

NGPF and the rebuilding of D&RGW K-27 #463

The Narrow Gauge Preservation Foundation was the largest donor in last year's successful reconstruction of former Denver and Rio Grande Western K-27 2-8-2 #463. Nicknamed "mudhens", this outside frame class of Mikados (see accompanying article) was a workhorse on the Rio Grande's extensive narrow gauge lines and was built new for the road in 1903. In 2002, the Federal Railroad Administration adopted Part 230, Boiler Regulations, in the CFR, that required extensive testing and re-certification of older boilers. A cursory examination of #463 disclosed it would not meet the new standards and after nearly a century of service, it was sidelined by the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railway (C&TS), which had restored her initially to service after years of storage.

A lack of funding prevented the C&TS from restoration of the engine and its future appeared bleak until the Friends of the Cumbres and Toltec approached a number of preservation organizations with an audacious plan to restore the engine for the next 100 years. But the budget of over one million dollars looked daunting. In 2009, a preliminary boiler inspection was performed confirming the worst fears that it was not in good shape. Corrosion, past inadequate repairs, a split dry pipe and enlarged flue sheets defined the problem and eventually, the cost of restoration



#463 with Max and Jake

exceeded the initial estimate as so often happens. Nevertheless the Friends pressed on.

Of the 1.3 million dollar budget, the NGPF was the largest donor with \$340,000 in grants. Many of those grants were "matching" meaning, the Friends had to raise an equal amount from other sources. Spurred by this, the members of Friends raised \$200,000 and other major donors included the Ludwick Family Fund and Save America's Treasures fund.

Interestingly, the Colorado Historical Society (History Colorado fund) and the C&TS Railroad Commission, operated by the States of Colorado and New Mexico, provided the smallest amounts. But every bit helped as extensive a rebuild as this one was.

Just how does one go about rebuilding an historic piece of machinery that is not only intended for display but must also earn its keep day in and day out? Fortunately, the Friends knew just what to do but the task was daunting; every piece of machinery had to be dis-assembled, inspected, cleaned and either repaired or replaced. The boiler work alone required skills and tooling almost lost over the years. Yet never was there doubt that the job was worth doing. This engine was a favorite of its crews in original service and remained a favorite for present day crews. It is also a favorite for filming and special runs.

Historic Machinery in Alabama performed the boiler rebuild, by far the biggest part of the restoration project. The cab was completely rebuilt by the C&TS shop forces in Chama. The locomotive frame work, wheels and tender rebuilding took place at a special facility in Monte Vista Colorado and all of the disparate pieces came together in the road's modern enginehouse in Antonito. The Friends and the railroad were fortunate in having available, a talented crew of

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Mission

The Narrow Gauge Preservation Foundation will preserve, exhibit and interpret significant prototype and model Narrow Gauge artifacts, as well as educate the public on the importance of Narrow Gauge railroading

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOB BROWN

is editor and publisher of the Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette, the premier magazine devoted to Narrow Gauge. Since 1975, the Gazette has documented the history of narrow gauge in articles, plans, photos and has acted as a focus for the Narrow Gauge community. Bob Brown, a Master Model Railroader as recognized by the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA), has been building narrow gauge models for over sixty five years and has a massed a collection of pioneer narrow gauge models reflecting his own interest in the history of Narrow Gauge. Bob also serves on the Museum Committee of the NMRA. Bob is the chairman of the Board.

SAM FURUKAWA

is a recognized photographer of Narrow Gauge, author and modeler. Retired from a long career at Microsoft Corporation, Sam is now a professor at Keio University in Tokyo, Japan. He is an author of three books on Colorado's preserved narrow gauge railroads. He has extensively photographed the operations of the surviving narrow gauge lines of Colorado and New Mexico and some of his videos have recently been released to the public by the NGPF.

FRED HAMILTON

was a long time employee for Kalmbach Publishing serving on the sales staff of both Trains and Model Railroader Magazines. Fred is also and avid On3 modeler and remains close to the model railroad industry. In the past, he has served as President and Executive Director of the industry's trade association and currently serves as the Treasurer of the NGPF.

BOB HAYDEN

is the author of numerous articles and books on narrow gauge topics and also was a long time employee at Kalmbach Publishing working on Model Railroader, Trains, Classic Toy Trains, Garden Railways and Fine Scale Modeler Magazines. Bob has also built narrow gauge models for over fifty years and currently works in the publication field. Bob serves as Secretary of the NGPF.

FRED HILL

is the owner of two hobby shops in Southern California, the original Whistle Stop in Pasadena and Allied Hobbies in West Los Angeles. He has long been active in railroad preservation for both narrow and standard gauges and is involved with two model companies, The Coach Yard and Thin Film Decals. He has served with distinction for many years as an officer and board member on several hobby trade associations.

JIMMY BOOTH

comes from a distinguished career as a principal at P-B-L or Peter Built Locomotives, a major supplier and importer of Sn3 locomotives and equipment. Jimmy also created Hi-Tech models, creating exquisite parts and details for model railroaders.

