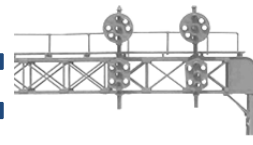


THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 18

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
JUNE 2011 REGULAR ISSUE

Number 6A

Published for the Education and Information of Its Membership



FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB.

A couple of our members have been in the hospital car recently; speedy recovers are wished for for Gary Woods and Hobie Hyder. June is here already and there is a real bustle of activity at the George L. Carter Railroad Museum. Lots of work projects are underway in almost every room. The Little Engineer's room is

getting a new, colorful display case for its collection of Thomas trains and rolling stock thanks to a donation of the case by **Duane** and **Harriet Swank** and a lot of painting by the host of that room, **Dave Doughty**. The display cases take on a fresh look thanks to the efforts of **Jim Pahr** and **Geoff Stunkard**. They have just removed the "modern trains"; freight and Amtrack, from the cases that helped to support our May Heritage Days, and are now installing Southern Railway trains and things for our upcoming "Song of the South—Serving up the Southern Railroad" that will be our June 25th "Heritage Days" focus. If you have model or prototype memorabilia for the Southern Railroad that you would like to display please bring it to the RR Museum as soon as you can. All of us that have operating models of Southern Railways locomotives and/or rolling stock need to plan to operate it on that last Saturday in June. We can accommodate HO, N and G-scales/gauges (short locos and cars for the G-gauge layout only). The Southern served Johnson City and Bristol and our publicity for the event has the potential of bringing lots of visitors to the Railroad Museum. Plan to come and bring your favorite Southern tuxedo, green or green and white prime movers and join in the operation.

Track work continues on the G-gauge under the direction of **Jesse Kittle** and a gang of Gandydancers including **Allan Morton**, **Dan McLeod**, **Tod Eaton** and others are continuing to improve the Bankus N-Scale layout. The N-scalers recently experienced a 'burnout' problem with both of their new radio throttles and they have been sent back to the manufacturer for repair.

The work on the new HO staging yard has progressed to the point under the guidance of **John Carter**, with help from many others

including **John Edwards**, **Lyle Montieth**, **Ed Champion**, to name a few who come quickly to mind, that the 8 tortoise machines have been installed under the turnouts and that part of the yard is almost operational. The turnout machines can be thrown using the DT400 Digitrax throttles making access to each of the staging tracks very easy even from some distance away. We will have a 'hands-on' training session soon to show MEMRR members how to work them.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. The Club has been invited by Melinda Copp, Project Coordinator, Town of Jonesborough, to bring the Cope Traveling Layout to display during their Jonesborough Days celebrations the first weekend of July. **Gary Emmert**, **Allan Morton** and several other club members will be undertaking the task of getting the little layout spruced up and ready for travel and display over the next few weeks. This group could use some help with this work. The Club will need to man the layout in the old Exxon Station on Boone Street, plus an additional small layout, from 10 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 2nd, and from 11 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 3rd. **Gary Emmert** has volunteered to be there both day, but we will need several other volunteers for each of the 2 days. Additionally, we will plan to take some of the 'surplus' and donated model railroad materials, some engineer hats, and the CRR prints as sale items. Please put this event on your calendar and let any of the club officers know that you plan to help out so we can put together a work roster. The more volunteers we have the easier it will be on everyone; so please do your part. **Bill Beagen** told us several months ago, prior to our May meeting, that he would arrange to transport the Cope Layout from the Carter RR Museum the evening of Thursday, June 30th, and bring it back the following week. We will need help with this transportation task in loading and unloading the layout. **Dave Doughty** will set up "Operation Life Saver" outside the Exxon Station under the canopy and man it.

The benchwork for the Tweetsie Railroad HO_n3 project is almost completed and the risers to support the track sub-roadbed is being installed thanks to many hours of work by **Duane Swank**, **Jim Gorny**, **Richard Gallaher**, **Paul Haynes**, **Larry Fraser**, **Fred** and others. We have been following a track plan created by **Emile Hamm** that is allowing us to pinpoint major features of the ET&WNC RR along our benchwork. Soon we plan to be laying track and connecting the wiring that will power the little 10 wheelers. There will be lots of opportunity to help us with these jobs and in creating the mountain scenery that will follow the pounding in of the last 'spike'.

