The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization of railroad and train enthusiasts that was formed in 1969. We are also the Little Rock Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. We meet on the second Sunday of most months at 2 p.m. Anyone interested in trains is welcome! 

If you’d like to join the NRHS through our club (thus being a member of both the Little Rock Chapter NRHS and national NRHS), you must pay $53 per year for the combined ARC and NRHS dues. Family dues, at-large memberships and student dues have also changed.

The next regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be at 2 pm, SUNDAY, January 13, 2008. It will be held at Curtis H. Stout, Inc., 2400 Cantrell Rd Suite 100, Little Rock, Ark. in the same complex that has Cajun’s Wharf. John Hodkin will give a presentation.

There was no official meeting of the club in December, so there are no minutes this month.

The KIAMICHI RAILROAD wasn’t sharing in the coal business generated by a new coal fired power plant near Fulton, Arkansas. The Arkansas Public Service Commission in its approval of the plant, specifically forbade the Kiamichi Railroad from operating coal trains over its line because of poor track conditions.

WYEHaUSER MILL AT MOUNTAIN PINE, ARKANSAS which was closed in December 2006 due to falling demand for pine plywood, has been demolished. As of December 2007 contractors were working on the site. Only the guard shack and a few administration buildings were left standing. The mill was opened in the late 1920’s by Dierks Lumber.

UNION PACIFIC ESTABLISHED a new seven-day record of trains moving out of Wyoming’s Southern Powder River Basin (SPRB). The new record of 284 trains surpasses the previous seven-day record of 280 and was achieved the week of November 22.

A MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS article calls for the elimination of airline flights between Manchester and London, England. John Gummer, a former environment minister, says that the 1.5 million people taking airplanes now should use the trains instead to help cut greenhouse gas emissions. (from The Manchester Evening News)

BANKS, MANN, & ANN S. ELKHART, INDIANA,

A TRUCK DRIVER FELL ASLEEP while driving on Interstate 30 in Texarkana, Texas on November 29, 2007. The truck crash caused the trailer to land on the Kansas City Southern tracks below, shutting down the line for several hours. (from The Texarkana Gazette)

A KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN FREIGHT train derailed near Council, Oklahoma in November 2007. The train was carrying hazardous materials. The company later revealed that the train derailed near the town of Bessemer, located around the derailsment. The involved 11 cars, five of which were carrying butane, a highly flammable, butane-like substance. Residents were not allowed back home for several days while crews worked to clean up the wreck. (from The Monroe News-Star)

AMTRAK’S PERE MARQUETTE, which was traveling from Grand Rapids, Michigan to Chicago, was speeding about 25 miles over the limit for the track signals when it rear-ended a freight train in Chicago, November 30, 2007. The accident sent some 71 people to the hospital and caused $1.3 million in damage. The engineer may have been confused by the signals on the track owned and maintained by Norfolk Southern.

The PHOENIX, ARIZONA, Arizona Railway Museum is located in Phoenix, Arizona. The museum is dedicated to preserving and displaying railroad history. It is open to the public on weekends and special events.

Cover Photo

Book Cover

Train Shows

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Arkansas Railroad Club member Naomi Hull, wife of Gene Hull, died November 15, 2007. She and Gene were charter members of the Arkansas Railroad Club. This is Gene’s handwritten reminiscences of Naomi.

MEMORIES

Gene Hull

During our 63 years together, Naomi and I created a lot of memories. Many of them involved railroads. I thought perhaps you might enjoy some of them.

During 1942 I was a brakeman for the Missouri Pacific, Van Buren Subdivision in passenger service. One day on Train 104 we pulled into Russellville. I was standing on the station platform when I saw a pretty girl and an older woman watching the train.

During a short conversation, I learned the girl's name was Naomi, and the older woman was her mother. I also learned Naomi knew my brother's two daughters, who lived near my parents. Since I lived at home, I still was living at home. A few days later, Naomi told me she was coming to visit at my brother's home, everything came up rosy.

On October 1, 1944 we were married.

For a honeymoon, I got a pass, good for 60 days, to Colorado Springs and return. On October 3 we boarded No. 104, headed west. We had to change trains at Lawton, Kansas to reach Pueblo, Colo.

World War II was going strong, travel was hectic. The agent at Lawton said the train we were waiting for was cancelled, and the only alternative was an upper berth in a Pullman on the Colorado Eagle.

Two kids from Arkansas riding in a Pullman on the Colorado Eagle, on a pass. The Lord was smiling!

On a previous visit at Colorado Springs I had met an elderly widow, where large two-story home was converted to a rooming house. We rented a room with kitchen, for two weeks. During the visit included trips aboard the Manitou & Pike Peak Cog Road to the summit, beautiful view.

