

LOCO NEWS

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LOCO OBSERVATIONS

BY Joe Fawcett - Member at Large

With the elections last month came some new faces set to take over the LOCO throttle. As you know, after six years on the board, I decided a little break was appropriate and took my name off the ballot. However, I am still deeply involved in LOCO and its activities so will continue, for as long as I can from a "member at large" perspective, to write articles for LOCO NEWS publication.

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Happy New Year to all LOCO members! Here it is 2006 already! Can you believe it? We have a whole year of progress behind us and a whole new year ahead to continue on the path of great progress that has already begun.

Let me start out by thanking *Joe* for his six years as LOCO president and his leadership in getting the club to the point that it is at now. I will do my best to continue what he has accomplished. I am open to any suggestions that you may have. You can e-mail me, call me, or

talk with me one on one—whatever is most comfortable for you. I want to keep this club as a hobby for everyone to enjoy and participate in.

Please take a special interest in our new members and show them what LOCO has to offer so that they can be involved in the hobby of live steam model railroading. Although we have to rake leaves and dig holes every once in a while, we want them to realize that it is ultimately all about the trains!

Until next time, see you at the track.

Brian

OBSERVATION from page 1

LOCO ELECTIONS. The three open 2006-07 positions were filled by *Bob Bogardus*, *John Reiff*, and *Tony Wasson*. They will join *Charles Parker*, *Ed Beaudette*, and *Brian Lacock* whose terms run through 2006. If any of the newly elected three cannot hold office or complete their term, the next in line of succession by the voting tabulation is *Leon Risenhoover*. As is the LOCO custom, immediately following the announcement of the election results, the new board members met to decide who would do what during 2006. *Charlie* and *Ed* agreed to continue in their respective posts of secretary and treasurer, while *Brian* accepted the position of president and *Bob* that of vice president. This will leave *John* and *Tony* to serve as directors at large. These folks are to be congratulated for stepping into their various leadership roles for LOCO!

Now, since that last newsletter, some improvements worth discussing have been accomplished or are in the process of being accomplished:

WEST COAST RAIL SWITCHES. It was truly a group effort that led to the beginning of switch building for the south loop. *Gene Berger* constructed the new track jig, *Delbert Scott* machined the aluminum blocks to hold the new West Coast rail into place, *Robert Swift* worked up the numbers to develop the new #8 frogs for the switches, *Gene* built the new #8 switch frog patterns, and *Truman Hefner* developed the plans for cutting and forming all the West Coast rail for the new switches.

Besides the size of the rail itself, one change you are sure to notice in the new switches is the material used for the points. In the past, we used one-inch “C” channel that had to be milled at an angle on one side. I am happy to say that we have gotten smarter and will be using 1/8-inch thick by one-inch high stainless steel angle

iron. While not quite as “pretty” as the points on the old style switches, they are a lot faster to manufacture and put into place as well as being a hell of a lot more durable. Tracks that have gone to this material are finding their switch points to be literally maintenance free and are lasting forever. As long as your wheels are gauged correctly, your train will run perfectly on them. The pictures will give you an idea of the progress made.

GAZEBO WATER RETURNS. Earlier this summer we were greeted with a water plume coming out of the ground next to the frost free water pipe at the northeast side of the Gazebo. *Joe*, *Gene*, and *Truman* tackled the issue by first digging out the line to find out exactly what the problem was and found that the plastic plumbing, not being strong enough where it joined the metal base, had snapped clean off. This meant that, in this spot, a frost free pipe could not be free standing. So a bigger hole was dug, some concrete was mixed, and a 4x4 pressure-treated post was placed to act as backing to which the pipe was secured. The three-day project restored the convenient source for watering the trees along the east side of the property.

DRAINAGE. Drainage has always been one of the most important facets of railroading. *Gene Berger* has done a phenomenal job working the drainage culvert on the west side of the parking driveway. From the picture, you can see that he has set up a bricked edging to funnel the water into the culvert where it can move quickly into the drainage ditch on the south side of the property. With this setup, we no longer have to worry about water going up and over the driveway and eroding the sides. Thanks, *Gene!*

TREX LUMBER PURCHASE. In early November, the time (and price) was ripe for a purchase of TREX lumber. So LOCO took the plunge and obtained an additional 100 12-foot sections. However, of the 100 pieces, 75 are specifically earmarked for use in the high line extension that will go up the east side of the property as they were funded through a private donation. The remaining 25 pieces will be used to make ties for the #8 switches for the South Loop first then the High Line. If our figuring is on target, this should at least get us to the top of the hill above the tunnel. It goes like this: 11.4 pieces will provide the ties to make four switches, so the 25 pieces we picked up this time will be used to make eight switches. We already had enough material on hand to have three sets of ties made up. Therefore, we have enough tie material now to make up at least 11 of the 13 required switches for the south loop and the first portion of the high line.

