

European Train Enthusiasts



*Newsletter of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
January 2006*

Chapter Meeting Saturday, January 14, 1:00-5:00

Dave & Maria Pryor
1285 Yosemite Way
Hayward, CA 94545

Future Chapter Meetings

Locations will be listed in the next newsletter.

Upcoming Module SIG Events

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: This is your editors first newsletter! Since I just moved house, I was not able to a lot of things I wanted, but look forward to pictures and Bilingual editions! More on all the editorial stuff soon!
Your editor: **Robert and Rachel de Jong**

December Highlights

by Steve Imialek

Minutes of Dec. 10, 2005 ETE Mtg. at the Blackhawk Museum

The meeting was called to order by chairman, Chris Vais at 2:00 PM. Approximately, 50 members and guests were present. Chris thanked the staff at Blackhawk for allowing us to use their facility and for setting up the room for our holiday buffet. The luncheon was provided from the chapter's funds. Thanks to Rolf Krumbiegel and Steve Imialek for obtaining the food and beverages.

I. Status Reports

- A. Treasury balance on 11/30 was \$4821.53.
- B. Membership dues for 2006 are now due. Dues are \$20. As of 12/26, 44 members are paid up.

II. Old Business

- A. Robert de Jong has taken over as newsletter editor. Future newsletters will be emailed and "snail mailed" to those without email. Please inform the editor of your current email!!
- B. El Camino Medical Center layout plan was shelved until we can meet with Mrs. Small.
- C. Eurowest X 2006 was discussed. The site and date has not been determined but please consider volunteering for a portion of the weekend when the schedule is set.
- D. 2005 ETE Directory for all chapters and At Large members can be found in the Members section of the web page www.ete.org

III. New Business

- A. The latest DVD is now available. Contact Steve Stern or use the order form.
- B. Bumper stickers are also available at \$1 each. Contact Steve Imialek.
- C. The next meeting will be at Dave Pryor's house on Jan.14.
- D. Tom Melka reported on the International Model Exhibition in Munich. He was fortunate to attend it while on a recent business trip. There was some pretty amazing stuff to see and the prototypes were fun to watch as well. He's posted some pictures on the web page. Thanks, Tom.
- E. San Antonio Hobbies is going out of business but there is another hobby shop that will be a Marklin, Trix and MiniTrix dealer. Tom's (Van Horn) Trackside Trains is located at 1675 Rollins Road Suite B-1 (Ingold Rd. side of bldg.) in Burlingame. (650) 692-9724. W-F 12-8; Th. 12-5; Sat. 12-6; Sun. 12-3.



Reverse Corner

by Steve Imialek

Happy new year! We are in the middle of our Fifth Annual Blackhawk Museum venue. Thanks to all the members who contributed their time and effort to make this show another crowd pleaser. A special thanks to Rolf Krumbiegel who placed all the operators and docents during this 33-day exhibition. Please make sure you get a chance to see the modular layout in this world-class museum. Our last day will be Jan. 8.

After a short break and some minor maintenance, our chapter's Module SIG will be present at the Great Western and Atlantic Train Show (formerly GATS) Jan. 21-22 at the Cow Palace. Sat. 11-5; Sun. 11-4; Admission \$8. This is generally a fun weekend and a chance to see what the other clubs are doing as well as take advantage of the train goodies the vendors are offering. As of now, this venue will be our only appearance at GWAATS this year. For a complete calendar of shows go to www.greatwesternandatlantictrainshow.com. You can also get a discount coupon for their shows on that web site.

Another great weekend of railroading will be our upcoming Talbot's Toyland venue. This will be a smaller modular layout but great fun. The staff at Talbot's goes out of their way to help us put on a "front window display" of our trains running on the layout. In the past, they have also had many items on sale during that weekend. The Marklin rep has also been on hand to display the latest and answer questions. Like our Blackhawk venue, Talbot's is also an annual event.

Speaking of which, we will also be at the Hiller Aviation Museum at the San Carlos Airport, The Museum on Main Street in Pleasanton, and the Museum of the San Ramon Valley in Danville this year. And did I mention that we will be returning to Blackhawk during the 2006-2007 holiday season? We have quite an interesting and entertaining year ahead of us. If you would like to be a part of this fun, then contact Tom Melka or any of the module owners. Operating trains and being a module partner or owner is very rewarding.

