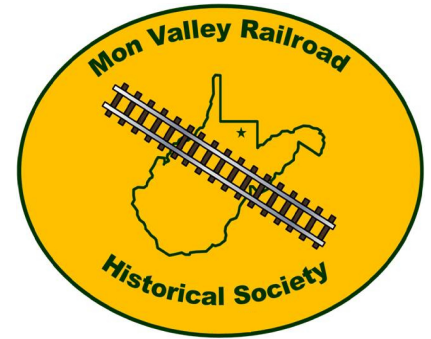


# ***TRAIN OF THOUGHT***

## **MON VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.**

### **October, 2021**



#### ***EDITORS NOTE***

Autumn is here, days are shorter, days and nights are cooler and we have a lot of work ahead of us.

The HO track plan was approved at the September business meeting, now we have to figure out how much wood and other materials we need to purchase for construction to begin. We will need every member to help with the construction, which will likely start along the back wall. Planning for the backdrop and support system will be crucial since we can't attach anything to the walls as per the Mall managements request.

Our next event will be in concert with the Alzheimer's Association on Sunday, October 17, 2021 from 1pm til 4pm. This event will go along way in getting the word out that our Society is still here and willing to help out other community organizations. Please help us if you can. If you are thinking of helping out with this event, the National Model Railroad Month event in November or our Holiday Open House in December please wear either your blue society polo shirt or yellow T-shirt. If you are a new member try to wear something that has a railroad theme.

Happy Training,

*Rich Henderson, Editor*



#### ***Minutes of the September 2, 2021 Business Meeting***

The September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 meeting was called to order by President Lou LeMelle at 1900 (7pm) with 5 officers and 9 members present. After his opening remarks, President LeMelle turned the conduct of the business meeting over to Vice President Ken Colvin. A motion was made by Greg and a second by Richard Turton to have the August, 2021 Business Meeting Minutes approved. The motion was voted on and approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Keith DeVault made his report. The society remains financially stable and healthy. Rich Henderson made a motion to accept with a second by Ken Colvin. Motion voted on and approved.

**Modules:** The modules ran well during both days of the Open House. It was reported that the mall wants the modules hooked up and running on Thursday Nights as well as special events held at the mall.

**Publicity:** After the Back to School Open House, FB had 730 likes, then on Monday there were 1033 post likes after Rich uploaded Bob Gays latest pictures, we also received a donation.

#### ***SCHEDULE of EVENTS***

**October 7, 2021  
Business Meeting**

**Sunday, October 17, 2021  
Alzheimer's Walk  
Open House 1pm til 4pm**  
*Worker's Needed!*

**November 4, 2021  
Business Meeting**

**November 13, 2021  
National Model Railroad  
Month Open House  
10am til 4pm**  
*Workers Needed!*

**December 2, 2021  
Business Meeting**

**December 18 & 19, 2021  
Holiday Open House**  
*Workers Needed!*



**Ad Cars:** No new updates to report.

**Membership:** Jeremy and Jay Farling had submitted an application for membership. After a motion by Keith and a second by Gary they were voted in and welcomed as new members. Welcome Aboard Jeremy & Jay!

**Donations:** Rich Henderson reported receiving a donation from Hastings Funeral Home for the Open House event. Dave Edwards donated monies from the coin operated mall layout.

**Old Business:** John Perry the Director of Operation Life Saver and Rich Henderson are to have conversation about Operation Life Saver and the 25 coloring books Rich requested.

Rich Henderson reported on the outcome of the Open House. Net profit totaled \$938.60. Rich also reported that the Kruger Street Toy and Train Museum folks enjoyed Saturday and returned again on Sunday. Gary Deavers made a motion to approve a Thank You card and donation to help offset travel expenses. After a second by Jon Hebb the motion was voted on and approved.

It was reported that the plumber intended to return on 9/3 to complete some unfinished work.

**New Business:** Key Learning Autism Center in the Mall contacted Rich Henderson saying the kids are very interested in visiting and seeing the trains. They can visit on Monday 9/13 between the hours of 9:30 and 3:30. Rich asked for volunteers to be available at 1:pm that day. Several members committed to be hosts.

Eric Hopkins started work on a visual display where the flower box is.

Jon Hebb has listed us with TechSoup. From what was

explained, this organization works to provide services and contacts for non profits to pair with corporations that have endowments, grants, and other resources that may provide opportunity for us. Jon also mentioned that he is researching ways that we can receive donations "on line". He suggested we reform membership levels and look into changing donor recognition.

Writing for grants and a Boy Scouts of America Railroad Merit Badge was also suggested.

Ken Colvin made a motion authorizing Jon to move forward on developing Merchant Services. Keith put forth a second and the measure passed.

**Main Layout:** Gary Deavers and Eric Hopkins explained the layout plans and entertained all questions. Gary recommended or made a motion for the Track Layout Plans to be approved. Keith gave a second. The plans were approved by unanimous vote. The committee insisted they continue to act in a leadership/oversight capacity. There were no objections.

**For the Good of the Order:**  
Nothing

Greg made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Rich offered a second. The meeting was adjourned by Vice President Ken Colvin at 2029 (8:29 pm).

