

SPLITSWITCH

Volume 67 Issue 7
www.samratx.org
July, 2009



Home of the San Antonio & Northern Railroad

A Short Blast From The Headend

Early last month I was fortunate to attend the Lone Star Region Annual Convention in Dallas/Fort Worth. The convention was well planned and really had a lot to offer, with the highlight being a ride on the Grapevine Vintage Railroad. The train ride went to the old Ft. Worth stockyards which have been converted to shops and restaurants. (Yes, they got the smell out.) We arrived back at the Grapevine station about 11pm. The locomotive that pulled our train had GP7 stenciled on it, but after speaking with the engineer it was revealed to be an F3 that had been refurbished to GP12, with a 3000hp power plant. On Friday, Wayne Hammelman, Don Scott and I tagged along with Bob Barnett from Houston to look at some Ft. Worth layouts. Friday night we took in several clinics. On Saturday we took a bus tour of layouts in the Dallas area. On both the self and formal tours we saw some really great layouts, two of which were club layouts. Saturday night was the banquet, after which Paul Steves wowed the crowd with a description of the 2010 Alamo Rails in San Antonio. Saturday morning after the LSR breakfast it was back to San Antonio. Overall it was a well designed convention with a lot of activities.

If you haven't been to a MRR convention, then I recommend you make a serious attempt to get involved with next year's, right here in San Antonio. You'll be surprised at the number of clinics and activities available at these events. It's really a great opportunity to learn more about the hobby, rub elbows with the experts and see some great layouts.

Sad News

It is with great sadness that I must share with you the passing of Hal Carstens. Hal died peacefully at home this afternoon [Tuesday] after putting in a nearly full day at the office yesterday. Hal had recently returned from a speaking engagement in Texas and had developed a rash that was being treated with antihistimine and cortizone, which he said made him sleepy. He left the office a little earlier than usual yesterday... but I noted that he made one of his usual smart remarks to Cathy as he left the building for the last time, and all seemed normal. He had no other medical complaints that I was aware of. Hal didn't come into work this morning saying that he thought he was having a reaction to the medication and would rest up for the day. He was home with Phyllis, and had a visit from Janet, but seemed to take a turn for the worse in the afternoon. Phyllis called Henry and EMS about 2:30 pm. Henry arrived first. No additional details are available at this time but I wanted to try to share this sad news with you before you heard it from another source.

Sincerely,
John Earley
Carstens Publications

Editors Note: Hal Carstens was the banquet speaker at the LSR Convention in Irving 2 weeks ago, and the Publisher of Railroad Model Craftsman. The railroading hobby has lost a great friend.

Sunday Fun Runs Back On!!

Paul Dawson would like everyone to know that the Sunday fun runs are back on from 1:00 to 4:00 PM and during the Crossroads Show.



San Antonio Model Railroad Association, Inc.

Items of Interest:

- Maintenance Crew #2 Work-day Saturday, July 11th
- Monday Morning Breakfast Group Meets at 8:00 am every Monday @ Denney's & 281 & Bitters
- Layout Management Committee will NOT meet this month
- Board of Directors Meeting will also NOT be held this month
- General Membership Meeting WILL be held Friday, July 10th 7:30 pm at the Museum
- Crossroads Train Show July 25th and 26th. Come help!!
- LSR Planning meeting will be held July 30th at Museum at 7:00 PM

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JUST WHAT ARE THE MAINTENANCE TEAMS

Editor-Frank Houzvicka
Mailing-Jack Morgan
Photos: Frank Houzvicka & Flash Blackman

If you notice in the SplitSwitch each month, there is a maintenance team listed. There are four teams—each headed up by one of the four Directors of SAMRA. I have tried to put every member on one of the teams. It is up to the Director to see the cleaning gets done. If you don't want to do it, then get someone on your team to be in charge. It doesn't take long if even 3 or 4 team members show up. The rotation is each team gets two months at a time and that averages about every six months. The schedule and an updated team list will also be posted on the bulletin board. Per the calendar, the team is supposed to clean up the second & fourth Saturdays (or whatever day is best for your team) each month—a total of four times each rotation. Keeping the club somewhat presentable is the responsibility of every member, especially if you are eating or drinking and drop stuff on the floor!! Clean it up!!

I won't take up space here listing the things that need to be checked or cleaned, but will be more than happy to give you a detailed list, offer suggestions, and even show you how to do it. **JUST ASK—JUST CALL ME AT 822-6409.** In fact, I will make sure each Director

gets a list, go over the list with the Directors and see if there are any questions. Directors, please contact your team members and see when they can come in to help.

