

COWTOWN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

FORT WORTH TEXAS

CMRRC



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Number 1

General Meeting

Happy New Year! The January monthly meeting of the CMRRC will be on January 16th at 7:00 pm. The program will be provided by member Dale Schmidtbleicher. Hope to see you there.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Joe Pritchett



Happy New Year everyone! The January North Texas Council meeting will focus on the final preparations for the Train Show. The January show is Jan 21st & 22nd be sure to come out and attend the show. We will have several clinics and 270 dealer tables. Any of you that use Facebook or Instagram, please visit to the Council Facebook/Instagram pages to help us promote the show. A new Facebook post goes out every Thursday.

The temperature has been reasonable, so we have been able to resume the Thursday/Saturday sessions. Tom has been working switch machine and electrical panel repairs. George and Dale have been working scenery and ballasting track. I have

replaced bad switch in the refinery. Gene has done a great job of cleaning and organizing the room. Watch your email for the next operating session. I encourage everyone to come out and participate. 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 the 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 of work it takes to put together the newsletter each month.

We continue the normal schedule of Thursday night sessions, 2nd & 4th Saturdays. Saturday sessions will start at 9:00am and run until 12:00pm.

TNT

Joe Pritchett
President - Cowtown Model RR Club

Joe and Gene Support the Fort Worth History Museum Model City Exhibit

In October of last year, the CMRRC received an email from the Fort Worth Science and History Museum requesting help with their Model City exhibit. The exhibit is about 15 years old and shows the different ways (Nuclear, Wind, Solar, Hydroelectric, Oil/Gas, and Coal) that electricity is generated to power a city. The interactive exhibit has six touch screens each showing a different method of power generation. The exhibit is done in HO scale and features a loop of track, a trolley line, operating Wind Turbines and several other animated features. As the museum reopened after the Covid shutdown, the people that used to help with the exhibit were no longer available and the museum had a desire to get the animation working again and freshen up the exhibit. After talking with the museum, we put together a plan to help them:

- Get the Wind Turbines working
- Get the Trolley running
- Get the Pump Jacks working
- Street lights/building lights
- Freshen up the trees
- After some Lexan attached to front gets installed the additional details can be added



Working under the Exhibit is a bit challenging; the support structure is built like cabinets and the

terrain is made from Fiberglass. Below are a couple of pictures to show the bench work.



Gene & I have been spending a couple of hours on Wednesday afternoons working on the exhibit. So far, I have repaired 2 and built 3 new ones from the kits they had along with 3D printed some spare

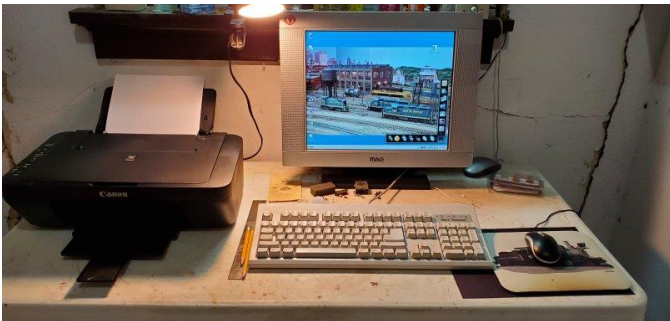
parts for the Turbines. All of the wind turbines are installed and working. Just before Christmas we got the Trolley running along with 2 Carnival Rides. We are currently working getting additional lights working. The Museum has very little documentation on the how things were wired, so a lot of detective work is required. During our last visit the Museum staff was measuring for the Lexan to protect the very front of the display. If you're interested in helping let me know.



TREASURER'S REPORT

by Dale Schmidtbleicher

Membership now stands at 9 active members. As was briefed at the December 2022 meeting, we have replaced our old, tired and broken laser printer with a new basic printer.



The main use of the printer is for our RailOp engineer order printouts. The printer cost the club \$96.87 and functions with our old WinXP SP2 operating system and no internet or wifi available.

January marks the start of a new year and of course club dues are due. Whether you pay by quarter, semi-annual or annual, now is the time. Please mail your dues to the following address:

**CMRRC
P.O. Box 331513
Fort Worth, TX 76163**

Make payable to: "Cowtown Model Railroad Club".



www.cmrrc.net

We are on occasion getting some requests/feedback from our cmrrc.net website and I will forward any information of interest to the membership.

Member information can be downloaded from the website. Click on the required topic on the front page, download the PDF file you are interested in.

Operation

We should be running more operating sessions now that the temperatures have cooled. Repairs have been made to track in several areas on the layout. 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?



Joe mentioned in his article what has been going on as far as layout construction. As for other items:

We are cleaning up old computer equipment as well as some other items that have taken up residence under the layout. I have also worked on the layout room door so that it will stay closed to keep the warmth in for the winter and cool air in for the summer.

On some another notes, if anyone has an idea of how to sell off the many, many books that the club owns, let Joe, Bob or I know. A couple of years ago we had picked up about 20 carousel slide trays of railroad slides from a donor. We would like to give them away rather than trash them. If anyone is interested in claiming them, let me know.

MONTHLY SCHEDULE

General Meeting:

The monthly Railroad Club meeting is held at 7:00 PM on the 3rd Monday of the month. The meeting is held at the Handley Community Center in the first-floor room.



Work Schedule:

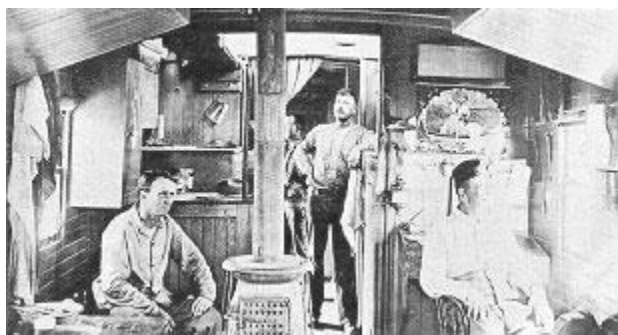
The normal work schedule is as follows:

Thursday Nights 6:30 PM-9:00 PM

2nd & 4th Saturday 9:00 AM-12 Noon.

Should a work session be cancelled for any reason, an e-mail will be sent out, time permitting.

The Wood Shanty Disappears; Cabooses Have Become Symbolic of Modern Railroading Techniques



Conductor W. J. Wash (seated, right) was master of this caboose in the days when conductors had their own cabooses and the car served as "home" for days at a time. Picture was taken in 1900.

The little wood shanty that used to trail faithfully after every string of freight cars-like many other railroad scenes-has undergone many changes in the past hundred years.

The box-like shelters train crews used to build to shield their cooking fires on spare platform cars in the mid-1800s, the converted box cars with sliding doors used around the turn of the century, the cupola-topped wooden cabooses popular after World War I, all have given way to ever more modern, efficient and better-equipped cabooses. Today's SP caboose with its sleek bay windows of shatterproof glass, automatic oil heater, electric lights and refrigerator, drinking fountain, radio-telephone and specially-designed Pullman-type crew seats is fast becoming an operating symbol of the technological advances continually being made by SP. Rapidly disappearing are the old-fashioned hard benches and feather dusters, the coalbin and the kerosene lamp and the lazy board. The caboose has become a rolling office, efficient and functional, vastly different from its forebears. The origin of the caboose is un-certain. Even its birthdate is unknown. The most generally accepted story of its beginning is that a man named Nat Williams - a freight conductor on the Auburn & Syracuse Railroad during the 1830s - made it his custom to sit in the last car of a freight train on a box or barrel and direct the train's operation. As trains and runs grew longer, some railroads provided platform cars for their train crews, and eventually converted boxcars for crews to use as shelters.

TWO THEORIES

Even the origin of the word caboose is disputed. Railroad historical authority D. L. Joslyn, a retired SP draftsman, documents its use back to the days of the early sailing vessels, when sailors customarily set up a fireplace or stove on ships' decks. To protect their fires and provide shelter for themselves, seamen erected boxes over their fireplaces. These shelters were known to the Dutch as kabuis,

to the Danes as kabys, the Swedes as kabysa, and Germans as kabuse.

Another theory holds that the word originated in Texas, Americanized from the Spanish word calabozo., meaning jailhouse. This idea, too, seems to have some merit.

In the eastern portion of the U.S., the car at the end of the train was called a "way car," "cabin car," "conductor's van," "accommodation car," "train car," "brakeman's cab," "shanty," or "crummy." Even today, many eastern railroads call them way cars, with a few referring to them as accommodation cars. Only in the West has the crew car been known almost universally as the caboose.

2- The 28-foot CP 136 cost \$838 when built as a CP box car in 1885.

3- Proud crew had picture taken at Redding in their new caboose, August 1900.

4- Built in July 1898, this box car was converted to caboose in 1923.

5- Shiny when it was new in November 1907, No. 409 was wrecked in 1936.

6- Built at Los Angeles in July 1937, this was one of first all-steel cabooses on Pacific Lines.

7- Bay window cabooses were especially designed for crew comfort and safety-cost nearly \$18,000 each.

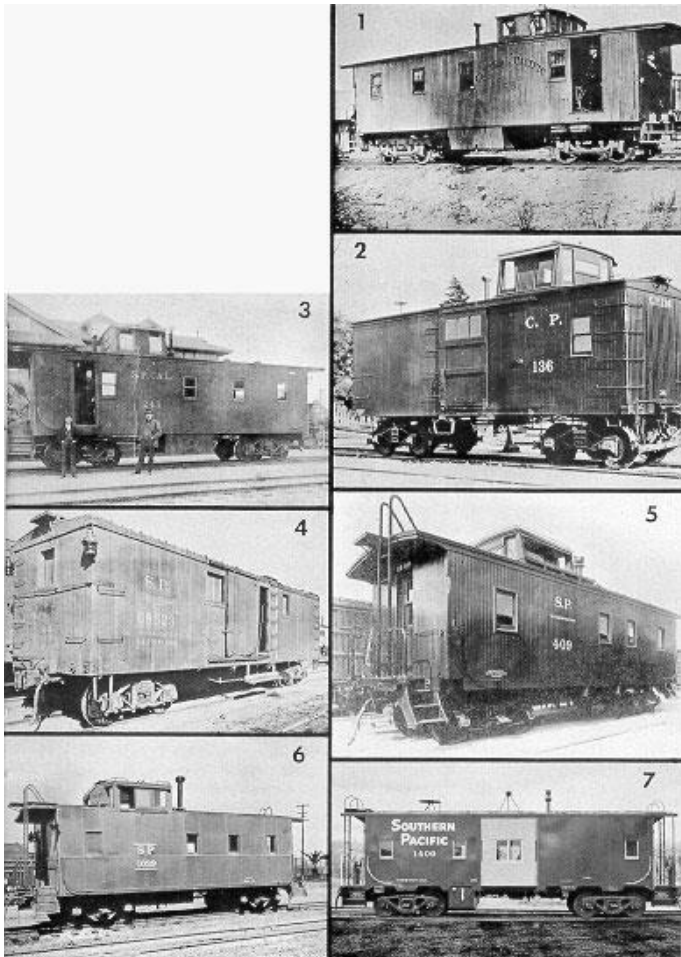
CUPOLAS

The origin of the most distinguishing feature of cabooses-the "lookout" or cupola-has also been the subject of controversy, although a Chicago & North Western freight conductor seems to have settled the question. In 1898, T. B. Watson wrote "During the '60s I was a conductor on the C&NW. One day late in the summer of 1863 I received orders to give my caboose to the conductor of a construction train and take an empty boxcar to use as a caboose. This car happened to have a hole in the roof about two feet square. I stacked the lamp and tool boxes under the perforation end and sat with my head and shoulders above the roof... (Later) I suggested putting a box around the hole with glass in, so I could have a pilot house to sit in and watch the train."

Cupolas were first built into cabooses on the Central Pacific-SP's railroad ancestor-about 1875, and were permanent fixtures until 1949, when bay windows first made their appearance on SP cabooses. (The Akron, Canton & Youngstown Railroad is said to have been the first railroad to use the bay window, in 1923.)

CABOOSE WAS HOME

In the early days of railroading, each crew was assigned its own caboose, which served as home for days at a time. Some crews gave their rolling homes as much care as their wives gave to their permanent family residences, equipping them with such niceties as lace curtains, picturesque lithographs,



(Photos) How the shanty grew up.

1- Central Pacific No. 45, built in August 1872 with wood frame trucks, could seat 22.

their own mattresses and bed linen, easy chairs, even cook stoves. The culinary arts of some crews became legendary, with specialties ranging from hot cakes so light they had to be weighted down, to holiday feasts of roast turkey and trimmings.

As railroading grew more complex, and trains grew faster and went farther in shorter times, the caboose was no longer necessary to provide a home for extended periods. They were then assigned to the divisions, and crews rarely left their own districts.

In today's modern railroading techniques, the caboose pool has proved a very practical and economical advance. Pools have been established in SP's northern and southern districts - the Roseville-Northeast pool, with 140 cabooses, covers the territory from Roseville to Brooklyn and Eugene on the North, and to Ogden on the East. The Los Angeles-Southwest pool has 228 bay window cabooses in use between Roseville, San Francisco, Bakersfield, Los Angeles, El Paso and Tucumcari. Under the pool arrangement, a caboose stays with the freight train from the train's origin point until it reaches its destination (if on SP lines) or an interchange point with another railroad.

DESIGNED WITH CARE

The care and attention given to cabooses has come a long way from the days when Nat Williams sat on a barrel in the last car of his train and T. B. Watson got his orders to pick up an empty boxcar for his new caboose. SP's newest cabooses - 200 all-steel cars with bay windows-were planned by car design engineers of the Mechanical Department, with the cooperation of the Operating and Safety Departments. A far cry from the ill-equipped

caboose of old, today's modern cars cost nearly \$18,000 each to build.

Typical of the efforts made to modernize crew cars was the re-building of caboose SP-1000 in 1959. One of those constructed in 1937, SP-1000 received a complete remodeling in the Los Angeles General Shops and was equipped with the most up-to-date appliances. Then the car was used by crews between Los Angeles and El Paso, with the request that they evaluate the new equipment, and suggest further improvements. After the test runs, the car was taken to San Francisco, where it was inspected at the company's invitation by legislative representatives and general chairmen of the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, as well as by four staff members of the California Public Utilities Commission. One of the most important advances made in modernizing cabooses, says Mechanical Department Engineer L. F. Bardoff, who helped design the new crew cars, "is the electrification program we began in 1954. We are continuing to install electrical systems so that eventually all cabooses used in pool service and long local runs will have electric marker lights, as well as desk and other interior lights. The electric refrigerators will be a help, too, in which to keep lunch and cold drinks on the hot runs." M. A. Nugent, superintendent of safety, adds that the consideration given to the comfort, health and safety of crews is another important factor in our cabooses today. "The heavier drawbars and center sills," he says, "coupled with all-steel superstructure, window safety glass and nonskid floor paint have made our cabooses some of the finest-and safest-crew equipment on any railroad."

Railroad Paintings

