Top right:** Tender after restoration. The fuel tank was completely rusted out and had to be replaced. **Middle right:** 527 back in her display at the Galveston RR Museum. **Bottom left:** Rusted fuel tank needs to be replaced. **Bottom center:** Front end of 527. **Bottom right:** Front end of tender with fuel tank removed. A new tank was reconstructed using builders original plans.

this lock-up and due to the method of construction used on the connecting rods and cross-slide, I was unable to disconnect the drive train from the piston and valve rods without cutting some of the assembly apart. This also blocked me from removing the rear valve and piston covers. Since the museum was primarily interested in a cosmetic restoration so the public could see the model in a static display, it was decided to forego an operational rebuild and finish it for display. I had a copy of the original plans which helped for reproducing missing parts.

## During the resoration



# Printing Gauge 1 Railroad Cars

By Dennis Grigassy

I've been a HALS member since shortly after the founding meeting and have had a little loco and several 7.5" cars at the track. The yellow articulated spine car with containers that is often used on operations day was built by me. I got into Gauge 1 live steam about 20 years ago. Now, with the Gauge 1 track at Zube I can participate more often.

I bought my first 3D printer about a year ago and was hooked. I also taught myself Tinkercad - a CAD program actually designed for elementary school children - perfect for me, and it's free!

It didn't take long for me to crave another machine, as 3D printing is very slooow! The Combine shown in some of the pictures probably took a total of 30 hours to print all the parts.

Last Christmas my wife got me a second 3D printer, and unbeknownst to her our daughter ordered me another. So now I have three, and all are running most of the time.

After "printing" lots of toys, trinkets, ornaments, etc. I decided to try my hand at rolling stock for Gauge 1.

I brought several cars to Zube about a month ago and ran them for several hours with no problems. I was skeptical that the 3D printed wheels wouldn't hold up,



but they did, and with no wear on the treads or flanges.

I'm working now on a couple of old English



passenger cars (Lower Left) and a Flat Car, all in 1:32 (9mm) scale which simulates standard gauge on Gauge 1 track.

**Above:** My three 3D printers at rest. Often one or more of them are running all day, and often through the night.  
**Center:** A shot of my Gauge 1 "Ruby" 0-4-0 live steam loco hauling a one-car passenger train - my 3D printed Combine.



# Rick Whites Passenger Car Building Saga

By Rick White

Photos By Rick White

## Phase 1 - Modifying Existing Cars

In January and February of 2018, JB Cason and I painted three older HALS passenger cars with a sharp looking ATSF Black &



White color scheme. We followed that in March and April of 2018, when we added benches to three new steel bodies and painted them to match JB's black and white ATSF engine.



## Phase 2 - Building New Cars

In December of 2019 I started the wood part of three new benches for three new steel bodies. First I used a router to round the

edges of the three wood 2x10 bench tops. The right hand board shown above has the rounded corners.

Next came the six 2x8 bench supports from



lumber which has had 1/8" ripped off each side to obtain the square edges needed for mounting them on top of the steel body to support the bench top.

The next photo shows the key to holding the



previous parts together and to the steel car body. These are 2.0 by 1.5 inch square cut lumber the same length as the bench seat. One will be which will be bolted to the centerline of the steel car and the other will be screwed to the bench top. The side pieces will be screwed to these boards.

The 1.5" by 2.0" pieces always warp a bit and must be straightened before screwing to the bench seat top or bolted to the steel

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body. I use a 3" by 1/4" angle to straighten the wood.



