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'The Best Friend Of Charleston'



"THE BEST FRIEND OF CHARLESTON" will return to Marshall this weekend after an absence of over 50 years. In the photo above, taken in 1927, Marshall residents inspect a replica of the famous train during its last

visit to town. Photographer H.K. Rogers captured the scene on film. Everett Barnett found the old photograph in his home and agreed to share it with us.

Pioneer Days Start Friday Rail Strike May Curtail Weekend Celebration

By BOB KOENIG

The fate of Marshall's 'Pioneer Days' celebration this weekend remained uncertain Tuesday afternoon. Marshall merchants, town officials and the Norfolk Southern Railway have planned a weekend-long celebration to commemorate the 100th anniversary of rail service in Marshall.

Whether or not celebration will go on is in doubt due to a strike against the railroad by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. The union walked off the job on Sunday because of the lack of progress in contract talks with railroad management.

When contacted on Monday afternoon, a spokesman for Norfolk Southern in Washington could not say what affect the strike would have on the proposed celebration. He said that the celebration's main attraction, a replica of "The Best Friend of Charleston", was presently in Atlanta and that it was still too early in the week to tell if the train could still be shipped up to Marshall in time for the celebration.

President Reagan on Monday

asked Congress to pass legislation bringing the strike to an end. Congress was expected to act on the matter Tuesday, but it is uncertain how soon legislation could be passed by both houses of the Congress. The Norfolk Southern spokesman in Washington said it is doubtful that the train would be brought to Marshall if the strike were not settled by Wednesday.

Contract talks between the union and railroad officials broke off Monday afternoon. At issue in the dispute is the right of engineers to higher wages as a result of smaller work crews on trains. Management has asked that the union give up the right to strike while the dispute is mediated.

The strike by the engineers has shut down rail service throughout the country, except in the Northeast where Conrail workers had previously agreed to a no-strike clause in their agreement with management. Several Norfolk Southern trains passed through Marshall on Monday, operated by supervisory personnel.

Should the celebration go on as planned, it promises to be an exciting weekend for Madison County. The centerpiece of the weekend celebration will be replica of "The Best Friend of Charleston", the first steam engine locomotive built in America. The train will give rides on the siding in Marshall from the old depot.

On Friday, the antique replica will give senior citizens and the handicapped free rides from noon until 1 p.m. On Saturday, the train will operate from noon until 4 p.m. with rides open to the general public.

Along with the famous old train, Norfolk Southern plans to bring along an exhibit car which will detail the history and present operation of the railroad. Both the "Best Friend of Charleston" and the exhibit car are free to the public.

A great many more activities are planned for the second day of the celebration on Saturday. In addition to the train ride and the exhibit car, there are craft shows, flea

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Sleepy Valley Is Wide Awake

By LORI PARKER

This community may be called Sleepy Valley, but as ex-Congressman Roy Taylor has said many times as he handed out awards at the Western North Carolina Community Development Assn. Luncheon in Asheville, "the people there are wide awake." Sleepy Valley is located in northwest Madison County near the Tennessee line housing a store, two churches, a community center, and about 33 families who are still concerned about their neighbor, do their best when someone needs help, and work together to make their community a better place to live and for others to enjoy.

This could be the reason Sleepy Valley Community Development Club has been so successful. In 1984, when most homes in Sleepy Valley had no

running water or inside plumbing or much of anything else, the community club was organized. They met in churches, homes, or any place they could, planning activities and projects to improve the quality of life in their community.

In 1968, the idea and need for a community center emerged. With the help of incentive grants available, plus a lot of real community action, the group formed bake sales, rummage sales, suppers, recycling projects, crafts sales, canning, making lye soap, sulphuring apples, and even one year making molasses. When the 4-H's, Ladies Extension Homemakers, and community club members, pooled grant money with the nearby small community of Lower Shut In, the money

slowly accumulated and the building progressed.

In 1975, the community center was dedicated, although not quite complete. Now it is self-supporting and supplies a place for community functions and festivities as well as church socials. For three years, it has been used for a Basic Adult Education classroom, with fifteen people receiving their G.E.D. certificates.

Improvements continue being made through award winnings and fund-raising projects. As soon as one project is completed, a new one begins. Sleepy Valley was chosen to place an exhibit at the 1975 North Carolina State Fair at Raleigh and received honorable mention and a \$400 prize. They also qualified and received a grant of \$500 from

the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation through the Center for Improving Mountain Living at

Western Carolina University.

More recently, they placed second in the Western North Carolina Development Assn.'s competition of the 18-Most Western Counties Division and received a \$300 prize. These awards and fund-raising project sales have been used to complete and maintain the community center building.

Not all fund raising project money is used on boring utility bills, attic vents, carpet and fireplace inserts. The latest project raised money for charter bus fare to take the 4-H Club, their parents and club members to the World's Fair. Forty-six community residents participated in simply having fun going somewhere and doing

something together. The face of Sleepy Valley has been lifted, along with the spirits of the people, by their

working together for the good of the community. Litter is picked up along the highway, attractive mail boxes are being provided, and flower planters enhance driveways throughout the community.

A cheer group was started a few years ago which makes weekly trips to visit the sick and elderly in the community for singing and prayer. Two homes now stand which were partially rebuilt by the group after fires. Sleepy Valley continues to be an example to any small community of what can be done for the betterment of community life, even when you don't have anything to begin with except the spirit of people helping people. When you drive through Sleepy Valley, notice the beauty around you. If you get lost or need someone, you'll find a real neighbor there to help you.



SLEEPY VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER

Portrait Of A Self-Made Artist



KEN PARKER

By ROBERT KOENIG

Ken Parker likes to do things his own way.

Ken and his wife Lori came to Madison County six years ago and settled into a 100-year old home in Spring Creek. Together, they built a new home on top of the old one. They still use the old home, as a studio for Ken's work.

His work is another thing Ken Parker likes to do his own way. That work, you see, is art. When it comes to art, you just can't teach Ken Parker anything. Ken Parker likes to do things his own way and he learns his own way, too. Whether it's painting, sculpture or photography, Ken is a self-taught professional.

Painting is his first love. Ken began painting while serving in the Navy. After his discharge, he admits he did take a few lessons.

Those lessons came to a halt, however, when someone

commented that his work looked just like that of his teacher. Ken Parker likes to do things his own way, you see.

Ken still paints, mostly in oils. He has been commissioned to do paintings for churches and many of his paintings are of religious scenes.

Now, however, Ken has also expanded his work to include sculpting and photography. In his sculptures, Ken combines his newly-acquired talent with his love for painting. He showed us a sculpture of children playing which he created. The work sits in a frame and is painted. Ken Parker likes to do things his own way.

Ken has been experimenting with the use of unusual materials in his sculptures. Not modern art materials like dental car fenders or soup cans, but unusual materials

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MARSHALL MAYOR Lawrence Ponder, center, makes a point to Tennessee Valley Authority board chairman Charles Dean during last week's dedication of the new

Madison County Industrial Park. TVA District administrator Andy Rye and County Commissioner James Ledford look on.