



CROSSROADS

**Inside you will find tributes to friends of our railroad
that have crossed the road.**

**1st Edition
Sunday, May 12, 2024**



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Marshall Black Remembered

By Jim Jackson



It is with great sadness that I must report the passing of **HALS** member 001 **Marshall Black**. Marshall died of cancer on August the 11th 1993 at the age of 69.

He is survived by wife, Lois, son, Steve, and his wife Romie. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family.

Many of us in **HALS** can trace our live steaming ancestry to the doorsteps of Marshall's shop, and beyond to the throttles of his locomotives. Those of us who have had the opportunity to know him, saw the development of human curiosity reach its highest plane. He was attracted by the power of horses; he was enamored by the frailty of man. He was awed by the unpredictability of nature; he was amazed by the preciseness of Pi. No topic was beyond his interest. Bonsai trees. Bagpipes. The striping on zebras. The kinetic energy in injectors. He inquired. He learned. He taught.

When the organizers of **HALS** "formalized" its effort, it was Marshall who provided the stabilizing influence, often stepping in to diffuse the crude bombs of self destruction we had unsuspectingly placed in our path. It was also Marshall who insisted that the organization as a whole be made stronger than the sum of its individual members. **HALS** is the benefactor of this unique equation, which is simply stated as follows: One plus one must equal much more than two.

Strangely it was not Marshall's desire to share his live steam interest that created my most vivid memory of him. It was his sun dial. While viewing it one gloomy November day, and listening to his story of its design, construction, and calibration, the sun, as if on cue broke through the overcast skies to strike a sharp shadow across the face. As soon as I became enchanted by the event, Marshall aware of his eventuality, remarked "*Time marches on*".

Today that experience reminds me that ultimately, time runs out for each of us. However, I find comfort in this thought. As



May 13, 1964 "At turntable - Enthusiast Marshall Black of Arcadia services his model of a 1904 Mallet locomotive, the original of which was built for logging work by a Los Angeles firm, Baldwin Locomotive Works."

C.T. Sumrall

In memory April 1998

A special man CT Sumrall has left us. CT was one of those rare people that made you feel good just by being around him. No train meet will ever seem exactly right without him. CT was always there with that broad smile and a gleam in his eye ready to work. Haul ballast on his beloved 3810 or haul train after train of kids. His life and joy was a railroad no matter what gauge the track.

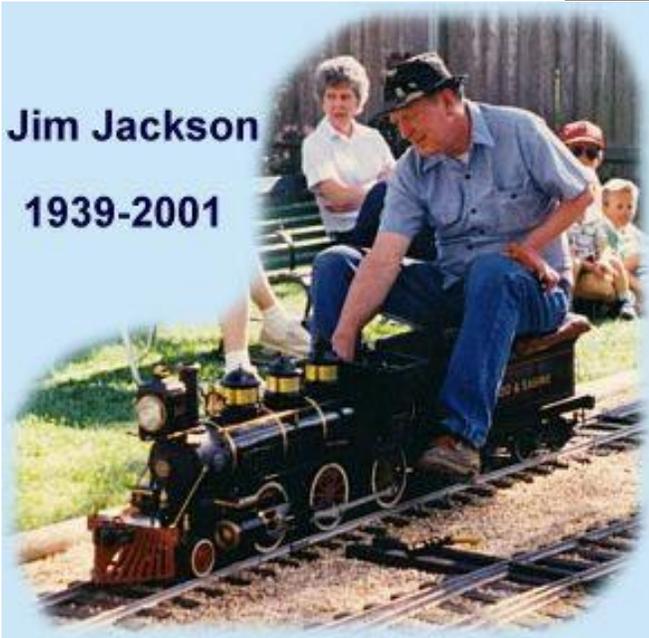
The turn out of live steamers at CT's memorial service was a testament to the remarkable number of friends he made in the hobby. There was also a huge contingent of his Santa Fe (that's how CT said it) buddies that joined his family, children and grandchildren (they called him papa choo) in remembering and celebrating his life. Fred Springer read a very touching eulogy that helped us all recover the man and friend.



←Here is CT. Sumrall, Stephen Balkum took this out of the [Jack Lucks' 1993 C&IG video](#) at 13:13.

↓And from the [1990 SWLS Spring Meet video](#)





Jim Jackson
1939-2001

THE PRIME MOVER of a train is its locomotive. The prime mover for the Houston Area Live Steamers was Jim Jackson.

Jim put together a list of live steamers in the area and contacted other club organizers around the country. He assembled an organizational plan and drafted a preliminary set of by-laws. Jim got the County behind the formation of HALS with a club track in a Precinct 3 Park. In the Fall of 1991, Jim served as President Pro Tem during the organizational meetings where the name HALS and

the by-laws were adopted and a slate of regular officers was elected.

The name of the club's railroad, Cypress Creek & Southern, also suggested by Jim in a naming contest, was adopted as well.

On September 25, 1991, Jim published the first edition of StackTalk, the club newsletter. He served as editor/publisher for most of the next five years.

HALS has grown from an idea held in common by the 24 attendees at the organizational meeting to a membership 94 strong today with over 5,000 feet of mainline railroad in one of the finest facilities in the U.S.. Jim was a husband, father, grandfather, brother and accomplished writer, but for us he was a lover of the hobby. 

A Tribute

AS AN ACTIVE member of HALS I enjoy all aspects of railroading. I am challenged with engine building projects and operation. I am especially pleased with all the many new friends I have made. HALS now occupies an important part of my life.

How did I become involved? Well, about ten years ago I was invited to have backyard hamburgers and watch a real live steam engine run. It was impressive; not only were the hamburgers great, but I was encouraged to operate the engine. I was bitten by the steam bug and there is no antidote in sight.

I am lucky that in my lifetime I have met a person who has really made an impression -- a mentor, if you will. My railroad hobby has brought me great satisfaction and real gratification. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to meet and be a friend of Jim Jackson.

Jim is gone from us physically, but his influence will always live within me and within our railroad community. After all, Jim was the one who gave me the \$10,000 glove!

— *Stu Marion*

The Legacy of Jim Jackson

How many times have you seen the name on the tower in front of the station and wondered just what that name represents? Have you ever wondered about the long building with two tracks leading into it? Where did that come from and why two tracks? For many members, Jim Jackson is only a name on the tower in front of the station.

For those of us who were around in the early days of the club, he was quite a remarkable man. In spite of a handicap that would slow most craftsmen, he managed to form a one man company that produced



tating the installation of Lexan windows. Spence Gaskin has been taking care of it for several years now and has repaired the doors several times. But this isn't what Jim Jackson is best known for. Doug B.

museum quality models of railroad cars and fittings. He was a founding member of the club and had a live steam track in his backyard. The long building with the two tracks was his engine house and was donated to the club after his death. During its time at Zube it has become a story in its own right. More than once, bees have built huge hives under it which have had to be removed. That required moving the building off of its foundation. It has been vandalized necessi-

Jim Jackson and the RAILWAY HARDWARE COMPANY

For many HALS members, the hobby started with the beginning of the Houston Area Live Steamers in 1991. However, there was much activity prior to that time. One of the more active live steamers was Jim Jackson. In the 1970s, he started a company called Railway Hardware Company. To

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quote an introduction to his 1983 catalog:

We are pleased to offer to the 1 ½" scale model builders an opportunity to construct highly detailed rolling stock using our moderate cost product line. You will note that the parts are principally designed for wood car construction typical of the 1890-1910 era.

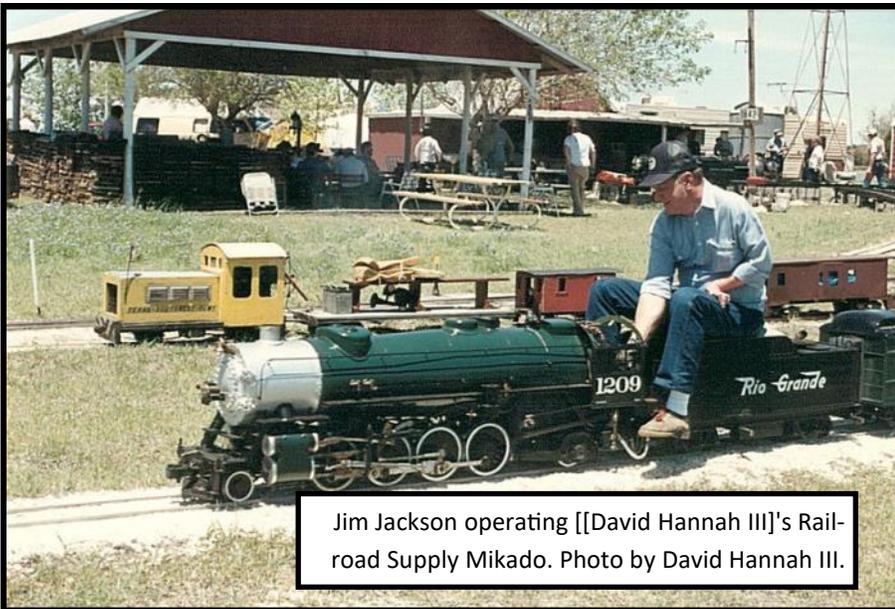
He was remarkably successful in this goal as one of his flatcars was entered in a San Jac model contest and was given 98 out of 100 points. Comments from the meet said that the reason for 2 points short was that the air lines could not pass air!

While he sold individual components, his objective was to produce complete kits. He provided wood parts where there were

relative low temperature melting metal. Items such as grab irons were made from a soft aluminum wire pressed in a metal mold. His 1983 catalog listed over a dozen wooden parts and over 50 metal parts. The wooden parts were from cherry wood and were precut including any slots and holes needed.

Some of the metal parts, he could not produce himself and went to commercial casting companies. The axle boxes were bronze castings, investment cast. The original turnbuckles, cast in babbitt, probably did not work too well, being too soft. So he had turnbuckles investment cast in brass complete with threads. Another area was square nuts. Early railroad cars used a lot of square nuts and Jim tried to provide them.

Jim was very active in early HALS and although he had a disabled arm, he could fire his oil fueled locomotive. It was not easy as he was known for setting the ties on fire while getting steam up. When he died, his shop equipment was offered to HALS members. With no offers for the parts inventory, Tom Herbert took them him with the idea of continuing the product line. After several years, he decided that he had lost interest and as Tom knew that I had done some RTV casting gave me the supplies.



Jim Jackson operating [[David Hannah III]'s Railroad Supply Mikado. Photo by David Hannah III.

wood parts in the prototype and metal parts to match the metal parts. For the metal parts, he would construct a master out of various materials, make a mold out of RTV or vulcanized rubber. Into the mold, he would pour a babbitt alloy. Babbitt alloy is a

By the time I got the RTV molds, most had deteriorated to being unusable and as I cast pewter, which needs a higher temperature RTV, I decided not to attempt to repro-

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duce the items. As the Railway Hardware Company was known for it's square nuts, there were several references to it in forums. I saw one from Dick Morris (Alaska)

that I replied to and found he had a complete catalog. I swapped some nuts he needed for a copy of the catalog.

A good set of pictures of the cars from kits is on the IBLs site. http://ibls.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Railway_Hardware_Company

The flatcar and gondola 'lived' with David Hannah III until they were sold, the gondola to a person in Kansas. The disposition of the flatcar is unknown. The refrigerator cars may still be around HALS, I would like anyone with information on the cars or persons who bought the kits to contact me. I am planning on putting a copy of Jim's catalog and drawings on HALS website.

Dennis Cranston



(Continued from page 8)

An Addendum to the Jim Jackson Story by Tom Herbert

I think, but I'm not sure, that Nathan Neuse got the flatcar, as it was period correct for his 4-4-0.

By 1992, when I joined HALS, Jim was already slowing down due to his congestive heart failure. He and I lived close to one another from August of 1992 to February of 1994, when I lived in Champions.

When I purchased my first freight car kit from Cannonball, Jim offered to let me use his shop to do the machine work on the trucks. He taught me the basics of how to use a lathe, on the condition that rather than turn only the 8 wheels needed for my car, I turn a second set for him. He also had me help him do some things that he could not do alone, and Carolyn could not help him do, because it required more strength than she had. I helped him cut the angle iron for the frames of Walt Sumner's sugarcane cars, and as you mentioned in your article, I ran the arbor press to make the grab irons that he needed.

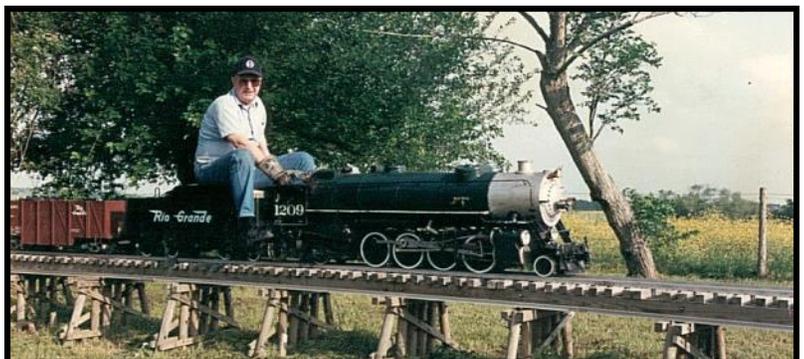
The Hanrahan refrigerator car mentioned in my addition to the article was sold as a kit by another supplier. It passed through a number of hands. I think it was originally purchased by David Hannah and given to Jim to complete. Jim no longer had the energy to do a project of that size, and passed the kit to me. When I told David that he had done so, David gifted the kit to me, and provided a hideous-looking pair of cast aluminum archbar trucks from Railroad Supply to

mount on it. They are still on it. I wanted to make a pair of Jim's beautiful built-up archbars, like the ones on the flatcar and gondola (and the ice cream refrigerator car) but Jim no longer had all of the components necessary to complete them. I spent a large amount of time milling lumber to scale size for the various moldings, making the ladders, handles, hinges and other metal fittings on that car.

I enjoyed the time that I spent with Jim, and was probably closer to him in his last years than most other members of HALS. That was the reason that Carolyn called Stu and I to get the materials for the estate sale that we had at HALS after Jim passed away. I purchased his rotary table at the sale.

