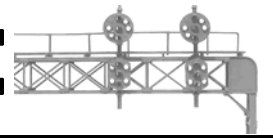


THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 15

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODULAR RAILROADERS CLUB
JANUARY 2008 ISSUE

Number 1

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

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.

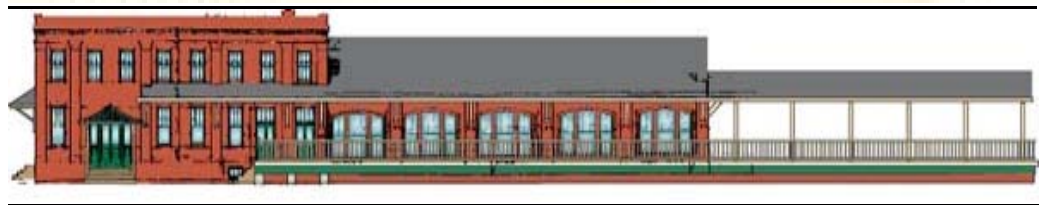
- A social gathering is held prior to the business meeting at *EL TORITO* on State of Franklin near ETSU in the Kroger Plaza starting at 5:45 PM. Visitors and those interested in joining MEMRR are invited to attend.

- 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.

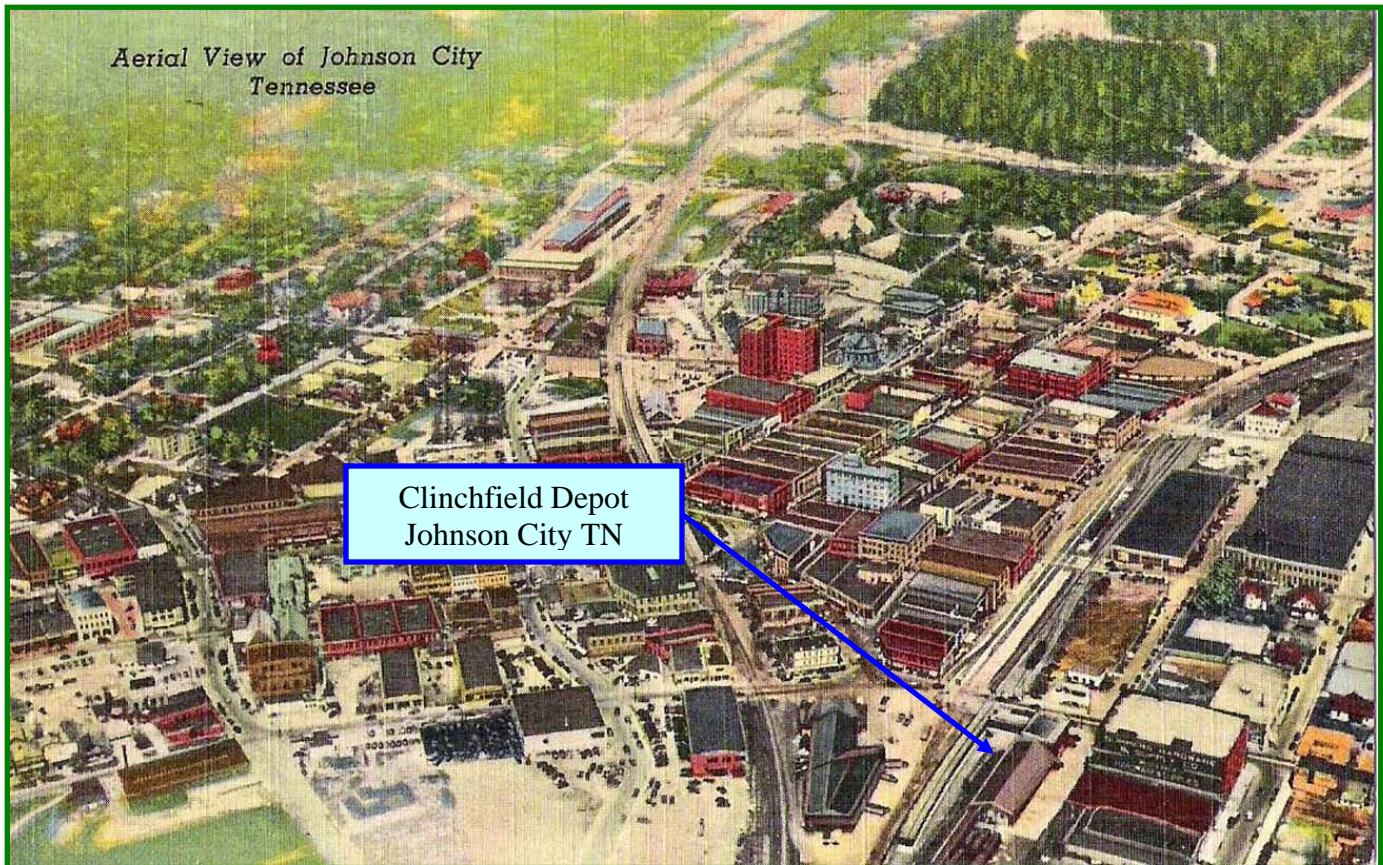


E.C. & O. DEPOT



From the Conductor's desk....

This month our feature is a photo essay on the Clinchfield Railroad Depot in Johnson City. The images are found on the Johnson's Depot website maintained by Alan Bridwell (www.johnsonsdepot.com). The historic *Clinchfield Depot* in Johnson City was saved from the wrecking ball in 2003 by Dorian Jones who hopes to restore the building. Our thanks go to Alan Bridwell for his efforts at preserving images from the past. His web site is a treasure trove of information on Johnson City and its surroundings across the years.





From the Chief Engineer's Desk: *Happy New Year and here's to a prosperous and healthy 2008!* But before we put year 2007 too far behind the caboose let's reflect on a few highlights of what was perhaps the best year for the MEMRR that I can remember.

We began the year in a great rail yard housed in Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site with a wonderful yardmaster-host, director Penny McLaughlin. But, our lease was expiring in a matter of months as Penny anticipated a long awaited need for the space we had used for more than a year for new exhibits for her museum. ETSU was beginning to move on promised space in the Old College of Medicine and we were informed that we could take possession of designated space there in April.

We moved on April 7th and begin working on Saturdays and Thursday evenings to resemble the Bankus N-gauge into a working layout, putting our layout back together, and concentrating on making the space into a museum. What initially looked to be a huge, cavernous room quickly began to shrink as display cabinets and a G-gauge layout materialized. We got lots of help from the ETSU Facilities Management crews with the physical details of remodeling the space to our needs and the Norfolk Southern Railroad

