

THE SIGNAL TOWER

The Newsletter of the Largo Central Railroad

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May 2007

President's Message

Greetings!

Our track is in pretty good shape after the hard work that was put into it. Members of other clubs have commented on the smoothness of our track.

We are now deeply involved in the maintenance of our T cars and their trucks. Terry O'Neill is working up a plan to replace the station wood decking that is in bad shape from the elements. The decking will be made longer in length to accommodate the longer trains we are operating because of the increased rider-ship.

With the above in mind, I am becoming very concerned about the reduced attendance of members during our work Saturday and the monthly Public Run Days. It is not fair to put all the work on a small core of members – month after month. I realize many members live a great distance from the track and just cannot attend. I am pointing my finger at members who are within reasonable distance from the track.

Maybe I am being a little harsh, but, railroading is a labor intensive hobby. We either maintain the safety of the railroad or – forget it!

On a happier note, we are serving lunch to all members who work on the third Saturday of every month (Work Saturday), also on Saturday and Sunday of Public Run Days. So come on out – you hear!

Warren Jamison

President

Mark Your Calendar

May 26, 27, 28 Memorial Day Meet at Manatee Central Railroad

Drop down and visit Larry Smith and Pete Newcombe. I have yet to hear of anyone saying they did not have a good time at Manatee. Bring a covered dish or dessert for the evening meal.

Memorial Day is also the day to remember comrades who lost their lives fighting for our survival and freedom. When you are on a train and the fresh air is blowing in your face, take a moment and say "Thank You".

If you have any questions about the meet, please call Larry Smith 941-776-2109 or Pete Newcombe 941-776-9693

Card Order Meet – June 8, 9, & 10 at the Big Boots and Western Railroad.

Capt. Boots and his crew have added many additions to the railroad. It is really growing, leaps and bounds.

Check in on the Captain's website for pictures and information on how to get to the track. www.bigbootsrr.com

So, pack up your locomotive and drag it out to 'Big Boots and Western Railroad' for a great time.

June 30, 2007 Fifth Saturday of the Month Festivities

Illinois Live Steamers 40th Anniversary Meet August 24, 25, 26, 2007

Come one, come all and join the Illinois Live Steamers in celebrating our 40th year as a live steam and large scale model railroading organization. The ILS plans a special event this year to celebrate a special milestone – 40 years! We would like to extend an invitation to live steam, large scale model railroading and railroading hobby enthusiasts. Vendor areas, food services, raffles and other activities are planned so bring your equipment, yourself and others and join in the festivities.

This year's meet will be chaired by Rick Tracy and Dan Miotti. Get hold of us if you have any questions or would like more information.

Website <http://www.illinoislivesteamers.com>

Email: spd4454@hotmail.com

Phone: Rick (815-485-4105); Dan (815-485-6670)

We will be posting more information on the ILS web site in the coming weeks. Hope you can make it. *Submitted by Dan Miotti*

Worlds First Live Smoking Caboose!!!!

Submitted by Tony Windsor

I have installed a potbellied coal (or wood) stove in my new Red Bobber Caboose!! The smoke emits out the Charley Noble chimney in a nice realistic fashion; and if I add ethylene glycol drops to the unit, the smoke will come out blackish and throw out soot all over just like the real stoves !!! Isn't that authentic enough?

The smoke apparatus will generate nice smoke for five hours on one filling of smoke oil (mineral oil – think of Johnson & Johnson baby oil). Cost; RR smoke oil – \$4 for 4 ounces, baby oil – \$2 for 4 ounces, (5 scents available) by Tower Hobbies – \$16 for one gallon (128 ounces), this comes out to a lousy 13 cents per ounce, cheap, what?

The smoke apparatus is powered by a 12 VDC Hobbico gell-cell battery of 7 AH capacity, tower # 1xl370. (www.towerhobbies.com). The oil reservoir tank is a Sullivan rst style 4 ounce # 425 and the oil fuel stopper kit is # 478, see www.sullivanproducts.com. The smoke unit is a Mack products # 7090-st universal smoke unit www.mackproducts.com, modified by Tony to accept a header tank in order to have long run time on the railroad

tracks. The on/off switch can be had at radio shack. If you really want go all out, you can add a cadence controller to the 2 speed fan so as the cabooses picks up speed, more smoke will come out the chimney!! So cool !! What?

In all the years of this live steam (table top or adult 7 1/2" railroading), I have never seen a smoking caboose!!! We all know that the cabooses of yore had coal, wood, or fuel oil stoves in them. *Tony Windsor* Tony.Barb7@Verizon

Trademark, Copyright, and Patent (Maybe) Pending.
Many Thanks Tony!

WHO BUILT WHAT?

Observe Caption One. Don Mann, is the designer and builder of the Club's new locomotive re-railer lift. As you know, diesel type locomotives are getting larger and heavier. There was a time when a couple of strong guys could lift the front or back of diesel loco and get it back on the rails. You now need at least four strong men to do the job. The problem is, though, most train guys have become rather rotund and you can't get four of them in the space needed to lift a locomotive.

