



The DERAIL

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

April 2015

Volume 46, Issue 4

Notes From Rex

By Rex Ritz

Hearty congratulations for this year's annual Greater Houston Train Show. According to our treasurer Gilbert Freitag, we were able to cover our expenses and provide some resources to help promote the hobby to the general public and continue activities in the San Jacinto club. As always this event is the highlight of the year and requires the dedicated commitment of services of almost every member. Nevertheless accolades must go out to our Chairman Bob Barnett. There are too many names to call out besides Bob so I will stop here. He has now provided a decade of service as Chairman and it is time for a new leader to come forward. In the near future we will be asking for your help in staffing the show team for 2016. Thanks to all for another successful

train show this year.

Magnolia, Texas is holding its annual Magnolia Historical Society Depot Days on April 18th from 11-5, according to the chair person Melissa Sunseri. She reports that "Magnolia Texas is one of the oldest train towns and Depot days is the annual fundraiser. In years past model trains clubs have come out and displayed their trains for the event". They are in search of a club that might be interested in doing so this year.

Melissa may be contacted at Enchanted Florist, email:enchantedfloristx@hotmail.com or by cell phone at 713-806-4401.

Midnight Rider Film Crew Train Accident Update 3

By David N. Currey

This article (third in the series) concerns a rail tragedy that happened on the set of the movie Midnight Rider, which was being filmed at an industrial site known as Doctortown near Jesup, Georgia. The film crew set up on a live CSX railroad bridge over the Altamaha River without permission from CSX to be on the bridge. CSX had informed them twice (in response to inquiries from the film company) that they did not have permission to film on the bridge, and that CSX does not allow such filming on its property. The ensuing tragedy resulted when a train traveling 57 mph showed up unexpectedly. Sarah Jones was killed and others injured, including Joyce Gilliard, who had multiple fractures to an arm.

ABC's 20/20 television show on Friday, March 20, 2015 reports on the start of the criminal trial of the film's director and producers, and also covered the tragedy itself. Included were interviews with victims and other individuals involved in the investiga-

tion, prosecution, and defense of the case. The show was done pretty well, and was informative, but in the fashion of such shows, they stretched out about ten minutes worth of news to fill 45 minutes of the show by repeating statements of people and re-showing the same film footage multiple times.

Of particular interest was new previously unreleased film footage that was taken from the railroad bridge by a member of the film crew as the tragedy was unfolding. In the new footage, a number of crew members between the cameraman and the end of the bridge are seen hurrying to get the bed and themselves off the bridge. Sarah was evidently behind the cameraman. They are making excruciatingly slow progress. Only about three glimpses of the oncoming train are seen in the film footage, which is gyrating wildly about as the cameraman makes his way towards the end of the bridge, which is also the

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Midnight Rider Film Crew Train Accident Update 3 (cont.) By David N. Currey

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direction the train is coming from. The clip has sound, and the train can be heard constantly sounding its horn as it approaches the bridge. Though the segment is only 17 seconds long, as I recall, 20/20 did not show this clip in its entirety start-to-finish, and it does lose some of its impact by being broken up into short segments that are replayed over and over. On the clip's last glimpse of the train, it is very close. The bed comes apart, making it more difficult to be removed. Finally, everybody forgets about the bed, and there is yelling. At this point, the video jerks around so wildly that not much sense can be made of it. In the last several seconds, the train sound suddenly increases in volume exponentially, and then loud crashes are heard, exceeding the volume level that the recording equipment can handle. In a short following segment shown on 20/20 (but not in the video link below), a part of the bed can be seen falling into the river. The film clip, though terrifying, is not that uncomfortably graphic in terms of what is seen in it, but much more graphic from the standpoint of the sounds it contains. If you are squeamish about such things, I would recommend not viewing this latest video clip. I forced myself to watch it, as I have been intensely fixated on this tragedy and its criminal case, even though the video was difficult to watch.

During questioning in court shown by 20/20, director Randall Miller is asked a number of questions. He is shown answering one particular series of questions concerning permission from CSX by using the same answer or slight variant: "That was not my job." Another person testified that Miller knew he did not have permission from CSX to be on the bridge, but he was going to film on the bridge anyway.

