

THE SIGNAL TOWER

The Newsletter of the Largo Central Railroad

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January 2006



New Look to the Website!

If you haven't been on the club's website lately you are in for a big surprise!

On January 15, the new site was uploaded to the internet and WOW! We now have a professional looking well mannered site. How did this happen? Just look to one of our newest members. You know the one who is either following or leading Ralph Tucker (can't figure out which). The member of who I speak is Terry O'Neill. After a little arm twisting and lots of work on his part, the new look is real. The member's only area is also now real. Just get with Terry and give him the username and password you want and shortly after that you will have access. If you need his email address just go to the Contact Us page.

Now it's your turn. If you have ideas, recommendations or something you want placed on the web let him know.

To you Terry, all I can say is THANK YOU. You embody the type of member that will make this club thrive and prosper. *Bruce-the-Larger*

President's Message

Greetings – 2006 has arrived and we now have a new year to bring our club to new heights. We have a lot going on this month. **Read the newsletter carefully** to see what is happening.

I want to thank all for having confidence in me and electing me President for 2006. It gives me great satisfaction to know that I have made a contribution to the Club's welfare. Hope 2006 treats us all kindly.

Don Newberry
President

Mark Your Calendar

January 28 th	Touch-a-Truck	Largo Central Park
January 28 & 29	The Great Train Expo	Tampa Fairgrounds

Annual Winter Meets for 2006

February 11 & 12	West Tocoï & Bostwick RR	FLS Winter Meet
February 13 to 19	Big Boots and Western RR	FLS Winter Meet
February 18 & 19	Tradewinds & Atlantic RR Run Days	FLS Attendees are invited
February 20 to 22	Manatee Central Family Lines RR	FLS Winter Meet
February 23 to 26	Ridge Live Steamers	FLS Winter Meet & Annual Banquet

For further information, log on the FLS web page www.floridalivesteamers.com or contact Larry Laird, 229-465-3402

We wish the above tracks the best of luck and good steaming for a successful Meet.

Largo Central Railroad Winter Meet

March 21 to 26.....Banquet March 24th. 6:00PM

Further Information: Contact: Ralph Tucker email:

ralphtucker@hotmail.com or Angelo Cantalupo, 727-531-8651

Or log on to our website: www.lcrailroad.com

Special Events for January

Saturday, January 28th — Touch-a-Truck event.

This event is just about the same as a Public Run we normally do on the first full weekend of the month. It will start at 11:00 AM. You must park your vehicle in the back parking lot of the park's maintenance facility. **Do not park in the regular parking lot!** Please come out and help as we have other activities going-on this day.

Saturday & Sunday — January 28th & 29th
The Great Train Expo, Tampa Fairground.

We will have a display setup for this event. More information will be given by Earl Mueller, Expo Coordinator, in a following article in this newsletter.

Secretary's Report

January 7, 2006

The Annual Meeting was called to order by President Don Newberry. The minutes of the preceding meeting were read and accepted. The Treasurer's report was read, with all current bills paid. Motion to accept was made, seconded and carried.

Election Results for 2006 Officers and Board Members:

President: Don Newberry
Vice President: Jerry Smithson
Treasurer: Wally Hebel
Secretary: Alex Watson
Directors (5)
Don Mann
Bob Wolfe
Vince Rizzo
Angelo Cantalupo
Howard Pike

The following items of business were conducted:

1. **MEET:** The following items were taken up:
 - a) Parking of motor homes – No decision has been reached. This will be taken up with the city.
 - b) As of now, 8 vendors have said they will come.
 - c) The Carolwood people will attend and want to use the feed store for their presentation for the whole day.
 - d) A discussion of the field trip to the Railroad Museum touched on cost and a fee of \$25.00 was decided for participants to cover transportation, etc.
2. Three new members were voted on and accepted:
Terry O'Neill
Tom Lawrence
Shirley Teerlink
3. Touch-a-Truck, January 28th. The city would like us to run trains. Okay.
4. City of Largo is having a special event program June 1st and 2nd, and have asked us to have trains available 1-2 hours. Okay.
5. We will participate in the train show at Tampa Fairgrounds January 28-29th. Several volunteered to help for those days with equipment.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Alex Watson
Secretary

Editor's Note:

Please give your cooperation and support to our officers as they grapple with the tasks of the club's operations.

We **thank** outgoing officers for their help and dedication.

Thanks to Jean Carter for preparing ballots and running the election and also to Marian Tucker for helping count the ballots.

Note from LCRR Railroaded Meet Chairman

I knew that the LCRR was a railroad club – **BUT**, I didn't know how much of a RAILROADING club it was.