I think that of all the people that were members of HALS when I attended the first meeting are gone now, with the exception of you and Barry, unless Mark Bing is still a member. Mark retired from medicine last year, and when I saw him at a restaurant around the first of this year, he looked terrible, and was walking with a cane. There are still some long-time members around, like Jim Cash. Jim has been a member for probably 22 years, now, as I will have been working at V&E for 19 years in two weeks, and I met Jim at Zube when he came to his first public run day, and joined immediately. He was the one that got me in the door at V&E.

Tom Herbert



LEE BALKUM

1941-2002

What are friends?

We all have people that we consider to be our friends; people without whom our lives would not be complete. Those individuals that we go to, to seek their opinions, to ask for their help with a dilemma, or just to seek companionship. People with whom we have common interests, those who we can argue with, just for the fun of it.

I had a friend named Lee. Chances are if you're reading this, you did too. He came into my life almost ten years ago, at the first HALS meeting that I attended. For some reason, I can still remember the first words he said to me, or at least come close. It was the May, 1993 general meeting, and HALS didn't even have a place to put a track yet. The club had been in discussions with the county about using a part of Bear Creek Park, but the floods of earlier that year took that out of the running. But the planning was going on, and the discussion at that particular time was to decide whether the 4 3/4" gauge track was going to be incorporated into the 7 1/2" gauge loop, or be an entirely separate undertaking (there were more mem-



Photo 5: Lee at the Cypress Creek Station. He often said that the social aspect of the hobby was what he loved the most.

bers in HALS at that time that owned 1" scale trains than there are now). But the discussion was going on, and never being shy to offer my opinion, I opined that they should be two different tracks, based on the different likely speeds of trains in the different scales. But I did preface my remarks with a disclaimer about having no experience in the hobby, and I probably didn't know what I was talking about. Lee immediately piped up with something like "well, then, you're in the same position as the rest of us!" That drew the expected chuckle from all of us. And a friendship was started. Soon after that meeting, Sonja and I moved to Katy from



Photo 6: Lee Balkum enjoys a beautiful evening of night operations.

the 1960 area, and it seemed natural that I would gravitate into Lee's circle. Sonja and I had only one car at the time, so I spent a lot of time begging rides to and from Zube Park. And those rides were never quiet. We'd discuss what needed to happen at the track that day, or Lee would go on about Clinton's latest antics in the White House. He was definitely not a supporter... And we'd plan—oh, would we plan!

Soon after we completed the Phase I loop, we got the word through the grapevine that the plans for the part of the park east of Phase I had fallen through. So, I mentioned to Lee on one of our rides to the park that we needed to plan an extension to the railroad to take over the rest of the northern half of the park. Planning, here we come! We took rides around the eastern half of the park in the Gator that David was storing out at the park at the time. Lee drew up a possible track plan, and we spent a January Sunday afternoon sloshing around in cold, ankle deep water, doing our best to stake it out using a plat that Lee had made using an aerial photograph of the park. And on the way home, with our cold, wet feet and boundless enthusiasm, we named all the places on the track plan that looked like they needed to be named.

And Lee would tell me about his family—living in Nashville, and Atlanta, and Dallas, and growing up in West Texas, in Andrews. He'd tell me about things that Stephen and Scott had done when they were growing up. The fish tanks that he'd had, and the photography that he'd done (more things that we had in common besides trains). And through it all, you could hear the love in his voice for Carolyn and the boys. And by sharing it with me, he made me realize that he was including me in his extended family; that I was part of his life, and I needed to know these things in order to become a more integrated part of the whole. But I realize now that

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(Lee Balkum Continued from page 10)

feeling wasn't exclusive to me. Judging by what I saw today, at his memorial, Lee had that effect on a great many people. There were a great many bodies in the solar system that made up the extended Balkum family.

When Lee's original cancer was diagnosed, he called my cell phone on a Run Day at Zube, and asked me to stop by the house on the way home from the park. When I got to the house, he was sitting in his favorite recliner, as he usually was when I walked in the door to the Balkum home. He opened his shirt to show me the purple dye from the marking pen that the radiologist had use to mark the points for the radiation treatments that he was about to receive. I sat down on the couch, and he and Carolyn proceeded to tell me what the doctor had found, and what the course of treat-



Photo 7: Lee Balkum backing his steamer out of the Cypress yards during a HALS operations meet.

ment was going to be. I think that I took it well, but I remember that I walked out of the house in kind of a fog. I certainly don't remember driving home. But I do remember that he was incredibly positive that he was going to beat it. And he did. I also remember the incredible feeling of relief, when he told me that the oncologist had pronounced him free of cancer, and that he was expected to stay that way for at least four to five years. And I remember the confidence in his voice when he said that if it did come back, he'd beat it again. But

that's not the end of the story. I guess that the enemy within didn't know that it was beaten. And so, the story began again. And it ended, last Sunday at about 4:00pm.

The loss to the Balkum family is incalculable, and to the extended Balkum family as well. During the time that I've been a member of HALS, Lee served as Vice President of Administration, County Liaison, and President. He told me once that if we didn't keep moving forward, we'd end up going backwards. And we've pretty much kept going forward. Lee was the driving force in the completion of Phase II, during the three years that he was President.

I asked at the beginning of this, "What are friends?" I was coming home from meeting some other friends in Waller at four o'clock last Sunday. And as I was coming through Brookshire, headed back east toward Katy, I had a strange hollow feeling in my chest. I've had that feeling before.

So now I can answer my own question: a friend is someone that carves out a space in your life, a niche in your soul, and lives there, to make you more--and better- -than you were before. And now I have a hollow space in my soul. See you later, Lee. -Tom H.

Thank You

To Our Friends at HALS:

Time has a way of moving on and though we all can look forward to more happy times during the Holiday Season, I would like you to know how much I appreciate all the expressions of sympathy that you have shown to me and my family. Thank you also for the many ways that the "HALS Family" has chosen to honor Lee. He truly loved you all.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Balkum

Jim Anderson

February 2002

It is with a heavy heart that I report the passing of a noble member of the club. Although Jim Anderson was a member for but a short time, his life touched many of ours in a profound way. Jim was the type of person that made friends easily and his warmth and concern for others was freely given. I spoke to Jim's neighbors and each of them told of how Jim was full of Joy and happiness as a result of his joining HALS. Jim spent many loving hours in his shop working on several buildings that were destined for Zube Park. He built a sanding tower and drying barn, a maintenance of way building, a scale signal system, and he did a fabulous restoration of an interlocking tower that came from the Browning Railroad. (see photo 7) Each of these structures will stand as a monument to Jim at various locations around the track. His enthusiasm and willingness to lend a hand were qualities that reflect the best that humankind has to offer. Jim will be sorely missed.
--JimC



Photo 7: Jim Anderson did a wonderful job restoring this Interlocking Tower that had a proud history on David Hannah's Browning Railroad

Walt Sumner

1936-2002

What I'll remember...Walt was my friend.

We knew each other for about ten years, or nearly so. When I joined HALS in May of 1992, Sonja and I were not yet married. We were living in a one-bedroom apartment in Spring Branch and my pickup truck had been stolen—so we were a one-car couple. I did a lot of ride begging in those days. In July of that year, the club had not yet begun to build a railroad; in fact we didn't even have a place to build one yet. But we had acquired a load of used rail, and a group of us were going to get together at Nathan Neuse's house to clean the oxidation off the rails, paint them (so it would look like rusted steel) and build track panels. Based on his phone number, I determined that Walt was the HALS member that lived the closest; we had met at a previous club meeting and had hit it off pretty well, we were both narrow-gauge enthusiasts. So I called Walt and asked him if I could bum a ride to Nathan's. Walt never hesitated, he just said "sure," and took my address, and told me what time he'd be there. And he was.

Years later, at a meet at the Browning Railroad, I was functioning as Walt's conductor, sitting at the rear of the train, and he and I were having a conversation on the radio. It was a beautiful spring day, and Walt was working Dulce up the grade through the s-curve to the station at the top of the hill. I commented to Walt about how nice the weather was, and how good the engine sounded, barking sharply as it pulled the train up the grade. His response was "yup, it's truly God's country."

Later yet, Walt purchased some land near Belleville, where he planned to build his own railroad. We had been working together at Zube park one misty Saturday morning, and the mist was steadily turning to a heavier rain. Walt asked me if I had any pressing plans that I needed to get home for. I didn't, so he asked if I'd like to go see his place and where he was going to build his Los Pinos Railroad. It sounded good to me.

We rode out to Belleville to a bakery that Walt knew about that served sandwiches on fresh-baked bread. We had lunch there, and then got back in the truck for a short ride to the property. When we arrived there, it was back to misting, and Walt wanted to make sure that I still wanted to see the place. I assured him that I wasn't going to melt in the rain, and we proceeded to spend about an hour and a half wandering about, following the proposed track bed, watching fish in the pond, and talking to his eccentric artist

neighbor. As we walked back to the truck for the ride back to town, we talked about the loco that I was planning on building, and how wide it was; it was slated to be a big loco, and Walt wanted to make sure that he made his center-to-center distances and switch stands far enough away from the rails, so that I would be able to run there. It didn't matter to him that he was going to have to re-work some of his plans—"it's only on paper, now" he said. "It will be harder later, if I have to move the track!" He just automatically judged that I would be welcome to run on his railroad.

When we were back in the truck, I remarked to Walt that he had certainly found a beautiful place to build his railroad, even in the rain. "Yes, it's certainly God's country." It seemed to be a theme with Walt; I had heard him make the same remark as he showed me pictures of a special trip that he had made to Chama, New Mexico, to visit a special run of the rotary plow to clear the passes after a mid-spring snow, in preparation for the opening of the passenger season at the Cumbres & Toltec.

Walt and I had much in common, besides our love of trains. We also were both very much fans of aviation and flying. We always had something to talk about that was of interest to both of us. As I was preparing to go to Walt's funeral, I was reflecting over the years we had known each other. And I suddenly recognized the pattern that had somehow eluded me in the past. Walt's casual remark "it's God's country" never really related to where he was; it seems to me that "God's country" was his state of mind. It was whomever he was with, and what he was doing, when he was enjoying himself.

Although Walt is no longer with us, I will always remember the things that we shared, the discussions we had, and the things that I learned from him. And I think that maybe his version of "God's country" would be a good place to be.

See you later, Walt. We'll keep the fires stoked for you. *By: Tom Herbert*

Those who knew Walt, will always remember him as never saying anything unkind about anybody... Walt, truly was an example to us ALL.

Walton B. Sumner

Sept. 20, 1936 - May 1, 2002



Walt was a Charter member of Houston Area Live Steamers, a faithful and constant companion to the rest of us, and an ardent supporter of the live steam hobby. He held many positions in the club, including Director and Secretary. Walt owned a 3" scale, narrow gauge Mogul, modeled after engines seen on Puerto Rican sugarcane plantations, and specially built for Walt in Australia. His wife Dorothy, an accomplished artist, presented an oil painting of Commissioner Steve Radack to him on HALS' behalf.

Walt was a loving husband, father of two sons, father-in-law and grandfather. He will be missed by his friends at HALS.



Walt & Dorothy (L) at the Holiday Party (Dec. 2001)



Walt (facing) dressed for Run Day (May 2001)



Walt, Dorothy & HALS reps present oil painting to Comm. Radack (Feb 2001)



Walt(L) checking double crossover at Black's Crossing (Oct. 1999)



Walt(L) assists with last spike in 3rd rail. (Oct. 1999)



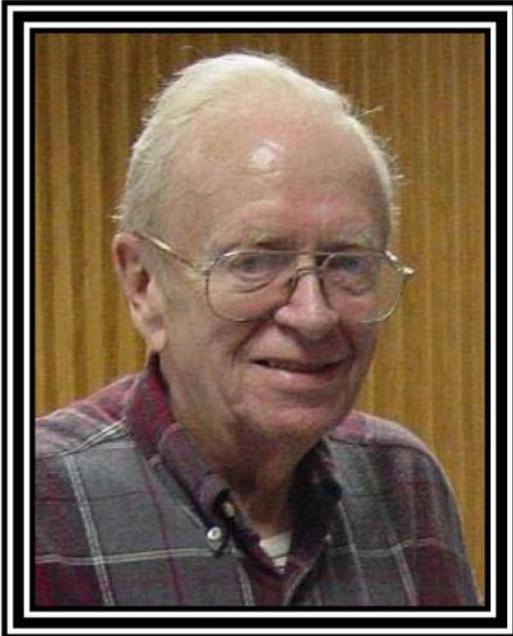
Walt & Dorothy crew a train in 1998.

[More Pictures](#)

Walt on his engine at Mark Bing's track (Dec. 1997).



Al Beggs



IN MEMORY OF ALAN SCOTT BEGGS MASTER TRACK BUILDER

AL Beggs, a HALS member since 1993, has been singlehandedly responsible for the construction of almost all track panels and switches installed in Phase II and III on the Cypress Creek & Southern Railroad. His face was the first you would see each morning at the M.O.W. Shed as he tirelessly devoted his spare time to the Houston Area Live Steamers. In 1999 he was presented with the Marshall Black Award, the club's highest honor, for his endless work and devotion to the club and the hobby. He also procured and paid the lion's share (along with some club funds) on the John Deere Gator, passing on the title to the club in December 2003. He will be sorely missed by all.

Thanks to the generosity of his family, they have requested donations be made to the Houston Area Live Steamers in memory of Al Beggs because of Al's years of devotion to the club. Donations may be sent to our treasurer Virginia Freitag, 1835 Alta Vista, Houston, TX. 77023.

Several members reflected on their fondest memories of Al:

- **Bill Howe** spent a lot of time together with Al and his best memories are the times he learned track panel and switch making from Al. One day they built 15 track panels. Al said, "No more, no more!"
- **Peter Bryan** remembers that Al's car parked at the M.O.W. shed was the first thing he would see when he'd come out during the week.
- **Jim Cash** says Al was always keeping him on his toes when he'd ask Al to build a switch. He'd repeatedly ask him, "Did you want a right switch or a left switch?" Next day he'd say, "Now, was that a right hand or a left hand switch?"
- Al gave a Gator tour to **Mary Lou Pasley**. She remembers how they went up on Mt. Zube (the big dirt pile) and they could survey the whole railroad. He really enjoyed that.
- Al Beggs built the whole yard between the Car Barn and the Engine Barn by himself, which astounded **Doug Blodgett**. Al would lay out each switch and panel down on his hands and knees and sweat profusely day after day.
- **Gil and Virginia Freitag** remember: No matter what day of the week we would go out to the track, Al would always be there and eager to find out why we were there and if he could do anything for us...a special track panel, cut plastic, drive the Gator, or whatever...it didn't matter. No matter what we were working on, he would always come take a "progress check" before he left. A true friend who is greatly missed!