As I pointed out in a previous article, Miller is a self-described and admitted guerrilla filmmaker. Filmmakers of this sort take pride in taking short cuts and do not always get permission to shoot film when they should. As proof of this, 20/20 showed segments from a previous Miller movie shot in 2013 where movie footage was filmed on New York subways, which according to New York City officials, is not permitted. There is also footage on the internet where he admits as much before college film students. He justifies the skirting of rules and regula-

tions by stating something along the lines of, "We're making a movie here," as if that alone is enough justification. Other internet footage shows him allowing a little girl to walk unescorted through a field of cows, and shows alleged damage to property done by his film crews such as spraying paint on stop signs, and roughly hauling a piano down the front steps of somebody's house (with probable damage to the steps) without getting their permission.

The defendants plea-bargained. Randall Miller pleaded guilty and was sentenced to two years in custody followed by eight years of probation. One of the terms of his probation is that he cannot serve in any kind of directing capacity or supervisor of safety on any movies for those eight years. This effectively shuts him up as a filmmaker for the next ten years, but it will be interesting to see what he does when he gets out of prison. He's known for taking chances and not getting permission, seemingly thinking he is above rules, laws, and common sense. It would be within character for him to work on a movie and to offer "advice" to the person who is officially the director. I'm not sure if this would be a violation of the terms of his probation or not, but at least he will not be responsible for safety. He will, though, be under a microscope when he leaves prison. If he is smart, and hasn't reacquired the feeling of invincibility and being above the law that he had during his previous films, or is a changed man, he may do okay. The other two people charged in the case, producers Jay Sedrish and Jody Savin, both received probation. It was not stated what the terms of their probation are.

20/20 did not correct some inaccuracies that have been allowed to remain attached to this whole affair. Perhaps they are correct in doing so, since they mainly report the news. I, on the other hand, am not limited to the misconceptions and inaccuracies promulgated by others. Miller had repeatedly said that he thought the crew would have 60 seconds to get out of the way of a train. That is a curious statement. There is a curve in the track two-thirds of a mile to the south. . With a speed limit of 70 mph, that leaves about 35 seconds, not 60 seconds. Do the math. Lives are at stake. So where did he come up with 60

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Midnight Rider Film Crew Train Accident Update 3 (cont.) By David N. Currey

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seconds? Obviously not from a CSX railroad man familiar with that part of the line. Miller did not time trains that went by. He evidently did not find out what the speed limit was on the line so he could calculate the safety factor. It was probably something he made up on the spot when faced with a question from somebody on the crew.

Miller stated that he was told only two more trains would go by that day. By whom? Six Amtrak trains (including the two Auto Trains) use the line every day, and I guarantee you many more freight trains use the line than passenger trains. I have not been able to find out the number, but because it is a major route between New England and Florida, I would expect at least twenty, and since double track starts just south of the bridge, it is probably more than that. Readers should Google-map the facility at Doctortown. It is conjecture on my part, but it is conceivable that somebody at Rayonier (probably unofficially) told Miller that two trains were going *into* the facility that day, but why Miller would think that applied to the CSX railroad is beyond me. Also, Miller specifically used the word “by” and not “into”. (Rayonier states they gave no information about train frequencies, which is reasonable as they would have absolutely no way of knowing.) One thing I especially liked, that 20/20 brought out in the interviews, was that there is no such thing as a schedule for freight trains, so how could anybody other than possibly the dispatcher himself give out such information about “two trains going by”.

And of course, as I stated in the previous articles, if Miller really had permission from CSX, railroad people would have been everywhere. The railroad would have been locked down and nothing would have moved on the track. There would have been a railroad person glued to Miller's elbow the entire time. But as I also stated, this permission could have never been given, because a railroad bridge is an inherently unsafe place for non-railroad people to be. One misstep or trip over a rail, and it's a 40 foot drop down to water or rocks or a floating tree trunk, regardless of the railroad official glued to Miller's elbow. Of grave importance, only one side of the bridge had a hand-rail.

Randall Miller is the first producer/director in movie history to be found responsible for deaths occurring on his set. This has really turned Hollywood on its ear. From now on, “We're making a movie here” will no longer be a reason to take safety shortcuts. Scumbag directors will now know that probably everybody on his set has the recently created iPhone app whereby they can within seconds anonymously report safety violations that occur. Even good directors will probably take more precautions.

As 20/20 showed, Sarah Jones' parents hired a boat to take them under the CSX bridge. While about 50 feet from under the bridge, a freight train went by. It was of course emotional for them. They wanted to get a sense of what Sarah experienced that day. They seemed awed by the train, but it was only going about 35 mph. If it had been going 57, I think they would have been horrified.

