



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
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CLUB OFFICERS

President:

Fred Alsop

ALSOPF@mail.etsu.edu

Vice-President

John Carter

carterjohn92@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Gary Emmert

jbox1015@comcast.net

Secretary:

Hobie Hyder

juliehobie@earthlink.net

Newsletter Editor:

Ted Bleck-Doran

Ted_mary@memrr.org

Webmaster:

John Edwards

webmaster@memrr.org



LOCATION

ETSU Campus
George L. Carter
Railroad Museum

HOURS

Business Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Meetings start at 6:30 PM in:

Brown Hall
Room 312
ETSU Campus,
Johnson City, TN.

Open House for viewing every Saturday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

Work Nights are held each Thursday from 5:00 pm until ??

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS MEMBER OF THE YEAR 2013



WHO WILL BE THE MEMRR MEMBER OF THE YEAR ?
FIND OUT INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF *THE SIGNAL BRIDGE*...

THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB.

Happy New Year fellow members!!! We have roared down the tracks and into our 21st year as an outstanding model railroad club, the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders. Twenty years is a long time for any volunteer organization to stay together and to continue to operate as a cooperating and organized group. We still have some of the charter members in our organization including **Paul Haynes** and our Vice-President **John Carter**.

The small group, called the Mountain Empire Modular Railroaders, began meeting at the Gray Elementary School in the fall of 1993 under the leadership of its founder, and our only Emeritus Member, **Bob Swartz**, who was the club's first newsletter editor. Because of the group's passion for their hobby of model railroading they continued to meet, created a set of bylaws for self-governance and a set of standards for the design of their individual modules.



Trains wait at Guangzhou Rail Yard

Their layout only came together once or twice a year when the club could find an event or space to assemble their personal modules into an operating DC layout in such venues as the Gray Fair Grounds, Clinchfield Reflections Days in Erwin the State Historic Site at Sycamore Shoals, and others. Such events were limited to weekends. Look at the MEMRR today and the changes that have taken place.

We have for the past 6+ years had a home at East Tennessee State University in a site, the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, dedicated to our hobby of model railroading and the history of local prototype railroading. Our membership has grown to more than 100 members annually, the layout is permanently on display and available to all members to operate on at any time they wish to come to the museum.

We now have the ability to operate in 3 model railroad gauges and will soon add HOn3 to that roster. The club's layout is now DCC and our locomotives have the sounds of the prototype as they traverse our personally created miniature world. Soon, through the efforts of our members, we will enjoy building trains on a working freight yard and operate more like the real railroads with radio-assisted coordination and the control of a yardmaster.

More and more of our area citizens are becoming aware of the Carter Railroad Museum and our visitation, each and every Saturday, continues to hold steady or increase. The volume of visitors to the museum and our layouts over the recent Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays was outstanding and we were very busy indeed operating the layouts and interacting with our museum guests. We are, indeed, a very fortunate group of model railroaders with over 5,000 square feet of modeling and display space available for our use, a great and growing railroad-oriented library, children bringing their parents to our Little Engineers Room each week, a membership base that provides a financial base that allows us to take on big projects on our personally and club-owned layout, and a talented membership that works well together and continues to promote our hobby to the public and to learn more about the multiple facets of the complexity of our hobby from our fellow members. **It is great to be a member of the MEMRR!**



