



Newsletter of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
November-December 2005

Chapter Meeting Saturday, Dec. 10, 1:00-5:00 pm

3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville, CA 94506

<http://www.blackhawkauto.org/infoc.html>

The Chapter will provide a holiday buffet, so don't bring refreshments!

Future Chapter Meetings

Locations to be determined.

Upcoming Module SIG Events

November 25, 2005–January 8, 2006: 21-module SIG layout operating at Blackhawk Museum, Danville.

April 8-23: Hiller Aviation Museum, San Carlos

May 14-June 3: Pleasanton Museum on Main Street

June 18-July 2: Museum of the San Ramon Valley, Danville

November 24, 2006–Jan. 7, 2007: Blackhawk Automobile Museum, Danville.

Editor: Starting in January 2006, Robert DeJong be our new newsletter editor. Thanks Robert!

October Meeting Highlights

by Steve Imialek

The October 8, 2005, SF Chapter Meeting was held at the Diablo Valley Model RR Club in Walnut Creek. Steve Imialek (standing in for Chris Vais) called the meeting to order shortly after 2:00 p.m.

About 35 members attended. Our host, Gordon Laughland, and the Club were warmly thanked for allowing us to meet there. Most of the ETE members were upstairs running trains and learning the club centralized traffic control system. Club members were on hand to tutor and give us “hands on” experience running their massive layout. Judging by the smiles and camaraderie, our ETE members were having a great time. Thank you, Gordon and crew!

Minutes of the October 8 Meeting

1. Status Reports

a. Treasurer's Report: Balance on 9/30 was \$5,749.49. Balance on 10/31 was \$4,951.56.

b. Module SIG: There are three items of interest: First, a new staging yard is being built and you can see it in operation at Blackhawk. Thanks to Ian Lorentzen, Steve Stern, Jim Lowe, Dave Pryor, Rolf Krumbiegel, Tom Melka, Steve Imialek, Chris Vais, and Dieter Vorbach, the staging yard was finished in record time — two months from inception to completion. Second, here are the 2006 modular venues to date, from Rolf Krumbiegel:

- Nov. 25, 2005-Jan.8, 2006: Blackhawk Museum, Danville
- April 8-23, 2006: Hiller Aviation Museum, San Carlos
- May 14-June 3, 2006: Pleasanton Museum on Main Street
- June 18-July 2, 2006 Museum of the San Ramon Valley, Danville
- Nov. 24, 2006-Jan. 7, 2007 Blackhawk Museum, Danville

Tom Melka will handle other venues, such as GATS (now GWAATS) shows and Talbot's Toyland.

Third, “The Reverse Corner” byline has changed from Tom Melka to Steve Imialek. Steve would greatly appreciate your help with photos of our venues and articles for the Express.



2. Old Business

a. Chapter Newsletter: Editing of the monthly newsletter has changed. Ryan Hoover, our editor for the past two-plus years will be leaving us for “greener pastures” in Ohio. He will be retiring soon and joining his extended family. We thank you, Ryan, for the excellent work you have done in editing the monthly newsletter. And we wish you the very best of good wishes on your next adventure “back home”. Robert DeJong has graciously volunteered to become the next editor. Thank you, Robert, for your interest in editing (and all that goes with it) this newsletter. Good luck to both of you.

b. Eurowest 2006: A Steering Committee should be formed by January. Since the Basque Cultural Center will not be available, a new location for the Tenth Annual EuroWest will have to be found and booked for this summer event. Volunteers are needed to man “duty stations” in short shifts during the two-day event. Please consider volunteering your time/expertise for this worthwhile venue.

c. The SF Bay Area Chapter Directory is now available on-line at www.ete.org. A reverse directory by area code was put in abeyance.

d. November meeting was not held due to conflict with International Railfair at Roseville, Nov. 11-13.

3. New Business

a. EuroRail Centrum, our new DVD video is in production. Pre-order forms will be made available.

b. November mailer: Instead of a newsletter, a mailing was sent with on order form for *EuroRail Centrum*, info on National ETE Board of Directors nominations, an ETE bumper sticker, a 2005 Chapter postcard, Blackhawk venue info plus one ticket for admission, and a membership renewal application for the upcoming year.

c. 2006 DUES are now being collected. Please use the application provided in the Nov. mailer and remit \$20.

d. Next Meeting: Will be held Saturday, Dec. 10 at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville, CA 94506. The chapter will provide a holiday buffet, so please join us. Directions are at www.BlackhawkMuseum.org and on page 3. **I**

The Reverse Corner

by *Steve Imialek*

ETE’s fifth annual appearance at the Blackhawk Museum is in full swing; 400 people passed through on Nov. 25, opening day! The module count is 21, plus the six corner modules. Proudly on display for the first time is our new staging yard.

