

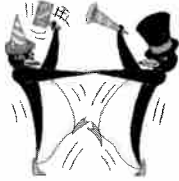
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TIDEWATER BIG TRAIN OPERATORS CLUB

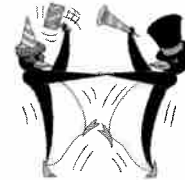
Gull



The Gull is the official monthly newsletter of the Tidewater Big Train Operators Club, Inc. Dues are \$20.00, payable on June 30, yearly. Submit items for inclusion NLT the 20th of each month. We'll take anything. Typos & misspelled words are intentional to help keep members awake when reading the newsletter.



JANUARY 2006

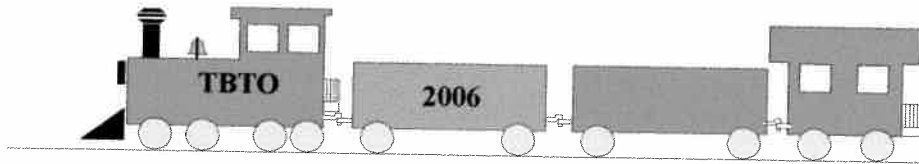


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MEETINGS & EVENTS

JAN. 14, 2006 ANNUAL DINNER, 5:30PM Gus & George's Spaghetti and Steak House 4312 Virginia Bch Blvd. R.S.V.P. to Suzanne Durbin 463-0684/zaknmaggie@verizon.net by Jan. 9th. Self pay for dinner.

FEB 9, 2006 7PM (Business meeting at this meeting) Edward & Patty Ross 1529 Pine Grove Ln. Chesapeake, VA 23321 465-3985

MARCH 4-5, 2006 TRAIN TIME Chesapeake Central Library. More to come later.

MAR 2006 Need host.

CONTACT , Teya Caple-Woods, THE PRES. if you wish to host a meeting.



DECEMBER MEETING NOTES

The December meeting of the TBTO Club was held Dec. 8, 2005 at the Avalon Church of Christ. The club wishes to thank the church for their hospitality.

- ☺ Treasurers report given by Dave Fahy. We have spent money again.
- ☺ Shed is completed and paid for. Needs to be painted in the spring.
- ☺ Annual dinner Jan. 14, 2006. See front page for details.
- ☺ Bob Maisey suggested to be thinking of new ideas for 2006 Holiday Train Show. Some suggestions are as follows: Better Santa location with a scene/log cabin; ? If times need adjusting; spot lights/overhead lighting issues; more help for set up and take down; ? If need more split jaws purchased; layout “in the round” for next yr/designs welcome anytime; PA system; megaphone; ?Barbie train; play Christmas music and have huge snow scene.
- ☺ 2006 quarterly business meetings as follows: Feb, April, July and Oct. Make a note of this for the coming year.
- ☺ Keene Black mentioned the trailer needs new tires and an inspection. Also tire covers to protect the new tires. To be voted on at business meeting in Feb.
- ☺ Yankee Candle factory in Williamsburg/Rt60 had a train layout set up for Christmas.
- ☺ Attendance at the show estimated to be 3100+. Raffle and donations more than doubled this year!

Holiday Show

Yes, it was our biggest and many say it was our best. After five long days of setup and working out the wiring problems the layout was ready for the public. With the train master in his control tower, we departed on the right tracks and on time. The Christmas train was pulled by PRR Mallet on the mainline one and the Freedom train was on mainline two. The layout consisted of thirteen (13) loops and six (6) point to point. With battery-operated trains sometimes you could see twenty-one (21) trains operating.

The Whiner Brother Circus was in town along with the odor. The crowd enjoyed the parade. The only complaint is that they need to clean up behind their elephants. And there wasn't an empty seat under the Big Top the entire week. There were a lot of new editions to the circus including a TY beanie clown was spotted sitting along the side a bridge watching trains. Ring Master Deihl was in rare form. I don't know what he was taking/eating or whatever but he needs to share with the rest of the membership.

