

## **MINUTES OF THE LONE STAR REGION BOARD MEETING Houston, Texas – January 28, 2024**

President Donna Orr called the Annual Board meeting to order at 2:03 PM.

### **Roll call**

All of the officers, directors and committee chairpersons were present except:

Voting Board Members:

Michael Harang – Proxy: Jeff Palmer

Phil Stewart – Proxy: Chuck Lind

Don Kimmell – Proxy: Jeff Palmer

Non-voting Board Members:

Ken Kaiser

### **Visitors**

Roy Kaiser

### **Motion 1: Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**Secretary Jeff Palmer** provided a motion and **Chuck Lind** seconded to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve, as published the Minutes of the June 04, 2023 Semi-Annual Board of Directors meeting published online. The motion passed.

## **Officers Reports**

### **President Donna Orr**

Happy New Year everyone. I hope that your holidays were great and this year is a better one for everyone.

Thinking about what to write in this report that would be interesting to all. I decided to look back to what other LSR Presidents wrote. And what I found out was very interesting. Every President had similar or the same challenges. The region has been trying to get youth involved in the NMRA for years. We've been looking at ways to increase membership. How to get more members to volunteer their time. What to do to make our regional conventions more interesting and attract more members.

Then on the current Regional Presidents Call, I learned that another region has set up a procedure for retaining rail pass members. The statistics are that only 9 out of every 100 rail passes convert to full memberships. This action plan will be discussed by our LSR Board of Directors and see if there is something similar that our region may do. On another note, our NMRA President Gordy Robinson mentioned that the NMRA membership grew this past year for the first time since 1992.

Conventions are always a subject of interest. Our 2024 regional convention is “Where the Eagle meets the Chief” hope to see all of you there, in Pasadena, Texas, February 15-17, 2024. You can go to [www.turbotrains.com/2024lonestar](http://www.turbotrains.com/2024lonestar) for more information.

Have you ever thought about what happened to passenger trains in the US? With a busy transcontinental network of 254,000 miles of tracks at its height a little over a century ago, America moved on trains. In the 1860’s we had the first transcontinental railroad. And by the 1900s, almost every American lived within easy access to a train station. Then what happened? One thing, our nation changed their focus to a smaller fancier transportation – the car. Many miles of track were then turned over to the freight industry. Also, attention was to an interstate Highway system, justified as a national defense program. Highways could be used for evacuation and to transport troops. Money was poured into the modernizing of the passenger network right at the wrong time. But then in 1970 Amtrak was born. Things are not great with Amtrak, since 70% of the tracks it runs on are owned and shared with private freight companies, which gives little control over scheduling delays and maintenance. But Amtrak is what we have for passenger transportation. Will they be able to convince Americans to hop on a train rather than taking a car between major cities? Just a thought.

Another thought - next year is the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NMRA.

### **Vice -President Ray Byer**

Hello to all how is reading this report. To all who may not know who I am or who is new to the LSR my name is Ray Byer. I am the current Vice President of the LSR, I have VP for two term and running for reelection again. I also Co-Chair the LSR contest Room, Judging and the LSR Parliamentarian. Been in the Hobby for over 30 years and part of the NMRA for 25 years. I model all scales (a so call Rubber Gauger) but I like logging and Light Industries railroads. In March of this year the LSR will be holding elections again, so I am asking for your vote. Thank you for your subport in the past and all forward in helping you and the LSR in the future.

An now for the VP report, as you all know the LSR holds an annual Convention each year. I have been contacted by members asking why do we have them? An I go into telling them how they can learn new skills and ideas on modeling, history, followship, and have a contest so you can have an item judged so you can work towards becoming a Master Model Railroad. Then they ask, “why does it cost so much”, I go into cost in hosting the event, cost of the event center, the dinner, and the awards. Then sometimes they ask, “why do y’all pick times in the middle of a school year or graduations”, try to expand that the date of a convention is set by the host who is putting on the convention. So after answering there questions, you have to think “why do we convention”?

“Why do we Have Convention”, there is a good question. As some of you know the Convention is One of the biggest costs that the LSR has each year, and if you

have attended in the past. To can see the attention is dropping, is this do to the age of the membership who likes coming each year to see old friends (I do). Or is it not or well advertising or promoted through the web or in print across the LSR Region. It comes a time would you (LSR) must ask is the worth the cost and time?

This is a question I am asking you the membership of the LSR, “Why do we have conventions and do we keep having them each year”. So, stop think and write down things you like about going to the LSR Convention and then write things you do not like about going to the LSR Convention and how they can be fixed. When you have your list of pros and cons send them to me at **raybyer@yahoo.com** . I will report back to you with a report on the outcome of this question and also it will tell me if you read this report and for me to keep fighting to have annual convention.

### **Secretary Jeff Palmer**

This will be my last report as the LSR Secretary and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the privilege I’ve had to work with each of you. I have always told everyone and specifically each LSR President that “if there was any one, they wanted in this position, I would be happy to step aside and let them have it.” In keeping with that statement, Peter Kazmir has stepped up. He should run uncontested by no matter what, I will be working with all LSR Secretary candidates to transfer those responsibilities.

