



## August Meeting

The next meeting will be on July 3rd, 2010. At Bayland Park Community Center.

The Meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

Program - "UP 844's Visit to the Gulf Coast" videos by Robert Pierce

## ALAMO RAILS 2010 LONE STAR REGION NMRA CONVENTION

By Ronald Burns

The Lone Star Region Annual Convention was in San Antonio, Texas this year. It started on Wednesday June 2 and ran through Sunday June 6. It was held at the San Antonio-Int'l Airport Holiday Inn on N. E. Loop 410.

At the last San Jacinto Model Railroad Club meeting, I mentioned that there was a layout in Dumas, Texas that was going to be open on Wednesday and again on Sunday so that people could see it on their way to San Antonio or on their way home. I decided to go there on Wednesday. This is Keith Kaiser's HO scale 24' X 20' freelanced model railroad based in West Virginia during the modern steam era. It has a combination of double track and single track main line. The layout has a completed lower deck with some scenery and a 4 level triple track helix to the upper level. Track work on the upper level is just being started. This is a very nice layout and was well worth the extra travel time to see it.

On Wednesday evening I attended a clinic on Traveling by Train presented by H. Harold Bryant. He covered Amtrak routes, schedules, on-board facilities, car accommodations, meal services, making reservations, purchasing tickets, discounts, safety and much more. We received a current national Amtrak schedule, trip planner, and other literature. There were several drawings for door prizes during the presentation. I didn't win. By the end of the clinic, I knew a lot about how to plan a train trip on Amtrak and now I want to do so.

Thursday morning and afternoon I went on the extra fare Prototype 1 trip to the Wimberley, Blanco & Southern RR out from Wimberley, Texas. This is a very large model railroad that you can ride on. It was started in 2000 and is on 18 acres of land in the hill country. The scale is 1½" = 1'0" for standard gauge and 2½" = 1'0" for narrow gauge and the track gauge is 7½" and 7¼". The railroad has approxi-

mately 14,000 feet of track which includes 6,200 feet of main line track. The main is double track with a balloon loop at each end. It was starting to rain when we arrived so I got out my poncho and managed to stay relatively dry. They ran 3 trains, 2 with steam engines and 1 with a diesel engine. The first train I rode was a passenger train pulled by a 4-6-4 Hudson lettered Georgetown & Western Number 9100. It had 1 REA car, 3 passenger cars lettered Wimberley, Blanco & Southern with 3 seats in each car, and 1 Pullman car. The next train I rode was a freight train pulled by a 2-8-2 Mikado lettered Texas State Railroad number 400. It had 10 freight cars (2 with seats) and a caboose. Rick White was the engineer on the diesel train. The diesel engine had some problems and I didn't get a chance to ride it, but I rode the others several times. We were told that a box lunch would be provided. As it turned out, there was no box lunch; instead the railroad owner, Mr. Edwards, provided us with a Texas style barbecue lunch with all the trimmings plus peach, cherry, and apple cobbler for dessert. The railroad has several rock cuts, lots of fills, and numerous bridges. An interesting feature in the construction is that the track is laid on 2 X 4 pressure-treated ties facing down. They look like the 2 X 2 ties that you usually see because more of the tie is buried in the crushed stone ballast.

We returned from the Wimberley trip around 2:30 pm, so I went on layout tours. I had planned each day's layout tours on Wednesday after I picked up my registration package. I managed to see 5 layouts by 9 pm.

On Friday morning I went on the extra fare Prototype 3 trip to the Union Pacific Intermodal yard and then to the Union Pacific freight yard. There were 2 buses used with the first bus going to the intermodal yard part of the tour first and then to the freight yard. The second bus did just the opposite. I was on the first

bus and Paul Steves was our tour guide. Paul was the convention chairman and works for the Union Pacific. The intermodal yard is a maximum security facility which opened in March





# 75th Annual NMRA National Convention in Milwaukee

by **Randall Wilson**

In 1935 Al Kalmbach, Bill Walthers and several other Milwaukee area model railroaders joined together to create the National Model Railroad Association. To celebrate its founding 75 years ago, the NMRA returned to its birthplace for its annual national convention. As my wife Diann and I were able to attend the 50th anniversary convention in Milwaukee, we decided to return to Milwaukee 25 years later for another NMRA convention.

A national model railroad convention is a week crammed full of both rail and non-rail activities. No one can hope to tour or attend everything, but my wife and I did enjoy several different activities.