This particular purchase (\$1,950.75 after tax) was a special order through the Home Depot on the northwest side of town. They had offered us an up-front discount of 8.5 percent; but since it was Veterans Day, and me being on active duty and all, I was offered an additional 10 percent military discount. In the end, the LOCO price was about \$18 per board before taxes, which is over \$6 a board cheaper than the other place I was getting them. In the end, not a bad deal!

In the pictures, you see that the TREX has been received and is currently being stored behind the shed at Truman's house. We reasoned that this site is more convenient for the three of us (*Gene, Joe, and Truman*) to get to when the time comes to cut into the proper sizes. I know for sure that at least ONE of us enjoyed unloading all that material and riding with it down the hill on the side of Truman's house. That was great fun!

TRUSS BRIDGE DECKING. The superb work done by our members is evident in the pictures. *Roy Kline* cut the pieces then welded them into two 32-foot-long continuous decking pieces. This was a two-weekend project made easier with the assistance of *Robert Swift, Delbert Scott, and Charles Parker*. To finish the project, *Joe Fawcett* and *Truman Hefner* accomplished the painting. The final coat was the same shiny aluminum used on the bridge itself. The walkways have now been set in place on the bridge but have yet to be secured. The final product looks and feels magnificent. As you cross the bridge, you still get that open feel by being able to look WAY down to the lake but through the safety of the open-mesh walkway. Another fine job by LOCO members sharing their time and expertise out at the track!

LOCO FACILITIES. Members, each of you needs to acknowledge your responsibility for the care of the club's facilities and take an active part in fulfilling that responsibility. No one person can or should have the responsibility of turning stuff on/off or locking the facility down when members depart. Without a permanent caretaker

at the property, we ALL must take additional care to make sure things are done. For example, when the weather turned really cold a few weeks ago, the heater was not turned on in the well house. This caused the existing plumbing to burst. Fortunately the valve was closed, and the pipe just sustained a partial crack which allowed only a minimal amount of water to leak onto the well house floor. But it could have been much worse. It could have been worse since no one would have realized it for several days. So, who is going to take charge of making sure the property is being taken care of? YOU!

ANNUAL TRAIN SHOW. The OKC Train Show in December was an unqualified success for LOCO made possible through the efforts of those members who took the time and made the effort to come out and help show the public who we are and what we have to offer. To give you an idea of the magnitude of what was accomplished, here are a couple of fun statistics:

- During the two days of the show, over 17,000 people walked through the building.
- Members at the LOCO booths greeted and talked to over 2,000 of those people.
- Members handed out 300 birthday party flyers, 500 club information flyers, and 600 maps to the track.
- A shot of *Ed Beaudette's* ten-wheeler was the only picture used by the Oklahoma Daily News in their article about the show.

But probably the high point of the show for LOCO was the phenomenal success of the picture-taking effort. This facet of the LOCO Train Show effort has, without doubt, become the main draw to the LOCO display and is actually generating more visits to the track than our other efforts. Believe it or not, there were a significant number of repeat customers from previous years. It seems that some families have made the LOCO display the spot for their Christmas pictures! The team of *Earl, Gene, Truman, and Charles* put around 200 kids and adults astride Double Aught to earn a gross for the two days of almost \$1,300. The only glitch during the weekend was that the printer used for the past two years decided, on Saturday morning just as the doors opened, of course, to stop making quality pictures, and a quick purchase of a new one became necessary. But even with that extra expense and the usual ones for supplies and paying for the booth spaces, the club realized a "donation surplus" of over \$600. The time may have come to consider building our picture taking venture in the future, possibly with just a few trains for display. It will require a different approach and the purchase of more equipment, but it's worth considering. Let the new directors know your thoughts . . . do we push for an enhanced picture booth next year or maintain the status quo?

HIGH LINE PREP IN THE TUNNEL AREA. In order for the high line to pass east of the tunnel, the way had to be cleared by moving one tree and installing a retaining wall to keep the dirt in place. On November 19,

Gene, Joe, Truman, and John Sullivan (a visitor to the track from New Orleans) got things going. One afternoon of digging by hand and with the backhoe resulted in the tree being transplanted and first of several ties moved into place. Now with the dirt held against the tunnel, there will be enough room to put one or two tracks between the tunnel and the fence. This work having been completed, a small Bobcat loader can now be used to push the dirt overburden down the wall on the east side to build it up to grade.

