



THE RPO



The Railroad Post Office Newsletter

San Antonio Railroad Heritage Museum

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South Texas Railroad Prototype Modelers (STRPM)

By Gary Rodriguez and B.L. Miers

STRPM has a HO-scaled modular model railroad layout on display at Wonderland of the Americas (formerly Crossroads Mall). As a division of the San Antonio Railroad



STRPM layout in construction - Photo taken by Michael Bongalis

Heritage Museum, the mission of the South Texas Railroad Prototype Modelers is to accurately and dramatically render railroads of

South Texas as true to scale model railroad dioramas which will be utilized as instructional aids in educating members and guests alike in how the Class-I railroads actually operate.

Some current goals we are trying to achieve are:

1.) Present a high quality museum layout based on the concept of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) from the Texas boarder to the Canadian boarder.

2.) Realistic railroad operations based on prototypical methods used by today's Class I railroads. This includes CTC and dispatch control on mainlines.



STRPM's Mr. Conductor by Michael Salas - Photo taken by Michael Bongalis

3.) Layout will utilize Digitrax Command Control (DCC) compatible equipment.



A mother and child watching a train on the STRPM layout - Photo taken by Melissa Stout

4.) Train manifest will be generated via and in house developed and maintained web-enabled database. Yards will have computer displays, which will display inbound trains as well as train manifest for building a trains. Lengths of trains will be varied between 75 to 150 cars, include DPUs.

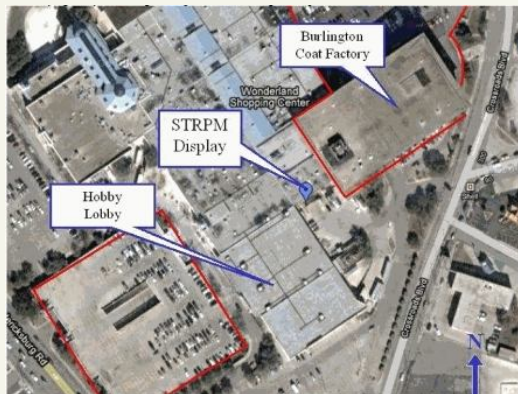


The Chicken Coop by Gary Rodriguez on the STRPM Layout - Photo taken by Michael Bongalis

5.) Theatrical lighting and ambience sounds will be used to fit into the scenery in the different sections of the layout. Lighting will change based on a 24 hour fast clock to simulate actual time of day. The weather events such thunder and electrical storms will also be simulated by the lighting and sound systems.

Wonderland of the Americas is located just Southwest of the I-10 West and N-W Loop 410 interchange. Inside the mall, the STRPM display is located downstairs between Hobby Lobby and Burlington Coat Factory. One the West side (near Hobby Lobby) there is a two story parking garage and one the East side there is covered parking under the Burlington Coat Factory (which is the closest). There is always plenty of free parking.

The layouts are available Friday 5-8pm, Saturday 10am-6pm, Sunday 12-6pm. We look forward to seeing you there!



Overhead of Wonderland of the Americas Mall (Crossroads Mall)

Upcoming Events:

- BOD meeting: 5/22 @ 6pm located at STRPM Modular Layout located in Wonderland of the Americas (Crossroads) Mall
- General Membership Meeting: 5/22 @ 7pm located at STRPM Modular Layout located in Wonderland of the Americas (Crossroads) Mall
- SP 794 Work Sessions: 5/16 @ 12pm located at Sunset Station
- Elmendorf City Council Meeting - 5/13, 6/10, (every 2nd Thursday) @ 7pm located at St. Anthony's Catholic Church Hall in Elmendorf, TX
- Elmendorf Town Hall Meeting - 7/29 @ 7pm located at St. Anthony's Catholic Church Hall in Elmendorf, TX

Railroad Terms:

- Doghouse: Nickname for the shelter placed on the tender deck of steam locomotives to house the head brakeman.
- Mike: Short for Mikado (2-8-2) steam locomotive.
- Flimsies: Refers to the thin piece of paper train orders were once written on.
- Gandy Dancer: This was once slang for one who maintained the railroad track and right-of-way. Its origins are difficult to trace but is said to be derived from the Gandy Manufacturing Co. of Chicago, which manufactured track maintenance tools.





