



March Meeting

The next meeting will be on March 2nd, 2010. At Bayland Park Community Center.

The Meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

Program - Matt Dillow - Model Building Demonstration

This was the continuous clinic in the Main Room at the GHTS.

The Greater Houston Train Show It's OVER!!

The 2010 Greater Houston Train Show is now history, and it was a successful show. The attendance was 1260 adult attendees, 47 teen attendees, and approximately 125 vendors, display layout crews and clinicians. If we include the children admitted without fee the total attendance approaches 1600 to 1800 people.

The show was a success because of the efforts of many San Jacinto Club members:

Ed Dibble headed up the advanced publicity mail outs for the last two years. This highly focused form of advanced advertising (mailing a reminder of the show location and time) has produced record numbers of repeat attendees. **Steve Sandifer** handled the advanced notices of our show date to hobby publications and area news papers. Steve has handled this "invisible" task that occurs well in advance of our show for several years.

Don Bozman handled the vendor tables and prepared the floor plans as he has for the last 5 years. This year was particularly difficult as we had 15 cancellations and Don was able to resell all of the tables before the show. Without Don's service the GHTS would not be possible.

Once again **Robert Ashcraft** headed up the Registration Desk with assistance from **Ed Dibble, Virginia Freitag, Gilbert Freitag,** and numerous San Jac member volunteers. The "Rush Hour" for this train show was more overwhelming than any in recent years. Employing up to four people taking admissions, the registrars worked to keep the registration lines short. Doug Milton, in an on-the-spot decision, assumed the role of traffic cop/line director and kept the line moving to the next open ticket window. Great job Doug!

Tom Bailey did an excellent job handling the San Jacinto Club sales table again this year as the club members turned their excess railroad stuff onto other model railroader's valuable finds. Speaking of sales, **Rex Ritz** organized a raffle for the donated N-scale layout and got several bids. The layout went for \$205.00

and there were three bids in that range. Great job Rex, for organizing this at the last minute, and getting the layout into the hands of someone who really wanted it.

David Currey assembled a great line up of clinics and was assisted by **David Milton** and **Gilbert Freitag**. Several clinics attracted capacity crowds and overall attendance was very good.

The Model Contest headed up by **Tracy Mitchell** attracted a large number of entrees for the second year in a row. Not only was the number of entrees good, but the quality of the entries was outstanding. One vendor who is also an excellent modeler told me that the San Jac show stands out for still having an NMRA style contest. This would not be possible without the efforts of Tracy, **Loren Neufeld, Byron Spampinato, Chuck Lind, Larry May,** and the other judges all of whom have faithfully maintained this tradition over the years.

Dave Shafer once again transported the San Jac Switching Layout to the show and handled the staffing for the duration of the show. Dave has restored the switching layout and it looks and runs great. This layout has introduced numerous kids (and quite a few adults) to the joys of a switching a "town" or industrial area on a layout. The combination of the switching layout, the G-Scale layout and an O-27 layout kept the smaller ball room filled with people all day.

See GHTSWrap-Up on Page 2



March 20th Trip Information in President's Message on Page 2

Great Houston Train Show Wrap-Up Continued

Our display layouts this year included:

- The Fort Bend County Model Railroad Club
- Forrest Cox 0-27 Layout
- 35/45 Z Bend Track
- Houston Area G-Gaugers
- Houston S-Scalers
- Northwest Crossing HO Division
- Northwest Crossing N-Scale Division

And the **All Points North Club** was open both days of the show.

Byron Spampinato organized the layout tour this year. I visited three of the layouts on the north side on Sunday after noon and thoroughly enjoyed each layout.

The set up crew (present at 6:00 am) included **Don Bozman, Tracy Mitchell, and Craig Brantley** and helped get the vendors and display layouts located and under construction.

The Tear-down crew of **Doug Milton, Ed Dibble, Steve Sandifer, and Dave Currey** rendered an invaluable service to vendors and display layouts helping to transport and load layouts and boxes of merchandise. The Main Ball Room was cleared out this year by 6:07pm, a record, thanks to the hard work of the Vendors, Layout Crews and San Jac tear-down crew. This feat was difficult for some of the vendors and layouts crews. Next year we will attempt to get an additional hour on our basic contract time (as opposed to a rather hefty "overtime" charge) to allow a little more time for these folks to pack up after a long day.

Once again this year the Greater Houston Train Show was a success thanks to the hard work of the San Jacinto Club members, the participating layout clubs, the visiting clinicians and home/club layouts in the tour.

A job Well- Done: Get some rest we are up to bat again next February.

