



# The DERAIL

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JANUARY 2010

## January Meeting

The next meeting will be on January 5th, 2010. At Bayland Park Community Center.

The Meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

**Program - Tom Bailey's presentation of Milwaukee Road's "Beer Line" in Milwaukee**

This switching line served the Schlitz Brewery complex and many other industries along its length.

As a child, Tom walked every inch of the line many times over, so he is very familiar with it. He describes it as an "intense switching" line.

## KCS Christmas Train viewing at Wharton in December

Photos by Gil Freitag



# Hogger's Luck Adds to Operational Realism

Submitted by Mark Couvillion

When a train leaves the yard, the engineer doesn't know what he will experience on his run. Most trips are uneventful, but occasionally something out of the ordinary happens to adversely affect his schedule. To add some unknown to our operating sessions, "Hogger's Luck" was developed as a simple method to add chance to the operation of the railroad.

Hogger's Luck is essentially a "fortune" drawn from a hat as the hogger leaves the yard with his train. He can't look at the fortune until he is out on the main line, but he must look at it before he arrives at his final destination. He must also immediately adhere to the fortune. Since we often operate using a fast clock, any problem encountered has a pre-defined penalty period. While most of the fortunes are benign, about 15 - 20 % will cause a delay. Most of the delays are brief, but a few are more substantial. When the dispatcher has to reschedule trains or start loading sidings to handle the backed-up traffic, that's when

operations get interesting!

Hogger's Luck was built using a word processing program. The fortunes are written in a large font, centered, and with triple spacing between fortunes. On a separate page, "HOGGER'S LUCK" is typed in large bold text to coincide with the spacing of the fortunes. First, print several pages of the "HOGGER'S LUCK" side, then turn the sheet over and feed it back into the printer to print the fortunes on the reverse side. The sheets are then cut into strips and folded so that only "HOGGER'S LUCK" is visible. The strips are then put in a "hat". Each engineer selects one as he is assigned his train.

Examples of fortunes follow. You can make any fortune appropriate to your operation, and any suitable delay. Avoid having more than about 25% of adverse fortunes, since it wouldn't be realistic and could become problematic during operations. Enjoy the addition of chance to your normal operating sessions!

| <u>Fortune / Message</u>   | <u>Time Delay</u>          |
|--|----------------------------|
| Stop for beans after the next set-out.   | N / A                      |
| Stay on the high iron.   | N / A                      |
| Have a great day!  | N / A                      |
| You're right on schedule.  | N / A                      |
| You've got a hotbox! Reduce speed and set out the third from last car at the next siding.                            | 5 minutes                  |
| You "Died on the Law"! Wait in the next siding for a replacement crew.   | 15 minutes                 |
| Leak in the train line! Stop and replace a gladhand.   | 20 minutes                 |
| You're on the ground! Stop to rerail the 4th car.  | 30 minutes                 |
| You left your rear brakeman at the last siding! Wait in the next siding for the following train to bring him to you. | Following train must pass. |
| You broke a knuckle! Emergency stop and repair.  | 45 minutes.                |

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## CHRISTMAS at the FREITAG'S

For those of you who couldn't make it to our annual Christmas party at Gil and Virginia Freitag's home, you missed yet another fun filled and spirited party. My guess is that there were some 50 to 60 people present this year...I was too busy having fun to count. As always the food was great and the company was better. The traditional gift exchange was again one of the highlights of the evening. Around 30 of the guys participated and about 15 or so of the girls had their own brand of fun. As usual there was that one piece of rolling stock that no one could keep under his chair for very long. This year's item was an ATSF 50ft Box (go figure) that a lot of us seemed to have an interest in. I know that it did get into Gil's hands for a while, in fact, when it first was opened early on, Gil made the statement that it would stay at the house. And if my memory serves me correct, he was right. However, the infamous Kadee boxcar did not make an appearance at this year's exchange. This makes the second year that it has not shown up. Could it be that the last one to receive it has found a place for it on their railroad? Perhaps next year it will raise its ugly head. I trust all had a great time at the party, I know I did. And as always, a big THANK YOU to Gil and Virginia for their hospitality.

Robert Ashcraft



## VACATION

By the time you read this column, I will be in South Africa on a two-week vacation to see family and friends.

Aside from the personal visits that I will be making, I am excited to be going because during the year, I placed orders for a number of new steam locomotives and other rolling stock from modelers there who either scratch-build or re-manufacture SAR models in HO. I have been in constant touch with these individuals because it is virtually impossible to purchase South African Railway (SAR) items for my layout here in the U.S, and so I intend bringing the specially-ordered items back with me when I return. If there is any interest from the Club members, I will willingly share these with you after my return to Houston, and will also let you know the current state of the railways in South Africa – especially as regards passenger travel.

During the 1980's and 1990's, steam train fans beat a path to South Africa's door to ride in beautifully-kept passenger coaches pulled by immaculate locomotives through some of the most spectacular country in the world. This was one of the last bastions of live steam and when one added truly luxury passenger train travel into the equation, it became a train-enthusiasts dream-come-true! Yet despite the Dollars, Pounds, Euros and Yen that poured into the country, the Government's railway division – Transnet, seems to be more interested in freight than tourism. They have therefore ignored all requests for preservation and tour operators have been forced cancel a number of steam train tours in the past few years.

Making matters worse is that historical equipment has been vandalized. A case in point is the dining-car "Protea" (below), a once-beautiful wooden saloon that carried a large number of royals and presidents.

