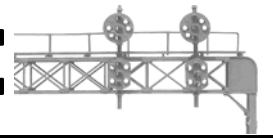


THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 16

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
FEBRUARY 2009 ISSUE

Number 2

From the Conductor's Desk...

CLUB OFFICERS

President:

Fred Alsop

Vice-President:

John Carter

Secretary:

Art Daniels

Treasurer:

Duane Swank

Newsletter Editor:

Ted Bleck-Doran

Webmaster:

John Edwards

LOCATION

ETSU Campus, George L.
Carter Museum

HOURS

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

- A social gathering is held prior to the business meeting at **EL TORITO** on State of Franklin near ETSU in the Kroger Plaza starting at 5:45 PM. Visitors and those interested in joining MEMRR are invited to attend.

- Work nights are held weekly on Thursday evenings starting at 4:30 PM and lasting until ???

- Open viewing and operating layout is available every Saturday from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM.



Ever wonder what to do with those Thomas the Train locomotives and car sets you purchased for when the grandchildren visited and now they are "too old to play with Thomas and his friends"? You could put them in a yard sale, or... have your railroad sponsor a Thomas the Tank Engine day and run excursions on a portion of your layout. The following are photographs of one such day in Medina NY in 2008.



Thomas is an unpowered locomotive so power needs to be supplied by the sponsoring road. Clean up the pride of your roster and place it on the other end of the train. Remember to have lots of activities for the kids to do... and crowds to capture the Kodak moment.



**Mountain Empire Model Railroaders
Minutes
Meeting January 27, 2009**

Members gathered ETSU on Tuesday January 27, 2009 for the January Monthly Meeting, which had been postponed from the regularly-scheduled date of January 21, due to inclement weather.

Dr. Fred Alsop, MEMRR President, called the group to order at approximately 7:05 PM. The Order of Business proceeded as follows:

I. Officers Reports:

1. The Secretary's report from the December Meeting was accepted as written.
2. The Newsletter Editor reported that he is looking for articles for upcoming newsletters and that several articles are currently being prepared for publication.
3. The Treasurer reported details regarding the current financial status and submitted his written financial status report for the record. The Treasurer also called for members to remember to pay their annual dues for 2009, which were due beginning January 1, 2009 and which will be delinquent if not paid by March 31, 2009. As of January 27, 2009, the Treasurer reported that 20 members had not yet paid their 2009 dues.
4. The Webmaster reported that there are no currently-known issues with the Club Website.
5. The Vice-President reported that progress is being made to secure programs for upcoming meetings, with programs already in place for the February and March meetings.
6. The President reported upon status of several on-going items and projects, including planned renovations of the Clubs additional rooms, his discussions with ETSU leaders regarding additional funding for the Museum, and his call to members and other interested parties for donations of model railroad equipment and/or funds for use in the museum.

II. Old Business:

1. John Edwards reported that the new miniature HO locomotive-mounted camera is working well and that he is currently trying to implement an on-board battery-charging circuit which would derive power from the track so that the locomotive-mounted camera to remain in service for longer periods of time.
2. Fred reported that the Museum Logo Contest Committee had not yet met and that he was expecting for that committee to meet in February.
3. Ted Bleck-Doran reported that there were currently 3 entries for the Photo Contest and he reminded everyone interested that the deadline for entry submittal is February 17, 2009. Details and requirements for this contest can be found in the Newsletter.
4. There was no report upon status of Museum or MEMRR Brochures.
5. There was no report upon status of the "Search Items" lists being prepared by module-owners for use by visitors to identify interesting items on each module.

6. The Museum has acquired two step stools for use by visitors as viewing aids. Fred stated that he would check with University Counsel regarding liability related to use of these stools by the public.

