



The DERAIL

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

January 2012

Volume 43, Issue 01

President's Message

Bob Werre

I hope all our members, friends and families had a good Christmas this year. This is a season to thank all the people who have helped to make our lives complete and safe.

I'm sorry I wasn't able to attend the Christmas meeting/feast at the Freitags this year. My whole family had the same cold and I didn't want to exchange it along with the gifts. I hope everybody had a good time. I also assume all those Athearn blue box kits found new homes again this year.

As we have now finished out the Fall Tour season, we need to think about our Greater Houston Area Train Show coming up in February. I'm sure Bob Barnett and crew will be looking for a few good men to lend a hand. Robert Ashcroft has taken over as the vendor/head table seller! Don Bozman has done an excellent job in coordinating this in the past.

Remember this event is more than just a bunch of vendors selling stuff. Our ability to hold a meaningful contest, numerous clinics, the switching module, and a small tour puts us in a different class than most of the other 'swap meets' in the area. Don't get me wrong, even this S scale guy has been able to find a few items he couldn't live without. Obviously the vendors do help pay the bills, but the rest of the show is

very important in keeping our hobby alive for the future.

With all this in mind, I'm working to have some presence at the "other Train show". I would like to see this as a recruiting opportunity as well as, a chance to hand out fliers for our show just a week after. Again, a few pleasant faces are needed to show what kind of club we are so we can round up a few new members.

To continue into the year, our new VP is busy lining up interesting topics to keep the members informed and entertained. We'll be starting out the year, with a railroader extraordinaire. Joe Dale Morris has been a fixture in the region for many years. I first met him more than a few years ago, at what was called "The O Gauge Bull-shoot" at its last get-together. He impressed me as a guy who knew railroading and could get things done. He also has one of the areas best collections of photos that he'll be sharing with us. Joe Dale will be coming in from Austin, so I hope our members will appreciate his efforts on our behalf.

I'm not certain when this newsletter will arrive in your IN box, but do solute the New Year in a safe manner. In other words—do it from the lounge car and not the engine cab!



Installment #5 – Equipment Issues

There are several things that I want to think about in this installment related to equipment that operates on the railroad: Inspection of engines and railcars, Bad Ordered cars, Repair of cars.

Inspection – the FRA requires that any piece motive power is completely inspected every 92 days. There is an effort underway to modify that rule as it seems that the reason for the rule, steam locomotives, are no longer quite the issue they once were... yes if they had an issue with a boiler or fitting, lives could be at risk. Today's modern Diesel engines are state-of-the-art masterpieces that should not require such a stringent program of inspection. Freight cars are inspected at the time of loading to insure that they are fit for interchange and that the load is properly secured/sealed. Any deviation from the standard is met with a failure and ultimate repair before the car is allowed to leave. The railroads will also inspect cars in their departure yards to insure that they are fit for interchange as well...

Repair - When a car fails an inspection in the plant environment, the car must be repaired before departure. Some plants have complete repair facilities while others have a RIP (Repair In Place) track set aside for repair. If repairs exceed the capability of the in-plant repair team, they may call in an outside mobile crew or ultimately send the car to a full service shop for more extensive repairs.

Regulatory testing - I might interject at this point, that railcar must pass certain tests on a periodic schedule as well – much like the annual inspection on your automobiles. For example tank cars must be completely inspected for tank flaws every ten years. These inspections also look for cracks in weld seams, brake part failures and all of the safety valves must be rebuilt and tested. These inspections/repairs are usually always completed at a full service shop facility.

Bad Order cars – there are plenty of ways that cars are identified as unfit: cars that are overweight running over a scale; cars can fail a visual inspection (safety equipment) by a railroad inspector; cars may have early warnings from FRA for suspect design or suspect parts; there are a variety of inline detectors - hot box detectors, dragging equipment detectors, truck hunting detectors and Wheel Impact Load Detectors; or cars that are found to be past a testing due date. The railroads have the right to repair any car presented to them and will

ultimately bill the car owner/shipper for any repair work on private equipment - certain railroads are "better" at it than others. The cost for the railroads repairs are typically much higher than repairs that can be made at the plants.

