

LOCO NEWS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2005

VOLUME 18, No. 1



LOCO Goes Both Ways!

Setting aside the normal work schedule, LOCO members used the Saturday after Thanksgiving to try something a little different, opposite direction running. With both the U.S. and LOCO flags flying, the festivities began around eleven with six trains making movements around the track following instructions from the dispatcher, *Garrett Bean*, who was set up in the tower with a track plan, a supply of “shrimp” boats, and two fully charged radios. Initially, some delays were being experienced because of the long run between the passing tracks at Indian Springs and Lee’s Summit. However, as the session progressed, it was found that, by putting trains in the hole on the reversing track and the Lacock Loop stub at Hefner Haven, the delays were reduced and traffic could be kept moving. In the end, no cornfield meets had been recorded, no clearances had been overrun, and no “hangins” had been required. All participants seemed to have enjoyed going both ways and agreed that, with some more experience in doing it, this could become the way of things at LOCO!



Happy New Year to all LOCO members! 2005 finds LOCO is on a roll with active members making the track and facilities even better. To start the first newsletter of the year, here are a couple of things to consider . . .

2005 DIRECTORS

The election votes are in, and we had no problems with “hanging chads” or other such silly nonsense. The three incumbent directors, *Charles Parker*, *Brian Lacock*, and *Ed Beaudette*, were reelected, so you get the same crew that you had in 2004! If for any reason one of the directors cannot meet their obligations this year, *Fred Sasovetz*, the first runner-up, will be asked to take their place. Immediately following the election, the directors met to decide on who will hold the various positions. The results are as follows:

Joe Fawcett—President
Brian Lacock—Vice President
Charles Parker—Secretary
Ed Beaudette—Treasurer
John Donaldson—Director
Carl Bogardus—Director

CHRISTMAS SHOW AT THE FAIRGROUNDS

For those who did not have the chance to work the LOCO booths or see the show, you definitely missed a good one this year.

Working the display area, *Carl* and *Robert Bogardus*, *Travis*, *J.D.*, *Joe*, *Dave*, *Brian*, *Truman*, *John*, *Jim*, *Fred*, *Robert*, *Tony*, and *Joe*, working the display area, easily spoke to several thousand folks over the two days. In the process, they handed out over 850 flyers giving folks information about the club, over 800 maps on how to find the track, and over 350 flyers explaining the club’s birthday party program. As a result, we should expect a few more people to come out and visit our operation this year!

Offering equipment for folks to see and feel were *Jim Murray*, who brought his blue and white GP-60, *Joe Fawcett* and his Erie Lackawanna SW-1500, *Truman Hefner* with an A and a B unit from his Santa Fe “collection,” and *Ed Beaudette*, who sent his shiny maroon Allen Ten-Wheeler. To fill out the back wall on the display rack,

J.D. had brought several cars from the track. But the most popular part of the display proved to be the VHS tapes of the LOCO track provided by *Truman* and *Fred* being played on *Joe’s* TV and VCR. More than a few folks stood in front of the TV for a long time in total fascination of the trains, then couldn’t believe that the track was so close to Oklahoma City.

Moving down the display a little further, the team of *Earl*, *Charlie*, and *Gene* had set up the now traditional LOCO photo area where people, for a donation of \$8, could sit on Double Aught and have their Christmas pictures taken and printed. The layout this year was outstanding, made all the more special with the addition of a plywood backdrop representing a tunnel portal that *Gene* had built and painted. Then to finish the “look,” *Charlie* brought out several different-size artificial trees. In the end, the only thing out of scale were the people sitting on the train! Over the two-day period, *Earl* took over 145 pictures (more really because some of the subjects required multiple attempts in order to get the “right” one) of small and not so small people sitting on the train. Many of the folks were repeat customers who wanted to have their kids’ picture on the train again to show their growth from one year to the next. Interestingly, more adults were having their picture taken on the train also.

From the clubs perspective, not only did the picture operation pay for itself, it actually realized a profit. After deducting all expenses, the club made approximately \$750! So the next time you see *Earl*, who used his equipment to take and process the pictures, *Gene*, who created the backdrop, and *Charlie*, who helped hundreds of kids on and off Double Aught and got them to laugh, be sure to offer a special LOCO thanks. Now, with the success of this operation behind them, the crew is busy considering ways to increase the donation margin by redesigning the setup so subjects can be moved through faster, increasing the processing speed, and increasing the photo offerings.