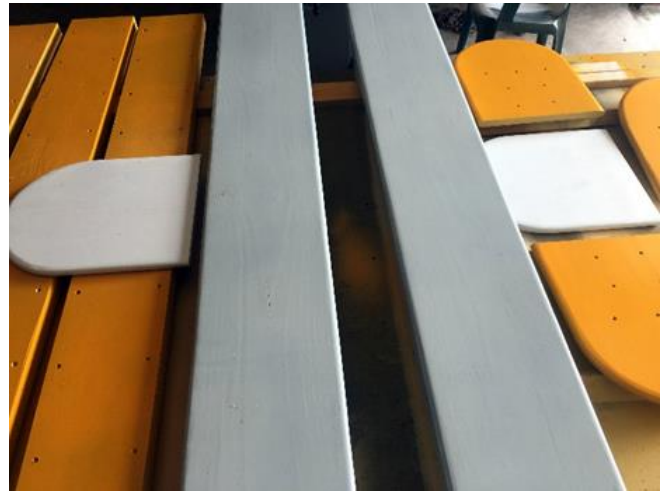
The lumber is sealed with thinned polyurethane varnish and then a second coat at full strength. All of the lumber is then spray painted white to provide a good base coat for the finish coat.



This end view photo of an ATSF car shows how it all goes together. The two side boards, painted black, are sandwiched over the 1.5" by 2" boards. The white bench is on top. The bottom 1.5" by 2.0" board is bolted to the steel car body by drilling and tapping holes 1/4"-20.

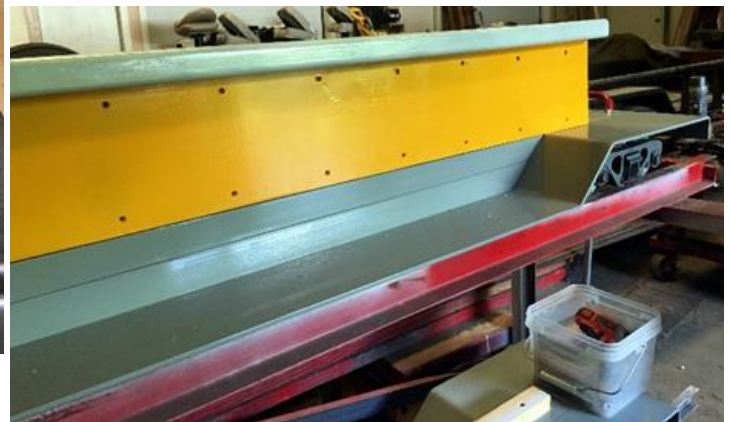
For the new cars, I was trying to match the UP color scheme. I chose to paint the

benches on the new cars with Light Ford



Gray, a Tractor Supply paint from Majic. The yellow pieces are Cub Cadet Yellow, also by Majic. The white pieces provide contrast against the light gray. We tried to color match the UP paints but that gave a gray that was too dark and a yellow that was too washed out.

Shown below is a mockup of the final assembly and these boards are just sitting



here. It looks like a Good Fit! The next car was not quite so good and later it had derailment issues which have since been corrected. All the other cars I have done were like this one with a good fit-up. The side boards have screw holes which are drilled and countersunk before painting. See next page for finished cars.

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Photos of the completed cars are shown here. The lettering was done by Greg Moore.

## HALS RETURNS TO THE TRACK WITH A SUNDAY RUN

COVID has been responsible for a major disruption of HALS public run days this year, but after much deliberation, we decided to hold our first run day of the year on Sunday, June 28. Permission was granted by the county and by all outward appearances, the day appears to have been a success. We had more than enough crew to

run five trains , with approximately 20 cars, and concessions was well staffed with Leighanna Brownlee and her family and Gail Campopiano. The only thing sold was water in order to minimize the risk of contact. The

club has not ordered new shirts this year due to the uncertainty of when run days could be held. The staff was protected by a plastic shield in front of them and the table was situated parallel to the restrooms, a departure from our normal setup. A single line was used for the public and no back-ups occurred. The line started at the entrance to

the concession area, passed between the front of the restrooms and the concession desk, and continued on around the corner through the open station area. There was no looping back and forth and since there was such a light turnout, there were no long lines. The public was very cooperative and fortunately so few showed up at any given time, that there was no problem with social distancing. No one tried to avoid wearing a mask and everyone seemed to have a wonderful time. Many of the riders we had were able to ride multiple times. 338 riders were logged during the day. Tickets were not handed out, but one was set aside for each rider and counted later. The PA stayed on the track well although it seems to be lacking on power. The Briggs engine runs fine so it's something else. Thank you to all that came to help. The G -gauge crew was out in force. I think it's good to have some normalcy back at our railroad.

