



The DERAIL

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

March 2016

Volume 47, Issue 3

Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Ry By Peter Leach with Brian Jansky

Behind the Bench Work

Seven Questions with Peter Leach

How long have you been into Model Railroading?

I started in 1978 with some used N scale equipment on a door. Space was an issue for years.

How did you get into the hobby?

I built plastic models as a kid. I eventually moved to building wooden ship models. I picked up some used N scales models while in a hobby shop one day looking for ship building materials. Haven't stopped since!

Did you have any previous layouts before this one?

I modeled Conrail's operations in the mid-1980s in N Scale. My last layout was of Palmer, Massachusetts on the on Boston & Albany line. It was 10 ft X 14 ft in part of a basement in my previous home in New Hampshire. I had 25 detailed and DCC'd locomotives with around 100 cars. The layout included a 12-track double-ended staging yard.

I started the change to On30 when the N Scale layout became a maintenance nightmare (too big!) It wasn't as fun anymore.



What interests you in your prototype?

I came across the book: *Two Feet to Tidewater* in a hobby shop in the 1980s. I tried, unsuccessfully, to develop some working HO_n30 models over the years based on the WW&F prototype.

The WW&F also appealed to my love of the New England coast and wooden ships.

Anybody or any layouts inspire you?

The work done by Dave Frary and Bob Hayden on their Carrabasset & Dead River layouts were my key inspirations. One of my biggest thrills in my years in the hobby was having Bob Hayden visit my layout, along with Bob Brown and Charlie Getz from the Gazette, during the NNGC this past year here in Houston!

I was also inspired to make the major change in scale and prototype/era by similar changes made by folks like Tone Koester, Paul Dolkos, Lou Sassi, and others.

What is your favorite part of the hobby?

I have two favorites: 1) researching the history of the prototype and 2) scratch building models. I combine the two to aspects to help me build accurate models that are appropriate for the time frame.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

I have met great folks since my move to Houston in 2012. The model railroad community is strong, and varied. I like to think that my Maine 2-ft themed layout has added a bit to the variety of in the area!



Pete Leach's

Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Ry

Quick Glimpse

Name: WW&F Ry

Scale: On30

Railroad: Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Ry.

Era: 1925

Location: Towns of Wiscasset and Albion, Maine

Size: 10' x 12'

Percent Complete: Track - 99%, Scenery - 33%

Control: Digitrax with SoundTraxx decoders in both locomotives and one Soundcar™

Track: Micro Engineering Code 83 hand laid on basswood ties

Switches: Handmade on Fast Track Jig with caboose hand throws

Bench Work Style: L-Girder with ½" plywood and Homosote

Roadbed: Homosote™ on ½" Plywood

Scenery Method: Plaster gauze, extruded foam, and lots of sculptimold! I recently started using Ground Goop after attending a Lou Sassi clinic in Kansas City last fall. I've also started using static grass with a flocking device for ground cover.

By the Numbers

Mainline run: About 40ft

Minimum radius: 24"

Minimum turnout mainline: No. 5

Minimum turnout yard: No. 5

Maximum grade: N/A

Layout height: 57"

No. of Locomotives: 2 Forney Locomotives kitbashed using Bachmann models.

No. of Freight Cars: 10, plus 2 planned

No. of Passenger Cars: 1 combine, plus one coach planned

Date Started: October 2012

Date Mainline Completed: December 2014



Operations

Operating Sessions: I am developing a system that uses car cards with single-cycle waybills. The process involves empty car orders to get the right car to the shipper. The trains are ran sequentially.

Operations will include manual animation on the water towers, turn tables and ball signals for the crossing in Wiscasset. All of this will add to the "play" time.

Session length: So far, it has been very relaxed. I start and stop before a session is complete. My guess is a full session would last a couple of hours.

Number of trains per session: 4 mixed trains daily (2 round trips) run sequentially.



