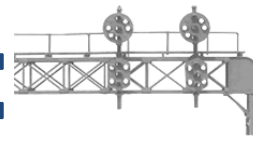


THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 18

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB

Number 4A

APRIL 2011 REGULAR ISSUE

Published for the Education and Information of Its Membership

The View From The Engineer's Side Of The Cab Observations from the MEMRR President



Winter's icy grip seems to have finally been broken and the MEMRR is steaming down new tracks as several projects at the Carter Railroad museum continue to take shape. On Sunday, April 10th a dozen or so MEMRR members participated in the second "Members' Layout Tours" visiting the outstanding G-gauge ET&WNC garden layout of member **Dick Conger**. The day was sunny and a record breaking 89 degrees F. and the visitors could not see all the water and wind damage the previous evening's storms had raked over the train's tracks and

electrical system less than 24 hours before. Dick had everything up and running and all of us had a great time in his back yard. Thank you Dick and the other MEMRR members who helped get the trains running. If you have not attended one of these events arranged by **Hobie Hyder** you are missing out on some terrific model railroading experiences and you need to mark your calendar for the next one. Watch for announcements and come along with us.

At the March business meeting a show of hands indicated at least 10-12 of the members present were very interested in a club railfan trip to the Cass Scenic Railroad in Cass, West Virginia in early September. Plans are to rent one of the large restored company houses operated by West Virginia's state park system in Cass and to book train rides in nearby Elkins, WV as well as the steam locomotive shay powered trains at Cass itself. We will plan the trip over Labor Day weekend leaving Johnson City on 2nd September and returning on the 5th. Details will be forthcoming. Please make your reservations with **Fred** or **Hobie**.

We have an opportunity to obtain an HO scale layout and pass it on to a club member. The layout has a roadbed of code 100 nickel silver intact; is DC powered, partially landscaped and with many buildings in place. The layout is an expanded dogbone with a "U" shape. The main portion measures 12 x 24 feet with two 5

foot extensions that bring it to a full 17 feet wide. The track plan allows for two full length runs on two different levels before the trains make a complete circle to their starting point. Several Athearn locomotives and some rolling stock is included. Here's the deal. The owner wishes to donate the layout to the Carter Railroad Museum. The museum wishes to sell the layout to raise money for the Tweetsie Layout Project now just underway. **The Layout needs a home.** If you need a jump-start on getting your own HO layout this may be just the way to get started in a big way. Interested? **Talk to Fred.** Two of our members have seen the layout and wanted it for their own, but it will not fit into either of their basements. How about yours???

You are all aware that we have been inviting local folks in to the Carter Railroad Museum to tell us their oral histories of our railroads. This initial program of gathering 'tales of the rails' has been very successful and we have interviewed more than 30 people in the 4 sessions we have held. The last one for the spring season was conducted on Saturday, April 9th. Delanna Reed, an instructor in the Graduate Storytelling Program at ETSU, and her students have been conducting the interviews and have been involved in a class on storytelling during this spring semester. Now, they are inviting us to come to a special presentation on Monday, May 2nd, to hear some of the students retell some of the railroad stories they have collected. The event will take place in Brown Hall, Room 304 on the ETSU campus at 7:00 p.m. This will be a special event and very educational and entertaining, so mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Our MEMRR sponsored "Railroad Heritage Days" have become popular events held the last Saturday of the month beginning in January. Our most recent event, "Steam Up-Steam Railroading Remembered" on March 27th drew one of the largest crowds we can remember to the Carter Railroad Museum. Several times during the day the aisles were so congested our engineers had difficulty following their trains around as they tried to keep up with them by walking around the layouts. **Geoff Stunkard's** idea for these special focal events have been a terrific hit with the public and we are getting great response on the front end and impressive turnouts of the railroad enthusiasts on the day of the special runs. Thank you all for bringing your favorite locomotives and consists to run during these 'heritage days' so our visitors and club members alike can have maximum enjoyment in seeing what model railroaders can do and what makes this hobby so much fun. Our next "Heritage Day" will be on Saturday, April 30th and we will be featuring, "Standard of the World—the Pennsylvania Railroad". We have a lot of Pennsy display materials already on exhibit at the Railroad Museum and more is promised. Bring your PRR locos and rollingstock and let Geoff Stunkard know that you

CLUB OFFICERS

President:
Fred Alsop

Secretary:
Donald Ramey

Newsletter Editor:
Ted Bleck-Doran

Vice-President:
John Carter

Treasurer:
Duane Swank

Webmaster:
John Edwards



LOCATION

ETSU Campus,
George L. Carter
Railroad Museum

HOURS

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

Open House for viewing every Saturday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Work Nights each Thursday from 5:00 pm until ??

will be running trains that day so we can plan for everyone to get running time.

