



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
FEBRUARY 2013 - MEMBERS EDITION

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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 6:30 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 ??

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

January 15, 2013

President Fred Alsop called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M. in room 312 Brown Hall, ETSU, with 11 members present and one guest. New potential member Lanny Norris was welcomed by President Alsop. Lanny lives in Elizabethton and has had a love of trains for many years. Lanny is an avid collector of Lionel and currently wants to build an HO layout. Lanny has already volunteered to help with hosting the BSA Saturday. It is expected that he will submit his membership application and dues to President Alsop soon.

President Alsop called for the reading of the Secretary's report from the December meeting as published in *The Signal Bridge* with a motion being made to accept them by Hobie Hyder, Secretary, and a second by Paul Haynes. The report was accepted. In the absence of Ted Bleck-Doran, Newsletter Editor, President Alsop praised Ted for his continued excellent work in the publication of *The Signal Bridge* and reminded the membership that Ted is always in need of articles and pictures for *The Signal Bridge*. President Alsop also reported to the membership to facilitate communication, future editions of *The Signal Bridge* will publish the email contact information for the officers on its masthead. Duane Swank, Treasurer, reported to the club as of meeting time that there were still approximately 34 unpaid memberships. President Alsop reminded the membership that they had until the end of January to pay their dues if they still wanted to enjoy the full benefits of being a member. At the end of January the combination to the lock will be changed and only members in good standing will have the combination. Treasurer Swank continued his report by reporting the balance of the club's checking account as of January. He concluded by reporting that the club's finances were in good standing. Bob Jones, Web Master, is snow birding in Florida, therefore in his absence President Alsop reported that he had been informed by Bob that all the information on the club's website is as current as can be. A full calendar of Heritage Day events as well as a calendar of events for the upcoming year for the club will be updated soon. Vice-President John Carter reported to the membership that tentatively Newsletter Editor Ted Bleck-Doran will present a video at the February meeting for the program portion of the meeting. Concluding the Officer's Reports, President Fred Alsop informed the membership that the George L. Carter Chapter of the NHRS will be hosting the BSA as a part of Merit Badge University during Saturday's Operating Session. President Alsop reported that there will be two sessions of 15 boys each. The first session will start at 9 A.M. with the second starting at 2 P.M. Bill Hensley, Gary Emmert and Dave Doughy have volunteered to be Instructors with Jim Pahriss coordinating the event.

For 'Old Business' President Alsop reported to the membership that Mike Buster was in the process of repainting and lettering two of the Club's Memorial Cars N&W passenger cars.

'New Business': The next Railroad Heritage Day event will be January 26th "Might and Money: Eastern Railroad Spectacular" as reported by Geoff Stunkard, Heritage Day Coordinator. Geoff said that he would prefer Eastern Seaboard Railroads ranging from Boston & Maine to the FEC in Florida for this Heritage Day event. He said that in particular that it would be nice to see Seaboard Railroad and some passenger trains. For the event, the plans are to have three displays featuring Empire Railroads, Florida Vacation and Potomac Yard. Geoff also informed the group that in his planning for this year's Heritage Day events that he tried to split the event into three different regions; east, mid-west and west. President Alsop continued the conversation by telling the group that the Heritage Days could be massaged with notice if there was something of particular interest that had not be included in this year's schedule. In order to save some time President Fred Alsop told the membership that the full text of the January Coordinator's Meeting will be published in the next issue of *The Signal Bridge*. However, President Alsop gave any coordinator present the opportunity to share comments. Bill Hensley, Wiring Coordinator, let the club know that the electrical supply for the outside loops was ready to be cut over to the new DCC system. Bill also informed the membership that he was ready to

start the wiring for the yard. The plans are to split the yard into four different districts using four buses. In the absence of Jim Hoyt, RIP Coordinator, President Alsop informed the club that more wheel sets are needed for club cars. Gary Emmert made a motion that the club order 100, 33 inch wheel sets. Paul Haynes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. In other 'new business' President Alsop reported that Joe Roberts is replacing the gears in the club owned GP7. Approximately 7:25, the meeting was interrupted by a fire alarm. Members were asked to exit the building until the situation could be assessed by campus security. After a brief wait, the meeting resumed at approximately 7:40 with no viable fire. Upon returning, the MEMRR Calendar of Events for the 2013 season was reviewed at the meeting with the following events scheduled/proposed:

January	19	BSA/Merit Badge University
	26	Heritage Day <i>'Might and Money: Eastern Railroad Spectacular'</i> .
February	2&3	Train Show, Easley, SC
	23	Heritage Day <i>'Mixed Trains - Daily Short Lines, Industrial, etc.'</i> .
March	1&2	Ashville Train Show
	30	Heritage Day <i>'3rd Annual Steam Up'</i> . 5:00/5:30ish Spring Fling Social at Choo Choo Café.
April	?	Contest Time? NRHS Photo Contest. MEMRR Modeling Contest.
	27	Heritage Day <i>'The Circus is Coming to Town'</i>
May	4	National Railroad Day
	18	NRHS Rail excursion to Knoxville & Zoo trip.
	25	Heritage Day <i>'Modern Railroading'</i>
June	1&2	Blue Plum Festival
	5&8	G Scale Convention, Cincinnati, OH.
	28-30	Jonesborough Days.
	29	Heritage Day <i>'Song of the South - Southern RR'</i> .
July	?	Annual Picnic.

or Aug		
July	14-20	NMRA National Convention, Atlanta, GA.
	21	?? Open Museum for NMRA Convention goers??
	27	Heritage Day <i>'Big Sky, Western Railroads'</i> .
August	?	?? Photo Contest Ends??
	31	Heritage Day <i>'Midwest Movers'</i> .
September	28	Heritage Day <i>'Atlanta's Loop'</i> .
October	?	2 nd George L. Carter Chapter NRHS Rail Excursion.
	26	Heritage Day <i>'George L. Carter's Fabulous CRR'</i>
November	15	National take a toy train to work day.
	16	6 th Anniversary of Carter Museum. National Model Railroad Month Clinics at museum ??.
	?	End Modeling Contest.
	?	Santa Train.
	10	Officer Elections.
	20	MEMRR's 20 th Birthday!
	30	Heritage Day <i>'N&W Railroad, Today and Yesterday'</i> .
December	17	Annual Christmas Party.
	21	Heritage Day <i>'Steam & Early Diesel Locomotive in the Volunteer State.'</i>

For a more complete and updated Calendar of Events, please refer to the club's web-page.

