



The DERAIL

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

July 2011

Volume 42, Issue 07

President's Message

Bob Werre

Welcome to the middle of Summer!

Our trusty Director at Large, Author Penny will be handling the meeting and doing double duty for the July meeting. Both Don and I will be away. I do hope you have a good time. Chuck Lind will be giving the presentation. I understand you will learn everything there is to know about sawmills and wood. This will also give you a couple of days to come up with some jokes about Chuck and wood! (see recent Gecko TV ads)

I believe Don will be traveling and I will be attending the NMRA National in Sacramento, California. This year the NMRA will be combined with the National Association of S Gaugers annual convention. Both organizations put on joint conventions with the idea of sharing talent, facilities and of course, the fun. The S guys also hope to steal/convert some modelers who find it difficult to see their modeling efforts in the smaller scales.

My first ever, S Gauge convention was held in that very city many years ago during the same time of the year. Sacramento will likely be just as hot as Houston during that time. I remember that trip very well. I flew to San Francisco via Eastern Airline's Midnight Special. These were special flights where large planes were loaded with FedEx cargo, so Eastern decided they could sell the cabin area fairly cheaply. I think the total round trip was around \$100. The downside was, no checked luggage (which really wasn't a problem for me), no food and the flights left at 3 AM! So with the exception of the weird hour of departure nothing really has changed except the costs and the TSA!

I've received a fairly good response to the idea of compiling a "talent pool" for use in finding and offering modeling help. The idea is that club members and others can be listed as having skills that can be used by others; these skills can be volunteered, bartered or money could exchange hands. These skills could be basic layout construction, wiring, DCC, background murals, web site design etc. Right now, I envision some kind of spreadsheet of services that can be utilized by our members in dealing with their layouts. Besides our own club members' talent, we need to be adding outside folks who also provide services that can be used. I haven't worked out all the details yet but it will be coming. We need to be a bit cautious in that the Bay land facilities prohibit selling things, so we will simply

be a reference tool.

It was brought to our attention that a competing train show event is scheduled very close to our annual show. Of course, this somewhat troubling concern of a large train show purveyor having their show a week before ours is obviously concerning from several standpoints. I have generally been a fan of such shows with a few caveats. They do have an advertising budget to draw a large crowd, the large crowd generally brings in many vendors from greater distances and occasionally far flung layouts that are interesting. The downside is when they schedule it one week before our show; one gets a bad taste in ones mouth. We put a lot of volunteer hours into this show, so if our attendance numbers are affected greatly it can be discouraging besides having a financial effect.

The bad taste is doubled with the way this company has also requested individuals and modular clubs to display at their events. They have three 'layers' of participation in these events; free, a schedule of honorariums, and special requests for payment. They freely admit their preference for the free-bees! I don't think there's any club that expects to make any kind of 'real' money, but I don't believe it's part of the American system to ask clubs and individuals to provide the "entertainment" for a for-profit company as well as, provide a great share of the financial heavy lifting for these events, while they take the proceeds home with them—wherever home is!

Perhaps in the future they can be directed to a better time slot to have their show as not to conflict with our Greater Houston Show and the Houston Museum's Railroad's show in October.

Of course, you all know of the lemon/lemonade parity, so we also have the ability to advertise our show at their event. So if they draw a good attendance, we then have the ability to invite those people to our show the next week. This could work to our advantage as part of an increased marketing effort on our part.

It's a day past our deadline, so I need to get this to our Editors...So build something, attend an Ops session and I'll see you in August.

Welcome to a new Derail forum... Modeling Tidbits to "Spike" your interest. Bob Sabol came to me with a concept to write a monthly series on modeling ideas tips and techniques. What he wanted was something that would not come from the mind of one individual, but would be a conglomeration from several. I will be calling upon various modelers to write something. It can be something basic or over our heads such as what Jim Hinds talked about last month.



