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Hundreds See Steam Train At Local Stop

JUNE 07TH 2011 BY NEWS

Hundreds See Steam Train At Local Stop

*By Annabeth Miiler,
ShowMe Times Editor*

The sound was the first thing you noticed.

There was the rhythmic chug-chug-chug of the engine as it powered its way along the tracks along the edge of Crowley's Ridge. Then there was the whistle. A rich, almost melodic tone made by nature's own steam. Unlike modern day horns and whistles – it was loud but fell pleasantly upon ears. There was a beauty to the combination of the sounds.

Then you caught sight of the train. It was almost like fireworks on the Fourth of July, or the sight of a Christmas tree bright on Christmas morning. It brought “ooh's” and “ahhs” and even applause. Youngsters jumped up and down with excitement. Camera shutters clicked.

The arrival of Union Pacific's No. 844 Steam Engine chugged to its temporary stop east of Dexter Monday morning, there was a sense of excitement, pride, and awe as the big engine came to a stop. For a community founded because of the railroad (in 1873) and that has dozens a trails pass through every day, it was an awesome sight.

The engine's stop in Stoddard County was one of many on the Little Rock Express tour

route that began in Cheyenne, Wyo. The route was one of four proposed routes in the Union Pacific online contest completed earlier this year, receiving 76,217 of the 178,675 online votes.

Families, pre-school groups, summer school classes, folks with a fascination for trains all made their way out the gravel roads to the Union Pacific center east of town. The parking lot and roadside were full of vehicles that carried folks to the rural stop. Intense heat – the temperature of the day and the heat from the enormous steam engine – didn't stop folks from the unique event.



“Choo-choo” the youngsters from Small Wonders all sang and motioned as the train came into around the bend.

As Conductor Jim Coker opened a passenger car side door, it was almost like stepping back in time. Dressed in an immaculately groomed navy blue suit, gleaming buttons, his conductor's hat neatly on his head and the traditional watch chain hanging on his vest – well, it was every kid's dream of an train conductor.

As he made the way around the train, Coker seemed to enjoy the attention No. 844 was receiving. We willingly stopped to take photos with the young and not-so-young. He proudly told kids about the steam engine, and never rushed but took time telling folks about the special train.

“In two days I will have my 40th anniversary of working for Union Pacific,” he said. Coker, from Cheyenne, Wyo., is the chief conductor on UP's steam train. The watch chain secures a wonderful pocket watch in its little vest pocket.

“My great-grandfather gave me this,” he said proudly as he takes the watch out to check the time. He passes his business card. “Here, I need to punch that,” as he proceeds to punch that business card as if it were a train ticket.



Toward the end of No. 844's time near Dexter

there was an almost surreal moment as a group of riders on horses approached the train. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid they weren't – just more train lovers travelling to see a unique sight.

Folks lined up for photos – with Coker, beside the giant wheels – their diameter is 80

inches – in front of the engine with the steam pouring out the top. The hour No. 844 spent stopped in Stoddard County was brief – but splendid.

And for those who didn’t travel to the train center east of Dexter – or for those who did but just got back into town in time – there was the added treat of seeing and hear No. 844 as Coker and crew travelled the tracks right through the heart of Dexter and the newly-restored depot – right along the roadway where a community was started in 1873.

Coker and the No. 844 are due back in Cheyenne on July 3.

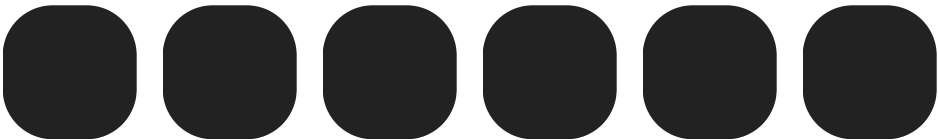
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18 Fore Life Tees Off For Successful Event

JUNE 06TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

18 Fore Life Tees Off For Successful Event

The action in the 18 FORE Life Charity Golf Event started early Saturday morning, with tee times at Hidden Trails County Club at 7 a.m at 1:30 p.m. Everyone in attendance can testify to the extreme heat felt on the links during the scramble.

But the heat would not allow the dedication, enthusiasm, excitement, and heartfelt love of this event to be drained. From volunteers to organizers to participants, there was plenty of action throughout the day.

