



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB

FEBRUARY 2012 - MEMBERS EDITION

Volume 19 - Number 2

Published for the Education and Information of Its Membership

CLUB OFFICERS

President:
Fred Alsop

Vice-President
John Carter

Treasurer:
Duane Swank

Secretary:
Hoble Hyder

Newsletter Editor:
Ted Bleck-Doran

Webmaster:
Bob Jones



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 in:

**Brown Hall
Room 312
ETSU Campus,
Johnson City, TN.**

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

Work Nights are held each Thursday from 5:00 pm until ??

THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING JANUARY 17, 2012 MINUTES

President Fred Alsop called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M. in room 312 Brown Hall, ETSU, with 19 members present and one guest for a total of 20. Cody Cagle, a guest of Don Ramey was introduced to the group as was new member Roger Teinert. Both were welcomed by President Alsop.

Officer's reports were presented; motions were made and seconded to approve them. Duane Swank, Treasurer reported the club's checking account balance as of January. John Carter, Vice President, informed the group that a hands-on clinic on how to install DCC in non-DCC ready engines will be presented by Don Ramey at the February meeting. The March meeting program, "Consisting trains after 1970" will be presented by Gary Emmert.

As a part of the President's Report, a change of Venue for our pre-meeting restaurant was discussed with a motion being made by Ted Bleck-Doran, seconded by Gary Emmert, to move February's meeting from the Firehouse Restaurant to the Magic Wok. The March meeting's dinner will be held at El Charolais Mexican Restaurant (formally El Toritos). President Alsop also shared a copy of one of the first Club Newsletters with the group that had been printed in the January issue of *The Signal Bridge*. According to that newsletter the club was started in 1993, therefore, it is 19 years old. President Alsop continued to inform the group that a small university grant of \$1,500 will be funded for the spring Railroad Oral History Program. Two persons will be hired by the university to staff the Little Engineer's Room. They will be trained by the university's Child Study Program and be certified in CPR and first aid.

Under Old Business Allan Morton informed the group that he expects to have a new sign for The Railroad Museum soon and that he had secured a 2 ½ X 6 foot banner for the Cope Traveling Layout. Ted Bleck-Doran informed the group that he was waiting on parts for the club's Memorial Cars and Jim Hoyt reported all was good-to-go on all Rip Track work.

Geoff Stunkard opened New Business with a report on the next Railroad Heritage Day. The next event will be held January 28th, entitled "Tennessee's Mountain Railroading Romance - Stemwinders and Steel". Geoff also suggested to the group that we unveil to the public the ET&WNC room, which was agreed to by the membership. 'Steam-up' will be the theme of the March Heritage Day event. President Alsop told the group that he had ordered Dual Gauge Switches for the ET&WNC layout from Walthers and that they should arrive by Thursday's work night.

Jim Pahr reported to the group the schedule for the Boy Scouts Railroad Merit Badge scheduled for Saturday, January 21st. Scouts are scheduled to arrive at the DP Culp Center at 8:45 A.M. Jim Pahr will pick them up at 9:00 to go to the museum. Gary Emmert and Dave Doughty will be teaching classes and assisting Jim. Classes are scheduled to be over at approximately 4:45 P.M. Extra volunteers are needed. President Alsop reported that the new University President, Brian Noland, and his son, Jackson, will visit the museum on Saturday, January 21st.

A brief update of the January's Coordinator's meeting was presented by Present Alsop. Treasurer Duane Swank proposed to the club his need for Coordinator's to establish a budget for their respective department. It was proposed to set aside \$75.00 for postage, \$300 for the purchase of three new locomotives for the N-scale, \$400 for bench work and \$1,000 to be placed in reserve for all electronics on the HO scale layout. Last year, a total of \$459 was spent. A motion was made by Ted Bleck-Doran, seconded by Jeff Stunkard, that Coordinator's are to present a proposed budget in writing at the February Coordinator's meeting and for Duane Swank to present a Unified Budget to

the club

President Fred Alsop led the club in a discussion at the request of new Web Master, Bob Jones concerning the appointment of a Communications Officer to assist with the web site when Bob is out of town for extended periods, and for other necessary communications tasks as needed. Ted Bleck-Doran made the motion, and Gary Emmert seconded, that a committee of three be appointed to write a job description for the Communications Officer. The committee will consist of Ted Bleck-Doran (chairman), Allan Morton and Paul Haynes. Job description is to be presented to the club at the February meeting for discussion and vote with the hope of filling the position at the time as well.

