



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
DECEMBER 2014 - 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 ??

CHICAGO TRAINING AUTHORITY 2013 HOLIDAY TRAIN



This view of the CTA's Holiday Train looks east at 2600-series car 2894 in the north pocket track at the Ashland/63rd terminal on December 16, 2000. The CTA sent the six cars normally used on the Holiday Train to Alstom out of sequence for rehab so they'd be ready for use in the 2000 train. (Photo by Sean Gash)



The CTA's Holiday Train visits the Green Line on December 16, 2000, looking east on the outbound platform at Cottage Grove-East 63rd. The Holiday Train consists of a CTA flat car decorated with a Santa sleigh, elf workshop, and copious amounts of lights, between sets of decorated rehabbed 2600-series cars. (Photo by Graham Garfield)



Blowing snow and biting wind were not enough to stop the Holiday Train, stopped here at Library station, from operating on the Loop Elevated for the lighting of Chicago's Holiday Tree in Daley Center Plaza on November 28, 2003. (Photo by Graham Garfield)



ANOTHER TAKE ON THE 3 HOLIDAYS IN CHICAGO – CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Courtesy of Eric Bronsky

The year is 2034. A fierce winter storm has grounded most vehicular traffic. But a CTA Flexity streetcar glides effortlessly through the drifts past Marshall Field's and the Chicago Theatre en-route to Navy Pier.

To augment expansion of CTA's tram network, Mayor Elizabeth Daley ok'd purchasing 20 second-hand Flexity cars (recently overhauled by Bombardier) from Toronto. The trams are powered by Alstom's APS system, so there is no need for overhead wires.

A crystal ball? Of course it's a Photoshop fantasy—a composite of Flexity Outlook trams, introduced to Toronto in 2014 (digitally repainted in CTA livery), and State Street during the Blizzard of 2011. If streetcars and Field's return to Chicago and the Cubs win the World Series by 2034, Chicago might just be a better place.

MODELING CLINIC: BUILDING A LASER CUT WOOD KIT NC&StL Ry HANDCAR SHED

The Nashville Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway Preservation Society promoted a series of four laser cut wood building kits featuring standard structures found along the NC&StL right-of-way. The kits were designed by Terry Coates and patterned after drawings he came across researching his book on the depots, stations and terminals of the “*Dixie Line*”. The kits included models of a section house, 4 standard outbuildings, a small station, and a handcar shed.

This article will focus on the construction of the handcar shed and discuss the steps taken in the assembling the structure, as well as noting tricks and traps encountered along the way. The handcar shed kit is a relatively easy one for someone just starting out in model building. It also lends itself to “kit-bashing” and detailing for the more experienced modeler. So let’s get started...



STEP 1: Selecting the needed tools

I first gathered up the tools I would need to assemble the kit. This included:

- Cutting blade (I prefer to use a single edges utility blade, but a hobby knife with a fresh will do nicely as well).
- Tweezers for handling small parts
- Jeweler’s file for touching up cut edges
- Hobby rulers (square and angle shapes) to ensure the structure is square
- Glue
- Hobby cut self-healing work surface or pad

NOTE: I like Arlene’s fast setting Tacky Glue for hidden joints due to the relatively fast setting time. Elmer’s white glue can be used where the glue may bleed along the edges of the joint. A damp cotton swab will remove the unwanted glue seeping from the joint.

TRAP: White glue can warp wooden part since the glue is water-based. It can also create a glossy surface on the porous wood if left to dry.

TRICK: Use solvent-based cement such as AMBROID WOOD CEMENT available through Walther’s or Hobbytown. The Ambroid cement can be thinned with acetone and brushed on inhibiting glue marks from forming. If you do use solvent-based cement be sure to work in a well-ventilated area.



STEP 2: Identify the parts/review the instructions

The Handcar Shed came with a photocopy of the original standard plan drawn by the NC&StL draftsmen and an isometric drawing showing the positioning of the parts. There were no other instructions. After reviewing the drawings I then laid the parts out on my work surface. Comparing the parts with the drawing I discovered that the isometric drawing placed the 2-window end wall on the handcar storage end of the structure. This was different from the standard plan drawing. I trial fit the ends and discovered that they were interchangeable. I decided to follow the standard plan placement for the windows in the end walls.

All the parts were cleanly cut and square. There was no noticeable warping of the wooden parts (a frequent problem with wood parts that have been exposed to moisture).

Parts included:

- Walls (front, rear, 1-window end, 2-window end)
- Roof halves
- Internal base/floor
- Corner trim boards (x8)
- Plastic sprue with windows (x3), hinged door, and sliding freight door

NOTE: For future scratch building plans I noted that the plastic parts were standard parts available from **Tichy Group**. It will be easy to work from the measurements from the kit to scratch-build additional sheds when desired.

model is essentially a self-squaring box with tongue and groove notching where the end and side walls meet. The floor will keep the rest of the structure fairly square. Care still should be taken to true up the parts as you assemble the kit.

TRICK: place a small puddle of glue on a scrap piece of plastic and use a tooth pick or scrap of stripwood to coat the joints with glue. Use the glue sparingly. A damp cotton swap can be used to clean any glue that may have oozed along the joint if it is a water-based glue and hasn't set.



STEP 4: Temporarily fitting the roof and ridge pole

I used a 1/8 x 1/8 piece of strip wood for a ridgepole when assembling the roof halves. I felt that it would give a more finished appearance and could represent a ridge cap.



