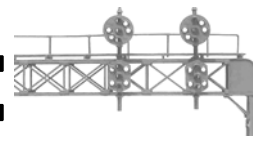


# THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 17

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB  
FEBRUARY 2010 ISSUE

Number 2

## CLUB OFFICERS

**President:**  
Fred Alsop

**Vice-President:**  
John Carter

**Secretary:**  
Donald Ramey

**Treasurer:**  
Duane Swank

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Ted Bleck-Doran

**Webmaster:**  
John Edwards

**LOCATION**  
ETSU Campus,  
George L. Carter Railroad  
Museum



## HOURS

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

**Open House for viewing every  
Saturday from 10:00 am until  
3:00 pm**

**Work Nights each Thursday  
from 5:00 pm until ??**



## NEW YORK MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION RUSH (Rochester) NY – Part 1



Christmas entailed a trip to Rochester NY to see family and friends. As with any established older city in the Northeast, Rochester has a rich railroad history. It was served by the New York Central, Baltimore & Ohio, Lehigh Valley, Buffalo Rochester & Pittsburgh, Genesee & Wyoming to name a few roads. The city boasted of a network of street car lines, part of the Empire State Railways (part of a Traction System you could ride in the finest of interurban cars from New York City trough to Chicago). The city even developed a subway system that ran into the 1950's. The larger community was home the Merchants Dispatch Car Company. Today it hosts CSX, and several regional shortlines.

The city and its suburbs support an active model railroad community. The 1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian Universalist Church houses the historic Kodak City Model Railroad Club that has been in existence since the early 1940's. Rochester Institute of Technology hosts a student run model railroad club with excellent running and scenery depicting area points of interest. Edgerton Park Field House displays a wonderful O-Scale layout featuring Rochester in 4 seasons. There are two modular clubs housed in a mall on the city's north side, one an N-Gauge layout, the other a G-Gauge layout,

There are several high quality hobby shops also located in the area. One caters to the Garden Railway set and has a large indoor G-Gauge layout in operation.



Rochester was voted "Best All-American Minor League Park" when it opened a new baseball stadium in the 1980's. One can enjoy a beer and a hot dog while watching the Red Wings (Twins AAA club) all the while watching CSX and Amtrak running just beyond the right field fence!

In an effort to preserve its rail history a group of dedicated volunteers established the New York Museum of Transportation







on several acres of farm land to the south of the city. There they have constructed a series of pole barns to house their growing collection. They have partnered with the Rochester Chapter, National Railway Historical Society to provide a mile of track on which they run street cars and speeder trips. The Rochester Chapter also has a steam locomotive and several diesels that are operable.

The collection includes a wide assortment of automobiles, busses, road maintenance equipment, horse cars and trolleys. Most have been stabilized and are in the process of restoration. As you enter the museum property you are greeted by a wayside station built for the Rochester & Eastern RY, an interurban that connected Rochester and Syracuse while trundling through the Finger Lakes county side. It's in wonderful condition. It was built to a standard design for the Rochester & Eastern and located near Canandaigua NY.

A line car (Philadelphia Transportation Snow Sweeper C-125) sits on blocking waiting on trucks and some frame straightening. Brill trucks are being rebuilt for operation (Brill 50E2 truck frames).



On the side lot a Buffalo Springfield Road Roller sits on display. Built in 1931 the roller was used by construction crews in Henrietta NY for almost 35 years.



A sister snow sweeper (Philadelphia Transportation C-130) sits in the barn under cover. Both were built by the J.G. Brill Company in 1923. C-130 is the more complete of the two sweepers.



A Best Model 60 (Caterpillar) Highway Snowplow (circa 1924) rests nearby. The tracked snowplow is a 4-cylinder bulldozer with LaPlant-Choate mechanical plow. It was used for many years by the Town of Rush to clear deep snow drifts throughout the town.