The President and members of the club asked me many, many times to be **Meet Chairman**. I kept saying **NO!** But, they didn't seem to know what that word meant. So, I thought, I'd change my tactic and make outrageous demands so they would say "**no way**".

1. *I would run the meet my way.*
2. *I would have the final word in any decision.*
3. *The BOD would back me up on all decisions.*

IT DIDN'T WORK!!!!!!

So as your new **Railroaded Meet Chairman**, here are a few changes I plan to make:

1. Everyone will have fun – Members will run during the meet. Everyone is expected to help out where they are able. Attending the meet doesn't qualify as working at the meet. There will be several subcommittees. Each chairman will be looking for help so the load is spread over the entire membership and not just a few doing all the work.
2. I expect the meet to break even or make money.
3. Item two means there will be some major changes.

With that said, I'm looking for all the input I can get and will listen to any idea. However, when I make the final decision, anyone who strongly disagrees vocally with me will automatically volunteer to be next year Meet Chairman.

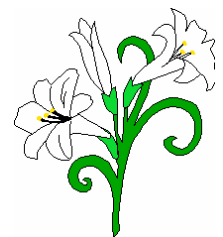
Your Railroaded Meet Chairman
Ralph Tucker

Our Sympathy

It is with great sorrow to report the passing of one of our members. Edie Watson passed away on Christmas Day. We extend our deepest sympathy to Alex Watson and his family.

Edie was the nicest lady you could ever meet. She always had a big smile and never complained. We sure will miss her.

Alex and his family "thank" all for their support and prayers for Edie.



LCRR and The Great Train Expo

Submitted by Earl Mueller, Coordinator

On Saturday, January 28th and Sunday January 29th, "**The Great Train Expo**" will be at the Tampa Fairgrounds. This is a big train event with vendors and displays galore. Attendance of people interested in trains will be up in the four figures.

We have been given permission to set up a display at this event. We have the opportunity to promote our club and hopefully sign up new members on these days.

Timing is the important key of this setup. It is a little different than the usual setups we do for smaller events. The doors at the Fairgrounds close Saturday at 8:30 AM, sharp, and we must be setup by 9:00 AM. There is also admission passes and parking passes to consider. The show starts at 9:00 AM and closes at 5:00 PM.

The following is the plan of our setup events:

On Saturday morning, all volunteers will leave from the LCRR Track at **7:15 AM sharp** for Tampa.

Howard Pike will be bringing his trailer and engine and I will be bringing my trolley. At the Expo, Howard will transfer his engine to a roll around dolly and the trolley will be carried in and set on a table. We will have two additional tables for promotional items such as, video tape player and monitor, membership packets, and display board, etc.

The **free passes** are supposed to be mailed to me and I will hand them out when we meet at the LCRR Track.

The volunteers to meet at the track for Saturday are, Howard Pike, Alex Watson, Vince Rizzo, Conrad Mueller and myself.

On Sunday morning, we will leave from LCRR at **8:00 AM sharp** as we will have everything setup the day before. Volunteers for Sunday are, Howard Pike, Bob Wolf, Angelo Cantalupo, Jean Carter, Bill Donati, Warren Jamison, Conrad Mueller and myself. Any one else who will like to participate can contact me at 727-525-9038.

Directions:

Take I-4 to the Orient Road exit in Tampa, bear to the right and then make a quick turn to the left. Go around a bend and approach the gate where the Fairground personnel will let you through if you tell them you are going to "**The Great Train Expo and Special Events**" Building. They may give you a parking pass if we do not have them ahead of time. Make the first right and then left around the bend past the stables – the show is on the left at this point. You will be sure to see the activity at the building. If you are not with us when we leave the LCRR yard, it will not be easy to get the passes to you once we are in the building at 8:30 AM.

The food is the typical Fairground fare – you may want to bring your lunch.

If there are any questions you can contact me at 727-525-9038.

Howard can take three volunteers and I can take two in our vehicles if you do not want to use your own car.

Let us all pitch in and make this gig a great success.

Earl Mueller

Now – Hear This!

During our Public Run Days, the train station becomes the Center of Operations for just about everything. Members mill around, talking, grabbing a bite of lunch, etc. Soon, members spill out on the loading platform and guess what happens? The one stationmaster who is running the operation suddenly finds himself surrounded by three or four self appointed stationmasters moving trains onto the platform and things finally turn into a circus.

The stationmaster is in charge of the train loading operation of the station. He is responsible for the safety of the passengers when he loads the trains. If he needs help, he will ask for help. Otherwise, let him do his job. Now, I know I am writing this article using a male gender, but we also have female stationmasters. It goes for everyone.

Conductors, make sure you have a radio and see that the engineer has one too.

