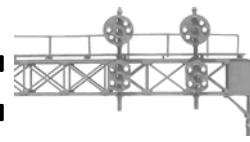


THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 16

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
NOVEMBER 2009 ISSUE

Number 11

CLUB OFFICERS

President:

Fred Alsop

Vice-President:

John Carter

Secretary:

Art Daniels

Treasurer:

Duane Swank

Newsletter Editor:

Ted Bleck-Doran

Webmaster:

John Edwards

LOCATION

ETSU Campus, George L.
Carter Museum

HOURS

Business Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Meetings start at 7:00 PM at ETSU Campus, Brown Hall Science Bldg, Room 312, Johnson City, TN.

- A social gathering is held prior to the business meeting at *EL TORITO* on State of Franklin near ETSU in the Kroger Plaza starting at 5:45 PM. Visitors and those interested in joining MEMRR are invited to attend.

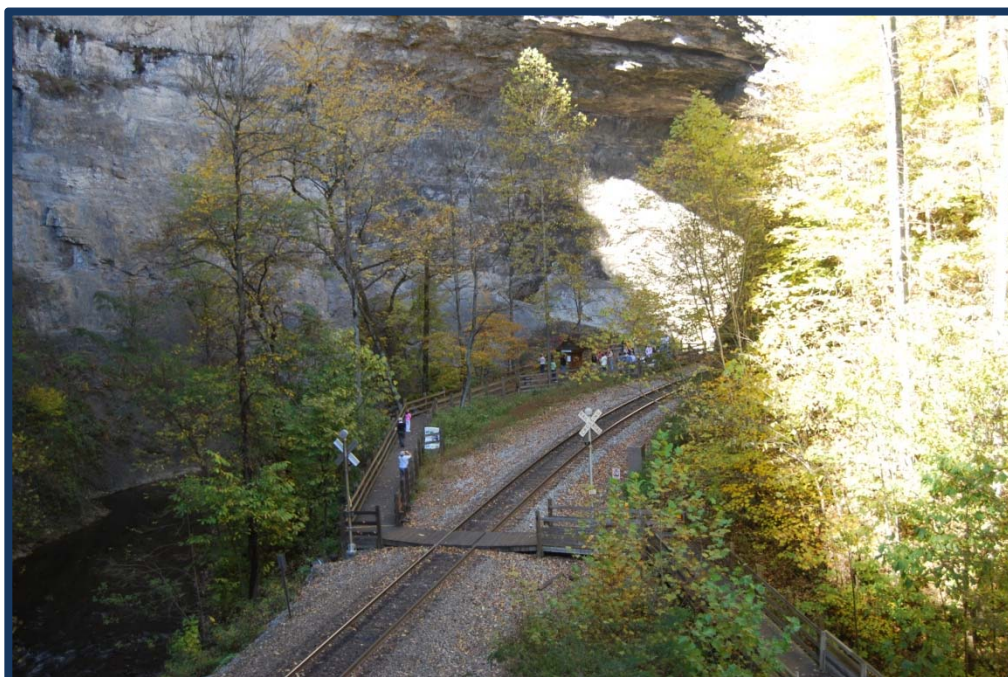
- Work nights are held weekly on Thursday evenings starting at 4:30 PM and lasting until ???

- Open viewing and operating layout is available every Saturday from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM.

Natural Tunnel Virginia Norfolk Southern's Hole-in-the-Wall



Two views of Natural Tunnel in Scott County Virginia. The tunnel is under an hour's drive from Johnson City and offers quite a bit of railroad activity. There are roughly 10 trains a day. Most of the trains consist of coal cars. There are also helper moves. In a three hour stay we caught two coal movements and one helper returning light. There is a ski lift to the bottom of the gorge or the more adventuresome can hike the trail to the bottom. There is also a trail to the north portal. While not as developed the railfan can get some interesting shots.





