



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB

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Ted Bleck-Doran

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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 ??

NS HERITAGE FLEET TO GATHER IN SPENCER, NC

JULY 3rd & 4th



New York Central Railroad (CR, EMD) was organized from 10 roads paralleling the Erie Canal between Albany and Buffalo, N.Y., and became known as the "Water Level Route." Today, the former NYC line between Cleveland and Chicago is the busiest on the NS system, with more than 100 freight trains daily.

NORFOLK, VA. - Norfolk Southern's Heritage locomotives will gather for a "family portrait" at the North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM) in Spencer, N.C., during the Fourth of July week. All 20 locomotives painted in the color schemes of predecessor railroads will be on display July 3 and 4.

"This is the first and probably only chance we'll have to get all these locomotives together in one place at one time," said Norfolk Southern CEO Wick Moorman. "We're proud of the role railroads play in keeping the country's economy strong, and July 4 is an opportune time to showcase that heritage of service and safety."

"Having these engines gathered together is a phenomenon, not just an event," said NCTM Executive Director Samuel Wegner. "And the N.C. Transportation Museum's Bob Julian Roundhouse is obviously a great place to frame this 'family portrait'. It's a great partnership with Norfolk Southern to host this historic occasion."

Tickets for the event are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children in advance, and \$30 for adults and \$20 for children the day of the event. Children 2 and under are free. Tickets will go on sale beginning May 21 at the [NCTM's web site](#) or by calling 704-636-2889, ext. 237. Norfolk Southern employees and retirees will be eligible for a \$5 discount, with a limit of four tickets per purchase. Some restrictions may apply. Retirees must purchase tickets by phone to get the discount.

The Fourth of July week was chosen because of the holiday and because demand for the locomotives in freight service temporarily will be reduced due to the traditional coal miners' holiday.

In a related event, on Saturday, July 7, the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke, Va., will unveil the refurbished Norfolk & Western 1776 locomotive, which was painted in a star-spangled color scheme to commemorate the nation's bicentennial in 1976 and has just been restored to its original luster.

Norfolk Southern is producing the Heritage fleet as part of the company's 30th anniversary celebration. Norfolk Southern was created June 1, 1982, with the consolidation of Southern Railway Company and Norfolk and Western Railway Company, but both of those trace their lineage to hundreds of predecessors dating back to the early 1800s.

The museum is on the former site of Southern Railway's Spencer Shops, a steam locomotive servicing facility. After the advent of diesel, Spencer continued to serve as a classification yard into the late 1970s, when Southern donated land and facilities to the State of North Carolina for the establishment of the museum.



Savannah & Atlanta Railway (SR, EMD), began life as the Brinson Railway in 1906, slowly expanding from Savannah toward the Northwest. It was consolidated with other small railroads to become the Savannah & Atlanta in 1917. Central of Georgia bought the S&A in 1951.



Reading Company (CR, EMD) was one of the first railroads built in America, and built its fortune hauling coal. It featured the first iron railroad bridge in America.



Erie Railroad (CR, EMD) was key to economic development along the Southern Tier, which includes Binghamton and Elmira, N.Y. In 1851, Secretary of State Daniel Webster was strapped to a rocking chair on an open flatcar, wrapped in a blanket and clutching a bottle of rum, so he could ride the just-completed railroad.



Photo of the four of NS Heritage Fleet units



Virginian Railway (NW, EMD) was the only railroad created through the capital and credit of one man, oil magnate Henry Huttleston Rogers. After building a short line, the Deepwater Railway, to haul coal out of West Virginia and then being blocked by the bigger railroads, he created another railroad, the Tidewater Railway, to reach Norfolk, Va., then combined the two into the Virginian in 1907. It was acquired by N&W in 1959



China In The Hobby News Athearn Moves Tooling To New Manufacturer

Published: May 24, 2012 Athearn Trains has retrieved all of its tooling from its Chinese supplier that closed in January and moved it to the same factory that produces its Genesis models, according to the company's Facebook page.

"Over the next few weeks, we'll be evaluating the tooling and taking the steps necessary to begin production," the Facebook post stated. "Although reacquiring our tooling is a major step, we still have a lot to accomplish before we begin projecting ETAs."

Model Retailer reported in January that Athearn lost one of its "close manufacturing partners" and that the model railroad company was expecting some short-term delays in its delivery schedule.

What's Up At BRH The Impending Move And Our Hobby In General!

First of all let me say thank's to everyone for their support of Blue Ridge Hobbies.

As some of you may know, the model railroading hobby is in a bit of a quandary at this time. With the slowing of the economy starting in 2008, our hobby has taken some hits.

The closure for several model railroad factories in China has led to supply shortages and delays in product releases. The workers in China are realizing that they have been under paid as well and that capitalism seems to be a better way. Oil prices have affected the hobby as well. From increased product production costs and fuel costs for both the consumer and the shipping.

Also, due to changes in credit card and banking laws the fees to process credit card transactions have gone up as well in November.

All of this leading to higher prices for product.

The manufacturers continue to upgrade their tooling to make a better product. Unfortunately, with the above-mentioned situations, this means higher prices on the hobby products we all buy.

I think all of us have reached the breaking point on pricing.

BRH has done all we can to hold the line on pricing. We have had to make adjustments to our pricing to cover these increases to keep our bottom line close to the same.

These areas of concern are not only affecting Blue Ridge Hobbies, but most store front based hobby stores. Many have already closed and some are on the verge of closing. This is currently not the case with Blue Ridge Hobbies at this time.

