



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

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

Volume 20 - Number 10

Published for the Education and Information of Its Membership

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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 ??

THE TWEETSIE SPECIAL

PROGRESS ON THE ET&WNC RAILROAD LAYOUT AT THE GEORGE L CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM



THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB.

The feel of fall is in the air and the leaves are beginning to show just a hint of the warm hues of October. The Mountain Empire Model Railroaders have maintained a busy pace at the Carter Railroad Museum including participating in some extra events.

The club and the museum hosted the ETSU President's Classroom on a Tuesday evening in September, the 5th time we have been selected by the ETSU administration to do so. My thanks to those of you who transported display materials and manned the table at the Erwin Train Show on September 20-21st ; especially **Dan McLeod**, **Jim Pahr**, **Mark Wormer**, **Bob Jones** and **Lanny Norris**. Dan did yeoman's work transporting our displays and sales items both to, and from, the show site at the Erwin Armory.

Our appreciation is sent also to **Jim Pahr** and **Tommy Knisley** for their help at the HobbytownUSA Swap and Sales event on October 5th, and to **Gary Emmert** and **Jesse Kittle** for helping me get everything priced and packaged for the meet.

We will be wrapping up our Photo Contest coordinated by **Geoff Stunkard** this month with a judging of the contestant's photos and the awarding of prizes. Thanks to **Hobie Hyder** for pounding the sidewalks and gathering the donated prizes for this contest. Winners will be announced in the next newsletter and perhaps if the editor has space the photos will be printed as well.

Our sister club, the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS, will be conducting their rail excursion to the Big South Fork Scenic Railway in Stearns, KY, on October 26th. This will be a great fall event riding the rails of the former Kentucky and Tennessee RR along the Big South Fork River in the Daniel Boone National Forest. The fall colors should be spectacular and the day-long event is most affordable at only \$59 for the bus ride from the ETSU campus via Greene Coach Lines ultra-modern buses, the ticket for the train, and entrance tickets for the McCreary County Museum. If you hurry you still have a chance to purchase your tickets and reserve space for you, your family and your friends for this great railroad outing.

Our MEMRR 20th Anniversary is next month and we have a design contest under way. Show your artistic talent and support of this active model railroad club that you share membership in by submitting your design for the 20th Anniversary Logo. There are no restrictions on the design other than the words, "Since 1993" have to be part of your design. The winning entry will be announced at the annual Christmas Party which is only 2 months away. So, get busy and show us your ideas and creativity with one or more submissions of a patch design.

November is the month when annual dues are due for the coming year. It is also the month when we elect all of our club officers for the 2013-2014 year. I will be forming a Nominating Committee at the October business meeting. Please let me know if you would like to serve on the committee or be nominated for the position of an officer in the club. The elected officers are: president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary, news-letter editor, and webmaster. I wish to thank the following officers who have served the MEMRR so well and with such responsible dedication during the past year. It is my hope that you will take the time to personally thank them for their valued service to the organization as well at your first opportunity.

Vice-President **John Carter** has served the club in this role for many consecutive years now and he has worked to assemble monthly programs by contacting speakers, both within and outside the club, for informative presentations as well as arranging for the showing of DVD's focused on model railroading. In addition, he has arranged for many of the club-approved purchases for the HO layout, particularly the construction of the emerging rail freight yard. John has also presided over the monthly business meetings and some of the coordinators meetings in my absence.

Treasurer **Duane Swank** has also served the club faithfully in this capacity for many years now. His books are always balanced to the penny, the bills are paid on time, and he has never been late with a monthly report. He has kept careful track of the monies coming into several accounts; the moneys from our member's dues that are the sole proprietorship of the MEMRR, and the monies from the museum's donation boxes that constitute a separate cash flow that becomes a "kitty" for the MEMRR and the Carter RR Museum as needed, but must still be tracked and accounted for. In addition, Duane has kept up with sales for the organization and the museum, arranged for the purchase of sales items for the public as well as for the club, i.e., shirts, hats, patches. We could not have enjoyed the services in this clerical role of a more capable and diligent person as our treasurer. It is regret that I announce that Duane has tendered his letter of resignation for this office ending this November and that this is one officer's position we will have to seek to fill.