Discussion was then held by President Alsop on Running Sessions for Members Only? Don Ramey made a motion and seconded by Ted Bleck-Doran to establish a committee

to research the idea of having a Member only operating session. A committee of Fred Alsop, Gary Emmert, Ted Bleck-Doran, Geoff Stunkard, Joel Shull, and Paul Haynes, with Don Ramey, to chair the committee, will research the idea and report back to the membership at the February meeting their findings.

Due to the lengthy discussions and lateness of the evening, discussion of a Calendar of Events for the MEMRR 2012 season was deferred to the February meeting. Volunteers for Saturdays' Operating Sessions was then asked for by Present Alsop. Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 P.M. Ted Bleck-Doran presented the program "N&W Oddballs: Not EMD's". Next meeting will be Tuesday, February ~~16th~~ at 7:00 P.M. in room 312 at Brown Hall, ETSU. ~~16th~~ 21st

*Respectively submitted,
Hobie Hyder, MEMRR Secretary*

Mountain Empire Model Railroader's Coordinators Meeting 12 January 2012

The January Coordinators Meeting was convened at 6:00 p.m. in room 235, Campus Center Building, ETSU, by President Fred Alsop. Fred announced there will be a birthday party in the Carter RR Museum on January 28th and reminded the group that the 28th was also our first Heritage Day for 2012 and it would be featuring Tennessee railroads. Fred also announced the part-time employee position he had requested from ETSU for the Little Engineer's room had been approved and funded. He will seek to find a person to fill the position ASAP. Fred also announced that the small grant to support the storytelling project, "Tales of the Rails" has also been approved.

Jim Pahr announced the Boy Scouts of America railroad merit badge sessions are scheduled for January 21st and we will have 15 scouts from 9 a.m. to noon, and a second group of 15 scouts from 1 to 4 p.m. Gary Emmert will be conducting the railroad prototype sessions and Dave Doughty will present the Operation Lifesaver sessions. Bill Hensley will demonstrate some model railroad techniques for the boys and they will visit the museum layouts. Jim will provide the MEMRR with a web link for the merit badge requirements so we may review them for ourselves.

Displays: Jim Pahr: The display cases will be changed out after the club meeting on Tuesday. Anyone wishing to display items should contact Jim or Geoff Stunkard.

Newsletter Editor, Ted Bleck-Doran: *The Signal Bridge* is on publication schedule. Always seeking materials from club members. He would like pictures and text of member modeling projects for the newsletter. Ted will present "Not

EMD Oddballs" as the program at the January MEMRR meeting.

Sales: Duane Swank: Our engineer hat inventory is adequate for now. We have 8 sets of the battery-powered "Christmas train sets" in inventory. Recommendation that for next Christmas we purchase 2 cases of the small sets and 1 case of the larger set for sales.

Club HO Layout: John Carter: Problems with Switch-8 which was reworked, but still is not functioning properly. Also, there is an electrical short on the city module where the turnout is located.

Club HO Electrical: Bill Hensley: The Switch-8 on Bill's module is not working either. He is investigating blocking system to prevent shorting. Little work remains to be done on the electrical feeds to the layout; biggest current problem is that the Digtrax system is not functioning consistently. Bill recommends that we need a standardized procedure to load and unload trains on tracks to cut down on electrical shorting and other problems.

Rip Track-Bad Order Car Repair: Jim Hoyt: Most of the club-owned freight cars have metal wheels and Kadee couplers installed. He is now working to add proper weight to bring cars up to MNRA specs. He plans to work on passenger cars next. He plans to experiment with 3-4 ounces of additional weight on the longer cars to see if they will track properly without going to the heavier MNRA recommended weights. He is adding weights to slope sheets of open hopper cars.

Cope Traveling Layout: Gary Emmert: The Cope layout is currently covered to protect it from the work in the Tweetsie Layout in the same room and no work has been done on it.

Large Scale Layout; Jesse Kittle: Large scale layout is running fine; no problems.

N-Scale; Jesse Kittle reporting for Tod Eaton: Reports he has cleaned all wheel sets on 117 cars and has worked on their couplers. He needs an N-Scale coupler gauge. He has created a roster for all operational locomotives and each will have a letter grade indicating their performance tendencies. He has placed a note pad near the throttles so that operating problems can be recorded and tracked and he is creating an "N-Scale for Dummies" operating manual for the Bankus layout.

Library; Gary Emmert: Gary Rabetoy has donated all editions of Railroad Model Craftsman, 2009-2011 magazines to the library. 98% of the donated hardback books are now catalogued and in the library and ready for circulation. The list is now on Yahoo on the internet so members can see what we have on the shelves. We are about out of space in the library; we need a larger rack for the DVDs. We need to develop a brochure/cards for distribution promoting the MEMRR, the NRHS chapter and the RR Museum.