The business model that made BRH the success that it is has to change. And here is way.

The first indication that the business model for the overall hobby industry was about to change came in November 2011 when Horizon Hobby (Athearn, McHenry and Roundhouse) started the Horizon Hobby Trains website. This site allowed them to sell direct to the consumer with a 10% discount. BRH still was beating this pricing, but many local hobby stores that discounted 10% no had more online competition. Not from other hobby stores, but from the manufacturer itself! Some stores have already closed because of this direct to consumer tactic. While I understand why they are doing this for their bottom line, is it good for the hobby in the long run? I do not think so. All hobbies need to have a local store for you the consumer to visit and see new product or get expert advice from. This in most cases, cannot be done over the phone.

However, it seems that the manufacturers and wholesalers seem to think they can do this. Also, the dealer website for Horizon was not functioning properly for a month effecting our ability to update.

Modeling is a hands on hobby, not a virtual one. This seems to be lost on the manufacturers and wholesalers as they are bringing sales all in house.

Also, in the last 5 years or so Walthers and Horizon Hobby have been selling via the of Amazon and Next Tag online for example. This new approach to the hobby industry in not a good one for all of us.

In December, Walthers in conjunction with several other large volume dealers that included BRH, started Beta Testing a new online system for the dealers. This system has helped BRH to have a better handle on product availability on our BRH website. This has greatly increased our productivity and assists us in keeping costs down.

The next big indicator of things to coming down the pike was in January. Several of the top Walthers dealers, including Blue Ridge Hobbies where asked about a change in pricing for the 932 and new 910 product line. The MSRP was going to increase by 10% to cover the production costs and upgrades to the products. This all happened in March.

But what was not included in the conversation was the reduction of the dealer discount by 10% as well. So Walthers is trying to make another perceived 20% more on the new items, not just hold the line on pricing!

Then, in April Exact Rail decided that they were going to sell direct to the consumer. At full price plus shipping. So they now will not sell to dealers or wholesalers like Walthers. Also, Aristo-Craft / Polk Hobby started a new site that offered manufacturer direct pricing to the consumer at what used to be the dealer discount and then offered the dealer another 10% off. This does not really help the overall bottom line to the dealer or our sales of Aristo Craft items.

Yesterday, Horizon Hobby advised all dealers that they were reducing the dealer discount another 5% on all Athearn, McHenry and Roundhouse items. Some pricing took immediate effect yesterday.

So the bottom line we feel is that the manufacturers want to maximize short term profit by bringing the product availability process in house and selling direct to you, leaving the dealers that cannot absorb the increases, out in the cold if not out of business entirely. And the lack of product availability leaves a store front with nothing to sell at any price. Like the currently situation with Atlas track and Midwest cork.

Even with the price increases, some products are announced and are continually delayed in arriving. There is no immediate relief in site for the product availability to change.

In most cases the delays are blamed on China production problems.

Our solution! Bring the manufacturing home! Back to the USA. Some companies are doing this.

Two years ago I mentioned this to the CEO and his number two for one of the biggest manufacturers of model train products. They advised me to do so there where to many cost issues. Union and wage cost. They advised they like to pay production employees a starting wage of about \$12.00 per hour. I advised him that is the going wage here in South Carolina. Come on down, we have plenty of capacity and factory space with many incentives. That was 2010. Look where we are today. Closed factories in China. The Chinese not returning the product production mold to the manufacturers. Thus, we have one of the slowest slows period the industry has seen in a long time.

With all that said, the next discussion is about the status of the Transportation Museum of the World Project featuring the Miniature World of Trains and the Blue Ridge Hobbies move to a bigger location.

The TMOTW-MWOT project continues to move forward, all be it at a slow pace.

The Model Building Committee and the Track Plan designer are working on the product offsite. ITT / DCC is on hold right now. Two more fund raisers are in the works for after July 4th. The car show did not materialize but is some is still something we want to do.

The building of choice is still the old Sam's Club, but the self-imposed cash needed of \$500,000 still alludes the project. So we cannot get into the building until some benefactor or benefactors (corporate or private) step up with the same vision we have and get the cash needed.

As we have stated before, the base lease is negotiated, all the project needs is the cash!

So, with the delay in the project move into the building thus delaying the BRH move, I have made the decision to restock the store but still hope that a move to bigger quarters shortly. We need the additional space for stock and shipping. We are exploring our options still for BRH. A final move decision will be made in the next couple of weeks.

Despite the changes to the hobby that continue, it seems each week, we still believe that retail stores like BRH are needed. We will do everything we can to continue moving forward and service the hobby world wide with the lowest possible pricing.

We will all need you support to accomplish this.

Your local hobby store is the life blood of your passion. I hope that the manufacturers will come to their senses and see that their plans to move it all in house will ultimately put the hobby life support and potentially close your local store. The hobby needs to have new members joining the ranks of the older modelers. Without them, there will not be any customer to make product for!

Please continue to support us as well as others in the retail industry.

Have a great holiday weekend,

Frank Ruby
Owner

First of all let me say that the response from our email from last Friday garnered a lot of response. All positive for the most part. We appreciate everyone's support.

The email has spread beyond the 12,000 people on our email list to generate discussions on blogs and forums around the world as well as numerous clubs across the USA.

So that we can keep you all informed, we have a couple of manufacturer emails to share.

The bottom line that Have a great weekend and spread the word!

