

THE SIGNAL TOWER

The Newsletter of the Largo Central Railroad

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January 2009

Membership Dues Are Due Now!!

President's Message

Greetings,

Here it is a New Year and January is almost gone. Does anyone have a mathematical formula for calculating the rate of time speeding-by with advancing age? If you do, send it to me.

Things seem to be on track at the railroad. Our *Touch-a-Truck and Florida Clown Day Run* went well. About 1300 kids and grown ups had happy smiles during the five hour run.

I want to especially thank Don Mann, Matt Jeffery and Mike Smith for replacing 100 feet of track (5 panels) of the west station track loop. It was done during the week of January 19th and completed for the *Touch-a-Truck Run*. We all owe them a debt of gratitude. The next track replacement will be the south station track loop.

Good news, the Rail Systems' RS3 and Slug is on its' way to the track. Can't wait for it to get here!

Remember our fifth Saturday this month. See you there!

Warren Jamison.

President

Editor's Note: *In the President's Message you came across the name of Matt Jeffery – who dat? — you probably asked yourself. Matt is a member of the Reading Model Engineering Society located in Berk's County, Pennsylvania. They have a large railroad running various gauges. So, Matt knows all about building track panels and laying track.*

Matt and Don Mann are good friends as they made their way to the U.S.A. from England a good number of years ago.

Matt visits Largo for a couple of months during the winter. So, what does he do? He takes a busman's holiday and comes to the railroad to work. He has so far built 4 track panels and helped Don put in the west station track loop. It seems they make a good pair. When I looked at the finished track, I noticed a trash can half full of wrappings for 'fish and chips'. There was also a 55 gallon drum nearby with a tightly sealed top and marked on the side, in large letters, WATER FOR TEA ONLY!

Anyway Matt, it's great to have you here visiting us.

Log on to www.rsme.org and visit a 25 acre site with 15", 7 1/4", 4 3/4" O and HO gauge trains. Full machine shop, picnic facilities and 25 acres of forest land.

Mark Your Calendar

Largo Central Railroad

Fifth Saturday — Fun Day — January 31, 2009

All members and members of other clubs are invited. A card order run is scheduled – bring your locomotive and run it around the track to your 'hearts content'.

Dolores Pike, the first lady of the railroad, who has other commitments that day, **will not** be able to bring her delicious meal for us to gorge down. She will bring a pot of her famous baked beans, however. David Hull is going fix up Mexican chicken. Please bring a covered dish to share to help out with lunch.

2009 Florida Live Steamers Winter Meet

West Toco and Bostwick (NEFLS)	February 14- 15
Central Pasco & Gulf (CP&G)	February 16- 18
Big Boots and Western RR (BB&W)	February 19- 21
Manatee Central (MCRR)	February 22 – 25
Ridge Live Steamers (RLS) ¹	February 26 – March 1
Largo Central RR (LCRR) ²	March 2 – 4 (Open House)

Note 1:

2009 General FLS Meeting – February 28, 2009.

FLS Banquet – February 28, 2009 at Dundee Community Center. Banquet Ticket, \$15.00, contact Allen Newcomb at 863-665-0482

Reservations for Campground at Ridge track – contact T.J. Bissett, 863-984-2038. After February 14th, contact Allen Newcomb, 863-665-0482

For more information, check the Ridge website, www.ridgelivesteamers.org.

Note 2:

Largo Central Railroad will have an open house – no night running or festivities. Bring your equipment and run all day – there will be no security guards for equipment left overnight. The yard will be locked up, however.

2009 Manatee Central RR Calendar

FLS Winter Meet	February 22 – 25
MCRR Spring Meet	April 03 – 05
Memorial Day Meet	May 23 – 25
FLS Past President's Meet	November 13 – 15

Editor's Note: *Manatee Central had kind of a 'spur of the moment' gathering on January 1st, 2009. LCRR members were invited and a few of us showed up, including Jean and I. It was a beautiful day and I feel we had the nicest time, ever. I always say "Going to Manatee Central is like visiting the, Old South". Many thanks to Joan and Larry Smith for their wonderful hospitality.*

Public Run Weekend

Saturday, February 7, 2009
Sunday, February 8, 2009

Membership Meeting

February 7, 2009
Be certain to attend!

Board Meeting

February 6, 2009 at 7:30 PM

A Minute from the Secretary (aka: Safety Officer)



This is the start of a new year of operating our trains in the Park and giving rides to many people, especially children. And what a start it was, over 3700 rides given the first weekend, we may be in for a busy year! Now more than ever we need to focus on safety.

There were two safety related issues discussed at our Jan. 3rd meeting. The new, temporary sign listing our safety rules for the riding public was in place. We will be having a permanent sign made up soon. It emphasizes our rule that infant children and pregnant women may not ride the train for safety reasons. Everyone working the station area as well as the train crew should be enforcing this rule. If we all apply this rule consistently it will be much easier to enforce.

We also discussed the need to have a fire extinguisher an air horn and a radio on each train carrying the public. These items will be placed in a "caddy" in the gondola to keep them available to the conductor.

