



The Bulletin

January 2014 Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Tim Skidmore, Grant Robbins, Gene Austin, Alan Coleman, Bill Poteat, Kevin Stine, Ken Humphreys, Joe Bost, and Larry Weed.

The meeting was called to order on January 6, 2014 at 7:40 PM by VP Grant Robbins.

Financial Report: Treasurer Gene Austin reported that the club had a year-end bank balance of \$4,834.00 with pending expenses of \$2,520 for 2014 rent, leaving the club with a balance of \$ 2,314. Most members have not paid their first quarter 2014 dues as of the meeting; with its variable dues structure the club is basically on a break-even basis at our current membership count.

Membership Report: Gene reported that as of January the club has 18 members; per our bi-laws one person has been dropped from the club roster after failing to pay dues for the past 18 months. On the positive side, Rodney Deal is our newest club member.

Wiring and Track Report: The dispatcher computer has been repaired; the holiday season limited further work.

Museum Report: The lighting and wiring in the new speeder room has been completed, CRR #65 has been moved into the room and awaits new rails and the restoration and assembly of the Fairmont trailer.

Scenery Report: No new activity to report.

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**Next Business Meeting:
Thursday, February 6, 2014
at 7:30 PM**



photo by the editor

Different Eras, Different Car Regulations

One of the discussions at our January meeting centered on the era/eras that we want to model on the Piedmont & Western. As originally conceived in 1988, the P&W was to alternate operating eras between the post-WWII steam/diesel transition and that of 1970's diesels- the now-removed and never-operated Fenestra Yard above Marshall was designed to hold "off-era"rolling stock. Two-era sessions never happened. For 25 years the club has generally run diesels with a few "steam excursions" or specials. Current membership interests have brought us full circle to expressed desires for alternating eras, thanks in no small part to the range of mass produced sound-equipped steam locomotives undreamed of in the early years of the club.

Roof walks (aka running boards) and brake wheel locations are two of the most obvious differences between the two eras. A Federal ban on roof walks for new "house" aka box cars ordered after April 1, 1966 and those delivered after October 1 of that year, mandated the changes reflected in the photograph above. Covered hoppers and a few other specialized cars, e.g. Southern Railway's kaolin-hauling box cars which had roof hatches were not affected by this regulation (their roof walks now deemed to be loading platforms for non-running use only), nor were non-interchange company service cars like bunk cars, m-o-w box cars, etc.

On January 1, 1967, high-mounted brake wheels were prohibited on new cars and cross-over platforms were required so that workers no longer would have to crawl under cars to reach brake wheels (see the L&N car above). On January 1, 1974 the original deadline for the removal of all roof walks was extended until the last day of 1983, but in the US the majority of box car roof walks were gone long before 12/31/83. Pre-1966 box cars with empty roof walk brackets and re-located brake wheels can be seen to this day.

Accurate modeling of the two eras under discussion will involve far more than just sorting roof walk from non-roof walk cars - note that steam-era 50-foot Southern car visible above the hoppers. The Southern changed its lettering scheme long before the roof-walk ban and that May of 1960-built 50-footer in the foreground with the later lettering design never ran behind steam...



THE PIEDMONT & WESTERN RAILROAD CLUB
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WEBMASTER: KEN HUMPHREYS

THE BULLETIN IS THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE P&WRR. ALL OPINIONS ARE SOLELY THOSE
OF THE EDITOR OR CITED CONTRIBUTORS.

Looking for a Club Project?

The back door needs a fresh coat of high-gloss, exterior paint.



News of Interest...

Our friends of the **Alexander Chapter NRHS/ Newton Depot Authority** continue to make progress at the **Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Short Line Museum**. Sidewalks have been poured under the shed and the only preserved 2-6-0 Mogul in the state, Virginia-Carolina #50, is now under cover:



Photos by the Editor

Aristocraft/Polk Hobbies shuttered its doors on December 20, 2013 after 75-plus years in business. Aristocraft focused G-scale; the Southern SD-45 in our museum being a prime example. In October of 2013 the Polk family wrote in part:

...In this latest downturn, we cut back staff to the minimum required to survive. Then the government battle over the debt ceiling drove the consumer market down even further.

...We have put several million dollars into product development over recent years, but the need for customers to cut back on non-essentials has caused this investment to be lacking in returns.

...The cost of manufacturing along with minimum production runs and long lead time has caused a lack of ability to continue as a sustainable entity. It's no longer a business!

Some industry observers predict that Aristocraft's molds and inventory in China will end up in the hands of the Chinese-based Kader (dba Bachmann in the US).



Nothing like sub-freezing weather to make us long for Spring, Summer, and Steam at Tweetsie. This shot of a 12/190 double header was taken during the 2011 National Narrow Gauge Convention.

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Old Business: Per previous discussions, the club will be honoring the many donations of time, materials, and heavy equipment usage made by a local firm and its founder. Duplicate plaques will be created, one of which will be on permanent display in the Old Rock School.

Also per previous discussions, a plaque honoring **Dr. Ben Garrou** will be created for permanent display at the club. **Ken Humphreys** has volunteered to arrange for the the plaques production after their design has been finalized.

New Business: **Larry Weed** distributed full-color 2014 calendars which feature rail photography from his trips to Alaska, St. Louis, and the Yukon. Copies are available for those members who could not attend the January 2 meeting.

The club voted unanimously to award **Danny Tuttle** and The Train Shop a non-voting, organizational membership as thanks for his many contributions to the the club and its members.

Improved communications of upcoming work days, etc. were requested by **Ken Humphreys**; **Larry Weed** offered to take on club projects which he can work on at home. **Alan Coleman** cited a number of repair projects (e.g, HVAC drain pans and dehumidifier installation) that individual members can undertake.

Kevin Stine led a discussion about improving our operating sessions which we hope to offer on 2nd and 4th Thursdays. The subject of alternating operating eras (see the related article on page 1) led to a consensus that we need to have the track, rolling stock, and motive power fine-tuned and fully ready for operating sessions. To this end, all turnouts need to be activated (e.g, the Lime Stone spur at Old Fort); the faulty turnouts in Ben's Cut and leading to the passenger line need repairs. Wiring of the Murphy Branch and Snowbird Logging line needs to be completed as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM by President Tim Skidmore.

submitted by Alan Coleman