



**Running Tortoise Dispatch**

## **YTLS train rides at Riverside Park does well at October event** by Kent Corcoran, sr.

The Yuma Territory Live Steamer displayed their portable track at the Riverside Park on the first weekend of October. They offered train rides to the public. Even though the area the track would be set on was tamped down, it still had some issues that had to be addressed to get the track to be useful. There were several areas that were muddy, indicating the area was lower than the rest. Therefore there was some grading required. Because of this issue we were not ready to operate for the public at the stated time.

By 6:30pm we were set for the public. We had steady groups of passengers for two hours that evening. Also we had a 20 minute period where it drizzled upon us. We were quite pleased with the turn out of the public for that first night. Sometime during the early hours of the morning the park sprinklers came on and drenched the station area and a corner of the track where we had the equipment stored. The tables protected the

station's paper material. Thankfully we had covered the rolling stock before closing down. There were several areas around the track that were muddy again.

Saturday started out very well. We started promptly at 10am and the first shift engineer did not get relieved until 2pm. Some passengers returned from the night before and many rode the train 3 or 4 times this day. As the day grew long the passengers began to slow around 4pm. From that point on it was sporadic throughout the evening. During the day we received a visit by Dave Nash who produces items for the City of Yuma television channel. We gave him a ride and explained our function to the community. The camera man with Dave Nash recorded quite a lot of video for their use. By the time we shut down the operation for the evening we were very pleased with the public turn out and how smooth it went. Again the sprinklers turned on but we were more prepared this time. Only the track area was affected.

As Sunday came around the security crew was able to take some photos of the area. The benefit to being at Riverside Park is the fact that the Union Pacific Bridge across the Colorado River is visible for all to see. When the operation started at 10:50am we had another steady day of passengers arriving to ride our trains. We operated all the way until 2pm when we began to disassemble our equipment. The first to go was the rolling stock. Some items needed to be offloaded to reorganize for the Maricopa Live Steamers fall meet two weeks away. All of the track had to be returned to the storage yard and borrowed trailers returned. By the end of the weekend we were all sore but satisfied with our efforts.

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## **November-December Event** by Wm. Kent Corcoran, sr.

Before our November operation the club received a donation of steel and aluminum rail from Camas, Washington. Included in this shipment were several more switches. One being made out of steel was used at Riverside Park. The steel rail we used to expand our spur lines had to be cut square and drilled to connect together. The aluminum rail was stored for

our permanent facility. When the track was installed we had a long siding where we could allow selected guest to operate our speeder without interrupting the main line used for the passenger train. The club purchased another engine and two riding cars in October. We now had two trains to haul our passengers on. We had the Running Tortoise Express and

the Bald Hare Special. We would change locomotives and riding cars to rest the crews and equipment several times each day. It gave everyone practical experience in the operation of a real railroad. We also added ballast to the track and an overhead sign with our logo on it. *Continued on pg2*

**Special thanks to:**

To the members and volunteers who help make our fall train operations a success.

The donors of grading, ballast, and security.

The City of Yuma, Yuma Parks Department, Yuma City cable channel.

Schwan's Food

Canyon State Water

## Return to Joshua Tree & Southern RR

by Kent Corcoran, Sr.

Members of YTLS went to the Joshua Tree & Southern RR again. This time we had Dale Giles, Tom Mercer, Carlos & Mike Santos along with us. Chuck Finnilla had family business to attend and was absent. We Met Tom in Indio, Ca. since he winters in Quartzsite, Az. From Indio we all rode together in Carlos' vehicle. As we neared the location we could see the steam rising from the steaming bays. The Crew from JT&S was already at work. Also a member of their club finally completed his scale 2 piston Shay and it was there and operating. This is one sweet little locomotive. You can eas-

ily see the love and craftsmanship that he put into this machine. After we spent 45 minutes gawking at it we had to explore the grounds. The track addition we helped with last year has progressed 30' more, most labor spent on filling in the grade. Also on the hillside were they are installing switchbacks, some track panels have been laid, one trestle across a gully is set but the one below it has not. But the grading is taking place to get it connected.

On the 15" gauge they have completed the balloon loop under construction last year. Here they had to hand excavate a

gap in the hillside over 15' tall. The turntable for the 15" gauge is installed but not connected to any track. Steaming bays are the same as they were last year. A surprise was in store for us. The 15" gauge club was going to operate their Shay locomotive. We came on the right day. A leak on the centre piston has to be corrected before they could fire the boiler. It was great to see her outside of the shed.

Before long the sun was walking to the west. It was time to head back to Yuma. Up on the hillside we could see steam rising up and out of the 15" gauge Shay. Unfortunately we did not get to see her pull away under her own steam.

## November-December Events *continued*

We installed steel stakes along the outer edges of the curved sections to keep them from being pushed outward by the train. The ballast helped keep the track level. Leonard Houpt had brought a special tool to help us level the track. A mirror on a frame helps to identify areas of track not level or straight without having to get down on the ground. It is used at other Live Steam clubs Leonard visits during the summer. Leonard also brought along volunteers from his RV Park to help us set-up and take down our track. Their help was greatly appreciated.

For November we had the sprinkler system turned off at the park so we would not be drenched in the morning. We also did a lot more advertising for this event. We found out that on Saturday there were too many things going on in Yuma to draw the public to us. Several of us went to Olde Towne Yuma where a children's fair was being held. We tried to get the people to come see us when they finished there. We ran into several people who had attended our event in October.

Bob & Ginny Hinkel set up a booth to sell our shirts and hats. Tom & Joan Mercer provided their trailer for use in security. On Sunday the people returned to ride the train. We signed up two new Family memberships. The weather was pleasant during this event.