CHARLES GETZ

serves as Executive Director for the NGPF. Since 1975, he has written a column for the Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette and has been active in the NMRA, currently serving as its President.

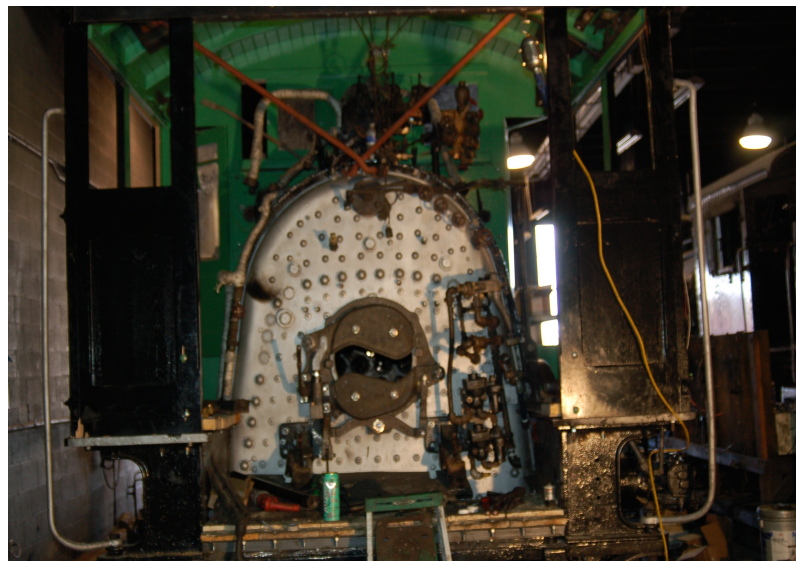
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professionals and volunteers who could tackle all but the most complex of jobs, saving money and showing the dedication of the local community to this project.

Final reassembly was agonizingly slow in fact because the workers literally squeezed time in between other duties.

After years of fundraising, planning and effort, the engine was completed to like-new status in mid-May of 2013, operating on the first train of the season later that month. A complete description of that trip can be found in

Robert's Ramblings in the September/October 2013 issue of the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette*. A number of other magazines such as *Trains* and *Railfan and Railroad*



magazines also covered the inaugural run. After over 100 years, the future of this survivor of the K-27 class appears bright and already she has pulled a number of "specials" including double heading with C-18 2-8-0 #315, another successful NGPF funded project. The

NGPF is proud to have played such an instrumental role in the preservation of this remarkable engine. As a favorite engine of our founder and NGPF Board member Sam

Furukawa, even the C&TS crews knew the 463 as "Sam's engine". Long may she run.

(Our thanks to Tim Tennant, Bob Ross and the Friends of the Cumbres and Toltec for the pictures and some of the information used in this article)



The K-27 class in prototype and model form

The Denver and Rio Grande Western K-27 class of locomotives were favorites of both the railroaders who operated them and the railfans who photographed them in service. Nicknamed “mudhens”, this outside frame class of Mikados was a workhorse on the Rio Grande’s narrow gauge lines and Baldwin built 15 for the road in 1903. For those who are not D&RGW fans, the “K” refers to miKado (2-8-2) and “27” to the 27,000 pounds of tractive effort the engines generated. When delivered, this class of engine was remarkably different from its later appearance. They were built as Vaucrain compounds featuring low and high pressure cylinders, which proved problematic in service. The slope-back tenders, to ease visibility, also did not have sufficient capacity for the road service to which the engines were utilized. As early as 1906, the engines began to be transformed to simple steam engines with rectangular

tenders. All but two received extended smokeboxes, later cut back due to maintenance concerns. Initially, the engines were too heavy for the original light 30-pound rail of the D&RGW but over the years, the rail was re-laid and the engines



#463 Double Heading with #487 on the C&TS

photo by Charlie Getz 2013

operated over the D&RGW and RGS. Ironically, the K-27 was the heaviest class of engine to be used on the RGS although a K-28 was once tried as far as Dolores, which proved disastrous to that road’s poor trackage.

The “mudhen” nickname came from the outside frame and counterweights in operation as the engine “waddled” down the light roadbed often swaying from side to side. It is a look hard to imagine on the C&TS’ well-maintained roadbed. In 1939, the RGS obtained #455 later wrecked then extensively and memorably rebuilt with a standard gauge cab. Later, sister #461 was the last engine obtained by the RGS. On the D&RGW, the engines enjoyed long service life with two sold to Mexico and two preserved as Durango switchers, #463 and 464.

Gene Autry bought #463 in 1955 and later donated it to the town of Antonito in 1971. #464 continued as Durango’s switcher until 1964 and sat derelict until Knott’s Berry Farm restored her to service in 1973. She now runs seasonally on the Huckleberry Railroad in Flint Michigan. Thus, it is possible to ride behind two fully restored K-27’s in 2015 with one on its “home rails” operating out of Chama and Antonito.

