



The DERAIL

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

July 2012

Volume 43, Issue 07

President's Message

Bob Werre

I'm writing this as I cool down after closing down the annual Father's Day train-show at Memorial City Mall. The other club I belong to, the Houston S Gaugers has been participating in this event almost since the beginning of time itself!

We have always gathered at the mall's shutdown time and then again on Saturday morning to assemble our modules for two days of train running in the common areas. Because this group has no "official" anything, we each have assigned ourselves tasks and responsibilities that need to happen for a successful setup. Over all these years we've only lost one member due to death and perhaps one to the member changing scales.

Since this was a typical of mall type event, it's not particularly noteworthy except when you are with a group for a long time working toward a common goal, it becomes difficult to understand when that well-oiled but sometimes cranky machine

starts to show signs of trouble due to age related issues.

Luckily our individual newer members are stepping up to the plate and filling in with new strength and ideas to actually make things even better. This club has succeeded in doubling its membership ever since we participated in AstroRail so many years ago.

In a short few months this same thing needs to happen with our club. However since we do have "official positions" I'm looking forward to seeing some new volunteers step-up and take the reins from your present officers and introduce some new ideas. It's okay to weather your layout, but our hobby needs to be fresh and vibrant as possible.

The Nuts / NWCMMRRC swap meet will be Saturday 7/14 after (Friday night 13th NWCX meeting) from 10 AM till 2 PM, which will overlap the normal club being open at 1 PM till 6PM. My thought is that insider trading between 10 and 12 (??) and open the overhead door at 12, one hour earlier than normal for all people. Insiders would be everyone that knows someone that will be there. I will get the announcement out on the other sites and also the San Jacinto site.

Hopefully will be a nice turn out. Bring your table, trains {ALL SIZES}, especially cash, so we can sell, buy, and trade our unwanted treasures, along with some great fellowship with fellow train buffs.

LOCATION:

Northwest Mall, Loop 610 and Northwest Fwy - enter on Hempstead Hwy side {RR track side} the service hallway between Macys & mall, turn left at the first hallway, hall turns right, then enter on right.

Looking forward to seeing everyone there. David
for more information email steamloco266@yahoo.com Call 713-504-7097

Mark Fishner and others normally bring a lot of goodies and sell at a good price. If you have made any of Marks' sales, you will know what I am talking about!

Dave

Dannenbrink and Milton receive Freitag Award

The San Jacinto Model Railroad Club awarded the 2012 Freitag Service Award to two long-time San Jacinto Club members at the recent Gulf Coast Limited Convention. The two recipients were Bob Dannenbrink and David Milton. Both are well known to club members as the editors of the Derail for ten years from 2000 to the October 2010 issue. But wait there's more:

Bob Dannenbrink: *from East St. Louis to Candlelight Drive.*

Bob grew up in East St. Louis, Illinois, surrounded by railroad yards, freight stations and engine facilities. He once told me that nearly every family in his neighborhood had at least one member working for a railroad. As a young man he worked for a time in the Wabash freight house and has some great stories to tell on his experiences there. After his service in the U. S. Navy in World War II and college, he and his family lived in California, then Wisconsin and finally in Houston. Bob was active in model railroading, the NMRA and rail fanning in all of these locations, including:

He was a member of the Midwest Region and the Neenah, Wisconsin Model Railroad Club.

He was a longtime member of the Pacific Coast Region and active member of the Walnut Creek Model Railroad Club.

After moving to Houston Bob was a member of the Houston Society of Model Engineers when the railroad was still

Downtown in Houston Union Station. He hand laid the turnouts for the throats to the HSME's large passenger station (the Union Station built in Union Station) and I used to park at the visitors railing during their open houses and marvel at the full-length passenger trains backing into the terminal.

Bob is also a longtime member of the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club having **served as President for Four terms.**

Bob served as Co-Editor of the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club DERAILED for 10 years.

Bob was the Outside Activities chair for the *Astro-Rail 89* NMRA National Convention here in Houston, and we personally dispatched layout tour buses out directly into a hurricane. That's dedicated model railroading!!

Most members remember the excellent clinics that Bob provided on hand laying track, building turnouts and a favorite at the train shows: "Loads in and Empties Out".