Currently the secretary is trying to help the future secretary to pull together the various reports from the other LSR Officers and Chairs in preparation of the February BOD meeting. The cooperation of the officers and chairs is greatly appreciated.

One last note, please remember in your reporting that education is our prime directive and to hi-lite it where possible in your reporting.

### **Treasurer Steve Sandifer**

Even though you elected me in May, and I was later added to the bank account, it was only in December that my signature was finally approved for our account. Donna and I have made numerous trips to the bank, filled out forms, shown minutes of board meetings, etc. in attempts to get things straight. It took a phone call to corporate to finally complete things, we think.

With that out of the way, I will be following up with Marker Lamp advertisers to ensure that they are up-to-date with payments and will be looking at secure ways to earn interest on our funds. It seems poor stewardship to have \$44,000 doing nothing.

Division 8 has not requested any seed money for the February convention nor have the accounts been finalized for the national convention. I hope you plan on coming to Houston in February. I will be hosting an operating session and presenting a clinic in addition to chairing the train show. Tables for the train show

have been sold out for months and include a number of estates where there will be bargains galore.

Net Worth as of	12/26/2023			
Assets				
	Cash and Bank Accounts			
		Bank of America		\$44,375.48
		Outstanding Checks		\$183.71
			Total	\$44,191.77
	Liabilities			
		Restricted: Bob Clark Award		\$448.86
		Restricted: DeLattre Fund		\$578.00
		Restricted: Div. 7		\$172.50
			Total	\$1,199.36
	Overall funds available			\$42,992.41

### **Advisor Chuck Lind**

Several topics have been discussed with the President and I have given my input on them based on past history.

## **Directors Reports**

### **Division 1 Director Dick Brannan reported:**

Cowcatcher Division had a great second half of the year. Participation of Division 1 members in the NMRA International Convention, 2023 Texas Express was very strong with many members on the convention leadership team, holding open houses and operating sessions, performing clinics, and of course just general attendance at the convention.

Our monthly meeting attendance continues to hover around 50 members attending with usually a guest or two. We had a number of outstanding clinics in the fall including two Zoom clinics , one by Bob Frankrone doing a “Love those Loads “ clinic and one on the NMRA gauge which included its history as well how to properly use the gauge put on by Brian Bart, a member of the Standards and Conformance Committee. Duane Richardson, MMR also put on an outstanding “Make and Take” clinic where the members built a laser cut loading dock in N, HO or O scale depending on their respective preference. Finishing off the year was

our annual Christmas Party with 55 – 60 members and guests participating in the “White Elephant” gift exchange.

The Division also participated in helping with the Union Pacific Family Day held in mid October at UP’s Davidson Yard, We had about 20 volunteers from the Division helping with set up, parking, registration, and “swag bag” distribution

Cowcatcher Division looks forward to a great 2024 and especially attending the LSR Convention in Houston.

**Division 2 Director Rod Fredericks reported:**

Medical problems have curtailed my activities as Division 2 director since last March. It has been a long road of numerous doctor visits and medical tests culminating in major heart surgery in August, and a long recovery. Follow up cardiac PT and family and friends’ support has gotten me nearly back to my old self again. And after having to miss the National Convention in last August, I am so looking forward the LSR convention in February.

I am also back to exploring the possibly of hosting the 2025 LSR Convention in the Baton Rouge/New Orleans area. After visiting several hotels in the Baton Rouge area, we have found a few sites that look very promising. All are on the south side of town adjacent to I-10 and I-12, which provides access to the New Orleans area only 80 minutes away. More on that to come.

I also plan to start holding Division 2 meetings. These meetings could have clinics, visits to clubs and members layouts, perhaps operation sessions, etc. Communication is the key to a successful division. I would be happy to hear any ideas you may have. Contact me at fredericks.rod@gmail.com.

So that’s all for now. Happy model railroading.

**Division 3 Director Charles Goodrich reported:**

Division 3 has returned to pre pandemic levels in attendance with between 30 and 45 people attending. Because I have not written a BOD report in a while, I have outlined all of our clinics for 2023 and January 2024. Following are the clinics we have had for the past year

January 2024 Jeff Palmer presented a clinic entitled “Track Issues”. He talked about building and maintaining track to minimize derailments.

December 2023 - Annual Christmas part at Donna Orr's and Roger Shanks home.



November 223 - Keith Stamper presented a clinic that featured a virtual tour of his railroad, the Colorado and Rio Grande Southern

October 2023 - Duane Richardson presented a make and take clinic featuring a jig for building trees.

September 2023 - Jeff Palmer presented a clinic on lubrication.

July, 2023 - Thomas Stephens gave a clinic entitled "Speed Matching for DCC Locomotives".

June 2023 - Steve Crise gave a photographic presentation of the Nevada Northern R.R.

May, 2023 - Thomas Stephens presented a clinic on DC vs DCC plus JMRI for Dummies.

April, 2023 - Dave Ackmann presented a clinic entitled "Generators". Dave has developed free online tools that make 3-D printing easier.