This first month I am going to talk about where to find information. Since this is an internet newsletter I figured the best place to start is online. There are so many wonderful web sites that I could write about only one a month and 10 years from now, I wouldn't have cracked the surface. One of my favorite sites is called the Terrapin Narrow Gauge Society.

www.terrapinnarrowgaugesociety.com

This description is taken directly from their web page: "The T.N.G.S. is a loose knit group of railroad modelers that has been meeting together in Southern California since 2000. It is not a club with dues or formal meetings, but a round robin group that meets at members homes once a month or so (usually on short notice). Those that want to come can bring their latest project, relax, exchange ideas, and enjoy a few hours with others of like-minded interest.

With an emphasis on modeling narrow gauge, scales in the group run the gamut from HO_n3 through to G_n15, and into 1.20.3. Most members however are 1/4 scale modelers, and that is the main scale of the group. Models range from freelance to prototypically correct, and everything in between. They cover steam, diesel, electric, traction, and even some futuristic/fantasy

models. We are a group that enjoys the art of model building,

over the joy of model railroad operating; there are however several in the group that are working on layouts, and several that have started fiddling with a modular layout."

This group has some of the best modelers in the country including Darryl Huffman, Chuck Doan, Russ Reinberg and Marc Reusser. So if you got a few minutes drop by their site and you will not be disappointed...Heck you might even learn something.

If you have a modeling technique or even a favorite site you would like to share with the collective, drop me a line and I will make sure it gets passed on to Bob to be added to the forum. My email is traymit@comcast.net

Station Stops

July 3-9 - NMRA National Convention, Sacramento, CA

July 23 - Houston Railroad Museum - The Airbrush Clinic, by Bill Reid, 10:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.

Aug 20 - Houston Railroad Museum - Building Trees and Bushes, by Jim Lemmond, 10:00am - 11:30am

Sep 21 - Houston railroad Museum - Decaling, by Tracy Mitchell, 10:00am - 11:30am



TUNNELS

Other than a festive, temporary circle around a Christmas tree, I cannot recall ever seeing a model railway layout that did not have a tunnel running either through a mountain or under a town. My personal belief is that this practice was initially adopted in order to emphasize the fact that the train was running under its own power since initially, toy trains had to be either pushed by hand or pulled by a string. Only in the late 1800's were the first clockwork motor, or in some instances steam engine, self-powered trains released.

Putting aside the history of toy and model trains for now, the history of tunnels is fascinating. The first tunnels were probably made by prehistoric man seeking to build or enlarge their caves. Then, over 4,000 years ago, irrigation tunnels were built in Babylonia and during the same period, a cut-and-fill, brick-lined pedestrian tunnel was built under the Euphrates River to connect the royal palace with the temple.

It appears that in order to be defined as a 'tunnel' instead of say, an overpass, it must be at least a tenth of a mile long and have a length more than twice its diameter. With that in mind, the oldest known 'railway' tunnel was built in 1796 in Derbyshire, England, with horse-drawn, wooden wagons that ran on wooden rails. Then, in 1804, the first true railway tunnel was built in Pentrebach, Wales, as part of a nine mile railway line to carry iron. Richard Trevithick designed and ran the steam locomotive on the line, and due to the limited tunnel clearance, the chimney had to be tipped when going through the tunnel.



Trevithick Tunnel

The first tunnel built in America is reported to have been in Tennessee, where a water diversion tunnel was built to power a water wheel in 1819. The first railway tunnel was called the Staple Bend Tunnel and was completed in 1834 in Pennsylvania. It was 900 feet in length and lined with stone.



Staple Bend Tunnel

There are many ways to construct tunnels. Cut-and-Fill is the preferred

method for shallow tunnels, but only if there is available space and surface activities aren't disturbed. Here, a deep trench is dug, the tunnel floor, walls and roof are then built, and the tunnel covered over again.

