

THE SIGNAL TOWER

The Newsletter of the Largo Central Railroad

P. O. Box 60192
St. Petersburg, FL 33784-0192
Club Telephone: 727-585-9835
Website: www.lcrailroad.com

Managing Editor: Angelo Cantalupo
Email: angac2723@gate.net
Telephone 727-531-8651
Production Consultant: Bruce Teerlink
bteerlin@bellsouth.net



September 2005

President's Message

Greetings to all!.....
We had a great turn out for workday on Saturday, September 17th. Track panels were made and installed on the south loop of the main line just beyond Snyder Bypass. Tom Eckert, our track ace was there to assist us. The large transfer table was adjusted to properly align with the yard and container tracks.

I am really **concerned about members not locking up the facilities properly**. Remember, a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. If a gate is left unlocked, every piece of equipment is in jeopardy. Before leaving the yard, make a mental list of check points to look at and see if they are locked.

See you on Public Run Days.

Don Newberry
President

Secretary's Report

September 3, 2005

The meeting was called to order by President Don Newberry. Motion was made, seconded and accepted to dispense with the reading of minutes of the preceding meeting because they were printed in the Signal Tower. The Treasurer's report was presented, with all current bills paid - Motion was made, seconded and accept.

NEW BUSINESS:

Due to resignations from the Board of Directors, the following were appointed to fill the vacancies: Don Mann and Jerry Smithson.

2. Howard Pike reported that on two occasions he found locks in the club area unlocked and the area unattended.

3. Jerry Smithson was asked about the steel building – nothing so far. The criminal background checks are continuing but only with emphasis on child molestation. Howard Pike was asked about fire suppression piping – He wasn't aware that he was appointed to the task.

OLD BUSINESS

1. A motion was made, seconded and carried to discontinue the \$100.00 initiation fee. The 90 day probation period for new members will continue, with new members on probation to be restricted from serving as engineers on run days.

2. George Taylor asked about our participation at the Children's Museum at Lowry Park on 19 September. He corrected our misunderstanding to the extent of our participation and several members agreed to go to the event with their equipment.

3. Dolores Pike reported on progress for the banquet on March 24, 2006.

4. A suggestion was made for a proposal to generate income for the club by selling 1 foot sections of track and marking it with a sign with the donor's name. After discussing, the proposal was taken under advisement for further discussion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Alex Watson
Secretary

Officer Elections for 2006

Year 2005 is racing to an end. October will be here and it is time to start making a slate of candidates for the December elections. A Supervisor of Elections (not a present officer) has to be appointed for the task. It is not an easy job. I remember one year when the yard had quite a number of members in it. I can't remember who came out the clubhouse with pencil and paper and yelled out "OK – time to sign up for officer positions in the upcoming election".

Pandemonium set in. It became a real Sadie Hawkins Day. People scattered in all different directions – running, scaling fences and even diving under the containers. No one was to be seen for the rest of the day.

So, do not let this happen. Sign up for officer positions. Become part of the machinery that lets the club run smoothly.

Attention,

All cooks, bakers and candlestick makers. October has a fifth Saturday, October 29th. That means, Railroad Fun Day. There will be plenty of food. Bring a covered dish. I do not know anything about the contest. I heard someone say they were going to put a large beach ball on a flat car – a contestant will stand on top of the beach ball and do a balancing act while a locomotive pulls the flat car over the pond.

Members and families of all railroad clubs are invited.

Important

Our President mentioned that he was concerned about members not locking up the yard properly.

Howard Pike reported the chain on the gate leading to the yard was unlocked. The Clubhouse door, the eye wash room door and the door to the room containing our expensive tools and supplies was not locked.

Jack Outlaw, a week later, reported the clubhouse door and the expensive tool room door open - the eye wash station door was not locked. Worst of all, the smaller transfer table was left outside of the yard. If some youngster climbing on the transfer table hurt themselves, we surely would be in trouble.

