



# The DERAIL

The Official Monthly Publication of the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club, Inc

September 2011

Volume 42, Issue 09

## President's Message

Bob Werre

My message this month will deal with volunteerism and the results! So this gives me a chance to thank Steve Sandifier for showing up with a clinic for us last month during our hour of need! Steve didn't exactly volunteer but he did see the need and took care of business!

Since I also was volunteered into this esteemed position of your president. I thought I might look back a little to talk about some of things that happened in our club over the last year. We've gained a few new members which is always good to see. Some volunteers helped with our new display at the first Big Texas Train show. Our annual Fall Tour was successful due to coordination of Bryon and the help of dozens of layout owners from around the area. Also, we had a prosperous Greater Houston Train Show again. That train show couldn't have happened without many months of pre planning not to mention all the people who gave clinics and manned the various tables. Additionally we updated our membership directory, started a "craftsman registry",

introduced a new layout tour coordinator, a new Derail staff, a Facebook director plus a refreshment of our website!

So here comes the sales pitch! I asked for an election committee to come up with some possible picks for positions—i.e. new volunteers! This club has been supported by all kinds of beginner volunteers who have become experts at making things work for a lot of years. I must confess that I've never been president of anything in my life; so that means you too can be the next President, Vice President, Train show coordinator or the next clinician. The photography school I attended a long time ago had the slogan—Learn by Doing! So now is the time to step up and learn to make things happen for the future.

Bob Werre



Realistic aspects of railroad administration that could be applied to the operation of a model railroad empire.

Many of you know me and that sometimes my mind goes a little crazy and that I like to share my crazy ideas from time to time. SO, I thought I would write a short series of articles that was inspired by attending this year's American Short Line and Regional RR Association meeting. On my drive home from San Antonio while I was reflecting on some of the issues that Short Line and Regional Railroads face in today's economic and regulatory environment, my mind wandered to model railroading and if/how any of these concerns could be translated to our model railroad enterprises... so here goes ....

### Installment 1 – Train Crew Size

The train crew size for prototype railroads are regulated either by ever-changing FRA rules or set by union agreements. The Short Lines and Regional railroads utilize between 2 and 4 man crews depending on the requirements of the particular job. At least 2 crew persons are almost always required, but additional personnel are necessary in some cases. Like in industrial/plant environments, maybe an extra safety watch or utility brakeman on spotted cars is required. There could be scenarios where reverse moves across

grade crossing are involved, where the highway must be flagged requiring additional crew persons. In some cases, I have even seen cabooses utilized to contain crew members(s) at the tail end of certain local train moves. My KCS contact tells me about a floating utility brakeman that can be assigned to crews on the "fly" by the local yardmaster depending on the situation. He can even be detached from that crew by the dispatcher and be transported to another train to help another crew if necessary.

Most of the model railroads that I have operated on utilize a single operator for each individual train. For most model railroads where space is particularly limited, a 3 - 4 person crew would be impossible and honestly, a bit of overkill. But consider if you will, adding an additional crew person to a train to form a 2 person crew - the engineer and the switchman. This would be particularly useful when a person is new to the railroad is paired with a "veteran" operator. Actually on the real railroads it is very rare for an engineer to leave the yard on a local job the first time he sees the railroad. This would add confidence to new crew through training, and may eliminate errors and help speed trains through an operating session.

The more trains that run, the more cars are delivered and the more money the railroad makes...

## NMRA Convention Highlights

Bob Sabol

This convention was unique in that the online information was very good and complete. In addition to really getting into the electronic age they offered train related activities several days earlier in the San Francisco area. I was not part of the early schedule. From past experience I am usually "trained out" after a week of non stop model train activities. When I signed up I only selected one bus layout tour and one prototype tour.

I believe this was my 7<sup>th</sup> national convention and from past experience sitting on a bus all day got old in a hurry. I picked a shorter tour of 6 hours but it lasted about 7 hours. When you have a bus of 45 people and they tell you only 10 or 15 people at a time with 5 minutes to view a layout takes away from what I like to do. For me studying the layouts and talking to the builder is very beneficial. I must say that the convention planners did offer drive yourself tours. I choose not to rent a car (\$20.00 per night hotel parking fee was not for me).