Each hole found sponsors and activities to liven the action throughout the course. Hole Four - Birdies Fore Breast Cancer - found a group of great volunteers lead by Super Sales Lady Kristi Boles offering everyone the opportunity to tee off from the Ladies' Tee Box at 150 yards using a Pink Tee and a Pink Ball. The hole, according to 18 Fore Life's Twitter page, raised over \$1600.

On Hole 14, another group of ladies were there to take pictures of all teams.

Among the favorite holes was the 17th Hole sponsored by Montgomery Bank with

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"Vegas style" activities and fun. Dana Adams and friends were assisting people with fun games and hilarious staged pictures with wedding veils and Carlos. (which we were promised would not make Facebook.)

The success of the 18 Fore Life Charity Golf Event is due to the support and generosity of the community. In 2010, the Foundation was able to give \$105,000 in "love offerings" sent to families fighting cancer in the area. In addition, more than \$30,000 has been given to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

Complete results of the golf event will be published in the *ShowMe Times*. The Ben Kruse 18 Fore Life Foundation sponsors the annual event, to raise money to help families

fighting cancer.

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Picture 1: "The Power of Friendship and Fun" that can create an event of the magnitude of 18 FORE Life is resembled in this picture. Scott Kruse, Bruce Christian and the many participants of the charity are pictured together here.

Picture 2: Montgomery Bank has a great group of ladies that assisted golfers throughout their day. Natalie Riley and Beth Fowler take a break watch the golf action.

Picture 3: Marc Thrower takes a power swing on the par 3 Hole #17 at Hidden Trails Country Club. Marc had a gallery of onlookers with Wes Howard and Coach Aaron Pixley, along with all the ladies from the Montgomery Bank "Vegas" Tent.

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Racking Horse Lovers Come To Town

Racking Horse Lovers Come To Town

*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

Cars and trucks at the Stoddard County Fairgrounds on Saturday gave the right-of-way to a four-legged form of transportation, as the 34th Annual Missouri State Racking Horse Championship returned to Dexter.

Exhibitors, owners, riders and trainers from throughout the Mid South descended upon town Saturday for annual quest for the best of the racking horse breed in the Show Me State. Close to 100 entries made their way around the show ring at the fairgrounds. The annual show is hosted by the Dexter Chamber of Commerce, which handles all the logistics for the show.

This spring's floods, storms and the tough economy didn't deter the exhibitors, who came from Tennessee, Mississippi, Kentucky, Arkansas, Illinois as well as Missouri for the show. Competitors show in a total of 22 classes – from Pleasure Racking for amateur young people to the Racking Horse Stake class.

For Joe Dan Carter of Martin, Tenn., this was his 34th time to attend the show in Dexter – that's every year since the very first racking horse championship in Dexter.

"I've been here every year that had a show," the bigger-than-life Carter said. Carter stood near the grandstand Saturday evening, talking to his friend State Rep. Billy Pat Wright and keeping a sharp eye on the show ring where one of his horses competed in a pleasure racking class.

"What's so special about the racking horse? I don't know – I just grew up on a gaited horse and I never have liked a trotting horse," the veteran horseman said. He concedes its personal preference, but he likes the racking horse. "There's good ones and bad ones in every breed!"

So for 34 years Carter has made the trek to Dexter for this annual show. This year he brought seven horses; other years there have been more. But he enjoys the show and showing his animals in Southeast Missouri.

“It’s always been real nice over here,” he said. “The people are nice. It’s a good show.”

What is a racking horse? Well, the racking horse dates back to Southern plantations before the War Between the States, when the horse could be ridden comfortably for hours on end before of its smooth, natural gate.

The Racking Horse is attractive and gracefully built with a long sloping neck, full flanks, well-boned, smooth legs, and finely textured hair. The Racking Horse is considered a "light" horse in comparison with other breeds, averaging 15.2 hands high (a "hand" is considered to be four inches) and weighing 1,000 pounds. Colors may be black, bay, sorrel, chestnut, brown, gray, yellow, cremello, buckskin, dun, palomino, roan, champagne, and even spotted.

The "rack" of the Racking Horse is a bi-lateral four-beat gait, which is neither a pace nor a trot. It is often called a "single-foot" because only one foot strikes the ground at a time. The Racking Horse comes by this gait as naturally as walking or striking a bold trot comes to other breeds. He is not to be confused with other breeds, with which the "rack" is an artificially achieved gait resulting from special training. Though he may be shown under saddle, in hand or in harness, and may be flat shod or shown with pads, he still performs the smooth, collected gait that made him famous as a pleasure mount.

