

THE SIGNAL TOWER

The Newsletter of the Largo Central Railroad

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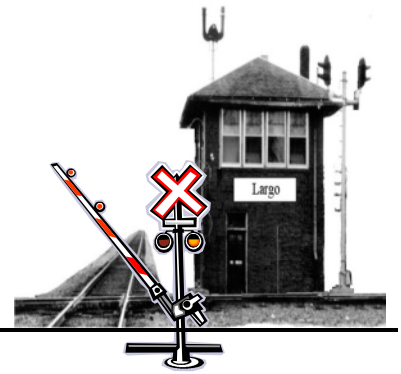
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August – September 2011

President's Message

Greetings,

It is still hot and muggy and we are still working to replace track. Every time I think we are all done with track – it just seems it never ends. I guess the people who fix and paint bridges find it the same. As a matter of fact, one of our members, Nick Damalos and his crew, paint large bridges and we very seldom see him. As it stands now, we are replacing a section of mainline east of the station toward Central Park Drive. There is still the relocation of the mainline, just outside of the yard, to get it away from a large oak tree's roots raising the ground under different areas of the track. Then we have the overhaul of the yard tracks. It never ends.

On a brighter side, autumn is near and railroad activity at different tracks rises with different meets. Angie will list some of them. Some of us are going up to Dunlap for their meet in a few days. Our friend, Earl Mueller has already left for Mid South, Dunlap, and Canton, Georgia. Hope the weather is fine and every one has a good time at these meets.

Many thanks to all the Doers who do track work, equipment maintenance, participate in our Public Runs and Birthday Party Runs.

See you at the track.

Warren Jamison,
President



ATTENTION

Big Boots & Western Railroad

Saturday, October 22, 2011 Meet

Saturday, November 19, 2011 Meet

Saturday, December 3, 2011

Captain John Boots 50th Birthday and Christmas party. This meet will also be a Memorial Meet for the late Bob Fivey. His family and friends will be present to spread his ashes on the railroad.

Central Pasco and Gulf Railroad

Halloween Night Runs

October 21 - 22 and 28 - 29, 2011, 7 to 10 PM.

Fall Meet

November 4, 5, and 6, 2011

Christmas Night Runs

December 16 – 17, 2011 7 to 10 PM

For more information, call 727-569-2289

Ridge Live Steamers

Fall Meet – October 21 – 23, 2011

Parking for campers will be on a first come, first served basis. A "Pot Luck" dinner will be at 6:00 PM on Saturday. For more information, contact Allen Newcomb 863-665-0482

Manatee Central Railroad

Fall Meet, November 11-13, 2011 and

Florida Live Steamers (FLS) Board of Directors' Meeting

When it comes to hospitality, this is the railroad! Go back in time to the "Old South" – Bring a covered dish to share with folks at supertime.

For more information, call Larry Smith 941-776-2109

Largo Central Railroad

Saturday, October 22, 2011 will be treated as our 5th Saturday (Fun Run Day) even though it is the fourth Saturday of the month in October. The actual 5th Saturday is reserved for the Park's "Spooktacular Event from 4 to 10 PM.

Our October 22nd, Fun Run Day – Starting time is 1:00 PM with various events followed by dinner at around 5 PM. Bring fruit or dessert to share with others. Members and their families of other train clubs are always welcome.

LCRR Board Meeting

Board Meeting - Friday, September 30, 2011 at 7:30 PM.

LCRR Membership Meeting

Saturday, October 1, 2011 after the Public Run

LCRR Elections for 2012 Officers

The Secretary of Elections, Angelo Cantalupo, will be soliciting candidates for 2012 Officers. Be certain to contact Angelo and have your name put in for one of the positions. To contact Angelo, call 727-531-8651 or email him at angac2723@verizon.net.

Birthday Runs for October 2011

Saturday, October 8, 2011

No Birthday Runs



Saturday, October 15, 2011

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Morning Shelter 1 | 9:30 to 10:30 AM |
| Morning | 11:00 to 12:00 Noon |
| Afternoon | 2:30 to 3:30 PM |

Saturday, October 22, 2011

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Morning Shelter 1 | 9:30 to 10:30 AM |
| Morning | 11:00 to 12:00 PM |
| 1:00 PM to ??? | LCRR FUN RUN DAY |

Birthday Runs can be added or canceled after the newsletter is printed; so be certain to check the Birthday Run Schedule Board in the Clubhouse for changes or additions.

