

745 JOURNAL

Steam Fest II: New Date, New Fun

Come one, come all, to Steam Fest II, on Saturday and Sunday, October 20 and 21, 2007, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Note that the **dates have changed** due to unforeseen circumstances.

Once again we will have Southern Pacific 745, our four roadworthy cars, and our caboose on hand. This year we are adding the opened-up gondola car as an observation platform from which to view both the Fest and the train action on the Public Belt's adjacent double-track main.

The Audubon Institute and the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad have again generously allowed LASTA to encamp on the track behind Audubon Park and set up to entertain, educate, and feed the public. Furthermore, Public Belt is transporting our train from our yard on Jefferson Highway to Audubon Park.

This year's Steam Fest will highlight the U.S. Army Transportation Corps in World War II, especially some personal experiences with the 723rd and 752nd R.O.B's, and some "austerity locomotives" that served the Allies. Our resident historian has been hard at work gathering information, pictures, videos, and artifacts to display in our theater cars.



Come to Steam Fest and see 745's cab, or they might fire my Dad as newsletter editor!

But of course that's not all. The cab will be open for your inspection; come and sit in the engineer's seat and grab the throttle, reverse lever, or brakes. Sit in the fireman's seat. Ring the bell. See our red caboose's "new" (to us) heater, just like in the olden days. The 2008 LASTA calendar, T-shirts, and other items will be available. We will also have special parking areas for antique cars.

And perhaps most importantly for Louisiana, we will have lots of food and music. The date change leaves things uncertain, but the previously-scheduled music was Hazel and the Delta Ramblers and Country Fried on Saturday and Benny Grunch and the Bunch on Sunday, and Ace DJ

Service throughout. We'll have a good selection of food, too. Check the LASTA web site (www.lasta.org) for updates!

To get to the Fest, enter Audubon Park from Magazine Street. From the uptown / up-river / Jefferson Parish side, almost as soon as you enter the park, turn right. From the downtown side, turn left just past the bus turnaround. Either way, go straight, then through the gate to the levee, across the tracks, and follow the main road's curves until you see 745 and the Fest.

Annual Inspection Complete, FRA Clears 745 for the High Iron

LASTA is pleased to report that SP 745 completed its annual inspection on June 26, 2007. Essentially, that means that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is not maintaining any particular restrictions on 745. Getting to this point is quite a relief and a blessing, and also a climb from the problems we faced a year ago after 745 had a low-water incident. Thanks to all of the volunteers who gave so much time preparing for, and participating in, the annual inspection!

Movie *Listerine* uses 745, this time under steam, in motion, and as herself

Another film crew has shot 745, this time under steam, in motion, and in her authentic Southern Pacific livery. On July 1, 2007, the cast and crew of the independent film *Listerine* descended on LASTA's yard in Jefferson Parish and spent the day filming. Our dedicated steam crew had 745 fired up and running along the tracks. This was not only a nice source of revenue for LASTA, but also a great chance to show a new and wider audience how exciting a real live, living and breathing steam locomotive can be, and what LASTA can do. But here is an eyewitness report.

from Bill Morris

I want to thank all those who participated in the making of the movie *Listerine* on Sunday. No matter how you participated, everyone's efforts are what made this another successful chapter in LASTA and SP 745's history. The film crew was very complimentary and appreciated all of our efforts. I was told by one of the members of the crew/cast that she had never worked with a more dedicated group before. They were able to get in all of the shots that were planned for the day. SP 745 performed beautifully and without any glitches.

I have said it before and I will say it again, LASTA has as good a group of members as anyone could hope to have.

Any railroad or business only wishes to have a work force as good as y'all.

Thanks again to everyone.

Hankins Day a success

We enjoyed a good turnout and good food for Hankins Day, LASTA's small way of saying thank you and farewell to our friend, member, and dedicated volunteer Mike Hankins, in a way that benefited his family. The regular LASTA Saturday sweat team descended on Mike's house to repair several things for Mike's wife Lisa and their son Joey.



*Wayne Minnick and Gerry Lynch at work on Hankins Day
Danny Rawinsky picture*

Free calendar when you pay your 2008 dues

LASTA has decided to provide a free copy of its 2008 calendar to every member who pays 2008 dues. Once again, we have a full-color, twelve-month, double-letter-size calendar featuring SP 745 and LASTA activities. Many thanks to calendar editor John Price and those who have allowed LASTA to use their pictures, including Shawn Levy, Louis Saillard, and James Robichaux.

The calendars retail for \$15, and cost LASTA about \$11 each to produce and mail to the members. To help offset this cost, LASTA is increasing its dues by \$5, to \$35 per year. Over and above the \$35 dues, we are asking for a **voluntary** additional \$5 contribution to help defray the calendar cost. In other words, LASTA would really appreciate your sending \$40, if you can, instead of \$35.

Mostly, though, the calendars are a way to keep LASTA and 745 on everyone's minds, and in everyone's hearts, on a daily basis. Think of 745 and smile.

The days before Operation Lifesaver, or trial lawyers . . .

We are not making this one up. Of course, we admit that the story is ultimately apocryphal. But it did appear in the Port Arthur, Texas *Daily News* on Wednesday, June 14, 1922, at page 3, column 5:

NAUGHTY PUFF PUFF

LONDON, June 14 – Two babies fell in front of a railroad train in the north of England. They were playing along the line and when the express pulled in sight, they fell over and rolled on the tracks.

The driver pulled his locomotive up but the speed of the engine could not be stopped. The babies were luckily pushed to one side by the cow-catcher.