Secretary **Hobie Hyder** is completing his second year as our MEMRR scribe. Hobie has a talent for taking accurate minutes and recording good accounts of our meetings, even when the action and the passions become fast-paced. He always provides me a draft of his minutes for my review and possible editing within a few days following each monthly meeting. They are always approved by the club and almost without any corrections, and any noted corrections are minor. In addition to taking and distributing the minutes of our meetings to the newsletter editor and the webmaster, Hobie sends appropriate sympathy, get-well, thank-you, etc. and other cards to our members and their families as needed as part of his duties.

Newsletter Editor **Ted Bleck-Doran** has filled this editorship role with unsurpassed excellence for several years now producing a monthly newsletter that is 12-16 pages in volume, or longer, that is second-to-none as model railroad club newsletters go. Those of you who have belonged to other model railroad clubs, or chapters of the NRHS, or other railroading organizations, realize that there are no comparable publications to *The Signal Bridge*. Ted not only publishes the standard information one would expect to see in such a newsletter containing minutes of the club's meetings, announcements, accounts of future or past events, a president's column, etc., but a vibrant, informative newsletter with modeling articles, reviews of products and books, feature articles on model railroading or prototype railroads, personal railroading stories submitted by our members, and special editions with lots of interesting, educational, collectable, and even way-out materials. Almost every member now receives their monthly newsletter electronically saving much needed dollars for other club priorities and expenditures.

Webmaster **Bob Jones** has executed this position of providing information to the club and to the public for 2 years now with outstanding service and continuously improved technology skills in the realm of social media. Bob transitioned into the position with the gracious assistance of **John Edwards** MEMRR's original webmaster and has been going full-steam ahead ever since. Bob has constantly updated the web page making it more user-friendly and adding new toolbars as well as a new look to the site. In addition to distributing *The Signal Bridge* electronically and providing a site for each month's newsletter so it can be view, read and/or down-loaded by our members, Bob has been invaluable as a means for the club's president to distribute announcements and requests for assistance to the entire membership on short notice. Having the ability to route important information to our members quickly and accurately has been of great benefit to me as your president and to our entire membership as a reliable means of disseminating news to everyone and getting responses back to me when necessary. This has created more work for the Webmaster, but has made a huge difference in information response for the officers and club members alike.

Gentlemen; it has been a distinct pleasure to serve with you this year. Each of you has done an outstanding job for the club and you have the deep respect of all of us for the

responsible manner in which you have conducted your duties, for the countless hours you have dedicated to the organization and the service you have provided that allows the organization to fulfill its role in a most professional manner. You often do your jobs so well that it attracts little notice or response from others, but never think that we take what you do for us for granted. Thank you from all of us.

You can review the duties of each officer, from the MEMRR President on down, in the MEMRR By-Laws. If you don't have a hardcopy handy please go to our website, memrr.org and you will find it on the toolbars in the left hand side of the site. If you want to be nominated for an officer position just let anyone on the Nominating Committee know of your desire serve or come to the November and have your name placed in nomination from the floor.

Informative meetings between the Carter RR Museum, some members of the MEMRR and the Project Director, Jody Gipson, of Tupelo Honey Café have continued. **Jim Pahr** is coordinating the MEMRR group and I have been acting as a facilitator and go-between. By the time you read this we will have drafted a final working agreement/contract between the two parties and designs for the N-Scale layout representing parts of Johnson City in the 1940s will be underway. ETSU is providing workspace for the project near the Carter RR Museum in the Campus Center Building. The group is conducting regular meetings and the project will take 6 months or more to complete. If you are interested in participating, or in just learning more about what is being planned, contact Jim.

In November we will mark the 6th Anniversary of the George L. Carter Railroad Museum at ETSU and the 20th Anniversary of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders. We have both come a long way down the tracks from our humble beginnings based on the passion for our hobby, our energy and drive, our talents and ingenuity, good leadership and a little bit of luck. Hear the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come.

Thank you all for what you do.

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

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 17, 2013

President Fred Alsop called the meeting to order at 6:40 P.M. in room 312 Brown Hall, ETSU, with 16 members present.

President Alsop called for the reading of the Secretary's report from the August meeting with a motion being made to except them as read by Hobie Hyder with Paul Haynes making the second. Minutes were approved by unanimous vote by the membership.

In the absence of Newsletter Editor, Ted Bleck-Doran, President Alsop informed the membership that this month's newsletter featured The Big South Fork Scenic Railroad.

Duane Swank, Treasurer reported the clubs finances were in good standing. Bob Jones, Web Master, said that the club's website was up to date.

