



The DERAIL

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President's Message

Richard Louvet

As your new president, let me introduce myself to those who don't know me.

My wife Sandie and I have lived in Clear Lake since 1978 and are both retired. We have two children who also live and work in Houston.

My history with railroading is typical of most modelers. It started with the Lionel set under the Christmas tree and never stopped. There were several attempts at building a layout through the years, none of which matured.

About 10 years ago I came across a book "Railroading Along the Waterfront" and fell in love with rail/marine operations. At the time, my wife was making frequent business trips to New York and I started collecting prototype information the New York Central facilities at Weehawken. This grew into a model based on the NYC west shore (River Division).

To jump start the layout process, I hired Custom Model Railroads to build a layout. It fit a 6 by 22 foot layout room and featured a carfloat.

The last few years have been filled with expanding the layout into a spare bedroom while continuing to acquire prototype information on the River Division. I wrote a series of articles for the Derail about the modules used in the expansion.

I also enjoy operating at several area layouts.

While I consider myself a fairly typical model railroader, I do not consider the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club a fairly typical organization. It is a small group of modelers that has an outsized influence on the hobby in the Houston area with the layout tour and train show as examples. It has modelers with unique levels of expertise that are open and welcoming to those of us with lesser skills.

With San Jac the way it is, I see little for the president to do except (pardon the pun) keep it on the rails and stay out of the way of my fellow officers and event chairmen.

Thank you for letting me serve the hobby.



Lights along the boarding platform break the summer night as I ease my car into a space next to the depot. A handful of passengers can be seen waiting for tonight's arrival of "The Eagle". By summer of 1969 only four short years away "The Eagle" will make its last run and passengers will no longer board the trains at Longview. Mack and I lock the car and make our way across the passenger platforms and into the darkness of the rail yard. This Friday night our plan is to depart from Longview by train, but not in the comfort of a coach seat or sleeper. Tonight we are going to experience the life of a hobo by boarding a freight train heading north to St. Louis.

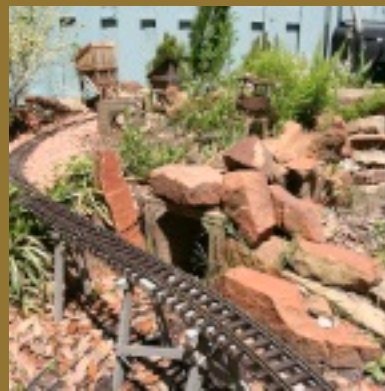
Many times I have watched the nightly arrival and departure of "The Eagle" and I have learned from these experiences that a north bound freight normally arrives ahead of "The Eagle" and is held by the dispatcher in the railroad yard until after "The Eagle" departs. If this is true tonight we will have the opportunity to execute our carefully crafted plan of locating an empty freight car in order to be on board when the train departs to follow "The Eagle" north. In the shadows of the rail yard we hear the sound of a locomotive horn announcing the arrival of a north bound freight. Our plan is falling into place as we survey the train cars rolling by until the ideal car for

our use is spotted. Squealing brakes bring the train to a stop and in the darkness of the yard we climb aboard our car. We are fortunate tonight as we select an empty baggage car that is no longer needed by the railroad and is in route to a scrap dealer. I tell Mack that this car will ride nicely and we have the benefit of two windowed doors on each side. As we make ourselves comfortable "The Eagle" arrives and the ritual of passengers boarding can be seen from our car door. Shortly "The Eagle" leaves and I tell Mack it will not be long before we are on our way.

The sudden rattling jolt takes us by surprise as the locomotives have taken up the slack and our car begins moving. The realization that we are now committed slows our conversation. My watch shows 9:45PM as the train leaves Longview yard behind and gains speed on the main line. East Texas dust and grit blow through the open doors of our car and the rumbling sounds of the train drown conversation. Soon the railroad parallels US highway 80 and we look out to see travelers in their automobiles making their way along side us. Riding up and down the East Texas hills we experience what railroaders call slack action. Couplers that hold rail cars together have some "give" in them and this causes slack action.