The layout is a prototype inspired switching layout with scratch built structures and rolling stock built to On2 standards but with On30 gauge track and wheels. It features the two towns at each end of the WW&F: Wiscasset with its waterfront and wharf at one end and Albion at the other. The track plan is based on the prototype in 1925, with adjustments made to fit the space.

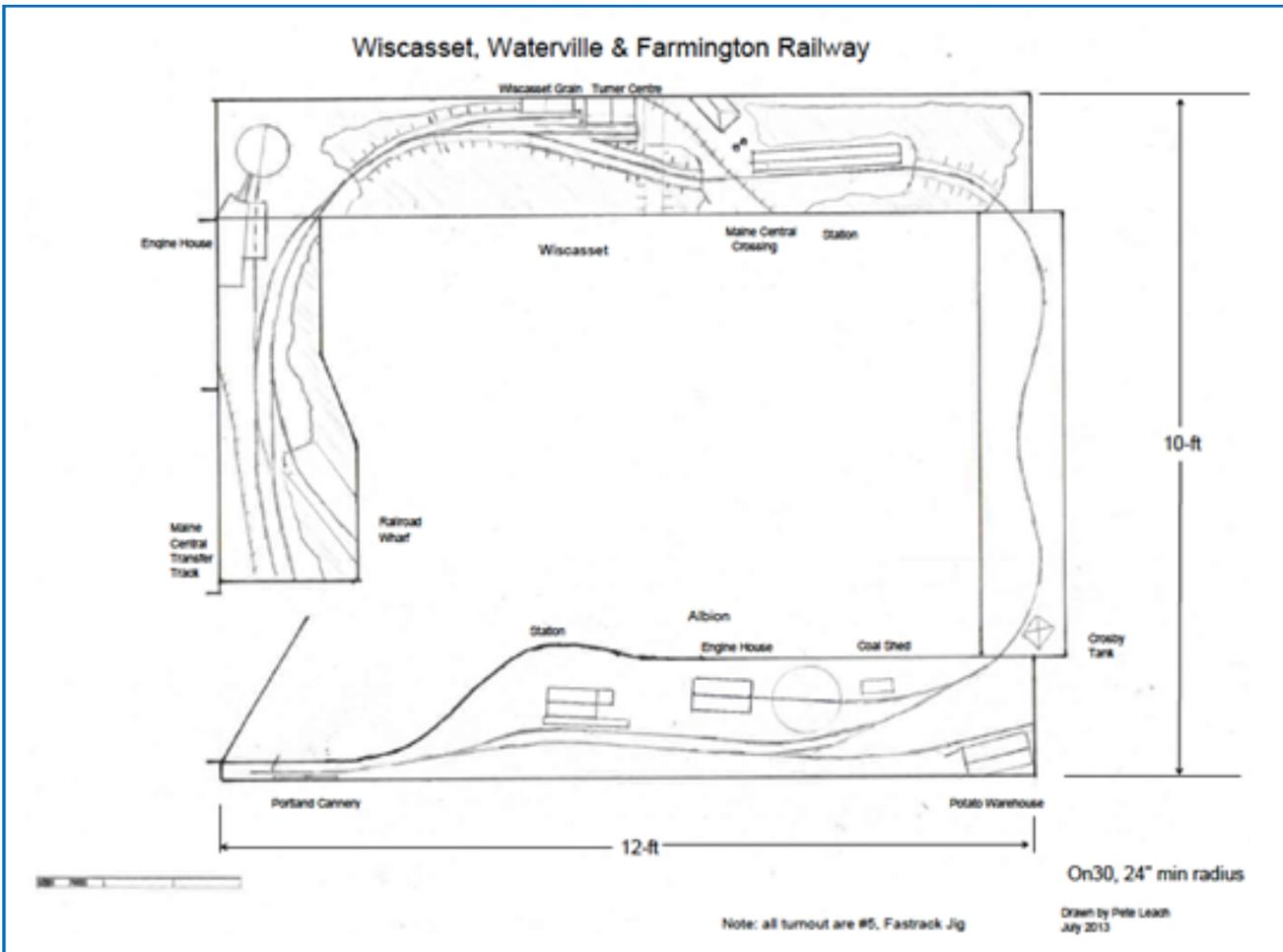
LDE's based on actual prototype track with adjustments for space. I've included a roll-away section (the wharf area) to allow access to the closet. This idea came for the Milwaukee Road Beer Line layout built by the [Model Railroader](#) staff.





