



October 2016, Houston Area Live Steamers, Volume 2016 Issue 10, Rick White, Editor

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1991

HALS ^{Years}

25

2016



Houston Area Live Steamers

25th Anniversary

Blowdown Meet

November 9-13, 2016

7-1/2", 4-3/4", Gauge 1 Tracks

Steam, Diesel, Electric

RV parking Available

RSVP or More info at halsmeets@hals.org

Zube Park, Hockley, Texas

Just Northwest of Houston on HWY 290

Parade of Trains Saturday

Several Special
Events Planned

Mark Your
Calendars NOW!





Howdy All

Can you believe the Anniversary meet is only days away? Did you put it on your calendar for November 9 - 13? If not it's time to get busy. Get that equipment out, clean it, fuel/charge it and get it ready for the parade.

Everything is coming together just right. With a few final touches being done as I write this the track will be 100% thanks to some very hard working members after two 500 year floods this spring.

We will do just about everything we did last year with a few changes to the meals. HALS will supply and cook Hamburgers and Hot Dogs for the Friday night meal and I will need some members to bring cookies, chips, dips, and, desserts for our Friday night meal.

During registration, which should start on Thursday, we will collect for the only two catered meals this year which will be on Saturday. For lunch we will have a variety of Subway sandwiches. Then for dinner we will have BBQ cooked on location by Champion cooker Dan Simons. He has won several contests on the local BBQ Competition Circuit and I am sure you will enjoy his meal. If get a chance be sure to visit

with him and see if you can get any of his secret cooking tips out of him. He will be cooking Pulled Pork, Chicken, and sausage. There will also be the standard sides along with beans and potato salad. We will need some members to bring cookies, chips, dips, and, desserts for Saturday's meals also.

We will not be serving Breakfast this year. There are plenty of places nearby for breakfast.

Like most of meets we will open the park to RV parking on Wednesday. There are limited spots with power and water (no sewage) so first come first served for those spots, but we have a very big parking lot with plenty of space for trailers and RVs without hookups.

On Thursday the track will be setup for open running with no closures planned. For night running, the use of radio (channel 7 code 0) and end of train lights are a must. We will setup tables at the west end of the station for selling of railroad related items only.

On Friday we will have an event called "On-Time", which is a controlled speed contest to see who can maintain a near perfect preset speed to arrive to the station On-Time. You will be timed traveling around a closed loop and attempt to obtain the perfect time without being late to the station. Competition will begin at 2:00pm Friday. The track including the main line will be closed during the competition

for safety and fairness. Last year's winner Spence Gaskin is keen on defending his title.

Everyone loves a Parade and being in one is even better especially on a train. Clean up that engine and cars and join in the fun. Long trains, short trains, decorated trains, all welcome. Get in line at Caliente and be ready for the 3:00pm start. The route will travel around the other loop (same as what we use on public run days). Be ready to blow that whistle or horn repeatedly and wave at the crowd in the station. The track will be closed to non-parade participants during the parade.

The main line will be filled with trains as they line up.

At the dinner on Saturday we will announce the winner of the "On Time" competition and the Marshall Black / Lee Balkum award for 2016 will be presented to a hard working member.

Sunday morning will be time to clean up, pack and say our good byes till the next time our tracks cross. Closing at noon Sunday.

I Sure Hope to see You There!

Greg Moore

Upcoming HALS Events

Date	Description (All activities at Zube Park unless otherwise indicated)
November 2016	
05 November	Work Day (9:00 AM) & General Membership Meeting (1:00 PM) with elections.
10 – 13 November	HALS Anniversary Meet
19 November	Public Run Day + Toys for Tots 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM
28 November	Board Meeting (07:00 PM) at Zube Park
December 2016	
03 December	Work Day (9:00 AM) & General Membership Meeting (01:00 PM)
05 December	Board Meeting (07:00 PM) at Zube Park (Optional)
10 December	Christmas Party, time to be determined.
January 2017	
January 7	Work Day (9:00 AM) & General Membership Meeting (01:00 PM)
January 21	Work Day
January 23	Board Meeting 7 PM at Zube Park
January 28	OPS Day 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

