

European Train Enthusiasts



*Newsletter of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
November 2004*

No Meeting this Month

Calendar of Events

Saturday-Sunday, November 27-28, 2004: GATS – Great American Train Show, Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Ave., Pleasanton, CA. (ETE is not exhibiting.)

Sunday, November 28, 2004 through Sunday, January 2, 2005: All Aboard: HO Scale European Trains — ETE exhibit and layout at Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville, CA 94506. Hours are 10AM to 5PM, Wednesday through Sunday (closed Monday & Tuesday). For more information, call (925)-736-2277 extension 236.

Saturday, December 11, 2004: Chapter Monthly Meeting. (To be announced in December newsletter)

Recap of the October Meeting

We enjoyed another fall meeting at the Andersen's home in Danville. A FREMO style layout was set up in their garage by the Module SIG. Several members had fun running their trains and we all enjoyed watching them. The highlight of the meeting was a video presentation by Stretch on the progress he has made on his layout, *The Andersen Bahn*. He planned and engineered the project very carefully, presenting details of methods he used to solve potential problems and to make the layout 100% reliable. After the presentation, we were invited upstairs to see the results of his handiwork. The quality of construction was readily apparent. Thank you, Stretch, for a very informative and enlightening seminar. And thanks again to both Michelle and Stretch for hosting us. It is always a fun venue.

October Meeting LOST AND FOUND

Someone left an item behind at the Andersen's. It is a magazine titled *Minnegazette*, which appears to be the magazine of the Minnesota Transportation Museum. If you are missing this, please contact Stretch at (925) 837-8198 or StretchA@aol.com and he'll see that you get it back.

The Reverse Corner

Notes from the Modular SIG

By Tom Melka (melka@pacbell.net)

The October chapter meeting included an enjoyable modular set-up in the Andersen garage (see Recap, above).

The Holiday season is coming up and so is our big venue at the Blackhawk Automotive Museum in Danville.

As we mentioned at the last Chapter meeting, this year we have Märklin USA sponsoring us. They will have starter sets available for door prizes. They are also providing Märklin track & electronics products for the module owners. Keeping with our open format of European trains, Prime Time trains also has volunteered model train products for door prizes at Blackhawk. We'll have sponsorship and support from local hobby shops, as well. Thanks to Jacques Vuye for coordinating this fabulous support.

This ETE venue continues to bring the highest attendance to the Blackhawk Museum. The promotional activity from Märklin and the shops should help drive even greater attendance numbers.

Those members who have worked this venue know how much interest in our hobby is generated. Having the connection to Märklin and the hobby shops this year will enhance the impact on our audiences and make our exhibit that much more enjoyable.

Blackhawk Museum gave us another vote of confidence by putting us upstairs, off of the main gallery, in the same large space we were in two years ago. This will allow plenty of room for a quality static display as well as our largest layout. I know the Module SIG is enthused and ready for this year.

As always, please join us as a volunteer docent or operator. Contact Rolf Krumbiegel (rolkru@earthlink.net) if you would like to volunteer. We will be operating Wednesday through Sunday every week from Thanksgiving to January 2 (tear down is earlier this year due to another display being set up immediately after ours.)

See you at Blackhawk! Happy Railroading!



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Treasurer's Report

by David Baird

The current (Nov 1st, 2004) SF Bay Chapter account balance is \$6,395.77. We started the year at \$5,334.59. I anticipate about \$350.00 in additional expenditures before the year's end, leaving us with about \$700 more at the end of 2004 than at the start of the year.

Chapter membership fees brought in \$1,053, and EuroWest 2004 netted us about \$800. Our miscellaneous expenses were about \$660, and the newsletter costs will probably total around \$500. Miscellaneous expenses included purchase of a TV and a VCR for improved presentations at EuroWest, Blackhawk, etc.

The ETE Chapter polo shirts were seeded by the chapter, and almost all the costs have been recovered. We spent \$1,218.16 for 50 shirts and have sold 48 shirts for \$1,200.

There is some concern that the chapter is holding a balance puts our non-profit status at risk. Chapter Chairman Dave Pryor and I believe we should reduce the balance, and one easy way is to reduce the dues for 2005. The newsletter costs will increase in 2005 because we will need to use a copy service and pay for envelopes and labels. Even \$100 a month for the newsletter will only reduce the balance by \$1,200, and we may still have more income if we hold EuroWest 2005.