It is with deep regret and heavy heart that I pass this on.

I have just received a call from Al Beggs son Michael letting me know that Al passed away sometime yesterday (March 9, 2005) at his apartment of a massive heart attack.

As I understand it, Michael and his sister Debbie Hart are the only surviving relatives. Debbie has flown in from her home in Hawaii to help with arrangements. They are planning on Al's obituary to be in the weekend Chronicle. I have no information about interment yet, but do know that a memorial service is NOT being planned.

In lieu of flowers, the family is asking that a donation be made instead to the Houston Area Live Steamers because of Al's years of devotion to HALS. Donations may be sent to our treasurer Virginia Freitag, 1835 Alta Vista, Houston, TX. 77023.

If I hear anything more, I will post it immediately. Al was an icon at HALS and will be missed by his many friends.

Doug Blodgett

DEBRA McCARTY REMEMBERED



Dave and **Debra** at GATS 2003

It is with sadness that we note the passing of HALS member **Debra McCarty** in Georgetown on May 31 after a stroke, the last of 10 which left her unable to talk or swallow. She was at home with her family and husband **Dave McCarty** as was her wish. **Stu Marion** served as pall bearer at her services in Corpus Christi on June 11. **Suzie Marion** reported that Dave wore his train cap at the service.

Dave says, "Her death allowed her to escape from her body which had become a prison, stifling a beautiful and vibrant soul. I will miss her." HALS will miss her too as she was always in attendance at run days, work days, and HALS events and enjoyed watching the happenings at Zube.

JACK EMERICK LUCKS, 1918 - 2007

by Bill Laird

The live steam fraternity lost one of the hobby's most revered members when Jack Lucks passed away peacefully at his home in Ft. Worth, Texas on April 14, 2007 at the age of 89.

Jack was born in February 1918 in Spokane, Washington. He grew up in southern California where he met and married his beloved Shirley. During his long career he worked on movie sets, both behind the scenes and occasionally as an extra, he was a licensed radio officer on merchant ships before WWII, during and after the war he worked at Consolidated Aircraft, which later became General Dynamics. One of the many jobs he had at Consolidated was as a pilot delivering newly completed aircraft to the military. His fascination with trains, big and small, was most likely based on the years he lived close to the Southern Pacific mainline in California. That fascination would remain with him for the rest of his life.



Jack was a stalwart in live steam in Texas. He was a major contributor to building and maintaining many of the prominent Texas tracks including Terry McGrath's Annetta Valley and Western, David Hannah's Browning, Ed Leatherwood's Dublin and Rio Grande, Roy Pickard's Comanche and Indian Gap, and Jack Haskin's Able Springs and North Texas. He was a charter member of the Annetta Valley and Western Railroad Club and active member of Southwestern Live Steamers and the **Houston Area Live Steamers**. He traveled with his trains all over the country and was widely known as truly a gentleman, always ready to help.

Jack often outworked those a generation or more younger than he and his knowledge and expertise were vast. He was always ready to jump in and help with any problem, big or small, and he worked at it until it was fixed. His wide smile, quick wit, and down home attitude of get it done will be greatly missed.

John Carroll Enders, Sr. 1918-2008

by Stephen Balkum, Grandson

John, a pioneer of the live steam hobby in Texas, passed away in March, 2008. He was born in Elgin, Texas, to William Henry, a railroad man, and Ida Allison Enders. At the age of two, the family moved to Austin which was his home from that time forward. He married Helen Lundgren in 1940. Two years later, he enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps. He served as an airplane propeller mechanic and spent three years in the China-Burma-India theater. After WWII, John accepted a job with the state and later the federal government in Austin. He retired from the General Services Administration at the IRS/VA complex.

John is survived by his wife Helen; daughter Carolyn Balkum; son and daughter-in-law Carroll and Becky Enders; six grandchildren and their families: Stephen and Lori Balkum, Scott and Cynthia Balkum, Chuck and Becci Ann Enders, Holly and Eric Bernard, Becky and Randy Jeffers, and Lacy and Brian Roland; 13 great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

John's passion for railroading began in his youth. His railroad name, Austin & Texas Central Railroad, was chosen with his first train set. His live steam interests began in 1960 in 1" scale. In the late 60s, he migrated to 1½" scale. He laid track in two locations around Austin prior to settling with the Hi Iron Ranch in Manor. This 7½" gauge railroad hosted one or two Southwestern Live Steamers meets per year with the 39th and final meet held in April, 1998.

John was a charter member of the Southwestern Live Steamers. He was honored with both the Les Burford award and the Iron Horse award. He was actually elected as vice president in the early history of the SWLS, but preferred to focus on supporting the club and hobby through his meets. He always spent a great deal of time making sure his facilities were in as good a condition as possible for every meet.

John loved working in his shop. A tip to his self-taught nature, he preferred to be called a blacksmith rather than a machinist. Twenty-one locomotives, both steam and diesel, passed through his shop. He is probably best known for his #869 Atlantic and the enormous #16 White Pass & Yukon narrow gauge Mikado. No one would consider him a "rivet-counter," but you could depend on his equipment to be strong, ready, and working. On one occasion, after a nasty roll-over of the Mikado (there was more than one) and the locomotive was placed back on the rails, he was able to continue down the track. Always remember, "If it moves, oil it; if it doesn't, paint it."



HALS MEMBERS REMEMBER:

John was the 2nd SWLS guys that I met. My first meet was at Manor in 1987 when I joined. My first impression was this gruff, tough man that I will not be friends with. But as the meet went on, I discovered his sense of humor and way with people that made me really like him from that point on. I always enjoyed being around John and Lee. It was always entertaining to say the least.

- Peter Bryan

I have so many, many good memories of him -- even before I ever met Carolyn and her own family.

I still remember coming to Austin especially for him to take me to the Caliche Pit to run his 1" engines. And then the great facilities at Manor.

I also remember back when I was sorta coordinating public run days at HALS and I suggested that all members wear a Red shirt to the event -- and John went out of his way to show me that not only had he gone out and bought a brand new Red shirt, but had bought Red socks too!

He was a great guy, and I will miss him a lot.

- Dennis Grigassy



*It is with a profound sense of loss that I share with everyone the passing of **Art Magill**. Art passed away Thursday, Oct. 29. I don't have all the details, but it was heart related. He will be deeply missed.*

Here are the details I have thus far:

Viewing:

Wednesday Nov 4 - 4:00-8:00 pm
Conroe Funeral directors
1504 N Thompson Street
Conroe, TX 77301

Service:

Thursday Nov 5 - Noon
Houston National Cemetery, also know as Veterans Memorial Cemetery
10410 Veterans Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77038

Art was 93, and out-worked most of us at the track. I will miss him dearly

Jim Cash, President



Art Magill

“Art was one of a kind. The first winner of the Marshall Black Award, he would help out with anything you needed help with, especially if it was electronic in nature. Art was 93, but his mind was as sharp as a teenagers with an incredible ability to remember details of events as far back as his war years in England.

“Art was my friend and I will truly miss him.”

Doug Blodgett, V.P. Operations

Rick White has put together a collection of photos of Art Magill as a tribute to Art. Spend a couple minutes at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/286ghVrqkU4Usi6j6> and you will see a dedicated member.



David Hannah III has captured what is thought to be a final photo of Art (pictured center) as he spent time at the October 17 Run Day.

RANDY AKIN 1948-2009



HALS has lost an enthusiastic member from our family. Randy Akin joined HALS about 3 years ago and shortly afterwards in April of 2007 was diagnosed with brain cancer. After a very courageous 2 year fight, he passed away peacefully Wednesday May 13th surrounded by his loved ones. Randy was a wonderful friend to many of us and after his cancer, so many of you befriended Randy at the track and I know he appreciated it. Up to the very last he was asking about HALS. As recently as February, he took Ed Rains conductors class so he could help us each run day. And even though he could not conduct in March, he volunteered to be switch tender for most of the day. He even wanted to sign up for Bill Lairds engine building class. Randy we will miss you.

Peter Bryan

From Jim Cash, President

Joel Corbin

at October Public Run Day

Photo by David Hannah III

It is with deep sadness that I report the passing of Joel Corbin. Joel was in the hospital over the Holidays and passed away on the evening of New Years Day.

In 2009, Joel served on the HALS Board of Directors as Jr. Director had advanced to the position of Sr. Director. In 2008, Joel came to HALS from the Sacramento Valley Live Steamers where he had most recently served as the SVLS club president for the previous 4 years.

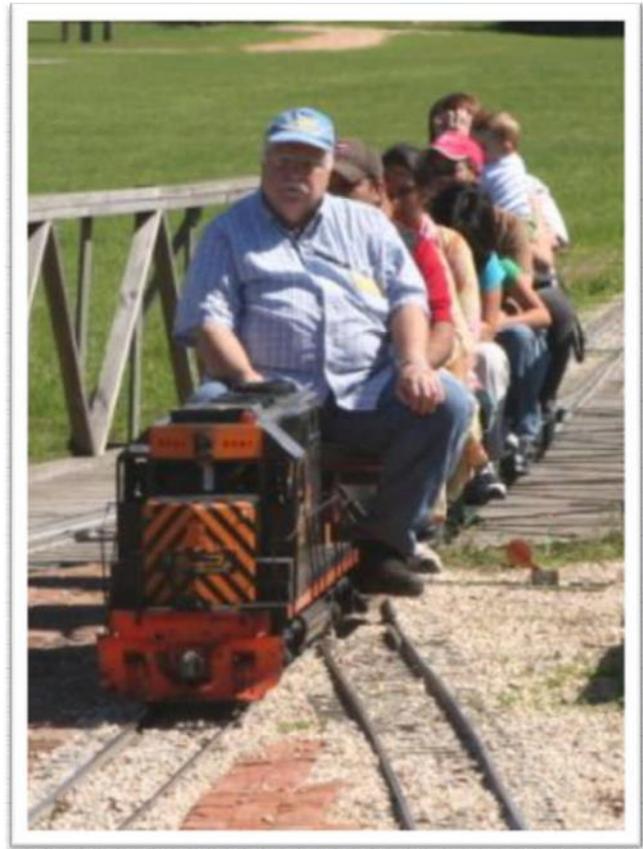
Joel worked tirelessly to do whatever he could to help HALS grow and expand. In 2009, he spent countless hours pouring over the HALS by-laws, writing and re-writing each section. His leadership in this thankless task was helping the HALS Board fix and improve the current by-laws. Sadly, he did not live long enough to see the fruits of his labor.

Joel brought a wealth of knowledge and wisdom to the club that I will always cherish. He will be deeply missed.

"Although this is hard for us as it would be any family, we thank God for his grace and Dad did not suffer in his illness before he left us to be with his Lord.

"Thank you for all of your friendship and support of my dad in the HALS group over the past months.

*Sincerely,
Richard Corbin
Joel Corbin's son*



Editor: Attending the memorial service on January 10 from HALS were: Doug & Andrea, Ed & Mary Rains, Dennis Cranston, Jim & Lisa Cash and David Hannah III.





James “Tweety” Tolson 1920-2010

We have lost another long-time livesteamer. **Tweety Tolson** has been a member of HALS for many years and would make the meets with his wife **Imogene** and later with members of his family. He is survived by his wife Imo of many years.

The funniest moment as reported by this **editor** occurred in Dublin, TX at the Leatherwood track. Tweety suffered from deafness as do many older men. Tweety and Imo were out on the track at the farthest point when the last part of the train, and more specifically the car that Imo was riding on, became uncoupled. Imo screamed and hollered for Tweety but he just kept right on going, never hearing her for a moment. She walked all the way back to the station pushing the cars by hand, all the while complaining loudly that he never knew she was left behind. “I’m going to get you for this, Tweety. That little dickens.” I’ll bet she did. All of this was caught on video tape

and still brings a big smile to my face.

For more pictures go to <https://photos.app.goo.gl/qFoWaLrADvwwgmTN6>



Helen shows the SWLS train quilt to Karen Stuteville at an SWLS/HALS Memorial Day meet.

Photo by **CBalkum**

1

Helen Enders

1922-2010

Helen, along with her husband **John**, were two of the pioneers in the live steam hobby in Texas, holding at least one meet a year beginning in 1972 at their track in Manor, TX. Many HALS members attended their first meet at that track. John and Helen were charter members of SWLS and long-time members of HALS. **Helen** was also the mother of HALS members **Carolyn Balkum** and **Carroll Enders**, and grandmother of **Stephen** and **Scott** Balkum. She left two children, six grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. During the last few years, Helen and John both helped to label and stamp HALS Stack Talk newsletters every month.

Bob Jackson - HALS has lost another member.

From the Houston Chronicle Obituary:

ERVIN ROBERT "BOB" JACKSON, retired Postal Inspector passed away on November 17, 2010. Loving Husband, Father, Grandfather, and Great-Grandfather, Bob was preceded in death by his wife Adeline and his granddaughter April.

Bob was a surviving P.O.W. of the War in the Pacific. Serving first with the Flying Tigers prior to American Involvement in WWII, Bob received his Honorable Discharge from the Army Air Corps in 1945. Bob was active in American Legion Post #305 in the Woodlands, Life Member Post 12024 of the V.F.W. in the Woodlands, 4th Degree Knight of the Knights of Columbus in Our Lady of the Pines Assembly in Conroe, Member of the CBI (China Burma India



Group) from WWII, Member of the H.A.L.S. (Houston Area Live Steamers) in Waller, TX, Extra Ordinary Minister with Sts. Simon & Jude Catholic Church in the Woodlands.

He is survived by three sons, Jerry of Chicago, Russell of Denver, and Wayne of Montgomery.

In addition, Bob is survived by his two grandsons Wayne Jr. and Andrew and his great-grandson Weston.

Editor: Just 4 days before he passed away, Bob was on his hands and knees in the Engine Barn spreading kitty litter so we could eat our anniversary meal inside.

Where do we get men like this?



