



The DERAIL

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

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President's Message

Richard Louvet

Intended Consequences

I recently submitted our renewal for 100% NMRA Club recognition.

Nosing around the NMRA website, I was surprised by the relatively low number of 100% clubs.

Being an NMRA member is expensive and I'm sure we lose a number of member/modelers who don't see the value of \$66 a year. Sure, the National has a long list of benefits, but why require San Jac to be card carrying members?

As an individual, I feel my membership fulfills an obligation to the hobby that has been repaid in terms of standardization procedures that foster uniform advances across individual modelers, groups and the model railroad trade. Imagine not being able to reliably use my Digitrax loco on your EasyDCC layout. What about that switcher that derails in your complicated yard throat because the wheel gauging is slightly different?

For the club, the NMRA supports its very existence. In my history with the club, there have been numerous discussions about options for excess money in the club account – and few if any about financial shortcomings. The monies we get from the Greater Houston Train Show give San Jac a degree of stability that should be envied.

The success of the train show is due in large part to the fine venue of the Stafford Centre. Critical to our continued use of the center is insurance. Critical to providing that insurance is our 100% NMRA membership.

We could purchase liability insurance directly. It would be one of our largest budget items and would be subject the year to year vagaries of the carrier. Requiring NMRA membership for the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club is well worth the cost involved.

I guess it's an intended consequence of NMRA membership.

Special Announcements

Experience Three Days of Steam and Diesel!

*Return to Spruce • Big Cut & Beyond • Including Night Photo Sessions
May 16-18, 2014*

The information about the 2014 Cass railfan trip is now up on their website.

<http://www.msrlha.org/rfw/index.html>

Aka: The San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Jamboree

The annual Greater Houston Train Show is coming up on February 15, 2014. This will be our 38th Train Show/Jamboree.

The San Antonio Model Railroad Association (SAMRA) Jamborees and Train Shows started about the same time. I really don't know which club actually started first. The first San Jacinto Model Railroad Jamboree was held in February 1972 with the late Ed Quin as chairman. But we have not held a show every year. Before the creation of Division 8, when the Lone Star Region Conventions were held in Houston, the San Jac was the host organization. To prevent spreading our club members too thin, no Jamborees were held in 1975, 1980, 1984, and 1989. We also skipped 1982 as we were in the middle of a date rotation. Since 1990 the Jamboree/Train Show has been an annual affair. **That makes this one 25 in a row!!**

The first three San Jacinto Club Jamborees were held at the *Airport Inn* near Hobby Airport. For several years after that the Jamboree site rotated around to different Hotels including:

The Albert Pick Hotel in 1977 and 1978. Don't look for it; it was torn down to build part of Westpark Drive.

Dumfries Royal Coach Inn-in 1979: A huge motel complex on the Southwest Freeway near Sharpstown; it is also gone.

The Astro Village Hotel- in 1981, 1983 and 1985: This hotel has changed names several times but still stands at the corner of Kirby Drive and Loop 610.

The Sheraton on Braeswood – in 1986 and 1987: Another large hotel that is also gone from the landscape.

Starting in 1988 and continuing through 1996, the Jamborees were held at the *Corpus Christi School* on Stella Link just south of Loop 610. We were at the School for eight years (remember no Jamboree in 1989).

Starting in 1997 we moved to a much larger facility, **The Humble Convention Center** and remained there for eight years through the 2004 show. During this time the name changed to the Greater Houston Train Show.

In 2005 we moved to the **Stafford Centre** and have remained there ever since. This will be our tenth (10th) show at the Stafford Centre.

The Train Show is one of the two major activities we sponsor to share model railroading with the public in the Gulf Coast area. Along with the Fall Layout Tour and our monthly meetings/programs, it constitutes who we are and what we do.

So Come Out and enjoy the show and volunteer for at least one time slot. --- Bob Barnett

Work Trains

David N. Currey

Despite the name, a work train usually did not mean lots of work for the train crew. Typically, the main work for the work train crew was getting the train out of some side track somewhere, moving it to where it was needed, and then doing a lot of sitting before finally stashing the train back on a side track somewhere. The exception was the engineer, who usually had to stay alert all day and move the train a lot.