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Guess the Layout!



Answer to Octobers' Guess the Layout: All Points North Model Railroad Club

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Though the give in each coupler may be only a half inch, in a train of a hundred cars it adds up to several feet. So as the locomotives pull the train up the hill the slack is pulled out and as the train starts down the hill gravity pushes the rear cars toward the locomotives and the slack runs in. One can hear the thump, thump, thump, as slack affects each car. Quite quickly we learn to listen as the thumps get louder and to be holding on to something. Otherwise we find ourselves no longer standing, but on our backsides sliding along the floor of the car.

Passing through Marshall we see the car inspectors with their bright lights looking at each car to make sure there are no problems. Still standing at Jefferson we see one of the last Texas and Pacific Railway water tanks; a reminder of the steam locomotive era. Sometime after midnight the train slows and begins to make its way into the depths of the Texarkana rail yard. Coming to a stop the midnight darkness is broken only by tall pole lights in the distance. Through the dusty windows of our car doors all we can see is a field of dark freight cars. An eerie quietness sets in punctuated by the occasional distant clang of cars being coupled and the hiss of air in the train brake. Mack and I talk in whispers and wonder how long we will be here, how far we will travel, and can we get back home by Saturday night. Being home by Saturday night is important as our parents expect us to be in church on Sunday morning. Our preparations included stashing money in our shoes should we get desperate and need to purchase a passenger train ticket to get home. I tell Mack that the train crew changes in Texarkana as this is where we leave the Texas and Pacific Railway and enter the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

A sudden rattling sound of a door opening on the opposite side of the car gets our attention. In the dim light we see a figure entering our car. As the intruder climbs in he spots us and stops briefly. In a gruff

voice he states "you boys don't mind if I share your car?" As I recall neither of us said anything; perhaps we unconsciously nodded our acceptance. With a jolt the train begins moving. Hobo Sam settles down in one end of the car; Mack and I in the other end.

Throughout the night our train crawls across the hills of Arkansas. The best sleep comes when we pull into a siding and wait for another train to pass. Sleeping while moving is almost impossible as we wait for the thump, thump, thump of the slack action to reach our car and then with a loud thump we slide backward along the floor. This is followed by the slack running in and the resulting slide forward along the floor. Finally I give up trying to sleep and just sit looking out the door at the moonlit countryside.

At sunrise Mack and I are standing in the door watching as the outskirts of Little Rock, Arkansas slide by. Hobo Sam who has not spoken all night joins us at the door and asks, "You boys got any money for breakfast". I have always wondered if he was going to offer to buy us breakfast or if he was looking to us for a handout. Mack and I move to the other door as the train rattles across the Arkansas River bridge. In the distance the state capitol dome glows gold in early morning sun. I tell Mack it is time to part company with Sam. He agrees. Moving slowly now the train is entering the North Little Rock yard so we decide to jump from our car. I jump first and although our speed is less than 15 mph I forget to "hit the ground running". I go face down into the rock ballast of the roadbed. Fortunately my hands and arms break the fall so I only end up with scratched hands and forearms. Perhaps Mack saw my face down exit or perhaps he just knew better, but whatever the reason he manages to jump and remain upright. We never saw hobo Sam again.

My watch shows 6:00am as we walk away from the tracks and down one of Little Rock's city streets. Within a short distance we spot a small diner that is

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doing a brisk business this early Saturday morning. Deciding that a good breakfast is in order we make our way inside and take a table. Looking at the crowd confirms that this is a working man's eatery. Breakfast this morning is eggs, bacon, and toast, and it tastes really good after a long night of riding the rails. Realizing that traveling from Longview to Little Rock was an all-night task we decide that our ultimate goal of St. Louis is no longer an option. In fact we need to find a train going south and hope that by nightfall we arrive in Longview. Retracing our steps we head back to the tracks.

