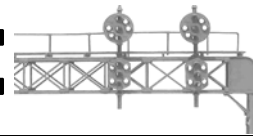


THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 14

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODULAR RAILROADERS CLUB

Number 1

December 2006 ISSUE

CLUB OFFICERS

President:

Fred Alsop

Vice-President:

John Carter

Secretary:

Mary Doran-Bleck

Treasurer:

Duane Swank

Newsletter Editor:

Ted Bleck-Doran

Webmaster:

John Edwards

LOCATION

Tipton-Haynes State
Historic Site , South Roan
Street, Johnson City, TN
(across from Charokee
United Methodist Church).

HOURS

- Business Meetings are held
the 3rd Tuesday of each month.
Meetings start at 7:00 PM at
the Tipton-Haynes State
Historic Site, South Roan
Street, Johnson City, TN.

- A social gathering is held
prior to the business meeting
at RUBY TUESDAYS on State of
Franklin across from ETSU
starting at 6:00 PM. Visitors
and those interested in joining
MEMRR are invited to attend.

- Work nights are held weekly
on Thursday evenings starting
at 5:00 PM and lasting until
???

- Open viewing and operating
layout is available every
Saturday from 10:00 AM until
3:00 PM. - NO SESSIONS
DECEMBER 19 THRU 30 T-H IS
CLOSED.

- Operation Sessions are in the
planning stages with dates
TBA.

SIGNAL BRIDGE SURVEY

Newsletter Question 1 - how big an issue?

- o "Just the facts ma'm" - 1 page
- o "I'm a completionist" - 2 pages
- o "Bigger is Better" - 3-4 pages

Newsletter Question 2 - How important is color?

- o "Im color-blind" - not important
- o "Brighten my world" - Somewhat important
- o "Lighten my life" - Very important

Newsletter Question 3 - What do you want in a newsletter?

- Check all boxes that apply.
- o Calendar of events/notices
 - o Meeting Minutes/Summary
 - o Treasurer's Report
 - o Officers' column(s)
 - o Historical photos
 - o Railfan photos - member trips
 - o Layout Enhancement Photos
 - o Layout visit photos (other layouts)
 - o Clinic - how-to column
 - o Clinic - railroad history
 - o Opinion column (to generate ideas)
 - o Membership List with phone/no addresses
 - o Club Swap-sheet/Want List
 - o Clinic - Website Column
 - o Other Ideas _____

Your Feedback and ideas are important.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As reported at November's meeting:

10/01/06	Balance on Hand	\$636.30
	Income	\$151.50
	Expenses	<u>\$ 11.70</u>
10/31/06	Ending Balance	\$776.10

Duane reminds members that dues are now coming due. Members categories are:

Full Member (Running Rights & Vote)	\$ 30.00
Family Member (each)	\$ 5.00
Associate Member (Running Rights)	\$ 12.00
Youth are free but must have an adult sponsor.	

There is a three month window for renewals, January thru March. Don't let your running rights lapse.

Mountain Empire Modular Railroaders Minutes of the Club Meeting 21 November 2006

Some of the members met at Ruby-Tuesdays on State of Franklin at 6:00 p.m. for dinner and discussion.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. at Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site by President Fred Alsop. 14 members present.

New member announced: Alan Sandidge, 904 Fairmont Ave, Kingsport, TN 37660-2538, Telephone 245-4056 (full membership). Bob Barrett, the new owner of the Johnson City HobbyTown, Inc. was present and invited the club to continue their 10% discount at his store and an extra 10% off rolling stock through December.

Program: a train video, "Going Home" about the restoration of N&W J611 in 1982 provided by Mike Buster

Secretary's report (JoAnn Alsop) as printed in the November *Signal Bridge* approved.

Treasurer's report (Duane Swank) a November balance of \$776.10 and reported Ed Lockett donated the \$52 worth of telegraph poles for trackside on all the club modules to the club. Thank you, Ed. Dues for 2007 are now payable to the treasurer.

Vice President's report (Ed Lockett) the December program will be a visit from Dirty Santa at the annual Christmas Party. Ed showed pictures of the layout he designed and constructed at Gary's new HobbyTown, Inc. at Turkey Creek, Lovell Rd. in west Knoxville.

President's report (Fred Alsop) thanked all the members for all the work they had done on the club's layout over the past year and for all the time they had spent running trains for the public. He pointed out with pride the great changes that had been made to every module.

