

Ridge Live Steamers

December 2012

CALENDAR

Winter Meets

NMRA Western Division Family Day	Saturday	January 26, 2013
North East Florida Live Steamers	Thursday – Sunday	January 31 – February 3
Big Boots & Western	Monday – Sunday	February 4 – 10, 2013
Central Pasco & Gulf	Saturday – Wednesday	February 9 – 13, 2013
Largo Central	Thursday – Sunday	February 14 – 17, 2013
Trade Winds & Atlantic RR	Saturday – Sunday	February 16 – 17, 2013
Manatee Central RR	Sunday – Wednesday	February 17 – 20, 2013
Ridge Live Steamers	Thursday – Sunday	February 21 – 24, 2013
FLS Annual Meeting	Saturday	February 23, 2013
Sebring Systems	Saturday – Sunday	March 9 – 10, 2013

Spring Meets

Central Pasco & Gulf Discover Live Steam Regional Meet		March 15 – 17, 2013
Ridge Live Steamers	Friday – Sunday	March 22 – 24, 2013
2013 Harris Chain of Lakes Steamboat Meet		February 28 – March 7, 2013
Manatee Central RR	Friday – Sunday	April 12 – 14, 2013
Memorial Day Meet	Sunday – Monday	May 25 – 27, 2013

HAPPY HANNAKUH MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR

May the joys and happiness of the seasons be present for all

First Annual Christmas Night Run by Bruce Rauch

The first Christmas night run was a festive success. On December 15, about forty members, family and friends came to the Ridge for the new tradition. Some, who came a distance, even brought their RV's to spend the night. The daylight hours were spent decorating trains, buildings and grounds with all sorts of lights and decorations. I've never seen the property look so cheerful. At five we enjoyed a great (as usual) potluck supper. By the time supper was over and the conversation

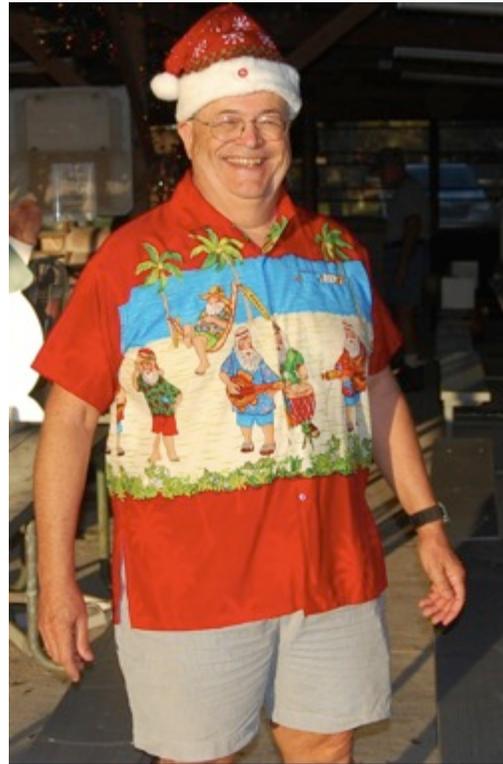
began to wind down, it was dark and time to light up the trains. There were at least twelve lit up and decorated trains parading around the track bi-directional. It brought new interest to meeting trains on the passing sidings. There was even a gauge 1 train bedecked in colorful lights. I'd like to thank all who made this first Christmas run a success whether setting up, taking down, preparing the pot luck, cleaning up, running and riding the trains or just watching. I hesitate to name names as I'd surely leave someone out but, a special thanks has to go to Nancy Dobler who surprised us all by spreading a little "dirt".

Some of the decorated trains in the yard



More Notes on the First Annual Christmas Night Run. What started out as, “How many will come?” Answer, “I don’t know.” Or, “How many will decorate their trains?” Answer, “I don’t know.” “Do you think we will have another?” Answer, “I don’t know.” For starting out with so many unknowns it certainly proved to be a great idea. The only remaining question is, how could we have trusted this project to someone who dressed up like a demented elf?

Many ideas to improve next year’s Christmas Run have been noted. It should be even bigger and better next year. Forward your ideas to Bruce Rauch.



FLS 2013 Winter Meet is just a few months away. Start making your plans now. The “Winter Meet Packet” will be distributed by e-mail to those who receive electronic distribution, others will receive it along with this newsletter, and still others will receive it with the FLS “Trainline.”

Please register at the Registration Desk. Your preregistered meet badges will be available there. Everyone should register and sign a Meet Waiver. Banquet tickets will be available next door to the registration desk.

Earl Mueller has done some investigating of the area motels. He does not recommend the Monticello Motel or the Super 8 Motel on Route 27 in Dundee, and the Travelers Motel is closed, and they have been removed from the list in the Winter Meet Packet. He has made arrangements with the Stay Plus Inn (863-422-8621) on Route 27 in Haines City. If you reserve a month ahead and mention “the train meet,” this should get you a group rate of \$49.00 per night.

Ridge Yacht Club. Again this year, Harold Dunsford and his cadre of volunteers have erected the yacht club for the live steam boat enthusiast. Bring your live steam boats during the Winter Meet and join with other fans. For those interested in full sized live steam boats contact Harold Dunsford or Jim Reid for information on the 2013 Harris Chain of Lakes Steamboat Meet to be held in Tavares at Wooton Park from February 25 to March 7.

