

# NEW MEXICO STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

AND  
RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. Box 27270, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7270—Tel (505)246-2926

## STEAM AMBASSADOR Young NMSLRHS Member Helps Preserve The History Of Steam

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

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

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



Peter rehearses before a few NMSLRHS members

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

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

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

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

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

## ANOTHER CHALLENGE MET See One, Do One, Teach One

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

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

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

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

First, what is Carbae 108?



'Professor' Dan and the air pumps.



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

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

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# BANGING ON A 2900

## Distaff Member Gets Down And Dirty

### Introduction

*It is not often we see a need to define or explain words or statements. In the case of our first female member of the elite 'Banging on a 2900' club, we have a descriptive subtitle, but because the terms may be subject to negative interpretation, they should be defined.*

*Distaff: Adj.—An archaic term for a female family member. (It is now considered by some people to be derogatory). Distaff is derived from spinning and weaving, a chore once considered exclusively a woman's work or concern.*

*Down and Dirty: Adj.—Realistic; intent; competitive.*

*The following article by Dr. Mike reveals how this NMSLRHS member debunked the first term by practicing the second. —Ed.*

“John Henry had a little woman  
 Her name was Polly Ann  
 John Henry got sick and had to go to bed  
 Polly drove the steel like a man, Lord, Lord!  
 Polly drove the steel like a man.”

*A preceding verse is from the famous rail song “John Henry”.*

## Board of Directors Election

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

The were two positions up for a vote. One of those was Board Secretary Steve Bradford's position. After a number of years in the role of Secretary, Steve came to the conclusion that getting reelected to the Board might interfere with a planned lengthy motor home trip to the Pacific Northwest. He chose not to run for reelection. Its certain that he will be checking out steam operations up that way.

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

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

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## LOOKING DOWN THE TRACK

### What Will You Do When... ?

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

What happens when it is restored?

Do you plan to operate it?

Will you do excursions?

Where will you find cars for excursions?

Where will you operate it?

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

Are you looking ahead?

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

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

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

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*Gail (Wilhelm) Kirby emerges from a dirty, hot, work place—the 2926 firebox. She is proof that locomotive restoration isn't just 'man's work'. She has spent many hours in some of the hottest and dirtiest places in Albuquerque, all at the 2926 site.*

Gail Wilhelm was born here in Albuquerque in May of 1953. She is the youngest of five kids. Three brothers and a sister still call her Baby Gail (*don't try it*). Her dad was a mechanical supervisor working on base doing a job he could not talk about. Before Gail came along he had made his way from Virginia to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and eventually to New Mexico.

As the family drove into Albuquerque through Tijeras Canyon her mom started crying. At that time she didn't like Albuquerque but subsequently it grew on her and she wouldn't go back to Virginia. (I've heard a pretty similar story about my mother-in-law coming to New Mexico in the early 50s.)

Except for a short stay in Bossier, Louisiana (near Shreveport) where the chiggers and ticks chewed on her, Gail has always been a New Mexican.

Gail's days as an elementary school student were different from what one might think. In fact, they could be considered downright exciting—that is if you like regular moves. The moves were driven by Albuquerque's rapid growth. The rapid growth meant that a number of new schools were built in a very short time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



*Desert Dream: It offers access to good fishing, and exploration of spectacular scenery that is inaccessible via other forms of transportation.*

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



*The Kirby's Piper Dakota; When they are not steaming, they are riding on air.*

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

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

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

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

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



*The leader of the choir is also very good with a grinder—and other tools as well.*

She has become a stalwart on our restoration team. She is making the term 'down and dirty' agree with its most positive definition.



*Here, Gail is stacking superheater tubes. Yep, they are dirty—very dirty! As in soot, grease, rust, etc.*

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

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## TRACTOR MOVE

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

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

Upon completion of 2926, it too, will be on display at WHEELS when not operating. Thus both of Jim's restoration projects will be close to each other for all to see.



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will require contributions to the planning process by a number of other interests.

After all, NMSLRHS may be the titular owner of 2926, but it is not just our locomotive, nor is it just Albuquerque's locomotive. It is NEW MEXICO's historical icon.

In looking down the track, we have begun contact with a number of individuals and organizations that will be a part of our long range plans. Some of that contact is indirect public relation tools such as our new rack card, this newsletter, and our web site.

Other contact about New Mexico and beyond is more direct. That includes attendance at tourism events, presentations to interested groups, and visits throughout the state to brief city, county and state officials.

We will have more about 'Looking Down The Track' in future issues, including summaries of visits to Hatch, Deming, Las Cruces, Spaceport America, et al.

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## STEEL DRIVIN' MAN

### Who Was The Famous Folk Hero?

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

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

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

Answers are available by sending an email to: [nmslrhs@nmslrhs.org](mailto:nmslrhs@nmslrhs.org)

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There are a couple of tricks. Rolling the rope flat first will allow you to massage it into place around the shaft. There is a little bottle of slimy juice, (FDA approved for food applications—!?!?) that you rub over the rope prior to placement. Then you have to re-cut the Garlock to the correct length after you screw up the first cut by failing to allow for the stretching out of the ring as you flatten it.

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



Dan Dalgarno: Is he seeing, doing, or teaching? Is Student Mike watching?

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

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

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

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

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



How to qualify for the dirty finger nail club.

# OPEN HOUSE 2010 AT 2926

THE 2926 RESTORATION SITE OPEN HOUSE WILL BE SATURDAY OCTOBER 2, 9:00AM TO 4:00PM

Come down to the 2926 restoration site. Have free hot dogs and soft drinks.

Listen to live music and check our progress in restoring this great locomotive.

**SITE LOCATION:**  
8th St. 4 Blocks south of I-40

**Bring the whole family  
AND  
BRING YOUR CAMERA**

**PARKING**  
—8TH ST  
—Between Tracks & Fence