Finally, another "mirror image" staging yard is in the works. Ian Lorentzen will work his magic in constructing the modules. Work parties to be

announced. These staging yards will be in use at our larger venues. Storage and transportation will have to be worked out. Anyone interested in taking over one of these as a Module SIG member? Covered transport vehicle is a must plus some storage space. Again, see Tom or anyone of us.

2006 promises to be an exciting year for us. Stay tuned and happy rails to you!

EuroSnips

Railway News in Europe and the World
Compiled by Jim Recker

Two December Storms freeze Europe

=====

A major storm blew across Europe on December 17th, dumping up to 70 cm (27.5") of snow in less than 24 hours across central and eastern Switzerland, snarling rail travel between Bern and Brig. Following an overnight avalanche, the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn (MGB) suspended its Glacier Express runs and closed its main line between Brig and Chur for 48 hours. Rail service was also affected in Germany and Austria.

Then on December 29th a much larger storm blanketed most of Europe, with snow and freezing rain. In Hungary, more than 120 trains were delayed. In Britain, several rail lines were closed in Kent and eastern England, which saw its coldest December since 1996.

In France, it was the freezing temperatures that caused the biggest problems, killing two. The storm closed many roads, flights at all French airports, delayed TGV trains up to three hours between Paris, Lyon, Marseille and Montpellier, and slowed TGV, Thalys and Eurostar rail traffic between Paris and Lille. Service was only slowly restored as ice damaged 25 TGV train sets.

In Sweden, heavy snowfall and strong winds cut electrical service across southern parts of the country, shutting down mainline rail lines for at least a day. However, despite heavy snowfall, authorities in central Europe were able to maintain rail service with only slight delays reported across Germany.



Austrian and Swiss Rail Links restored

=====

Two Swiss rail lines, closed from heavy rains last August, finally resumed passenger traffic:

- The BOB line Zweilütschinen - Grindelwald was reopened on December 1.
- The Zentralbahn's Wolfenschiessen - Engelberg line resumed regular service on December 11.

In Austria, the Arlberg line between Bludenz and Landeck, also closed as a result of flood damage, reopened on December 3, finally resuming direct services between Switzerland and Austria.

Swiss Study for Deep Rail Tunnel

=====

BERN, Dec 9 -- The Canton of Graubünden has approved initial funding of CHF 20 millions for "Porta Alpina", a subterranean tunnel 800 meters below ground, in the new trans-Alp Gotthard tunnel still under construction. Coupled with funding from the Swiss Federal government, most of the spending will cover the cost of building an elevator shaft and a high-speed elevator down to the new high-speed rail line. Building this vertical tunnel should ensure that the rail service does not bypass the local region following tunnel completion in 2012.

Smoking banned on Swiss passenger trains

=====

ZURICH, Dec 31 - As new timetables go into effect, all Swiss Federal Railways trains will be smoke-free, according a report from Swissinfo. Public transport authorities have ordered a general smoking ban on the railway, which includes enclosed spaces such as waiting rooms and ticket offices at railway stations. Those who continue smoking in prohibited areas after the ban goes into effect will face a penalty of US\$19.

Smoking has not been allowed on Swiss buses and trams for many years, but the Swiss Federal Railways has been a holdout, with up to one-third of the seats on its trains designated for smokers. Lighting up will continue to be allowed on railway platforms that are open to the elements, and on the open decks of lake ships.

New Swiss Rail Merger Announced

=====

BERN, Dec 2 -- Swiss transport officials have announced that a merger contract was signed by the boards of AB Appenzeller Bahnen, TB Trogener Bahn, RHB Rorschach - Heiden Bergbahn and RhW Rheineck - Walzenhausen Bahn to form a new company named Appenzeller Bahnen.

Their stockholders shall take final decisions in June. The merger would still take effect if either RHB or RhW board of directors would decline. AB and TB will move ahead regardless, as a majority of shares are held by the Confederation and the concerned cantons, which have already approved.

First ETCS Level 2 Route Is Certified

=====

BERLIN, Dec 7 -- Germany has become the first country in Europe to operate a European Train Control System (ETCS) Level 2 signaling system in scheduled service.