Mr. Pryor and I think we should eliminate the chapter dues for 2005 and only collect the fees that ETE National requires (currently \$15). The chapter might also consider other places to spend some money, perhaps a Chapter DVD player and some train videos could be considered. There are currently DVD players that can show PAL format as well as NTSC, so that would allow us to show DVDs sold in Europe that can't normally be played here.

Call For New Chapter Officers

Another year, another call for chapter leadership. We have seen some interest in filling the roles that will be vacated by Mr. Baird and Mr. Pryor. Rolf Krumbiegel has offered to continue with events and site coordination, as he has done so ably this year. Steve Imialek has put forth his name as a candidate for Treasurer and Membership Officer. Joe Freese has offered to help with mailing the newsletters if someone else will write the copy and mail it to Joe. We still need volunteers to be Chairman and/or newsletter editor. The December chapter meeting will be the time we select the new leaders.

Current Officers

Dave Pryor - Chairman
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EuroSnips

News about Railways in Europe and the World

Compiled by Jim Recker

Märklin workers strike over job outsourcing

GÖPPINGEN, Germany, October 5th – Workers at Märklin brought production to a standstill after they went on strike in protest against planned job cuts. Half of the 400 employees affected by the cuts may be transferred from the main Göppingen production site to Sonneberg in eastern Germany and Győr in Hungary. Märklin is aiming to reduce costs by 15 percent. Restructuring has been prompted by competition from Asian manufacturers.

The world largest manufacturer of model railways, Märklin explains that it must diminish 400 of its 1,100 jobs in Göppingen to remain competitive. Assembly in Göppingen costs €2,200 per month, while Märklin pays only €350 per month in its Hungarian plant. By shifting certain production to other factories, Märklin is expected to save over tens of millions of Euros annually.

The East German model train competitor Piko, like many other German manufacturers, set the pace several years ago when it moved much of its production to China and Asia. Piko realized it had no choice, since more than 75% of all toys, including model trains, on the German market originate from "offshore," primarily from China, according to the German Toy Manufacturing Federation. Market leaders such as Märklin have been finding themselves at a disadvantage. Since Piko began "co-manufacturing" with the Chinese, Piko has seen double-digit increases in sales and market share increased over 35%.



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Other German toy manufacturers are moving in the same direction, especially for any extensive manual labor processes. It just makes economic sense. Nevertheless some German companies have held off shifting as long as possible, Märklin being one of those companies.

(Editor's note: Some of the Märklin / Trix USA models are outsourced to China, already. My Union Pacific freight cars, branded both Märklin and Trix, all have a little sticker on the car bottom or on their box that says "Made in China." To be competitive in the US market, this is a necessity, as virtually all quality American prototype model trains are now made in China and are priced less than Märklin or Trix. – Ryan Hoover)

In 2002, Märklin had half of the German market, where 70% of its products are sold. Total revenues were €170M, about \$185M.

Siemens demonstrates driverless freight wagon

KÖLN, Germany, November 4th – Siemens demonstrated its new driverless freight car, the CargoMover. It has laser and radar sensors which can detect obstacles, and a powerful horn to beep at them. It also has a video camera at the front which lets a control center see what is in front of it. It is controlled via GSM-R radio and European Train Control System (ETCS) signaling.

Siemens says it is economical for shorter distances like 50-150 km, where manual labor makes it too costly for conventional rail freight to be profitable. At an average speed of 70 kph, power consumption would be 30% lower than a truck due to its lower rolling resistance. Siemens envisions the CargoMover paying lower track access charges since it can run in empty time slots by using information from the ETCS. Won't this be a boring train model!

Deutsche Bahn puts major engine order on ice

BERLIN, October 29th – Deutsche Bahn (DB) has announced that it had put on hold plans to tender a contract for more than 400 locomotives, an order valued at around one billion euros.

DB said in the summer of 2003 that it planned to contract and order for 466 new locomotives in a deal that would likely attract the interest of all major players both in Europe and worldwide. They had hoped that by tendering such a big contract, it would cover both its freight and passenger business and could secure better prices. However DB now recognizes that isn't the case.

