



Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc.

Southeast Chapter

Newsletter No. 103 – October, 2007

Southeast Chapter 2008 Elections

At our September meeting a Nominating Committee was formed consisting of Jim Smith, Art Towson and Reid Adams. They agreed to seek SE Chapter members willing to run for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer for 2008. The Nominating Committee slate will be presented at our November 8th meeting. Ballots will be sent out in the December *Southeast Limited*; however, if only four people apply for the four positions, they will be “elected” by Acclamation by Proclamation (see August *SE Limited*) at our January banquet. If you’d like to run for office, please contact Jim Smith at 904-276-2972.

“Trestle House” Train Watching, By Jim Smith

For those of you who have been to the Folkston Funnel, I have another suggestion to offer for great CSX and Amtrak train watching in the same area. About four miles south of Folkston is the Trestle House. It is a three bedroom home built on and over the south abutment of the first railroad bridge built across the St. Mary's River at this location.

Southbound CSX freight train lead by GE # 5350 and an EMD SD40-2 # 8203



Southeast Limited



The gathering room of the trestle house built around the original bridge abutment – note the granite blocks below that held the bridge and the granite blocks above that supported the track.

You can see by the photos that it is nicely situated on the Florida (south) side of the river and, besides having wonderful views of the CSX bridge over the river, offers all the comforts of home. The three bedrooms each contain double (or larger) beds; there is a very large gathering room and a dishware supplied kitchen. You just need to bring your food, toothbrush, AND YOUR CAMERA! You could even bring a canoe or small boat and your swim suit as there is a small "beach" next to the house. This is simply a great place to watch CSX and Amtrak trains.

If you are interested in renting the Trestle House, the cost is \$150 a day. Just contact the owner, Ms. Vivian Ritsma, at vrtsma@yahoo.com . I would highly recommend it!

Announcements:

December 13th - Regular SE Chapter meeting, 3rd floor CSX GOB, Jacksonville, FL 6:30PM

December 15/16 - Model Train Show, Tampa, FL Florida State Fairgrounds

SOUTHEAST CHAPTER OFFICERS

William F. Howes, Jr.	President
James A. Smith	Vice-President
Arthur L. Towson	Secretary
John Leynes, Jr.	Treasurer

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Andy Kirk's Southeast Train News:

Simplified Dining Service Debuts on *Lake Shore Limited*

On Sept. 17, the conventional dining car on train # 49 was replaced by an Amfleet II Dinette, offering the new simplified menu. The change took place on # 48, departing Chicago on the 18th. An additional Amfleet II, or Horizon lounge car, operates in the consist to provide light food service. The Heritage dining cars are some of the oldest and most maintenance intensive in Amtrak's fleet. These cars remain in service on the *Crescent* and Florida trains; however, their days are numbered.

Tri-Rail Troubles

On July 1st, Bombardier Transportation assumed a \$97 million seven year contract to maintain Tri-Rail's fleet of 16 locomotives and 26 coaches, along with two 3-car DMU sets. On the same day, Veolia, which also runs MBTA commuter trains over the Mass. Bay Railroad, assumed control of train operations for the South Florida commuter line. Herzog Transit Systems, who had both run and maintained the trains since 1994, did not bid on the new contract.

Since the transition, the number of late or cancelled trains has skyrocketed, according to the South Florida *Sun-Sentinel*. During July, 32 trains were late or cancelled, with the number jumping to 82 during August. The worst day was August. 16th, when 13 of the 50 trains were affected. Complaints from passengers and train crews ranging from foul-smelling toilets, roach infestations, and a/c breakdowns, prompted Montreal-based Bombardier to boost the local workforce. Since the arrival of a new Bombardier management team, on time performance increased from 61% in August to 86% during the first week in September and only seven trains that week were late or cancelled due to mechanical problems.

Meanwhile, Tri-Rail continues to work out plans to assume train dispatching of the line from CSXT, having made arrangements with Amtrak. However, execution of this plan is being delayed by funding issues. All these problems are occurring just after the completion of a double-tracking program and the addition of several train frequencies to boost weekday service to 50 trains. Ridership for the first 7 mos. Increased nearly 10% over last year.

