



THE FIRST STATE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB, INC. NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2015

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of The First State Model Railroad Club, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015, at 7:30 P.M. at Jarrell Station at 1282 McKee Road (the Old REA/Magnum Building) in Dover, DE. From Route 13, go west on Scarborough Road about two miles and the building is on the right. From Dover, off Route 8, take Saulsbury Road north, which turns into McKee Road and the building is on the left next to Dover's Children's Village Too (formerly Kenton Child Care Center). Come early and run some trains.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS:

January has come and gone, taking with it one of the high points of our club's year. The trip to Springfield, MA to attend the Amherst Society's annual super train show (four exhibit halls filled with every conceivable model railroading product in all scales and types) was very successful thanks to the organizing skills of Jim Thompson, Paul Roy and Dick Lush. These guys constitute a very experienced team and they have done a great job this year. We had three carloads of members and wives with Les Souder, Bill Schrodell and, of course, Jim Thompson doing the driving. Starting out the weather predictions were rather dire but we drove up on Friday in the finest conditions one could wish for, bright sun and mild temps. Saturday there was snow on the ground but it was nothing the road crews couldn't handle. For the wives' trip to Yankee Candle on Saturday, Myrna Valle took over and piloted Les' SUV from Springfield to YC and back. Myrna is an excellent all-around driver and all the ladies felt safe and secure with her at the wheel. We found a great new place to eat when we went to the Steaming Tender restaurant on Saturday evening. We may make this our banquet stop if we go again next year. Meanwhile we got our usual warm welcome at Bob Evan's IHOP on Saturday and Sunday. We came home Sunday and once again the driving was easy. Our only excitement was evading a fire truck that made an unexpected left turn in front of us and stopped just short of a herd of deer while running on a back road near Massey, MD. I lost out on a brass loco when the guy ahead of me snapped it up right under my nose, but that's train shows! I bought some tools and a pair of Bachmann Western Pacific diesels, one of which will be going up to Philly for trouble shooting right out of the box! Although our members "shopped down hard" in Springfield, by the following weekend they were ready to go again so nine of us attended the Timonium Train Show on Saturday and came home with more cool stuff. I will spend the rest of the winter and early spring sorting out the stuff I bought. With additional local shows scheduled for March and April there should be no reason for us to lack modeling projects from now until summer!

Speaking of projects, the Agricultural Museum layout just keeps moving along. Project manager Henry Kramer vowed he would have everything in place by spring and this prediction is rapidly shaping up thanks to a dedicated corps of workers. The skills these guys are mastering working with structures and scenicizing are IMPRESSIVE and will stand both them and the Club in good stead as we all advance our modeling agendas.

So, what comes next? I have proposed that we take our fleet of donated club rolling stock, which now numbers approximately ninety units and get them fine-tuned and in compliance with NMRA operating standards. This will involve bringing them up to par in the areas of weight and coupler heights and improving the rolling qualities of the trucks and wheels. There is also the matter of laying track and wiring up the very sophisticated lift gate that Richard Stockslager has made for the DCC layout. We will also continue work on newer DCC modules now in place but unfinished otherwise and some smoothing out work is needed on our older DC layout. In addition to these activities we have a very busy schedule of public events coming up, starting on Saturday, February 28th, when we set up at Smyrna High School to help them celebrate their annual festival. The following Saturday, March 7th, we set up again at the Sudlersville Fire House to support another train show run by club member Kurt Schwaninger. After that we have a two-day set-up at the Chase Center for the Greenberg Train Show in Wilmington. We have just received confirmation so this show is definitely "on." That's a lot of shows in a relatively short time frame and I encourage as many members as possible to participate, help set up and especially bring trains to run.

Finally, Henry Kramer has drafted a position paper advocating that we investigate the possibility of building some modules inspired by the FreeMo movement that has taken hold of a segment of the modular railroading community. In brief, FreeMo seeks to incorporate greater operating opportunities for modular railroaders by stressing interoperability between clubs, single track mainlines and point-to-point routings and extensive industrial switching on modules that feature curvature and, in some cases, grades. To see how this works, Sam Eaton and I visited the Capital FreeMo layout set up at Timonium and spoke to some of their operators. We learned that it takes a lot of planning and conforming to rules and standards to achieve interclub operability BUT if we only opt to apply the FreeMo concepts to our DCC modules then we are already 90% there, according to one of the guys we spoke to. If we went this route, Henry points out, we will allow more scope for module building, teach more of our members new skills, and learn more about DCC related operation. To understand better what this involves, I urge members to go to Youtube, search under the keyword FreeMo, and scan some of the relevant websites. We'll be discussing our findings at our subsequent meetings and on Thursday evenings.