February 2017	
February 4	Work Day (9:00 AM) & General Membership Meeting (01:00 PM)
February 18	HALS at Greater Houston Train Show
February 20	Board Meeting 7 PM at Zube Park
February 23-25	Chugga Chugga Chili Fest
March 2017	
March 4	Work Day (9:00 AM) & General Membership Meeting (01:00 PM)
March 11	Work Day, prepare for public run day.
March 18	Public Run Day 9 AM to 2 PM
March 25	OPS Day
March 27	Board Meeting 7 PM at Zube Park
April 2017	
April 1	Work Day (9:00 AM) & General Membership Meeting (01:00 PM)
April 15	Public Run Day 9 AM to 2 PM
April 24	Board Meeting 7 PM at Zube Park
May 2017	
May 6	Work Day (9:00 AM) & General Membership Meeting (01:00 PM)
May 20	Public Run Day 9 AM to 1 PM
May 22	Board Meeting 7 PM at Zube Park
May 25-28	Memorial Day Weekend Meet.

Work Day

October 1, 2016

Rick White

HALS Work Day and General Membership Meeting. The organization voted to change the 2017 SWLS meet to the November Anniversary Meet to get better weather for live steamers from the SWLS organization.

Work started just after 8 AM and folks were still arriving just before the 1 PM meeting. I sprayed the track for weeds. Did not have enough to spray in front of the car or engine barns, nor the side tracks along the main lines. Greg Randall drove 3 hours and then worked more than 6 hours on the 4.75 inch gauge track. He fixed a bad curve by Sweetwater Station. Look now, it is nice and smooth. Greg added track anchors.

Doug Blodgett moved his Mikado to the steaming bays, but his bad back forced an early retreat, gone by 11 like Bill Howe, who got rid of bad track left over from the flood damage.

Bill Smith, Bob Barnett, Jim Cash, and Robert Briggs mowed and used string trimmers. What a better looking place.

A large crew worked on the track between Black's Crossing and Sand Springs

George & Nathan Leventon,
Peder Serkland,
Suzanne Tacconelly and son
Barry Tobias (Gator Driver)
Connor Witkowski
Bob Barnett

Photos of this work were taken up close by Gary Brothers, but mine are from afar.

While not done on this work day, Brent Lowery has been out working on the retaining wall by the Old Car Barn and does that wall look a lot better than any landscape timbers and will it ever last a lot longer!

A few more photos at

<https://plus.google.com/.../107787.../albums/6336844133963824497>



Greg Randall fixing the 4.75 inch gauge track at Sweetwater.



Robert Briggs trimming grass near Cabin Creek.



Greg Randall fixing the 4.75 inch gauge track at Sweetwater.



The work crew between Black's Crossing and Sand Springs.



Robert Briggs mowing near Cabin Creek.



Brent Lowery has been extending the retaining wall by the old car barn.

See Gary Brothers photos in the next article.

Work Day
October 1, 2016
Gary Brothers

The work between Black's Crossing and Sand Springs.



Suzanne Tacconelly, George Leventon, Nathan Leventon, and Steve Tacconelly.



George Leventon working on the end of the old track near Black's Crossing.



Peder Serkland using a 2x2 to ensure a uniform road base.



Bob Barnett, Suzanne Tacconelly, and Peder Serkland



George Leventon, Peder Serkland, and Nathan Leventon, who is checking cross level.



Suzanne Tacconelly, Nathan Leventon, and Barry Tobias



Nathan Leventon using the plate tamper to pack the crushed concrete road base.



Suzanne Tacconelly moving crushed concrete to level the road base.



From the 2015 Anniversary Meet:
Timed event start.

Bob Barnett with T&P 502 (3.80 mph), George & Marilyn Frank (3.60 mph, the slowest) with Goose, and Spence Gaskin (3.86 mph, and the winner).