The prototype tour was a trip to the old SP yards located near the California State Railroad Museum. I was really neat to see a

lot of old engines and cars in storage, which they hope to repair and bring back to museum quality. They had a working transfer table going between 2 buildings with 25 stalls each. There are big plans for the future. Time will tell.

Clinics were high on my agenda. Among the clinics I attended was a four hour layout design boot camp presented by Byron Henderson. Other clinics included judging models, scenery, two level layouts among many others. Overall the clinicians were very good and made the time fly by. I noticed one name mentioned in almost every talk and that was of John Allen. Not much to say about someone who was ahead of his time in talent, design, scenery, aging wood, and operations and may other areas of our hobby. Sure wish I would have been able to meet him and visit his layout.

In most of my past trips to the NMRA convention I felt the contest room was on par with the LSR models. This year in Sacramento the quality of the contest models was exceptional. Lot of

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Station Stops

Sep 24 - Houston Railroad Museum - Decaling, by Tracy Mitchell, 10:00am - 11:30am



TRAINS IN MOVIES

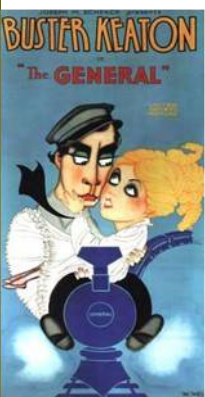
When the railway was invented, the world for the first time, had a solution to long distance transportation for the masses. Prior to then, horse-drawn carriages had neither the endurance nor the speed of trains and were obviously not as safe. Train travel provided families the opportunity to be re-united and it thus became, and has still remained, a romantic and beloved way to travel. This fact was not lost on filmmakers, who almost from the inception of the movie industry, realized that putting the two together would almost guarantee a hit.

There are far too many movies to discuss in an article such as this, however I have a few favorites that provide either a historical reminder of my past, or that I like for the sheer fun of the movie.

In 1895, Louis Lumiere made what is generally considered to be the first motion picture in modern history - Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat. This short, black and white movie has been restored and can be seen today on YouTube. Popular legend has it that, when this *film* was shown, the *first*-night audience screamed and fled the cafe in terror, fearing that the train would hit them.

I like this clip because as depicted, I clearly remember the suburban, wooden-sided trains that I used to take as a kid – the carriage doors that swung open onto the platform, and the heavy leather strap that was affixed to the door, that one pulled to close it once inside.

The first acknowledged US railway movie is 'The General' - a silent comedy released by United Artists in 1926 and starring Buster Keaton. Although considered a box-office disaster at the time, it is now considered by critics as one of the greatest films ever made.



In 1934, long before she became a Dame, Agatha Christie realized the romance and attraction of train travel and, wrote 'Murder on the Orient Express' – a story about a murder on a luxurious train travelling from Istanbul to Paris. It starred master-sleuth Hercule Poirot and in 1974, it was made into a movie. For us rail fans, the film clearly shows the opulent, sumptuous coaches of the *Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits*, and these were the basis of the 1980's coaches of the SAR Blue Train.

Thriller/comedy fans made 'Silver Streak' a box office smash when it was released in 1976. The movie was filmed mainly in Canada, but Los Angeles' Union Station and Chicago's downtown terminal, both feature in the film. The climax of the movie depicts the crash of the Silver Streak's diesel locomotive through the station's bumper and then through its walls, and this is loosely based on an incident that occurred in Washington in 1953.

At that time, the brakes on Train #173 failed and it crashed through the wall into Union Station, demolishing a news stand and sliding across the concourse. The floor then gave way and the GG1 and two of the

cars fell into the basement baggage room.

In 1974, 'The Taking of Pelham 123' also became a box office hit and in the movie, armed men hijack a New York subway train and demand ransom for the passengers. For people living outside of the US as I was at the time, the movie provided a true-to-life representation of subway coaches, engineer compartments and controls, and the vast maze of underground tracks to be found in the New York subway system.



