

NEW MEXICO STEAM LOCOMOTIVE AND RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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LATE NEWS

BIG ORDER ARRIVES

New Flue Tubes And Super Heater Pipes Delivered To Restoration Site

Monday October 19, several members arrived on site to welcome—and unload—a steel shipment. The truckload of steel was the much awaited new flue tubes and super heater pipes



Truck maneuvers into position to unload.

A crane to lift and unload the bundles of pipe was already on site, its operator ready to go to work when the truck rolled into the site.

During recent work sessions, Rick Kirby has prepared for the delivery. A 40 foot storage container was positioned near the front of the locomotive. Under Rick's direction, it will serve as a flue shop. Its location will provide easy access to the smoke box, through which the pipes will be passed for installation.



Crew members watch as a bundle of flue tubes is lifted from the truck to be placed atop the stack.



Randy McEntire counts individual super heater pipes. He inventoried and marked each bundle.

More pictures on page 4.

OPEN HOUSE 2009

The annual Open House .2009 at the New Mexico Steam Locomotive & Railroad Historical Society's 2926 restoration site took place on Saturday September 26. The site was cleaner than it had been for some time, thanks to the hard work of a scrubbing crew composed of Society members.

The weather was great and attendance was good. A steady stream of visitors came by throughout the day. The restoration site was well populated by Society members in yellow hard hats and bib overalls, ready to answer questions and direct visitors around the site.

One year ago, the fully restored 2926 tender, standing proudly on site, was the center piece at the NMSL&RHS Open House 2008. With its new shiny black coat of Dupont Imron paint, it provided highly visible proof of the Society's ability to carry through on complex restoration tasks.

This year, the locomotive's recently installed cab was the center point. The cab was temporarily set back in place just before the Open House. Though major restoration work on the cab is complete, it was necessary to check the fit. And fit, it did, thanks to a fine job of restoration. It will have to be removed again as work continues on the boiler and firebox.

An added benefit of having the cab in place was recognition as a steam locomotive. To many youngsters, and more than a few adults, 2926 doesn't look much a steam locomotive without the cab. It just looks like a very large piece of rusty metal. The cab saw a lot of traffic during Open House 2009.



Randy McEntire's well built stair allows visitors to check out the inside of the 2926 cab. With access to the cab it is easier for visitors, especially youngsters, to envision an operating locomotive.

As usual, the music was great, with three bands, (Los Radiators, the New Mexico Territorial band, and Holy Water and Whiskey) providing entertainment throughout the day. Everyone enjoyed the hot dogs and refreshments. We sold flue tube sponsorships, T-shirts, cups, artwork, and other memorabilia, received numerous donations, and signed up a few new members.

At the end of the day, everyone agreed that Open House 2009 was another successful event at the restoration site. To the clean and scrub crew, it made all the sweeping, scrubbing, polishing and other cleanup work seem quite worthwhile. Some of them are already looking forward to next year.

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BITS AND PIECES

During the course of our regular work sessions, there are many smaller, but significant happenings around the 2926 restoration site. Though not as interest grabbing as a big crane lift, or ultrasound mapping, they contribute to the overall project. Here are a few:

* * *

A bit about creature comfort.

Just when our volunteers will begin spending even more time on site, here comes winter. And the temporary building that was long ago dubbed our 'World Headquarters' (WHQ) was never insulated. It was on comfortable when the outside temperature was moderate.

A few weeks ago, new member Warren Jenke had an idea. He would insulate the WHQ so that those working there could be more comfortable, and those working outside would have a warm place to take a break.

And insulate it he did. Just in time for the first cold snap. While he was at it, he ripped out the dirty old carpet and installed much easier to clean vinyl floor cover.

* * *

Goodbye Lake Robart

Since we moved onto the site on 8th St, the area we use for parking has become a lake every time it rains. It was named for Ernie Robart, who spent much time clearing weeds and trash from the parking area.

Thanks to the contractor who built the pit, and a few members in a shovel brigade, the low areas were filled with soil that soaks up even the heaviest rainfall. Lake Robart is now reduced to a few puddles, even after a hard rain.

* * *

Planned art event

Artist Gayle Van Horne is planning a display of train art at his downtown studio early next year. If you know of an artist who might be interested in participating, please contact us.

The event is planned for April 2010. We will have more details in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, prints of art by Van Horne, Gil Bennett, and our own Steve Bradford are available for sale at the NMSL&RHS.

Fund raising

The Society Board of Directors has established a Fund Raising Committee chaired by Ed Strebe. With the establishment of a formal committee, two new members have joined those who have been working informally to raise funds to keep the restoration going.

They are retired chemist Andy Rutkiewicz and USAF Lt.Col/C-130 pilot Charles 'Chuck' Mangold. Both have experience and skills in proposal writing and other fundraising activity.

BANGING ON A 2900

Mike Hartshorne, President NMSL&RHS

This article has been a joy to write until now. I planned it to be another article showcasing the amazing array of abilities, experience and talents of "a bunch of guys banging on a 2900"—the 2926 restoration team. In this case, it would focus on Jim Hills, restorer of the just completed firing deck and cab. However, the untimely death of one of our best made the writing very difficult.