Frank Ruby, Owner

FROM ATLAS:

Message from the Atlas CEO to our Customers-Distributors, Retailers and Consumers,

In an effort to stabilize pricing, while assuring the continuation of quality Atlas model railroad products, I made a decision approximately one year ago to transfer all Atlas product molds from a primary supplier to multiple suppliers. The transfer of more than 5,000 Atlas proprietary molds and tools was not as smooth as I had hoped for, however, the process is nearly complete.

The following is a current update on Atlas production.

1. **N, HO and O Freight Cars and Locomotives-** Atlas freight cars and locomotives are in full production at our new suppliers and are currently being shipped from Atlas to distributors. Watch our A-Z on-line shipping schedule for updates.
2. **O Gauge Track and Accessories-** Atlas has a complete supply of both 3 rail and 2 rail track products and accessories. 2 rail flex track is currently sold out at Atlas and is in short supply at retailers. Production is being worked on and will be available late summer.
3. **N and HO Gauge -** Our new supplier is currently testing and prepping primary Atlas track molds. Production will start in June and Atlas will receive the first shipments of N & HO track this summer. Consumers should check their retailers for availability. If individual consumers need a few pieces of track to finish or repair their layout Atlas will fill their order from a limited supply of customer service stock while supplies last. Cost is MSRP, no discounts.
4. **N & HO Accessories-** Atlas has a limited supply of accessories and retailers should be checked for availability. New suppliers have started production of these products and full availability will be achieved during the summer and early fall.

I would like to thank all of our customers- distributors, retailers and consumers- for your continued support of Atlas products. Especially during these last few years of tough economic times. I wish you all, your families and

friends, in particular all our veterans, a safe and happy Memorial Day weekend holiday.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Haedrich,
CEO Atlas Model Railroad Co. Inc.

FROM Athearn, McHenry and Roundhouse:

I'm sure many of you have experienced much frustration recently due to the continued unavailability of key Horizon products and parts, and I sincerely apologize for that. Unfortunately, we made two significant mistakes. First, we misjudged the capacity of our factories to produce the products that we needed. Second, we compounded that by underestimating the demand for those products by you. We've been playing catch-up since this problem was first identified in early 2012.

We have not provided the service that you deserve. Throughout April and May, shipments have been arriving almost daily. While we are seeing our ability to ship orders improve, we will not be back to where we should be until early July for the availability of Horizon-branded products. No one at Horizon is happy about this situation, and we are working feverishly to solve both the short term and the long term problems.

We are committed to restoring our service level to you. Please don't judge us by my words alone, but by our actions to improve our service levels. We appreciate your business and hope that you will let us prove to you that we can turn this situation around.

Sincerely,

Joe Ambrose
President & CEO



Rock Island's "Short Line Junction" Tower
Photo from Gary Emmert

Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Minutes Meeting May 15, 2012

In the absence of President Fred Alsop who was on the road conducting bird identification workshops for the TWRA, Vice President John Carter called the meeting to order at 6:59 P.M. in room 312 Brown Hall, ETSU, with 16 members present and two visitors. Mark Woomer of Piney Flats and Dave Finger of Morristown was recognized and welcomed to the meeting by Vice President Carter. Mark Woomer announced that he plans on becoming a member and has already volunteered to help with future Saturday operating sessions and Jonesborough Days.

Vice President Carter called for the approval of the Secretary's report from the March meeting. A motion was made by Hobie Hyder, Secretary and a second by Ted Bleck-Doran, Newsletter Editor to except the report as published in *The Signal Bridge*. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote. Ted Bleck-Doran, Newsletter Editor, informed the group that the number of hard copies of *The Signal Bridge* being mailed out is now down to five. He also reminded the group that he is still in need of articles, information and pictures for *The Signal Bridge*. The deadline for publication of any articles etc., in June issue of *The Signal Bridge* will be the second Sunday in June. No Treasurer's Report was given due to the absence of Duane Swank, Treasurer. Bob Jones, Webmaster reported that the May 26th Railroad Heritage Days information will be updated and posted on the web. He also informed the group that a work schedule of those volunteering for Saturday operating sessions and events will also be posted. Anyone willing to work is asked to contact Bob so your name can be added to the list. Jim Pahriss and Gary Emmert have volunteered to do upcoming programs.

Old Business: In the absence of Bill Hensley, Wiring Coordinator, Gary Emmert reported to the group that the addition of three more power boosters was needed for the HO layout. The money has already been allocated for this and Bill plans to order them ASAP. Hobie Hyder, Secretary told the group that the proposed modeling contest has been slated to start in June. A list of prizes to be donated by Hobbytown for the contest was given by Allan Morton and are as follows; two train cars, one Exact rail car, one \$15 and one \$10 gift certificate. Allan also stated that Bob Barrett may be willing to donate some coupons that would give the bearer \$5 off a \$25 purchase to everyone entering the contest. More information and final details about the contest will be sent to Bob Jones, Webmaster to be posted on the clubs website in the coming weeks.

In other Old Business, Jim Pahriss reported to the club that applications for the upcoming Carter Chapter NRHS and the Carter Railroad Museum excursion on June 16th to The Big South Fork Scenic Railway in Sterns, KY have been placed in the window in a rack in the main room of the museum. For groups, only one Liability form is needed. Anyone wishing to go is requested to get your forms and money into Jim ASAP as news of the trip is getting out and it is expected that it will fill up very fast. A second bus was discussed should the first continue to fill up however it was determined that at least 100 people would be needed for this consideration. Lastly, Jim Pahriss reported that he did a radio interview with Jim Blatlock of WETS radio about the trip that was aired between 7:30 and 8:00 A.M. May 14th.