III. New Business:

1. Fred led a discussion regarding acquiring and housing additional items for static display in the Museum's display cases. Several members indicated interest in providing RR-related items for display. It was generally agreed that it would be desirable to change out displays more frequently, but that further discussion was needed regarding security of items left for future display, but which were not actually within the locked display cases. In particular, Fred noted the need for records to be kept for items coming into the Museum and for items leaving the Museum. Several members with items immediately available were to coordinate separately with Gary Cameron so that Gary's items could be replaced by other items as appropriate.
2. Gary Cameron requested that MEMRR members take the lead in putting together a one-day show to support his plan for a NE Tennessee Regional Train Show on April 11, 2009. After much discussion, Gary's request was rejected at this time by the members with the comment that, although the club generally favorably supported the show concept, nevertheless, there was not enough time available to meet the April 11 show date. Fred Alsop, Mark Elmore, and Jim Pahr agreed to become a committee to look into issues associated with supporting a trade show in the future.

3. Hobie Hyder has made a special arrangement with Accurail for the production run of 50 specially-numbered and decorated Hopper Cars. Although not an official MEMRR function, any member who would like to purchase some portion of this special run should contact Hobie directly for details.

IV. Museum and Club Layout Reports:

1. Work is progressing on the N-Scale layout. No specific progress reports were available.
2. Wiring work is needed on the HO layout to replace the first generation digital support wiring. Volunteers were solicited to help with this project during club work sessions. Significant progress has been made toward construction of the Roundhouse for the HO layout.
3. Clear Lexan side protection panels have been installed on the G-Scale layout.

V. Volunteers For Saturday Museum Open Hours:

1. Fred complimented the entire membership for the hours being volunteered to support the Saturday Museum public viewing periods. Fred noted in particular that interaction between MEMRR members and visitors had increased and that the number of both new and repeat visitors was rising.
2. Volunteers were assigned for the upcoming Saturdays of January 31, February 7, and February 14.

VI. Announcements:

1. Fred confirmed that the February Meeting would be held on February 17, 2009 in Room 312, Brown Hall, ETSU Campus at 7:00 PM, with the usual informal gathering at 5:45 PM for dinner at El Toritos Mexican Restaurant for all interested members.

VII. Program:

1. Gary Rabetoy presented a video program on the ET&WNC Railroad.

Minutes – 2nd update and submitted January 31, 2009
by Arthur T. Daniels, Secretary

The meeting was adjourned following the program.

Interstate Hopper Car



AccuRail 2500 Series Interstate Coal Hopper

Hobie has been in contact with AccuRail to see if a run of Interstate Hopper cars in HO Scale could be done for the club. This is what he's found out to date...

Anyone wishing to make this happen needs to e-mail or call me with their orders. With an order of 100 our price is \$11.98 and with an order of 200 we drop to \$9.98 and three different numbers. They will also give us the kits to change the numbers on the rest. I am also sure they will mix our order 50/50, 1/2 with yellow logo and 1/2 without. I've got some new prices and quantities here for you. The 48 and 96 pieces are basically as low as they can possibly go already, but I did find a way to get it down to \$9.98 each for 200 pieces if you'd like (and in multiple road numbers, which really helps sales). Or a new quantity of 150 pieces with kind of an in-between price, which may work (also in three road numbers).

48 pcs. @ \$12.98/each with the yellow "Coal goes to war" hit (1 road number).

48 pcs. @ \$12.48/each without the yellow printing hit (1 road number).

100 pcs. @ \$11.98/each with the yellow "Coal goes to war" hit (2 road numbers).

100 pcs. @ \$11.48/each without the yellow printing hit (2 road numbers).

150 pcs. @ \$10.98/each with the yellow "Coal goes to war" hit (3 road numbers).

150 pcs. @ \$10.48/each without the yellow printing hit (3 road numbers).

200 pcs. @ \$10.48/each with the yellow "Coal goes to war" hit (3 road numbers).

200 pcs. @ \$9.98/each without the yellow printing hit (3 road numbers).



