



STACK TALK

Houston Area Live Steamers

"Since 1991"

March 2006

Volume 15 Issue 3

PERFECT CHILI, BUT CHILLY WEATHER TOUGH ON ENGINEERS/PASSENGERS



Chugga Chugga Chili Fest Report: The warmest winter in a long time and we drew the one cold weekend. Figures. Lots of plans were set in motion, camping, chili trophies, friends, etc. Despite the cold 40 degrees on the outside, the chili kept the shop nice and warm. **Gary Brothers** was chief ramrod and did a very good job of creating interest with good publicity and acquired the trophies for competition and previewed them at the February meeting.

Early Friday morning the 70's on the thermometer plunged to the 40's and we knew we were in for it. **Gary Brothers** stayed toasty warm in his trailer but the others who were scheduled to camp wimped out. Three cheers for Boy Scout Troop No. 806 which camped out at Caliente. They

had been on the calendar for 6 months. The 26 scouts and parents got to test out their long johns. **George Leventon**, camping with them, provided the train for the scouts to ride.

Engines running were: **Freitag's** RS3, **Outlaws'** FP-45, **Leventon's** Box Cab, **Hitzfelders'** Consolidation, HALS 5321, **Brothers'** SW1500, **Pasleys'** Motorcar, **Melchers'** Pacific, HALS 3119, HALS switcher.



30 members present were **Gil & Virginia Freitag, Doug Blodgett, Gary Brothers, Nick & James Hitzfelder, Ben & Patty Benda, Brent & Amanda Courtney, Ken & Betty Smith, Cody Crawford, Ed & Mary Rains, Ron & Mary Lou Pasley, Clyde & Laura Brown, John Frank, Dave & Angela James, Jesse Adams, Art Magill, Bob Jackson, Stu Marion, Rick White, Gary & Letha Grace McCoy, Carolyn Balkum, Bill Howe, George, Marge, Nathan & David Leventon.** Visitors were: Richard Thomas, visiting from Roselle, Illinois (guilty of taking



Dick **Melcher's** Pacific home), David Karl, Chicago, IL, and Travis, Sherrie and Allison Smith.



Each person who brought a crock pot of chili drew a number and placed a numbered cup beside their pot. Each person was issued a washer (we had lots of them) and they voted for the best pot by placing their washer in the cup alongside the favorite pot. There were 6 pots, furnished by **Mary Lou Pasley, Gary Brothers, Laura Brown, Carolyn Balkum, Betty Smith, and Virginia Freitag.** First Place went to **Gary Brothers** and second place trophy went to **Carolyn Balkum.**

(continued on page 3)

ALL ABOARD!

Houston Area Live Steamers Inc.
P. O. Box 215
Hockley, TX 77447-0215



2006 Brass Hats:

- President Doug Blodgett
- V.P.Admini. Kevin Outlaw
- V.P.Operations Vance Nickerson
- Secretary Dennis Grigassy
- Treasurer Virginia Freitag
- Senior Dir. David James
- Junior Dir. John Frank



2006 Striped Hats: Superintendents of:

- Manpower ---
- Publications Carolyn Balkum
- Facilities Gil Freitag
- Train Ops ---
- Records ---

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The Prez Sez

We have just finished up another great Chugga Chugga Chili Fest in spite of the cold and rainy conditions that persisted through the Feb. 20th weekend. This year **Gary Brothers** was in charge and he started what might be a new tradition – awarding prizes for the best chili. In what could be the shadiest bit of maneuvering ever at a club event, **Gary** walked away with the top honors, but I know he earned it honestly. My thanks to **Gary** for a great job in coordinating the Chili Fest and to all who came out in the nasty weather. Did I forget to mention that a number of Boy Scouts also camped on our grounds (out beyond Anderson Loop) the same weekend and **George Leventon** used his beautiful new 2.5" scale Box Cab engine to haul them and their equipment to the camp site so their vehicles wouldn't go out on the soggy ground. Nice going **George!**

Earlier in the month, we tried a new style of general meeting when we had a mostly entertainment and learning program, with only pertinent business items handled after the presentations. Based on the positive response I received from various members after the meeting, I intend to continue this format for three of every four general meetings this year. That means, of course, that we need more people to present programs, so please give some thought to what you might be able to share with the rest of the members. Personal experiences, building techniques - all are fair game for a presentation and I guarantee that most members appreciate hearing it.