STEP 3: Assembling the floor and walls

You'll want to avoid glue creeping/oozing out of any joints when using Elmers or Tacky glue. An inconspicuous blob of glue can mar the finish on the structure and become noticeable after painting. The



STEP 5: Sealing the wood parts

Given that the kit is wood the parts need to be sealed prior to painting. Acrylics are water based and will definitely cause the structure to warp. Even using solvent based paints such

as the old Floquil line, Poly-S or the new replacement paints can produce warping. I sealed the structure with an overspray of Dul-Cote, a lacquer based finish. Be sure to apply the finish in several light coats to avoid filling in the laser etched siding and shingle details. Allow to dry overnight.



STEP 6: Painting the structure

I home layout features two railroad companies with a Class 1 branch being extended by a shortline's operation. To identify which company's track a train is wayside structures are painted either in a grey scheme (Muskrat Mountain Railway) or a two color yellow and green scheme (NC&StL)

Since the shed will be placed on the NC&StL portion of the Tracy City Branch I decided to paint the structure Dixieland colors. The paints I used were:

- Yellow Ochre
- Kelly Green (trim, doors and windows)
- Black (roof and interior)

I also used the following colors for weathering:

- Burnt Umber (washes and streaking the roof)
- Raw Umber (rust streaks)
- Medium grey (accumulated dust)



STEP 7: Glazing the windows

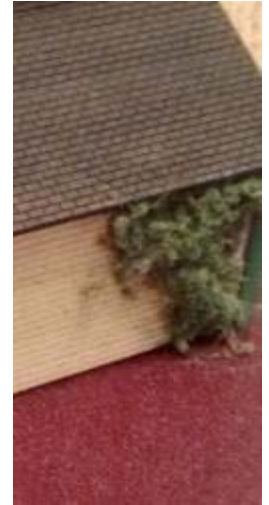
The kit didn't come with any window glazing so I rummaged through the scrap box for a piece of thin clear plastic and came away with a scrap piece left over from a Jordan vehicle kit. I measured the door and window frames and cut the four required pieces. I test fit them and trimmed the pieces when necessary for a tight fit. I put a bead of Testors Master Modeler cement around the inside of the window frames and the inside door frame. Using tweezers I set the glazing into the frame and applied gentle pressure to get a good bond between the glazing and frame.

NOTE: Elmers White glue or Tacky Glue can be used to make individual panes of glass. Draw a bead on glue across the frame until a thin film of glue is stretched across the opening. Elmers will harden with a frosted look while clear Tacky Glue will harden into a clear film. One or more individual panes can be popped out to depict broken windows.



STEP 8: Final details and weathering:

With the glazing for the windows and door in place the roof can be attached. Be sure that the overhand is each front-to-back and side-to-side. Once the glue has set the building can be weather and other details added. I decided to add some signs, a circus poster, and some vines to break up the blank



back wall. I also lightly weathered the roof adding some rust streaking from the metal ridge cap some dirt and soil splashing along the foundation since the structure does not have rain gutters. The rest of the structure was left fairly plain as though it had received a coat of paint in the recent past.

TWO EVENTS ARE 'ALL ABOARD' FOR VISITORS AT THE FREE-ADMISSION

George L. Carter Railroad Museum on ETSU's Johnson City Campus.

Carter Railroad Museum To Bring Out Passenger Train Memories in November

November marks a busy travel month for many, and one of the most popular regional attractions will be celebrating the great passenger trains of yesterday. Two events are planned this month for the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, located in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. The first is the museum's Homecoming all of November celebrating seven years of community involvement with its interactive railroad displays, while the second event will be the normally-scheduled Heritage Day with a new twist. *Varnish & Chrome: When Beauty Rolled the Rails on Passenger Trains* will be held for the first time ever on November 29.

Model railroad layouts in the museum will be operating on both days, while a display of rare older railroad service china, memorabilia and artifacts will take up a good portion of the cabinet space in the main Fred Alsop Gallery starting the November anniversary celebration. Moreover, model

versions of the trains that once carried those items and paying customers to points nationwide will dovetail into the Thanksgiving holiday.



CSX 6111 (ex-B&O 4212) GP40-2 doing switch duties in Kingsport TN

Photo courtesy of Paul Haynes

"There was always a certain romance with passenger railroading, of speeding through the night, sightseeing the American continent, and meeting new friends," admits Geoff Stunkard, the museum's Heritage Days coordinator. "Two years ago, we received an amazing collection of rare railroad china from Rev. Howard Walker of Joliet, Illinois, and these

events will be the first time it has even been seen publicly. Adding in a passenger train-themed Heritage Day was a natural thing to do.”



Shell Creek takes shape in the Tweetsie

Though perhaps cryptic, the term varnish and chrome refers to the spotless condition and service first-class patrons received in the 'golden age' of rail travel, which spanned 1870-1960. The railroads often operated some amenities of the trains at a loss, selling the experience as a public relations masterwork. The titans of business, stars of the stage and later Hollywood, and political leaders all used this mode of transit before the advent of safe airline service. The railroads invested in lavish equipment, premium service, and high-speed operation during this time, with the name trains well-known to youngsters and adults of the era.



Roundhouse on the Bankus Layout

The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and includes model railroad layouts, a special 'Little Engineer' 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:

etsu.edu

or

johnsonsdspot.com/glcarter/cartermuseum.com

The Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) 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.