"Naughty puff puff run over babies," they told their horrified mother, who found them playing on the line again a few moments later.

Bisso steam locomotive on the horizon

Many of you are familiar with the other steam locomotive that has sat on display behind Audubon Park: the Bisso Towboat Co. switcher that sits on a small hill just upriver from the Park. It is a 1907 ALCO 0-6-0 originally built for the Trinity & Brazos Valley. Those of you who have been members a long time may recall that Bisso Towboat has given LASTA quite a bit of access to this locomotive, LASTA has looked into the feasibility of restoring it, and Bisso actually leased it to LASTA for a nominal rent.

Well, we are trying to arrange to deliver the locomotive to LASTA's yard on Jefferson Highway. No date is set, and no firm arrangements are in place. However, we hope to soon have it available for viewing and preservation work at the LASTA yard.

Certainly putting the Bisso locomotive in operating condition would be a major undertaking, requiring hundreds of thousands of dollars and thousands of hours of skilled labor. And that day may never come. But we hope to at least have the locomotive in a location more accessible to the public, and to do what we can to at least prevent any further deterioration. Thanks Bisso!

LASTA issues a major thank you to . . .

As always, LASTA could do little without the help and generosity of many people and



The Bisso Towboat Co. steam locomotive, a 1907 ALCO 0-6-0 built as Trinity & Brazos Valley No. 76, from the limited public vantage available on January 31, 2006.

organizations, which comes in many forms. Recognition here is only a small way for us to say thank you, but we don't want our friends and benefactors to go unrecognized.

The youth group from the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, Massachusetts came to the New Orleans area to do good works for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and left behind a very generous monetary donation to LASTA. May you receive an appropriate blessing in return!

Mitey Automotive Center at 3530 Jefferson Highway (504-837-5122) has donated lots of used oil. Thank you for sending the oil to a place where it's *supposed* to burn!

Likewise, Bert's Complete Auto Repair at 409 David Drive (504-734-1612) has given us lots of used oil—thank you!

Last but not least, we have two new members of the 745 Club: Allan Nation and Richard C. Spencer. Thank

you both for your generous donations of \$745 each. Welcome aboard!

LASTA dues are coming due

Just a friendly reminder: LASTA dues are for a calendar year, and unless you are a 745 Club member, your membership lapses on January 1, 2008, unless you pay the 2008 annual dues (\$35) before then.

Your dues get you into LASTA's 2008 events for free, and as previously explained, include the full-color 2008 LASTA calendar plus this newsletter.

So please, if you have not already done so, renew your LASTA membership for 2008. You can do so both by sending your check or money order to LASTA at 727 Washington Ave., New Orleans, LA 70130; by paying through the LASTA web site (www.lasta.org); or by renewing at Steam Fest, in which case you get your 2008 LASTA calendar on the spot.

President's Column

Dear Friends and Members of LASTA,

All of us are very busy preparing for our upcoming Steam Fest II (October 20 and 21, 2007). We are making improvements and hope this will become an annual event. This year we hope to use a little steam to lubricate SP 745 as she is pulled to Audubon Park. If we do, be careful not to get too close to our "hot" lady.

LASTA is making a big change this year in an effort to give our members the biggest bang for their bucks. Because we always run out of our beautiful calendars, disappointing many of our members, LASTA is increasing the annual dues from \$30 to \$35 and will automatically send our 2008 calendar free! No one will be disappointed this year. Because it costs \$11 to produce and ship the calendar, we are asking that you donate another \$5 for the cause, but this is strictly voluntary. The calendars sell for \$15 each at hobby shops, on our web site, etc. Of course, all of our 745 Club life members will receive the calendar free (one of the many, many benefits of the 745 Club). LASTA family membership has many additional benefits. Besides a free calendar, you and your family will have free passage to the train exhibit during Steam Fest, and free entry to the Christmas party in December when Santa arrives by steam. And of course you receive our quarterly newsletter. Also coming this year, we hope to steam up the engine every quarter (pending approval by the Board). LASTA members would have free access to these events (one would otherwise have to pay \$10 an adult and \$5 for each child). Family membership is the way to go! Finally, and most importantly, your \$35 membership keeps historical SP 745 alive and well. So please renew your membership early so

you can enjoy your 2008 calendar before the new year.

Our used oil collection program is getting off the ground. Individuals bring in their containers of used oil (please join them, and have lunch with us on Saturdays). Private businesses along with city and parish government agencies are also helping. Our SP 745 is a vampire for oil. Help us satisfy the lady!

One of our LASTA members contributed a generous donation toward our Educational Center and we are making immediate use of it. This month LASTA is honored to host a railroad field trip for some of our local Cub Scouts. We'll explain to them the workings of our steam engine, walk through our coaches, ride on our Diesel engine ("Agnes"), learn of our recycled used oil program, and give them some refreshments. Any donations you can send for our community outreach programs such as this would be deeply appreciated.

LASTA's by-laws stipulate that on the first Thursday of each November, we have a general meeting for all LASTA members. During this meeting, the members vote for three board members from the general membership. This year Thursday, November 1 at 6 p.m., the general meeting will be in the Jefferson business coach at our rail yard. Come and participate!

Let me end by thanking all of you who have sent contributions for our late member and volunteer Mike Hankins and his family. We were able to make much needed repairs to his house and make a substantial donation toward his son's tuition at Saint Michael Special School. His family is deeply appreciative!

Thank you for your continued support. Please renew early your membership for 2008. Come see us at Steam Fest II and continue holding us in your prayers.

Bruce Brown