In one respect, work trains were handy for the seniority board. They enabled train service employees to

get a bump. Bumps could be hard to get, especially for the older more senior employees. There were only two ways to get a bump: being bumped yourself, or having your job abolished. Here's where the work train came in handy. Most work trains only lasted a day or two or three. Sometimes, if there was a lot of work needed in an area, they might list a work train job for a week or more. So, if you were one of the more senior brakemen, you could bid on a work train

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job, most probably win it, and then when it was abolished, you'd have a bump which you could use anywhere else on the division.

In case you're wondering what the heck a bump is, it's pretty simple. That was the term used to describe the act whereby somebody used their seniority to get a particular job they wanted. For example, suppose you were the least senior brakeman on a North End pool crew working out of Houston on my old Kingsville Division. You're happily working five to six trips a week--sometimes to Vanderbilt--sometimes turns to Angleton and back to Houston. One day, a crew caller calls you up and says, "Mr. Smith, you've been bumped by A. J. Carothers." What that means is brakeman Carothers has replaced you on the crew. It also means that you now have a bump you can use on any brakeman job on the division currently being worked by a brakeman one rung or more below you on the seniority roster. If you were working at a terminal away from the home terminal at Kingsville, you were also entitled to deadhead pay going back to Kingsville, and to where you placed your bump. Later, this rule was amended so that if you bumped onto a crew working out of the same terminal you got bumped in, you were only entitled to deadhead pay to Kingsville.

An alternative to bumping somebody else was to stay on the base terminal extra board in Kingsville. If you wanted to work on one of the satellite extra boards they had around the division, like the guarantee brakeman extra boards in Brownsville and Bloomington, and the guarantee extra board in Houston, then you bumped the lowest seniority person on that board.

A bump, therefore, created little ripples that worked their way through the seniority roster for weeks until finally some poor brakeman was so low on the seniority roster that all the working brakemen with less seniority than him were working on the extra board, or else any jobs he might could bump onto were jobs he was not interested in. When enough jobs were abolished that too many people were on the extra board in Kingsville, that's when they laid people off.

At first I always hated bumping somebody, because I felt bad about taking a job away from somebody who probably wanted that job, but after being bumped quite a few times myself, I realized it was just part of the job. I never felt any animosity towards anybody bumping me, and I'm sure most other trainmen felt the same way.

After I first hired out, I didn't bump anybody for probably nearly a year, until one day an engineer said something like, "Hey, David, I heard so-and-so's working a North End pool crew. Isn't he below you on the seniority roster? You ought to bid on one of those jobs." So I started bidding on the pool crew jobs when they opened up, and soon won one, after which I was usually able to bump onto another pool crew job whenever I was bumped.

One type of work train, perhaps the most common type, was the ballast train. On the Kingsville Division back in the early eighties, it was usually an old GP20 and a few hopper cars. The ballast train would go on duty at some siding somewhere where the work train was stashed. If it was the first day of the work train, you might actually have to get your engine out of the roundhouse track in a yard, go dig your ballast cars out of the yard, and then run your train to where the ballast needed to be dumped. You usually took only the number of hopper cars you conceivably might need in a days work, but that was probably determined by the maintenance-of-way foreman, and the train crew just dug out the car numbers requested. Another option might be to dig out all the cars you needed for a week's work, haul them to a house track somewhere, and only take the number of cars out on the line that you needed that day. At the end of the day, you would probably tie up in some house or team track near there, which is where you would go on duty the next day of work.

Once the ballast train was moved to where the ballast needed to be dumped, the crew's job was pretty much over with until time to stash the train somewhere. The MOW foreman would take over all the decision making for the train movements and instruct the engineer by radio when to ease ahead, back up, or stop.

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Spreading ballast like this on the mainline was a slow time-consuming affair. The MOW crew would place a railroad tie under the car and in front of the trailing wheels of the car being unloaded. They would only unload one car at a time. They would then open the hopper under the car enough so the ballast would start flowing out, and the engineer would move the train ahead until instructed to stop. If too much ballast came out, I would imagine they would have to shovel some out from under the car. The tie kept the ballast from getting under the wheels, and also smoothed it out to no higher than the top of the rail. Later, a tamping gang would come along and raise the track up a bit when they tamped the new ballast under the track. The reason you only took the number of cars you needed out onto the line was probably because a long string of cars has more slack, and the ballast might pile up higher underneath the cars before the slack ran out, making it more difficult for the MOW crew to work the ballast.

Railroads are always having to add ballast to rail lines, because the ballast sinks into the ground as well as spreads out over time. Every kid that comes along and throws a piece of ballast off into the woods doesn't help things either.

