

THE SIGNAL TOWER

The Newsletter of the Largo Central Railroad

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May 2006

Volunteers Needed for Birthday Runs

In order to keep the Birthday Trains running we need volunteers. There is a sheet with Teams on the Birthday Schedule Board. These Birthday Runs help with our expenses. Please sign up NOW!

Vice President's Message

To all the members of Largo Central Railroad:

I have put together some figures to let everyone know what the railroad expenses were and what the prices are today.

- 1) Insurance cost \$900.00, today's cost \$4,671.42
- 2) Fuel costs a weekend \$15.00, today's cost \$80.00
- 3) 15 foot straight section of track \$80.00, today's cost \$150.00
- 4) 15 foot curve section of track \$80.00, today's price \$150.00
- 5) Number 8 switch right hand \$150.00, today's price \$225.00
- 6) Number 8 switch left hand \$150.00, today's price \$225.00
- 7) Number 11 switch right hand \$165.00, today's price \$255.00
- 8) Number 11 switch left hand \$165.00, today's price \$255.00
- 9) 30 degree crossover \$100.00, today's price \$175.00
- 10) 45 degree crossover \$125.00, today's price \$200.00
- 11) 90 degree crossover \$135.00, today's price \$210.00
- 12) Rail jointers \$0.35 each, today's price \$0.55 each
- 13) Frog replacement \$22.50, today's price \$45.00
- 14) Replacement rail \$0.41 a foot, today's price \$1.00
- 15) Wood tie replacement \$0.35 each, today's price \$0.75 each
- 16) Plastic tie replacement \$0.75 each, today's price \$1.87 each
- 17) Replacement screws for track \$0.03 each, today's price \$0.05 each
- 18) Guard rail replacement \$0.41 a foot, today's price \$1.00 a foot
- 19) Switch points replacement \$20.00 each, today's price \$60.00 each
- 20) Riding car \$700.00 each, today's price \$1,500.00 each
- 21) Replacement trucks (pair) \$250.00, today's price \$550.00 (pair)
- 22) Replacement couplers (pair) \$35.00, today's price \$50.00 (pair)

- 23) Railroad Diesel Engine \$5,500.00 each, today's price \$12,500.00 each
- 24) Caboose car \$550.00 each, today's price \$1,250.00 each
- 25) Conductor gondola car \$500.00 each, today's price \$1,200.00 each

These are just some of the expenses that have increased in our operation of our beloved railroad. None of these expenses include expansion of our railroad.

Prices are subject to change.

Jerry Smithson.
Vice President

COMMUNICATION FIASCO

Due to a breakdown in communications in scheduling trains for the Friday, May 19, 2006, Park Concert Run, crew members showed up around 9:30 AM without knowledge that the train run was cancelled. Two of the members traveled quite a distance — one from Land O'Lakes and the other from Apopka.

We are truly sorry for the hardship we put David Woodbury, Alan Woodbury, Kyle Woodbury, Dennis Mills, Chuck Analetto and Marty Van Zenten through.

Vice President, Jerry Smithson found out at the last minute this event was being held in the evening. He cancelled the train run for safety reasons.

We are now working to compile a list of our most dedicated members, who show up for the events, to contact if this problem ever occurs again.

Mark Your Calendar

Remember — Manatee Central Lines "Memorial Day" Meet: May 27, 28, & 29. If you want to have a real enjoyable time and sample "Southern Hospitality" — this is the place to go — Bring a covered dish.

Events continued Page 2.....

Wednesday, May 31st – We will run trains from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM for the St. Paul School children.

June 1st and June 2nd – We will be running trains for about 4 hours each day from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. This event is for the park involving children.

Fun Run Day, April 29th

Submitted by Greg Boden

The card order operation was, seemingly, a great time had by all who participated. It went so well that we are going to do it again on July 29th. Please come and participate.

I would like to express my gratitude to all who did participate. A special thanks goes to Don Mann, who fed us twice with his usual excellent fare. George Taylor, the Yardmaster, gets a big thanks. Special gratitude goes to Warren Jamison – without his guidance, it never would have happened. Gail Komar and Chris Janks gave valuable input in the planning stages. In addition, Andrew Habasevich, Chuck Analetto, John Ruper, Marty VanZanten and Sandy Drayer were a huge help. I would also like to express my thanks to Chuck Hackett for volunteering 844 to be the Class 1 train. He had a timetable to work to and did a terrific job.