One of the government's crazy attempts at earning money involved hiring out some of its historic vehicles for a "Rave Train" around

Cape Town. For this task, "Protea" and a few other historic coaches were gutted – windows were torn out to make way for air-conditioning units, etc., – and turned into a mobile nightclub



with sawdust on the floors. Promises were made that "Protea" would be restored to original condition - promises that turned out to be nothing more than hot air and bluster, judging from the recent photos (see left).



What a disgraceful end for a once-magnificent piece of mobile South African history.

Sadly, "Protea" appears to be just one of many victims including other historic locomotives and coaches, that have been destroyed either intentionally or through neglect.

On my return, I will let you know what other items of interest I find when in and around the country. For example, there was, and apparently still is, a wonderful train that goes from the center of Cape Town to a seaside port called Simonstown, and for the last ten miles or so, the line runs right along the sea-side – literally feet away from the beaches and the surf. The memories of riding on that line as a young boy are still so fresh in my mind, but now...? I fear the worst but hope for the best.

I wish you all a wonderful 2010. May it bring you and your families all that you wish for yourselves, including happiness and peace, but most of all, good health!

## Personal Request!

As many of you know, I intend embarking on a new layout in 2010, but I am struggling to maximize the space available to me.

Being computer literate, I want to use a computer CAD/CAM-type program to help me design and finalize my track plans, but although there are a number of track-design computer programs for sale on the Internet, I do not know which one to buy. I am certain that there is a program that will fit my needs but I need your help to choose the one best suited to me.

Accordingly, if you have ever used any track-planning or design software, please let me know and better still, if you actually have a software package that you can demonstrate to me, I would be truly grateful. I am not asking for a free version of the software – all I want is someone's advice and expertise so that I know which one to buy and also, how it works.

I thank you in advance for your assistance and as usual, I can be contacted at [henridmorris@att.net](mailto:henridmorris@att.net).

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wow! Another year has come and gone. Where does the time go? Seems like we were making our resolutions just yesterday, let alone have had enough time to complete them. But what's good about this hobby is, the things we didn't get to this past year are still there for us to enjoy this year. I know that the plans I made for my layout didn't get as far along as I had hoped (does anyone remember rebuilding after Ike?), but the enjoyment is still there for the upcoming year and those to come. This up coming year should hold some fun times for us. Our annual train show is just around the corner and I am still working on a trip to the Texas State Railroad this spring. Add to that our monthly meetings and the clinics that will be presented, along with the friendships, both old and new that will continue to grow, and I can't think of a better hobby to be in than this one. I know of at least one new layout that is under way and will be on the Tour next year and of another layout that is in the serious planning stages. I continually receive emails from people who have found our website or have heard about us through the Layout Tour, so it seems that our hobby is still a viable and interesting one to be in. I hope all of you have had a Blessed holiday season and that Santa brought you that 4-8-2 or that Geep that you had on your wish list and I look forward to sharing the fun of Model Railroading with all of you this coming New Year.

## Meeting minutes for December 1, 2009

President Robert Ashcraft called the meeting to order at 8:25 PM.

Thanks were greatly expressed to Gil and Virginia Freitag for hosting the December meeting/Xmas Party at their home.

Craig Brantley gave a promo presentation on the up and coming Sn3 Convention 2/24/2010 – 2/27/2010. 20+ clinics are scheduled as well as home layout tours and 42 vendor tables. The event will be held at the Hobby Airport Marriott Hotel. Registration is \$45 before 1/1/2010 and \$55 after that. Spouses are FREE. Registration is open to all, regardless of scale. See [www.sn3-2010.com](http://www.sn3-2010.com)

Meeting adjourned at 8:35PM

General comments: 44 people were present at the meeting.

-Respectfully submitted, Gilbert Freitag, Secretary / Treasurer

# GREATER HOUSTON TRAIN SHOW

**SATURDAY, February 20, 2010 \* 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

In the Beautiful Spacious \*  
**Stafford Centre**  
10505 Cash Road @ Murphy Rd.

*Easy Directions:  
Exit US-59 south at Wilcrest Dr.  
(later becomes Murphy Road)  
go 1.8 miles south to Cash Rd.  
on southeast corner.*

**Admission:**  
Adults - \$6  
Children 12 to 18 - \$1  
Children Under 12 Free,  
Max. \$12.00 per Family  
**FREE PARKING**



• 20,000 Square Feet of: Instructive Clinics,  
Model & Photo Contest, Operating Layouts, Vendors from  
across the Southwest, plus  
Afternoon & Evening Tours of Home Layouts.

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For More Information Visit our Web Site  
web: <http://sanjac.leoslair.com>

## Sn3 2010 Symposium • Houston, Feb 24th to 27th

It's less than 3 months away until the 2010 Symposium.  
Have you made plans yet to attend this event in February?

It's 4 days of narrow gauge model railroading, with clinics, layout tours and vendors. The web-site has been updated with the updated Clinic list, the Daily Agenda, and even has the results from our late Summer poll.

Its more than just narrow gauge. There will be some of the best modelers in the country here presenting clinics.

Please take a minute and drop by the website at: <http://www.sn3-2010.com>

The event is getting close, so please register soon! \$45 until Jan 1, 2010, \$55 after that.



Meetings are the First Tuesdays of January through December at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet. Meeting time is 7 to 9 pm. Visitors are welcome.

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