

The Railfair, June 2006

Ira Schneider



The 2006 Hill Country Railfair and Festival, sponsored by the Austin Steam Train Association, was held on June 24 and 25 in Burnet, TX.

Our layout was in the Herman Brown Library Annex on Courthouse Square. This building was formerly a hardware store, and has a large, open interior. We had a 24' x 65' area for our layout and raffle.

On Friday evening Ricky, Ira, Scott, Ed, and Steve set up a 9 x 3 module layout. The layout included Ed's and Rick's bridges, Steve and Adrian's transfer table/industrial scene, Scott's accessories, Ira's carnival rides, and the trolleys. We set up the entire layout within 2 hours.

Several of us completed setting up scenery on Saturday morning. The event was open to the public from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM. We experienced signal problems with TMCC engines all day. When the exhibit closed, we tested the electrical outlet we were using and found that it wasn't grounded. We located a grounded outlet nearby, which we used on Sunday.

On Saturday evening, the Austin Steam Train Association sponsored a dinner train ride. Several of our members rode the train and commented that the food was excellent. They highly recommended that more of our members take advantage of this opportunity next year.

On Sunday, the event was open to the public from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM. The TMCC engines worked better (but not 100% OK) since the layout was plugged into a grounded outlet. We disassembled the layout and packed the trailer in about an hour.

Rick, Ricky, John, Adrian, Ira, Scott, Ed, and Steve ran a mixture of passenger and freight trains on both days. We had several crowd-pleasing wrecks. The main problem, as usual, was trains uncoupling without the operator noticing. When the engine caught up with the end of the train, it was like Gomez Addams running his train set – KABOOM! Fortunately, we caught most of these problems before the trains crashed. We also had several problems of long trains derailing on the curves due to their own weight. Scott wanted to run a 70 car freight train but had to scale his ambitions back to only 55 cars.

There were many visitors to our layout on both Saturday and Sunday. Lorraine ran our raffle on both days. This was our most successful raffle ever.

You can see pictures of this event in the Photo Album on the TTAT web site home page (www.trainweb.org/ttat).