San Antonio Railroad Heritage Museum



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SP 794's First Inspection Report

By Sean Embry

San Antonio Railroad Heritage Museum (SARHM), though a generous grant from the Sunset Station Group was able to retain Scott Lindsay of Steam Operations Corporation (<http://www.steamoperations.com>) for Phase I general inspection of the SP 794 over October 22nd to 25th 2009. It was by no means a complete inspection; however, many important facts were found.

One that surprised us all was the condition of the boiler as observed though the washout plugs – the interior was nearly pristine! Threads on stay bolts were clearly obvious, no sludge and only very slight corrosion was observed. You could rub your finger on the sheets and expose bare, clean metal! No patches to the firebox were observed, though some areas were not visible due to un-removed refractory lining. Valve covers were removed. No frame or cylinder casting defects were noted, however, as with all restorations the frame will be further evaluated and repaired as/if required. Mr. Lindsay said "I understand there are those in your community who have voiced the opinion against restoration because the SP 794 is in too poor a condition to be rebuilt. However, based on my findings and experience in the restoration and safe operation of steam locomotives, I strongly disagree. The 794 is an excellent candidate for return to operation. Your desire to move forward with an operational restoration is sound."

In a way, it's almost scary how much the SP 794 cries out to be returned to operation. Most valves are still operable, the Nathan oiler still pumps oil, and so far, observed deterioration is limited to the expected consumables such as lumber decking on the tender, the bottom of the smoke box, tires, and so on.

The smoke box was found to have heavy corrosion due primarily to the years she sat without a cap over the stack, the steam generator for effects, and raccoons nesting in it. A very unpleasant muck was removed by B.L. Miers (Chairman, SARHM), Mike Bongalis, (In house steam expert), Gary Rodriguez (President, SARHM) and SARHM members. The bottom 3rd of the smoke box may need to be replaced. The baffles in the tender rusted away long ago, but these are simply plate steel and are easy to replace. The tires and trucks will need work – the tires will need replacement as a matter of course, and the trucks and spring rigging will need to be reverse engineered to ensure proper loading on all wheels. Some discussion as to converting to roller bearing on leading, trailing, and tender trucks is under advisement. Main drivers will not be converted to roller bearing as it is not practical.

Most of the gauges in the cab are not original, and will be replaced with correct period and FRA compliant gauges. One area we are conflicted on is the brake valves – should it be rebuilt using the original 6ET equipment, or replaced with modern 26 NL or L valves? While the older equipment is correct, the 26 valves would tend to eliminate concerns by the class 1 railroads during interchange with them. Other additions may be required by host railroads to incorporate the engine into their system.

The tender oil bunker needs to be completely inspected and any corrosion or holes will need to be fixed. The tender wood support structure needs replacement as well. Draw bars, couplers, draft gear and related equipment will need a close inspection, and where needed, repair or replacement. Appliances such as lubricator, air compressor, air compressor lubricator, steam turbine generator, injectors and so on will need to be completely torn down, inspected, and returned to manufacturer's specification. Locomotive piping for all steam and air will be replaced due to deterioration and to avoid introducing contaminants to rebuilt systems. The current generator is not original. We will seek to replace it with the correct model. The generator on the SP 794 now is seized and won't turn.

Also, the SP 794's original whistle is missing. In photographs from her time in Maverick part from the 1960's to 1996 show that it went missing long ago. Efforts to secure a replacement whistle are in progress. Her current whistle is not original.

The boiler needs a 1472 day inspection which will generate a new FRA Form 4, hydrostatic testing is needed and the like. There is some gross corrosion of the tube sheets on the bottom both in the firebox and smoke box side. A partial replacement may be required. The flue tubes need replacement in any case. While the engine was built by the Brooks Locomotive Works, her current boiler has a Baldwin maker's stamp and serial number. This indicates a possible replacement prior to retirement with whatever boiler would work by the SP.

