STEAM AMBASSADOR
Young NMSLRHS Member Helps Preserve The History Of Steam

One of our youngest members has become our newest ambassador of steam. Moriarty student Peter Brown’s National History Day project has gained wide attention.

Peter’s project, a stand-up performance entitled “The Steamy Rise and Quiet Demise of Santa Fe’s 2-10-4s” has gained wide acclaim from steam fans and rail historians alike.

He has performed in competition at three levels—regional, state and national. In the process, he garnered 2nd place at both regional and state level. He is pictured here in his rehearsal performance for some real tough critics—NMSL&RHS members.

Peter spent a full year researching the steam locomotives that played an important role in the southwest U.S. up to and during WWII. In the process he sought information from the “Railroad Artifact Preservation Society” (RAPS) in Amarillo, Texas.

RAPS is the home of AT&SF 5000, the first and most famous of the 2-10-4s. Dubbed the “Madam Queen”, AT&SF5000 will become the centerpiece of a museum that will be part of a Railroad Heritage Education Center to be built in Amarillo.

In late August, Peter will travel to Amarillo where Sam Teague, President of RAPS will present him with an award.

He will be recognized for “outstanding achievement in research and presentation of the 5000, 5001 & 5011 class of Santa Fe steam locomotives.”

The award will be presented at a ceremony alongside the Madam Queen.

ANOTHER CHALLENGE MET
See One, Do One, Teach One

Many 2926 restoration tasks seem to go quickly from simple to challenging. Fortunately, we have friends who help us meet the challenge. Such was the case with sealing the 2926 air pumps, when Dan Dalgarno of Garlock Sealing Technologies stepped up to help solve the packing challenge. In the following article, Dr. Mike Hartshorne, NMSLRHS President, (our first pump packing student) explains the down and dirty packing solution.—Ed

Garlock salesman Dan Dalgarno made the pilgrimage from Phoenix to Albuquerque to serve as professor of packing on July 10th, 2010. Dan confirmed the story in the International Resource Journal that Garlock’s history goes back to 1887 when Olin J. Garlock developed a better seal for the rods of steam locomotive engines.

Garlock Sealing Technologies makes an interesting google. I viewed the exercise in light of my medical student time when the education mantra was “see one, do one, teach one”. That seemed a pretty good model for the day. Professor Dan showed me how to measure and install packing made of successive rings of Garlock Carbae 108 square braded rope.

The two recently rebuilt cross compound air pumps have 8 separate packings to seal their shafts. Each requires three courses of packing rope. Unscrew that big nut around the shaft, pry up the ring that holds the packing in place, and one at a time tamp the measured ropes in place around the shaft with their joined ends offset by 120 degrees, replace the ring and hand tighten the big nut. Sounds simple, but is it?

First, what is Carbae 108?

Garlock’s Carbae™ 108: Great Packing, AND a Great teaching/learning experience

The MSDS mentions several compounds like Polytetrafluoroethylene, Mono(p-nonylphenyl)ether, and Ammonium Perfluorooctanate (translation: slippery and greasy). The braded square rope is 95% graphite (translation: slippery and dirty). When finished your hands and shirt are beyond clean up. .

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Board of Directors Election

A slate of four candidates was nominated to fill two positions on the Society’s Board of Directors. And this year, there was a difference. We had the first female candidate—and she won a position on the Board.

The two positions up for a vote. One of those was Board Secretary Steve Bradford’s position. After a number of years in the role of Secretary, Steve came to the conclusion that choosing not to run for reelection. Its current that he will be checking out steam operations up that way.

The big news is our first female candidate, Gail Kirby. As CMO Rick Kirby’s better half, Gail has put in many hard and dirty hours at the restoration site. She handily won a BoD seat.

Former BoD member Bob DeGroft got the most votes for the other open position.

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LOOKING DOWN THE TRACK
What Will You Do When . . . ?

More and more frequently, we hear questions about the 2926 restoration like:

- What happens when it is restored?
- Do you plan to operate it?
- Will you do excursions?
- Where will you find cars for excursions?
- Where will you operate it?

Those questions all carry the inference of another question. That question is:

- Are you looking ahead?

The answer to the last question is: Yes, we are looking ahead. But for the past several years, that has just been a dream on the back burner. We have stayed focused on the task at hand through those years, and are well aware that we must not take our eyes off our primary task of restoration.

The answer to the first three questions is a resounding YES !! And we are now beginning to take a serious look down the tracks.

The where, when and how of excursions operation is yet to be decided. Those decisions

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Those first few years of public school found Gail jumping from school to school almost every year. She attended Eubank, Sombra Del Monte, Mitchell, Madison, and Hoover elementary schools.

Later, moving on to high school, she was in the Sandia High class of ’71. She missed meeting future husband Rick at that time. He was in the Sandia High class of ’68.

All along the Wilhelm’s were members of Albuquerque’s First Baptist church where she was baptized at age 7. After High School she spent time at Oklahoma Baptist University at Shawnee studying Music Education and Voice. She has a talent for singing and is currently president of the choir at The First Baptist Church.