The RR Museum Library continues to take shape under the hands of **Gary Emmert** and **Bob Jones**. Our librarian reports that some of

CLUB OFFICERS

President:
Fred Alsop

Secretary:
Donald Ramey

Newsletter Editor:
Ted Bleck-Doran

Vice-President:
John Carter

Treasurer:
Duane Swank

Webmaster:
John Edwards



LOCATION

ETSU Campus,
George L. Carter
Railroad Museum

HOURS

Business Meetings are held the
3rd Tuesday of each month.
Meetings start at 7:00 PM at
ETSU Campus, Johnson City, TN.
Brown Hall Science Bldg, Room 312,

Open House for viewing every Saturday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Work Nights each Thursday from 5:00 pm until ??

the books are now ready for members to check out. Some of the rarer volumes will have to be read in the library, but many books, magazines, and DVD/videos are now available for circulation. See Gary for details. Check out the Library at your earliest convenience. Besides its holding it is computer equipped and **Duane Swank** has finished out all the bookshelf facing with oak—very nice indeed!



Hi-Railin' In Style
Submitted by Gary Emmert

Let me quickly state that a lot of other club members have been doing lots of things on the layouts, on individual modules to bring them up to museum standards, and on the many exhibits. It's just difficult in the space I am provided to recognize you all individually. You continue to make our visitors feel important and raise the level of the hobby with you passion for it, through your professionalism and the demonstration of your model railroading skills and talents. You need to continue to let your club officers know how we can better meet your needs as members of a great model railroading club. Thank you all for all you do for the hobby and for each other.

At my request **Allan Morton** has been polling the membership to better determine our areas of interest (based on the coordinated groups we have created over the past year), the model railroading areas members would most like to learn about, their self-evaluated skill level, the expectations they have for joining the club, and how the club might help them achieve their expectations of membership. Allan sent out self-addressed, stamped envelopes with his questionnaire to those club members who had not already responded. From a membership totaling in the 90s (counting family members) he got 23 written responses—he got none from the group he sent the already stamped and addressed envelopes to. ***(Please find the poll results in this edition of The Signal Bridge)*** Here is some of what our members told him (Remember only about 25% responded, so sample size is small):

Area of Interest: There is more interest in the model layouts, museum display cases, and library development, than any other areas. Most of those responding where most interested in HO-scale, but this is not surprising based on the history of the MEMRR being focused in this scale for most of its existence.

Area of Interest—Learning: With an almost even split between the 3, these are the areas most responding wished to learn more about; Track Laying, Electrical DC/DCC, and Scenery and Detailing. Of the 23 respondents, 16 (64%) consider themselves to be 'intermediate' in their skill levels (other choices were 'beginner/novice' and 'expert').

Expectation from Membership in the MEMRR: The most frequent responses included; 'learning as much as I can from other members', 'enjoyment and interaction with members and the public', 'learn new techniques and new ideas', and 'creative outlet'. There were other responses covering layout maintenance and operations.

How can the Club help you achieve your goals?: Responses included: 'willingness to teach members', 'work directly with skilled members', and 'hands-on clinics and workshops—not instruction'.

The Coordinators discussed this survey at our June meeting and feel we should offer some hands-on learning clinics that will provide instruction and techniques in the "Areas of Interest-Learning" section from the poll that will teach **track laying**, **electrical DC/DCC**, and **scenery and detailing** as the initial clinic modules. Two times for these learning sessions have been suggested and will be discussed further at our business meetings. They are: 1) single 30 minute (approximately) clinics to be held as part of the Thursday night work sessions, or 2) special clinics that would be held on Sunday afternoons at the Carter RR Museum (no trouble finding parking spaces any time of the year on Sundays on the ETSU campus). I need feedback from the members about how you feel about this possibility; if you would be willing to teach such a clinic; and if you would attend such clinics if the Club makes the effort. If the membership feels this is a desirable way to proceed we will publicize each event with all details regarding times, dates, subject of the clinics, instructor(s), etc. So, think it over; talk it over, and let club officers know what you think about offering and attending these learning/teaching events.