Some of you may have heard that the Los Angeles Live Steamers were shut down by their park board after a passenger cut her leg on a tie after leaning outboard too far and falling out of a gondola. We don't use gondolas to haul passengers for the very reason that caused this accident, but we should take heed of the consequences of not always being prepared for any eventuality. One of the most experienced clubs in our hobby is now working with a safety inspector selected by their club and approved by the city of Los Angeles to review and make corrections to their whole track before being allowed to operate on their track again. The track is being upgraded and all of the equipment (both club and private) is being inspected to very strict compliance to the rules. The members must all take a safety class and their spring meet has been cancelled. Before all this happened, we were already doing our 2006 Risk Assessment Study headed up by **Rick White**. I have been impressed by the input you have provided to **Rick** and I am pleased by the obvious attention our members give to safety. The study results will be presented soon and we will be taking action as necessary to ensure that our track continues to be of the safest locations to operate Live Steam equipment in the nation.

Next up – a Fun Run day which will have already happened by the time you read this.

Doug Blodgett



General Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2006

Meeting called to order by President **Doug Blodgett** at 7:00 pm. In Bear Creek Park Community Center

ANNOUNCEMENTS--

We are going to "trash" all but one lawnmower at the park in March. If you have a mower "on loan" you need to come and remove it from the property very soon.

A copy of the current track plan was posted on the wall, and Doug explained a few things relating to the now-started "environmental study" being done by the County, and how this is affecting many of our plans for modifying/expanding the track layout. Also shown on the track plan was the area that the County intends to pave for more parking. This is to be done during this year because the grant for the parking lot funds will expire at the end of the year.

Also shown was a suggested long range plan to put steel shipping containers connected by a transfer table to a new spur track near Caliente if the parking lot doesn't extend as far as the plan currently shows it. The idea is to have members who want to, to purchase shipping containers in which to store their valuable locomotives and cars that would be pretty much vandal-proof.

Also shown was the location of the new fencing around the Gauge 1 track and where the old fencing was removed.

7:15 pm

PROGRAM--

The floor was turned over to **Peter Bryan** who presented a one-hour video program showing track maintenance on both the Norfolk Southern and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroads. Most everyone present thoroughly enjoyed the presentation.

Rick White presented Peter B with a "token" of the club's appreciation for presenting the program (an HO model of a caboose).

Doug B showed drawings and gave some explanations of the construction methods that he plans to use for the new 2-8-2 Mikado locomotive that he has just started constructing.

BUSINESS--

The gasoline engine for club locomotive #5321 has been removed and sent to a small-engine repair facility. They estimate about \$200 to put the "pretty worn" prime mover into better shape so that we may be able to get a couple more years use out of it. The estimate for a new prime mover is around \$800. Moved by **Brent Courtney** to accept the estimate and proceed with the work.

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued from Page 2)
Seconded by **George Leventon**.
Motion passed. (UPDATE – WORK
ON ENGINE IS COMPLETED)

Virginia Freitag requested some money to acquire "engineers" caps to sell to children and possibly adults on public run days. It was determined that we already had enough funds budgeted for shirts and other sale stuff, and that we would not need to vote on approving any more funds at this time. **Virginia F** was given the "go ahead" to proceed.

Gary Brothers showed the trophies that he has had made for the #1 and #2 Chili pots at the upcoming Chugga-Chugga Chili Fest. **Gary B** explained how the winners will be determined, and urged all to plan on attending.

Doug B asked for someone to volunteer to be the coordinator for the upcoming SWLS/HALS annual meet. As the coordinator for the past several meets **Doug** has plenty of information, and will be publishing the "requirements" to the email list and in the next issue of Stack Talk.

Virginia F passed out copies of the current Treasurer's Report, made a few comments, and asked for questions. There were none.