Secretary's Minutes

Date: September. 3, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by President Jamison.

Minutes from the last meeting: Dave Langdon made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the July 2nd meeting. Motion carried. There was no membership meeting in Aug. due to rain storms.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer reported was presented and approved.

Unfinished Business:

1. The blue train was used today and will soon be completed with the addition of a caboose. No decision has been made yet on the purchase of Jere Wendt's engine. It will be decided at the next BOD meeting.
2. It was a busy day today with 1866 rides given. It is essential that all crews keep to a ½ hour lunch break so all have a chance to eat and we can keep the trains running during the lunch hour.
3. Chuck Hackett has a wireless signal system ready to be tested. We will try it on part of our track to see if it will work as planned.

New Business:

1. The next section of track to be replaced will be the East Bay Loop. We will also eliminate the siding there. This work will start this Saturday the 10th and should be completed by the next run day. Then we will do behind the tunnel.
2. Saturday the 22nd of October will be a Fun Run and dinner get together. At that time, we will celebrate our 20th year of operation.
3. We will put up a sign to indicate that only riders can be in line beyond the check in table. This will make it easier for the Station Master to control people that are not supposed to get on the train. Also, there is no smoking allowed by passengers or crew on the trains.
4. The Red Cross first aid training for members who are interested may be available through the City as their employees are required to have CPR training.

There being no further business to discuss, James Salerno moved to adjourn. Motion carried, meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectively submitted,
Marty van Zanten, Secretary

Happy Birthday to You!

September 2011 Birthdays

Chris Janks
Mark McCoy
Carol Reid

Gail Komar
Michael Gulino
James Salerno



October 2011 Birthdays

Christian Gable
Matthew Bryant
Danielle Damalos

Michael Piechota
Loretta Bullock
Alan House

Happy Birthday! May your day be filled with sunshine and smiles, laughter and love.

Central Pasco and Gulf Railroad

One thing your editor doesn't like is traveling. I have visited only a few tracks in the 15 years I racked up in this hobby. A few days ago, my good friend, Don Mann called me and told me he was going up to Crews Lake and wanted to take me along as I have never been there before. He offered to make lunch and would run the air conditioner in his car, an offer I could not refuse.

It was a pleasant ride up and it did not take too long to get there. Jerry Smithson and Don Koerner introduced us to some of the members.

Don Mann and I hopped on a riding car with Jerry operating the locomotive. He went at a slow pace and explained many features of the railroad. They have a buried water line following the tracks for steam engines and firefighting as the railroad runs through wooded area. The track switches are electrically operated. The signal system is designed by Chuck Hackett and is a real good one. Concrete mile markers have been installed and it gives the railroad a professional look.

The railroad was once a single track with many sidings. No more! There are many ways now to get you where you are going. It takes about 30 minutes to travel the full railroad.

I was very impressed with what I saw and recommend to anyone who has not been to Central Pasco and Gulf Railroad to take time out and visit this track. You will not be disappointed.

They are having their Halloween gig October 21-22 and October 28-29 from 7 to 10 PM. They go all out with their props and scary stuff. From what I heard, about the one last year, you and your family do not want to miss this one.

Many thanks to Jerry Smithson and Don Koerner for the guided tour of the railroad. Also, to Don Mann for getting me out of Largo for the day and a great Lunch.

Angie

EDITOR'S REPLACEMENT

So far, no one has offered to take the newsletter editor's job. Time is ticking away and December is coming fast.

Your old feeble editor.

DOERS

Saturday, July 23, 2011

Tom Eckert, Mark Zielinski, Alex Watson, Sandy Drayer, David Hull, John Eason, Bill Larsen, Jean Carter, Sharon Bryan, Matt Bryan, Vince Rizzo, Warren Jamison, James Salerno and David Langdon.

Saturday, August 13, 2011

Alex Watson, Tom Eckert, Warren Jamison, Matt Bryan, Rodger Bryan, Alan Isaac, David Hull and Don Mann.

Saturday, August 20, 2011

Tom Eckert, Warren Jamison, John Eason, Alex Watson, David Hull, Marty van Zanten, Sandy Drayer, James Salerno, Don Mann and Chessie, Yard Superintendent.

