



# The DERAIL

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## President's Message

Bob Werre

The word is in that we've dodged a bullet and waded in the water to make the Greater Houston Area Train Show another success this year.

Several of us manned a joint table (Division 8 and San Jac) at the prior week's show at Reliant Arena with discount coupons for our show. Although a direct comparison between crowds isn't easy; I can say with certainty that our isles were more crowded in the Stafford Centre. The GTE's second day seemed even less attended than Saturday. Many of their vendors seem to stray from a railroad theme venturing into strictly toys which might have eliminated the serious customers very quickly.

When I visited our registration table, I viewed many of the yellow coupons that we had taken in, further indicating that our efforts worked for us. I also noticed that the check in area had customers arriving late in the afternoon who replaced those that normally start leaving by mid afternoon. So it appears that the earlier rain only had a marginal effort on attendance. At the end of the

day I noticed that "Toms Bargain Basement of Trains" seemed to have sold most of the member's items hopefully indicating that the vendors made a few dollars too.

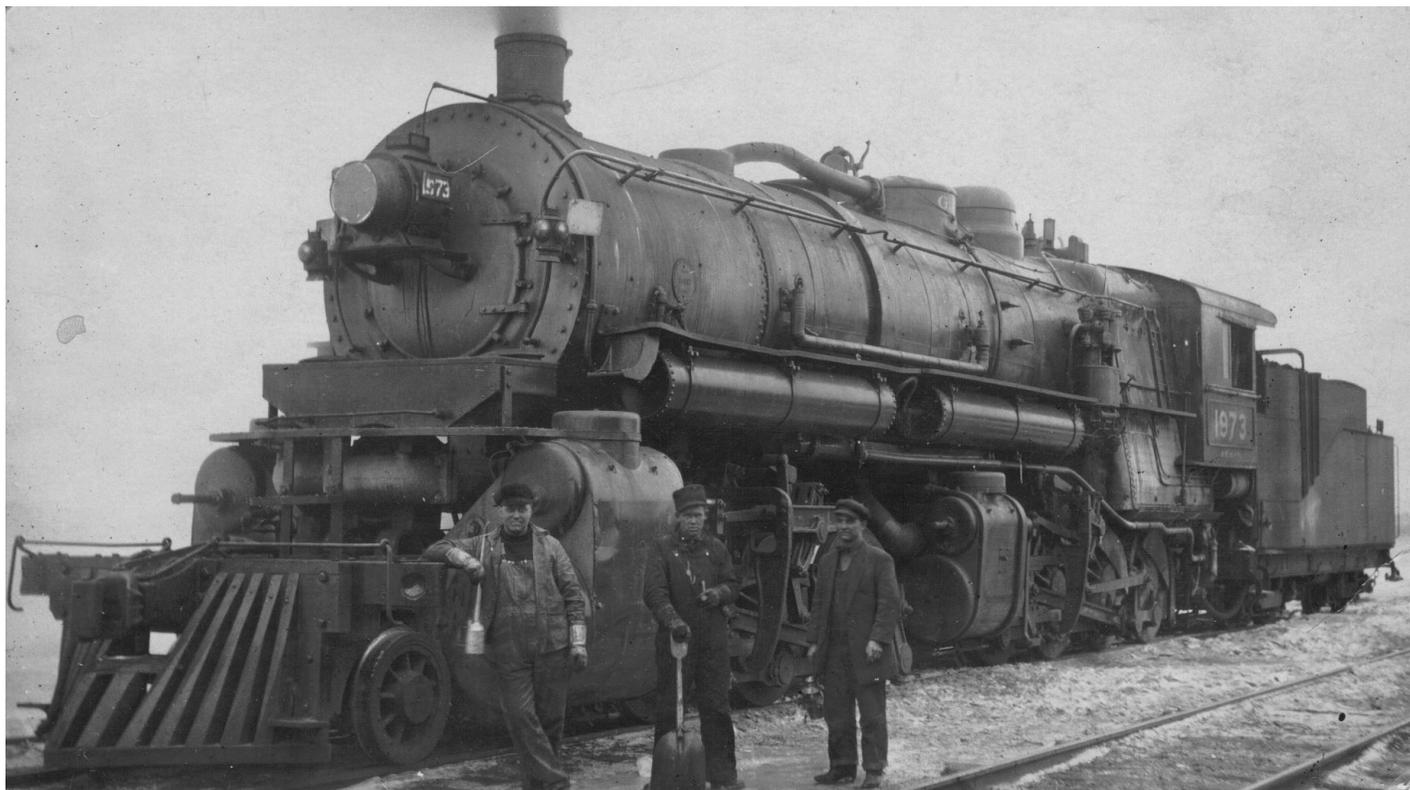
To wrap up this weekend, I hope those who volunteered were rewarded for their service, because you deserve our thanks in keeping our tradition alive. I hope the vendors made some much needed revenue, and I hope we have served our area with a good contest and clinics to serve the modeling community plus offered the general public a nice family friendly event.

One additional thought: The Houston area does have room for more shows of various types but crowding them or stepping on another show may have proven to be bad business!

What's next, I understand the Division has an event or two coming up and I assume HALS will be waking up for the season. Besides that it won't be long before the sounds of your Toro will overtake those of your SD-60. Put time aside for both!