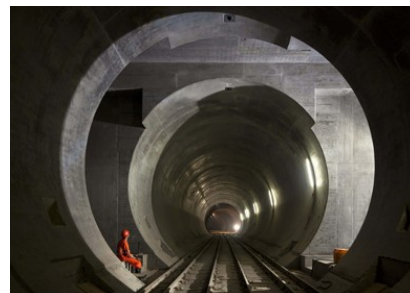
Most tunnels are constructed by boring or if the ground is too hard, by drilling and blasting. Today, modern tunnel boring machines work on the full face (i.e. the complete diameter) of the opening, and although the machine is usually discarded at the end of the dig, it is a fast and economical way to build long tunnels.



Gotthard Base Tunnel Boring Machine

Instead of boring, underwater tunnels are often built by laying prefabricated tunnel boxes directly on the seabed. These steel or reinforced concrete boxes are usually buried in shallow trenches dug for this purpose, and then covered by ballast so they will not be affected by the movement of the water. Rubber gaskets are used to make the section joints watertight and water is pumped out of the tunnel to make it ready for service.

The longest railway tunnel in the world is now in Switzerland, where, after 14 years of construction and \$10 billion, a new 34 mile long Gotthard Base Tunnel was recently bored almost two miles under the Alps. The project created around 2,500 jobs (eight lives were lost), and by 2017, around 300 trains a day will travel between Zurich and Milan, Italy at speeds of over 155mph - cutting travel time by 90 minutes.



The previous record was held by the 33 mile long Seikan Railroad Tunnel in Japan which connects Honshu and Hokkaido Islands, followed by the Channel Tunnel which has three 31 mile tunnels (one for service), of which 23 miles are under water.

When the short railway tunnel was dug in Wales 200 years ago, who would have thought that a 34 mile tunnel could be built under the Alps for trains that could attain what were then unimaginable speeds?

Operators Corner

Peter Bryan

Besides excellent track work I feel you must have an inviting railroad setting just like a comfortable and inviting home. Certainly a well lighted room is important. In addition I have natural light coming in through the windows that make reading card numbers easy. One of the things I learned on operating on many railroads is instead of having 75 cars lettered for the Chesapeake & Ohio or the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe, I have a whole range of different railroad reporting marks and so really all you have to look for is the reporting marks



door to the West Virginia Western railroad. I have a balcony overlooking our Lake so the crew members can take a break there on nice spring days.

Gil Freitag helped do all the main wiring (actually he did all the wiring- I was the go-fer) for the railroad room. He made it so one switch turns off all the power and another turns off all the lights. I have been fortunate (with a very understanding and caring wife-Susan) to have had over 200 operating sessions in eight years. I figured that there

have been over 1600 operators to my railroad from 27 states. This is another lesson I learned from Gil and Virginia Freitag. It's a great way to make friends and a great way to spend an enjoyable three or four hours with people that enjoy your hobby. By having this many operating sessions, it is also a great way to not have to clean your track on a regular basis.

I use fluorescent lights around the railroad room to give good lighting to read the card numbers. I know this makes for lousy photography but that is not of interest to me at this time. I'm lucky in having a fully carpeted and air-conditioned room in addition the restroom and crew lounge area are just outside the

Guess the Layout!



All pictures are from the same layout.

Answer to last months' Guess the Layout: Bob Werre

HOUSTON HISTORY NIGHT

Houston History Night is a night dedicated to commemorate the history of Houston. The event is scheduled for **Saturday, July 16th at 6:05pm.**

With your participation, we will have a **Model Train Exhibit in the Union Station Lobby** prior to the game and potentially for the duration of the game. In order for your club/organization to have an Exhibit in the Lobby, a **Vendor Table** needs to be purchased (information below).

This year is the **100th anniversary of Union Station**, as well as, the **175th Anniversary of the City of Houston**. Union Station is a part of the Astros organization as it serves as our main entrance into Minute Maid Park. We are reaching out to train/railroad clubs, historical organizations/societies and museums within the Houston area to come out to Minute Maid Park and celebrate!

