



February 2017, Houston Area Live Steamers, Volume 2017 Issue 02, Rick White, Editor

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The Presidential Siding

February 2017

Hello all,

We just completed the Chugga Chugga Chili Fest in absolutely awesome weather. The steamers were out in force, the 4 ¾" track some serious activity, and the Gauge One was active. We had visitors from north and central Texas who did not bring equipment to run, but came to check us out. They all were pleased with what they saw and they all took multiple rides behind multiple locos. It was a great weekend and I want to Thank You to all of you that assisted in the Meet, came out and ran trains, etc. It was a very good weekend.

On the County front, two major issues to talk about. First, the County Electricians were able to reconnect the power to 13 Stitches, including the Air Compressor and Turntable the week before the Meet started. During the same time frame they upgraded all of the Streetlights from Sodium bulbs to all new LEDs. They are some kind of bright! And for the first time in a long time they are all working well! They had to bring in a very large Bucket Truck to get to them since the trees have grown quite a bit since the lights were new..

Second, Dennis Cranston and Bob Barnett had an excellent meeting with County Engineering and the Permitting Office last week concerning the New Car Barn Project. We are continuing to better understand the requirements that we are now working under. Things are certainly improving in the relationship with the County as they learn more about us and we learn more about them.

They also discussed issues like how we will maintain trackage, berms, etc. as we move forward. They

are very keen for us to continue to maintain our infrastructure. We will still have to conform to the new requirements you have all been hearing about, BUT, we are able to maintain existing infrastructure without having to go get Permits for example. It is becoming very obvious that water flow and doing things to change / disrupt, it etc. is a major issue. More information on that in the future.

Bob Barnett is the process of setting up his Engineering Company which will be used to assist HALS in Projects with the County. Bob brings significant experience in this area and I believe will be a key player in the process as we move forward.

Progress has also been made on the New Car Barn. The main doors and the personnel door have been installed, fascia boards put into place. Next steps are Door Sills, painting the fascia boards and beginning work on the Racks to go in the Barn.

Thank You for your support and I really hope that more and more of you can come out and enjoy what HALS has to offer.

Hope to see you on the rails!

Bill Smith

President, Houston Area Live Steamers, Inc.
Home of the Cypress Creek & Southern Railroad

HALS Events 2017

All events at Zube Park

January 7: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 January 21: Work Day
 January 23: Board Meeting 7PM
 January 28: OPS Day

February 4: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 February 18: HALS at Greater Houston Train Show
 February 20: Board Meeting at 7 PM
 February 23-25: Chugga Chugga Chili Fest (Bob Barnett)

March 4: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 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 at 7 PM

April 1: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 April 8: Fun Run Day
 April 15: Public Run Day 9 AM to 2 PM
 April 24: Board Meeting at 7 PM

May 6: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 May 20: Public Run Day 9 AM to 1 PM
 May 22: Board Meeting at 7 PM
 May 24-28: Memorial Day Weekend Meet (Gary Brothers)

June 3: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 June 10: Fun Run Day
 June 17: Public Run Day 9 AM to 1 PM
 June 26: Board Meeting at 7 PM

July 8: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 July 15: Public Run Day 9 AM to 1 PM
 July 24: Board Meeting at 7 PM

August 5: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 August 19: Public Run Day 9 AM to 1 PM
 August 28: Board Meeting at 7 PM

September 9: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 September 16: Public Run Day 9 to 1
 September 25: Board Meeting at 7 PM
 September 30: OPS Day

October 7: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 October 14: Fun Run Day
 October 21: Public Run Day 9 to 2
 October 23: Board Meeting at 7 PM
 October 28: OPS Day

November 4: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 November 9 – 12: SWLS Meet and HALS Anniversary Meet
 November 18: Public Run Day 9 to 2 with Toys for Tots.
 November 27: Board Meeting at 7 PM at Zube Park

December 2: Work Day and General Membership Meeting at 1 PM
 December 11: Board Meeting at 7 PM at Zube Park

February 17, 2018, Greater Houston Train Show
 February 22-24, 2018: Chugga Chugga Chili Fest

Public Facebook pages

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

No Login required

Greg Moore is in charge of this Facebook page.

E-mail is bubbadawg@gmail.com

Facebook Group

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

Facebook login required

This is where you can post your photos.

Tomas Sandoval is in charge of this group.

