

The early Years of KLS..... By Marie Weaver (1990-94)

The Kitsap Live Steamers was organized as a non-profit ride-able railroad in January 1990 with a listing of 12 members. I would like to note that there are only three of us left, Myself, Dennis and Robert Noecker. Robert states that he was not part of the original group but I know he is a charter member!

Also I wish to state that I am not a writer nor am I a historian. These are my memories, my opinions and they can be somewhat squid from the years. Dennis and I started The Kitsap Live Steamer for very selfish reasons. We needed a place to play and for Dennis to run his Shay!

In the Fall of 1988 Dennis and I were living just a couple of miles away from the current track. At that time the Park did not exist, it was just woods. Actually the land had been bought by the South Kitsap Park district in the late 70's to build a Community Park but nothing had been developed due to the lack of funds. It seemed that on the same ballot that give the funds to buy the land there was also another bill that taxed the district for sewer funds. That bill stopped the development of the park for over 10 years because of the levy that was put on the Park District by the sewer district levied bill for \$100,000. Bob Oke was Pak Board Chairman; he eventually worked out a deal with the county where the county bought a strip of land that belonged to South Kitsap Park District for \$100,000 and those funds paid the sewer levy bill.

Dennis came home one evening asking what was planned for the corner of Jackson and Lund. He had heard there was a Mobile Home Park planned for that acreage. At that time I was working in an office downtown and Bob Oke, the Park Board Chairman and later Senator Oke, had come by just that same day talking about the development of a 200 acre park on that corner. I told Dennis about what Mr. Oke had stated. Dennis asked a question of me, but mostly to himself "Would the Park District entertain the idea of a scale railroad going around the Park?"

In the next week I found out when the park board was to meet and we attended our first park board meeting. (This was the first of twelve years of Park Board meeting that became part of our Wednesday s nights once a month). At that first meeting Dennis explained to the park board the concept of a scale model ride-able railroad and asked if they were interested. The park board was more than enthusiastic. The only questions they had besides the cost was can we charge for the rides and how fast could it be up and running? Dennis had to explain that it would take more than a year of construction once an area was decided on and a staging area could be constructed. This fact was cooling to some of the park board members because they had want to have grand opening of the park in the summer of 1989; wanting the train rides to be part of that grand opening. (The grand opening of the South Kitsap Community Park did not happen until the Summer of 1990 due to lack of funding and construction cost.) However, the Park Board did agree to let Dennis and I try to see if we could put together a group to assist in the construction and then bring the idea back to them. In the summer of 1989, Dennis put an ad in two magazines, Model Tec and Live Steam. A meeting was schedule at our home but we did not receive any response to the ads. In September, Dennis got a call from Phil Stone who had seen the ad but was out of the area and not able to attend the meeting. Later that September Phil came to our home in Port Orchard; we talked about the project and how to get a better response. It was determined that it might be better to take the idea to the model railroad community by setting up a static display in two upcoming shows, The Boeing Swap Meet and the Seattle Center Railroad Show.

Both shows were within two week time frame of each other in November. A bank account was opened and the first funds were deposited in what was then the Port Orchard Bank. At this same time I was talking with people in the Port Orchard community and additional seed funds were provided for the beginning of an Organization.

Dennis set up space in both shows and we took his partially constructed Shay and Phil's caboose and cars to be displayed. At the Boeing Swap meet the only area available to us was the foyer in the old Boeing cafeteria. We talked to almost everyone who entered the building with a great deal of positive feedback. We had them provide their names and address so an invitation could be sent about any future meetings. The same type of display was done at the Seattle Railroad Show. From these two places came a total of 122 names and address.

Also at the Seattle Show, Dennis was approached about a 12" amusement park train. He was asked if the Kitsap Live Steamers would be interested in having a 12" gauge amusement park train. The offer included an engine, three riding cars and 700 feet track. Of course being a new organization we were not one to turn down a free train, and accepted the gracious offer. The train was picked up the following weekend. The train needed a great deal of repairs and work. Over the following months the engine was repaired, the cars repainted and a new set was made for the tender that was attached to the engine where the engineer rode.

In December of 1989 invitation were sent to each of the individuals that had sign up to come to a meeting in January 1990. Space for the meeting was obtained at the Eagles Club in Port Orchard, just a mile or so from the park.

The park was moving ahead with clearing the land of trees and brush. The Navy Seabees were convinced to come and cut the main road into the park from Jackson side, also to clear a play field area.