Information on the K-27 class can be found in an article in the *September/October 2013 Gazette*; the *March and June 1973* issues of *Model Railroader Magazine* and in *The Mudhens: A Pictorial History* by Dennis O’Berry, 1995, and in the *R-Robb series of softbound books published by Robert Grandt*.

Models of the K-27 have literally been offered in all of the major scales. HOn3 saw a series of highly detailed imports from PFM and Westside, which imported even the original version of these engines. Blackstone sells beautifully detailed and crafted K-27’s with DCC and sound. In Sn3, PFM imported a version from Korea and PBL offers runs in brass or as a “hybrid”. PFM imported exquisite Kodama built models in On3 as well as ones by Toby. PSC and Mountain Models also sold On3 models. Accucraft sold live steam as well as electric version in large scale and Aspen models in Nn3.

Given their longevity and popularity, we should not be surprised that the mudhens continue to waddle on layouts around the world and in Colorado and Michigan.

From The Executive Director

For some of our charter members, this is newsletter #4 and time to renew your membership. Hopefully, through these newsletters you have better understood some of the many successful projects made possible in part because of the NGPF. You are now a part of that effort and we have so many great stories to tell. Next issue, we will highlight the turntable at the Colorado Railroad museum and future issues will outline projects such as C-18 #315, SPNG #18, a Silverton Northern caboose, the Tweetsie railroad and so much more.

On the model front, we have preserved and are storing a number of exquisite narrow gauge models in many scales, which we hope to one day display. We preserve art and narrow gauge books. If it is Narrow Gauge and if we have a constructive role to play, we try to do so.

But all of this depends upon support from members like you. So if your renewal date is near or when it comes due, please consider renewing your membership and continue helping us preserve that we all enjoy. Doing so insures preservation of important model and prototype narrow gauge artifacts for future generations to enjoy. See you next time

– Charlie Getz

UPCOMING ISSUES

- Turntables on the Narrow Gauge
- EBT Hoppers – A Long Way From Home
- Preserving Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge.
- Narrow Gauge in Model Form
- A Caboose in Silverton

A THANK YOU OFFER

To members renewing at the regular annual rate of \$45.00_{USD}/year, we are offering (at no additional charge) a copy of Sam Furukawa’s DVD on the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railway, a value of \$20.00. This professionally produced video features some of the best of Sam’s award-winning photography. This is in appreciation for your membership.



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WHO WE ARE - WHAT WE DO AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Narrow Gauge Preservation Foundation (NGPF) was first established as the Narrow Gauge Trust in 2000. It was the dream of one of our board members to help preserve Narrow Gauge in both its prototype and model form. In 2002, the Narrow Gauge Trust Fund was incorporated as the Narrow Gauge Preservation Foundation, and acquired non-profit status both within the State of California and as recognized by the Federal government. As a non-profit public benefit corporation, our mission is to establish interactive exhibits where the public can learn of the significant history of Narrow Gauge railroading as well as to support preservation activities and projects wherever possible.

The foundation is administered by a board of directors, which does not receive compensation. The NGPF is proud that less than five percent of its funds are spent on administrative costs. Thus, ninety five percent of the funds raised go toward preservation efforts.

Our primary function is the creation of interactive exhibits where the public can be told the story of Narrow Gauge, such as the one at Chama. As with the Chama exhibit, each exhibit will include interactive video presentations and models as well as dioramas, photographs and other graphics to explain the significance of the Narrow Gauge railroading experience. As a secondary function, the NGPF assists Narrow Gauge preservation efforts across North America. These efforts to date have exceeded over one million dollars and in some cases have made the difference between preservation and loss of significant artifacts.

The foundation is also unique in supporting the efforts of Narrow Gauge Preservation projects throughout the United States rather than concentrating on one area or one particular project. To date, the organization has supported projects on the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, Ardenwood Park in California, Friends of Denver and Rio Grande Engine #169, the Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge Railroad Foundation, The Colorado Railroad Museum, the Southeast Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum in North Carolina and the Durango Railroad Historical Society, among others. In addition, we have preserved the collections of prominent narrow gauge modelers, extensive libraries of books as well as important art pieces depicting narrow gauge scenes.

One of the unique aspects of the NGPF is the use of matching grants to encourage the receiving parties to reach out to the public for support. Many of our grants require that the receiving agency establish within a set time frame, an equal number of individual new donations from members of the public, which not only shows support for the particular project, but also provides new sources of funding for the organization. As a result of this policy, organizations receiving our grants have reported increased donations. Thus, the NGPF not only supports Narrow Gauge preservation but also encourages those who share our interest to broaden their base of support. In granting that support, we also utilize the expertise of our Board in evaluating the requesting organization and its ability to accomplish its stated goal.

Donations to the foundation are tax deductible and can be either recognized or kept anonymous. All donations are acknowledged and donations in any amount are greatly appreciated. These donations, as well as sales of books published by the Narrow Gauge Preservation Foundation help us to continue our work. By donating, you do more than support one particular Narrow Gauge operation or project; you support a variety of worthwhile projects and can make an enhanced contribution to the preservation of Narrow Gauge.