E-mail is tomas_sandoval@hotmail.com

Bill Smith**HALS Work Day****February 11, 2017**

Hello all,

I just want to take a minute or two and say Thank You for coming out to Zube today.

One group made pretty good progress on the New Car Barn, hanging the remainder of the Hardi Plank on the front of the building, installed the new personnel door, and cleaned up the two bays on the south side.

Another group installed a Grade Crossings near Cabin Creek, while Peder was spraying weeds on the track.

A big Thanks to you all. I had a great day, in great weather, with great friends...

Doug Blodgett
HALS Work Day
February 11, 2017

Here are some photos of today's activities. Some of the story is in the photo captions. Here goes:

Today was a kind of supplemental workday and the weather was perfect considering it's the middle of February. Bob Barnett had requested help to work on the new car barn and a good crew responded. See the photos for details.

One of the major concerns we currently have is the loss of power at the MOW shed when it was disconnected during the demolition of a county building at the entrance of our property. This source powers our compressor and transfer table. When the Park Superintendent was notified, he immediately began work to get us power back in time for the upcoming Chili Fest. Given the amount of work done by the county last week, it looks like we just might have conventional power in time. If not, the Superintendent has committed that we will have power by other means in time for the

Chili Fest. He has always come through for us so I would not let this situation interfere with your plans to attend the Chili Fest this year. We will make it work, one way or the other.

The county mows a lot of the large areas on our railroad but there are some smaller places they can't get their large machines across the track. We use our own riding mower for those places and have lightweight crossings for it. One of the crossings was a kind of temporary thing though so today a crew went out to put in a more permanent one. Rick White, and Gary Brothers did the work on this one. See the photos for details.

I wasn't there the whole day, but the morning was certainly productive.

If you are unsure about attending the Chili Fest because of the power situation, please come anyway



The county has installed a new distribution box for power to their new building at the entrance to Zube Park. The feed for this is coming from a pole transformer across Roberts Road.



This was a hole last week, but has been filled and will probably be the base for the new building. The new building will be larger because it will hold offices whereas the old building only housed several very large tractor/mowers.



New conduits for the power coming from the distribution center. This will probably feed our MOW shed (13 stitches) too.



Bill Howe and Rick White are working on installing a new mower crossover on the mainline. The previous one was not visible at times when the grass got too high. Gary Brothers checks his phone, he also spent some time installing rail.



Bob Barnett and Robert Briggs are installing Hardi Plank surrounds on the roll-up door openings.



LEFT: Robert Briggs, Bill Smith, Bob Barnett, and Gerald Lee are working at cutting pieces to fit. Bob brings his generator to power the compressor since there is no power at the new building site. Cutting the concrete product produces a large cloud of dust and Robert Briggs is properly masked for the job.



OK. Somebody has to supervise the guys handling all those dangerous tools and these two are just the ones for the job. Dennis Cranston and Bill Smith are keeping everything running smoothly.

**Rick White
HALS Work Day
February 11, 2017**



Bill Howe installing rail.



Gary Brothers and Connor Witkowski installing rail.



Peder Serkland sprayed the track.



Gary Brothers after all the work has been completed.



Connor Witkowski moving ballast to the edge of the completed grade crossing.



Connor Witkowski rowing the ballast car back to the car barn. After a discussion with Peder Serkland, Bill Howe and Rick White set out to use the materials Rick has been carrying around in his van for four months and install a new grade crossing. Just before a public run day while mowing, Pete Greene could not see the grade crossing because of the tall grass. The mower and the crossing were both 4 feet wide. He got off the edge and bent a rail. The grade crossing was old and the boards split. The grade crossing width was increased to 6 feet and the ties were made long to have three full width boards. A flatter crossing should have fewer problems high centering a mower deck. Gary Brothers stopped in and wanted to help, and he did a lot of rail installation sitting on his rail cart. Connor Witkowski came and also took part, learning to install rail. He also tamped ballast.

**Gary Brothers
HALS Work Day
February 11, 2017**



Old ties removed, with their mark in the dirt showing on the left. Rick White digging out old dirt and ballast on the right.



Rick White digging out ballast and dirt from under the old grade crossing.



Rick White digging out ballast and dirt from under the old grade crossing.



Bill Howe cutting rail while Rick White steps on the rail to hold it in place.



Rick White moving ballast while Connor Witkowski tamps ballast.



Rick White moving ballast while Connor Witkowski tamps ballast.