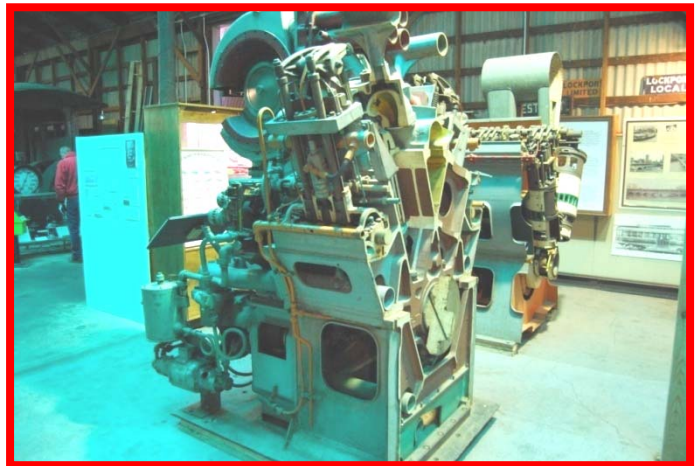




The Visitors Center houses the bulk of the collection and there is plenty to see. Posted around the outside walls are a series of display cases and storyboards depicting Rochester Area steam, streetcar and interurban history. The displays are laid out in a logical timeline and theme sequence.

One of the first railroad artifacts to be displayed is a Casey Jones Track Car. This is believed to be the oldest operating track maintenance car in existence. It has been completely restored. Originally built in 1927 it was purchased by the Rochester Subway from Northwestern Motor Company in Eau Claire Wisconsin. An unpowered hand car is also on display.

The next display are two cutaway engine blocks that show the inner workings of the diesel prime movers. On display are sections from an ALCo 244 and an EMD 567 prime movers. They were originally used as training displays. Even though they contain only one or two cylinders they are quite massive and impressive to stand next to.



A 40-ton steam locomotive built by ALCo-Cooke in 1920 is in nicely restored condition. It was built as Solvay Company No. 47. And

performed switching duties during the first half of the 20th Century at the Solvay Works in Syracuse NY. It is a classic representation of the thousands of industrial switchers that plied their trade in unheralded settings off the mainlines of America

Rochester Railway No. 437 and Hornellsville Electric Railway No. 34 sit in line awaiting restoration. Deterioration of these wooden cars has been stabilized but both await major cosmetic restoration. The Rochester Railways No. 437 was converted to single-end operation having been built originally for double end operation. It has a deck roof



and of a wood semi-convertible city car style (Kuhlman, 1904); ex-Rochester Railway Co. (1904-1909) and ex-New York State Railways, Rochester Lines (1909-1936); unrestored car body on replacement Brill 77E trucks; on display in main car house.

The Hornellsville Electric Railway No 34 was built as a double end arched roof single truck wood snow plow by Brill, 1905); ex-Hornellsville Electric Rwy. (1905-1910) and ex-Hornell Traction Co. (1910-1926); unrestored car body with no equipment; stored inside main car house on shop truck.



Our final photo for this part of our review of the collection at the New York Museum of Transportation is of the interior of C-130 snow sweeper. This is one of the best preserved pieces in the collection and depicts a fully functioning sweeper.



## Mountain Empire Model Railroaders General Meeting January 19, 2010 Minutes

### All Aboard:

President Fred Alsop called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05p.m. after your Secretary and V.P. made mad dashes to arrive in time to assemble with the group. With no new members present, Fred proceeded to the officers' reports for this month.

### Officer Reports:

Secretary Report: Secretary was out previous month (no report).

Newsletters Editors Report: Editor was absent this night (no report). *I must say, however, I believe our newsletter is among the best of any I have ever seen. If you agree, please let Ted know. Thanks Ted for continuing your outstanding efforts.*

Treasurers Report: Treasurers report was given, income and expenditures reviewed, and approved.

Balance forward	=	\$2,440.42
Income	=	\$724.50
Expenses	=	=\$265.25
Month-end Balance	=	\$2,899.67
(Available Balance)	=	\$2,694.69

*Note: We currently have approximately 27 members with unpaid dues for 2010. Please do not let your membership expire. Contact Duane Swank for remission of dues.*

Web Masters Report: Web site is up and running fine. E-Mail addresses for those wishing to acquire a MEMR web address are available. *NOTE: John has had surgery on his knee and will be absent for the next few weeks. Please, join me in wishing John a speedy recovery and a quick return to the layouts. We miss ya John..*

Vice Presidents Report (upcoming programs): John Carter reported no new programs have been scheduled for the upcoming months. A few requests have been made for clinics that were missed during the December Clinic Weekends. A request was made and accepted for a Clinic on making Pine/Fir trees for February. These are the trees located at the corner module just as you enter the HO Layout room. If you want to view or learn this process, please attend the February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Also, if you want to volunteer for a program during the upcoming year, please contact VP John Carter.