With Don's lifter, you just set it in front or back of the loco, hook the chain at the end of the boom around the coupler, bear down on the opposite end of the boom for lifting, then swing the boom to position the trucks over the rails and slowly let it down. Leverage is adjustable. The re-railer worked like a charm on our heaviest locomotive.

If you want more information, contact Don Mann 727-584-1058.

Thanks Don — superb workmanship!

Caption One



Photo by Terry O'Neill

Minutes of Membership Meeting of Largo Central Railroad, Inc.

Date: 05/05/2007

The President called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM

Reading of the Minutes: A motion was made to suspend the reading of the April minutes by Terry O'Neill & seconded by Chuck Analetto. All were in favor.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report for the month of April was read by Gail Komar. We are in line with our budget

projections. We appear to be in very good position financially. There were 1,355 riders today. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as read was made by Terry O'Neill and seconded by Howard. All present were in favor.


UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS:

City Commission Meeting: Warren Jamison and Terry O'Neill attended the meeting on 05/02/2007. At the meeting the Commission approved the first reading of the Budget entry for LCRR. There was one citizen who talked against approving the Budget entry for LCRR, but he didn't sway the Commission against it. The vote for it was unanimous. Parks and Recreation stated that it was an ongoing thing – it will have to be voted upon by the Commission each year, but it will automatically go in each year for approval. At the second reading on 05/15/2007, if they approve it, we can start drawing against it – it's like a line of credit. This money can not be used for new engines and cars. It is for maintenance, track replacement, etc. The next Commission meeting will be 05/15/2007 and anyone can attend.

Rolling Stock: We had a conversation with the gentleman who is making them, and he said that they will be delivered at the end of this month. This gentleman is also going to make new bearings for the trucks that we previously purchased from him. The original bearings in those trucks went bad.

Station: The City has asked for bids to replace the banisters. The city is sending out contracts for the replacement of the steel columns in the station because they are rusting inside. We may redo the decking at the station later with plastic.

People running locomotives: Warren Jamison is requesting that engineers watch the speed because the stopping distance is greater the faster you are going. This is a safety issue as well as an issue of wear and tear on the engines and the trucks.

Lunch: Warren gave thanks to Terry O'Neill for making the lunch this weekend. 

Raised ramp: Someone asked about a raised ramp at the station. It was stated that it may need to be removable because kids would use it as a jungle gym. More discussion and planning is needed for this. Also, the city needs to be consulted for approval.

NEW BUSINESS:

3rd Weekend: The next workday will be 05/19/2007 – The riding cars will be worked on. Warren wants a couple more t-cars brought into service. Last workday Warren and Don Mann replaced a lot of outer curve rail with heavier rail, and Warren wanted to thank Don and himself for this work.

Thanks: Warren wanted to thank everyone for having a good year. Everyone is doing a good job, and we are having better communication with the City.

White Board with track layout on it: It is located next the door in the clubhouse. Don Mann stated that when anyone is running and notices a problem with track, he would like them to mark the section with a number on the white board, and put the number below and describe the problem.

Adjournment: A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jerry Wendt, and seconded by Delores. All present were in favor. Meeting was ordered adjourned at 5:03 PM

Respectfully Submitted

Mary K. Brady

Mary K. Brady, Secretary

Birthday Runs for June 2007

June 9, Saturday Morning: 10:00 to 11:00 AM Afternoon: 2:30 to 3:30 PM	June 10, Sunday Afternoon: 3:00 to 4:00 PM
June 16, Saturday Open	June 17, Sunday Open
June 23, Saturday Morning: 10:00 to 11:00 AM Afternoon: 2:30 to 3:30 PM	June 24, Sunday Open
June 30, Saturday 5th Saturday FUN RUN DAY	

Check the Birthday Run Schedule Board in the Clubhouse for changes or additions

Public Run Weekend

Saturday June 2, 2007
 Sunday June 3, 2007

Membership Meeting...

June 2, 2007 after the Public Run
 Be certain to attend.

Board Meeting

June 1, 2007 at 7:30 P.M.

Public Run Tally

Saturday, May 5, 2007, 1355 passengers were given rides.
 Sunday, May 6, 2007, 1320 passengers were given rides.

Happy Birthday to You!

May Birthdays

Eric Amaral	John Beard
David Bell	Jerry Edward, Sr
Chuck Hackett	Warren Jamison
Edward King	Austin Gable
Otis Lawrence	Vincent Rizzo
Pamela Wendt	Robert Wolf

Darrel Woodbury
 Happy Birthday and may good health and good fortune shine on you.

The Doers

The following members showed up for Saturday chores.

Saturday, April 28

Sandy Drayer, James Salerno, Don Mann, Chuck Analetto, Alex Watson, Terry O'Neill, Warren Jamison and John Eason.

