

RIDING RAILWAYS NEWSLETTER



Grand Scales
Quarterly

AUGUST 2006

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Even though the summer is slipping away, there are still some big events coming up in both the Grand Scales and 7+RAILROADER communities. For the 7+ crowd there is the **Illinois Live Steamers Annual Meet** being in Suburban Chicago, IL, the **Waushakum Live Steamers 36th Annual Meet** in Holliston, MA, and the **Pennsylvania Live Steamers 60th Anniversary Meet** in Graterford, PA. Imagine! 36 years for the Waushakum Live Steamers and 60 for the Pennsylvania Live Steamers!! Congratulations to these and other groups who are celebrating milestones this year. If you will be attending any of these or other meets, please consider sharing your photos and stories with us.

Now on to other news in railroading.

Regards,

Susan

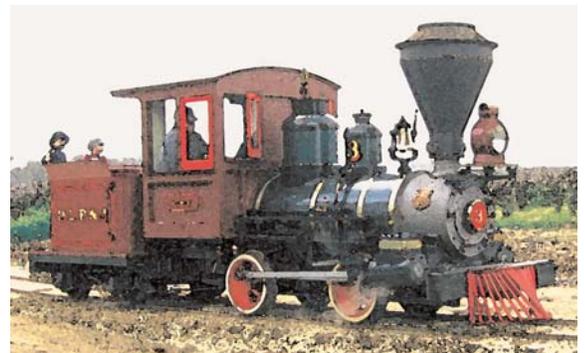
REEDLEY! RAIL FEST!

Hillcrest Shops is hosting another **Reedley Rail Fest** this year. (The **Grand Scales Quarterly** hosted the first Reedley Rail Fest in conjunction with the Grand Scales Convention last year). As many of you know, Hillcrest Shops is the current home of the Marie E (below) and also builders of beautiful equipment from steamers to diesels, riding cars to box cars, and more. They just recently finished refurbishing the Nut Tree train (which will reopen in Vacaville later this year) and are also building a great deal of equipment for the Arborway T.T. & Northwestern RR in Missouri. Needless to say, their shops have been kept quite busy!

The crew remembers what fun they all had last year during the convention and decided to host another rail fest this year. The dates

are **October 14 and 15, 2006**. Greg and I will be there but as guests this time, just enjoying ourselves and having fun. But all are invited to come and join in. If you do come, please say hello when you see us.

To learn more about the Rail Fest, or about Hillcrest Shops, contact them directly at 559-638-2762 or visit their web site 5inchsteam.8k.com/.





You Are Invited

TO THE GOLDEN SPIKE MEET OF THE THE ARBORWAY T. T. & NORTHWESTERN RR SEPTEMBER 23 - 30, 2006

John & Judy Woods would like to invite the subscribers of the Grand Scales Quarterly to the first major open house of their new 15" gauge railroad. Phase 1 has been completed and there are approximately five miles of track, making it one of the largest Grand Scale railroads in the U.S.

Larger groups and more railroad action will be seen on Saturday the 23rd and Saturday the 30th, but you are welcome to some on those days or any days of the weeks between. Those with 15" gauge equipment are welcome to make arrangements to operate on this brand new track.

The railroad is located southwest of St. Louis, Missouri. If you would like to attend please contact ATT&NW Manager, John Bishop at bishop10@misn.com



TRACKS TO THE PAST

One gathering that looks very interesting is the Northwest Ohio RR Preservation TRACKS TO THE PAST meet on September 9 & 10, 2006. NWORRP is home to a former House of David steam engine and is dedicated to preserving the history of railroads in the mid-west.

Tracks to the Past will feature many displays and events for the whole family, including Gas Engines, Tractors, Steam Traction Engine, Operating Sawmill, Shingle Cutter, Antique Cars, Fire trucks, Quarter-scale Live-steam Train Rides, B&O Caboose tours, HO Model Trains, Millstream Wood Carvers, Calliopes and much more. For more information, visit. <http://www.nworrrp.org/specialprograms.htm>



CHANGES ARE A COMIN'

We will be updating the GSQ web site (<http://www.grandscales.com/>) next month. One feature that may be of interest to you will be the inclusion of some of the articles from our first nine issues, which are no longer in print. While we do hope to have these issue reprinted in the future, you will be able to enjoy some of the articles once they are uploaded to the web site. (These will be available only for downloading as we will not be able to print them out and mail them to individuals.)

