

RIDING RAILWAYS NEWSLETTER



Grand Scales
Quarterly

JUNE 2008

Welcome aboard! Greg and I have good news - **GSQ** and the **7+RAILROADER** will soon be back in production! You should receive a note from us sometime this coming month (July) with more information. Thank you all for your support and encouragement. It is greatly appreciated.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Susan'.

PS - Back issues of **GSQ** and the **7+** are currently on sale. For more information, visit page 4 of our gift shop or [click here](#).

THOMAS at DISCOVERY KINGDOM

Six Flags *Discovery Kingdom* (formally Marine World) in Vallejo, California, has built a theme area dedicated to Thomas the Tank Engine and friends. Thomas, the main attraction, is pictured next to the station, awaiting more passengers. (The station was empty while the picture was being taken due to a parade going by.)

Walking along the tracks, one meets Cranky the crane, below. Also, if you make it to the round house, you will also see James and Percy (though they are just images on the front of the round house). The grounds are well cared for and there are several other rides related to the various characters.

To make the most of this themed area, Six Flags made sure to place the Thomas gift shop in the station. One has to walk through it in order to leave the train. There were many, many families seen holding various Thomas toys, stuffed animals and the like throughout the park. Obviously a smart move on the park's part.

While some may dislike Thomas, one has to admire the franchise and its ability to draw young children into the railroad hobby. ***





NEWS

Children in Madison, WI, have a new zoo train to ride. The **Henry Vilas Zoo** began giving rides on its new **Mini-Express Train** in June during its Feast with Beasts festival. We were unable to obtain a photo but would be pleased if anyone else had a photo to share with us.

Of course there have been two wonderful railroads close to Madison for many years. One is the **Whiskey River RR** found in Little A-Merrick-A (16", Marshall, WI, www.littleamericka.com) and the other is the 15" **Milwaukee Zoo railway** (<http://www.milwaukeezoo.org>). Both feature beautiful equipment.

The **Zoo-Northwest Florida** offers special zoo camps. This is of interest to us because one of the features is a daily train ride through the zoo's 30-acre wildlife preserve. (www.thezoonorthwestflorida.org) Gotta love a zoo with a train.

More zoo news: Some young visitors to the **Virginia Zoo** have been mesmerized by items not usually seen here, including bulldozers, construction stakes and railroad ties.

This year at the Zoo, warm weather brings visitors, flowers – and a train. Construction is underway for the **Norfolk Southern Express**, a fun train feature that will give visitors a narrated tour of the Zoo in style. During construction, fewer than 5% of our animals may not be on exhibit, such as the red panda, camel and emus. In the meantime, exhibits in Africa and the Barnyard are open and waiting for you! The **Norfolk Southern Express** is scheduled to open this summer. www.virginiazoo.org

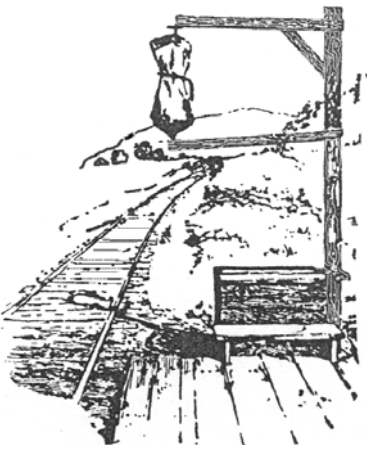
The railway (right) in **Pullen Park** in Raleigh, North Carolina, has been undergoing some much needed maintenance. The train had been shut down after a kink in the track was

noticed. They believe the track trouble arose from some nearby erosion and the high heat they have been experiencing. The train should be up and running again shortly since a licensed contractor has been brought in to repair the track.



James Pekerak, whose locomotive is above, was featured in a column in the Springfield, MO, News Ledger. I know the link is long but you can still see the article by visiting <http://www.news-leader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080616/COLUMNISTS02/806160360/1072/NEWS06>. For those of you who are unfamiliar with James, he has built the **Northview & Frisco Rwy**. His first railroad was featured in GSQ issue 14. Congratulations on a nice article James! 🎉





MAIL CAR

We welcome your letters, comments, thoughts, pictures and news. Send to: srobinson@theskybeam.com or mail to:

Robinson & Associates
PO Box 8953
Red Bluff, CA 96080

Understand that every phase of publishing is going through difficult times in current economic conditions. Even local newspapers here in Florida, as well as other hobby publications, seem to be facing cut-backs on every side.

