

THE ORDER BOARD

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Nashville Chapter NRHS

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HO Car Project Box Cars Are Here!

Allen Hicks has received the Red Caboose-produced HO 500 series & 7900 series TC Ry 40' box car kits. There's 2 different numbered cars for the 2 series, giving 4 different car numbers in total (TC 501, 537, 7923 & 7942). These cars include NMRA RP25 metal wheelsets with realistically tapered metal axles. Price for local delivery (no shipping involved) is \$16.50 each, \$64/set of 4. **Allen** should have the kits for sale at the Dec meeting.

2003-2004 Schedule

Dec 19 Road Kill Buffet- TCRM Nashville TN
Jan 31 Watertown Mother Goose Trip
Feb 14 Watertown Valentines Day Murder Mystery Trip
Feb 28-29 GATS Show Nashville Municipal Auditorium
Mar 13 Watertown Train Robbery Trip
Mar 27 C Div Meet/Model Train Show & TCRM Open House
Apr 3 Watertown Easter Bunny Trip I
Apr 10 Watertown Easter Bunny Trip II
Apr 24 Watertown Mile-Long Yard Sale Trip
May 1 Cookeville TC Ry Spring Rendezvous Trip
May 28-30 SER Convention Birmingham AL
June 5 Watertown Civil War Reenactment Trip
July 10 Watertown Murder Mystery Trip
Sep 4-5 Nashville Day Out With Thomas The Tank Engine
Sep 11-12 Nashville Day Out With Thomas The Tank Engine
Oct 2 Watertown Train Robbery Trip
Oct 9 Watertown Fall Mile-Long Yard Sale Trip
Oct 16 Cookeville Super Fall Foliage Trip I
Oct 23 Cookeville Super Fall Foliage Trip II
Oct 30 Cookeville Super Fall Foliage Trip III
Dec 4 Lebanon Victorian Christmas Trip
Dec 11 Watertown Two Santa Trips – Santa on board the trains!

Program Notes

December meeting will be our **Road Kill Buffet** followed by an appropriate program.

January- Excursion Train car host certification training coordinated by **Jim & Cheryl Brown**.

February- Resin Kit Assembly by **Garrett Rea & James Bilbrey**

December Road Kill Buffet

Our December Thursday night meeting is on **Friday, December 19**, starting at 7 pm (the Friday day of the week was required because of the caterer's schedule). This is our **Road Kill Buffet** and is for C Div/NRHS/TCRM members. Also, you'll like the program after our buffet. Serving time will be right at 7 pm or so.

Hobby Shop News

The Hobby Shop has several new items in stock as well as the Walthers Dec 2003 sale catalog. The Hobby Shop will be glad to order anything you want that's stocked by Walthers. Be sure to stop in and see what you can add to your model railroad at home or to the modular RRs operated by our HO and N scale modelers.

Another Member Gets Published

Garrett Rea will have an article on his HO scale PRR G22 gondola in the January edition of the PRR Technical & Historical Society monthly online modeling magazine "The Keystone Modeler". His car will be featured in Elden Gatwood's continuing series on PRR gondola classes.

TKM can be accessed by even non PRRT&HS members by going to the following link:

http://www.prrths.com/PRR_Default.html

Scroll down and click on "The Keystone Modeler" link.

Sad News

Robert Thurman's mother passed away on December 14, 2003 at her home in Cookeville. Arrangements are pending. Thurman Funeral Home in Sparta TN will be in charge of arrangements, but she will lie in state at Hooper, Huddleston, & Horner Funeral Home in Cookeville when final arrangements have been made.

FROM THE WATER LEVEL ROUTE TO THE CUMBERLAND PLATEAU

Riding behind NYC E-units on the old Tennessee Central
By **Lyle Key**

THE MEMORABLE RUN OF THE TENNESSEE
WILDFLOWER SPECIAL ON MAY 10, 2003

We arrive at the Museum site on the east side of Nashville about 45 minutes prior to the scheduled 8 o'clock departure. The excursion train looks like a beautiful vision from the glory days of American streamliners:

<u>Motive Power and Passenger Equipment</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Ex NYC E-8 #4068 Ex NYC E-8 #4080	The E-units are resplendent in NYC's classic lightning stripe color scheme. They look just like they did in the good old days except for the Federal Railroad Administration mandated ditch lights.
TCRX #103	Museum President Terry Bebout's private car.
Ex-SAL Sun-Lounge Hollywood Beach	One of the unusual SunLounges built for SAL's Silver Meteor by Pullman.
Diner Lounge TCRX 3119	Ex PRR Smoker-Lounge, reconfigured and redecored by Amtrak.
Dome Coach TCRX 9400	Built for NP by Budd.

NEXT MEETING Willow St Building Friday December 19, 2003 7:00 PM

Coach TCRX 4717 Built for ATSF in 1953 for the *El Capitan*. Still has Southwestern décor.

Power car Ex-CRI&P RPO #514.

The Tennessee Wildflower Special departs at 8:05 as we enjoy a fine breakfast prepared by our host. TCRX 103's platform is right behind the nose of the trailing E-unit for the eastbound trip, and that will provide some great opportunities to see and hear the classic diesel locomotives in action.

Terry tells us that when he was a small boy, he announced to his mother that someday, he was going to own a private railroad car. She had her doubts, but on the weekend before Marvin's charter trip, Terry's mother had been her son's guest on his private car for a regular Museum excursion. TCRX 103 has an interesting history. It was built by Budd in 1950 as SP 9012, a 10-6 sleeper. SP sold it to the Pickens Railroad in South Carolina where it was converted into a stainless steel business car named *Edna III*. The Pickens Railroad sold the car to comedian Jackie Gleason who typically used it on trips between New York and Florida. The car briefly was owned, but never used, by Auto Train Corporation. After Auto Train released it, it was stored in Florida for several years.