Tweetsie HOn3 Layout; Fred Alsop: Work is progressing with track being laid and Gary Woods is working on the

electrical feeds for the layout. Duane has almost completed the benchwork. Once all the track is laid, wired and tested as a DC layout the layout will be converted to DCC.

Publicity/Events; Hobie Hyder: No report.

Further Announcements:

- 1) Jim Pahrns reported the NRHS will provide a brochure to its membership that lists all railroading events and museum across the country. The Carter Railroad Museum will be included.
- 2) Jim Pahrns reported that several members had expressed their desire to establish member-only, closed operating sessions on the HO layout and that perhaps a committee should be formed to explore the idea of doing so. Fred will place this on the agenda for the January MEMRR business meeting.
- 3) 3) Tod Eaton requests that the museum make arrangements to move the Z-Scale layout out of his basement where it has been stored for many months and store it somewhere else.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Mountain Empire Model Railroader's Coordinators Meeting 9 February 2012

The February 2012 Coordinators Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Fred Alsop in room 235 of the Campus Center Building on the ETSU campus. Eleven members were present.

HO Layout-Electrical; Bill Hensley: Bill Hensley presented a detailed budget of the remaining electrical supplies and Digitrax equipment currently needed to complete the HO yard and the rewiring of the club's layout. The budget was in two forms, one partial and one complete. After much discussion the coordinators passed a motion to propose to the MEMRR at the February business meeting that we purchase the complete list of items on Bill's list. Further, it was proposed that we ask the membership for donations to aid in this bulk purchase totaling \$1,698.37 and Geoff Stunkard volunteered to draft such a request for critiquing by the coordinators prior to it being routed to the membership.

Newsletter Editor; Ted Bleck-Doran: Ted will have the February 2012 edition of *The Signal Bridge* ready for distribution next week. Deadline for articles and features is Sunday, Feb 12th at midnight.

Sales; Duane Swank: We have had sales of 12 children's hats. Duane has restocked all hat sizes at the RR Museum. Members are asked to please place sales monies/checks in the tin box located with the hats and add a note of what you sold so we can keep up with sales and inventory.

Displays; Jim Pahrns: The current temporary displays will be changed out on Thursday, Feb. 16th and we will be featuring shortline railroads across the country. Any member who has items to display please bring them to Jim or Geoff Stunkard. Jim requests \$50 to \$100 to purchase support items (easels, stands, holders, etc.) for the display cases.

Heritage Days; Geoff Stunkard: The next Heritage Day at the RR Museum will be on Saturday, 25 February and will feature shortline railroads across the country. Members are asked to bring their HO locomotives and rolling stock to support this event. Geoff announced he has created the draft press releases for this February event and for all the Heritage Day events for the remainder of 2012 and has emailed them to Fred.

Events/Publicity; Hobie Hyder: There will be a train show in Asheville, NC on Friday/Saturday March 3-4th. Hobie requests \$50.00 for postage and cards in his role as secretary (this is the amount we have been providing annually for special card mailings). Jim Pahrns requested that \$200 be budgeted for the club's two major social events (to be shared by the Carter Chapter

NRHS) for the Railroad Museum's annual picnic and Christmas party.

HO Layout: John Carter: The construction of the yard is progressing slowly partly due to some design changes in the track layout and partly due to the needs of the electrical crew to complete some phases of their work before more track can be installed. John is still working on track laying and could use some help from the membership. The lift bridge (duck-under) has to be repaired once more. **Please lift it carefully and close it gently to prolong its life and promote proper track alignment. THE BRIDGE IS FRAGILE AND IT OFTEN GETS ABUSED. PLEASE BE CAREFUL WITH IT.**

Rip-Track and Bad-Order Cars: Jim Hoyt: Plenty of wheel sets in stock (approximately 75) and couplers (approx. 40). He has created a notebook with inventory of club cars to build trains with. All repaired club cars now on the tracks are properly weighted. John Carter is working to acquire additional metal (lead) for weights for club cars.

Bankus N-Scale: Tod Eaton: Several new members have joined the N-Scale group and they are working well and greatly appreciated. Jesse Kittle has been cleaning the cars and their wheels. Three new Atlas diesel locomotives were purchased by the museum as prime movers for the layout and will soon be placed into service. Tod requested we relocate the museum's Z-Scale layout (currently stored

in his basement). Gary Emmert volunteered to have it stored at his home and we will make arrangements to do so.

Library: Gary Emmert: Library is "okay" as is. We need more space. Library has 20 new DVDs mastered from our inventory of VHS tapes. Plans are to convert more VHS to DVD. We are going to place a rack in the hallway on Saturdays with extra copies of model railroading magazines to be given away to the public.