March 2023 - Jeff Palmer gave a clinic on building Deciduous Trees using Sagebrush and Super Tree material.

February 2023 - Jerry Hoverson presented a clinic on Modeling Water. Jerry discussed several methods that create an acceptable water feature for our layouts.

January 2023 - Charles Goodrich presented a clinic on Painting, Decaling and Weathering a Locomotive

The Plano Train Show was a success this year. Division 3 members put on clinics for the show as well as a couple of booth clinics at the division booth. The show is sponsored by both Division one and three and is held twice a year,

Division 3 meets at Christ the King Lutheran church in Allen. The church has been very gracious in providing a meeting place and lets our group concentrate on meeting content instead of finding a place to meet. Meetings are held on the third Saturday each month at 10:00 AM unless there is a conflict with other events.

We continued our segment on Tips and Tricks.

Still popular is the show and tell segment where members bring what they are working on to show the group. This is a venue that allows people to show off their modeling skills and gives people a chance to be more involved.

**Division 4 Director Bob Thiele** reported:

The division has been active participating in bimonthly meetings and working on group projects. The all NMRA modular group the been interacting with the public and modifying the Austin downtown portion for better ease of operations.

A project that the division has undertaken as a group is a portable shelf layout. The membership has input on each of the phases of construction. At each phase of construction, clinics that relate to the construction are presented by the members. So far clinics which have been presented are roadbed using ridge insulation and cork, wiring technique using different components, Hand laid track and switches. Other clinics to be present will be scratch building/kit bashing buildings and structures. Members of the division will be constructing the structure for the shelf layout. There will be several clinics on scenery and weathering.

The Division is in the process of updating its website. All meetings that have been recorded on Zoom will be uploaded to the site. Clinics that include PPT., will be added. New topics have been added to the home page so the public can get a greater understanding of what we do. We are making a to effort get more public awareness by traveling to train show and youth orientated events. We set up the David Barrows South Prairie modular layout. The public is invited to operate the layout.

The Austin Model Railway Society in conjunction with Hope Presbyterian church sponsor a breakfast with Santa. After breakfast, the public is invited to tour the

modular layout. Kids can run a consist around the layout and all questions are welcomed. At this time, they are planning the next Austin Train show which will be at the end of August.

The membership total has made a small gain with help from AMRS and exposure from the trains show. It is the divisions' goal to attend three train shows a year with the South Prairie modules to expose the public to model railroading.

### **Division 5 Director Books Willig**

Division 5 is going strong and growing. We are up 6 members since the start of 2023. In June we had a weekend meetup for division members. This meeting was held at the American Windmill Museum June 16-17, 2023. During this week the Lubbock Model Railroad Association had their modular layouts and other setups on display at the museum. Several clinics were presented on Friday and Saturday by Laurence Ertner, Adam Chavez, Mike Mackie, Henry Crawford, Don Winn, and Shelley Harris, the weekend concluded with a dinner and Mike Mackey giving the keynote address. We had 3 new members sign up that weekend.

The Abilene Model Railroaders Society has moved into its new building and recently held an open house in December.

Division 5 member Spanky Fuentes won the Judges Award at the 2023 Texas Express National Convention.

View the division's previous meeting recordings.

<https://www.youtube.com/@NMRALSRD5>

Sign up for updates from the division and when we are holding our monthly meetings go with this link. <http://eepurl.com/hRLLm9>

Till next time keep on modeling and be happy.

### **Division 6 Don Winn reported:**

It has now been over a year since we transitioned from the South Texas Railroad Socials to official division 6 meetings, and I'm pleased to report that things are going very well. We have stepped up the meeting frequency from quarterly to bi-monthly, meeting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of even-numbered months to offset Division 4 which meets on the odd-numbered months. Attendance has remained steady at 25-30 participants.

The next step is to develop a working committee for the division and find people to fill some of the critical chairs, such as membership. After 6 years as the director, I have decided to step down, but not before finding a replacement. Roy Kaiser, an NMRA life member for almost 50 years has agreed to run in the upcoming election. I will stay on filling a number of roles in the division. Special thanks to Bob Thomas, who has been a great help, and has agreed to continue to support the division as our social media chair and to share his expertise for the Tips and Tricks segment of our meetings.



Additional details of division activities can be found in my quarterly reports to the Marker Lamp.

**Division 7 Director Don Kimmell** reported:

It has been a quiet six months on the modeling front. Membership has held steady despite out local economy. We did a brief poll of our members (e-mail & phone) and there was not a great desire to get together, mainly a time/distance issue.

On the local front, work is moving along on the Sue Lines rehab while it's new home is under construction. More to follow when available.

The small layout located in our Sci Port IMAX room is not running during the projectors are being upgrading to digital. Hopefully it will be running again in the future.

The new railroad, Canadian Pacific Kansas City, ran all of their Holiday Trains this season. It was interesting to say the least. The Holiday Express (old KCS) covered the southern part of the system, while the two Holiday trains covered all of Canada, the

East and Midwest, also the Mexican edition also ran. It was a bit hard to keep track of who was where. When the schedules were shown to us (KCS Historical Society) someone made the comment that they were "banging the corners"! We sure did. Meridian, MS on the east, Wyle, TX on the west, LaPlace, LA to the southeast and Victoria, TX to the southwest. Another change was we did a bit more daylight running, which was a refreshing change. In years past, we would run part or all of the night to reach the next location, so one, sort-of, got used to sleeping on a moving train. It did make for some interesting sleeping positions. Everyone both workers(elves) and the public enjoyed the show.