If you are a lover of European railways and mountain vista's, 'Von Ryan's Express' is not to be missed. Based on a book by David Westheimer, the movie is about British and American prisoners-of-war who seize a Nazi train that is transporting them from Italy to Austria and make a run for neutral Switzerland. The scenery towards the end is breath-taking, with the train going through mountain passes, tunnels, and bridges over high gorges – a model railroader's delight.



Aside from enjoying these and other movies, I often learn a lot from them (see the gallery to the left of the photo above? I had no idea that these existed), and as mentioned above, they bring back treasured memories of years gone by.

What are your favorite train movies and why? What movies should I have included here? Let me know and I will try to include and thus shares them in future articles.

Finally, I intend finishing off my column with a new monthly feature entitled –“You know that you are a model train lover if...”

..the latest issue of your scale model railway news arrives on the same day as your federal tax refund check, and you open the magazine first.



Like most of us, my Dad had Lionel trains and even built an “L” shaped layout in the attic in Huntington, WV that was about 12X24. It had bridges, tunnels, turntables, and scenery. It even had the Lionel log loader, coal loader, milk can loader, etc. Oh what I wouldn’t give to still have those accessories. I played with that railroad until I was about 15.

My Dad also took me to the Huntington Station from time to time and even took me on two business trips to Washington, D.C. on the George Washington in the Pullman. I think that is why to this day I love passenger trains on the model and to travel on the prototype. Another fun railroad option in Huntington was a tower (ironically enough it was named HO tower) about 5 blocks from my home on the mainline of the C&O Railroad. I would go over from time to time with the tower man and watch him throw the armstong levers for an hour or so. Oh how I wish I had taken pictures and paid more attention to this operation.

As happened to many of us, sports, girls and school interfered with my railroading for about 15 years until I moved to Houston in 1972. I went to my first San Jac meeting at the old Pearlman studios where Papa Ben’s used to be. It is there that Ken Caulking introduced himself to me (like he did to most every one. I sure do miss Ken.) I also remember meeting Bob Danninbrink, David Milton, Don Bozman, Ben Pearlman, Larry Redmond, and Gil Freitag at these first meetings.

And it here where I first learned of the old San Jac Jamboree and layout tours. From the layout tours I got invited to David Hannah’s Live Steam railroad in Chappell Hill (the Browning Railroad.) My first experience there was with Barry Bogs (this was in about 1986) on our hands and knees putting down track at David’s railroad.

## ATTENTION LAYOUT OWNERS/OPERATORS

### SIGN UP FOR THE ANNUAL FALL LAYOUT TOUR

DATES	LOCATION
Oct. 15-16	Northeast (Hwy. 59 North, Crosby, Kingwood, Liberty)
Oct. 22-23	Far North (Bryan/College Station)
Oct. 29-30	Northwest (Hwy. 290)
Nov. 5-6	South (I-45 South, Dickinson, Galveston, Pearland, Texas City)
Nov. 12-13	North (I-45 North, Conroe, Tomball, Spring)
Nov. 19-20	West (I-10/610 West, Memorial)
Nov. 26-27	Southeast (I-45 South, I-10 East, Beaumont, Orange)
Dec. 3-4	Southwest (Hwy. 59 South, Bellaire, Manvel, Richmond, Rosenberg)

You may choose any date to host your open house however you should receive the most visitors if you select from the dates above based on your location.

Provide 4 photos (800 x 600) of your layout for the San Jac website.

Send your name, open date/time, contact information and photos to: [sanjactour@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sanjactour@sbcglobal.net) I will send you a layout description form via email.

**Please submit before September 5.**

Craig Brantley (281-642-4189 cell)

## Guess the Layout!



Both pictures are from the same layout.

*Answer to last months’ Guess the Layout: Gil Freitag*

Quality model railroad magazines are always welcome at the Sandifer house. I typically read a magazine pretty thoroughly and then cut out the articles I think are worth keeping and throw the rest away. Then I file the article in my 4 drawer filing cabinet for future reference.

I also have another filing cabinet – my computer hard drive. There are 6 free on-line magazines that I regularly read and file away for future reference. Many of you may read these as well, but hopefully at least one of these will be new to you.