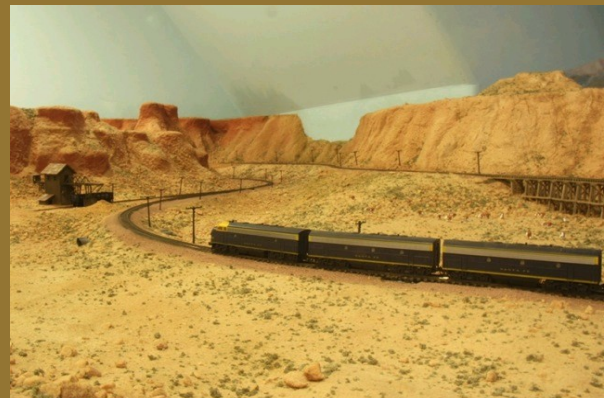
Now back to the model railroads – as I have experienced, when a car fails during an operating session, the owner usually removes the car from the railroad and makes some notes as to why it failed and will ultimately make the necessary repairs. Most owners have a maintenance program setup to validate the operability of cars – free wheeling, proper weight, and coupler height verification. All of these steps are similar to real railroad operations. Our model railroads should have engine service facilities where inspections, repairs and re-fueling of our models can be accomplished. These can be anything from a tank truck that is used for refueling to a complete roundhouse/maintenance facility.

In my experience of operating model railroads, there have been a couple of occasions where a bad order car is identified and instructions are given as to where to set the car out of my train – one even actually squeaks! In an article in Model Railroad Hobbyist e-zine there was a link to a programmable electronic talking defect detector called the TrainBoss™ from Boulder Creek Engineering which is advertised to speak and display 6 types of defect alarms for passing trains and also reports axle count, train speed and length, and temperature — just like automated detectors on the prototype. Talk about realistic train defects!

As for industrial repair capabilities, one oil refinery facility I was switching on a club layout in Tulsa actually had a repair shop that was an in-plant switching location – cars were switched to/from that track just like cars switched to/from loading racks. They had even added a cleaning rack to that facility – tank cars must be cleaned before repairs can be made to the tank. A railcar shop could be built in one of the little towns along the mainline and cars could be switched there just like any other customer.

Let's face it, Stuff happens – things break and when they do, the railroad needs the capability to fix broken equipment to keep the wheels rolling.

Guess the Layout!



Answer to December's Guess the Layout: Gus Freitag

Please keep Gus in your thoughts as he undergoes gallbladder surgery on Dec 29th

Back when I was on the Missouri Pacific, the five main concerns of us trainmen were probably, in approximate order: safety, pay, working conditions, food, and rest. Of course, some trainmen had other concerns, such as aggravating their least favorite trainmaster or imposing their will on their underlings or those in charge, but this article will focus on just the last two: food and rest.

I don't remember exactly what the union agreements were that covered meals, but the engineer's union (the BLE, i.e., "Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers") had an agreement that they would get to have an hour's meal period every tour of duty, and that did not mean sitting in a siding somewhere eating a sandwich out of a plastic bag. I don't believe the brakemen and conductors' union (the UTU, i.e., "United Transportation Union") had an agreement, or if they did, it was simply that they would get to eat when the engineer's ate. Since the conductor and brakemen couldn't do much without the engineer when they were off eating, train crews always ate together somewhere—almost always at a restaurant if such was available.

Nine times out of ten, on the Kingsville Division's North End, this meant that the train crew would probably eat at Angleton. A through freight between Vanderbilt and Houston would turn their train over to the Angleton switcher on duty at the appropriate end of the yard, and a limousine or carryall (now called a "large SUV") would take us to a restaurant. If no switcher was on duty, we'd switch our train and then go eat.

Angleton had a number of good restaurants we frequented, including motel restaurants, a soul food establishment, and a place that could hardly have passed even a blind fire marshal's inspection. Also included in the eateries we could frequent was an excellent barbecue place 5 miles up the track in Danbury and a motel restaurant in Lake Jackson. On occasion, a member of the crew, if his home was actually in or near Angleton, might take off for home to eat, but that would be via his own transportation. Some trainmen actually kept a second car parked at the depot in Angleton and sometimes even Vanderbilt even though they lived elsewhere.