### Presidents Report:

1. Fred started off by saying the Annual Christmas Party/Meeting was a resounding success and gave a hearty Thanks to the Organizational and Setup committees. Approximately 50 members were present at Tipton Haynes with a wonderful holiday selection of food for the gathering. The 2009 Christmas gathering was undoubtedly the best yet.
2. During his absence of three weeks in December, Fred noted that the Museum was up and running in a regular fashion and wished to thank everyone involved during

the Holiday season. The club is in good shape for whatever obstacles arise to provide openings on Saturdays.

3. Tweetsie Reference Materials. Gary Rabetoy and Jim Pahrts have been busy acquiring the necessary information (books, etc) for the club to knowingly proceed with the Tweetsie Layout in the Ken Marsh Room. Joe Roberts had found multiple copies of the Vol 7 we need. Jim reported on the Ferrell and Graybeal books. Geoff Stunkard has donated original Stemwinders, and discussions on the Chris Ford maps of Tweetsie were held.
4. NCE DCC Operating System: Fred has noted several pieces of the old operating system are still available. Should you wish to purchase any NCE equipment, please work thru Duane Swank for availability and price.

### Old Business:

1. Our coordinators meeting was held on 1-12-10 and a new Librarian Coordinator position was created. Our Books, Magazines, and other articles need to be inventoried and made available to the membership. Gary Emmert volunteered and was duly appointed to fill the position for 2010.
2. Gary Rabetoy reported on the progress of the Tweetsie Layout in the Ken Marsh Room.
3. Emile Hamm presented his CAD rendering of the proposed Yard. Concerns were expressed on available space and trackage. Plans are to be finalized first and further discussions on module construction, track laying, and wiring will take place to organize this expansion effort. Funding for this project will come from club treasury to keep this portion of the HO layout, "Club Owned." Expect the upcoming plans to reveal the Diesel Shop, placement of Dioramas, and the switching areas along with an aisle width of 3 feet minimum. An order of business to proceed will then be developed.
4. Rewiring: This project is at the half way point. Expect progress to resume shortly.

### New Business:

1. Computer is to be moved from current location to allow future placement of yard expansion.
2. Winter Weather policies for inclement times were discussed. During bad weather, if in doubt of safe driving conditions, call Fred FIRST to inquire of museum being open. To ensure the safety of our members, the Museum will be closed if conditions warrant. If University is closed, so will the museum. This should be coordinated with the folks scheduled to operate. If you are in doubt, call before driving..... Remember, we do not want to sacrifice our Safety.
3. Jim Pahrts's motion for an events calendar was reviewed. Jim suggested that our Clinics be held in November which is National Model Railroad Month and that we compile and maintain a "Show List" for the upcoming year. Discussions yielded adding club outings to this list as well. If you know of any upcoming events, please coordinate with John Edwards.

Currently we have these listings:

January-	Our Annual Planning Month
February-	Asheville NC show



March-	Trip to Smokey Mtn Railroad
April-	Hendersonville show
May-	Rail Grass; Asheville Speeder run; Cass Trip
June-	Annual club Picnic; ETWNC Historical convention; Charlotte NC show
July-	
August-	
September-	
October-	Hendersonville show; Doe River Gorge trips;
November-	National Model RR Month; 3 <sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Carter RR Museum; Saturday Clinics; Bluefield WV show; annual election of officers for upcoming year.
December-	Annual Christmas party & meeting

**Note: if you want to add to this listing, please contact John Edwards**

4. Fred announced that 50 clubs would be awarded a complete operating Paragon 2 Y6B in 2010 and that he has already secured us being signed up for the drawings... *Thanks Fred.*
5. Joe Roberts announced our Nickel Plate PA (donated by Deane Ordiorne) was lying unused in one of the drawers. He is willing to update the unit with a DCC decoder and fine tune it for a nominal fee of \$20.00. Motion made, voted on, Motion Carried. Joe will perform the work and return the PA diesel to the museum.
6. Switches in two locations are causing troublesome operations. One is the double slip switch at the entrance to the yard. Motion made to use club funds to replace this switch. Discussions were held, Motion Carried. Second switch is on corner module as you enter the museum. This switch is on a personal module and club members decided to assist with the replacement of this



### Mountain Empire Model Railroad Club Operating Group Coordinators Meeting January 14, 2010

To: Fred Alsop III, President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR)  
From: Gary Rabetoy, Coordinator, Rabetoy Layout Development Operating Group