Virginia Freitag requested approval to acquire "engineer" caps and possibly T shirts with another new design. We decided that money was already in the budget and caps fall under tee shirts.

MEETING ADJOURNED
at 8:55 pm.

CLEAN-UP NOTICE

Mowers numbers to be trimmed. There have been as many as four **hand-pushed power mowers** in the MOW shed during the last year. Although the club appreciates your contributions, we only need and have room for storing one lawnmower. This is to let you know that we have selected and tagged the mower we want to keep and are giving you a chance to remove your mower from Zube Park storage if it is not tagged. We will dispose of any untagged mowers on the March 4th Work Day.

Doug Blodgett



Richard Thomas, from Roselle, Illinois, is shown with the Pacific he purchased from Dick Melcher on the weekend of the Chili Fest.

(From Page 1)
Gary Brothers says, "In spite of the weather I think things turned out great. Lots of camaraderie and visiting went on. A special thanks to **Brent Courtney** for figuring out what the problem was with the water system in my trailer."

A great big THANK YOU goes to **Gary** for setting up and making arrangements for this weekend. But DOUBLE THANKS go to him for the extra time and effort he had to put in cleaning up after everyone left.

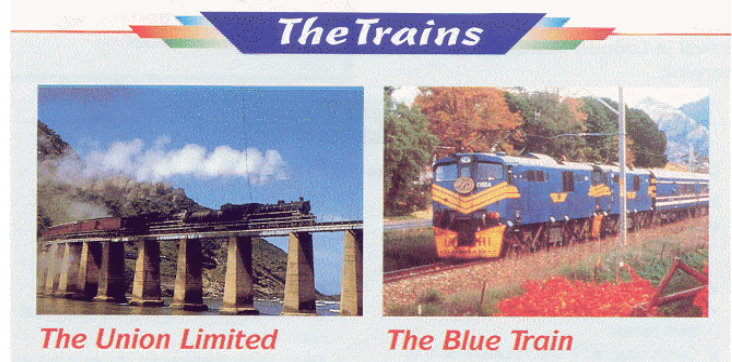
Photos courtesy of:
Patty Benda ↴
Clyde Brown ↴
Doug Blodgett ↴
Carolyn Balkum

Plan now to come to the next General Meeting. Our program for this night will be given by David James and I know you'll find it educational.

**March 2
Thursday 7:00
Bear Creek
Community Center**

A South Africa Railway Adventure

By
David James



**Pictures, Video Clips and Souvenirs from
The Blue Train and The Union Limited**

Note from **Virginia Freitag**, Treasurer.

I promised **Laura Brown** and **Mary Lou Pasley** they would NOT have to work the Concessions by themselves this year as they did several times last year. so.....

Please think about it now. We need to get several people to sign up for each month so they could relieve each

other. 6 hours straight is too much to ask anyone.

Please let me know which months you would like to help out. (This is a chance for some of the wives who are not really into "trains" to help out. Of course it is not limited to wives...responsible teens can help too

and also men who are not qualified engineers and/or conductors)

We need 1 to sell T shirts, 1 to sell drinks and 1 to talk to sign people in and talk to them. Also 1 to give out Tickets.

CONCESSIONS
9:15-1:15

CONCESSIONS
1:15 - 4:15

TICKET BOOTH
10:00-1:00

1:00-4:00

If more sign up, the shifts can be shorter.

Thank you so much for helping out...Concessions are a major contribution to our treasury.
Virginia

**SAFETY MEETING
March 18 Run Day
9:00 A.M.**

Mandatory meeting for all who will be involved in the run day, especially engineers and conductors. Will cover new policies and safety issues put in place this year. Please be on time so that we have plenty of time to prepare for the first guest arrivals.

The First Fun Run of 2006

was held January 28. Folks came out to run and ride and enjoy each other's company. The weather was good **Vance Nickerson** (right) is shown on Roy Pickard's 0-6-0 in its excellent C&IG weathering. Perfect engine for the C&IG.

Photos by Rick White ★★



Justin Outlaw on his newly painted engine.



