

# COWTOWN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

## FORT WORTH TEXAS

CMRRC



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### **General Meeting**

The February monthly meeting of the CMRRC will be on Monday night February 16th at 7:00 pm. The program is still under consideration and will be included in the text message announcement as the time gets closer. I hope to see you there.

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### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

by Joe Pritchett



Happy February! The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs had a very successful January show and show season. The paid attendance for the January show was 4881 and 1762 kids for a total attendance of 6643. Those numbers are the best January show in 15 years. Between the two shows the total attendance was 10454. The Fall show date is contracted for September 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The January show will be January 16th & 17th, 2027. I will have a more detailed rundown at the February meeting. I want to thank George and Doug for manning the club table and sales it generated. We do need to select a new NTC rep this month.

The layout seems to be running pretty well although we had an issue during the last ops session. We will take the next session to troubleshoot and resolve the problem. I picked a couple of pieces of flex track and the large radius LH curved switch. This will let us fix a couple of problem areas. Dale also donated a switch to fix another spot. We will get these repairs done and resume operations. Temperatures can get a crazy this time of year so be sure to check your phone for the next work/operating session.

George continues to make progress on Midway. Get with Dale or I if you would like to do program for one of the meetings, we are always looking for new topics.

Now that cars have been spotted on the layout make sure that if you need to move a car to work on something that you put it back where it was. When you are out working on the layout, please make sure that nothing is left on the rails and remove any leftover materials that could interfere with the testing. If you know someone that might be interested in joining the club, be sure to invite them out since we are open to having new members. I want to thank Dale for all the work it takes to put together the newsletter each month.

The normal schedule of Thursday evening sessions is from 6:30pm – 9:00pm, 1st & 3rd Saturdays but watch your phone for changes. Saturday sessions

will start at 9:00am and run until 12:00pm. We will not have session on January 17<sup>th</sup> since most of us will be at the Train Show.



Joe Pritchett  
President - Cowtown Model RR  
Club



### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

*by Dale Schmidtbleicher*

Membership stands at 7 active members.

I have submitted the Club's annual IRS Form 990-n tax form for a tax exempt organization.

Member Doug Lehto has volunteered to be the Club's representative to the North Texas Council. Thank you Doug. Along with Joe, he should keep us all up to date on what is going on in our area when it comes to model railroad events.

As always, the treasurer's report will be made at the Club's monthly meeting.

The next due date is for 2nd quarter dues is April 1<sup>st</sup>. Please give Dale your dues or mail your dues to the following address:

CMRRC  
4504 Quail Hollow Ct.  
Fort Worth, TX 76133

Make payable to: "Cowtown Model Railroad Club".



## **Operations**

Trains are running!

Operating sessions will be announced to all members by text or e-mail. We hope to see more members attending in the future.

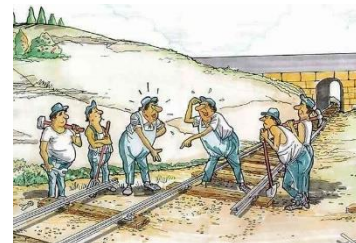


### **Update on Construction**

*by Dale Schmidtbleicher*

*What's new in the area of layout construction?*

As Joe's article pointed out, there are a few track and switch repairs that are scheduled to be attacked in the near future.



As always, track cleaning is always needed to be addressed. Keep those track cleaning cars rolling!

George is working on the building lighting in Midway. He suggested a new method to experiment with in order to keep the track cleaner. We decided to try it in the Acme Coke Plant area and yards.

Tom has been reworking on the Cimarron West End switch panel. He has installed a small secondary switch panel on the backside of the layout that will duplicate the control of the cross over switches going into Cimarron Jct. and the turn around the engine yard and the route into West Cimarron. There is still a switch in that combination that is off-set and the linkage needs to be adjusted.

We still need to start clearing out useless items under the layout. Does anyone know of anyone or organization that would want all those carousels of slides? One possibility might be the HHDC???