CLUB INSURANCE. I recently received the annual request for information from our current insurance company. As in the past, they need the loss run from our previous insurance company (a loss run tells them if we had any reportable accidents, which we did not), the number of people in our club (47 counting associate members), and approximately how much we received in donations for 2005 (a little over \$5,000 in donations from company and private donations, birthday parties, and picture taking at the train show). The premium was a little over \$1,800 last year. Hopefully it will remain the same or even go down this year. (Hey, a person can always wish, can't they?) The policy is up for renewal on January 5, so either way, I should have received the quote by the time you read this. Note: This policy does NOT cover the house on the property. The house does not have insurance at this time.

LOCO BIRTHDAY PARTIES. In 2005, LOCO sponsored 13 parties which generated around \$1,500 in donations. We are now getting repeat business in addition to new bookings. In fact, last June a party was set for the 7th of this January! Something you should know is that the responsibility for setting up birthday parties has switched from *Truman Hefner* to *Charles Parker*. *Charley's* name now appears on the flyers and he will be taking the calls and letting members know when they will be needed. If you receive any requests for or about LOCO parties, please forward them to *Charley*.

Of note here, two months ago the club voted to put all funds received from birthday parties into a separate fund specifically for the purchase of another club engine. Therefore, we are depositing the party money into the club shares account and all other operating monies into the checking account. To date, we have \$265 in the shares account for the locomotive. Although no decision has been made as to what engine to get, it must be of a size to easily haul five or six carloads of adults around the track. Your board is open to your suggestions.

ANNUAL DUES. By now you should have received notification that your annual dues are now due. LOCO has once again been able to keep the dues at \$100 per year for full membership and \$25 for an associate membership. We need you to send in your dues by the end of January to make sure your name is included on the annual membership roster. Additionally, this capital is

needed to pay for the club insurance that is due in the month of January. The instructions that you received has you sending your payment and information sheet to *Earl Bean*. *Earl* takes the information you provide to build the membership roster and makes sure the check gets to the treasurer. Please be aware that there may be a delay in getting the checks deposited as *Ed* and *Earl* don't always get to the track at the same time!

STEAMERS' COAL. For you steamers who run *Double Aught*, the time has come to consider a source of coal. In the past, the club was able to rely on *Loren Jennings* for coal; but the supply has receded. In fact, the last time I looked in the shed, there were only five or six buckets left. Anyway, since *Loren's* passing, LOCO no longer has that close supply. Like I said, it's time to start thinking new coal source and how to get it to Oklahoma.

2006 WORK PROJECTS. Keeping the LOCO facilities maintained and improved is a never-ending, dynamic process requiring the help of more than just a few members. There is always a project that needs to be tackled, and I propose setting a pace for 2006. I have taken the liberty of breaking them into three categories. The list may not be complete, but I believe it is close. The bigger question is what are YOU going to do about it? Your club can always use your help on Saturdays!

SMALL PROJECTS:

1. Level the silver bridge on the loop extension and secure with 3/8" lag bolts. (Note: bolts are available and will be in a bag secured to the bridge.)
2. Survey the grade from the top of the high line near the south tunnel entrance down to the front of the property.
 - a. Set grade stakes every 50 feet along the fence line and permanently mark bottom of tie height.
3. Cut bolts on ends of 4S bridge to allow walkways to be mounted adjacent to the track.
4. Paint several sections of grey pipe aluminum color to go across the 4S bridge (pipe will carry electric lines for signal system Bob Bogardus is building.)
5. Run 120V electric wiring from the trailer to the signal box (supports lights).

MEDIUM PROJECTS:

1. Put base ballast down for both tracks from the west driveway down to the parking lot driveway.
2. Put base ballast down for the main line of the loop from the parking lot driveway to Hefner Haven.
3. Lift full-size train flasher signals off their bases to dig wires out so that wires to the lights can be installed.
4. Remove rust and paint full-sized signals silver.
5. Cut the wall on the east side of the tunnel and install double sets of ties for the retaining wall (high line).
6. Trench to all the signal boxes that Bob Bogardus installed.
7. Trench down the front side of the property to install water outlets.

8. Replace track from the pine tree (north side track) to the 4S bridge.

a. Install 2X6 material on the north side of the track 40 feet back from the 4S bridge to keep the ballast from washing out.