Group donated a flashing railroad crossbuck to mark our new entrance door. November 16th was a historic day for our club as that day, National Take a Toy Train to Work Day, (November is National Model Railroad Month) was the dedication date for our new George L. Carter Railroad Museum with lots of special guests in attendance including members of the Carter family and Marian Bankus came all the way from Houston, Texas, with her son David and daughter Pat. The events began with a morning local railroad history lecture series with speakers Ned Irwin, Johnny Graybeal, Alan Bridwell, and Ken Marsh, and ended with the formal museum dedication by Dr. Paul E. Stanton, Jr., President of East Tennessee State University. We also received donations of railroad items, some historical, some on temporary loan and some as permanent additions to our museum. Many of our members brought important items to help fill the display cases to add important variety to our exhibits. In the 7 Saturdays since the museum opened to the public we have had more than 800 visitors, some of whom have become new MEMRR members.

Our annual election of offices took place in November as well and all of the serving officers were reelected to their positions for another year. Our club is in good, experienced hands for 2008. We ended the year with a great Christmas Party at Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site that was a warm and joyous event for everyone. "Dirty Santa" attended and distributed gifts with a twist, and the meal was both filling and wonderful.

As we begin the New Year of 2008 we have as a club many, many things to be thankful for. Several of our members faced serious health issues in 2007 and all are making their way back to full strength. Our club is active with a solid core of members who have faced the challenge of building our club and the railroad museum and meeting the responsibility of the added workload to make it possible and on schedule. We have a display environment that would be the envy of almost any railroad club in the nation with our layout at the heart of a very fine railroad museum on a great university campus. We have unlimited access to the museum as members of MEMRR. We enjoy the weekly visits of the people in the community who are all most complimentary of our work and our hobby.