We are discussing how to locate a south bound train when we run into a figure sitting trackside in the shade of some bushes. From his place in the shade Kingpin motions us over and asks where we are going. Being young and tough Mack and I look at Kingpin who appears to us to be 70 years old and decide we can handle him. Explaining our need to go south Kingpin quickly tells us that there will soon be a south bound train headed our way and it will be moving slowly. We should be able to find and empty car and board easily. Our new hobo companion remarks that it is going to be a hot one today and asks if we have water for the trip. Shaking our heads no, Kingpin gets up and tells us to follow. A little further back in the bushes we find an area littered with trash and empty wine bottles. Selecting two bottles with screw caps Kingpin hands them to us and directs us over to a water hydrant. Here we wash out the bottles and fill them with water for our trip. It is fascinating what one can learn from older more experienced folks.

With our newly acquired canteens in hand we arrive trackside to see the headlight of a southbound train headed our way. After the locomotives pass the three of us move into position to board. Loaded cars keep rolling by and I am beginning to think we're not going to find an empty when Kingpin spots a

box car with its doors open. We all begin running beside the car. Kingpin is the first to climb in, Mack follows him, and I am last to climb in. For those of you who have never been up close to a railroad box car, the door opening is four feet above the ground. There are no steps or handles around to door opening. To this day I don't know how I was able to run alongside the moving car, grab the door frame, and haul myself up and into the car. I don't want to consider the result if any of us had slipped and fallen on the rails.

My joy of successfully climbing aboard quickly turns sour as I discover the car has recently carried a load of raw sugar. In this era railroads would staple heavy cardboard type paper half way up the door openings of box cars and then load loose bulk commodities such as grains, flour, and in our case raw sugar. I have never seen before or since so many black flies in one location. Our return trip is not starting out well. All three of us are standing in the door trying to breathe without sucking flies down our throats. Looking forward I notice the train making a sharp right turn and now heading northwest. In planning this trip one prudent thing I brought along with me is a small system map of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Very quickly I study the map and discover our train is no longer headed south but is on the northwest line to Ft. Smith and eventually Kansas City. Pointing to the map I tell Mack we are in trouble and must get off now. Kingpin hears our discussion, looks out the door, and with several expletives confirms the route.

The train is beginning to pick up speed so without further discussion I jump out of the car and make a stand up exit by hitting the ground running. I watch as Mack and Kingpin continue to stand in the door as the car disappears around the bend. Suddenly it hits me that I am now all alone and Mack and Kingpin are on their way to Kansas City. Running alongside the train around the curve I finally find Mack

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walking back toward me. “What took you so long to jump?” I ask and he replies that Kingpin said he was too old to jump and he was begging me to stay with him. Somewhat shaken by this unfortunate event we began walking back to the water hydrant to replace our canteens which were now on their way to Kansas City.

While filling our new canteens with water we encounter Night Traveler who like Kingpin tells us to expect a south bound train at any time. Night Traveler is headed north so very shortly he leaves Mack and me and heads toward the north end of the freight yards. We just get into a shady spot when the headlight of another south bound train approaches. As before we wait till the locomotives pass and then move into position to board. Coming toward us we see an open top car loaded with some earth moving equipment. Noting there is space among the equipment and convenient steps and ladders on the car end we decide to board this car. Once aboard we intently keep our eyes forward to insure this train is going south and does not become a repeat Kansas City experience. Luck is with us as we pass the junction to Ft. Smith and Kansas City, cross the Arkansas River, and head south out of Little Rock toward Longview.

Throughout the heat of this summer’s day we continue south through Malvern, Arkadelphia, Prescott, Hope, and into Texas at Texarkana. To avoid the sun’s heat we seek shade by sliding underneath the earth moving equipment and lying on the car floor. Somewhere south of Texarkana we stop on a side track to let other trains pass. An ice bunker refrigerator car is just ahead of us and I can see water from the melting ice dripping from the car. With my empty canteen in hand I climb down and walk to the refrigerator car. Holding my wine bottle under the drip spout the melting ice slowly begins to fill the bottle. Two short blasts of the locomotive horn interrupt the process so I rush back to our car and get aboard just as the train begins moving. Sampling my new water

supply I am surprised at its salty taste; it is not useable. After this trip I learn that salt is normally added to ice bunker refrigerator cars to improve ice melt and cooling.

