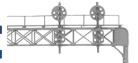


# THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Volume 18

## NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB MAY 2011 REGULAR ISSUE

Number 5A

Published for the Education and Information of Its Membership



Summer is coming faster than the *Cannonball Express*, ETSU's Spring Semester is over and the graduation exercises were completed on Saturday, May 7th. From now until mid-August there will be plenty of parking spaces around the Carter Railroad Museum. So, come on down and select a free parking spot near the door and help us with the major projects that are going on at the museum. We do need you. I will be on the

road in 3 states during the working weeks for the rest of May and into the first week of June conducting bird identification workshops for state and federal biologists. If you need to get in touch with me try my cell phone in the evenings (615/604-8759) when I will have a better chance for service and time to talk to you. **John Carter** will preside in my absence at the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting at our regular meeting room, 312 Brown Hall. He will also conduct the Coordinator's Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. I will be at the museum on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. I apologize for any inconvenience my absence may cause, but I have been conducting these workshops for 20 years now and they are an important element in the conservation of birds in the southeastern U.S.

A suggestion has been forwarded to try a 'new' restaurant for the group for the May meeting. Let's go to **The Firehouse Restaurant** a couple of blocks from ETSU, meeting at 5:30 for dinner. They have a meeting room upstairs that may be available for us. The **Campus Q** restaurant just did not meet our expectations.

Our well publicized *Railroad Heritiage Days* the last Saturday of each month continue to draw big crowds. In April we celebrated *"The Standard of the World—The Pennsylvania Railroad"* and several of our members including *Duane Swank, Dan McLeod,* and *Allan Morton* brought lots of their PRR models and railroad memorabilia (Allan had a great exhibit of PRR china that I hope you got to see on exhibit) for the display cases in the museum and we had lots of PRR tuscan rolling through our southern Appalachian scenery to the delight of a lot of visitors and MEMRR members alike. We even got our founding emeritus member, *Bob Swartz*, whose father worked for the PRR, and who is a PRR fan to

## The View From The Engineer's Side Of The Cab

#### Observations from the MEMRR President

come to the museum with his PRR 4-6-2! Our Heritage Day focus for May is "Here to Stay—Modern American Railroading" in honor of National Train Day, May  $7^{\text{th}}$ , and we already have some Amtrack trains in several scales on display. Support this event and your club by bringing your modern trains to run on May  $28^{\text{th}}$ .

We are still looking for a home for part of an HO layout. Bob Jones is going to incorporate half of it into his home layout, but does not feel he wants to take on all of it. However, we have to remove all of it from the donor's basement sometime in June. Pictures of the layout and its track plan are available at the railroad museum. The part that is available has code 100 nickel-silver track, is half of an expanded 'dogbone' and measures roughly 17 x 28 feet. Check out the photos. Talk to Bob, Allan and Hobie as all of them have seen the layout; and let me know if you're interested and we will discuss details.

## This is the latest information about happenings at the Carter Railroad Museum:

- 1) The museum library is being set up with most of the books, magazines, and DVDs on the shelves thanks to work by **Gary Emmert, Dave Doughty,** and **Bob Jones.** New magazine binders (34) have been purchased to hold the last of the magazines and a computer, keyboard, mouse and monitor have been donated by ETSU for use there. Oak lumber has been purchased to 'finish-out' the book shelves.
- 2) Spruce lumber has been purchased to construct the benchwork for the "Tweetsie" layout and **Duane Swank** has been precutting it to size at his home workshop. **Duane** and **Fred** have completed the benchwork, sans risers, on the Rabetoy layout side of the room and work will continue shortly to construct the remaining benchwork in the newly renovated section of the room. All the HOn3 track and turnouts has been ordered for this new layout and the turnouts have been delivered; the 3' sections of flextrack is on its way with an expected delivery date in mid-May. Cork roadbed has also been ordered.
- 3) **John Carter**, with help from several MEMRR members has installed 8 tortoise machines under the staging yard and will soon begin laying track toward the new freight yard. He could use help so step up and volunteer your time.