I did due two Operation Lifesaver presentations, one to a Boy Scout Troop in the old Minden shops(L&A/KCS), the other in Vicksburg for a "Garden Club" (outdoor railroad layout). While in Meridian, I visited with the city's Boys and Girls club who wish to build a layout. I put them in contact with some local modelers.

**Division 8 Director Phil Stewart** reported:

2023 was the year of the clinic in Division 8. We are continuing that in 2024. We wanted to emphasize clinics that would help folks toward earning achievement awards and ultimately their MMR. The other clinics we did in 2023 and want to continue in 2024 emphasized prototype roads and operation. Even though as a modeler we model a particular road or freelance we can always learn how how other railroads did things. Our January clinic will be about operations of the New York Central. Hopefully in the next year we'll have a couple of members closer to becoming an MMR.

Elections are coming up at our next meeting. We hope to have a full slate of candidates eager to make Division 8 bigger and better than ever.

We are looking for clinicians for 2024. If you are interested please contact Phil Stewart. We want to emphasize make and take clinics for projects for cars, structures, electronics and scenery. Again the goal is to push the Achievement Program so with that being said I have volunteered my layout for division members to help them with their achievement awards for scenery and electrical. One of the things that the NMRA teaches us is to share our knowledge with others. I got my electrical and scenery achievement awards years ago so I'm here to help. There are some bare spaces on my layout that can use some help with scenery and getting a train around the track.

**Director-At-Large Michael Harang** reported:

Have been away from home base for several weeks working, sorry for the delay in sending this report. Also, I will be out of the country for the BOD meeting on the 28th. I will arrange for a proxy in my absence.

**2023 Texas Express and Beyond**

WOW, AMAZING, SPECTACULAR, VAST, INCREDIBLE - After attending my 1st NMRA National Convention at the 2023 Texas Express in August at the Gaylord Texan, putting the experience into words is a true challenge! Also, being on the organizational committee as the Convention Photographer, and having the pleasure of working with so many talented people was simply a joy. Yes, it was a lot of work and a large commitment, but definitely worth it, and something I would do again if the opportunity presents itself. Throughout the year-long plus planning phase and the almost two week execution phase (at least for me), watching this convention come together and unfold before my eyes was synonymous with watching a well oiled machine - it kinda of reminded me of all of the pieces and parts in a K28 steam engine - each designed to fit a special need and requirement, and working in unison for a common goal.

So, what is the BEYOND? For one, the LSR 2024 Convention "Where the Eagle meets the Chief" is to be held 15 - 17 February 2024 in Pasadena, Texas. This looks to be a great convention and one not to be missed. If you attended the 2023 Texas Express, parlay that experience into the LSR 2024 Convention and keep your train moving on down the tracks.

Also, look over Bill Dryden's "Up The Tracks Event Calendar" in the current issue of the Marker Lamp. Here is listed all manner of events, train shows, meetings, excursions. We in the LSR are highly fortunate to have a large and diverse event calendar at our fingertips, so getting involved and getting out there is really easy to do.

Then, there is the NMRA 2024 National Convention to be held in Long Beach, California on 4 - 11 August. Pursuing their website recently, they have a great line

up planned for us. If you have never attended a National Convention, do yourself and your hobby a favor and go!

In closing, my message to you is two-fold: Get out there and experience what this great hobby has to offer, and to get involved. There is truly something for everyone and at every level. I recall the graduation speech given to my son's 8th Grade class and the speaker's message was simply to "get involved". He told those students that the most boring thing would be to just go to high school classes and then go home. From my perspective, being involved in something leads to an enriching, rewarding, and fulfilling life. If you want to participate but are not sure what to do or how, just ask someone on the LSR Board - we're here to help you. Being part of the LSR committee for the past few years and participating in the committee for the 2023 Texas Express has given me the opportunity to meet many people and experience many different things that I would otherwise not have done.

**Director-At-Large Pete Leach** reported:

This has been a very busy time with my hobby. I presented my Painting Figures clinic at the Division 8 meeting in June. I also presented my clinic on the New England Ice Trade to the San Jac Model Railroad club in August. Both were well received.

On the modeling front, I completed a 21" X 24" diorama scene based on the ice business in New England. This HO<sub>n</sub>30 effort included a scratch-built icehouse and 2-masted schooner. This was part of my experiment in modeling in this smaller gauge and scale. An article on the project was published in the Nov/Dec GAZETTE. I've also built a couple of On30 Maine 2-foot cabooses, and an O scale lobster boat named for my late friend, Denny McGonigle. It sits proudly along the waterfront on my layout.



*Figure 1 - The Denny McGonigle is preparing to get underway to work the lobster traps.*

I completed a scratch-built diesel switcher that qualified me for the Motive Power AP certificate. This is my 10<sup>th</sup> certification.