Doug Gillory on his Mogul



Ricky Pike and his switcher



Virginia Freitag with a trainload of passengers



There's always someone working, here Art Magill

CONTINUING TO USE CONCRETE TIES

Saturday afternoon, during the Chili Fest, **George Leventon** derailed his engine on the curve between Sweetwater and Dinky Creek Junction. **Ken Smith, Kevin Outlaw** and I went over to see what the problem was and determined that the cause of the derailment was unlevel track.

In leveling the track, we found many ties were disconnected from the rail and all of the ties in this area are in their last days. With George, we decided this is an excellent section of track for concrete ties. We would like to put in 300ft-400ft of concrete ties in this area. This will be brought up at the next meeting.

The first 220ft of test concrete ties have been in for a little over a year now and both sections still look great.

A few facts about concrete ties:

They are slightly larger than our wood ties, being 1 3/4" x 2 3/4" x 15" long. The cost per tie is 35 cents (10cents - portland and sand + 14 cents rebar + 11 cents anchors).

The first ties were poured using plastic tubing for anchors. However, after reading that The New Unionville & Western Railroad in Bloomington, Indiana uses concrete ties in severe service areas, I noted that they use 1" *Fastenal* straight plastic tubular anchors. I looked into getting them and found these anchors are stocked in Dallas and quickly available by order locally. I ordered some 1 1/2" rather than 1" and poured one batch of 45 ties and they proved to be satisfactory.

Presently we have three molds which cast 15 ties each. These molds require 3 man hours to cast 45 ties which amounts to 15 ties per man hour.

Presently we have about 400 concrete ties in stock, but if we decide to go into mass production, I will rebuild the molds to cast 10 ties each. The reason is I have found that you can simply turn the set up mold of ties upside down and dump the ties out and 15 ties is a little heavy for me, therefore 10 ties



would be easier to handle. I would plan to make about 10 molds which would make 100 ties per pour.

I also think we should continue to use #10 screws for concrete ties for better holding and longer lasting due to their size. This will add a little extra cost.

I will admit there are a few unknowns with using concrete ties, but I have found no one who uses them unsatisfied.

Some concerns were: noise, which turned out to be false; another was the reaction of the lime in the concrete to the aluminum; and another was if concrete ties would damage wheel flanges in a derailment. Bill Hays in Michigan, told me of a track that had a wheel damaged in a derailment, but said he thought it was because the ties were 1ft. apart and wheels were sinking down between the ties and thus had to bounce over the next tie. I suggest we continue to space ours on 4" centers which should help prevent this problem.

If we start soon, I think we could get this trouble section of track reworked before the SWLS meet.

Gil Freitag ★
Supt. Facilities

WORK DAYS
Come help us March 4
for the Scheduled monthly workday.
There's lots to be done before our first
run day.

Bad order wheel And we thought *we* had problems

Can you imagine? It happened in Wyoming on the BN east of Orin Junction. Track speed is 50 mph most of the way. It stayed on the track too.

V. Freitag †



PREPARING FOR THE SWLS/HALS 2006 Meet Coordination List

By Doug Blodgett ★

At the last general meeting, I asked for a volunteer to handle the SWLS coordination duties this year. In response, I was asked to provide a list of what the coordinator needs to do. Here is the list that you asked for. Some of this stuff needs to be done NOW, such as writing vendors. If you want to divide up the duties with some one else, that is fine with me and would probably be the best. As you can see, Peter Bryan has volunteered to handle several of the jobs, but we need many more members to help out.