Cope Traveling Layout: Gary Emmert: Need budgeted \$50.00 for minor repair to replace 2 faulty turnouts. Gary and Dave Doughty have ideas for the construction of 2 more scenic inserts (a carnival and industrial scenes) for the layout. Fred urged that it be made ready for display at upcoming spring and summer local public events. Fred also requested that several members familiar with trailer meet with him to inspect the RR Museum's trailer with the goal of getting it ready to transport the Cope layout and other items.

Large Scale Layout: Jesse Kittle: The layout is operating without problems. He is seeking any donations of western motif, G-Scale locomotives, rolling stock, figures, etc., for the McKee layout.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

In The Library

Recent Additions to the Video Collection

(Available in DVD and VHS)

One of the benefits of MEMRR membership is access to the ever growing George L Carter Railroad Museum Library collection of DVDs and VHS tapes. Included are programs from Kalmbach's *Dream - Plan - Build* video series.

The **D-P-B** series includes a video magazine selection of how-to modeling tips, great model railroad tours, prototype visits, and railfan/tourist outings from across the country.

The **D-P-B: Rails Across America** series is a collection of modern prototype operations along some of America's railroad hotspots.

There is also the **D-P-B: Real Rails Edition** series which focuses on prototype themes such as locomotive history. Then there's the **D-P-B: Industries in Action** series with specific look at the Coal and Steel industries. Finally: **D-P-B** has provided **Special Editions** with emphasis on Model Railroad Operations and longer versions of layout tours.

The Library also has a selection of Alan Keller's **GREAT MODEL RAILROADS** videos. Each program features on of the world's best model railroad describing each layout in detail, explaining its operation, and highlighting key modeling techniques.

In addition, the library maintains an extensive collection of historical, railfan and prototype videos.

Many have been reviewed in the pages of *The Signal Bridge*. The latest acquisitions are:

- **San Jose Steam Celebration:**
SP 4449 UP 3985 SP 2472
- **Pentrex Vintage:**
The Super Chief
- **Locomotive 1522**
- **Pennsylvania Railroad Series - Motor Classics**
Classic Railroad Series:
- **The Standard Railroad of the World**
The Pennsylvania Railroad

- Dateline Delaware & Hudson:
Binghamton NY
- Union Pacific 844
- Above the Adirondack Scenic Railroad
- Adirondack Scenic Railroad:
Utica to Lake Placid New York
- Southern Pacific Daylight 4449
- America by Rail:
Volume I: The Heartland
- Union Pacific Steam
844 - 3985
- Southern Pacific Double Feature
"ICTF - Los Angeles"
"The West Colton Yard"
- Western Pacific OnTV
- Countdown to Merger
Santa Fe's Marceline Subdivision
- Amtrak X2000 Demonstration
- Tour of Time:
M10000
- Luxury on the Rails"
Exploring the World of Privately Owned Passenger Cars
- Memories of the Delaware & Hudson
Volume 1
- This is Clinchfield: CSX Hotspots
Erwin to Spartenburg
- All the Live Long Day
An Oral and Pictorial History of the D&H Railroad
- Back Then: Blue Ridge Tweetsie
- C&IM Special:
Return of the Heavyweights - Volume 1
- Steam Over Tennessee Pass
The Steam Event of 1997!
- 4960
Steam Star of the Grand Canyon Railway
- New Georgia Steam Excursions
A&WP #290
- Union Pacific: Last of the Giants
Volume III - Sherman Hill
- Adirondack Centennial Railroad
The Second Year

Take some time - stop by the Library and check out the DVD collection. You just might find something of interest to pop in that DVD player and pass a cold winter's night.

"The Carter Legacy" DVD Only Limited Copies Remain

Members, I have been informed by Dave Currie, the digital videographer at ETSU, that he has approximately 20 copies of the DVD, "The Carter Legacy" that also carries several tracks about the club and the Carter RR Museum that have been pressed and covered with a cover that has a mistake on it. The error is small and on the cover only (not on the

DVD tracks) and has to do with the numbering system. These are the only 20 DVDs with this mistake printed on the jacket and this will make them unique, perhaps "collectors items". He will make them available to us for purchase for \$10 each (80% goes to the museum's budget). If you would like to have one let me know and I'll pick them up for us. More will be available to those who want them at the same low price, but only the first 20 sold will have the jacket error

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

My thanks to all of you once more for the surprise birthday party you gave to me on January 12th. It was truly a surprise and you duped me hook-line-and-sinker. I truly suspected nothing when I was lead to the darkened room, but it became brilliant in a flash with your warm friendship. Thank you so very much. It is a pleasure to be associated

with such a friendly and talented group of people as we have as members of the MEMRR.