I attended the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Denver this Aug/Sep. It was part of a road trip that had me put 2890 miles on my car. On the way to the convention, I visited a great HOn30 layout in Colorado Springs by Sam Brenner. He is modeling the Maine 2-Foot Moson Railroad in a small upstairs room. His layout features small HOn30 Forney locomotives WITH SOUND! I am now trying to figure out how to do that on my HOn30 Forney's!

The convention was well attended, and I saw many LSR folks there. I gave 2 clinics on Operations of my WW&F and 2 on Painting Figures. I had great fun and met some interesting folks. In fact, Rich Gibson invited me to his house after the convention to see his basement size layout of the Maine Central's Rockland Branch. His standard-gauge prototype crossed my narrow-gauge prototype in Wiscasset, Maine.

After the convention, my wife and I drove to Santa Fe, NM for a few days of sightseeing. While there, I got to visit with long time Maine modeler and former Model Railroader staff member Bob Hayden. Bob, along with Dave Frary, helped pioneer Maine 2-foot modeling back in the 1970s. He is now building his version of the Maine Central Rockland Branch in a large outbuilding. It was great spending time talking 2-Foot with Bob. Go figure: I drive all the way to Colorado to visit 3 Maine themed layouts!

Finally, I am looking forward to the LSR Convention in Houston this February, where I am serving as the registrar. Get you registrations in!

**Director-At-Large Darrell Cowles** reported:

Thank you to all who helped, worked shifts, or coordinated the most recent Region and National conventions. I believe they were both huge successes thanks to your efforts. The Houston convention is approaching very quickly and I hope it will be as well done. Visiting with members at the recent convention, at the Plano train show, and online makes me believe that the hobby is secure for the immediate future, but the overriding concern is the much-discussed lack of appeal to younger people. While the NMRAX YouTube web events are good, in that they are in the mobile format, do they actually attract younger people into the hobby? How do we measure this? Can we measure this?

While visiting with an officer in the local National Railway Historical Society a couple of years ago after a meeting, I was told they face exactly the same issue of attracting younger members. I was told that 15-20 years ago, there were 20,000+ members and now there are only about 8,000. I haven't seen, or are unaware of, any programs they have implemented to draw in younger people; are they destined to just disappear? I hope not. I am encouraged by the emphasis the NMRA has given to attract younger people, but think it must be an ongoing battle. The local Plano train shows attract families which brings children into contact with the hobby, perhaps for the first time. But how do we keep exposing them to the hobby when we only have two public events per year that are priced family-friendly?

I would suggest we add some additional exposure by asking local clubs with permanent layouts to open for the public a couple times per year. Even modular clubs can do this if they have a venue that allows public visits. Who knows, they might even pick up a new member or two! The Texas Western has now had two Holiday Open Houses and one summer Open House that is advertised in the local community and in the hobby. The most recent saw a 20% increase in attendance with mostly families attending. If more clubs could do this, then we could constantly offer the chance for young people to become exposed and interested in model railroading.

## **Department Reports**

**Achievement Chair Duane Richardson** reported:

Here is what has taken place since the last report.

Qry-AnnualReport								
Membership_num	FIRST_NAME	LAST_NAME	Certificate	Date	LSR_NUM	MMR_NUM	Mid_Year_Report	Annual_Report
163531	Pete	Leach, MMR	Official	6/20/2023	887		No	No
165085	Tom	Greco	Golden Spike	6/20/2023	888		No	No
142118	David	Griffith	Scenery	6/20/2023	889		No	No
144370	Don	Winn	Scenery	6/20/2023	890		No	No
144370	Don	Winn	MMR	6/20/2023	891		No	No
144217	Jay	Waters	Scenery	6/20/2023	892		No	No
165085	Tom	Greco	Civil	8/20/2023	893		No	No
165085	Tom	Greco	MMR	8/20/2023	894		No	No
168274	David	Crumpton	Cars	8/20/2023	895		No	No
171103	Eric	Smith	Author	8/20/2023	896		No	No
143273	John	Garfield	Cars	8/20/2023	897		No	No
140542	Thomas	Stephens	Volunteer	9/20/2023	898		No	No
169281	Mike	Armstrong	Scenery	10/20/2023	899		No	No
122947	Chris	Atkins	Volunteer	10/20/2023	900		No	No
122947	Chris	Atkins	Author	10/20/2023	901		No	No
168274	David	Crumpton	Chief Dispatcher	10/20/2023	902		No	No
168274	David	Crumpton	MMR	10/20/2023	903		No	No
163531	Pete	Leach, MMR	Motive Power	12/20/2023	904		No	No
148871	Jackobs	Steven	Electrical	12/20/2023	905		No	No
122947	Chris	Atkins	Chief Dispatcher	12/20/2023	906		No	No
124816	Duran de And	Ing. Ezequiel	Electrical	12/20/2023	907		No	No
172851	Cliff	Cheeseman	Volunteer	1/20/2024	908		No	No
148871	Jackobs	Steven	Structures	1/20/2024	909		No	No
			.				No	No