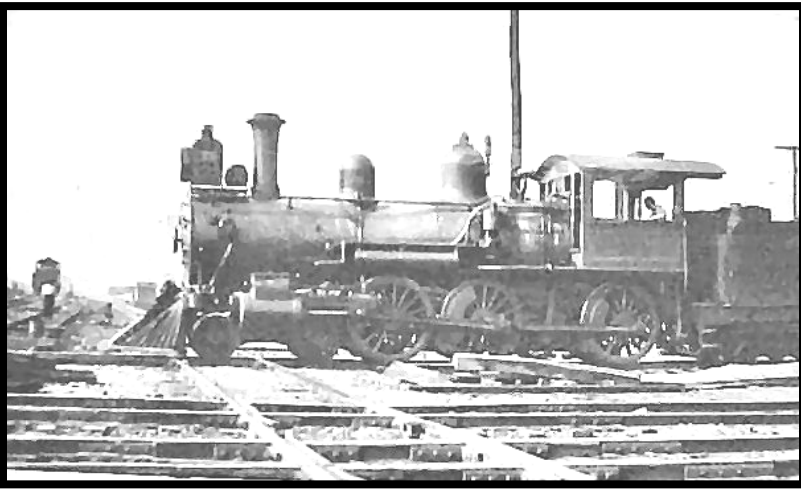
Ed Lockett did a brief show-and-tell on modeling with foam board with a diorama of the Battle of Stalingrad that was very well done of a shelled out cityscape with entrenched solders.

Old Business:

- 1) Christmas Open House: Dec 2 & 9; 10 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Members run trains and give layout tours; the following members have

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Nashville Chattanooga & St. Louis No. 261

From the Conductor's Desk:

Tired of running the same old passenger train? Want to add a little variety to Saturday operations? Here are some ideas:

- The Club has a collection of DVD's featuring vintage films of late Norfolk & Western steam in operation during the mid-1950's. Much of the footage features run-bys of the Powhatan and several local passenger trains. These clips are an invaluable tool for more realistic passenger operations. They capture actual consists that can be readily duplicated with existing rolling stock on the layout. Try running a local with one baggage car, one combine, two coaches...
- Leave a baggage, RPO, dinner, or sleeper on the passenger siding in Johnson City to be picked up by the "name train" – or – conversely drop one of the cars off.
- Add express cars or reefers to the consist. This could coincide with seasonal traffic changes like produce harvests or additional holiday baggage and contract mail.
- Try staging a switcher on the passing sidings with the additional cut of cars for the passenger train. A "name train" crew seldom switched their own train.
- Run a mixed train... a combine or single coach with a string of freight cars would not be out of place.
- Running two trains on the same line adds to the variety. Plan for several meets. Have the freight or local passenger train go into the hole to allow the "name train" to overtake the freight – and then – back the freight back out onto the main line.

Here's a couple of sample consists observed on *Norfolk & Western Pocahantas Glory Vol 1:*

"Virginia Creeper" (N & W No.201/202)

Class M 2-8-2 + Box Cars (x4) + Gondolas with fresh tie loads (x3) + Heavyweight Coach (x1) + Heavyweight RPO (x1)

"Pocahantas" (N & W No.15/16)

Class J + Smooth-side Baggage + Heavyweight Baggage + Heavyweight Combine + Smooth-side Coach (x3) + Observation

Class J + Heavyweight Baggage (x7) – Flute Sided Coach (RF&P) (x1) + Stainless Steel Flute Sided Coach (Southern) (x1) + Pullman (x2)

"Powhatan Arrow" (N & W No. 25/26)

Class J + Heavy Weight Baggage (x2) + Smooth-side Baggage (x1) + Smooth-side Combine (x1) + Smooth-side Coaches (x3) + Observation

Class J + RPO (x1) + Heavyweight Baggage (x1) + Smooth-side Coach (RF&P) (x1) + Combine (N&W) (x1)

Consists for some of the multi-road "name trains" could be quite varied with cars from all the participating lines present. The "Pelican" and the "Tennessean" are a couple of examples.

"Pelican" (circa 1957)

E8 A-A (Southern) + Baggage (x2) + RPO (x1) + Baggage (x1) + Box Car + Express Car (REA) + Baggage (x1) + Combine (x1) + Smooth-side Coach (x1) + Coach (x1) + Pullman (x1) + Dinner (x1) + Pullman (x1) + Observation.

NOTE: Baggage cars were Heavyweight, Smooth-side and Harriman; coaches represented the participating roads; Pullmans were in Pullman colors and road markings. Norfolk & Western Coaches and Observation cars were Smooth-side.

If any members have public passenger timetables for their favorite roads, they can find notations detailing the make-up of many of the trains. Head end cars (baggage, express, and RPO) will not be noted but Pullman configurations, coaches and combines will be identified. Also identified are stations where dinning car service would be added and sections joined. Members may wish to share their collections or provide a clinic on their favorite passenger trains.



