



Stack

Talk

August 2020

Vol 29 Issue 8

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

HALS Rides Given

Year		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
March	Saturday			1,440	1,466	1,588	1,391	427	534	1,526	1,529	1,807	119
	Sunday												
April	Saturday			1,510	1,212	1,194	1,282	998	1,435	1,622	1,471	1,406	1,446
	Sunday												
May	Saturday			1,190	1,189	1,144	1,246	911	1,066	1,124	837	1,247	-
	Sunday												
June	Saturday			1,250	1,205	1,256	1,521	1,302	1,436	1,084	877	865	1,007
	Sunday		338										
July	Saturday		322	1,200	1,210	1,130	1,168	1,150	1,139	1,194	979	885	1,246
	Sunday			715									
August	Saturday			1,130	1,170	993	-	962	1,081	1,077	838	890	1,021
	Sunday												
September	Saturday			1,285	1,250	1,322	1,405	1,250	1,084	641	1,112	1,243	1,108
	Sunday			800									
October	Saturday			1,298	1,200	1,478	1,232	1,535	1,565	1,633	1,548	1,162	1,582
	Sunday			759									
November	Saturday			1,453	1,350	1,478	1,381	1,007	966	1,756	1,597	1,579	1,594
	Sunday												
Totals	Saturdays	-	322	11,756	11,252	11,583	10,626	9,542	10,306	11,657	10,788	11,084	9,123
	Sundays	-	338	2,274	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	110,651	-	660	14,030	11,252	11,583	10,626	9,542	10,306	11,657	10,788	11,084	9,123

COVID 19 Plays Havoc with HALS 2020 RUN DAYS

Greg Moore, VP Communications, has prepared this impressive chart showing our ridership for 2010 through 2020.

The numbers in the chart show only total rides given - not the number of individuals who show up for rides. Since we only count rides, it is impossible to deduce how many people have actually come to the park this year, but generally the fewer riders there are, the more times riders will re-board the trains and go around again. With

numbers in the 300's this year, it is reasonable to assume that fewer than 100 people showed up for each of the run days in June and July. The good news is that with 5 trains available to pull passengers, it easier for the crews to keep riders separated into individual families during the day. HALS remains committed to keeping crew and passengers safe in these dangerous times and may shut down again if deemed necessary.

Editor

TRACK RIGHT OF WAY



By
Loren Miller
VP
*Track Right
of Way*

Q

quick looks at maintenance on the railroad

I would appreciate it if you would give special recognition to Pedar. He has gone above and beyond helping me with the work on Dead Mans Curve. He was there for almost 4 hours yesterday and over 5 hours today. *Loren Miller*

Happy to do it Loren. He did some survey work for me too. Editor

From Jim Cash : I celebrated the birth of this great nation on the 4th of July by repairing the sprinklers near 13 Stitches....and running trains, BBQ, Fireworks, Grandkids, etc.

Just a heads up in case anyone sees something amiss with the water. It should come on every other day for 10 minutes in 2 locations:

1) Under the white sign that says Welcome to Zube Park, Houston Area Live Steamers

2) Along the chain link fence where the Sago Palms are located.

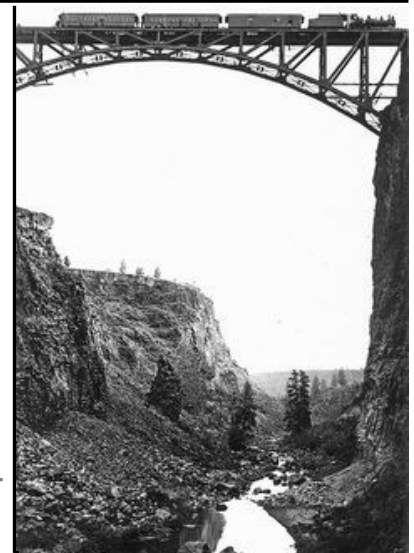
If you see excess water, please let me know ASAP so I can adjust / repair them. *Jim*

From Rich Businger: We have rebuilt 4 bridges and a crossing so far. We have had donations from a few members and can always use more for the bridge project. *(The expense for materials is not being reimbursed by the club - editor)*

The dual gauge bridge from the turntable toward Sweetwater is next. I have taken it out of service. Most of the timber is rotten and any semi rigid object will penetrate the wood. Bob and I will be demolishing the bridge soon and then we will start the reconstruction. We have to limit our activity on the bridge due to the heat and it could take 3-4 weeks of limited work to complete it.

