The CRM&HA Newsletter

November/December 1999 Dennis Moriarty/Editor Volume 8 Number 6
Meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Central SC Library.

Christmas Party

The Christmas Party will be on 12-16-99 (our regular meeting night) at the Central SC Library. (7:30)
Please bring beverages with cups, or deserts with plates and forks etc. or snacks with bowls etc..
Call Bob Hanson at 885-0136 to let him know what you are bringing so that he can make sure there is enough of each.
Also, please bring a wrapped gift to exchange, railroad related, new or white elephant, but as Bob says "Good stuff". Also, consider bringing a show and tell item. Fun Fun Fun.
We will have the election of the CEO and Division Supers. So this is an important night. The nominating committee has nominated the following.
Chief Engineer/President----Rob Seel
HO Division Superintendent----Bob Folsom
General Division superintendent----Mac McMillin

Editorial: by Dennis Moriarty
Happy Thanksgiving, and Merry Christmas to y'all. The year has passed so fast that it hardly seems like the winter is approaching. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Christmas party. If it is like past years there will be plenty to eat. I always enjoy the "show and tell" session and the gift exchange. Also you can meet the new club officers. As many of you know Gene Tagliarini our Division Super, has moved to Wilmington NC. We wish Gene well at his new home and want him to know that he will be missed by the CMR&HA club. February is fast approaching and we are all getting ready for the Train Show. Please volunteer your services to our Show Engineer Bob Hanson.
I want to thank Rob Seel for writing an article for this newsletter. It is nice to get some alternate ideas about modeling. Maybe Rob's article will inspire some more of you to write a short article about any train-related subject. I am sure it would be welcomed by our membership.
I have been working hard on my own layout and I think it is easier to start from scratch than to adapt old layout sections to a new layout. Anyway I have the main line running even though it looks more like expressway overpasses than train layout. The track bed is flying in space between existing sections. I have all seven trains running through the system. It takes over 20 minutes for a train to make the complete trip because of all the starts and stops it has to make waiting for trains to pass. I am now starting to rewire the yard and then I can put in the supports for the Hydrocal scenery. Once that is in I won't have to worry so much about a derailment crashing to the concrete floor.
Please support the newsletter by submitting articles, news and or information. If you don't wish to write please give me a phone call. E-Mail, copy on disk and written contributions are most appreciated. My address is Dennis Moriarty, 519 Beacon Shores Drive, Seneca, SC 29672. Phone 864-888-2332. E-Mail MQK @ carol.net.

Thank you!

Thank you, Curt Ehmann, Rob Seel, and Bob Hanson for your contributions this month.

Thank you!

We wish to thank Clarence Harold of **Realty Executives** in Seneca for printing our newsletter at no cost to the club.

OPEN HOUSE SEE PAGE 3

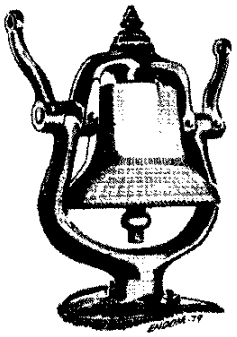
FROM THE ENGINEER'S SEAT
By Bob Hanson

From the right-hand seat---
We've been running this express train for 2 years now and are about ready to pull into the last station. For those of you who will make the last stop for this year at the December meeting, if you plan to attend and have not already signed up for either 1) soda and glasses, 2) cookies or brownies, or 3) snack items, ----**PLEASE CALL ME TO CONFIRM YOU ARE COMING AND WE WILL FIGURE OUT WHAT IS THE MOST NEEDED OF THE ABOVE 3 ITEMS.**
Also, everyone coming to the December meeting is asked to bring at least one WRAPPED item for our annual random gift exchange. NO JUNK---GOOD

STUFF. Remember---your give-aways or extras may be just what someone in the Club is looking for. Finally---even though we've had a little play with smoke and mirrors we've been able to keep our timetable and there is a full load of coal (cash) in the tender for your new officers to handle. **PLEASE SEE NOMINATING COMMITTEE SELECTIONS ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE**.

Well, that's about all for now. The steam is built up, the pressure gauge is working fine---and I'm ready to party!!!!!

(Retiring) Engineer BOB



DIRT CHEAP

Scenery tips by Rob Seel

Have you ever hesitated to model scenery because you either thought it was too difficult or too expensive? Well, rest assured it is neither! In fact, good looking scenery can be easier and cheaper than you think, and sometimes it's only as far as your own back yard. Six years of under-funded architecture school made me a cheap but good-looking modeler (my skills even got better too). Now, you too can be a cheap, good-looking modeler, or maybe just plain good-looking with very little money. So stop looking into that mirror -- it's for the layout!