#### Rabetoy Layout Development

##### Progress Report:

1. In the November/December 2009 edition of the Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette, an article on Locomotives of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad covering The "Signature Locomotives", Ten-Wheelers 10, 11, 12 and 14 by Johnny Graybeal was published. A copy of this article has been made and will be placed in the reference library.
2. On December 11, 2009, I mailed a scale drawing of the room and its contents where the ET&WNC layout will be constructed to Philip Sloan for his use in drawing a track plan in response to his offer to do so. This plan is pending.
3. On January 9, 2010, a meeting of the ET&WNC RR Layout Development Volunteer Group was held at the George L. Carter

switch with personal voluntary donations. John Carter will purchase both switches and they will be installed to promote enhanced operations. *Note: I sincerely wish to Thank each one of you for your personal contributions enabling the "second" switch to be acquired and replaced. Don Ramey*

7. Entry Bridge to center of layout. Joe Roberts discovered (by accident) our bridge is in dire need of repair. Discussions to revamp the bridge to restore the operating mechanics to obtain secure closings each time bridge is lowered in position. Also discussed was a method to secure the bridge in the "up" position during work sessions to lessen the wear and tear on the bearings and bridge mounts. Work will proceed on bridge during the upcoming Thursday night sessions.
8. Lyle Montieth stated he has disabled the "Power Save mode to prevent "run-away" locomotives. This is a known bug in the DigiTrax system we own. *Thanks Lyle, for your efforts.*

#### Volunteer Recruiting for Saturday Operating Sessions:

1. Next 4-weeks Operator Volunteers. Wow, what a great showing. *Thanks to all you engineers for your unselfish desire to come out and run your trains. This is what makes it fun for all.*

**Announcements:** with no new announcements being made, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30p.m.

#### Program for the Evening:

Gary Emmert provided a great video of Arizona Short Lines operating in and around 1993.

#### Next Scheduled Monthly Meeting:

February 16, 2010 *Please Make Plans Now to Attend.*

*Respectfully Submitted: Don Q. Ramey*

Railroad Museum. The detailed record of this meeting is provided (Enclosure 1). In brief, the group was made aware of the existing resources for this project and after considerable discussion decided on the following:

- A. Basic elements of construction.
- B. Basic elements of operation.
- C. Basic time period.
- D. Basic track plan development.

Regarding item 3 D, Emile Hamm was contacted and has agreed to provide a preliminary CAD drawing in accordance with A-C above. A scale drawing of the room as noted in item 2 above, reference library access, and a copy of the detailed record of the meeting noted in item 3 are being provided to him to assist in this aspect of the project.

#### 4. Recommendations:

- A. Await the ET&WNC RR track plan being drawn by Philip Sloan.
- B. Await the ET&WNC RR CAD track plan to be drawn by Emile Hamm.
- C. When a satisfactory track plan is available, begin construction of the ET&WNC RR layout.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary M. Rabetoy



Railroad Museum

## ET&WNC RR Layout Development Volunteer Group Meeting

Date: Saturday, January 9,  
2010 10:15 AM

Location: George L. Carter

### Members Present:

Gary Emmert      Rich Gallaher      Ken Harmon  
Skip Oldham      Gary Rabetoy

### Members Absent:

Bob Jones

### Agenda:

#### 1. Track Plan Components suggested by John Waite:

- A. Johnson City (Including the Furnace)
- B. Coal Chute
- C. Hampton (with passing siding)
- D. Doe River Gorge with Pardee Point and bridge-tunnel-bridge sequence
- E. Elk Park with White Mill
- F. Cranberry with upper yard, mine buildings, and tipples and lower yard with store and depot
- G. Staging tracks representing the Linville River Rwy
- H. Elizabethton (optional)

#### 2. Suggested time period (from John Waite and Chris Ford) – 1915-1930

#### 3. Problems:

- A. Space required to accomplish item number 1 would be 500 square feet (John Waite)
- B. Space available:
  - 116 square feet with shelf and expansion (module) benchwork
  - 188 square feet if expansion (module) benchwork is built in a double-deck fashion
  - 232 square feet if expansion (module) benchwork and shelf are both double-decked
- C. Limited pulling power of brass ten wheeler ET&WNC locomotives