She liked the field of music, but to earn her keep Gail began work at Allstate insurance in 1973. She worked there for 30 years, 7 as a manager. That three decade span was enough and she retired from that business.

For fun Gail played softball. She played fast pitch for the City league and slow pitch for the Church league. And that is how she met Rick. He was coaching softball in Albuquerque and working with the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 412 in Farmington. She played everything but pitcher. She says she didn’t regularly play catcher but she did catch Rick.

Twenty-five years ago Rick belonged to the Hoffmantown (Baptist) Church. Gail stole him from Hoffmantown, and they were married at The First Baptist Church where they still worship as the Kirbys. That is probably OK. Hoffmantown was established in January of 1953 as a mission church of The First Baptist Church.

Gail and Rick had other things in common, one of which is the wonderful ’southwest outdoors’. They run Desert Dream, Inc., formed by a group of 11 owners of a houseboat on Lake Powell. They serve as President and Secretary of DDI. They like fishing. They will fish for anything, and Lake Powell is a great place to fish.

Their favorite way of getting to Lake Powell is via their Piper Dakota aircraft. They enjoy flying the Dakota to other venues with pilot-in-command Rick. NASCAR tracks around the country are a frequent destination.

An obvious major interest for the Kirby’s is trains. Gail had her first train rides on the Cumbres & Toltec and Durango & Silverton RR. She was hooked on steam. Now she is hard at work to put 2926 back on track.

My first meeting with Gail was shortly after she and Rick joined the NMSL&RHS. The impending open house plans called for members to wear dress uniforms with Hickory Pinstripe Overalls.

The overall manufacturer’s instructions for how to fit men were reasonably straight forward. Keep the inseam and add two inches to the waist. For women they were a little vague. I grabbed her by the hand and walked her to a pile of new overalls and said just try them all on. It worked. Now if there are gals in the outfit than heed overall advice I just send them to Gail.

(Coincidentally, those pinstripe overalls have been manufactured in Gail’s onetime city of residence, Shawnee Oklahoma, for more than 100 years. The label on the overalls—Roundhouse, of course.)

Gail says she was never a tomboy. I suppose that means before the 2926. Gail has a remarkably deft touch with a grinder, an authoritative way with a nut splitter, and has polished more than her share of pipes.

It gets even better. As of this writing Gail has just become the newest member of the Board of Directors of the NMSL&RHS. She was also selected by the other BoD members to assume the position of Secretary replacing Bradford. Congratulations, Gail, it is great to have you working with us.—Mike Hartshorne

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TRACTOR MOVE

The 1931 Farmall F-30 farm tractor beautifully restored by the late Jim Hills arrives for display at WHEELS Museum. Jim’s family donated the tractor to NMSLRHS after Jim’s untimely death.

Another piece of Jim’s masterful work was the cab and firing deck of 2926.

Upon completion of 2926, it too, will be on display at WHEELS when not operating. Thus both of Jim’s restoration projects will be close to each other for all to see.
There are a couple of tricks. Rolling the rope flat first will allow you to massage it into place around the shaft. There is a little bottle of slimy juice, (FDA approved for food applications—!!??) that you rub over the rope prior to placement. Then you have to re-cut the Garlock to the correct length after you screw up the first cut by failing to allow for the stretching out of the ring as you flatten it.

A used dental tool and a long screw driver may be pressed into service to assist. But the real trick is how you hold your teeth while you try to mash the rope rings down. Study Dan’s face carefully.

After I thought I understood, Dan let me take over. After a few learning installs I was the professor and Chuck Mangold became the next student.

We decided not to mention to the following students how hard it is to get the packing around the shaft with the keeper ring already seated.

In succession Ken Dusenberry and Bob DeGroft took their turns and made it look easy. (I’ll bet they are still trying to get their fingernails clean.)

While teachers and students were getting dirty installing the packing, Randy McEntire scrounged the right fitting for a 1” air hose. When all the packings were in place the pumps were run on compressed air for a few victory cycles.

We do have video clips of the victory cycles to prove our skills at stuffing Carbae™ 108 in tight spaces. Thanks to Dan, Garlock, and Carbae™ 108, 2926 is a little bit closer to being back in service.—Mike Hartshorne

STEEL DRIVIN’ MAN
Who Was The Famous Folk Hero?

Even the most citified, cloistered, classical music lover has heard of the legendary folk song ‘John Henry”. Many of us have heard several versions and renditions of it. But how many of us have done an in depth historical research to see the facts of its origin?

A recent book reveals that someone has researched it thoroughly. The following questions about the Legend of John Henry are based on that research. See how many you can answer without going to Google.

Was John Henry a real person?
The song is based on what railroad?
It was based on what work location?
How did John Henry come to work there?
Did he actually die of overexertion?
Where was John Henry buried?
What famous poet often sang the song?

Answers are available by sending an email to: nmslrhs@nmslrhs.org

How to qualify for the dirty finger nail club.