



# The Coal Road

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**The Monthly Newsletter of the George L. Carter Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee Volume 4, Number 9, September 2014**

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## The Drawbar

Summer is winding down and most of us have gotten away for a little family vacation time, perhaps ridden a few trains, gone to a couple of train shows, or just had fun with our hobby of railroading. We have had good visitation at the Carter Railroad Museum this summer and a lot of progress has been made on our three big projects, our Tales of the Rails oral history project, the HO yard and the HOn3 Tweetsie Project. Some members have fought through illness and some of our former members have had the loss of family members. Fall is often a transition time and a time to focus on those things that we deem important to do before the coming winter. I hope that your continued support and activity as a member of the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS will be high on your list.

Our **annual railroad museum picnic** is very near. Once more we have been invited by **Kim and Tom McKee** to be guests for this highly anticipated social event at their lovely home on the lakeshore. Please check the list of fellow members of the MEMRR and our Carter Chapter NRHS on the MEMRR website ([memrr.org](http://memrr.org)) and add your name to the list and what you plan to bring to share with the group. The picnic is on **Sunday, 14 September** and begins at **4:00 p.m.** Tom has added to his garden railway and if you have a G-scale locomotive you want to run, bring it along and try it out in the open. But, most importantly, this is a social event to promote relaxation among friends with your spouse or significant other, and enjoy the good food and the company of our museum volunteers. Come and have a great time with us!

The Carter Chapter NRHS and the Carter RR Museum are hosting a **rail excursion on the Smoky Mountain Railroad** in Bryson City, NC on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. Information is on the MEMRR website along with ticket requests and waiver of liability forms for your convenience. There are several classes of coaches for you to choose from and the fall colors on the 44 mile round trip train ride should be outstanding. Come help

support the museum and the Carter Chapter by joining us and tell your friends, fellow church members, other organizations, etc., about the trip. We were able to fill 3 buses with 160 travelers for our rail excursion to Knoxville in May. Let's work hard to see if we can do the same, or better for this one. We would like to have 100% participation for this trip from chapter members, not only for the financial support, but to act as bus hosts and to help our guests throughout the trip. Charlene and Dan McLeod have taken over the responsibility of handling all the ticket requests, and liability waiver forms, and will be sending out all the ticket confirmation information to those signing up for the trip. This is a tremendous job and we all have to extend our appreciation to them for the work they are doing for the chapter. They will also have to make a personal trip to Bryson City to pick up the tickets when we end our sales for this trip on 10 October so we will have them in hand to distribute prior to our buses arrival at Smoky Mountain Railways. I have a guest appearance on Amy Lynn's morning show on CBS channel 11 on the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> to talk about the trip and to try to recruit members.

If you want to **add to your railroad library** with some good hardbacks on your favorite railroad at a 30% discount, see the list of books that the Carter Chapter NRHS has posted on the website that will be ordered for the NRHS National Fall Convention they will be hosting in Johnson City in mid-November. Contact **Jim Pahr** with your order and the books will be delivered prior to the convention. This is a great opportunity to get some good railroad books at a very good discount.

We have lots of great railroad books in our library as well as DVDs on railroading and model railroading. These are available for member's use. See **Gary Emmert**, our librarian, if you want access to these resources.

Some of you are not only NRHS members, but also members of the MEMRR. The NRHS just held their national elections and the recently announced results show we have elected a new president, **Al Weber**, from the St. Louis, MO area. Our own **Jim Pahr** was elected to the National Board of Directors as the Director of District 5. Congratulations Jim! **Bill Beagen** has graciously agreed to be our acting National Representative for the Fall and Winter NRHS National Conventions to give us time to fill this important position being vacated by Jim because of his election to the BOD. Thank you Bill! Now the big task begins to try to stabilize the organization's finances and to begin to grow its membership again. If you know a National NRHS member who is a member of one of the many chapters across the nation, but not a member of the George L. Carter Chapter, you can remind them that they can hold joint chapter memberships by only paying the dues of each of the chapters they wish to belong to. The Carter Chapter would like for you to invite them to join our chapter as well as continuing to be a member of their current NRHS chapter and join in our activities that include the sponsorship of rail excursions, the collection of oral histories of Southern Appalachian railroads, and the hosting of the National NRHS Fall Convention in Johnson City. Do you know at least one other person you can invite to our September meeting so we can meet them and offer them membership in our chapter? Please invite them to come with you on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Those of you who know members we recently lost because of their strong feelings about the national leadership and the direction they were taking the NRHS, please talk with them and invite them to rejoin our chapter. We need their experience, their wisdom and

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insight, and their imagination to help us continue to grow our chapter and expand its activities.