**Model Railroad Hobbyist** is the latest and most ambitious project to hit the model wire in years. <http://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/> It is a first quality magazine averaging 20 megabites in download. It utilizes the medium to the max by linking manufacturers websites and special videos to the articles. Many of those links are available in multiple qualities (and download sizes). If you did not make the National Train show, you can find numerous videos on their website. This year the *Hobbyist* became a monthly publication, so once you sign up you will be notified when the next issue is available. The current issue includes a fascinating article and video on Nick Muff's Kansas City Southern layout, complete with prototype (yes 1:1) F unit cab. I printed out an article on weathering scrap metal gons to put in my files. Vic Roseman has an article on a variety of ways to model rivets with an emphasis on the Archer transfer. If you don't read *MRH* – you should.

The others are railway historical society magazines which are published quarterly. The B&O Society produces the **B & O Modeler Magazine**. <http://borhs.org/ModelerMag/index.html> These 3-5 meg downloads produce a 26 page magazine focused on prototypes and models of the B&O. Other than Cliff Cheeseman, I don't know of a modeler in our club who focuses on the B&O, but their mail cars and freight cars ran on the Santa Fe, so I look for interesting articles. Some of the kitbashing and construction articles fit anyone's modeling.

The **Chicago and Northwestern Historical Society Modeler** is a similar publication. <http://www.cnwhs.org/modeling.htm> The last one ran 28 pages and was a 3 meg download. There was an

interesting article in a recent issue on scratch-building a Sn3 C&NW boxcar. It caught my broadminded eye because I saw the prototype a couple of years ago at North Freedom, Wisconsin.

The last edition of the **Keystone Modeler** ran 12 megs, but that is considerably larger than usual. [http://www.prrths.com/newpr\\_files/newPRRKeystoneModeler.htm](http://www.prrths.com/newpr_files/newPRRKeystoneModeler.htm) The size depends to great extent on the number of photos and whether they are color or black and white. The Pennsy Society does a great job with this – I have 63 issues on my hard drive. The latest issue shows prize winners from their annual convention, a wonderful ore boat and dock, and a neat scratch-built welding shop that would look good on any layout.

The **Seaboard Coast Line Modeler** is the other publication I am aware of. <http://s-clmodeler.aclsal.org/> I just printed out for my files an article on kitbashing one of their stock cars. The last issue was 123 pages long and a sizeable 67 megs of download. Of course if you don't find anything of interest, you can always delete it.

There is one issue that was jointly produced by the B&O, Pennsy, and Seaboard Societies that is special to the prototype modeler and available on all the websites. The Winter 2008 issue was a special 81 page production by Bill Welch on the wood sheathed reefers of the WFEX, FGEX, and BREX. It is one of those "everything you ever wanted to know" issues.

New is the **New York Central Modeler**. [http://nycshs.org/nycentral\\_modeler.php](http://nycshs.org/nycentral_modeler.php) The current issue is 46 pages ( megs) and includes a neat modeling challenge using a drop center flat and a boiler load. The article on 1950s NYC models was very informative to me, including the gondola loads. I even found a potential source of impossible to find NYC decals in that article.

If you know of any other such sources, share them with us. If you are not a rivet counter, kindly ignore everything but the *Model Railroad Hobbyist*. I enjoy them all. Now back to those resin stock cars I am building.

## A Response to our Member Query....



Q: When I was in B.C., the Canadian Pacific track had a wooden peg driven through the tie plate and into the tie approximately every 5'. I have never seen this before. What is the purpose of these pegs?

George

A: I don't know for a fact, but since it's a wood peg, it must be designed to deteriorate. My guess is that when the wood peg breaks off, it means it's time to replace the tie.

David N. Currey

For the past few months in the operators corner, we have been talking about getting the railroad set up, the environment, etc. Today we're going to talk about the railroad itself and some of the things that were done to make it easier to operate the railroad. One of the most important things on the railroad for ease of the operator is clearly marked control panels and diagrams. Certainly you will have some people there that have been on the railroad in the past and they are familiar with the railroad. But when you have out-of-town visitors, new operators etc. they may need some help getting around your railroad.