- Welcome banner for front gate. Same type as HALS banner - About \$80 (Peter Bryan)
- Arrange for tent for registration in same location as last year. This year use one that is waterproof. (Peter Bryan)
- Volunteers to man the registration desk. (Peter Bryan)
- Start looking for volunteers now. Assign positions.
 - o Unloaders and loaders at transfer table – on call by radio from registration desk
 - o Registration table – 4 hour shifts
 - o Maintenance crew. Have a reporting board where notes can be left for the maintenance crews to check for needed repairs. Also on call by radio
- Need 5 new water hoses for steaming bays
- Check to make sure air hoses for steaming bays have proper fittings.
- Look for vendors to provide door prizes. Don't have to be RR related.
 - o Write letters to potential vendors
 - o Ask for prize donation or bring wares
 - o Need volunteer
- Need a volunteer to put out the signs that Ed Rains made for the track last time and after the meet, store them in a place where we can find them again. Are any new signs needed?
- Arrange for Don to bring live steam exhibit. Provide him a tent so it can be on display for 2 days or more. Helpers needed to set up and take down.
- Static display of steam or other types of engines that members have constructed. Set up in the station area.
 - o Kieth's steam roller
 - o Doug's Shay
 - o Canvass members to see who else has something to display
- Need someone in charge of making sure that everything is cleaned up after meals.
- Breakfasts – who will cook, provide supplies. Donation from vendor? What days
 - o Friday
 - o Saturday
 - o Sunday
 - o Monday
- Lunches – any planned or is it eat on your own?
 - o Friday – on your own
 - o Saturday – catered by Ronnie Brothers (Peter Bryan)
 - o Sunday
 - o Monday - no
- Dinners – how many catered, pot luck
 - o Friday – eat out at restaurant as group
 - o Saturday - 150 catered dinners (Peter Bryan)
 - o Sunday - eat out at restaurant as group
 - o Monday - no
- Need a volunteer to be in charge of restroom cleanup each day.
- Need someone to hold morning safety meeting for each day. Very brief like Maricopa. Tell them where first aid stations are, track plan for day, when lunch is, etc. There is already a sign made to announce the meeting.
- Offer boiler testing on fixed schedule – once a day? Need person to do this.
 - o Friday – 2:00 to 4:00pm
 - o Saturday – 11:00am to 1:00pm
 - o Sunday – by appointment only
- Need volunteer to check medical supplies - put out where easily found, make sure they are adequately stocked for cuts, bites, and heat related problems.
 - o Steaming bays
 - o Station platform
- Have a supply of buttons and pins for sale. Can we make a special shirt for this meet?

From **Peter Bryan** ★, Ops Coordinator:

Don't forget our **Operations Day** at HALS on Saturday March 11. Be sure and mark your calendars to participate in a fun day with lots of friends. Be sure and bring the kids as we have found that this can be a great way to get them involved in the hobby. Even if you have never operated, we will train you. It is a lot of fun so come on out and give it a try. We will have a number of jobs you can choose from:

- Engineer- Local Freight, through freight, passenger train or just run as an extra if you want to just run your engine.
- Conductor – you are the boss and this is the chance for the ladies to tell their husbands what to do!!
- Brakeman – you do what the conductor tells you and get lots of exercise.
- Conductor for the passenger train- you get to read a timetable (courtesy of Rick White) and report anyone in your way.
- Trainmaster – you get to organize the setting out and picking up the equipment at beginning and end of session.
- Loadmaster – to make sure all cars and motive power is put up and in the proper place.

So come on out and let's have a great and fun OP's day.

From **Rick White** ★, Timetable creator:

Houston Area Live Steamers Passenger Train Timetable January 6, 2006

Counter Clockwise Read Down				Location		Clockwise Read Up				
Sumrall Express 5		Cypress Creek Flier 3		Zube Zephyr 1		Zube Zephyr 2	Cypress Creek Flier 4	Sumrall Express 6	Lakeside Local 8	
.40	Lv	.20	Lv	.00	Lv	Cypress Creek Station	Ar .12	Ar .27	Ar .41	Ar .54
.42	Lv	.22	Lv	.02	Lv	Sweetwater	Lv .10	Lv .26	Lv .40	Lv .53
.44	Lv	.24	Lv	.04	Lv	Lakeside	Lv .08	Lv .24	Lv .38	Lv .51
.46	Lv	.26	Lv	.06	Lv	Mosquito Bend				
.48	Lv	.28	Lv	.08	Lv	Boneyard				
						West Sumrall	Lv .06	Lv .20	Lv .36	Lv .49
.50	Lv	.30	Lv	.10	Lv	East Sumrall				
.51	Lv	.32	Lv	.12	Lv	Caliente	Lv .04	Lv .18	Lv .34	Lv .47
.52	Ar	.34	Ar	.14	Ar	Cypress Creek Station	Lv .02	Lv .16	.32	.45

Counter Clockwise trains are superior to Clockwise trains of the same class.