And my personal favorite bit of trivia: Bob the only guy this far south, and I'll wager in Texas that has an Fuel Oil fired furnace to heat his train room.

Bob, Thank you for decades of service to the hobby, the NMRA and to the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club. Well Done!!

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Guess the Layout!



Answer to Junes' Guess the Layout: Gordon Bliss

While browsing around in the model railroading community on forums and sites like Twitter I have noticed many adult males ask a particular question. Is model railroading a nerdy activity that is mostly aimed at children? To answer this simply, model railroading is a hobby that is suitable for all ages and can actually teach you many life skills. There are certain aspects of this hobby that most children or even teenagers just could not do as they require time and dedication to learn such as wiring up the tracks or designing a locomotive from scratch.

Designing and building a layout can be straightforward or a very creative and complicated process depending on what approach you use. The 3 main approaches you could use in increasing difficulty are:

1. An “all in one” kit that is ready to run out of the box. This means that all the components such as locomotives, rolling stock, scenery and tracks are already constructed. All you need to do is link the components together on a layout.
2. A “shake the box” kit where all the components are included in an easy to assemble form.
3. The last one is either craftsman kits or raw materials that you use to build the whole layout from scratch.

The more experienced you become the more you will want to challenge yourself. Choosing number 3 from the list above can involve woodcarving, painting, electrical skills, machinist skills and possibly a few others. Learning these skills can be a lot of fun when in the context of model railroading. Not only can you increase your ability to customize your layouts, but also learn things that are useful for other areas of your life. Read on to find out how learning additional skills would be beneficial to you.

I bet you never thought your History classes would come in handy

The more enthusiastic model railroaders like to build layouts that are historically accurate such as the “World War 2” era or the steam train era. Getting the details factually correct can take a lot of research and attention to detail. This is not only limited to the locomotives and rolling stock, but to scenery also. In fact when showing off your completed work to non model railroaders it is usually the scenery that will explain to people what your layout is about.

When researching for the layouts you will also learn some cool train history lessons along the way. However a more important benefit is that your research skills will improve and this skill can be transferred over to other parts of your life.

Ever thought of painting your own model trains?

While the mechanical features of your locomotives and rolling stock are important, it is the visual impact that they are able to exert that is most important in order to impress people checking out your layout. Learning how to paint the train models gives you a lot of control over the design. This higher level of control is beneficial because it allows you to customize your layout to whatever your imagination is limited by. This creative aspect of

model railroading can keep people making new models and layouts for many years.

Typically there are two main approaches to painting your train models which are using spray or a brush. Spray painting more of a mechanical process whereas using a brush allows for a much higher level of detail and customizability. However using a brush requires a greater level of skill and takes longer to learn. Learning this type of painting has other benefits such as doing DIY work on your kitchen furniture among other things.

Create your scenery using woodcarving

Being able to create your own scenery components without any limitation using wood carving techniques is not only a very rewarding process, but also allows you to create impressive layouts. Using wood you can make figurines, buildings and even the whole landscape. Then using your painting skills you can adapt the scenery components to fit your particular theme. Wood carving skills learnt during time spent on model railroading can be transferred over to many other useful projects such as carving out a toy to give to a child as a birthday present.

Learn how to wire a layout

Wiring up a model railroad layout is a more technical aspect of the hobby as opposed to the creative sides such as choosing a locomotive or arranging scenery components. At first it might seem too much of a chore to learn the electrical skills. However when building your own layout it is a vital skill to learn in order to ensure that your trains run smoothly, fire effects work, switches switch, light go on and off, signals change, smoke blows and whistle effects work. Even if you choose to get an “all in one” kit to build your layout there will often be problems of an electrical nature. Knowing what to do in such cases will make your model railroading experience much smoother.

Electrical skills learnt whilst building and maintaining your railroad layout can come in handy in a large number of situations. Such as fixing an electrical appliance in your home or doing some car maintenance that requires wiring of some type.