There will access to the turntable via the transfers table or the new bridge we finished today. The 1" route to the turntable will be affected. I believe this will affect Greg Randall and Michael Sherpenberg only.

Editors note: Before the trestle was there, the track just crossed over a concrete culvert pipe. We received an educational grant called Project S.T.E.A.M. for a group of students from Waller High School and chose to have them put in a trestle at that location. We had the culvert removed and they built the trestle for us over a period of weeks. The grant stipulated that we teach them something about trains and their operation which we did. Gail Phillips was the member who did the paperwork for us to get the grant. See the original article in the May 2000 issue of Stack Talk.



Many thanks to Chris Mears for cleaning out brush under the Phase IV bridge last month. We finally have a photo of how good a job he did.



Bridge Crew Achieves Amazing Results

A small group of members, headed up by Rich Businger needed something to do during the Covid crisis and decided to replace some rotted ties on the Powder Creek trestle. Bob Dobrowolski and Loren Miller joined in and soon the trio decided there was a lot more to do after they finished with Powder Creek. Here are photographs of what they have managed to accomplish in the last several months. Right now they are working on replacing the Waller High trestle which was dangerously rotted. The new structure

will be much stronger. I was particularly happy to see the worn berms on the approach to the stairs being renewed. *Editor*

Bridge and approach to turntable with widened foot path



Waller High Trestle demolition



Powder Creek Trestle

Grade crossing at Dinkey Creek Bridge



Drainage bridge at Brothers Siding



Dinkey Creek Bridge

In Rich Businger's Own Words

A description of the work done on the bridges

The curved Phase 1 bridge was completed first (Powder Creek?), then Dinky Creek was completed. After they were done, we replaced the grade crossing going towards Lakeside and then the bridge going into Phase 3 was completed.

The last bridge about killed us as it was in the sun and temperatures and heat index were so high. We decided we would wait until the fall to do any more bridges when the temperatures were more tolerable.

That decision lasted about a week. Since the bridge by the turntable is mostly in the

shade, we decided to do it next. Then we decided if that bridge was in the shade, the dual gauge bridge from the turntable towards Sweetwater was also in the shade and we could do it too.

The main dual gauge bridge bent is built and I am hoping to get it installed this weekend. I also hope to get the bulkheads finished. I will be using 2x 4x6 boards for the main supports under the rails, 4x4s on the outside of the bridge and 2x4s as ties.

Rich B.

Family Night at the Park

A New Tradition ?

By Doug Blodgett - Editor

There is no doubt that the COVID pandemic has changed the way we lead our lives this year. Masks are required in public places, "social distancing" has entered our lexicon, and hand washing has become "de rigueur".

All of this was bound to change old habits and the way we are able to entertain ourselves at HALS too. New special groups have formed, either from boredom or necessity.

Take the Tuesday morning ZOOM conference. Formed originally to learn the "in's and outs" of working with ZOOM, it has now become more of a social gathering for keeping in touch with other members. Discussions cover almost any topic are but usually related, however remotely, to the live steam hobby. Those of us who participate have seen displays of miniature model making, a shop tour, photos and a lecture

on how the Amish use steam power to farm today, how building lighting for studios is designed, and numerous other topics.

Another new "tradition" is the Wednesday morning group, consisting mostly of retired members, who meet at the park for a couple of hours on Wednesday mornings to share ideas and maybe do a bit of personal work without the hassle of a scheduled workday.

Now another outlet for HALS socializing in these turbulent times seems to be emerging and that is the Wednesday evening Family Run started by Jim Cash. Several families have already participated including the Brownlees, Taconelly, Alexanders, Mears, and coming up, the Casons. According to reports, the first evening run was a lot of fun and considered a great success. Did

someone mention freaky green laser lights?



Evening at the Park

C. Mears photo

OF INTEREST TO LIVE STEAMERS



How the little engine got it's name is a story in itself, but basically, my wife's middle name is Eleanor, a name she dislikes intensely for some reason. I wanted to name the engine after her but she would have no part of it. So, I came up with the phonetic spelling LNR (Eleanor). Clever, hunh? She was okay with that, so there it is. The number 13 has sentimental value in that we see it as our lucky number. When we married 25 years ago, it was thirteen months since we met. I was 13 inches taller

LNR When it was Painted D&RGW "Bumblee" Colors

This is the only photograph I could find showing what LNR 13 looked like when it was originally donated to HALS. I remember bringing it home to install an axle pump in it, but don't remember what led us to repaint it in the colors it sports today.