Volunteers for Saturdays' Operating Sessions were then asked for by Present Alsop. Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 P.M. Next meeting will be Tuesday, February 19th at 6:30 P.M. in room 312 at Brown Hall, ETSU. Those who want to dine together will meet at 5:00 in ETSU's Market Place cafeteria, 3rd floor, Culp University Center.

*Respectively submitted,
Hobie Hyder, Secretary MEMRR*

MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE FELLOW MEMBERS OF MEMRR AND THE CARTER CHAPTER NRHS

Last fall when Bob Jones, the MEMRR Web Master, was indicating some frustration with all the tasks he was encountering in that important position I spoke to Mark Woomer about the possibility of helping with some of these tasks and he readily agreed pending Bob's agreement. I then spoke to Bob one afternoon shortly afterwards at the museum following that conversation and related Mark's

willingness to use his considerable expertise in electronic/web communication to help us as we needed it. That is what is continuing to happen, but perhaps has been somewhat confusing in the chain of emails in recent days. Bob continues as the current WebMaster and is doing a great job there. Mark is now the secretary of the GLC NRHS Chapter and is doing a terrific job there. I may have caused the recent confusion by a series of short messages I had to get circulated to both clubs by sending messages jointly addressed to Bob and to Mark with the request that they get them out to the respective memberships that I am the the concurrent president of. Both gentlemen responded in quick fashion and all the

members of both organizations were quickly informed about weather closings of the Carter RR Museum and my pending late arrival to the museum's weekly worksession last night. Bob and Mark are doing a terrific job and I greatly appreciate what they are doing and how they are doing it for all of us.

It has been pointed out, and rightly so, that because of the structure of the membership by the NRHS, that club's members pay national membership dues in addition to their local annual club dues, we must continue to strive to assure NRHS National, that the two organizations are not commingled in their operations. National NRHS requires that all participants in NRHS chapter meetings (except for occasional guests) must also be members of National NRHS by paying national dues. We don't want to create a situation where National NRHS feels the members of the MEMRR are really members of the Carter Chapter NRHS and begins to request memberships and dues from that separate club. We do, in fact, have members of the MEMRR that are dues paying members of the Carter Chapter NRHS, and visa versa, but their memberships are separate between each organization. This situation arises because each club has seen fit to elect me to be their president concurrently, and because each club is affiliated with the George L. Carter Railroad Museum to which I have been appointed as the Director by two ETSU presidents. I have sought to use the RR Museum as the umbrella to facilitate activities that both the MEMRR and the Carter

Chapter NRHS can participate in together while remaining separate organizations with separate identities, separate bylaws, separate officers, etc.; in such activities as the annual picnic, Christmas party, museum anniversaries and so forth.

I rejoice that we can work together as well as we do. That we can choose to be members of both clubs, or only one, as we choose and that we have the RR Museum as an anchor for both organizations. We continue to grow stronger, grow our separate memberships, set our club's goals independently of each other and embrace our railroading interests and each other. Separate but equal.

Bob and Mark, thank you for working with me and with each other for the good of the clubs we represent. If there are any other things we need to discuss with regard to getting the word out to our respective organizations, or who may be responsible for doing so, let's continue the dialogue.

Have a great day and I will hope to continue to work with all of you to make 2013 the best ever for the G. L. Carter RR Museum, the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, and the G.L. Carter Chapter NRHS.

Best Regards,

Fred

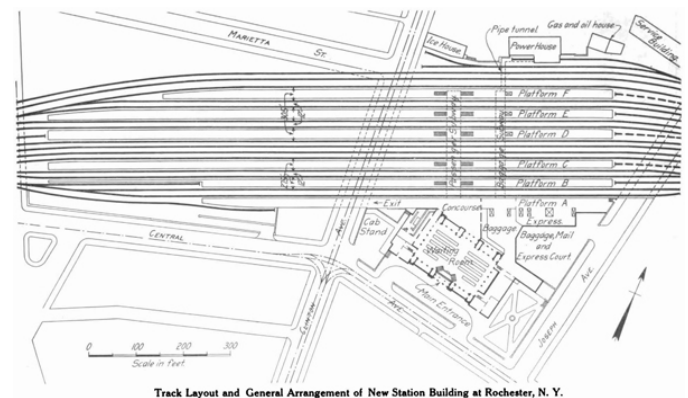
Traveling on the Lake Shore Limited A Holiday Adventure

December was a good month to travel by train in the Northeast. Two back-to-back winter storms blanketed the nation from the upper mid-west to the Atlantic coastline causing delays and cancellations to travel plans. Airline ticket holders for flights across the northern tier of the United States rushed to board flights that had yet to be cancelled and those forced by cancellations looked for alternate means of travel. Travelers who had booked ahead for train travel fared better during the holiday travel season.



NEW YORK CENTRAL DEPOT AT ROCHESTER NY

Mary and I had booked our ride on Amtrak's **Lake Shore Limited** (48/448 and 49/449) about around 30 days in advance. We would be traveling from Rochester NY to Springfield MA the day after Christmas and returning the following weekend. Creating the reservations on Amtrak's website was easy. Anyone who has mastered online airline reservations will find the Amtrak site familiar ground. I received an e-ticket within minutes of placing my reservations.