Membership DUES

In the December newsletter, you received an **application to renew your membership** for 2006. This **application with dues is to be mailed to the Membership Chairperson, Jean Carter**, 8305 121st Place North, Largo, FL 33773. Dues are due now and must be paid by the end of March. Membership cards will be mailed out with the February Newsletter. A new membership list will be available in April.

Your cooperation in following the above instructions will ensure an **up-to-date and accurate membership list**. *Jean Carter, Membership Chairperson*

Public Run Weekend

Saturday..... February 4th, 2006

Sunday..... February 5th, 2006

Membership Meeting:...

After Saturday Public Run

Board of Directors Meeting

February 11, 11:00 AM

Birthday Runs for February 2006

<p>February 11th, Saturday Morning - Open Afternoon: 2:30 to 3:30 PM</p>	<p>February 12th, Sunday Team 4 Open</p>
<p>February 18th, Saturday Morning: 11:00 to 12:00 AM Afternoon: Open</p>	<p>February 19th, Sunday Team 5 3:00 to 4:00 PM</p>
<p>February 25th, Saturday Morning: 10:30 to 11:30 AM Afternoon: Open</p>	<p>February 26th, Sunday Team 1 2:30 to 3:30 PM</p>



Caption 1

Saturday – December 17th

Track panels were being built by a very busy crew. A new tarp was installed over the steaming bays. All this and Birthday Runs too. We had a great showing of members. Thanks to Howard Pike, Bob Wolf, Don Mann, Jerry Smithson, Terry O'Neill, Bill Donati, Warren Jamison, Tom Eckert, Don Newberry, Mark Zielinski, Vince Rizzo, Tom Kaufman, Ralph Tucker, and Sandy Drayer.

Saturday – December 24th

This is the day before Christmas and we had another great turn out. Talk about dedication.

Nick Damalos donated a container to the club. Caption one show the container in place after Wally Hebel lifted it with his company's crane. This is the second container Nick donated. We owe Nick, Wally and his employer a debt of gratitude for what they have done.

We also thank the following for their help and the work they done this day: Bob Wolf, Greg Boden, Don Mann, Bill Boyd, Alex Watson, Ralph Tucker, Sandy Drayer, Terry O'Neill, Bill Donati, Tom Lawrence, Matt Lawrence, Wally Hebel, Don Newberry, Jerry Smithson and Mark Zielinski. Photo sent in by Sandy Drayer – Thanks Sandy.

Monday- December 26th

Tom Lawrence, Don Mann, Mark Zielinski, Sandy Drayer and Howard Pike painted the container green which was installed on December 24th, according to the Operation Chief of the park. All containers will be painted the same color. Thanks to all who helped.

Visitors

We had two members from out of town who visited the club in December.

Mary K. Lefferson from Kentucky came down to say "Hi".

We also caught a glimpse of Chuck Hackett from Nebraska. He will be down to the March Meet with his Northern.

Who is Building What?

This should be titled, *Who Built What?* Look at Caption 2 and 3 — No, it is not a crane for lifting conductors who fall off trains. It is a tool used to change ties out in the field. This apparatus was built by Ralph Tucker, one of our dynamite members.



Caption 2

The tie changing mechanism is shown on the steaming bay for better clarity. One simply slips the tool on the end of a T car. The old tie is dug out and a new one put into place. The tongs clamp on the bottom of the tie. Pull the handle on the top of the boom and the tie is

snug up against the bottom of the track. The springs hold the tie tight enough so you can screw in the necessary screws to hold the tie in place. Remove the clamps and move the T car to next tie and do the same. Works great!



Caption 3

How did this all come about? If you ever changed a tie in the field you will quickly know why. Try holding the tie straight while trying to put screws in place. One hand is holding a drill with a screwdriver bit and the other is trying to hold the screw. The tie just goes where it wants.

Ralph just became tired of banging his forehead on the ground from frustration. Instead of destroying his noggin, Ralph put his noggin to work and built this machine. Great work and well done, Ralph! Thanks for the photos. If you want more information, call Ralph Tucker at 727-349-8480.

Happy Birthday to You!

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

Peter Bialecki

George Roberts

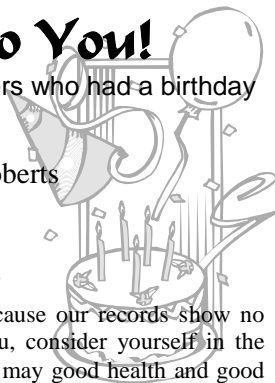
Doug Fulthorpe

Matt Wolf

Andrew Habasevich

Don Mann

We may have missed your name because our records show no listing for your birthday. 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."



LCRR 2006 Meet Schedule of Events

Tuesday, March 21

Railroad Open 8:00AM – ??