Another type of work train is the rail train. The rail train does one of two things: It either deposits the new welded rail alongside the track where it is to replace the old rail, or it picks up the old rail that has been replaced, and hauls it somewhere to replace other rail in a siding or some place.

A third type of work train might be a weed sprayer train. I say "might", because I never worked one of those, so I don't know if they needed a train crew or not. I would think that at a minimum, they would probably need a pilot (an engineer who knows the division) if the weed sprayer was actually to be run by a member of the weed spraying company and not an engineer from the division. It also probably needed a conductor who knew the ropes.

A rare fourth type of work train contained a crane car with a giant electro-magnet, as well as several gondola cars. It went along the right-of-way after some new rail had been laid, new sidings put in, bridges had been built, or perhaps other work had been done. It picked up anything metal along the right-of-way that was made out of steel--things like short pieces of rail that had been cut out to fit around the switches, buckets or piles of spikes, piles of tie plates, etc. I may have seen one of these one time. If both gondola cars on either side of the crane car got full, the train would have to go to some siding somewhere, and get an empty one or two next to the crane again. Like the other work trains, it was not much work for the train crew other than the engineer.

I worked several ballast work trains and at least one rail train. The one that sticks out in my mind was a ballast work train that was spreading ballast somewhere in the vicinity of the San Bernard River—between Brazoria and the river I believe. It was a hot sunny morning. Suddenly, a quick shower sprang up. It was one of those light drizzles while the sun was still shining. The initial drops of rain hit the hot ballast and immediately turned into vapor, and a veil of steam rose up along the right-of-way.

I was mentally kicking myself, because the Missouri Pacific Railroad was having an employee photo contest at the time, and this would have been one heck of a photo. I would have grabbed my camera, jogged down the track a couple of hundred feet, and then taken several photos of the work train seemingly emerging from the sunny mist. Alas, I did not have my camera with me. It was the best photo I never took.

In our hobby, work trains could be a little something extra added to the model railroad mix. If you had an experienced operating crew during a session, and everything was running smoothly and quickly, you could have somebody run a work train to spread ballast somewhere, either to throw a wrench into the works, or give somebody something else to run. His job would be to dig some ballast cars out of the yard (thereby getting in the yardmaster's way), and then

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head out to some milepost between towns. His instructions would be to spread ballast from milepost such-and-such to milepost such-and-such (or maybe one town to the next town), and to tie up on some side track near there at the end of work. You would probably give him a time period (such as fifteen or twenty actual minutes or something). He might also have to stop work intermittently to get out of the way of trains now and then, but it is not unusual for other trains to sometimes have to wait until the work train gets done or completes a certain amount of work. At the next operating session, you could instruct some mainline freight to pick up the work train. This would mean tying the engine into the consist as well as picking up the ballast cars. Activities such as this add variety, and keep operating sessions from being more-or-less the same from session to session.

I'd like to see some manufacturer produce a model of a rail train. It could be about eight to twelve cars in length, and the "rail" would be made of some kind of flexible rubber that would easily flex around curves. Possibly the rail could come on a roll where the modeler would cut it to length. The manufacturer could even offer two-car or four-car add-on sets. Does Walthers, Athearn, are Con-Cor hear me about this? I think this would be a popular item in HO and especially N scale. I can visualize the ad in Model Railroader magazine: "For the model railroader who has everything...".

Time to tie this one up.

The Greater Houston Train Show: *IT'S HERE (AGAIN)!!*

Bob Barnett

It's that time again!! And we are calling all San Jacinto Club Volunteers:

We passed around sign-up sheets at the January Meeting and got about 40% of the slots filled. We will have the sign-up sheets again at the February meeting so please consider taking a time slot (Good positions are still available!!)

Craig Brantley just sent out the layout tour notice/invitations. So if you have an operating railroad consider being on the tour.

So far have the following staff Volunteers:

Vendor Table Sales: Robert Ashcraft
Clinics: Steve Sandifer
Contest Room: OPEN!!
San Jacinto Sales Table: Tom Bailey
Layout Tours: Craig Branteley
Registration Table: Ed Dibble
Robert Ashcraft
Gilbert Freitag
Switching Layout: Dave Shafer
Advance Publicity: Steve Sandifer
Publicity Mail Out: Ed Dibble

Display Layouts: Bob Barnett

Plus a lot of folks who signed up for individual shifts.