Let me also remind you that the **ET&WNC RR Historical Society** will be returning to Johnson City in June 2015 for their 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention and the Carter RR Museum will be co-hosting their convention for the second consecutive year at the Carnegie Hotel. This historical society is engaged in preserving the history of the “Tweetsie” railroad and the heart of that little narrow gauge railroad was right here in Johnson City. They are building a much better website as one means of improving member communication and with dues of only \$30 per year they are an historical society that I would encourage you to consider joining. We will become more and more associated with them as they continue to hold their conventions in Johnson City and as we progress in our creating the ET&WNC RR in HO<sub>N</sub>3 scale in the Carter RR Museum. The Historical Society has established a committee to recommend whether or not to become affiliated with the Carter RR Museum in a more formal way and will make their recommendation to the membership sometime within the next year. I have had the recent honor of being added to the Society’s Board of Directors. Their BOD will have their first meeting since their June convention in Johnson City on October 18<sup>th</sup> to begin plans for the society that will include better communication with members, an expanded web page, the 2015 annual convention, and visions for the historical society. The BOD meeting is open to members.

Here is an update on the City of Jonesborough’s proposal to ETSU for a branch of the Carter Railroad Museum in that city. I met with 12 of our members who reside in or near Jonesborough for an evening meal and discussion about this proposal, and discussions I had had with the Jonesborough City Manager, Bob Browning, ETSU President Noland, and other ETSU administrators. The purpose of the meeting was to hear their comments, their questions, and get their input based on the reality that if we do decide to place a small museum there, these members would be the nucleus of the needed volunteer staff that would be required to man it. There was unanimous consensus from these members, and two who were absent, but sent “proxy votes”, that we should proceed toward this goal. Let me state that the ETSU president will make the final decision based on all the information we can supply him with, in addition to careful cost analysis that will center on what the university shall have to supply and what would be expected from the City of Jonesborough. So, this is only the process of reacting to the proposal from the City of Jonesborough at this stage, and no decisions have been made. As I have additional meetings on this proposal I shall strive to keep you informed of everything I know about what is happening, or not happening, and continue to seek your input. On Thursday, Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>, I met with Jonesborough members from the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS, **Dick Conger**, **Bill Beagen**, and **Dan McLeod** at the Slemons House in Jonesborough (the property the city is offering as the museum site) for a thorough inspection of the premises, inside and out, so that we could collectively analyze what the structure was like, its potential as a small railroad museum, and what it would need to bring it to that juncture. I have a meeting scheduled with ETSU administration on Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss my findings and to continue the due diligence planning necessary before the university would decide to pursue negotiations with Jonesborough.

If you have not checked out our Donor's Wall recently you will find that 10 new name plates have been added to it. We greatly appreciate the gifts that these donations represent to the museum and the support of the exhibits we create and the layouts we operate. Please thank those you know whose names we post for their continued generosity towards us.

The long-awaited opening of the first 6 mile section of the Tweetsie Trail on August 30<sup>th</sup> was an outstanding success for Johnson City and the citizens of the region. More than 1,700 walkers and runners registered to participate on opening day along with more than 500 bicyclists. Many more 'crashed' the event and used the train that day without registering. In the weeks since its opening there have been thousands of users and their enjoyment of the trail has been a very positive experience. If you have not tried some part of the trail please do so. The walk is very easy, the scenery is wonderful, and you can almost see in your mind's eye the little narrow gauge steam engines moving down the ghost tracks as you walk or bike the old historic roadbed.

The university is back in session for its fall semester and that means parking is harder to find once more. If you plan to arrive at the museum on weekdays around 4:30 p.m. you can usually find parking spots as many of the university staff ends their work day and leave the campus. You don't need to use your volunteer parking permit after 3:30 p.m., but remember to always park in legal spots or run the risk of having to pay a parking fine. The Market Place, the university cafeteria in the Culp Student Center, is now serving meals all day long on its regular schedule and we will plan to dine at 5:00 p.m. on club meeting nights there. The price for a meal is still \$5.25 and it is an easy walk from there to our meeting room in 312 Brown Hall.

Thank you for your membership, your energy and talents, your support of the Carter Chapter and the Carter RR Museum, and most of all for your friendship. We have a terrific chapter of the national historical society, and a great sister model railroad club in an outstanding venue. There are lots of things happening at the Carter Railroad Museum. We are gathering a lot of attention in the community and in the region and we continue to have a lot of visitors on any given Saturday. Please continue to enjoy the passion of preserving America's railroading history, and if you participate in smaller trains, the hobby of model railroading, and continue to be ambassadors of railroading in all its forms to others. Hear 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, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS  
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU

**George L. Carter Chapter of the NRHS**  
**. Minutes of August 18, 2014**  
**Brown Hall, Room 312**  
**On the ETSU Campus**  
**6:30 PM**

The meeting was called to order by the president at 6:35 PM. Members present: Fred Alsop, Bill Beagen, John Dodge, Carolyn Gregg, Paul Haynes, Charlene McLeod, Dan McLeod, Charlotte Pahr, and Jim Pahr.

**Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**Officers Reports**

Fred reminded us that he is on the board of the ET&WNC Historical Society. That group plans to hold their convention in Johnson City next year, and is working on plans for greater publicity. At present, there are no plans for formal affiliation with the Carter Museum. There were no reports from the Vice President, Treasurer, Librarian, or Secretary. Jim Pahr, National Representative, informed us that the results of the National Election of Officers should be available about 8/26/14. It was moved and seconded to approve the Minutes of the June meeting as distributed in *The Coal Road*. The motion passed. There was no report from Directors-at-Large. The Editor of the newsletter has sent out the most recent newsletter on time. The Historian continues to work on Tales of the Rails. The Board of Directors met prior to the member meeting and discussed the upcoming excursion, and possible purchase of an ad in a book.

**Current/Old Business**

Discussion regarding TVRRM steam engine at the 2015 ET&WNC convention. Jim Pahr suggested that an initiative through ETSU might be successful in arranging such an event. Jim will investigate the cost of such a visit.

Carter RR Museum summer picnic: 14 September at 4 p.m. hosted by Tom and Kim McKee. Members should contact John Edwards to track attendance and volunteer dish.

GLC Museum Volunteers. Fred reminded us of the continuing need for museum volunteers.

**New Business**

Plans for October 2014 rail excursion. The following price list was suggested for the Excursion:

First Class:	\$140
Premium Class:	\$120
Crown Class (Adult)	\$110
Crown Class (Child)	\$75
Standard (Adult)	\$95
Standard (Child)	\$70

Discussion regarding whether prices were appropriate. It was pointed out that the price includes a markup of approximately \$10 per seat over direct cost of train ride, bus ride and meal (if appropriate). It was moved and supported to adopt the prices. Motion passed.

Purchase of Ad. It was moved and supported to purchase a half-page ad in the upcoming publication of *Early Settlers of Washington County*. Cost is approximately \$84. It was moved and supported to amend the motion to make it contingent on sharing the cost with the Carter Museum and MEMRR. The amendment passed, the amended motion passed.

MEMRR Cope Layout. The layout will be in Greenville on 9/20. Volunteers to operate it would be helpful and appreciated.

Jim Pahriss read a paper on the early history of railroads in East Tennessee. There were illustrations included.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45

**Next GLCC Business Meeting** September 15th. Those wishing to join us for dinner at 5:00 p.m. meet and eat at The Market Place, the ETSU cafeteria on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the Culp Center.

Respectfully Submitted,  
John Dodge  
Secretary *Pro Tem*

<u>MEMBERSHIP</u>		
<u>2014 Business Meeting Dates</u>		
Monday – 1/20/2014	Monday – 5/19/2014	<b>Monday – 9/15/2014</b>
Monday – 2/17/2014	Monday – 6/16/2014	Monday – 10/20/2014
Monday – 3/17/2014	Monday – 7/14/2014	Monday – 11/17/2014
Monday – 4/21/2014	Monday – 8/18/2014	<b>12/16/2014 – Christmas Party –Choo Choo Cafe</b>

**The next scheduled general meeting is Monday, September 15th, on ETSU Campus, Brown Hall Science Building, Room 312, at 6:30 p.m.**

**ETSU's cafeteria "The Market Place" on the 3rd Floor of the Culp University Center will be open for those members who wish to meet for dinner at 5:00 p.m. prior to the Chapter business meeting. Meal price is \$5.45 per person but you must mention that you are a staff member (by volunteering in the RR Museum) in order to get this reduced price.**

### **Editors Note**

With the return of Fall close upon us, I seem to keep remembering my high school years in St. Benedict's as a member of the school band. We used to play at all the home and away games that were scheduled and I had to get from Iselin to Newark early in the morning (this doesn't even take into account the parades we marched in). Of course I used the PRR to get to Newark (same one I took to get to classes, but on Saturdays the busses ran a different schedule from Penn Station to High Street, so I either had to hoof it 12 blocks or use an alternate means of transportation. Enter the Public Service Subway from Penn Station to High Street! This system used PCC cars (although I did not know what the heck they were) and ran about every 10 minutes. Problem solved and then I only had to walk 3 blocks instead of 12. Hooray for PCC's! I was in the Band for three years and the routine did not vary from week to week, so I rode those cars a lot, wish I could do it again.

The PRR is gone, and so are the PCC's, just wish I had the foresight to take a load of pictures to preserve the history. Our chapter is chartered to do just that for the area. We have so much railroad history here in Johnson City, it would be a crime not to preserve it so following generations can see what made this area prosper.



### ***The George L. Carter Chapter NRHS***

The Monthly Meetings are the Monday preceding the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM in room 312 of Brown Hall, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN. The room is on the Third floor entering from the northeast entrance doors. For more information, please write to the Chapter at:

George L Carter Chapter NRHS  
P.O. Box 70697  
East Tennessee State University  
Johnson City, TN 37614

The George L. Carter Chapter NRHS Newsletter is prepared and distributed monthly prior to the meeting. Opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily the views of East Tennessee State University and its employees, the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS, and its members, officers, and board of directors and the National Railway Historical Society. Contributions of articles are welcome and encouraged. For permission to use the material in this newsletter, please contact the editor, Bill Beagen (rbill@embarqmail.com). Contributors are Fred Alsop, Jim Pahr, Mark Woomeer and John Dodge