Also that December the first newsletter went out to those individuals who either signed up at the two shows we had participated in or those who had shown an interest in organizing a organization. At that time the newsletter was call "Stack Talk". Phil Stone was the Editor and continued to write a newsletter for an addition two months, when Marie took over and did her best to keep others informed.

In January 1990, Dennis, Phil Stone, and I had our first meeting. Twelve people showed for that meeting. We discussed the makeup and scope of organizing the project; it was decided to name the organization "The Kitsap Live Steamers" and to apply for a non-profit status with Washington State. Bernie Swenson was at that first meeting. He brought along his two locomotives, a Mogul and a Mikado. He talked about a club he belonged to with another attendee, Walter McGowan. They invited those at the meeting to join them in Monroe to visit a track they had been building; The Index and Galena. A time and date was set up for the next meeting and those who wished went to the park to look over possible sites within the park to establish the railroad. Dennis, Phil and I attended the next meeting of the "Index and Galena, where Phil bought Bernie's Mogul and learned to run it.

February 1990 the Articles of incorporations and the Bylaws were approved by the organization and sent to Washington State for approval. The first officers were elected with Dennis Weaver as President, Phil Stone Vice President, Marie Weaver was Secretary and Bill

Laybourn was Treasurer. The Directors were Ray Stone, Dick Nedrow and Bernie Swenson. The Organization began the drafting of the agreement with the park and also the repairs of the 12" gauge train that was donated to the Organization (Promo Train).

In March the incorporation documents were received back for the state with the Federal tax ID number. Committees were formed to draft an agreement with the South Kitsap Community Park District with a rough draft submitted to the individual members for review and approval. The preliminary site for the compound area was chosen.

In June 1990 KLS participated in the Fathoms of Fun Parade with Bernie Swenson's Mikado being fired up and placed on blocks. The float took the shape of a locomotive going into a tunnel with riding cars behind and several children in those cars waving at the public. Bernie kept blowing the whistle. With smoke coming from the stake and the wonderful sound of the whistle being blown made a wonderful glorious site to see.

In September the search began in earnest to locate a contractor who would be willing to clear and grade the compound area. This research took several months to complete. However the Park fared very well in obtaining the services of The Department of Natural Resources work crew from Mission Creek Youth Camp. They came into the park and built family picnic areas, several nature trails and a bridge over a stream in the back of the park. The Organization's members continued to go to Monroe for the meets up there and KLS had their month meetings at Waldo Thomas Track. In September Waldo approached Dennis about buying his track, switches, turntable and unloading device; he stated he wanted to sell his property. Waldo sold the organization approximately 1500 feet of rail with bridges, trestles and unloading device for \$9000.00. The Organization's members voted to accept Waldo's offer at the October meeting. Members of The Index and Galena were very upset about Waldo wishing to sell out and pull up the track they had worked so hard for years; just finish engineering a smooth running track. Crews were organized and went to Monroe, pulling up the track in two weekends, with the idea to save everything that could be saved, so it could be put back down in the park. Trailers and pickup and anything else that could be used to haul it back to Port Orchard. The track and other items were temporarily placed in Dennis and my backyard. It has been stated that like the Phoenix out of the ashes of the Index and Galena rose the Kitsap Live Steamers non-profit railroad where Mr. and Ms. Joe Public could bring their children, ride the trains in a public park for a donation. This was the beginning of a long ride to success.

Those early months were a struggle to find funds to build and pay Waldo for the track. The organization only raised a little over \$1200 in the first six months. With the organization taking Waldo up on his offer funding raising became a high priority. Innovative ideas were put in place. The Organization voted to sell "Bearer Bonds", Gold and Silver Certificates were sold in the Kitsap Community. Also "a Foot of Track" tags that were put down on the track with the donors names on them became a major fund raising tool. Bearer Bonds were numbered so that the lowest numbered would be redeemed first. Also the 12" gauge train that had been donated to the organization having been refurbished and was put to work as the "Promo Train" that was taken to festival and events all over Western Washington. The first was at Grays Harbor Rail Fest. The organization was promised \$2500 for running the train for three days. This turned out to be a disaster. The promoter embezzled the proceeds from the festival; the Organization was not the only non-profit to lose out on the festival. Rainer Scenic Railroad brought an Operating Live Steam Locomotive and four passenger cars to Grays Harbor, paying Amtrak for the right of

way on their tracks to get it to Aberdeen and run the train from Aberdeen to Hoquiam. The cost of the ride was \$25 a head; it was a very popular part of the festival. However, it was a learning curve for me. I never again accepted a promoter promise; it was money up front or nothing.