Trains may arrive early but may not leave early.

Clear path for passenger trains by time they leave the previous siding.

Times shown are minutes after the hour (substitutue : for . in time shown)

A new passenger timetable has been created for the HALS operating sessions. First, a word about timetables. Every location listed on the timetable is called a station. Except for the last station on a timetable, the times listed are leaving times. The last station on the timetable shows an arrival time. A passenger train may arrive early at a station. A passenger train may not leave early. Watches and clocks will be synchronized by the dispatcher, who is the owner of the official time. Normally trains run north and south or they run east and west. However, we run around and around with the passenger trains. Clockwise and counter clockwise are used for passenger trains for clarity. A track

diagram will be printed on the back of the timetable.

One train runs counter clockwise on the normal public run day track - the outer loop that uses Phase I, II, and III. The schedules for the counter clockwise trains are on the left side of the timetable and are read down. There are three scheduled counter clockwise trains each hour.

The counter clockwise train is superior to the clockwise train. When there is a meet, the clockwise train needs to be out of the way of the counter clockwise train by the time the counter clockwise train leaves the **previous** station. Note, this is not the time that train leaves the meet station. Same

thing applies to freight trains that meet any passenger train. Be out of the way by the time the passenger train leaves the previous station.

The clockwise train runs four schedules per hour, as shown on the right side of the timetable. Read these from bottom to top. These run only Phase I and II, and is the reason that four may be accomplished per hour. Again, the counter clockwise train is superior to the clockwise train.

When a scheduled train is cancelled, please make a radio announcement so that the freight trains are not waiting for a cancelled train. Use

(continued on Page 9)

the radios on the normal month - day frequency and subcode.

The dispatcher does not dispatch the passenger trains. The freight trains and engineers on locomotives out running for fun on an operations day need to have a **passenger timetable, a watch, and a radio**. Except for the passenger trains, you need to talk to the dispatcher to keep from running into each other. All track can be run in both directions during an

operations session. Yes, trains do run against passenger trains, but with the timetable in hand and ready to be at a siding and out of the way of the passenger train.

Freight trains can use the timetable to see when a passenger train is due at their location. Pick out your station on the timetable, down the center of the timetable. Look left and right for times just after the current time. When

you find the times just after the current time, circle them so you can find them quickly. Then go about your business switching cars. Keep an eye on the time and be out of the way of the passenger train when it comes, but now you have the time circled and can see it at a glance. After the meet, cross that time out, and look for the next passenger train, and circle that time. You are doing well, keep on railroading.



Here's a shot of the new Gauge 1 fence that was completed this month. The welder is installing the gate which is just like the ones on the path around the MOW shed.

The overall effect is very nice and provides enough room for everyone to do their thing with a good view of the happenings on the Gauge 1 track. The county ran the fence almost the full length of the Gauge 1 track (parallel to the creek), so there shouldn't be a problem with visitors going that far to get inside. They took down the old fence, making the 7 1/2" track seem much more open while coming around the bend at Sweetwater.




Thanks to the welder DOYLE FULKERSON. He is attaching the gate on the new fence between the Gazebo and the Gauge 1 track. He also worked on the railing around the loading platform last year. Another great job by the Precinct 3 workers at Zube Park and many thanks to Steve Dorman for acting so quickly on our request.

Doug Blodgett ★

Letters to the Editor

From **David McCarty**, Georgetown:

News from the Austin & Texas Central: Mikado 786 is finally being readied to be shipped off to start the re-assembly process. The last I heard, the frame, drivers, side rods and new cylinder saddles are to be shipped to a shop up near Birmingham, Alabama. To be machined and aligned. The boiler is going to someplace in Kentucky to be re-flued. Once this is completed everything is coming back to Cedar Park for final re-assembly. Hopefully in about a year and more than \$1,000,000 later our steamer will be pulling the public again. I'll keep you informed as to the progress as it happens.