The film crew of the television show *Vampire Diaries* was especially hard hit by the death of Sarah Jones, as Sarah had once been a member of their crew and developed many friendships there. In memory of Sarah Jones, the first film shot of each day on the set of *Vampire Diaries* is now referred to as “the Jonesy”, and that term is now used across the country for first shots of the day. For the past year across the country, most (maybe all) slates—the clapperboards used in television and movies to aid in synchronizing picture and sound—have had the words “Sarah” or “Sarah Jones” taped to them, or even had a photo of her attached. More recently, as part of a memorial campaign started on the anniversary of Sarah's death, these slates have also or instead had the letters “SOS” put on them, which stands for both “Safety On Set” and “Spirit of Sarah”.

The following link is to the latest released footage of the *Midnight Rider* film crew train accident, filmed from a film crew member on the bridge. Discretion is advised:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yt5fAkSf8AQ>

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Midnight Rider Film Crew Train Accident Update 3 (cont.) By David N. Currey

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The following link is to previously released footage, taken from the train's onboard video camera:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2816922/If-train-comes-60-seconds-track-Shocking-final-moments-camera-assistant-Greg-Allman-film-killed-train-bosses-filmed-scene-without-permission-narrow-bridgee.html>

The following link is to the Google Map location of the CSX railroad bridge:

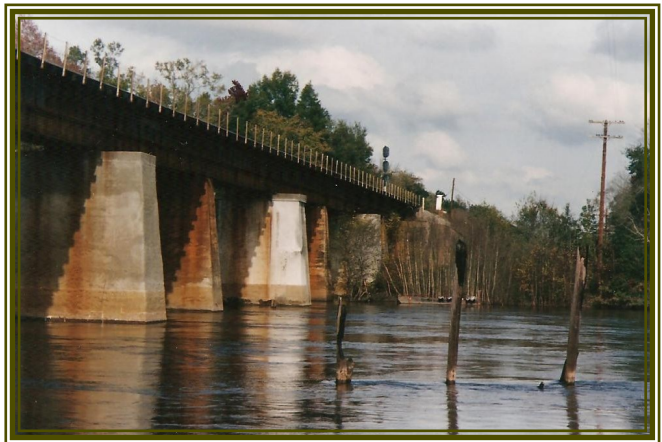
<https://www.google.com/maps/@31.654302,-81.8279438,82m/data=!3m1!1e3>

The following link is to the Slates for Sarah Facebook page where you can see hundreds of slates and other memorial photos for Sarah Jones:

<https://www.facebook.com/slatesforsarah>

This article is tied up in memory of Sarah Jones.

I would like to thank Craig Swain for the use of his Altamaha bridge photos.



The 2015 Greater Houston Train Show by Bob Barnett

Well the **2015 Greater Houston Train Show** is now history and it must have been a good one. We handed out 1375 numbered badges and approximately 180 special badges to vendors, display layout operators, clinicians, contest judges and show staff. Several vendors contacted Robert Ashcraft and I have heard from some directly. They were pleased with the turn out and results of the day. Although our gate numbers are modest compared to some of the other area shows, we must pack in modelers with money to spend on the hobby. . It has probably been over ten years since we have not sold out of tables and each year the stand-by list gets longer.

I spent much of the day in the clinic rooms and they were very well attended. Chuck Lind says the contest entries were light so, next year we need to talk up the contest and encourage club members and members from the other area clubs to dig out those models and

bring them.

The GHTS takes the concerted effort of a lot of club members. The Chairmen for the various tasks include:

Steve Sandifer sends out advance notices to the various publications months in advance.

Ed Dibble has faithfully edited the attendee sign-up list and sent out the reminder cards each year for many years. This is our most effective advertising as these folks have proven they are willing to attend.

Gilbert Freitag has procured the cash and change needed to open the show and keep it going all day. He also monitors the cash flow and accounts for the income at the end of the day.

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The 2015 Greater Houston Train Show by Bob Barnett

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Robert Ashcraft once again handled the Vendor Table Sales and has done an excellent job on this since Don Bozeman retired as the Vendor Chair.

Don Bozeman once again prepared the floor plan for the large hall and the smaller clinic/contest/display rooms.

Tom Bailey handled the San Jacinto Club Sales Table as he has for several years. This is a very important task as it allows several of our members to sell some surplus equipment while they are working other parts of the show.

Steve Sandifer and Dave Currey worked the clinic rooms all day and Steve provided the screens and back up AV equipment.

Chuck Lind headed up the contest and assembled a team of judges to provide an NMRA style contest.

Dave Shafer brought the San Jacinto Club Switching Layout to the show and supervised the staffing of the layout for the entire day.