All too soon I had to tell Mrs. Atkinson we had to head for home. She apologized for not sending a wedding present. Then she said, “How about two weeks rent?” She didn't need to insist. A 30-day honeymoon involved with trains.

The following 60 years Naomi and I chased and rode trains during annual vacations. Narrow gauge trains, abandoned roadbeds, history. They all were fascinating. Naomi enjoyed them as much as I did. That made it all even better.

Silverton, Durango, Galloping Goose, Lizard Head, Alpaca Tunnel. We saw them all. A story in one of the Arkansas Railroader bulletins told of our rebuilding a stretch of large-boulder roadbed beside the railbeds of the west side approach to Alpine Tunnel.
The Arkansas Railroad Club held its annual Christmas party on December 8 at our meeting place at Curtis Stout in Little Rock.

(Top photo) Members enjoy a wonderful dinner of turkey and vegetables. (Left photo) Member Fred Fillers coordinated not only the Christmas party but also held a drawing for door prizes including Missouri Pacific crew packs, Union Pacific calendars and the table decorations. (Right photo) Members Bill Bailey, Michael Hoge and Jim Wakefield look over photos of the Missouri & Arkansas. David Hoge Photos

Gene and Naomi Hull at presentation of plaque honoring Gene as Railroader of the Year in 1999 by the Arkansas Railroad Club. The pair were charter members. Tom Shook as president that year presented the award. Tom, also a charter member, died last year.

The odor of coal smoke in the engine-filled yard at Edma, New Mexico. A visit to the seldom-used Cumbres Pass after an extended snowstorm.

Finding an engine on the ground near Windy Point, because of ice covering the rails.

Naomi walked along hand-hewn crevices at the ‘balloon-twine’ around of the abandoned Silverton narrow-gauge rail.”

Going to the crest of Tenerife Hill at Dakota, Colorado, and watching trains at the depot for awhile.

Exploring the Rock Island three-track engine house at Tucumcari, New Mexico.

Driving the abandoned railroad of the Durango & Silverton narrow-gauge rail line.

These are some of the things from which memories are made.

I hope Naomi can look down and remember...
Southern Pacific 7666 along with Union Pacific 1532 switching the former Cotton Belt yard at Camden, Arkansas. June 23, 2006. David Hoge photo
This letter from member Travis Bell was recently received and recounts the operations of the Missouri Pacific around Gurdon during his childhood.

FROM: Travis Bell, September 24, 2007

Sir:

I found the September 2007 newsletter more interesting than usual due to the excellent contributions of Mr. John A. Mills about MoPac passenger coaches, and the pictures of MoPac steam locos. Being close to the same age as Mr. Mills, his reminiscing about the golden years of MoPac, the 1930s and 1940s reminded me of the fond memories I have of those days, the biggest difference being the sites: mine center around the area between Little Rock and Texarkana, and certainly between Gurdon and the El Dorado-Monroe.

As a teenager, I watched what was going on in the MoPac world, and remember most passenger trains through Gurdon during daylight hours, such as #4, 5 & 6, 7 & 8, and 17 & 18. Didn’t know much about the nighttime trains except some pulp northbounds that took on fuel oil and water at night in sight of my home, near the roundhouse, but were not scheduled to stop at Gurdon’s depot.

As a teenager I thought I knew all classes of MoPac steam, but never saw one of the 1901 Berkshires, or Russian decapods, or any six-wheeled or eight-wheeled switchers, until 1951 when the 2301 ten-wheeler might be used. Before 1940 there was two (2) passenger trains we referred to as the El Dorado Passenger, came into Gurdon each day, I suppose both originated at Monroe. Standard power was the 6501 class Mikados, but I remember one old coal-fired 2500, the 2516, that was used on the Womble local.

Between 1940 and 1947, quite a few changes took place here. The track now referred to as the 14 rail was installed which required the construction of a timber trestle beside the concrete one near the roundhouse, and a longer turntable installed at Gurdon. The standard power for the Womble Branch (later renamed Normal Branch and now known as Caddo Valley RR), was 2301 ten-wheelers, but I remember one old coal-fired 2500, the 2516, that was used on the Womble local.

When my dad arrived home after work, and I told him I saw that 1157 on #8, he exclaimed “Yeah, and the tender was just about as long as the engine, wasn’t it?” I replied “Boy, you got that right.” Then in 1949 I got to see an 1100 Berkshire, the 1125 as I recall, which also came off one of the “Texas” lines.