Work Day

October 6, 2016

Doug Blodgett

Several people came out to the track today to work on various projects. Pete Greene, Peder Serkland, Gary Brothers, and JB Cason concentrated on the area at the east end of Phase 3 replacing outside rails that had worn badly on the curve. They are doing this over a period of several days and work on 50 feet at a time. This way they can finish a 50' section and keep the track in use when they are not there.

They are bolting the 5 new sections of rail together before laying them down on the ties. Gary has devised some wooden jigs that temporarily hold the rail at the right spacing until they use track gauges for final screwing down. With 4 people on the job today they were making quick work of it.

Spence Gaskin was out to continue his work on restoring the Jim Jackson engine shed that has badly deteriorated. He is making great progress. The roof is now almost back to its original brown color after the power washing today.

Bill Howe was lubricating switches and doing general maintenance on switches.

Doug Blodgett took the photos and used the blower to clean the Phase 3 track of leaves and pine needles.



Gary Brothers is drilling holes in the track for new track joiners. We are no longer using the slip on rail joiners.



Spence Gaskin power washing the roof of the old Jim Jackson engine house.



Bill Howe getting ready to go out and work on switch maintenance.



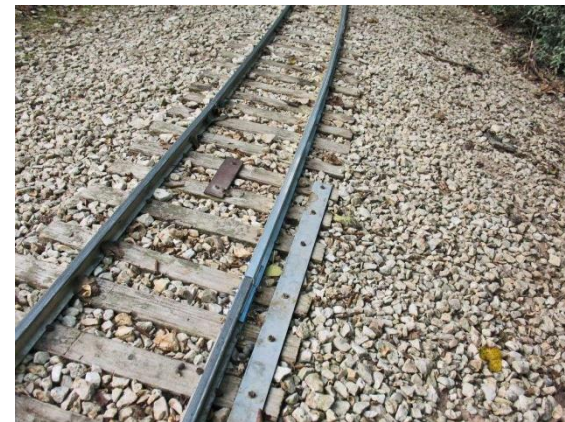
JB Cason and Pete Greene conferring.



Since we had the blower out anyway, to clean the work area, I went ahead and cleaned all of Phase 3 of leaves and pine needles.



Peder Serkland is brushing ballast off the ties while Pete Greene stands ready to drill rail with the 12 inch long 3/16" bit.



Here we can see where the new rail joins the old. This was installed earlier this week on Tuesday by Pete Greene and Gary Brothers.



LEFT: 5 sections of bad outside rail removed



ABOVE: The work gang is parked in tall grass at the east end of Phase 3.



We noticed this flattening at some joints where concrete ties are being used. Not sure yet what is causing this.

Below from last year's Parade of Trains at the Anniversary Meet.



Bob Barnett on the 7th train in the Parade of Trains.



Bill & Claudia Smith on the 8th train in the Parade of Trains.

Work Day

October 6, 2016

Gary Brothers

The shiny new rail on the outside of the curve after we installed 6 or so new rails today. Another five were installed by Pete Greene and I on Tuesday. Today we had more help, see Doug Blodgett's article for the work crew. These new rails are joined with RMI fish plates and not the slip on rail joiners. Makes for a very smooth curve.



HALS Members at the Able Springs & North Texas – SWLS Meet October 6-9, 2016, by Rick White



Spence Gaskin is training a young engineer how to grab the next block. The green clear button is to the right of the yellow take button. A box cab waits behind Spence.



Jerry & Mary Lou Schoenberg



Peter Bryan is the engineer



Phillip Bell and Richard Osborn



Greg Moore, now pulling TWO passenger cars.



John Walton watching Greg Moore hit the green block release button so he can capture the block and go. David Rucker and Gary McCoy waiting to go, also.



Paula & Rich Businger



Ron Canfield and Greg Moore



Kari Wirth, the SWLS President.

HALS Members at the Comanche & Indian Gap – SWLS Meet October 13-16, 2016, by Rick White



JB Cason with his Titan Trains GP-9 locos.



