



December 22, 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings NSFWA Members: It will be an honor and a pleasure to lead us through this next year 2017. I'll let you know that your Board is planning to get the membership more informed and involved than ever before. We will be asking for your help with displays, educational talks, both at our conferences and in your local communities. We will need your help with a handful of subcommittees to strengthen our organization. I certainly think that our past leadership has taken us on a good path, which readies us to proceed on to great success. Let's work together and we will see an organization which does have and will hold the respect of the nation, as a knowledgeable and trusted source of history in the field of wooden wheel transportation of both human and freight. I encourage all of you to contact the NSFWA Board to express your ideas and thoughts. Our website (www.stagecoachfreightwagon.org) has contact information for your use.

Jeff McManus

2016 Annual National Stagecoach & Freight Wagon Conference News

The 2016 Conference was held in July at Sheridan Wyo. First of all, we would like to give a big thank you to "The Sheridan WYO Rodeo" board and its "Gold Buckle Club" for partnering with us to put on our conference in an exquisite setting. Sheridan holds their PRCA Rodeo in July, along with a never ending schedule of family fun activities. Your NSFWA Conference hosted an interesting group of coaches, freight wagons, military wagon & cannon, funeral hearse, sheep wagons, chuck wagons and more. We held numerous talks by knowledgeable speakers about the travel of both people and the freight to get the "American West" settled. We held three types of demonstrations this year: 1) chuck wagon cooking, done by two hard working chuck wagon crews, Ray & Cindy Gullion and Kim & her son Justin Manning; 2) A wheelwright shop, set up by Doug and Holly Hansen of Hansen Wheel & Wagon Shop, hosting several sessions on the steps in making and caring for wagon/buggy wheels. Harland Olson of High Country Horse Drawn and Jem Bluher of Anvil Wagon Works, both experienced wheel wrights, also helped with the demos; 3) A Blacksmith shop with demonstrations each day by the local Blacksmith, Kevin Willey. We would like to thank our speakers; Paul Fees; Misty Stall; Elizabeth Watry; Nancy Trabing Mickelson; Doug Hansen; and Rawhide Johnson for an excellent job of speaking . We also owe a thank you to each member that helped to make the Conference a success.

Notes from Sheridan Participants

Our trip to the NSFWA 2016 Conference started off with a fast trip through Yellowstone Park and a day in Cody, WY at the Buffalo Bill Museum. While at Sheridan we enjoyed the people with new contacts and old friends...all the NSFWA lectures...the Rodeo...BBQ...and we loved the set up with the horse drawn vehicles...the chuck wagons with great cooks! The best part was that the 16th of July was our 50th Wedding Anniversary! What a special way to celebrate it! We ended our trip with three days in the Black Hills of South Dakota...a long awaited adventure...Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse and all. Thank you NSFWA for a great trip!

Victor and Carolyn Haenny
Victory Ranch Potlatch, Idaho

After attending the July 2016 National Stagecoach and Freight Wagon Association meeting in Sheridan, Wyoming, I can tell that the board of directors is working hard to improve the association. I would like to thank them as well as other members who cooked, brought wagons, did research or gave the demonstrations. I think that it was a very good mixed exhibit. There were horse drawn vehicles, demonstrations of multiple wagon hitches, wheelwright demonstrations, blacksmithing, historical lectures, and plenty of sharing of information. There was something offered for everyone. Also, the Association was represented in the Parade with several of the wagons that were on display.

Good Old Days Coach & Wagons

Ricky & Judy Day

Wortham, TX

A shout out to the Board Members and others who helped put on the convention at Sheridan. The wagon display, including the chuck wagon, was great. My favorite was the old Lynch wagon followed closely by the Yellowstone. The discussion about the hitching of freight wagons was very good and informative as well as the wheelwrighting demonstrations. Enjoyed the presentation about restoration verses preservation by Rawhide. Learned many tips for processes, materials, etc., for either way to conserve old wagons and reasons for which way to go. Overall good show!

Thank you all again,

Ron Krause

Walla Walla, WA



Rebuilding Project of the Borax Wagon

Amongst smart phones, smart watches, and instant everything, we can tend to lose touch with our past, our history. Generally, if an individual under the age of 50 is asked, “Do you know about 20 Mule Team Borax?” the result is usually a blank stare. 20 Mule Team Borax, once a household word in cleaning, laundry detergent, and the subject of “Death Valley Days” TV series, is no longer a familiar commodity.