Road & Street Signs for the Layout:

Adding road and street signs is an evening project that adds a bit of detail bringing life to your highways and by-ways. Everyone has experience with signs on a daily basis. Street and highway signs help create a sense that people populate the layout. They suggest the routines and rules people have to follow in the course of going about their day-to-day activities.

Signs can also create a sense of time and place. In the mid-50's street and highway signs were not as standardized as they are today. Local variations can leave a lasting impression on a viewer when they say "Gee, I can remember a sign like that when I was growing up..."

What's Available:

There are plenty of ready-built, kit, and super-detailing products on the market which makes the process of adding signs along a highway, street or road an easy task. Just check the latest Walthers' catalogue for ideas. Here's a couple of suggestions.

Bachman Ready-built set \$6.50

160-42204 Rail & Street Signs

Blair Line LLC (\$5.00 each) printed on thin plastic

184-102 Regulatory Signs #1 1948 - present

184-103 Regulatory Signs #2 1950 - present

184-104 Construction Warning Signs 1950 - present

184-105 Warning & Symbol Signs #1 1971 - present

184-106 Warning & Symbol Signs #2 1948 - present

184-107 Warning & Symbol Signs #3 1948 - present

184-106 US Highway Route Markers 1950 - present

184-110 Warning Signs 1948 - present

184-142 Vintage Regulatory Signs 1930-1950

184-143 Vintage Warning/Stop Signs 1930-1950

184-144 Vintage Caution Signs 1930-1950

184-147 Modern Traffic & Symbol Signs

184-148 State Highway Route Signs

JL Innovative Design (\$3.49 each) color printing on heavy paper

361-196 Danger/Warning (250 Signs)

361-202 Uncommon Street & Parking (150 Signs)

S&S Hobby Products (\$6.99 - \$8.99)

643-300 Stop Sign Set (12)

643-301 Route Sign Set (10)

643-302 Interstate Sign Set (10)

643-303 Street Sign Set (10)

Woodland Scenics (\$5.98)

785-555 Road, Product & Burma Shave Signs

785-571 Railroad Signs

The difficulty with relying on manufactured signs, however, is that you are limited to what the manufacturer has included in their set. What happens if you need more of one type of sign and not enough are provided – or – there is a style of sign not provided in the set?

Another problem is with the scale of ready-built sets. Occasionally, the ready-built sets are too big and bulky to look good next to a fine-scale structure on the layout.

What's needed?

Here's a parts list to make your own street and highway signs:

- Evergreen Scale Models
 - 9015 Plain Sheet Styrene 0.4 mm
 - 90501 Styrene Angle "L" 1.2 mm
 - 90856 Styrene Round Rod "O" 1.1 mm
 - 90740 Styrene Square Rod 1.0 mm
 - 90511 Styrene I Beam 1.6 mm
- Paints
 - Old Aluminum – or - Silver
 - Earth Tone (weathering)
 - Burnt Siena (weathering)
 - Raw Umber (weathering)
 - Dullcote (spray)
- Adhesives
 - Bond 527 Multi-Purpose Cement
 - Testors Plastic Cement
- Sign Set

Let's Get Started: (Continued in next months **Signal Bridge**)

Next Meeting:

December 19th – Holiday Gathering
 Location: TIPTON-HAYNES Historic Site
 Time: 6:00 PM

Refreshments: DISH TO PASS (table service provided)
 Gift Exchange: 1 GIFT/PARTICIPATING MEMBER
 NOT TO EXCEED \$10-\$15 IN VALUE

PRODUCT REVIEW

Dream-Plan-Build, Vol. 7: Real Rails Edition – Big Power

- This is the latest edition of the Kalmbach Publishing Co.'s series of DVD's.
- Unlike the previous DVD's in the series, this volume's sole focus is on prototype railroading. Specifically, the video features modern diesel locomotives with HP ratings of 4,000 HP or more.
- Chapter selections emphasize the history of Big Power producers GE and EMD with shop scenes showing the construction of these high power units.
- For the modeler interested in modern locomotives the following units are featured:

GE Dash 8-40CW	EMD SD45
GE Dash 9-44CW	EMD SD 70M
GE AC4400CW	EMD SD70MAC
GE AC6000CW	EMD SD90MAC
	EMD SD80MA
- This is a video with the TRAINS readership in mind.
- The DVD holds limited value for the modeler. Scenery and action shots are spectacular. Interior shots of the locomotive shops in Erie, PA (GE) and London, Ontario (EMD) provide details seldom seen but critical in accurate modeling.