Jim Valle, President

SPRINGFIELD TRIP

WOW!!! This year's Springfield Trip to the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, MA was a great success again. There were six couples and three individuals making the trip. The couples were Paul and Paula Buckley, Lena and Paul Roy, Kathleen and Bill Schrodel, Ann and Les Souder, Jim and Carolyn Thompson and Myrna and Jim Valle. The individuals were John Gray from Mississippi, Dick Lush and Ralph Pfannenstiel. There was also Kurt Schwaninger, who left a few days earlier to catch some clinics. The group left from Les Souder's home at 8:30 A.M. on Friday, with two stops enroute and final destination at the Sheraton Monarch in Springfield, MA around 3:00 P.M. It is about 330 miles each way. The parking lot was packed because of a concert around the block, but Les and Thompson found a spot in the underground area, and Bill Schrodel had to go to the overflow parking across the street. That was fine until around 6:00 P.M. when we were to leave for the Steam Tender Restaurant in Palmer, MA about thirty miles away. We had a 6:30 reservation. The Souder and Thompson vehicles waited for 20 minutes outside the hotel for the Schrodel vehicle to join up with us in heavy traffic. Never saw them. Since everyone had GPS, we finally just had to leave. We all arrived at the Steam Tender about the same time, 35 minutes late and the place was packed. Thank goodness Kurt left early and assured them we were on our way. We had a table dead center of the old train station. We were very apologetic and they said it was ok. I have photos of the group. Trains passed by every 20 to 30 minutes. The food was outstanding and the wait staff were wonderful. From there it was back to the hotel for a good night's sleep so we would all be ready for Saturday.

The next morning all the men met in the hotel lobby to leave for our traditional breakfast at IHOP run by Bob Evans. It was snowing fairly hard but IHOP was only two miles away and the train show another mile, so a blizzard wasn't going to stop this crew. We missed Pete Nickerson from MA as he thought the show was the next weekend. Thank God he missed the trip because the roads were getting deeper and deeper with snow. We are looking forward to next year, Pete.

From breakfast, with armbands on, we arrived at the show around 8:30 A.M. The doors opened at 9:00 A.M. We sat in our cars awaiting the big train horn to sound and away we went. Well, with four big buildings, the Mallary Complex, the Stroh Building, the Young Building and the largest Better Living Center, we split up and took on six hours of trains, trains and more trains. There were around 400 vendors and about 30 layouts. I took plenty of photos. One point of interest was the Free-mo display. I took plenty of photos of it, but module for module, the Club has done an outstanding job with our new DCC layout, which is along the same lines. The standards are they have to connect to each other and the wiring compatible. Outside of that, you are on your own. We had a guy from the D.C. area to explain it more. There are companies that will design and build your frame work and ship it to you. Woodland Scenics had ongoing displays with projects the Club can take part in. Athearn had their new A and B Genesis GP 9s on display, soon to be out. Tangent had their new cars out and if you purchased one you got a bright orange bag to carry it in. There were a lot of orange bags being carried around. Broadway had their new products and Atlas had a large display. There were steam and diesel trains you could sit on and ride and always a Gandy Dancer on display. This year it was an 8-passenger unit. There were train rides for the kids on the Roaming Railroad. As you can tell the day was pretty packed with lots to see and do and buy. We all met at the Mallary Building at 4:00 P.M. Yes, all were present on time for departure. We returned to the hotel to get ready for dinner.

The ladies gathered a little later Saturday morning in the lobby of the hotel to decide whether they thought they could make the journey to Yankee Candle which is about 30 to 40 miles north of Springfield. The unanimous answer was "Yes" and off they went. With Myrna as the driver (she is one brave lady behind a wheel) they were off; however the snow was coming down pretty hard and it took longer than normal to arrive at Yankee Candle. They did not stop for breakfast, but when they arrived at

Yankee Candle it was just at 10:30 A.M. and the restaurant was opening, so they decided to have an early lunch. Lunch was wonderful, as always, and then they shopped for two or three hours. Everyone found a few items they could not live without, including some great gifts. They then met up at 2:30 to start their journey back to the hotel. The snow was letting up a little which made the drive slightly easier. They arrived back at the hotel around 3:15 P.M. to wait for the guys to return from the show.

Saturday evening dinner was at Schermerhorn's Restaurant at 7:00 P.M. with a departure time of 6:30 P.M. All the arrangements were made by Paul Roy. We all arrived at the restaurant on time. It is a seafood place in Hoyoke. When you first enter you walk past the cash register, get seated, look over the menu, then get up and go to the register to order. You then go back to your seat and wait for them to call you. "Different". From there we went back to the hotel suite and had wine and cheese and crackers and other snacks. With two tvs to view, you had a choice of the Big Bang Theory or old commercials from the 1950s and 1960s. John Gray was giving a street by street description of the town he lives in, Ocean Springs, Mississippi. He said he has an extra bedroom, so if you plan a trip that way be sure to stop in for the night. Ralph Pfannenstiel supplied the Mississippi Baby Cake and Les Souder was the lucky winner who got the baby and will purchase one for next year. Well, it was a long day and we all retired for the night.

On Sunday morning, all the men and women gathered in the lobby to travel to breakfast at IHOP. As usual, all arrangements were made and the room was set up for us. Breakfast was at 8:00 A.M. and everyone had a great start to the day. This is our 8th year and photos are on the wall to prove it. Several photos were taken for next year's wall hanging.

