

# NEW MEXICO STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

AND  
RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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## BANGING ON A 2900

Featuring Some Of The Folks Making Noise In The Sawmill Neighborhood

Since the NMSL&RHS brought AT&SF steam locomotive number 2926 to the Sawmill District, strange sounds emanate from the area—at times echoing across town.

Sawmill is an older neighborhood between Albuquerque's Old Town and the old Indian School site astride I-40. The area is home to Bureau of Indian Affairs offices, the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, and a variety of old and new commercial business activities.

So, who are these noisy folks, and how do they and their noise fit in?

Very well, according to the neighbors. They have accepted the 2926 restoration project as a suitable addition to the neighborhood.

Noise is no stranger in a neighborhood with an interstate highway, lumber and steel yards, and related commercial activities.

### *Why the peculiar title for the article?*

The answer is that we plan to use the 'Banging on a 2900' banner to headline future articles addressing in detail critical aspects of the 2926 restoration.

First, the feature articles will provide details of some especially challenging tasks the restoration requires.

Second, they will reveal the outstanding talents and abilities that many NMSL&RHS members bring to the restoration project.

The 'Banging' articles will show that the restoration activity and the accompanying noise actually represents far more than just a bunch of guys banging on a 2900.

They will define NMSL&RHS as a solid, professional group of dedicated steam enthusiasts who possess a wide range of skills. Their considerable abilities are being applied in a very well organized manner to bring a steam era icon back to life.

And the noise they make?

Many people like the noises. In addition to normal workplace noises, there are some pleasant ones. The ringing of 2926's huge bell, and the sound of its whistle bring back memories of a long gone era in which steam ruled—and helped build the West.

The leadoff article inside this issue addresses work on the 2926 tender's trackside water fill system. In addition to detailing the system, it will feature the skills of longtime member and 'super welder', Rick Kirby.

## FIRING AT&SF NO. 3751

Four Lucky Members of the NMSL&RHS Participate In Firing Up The Oldest Surviving 4-8-4 Steam Locomotive

Bob Kittel, CMO of the San Bernardino Rail Historical Society—and mentor for the 2926 restoration—recently made an enticing offer to the NMSL&RHS. He extended an invitation to have four of our members come to Los Angeles for the firing up and display of AT&SF 3751.

This issue of the newsletter recaps a few of the experiences of the four lucky guys chosen for a work session with the San Bernardo group. In the next newsletter, they will provide a more detailed report.



*AT&SF 3751 parked at the site of the long gone Redondo Beach roundhouse. Evening darkness, trackside lights, and 3751 steam combine to create a surreal, yet nostalgic scene in this shot by Travis Atwell. Having just been fired, the huge locomotive is ready for a short trip to an Amtrak maintenance yard and a weekend of public display.*

They will recount their personal experiences with 3751 and the San Bernardino crew. Hopefully, they will provide details of what was learned and how the lessons learned might help NMSL&RHS members prepare for the day when we will be firing 2926.

Bob Kittel's invitation to NMSL&RHS put President Mike Hartshorne on the spot. From a bunch of guys who wanted to go, he had to choose the four members to trek to Los Angeles for the event. The really painful part of his task was the fact that his work dictated that he could not send himself.

On the other hand, most members—even a few who would have ditched work to go—were quite ready to make the trip to L.A. In fact, there was a bit of lobbying to be one of the lucky four.

But Mike was up to the challenge, and after considerable thought, he chose the following individuals:

**Ken Dusenberry**, Long time member and Chief Mechanical Officer since the start of the restoration.

**Clem Harris**, a relatively new member with invaluable credentials as an experienced steam locomotive fireman and engineer. Clem is currently an engineer for the New Mexico Railrunner Express commuter line;

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## ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

If you currently participate in on-site work activities, or if you wish to do so, safety training is required. Please read the following announcement regarding the annual safety review and refreshment sessions.

## SAFETY REVIEW

### Board Implements Annual Safety Review

The NMSL&RHS Board recently voted to require an annual safety review for each member qualified to work at the locomotive restoration site.

To this point we have an excellent safety record. We want to keep it that way. The annual review will serve to refresh our knowledge of workplace safety rules and practices.

So that all members will have access to the safety review, there will be at least two such review sessions offered each year.

The review will apply to all authorized workers except those who have completed their initial New Member Safety Orientation within the same year. Members who do not attend one of the sessions cannot work at the site until they have participated in the safety review process.

The first Safety Review Session for 2007 will be held on Saturday, March 10, beginning promptly at 9 AM. The session will be held at the Truelife Fellowship Church located at 216C Menaul NE. That location is between the railroad tracks and Broadway on the south side of Menaul. It shares a parking lot with Source One Office Furnishings.

