

# THE SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum

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## Annual Meeting Ron Sullivan to Speak

The Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, TN has set Saturday, April 17, 2010 for our Annual Meeting.

We have a really outstanding speaker for our Annual Meeting this year. His name is Ron Sullivan, and he and his wife Marilyn have been hiking all over the North Carolina side of the Smokies, tracing old railroad lines and turning up fascinating artifacts from the old logging operations there.

Ron is producing a four volume history of these logging companies, contemporaneous with the Little River Lumber Company, called *If Rails Could Talk...* Each volume will cover the stories of three sawmill towns.

Volume I (over 400 pages) has been completed and is awaiting publication. It covers operations at Crestmont, Sunburst and Quinlaintown. *"Sunburst and Quinlaintown were in southern Haywood County, both within 10 miles of my house as the crow flies, and both are at the bottom of man-made lakes today."*

Volume II will cover Waynesville, Ravensford and Smokemont. Volume III will cover Bryson City, Noland and Forney. Volume IV will cover Proctor, Fontana and Kitchensville.

Certainly no one else has approached this sort of extensive research, especially with the Sullivans' work on the ground with GPS and photography. Those of you who have seen Ron's email progress reports, or have seen one of his presentations, have surely been impressed with the beauty of his layout, maps and images. These volumes will truly be a treasure when the work is completed, and should set a new standard for historical work of this type.

On April 17 you will have an opportunity for a glimpse into

Ron's work which you should not miss.

In addition to a picnic lunch, we will also have motorized speeder and hand car rides (you provide the power for the hand car) and tours of the museum and the new shop building.

Please note that all activities are free of charge, but we do require reservations for the picnic lunch.

For out-of-town members, we have made arrangements with The Highland Manor for specials rates for this event. You can visit [www.highlandmanor.com](http://www.highlandmanor.com) or call them at 800-213-9462.

Our schedule is:

Time	Activity	Presented By	Reservations
11:00 - Noon	Special Walking Tour of Museum Property	Museum Staff	No
Noon to 1:00	Lunch	Museum Staff	Yes
1:00 to 1:30	Business Meeting	Rick Turner	No
1:30 to 2:30	Presentation on North Carolina Smoky Mountains Logging	Ron Sullivan	No

We are requiring reservations for the picnic lunch so we can get a head count and determine the amount of food we'll need.

To make your reservations, please call Rick Turner at 865-428-0099 or email him at

[president@littleriverrailroad.org](mailto:president@littleriverrailroad.org).

Please plan to attend. We look forward to seeing you there!

# From the President

Since our last issue of *The Semaphore*, we have enjoyed a very active year the Museum. The landscaping work done in 2008 still draws rave reviews. The steps to the cab level of our Shay 2147 have been completed, and they have been a great addition to the Museum. The roadside sign is nearly complete thanks to the work of Captain Dave Lavoie. The sign itself is in place along with all the lettering, but the carving of a Shay pulling a log train has not been finished.

We have two on-going projects with our artifacts:

1. During the Christmas season of 2007, a wind storm blew the roof off our L&N Little Woodie Caboose No. 888. The task of replacing the roof revealed more damage to its interior resulting in our removing all the outside siding from the caboose. What started out as just a replace the roof job has turned into one of much larger scope. With the last of the grant money, we have procured the necessary lumber to complete the job. We have been fortunate to have some volunteer help with the restoration and more is always welcome.
2. Now that the steps to the Shay are in place, we are now addressing the cab and other parts that are no longer on the engine. We have had debate over whether the cab should be wood or steel (see the History of Shay 2147 below) with wood being the consensus material for the new cab. We have drawings and plans for the wooden cab, and we plan on pushing forward with this project. Now that we have used all the funds remaining in our grant, funding for the cab and other restorations for Shay 2147 is needed.

Christmas season this year was bright and cheery at the Museum thanks again to our Christmas light enthusiast Andy Wellman. As he did last year Andy put lights on just about everything we have, but it was spectacular and brought many visitors to the Museum. After Christmas as he was taking the decorations down, Andy configured the Shay 2147 headlight to burn dusk to dawn efficiently, thanks to a very low wattage bulb.

The winter season here in East Tennessee has been rather harsh and affected this year's Townsend Winter Heritage Festival. As we did last year we scheduled walking tours of the Tremont area, the Townsend area and Elkmont as well as a showing of *Whistle Over the Mountain*.

Our morning activity at the Annual Meeting will again feature a Board Member stationed at each of our artifacts (Shay 2147, the caboose, the Frick, etc.) providing in-depth information about that artifact. Our intention is allow attendees to learn more about the Museum, and at the same

time provide the Museum with the basis of a brochure about the Museum. After the business meeting we will feature Ron Sullivan's program about logging operations on the North Carolina portion of the Great Smoky Mountains. We think you will find this to be an informative and entertaining day. We hope you will attend.

