



# The Coal Road

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The Monthly Newsletter of the George L. Carter Chapter, National Railway  
Historical Society, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee  
Volume 1, Number 7, August 2011

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## The DRAWBAR OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

My wife, Jo Ann, and I are happy to be back on 'home rails' after a month away from Tennessee that was almost equally split between the prairies of western Minnesota and the mountains of Peru. We look forward to seeing our George L. Carter Chapter NRHS members at the August meeting next week. My sincere thanks to Vice-President Jim Pahrís for hosting the July meeting in my absence; I know he did a great job.

Just a quick reminder that you have the opportunity to participate in a couple of upcoming activities that are being co-sponsored by the George L. Carter Railroad Museum and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders club. On August 21<sup>st</sup> there will be a picnic at 4:00 p.m. at the home of Tom and Kim McKee. The only requirements are that you bring a covered dish, adults only, and that you let the picnic coordinator, Jim Pahrís, know that you are planning to attend. You already know many of the members of the MEMRR and this is a chance to meet some new friends. Tom McKee, our host, has a nice G-Gauge garden railroad and may also be operating some G-Gauge live steam. Come join us for a fun-filled afternoon.

The MEMRR and the Carter RR Museum are also planning a rail-fan trip to northern West Virginia over the Labor Day holiday weekend. We will be riding trains at Cass Scenic Railroad, the *Tygart Flyer* in nearby Elkins, WV, and perhaps other local railroads such as the *Durbin Rocket*. Reservations for the weekend's lodging have been made at Cass Scenic Railroad for two of the company houses that will sleep 14 people. We still have room for 4 people in the houses. All train ticket purchases are the

responsibility of each individual, so you have many to choose from, but hurry—it's a holiday weekend and seats on the various trains are limited. See the August issue of *The Signal Bridge*, the monthly newsletter of the MEMRR, or go to their website, for details. Contact Fred Alsop if you plan to go and stay with us in the company houses, or for additional details.

The chapter still needs a secretary!!! Surely, someone in our membership would be willing to take on this important task to help us keep accurate records of our business meetings and to facilitate membership communication as well as the necessary correspondence between our chapter and the National NRHS. Please contact any office as soon as possible and volunteer your services. Your chapter needs you and you will receive guidance and assistance from our officers. Please let me hear from you today that you will accept this opportunity to help your chapter grow stronger in this, its fledgling year. Thank you.

The chapter will begin to initiate our plans to assist the local Boy Scouts of America council in their scouts earning the Railroading Merit Badge. This was one of our planned chapter objectives that were identified in our organizational meetings and in our application for chapter status. Vice-President Jim Pahriss will be guiding us in this project. This fall as the Fall 2011 Semester gets underway at ETSU we will once more put together with the Carter RR Museum and the ETSU Graduate Program in Storytelling a series of interview events to record and preserve personal oral histories of local railroads from area residents. Their memories will not only be preserved and archived at the university, but will also be used in public presentations and perhaps in some publications as well.

A hot summer is coming to an end and vacations that have disrupted our normal routines have mostly ended, so it is time to begin once more to focus on our NRHS chapter and begin to move forward with building our chapter and enjoying all the opportunities for fellowship and service that it provides. Welcome aboard! See you all on Monday night, August 15<sup>th</sup>.

Fred Alsop  
President, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS  
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU



## NRHS 2011 CONVENTION REPORT

On Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, your National Director and his wife flew from Washington Dulles International Airport to Tacoma, Washington to attend the 2011 National Railway Historical Society Convention. There was a pre-convention trip Monday on the Chehalis-Centralia Railroad. Our motive power was a 1916 Baldwin oil-fired "Mikado" (2-8-2) that originally served as a logging locomotive on the Cowlitz, Chehalis &

Cascade Railroad. The right-of-way used by the Chehalis-Centralia is the former Milwaukee Road line between Centralia and Ruth, Washington.

Early Tuesday morning we were up to catch the Amtrak *Cascades* train from Tacoma to Vancouver, Washington. This Vancouver is located on the Washington side of the Columbia River across from Portland, Oregon. If you have the opportunity to ride the *Cascades*, do so as they are unique trains here in the States. They are built by Talgo in Spain. There is a power unit (locomotive) on each end and each car has only one axle. The cars are comfortable and roomy. Because of the early hour we ate breakfast on the train. The buffet car had a good selection of breakfast items to include oatmeal, hot sandwiches and pastries. The purpose of our trip was to meet the Convention Train, headed by 4449 a former Southern Pacific GS-4 (4-8-4), which headed up the **Freedom Train** during 1975-76. We had about an hour lay over before heading north behind 4449. That evening we had a reception at the Foss Waterway Seaport, a maritime museum in a former Northern Pacific warehouse building. The area where the convention hotel (Murano) was located was a former industrial and warehouse district for the city of Tacoma. Many of these structures have been renovated and converted into offices and apartments. Remnants of railroad sidings were present in many locations.

Wednesday gave us a selection of three different events as well as an evening dinner cruise on Puget Sound.