The Story Behind LNR's Name As told by John Mayo, donator of the locomotive, in a 2003 letter to Doug Blodgett

than she, and I am 13 years older. Some things never change, some do. Anyway, I am always happy to read about LNR's new life as a member of HALS. Again, I have no objections to your proposal for repainting her to whatever scheme the club would like. If there are no overwhelming objections, I would still like her to be known as LNR 13, even it isn't anywhere on her paint job. Even so, she will always be HALS # 13, LNR (Eleanor) to me. Have fun and paint away.

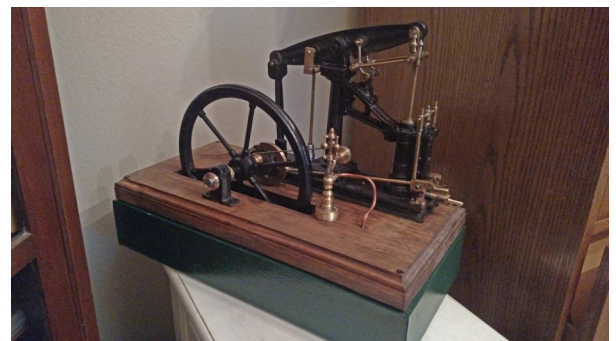
Sanderson Beam Engine

A construction project by Gerald Lee

I am sending this picture to you of the Sanderson beam engine I recently completed. It took me about 2 months to build and has over 450 separate machining steps. The cylinder casting alone has 64 separate machining steps, some of which were 2 inch long blind holes drilled to intersect the ports.

I got the set of castings two years ago from a modeler friend up here in Ohio. He had this set of castings sitting under his bench for over 30 years. The casting quality was that of the Stuart engines. It runs well on air at about 5 to 10 psi.

Many, like myself, have never had any formal machinist training. I had an interest. So I bought a small Craftsman lathe and started making scrap. Soon a steam engine appeared. The rest is history. The next one I do will be engine number 57. Overall, pretty cheap therapy. *Email from Gerald*



An Addendum to the Jim Jackson Story - by Tom Herbert

The original story about Jim Jackson's Railway Hardware Company appeared in the July issue of Stack Talk. After that article appeared, Dennis Cranston forwarded me this additional information that Tom Herbert had sent to him.

Doug B

I think, but I'm not sure, that Nathan Neuse got the flatcar, as it was period correct for his 4-4-0.

By 1992, when I joined HALS, Jim was already slowing down due to his congestive heart failure. He and I lived close to one another from August of 1992 to February of 1994, when I lived in Champions.

When I purchased my first freight car kit from Cannonball, Jim offered to let me use his shop to do the machine work on the trucks. He taught me the basics of how to use a lathe, on the condition that rather than turn only the 8 wheels needed for my car, I turn a second set for him. He also had me help him do some things that he could not do alone, and Carolyn could not help him do, because it required more strength than she had. I helped him cut the angle iron for the frames of Walt Sumner's sugarcane cars, and as you mentioned

in your article, I ran the arbor press to make the grab irons that he needed. The Hanrahan refrigerator car mentioned in my addition to the article was sold as a kit by another supplier. It passed through a number of hands. I think it was originally purchased by David Hannah and given to Jim to complete. Jim no longer had the energy to do a project of that size, and passed the kit to me. When I told David that he had done so, David gifted the kit to me, and provided a hideous-looking pair of cast aluminum archbar trucks from Railroad Supply to mount on it. They are still on it. I wanted to make a pair of Jim's beautiful built-up archbars, like the ones on the flatcar and gondola (and the ice cream refrigerator car) but Jim no longer had all of the components necessary to complete them. I spent a large amount of time milling lumber to scale size for the various moldings, making the ladders, handles, hinges and other metal fittings on that car.

I enjoyed the time that I spent with Jim, and was probably closer to him in his last years than most other members of HALS. That was the reason that Carolyn called Stu and I to get the

materials for the estate sale that we had at HALS after Jim passed away. I purchased his rotary table at the sale.

I think that of all the people that were members of HALS when I attended the first meeting are gone now, with the exception of you and Barry, unless Mark Bing is still a member. Mark retired from medicine last year, and when I saw him at a restaurant around the first of this year, he looked terrible, and was walking with a cane. There are still some long-time members around, like Jim Cash. Jim has been a member for probably 22 years, now, as I will have been working at V&E for 19 years in two weeks, and I met Jim at Zube when he came to his first public run day, and joined immediately. He was the one that got me in the door at V&E.

Correction to July issue, page 9.

Stack Talk edited paragraph to:

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.