SCHEDULED EVENTS:

1. June 21st Business meeting with dinner at **The FireHouse Restaurant** at 5:30,
2. July 2-3rd. Cope Layout at **Jonesborough Days**
3. August 21st. **Club Picnic**. Hosted by Kim and Tom McKee at their home on Sunday, beginning at 4:00 p.m. and going until—? Parking at the Lutheran Church parking lot (not enough space at the McKees) and we will need some vans for a shuttle service. Details will be worked out with **Jim Pahr** coordinating.
4. September 2-5, **club railfan trip** to Cass Scenic Railroad, Cass, West Virginia. We still have 5 spaces available in the park historic company housing, but you need to contact me quickly if you want to reserve your space with us.

There are lots of activities and modeling possibilities to suit the palate of every MEMRR member. Get on board and join in. We need you!!!! Summer is almost here and the rails are getting hot! Hear the whistle blow and dream of all the destinations yet to come!

Fred Alsop
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum



2011 MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

By Allan Morton

Earlier this year members were asked to complete a simple survey. It was designed in part to find out why some members stick with the club and why others drop by the wayside. There were a total of 23 written responses to the survey. The following are the results:

AREA OF INTEREST

- 20 HO Scale Layout
- 7 N Scale Layout
- 2 G Scale Layout
- 8 HO_{n3} Tweetsie Layout
- 2 Traveling HO Layout
- 1 Kids Play Room
- 3 Museum Display Cases
- 4 Library Development

AREA OF INTEREST - LEARNING

- 14 Track Laying
- 17 Electrical DC/DCC

- 14 Scenery and Detailing
- 3 Layout Maintenance
- 8 Bench Work
- 2 Research
- Other (Specify): Club Computer, Development of Programs, RR Photography, Convert Pre-DCC Locomotives

SKILL LEVEL

I consider my skill level to be:

- 5 Beginner/Novice
- 16 Intermediate
- 2 Expert

EXPECTATIONS

What are your expectations from membership in the club?

- Learn as much as I can from other members.
- Enjoyment and interaction with members and the public.
- Learn new techniques and new ideas.
- Creative outlet.
- Work together to maintain the layouts and keep everything running smoothly.
- Simulate real railroad operations.

How can the club help you achieve your goals?

- Willingness to teach members.
- Work directly with the skilled members.
- Hands-on clinics and workshops, not instruction.
- Improve track plan, dispatching, yard layout and switching on the HO layout.

MEMRR Coordinator's Meeting 9 June 2011

George L. Carter Railroad Museum ETSU

Fred Alsop presiding; persons making reports are listed below

HO Layout: John Carter & John Edwards.

Eight tortoise machines connected to Switch 8 and working. Broken DT400 Digitrax throttle returned to Digitrax for repairs and upgrade to duplex mode. Two different model railroading electricians from different clubs have given opinions on possible solutions to electrical shorting problems being experienced on our layout. Design for curve connecting new staging yard and freight yard needed to continue track laying.

N-Scale Layout: Tod Eaton & Allan Morton.

Newly purchased steam loco has been returned for repairs (under warranty and broken upon arrival) to manufacturer. Both newly purchased radio throttles have been returned for repairs). Some additional new track installed to replace bad sections.

Large Scale Layout: Jesse Kittle.

Maintenance on locomotives and rolling stock continues; track maintenance (especially on turnouts) continued as well as track cleaning.

Exhibits: Jim Pahr.

Jim will be traveling and will change out 'Modern Railroad' exhibits by next Thursday (June 16) night. They will be replaced with Southern Railway exhibits to support our June 25th Heritage Day focused on the Southern RR.

Events: Jim Pahr.