BTW, most of any of my ideas are stolen from other people and their railroads. I think I mentioned earlier but I always took a note pad with me to each railroad I operated on to get (steal) ideas.

On the West Virginia Railroad, each town, including the one industry towns, have a very nicely done panel (thanks to Don Bozeman) that shows the town, the main line, passing (siding) tracks, and East and West directions and the next town or two to the East or West. This is very important to operators and helps him keep track where is East or West (Or North or South) on your railroad. In addition the panels have the OS turnouts with a toggle switch to throw the OS sections. Also is an LED on the panel to indicate which track you are aligned for.

Just in case you are curious about what OS sections and turnouts are, I will try to explain very briefly. In the old days under time table and train order operations, the station agent would note on his sheet when a train had passed his station and pass that on to the dispatcher. Then the agent would note on his sheet that a train had passed his station and the time, then pass that on to the dispatcher. He noted that "on sheet" or OS or "on station". On my railroad the OS sections are the main turnouts for the pass-

ing and main siding in each of the towns

I might also mention at this time that I only have the slow motion electric switch machines (Tortoise machines) wired for the main and passing sidings in each of the towns. The rest of the railroad, except for the staging tracks, use Peco hand throw turnouts. I have found that hand throws are very convenient and saves on wiring and saves the confusion of new operators to try and figure out which toggle throws which turnout. The conductor/engineer simply reaches for the turnout and throws it.

In addition to the clearly marked control panels in each town, I also have a diagram with all the industries shown since many of my towns are as long as 10 feet and as many as 15 industries with up to 30 spots. I needed a way for the crew to quickly and easily find each industry and spot. On our way to Prairie Rail Classic in Kansas City a few years ago, we stopped in Bella Vista, Arkansas to operate on some railroads. I went to a gentleman by the name of Art Cunningham and he used laminated sheets with each town and industry clearly laid out. Most interesting he hung the town diagram on hooks so that the crew member could easily lift up the sheet and afforded him 45° angle for easy viewing. This is what I have done on the West Virginia Western and the guys seem to really like it. My thanks go to Tom Bailey for doing the diagrams on his computer.

Another little tool that I use on the West Virginia Western or clipboards some crewmembers like to carry a clipboard and pen with manifest on them. This allows them to check off each set out/ pick up as they go. In addition I also have a straight line schematic of the railroad attached to the front of the clipboard for quick and easy reference. If they don't want to use the clipboard, that is fine.





*(Continued from page 2)*

talent went into the contest room. Check it out when the entries appear in the NMRA magazine.

One of the highlights of the convention week is to attend the train show. Each vendor seemed to have something else I wanted or another great idea to incorporate in my layout. I suspect that I act as most model railroader at train shows where our purchases are made of want rather than need. This is the fun

part of the hobby.

I hope this will not be my last national train convention. May all of you have the opportunity to attend an NMRA national convention in the next several years.

## August Minutes

Gil Freitag

Meeting minutes August 2, 2011

President Bob Werre called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and welcomed all. We had 1 visitor and about 65 in attendance.

Vice President Don Formanek explained how the night's scheduled presentation by Brenda Bob would have to be moved to next month due to a bridge fire on the UP mainline and her dispatching skills were of the greater need that night. Steve Sandifer graciously stepped up at the very last minute to bring his equipment and 4 choices of DVD's to be used for the nights show.

By popular vote, "Designing a Railroad for Operations", by Bob Folz was chosen. Many aspects to consider when planning a layout designed for operation were presented in the DVD. Bib explained why he chose Glorieta Pass, NM in 1951 as his layout prototype. It had the equipment, scenic, and operational features he wanted to model. Bob explained many sources you can use to get information such as track charts from Historical Societies. Selective compression ideas were discussed since most of us don't have 10,000+ square foot railroad rooms. Overall a very informative DVD.

Once again, thanks to Steve for providing the program, last minute - literally.