The railroad was pretty good at living up to the letter of the eating agreement with the engineer's union, and I don't ever recall our meal period ever being cut short to get us back on the train. On some occasions, the engineer or conductor might actually get a little testy because we were left waiting in the restaurant for more than an hour. It didn't bother me about that, as I was still getting paid regardless. No restaurant ever chased any crew I was on out of the place for loitering. I was almost always very satisfied with the eating arrangements.

Once or twice, when things were super hectic in Angleton, we were handed up bags of sandwiches, chips, and drinks, or donuts and coffee instead of letting us go eat somewhere. This did not go over too well with the train crews, and I don't know what the union agreement was on such, but I never heard of any repercussions about it. Basically, I believe the trainmasters didn't want to antagonize the train crews, and when such eating situations

happened, the crews sort of accepted it as necessary under the hectic circumstances present.

Where it got interesting, was when the train was not in Angleton when it became time for our meal period. Trainmen really relish a good square meal, so if we knew beforehand that we would not be able to eat in Angleton, we would try to plan where we could eat, and figure out how to get the dispatcher and/or trainmaster to go along with it. Just about every town had some kind of restaurant or hamburger joint, most with decent if not excellent food.

Brazoria had an excellent barbecue place, and I remember eating there several times. One of the places we really relished eating at was the hotel in Blessing. It was in an old old hotel. Serving was done homestyle. There was this huge stove (must have dated from the early 1900s) with pots of homestyle food on the burners, and you just walked up and spooned out what you wanted. The pot roast there was absolutely unbelievable—not that adulterated Yankee stuff, but good Texas-style pot roast—as was the mashed potatoes. I only got to eat at that restaurant a handful of times, though, unfortunately.

Bay City had a number of restaurants, but I can't even recall ever eating there except at this one particular motel, though I'm sure we ate elsewhere on occasion. The thing was, we were seldom in Bay City at mealtime.

I recall eating at a restaurant in Sweeney that was festooned with a local artist's beautiful Texas landscapes, but I can't remember if that was while on a mainline freight or on the Sweeney Traveling Switch Engine.

If I was working off the extra board and assigned to some traveling switcher somewhere, eating was a little different. On the Sweeney TSE, we generally broke to eat before we went out to the plant, I believe. On such TSEs, that was sometimes the case. You would do your yard work first, which generally took only a couple of hours or less, and you ate before going out to the plant, because you'd be out there 6 or 8 hours.

The Monsanto and Amoco plants at Chocolate Bayou were handled differently. You were responsible for taking along a sack lunch, or you could choose to eat at the plant where they had a lunchroom with vending machines where you could get something, even hot if you wanted it.

Work trains (ballast or rail laying trains, etc.) were another story. You were often in some strange place on the railroad with no eating facilities around. In that case, we often were transported by limousine to another town in order to eat, or sometimes, the dispatcher would let you run down the track 10 or 20 miles to go eat.

Once on the Middle Division (between Kingsville and Vanderbilt) we actually parked our locomotive on the mainline (we had track and time) while we walked to a restaurant across the road.

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FROM MY GARRATT

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS

2012 – a full 366 days that lie ahead - awaiting our bidding and full of promise, and although no one can predict the future, many people try to plan for the new year by making resolutions. These commitments or self-promises usually include spending more quality time with family and friends, eating more healthy foods and losing weight, etc., etc., but I decided to be different this year and include my trains in my resolutions.

That started me thinking.....what was a ‘Train Resolution’? My mind immediately turned to ‘training’, but since I work-out on a regular basis, I quickly put that aside and tried to concentrate on model trains instead. Then it hit me!

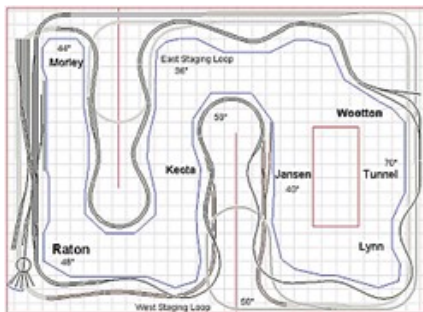
My new year’s resolution would be to truly start building my new layout!