Nuremberg Rail Yard

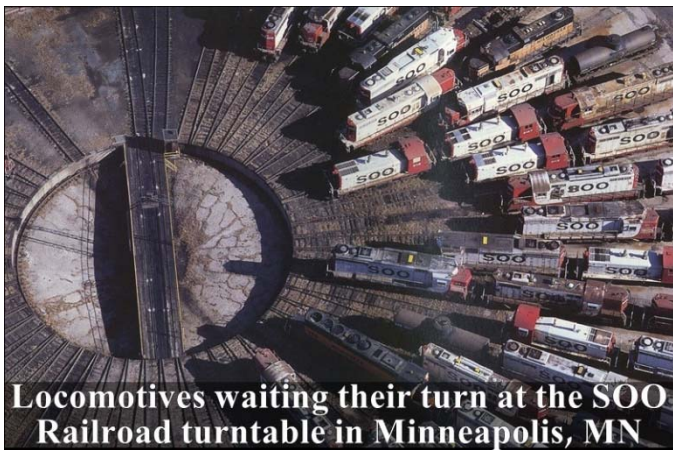
Welcome our new member, John Couture, to the MEMRR! John joined us in early December and has just recently purchased a house in the Kingsport area. He is already involved in learning to make trees for the Tweetsie Project and has become a member of the group working on the Tupelo Honey Café Project. Welcome John! Please introduce yourselves to John and make him feel part of our club.

Speaking of members and memberships, all of you are aware that the period from November to January 30th is the window when members renew their dues for the coming year. We don't want to heckle you for your dues, but we will

if we have to as we don't want to lose any MEMRR members. You are all important to us and to our organization.

Each and every one of you bring a special personality and much appreciated diversity to the club and each of you have your special talents that lend themselves to our hobby of model railroading and the growth of the MEMRR and the Carter Railroad Museum we are affiliated with as volunteers who operate the layouts, create the displays and greet the museum's visitors, young and old. We have not changed the dues structure in many years, and we have no plans to do so. Therefore, your \$30 annual dues for a full membership, and an additional \$5 for each household family member you wish to add, is a real bargain any way you look at it. That is less than taking your family out to eat for a single meal, or treating the family to a movie and a visit to the concession stand, or your annual subscription to your favorite model railroading magazine. Don't wait until our Club Treasurer, **Gary Emmert**, has to contact you personally to get your dues in, or until I have to send you a personal letter asking you to renew your membership!

Pay your dues for 2014 now and remain a member in good standing with an outstanding model railroad club that has more to offer than most any other railroad club in the country.

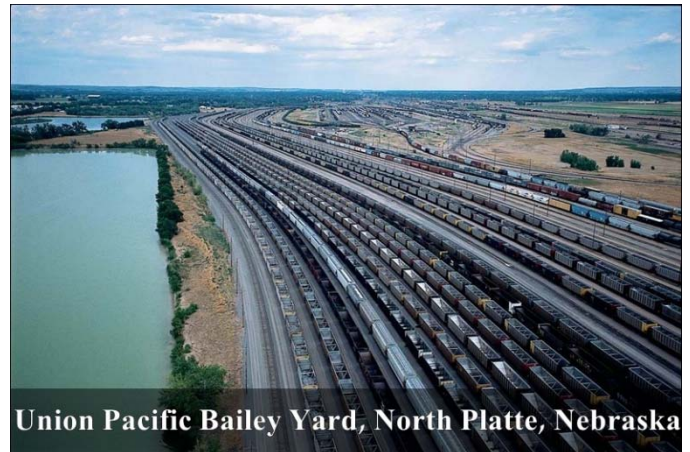


Locomotives waiting their turn at the Soo Railroad turntable in Minneapolis, MN

See our Treasurer soon and pay him personally and save the postage, or send your check, in the proper amount, (you can check out the various dues-structure categories on our web site at memrr.org) made out to: "MEMRR" and mailed to Gary Emmert, Treasurer, PO Box 70697, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN 37614. It's that easy! **Please do it now if you have not already done so and welcome back to the MEMRR for 2014!**

I wish to thank **Jim Pahr**, who coordinated our 2014 Annual Christmas Party for, once again doing such an outstanding job that greatly contributed to the smooth operation and the success of this greatly anticipated annual event. This year

we sold tickets for the event because the meal was being prepared for us, a big departure from the pot-luck events that we held in the past and that required work on the part of many of the spouses, significant-others and the members who participated. We had agreed to hold this year's joint Christmas Party for the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, and George L. Carter Chapter NRHS, at the Choo-Choo Café in Erwin, Tennessee; the historic headquarters of the Clinchfield Railroad created by George L. Carter. The café is housed in an historic CC&O RR building that once served as the company store. The Choo-Choo Café was a great choice as a Christmas Party venue. Brenda, the owner, proprietor, cook, part-time waitress and hostess, had the hall decorated for Christmas with a lighted Christmas village, a large Christmas tree and lots of holiday decorations on the tables and around the room. The meal was excellent and all who wanted them were invited for "seconds".