#### 4. Possible solutions:

- A. Double-deck some or all of the available space as noted above
- B. Compress above elements into segments with view blocks
- C. Eliminate certain segments
- D. Suggested trackwork standards:
  - Minimum radius: 22 inches
  - Maximum grade: 2 %
- E. Maximize pulling power of locomotives
  - Add weight to locomotives
  - Increase traction of locomotives (Bullfrog Snot)

#### 4. Resources available:

- A. Reference Library:
  - Along the ET&WNC Volume I: Early Narrow Gauge Locomotives by Johnny Graybeal

- Along the ET&WNC Volume II: The Ten Wheelers by Johnny Graybeal
  - Along the ET&WNC Volume III: Depots by Johnny Graybeal
  - Along the ET&WNC Volume IV: Freight Cars A by Johnny Graybeal
  - Along the ET&WNC Volume V: Freight Cars B by Johnny Graybeal
  - Along the ET&WNC Volume VI: Passenger Cars by Johnny Graybeal
  - The Blue Ridge Stemwinder: An Illustrated History of the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad and the Linville River Railway by John Waite
  - Tweetsie Country by Mallory Hope Ferrell
  - 20 Years of "The Stemwinder" CD by Chris Ford
- B. Donated Track (including narrow gauge, dual gauge, and turnouts) – 220.06 feet (Specific lists of items attached)
- C. Scale drawing of layout room with contents (Provided)

#### 5. Next step:

- A. Design track plan (overall vs individual section assignments)

#### 6. Discussion and Conclusions:

- A. Space and construction concerns:
  1. The shelf will not be double-decked.
  2. The shelf will have a self-contained and transportable structure upon which a portion of the ET&WNC RR layout will be constructed. This portion will contain:

##### Johnson City Terminus

1. Cranberry Furnace
2. Standard gauge connection with Southern and Clinchfield Railroads
3. Coal trestle
4. Enginehouse
5. Depot

##### Dual gauge line to Elizabethton with Laurel Fork Railway spur

1. Coal Chute.

#### 3. The modules will be double-decked

#### 4. This portion will contain:

- Hampton with passing siding
- Wood deck truss covered bridge
- Tunnel 1
- Wood thru truss covered bridge
- Doe River Gorge\*
  1. Tunnel 2 (optional)
  2. Tunnel 3
  3. Pardee Point
  4. Steel deck truss bridge
  5. Tunnel 4
  6. Steel thru truss bridge
  7. Tunnel 5 (optional)

#### **\*Note: This section will feature scenery extending to floor**

- Roan Mountain with passing siding
- Elk Park with White Lumber Co. Mill spur
- Cranberry
  1. Upper yard, mine buildings, tipples, wye, and Linville River Rwy spur
  2. Lower yard with store, depot, and train shed

#### B. Operation concerns:

1. The ET&WNC layout will be operated as a point to point

2. The time period to be represented will be 1915-1930
3. There will be one (two optional) connection(s) with the Rabetoy layout
4. The minimum radius will be 22 inches.
5. The maximum grade will be 2%
6. Efforts will be made to increase the traction of the ET&WNC ten wheeler brass locomotives including:
  - Adding weight as possible
  - Using Bullfrog Snot

C. Emile Hamm was contacted and has agreed to draw a CAD track plan incorporating the above as possible. Requested items for his purposes include:

1. A detailed scale drawing of the layout room and contents. This will be provided by a scale drawing made by G. M. Rabetoy (1/4 inch: 4 inches)
2. Access to reference materials:
  - a. In this regard the following information from The Blue Ridge Stemwinder book by John Waite is provided to assist in the CAD track plan drawing: Elevation Graph of the ET&WNC -LRRY - page 12 ET&WNC RR Milepost Track Features 1915-1920 pages

354-358

## TITANS OF MOUNTAINS- RETURN TO BALD KNOB 2010 CASS RAILFAN WEEKEND May 21, 22, and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Friday, May 21: Whittaker Camp 1 Fire Tower Dedication:

Train to Whittaker for dedication; multiple runbys at Whittaker; return to Cass for dinner and meeting night photos at Leatherbark Creek.

Saturday, May 22: Logging Day: Passenger and log trains go to Old Spruce and Bald Knob; multiple runbys at several locations; lunch on the mountain; evening activities and night photos in Cass.

Sunday, May 23: Wood Hicks and Trains: Passenger and log train go to Whittaker Station; multiple runbys at several locations; lunch at Whittaker Station; demonstration by World Champion Wood Choppers during lunch; Return to Cass at 2:30 P.M.