Santa and Mrs. Clause took center stage with their birdhouse layout. The layout had two levels with three operating trains, cable cars and waterfall. They had no idea when they joined our club that they would be responsible for a major portion of the layout. They passed the test with flying colors. So they will be designing the entire layout next year. **WELCOME TO THE CLUB!** Thanks for filling in Friday. The kids and parents enjoyed Santa and Mrs. Clause. I hope we can see more of them at this year show.

The Bear community was busy putting on the Ritz. It's amazing for their size, they are good and hard workers. You could hear laughter and music during the set-up and the entire show. They did a beary good job. The Puddle Jump Express was seen bearing around the countryside. There was a little white bear seen drive a motor cycle around the show. I wonder if Mom bear knew Papa bear give him permission to be out so late. The last I heard the wiener and condiment train was attack by some hungry bears. Well Papa bear built his own layout. He needs to learn how to measure better. He had us set the riser 4ft apart for his yard sale find (1.00) Aristo Craft 3ft bridge. You do the math. The disappearing Shay and Shortline train did disappear and wasn't seen for a whole day. Unfortunately papa bear couldn't get the switch to work so things didn't work as planned. You now have 11 months to perfect it.

The Polar Express was playing at the Starlight Drive in Theater the place was packed. I spotted a little boy in a tree watching the movie. I sure hope he could read lips.

The Capleville and Werner Mogul Express pulled in and out of the station always on time filled with tourist visiting for the holidays. Thanks to Bill's wiring everything ran smoothly. It was a great hit with the crowd.

You could smell the aroma of cookies from Cookie Jarville. You could hear the kids begging for cookies the entire show. I think Patsy has a thing with cookies and candy. Did you check out her kit bash entry?

The Lindwood Falls with fish was a GREAT addition to our layout. Our original water feature didn't workout as planned. So Lindwood provided us with a commercial unit and Styrofoam. Bob, Fahy and I helped Lindwood finish carving the foam. And I had the honors of taking the mountain and rocks home to seal and paint. During set up we had a problem with mountain floating but Bob came to are rescue and with a board braced under the pipe. The second problem was foamy water and Dan solved that problem with a liquid used for hot tubs. After these problems were fixed the fall performed perfectly the entire show. And the fish have a new home in Adia's fish tank. **THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

The kit bash contest entries were great. The public love it. We had 3105 voter. The accounting firm has tabulated the vote. Here are there results.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. We have a winner. Well, actually all our participants in the TITO 2005 Kit Bash contest are winners and deserve to be recognized.

Officially speaking, the accounting firm of Suzanne and Talmadge have completed the voting tabulation and are prepared to announce a winner. The voting was close and the race came down to the wire. A clear front runner and potential winner appeared after one percent of the chads had been counted. However, being the responsible chad counters we are, (and not wanting to create another Bush/Gore boondoggle) we chose to count further before broadcasting any results.

Turns out that decision were correct as two other dark horses had emerged by the time 50% of the chads had been recorded. But again, the race appeared too close to call. So the Team tightened its visors and continued on to complete its mission. Of course there were a few obstacles along the way that delayed our efforts. For instance, some chads were blank, some contained comments (such as, "Greatest show ever!", "God bless you for all the hard work," and "My vote's for sale"), and others with multiple numbers. We chose to ignore them.

By now, I guess you're anxious for yours truly to finally announce the winner. Well, just hold on.

The Team finally felt a clear winner was emerging after 95% of the chads had been counted. We still chose to wait until counting them all so as to ensure we missed nothing. I am happy to say the tabulating is over and we have a winner.

