

RIDING RAILWAYS NEWSLETTER



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Hello from Red Bluff, California! We're busy winding up the year (which went by entirely too fast!) and making plans for this coming spring. Lots to do. Equipment to build, magazines to publish, DVDs to finish, and lots of trains to play with! Of course, the trains are fun, but the real enjoyment comes from visiting with all of our friends around the world. In this internet age, it is so much easier to keep in touch. Just this past week we have visited with friends in Canada, Australia, England, and, of course, through out the United States. Keep the notes, photos, articles, letters, comments coming! We love to hear from you even if it is just to say hello!

Hope you enjoy this issue. I've tucked in some drawings from the Redwood Valley Rwy, mentioned some news from Plum Cove, ran an article on keeping a full scale locomotive running, and more! And for the cover below, it's simply a nice photo from the McCormick Stillman RR Park in Arizona featuring the No. 11 as she exits the tunnel.

Regards,

Susan

PS - there is a special offer on 7+RAILROADER back issues on page 4. . .



STEAM CLEANING: KEEPING PUFFY THE RAILROAD ENGINE IN SERVICE IS A DIRTY JOB

By Bill Teeter
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER
(Thursday, November 30, 2006
Edition: NortheastE, Section: Metro,
Page B1)

GRAPEVINE — Climbing from the smoke box of a 110-year-old steam engine, Tommy Faifer was covered in grease and grime. He'd been removing charred black sand that had circulated through boiler tubes to keep them clean.

"Sometimes I want to call that guy from the Discovery Channel's show, Dirty Jobs, and have him come out and do this," Faifer said.

Faifer, 52, is the mechanic in charge of keeping Puffy, the Grapevine Vintage Railroad's antique locomotive, rolling. The locomotive's maintenance record is clean, but keeping it that way isn't. "Sometimes when he gets home," said his wife, Donna Faifer, "it's like he's got a dark tan."

Puffy is one of six active steam locomotives in the Federal Railroad Administration's five-state region that includes Texas, said Tom Tulley, a federal railroad inspector. It was built in Patterson, N.J., in 1896. Puffy's job is to make two 65-mile round trips each weekend between Fort Worth and Grapevine. Faifer, volunteer Jerry Barnes and the three-person train crew work through the week to make sure Puffy is ready.

The dirtiest tasks:

Climbing into the firebox, where fuel oil is burned to heat water and create the steam, and using a hammer and chipping tool to clean out residue.

Crawling through the round hatch of the smoke box at the front under the headlight to dump charred sand out through an opening at the bottom of the chamber.

The chores are endless. Myriad moving parts must be inspected, lubricated, adjusted, cleaned, machined or periodically replaced. Bushings must

be machined, brake shoes replaced.

Among the more complex and time-consuming tasks is maintaining steam injectors, which draw water from the tender, combine it with steam and force it into the boiler. The locomotive has 65 grease fittings that must be constantly lubed, and five oil reservoirs that must be constantly refilled. "It's a big teakettle," Faifer said.

The locomotive burns fuel oil in the fire box just forward of the cab. The boiler, a cluster of 268 tubes surrounded by water, turns that water into steam, which moves two great pistons mounted in housings on each side of the front of the locomotive.

Puffy is well-maintained, inspector Tulley said. And he should know. For each 31 operating days, Puffy must undergo a safety inspection by the Railroad Administration. An annual "tear-down" inspection can take 30 to 45 days of very close scrutiny.

A surprising challenge

Faifer learned about the job through a help-wanted ad in 2001 and thought it seemed like a good fit for him. "It said, 'heavy equipment, with a locomotive,'" Faifer said. He applied for the job and got an interview. But until he arrived in Grapevine to talk to his employer-to-be, he didn't know he would be charged with maintaining a steam locomotive that was more than a century old. "They said locomotive, they didn't say steam engine," Faifer said. After looking it all over, Faifer decided he could do the job. "It's just another piece of equipment," he said.

Steam railroad locomotives weren't covered in the coursework when Faifer was training to be a diesel mechanic at Austin Community College in the late 1970s. The new job meant a lot of learning along the way.