Union Pacific Bailey Yard, North Platte, Nebraska

The assembled group of merrymakers, 42 strong, had a wonderful evening of socializing and enjoying the company and the event and the overwhelming consensus when they were polled was to return in December 2014 for our annual Carter Railroad Museum Christmas Party. Those reservations were secured that evening. The party would not have been complete without a visit from "Dirty Santa" and the group was not to be disappointed. The gifts were piled high, numbers were drawn by the participants, the rules were established and the fun of opening railroad-related gifts began. Dirty Santa insured that some would only hold their treasures for a limited time before "surrendering" them to others, but everyone who brought a gift took one home and everyone enjoyed the unwrapping, the discoveries, and the exchanges. Thank you Santa!!! Mark the 3rd Tuesday of December, 2014, on your appointment calendar and make your plans to join us again next year.

If you have not been in on the discussions and the club's decision to begin operations on our HO layout at the Carter RR Museum via the use of radio-communication, please

read **John Edward's** find article on the subject and the recommendations for what equipment you may wish to purchase in the December issue of *The Signal Bridge*. As our club layout has become more complex with addition of new wiring that allows us to do more operational things with our trains, as the noise levels have increased with more sound systems being operated simultaneously and with increase visitation to the RR Museum, and with more units operating, it has only made sense that we be able to effectively communicate with every operator in a clear and immediate manner. The use of this technology will be tried on an experimental basis to learn if this will help us achieve that goal. It should make our operations easier and more fun for everyone and our enjoyment of our hobby is a major goal for us all, and a basis for this decision. We should be able to operate our trains on a much-improved layout and in a more professional manner than we have been able to do in the past, and with little additional cost to individual members who will be running their personal or club-owned locomotives and consists on the layout. The club has voted to provide several units with headsets for club members to use just as we have provided several hand-held DCC throttles for train operation in the past. Read the article and ask **John Edwards, Larry Jackson, Bill Hensley** and other members who are up-to-date on this radio technology whatever questions you have about the equipment or their use and they will be happy to provide as many answers as they can for you.



The following series of photos of a CN train that hit a log truck on the Redditt sub (between Winnipeg MB and Sioux Lookout ON)

Three major projects continue to be underway and some are nearer to completion than others. All of them invite you to invest your time, talents, and hobby skills and to join one, or several, of the groups that are currently working on them. Just let any of the members involved with these projects know of your interests and they will be happy to include you. **They are the MEMRR HO layout, the Tweetsie Project, and the Tupelo Honey Café Project.**

1) The track-laying phase for the new working freight yard on the MEMRR HO layout is nearing completion, but this

will not complete the project. There will still remain the tasks of ballasting the yard's tracks and the building of the structures needed to support the yard's operation and installing them on it. If we want lighted signals on the yard they will have to be installed as well. So, there is still a lot of work to be done and a lot of modeling opportunity for any members who want to lend a hand with this club project.