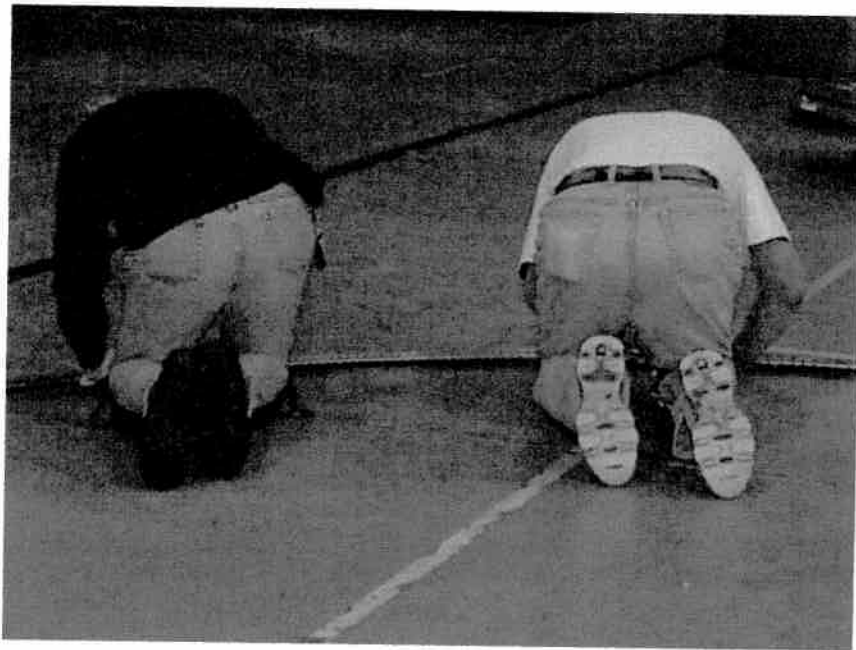
BUT, before we announce the winner, there is one more bit of information to share.

YES, MR. TREASURER, WE HAVE MO' MONEY. Turns out some voters assumed the ballot box was for donations, or perhaps someone was attempting to sway the Chad Counters. Either way, \$14.76 was found in the box. Now, had this vote been taken in Florida, the attitude would probably have been "Finders Keepers." Not so, in VA, and certainly not so when it comes to the Accounting Team of Suzanne and Talmadge. So, we'll hold on to the donation until we see you, or we can send you a check if the Club needs it before then.

Now, back to the issue at hand. Are you ready to find out the winner? Drum roll please!
Dum! dum! dum!.....:

For the correct amount of money you could be the Winner. The winners will be announced at our annual Don't Dress Up Banquet on January 14th.

Anyway I would like to thanks Fahy and David Caldwell who were there every day of set up and operation. And Sherry for the excellent job on advertising and taking care of the raffle. And a big thanks to all the members that took the time out of their busy schedule to help set up, operation and take down. Our pot luck dinner on Sunday evening was a great ending for all our hard work. THANKS! HAPPY NEW YEAR!



THE END

SNOWTOWN

Snowtown, owned by the Caldwell's, was set up opposite the main layout. The display of 20+ lighted buildings was surrounded by a winter sky backdrop constructed and painted by Roland Smith. Great job Roland! This addition can be used in years to come. Snowtown had a skating rink and sledding hill with skiers and snowmobilers. There were kids building snowmen. At one end was a lake with a lighted boat. A trio of singing bears were in town center.

Santa was seen everywhere. He was helping Dominion Power keep the lights on by repairing the Merry Christmas sign. He was riding a train above the layout and also in a hot air balloon. Someone saw him with his reindeer circling a lighthouse.

The grinch was seen in town driving his famous car.

A point to point with the Waddling Goslin ran from end to end. All the cold skaters, sledders and skiers got warmed up at the nearby Cracker Barrel.

Next year Snowtown wants to be in the main layout. We hope to add a Ski Resort by then.



RR Terrorism Vulnerability

Attention is necessarily focused these days on the vulnerability of people – no matter where they are – to attacks of one kind or another. Witness the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 and its absolute destruction on 11 September 2001, as well as the destruction at the Pentagon and the plane crash in Pennsylvania, all due to the actions of Muslim plane-hijackers, on that same day. There are myriads of other recent cases-in-point such as the subway bombings in Spain and England, the nightclub bombings in Indonesia, and the bombings the other night in Amman, Jordan, all brought off by homicide/suicide idiots ostensibly paying their way to the ecstasies of Paradise. The Israelis have been living with this circumstance for decades in a country only one-fifth the size of my small state of Kentucky.