The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab:

Thanks to all the MEMRR members who hosted the visitors from the Southern and Norfolk & Western railroad historical societies at

the Carter Railroad Museum on Friday evening, October 16th. Our visiting railroaders had a great time as evidenced by this email from the organizer of the event, Greg Soots:

From: Gregory M. Soots

To: Fred J Alsop

Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2009 10:42 PM

Subject: Laying Rails in Bristol

Fred,

Not sure when you're going to be back at the university but I thought I would fill you in on last weekend. First, I wish you had been there and regret that you were away. Your "crew" were perfect hosts. We had about 31 people come tour the museum and layouts and I think every one of them was very impressed with what has been built there at ETSU. Several of the people bragged about the quality of the museum and the layouts. I left around 8pm and there were still several of our attendees still there taking pictures and talking. Two of your members spent Saturday with us too.

Thanks for the great help and allowing us access to the museum.

Greg

I did get back in time to attend and preside over some of the October meeting after a 500 mile drive with my students from the Outer Banks of North Carolina on Tuesday, 20 Oct. I missed the discussion on the conditions for selling the NCE DCC equipment, but club member, Joe Roberts, has purchased some of it and we have others with interest in it. Jim Pahriss has been in touch with Johnny Graybeal, one of the areas most knowledgeable people on the "Tweetsie" railroad conveying our interest in the ET&WNC as a modeling subject for the "Rabetoy layout". Johnny has agreed to help with the project acting as a consultant and offering his books on the railroad to the club at an author's discount. We voted to purchase what we could from him (2 of the 7 volumes are not currently available from his stocks) and to buy the others to use as reference materials on our Tweetsie project. The needed display cabinet pieces arrived on the 28th from Lozier and were assembled on Saturday, 30th, in the "Ken Marsh" room at the museum. Lighting will need to be added, but they are 95% ready for use. With this work out of the way the Rabetoy group can begin planning in earnest for the Tweetsie project.

The "Little Engineers'" playroom is nearing completion with the hope of having it in service on November 14th when we celebrate our 2nd anniversary of the George L. Carter Railroad Museum. Local media will be contacted with an article to be released by ETSU's University Relations marking the occasion and there will be thousands of people on campus that Saturday to celebrate Home Coming. We are listed in the university's schedule of events for that day as one of the special places to visit on campus. We really need as many club members (those not going to the train show in Bluefield on that Saturday) to be present to help handle a big

visitation day at the museum. Our kid's caboose is scheduled to be completed by that date, complete with television set and DVD player and if any of you have DVD's of kids railroading films, such as Thomas-the-Tank, please donate them, or lend them to us long enough for us to copy them, so we can have shows for our littlest visitors that day.

We have had two coordinators meetings, and will have had a 3rd by the time you are reading this. They are providing structure to our organization that is allowing lots of projects to be conducted simultaneously and I think we can all see their importance by the number of projects that are underway each Thursday night. These groups need members and all you have to do is pick one, two, or several, that interest you and sign up on the clipboards on the back of Hobie Hyders coal tipple module. Tell the coordinator you are ready to help and let them get you started on a project. Simple as that!

November is the month that the MEMRR elects its officers for the coming year. We formed a nominating committee, Harriet Swank and Allan Morton, at the October meeting and charged them with providing a slate of officers for consideration at the next meeting. If you want to seek an office in the club just let them know. The floor will be open for additional nominations at the November meeting. Be sure to let the current officers know that you appreciate the role they have played for the club during their past year in office as well. November begins the quarter in which everyone's dues are payable to retain membership for the coming year. With the terrific club we have and the outstanding facility we occupy and the wonderful opportunities offered for the pursuit of the hobby of model railroading I am sure everyone will want to renew their membership in a hurry and our treasurer will have a line cued up just waiting for a chance to pay him.

The Carter Railroad Museum logo contest was launched in early October with a deadline for entries of 14 November (remember, November is National Model Railroad Month) and a deadline for judging the entries and announcing the winners before Thanksgiving. The Tennessee Credit Union sponsored the event with \$900 in overall prize money. Entries are beginning to come in and we will plan to display them at the Sunset branch of the TCU prior to the judging. If 2 or 3 members would be interested in acting as part of the panel of judges, please let me know.