JB Cason meets Danny Click at Anasazi.



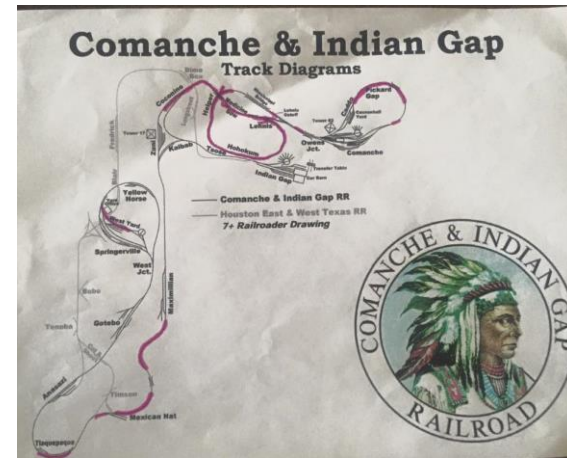
Ken Smith grinding out a screw head that is rusted in place to remove a guard rail.



Ken Smith and Mike Hales at the far west switch at Zuni.



Greg Moore at Tlaquepaque



Bill Howe, Rich Bussinger (the two who built the switch) putting in the rail on this end of the new curved switch.



Nick Edwards with Doug and Patty Gillory.



Tomas and Erin Sandoval



Craig Thomasson



Rich Businger with ATSF 111



Work Train BN 6105 with Ken Smith (engineer), Mike Hales, and Bob Lambert

Thursday Mini-Work Day

October 20, 2016

Spence Gaskin

Today the track was made passable through the siding at Sand Springs, making the last flood damaged section passable. Some long steam engines may not be able to take the tight turn at one end of the siding, so repairing the straight track Sand Springs is next to be repaired. The old track was shifted over to the opposite side of the siding in order to allow some grading of the main's roadbed Friday morning.

The long straight track between Black's crossing and Sand Springs was already in place, but was in need

of ballast and tamping. The first hour and a half of the day consisted of Peder Serkland dumping ballast, myself running two ballast or side dump cars at a time to the tipple, which Pete Greene was working constantly with the tractor to keep the tipple full. Peder leveled and tamped this stretch, getting it in great shape while Gary Brothers, Pete Greene and I filled in the washed out sections near Lakeside Jct. Gary had worked ahead on replacing rotted ties in this section. Some weed eating made the track visible, and showed the siding is in pretty good shape.



Peder levels track after ballast was added.



Pete Greene brought over the weed eater, which he and I used to clean up the area.



Gary replaces rotten ties in the washed out section.



The worst washed out area before repair, with some ties under it for support.



The water in Sand Springs had not only moved non-anchored track, but had broken the weld on one of the track anchors when it moved the rails. Incredible power of water. Wide gap in far rail.



Pete moves some ballast into place, while Gary does some supervising. Peder is leveling in the background

Work Day

October 21, 2016

Peder Serkland

With the passage of the front Thursday, it was a spectacular day to be out at HALS. We had a great crew together and got a great deal done at Sand Springs. Pete Green, Nathan Leventon, Robert Briggs, and Peder Serkland turned out.

Together we replaced the worst of the ties from Black's Crossing to Lakeside, moved out the old track along Sand Springs, scraped off the dirt, laid a thin leveled layer of ballast, and got the first two track panels into place. North of the crossing, ballast is in place and partly tamped and dressed.

Thanks to all for a wonderfully productive day!



Work Day

October 21, 2016

Gary Brothers

Rail replacement is taking place in between the grade crossing and Sand Springs.