Parts of the line between Jüterbog and Halle/Leipzig had been used for trials since 2003. Finally the whole route is now certified for commercial passenger service using ETCS.

German Rail (DB) and suppliers Alcatel and Siemens led the German ETCS pilot project. Trains will operate at up to 200 km/h on the route.

RFF Pursues Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur High Speed Line Project

=====

PARIS, Dec 7 -- French Rail Network (RFF) decided to continue preparations for construction of the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur high speed (TGV) line following a four-and-a-half month public consultation. Costs for the 10-15 year project are estimated at between €5 billion to €7.5 billion.

RFF will launch complementary studies in 2006 to investigate three different scenarios:

- Reduce the journey time between Paris and Nice to less than four hours compared with 5h 33min at present by extending the present line from Marseille to Nice via Toulon
- Serve Toulon and Nice on a separate line bypassing the center of Marseille,
- Offer direct access to Toulon and Nice by rapid regional links from the existing high-speed line.

The studies will also consider eventual extension of the project towards Italy, and short-term improvements to regional and freight services in the area



Battles to Maintain British Train Services

LONDON, Dec 13 -- A campaign launched in June to prevent the overnight train service linking London with Plymouth and Penzance from being axed came to a successful conclusion today with the announcement by the British government that the train will continue to operate. This is one of the commitments in the new Greater Western franchise, which has been awarded to First Group.

The government had asked bidders for the Greater Western franchise to submit separate costs for the operation of the sleeping-car train with a view to withdrawing it. The government claimed that the train did not represent value for money but failed to produce figures to back this up.

Meanwhile, south of London, airlines have been working hard to save the Gatwick Express high-speed link, the non-stop express rail link between London Victoria and Gatwick Airport. Rail bosses had put forward plans to scrap the Gatwick Express and replace it with "stopping" trains to ease overcrowding on the London to Brighton line. The Board of Airline Representatives in the UK (Bar UK) said it now thought that the British government may be rethinking the matter, with the Department for Transport (DfT) considering the options. Scrapping the 30-minute service between Victoria and the West Sussex airport was proposed by the Strategic Rail Authority, whose responsibilities have now been taken over by the DfT. The airlines believe it is a big mistake to take away a direct rail link at a time when air passenger numbers are growing.

Portugal plans fast rail to Spain

LISBON, Dec. 13 -- A new rail will bring Portugal capital closer to Europe. Portugal's government has laid out plans to build a high-speed rail link connecting its two biggest cities with the Spanish capital, Madrid.

The €7.7 billion (\$9.2 billion) railway linking Lisbon and Oporto with Spain is scheduled to be ready by 2014. It is expected to cut the rail journey time between Lisbon and Madrid from 10 hours to less than three hours.

The plan has been scaled down for economic reasons, after years of fierce debate within Portugal and with Spain. The proposal still has its critics. Of the five lines planned, only two will be built.

Roughly one-third of the Portuguese cost will come from EU funds and the remainder will be drawn from loans from the European Investment Bank, to be repaid once the trains start running. The project also calls for a new bridge spanning the River Tagus in Lisbon.

Ocean Waves leave 160 stranded on train

DAWLISH, UK - Dec. 2 -- A Virgin express train broke down on a coastal route in southwest England after being hit by huge ocean waves during sever weather, stranding about 160 passengers for three hours. The Glasgow to Penzance service came to a halt caused damage to tracks near Dawlish in Devon.

The track has been damaged in both directions, and the train involved was stopped at red lights on the sea wall at Dawlish when it was hit by a huge wave - and water got into the electric components of the train. Contingency plans were put into immediate effect but the track had been damaged by debris in both directions that delayed the arrival of the rescue locomotive.

Once the track had been made safe the train was towed to Dawlish station. Passengers were then transferred to a Great Western service to continue their journey.

Virgin will be offering all passengers involved a full refund. The rail line is now open but only a single track furthest from the sea.



2006 DUES ARE DUE - \$20
\$5 for SF Bay Area Chapter and \$15 for
ETE Nat'l Name Address City, State, Zip
Phone, Email, Fax

Make check payable to "E T E". Mail
payment with this dues form to:
ETE SF Bay Area
P.O. Box 1451
Brentwood, CA 94513