**Gary Brothers
Sinclair Tank Car
February 12, 2017**



Mockup of the lettering for the Sinclair Tank Car. Paper background made to match the car color. "65 Million Years in the Making"



Sinclair Tank Car
"Where Dinosaurs Still Roam"

Gary Brothers Flat Car for HALS 5321

Gary was tired of the single truck riding car behind the HALS loco 5321. He decided to build a two seat riding car 6 feet long with JB Cason donating the materials and Gary donating the trucks and couplers. Thank you Gary and JB! The flat car was at the Chili Fest in late February for all to see.



Birth of a new car. First few photos show parts clamped together before welding.



Car's backbone with the cross pieces welded together and the extra plates for Tom Bee trucks bolted on rather than welding it to the frame.



LEFT: Frame in place with 1 x 2 inch coupler pocket sticking out the end. Two plates welded in place with holes for mounting eye hooks for safety chains.



Cross brace with diagonal cuts to appear prototypical.



Frame on its side. The 2 x 2 inch tubing on the main beam is used to stiffen the frame, and is needed when two big live steamers sit on the car. The taper in the 1" angle iron connecting the central frame to the side pieces is shown. The two tapers are nice touches!



Truck installed, frame right side up on the display stand. 1.5" scale MCC trucks. 3/4" square tubing used for stake pockets.



The frame with trucks displayed on the Display Track for HALS use at the Greater Houston Train Show.

HALS at the Greater Houston Train Show

Rick White, February 18, 2017

HALS was at the Greater Houston Train Show today with trains that Gary Brothers and Dennis Cranston brought. Rich Businger took home his tank car that Gary had brought to the show. Also present were Bob Barnett, Spence Gaskin, John Frank, and many Model Railroaders that I know. Fun day!

Having both a finished tank car and a kit mostly built allowed model railroaders to see how we are just a bigger scale and that they too could build cars. We talked to modelers who wanted arch bar trucks, old plain bearing trucks, and new roller bearing trucks. The older the modeler, the older the truck design wanted. But, they all seemed very serious!

One group who is interested has a son (nephew for the other adult) who built a radio control 1.5" scale modern crane, and is it beautiful and it operates well! We very much need to see these gentlemen out again (they came for the last OPS day in 2016). So, these guys are serious into building modern cars and have the skills and equipment to do it.



Dennis Cranston watching Bill Smith look over the handouts Dennis had prepared.



Gary Brothers's Shell Tank car with tiny N scale model on the walk way under the center dome.



Dennis Cranson brought the banner, banner holder, and the 3.5" gauge steamer. Bill Smith talking with Dennis.



Bill Smith and Dennis Cranston with the HALS banners that Dennis made.



Gary Brothers sitting behind the Dennis Cranston 3.5 inch gauge steam loco and beside his Shell Tank car.

Rich Businger bought the kit parts from Titan Trains less the tank. Rich built the kit frame and Gary Brothers built the tank form 12" PVC pipe and added the kit parts to the tank. Rich will finish the car from here.



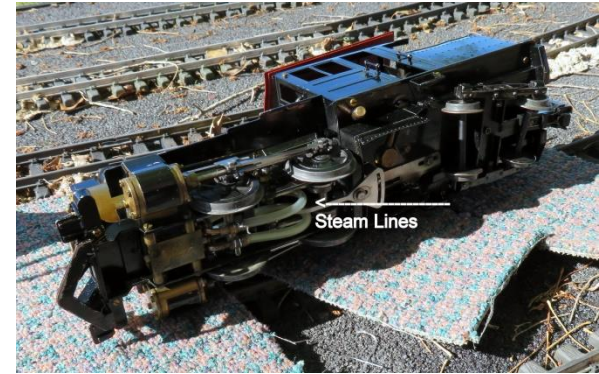
The Chili Fest by Rick White



Phil Carter's train with Spence Gaskin working on the steam loco he acquired 6 days earlier. 2/23



Phil Carter's train. February 23.



Spence Gaskin's "new" Forney that had leaking steam lines. 2/23



Bill Howe running his train backwards to view the new car barn. February 23.



Doug Blodgett with the HALS John Deere Gator. 2/23



Rolland Boutnell with his steamer, propane car, and caboose.



Bill Courtright, his loco is at his upper left. Small loco. 2/23



Bill Courtright's little loco, steams right along! 2/23



A 2-4-4 Forney with Tiffany refrigerator cars. February 23



ABOVE: Pat Darby with an after lunch break from steaming.