Registration 9:00AM – 5:00PM

Wednesday, March 22

Railroad Open 8:00AM – ??

Registration 9:00AM – 5:00PM

Thursday, March 23

Railroad Open 8:00AM – ??

Registration 9:00AM – 5:00PM

Field Trip 7:30AM – 4:30PM

Bi-Directional Running on Signals – Dark until ??

Lunch 11:00AM – 1:00PM

Friday, March 24

Railroad Open 8:00AM – 5:00PM – Reopen after
Banquet

Registration 9:00AM – 5:00PM

Banquet 6:00PM

Bi-Directional Running on Signals – Dark until ??

Lunch 11:00AM – 1:00PM

Saturday, March 25

Railroad Open 8:00AM – ??

Registration 9:00AM – 5:00PM

Bi-Directional Running on Signals – Dark until ??

Presentation in Feed Store TBA

“Walt Disney’s Railroad Heritage”

.....presented by Michael Broggie

Carolwood Pacific Historical Society Founder &
Chairman

Lunch 11:00AM – 1:00PM

Sunday, March 26

Railroad Open 8:00AM – ??

Registration 9:00AM – 3:00PM

There will be parking for Campers but no hookups are available.

The Wonders of It

There was a time when trains were switched from one track to another by a switchman up in a tower or someone in the train crew to get onto a siding. Things are a little different now or as they say, ‘Dem days are gone forever’.

I am sure many of you have seen pictures of a large control room with computers and a huge board on the wall with the railroad’s track layout and little lights showing the

location of trains as they travel along. This one control room operates the track switches for the entire railroad.

So it was when a technical writer from a prominent trade magazine decided to write an article on modern railroad switching. He made arrangements with a well known railroad that had tracks running north and south – the entire length of the country.

The technical writer visited the Railroad Switching Center and it was just as I described above. It was a very professional operation. He noticed a door behind the computer desk marked, '**Keep Out – Secure Area – Authorized Personnel Only**'. He asked what was behind the door. It seems the computers and monitors in the Control Center were peripheries of the main computer behind the locked door. After a lengthy period of phone calling and red tape, he was allowed to enter the main computer room.

Caption 4 is what he saw. As a technical man, he was completely dumbfounded. He could not believe the entire railroad depended on a computer built with what is known in the electronics field as, '*Rat's Nest Wiring*'. He was assured the computer was absolutely reliable.

The original computer was built by one of the well known computer giants. Fact is, they couldn't get a train to go further than one or two miles from the yard. In desperation, they called a local TV man and he built the present computer. There is no wiring diagram and the TV man has left the area. The computer does the job and no one is overly worried about it. After all, they have switched thousands of trains with few mishaps and are allowed a certain percentage of screw-ups.

They did have one major occurrence that was one for the books and it was not the computer's fault. Luckily, there were no accidents.

The Superintendent of Operations brought his nine and twelve year old grandsons in to show them the setup. While the Super was preoccupied with railroad business, the grandsons, somehow, got into the main computer room. Of course, they spotted the keyboard and started to look for computer games. Track switches were clickety clacking up and down the North – South corridor. Trains were going in all different directions and the confusion was unbelievable.

It took over a month to find the trains that entered Canada and Mexico. They are still missing one boxcar in Mexico. It contained a shipment of 24 karat gold plated yo-yos destined for the U.S. Congress.

What happened to the superintendent? Due to the reams of paper and hundreds of hours needed for justification, the railroad uses the same procedure used by the Federal Government in this type of situation. It is called PBD or *Promotion by Default*. In other words, instead of being sacked you are promoted. This gets the person out of your department and into someone else's. Eventually, the person who was supposed to be sacked is up at the top. If things go right, the person retires and probably will get a 10 million dollar bonus to boot.

I think the technical writer sent his story to one of the comic book publishers.////////



Caption 4

MISTOOK (MISTAKE) CORNER

I made a real mistook in last month's newsletter. There is no Bob Conklin in our club as mentioned in '*Who Is Building What*' article. There is a Bob Conkle in the club, however.

I have known Bob for a number of years and just can't figure out how I could get his name misspelled. I also made a couple of other small errors. One wisenheimer member recommended that I put a vacuum gauge in my ear and see if there are any leaks in my head.

So, if you should receive a newsletter written in Italian, please call me *right away*. I will then know it is time to put myself out to pastures.

Sorry Bob, you will receive a marker to throw rocks at the editor.

The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail instead of his tongue.

Jean Carter also works for the newsletter editor. She does the typing on the linotype machine, does the graphics, composition, inks the rollers on the presses, installs the huge rolls of paper on the presses and sweeps the floor. I do the supervising – after all, I am the Editor. Many thanks, Jean.

See you next time, Angie