The Promo Train was one of the most lucrative fund raising ideas but also one of the most hard working man power lose effort to the organization. In approximately four years the Organization raised most of the funds needed to pay for the operation of the Organization. However, in order to buy the track from Waldo the Organization did have to barrow \$2000.00 in February 1991 and Bernie Swanson was the co-signer for the loan. I have always felt that the Grays Harbor Rail Fest was the cause of us needing to rely on a loan!

While the Organization continued to try and raise funds to build the track, the Organization did put the Promo Train to work in the Park, the first run was done around a pile of dirt at the end of what is now the play field on Aug 5, 1990. We give rides to nine people at a time in the three riding cars. This continued while the track was been constructed. Dennis and I continued to attend Park Board meeting, working with them to establish an area. Once any area was mutually agreed upon, I began to try and find resources to get the area cleared. I talked with a local construction company, RV and Associates who agreed to come and clear a compound area and right of way of stumps. This company was suburb in their response to the Organization's needs. They brought in an excavator that had a thumb and within three hours, including lunch had the compound cleared, a large burn pile of stumps going and the right away cleared of all the stumps.

I found out through my connections in the community the Purdy Women's Prison would brush out the right of way if we marked out the area. In August of 1990 team of members went out to the park and marked the right of way of the first 1300 feet. On a Friday a group from the prison came and cleared the brush. This was very amazing, I had walked with the superior that morning and I had to wear boots but that afternoon I walk the same area in sandals. All the brush was bundled and stacked to the side of the right-of-way. This was amazing to see how fast and efferent this group of women was.

The Organization's membership continued to grow. On March 23 1991 a red letter day for the organization. This was the day the organization actually started construction of the railroad. The membership was now up to 26 hardworking individuals. They began with attempting to rough out the road bed by hand; men with shovels and rakes leveling out the right of way. (HANDWORK, THE HARDEST WAY TO GO, the organization uses a tractor now to do the same job). This was not very successful. In April, Kitsap County road department sent over a rubber-tired loader and they leveled the compound area and roughed out the entire track route. Seth Posey and his volunteer crew from the county and the loaned loader saved the membership many hours of work and most likely several backs as well.

Another problem was a compound area needed to be constructed so that the rail and equipment could be moved to the park from the Weaver's backyard and safely locked up. In researching the cost of a chain link fence, it was determined to be out of the budget. On Easter Sunday while going to our daughter's home for dinner, Dennis and I saw a Puget Power Substation property up for sale. The idea of obtaining the fencing hit us both at the same time. The next day Dennis called the phone number on the sigh and was told that the fencing could not be sold separately, but the woman did eventually provide Dennis with a list of companies that

had bought other Puget Sound Substation land. We contacted the four names we were given and three stated no, but the fourth Crest Builders asked us to come and talk with him. Mr. Crest was a contractor who built specialty type homes. He had us go look at the property where the fence was to see if it was going to meet our needs. The fencing dynamotor was just what was needed. Crest Builders provided the fencing for our compound. Teams again went to Tacoma with cutting torches and trailers; bring back a commercial grade fence that was erected in the compound area. The track as removed from the Weaver's back yard to the park so that the work of laying the track could be started as soon as possible.

In August 1991 track lying commenced with two groups setting the first abutment for the trestle while one of the groups laid approximately seventy feet of track. The first loop of the track was to be 1300 feet through what is now the yard area. The station was setup more to the North than it is now. All efforts eventually to come together just north of the trestle and crossing.

Also, in July the concerns for the South Kitsap Community Park Districts lack of funds brought to raise the subject of county taking over the park. An amendment to the original agreement with the Community Park District was done. This amendment provided KLS with a perpetual renewal of the agreement with the Park every five years as long as the organization maintains the ride schedule that is advertised to the community.