Vice-President John Carter stated that he is in need of programs for upcoming meetings. Concluding the officer's reports,

President Alsop gave special thanks to all who helped with Samuel Newman's birthday party. He also thanked all who helped host the ETSU President's Classroom. President Alsop reported for the fifth straight year that the Carter Museum has been the classes' scheduled stop number one on the tour! President Alsop continued with his thanks, by thanking all those who helped make the Back to School - Thomas Day such a huge hit.



President Alsop asked the membership if they were still willing to participate in the Erwin Train Show and asked for clarification as to how they wanted to participate and what they wanted to take to display. The membership agreed to take the On30 layout and also the six foot module showing the various stages of how to build a module.

President Alsop reminded the membership of the upcoming fall rail excursion on Saturday, October 26th on The Big South Fork Scenic Railroad by the Carter Chapter of NHRS. He recommended that those interested in going purchase a boxed lunch. Layover is approximately 45 minutes at the Blue Heron Mine exhibits. By purchasing a boxed lunch, you will be guaranteed to get lunch and you won't have to stand in line to purchase food from vendors. Additionally you will have more time to visit the museum and exhibits.

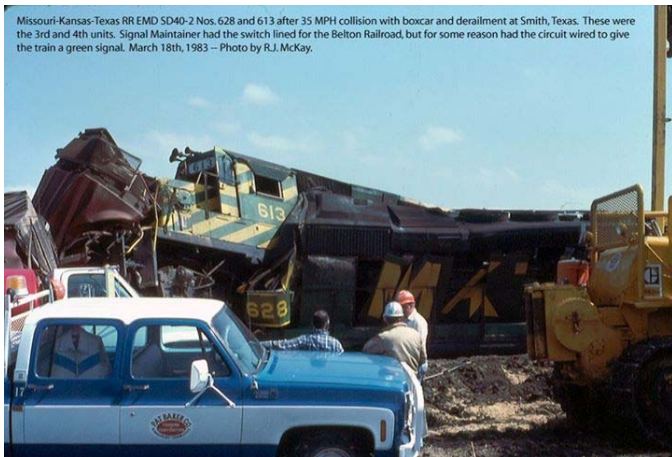
At the August MEMRR business meeting a motion was passed to purchase additional 9V rechargeable batteries for the HO layout throttles. They have not yet been purchased but will be ordered soon.

'New Business

The next Railroad Heritage Days for the museum will be September 28th. The theme will be 'Railroads of the City of Atlanta'. Geoff Stunkard stated that he would leave the Southern Lionel display on loan from Lanny Norris up for viewing. He also reminded the membership that a lot of railroads served Atlanta, i.e., L&N, NC&StL, SOU RY, ACL, COGA and more, so everyone is invited to come out and run their trains.

President Alsop said that Jim Pahriss has agreed to coordinate the Tupelo Honey Café N Scale project. Lanny Norris is working on a Construction Contract for the project. Jim Pahriss informed the membership that he will be holding a meeting for all those interested in helping with this project Monday, September 23rd at 6:30 P.M. in room 312 of Brown Hall on the ETSU campus.

President Alsop said that the ET&WNC RR Historical Society Convention will be June 27th - 29th, 2014 at the Carnegie



Old Business

President Alsop reported that approximately 30 members attended the Annual Railroad Museum picnic on September 8th at Tom and Kim McKee's home. Jim Pahriss said that a lot of work had been done on Tom's big G Scale outdoor layout. Dan McLeod brought some of his G Scale equipment and ran it.

The Photo Contest is underway as reported by Geoff Stunkard. The contest will end September 30th with possible plans to display the winners at Nelson Fine Art and The Carol Reece Museum as well as the George L. Carter Museum. Hobie Hyder, Publicity/Event Coordinator, said he was willing to work with Geoff to finalize prizes for the winners.

Discussion continued concerning the use of operation of the HO Scale layout using microphones/headsets. Bill Hensley reported that he had been in contact with the NMRA and they were unable to assist us with the information we are seeking. Hobie Hyder reported to the membership about the use and success of stationary "telephone-type" phone handsets used by some larger clubs that he recently visited in the Pittsburgh area. Dan McLeod said that the headsets needed to have an on/off switch. Further discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Hotel in Johnson City. He suggested that this event could spring into a possible Regional Train Show. He further committed that for a cost of only \$39 per person, plus membership into the organization, you could get a meal at the Carnegie on Friday night, get an after-hours ride on the Tweetsie in Blowing Rock and dinner at the Tweetsie Palace as well as a ride on the Speeders at the Doe River Gorge on Sunday.