Come on – members – do something about this – **lockup properly** – enough said.

Report from George Taylor

George has informed me that he was in contact with the HB Plant Historical Railroad Society who wants to visit our club.

They plan to visit on our Railroad Fun Day, Saturday, October 29th. George estimates there will be around twelve guests. We welcome them.

Trains at the Tampa Children's Museum and Kid City!

Submitted by George Taylor

Since earlier this year, several of us have worked on and off to see if we could work with the Tampa Children's Museum on a special railroad program. In the shuffle of club business, Bruce Teerlink kept the initial contact and the idea on the burner for us. Thank you Bruce, you did good. There were a few changes at the museum in terms of personnel, but the event was scheduled and the new person was given several contact numbers for the LCRR. Initially, we were going to host the children to a day on our railroad, but the logistics proved too great to overcome. Both groups recognized the importance of presenting both messages of rail crossing safety and railroad history, the show must go on as it were.

On September 10th, we made it happen! They couldn't come to Largo, so, we took the railroad to them...in a way. Over the last couple of months, I'd been asking for volunteers to help with the program by taking some of our railroad equipment over to Kid City for the children to see. I knew that I would be taking my equipment, but a caboose does not a railroad make. I needed more...so Howard and Delores Pike came to the rescue! We had also scheduled Skytrain to be there, but a last minute hitch in transport the complete demonstration rig kept it away. Well, thanks to Howard, the chassis made it! I also want to take a moment to thank my stalwart friend Jerry Smithson for his support of the event. I really do mean it about his support because he leant a display stand to the event that allowed the kids to get a close view of some of the equipment. Jerry did his best to be with us, but business took him elsewhere. Once we'd setup, the Pikes were absolute troopers! Our stint with the kids lasted from 10am till noon. 'Mom Delores' and

'Pop Howard' were in their element with the kids and their parents. They handled all the questions about miniature trains, about you...the LCRR, and about railroading in general. Meanwhile, I gave the Operation Lifesaver program and was ably assisted by my daughter, Betty.



Betty Taylor



Howard Pike

Did I mention that 'Mom Delores' thought of everything (well, almost everything...that's another story)? I hadn't given any thought towards lunch other than maybe taking them out to eat when the event was complete. Leave it to 'Mom Delores' to think to bring food and drink for all of us to enjoy. Whew! It got hot on the miniature streets where we set up! Her thoughtfulness was indeed welcomed! About Kid City, it is a teaching environment originally setup to promote safety on city streets. It is the City of Tampa in miniature. Over the years, they have added facilities to nurture the children's interest in the practical side of math, science, music, safety, and the art of everyday living.

We weren't the only railroad group there. Down the 'road', the Lego Railroad Group were set up with their demonstration track. Almost by accident we discovered that they had built the Lego version of Skytrain and were quite surprised to see the engineering model that we built. We had a great time comparing notes with them and have invited them to join us for our spring meet. Look for them to visit with us soon!

In terms of our normal run day attendance, this event would be termed as sparsely attended. As far as children are concerned, it doesn't matter a whit. We made some great contacts, some good friends, and presented our message of safety. That's a resounding success in my book. We were also asked if we

would return for another railroad day event...hell yeah! Need I say more? This is the type of event that each of our members need to go out and work on. Even if they did nothing more than hand out safety materials, they will become attuned to what will happen if we just packed our trunk and left town.

Many thanks to Bruce Teerlink, Mom and Pop Pike, Jerry Smithson, my daughter Betty, the folks at OL, the folks at Kid City, and the leadership of the LCRR for the opportunity to work this event.George the Caboose Moose

Thanks George – well done! Editor

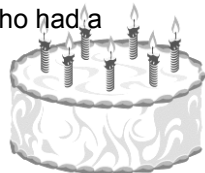
Happy Birthday to You!

Following are names of members who had a birthday this month (September).