LOCO MEETINGS

At the December 19 LOCO club meeting, a request was made to change the meeting date to the second Saturday of each month. So for the foreseeable future, mark your calendars to reflect this change.

Now I’m going to take this one step forward. The meeting will be held at 8:00 a.m. with breakfast served to those in attendance. This came about after it was successfully tried at the December 19 meeting. *Joe*, *Charlie*, *Brian*, *Carl*, and *J.D.* showed up a little early to

set things up and cook. *Brian* prepared the coffee, *Carl* did the hot chocolate, *Charley* did the bacon, *J.D.* did the toast, and *Joe* bounced between the pancakes, scrambled eggs, and sausage. With this type of help, we can expect to enjoy a good breakfast, complete a productive meeting, and be concentrating on projects by 9:15 a.m. If you are game to continue this, I'll help!

So, as a reminder, the next LOCO meeting will be on Jan 8; and the following meeting will be on Feb 12.

LOCO SWITCH MACHINES

A few weeks back, we finally received a batch of 38 casting sets—a good thing since we were down to having just a few finished kits left. However, after talking to *Robert Swift*, there are a couple of problems that need to be discussed with the club. From the way I see it, we need to come to terms with three things: Cost, who does our business, and how to increase our market share for the product.

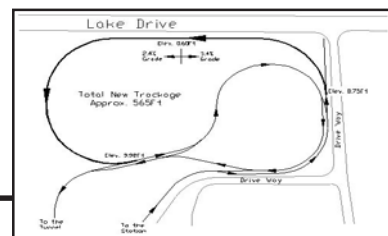
First, the cost of doing business is going up. The price of future orders with the company we now deal with will increase by approximately 54% plus some new per order surcharges—\$3.72 for natural gas and \$5.23 for “material adjustment.” If this remains the best price we can get, we will have no choice but to increase the price of both the kits and the finished product we sell. But before we do that, we have to explore if the current source is the best option. Since our orders are small and infrequent, in the great scheme of things, we are a very small fish in a very large pond. When we request a batch of castings, our pour usually has to wait to be scheduled as part of a larger pour for a more substantial customer. In

the case of the last order, almost six months passed between its being placed and our receiving the casting. Bottom line: If we remain with the current company, we will have to start forecasting our casting needs much farther in advance and expect to pay a lot more. On the other hand, some shopping around seems to be in order; and in a recent conversation with *Robert*, he requested and received authorization to do just that. He is now hard at it.

Second, I need to discuss the market for switch machines and our share of it. I keep reading in the current magazines about all the new tracks going in across the country but see that our sales have started to drop off! I am not aware of any better replacements being offered, so the question is: Why aren't these track builders beating a path to our switch machine door? And this is an important question because the profit from switch machine sales is one of LOCO's major money makers and goes a long way to keeping the club operating. Obviously, we need to change our strategy and market our product better. Some ideas are to advertise on hobby-related web sites and offer discounts if people purchase kits/finished machines in quantities of 5, 10, 15, or more. Of course, in conjunction with increasing sales, we will be required to keep sufficient stock on hand to handle the orders as they come in. After all, the best way to lose customers is to tell them it will take six months to fill their order! So, what are your thoughts on this?

Joe

Lacock Loop



Both ends of the Lacock Loop extension are now being worked. On the east side, thanks to *Robert Swift* who has been working as his schedule allows and *J.D. Donaldson* who has been using Dr. B to remove the excess dirt, the first 80 feet or so has been graded, and the grade string is in place. The second big push has been on the southwest portion adjacent to the driveway where the loop will tie into the existing main line. The weekend of December 11 *Joe* and *Truman* replaced the #6 switches between the inner and outer loop and to the gravel pit with new #8 switches then realigned the track for the inner loop. The following Saturday, the whole LOCO crew, *Travis*, *Brian*, *Joe*, *Truman*, and *Tony*, reconnected the main line and ballasted about 80 feet of track.

Note: The track to the gravel pit does not exist at this time. If gravel needs to be loaded into the hopper cars, we will need to use the back hoe. To make things easier, we will fill the hoppers at the end of each work session so they will be ready to move to maintenance spots without delay.