Saturday, May 19

Chris Janks, Jean Carter, James Salerno, Alex Watson, Tom Lawrence, Matthew Lawrence, terry O'Neill, Don Mann and Warren Jamison.

Work Day consisted of modifications to T cars to keep wheels on our new trucks from rubbing the bottom of the cars.

Some trucks have experienced bearing failures. Modifications are being made to accept heavier duty bearings.

Members who did not show up, missed a great lunch.

What The Halibut Is This?



A locomotive, of course, with no known prototype and yet – it is more prototypical than any locomotive in the hobby. It was built by Frankie (Cuckoo) Marino. I will first tell you about Frankie Cuckoo and next month give you the lowdown on the locomotive.

Frankie is a product of the “Great Depression” of the 1930’s. There are many railroaders who are still around from this era, including me. Frankie has an unusual nickname, like all males, if you came from Brooklyn, New York. We did not pick our nickname, it was given to us by our buddies because of some anomaly of our anatomy or there was something unusual about

our character. The nickname remained with you for the rest of your life.

Some of my friends' nicknames are as follows: Ole' (Chicken Feet) Larsen, Louie (Whiner) Scotto, Eddy (Fat Eddy) Ziegler, Raymond (Banana) Buonomo, Jack (Water Rat) Francini and Ignatz (Snatso) Schefiddi, just to name a few. They gave me the nickname of "Angie" and it is still with me.

Frankie Cuckoo was a little older than our group and went off to war first. Frankie loved trains and there were times we would avoid him because he gave us a headache with his train talk. He was hit on top of his head by shrapnel, from a German 'eighty-eight', that went through his helmet at the battle of Kasserine Pass in North Africa. The doctors put a metal plate in his head and sent him home.

Frankie recuperated and went back to his usual cuckoo life. A couple of incidents happened that made Frankie hate the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) with a purple passion. It didn't go to well for him when he told an agent the German S.S. were angels compared to IRS agents.

Frankie did not want to pay income tax. He received a notice from the IRS that he owed \$1,000 for back taxes. Things were getting serious when he received a summons to appear at the Federal Courthouse. What did he do? He borrowed \$1000 from his parents and went to different banks to buy 100,000 pennies. He put the pennies in paper cups and packed the cups in cardboard boxes. Frankie borrowed a truck from his dad, drove down to the government building; and with the help of his friends, placed the boxes in the lobby of the building with a note PAID IN FULL. There really was nothing the IRS could do to him as he paid his debt. He was, however, put on the Fed's *Black List* and watched like a hawk.

Frankie's dad owned a construction company that employed him as a subcontractor. With this arrangement, he told his father that he would pay his own income taxes. Well, two years later, Frankie received a notice he owed the government \$2,000 in back taxes. Now, Frankie was really frosted. He borrowed, without his dad's knowledge, two dump trucks from the company. He rounded up a few of his buddies and headed to New Jersey. Frankie went up and down the state buying manure from farmers until he filled the two trucks. You probably have figured out what he was going to do and he did just that. The manure was dumped in front of the government building with a note 'Compliments from Frankie'.



Frankie, his friends and his father were arrested and thrown in the cooler. Frankie was now doomed as the Feds wanted him out of the way. Not to hurt him, maybe to just lose him in Tibet somewhere. There is a plan called, thirteen divided by zero for this type of situation. If you were one who went to grade school to shoot paper clips or just to keep warm, then you will not understand thirteen divided by zero. I assure you, it does not equal zero. Frankie was committed to a mental institution.

Well, the Feds were off the hook but not the mental institution. Frankie went to the head administrator and requested they supply him with a lathe and a milling machine because he wanted to build a locomotive. The administrator had him escorted back to his room and commented, "Frankie was talking too much like a sane person".

They succeeded in getting Frankie mad. He gained the confidence of the patients and organized hunger strikes, free for alls in the dining room by throwing food at the staff, and all sorts of bad behavior to drive the administrator insane. The crowning

glory came when Frankie had the patients take their beds outside of the building. He went to the administrator and demanded they rent a cherry picker or crane to lift the beds into the trees so the patients can sleep with the squirrels and birds. The administrator reached in his pocket, took out a white handkerchief and placed it on his desk. Frankie finally succeeded in getting his machine tools.

Things really improved over time as the administrator and Frankie became good friends. The locomotive was completed and tracks were installed on the grounds. T cars were built to give the patients rides. Once a month, on the full moon, they had a night run so the patients could howl at the moon.

Frankie eventually became bored and just disappeared in the night. Some say, he left the country and went to a place where there are no income taxes. I sure would like to know where this place is.

Frankie's locomotive was shipped to this mom where it rested for a number of years in the garage. When his mom passed away, the locomotive was sold.

Good Luck, Frankie Cuckoo, wherever you are. Next month we will explore the locomotive. *The Editor*



Belt Guard taken off for clarity.



**God Bless,
See you next time, Angie**