Vendor Opportunities:

- **Table set-up in Union Station Lobby**
 - **\$400**
 - **50 View Deck 2 Tickets**
 - **1 Parking Pass**
 - **Ribbon Board Recognition**
- Opportunity to display and distribute information about your club/organization
- **Over 30,000 fans** are anticipated

Fundraising Opportunity:

- Opportunity to **raise up to \$10 per ticket sold!**

We look forward to having your club participate!

The 16th is also Faith and Family Night at ballpark, so our members may have some interest in attending with a church group, and also seeing exhibits in Union Station.



Brian Kletter

Ticket Sales Representative
Houston Astros Baseball Club

bkletter@astros.com

713-259-8309 (office) | 713-259-8326 (fax)

Meeting minutes June 7, 2011

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

Vice president Don Formanek introduced the night's presentation:

Jim Hinds presented Wire Sizes for Model Railroads.

Jim explained that code 80 N scale flex track has a resistance of about .05 ohms per foot which is about the same as #26 copper wire. Most wouldn't think it was that bad. This causes a lot of voltage drop, especially with higher current trains. This is why Jim suggested we place feeders about every 30"-60" down to a heavier "bus" wire. Jim went through the math to aid us in selecting the proper bus wire size for a given situation and how often the feeders to it need to be. A general rule is to have feeders about every 5 feet on every other rail. You can oversize your bus wires but you are just added unnecessary costs to your layout. Jim explained how the myth of voltage drops due to the "skin effect" is negligible in the model railroading field, only really effects ultra high frequency areas. Solid wire is cheaper per foot than stranded wire of the same gauge but stranded wire is easier to work with. Overall – do a little math to determine the smallest wire size for you application to minimize overall costs.

Don said Chuck Lind will discuss Saw Mill Operations next month.

August will have a UP RR guest speaker: Yardmaster Brenda Bob

We still need ideas for future clinic ideas.

Old Business:

We had a show of hands of those going to the LSR Convention, Lubbock, TX June 9-12.

New Business:

Bob Barnett reported that Train Expo 2012 has booked Houston 1 weekend before our Stafford Show. They will be at the Reliant Center. After much discussion about the pros and cons of moving or canceling our show, the club voted to leave our show at the originally planned date of Feb 19th.

There will be a train show at Memorial City Fathers day weekend. Several club layouts will be participating.

The Galveston R.R. Museum has been re-opened after hurricane repairs.

Bob Werre suggested collecting a club member skills database to allow us to share our talents and perhaps post this in the club directory. Such talents such as wiring, painting, custom building, casting, etc. could be done for a fee or traded for returned talents.

Derail: Bob Sabol

Bob asked that anyone not receiving the Derail via email to contact him and he will get you on the list. Bob thanked all those who have contributed material. Still could use new material.

LSR:

Convention, Lubbock, TX June 9-12

NMRA:

The convention is in Sacramento, CA. July 3-9.

Division 8: Jim Lemmond

There will be a clinic on hand laying track at the Houston R.R. Museum on June 25th at 10AM. July's will be on airbrush painting by Bill Reid.

Refreshments were thanks to Bettye Bozman and Virginia Freitag. Steve Sandifer volunteered to bring the treats next month.

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses:

\$464.00 GHTS damaged tables purchase

\$54.13 Club Shirts printing set-up fee

Income:

\$6904.78 Ending balance with all bills paid.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40PM

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!



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Tuesday July 7

Chuck Lind

presents

Saw Mill

Operations

Steve Sandifer's Soldering Clinic

Several people have asked me about the solder paste demonstrated in my clinic. Home Depot sells Oatey Instant Solder in the plumbing section. It comes in a black and white tube attached to a card.

I videotaped the presentation, broke it into sections, and have posted it to YouTube if you wish to see the presentation again or missed it the first time. The overview is available at: <http://ssandifer.com/Lay/Howard/Const/Solder/index.htm>



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