Dennis Grigassy
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HALS member for over 10 years!

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE: **Barry Tobias** has 3 mills for sale. If anyone is interested in any one of these, please contact him directly.

FOR SALE: 5" X 10' Enclosed Trailer. This trailer was built by Cargo Craft and has been outfitted for hauling 7 1/2" gauge railroad equipment. The trailer has a single axle rated at 3500# and the empty weight is 750#. Some of the options include: extra thick floor, insulated walls & ceiling, spare tire, stone guard, stabilizer jacks, and two aluminum 7 1/2" tracks for equipment. This is a very nice trailer that cost \$2800 new, the selling price is \$1800 firm. If you are interested, contact Brent Courtney

FOR SALE: 16 foot tandem trailer with 4 rows of builtin track and strut tie-down rails. Price or trade for 10 foot box trailer. Contact James Hitzfelder.

FOR SALE: 4'x8', pretty heavy-duty trailer with a ramp-style tail gate. I bought it new about 4 years ago, used it about 5 times. Been stored under cover. Call Dennis Grigassy

It was So Quiet You Could Hear a Pin Drop

By Doug Gillory ★

Poet Laureate of the Texas Grand Trunk and Western R.R.

Once upon a time before we were old enough to railroad, our railroad forefathers coupled steam locomotives to cars with a very simple apparatus:

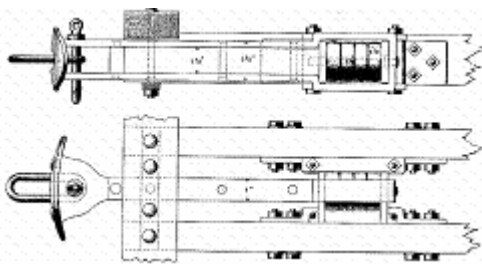


"Link & Pin Coupler."

Connecting several carriages or freight wagons together required some kind of technology. This technology evolved from the horse drawn wagon. Initially a short length of chain, soon to be replaced by a single link placed into a receiver at the end of the car and secured with a vertical pin. The link so attached to one car was then attached to a second car to couple the cars.



This technology was very dangerous. It required a railroad worker to be between the cars and somehow signal the engineman to move the cars close enough while holding the link in position to slide into the receiver of the car being coupled, and cost. Many a brakeman lost hands, fingers and even lives. Between 1870 and 1885, this type coupler survived until 1900 when it was outlawed by the Newly formed "Interstate Commerce Commission".



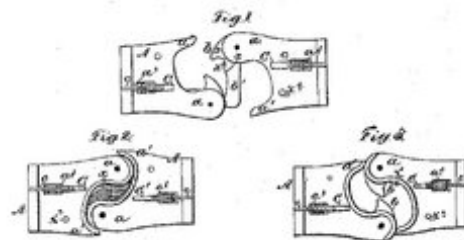
The line drawing above illustrates the standard "Link & Pin" Coupler used on most United States railroads during the 1860's and 1870's.

The link and pin coupler ultimately proved unsatisfactory because:

- it made a loose connection between the cars and allowed too much give and play
- no standard design causing train crews hours trying to match pins and links coupling cars

- links and pins were frequently lost, elevating substantial replacement costs
- crew members placed between moving cars during coupling and were frequently injured and sometimes killed.
- railroads pressured to operate trains that were heavier than the link and pin system could support.

A little more than 130 years ago a new technology was introduced by Eli H. Janney. [The Janney Coupler](#). **Eli H. Janney**, the inventor, was born into a modest farming family in Loudoun County, Virginia, near Washington, in 1831. Eli studied briefly at a seminary but returned to farming until the beginning of the Civil War. He served in the Confederate Army as a field quartermaster and rose to the rank of major. After the war, Eli Janney was too poor to resume farming and became a clerk in a dry goods store near Alexandria, Virginia. Business was slow in the defeated South, so Eli spent a lot of time whittling his design ideas out of wood. He also read or heard about local trainmen who were injured by the dangerous link-and-pin car couplers. In April 1868, Janney received his first patent for a coupler. It was a failure like hundreds of others. Then one day he hooked his fingers together, one thumb up, one down. Opening either set of fingers disconnected the coupling. He spent many lunches and spare time carving out a working wooden model. Having no skills as a mechanic or an artist, he had it translated into a drawing by a draftsman.