The photograph below is of Great Northern Engine Number 1973, a Class M1 2-6-8-0 built by Baldwin in 1911 as part of an order for 35 engines. The engine was a compound Mallet in that it used high pressure steam for the rear cylinders and low pressure exhaust steam in the front cylinders. This design gave the engine high fuel efficiency along with high pulling power at low speeds. Tests, however, revealed that the pulling power fell off rapidly as the speed was increased. The situation was corrected by replacing the front section of each engine with a new section having high pressure cylinders making the engines simple Mallets. The conversions were done in all five of the Great Northern shops as described in the January, 2007 issue of the Model Railroader. The rebuilt engines retained their original numbers and became Class M2 engines.



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## Guess the Layout!



*Answer to February's Guess the Layout: Houston Live Steamers*

This article is about passenger trains I have seen, but I'm limiting it to passenger trains I saw before Amtrak or at least ones that I think I saw. (My memory seems wrong in at least one instance.) Some of you may think I'm beginning to scrape the bottom of the topic barrel with this article, and so might be the case, but I enjoy remembering these sightings, and so might another one or one and a half of you out there.

I grew up in Lake Charles, Lafayette, and (briefly) New Orleans, Louisiana in the 50's and 60's. Our home in Lake Charles was on the south side of town near Dolby Elementary School (a block and a half walk to school), just off Ryan Street--far away from the SP tracks, and there was no reason to ever go north of downtown where the SP tracks were. There were, however, some MP tracks on the south side, but nothing much was ever seen happening on them. Where they crossed Ryan Street, they looked very poorly maintained.

My family left Lake Charles for Lafayette right after I started 7<sup>th</sup> grade in 1964. Lafayette's tracks were more in the center of town, and we often drove over them. I got my driver's license, and became good at talking my parents into letting me drive down to the depot in the family Le Sabre to watch the Sunset Limited go through on Sunday afternoon.

My stay in New Orleans lasted only for my first six weeks of high school (9<sup>th</sup> grade), and then my dad quit his job with Mobil and the family moved back to Lafayette. However, that brief stay enabled a nice sighting on the approaches to the Union Passenger Terminal.

I'm getting ahead of myself, so lets reboot and go about this chronologically.

My first train trip, and one I don't remember, was on the Sunset Limited from Lake Charles to Houston. My mother was pregnant with my sister, so that places it probably early in 1957 when I was 4 years old. This would have been before the SP flip-flopped the schedules of the westbound Sunset Limited and Argonaut, so it was at night. We either changed to a bus or another train at Houston. Supposedly, according to my mother, I was almost seriously injured by a Houston cab driver. She had hailed a cab from Houston Grand Central Station to just across downtown, and the cab driver was so ticked off at getting such a short fare, that he started away from the curb with the taxi before my mother had even gotten me into the cab, and I was being drug along on the pavement. Wish I could have remembered that trip. I never asked her what we changed to in Houston. If we went to the trouble to leave Lake Charles in the dead of night, it might have been the Sam Houston Zephyr, as there was more than one hour to connect.

The first trip I remember was a real gem. I bet just about anybody would trade me a trip on some other notable train to get this mileage, if such could be traded. In Lake Charles, Louisiana, a year or so after my first train trip, my kindergarten class rode the remnant of the Lake Charles section of the MP Sunshine Special from Lake Charles northeast to Kinder, Louisiana—a distance of about 34 miles. The main thing I remember about this trip was the crowded coach in the Lake

Charles depot, and looking out the window at our parents driving their cars along the road to Kinder. Kind of interesting that the word “kindergarten” has “Kinder” in it. I remember that for a long while after this, every time we drove by the Lake Charles MP depot, I'd look for trains. For a year or so maybe, I'd occasionally see something, usually a caboose or freight cars, but then it reached the point where there was nothing left to see—just an old depot with nothing going on.

Somewhere around this time is a memory that just doesn't make sense. I remember seeing a round end fluted side observation car on a train at the Lake Charles KCS depot. Now the reason this doesn't make any sense, is I don't believe the KCS ever ran such equipment into Lake Charles on passenger trains, and by the time I was 2 years 3 months old or before, there were no longer any passenger trains scheduled into Lake Charles. The ones that used to run were mere shuttle runs up to DeQuincy to connect with the Shreveport-Port Arthur trains. I also seem to remember that the car was shiny stainless steel, whereas the KCS's fluted side observations were painted. I suppose I could have seen one being used as a business car.

Possibly it was an observation from some other railroad—maybe a merger was being considered back then, and the other railroad was touring the property. I'll probably never know the answer to this enigma. Another possibility just occurred to me. The KCS got their round end observations from the NYC. Could be that what I saw was one of these before the KCS repainted them, and some railroad official took them on a trip to check them out, however, the KCS observations don't really look much like what I remember seeing.

My first fairly long train trip that I remember was with my Grandma Vernie Nelson. She had been visiting us in Lake Charles, and wanted to get back to Dawson, Texas to grocery shop and take care of things before my parents and sister visited her a few days later on a vacation trip. This would have probably been about the summer of 1959. I had been working a sob story on my parents. Even at the age of

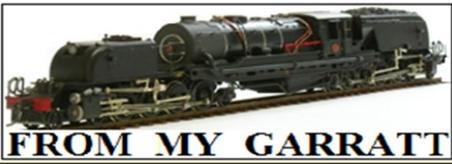
almost 7, I knew that passenger trains were in decline, and I convinced them to let me have a train trip before they were all gone.