Ah, but wait! Before starting a new one, I had better take some photo’s and video’s of my current layout so that my handiwork will visually be preserved for posterity.



So now, my New Year Resolution is to take photo’s and a video of my layout, then to start building a new one!

Ah, but wait! I can’t start building a new layout until I have finalized a track plan for it. I know roughly what I want but I still don’t have an accurate design! For example, I have two levels now – what about the future? Do I want to run long train runs or short? Operations, continuous running or a combination of both? I had better do some careful planning before just arbitrarily going ahead with a new one!



So now, my New Year Resolution is to take photo’s and a video of my layout, then to finalize a track plan for a new one, and then start building it!

Ah, but wait! How do I finalize the track plan of a new layout? I could look through my MMR back-copies to see if I can find an example of similar layouts but if I did that, 2012 will pass by without my even starting a new layout because it will take me forever to go through thirty-plus years of magazines. Ah, I know! I can order MMR’s seventy five years of magazines, since they are all indexed on DVD’s!

So now, my New Year Resolution is to take photo’s and a video of my layout, then to buy MMR’s 75 years of magazines on DVD, then to finalize a track plan for a new one and then start building it!

Ah, but wait! Even if I find a track plan that I like, I have to know how, if at all, to make it fit into the space available. I therefore need to buy and then learn to use a layout CAD/CAM program that will assist me in maximizing the available space in the two rooms, will let me know how big the center island be, what the gradient between the two levels will be, what the curve radii will be etc., etc.

So now, my New Year Resolution is to take photo’s and a video of my layout, then to buy MMR’s 75 years of magazines on DVD, then to finalize a track plan for a new one, then to learn and be able to use a CAD/CAM planning program, and then to be able to start building it!

Ah, but wait! I can’t start building the new layout without first demolishing my existing one, and that will take time as well as some sweat and a lot of tears.

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From my Garrett cont'd



So now, my New Year Resolution is to take photo's and a video of my layout, then to buy MMR's 75 years of magazines on DVD, then to finalize a track plan for a new one, then to learn and be able to use a CAD/CAM planning program, then to demolish my existing layout, and then to be able to start building a new one!

Ah, but wait! All of that planning has made me tired. I think that I need to take a rest before starting on these resolutions.

I hope you all have a happy, prosperous and most important of all, a healthy year ahead.

Operators' Corner

Peter Bryan

This month we will continue our discussion of various ideas to enhance your operating sessions. If you are new to operations I would suggest that you not use a fast clock to begin with. This will add additional pressure not only to you but to your operators. As you get more involved and have more operating sessions you may start using a fast clock, especially if you have passenger trains.

Bill Wright I were at an operating session on a model railroad in Chicago Illinois a few years ago and the owner had a fast clock, not only for the passenger trains, but for the freight trains also. In one instance we had to sit around 30 min. waiting for the time of our freight train to leave. It was amazing; there was only one other train on the whole railroad.



On the West Virginia Western, we use a sequential list of trains. This allows the operators to have a nice, fun, and easy session without the pressure of the trainmaster looking over their shoulder. If you do want to run scheduled passenger trains (which I do and love as a part of the operating session), then just run them in sequence.

Not having a fast clock it also takes the pressure off the yard crews as they actually do their work in real time. Do not have your railroad set up so that you cannot leave until 2PM (fast time) simply because it is not 2PM.

When you do have new operators do not make long introductions (I have seen introductions up to a half hour!) to your railroad. First of all, since I have never seen your railroad I will not remember all the jobs and the locations that you have talked about. If I am an experienced crew member, I will be bored. On my WVV RR, I simply explain how the throttle works, how to uncouple cars, the turnouts, and the various jobs available. Of course make sure that you are available to answer any questions your new operators may have.

I have gone to some railroads in the past and one or two operators hog the best jobs. To combat this, I use Clue pieces and draw for the jobs. Another way is to put numbers in a hat and let the operators draw for seniority.

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One Saturday, when the Mission Traveling Switcher had to go to Rio Grande City, there was a Dairy Queen near the team track where we spotted the car of lumber, which was the only commodity ever delivered there. We simply walked over there and ate—no limousine necessary.