The Christmas Holiday season is rapidly approaching and we need to think about our annual club Christmas party at the November meeting. We also need to plan holding model railroading "how-to-do-it" clinics and workshops for the Saturdays between Thanksgiving and mid-December as we have done in years past. Please be thinking of 15-30 minute workshops you can conduct to show others how we do some of the things we do in model railroading to help them enjoy their hobby more. You don't have to be a professional or a teacher, but all of us have some facets of the hobby we can demonstrate to others. We will spend some time at our next meeting putting together a list of offerings and get them out to the local media to encourage visitors to come to the museum at Christmas time. We will need some museum holiday decoration thoughts as well.

Falls colorful leaves are blowing across the tracks ahead, but the lights are green and we are moving forward. Hear the whistle blow and think of all the destinations yet to come!

Fred Alsop
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum



Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Meeting Minutes October 20, 2009

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:57 PM by Vice President John Carter. President Fred Alsop was not present for the beginning of the meeting.

Officers' Reports:

Secretary's Report: Minutes from September meeting were accepted as printed in *The Signal Bridge*.

Newsletter Editor's Report: Ted Bleck-Doran reported that Gary Emmert will write some articles for selected future editions of *The Signal Bridge*.

Treasurer's Report: Duane Swank reported as follows:

Balance Forward: \$1,616.32
Income: \$2,258.80
Expenses: \$2,276.64
Month Ending Balance: \$1,598.48
Available Balance: \$1,194.04

Webmaster's Report: John Edwards reported that he has created a secure section for Members Only on the Webpage. The site section is password protected. John Edwards provided the password to members present at the meeting. John Edwards will provide the password to any member in good standing who requests it. Members should contact John Edwards directly to request a password.

Vice President's Report: John Carter reported that tonight's program will be presented by Ted Bleck-Doran and will be a DVD from the 1950's on a car shop's construction of Reefers. Tod Eaton will provide the program for November. December will be the club's annual Christmas party and the January program will be The City of Chicago by Gary Emmert.

President's Report: Fred Alsop was not present at the time of the President's Report

OLD BUSINESS:

- G. L. Carter RR Museum Logo Contest** was launched October 7, 2009 with \$900.00 in total prize money graciously provided by the Tennessee Credit Union. A link to the Carter RR Museum section on the ETSU website will be added to the MEMRR website.
- The Railfan trip** to the Craggy Mountain RR in Asheville has been postponed.
- The Appalachian Model Railroad Club** has declined the opportunity to purchase the NCE DCC system. Other opportunities to sell either the entire collection, or in sections, were discussed. Harriet Swank made a motion to offer the DCC system to club members on a first-come, first-serve basis to club members. The motion was seconded by Bill Hensley. The motion was passed. Duane Swank made a motion to discount the new equipment by 40% and the used equipment by 60% for members only. The motion was seconded by Jim Pahrnis. Ensuing discussion clarified that any sale would be "as is", with the purchaser being responsible for any issues or upgrades. The motion passed. Jim Pahrnis moved that any equipment left by January 1, 2010 be offered to Bob Barrett at HobbyTownUSA for consignment sale. Fred Alsop seconded the motion and the motion passed. All

interested parties should contact Duane Swank regarding purchase.

