



# The DERAIL

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

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Volume 44, Issue 11

## President's Message

Richard Louvet

### A San Jac Thanksgiving

As a kid, I always enjoyed our Thanksgiving dinners. It wasn't until later I appreciated the work that went into preparing the food I loved.

The San Jac Club is a lot like that as well. It was not until I became an officer that I realized the work that goes on behind the scenes.

My Thanksgiving message is a sincere "Thank You" to all the members who freely give their time and talent to keep the club activities humming. I won't try to list any names because I'm sure I would

miss many of you.

I never cease to appreciate not only the volunteers but the level of professionalism that keeps the San Jac Model Railroad Club operating as a truly first class organization.

I couldn't let this thank you go by without a request to the membership to consider volunteering for one of the club offices. It's a satisfying job and you are surrounded by really good people to help.

Happy Thanksgiving!



## Safety First

David N. Currey

This article is about railroad safety, and is mostly in the form of a list of many of the safety related things we did on the railroad just about every day. Safety was emphasized from Day One, beginning in Brakeman School. I've forgotten what the employment examination before being hired was like, but I would imagine that some of the questions were designed to weed out people who were careless or didn't put too much importance on following rules. I've probably overlooked a few, but this is a fairly comprehensive list.

Walking around:

Walk—*never* run.

Don't step *on* the rail—step *over* the rail.

Always look both ways before crossing a track or road and be aware of everything going on around you.

Always be on the lookout for moving equipment.

If crossing a track near a rail car, do so at least 10 or more feet away from the car in case a cushion underframe suddenly expands and causes the car to move by itself.

Be wary of power switches, and especially don't step between the points—the points could move at any time.

When walking around, particularly on ballast or over track, be sure to lift your toes higher than you normally would. (This was not a rule, but I observed most trainmen walked this way from experience.)

Don't walk between cars whose knuckles are close together.

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Climbing up on and getting off of moving equipment:

Before stepping up on a moving piece of equipment, have a good grip with *both* hands on the grabiron or handrail.

Step up on the moving equipment with your *leading* foot (foot *closest* to the oncoming equipment) first.

If your foot misses the stirrup or step, don't let go of the handrail. That's why you have a good grip.

If given the option, step up on the rear stirrup of the *last* car in a moving cut of cars, otherwise, step up on the leading stirrup of a moving car. The reason you don't step up on the rear of a car in a cut with a following car, is if you miss the stirrup you can fall between the cars. If getting on the front of the car, you would fall into the side of the car. And of course, on the rear of the last car, you would simply fall on the track behind the car.

Do not ride on the front end of a freight car, ride on the front side of the car or on the rear of the car if last in the cut (which is possible on tank cars).

When alighting from a moving car, have your body's momentum moving *away* from the car—not parallel with the car, so you can't trip or slide on ballast and fall under the car.

Operating or using various equipment:

When opening a knuckle on a car, do not place your foot underneath the knuckle—stand off to the side in case it falls out due to a missing pin.

When coupling up airhoses between cars, keep one foot back outside the rail. That way, if the car suddenly moves, you will have the rail to pull on with your foot to help you get the heck out of there.

After lining a switch, visually check to make sure the point is firmly up against the stock rail.

When picking up orders on the fly, maintain a firm grip on the caboose handrail in case the clerk strung the string incorrectly, so you won't be jerked off the steps.

Don't wear large rings on your fingers—you may favor that finger and sprain another one lining a switch or grabbing hold of a grabiron.

Before dropping a car over a switch, test the switch to make sure it works properly and the points will move on the first throw.

Don't drop cars over power switches if they're to be lined during the drop.

During a drop, send the locomotive down straight unobstructed track if possible. That way, if the switch did not line properly and has to be restored, the locomotive will have room to get out of the way.

Miscellaneous:

Repeat instructions back to the person who gave them to you, worded differently if possible, so both you and the person instructing you will know you understood the instructions.

Stay alert.

When acquiring train orders, check to make sure they are the right date, and all orders listed on the first sheet are actually attached, and then *read* them.

When on a caboose in particular, be ready for slack action at all times.

When doing a roll-by inspection, and especially when looking over a train going by at track speed, stand well back from the track so you are not hit by any ballast thrown up or strapping material that might be dragging along the side of the train.

