



THE FIRST STATE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB, INC. NEWSLETTER MAY 2014

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of The First State Model Railroad Club, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, May 13, 2014, 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 Kenton Child Care Center. Come early and run some trains.

(Interim) PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS:

After several years of guiding our club as president, Jim Thompson has decided to step down so that he can take a breather and enjoy a little rest and relaxation. During the time he has been president the club has come a long way. Membership is up, we have a secure facility to support our operations, we've gone on a lot of very successful trips and we've moved decisively into the DCC era. This has been due in no small part to the hard work and attention to detail that Jim has provided over the years and we all owe him a real thanks for a job well done. Upon his announcement at the April meeting we did a polling of the membership to see if anyone wanted to step up and assume the top leadership slot. After everyone had their chance, I volunteered myself to serve as president for the next six months until our Constitution and By-Laws call for a regular election. Henry Kramer has volunteered to replace me as club secretary. While I am serving as president, I do plan to move the club towards a number of goals which I think will provide us with an improvement in our operations and make for a better experience for our membership.

1. Regarding our organization, I would like to revive our coordinator offices and appoint an electrical coordinator, a DCC coordinator, a module coordinator for each modular layout, a shop coordinator and an awards coordinator. Coordinators serve as advisors and "lead men" in guiding interested members who want to work on club projects.

2. Our older modular layout is still our most valuable asset in terms of size and track space. I believe we should start to give it a systematic repair and maintenance program with the intention of making it a permanent display in the main train room. This means solving electrical faults, eliminating rough track and faulty switches, regular track cleaning and improving prospects for operating trains. We might even consider applying dual DC-DCC operation.

3. Our lightweight DCC layout would become our portable display for going-on-the-road. After it has been perfected it will leave the main train room and live in the trailer or perhaps be set up to operate in the truck bay. Work on modules for this layout could be done in the shop. While this layout is in storage, it may be possible to apply its DCC equipment to the old modular system so that we can continue to learn and operate in this mode.

4. Finally I think we should take our shop and storage rooms in hand to eliminate the accumulation of junk (mostly donated) and make room for workspace. We also need to inventory our tool holdings, books and magazines collection.

Now none of this is written in stone and it surely won't happen overnight. It's just my vision of how we move ahead as an organization. Some of these steps require choices to be made and new ways of thinking about traditional club values and purposes. Please don't hesitate to share your views with me and/or propose alternate plans and ideas.

The Boy Scout Merit Badge Program -- On two separate Saturdays in April we hosted contingents of Boy Scouts seeking the Model Railroading Merit Badge. Jeff Shockley did the recruiting, Paul Buckley contributed his highly polished lectures on safety and general railroad lore and Dick Lush looked after the technical aspects of operating the Timesaver and assembling the car kits. Several members of the club contributed their time and energy including John Murphy and Jim Valle. In addition to fulfilling the regular requirements of the Merit Badge, the approximately forty scouts got a chance to run trains on our layout and see a demonstration of DCC operation. Everything related to this activity went very well although Paul had to make a quick trip to North Carolina to ensure a good supply of car kits for the second session.

Dover Days -- It's official. We are in the official program for the Dover Days festivities. We will operate an Open House on Saturday and Sunday, May 3rd and 4th, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Set up will be at 8:00 AM Saturday morning. Just to be sure, separate notices will appear in the Dover Post and Delaware State News giving the times and our location.

James Valle, Interim President

Merit Badge Class Report -- Jeff Shockley

The club sponsored 2 classes, on April 12 and April 19. A total of 36 scouts participated in the program (22 on the 12th and 14 on the 19th) representing 13 troops from 4 states: Delaware (troops 78, 154, 903 from Dover, troops 116 and 186 from Milford, troop 534 from Harrington, and troop 90 from Laurel); Maryland (troop 131 from North East, troop 165 from Denton, troop 175 from Sudlersville, and troop 495 from Kent Island); New Jersey (troop 60 from Daretown) and New York (troop 225 from Merrick).

On the 12th the club was visited by Don Jennings, one of the Directors for the Mid Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association. Don came up from Cary, North Carolina, to see how we ran our classes and to help with the instruction. He had planned on bringing up boxcar model kits for the scouts to build as part of our program. However, the kits didn't make the trip north, but the club had enough kits on hand for the first class, so no harm, no foul. Paul Buckley rode back with Don to Cary, collected the car kits, and took the train back to Wilmington. So now we have kits for a few more classes.

After introducing the staff members and having the scouts lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, Scout Oath and Law, the groups were split into 2 smaller groups. 1 group was in the meeting room with Paul Buckley talking about railroad safety, identifying different railroad cars, how steam and diesel locomotives produced power and other subjects; the other group was in the layout room. The 2nd group was split into two other groups, 1 built the boxcar model with Jim Valle, and the other took turns operating the “time-saver” layout with Dick Lush. When those two groups were done, they switched areas. I spent the time walking around taking pictures.

After the 2 small groups were done with the “time-saver” and building the model and the other group was done with the lecture, we met around the new modular layout with Dick Lush talking about the differences and similarities of DC and DCC layouts.

We then took our lunch break giving the staff time to re-energize for the afternoon session. After lunch, we switched the groups so that the group that got the lecture worked on the model building and “time-saver” and the other group got the lecture portion.

When the 2nd session was finished, all the scouts gathered around the layout and we assembled a train with all the boxcar models and the train made one lap. After completing and distributing the merit badge “blue” cards, we said goodbye to the scouts, parents, and leaders for their drives home.

All the scouts I talked to thanked us for giving them the opportunity to earn the Railroading merit badge and that they had a good time. Even the adults told me they learned a few things from attending the class.

The club has now awarded 303 Railroading merit badges, held in 21 classes, since we began this project, EXACTLY 11 years from our first class, on April 19, 2003.

GROUNDS CLEAN-UP:

Thank you to Boyce Failing, Pete Nickerson (who was visiting DE prior to his return to work following knee replacement surgery in Feb.) and Richard Stockslager for their work in clearing away the winter's debris (broken tree limbs, trash, etc.) from the Club grounds. Yard work will continue through the coming months. Volunteers are needed for this ongoing project.

BEREAVEMENT:

On Wed., April 23, we were notified that Marilyn, the wife of Pete Nickerson, had fallen down stairs and died. On Fri., April 25, Jim Thompson and Richard and Joyce Stockslager drove to MA to be with Pete and his family for the memorial service on Sat. They had dinner with the family Fri. evening and then went to Pete's house to visit with him. After going to nearby Plymouth to see the "Rock," they attended the service and reception on Sat. and later that afternoon Pete drove them around the area (Duxbury, etc.) and showed them the highlights of where he lived. They had dinner at Pete's and visited further. On Sun. morning Pete drove to their hotel to see them off as they left for home. Several Club members donated toward an Edible Arrangements fruit bouquet that J,R&J took with them and it was appreciated by the family. We will remember Pete buying the guys breakfast during their annual Springfield trip for the past several years. We extend our deepest sympathies to Pete and his family at this difficult time.

UPCOMING SHOWS:

May 3-4, 2014 Old Dover Days, **FSMRRC will participate.** 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

May 10, 2014 Sudlersville Toy & Train Show, 203 N. Church St., Sudlersville, MD; \$5. admission.
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. POC: Kurt 302-270-4786. See 3D printer in operation.