Other New Business:

President Alsop said that the Tweetsie Trail Committee that he is on had been in contact with Chris Robbins, Owner of Tweetsie Railroad, and that he has no copyrighted rights to the name 'Tweetsie' and additionally, has no problems with the city of Johnson City naming the trail 'The Tweetsie Trail', therefore this will probably be the official name for the new walking trail from Johnson City to Elizabethton.

Duane Swank informed the membership that this will be his last year as Treasurer as he has done it for several years and he needs a break. President Alsop said that he had talked with John Dodge about assuming the role and that John will do the job if elected, but anyone interested is encouraged to let him know of their interest in this position. A round of applause was then asked for Duane, for a job well done.

Alan Morton said that he had been approached by Chuck Alter with The Festival of Nations in Greenville, asking if the club would like to participate in this event on September 28th. Mr. Alter requested that the club bring The Cope Traveling Layout and other display materials. The membership agreed that they would like to do something in the future, but could not take The Cope Traveling Layout on such short notice. James Gregg will be at the event with his Bigboy pyramid display. President Alsop agreed to ask James if he would take some signs to the event as well as some audio/video CD's and photographs showing the work at the museum. He additionally stated that the membership could take the six foot 'how to build a module' to the event if members were willing to take the responsibility to move it.

Lastly, Alan Morton, Communications Officer, stated that several members had been in contact with him wanting clarity on the headsets/headphones as there seemed to be a lot of confusion out there about them and the club's intentions. Geoff Stunkard volunteered to work on an explanation laying out all the possibilities and why it is felt that the club needs some type of communication during

future Operating Sessions. President Alsop stated that any such provisions for electronic communications would also allow for some club-owned sets to be included for the use by members or guests.



Before adjourning, President Alsop informed the membership that Rev. Howard Walker of Joliet, IL and his family will be in Johnson City October 10 - 12. Rev. Walker is the donor of most of the hardback railroad books in the Carter RR Museum library and for whom the library is named.

Secretary Hobie Hyder said that he was in need of someone to take the minutes for the October meeting as he will be celebrating his wedding anniversary. Anyone interested in helping out is encouraged to contact Hobie or President Alsop who will also be out of town with his field biology class.

Volunteers for Saturdays' Operating Sessions were then asked for by President Alsop. The business portion of the monthly meeting was concluded at 8:02 P.M.

The evening program was a DVD on the Garratts of South Africa's railroads presented by Jim Pahriss

Next meeting will be Tuesday October 15th 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*

MESSAGE FROM THE WEBMASTER

Based on the current requirements for your Webmaster, I will not be able to serve as your Webmaster into 2014. You will need a new Webmaster. If he/she needs help I will be available to help between now and mid December. Rita & I will go to Florida in January for several months. I will have a

different computer that will not have the member's e-mail address list.

If I am asked to serve as your Webmaster in 2014 the members need to change the By Laws as they affect the Webmaster's duties. I have indicated the changes below. I will post an updated member's list supplied by others, but will not maintain an updated e-mail address list. In affect I

will not be able to forward or notify members of any club events, but I will post all this information on the Website 'www.memrr.org'.

the club needs to establish a Communication Officer or Coordinator in order to commutate information to the members. It has been suggested that the Website be handled by ETSU. If that happens, the club will still need someone to commutate information to the members.

Since I have catalog over 800 library books, I will continue to help to catalog any new books for the library. Also, I can print out new membership cards of 2014 based on last year's cards.
Bob

Webmaster:

- Secure and maintain a suitable web host for the MEMRR web site. (Insure that yearly host fees are paid)

- Design and create MEMRR and George L. Carter Railroad Museum web pages.
- Maintain and update web pages in a timely manner.
- Maintain an E-mail list of all members with computer access.
- As updates of a complete member's list are received they will be posted on the MEMRR Website in a timely manner.
- Notify all members with computer access of important upcoming club events.
- Once or twice a month notify club officers with computer access on any changes or updates to the www.memrr.org website.
- Once all versions (extra and/or bonus) of "The Signal Bridge" club newsletter are released they will be combined into one monthly edition and then posted on the MEMRR Website in a timely manner.
- Maintain MEMRR E-mail server.