Cost: \$24.90 (S&H Included)

Progress on the MEMRR - Layout Enhancements

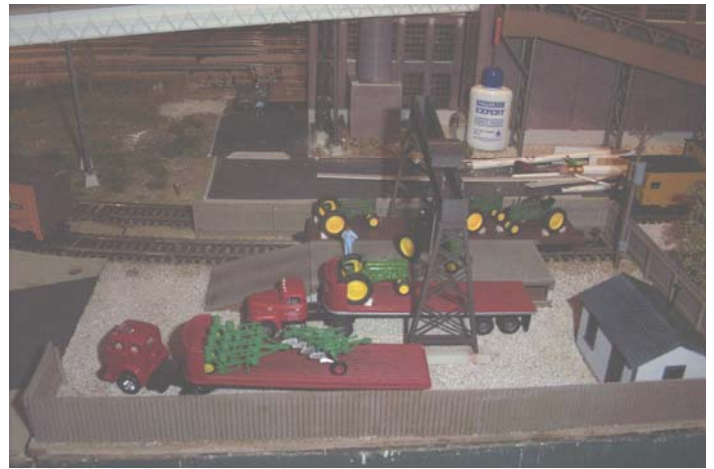
Ted, Mary, and John have been busy with the hilltop village. Ground cover, trees, junk cars and debris have been added. Road to the cluster of houses has been graveled and guardrails installed... with lots of weeds. The gully has received some attention as well with a 1940's "Buy War Bonds" Billboard installed. Also planned are: a small graveyard, more junk, fences, and road signs (watch future issues of the *Signal Bridge* for the continuation of a "how-to" clinic on signs).



Fred has added a gritty farm scene with his "ROCK CITY" barn and chicken coop. The barn and chicken coop are scratch built from. Fred sketched plans from an old calendar print and built the structures from parts on hand. The sign on the roof was hand painted. Fred sure sets the bar high for the rest of us!



Greeting visitors at the door is Don's addition of a genuine Appalachian mountain vista. The start of a lumber road is visible as the right-of-way takes shape.



Larry has quite the agribusiness going the a load of tractors and farm equipment arriving at the loading dock.

Minutes continued from Page 1

volunteered to present "how to" workshops: Fred (pond & weathering with oils), Hobie (rock casting and painting), John C. (track & ballasting), Paul (wheels & couplers, making trees), Larry (mortar & bricks), Ted (painting little people), Duane (sawdust w/rite dye).

- 2) John Edwards reported on his completed installation of the train speedometers.
- 3) Mike Buster provided "clamps" to be made from commercial clothes hangers.

New Business:

- 1) Fred Alsop reported on the letter of agreement between ETSU and MEMRR with the changes suggested by the club being presented to ETSU administration. No word yet on whether or not they will be accepted as presented or if further negotiations will take place.
- 2) Fred Alsop reported 2 boxes of sage brush had arrived via his brother in Wyoming and are available at 50 cents each.
- 3) Election of slate officers as presented by nominating committee (Paul Haynes and Mike Buster) unanimously approved for 2007: President Fred Alsop, Vice-President John Carter, Secretary Mary Doran-Bleck, Treasurer Duane Swank, Editor of the *Signal Bridge* Ted Bleck-Doran, Wed-Master John Edwards.
- 4) Annual Christmas Party was planned by Ed Lockett. Ed offered his home as a site, but the club, after expressing their appreciation to Ed, decided to hold it at Tipton-Haynes. The meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. with Ed Lockett furnishing the Christmas tree, plates, cups, utensils, and drinks. Each member is to bring a dish and Mike Buster volunteered to organize the food by contacting each member with a choice of what they should bring. Each member is to bring a model railroad type gift valued between \$10 to \$15, wrapped to be placed under the tree for exchange. Dirty Santa will distribute them. Bring a guest/spouse/special friend and join in the holiday fun, show off the layout, and run the trains. Date: Tuesday, Dec 19th.
- 5) The club voted to organize a calling chain so that a member would call 2 members who would call 2 members, etc, etc. to remind them of each club meeting a few nights prior to the meeting to attempt to turn out the membership. John Edwards encouraged anyone with a home computer who is on line and not connected to our web page to contact him to be added to that group.
- 6) The club voted to buy a digital scale so rolling stock can be properly weighed and weighted. John Edward will make the purchase.
- 7) John Carter will organize a club trip to visit the Knoxville club's layout at Oak Ridge after the first of the new year.
- 8) All weekend (Saturday) runs up to the December meeting are covered except Saturday, Dec 16 with the only volunteer for that day being Paul Haynes in the morning. We need at least 2 or 3 others volunteers to cover the rest of the morning and afternoon slots that day. Please contact an officer and volunteer.