- 2) The Tweetsie Project has reached a stage where all the hardshell that will be the base for the scenery has been constructed so it is now possible to get a feeling of what the mountainous terrain landscape will look like. The background scenery on the Cranberry Mine section nears completion and that will facilitate the laying of the track on that section. Once that is accomplished we can begin to test run locomotives over most of the layout. Lots of trees still need to be constructed to cover the many square feet of mountains and valleys so tree makers are needed and **Bear Anderson** or **Ken Harmon**, both accomplished tree-makers, will be happy to show you how to make them. There are lots of modeling opportunities here.
- 3) The Tupelo Honey Café Project is being constructed in N-Scale on a 3 foot x 16 foot "table" in the ETSU Physical Facilities' Paint Shop a few blocks from the RR Museum on the ETSU campus. **Jim Pahr** is coordinating the project and there is need for the construction of lots of buildings for the layout that currently needs to be completed in March 2014. The finished layout will be displayed as a Community Table in the restaurant to be a focal point of entertainment for people waiting to be seated in the café. We will have information about the display, the Carter RR Museum, the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS in the restaurant that has the potential to bring us visitors and new members.



Lead unit was the 5146 a GMDL SD40.

We will use the "Program Section" of the January 2014 MEMRR business meeting to construct a calendar of events for the coming year. Please plan to attend and participate,

but if you cannot do so, please contact any officer of the club and give them your idea for something you would wish us to consider for club participation and we will introduce it along with others during the meeting.

2013 was another very good year for the Mountain Empire Model Railroader and the Carter Railroad Museum. There are many events we participated in that we can be proud of that carried out enthusiasm for our hobby to the surrounding community, either by taking our displays out to regional events or in our operations and displays at our home in the Railroad Museum. We have improved our layout, improved the exhibits at the Railroad Museum, gained new members with their personal railroad and modeling experiences, and grown stronger as a club that is two decades old. Sadly, we lost some members to death and well shall long remember them and their irreplaceable personalities they shared with us. Thank you all for all that you do for the MEMRR and for the Carter RR Museum. Welcome to 2014 and all the possibilities and challenges that it will bring.

Hear the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come!



Seeing the truck on the crossing before hitting it with the train, the engineer hit the deck below the window level and the head end brakeman ducked down behind the wall and door under the middle windows

Happy New Year!!!

*Fred J. Alsop III
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU*

**MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL
RAILROADERS
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 17, 2013**



Section crews had to cut out some of the logs before both the crew members could exit the cab hours later.

The MEMRR's December meeting was held at the Choo-Choo Café in downtown Erwin, Tennessee as part of the annual G. L. Carter Railroad Museum's affiliates Christmas Party. President Fred Alsop presided in the absence of Santa

Clause who could not attend due to other pressing obligations at the North Pole. In attendance for this festive social event were 42 members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders and the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS and their spouses or 'significant others'.



Anywhere there was glass, the pulp logs loaded cross wise on the truck, penetrated into the cab including through the number boards

After the meal President Alsop convened our business meeting. The business meeting was short and most old business was 'tabled' until the January 2014 meeting in order not to prolong the awaited appearance of the highly

anticipated “Dirty Santa” event. The January 2014 meeting will use the “program” section to create our calendar of events for the coming year and everyone is encouraged to attend to participate or, if you cannot attend, please send any event ideas you wish to have considered to one of the officers. The newly elected officers were recognized and those who had served the previous year were thanked for their leadership and outstanding service to the club. **Jim Pahr** was thanked for arranging the Christmas Party as our party coordinator for his yeoman service to the organizations in this role and the success of his labors that the assembled throng was enjoying. Progress on the Tupelo Honey Café N-Scale layout was presented with an invitation to any modelers to join the group being coordinated by **Jim Pahr** in constructing the layout. Deadline for completion of the project currently is set as March 2014. ETSU is providing space for the construction in its Physical Plant in a portion of the Paint Shop and members are welcome to drop by and view the layout as it is being created and assembled. It will be based on Johnson City in the late 1940s-early 1950s and will be depicting a section of the city down the current State of Franklin (formally a rail yard) east to west from just east of Tupelo Honey Café (the old CC&O RR station currently being restored) west to include parts of ETSU.

Museum volunteers for the next 5 Saturdays were solicited. Fred stated that he would be out of town from 24 December, 2013 until 10 January, 2014 with most of that time being spent on a birding trip with friends in Ecuador.

