

# Sidewinder Switchback

## M.L.S. FALL MEET 2010 *by Wm. Kent Concoran, Sr.*

### Inside this issue:

Fall Meet at Adobe Mountain	1,3,5
Reconfiguring the Trailer	1,5,6
Building a Railroad	2,4
Photo of North side of Paul's railroad	2
Photo of club members at M.L.S.	3
Photo of South side of Paul's railroad	4

The fall meet at Adobe Mountain held by Maricopa Live Steamers during October 2010 was special to the Yuma Territory Live Steamers for several reasons. Although some members were not back in the region to attend the event, those who did attend had a wonderful weekend. Dale Giles had spent the summer installing hand rails onto his GP39 engine. Carlos Santos changed his Plymouth Switcher from a Red paint scheme to Yellow and added another battery to the engineer's car. He also got the starter to work off of a switch so the pull cord would be a secondary startup option. Both of these engines and riding cars were brought to the Fall Meet.

Carlos & I brought the equipment up on Friday. The equipment was secured in the trailer that was recently expanded with an upper deck for lighter rail cars. Dale and Betty Giles arrived later that afternoon. They all stayed in Phoenix the whole weekend. Chuck Finnilla and Marsea Petry arrived on Saturday and left for Yuma late that night. While we were at M.L.S. we all had a great time in Phoenix.

## RECONFIGURING THE TRAILER

We have been using flatbed trailers from Carlos Santos and DPE Construction to move our track and train to our temporary portable setup areas around Yuma. We have used Carlos' trailer to transport our rolling stock to M.L.S. events. Carlos also has an enclosed trailer we used to pick up our donated machine shop equipment. As we

### Abbreviations:

- I.G.A. Inter Governmental Agreement.
- M.L.S. Maricopa Live Steamers.
- JT&S Joshua Tree and Southern
- DPE Construction Don Peterson Engineering Construction

## INSTALLING A RAILROAD *by Wm. Kent Concoran, Sr.*

After contracting to build a railroad for Paul Chapman we worked on a proposal to submit to him consisting of the cost of labor to build the track and install it in his yard. Paul would provide the rail, ties, and hardware. We would assemble the rail into track panels, grade, level, and ballast the railroad. Before we started, Paul had a fire in his garage where his material was stored. Thankfully it was extinguished quickly and the damage was limited to the ties and plastic bags holding the screws. The ties had the ends and one edge charred but were still usable. The fire hardened the ties much like Neanderthal hunters hardened spears for hunting. This and the bug treatment Paul gave the ties will insure that any termites will not be eating these ties.

**With the depot being erected and the spur line being installed, Paul Chapman's' private railroad is taking shape. In the future this spur may reconnect with the main line.**



After the County Fair we developed a track plan for the route, and began building the track panels. We worked from the late spring throughout the summer producing track panels and delivering them to his yard. Because of the hardened ties we had to drill pilot holes for the screws to secure the rail through the tie plates and into the tie itself. Working with the charred ties became a dirty job. If we ever get a coal fired steam engine we will be prepared

## FALL MEET *Continued*

Friday there was open rail because the traffic was low. After viewing the video tape on safety in the clubhouse, Carlos & I were ready to depart on our adventures. Using Dale's engine and our riding cars we left the station for Werner, Bobberg, and Far Flung. These 3 routes kept us on the rails until the sun went behind the mountain on the west. The expansion of Far Flung had been completed and it was the perfect ride to take. The weather was warm and as we entered the lower end that wound through the Mesquite trees the cool shade was a welcome relief from the sun. After dinner Carlos started up his Plymouth switcher and headed off to Pottsville. I was camping in the area and jumped the train near the station at Perryview. From there we rode all of the other routes not traveled during daylight hours, and some a second time.