Occasionally, in the middle of the night, when we were stuck somewhere and no restaurants were open to eat at nearby, we were just out of luck. Due to the iffy nature of exactly when we would get to eat, I always carried something to snack on in my grip, usually at least three items that I could shape into a make-shift meal. Small boxed raisins were a favorite, as well as fruit pies, candy bars, chips, etc. Once, when we were stuck in La-Ward for a spell, I got off the engine, walked a short distance to a small store, and bought a pint of ice cream to eat while we waited for the dispatcher to clear us out of there.

At Vanderbilt, the away-from-home terminal, the railroad had a contract with the woman who ran the local beanery, and she would get up in the middle of the night to cook meals for trainmen going on duty. My favorite meal was the country fried steak and fries, but the huge Mexican taco plate was really good as well. I often did not eat at the beanery if I was going to be the only member of the crew eating, as I didn't want to wake her up just for one meal, but almost always, at least 2 or 3 of the crew would be eating there before the run.

On mainline freights, I only really remember one trip where we probably did not eat at all. (They might have handed us up sandwiches in Angleton, but I don't remember.) We had 8 cars on an extra train out of Houston bound for Bloomington. Power was a brand new GP50, I think. This was the hottest thing on the MP system at the time, as these cars should have already been at the Celanese plant on the Seadrift industrial lead—probably thousands of dollars lost in missed production time was involved. It was the fastest trip I ever had over the North End between Houston and Vanderbilt, and we did the 139 miles in 5 1/2 hours (on duty), as I remember it. We had clear signals the entire trip, and only stopped for train inspections. May not sound like breakneck speed, but that included a limo ride to South Yard, 20 mph running in Houston, several slow curves, probably several slow orders, and the two inspections. Since we only had 8 cars, we could probably go the top speed of 50 mph most of the way on the MP (45 mph on the ATSF).

Now we come to the rest part of the article. Getting your rest was a lot more straight forward. If you worked less than 12 hours, you got 8 “uninterrupted” hours of rest between runs. If you worked a full 12 hours, you got 10 hours of such rest. I placed “uninterrupted” in quotes, because you would normally get a 1 1/2 hour or 2 hour call before your went on duty, which of course would interrupt a sound sleep quite effectively.

Getting enough rest was always an issue on the railroad. When you arrived in Houston after 10 hours on duty, you got a minimum of 8 hours of rest. This meant a half hour or so driving home, a half hour eating dinner or whatever, and a half hour showering, and then getting into bed. So usually, it was at least an hour and a half before you could actually start getting your rest. In Houston, they gave you a 2 hour call before going on duty. So in actuality, you might only get 4 1/2 hours of sound sleep, presuming you could fall asleep when you hit the sack. If you weren't sleepy, you'd lie there and try to sleep. It wasn't unusual for me to get only 3 or 4 hours sleep between runs because of this. At least it was rest while you were lying down, though not necessarily sleep.

Also, trying to gauge when to hit the hay was difficult, because it was determined a lot by when you figured you were going to go back out on the next run. So when you got back to the house, you would call into the crew callers and check what was on the board. They would tell you something like, “You're fourth out, Currey. The only thing showing is a crew for 359 at 11:59 pm, CAX train around 2:00 am, and 195 at late morning”. (I can't remember what the actual train monikers were for these approximate times, so these train names are only representational.)

In such a case, I would probably figure something else would show up before 195, and I would probably go out by 195's departure time. Of course that didn't always happen. In fact 195 could get canceled or run late, nothing extra would show up, and I might not go out until 359 the following midnight. The worst thing was to get your rest, and then go out on a train about the time you would normally be hitting the sack for the next period of rest. So you tried to gauge when you needed to hit the sack. Often times, you would try to take a little nap if it wasn't really bedtime yet if you thought you were going to get called soon.