Welcome new members, **Chris Ilderton** and **Josh Peterson**, who joined the MEMRR in February. Both have been coming to the Carter Railroad Museum and Chris has joined several work sessions on Thursday nights and Saturdays. Josh's work schedule will prevent him from coming on Thursday nights, but expect him to be present and running CSX consists on some Saturdays. Please introduce yourselves to Chris and Josh and get to know them. They are great guys.

Renewal letters, with an apology, were sent to the 8 members who we did not have email addresses for and through an oversight had not been receiving hardcopies of *The Signal Bridge*, and no other notices of club activities. At this writing 3 have rejoined and 2 of them now have given us email addresses so we can get them club notices and the monthly newsletter electronically. Welcome back gentlemen, and thanks for forgiving our oversight. For those of you who still have not renewed, time is running out. Please send your checks for your 2012 dues to the Duane Swank, our treasurer, ASAP and stay on track with an outstanding model railroad club.

To keep everyone informed of club activities the membership unanimously approved the creation of an appointed position of Communications Officer at the January meeting. A committee of 3 volunteered to create a job description for the post and to circulate that description to the membership for review prior to the February meeting. **Ted Bleck-Doran** (chairman), **Paul Haynes** and **Allan Morton** comprise the committee. Ted presented a draft of their work on the job description at the February 9th Coordinators Meeting for review. I have asked Ted to circulate that description to the membership for review and comment prior to the February 21st business meeting. Please read it over and send any suggestions for changes to the draft to any of the committee members by Sunday, February 19th.

Allan Morton and several other members have completed a new "Museum is Open" sign to be placed in the window on Saturdays to replace the old yellow "Model Trains Running" sign that we have been using for many years. The new sign, bears the Carter Museum Logo and is very well done; a most welcome improvement over the old one. Thank you, Allan, for initiating the project, and thanks to everyone who helped in the work to get it done. The new sign looks terrific!!!

In response to a growing number of MEMRR members who have expressed a desire to have private operating sessions (members only—not open to the public) where we will operate the HO layout as if it were a real railroad instead of just running in endless circles, the club voted to form a research committee at the January meeting. The committee

consists of **Don Ramey** (chairman), **Gary Emmert**, **Ted Bleck-Doran**, **Geoff Stunkard**, **Joel Shull**, **Paul Haynes** and **Fred Alsop**. They welcome suggestions from all club members and will make a report to the club soon on their findings and suggestions. When the new yard is completed the operating possibilities will be greatly expanded. **Jim Hoit** has created an inventory of the club rolling stock that can be incorporated into the operations scheme.

At the January meeting we decided to give some other restaurants a try for February (Magic Wok) and March (El Charolais). **Let me ask you to do this instead.** For those who would like to get together prior to the next club meeting for an evening meal and socializing, let me suggest the ETSU university cafeteria called "The Main Meal". It is located on the top (3rd) floor in the west end of the Culp Student Center (the big concrete building at the south side of the campus) and only a short 3-5 minute walk from our meeting room in Brown Hall. If you tell the cashier you are a "staff member" with the Carter Railroad Museum your meal will cost you only \$5.20. The food is very good and you will have many, many choices. The dining hall is spacious, not so crowded and reasonably quiet (we can talk without shouting at each other). So, if dinner prior to the meeting appeals to you please come and join me there at around 5:30 p.m. on the 20th. *Bon appetite!*

Gary Emmert, our librarian, informed the coordinators at the February meeting that we have lots of duplicate model railroading magazines that have been donated to the museum. We have put some of these on a rolling stand that will be placed in the hallway of the museum each Saturday with signs that say "Free Model Railroad Magazines", "Please take one or several". This is a good way to get many people who may only have a weak interest in the hobby a magazine that they can read and perhaps it will become a tool to recruit them into the hobby, and even into our club. The stand with its free magazines made its first public appearance on Saturday, February 11th and was a big hit with our visitors, so it is already working and doing its job. Help us keep it filled with any model railroading magazines you may wish to donate.

Thanks to a lot of work and coordination on the part of **James Pahr**, we helped 30 Boy Scouts complete many of their requirements for their railroading merit badge on January 21st. Club members **Gary Emmert**, **Dave Doughty** and **Bill Hensley** assisted the scouts with special sessions on prototype railroading, Operation Lifesaver, and model railroading, respectively. Members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders answered many of the boys' questions as they viewed the operating model railroad layouts in the Carter Railroad Museum. All-in-all it was a successful day, both for the scouts and for our chapter. We learned a lot from this first experience and plans are already being made by our chapter members on ways to improve the experience for the next troop of Boy Scouts who will come to us for

help with this merit badge. My thanks to everyone in the Carter NRHS chapter and the MEMRR who helped make this a good day for everyone involved with it. Jim has already been contacted by another local scout master regarding our merit badge program and we may have another troop to work with in the near future.