My grandma and I left Lake Charles in the morning on a Greyhound bus bound for Houston. We arrived at the Houston Greyhound bus station, about 1 block from Union Station, probably around noon or shortly afterwards. We grabbed a bite to eat in the bus depot restaurant, and then walked to the train station. (I re-enacted this walk a few years ago when I went to an Astros game at Minute Maid Park.) I remember the waiting room at Union Station was very big, and there were quite a few people milling around. At one point we walked out on the concourse to check on the train, and I remember seeing a yellow switcher (HB&T, probably) switching passenger cars behind a fence. Not sure if this memory makes sense, because I seem to remember the fence as being to the south of the platform tracks. I believe there once was a coach yard in that general direction, so maybe it's correct.

We eventually boarded the Twin Star Rocket, and rode it to Corsicana. I remember, as we left Houston, that it was late in the afternoon and the shadows were long. We passed businesses with rail docks. We also

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### THE MRIE & I.

No – the MRIE&I is not a new rail company but rather my acronym for the Model Railroad Industry, the Economy and the Internet.

Imagine having no model railway stores in Houston! Imagine having no place to view newly released models or to be able to meet with or talk to other model train enthusiasts! With the increase of internet sales combined with a slow-to-recover economy, this could easily become a reality.

Recently released government sales statistics for 2011 show that online retail sales increased 14% in the fourth quarter of 2011 to a record \$161.5 billion, and that during each quarter of last year, they increased by double-digit percentages versus the prior year.

Why are on-line sales growing so dramatically and what effect does this have on model railroad retailers and railroaders?

Obviously, the most important factor here is ‘Price’ – an area in which brick-and-mortar stores find it more and more difficult to compete, because they need higher selling prices in order to cover the carrying cost of inventory and overheads such as rent, electricity, etc. Internet sellers by contrast, often have no inventory or overheads, and place orders with manufacturers only after customers have ordered and paid for the item. In addition, internet ‘stores’ often have products shipped directly from the wholesaler to the end-user, thus saving on internal labor costs.

Then there is the issue of price comparisons. By surfing the internet, a buyer can locate the lowest price for an item as opposed to spur-of-the moment buying for whatever the list price is at the local store.

Sales tax is also an issue because currently, unless the seller is in the same State as the buyer, no sales tax is levied on internet sales. This is something that many States are looking into because it is costing them billions of dollars in lost revenues, but until it changes, it is another great incentive for buyers to shop



on line. This is true even though there may be shipping charges

associated with on-line sales, but these are often waived by the seller. Then, there’s the convenience of on on-line shopping.

e-Commerce stores never close, so shopping can be done at any time of the day or night, as long as there is an internet connection. The location of the seller is also irrelevant, and an on-line order can easily be placed regardless of traffic conditions or the seller’s geographic area.

So, if one takes all of the above into consideration, the natural conclusion appears to be that we should all shop on-line. Or should we?

What would Houston be like without any model train stores? Would you miss not being able to see or touch new or required products before buying them, or having a place to go to in order to meet and talk to others who are interested in our hobby?

Are you willing to wait a week for a mail or UPS delivery, instead of being able to go in to a store and buying what you need there and then? Where would you take your kids or grandkids in order to buy a Thomas or other train set for them, or to just introduce them to our hobby?



A few years ago, we lost a valued model railroad store in our city and apparently, one of the others is now up for sale. So, as someone who values the camaraderie, advice and support that I constantly receive from the local model train stores, I believe that we should do whatever we can in order to keep them in Houston.

To paraphrase an old James Garner movie - “Support Your Local Sheriff”, I urge all Derail readers to “Support Our Local Train Stores”.

# The 2012 Greater Houston Train Show

## We had a Great Time!!

The 2012 Greater Houston Train Show, our 37<sup>th</sup> Jamboree/Train Show, has come and gone. I hope you made the show and had a great time. Our show was a success again because of the hard work and dedication of our members and our friends in the railfan/model railroading community.

When the Club found out several months ago that the Train Expo was coming to town one week prior to our show date, we were very apprehensive about the outcome of the show this year. Should we cancel? Should we attempt to change the date? Should we proceed full speed ahead and hope for the best?

The Club voted overwhelmingly to proceed with business as usual. We invited several local modular layouts that have been with the show for many years with the caution that revenues and layout reimbursement might be very thin this year. **The NWX-HO Division, NWX-N-Scale Division, HAGG, and Houston S-Scalers** opted to stick with our show. The Houston Area Live Steamers elected to set up at our show and forgo the Train Expo. The All Points North Club, Gulf Coast Chapter of the NRHS, and the Houston N-Crowd also participated with detailed displays as they have for many years. **We greatly appreciate these clubs' support!**

And evidently the Vendors like our show too. **Vendor Chair Robert Ashcraft** sold out of tables shortly after Christmas and developed a substantial waiting list. **Vendor Chair Emeritus Don Bozman** handled the floor planning again this year and rearranged the plan to allow about 10 additional tables this year. Even with that we could have sold an additional 10 to 15 tables with the people on our waiting list alone.