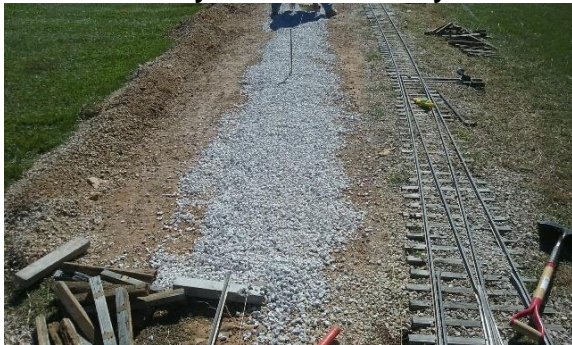
After the old track was removed, the road bed was scraped down to a consistent level removing the old ballast using the tractor and then a thin layer of good ballast was put on the roadbed.

Peder Serkland stretched a string to get the rail head level and the ballast was graded to get the desired elevation. Meanwhile the old track was taken apart, salvaging what few ties we could for reuse for future projects. The old ties will be thrown away. I expect that the new track panels will be ready to install early next week.

Whoops, I spoke too soon, after I left just after 12 o'clock, the gang set out two track panels with concrete ties and was in the process of fastening the rail joiners.

Working on track replacement today were: Gary Brothers, Pete Greene, Robert Briggs, Peder Serkland, Nathan Leventon.

Other members at Zube today were: Rich Businger, with his engine out giving rides to friends and family. J.B. Cason was there getting cars ready for the OPS Day tomorrow. Dennis Cranston worked on signals



The right of way with ballast.



Peder Serkland leveling ballast by hand.



Nathan Leventon and Pete Greene taking old track apart.



Pete Greene and Robert Briggs take apart old track panels.



Pete Greene with drill and Nathan Leventon pulling rail out.



Nathan Leventon, Pete Greene, Robert Briggs, and Peder Serkland.

Below are two photos from the 2015 Anniversary Meet parade of trains.



Pete & Donna Greene with the 9th train in the Parade of Trains.



Brian & Gail Campopiano with the 11th train in the Parade of Trains.

**OPS Day
October 22, 2016
Bill Smith**



Pete Greene, Peder Serkland (back breaking job), and Gary Brothers (sitting on his wheeled seat).



Peder Serkland



Gary Brothers installing concrete ties between track panels while Peder Serkland tightens screws.



Engineer JB Cason with conductor Gordon Bliss.



Gary Brothers and Pete Greene



Doug Blodgett and Peder Serkland



Spence Gaskin (engineer), Gilbert Freitag (conductor), and Bob Werre



Peder Serkland bending over again.



Peder Serkland, Pete Greene, Doug Blodgett, and Gary Brothers.



Pete Greene, Peder Serkland, Gary Brothers (seated) and Doug Blodgett

OPS Day
October 22, 2016
Rick White

Bob Barnett was Train Master for this OPS Day, making it run smoothly with three freight trains and no passenger trains. We had a timetable for the day, but no takers. We started the day with one four person crew and two crews of three. We ended the day with all four person crews. There

was a work crew out at Sand Springs, and the photos of Bill Smith show that work well. See Bill's article. The captions tell the OPS story as best as a conductor on a train can, but much was missed. Robert Briggs had his narrow gauge steam engine out for a spin.



The crews moving cars from the car barn to the classification yard.



Tom Bailey on Bob Barnett's loco moving cars to the classification yard.



Bill Smith has his loco out to ride him to the action.



Gary Brothers and Bill Smith discussing the concrete tie track.



Pete Greene and Peder Serkland take the lift off of a concrete tie track panel that Doug Blodgett moved with Walt, the tractor.

On the right:
Beverly Barnett is looking back at her grandson and daughter. Tom Bailey is the rear brakeman. Dennis Cranston is out checking signals.

Engineer Bob Barnett is the engineer for the Barnett train of three generations.



Gary Brothers is handing tools to Pete Greene while Nathan Leventon looks on.



Jason Bienek with Frisco 807.



Brakeman Tom Bailey and Bob Barnett at Lakeside.



Gary Brothers and Nathan Leventon watching Pete Greene join rail.



Bob Barnett is watching Bill Smith take photos.



Bill Smith has his camera in his right hand and is looking for a photo opportunity.