ETSU's new President, **Brian Noland**, and his 7 year-old son, **Jackson**, visited the Carter Railroad Museum on January 21st. President Noland spent 45 minutes, or so, touring the entire museum, asking about the exhibits, the layouts, our history, meeting members and our visitors, and learning about our operation. He asked if he could join us on some Thursday night work sessions and I, of course, invited him to join us and to come run some trains anytime he could work it into his busy schedule. At his first meeting with the Faculty Senate on the following Monday he was

asked many questions by the Senators, but the last one queried him about any unexpected, pleasant surprises he had found on the university campus in his first week as president. He named several, and one of the first on his list was this, "If you have not seen the Carter Railroad Museum on our campus, you must do so. It is fantastic!!!" Members of the MEMRR congratulate yourselves for the outstanding job you do for the hobby of model railroading, for the Carter Railroad Museum, for the university, and for the surrounding communities in our region. Hear the whistle of the train at night and dream of all the destinations yet to come.

Fred Alsop

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

Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Communications Coordinator Position Proposal

Communications Coordinator

1. The **Communications Coordinator** will be an appointed position with the incumbent named by the President MEMRR either by securing a volunteer or actively recruiting from the MEMRR general membership.
2. The **Communications Coordinator** will participate in the monthly MEMRR Coordinator's Meeting as an activity or area coordinator and report on activities, needs, or concerns regarding the maintaining of open lines of communication between the MEMRR organization and its membership.
3. The **Communications Coordinator** will be assisted by the following organizational officers and/or coordinators:
 - a. **Treasurer:** will provide a lists of active (paid up and honorary) members, new members, and inactive/dropped members; lists to contain mailing address, email address, phone numbers.
 - b. **Webmaster:** will provide an email group list of those members who receive club communications by internet.
 - c. **Secretary:** will provide notification of any member concerns (deaths, illnesses, births, etc.) or information of general interest to be shared with those members lacking email capabilities.

- d. **Publicity Coordinator:** will provide notification of any special events or information of general interest to be shared with those members lacking email capabilities.
 - e. **Newsletter Editor:** will provide a hard copy of *The Signal Bridge* for duplication and distribution to members lacking email capabilities.
4. The **Communication Coordinator** will be responsible for:
 - a. Mailing out copies of *The Signal Bridge* and other pertinent communications to members lacking email capabilities (*club to provide duplication services or reimbursement for duplication and mailing*).
 - b. Establishing a call list to facilitate short notification of club activities or needs (*this is in conjunction with the Webmaster's email distribution of event notification*).
 - c. Make welcoming contacts with new members to ensure contact information is accurate, administer a New Member Interest Survey, and periodically report to the membership (through the Coordinators Meeting, General Business Meeting or *The Signal Bridge*) on the results of the Member Interest Survey.
 5. The **Communication Coordinator** can enlist the aid of a committee of his/her choice and selection to assist with the task assigned above.

*Submitted by: Ted Bleck-Doran
Allan Morton
Jesse Kittle
Paul Haynes*

February Heritage Days
Short Line Railroading Runs Again
at ETSU's Carter Museum on February 25
Mixed Train Daily–Short Lines & Industrial Railroading
(with logging railroad demonstrations)
are Heritage Day feature

This month, the George L. Carter Railroad Museum will take the (rail)road less traveled as the February 25 "Heritage Day" event pays tribute to the short lines and rural transport efforts of yesterday. Located in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University, special displays of model railroads as well as books and photos will highlight this special event, thanks again to members of the growing Mountain Empire Model Railroaders club and the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

While many of these Heritage Day events have focused on larger enterprises, the sinews of small and medium sized rail operations reached into all manner of places across North America, some for general commerce, some for specific industry. A "Mixed Train" was often a smaller scheduled operation that combined freight and passenger service in a single unit, usually on a daily or regular schedule. The advent of better roads and personal automobile ownership after the second world war ended much of this, and the federalization of passenger service by Amtrak was the final blow, though many operations that had specific reasons continued in the freight-only business.

"We hope this event will be popular, but it is somewhat bittersweet for fans of real railroading as the scrapping operations of the East Tennessee Railway to Elizabethton continue," says Geoff Stunkard, the coordinator of the museum Heritage Days program. "Many people feel a sense of local pride about short line railroads, as they were considered 'our train.' We hope to give people a sense of how some of these railroads were operated."