Next time, the operation will be a little more sophisticated with more complicated switching and a few more prototypical rules. Also, there will not be any 0-2-0 switching – you know who you are. These are not timed events. They are a pursuit of accuracy. At our next event, however, it is planned to have some scoring to enhance the competitive spirit. You do not have to be a LCRR member to participate. Members of other clubs are welcome.

Volunteers are needed for staffing these events. If you want to help in the yard, be a scoring judge or help in any other way, just contact me. Sooner is better.

More operable rolling stock will be very welcome. This time, we were able to field four short trains and a handful of pre-spots.

Again, my thanks to all who participated and my apologies to any that I have failed to mention.

Greg Boden

NOW HEAR THIS!

1. **Terry O'Neill has spent over nine hours rearranging the equipment stored in the containers.** Rolling stock and locomotives that are hardly ever used are now stored in the left container as 'Dead Storage'. **Our birthday trains have their own designated tracks.** The most amazing thing is Terry has made room in the containers that you couldn't even store an HO train set in. Only a magician can do that.

Check out our website.— Terry has a picture of your train in the "Member" section. You need a password to get in. Check with Terry about this if you do not already have one. Great job Terry!!! – Thanks!

2. **Conductors** – When in the station, check out the opposite side of the train the stationmaster cannot see.

Make a check of chains and couplers every time you are in the station. Check to see if passengers shoe laces are tied and no clothing or objects are close to the ground. If you think a car is overloaded, discuss it with the stationmaster to rectify the problem.

Safety has the highest priority and most of it is common sense.

Letters

Dear Largo Central Railroad Members,

My name is John Cantu' and sadly I am leaving this amazing railroad. It has been a wonderful year with everyone.

When I first came to the club in mid-June, I was confused; but then, I met people like Andrew who actually was my age and enjoys the same things I do. That day I met Mr. Wally. I got to see his amazing #1927 F40PH Amtrak Engine. This engine reminded me of California because I used to see the Amtrak trains come in and out of San Diego.

My first day was a Run Day and that is when Mr. Warren taught me to be a conductor. I enjoyed that job so much. All day Andrew and I conducted the same train till closing time.

Another good person I met was Mr. Angie. He made me laugh a lot because of how we both are similar due to our Italian backgrounds. His last name is spelled almost the same as mine and we laughed a lot about my funny nickname, Toucan.

Mr. Jerry was nice — making sure I was certified. Also Mr. Warren helped out to get me certified.

There was Mr. Bob and he showed me his amazing steel boxcab engine.

I met Mr. Alex Watson who gave me a ride and a story while driving his engine. I met his kind wife, Mrs. Edie Watson which I sadly learned that she passed away.

I went to the big Winter Meet and had a great time! I met many nice people who were very kind.

I am sad to be leaving this wonderful club that has given me things which I will never forget like when I helped Mr. Don fix railroad ties. That and many other things I learned, will help me when I move to a new railroad club.

Possible visits? – I am not certain, as it all depends on time and what is happening. I will miss learning new things and helping out. I wish all will have a great time at this club; and if I ever return, I am hoping to be greeted with great big open arms just as I was one year ago.

*Sincerely,
John Cantu'*

*Thank you for your letter and we wish you the **Best of Luck** on your new adventure.*

Message from our Catering Department

From Don Mann, Culinary Aficionado Supreme

I want to thank all who attended breakfast and lunch on our Fifth Saturday of the Month, April 29th.

There is no greater joy for a Chef to see the food he prepared being devoured by his friends. There were no leftovers to speak of – a sign of a successful breakfast and lunch. I counted around 27 to 30 happy souls.

For those who did not attend, here is what you missed.....

Breakfast: pancakes, bacon, sausages, scrambled eggs, stewed tomatoes and all the necessary goodies, like coffee, etc.

Lunch: Baked pork roll, baked chicken breast, stove stuffing, barbecued beans, gravy and fantastic desserts.

Many thanks to all the ladies who brought in desserts and all who helped with the meals.

My deepest apology to Bill Boyd and his wife for forgetting the dessert they left in the club fridge. Bill reminded me of it, but getting things ready for the meals and keeping the people fed caused me to forget the dessert.

I had a problem keeping the food hot. If any member knows where I can get a steam table, please call me.

Till next time, *Don Mann*

Don, you did a fantastic job! We sure owe you a debt of gratitude – Tons of Thanks.

PUBLIC RUN TALLY

On Saturday, May 6, 2006, 2,014 passengers were given rides. On Sunday, May 7, 2006, 1,611 passengers were given rides.