Pete wrote an article depicting operations on his Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway in this month's Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette, January / February 2016. The layout was also featured in this promotional video for the Nation Narrow Gauge Convention 2015, please check out the Gazette and the YouTube link below for more information.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90h2bj4HdCw>



Realistic Operations On Your Model Railroad Part 6 By Al Partlow

In this month's episode, we are going to take a look at a modern industry that will fit in a small space, but still provides lots of switching opportunities. The industry I will be discussing is the Corn Syrup Industry and more specifically a Corn Syrup Transload Terminal. While it would require a large amount of space to accurately model an actual corn syrup manufacturing facility such as Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) near Cedar Rapids, IA or Tate & Lyle at Decatur, IL, a transload facility such as Tate & Lyle at Westborough, MA will easily fit in a much smaller space. These terminals are commonplace in many metropolitan areas, wherever food processing industries are located.

If you are not aware, corn syrup is a major commodity transported by many of the Class 1 Railroads. For example, at one time, corn syrup ranked third in the CSX traffic mix, behind coal and autos/trucks. So, for you modelers from the mid-1970s to the present, corn syrup traffic is certainly appropriate for your railroad. Plus, corn syrup tank cars are readily available from numerous model manufacturers, including Atlas, Walthers, and Intermountain. Most corn syrup tank cars were built by Trinity Industries. The smaller 17,600 gallon cars were built between 1984 and 1998, most of which are still in service today. The larger 19,600 gallon cars were built starting in 1998 and are still built today.

A Corn Syrup Transload Terminal basically receives various grades of corn syrup in rail cars, transfers the product to storage tanks, and then reloads product into tank trucks for delivery to various food and soft drink manufacturing plants. Switching is not a simple matter of pulling cars out and shoving cars into the facility, as specific car spots only receive certain grades of product. Corn syrup comes in many grades, ranging from thin (for soft drinks) to thick (for ice cream) and in between for bakeries and candy companies. In addition, when it is cold, cars must be heated in order to unload in a timely manner. Since the cars are loaded "hot" they usually do not require heating to unload in warmer months.

If you have the space, you can model extensive tankage with lots of piping, especially if you enjoy building this sort of facility. But, if you don't have the

space or do not like to model in great detail, you can simply have some simple piping from unloading spots going into a structure(s) which would contain numerous tanks for storage of the corn syrup. Of course, you can also combine some outside tankage and some structures for a more interesting complex. Both Pikestuff and City Classics offer structures in HO and N scales that can be used for these buildings. Walthers also makes an industrial piping kit. Pump houses and steam equipment structures can be scratch built from styrene or wood.

The number of tracks in your facility may also vary depending on your space. The Tate & Lyle facility in Westborough has two unloading tracks. The inner track holds eight cars and the outside track five cars. The three cars furthest from the building on the inner track cannot be unloaded, but can be "heated" prior to unloading. The fact that the inner track also "fouls" the outer track also further complicates switching the terminal, as cars for the outside track must be spotted first. This facility typically receives five cars a day and releases the same amount. In addition, they store ten to twenty cars on adjacent storage tracks. Corn syrup has a shelf life of 180 days, so switch crews and terminal personnel need to make sure that cars are unloaded within that time period. If not unloaded, the cars are shipped out to be converted into ethanol. Cars are also brought in over the weekend to set up the facility for Monday morning unloading requirements.