For December we shifted the track

somewhat. Moving the switch on the main line towards the centre of the straight track at the station allowed a longer spur for changing trains without too much hassles on the main line operation. We combined the concession and ticket booths together. The Hinkle's went all out to sell our shirts and hats to the public. There were paper engineer hats and train whistles for the kids. Those sold out before Saturday evening. Many members purchased or ordered shirts for themselves. Our main problem was that the weather did not cooperate as we hoped. We had a cold front come through, it was cloudy and a slight wind chilled the air. We had cold drinks but no one thought about hot drinks. If we had hot chocolate we would have had a winning item in the morning and evening.

With this as our last scheduled event on portable track, several of the members began the task of locating where we will put our permanent station and other infrastructure. When the time comes in the spring we will need to install the station area and the main line of track to provide public train rides while still expanding our railroad in the park. All members will be grateful that we will not be using portable track anymore. We have worked hard to get to this point in such a short time.

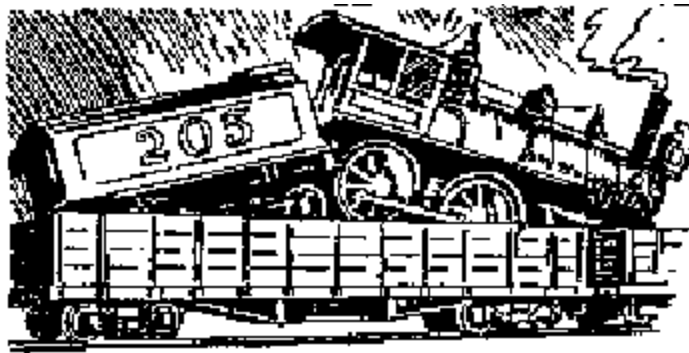


## Junior Engineer program for youths 10 and up.

By Kent Corcoran

At Yuma Territory Live Steamers we offer a Junior Engineer program for youths 10 and above. This program is more than an Engineer program. Youths will also learn the job description or Brakeman and Conductors, Firemen and Signalman. All aspects of train operation and safety will be taught. Since we are a Live Steam organization, the children will get a working knowledge of a steam engine. When we are not functioning with public passengers the students will be learning to operate the actual equipment that we use. Safety is the utmost concern. Students will learn all the requirements of a position before they practice them on the club equipment. All hand, lantern, flag, and horn signals will be taught to the students.

The course will have the history of steam engines as they developed to be incorporated into trains, pumps, paddle-wheel ships, tractors, shovels. The transition to gas-diesel driven trains and through to the diesel-electric trains in use today will be examined. The history of how Yuma developed before and after the arrival of the railroad. Also how the Sunset Route of the SP RR affected the southwest of the country as the only crossing on the Colorado River. From Los Angeles to El Paso, the building of the Sunset Route was similar to the building of the first transcontinental railroad. It followed the existing trails of the 1850's. Fewer Mountains needed to be traversed, but the work was done through the hot dry deserts of the Southwest. The crossing of the Pecos River in West Texas is still the tallest railroad bridge across a river that is in use. The original pilings from 1892 can still be seen far below as you cross that gap. Only the Columbia, Washington bridge is higher but it is no longer used.



## Yuma Territory Live Steamers

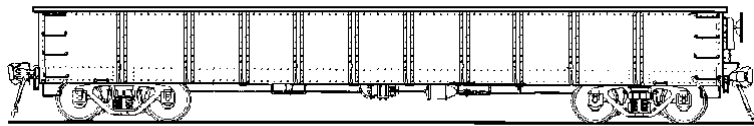
1336-A So. 4th Avenue  
Yuma, Arizona  
85364  
www.yumalivesteamers.org

Phone: 928-782-1988  
Fax: 928-782-2069  
Email:  
livesteamersofyuma@yahoo.com

### ► Rebuilding Yuma's Railroad Heritage



Our mission is to educate children of all ages, about the heritage of railroads, through our Mentoring and Junior Engineer programs. One of our goals is to build confidence and responsibility of youth with the following emphasis on: Skills and responsibility of an Engineer, Conductor, and Brakeman. Technical skills of building a railroad. Railroad history and safety.



## Stories From the Caboose by Leonard Houpt; President

I started in model railroading as most people do, O and HO scales. The more I learned in those scales, the more I was interested in the real trains. I was President of two separate model RR clubs, one of which I started. As I matured, so did my interest in all things related to trains. At one point I was operating a 0-4-0 Porter loco on a Tourist line. Living in the Pacific Northwest exposed me to the Live Steam branch of Railroading.

As I reached retirement age I became an active member of Kitsap, Train Mountain, and Sacramento Valley L.S. clubs. When full retirement arrived I began to winter in the Desert Southwest and became an active member at Joshua Tree & Southern and Maricopa Live Steamers. I was in Yuma when a model railroad club started and joined it. I saw the potential for a L.S. club there. My past experience as

President of model RR clubs helped to start this club. All of our members have model RR experience from all scales, and several are also live steamers. Now 4 years later we have incorporated, received non-profit status; and are on the cusp of signing and agreement with the city for a permanent home to build our RR dynasty. One of our members has a large shop that we utilize for our workshop for the construction of riding cars and track building. With my contacts to other live steamers it has helped to get donated track, machine shop equipment and blueprints for our club.

As an active member at these different clubs I have seen the variety of ways that the clubs operate. The climate differences and terrain also make a difference in the operation. In the Northwest it is cold and damp compared to the hot and dry desert.

The use of ties and ballast are different for these areas. The desert is generally flat and open while the mountains have more grade to contend with. Our proposed location is near the Colorado River and natural wetlands. We also have a grand view of the 1923 SP Bridge that spans the river from the Yuma Territorial Prison to Fort Yuma on the other side. This bridge is a single track and is active with trains at any time of the day.