So our last big fear: Can we get the modelers and general public out. Well, evidently the area modelers and rail fans like our show too. The attendance count based on the number of stickers given out is 1084 adult attendees. If you add in the vendor, clinicians, and show staff badges we had about 1200 adult attendees and an estimated 200 to 300 children and youth attendees. This was a record year for attendance since we have been at Stafford, and I believe only the 1979 Jamboree chaired by Greg Johnson (that Ben Pearlman managed to get on the evening news) topped or attendance this year.

Distinguishing features of our show are the full slate of clinics, the NMRA-style modeling contest, and home layout tours after the show. And our club and the chairmen arranging for these provided an excellent offering to the attendees.

**Dave Currey** arranged for the clinics and set up the rooms in the real time, and Walter Pasciak assisted Dave with the clinics set up all day. A listing of the clinicians includes:

Chuck Lind-Saw Mill Operations

Tracy Mitchell – Maintaining the Equipment for the Texas Children's Hospital Layout

George Bohn and Mike Gulley –Building Portable layouts with a new modular frame system.

Gary Strouz, Aaron Conde, and Nathan Conde – Painting back drops from Prototype photos.

Peter Bryan –The history of the Comanche & Indian Gap Railroad

Gordon Bliss and Eddy Aycock – An Overview of setting up your railroad for Operations

Steve Sandifer – Live Stock Shipping

Mark Couvillion – Setting Standards for Rolling Stock on your railroad

THANKS DAVE! This was a great balance of clinics delivered from people who know their topic well.

The annual model and photography contest was handled by **Tracy Mitchell, Ray Byer and Don Formanek**, all veterans of the Contest Room at the GHTS and the Lone Star Region. Judges included Ray, Don, Tracy and Leslie and Mike Bodak (and I am sure additional judges I did not see). Tracy obtained a new stock of ribbons this year that he estimates will last for several more years. So, there is still time to finish up those models and get them into the contest next year!!

**Layout Tour Chair Craig Brantley** deserves double kudos for assembling the tour this year. Our annual fall tour just finished up in December and Craig is currently in the middle of assembling the layout tours for the *2012 Gulf Coast Limited* in June. So to take the time out and put together another tour during the middle deserves some special recognition. A nice feature of the Saturday layout tour is that attendees could visit two world class scenicked mountain railroads only about five minutes apart. After visiting **Gil Freitag's Stony Creek & Western** and **Eddy Carroll and John Weiss's D&RGW** railroad, if you are not motivated to go home and start some scenery, you need to think about another hobby! A big thank you is due to Craig and all of the layout owners who opened up their railroads.

But the attendees could not enjoy the show if they can't get past the front door. Thanks goes to **Registrars Ed Dibble and Robert Ashcraft and Treasurer Gilbert Freitag** for organizing the Registration Desk and to **Bob Sabol, Harry Daniel, Peter Howell, Don and Bettye Bozman, Rex Ritz, Chris Tolley, and Steve Sandifer** for working shifts at the front desk. **Ed Dibble** culls through the registration cards in the off-season and mails out several hundred Invitations each year to keep the customers informed of our date and time. **Steve Sandifer** sends our

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# Things I've Learned Over the Years

Mark Couvillion

The track is the foundation of your railroad.

- Do not skimp on track. Buy the best you can afford and install it carefully.
- Avoid turnouts with stamped point rails, as they are difficult to keep in gauge.
- Prefer the larger frog numbers as the cars will look more realistic on larger radius curves (diverging routes).
- Learn how to wire powered frogs so that there are no dead spots in the middle of your turnouts. Your 4-wheel engines will thank you for it.
- Lay your track by sight to insure against kinks. If you can tell where the joint is in the rail when viewing from afar, your train will remind you every time it passes that point.
- Use templates to lay curves. It is faster, easier, and more accurate than using the trammel-rod (arc) method, and you can quickly change radius if you need to.
- Once the track is laid – RUN THE TRAINS. Before you put down any scenery, ballast, paint, anything – RUN THE TRAINS. Locate problems such as insufficient power, kinks, misaligned rail, etc., BEFORE you invest more time in the layout.

- Keep structures, especially fragile ones, away from the normal access route of your arm to manual ground throws or other things you need to reach for.
- Install plenty of track feeders. Don't rely on rail joiners to carry power to the next section of rail. Rail joiners are for alignment ONLY, not to carry power.
- Set up a color coded system for wiring and stick to it. Avoid using colored wire that is normally used to carry electrical current (red, white, black, green).
- Do not attach the wrong color wire to a bus or extend a wire with the wrong color because you are out of the correct color. It may save you time now but will frustrate you (or a member of your crew) in the future.
- Wire your railroad in several blocks / power districts. You can always jumper them into one if you want to, but if you want signaling, occupancy detection, and/or unaffected operation of the layout when you have a derail / short using DCC, you will find it easier to install up front than later.
- Polish the rails with Maaz or Flitz. Do not use Goo Gone (leaves a residue), bright boys (scratches the railhead), or anything that can contribute to dirt on the track.
- Run metal wheels on your cars. Plastic wheels tend to accumulate dirt because of static charge buildup as they roll down the line. Metal wheels don't build up the static charge.

