



# Ties and Rails

Official newsletter of the Crossville Model Railroad Club

December 2025

(931)210-5050

[www.crossvilletrains.org](http://www.crossvilletrains.org)

## Finally!



Crossville: December 2, 2025 was not only a banner day for the Railroad Club, but the Cumberland County and Middle Tennessee community at large. The rebirth of a long standing family and community tradition spanning generations which drew over 400,000 visitors from over forty foreign countries as well. Made possible solely due to the generous donations of members from the community who have fond memories of bringing their children and grandchildren to "See the Trains".

I cannot thank our local dignitaries, the Chamber of Commerce, our contractor and the many members of the railroad club who braved the elements to help celebrate this monumental event. Special thanks also goes to Ed Potts, on the far right, our immediate past president and the Bruce Herring, just left of the sign on the ground, our incoming president in 2026.

It was my job as current President to get the ball to the one yard line so the team could push it across in 2026. Looking forward to seeing all our friends again at the "Club".

Pat Taylor, President CMRC

## ***The Prez. Sez:***

As the last few days of 2025 rapidly approach, again, I think we look at each other and ask where in the heck did 2025 go. Time may fly when you're having fun, but darn it, flies a lot quicker when you get older. I tell people when you retire the calendar changes dramatically. There is Sunday, Monday and then Friday, Saturday. What the hell happened to Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday? I don't know.

Anyway, this will be my last post as President of the CMRC and I want again reiterate what an honor and privilege it has been to serve this wonderful Club. It is an organization well worth fighting for.

2026 holds some remarkable events for the Club and, of course, for the membership as well. Having a place to call home, I think, will change everyone's outlook on their commitment to what has been sort of stagnant waiting for our big break. Our big break is here and I think we're gonna be taking full advantage of it. But we can only be successful if all members are contributing to the cause.

Over the next few months, the scale coordinators and other Board members will be requesting assistance with rebuilding our railroad dynasty. Please, no matter how you can contribute, the important thing is to contrib-

ute whatever you can. This is not gonna be a job for 15 or 20 members but it's gonna take all 60 members to actively participate in the rebuild. So I want to encourage all members to help not only support the Club, but also support Bruce, as President, and Marcus, as the new Director, with their efforts to keep the Club moving in a forward direction with our eye on the golden ring.

When I speak about contributing, it's about your skill set. What do you excel at? What don't you excel at? How can you help? And what are you willing to do to help?

Personally, I am a terrible track layer and am unskilled at soldering. But I love weathering, landscaping, making things look "used", and making sure there are lots of details to look at.

There is also always the option to donate money for the layouts. Like me, with physical limitations, I try to contribute in other ways that will support the Club. So don't feel that because you can't crawl under the table to do wiring, that you cannot contribute. There are many ways to do, so never be afraid to ask

*Continued on Page 3*

***Rail Trivia:*** *In 1898, the Illinois Central introduced café cars - described as composite baggage, smoking, café, and parlor cars - which were 72.5 feet long and equipped with 16 wheels. The cars, built by the Pullman Company, cost \$11,386 each.*

*Continued from Page 2*

how you can help.

God bless all the members and your families and I wish everyone the Merriest Christmas, the Happiest New Year and may our 2026 be a remarkable year, not just for the Club, but for our families as well.

Happy Holidays,

President Pat

## Marketing Comm. Ralph Watson

Pat Taylor, Marcus Simms and I did the Veteran's Parade on November 8. On November 25, Bruce and I put up the tree at First National Bank. It is upstairs between Taylor Swift and The Playhouse trees. Look for posts on our updated website.

Next up is our long awaited ground breaking at 87 West Avenue on Tuesday, December 2, at 3PM.

## This is a big deal.

This is step one in a long and heavy workload process. All are needed, expected, to participate. Please arrive early and use the parking at One Bank, Highland Federal, and ARC rehab center. You will be assigned tasks and given souvenirs.

A week later is our annual Holiday dinner at Tansi on December 9 at 5PM, If you have not signed up yet because the \$15. each is too much, come anyway and your dinner will be sponsored by another member(s). It is really good food and fellowship.