New Business: Gary Emmert, Librarian reported that he has been in talks with Norfolk Southern and is receiving 16X24 frameable prints of the Heritage Locomotives and other goodies for the museum. In the absence of Geoff Stunkard, Gary Emmert told the group that Geoff had requested anyone having items to display for this months Railroad Heritage Day theme '*Modern American Railroads*' is asked to please bring them to the museum Thursday.

In the absence of President Fred Alsop, Jim Pahriss chaired the May Coordinator's meeting. He reported to the club that there were two major things that came from the meeting: one, three power boosters was needed to keep the HO layout running, the second, someone had pulled the drapery down from the HO layout in the main room of the museum and had failed to realign the switches. A review of the security tapes from the museum may be requested from Campus Security. A detailed report of the May Coordinator's meeting will be published in the June edition of *The Signal Bridge*.

A discussion of the upcoming displaying of the Cope Traveling Layout at the Blue Plum Festival was discussed in length by the membership. The over all consensus was the gazebo offered by the Blue Plum Festival for display of the Cope Layout would not be suitable. Vice President John Carter said he would inform President Fred Alsop and seek advice before proceeding. Jim Pahriss, suggested he would get into contact with the *Hands On Museum* to see if we could display the layout there during the Festival. Joel ??? said he knew the owners of several buildings in downtown Johnson City and he volunteered to approach them about space to display the layout during the Festival. Everyone was asked by Hobie Hyder, Secretary to report to him any changes as soon as possible so he could coordinate the details with President Alsop.

In other New Business; Jim Pahriss, told the club that President Alsop had informed him that Susan Taylor wanted to bring a group of K-1 graders to the museum on June 29th for an educational field trip. The group will range in size from 10 to 20 kids. The tour has been scheduled for

10 A.M. with members volunteering to host the group requested to be present at 9 A.M.

The last item of New Business was the calling of Volunteers for Saturday Operating Sessions and the announcement of a train show in Winston Salem, June 2nd and 3rd.

Ted Bleck-Doran, Newsletter Editor presented a very interesting program on the NC&SL railroads 'City of

Carter Railroad Museum's Heritage Day: All About The Present in May

Popular free ETSU attraction will portray modern railroads on May 26 'Here to Stay' event honoring national Train Day

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum located in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University will be anything but ancient as 21st century railroading takes over on May 26. 'Here to Stay' will feature modern trains and equipment representing the large North American railroad systems and equipment that are currently functioning, including Amtrak and local lines CSX and Norfolk Southern.

Economic realities and technological development have created a handful of super railroads that now handle a majority of the nation's rail service. Increased horsepower is coupled with environmental accommodations and digital operating systems to make today's trains some of the most impressive in history. Even the various cars used on today's lines have remarkably more capacity than anything from the past. Members from both the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders club and the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be on hand to assist in this display day.

"While the Carter Railroad Museum's mission is mainly historical in nature, we want to make it possible for the public to understand modern railroading as well," says Geoff Stunkard, the coordinator of the museum Heritage Days program. "Since May 7 is National Train Day, what better way than to make the focus of May's Heritage Day event in deference to where we are instead of where we have been. This should be a fun event."

Model trains representing this equipment will be operating on the MEMRR club's large 24x44 1:87 HO scale layout that is housed in the museum. On display will be information on modern lines and Operation Lifesaver, while a special photo tribute to the Santa Fe Railway (now BNSF Railway) through original publicity photos will show the revolutionary changes that led up the modern age.

Memphis'. Jim Pharis will show a video for the June meetings program. Title to be announced later. Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 P.M. Next meeting will be Tuesday, June 19th at 7:00 P.M. in room 312 at Brown Hall, ETSU.

Respectively submitted,
Hobie Hyder, Secretary MEMRR

The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and includes model railroad layouts, our 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' narrow gauge 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 <http://etsu> or <http://johnsonsdotcom/glcarter/cartermuseum.htm>.

The MEMRR club works in conjunction with the 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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TRAIN RELATED ITEMS ONLY

MEMBER	PHONE	ITEM FOR SALE	PRICE
Duane Swank	423-542-8989	NEW -Bowser- N&W box cars-3 different numbers- each unit priced	\$ 15.00
Duane Swank	423-542-8989	NEW -Bowser- N&W hopper cars-8 different numbers- each unit priced	\$ 15.00
Duane Swank	423-542-8989	NEW -N&W heavyweight passenger car set of 8	\$ 80.00
Hobie Hyder	423-213-4067	NYNH&H tongues. Approx. 3' long. Made in Hartford, Connecticut shops OBO	\$ 75.00
Gary Emmert	903-452-5012	Atlas MP15 locomotive with L&N lettering--decoder equipped	\$ 60.00

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FIRST OF THE MONTH

IF YOU HAVE MULTIPLE LIKE ITEMS, THEY CAN BE LISTED AS ONE ITEM

Myrtle Beach Train A Look at the Carolina Southern

By Hobie Hyder

Sun, fun, beach and trains? Sound like the perfect combination? Well it can be if you're planning a trip to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Recently, on a weekend trip to Myrtle Beach, I had the opportunity to become reacquainted with the old rail line running from Conway to Myrtle Beach. It's been years since I've been to Myrtle Beach, thus, I couldn't wait to see what had happened to the old railroad, it's large Bascule Bridge at Waccamaw and the little brick station at Myrtle Beach.