## March Meeting Program by Tom Marsh

Flashback to railroading and railfanning in the 1970s with this old-fashioned, pre-digital age Kodak Carousel slide show. We'll experience it all: cheap camera lenses, off-brand processing, fading Ektachromes, brilliant Kodachromes, and if we're lucky, a slide tray jam or two. In the space of one Carousel tray, we'll see roster and action shots capturing the spirit of the Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, Katy, Mo-Pac, early Amtrak and more. Until the show's presentation at the George Bush Presidential Library in November 2011, most of these slides had not seen a projector bulb for 25 years or more (some not ever), so hang on for a nostalgia rush!

Tom Marsh is a life-long railfan and model railroader who resides in Houston. A graduate of Texas A&M's Texas Maritime Academy, he has funded his railroad-related avocations for the last twenty-five years by working as a business journalist covering the offshore energy industry. He has also served in various volunteer offices with the Gulf Coast Chapter, National Railway Historical Society and the Texas Gulf Division of the Lone Star Region of the National Model Railroad Society



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passed within 5 blocks of where my current home would be built. Grandma took me to the diner for dinner, and I remember her cautioning me to be careful walking between the cars so I wouldn't get my toes pinched. We arrived at Corsicana after dark—the depot lights were on, and either my grandma's tailor shop employer or the Hamptons who ran the dry goods store picked us up at the depot to take us to Dawson 25 miles away. That was my last train trip for 11 years.

Around about the summer of 1964, my family made its biggest vacation ever: to California and back. It was our version of National Lampoon's Vacation movie—complete with our Grandma Nelson along for the trip, and our dog Snoopy. (Snoopy survived—unlike the dog in the movie.) Disneyland substituted for Wally World. We never made motel reservations. We'd just find a motel when we were close to supper time. Sometimes all the motels would be booked in some small towns, and we'd have to drive to the next town. Sometimes we had to settle on a not so nice motel or one a little pricier than we wanted.

On the NLV trip, we spent one night in El Paso. The next morning, we left El Paso very early and had breakfast at a roadside park somewhere not far outside El Paso. We often had such a breakfast to save the expense of a restaurant. Research in my 1955 Official Guide leads me to believe that it was in Anthony, New Mexico, where I sighted a Santa Fe passenger train heading what I thought back then was westbound, but was actually northbound. At that point in my life, I knew the Santa Fe was mainly an east-west railroad between Chicago and California. I had no idea what Santa Fe train would be meandering around southern New Mexico, or that the railroad even reached that far south into New Mexico. It was a pretty little thing: an E unit and about 4 or 5 cars, clearly visible across the flat mostly barren outskirts of the town. (Do towns have inskirts, as that was where the train was?) As we passed by about a mile from the tracks, it started pulling out of the depot headed for who knows where (Albuquerque I found out later in college when I saw a copy of the October 1958 Guide).

I was in Boy Scouts. My Troop 159, that met at the Grace Presbyterian Church two blocks behind my home in Lafayette, often went on camping trips. One place we went to several times between 1964 and 1966 was at a place called Melville Lakes, or perhaps near there. I didn't know it at the time, but it was on the ex-T&P line from New Orleans to Shreveport. This was 34 miles south of Bunkie (southeast as the crow flies—but not the KCS Flying *Crow!*).

We always camped in a low-lying area near a very long concrete railroad trestle. The first several times we camped there, we'd see a passenger train go by northbound in the late morning, and southbound in the late afternoon. My 1965 Official Guide confirmed them as the then unnamed remnants of the Louisiana Daylight. It always consisted of an E7 diesel, a baggage car, and a coach—all streamlined. Once, a buddy and I were waiting under the trestle with rocks in hand ready to pelt the sides of the box cars on a freight train. After the engine went by, we jumped out from under the bridge to let fly, but had to hold up because it was a passenger train. By several years later, when I camped there as an Explorer, the passenger train was gone. I didn't know it at the time, but while we slept at night, the Louisiana Eagle went by with sleeping cars. Dang it. Why couldn't I have been sneaky and snuck out to check those out. I probably heard them though, but that doesn't count as a sighting. Maybe one of these days I'll write the sequel, "Passenger Trains I Have Heard".

Some of my family's vacations went to the southeastern United States.

On one of these, we were driving through Birmingham, Alabama about early afternoon. I recall we were headed south towards Florida, which doesn't make a lot of sense, because I can't remember or figure out where we might have been coming from—probably Kentucky. We passed by the Birmingham Terminal Station. I remember the area as looking like a battle zone, as it appeared a lot of things had been razed, and the depot was standing kind of forlorn all by its lonesome amidst the destruction. It still had quite a few tracks, all vacant, still with dwarf signals, except one track with an SR passenger train in it. I had no idea at the time what train it was. Many years later I researched in an Official Guide and deduced it had to have been the eastbound Birmingham Special waiting for its late afternoon departure to Washington D.C. It had about 3 cars.