**Greg Malnikoff**  
Secretary, MVRHRS



## ***Command Control & Sound Systems for "O" Gauge***

Believe it or not but there is "Command Control" for "O" gauge electric trains! It all started in 1969 with Louis Marx & Companies Sound of Power (SOP), which was just a white noise circuit-board and speaker mounted in a steam loco's tender that created the "Chuff chuff sound of a steamer timed to the turning of the locomotive's drivers. Then in 1972 Lionel created the Mighty Sound of Steam which was basically the same system. An electronic whistle and diesel horn was later added to locomotives. From this humble start the flood gates were opened for Command Control in O gauge. It is very similar to DCC in HO scale.

Some History: The first Command Control system came from Lionel in 1947 and was called "The Electronic Set". Lionel placed small radio receivers in the tender and each freight car. A special transformer with color-coded buttons was produced. This allowed the operator to press a button and reverse the locomotive, blow the whistle or uncouple or unload the freight car. The radio frequency receivers had to be constantly adjusted.

It was expensive and only lasted three years. Then in the early 1960's General Electric came up with ASTRAC for HO scale, again a radio frequency control system, up to five locomotives could be controlled on one track with no isolated blocks. Again, this system was complicated and expensive and did not last.

In the early 1990's Lionel developed Train Master Command Control or TMCC for short. This system was jointly developed by Lionel and "rocker" Neil Young. Young is a long time Lionel enthusiast and had a disabled son that had trouble working the regular transformers controls and

## *Command Control for "O" Gauge Continued*

getting around their large O gauge layout. Pushing buttons on a remote control device and following the train around the layout in a wheelchair was much preferable. The power from the transformer was a constant 22 volts to the rails. In this system each locomotive had a radio frequency receiver either in the tender of a steamer or body of a diesel or electric. Basically it was/is a decoder just like the ones used in HO scale DCC. In Lionel's case the signals were sent through the air waves not through the track. The antenna was the steamers handrails insulated from the die-cast body or inside the shell of plastic bodied diesel. This allowed multiple locos to travel on the same track at the same time using a CAB-1 remote controller (later a CAB-2) controller. The controller not only controlled the engines speed but also was able to reverse any loco on the track and allowed the operator to blow the whistle/horn and/or bell in each unit. As the power increased so did the steam or diesel rev's from the loco's. As it slowed to a stop all the sounds of shutdown were also heard.

Next came DCS (Digital Command System) from Mikes Train House (MTH Electric Trains) and it was almost exactly like HO's DCC with a decoder, track power was fixed at 24 volts max and the signal was sent through the track rails. This system also controlled the locos speed, reverse and any bells, whistles or diesel horn sounds. They were competing systems and incompatible with each other. Operators had to choose which one they were going to use or buy both systems for their layouts if they wanted to run both companies locomotives! At over \$1,000 dollars each it was a hard and expensive choice.

Lionel took the first steps to become the market leader by licensing their system (TMCC) to other manufacturers while Mike Wolfe of MTH kept his system in house. Little wonder that Lionel's system is the more popular today. MTH did however push the limits by creating better sound systems for their fleets and of course Lionel had to keep pace offering Rail Sounds and later Rail Sounds 2 in their locomotives. These were only sound systems not train control systems but O gauge operators liked them and of course sound has been part of electric trains since the 1930's when the first whistle tender was offered by Lionel.

Over the years each company upped the other in advances in technology with Lionel finally winning out with their new "Legacy System". Lionel spun off its technology division to Neil Young who created "LionTech" to exclusively develop Command control and Sound systems for Lionel. Legacy is the most expensive one to date but offers the most thrilling experience for O gauge model railroaders. Not only does it control the locomotives but offers the finest set of sounds and special effects from quilling whistle/horns, to steam coming from the whistle when it is blown to digital recreations of sounds created for each type of locomotive developed by the railroads. An Alco sounds differently from an EMD, electrics sound differently from a diesel and steam locos all have their own separate sound systems, even the squeaking brakes can be heard. There is "Cab chatter" where you hear different communications between the engineer and the dispatcher, the conductor announcing the departure and/or arrival of their train at the station, and it all can be adjusted and/or changed by the operator. Smoke units can be adjusted for more or less and not only comes

from the stack but also steam from the cylinders. Diesel locos also smoke and all this can be controlled, adjusted, turned up or down by the hand held remote!

The final Command control system is the simplest and also comes from Lionel and LionTech. It's called LionChief (later LionChief +). It was made for starter sets and could only run one loco at a time. The disadvantage with this system is that an operator had to have a separate controller for each locomotive. Imagine trying to run two or more locomotives on the same track with different remote's at the same time! LionChief + solved this problem less than a year later by allowing one controller to handle five locos at the same time using one handheld remote.

It should be noted that what we call "Conventional Control" is still very popular and even though these new systems can do just about anything both Lionel and MTH have made their equipment so that it can run without Command Control. An Operator can place any loco equipped with command control on a regular layout and it will run by adjusting the handle on a regular transformer. You can also blow the whistle/horn or ring the bell. You can hear the startup sounds and the increase in steam sounds or diesel rev's without paying through the nose for an expensive control system. Of course some of the fancier effects are only triggered by the Command system and are not available in Conventional Control. So while HO scale operators have DCC and the different systems are mostly compatible it's not so with O gauge. Maybe one day it will.

***Rich Henderson***



***Mon Valley Railroad  
Historical Society  
OFFICERS***

**President**

Lou Lemelle  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Kenton Colvin

Cell [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Secretary**

Greg Malnikoff  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Keith DeVault  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Rich Henderson  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Gary Deavers  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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<http://www.MVRRHS.org>

***Our Society***

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