In September we will try again to have an UP RR guest speaker: Yardmaster Brenda Bob

October: Greg Johnson – SP presentation

November: Joe Dale Morris – SP Narrow Gauge

December: Christmas Party

Old Business:

Bob Werre passed around a skill list signup up sheet to list our talents for trade/sell. This information will be collected and possibly put on the club website.

New Business:

Bob Werre asked for a nominating committee for our next elections. Denny McGonigle and Robert Ashcraft volunteered for the task.

Derail: Bob Sabol

Bob thanked the 11-12 people who contributed to this month's Derail. Bob asked that anyone not receiving the Derail via email to contact him and he will get you on the list.

LSR:

Convention, Houston, TX 2012, Hilton S/W at Regency Square.

Bob Barnett will be the chair and also VP of the LSR.

NMRA:

Bob Werre gave a recap of the NMRA convention. It was a good show and the model contest was spectacular. The clinics were first class. Some of the big name manufacturers were surprisingly absent at the trade show. Bob Sabol, Ron Burns, and Denny McGonigle also recapped and complimented on the convention. Ron Burns talked about a Feather Canyon driving tour that was on the way to the convention. They have a website that has a detailed mile-by-mile instruction of what to look for and how to get to the perfect lookout points. Ron encouraged those traveling in the area to take this tour.

Division 8: Jim Lemmond

The next clinic at the Houston R.R. Museum will be on August 20th at 10AM, Jim Lemmond on tress, September: Tracy Mitchell on decals.

The annual hamburger/hotdog picnic at Zube Park will be on October 1st starting about 10 AM. Bring a sidedish or dessert.

The Division will have a table at the Big Texas Train Show 10/8/2011 at the GRB. We will need to fill a volunteer signup sheet at our next meeting and will share the table with San Jac.

Fall Layout Tours:

Craig Brantley asked that we send him an email an he will send you a form/info sheet to fill out. Craig is trying to get things finalized by the 2nd week of September to go to print. The web based version will be continuously updated. He challenges all layout owners to have something new for guests to see each year.

Refreshments were thanks to Bob Barnett and Virginia Freitag. Dianne Tolley volunteered to bring the treats next month.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

\$6825.71 Beginning balance

Expenses:

none

Income:

\$73.00 Club Shirt sales

\$6898.71 Ending balance with all bills paid.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50PM

-Respectfully submitted, Gilbert Freitag, Secretary / Treasurer



San Jac RR Club Meetings take place  
the first Tuesday of each month

Bayland Community Center

6400 Bissonnet St. Houston, Tx

[Click here for directions](#)

Visitors are always welcome!



## Officers

**President:** Bob Werre

*Bob@BobWphoto.com*

**Vice-President:** Don Formanek

*locogearred@gmail.com*

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Gilbert Freitag

*gilbertfreitag@att.net*

**Director:** Arthur Penny

*apenny@flash.net*

**Division 8 Rep:** Tracy Mitchell, MMR

*traymit@comcast.net*

## Derail Staff

**Editor:** Bob Sabol

*bsabol@stillmeadow.com*

**Production:** Kathryn Monds

*kmonds@stillmeadow.com*

**Regular Contributors:**

Henri Morris

*morris-hou@att.net*

Peter Bryan

*peterb@pdq.net*

Tracy Mitchell, MMR

*traymit@comcast.net*

[sanjac.leoslair.com](http://sanjac.leoslair.com)

Do Not Use www.

Webmaster: Jim Lemmond

**Tuesday**

**Sept 6**

**Brenda Bob**

**UP Manager of  
Train Operations**

**See You There!**

## Special Guest Speaker at September Meeting

Brenda Bob, Manager of Train Operations (MTO) at Southern Pacific's Eureka Yard will be speaking at the **Sept 6** meeting at Bayland. Ms. Bob has been with Southern Pacific since 1979, and is responsible for training new-hire Managers of Yard Operations.

She has many interesting experiences to draw upon, which should make this an exceptional program.

Mark your calendars, you don't want to miss this! Barring more bridge fires or other disasters, she really will be there this time



<http://www.usersnet.com/photography/beautiful-photographs-of-urban-and-rural-photography.php>