**CLUB OFFICERS** 

**Duane Swank** 

President: Secretary: Fred Alsop Donald Ramey

Vice-President:

**John Carter** 

Donald Ramey Ted Bleck-Doran:

Treasurer: Webmaster:

Webmaster: John Edwards

**Newsletter Editor:** 



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,

4) **Gary Emmert and John Faucett** have been working on the Cope Traveling Layout getting it ready for its next scheduled showing at Jonesborough Days in early July.

- 5) Lexan has been purchased and delivered to replace the existing plexiglass on the Bankis N-Scale layout, for the Cope Traveling Layout and for the Tweetsie HOn3 layout when it is completed. We will now have museum-quality barriers for each of the layouts housed there.
- 6) 11 additional HOn3 car kits (hoppers & 2 flatcars), a passenger coach kit, and 2 depot kits (1 constructed) have been purchased for the Tweetsie RR project. MEMRR Members; we have lots of projects and lots of materials on hand for their construction. Summer days are long and the parking is easy. Come on down to the Carter Railroad Museum and get involved!

We have reservations for 14 in two restored company houses at Cass Scenic Railroad for 2-5 September (Labor Day Weekend). Several members have already made requests to me to hold places for them. First come—first served! We will carpool up on

Friday and come back on Monday. The cost of the houses will be determined by the number going, but if we fill the spaces (14) it will cost approximately \$55/person total for the 3 night's lodging. Look for details elsewhere in this newsletter. You will be on your own to reserve your train tickets (go online and Google for ticket information and train schedules). I have the houses already reserved, so please contact me if you want to lodge with us.

You hold membership in and exciting model railroad club housed in a terrific location. We need your help with lots of summer projects. Get on board and join the fun of model railroading with a lot of good guys and gals. A lot will be happening in the Carter Railroad Museum this summer and you won't want to miss out on it. See you on Thursdays and Saturdays? Remember, every member has access to the museum 24/7, and did I mention that there is lots of parking for the next few months??

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

### Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Coordinators' Meeting April 14, 2011

Little Engineer's Room: Duane Swank: Suggest we buy 'maxie-pack' of AA batteries for the battery-powered locomotives and trolleys instead of relying on the few rechargeable batteries in stock. One of the 2 flashing lights in the crossbuck needs replacement. We need to be more responsible in wiping down the kid's toys after each Saturday play session as well as other surfaces. Be sure to vacuum the carpet as well.

**Display Cases:** Jim Pahris. Pennsylvania Railroad items are featured this month as support for April 30th 'Railroad Heritage Days' at the museum. We are turning over these displays each month for these special featured museum events.

Sales: Duane Swank. We now have a supply of George L. Carter RR Museum logo embroidered iron-on patches available for hats, shirts, jackets, etc. Pride \$4.00 @. Engineers hats with these logo patches will sell for \$11 @ adult's and child's sizes.

**Publicity:** Hobie Hyder. Hobie will generate press releases publicizing our Little Engineer's Birthday Party Packages. Fred & Geoff Stunkard will generate press releases for the upcoming 'Heritage Days' event featuring the PRR. Hobie will assist in the media distribution of both of these.

Events: Hobie Hyder. Hobie arranged for the club to visit member Dick Conger's G-Gauge Garden Railway at his home in Jonesborough on Sunday, April 12th. He is arranging other model railroad layout tours for the club. May 2nd will be a special storytelling event at the Johnson City Public Library, 6:30 p.m., by Delanna Reed and some of her graduate students. The club is invited as special guests. Plans are being firmed up for a club visit to Cass Scenic RR in Cass, WV, over Labor Day Weekend, 2-5 Sept. Jim Pahris will coordinate the club picnic in late July or early August with hosts Mr. & Mrs. Tom McKee.