The **Lake Shore Limited** is Amtrak's long distance train from New York City to Chicago following the former NYC water level route. This carries the train along the

picturesque Hudson and Mohawk River valleys, the old Erie Canal tow-path, then skirts the southern shore of Lake Erie and into Chicago's. It was hard not to compare the current Amtrak version Lake Shore with the original Lake Cities operated by the Erie-Lackawanna. I had the pleasure to ride the Erie's version from Chicago to Meadville PA in the fall of 1969. While passenger service was generally in decline back then, the E-L served up its name train in fine form.



Amtrak's replacement depot

Our trip would see us depart from Rochester at 10:15 AM. We arrived 15 minutes early and quickly learned that the train was to be 15 minutes late due to snow in Buffalo and a sold out status. The train's arrival was ultimately 35 minutes late, and with the boarding of nearly 100 passengers at Rochester, the train resumed its trip a total of 55 minutes late. Passengers boarding at Syracuse, Utica, Rome, and Schenectady would cause the train to be 1 hour 45 minutes late arriving at Albany-Renesalier. The Cities makes up time at Albany due to a built in 2 hour layover. Albany is where the train is split into two sections (NYC and Boston) and receives new power for the heading to Boston.



Sister coach 25000 to Use in The Lake Shore in 12/2012

On the day we boarded the **Lake Shore Limited**, the train consisted of a power unit (PH102), (Boston Section) baggage car, Viewliner sleeper, 2 coaches, Club Car followed by the NYC section of 5 coaches, dinner, and a single Viewliner sleeper. The coaches and club car were of Metroliner design with plenty of leg-room. This was quite different from the coaches of the **Empire State Express** trains that provide additional service from NYC to Buffalo service. The Express trains have been fitted with Roher designed coaches with seat more akin to airplane cabin seating, at least from my experience in 2001 and 2002. Due to the sold out status of the train on our travel day, we could not find adjoining seating. This proved not to be a problem... we just went to the club car and enjoyed a long cup of coffee and a lingering lunch. There was no press of fellow passengers wanting a table until after Albany and closer to dinner time.



Café Car in The Lake Shore

A word about station facilities: Syracuse, Utica, and Albany have modernized multimodal (train, long distance/regional bus, and taxi) terminals. Utica appeared to have the nicest station serving Amtrak, the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, and the Timber Special. Rochester tore down its classic NYC depot and erected a modern cookie cutter depot to serve the onset of the Amtrak era. Were there was once 8 platforms, there are now only 2 with one serving as a freight track. I miss the old depot with its high Grand Central style vaulted ceiling and spacious waiting area. Today's station is more like a forlorn airport gate waiting area in need of repair. 2013 should see the start of construction of Rochester's intermodal terminal. The existing station will be razed and a new, larger, multi-transit facility built.

Amtrak's food fare was adequate. Lunch was generally available from mid-morning breakfast to 12 midnight. Prepackaged and microwaveable items were available along with deserts, candy, snack foods.



Viewliner Sleeper in *The Lake Shore*

There was a good selection of hot and cold beverages. The dinner was open from noon until 9 PM at night with separate lunch and diner seatings. We enjoyed a meal in the dining car on the return trip. Mary had the roast pork special while I had the Chef's Market Special (Bar-b-q Ribs). Wine and beer are available for consumption in the dining car. I did miss the heavy railroad china. Amtrak serves on plastic place settings. The only thing heavy was the flatware. While the meal was good and at a reasonable price (comparable to a mid-priced restaurant) it was a cook-chill portion controlled product. Gone are the days when there were honest-to-goodness chefs cooking menu items from scratch.

The return trip from Springfield MA was uneventful. We started out at 2:45 in the afternoon already 30 minutes late. With delays for freights and the east bound version of the train, we were 1 hour 45 minutes late into Albany. With an abbreviated layover to join the two sections for the run to Chicago, we left nearly on time and made it into Rochester 35 minutes late.



Baggage Car used in *The Lake Shore* Service

All in all, our experience with Amtrak was good – a C+/B-grade due to lateness and crowding. I'm betting our experience was still better than for those traveling by any other means given the wintery weather and airport delays. Based on our experiences we would give Amtrak another try in the Future.



An Amtrak P-42

#630 STEAM EXCURSION March 9th and 10th



Steam excursion on March 9th and 10th. Round trip both days. Leaves Bristol at 8 AM, with a stop in Abington then arrives in Radford at 12 noon. Leaves at 2 PM for the return trip to Bristol, to arrive at 6 PM.

Sunday trip leaves Bristol at 9AM with a stop in Johnson City then goes to Bulls Gap. Arrives back in Bristol at 5PM.

March 9: Bristol, Virginia to Radford, Virginia (220 miles round-trip) Departure Time: 8:00am from Bristol, with 2.5-hour layover in Radford, returning approx. 7:00pm Tickets: \$65 (on-sale now from [Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum](http://TennesseeValleyRailroadMuseum.com))

March 10: Bristol, Virginia to Bulls Gap, Tennessee (156 miles round-trip) Departure Time: 9:00am from Bristol, with 2-hour layover in Bulls Gap, returning approx. 5:00pm Tickets: \$65 (on-sale now from [Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum](http://TennesseeValleyRailroadMuseum.com))

MEMRR ALERTS IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fellow Club Members:

I have 3 announcements to pass on to you as follows:

1) I have our **volunteer parking passes** for the spring semester and will place them in the Carter RR Museum near the controller computer stand where we kept them last semester. Several of you got one and signed for it at the January meeting of the MEMRR. **Please take only one Parking Pass and sign for it with your contact information and record the pass number on the sign-out sheet as you did last semester.** If you will limit yourself to one pass it can be placed in any vehicle you may want to drive and park on the ETSU campus (parking only in legal parking places for faculty or students—not in reserved or handicapped spots, the latter unless you have a handicapped sticker or license plate). Taking only one parking pass will also allow our limited supply to go to more members who may need them. Remember, the parking permits are not needed after 3:30 p.m. as all legal parking spaces on campus are "open parking spaces" after that time.