As a kid, the long drive to Myrtle Beach was always made a little easier knowing that nearing the end of my long journey I would get to ride along side the tracks of the former Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. The chance sighting of a train was always hoped for. Unfortunately more times than not this chance sighting was not to be; however, I do remember back in the very early 80's near Waccamaw seeing a locomotive in the Seaboard Coast Line livery performing local switching operations.

Since it has been at least ten years since I visited Myrtle Beach, I was eager to see all the changes, in particular the old Atlantic Coast Line station and maybe another chance sighting of a local. The ACL station is located about one block from the old pavilion and was originally constructed in 1937. "This one-story rectangular building was constructed with the standard ACL bi-level floor plan that has a raised freight room with steps leading down to the lobby/office area. The exterior, however, is much more elaborate than other ACL stations in the south. The station is built of clay red brick. Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Mission stylistic influences are evident in its architectural detailing. The station has a hipped roof, brick bearing walls, a stepped parapet roof in the square bay, nine-over-nine windows, concrete sills, a decorative belt course above the windows, scroll-sawn rafter ends, and a large roof overhang with open eaves."



Ten years ago, the station had been neglected and in need of a little TLC. Today, and to my pleasant surprise, the station has been purchased by the City of Myrtle Beach and has been completely restored for weddings, graduations, and birthday parties, etc. The station was listed in the National Register July 22, 2002.ⁱ In May of 2004ⁱⁱ, a ribbon cutting for the Myrtle Beach Atlantic Coast Line Station was held, thus, preserving all its former glory for generations to come!



After checking in to our accommodations for the weekend, more determined than ever to complete the second part of my mission, to see a train, I looked in the yellow pages to find the name of the railroad and acquire an address for the yard and shops. I found that the railroad was now owned by the Carolina Southern Railroad and their headquarters is located only 14.1 miles from Myrtle Beach in Conway, South Carolina.



The current Conway to Myrtle Beach short-line operation of the Carolina Southern Railroad has had somewhat of a storied history, having changed ownership several times since the 1980's. Originally opened in 1900 by the Conway Coast and Western Railroad, a predecessor of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, the railroad was sold in November of 1984 by the Seaboard System to Horry County. The Horry County Railway operated the railroad until October 1987 when the Waccamaw Coast Line took over.

Historic Places in 1995.ⁱⁱⁱ Also, like its sister station in Myrtle Beach, it is built in the American Craftsman design and is known for its architectural significance. Unlike the Myrtle Beach station, the station at Conway is not built of brick but rather the more traditional board-and-batten construction, painted gray with white trim. The station features a long, rectangular, one-story, gable-roof with wide overhanging eaves.



The Carolina Southern Railroad Company began operations in 1995 as a result of a spin off of two CSX branch lines. One was a portion of the now abandoned ACL line between Florence, South Carolina and Wilmington, North Carolina, and the other was operated by the Waccamaw Coast Line from Conway, South Carolina to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The Carolina Southern Railroad has over 95 miles of track, 11 engines, owns and operates several box cars, passenger cars, and the City of Myrtle Beach Club Car. Its chief commodities are coal, wood products, stone, grain, agricultural chemical, and processed food. Accessible to the line are industrial parks in Whiteville, North Carolina, as well as, Marion, South Carolina. The railroad interchanges with CSX at Mullins, South Carolina.



After arrival in Conway, I found the Carolina Southern's headquarters to be housed in the former now historic Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Station, just a short distance off Main Street. The Atlantic Coast Line Station was completed in 1928, and like the one in Myrtle Beach, has been fully restored and placed on the National Register of





Upon observation of the grounds, I observed a line of box cars parked beside the station, as well as, a former Waccamaw Coast Line caboose. Located just past the parked freight cars, set the fruits of my labor: two Carolina Southern locomotives, locomotive #100, and locomotive #3617. Locomotive #100, a GP18, was originally built in 1960 as Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific #1333. The other locomotive, #3617, while not listed in the Official Equipment Roster, appears to be an ex Illinois Central GP 38 (thanks Gary Emmert).

Finally, mission accomplished!

Official Equipment Roster

No	Builder	Model	Horsepower	History/notes
48	GM	F7A	1500	Originally built as the Texas & New Orleans #379 7/52, traded to GE, to Wellsville, Addison & Galeton #2400 in 1969, to Louisiana & North West #48 in 1974, to Waccamaw Coast Line 48 1/92, stored at Chadbourn in disrepair
87	GM	SW9	1200	Originally built as the Chesapeake & Ohio #5092 in 1953, to Baltimore & Annapolis #87, still painted and lettered for B&A and stored in Chadbourn
88	GM	F7A	1500	ex-MILW, ex-Waccamaw Coast Line, stored at Chadbourn in disrepair
100	GM	GP18	1800	Originally built in 1960 as Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific #1333, ex-Nashville & Ashland City #9, ex-McCormick, Ashland City & Asheville #9, red and white, in regular freight service
943	GM	GP18	1800	Originally built as Norfolk Western #943, ex-Waccamaw Coast Line #943, high, short hood, in faded WCL purple paint, in regular freight service
950	GM	GP18	1800	ex-Mid-Atlantic, ex-Norfolk Southern, ex-Norfolk & Western, in red and white Carolina Southern paint, chop nosed by CALA
951	GM	GP18	1800	ex-Mid-Atlantic, ex-Norfolk Southern, ex-Norfolk & Western, in Carolina Southern Pullman green, chop nosed by CALA
958	Gm	GP18	1800	ex-Mid-Atlantic, ex-Norfolk Southern, ex-Norfolk & Western, in gray/maroon Mid-Atlantic paint, chop nosed by CALA without benefit of a repaint
2613	GM	GP30	2250	ex-Waccamaw Coast Line, ex-Norfolk Southern, ex-Southern, high, short hood
6622	GM	F9BU	1750	Originally built March 1957 as the Canadian National 6622, class GPB-17d, retired from CN roster and transferred to VIA 31 March 1978, sold for scrap by VIA November 1991 to Montreal Locomotive Sales, Lachine QC, sold March 1992 to Waccamaw Coastline Railroad, to Carolina Southern Railroad, in service as of 2002, repainted in CN colors by WCL