We have preliminary word that we will be invited to display the **Cope Traveling Layout** during **Jonesborough Days, 2-3 July**. We will need to put some touch-up efforts into getting the layout ready to travel. **Gary** and **David** took the lead with this project and I hope they will step up again, but we could use some help to make sure it is in top shape for display. We will need some brochures for it as well and **David Doughty** will be invited to present his Railroad Safety program during the event.

Our **Railroad Museum Library** is taking shape under the strong hands of **Gary Emmert**, our club and museum librarian. Gary has already moved most of the railroading magazines onto the shelving. Laminate for the shelves was donated by **Big Johns Closeouts** through an arrangement by **Lisa Thomas** (thanks, Lisa) and was installed by **Duane Swank** (thanks, Duane). The hardback books and DVDs will be moved in when we can secure the collection. Security will be improved by changing the lock on that single door, room 100, to a different key from our 'master 113 key' so we can better control access to the collection. Our librarian and some of the officers will have the key. Once we are set up the collection will be available for checkout or for reading in the library room by all our members. The officers agree we need to better secure the collection because of the value and rarity of some of the hardbacks in the collection.

Library taking shape—door locks

If you have used any of the HO Digitrax throttles lately you have surely noticed that all the broken battery covers on the backside of the throttles are now repaired and better than new. Thanks to the ingenuity, creative effort, and mechanical skills of member **Don Ramey** we now have all our throttles back in good condition.

Don, we thank you for taking this project on for the club and doing such an excellent job with the task.

The N-scale layout continues to be improved under the stewardship of the '**N-Scale Group**' and on many Saturdays seems to run flawlessly; a big step from its condition in recent memory. Three new steam locos by Model Power, each with a different wheel configuration, have been recently delivered to the layout and a new, radio-control system that will allow for easier operation on busy days has been ordered. Check out the Bankus N-Scale layout if you have not done so in a while and I feel you will be impressed with what Ted, Allan, Dan, Jesse, Bill and the rest of the N-Scale gang have accomplished there. Well done, gentlemen!

We are well into April. Work continues on the HO yard, and plans are still underway for a Tweetsie railroad to emerge across the hallway from our main display gallery. Signage for the doors has been ordered. The Spring Semester will end the first week of May and parking will be easier for a few months. We can use all the help you can give us to speed these multiple projects, both new and old, along. Thursday nights are work nights and we are open for public operation of all the layouts every Saturday. Come on down and lend a hand. We need every member and we look forward to your company. I hope to see you in the Carter Railroad Museum very soon? Make tracks our way and get involved. We have a terrific club! Hear the whistle blow and dream of all the destinations yet to come.

Fred Alsop

*Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroad Club*

Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Coordinators' Meeting March 11, 2011



EVENTS: Tom McGee said he would host the picnic per Jim Pharis

NEWSLETTER: Ted (Publisher) look for a more cost effective resource for mailing out newsletter. It is 25 pages and 13 copies are currently being mailed out. **Agenda-** possible increase in dues to cover cost of mailing or have a strip down version that is mailed and extended version available on line. It is not large enough to be considered for bulk mailing.

DISPLAYS: Geoff Stunckard - Logging Equipment. Doing monthly Heritage days. March 26th will be steam up. Story telling this weekend also.

Jim Pharis - mechanical trains on the weekend of 26th and request for 3 cases next month for Pennsy Railroad.

HO SCCALE:: John carter Have the wire. Maybe use LED's for track detection in staging yard.