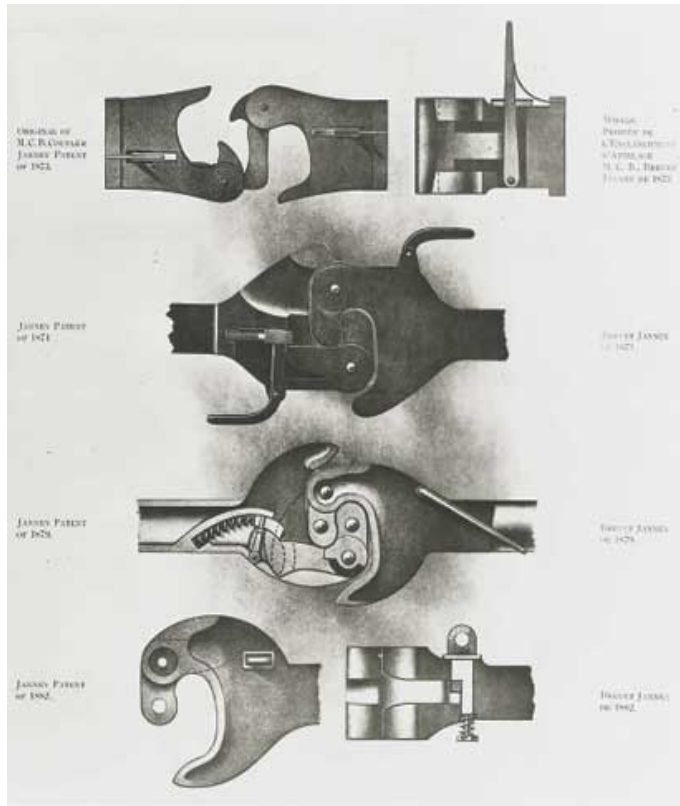
First Draft of Eli Janney's Coupler.

A written description followed, and on April 29, 1873, the former soldier was issued a second car-coupler patent. He persuaded a few friends to finance the manufacture of four couplers for testing on local short line.

However, for approximately 25 years the Railroads did not want to spend the money to change couplers. One manager, J. D. Laing, of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railway, was willing to listen to Janney. He even conducted a test of the new coupler, in 1874. The results were so good that the Fort Wayne line adopted Janney's invention. During the next four years the short line refitted 152 passenger cars. Injuries decreased dramatically and Janney's coupler proved more economical and practical than all other patents issued and manufactured. Change does not take place fast enough for great ideas. Many railroads were slow to adopt this new technology. Eventually they all came around to using

Janney's safer automatic coupling system. By this time Janney was very poor and turned to two other Inventors for help. McConway and John J. Torley, another car-coupler patentee, one of more than 900 by 1875, but the two were ready to take a gamble. In 1877 or 1878 they worked out differences of their patent ideas and agreed to develop Janney's invention. McConway and Torley paid Janney enough to buy a farm back in Virginia, and manufactured Janney's coupler for the railroads. In the years to come, much occurred with government regulations

and standards created in the railroad industry. Some of the safety standards and safe operating procedures followed by railroads today were the ideas of Eli Janney. Eki became a consultant for railroad operation before he retired pattering around his Virginia farm. He remained active in coupler design until in 1910 his health declined. He died in 1912. Janney had made no great fortune from his patent, but he was paid richly in lives and limbs preserved.



Second Patent Coupler illustrations.



Modern Day Automatic Jenny Coupler System.

Eli H. Janney (1831 – 1912) was the inventor of the modern knuckle coupler that replaced link and pin couplers on North American railroads.

By the way, when the coupling is performed very smoothly, you can hear the pin drop. Thus, one of the many sayings we have from the railroad industry.

It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop



2006 TIMETABLE

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