Tickets & Information: Tickets and Reservations are for: "Railfan Weekend 2010." Contact Cass Scenic Railroad State Park, PO Box 107, Cass, WV 24927. Or, call TOLL FREE 1-800-225-5982: ask for Cass Scenic Railroad. Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express, and debit cards are accepted. Office hours: Monday to Saturday 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Sunday 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

Price of a ticket is \$200.00 for all three days, including box lunch for Saturday and Sunday, complementary coffee, tea, and chocolate, water on trains, both night photo sessions, and the World Champion Wood Chopping demonstration. A Sunday-only ticket is \$75.00 includes one box lunch. There are no Saturday-only tickets.

Saturday Breakfast starts at 6:00 A.M. - \$ 6.00

Sunday Breakfast starts at 6:00 A.M. - \$ 6.00

Saturday Loggers Dinner \$12.00

Cass Lodging Information: There are three primary motels within 15 miles of Cass: Inn at Showshoe, Boyer Motel and Hermitage.

Note, the Inn at Snowshoe is offering a discounted rate of \$69/night plus tax.

### CASS SCENIC RAILROAD COMPANY HOUSES

For Railfan Weekend as of today January 26, 2009 there are three six man company houses available. Six man houses are three bedrooms; two of the three have one double bed and four singles, the last has two double beds and two singles. Cost for Friday and Saturday is \$158 per night plus tax. Other lodging is available for less.

Track maps:

- a. Doe River Gorge 1915-1920 - pages 28-29
- b. Johnson City (Watauga Tannery) 1915 - page 47
- c. Johnson City 1915 - pages 60-61
- d. Johnson City 1915 - pages 76-77
- e. Johnson City 1915 - pages 92-93
- f. Johnson City (Cranberry Furnace) - page 101
- g. Elizabethton 1915 - pages 108-109
- h. Cranberry 1925 - pages 124-125
- i. Elizabethton (Rayon Plants) 1945 - page 156
- j. Cranberry Mine 1925 - pages 172-173
- k. Johnson City to Coal Chute 1915-1920 - pages 188-189
- l. Coal Chute to Crabtree 1915-1920 - pages 204-205
- m. Crabtree to Cranberry 1915-1920 - pages 220-221

7. Next meeting:

February 6, 2010 at 10:15 AM at the  
George L. Carter Railroad Museum

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Rabetoy

## ET&WNC Events for 2010

1. The ET&WNC Historical Society annual convention will be held Friday-Saturday-Sunday, June 18-20, 2010. The convention will begin Friday evening at the Best Western located in Banner Elk, NC and is open to non-members. There is a registration fee for the weekend activities. I will send additional information as it becomes available, i.e. schedule of events, convention registration fees, etc.

2. Tweetsie Railfan Weekend will be held at the Tweetsie Amusement Park located between Boone, NC and Blowing Rock, NC on Saturday and Sunday, September 11-12, 2010. For more details and a schedule of events, visit the Tweetsie web site at [www.twetsie.com](http://www.twetsie.com) and go to Special Events.

## GET WELL WISHES

Fellow MEMRR Officers:

I had a telephone message from John Edwards stating that he had undergone surgery that day to repair a quad tendon on his knee that he "blew out" in a fall. He regrets that it will be a while before we see him again. Please get the word around to the members and Don, as secretary, has sent him a "get well" card on behalf of the club.

Thanks guys. John is a wonderful member and we hope the very best for him and a speedy and full recovery.

Also Newsletter Editor Ted Bleck-Doran spent 5 days as guest of Johnson City Medical Center the end of January. He is home and back to work part-time.

Fred



### MEMRR CLUB CLINIC USING DYED SAWDUST FOR GROUND COVER

Duane Swank



One of the hot clinics presented during the Holiday open house weekends was one presented by Club Treasurer Duane Swank on using dyed sawdust for ground cover. Over the years the technique has proven itself cost effective and provided good scenic effects. Here is a pictorial edition of Duane's clinic.

**Tools of the trade:**

For the project you will need a selection of sifters and sieves. The gauge on the openings should vary in size. The hand crank flour sifter is used to loosen and un-clump both the



dried un-dyed saw-dust, as well as in later steps in the process. The

hand sieves have a finer mesh which can be used to further grade and separate the saw dust. These are inexpensive items to obtain and can be purchased at grocery or discount stores in the housewares section. It is probably best not to use the ones from the kitchen.