LITTLE ENGINEERS' ROOM: Duane - counter top is down

G SCALE: Jesse Maintenance, some scenery

N SCCALE: Jesse Todd working on track, same things Engines, wore out they have six axle units but too big to run. Maybe need to invest in new engines

COPE LAYOUT: Jerry per Jesse said it still has a bad control switch but still running

LIBRARY: Still need laminate for shelves

SALES: Plenty of hats. The commemorative caboose is going to be too much labor. Geoff thinks t-shirts will be a better choice for 100th anniversary to sale to the public

EVENTS: Layout tour Dick Conger G scale garden railroad. End of April. Per Jim Pharris - train set in silent auction for "Music on the Square" in Jonesborough. \$20.00 advance tickets \$25.00 at door

at the story telling center. Need to vote on attending. April is the Pennys showing.

ETWNC ROOM: Duane recommends to purchase wood from Paul's cabinet shop. Rich is currently working on the plans for the layout in new room.

*Submitted by John Carter
MEMRR Vice-President*

Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Minutes of General Meeting March 15, 2011



All Aboard:

President Fred Alsop called the meeting to order at approximately 7:15p.m. in room 312. We had partly cloudy skies and a bright evening sun shining down on the "sparse" parking we so often find on campus. There were 20 members and one visitor, Ms. Delanna Reed present.

This night's meeting started with a review of Ms Reed's "Story Telling & Oral History" class activities. April 9th was to be the next weekend event with capturing more local lore and efforts were to be made to get in touch with several local area steam veterans. The finished collaborations will be held by the Appalachian Archives at ETSU. We listened to a selected version of a story as told by Ken Riddle and visited the web blog page of the story telling class. (<http://railroadtales.wordpress.com>) page has active links and lots of information on this subject.

Officer Reports:

Secretary Report: Secretary moved that without corrections or additions, February minutes be approved as published in March Signal Bridge. Motion carried.

Newsletters Editors Report: Ted was with us and once again Kudos to you Ted for the fine series of documents published and forwarded with the January Signal Bridge. More discussions on the Signal Bridge followed during the meeting.

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

Note: Currently we have several members with unpaid dues for 2011. 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.

Vice Presidents Report (upcoming programs): John Carter reported on a current listing of upcoming programs as follows:

April-Prototype Consisting-Gary,

Presidents Report:

1. Fred started off commenting on the success of the Birthday Parties and how they are helping us as a group through good relations with the public.
2. The third installment of the story telling segment was discussed as well.
3. Fred also commented on the apparent success of our Railroad Heritage Saturday Program which is the fourth Saturday of each month. The Volunteer Saturday Special running was a success and we are getting good reviews on this monthly application of our hobby in running our trains.

Old Business:

1. Following-up, Allan has contacted members who did not renew memberships, and this was to be discussed at the co-ordinators mtg..

New Business:

1. Partial list of upcoming events this year:
 - April-Possible outing to Oakridge Model RR Club
 - May- Rail Grass, Racks by the Tracks, National RR Day, Museum open doors ETSU Spring Graduation Cass Scenic Railroad RailFan weekend is May 20-21.
 - June- Blue Plum Festival Johnson City, TN, Craggy Mtn. Railroad visit (Speeders)
 - July- Annual Club Picnic (We are contacting Tom McGee to set a date- in July or August.)
 - August- Cass WV group trip
 - September- **7-10** Eastern Narrow Gauge Convention, ETSU Presidential Classroom visit
 - October- ETSU Centennial; Doe River Gorge foliage trips;
 - November- National Model RR Month; 4th Anniv. Carter RR Museum;
 - Saturday Model Railroad Clinics; ETSU Homecoming Bluefield WV show; annual election of officers for upcoming year.
 - December- Annual Christmas party & meeting
2. Allan has the logo for ETSU, JCPD, and JCFD.
3. ETSU has purchased 55 locomotives to be presented to "Friends of ETSU". More information on this as it comes available.
4. New 9-volt batteries are in and the covers that were broken have been repaired. PLEASE NOTE: when removing the covers to install-remove the battery... the cover SLIDES off. Do not attempt to lift the cover until it has completely released from the case. This is what is breaking the units.
5. Discussions were started on a "subscription" fee for our newsletter since the dues do not fully cover the "printing/postage" costs. More on this is to come.
6. Centennial Locos are in for the "Friends of ETSU" Club is preparing engines and display cases.
7. Club considering trip to CASS in August... more to follow
8. Jack Miller Memorial Fund for the Boy Scout Railroad merit badge was discussed as was procuring another passenger car to memorialize Jack Miller as we have done with other members that have caught the last train west in the past.