Diann's favorite tour was Architecture of Sacred Places. Diann toured four historically significant designs in places of worship. St. Josephat Basilica, completed in 1897, The Congregation Shalom, a modern Jewish Temple with stunning glass works, St. Mary of the Hill, a shrine dedicated to Mary, Help of Christians and the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church which was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

I enjoyed San Jacinto Model Railroad club member Greg Johnson's clinic entitled Researching, Designing and Building SP Switching Layout - T&NO Clinton Branch. Greg also presented Building and Operation and Industrial Strength Railroad. I also enjoyed MMR Leslie Eaton clinics Getting Down and Dirty With Weathering and Nano-Animation for under \$10. For those of us that have seen Leslie's weathering work with cosmetics, she now works with acrylic paints from Iwata that she helped develop. See [http://www.iwata-medea.com/index.php/medea/com\\_art\\_real\\_deal\\_weathering\\_kit/](http://www.iwata-medea.com/index.php/medea/com_art_real_deal_weathering_kit/) for more details.

I also enjoyed several home layouts. The Milwaukee area has some really, really, really large basement layouts! Bob Perin models 20 miles of the Illinois Central Railroad in his 3500 square foot basement. His large basement allows him to model the entire 20 miles to scale. No selective compression on his layout! It is impressive to see 70 car trains run on 80 inch banked curves with easements. (Do you really need easements with 80 inch curves?) Greg Bedlek's 30 X 95 ft basement empire features a 60 foot long main yard and a 45 foot long passenger station. He needs big yards and stations for his 3,000 freight cars and 250 locomotives.

The biggest model trains on tour were the 7 1/2" live steam railroads. I rode directly behind a steam locomotive on the Lake Forest Live Steam Club's 7100 foot single track railroad. Nothing beats the sound, smell and soot of a real steam locomotive!

Model railroaders could tour Model Railroader's offices and see MR's HO scale MR&T layout. Walthers also had several

tours to their warehouse. Badger Airbrush offered tours of their factory and at the end of each tour Badger presented each tour member with a new airbrush.



Walther's Latest Model, Los Angeles Union Station

For many model railroaders the highlight of the week is the National Train show. Here convention attendees have three hours to see the newest products and talk to model railroad manufacturers before the show opens to the general public. A good web site for a look at all the new products is <http://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/>.

The train show featured several nice layouts including a very large Free-Mo layout. Free-Mo modules are used to build a layout that features a single track mainline operating point-to-point or loop-to-loop. The Free-Mo layout at this year's train show was fully signaled with passing and industrial sidings. Operators on the Free-Mo layout used DCC equipped locomotives to run trains across the layout. The trainmaster would make up a switch list for each train departing the yard to tell the crew the industries they would be working. It was interesting for the public to watch the crews working the trains as if it were a real railroad.

Another interesting layout was a model of a Great Lakes ferry. The operators spent all day Friday moving rolling stock on and off the ferry.



*The Derail*



The National Model Railroad Association used the 75th anniversary to unveil its new logo and name. To quote from the announcement ..."Welcome to the new NMRA logo..."NMRA" now supplants "National Model Railroad Association" and becomes our brand, just as "NFL", "CBS", and "AARP" have become brands in their respective fields...We've even renamed our magazine, "NMRA Magazine" to further reinforce that brand.

The convention attendance was about 2000, lower than I expected. Attendance at the National Train show was a lot less than the manufacturers and vendors expected. Many have suggested various reasons for the smaller than expected turnout. I just know that Diann and I had a great time and are making plans for next year's convention in Sacramento.

## LSR 2010 Continued

1999. Cameras and computers are utilized to allow 1 person in the office to verify and control all trucks upon entry. Each driver has to go through a fingerprint scanner to insure that he is the driver that should be there with that particular load. Two 100 ton cranes guided by GPS are used in the loading/unloading of containers. After a tour of the yard, our bus went to the Union Pacific's Sosan Yard which is close to downtown San Antonio. Here we saw some of the freight car repair facilities with some repair work in progress as well as trains arriving, being inspected, cars being sorted to various tracks, trains being made up, and departing trains.