If taking care of the club is not something you can or want to do then make a donation for the grass cutting because we are lucky the maintenance teams don't have to do the grass and outside stuff like we used to do. For those of you who have contributed, I give you a big thanks and for everyone, keep those donations coming.

If you are listed on a maintenance team, call the Director you are listed under or just show up. You won't have to mow grass and might have some fun, or get to build scenery, or work on the raffle projects for the jamboree.

Sharon Mainz



Maintenance Team # 2

- AL BOOS 658-4548
- STAN ADAMS 830-535-6214
- CHARLES & SANDY BARNES 830-755-4746
- GARY & LYNN BROWN 830-438-6160
- DONALD BRYAN 651-8242
- HAROLD BRYANT 830-426-5539
- JIM CONNOR 923-5865
- MARY DODSON 341-4866
- BRUCE GRANT 658-4364
- BILL GRAY 830-606-1543
- WAYNE & LOIS HAMMELMAN 830-964-3659
- SHELLEY & BEN HEDGES 830-510-6105
- DONALD HOISEK 512-863-3220
- ERNIE & MARY LOU KAAK 403-0287
- DICK KEITH 830-980-3253
- JIM LADD 655-5267
- GERALD LIEN 653-6062
- JACK MORGAN 653-1723
- RON NAGEL 651-5188
- DENNIS PIERCE 653-8863
- DALE REED 650-8619
- ALLAN TINDEL 830-460-8587
- JIM TUCKER 677-0710

CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

If you change an address, e-mail, phone #, etc., please let us know.

If you don't tell us, we don't know!



"CANS"



Remember to bring your empty aluminum cans to SAMRA for recycling. The money made from recycling cans goes into the general fund to help pay for the needs of the club. This is an easy way to put some extra money into the treasury without digging into your pockets.

PLEASE HELP!



[This NMRA/LSR Siding column for July was unfinished and unedited at the time the Splitswitch was in final markup as the author, Fred Bock, was in the hospital recovering from Pneumonia, exacerbated by congestive heart failure. Our best wishes go to Fred for a speedy recovery].

SAMRA Modular Group Special Interest Group (SIG)

Pat Mackin

SAMRA has its first SIG with the SAMRA Modular Group. A SIG is simply a group of SAMRA members who have a special interest in a particular area of our hobby and who want to organize themselves to put some extra focus and time into that area. Proposed revisions to our SAMRA bylaws which we will be voting on in the near term have added a section that defines the basic requirements for establishing and operating a SIG. The two most important ones are (i) participants must be SAMRA members, and (ii) SIGs must pay their own way.

Essentially, modular model railroading consists of small (usually 2' by 4') sections that are mobile and may be linked together. Any number of people may participate, and a modular layout can grow or shrink depending on the number of active participants. SAMRA has had other modular groups in the past, but this is the first time one has been organized as a SIG.

Modular model railroading is a long standing aspect of the World's Greatest Hobby. NMRA has specifications for developing modules to help ensure that the modules can be interconnected so the tracks line up and the wiring is compatible. These specifications guarantee that modular model railroaders can get together in groups to produce very large layouts.

The current SAMRA Modular Group was organized about eight years ago. At that time, construction of the museum layout was just beginning. Also, in addition to SAMRA members who had a long-term interest in modular railroading, there were some new club members who had no previous experience in the hobby and who were looking for a place to learn and practice their fledgling skills. Establishment of the current modular group satisfied both those needs.

The group elected to use Cell-U-Clay rather than plaster in scenery development to keep the modules light and more mobile. The group also elected to wire its two main lines and its third auxiliary line to support both DC and DCC operation by means of selector switches.

Aside from a general requirement for a somewhat realistic scenery and terrain transition between adjacent modules, members can do whatever they want with their modules, and several modules have changed complexion and theme substantially over the years.

Typically, the SAMRA Modular Group looks for open business locations in malls and negotiates rent-free occupancy with mall managers. Since its establishment, the SAMRA Modular Group has had "gigs" (i) three places in Crossroads Mall, (ii) in McCreless Mall, (iii) in Westlakes Mall, and (iv) in its current location in Quarry Mall. We have also participated in both local and out-of-area train shows, including two months at the George Bush Sr. Presidential Library in College Station. In between "gigs" we typically store our modules in our garages.

Due to the current economy, it looks like we will continue to occupy the open business location at Quarry Mall for quite some time. We are open on Friday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 6:00 p.m. All SAMRA members are welcome to come on out and run our module group trains or bring your own trains to run.