9. Plans to repair/replace any defective Tortoise machines on layout were discussed.
10. Plan to purchase LED's for the staging yard was made... more later.

Co-Ordinators mtg:

Brief report was given by Fred Alsop

Volunteer Recruiting for Saturday Operating Sessions:

Next 4-weeks Operator Volunteers.

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 further new announcements being made, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Program for the Evening:

As mentioned earlier we heard Ms Reed discuss the rail related storytelling and oral history progress.

Next Scheduled Monthly Meeting:

April 19, 2011

Please Make Plans Now to Attend.

*Respectfully Submitted:
Don Q. Ramey*

**A New Format for the SIGNAL BRIDGE:
Proposed Changes in Publishing the Club
Newsletter**



**The Signal Bridge
Premises**

- The **Signal Bridge** is the primary method of communicating with the majority of club members.
- Many members join in part because of the quality and content of the **Signal Bridge**.
- The **Signal Bridge** is an added expense for duplication and mailing, especially with the added content pages, Bonus and Special issues.

The Signal Bridge Mission

To provide the membership of MEMRR with:

- Records of club business,
- Schedules of events,
- Updates on club projects,
- Reports on Club Activities,
- Items of membership interest,
- Instruction on modeling techniques and hobbycraft ,
- Reports on prototype information,
- Updates on preservation efforts, and
- Promotion of club archives and historical collections.

The Signal Bridge Plan



Publish monthly a **Regular Edition** of the **Signal Bridge** which will include:

- MEMRR Meeting Minutes
- Coordinator's Meeting Report
- Text updates of Club projects
- From the Engineer's Side of the Cab column
- Calendar of activities

This will be a stripped down version distributed to those on the electronic and hard copy mail lists. It will be limited to 6 pages (3 sheets). Surcharge would apply for hardcopy mailing.

Publish monthly a **Bonus Pages Edition** of the **Signal Bridge** which will include:

- Pictorial reports on club activities
- Clinics on modeling an hobbycraft tips
- Prototype information
- Preservation efforts
- Club Archives
- Billboards and period signs

This edition will contain the sort of articles we've become used to over the past several years. It will be 6-10 pages (3-5 sheets). This would be available by electronic distribution as a member bonus. Members without computer access could order at cost for duplication and S&H.

Publish occasionally a **Special Edition** of the **Signal Bridge** which will include:

- Reprints such as ETT, PTT, Rule Books/Operating Manuals
- Historical manuscripts
- Articles too large to fit the Bonus Page edition

It will be 12+ pages (≥ 6 sheets). This would be available by electronic distribution as a member bonus. Members without computer access could order at cost for duplication and S&H.





THE COAL ROAD



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGE L. CARTER CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE DRAWBAR OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

The first Board of Directors meeting for our new chapter was held on April 4th, 2011 at the Magic Wok restaurant in Johnson City. A report of that meeting is included in this copy of our newsletter.

Since the last meeting of the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS we have regrettably had two important officers resign their positions. Betty Jackson incurred a major shift in her work hours at her company that will prevent both she and Mike from attending our monthly meetings. Because they strongly feel it is singularly important for all our officers in a chapter as young as ours to be able to actively attend all of its meetings they have decided that it is in the best interest of the organization that they vacate their posts and make them available to someone else. I have discussed their decision with them by email exchanges, but have been unable to dissuade them. Mike Jackson, our newsletter editor, will be leaving that position as well. The good news is that both Betty and Mike plan to retain their memberships in the chapter and will attend our meetings and events as their schedules allow. We thank them for their support and outstanding service to the Carter Chapter and hope that future circumstances will allow them to again join us on a regular basis. We wish them the best of everything and look forward to seeing them at the Carter Railroad Museum and in our chapter whenever they can do so.

With the positions of Chapter Secretary and Chapter Newsletter Editor now both vacant we are in desperate need to fill them, and to do so quickly. If any member wishes to volunteer for either position please contact me at fredjalsop3@earthlink.net or by my home telephone: 423/929-3733 at your earliest convenience. Both of these positions are critical to the chapter and our membership, though small, is large enough to have members that are talented enough to fill them. Please volunteer!