The company will re-examine its needs and might simply consider modernizing its existing fleet of locomotives, without specifying exactly how many new locomotives might be acquired at the end of the day.

Berlin-Hamburg in 90 Minutes

BERLIN, October 27th – The upgrade of the Hamburg-Berlin railway is complete. Starting December 12th, the 287 km trip will take 90 minutes at up to 230 kph, an average of 191 kph and 40 minutes faster than now. This upgrade finally makes the trip faster than it was in the 1930s. Fifty-two level crossings have been removed or replaced, as well as some platforms for passengers which were adjacent to the high-speed tracks.

New Visp station cornerstone laid

VISP, Switzerland, October 20 – The SBB-CFF, the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn (MGB), the Haut-Valais Postal Bus Company and the township of Visp will invest more than CHF 90.5 million over the next three years into a new railway station for Visp. As the center for all public transportation of the region, and the launching point for travelers to Zermatt and Saas Fee, the platforms for the two rail companies will be upgraded, a new bus terminal added, and the station square improved.

New M2 Metro for Lausanne

Construction has begun to replace an existing funicular railway connecting the city center with the banks of Lake Geneva into Lausanne's first underground subway system, aimed at better connecting the north and south of the city.

The technologically innovative project is expected to improve travel time for Lausanne's 250,000 inhabitants, with the capacity to transport 70,000 people a day, or 25 million a year. The journey time between the north and south of the hilly city should be reduced to less than 20 minutes.

But the project is a complex one, appropriate for Lausanne's hilly landscape. Much of the city will have to be dug up for the tracks to be laid. The northern half of the city is expected to be under construction until 2008.

When completed, a fully automatic underground train will run through the tunnels on tires, no longer a cog railway, despite an average gradient of 5.7 per cent and rising to 12



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per cent in certain places. The subway service is envisaged as the spinal cord for the public transport network in Lausanne, serving as the north-south axis.

The M2 line will replace the funicular railway which for 125 years has linked the city centre with Ouchy on Lake Geneva. The project is expected to cost SFr590m (€460m or \$472m).

French-Swiss international rail link to reopen

Closed by the SNCF in 1995 because it was not profitable, the local regional governments of Jura and Franche-Comté have partnered to reopen the 1.6 km rail line between Boncourt [CH] and Delle [F]. It is hoped that trains will be able to run again between Bienne and Delle in 2006.

The local investment for this short line will be SFr1.3m. Both Swiss and French authorities are now looking to add TGV service, extending the TGV Rhone-Rhine line from Mulhouse.

Shortline Rail News

First *Shinkansen* derailment due to earthquake

TOKYO, October 23 – A strong 6.5 Richter-scale earthquake in Japan's Niigata Prefecture derailed a *Shinkansen* ("new main line") train at 210 kph on the Joetsu line on Saturday, October 23. This was the first time a Japanese high speed bullet train has been derailed in 40 years of service since their inauguration in 1964. Eight of

ten cars derailed, and cars 1 and 9 ended up leaning over at 30°. Amazingly, no injuries were reported. A number of other local trains were also stranded for several hours without power before passengers could be evacuated.

British bullet trains on hold

Britain was to have built thirty 225 kph trains with six cars each for high-speed commuter services between Ashford in south-east England and London, with service to have started in 2009. The trains would have run from Ashford to St. Pancras. However, in late October, it was announced that the planned start of high-speed commuter trains on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link may be delayed. Eighteen trains would be needed, costing £20m each.

Denmark signals renewal

The Danish ministry of transport is looking into a plan to loan DKK 7 billion to renew all signals on the network. The current plan of gradual renewals may be too slow as the signals are worn out and cause many delays.

Caltrain *Baby Bullet* expresses immensely popular

SAN FRANCISCO, November 10 – Caltrain monthly ridership is up 17% since June, when the CTX capital upgrades were completed. CTC (bi-directional centralized traffic control), continuous welded ribbon rail, concrete ties, high-speed crossovers, three stretches of four-tracked line, and six new 79mph "Baby Bullet" expresses that make only six-stops have reduced travel time by almost 40 minutes between San Francisco and San Jose — from one hour and 32 minutes to 54 minutes. Weekly ridership is up 17%.