*JB Cason*

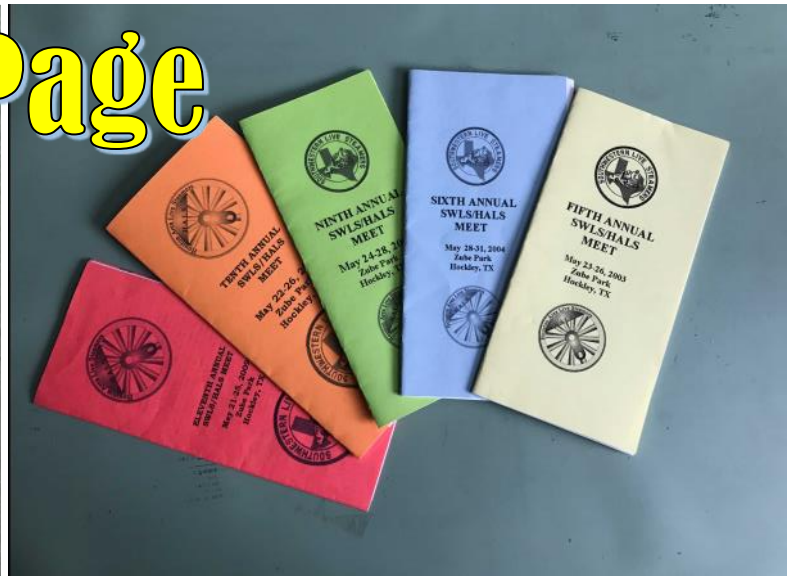
*My thanks to Loren Miller, Leighanna Brownlee, Bill and Billy Noyer, and Dennis Cranston who also contributed bits and pieces to this article via emails and Zoom.  
Doug B.*

### PRESIDENTS REPORT



*By  
JB  
Cason  
President*

# July Photo Page



**Above right:** Does anyone remember these? We used to issue information booklets to visitors at our major meets. They included a track map, local lodgings, and track rules. *D Blodgett*

**Above Left:** Load of passengers in Phase 3 during first run day of the 2020 season. Note the spacer car in front of the conductor car to provide extra safety for the conductor.

**Center left:** Hood ornament.



**Lower left:** New face of COVID railroading - everyone has a facemask on.

**Lower right:** Train leaving the station. Light public attendance made it easy to socially distance in the station. Workers reported a relaxed day hauling the public who cooperated with our rules very nicely. *L. Miller*

*Left hand photos by B. Noyer*



# 1st Run Day of the Season

## OPERATIONS REPORT



By  
*Bob  
Barnett  
VP  
Operations*

We had a lightly attended Sunday afternoon Run Day on June 28<sup>th</sup>.

It was a Fun-Run Day, literally. The crowd was pretty small, and we could

with water sensitive engines to the barn and we re-crewed the parked train.

While this was a smaller than anticipated crowd, we were able to demonstrate that we can function with social distancing and mask-required conditions. The station concession crew did not hand out tickets but tore one off for each passenger (a suggestion from Mary Lou Paisley as that was done in the early days of HALS Run Days), thus minimizing contact for the concession crews and for the station masters. Also, only water and soft drinks were

load the cars with two to three family members per car. Larger families were split and given two cars. We started the day with five trains. With the lighter than expected crowds, Chris Mears and Stephen Tacconelly decided to park one train and run steam as a demonstration for the attendees. We were able to carry the lighter crowds with only three trains. As rain clouds moved toward Zube we sent two more trains

***While this was a smaller than anticipated crowd, we were able to demonstrate that we can function with social distancing and mask-required conditions.***

sold at the concession stand. All in all, the station crew, Leighanna Brownlee, her husband and son Jason, along with Gail Campopiano did a great job.

Thanks to train crew members: Bill and Billy Noyer, J. B. Cason, Mike Alexander, Chris Mears,

Stephen Tacconelly, Randy Neville, Loren Miller and Brian Campopiano.