In the fall and winter on 1991and early spring of 1992, all efforts were targeted on laying rail with the exception of the running of the Promo Train in Western Washington Community Festivals; to keep the funds available. Work crews were set up with the county juvenile courts; with the high school for community service projects and any other entity that could be encouraged to help. The compound area had conduit laid however, the area still did not have water or power only the piping and wiring laid in the conduit. The Organization worked with the Park Board to obtain electricity and water. The lines for both were laid down KLS's access road and then disbursed out to the rest of the park. Other resources that were needed were obtained by donations were very helpful. The Kitsap County business community responded wonderfully with whatever was needed. Port Orchard Gravel provided the ballast, along with Kitsap Quarry, Morrison Sand and Gravel hauled the ballast to the park, Tacoma Screw provided screws, McLendon Hardware provided wood and other items and the Organization continued to use what was obtained from Waldo.

In the first part of June the track was connected at the crossing with Dennis Weaver, Don Deffley and I putting the last section in place. On June, 27, 1992 the Kitsap Live Steamers provided the first run with two gas powered diesel type locatives and the member's cars. The trains were provided by Bob Bylsma and Walt McGowan. Pole fencing had been set to keep the public from walking out on the track at the station. A barbecue and potluck was done so the membership and their families could run their locomotives' (including steam as the organization did not have permission to run steam in the public venue yet) and have fun on what they had worked so hard to build.

Once again setup continued to be tedious but the word spread in the community that we were up and running. Donations were small but coming, the Promo Train continued to bringing in most of the funding for operations. Even though KLS could not yet use steam to haul the public Bernie's Mikado became eye candy to the public so they would see what was to come. Throughout 1992 the organization continued to have private barbecues to allow those members

who had locomotives, especially steam to run. KLS could not haul the public but members had fun with what equipment was available, profiting from all the hard work!

In August 1992 the organization was approached by Bremerton's community theatre to film a segment to be used in one of their coming performances, Nunsenes. Bernie Swenson with his "I am ready to run" attitude volunteered to bring his Mikado out to the park for them to use. On August 15 1992, the theatre Group showed up with five women and a three foot long dummies dressed as a Nun to be used it a video. They set up a scene of the Great Train Robbery and then used it as if the Nuns were at the Movies in their performance of Nunsence. This play was hilarious and hysterical, held in mid-November, this production provided more PR for the organization and upped our ridership the follow spring.

During the winter of 1992 a decision was made to add track on the backside of the compound, across the organization's assess road, and additional track in the loading area. This provided more room for locomotive and trains in the yard as the mainline was shifted out of the yard area to the track alongside of the compound. This extension added 800 feet of rail to the mainline.

I started working on getting the Organization set up as a 501 c 3. Many different drafts were sent in to the IRS but they came back unapproved. One afternoon the phone rang and it was a man from the IRS who had another draft in front of him. His name was Mr. Gonzales; he wanted to know what was being attempted with this application for nonprofit status. I explained the concept and amazingly he understood because he was a member of The Los Angeles Live Steamers. Mr. Gonzales corrected the application and sent it back for me to rewrite it according to his correction and to be sent back to him. This was done and the Organization obtained its 501c 3 status. That was retroactive to February 1990.

There was another big issue that the Organization was facing; with Washington State, so that there could be Live Steam hauling the public in the park. Washington State boiler laws did not allow for small hobby boilers, all boilers had to be built to SME code, which was way over the needed limits for the locomotive boilers. Dennis and I, along with several members attended the boiler board meeting in an attempt to get approval for live steam in the park. It became very clear that it was going to take a Legislative bill to get approval to have steam in the park. At one of the meeting the boiler board argued with a group that a hot water heater was a high pressure boiler! Bob Oke, who had now become Senator Oke, helped it getting a bill written. I worked with the boiler board chairman about the limits on the testing of the boilers. A second bill was started in the House of Representatives as well as the Senate, just to be safe that somehow another bill could be attached to the boiler bill. That is just what happened; another antique boiler group attempted to get approval for old boilers for steam tractor through by attaching it to the hobby Senate bill 5274 had to be dropped and the Senate bill 1771 passed. This bill allow boilers manufactured before January 1, 1995 used for non-commercial purposes that do not exceed 16 inches in diameter, 5 cubic feet of volume, 20 square feet of heating surface, and 150 PSIG pressure.

On March 27, 1993 the passing of the House Bill 1771 was set to the governor for his signature, this was only the start. Over the course of the next few weeks the boiler committee had to iron out what the law meant in reality; how it would need to be implemented.