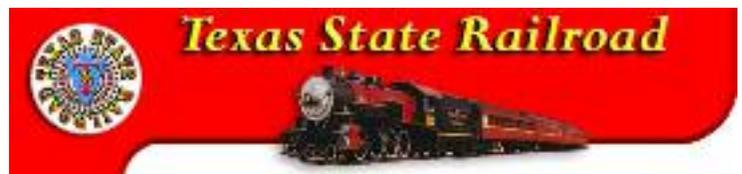
Bob Barnett

FROM THE PRESIDENT

If you missed the 2010 Greater Houston Train Show, you missed one of the better train shows, not only in quantity of attendance but in quality of clinics, contest entries, and vendors. A BIG THANK YOU to Bob Barnett and all the other chairmen and staff that helped make this one of our better shows. I'll leave the final numbers and other results of the show to Bob and the other chairmen that have reports.

The next item on our agenda is the trip to Palestine for a ride on the Texas State Railroad. At this time we have 12 slots remaining, so get with your significant other or who ever you need to consult and get signed up at the March meeting. The cost of the trip is just \$20 per person, which includes the bus ride up there and back and the train tickets. The club will provide some drinks for the trip, but lunch at Rusk will be Dutch Treat. I had the opportunity to visit with a representative of the Texas State Railroad at the train show and he stated that the Dogwood Steam Excursion has proved to be one of the nicer excursions with all the dogwoods and redbud trees blooming at that time of the year. So here is the itinerary again:

- 6:15 am Depart Church of Christ @ Stella Link & W Belfort
- 7:00 am Depart parking lot @ Larry's Hobbies I45 @ FM 1960
- 10:00 am Arrive at Palestine
- 11:00 am Train departs Palestine for Rusk
- 3:30 pm Train arrives Palestine from Rusk
- 4:00 pm Depart Palestine
- 7:00 pm Arrive Larry's in North Houston
- 7:45 pm Arrive southwest Houston at church



So mark your calendar for March 20, 2010 for fun and relaxation on the Texas State Railroad. Until next time, remember to keep oil in your lanterns and a full head of steam in your boilers.

Robert Ashcraft
President



SOUTH AFRICAN MODEL RAILWAYS

In my last column, I promised to review the amazing state of railway modeling in S.A.

The official population of the country today is around 50 million people, but only a relatively small percentage have money to spend on non-essential items. Within that small percentage an even smaller percentage have any interest in railways – model or otherwise - which means that there is no mass-market for model trains. No mass market means that it is uneconomical to make South African Railway (SAR) models, so very little has been available.

One exception occurred during the 1970's when the now-defunct Italian company Lima, mass produced some SAR electric loco's, diesel loco's and coaches. These were poor quality, inaccurate models however, as shown below:



This Class 5E Electric Unit has oversized wheels, the dimensions are wrong, there is little detail and the motor is useless. Then they released the Blue Train coaches.

Originally, this one was probably either a Scandinavian or European coach painted in Blue Train colors, and therefore did not accurately match the prototype. It is considerably longer than those on the real Blue Train, the windows and door arrangements are off, as is the design and configuration of the interior, corridor vestibule and diaphragm linkages.



One semi-mass market manufacturer of SAR locomotives is the English firm DJH Engineering. They still make precision-cast, high-quality locomotives such as my Garratt below, but they are built-to-order and are expensive; each one costs around \$2,500.00!



There are no other viable manufacturers of SAR products, so imagine the frustration of walking into your local model railroad store and only being able to buy European prototype locomotives and rolling stock - no GM, ALCO or Baldwin loco's, no Pullman passenger cars, no boxcars or cabooses - in fact no US prototype models at all! Until recently, that was the frustration of SAR modelers – plenty of European and US prototype models, but no SAR models available.

Enter the small entrepreneur!

After seeing second-hand SAR Lima and other hand-made equipment being sold on e-Bay and similar sites for outrageous

prices, the private market jumped in. As a result, there are now some incredible, detailed and accurate models are being produced - albeit in limited quantities – either from scratch or by utilizing parts from US models. Some examples are as follows:

The now-defunct International Hobby Corp. (IHC), used to make a great 4-8-2 steam locomotive



I purchased some of these on e-Bay last year and sent them to a modeler Cape Town. There, he removed and discarded the bodies from each loco and tender, as well as the 2-wheel trailing bogie, and replaced them with new, hand-built loco and tender bodies, and a new, hand-built 4-wheel trailing bogie. The result? I now have two amazingly detailed and accurate models of the massive SAR Class 25 4-8-4 Condensing and non-Condensing loco's (see photo's below.)



With the addition of DCC sound, I now have every SAR modeler's 'dream trains' running on my layout.

As regards rolling stock, a company that builds architectural models recently started building SAR model trains. They have now released limited edition models of all eight of the different coaches of the Blue Train – each one again, accurate in all respects (see photo below). Like the Class 25's above, these coaches are limited editions and only eight sets of cars are available each quarter. That increases their value however, and makes them even more sought-after.



The company now also builds and sells accurate freight car models as shown below.



So to sum up, after a long drought wherein the only models available to SAR fans were a very few, poorly-made models that worked sporadically at best, we are now getting a much greater variety of loco's and rolling stock, and since these items are made for the serious SAR fan, accuracy, details and quality are built in from the outset. I came back from my recent trip not only with the above two loco's, but also with a hand-built Class 10BR 4-6-2 loco, a highly-detailed hand-built model of the very first electric unit in SA, a complete set of the new Blue Train coaches, plus a variety of new goods wagons and guard's vans (cabooses).