July 2-3, Cope Layout on display at Jonesborough Days. Volunteers needed Sat, 2nd 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sun 3rd from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Need help moving the layout on the 30th (transport arrangements have been made)

August 21, Club Picnic at home of Tom & Kim McKee. Details will follow

Sept 2-5, Club railfan trip to Cass & Elkins, WV. 5 spaces for housing still available. (contact Fred)

Sept 18-19, train show and swap meet at Erwin. Gary Cameron has details.

Sales: Duane Swank.

We have engineer's hats for sale at Jonesborough Days. Possible 'license plate' with Carter RR Museum logo as sale item. See the one on Duane's truck.

Publicity: Fred Alsop.

Press release will be readied with Geoff Stunkard's help and sent through media via ETSU University Relations announcing the June 25th Heritage Day featuring the Southern Railway.

Library: Gary Emmert.

Duane Swank has installed finished oak facing on the book shelves. All magazines in new box binders; these boxes will be labeled soon to show contents. Many books are ready for checkout to members (see Gary). Rev. H. Walker will be donating approximately 85 VCR tapes on railroading to the library in the near future.

Cope Traveling Layout: Gary Emmert & Allan Morton.

Club members will get it ready for Jonesborough Days (early July). Needs tunnel liner, scenery touch-up, railing to hold lexan shields and lexan attached. Needs one electrical turnout repaired.

Little Engineers Room: Fred Alsop.

David Doughty is painting and ready to install a wall-mounted display case to hold many of the Thomas locomotives & rolling stock. This will prevent some of the abuse to them as they are being stored in the drawers by little folks who often toss them in as now an adult will have to give the desired toy to the child from the case that will be out of their reach (we hope).

Rabetoy Layout & Tweetsie Project: Duane Swank & Fred Alsop.

Bench work is nearing completion. Risers to hold the track sub-roadbed are being installed. Emile Hamm's track plan is being used for general guidance for track layout positioning. Rich Gallaher is researching details of landmarks and landmark construction. Goal is to have track laid and wiring completed for operation by early September for the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Hickory, NC.

Poll of MEMRR Membership: Allan Morton.

Allen reported on a survey of members to establish their areas of interest, the areas of learning interest (most indicated interest in learning about track laying, electrical DC/DCC, and scenery & detailing). The group discussed possible ways to conduct hands-on learning clinics and workshops, times when these might be done (Thursday nights as part of work sessions, or Sunday afternoons), and the need to involve as many members as possible in these publicized events.

Mountain Empire Model Railroaders

Minutes of General Meeting: May 17, 2011

All Aboard (The Polar Express??):

Vice President John Carter called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05p.m. in room 312 which brings us to the "Polar Express" opening. Man was that room Cold!! Thermometer said 61 degrees and it was 49 and raining outside.... There were 16 members, including founding member Bob Swartz, (welcome back Bob, we hope to see you more often..) and no guests, present.

Officer Reports:

Secretary Report: Secretary moved that without corrections or additions, previous minutes be approved as published in April Signal Bridge. (Thanks from the Sec to Ted & Dave for recording the minutes) Motion carried.

Newsletters Editors Report: Ted continues to do an outstanding job of publishing our newsletter Signal Bridge. *The new format was discussed.*

Treasurers Report: no report – Duane was out of town.

Web Masters Report: Web site is up and running fine. E-Mail addresses for those wishing to acquire a MEMR web address are available. Note: John is to have surgery soon and may be recuperating for a bit.. contact now for any issues.

Vice Presidents Report (upcoming programs): John Carter reported on a current listing of upcoming programs as follows: Gary Emmert will be having the next several programs tentatively as follows:

- June-Passenger train "consists",
- July-Freight train "blocking" (pre 1970),
- August-Freight train "consisting" (1970 to date)

Presidents Report:

Fred was out of town so no report given.... We did however discuss the need for a program on the correct way to start and shut down the DigiTrax system at the museum. Several times the system has not been shut down correctly and difficulties have been encountered when starting the system up on Saturday mornings. More on this later..

