

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

MON VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.

October, 2023



EDITORS NOTE

Crisp air, warm days, cool nights, time to work on the railroad! Work sessions continue on our HO, N & O gauge layouts. Members are always welcome & I encourage you to come and help us build your new layouts! After all, they are being built for your enjoyment of your favorite hobby, model railroading. Come on, help us.

National Model Railroad month is in November and we have scheduled a one day Open House on Saturday, November 11th from 10am til 4pm. We need workers for this event, Please set aside some time to help.

We keep getting visitors on the days when we are having work sessions. Many of those people have never heard of us or they say we are never open when they are at the Mall. Please show them around, give them a pamphlet or flyer. Think about talking up our Society when you are out & about. The more the merrier!

Model Railroading is Fun!

Rich Henderson, Editor



Minutes of the September 7, 2023 Business Meeting

Vice President Ken Colvin called the meeting to order at 7pm with 12 members, including 4 of 5 officers, attending. Another member arrived shortly thereafter making the total attendance 13.

Minutes of the previous meeting:
Gary D. moved that we approve the minutes of the August 3rd business meeting as published in the September newsletter, seconded by Eric M. Approval was unanimous after no discussion.

Treasurer's report (Keith D.):
Committee members have been contacted and most have responded, and this effort is slowly getting off the ground and back on the track. Melissa B. volunteered to join the fundraising committee.

Publicity (Rich H.):
Facebook / Meta changes – no longer administering donations; this role now handled by PayPal Giving Fund for Charities. Donations are easy, though there is a 3% to 3.5% processing fee. MVRHS now has 1,290 followers, which is expected to roll over to 1,300 soon. Open House and layout construction photos generated dozens of likes and several shares.

Meeting Minutes continued on Page 2

SCHEDULE of EVENTS

**October 5, 2023
Business Meeting**

**November 2, 2023
Business Meeting**

**November 11, 2023
National Model
Railroad Month
Open House??
Workers Needed!**

**December 7, 2023
Business Meeting**

**December 16 & 17
Holiday Open House??
Workers Needed!**

**January 1, 2024
Operating Session??**

**January 4, 2024
Business Meeting**



Minutes continued from Page 1

Rich had roadside and interior signs printed at his expense.

Fundraising (formerly Ad Cars) : (Eric H.)

Committee members have been contacted and most have responded, and this effort is slowly getting off the ground and back on the track. Melissa B. volunteered to join the fundraising committee.

Membership: (Rich H.)

Rich moved to have MVRRHs accept Melissa and Emanuel Brodsky under a Family membership, seconded by Dave E., who also sponsored them. The membership approved unanimously after a brief discussion citing their ongoing contributions engagement in Society activities. Rich followed up with a motion to accept Miller Geer as a new member. Miller is a WVU freshman with a layout back home. He assisted with the Back to School Open House. The motion was seconded by Keith D. with unanimous approval by members present. This brings our total membership up to 40. Welcome Melissa, Emanuel and Miller!

Donations:(Rich H.)

The caboos had not been checked at the time of the meeting.

Old Business:

Open House review (Rich H.): Both days of the Back to School Open House were busy and profitable for the Society. All three layouts operated respectably well.

New Business:

National Model Railroad Month Open House: Motion by Rich H. to set Saturday, November 11th for this event, second by Roy S. Approved unanimously after a brief discussion clarifying date, purpose and number of days – only the Saturday in this case.

Holiday Open House: Motion by Rich H. to set for Saturday and Sunday, December 16th and 17th, seconded by Frank B. Approved unanimously following a brief discussion.

LAYOUTS:

O Gauge :(Rich H.)

Mountain forms are nearly ready for application of scenic materials. Track received for finishing the yard, which will have it's own transformer and appropriate wiring and phasing with the main transformer.

HO Scale: (Keith D.)

The second level benchwork is finished and final elevation materials, roadbed and track may now be installed throughout. Wire is in for drops, power blocks are installed.