Consider building your locomotives from scratch

The high quality locomotives and rolling stock that are manufactured by reputable brands such as Bachmann and Lionel primarily use metal. Learning machinist skills will give you the ability to create models from scratch. It will not be easy to master such a skill to the point where you can build high quality model trains. However for the more enthusiastic model railroader this is a skill worth investing a lot of time and effort into. Learning machinist skills gives you the added benefit of being able to do a high number of DIY activities such as repairing a car.

For those of you not interested in completely mastering machinist skills, you could make an effort to learn some aspects of it as this will allow you to do some important repair or maintenance work on train models that you might buy.

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The train inspection used to be a railroad ritual on the real railroads, but now is seldom done. With the advent of dragging equipment and hotbox detectors, the old tried-and-true train inspection has gone the way of the dodo bird, board games, and Burma Shave signs. This article will give you an idea of what was entailed in doing a federally mandated train inspection, and give some suggestions for adding such a thing to spice up the operations on your model railroad.

Back in caboose days, train inspections were required every 100 miles. It didn't have to be done exactly every 100 miles—that was just a ballpark figure. On the 379 mile Kingsville Division, this meant every train between Houston and Brownsville had to be inspected four times. The railroad set up zones (my term, for lack of a better one) that encompassed several passing sidings where each of the inspections had to be done within.

North from Brownsville, if my memory serves me correctly, the first inspection had to be done at either Armstrong or Sarita. Possibly Norias was included in this zone, but it was only 67.6 miles from Brownsville. I only had a few trips on the "Southern Division", as Brownsville-Kingsville was called, and for the life of me, I can't recall doing a single train inspection down there (except maybe vaguely one night at Armstrong), though I would have had to do one every trip, or twice a turn.

The second inspection, on the "Middle Division" between Kingsville and Vanderbilt, was done at either Greta or Inari—two little wide spaces between the rails in the middle of nowhere. I remember doing some of these, and also remember the story about where one of these inspections didn't quite go "as planned". Fortunately, the storyline never happened to me. The story goes that in the days before radios on cabooses, or perhaps the caboose radio was broken, a northbound train at one of these spots stopped for an inspection, but before we cover the story, we need to understand just how a train inspection is done.

First, there are two ways to inspect a train in accordance with regulations. You can walk it, or you can roll it. A "roll-by inspection" has to be done at a speed of no more than 20 mph. Train personnel (they can even be from another train, track gang, bridge gang, or rail gang) must be positioned at ground level on each side of the track. An engineer remaining in the cab while performing a roll-by for another train is not doing it properly, and none ever remained so, as that would be a significant rules violation.

Typically, a train would put off doing an inspection during one of these zones until they had reached the last siding of the zone in hopes that there would be an opposing train to give them a roll-by inspection. Occasionally, if they had a really long train, they would do a walking inspection at the longest siding regardless of where it was in the zone.

A typical walking inspection actually has a roll-by portion. At the inspection point, the engineer slows down to about 5 mph so the head brakeman can drop off "in the bushes" on the side of the track. Once he has alighted on the ground, the engineer can pick the speed back up to 20 mph, but since he only drags half the train by the head brakeman, he may not get up to 20 mph before stopping. Sometimes, the engineer will tell the head brakeman where he wants him to drop off at if the train is unusually long or short.

Once the engineer has drug half the train by the brakeman, he stops the train. A brakeman might count the cars passing by, and hop on if the midpoint is reached. I seldom did this, as that was just an extra opportunity to get hurt, and stepping up from the "bushes" side of the track may not be good footing. Besides, I like the change in routine of the walking inspection. After the train stops, the head brakeman crawls across the train and walks up on the siding side of the train—usually walking between the rails of the siding because that is where the best footing is. Of course, he is looking around for trains on the track, etc. While he's walking up the side of the train, the rear brakeman is walking up likewise from the caboose. He counts the cars he passes, and after he walks half the train he crosses over. The engineer will be watching, and when he is safely across to the other side of the train, he blows the horn, and begins easing ahead, and now the rear brakeman rolls-by the rear of the train. If inspecting on a curve, the engineer makes a guess when he thinks the brakeman has had plenty of time to walk up to the headend, toots his horn, gives the brakeman time to cross over, and then eases ahead. The conductor will normally be watching and inform the engineer by radio when to slow down to pick up the rear brakeman.