**Contest Co-chairs Ray Byer, Jeff Palmer** reported:

With the NMRA National convention this past August 2023, there has been minimal activity involving the Contest Room. Ray and I continue to review expenses and how to reduce them

**Convention Chair Joe Leising** reported:

Cowcatcher and Trinity River Divisions co-hosted the 2023 NMRA National Convention this past August. Nearly 1,000 attendees from around the globe registered, visiting to experience the Dallas/Fort Worth prototype train attractions, area layouts, amazing clinic schedule, and Texas Hospitality. The convention was not only a financial success which benefited both host divisions as well as the Lone Star Region, but some constant national convention attendees have

commented that the 2023 convention was one of, if not the best convention that they have ever attended. A special thank you to the clinicians, volunteers, and convention committee members, as well as to those who attended expressing their support, all contributing to making the 2023 Texas Express Convention a tremendous success

Congratulations are due to the many LSR Members who received awards at the National Contest Room, and to LSR President and Texas Express Convention Chairman Donna Orr, who received the NMRA's Presidents Award. Future national NMRA conventions are planned for Long Beach, CA in 2024, Novi (Detroit), MI in 2025, and Chattanooga, TN in 2026.

The Texas Gulf Division will be hosting this year's regional convention, Where The Eagle Meets The Chief, in Pasadena, TX. A great line up of clinics, operating sessions, and layout tours, with free admission and early admittance to the Greater Houston Train Show is scheduled to take place February 15 – 17, 2024. In addition to access to the train show, registration also includes the Saturday Evening Banquet. Dinner tickets are available as a separate registration event for individuals that will not be participating in the other convention activities. Come visit and operate on amazing layouts, and reunite with old friends and make new ones. Convention registration is available at [www.TrurboTrains/2023LoneStar](http://www.TrurboTrains/2023LoneStar) and discounted hotel reservations can be made by emailing Michelle at [lq53239tx@gmail.com](mailto:lq53239tx@gmail.com) providing your name, telephone number and referencing **LSR Convention**.

A special thank you to Chuck Lind, Bob Barnett and the entire Texas Gulf Division for stepping up to host the 2024 regional convention after a different division defaulted on their commitment to do so.

Two weekend dates in July 2025 are being looked at for the Lone Star Regional Convention, to take place in Baton Rouge, LA. Bayou Division 2 Director Rod Fredericks has identified possible locations for the convention that will be researched to determine the best convention venue. More information will be provided once it is available.

Opportunities are available for 2026 and beyond to host the annual Lone Star Region Convention. Do you want to stimulate the economy for your area and finances for your division? Do you want to showcase the talents of modelers in your division? Contact Convention Chair Joe Leising at [Joe@Leising.com](mailto:Joe@Leising.com) to starting planning for your division to host an annual Lone Star Region convention.

## **Education Chair, xxxx xxxx No Report**

## **Events Chair, Bill Dryden reported:**

Some of my better sources dropped off-line, but I still have a few several good sources for up-coming events and continually soliciting new events. I will visit the web site for each published event to assure that the site is still active and provides the reader with needed information concerning the respective show. Occasionally, notices [still] arrive between a day to a week after the column has



been submitted. I respond with a revised column to the editor; some actually get there before the issue has been finalized. <sigh!> Further, I will advise the sender of the situation, with a reminder of our deadlines for future submittals.

Overall, I am keeping up with the known events within our Region. ALL submittals are greatly appreciated.

Anyone having events to be published, please send me the details:  
[bdr149@airmail.net](mailto:bdr149@airmail.net)

A reminder to all:

***Please consider our deadlines for submittals and publications to allow adequate lead time to correctly announce your event – Column submission deadlines are the 15th of January, April, July and October; publication of the Marker Lamp is the middle of the following month.***

**Historian Bob Barnett** reported:

We are continuing to assemble information on Longtime LSR members and well-known layouts. This has turned out to be a very involved but rewarding undertaking. So far we have a file on several well-known modelers and several famous layouts. We are pursuing leads on many more.

The next planned articles for publication are Larry Redmond and His Parallax Railroad and The Houston Society of Model Engineers.

**Written to date are:**

1. The ***Houston Society of Model Engineers*** with much help from former HSME President Art Borman.
2. The ***Houston, Smithville and Indian Territory*** layout of Fred Schmiedekind in Houston (Published in recent Marker Lamp).
3. The ***Parallax Railroad*** of Larry Redmond being prepared in cooperation with Randall Wilson and Rick White who were regular operators on the Parallax.
4. ***Stony Creek and Western of Gil and Virginia Freitag***- being prepared by Randall Wilson from the excellent private print book he did several years ago on the SC&W. This is actually a process of boiling down information and photos from Randall's private publication book and numerous articles published in the Derail on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SC&W.

**Next up: Several famous layouts around the Lone Star Region are next in line:**

1. ***The Texas & Rio Grande*** of Bill McClanahan,
2. ***The Marquette Union Terminal*** of Cliff Robinson. Both of these have been published in the hobby press so information and limited photos are available.



James Peterson furnished informative feedback on these famous early Dallas layout owners as his father was active with these modelers and James knew these layout owners in his youth.