The plate lamination corrosion seen on the bottom of the firebox involves the fire pan, not the mud ring proper. This is a consumable and will be replaced, given the significant corrosion present. This area is prone to hold moisture and rusts in most park engines. Some rigging was bent (perhaps in the move from Maverick Park to Sunset Station) – this is unimportant in the overall rebuild scheme, and Mr. Lindsay is confident in the ability of the Friends of the SP 794 to correct it, and if not, Steam Operations can.

SARHM is currently negotiating with the City of San Antonio and the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce (the owners of the locomotive) to rebuild the SP 794. SARHM members are first citizens of San Antonio, and are proud of the history the SP 794 represents. We wish to preserve her for future generations, and if we're able, restore her to her fire breathing and steam snorting prior glory for our children, and their children to enjoy. The SP 794 is a unique artifact of the Industrial Revolution, and spent her working life in this area. It is a worthy and fitting goal to return her, shrouded in steam, to operational status.

As it stands now, these are our objectives:

1. Complete negotiations to return the SP 794 to operation. (In progress)
2. Establish a base of operation for her rebuild. (In progress)
3. Raise funds for the rebuild, acquisition of historical equipment (In progress)
4. Make a plan to present this to the citizens as historical equipment and interactive display
5. Engage with others in Texas to promote steam operations, both for San Antonio, and our colleagues' efforts in other cities.
6. Participate and support all steam operations in North America as much as we're able and within the scope of what we can reasonably do.

If you would like to donate to the preservation and rebuild efforts, and/or volunteer your time, please contact

Ms. Marla Rodriguez
PO Box 794,
Elmendorf, TX 78112-9998
or
info@sarhm.com

We're accepting PayPal donations at <http://www.sp794.org>
click on "Donate"

The San Antonio Railroad Historical Museum is a registered Texas not-for-profit 501(c)(3).



Scott Lindsay of Steam Operations Corporation - Photo taken by Tori Pulliam



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Friends of the SP 794 2010 Project Plan

By Gary Rodriguez

This year we have several new task that have added to our list of things that need to be done to help preserve the SP 794. Since having Mr. Lindsay from Steam Operations Corporation come down, he has given us an additional list of things that need to be done in preparations for a future restoration. Some things will not sound necessary at this time, but none the less are needing to be started. The list below is not in a specific order.

- Remove Christmas decorations from locomotive. (Done)
- Touch-up paint in areas where original paint is failing. Please note that this is not the paint we applied last year, but instead is the paint applied to the locomotive when it was donated to the city.
- Finish removing firebricks from the firebox.
- Remove sand from sand dome. This will prevent moisture from accumulating on the upper boiler sheet.
- Remove natural gas boiler from "doghouse" on tender.
- Repair and replace "doghouse" roof.
- Replace wooden deck on tender.
- Begin removing waste packing from above locomotive driver journals and clean out slots.
- Clean all lubrication fittings and lube.
- Clean cross-head guides and lube.
- Repair train number boards and reapply to locomotive.
- Repair locomotive marker lights and replace missing or broken parts and reapply.
- Locate and acquire second set of locomotive marker lights for rear of tender.
- Fabricate new headlight shroud for headlight.
- Finish removing scale and rust from tender interior.
- Construct window sashes from photos of those found on sister locomotives to replace those that are missing.
- Locate and replace cab seats. If need be, fabricate new ones.



Joseph Naefie removing plug on one of the many Inspection Ports/Washout Plugs inside the cab of the SP 794 - Photo taken by Mike Bongalis

So far it appears that we will only have two events for 2010. Of course, new opportunities may arise at anytime which would change our plans. We will inform you of any changes to our events itinerary to be sure there are no conflicts. Below is the events we will be participating in or holding.

National Train Day - May 8th

Holiday Lighting of the SP 794 - November 28th (We are not going to try and have the lighting on the same day as the River Walk lighting, unless otherwise requested)

As with the past year and a half, we will continue to promote the restoration of the SP 794 and her connection to San Antonio's railroading past. We are hoping to generate more support and contributions to the cause of not only restoring the SP 794 back to operations, but preserving her for future generations.

A Rare Missouri Pacific Baggage/RPO Car Donated to SARHM

By Gary Rodriguez

We are pleased to announce that SARHM is now the owner of a rare Missouri Pacific Baggage/Railway Post Office (RPO) car, MP 378.