There is still no mass manufacturer of SAR models – one could not economically stay in business with the limited size of the demand there – but the demand is steady and although the cost per item is proportionately more than we spend here in the US, SAR lovers are ensuring the survival of our hobby down under.



BNSF Derailment - Santa Fe, TX February 18, 2009



I saw a real combination of older equipment and new technology. These photos show a ballast hopper with electric motor powered discharge gates. Six solar panels charge the battery. The gates can be controlled remotely from a box on the ground or from a GPS satellite. This information came from a crew member who talked to me while my daughter took these pictures with her phone. Things have come a very long way. Dave Milton



The Union Pacific Railroad has scheduled a steam excursion to Harlingen TX for April of 2010. Here is the tentative schedule from a crew member of the U.P. Steam Crew:

You asked about our route to Texas in April. The plan now is to go east to Kansas City and then down south through McAlester, Fort Worth, on to Houston and then on down, looks like it is planned to come back through Palestine on the way home should be there the night of April 19th, leave for Longview on the 20th and be in North Little Rock on the night of April 21st, layover in North Little Rock on April 22nd and then leave April 23rd. That is the plan now and of course that is always subject to change! Usually it stays as planned but you never know!

Hopefully we will see you sometime in April!

Thank you, Rick Braunschweig, Fireman U.P. Steam Crew



San Antonio, TX
June 2nd - 6th, 2010
for more information, go to
<http://alamorails.org>

Meeting minutes for February 2, 2010

President Robert Ashcraft called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

We had 3 visitors.

Vice president David Currey introduced our clinic: "Signals 101" by Ed Rains.

Ed gave a summary of the history and purpose of signals in the railroad industry. The first signal system was a man with a flag on a horse in the 1820's. In the 1850's, with the invention of the telegraph, dispatchers could "radio" ahead train orders to the next station attendant, ahead of the train. In the 1880's-1890's detection systems were invented to "automatically" activate signaling devices such as semaphores. These systems were designed to keep separation between trains. In about 1910 lights that were visible outdoors came into the market and this led to the color light signal development. Many different styles of color signals were used by various railroads. Searchlight signals came out shortly after, in the 1920's, and these minimized the amount of mechanisms and improved visibility. Now we are going back to 3 individual lights with no mechanicals and good visibility. CTC started in the 1930's with dispatcher controller signals. Ed concluded his presentation with a short video on signals and dispatching using CTC panels.

Next month's clinic will be by Matt Dilow on Model Construction.

Refreshments were thanks to Bob Barnett and Virginia Freitag.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

\$6267.90 Opening Balance

Expenses:

\$1500.00 Train Show – Stafford Center rent

\$285.00 – Texas State RR bus deposit

\$60.00 – 2010 Train Show insurance

\$20.00 – Returned check

\$230.83 – Train Show Postcards

\$12.14 – Derail expenses

\$855.00 – Rusk bus balance

Income:

\$8.00 2010 Derail – snail mail payment

\$3312.93 Ending balance with all bills paid.

Minutes for January were approved as published.

LSR:- Tracy Mitchell

There was a tour in S.A. of the upcoming 2010 facilities.

Holiday Inn Select - \$98 Rooms, \$89 Registration

The convention website is now linked to the LSR site.

The next Marker Lamp issue is at the printers.

Future LSR conventions: 2011, Lubbock; 2012 Houston

Division 8:

There are plans for a picnic in Alvin.

The clinic session will start in May

We still need a Division Youth nominee to sponsor.

Candidates for the upcoming elections are still needed.

NMRA: No report

DeRail:

Dave Milton: We need material! Model or prototype topics accepted.

Old Business:

The Texas State RR trip – Saturday, March 20th – Tickets available for \$20

6:15AM Bus departs Stella Link & W. Belfort

11:00AM Train departs

-lunch on your own

3:30PM Train arrives back

7:45PM Bus back to Stella Link

New Business:

Robert Ashcraft thanked the Derail staff for a great issue.

Bob Barnett reminded us of the upcoming February 20 train show.

Last minute volunteer spots still needed.

Byron is setting up the home layout tours.

David Currey gave a list of the clinics currently lined up.

Several layouts, all scales, will be at the show.

Sn3 Symposium: Craig Brantley:

February 24-27, www.sn3-2010.com

Marriott @ Hobby Airport

\$25 special registration for SanJac members

There will be lots to see and do.

Vendors/layout tours/clinics/etc.

Jim Lemmond:

There is a layout from Chuck Lind that needs a home. It will be given/raffled away at the Stafford Show.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35PM

General comments: 50 people were present at the meeting.

-Respectfully submitted,
Gilbert Freitag, Secretary / Treasurer



Meetings are the First Tuesdays of January through December at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet. Meeting time is 7 to 9 pm. Visitors are welcome.

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