In Memory of Allan Ray Cleveland 1934-2012



"His favorite hobby was Lionel trains and most recently could be found many Saturdays at Zube Park in Cypress TX helping Houston Area Live Steamers with public train runs and work days." That's how we know Allan, always pitching in to help out at HALS and this year elected to the Board of Directors as Jr. Director.

But Allan was a man of many talents and activities. He served in the Air Force and received a BS in engineering. He remained active in assisting veterans, church and youth groups, and his community fundraisers through the Masons. He leaves his wife Theresa, four daughters, his grandchildren and many friends. We will miss you, Allan.



Allan Cleveland as Conductor



Allan Cleveland as Engineer

July 28, 2014

“Steamer” Bill Smith, Stack Talk Editor

Will Chorley

We received word from Anne Chorley that Will passed away on 28 July from complications related to chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer. Our condolences go out to Anne and the Chorley family. Rick White has posted some photos of Will at



Will and Anne Chorley

More photos at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/TdFFFuFw6ToecTHs8>

Be sure you give them a look.



Harry Bean on Engine 3420 which logged over 3,400 ACTUAL miles



A Member Lost

On October 22, 2014, HALS Member and Steaming Legend, Harry “Scorcher” Bean passed away. He is shown in the photo at left with his son Earl.

Your Editor had the chance to meet, and spend some time with Harry at the HALS 20th Anniversary Meet. What a nice man...

Harry will be missed

Grumpy (AKA Louis C. Christensen)

Bill Smith, HALS V.P. Communications reports:

We received the following news on 15 April. This is from Grumpy's daughter.. Last night Dad (Lou, Mr. Lou, Grumpy) passed away peacefully at home. He had had several trips to the hospital this semester and at the beginning of March was diagnosed with cancer. He was discharged to the house and received care in his final weeks for Houston Hospice.

He will be cremated and scattered at sea by the Navy. Details on memorial service in Houston will be finalized later today. While thoughts and prayers are always welcome due to our allergies we are asking that flowers not be sent. Donations in Dad's honor can be made to Houston Area Live Steamers PO Box 215, Hockley, TX 77447. This is the group that runs the trains at Zube Park where Dad enjoyed time with the kids and as a station master.



His eldest daughter [Marilyn Christensen](#) can be reached via Facebook PM or email at sunmac5@aol.com

Rest in Peace, Grumpy...

The following information was in the Houston Chronicle 16 April:

Louis C. Christensen 1943-2015

Born Nov 12, 1943, passed into a better world on April 14, 2015

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Sharon, three children, Marilyn (Miss C) who teaches at Eliot Elementary School in Houston, Sheril Sheppard and husband Shawn of Richmond, VA and Scott Christensen, wife Christy of Victoria, TX. as well as his three grandchildren; Isabelle, Natalie and Eli.

Lou (better known as Grumpy) was born in Lakewood Ohio, attended Rocky River High School, and entered the Navy in 1963. He served aboard the USS Enterprise, The USS Long Beach and the USS Eversole. After serving ten active years, he served sixteen more with the Navy reserves. He was quality control engineer for both Hartford, Kemper & Baker Packer Insurance.

Upon moving to Houston, "Mr. Lou" was active for many years as a volunteer at Eliot Elem. School, worked with model trains both at Northwest Mall and at Zube Park.

Memorial service will be held Saturday evening from 6 – 8 pm in the Kathryn Foley Memorial Event Center. In Lieu of flowers a memorial donations can be made to: Houston Area Live Steamers PO BOX 215 Hockey TX 77447

More photos at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/Cz2AxfpPitRygKAj8>

Stuart (Stu) E. Marion



Stuart Eli Marion, age 89, passed away peacefully at his home in Houston, TX on December 6, 2015. Stu was born in Brooklyn, NY, on March 18, 1926 to Maxwell Marion and Martha Irene (Fishman) Marion. He graduated from Boys High School in

Brooklyn.



In June of 1944, he received his greetings from Uncle Sam and was assigned to the United States Army. Stu served in the 84th Infantry Division, the Railsplitters, and fought in three major World War II battles in Europe, including the Battle of the Bulge. In honor of his service he was a recipient of the Bronze Star, among other awards. Following the end of the war in 1945 he served as part of the Army of Occupation; during that time he was trained as a radio operator. This training sparked an interest which lasted for the rest of his life; he held the Extra Class amateur radio license.

Stu was a gifted machinist; in his home workshop he machined and built three one-eighth scale steam engines and a steam tractor. As a member of the **Houston Area Live Steamers**, he enjoyed many years of running his engines and helping friends with their projects. Stu was an engineer's engineer, who enjoyed all sorts of repair and building projects for family, neighbors and friends. One of his remarkable achievements was building a full-size red barn on the family's small farm in Brenham, TX, with the help of his son John, who was age ten at the time. The farm was a great love of Stu's for twenty years. He enjoyed growing vegetables and tending a small herd of cows. In his later years Stu enjoyed playing tennis and bridge; he was



an avid reader. Generosity was one of his notable attributes. In his later years Stu adopted and cared for a succession of beloved dogs.

Family and

(STU Continued on page 30)

(STU Continued from page 29)

friends are invited to a Memorial Service honoring Stu's life, Friday, January 29, 2016, at 12:45 p.m., at the Houston National Cemetery, 10410 Veterans Memorial Drive, Houston, TX 77038. A Celebration of Stu's life immediately follows at Kenny & Ziggy's New York Delicatessen Restaurant, 2327 Post Oak Blvd., Houston, TX 77056.

For anyone wishing to make a gift in Stu's memory, the following organizations are suggested: **Houston Area Live Steamers**, P.O. Box 215, Hockley, TX 77447-0215 (www.hals.org) ; Honor Flight Houston, P.O. Box 690545, Houston, TX 77269 (www.honorflighthouston.org); or any dog rescue agency or other charity of your choice.

Stu was a master craftsman and good friend.

I remember the loco that he built and ran so much in the early days. He also started work on the HALS mogul and lots of other stuff.

I miss him very much.

Dennis Grigassy Sr

Memories of Stu

Shortly after joining HALS 25 years ago I met the duo of Stu Marion/Barry Tobias. They seemed inseparable, almost conjoined twins. Both of them were extremely welcoming and very willing to help a "newbie" with their knowledge, experience, and to open their workshops to help fellow live steamers in their projects. Stu spent many hours with me in his shop and loaned me some of his precious tools to take home and use in my shop for my first build. I always looked forward to seeing him, his smile and positive attitude to life were contagious. I consider him to have been a good friend and miss his wise counsel, technical expertise, and exuberant personality. I'm glad Barry is still carrying on the heritage of the "dynamic duo".

Bill Laird



See <https://photos.app.goo.gl/sKqLjUCnJ5nxE6fk6> for a series of photos of Stu at HALS and at Brent Courtney's track. Photos are by myself and David Hannah with credits in the labels for the photos. These cover 2009 to 2013.

Rick White

Marshall Phillips

November 25, 1918 -- December 14, 2015

Marshall Phillips was born in Polk County on November 25, 1918, the first child of John W. and Ruby (Sprayberry) Phillips. He died in Livingston on December 14, 2015. He grew up with 3 brothers, 4 sisters and many uncles, aunts and cousins. Marshall graduated from Livingston High School, served in the Civilian Conservation Corp in Livingston and married Zelene Stephens on August 20, 1939. In World War II, he worked in the defense industry as an electrician leaderman at Livingston Ship Yard in Orange, Texas helping to construct destroyers. He enlisted and served in the Navy as a radar technician. After World War II, he and Zelene opened Phillips Radio Service in Livingston which later became Phillips Radio and TV Service.

Marshall enjoyed a number of hobbies as well as running his own business. He was a private pilot flying the family on numerous trips, an amateur radio operator, a self-taught musician learning to play the organ, and he built and operated small saw mills at their residence. His most satisfying hobby was building and operating live steam trains and he was well known in the Southwestern Live Steamers Club for his construction and ability to identify and fix problems with live steam locomotives.

In August of 2015, Marshall and Zelene celebrated their 76th wedding anniversary, and in November, his 97th birthday.

Marshall is survived by his wife, Zelene Phillips; son and daughter-in-law, Stephen and Gaffney Phillips, his grandson, Grady Phillips, sisters, Lorene Meza, Marie Kinard, and Mildred Wood, and brothers; Sidney Phillips and Marvin Phillips. He was predeceased by his parents John and Ruby Phillips, his sister, Mary Phillips; and his brother, Verdis Phillips.



Marshall Phillips (r) chatting with Alex Hitzfelder next to his Mikado at the [1990 SWLS Memorial Day Meet in Dublin](#)

David Hannah III

September 3, 1944—December 29, 2015

Obituary

David Hannah III passed away peacefully and unexpectedly at home on Tuesday December 29, 2015. A native Houstonian, he was born September 3, 1944, to Catherine and David Hannah Jr.

He started his professional career with the Burkhead Manufacturing Corporation then entered the real estate business. As an officer for the Ayrshire Corporation he developed property in Texas, Louisiana, and Australia. His most recent position was with Houston Executive Airport.

Born prematurely, David was extremely hard of hearing which makes many of his accomplishments noteworthy, among them, earning a pilot's license before getting a driver's license, building a one and a half inch scale, working replica model of a Mikado steam engine and building by hand two miles of track for his model trains for The Browning Railroad in Chappell Hill, Texas.

David met Kenzie Ganchan when she was three weeks old when their mothers brought them both to the local sewing club. He married her in April 1970 and loved to boast that he met the love of his life when he was just three years old. His love of trains and planes was only eclipsed by his love and devotion to his family and his grandchildren. Always genuinely happy to be helpful in any situation and with the friendliest of dispositions, he never knew a stranger. He was a great husband, father, grandfather, neighbor and friend. He will be missed by many.

David served as the Vice President of the River Oaks Property Owners association, served as an Election Judge for Precinct 217, was on the Aviation Committee of the Houston Chamber of Commerce. **He was also a founding member of the Houston Area Live Steamers (HALS)** and most notably served on the board of the Houston Ear Research Foundation for over 33 years.



(DH3 Continued on page 33)

(DH3 Continued from page 32)

He was a life-long member of the First Presbyterian Church of Houston and a member of St. John the Divine.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Kenzie Ganchan Hannah, his sons David Hannah IV and wife Michele, Richard Ganchan Hannah and wife Lana, and John Marshall Hannah; grandchildren Julia, Lena and Pierce Tongate, and Price and Charlie Hannah, brother Douglas Hannah and wife Flo, sister Glen Hannah Cole and husband Hugh, his favorite aunt and uncle, Rita and John Hannah as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

(Ed. Note: There is a very nice obituary for David on the web that describes his life and achievements very well. You should take a few minutes to find and read it. But the sentiment below tells us about the David we were privileged to have as a friend.)

My sentiment regarding David Hannah, III... A rarer individual you will never meet. Those of us fortunate enough to know him should rejoice that he was part of our lives. I believe that a man's character can be measured by the friends he keeps and his generosity towards others. I never knew David to meet a stranger! In our world of the Live Steam Hobby, David was known from coast to coast. He would spread his own brand of Texas comradery and hospitality. He was oh so proud of Texas!

His Browning Plantation Railroad was legendary! A warmer and welcoming place you would not find. His generosity formed the Houston Area Live Steamers (HALS). The club was fortunate and should be ever so grateful to have had such a benefactor!

I feel truly blessed to be able to call David my friend. A man like David Hannah only comes along once in a life time. God Bless his family and dearest friends. He will truly be missed.

Michael and Terry McGrath, and all of the members of the Annetta Valley and Western Club.

Bill Laird wrote, 2 Nov 2023:

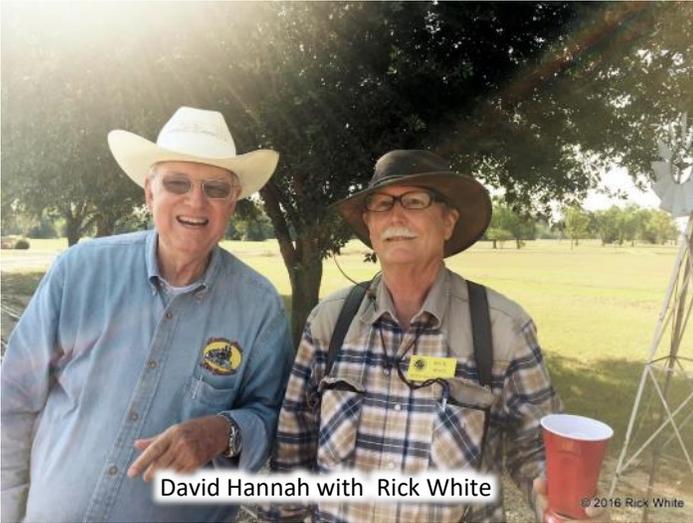
My introduction to the hobby was by [David Hannah](#) at the [Browning Plantation](#). 5321 was the first locomotive I drove. David showed me around and put me on 5321 and said "have fun." David's wife, Kinsey, kept my wife busy touring the Plantation while I played with trains. Great memories..

Peter Bryan wrote, 3 Nov 2023:

(Continued on page 34)

(DH3 Continued from page 33)

I too was introduced to this wonderful hobby by David Hannah at the Browning Railroad in 1985. Barry Bogs and I were there together on our hands and knees connecting track panels for the day. By chance it was a workday. That was my introduction. Surprised I came back! But I did and brought Gil Freitag with me the next time. Since 1985, I've loved this segment of the hobby ever since.



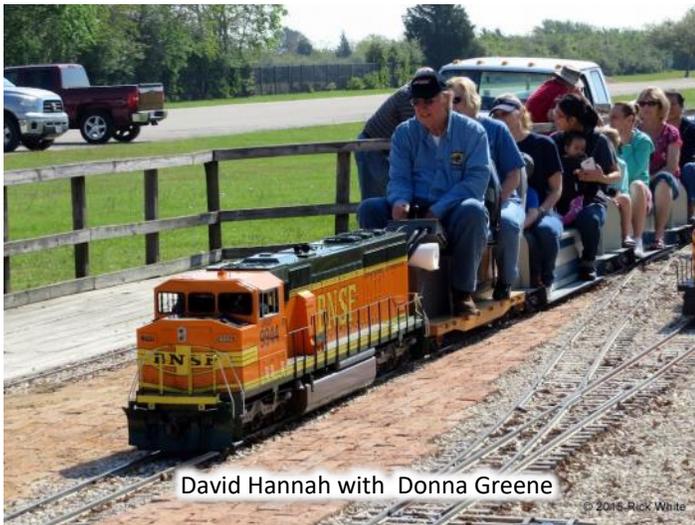
David Hannah with Rick White

© 2016 Rick White



David Hannah with Doug Blodgett

© 2015 Rick White



David Hannah with Donna Greene

© 2016 Rick White



David Hannah with Doug Payne

© 2015 Rick White



David Hannah with Connor Witkowski

Ed Rains

March 27, 1943—August 16, 2016

The Builder

Ed has made a few things for HALS that we still use all the time. Ballast cars, spray car, critter to pull the spay car, and six side dump cars. The ballast cars still belong to the Rains family, but the rest were made for or sold to HALS.