Seriously, this is one of a series of easy "how-to" articles on crafting scenery. Assuming you already have completed basic framing and track work, let's gain some ground. If you are staring with an open-grid, or "cookie-cutter" type of framing, you have the advantage of running level track while your terrain rises and falls around your trains (kind of like it does in the real world). You can have high mountains and low river valleys at the same time. As Yogi Berra might have said, as many articles have been written about different land-forming techniques, there are many ways of forming land.

Carving solid blocks or sheets of foam plastic is effective, but can be quite expensive. I tend to limit my use of foam plastic to knolls or small rock cuts. But for quick and dirty topography, I recommend shell-type scenery. Some people use patches of commercial paper towels dipped in Hydrocal plaster laid-up over webs of cardboard strips, masking tape, wadded newspaper, etc. If you do this, be sure to use REAL Hydrocal -- not the lightweight casting stuff, because you'll be disappointed when it dries and flakes away, leaving a pile of wasted time and money. But, if you use real Hydrocal carefully, you can have a paper-thin, hard shell that is virtually self-supporting. Hence, the name "hard shell" scenery. Plaster cloth, however, is GREAT STUFF! Why it has taken so long for us hobbyists to discover what physicians have snickered at us about as they wrapped our broken arms with. . . ? You guessed it. A roll of plaster cloth at a decent hobby store costs about $6-7 and is well worth the price. Simply cut an 8 to 12-inch piece, dip it in a pan of water, and drape it over wadded newspaper, stapled cardboard strips, etc. Unlike Hydrocal, you don't mix anything or race against the curing time. Plaster cloth is very clean too. You might get a little plaster on your fingertips, but it drips clear water. Be sure to overlap the pieces 1/4-inch or so, and seam the pieces together with your fingers. You may wish to reinforce weak areas with a second layer, but usually one will suffice.

Next time, I'll discuss grading and exposed rock, which are applied over the plastercloth. Stay tuned!

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Minutes of Regular Meetings

October 21, 1999

CEO and Engineer Bob Hanson at 7:30 PM chaired the meeting. 12 members were in attendance.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved.

Treasurer **Ralph Milz**, although unable to attend reported that our account total is $5,144.05.

Old Business: Four N modules are still in storage. They will be moved to the Rail & Spike soon.

Howard Garner gave a report on the progress of the Club hosting the annual meeting of the SE Division of the NMRA in 2002. Howard said that we would know if our offer would be accepted by the next business meeting. Howard has lined up 3 clinics and needs more. If we are approved we will need to have most of our plans made by the Atlanta RR Show in six months, so that we can advertise.

New Business: The CRM&HA Web site will be moving soon. The new address will be issued as soon as it is available. The Rail & Spike now has a Web site. It is WWW.RAILNSPIKE.COM.

There was a discussion of the CRM&HA Train Show in February. Work has started and each member involved gave a report on his or her status. It was reported that two clinics have been lined up. Our HO division super (**Rob Seel**) will talk on "Modeling Water", and **Jim Moir** from Knoxville, Tenn. will talk about "Computers and Model Rail Roads".

Rob Seel reported that his Saturday clinics at the Rail and Spike are now only on rain days.
Rob Seel reported that he could use some help building buildings for the Club's HO layout and to contact him for instructions.
Show and Tell: **Rob Seel, John Thorpe, Howard Garner and Steve Zonay** brought in Photos and Models for everyone to look at.
Program: **Rodney Cowan** brought a very interesting video about the Boston and Maine Rail Road in the 40's and 50's. Rodney called the equipment junk, but it was interesting junk, many old steam engines were pulling passenger and freight cars.
Respectfully Submitted, D.C. Moriarty, acting Stationmaster.

Minutes of Regular Meetings
November 18, 1999

Not ready as yet because of the Holiday.
But, if you missed Pete Sheriff and Maurice Adams's program, you missed a good one!

Open House!

The Garner Family invites everyone to an open house of the Cascade Western Rail Road on December 4th, Noon to 10pm. The CWRR is located at 244 Margaret St., Pickens, SC. Call Howard at 864/878-4705 for directions if needed.

Club Layout

Work on the club layout at Bob Folsom's house is still going on Thursday nights. If you would like to help with the layout, please call Bob at 654-8244.

Interesting Articles
Curt Ehmann submitted the following articles.