Terry obviously enjoys being a private car owner, but he also recalls the not so glamorous job of restoring it to reliable operating condition. He vividly remembers working in the overhead crawl space on a muggy August day while reworking the car's electrical system.

While we are enjoying our breakfast, the train parallels the Cumberland River and crosses Mill Creek and Stones River. All of those waterways are extraordinarily high by virtue of the heavy spring rains. At 8:53, we stop at Mt. Juliet for the first photo runby. The early morning has been mostly cloudy, but the sun pops out just in time for the runby action. Everyone is pleased with the photogenic location and the unexpected sunshine, and we're back on the road again at 9:24.

The train has 128 passengers who hail from Tennessee, Washington State, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, New York, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Washington, DC, Minnesota, Arkansas, Ohio, Virginia, and New Jersey. A retired Northern Pacific conductor has come all the way from Washington State to ride the ex-NP Dome. He told Marvin that he never got to ride one when NP was running its own passenger trains. We arrive in Lebanon at 9:55. If all goes well, commuter trains will be running between Nashville and Lebanon by late 2005. The old NC&StL depot is visible about two blocks from the N&E depot. NC&StL abandoned its Lebanon branch about 1938. N&E's shop is on the east side of Lebanon, and several of its green and yellow locomotives are spotted on the tracks outside the shop building.

East of Lebanon, the E-units top the short 3% grade of Billy Goat Hill without any noticeable strain. A now abandoned Frisco line traversed another Billy Goat Hill in my hometown of Birmingham, and one wonders how many railroads cross a grade known by that name.

At 10:25, we stop briefly in Watertown to swap the cab riders. Watertown is the turning point for many Museum excursions, and a nice platform has been built alongside the railroad. We briefly watch a baseball game that's in progress in a nearby park. At 10:30, we're rolling again.

The train rolls through the little town of Alexandria at 10:58, and we reach Carthage Junction at 11:04. Carthage got quite a bit of media attention during the last Presidential campaign since it's

the hometown of former Vice President Al Gore. The Carthage Branch curves off to our left in a northerly direction. It once extended 8 miles into downtown Carthage, but only about 5 miles of the branch remain.

Beyond Carthage Junction, we're treated to a succession of bucolic scenes with cows, horses, goats, and even buffaloes grazing in the rolling pastures. The narrow country roads follow the contour of the undulating topography, and as Lucius Beebe would say, most of the barns are "innocent of paint." This is the sort of rural Tennessee countryside I remember from the pre-interstate highway era, and it probably looks virtually the same as it did when EMD delivered our E-8's to the NYC half a century ago.

At 11:15, we're running alongside the Caney Fork River which is well over its banks like the other waterways we've encountered. The train slows to a crawl as we pass between the Bluffs of Sebowisha on our right and the river on our left. Terry tells us that a TC president had two dogs named Sebo and Wisha, and that for many years, TC owned an executive retreat named Camp Sebowisha on top of the bluffs.

Now that we're deep in the woods, the air is full of wispy white seedlings from cottonwood trees. After crossing over a bridge to the north side of the river, we can see a panoramic vista that includes the river and a hillside meadow covered with yellow wildflowers. To complete this idyllic scene, an eagle is soaring high over the meadow.

At 11:36, we slowly traverse a tight, right hand curve before passing milepost 69 and easing across a through truss bridge over the Caney Fork River. This railroad bridge is visible from I-40 and the nearby rest area, and just beyond the rest area, I-40 begins its climb up the west side of the Cumberland Plateau. At milepost 70, the railroad reaches Buffalo Valley and begins the 5-mile climb up the 3 1/2% grade of Silver Point Hill. Silver Point Hill is a tough challenge under the best conditions, and retired L&N Superintendent Ira Bell once told me that he hated to deal with it in the fall when the autumn leaves made the track exceptionally slippery. Much to everyone's delight, the old E-8's perform like champs and walk right up Silver Point Hill without slackening their pace.

The Museum operates immensely popular fall foliage trips to Cookeville, and in past years, those trains have handled 450 passengers. This year's train will have additional cars that will increase its total capacity to 520. The 2003 fall foliage train will require 4 or 5 locomotives to make the climb up Silver Point Hill.

Just after topping the hill at milepost 75, we cross I-40, and at 12:10, we stop east of Baxter for photo runby number two. By the time the train backs down for the runby, the clouds have moved on to the east, and we once again have plenty of sunshine. For the rest of the trip, we will be operating under beautiful blue skies.

We're off and running again at 12:35, and at 12:51, we arrive in Cookeville. The old depot now houses a museum and a ten wheeler is spotted nearby along with a couple of cabooses. One of the cabooses actually came from the TC. Most of the passengers detrain in Cookeville, but some of us will stay on the train for the short run to Algood. We leave for Algood at 12:56, and Terry joins us for lunch in the dining section of TCRX 103. On the east side of Cookeville, we skirt the edge of the Tennessee Tech University campus.

We stop in Algood at 1:15, and the E-units run around the train on the passing track. We head back toward Cookeville at 1:35, and with the diesels on the other end, 103's rear platform is now on the rear of the train. We're back at the Cookeville depot at 1:51, and we depart for Nashville at 2:03.