There being no further business introduced for the members, the business meeting was adjourned for a similar short business meeting of the Carter Chapter NRHS with President Alsop wishing everyone a safe and joyous holiday season.



Both made it out alive.

Fred Alsop took lots of pictures of the attendees and the party and will provide them to the newsletter editor for possible selected use in *The Signal Bridge*.

At the end of the joint meeting President Alsop asked the group of party goers how they liked the party at the Choo-Choo Café. There was unanimous agreement that all present really enjoyed the venue, the food and the decorations in this historic railroad building and it was the overwhelming consensus of the group to hold our 2014 Christmas Party at the same location. **Jim Pahr** quickly made these reservations with the owner of the café and we are set for December 2014.

Minutes of the meeting prepared and submitted in the absence of Secretary Hobie Hyder by President Fred Alsop



PLANE MEETS TRAIN AN HISTORIC FIRST

Nov 19, 1958 Santa Fe's San Diegan #74 struck the F4D-1 Skyray of VMF-542 piloted by 2nd Lt Phillip M. Schmidt, who was practicing power-off landings and missed the cable at El Toro NAS, plowed through the fence and came to rest on the tracks, the San Diegan with engineer William Ryder traveling at a speed of 75 mph saw the plane and applied the brakes but struck the plane before coming to a stop. The train's Brakeman Pat A Schamber pulled the injured pilot from the plane. Before the plane burst into flame. derailed cars #3430, #3165, #3144, #1399, #3100, #3094, #3082 some minor injuries to the approx 80 passengers on the train.

MEMRR & GEORGE L CARTER CHAPTER CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS DINNER AT THE CHOO CHOO CAFÉ'



The Choo Choo Café was decorated with holiday cheer. A Santa Village with a Christmas Train greeted the guests...



The cafe was warm and festive...



Our hostess and owner went out of her way to make use fell welcome...



No one went away hungry, the serving were plentiful...



The tables were decorated with care...



A table was loaded with vintage model and care kits...



Everyone had a share of festive spirits....



And a twinkle in their eyes...



Even Santa showed up...



or – at least a jolly old elf...



loaded with lots of gifts and toys



With a game of "Dirty Santa" some gifts are just too good to have just one owner...



Happiness at Christmas for a railfan is a full stable of reindeer... er... locomotives

THE LA&SL RR CLUB NOLENSVILLE TN

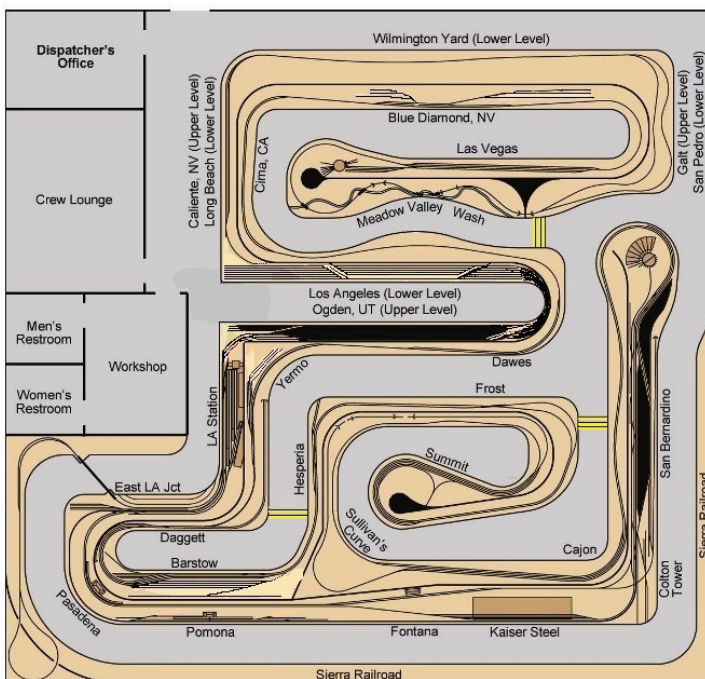
Photos by Ted Bleck-Doran

In May 2013, Mary and I attended that Nashville Chattanooga & St Louis Preservation Society's Annual Reunion. One of the featured events was a trip to Nolensville TN and a visit to the Los Angeles & Salt Lake Route Model Railroad Club, a HO layout depicting a line from the west coast port of Los Angeles to Salt Lake City.