HALS Spray Rig ready to roll with three containers of herbicide. 2016-0131



Bill Laird and Ed Rains build the HALS spray rig critter at the WOF Critter Clinic 2011-0625. Bill was the teacher and Ed built.



Ed Rains beside the side dump cars that he welded together. 2014-0710 Yes, it took three months to get here, five times the work!



Painted and lettered CC&S 211. Metal fabrication for the body by Gilbert Freitag. Rest of work by Ed Rains and Rick White. 2014-0802 One of six. Four months work.

Ed Rains

The Worker



March 14, 2015

Ed Rains's nail gun was a real time saver. Pete Greene looking on.

This may have been Ed's last work day at HALS.

Bill Smith Photo

Ed Rains

BOD Member

Positions held by Ed were:

2003: VP Admin

2004: VP Admin

2005: VP OPS

2009: VP Admin

2010: VP OPS

2011: VP OPS

2013: Jr. Director

2014: Sr. Director

2015: VP Manpower

During the 2003 – 2005 years, HALS put together the operations manual we use today for safe operations of trains at HALS. Ed was a critical thinker and in charge of this effort, feeling very strongly about getting practices documented and followed. We did not want to have written practices that we no longer followed nor have practices that were unsafe. That critical thinking has helped us stay safe these many years. We continue to use the safest type of public ride car we know about. We gave up entirely on models of passenger cars. And recently, we tried cars with boat seats and found that unsatisfactory from a safety and cost perspective. This focus on safety has continued in the HALS organization with the emphasis by the VP Track on improving the track significantly and by widening the right of way. The emphasis on annual maintenance of all passenger equipment also continues.





2005 Board Meeting with food and the big gavel



2009 Ed leading a training session. Ed gave dozens of training session like this and on the trains. DH3 photo

LEFT:



Conductor Ed Rains is training Brandon to be conductor, HALS Public Run Day, 2012-0421

Ed Rains

March 27, 1943 – August 16, 2016

Operations

Ed has been involved in operating sessions on indoor model railroads for over two decades. He was often the dispatcher of Gil Freitag's layout. He brought that enthusiasm to outdoor ride on railroads. Before HALS started operating, he took part in operations on the Comanche & Indian Gap at Priddy, Texas. I do not know when HALS operations started, but it was before 2003 when the first photo here was taken. Ed has always supplied the waybills we use, having written the program in Pascal. He changed computer languages over the years, but he has always been our supplier of waybills. Often he has been trainmaster, running the show.



Ed Rains sorting out cars for an OPS session. 2003-1129



The only one with paper work for the OPS session: Ed Rains January 29, 2005



At Left:

HE&WT Mixed train during a C&IG Spring Fling. Three passengers and three empty seats. It was loads like this that let Ed know he needed a larger loco. May 13, 2005



A year later, May 6, 2006, Ed has that new and bigger loco operating at the C&IG.



Ed Rains switching the Michigan Central at Romeo. September 9, 2007

Ed Rains

Meets

Ed loved meets. He always wanted to be where the action was, so he took his travel trailer to meets local and out of town. At HALS he got family to come out and enjoy the train rides with him. He moved from just attending meets to making breakfast meals at HALS. Then he added grilling Friday night dinners. He was in his element behind the grill cooking and talking with other live steamers.



Ed loves dogs.
May 26, 2007, SWLS Meet



Ed and Mary Rains
Ed loves dogs
Chugga Chugga Chili Fest
February 27, 2010



SWLS Meet May 26, 2012



Ed Rains, Gil Freitag, Barry Tobias,
and Virginia Freitag. Anniversary
Meet, November 13, 2010

More pictures of Ed can be found in the August 2016 Stack Talk.

And at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/4wAAZxPVp4tgKaqP8>

Dan Douglas

December 24, 2016

On December 24th, Chris Schieck gave us the sad news "I am sorry to have to report that former HALS member Dan Douglas passed away this afternoon. Dan was a regular operator on the Forest & Western Basement and Backyard Divisions and several other model railroads in the Richmond, Charlottesville and Lynchburg, Virginia area. He will be sorely missed. Please keep Dan and Maxine in your thoughts and prayers."

In memory of happier times, some photos of Dan and Maxine at HALS Christmas parties. I remember Dan for all the parts of HALS that he painted for us. What a trooper! Many a public run day Dan has been a conductor and engineer, giving smiles to many many children who ride our trains.

Dan, you will be missed.

On December 26th Chris Schieck reported that Dan Douglas's son Nathan called Christmas Day to say there are no immediate funeral service plans for Dan. They will probably schedule a memorial service around a family reunion later. Maxine has relatives in Virginia and Houston, and Dan has relatives in Houston and California, so the service might be held in Virginia or Texas. The family was preparing an obituary on Christmas Day.



July 17, 2010, Public Run Day

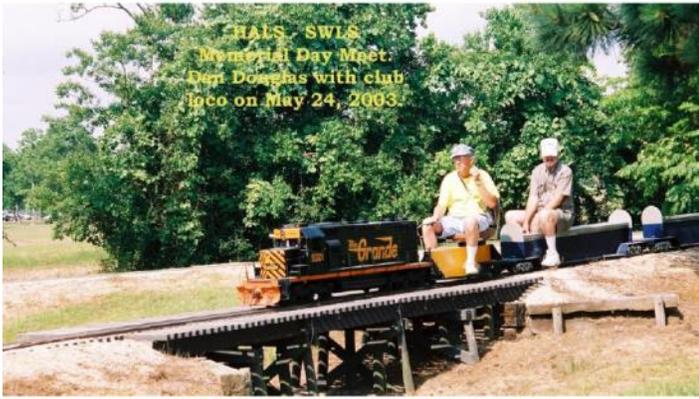


November 20, 2010, Public Run Day



Above: June 18, 2011, Public Run Day

Left: December 6, 2010, Christmas Party



SWLS Meet May 24, 2003



November 21, 2009, Public Run Day



November 21, 2009, Public Run Day



February 27, 2010, Chili Fest, Dan & Maxine



December 3, 2012, Christmas Party with Maxine and Dan

For more pictures go to <https://photos.app.goo.gl/yCJdqwHAoMqnm6tD9>

Remembering Gary Brothers

JB Cason - Just to let everyone know. Gary Brothers just passed away. Please remember his family in prayer.

Chris Schieck - One of the first things I noticed and photographed when I reached HALS in 2008 was Gary's Shell tank car. He was indeed a good craftsman and great asset to HALS.

Doug Blodgett - Very sorry to hear that. We will pray for the family.

Donna Greene - Pete and I had been talking with Linda this week. We feel we just lost a brother we never had due to being only children. Rest in Peace Dear Gary♥🙏

Peter and Susan Bryan - Gary is one of the good guys and an early supporter of HALS. He did so much for us over the years. We are very sorry Linda. God bless you in this time of need.

Betty Smith - Such a great man and friend. Such a loss. Our deepest sympathy to his family.

Andy Isles - Such sad news..... thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Rick White - Gary liked concrete projects including grade crossings. His favorite part of concrete work was the finishing, not the pouring of concrete or setting up the re-bar.

Gary Brothers Passes

Gary Brothers, longtime member of HALS, passed away Friday, February 7, 2020, in Tomball, Texas at the age of 68. Gary is survived by his wife Linda, two sisters, and three brothers.



Gary Brothers receiving the 2016 Marshall Black / Lee Balkum award. Lower left -Gary's showpiece Shell tank car, one of a fleet of tank cars that he built. Lower right -Gary and wife Linda

Remembering Gary Brothers

Scott Weatherford - Sad news indeed.

Kieth W. Bailey - I'm Truly Saddened to hear of Gary's Passing. He was a Great Guy, and we spent many happy hours together when I lived in Houston and was an active member of HALS. Please Pass on my Heart Felt Condolences to Gary's Family.

Dennis Grigassy, Sr. - One of my oldest dear friends at HALS. RIP

Randy Neville - So sorry to hear this. Our prayers go up 🙏

Tomas Sandoval - Oh my.... love and hugs to Linda and their family!

He will always be loved and remembered! Such a great friend and mentor and family to so many of us! Prayers for peace and comfort to Linda, their family and all who are close to Gary!

Stephen Balkum - RIP Gary.

Marge & George - So very horribly sad. We'll miss him so much.

Loren Miller - Very sorry. He will be missed.

Spence Gaskin - Terrible news but thank you for the updates.

Rich Businger - Sorry to hear. Thanks for letting us know.



[More Photos here!](#)

Claude Wiseman Passes

It is with great sadness that we report that long time member Claude Wiseman passed away on March 9, 2020 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Although probably best known as the designer and builder of the turntable at the Roundhouse, his mechanical expertise was part of many projects the club took undertook. Claude would always be there for you if you needed help with your own project. He was just that kind of man and he will be missed by those who knew him. We do not have any information about memorial services or funeral at this time but if it becomes available, it will be reported on:

HALSTalking@groups.io.

[More Photos](#)



Photos by Rick White

Upper-Whites 40th anniversary on 1/30/2005

L/R –at new car barn 08/2018

Mid –At Zube 06/2019

L/L –Happily pulling passengers on 04/2011 Run Day



Bill Howe 1933-2020

William Roger Howe, born May 18, 1933 in Minneapolis, MN, passed away on May 2, 2020 in Cypress, TX. He is survived by his wife, Majorie Howe. Bill spent time in the Marine Corp and later made his career as an FAA Air Traffic Controller after then President Reagan fired 11,359 striking air traffic controllers in 1981. Bill was a HALS member from at least 2001 but records are not complete. [See Rick White's tribute to Bill](#)



Paul DeVerter

August 19, 2020

We are saddened to report that our friend, long time live steam railroad enthusiast, and early member of HALS, Paul DeVerter, passed away on August 19th, 2020, in Findlay, Ohio. He spent the majority of his life as a lawyer in Houston, and only recently moved to Findlay.

Paul was one of the founders of SWLS and wrote their articles of incorporation. He had a small scale live steamer, the Victoria, which operated on an elevated track. He also owned a little 7 1/2 gauge diesel which he kept at the HALS track. Known by members as the "DeVerter Diesel", it was used regularly to pull work trains while building Phase 1. Paul led a very interesting life and much of it is detailed in his obituary below.

Paul Logan DeVerter II, 87, of Houston passed away on August 19, 2020, in Findlay, OH. Born on October 25, 1932, in Houston, Paul was the eldest son of Paul Logan and Ruth Ashmore Hendricks DeVerter. He was raised in Baytown, TX, with regular summer visits to his mother's family farm in Eel River Township, Hendricks County, IN. He attended Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN, and graduated from the University of Texas School of Engineering, Austin, with a BSME.

After spending two years in the United States Army as a radar and computer technician during the Korean War era, one of those years serving in England, he graduated from the University of Texas Law School, Austin, with an LLB. Concurrently while in law school, Paul worked as a research engineer in the Defense Research Laboratories. He was a member of Phi Kappa Psi social fraternity and Alpha Phi Omega legal fraternity. He was a 32nd Degree Mason and a member of the Arabia Shrine Temple.

On August 31, 1957, Paul married Betty Jane Cox in Abilene, TX. In 1959, he started with the law firm of Fulbright & Jaworski where he was an Intellectual Property and Patent attorney specializing primarily in unfair competition and trademark law. He was a member of several Bars including the State of Texas, United States Supreme Court, United States Court of Appeals Fifth and Eleventh Circuits, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. He was also registered to practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office and Canadian Trademarks Office.

Paul served as an officer in a number of legal organizations including Secretary of the Houston Patent Law Association, Chair of the State Bar of Texas Patent, Trademark and Copyright Section and President of the South Texas Alumni Association of Phi Kappa Psi. After more than 40 years, he retired from practicing law.

Having a lifelong love of railroads, Paul had been described as the dean of Houston trac-

(Paul Continued on page 46)



(Paul Continued from page 45)

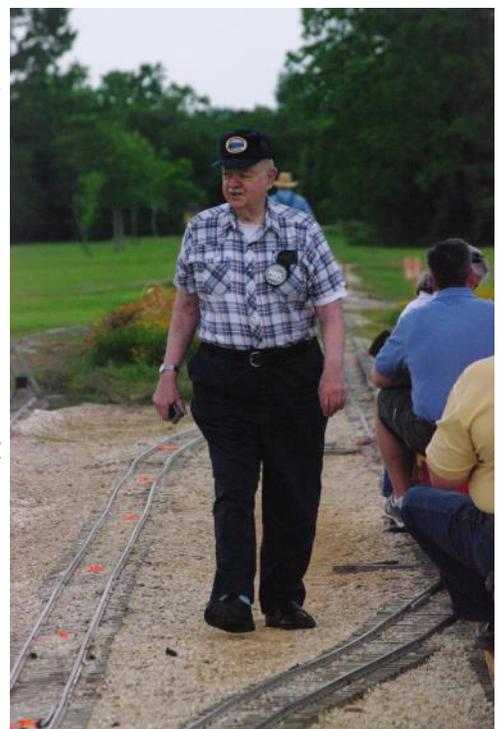
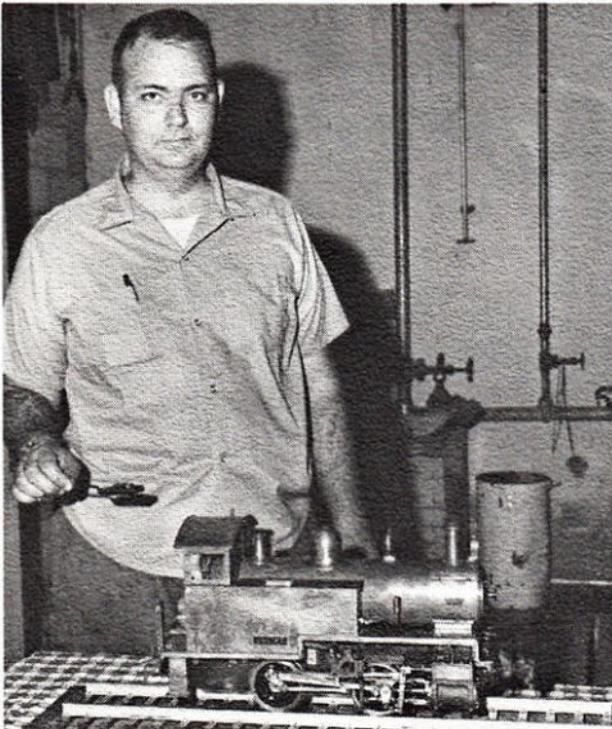
tion historians. Whether it was an interurban, a trolley, narrow-gauge, passenger or model train, he was an enthusiast, photographer and collector. In the preface to his 2000 book entitled "Houston North Shore," Paul wrote: "My interest in railroads probably derives from the fact that I grew up in the Humble Oil & Refining Co.'s company housing in Baytown. Our house was only one block from the Humble track which connected the refinery with the docks. The Houston North Shore was more distant, being four blocks away."