3. Bob Clark's ***Ironhead Timber Company*** - Chuck Lind will undertake this one with input from the narrow gauge/logging fraternity in the LSR.

**Help needed:** Several famous LSR layouts that are still up and running need in-depth documentation,

- The ***Texas Western*** in Fort Worth.
- ***The Cowtown Model Railroad Club*** (successor to the General Dynamics club layout).
- ***San Antonio Model Railroad Club (SAMRA)***- the lavishly detailed masterpiece in San Antonio.
- ***Texas Northern Model Railroad Club.***
- ***All Points North Model Railroad Club*** Conroe/North Houston Area.

And..... Based on my recent trip to the Plano Train Show, there are a lot of active clubs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, some with permanent layouts and some modular layouts, that need documentation. More to come!!!

#### **Membership Chair Ken Kaiser** reported:

Once again, we managed to keep our numbers above the water line.

We gained 83 members by December. We started at 899 and ended with 962. We had an excellent recruiting program which signed up 240 new members. However, with 240 new members we should have ended the year with 1,098 members. That means we actually lost 136 members.

There are many valid reasons why individuals chose not to renew their membership. If we are to stop the bleeding of non-renewals more attention needs to be placed on retaining the members that we have. To do this each Division must do several things.

- 1) Contact members who fail to show up for the monthly meetings or sign on to the ZOOM meetings for two consecutive months and find out why they didn't attend. You may be able to prevent a membership loss.
- 2) Ensure a designated member of the Division staff contacts each member who was on the 30-day delinquency list to determine why they chose not to renew their membership. Use text, email and lastly telephone. I know it is hard to hear negative comments and you may not like what you hear. However, by listening to their concerns we may be able to improve the services we provide to our members and reduce the number of non-renewals.

Based on the letters sent to members on the 60-day delinquency list, membership cost had been the primary reason for members not renewing their membership.

Now that the membership fee has been reduced to \$68, that reason has reduced significantly. We are now hearing that members are not renewing due to their inability to travel to the meeting locations and interact with fellow train modelers. We may be able to mitigate this if every Division is holding Zoom meetings.

**Nomination Chair Pete Leach** reported:

The nomination process for the 2024 elections of officers is right around the corner! Up for election, or reelection are the following positions:

- Vice President
- Secretary
- Div 2 Director
- Div 4 Director
- Div 6 Director
- Div 8 Director
- ALL 3 Director at Large positions

We currently have people running for all positions.

Please give it some thought if you would like to run or rerun for any of these positions! The region cannot run without good people taking a leadership role.

**Non-Rail Chair Open** **No Report**

**Parliamentarian Ray Byer** **No Report**

**Photography Chair Michael Harang** **No Report**

**Publications Chair Peter Kazmir** reported:

After numerous interruptions and personal issues, the *Marker Lamp* should be back on its normal schedule going forward, with the next issue planned for March 15 (submission deadline February 15). I won't go into all of the various reasons for the delays, but I do want to offer my sincere apologies.

At the moment, I am experimenting with tools to publish the *Marker Lamp* as an online "web magazine", where you can view and read content organized like a website, similar to a news website, or a site like Railroad Model Craftsman's. This will have several advantages:

- It will be easier and more accessible to read, as you won't have to download a large PDF document, you can access it from any browser (like your phone), and you will be able to easily adjust settings like font size and contrast settings if needed.
- It will allow multiple people to work on the *Marker Lamp* at the same time, so we could have folks upload and edit their own columns and articles (if they want to). (And in general, publishing the *Marker Lamp* will no longer require strong working knowledge of software like Adobe InDesign.)
- It will be *much* faster and easier to publish, as most of the work is laying out the articles and photos in InDesign by hand.

- It will enforce consistency in format and provide better linking to external sites and sources. It will also enable video to be included with articles.
- It would give us the ability to publish content anytime we want, not just quarterly, although that is not a primary goal.

Just to be clear, the vision here is not to move to a “digital publication” using an app like Zinio (like Model Railroader or the NMRA Magazine), because that would not give us most of the advantages listed above (digital publications still require a PDF file). This would be published on the LSR website using what is called a “Content Management System”.

If there are folks out there who still prefer to download a single PDF file, I am working on a mechanism to allow that. I am also going to ensure we can archive each “issue”. Finally, I don’t expect this to cost the LSR any ongoing fees.

If all goes well, I will publish the March issue in both formats as a test.

I also want to mention that the LSR Google Drive is now set up and configured. There are a number of pre-defined folders set up for various departments and functions, as well as folders for each officer and chair. Of course, we can change the set up however we need to as time goes on.

I will close with my usual plea for content for the *Marker Lamp*. We do have several folks who are contributing regular columns now (thanks folks!) but it’s still difficult to get “main articles”. If there is anything you can contribute, please contact me. I am willing to edit whatever you have – even if it’s not in article format (like a clinic/PowerPoint presentation, a review, a collection of photos, or even a video) – and it can be about *any* aspect of model railroading (or prototype railroading). If you’re interested, someone else who reads the *Marker Lamp* will be too. (And officers and chairs, please don’t forget to submit your reports.)