Pete Greene is passing nuts and bolts to Nathan Leventon for the rail joiner. Gary Brothers looking on. Peder Serkland bent over in the background.



Doug Blodgett taking video using his GoPro camera with sound.



Spence Gaskin and George Leventon standing in the shade while Nathan Leventon tamps ballast in the sun.



Virginia and Gil Freitag eating lunch on OPS Day.



Peder Serkland still leaning over.



Transfer table left lined up with the track, which will let the table bend. Nathan Leventon, George Leventon, and Doug Blodgett, who is sitting on JB Cason's trailer.



The JB Cason (engineer) and Gordon Bliss (conductor) crew switching Sweetwater.



Brakeman Bob Barnett and Tom Bailey ride by the crew working Sweetwater.



Engineers JB Cason and Jason Bienek.



Gary Brothers talking with Suzanne Taconnelly at Sand Springs.



Pete Greene and Peder Serkland



Robert Briggs has his steamer out for rounds around Phase I.



Robert Briggs has his steamer out for rounds around Phase I.



Robert Briggs with his narrow gauge steamer.



Spence Gaskin (engineer) with George Leventon following Robert Briggs.

OPS Day, October 22, 2016, by Spence Gaskin



Train Master Bob Barnett leads the 9:30 AM discussion on the OPS day ahead. Gordon Bliss on the right.



The crowd has gathered to listen to the Train Master.



Conductor Gilbert Freitag on the right directs switching at Bone Yard.



Engineer JB Cason tries a problem switch as Gordon Bliss looks on.



The East Sumrall problem switch, loose guard rail.



Gary Brothers fixes the loose guard rail during the OPS day, thank you Gary.



Emmy Freitag on the left and Gilbert Freitag on the right switch East Sumrall.



Gilbert Freitag, the couductor, looks for the tiny metal spot labels at Lakeside.



The crew on the HALS 5321 train. Engineer is Spence Gaskin.



The Frisco 807 crew of Bob Barnett, Tom Bailey, and Rick White switching East Sumrall.



Engineer Jason Bienek with his Frisco 807



Gil Freitag seated on the red car at Caliente.

Work Day, October 22, 2016, by Spence Gaskin



Pete Greene and Peder Serkland with Gary's seat.



Gary Brothers on his roll around seat connecting rails. Pete Greene looking at track.



Tractor man Doug Blodgett talking to the track crew of Gary Brothers (seated), Pete Greene, and Peder Serkland.



Peder Serkland with ruler in hand checking track. Always leaning over, my back hurts seeing that.



Suzanne Tacconelly and Gary Brothers connecting rails.



Gary Brothers inserting ties.



George Leventon, Nathan Leventon, and Pete Greene with the Gaskin ballast train at the left.



Suzanne Tacconelly and Nathan Leventon work ballast while Pete Greene shovels ballast in the background.



Pete Greene and Gary Brothers. Too much stoop labor.



LEFT: Gary Brothers using the rail joiner drilling jig. Gary's roll around seat on the right.

Work Day

October 25, 2016

Gary Brothers

After I worked alone on Monday the 24th, on the 25th we had three workers.

Gary Brothers used the tractor and took photos. Peder Serkland spread ballast and aligned the new track.

JB Cason ran a ballast train back and forth and spread ballast.

The ballast bunker is now empty and the ballast tipple is about half full.

Dennis Cranston placed an order for ballast, which will come on Thursday, October 27.



Sand Springs with a string line for installing track panels. Ballast tomorrow. 5:31 PM on Oct. 24



Curve between Sand Springs and Lakeside Jct. 5:32 PM on October 24



Peder Serkland moving ballast in Sand Springs. 3:22 PM on October 25



Peder Serkland, ballast cars almost empty. 3:27 PM on October 25



Peder Serkland and JB Cason between Dinkey Creek Bridge and Lakeside. 4:01 PM on Oct. 25



JB Cason and Peder Serkland testing track after ballasting. 4:06 PM on October 25

Help HALS get \$\$\$ while you shop!