Gregory Boden

Gail Komar

Brandon Mcaustland



We may have missed your name because our records show no listing for your birthday. We are trying to get birthday dates and it looks like it is going to take some time. If we missed you, consider yourself in the above list as we say, "Happy Birthday and may good health and good fortune shine on you."

Workday - September 17th

The following members were present for 'Workday'. Even if you can spare a couple of hours on this day at the track, it will be greatly appreciated. Thanks to all members who showed up. Greg Boden, Chuck Lisner, Alex Watson, Marty VanZanten, Don Newberry, Tom Eckert, Jerry Smithson, Sandy Drayer, Bob Wolf, Bill Donati, Warren Jameson, Howard Pike, Charlie Lyons, Don Mann.

Special thanks to Tom Eckert who shows up every chance he gets. Tom is a long time member of the club. Many of the new members do not know him. Tom doesn't say too much, but he is a walking encyclopedia on trains and railroads. He is a machinist and one of the best trackmen in the hobby. We are all fortunate to have Tom as a member.

Public Run

Saturday.....October 1st, 2005

Sunday.....October 2nd, 2005

Membership Meeting:...

After Saturday Public Run

BIRTHDAY RUNS FOR OCTOBER 2005

October 8th, Saturday

Morning: 10:30 to 11:30 AM

October 9th, Sunday –

Team 4

	Afternoon: 3:30 to 4:30 PM
October 15th, Saturday Morning: 10:30 to 11:30AM Afternoon: 3:15 to 4:15 PM	October 16th, Sunday – Team 5 Afternoon: 3:00 to 4:00 PM
October 22th, Saturday Morning: 10:30 to 11:30AM Afternoon: 4:30 to 5:30 PM	October 23th, Sunday – Open – Check Board in Clubhouse.

New Engines

Mountain Car Company rolled into the yard and delivered a C44-9 locomotive and a powered custom built engineer riding car. The recipient of this beautiful locomotive is Bill Donati. It isn't even Christmas yet. The color of this engine is absolutely superb with the Cascade & Western Railroad marking on the sides.

Warren Jamison also has a C44-9 and is waiting for the powered engineer's riding car. The C44-9 is a power house- 16 horse power Vanguard gas engine and 24 wheels powered – this includes the engineer's car.

When Bill realized he couldn't get this huge engine in the trunk of his car, he took delivery of a Real Trains, electric locomotive scaled from a 100 ton switcher. It will run 8 to 10 hours on a battery charge. He is waiting for the soundboard and air brake kit. So, his new motto is, 'Have engine – will travel'.

Tons of luck Bill and may you get years of enjoyment from your new equipment.

Mistook (Mistake) Corner



Glory be – your editor made a mistook! How can that happen? Well, if you remember, I reported that only two teams participated in the Railroad Rodeo switching contest. **Three teams participated.**

My apologies go to Bill Behrens and his team mate. I tried to find out who the team mate was, but the people I asked couldn't even remember if there was a contest.

Anyway – Bill Behrens and his teammate are at the beginning of the line to throw rocks at the editor.

Guess What?

That noodle kugel, Mr. No Name has struck again. You know – the member in the Board of Directors who has the same initials I have. I told you about him in the August issue of the newsletter.

He came up to me to let me know my demented brain couldn't write a serious story. What he doesn't know is the word, *demented*, brought to light a story of my school days in using words starting with "de". You have to wait for that one because I want Mr. No Name to eat his words. I am going to reprint some of the stories I wrote in the earlier newsletters. New members haven't read them and old members have long forgotten them.

The following story was in the June 2000 newsletter.

The Story

As you know, your editor, cordially known as "melon head" to some, writes a story once in a while. One was about a locomotive hitting a flat bed tractor-trailer loaded with manure. The story wound up on the Internet and I received inquires whether it was true or not. It also showed up in a newsletter in Nova Scotia. The following story is not the one mentioned above. So grab a candy bar or scavenge out your favorite candies from the Whitman Sampler box and sit back.