Between Texarkana and Marshall there are stretches where US highway 59 parallels the railroad. We take this opportunity to wave at the motorists traveling beside our train. More than once we see parents pointing us out to their children. No doubt these kids are being told all sorts of stories about the sad lives of hobos. I’m sure they don’t realize we are simply college students enjoying a hobo experience. As we approach Marshall I tell Mack that if the train stops for a crew change we need to get off because it most likely will not stop again in Longview. The good news is that we are going to be in Marshall before passenger train 27 arrives. So, if we have to get off in Marshall then we can buy a ticket and ride the last 20 miles to Longview in air conditioned comfort. If there is no stop in Marshall then hopefully the train will stop in Longview or at least slow enough for us to get off. Marshall comes and goes with no stops.

Seven miles from Longview we pass through Hallsville and are now paralleling US highway 80. At this point we are becoming very concerned about what might happen at Longview. I speculate that since there was no crew change stop in Marshall one of two things will happen. Either the train will continue west past Longview to the next crew change point of Mineola or the train will take the junction south to go to Houston. The first option will not allow us to get off as the train will remain at speed. The second option to Houston will allow us to get off because the train must proceed slowly through the junction. We hope for the latter.

Entering the outskirts of Longview our eyes are focused on the front of the train to see which route is to be taken. As we crest the hill and head toward the Longview yard the train begins slowing and soon we spot the locomotives entering the junction. When our car reaches the end of the passenger platforms I tell Mack it is time to get off as the speed will not get

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much slower. We both make a graceful exit onto the east end of the passenger platform and begin the walk to the station and my car. Our hobo experience has ended and now it is time to head home, get something to eat, and clean up. As we arrive at my house my Mom's face which looked very worried Friday when told her of our plan now shines brightly. I tell her it was a great trip but not one I will soon if ever repeat. After dinner we sleep for twelve hours.

Though the hobos were real the names Sam, Kingpin, and Night Traveler are fictitious. As I recall Mack and I never learned their real names nor gave them ours. I have often thought that if I ever was back in Little Rock could I find that diner where we had breakfast. Most likely not, 46 years is a long time and many changes have taken place.



President Bob Werre called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and welcomed all.

Old Business: none

New Business:

Vice President Kelly Russell introduced this month's program: The Comanche & Indian Gap Railroad, by Peter Bryan also titled "Where the heck is Tlaquepaque".

This is one of about 6 – 1-1/2" live steam railroads in Texas, including the one at Zube Park in Hockley. The C&IG has a branch line, the Houston East & West Texas R.R., aka "the rabbit". The C&IG was started in 1972 by Roy and Marilyn Pickard. This is the first point-to-point live steam railroad in the world. The first guests came to the R.R. in 1986. The first Spring Fling Meet was in 1996 which allowed the "HO" guys to run on the railroad. Roy passed away 2 years ago, but the R.R. still operates thanks to the maintenance of the guests. It is on 35 acres, has #16 turnouts for the most part, 15 towns, about 70 industry set out spots, 7800 feet of mainline one way. It is about 3 real miles round trip. The branchline is about another 2500 feet of track with 8 towns and another 30+ industry spots. There are 3 complete yards with full facilities. Car cards are used for switching during the operating sessions, which are run on a timetable using real time. It requires 50-60 people to operate fully. Peter showed lots of photos of the R.R. and operations on it. Peter concluded with a video taken at the R.R., lots of familiar faces were seen in the photos/video as well as people from all over the country.

Kelly announced we still need a November presentation. We will have an operations round table as a program in the spring.

Election of officers:

Bob Werre thanked Bob Ellis for his role as nominating chairman. The nominations were: Dick Louvet- President, Kelly Russell – Vice President, Gilbert Freitag – Sec/Treas, Mike Bodak – Board Member. The slate was closed for nominations and passed by voice vote. Thanks to Bob Werre for his term as president.

