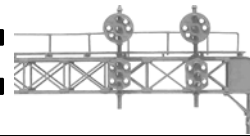


THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 14

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODULAR RAILROADERS CLUB

Number 4

March 2007 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 Cherokee
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.

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

SIGNAL BRIDGE MEMBER-OF-THE-MONTH

Bill Hoover

Email: (None at present)
Home Layout: **Yes**
Visitors Welcome: **Not Yet**
Occupation: **US Postal Service**
MEMRR Module: **No**

Favorite Railroad(s):
Pennsylvania Railroad
Favorite Aspect of the Hobby:
Seeing and working with other rail fans

Least Favorite Aspect of the Hobby:
Getting all the scenery designed and installed.

How Did You Get Started In the Hobby:
Belonged to a model railroad club while on active duty in the Army back in 1957

How Long Have You Been a Member of MEMRR:
Since 1995

What Got You Started with MEMRR:
Ed Lockett invited me to visit ... and I stayed

What Dreams Do You Have for Your Layout of Module:
To get this layout of mine up and running in 2007

What Other Model Railroad or Railfan Activities Do You Participate In:
Almost all railfan activities involve traction oriented museums and activities

What One Thing Would Improve MEMRR:
Getting the word out to the public about what we do and what the club's efforts look like.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As reported at November's meeting:

01/01/07	Balance on Hand	\$ 1,002.77
	Income	\$ 275.00
	Expenses	\$ 68.80
01/31/07	Ending Balance	\$ 1,208.97
	January Obligations	\$ 40.13
	Balance Available	\$1,168.84

937.35

March is 2007 Dues Month

Members categories are:

Full Member (Running Rights & Vote)	\$ 30.00
Family Member (each)	\$ 5.00
Associate Member (Running Rights)	\$ 12.00

Mountain Empire Modular Railroaders Minutes of the Club Meeting 20 February 2007

15 people present. Alsop called meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Paul Haynes gave the program, a DVD in the America by Rail Series with tracks of the West Coast rail route in southern California (LA to Seattle) via Amtrack; Fish Camp shays, and Sugar Pine model A fords.

Treasurer reported Feb balance of \$1,208.77. Secretary's report was approved as written in the Signal Bridge.

The **webmaster** reported on a new club website at <http://memrr07.t35.com/> and presented a handout with access directions and other information.

Vice President reported on March program to be presented by Ted Doran-Bleck on weathering with acrylics.

President urged club members to work responsibly to share the duties and requirements of completing modules and volunteering for the public runs for the public on Saturdays. He also commented on the outstanding job the newsletter editor has been doing with the Signal Bridge, "The best newsletter in the history of the club".

Old Business:

- 1) **Alsop** says the club can expect to be in the new space at ETSU in a few weeks and the Memorandum of Understanding between ETSU and MEMRR should be signed very soon.
 - 2) **Joe Roberts** was not present to comment on his progress in creating a calling chain.
 - 3) **John Carter** will report in March on his efforts to arrange a club trip to visit the layout(s) of the Knoxville model rr club.
 - 4) **Hobie Hyder** will purchase an N&W caboose at the Asheville train show for donation to the club.
 - 5) **Mike Buster** will letter two N&W passenger coaches in memory of our deceased members, **Ernie van Huss** and **Bill Harr**. The coaches will bear their names and the date of their deaths as the road number. **Charlie Causey** will donate the 2 cars for this project.
 - 6) Discussion on the NW Short line wheel sets for the club F-units was tabled pending more information on prices and options.
- MINUTES Continued on Page 4 Column 2...**

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From the Conductor's Desk:

Short lines and Oddball Paint.

Tired of Norfolk Southern black and white paint? Longing for something different from CSX blue-gray-yellow? Leasing equipment from a short line or rebuilt might just be in order. Here are a selection of locos stumbled upon while vacationing.

The first two are of Falls Road Railroad's No. 1802. The loco was borrowed from an upstate New York short line outside of Buffalo to head up a "Santa Train" during the holiday season. The regional chapter of the National Railway Historical Society provided 5 stainless steel coaches of New York Central heritage. The train ran on CSX tracks from the old NYC freight depot in Marion NY to the yard in Lockport 17 miles away.

The Alco RS units were found in Scranton PA. The photo in the left hand column is another short line loco, this time from the Delaware-Lackawanna. The D-L borrowed the former Reading Railroad's paint scheme as evident from the photo below.

The last two photos are also of D-L equipment. One in a rather utilitarian (make that "ugly" gray-red scheme (DL 3000) and the other in a more attractive light gray, blue grey and yellow scheme reminiscent of the former Delaware & Hudson paint scheme.