The review will consist of two one hour sessions. The first will be a general review of site safety rules and procedures and will be conducted by Safety Officer Jon Spargo. After a short break, Clem Harris will make a presentation on operational railroad safety, i.e. a) Car mover and rolling stock safety; b) Blue flag rules; c) Operational job briefings.

This will be an introduction to operational railroad safety as practiced by railroad professionals and should be a very interesting introduction to operational safety. All members are encouraged to attend this first session.

**Jon Spargo, Safety Officer, NMSL&RHS**

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**Travis Atwell**, a university student and an excellent machinist, is the youngest and probably most tireless volunteer. He represents our future. We could use several more such eager and energetic youngsters.

**Albert Leffler**, Phoenix resident with childhood memories of watching 2926 arrive at Coronado Park in 1956. Albert's travels allow him to maintain close contact with the SBRHS, and his E-Bay shopping skills have produced a number of much needed items for the 2926 project.

The firing of 3751 was scheduled for the second weekend in February. The four lucky guys scrambled to make travel arrangements. Ken opted to fly. Clem and Travis chose to drive in Clem's pickup truck. Work and school schedules meant they had to drive all night in order to arrive in L.A. on the morning of Friday, February 9. Albert drove out from Phoenix.

Due to an Amtrak scheduling change, a decision was made to fire up the locomotive earlier than originally planned. Some regular 3751 crew members



*SBRHS photographer Glenn Campbell produced this shot of a happy 2926 foursome posing in front of 3751. From Left are Ken Dusenberry, Albert Leffler, Clem Harris, and Travis Atwell. It was quite a task to bring this group back to earth in Albuquerque after their 3751 experience in Los Angeles.*

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## **PLUMBING THE 2926 TENDER TO MATCH TODAY'S WATER SOURCES**

### **NMSL&RHS Super Welder Working To Restore 2926 Has Long Attachment To The Locomotive**

*In the last issue of the newsletter, we mentioned the need to install a new water fill system for the 2926 tender. Here are some additional details of the task, and background on the great job of pipefitting and welding done by Rick Kirby, NMSL&RHS member who played on 2926 as a child.—Ed.*

#### **The Need For Water Supply Modification**

The tender was designed to be filled through a hatch in the top from a water spout on the ubiquitous water tanks at rail stations of that era. The few tanks that still exist are saved for historic purposes only, and are not functional.

Today, to operate steam, water must be supplied from fire trucks, tankers, or fire plugs. Thus, a pipe system to fill the tender from trackside rather than the top is necessary.

A primary consideration in the new system is appearance. It should be as unobtrusive as possible to retain the tender's original appearance. That meant the pipes should not be readily visible on the outside of the tender.

#### **The System Design**

The system recommended by Bob Kittel of the SBRHS and others was to install a standpipe through the bottom of the tender and connect it to pipes extending to each side near the tool boxes suspended underneath the tender.

That meant cutting a hole in the cast iron bottom of the tender, not necessarily an easy task, and one for which pipe-fitter/welder Rick Kirby did not have proper equipment. He called on a local welding company with a plasma cutting torch.

Using the plasma torch, Lester Sanders of ABC Welding cut two holes in the bottom of the tender.

One was cut in the middle of the tender for the standpipe that would be placed inside. A second hole was cut at the rear of the tender to allow connection to auxiliary water tender.

Once the holes were cut, work began on the piping system. To work effectively, the system re-

quired far more than just a straight standpipe. There were drains, fittings, mounting brackets and check valves to install.

Rick was able to accomplish much of the pipe assembly welding off site, where he had plenty of space to work. Working at home he assembled the pipes that would connect to the central standpipe.

The installation was not so easy. Much of that work had to be done inside the tender. The inside work presented an additional challenge. It meant that



*On his back with feet braced on the bottom of the tender, Lester Sanders of ABC Welding uses a plasma torch to cut a hole through the thick cast iron bottom of the tender.*

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were unable to adjust to the accelerated schedule. Thus, on Friday, the four New Mexico visitors received a surprise. They were quickly put to work helping Bob Kittel prepare 3751 for its move and display on Saturday.

It was an experience of a lifetime. They suddenly had a hands-on opportunity to work with big and significant steam. Though still somewhat sleepy after the trip to L.A., they enthusiastically joined in the action.

There were benefits well beyond an experience with 3751. The trip provided a great get acquainted opportunity for both groups.

Though Bob Kittel and Wolf Fengler had visited the 2926 site, this was the first opportunity for NMSL&RHS members to work alongside Bob, Wolf, and other members of their organization with their locomotive at their site. The event thus served as a bonding experience for members of both organizations.