Over the years, Paul spent countless time and talent working on the restoration of historic railroad passenger cars, including his own Pullman car, renamed the "San Jacinto." He also built his own model live steam locomotive, "Juliet," in his home workshop, and took her to several live steam meets. He was a founding member in 1961 of the Gulf Coast Railroad Club and was instrumental in the club's 1967 transformation into the ongoing educational nonprofit Gulf Coast Chapter - National Railway Historical Society, Inc., also serving as the organization's first elected president. Paul also was the driving force behind the chapter's first historic railroad car acquisition. Paul was a former president of the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners, serving as that organization's Chief Mechanical Officer (where he was a vocal and effective voice with railroads and Amtrak on behalf of car owners) for more than thirty years, and was named a Director Emeritus. He was an officer and founding member of the Southwestern Live Steamers, writing that organization's founding Articles of Incorporation. He was on the board of directors of the Galveston Railroad Museum and a member of the Electric Railroaders' Association.

Recognizing a special need, Paul was also an entrepreneur. He founded DeVerter Locomotive Works making castings for air brakes.

Paul enjoyed travel, a good Manhattan, watching John Wayne Westerns and sampling new and different food (particularly spicy ethnic fare). In his retirement years, he enjoyed playing with train simulators and collaborating in online train simulator forums, designing virtual repro-

ductions of historic cars and locomotives. In true form as an engineer, he liked to take things apart to see how they worked, and then attempt to put them back together again, sometimes to the detriment of the object. His most recent hobbies had been bird watching and growing hot peppers.



Dr. Mark Bing

October 15, 1951 - January 9, 2021

Mark Lyndon Bing, revered physician and life-long servant of Katy, Texas, passed away from the effects of Fragile X Tremor and Ataxia Syndrome (FXTAS) peacefully at home surrounded by family. His passing shortly follows 36 fervent years of medical practice with special adoration for the underserved.

He married his loving wife, Kelly Beck Bing in 1987. He is survived by her and his five beautiful children: Elizabeth Cools and husband Joshua Cools, Ethan Bing and wife Claudia Wei, Natalie Morgan and husband Cody Morgan, Mariel Godeaux and husband John Godeaux, and Elliot Bing along with 5 grandchildren and 2 miracle grandbabies on the way. He will be watching over and protecting them from heaven.

Mark was the eldest son of Doctor Lyndon Bing and Dorothy Bing and brother of Sarah Turner, Rebecca Quantz, Martha Culbreth, and Doctor Paul Bing. He loved trains, chess, morse code, running, shortwave radio, the Katy Tigers and like many young boys of that time, he was particularly fond of blowing things up. He would walk the sidelines with his father at Katy Tiger football games instead of his own Kinkaid School games. Much like his Uncle Arlys, he loved to outsmart anyone and everyone. He was once sent to the barn during a family lunch after his father grew tired of hearing him sing the jingle from the Chuck Davis Chevrolet commercial, one too many times. Mark made sure to belt the tune loud enough for everyone to hear in the house, much to his parent's dismay. And when his mother punished him by making him walk home one day, he had a grand time strolling down the railroad tracks. He took his time, and arrived well after dark, worrying his mother sick.

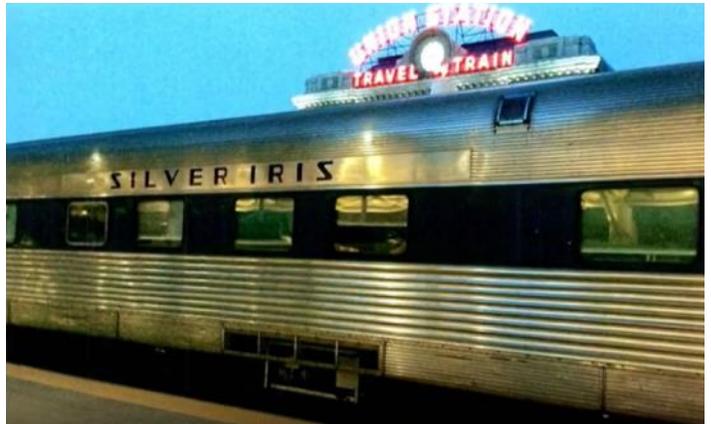
His medical training began in Guatemala where he was accepted into the Opus Dei Catholic community. He learned Spanish and treated the impoverished population with limited resources at hand. It broke his heart wide open. And from that crevice, an endless torrent of love, compassion, and strength never stopped flowing. He completed his Internal

Medicine residency at the Marshall School of Medicine in West Virginia and returned to Katy to practice alongside his father. Lines quickly grew out the door as he'd steal out to the



back to paint his boyish grin upon the afternoon train chugging by.

Doctor Bing had a love of trains that began when he was just a boy. He fondly reminisced about hearing the engines roar through old town Katy. The obsession only grew; Elm Street Station was later born. He opened his home and his station, serving hot dogs, lemonade, and train rides to the



community. He was especially excited when Boy Scouts came to run the trains and earn their railroad merit badge. And if that wasn't enough, he eagerly kept busy cleaning windows, making beds, and assuming porter responsibilities on his private pullman car, the Silver Iris. The joy that the Silver Iris brought him and all that travelled with him was unparalleled. The private car has since been retired and Doctor Bing graciously donated it to the Wheels Museum in Albuquerque, New Mexico where it will reside for all to see and enjoy.



Tom Moore, 86, HALS Charter Member passes



Tom Moore in his favorite haunt at HALS, the clubs machine shop.

Thomas Ward Moore, a charter member of the Houston Area Live Steamers, passed away on September 8, 2021 in Spring, Texas from complications with pneumonia.

Tom received his bachelor's degree in Geophysical Engineering from Texas A&M University and was employed by Schlumberger as a geophysicist, specializing in surveying oil and gas resources in the petroleum industry. At one point in his career, he was assigned to scrap a whole warehouse of old machine tools, some of which ended up in his own home shop.

A geophysicist by training, he was a machinist at heart and also a member of the Houston Home Shop

Metal Club as well as HALS.

Remembering Tom Moore by Dennis Cranston

I met Tom at an early organizational meeting of HALS as he was the first to introduce himself. Through HALS we shared our interest in machining. He convinced me to join the Home Metal Shop Club of Houston where he was very active bringing in projects of his to show various techniques. Later when I became president, he was the vice president, responsible for the club programs. With his wide interest, he brought many topics to the meetings.

He liked to attend auctions, especially school auctions. At one auction, he bought a complete metal casting set of equipment. This equipment, including a muller and several furnaces, was stored in HALS Back Shop at Zube Park. As there was interest in the Home Metal Shop Club on casting, we put on a casting workshop at Zube where we cast several items, mostly in aluminum. One of the items was a switch frog, which was sold to HALS to pay for the supplies.

This frog was put in service, but not very successfully as it was cast from a soft alloy (356) and not heat treated. On another occasion, Tom and I sponsored a Petrobond making session, Petrobond being the trade name for a sand mixture used to make molds for metal casting. I obtained the power and Tom set up his muller which required 220 volts. Tom added a 220 volt outlet to the shop and ran an extension cord out to the Back Shop. After a successful day of making casting sand, we decided to fire up a furnace. Someone wanting to run the 110v blower for the furnace, saw Tom's extension cord and plugged it in. The blower went off in a high scream. With no blower, the furnace was unable to get hot enough to melt, so that was the end of metal casting at Zube.

A Tribute to Tom Moore

By Doug Blodgett

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Tom Moore, one of the Houston Area Live Steamers charter members. Tom was a member from 1991 until several years ago when it became difficult for him to drive to the track.

Tom was quite an extraordinary man and was probably better known by HALS members for his machining skills than as a railroader. In addition to his years of activity at HALS, he also was a member of the Houston Home Metal Shop Club and served as their president for two terms.

A man of intelligence with an interest in helping others that endeared him to his many friends, Tom was always ready and willing to provide assistance to anyone with a project they were working on. He had an extraordinary home machine shop that was available to anyone who was willing to listen to good advice and learn how to do machine work in a safe manner. Several HALS members including Rick White and Pete Green took a beginner's machine shop course offered by Tom at his garage workshop, learning how to use a lathe and mill in the process.

Those who were friends of Tom and/or took his machining course will be familiar with his 64 page 1992 booklet on thread making that he compiled, writing his own programs on early computers.

It is called a Composite List of Screw Thread Dimensions. Some of the common threads in it are available on phone apps today, but not all. Tom included information on 27 different types of threads including Swiss Watch, Helicoil, British Standard Cycle, Thury, and others not

commonly used. Unlike apps, the book also contains information on what all the numbers mean, dimensions for different fits of each thread, and tooling information, whether internal or external.

Back at Zube Park, Tom was instrumental in the final assembly and wiring of the controls on the transfer table at the Roundhouse. He also designed and fabricated a scale switch machine that he wanted to be used by the club. Built to Tom's high standards, it was a work of art and could be adapted to work with an electric motor for remote operation. Eventually, it proved to be too complex for use on our railroad, and the project came to an end.

Back when Tom joined the club, there was still an interest in 3 1/2" (3/4" scale) gauge operation among live steamers at a club that preceded HALS, and Tom was building a live steam engine in that gauge under the guise of the Lone Wolf Locomotive Works. As Tom told me, he left the unfinished engine in plain sight in his garage one day and when he returned it was gone. He never had the heart to start another one but remained in HALS providing his expertise at building and repairing for many years. 🚂



Tom Moore at a 2010 HALS Christmas Party at the Hockley Community Center



L to R: Bob Barnett, Tom Moore, in background Peter Bryan.

John Frank

I have been notified that an old friend of mine, John Frank, passed away at 3 am this morning. This was a result of a long battle with Parkinson's disease.

John had been a major factor in Gauge 1 Live steam in Houston and was very active at the Gauge 1 track at HALS. He also served as a Director at HALS and was a part owner of the Goose.

Funeral service is at 1pm on Monday, October 4th in the chapel at St. Luke's Methodist Church, 3471 Westheimer Rd, Houston.

Gravesite service following at 2:30 at Glenwood Cemetery, 2525 Washington Ave, Houston.

Dennis Cranston

John Frank was involved in all aspects of railroading. In addition to live steam and HALS John was involved in several other railroad clubs. It seemed that every railroad event, train show, or club meeting I attended in the Houston area, John was there. He had an elaborate HO scale layout in his home and I was fortunate enough to be invited to many of his operating sessions. I will miss him.



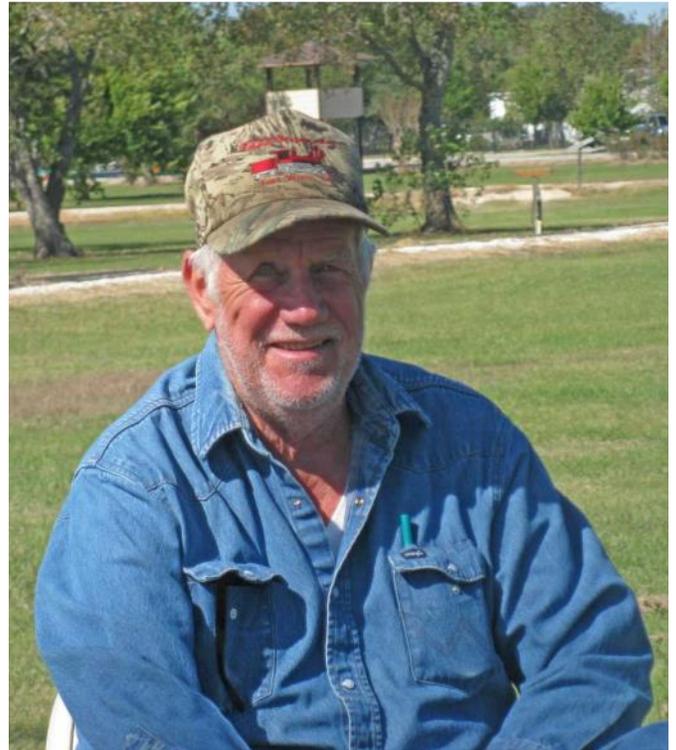
Gary L. McCoy

Jan 19, 1945 to Oct 31, 2021

HALS member, Gary Lynn McCoy, age 76, passed away October 31, 2021.

Gary will be remembered by many of the older members of HALS, but due to illness, he and his wife, Letha Grace, have not been frequent visitors in recent years.

If you were from out of state and had the good fortune to meet Gary for your first time, I'm sure you would have told all your out-of-state friends that you had met a real live Texas cowboy. And you would be right. He not only looked the part but was a real live cattle rancher with a patch of oil on his land. You don't get more Texas cowboy than that.



The image was enhanced by Gary showing up for meets with one of his two converted stock trailers that were equipped with both living quarters and a special storage area for his trains.

Gary and Letha Grace were the initial organizers of what is now a HALS tradition, the November "Toys for Tots" collection. Their unselfish efforts in this project have certainly enriched the lives of many children at Christmastime.