JIM HILLS OCT 18, 1944—SEPT 6, 2009



Jim Hills at our summertime cookout at Rick and Gail Kirby's place. The smile is not just for the camera. That smile and friendly countenance IS Jim Hills.

Members of our Society have graciously allowed me to interview them and give me the material to tell their story. As the fates would have it I had arranged with Jim Hills to interview him the very day that he would be tragically taken from us. I never got the chance. Jim's untimely death 9/6/09 has upset us all. Instead I listened to what his fellow Society members had to say about him. The following paragraphs contain their comments.

Ken Dusenberry said, "I watched Jim work with metal, and I was both fascinated and amazed with his skills. I have known many folks who worked with metal, but Jim just seemed to be so knowledgeable and competent with what he was doing. The work that he did was perfect in every dimension. He truly seemed to enjoy creating things with the steel. It was a joy to watch an artist at work with his tools.

One thing I will remember the longest was the laughter we shared. Jim and I laughed each time we passed each other. I found myself diverting to where Jim was working as I moved around the site to get tools or water, because I knew I would spend a few moments in laughter with him. We laughed about many things, but the most common was the simple understatement or misstatement of the problem at hand. An example would be that if two parts do not fit together correctly, then you are either using a hammer which is too small or the parts are not traveling fast enough relative to each other. They were all simple things which gave us just a few moments of laughter.

Larry Lukash said, "I knew he was from Kansas. I asked him if he ever met Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz. He just chuckled and said he never had the pleasure."

Pastor and toolmeister Ed Strebe said, "Jim was a neat guy. Not only was he an excellent welder but his steel work in the repair of the cab and the fabrication of the new deck were tops. Few if any could have done it better.

Jim was a great guy in a lot of other ways as well. Soft and slow-spoken, he always seemed to have a good word for everybody. Instead of joining the gang for lunch, he went home and ate with his wife (Eleanor). It was a mute testimony to the relationship he had with her."

Newsletter editor Doyle Caton said, "In addition to his work on 2926, Jim's real pride and joy was the Farmall 30 tractor he restored. He hauled it down from Kansas recently. He said he would bring it to the site some day. Jim and I had both driven Farmall 30's as youngsters. We agreed that you haven't really lived until you have spent a hot ten hour day at the wheel of a Farmall 30

New member Andy Rutkiewicz said, "He was a Real Gentleman. In the short time that I knew him I came to respect him highly. We have a void in the #2926 team. May he rest in peace."

Chief Mechanical Officer Bob DeGroft said, "You saw that last spring I coined the moniker 'dirty dozen plus' for some of the Society members. That label defined the core group of guys who showed up almost every day during the scan project. Jim was always there.

What I think makes Jim stand out is that he always had a positive attitude, never had a bad day, and went the extra mile to supply me with bits of knowledge to help out a CMO who obviously knew less about heavy construction than he did.

Jim would walk onto the site carrying some internet info that he had found about threads, sealants, or whatever, and very calmly brief me on what I should do. No ego. He would show up with his monster pickup equipped with every do-dad known to Detroit. He would pull out some sort of tool that none of us had ever seen before, and give it to the Society.

When we were all baffled as to how to remove a part, Jim would quietly step up and 'git'er done'.

Does anyone know that we have a miners' steam drill courtesy Jim?

Restoration of the 2926 cab and firing deck was a major task. It was Jim's task, and he did a masterful job. During the crane lift of the cab I practically had to push Jim to the forefront to conduct the lift of a major component representing his fine restoration work.

He was beaming with pride as it easily clicked into position. Completion of Jim's cab restoration work is a major milestone for us.

His wife Eleanor, told me that the time he spent on our project was some of the best times he ever had.

Though very personable, and a great team player, Jim liked to work by himself. He took on the project of the firing deck and cab restoration and was happy as a clam without asking for help. He always had a simple solution to a complicated problem, his past experiences served him well. He got along well with every personality type we have, and God we do have a plethora of types. He will be sorely missed, especially by me."

For myself, I remember Jim best for his good humor and wisdom. He never engaged in a fuss when he could turn an angry word aside with a bit of a joke. He would always listen to a point of view without criticism and take all questions on their merit. I liked listening to him explain mechanical things to me. He never talked down to me and encouraged me to ask stupid questions. He was a good teacher. I never missed a chance to greet him and share a smile with him. It was good to shake his powerful hand. I'll be remembering his big smile when 2926 runs for the first time.

The Society will honor Jim's name with a plaque in the cab he rebuilt. His good name will ride with the 2926 where ever she runs. I hope his name "in memoriam" will extensively decorate the flue sheet donation list.

Editor's Note

A VERY SPECIAL PERSON

Dr. Mike is right. There is no joy in writing about the loss of a friend like Jim Hills. The real joy was knowing Jim, and the time spent working, laughing and reminiscing with him about many things of common interest.