In 1966, Mobil transferred my dad to New Orleans, so I lived in New Orleans on the "West Bank", which is on the east side of New Orleans, for about 6 weeks until my dad quit Mobil to go to work for a private firm back in Lafayette. We were able to move right back into our house, which hadn't sold yet. One evening in N'awlins, while I was with my mother heading southeast on the Pontchartrain Expressway, I caught a good pacing view of a KCS passenger train heading in towards the Union Passenger Terminal. This is one of those memories that may be somewhat in error. I remember looking at the train on my right, when it would have had to have been on my left, so maybe the sighting actually took place on the Airline Highway instead. The train would have been KCS unnamed train No. 9, due to arrive at the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal about 8:00 pm. Since it was well after dusk, and this was in the early fall, the train must have been running late, or the schedule was different than in my January 1, 1965 Official Guide. My chief memory was that in the darkness the cars appeared almost black in color, with no discernible striping or color, but with the words "KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN" clearly seen in reflective lettering on all the cars. The train sure looked sharp and comfy.

While not a complete train, once, when my family's car passed over the approach tracks to NOUPT, I looked down and saw two round-end IC observation cars coupled together on one of the platform tracks out past the ends of the sheds. Oddly, they were coupled flat end to flat end. Have no idea why they would have been there in that positioning, and in particular, why one would be backwards from the way it should have been backed into the depot. Another time I saw a couple of KCS heavyweight baggage cars in about the same position.

After moving back to Lafayette, in the aforementioned trips down to the Lafayette depot in the family Buick to see the Sunset Limited pass through, I saw all kinds of interesting things. I saw passenger geeps numerous times. Rarely, I saw an E8, usually second in the consist. Most of the time it was FP7s, except at the time I thought they were F7s. One time, while exploring an abandoned cotton gin with a buddy about half a mile west of the depot, the Sunset went by bound for Houston with the usual 4 cars, but with 5 F units. On another occasion, I saw the Sunset staying overnight in the Lafayette Yard due to the bridge at Morgan City having been wiped out by a barge. That seemed to happen regularly. More than once, I caught the KCS observation Good Cheer bringing up the markers on the Sunset. I had no idea what railroad the paint scheme was from, so it must not have been lettered. What always impressed me about the departure of the Sunset from the Lafayette depot was that the train seemed to be up to at least 30 mph before the last car exited the platform area.

*To be continued in the April issue*

*(Continued from page 2)*

Number 1973 was rebuilt as a M2 in the GNRR shop in Superior, Wisconsin in 1926 and saw service in Montana as a coal burning freight engine. At the end of World War 2 it was converted to an oil burner and reassigned to the Spokane Division. A model of Engine 1973 as an oil burner can be seen on Don Bozeman's Great Great Northern layout. The book, *Steam Locomotives of the Great Northern Railway* contains three photographs of Number 1973 as an M2 locomotive and states that the engine's last assignment prior to being scrapped in 1955 was pulling ore cars in the Minnesota iron range.

The subject of this article is not, however, a locomotive but the engineer in the left foreground of the photograph. The engineer's name was Charles Setterlund and he was my grandfather. Like Engine 1973, Charles Setterlund led two lives; first as a young man in Sweden and second as a family man and rail-roader in America. Also, like Engine 1973, his second life was more successful.

Charles Setterlund grew up in Sweden and, after serving in the Swedish army, emigrated to the United States in about 1900. Prior to this move he had learned to speak English and had studied books on what he called "the English ways". He went to work for the Great Northern Railway in Minot, North Dakota, which is still a division point. His brother, Olaf, soon followed but continued on to Portland, Oregon, where he later started a grocery business.

Charles met and married Hilda Westlund in Minot in 1903. Hilda had grown up in Sweden where she was part of an all-girl band and had arrived in the United States a few years ahead of Charles. Her father had died young leaving a widow with nine children. The two oldest children remained in Sweden with their mother while the other seven came over to Minnesota and North Dakota as they finished their schooling. Charles and

Hilda's first child, my father Sydney Setterlund, was born in Minot in 1907.

Charles continued to work his way up the seniority ladder with the railroad and became an engineer. The family moved from Minot to Grand Forks, North Dakota where Charles had a new home built near the University of North Dakota. It was also very close to the railroad. A second son was born in 1919 and both sons went on to gain mechanical engineering degrees from the university.

In December of 1929, Sydney married my mother, Edythe Huard. Edythe's parents were part of a French-speaking community that had been started by immigrants from Quebec. In the early years of their marriage they lived with Charles and Hilda and I was born there in 1932. Later we moved to Minneapolis and Chicago and ended up in Burbank, California in 1939 where my father found work at Lockheed Aircraft Company.



My father was an army reserve officer and was called to active duty when the United States entered World War 2. He spent the entire war on the Indo-China front. Meanwhile, my mother moved in with her parents in California and, along with her brother and father, went to work for Lockheed while I was sent to live with my grandparents in Grand Forks until 1944.

Charles Setterlund became a father to me during the years I lived in his home and we would follow the World War 2 on maps and the daily newspaper. He talked at length about life in Sweden and about the railroad. Sometimes we would take trips to the root beer stand or to the creamery for ice cream. We also took trips to the roundhouse including one trip where I watched red hot rims being shrunk on to locomotive wheels. He was very proud of his skills as an engineer and stated that while he was not allowed to come into a station too slowly, he could stop the train so smoothly that not a drop of coffee would be spilled in the dining car.