A view down the main street in Shell Creek

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 HERITAGE DAYS SERIES EVENTS FOR 2014

November 15: Homecoming at Carter's Place - 7th Anniversary (debut of Walker rail china collection for the first time ever in public)

November 29: Varnish & Chrome: When Beauty Rolled the Rails on Passenger Trains

December 20: Dixie Rail Extravaganza

COORDINATORS MEETING NOVEMBER 13 2014

Meeting convened in room 235 Campus Center Building, ETSU at 6:00 by Fred Alsop. Coordinators present: John Edwards, Bill Hensley, Dan McLeod, Gary Gilliam, John Carter, Dean Small, and Ted Bleck- Doran.

WebMaster: John Edwards reported the website is up and working well. If members want MEMRR email addresses contact John. John reminded us that officer elections for 2015 were coming up this month and that he would be distributing ballots electronically to all members with email addresses.



Mountain village on the Bankus N-gauge layout

HO Electrical: Bill Hensley stated the 120 volt extension to each side of the lift bridge was completed. As a member of the ad hoc Nominating Committee the ballots for officer election had been created and were ready for distribution. Regarding the museum's railroad silver the employees of the Pigeon Forge Titanic Museum stated the use of carbon to keep the silver from tarnishing was key and that humidity was a big factor in this process. Recommended keeping the silver in a 50-55% percent humidity climate while on display and that the use of a hydrometer was important to test the humidity levels. He found a company in Missouri who would custom build a case for it, but that it would be expensive.

Tupelo Honey Café Layout: Dan McLeod reported that Allan Morton, Larry Jackson and he had continued to work on the layout and that it has been operating normally for approximately 3 weeks now. Some of the scenery needs to be re-glued and there may still be a slight kink in the "Tweetsie" track that will be corrected. Electrically, it still needs to be reset when the power is interrupted. Most of the operational problems have now been corrected.

Newsletter Editor: Ted Bleck-Doran reported the November edition of the newsletter had been distributed and that it consisted of 24 pages. He thanks the members for the raft of photos and materials they had contributed for this issue. He stated that Geoff Stunkard had agreed to submit an occasional article to the newsletter.

N-Scale Layout: Gary Gilliam reported that the layout was operating well. He stated the new trolleys purchased for it were running well and the old ones have been "retired".



Union Pacific 4840 on NS track working off some mileage
Photo courtesy of Paul Haynes

HO Scale Layout: John Carter reported that insulators had been installed on the yard tracks as needed and his crew was working on insulating the wiring beneath the benchwork on the yard. He will soon begin to weather the tracks and ties. Gary Gilliam has installed jumper wires on the lift bridge were needed.

Cope Traveling Layout: Dean Small reported that he was planning two new scenic concepts for the Cope Layout; a Thomas-the-Tank and Friends theme and a country fair theme. Dean is compiling a list of carnival equipment, i.e. Ferris wheel, bumper cars, swing ride, etc. and others and will ask the members at the November business meeting for an approved motion for funds from the club to purchase the needed structures. Dean also would like to invite any club members who are interested in helping with this project to tell him of their interests and he welcomes any help he can get.

Fred Alsop reported that he has had a meeting with an ad hoc committee created by the ETSU President to continue the study of the obligations that ETSU would assume and those that the City of Jonesborough would assume if Jonesborough's request for a satellite railroad museum of the Carter RR Museum were to be established in that city. Fred stated that the final decision would be made by ETSU



Small town details on the Bankus Layout

President Brian Noland and that he would keep the membership of the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS posted.

Fred also reported that Ken Riddle and others would be going to Alabama on the 20th to bring back a 4-4-0 steam locomotive for use by Christian Ministries in the Doe River Gorge. Fred also said the National NRHS Fall Conference headquartered at the Carnegie Hotel and hosted by the Carter Chapter NRHS would begin on 13 November and conclude on the 16th. Approximately 65 NRHS officers and member from across the country were registered to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 PM

Submitted,

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

**A PERSONAL THANK YOU
FROM THE OUTGOING SECRETARY**

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Debbie Edwards on becoming the next Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Secretary. It has been a pleasure serving the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders as your Secretary for the past two years. Thank you to President Alsop for all the nice comments and accolades at the November meeting. I am confident that Debbie Edwards will more than fill my shoes as your new Secretary and trust everyone to give her the same support that you have given me.

Sincerely,

Hobie Hyder



New firehouse on the HO club layout

**GEORGE L. CARTER RAILROAD
MUSEUM
CHRISTMAS PARTY
2014**

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum Christmas Party will be held at the Choo-Choo Café, 111 Main St., Erwin, TN on Tuesday, December 16th at 6:30PM. The price per person is \$15.00. Chapter and Club will cover the gratuity.

This is an adult only party and is open to members of the GLC Chapter, NRHS and MEMRR and their adult guests.

Jim Pahrjs will begin selling tickets for the party on Saturday, November 22nd. Ticket sales will end Tuesday December 9th. (Have to give the café a head count that date.)

Admittance to the party will be by ticket. No ticket – No tucker; Aussie for food.

Dirty Santa rules apply so bring your gifts for the present exchange, minimum of \$15.

MENU:

- Your choice of Coffee, Tea or Pepsi product
- Ham
- Turkey with Dressing and Cranberry Sauce
- Devilled Eggs
- Sweet Potatoes
- Green Beans
- Dessert – Orange Delight Cake
- Pecan Pie

Jim may be contacted by calling 423-753-8045 or email at: pahrjsj@comcast.net.