The guys all returned to the show for final wheeling and dealing, except for Dick Lush who was feeling a little under the weather. The ladies went back to the hotel to pack for a 1:00 P.M. departure to Delaware. All deals were made and the guys left the show at noon. Since it had snowed on Saturday, attendance was down, but Sunday was packed. The lines were about 1,000 yards long and there were four lines of people trying to enter the show as we were leaving. See photo (at meeting). Back at the hotel all were signed out and for the first year with military ID we didn't have to pay hotel tax. That was a great savings. We also saved on parking. All in all, it was a great show.

We stopped on the way home our usual two times with our last stop at Cracker Barrel in Pennsville, NJ. We got to Les' around 8:00 P.M. and set out for home from a long three days. Plans are set already for next year. For those who went for the weekend we hope everyone totally enjoyed it and for those who did not, consider joining us next year.

Jim Thompson

PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

If you were/are involved with any of the BSA merit badge classes, I would appreciate it if you could attend the February meeting wearing a club shirt or jacket. I want to get a picture of the group with the plaque the NMRA-MER presented us back in November. I tried to get this done last month, but with the length of the meeting, some left as soon as it was over. Please, stay around after the meeting for a couple of pictures; hopefully it will only take a few minutes.

Thank you. **Jeff Shockley**

TRAIN SHOWS:

February 21-22, 2015 – Spring Thaw Train Meet. Allentown Fairgrounds Agricultural Hall (Agri-Plex), 302 N. 17th Street, Allentown, PA. Saturday: 9am-4pm, Sunday: 9am-3pm. Admission: \$7/day, kids 12 and under FREE with paying adult.

February 28, 2015 - Seaford Fire Co. Train Show. King & Cannon St., Seaford, DE. 9am-3pm.

February 28, 2015 – “I Love Smyrna School District Day.” FSMRRC will set up display. 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

March 7, 2015 – 2nd Annual Sudlersville Toy & Train Show. 203 N. Church St., Sudlersville, MD. 10am-3pm. Admission: \$5.00, children under 15 FREE, with a paying adult. Early buyer entry at 9:00am, admission: \$10.00. **FSMRRC will set up display.** Info: Kurt 302-270-4786, sudlersvillemuseum@gmail.com

March 14-15, 2015 – Greenberg's Train & Toy Show. Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison St, Wilmington, DE. 10am – 4pm, both days. Admission: Saturday \$8.00, kids 12 & under FREE, Sunday \$8.00, kids 12 & under FREE. **FSMRRC will set up display.**

March 27-28, 2015 – East Coast Large Scale Train Show. York Expo Center, 334 Carlisle Ave., York, PA. Friday: 9am – 6pm. Saturday: 9am – 4pm. Admission: Two-Day Ticket Adult – \$18, children under 12 FREE. One-Day Ticket Adult – \$10, Children under 12 FREE. Two-Day Group (Club) Rates Available: \$15.00 for 25 or more tickets when purchased in advance.

April 11, 2014 - Delaware Train Show. Nur Shrine Center, 198 North duPont Hwy., New Castle, DE. 9am – 2pm. Admission: \$4.00; \$10.00 8:00am Early Bird Buyer. Kids under 12 FREE

UPCOMING EVENT OF INTEREST:

April 11, 2015 - Boy Scouts of America Railroad Merit Badge Day. Sponsored by the First State Model Railroad Club. 1282 McKee Road, Dover, DE. 9am – 3pm. Open to 30 scouts. Admission FREE. Contact via e-mail: cubbie109@yahoo.com.

REMINDER:

DUES OF \$60 PER YEAR ARE DUE AND PAYABLE BY THE END OF FEBRUARY. PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR DUES TO TREASURER RICHARD STOCKSLAGER TO GET YOUR UP-TO-DATE MEMBERSHIP CARD.

THE TRAIN: This is very beautiful and was received in an email from a friend and is being sent on to you. Author unknown.

At birth we boarded the train and met our parents, and we believe they will always travel on our side. However, at some station our parents will step down from the train, leaving us on this journey alone. As time goes by, other people will board the train; and they will be significant, i.e., our siblings, friends, children, and even the love of your life. Many will step down and leave a permanent vacuum. Others will go so unnoticed that we don't realize they vacated their seats. This train ride will be full of joy, sorrow, fantasy, expectations, hellos, goodbyes, and farewells. Success consists of having a good relationship with all passengers requiring that we give the best of ourselves.

The mystery to everyone is: We do not know at which station we ourselves will step down. So, we must live in the best way, love, forgive, and offer the best of who we are. It is important to do this because when the time comes for us to step down and leave our seat empty we should leave behind beautiful memories for those who will continue to travel on the train of life.

I wish you a joyful journey on the train of life. Reap success and give lots of love. More importantly, thank God for the journey.

Lastly, I thank you for being one of the passengers on my train.

Do you have something you would like to share with the members of FSMRRC? If so, please submit them to stockslager@gmail.com by the end of each month.