# The 2012 Greater Houston Train Show

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date and time to several hobby publications and has managed to get our show coverage in several neighborhood papers over the last several years. These efforts have helped increase our "public attendance".

For well over 30 years (probably closer to 40) the San Jac has introduced Jamboree/Train Show crowds to the joys of operations through the Switching Layout. Designed and built by the late Bob Hardin the layout was maintained and updated by Cecil Stewart for many years and has been refurbished and maintained by Dave Shafer in more recent times. If Dave ever sells his trusty Suburban we are in real trouble with the Switching Layout. Dave along with the Yard Crew of **Peter Bryan, Ed Rains, Rick Jones and Kelley Russell** kept the cars moving and the operators working for another year of operating fun.

If you did not pick up any bargains at the San Jacinto Club table you were not looking hard enough. Once again **Tom Bailey**

staffed and managed the sales table with the aid of **Tom Leffler, Dick Louvet, Cliff Cheeseman, Chris Tolley, R. A. Vanderwilt, Steve Sandifer and Don Threlkeld**. This endeavor symbolizes how the Jamborees started out 40 years ago, modelers selling of excess stuff to other modelers at bargain prices. Thanks for your effort and the bargains guys.

And last (actually first) the Set up crew of **Robert Ashcraft, Peter Bryan and Don Formanek** got us started out at 6:00 AM and **Walter Pasciak and Dick Louvet** helped complete the set-up. The Tear Down crew of **Dave Currey, Ed Dibble, Mark Couvillian and Steve Sandifer** helped vendors load up and closed down the show for another year.

I'm certain there are other members who worked at tasks during the day that I have missed.

**THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!!**

## Operators Corner

Peter Bryan

Welcome to this months operators corner. Most of us that have a model railroad have a guest book. It is fun to look back and see where your guest or from and who the "famous people" that have been to your railroad. But I use my guestbook during open houses for another very important reason. I put at the top of my guestbook: If you're interested in operating on the West Virginia Railroad or want to learn to operate in general, please leave your phone number and I will contact you for an OP session".

This works very well in getting new operators. I try to have at least one new operator at each of my sessions. Some of these guys have never had a throttle in their hand. So far I have at least 20 to 30 guys that have never operated on a railroad or not been an operator on my railroad operate on The WVW RR.. I'm very proud of this.

One time after one of my operating sessions, a new guy told me that he was going to tear up his old railroad and build it for operations.

Here's an interesting side story about the guestbook On Gil Freitag's Stony Creek & Western Railroad. Gil's first open house was in 1963 in and a person by the name of Roy Pickard signed his guestbook. Well 32 years later I took Gil to Roy's fabulous live steam railroad in Comanche Texas name the Comanche meaning gap railroad. When they met they both realized the last time they had seen each other was at Gil's railroad in 1963. That was a pretty neat reunion for two great model and live steam railroaders.

Switching gears a little bit, I know you've heard all the talk about having enough staging tracks. Well believe me, it is true. You can never have enough. On my railroad I ended up installing a switch back in staging just so I could add one more staging track for new train that I added.

Maybe an even more important feature is way to turn trains in your staging yards after an OP session. You do not want to spend 8-10 hours to restage your railroads and believe me there are a few railroads out there that do take that long. In fact there is a railroad in Pennsylvania that I hear takes 24 hours to re-stage. Need less to say he only has 2 OP sessions a year!! At some point you may decide oh heck I won't have a session tonight because I do not want to spend all day in the railroad room.

I was very fortunate to have Don Bozman help build my railroad. He insisted that I have returned loops at all my staging yards that allow me to restage all 11 of my staged trains in about a half an hour. ( Thank you Don!!) Believe me that is huge. Of course if you have the room to have loop or serial staging that is even better. Your staging track should also have some kind of detection or TV screens if it is hidden. This will save you many headaches in the future.

Again you are invited to operate on my West Virginia Western Railroad. Just give me a call at 832-237-4388.

President Bob Werre called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and welcomed back "old time" member Don Threlkeld.

Old Business: none

New Business:

Vice President Kelly Russell announced the evening program: Steve Barclay, MMR #463, Scratch building freight cars from styrene.

Steve opened with a video of his layout showing some of his scratch built cars in use and working semaphore signals.

Why scratch build? It's fun. It's cheap. You can make non-commercially available cars. You get achievement program points.. You can Show and tell.

Why Styrene? It's cheap. It's readily available. Easy to work with. Consistent quality. Not moisture effected. Easy to paint. Lots of shapes and siding types.

What to build? Where to find plans? Books, magazines, copy a kit or model, photos, car builder encyclopedias, Historical Societies. It is OK to simplify construction, especially on the underframe. You don't need every rivet/bolt.

Start with the underframe. Steve recommends Tenex solvent, single edge razor blades. Fit and finish counts-take care. Use fiber brush to smooth out glue marks.

Build the body nest. Build a box, adding angles in the corners for strength. You can microwave sheet styrene to "set" a curve form into it. Wash the model with soap and water before applying any paint. Use an airbrush to paint. Steve recommends: Floquil PolyScale, Scalecoat 2, and Model Flex. Thin paint per manufactures specs.