Another thing I/we need help from a bunch of us is to put together a nice looking but simple float for the Crossville Christmas parade which is on December 13, Saturday. Step off is 3PM but the lineup will be earlier. Pat has had some new banners made "coming soon..." and 87 West Avenue, etc. All ideas, concepts and designs are welcome. Truck, trailer, tractor, oxcart? Lights, wreaths, music and more. I have set aside all day on 12/5, 12/6 and 12/8, and the afternoon of 12/7 to get this done.

Call or text 931-248-4263, write [rxalph@gmail.com](mailto:rxalph@gmail.com) or just show up at 951 Holiday Drive. That is my commitment, where is yours?

For those of you who want to have a special something under the tree, check the link below at the Mystery box sale by Rapido.

[https://rapidotrains.com/mystery-box-2025.html?srsltid=AfmBOorctMxBZEevqGf\\_yUYyMZF1JP5OjQdBq0vy0aSc21UK4Fnu8M48](https://rapidotrains.com/mystery-box-2025.html?srsltid=AfmBOorctMxBZEevqGf_yUYyMZF1JP5OjQdBq0vy0aSc21UK4Fnu8M48)

**Merry Christmas!**

Ralph Watson

## Greetings From President-Elect

### Bruce Herring

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and enjoyed time with friends and family. Ours was a quiet affair with just Arlene, the dogs, the cats and I. We had a special guest names Smokey. He was dumped in Pikeville, hit by a car, and shot, shattering the bones of his right front leg. His leg was amputated last Thursday, and he is recovering here with us. He will be going to his permanent home after he heals.

This has not been a good year, health wise, for our former and current Club presidents. Ed Potts suffered severe injuries in a car accident earlier this year that put him in the hospital, and then into a rehab center for months. Now, our current President, Pat Taylor, is fighting kidney issues that have landed him in the hospital for an extended stay. Please keep them both in your thoughts, hearts and prayers.

First, I would like to talk about our groundbreaking ceremony at 87 West Avenue on Tuesday, December 2nd at 3:00 PM. I would ask everyone to try to attend this event. We need a strong showing of support. Be sure to wear your Club apparel, if you have any.

Next, just one week later, is our annual Christmas dinner at the Lake Tansi Restaurant on Tuesday, December 9th. I am sad to say that this year's turnout is the lowest I have seen since leading this event. Just 32 people coming, really? I know we can do better than that. Please get hold of me ASAP so that I can add you to the list of attendees. Too late to send checks in the mail, just tell me you are coming and pay at the door. I want to see 50 guests on that list. Email: [bherring52@outlook.com](mailto:bherring52@outlook.com)

Phone: 423-326-6156

There will be door prizes, a 50-50 raffle, and a silent auction for one my wife's Christmas Afghans (funds going to the building fund.

Lastly, I know that 90% of our attention will be going into the new building. However, there are some housekeeping items that I would like to address. I ask everyone to take a look and see where you think you could help. There are too few members involved in our Committees. I think there are Committees that can be consolidated for more efficiency. I would like to see a Special Events Committee that would handle things, such as Lunch on the Lawn, Annual Picnic, Christmas Dinner, and any other public event that the membership chooses to participate in.

More on this to come later as we settle into the new year, For now, I bid you peace and good health.

Sincerely,

Bruce Herring - President Elect

Crossville Model Railroad Club



## Your New HO Scale Coordinator/Director

Hello, would like to introduce myself.

My name is Fred Marcus Simms; here at the Club I go by Marcus. I was in the Boy Scouts; I am a U. S. Army veteran, was a shop manager in my family run business; was an over the road truck driver, and now the shop manager at the place where I work. I work a full time job 5 to 6 days, 40 to 60 hours a week.

I'm an HO scale model railroader, collector of other scales, and collect some railroad artifacts. I have built a few layouts for myself and help other modelers build theirs. I started with a 4' x 8' sheet of plywood in the floor layout. Now I am working on a 14' x 20' double deck layout. The name of my railroad is The Caney Fork Western Railroad. I started out using DC power and changed over to DCC.