Switching a facility such as this one, translates well to the use of a Switch List. Cars that have not been unloaded or those partially unloaded must be re-spotted, in addition to inbound loads spotted at the correct unloading spot for the specific grade of corn syrup received at that spot. Empties must also be pulled as required. By adding more tracks and more unloading spots, the facility can increase switching time accordingly. It is my understanding that JMRI can also generate detailed switching instructions for switching this type of facility, although the switch crew may have to handle re-spots via mental or written notes.

So, if you are a modern era modeler, give some thought to a Corn Syrup Transload Terminal.

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Realistic Operations On Your Model Railroad Part 6 By Al Partlow

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Switching this kind of facility can keep crews busy for an unlimited amount of time, depending on the number of unloading spots and the amount of trackage you are able to include on your layout. For more complex operational possibilities, you can locate your transload terminal in an industrial park and have even

more switching opportunities. Have fun with transloading corn syrup on your layout.

For additional information, photos and track layout drawings of this type of facility, please see the Winter 2016 Edition of Kalmbach's "How To Model Today's Railroads".

An Anatomy of an "SP Meet" By David N. Currey

I recently had the opportunity to ride the Sunset Limited from El Paso back to Houston. The opportunity arose rather quickly when an old friend named Ernest from Lafayette, Louisiana had a ticket available because his wife had to back out unexpectedly. What we did was drive out to El Paso, as he was on his way to California to judge piano guild in the Los Angeles area.

He had planned the trip expertly, with numerous surprises along the way. Knowing my taste for barbecue, he stopped at a place near Columbus (Mikeska's, I believe) where I had previously only sampled their barbecue sandwiches. I had a sliced beef plate, and it was really good.

On the east side of San Antonio, he threw me for a loop when he took a bypass around the east and north side of the city, and then continued west-southwestward past I-10 when we met it. It sort of crossed my mind that he was going to detour through Bandera, because he often heard me talk about the town, but I knew we had to make it to Van Horn, so such a delay seemed unlikely. However, that was exactly what we did, and I was able to point out several of my favorite spots, such as the dam and city park on the Medina River, the River Front Motel, the OST Restaurant, and Bandera's first bank, which I had built an N scale model of years back. I should have showed him the Mayan Dude Ranch on the west side of town, but I surmised we were a little pressed for time, so skipped that.

Then it was off to the races again. At one point west of Junction, I looked off towards the north and saw something I'd never seen before: There was this dust storm about a half mile across about two miles away, and the dust was being sucked up into a cloud that seemed to have sort of a big hole in the bottom of it

as wide as the dust storm. You could tell it was dust, not rain, because it was tan colored. All the rainstorms in the vicinity were grayish colored.

On the other side of Fort Stockton, Ernest casually asked me if I'd be interested in seeing the Marfa Lights, a topic we occasionally had discussed, so we detoured down US 67 through Alpine, stopping at the Amtrak station, and then on towards Marfa. The viewing area was nice, with an elevated platform and restrooms across the highway from the Sunset Route. It's located at the entrance to the old Marfa Army Air Field (totally gone now), which was closed within a year after World War II. Up to thirty-five people were there, just after dusk. I had not expected to see any lights, but we did. A "new" local, living in Marfa for nine months, said this was his eighth time to view the lights. A radio tower beacon off to the southwest was used as a bearing. Up to several degrees east of that were several lights that went off and on and sometimes moved. The locals stated this was traffic on US 67.

From two degrees to ten degrees west of the beacon light were what the locals told us were the Marfa Lights. Usually, at least one was viewable. Occasionally, up to four could be seen at once. They would be of varying brightnesses, and would crop up in different places and heights (always at or just above what looked like the horizon, but actually was not), but would never move around, whereas the lights on US 67 did show movement if you watched them long enough. We were told that on some nights the Marfa Lights moved around a lot, and on other nights did not even show at all. Ernest and I both discounted vehicle lights, for if they were actually vehicle lights on the highway, they would show movement. We did not observe any other lights winking on and off in any other directions. *(Continued on page 8)*

An Anatomy of an “SP Meet” (Cont.)