I'll never forget the worst case scenario that actually happened. I called up the crew callers from home around 7:00 pm. They said my pool crew was fifth out, and the only thing showing was 359 at midnight. So I figured it would probably be the next evening before I would go out. Therefore, I could do a “normal” sleep time, and decided to hit the sack shortly after midnight so I would be rested by 195's departure late the next morning in case a couple of extra crews got called out. I laid there maybe a half hour without being able to fall asleep. Suddenly the phone rang. “Currey, you're called to deadhead for FA train at 3:00 am at Settegast Yard.” Holy cow, I was going out without any sleep! That was a tiring run. Four crews had gotten called out at the same time, and we all showed up at the south Settegast crew shack: two deadhead crews for hog-lawed trains including mine, and two crews to catch trains out of Houston.

Another thing the railroad could do, which helped them handle uncanned situations, was that they could pull you out of service after you had worked a few hours, put you up in a motel for 4 “uninterrupted” hours of sleep, and then put you back on a train. In that case, you would have the full amount of work time re-

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maining that you had when they put you up in the motel. This only happened twice to me. The first time, I actually got about 5 1/2 hours rest, and I don't remember what happened the other time. This kind of thing only happened if a derailment or something occurred that closed down the mainline somewhere for a lengthy and certain amount of time. It was actually kind of nice, because they kept paying you while you slept.

Another interesting thing concerning rest was at the away-from-home terminal: they had to send you out on a train within 24 hours of you being rested. If no train was available, you went on the pay clock anyway. Once down in Vanderbilt, I actually earned a full 8 hours of pay sleeping in bed like a baby.

I seldom made use of the “recreational facilities” in Vanderbilt between runs, and generally used all the time to make sure I was rested. The recreational facilities were a TV room, a ping pong table, and a poker table. This was before cable TV was common. I always had a paperback book to read, and could get myself sleepy simply reading that. Any switching going on in the yard there never kept me awake, in fact I think it lulled me to sleep.

So believe or not, when I'm at somebody's model railroad operating session, I always make sure to visit the snack table and sit in a chair a few minutes getting my food and rest between runs—just like old times.

At the request of many at the Christmas Party: the Dibbles' Sweet Potato Casserole recipe

4 large yams, peeled, boiled until nearly tender, and mashed	1 tablespoon flour
2 cups sugar	4 eggs
¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) butter	2 tablespoons whipping cream (can use evaporated milk, or any milk)
1 tablespoon vanilla	Cooking spray
½ teaspoon nutmeg	Topping (recipe follows)

Preheat oven to 325°. Combine yams, sugar, butter, vanilla, nutmeg, flour, eggs and whipping cream. Spray a casserole dish or 9 by 13 inch pan with cooking spray to prevent sticking. Put filling in pan. Bake 1½ hours, until a fork or toothpick inserted into filling comes out clean. While casserole is baking, make Topping. Spread Topping across baked filling. Return to oven for 20 to 25 minutes at the same temperature.

½ cup (1 stick) butter

1½ cups brown sugar

2 tablespoons flour

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1½ cups chopped pecans (add less or more if preferred)

Cream butter and sugar. Add flour. Add vanilla flavoring gradually. Fold nuts into the mixture with a spatula to keep from breaking nuts.

As one of our daughter-in-laws is eating gluten free to help reduce the number of migraine headaches she has, I have started omitting the flour in the sweet potatoes and the topping. I really can't tell the difference. Just a hint.

I got this recipe from the Houston Chronicle so have no idea who Aunt Leola is, but many people have loved her sweet potatoes when I make them this way. I'm happy to share the recipe. Enjoy! Darlene Dibble

Meeting minutes December 6, 2011

Christmas Party at the Freitag's.

Thanks to all who attended and participated in the meal.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses:

\$1906.29 – Fall tour sheet printing

\$60.00 – 100% NMRA Club – Train Show Insurance

Income:

none

\$7059.01 Ending balance

Note:

Bank statement balance is \$7759.01

We have the following checks/payments uncashed.

These are all profit sharing checks from the Trade Shows.

Please deposit these outstanding checks and/or inform these groups if you see/talk to them.

10/30/2010 – Houston Area G Gaugers

2/19/2011 – NANS

2/19/2011 - Bay Area Fellowship

2/19/2011 - All Points North

2/19/2011 - NHRS

General comments:

-Respectfully submitted, Gilbert Freitag, Secretary / Treasurer

Alpine, TX Train Trip in March!