9158	GM	F7AU	1500	Originally built August 1952 as the Canadian National #9080, F7A, class GFA-17a , reclassified GFA-15d, September 1954, rebuilt to 9158 November 1972, class GFA-17a, retired December 1989, sold to Century Locomotive Parts, Lachine QC in 1992, to Waccamaw Coastline Railroad, to Carolina Southern, red and white, ex-Canadian National
9163	GM	F7AU	1500	Originally built November 1952 as the Canadian National #9116, F7A, class GFA-17a, reclassified GFA-15d, September 1954, rebuilt to 9163 April 1973, retired December 1989, sold to Century Locomotive Parts, Lachine QC in 1992, sold to Waccamaw Coastline Railroad, to Carolina Southern Railroad, red and white, in regular freight service

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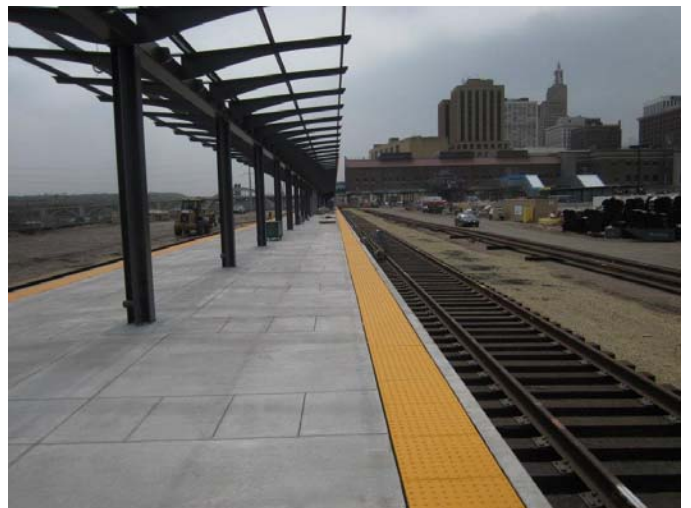
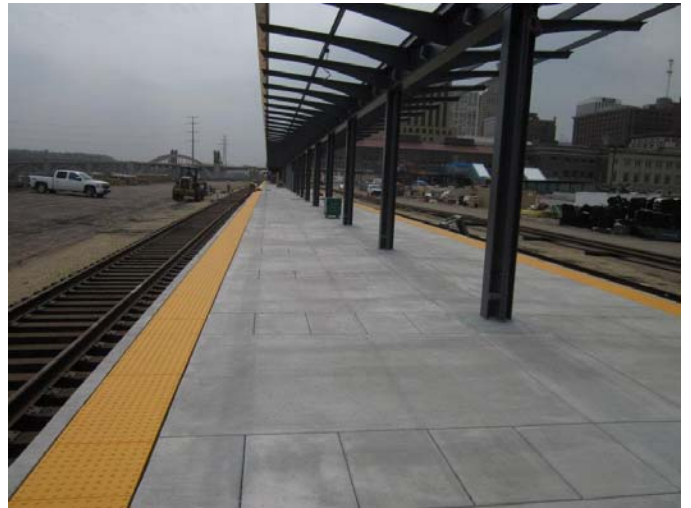
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St Paul’s Union Station





Mountain Empire Model Railroaders 1st Annual Modeling Contest

The overall theme of the contest will be weathering. There will be three categories; Best Weathered Rolling Stock, Best Weathered Diesel Locomotive, Best Weathered Steam Locomotive. Prizes will be awarded for first place in each category with one, over all grand prize winner. You may enter as many entries in each category as you want however you can only win once. Contest winners will be based upon number of votes received. Entry forms for contest voting will be made available to the public on Saturdays and to Club members on Thursdays and Saturdays. Club members are ask to not vote for their own submission and are ask to vote only once. Entries will be displayed in the display cases in the main room of the museum for judging by the public and members. The start date for the contest will be in conjunction with the changing of the display cases in June for the June Heritage Days and continue through the Saturday prior to the September Monthly Business Meeting. Winners will be announced at the October Business Meeting/Newsletter.

When The Northwest Logging Industry Was Still Young...



Just look at the length of the hand saw they needed...



...and look at the size of the heavy duty axes...



Maneuvering the logs down the mountain to the train was a complex job..



some of the logs were larger than the train engine...



hollowed out logs were also used to house and feed the crews...



A hollowed out log became the company's mobile office..



Another Heritage Unit Gets New Paint
 Virginia Transportation Museum's N&W 1776 Bicentennial Unit



N&W SD45 1776 working the yard in Roanoke, VA. [4-75]



NW Bicentennial coal hopper 1776 arrives in Williamson on a train of mtys. NW painted an SD45 and a trailer in bicentennial colors as well November 1977



The freshly repainted N&W 1776 brings up the rear of a lite power moving passing by the restored Bristol depot. March 2012.