To the left Duane has separated the saw dust into several grades: course, medium and fine.

Also shown is a selection of powdered dyes which need to be mixed into solution before beginning the dying process. Fabric dyes come in dry

ready to mix and pre-mixed packaging. Again, these can be purchased in grocery and discount stores.



You'll want to purchase several colors of dye including: light green, medium green and forest green, yellows and perhaps and earth tone brown. When working with the dyes, different intensities of color and hue can be achieved through adjusting the strength of solution and/or length the sawdust remains in the dye solution.

You will want to work in an area you can afford to be a bit messy in. Using the kitchen counter is probably not the best idea since the dye solution will stain unprotected counter surfaces. Duane like to work off a used piece of ceiling tile since it is porous and will absorb some of the liquid before it runs off the work area.



Dyeing the sawdust is easy. You can mix small amounts of dye in a variety of colors and solution strengths. Soak the sawdust in the dye. Using one of the sieves drain the dyed sawdust to recover some of the dye solution and spread the sawdust on a paper towel placed over the ceiling tile. You'll want to use latex gloves for this part as it gets quite messy.

The dyed sawdust can be left overnight to dry or the drying process can be sped up by spreading the sawdust across a cookie sheet and placing it in a warm 150-250 degree oven. Best check with the baker in the house regarding the use of cookie sheet and oven.

Use the flour sifter to break up the dried clumps and rescreen the sawdust for sizing. Baby food jars or condiment containers with lid can be used to store the sawdust by color and texture size. *Editor's Note: I like to use empty seasoning containers with shaker tops since the shaker top is helpful when applying the sawdust to the scenery base.*



*Editor's Note: this technique is also useful for dyeing tall grass using twine cut to 1/8<sup>th</sup> 1/4" and 3/8<sup>th</sup> lengths. Be sure to use hemp twine as sisal is too broad a strand and does not take the dye. The tall grass can be glued in clumps using your favorite scenery cement. While labor intensive the method is effective for small areas for example around the foundation of a building to give it an established feel.*

The same technique can be used to adjust the color of ballast and rock hues. Try dyeing ballast in small batches as crushed rock will react differently to the dye solution. Duane produced a purplish tint using Deep Green dye,



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

The snows of winter brought our first-ever Saturday museum closing on January 30<sup>th</sup>. The university closed the afternoon before and I asked WETS radio to make the announcement in addition to calling/emailing the volunteers for the day. We will have had another first at the museum by the time you read this; our first birthday party in the "Little Engineers' Room" on February 6. John Edwards has been in the hospital for surgery on torn quad tendons in a knee, so expect him to be away for a while as he recovers, but continue to let him know how much he is missed. John Carter has been working to repair the lift entry bridge into the HO layout. The original hinge has gotten looser with age (I seem to be suffering the same malady) and John has had to construct a new one from parts of the old hinge and a new set of ball bearings in between. Our new secretary, Don Ramey, has his first club minutes of our January business meeting in this issue of *The Signal Bridge* and I know you will want to thank him for a job well done on his initial task.

As we continue to organize in response to our club's continued growth (remember to pay you dues to continue to be a part of this active organization in 2010) Jim Pahr's initiative for us to begin to plan for our calendar year was voted in at the January meeting. We have started a calendar of events that will include announcements of regional train shows, but more importantly the club railfan outings we will plan, and the special events the club and the museum will participate in this year right up to the annual Christmas Party. Adding to the calendar will become a part of each business meeting and copies will be posted in the Carter Railroad Museum and on our MEMRR web site.

At the January Coordinators' Meeting the overwhelming consensus of the group was that with the rapidly growing collection of magazines, periodicals, books, CDs and DVDs we needed to add a position of Librarian. Gary Emmert had already been doing much of the organizing of these materials and has agreed to be the coordinator for this important area. Anyone wishing to help should talk to Gary. Other highlights as reported by the various coordinators follow:

**Large Scale Layout:** Ballasting of the track is now underway.

**HO Layout:** Wiring continues to be replaced with the job about 50% completed. The track plans are almost completed for the freight yard and aisle ways and will soon be presented to the club for approval.

**N-Scale Layout:** Track replacement and realignment is continuing with improved train performance.

**Cope Traveling Layout:** Plans are to have it ready for the May RailGrass Festival in Kingsport as its first showing.

**Rabetoy Layout:** Track plans are being created by club members and outside "consultants"; additional "Tweetsie" reference books have been obtained; decisions have been made that will initiate construction as soon as a suitable track plan is developed.

