



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
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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 ??**

SPECIAL EDITION: TRACK MAINTAINCE NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRACK REPLACEMENT PROGRAM



This past spring Norfolk Southern sent one of its crack track crews through the Tri-Cities area with mission of replacing its welded rail on the mainline. The crew spent nearly a week pulling spikes, replacing ties, removing the existing rail and replacing it with new welded rail. All grade crossings were also replaced or reconditioned. Approximately 7 miles of new rail were laid between Piney Flats and Telford. Paul Haynes caught the crew putting the Maintenance of Way (MOW) equipment up for the night in the Johnson City yard. Your *Signal Bridge* editor caught the team in action while working in Jonesborough. In this issue we will take a look at track maintenance and the equipment used by the railroads. All photos are by Paul Haynes and Ted Bleck-Doran unless otherwise noted.



Bunk cars on siding in Johnson City yard - 2013. Photo

MAINTENANCE OF WAY EQUIPMENT COMMON TYPES OF MACHINES

BALLAST REGULATORS - Ballast regulators are railroad Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) equipment used to shape and profile track. Produced in low, medium, and high production ballast regulators based on the need.



LIFTERS - Automatically lifting one or both rails to a pre-determined height, these Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) machines allow for the positioning of the tie plates between the ties and the rail. These self-propelled Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) machines often include such productivity-improving enhancements as plate-pushing tools, etc.

SPIKE PULLER - The Spike Puller is Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) equipment normally a single-operator compact machine designed for high-production, removal of rail spikes from a single rail, most often one spike from each side. The hydraulic/electric spike pulling mechanism extracts spikes from open rail areas and from near joint bars.





TIE CRANES - Utilized in new Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) tie gang production and for the removal of old ties. These Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) units place and position rail ties in preparation for insertion in front of the rail tie inserter.



SPIKE DRIVERS - Spike driving machines can drive up to two spikes per rail at once for a total of four at a time in each tie. These Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) spike machines are hydraulically operated.



INSERTER REMOVERS/EXCHANGER - Rail tie inserter removers exchange up to nine ties per minute while maintaining track alignment. A railway Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) tie handler manages switch ties with ease while retaining proportional control for precise tie handling.



GANG SPIKERS - Automated railroad Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) equipment, rapid and safe spike-driving machines take the work out and put speed and safety in the unpleasant and time-consuming job of driving spikes in railroad track. Modern equipment makes one or two person operation practical.

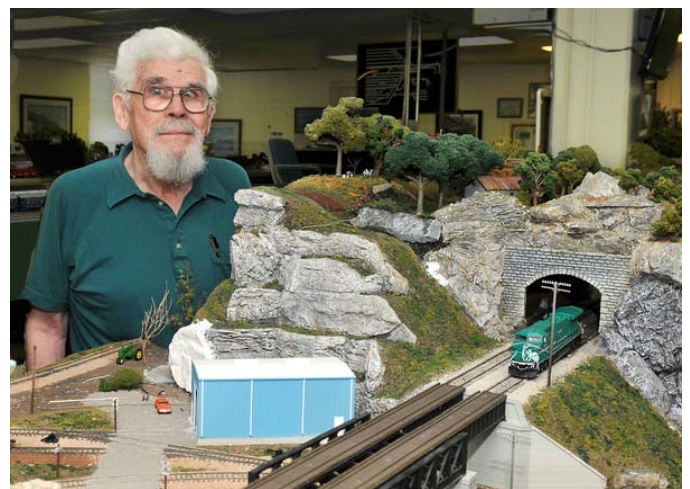


TAMPERS - Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) machines capable of raising, aligning and tamping, and resetting tie and rail assemblies, tampers are one of the most widely used MOW machines.





Reverend Howard M. Walker
Railfan and Benefactor Visits The
George I. Carter Railroad Museum



Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Meeting Minutes October , 2013

Called to order By John carter

Minutes for September was passed by Paul Haynes second by Bill Hensley

New letter sent out by Ted Black Doran available on web site

Treasure Report given to Fred Alsop

Web Master: Bob Jones plans to stay one more year in current position request a 72 hour notice instead of 24 x 7
Vice President John Carter: No program was requested. John Carter will make sure something is lined up.

President report Fred Alsop: Absent for meeting due to being out of town with Biology Class. HE would like to thank everyone for all the hard work during the Erwin Train Show September 20-21, 2013.