By David N. Currey

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The Marfa lights did sort of look like the vehicle lights on US 67, with the exception that they didn't move, but that was the only thing to indicate they were probably not vehicle lights. To me, the viewing of the lights were inconclusive, but another friend who'd been out there with his wife said he saw them and they moved around all over the place. Explanations for these lights include cars, trains, lights from Earth's magnetic field, plasma lifeforms (orbs), and bio-luminescent ropens (modern day cryptological flying reptiles).

The next day, after a night of peaceful rest in Van Horn with UP freights on the Baird Sub zipping by all night, we headed on to El Paso, seeing several UP freights on the way, and sampling some Mexican food in Sierra Blanca. I should have warned Ernest that Mexican sauces are hotter the closer you get to the Rio Bravo (Grande), as he sampled several of the picante sauces. A couple of minutes later, with his iced tea glass empty, he stated his mouth was on fire. I was a little more cautious, and steered clear after sampling one of the sauces, though not soon enough to keep my stomach from feeling a little queasy. The food was really good, though, and the refried beans were the best I've ever had anywhere.

Ernest dropped me off at El Paso Union Station. It was in good shape, but was unairconditioned. Because it was a dry heat, it wasn't too bad. Amtrak got in early, and after the conductor scanned my ticket, I boarded the train. The west Texas scenery has to be seen in person to really be appreciated. You could see miles and miles of Texas. Everything seemed sharper than in the hazy Houston area. You could look off in various directions and see several rainstorms miles away all at once, though no drops hit our train. Paisano Pass was beautiful, and this was the first time I realized I was passing through it when I actually did.

After night set in, I stayed on in the lounge car for a while, and became transfixed with the moon seen through the upper curved windows. It moved around back and forth gradually in an arc of about 120 degrees, so it was almost impossible to figure out what direction was east. After a while, the moon settled

down on the right (rear) quarter, so I figured then that we were generally headed east and a bit to the south at that point.

From El Paso to Del Rio we passed few westbound trains, but just on the west side of San Antonio we passed four such trains in close succession, including the westbound Sunset Limited. My train sleeping technique was rusty, and I probably did not sleep more than three hours all night. My technique involves taking Ibuprofen and Nytol, but I'd forgotten the Nytol. Amtrak no longer passes out pillows, so I had to use my plastic bag containing dirty clothes. Most of my sleep was actually between San Antonio and Flatonia the next morning. On arriving in the diner, I asked the guy seated across from me where we were, and he said he didn't know. Just then, I saw the railfan observation platform glide past, so I told him we were in Flatonia.

Up to this point, we had arrived at every station stop between nine and twenty-five minutes early, which was some kind of record. Around Columbus, I calculated that we would be roughly about fifteen minutes early into Houston, but I also told myself, “I'll believe it when I see sit.” After all, we were talking UP/SP dispatchers here, who are bred to have a healthy disregard for anything passenger and raised to hold said thing in complete contempt. This, the truth, is self evident, and I hold it well.

As we bounced and swayed along, I couldn't help but feel that the track between San Antonio and Houston was not in as good a shape as that from El Paso to San Antonio. Walking through the coaches was a good deal more taxing on my train legs. Other than a short delay leaving San Antonio, we were doing well, though. That is, well until we got to East Bernard, a short ways west of Rosenberg, where we headed into a siding, perhaps the first siding since El Paso.

We pulled in until we cleared the west end of the siding by a few car lengths, and then stopped. Now where had I seen this before? How about Navasota on the old Houston leg of the Texas Eagle, and a number of other places on ex-Southern Pacific lines. Could I be about to experience another...another...“SP Meet”?

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An Anatomy of an “SP Meet” (Cont.)

By David N. Currey

(Continued from page 8)

For those of you new to my articles, let me educate you that an “SP Meet” is where a passenger train heads into a siding to meet a train, and then backs out of the siding after the meet. The reason is usually because a hog-lawed or parked train is in the siding ahead of it, or maybe even stored cars.