PROJECT CHALLENGE OFFERED SPEED CLOCK INSTALLATION

As many of you know, I would like to see the Train Speed system up and operating. I will donate \$75.00 to the MEMRR club if we can do it by January 25th, 2015. No change to the sensors position which are visible from both the east side and west side of the layout (same as before). This is my Challenge, which should cover most all the costs for the material needed to complete the project. As to the coal tower, the Train Speed could fit in it and be visible, but how do we get the wires up into the tower. The tower is missing the part that moves the coal to the tower. The method to move the coal to the tower could conceal the wires needed to operate the Train Speed. Question, was it an elevator or conveyor belt? If this part is missing and can be found it could be used to hide the wires.



Truckin' through the countryside on the Bankus Layout

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS MEETING MINUTES November 18, 2014

President Fred Alsop called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. in room 312 Brown Hall, ETSU, with 20 members present.

Before calling for the reading of the Secretary's report, President Alsop welcomed back Mike Buster who has had a lot of recent health issues and has been side lined from coming out to the museum.

Officer's reports:

Secretary:

President Alsop then called for the reading of the Secretary's report from the September and October meetings as

My original idea was a warehouse, which was shot down. Next idea is a water tower with an opening for the number board. Any other ideas that meet the Challenge will be accepted if completed and operating by January 25th, 2015.

*Thanks
Bob Jones*

FRED ALSOP'S REPLY

Bob:

Thanks for the mental challenge and the monetary challenge on getting the train speed system back up and operating. The coaling tower option as a possible site has been dismissed as being unworkable as it will not house the machine and the wiring needed to support it. Hopefully a group working with John Carter who is the coordinator for the HO layout and some of the electrical gurus will be able to come up with an acceptable solution. The warehouse idea was not dismissed because of the building, but rather because of the possible encroachment of that structure on a site long populated by other structures designed for those particular locations.

March on with your aspirations to get the train speed hardware reinstalled and working. This is a good project that will have the support of the MEMRR if it can be done cooperatively by those in the membership who can act as an *ad hoc* working committee to get it done. Your enthusiasm for the project means that you need to be a member of the group.

Regards and Happy Thanksgiving.

Fred

published in *The Signal Bridge*. A motion was made by Hobie Hyder, Secretary to accept them as published. Gary Emmert seconded the motion.

Newsletter Editor:

Ted Bleck-Doran, Newsletter Editor, reported that the current Signal Bridge was 24 pages long. He also thanked the membership for all of their contributions the past several months and asked that they continue submitting materials for the newsletter.

Treasurer:

Gary Emmert, Treasurer, gave the Treasurer's report and reported that the club's finances were in good standing.

Webmaster:

John Edwards, Web-Master, stated that everything was up to date and complete with the club's web page. President Alsop commended John for the excellent job he has been

doing getting club information out to the members in a timely manner.

Vice-President:

Vice-President John Carter reported that he is working on a January program and will let the membership know as soon as he has one.

President:

Concluding the President's Report, President Alsop gave the membership an update on the possible Jonesborough Satellite Railroad Museum. President Alsop said a 'punch' list had been made and that the final revisions with ETSU Administration had been made and that negotiations were on going. The final decision will be made by ETSU President Noland.



Coal Mine on the Bankus Layout

Old Business:

Planned Learning Sessions

President Alsop gave an update on the Planned Learning Sessions. He said that he would be doing the next one Thursday, November 20th at 6 P.M. in the Museum Workroom. The Learning Session will be on water. Ted Bleck-Doran will do a Learning Session on the Jordan Miniatures Thursday, December 11th.

Signal System:

John Edwards informed the membership that he will have a report on a signal system for the mainline crossovers at the wye ready to go for the next meeting. John has had some health issues that have slowed his progress.

Signal System:

Bob Jones showed the membership a two story warehouse building, that if agreed, he would order and said would be great for housing the train speed box. Presently, the speed box is not hooked up and members cannot judge train speeds.

Train Show:

Bill Hensley reported to the membership that he had been in discussions with Fred Coleman of the Cal Palace Train Show in Asheville and he has agreed to come over and help us with table layouts, etc. should we decide to host a show. President Alsop has suggested two possible locations; the Ballroom at the DP Culp Center and the Millennium Center at the Carnegie. He said that he would contact both and find out if there are any fees and what the availability for each may be.



Passengers waiting at the new Station on the HO Club Layout (Hey! Isn't that Bob Jones?)

New Business:

Heritage Days:

President Alsop, on behalf of Geoff Stunkard, Heritage Days Coordinator, reported that the next Heritage Days at the museum will be on November 29th. The theme will be *"Varnish and Chrome; When Beauty Rode the Rails on Passenger Trains"*.

Coordinator's Meeting:

President Alsop reported that the minutes of the Coordinator's Meeting will be published in *The Signal Bridge*.

Officer Elections for 2015:

Bill Hensley presented the nominations for the 2015 Club Officers and they are as follows: Dr. Fred Alsop, President; John Carter, Vice-President; Debbie Edwards, Secretary; Gary Emmert, Treasurer; Ted Bleck Doran, Newsletter Editor; sharing the duties for Web-Master; John Edwards and Bob Jones. **A motion was made by Jim Pahr and a second by Paul Haynes to elect the slate of officers by acclamation as presented. Motion passed unanimously.** President Alsop thanked outgoing Secretary Hobie Hyder who has served in that position for the past two years. He said Hobie has done an excellent job and that he had always gotten the minutes back to him in a timely fashion. His services will be missed.