A point of interest on Public Run Days is that some members of our club and members of other railroad clubs travel a great distance to participate. They come from Jacksonville, Port Charlotte, Sanford, Land O'Lakes, Ellenton, Zephyrhills, Fort Myers, Manatee, Kissimmee, Apopka, and beyond.

What makes the Gals and Guys in blue give up their time and money for this endeavor? Sure, it is the love of trains, but, it goes deeper than that.

Is it the smile and happiness you see on the faces of children? Is it the part you play to have families together and enjoying their children? Or maybe, it is just knowing you helped them forget the "hum drum" of life for just a little while.

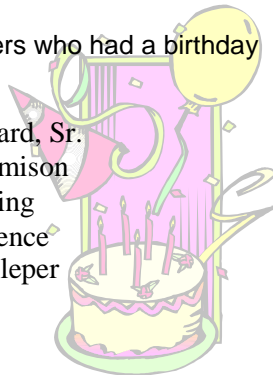
Most of all though, it is when a youngster gives you a hug to thank you. The feeling you get is surely a "Thank You" from Heaven.

Happy Birthday to You!

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

John Beard
Chuck Hackett
Willie Jennings
Gene Lane
Vincent Rizzo
Pamela Wendt
Eric Amaral

Jerry Edward, Sr.
Warren Jamison
Edward King
Otis Lawrence
David Schleper
Bob Wolf



Happy Birthday and may good health and good fortune shine on you."

Public Run Weekend

Saturday..... June 3, 2006
Sunday..... June 4, 2006

Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, June 2, 2006 at 7:30 PM. Please attend.

Membership Meeting:...

June 3, 2006

Birthday Runs for June 2006

June 10th, Saturday Afternoon: 2:30 to 3:30 PM	June 11th, Sunday Afternoon: 2:30 to 3:30 PM
June 17th, Saturday Morning: 10:00 to 11:00 AM	June 18th, Sunday Time Unknown – Check the Board in Clubhouse
June 24th, Saturday Open	June 25th, Sunday Afternoon: 2:30 to 3:30 PM

Check the Birthday Run Schedule Board in the Clubhouse for Team assignments on Sundays and changes or additions.

More Teams Are Needed!!!

Volunteers for the Birthday Run Teams are as follows:

Team 1: Angie Cantalupo, Alex Watson, John Ruper
Please note, Angie is out of commission - A substitute is needed.

Team 2: Chris Janks

Team 3: John Eason, Warren Jamison,

Team 4: Ed King, Howard Pike, Don Newberry

Team 5: NONE

Alternate: Dennis Mills 813-996-0381

We need volunteers to fill all the Teams. Please help!

WORK ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Saturday, May 12, 2006

There was track work, birthday runs, and general maintenance done this day. Members present were Terry O'Neill, Tom Eckert, Don Mann, Bill Boyd, Alex Watson, Howard Pike, John Eason, Sandy Drayer, Jere Wendt, and Jean Carter.

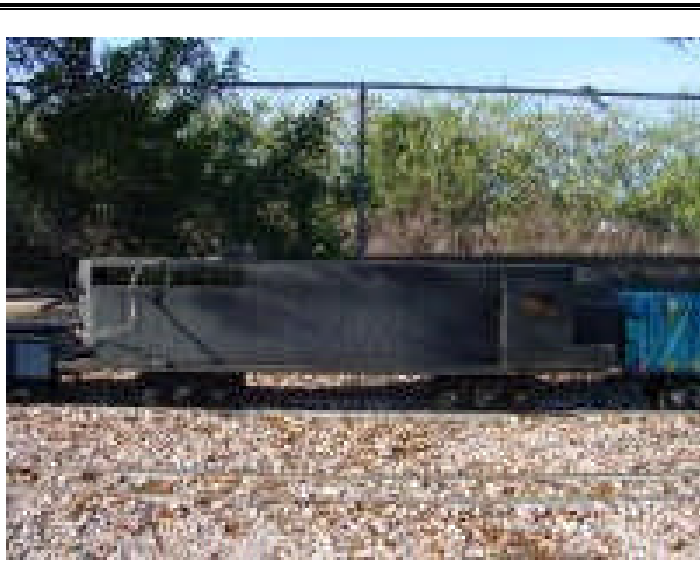
Tom Eckert, our track expert is back for a while working his magic on the tracks.

Saturday, May 20, 2006

All kinds of work done on this day – Track work, work in the tunnel and birthday runs. Members present were, Don Newberry, Gail Komar, Terry O'Neill, Bill Boyd, Chuck Analetto, Don Mann, Eric Amaral, Alex Watson, Sandy

Drayer, John Eason, Vince Rizzo, Chris Janks, Tom Eckert, Jean Carter, Bill Donati and Jere Wendt.