As inferred in Bob DeGroft's comments, our Society encompasses one of the most diverse groups of people one can imagine. In such a group, personality clashes can happen. Not so with Jim. He was a friend to all. Whatever the task, he was great to work with and we all learned from his vast experience and skills.

How does one describe Jim? All languages have myriad descriptive terms. But, Yiddish, the polyglot language of eastern Europe has a single word to describe our friend Jim. That word is mensch.

Mensch has found its way into many other languages. It is an entirely positive word that is used in English and a number of other languages to refer to an admirable, honest, decent, responsible and upright person.

Jim Hills was a mensch.



Preparing for pit construction. We needed a pit to access the undercarriage of 2926. Here, Jim Hills begins cutting the rails so the pit digging can begin. The finished and primed cab next to the locomotive is an example of Jim's fine restoration work.

THE 2926 FLUE TUBES

One big step in the restoration process is flue tube replacement. A total of 274 of these tubes reside between the front and rear flue sheets of the 2926 boiler. There are 220 large tubes (3.5 inch diameter) and 54 small ones, (2.5 inch diameter).

Each tube is 21 feet long, and is anchored at the front and rear flue sheets. Each 3.5 inch flue tube is 21 feet long and contains a superheater tube that is 20 feet long (folded over on itself in four lengths totaling 80 feet). Each unit weighs about 100 lbs.

Most labor cost to replace the flue tubes will be volunteered by some of our skilled members. Not so the tubes themselves, the purchase of which seriously depleted our cash resources.

One way to replenish those resources is to allow all of our supporters to take part in the restoration of 2926. Anyone can do so by sponsoring the cost of one or more flue tubes.

Sponsorship can be in the name of the sponsor, spouse, children, grandchildren, friends, organizations, or it can be done anonymously.

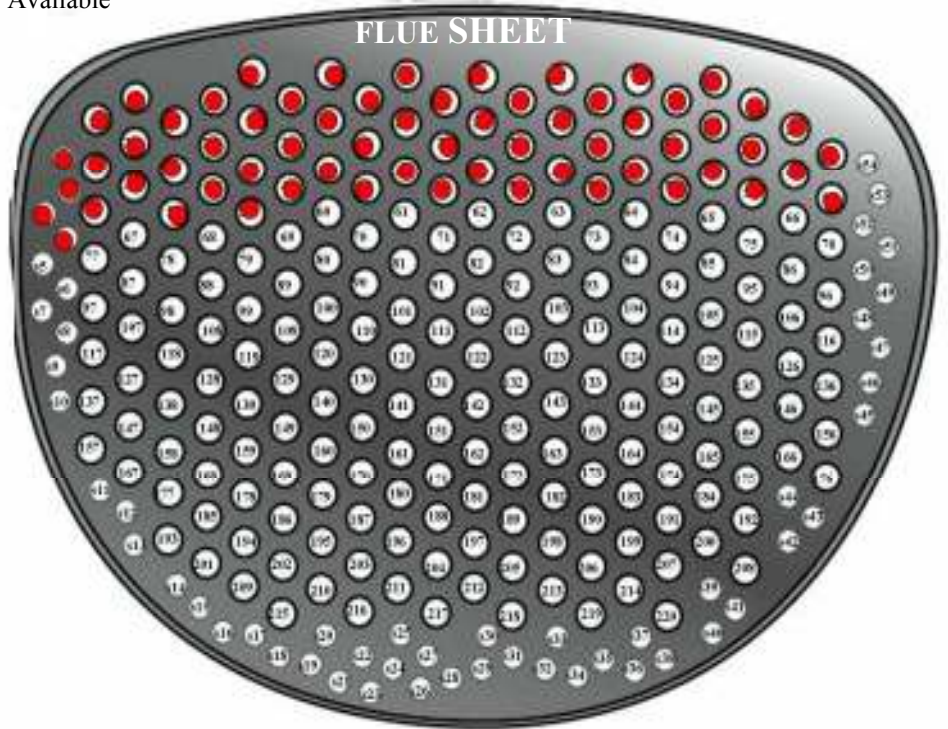
The flue tube sponsorship chart at the right represents a flue sheet, and depicts one end of the flue tube array.

Below are pictures of the arrival of the flue tubes on site. Help us fill the holes in the flue sheet above with the new tubes by sponsoring one or more tubes. Your sponsorship, in the name of whomever you wish will be recorded on a large chart, and kept in our permanent records of the individuals and organizations that helped bring 2926 back to life.

**HELP RAISE FUNDS TO RESTORE 2926
SPONSOR ONE OR MORE FLUE TUBES**

Sponsorship can be in the name sponsor, spouse, children, grandchildren, friends, organizations, or it can be done anonymously.

- Sponsored
- Available



FLUE SPONSORSHIP: 3.5 Inch Flue—\$300 2.5 Inch Flue—\$200



Unloading the new flue tubes and superheater pipes. Once the truck is in place, Rick Kirby signals to the crane operator to lift first bundle



Unloading is finished. The truck is gone..

But First, let's secure the valuable purchase———Inside our new flue shop.