Barge transfer on the Bankus Layout



HLMX 949931 hopper in Kingsport TN
Photo courtesy of Paul Haynes

ETSU Christmas Event:

President Alsop said the annual ETSU Christmas Event will be December 6th from 4 to 7 PM and that the administration had once again requested that we do a train display for the event in the administration building. Jim Pahrís agreed to take care of the display again and will ask Dan McLeod to help him with doing the display.

MEMRR/CLCRRM Holiday Party:

The Annual Railroad Museum Christmas Party will be December 16th at 6:30 P.M. at the Choo Choo Café in Erwin. Jim Pahrís is working on a menu and will let the membership know the price at a later date. Last year the cost was \$14.50 per person. A ceiling was set for gifts at \$15.00 for Dirty Santa to deliver. President Alsop said no decision would be made at the Christmas Party this year about where to have it in 2015.

MEMRR Activity Calendar Planning:

Per the October minutes, that decision will be made at the January Planning Meeting.

Cope Traveling Layout:

President Alsop, on behalf of Dean Small, Cope Traveling Layout Coordinator, stated that Dean had informed him that he has now gone through all the circus things at the museum and there wasn't much that could be salvaged. He has asked for a ceiling of up to \$500 to be used for purchasing new circus things that can be used to build two new inserts for The Cope Traveling Layout. **A motion was made by Jim Pahrís and a second by Gary Emmert to grant a ceiling of up to \$500 for Dean to purchase the necessary circus things.** Duane Swank said that he had a lot of circus stuff that he would be willing to sell the club at a discounted rate. President Alsop said he would put Dean into contact with him. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Johnson City Boys Club/Girls Club:

Concluding New Business, Charlotte Pahrís recently visited the local Boys and Girls Club and reported to the membership of their interest in having a train placed around their Christmas Tree. She also said that they were interested in having us teach them how to build a model train layout and asked the membership to support the idea. **A motion was made by Charlotte Pahrís and seconded by Gary Emmert to place a train around their tree and to help them with learning how to build a train layout.** President Alsop thought the ideas were good one, however, he suggested we do this in stages starting with the train around the tree first. After discussion, President Alsop amended the motion to state that we would do a temporary railroad display around their tree perhaps going further later. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 P.M.

Program:

Gary Emmert uthen presented a program on 'Proper Railroad Radio Communication'.

Announcemtns:

No Coordinator's Meeting is scheduled for December.

The next club meeting will be Tuesday, December 16th at 6:30 P.M. at the Choo Choo Café in Erwin for the Holiday Christmas Party.

*Respectively submitted,
Hobie Hyder, Secretary, MEMRR*

RAILFAN OUTING
MIDWAY KENTUCKY
BLUEGRASS RAILROAD MUSEUM
By Hobie & Julie Hyder

Col. John Francisco eventually purchased property here which figured into the coming of the railroad. The Lexington and Ohio Railroad was incorporated in 1830 at Lexington, the second oldest railroad west of the Alleghenies. Today the tracks are active and used daily by R.J. Corman Railroad.



One of the pics shows the actual stones/seals used by the Lexington & Ohio RR back in 1831. The Diesel is a U.S. Army MRS-1 that was used at Fort Knox, KY built by American Locomotive Works. Not sure about the Bud Car but appears to be in C&O paint scheme?

Julie just got back from Midway, KY and took these pics. Thought you might like them for the Signal Bridge? Midway was the first town in Kentucky established by a railroad.



*Enjoy,
Hobie*

The Electronics Shop

Frank Fezzie

Having just relocated to the Tri-Cities area from South Carolina, I was very happy to be able to join the Mountain Empire Model Railroad. My background as an electrical engineer and my many years of experience with Digitrax DCC systems has resulted in the club putting me right to work on the electrical systems of the various layouts. Right now I am focused on the main HO layout and I am also starting to work on the Tweetsie layout.



Heroes Day in the Little Engineers Room

A regular column in the club newsletter sounded like a good way to communicate with all of the members, both to spread important operating information to everyone, and to help shed some light on how the electronics systems operate. And thus this column is born. I will try to avoid getting too technical, but I will strive to give you enough information to form a clear understanding of the subject at hand. I plan to accept questions from any of you regarding electronics in model railroading and answer them in this column each month if I am able. Stay tuned and we will get information to you on how to submit questions.

For this first column I want to address a couple of important issues about throttles. These issues affect the reliability of radio communications between the throttles and the command station that runs the layout, both for you and for everyone else. In other words, problems in your throttle can adversely affect other engineers on the layout. So it is very important that certain throttles be properly configured to avoid these problems.



More Heroes

Digitrax has two radio systems, and the HO layout and the Tweetsie layout support both of these systems. The older system is a simplex system operating on a frequency of 800 MHz. Simplex means that communications only goes in one direction, from the throttle to the receiver. The UR91 is the radio receiver that is connected via the Loconet to the command station. The UT4R, DT400R, and DT402R throttles use this radio system. Note that the last letter of the model number of each of these throttle is "R". This is Digitrax's indication that the throttle is radio equipped and uses the simplex system. Because radio communications in the simplex system only go in one direction, these throttles must be plugged into the Loconet in order to perform certain tasks such as acquiring and dispatching locomotives, and making up and breaking up consists.