The layout is housed in 5,000 square feet warehouse and features a double deck mushroom design that allows for prototypically long runs. Point-to-point operations can take 30 minutes or more for a train to run from terminal to terminal.

This layout is designed for operations!

Track Plan - Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad Layout



The History of the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad Layout

May 20, 2006 - Presentation by Bill Hemrick at the monthly TCRM meeting on his proposed 5,000 sq. foot HO model RR to be built in Nolensville, Tennessee.

June 5, 2006 - Building pad and underground utilities are complete.

January 20, 2007 - First operating session is held on the Long Beach/Terminal Island portion of the layout.

October 27, 2007 - Regular monthly operating session. Trains run to San Bernardino for the first time during regular operations.



There's room enough on the logging branch to include BLS' McCabe Log Mill

April 14, 2008 - Benchwork for the entire railroad is completed.

May 31, 2008 - Regular monthly operating session. Trains run to Ogden for the first time during regular operations.

July 23, 2008 - The mainline is complete from Terminal Island to the Johnston Coal Co. east of Ogden.

September 27, 2008 - Regular monthly operating session. Trains run to the Johnston Coal Co. for the first time during regular operations.

December 4, 2008 - Open house at the railroad with over 70 people in attendance.



Here's another photo of McCabe's Mill Complex

January 7, 2009 - Based upon a poll by the members of the billslayout email list, the layout was officially named."Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad"

August 31, 2009 - The Middle Tennessee Model Railroaders becomes the official name for the club that operates the Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad.



Much of the scenery is sparse high desert plateau.

Road History - Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad

The development of the railway line that later became the LA&SL began in 1871, when the Utah Southern Railroad began constructing trackage southward from Salt Lake City. The Utah Southern, controlled by the much larger Union Pacific Railroad (UP), built a line to a station known as Juab, Utah in 1879. From there, a second UP subsidiary known as the Utah Southern Railroad Extension took up the work, completing trackage as far as Milford, Utah in 1880. By the end of the century, these and other lines had been absorbed into the Oregon Short Line Railroad, a far larger UP subsidiary.



There are numerous FSM and other craftsman type kits on the layout

Work on extending the Milford line southward began by 1889, but no tracks were actually laid due to financial issues. Construction resumed in 1899, however, when the route was completed as far as the Utah-Nevada border. Substantial grading work also took place in Nevada, and the UP's stated intent was to continue expanding the line all the way to southern California.



With 5,000 sq. ft. of space industries take on a whole different dimension.

Another player entered the scene in 1900, however, when William Andrews Clark acquired the struggling Los Angeles Terminal Railway with an eye to extending the line northeast to Salt Lake. The railroad was reincorporated in 1901 as the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad and Clark announced plans to construct a line between Salt Lake and southern California. Clark assembled a variety of political and financial supporters for the project, both in California and Utah; in contrast, the competing Union Pacific Railroad and its formidable leader E. H. Harriman stood in opposition to Clark's plan.



Here's a large power plant that dwarfs the freight cars

Clark's forces began construction work in Nevada, along the existing UP grade, and a brief "railroad war" ensued before Clark and the UP called a truce in 1903. Their agreement called for Clark's railroad to acquire the existing UP trackage south of Salt Lake City; in turn, the UP received a 50% ownership interest in Clark's railroad. Construction of the

remaining line proceeded rapidly, and the complete Salt Lake-Los Angeles line was opened on May 1, 1905. In California, Clark negotiated a trackage rights agreement allowing his new line to use the existing Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway route over Cajon Pass, in lieu of constructing its own tracks across the pass.