2) A number of our members are planning to go to the train show in Easley, SC this Saturday. We may be very shorthanded in having enough members to effectively operate the Carter RR Museum. **I am asking any of you who can to please come down on Saturday, Feb 2nd and help us out.** Thank you in advance.

3) **Today I was scheduled for oral surgery to remove an infected molar along with an impacted wisdom tooth** (I can't really afford to lose any more wisdom) and the operation is scheduled for Friday morning. Depending on my ability to recover sufficiently by Saturday, I may not be physically able to make it to the Carter RR Museum as I had planned this Saturday. I regret this in more ways than one, and I shall be there if I can, but we will just have to wait and see. I just wanted you all to know that I may well be absent and this is the reason for it.

Have a great time this weekend whatever you do. I will be at the museum on Thursday as usual and hope to see you there. We have several big projects going on and John Carter could really use some gandy dancers to help with laying the Club's HO yard track and I could use a gang of "puff-ball" tree makers on the Tweetsie project. Come one down and help out!

*Regards,
Fred Alsop*

Seeing the Forest for the Trees Puff Ball Foliage

A Simple Scenery Technique to Add 3-Dimensional Depth
By Fred Alsop

The hills are alive with puff-ball trees, at least the hillsides at the Cranberry NC end of the Tweetsie layout. Fred Alsop has been occupied making hundreds of small walnut-sized fiber filled, ground foam covered clusters to represent the forested lands above the mine at Cranberry. Thousands more will be needed... so if you hear Fred muttering to himself something that sounds like "Only God and me can make a tree..." you will know why,



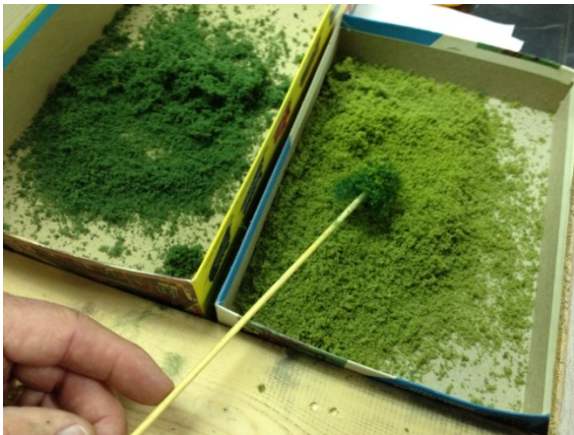
STEP 1 – Fred first forms a walnut size ball of poly-fiber. He then places the ball on a bamboo skewer which has been sprayed with WD40 or vegetable oil to prevent the ball from sticking to the skewer.



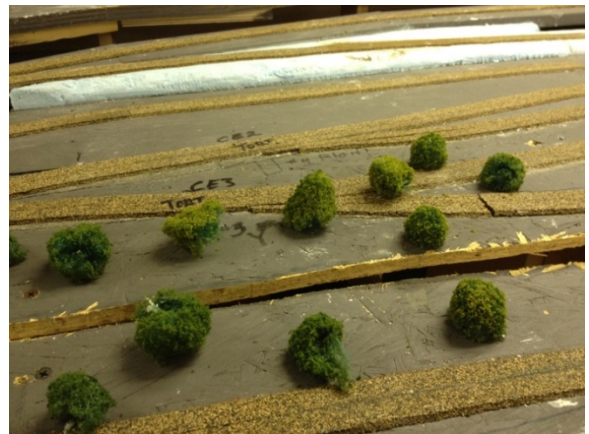
STEP 2: The fiber ball gets a healthy dose of spray contact cement... make sure you are in a well-ventilated place – wear a dust mask as the spray particles can aggravate breathing problems in the lungs – stop by the Tweetsie room if you need convincing – the spray shield pictured below is caked with built up glue deposits,



The process of repeated over-spraying and rolling the ball in the foam can be repeated until you are satisfied with the color or simulated leaf density.



STEP 3: Fred uses two colors of ground foam to create hue variations in leaf color. Roll the cement covered fiber ball in the loose ground foam until the ball is well covered.



STEP 5: The finished puff-ball tree tops are then removed from the skewer and left overnight to dry.



STEP 4: The foam coated ball gets a final overspray of hair spray to insure the ground foam is fixed in place.



STEP 6: The final step is to cut the ball in half (both front and back will not be seen and cutting the balls in half automatically doubles your tree production). Use your favorite scenery cement or white glue to affix the “tree” to the backdrop.

HINTS: Vary the colors and size of puff-balls. Larger balls are used to represent trees in the foreground, decrease their size as they recede into the distance.

From The Camera Of Paul Haynes Car Movements Through The Tri-Cities

These pix are good examples for anyone wanting to heavily weather gondola cars. As can be seen this particular car has been in the car shop more than a time or two, only the necessary work was done to make the car road worthy. Norfolk Southern is currently using it for hauling tie plates or ties. The pix was taken in November of last year in down town J C on the siding by the N S field office just off of I-26.



GEORGE CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM COORDINATORS MEETING. 10 January 2013

Meeting called to order by MEMRR President, Fred Alsop, at 6:05 p.m. in room 235, Campus Center Building, ETSU.