Decaling: Start with glossy paints, cut decals close to lettering, use lots of setting fluid. Realize it's OK to make mistakes, buy an extra decal set. For Dry Transfers, start with flat paint. Run a razor blade down each siding line, adding more decal set if needed. When decals are dry, wash car again. Apply overcoat of 50/50 flat finish and gloss coat and cut this 50/50 with Dio-sol.

Weight the car to NMRA standards before final assembly. Add roof walks at the end. Steve states roof walks should be stained, not painted. Steve likes to use real wood for this and attach with ACC glue. Use Bragdon weathering powders to stain the wood. Final car weathering can be done with weathering colors to lightly over spray areas. You can use the powders here too. Don't forget the wheels and couplers.

Steve wrapped up with photos of his layout and showed us the use of backdrops from the Backdrop warehouse which are produced from real photos.

Next months Program: Tom Marsh – old slides

Don Threlkeld showed some photos of his railroad and stated that he is moving and if you want to buy his railroad, you get the house with it.

Local Galveston paper article stated that the lift bridge replacement/ installation starts on the 8th and should be open for traffic by the 17th.

Jeff Mills announced, after 25 years, the owner of M&M Hobby Shop is retiring and is looking for a new owner to keep the shop open.

Steve Barclay announced the Galveston RR Museum will be having a Train

Show in October.

Website: Jim Lemmond

Keep checking for updates.

Derail: Bob Sabol

Keep the articles coming.

LSR:

Tracy Mitchell: Board meeting: next year convention in Dallas, May 31st weekend

Election Ballots in the Marker Lamp: 3 At large positions (2/4/6/8)

NMRA: no report

Division 8:

Jim Lemmond: April 21st Chili Cookoff at the Alvin Depot, starts about 10am.

Train Show Feb 18,2012:

Bob Barnett reported that we still need people to sign up for various positions.

David Currey announced the current clinic roster is detailed in the Febuary Derail. Robert Ashcraft reported we all tables sold and people on standby in case of last minute openings. Robert could use some set up help the mourning of the show and at the end since we only have one hour to pack out. The Katy/Fort Bend/Clearlake/Pearland Chronical sections should have some articles/PR on the Thursday before the show.

We will be passing out flyer's this weekend at the GRB Train Show, advertising our show.

Refreshments were thanks to Steve Sandifer and Virginia Freitag.

Rex Ritz volunteered to bring the snacks next month.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses:

\$204.60 – Train Show contest ribbons (10 year supply)

\$15.00 – bank fee (balance fell below \$5,000)

Income:

\$1020.00 – Train Show table sales

\$4336.45 Ending balance

Meeting adjourned at 8:45PM

-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

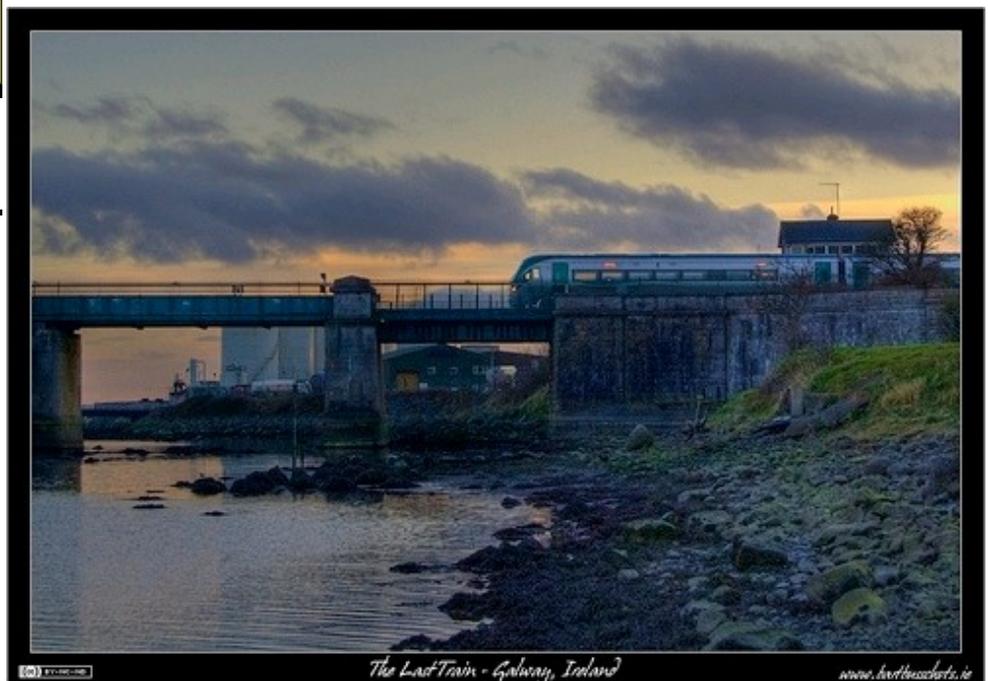
### March 6

## See You There!

The Hermann Park Railroad is 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](mailto:rmisrack@hermannpark.org) for more information and an application.

*Happy St. Patrick's Day  
from your Derail Staff!*



*The Last Train - Galway, Ireland*

[www.lasttrains.ie](http://www.lasttrains.ie)