Interior photo of the MP 378 - Photo taken by Gary Rodriguez

The car was built in 1948 by American Car and Foundry Co. (ACF) of St. Charles, Missouri as one of several of the same configuration for the Missouri Pacific (MP) and Texas & Pacific (T&P). The MP 378 started out as the MP 814 and was acquired for the International and Great Northern (I&GN) by the MP with sister car 817. The car is 85' 6" in length, rode on six wheels, drop equalized heavyweight trucks, and was originally painted in the Eagle scheme and carried I-GN in the letter board area at either end of the car. While classed as a mail-baggage car, it was actually a RPO with a 35 foot postal apartment (as they were referred to) with the remainder available for express and baggage service. In 1963 the car was renumbered to the MP 378 and repainted into the solid "Jenks Blue"

with an aluminum trim strip running the length of the car below the old letter board area and carrying the MP's red "buzz saw" emblem centered below the strip. On either side of the postal apartment door where the mail hook would have been situated, would have been stainless steel panels to help protect the car sides from catching mail on the fly. The MP 378 and its sister were retired from service in 1968. How the MP 378 ended up in Deep South Texas is a mystery, but in any case we are proud to have such a rare car as a start to our collection.



MP 378 - Photo taken by Gary Rodriguez



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A Smokin' Hot Christmas

By Melissa Stout



SP 794 Christmas Lighting - Photo taken by Mike Bongalis

December 2009 marked the Second Annual SP 794 Christmas Lighting Event for SARHM. The locomotive this year had more lights added and was first lit the night after Thanksgiving, November 27, 2009. That night we held a lighting ceremony where the SP 794 appeared to have steam and smoke coming out of the smoke stack by the use of a fog machine that was inserted into the fire box of the locomotive. The SP 794 had a wild appearance that night since it appeared to have fire coming from the smoke stack from the red light was inserted into the smoke stack to further illuminate the steam and smoke appearance.

Making its first appearance was SARHM's new character named "Ole Smokey". Our Chairman, B.L. Miers dressed up in a red shirt and green overalls with a Christmas Railroad Hat and beard and entertained the parents and children who attended the event. Toys for Tots was also there collecting toys for children with needs for the Christmas Holiday. We also opened up the cab of the

SP 794 and had visitors get a good look of the inside of the cab and let children chime the bell. Christmas music by Vocal Magic was playing for everyone to enjoy as well. As the night passed on, many visitors going back to their cars after leaving the lighting of the Christmas Tree on the River Walk stopped by to enjoy the SP 794. Many people commented how they never knew the SP 794 was there even though they pass by it several times and how the Christmas lights drew them to it.

The 2009 SP 794 Christmas Lighting Event has posed a new challenge for SARHM in 2010 to make the lighting event even better. We would like to thank Sunset Station for allowing SARHM to continue to improve the SP 794 and supporting us with the lighting events. Also, we would like to thank all of the visitors and members who support the SP 794. With your help, SARHM is able to keep the SP 794 here in our community and maintained to preserve the history of our community. Please come out for our Third Annual Christmas Lighting Event later this year. We look forward to seeing you!



SP 794 Christmas Lighting - Photo taken by Mike Bongalis

Continuing Historical Preservation in Elmendorf

By Melissa Stout

On July 29, 2010, SARHM will be back in Elmendorf, TX at the St. Anthony's Catholic Church Hall holding their second Town Hall Meeting. At the meeting, we are scanning and copying pictures, taking photos of historical items, and recording stories of the past provided by the citizens of Elmendorf, TX. We started this process about a year ago in an effort to gather the history of Elmendorf and help the community preserve their history. While gathering each item, permission forms are filled out allowing SARHM to display them in a future museum site to be located there in Elmendorf. The name for the museum is the Elmendorf Heritage and Railroad Museum and the main building of the museum will be a replica of the original Elmendorf SA&AP train depot. The City of Elmendorf is also on the permission forms and we are providing the City of Elmendorf with all of the information we receive in order to allow the city to display these historical items in their library, city hall, and etc.