It takes little imagination to conclude that prime locations for killing large numbers of people are found in transportation systems, especially the airlines and railroads (particularly the subway/commuter systems in and between large cities), and in places where large numbers of people are gathered, such as in restaurants, stadiums, etc. One wonders how long it will be before a suicide bomber shows up at one of the football bowl games, especially given that many potential bombers already live in this country, as did most of the WTC murderers at one time or another.

I'm reminded of an incident in Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee, that took place while I was still working. For reasons known only to himself, a local idiot decided one day (or night – don't remember which) to see if he could wreck a freight train. He may have just wanted to watch the crash, provided he could carry it off. Actually, it was a simple matter to wreck a train without any thought of explosives. All he had to do was figure a way to derail one wheel on any locomotive or boxcar, and everything behind it would jump the track, turn over, or whatever until the motion of the train was stopped. At this location, the train could be expected to be doing about 50 mph. The vandal decided to prop an angle-iron (the six-holed iron strip that was bolted to the ends of tracks to join them) in a switch-frog, the joint that allowed wheels to pass through intersecting tracks allowing for movement of cars to a siding. He could have expected that the angle-iron would either be slipped aside under the weight of the engine or act as a derail, like the ones designed for that purpose to keep rolling stock from exiting sidings because of faulty brakes or brakes released by vandals.

When one wheel on the lead axle on the lead truck of the locomotive on a northbound out of nearby Chattanooga hit the frog, it jumped the track and the engine headed down into a shallow ravine beside the track toward a small stream, the other three locomotives following it and a large number of cars winding up all over the right-of-way. Without doubt, the miscreant watched the whole scene, probably with some ecstasy of his own, realizing that he had just caused a terrible wreck. The brakeman in the second locomotive was injured, and I believe he never worked again. This lowlife caused a terrible mess, loss of millions, probably, in damages, and could have caused the deaths of at least three men... and it was s-o-o simple, probably taking no more than a minute to arrange. Actually, this criminal was run to ground and sent off to the big-house for maybe three years. When he returned to Soddy-Daisy, he got into some kind of brouhaha and was shot and killed.

Around 1970, when I was braking between Danville and Cincinnati, someone(s) removed a number of spikes from tie-plates (the fixture into which the rails are fitted and through which the spikes overlapping the rail are driven) on the outside track on a high-speed curve, probably with the intent to make the track slide away under a train from the inside track and throw the cars on the ground. No wreck occurred, but the Lexington paper ran a picture of this attempt at train-wrecking, innocently giving copycat types some inspiration. On a northbound trip on the local back in the 70s, I got up as much speed as I could muster at Somerset, Ky., to hit Norwood Hill, only to crash into some crossties that had been wedged on their ends between the rails. There was no derailment... just some broken ties and a furious engineer – me. I backed up all the way for another run at the hill and lost that much time.

I've run over lots of things on the tracks, put there by folks mostly wanting to just see what would happen, I guess, or to have something or other flattened. For years, I carried a penny I had placed under a train wheel at Old Fort, North Carolina – no danger, of course – when I had accompanied some youngsters to Ridgecrest, a Baptist retreat nearby. That was in another life in the 60s before I returned to railroading for the last time. Folks used to park cars or pickups on the tracks for purposes probably having to do with spite occasioned by the threat of their being repossessed for nonpayment. They never considered the danger that posed to the train crew.

The point of this piece is simply that sabotage of railroads is a simple thing to achieve, much simpler in a way than blowing up airplanes, since there's no way to guard thousands of miles of tracks, either urban or rural, or run security checks. The sabotage of an AmTrak train out west some years ago comes readily to mind.