FROM THE WORKBENCH
RETOOLING A PAIR OF TANK CARS

Paul Haynes

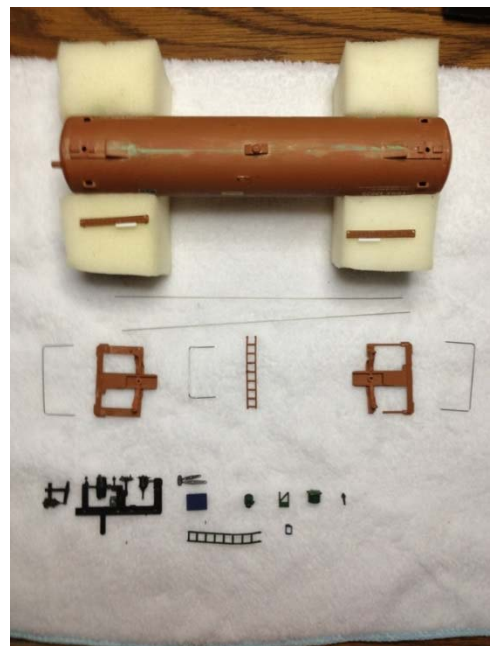


OK Gary these pics are for you.

Paul Haynes has been busy with retooling a pair of tank cars. He's been adding detail as he has made progress. New handrails, ladders, grab irons, piping, and brake system details are in the works. Here is the brown tank car as it looks now. The end sills are glued together. Only the one on the right side needs additional work.

In the second pic, I laid out all the parts that were in the box. You could say there are a few parts missing. This car is going to be a total rehab job.

At the bottom of the pix are parts that I will either replace or tweak. At the top you can see where I have puttied and sanded bottom of the tank body. Also on the cradle are the two walkways. Each one has a small strip of plastic glued to the outside edge. I will dress those to what they should look like for the hand attachments.



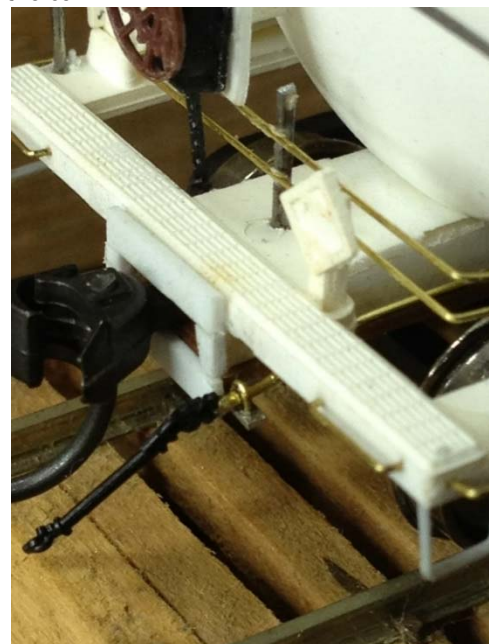
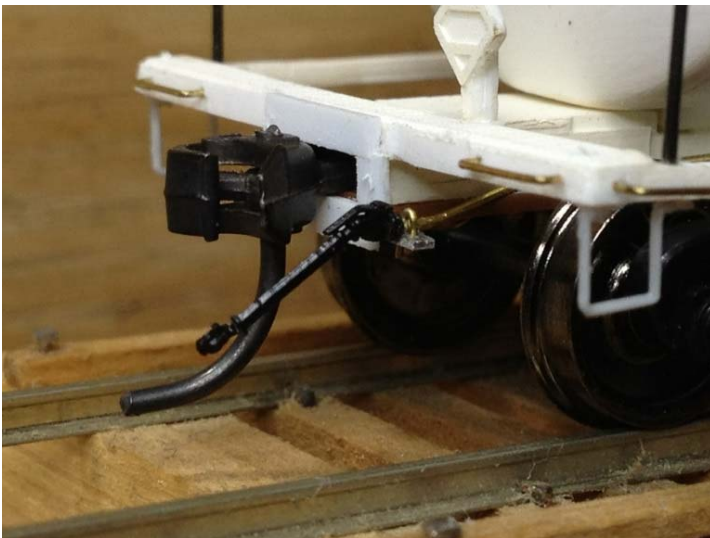
The second tank car is a UTLX shorty... It will be rehabed from top to bottom and end to end. Here are the first pic I took of the whit short tank car.



Note in the photo above are a view of the walkways with the hand rails. One is at the short end and the other is for the long end of the walkway. (That long one is the one that is needed for the brown tank car.)



One step closer. The car now has air hose and piping at both ends of the car.



Also notice the additional "steel plate" material around the coupler pocket.