The sign-up sheet for operators and/or docents was included in your Nov. mailer. We are always looking for interested persons as operators, docents, module owners (including the module SIG corners) and/or partners with module owners.

AC and DC trains will be run during this venue starting Nov. 25 and lasting until Jan. 8, 2006. This venue has attracted much interest from the public; the phones have been ringing at Blackhawk for several weeks asking, “if the trains are there”.

Besides the modular layout there are also static displays on various aspects of European railroading and a continuously running video. Marklin has also donated a brand new starter set for some lucky individual again this year.

Remember that ETE members will get in free with a chapter shirt, badge, or ID card.

Thanks to all who contributed time (too numerous to mention at this moment) and collections (Dieter Vorbach, Don Good, Andreas Hildebrandt, and Greg David). Remember ETE members will get in free with chapter shirt, badge, or I.D. card.

Other Future Module SIG Venues

The management of the GATS shows has changed hands again. “Hobbies Unlimited” now controls them



and the shows are called "Great Western and Atlantic Train Shows" (GWAATS) at <http://www.gwaats.com>.

They provide a small stipend for operating layouts and it is a great way to spread ETE's mission to the public. We will consider some two-day and one-day shows for future SIG participation. More specifics will follow in future newsletters.

Another annual venue is Talbot's Toyland in San Mateo. No date has been set yet, but it will probably be in Feb. or March.

Shutterbugs, please share your pictures of our modules with us. We can always use photos of the layout in the *ETE Express* or our Chapter newsletter.

Happy rails to you! **I**

EuroSnips

Railway News in Europe and the World

Compiled by Jim Recker

Winter's first blast slows Europe

BRUSSELS, Nov 26 – Winter roared across western Europe dumping heavy snowfalls and causing massive traffic jams, airport and railway delays, primarily in France, Germany, the Benelux region and Great Britain.

The biggest railway troubles were in Germany, mostly caused by falling trees. Near Osnabrück, a train was stalled overnight with some 400 passengers aboard. By morning, the storm has moved eastward and most rail traffic had resumed.

In Scotland, a snow slide caused a derailment near Inverness, resulting in several passengers being slightly injured.

Swiss Federal Railways said it experienced problems with snow and ice freezing up switches, resulting in three-hour delays in some places.

By Nov. 28th, most all rail traffic had resumed across the continent.

Madrid-Toledo high-speed link opens

MADRID, Nov 16 – Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero inaugurated the Spanish National Railways' (RENFE) new high-speed rail (HSR) link between Madrid and Toledo. The €15-million project involved the construction of a 20.5km branch off the Madrid-Seville high-speed line, replacing the original broad gauge (167.2cm) line with standard gauge (143.5cm).

RENFE's new high-speed service covers the 75kms between Madrid and Toledo in 35 minutes. HSR. The new branch has a maximum speed of 270km/h. Minimum curve radius is 4,000m and maximum gradient is 2.75%. The line is equipped with three signaling systems: ETCS, LZB, and ASFA, installed by a consortium of Alcatel, Siemens, and Dimetronic, Spain.

RENFE will operate much more frequent service on the branch than before HSR.

Germany commits to bridge to Denmark

The new German government under newly-elected conservative Chancellor Angela Merkel has committed itself work to build a 20km, €3-billion bridge across the Fehmarn strait to Denmark. It would cut trip time between København and Hamburg from 4.5 to 2.5 hours. The Danish transport minister expects to sign a treaty in January, so that the bridge may open in 2015 or 2016.

TGV starts German testing

French weekly magazine *La Vie du Rail* reports that the first SNCF TGV Paris–Ostfrankreich–Süddeutschland (POS) power unit, number 4401, was delivered for testing on October 13th. It is due to cross the Rhine soon for tests intended to obtain authorization for running in Germany.

Athens suburban railway extension

A 200km/h suburban railway linking Athens with its airport has been extended to Corinth, which is now 70 minutes from the airport by train. Called Proastiakos, Greek for "the Suburban," the line is 88km long. It was built at a cost €475 million.

British Rail to try airport scanners

Plans for airport-style security scanners at railway stations with armed police scrutinizing passengers are being drawn up to try to stop terrorist attacks on the British rail network. The pilot scheme at Paddington Station, London, will only cover the Heathrow Express line, and will allow officials to find out how much disruption it would cause.