Old Business:

1. Photo contest continues.
2. Operating HO with microphones and Headsets. Bill Hensley reports he has spoken with a club in New Jersey and they recommended headsets with push to talk radios. Recommended to purchase in bulk packs. Phones are less cost effective and may create problems.
3. 20TH Anniversary: As of last month no entries has been made for the patch.

THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB

It's leaf-raking time and days with deep blue skies and frosty mornings; perfect weather to drink hot beverages and read our favorite railroading magazines and books. If you are a model railroader as well it is a good time to start, or finish that modeling project you have been thinking of doing. Bring your talents to the Carter Railroad Museum and help us with some ongoing projects, or take advantage of rubbing shoulders with some of the track-laying or scenery expertize available and learn to make some dandy-looking trees for foresting the Tweetsie layout. Come down and operate the layouts and join the fun on Thursday nights and Saturdays. Model railroading is a lot of fun and we have some great members to share the hobby with that are friendly and willing to help you in any way they can. Be a regular and enjoy the world's greatest hobby with us at the MEMRR and the Carter Railroad Museum.

4. Rechargeable batteries was tabled until more information is provided

New Business

1. Railroad Heritage days was October 26, 2013
2. Tupelo Honey Café and MEMRR / Carter RR Museum: drawing was presented this week and meeting will be on Monday, October 21, 2013 at 312 Brown Hall, ETSU Campus. The N scale layout will be 30 inches x 16 ft.
3. Carter Chapter Railroad Excursion at time of meeting 79 riders and 20 vacancies.
4. Early plans for Christmas Party: Held at the Choo Choo café in Erwin. \$14.50 per meal this includes 2 meats.
5. November election of officers: No volunteers at the meeting for the nomination Committee. Recommended that the previous year nomination committee serve another term. (Allen Morton, Paul Haynes, Duane Swank.

Other New Business:

1. Bill Hensley recommended a Compliance Station be developed to ensure all cars and engines are in spec prior to placing on the layout. Tabled until November meeting date.
2. Adjourn Meeting

Program: Video of "Great Model Railroads"

Submitted by:

John Carter
Vice-President, MEMRR

I want to thank chapter **Vice-President John Carter** for presiding over the October business meeting for me as I was on the Outer Banks of North Carolina with my Coastal Biology class from ETSU. Good job Jim!

The past few weeks have been busy ones for the MEMRR club and many of our members have put in a lot of extra time with our events and other special projects. The club is only as strong as its members and we have an outstanding membership with lots of talent, experience, sound leadership and good advice that has made our 20 year old model railroad club successful and fun to be a part of. Thank all of you for all you do in this collective effort that we call the Mountain Empire Model Railroad Club and for all the support you provide for the G.L. Carter Railroad Museum at ETSU.

On Saturday, October 26th, we had a book signing as part of the Carter Railroad Museum's Heritage Day Event that celebrated the N&W Railroad. Authors **A.J. "Aft" Peoples** and **Mark Stevens** signed and sold copies of their new book, **The 1 and Only: the Pictorial History of the #1**, the Clinchfield Railroads celebrated steam locomotive. The authors

donated a copy to the Carter RR Museum's library and left a small supply of books for sale at the museum. They sell for approximately \$33. Please contact our librarian Gary Emmert if you would like to purchase a copy.

The comptroller's office at ETSU has provided an account number for the NRHS Heritage Grant that we received earlier this year to support our "Tales of the Rails" oral history program. That account number facilitates our spending the grant funds for the project. I will be getting in touch with **Carolyn Gregg** and **Dr. Delanna Reed** very soon to get this interview and archiving project up and rolling again. If you have contact information for people with knowledge of railroading in the region that you feel we should interview, please let me know and we will follow up with them. Our grant funds will be spent on interview and transcribing costs between now and June 2014 and we hope to add a lot of additional interviews to our collection.

The annual RR Museum Christmas party is being planned under the coordinatorship of **Vice- President Jim Pahr** for the chapter and our sister organization, the members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders. Both organizations agreed to travel to the Choo-Choo Café in Erwin for this year's event and the agreement Jim has struck for us with the owner is most exciting. You will get further details at the November meeting and in the newsletter, but let me say that the venue will be festive, the food excellent and the party-goers should have a great evening. The meal will include 2 meats, veggies and desert; all for \$14.50 (we don't have to prepare dishes as we did in the past), the chapter/club will pick up the tip for the services; we will add our own decorations to the room in addition to the holiday decorations that will already be there, and Dirty Santa will pay a visit. Mark Tuesday, 17 December, on your calendars and plan to attend. Jim will provide additional details and we will need to know how many party-goers to expect. Members and spouses/significant-others only, so leave the little "elves" at home as this event is for grown-ups.