Soon after he came on board, the locomotive was completely re-built, and consultants hired for that job taught him much of what he needed to know in what he called a kind of apprentice-

ship. These days he says he gets help from a national network of steam locomotive mechanics who exchange information to help one another deal with technical questions.

Faifer decides what needs to be done, and Barnes helps him. "If he needs something, I go get it — I'm a go-fer," said Barnes, a retired safety inspector and licensed boiler inspector, as well as a railroad buff and model railroader.

Everything about Puffy is an involved process, Barnes said, including starting it up for a run. "It takes about five hours to steam the engine up," he said.

New chapter

The locomotive was once part of the Fort Worth & Western Railroad's Tarantula excursion service. The city of Grapevine is buying the locomotive and passenger cars under a lease-purchase agreement. Until Nov. 1, crews operating the train were Fort Worth & Western people, but since then the Vintage Railroad has hired its own crew, and it now operates with no outside help.

The railroad needs some more hands to help care for the trains and to host visitors to the railroad. Tom Wayne, head of the Grapevine Vintage Railroad, is accepting names for a list. Not all of the volunteer jobs would involve getting very, very dirty, officials said.

PUFFY FACTS

Puffy, or Engine 2248, is an 1896 locomotive built by Cooke Locomotive & Machine Works in Patterson, N.J. Puffy is one of six active steam locomotives in the Railroad Administration's five-state region that includes Texas.

To volunteer or find out about train schedules, call the Grapevine Vintage Railroad at 817-410-3123 or go to www.grapevinesteamrailroad.com. Bill Teeter (817) 685-3801 bteeter@star-telegram.com

VENDOR NEWS

New TWO FOOT GAUGE locomotive for 7.25" - 7.50" announced from Plum Cove Studios.

In the late 1940s General Electric manufactured three diesel electric locomotives for a two-foot gauge railroad in Massachusetts. When that line closed, two of the three 150hp, 23ton locomotives lived out a "postman's pension" at the Edaville Railroad on Cape Cod, running reliably for three decades and effortlessly pulling millions of happy passengers at that famous tourist attraction.

Like fried clams and baked beans, these locomotives are true New England classics, but would be at home on any 7.25"-7.50" pike, especially those running larger scales like 2.5" or 3.75" scale where a mix of steam and early diesel coexists.

Plum Cove Studios is offering a limited-edition run of locomotive kits based loosely on this design. They're not exact scale replicas, but rather they're sturdy, reliable work-horses built with all metal construction that faithfully replicates the gen-

eral design. Plum Cove Studios will provide the frame, super-structure,



RTR running gear, electronics and basic details. Customers will easily assemble the kit with tools found in the common household.

Like other Plum Cove Studios products, this locomotive uses specially modified 24 volt motors, hung on the axles like the prototype, and a 24 volt control system powered by two or four 12 volt deep cycle batteries. The pre-wired electronics include a built-in charger, a simple handheld control lever - spring loaded to center to act as a deadman switch - allowing infinitely variable speeds, and even features regenerative braking, or dynamic

braking, that recharges the batteries whenever the locomotive is slowing.

Interested parties should contact Sam Pool at Plum Cove Studios. Deposits are being taken for winter/spring production with deliveries estimated around May/June 2007.

If you'd like to know more about any of Plum Cove Studio's products or services, contact Sam Pool or Paul Pool directly via phone 978 865 6727, or online at www.plumcovestudios.com or via email at sampool@plumcovestudios.com or write them at 19 Linwood Place, Gloucester, MA 01930-1135

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7.25" - 7.50"

Plum Cove's cost effective power axles let you motorize almost any truck from any manufacturer. Think trolleys, booster cars and rejuvenated old locomotives.



Eliminate feeble old boilers. Power your tender!!!

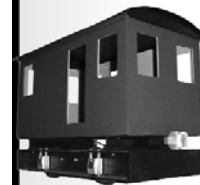
Lengthen your trainset with a powered BOOSTER CAR.

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Easy assembly. Incredibly strong. Lasts for days per charge. Fits in your auto's trunk.

Rolling stock and more great stuff online!