And we had very widespread club participation. Members who signed up for shifts at the club sponsored tables include:

Our 6:00 AM Set Up Crew: Steve Sandifer, Don Formanek, Robert Ashcraft, David Gilchrist and Chuck Clark.

The Late Shift Tear Down Crew: Steve Sandifer, Ed Dibble, and David Currey.

Registration Table: Treasurer Gilbert Freitag, Walter Pasciak, Chris Tolley, Denny McGonigle, Killeen Ryan, Tim Beauregard, Cliff Cheeseman, Rex Ritz, Jeff Mills, Laurie Lind, Peter Howell, Chuck Clark, and Ed Dibble. Gilbert, Ed Dibble and Rex Ritz monitor the registration tables all day and make sure it runs smoothly and it is staffed for all shifts.

San Jac Sales Table: Tom Bailey who puts in the whole day at this and has for several years, Dick Louvet, Brian Jansky, Bill Wright, Chris Tolley, Ed Dibble, Bob Were, and Kelly Russell.

The Contest Room: Chairman Chuck Lind, Loren Neufeld, Don Formanek, Ray Byer and Blake Boggs served as the judges. Thanks to each of these guys as judging takes a big slice of your time during the train show.

Switching Layout Crew: Dave Shafer, Jeff Mills, and Denny McGonigle. *It is highly likely that Dave got some additional volunteers after the sign up sheet was completed and I have missed their names here!*

And the Clinicians: Tom Palmer, Steve Sandifer, Paul Bender, and Steve Nelson. Tom and Steve are well-known prototype modelers from the Houston area, (actually Stafford, Texas and Meadows Place, Texas). Paul Bender traveled from Lake Charles, Louisiana to present two clinics on JMRI. Steve Nelson of Cedar Creek, Texas is becoming the regional arborist as he has presented tree clinics at the 2014 LSR Convention, Austin train shows, the GHTS, and I understand the Narrow Gauge Committee is after him. **Thanks to each of these experts for sharing their knowledge with fellow modelers.**

A couple of things we need to work on:

Do we want to drop the layout tours altogether from the GHTS or can we revive the attendance somehow?

How can we increase participation in the Model Contest? If we are going to use the room and tie up several people for the day we need to get more widespread participation in the Contest.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO WORKED ON THE GHTS!!!

Well that's a wrap for another year. We hope you enjoyed the show and the club can look forward to many more successful years of the GHTS.

Thank You!

A New Approach to Railroading

By Dick Louvet

The April clinic will introduce the club to virtual railroading. New technologies in hardware and software have revolutionized the hobby. High fidelity simulations promise to continue this revolution.

David Petersen gave a series of clinics at the 2014 LSR convention last year. He has graciously agreed to present an overview of simulation as our April clinic.

I asked David to tell us a little about himself:

“A bit about me. Got into model railroading about age 7 with a Lionel set I had to share with an older brother. He wanted to run in circles, I wanted sidings and industries to service. In my early years I always had a layout design I was developing or was building. I liked building models of buildings and got quite good at it.”

“When I moved to Texas in 1976, David Barrow invited me to operate on the Cat Mountain & Santa Fe RR. Did that for several years, then my career got in the way and I dropped out for a few years.”

“It was Train Dispatcher software that got me back into railroading. Then I discovered Trainz and have been hooked ever since. I love to model prototype operations and I discovered that I could create exact computer models of any prototype section of railroad

anywhere in the world. The one thing that was missing was a simulation of prototype waybills - something that gave each car a destination. I was so passionate about this, and could find no system or anyone that was interested in one that I taught myself computer programming and created a car destination system for Trainz. Back in 2010, Trainz sponsored a worldwide competition for the best operating session. I used my creation in a session and it won first place.”

“Today, when I create an operating session for a Trainz route, it is a 7 day session. You can save a session in Trainz, and come back to it anytime as continue running the trains.”

“My presentation will introduce your members to Trainz simulation software and demonstrate a few of the many things one can do with it. What I like most is that you can model any railroad, have no space limitation, cost is minimal, and the Trainz community is worldwide, diverse and most helpful. You can model a model railroad or you can model a prototype. You can model in any scale you want.”

Don't miss this clinic! It may also be a good time to visit the San Jac Club if you are not a member but needed an excuse to drop by as a visitor next meeting. See the website for details.

Derail Article Submission Guidelines

We welcome all articles which will be of interest to our readers. If you would like to submit something, we have the following requests.