Another note is the result of one of those inevitable “en-route” developments. When it came time to actually set the switches and align the track, it was discovered a choice had to be made. We either had to lose some of the nice pines along the drive or about 30 feet of what had been planned as part of the downgrade toward the front of the property. The decision was made to preserve the trees and the switch was set accordingly. *Robert's*

transit talents will be needed to recalculate the cut, but it appears as if we may have to live with a 4 percent grade for that short part of the loop. Once we have the new numbers for the grade, we can immediately begin excavation of the grade down. Using Dr. B, this will be an easy job; but some hand shoveling of the loose dirt may be necessary to achieve the final grade. Additionally, due to the close proximity of the inside track adjacent to the driveway on the west side of the property and the fact that we will be cutting a grade between the tracks, we will also have to figure on building a low retaining wall along approximately 40 feet of the track. We are currently looking into using landscape timbers pinned in place like we did with the railroad tie walls. However,

nothing has been set in concrete, so we are all ears for better suggestions and sources of material.

In excavating the grade from the parking lot driveway to the West driveway, I intend on cutting it just a little wider than the width of the backhoe front bucket and 3-4 inches below the tie level. The wide cut will aid in keeping water away from the track, and the deeper cut will allow for the placement of 1 1/2 inches of rock in order to form a solid ballast base and ensure proper drainage.

So, as you can see, the club now way beyond just starting work on the Lacock Loop extension but it will take the efforts of all members to come out on Saturdays to make it a reality before the SWLS meet in June.

Loop Bridge



When it rains, about 40 percent of the LOCO property drains through the area at the North end of the Lacock Loop extension near where the Hefner Haven siding used to exist. In short, a bridge approximately 10-foot long will be necessary. Now, with work well underway on the loop, we need to narrow down what type of structure we want to span the gap. As you consider the options, keep in mind that, whatever structure is built, it will only have about 10 inches of vertical clearance below it so some styles will work well.

Currently, there are two proposals on the table. The first, a Squire Whipple Bowstring Truss Bridge, was made by *Robert Swift* and detailed in the May-June '04 LOCO NEWS. If you go back to that issue, you will see several color pictures of how the bridge should appear and a cost estimate indicating that the material would be in the \$1,000 range.

The second proposal comes from *Truman Hefner*. Based upon the fact that the bridge will not be that far off the ground, he submits that we consider a girder bridge like those in the Pee Wee Park area. It would be a single girder, 10 feet long and 4 feet wide, placed on two short concrete piers. A local metal company submitted a bid of \$325 which would include, not only the materials, but the shearing the metal, cutting the curve on the ends, and bending the strap material for the ends. The club would only have to weld it together and set the bridge in place.

As already mentioned, decision time is at hand although the club is still open to other proposals. If anyone has something different in mind, NOW is the time to suggest it. Otherwise, the choice will be between the two designs mentioned above. But no matter which bridge is selected, it will take YOUR help to make it so!



Whipple...

or



Girder...

or something else? Your choice - but choose soon!

Coupling Couplers

By: Harry "Scorcher" Bean



After the Civil War, a number of automatic couplers were invented to replace the old link-and-pin couplers. One of them was the Janey Automatic Coupler introduced in 1879. Because link-and-pin systems remained in general use, many of these early automatic couplers, while not compatible with each other, had a notch in the center of the knuckle for coupling to a link and a vertical hole in the knuckle for the pin to hold the link.* Finally, in 1888, the Master Car Builders Association (MCB) adopted the contour lines of the Janey patent as the standard for U.S. railroads. The MCB thus ensured that all couplers in use would be able to couple to each other. Then in 1911, the MCB Coupler Committee took the next step and asked the manufacturers to cooperate in the development of a coupler in which all the parts would be interchangeable as well. This resulted in a new standard design, the Type D, being adopted in 1916. In 1932, the Type E coupler was adopted. This improved version had no parts interchangeable with the Type D and is still the most widely used U.S. coupler.

So, here it is 72 years later and, oh, how nice it would be if the manufacturers of our 1 1/2-inch scale equipment would follow suite and adopt a standard coupler con-