Even as a teenager I observed that the top of the stack seemed to be about the same distance from the rail on all classes of steam locos and I had no idea why that was so, but now I know it was because of the Brooks models with their piston valves in inclined valve chests and Stevenson valve gear. Continued next page
Oh, those were the good old days and memories are about all that's left of them. Mr. M. M. Ryle (Happy), was the general roundhouse foreman, Mr. A. B. Mizell was Mr. Ryle's clerk for several years. I knew him as Bro. Mizell, a Church of God Minister, when I knew him 1964-1966, then in 1989 I ended up married to his oldest daughter, Rebekah. (Unfortunately, the marriage ended 5 years later, December 1994).

One of the boilermakers was a Mr. "Boilermaker" Smith, his son Brody, and ther was Mr. Doyle "Pettkellet" Davidson, his sons Doyle, Jr., Roland "Lefty" and Ross, Sam Miller, Earl Allen, his son Alfred "Sonny" Allen, Charlie "Lick" Allen, Charles Bones, Bill Slayton, Raymond Crawford, Artice Francis, Horace Cobb, and several men by names, e.g. H. E. "Tobe" Toland, engineer, Tobe. "Catfish" Bullard, Howard "Speedy" Thompsett, and other engine service men such as Mr. J. B. Loving (he could make that whistle yodel). When he wamble local, you know who it was. Also, my old friend Mr. Tony T. Simmons, P. C. Macnamara, "Chicken" McDonald, Fred Stellfler, Uncle Henry Rogerson (retired off the El Dorado passenger at probably 80 years old), Herman Robertson, David Paul (Honkey) Jackson, Jim Young, J. A. "Tommy" Glover, Glen Ross, Bill Dunil, Hobart Ricketts, Clarence Ricketts, Henry Thomas, Clark Sidney Thomas, Gordon Anderson, and many more I can't think of right now.

Some of the brakemen-conductors I knew included Joe Reid, Marvin Francis, R. E. Graham, Tim Finley Graham, Elmer "Piggy" Pratt, Charles Kuhn, Russel Overbery, Teddy Stoudt, and others that called Gurdon home. Two carmen I can recall were Clarence "Country" Brown, and "Pappy" Covington.

Gordon was really a railroad town but dieselization started its demise, and it's downgrading is still going on. I wouldn't be surprised if the Union Pacific decided to route all traffic via the old Cotton Belt and abandon the Texarkana to Little Rock ex-Mopac line.

Although Mr. W. M. Mike Adams was stationed at Gurdon during the last days of steam on the MoPac, I never had occasion to meet him and only got acquainted through his very interesting articles in Kalmbach Publishing Company's TRAINS Magazine and his contributions to the Arkansan Railroad Club, and I regret never getting to talk to him personally before his death. I feel like Mr. Mills would be another person I would enjoy conversing with, may I can attend club meetings sometime and meet hi (and Mr. Hul). Mr. Mills or Mr. Hul might recognize some of the names I listed, some of them are still living, and at least two are still working for U.P.

I am very much an Amtrak fan and do more than pay lip service to it, having made four round-trips to Santa Barbara, California via the Texas Eagle-Sunset Limited to LAUPT, and a Surfliner to New York. As a European I find it quite strange but would really like to know how this came about. On the other hand although we have fast daytime trains we have found that the traditional sleeper service has a market where the departure is around the time of a last flight and the arrival is about the same time as an air passenger would arrive in the city center. This type of journey would be ideal for a service from Chicago to Little Rock - say depart at about 20:00 and arrive at about 08:45 or Dallas to Little Rock with a shorter journey so depart 22:45 and arrive 07:15. The Texas Eagle, however, stops at Little Rock in the middle of the night and at the same time does not seem to compete with longer air transits from Chicago to Dallas for example. This is a little confusing - but obviously has been arrived at via a commercial analysis.

I hope that I have not given the impression that one side is better than the other - simply that the outcomes of history are different - and I wonder why? One day I will leave my 230 miles / 1 hour 50 minutes "long distance" Ashford to Paris journeys and ride the long distance US trains in a roomette - but until that day I would really like to understand how things happened on your side of the Atlantic.

My very best wishes to all of your club members. BOB PARSONS

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http://www.barham-kent.org.uk/ Barham Village Website

LETTERS

This Union Pacific train was seen pulling a special flatcar loaded with a turbine for a power plant in Texas. Photographed at Little Rock's Union Station on November 21, 2007. Joe Roddy photo

Page 12 Volume XXXIX, Number 1, January 2008 Arkansas Railroader (Little Rock Chapter NRHS)
MODEL RAILROAD CORNER

PROTOTYPICAL TRACK PART-II

By Joe Musgrove

In last month’s article I demonstrated techniques of installing roadbed and track. This month I will show you techniques for ballasting to make your track look prototypical.