LEFT: Phil Carter with his Berkshire. February 23.



Steamers waiting for live steamers to run them. Left Gerald Lee. Right Clyde Brown. Clyde had a lubricator issue that he could not resolve and was not able to run. February 24.



Greg Randall's 1" scale RS3 with sound. February 24.



ABOVE: Greg Randall's 1" scale train. February 24

RIGHT: Pete Greene controlling the transfer table.



Gearld Lee working on steam.



Doug Blodgett getting ready to steam up. February 24



JT Bailey's brand new C&IG refrigerator car. First time on the rails. MCC. February 24.



Bill Smith working on his RS3.



Bill Howe making track panels.
February 24



Phil Carter, Pat Darby, and Art Gibson.
February 24



John Frank watching his steamer
closely. February 24



John Frank's steamer.
February 24.



Phil Carter watching John Frank's
loco. Art Gibson steaming up in
the background. February 24



Bill Smith out for a run before he picked up passenger cars. 2/24



Gerald Lee and Pete Greene



Gerald Lee
February 24



Greg Randall working track.



Pete Greene takes care of a cinder in the eye while engineer Gerald Lee moves out. February 24.



Greg Moore
February 24



ABOVE: Spence Gaskin running Doug Blodgett's Mikado under Doug's watchful eye.

RIGHT: Pat Darby, Bill Courtright, Phil Carter, Dennis Cranston, and Bill Smith. February 24



Above and left: Greg Randall, 1" scale track. February 24



Doug Blodgett and Spence Gaskin



Cody Crawford brought out some new concrete tie molds. Improved versions. February 24



Bill Smith



Bill Smith, Cody Crawford, and Pete Greene February 24



LEFT: Greg Moore with the HALS signs he created for our 25th Anniversary. February 24

Greg Moore, Doug Blodgett, Pete Greene, Cody Crawford, and Donna Greene. February 24



Bob Barnett, February 24



Greg Randall, February 25



Gerald Lee with family and friends.



JT Baily February 25



Rolland Boutwell



Greg Moore on February 25



Spence Gaskin (engineer) 2/25



Greg Randall, Donna Greene, Monterey White, and Virginia Freitag.



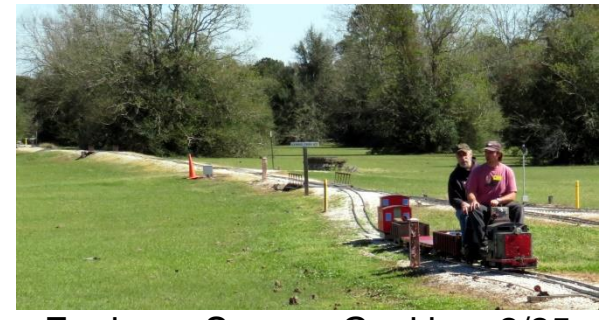
Virginia Freitag and Mary Rains February 25



JT Bailey, February 25



Greg Moore



Engineer Spence Gaskin 2/25



Mary Rains, Gary & Linda Brothers looking at the green tank car.



Greg Moore on February 25



JT Baily (engineer) 2/25



Greg Moore on February 25



Vicki Lee (conductor) checking her train while Gearld Lee (engineer) talks to his friends and family.



Gerald Lee with family and friends. February 25



Rich Businger (center) with his friends.



Rich Businger (center) with his friends. February 25



Bob Barnett (engineer), Gil & Virginia Freitag, Mary Rains, and Stephanie Gaskin.



Bob Barnett (engineer), Gil & Virginia Freitag, Mary Rains, and Stephanie Gaskin.



Doug Blodgett with his Mikado and freight train. February 25



Gerald Lee (engineer) and Vicki Lee (conductor) with family and friends.



Doug Blodgett (engineer)



Bill Smith on February 25



JT Bailey



Clyde & Laura Brown
February 25



Bob Barnett with Gil & Virginia Freitag
and Mary Rains. Rich Businger.