SAMRA Modular Group has unclaimed modules and space, and we are always looking for new members. We have no dues, and we run our group based on consensus. If you would like to look into joining the group, stop out at Quarry Mall or contact one of our members. Current members are Paul Lawler, John Talley, Bill Eubank, Scott Priegle, and Pat and Joe Mackin. However, Joe Mackin will soon be running away from home to go to A&M, so you won't have to put up with him for long.





YAAK from KAAK

Welcome back to San Antonio, Jack Siegel, from Overland Park, Kansas. Glad to have you back aboard.!

Doyle Bond is now out of the hospital. His Mercedes is out of commission but he is looking pretty good.

Gary Brown will be starting a new 4'x 6' layout for our January 2010 Jamboree after the Summer Balcones Show.

Mary Dodson is in Las Vegas for 4 weeks visiting her daughter, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Paul Dawson is almost finished with his section of the Museum layout. Check out the snakes, squirrels and new telephone poles.

Wayne and Allen are working on the road to Pearl Brewing Co.

Al Boos will be painting the area behind the Van Auken section soon.

John and Orphie are moving forward on the area above the Zingerle bridge.

Jim Ladd and Frank Houzvicka are still working on the second and third control panels.

A lot of folks will be missing in July- being at the NMRA Convention in Connecticut.

Have a Happy Fourth of July !!!!



**HELP HELP HELP.....
Calling all Members!!!**

The summer show at Crossroads Mall is rapidly approaching. Volunteers are needed to help with setup, registration, tear-down, security and various other duties. We will start setup on Friday July 24 at 2:00 PM. Help is also needed on Saturday the 25th from about 8:00 AM to assist vendors coming in on the day of the show. Any one helping with registration needs to be there by 9:30 AM. If you want to help with clinics please let Ernie Kaak know by the next general membership meeting.

I realize that members are preoccupied with summer vacations and other activities. Also our show always seems to be close to the National Convention and other popular regional shows, but we really need all available members to participate and help where ever they can. Please come to the general membership meeting on July 10 so that we can make final plans for the show.

Ralph Alexander, Jamboree Chairman

NEW MEMBERS

Rodney Apgar

Spouse: Deborah
Years in Hobby: ?
Layout: No
Scale: HO

Frank Jaskinia

Spouse:
Years in Hobby: 20
Layout: Yes, 3x5 yard
Scale: HO

Samuel E. Shrum

Spouse: Wanda
Years in Hobby: 10
Layout: long ago
Scale: HO

W. Kennedy Gauger

Spouse: Paula
Years in Hobby: 26
Layout: No
Scale: HO

David Thronson

Spouse: Barbara
Years in Hobby: 5
Layout: No
Scale: HO





Want to take a trip on AMTRAK?
 Want to go to the Temple Train Show in September?
 Want to do BOTH!!

Harold Bryant will be giving a clinic on traveling with AMTRAK at the August business meeting. It has been suggested that we use this new found knowledge to take a day trip and travel to the Temple Train Show on September 19th. We are in the planning stages but here is what we know at this point:

The train leaves SA at 7:00 AM arrives Temple 11:15. Leave Temple 5:15 arrives SA 10:20 PM. For those of us living north of SA Harold will work at getting us on in San Marcus (where parking is free and available). When he last did the trip, the cost (group rate) was \$33.00 for adults, \$28.00 for seniors and \$17.50 for kids. This may change for us. Harold is working with the members of the Temple MR club to provide transportation to the show and back for us. While we are at the depot, their club is nearby as is the RR museum, which we can view while waiting.

This is about all we know at this time. At the August meeting/clinic, we should get final details. About 20 members said they would go at the last meeting (June), so this should be fun trip.

SAMRA Holds Sixth Railroading Merit Badge Clinic Pat Mackin

On Saturday, May 23, SAMRA hosted 24 boy scouts for our sixth Railroading merit badge clinic. This activity is part of our education and public outreach responsibilities under our 501(c)(3) charter. This was also the first clinic at which we hosted scouts from out of the area. Except for one local boy, these scouts were all from Corpus Christi or Austin.

The clinic lasted from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., an hour later start and finish than normal to allow for the travel time required from Corpus Christi. SAMRA meets a real need with these events, since our museum layout provides an almost ideal facility for learning about railroading. We have instructed approximately 175 scouts since we started the clinics, and the local council of the Boy Scouts of America is greatly appreciative of our efforts.