1. Northwest Railway Museum – Snoqualmie, WA: This is the largest railroad museum in the Northwest, formed in 1957 as the Puget Sound Railway Historical Association.
2. Seattle Traction Tour: This tour involved four distinct traction operations: King County Metro's trolley coaches, the Seattle Monorail, South lake Union Streetcar, and Sound Transit's Central Link light rail line. The light rail line currently runs from King Street Station to SeaTac Airport. I chose to participate in this event and found it quite informative and an enjoyable experience.
3. Lunch at Paradise Lodge on Mt. Rainier: This was a non-rail event attended by many wives (including mine) and several male members. The focus of this event was the mountain scenery and a relaxing lunch setting with great vistas of the mountains still covered in snow.

Thursday was also a three event day culminating with Meet the NRHS Officers, Evening Reception and NRHS At-Large Member Meeting.

1. Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad (MRSR)/Tacoma Rail Trip: We left Tacoma in Tacoma Rail's four car 50's light weight train pulled by a SD45 and a GP40 because as we left the station, we began to climb Tacoma Hill, a 3.8% grade. Tacoma Rail operates on ex-Milwaukee Road trackage between Tacoma and Eatonville, WA. At Eatonville we transferred to the heavy weight coaches of MRSR pulled by a Willamette. A Willamette looks very similar to a Shay but is covered under separate patents. (Don't ever call a Willamette a Shay as it can get you into all kinds of trouble.) MRSR has the world's

most complete collection of geared logging locomotives (Climax, Heisler, Shay and Willamette) as well as a collection of rod engines and early diesels.

2. Woodinville Winery Tour: This was a seven hour tour, visiting three wineries: Brian Carter, Columbia and Ste. Michelle. Washington is the second leading producer of wine in the US.

3. Tacoma Rail Night Photo Session: The high light of this event was having SP 4449 under steam as well as vintage Tacoma Rail equipment

Friday was a potpourri of Seminars, Board of Directors' Meeting, Annual Membership Meeting, and Banquet. The main thing that came out of the Annual Membership Meeting was the adoption of the new National By-Laws. Now we are in a transition period. The current officers and Board of Directors (BOD) are still in place and will serve until the 2012 election is conducted as set forth in the new By-Laws. The BOD will elect the National Officers for this transitional period at its Fall Meeting in Willington, Delaware. In 2012 the President, Vice President and a 23 member BOD will be elected by the membership. The next step in our transition is the establishment of districts from which the BOD members will be selected by the members of the districts.

Saturday was Mainline Steam with 4449 over Stampede Pass, a round trip distance of 180 miles. Our photo run-by was conducted at Easton after the locomotives were turned and re-connected to the train. Easton was a great location to take pictures and the sun was out and shining.

Sunday was the reverse of Tuesday as folks rode the convention train behind 4449 to Portland. There a lot of members returned home from Portland. Those individuals returning to Tacoma rode the Amtrak *Coast Starlight* back to Tacoma.

The convention was conducted during the major floods in the Dakotas. On Tuesday when we reached Vancouver, WA, to pick up 4449, the Amtrak Agent told us that the *Empire Builder* had been embargoed and would not run until July 6th. This caused problems for a lot of folks who were booked on the train for their return east. Carl Jensen had his son's car the *Getchi Gami Club* (sp?) as part of the convention consist. It was scheduled to return behind the *Empire Builder* and had to return behind the *Sunset Limited* out of LA several days after the convention.

Jim Pahrns  
Vice President/National Director

Minutes of the  
General Meeting of the Geo. L. Carter Chapter NRHS on July 18, 2011  
**The meeting was brought to order by Vice President/National Director, Jim Pahrns, at 6:30 P.M.**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Since Fred Alsop was out of the country bird watching, there was no president's report.

SECRETARY'S MINUTES - June 20th minutes appeared in the July issue of The Coal Road. Bill Beagen made the motion to accept them as published with Gary Emmert seconding the motion. All were in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Given by Duane Swank - report was accepted with no objections noted.

EDITOR'S REPORT - Bill Beagen, the newly appointed editor, published his first newsletter for the Chapter in July and asked if everyone had received it or had any suggestions. No comments made other than 'Thanks Bill' for taking over this task.  
VICE PRESIDENT/NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jim Pahrís gave a brief report about his trip to the National Convention in Tacoma, WA. Jim said the main thing to come out of the meeting was the adoption of the new National By-Laws and now we are in a transition period.. The current officers and Board of Directors (BOD) are still in place and will serve until the 2012 election is conducted as set forth in the new By-Laws. The BOD will elect the National Officers for this transitional period at its Fall Meeting in Wilmington, Delaware. In 2012, the President, Vice President and a 23 member BOD will be elected by the membership. The next step in our transition is the establishment of districts from which the BOD members will be selected by the members of the districts. More of Jim's report will appear elsewhere in the August issue of The Coal Road.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Boy Scout Merit Badge Program - Jim Pahrís plans to have the program on schedule by late September with the initiation of the program in early October and another one in the Spring.
2. Chapter Logo - Bill Hensley has not had the opportunity to get the sample shirt made with the new logo. This is still pending. The new logo appears in the upper left corner of The Coal Road.
3. Cass Scenic Railroad trip over Labor Day Weekend (leaving Sept. 2 and returned Sept. 5). Car pooling will be an option to driving individually. Lodging has been reserved and tickets for the train rides need to be reserved (on your own) ASAP to insure they aren't sold out when we get there since it is a Holiday weekend. Please get with Fred Alsop if you are planning on going; there may be 1 or 2 openings yet in the reserved Company houses.
4. The third and final reading of the revised Chapter By-Laws took place and all changes (Article 4, Article 5 and Article 11) were approved and adopted by the membership present. The revised by-laws will be emailed to all members.