Some final notes: As you can see we are aggressively trying to improve the Museum in all phases of operation. We can always use your help either financially or by volunteering your time. If you are coming to the Annual Meeting and plan to have lunch with us, please let us know how many are in your party so we can have enough food for everyone. Also if you are coming to the meeting and have old photos or artifacts from the Little River Railroad or Lumber Company, we would love to see them.

We look forward to a great 2010.

## Annual Memberships

Each year we ask each of you to contribute the small amount \$21.47 for continued membership in the Museum. The benefits of membership have always included our annual newsletter, *The Semaphore*, and our grateful thanks for your support. Memberships are annual and run from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December. This year we are adding one more benefit to membership in the Museum by giving all members a 10% discount on all items in the Gift Shop.

For those members who receive *The Semaphore* online, we now provide the ability to start or renew memberships on line through the Gift Shop. For all others a membership form is enclosed.

Thank you for your continued support.

## The History of Shay 2147

**1909- April, 14** -Built. Purchased by Davis Supply Company (Dealer), Pittsburgh, PA for Babcock Land and Lumber Company, subsidiary Tellico River Lumber Company, Tellico Plains as #2147.

While owned by Babcock, #2147 was used in the

Tellico Plains area from 1909 until 1924. (1)

In 1924 the Tellico River Lumber Company was winding down their operations in the Rough Ridge Creek area of Tennessee near the North Carolina line. While pushing empty cars upgrade to pick up the last random loads of timber, #2147 lost traction and rolled downhill 27 rail lengths (assuming they are using the standard length rail or 39', it traveled 1,053') before derailling into the creek, sliding on its right side, shearing off all three cylinders and destroying the original cab made of wood. (1)

The engine was loaded into three hopper (gondola) cars and taken to the Babcock operation in Alcoa where it was rebuilt with a steel cab. It worked as the yard switcher for a week while the regular switcher underwent maintenance. (3)

**1925-June** #2147 is assigned to the Citico Creek area. (2) The engine probably reached that location via the Tennessee, Carolina and Southern Rwy. (a subsidiary of Southern Rwy). Most likely route would be the line that parallels McArthur Road, Wright Road, crosses Lincoln Road into Maryville crossing under Harper Street, over East Broadway Avenue, Sevierville Road past the Southern station in Maryville and on to the line south. (3)

**1929-October** #2147 pulls the last train out of Citico Creek/Jefferies Hell area. The last car of the train is a log loader crane taking up the rails as they pass over them and loading them onto flatcars. (1, 3)

**1931-April** A runaway train on Mark's Creek on the Middle Prong of the Little River destroys Little River Lumber Company Shays #9 and #11 [In "Ghost Railroads of Tennessee" Elmer Sulzer, it records #9 and #11 being destroyed in 1933]. Enginemen Luther Waycaster and Avery Conner traveled to the Babcock yard that day and fired up #2149 (sister to #2147) and returned to Townsend that night. This was probably leased from Babcock and Joe Murphy was the rail superintendent for Babcock at the time. He no doubt affected the lease agreement.

**1931-August** LRRR purchases Bond-Foley Lumber Company Shay #5 (c/n 2827). Carried the number 5 for a while then was later referred to as #27 or 2827.

**June 24, 1935-** After the track had been repaired and the engines salvaged (the boiler from #11 was saved

and used as the heating plant for the Townsend High School) Woody Dew and John Compton were sent to the Babcock yard in #110 and returned with #2147 cold, in tow. The Little River used #2147 for more than a year, from 1932 on. (2) [In "Whistle Over the Mountain" by Ron Schmidt and Bill Hooks, they state that #2147 was purchased in June 1935 after Babcock Lumber operations were sold in 1934 and that #2147 was sold almost immediately to John J. Craig Quarry. This is not correct as several individuals have provided first person accounts of operating #2147 at LRR. This date is also used in "Ghost Railroads of Tennessee" and on [WWW.shaylocomotives.com](http://WWW.shaylocomotives.com) site.]

**July 1935-**Sold to John J. Craig Co. (Quarry) Friendsville, TN as #2147. [According to Weals' article #5, the purchase year was 1936 and LRRR had owned the Shay for two years with it being in everyday use.]

**July 1960-**Sold to Conasauga River Lumber Co. Conasauga, TN as #2147. [According to Weals' article #5, the purchase month was August.] Not used probably due to bad staybolts in the boiler located behind the cylinders which kept the boiler from being certified.

**1965-**Sold to Graham County Railroad, Robbinsville, NC as #2147 for display at Bear Creek Scenic Railroad as #214 "Ole Sidewinder" at Robbinsville, NC.

**1982(?)**-Sold to Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, TN as #2147. Named "Dorothy" in 19XX in honor of Miss Dorothy Fisher. On display.

## Bibliography

- (1) Charles M. Hall "History of Tellico Plains"
- (2) Vic Weals Tennessee Travels Column, Knoxville News Sentinel, Parts 3-5
- (3) Neal Stone
- (4) Inez Burns "History of Blount County"