First, I would like to thank Ed Rains, Gilbert Freitag, Mark Couvillion and Marty Naul for their participation and expertise as panel members. I thought would share several things I learned and a couple other notes I made as the session went on:

- When the layout is located in a non-air conditioned area, instead of soldering the rail joints, leave a small gap between the ends of the rails to allow for thermal expansion in the warm months. One must make sure to add a feeder wire from the block bus wiring to each section of track to insure power to the trains.
- Spray the underside of the railroad flat white it makes it easier to see the wiring and gives one a good easy-to-read place to make notes next to the wires.
- One of our panel members suggested that you

place a piece of Plexiglas or Masonite under each turnout pre-drilled with holes for mounting tor-toise switch machines, if you even consider wanting to add them in the future.

- DC layout power supply only puts out 2 amps of power, while a DCC command station will send 5 or more amps of power to the track, therefore a DCC layout requires a larger gauge wire to insure proper current distribution.
- Ed Rains mentioned a group website where one could read more about electronic controls and the availability of electronic kits: [www.merg.org.uk](http://www.merg.org.uk)
- Gilbert Freitag mentioned a website primarily related to robotics, but they have reasonably priced electronic parts (push buttons, switches, connectors, servo motors, and tools): <http://www.pololu.com/>



**Be aware of your surroundings. Be careful where you park.**

It's been mentioned at recent meetings and here in the Derail that we have a new e-mail list available for the use of members. This new list operates through the Yahoo Groups web site. Unlike the announcement list used for distribution of the Derail and certain special announcements, which operates as a one-way list, the new Yahoo based list allows any member of the list to send a message which will be redistributed to all of the members of the list.

Joining the SJMRRC e-mail list is easy. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/SJMRRC/info> to find our main group page. Click the Join Group button and you will be guided through the sign up procedure. Select how you wish to read the messages posted to the list – by logging into the Yahoo Groups web site, by individual e-mails, or by a single digest e-mail of all messages posted during a 24 hour period.

Our e-mail list is a private list, meaning only SJMRRC members, families and certain other persons which have been vouched for by the members may join. After you are approved you will begin to receive messages posted to the list and may post your own. When you sign up please include your name and not just an e-mail address so that you may be found in our members directory. We keep the list private by verifying who may join to avoid harvesting of names and e-mail addresses by unscrupulous spammers.

You may wonder what the purpose of this list is. It allows us to communicate more directly with other members and on a variety of other subjects than would be possible with the announcement list. You won't have to wait possibly weeks until the next meeting to do so. Here you may ask modeling questions of other members if you're stuck on something. Or you might wish to share information on something that you have accomplished. If you're a layout owner with openings for operators at a session you're hosting you may post that information to the list. If you'd like to form a carpool to the meeting or for the upcoming Fall layout tours you can post about that. Questions and discussions about recent clinics may continue beyond what the time allowed at the meeting.

There are a few other features that are available with membership on this list. One is that you may attach photos to e-mails that you send to the list. The photos are not actually sent out attached to all of the e-mails distributed to the list. Yahoo strips them from the original message, stores them on their servers, and includes a link to those photos in the e-mails that it sends out. People reading the e-mail may click on that link to see your photos if they so choose.

Another way to make photos available is to store them yourself on our Yahoo Groups web page. If you log in there with the user name and password you used to join the list you'll see links along the left side. One is a Photos section. We have 100 Gb available to us for the storage of photos there. A couple of photo albums have already been created by members but there's still an enormous amount of free space left.

You'll also notice that the group page has a link for Files. This is for types of files other than images. PDF files, text files, spreadsheets, Word files and other sorts of data files may be placed in this directory. We are more limited in space here, only 100 Mb, so we have to be watchful of the size of files we place here. All of our back issues of the Derail would fill it up and more, so they can't be placed here, unfortunately.

There's another section here on our web page for Links. This could be very useful if you have a web site for your layout or your blog or some other web presence that ties in with our interests. Links to local model railroad retailers would be useful to help new people in the hobby locate where they can buy supplies. A link to the NMRA has been added here.

Lists such as this only provide a useful function when the members participate. It is only as good as we make it. If you haven't joined yet take a few minutes to create your account. At the time of this writing only 27 SJMRRC members have made the plunge. We hope that more of you will sign up and make a contribution, get a discussion going, or answer a question.

October 1, 2013

President Dick Louvet called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and welcomed all current members and guests. We had three visitors.

This month's program was introduced:

Round table discussion on layout control and wiring.