This is partly why the Death Valley Conservancy has commissioned Engels Coach Shop of Joliet, MT to build a completely authentic workable set of the 20 Mule Team Borax wagons. Since there is only one original complete set of wagons remaining at the Harmony mine in Death Valley, currently owned by the Park Service, and for display purposes only, it was decided to replicate this part of our history while there is enough left of the originals to take measurements from.

In October of 2014 Dave and Diane Engel traveled to Death Valley to meet with Bobby Tanner and Henry Golas and began making blueprints of the remaining wagons. Soon thereafter, Garon Stutzman of Maryland, offered to provide the white oak blocks to start the hubs, so Dave traveled east that Dec to haul back the 300# to 320# rough blocks, and the process slowly began.

Being aware of the magnitude of the project, Dave hired Calvin Roorda and began instructing him on the fundamentals of wheelwrighting so that he would be able to help deal with the wheels. Each wagon weighs close to 8000# empty, is 16' long and 9' 7" tall. The front wheels are 58" tall and weigh 780#. The rear wheels are 80" tall and weigh 1080# each. All wheels have steel tires that are 1" thick and 8" wide, designed for the desert sand and 10-ton loads of Borax on each wagon.

These wagons operated from 1880 to 1885, traveling 165 miles one way, from the Harmony mine to the railhead at Mojave, CA. Each trip took 10 days and was operated by two men, the muleskinner that directed the 20-mules and ran the brake to the first wagon, and the second man, the swamper, who sat on the second wagon and operated that brake and the brake to the water wagon.

While the preliminary groundwork was being worked out to begin construction, funding was also being sought after to bring this dream to fruition. When the Rio Tinto Mine, which currently mines borax near Boron, CA., offered matching funds to the funds being raised privately, the project officially began February of 2016.

Thus began the endeavor to complete both wagons, from scratch, in 10½ months. The first début will be the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, CA on Jan 2, 2017. Then the hope is to take these back to Washington DC for the Inauguration Parade on Jan 20, 2017. These will both be 100-year centennial parades for these wagons, commemorating having been in the Rose Bowl Parade in 1917, and then they were in the Inauguration Parade for Woodrow Wilson, also in 1917. Eventually these wagons will be displayed at the Law Museum, just outside of Bishop CA, home of Bishop Mule Days. A new building is being constructed for them.

Funding is still being raised to help with travel expenses to meet these parade schedules. Anyone interested in helping with this momentous occasion is encouraged to contact the Death Valley Conservancy. This is the first time in 130+ years that wagons of this magnitude have been built. Your contribution to this historical event is much appreciated. Progress videos are being posted on You Tube under **EngelsCoachShop** so you can watch these wagons being built.

Dave Engel



New Members

Harley D. Troyer, Fort Lupton, CO
Sam & Phyllis Hampton, Worland, WY
Romanus & Maribel Kloss, San Dimas, CA
Patrick Goodknight, Oronogo, MO
Gene W. Marshall, Morrill, NE
Doug Mikkelsen, Rozet, WY

Upcoming Events

Join us for the **2017 NSFVA Annual Conference** in conjunction with the Santa Fe Trail Association's Annual Symposium September 27-30, 2017, in Olathe, Kansas. We are excited to be a part of this important symposium and find that we, the NSFVA, as an organization of historic vehicle enthusiasts, can join forces with the many trail historians of the SFTA, and really bring to life and link together the wide and varied important events the vehicles and trail played in American History. The NSFVA will have presenters at the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm on Friday, September 29th. The topics include "The technical aspects of the stagecoach and its construction", as well as the "Trails and Experience of Stagecoach Travel". Also, the NSFVA will support a tour to the Fort Leavenworth Frontier Army Museum. To learn more about the SFTA Symposium and other upcoming NSFVA events, as well as the registration form for the 2017 NSFVA Conference, please visit the NSFVA website at: www.stagecoachfreightwagon.org

Special Note: Anyone who is interested in applying for a Board of Directors position and getting more involved in the NSFVA, please contact Jeff McManus at 307-765-4584.

***Friendly Reminder – For those who need to renew your membership dues, the form is available on our website.** Also, in an effort to keep our membership abreast of activities, minutes of our meetings are now posted on our website and Facebook.

Tom Henrich, Director
NSFVA

****SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!****