On Thursday, October 31st, **Jim Pahr** and I drove north toward Joliet, IL to visit **Rev. Howard Walker** and to pick up additional railroad-related items that the reverend is donating to the Carter Railroad Museum. We had lots of time on the 650 mile trip to Joliet to talk about the club, the NRHS chapter, the railroad museum and lots of other things. Rev. Walker is an outstanding person who, in addition to being a Lutheran minister, is a long-time railroad enthusiast, long-time NRHS member and former National Board Member, and a model railroader with a big HO scale layout in his basement. At 86 years of age he is beginning to slow down physically, but not mentally, and is downsizing some of his many railroad memorabilia that has been collected over a lifetime. On Saturday morning we carefully packed a van load of railroad china, railroad silver, railroad mugs, railroad locks & keys, lanterns, marker lights, photographs and prints, and much more and headed back towards the mountains of East Tennessee. His wonderful gifts are now being inventoried and catalogued and have added an additional diversity to the museum's collections. When we

have them ready for display please plan to come by the Carter Railroad Museum to see them for yourself; I think you will agree we are, indeed, most fortunate recipients of some outstanding railroading treasures.

November is an important month in the railroading world and it is for the Carter Railroad Museum. November is National Model Railroad Month. November 15th is National Take-a-Toy-Train-to-Work-Day. November 16th the Carter Railroad Museum celebrates its 6th Anniversary. This year we are planning a party and movie fest for our smallest participants and this will be a special day for our Little Engineers. Come help us celebrate the future of railroading and railroad clubs by helping the children and their parents who are regular visitors to the railroad museum understand how much we appreciate them. The 30th of November will be our Heritage Day event, "Steams Last Stand—the N&W Railroad from steam locomotives and coal drags to modern-day diesels and Heritage Units". So, mark your calendars and bring you N&W consists to the museum; or, use some of the MEMRR's club units including the Js with their passenger consists or hook up our N&W y6b articulated locomotive to a long string of freight cars and go out on the main.

November is also important because we will be electing our club officers for the coming year. The Nominating Committee has recruited a list of nominees for all of our offices, from President on through each position, and they have distributed ballots to each member. In past years only those present at the November business meeting, approximately 20-25% of our membership, voted on our officers. This year we decided that we really desired to have every member have the opportunity to vote and that this not be predicated on their ability to make it to the meeting, so ballots have been distributed to every member. Please vote and return your ballot either by mail to a committee member, or bring it to the November meeting with you. Thanks to all who served on the committee and to the nominees they have selected to fill these important posts we express our gratitude for your willingness to serve the organization for the coming year.

Our club Treasurer, **Duane Swank**, has tendered his letter of resignation from this position in the club after many years of dedicated and diligent service to the MEMRR. We collectively thank him for the experience and professionalism he has brought to our organization and wish him the very best as he "retires" from these duties that he has executed on our behalf so well. Your talents and expertise have gone a long way in supporting the club and the Carter RR Museum in assisting us to the level of financial organization we now enjoy and you have left big shoes to fill. I know you will help the new treasurer who will be elected to this vacated positions in his transition into his new role of responsibility. Please know that your service is valued and we appreciate you for your long dedication to our financial matters, big and small, but more for the wonderful person you are and for all that you have shared with us. I hope to have your friendship and your company for many years to

come and to see you often at the Railroad Museum, and at our club meetings. THANK YOU!!!!

Our MEMRR Club has come a long way in the 20 years we have been organized. In the past 6 years we have grown with our affiliation with the Carter Railroad Museum and the facilities the university has provided for us, from a model railroad club of 30 members without a "home base" to more than 100 members with more than 5,000 square feet, and no overhead, to practice our hobby in. Your talents, support and efforts have molded us into an outstanding club with

tremendous public outreach and appreciation for what we do. We still have a bright future as an organization and a wonderful collective membership. We still have tasks before us including important decisions on the direction our members wish to take us. Listen to the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come.

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

ROAD TRAINS

ONLY IN AUSTRALIA



This is a recent email sent regarding the cattle trains at Helen Springs Station.



There are interesting statistics.