Rick originally wrote:

The next car did not and later it had derailment issues. All the other cars I have done were like this one with a good fit. The side boards have screw holes drilled and countersunk before painting.

Doug - the problems have not been fixed. *Rick*

TIPS & tricks

A new column for our model builders and newer members to the live steam hobby who work on their own engines.

During the weekly Tuesday morning ZOOM meeting the other day, we were talking about a repair I did on LNR 13's lubrication line. When Chris Mears asked me how I did it and the differences between the various fittings, I realized that we may have newer members in the club who are learning live steam but don't know much about repairing an engine and perhaps other little tricks about maintaining one. Then when Chris suggested that I start a tips column in Stack Talk, I decided that could be of real benefit to our members. Chris had asked about the fittings on LNR so lets start with that.



LNR repair was supposed to have a loop in it for stress relief but I didn't bring a long enough piece of tubing so this was my job site compromise.

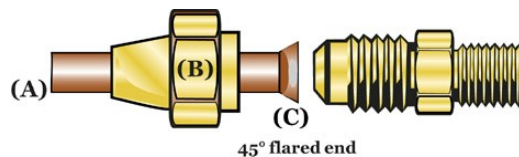
Differences between flare and compression fittings

Compression fittings are used in relatively low pressure situations and do not require any special tools to install. Flare fittings can be used in higher pressure conditions and are primarily used for natural gas and propane connections because they are virtually leakproof. The flare has to be formed with a special tool, but that doesn't have to be expensive. There are economic flare tools available at the hardware store for home use.



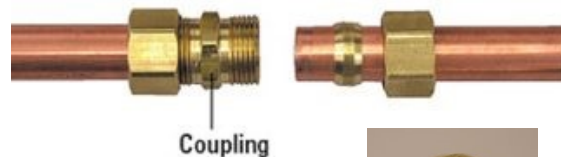
Medium priced flare tool kit.

This is a flared connection. The nut (B) must be installed on the tubing before forming the flare. A tool for forming the flare is shown to the left. One of the reasons I like to use flares is because they are relatively easy to remove in tight spaces. That is not true for compression fittings as you will soon see.



Let's look at the compression fitting next. These are quite common on old engines, probably because they don't require a tool to form the end of the tubing.

Instead, a little ball called an "olive" is slipped over the tube before the nut is screwed down on top. The nut compresses the olive around the tubing, forming a watertight seal. **Note that the olive is not slid to the end of the**



An "olive"

(Continued on page 8)

tubing. The reason for this is that the excess piece of tube sits down inside the coupling which helps keep everything in line when the nut is tightened over the olive. There is, in my opinion, a major disadvantage to this connection for small models and that is that the tube has to be pulled out a bit of a distance before you disengage the coupling. That is OK if there is room for flex, such as in a bend, in the tube on the olive side. If not, you can't get the joint apart unless you remove something else so you don't kink the tube. Here's an example of the olive pushed all the way to the end of the tube. You can do this, and tighten it, but you run the risk of deforming the tube, or the tube kind of goes at an angle when you tighten the nut and the connection will either leak or eventually break off. That is what happened on LNR. The fitting receiving the tube with the olive



Don't install your connection like this

on it has not been bored to accept the extra bit of tube and the olive compressed unevenly. A new fitting eventually needs to be made to make this connection more reliable.

There are other tubing connections of course, and perhaps the best known are the Super Scale brand of connectors. They come in various forms and can be soldered or threaded onto the end of tubing and we will look at some of these next time.

I have a little trick for screwing them onto copper tubing which doesn't thread too well. I also have a little "old timers" trick for threading copper tubing which you won't believe, but it works like magic.

If you have some tips and/or tricks of your own that you would like to share, please submit them to me at editor@hals.org and I will be happy to put them in Stack Talk.

Till next time. *Doug Blodgett*

Old HALS Steambuilders Forum Reincarnated in Groups.io

Back in 2009 we started an email forum called Steambuilders@HALS.org. I still have some of the more interesting, to me anyway, emails that were traded on that forum. The last messages were posted there quite a few years ago, but because of the new **Tips and Tricks** column, I thought that it might be a nice idea to rekindle the old Steambuilders list and bring it up to date a bit. Greg Moore has created it in groups.io for us and it is now available for use by any HALS member. We initially populated the list with names of

members who were known to have or had expressed an interest in live steam and announced it on the HALSTalking group. Already the first few days have been quite active with thank you's for reviving the list and even a few tips. You can check if you are a member by logging into your groups.io account. If Steambuilders shows up, you are already a member. If not, email myself or Greg Moore and we will add you to the list.