Running lease equipment can add variety to your operations and equipment rosters. Re-engined lease equipment can even allow a fleet or motive power from another generation to appear on you layout



**Attention to Details:
Poles, Cross Arms, Insulators and Wires**
By Hobie Hyder

I have always enjoyed visiting and viewing model train layouts, and regardless of how many I see, I always see or learn something new. While searching the web the other day, I came across a really great model railroad site (www.cwr.com/nmra/layout-HO2.html.) While viewing these really good layouts, I came across one that really stood out to me as being top notch – Cliff Power’s Mississippi, Alabama and Gulf. The MA&G was one of those layouts that we can only dream of building, or at least I can only dream about building. However, even it was not as perfect as it seemed.

In all of its glory and attention to scenery, I couldn’t help but notice that Mr. Powers used electric poles instead of telegraph poles along his railroad right-of-ways. I chuckled a bit as I thought to myself how someone who was obviously so talented and skilled in his hobby could make a mistake like this, but then if you look at modern railroads today, you would be hard pressed to find any telegraph poles much less lines. Thus, what an excellent opportunity the addition of telegraph poles to your module is for you to pat yourself on the back and chuckle with me when you see this and other great layouts that have failed in this very basic attention to detail. There is a difference!

The most underlining difference can be summed up as financial. Telegraph poles are smaller in size and shorter in length than electric poles and thus are cheaper to purchase. Another difference, and perhaps the most noticeable one, as well as the one that will be noticed by an avid observer, is the number of insulators on the cross arms. Telegraph poles have more insulators on their cross arms than electric poles; ten in most cases, however, this will vary as to purpose as seen from The accompanying drawings taken for the **Chesapeake & Ohio Track, Maintenance-of-Way and Roadway Structures – Drawings & Data Handbook** reproduced by the Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society, Inc.

Most notable, the standard height from ground to the bottom wire should be at least 27 feet, and the pole placed no less than 12 feet from the near rail. Thus, I recommend using the longer poles by Rix. The shorter ones make it impossible to maintain proper heights. Note, the longer poles will be longer than needed, but don’t cut the excess

off! The excess allows you to put more of the pole in the ground, which helps with stability when we stretch the elastic wire. Plus you can adjust the poles up or down as needed.

As far as distance between poles, I measured the distance of the few remaining telegraph poles that once lined the Clinchfield Railroad and found them to be approximately 120 feet apart. For modeling purposes Fred and I determined that a scale distance of approximately 80 to 85 feet looks best. By placing them close together on our modules, it also helps the viewer to distinguish the difference between electric poles and telegraph poles as the distance between electric poles are a lot farther apart.

Additionally, it is recommended that our telegraph poles should be placed outside the main, so as to not interfere with commercial electric lines, structures, etc. on the modules.

Part 2 in the April Issue

Editor’s Note: Telegraph lines are logically located along rights-of-way since telegraph service was initially used to control the movement of trains from station to station. Until the advent of modern telecommunication and multiple circuit transmission over a single line, each wire on telegraph poles could carry only one circuit, hence the need for multiple wires in gangs of ten and multiple cross arms. During a visit to upstate New York telltale evidence of the limitations of this early technology was still evident along the old New York Central right-of-way. Telegraph poles were still in evidence with three cross arms each with posts for ten insulators – that’s 30 lines! As multiple-circuit switching technology became available with the telephone, strands of wire were removed. Still, 5-10 lines were still visible.

Those modeling a more modern time frame may still wish to install abandoned telegraph/telephone lines alongside their right-of-way. Poles can be tilted, wires missing or dangling, insulators absent... and don’t forget – lots of ivy (poison or otherwise) to encrust the poles, cross arms and remaining wire. – TB-D

JOIN THE FUN

THURSDAYS ARE WORK NIGHTS
THE CREW GATHERS BEGINNING AT 5:30 OR
SO...
THERE’S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO
LEARN – SEE – OR - DO

Next Meeting:

March 20th, 2007
Location: TIPTON-HAYNES Historic Site
Time: 7:00 PM
Social Gathering: 5:30 PM Ruby Tuesdays
Across from ETSU on State of Franklin
Program: Ted Bleck-Doran
“Weathering With Acrylics”

Contest Materials

Here are several inexpensive sources for dimensional lumber and other interesting trinkets:

Dollar Wise (near Food City):	CRAFT MATERIAL – Sticks 1000 Count Basswood HO Scale 6"x6"x14' Cost: \$1.00
long	BAMBOO SKEWERS – 100 pieces; 12" Bamboo HO Scale 12" Diameter Poles Cost: \$1.00
	CRAFT WIRE - 24 yard spool Uncoated 24 gauge (brass and steel) Cost: \$1.00
Walmart	SKINNY STICKS Hardwood HO Scale 4"x24" Cost: \$1.49
Dollar Tree	SANDWICH TOOTHPICKS – 200 count Basswood HO Scale 9"x9"x24' Cost: \$1.00
Walgreens	TEA LIGHTS Battery operated flicker lights printed circuit board Cost: 2 for \$3.00

MODEL CONTEST DETAILS BELOW

MODEL BUILDING CONTEST:

Bring something (*other than stacked lumber*) that you have built to the April meeting.