- Roundhouse Ready Board:** Allan Morton reports that the Roundhouse Engine Stall Location Board is almost completed. This board will inform all members at the club as to which engines are in the Roundhouse and in which stall. In discussion, it was mentioned that only functional engines should be in the Roundhouse.
- Corporate Support:** Fred Alsop mentioned that a total of \$100.00 has been received from various area Walmart stores thanks to the efforts of Hobie Hyder.
- Other Old Business: None mentioned.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Nominating Committee:** John Carter called for volunteers for the 2010 Officer Nominations Committee. Nominations are normally presented during the November meeting for vote and approval so that they may take office in January. Allan Morton and Harriet Swank volunteered to serve as the Committee.
- National Model Railroad Month:** November is National Model Railroad Month and a November Friday is National "Take A Toy Train to Work Day". November 14th is ETSU's Homecoming Day and November is the anniversary month for the museum. Fred Alsop (who arrived and assumed leadership of the meeting) proposes to use these opportunities to promote the Railroad Museum and MEMRR.
- Calendar Planning:** Jim Pahrnis moved that the January 2010 meeting be devoted to planning for 2010. Gary Emmert seconded the motion. Jim explained that the planning session would result in a schedule of events for the year (clinics, special club and museum events, possible excursions, etc.). Several people mentioned that a coordinator would need to be needed (omit developed). Motion carried.
- ET&WNC Library:** Jim Pahrnis moved the club purchase 5 of 7 available volumes of the ET&WNC History by Johnny Graybeal plus an annual membership in the ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society. Motion carried. Jim made a motion to buy the missing volumes 3 and 7 from whatever source they might be available at a total cost not to exceed \$75.00. Motion was seconded by Allan Morton. Motion was passed.
- Warm White LED Source:** John Edwards reported that Walmart has 60-bulb warm white LED strings for \$6.99 and recommended them for model railroading, particularly for structure lighting.
- DCC Installation Help:** Bill Hensley mentioned a website "TCSGCC.COM" as an excellent resource for information about installing DCC decoders into various locomotives.
- 2010 Dues cycle:** Information regarding dues for 2010 will be in the November Newsletter.

LAYOUT REPORTS:

None

VOLUNTEERS FOR SATURDAY MUSEUM OPERATING SESSIONS:

Volunteers were taken for upcoming Saturdays for Museum.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dates for Upcoming Events: Remember the various dates in November for special events, as mentioned elsewhere in these Minutes. Good coverage at the Railroad Museum is needed for the expected increased attendance.

PROGRAM:

The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM. Ted Bleck-Doran presented a program entitled "A Day at the

Shop" a video showing how they built refers at Dispatch Junction and the East Rochester Car Shops.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 PM.

Minutes prepared and respectfully submitted by

Arthur Daniels, Secretary



**MEMRR Operating Group
Coordinators
Meeting Report
October 8, 2009**

Rabetoy Layout Development:

Informal discussions with MEMRR members including those that have volunteered for the Rabetoy Layout Development Group have produced the following suggestions:

A. Acquire a reference library for development of the ET&WNC section. Suggested books include the following:

1. Along the ET&WNC Volume I: Early Narrow Gauge Locos by Johnny Graybeal
2. Along the ET&WNC Volume II: The Ten Wheelers by Johnny Graybeal
3. Along the ET&WNC Volume III: Depots by Johnny Graybeal
4. Along the ET&WNC Volume IV: Freight Cars A by Johnny Graybeal
5. Along the ET&WNC Volume V: Freight Cars B by Johnny Graybeal
6. Along the ET&WNC Volume VI: Passenger Cars by Johnny Graybeal
7. Blue Ridge Stemwinder: An Illustrated History of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad and the Linville River Railway by John Waite
8. Tweetsie Country by Mallory Hope Ferrell

All of the books by Johnny Graybeal are available from the Tarheel Press at a cost of \$29.95 each. The book by John Waite is available from the Blue Ridge Parkway Store at a cost of \$59.95. The book by Mallory Hope Ferrell is available from Amazon at a cost of \$42.95. The total cost of the above books would be \$282.60. Shipping costs would be added. Information on the above is attached.



B. In addition, I have provided some references regarding available plans and models concerning the ET&WNC which are also attached.

C. Consideration should be given to contacting the Art Department of East Tennessee State University (ETSU) for assistance in painting appropriate backdrops to show, for example, Johnson City and possibly other areas.

D. It is my understanding that it may be possible to acquire one or more of the ET&WNC ten wheel brass HO3 locomotives (possibly through a generous donation) that were produced by Train and Trooper in Phillips, Maine.

E. It is my recommendation that:

1. The MEMRR club should acquire the books noted in section A which can be used to develop a track plan including structure selection for the proposed ET&WNC section.
2. The ETSU Art Department should be contacted regarding backdrop painting.
3. If Item D above is true, the donated locomotives may serve to establish an operating time frame for the ET&WNC section of the layout. This would simplify the planning for the rest of the layout, presuming it is decided that only a defined period will be modeled. There should be further discussion on this latter issue prior to proceeding in a definitive manner.