Cope Layout Travels To The Hands On! Regional Museum
Blue Plum Festival
Johnson City – June 1-3, 2012
 Report by Allan Morton

The Cope layout traveled to the Hands On! Regional Museum in Johnson City, TN for display at the Blue Plum Festival. The event lasted 3 days from Friday, June 1st thru Sunday, June 3rd. During that time, many visitors to the festival got a first- hand look at the HO scale layout in action and information about the Mountain Empire Model Railroad Club and the George L. Carter Railroad Museum.





A special thanks goes out to **Gary Emmert, Paul Haynes, Jim Pahrís, Tod Eaton, Dan McLeod, Allan Morton and John Carter** for their help greeting visitors during the event.

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

Please welcome new Associate Member, **Mark Woomer**, of Piney Flats to the MEMRR. May was a busy month for everyone, including your president. I conducted bird identification workshops in 3 states and photographed birds for a week in Minnesota (my professor/biologist's hats). However, I did manage a couple of Saturdays at the Carter Railroad Museum in all that travel during May and attended the NMRA's Southeast Regional Convention in Gatlinburg where I presented a clinic on creating the Whistle Stop Café. I also made it back to Johnson City on the last day of the Blue Plum Festival in time to spend the final hour of the event with several of our club members manning the Cope Traveling Layout at the Children's Hands-On Museum. My thanks to Vice-President, **John Carter**, for presiding over the May club business meeting in my absence.

With regard to the **Blue Plum Festival** I need to thank **Hobie Hyder**, Club Events Coordinator, for securing our invitation and the initial venue to the event and to **Jim Pahrís** for getting the layout into the front window of the Hands-On Museum where it escaped Friday's severe rain and wind storm that struck so many of the vendors who were unprotected and out on the streets. **Duane Swank** pulled the RR Museum trailer to his house prior to the festival and custom-fitted the inside to carry the Cope Traveling Layout for this festival and to future events. Thank you Duane for the excellent carpenter's work you did to make the little layout travel safely and damage-free. There are a host of MEMRR members to thank for getting the layout ready for public viewing, including **Jerry Dennis** and **Gary Emmert**, and because I was not here to participate, I don't have a list

of all the great members who took their time to man the venue and operate the little layout for the entire 3 days of the Blue Plum event, so let me just say, "Job well done and thank you for representing the more than 90 members of our model railroad club. Your efforts on our behalf are recognized and most appreciated." The preparatory track work and scenery repair that went into the layout let it put its best foot forward and the trains operated almost without fault for the duration of the festival. Our club volunteers reported that many festival goers stopped in to see the layout and many learned about our model railroad club and the Carter Railroad Museum because of our participation.

At the end of June and early July (June 29-30 and July 1) we will be taking the Cope Traveling Layout to Jonesborough to participate in **Jonesborough Days**. We will need to plan this event with any necessary repair work to the layout and to get volunteers lined up to man the venue for the 3 days of this event as well. Some of this planning can be done at the June Coordinator's Meeting and wrapped up at the June business meeting. Please check your calendars and your personal schedule and plan to help us represent the club at this event. For some of you members who we don't get to see often we could certainly use your help and this is an easy DC layout to operate. The more club members we have working the event the easier it will be for all of us. Please make plans to join us and let some of the officers know that we can count on you to lend a hand.

By the time you are reading this column our sister club, the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS will have successfully executed its first railfan trip as an organization. Many of you will have joined us as passengers on our leased Greene Coach Line modern buses and joined us in a trip to ride the former coal-hauling railroad of the Big South Fork Scenic Railway at Stearns, Kentucky. This first venture of the Carter Chapter NRHS sold enough tickets to fill not one, but two 55-passenger buses for the outing. I am sure the chapter will be planning more such events in the future. If you missed this one watch for announcements for the next one and be sure to get on board. I am sure we will have enough photos to use for a club program some night to let you see some of what you missed in the train ride, the demonstration coal mine, the historic museum and the town of Stearns itself.

ETSU ended its spring semester with a graduation exercise on Saturday, May 5th, but now summer sessions have begun. There are fewer students so parking is somewhat easier on campus, but it is compounded by all the service trucks from contractors and sub-contractors who do a lot of work on the university and its grounds in the summer months when many of the students are away. Additionally, we have lost 3 parking places in front of the railroad museum with the addition of 2 handicapped parking spots (2 handicapped spots take up the area of 3 non-handicapped spaces). And, if that were not sufficient, the

traffic is being rerouted in the area of the campus just north of our building. Because of a rash of pedestrian/vehicle accidents on campus during the spring semester the administration has decided to stop the flow of vehicle traffic through the heart of the campus off of State of Franklin and University Parkway. This is resulting in a blocking of several streets on the north side of the Campus Center Building where the railroad museum is located to prevent all traffic except foot traffic from entering that part of the campus. You will have to perhaps plan other routes to the museum, but we still have easy access from Robert Bell Drive to our building (the route many of you take anyway off State of Franklin on the north or Seehorn Drive to the south. Thursday nights this summer still finds parking near the railroad museum somewhat limited this summer because traditionally Tuesday and Thursday night classes attract more students than any other night of the week. Also, Carter Hall just to the south of the museum is being used to house students this summer.