HO Layout: John Edwards/ John Carter (pers. com.). Staging yard: 1 tortoise machine left to install. Some wiring remains to be completed. Almost ready to lay track towards new yard. Problems with reversing section remain to be solved, but much discussion of the problem is taking place. Fred stated that we may get Dan Lang from the Hendersonville, NC club to come up to assess the problem and possibly recommend solutions. Dan is most knowledgeable of DCC and electrical puzzles.

Bankus N-Scale: Tod Eaton (pers.com). Track cleaning and locomotive repair have been priorities and that work continues. Fred ordered 3 Southern RR steam locomotives, each with different wheel configurations as requested (they have been delivered as of Saturday, April 16th). Two Crest (formerly Aristocraft) radio control throttles, transmitters and receivers have been ordered for the layout through HobbyTownUSA.

**McKee G-Gauge:** Jesse Kettle. Steam Locomotive donated by Dan McLeod has been dullcoated and weathered. Passengers (also donated by Dan) have been added to the passenger consist.

Cope Traveling Layout: Gary Emmert. The club has been invited to display this layout at Jonesborough Days, 2-3 July. Work will take place to bring the layout back up to public-viewing standards and to correct electrical problem with one turnout. Transportation will be worked out to get it to Jonesborough and back. John Carter will find vendor for Lexan to create protective barriers around the layout.

**Rabetoy HO/HOn3:** Richard Gallaher/Fred Alsop. Paul Haynes has ordered spruce lumber to be used to construct the benchwork for the "Tweetsie RR" project. Emile still working on the track plans. Fred needs estimate of track needs so some/all of it can be ordered. ETSU will soon install security cameras in this newly renovated room.

**Publications:** Ted Bleck-Doran. April issue of The Signal Bridge will be published in a new format with a 6-10 page business section distributed via computer or hardcopy that will be mailed to members not on-line; a 6-10 page 'bonus' section distributed online only; and some-time 'special' sections also distributed via the internet. All sections will be archived at the club's website by the webmaster and can be accessed there. Up-coming editions of the newsletter will feature: Allan Morton's PRR China, Duane Swank's PRR HO-Scale models (mostly locomotives), and Jim Pahris' Switzerland railfanning trip. The editor needs copy on how-to-do-it clinics, construction projects, and the Cass Scenic Railway; all preferably in PowerPoint for publication.

Library: Gary Emmert. The lock on the library will be changed so the master key (113) does not open it to add additional security to our growing reference collection that now contains some very valuable books. All members will have access to the entire collection once it is on the shelves, as well as to magazines and

DVDs, but these items will have to be checked out if they are to leave the library. Reading and DVD viewing facilities are being arranged. Duane has installed the laminate covering on all the shelving (donated by Big John's Closeouts, Elizabethton, through an arrangement by Lisa Thomas). Oak has been ordered through Paul's shop to face the shelving. Ted has made a recent donation of books on traction and railroading to the MEMRR. We need cardboard binders to house annual additions of model railroad magazines and are soliciting any donations of same from the membership.

Many of these projects need additional volunteer help. Please see one of the coordinators listed in the report above and lend a hand

Prepared and submitted by Fred Alsop 4/17/2011

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Vice-President John Carter.

**Recognition of Guests and New Members:** There were no new members or guests present. Fourteen members were present.

#### Officers' Reports:

**Secretary's Report:** Minutes were approved as published in the April issue of *The Signal Bridge* without reading. Motion: Bleck-Doran: Second: Edwards.

Newsletter Editor's Report: The new format for *The Signal Bridge* was unveiled with the release of the April issue. Issue 4A was released as the "regular edition" containing 6 pages. This section contained minutes from the coordinators' meeting, business meeting, club president's column and *The Coal Road* newsletter from the George L Carter Chapter – National Railway Historical Society. Issue 4B contained a photo gallery on the Clinchfield RR depot in Erwin, TN; articles by Allan Morton, Duane Swank and Jim Pahris. Issue 4C was the "Special Issue" containing a reprint of UP's special car handling manual. The special issue will be available for download on the club's website. The regular and bonus page editions will be distributed by e-mail while only the regular pages will be posted as hardcopies to members without e-mail.

**Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report was tabled to May due to the treasurer's absence.

**Webmaster's Report:** John Edwards reported that the Special Editions of *The Signal Bridge* for 2011 have been posted to the club website in combined format for ease of downloading.

**Vice-President's Report:** John Carter reported on possible and tentative programs for the monthly meetings. These include:

- Swiss Railways: Jim Pahris
- Passenger Consists: Gary Emmert

### Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Minutes of General Meeting April 19, 2011

- Train Blocking Pre-1970's: Gary Emmert
- Train Consisting Post-1970's: Gary Emmert
- Train Orders/Work Orders: Gary Emmert
- Not EMDs N&W's Oddball Fleets: Ted Bleck-Doran

**President's Report:** This was tabled due to Fred's absence to be in Nashville TN to receive a conservation award from the Tennessee Wildlife Federation – *congratulations Fred!* 

**Special Announcement:** May 2<sup>nd</sup> the Johnson City Public Library will host a storytelling event, "Tales of the Rails," by Delanna Reed and her ETSU students. The program will begin at 6:30 PM.

#### **Old Business:**

- Memorial Car: The club voted to purchase a suitable passenger car and letter it for former member Jack Miller. Ted Bleck-Doran offered to price our cars and report details at the next meeting.
- 2. Signal Bridge Format: It was reported that the new format will be maintained through the summer months and reevaluated in the fall. Progress in obtaining email address for all members in order to eliminate posting hardcopy mailings of the newsletter is on-going.
- 3. Hand-Helds and Batteries: It was reported the all the club hand-held controllers have battery covers with new metal clasps. A number of controllers have been found with batteries left in them between operating sessions. Please remove all batteries at the end of work and operating sessions. When recharging batteries, please remove them after they have been recharged. Leaving them in for a prolonged recharging period only shortens battery life.

#### **New Business:**

 Railroad Heritage Days: the next event in the Railroad Heritage Days series will be held April 30th and feature the

"Standard of the World - The Pennsylvania Railroad." Members are invited to bring and run Pennsy equipment. Special trains are already planned by Allan Morton and Duane Swank. There are also special displays in the cabinets.

- New Restaurant for Dinner before Meetings: several locations were discussed without achieving consensus; it was recommended that we stay at El Cariolas since the new addition should be available by next meeting. NOTE: Fred recommends we try the Firehouse in May.
- 3. April Coordinator's Meeting: John Carter gave a brief summary of the monthly Coordinators' Meeting. NOTE: full minutes from the meeting are published elsewhere in this issue of The Signal Bridge.
- 4. ETSU Centennial Locomotive Display Cases: 55 locomotives lettered for ETSU were ordered from Walthers along with display cases. 20+clear display case tops arrived with damage. These have been replaced. Track has been affixed to the display case bases. One set will be retained by the club.
- 5. Cass Scenic Railway Outing: plans are still under way for a late summer outing to Cass WV. The event is planned for Labor Day weekend. House reservations have been made by Fred. Those interested should sign up with Fred and Hobie. Space is limited. NOTE: details are published in the May "Regular" edition of The Signal Bridge.
- 6. April "How-to-do-it" Clinics: Spring How-to clinics were tabled for this year; members present felt that there was not enough time to pull plans together and that the Heritage Days were already providing enough of a draw on Saturdays.
- 7. HO Layout Availability: a 24'x12' with two 5' sections is still available. The track plan is suitable for an operations oriented modeler. See the April 2011 issue of *The Signal*

**Bridge** for details. ETSU Foundation will handle the sale. Asking price is \$3,000 to \$3,500.

#### 8. Other Items:

- a. Jonesborough Days: the Cope traveling layout has been requested for display on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> during the Jonesborough Days observance. The layout would have to be staffed from 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday and from 1 PM to 5 PM on Sunday. The layout would have to be transported by the 1<sup>st</sup>.
- b. Library Donation: Jim Pahris reported on his visit with a possible benefactor who wishes to donate his railroad library consisting of 400 volumes and numerous DVD's and VHS tapes on rail related subjects. The library is valued at \$20,000!
- c. Library Magazine Cases: the library is in need of document storage boxes to secure the magazine collection. Anyone aware of a source for these cases should contact Gary Emmert or Dave Douty