Clyde & Laura Brown. 2/25



Mike & Case (engineer) Alexander

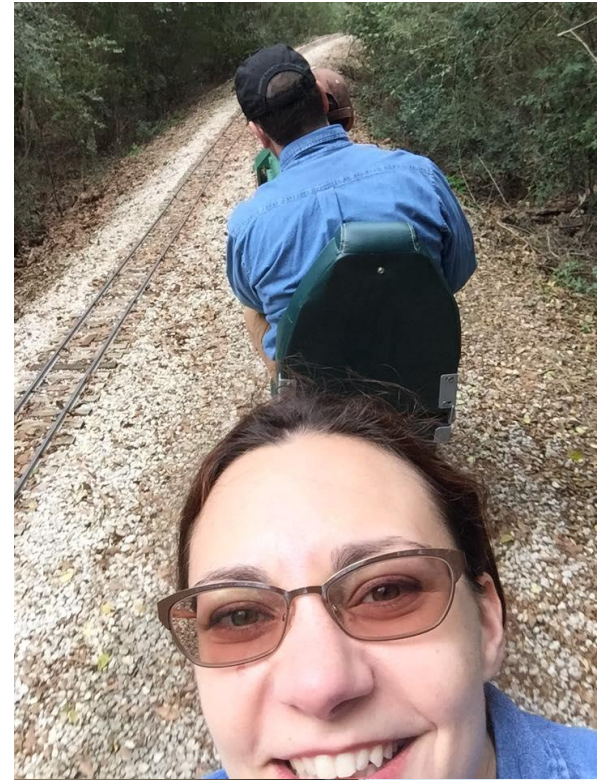


Case (engineer) and Mike
Alexander on February 25



Stephanie and Spence Gaskin with
Frankie. End of Saturday.

The above photos were taken by Rick White, who was not at the track on Sunday, February 26. Erin and Tomas Sandoval provided the following photos taken on Sunday. Thank you Erin and Tomas!



Chili Fest, by Spence Gaskin

Shown below are a few of the photos from Facebook at

https://www.facebook.com/spence.gaskin/media_set?set=a.10102259743567958.1073741887.38713518&type=3&pnref=story



Bill Howe laying panels out to design tracks to the new car barn.



The track laid out.



Bill Smith, Cody Crawford (he retired 2/1/2017), and Rick White. Welcome back to the track Cody!



Tomas Sandoval trying to get ready for a family picture.



Staying "still" for a second



Gary Brothers Shop Gantry Crane

Gary Brothers is building tools for his new shop, which itself is still being built. A steel beam that holds the roof up was used to hold the crane. Power is routed down the side of the beam. A Gantry Crane was added today. Lots of welds. The lift mechanism was added two days later.



The Gantry is shown in the out over the floor position. The upper arm is 4' long. Gary Brothers 2017-0214

The Gantry is shown rotated back along the wall, out of the way. Gary Brothers Photo 2017-0214



Lots of welding for the bottom support and rotation mechanism. 4" by 4" steel beam placed in shop for this Gantry Crane. Clamped now for tests. Will be bolted in place much higher when tests over. Gary Brothers 2017-0214



The top mount of the Gantry Crane has less welding. Clamped on while Gary figures out how high he wants this mounted. 4" by 4" steel beam. Gary Brothers 2017-0214



LEFT: Top part of whole picture showing just the arm and chain hoist. Gary Brothers 2017-0216

RIGHT: Now bolted to the steel beam up high with the chain hoist attached. Looking great! Gary Brothers 2017-0216



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.** 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 March Stack Talk

Work Day for March
First public run day of the year.
OPS Day
Your Project

2017 HALS Board of Directors

President Bill Smith

V.P. Operations Bob Barnett

V.P. Facilities Spence Gaskin

V.P. Track & Right of Way

V.P. Motive Power & Equipment

Secretary Rick White

Treasurer Dennis Cranston

Former President: Pete Greene

V.P. Communications Open – main duty is writing Stack Talk and taking photos for it.

V.P. Manpower Rich Businger

Senior Director Connor Witkowski

Junior Director JB Cason

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

Editor's Comments

Rick White, Stack Talk Editor

We had an official work day on February 4th and I have not one photo from that day. But, a week later when we had an unofficial work day, three members provided photos. It would be great to have more photos of the scheduled work days. Thanks to Doug Blodgett, Gary Brothers, the Sandovals, and Spence Gaskin for photos for this issue!

I can be reached and submissions may be made at the following e-mail address: Rick.White.Jr@gmail.com

HALS Mailing Address

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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>

Greg Moore is in charge of this Facebook page(s). E-mail is bubbadawg@gmail.com

NOTE: No Login required

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

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

NOTE: Facebook 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**