First, you want to decide the size and color of ballast you will be using. For N-Scale I recommend using the smallest size available which is usually described as “fine.” If modeling HO fine, medium, or course can be used depending on the look you are going for.

The color you use depends on the railroad you are modeling. Railroads generally use rock that is easily available from the local quarries. If you are modeling a freelance layout you certainly have more choices. In this demonstration I will use a mixture of medium and dark gray fine ballast.

A Layer of Ballast

Ballast is laid in three different steps, the first two for laying ballast alongside my track. Using full strength white school glue I take a brush and layer the glue along the sides of my track and road bed. If you find the glue too thick to work with you can mix in a little water to thin it out.

Next, using a spoon, gently sprinkle the ballast over the glued areas making sure to get complete coverage. Let the glue dry about 6 hours and then vacuum over the area to remove the lose ballast. The first step places a base level of ballast and helps prevent a “crusty lose mixture” when laid too thick. Work in small sections to make sure you lay the ballast before the glue starts to dry.

In the second step, using a spoon, sprinkle a thin layer of ballast on top of the first layer. Taking a soft brush gently remove ballast that might have gotten on the ties. Next, using a spray bottle, spray the area with a 50/50 mixture of water and rubbing alcohol. This will allow the glue mixture to soak into the ballast when applied.

Applying Woodland Scenics Adhesive

Taking an eye dropper I apply Woodland Scenic’s adhesive over the ballast. I make sure every area of the ballast receives a good soaking. Once the mixture is applied I will let the area dry for 24 hours. Once dry I will vacuum over the area to remove any lose ballast. Note any areas that you need to go back and reapply ballast.

Once ballasting the side of my track is complete, I will ballast the track itself. Using a spoon I carefully apply ballast between the ties. Once applied I take my finger and gently run along the ties to smooth the ballast. I repeat the steps of applying and smoothing until my ballast looks correct. Ballast should appear at tie level or just below for mainline rail and passing sidings.

Removing Excess Ballast

Once the ballasting is complete I take a small brush and gently remove ballast from the top of my ties and along my rails to avoid operating problems. Next, I take a spray bottle with a 50/50 water alcohol mix and spray the ballasted area. Once complete I take my eyedropper with adhesive and carefully apply to my ballast. I then let the area dry for 24 hours. Once dry I will carefully inspect the track and remove any ballast stuck to the rails with a track cleaning eraser or small screwdriver if needed. If using a screwdriver or another sharp object use caution to avoid scratching the rails. Ballast stuck to the top of the ties can be removed using sand paper. When using sand paper be very gentle, the goal is to remove ballast not damage the ties.

Touch up and Testing

After removing problem ballast I will inspect and correct any problem areas such as missed spots, again letting these corrected areas dry at least 24 hours if reapplication of adhesive is necessary. Once complete I will vacuum the track and surrounding area to remove any lose ballast.

Next, I will run railcars across the ballasted section and not only look but listen for problems. Once any problem has been corrected I am ready to move on to the last step of weathering my track. I will cover weathering in next month’s article including a great technique using a mixture of powder paints and plaster of Paris.

Layout Tip: Ballasting and weathering can be a tedious process. Take your time and divide your work into small sections. This will help you avoid getting tired and making mistakes.

Questions, ideas, or stories you would like to see in a future article? You can contact me by phone or email: 501-833-8050 jdmusgrove@ualr.edu

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Arkansas Railroad Club member Ken Ziegenbein’s photo (above) is featured in the official 2008 Union Pacific calendar. Union Pacific’s 844 is greeted by school children at the old Texas & Pacific depot in Marshall, Texas in May 2006. Tom Duggan photo

The Arkansas & Missouri has recently added a slug unit. The unit is believed to be a Southern Pacific U25B that was converted to a TEBU (Tractive Effort Booster Unit) by Morrison Knudsen for the SP. AM 80 was photographed at Springdale, November 19, 2007. Tom Duggan photo

Dues Reminder

Your Arkansas Railroad Club dues were due by January 1, 2008. Dues are still $20 per year.

If you are renewing for the NRHS you need to pay an additional $33. All NRHS members should receive a bill from the NRHS which they should then remit along with their payment to the Arkansas Railroad Club.

Also include any address changes

Send your payment to the:
Arkansas Railroad Club
PO Box 9151
North Little Rock, AR 72119

The Arkansas Railroad Club is selling official 2008 Union Pacific calendars as a fund raiser. Order today! See Page 3

Arkansas Railroader