- There are 17 trucks with 3 trailers and 2 decks per trailer.
- Therefore, there are 102 decks of cattle and there would be approximately 28 cattle per deck; This totals 2,856 head of cattle. The cattle will weigh approximately 500kg each (1102.3 lbs.)

- The sale price for cattle at Longreach is approx. 165c/kg (75c/lb.)
- Each animal will therefore be sold at \$825.
- Total revenue from this analysis is \$2,356,200



Another fact

Each trailer has 24 tyres plus a dolly with 8 tyres the 72 trucks there are 4,464 tyres on the road



Road trains loading cattle at Helen Springs Station, north of Tennant Creek NT ..

Now that's a Road Train!!

BUSY NOVEMBER FOR GEORGE L. CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM FEATURES SOMETHING FOR EVERY AGE

Thomas Film Fest slated for 6th Anniversary celebration on November 16, N&W Heritage for November 30. The George L. Carter Railroad Museum, located at 176 Ross Dr. on the campus of East Tennessee State University, will play host to both regional and national activities this coming month. With the end of the year approaching, November has traditionally been a busy month for visitors due to the Thanksgiving holiday. This year, the facility that opened back in 2007 will celebrate six years of being part of the community with two special days and special displays.

“We have greatly enjoyed both the pleasures and challenges the museum has presented us over these years, and really wanted to pull the stops out here for a couple of special days in November,” remarked Fred Alsop III, the museum’s director. “The things we are planning to showcase this month should hopefully find everyone who comes to the Carter railroad facility entertained.”

November is a busy month on the model railroading calendar, as it is National Model Railroad Month and, in the past, has included even a whimsical ‘National Take a Toy Train to Work Day.’ For the museum, Saturday November 16th will find things kicking off with a special exhibit on the history of model trains in the larger exhibit hall, special equipment running on the HO scale layout, and guided tours of the ongoing ET&WNC RR scale model exhibit, which encompasses 1300 square feet and showcases one of the most remembered rail lines in the region, affectionately called the Tweetsie.

Meanwhile, the ETSU associates who operate the popular ‘Little Engineer’s Room’ will be hosting a Thomas the Tank Engine Film Fest, which will include both regular shorts and the feature-length version of **Thomas: King of the Railways!** The free movie showings are scheduled for 11 AM, 12:30 PM and 1:45 PM, in addition to many special events for children. Of course, the large number of toys and games in the room will also be available to young engineers to develop and operate.

On Saturday, November 30th, during the busy Thanksgiving weekend, operations on the Norfolk & Western / modern Norfolk Southern will highlight the HO scale layouts, including everything from the steam era to the latest Heritage historic- painted locomotives that proved to be so popular last year. Special O. Winston Link and N&W-oriented films will be shown, and the public is invited to bring in any artifacts from this operation to show and display.

The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and includes model railroad layouts, a special child’s activity room, and ongoing programs. There

is no admission fee but donations are welcome for its upkeep. The museum is also seeking artifacts for display, including the newest addition dedicated to the long-defunct, but well-remembered ‘Tweetsie’ line, the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad; this room, still under construction, again will be open for guided tours during event days.

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.com> or <http://johnsonsdetpot.com/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 <http://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, 176 Ross Drive. The entrance door is adjacent to the flashing RR crossbuck; for more information contact the Museum Director, Dr. Fred Alsop, at telephone 423/439-6838 or by email at alsopf@mail.etsu.edu

George L. Carter Railroad Museum’s 2014 Heritage Day Event Schedule:

January -	Rails Through Metropolis: The Northeast Big Shots
February -	The Sound of Rail, Country Style: Nashville’s Railroads
March -	4th Annual STEAM-UP
April -	Norfolk & Western Then & Now
May -	Modern Railroads
June -	ET&WNC National Convention
June -	Song of the South: Southern Railway Heritage
July -	Big Power & Black Diamonds of Appalachia
August -	Prairie Fires and Mountain Peaks: The West Side of the Mississippi
September -	Thunder in the Timber: 120 Years of Logging Heritage
October -	George L Carter’s Fabulous Clinchfield Lines
November -	Varnish & Chrome: When Beauty Rolled the Rails (museum’s 7th anniversary with debut of the extensive Walker rail china collection for the first time ever in public)
December -	Dixie Rail Extravaganza
TBA -	Sir Topumhat’s Big Top Spectacular (for younger railfans)