We have a great year ahead of us and we shall need to plan how to make the most of it. Each club member needs to decide what you can do individually to help your club to be even better in 2008. Everyone will be expected to help keep the museum open on Saturdays and on special event occasions, so plan to spend at least one Saturday a month at the museum operating the layouts—that's all the layouts; N, HO, and G. Come and help on Thursday nights and don't forget the important monthly meetings on 3rd Tuesdays. We will be modifying our current bylaws which are the basis of our club charter and operating rules, planning modifications to the HO layout including a working freight yard, converting our DCC from NCC to Digatrax, and making plans for improving the railroad museum. There is much work still to be done and the added responsibility of being open weekly as a public display. If we all share the work, as we should, it will be much easier for the club to achieve, so please do your part in 2008. We have a great club with a terrific and talented membership, so don't miss any of the fun by not being an active member in 2008. But, remember, 2008 dues are due now and you can't be part of an exciting year if you don't renew your membership as step number one. I hope to see you at every scheduled club event in this New Year. The mainline is clear so come on aboard!

Fred Alsop, President

SIGNAL BRIDGE
MEMBER OF THE MONTH
DON RAMEY

E-mail donramey@hotmail.com

Occupation Quality Control Manager

Home Layout Yes – Early Stages

Guests Welcome Yes – Bring tools

MEMRR Module Yes

Favorite railroad

Southern, Chesapeake & Ohio, Clinchfield

Favorite aspect of hobby

Believe it or not – scenery & details, finding time, parking & a cooperative back, permitting, completion of the module will happen.

Least favorite aspect of hobby

Haven't really found one yet. Cleaning track would be a good candidate.

How did you get started in the hobby

Watching C&O steam as a child sparked the interest that has so far lasted a lifetime; HO trainsets, railfanning, led to meeting people in the area with similar interests which led to MEMRR.

How long have you been a member of the MEMRR

A year longer than I can remember, but too shy to admit it.

What got you started with MEMRR

A desire to run trains on a "finished" layout... meetings at Gray Elementary School and still persevered to stay encourage and enjoy.

What dreams do you have for your layout or module

Trees... lots and lots of trees, track would be nice and why not throw in a few trains to watch – hopefully sooner than we all think.

What other model railroad or railfan activities do you participate in

Picture taking ... detailing engines... electrical "tricks" and 12" to the foot activities

What one thing would improve MEMRR

Operating sessions And more "school hands on" clinic sessions.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Dream-Plan-Build: Rails Across America Edition

Kalmbach has produced a new edition of videos in The Dream Plan Build video Series, this one entitled **Rails Across America**. This is the second, **Rochelle Illinois Railroad Park**. The subject of the video is modern day rail operations at one of the busiest crossings in the country, Rochelle, IL More than 80 trains pass through the park each day. Norfolk Southern, CSX, BNSF, UP trains parade through the frames of this video

The video adds an extensive array of modern motive power and contemporary rail cars to the club's video collection. It's limitations are the lack of variety of scenery. Shots are limited to the park and it's immediate surroundings. Chapters include:

- A History: The Crossing & The Railroads
- Day 1: Up Close at the Diamond
- Day 2: Enjoying a Trackside View
- Heritage Units: Katy & Mopac
- Dynamic Views: Teading Towards the Crossing

If you like modern diesels and big power with long frags and container expresses then sit back and enjoy the scenes. You can borrow the club's copy and enjoy an hour or so of watching the big boys operate.

Cost: \$24.90 (S&H Included)

JOIN THE FUN

THURSDAYS

ARE WORK NIGHTS THE CREW GATHERS
 BEGINNING AT 5:30 OR SO...
 COME WORK ON THE LAYOUTS

- OR -

SATURDAYS

WE ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
 GET IN THE ACTION AND RUN SOME TRAINS
 WE ARE OPEN 10 AM UNTIL 3 PM
 THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO
 LEARN – SEE – OR – DO
 IN N Gauge – G Gauge – and HO