Mershon Tower Comes to the Ridge, special from Bob Babcock

This tower started off by my research into Michigan railroads with the idea of lettering my riding car. On the way I discovered a picture of Mershon Tower and I thought it would make a great addition to what is now known as Bissett Yard. First a little historical background.



Mershon tower was built prior to 1900 to control the crossing of the Michigan Central, Pere Marquette and Grand Trunk Western railroads near Saginaw Michigan. The tower contained 26 interlock levers to control switches on each of the railroads. Operation of the tower alternated between Michigan Central and Pere Marquette annually until the late 1920's when Pere Marquette took over permanently. In 1988 Mershon Tower was moved to its present site at the Saginaw Railroad Museum.

My wife Betty and I visited the museum one rainy day and were able to take many pictures and a few measurements. I was able to use the pictures and measurements we took to develop detailed sketches. Some compromises had to be made most notably the building couldn't be any taller than 32 inches in order to fit in my trailer. I decided to make the entire structure out of treated lumber to minimize the risk of insect damage. I was also concerned

that the building be structurally sound given the high winds we can experience in Florida.

The first step was to make 13 windows and two doors. The windows were made from pieces ripped from a 2x8 and slotted to hold the acrylic used for the glass. The doors were made in a similar manner with acrylic top and bottom. The bottom panel was painted to look like a panel door. Electrical terminal nuts with the knurl filed off were used as doorknobs.

The base of the building was made from 4 - 5/4 deck boards ripped to size and glued together. The structure of the building was made from pieces ripped from a 2x8 for stability. I found that pieces ripped from 2x8s were more stable than pieces ripped from smaller dimensional wood. Four frames spaced about 9 inches apart were made for the lower part of the building. The upper part was built around the windows and door.

The next step was to make clapboard siding. Lots of clapboard siding. Each clapboard was individually ripped from a 1x6 and nailed into place using a brad nailer. I had determined that I wanted clapboards 1/4" thick at the top and 3/8" thick at the bottom. This turned out to be 11 degrees. You make a lot of sawdust cutting clapboards. I filled 3 five gallon buckets with sawdust.

I had to decide what to do about a stairway to the upper floor. The prototype building had a stairway that ran straight up longitudinally. I knew this would present a tripping hazard so a change was needed. A stair mounted across the end of the building would also stick out presenting a potential tripping hazard. I really didn't want to use just a ladder. Then I remembered something I had seen used on "This Old House", it was a stairway with staggered steps. It allowed a full width step but the stairway was twice as steep. Apparently this type of stairway was used in some East Coast lighthouses. I cut 3 stringers and set them up in the milling machine to cut slots for the steps. Everything fitted up perfectly and the steps were glued together.

Looking at the photographs I determined that the roof slope was about 30

degrees. Since this was a hip roof, the roofing material had to be cut using a compound angle. Fortunately my miter saw had a table for compound angles. Because of the size of the pieces I ended up cutting them on the table saw. Because I wanted a solid structure, 1/2-inch thick treated plywood was used for the roof. The prototype had a brick chimney and because it was a prominent feature, a chimney was made. Mortar lines for the bricks were made using a 1/16" mill cutter in the milling machine. I thought it might be a good idea to vent the roof to prevent the windows from fogging up. Roof vents were made using plastic pipe and elbows to keep water from blowing in. Screens were added to keep out the bugs. The roof was covered with black rolled roofing.

Trim was cut and painted before being glued on. The molding under the windows was made using a series of cuts on the table saw. An electric light was added for night operations. The building was painted dark green with straw yellow trim to approximate Pere Marquette building colors. My cousin John Sweeney provided the metal stanchions for the handrail.

Rich Dobler and his grandson poured the slab for the building to sit on. Harold Dunsford, Tom Pfister, Carol Pfister and Jim Reid helped move the building into place.

This was a very interesting project that ended up being a lot more involved than I first thought. I'm looking forward to building more structures but not with clapboard siding.

Nominating Committee for 2013 Officers. At the November meeting the Nominating Committee presented the following slate: President, Bruce Rauch; Vice President, Chris Forte; Secretary, Allen Newcomb; Directors, Jerry Rivet, Foster Bond, and Fred DeLoach. Nominations will be open from the floor at the January meeting.

Name Badges. Please wear your name badges when at the track, especially during run days, so that we may all learn the names of members we don't know, and new members may get to know us. Additional, or new, badges may be purchased for \$6.00.

Electronic Distribution. Help the Treasurer and the Secretary/Editor to save money, and time. If you do not already get the newsletter e-mail, please e-mail me at allenpn@tampabay.rr.com with your e-mail address. Please be sure to add me to your mailbox so that I won't be blocked. Please be assured that only RLS mail will be sent to you and it will be as a "blind copy" to prevent anyone else gaining access to your computer.

General Membership Meetings will be held the fourth Saturday of each month, unless otherwise noted. They will be held at the pavilion after lunch. This is to satisfy the Requirements of Article 1, Section 4 of the Ridge Live Steamers By-Laws.

Board of Director Meetings will be held on run days in January, April, July and October. This is to satisfy the Requirements of Article II, Section 3, Paragraph (1) of the Ridge Live Steamers By-Laws. By direction of the President additional Board of Director meetings will be held right after lunch on run days during the intervening months, if necessary.

A Passing Note on the Florida Live Steamers. The Florida Live Steamers is an umbrella organization that coordinates the railroad activities around the state. If you don't belong, it is time you did. If you do belong, dues are due. \$20.00 a year should be mailed to FLS, 9111 Erie Lane, Parrish, FL 34219.