1. The project must have a railroad theme.
2. The project must include at least 2 of the above materials listed in this month's Product Review column.
3. The other items are allowed such as acetate (for windows), card stock or Strathmore board, glue, paint or stain.
4. No commercial parts including castings and scribed or milled siding or dimensional lumber (plain bass wood or styrene that you scribe, mill or cut is OK).
5. The model may be attached to a diorama or base.
6. **Best entry will be decided by popular vote of those present**
7. Prize will be a certificate suitable for framing and eternal bragging rights as being the **WINNER** of the:

**"FIRST ANNUAL CREATIVE MODEL BUILDING CONTEST
SPONSORED BY THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODULAR
RAILROAD CLUB IN THE TRI-CITIES OF TENNESSEE."**

PROGRESS ON THE MEMRR:

There have been several deed transfers of late. Those known to have occurred are:

Don Ramey to John Carter:
Two City Modules
John Carter to John Edwards
Two City Modules

**Jim Pahrís/Jack Cope to Ted Bleck-Doran/Mary
Doran-Bleck**
Mountain Module

MINUTES Continued from Page 1 Column 3...

New Business:

- 1) Several MEMRR members are helping with the construction of a G-gauge layout at the Hands-On Museum (Jim Pahrís, Jack Cope, John Edwards and Fred Alsop). Members are invited to help with the scenery.
- 2) The club has been invited to display our layout at the 2006 Jonesborough Days in June. After discussion the club decided it must decline the invitation but will send thanks for the invitation and offer to have our layout open for visitor viewing at ETSU that weekend.
- 3) John Carter has purchased Roger Weaver's two modules and he and John Edwards will continue to add detail and lights to that cityscape. Jim Pahrís offered his 4 foot module for sale at \$100.
- 4) Members were reminded of the April model contest challenge issued by Ted (see the Feb Signal Bridge for details).
- 5) Club members are asked not to visit Tipton-Haynes in the late night hours (circa 2:00 a.m.) without first letting Penny know you will be coming as the tenants were frightened and upset recently when someone decided to work in the early morning and they were awakened by the noises coming from the museum.
- 7) Duane Swank reported that he is adding copies of volumes #3 and #4 of the Dream, Plan, Build DVD series the club is subscribing to our library (the originals are not circulated, only the copies) and that someone has volume #1 and there is no record of who checked it out. Club Videos/DVDs are available to all members, but please check them out by signing the checkout sheet. Duane also donated a copy of a DVD on the Clinchfield Coal Story. Charles Causey offered to burn copies of DVDs for the club from any originals members were willing to provide for that purpose. A recommendation was made that the club buy some blank DVDs for this purpose.

Show and Tell:

John Carter showed several large 8 oz. bags of black, brown and camel-colored polyfiber purchased for about \$4 each compared to Woodland Scenics price of \$3.95 for a 0.56 oz bag. John donated one bag to the club for tree and shrub making. Mike Buster donated 3 plastic shirt holders for display stands. Fred Alsop showed a one room rural school with paired outhouses he is scratch-building taken from photos of a prototype in Odessa, Minnesota.

Announcements:

CTC Board is now Railroad Illustrated. The Feb 23-24 train show in Asheville's Haywood Co. Fairgrounds (several members plan to attend). March 24-25 Norcross, GA train show.

March meeting:

Tuesday, March 20. 5:45 dinner at Ruby-Tuesdays on State of Franklin near the university. Meeting at 7:00 at Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site.

Volunteers for the next 4 Saturdays: Feb 24 = Larry, Duane, Charlie; Mar 3 = John Carter, John Edwards, Jim Pahrís; Mar 10 = Paul, Ed; Mar 17 = Larry, Duane, Fred.

Meeting adjourned: 9:30 p.m.

President's Note: 27 Feb 2007. Today, Tues Feb 27. I signed the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of MEMRR which was also signed by the Provost, Dr. Bert Bach on behalf of ETSU. Copies will be made available at the next meeting. I feel it is a solid, fair, and flexible contract between the two parties. Highpoints include \$500 to go toward restoring and upgrading the Bankus N-gauge layout and an annual budget of \$1,500 for the museum. I met with representatives of the university physical plant on Monday, 26 Feb and outlined the details for completion of the space we will occupy at ETSU. The space should be ready for us by 15 March. More information at the March meeting but at this time the contract is signed and the room is almost ready.

Fred Alsop