Also, if you have a moment now, please take a look at our links page. If you know of any links that should be added, please let us know.

HESSTON STEAM & POWER SHOW

The annual Hesston Steam & Power Show takes place this labor day weekend in Indiana. According to their web site: Education and entertainment are in store for the whole family as the many uses of turn-of-the-century steam power are demonstrated to the public. Old-time farm machinery, antique cars, and other machines are also on display. The museum also hosts a flea market, food and drink. For more information visit their web site at <http://www.hesston.org/>.



The following article appeared in Grand Scales Quarterly volume number 11. It is reprinted here to share more about the Hesston Steam Museum. We hope you enjoy it and are able to visit Hesston during their Steam & Power Show.

The Hesston Steam Museum (officially known as the LaPorte County Historical Steam Society, Inc.) is located near Hesston, Indiana. The north border of the property is the Michigan state line. The 1:1 scale railroad has a section called “Michigan Curve” where the right-of-way comes very close to making the line an interstate carrier.

There have been more gauges of rideable live steam at Hesston than at perhaps any other museum on North America. The smallest was the elevated 3½” gauge ¾” scale line (which is the only line not remaining). The 7½” gauge line has over 1400’ of track. The Grand Scale line is 14” gauge, and it’s loop covers about a mile of the museum grounds. The “full size” railroad is a unique one indeed. It may well be the only 24” and 36” dual gauge railroad in the country.

HISTORY

The roots of the Hesston Steam Museum begin back in the 1950’s. A group of steam-minded fel-

lows formed the “LaPorte County Threshemen”. In 1955 a 22 acre parcel was purchased. After clearing some of the land and better preparing the site, their first steamup was held on Labor Day of 1957. Traction engines were the main feature. By the early 60’s a saw mill, an electric power plant, and a Browning crane (all steam powered) were in use.

In 1964 a 24” (60 cm) gauge Henschel 0-4-0T was purchased from Elliott Donnelley, the owner of a very large and successful printing company. Mr. Donnelley soon took an interest in the group. He told the group that 22 acres was not enough land to run a railroad. He funded purchases of land in 1965, ‘66, and ‘67. The museum grounds now resided on 155 acres.

Next came truckloads of rail and ties and expensive custom built, dual gauge switches. Two foot and three foot gauge rolling stock began arriving from as far afield as Colorado and Guatemala. The group was literally overwhelmed at the generosity. The members were all working men. They couldn’t find the time build the railroad for which they now had the materials . . . so Donnelley said, “Have someone build it.” In the late 60’s a contractor was brought in to build 2½ miles of dual gauge railroad for \$70,000 per mile.

These great donations by one man, though, should not be allowed to

overshadow the efforts of so many. Over the past four decades a great many hands who have worked hard to bring this collection together and show it off to the world. Countless hours of skilled craftsmanship and brute labor have gone to create a truly extensive collection of antique equipment.

THE 14” GAUGE

During these years Elliot Donnelley’s attention was not solely directed toward Hesston. Along with helping out the Sandley operation, the Milwaukee Zoo, and the Chicago Zoo, he also had three railroads on his own property in Lake Forest, Illinois. These were 7½”, 14”, and 24” gauge. Some of his 24” gauge cars were built by Sandley and can be seen in GSQ #6, pages 15 and 16 where their catalog is reproduced. He often used his home railroads for fund raisers that benefitted the many non-railroad charitable organizations he supported.

The 14” gauge line was named the Stet & Query Central. This name was both appropriate and meaningful. Being in the printing business, Donnelley was very familiar with proof reader’s marks used to edit a document before publication. A “query” is a mark, usually a question mark, used to indicate that a statement needs to be verified. The term “stet” is particularly significant. If a word or letter has been marked for deletion, it

is reinstated by underlining it with dots and writing "stet" in the margin. All of this equipment, like some many miniature railways, could have easily gone to the scrap metal yard. Stet is Latin. It means "Let it Stand".

Two Wagners (a 4-6-4 and a 4-4-0) and one Crown (a 4-4-0) steamer ran on the S&QC. One of the Wagners was rebuilt by the Sandley shops and given a much different appearance. The original boiler was replaced with a much larger one. It also received a much larger cab and tender. Rolling stock consisted of Wagner riding cars and Sandley coaches and a few freight cars.