Gary D.: Electrical issue with curved switch entering Easton staging is fixed. Decker Run industrial area is wired and the track at Easton is painted. Panel toggle switches are in place for around half of the anticipated installation locations.

N Scale Layout: Max McD .:

The mainline is now defined and about half of the cork roadbed is done. Switches are being cut in. The group discussed yard configuration and wiring. Monday and Thursday work sessions will resume.

For the Good of the Order:

Rich H.: Old guest book missing. Rich provided a new replacement. Several members participated in a discussion aimed at increasing security.

Bill H. requested consideration when turning off lights and breakers. Improved documentation / indicator labels suggested.

Rich H. will circulate an updated roster.

Eric M. mentioned National Rail Safety week, September 18th – 24th. Only railroad personnel should be on railroad property and flashing red lights at crossings mean stop!

With multiple motions on the floor the meeting was adjourned at 7:38pm.

*Eric J. Hopkins,
Secretary MVRRHs*



Caboos – Last Days.

Cabooses (no, not caboose) were a common occurrence on freight trains throughout most of the 1900s, yet we rarely see them today. Why is that? When did they stop operating? Where did they go? And lastly, how can I model the last days of the caboos on my layout? Cabooses used to bring up the rear of every freight train on the rails. What happened to them? Can you still model them.

Why?

In one word: **technology**. Advances in technology meant that the jobs of the conductor and brakeman in the caboos were obsolete. Roller-bearing trucks started replacing solid-bearing trucks at the end of World War II, drastically reducing the threat of hotboxes. Wayside detectors, such as hotbox and dragging equipment detectors, were placed throughout the system, eliminating the need for eyes in the back of the train. Signal systems like Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) and block signals, as well as hand-held radios, took most of the rear brakeman's job away on road trains. The final nail in the coffin was the introduction of the End of Train Device. This device monitors different factors, such as brake pressure, and has

Caboose - Last Days Continued

a flashing red light warning of a train's presence. Newer, smarter EOT's can even send GPS signals and apply emergency braking.

When?

The Florida East Coast began using EOTs in 1969, but it wasn't until the 1980s that the rest of the country caught on. The use of the end-of-train device was codified in the 1982 United Transportation Union (UTU) national agreement. Caboosees were leaving the railroads en masse by the mid-1980s. The railroads retained a few of their cabooses for jobs such as transfers, locals, and as living quarters. Many railroads used home-built transfer cabooses for transfer and local jobs and some are still in use. Purpose-built cabooses were converted to shoving platforms or for other specific duties such as railroad police.

Where?

Unfortunately, a majority of the cabooses around by the 1980s were sent to the scrap yard. Lines of cabooses could be seen at major yards with only one destination in sight. As mentioned above, the railroads kept some cabooses for various specialty uses. Many wound up in the hands of railroad museums, businesses, and private collections. Athearn recently announced a run of caboose-turned-businesses, due to release in 2024.

How?

This is the fun part; how can you model cabooses on your layout during this transition period? Sparingly. Since the railroads had no use for major servicing facilities, a caboose track on your layout may only need to hold one caboose. The transition between cabooses and EOT's was quicker than the transition between steam and diesel, but if you model the mid-1980s, it could be prototypical to have some

road trains run with a caboose and some with an EOT. To prototypically model the era, but still display cabooses that you have, you could place them all on one yard track. And if you model the modern era, cabooses are still used as shoving platforms and in excursion service. The caboose modeling possibilities are virtually endless.

Caboose photo courtesy MVRHHS



This Article was given to Ken Colvin by a friend.



ARTICLES WANTED

Space is available for members to write an article for the newsletter. It may be about your model railroad, a new model you just built or acquired, a railfan trip you recently took or about any railroad related topic. Just type it up and send it to: Rich Henderson, Editor at: trainman430@comcast.net

Please allow two (2) weeks before the next newsletter is published.

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