The newer radio system is a duplex system operating on various channels in the 2.5 GHz band. Duplex means that communications go in both directions between the throttle and the radio transceiver. The UR92 is the radio transceiver that is connected via the Loconet to the command station. The UT4D and DT402D throttles use this duplex radio system. Here the last letter of the model number, "D", indicates that the throttle is radio equipped and uses the duplex system. Because of the duplex communications, these throttles can perform nearly every function while unplugged from the Loconet and operating in radio mode.

And here is your first advisory about using throttles. I strongly suggest that anytime you are using the DT402D throttle to program a decoder, you perform this task with the throttle plugged into the Loconet. The duplex radio system is not bullet proof. Some keystrokes get lost in the transmission process. This can create havoc when you are trying to program a decoder.



Our own Superheroes.

The DT402 throttle is available in three versions, the DT402 with no radio, the DT402R with a simplex radio, and the DT402D with a duplex radio. Digitrax designed this throttle so that the operating software inside can be upgraded in the field. The current version of the software is version 16, also known as 1.6. It is very, very important that all DT402, DT402R, and DT402D throttles be upgraded to the current software. It is easy to determine what version of software your DT402 throttle is running. Without installing a battery, plug the throttle into the Loconet. Very briefly on the screen you will see something like DT402D16. The DT402 indicates the throttle type. The next letter indicates the radio system; "I" means no radio, "R" means simplex radio, and "D" means duplex radio. The last two digits indicate the software version installed in the throttle. These last two digits need to be 16. Older versions of the software caused unreliable communications for the throttle and could also affect other throttles in use. If you get anything different from "16" for the last two digits then see me at the club and I will upgrade your throttle software for you. I am at the museum on most Saturdays.

The DT402, DT402R, and DT402D throttles use more power than any other model, and as a result have a shorter battery life. The backlight for the display is a major consumer of battery power. The factory default setting for the backlight option in the throttle is MAX or maximum. I strongly recommend that you change the backlight option setting in these throttles to either MIN or "1". This will nearly double the battery life in the unit. In a later column I will go over all

of the throttle option settings for the DT402 series of throttles and provide suggestions as to how they should be set.



Ready for the superheroes to arrive

The DT400R throttle can be a source of significant radio problems if the options in this throttle are not set correctly. The problem is that there is a bug in the software in the throttle that results in the following; whenever the DT400R goes into sleep mode, it will periodically transmit a carrier signal at full power that results in the loss of communication for all simplex throttles such as the UT4R, DT400R, and DT402R for a period of 10 to 20 seconds. Therefore it is very, very important that sleep mode be disabled in all DT400R throttles. There are 6 option settings in the DT400R throttles. I strongly suggest that they should be set as follows:

Option #1 = x01 Ballistic Tracking On, Clicks On, Local Emergency Stop (factory default setting)

Option #2 = x83 128 Step Decoder, Power Save Off

Option #3 = x01 Backlight at Low, 12 hr clock format, 4 level stack, Teatherless Release Off (factory default setting)

Option #4 = This is the throttle ID #. It is not currently used for any reason. Value not critical.

Option #F = x0A Radio frequency. Do not change.

Option #6 = x44 Throttle type. This is value for at DT400 throttle. Do not change.

If you have questions about how to set the option settings in your throttle, feel free to see me at the museum or refer to the operating manual for the throttle. There will also be a set of instructions kept at the dispatcher's desk.

THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB: THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The holiday season is finally here with the recent passing of the American family tradition of Thanksgiving and now that we are into the month of December Christmas is only weeks away. Those of us who are still holding down jobs will look to the holiday breaks in the work schedule to take a relaxing step back and think about the year that is almost past and the new one that we are about to embark on.



Oct 24, 2014, 3 buses with 160+ people ready to depart ETSU for Smoky Mt. Railroad, Bryson City, NC

It has been another excellent year for the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders and for the George L. Carter Railroad Museum that we call our "railroading home". Together, with our sister NRHS chapter, we have made great progress in 2014 and the future continues to look bright. We have celebrated Heritage Day Events at the end of each month and many people from the surrounding area have come with their friends and family to see our displays at the railroad museum. Some have come back more than once and a few have joined our ranks as new members of the MEMRR. Our recent passenger train event on the Saturday following Thanksgiving drew more than the usual numbers of visitors to the museum with the ladies in the Little Engineers Room counting 96 playful youngsters and their attending adults while the big gallery scored at least 152 patrons seeing the layout exhibits and the dining car china and silver. We have enjoyed excellent media coverage through our press releases that have brought television reporters and newspaper reporters to our museum and very valuable publicity about our model railroad club, the NRHS chapter and the museum to thousands in the Tri-Cities region.



Depot in Bryson City, NC

Our annual elections of officers in November saw the reelection of **Fred Alsop** as **President**, **John Carter** as **Vice-President**, and **Gary Emmert** as **Treasurer**. **Hobie Hyder** resigned his post of the past two years as the club secretary and was succeeded by the election of **Debbi Edwards** to that position. **John Edwards** and **Bob Jones** decided to share the position of WebMaster and will divide those duties for the coming year. Our newsletter editor extraordinaire, **Ted Bleck-Doran**, agreed to remain in that position and **Gary Emmert** will continue to serve as our Librarian. **Allan Morton** will continue in his role as our official "greeter". Once again the election was via ballots distributed to the entire membership.