Okay. Since the SP Meet requires a backup move, I should be seeing the conductor coming down the aisle for that. However, no conductor was coming. With the westbound signal on the main track green, it wasn't too long until a train zipped by us going west. Still, no conductor yet. What gives? I had a feeling, rooted in my experience, that the SP Meet was still on.

A chap from Australia was there with me, and I explained what I thought was happening, but was confused when the conductor did not show up and our signal to the rear remained red. Then I suggested to the Aussie that maybe we were going to meet two trains here. Then the mainline signal turned yellow, and a couple of minutes later turned flashing yellow. The second train did not show up until it was green. I explained to the Aussie that the second train was probably holding back so he could ride on greens instead of having to proceed cautiously on flashing yellows. After this, the Aussie seemed to begin regarding me as some kind of soothsayer or something.

Then the conductor showed up, and I said something to him to the effect of, “I know what's going on. We're doing an SP Meet, right?” He may have been testing me, so I explained what an SP Meet was. He said that Amtrak has to do that a lot on the BNSF as well, so maybe the UP is not the only practitioner of the technique. The Aussie commented that he was learning a lot—maybe a lot that he didn't want to be learning.

Finally, we got a yellow signal to back out of the pass, and soon we were zipping down the mainline again. I was sure we couldn't get into Houston early now. The UP dispatcher had done his duty. I will never ever again doubt the ability of a UP dispatcher to foul up an on-time passenger train. What could I have been thinking back there? I can only remember

one time getting into Houston early in my 45 years of train riding. The dispatcher responsible for that miracle was probably a boomer off the ATSF or a newbie. I imagine he was then severely reprimanded by his SP supervisor, and told to never ever put a passenger train into any town on schedule, much less early. “We can't let Amtrak know we can run them on time,” I can hear him screaming. This, the deduction, is self evident, and I hold it well.

It would take a miracle for us to even get in on time, now. Well, we got the opposite of a miracle. Somewhere along about Stafford, I thought I heard the train go into emergency. I glanced out the window to the right, and saw a grade crossing coming up a few seconds later. Finally, we began slowing down, so I figured we probably came close to hitting something. Within about ten seconds, I could smell the brake shoes as we came to a screeching halt another twenty seconds or so later and about a football field past the crossing.

I later confirmed with the conductor that we had a close call at the grade crossing. He said it had been an 18-wheeler, and announced that over the loud-speaker system. It put us twenty minutes late into the Houston Amtrak restroom, I mean, station. I walked up to the head end and asked one of the guys coming down from the engines, “Did you bring her in from San Antonio?” He said yes, so I asked him how close it had been. He held up his hands about twelve inches apart. He told me his fireman had been on the floor. “That was close,” I said. He replied, “Too many close ones.”

My cab ride home was \$55.00—almost two-thirds the price of the entire Amtrak ticket from El Paso. The exorbitant fee was due partially to two detours we had to make due to freeway and road construction. He wouldn't take any of my suggestions on how to get around these areas, and I got the impression he had not been driving a cab that long. It had been a wonderful trip to El Paso and back, and blessed perhaps more than a little bit by the Man upstairs near the end. Time to tie this one up.

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*West Texas Sunset Southwest of Fort Stockton
Photo by: David N. Currey*



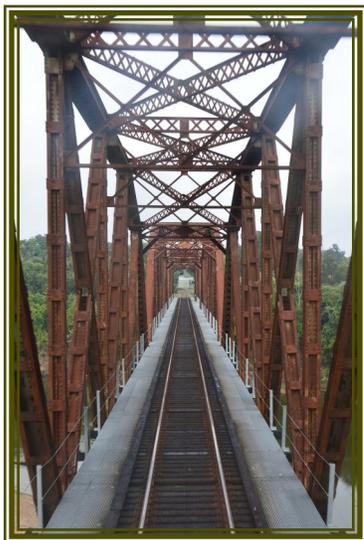
*Union Pacific Freight on Baird Subdivision East of Sierra Blanca
Photo by: David N. Currey*



*Old Southern Pacific Station at Sierra Blanca Begging to be Modeled
Photo by: David N. Currey*



*El Paso Union Station Waiting Room
Photo by: David N. Currey*



*Sunset Limited Crosses Colorado River Bridge at Columbus
Photo by: David N. Currey*



*Union Pacific Freight Passes Sunset Limited During SP Meet
Photo by: David N. Currey*

San Jac February Minutes

By Dick Louvet

President Rex Ritz called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The club welcomed James Little as a new member.