Library; Gary Emmert: A) The collection is now catalogued with the exception of 23 more recently donated books that need to be labeled. B) We need to make a decision on what to do with 2nd, 3rd and other duplicate copies of book in the library collection. C) **Geoff Stunkard** has created a draft for a library policy and that will be reviewed by the "Library Committee" to include **Fred Alsop, Gary Emmert, Dave Doughty,** and **Geoff Stunkard.** Fred will invite a library archivist to attend this meeting. D) We need information on archiving and protection of our growing collection of books, paperbacks and railroad-related papers. E) Should the museum purchase digital copies of Model Railroader, Classic Trains Magazine, Special Issues of Railroad Layouts, Classic Toy Trains Magazine, etc. ??



HO Freight Yard; John Carter: A) The south end (end opposite the gallery entrance door) will be finished in a couple of weeks. B) The double crossover on **Duane Swank's** module will probably be removed as it is projected to cause difficulties in operations on the layout. C) Proposed to move the two turnouts on **Rich Gallager's** and **Jim Pahr's** modules back towards the roundhouse end to facilitate switching maneuvers and place a crossover here as well.

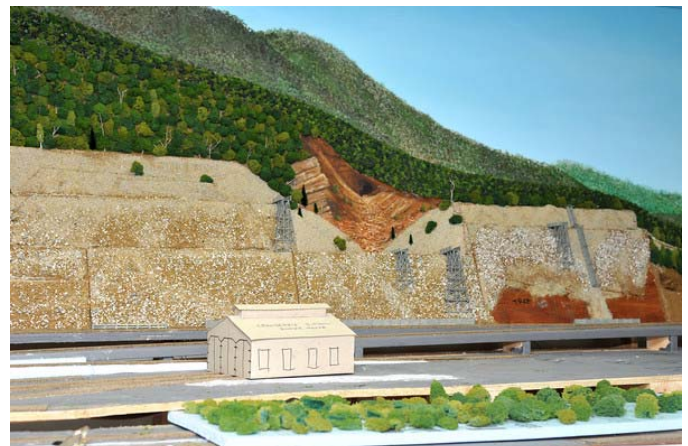
Large-Scale Layout; Jesse Kittle: There has been no contact from Bachman, Inc. on the repair of the G-Scale locomotive to be returned to them for repair. Jesse will give Fred copies of the Bachman correspondence for follow-up. Will use White Pass RR loco for parts.

N-Scale Layout; Jesse Kittle: A) **James Gregg** is working on a saw-mill for the N-Scale layout. B) We have N-Scale locos that are getting worn out and some that will no longer run. We need to replace some of them. C) There has been

some discussion about converting the Bankus layout to DCC as more N-Scale locomotives are being produced with DCC on board or with DCC plugs, but it is felt that converting the layout to DCC is currently not feasible and we need to continue to purchase analog locomotives (DC).

Events; Geoff Stunkard: A) Calendar of monthly Heritage Day Events completed for 2013. B) Geoff is creating a Norfolk Southern appreciation book to be given to the railroad featuring the Carter RR Museum, its two affiliated clubs (MEMRR and Carter Chapter NRHS), and a photo and text essay of what the museum is and what it and its volunteers are doing for the community.

Boy Scouts of America; Railroading Merit Badge; Dave Doughty and **Gary Emmert** reviewed their plans for this event to be held at the RR Museum on 19 January. There will be two sessions hosting 15 Boy Scouts each. Gary will instruct using PowerPoint on prototype railroading. Dave will instruct using PowerPoint on Operation Lifesaver. **Bill Hensley** will demonstrate soldering techniques and the MEMRR will operate the layouts in the Alsop Gallery and answer questions regarding model railroading. **Jim Pahr** is again coordinating the event with the scout leader and the local council.



Inventory & RIP; Jim Hoyt: A) Need 33" wheel sets, 100 units, for the MEMRR club cars. Motion will be made for purchase and club approval at the January Business Meeting. B) The President's train has been repaired with the replacement of 8 springs on the knuckle couplers and the replacement of one coupler.

Newsletter; Ted Bleck-Doran: The January issue of *The Signal Bridge* is ready for publication with the receipt of the President's column. Second Sunday in January is the deadline for the Jan. 2013 issue. Ted needs shots of the layouts for the newsletter.

Sales; Duane Swank: a) Engineer hats in sizes L and M will be purchased (3 dozen L and 1 dozen M). b) We need to try

to sell the battery-powered train sets left over from Christmas. Additionally, we need to display for sale the Carter books, Carter Legacy CD and the museum license plates we have on hand.

Tweetsie Project: Fred Alsop: A) The Cranberry section is the current scenery priority as the backdrop mountain has to be completed before the track and wiring can be installed. B) **Duane Swank** has made good progress on the section containing the covered deck bridge and tunnel #1. C) When Fred finishes with the Cranberry backdrop and the track laying on that section the next priorities will be 1) the construction of all the bridges on the line and, 2) the completion of the electrical wiring (**Gary Woods** is coordinating the wiring with help from several club members.)

ET& WNC RR Historical Society: Fred discussed efforts to invite this historical society to consider Johnson City as the site for one of its conventions in the near future, in 2013 if

plans have not already been made, and in 2014 if they have. Alsop cited the possibility of being hosted near the Carter RR Museum, near some of the historical buildings used by the Tweetsie RR, the proximity to Dick Conger's G-Scale Tweetsie layout, Gary Cameron's rebuilt Allison ET&WNC HO-Scale layout, the ability to draw visitors and possibly recruit members from the Tri-Cities area, and other advantages.