Old Business:

Ted is still out-sourcing the "Jack Miller" car.

New Business:

- 1 For his "loan" of 8 tortoise machines for the yard, the club owes Fred 8-machines and is to replace them.
- 2 A R.I.P. track (specific place for equipment with problems to be placed) was discussed. We also need to make a list of each car's problems and designate a repair crew to maintain the cars.
- 3 There is no power on the ho scale inside frog at he ball field.. this issue is to be addressed,
- 4 Partial list of upcoming events this year:
 - June- Craggy Mtn. Railroad visit (Speeders)
 - July- Annual Club Picnic (Jim and Tom to coordinate date)
 - August- Cass WV group trip
- 5 There will be a Train show and sale at the Erwin Armory this September 17th and 18th. Make your plans to attend. Should you want to sell anything, tables are available for \$20.00

6 With the wiring issues the HO scale layout is currently encountering the following has been proposed: *Before any work is done on any modules, the work (wiring etc..) is to be explained to all module owners and a vote taken from the module owners before it is presented to the club. The club will have one vote for "club modules". After this vote has passed the ideas will be presented to the membership for consideration and purchase of any material needed to complete the work. Our wiring woes were discussed with a couple of knowledgeable modelers from other organizations*

and suggestions made. These should be presented soon as John Edwards has the information.

Co-Ordinators mtg:

- 1 G-Scale: Jessie continues to work diligently on various upgrades.
- 2 N-Scale: Lexan work is complete and track work is upcoming.
- 3 Lil Engineers Room: car rack has been painted and Hobie is to rerun the announcement for birthday party availability.
- 4 Displays: If you have any material you would like to see displayed and shared with our visitors. Especially during the "Heritage Saturdays", see Jim.
- 5 Tweetsie: New module plans are now finished and vendors are being researched for production of laser cut wood caboose and coach kits.
- 6 Cope: Has one bad turnout and Lexan is ready to be installed. Thinking on "radio control".
- 7 HO Scale: Staging yard wiring, scenery, and yard track rework is progressing.
- 8 Library: Computer is in and ready to be installed.

Volunteer Recruiting for Saturday Operating Sessions:

Next 4-weeks Operator Volunteers. **Thanks to all you engineers for your unselfish desire to come out and run your trains. This is what**

makes it fun for all. With summer time upon us and vacations and outside work going on, it is sometimes hard to have enough volunteers available to properly man the museum and layouts. If you can spare the time, please come out and help.

Announcements:

- Cope layout will be at Jonesborough Days festival on July 2 and 3..
- *May "dinner before meeting"* was held at the Firehouse Rest with good success.
- With no further new announcements being made, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Program for the Evening:

Jim Pahr's presented Swiss Railroad Museum program.

Next Scheduled Monthly Meeting:

June 21, 2011

**Program: Gary Emmert with consisting Passenger Equipment
Pre-Meeting Dinner: The Firehouse**

Respectfully Submitted: Don Q. Ramey

NRHS Spring 2011 Conference and Meeting Report From Jim Pahr's

The Spring 2011 National Railway Historical Society Conference and Board of Directors meeting was held in Urbana, IL April 15-17, 2011. On Saturday morning we visited the Monticello Railroad Museum in Monticello, IL. This museum has an excellent collection of railroad rolling stock mainly from railroads serving the state of Illinois. The main thing that caught my attention was the excellent condition of the items in their collection. This was a very impressive aspect as so many museums have rolling stock sitting outside totally unprotected and showing the worst for it. The overwhelming majority of their items were in the open but are well maintained. They do have several buildings where maintenance is performed and the help of a significant number of dedicated volunteers. But the key to their success in maintaining their assets in such superb condition is the Railroad Engineering Program at the University of Illinois, Urbana. Professor Christopher P.L. Barken, director of the program was our banquet speaker Saturday evening. The students participating in the program courses do their practicums on the museum's equipment and private right-of-way. Additionally, the museum has excess trackage, which is used to store tank cars for the ADM Corporation. ADM pays the museum a fee for this privilege.