On Friday afternoon I visited 4 layouts and then went to the Texas Transportation Museum. There we had a barbecue dinner and toured the museum and grounds. Inside a large building you could see several vintage automobiles and trucks and the Alamo Model Railroad Engineers HO scale layout. Outside there is a "G" gauge-garden railway and several locomotives, freight, and passenger cars. We also had the opportunity to ride a real train consisting of a diesel switch engine, open car, and a caboose down a track approximately a third of a mile long.

Saturday morning and afternoon I visited 6 more layouts. Saturday evening was the Convention Banquet which began with a happy hour with hors d'oeuvres followed by a steak or chicken dinner. It was announced that there were 25 chicken plates and those that wanted chicken should hold up their hand. I wanted the steak, but the table I was at was the last to be served and the waiter said they had run out of steak and chicken was the only thing left, so Phil Stewart and I had to take the chicken. The guest speaker was Stephen Priest, MMR. He is the editor of the NMRA's Scale Rails and numerous other publications. His presentation was very and focused on his model railroad layout and his career with the ATSF and ATSF/BNSF.

Sunday morning was the LSR Breakfast and Business Meeting followed by the LSR Board Meeting. If you haven't been to a LSR Board Meeting, you should attend one sometime just to see how our elected LSR officials are working for us. The minutes should be published in the Marker Lamp.

On my way back to Houston, I went to New Braunfels to see the New Braunfels Railroad Historical Society Museum. They have a 0-6-0 Porter steam locomotive, several pieces of rolling stock, and HO and N scale layouts. I saw 1 more layout about 10 miles out of town.

I had a lot of fun at this convention, met some new people, and renewed friendships with fellow model railroaders I had met at other conventions. The convention had many more activities for modelers and non-rails including operating sessions, tours, silent auction, contests and clinics. With so much offered to select from, you can't do everything and I decided to see as many layouts as I could and planned each day around them. There were 19 layouts open and with the help of my GPS Navigation System, I saw all of them. Various scales were represented, 11 - HO, 2 - N, 1 - S, 1 - Sn3, 2 - O, 1 - G, and 1 HO/N. Total registration was around 187.

This was the 26th LSR convention for me. My 1st was in 1985 and I have attended each year since then. The 2011 convention will be in Lubbock, Texas. I believe the dates are Wednesday June 8 through Sunday June 12. Hope to see you there.



*The Derail*

## An Eventful Family Train Trip

It is not often that I get to take my grandchildren on a train ride, and this one was very eventful, definitely a trip to remember.

When we got to the depot, the passenger special was eager to leave. I had to get our tickets at will-call and get the family on board with little time to spare. We were lucky enough to find seats in the observation for the 6 of us, and nearly immediately the "All Aboard" was sounded, the whistle blew, and we were off.

We eased down the hill, around the tannery, through the though truss bridge over the river, across the highway and started up the hill. That's when the excitement started. Part of the way up the hill we stalled. Our little engine that could, couldn't. Its drivers were spinning. The engineer left the cab to apply some extra sand to the rails, but it did not do any good.

We could not imagine what the engineer would do. There certainly was no helper anywhere near nor a passing siding to double the hill. So he backed up, back across the highway and the bridge. We had a great view here from the observation, and I am not used to a push-pull operation. He revved the engine and away we went to attack the hill again, this time with a little faster speed. We made it a little further, but not over.

I thought they might even ask some of us to get off to lighten the load, but no, back down the hill we came again, this time farther, back around the tannery. Whistle and here we go again, with speed we were hanging on as the leisurely ride was becoming more daring. But to no avail, we stalled a third time.

In reverse again, we were really hanging on now. That light gauge rail was not designed for speed and we were getting beaten up. I did not feel comfortable with that reverse ride and began to look at how I would protect my grandson and myself should we derail. We backed all the way to the depot. Now what? I was sure they would drop a car, and since we were in the last car, that meant the end of our day.

But no. We did take on a new engineer. I think his name was A. J. Foyt, as we left the station like a rocket. We were thrown around in the seat as we rounded the curves and headed over the bridge. We were halfway across the highway before the gates even started to go down! Hanging on for dear life, and chanting "I think I can, I think I can we barely topped the hill at a walking pace.

The rest of the ride was fun and uneventful until we turned a tight corner around the golf course. Then we came to a stop again. Word filtered back; our engine had derailed, its main drivers had come off the track. A call was made to the dispatcher. The people in the seat behind me got off; they did not want any more of this and said they would walk. I was having a great time – you don't have this much fun every train trip.