On April 9th, Delanna Reed and her graduate students in the university's Graduate Storytelling Program conducted interviews with volunteers who had responded to media publicity and telephone calls from Delanna and from this NRHS chapter to come to the Carter Railroad Museum to relate their personal railroading stories. We have now conducted 4 of these oral history sessions since November, 2010, and have interviewed more than 30 people. Our chapter has taken these events and this oral history project on as one of our focal projects. Delanna could use help in transcribing the digital recordings they have made of each interviewee into hardcopy manuscripts. She is looking for volunteers from our NRHS chapter to train to do this task. I will be happy to serve as a contact for you if you wish to help out or you can contact Delanna directly at ETSU at 423/439-7601 or by email at reeddk@etsu.edu to see what is needed and

all the details for helping with this task. Delanna will have a special presentation of some of the 'tales of the rails' she has been collecting with her students at ETSU for members of our Carter Chapter NRHS and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) on May 2nd at 7:00 pm on the university campus. The location is not yet decided at this writing but will be provided to all our members very soon. So, mark your calendar and plan to attend.

The MEMRR club is planning a Labor Day weekend at Cass Scenic Railroad, Cass, West Virginia that will involve 3 nights (Friday-Sunday) at one of the restored sawmill company houses in the state park and rides on the Shay-powered trains and the Elkins trains during the weekend. They are inviting members of this club to join them. Let me know if you are interested and I will provide you details as the reservations are made.

If you have friends with railroading interests similar to yours who are not yet members of the Carter Chapter NRHS please bring them to an upcoming meeting and we will do our best to welcome them to become members. We will need help as we begin our work with the area Boy Scouts of America councils with our railroading merit badge program and with future storytelling events at the railroad museum. In the coming months we will be planning other railroading themed events as our chapter grows. Have your railroading friends and acquaintances come meet our members and see if we can provide avenues to broaden their railroading fun and education.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the next chapter meeting. Every member is important and every member has talents that will make this little chapter stronger and more fun to be a part of. Hear the whistle blow and dream of all the destinations yet to come!

Fred Alsop
President, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS



MEMRR CLUB HATS, TEES, SWEATSHIRTS & JACKETS

Order Yours Today



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| PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE | MEMRR Member Name _____ | | | | | | | | If jacket(s) to have personal name(s) embroidered, print name(s) below |
| Date _____ | Have orders to Duane Swank by 1st of month. | | | | | | Total of Order \$ _____ | | |
| ALL MERCHANDISE IS FOREST GREEN UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED | Merchandise with MEMRR Embroidered Logo | | | | | | | | |
| |Quantities..... | | | | | | | | |
| POLO SHIRTS w/pocket | \$17 Small | \$17 Med. | \$17 Large | \$17 XL | \$19 2XL | Total | Paid | Date Delivered | |
| SWEAT SHIRTS | \$14 Small | \$14 Med. | \$14 Large | \$14 XL | \$16 2XL | Total | Paid | Date Delivered | |
| T-SHIRTS w/pocket (short sleeve) | \$8.50 Sm. | \$8.50 Med. | \$8.50 Large | \$8.50 XL | \$10.50 2XL | Total | Paid | Date Delivered | |
| T-SHIRTS w/pocket (long sleeve) | \$11 Small | \$11 Med. | \$11 Large | \$11 XL | \$14 2XL | Total | Paid | Date Delivered | |
| BUTTON FRONT dress shirt w/pocket (long sleeve) | \$22 Small | \$22 Med. | \$22 Large | \$22 XL | \$25 2XL | Total | Paid | Date Delivered | |
| Jacket lightweight flannel lining <small>Personal monogramming add \$5.00 per jacket; print name(s) to right of page</small> | \$22 Small | \$22 Med. | \$22 Large | \$22 XL | \$25 2XL | Total | Paid | Date Delivered | |
| Jacket lightweight fleece lining <small>Personal monogramming add \$5.00 per jacket; print name(s) to right of page</small> | \$36 Small | \$36 Med. | \$36 Large | \$36 XL | \$39 2XL | Total | Paid | Date Delivered | |
| Engineer HATS (blue/white w/club logo for members only) = \$11.00 each | | | | | | Quantity | Paid | Delivered | |
| Baseball HATS (w/club logo for members only) = \$10.00 each | | | | | | Quantity | Paid | Delivered | |
| GIVE ORDER FORM to: Duane Swank | | | | | | | | | |
| MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MEMRR | | | | | | | | | |