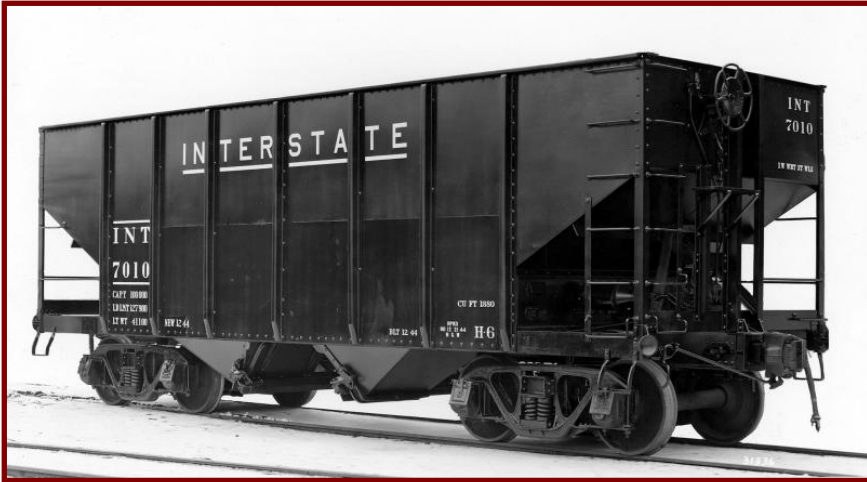
Interstate Hopper with "Coal Goes To War" Slogan

Coal Hoppers

Dan Bourque (INTERSTATE RR, HO)
<http://appalachianrailroad.com/>

50 and 55 ton hoppers were the norm on the Interstate 1920's to the 1960's. At one time, the road hit a high of 3147 hoppers. The number of hoppers in service at one time goes up and down. The fleet lasted until the last was retired in 1983. The Interstate was buying new hoppers up until the early 1950's. In 1958, 729 were acquired from the New River Consolidated Coal and Coke Company (NRBX), a subsidiary of Berwind-White Coal Mining Company. They were numbered 15500 - 16235. This group of cars were a GLa hopper, a Penn.RR design.

Interstate numbered their 50-55 ton steel hoppers from 1100 to 16236. This number represents renumbered hoppers after they were rebuilt, as well as new purchases.



The lettering on the hoppers was changed sometime during the rebuilding program in the 1940's. It went from a "I" to a "I" style. All the Interstate hoppers were ribbed sided with white lettering on a black body. After the Southern takeover, a few offset side hoppers with side extensions were painted an oxide red color and lettered Interstate, using a Southern-inspired lettering scheme. Some of the ribbed side hoppers also received the same type lettering.

Modeling the Interstate's hopper fleet is actually pretty simple. All of the hoppers ordered by the Interstate from 1923 on were of a 50 or 55 ton, rib-side twin design. The Accurail USRA hopper

is a pretty good HO scale stand-in for several of the classes which were rostered from 1923-1970. For you N-scalers, I think Microtrains (?) makes a similar car. The second twin design was slightly taller and had more closely spaced bay doors. I've studied pictures, and I think an MDC 3-bay with the center removed would capture the proportions nicely. Modeling a few of these along with the USRA style hoppers would really make your train look authentic.

The Accurail hopper already comes in Interstate colors (black with white lettering). This is a great starting point because the paint is good quality and the black is easy to match. If you want to paint it yourself, Campbell Road makes dry transfers (they may even make N-scale transfers). To make the first variant, build the Accurail kit as-is but remove the four small angular gussets in-between the slope sheets and sidesill on the sides of the car. This will make a car that fits at least the 5510-7009 series. A second style of hopper can be made by building the kit per directions but replacing the brake lever with a brake wheel (paralleled to the car ends, not the rails). This hopper matches the 15000-15321 cars rebuilt by the Interstate's Andover shops in the 50s. The MDC kitbash would represent the 8010-9120 cars.