The NHRS Chapter will host a four-day trip to Alpine, TX and Big Bend country on March 14-18, 2012. Alpine is a small town with some great hotels, an excellent museum, some down-home honky-tonks, one rental car company and is the gateway to the Big Bend country. Nearby towns of Marfa, Fort Davis and Marathon also offer accommodations and attractions such as book and art stores, rock shops, an observatory, a restored nineteenth century army post, and the hotel where Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean spent months while filming *Giant* in 1955. Big Bend National Park, with its rustic accommodations, hiking and horseback riding is about 2 hours by car from Alpine.

THE CHAPTER WILL PURCHASE NON-REFUNDABLE GROUP COACH TICKETS AND EACH TRAVELER WILL MAKE HIS/HER OWN HOTEL AND RENT CAR ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ALPINE AREA.

NON-MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TRIP.

Itinerary:

Deadline for receipt of money and traveler information: Jan 17th

Depart Houston - 9:50 p.m. Wed, March 14th

Arrive Alpine - 1:24 p.m. Thurs, March 15th

Overnight in or near Alpine - Thurs and Fri

PASSENGERS MAKE THEIR OWN HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS

Depart Alpine - 1:45 p.m. Saturday March 17th

Arrive Houston - 4:40 a.m. Sunday, March 18th

The Chapter will purchase non-refundable group coach tickets for participants and will attempt to reserve roomettes or bedrooms for those who want sleeping accommodations on the train. BUT PASSENGERS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN THE COM-

FORTABLE COACH SEATS, BECAUSE THE SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS MAY BE SOLD OUT OR MAY BE EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE.

The *Sunset Limited* has a full dining car and a lounge/snack bar car. The web page www.visitbigbend.com has additional information on the area.

Phil Whitley(713 870-8658) and Phil Scheps(713 319-8906, phil_scheps@yahoo.com) are coordinating the trip and may be contacted for additional information.

Reservations and cash or check must be received by Jan 17th(the night of the January membership meeting). Round trip coach cost is \$136 for adults, \$116 for seniors 62 and over, and \$68 for children 2 through 15. Pricing on room upgrades varies and will not be known until the group coach tickets are purchased.

Your money (coach fare only) must be accompanied by the full name and age group of EACH traveler (this is an Amtrak requirement for group travel) and contact information for the party. If you are requesting sleeping rooms, don't sent additional money now...If the rooms are available, you will be given the opportunity to pay or cancel AFTER the group coach tickets are purchased and the availability and price of sleeping accommodations is known .

Mail a check and required information on your party to Phil Scheps, Treasurer, 1536 Indiana St. Houston, TX 77006. Check should be made payable to Houston Railroad Museum.

IF FEWER THAN 20 RESERVATIONS ARE RECEIVED, THE TRIP WILL BE CANCELLED AND CHECKS WILL BE RETURNED UNCASHED. ONCE THE GROUP TICKET REQUEST IS MADE, THE TICKETS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE ALTHOUGH THEY ARE TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER PASSENGERS.



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!



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Next Meeting

Tuesday

January 3

See You There!

January Presentation by Lt. Col. Joe Dale Morris

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Dale Morris is retired from the United States Army Transportation Corps. He is a native Texan, professional railroader and a Southern Pacific historian. He is an accomplished artist and his pen-and-ink drawings and water colors have appeared in many railroad books. He resides in Austin, Texas with his wife Jo Nell.

Colonel Morris directed the restoration and operation of SP/T&NO Mikado #786 and SP Mogul #1744, and was involved in the training of locomotive engineers, both steam and diesel, for short line and tourist railroads for many years.

Colonel Morris has authored five books, *The Texas State Railroad* (1979); *Serving the Golden Empire, Branch Line Style*, (2002); *The Slim Princess in the Sunset, 1940-1960* (2008); *SPs Golden Empire 1954-1958*, the color photography of John B. Hungerford and Harold F. Stewart (2011); and *the Southern Pacific Lines in Texas and Louisiana, 1934-1961* to be published in 2012.

He has also done the graphic design, layout and artwork for two other books, *SP Narrow Gauge Locomotives and Equipment* by Robert A Bader (2008) and *Chasing the SP through California*, by Rod Crossley (2010).

Happy New Year from the Derail Staff!