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LETTERS

Greg and Susan,
I just wanted to drop you a line and tell that I am the new owner of Bill Daney's "Cactus Rose". Built in 1944, it was the first of only 3 diesel profile locomotives Daney built, it operated at Elitch's Gardens in Denver, Colorado.

At some point, it disappeared from the radar screen and surfaced about 15 years ago on a seldom used piece of overgrown property in Denver. It sat there rusting away until about 18 months ago when it's owner passed away and his wife wanted it gone along with the rest of the scrap metal, so it was subsequently sold again to a couple of guys who deal in unusual "stuff" as they put it.

We feel very fortunate to get the opportunity to purchase this locomotive and return her to service after many years of neglect. I am enclosing a pic taken 10/7/06 of her being loaded onto the trailer for the journey to Flora, Il. I am in the process of trying to locate any pictures of the locomotive in it's former glory, but so far have been unsuccessful. If you have any interest in doing a story about this train let me know. I have been in contact with members of the Daney family and they are searching through all of the photos of trains that Bill built to see if they might have a photo. Thanks for all you do to keep this hobby and it's history alive.

Clint Green

Little Toot Railroad Co.

Home of:

Crown Locomotive #1

Crown Locomotive #1966

15" Tampa Bay Metal Products "Tom Thumb"

15" Freelance F unit and 3 streamlined coaches

Bill Daney's "Cactus Rose"



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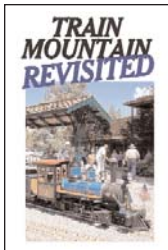
We're clearing out our back issues and have a special sale on older back issues. We have gathered them in sets of 20, covering the remaining issues from Vol 5#1 through Vol 10 #3. Normally these sell for \$100 but for the month of January, we will sell these sets for only \$49! (I'm feeling generous today, so if you mention this newsletter, I will even throw in free shipping in the U.S.!)

TO ORDER: Send a PayPal payment to mainline@sunset.net or call 530-527-0141. You can also fax your order to 530-527-0420. For international orders, please e-mail for shipping rate. Thanks!

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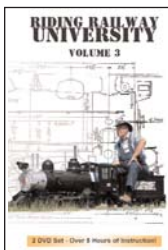


The 2006 TM Triennial was even larger and more spectacular than in years past. This program takes us back to Train Mountain to enjoy this world class event.

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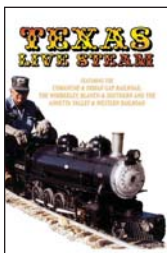
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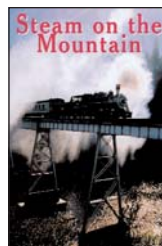
Blanco & Southern. You'll learn about large scale Operations at Roy Pickard's down-home **Comanche & Indian Gap.** And you'll really enjoy the welcoming atmosphere at Terry McGrath's **Annetta Valley & Western.** A must for Texans and for anyone interested in seeing how live steam railroading should be done.

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Baldwin Mikado working the same grades in the shadow of the same mountain it saw over ninety years ago. You'll ride in the cab with the engineer and the fireman as they reign in the power of a loud, bucking "iron horse". You'll see close-up shots of the powerful drive rods and steel wheels. You'll enjoy the dramatic scenery and hearing the engineer describe what it's like to run a steam engine over a railroad he has worked on for decades. And there is no sound in the world like a lonesome



steam whistle echoing through the pine trees.

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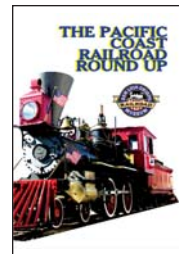


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PACIFIC COAST RR ROUND UP DVD

The Pacific Coast is a private railroad on the Central California coast.

It is opened to the public only once each year, as a fund raiser for the San Luis Obispo Railway Museum. This DVD takes you aboard the charming narrow gauge train. It features vintage steam engines (including the one that was in the opening shots of Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman TV show with Jane Seymour). The coaches are genuine Disney coaches - the first coaches to be used in service at Disneyland. Great for railfans, narrow gaugers, families, Disney enthusiasts and anyone else who would just enjoy a good show. Approx. 1 hour with bonus features. \$19.95.



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