Please enter your name in the log book at the clubhouse. This is where I copy names from to put in the newsletter.



For Sale

Above is an electric 7½ inch gauge engine with a GP-35 shroud. This engine was fabricated by member, Sandy Drayer.

The engine is equipped with commercial trucks. Each truck is powered with a one horsepower electric motor. A Curtis pulse width motor controller with dynamic braking supplies the torque and speed regulation. All wheels are powered.

An automatic on board, heavy duty marine battery charger, keeps the two “deep discharge” 875 cranking amperes marine batteries in tip top shape.

Sandy had to move and could not finish the installation of external fixtures for the engine. He will supply the stanchions and handrail fixtures. There is also a fan housing included.

The engine runs great. If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Drayer, 727-733-0936.

Card Order Run from the Past

In the last issue of the newsletter, I had a little note at the end about another Card Order Run.

I also explained what a Railroad Card Order Run consisted of. Not all Card Order Runs are railroad related – as you will find out.

Relax now, and travel back with me to Brooklyn, New York, during the 1930’s. The “Great Depression” was in full swing and times were really bad. Most every one was poor. That is, our parents were poor. Kids had no idea things were bad because we thought it was always this way.

I was about eleven years’ old and attending P.S. 169 and about to transfer to Junior High School. We had a Card Order Run then and no one knew when it started or if it ever ended.

OK, so what is a Card Order Run? The “Card” is your school report card. It was really a card about the size of a postcard, nothing like the large printouts the kids get now days. On it, were letters marked from A to D. D was failing and probably meant dumb. D was always marked in red ink. Most of the boys and very few girls were real good at getting D’s.

The “Order” was to hide the card if you received any of the red D’s to keep your parents from knowing what a dummy you are. Who knows, they just might forget about the card. We never gave any thought that the card had to be returned to the teacher with one of our parents’ signature on it.

“Run” is just what it means. Smoke and sparks came out from the soles of our sneakers when we found out our parents figured out what we done. We were in for a shellacking and also to do time in solitary confinement.

I didn’t always get a D. My worst subject was English grammar. Probably because it was absolutely foreign to me compared to the Booklynese dialect I knew so well. The Board of Education tried to wipe out the stigma of the Brooklynese dialect with disastrous results.

OK, here is the scenario at my house when I received one of the red “D’s”. Of course, I would hide the card. I knew, however, it would only give me a couple of days reprieve. My younger sister received her card about two days later. She always received A’s that burned me to no end. After she gave her card to my mom, I knew the jig was up. Mom would stare at me and say, “You get that card right now or I’ll wring your neck”. I would then reach behind the icebox (no one knew what fridges were then) fish out the card and hand it to her.

When Mom’s eyes widened and the artery in her neck puffed out, I knew it was time to go into the “Run” phase. I would make a beeline for my bedroom. Sure enough, my mom was right behind me waving a broom like she was leading a parade down Fifth Avenue.

When I reached the entrance to the bedroom, I went into a precision maneuver that I am still proud of to this day. I would drop to my knees and just drop my body on the floor to let the momentum slide me under the bed. My mom couldn’t get to me. She would start poking the broom under the bed from one end to the other like she was stoking the fire in the firebox of a locomotive. Sound effects were added to the fiasco, like, “Mom, Don’t, Please, Somebody Halp Halp, Stop, Mom call the Doctor – I’m killed”. She would finally tire and head back to the kitchen mumbling, “Wait until I get my hands on you”.

The fact is, my mom never once hurt any of us kids. It was just a lot of hollering, threats and broom waving.

About ten minutes later, I would slowly shuffle out to the kitchen, peek my head around a cabinet and my mom would say, “Wait until your father comes home”. Heck, I had no problem there, my dad was the kindest man you could ever meet. He wouldn’t hurt a fly. I did get a long lecture, though. It always ended about the same way. If I didn’t mend my ways and get good marks, the only job I would ever qualify for was a street cleaner.

I never had the chance to get a street cleaner’s job. Some years later, when our bunch graduated high school, most of us were conscripted into the Armed Forces.

The government gave me a new Mom – A sergeant who I am sure ate roofing nails for breakfast and then brushed his teeth with gun powder. Many a time I would have given anything to be in my fortress – under my bed.

When I think back to the Card Order Run days, I still have to chuckle and say, “God Bless all Moms – and Dads too”.

See you next time, Angie