The Interstate also rostered some ex-Southern cars including some offset-side, extended-height cars acquired in 1965 after the Southern buyout. These cars were red with a Southern-style jumbo "INTERSTATE" on the side. These cars were the 9200-9234 class. Many of the 8010-9120 cars were also repainted in this scheme beginning in the early 60s—all but the big "A" can be pieced from the "SOUTHERN" on Microscale's decal sheet. Beginning with the Southern merger in 1960, most of the Interstate cars were slowly phased-out of regular service and used as shuttle cars between the mines and transloading facilities at Appalachia and Wentz. They were gradually replaced by 70 ton hoppers beginning in the mid-70s, but some hung on until after the NS merger!. I don't have pictures of the other classes in the roster, so I can't tell you what's a good match for every series, but here's the all-time Interstate hopper roster:



Class	Type	Years of Service			
100-134	40 ton-wood	1914-1929	8262-8761	50 ton	1948-1983
1000-1019	40 ton	1912-1934	8762-8891	50 ton	1949-1983
1100-1750	55 ton	1925-1929	8862-8911	50 ton	1951-1983
2000-2299	50 ton	1913-1951	8912-9120	50 ton	1952-1983
2300-2799	50 ton	1918-1951	9200-9234	55 ton	1965-1973
2800-2809	50 ton	1922-1934	9300-9323	50 ton	1965-1971
5000-5509	55 ton	1920-1951	9400-9718	50 ton	1965-1973
5510-7009	55 ton	1923-1956	15001-15100	55 ton	1924-1929
7010-8009	50 ton	1946-1983	15101-15878	55 ton	1924-1929
8010-8261	50 ton	1948-1983	15000-15321	50 ton	1956-1967 (rebuilt)
			15500-16236	50 ton	1957-1970 (rebuilt)



FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE

CAB: Our MEMRR Club keeps growing. Welcome new members. There are plenty of modeling opportunities at our club headquarters in the George L. Carter Railroad Museum on the ETSU campus. We have the constant maintenance, upgrading and expansion projects on all three operating layouts, and the need for club members to be present for our public museum openings on Saturdays. It's a terrific place to come and run your favorite locomotives and consists. There is our mobile, out-reach HO layout that needs collective inspiration to make it into a multiple scene layout that will travel outside the museum to malls, schools, county fairs, retirement homes, etc., to bring model railroading to many who may not have yet visited the museum. As our two new rooms are refurbished in the coming weeks we will have even more challenges for the creation of exhibits for the Ken Marsh Room and the Kid's Railroad Room. We need all your talents, modeling skills and ideas. Please talk to me about what you can do and we'll happily get you started. If you want to get engaged in a terrific model railroading club with lots of opportunities for you to engage in your hobby you have come to the right place. We welcome you and need you one and all.

Member Gary Cameron is organizing an Annual Spring East Tennessee Railroad Days event scheduled for Saturday, April 11th. He will have model trains and other events, including vendors at his building down town and we will be open at the Carter RR Museum, perhaps with expanded hours that day to do our part as well. There was a proposal for the MEMRR to sponsor a train show with many vendors in conjunction with that event, but after an enthusiastic discussion the club decided to postpone because it was felt the time period for organization of such a major project was not sufficient. A committee was formed to investigate the possibility of hosting such a show in the spring of 2010.

I contacted the university attorney, Mr. Ed Kelly, as the follow-up to our discussion regarding the liability to the club/museum if we provided some step stools to facilitate the viewing of our operating layouts by small children, under the guidance of their parents or guardians, as requested at the last meeting. The university counsel is of the opinion that we should not worry about the liability. We should continue to caution parents who's children are using our step stools, or their own, as to the risk of falling on the hard floor and ask them to be mindful of their little one's safety and perhaps even put warning labels on our stools, but nothing more is required of us.

Several members have indicated their desire to use some of the museum's lighted, locked cabinet space to display some of their railroad collectables. The turnover of exhibited items will provide a fresh look at new things for our regular visitors and is to be encouraged. Gary Cameron has agreed to work with those of you who want to be involved to arrange mutual times when our visitors are not present to facilitate making some of the space he has been

MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Gary Rabetoy

E-mail grabetor@yahoo.com

Home Layout Yes - Freelanced

MEMRR Module No

Visitors Welcome Yes

Occupation: Retired US Army Program Manager

Favorite railroad: New York Central, Santa Fe, Great Northern, Northern Pacific, Southern Pacific, Chicago & Northwestern

Favorite aspect of hobby: Building freight cars and structures

Least favorite aspect of hobby: Installing under the layout turnout motors and electromagnetic uncouplers

How did you get started in hobby: Received an American flyer trainset as a child

How long have you been a member of the MEMRR: I joined in 2008

What got you started with MEMRR: I visited the layout with a tour group and later had dinner with a member.