Gary and Letha Grace McCoy tending the Toys for Tots booth one cold November day.

Kenny Rhodes told me that "at meets Gary used to be the first one around the track with his steamer in the morning and held up his cane to clear the cobwebs from the track as he rode along",

Gary was larger than life and will be fondly remembered by his many friends in the live steaming fraternity.

(McCoy Continued on page 52)

(McCoy Continued from page 51)

Rick White Remembers Gary McCoy

I took hundreds of photos of Gary and Letha Grace from 2009 to 2019 as we traveled to tracks all over Texas and to Maricopa Live Steamers in Phoenix, AZ. We were fortunate to have many opportunities to sit down to dinner with them at meets and on HALS Public Run Days.

The Google photo album at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/pDwFWgn7gU56WzsN6> has most of my photos.

One favorite photo from November, 2009, shows Gary and Letha Grace on Gary's train being pulled by his put-put loco. Another is the very last photo in the album and it shows the hard passage of 10 years for Gary and my wife Monterey. It was taken at the 28th Anniversary Meet in November of 2019, and both are riding their wheels.

Letha Grace and Gary started the **Toys for Tots** drive we hold at our November Public Run Days and photos of many years show these Toys for Tots drives in the Google Photos album link above. Thank you, Gary and Letha Grace for starting this tradition that continues to this day.

Rick White



Kari Wirth Reminisces

I'll never forget meeting Gary, Letha, & Rusty at HALS. They were some of the first people to include me in this hobby. I am so sad to hear of his passing and he will forever be remembered by me for our times cherishing a loved hobby. ~ *Kari Wirth*

Heidi Noyer

March 9, 2022





Remembering Virginia Freitag

By Jim Cash

In October of 1998, I went to the Great American Train Show... I can't be sure, but I think it was held at the George R. Brown Convention Center that year. I had been casually running HO model trains

since I received my first Christmas train as a boy. In 1998, I was on a mission to find some rare Texas and Pacific rolling stock for a new HO layout I was planning to put around my Christmas tree that year.

As I wandered around the vendors and the layouts, I came across something unusual... a train BIG ENOUGH TO RIDE ON! Wow.... This was really cool. They didn't have a track setup, but they had some neat displays and a bunch of friendly people. I grabbed a brochure and then someone said "You know, we have a track out at Zube Park...and tonight, after we leave the train show, it is Public Run Day." Those words changed my life.

My family made the trek out to Zube Park. I was hooked! That evening, as I held my 2 year old Cooper on my shoulders, I heard something magical. "You know, we are always looking for new members....no experience necessary." Seriously? Yup...I was sold.

I started coming out to meetings and workdays and helped on Public Run Days. I soon qualified as a conductor. Eventually, I achieved the coveted rank of "Engineer". It just kept getting better.

It was at one of those events that I first met Gil and Virginia Freitag. They were relatively new to HALS, having joined in January of 1998. Friendly doesn't even begin to describe them. They both had a smile that would reach out and touch your soul. You couldn't help but smile when you were around them. Virginia loved to laugh. Her sweet laughter was infectious.

Virginia was ALWAYS helping. She was never

idle. If there was something that needed doing, she was right there with Gil picking up a shovel or a bucket of ballast....whatever needed to be done.

Virginia NEVER got angry....now she would disagree...nicely and say: "Well...." (long drawn out well)....."I don't know if I believe that, but I've seen other people do it like this...." She was a wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and experience.

When it came to meets, that meant food. Virginia ALWAYS brought something. Usually a dessert... and then would fret that she hadn't brought enough. (There was always enough.) She was a well-practiced hostess.

She loved to entertain. I do believe that Virginia and Gary Brothers would compete to see who could be the first to get a game of Mexican Train started each night. Many times, she would be the last to leave as she would stick around to help clean up after the games had ended.

In April of 2003, Gil and Virginia's Stony Creek & Western Railroad made the cover of Model Railroader magazine. I think I was nearly as excited about it as they were. They were now the most famous friends I had. It was a REALLY big deal. I remember that Virginia hosted a reception at her house to celebrate the event. Everything was PERFECT! It felt like Virginia had spent weeks preparing the house and the food for this special event. She wanted this to be something special for Gil. I still have my April 2003 copy of Model Railroader magazine.



Gil and Virginia were some of the prime movers behind our Phase III track expansion. Literally movers...of dirt... Lots and Lots of dirt. Virginia was a master at running the gator back and forth from the dirt pile to the roadbed. She knew exactly where Gil wanted the dirt. Gil eventually turned his green Ford truck into a dump truck. It was a very clever invention and it allowed them to move TONS of dirt every time they came out

(Virginia Continued on page 55)

(Virginia Continued from page 54)

to the park.

In phase III, if you look at all the concrete piers and abutments, EVERY single one of them has Virginia's sweat and tears mixed into it. Oh, and don't forget the grade crossings..... They are 18" thick! Virginia helped mix TONS of concrete...one bucket at a time.

The list of things Virginia helped with is endless. Recently, when she didn't have the strength or time, she offered to help finance small projects around the track.

She had her hand in everything. The beautiful buildings at Sweetwater, Lakeside, Sumrall, and Cabin Creek. The Ballast Tipple at Hannah's Junction. Amazing cattle cars made of LEXAN. Winner of the Marshall Black, Lee Balkum, C.T. Sumrall Iron Horse, and Les Burford awards. Landscaper, weeder, track builder, conductor, engineer, concession worker, entertainer, hostess.... But most important, she was a wonderful friend.

In the world of model railroading, Gil is Master Model Railroader #91. But Virginia was the wind in his sails, the coal in his firebox, the steam in his boiler, and the love of his life. Gil and Virginia were a matched set. One was not complete without the other.

Virginia, we miss you.

By **Jim Cash**



Photo by Rick White

Some Facts of Virginia Freitag's Involvement in the Hobby of Model Railroading.

- ⊗ Virginia and Gil hosted open houses for the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's November Layout Tours (later called the Fall Layout Tours) from 1972 until 2021, with the only exception being the 2020 Covid cancellation of the in-person tours.
- ⊗ Virginia and Gil hosted the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Christmas Party in their home for around 50 years, from 1970 or 1971 until 2019. The 2021 Christmas Party was held at the Harris County Bayland Park community center and Virginia and Gil were presented with a plaque And A GIANT Thank You card signed by all San Jac attendees.
- ⊗ Virginia served the LSR as the Non-Rail events coordinator for conventions for many, many years.
- ⊗ Virginia served as the non-rail coordinator for the 1989 NMRA National Convention held in Houston. She later received the

Achievement Certificate for Association Volunteer for this service.

- ⊗ Virginia was awarded the 1999 John E. Loeffler Award for service to the LSR. This award was later recaptioned the Loeffler/Freitag award and still later changed to the "Freitag Award". The "Freitag Award" was deliberately named that to honor **BOTH Freitag's** for their many years of service to the LSR.
- ⊗ The Freitag's were very active in the Houston Area Live Steamers for many years, with Gil serving as Vice President of Operations and Virginia working with the concessions, ordering the re-stocking of HALS souvenirs and serving as Conductor and Engineer on Run Days.
- ⊗ Virginia was the mother of five children and Grandmother to 13.
- ⊗ And last, but certainly not least: It is Universally agreed by Houston Model Railroaders, and most likely all LSR & HALS Members, that Virginia is fully qualified for Sainthood for her unwavering devotion to and care for Gil since his stroke in March of 2010.

Some Virginia Memories

-Spence Gaskin

I know many of you knew her much longer and better than I, but my family feels very privileged for the time we did have with Mrs. Freitag. I was first introduced to her and Gil on Halloween in 2013. I was decorating our house while in my Conductor outfit as a costume, when a neighbor saw me and said, "I have someone you HAVE to meet!" Thus, I was drug around the block to meet an amused Virginia. Suddenly this family I didn't know before seemed to be everywhere! It turned out we went to the same church, were both HALS members (we had just joined), and my best friend had once been an Occupational Therapist for Gil. Virginia was instantly lovable; her passion for everything from trains and family to the arts and sports kept the conversations going, and soon she had adopted Steph and I beyond just being neighbors or train friends.



When our son Francis was born, Virginia was determined to be one of the first to meet him, so sure enough, she and Gil were soon at the Hospital. They had

previously driven up to Spring for the baby shower. I often have trouble getting myself out of bed, she on the other hand always seemed to have her and Gil on the move. Although I work for a railroad, she knew her way around the railroads and yards of Houston better than I ever will. At minimum, every Sunday after Mass they were off exploring the city to see what the railroads were up to, typically accompanied by Gus and Rhoda Freitag.

When Francis had his First Birthday, they showed up ready for the party. She even gave my newer hobby of pinball machines a try. She seemed able to chat easily with everyone, knowing all the local sports to keep up with my in-laws, the ins and outs of the Texas Medical Center to relate to our friends in that field



They also made their way down to Galveston for one of the excursions we ran to Brenham and back, where she and I managed to get them into one of the fancy private cars instead of general seating. She was so excited about that, and for that matter every little



thing we or anyone did for them, an amazing and generous person.

If you are a newer member, take a chance to dig through the old Stalk Talk pages online and see all the work she and Gil were part of out there, particularly on Phase III. Oddly enough, a few years ago when my dad was looking through old pho-



GIL FREITAG MEMORIES

-Spence Gaskin

Last month at Virginia's funeral there was much speculation on how Gil could survive without the love of his life, as well as resolutions to get him back out to Zube for the Memorial Day Meet. Unfortunately, his time with us was even shorter than we could have guessed and this inseparable pair was re-united just barely a month after her passing. I unfortunately didn't know Gil before his stroke, but even with his aphasia he was an incredible man, and an inspiration.

Gil's vocabulary was severely limited, but between his determination & Virginia's help, it was possible to figure out much of what he was trying to convey. Like Jim Cash alluded to in his tribute to Virginia, her drawn out "Wellll....." of disagreement carried a lot of weight to it, so also did his few words. His often repeated "Thank You!" and "Yes sir!" were as packed full of gratitude as I have ever heard. When I would visit their house, it was often his excuse to act up a bit, get out of his chair and crawl under the layout. I would ask him not to, as it always upset Virginia, but when his mind was set on something...it was going to happen. I couldn't understand most of what he said, but he knew that layout better than anyone else ever will...and he would emphatically point at different wiring and try and get Bob Barnett or I's attention about whatever issue was bugging him. Virginia would eventually catch us, and his catch-all phrase of "busted" never seemed more appropriate.

I think the most excited I ever saw Virginia was a day when I mentioned visiting my parents in Spring, Tx. Gil tried to pipe up with something, and we were playing the guessing game to figure out what he was getting at. Was it about my parents? no The dispatchers in Spring? no, but then he said "boxcar" and Virginia suddenly focused on that. "Honey, did you say boxcar???" and he said it again. "That's a new word!" she exclaimed, and he said it over and over, so happy to have regained a word that had been taken from him. Their joy was so infectious. He had so many hard times and bad days, but she was the perfect cheerleader keeping him going and focused on the good. Eventually things calmed down, and we

figured out he was talking about Lloyd Yard, and she drove him there later in the week to go see it again.

He had such an enthusiasm when people took the time to engage with him. During the layout tours people would come say hello...often they were folks who only knew him through the reputation of his work being published in model railroad magazines...and he would greet them just as warmly as those who he had known for years. During Mass, he was very much a fan of the sign of peace, where parishioners greet their neighbors with a handshake or other sign of affection, and a smile never seemed to fail him when there were kids around.



Any doubt in his observation skills was lost when travelling with them. They often

picked me up for the San Jacinto Model Railroaders club meetings, and he was definitely still the navigator. Virginia and I would be talking about something...and he would get her attention and point at another way to go. She might dismiss it at first...but then find out he had spotted a far-off train blocking our path, or traffic we needed to avoid, and he would



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contentedly nod when we finally caught up with him on what was wrong. It was a very subtle “I told you so” that didn’t go un-noticed.

You all who have been part of this city and railroading community much longer than I have know what a void his departure leaves...He and Virginia fostered model railroading & promoted its family aspects for more than fifty years. Their kindness, loyalty, and love will never be forgotten.



Gil exiting after a train excursion in Galveston, followed by Gilbert & Emmy. I am operating the lift. Picture by Dr. Duncan of the Galveston RR Museum.

Gil and Virginia Freitag at HALS

When Peter Bryan introduced Gil and Virginia as new members in the January 1998 edition of Stack Talk, it was immediately clear with their skills and experience in the model railroading hobby they would be great additions to our club.



You do not have to go very far to see the impact Gil and Virginia Freitag at Houston Area Live Steamers. They had a part in many of the projects at HALS, like building road beds, building concrete bridge abutments, scale model size



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buildings around the track, and much more.



In December 1998 Straw Boss Gil Freitag was in charge of dismantling the Dinky Creek Bridge at the Browning Railroad, preparing to be relocated at Zube Park in March of 1999.



The Tale of two Alcos. The two Alco RS3's seen on the tracks at Zube were built by Gil and his son Gilbert with Peter Bryan providing encouragement, soda pop and most importantly staying out of the way. More to this story can be



found in the April 1999 Stack Talk.



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For more photos of Gil and Virginia Freitag's time with HALS go to:

<https://goo.gl/photos/cHnvC7x4qmXuX1wR6>

Greg Moore



Joan Noyer

August 2, 2022

Joan Phyllis Jacks Noyer was born on June 27th, 1941 in Napa, California to Guy Wallace Jacks and Clara Jenkins Jacks. She graduated from Napa High School and later went to Napa Junior College and Sacramento State. She later graduated from Fresno State in 1985 with her teaching degree and taught within the Clovis Unified School District at Clovis High, Jefferson Elementary and later at Gateway High School in California as a Special Education teacher. While working at her



parent's hobby shop in Napa, California, she met Bill Noyer, one of the handsome young salesmen that called on the shop. They dated and married 6 months later and had three children, Lisa, Billy and Danny. They lived throughout the state of California and eventually settled in Clovis, California, where they lived on 5 acres in view of the Sierra mountain range for 42 years. They spent much of the early years on the lake, boating and skiing with their family. In later years, they started on their scale-train adventures, joining a number of California train clubs throughout the state and west coast. They continued their boating adventures on two different cabin cruisers and enjoyed them immensely.