- Please indicate if the article is an original and if you are the author. If you are not the author, please indicate where you received the information. Before we publish, we need to get the ok from its original source.
- Pictures help add to articles. Please state who the photographer is and if we have permission to include the picture.
- To give you proper author credit, please indicate how you want your name to appear. For example: Is it Robert or Bob? Do you want a middle initial used? Etc.
- Please save your article in Word using Times New Roman size 12 font and make the name of your article the file name.
- Please submit all information to both bsabol@stillmeadow.com and tbrogioitti@stillmeadow.com by the 15th of the month before publication. We will do our best to include your submission in the next issue. Any additional notes to us about the article or publishing requests can be made in the email when you attach your article and pictures.
- Please limit each email to 10MB (with picture attachments) to ensure that the email servers will send and receive them okay. You can submit your pictures over several emails or reduce the size of each picture to a medium resolution.

Meeting minutes March 3, 2015

President Rex Ritz called the meeting to order at 7:05PM and welcomed all current members. We had 2 visitors: Gary Rice who models in HO and Ray Thompson who models in S, HO, and G.

Vice president Chuck Lind announced this month's program by Tom Palmer: MKT Passenger Train Operations 1946-1953.

Tom opened with Feb 1, 1946 equipment rosters of the various districts.

-Northwestern District Service:

4-4-0 Americans and a couple cars

-Northern District Service:

Gas electric and chair car

2-8-0 (which was later replaced)

-South Texas District Service

Connects to the Texas Special

4-6-2 Pacific's plus a few baggage, chair, and Pullman cars

FM 1644's were brought in, followed by RDC's

-Eastern District Service

The Bluebonnet, Texas Special, and Katy Flyer

-Northern District Service

The Bluebonnet, Katy Flyer, Katy Limited, Sooner

-Southern District Service

The Bluebonnet, Katy Flyer, Katy Limited, Texas Special

-North Texas District Service

The Bluebonnet, Katy Flyer, Katy Limited, Texas Special

-South Texas District Service

The Bluebonnet, Katy Flyer, Katy Limited, Texas Special

Tom presented lots of photos of the cars and engines used on each of the above Districts.

Tom concluded with Troop Trains – photos of military troop trains.

Next month's program will be by Dave Peterson on the virtual prototype modeling and operations.

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

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses:

\$150.00 Train Show sales table refunds

\$689.20 Train Show expenses

\$3220.00 Train Show start up cash

Income:

\$9181.00 Train Show deposit

Ending balance: \$12,126.67

Train Show 2015:

Bob Barnett announced we had about \$3000 profit. He thanked all who helped make the show a success.

We gave out about 1380 stickers plus about 200 vendors so he estimated about 1600 total attendance.

Thanks to Ed Dibble for the postcard mail out.

We need to purchase some replacement easels for use at the show.

Chuck Lind reported low entry totals for the contest. 6 models and 16 photos. Attendance in the contest room was also low. Need more signage or a better location.

We should get a \$675 deposit back from the Center.

We have a projected payout of \$900 to the show layouts.

LSR:

Jim Lemmond reported on the LSR board meeting.

The 2015 LSR convention will be in Beaumont, July 22-25, 2015. It will be at the Holiday Inn Plaza, a great facility, good food. Ed Dibble is working on registration this week.

Division 8:

No report

Narrow Gauge Convention, Sept 2-5, 2015:

Don Formanek reported they have 237 vendors, 75 clinics, display layouts, contest room, auction, home layouts.

More volunteers are needed and those who do get free registration and a shirt.

Derail:

Bob is still in need of more articles. The 15th deadline for submissions to the Derail.

The Bill Hughes layout is completely sold.

Website:

Brian Jansky: no report

Yahoo Group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/SJMRRRC>

Refreshments were thanks to Colleen Ryan(sp?) and Virginia Freitag.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM

-Respectfully submitted,

Gilbert Freitag,

Secretary / Treasurer



San Jac RR Club Meetings take place
the first Tuesday of each month
at 7pm

Bayland Community Center
6400 Bissonnet St. Houston, Tx

[Click here for directions](#)
Visitors are always welcome!



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Next Meeting

TUESDAY, APRIL 7

“Virtual Model Railroading”

(hosted by Dick Louvet using Trainz, a simulation software)

by

Dave Peterson

Refreshments:

Virginia Freitag (drinks)

Bob Werre (cookies)



Video Corner

Have you ever seen a train lay its
own tracks?

<http://www.wimp.com/traintrack/>