**UPDATE ON THE TUPELO HONEY PROJECT
PLANS ARE IN PROGRESS FOR ASHOCASE
LAYOUT AT THE NEW RESTAURANT**

Dan, Dick and I went over to the Archives of Appalachia and printed off some maps of Johnson City to include the Southern, CC&O (Clinchfield) and ET&WNC yards and stations. These items should provide us with the

background needed to build the layout. We are going to have to use some modeler's license in what we do construct.

Yesterday, Lanny Norris and I met at the Museum and began drafting a proposed contract to present to Tupelo Honey for our participation in this endeavor. We will continue working on this document over the next several days.

I would propose that we plan to meet at **6:30PM, Monday, September 23rd**, in our regular classroom meeting location,

Room 312 in Brown Hall. I ask that each of you come prepared to state your area(s) of interest and expertise for working on this project. Please remember that we will be constructing two complete layouts, as the first one will only be modules connected together with track and wiring installed. The second set of modules will be fully scened to include structures, scenery, people and vehicles. By approaching the task in this manner we give Tupelo Honey a platform upon which to run trains and the pressure on us is not as great to have everything completed in a very short

timeframe. Lanny and I are initially proposing that we have at least 90 days to complete each of the finished modules, which means a full year after the barebones one is installed.

If you have any suggestions or comments please let me know.

*Thank you,
Jim Pahrís*

MINING ON THE BIG SOUTH FORK EQUIPMENT AND CRUSHER OPERATIONS

The BIG SOUTH FORK SCENIC RAILROAD not only preserves a railroad from yesterday and a picturesque right-of-way along the Big South Fork River, but it has saved the railroad's mainstay and primary reason for existence: coal mining. It's preservation of the Blue Heron Mine enables visitors to capture a glimpse of deep earth mining.

the mine and inside the mine itself. These motive power vehicles replaced the actual mules first used in the mine. It was not uncommon for mules to live out their days without ever seeing the sun once they were brought into the mine. Mules were also used as a safety check for the buildup of methane and carbon dioxide levels much the same as canaries.



The interpretive display takes the visitor to the seam face with a display of a pair of miners working the face. Don't worry, the scene is just a few steps inside the mine shaft. There are no bats or risk of caveins.



Just inside the mine opening and a short distance away are two ore hoppers. Like the rest of the equipment, they are low squat cars designed to work in the low clearances of the mine itself. The height of the shafts and passageways were dictated by the height of the coal seam. In Blue Heron's case the height was rarely more than 3-4 feet.



Just outside of the mine entrance is an electric "mule", a powered mine car used to move the ore hoppers to and from



The display also includes a loader with coal hopper positioned beneath the conveyor belt. In the photo below you can see the armatures and poles used to support the wire to power the electric mules.



The loader would be moved near the seamface where mechanical arms would scoop the coal broken from the face onto the conveyor belt. Temporary track would be run the the seam face and a hopper positioned to receive its load from the conveyor belt.

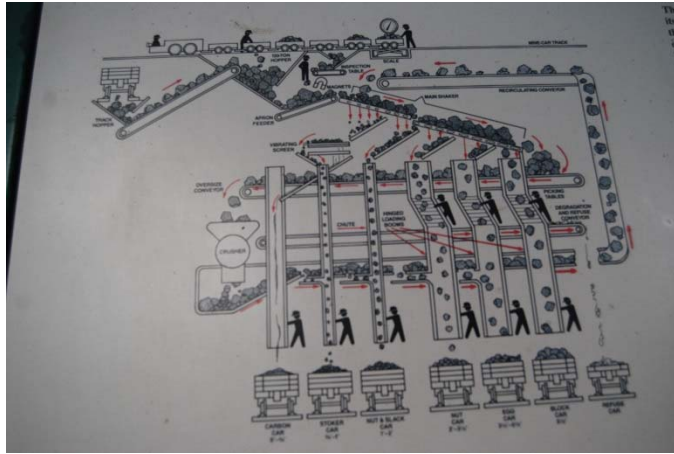


The tool shown above is a seam shear used to undercut the seam face which in turn allowed the miners to drop the coal in the seam above the cut to the mine floor. Chunks could then be broken into manageable pieces and fed to the loader. Remember all this was done at Blue Heron in a passageway 4 foot high from a kneeling position!



From the Mine the coal was transported to the crusher pictured above. There the chunks of coal was washed, broken into smaller pieces, screened for size and sorted to storage bins. From there the coal would be loaded into the awaiting railroad hoppers for transit to the coals final destination.