Clinic

Chuck Lind introduced Mike Gulley for a clinic on the Digitrax Zephyr. Mike explained the operation of the Zephyr. Although advertised as a “starter” set, it has a full set of DCC features and integrates with the other Digitrax products. It is limited by the number of locomotive addresses and the amperage of the built in booster.

Mike used the manual to cover the features of the system and offered several helpful tips from his own experience. He handed out a simple schematic for one or two additional throttles for the Zephyr.

Mike answered questions during the break

Treasurer’s Report

The January 29th bank balance was \$11333.20. Deposits for the month included Train Show vendor table receipts. Expenditures included gift cards for the Derail assistant editor.

The December secretary’s report was accepted as published.

The secretary is in the process of digitizing the club’s records. Jim Lemmond volunteered to convert some old VCR tapes to DVD format. We are looking for pre-2002 copies of the Derail to scan. Several members volunteered to bring in some old issues.

Voting on the Bob Dannenbrink Open Loads Contest was held during the break.

Train Show

Bob Barnett passed around volunteer signup sheets for the show. There were a few open slots.

David Curry is in charge of clinics. There are six clinics

covering scratch building, operations, an overview of the hobby, as well as building one of the modules on display at the show.

Bob mentioned that our show is unique: it is one of the last shows with a lot of individual modelers buying sales tables.

The show is February 20, from 10:00am to 4:30pm.

Division 8

Jim Lemmond covered an additional bylaw change for Division 8 for first time members: they can be trial or regular members.

The Division 8 web site is active at www.texasgulfddivision.org.

The LSR board reviewed results from the last convention. They are investigating holding the convention in smaller towns to keep costs down.

The 2016 convention is scheduled for Dallas/Fort Worth.

Houston will host the 2017 convention.

Derail

Bob Sabol again thanked the Derail contributors. The newsletter is only as good as the submissions.

Terri Brogoitti emailed the board with her thanks for the gift cards presented to her at the January meeting.

New Business

Bob Barnett announced the “Open Loads” winner. Kelly Russel won the \$50 prize with his “Party” car. The cars can be submitted for a popular vote at the train show. The can also be judged under NMRA guidelines if requested.

Respectfully submitted,
Dick Louvet

Steve Sandifer Newspaper Article

Be sure to check out the front page article about San Jac member Steve Sandifer featured in the Fort Bend Star on February 17, 2016. Congratulations, Steve! And thanks to Phil Stewart for bringing it to The Derail’s attention. <https://issuu.com/fortbendstar.com/docs/star021716>



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, MARCH 1

“Life of Railroading”

by

Bruce Blalock

Bruce is a retired UP engineer and will talk about his life working for the railroad. Bruce is a very interesting speaker who has spoken at several events.



Refreshments:

Virginia Freitag (drinks)

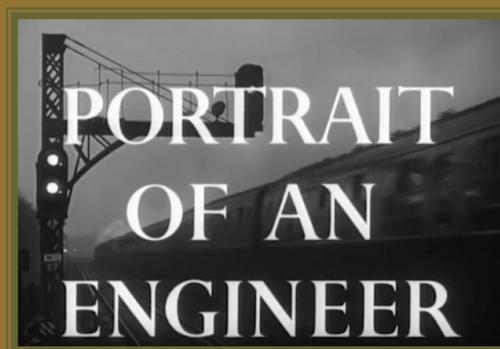
Mike Brignac (cookies)



Video Corner

“British Railway Engineers at Vulcan Foundry—1954”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7IbKjVo0IM>





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