In addition to mixed operations on the museum-based 24x44 HO scale layout, there will also be demonstrations of the unique logging steam engines that would sometimes be called on when tracks had severe curvature or gradients. A photo display of original snapshot photos from the Buffalo Creek & Gauley, a West Virginia-based steam logging and mining operation that operated until 1963, will also be highlighted on this special day.

The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and includes model railroad layouts, a special child's activity room, and ongoing programs. There is no admission fee but donations are welcome for its upkeep. The museum is also seeking artifacts for the newest addition dedicated to the long-defunct, but well-

remembered 'Tweetsie' line, the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad; this room, still under construction, again will be open for guided tours during this event day.

In addition to the displays, there is also a growing research library, the National Railway Historical Society chapter, membership opportunities, and an oral history archive being established as part of the museum's programs. Info can be found online at: www.etsu.edu/johnsonsdspot.com/glcarter/cartermuseum.htm

The MEMRR club works in conjunction with the railroad museum to demonstrate and maintain the model layouts, museum exhibits and other projects. More info can be found at www.memrr.org. Membership opportunities are available to adults, and include special benefits and model railroading enjoyment.

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum is located on the campus of East Tennessee State University, Campus Center Building, 100 Ross Drive. For more information contact the Museum Director, Dr. Fred Alsop, at telephone 423/439-6838.

The 2012 Railroad Heritage Days Schedule
FINAL SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH AS NOTED

February 25 Mixed Train Daily – Short Lines & Industrial Railroading (with logging railroad demonstrations)

March 31 2nd Annual STEAM UP – Steam Railroading Remembered

April 28 Yankee Rivals – NYC, PRR B&O, and so-called Friends

May 26 Here to Stay – Modern American Railroading (in honor of National Train Day May 7)

June 30 Song of the South – Serving Up The Southern Railroad

July 28 Meet Me in St. Louis – Great Railroads from a Great Town

Aug 25 Appalachian Conquest – Eastern Mountain Coal Roads from Tidewater to Timberline

Sept 29 Stainless & Steamless – Streamliners and 1st Gen Diesels

Oct 27 Our 100 Year Heritage – Carter's Fabulous Clinchfield Lines

Nov 24 Steam's Finest Hour – Articulated Locomotives from Coast to Coast

Dec 15 Nights & Weekends – Long Trains on the N&W

IT'S IN THE DETAILS PINE TREE TOUCHES: RECLAIMING 2ND HAND TREES

An Occasional column of Ideas and How-To's
Photos and Text by: Ted Bleck-Doran and James Greig

During January's *Heritage Days* open house James Greig and I had some time on their hands. We were covered with plenty of guys to operate the layouts (it seemed that many of the club members love to run Clinchfield). We were hosting a birthday as well so there were lots of visitors to entertain.



The project module developed for the November/December clinic series had been moved on to the baggage cart in the main room. Just the right opportunity to demonstrate some modeling techniques. But what?



Searching the workrooms, we came across a bag full of old reclaimed pine and fir trees. They were in sad shape. Most

of the original green paint had worn off the copper armatures with the bare metal showing. We thought, "Now these would provide a quick clinic for the visitors!"

Supplies were gathered. These included a variety of ground foam in fine granularity. We used a blue-green, a medium green, blended "grass" and "burnt grass" (yellow) fine foam. We also grabbed some coarse ground foam for the ground cover when "planting the trees."

We mixed up some "wet water" (90% water; 10% isopropyl alcohol) in a spray bottle. We also concocted some dilute Elmer's Glue (50% glue; 40% water; 10% isopropyl alcohol) to affix the ground cover.

Searching the cupboards we stumbled across some White Rain hair spray to use as an adhesive for the ground foam (pine needles). White Rain is inexpensive and works like a charm to bond the foam to the armatures. Finally we found some Woodland Scenics adhesive glue. With everything in hand we got the clinic under way.



Step 1: Here James is spraying the tree armatures with a fine mist of hair spray. This will coat the armatures and make them tacky.

Step 2: Using a measuring spoon, sift the fine ground foam on to the armatures. Use the blue-green or a dark green mix as a ground coat. This coat will represent the base color of the needles.

Step 3: Re-spray with the hair spray to renew the tackiness and gently sift the medium green to create some texture and color variation. Trees in nature are never a uniform color.

NOTE: if you sift more of the medium green on than you like hit the tree with another overspray of the hair spray and sift more of the blue-green base color over the tree.



Step 4: Since much of our modeling is set in mid-summer, pine, fir and deciduous trees sometimes become distressed. A light sifting of burnt grass (yellow) will make the tree really “pop” by simulating heat and drought distress. Care needs to be taken that only a little amount of yellow ground foam is used. We don’t want our trees to look too distressed.