Once everybody is back on, the rear end informs the engineer if they found anything, but usually everything is okay, and the engineer gets her back up to track speed.

In five years of doing inspections, the only thing I ever found was sticking brakes, which was fixed by either releasing the hand brake if that was the issue, or cutting the brakes out of the car in question. I did that maybe twice in five years. Another time or two while on the caboose, I smelled the sticking brakes, and radioed the headend to stop so I could walk up and check out the car. You could usually feel the heat coming from the wheels when you were within about one car length of the car with sticking brakes.

So obviously, if your train can get a roll-by inspection from another train, you can save at least ten minutes of time.

Railroad crews followed this inspections business to the letter of the law. It was considered so important, that even at points outside the inspections zones, trains would do roll-by inspections for other trains, except on these occasions, the train didn't have to slow down to 20 mph.

After a train has passed by another crew doing a roll-by inspection for it, the crew of the other train on the ground would give a highball or proceed signal to the brakeman on the rear of the caboose of the train being inspected. The rear brakeman on the train being inspected by roll-by is not only out there looking for the signal from the inspecting crew, but he is also looking over the other train as his caboose passes it. Everybody is looking out for everybody. At night, the highball signal (a fast spinning of a lit lantern) lends kind of an excitement to the event. I usually gave only a proceed signal (lantern moved slowly up and down), except if the train was obviously going by at track speed, in which case it really wasn't an inspection, but simply a look-over. Somebody once told me you should only give a highball sign in CTC country if you know the other train has a green signal. I don't know if that was true or not, but it sounded good to me, but I still just can't imagine a brakeman

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giving a highball to the rear brakeman on the other train, who then radios his engineer and says "highball both sides", and the engineer then thinks, "Oh, I only had a yellow, but I think I'll notch it up to 50 since that brakeman a mile back there says 'highball'." (!)

Back to the story at Greta or Inari: The rear brakeman was inspecting the rear of the train during the roll-by portion of the walking inspection, but the engineer either misjudged the length of the train or forgot about the brakeman. Anyway, when the caboose came by it was moving much too fast to get up on, so the brakeman was left standing by the track in the darkness. The conductor was on the headend for some headend work up ahead, so couldn't brake the train from the rear. Since there was no working radio, nobody expected an "Everybody on" from the caboose. I don't remember how the story turned out, but the brakeman probably walked down to a phone box and called the dispatcher. That could easily take five or ten minutes, and if the dispatcher is not expecting a call, he is not always quick to answer. Contacting the train could easily take another five or ten minutes. By then he could be fifteen miles away.

The "North End", between Vanderbilt and Houston, has two inspection zones. One was at either Blessing, Buckeye, or Bay City ("SK Siding" to be exact). Bay City's SK Siding was on a curve and was relatively short, so trains knowing that there was no train up ahead to do a roll-by would usually inspect at Buckeye. I also got the feeling that engineers just felt more comfortable doing the inspection on straight track at Buckeye where they could see the rear brakeman in the clear. The other North End inspection had to be done at either Liverpool or Brownie before getting on the ATSF. Sometimes, the ATSF dispatcher calling a Brownie crew on the radio would ask them if they were done with their inspection, because he didn't want to line the train up through 27 Crossover to Alvin if they were going to be sitting there another ten minutes or so.

I really enjoyed the nice walks during inspections. Sometimes at night it could get a little spooky, though. I've already written in another article about the armadillo rustling down in the brush on a very foggy night that sounded like something much larger. I also remember walking an inspection at Bay City one night, and just after I had passed an open boxcar, a Mexican national called out from the door, "Got a light?" I must have jumped a foot, and made it a point afterwards to keep my eye on all open-door boxcars until I was well down the track. Somebody had warned me about a particular engineer that had been known to jump out of a boxcar door at night to scare a head brakeman walking an inspection. I understand that one time he brushed the arm of the brakeman in doing so, and that the brakeman practically flew up to the headend without so much as a look back. Indeed, one inspection I did find this guy walking back up to the engine from several car lengths beyond the trailing unit. I suspect that he was unable find an open boxcar.