From the preserved Blue Heron Mine complex, the company town's buildings, represented and interpreted by skeleton framework structures, one can get a fair idea of how the company was laid out and operated.



For modeling reference take a good look a Hobie's Elkhorn Mine module at the club. It's a great depiction of a mining community not unlike the one preserved along the Big South Fork Scenic Railway.



AROUND THE CLUB ACTIVITY AT THE GEORGE L CARTER RR MUSEUM

Things have been busy at the George L Carter Railroad Museum of late. Much of the time and effort has been going into the Tweetsie Layout. At the top of the list have been the efforts of the "God Squad." (You'll realize why the name - but in case the reason is less obvious just GOOGLE: *Joyce Kilmer*). The team has been making trees... lots of trees... puff ball trees, foreground trees, ones with plastic armatures, ones sage brush, ones with wire armatures, ones one of sugar bush... there are big ones, small ones, short ones, tall ones... aw - you get the picture...



One of MEMRR's newest members, Bear, shows his technique of making a foreground tree. Bear has worked for the likes of Lucas and Spielberg creating miniature landscapes.



Above are just a sample of the several hundred puff ball trees used to represent distant forest.



Here Ken has taken some lessons from Bear and is working on a sage brush armature tree.



Brad shows off two completed foreground trees he's finished and readied for installation.

Also helping with the trees are, new members, Grace, her son and mother. In addition to trees, work is progressing nicely on the layout itself. Work on the electronics is progressing nicely under the leadership of Gary, aided by Chris and Jim.



Brad works topside while...



Jesse plays at being a contortionist underneath installing Tortise switch machines in the Johnson City yard portion of the layout.



Gary is taking ET&WNC #12 out for a test run and debugging electrical glitches.



Mike has been working on the Rabatoy layout as well as laying ballast on the Tweetsie. Here he is gluing some thin blue insulation foam down to give the otherwise flat year surface a bit of contour.



Fred makes headway on the scenery leading into the final curve into Cranberry. Fred has had help from a number of members including Duane and Dawn.



The scenery base consists of blue insulation foam cut to give the impression of the ridgeline and securing strips of cardboard to shape the contours.



The approach to the highway bridge and covered deck bridge at Hampton is shaping up nicely. You will notice photos posted along the Tweetsie right-of-way at areas where things will look as much like the prototype as possible.



The Banner Elk isle is shaping up, awaiting the installation of the fascia.

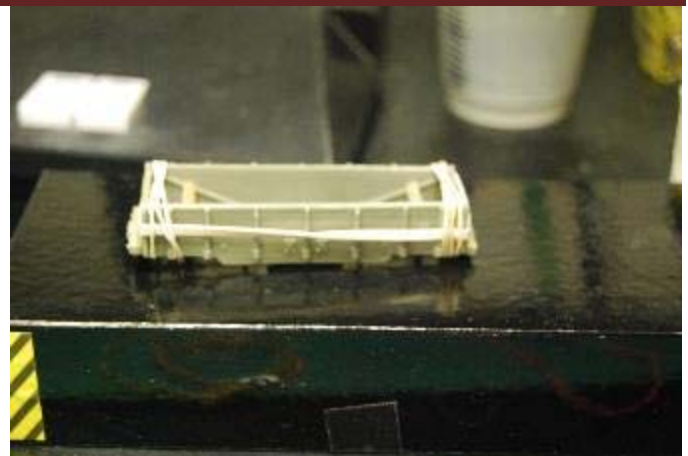


A good example of creating the prototypical feel is along the Doe River gorge isle ... here Fred has installed the retaining walls just past Pardee Point.

Work has not been limited to the Tweetsie. Larry, John and Ray have been laying track, aligning switches, wiring and installing tortoise switch machines in the new yard on the MEMRR club layout.



Gary has also been busy coordinating the Library, cataloging DVD's and researching pricing on a sizeable donation of model railroading kits, scenery items, rolling stock and locomotives.



Ted Bleck-Doran has been working on rolling stock for the Tweetsie; here's a hopper under construction. The resin mold cars be ticklish to build but make into a nice model when done.