With the many children and adults using the Park on our run days there always seems to be someone walking, running, biking, rollerblading, etc. around the trains. Consequently, whenever engineers are operating their trains, they should always focus their attention on the track ahead. It is easy to be distracted by questions from riders or lose focus after a long day of going around and around. But it is at times like these when a child will wander onto the track ahead and we will need to take action to avoid a serious incident. Keep alert for the unexpected!
Marty

Birthday Runs for February 2009



February 14, Saturday

Morning: 10:30 to 11:30 PM
Afternoon: 2:30 to 3:30 PM

February 21, Saturday

Morning: 11:00 to 12:00 PM
Afternoon: 2:30 to 3:30 PM

February 28, Saturday

Morning: 11:00 to 12:00 PM

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

Job Well Done

Our **Heartiest Thanks** to Chris Janks for building shelves and areas to store equipment in the Public Run trailer. The trailer is pulled up to the station on Public Run days with the equipment for setting up. Each piece of equipment is in its proper place in the trailer.

Chris worked on the project for a couple of weeks during the weekdays and weekends. Many Thanks Chris, for a job well done.

Happy Birthday to You!

January Birthdays

Fred Clepper	Doug Fulthorpe
Robert Habasevich	Andrew Habasevich
Don Mann	James Reid
Matt Wolf	Kamron Woodbury
George Robert	

Happy Birthday! May good health and good fortune shine on you



ATTENTION

The mandatory yearly audit is upon us. Only regular members are eligible to perform the audit. Two volunteers are needed. Contact the President for more information.

Safety of the Railroad

It was suggested that we reprint the responsibilities of the Conductor, Engineer and Stationmaster. Last month the Conductor and Engineer Responsibilities were printed. It was stated that the Stationmaster responsibilities would be printed in the January issue of the newsletter.

However, the editor, who is also a member of the Board of Directors, after reviewing the Stationmaster Responsibilities, feels that an update is needed to reflect the current operation of our railroad. Therefore, Stationmaster Responsibilities will be delayed and published after they are reviewed by the Board of Directors and the Safety Officer.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you have not paid your dues by March 1st, your name will be removed from the Membership Roster

You may mail your dues to Largo Central Railroad, Attn: Membership, PO Box 823, Largo, Florida 33779-0823. To pay dues in person, see Jean Carter.

Regular Member	\$25.00
Associate Member	\$20.00
Family Membership	\$40.00
Junior Membership	\$15.00

Public Run Tally for January

Saturday, January 3, 2009, 1950 passengers were given rides.

Sunday, January 4, 2009, 1832 passengers were given rides.

Mixed Train Daily

By Bill Boyd

In 1865 at the end of the American Civil War, the railroads of the South were in shambles. Engines were blown up, wood cars and ties were burned up and every piece of rail was heated up and wrapped around the nearest tree. The only iron ore mine was in Alabama and the only steel mill was in Birmingham. All was lost.

There were not enough passengers for a whole train and not enough freight to make up a full train; so, the 'Mixed Train' came about with a few passengers and less than full loads of freight. One such line was from Starke, Florida to Bell, Florida almost to the banks of the

Suwannee River with a sawmill there, 120 miles round trip – It took all day.

Short lines had sprung up all over the South built by the local people who did not trust the 'Yankee' train builders. In Georgia, there were more of these short lines than any other state, some only 6 to 50 miles long. Cotton, corn, tobacco and marble had to get to market.

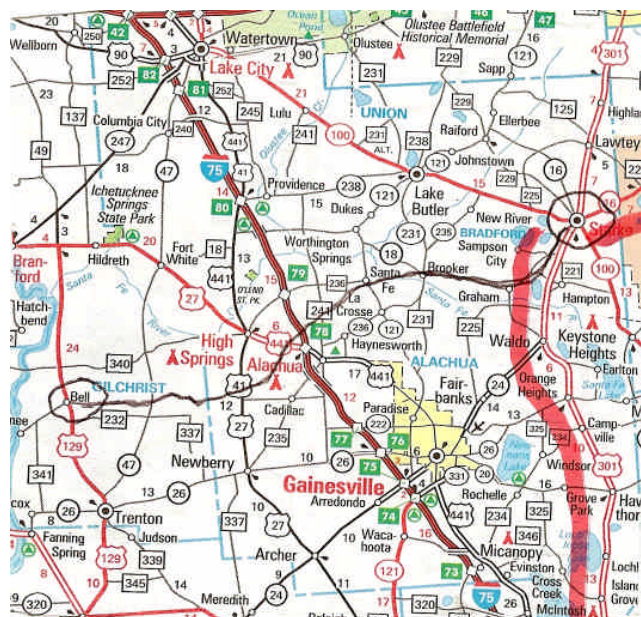
One cold morning in November, I boarded the CSX train in Starke. I was the only passenger. The 3 man crew drove up from Wildwood, a train yard in Central Florida. The consist was a GP-40 locomotive, 3 gondolas, 3 flat cars for logs and one old Seaboard day-coach with coal dust still on the windowsills. The train left Starke at 8:00 AM for the trip half way across Florida. We went through 3 to 4 little towns and arrived at Bell about noontime.