**Volunteers for Saturday Operating Sessions:** volunteers to cover the following Saturday operating sessions were secured: April 23<sup>rd</sup>, April 30<sup>th</sup>, May 7<sup>th</sup>, and May 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### Announcements:

- May Coordinators' Meeting, Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM, Room 235, Campus Center Building
- 2. The Newsletter Editor is looking for photos from previous Cass Scenic Railway outings for a summer special edition.

**Program:** "Agency Response to Rail Disasters"

Gary Emmert

May Meeting: Tuesday, May 19th, 7:00 PM

Room 312, Brown Hall, ETSU Program: Swiss Railways Jim Pahris

Submitted by Ted Bleck-Doran and Dave Douty



**Purpose:** To have a great railroading experience in the mountains of scenic West Virginia. We will lodge in the restored company houses of the Cass Scenic Railroad State Park in Cass, West Virginia. There we can explore the company town, ride behind the shays of the CSRR to the top of Bald Knob the third highest

### LABOR DAY WEEKEND RAILFAN TRIP

September 2-5, 2011

## Sponsored by the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders

mountain in the state, and have the opportunity to ride the train at Elkins, WV as well. How you choose to spend your Saturday and Sunday will be up to you, but here are the options listed below.

**Destination:** Cass Scenic Railroad State Park, Cass, West Virginia. Optional destinations for additional train rides at nearby Durbin and Elkins, West Virginia.

**Whose going?** Members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders club are going and they are inviting the members of the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS to participate.

**Lodging:** Fred Alsop, president of both clubs, has made reservations in the Cass Scenic Railroad State Park in 2 of the restored company houses. One house sleeps 8 and the other

sleeps 6 in double-occupancy bedrooms. Currently, there is reserved housing for 14 people on a first-come/first-served basis. Additional housing may be available through the state park, but any additional reservations will be the responsibility of those who want to join us after the above spaces have been filled. If we fill all 14 spaces in the 2 houses the approximate cost will be \$55/person total for the 3 nights. If you plan to go and you have not already notified Fred please do so quickly. Phone: 423/929-3733 or cell: 615/604-8759 or at <a href="mailto:fredialsop3@earthlink.net">fredialsop3@earthlink.net</a>. Several members have already secured their spaces on the trip, so don't delay if you want to join us for this outstanding railroading venture.

**Getting there:** Travel will be by personal vehicle, but we will attempt to carpool for those who would like to share a ride. We will work out these details after the group is established.

National Holiday: Lots of folks will be traveling over this long holiday weekend. It is very important that you make your reservations early in order to get the lodging and the train tickets you desire. Spaces will fill up quickly and fast action on your part will go a long way in staving off the disappointment of not getting to do all the things you want to do.



Train Rides:

#### Cass Scenic Railroad

Check out their web site at: <a href="http://www.cassrailroad.com">http://www.cassrailroad.com</a> for all their information including schedules, location, fares, events, etc. For tickets call **800CALLWVA** and then ask for **'Cass Scenic Railroad'**. You can get additional ticket discounts if you book more than one train ride in a 7 day period. Here's what available on Saturday and Sunday, 3-4 Sept.:

**Whittaker Station**-4 miles, 2 hrs with stop at the outdoor Whittaker Station logging museum. Cost \$21 for adult ticket. Departures at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m.

**Bald Knob-** 11 miles, 4.5 hrs with stops atop Bald Knob and at Whittaker Station. Cost \$27 for adult ticket. Departure and Noon.

**Bluegrass Buffet**- Saturday evening only with departure at 5:15 p.m. Check web site for prices and reservation information.