Doug Blodgett

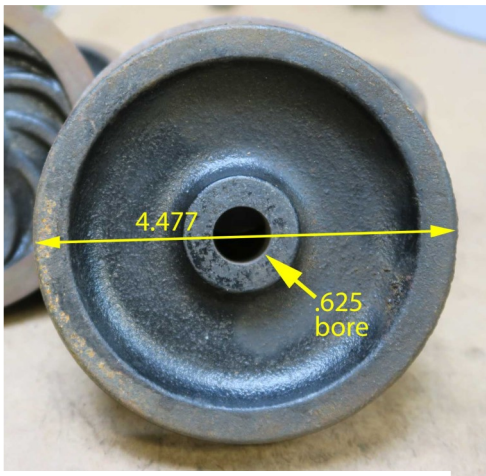
August Timetable

- 1 Workday and board meeting at 11:00am
- 1 General Membership meeting at 12:30pm. Zoom available.
- 8 Open Saturday
- 15 Public Run Day 9am to 1pm
- 22 Open Saturday
- 23 Sunday Public Run Day 2pm to 5pm
- 29 Open Saturday



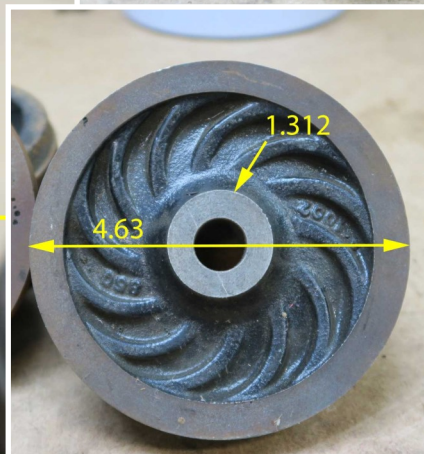
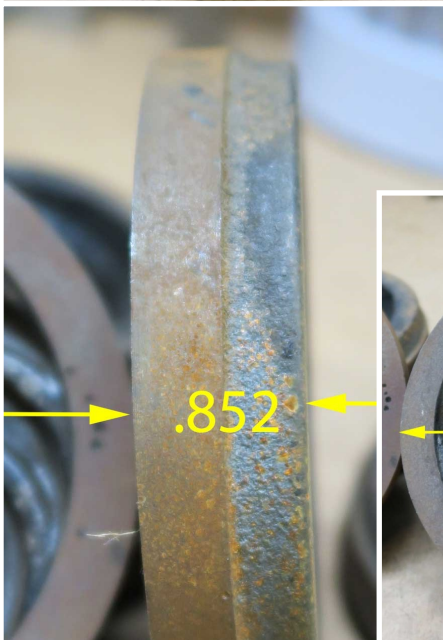
Act now and I will throw in a free router table

Old Sears Router. Runs good. Getting rid of it because I downsized to smaller DeWalt.



Set of 9 cast iron wheels Partially machined. Make offer.

Doug Blodgett
281-353-9819



I was asked the other day if I would create a sales page for Stack Talk. So, here it is - a last minute insert. It's nothing fancy but it might get better in the future.

If you have something for sale, please send a photo and description to editor@hals.org and I will put it on this page for you.

Editor

Who's been- Working on the Railroad

Due to the difficulties in keeping track of the members who have been working for HALS during the COVID crisis, I am reluctantly making the decision to remove this column from Stack Talk. With no effective way to accurately record all those who put in time for the club while at the track on non-work days, working from home, etc., I feel that rather than hurt anyone's feelings by omitting their contribution, it would be better to recognize their efforts in various articles. *Editor*

SATURDAY EXTRA BOARD

August 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 — 660

Total YTD 2019 — 7311

Jun 28	338		
Jul 18	322		
July 25	***		

Dates in red denote Sunday run days

*** - rained out

Station Masters

Bob Barnett

Houston Area Live Steamers

Zube Park

Mailing Address

Houston Area Live Steamers

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

July Concession Stand Report

By Leighanna Brownlee

We sold some cups and two t-shirts. I am going to run to Office Depot this week and get some plastic frames. I can print out a list of what we have for sale with pictures, put those in the frames and place them around the tables. The cups and books were offered when guests first came for tickets but I think it would slip their minds when they got off the train because they weren't visible.

After several requests for shirts, Elizabeth offered to get one while explaining that we couldn't take it back once it had been handled. I believe we can pull off selling t-shirts if we keep them off the tables and out of reach like we did with the cups and books. *Leighanna*

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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.