The town was one country store with a single gas pump out front. Inside the store, was a corner for the Post Office. On the counter, was a large yellow cheese with a fly paper catcher hanging over it. Each of the train crew got a wedge of cheese and a loaf of bread. I had my lunch in a brown bag. Also, in the store was a huge icebox filled with all flavors of Knee Hi bottled drinks. Each of the train crew bought a bottle of Knee HI and several stalks of sugar cane. Then we were ready to leave. No more town was there, no stores, no houses and no sawmill.

We left Bell at 1:00 PM and picked up loaded cars of lime rock and pulpwood logs cut 6 to 8 feet long to fit on the flat cars. The train averaged about 15 miles per hour. On the return trip, we stopped at a county farm where the crew bought fresh eggs, turnip greens and more sugarcane stalks. It was almost dark when we arrived back at Starke. The train ride was most interesting.

The End

Many thanks for the story, Bill. I really enjoyed reading it. Editor



Getting Smart



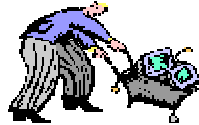
School will be held on Sunday, February 15, 2009 at 1:00 PM. You will be searched for any water pistols or pea shooters.

Video Presentations:

1. **Working with Tubing**
2. Second part of **War Trains**.

Members who showed up at the last meeting were Jim Reid, Dave Hull, Tom Eckert, James Salerno and Angelo Cantalupo.

The Doers



Saturday, January 10, 2009

Alex Watson, John Eason, Jean Carter, Chris Janks, Tom Eckert, Sandy Drayer, David Hull, James Salerno and Mike Smith

Saturday, January 17, 2009

James Salerno, Tom Eckert, Sandy Drayer, David Hull, Jean Carter, Mike Smith, Chris Janks, Don Mann, Warren Jamison, and Otis Lawrence.

Angie's Corner

Since Bill Boyd graciously presented us with a train story, I do not have to think one up and can go on with my usual scrambled eggs ramblings.

Any person reading the Signal Tower for the first time and reads the name of the editor, that person will say, "Hey! This guy surely doesn't come from Dublin". The person is right. My grandparents came from Italy at the beginning of the 20th Century. They worked hard and made sure their children knew that school and discipline were the first priorities.

Somehow, during growing up, us kids developed some peculiar ways of doing things and it is still with us today. Even actors like Danny DeVito, Anne Bancroft and Dom DeLuise used these peculiarities in their movies.

One strange thing is, we never use dollars and cents when dealing with money - usually, the name of a vegetable or other objects of food. The best way to show what I mean is by example.

Alfonso Calamari (Al) has to buy a new grape press for his grandfather since the one he was using disintegrated. It was only about 300 years old and the old man claims it must have been defective when they made it.

Al knows a guy living on the block who works in a store where they sell these things. So, Al takes off to visit Nunzio Scungille (Nunz) at the 'Make Your Own Wine and Beer' store.

Before he goes into the store, I have to tell you prices are never put on anything you want to buy. Also, the

sales tax has to be secretly part of the price. The grape or wine press costs \$100.00. That's what the owner or the 'padrone' of the store wants and will take no less.

Al walks into the store and the usual boiler plate greetings take place. How's the family etc. etc. Al looks at the grape press and comes out with, "Nunz, how much do you want for this beat up press that looks like it is going to fall apart"? Nunz replies, "That so called beat up press is brand new and it will cost you 200 clams". "What"! Al yells out, "you trying to rob me without a gun? That's a lot of scarola"! (scarola is escarole – a green leafy vegetable used in salads or steamed.) There is about 20 seconds of silence when Al tells Nunz, "Look, I am not in the mood for bickering. I going to make you one offer and that's it. I will give you 100 bananas for the press. That's it – fine". (fine means, 'the end') Nunz comes back with, "OK, now who has the gun? I can't do it, I have to ask the padrone first." Well, this goes back and forth and Nunz finally takes the offer. It always becomes one of those, 'nothing lost, nothing gained' situations.

Now what is all this nonsense about? This was not a sale, clams and bananas were involved and it is now bartering. There is no tax on bartering. How is the padrone going to send the state 6 or 7 bananas for sales tax? He does send in 6 or 7 dollars to the state but, Al does not know he paid sales tax. It is part of the game.

What about the \$100 promissory note with Benjamin Franklin's picture on it that was slipped under the table to Nunz? According to the old timers, that picture was really Benny Franklinoni who had to change his name because a number of irate women and a few husbands were looking for him. If you read about the life of Franklin, you will find he didn't change much. He was pulling the same shenanigans all the way from U.S.A. to France.

I think I will go down to the steaming bays to see Vince Rizzo. He is firing up his beautiful 10 wheeler. I am going to ask him if he wants to sell his locomotive that looks like it was in a wreck and it belongs in a junk yard. I will offer him 50 coconuts and see what happens. Fine

Words of Wisdom

When making New Years resolutions, or any other resolution, you probably will not keep anyway, say them out loud so only your ears can hear them. Make sure your brain does not hear them. Ears have no conscience.

Angelo A. Cantalupo

Absolutely no claim to fame – whatsoever!

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