Two pickups arrived a few minutes later and the crew made quick work of rerailing the 4-2-4, and we were off again. In a few minutes we were back at the depot having received far more than our \$3 ticket price. The next time you are in San Antonio, visit the Zoo Train in Brackenridge Park. If you are in luck, you will have Mary Barrett as your engine and will have some excitement along the way.

Steve Sandifer

4• August 2010

## For Sale:

Industrial buildings, track, some cars, a complete train set, materials to weather the buildings, engines, and train cars.

A 4'x6' layout with the track already laid on it.

The ad is on the Houston and Galveston Craigslist.

There is about \$350.00 of train stuff, but I need to let it go.

Please Contact:

Rob Canet

Cell: 832-654-7127

e-mail: [robcenet@hotmail.com](mailto:robcenet@hotmail.com)



*The Derail*



# FROM MY GARRATT

## SCRATCH-BUILDING HISTORY

'Prize Model Railroad Layouts' was published in 1952 and has reprinted articles from Model Railroader Magazines from 1926 through 1952. It has 35 articles with black and white photographs spread over 144 pages and I have treasured this 'book' since my late father purchased it for me in South Africa back in 1952 or '53.

I often look at the book and what amazes me is not only the progress that the model railroad industry has made since it was published, but also the ingenuity and creativity of model railroaders – both then and today!



For example, an 'O' gauge layout in an 18 x 24 foot garage had this scratch-built, remote controlled Bascule bridge that was held together with 600 screws. No glue or styrene in those days!

The custom built control panel shown here, had over 9,000 feet of wire between it and the track. It also had 18 rheostats, 16 meters 155 lights and 95 switches – no chips or transistors.

The next photo shows an ingenious collapsible, travelling scaffold that enabled the author to reach inaccessible parts of his table-top layout. (Note his elegant bow-tie!)



Also in the magazine are photo's of a little known layout (at the time) called the Gorre and Daphetid! Construction is under way.



These are but a few of the hundreds of fascinating photo's of big and small, indoor and outdoor layouts. Many of the articles also have detailed how-to instructions and photo's of scratch-built loco's, rolling stock and structures – a testament to the ingenuity of the modelers of the day and they provide an amazing contrast to the (color) photo's and articles in today's Model Railroader.

But what of modelers today? The plethora of pre-built products in the market today has dramatically reduced, but by no means eliminated, scratch-building enthusiasts.

One need only look at the number of scratch-built entries that are submitted for judging at train shows every year, to realize that there is a large number of modelers who enjoy building things from scratch – even if that item is available in the market place.

Then there are scratch-builders who ply their craft because of an item's unavailability. For example, a friend of mine in SA can remove the body from I-H-C or Mehano 4-8-2 loco like the one here;



and replace it with a scratch-

built body of an otherwise unavailable South African Railways 4-8-4 like the one below.



I now have a few of these running with DCC sound on my layout and they are just great!

The lesson here is not to be scared to try your hand at scratch-building. Regardless of whether or not you have a layout, it can be so rewarding to create your own product! I know because I originally lacked that confidence, but my layout needed an overhead pedestrian bridge and nothing was available. I therefore timidly put together my first completely scratch-built article and the proud result is shown below;



So the next time you need something to do or need a specific item for your layout, consider scratch-building. You never know. You may be the next George Sellios.

Meeting minutes for July 6, 2010

President Robert Ashcraft called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

We welcomed Gil Freitag as this was his first meeting to attend since his stroke.

Vice president David Currey introduced the night's clinic:

"Operation Life Saver – In The Interest Of Safety", by Steve McNeal.

Steve explained how volunteers go to groups to give FREE, did I say FREE, yes it is FREE, presentations to spread the message about train safety. Special target groups are seniors, student drivers, first responders, truck and bus drivers. They stress the three E's: Education, Engineering, and Enforcement. Operation Life Saver was founded in 1972. There were 12,783 train/vehicle collisions per year before Operation Life Saver started. Now there are about 1,880...this shows a great improvement. 248 people died last year in train/vehicle collisions and 2/3rd's of these were in daylight hours. Half were at crossings with gate, bells, and lights going. You are 20 times more likely to die in a train/car wreck than any other car wreck. 21% of the collision occurred when the train was already across the road, ie. the car T-boned the side of the train. 434 people died being hit while walking on the tracks. The stopping distance for a car at 55 MPH is about 200 feet (large rubber contact to road). The stopping distance for an average train is about 5,280 feet (dime size metal to metal wheel contact points). A car's driver is financially liable for all expenses in a car/train wreck – this include damage to the train, tracks, cargo, intersection, and surrounding property.