Passenger trains still efficient transportation

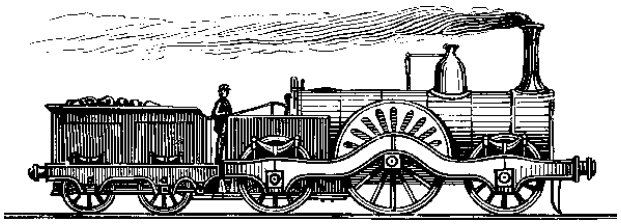
USA TODAY's coverage of Amtrak's record-setting test run by the high-speed electric Acela train was very encouraging to all of us who advocate high-speed corridor trains as a solution to the functional deterioration of the nation's congested airway and highways systems. ("'Red- Letter day' for red-ink railroad, "News, Oct. 12).
However the headline selection was unfortunate and misleading. It perpetuates the fallacy that rail is less economical than air and highway in carrying travelers. Actually most of the "deficits" and "subsidies" USA TODAY attributes to Amtrak in its report represent nothing more than federal investment in new infrastructure – track, signals, overhead electrification, bridges and tunnels – needed to make trains safe, fast, comfortable and economically competitive with other federally sponsored transportation.
This is the same kind of federal investment that has been going into the nation's highways and civil-aviation infrastructure, though they are on a much more vast scale -- $trillion each – for more than 70 years.
With a much smaller amount of capital investment, a modern-corridor railroad generates a commercial performance many time superior to that of an airway or highway infrastructure.
On Japan's original Tokyo-Osaka Shin Kan Sen railroad, peak-hour trains running five or six minutes apart enable a single track to carry up to 10,000 passengers per hour regardless of weather. A single lane of highway can move only 1,200 person per hour, and only under ideal conditions.
Weather permitting, it would take 33 Boeing 747's to move the 10,000 rail passengers, and the 747s would lack the train's ability to make intermediate stops.
Please stop attributing "red ink" to passenger trains. The focus should be on the real numbers.

James E. Coston
Chicago, Ill.

Not really speed record

Amtrak's claims of its Acela test train's setting a North American speed record for "a passenger train on regular track" – must be taken with a grain of salt.
The generally recognized North American speed record for conventional railroad equipment still belongs to a New York Central Budd RDC-3 self-propelled passenger coach, No. M-497, which reached 183.85 mph on July 24, 1966.
The run actually was made on 24 miles of arrow-straight regular track between Butler, Ind. and Stryker, Ohio.
Powered in regular service by a self-contained diesel-hydraulic drive, the M-497 was highly modified with a streamlined nose and refitted for tests with a pair of military-surplus jet engines mounted on the roof near the front of the car.
Little seems to be known about the purpose of the tests, since the New Your Central Like most contemporary U.S. railroads, already had written off passenger travel as largely irrelevant to its future.
Amtrak's claim may be valid if "train" is exclusively defined as two or more cars coupled together, but the M-497 record has remained unchallenged for 33 years.

Darrell Sherrod
Kokomo, Ind.



Cleaning Train Engine Wheels
By Dennis Moriarty

A simple but effect way to clean train engine wheels is to lay a piece of paper towel over the track. Soak the towel at the track with liquid track cleaner using a small paintbrush to apply the cleaner. Place the front half of the engine on the wet towel and the back half on the track for electrical contact. With the power on, let the front wheels rotate and move back and forth on the towel. The cleaning fluid will make the wheels sparkle. Turn the engine around, move the paper towel to a clean area, reapply-cleaning fluid and do the other half. You can do it on the layout or use a board with about two feet of track attached at the workbench for this purpose. I use a toy train transformer with alligator clips attached to power the track. It really works.

Inside/Out
Inexpensive Crossing Gates
By Dennis Moriarty

In the last article, roads and hi-ways crossing railroad tracks were discussed. RR crossing signs are used on some country crossings, which makes life easy for the modeler because several companies make manufactured signs in all the scales.

Crossing gates present more of a problem. First they are mechanical devises that show predominantly on the layout. If a crossing gate is installed in a fixed position it doesn't look very realistic when the train goes by and the gate is still flying in the air. The problem is making the gate go down before the train reaches the crossing and go up after it passes. There are a few companies that make kits that include optical sensors to locate the train and a mechanical device to lower the gate. They are expensive but effective.

I thought it might be more fun to try to build an operating gate from scratch. To start, plastic gates can be purchased for a nominal cost. They can be made more realistic looking by painting them and or by adding thin cardboard strips on the side to make the gates longer. The gates that we need are the ones that have a counter weight on the backside of the fulcrum. To make the gate go up: First drill a small hole through the gate between the counter weight and the fulcrum and one directly below it through the layout top. Second put a thin wire (approximately #22) up through the layout and into the hole on the gate. Secure it to the gate with a simple twist. Under the layout attach a finishing nail to the wire leaving about 3 inches of slack. The weight of the nail will pull down on the back of the gate and the gate will go up. To make the gate go down add an electro-magnet coil above and around the nail. The coil can be made by winding magnet wire around a plastic soda straw. Put a pencil inside the straw to keep it from collapsing and put the straw and pencil in a drill to wind the coil. You can experiment with the number of windings but most any gob of wire will work. Or you can find an old solenoid coil or relay coil and drill the core out. Pull the pencil out and slide the straw and coil up over and slightly above the nail. Apply power to the coil with a toy train transformer and it will pull the nail up inside and push the gate down. The coil can be held in position under the layout by making a small L shape wooden support. Screw the bottom of the L up to the bottom of the layout and tape or hot glue the coil to the support. Be sure you get it at just the right spot so that the nail slides up into the soda straw without resistance. If your crossing has two gates just add another nail and coil across the road.