What dreams do you have for your layout or module: Expansion of narrow gauge section with a dual gauge connection with the branchline.

What other model railroad or railfan activities do you participate in: I've visited and ridden on narrow gauge and logging railroads. I'm especially interested in geared steam.

What one thing would improve MEMRR: Add rolling stock with separate ladders and grabirons.

What Special skill are you able to share with the club: Resistance Soldering

Club Activity Schedule Thursdays

Are Work Nights - Come join the Fun –
There's always a project going on from 4:30 to 7:30
or later

Saturdays

Are Open Sessions for Public Viewing – Sign up to
help out for 9:30 -12:30 or 12:00 -3:00 or stay the
day

3rd Tuesdays

Business meeting & Clinic Night
5:45 pm – El Torito Restaurant West State of
Franklin at the Kroger Plaza
7:00 pm FTSU Brown Hall Room 312

using available to others. We want to thank Gary for the

use of some of his many railroad treasures, including antique toy and model trains, that he has so graciously loaned the museum for display and we hope he will continue to allow us to exhibit many of his items, and those of his friends in our cabinets.

Last month's treasurer's report indicated how much we have grown as membership dues, club sales of hats, and the donation boxes have produced a current balance of over \$2,000—with more than 20 members still unpaid! Duane and I discussed the liability problems and the sometimes inconvenience of reimbursement for club purchases, or the confusion that occasionally arises in just making out a check for the payment of dues, and agreed on a new course of action. Friday, February 6th, we opened a bank account at First Bank on State of Franklin, in the name of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR). Club monies will be deposited in that account and can be drawn against it using checks. The treasurer, Duane Swank, and the president, Fred Alsop, can make the deposits, the withdrawals, and write the checks; all the normal banking transactions. Checks can be made out to either of these club officers, to the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, or simply to MEMRR for deposit.

The N-Scale group is busy improving the wiring on the Bankus layout and doing some track realignment. The HO-

Scale contingent is working on improving track performance and the 21 stall roundhouse is really taking shape and should be installed on the layout in a few weeks. Plenty of help is needed on both layouts so volunteer your time and talents. The university physical plant has begun the early phases of room renovation in 100B with the removal of the chemical fume hood and more work will follow soon.

Reminders: Please pay your 2009 dues if you are still delinquent as we don't want to lose you and you don't want to miss out on the activities of the club and the museum. Don't forget to submit a list of things on the 3 layouts for our visitors to "search" for and give those to the Newsletter Editor. Also, submit your 5 x 7 inch photos for the club photo contest. The more entries the better!

Visitation at the museum on Saturdays has been very good and we continue to draw new members from the visiting public. 2009 is promising to be an excellent year for the club and the museum from where I sit.

Fred Alsop
President of MEMRR
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum

The loco is coaled and steam is up! Are you on board?

Your membership with Mountain Empire Model Railroaders is about to expire and this may your last issue of *The SIGNAL BRIDGE*. December-January-February are membership renewal months. So please consider renewing your membership today.

Full Membership is \$30.00
Family membership is an additional \$5.00 per member
Associate Membership is \$12.00

Send your check to:
MEMRR

c/o Duane Swank
1763 Sylvan Hill Road
Elizabethton, TN 37643

The club is at ETSU with both HO and N Gauge Railroads to operate. Come join the fun.



PRODUCT REVIEW Rails Across America Edition Roosevelt Road

Kalmbach has produced a new volume in the *Dream Plan Build* video Series. The latest volume is *Roosevelt Road* in the "Rails Across America" series. It brings the action of Chicago's Union Station to your home entertainment center. Commuter trains, Amtrack intercity trains, switching operations provide a steady lineup of rail activity. This is Chicago's hotspot for passenger operations. The video crew gets accosted by Chicago Police and Amtrack security people. Such is railfanning in the post-9/11 era.

Cost: \$24.90 (S&H Included)