Southeast Chapter - Meeting Minutes Recap:

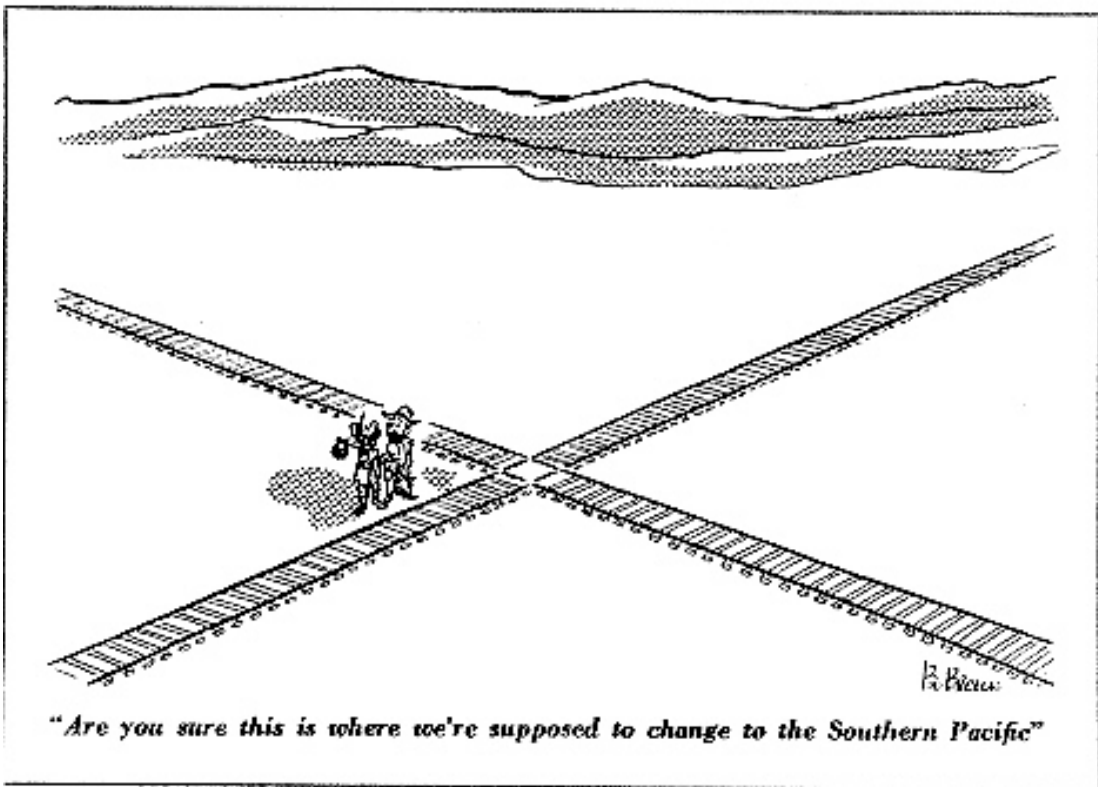
The **August 9, 2007** meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Howes at the CSX General Office Building. There were six members present and Larry Shugart was a guest. The Secretary's Report for our July 12th meeting was approved as presented.

Treasurer, John Leynes, reported that are various accounts totaled \$9,145.49. This report was also approved. Old Business - Committee Reports: Jim Smith discussed (with Bill Howes assisting) a possible Amtrak trip from Jacksonville to Tampa, but no date has been set.

Jim also presented his proposal for the use of "Acclamation by Proclamation" reviewed in our August SE Limited. Usage would only occur when the number of applicants running for office equaled the number of positions available. No formal ballots would be used and the candidates would be approved for office via Acclamation by Proclamation. The proposal was approved by the quorum of members attending the meeting. Under New Business, a proposal was discussed and approved to send a \$200 donation to the group that is working to preserve the historic B&O station at Duffields, WV. Our program was presented by Reid Adams reviewing a trip he and Bill Howes took to follow various railroads while traveling from Denver to Jacksonville. Photos were shown of the former RI, C&S, FW&D, and ATSF.



The river side view of the trestle house showing the old bridge abutment below the deck, with a CSX freight train crossing the St. Marys river.



Cartoon: From the no-longer published *Railway Progress* magazine – April, 1958.