Remember: "Look-Listen-Live"... "Stay Off-Stay Away-Stay Alive"

Next month's clinic will be videos of UP 844 from Houston to Bloomington, by Robert Pierce

Refreshments were thanks to Angie Caulking and Virginia Freitag.

A thank you was given to Steve Sandifer for providing the club with A/V equipment for our meetings each month.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses: \$286.89 for engraving and the small bowl for the Freitag/Leofler award

Income: none

\$9633.78 Ending balance with all bills paid.

Minutes for June were approved as published.

LSR:

San Antonio Convention, Jerry Hoverson was presented the Freitag/Leofler award.

Division 8:

The clinic session at the Houston R.R. Museum, 7390 Mesa Road will be one week from this Saturday at 10 AM by Loren Neufeld.

NMRA: No report

DeRail: No Report

Old Business: -none

New Business:

Byron Spampinato will be collection fall layout tour info soon.

Club officer elections coming soon, be ready to run for an office.

Peter Bryan, The Dallas Interchange will be in mid November, Friday-Sunday. There were 20 slots for operators and about 3 are left. Contact Peter for more information.

Commanche and Indian Gap Railroad Tee-shirts are for sale, \$14, contact Peter Bryan to buy one.

We had 2 raffles today to give away 2 items. Dave Milton won the Water Tower model and David Gilchrist won the train set

Meeting adjourned at 8:35PM

General comments: 36 people were present at the meeting.

-Respectfully submitted, Gilbert Freitag, Secretary / Treasurer



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.

## OFFICERS

**President:** Robert Ashcraft - [crash8473@comcast.net](mailto:crash8473@comcast.net)  
**Vice President:** David Currey - [texasandlouisiana@msn.com](mailto:texasandlouisiana@msn.com)  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Gilbert Freitag - [gilbertfreitag@att.net](mailto:gilbertfreitag@att.net)  
**Director:** Don Formanek  
**Division 8 Rep.:** Tracy Mitchell - [traymit@comcast.net](mailto:traymit@comcast.net)

## DERAIL STAFF

**Co-Editor:** Bob Dannenbrink  
• (713) 688-0718  
• [bdann@hal-pc.org](mailto:bdann@hal-pc.org)  
**Co-Editor:** Dave Milton,  
• (713) 467-8716  
• [ddmltn@att.net](mailto:ddmltn@att.net)  
**Graphic Designer:** Rosalie Milton,  
• [rmltn@att.net](mailto:rmltn@att.net)  
**Production & Delivery:** Doug Milton,  
• [doug@texashorizons.com](mailto:doug@texashorizons.com)

## REPORTERS

**Local Railroad News**  
Ted Ferkenhoff  
• (281)-835-6010  
• [tferk@comcast.net](mailto:tferk@comcast.net)  
**Hobby Supply News**  
Tom Cobb  
• (713) 729-6697  
• [tecobb@academicplanet.com](mailto:tecobb@academicplanet.com)  
**Railroad Scanner News**  
Dave Milton  
• (713) 467-8716  
• [ddmltn@pdq.net](mailto:ddmltn@pdq.net)  
**Local Layout Activities**  
Bob Barnett  
• (713) 660-8820  
• [rbarnett@sparks-barlow.co](mailto:rbarnett@sparks-barlow.co)

## GREATER HOUSTON TRAIN SHOW

**Chairman:** Bob Barnett  
• (713) 660-8820  
• [rbarnett@sparks-barlow.com](mailto:rbarnett@sparks-barlow.com)  
**Club Sales Table Chairman:**  
Tom Bailey  
• (713) 774-6990  
• [ritabailey1@aol.com](mailto:ritabailey1@aol.com)  
**Vendor Sales Chairman:** Don Bozman  
• [don\\_bozman@att.net](mailto:don_bozman@att.net)  
• (281) 481-0352

## SAN JACINTO RR CLUB WEB SITE

**Webmaster:** Jim Lemmond  
• [sanjac.leoslair.com](http://sanjac.leoslair.com) (do not use www)

## FALL LAYOUT TOUR

**Chairman:** Byron Spampinato  
• [bspampinato@comcast.net](mailto:bspampinato@comcast.net)  
• (281) 251-0459