To have the train activate the crossing gate install a track insulator at the point where the train is to lower the gate and another at the point where the longest train will clear the gate. A current sensor in the wire to this "Block" in the track can be used to activate a relay. The relay is wired to the electro-magnet coil at the gate and from the power source. When the train engine enters the block the relay closes which powers the coil which pulls the nail up into the coil and the wire goes up and lifts the back of the gate. A slow motion turnout motor could be used instead of the electro-magnet, which would make the gate even more realistic as the gate would come down slower. If a double pole relay is used, the other side of the relay could be used for a sound system to activate a bell sound speaker or flashing light at the crossing. Next month we will review the block current sensor which is used to tell when a train is in a block and can control other items like gate crossings, turnouts, other trains, track reverse relays etc.

Tip of the Month
By Dennis Moriarty

Snap Switches detract from the appearance of the layout but are much easier to use and are inexpensive which can be important in large layouts. They can be made less noticeable by painting them the same color as the layout at that point and then covering them with ballast or grass, weeds, and bushes.

ASrailD
ZfansD

At the October meeting.
It was reported that the Greenville Northern was shutdown and may reopen. The NHRS wants to use the tracks.
It was reported that NS was seen using UP power.
At the November meeting
As reported last month NS is using UP power. It is also using CN engines. Rodney reported seeing a multiple header of 7 engines and only one was NS.
Bob Folsom reported on his trip to Orlando, Fla. There was a conference and Light Rail Bombardier brought a 3-car train into the Expo Center complete with panagraph and fake overhead wires for the display.
Mac reported that the state of North Carolina is buying abandoned short line railroad trackage.
Bob Hanson reported that North Carolina has purchased several engines and they are being used for passenger service.
It was reported that Hurricane Floyd washed out many bridges and roadbeds.
Just a reminder, be safe and do your railfanning from a distance.

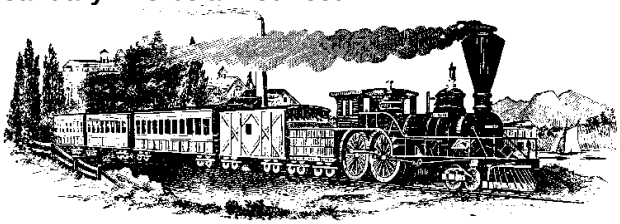
Dues Due

Our Paymaster, Ralph Milz would like your year 2000 dues. Please **fill out the form on the back of the newsletter and give or mail it with your dues** to Ralph Milz at 6 Iron Clad Drive, Salem SC 29676. It's still $20.00.

Welcome New Members

No new members at this time. Please help us increase our membership by signing up a friend. There is a membership application on the back page.

Future Meeting Programs
December: Christmas Party
January: To be announced.



CMR&HA TRAIN CREW
Engineer and CEO: Bob Hanson
Division Super: Gene Tagliarini
Station Master: Curt Ehmann
Paymaster: Ralph Milz
HO Division Super: Rob Seel

OPEN HOUSE
SEE PAGE 3

Cartoon from WWW.toytrunkrailroad.com

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Central Railway Model & Historical Association

Membership Application

Member #_____

Name:_____

Address:_____**Phone:**_____

City:_____**State:**_____

1. Declared Interest Group: HO N General (Circle one)

2, Other Railroad Interests: Modeling Collecting Railfanning History
Other?_____

3. Modeling Scale: Z N HO S O G (Circle yours)

4 Railroad Memberships: NMRA NRHS Other?_____

5. Do you have a home lay-out? Y N Open to Visitors? Y N

6. I can help the Association by:

- **( ) Working on one of the modular projects**
- **( ) Helping with set-up and operation of lay-outs at shows.**
- **( ) Organizing an excursion to a show or museum.**
- **( ) Serving on a committee (i.e. Audit, Publicity, etc.)**
- **( ) Serving as Officer or Director.**
- **( ) Preparing a short program for monthly meeting.**
- **( ) Other:**_____

7. Please record my membership in the Association for 1999. Enclosed is my (check) or (cash) in the amount of $20.00, Send to: Treasurer, CRM&HA, P.O. Box 27, Central SC, 29630-0027. Phone (864) 944-8120.

Signature _____

C.R.M.&H.A.
Dennis Moriarty, Editor
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Seneca, SC 29672

FIRST CLASS MAIL

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED