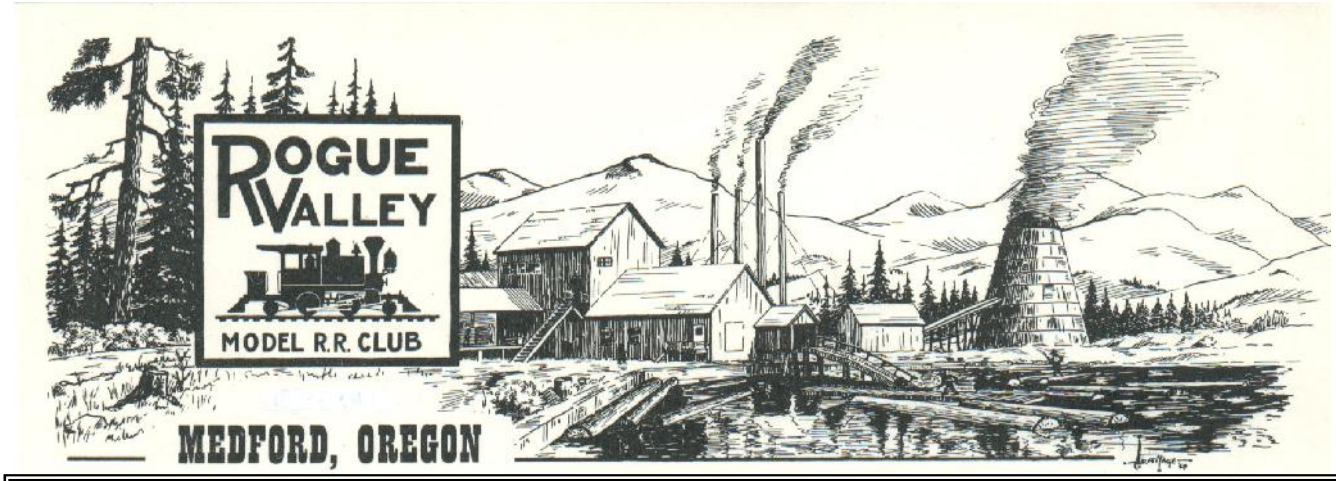


The Passing Track

October 2008
Newsletter of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club
PO Box 1362—Medford, OR 97501
Home page is http://rvmrc.railfan.net/

October 22 General Membership Topics

At this Months' General meeting we are going to discuss the needs (or not) of our signal system. Ed Kleinman has found a supply of NJ International target signals and has found some great detectors to run them.

There has been discussion of what to do with our modules now that we are getting closer to having the permanent layout done. There are options but we need your input on what we should do.

We have 2 shows coming up, November 1 and 2 in Klamath Falls, and our annual Railroad show at the Armory in November. A lot needs to be done to make ready for these shows, and your help is very much needed.

Please, try to make it to this very important meeting.

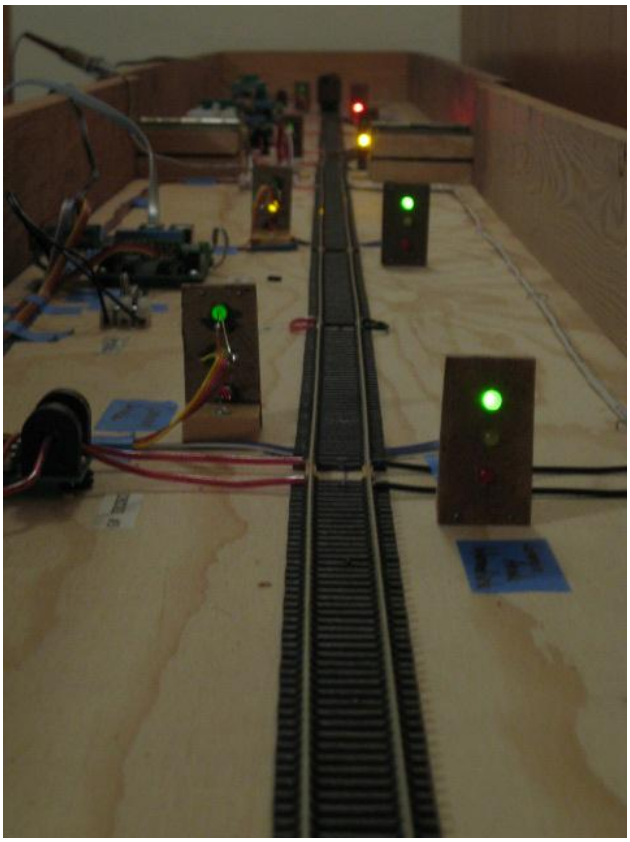
Signal System

While the Club Board was unable to discuss any business due to the lack of a quorum, the topic of signaling on the Pacific & Eastern dominated the evening discussion. Dave Carr proposed a continuation of the signaling discussion at the next General Meeting to take place on October 22nd. It is hoped that a quorum of board members will be present, and all members interested in a lively discussion of signaling on the P & E are encouraged to attend. Among the topics discussed was a time-sensitive offer from NJ International to the RVMRR Club to purchase SA Target Signals at a significant price reduction. NJ International generously offered sale of their signal #1344 for $15.00, a 35% reduction from their normal sales price, for a quantity of 25 or more.