They moved to Harker Heights, Texas in October of 2016, which has been their launching point for many of their train and traveling adventures. They became members of **HALS (Houston Area Live Steamers)** shortly after arriving in Texas where Joan made many new friends and renewed her status in the train widows club. She found and joined Mountain View Baptist Church, just around the corner from their neighborhood, where, as usual, she made many new friends and pseudo family members.

In June of this year, Joan and Bill renewed their vows as they celebrated their monumental 60th wedding anniversary.

Joan went to be with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on August 2nd of this year.

Joan is survived by her husband, Bill, two sons Billy and Danny and daughter Lisa. She also leaves many grandchildren, Daniel, Kyle, Jacob, Billy, Jill, Sampson, Philip, Victor, Belle, JV and Bena.



The Following is an Excerpt from Ron's Obituary



Ronald Sabin Pasley

MARCH 26, 1946 – MARCH 18, 2023



Ron loved trains and history. He volunteered at the National Railroad Historical Society Museum restoring train cars and leading tours. In the mid 1990's, he joined the Houston Area Live Steamers where he helped build all three sections of the track, fixed engines, and worked as an engineer and conductor on the passenger trains on the scale model trains in Zube Park. Unable to participate for the past few years, he chose to pass away on the first HALS Public Run Day of the year. He also belonged to the Southwestern Live Steamers and enjoyed their 'meets'. After retirement, he and his wife bought a trailer and toured national parks, museums, rode scenic trains and visited scale model railroads.

From Doug Blodgett

I am very sorry to hear about Ron's passing. I remember him well as he was a major force in the club during the early days. He was incredibly strong and one of my most endearing memories is of him transforming a 6-foot-long piece of 8" steel channel into a 7 1/2" gauge piece by beating the center with a sledge hammer until the sides bowed inward to 7 1/2". I guess he was going to eventually build a car stand with it. Ron also laid a spur track into 13 stitches in the very early days and was going to use that to store the DeVerter Diesel that we used to use for maintenance work in the

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shed. That track is long gone, removed when the county cut new ditches for the car barn. He also had a steam engine that he was building. I seem to remember that it had some unusual pieces on it because, as noted, he was a professional machinist, and adapted many off the shelf items to work on the engine. I never got to see it run, but I think I heard that he finally completed it and ran it.

The last time I saw him was several years ago and he was obviously having severe medical issues. I hope that he did not suffer. You were a good man Ron. We will miss you.

Rick White: For many years Ron and Mary Lou Pasley were HALS members until Ron's health problems started (see link to obituary where his illness is mentioned). Ron and Mary Lou were also SWLS members. And, if you look at <https://hals.org/members/halsofficers.html> on the members only page, you will notice that Ron was Jr. 1997 and Sr. Director 1998 and Mary Lou was Secretary for 3 years 2002-2004. Ron is fondly remembered as the member who would always put up the flag. Ron is remembered on our farm as the only one who ever got lost walking around the farm.

Bill Courtright: I'm very sorry to hear about Ron. I could see him getting slower over the years thinking the inevitable was happening. I'm sure everyone that knew him felt the same way. It's happening to all of us as time marches on so to speak.

Steven Tacconelly: I'm sad to hear that. He was one of the members I fondly remember working with to make concrete ties long ago.

Jim Cash: I liked Ron a lot. I'm sorry to hear of his passing. My condolences.



JB Cason: I didn't know Ron well but liked him. Sad we're losing so many of our members.

Spence Gaskin: Mary Lou and Ron were the first people to welcome me to the club when I was interested in joining. He was having medical issues then, but they were still able to travel extensively. He and my Dad were from the same area of New York, so it was nice to hear about their visits up there. I hope his final years were as comfortable as possible.





Rick White



William Earl (Bill) Smith



Bill's Obituary

On the evening of April 2, 2023, Bill passed away peacefully. Bill was being visited and comforted by family members at the Methodist Willowbrook Hospital in Houston, TX at the time of his passing. Bill was 71 years old.

Bill was born in Dallas, TX on June 5, 1951, the first child of Shirley Jean (McGarvey) and Richard Earle Smith, but grew up in Arlington, TX where he enjoyed cars and rock n roll music. He was active in Junior Achievement in high school. After graduating from Sam Houston High School, he studied at the University of Texas at Arlington where he earned an Associate Degree. He then took a job at Brown and Root in Houston, TX as a draftsman. Soon thereafter, he married the love of his life, Claudia Callaway, and they had 2 children, a son, Matthew and a daughter, Rachel. After spending several years at Brown and Root, he moved to Honeywell where he worked for more than 30 years.

He earned the Black Belt in Six Sigma in his professional career. He also returned to school to earn his Bachelor's Degree and then his Master's Degree while he was working at Honeywell.

Bill had many hobbies and interests during his life.

He practiced karate and kendo for many years achieving the rank of Sixth Degree black belt. He was designated as a member of the World Kendo team representing the USA in Canada. He traveled to Japan several times practicing in many dojos and meeting many Sensei's. He was an assistant instructor and instructor at the Houston Budokan during his martial arts career. He was also adopted into the Chiba

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Family in Japan as a Hatamoto in 1979.

Bill spent hours on his bicycle participating in several long-distance rides including the Hotter N Hell 100-mile ride in Wichita Falls, TX. After he tired of pedaling, he moved to motorcycles when he bought his first Honda Gold Wing and six months later rode to California and back with Claudia. They took many vacations on their Gold Wing to the western states including riding as far as Montana. Bill and a friend even rode the Iron Butt Challenge (1000 miles in 24 hours).

Bill was a member of HALS (Houston Area Live Steamers) for many years where he served as President for several of those years. Bill loved steam trains and he and Claudia rode many of the historic steam trains around the country. As he matured, he really enjoyed the BYOC (Bring Your Own Chair) Wednesdays out at Zube Park with his buddies.

Bill was also a pistol enthusiast. He liked target shooting and was quite good at it. He always looked forward to going to the shooting range on Thursdays with his good friend, Darrell Craig.

Bill was also a member of the Woodlands Photography Club. He loved learning about the technology of photography even more than actually taking the photos.

Bill's son is a basketball coach at Barber's Hill High School and Bill was considered the team grandfather for the basketball teams where he attended almost every home game.

Bill was preceded in death by his father, Richard Earle Smith; his grandmothers, Monica (McNeff) Wilson and Zula (Kincannon) Smith; his grandfathers, Lawrence McGarvey and James Eugene Smith; and nephew, Richard Anthony Smith.

Bill is survived by his wife of 50 years, Claudia (Callaway) Smith; mother, Shirley Jean (McGarvey) Smith; son and spouse, William Matthew Smith and Anne Schellhase; daughter and spouse, Rachel Lauren (Smith) Woodall and Daren Woodall. Brothers James Lawrence Smith and Steven Richard Smith. Also,

five grandchildren – Riley Evan Woodall, Mia Shea Woodall, Landon Chase Smith, Jordan Reece Smith & Emma Grace Woodall. Bill is also survived by his mother-in-law, Elna Rose Callaway and brother-in-law and wife, Billy Callaway and Victoria (Matthijetz) Callaway along with several nieces and nephews.

The family wants to let friends know about philanthropic opportunities that Bill would be interested in.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to HALS (Houston Area Live Steamers) at P.O. Box 215, Hockley, TX 77447 or donations@hals.org .

Or

His short illness was due to complications of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

This happens to be a unique area of research at the AdvenHealth Translational Re-

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search Institute in Orlando, FL.

Bill was a clinical research participant earlier in his life and the family believes he would enthusiastically support this research. Please consider making a donation in his memory to advance this important clinical science at <https://give.adventhealth.com/fundraiser/4585531>

From Rick White

I am starting a tribute to Bill Smith using the photos that I have of him since he started at HALS. As of this writing, I have only uploaded the photos from the current time back to mid-2019 (85 photos). These are real telling for all us old timers (over 70). We start in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic and are working, running trains on Public Run Day, and riding trains on fun run days. During 2020, the first year of Covid-19, we are still working, sometimes with masks, other times just staying apart. But by late 2022 and in 2023 we are just sitting. And, Bill had given up on coming to work days and Public Run Days. We were run down, and it was not just that we were a year or three older. Covid-19 affected us. We ran out of energy. But, sitting and talking, we got to hear Bill's stories of riding around the US with Claudia on his motorcycle. And we heard about his cameras and Claudia's cameras. Bill says he used his good cameras to take snapshots. Claudia is a photographer. Beautiful places and snowy roads. When all we did was ride trains on Public Run Days and work on Work Days, we did not talk. The advent of BYOC (Bring Your Own Chair) Wednesdays gave us that ability to sit and talk that we did not have before. Bill was just as big a part of BYOC as he was a big part of HALS as President back in 2016-2018. Bill Smith is missed already.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/X5pcxayDGzcd1rvj8>

When you go to the link and see all the photos, you cannot see the labels. To see the labels click on a photo, then click on the i in the circle on the upper right. That shows the meta data on the right side. Unfortunately, the label (date and who is in the photo) is on the bottom of the meta data. The oldest photo shows up first, with newest at the bottom. As I add photos, the oldest will still be first.

Responses to the news of Bill Smith's passing:

JB Cason: Just wanted to let everyone know Bill passed away this afternoon about 5:30. When I know the arrangements I will let everyone know.

Ken Smith: Our condolences to the family. Ken & Betty ☐

Mike Alexander: Sad to hear. All the best to his family. Case, Elizabeth and Mike

(Bill Smith Continued on page 67)

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Rich Businger: Thoughts and prayers to the family. He was a good guy.

Marge & George Leventon: So Very sad.

David & Benjamin Dutchmann: We will pray for Bill's family to have Peace in this time of loss. Bill was always very nice to us and made us feel welcome even though we were not there as much as others. He enjoyed that a young boy like Benjamin had interest in Live Steam.

Steve Dennis: Bill will be greatly missed! He was one of the first people I met at HALS! He became a good friend. My thoughts and prayers go out to the family and to the HALS family!

Dennis Cranston: Another member of the Zube Park Shade Tree Sitters gone. Will be missed.

Steven Tacconelly: I always loved taking to bill any chance I got. He will truly be missed.

Spence Gaskin: While he wasn't the first person I talked to at the club, Bill was the first person who really took me in & showed me around at my first meet. He shared a lot of that infectious enthusiasm with many newcomers. He and Jeff are the ones who taught me to fire steam before I had even touched the throttle of an electric engine. Gone way too soon.

Robert Barnett: Very sad and a huge shock to me. I saw him at the track on Ops Day and everything seemed OK. We never know what's in store.

Asher Dean: I may not have known Bill very much, but my heart still goes out to his family. He will be missed.

Chris Schieck: What a nice tribute to Bill, Rick! Thanks for taking all the photos you do, and thanks for adding the descriptive notes about them.

Loren Miller: That is great Rick.

JB Cason: Lots of good pictures. Thanks Rick. He is missed.

Doug Blodgett: Bill seemed to be one of those people who was just "there" all the time. Three time president, former Stack Talk editor, Bill knew his way around the club. Shortly after joining, he was one of the first to take the training course on LNR and became deeply involved with the operating and taking care of the little steamer. So much so, that he later wrote an incredible instruction manual for it. I have never seen anything like it for any other engine. And he went on to share his knowledge by teaching others how to run the engine. He was one of originators of the Wednesday BYOC gang and I will sorely miss his presence at our weekly meetings.

William B. Noyer: Bill was the first person we (Mom, Dad and I) met our first visit to HALS. He was so welcoming and made you feel at home. To me he was the face of HALS that day. As Spence said, he had this infectious enthusiasm that made you want to be a part of HALS even if you didn't even have an interest in trains; of course Dad and I we're already in. After finding out he was the president of the club at that time I would refer to him as " Mr. President " every time I saw him. Him and I had many a great conversations, both at meets and Public Run Days about all sorts of topics. I am going to miss him terribly.

Crispin Richards: I met him at Ops Day. He was very generous with his time and knowledge. I wish

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I'd had the opportunity to meet with him more. Little wonder he has left such a hole in the lives of the people that have known him. It's great that Rick has compiled such a tribute to celebrate the life of one of the good guys.

Allen Melton: Bill was very kind and helpful when I first joined. A true gentleman and a loss for everyone. Prayers for his family.

Leighanna Brownlee: I am so sorry. Bill was very kind to me and Jason when we joined HALS.

Keith Bailey: Although I don't believe I got to meet Bill Smith, as it seems like an eternity since I was a regular at ZUBE Park. Please accept My Heart Felt Condolences to Bills Family, and Y'All at his passing!!

Pete Greene: Though we aren't hanging out there any more, Donna and I will sure miss Bill and our heart goes out to his family. I always felt a special connection to Bill because, like Peder, we all 3 used to fly airplanes. So when we weren't talking trains, we could always talk about airplane adventures. God speed, Bill.



<https://photos.app.goo.gl/X5pcxayDGzcd1rvj8>



Janet Tobias

February 16, 2024

Janet Clairfield Tobias, born on March 29, 1937, peacefully passed away on Friday, February 16, 2024, surrounded by her loving family. She was 86 years old. Janet was the cherished daughter of Max and Ruth Clairfield.



While still in high school, fate introduced her to Barry Tobias. After graduating from San Jacinto High, Janet attended U of H for a short time and prepared for her wedding. Their union on June 16, 1956, marked the beginning of a journey filled with enduring love. Strengthened by their shared traditions, such as their steadfast Friday trips to the beauty shop, Janet and Barry crafted a bond that stood the test of time. Together, they created a warm and welcoming home at Town and Country Apartments, where the arrival of their two daughters, Terri and Randi, brought immeasurable joy into their lives.



HALS Christmas Party 2004



HALS Christmas Party 2006



Loren Miller member of HALS since May 13, 2017.

Loren passed away April 9th, 2024 at the age of 77, surrounded by his closest loved ones. He worked in the flooring industry for almost 60 years, clear up till the day before he passed.

He was a jack-of-all-trades and a master-of-none as he would say, and enjoyed many hobbies including camping and fishing.

Most recently, he became passionate about trains and giving back to the community through his partnership with the Houston Area Live Steamers Organization. Some of his favorite memories were of giving free rides at Zube Park, where he enjoyed seeing the smiling faces of the kiddos riding the trains.

Photos by Rick White and Doug Blodgett