Modeling Contest: The coordinators discussed the desirability of organizing another modeling contest based on the success of the locomotive/rolling stock weathering contest in the summer of 2012. Ideas included the construction of a small railroad diorama with a size to be determined or perhaps a photo contest of prototype or model railroading themes, or both. These suggestions will be brought to the club.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB. The MEMRR President's Column



The snows of January 2013 have caused a lot of closings and delays on Fridays and Saturdays. I attempted to close the Carter Railroad Museum on Saturday, January 26th because ETSU had closed their campus due to the icy road conditions on the day before. I sent out an **"urgent"** notice to our WebMaster that evening advising that the RR Museum would be closed and for our volunteers to stay home and off the road. Additionally, I called two of the local TV stations and they agreed to let the public know we would be closed as well. I went to bed thinking about my decision, but with the comfort that I had done the right thing to protect everyone's safety for the following day. Saturday dawned bright, sunny, and with melting ice. Checking my email I saw that my **"urgent"** message had been posted to the MEMRR membership, but checking the local TV stations

I found that neither one had posted our closing announcement to the public. By 9:00 a.m. I decided that I would go into the Carter RR Museum to see how the road conditions were and to see if I could operate it with whomever may not have seen the "we are closed today" email that morning. The roads were mostly ice-free into Johnson City and the campus and when I arrived **Michelle Kelly** was there to host the Little Engineers Room and **Joe Roberts** and **Don Ramey** were running trains (Joe had seen the notice and told Don, but both decided to come in anyway and operate their consists.). Within the next few minutes, more MEMRR members had arrived and they kept coming in most of the day. We had a big turnout of children with their parents, visitors to the "grown-up" parts of the museum, a cub scout troop with their leaders after lunch and one big day of running trains. I was most happy that my public notice was not run by the media and that we have volunteers who are so dedicated to coming down to the Railroad Museum on Saturdays that we were able to be open even on a wintry day that held promise of keeping most people away. Thank you all for the support and personal effort you put into our model railroad club and the Carter Railroad Museum that provides our model railroading "home". **WELL DONE!!!**

The university is back into its spring semester for 2013 and all of its support facilities are open. That includes The Market Place, the cafeteria on the 3rd floor of the Culp Student Center only a few hundred yards from the RR Museum and just a little further to our monthly meeting place in Brown Hall. Those of you who want to join us for dinner before the meetings will find it convenient, quite, comfortable and with a diversity of food items to choose from. All of it is all-you-can-eat for the low price of \$5.45. Just tell the cashier you are a staff member of the Carter RR Museum to get this lower price. We will be gathering

there at 5:00 p.m. before our 6:30 business meetings each month. Many of us take our lunch there on Saturdays as well and enjoy not having to drive off campus to a restaurant and deal with any parking issues. Many of the varsity basketball games are on Saturdays and Thursdays (the latter during the evenings) and this has made parking at the museum especially difficult at times this semester as many of the “special athletic supporters” are being parked in the lot near the museum’s entrance. If you can grin-and-bear it this year things will be much better next spring when the 1,200 car parking garage is slated for completion and the crowds will be using it. Hang in there!

We have been reminding our MEMRR members in a number of way (meetings, emails, newsletters, etc.) that the dues for 2013 membership renewals have a window from late November until the end of January to be paid. You should be paid up for the 2013 year by the time you read this, and if you have not, you should not have been sent this issue of our newsletter and should not plan on getting another one until you have paid the small sum we ask of members to support our club and our club layout. I emailed and snail-mailed final notices for renewal the first weekend of February and we are most pleased that you have chosen to be a member of the MEMRR once more. **Welcome Back!!**



This will be a very special year for the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders club as this is the year we will celebrate our **20th anniversary as a model railroad club**. We will be planning some special events during the year to mark this important milestone in the life of this outstanding organization. Your suggestions for appropriate ways to do this are welcome and eagerly sought, so please make them known. We used the time during the January business meeting to plan a calendar of events for the year of 2013 and some of them will be part of our celebration. The list of events should appear in the minutes of the meeting taken by our secretary, **Hobie Hyder**, and printed within the pages of this month’s *The Signal Bridge* so look for them there.

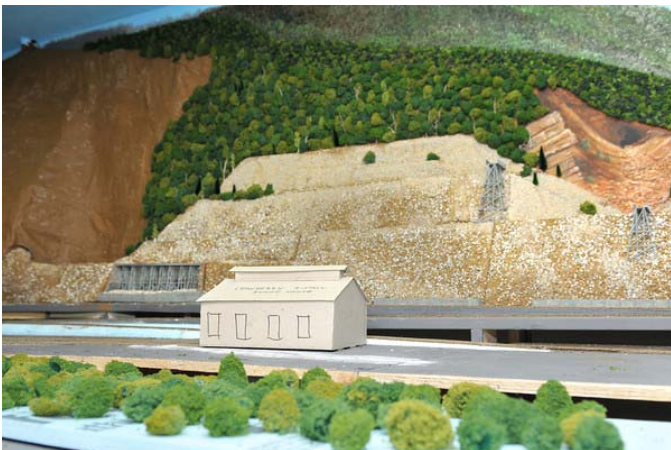
In conjunction with the annual events that were discussed at our January Business Meeting, in the January Coordinator’s Meeting the topic of organizing another modeling contest arose. It was felt that the locomotive/rolling stock weathering contest that was initiated by **Hobie Hyder** and then picked up by several of our MEMRR members who organized it and got it underway was a big success last summer. That it attracted a lot of attention from the public, provided an opportunity for club members to show off some of their modeling skills, and in addition to being fun, also resulted in some prizes being awarded by sponsoring hobby shops. It has been suggested that in 2013 we might organize a photo contest (models or prototype railroad subjects) and another modeling contest that might focus on creating a small diorama with railroad theme. If you like either or both of these ideas, let’s talk about them and see if we can get them organized into a reality. Are there any volunteers who would like to take this event on as a project?