May 6, 1993 three member of the Kitsap Live Steamers, Dennis Weaver, Doug Wilkinson and I saw Governor Lowery sign into Washington State Laws House bill 1773, the “hobby steam” bill. The long skirmish was a success so that steam could run in the park. However, the organization had to work with the boiler board inspectors to get the engines checked out and approved. This turned out to be quite an adventure. The law as it was written directed the State boiler inspectors to show that our engines were safe, certify them as such with the support of the paper work that corresponded to each of the engines. This was easy to say, however when it came down to practicalities; with the locomotives being hydrostatic pressurized to 1.5 times operational pressure was not the problem. It became clear the plumbing, other same valves and parts leaked which made sustaining the higher pressure a problem. It turned out that by adding a spot for a temporary plug in the line of the cylinder solved the problem, thus the clearing and certification of the first boilers were able to be completed.

In my opinion, The Kitsap Live Steamers has been a leader in the Live Steam Hobby. The Organization has made it possible for other Live Steam Clubs to set up and run in Washington State. For many years KLS was the only one of its size and type but very recently others are in the process of being developed. Our leadership has broadened the availability of Live Steam in Washington State. In all the years that KLS has been established it continues to amaze me of the diversity and commitment of individuals from the entire Western Washington Community that has been willing to participate in our adventure. Those individuals living 100+miles of driving and costly ferry trips have remained supportive; working hard both in the park as well as building hardware, developing designs and building running equipment at home; then bring and setting up or implementing those designs in the park. The Western Washington Communities and the Live Steam Hobby in general, has benefited from KLS and its work with Washington State; along with the many designs that have been developed by our membership!

On August 14, 1993 saw the first run of authorized live steam in the park. Senator Bob Oke cut the ribbon which officially opened The Kitsap Live Steamers to operate live steam. There were many people from the community there to observe and ride the steam locomotives that day. The locomotives were provided by Phil Stone, Bernie Swenson and Dennis Riches that operated on that day; carrying distinguished visitors on the rails. After the ribbon was cut, the first individuals across the tussle was Bernie on his Mikado with Senator Oke along with his wife Judy, followed by Dennis Riches on his Heisler with Dennis Weaver and I riding in the car behind him. All of the other members followed in the various locomotives that were available across the trestle. It was a glorious day for our membership!!!

There had been a lot of hard work by so many of our members to get to that point; along with the business community that had donated materials, it was truly a team effort to achieve the completion of that day! Bernie Swenson never believed that he would live to see the official running of live steam, just the “barbeques” where he was able to operate his locomotive. The organization had another one of their barbeques that day but this time it was officially able to run steam in the park. The park board provided a cake and as usual the organization members provided their own meat and a dish to share, which has been the unofficial rule since the beginning of having potlucks at the track. Bernie Swenson ran the Mikado, Phil Stone with his little Mogul provided those present with a ceremony of the Golden Spike being struck in the yard as the opening of the barbeque.

“Little Bit Junction” the organization's store was organized in late summer of 1993 with a loan from a member of \$400. “T” shirts and train hats were bought and went on sale. This added funds to the operations and has continued to help with the building of the railroad. The organization's bank balance remained low but growing, as the donations continued to come in throughout that summer. More and more people had found KLS because of the publicity of operating live steam. Funding was still an issue and the organization wished to purchase a locomotive. The “Promo Train” continued to be the main source of revenue going to festivals and other community events.

Throughout the late fall and winter of 1993 the organization continued to trim track and work on improving the parking area and grounds. The organization recognized Bernie Swenson’s continued dedication in using his boiler expertise to ensure the first public steam run was a success, helping with the inspection of the steam locomotive boilers. *In recognition of his outstanding commitment the North track crossing of the inner loop was officially named Swenson Crossing.* The organization started working on building track panels and switches so that a new loop would be ready for the opening day in 1994. In those days the organization ran from May to September. KLS resolved to have the Washington State Model Boiler exemption law changed to remove the exclusion of boilers built after December 31, 1994. There had been issues raised by non-members that they believed hydrofining a boiler to 1.5 times working pressure could damage the boiler, thus individuals that lived in state and those out of state would not come to KLS but run on private tracks only. (Since that time it has become a non- issue because KLS has proven that testing a boiler at those levels has no effect on a “hobby” boiler). This was eventually successful. Standards for track building and laying also were established during this time, and have been maintained to this day.

The membership continued to grow with each static display that was done in the community. The organization participated in the Hobby Show held at the Puyallup Fairgrounds in February 1994, also at the South Kitsap Mall’s Railroad Days. In April there was a static display done at the Puyallup Spring Fair.