John Grennan was born in 1842 in the city of Portland, Maine. He had a normal childhood and became a railroad engineer like his dad. While working in the Portland yards, the Civil War started and many of his friends went to fight for the "cause". John finally volunteered into a new regiment, the 20th Maine. The 20th Maine became part of the 5th Corps, Army of the Potomac.

Well, not to go through the entire events of the Battle of Gettysburg, John Grennan found himself lying on the ground with a shattered knee cap after the ill fated, Pickett's Charge. He looked down on the battlefield and could not believe his eyes. Row after row of confederate soldiers were piled on top of each other after being cut down by artillery fire. He later learned, when he was in the hospital, the casualties of the Battle of Gettysburg, counting both North and South, reached 56,000. John could not comprehend on how a higher being named God could allow such a thing to happen. He just gave up and became an atheist. Many an argument ensued over religion when he had a beer or two at the tavern.

Like many ex-soldiers, John did not go back home but married a young lady and settled down in Northern Virginia, not too far from the railroad yard where he worked. He was an engineer and was proud of his engine, a 4-4-0 American, also a veteran of the Civil War.

John had the daily passenger run from Washington, D.C. to Baltimore and back and also worked switch engines in the yard. Lately, during his run to Baltimore, he would pass an abandoned farmhouse just north of Silver Springs, Maryland, and noticed a reflection of light shinning from one of the bushes near the front door. Every time he passed this point the reflection was there – as though it was sending out Morse code. He called his fireman to look at the reflection to make sure he wasn't imagining this. The fireman just shrugged his shoulders and said "It probably is a reflection from a piece of metal".

The reflection was starting to bug John to a point where he had to go and see for himself. He made arrangements with the engineer, who had the run on John's day off, to slow down and let him off the train near the farmhouse. He would be picked up a couple of hours later by another train traveling south. Getting to the farmhouse was a chore since everything was grown over. He finally reached the front door and started probing around in the bushes. Lo and behold he found the object reflecting light. It was a beautiful gold chain and cross. He wondered how it got there. Some birds, like crows, pick up shiny objects and hide them, he thought. He put the cross in his pocket and started back to wait for the train.

The next day he began his run north and it started snowing. It was the beginning of April and anyone from this part of the country knows you get real bad snowstorms at this time. Visibility was poor as he tried to see ahead. He showed the cross to his fireman who just didn't know what to make of it. John hung the cross on one of the valves protruding from the steam manifold. The snow was piling up so bad John had to drop his speed. Suddenly, there was a terrible vibration that shook the engine. The fireman was crouched down looking into the firebox poking the fire. The cross started to swing back and forth hitting the back head and making a noise that annoyed John. He reached over to get the cross when a loud shearing noise filled the cab and the entire roof of the cab disappeared into the woods. The drive rod snapped and broke off the pin of the driver causing the rod to go through the floor of the cab. On its way to the top of the cab, it sheared off the Johnson bar and put the engine in reverse. It also took the throttle bar with it. If John had not reached over to get the cross, he surely would have been cut in two. John quickly gave the whistle signal for the brake-men to put on the train brakes. He also noticed the warning marker, warning him he was going into a blind curve appropriately named, 'Widow's Curve'. The engine was shaking so bad it was a miracle it did not jump the track. There was a frantic race to open every valve that would drop the steam pressure to slow up the drivers spinning in reverse. Finally, about three-quarters into 'Widow's Curve', the train stopped. Not twenty feet in front of them were two huge pine trees that toppled down from the top of the hill because of erosion and the weight of the snow. The trees were straddled across the track.

John looked at his hand and noticed blood between his fingers. He had squeezed so hard on the cross that it cut into his palm. He remembered some 2000 years ago, another incident took place causing palms to bleed.

John eventually became a Methodist Minister and Chaplain of the Railroad. God sure works in mysterious ways.~

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other.....Oscar Ameringer

Have a great month! See you next time, Angie