On Saturday, as the other members arrived, time was spent looking at the items for sale. By noon we started to run our trains again. At this point all trains had to contact the tower to route their trains to the track they wanted. I took Betty Giles out on Far Flung Flats on Dale's GP39 while Carlos took Dale and Chuck out on the Plymouth. When Betty & I reached the balloon loop on Far Flung we had to stop for traffic. While waiting there a coyote came walking through that area. He didn't seem to be concerned with any of the trains and passengers in that area. Marsea arrived and she got photos for our archives while we were resting the equipment and ourselves. We discovered that we had lost our headlights on the GP39 so Chuck & I walked the tracks looking for them. We found one and had to replaced the other. We were

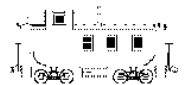


**Club members Carlos Santos, Kent Corcoran, Marsea Petry, and Chuck Finnila sit for a photo on Carlos' Plymouth switcher and cars. An idle moment in the afternoon before riding the rails again.**

## RAILROAD *continued*

for it. Meanwhile Paul had ballast material delivered in preparation for the installation. After each weekends work session Paul could see the progress of his railroad. Paul had a small depot built and started to install railroad items around the track route. His railroad empire was beginning to take shape.

In late summer the vacant property behind Paul's home came up for sale. Paul decided this would be perfect to expand his railroad empire and was able to purchase this property. This resulted in the original track plan being amended. The original oval was turned into a horse-shoe for now. By Labor Day weekend we had completed the building of the track panels. Grading and laying the track began before Thanksgiving and was completed before Christmas. The completion of the railroad will continue into 2011 when more material will arrive. Development of industrial spurs and trestles will be designed for the new property.



**Paul Chapman's railroad shown from the grade crossing winding west. The vacant lot in the back ground will be the continuation of the rail line.**

## FALL MEET *continued*

now ready for safe night riding.

Some of Carlos' kids and grandkids came up after dinner and rode our train from sunset until 11pm. While going out Far Flung Flats there was a bottleneck near Smolyk. After getting thru past that and back to the station every one left for the night. The weather was still warm and I took off for some late night riding. It was near 1pm when I put the train to bed and retired for the night.

Sunday morning the ballpark nearby had a flock of hot air balloons preparing for flight. The first one airborne was drawn over to Pottsville. Several other balloons got airborne and passed over head. Now the Lead Balloon starts heating hot air every few seconds. Each time he turns on the burner he doesn't rise, but descends over Dead man's Trestle where I had my camp. There was just enough acreage where there was brush and few trees where the balloon was about to land. Then the balloon gets a second breathe and slowly begins to ascend back into the sky. With that I went and warmed up the GP39 for some early rail-roading. I went to Pottsville first, and brought along my video recorder. Exiting Pottsville the switch had been rerouted onto Bobberg leading into New Diehl City. That was a great change to start the morning, making the route longer. Carlos showed up after 2 more routes and we prepared to load the equipment into the trailer. Once loaded we headed for Yuma and made it back by sundown. Unloading the equipment will wait for another day.



## RECONFIGURE *continued*

build and purchase new cars we have more choices on how many pieces we can bring.

We have transferred the sub-floor panels with flat bar track on them from the flatbed to the covered trailer. We have designed and installed an upper deck for lighter and lower height cars. Using a crossbeam construction, evenly placed laterally, we secured some of our straight steel track inside on either side to the trailer. At the tailgate we constructed a support for the

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AT JOE HENRY PARK.  
SCHEDULE TO BE ANNOUNCED**

## RECONFIGURED *continued*

track at the end of the tailgate. A section connects the track inside the trailer to the transfer table if available. Our first use of this trailer was the Fall Meet at M.L.S. As we were unloading the equipment we found that the extension for the upper deck was 5" longer than the tailgate. This caused us to move the trailer back or forth depending upon what deck is being used.

Also the feet on the stanchions at the tailgate were a bit long and high. When loading the straddle cars we got by the feet with no problem. But when unloading them at M.L.S. the running boards caught on the feet. The also were caught when we reloaded them for the ride home. Loading the equipment to return to Yuma was easier even though both engines were worn out from usage over the weekend and had to be pushed in. Both trips to and from Phoenix the equipment stayed secured. There will be more modifications in securing the upper deck cars so they do not shift forwards or back as well as limiting how high they lift.