Saturday, August 27, 2011

Tom Eckert, Alan Isaac, Jean Carter, Sandy Drayer, Warren Jamison, and James Salerno.

Saturday, September 10, 2011

Tom Eckert, Mark Zielinski, Alex Watson, Jim Green, David Hull, James Salerno, Warren Jamison and Matt Bryant.

Saturday, September 17, 2011

Tom Eckert, David Hull, Marty van Zanten, Alex Watson, Sandy Drayer, Larry, Alan Isaac and Chessie, Yard Superintendent.

Thanks to all of the above for their participation to keep the railroad operational.

Public Run Tally for August & September

Saturday, August 6, 2011, 867 passengers were given rides.

Sunday August 7, 2011, 1,140 passengers were given rides.

Saturday, September 3, 2011, 1,866 passengers were given rides.

Sunday, September 4, 2011, 1,836 passengers were given rides.

Boss of the Train

(The First Bell Cord)

In the early days of the railroad in this country, the locomotive engineer was master of the train. He ran it according to his judgment. Collecting fares, superintending the loading and unloading of freight and shouting "All aboard!" were all that the conductor was expected to do.



The Erie Railroad was then the New York and Erie Railroad. There was no rail connection with Jersey City in 1842. Boats carried passengers from New York to Piermont-on-the-Hudson, which was then the eastern terminus of the road. Turner's, forty-seven miles from New York, was as far west as the railroad was in operation.

One of the pioneer conductors of this line was the late Capt. Ayres. He ran the only train then called for between the two terminal points. It was made up of freight and passengers cars. The Captain frequently encountered a fractious passenger who insisted on riding without paying his fare. As there was no way of signaling the engineer, and the passenger could not be thrown from the train while it was in motion, the conductor in such cases had to let him ride until a regular stop was made. Capt. Ayres procured a stout twine, sufficiently long to reach from the locomotive to the rear car. To the end of this string next to the engine he fastened a stick of wood. He ran this cord back over the cars to the last one. He informed the engineer, who was a German named Abe Hammil, that if he desired to have the train stopped, he would pull the string and raise the stick, and would expect the signal to be obeyed. Hammil looked upon this innovation as a direct blow at his authority, and when the train left Piermont he cut the stick loose. At Turner's he told Captain Ayres that he proposed to run the train himself, without interference from any conductor. The next day the Captain rigged up his string and stick of wood again.

"Abe," said he, "this thing's got to be settled either one way or the other today. If that stick of wood is not on the end of this cord when we get to Turner's you've got to lick me or I'll lick you."

The stick was not on the string when the train reached Turner's. The Captain pulled off his coat, and told Hammil to get off his engine. Hammil declined to get off. Capt. Ayres climbed to the engineer's place. Hammil started to jump off on the opposite side. The conductor hit him under the ear, and saved him the trouble of jumping. That settled forever the question of the twine and stick of wood. The idea was quickly adopted by the few roads then in operation, and the bell or gong in time took the place of the stick of wood. Henceforth the conductor was boss of the train, and the engineer took orders from him.

FOR SALE

Atlas Lathe- 9 inch swing with a 54 inch bed

Has gear box for thread cutting and driven longitudinal cross feed. Loaded with accessories.

For more information, contact Bob Conkle,
727-226-4176

A STORY

How about a story? Will it be true or fiction? That I will leave for you to decide.

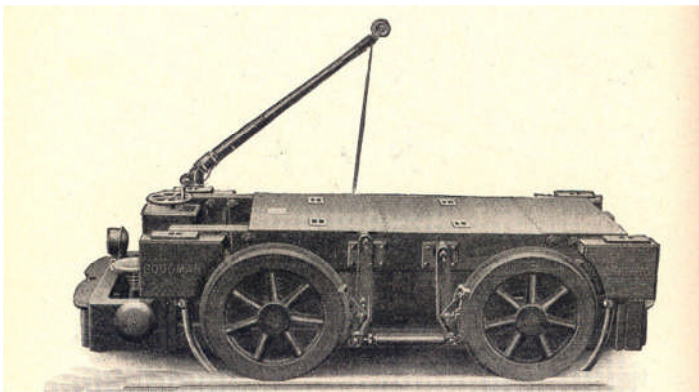
In the early part of the 20th Century, things were booming because of the industrial revolution. Immigrants were arriving with many skills to work in steel mills, railroads and many other industries including mining.