#### **Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad**

website <a href="http://www.mountainrailwv.com">http://www.mountainrailwv.com</a> and ticket information at <a href="mailto:ticketinfo@mountainrail.com">ticketinfo@mountainrail.com</a>; phone: 877/686-7245

**Durbin Rocket:** powered by rare Climax, old #3, built in 1910. Ride is 10.5 miles; 2.5 hrs. Departures from #3 E. Main Street, Durbin, WV at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tickets \$22 adult (\$20 senior—65 and +). Reservations: <a href="http://rezweb.com/durbin/">http://rezweb.com/durbin/</a> or toll-free: **877MTNRAIL** or 877-686-7245.

**Cheat Mountain Salamander:** Trip is 88 miles roundtrip and takes 6.5 hrs, through one of the largest wilderness areas in the eastern U.S. Ticket prices: adult \$58 (senior \$56--65 and +). Check their website for schedules at <a href="http://www.mountainrailwv.com">http://www.mountainrailwv.com</a>

**New Tygart Flyer:** Trip is 4 hrs and covers 46 miles round trip and departs from Elkins, WV at 11:00 a.m. Ticket prices: adult \$45 (senior \$43–65 and +), includes buffet service. Parlor car with meal (limited seating) \$56 (\$54 for seniors). Departure 315 Railroad Ave, Elkins, WV.

Reservations <a href="http://www.mountainrailwv.com">http://www.mountainrailwv.com</a> or by phone: 877MTNRAIL.

**Mountain Explorer Dinner Train:** 4 hour ride, gourmet dinner meal. Price \$70 (upgrade to parlor car \$80). Departs Elkins Depot, 315 Railroad Ave. Elkins, WV at 5:00 p.m. Make reservations at above web sites or toll-free phone number.

**Fred's Personal Plan:** Arrive at houses in Cass, WV, on Friday evening, Sept  $2^{nd}$ . Ride the New Tygart Flyer in Elkins (approximate 1.5 hr drive from Cass) on Saturday, Sept  $3^{rd}$ . Ride the Cass Scenic Railroad train to Bald Knob on Sunday, Sept  $4^{th}$ ; and perhaps take the Dinner train at 5:30 that evening. Depart for Tri-cities on Monday, Sept.  $5^{th}$ . Have a great time with some outstanding railroading buddies. **Are you getting on board?** 



# MEMRR CLUB HATS, TEES, SWEATSHIRTS & JACKETS Order Yours Today



PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE MEMRR Member Name									
Date	Have orders to Duane Swank by 1st of month.  Total of Order \$								If jacket(s) to have personal name(s) embroidered, print
ALL MERCHANDISE IS FOREST GREEN	Merchandise with MEMRR Embroidered Logo								
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED	Quantities								name(s) below
POLO SHIRTS w/pocket	\$17 Small	\$17 Med.	\$17 Large	\$17 XL	\$19 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
SWEAT SHIRTS	\$14 Small	\$14 <u>Med.</u>	\$14 Large	\$14 <u>XL</u>	\$16 2XL	<u>Total</u>	Paid	Date Delivered	
T-SHIRTS w/pocket (short sleeve)	\$8.50 Sm.	\$8.50 <u>Med.</u>	\$8.50 <u>Large</u>	\$8.50 <u>XL</u>	\$10.50 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
T-SHIRTS w/pocket (long sleeve)	\$11 Small	\$11 <u>Med.</u>	\$11 Large	\$11 <u>XL</u>	\$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 Personal monogramming add \$5.00 per jacket;	\$22 Small	\$22 Med.	\$22 Large	\$22 XL	\$25 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
print name(s) to right of page  Jacket lightweight fleece lining  Personal monogramming add \$5.00 per jacket;	\$36 Small	\$36 <u>Med.</u>	\$36 Large	\$36 XL	\$39 2XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered	
print name(s) to right of page  Engineer HATS (blue/white w/club logo for	or memb	ers only	) = \$11.0	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			T						
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MEMRR									