A special Thanks to Clyde Brown who volunteered to be the club ambassador, pull trains if needed or help out around the concession as needed. *Bob Barnett*



Loren Miller photo

# Who's been- Working on the Railroad

Rick White  
Bill Smith  
Gerald Lee  
Loren Miller  
Bob Barnett  
Rich Businger  
Dennis Cranston  
Jim Cash  
JB Cason  
Doug Blodgett  
Mike Alexander  
Chris Mears

REMEMBER YOU  
MUST SIGN THE  
WORK SHEET IN THE  
SHOP TO BE ON THIS  
LIST

## SATURDAY EXTRA BOARD

### Month 2020

#### Engineers and Conductors

Public Run Days may still be cancelled due to concerns with the health risks associated with the current COVID-19 epidemic.

Members should monitor

**HalsTalking@groups.io**

for the latest updates about using the park and eventual return to service.

#### 2020 Monthly Ridership

Total YTD 2020 — 338

Total YTD 2019 — 5395

Jun 28	338		

Dates in red denote Sunday run days

#### Station Masters

Not Reported

### Houston Area Live Steamers

Zube Park

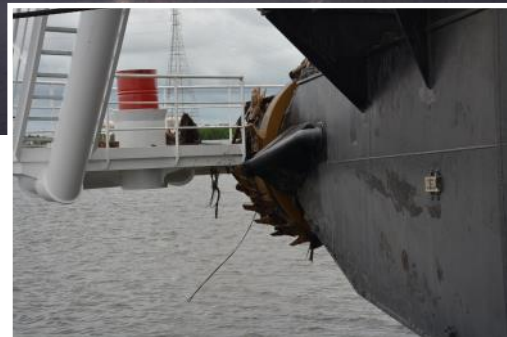
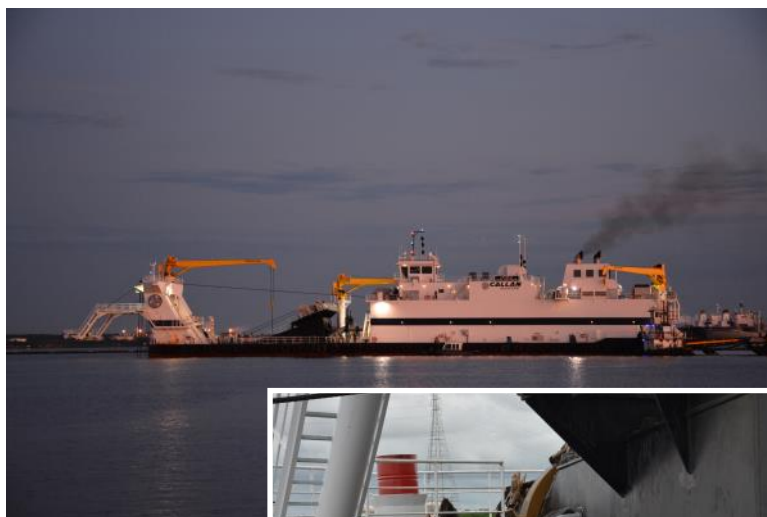
Mailing Address

Houston Area Live Steamers

P.O. Box 215, Hockley, TX 77447-0215

### Memo from Peder Serkland - when he's not railroading.

I attached a couple pictures of what's been keeping me away. I believe this may be the largest inland suction dredge. We just started dredging near Port Neches in the last



few days. The angle isn't good but the second picture shows the business end lifted out of the water. The teeth need a good flossing after picking up some old disused power poles. The cutter is about 8' in diameter.

Best Regards, Peder

#### VP Communications

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Greg Moore

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Bob Barnett

**VP Manpower**  
Peder Serkland

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**VP Facilities**  
Jim Cash

**Treasurer**  
Dennis Cranston

**VP Track Right of Way**  
Loren Miller

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**VP Motive Power & Equipment**  
Bob Dobrowolski

**Junior Director**  
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