*SBRHS CMO Bob Kittel chats with Clem, Albert and Ken in cab of 3751. Photo by Glenn Campbell*

The lessons learned during the weekend in L.A. will be long-lasting and hopefully infectious to the other members of NMSL&RHS.

It is easy to envision the time a few years from now when the San Bernardino and New Mexico groups just might have an opportunity to bring the first and last of AT&SF's massive 4-8-4 locomotives together for a world class performance.

#### **NOTE TO READERS**

We are now distributing a PDF version of the NMSL&RHS newsletter via the internet, it is also posted on our web site.

Those who choose to receive the newsletter electronically will get sharper, clearer pictures and in color. There will also be pictures on the back page that in the postal version must carry postage, mailing address and return address.

Marlin Allison sends the PDF files to your listed email address. He can usually reduce the files to less than one megabyte and still have excellent resolution and readability.

If you wish to receive it electronically, email Marlin at [amb10587@earthlink.net](mailto:amb10587@earthlink.net) or Doyle at [dle8n@msn.com](mailto:dle8n@msn.com).

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## AT&SF 2926 TO BE LISTED IN NATIONAL REGISTRY

### To Celebrate This Honor, NMSL&RHS Will Host An Open House At The 2926 Site In May

On February 16, 2007, the Cultural Property Review Committee of the Historic Preservation Division (HPD), New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, unanimously approved the application by the NMSLRHS to have ATSF No. 2926 listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The locomotive was already listed on historic registers of both the City Albuquerque and the State of New Mexico.

The recent action followed a nine month effort by our Vice President, Bob Scott, of Santa Fe. He worked diligently with HPD personnel to prepare the necessary documentation to demonstrate the historic importance of the locomotive.

Bob is a retired naval architect from Annapolis, Maryland. During the past couple of years he has made a smooth transition from ship design to steam locomotive restoration, and from sea coast to high desert. His skill in dealing with large projects and bureaucracies is a welcome addition to NMSL&RHS rail history preservation efforts.

Final approval of the application at the Federal level could take up to 3 months.

Also through Bob's efforts, NMSLRHS is applying to the HPD for a 2007 Heritage Preservation Award as part of New Mexico's Heritage Preservation Month in May.

Since that point in time matches the anticipated approval of the Federal historical listing, we will hold an open house to celebrate progress in our historic preservation efforts.

The Open House will be held on Saturday, May 19, at the 2926 restoration site, 1833 8th St. NW. Gates at the 2926 restoration site will be open from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Parking is available on 8th St., and along the south fence of the site, along the rail spur.

The open house will be a show and tell event, with emphasis on presenting comprehensive information about the locomotive, its history, the project and operational goals.

There will be no live entertainment, and no food served on site. There will be free liquid refreshments in the form of soft drinks, coffee and tea provided at the site.

There will be oral and slide presentations, as well as videos, about the historic nature of the locomotive and progress that has been made on the restoration.

NMSL&RHS members will be available on site to escort visitors around the restoration site. They will be prepared to answer questions about 2926 and the restoration project.

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the work must be done in very confined spaces. To control water sloshing, the inside of the tender is a virtual honeycomb with baffles every four feet side to side, front to rear and top to bottom.

Fitting and welding the pipes inside was a very demanding job. Rick did an outstanding job—and he did it while scrunching his body into some incredible and often painful positions. The following pictures show the challenges he faced and the high quality of his work in spite of the difficulty.



*Deep inside the tender, Rick welds while lying on his back in a cramped corner.*



*A view inside the tender showing the many baffles that inside workers had to deal with. The tender is entered through the hatch on top. Some welding was done more than 20 feet inside, behind several baffles.*



*Examples of Rick Kirby's welding prowess. On the left is the junction of the side pipes and the vertical standpipe. On the right is a flange at a check valve.*



*Side pipes and vertical standpipe, (just right of center), complete with check valves and drains and attached to the tender bottom. Only the ends will be visible when tool boxes and trucks are reinstalled.*



## About The Artist—Welder/Pipe Fitter Rick Kirby

The following are Rick Kirby's words on growing up in Albuquerque with 2926, and having the opportunity to help restore the huge locomotive:

*As a small boy growing up here in ABQ, we lived up in the Hoffmantown area. There were no Winrock or Coronado shopping centers. Everything we needed had to be purchased downtown. We always went the same way every weekend. We'd go down Menaul, south on 2<sup>nd</sup> turning into 3<sup>rd</sup> street passing the recently retired 2926. I'd say "Dad lets stop and look at the train!" Dad would say something like, "No, I'm in a hurry or we just looked at it last weekend!" Little did I know then that someday I would be taking part in breathing new life into these million pounds of iron!*

After high school and two years of college, Rick enrolled full time in the Plumbers and Pipe-fitters Apprenticeship Program. Upon completing five years of training, he was awarded 2nd place pipe-fitter for the State of New Mexico.