A big **Thank You** goes to **Dick Louvet** for organizing the San Jac Table at last week's World's Greatest Hobby Show. We handed out several hundred flyers for the upcoming GHTS. Dick also submitted the paperwork to get the club re-certified as an All-NMRA Club, allowing us to apply for our NMRA insurance certificate.

See you at the February Meeting



Meeting minutes January 7, 2014

President Dick Louvet called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and welcomed all current members and guests. Dick passed around a sign-up sheet for last minute volunteers to man the club table at the World's Greatest Hobby Show at the GRB, Houston, Jan. 11 and 12, 2014. See wghshow.com for details.

Vice president Rex Ritz introduced this month's program by Chuck Lind, Don Formanek, Craig Brantley, and David Fritsche on the CASS Scenic RR's 50th Anniversary run days.

Chuck started with photos of stops they made on the way to CASS.

They stopped at the Great Smoky Mountain RR. There was a large Lionel collection and RR there too. Chuck had photos of prototype passenger trains running there, as well as the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. There is a automobile road on a lot of the old RR right of way. There was a fantastic bridge, New River Bridge, that people jump off 1 day each year.

Once at Cass, the guys were able to film several photo run-byes of freight consists. All the motive power was diesel for these. The tightest mainline radius in the US is on this line. Next they stopped in Durbin and got to film run-byes with Climax steam power this time. Then off to Cass State Park. There are remains of a large lumber mill complex that is mostly gone now. They have restored company houses that are available to rent for lodging. A rebuilt C&O depot is on the line with about a 40' long model RR inside. The Cass lumber production was about 1 million board feet a week in its hay day. Parts of the power house and mill are still present today. Cass had 4 shays steamed up and running that day, plus 1 more in running condition. They have a crew member on each car to manually operate the hand brakes since no air brakes on the trains. Chuck showed lots of photos of the shays in action, in between the rain showers of the day. There was even side by side "drag racing" by 3 shays on Sunday morning.

Next month's meeting will be by Richard Bartlett on Model RR lights/LEDS.

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

Treasurer's report, Gilbert Freitag:

Expenses:

\$487.83 train show post card mailing

\$259.80 club brochure printing

\$3140.00 City of Stafford train show rent

Income:

\$810.00 Train show table sales

\$5,942.57 Ending balance

New Business:

Dick Louvet discussed an inquiry that was made to the club for anyone interested in building a scale model of the Galveston Warves for their anniversary meeting. A conference call to dis-

cuss details on this will be made in the coming weeks.

A discussion of the funds of the club and there use was put on hold until after the train show.

Ed Rains is recovering and trying to get off his IV pain meds so he can return home. Emails and cards are welcome, but please no visitors at this time.

Dave Milton is in a rehab center in Alvin to build up his strength, after falling and fracturing a hip around Thanksgiving time. Dave would like phone calls and/or emails to boost his moral. See this issue of the Derail for contact informations. He is not is any real discomfort and wants to go home.

Website:

no report

LSR:

Blake Bogs report there have been some email problems with the LSR but they are being resolved.

Division 8:

no report

Derail: Bob Sabol

Bob asked for more modeling articles. Remember the deadline in the 15th of the month.

Yahoo Group:

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

There can be postings of people wanting to sell/give away RR related items.

NMRA:

no report

Greater Houston Train Show, Feb 15th, 2015, 10:00AM to 4:30 PM

Bob Barnett passed around some sign-up sheets for a few more volunteer spots that need to be filled.

Steve Sandier has 4 clinics locked in and 4 more in work. Contact Steve if you have any last minute clinic ideas.

Craig Brantley is working out a "limited" layout tour list.

Tim Bailey read the "new" San Jac sales table rules.

Robert Ashcraft reported that the sales tables are sold out...again.

Dave Shafer will bring the club switching layout.

There will be a judged contest, so bring your entries.

Fall Layout Tour:

Craig Brantley reported all went well. Thanks Craig for another year well done.

Refreshments were thanks to Bob Barnett and Virginia Freitag.

Tom Bailey volunteered to bring them next month.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 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, FEBRUARY 4

**Model Railroad Lighting, LEDs
by Richard Bartlet, VP Houston N Crowd**

Refreshments: Tom Bailey and Virginia Freitag

Video Corner

Why did the chicken cross the tracks?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rtAoBKKd1Q>

Guess the Layout!



Answer to January's Guess the Layout: Bob Werre