Our sister club in the RR Museum, the **George L. Carter Chapter NRHS**, has also used their January meeting to create a calendar of events for the chapter. Among them will be a rail excursion that should be fun for the entire family. It will have a lot of positives going for it including: a short ride to the train, a steam locomotive pulling a train that is exclusively ours (no outsider passengers), a trip to the zoo, and at a very reasonable cost. The Carter Chapter is planning a Saturday, May 18th trip to Knoxville via Greene Coach Line transportation from ETSU to ride the 3-Rivers Rambler in the morning and have an afternoon at the outstanding Knoxville Zoo before returning to Johnson City. Plans are currently in the formative stage and you will get all the details you desire later, but this should be a fun trip for the entire family and you should put the date on your calendar now. **MAY 18, 2013.** (This will be the weekend following the ETSU graduation exercises.)



The big projects of last year continue to be the big projects of this year, namely, the club’s HO-scale working freight

yard and all the auxiliary components that are connected to it and the museum's Tweetsie Project. **Bill Hensley**, coordinating the wiring of the freight yard and the upgrade of the wiring for the entire layout, and **John Carter**, coordinating the track laying and design in the freight yard continue to make these their priorities. The work is progressing slowly, but it is progressing. Both coordinators could use additional to the dependable volunteer crews who have been working with them. If you have some time and interest in track laying or wiring please let these fellows know and get on their teams. The sooner we can complete this important work the sooner we can begin to operate the club layout like a real railroad with operating sessions, timetables, and tasks for our miniature locomotives and their consists. The Tweetsie Project, too, is progressing with **Fred Alsop** working with the scenery crew and **Gary Woods** coordinating the wiring that will make the narrow gauge 10-wheelers come to life on the layout. Both fellows could use additional help and would welcome you as part of their "crews". With thousands of "puff-ball" trees to be made to forest the HO_n3-scale mountainous terrain of the "Doe River Gorge" and the sides of the slopes at "Cranberry", plus some areas in between, I could use a lot of help in making these background trees. No experience is required and you can learn to make these trees in just a few minutes. We will not be able to lay the track and do the wiring at the Cranberry Mines until the background with all its many trees is completed. We can have a "puff-ball tree" party if that is what is required to get some of our modelers down to the museum. Just let me know and I'll order the refreshments.



Because of the renovations that began last summer on some of the upper floors in the Campus Center Building the RR Museum is located in, we have not been able to schedule any children's birthday parties for many months. We will be having our first one on Saturday, February 16th from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and I will need some assistance that morning before 10:00 a.m. to decorate the room. For parties numbering less than 15 participants we will be using the small conference room on the second floor that we use for our monthly coordinator's meetings. For

larger groups we will be able to use the room just down the hallway from our main gallery, room 102, as scheduling permits. It does not take much time to decorate for these events with 3 or 4 people helping out and they not only afford a memorable experience for the children, their friends and parents, but provide a small source of additional revenue for the museum as well. I'll send a reminder asking if a few of you can help with the decorations next week. Thank you for your assistance in advance.



We once again assisted the **Boy Scouts of America** in meeting some of their requirements for their **Railroading Merit Badge** in the 19th of January. **Gary Emmert** worked with the boys on prototype railroading, **David Doughty** instructed in the Operation Lifesaver materials, members of the MEMRR present that day demonstrated the operations of model railroad layouts and answered questions about model railroading, **Bill Hensley** demonstrated the art of soldering, and **Jim Pahr** coordinated the event with the local scout council. Our thanks are extended to all of you who participated in this second annual event to help our local Boy Scouts and increase their interest in railroading.

Its only February but we seem to be highballing down the main line at a good clip. There are many opportunities to engage in model railroading and to interact with the community though all you do at the Carter Railroad Museum and beyond. It is a pleasure to be associated with such an active and knowledgeable club of model railroaders and their spouses, children and significant others as we have in the MEMRR. We need you and your talents at the museum on work night Thursdays and for our public operating sessions on Saturdays. Many opportunities lay ahead for us. Listen to the sound of the whistle of the train at night and dream of all the opportunities yet to come.

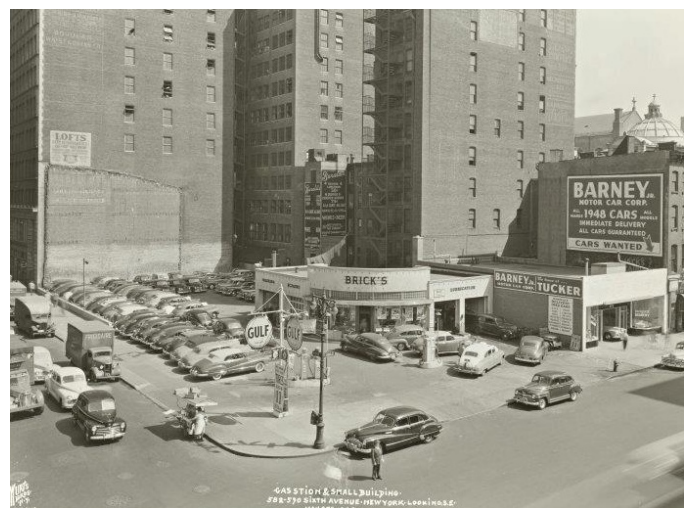
Fred Alsop
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU

REMEMBER WHEN -
A PHOTO GALLERY FOR THE PERIOD MODELER













ETSU Press Release

Tweetsie Railroad being created in Miniature at ETSU's Carter Railroad Museum

JOHNSON CITY – Perhaps the most famous narrow gauge railroad east of the Mississippi was the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad (ET&WNC), connecting the major railroads in Johnson City with the rich magnetic iron deposits along Cranberry Creek, N.C.

The narrow three-foot gauge rails wound around the small valley towns of Appalachia and followed the river-edged gorges of the Doe River along 35 miles of mountainous uphill climb to the iron mines. The shrill sound of the whistle of the little 10-wheel locomotives earned the nickname “Tweetsie” for the engines and the rail line.