Our train arriving in Bryson City, NC

I want to take this opportunity to thank the officers who served us so well in 2014. It is through their leadership that the club transitions so smoothly throughout the year and it is with the support of the entire membership that they are able to get their extra club responsibilities accomplished. I look forward to working with the newly

elected officers in 2015 knowing how much we can all depend on them to do an outstanding job for the MEMRR and for the Carter RR Museum. I also wish to thank you all for the confidence you have shown in me to elect me to serve another year as your president. I promise to do the best I can for the club and for the museum in 2015, but I shall continue to need your help and guidance as always.



Fred Alsop at Smoky Mt. Railroad excursion 24 Oct 2014

We are in the quarter of the years when the renewal of our dues occurs. Please don't procrastinate and go ahead and renew your membership as soon as possible. The dues have stayed the same for years and we have no plans and no need to raise them in the foreseeable future so get your money or check to the treasurer soon! Your dues go only to the MEMRR, not to the support of the Carter RR Museum, so every penny is spent on the club layout, on producing and distributing our outstanding newsletter, on postage and for cards to members in poor health and the miscellaneous oddities that arise during the year. You receive a great 20+ page color monthly newsletter, 24-7 access to the Carter Railroad Museum, the use of club locomotives, rolling stock and Digitrax throttles, and the priceless camaraderie and friendship of a 100 member model railroad club that is filled with great guys and gals with lots of model railroading knowledge, experience, talents and skills who are willing to share what they know with every member. That's a great investment for only \$30 annually!

Our Annual Christmas Party is on the 16th of December and you are going to miss a great evening of fun, food and socializing if you don't attend. Besides, Dirty Santa will be in the house providing all kinds of railroading themed gifts for model railroaders, train aficionados and their spouses or significant others. I hope you did decide to come and join us for this merry holiday event. **Jim Pahr** has graciously once more volunteered to be the coordinator of this event making all the arrangements at the Choo-choo Café in Erwin and selling the tickets for the meal.



Open air coach Smoky Mt. Railroad

Those of you who subscribe to *Model Railroad Craftsman* magazine received their second publication since White River Productions took over the publication of the monthly magazine from Carstens Publishers with their November-December 2014 edition. The excitement for us is their full page ad on page 86 announcing the soon-to-be-released 6th annual edition of the *HOn3 Annual*. This is the edition that will carry **Geoff Stunkard's** article and photographs to the world on our Tweetsie Project at the museum. The ad states: "Our biggest issue yet! Now in its sixth year, the 2014 *HOn3 Annual* from White River Productions is packed with 116 pages dedicated to great HO narrow gauge model railroading. This issue includes a step-by-step article on how to scratch build an award-winning Carter Bros. combine, *HOn3* billboard reefers, coaling sheds from the C&S, scale couplers for *HOn3* rolling stock, building and operating signal board, **a tour of the Tweetsie layout at the George L. Carter Railroad Museum**, bonus prototype Tweetsie coverage and much, much more. Don't get left at the station!"



Our train along the Nantahala River

I have personally been privileged to see the 10 pages of galley proofs with their photos and the article is outstanding! Geoff has done a terrific job of describing the brief history of the ET&WNC RR and its construction in miniature in our museum and many of our MEMRR members who have been working on the layout and the project will see their names in print in this outstanding publication. Geoff's photographs of the layout are as good as any I have seen in any model railroad magazine and he is to be congratulated on the wonderful work he has done and continues to do for us. This publicity is a spectacular event for us all and should be celebrated!



GSRy 711

If you want your own personal copy there will be several ways to get one (or more). We have asked Bob and Mary Barrett at HobbyTownUSA to order 20 copies for sale to our members. You can go directly to the publisher, White River Productions and order by phone: 877/787-2467 (toll free) or by email at: info@WhiteRiverProductions.com. The listed price is \$19.95 plus shipping and handling.



Coach interior

Michelle Kelly who has brought energy and innovation to our Little Engineers Room for more than a year now will be graduating with her degree on December 13th. She has done an outstanding job with the children and their parents and/or guardians who visit the popular playroom and has brought new visibility to the museum with her Facebook page and many new events to us for the kids to enjoy. Please congratulate her on her degree and let her know how much we appreciate all her hard work on behalf of all of us and tell her how much she will be missed. A role very well played Michelle, and an act that will be very hard to follow. Thank you from all of us and from all the children that you made so happy every Saturday. Please come back to see us whenever you can!



On the return trip

On Saturday, December 6th, ETSU celebrated the holidays with a tent with live music, hot drinks and treats outside the administration on campus following the Johnson City Christmas parade. Inside the administration building they had a Santa with helper elves for children to have their photos made with and had asked the Carter Railroad Museum for the second year to have a train display for their guests. **Dan McLeod** once again transported his G-Scale locomotives and rolling stock, his town scene complete with numerous cars and trucks and lots of people to inhabit the village, along with the track and roadbed (the latter loaned by **Jim Pahr**) to the event. **Gary Emmert** and I helped him sit it up in ETSU's Dossett Hall and Dan stayed to man it. Dan is terrific with the children who come to watch the train make its endless circle route and does a terrific job representing the MEMRR and the Carter Railroad Museum as this and similar events. Gary and I helped Dan take down the display the following Sunday. Dan, thank you so much for all the time you put into these outreach events and for supplying you great layout and train equipment and materials. Your efforts on our behalf and your wonderful helpful personality

serve us and those you meet as our representative exceeding well.