A model railroad (MRR) signaling system is relatively complex, involving a significant amount of research, monetary investment, and time investment for its implementation. An MRR signaling system varies only insignificantly from a prototype railroad signaling system, and it is probably more complex than an automobile traffic control system. To date, the signaling gang at the Club has been exploring and experimenting with various types of systems on the market. The two that seem most promising for implementation on the P & E are those from Team Digital and JLC Enterprises, colloquially known as C/MRI (Computer/Model Railroad Interface), created by Bruce Chubb.

A signaling system involves several components working together: block occupancy detectors (that report the presence or absence of locomotives and railroad cars in a block); resistive wheelsets (that make detection of non-current drawing railroad cars possible); turnout position feedback (that reports switch positions along the main line); signal controller boards (that input information from block detectors and turnout position feedback and output information to the individual colored lights of the signals); and the software/logic (that is programmed into the signal controllers to dictate how the input information is to affect the controller outputs which are connected to the colored lights of the signals).

The Team Digital system has been successfully configured on the Club's signaling test board, and its operation was demonstrated during the visit of the Eugene Model Railroad Club to the RVMRR Club some weeks ago.



The software/logic of the Team Digital system was configured to execute the Automatic Block Signaling (ABS) system, a system that ensures the protection of trains traveling in the same, signaled direction. The system was connected to a laptop running PanelPro from JMRI (Java Model Railroad Interface); the computer monitor graphically displayed the test board track layout and allowed for monitoring of the signal states, occupancy of the blocks, and control of the test board turnouts using the computer mouse.

Larry Tuttle has completed the construction of a second signaling test board to be configured with Bruce Chubb's C/MRI system. The C/MRI system has the ability to be easily interfaced with all controllable aspects of a model railroad. In addition to the control of signals, this system can be interfaced to control layout lighting, structure lighting, room lighting, fascia turnout pushbuttons, a fast clock, dispatcher control panels, and more. This system should ready for demonstration in about 4 to 6 weeks. Members will be notified in advance of the demonstration.

Many aspects of the permanent layout can be implemented at little to no cost. For example, moss can be picked from the woods and used as landscaping on the layout, and twigs can be gathered, sized, and cut to simulate logs. The signaling system, on the other hand, comes at a cost. Even though many of the components of the control system can be purchased separately and the boards built from scratch, there is still a sizable investment in the cost of the components, as well as

the signals, themselves. The Club needs to decide whether it is willing to invest money to add signaling to the layout, a trackside detail that adds automation and significant realism to a layout. It is estimated a complete signaling system may cost as much as $2,000. The Club needs to develop a set of criteria so that the Board can decide if a signaling system is desired, and if so, what system is best for the P & E, now and in the future. The membership needs to participate in these discussions, so the Board can make an informed decision and account for the opinions and concerns of all the club members who have a comment about signals.

October Board Meeting Notes

The Board Meeting of October 8, 2008 was called to order at 7:30 PM. Two board members, five regular members, and one associate member were in attendance. In the absence of a quorum (which required three board members be present), the meeting was officially cancelled.

Railroad Shows

The Klamath Falls railroad show will be on the first weekend of November on the 1st and 2nd. Tentative plans are to load the truck on Thursday, October 30. Therefore, there is an opportunity to help load even though you may not be able to go to the show in Klamath Falls. The group will return Sunday and can use help unloading, as well. The Club has an approximate 15x40 foot space.

The annual Rogue Valley Railroad show is over Thanksgiving weekend (November 28-30). The show job schedule is at the Clubhouse. Please sign up for the various work slots. Also, let Jim Dougall know if you are available to take on jobs not signed up for by other RR Park Clubs.

Logistics for both shows will be a topic of discussion at the Membership Meeting.

Reducing the Number of Modules

A final topic at the General Membership meeting is a decision on which modules will be eliminated such that the remaining modules can be safely stored in the shed and possibly under a few locations of the layout. We need to do this in order to build the final phase of the permanent layout. We have an opportunity to donate the excess modules to the Klamath Rails Club and can possibly ship them to Kfalls when we travel to the RR show there at the end of the month. Another option is to provide some or all of the excess modules to RVMRC members wishing to build an On3 layout.

Rogue Valley Model RR Club
PO Box 1362
Medford, OR 97501-0102

RAILROAD TIME CARDS 2008

Nov 1-2 - **Klamath Rails Model Train Show**, Klamath County Fairgrounds, Klamath Falls, Ore. Model railroad displays, swap meet, door prizes, and more. Show time: Sun. 9am – 4pm. Info: Steve Hart 541-892-2550 or Joe Brick 541-883-3071.

Nov 8-9, 15-16, 22-23 – Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club Open House, 2505 N. Vancouver, Portland, Oregon, 10am – 5pm. Info: 503-28-TRAIN 503-288-7246, http://www.cgmrc.com/

Nov 29-30 – **31st Rogue Valley Railroad Show**, Medford Armory, Medford, Ore.
Show time: Sat. 10am – 5pm, Sun. 11am – 4 pm. Model railroad displays, exhibits, swap meet, door prizes, raffle and more. Info: Bill 541-821-5547 or Brad 541-535-7952 bfawcett@mind.net

Dec 6 – Rickreal Train Show, Poke County Fairgrounds, Show time 10am – 3pm. Info: 503-581-6071

If you know of shows not listed here please let me know so we can share that information with our readers.
Contact Bruce at iwcrr@charter.net or 541-890-8145. 10/14/2008

The Warning Signs: You might be a Model Railroader if…

- Your spouse gives you some old newspapers, a bag of foam and a box of Hydrocal for your birthday, and you're speechless with joy.