Another view of the high desert plateau scenery

On April 16, 1916, "San Pedro" was removed from the corporation's name, a reflection of the fact that the former town of San Pedro had been annexed into the city of Los Angeles in 1909. The LA&SL operated independently until April 27, 1921, when the UP agreed to acquire Clark's half-interest in the railroad. From that point on, the LA&SL lines were operated as an integral part of the UP system, although the LA&SL corporation continued to exist on paper until January 1, 1988. The former LA&SL main line remains an integral part of the UP network today.



Club members have lots of animation and special lighting effects

Following standard railroad practice, the LA&SL designated a series of locations along its route as "division points" – bases for the railroad's operational and maintenance activities. Traveling southwestward from Salt Lake, the railroad's division point towns were Lynndyl, Utah; Milford; Caliente, Nevada; Las Vegas; Yermo, California; and San Bernardino, California. Nearly the entire route of the railroad

traversed rugged and largely unpopulated desert terrain. There were no major population centers between the railroad's endpoints until the city of Las Vegas began its rapid growth in the mid-twentieth century.



A view down the shortest leg of the branchline

The LA&SL was known for its depot buildings, many of which were large and imposing structures designed in the Mission Revival architectural style. Landmark LA&SL stations in Caliente, NV and Kelso, CA survive today. Several smaller Mission Revival depots erected by the railroad still exist in southern California, as well. At least two of the railroad's smaller stations, at Lund and Black Rock, Utah, were designed by the noted architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood.

The club has its annual election of the Board of Directors at the Saturday operating session in January.

All other club Communication is done prior to other operating sessions or by email.

Operating sessions and meetings are restricted to club members only.

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS

“MEMBER OF THE YEAR”



BEATLEJUICE

WHEN DID YOU BECOME A MEMBER:

Just recently... when you are in my state of existence time sorta gets blurry.

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE CLUB:

It's hard to say... I had been digging around for something to pass the time, you know. Eternity can drag just a little and after a couple of centuries I thought "why not?" Model Railroading is sort of timeless you know. You can dig around in the past or go straight to the present.

WHICH SCALE TO YOU PREFER:

Any scale I can fit into. I like to work up close to my modeling. Working 1:1 one in 1/87th scale is a blast.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE RAILROADS:

Most of the dead ones ... er ... I think they are called "Fallen Flags." ... There's something terribly morbid about them. They sorta of haunt the memory like the sound of an old steam whistle in the dark ... or a hint of coal smoke on a slight breeze.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE HOBBY:

Why building structures of course. I once haunted a model village in a couple's attic. Of course digging through foam insulation to get out of the grave was a bit of a challenge, but that got me really "into" modeling.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE HOBBY:

I was a neighbor to the Adam's family. Pugsley and his dad showed me their train layout. I just loved the way that kid could make such realistic explosions!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT:

You don't have to rush to master every aspect of the hobby. If your haunt is the basement, spare room, or club you have an eternity to meet and master the hobby's challenges.

WHAT GOAL HAVE YOU SET FOR THE COMING YEAR?

I'd like to get involved in the Tupelo Honey's railroad project. I hear the guys building the model railroad featuring Johnson City and its railroads are trying to highlight local buildings and attractions. Why with my familiarity with cemeteries and old things, why, it wouldn't be frightful to say, modeling the Mountain Home National Cemetery would hauntingly familiar to say the least.

(For a fun night's entertainment be sure to watch the Warner Brothers movie "BEATLEJUICE" starring Michael Keaton as Beatlejuice.)

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HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES FOR 2014 YET?



YOU ARE COMING TO THE END OF THE TRAIN SEND YOUR DUES IN TODAY!

Make Checks payable to:
"MEMRR"

Gary Emmert, Treasurer
PO Box 70697

East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, TN 37614.

Dues are payable during the months of December, January and February. Don't miss out on a single issue of *THE SIGNAL BRIDGE* or the opportunity to run you favorite lashup on the club layouts.