Now, the members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) club are recreating the Tweetsie line in miniature within the Ken Marsh Gallery, a 1,300-square-foot exhibit hall in the George L. Carter Railroad Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University.

After much research, the MEMRR members have created the infrastructure for the display. The mountain background that contained the underground tunnels of the iron mine at Cranberry has been created and is being “forested” with miniature trees. The coal transfer trestle in the ET&W Johnson City yard is in place.

The model layout will begin its journey in a miniature Johnson City, shown in 1925, when the Tweetsie was in its heyday. The track will pass the coal chute outside Elizabethton, cross the Doe River on bridges at the town of Valley Forge and the covered deck bridge west of Hampton before entering the first tunnel and exiting across the covered bridge at Hampton. Trains will begin their ascent through two more tunnels and into Doe River Gorge and through Pardee Point, the most photographed site on the railroad. Continuing through the gorge, engines go over two more bridges and through two more tunnels, and then over Blevin's bridge. After visiting Crabtree, Roan Mountain, Shell Creek and Elk Park, the model trains will pull into a replica of the mining community of Cranberry, N.C.

Dr. Fred Alsop, director of the museum, says, “While the distances between landmarks on the model layout have to be compressed, we are depicting 35 railroad miles folded into eight scale miles, with all the bridges and five tunnels built to scale length.

“The layout has been divided into nine major sections at least 20 feet long. Each of these sections will contain major features of the railway, and each section is available for sponsorship. Donors will have their names designated on plaques and the funds donated will be used to purchase the materials needed to build the operating Tweetsie layout. Two of the nine sections have already found sponsors.”

The public is invited to tour the Tweetsie model railroad project to view its progress while visiting the Carter Railroad Museum. In addition, the museum has three operating model railroad layouts in three different scales, along with railroading exhibits, a growing research library and an oral history archive. The museum is also the home of a National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) chapter. Information can be found online at www.etsu.edu – Or – <http://johnsonspot.com/glcarter/cartermuseum.htm>.

The MEMRR club works in conjunction with the museum to demonstrate and maintain the model layouts, exhibits and special projects. Visit www.memrr.org for more details. Also, the museum hosts the George L. Carter Chapter of NRHS which focuses on prototype railroading and supports the oral history program, in addition to organizing public rail excursions. Membership opportunities are available to adults, and include special benefits.

The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are welcomed to support museum programs. The museum is located in the ETSU Campus Center Building, 100 Ross Dr., and can be identified by a flashing railroad crossing signal over the back entrance to the Campus Center Building. Visitors should enter ETSU's campus from State of Franklin Road onto John Robert Bell Drive and turn left onto Ross Drive.

For more information about the event or special assistance for those with disabilities, contact Dr. Fred Alsop, the museum's director, at (423) 439-6838.



STOP !
This may be your last issue of *The Signal Bridge* if you have not
paid your dues for 2013,
You can send your dues in today.

MEMRR
c/o Duane Swank
1763 SYLVAN HILL RD
ELIZABETHTON, TN 37643

**MEMBERS ONLY BULLETIN BOARD
TRAIN RELATED ITEMS ONLY**

MEMBER	PHONE	ITEM FOR SALE	PRICE
Duane Swank	423-542-8989	5 unit spline car set with 5 semi trailers included	\$ 80.00
Duane Swank	423-542-8989	Complete oil refinery with extra piping and tanks	\$ 50.00
Duane Swank	423-542-8989	NEW-Walthers Cornerstone Superior Paper Company 933-3060--last produced in 1998	\$ 90.00
Hobie Hyder	423-213-4067	NYNH&H tongues. Approx. 3' long. Made in Hartford, Connecticut shops OBO	\$ 75.00
Tod Eaton	423-913-2157	2 each Paragon 2 SD40-2 Norfolk Southern locomotives	\$ 175.00
Ed Champion	423-467-9934	Each \$175.00 or Both for \$325.00	\$ 175.00
Ed Champion	423-467-9934	NEW-MEMRR sweatshirt, size M	\$ 10.00
Tom Knisley	423-794-8701	Broadway Limited HO EMD SD9, N&W #2353; BLI #5290 Bought new-ran 1 day on the club layout	\$ 100.00
Tom Knisley	423-794-8701	Bachman Norfolk Southern GP-50--runs good--used--DC	\$ 20.00
Tom Knisley	423-794-8701	Athearn Blue Box PRR FP45--used--needs cleaned & lubed--DC	\$ 15.00
Tom Knisley	423-794-8701	Life Like Proto 2000 L&N E8A--used--runs good--parts missing--DC	\$ 25.00
GLC Museum		5 pictures of the heritage engines on the turntable. 36" X 18". Top 5 bidders will get a picture. Send all bids to Duane Swank at duaneharriet@charter.net. Winners will be picked the first Saturday in March.	minimum bid \$20.00

1-3 ITEMS FOR SALE—FREE
4-7 ITEMS FOR SALE—\$1.00
8-11 ITEMS FOR SALE—\$2.00
EACH ITEM OVER 11—\$0.25 EXTRA

EACH MEMBER TO SUBMIT THEIR AD ALONG WITH THE APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF MONEY TO

DUANE SWANK
1763 SYLVAN HILL RD
ELIZABETHTON, TN 37643

IF AD IS NO MORE THAN THREE ITEMS, THEN E-MAIL THAT LIST TO
 duaneharriet@charter.net

I WILL COMPRISE THE LIST BY THE 25TH OF EACH MONTH
 THEN THE LIST WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE EDITOR FOR PUBLICATION IN THE SIGNAL BRIDGE BY THE
 FIRST OF THE MONTH

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