During one inspection at Buckeye on a hot day, I rescued a snapping turtle. He was sitting all dehydrated in a dry ditch that normally held several feet of water. He was half dead, and probably didn't survive, but I picked him up by the rear of the shell and carted him several hundred feet up to some water and set him down in about an inch of it. That was all I could do for the turtle, and continued with my inspection.

I'm convinced that some other brakemen also found these nighttime inspections spooky. Some would light up a fusee and carry it, as it could be used as a weapon if you were to sling some of that burning molten fusee material at somebody. I tried lighting one up once, but the thing was so bright it blinded me. I'd be an easy target for somebody, *or some thing*, waiting for me down the track.

During my last several years on the division, they installed some dragging equipment and hotbox detectors within these zones. We still had to do the walking inspections, though. The new equipment was just an added safety precaution. When set off, the device would radio the train the axle count to the defect. I believe this was from the rear of the train. I think that now, they don't have to do walking inspections anymore. The detectors in effect give a roll-by inspection.

Now in the modeling world, if you model a Class I mainline back before the mid-eighties, you could establish an inspection zone. Pick two adjacent towns on your layout that are in the middle of nowhere, or at least don't have a yard. Mandate that federal inspections will be done on all trains passing through the zone. You could spice it up by actually having a car with some "dragging equipment". Attach a piece of flimsy material to the bottom of a car—easily visible between the trucks when at eyeball level. Any such found car would then have to be set out at the next town or siding. Anybody missing the dragging equipment, whether they were doing a roll-by or walking inspection, could be "called on the carpet" at the end of the operating session. The guilty party would be in for some good-natured ribbing, especially from those called on the carpet during previous operating sessions.

Such a zone could encourage cooperation between crews. Even the crew stuck in the siding at a meet within the zone would have an incentive to pay attention to the passing train, as they are the ones responsible for the inspection.

I don't know if any of you who've attended the Comanche and Indian Gap Spring Fling have ever noticed, but if I'm head brakeman on a train and we're waiting in a siding for a meet, when the other train gets close, I usually get up and walk across to the other side of the track and give them a roll-by. I know we're just playing trains, but I don't feel right sitting on my duff when the other train goes by. Ingrained inspection procedures are hard to ignore. As I get older, that becomes more of a chore. Maybe I can justify sitting on my duff as simply taking it easy on my legs instead. We'll see next time.

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David Milton: Lifelong Houstonian, rail-fan, and model rail-roader.

Perhaps David Milton's most lasting contribution to the hobby is without David Milton there might not be a San Jacinto Model Railroad Club. Dave was one of the founders of the club and has been a member for almost 60 years. In the early days the Club met in members' homes and Dave was one of a handful of members that kept the club alive and well. Dave is also regarded as a Southern Pacific historian. Together with his fellow SP devotees Tom Cobb, George Werner and Al Partlow, they hold the collective knowledge of the SP in Houston and the surrounding countryside. A sampling of the highlights of Dave's model railroad involvement includes:

He was a founding Member of the San Jacinto Chapter of the Lone Star Region in 1953. *(The name was changed to the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club in the 1958 Constitution).*

He participated in LSR Model Contests for many years beginning in 1956 and was the LSR Contest Chairman in 1960.

Dave has held every office in the San Jacinto Club includ-

ing President, Vice President and Treasurer.

He was elected to the LSR Board of Directors in 1965 and served several terms.

He was elected LSR Vice President in 1974 and served as President of the Lone Star Region in 1975-1976.

He helped the San Jacinto Club form the Loeffler Service Award in 1962 and made the Award presentations in the 30 years he served on the committee, **thus the reason why you have not seen him actually Receive the award.**

Served as Co-Editor of the San Jacinto Derail for 10 years.

Is the only surviving member who signed all three of the San Jacinto Club Constitutions- in 1953, in 1958 and in 1991.

Dave, thank you for your lifetime of service to the hobby, the NMRA, the Lone Star Region and especially to the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club.