Instructors for this event were Al Boos, Carl Lehman, Frank Houzvicka, Ron Nagel, Paul Steves, and Gary Brown. In addition, several people helped by either sprucing up the museum or assembling some complimentary model railroading reading materials including Sharon Mainz, Lynn Brown, and Doyle Bond. These people all have my great appreciation for making these events possible. If I have failed to mention anyone, please consider it a memory failure rather than an insult.

We continue to receive requests for these clinics, and we have been trying to schedule them once every two or three months. Our main limitation on holding the clinics is availability of members to serve as instructors - I don't want to wear out those who have generously volunteered so far. The effort is minimal, and as a model railroader, you already have the knowledge needed to participate. The scouts have a merit badge pamphlet that helps us orient our instruction to the specific needs of the scouting program.

If you would like to participate in this valuable and enjoyable program, just email me or give me a call. The only qualification is that you need to enjoy talking about trains.

HOME LAYOUT TOUR

No information on any home layout tours
 for the Month of July.





SAMRA General Membership Meeting, June 12th, 2009

President Nagel called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

President Nagel summarized the Treasurer's Report in the absence of E. Kaak. The report was approved.

New members Frank Jaskinia, W. Kennedy Gauger, Samuel Shrum were announced.

Guest Spring Dyer of Amedisys Hospice was introduced and made a request for a SAMRA volunteer to support one of her hospice patients who is a model railroader. She also provided general information regarding needs for hospice volunteers.

R. Alexander provided a status of the preparations for the summer show. Vendor participation is low, and Ralph asked for assistance making another round of vendor calls. Balcones Heights has awarded \$2000 to support the show. Members were asked to help distribute flyers and to set up for the show starting at 2:00 p.m. on July 24.

P. Steves reported on the status of preparations for the 2010 LSR convention.

P. Mackin provided a report on successful completion of the May 23 railroading merit badge clinic. Twenty-four scouts were trained.

President Nagel reported that updated bylaws will soon be provided to members for review and for vote at the July general membership meeting. W. Hammelman summarized the proposed bylaws changes.

W. Hammelman discussed a proposed rail fanning trip on Amtrak to Temple and back for the train show on September 19. Details are still being worked out.

After the meeting O. Neathery provided a clinic on decals.

President Nagel adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Pat Mackin – Secretary



BY-LAW AMENDMENTS TO BE PRESENTED AT THE JULY BUSINESS MEETING

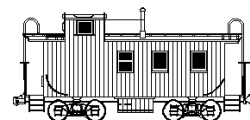
Your by-law committee, at the request of the Board of Directors, has been working on three by-law changes which will be presented at the July business meeting for discussion and vote. The three areas of change are as follows:

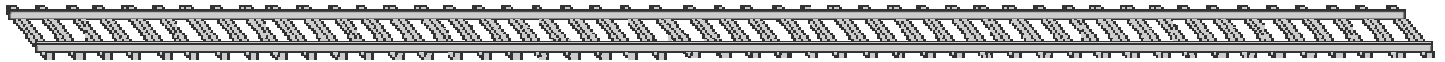
1. All reference to assessments have been removed. However special assessments remain in the bylaws.
2. A new chapter on SIGS (Special Interest Groups) has been incorporated into the bylaws.
3. A new category of Sustain membership has been established.

A copy of the revised (proposed) by-laws will be available for viewing on the SAMRA website (www.samratx.org), All proposed changes are shown in **RED**.

Please review these proposed changes carefully and be prepared to vote on them during the July business meeting.

Your by-law committee
Chuck Booth (chairman)
Bill Eubank
Wayne Hammelman





Home of the San Antonio & Northern Railroad

SAMRA Clinics

The June clinic was conducted by Orphie Neathery. A large group stayed to hear him present how to use a computer to make decals. Professor Neathery's class was very well received.

The July clinic will be conducted by Bill Eubank on Building Structures. Bill will share the methods and techniques he uses to build those very interesting and realistic structures found in many places on the San Antonio and Northern Railroad. His structures range from a typical Texas barn, to rural structures, to industrial buildings.

The August clinic will have Harold Bryant presenting information on riding AMTRAK.



Have an idea for a future clinic? See Wayne Hammelman!

The Splitswitch
San Antonio Model Railroad Association, Inc.
7702 Narrow Pass St.
Live Oak, TX 78233 - 2947
www.samratx.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL



7th Balcones Heights Family Train Show

**Connecticut Convention Center
July 5-11, 2009
Hartford, Connecticut**

**July 25th-26th, 2009
Crossroads Mall
Southwest Corner of IH 10 & Loop 410
San Antonio, TX**