Coal mining was at the bottom of the list. It was dangerous, absolutely dirty, hard work and the coal dust breathed into your lungs will give you Miner's Lung that will eventually put you in the grave.

This event starts at a Pennsylvania coal mine near the city of Scranton. It is a large mine with a number of vertical shafts going down deep into the earth. Miners were reporting that gas was starting to build up in some of the areas in the mine. Pipe was ordered to increase the ventilation systems to combat the rising gas.

About a week later, railroad flat cars loaded with pipe were entering the mine area when suddenly the ground rumbled and heaved with clouds of debris rising into the air from shafts 3 and 4. A steam whistle started blowing off a warning to every one there was a mine explosion. It didn't take long for miners and families of miners running to the mine for news of their loved ones trapped hundreds of feet below.

In shaft four, miners who were still alive, were helping others who were hurt and regrouping in an area where wooden beams were still holding. The only light was the miners' lamps on their hats that would eventually shut down. Things looked bad for all and many already decided this was the end for them.



A while later, after the dust settled down, a miner noticed there was a light shining way up the corridor where the coal cars were stored. It was a mine locomotive pictured above with the headlight on. One of the group was a superintendent who came down to measure the gas concentration and is now trapped with the rest. He was very knowledgeable of mining and was also a signal man on a destroyer in World War I. The light showed him the electrical feeder system to the catenary to run the locomotive was still operational.

This mine had its own electrical power plant. Inside the plant were four large vertical steam engines coupled to dynamos and a huge electrical switchboard. A plant operator called the plant superintendent to make a decision for him. All feeder circuit breakers were tripped except one. The operator wanted to know if he should open the feed. The superintendent tapped on the feed ammeter with his finger. He noticed the meter was slightly up from its zero position. He instructed the operator to

leave the feeder hot, but check the meter often during the course of his duties. It was a new feeder installed a month ago for shaft four.

Back in the trapped area of shaft four, the trapped superintendent had a plan. He instructed the miners to bring all large crowbars and pipe for leverage to the locomotive site. His plan was to lift the locomotive using crowbars with pipe on them to increase the leverage.

What he wanted to do was just lift the wheels off the track a little so they would run free. Since the wheels were part of the ground system, the crowbars would then be wedged into the tracks and allowed to rest tightly on different parts of the locomotive frame to complete the ground contact.

The crew lifted the locomotive and slid wood planks under the frame to hold it up and then completed the ground system. What was the idea behind all this? The locomotive was going to be used as a telegraph key to contact the power plant. The superintendent trained a half a dozen men to work in shifts to send S.O.S. using the throttle of the locomotive. Three short applications of the throttle, a delay, then three long applications, a delay, followed by three short applications, a long delay and then it is all repeated again. This went on for an hour and a half with the trained crew taking their turns.

Back at the power plant the operator finally saw the meter moving and quickly called the superintendent. The super observed the meter moving with three short movements of the needle, three long and 3 short. He recognized the distress call and ordered the plant operator to fetch the paymaster who was a Signal Corps Captain in the army during World War I.

The paymaster arrived at the power plant and was quickly briefed as to what was happening. During one of the long pauses, he used a knife switch above the circuit breaker as a key and made the head light of the locomotive flash on and off a half dozen times to acknowledge that contact was made.

This was a very slow system of communications as a locomotive does not act like a high speed telegraph key. The trapped super in the mine had a clip board and paper to write letters on. The first message sent was the exact location where they were trapped. Then the names of the men were sent to take some stress off their families knowing they were still alive.

The drafting department took out their blueprints and found a corridor from shaft 2 came very close to where the men were trapped and it was decided they were going to break through the wall to free them. The first thing they done was to drill some holes to slide pipe through for fresh air as it would take some time to break through the wall.

They were finally freed and taken up to their families with the lift in shaft 2. Miners in shaft 3 were not so lucky however, none survived. Twenty-four men, some very young lost their lives because they could not get to them fast enough.

As far as any one knows, there is no record of a locomotive that was ever used as a telegraph key — except the one in shaft 4.

The End.

God Bless,!

See you next time, Ang