I was looking at what I could give back to the Club for all the enjoyment I get being part of this Club. I thought, why not? So I volunteered to be the new coordinator and was approved by the Board and members. I was elected to the Board as the Director - Utility. I would like to THANK EVERYBODY that voted for me for giving me a chance.

Plans for after the first of the year, once we're done with the holidays, I plan to get with all the coordinators from CMRC, UCRS, and Board members to see how much room we will be working with. Then I want to get with all HO scale people to see what they want. I even want to hear from all members what they want to see on the new layout. If you have an idea, let me know. It's hard to plan anything till I get more information on how much room we will be working with. It's not going to be as big as the old layout, but better.

I've already talked to a few members stating what

they would like to see in the new layout, but I need to hear from all members. The new layout will be set up for continuous and switching operations. It will be for 2 to 4 people to run trains. I have been studying other Club layouts in the internet, to see how much they put in a small space. Will try and stay away from all duck under and crawl under, but double deck may not be out of the question.

Will try to incorporate different types of track laying and scenery ideas into the layout, so the public can see what goes into a model railroad.

We will have to start small and work up to bigger. We will have to figure out how we are going to build this layout and out of what. The theme for the layout will have to be a general theme, so we can run all equipment. It will be DC and DCC. Would like for it to be as detailed of a layout as we can get it. I will need everybody's HELP, I can't do it by myself. When it's time to start building the layout, I want us to be ready. We all will have to help in the other scales so they can get up running and operating.

The following people are on the HO scale board at this time:

|                   |                                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Coordinator       | Marcus Simms                    |
| Asst. Coordinator | Tom Shallcross                  |
| Motive Power      | Richard Morris                  |
| Rolling Stock     |                                 |
| Right of Way      | Richard Morris                  |
| Electrical        | Tom Shallcross<br>Mike Durnwald |
| R&D and IT issues |                                 |
| Procurement Team  | Art Landrigan<br>Roberta Dean   |

Inventory Tom Shallcross  
Scenery Ralph Watson  
Donation Processing Tom Shallcross  
Weathering Pat Taylor

If anybody wants to step back off this list or to be added to this list, let me know. We can always use new ideas, good or bad. This is not going to be done my way, that's why I need everybody's HELP. It doesn't matter how big or little it is, just step up and help.

This is everybody's Club not a selected few. You can find me on Facebook under my name and my railroad name. I have even been trying to do a little bit on YouTube. If I had an office, it would be open door policy, call, text, messenger. Or email me 24/7. I will get back to you. When the President of the Club asks for a report, I want to be able to say more than, "Nothing at this time".

Happy Model Railroading

Fred Marcus Simms (please call me Marcus)

HO Coordinator

Director - Utility (starting 01/01/26)

Email: [shapes\\_1988@yahoo.com](mailto:shapes_1988@yahoo.com)

Phone or text: 931-607-9857

In person: all meetings

Live everyday like it's your last!

**DROVE TOO LONG**

**ENGINEER SNOOZING**

**WHAT HAPPENED NEXT**

**IS NOT AMUSING**

**Burma Shave**

## *CMRC Treats . . . .*

*Submitted by cooks.com for CMRC cookbook*

### **Railroad Cake**

1 c. sugar

1/4 c. butter

2 eggs

1 tsp. vanilla

1 c. sour cream

2 c. flour

1 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. baking soda

Mix all together. DO NOT beat with a mixer.

Put in a 9x12 cake pan.

#### **Topping:**

1/2 c. crushed walnuts

1/2 c. sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

Mix all together. Put 1 can of cherry pie filling on top of batter, then put topping on last. Bake at 325 degrees for 35 minutes. The top will look like a railroad track.

## Letter to the Editor

As the spouse of an active CMRC Board member, I usually wait outside meetings but recently stayed to listen. There was discussion that the railroad club is entertainment rather than educational and thus not part of the Upper Cumberland Railroad Society. I did not comment as I am not a Board member.

After moving to Crossville, Tom first introduced me to the Train Club. Members enthusiastically shared train operations, scales, and historical replicas, showing visitors how everything worked and continually updating layouts with new technology - a valuable learning experience for all.