Amazon Smile

Kroger's Community Rewards

Amazon Smile and Kroger's Community Rewards are efforts by Amazon and Kroger to support the non-profit organizations that their customers believe in. You can help HALS by using them. Instead of going to Amazon.com, go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> to do your Amazon shopping. Pick out Houston Area Live Steamers as your choice of non-profit organizations. If you shop Kroger and have a Kroger rewards card, then go to <https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow> and select Houston Area Live Steamers (oops, they wrote down streamers). **You have to renew this every year for Kroger, please do this now.** This does not take anything away from you – it just gives money to HALS! These programs bring in 30 dollars a month with only three members in each right now. This does not cost you more, but does contribute to HALS.

Coming in the November Stack Talk

Work Day for November
Election Results (for HALS)
25th Anniversary Meet
Public Run Day November
Toys for Tots
Your Project

2016 HALS Board of Directors

President	Bill Smith
V.P. Operations	Bob Barnett
V.P. Facilities	Peder Serkland
V.P. Track & Right of Way	George Leventon
V.P. Motive Power & Equipment	Gary Brothers
Secretary	Rick White
Treasurer	Dennis Cranston
Junior Director	Connor Witkowski
Former President	Pete Greene
V.P. Communications	TBD
V.P. Manpower	TBD
Senior Director	TBD

(NOTE: Pete Greene is continuing as the "Former President" since Bob Barnett is still on the Board.)

Editor's Comments

I inserted some photos from last year's anniversary meet in hopes getting you interested in coming out this year. The timed event is 2 PM on Friday. The Parade of trains is 3 PM on Saturday. After dinner on Saturday there will be some presentations and the Marshall Black / Lee Balkum award will be presented to a hard working member. Peter Bryan will be there to receive his 2015 Marshall Black / Lee Balkum award, his first appearance at HALS since the award was announced.

There is a new ad on the last page.

Rick White, Stack Talk Editor

I can be reached and submissions may be made at the following email address:

Rick.White.Jr@gmail.com

HALS Mailing Address

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Hockley, Texas 77447-0215

HALS Physical Address

Houston Area Live Steamers, Inc.
17802 Roberts Rd.
Hockley, Texas 77447-0215

To reach **all HALS members** send email to roundhouse@hals.org and roundhouse1@hals.org

To access the **HALS Public Facebook** page use the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/HALS.ORG>

NOTE: No Login required

To access the **HALS Internal Facebook** page use the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1424915724430631>

NOTE: Login required



Things for Sale

FOR SALE: Screws, #8, 1-1/4" long. 5,000 for \$25.00. **Contact Barry Tobias (713) 729-2199**

FOR SALE: 3/16" Copper Rivets 1-1/4" long. \$10.00 a pound. **Contact Barry Tobias (713) 729-2199**

FOR SALE: 1/2" o.d. Copper Tubing, 3/8" i.d. Type L. \$1.15 per foot.

Contact Barry Tobias (713) 729-2199

FOR SALE: 45% Silver Solder 1 oz. \$12.00 **Contact Barry Tobias (713) 729-2199**

For Sale

Two Intermodal Cars with containers

Owner: Jerry Salsbury: [785-893-4241](tel:785-893-4241)

Posted by Richard Osborn: [254-721-0438](tel:254-721-0438)

Brand new and listed for sale, two well or stack cars from Mountain Car Company. Both cars are complete with MCC trucks and couplers. These new cars have never been pulled, only on the rail for pictures. Beautifully built, painted and lettered by MCC. Owner ordered and has now decided to retire from the hobby and sell out. Asking \$6,500 for both. Please contact the owner or me for more information. Richard Osborn





MDM built GP 7.
Loco is 24 volt electric.
\$13,500.00

Also available:
Cotton Belt engineers car
with two seats, air
compressor and Tom Bee
trucks with brakes
\$1500.00

Shane Murphy
shane.murphy@ymail.com

All 7.5 inch gauge.