Panel members: Mark Couvillion, Gilbert Freitag, Marty Naul, Ed Rains

The moderator asked the panel members to comment on several topics and well as some questions from the floor. Topics discussed included: electrical documentation, turnout electro-mechanical powering and frog/point powering, making wire-wire and rail to wire connections, control panel usage/location/construction/labeling, DCC systems overview, DCC zoning, throttle type pros and cons, among others. The time slot ran out by fast and not all of the planned topics were addressed. It was suggested that a follow-up discussion on the computer's role in electronics such as JMRI and CMRI be a future meeting program.

Next month will be program will be by Phil Stewart on LA sugar cane railroads.

December: Christmas Party

The minutes from last month were approved as published in the Derail.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses:

\$5.00 state Non-profit status filing fee

\$100.00 Bayland Center Deposit

\$328.80 Club brochures and stands

Income:

\$100.00 last year's Bayland Deposit refund

\$1675 Train show table sales

\$8,610.63 Ending balance

Club Brochures: Bob Werre announced the clubs brochures are ready for distribution to area hobby shops. They will also be available for upcoming train shows.

Website: The website is up and running again with our new webmaster Brian Jansky.

LSR:

no report

Division 8:

Picnic at HALS on October 12th about 11AM. Trains will be running for rides.

Derail: Bob Sabol

Bob asked to keep the articles coming.

Yahoo Group:

Dick Louvet is working on getting this setup.

NMRA:

no report

New Business:

Fall layout Tours: Craig Brantley

Craig had the printed versions ready and asked for volunteers to take them to area hobby shops. There are 53 home layouts and 14 clubs layouts on this year's tour. There as 2 or 3 first timers and 2 or 3 that have not been open for a while. Photos of your layout are still welcomed to be placed on the web version. Contact Craig or Jim Lemmond to get your photos on-line.

Greater Houston Train Show, Feb 15th, 2015

Bob Barnett reported 86 sales tables sold as of today. Layouts are getting booked, Advertisement information is being sent out to long lead time publications.

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World's Greatest Hobby Show, GRB, Houston, Jan. 11 and 12, 2014.

We will need volunteers to man the San Jac club table at this event.

See [wghshow.com](http://wghshow.com) for details.

Refreshments were thanks to Tom Bailey, Emmy Freitag, and Virginia Freitag.

Next month will be by Richard Bartlett.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

General comments:

-Respectfully submitted,  
Gilbert Freitag,  
Secretary / Treasurer

## Announcements

### Derail Archives Added to the San Jac Website

Past issues of The Derail are being added to the San Jac website in the form of an archive. They can be found by going to <http://sanjac.leoslair.com> clicking on the 'Derail' link found in the text on the home screen or in the menu to the left, then following a link on that page to the archive page.

Scrolling down, you will find the past issues of the Derail in chronological order. I have also added the titles and the authors of the articles found in each Derail to the page. Please use your web browser's search feature to search for your favorite subject or author. To do this, use hold down the Control button and press F on a Windows computer (Command and F on Mac systems). At the time of this writing, only 2013 has been done but the archive will go back to 2002 once time allows.

If you have any ideas on ways to improve the website, (or see typos!), please feel free to contact me at [BrianJ844@gmail.com](mailto:BrianJ844@gmail.com)

Thanks,  
Brian Jansky San Jacinto MRRC Webmaster

### Click to see the 2013 Holiday Express Schedule

<http://www.kcsouthern.com/en-us/AboutKCS/Pages/2013HolidayExpressSchedule.aspx>

### 2013 Fall Layout Tour

Open all weekends in November.

Tour list available at San Jac website or your local train shop.

Visit the San Jac website for updates, photos and Google maps.

A new email chat list has been created on Yahoo Groups for members of SJMRRC. This will be for discussions, announcements, requests for help, and other information regarding SJMRRC, model trains, or prototype trains in general.

Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SJMRRC> to request to be added to the list.



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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Do Not Use www.

**Webmaster: Brian Jansky**

## Next Meeting

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Our November clinic will be “Louisiana Sugar Cane Railroads” presented by Phil Stewart

Refreshments to be provided by Richard Bartlett and Virginia Freitag

## Video Corner

### Train vs. Tornado

<http://youtu.be/LYubpuIe3cw>

## Guess the Layout!



Answer to September's Guess the Layout: Charlie Caggiano