In February 1994 the organization started investigating how to obtain a locomotive. Also riding cars for the organization were planned, with one example having been built. These were gondolas made of metal. The drawings were submitted to the membership, with standard trucks built and the members tack welded the gondolas parts together. The “Promo Train” was overhauled, with new belts installed. The generator on the “Promo Train” was burnt out and rewiring was not financially feasible, it was felt that the small cost of recharging the batteries of the locomotive and its long services between charges, made generator repair unnecessary. The “Promo Train” was asked to go to Matlock, Mason County Fair, Kitsap Family Fair, Kingston Farmer’s Market, Port Angeles’s Mill Works, Auburn Days and Kent Good old Days. As you can imagine with all these weekends being taken up through the summer of 1994 the organization's members were busy both in the park as well as all over Western Washington with the “Promo Train”. Also, KLS was approached by the Puyallup Spring Fair and on April 1st 1994 Ron Gates and I met with the state fair management regarding operation of the “Promo Train” at the Puyallup Spring Fair that was on April 14 through the 17, 1994. The organization received \$1500 for their running of the train for ten hours a day. This was an event that the organization did for just a couple of years because of the amount of work that was involved. However, once

again the “Promo Train” provided funds that were needed to operate our home track in Port Orchard.

In May 1994 the organization adopted what is now KLS’s logo of a two-truck Shay locomotive. The original design was done by a local artist and paid for by unknown benefactor. The design was sent to Washington State’s Patent office to insure no other organization, club or person could use it.

In June 1994, the second hydro testing was done by the state with eight new boilers being certified. KLS continued to build a relationship with the state boiler inspectors. Dennis Weaver and Don Deffley were appointed the organization's official boiler inspectors.

Through the spring and summer of 1994 the organization continued to provide rides to the public. Donations in those days were small but KLS was grateful to receive anything. In June 1994 the switch operators that have become a standard in the hobby were designed and the prototype put in place at the park. Walter McGowan along with Howard Springer and Dean Busch were the master minds behind the original design. The stands are operated where an engineer rolls up on a switch that is twenty feet ahead; changes the direction of the switch without getting off of the locomotive! Over the years these switch stands have been modified and improved but the basic design has remain the same. The switch stands are now part of most tracks including Train Mountain!

In July 1994 there were still several coupon bonds that had been issued to buy the track and equipment from Waldo Thomas, still outstanding. Dave Thomason and other members pledged to donate funds in order to retire them. The funding for the organization was still an issue and several members guarded what little funds there were in order to maintain a positive balance in the checking account. Over the course of several months to follow all the coupon bonds were redeemed or turned in as a donation to the organization.

Up until July 1994 the business meetings were being held the morning of a run day, this caused several issues. Time was a problem when there were issues to be discussed that took a lot of time. Also, it caused problems with set up at the depot. It was decided to move the business meeting way from the park at another location once a month in the evenings.

In August 1994 Don Deffley presented the organization with the identification sign of the riveted boiler at the front gate with Dennis and my names on it as founders. I attempted to plant rhododendrons behind it but people kept parking on top of them, thus killing them. I also tried to plant grass in the picnic area but due to the trees and again people parking in the area the grass would not grow.

Up until September 1994 all members had the right to vote on all issues that came before the board. The by-laws set the organization up as a Board run organization. This was pointed out that the organization was not being run as the by-laws outlined. The ultimate decision of those present at that meeting was to have the Board be authority that ran the organization, with input from the floor at business meetings. Once the discussion was over the board, that is the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasure, and the three directors would vote on the issue for it to be adopted or not. This was voted on and passed at the September 1994 business meeting. Part of this decision for the board to run the day-to-day operations was to have an agenda

presented to the members at large so there could be discussion on each subject. This decision followed the by-laws that were adopted in March 1990.

In December 1994 was the first business meeting held at the Poodle Dog Café. Over the years KLS has tried using various libraries and other locations but has returned to this location for the business meeting, 7pm to 8:30 is what has come to be the usual. Also all of the coupon bonds that had been so helpful funding the track purchase from Waldo Thomas were finally paid off.

With each passing year of the organization has been part of my life I continue to be amazed by how well the trains have been accepted in the community. The phone calls I have gotten over the years are usually the same, Are you running today, what time and how much! The first five years have been the hardest to organize, find funding and people wishing to share my dream and passion for the hobby. This is just the beginning of this history and I hope to follow with the rest, at a later date. It will be twenty-five years in January 2015.