An additional step to preserve Elmendorf's history is to document what is happening in Elmendorf today because what happens in Elmendorf today will become Elmendorf's history. We have been attending Elmendorf's events such as the Classic Car Cruise, the National



Baptism Day - Consuelo Pasthan held by Minerva, Emmet, Cornelio, George, Andres, and Beatrice at Santiago Taria Home - Provided by Ruben Tellez Pasthan

Night Out, and the Pony Express taking pictures as well as going through the city taking pictures of the businesses, homes and structures. Also, we have been cutting out news articles from papers such as the Wilson County News and scanning them as well as placing them into scrap books for them to be preserved until they can be properly displayed in the museum. We have provided the City of Elmendorf with a website at www.elmendorfmuseum.org where all of the historical photos and articles are displayed.

Also, we have been searching the archives of history at UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures and plan on continuing our search for historical gems at the San Antonio Library and the East Central School District. We have a lot of work to do in order to preserve the history of Elmendorf, so any help you can provide is greatly appreciated. You can contact us at melissa@sarhm.com or contact Melissa Stout at 210-296-5886.



Alfred McLane Casanova, Delia-Alfred Jr. holding Vickie (2yrs) - provided by Virginia Piper



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SP 794 Work Update

By Gary Rodriguez



Gary Rodriguez and Joseph Naeffle hard at work on SP 794 - Photo taken by Mike Bongalis

So far for 2010 we have only had a few work days on the SP 794. The weather has not exactly been kind to our efforts as we have been getting quite an abundant amount of rain. We were able to get all the Christmas decorations removed from the locomotive on our one work day in January. We also discovered something that we had not seen before on the locomotive. The 76 is stamped to the left side of the trailing truck of the locomotive. This is now the third part from a locomotive we have been able to identify from the number stamped on the parts.

Mr. Scott Lindsay of Steam Operations Corporation has laid out some basic things we need to attack on the locomotive in preparations for the upcoming rebuild. We are going to be starting on three of the items listed in the coming work sessions. We will be cleaning the drivers journal box guide lubrication wells, all the lubrication fittings on the moving parts of the side rods, and clean the valve and piston guides of rust. We will also be lubing all these areas. It is too early to tell if we will be moving

the 794 by rail or by truck, but lubing all the joints couldn't hurt and it will at least prevent rust from building up and locking parts together. Of course, we are still going to be removing the bricks from the firebox, but we will hopefully have that completed in a month or so.

Please check the SP 794 website for updates and work day schedules. If you are not a member and would like to help, please download and fill out our membership application. We need as much help as possible. Thank you.



Gary Rodriguez and Joseph Naeffle hard at work on SP 794 - Photo taken by Mike Bongalis

Announcing SARHM Forums

By B.L. Miers

We have set up a forums site for hosting discussions about all of the ongoing museum projects. If you want to know the latest and greatest about a SARHM project, the SARHM Forums is the place for you. You don't have to be a member of SARHM to participate in the forums, but you do have to have a valid email address and to register on the forums site to be able to see the information and participate in the discussions. The forums registration process is quick and is as simple as 1-2-3. Here are the steps to a successfully registration:

Step 1. Get on your Internet accessible computer to <http://forums.sarhm.com>

Step 2. Click on the Register link below the SARHM logo

Step 3. Click the "I agree to these terms" button

Step 4. Fill out the User Registration form. In order to accomplish this step you will have to come up with a user name that is not already being used, be able to create a password that is between 6-30 characters long, comprised of both UPPER and lower letters and at least one number (0-9) and be able to enter the same password twice in the form. You also have to figure out some squiggled letters that make up two words that will also be displayed in the form. The reason for this is so that we don't get a bunch of computers claiming to be humans in the site and being used to fill up our email boxes with a bunch of unwanted emails, known as SPAM.

Step 5. You will receive an email with the subject as Welcome to "SARHM Forums", which will contain a link back to the forums site to activate your account. Click on the link and the registration process is done.

Now, click on the Login link located to the left of the Register link, enter in your user name and password and you will be able to read and contribute to any or all of the discussions about all of the SARHM projects. You can subscribe to your favorite project discussion and receive an email to notify you when someone posts his or her comments to that project forum. Who knows you may be the one who posts a great idea on what we can do next as a museum project.