**Little Engineers' Room:** The marker light will soon be installed on the "caboose"; and negotiations are underway with the university Child Study Center to get some student assistance with the children on Saturdays.

**Display Cases:** Displays will continue to be changed on a regular basis and some individual cases will carry "theme" displays. See Jim Pahrif if you have materials to display or ideas for displays.

**Publications:** A new brochure is being developed. The Carter Museum logo will soon be copyrighted and will be used on numerous items.

**Publicity:** No current events to publicize, but some are being planned.

**Events:** Materials are being gathered for consideration for railfan events including Cass, Knoxville, and Chattanooga.

**Sales:** More children's engineer hats are needed and a club shirt order is being prepared (Please contact Duane if you want to order a club shirt).

These are only the notes of what each group is working on. The club could use your help in any of these areas on any of these projects. Please see a coordinator and join one or more groups and get started. Sign-up sheets are available on the clipboards near the computer inside the HO layout. Put your hobby skills to work and get to know some of your fellow members better.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual RailGrass Event will be held in Kingsport May 7 to May 9<sup>th</sup> (Friday evening through Sunday afternoon). Free tables will be provided for clubs and we have been invited to participate once again. In the January coordinators meeting it was felt that we should make a serious effort to get the "Jack Cope Traveling Layout" up and ready for travel. I will be working with that coordinating group most Thursday nights to do just that. I can get the scenery developed on the layout which will feature fall colors, but I can use some help if you are interested. David D. and Gary

E. are busy developing one set of "drop-ins" for the center of the layout. They can also use your help with this. Additionally, we have extra sets of "drop-ins" available if several of you want to design one of your own. We could use one set that would be suitable for Thomas-The-Tank if you want to put your design skills together, but we will give serious consideration to other ideas for scenes, i.e., industrial, rural, circus, old west, mining, milling, you-name-it, etc.; so see me and let me help you get started.

Remember we have some of the Johnson City Downtown Association gold-plated Southern Depot ornaments for sale (8 left) if you would like one, and we still have a supply of the CRR set (2 photos in a set) of F7 prints for sale as well. We get a share of the monies from the sale of the prints (but not from the ornaments). If you don't have a club shirt please see our treasurer, Duane Swank, and place an order. The shirts are embroidered with the club name and are a great addition to identify you as a club member when you wear them to club events, meetings, and Saturday operating sessions in the Carter Railroad Museum; or anywhere for that matter. They are available in a variety of styles, polo, tee, and long sleeve.

**Renewal of 2010 dues** are now "**Past Due**" but there is still time to get on this year's membership role. Just send your dues to the treasurer, Duane Swank, 1763 Sylvan Hill Rd., Elizabethton, TN 37643. Your dues help support the newsletter and club projects and at \$30/year for full membership, you will spend more for one dinner out and a night at the movies. Your membership provides 24/7 access to the Carter Railroad Museum and the club owned and/or maintained layouts; the opportunity to enjoy your hobby of model railroading with a great group of men and women; your involvement in lots of club and museum projects; operating track rights in 3 scales; participation in and voting privileges at club business meetings; a model railroad learning environment where everyone can get a lesson anytime they wish to from some real professional modelers that will improve your hobby skills—and you may teach us some tricks as well; and your membership card also gains you discounts at HobbyTownUSA, Johnson City, thanks to the owner, Bob Barrett, who is also a member of the MEMRR. If you purchase enough model railroading goodies from Bob you will pay for your membership in the club in no time through his generous discounts to us. So, what are you waiting for? We miss you and want you to renew your membership. Come join in the fun of a terrific hobby with an outstanding model railroad club. **WE HAVE PLENTY FOR YOU TO DO WITH US!**

We are building up steam for a great run at 2010. There are lots of projects both big and small going on or in the planning stages. Get on board, join a group, and have fun with us. See you at the museum and/or the next club meeting. Hear the whistle blow and think of all the destinations still to come!

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



THIS MAY BE YOUR **LAST** ISSUE OF **THE SIGNAL BRIDGE**.

BE SURE THAT YOUR DUES AND CONTACT INFORMATION ON FILE WITH DUANE SWANK AND ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE.

DON'T LET A LAPSE IN MEMBERSHIP PUT YOU ON THE SCRAP TRACK.