Because of the Thursday night parking difficulties, especially very close to the railroad museum's front door, there has been some discussion revolving around the possibility of changing our work night to another evening or perhaps to Sunday afternoon. Such discussions are always open and welcome. If another work time would result in more members coming to the Carter Railroad Museum to work on our layouts, exhibits and projects, I shall be the first one to promote it. I will ask **Bob Jones**, our Web-Master to poll the membership to seek a consensus on whether we should continue to get together on Thursday afternoons/evenings as we have done for the past 4+ years ("if it ain't broke, don't fix it") or if another time would suit the membership better. Let me put these concerns into the mix for your consideration as you think this over and come to your decision. Remember, the more voices we have on this topic the better we will be able to decide what will best fit the schedules of most of our members. **Things to ponder with changing work schedules:** 1) All members now know that **Thursday night** is work night and have arranged their schedules accordingly. 2) We operate the railroad museum for 5 hours **every Saturday** (except holidays) and it takes approximately another hour for preparation & lock-up (so, Saturday is probably not a day when we could expect to do any work on the exhibits). 3) The Carter Chapter NRHS meets on campus one **Monday night** a month. Many of its members are members of the MEMRR. 4) The MEMRR meets on campus one **Tuesday night** a month. Many of its members are members of the Carter Chapter NRHS. Also, on Tuesday nights we have as many students and faculty on campus as we do on Thursday nights (nothing gained). 5) **Fridays** many of the students leave campus for the weekend, but many of our MEMRR members often begin their weekend, and weekend travels on Friday afternoons. 6) For many, **Wednesday night** is church night. Finally, 7) **Sunday afternoons** after 2 p.m. takes care of church and Sunday dinner, but is also a weekend day. I am sure each

of you has a day that will work best for you. I have only tried to list some of the obvious obstacles that we should consider in trying to find a time that will work best for most of us. Let me hear your thoughts we will continue this discussion. But, for the present, remember Thursdays are work days beginning around 4:30 when the university's hourly wage earners are leaving for the day and parking places open up for a little while. So, 4:30 is a good time to arrive and find that parking place close to our entrance door and for you to pitch in and give us a hand with model railroading. I hope to see you soon!!

Economics have forced a change in the discount policy for MEMRR members at Bob Barrett's HobbyTown USA. Here is an email he recently sent to me dated May 25, 2012.

Fred,

Please pass this on to the train club members and also Gary Cameron. I know I have had Gary's email before in my system here, but I can't find it.

Lots of bad news has come about in the Hobby and I suspect it is only going to get worse. Seems like manufacturers have reached the tipping point on price versus sales of their product affected mostly by manufacturing in China. The economy there is booming I guess so Chinese manufacturers can raise their prices. But if the US manufacturers raise the retail anymore, and I agree it is already too high for most, then sales will drop off. We are already seeing that. We have also seen some Chinese manufacturers simply drop making train products. Athearn lost their facility that made the Athearn Ready to Roll train sets... what we have in stock is all we can get until spring 2013. And worse, Atlas track in the US now is all we will see until next year apparently for the same reason. So we can expect a large shortage come fall and Christmas.

As for the pricing and shortage issues, they have come up with a solution... they will make the dealers cover the cost. In the last few months, we have had a few of the distributors/manufactures cut our discounts up to 10%. What use to be a 40% margin, giving a little room for a discounted price, is now 30%. Walthers items have lost discounts too. Then we have the manufacturers like Exact Rail just drop their entire dealer network in North America in favor of eBay and consumer direct. I just became an Exact Rail dealer 3 months before that announcement! (that is the 3rd to do so in the last year by the way). Now we have been notified by Athearn of a 5-10% drop in their dealer discounts as well. Rumor is from one of my distributor contacts that the ball is now rolling from the big boys like Athearn, Walthers etc., that all the others will follow suit and lower dealer discounts to allow the MSRP not to rise.

O scale is even worse, as some items from Lionel, MTH etc. already are at a 15% margin. I simply can't afford to bring in an item at that margin in the hopes I will sell it. Since every sale I make by credit card costs me nearly 5% with franchise fees and credit card fees, 10% wouldn't suffice to keep my store open unless I had a huge jump in volume, and I don't see that happening. It is already tough enough to compete with the online sales by distributor-reseller companies like Tower Hobbies (i.e. Great planes), Walthers, Athearn, Micro Trains and the like since I am at a 9.5% disadvantage already with tax added.

So the short of the story above is that I can no longer offer a 10% discount across the board for the train club members anymore and still award the coupons for every \$100.00. I will need to go through all the product lines and refine what we sell and the prices we can afford to sell them at. Some things may stay at 10% for now, like Woodland Scenics, as they have not changed discounts. I apologize for this change, but to stay in business I have to make sure I keep my profitability at a point where I can. And to let you know, all the other hobby categories are starting to reduce margin discounts, free freight and volume purchases, so Model railroad isn't alone. And just to show what kind of affect this may have, I currently take home about 8% of gross sales for the year. If I just lose 5% margin from sales throughout the store, I would only have

enough money to pay my mortgage at home.... the store would close for sure.

I might entertain the 10% discount on pre-orders of Athearn and Atlas engines/rolling stock since I would be guaranteed the sale. No prepay necessary.

Sorry it has come to this. Hope we see some improvement down the road. But just because sales are good, doesn't mean profitability is good.

Bob Barrett
 Hobbytown USA

June is a busy month. There are lots of exciting projects underway at the Carter Railroad Museum and in the MEMRR. Come on down on a Thursday night or bring you consist and run it with your fellow club members on Saturday. Come and participate and enjoy the fun of model railroading with the MEMRR in a terrific venue on the ETSU campus. 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

Through the Lens of Paul Haynes Sperry Rail Service HiRail Truck in Kingsport TN





Photos from Newton Iowa
Modern Day Steam