Recently, while selling old lumber at a garage sale, I mentioned it was meant for a train layout. I told the man that we were members of the Crossville Model Railroad Club and this stranger recalled fondly how his children and grandchildren had learned about trains through Club members explanations and demonstrations.

The Club acts as both an educational hub and the working arm of the Upper Cumberland Railroad Society. As members, we can be proud of how we benefit our community, offering entertainment and, even more importantly, promoting education - especially as we reaffirm our dedication to, once again, being active members as we start construction on our new facility.

Sharon Shallcross



IT MAKES FOR SOUND  
PROOF BENCHWORK AND  
COMES IN HANDY.



## CMRC "O" SCALE

### DECEMBER REPORT

With Pat Taylor stepping down as President, and Bruce Herring elected President. With Bruce moving into his new position, there is now the need for an "O" Scale Coordinator. I have been asked to volunteer to be the interim coordinator during the transition.

During this period I want to thank all the old and new members that have continued to support the Club. With the upcoming Christmas Party, I would like to see all of the "O" scale members volunteer to attend the party. It is just another way to visit together.

This will give me an opportunity to meet many of the team, and discuss ideas to move forward during the transition.

To start our conversation, I would like to start with a January meeting at the Common Grounds Café on Stanley St. to discuss our expectations during construction of our new home. We could also do a tour of our "stuff" at the warehouse so you can actually see what is available to start on a plan for our layout.

I hope you will attempt to attend the Christmas Party, and please wear your name tag so I will be able to put a name with the face.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL

John Benedetti



## Veteran's Day Parade





Our quarterly meeting was held on Nov. 17, 2025 at Shoney's restaurant in Crossville.

The main topic on the Agenda was the election of Officers and Directors for the upcoming fiscal year 2026. Since the incumbents were eligible for an additional term, and were unopposed, the Chief Clerk was requested to cast a single vote for them. The candidates were unanimously voted for reelection by the members present. The officers elected were as follows:

Assistant Superintendent - Ed Potts

Paymaster - Jan Novack

Director - Ralph Watson

2026 National Train Show in Chattanooga, TN hosted by the SER. A reminder of the need for anyone interested in volunteering to have their layout listed for visitation with the Convention should contact Bill Orman or Art Landrigan for information.

The next meeting is scheduled for MONDAY, Feb. 16, 2026 at Shoney's.

Art Landrigan

Superintendent

## House of Hope

Once again our members came through, fulfilling 20 children's Christmas wishes by providing generously to the House of Hope Angel program. Our car was full and the gifts were welcomed when they were delivered.

Thanks to everyone who participated and we give thanks that we can continue to participate in this important opportunity to give a wonderful Christmas to these children.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

Sharon Shallcross

**Rail Trivia:** *Before experimenting with nitroglycerine, the Central Pacific's work on blasting tunnels through the granite walls of the Sierra Nevada progressed at between twelve and sixteen inches per day, working around the clock.*

**Check out  
6,000 train books.**

Or 100,000 train photos. Or 50,000 train magazines. In fact, there are a lot of things you should be checking out at the National Model Railroad Association's Kalmbach Memorial Library. You'll find everything from prototype railroad periodicals to vintage model kit instructions.

As an NMRA member, you have easy access to everything – it's all just a phone call, letter, or email away. Our staff will even help you do research about virtually any train topic, whether it's model or prototype.

Visit one of the world's largest train libraries at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org). You'll find that the NMRA has a lot to offer modelers. Check it all out!



**We make it even more fun.**  
[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)  
423-892-2846



*What A TEAM Community*

# PARADE OF CHRISTMAS TREES

## CROSSVILLE OFFICE

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE TREE

**DECEMBER**  
**8<sup>THRU</sup> 23**

The Christmas Trees are decorated by local schools, churches, and civic organizations and will be on display now through January 5th.

 **FIRST NATIONAL BANK**  
OF TENNESSEE

Crossville: 1386 North Main Street  
931.484.BANK (2265)

[fnbotn.com](http://fnbotn.com)

   **Member FDIC** **EQUAL HOUSING LENDER** **NMLS# 431625**