Czech Railways launches Pendolino in fleet service

Czech Railways will launch its fleet of Alstom Pendolino EMUs in passenger service on December 11 between Prague and Ostrava. The 230km/h tilting trains will initially be restricted to 160km/h, but this is still 20-30 km/h faster than conventional equipment. Next year, it is hoped to operate them between Prague and Vienna.

Swiss rode trains more than any other Europeans in 2004

Once again, the Swiss had the best statistics in Europe when it came to train travel with 37 trips per person per year in 2004, according to the International Railway Union (UIC). Worldwide, the Swiss took second place behind world champion, Japan, which posted 67.

In third place was Luxemburg (30), followed by Denmark (28), Austria (24) and Germany (21). Moldava, Turkey and Greece are at the bottom of the list, with just a single trip per person per year.

NIMBYs protest new Italian high-speed rail line

VENAUS, Italy, Nov. 30 – Thousands of demonstrators halted work in the Val di Susa (Italian Alps) to protest against the survey work for the new Turin HSR line. Hundreds of police officers were needed to hold back the crowds outside Venaus (60km from Turin) where geological surveys were being conducted. Hundreds of protesters have already delayed the work efforts for several days. Tension is already high in the area, which worries local authorities, as the Olympic games are scheduled to start there in just three months.

Swiss Arlberg Bahn reopens

As a result from the floods last August, the Arlberg line remained closed until December 2nd. Buses replaced all trains between Bludenz and Landeck. Lines still closed are BOB Zweilütschinen–Grindelwald and ZB Wolfen-schiessen–Engelberg.

Fed-up London commuter starts his own railroad

LONDON – A British commuter, who says there are too few early-morning trains, is to launch his own rail service to London. Rory Webster, 56, who lives 78 miles from the city, intends to lease two trains per day for the journey to Paddington Station.

The earliest train from his home village of Pewsey, Wiltshire, to the capital, is currently a First Great Western service leaving at 7.24 a.m. – too late for Mr. Webster. Passengers wishing to leave earlier are forced to travel via other towns and cities.

From January next year, Trotter Trains, as it will be known, will run its two trains at 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. from Westbury, Wiltshire.

"I'm just an ordinary man in the street with a desire to see things work better," Webster told the UK Press Association (PA). "There's no consideration for the traveler at the moment. We might as well be meat."

Webster says his own trains will not only run earlier, but they will be cheaper. He hopes to lease back his trains to First Great Western during the day, before making return journeys later in the evening.

"Even if all this comes to nothing more than waking First Great Western up to the fact that there's a demand for earlier trains, then I will have achieved something," he told PA. A First Great Western spokesman said: "Government figures show that our journey numbers have increased dramatically."

has been rented. The current administration offices will keep 90 employees.

Meanwhile, as reported in August, Märklin has continued to scale back and has moved ahead with relocation to its Trix factories in Nuremberg and Sonneberg, Germany, and Győr, Hungary. Märklin has also moved its museum, training areas and warehouse "Werk 1", emptying new facilities it had built over the last several years. Since Märklin is privately held, any financial announcement is not expected until next year, after the traditional Christmas buying season. **I**

ROCO and Märklin now ready for traditional Christmas toy season

MUNICH – In a press release from its new corporate offices, Modelleisenbahn GmbH, founded during this past summer as an asset-holding company for the insolvent Austrian model train manufacturer, ROCO-Group, has acquired all assets of the bankrupt company and has received a go-ahead from its creditors to proceed with production.

Consent of the bankruptcy court is expected in a matter of weeks. The Modelleisenbahn GmbH new board of directors includes a majority of ROCO's major creditors.

Since declaring insolvency on July 15, ROCO has remained busy: Through a special arrangement with the remaining employees, and with some supportive customers, ROCO saw revenues of € million during the last three months; and Modelleisenbahn GmbH is now back in the black. With the holiday season coming up, the new ROCO management is rather optimistic for the near term. Revenues are expected to reach €25-30 million in 2006.

The restructuring program is also on track and will be fully implemented by early next year. Tooling, dies, and molds have already been moved to a new manufacturing location at Gloggnitz, Austria, as well as to some outside vendors, probably in China. The Slovenian factory in Banska Bystrica had seen its staff increase from 220 to 270. A second adjacent building



**HAPPY
HOLIDAY
RAIL-
ROADING!**