In December of 1975, Mr. Donnelley passed away at the age of 72. In June the following year, Mrs. Donnelley donated the 14" gauge railroad and much of the remaining two foot gauge equipment to Hesston. Planning was soon underway, but it was to be a large task. After surveying and earthwork, the rails began to move from Lake Forest to Hesston early in 1977. The mile long loop was completed in August of 1981. A formal golden spike ceremony was held the following summer on July 18, 1982. Many members of Donnelley family were present, including grandson Elliott Donnelly II who drove the spike. A large memorial plaque, mounted on a granite boulder, was also dedicated that day in honor of all that Elliott Donnelley had for the Museum.

Another locomotive arrived just after Donnelley's . . . an engine that is no doubt familiar to many GSQ readers, and one that has probably pulled more than a few. The streamlined 4-6-4 Wagner from Kiddieland in Melrose Park, Illinois had been purchased by Harold Wagner Jr. (no relation to miniature RR Wagners) and donated to the Hesston group.

It soon became clear that the Crown 4-4-0 was not stout enough to handle the heavy trains and steep

grades of the line. Long time member Dave Baer had his own 14" railroad with a Wagner 4-4-4 Jubilee. Since the curves of Dave's railroad proved too tight for the Jubilee, a trade was ideal. The restoration of the Jubilee was partly complete, and has yet to be finished, but that made the FOURTH Wagner on the line. This S&QC is truly a stronghold of Wagner steam.

A gas-mechanical "diesel" also graces the line. It was built on a G-16 (or would you call it a G-14?) chassis and trucks. The "prime mover" is the ever present V-4, air cooled Wisconsin engine that powered hundreds of G-16's.

DISASTER STRIKES

On May 29, 1985 the 2' / 3' gauge engine house caught on fire. The intense conflagration completely destroyed the building. A number of Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow gauge cars were lost, including caboose 0587. The engines inside were very seriously damaged. These included two 2' gauge 0-4-0T's, one from the Darjeeling & Himalayan RR in India and the other a Henschel from Germany. The three foot gauge engines were a 2-6-0 Porter, a 12 ton Plymouth Diesel, and the last narrow gauge Shay ever to be built. Many tools, materials, and spare parts were also lost.

The 14" gauge railroad was also affected. Since there wasn't enough room in the 14" gauge car barn, all but one of the Sandley coaches were stored along one wall of the larger engine house. These too were completely consumed in the fire.

If there is any silver lining in such a terrible occurrence, it is that fire was fully covered by insurance. The loss was valued at \$2.5 million. In 1987 both the "original" Wagner from the Donnelley estate and the Kiddieland Wagner received new boilers from Vierson Boiler Works of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

TODAY AND TOMORROW

The ride is much as it has been for years. As with every railroad, the maintenance is never ending. Hard working volunteers have seen their activity result in a Grand Scale railroad that brings a thrill to thousands every year. Efforts are made to steam up the Stet & Query Central, along with the other lines, on a regular basis during the summer (contact the Museum for specific dates and information).

The engines and the rolling stock have been kept in separate buildings. A shortage of space has plagued the S&QC from the beginning. A new car barn adjacent to the 14" gauge engine house is in the works. This will allow easier access and maintenance of the equipment. The 7½" railroad will make good use of the old car barn.

The burned Sandley coaches have not yet been replaced. But the trucks and much of the hardware were salvageable. There are plans to utilize them in the construction of more riding cars. Work is also underway to re-restore the 3' gauge Shay that was so badly damaged in the fire.

So much has been accomplished. And so much lies ahead. The Hesston group is devoted to the magnificent power and deep heritage of steam. They will continue to care for their charge, and will be sure to "Let it Stand". ~~████~~

If you would like to join in the fun, contact the LaPorte County Historical Steam Society Inc., 2946 Mt. Claire Way, Long Beach, IN 46360-1769. Business Office phone: 219-872-7405. Museum Phone: 219-778-2783 (operating days only).

[Our special thanks to John Harbeck, the late John Edris, and Elmer Mauger. Without their help this article would not have been possible.]