The Monticello Railroad Museum has recently restored Southern 2-8-0, #401, which powered our train. The right-of-way owned by the museum is the former Illinois Terminal Railway, an interurban line which had extensive trackage in central and southern Illinois. The IT was merged into the N&W September 1, 1981.

Sunday morning the BOD convened for its Spring meeting, where our motion to extend the age for student membership was approved. Now NRHS has the capability of encouraging college students to join local chapters at a reduced rate. This is a benefit to us as a chapter located on the ETSU campus and to many chapters in the vicinity of a of colleges and universities. The society needs younger members and a student through age 24 can now join with full benefits but at the reduced expense of \$26 (\$16 National & \$10 Chapter). We frequently have students visiting the museum so lets start encouraging them to become members of the chapter.

The next BOD meeting will be at the convention in Tacoma, WA on Friday, June 24th. The annual membership meeting will be that same date. Your National Director serves on the National Bylaws Committee. The new bylaws are to be voted on by the membership, including proxy ballots mailed or delivered at the convention. If you have not sent in your Proxy, hopefully voting for the new bylaws, please do so as soon as you can. Your proxy must be received by June 24th in order to be counted.

Jim Pahr's
Vice President/National Director

PROGRAM REMINDERS

On June 25 we will be having the sixth of our Railroad Heritage Days titled "Song of the South - Serving Up The Southern Railroad." We are looking for items to display in our display cases and on our baggage cart. If you have any items relating to the Southern Railroad please bring them in next Thursday. Jim Pahr's, our display coordinator will be going out of town that evening so

please try to get your items down to the museum as close to 5PM as possible.

The MEMRR is going to have the Cope layout on display in Jonesborough on the 2nd and 3rd of July. Hours of operation will be 10AM-9PM on Saturday and 11AM- 8PM on Sunday. We will be set up in the old Exxon Station on Boone St. We are calling for volunteers to man

our display for these two days. We hope to get enough volunteers to have a few shifts each day.

Our annual picnic will again be hosted by Kim and Tom McKee on August 21st at 2PM. Tom has done a lot of work on the upper level of his outdoor G scale layout and is eager for us to see it.

MEMRR CLUB HATS, TEES, SWEATSHIRTS & JACKETS

Order Yours Today



PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE		MEMRR Member Name _____							If jacket(s) to have personal name(s) embroidered, print name(s) below
Date _____		Have orders to Duane Swank by 1st of month.			Total of Order \$ _____				
ALL MERCHANDISE IS FOREST GREEN UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED		Merchandise with MEMRR Embroidered Logo							
	Quantities.....							
POLO SHIRTS w/pocket	\$17 Small	\$17 Med.	\$17 Large	\$17 XL	\$19 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
SWEAT SHIRTS	\$14 Small	\$14 Med.	\$14 Large	\$14 XL	\$16 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
T-SHIRTS w/pocket (short sleeve)	\$8.50 Sm.	\$8.50 Med.	\$8.50 Large	\$8.50 XL	\$10.50 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
T-SHIRTS w/pocket (long sleeve)	\$11 Small	\$11 Med.	\$11 Large	\$11 XL	\$14 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
BUTTON FRONT dress shirt w/pocket (long sleeve)	\$22 Small	\$22 Med.	\$22 Large	\$22 XL	\$25 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
Jacket lightweight flannel lining <small>Personal monogramming add \$5.00 per jacket; print name(s) to right of page</small>	\$22 Small	\$22 Med.	\$22 Large	\$22 XL	\$25 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
Jacket lightweight fleece lining <small>Personal monogramming add \$5.00 per jacket; print name(s) to right of page</small>	\$36 Small	\$36 Med.	\$36 Large	\$36 XL	\$39 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
Engineer HATS (blue/white w/club logo for members only) = \$11.00 each						Quantity	Paid	Delivered	
Baseball HATS (w/club logo for members only) = \$10.00 each						Quantity	Paid	Delivered	
GIVE ORDER FORM to: Duane Swank									
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MEMRR									