See you in forums. B.L. Miers, Chairman. A.K.A. IronHorse



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Classic Car Cruise Around the Corridor Visits Elmendorf

By Melissa Stout

On Saturday, May 1, 2010, the Classic Car Cruise Around the Corridor made its stop through Elmendorf, TX at the St. Anthony's Catholic Church. This is one of many stops the drivers and companions of these immaculate vehicles make where they can stretch their legs, get something to eat and drink (provided by the Senior Citizens of St. Anthony's), and speak to fellow members of their organizations as well as other organizations that happen to be there. SARHM was one such organization there providing information about the restoration



1956 Ford Thunderbird presented by the Thunderbirds Club - Photo taken by Melissa Stout

of the SP 794, the National Train Event at Sunset Station, and the plans for an excursion railroad trip from San Antonio to Elmendorf where the Elmendorf Heritage and Railroad Museum will have its functional train depot/museum. Many of the owners of these classic cars were extremely interested in the restoration work of the SP 794 as they already know and understand how much work is needed to restore a piece of history.

Marla Rodriguez manned the tables handing out flyers, answering questions,

and explaining the photographs in the many photo albums present. Melissa Stout took pictures, handed out flyers and spoke to the owners of the exquisite classic cars. There were so many more classic cars available this year and we were constantly surprised by what else came around the corner. The car clubs that stopped in Elmendorf were the San Antonio Mustangs, the Wilson County Car Club, the San Antonio Gear Grinders, the Thunderbirds Club and the San Antonio Street Machines. This event was such a treat to the SARHM members and we look forward to attending next years event, which is held the first Saturday in May of every year.



1969 Ford Mustang Shelby Corby presented by the San Antonio Mustangs - Photo taken by Melissa Stout



1936 Ford Pickup presented by the Wilson County Car Club - Photo taken by Melissa Stout

SARHM's Mission

The purpose of SARHM is to inform and educate the public about the rich railroad history of San Antonio and the South Texas region, by offering a historical look at the economical and cultural impact that the operations of the railroads had on the past. Further, SARHM will look at how the railroad affects the region today and will continually look forward toward how the railroad will affect the future of our region.

SARHM Needs Your Help!

by Marla Rodriguez

How can you help?

Membership: By becoming a member, you can help this organization by giving your voluntary services enabling us to work as a team to preserve the railroad heritage of San Antonio and the South Texas area for all generations. This invaluable education will give future generations the history needed to expand their knowledge and understanding of how the railroad impacted our way of life as well how it affects us currently as we move into the future. For a membership application, please visit our website at www.sarhm.com or feel free to call or write.

Donations: If you choose not to become a member, but still want to help, donations are a great way to start. We are accepting both cash donations and railroad related items for donation.

Cash donations will receive a receipt for tax purposes as we are a 501(c)3, Not-For-Profit

Organization.

All non cash donations will need an appraisal presented to ensure a proper receipt is issued for tax purposes. If the non cash item is not able to be presented to a member, a photo sent with a description and the appraisal may be mailed or emailed for consideration.

Information: Any information you can contribute is also a wonderful way to help. The information can be historical, documentation, photos, equipment, location, or financial opportunities.

Ideas/Suggestions: We at SARHM are interested in your ideas and suggestions. Anything is open for discussion including ideas to improve what we are already doing. Please don't hesitate!

No matter which way you decide to help, or how much you decide to help, please know your help is greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your support!

Board of Directors

Chairman: B.L. Miers
President/CEO: Gary Rodriguez
Executive Secretary: Melissa Stout
Treasurer: Mike Stout
Public Relations: Marla Rodriguez
Membership Coordinator: Robert Stout
Member-At-Large: Sean Embry
Member-At-Large: Darlene Hicks



Southern Pacific #794 located at Sunset Station, San Antonio, TX - photo taken by Melissa Stout

We're on the Web!

www.sarhm.com www.sp794.org
www.elmendorfmuseum.org
www.saap60.org

The RPO newsletter is created and assembled by our Public Relations Director, Ms. Marla Rodriguez and Executive Secretary, Mrs. Melissa Stout. Please feel free to contact us with your questions, comments or concerns. Thank you.