Thanks, and keep the FUN in model railroading!

**Youth Chair Chuck Lind** reported:

Have 4 youth award nominations for this year to be approved:

Division 4 - Kavish Nave

Division 5 - Danny Joe Gumaer

Division 6 - Noah Hunter & Ramsey Bush

Since there are 2 nominations from Division 6, one will have to be a Board Youth.

**OLD BUSINESS**

It needs to be noted that the first two items under New Business were originally slated to appear here. After a Point of Order request, the items were moved to New Business. After the BOD meeting, it was determined that the items in question did indeed belong in Old Business.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Peter Kazmir** opened new business describing the new email service – Moosend. The new service requires a \$150/year expenditure.

**Peter Kazmir** reassured the BOD that the Marker Lamp publication was back on track after a year turmoil in which only 2 of the quarterly magazines were published.

**Chuck Lind** discussed the damage done by the lack of the Marker Lamp publication to the 2024 LSR Convention being held in Houston. Not to mention the damage done to the LSR with the failure to publish the minutes from the June 2023 BOD meeting. Chuck went on to describe the problem of trying to get the convention advertisement email out.

**Chuck Lind** presented 4 Youth Award candidates – Kavish Nave from Division 4, Danny Joe Gumaer from Division 5, Noah Hunter from Division 6, and Ramsey Bush from Division 6. Since Noah and Ramsey were both from Division 6, Noah Hunter was presented as the Division 6 candidate and Ramsey Bush was presented as the BOD candidate. Chuck made the motion to accept the candidates as the LSR Youth Award winners. Don Winn 2nd the motion and the motion Passed.

**Divina Gato-Hogno** presented the idea of creating a **Young Professional Award**. The basic issue is college students and young adults starting their post college career life. Many of these young adults lack the funds necessary to afford NMRA membership. Blake Bogs was cited as an example of college student and newlywed professional. It was pointed out that if we are going to recruit younger member, the NMRA/LSR needs to reach into the colleges and identify opportunities to involve the young adults into Model Railroading. A committee was formed, Diviana Gato-Hogno, Peter Kazmir, and Bob Thiele, to investigate this avenue and report back to the board.

**Chuck Lind and Donna Orr** presented the topic “Excess Funds for Special Events at Regional Conventions”. The basic idea is to allow LSR unsecured funds over \$40K with a \$2K cap to be used for a special event at a regional convention. After some lengthy discussion, a motion was presented for an LSR regional convention to be able to request funds used for a special event sponsored by the LSR at the regional convention. with board approval. The amount is limited to \$2k and can be requested if the unsecured LSR funds are over \$40K. The motion was made by Chuck Lind and 2nd by Pete Leach. The motion Passed.

**Donna Orr and Peter Kazmir** opened the discussion on Regional Conventions. Everything from conventions dates, how to draw in the public, and how to make the convention available to the smaller regions was discussed. The concept of forming a convention committee to help provide needed services not available in all regions like registration, web, hotel/facilities negotiations, and other services. The idea is to provide a

group of people with skills to help the local host committee bring an LSR convention to their division. An exploration committee was formed to study and flesh out this new group. The committee consists of Donna Orr, Peter Kazmir, Joe Leising, Riley Triggs, Divian Gato-Hogno, Marc LaChey, Rod Fredericks, and Bob Thiele.

**Ray Byer** opened a discussion on Contest Awards. He reviewed the history of expenses associated with contest room awards. This was an awareness discussion on the on-going expenses associated with the contest room.

**Steve Sandifer**, the LSR Treasurer, presented a discussion about placing some of the LSR funds into various interest-bearing accounts/instruments like CDs, and other possible investments. He pointed out that over most of the past decade, interest bearing funds were non-existent but now that has changed. Steve presented a motion to invest about at least \$30K in 3 \$10K CDs. Now that we have over \$50K, I may increase that. Most CDs are only 7-9 months right now. Pete Leach 2nd the motion. The motion passed.

**Donna Orr** presented the Pathfinder document from the Pacific Northwest Region (PNR) of the NMRA. The document outlines retention and recruitment methods being used by the PNR. She presented the document as something our region/divisions might want to look at to help in our efforts.

**Donna Orr** presented the results from the 2023 NMRA Convention. She announced that all issues and books with the NMRA have been closed. Overall, the convention was a success for the LSR. The LSR, and Divisions 1 & 3 (host committee), who hosted the NMRA convention, are going to receive about \$65K. To date, the LSR has received \$9K as a first installment on their role in the convention. Divisions 1 and 3 are scheduled to receive \$20.7K in the next few weeks as the books are closed. A thank you was given to Donna for her outstanding efforts in pulling off a great convention.

**Donna Orr** presented **Bill Dryden** the **President's Award** for his outstanding efforts to track, remind, and publish LSR Events for the past several decades. Congratulations Bill for a job well done!

**Donna Orr** presented the motion to adjourn. Ray Byer 2nd the motion and the motion Passed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who served on the board over the past decade and say **Thank You** for allowing me to go along for the ride. Jeff Palmer, MMR