## *The Railroad Caboose*

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### **MONTHLY SCHEDULE**

#### **General Meeting:**

The Club's monthly Railroad Club Meeting is held at 7:00 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month.

The meeting is held at the Handley Community Center in the first-floor room just inside the building side door.



#### **Normal Work/Operate Schedule:**

The normal work/operate schedule is as follows:  
Thursday Nights 6:30 PM-9:00 PM.

1st & 3rd Saturday 9:00 AM-12 Noon.

Operating sessions will be announced by text and e-mail prior to the scheduled event.



For more than a century the railroad caboose was a fixture on the end of freight trains. The real purpose of the caboose was to provide a sheltered vantage point from which trainmen could watch the cars ahead, sleep, cook and eat their meals, and do their paperwork. It served as the working headquarters of the freight conductor and his rear brakeman.

The caboose has had more names than any other piece of railroad equipment – even more than the locomotive. Railroaders called it by numerous names: cabin car, crummy, shack, waycar, bobber, brainbox, shanty, hack, just to name a few. Though we have come to know the term 'caboose' as a railroad car, its original meaning is defined in Webster's New International Dictionary as a nautical term meaning "a house on deck where the cooking was done; a galley."

The first caboose on record was rather primitive, being merely the last boxcar on a passenger-freight train on the old Auburn & Syracuse line. From this car in the 1840's, conductor Nat Williams ran his train. In it he kept flags, lanterns, chains, tools, etc. He wrote his reports while seated on a wooden box, using an up-ended barrel as a desk, and ate his meals in the same fashion. In effect, Nat's car was a caboose.

The cupola on top, according to railroad legend, appeared during the Civil War, around the time of the Battle of Gettysburg. The origin of the cupola



[www.cmrrc.net](http://www.cmrrc.net)

We are on occasion getting some requests/feedback from our **cmrrc.net** website. We can thank the website for giving us a hand in getting donations.

Many of those donations have contributed to the club's financial position as well as adding to the scenery or structures on the layout.



gives credit to T. B. Watson, a Chicago & North Western freight conductor. When Watson's flat-topped caboose was temporarily assigned to a work-train, he had to use an old boxcar in its place. This car had a large hole in the roof and Watson piled boxes up to the hole and sat with his head and shoulders protruding out above the roof. This position gave him an excellent view of his train. Watson thought that if all way cars had this feature, the trainmen's work would be easier.

Arriving at his destination he suggested to the master mechanic that "crow's nests" be included in the two new way cars then being built at the North Western shops. The official agreed, the cars were constructed that way, and the C&NW may have been the first railroad to use cabooses with cupolas.

The typical caboose featured a cupola or bay windows by which to view the train. Seats, a heating and cooking stove, bunks for crewmembers, lockers, closets, and the conductor's desk were also present as were other necessary supplies. Though arrangements varied, all cabooses essentially contained the same equipment.

Though we think of cabooses as being red in color, they have actually been painted almost every color under the sun. In the old days, many conductors who were assigned a waycar, could paint and decorate them any way they chose within reason of course. Each had its own design style ranging from the elaborate to the very simple.

As railroads changed, the caboose changed as well. With the implementation of the airbrake, the rear brakeman was able to apply rear braking from his seat, without leaving the caboose. Steel replaced the old wood bodies and many railroads replaced the cupola with bay windows on the sides. Short-wave radio telephone systems were also installed to keep in contact with the locomotive.

After many years, it became evident that new technology would slowly diminish the need for cabooses. Automatic block signals eliminated the

need for a flagman. Switchmen were replaced by dispatcher operated power switches. And the primary function of the caboose as an observation platform was no longer needed as new trackside equipment could easily spot safety defects. And so, the watchful brakeman was gone, too. The era of the caboose had expired.

The caboose is now a thing of the past - a victim of modern technology. The "little red caboose" has been replaced by an EOT (end of train device), an electronic box which monitors the train from the last car. The railroads say that technology is safer - and cheaper - than cabooses and their crews. Old timers say that nothing can safely replace the eyes and ears of the dedicated men who rode the caboose.