Over the past 36 years he has worked as a pipe-fitter and/or certified welder on a wide spectrum of projects. Projects included: copper smelters in Arizona; stainless steel laser weapons piping and high pressure nitrogen lines at weapons labs; various electric power generation plants, including nuclear; and other such high pressure, high tech activities.

In 1988, after passing the New Mexico State Master Mechanic Test, Rick founded Accucraft Mechanical. The company began contracting for plumbing, fire control, and heating systems in large buildings. One contract was to perform a wide range of work for a major bank. In this role, he installed, remodeled and repaired systems in large multistory buildings throughout the state.

A private pilot, Rick uses his aircraft to reach job sites, for recreation trips to his boat located at Lake Powell, and other business and recreational trips.

As with several other members of the NMSL&RHS who grew up climbing on 2926 in Coronado park, Rick has a special attachment to the venerable locomotive. He is eager to get the tender back together and start on the locomotive itself. With his welding and pipe-fitting skills, it is certain that he will be a real asset when work starts on the boiler and tubing.

Like the rest of us, Rick has a lot of respect for the people who designed, built and operated 2926 sixty years ago. However, it is certain that with his skills and 21st century technology, the weld junctions and pipe connections will be better than those that came out of the Baldwin factory.

The NMSL&RHS is indeed fortunate to have members with such skills. And especially someone who enjoys the work he is doing. In spite of the other business and recreational activities that place demands on his time, when Rick is at the 2926 site, he is pretty relaxed and laid back— just another of those guys 'Banging on a 2900'.



Rick Kirby points to the removable brass coupler that will be used to connect to track-side water sources to the 2926 tender. An identical coupler is on the other side, and a similar fitting is at the rear of the tender to connect to an additional tender.

## CHRISTMAS TRAIN RUNS AGAIN

For several years, NMSL&RHS set up and operated the garden train at the Wells Fargo Bank in downtown Albuquerque. Recently, the bank decided not to operate the train during the holidays.

The bank subsequently donated the train to the NMSL&RHS. We began searching for a place to operate it for a good cause. Rick Kirby and a number of his friends from the First Baptist Church stepped up and offered to operate it at their church parking lot.

The picture below shows a freshly painted train operating at the church during the 2006 Christmas season.



\* \* \* \*

## TOOLS DONATED TO NMSL&RHS

### Donated Equipment Will Be Put To Good Use

Thanks to Rightway Precision Manufacturing, the we now have some new machine tools.

A few days ago, Ernest Garcia of RPC, an Old Town machine shop, offered to donate a milling machine to NMSL&RHS.

He stated that RPC is moving to much smaller quarters, and did not have room in the new facility for all their equipment.

After a quick look at a Hurco Milling Machine, his offer was accepted. Ken Dusenberry and Travis Atwell picked up the machine on Monday and delivered it to the 2926 site.



Using our sixty year old forklift (an earlier donation), Travis Atwell delivers the new milling machine to its new home.

RPC also donated another small lathe, and may have more equipment. We are very appreciative of the donation, and will certainly put the equipment to work.

## EMAIL AND DIRECT DISTRIBUTION EDITION

*This version of the newsletter is designed for email and direct distribution.  
It substitutes additional photos in the space used for mailing label and return address on postal version.*

### CALIFORNIA DREAMING Snapshots from the recent 3751 operation



*Inside forward view from the engineer's seat of 3751.*



*Outside forward view from the engineer's seat of 3751*



***Dreamin' of Steamin'*** Whether sitting in the engineer's set or scrubbing the side of the tender, Clem Harris is dreaming of the day 2926 will be ready to fire up for a run on the high rails. After an experience like the one on the right, he would probably be able to get a job at one of the local carwashes, but it wouldn't be as much fun.



*Travis Atwell tries out the engineer's front row seat of SBRHS famous locomotive.*

### MORE TRACKSIDE WATER SYSTEM SHOTS



*Waterfill standpipe secured inside tender*



*Diffuser top of standpipe*



*Trackside water system during installation, showing both side pipes and bottom of vertical standpipe. Picture was taken from rear of tender bottom looking forward.*

### MORE SHOTS FROM THE LAST 2926 OPEN HOUSE

Everyone seems to have a camera at our open house events. Here are two pictures we just uncovered from the last one.



*War Babies: Two machines that helped win WWII. Both 2926 and the Jeep were built in 1944.*



*NMSL&RHS Fire Dept? Well, not quite, but the beautiful GMC fire truck that member Lawrence Harman found in Tennessee is always available for NMSL&RHS events.*