Returning to Bryson City 6 p.m. and meeting dinner train

I had the privilege of putting on a sequence of two workshops in our series of “how-to-do-it” Thursday evening clinics on model railroading in November. My demonstration was based on how to create water effects and used small models of a pond, a river and a mountain stream as a base for the “lessons”. The first workshop focused on creating the base and preparing it for the water element’s contours. That was followed by painting the bed of the pDETA pond or stream with colors to simulate the color of the water and the substrate that the poured “water” would reveal using various earth tones (no blue paint) ranging from pale browns in the shallow parts of the pools and streambeds to deeper browns and some Payne’s gray to represent the deeper water.



For the second workshop on the Thursday following Thanksgiving I demonstrated how to use Envirotex (a two-part resin and hardener) to mix, pour and spread to dry to simulate water. The finished examples are in the museum workroom and I will be happy to discuss them with any of our members who may have questions about the techniques used to create them or any water effects for your own layout or diorama.

Ted Bleck-Doran has been working with several MEMRR members for many weeks now constructing Jordan Miniatures models of 1920s vintage era cars and trucks, mostly Ford model Ts. Ted has agreed to do a workshop on the construction, painting and weathering of these models on Thursday evening, December 11, at 6:00 p.m. in the Carter RR Museum workroom #108. You won’t want to miss this informative modeling clinic as Ted is one of the outstanding modelers when it comes to applying detail to very small detail items. These models of old vehicles for the road are very small indeed and Ted has the talent and knowledge to make them look like they have spent many years on dirt roads and little time being washed and waxed for special occasions. The clinics are free for members and extremely educational. Mark in on your calendar and plan to attend.



**What kind of car is this? You might be surprised!
Photo provided by PaulHaynes**

The Christmas Holiday Season is bearing down upon us faster than Santa in his reindeer-powered sleigh on Christmas Eve and the icons of the season are everywhere in the merchant’s stores, the television advertising, the classic songs on the radio, the shopping we are engaged in and the cards and letters we are writing. The Carter RR Museum is taking on a holiday look with the decorations that have been added marking this winter event. The museum will be open each Saturday throughout the holiday season and through the winter on our regular schedule only being closed if winter weather brings snow and ice that would prevent our guests and our members from having safe travel

over the roadways to get to the museum. I wish each of you a most merry holiday season and a most happy, healthy and prosperous new year for 2015. May Santa bring you some new trains and/or wanted model railroading paraphernalia, not because you need it, but because you want it and you have been good all year long. You have been very good and most cherished members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroader club all year and the work you do for the club and for the George L. Carter Railroad Museum during the year is priceless.

May you continue your memberships in the MEMRR and continue to enjoy all the privileges that inexpensive membership brings to you. We look forward to another year

with you in our company and to you help in making the club and the railroad museum even better in 2015.

Hear the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS !!

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

**NOTE FROM THE TREASURE
2015 DUES & BOOK SALE**

Dues for 2015 are now ... well ... due. Membership fees remain the same with Full Membership at \$30, Associate Membership still \$12, and additional family/household members at \$5. Each level of membership includes running rights on the club layout, 24/7 access to the train rooms and workroom, and the email version of the newsletter, *THE SIGNAL BRIDGE*. (A HARDCOPY of the newsletter can be received by mail for an additional charge.

The library is in the process of culling duplicate titles and is placing them up for sale. The sale will be by auction bid. Those bidding must meet the minimum bid. A maximum bid can be indicated. If a maximum bid is the winner, the actual price for the volume will be set at the second highest bid + \$1 (not to exceed the maximum bid. All bids must be received by the treasurer by midnight January 12, 2015 (Monday). Bids can be emailed to:

Gary Emmert at jbox1015@comcast.net

JANUARY'S BOOK LIST	Minimum Bid
MODEL TRAINS by Consumer Guild	\$ 7.00
THE GEORGIAN LOCOMOTIVES by Stafford Bryant	\$ 7.00
RAILROADING FROM THE HEAD END by Skip Farrington	\$ 7.00
STEAM PASSENGER LOCOMOTIVES - World Wide	\$ 5.00
CLASSIC STEAM TRAINS OF THE SOUTH (NEW)	\$ 9.00
TWENTIETH CENTURY LIMITED 1938-1967	\$ 9.00
CLASSIC TRAINS (UNITED STATES)	\$ 7.00
BOUND VOLUME OF MODEL RAILROADER MAGAZINE - 1964	\$12.00
BOUND VOLUME OF MODEL RAILROADER MAGAZINE - 1965	\$12.00
BOUND VOLUME OF MODEL RAILROADER MAGAZINE - 1966	\$12.00
BOUND VOLUME OF MODEL RAILROADER MAGAZINE - 1955	\$12.00
BOUND VOLUME OF MODEL RAILROADER MAGAZINE - 1956	\$12.00
BOUND VOLUME OF MODEL RAILROADER MAGAZINE - 1957	\$12.00

DETAILS TO IMPROVE THE LAYOUT
THINGS FOUND ALONG THE RIGHT-OF-WAY



MOW SHED - SPRUCE PINE, NC



ABANDONED WHEEL SET

CSX SANTA TRAIN - 2014
RUNNING THROUGH KINGSPORT TN
PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAUL HAYNES





Santa greets holiday revelers from aboard his sleigh as the CTA Holiday Train makes its way on the Orange Line in 2007.
(Photo by Tony Coppoletta)

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
CTA HOLIDAY TRAIN PHOTOS FROM
WWW.CHICAGO_L.ORG