5. The MEMRR annual picnic at Tom and Kim McKee's lakefront home is still scheduled for August 21 but the time has been changed from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The George L. Carter Chapter has been extended the invitation to attend. Members and spouses (or significant others) are invited. No children please, this is an adult outing. Jim Pahr is coordinating with the McKee's and will advise members soon of the menu, what to furnish, etc. Jim has supplies (plates, napkins, flatware, etc.) that he will give to Dan and Charlene McLeod to take to the picnic since he will be out of state and unable to attend himself. Parking will be at the church (as in previous years) with shuttle service provided since there is very little parking area at the McKee's.

6. National has corrected the Chapter name, from George L. Carter Railroad Museum to George L. Carter.

7. Still searching for a new SECRETARY.

8. Jonesborough Days, July 2 and 3 was a big hit with the children. The memorabilia (engineer's hats, license plates, museum patches, rolling stock, etc.) that was taken down were apparently not displayed in an appropriate area as only 2 hats were sold. The donation can was sent out by the layouts on Sunday and there was a small collection of \$9.00 plus small change. But, every penny counts. David and Laura Doughty did an excellent job with presenting the Operation Life Saver Program giving away over 500 packets of information. Thanks Dave & Laura.

Gary Emmert suggested a letter of thanks be sent to Melinda Copp for all her help and assistance. Jim Pahr is will take care of getting this done.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Jim Pahr is reported on the National Convention as mentioned above.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Also, Jim said the National is sponsoring a trip to Israel (train riding, of course) November 10 thru 21, 2011 at a cost of \$2990 plus air fare with a \$200 deposit. They must have a minimum of 20 people with a maximum of 40 people to take the trip. If you are interested, please contact Jim Pahr for more details.

PROGRAM - A video was planned but even with instruction left by Fred, no one could get the equipment to work.

ADJOURNMENT - Gary Emmer made the motion at 7:25 p.m. to adjourn the meeting; Bill Beagen seconded it and all were in favor.

The next business meeting will be August 15th. Hope to see more of you there.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Harriet Swank, Acting Secretary  
Director

Approved by: Jim Pahr, VP/National

Editors Remarks

I am sorry this issue is so late in getting out to you, the members. Circumstances got a little out of hand and I was just able to put it all together. I promise to get it to you a lot earlier for next month.

Bill

If anyone has anything they want to contribute to the Coal Road, please send it to me, my e-mail address is [rrbill@embarqmail.com](mailto:rrbill@embarqmail.com). Thanks for your help.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Nothing new to report at this writing. However, we encourage anyone who knows someone interested in railroading to please encourage them to join our organization.

Keep those rails clicking.

Harriet Swank,  
Membership Chairman

**The next scheduled meeting** is Monday, July 18th on ETSU Campus, Brown Hall Building, Room 312, at 6:30 p.m. Please try to attend and bring a guest.

**Chapter Officers:**

President - Fred Alsop (*fredjalsop3@earthlink.net*)

Vice President/National Director - Jim Pahris (*pahrisj@embarqmail.com*)

Secretary - vacant

Treasurer - Duane Swank (*duaneharriet@charter.net*)

At Large Directors - Bill Hensley and  
Dan McLeod (*chardanmcLeod35@comcast.net*)

**Appointed Positions:**

Editor – Bill Beagen (*rrbill@embarqmail.com*)

Librarian - Gary Emmert (*jbox1015@comcast.net*)

Membership Chairperson - Harriet Swank (*duaneharriet@charter.net*)



## **The George L. Carter Chapter NRHS**

The Monthly Meetings are the Monday preceding the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM in room 312 of Brown Hall, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN. The room is on the Third floor entering from the northeast entrance doors. For more information, please write to the Chapter at 1763 Sylvan Hill Road, Elizabethton, TN 37643.

The George L. Carter Chapter NRHS Newsletter is prepared and distributed monthly prior to the meeting. Opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily the views of East Tennessee State University and its employees, the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS, and its members, officers, and board of directors and the National Railway Historical Society. Contributions are welcome. For permission to use the material in this newsletter, please contact the editor, Bill Beagen. Contributors are Fred Alsop & Jim Pahr.