VENDOR NEWS

REEDYVILLE RAILROAD PRODUCTS

Steve Reedy of Reedyville Railroad products sent us information on their new bells. Steve says "These came about because I could not find a bell, a good one, for my 15" gauge train. Since I have always made my own patterns, I built the bells and harps and am now offering them for sale. The bells are solid brass and the gonger is brass too, with the hanger bracket. The harp is cast from aluminum but on special orders can be cast in brass. The retail of the 15" gauge bell is \$275.00 and the larger bell is \$350.00." To order, contact Steve at Reedyville Railroad Products, 1098 unit 6, San Mateo Ave, So. San Francisco, CA 94080. 650-343-5629
E-mail sreedyville@comcast.net

POLK'S HOBBY

Lewis Polk of Polk's Hobby and Aristo-Craft Trains called this morning to tell us more about their upcoming 7.5" gauge live steam release. The Polks have long been well-known for producing attractive and durable train models but are new to the 7.5" gauge field.

Their new locomotive / ride-on power car combo has a suggested retail of \$1600. They will also be selling 6 foot track panels, at a very affordable price, that are supposed to go together fairly easy. It may be a good way for new enthusiasts to enter the hobby. More information will be available very soon. 

Reedyville Railroad Products

5 inch scale Bell Complete \$275.00
9 3/4 x 7 3/8 , weight about 8 lbs.

Larger Bell complete \$350.00
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Bells are solid brass, Harp casting is Aluminum

BELLS



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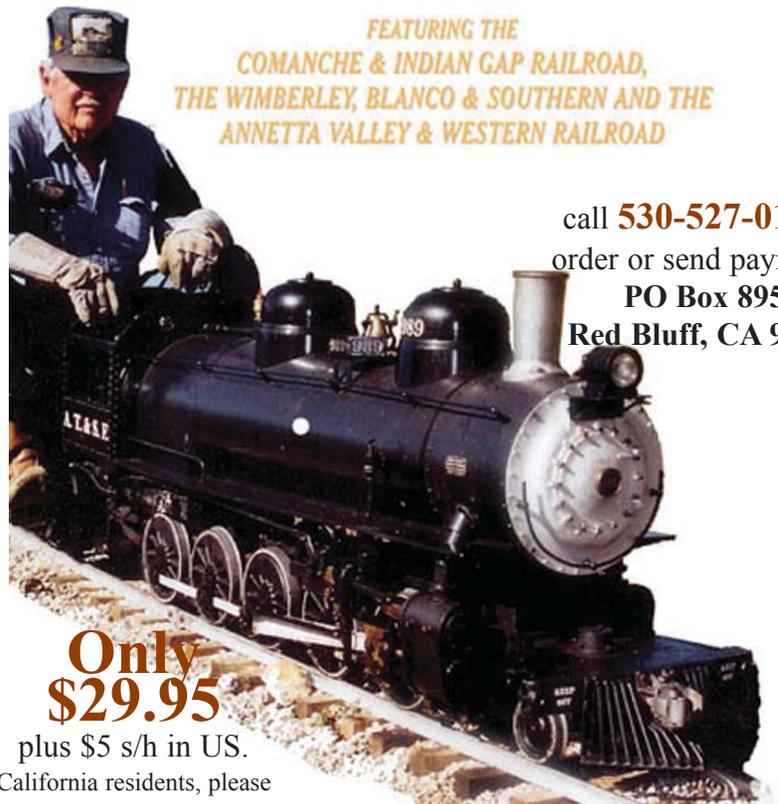
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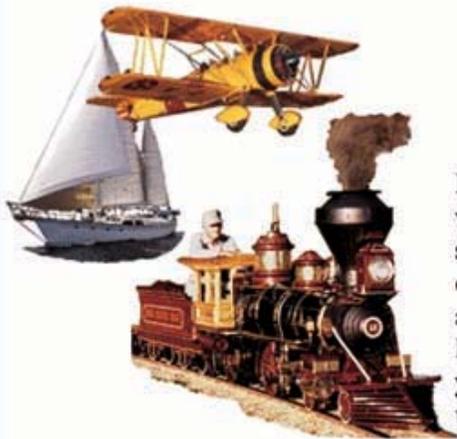
One last note from Steve Reedy. He recently finished this attractive depot for his private 15" gauge railroad near Placerville, California. The depot is designed to resemble the Disneyland depot and, I must say, turned out very well. (We think he ought to sell plans or custom build these for others.)

If you have a unique building on your railroad, regardless of gauge, please send in some photos and tell us about it. Quite a few of our readers ask for more information on trackside structures and would be thankful for your efforts.



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