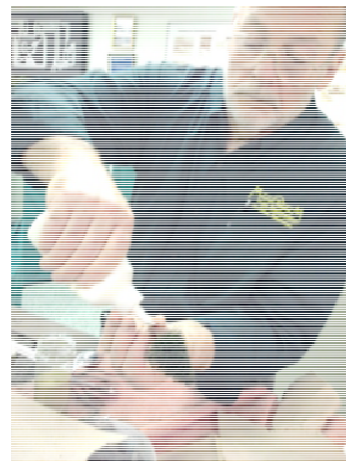


Note: Fall pine trees will tend to shed their needles. These can be represented using brown tones ground foam. Also, make sure to sprinkle the brown foam under the trees to represent dropped needles.

Note: When applying the yellow or brown tone foam, work with the trees in an upright position. This will allow the lighter color to settle in the crown of the tree first. The crown of the tree is most likely to show the signs of distress first.



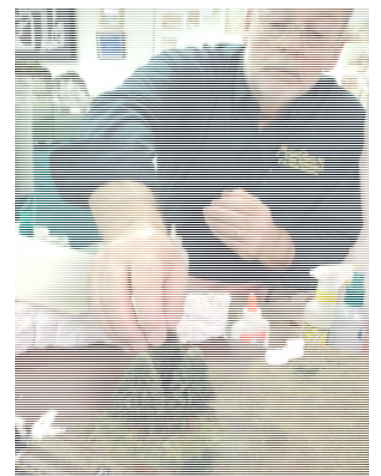
Step 5: Overspray the tree a final time to affix the ground foam completely. Now the tree is ready to plant.



Step 6: Here James used Woodland Scenic Cement, applying it to the base of the tree. The tree can now be planted. We started a small grove of pines working more of the ground and coarse foam under the trees. An additional clinic will describe how we did it.

Note: additional time could be spent detailing the tree trunks. A simple wash of black or burnt umber would have helped bring out the detail of the bark on the tree trunk bases. This would almost be a “required” touch-up for any foreground trees, less needful if the trees are set in the background.

*Editor’s Note: this clinic description was easy to create. Ted and James talked through the steps described above. A smartphone camera was used to document the steps. When doing a “How-To” clinic at the club ask someone to take some snapshots of each step of the process, jot some notes down and send them to the **SIGNAL BRIDGE** editor. Just think – you too can be a model railroad author!*



Nothing Runs Like a Deere

Oops – Not My Fault



PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
 ALL MERCHANDISE MUST BE PAID FOR AT TIME OF ORDER
 AND ALL SALES ARE FINAL, NO REFUNDS. MAKE
 CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MEMRR

Order total \$ _____

ALL MERCHANDISE IS FOREST GREEN - tape number 41357

MEMRR Member Name _____

Date _____

Have orders to Duane Swank by end of month.
 Orders are placed with supplier by the 1st of each month.

Merchandise with MEMRR Embroidered Logo

If jacket(s) to have personal
 monogramming, print name(s) & respective
 size(s) below (\$5.00 extra per jacket)

Quantities

	\$21 Small	\$21 Med.	\$21 Large	\$21 XL	\$23 2XL	\$27 3XL	\$29 4XL	\$33 5XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered
POLO SHIRTS w/pocket K500P											
SWEAT SHIRTS PC90	\$18 Small	\$18 Med.	\$18 Large	\$18 XL	\$20 2XL	\$22 3XL	\$24 4XL	N/A	Total	Paid	Date Delivered
T-SHIRTS w/pocket (short sleeve) PC61P	\$13 Sm.	\$13 Med.	\$13 Large	\$13 XL	\$15 2XL	\$17 3XL	\$19 4XL	N/A	Total	Paid	Date Delivered
T-SHIRTS <u>no</u> pocket (long sleeve) PC61LS	\$15 Small	\$15 Med.	\$15 Large	\$15 XL	\$17 2XL	\$19 3XL	\$21 4XL	\$23 5XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered
BUTTON FRONT dress shirt w/pocket (long sleeve) S608	\$26 Small	\$26 Med.	\$26 Large	\$26 XL	\$28 2XL	\$30 3XL	\$32 4XL	\$34 5XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered
Jacket lightweight flannel lining JST71 Personal monogramming add \$5.00 per jacket; print name(s) to right of page	\$32 Small	\$32 Med.	\$32 Large	\$32 XL	\$34 2XL	\$36 3XL	\$38 4XL	\$40 5XL	Total	Paid	Date Delivered
									Quantity	Paid	Delivered

Engineer HATS (blue/white w/club logo for members only) = \$13.00 each

Baseball HATS (w/club logo for members only) = \$12.00 each

GIVE ORDER FORM to: Duane Swank by end of month

1/20/2012

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MEMRR