Rabetoy Layout Development (Addendum):

1. In discussion regarding section A, it was suggested that Johnny Graybeal should be contacted about the possibility of donating copies of his books to the MEMRR either at a reduced cost or possibly without cost.

It was also suggested that the MEMRR obtain a membership in the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Historical Society the president of which is Johnny Graybeal.

Jim Pahrts agreed to contact Johnny Graybeal regarding the above two issues.

2. In discussion regarding section C, it was suggested that digital photographs might also be considered for backdrops for the proposed ET&WNC Railroad section of the Rabetoy layout. Bill Bledsoe, a local artist was also suggested as a possible alternative for painting a backdrop for same.

Respectfully submitted
Gary M. Rabetoy



Helpers emerge from the North Portal

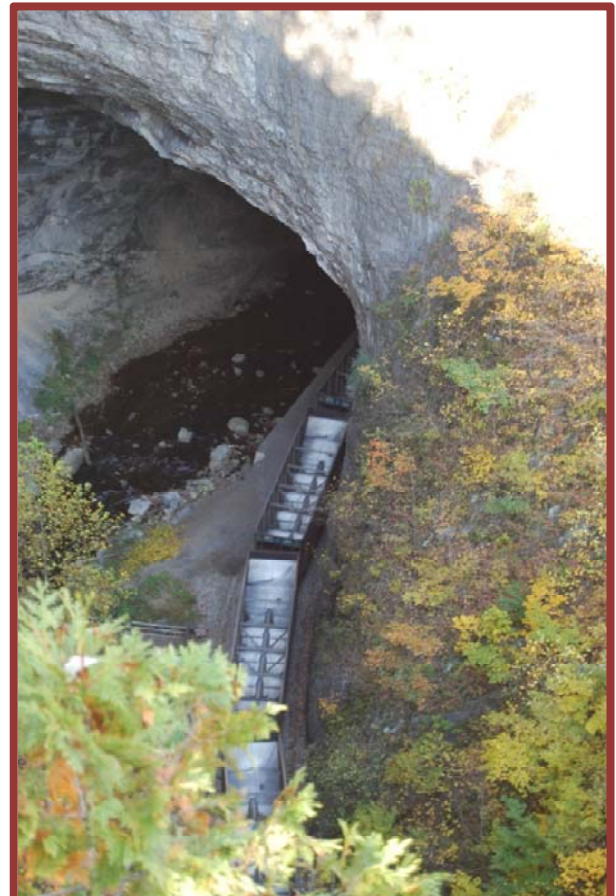


A bored tunnel just to the south of the south portal



A Forney Steam Locomotive on display near the visitor's center

Natural Tunnel	
The Natural Tunnel is still used as a railroad.	
Info	
Location	Natural Tunnel State Park, Scott County, Virginia, United States
Opened	1894
Owner	Commonwealth of Virginia
Operator	Norfolk Southern Railway
Traffic	Coal Haulage
Character	Naturally-formed limestone cave converted to a railroad tunnel
Technical	Naturally-formed limestone cave converted to a railroad tunnel
Construction	1893
Length	838 feet (255 m)
Gauge	1,435 mm (4 ft 8½ in)
Electrified	No
Tunnel clearance	Portals: 50 feet (15 m) Max: 80 feet (24 m)



Mountain Empire Model Railroaders

Tri-Cities, Tennessee www.memrr.org

Mountain Empire Model Railroad Exhibit
The George L Carter Railroad Museum
Open every Saturday 10AM thru 3PM

Complete Train Control

The loco is coaled and steam is up! Are you on board?



Your membership with Mountain Empire Model Railroaders is about to expire and this may your last issue of *The SIGNAL BRIDGE*.

December-January-February are membership renewal months.
So please consider renewing your membership today.

Full Membership is \$30.00
Family membership is an additional \$5.00 per member
Associate Membership is \$12.00

Send your check to:
MEMRR
c/o Duane Swank
1763 Sylvan Hill Road
Elizabethton TN 37643

The club is in new quarters at ETSU with both HO and N Gauge Railroads to operate.
Come join the fun.