Website: Jim Lemmond

Check website for updates and fall layout tour info.

Deraill: Bob Sabol, No Report

LSR: No Report

NMRA:

Don Formanek reported on the National Gauge Convention in Washington. There were about 35 layouts on tour. It was brought up that all layout owners on tour at the Narrow Gauge Convention must be NMRA members. About 1550 in attendance (more than even at the NMRA convention), over 105 clinic time slots, 7 going at a time. 108 vendors, great contest. Clinics ran 8-noon, layout tours noon-6, then more clinics 6-10.

Division 8:

Jim Lemmond announced the Division 8 picnic at Zube Park on Octo-

ber 13th from 10AM on. The Division will provide bread, meat, and drinks, members please bring a desert. Election of officers will take place at the picnic.

It was brought up that the roles of club foremen are not active at this time. A call for a vote to contribute \$500 towards HAL's bridge fund was brought up.

Fall Layout Tours:

Jim Lemmond brought a few hard copies of the current lineup, unfortunately, Jim Long was not present to get one. Thanks to Craig Brantley for all his great work organizing this year's tour. Goggle Maps will be up the week before each weekend tour then taken back down. Barry Bogs had the crossbucks available for pickup for those who signed up for them.

2013 Train Show:

80 of the 120 sale tables have already been sold.

There will be a train show this weekend at the Galveston Train Museum with a contest room for model judging for merit points.

Refreshments were thanks to Ed Dibble, Kelly Russell, and Virginia Freitag.

Chris and Dianne Tolley volunteered to bring the snacks next month.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses:

\$24.55 2013 Train Show mailing supplies

\$100 Bayland Center deposit for meeting space

\$15.00 bank fee (balance fell below \$7,500)

Income:

\$1605.00 2013 Train Show table sales

\$5737.14 Ending balance

NOTE: Anyone needing a name tag, email Gilbert @ gilbert-freitag@att.net. He will try to run another batch soon. Have Bob Werre & Eddie Moore so far.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 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!



Officers

President: Richard Louvet

Bob@BobWphoto.com

Vice-President: Kelly Russell

krussl@yahoo.com

Secretary/Treasurer: Gilbert Freitag

gilbertfreitag@att.net

Director: Tom Cobb

Division 8 Rep: Tracy Mitchell, MMR

traymit@comcast.net

Derail Staff

Editor: Bob Sabol

bsabol@stillmeadow.com

Production: Kathryn Monds

kmonds@stillmeadow.com

Regular Contributors:

Henri Morris

morris-hou@att.net

Peter Bryan

peterb@pdq.net

David Currey

texasandlouisiana@msn.com

sanjac.leoslair.com

Do Not Use www.

Webmaster: Jim Lemmond

Next Meeting

TUESDAY

NOV 6

See You There!

With donations from Galveston native George Mitchell, two Santa Fe F units have been restored and will pull a special train to Galveston for the grand reopening of the Galveston Railroad Museum. The train will travel from New Orleans to Houston on Nov 9, overnight at the Amtrak station and depart for a round-trip journey to Galveston on Nov 10. Check out the links below to the museums website for a short video of the unveiling of the F7s. They look GREAT!

<http://www.galvestonrrmuseum.com/>

http://www.galvestonrrmuseum.com/grrm_docs/great_grand_reopening.pdf

San Jac Fall Layout Tour 2012 Dates

October 20-21

East (Kingwood, Crosby)

October 27-28

South (Friendswood, Dickenson, Galveston, Pearland)

November 2-3

HOOTERS Operating Weekend

No Layouts Open

November 10-11

North (Spring, Conroe, Tomball, Bryan/Coll. Station)

November 17-18

West (Katy, Richmond)

November 24-25

Layouts traditionally open on Thanksgiving weekend, Baytown

December 1-2

No Layouts Open

Thank you for participating in the World's BEST Hobby!