MODELING A FLATBED LOAD BRINGING BACK MEMORIES

By Jesse Kittle

This story begins when I bought an HO scale Ford Ferguson tractor from Larry Fraser, but first a little history. I grew up on a farm in Johnson Country; a place where everyone farmed and Ford tractors were the go-to power of choice. The mountainous terrain ensured that crop row tractors (sometimes called tricycle tractors) with the two front tires very close together on a short axle were very dangerous. The more stable and affordable Ford's were much more common than John Deere's or International tractors. This is the case even to this day, long after crop row tractors have stopped being manufactured. Thus, I worked with Ford farm tractors more than any other.



The Wiking Ferguson I modeled was not quite a perfect stand-in for a Ford 8N, Ford Jubilee or even a Ford Ferguson tractor, but it is very close. Since I have always favored the light gray and red of the Ford 8N's from late 1940's and early 1950's, I decided to paint it these colors. My favorite vehicle manufacture, Classic Metal Works, has recently released 1941/46 Chevy trucks of which I bought a green flat bed. I was inspired by the tractor loaded on a flatbed truck on Fred's module, and I thus decided to weather the truck and chain the tractor down.

There are numerous sources on restoring Ford tractors online. I took my time deciding which colors to use, partly because there was

not a universal consensus of which colors to use on the restoration web sites. I settled on light gray and Chrysler engine red by Master's Models paints.



I carefully painted the tractor the respective colors and painted the seat, steering wheel, tool box, and fuel filter on the tractor flat black. The truck looked too plastic and unreal so I painted the bed of the truck with a wood brown and light gray, then wiped off the bed before the paint dried to give it an uneven coat. I followed this with a mix of weathered black, grime, and rust brown powder pastels on the bed to weather it further.



I masked off the windows and chrome grill, then sprayed the whole truck with dull coat. Since I decided that any model railroad I would build in the future would be set during the transition era, the truck would be relatively new during this period, thus I didn't over-weather the truck. I debated if I should weather the tractor, but decided against it, choosing instead to keep the tractor looking new.



One of the most outstanding details of Ford 8N is the Ford decal emblem on the side of the hood. I spent hours searching for decals that would match, but all in vain. I turned to Allen Morton. He can and does print decals in HO scale. However, the tractor is small for HO and any decal would have to be close to N scale in size. Allen can only print down to a 8 point font, so this was going to be a problem. I was unable to find anything, so I gave up and moved on for the moment, figuring I could finish the model and search for any decal later. I'll come back to this in a moment.



I have experience loading farm tractors, and I knew that backing a tractor on to the truck would have been the most stable and safe option. Since the center of gravity of the tractor is more toward the rear axle this needs to be toward the cab of the truck, so I opted for the more prototypical approach. I used square toothpicks to make wheel chocks cutting the rounded ends off, just using the center square section. I set the tractor on the bed then sent the wood wheel chocks in place, and then removed the tractor to glue the chocks in place. When deciding what type of chain to use, I ran into some obstacles. I was delayed several weeks in finishing the model as I completed my thesis for graduate school. I wanted to use Model Builders chain, but because of the delay, when I went to Modeltrainstuff.com to buy, they didn't have the 24 links per inch that I wanted, and I was forced to buy the larger 15 links per inch,

which was too big. I had chain that I had bought from Michael's but it was shiny gold chain that would need a lot of work. There are multiple bottles of a fluid marked "metal black" in the work room at the museum, so I used this to blacken the gold chain. This worked swimmingly, and I added of mix a rust and black powder pastels to weather the chain more by brushing it on and then spraying that with dull coat



With the chocks glued in place, I carefully fitted the chain around the rear wheels and front axle. I wanted to be able to take the tractor back off in case I wanted to use it to model something else. Consequently, the tractor is not glued down. With such a light little tractor not glued down, using just the chains proved to be a challenge, but with the chains glued in place under the frame of the bed, this load was complete, and I was satisfied with the results.



It was at this point I revisited the issues of the Ford decals. The tractor would have a much better look with decals on it. One of the major concerns was that the Ford 8N decals were a very distinct script that was used, red lettering and not a blue oval. Since Allen could only print down to a 8 point font, I needed to find a decal print that was save as something like a PDF file. With more searching online, I was finally able to find a print that I could resize. I sent it to Allen who was able to print off decals for me that were the right size, which was something like a 5 point font. These worked perfectly and added a significantly to the overall appearance of the tractor and truck combination. I am not sure if I am still complete with this model. I found a article in Model Railroader that explained adding license plates and mud flaps to an HO scale truck. What keeps me interested in model railroading is adding and challenging my skills. One should never settle for a result, but always strive for the very best.