***Congratulations
to Bob and Dave!***

The Many Life Skills Model Railroading Can Teach

Arthur Limes

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Selling model trains to fund your hobby

Now that you roughly know what it takes to build your own models and layouts from scratch you can consider doing it for the purpose of selling them. The money earned can be reinvested into model railroading in any way you see fit. This will give you even more freedom to build bigger and better layouts. Before searching for a venue to sell of your goods do the following:

1. Clean the items you wish to sell. Nobody will appreciate buying a set of dirty model trains.
2. Next inspect all your items for any damage and repair to the best of your ability. Any damage greatly reduces the price.
3. Take many pictures, this will increase the sales price because it will allow people to see what they are buying clearly.
4. Do some research at places like Amazon and eBay to give you a better idea of what your stuff is actually worth.

The best places on the Internet to sell stuff in a very quick and safe manner are eBay and Craigslist. Offline alternatives include auction houses, gadget shops, toy shops and model type shops.

Making the decision to invest in skills

For most people this decision will be based on what it is that they get out of model railroading. The people that only enjoy looking at the finished layout in full working order hardly need much investment of additional skills. Instead buying an "all in one" kit will be the fastest and simplest way of achieving what they want. Whereas the model railroaders that enjoy the building and customizability aspect of model railroading will gain a lot from investing in the skills mentioned in this article. In closing I would like to say that what you usually get out of a hobby is what you put into it in terms of effort and enthusiasm.

For additional information check out <http://modelrailwaylayoutsplan.com> where you can download a free e-book called "[7 model train mistakes to avoid](#)"

Meeting minutes June 5, 2012

Vice President Kelly Russell called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and welcomed all, in president's Bob Werre's absence.

Old Business:

none

New Business:

Vice President Kelly Russell announced the evening program: Blake Boggs on "Making a clinic using PowerPoint 2010". Blake explained ways to make your presentation more interesting by: adding in real photos, adding animation to text and video, adding backgrounds, using multiple fonts, and adding charts/text/word art. Blake also demonstrated ways to advance to the next slide by using animated transitions. He also showed how to use the auto-play feature to progress through your clinic.

Kelly then did an impromptu second clinic by asking members to "Tell us about your layout". Five members participated in this mini presentation program: Dave Shafer, Jim Hinds, Dick Louvet, Van Vanderwilt, and David Gilchrist.

Next month's clinic is not known yet, contact Kelly for ideas or to volunteer.

There will be a modular setup in Memorial City Mall for father's day.

Don Bozman reported that the layout in Texas Children's Hospital runs about 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are about 7 trains, a trolley, about 30 animations, and 7 sound systems to maintain and keep operational. Don explained how wipers are added to the locomotives to make them more reliable. Don is asking for help in this area. It is a paying job. Contact Don for details.

M&M Hobby shop is adding more freight car kits as well as more depth in the detail parts. The owners have a 4-5 year goal of becoming Houston's largest hobby shop.

Website: Jim Lemmond

Keep checking for updates, especially about the convention.

Derail: Bob Sabol asked for layout briefs are articles to keep the Derail interesting.

LSR:

Tracy Mitchell reported Fred Bock, John Lott, and Bill Wilson passed away. All will be greatly missed.

Convention chairman Bob Barnett announced the LSR convention starts tomorrow. There is a great lineup of clinics and layout tours. There are still some seats open for the layout and prototype tours. Registration is now at 174, which is a break even point. Attendance at LSR conventions has been declining each year, possibly due to price. Convention hotel food minimums can be as high as \$17,000, which is not realistic for our size shows. We may have to consider civic centers, schools, or other non-hotels in the future to help keep registration costs down. We hope to see everyone at this year's show.

NMRA:

no report

Division 8:

no report

Refreshments were thanks to Virginia Freitag.

The Bodaks volunteered to bring the snacks next month.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses: none

Income: none

\$8585.64 Ending balance

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

General comments:

-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!



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Next Meeting

Tuesday

July 3

See You There!

The Hermann Park Railroad is still looking for railroad enthusiasts to fill seasonal part-time positions, such as locomotive engineer, conductor, and station master. The Railroad staff is responsible for safe, efficient and fun operation of the train.

These positions have flexible hours, although weekends and holidays are the busiest times. Call Ron Misrack, the Director of Visitor Services at 713-528-0827 or e-mail him at rmisrack@hermannpark.org for more information and an application.

HAPPY JULY 4TH

FROM YOUR DERAIL STAFF!