The Racking Horse is similar to the Tennessee walking horse, and aficionados of both will debate the virtues of their favorite breed. The Racking Horse was derived from the Tennessee walking horse, and USDA officially recognized it in 1978. It is known for a distinctive single-foot gait.

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18 Fore Life: 'Run Like Your Hair's On Fire!'

JUNE 04TH 2011 BY NEWS

18 Fore Life: 'Run Like Your Hair's On Fire!'

*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

Brian Holman, was on top of the world – or so he thought. On the pitcher's mound for the Seattle Mariners in 1990, he was just one batter – one batter mind you --- away from pitching a no-hitter.

Holman told the crowd at the 18 Fore Life Banquet Friday evening that at that moment, he knew was headed to the Baseball Hall Of Fame!

"I remember when there were two outs in the ninth and I was thinking to myself, 'I'm going to be in the Hall of Fame,' " he said. "I'm thinking how great that is, and one pitch later, it's gone. To be so high one moment and then to be knocked off your pedestal the next, that to me is what life is. So you enjoy your life. Take it as far as you can, knowing that it can change at any time."

Holman's talk was part of a festive evening kicking off the 18 Fore Life Charity Golf Event weekend. Holman's story was riveting, emotional and inspiring.

A man who was at the top of a major league baseball career, he had the wind blown out from under him numerous times, but he never gave up, he never gave up, he never gave up.

From watching his younger brother recover from being hit directly in the head with a line drive baseball, to a son who fell 31 feet from a ski lift and then be diagnosed with a cancerous tumor, to a daughter fight a battle against leukemia, to himself being diagnosed with a leaky heart valve and have open heart surgery – through all these travails Holman said he never quit.

"It doesn't matter whether you're a ballplayer or the color of your skin or rich or poor, bad things can happen to anybody at any time," Holman said.

Holman said the key is to never give up.

“Run like your hair is on fire.” Holman said. And he stressed again, to never give up. Never give up hope; never give up the fight.

Bruce Christian closed the evening’s banquet by offered the traditional toast to the late Ben Kruse. Christian relived his memories of being a coach to young Kruse, and watching Kruse grow up and give back to people in the community.

The Elks Lodge was packed for the annual event, and seemed somewhat like a town reunion. Friends of Ben Kruse – old school chums and friends – came home to Dexter and joined one another to remember Kruse, and to give back to the community through the charity he helped establish.

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School Board Hires New Teachers

JUNE 03RD 2011 BY NEWS

School Board Hires New Teachers

*By Annabeth Miller
ShoweTimes Editor*

Three new teachers were hired this week by the Dexter Board of Education.

The board met this week in a special meeting. During the special meeting the board had a first reading of new and/or revised policies before it voted to enter Executive Session.

During the closed portion of the meeting the board approved three new teachers for employment in the district:

- Marti Pulliam was hired for the high school industrial technology program. Pulliam has taught for one year and has 11 years of practical experience as a surveyor, construction technician and computer drafter;
- Misty Everett was hired to teach high school English; Everett has a Masters in English and an additional certification in speech and debate and five years teaching experience;
- Rhonda Lane was hired for high school English; Lane has nearly 20 years teaching experience in English and Family and Consumer Science.

In addition, the board approved the move of Molly Probst to Title I Visual Intervention Program at Southwest and hired Cody Boyer as a special services aide and Sheila Minehart for custodial help.

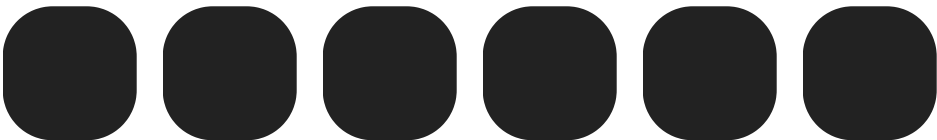
The board also approved the following extra-duty assignments:

- Mike Vipperman, freshman football
- Rhonda Robinson, high school volleyball assistant
- Tammy Crowley and Vicki Windham, high school football cheerleading
- Cody Boyer, middle school football assistant
- Alana Dowdy and Eric Sitze, assistant high school activities directors

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