As a subscriber and supporter of Robinson Associates for some significant time, I share your concern with what we both see on every side, but obviously from a more personal viewpoint, I as a consumer and you as owner and publisher.

If you are indeed facing these difficulties, please be assured that I am among the many fans who wish you well, on every front. This next remark is not intended as a mere cliché, but with heartfelt interest: If there is, indeed, anything I can do to alleviate your situation, please don't hesitate to ask. As someone who once published a weekly county newspaper in the Northeast (with a very modest circulation of only some 10,000 readers), I can appreciate the pressures that straitened circumstances place on every aspect of your life.

Please forgive these questions, which may seem like an intrusion into your business life, but they are asked with the greatest sensitivity to your position and the good of the hobby. You have my genuine concern for both Robinson Associates and the field of large scale railroad models, which deserves quality publications such as you have launched.

Sincerely,
Hal Pelta

I just wanted to write and thank you for the publications that you have put out over the years, I have in the past subscribed to Grand Scales, but am currently unable to do so.

However, I want you to know that I feel it is a great tool and asset to the grand scales community, and as soon as things change I plan to resubscribe.

I want to also offer an Idea / suggestion that may help. I know that printing the magazines is costly, but the electronic copies are virtually free (minus time and such). Have you considered a "Virtual GSQ"? I know that you are able to still put out the newsletter, so even while there is a financial pinch it seems you are still able to invest the time to edit and assemble a magazine, just aren't able to print it. What if for the time being you released the magazine in a PDF format and made it available online? Just a thought,
David Kmecik

Perhaps I was not fully aware of your situation but with the writings on the Grand Scale Railway Forum, perhaps I learned a bit more. I commend you both in your efforts for what you both are trying to do for the hobby and as I'm sure you have found there are always more who will complain than compliment.

I have a few ideas which I need to eventually put together for articles. Right now it's more of a question, do I write articles or do I try to get some

projects done.

I wish you both the best of luck and Thank You for your ongoing efforts.

Take care,
Keith Muldowney

Editor's Note:

These letters are a but a few of the many we have received in support of GSQ and the 7+RAILROADER (and ourselves). And we are grateful for your comments and support and offers of help. As I mentioned on the front page, we will be publishing both magazines again very soon, though it looks like they will both be published on-line. Shortly our subscribers will receive a letter from us with details, passwords and such. While we would prefer to continue publishing a print version, this just isn't feasible at this time. However, we are very excited about going on-line.

There will be many benefits to going on line. One is the use of color photos throughout the publication. Another is that we will have more room for in-depth articles, drawings, photos and more. And also, you the reader will be able to download the magazine immediately - no more waiting weeks for delivery to your mailbox.

*It is an adjustment for all of us. We hope that you will continue reading the magazines, sending in news and articles, and helping us once again publish some of the best hobby magazines out there! ****



Ok, I admit it, this picture is here simply for vanity's sake! It's a painting I did a while back using a photo from one of our English tours. It was a fun creative exercise and one that brings back many happy memories for me. Thanks for humoring me, Susan

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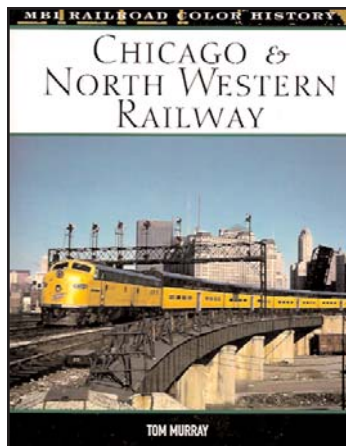
BOOK GIVE AWAY

Last month's book give away was so much fun that I thought I would give away another one this month! Simply send an e-mail (srobinson@theskybeam.com) with your name, address, phone number and e-mail address. I'll take all the names and draw a winner in mid-July. The winner will receive the book by the end of July.

CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN RWY.

by Tom Murry
ISBN: 978-0-7603-2546-9
Hardcover, 8.5 x 11 inches, 160 pages
Voyager Press
www.motorbooks.com

By the time it was merged into the Union Pacific in 1995, the Chicago & North Western was one of the nation's oldest surviving railroads, a testament to the Midwestern stoicism with which it had gone about its business since 1859. This illustrated history chronicles how C&NW emerged from a collection of regional



carriers to become a strategic link between eastern railroads and the West.

Author Tom Murray traces the railroads expansion as it extended secondary lines throughout the Midwest. He also explores C&NW's joint ownership of UP passenger trains and describes how the railroad answered challenges from regional rivals with the "400" series of passenger trains. As fascinating as the story are

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Western's rise and eventual demise. **★**

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