

RAILROAD TRIVIA

This is an historic session today – the members of this group have participated in a combined total of 498 sessions, an astounding number, exceeded only by the combined ages of the group.

But vast experience aside, the brass hats have thrown a few wrinkles in today's operating scheme, which I'll cover momentarily, but it means that the team needs to be at the peak of their mental alertness. Knowing that would be a problem, even without one of Marlene's fantastic meals, I wanted to take a couple minutes to try to stimulate those mental faculties.

I considered administering a rules test, but then I realized I might have to read them, so I decided a quick railroad trivia pop quiz would be more stimulating, and provide more useful information.

If you have any inkling of an answer, just blurt it out – guessing, and the resulting public embarrassment is strongly encouraged. Remember – what happens at the E&P, stays at the E&P.

Our panel of judges (me) is the final authority on any question (unless you have proof).

So for the pride of FQOs everywhere, here we go with the lightning round...

What is a "gandy dancer"? Why are they called that?

Rail slang for anyone working on the tracks.

Most of the specialized hand tools were made by Gandy Manufacturing Company

What is the longest railway line in the world?

Trans Siberian Railroad, Moscow to Vladivostok – seven time zones, 5772 miles long

And speaking of long...

Where is the longest stretch of tangent track in the world? In the US?

Trans – Australian Railway – 478 km (slightly over 297 miles)

CSX (former Seaboard Air Line), inland from Wilmington, NC – 78.86 miles

Here's one especially for all you iron benders...

How did the frog of a switch get its name?

Its shape resembles the frog of a horse's hoof

For all you history buffs...

What was the name of the first US built steam locomotive?

Tom Thumb (0-4-0) – built by Peter Cooper in 1830 – got beat by a horse

What was the name of the first US built locomotive to pull rail cars and even operate a regularly scheduled passenger train in the US? How long did it operate?

Best Friend of Charleston (0-4-0) - built by West Point Foundry in 1830; ran on first six miles of the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road Company

Destroyed by boiler explosion in 1831 (fireman got tired of hearing safety valve whistle)

What is a foamer?

Term used by RR employees to describe a rail fan (tend to drool and foam at the mouth when they see a train)

What was "Rail Pax"?

Original name of AMTRAK (National Railroad Passenger Corporation)

What was the name of the steam locomotive that holds the world's speed record? What is the speed?

The Mallard – London & North Eastern Railway Class A4 4-6-2 Pacific built in 1938

125.88 mph

I personally think that record was easily surpassed by Wayland Moore operating a C&O Allegheny around the curve by Meadow Creek on Clint Foster's New River layout, but other than Clint's screams, we didn't have any way to accurately measure, so the old record stands.

What horn signal would be used to get passengers and crew back on the train immediately?

One very long blast

What is the common name for a steam locomotive with a 4-4-0 wheel arrangement?

American (American Standard) – the basic configuration for about 50 years (1840-1890)

What was the wheel arrangement of the heaviest steam locomotive ever built?

4-8-8-4 (Big Boy)

Which railroads had these official slogans?

"Standard Railroad of the World" – Pennsylvania RR (1846-1968)

"Building America" – Union Pacific (1862-present)

Personal note: I retired after 25 years with the UP, and I had no idea that was their slogan.

"Route of the Hiawathas" – Milwaukee Road (1847-1986) {Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific}

"Those Who Know Go..." – B&O (1830-1987)

"The Grand Canyon Line" – ATSF (1859-1996)

"Thoroughbred of Transportation" – Norfolk Southern (1990-present)

"McKinley National Park Route" – Alaska Railroad (1914-present)

And finally, this one should separate the Old Heads from the Piglets...

What are the four railroads on the game of Monopoly?

Short Line

Pennsylvania

Reading

B&O

Nicely done! And now that everyone's neurons are functioning at a very high level, let's kick this pig!