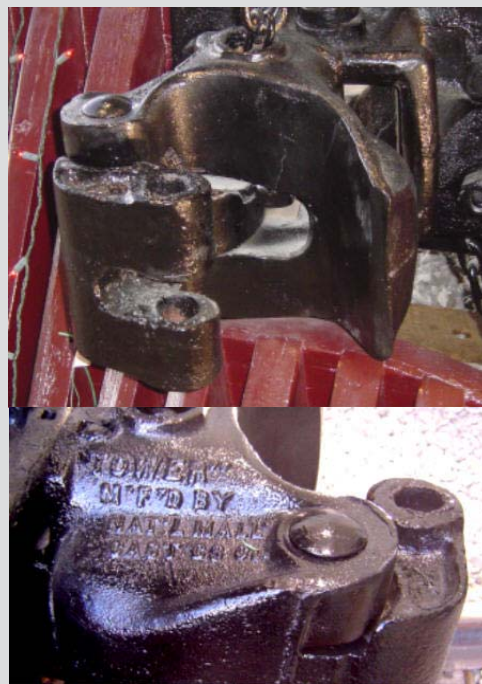
tour. The inability of one brand to couple to another brand is an inconvenience, at best. However, it becomes downright annoying during an operating session when making up trains with cars supplied by many owners. And then there is the matter of safety. While some couplers may couple initially or appear to couple, they tend to separate at inopportune times during the run. How about it, L.S. manufacturers? While your parts would not have to be interchangeable, you could achieve true coupler compatibility throughout the hobby if you would adopt a standard contour!

While we wait for the happy event, equipment owners can themselves help mitigate the problem. First, filing or grinding the knuckles and/or the knuckle pockets goes a long way toward improving compatibility. Second, spraying couplers with WD40 or graphite before each meet makes life much smoother for the brakemen. And speaking of brakemen, if the open knuckle of one coupler won't couple with the closed knuckle of the other, try reversing the open and closed knuckles. Also, brakemen should ALWAYS carry a small pocket-clip screwdriver to be used to coax a latch by "tickling" the knuckle of a reluctant coupler.

*A fine example of an automatic coupler able to accept a link and pin can be seen on front of the recently restored EP&SW No. 1, a 4-4-0 American built in 1857. Since this particular engine remained in service until 1903, well after the Janey contour lines became standard, the couplers would have had to be compatible with other couplers and is most likely one of the last of the automatics with the link-and-pin feature. Note the slot in the knuckle and the pocket at the back to receive the link and hole in the knuckle for the pin. Can you imagine being the brakeman who had to go between the moving cars to align the link and drop the pin? It has been said that the "experience" of a brakeman was determined by the number of missing fingers and that those who attempted to save their fingers and hands by using their brake club to hold the link to be guided into position were sissy! What would OSHA say?

A note about No. 1

There are several unusual things about this engine. The first is that it still exists at all since the custom when it was put on outdoor display in August 1909 was to send old engines to scrap. It is very likely the first U.S. steam engine so treated. Also, it went on display in near original condition. With the exception of a five-foot extension to the smoke box made when it was converted from wood- to coal-burning and the addition of an air pump for train brakes, it had received no extensive modifications during its operational life. It is now on permanent INSIDE display at the Railroad & Transportation Museum located inside the Sun Metro Parking Garage on the corner of Durango and San Antonio streets in downtown El Paso. You can see a nice slide show of it at: <http://trainweb.org/elpasorails/slide.html>





CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

January 2
First Sunday Fun Run
LOCO track

***February 12**
Breakfast &
President's open meeting
LOCO track

***January 8**
Breakfast &
President's open meeting
LOCO track

March 6
First Sunday Fun Run
LOCO track

February 6
First Sunday Run run
LOCO track

***March 12**
Breakfast &
President's open meeting
LOCO track

Every Saturday
Work session
LOCO track

NOTE: Everyone is invited to meet at Ashley's in MWC every Saturday (except Open Meeting Saturdays) 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 breakfast (around 8:30 a.m.) at the track on the second Saturday of each month.

Return to IN THIS ISSUE ABOUT LOCO

LOCO NEWS

is the bi-monthly publication of:
Locomotive Operators of
Central Oklahoma, Inc.
29626 Lake Drive
McLoud, OK 74851

Material for publication must be received by the editor no later than 15 days prior to the publication date. Publication dates are the first Saturday of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

LOCO NEWS editor

Earl H. Bean
6409 Beaver Creek Rd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73162
(405) 722-3675
FAX: (405) 722-0198
E-mail
bean.2248@cox.net

OFFICERS

President — Joe Fawcett
799-3681
Vice-President — Brian Lacock
224-1693
Secretary — Charles Parker
392-4635
Treasurer — Edward Beaudette
273-0726
Director — Carl Bogardus
751-4215
Director — J.D. Donaldson
396-3013

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Resident — \$100
Associate — \$25 (optional
for anyone living more than
60 miles from the LOCO
facility)