LARGE PROJECTS:

1. Put in piers and construct the bypass trestle from Hefner Haven to just north of the Hefner Haven trestle.

2. Continue dirt work and build retaining walls for the high line on the east side of the property.

3. Excavate the pond on the east side of the 4S bridge and move dirt to the high line.

Well, that is about all I have for now. I'll see you out at the track!

Joe

Train Show

By: Earl Bean

According to train show "groupies," the OKC Train Show has become one of the largest in the country; and as we packed things up on Sunday, we learned that changes are in the works for 2006. Simply put, the show has outgrown the current building—ALL spaces had been spoken for months prior to the show, and still vendors stood in line waiting for a chance to slip in through last minute cancellations. The use of another building (or buildings) is almost certain, but just what that will mean for LOCO is yet to be determined. One thing we can probably count on is that we will lose the extra space our location by the door has provided. For those not aware of the setup, our "official" spaces are the two designated booths on either side of the door; and we are allowed to "migrate" into the space in front of the door after everyone else is in. So, with a location change in the works and, as Joe pointed out, the picture taking has become the main attraction of our display, now is the time to reconsider our approach to the show.

The first thing to establish is our purpose for participating in the show. In the beginning, it was to develop a public awareness of a phase of the model railroading hobby that was hidden from most. A couple of years ago our purpose became attracting new members, the primary target being family groups. But now that the picture-taking venture has become such a donation generator, I propose that our purpose for train show participation should be to maximize that potential. To be sure, having some equipment on display, especially hands-on stuff, and keeping videos going showing the hobby in action is important and should be kept as a part of the display. However, if LOCO is ever to realize the potential income from the pictures, we will have to make the conscious decision that the picture taking is the PRIMARY reason we are at the show, and our display should be designed accordingly.

I have been deeply involved in the picture-taking efforts for the past five years; and during that time, I have come to feel that our current approach is keeping us only at the tip of the donation iceberg. We have enjoyed a continued increase in "donation surplus" through some streamlining of the operation and the changes made to the display "environment," most notably the addition of an attractive background built by *Gene Berger*, our

resident carpenter, and the trees and other greenery provided by *Charlie Parker*. But we are still just scratching the surface. My contention is that, with a coordinated approach, our picture taking can become our single biggest source of income!

So, what will it take? For starters, we MUST be capable of taking and processing 500-600 pictures (or more) over the weekend. That is more than double what we can possibly do now; but with available equipment, pictures go directly from the camera to the computer/printer (like they do at the malls for Santa photos), and such numbers are well within our ability. We do have a new printer, and it produces great pictures but is SLOW, SLOW, SLOW!!! We will need either more printers or a newer high-speed one. Keep in mind, you gotta' spend money to make money!

In addition to more or better equipment, we need to provide our donors with more options beyond the current one, two, or four images per page. I would like to see the addition of some seasonal offerings like Christmas cards or pictures with personalized messages. We can also offer delivery options. For instance, if you donate X amount, you get your picture today, but for Y, a lower amount, it will be mailed within the week, or for Z, the file will be provided on a disk or e-mailed. With the computer, such things are possible, but it will take a good deal of pre-planning to make them so. However, if we elect not to do any of those things, there is one thing we MUST do; have a "jolly" gentleman (dressed in seasonal train cloths of course) available to pose with those junior engineers. I think that by itself will have them lined up out the door!

I also have in mind some ideas about the effective use of two booth spaces and improving the photo environment. However, making ANY of this happen will take the TOTAL support of more than the four who have been doing it for the past several years. Basically, we have worked without a break for the two days of the meets. While it's for a good cause, it still makes for some LOOOOONG weekends! Besides, for LOCO to realize the donation potential of the picture operation, it will take more folks doing more things. And as for that potential? At a minimum, I feel our donation surplus will equal our insurance payment. But I see even that as only the beginning. I think that, with the right approach and support, we can do much, MUCH better!





CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

February 5
First Sunday Fun Run
LOCO track

March 5
First Sunday Fun Run
LOCO track

Every Saturday
Work session
LOCO track

NOTE: Everyone is invited to meet at Ashley's in MWC every Saturday at 8 a.m. for breakfast before heading to the track for a productive day.

*The President's open business meeting will be conducted during lunch (around noon) at the track on the second Saturday of each month.

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ABOUT LOCO

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Resident — \$100
Associate — \$15 (optional
for anyone living more than
60 miles from the LOCO
facility)