



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 5, Number 1, January 2015



The Drawbar

Welcome to 2015! Does it seem that long ago that we were celebrating the arrival of the millennium? It is my wish that you and your family enjoyed a great Christmas and a wonderful New Year and experiences a most joyous holiday season.

We held our Annual Christmas Party for the second consecutive year at the Choo-Choo Café in Erwin, TN on the night of December 16th. Our gratitude goes to **Jim Pahr** who made all the arrangements and so skillfully coordinated this year's event. It was a festive occasion for the 45 merrymakers, members, spouses and guests, who attended. Café owner and chief-cook, Brenda, had a great meal prepared to our order and the building was decorated with a mix of railroading memorabilia and Christmas ornaments including a big Christmas tree. We had a short business meeting for both our represented club/chapter groups during which I took the opportunity to review some of the many accomplishments achieved by the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, the G. L. Carter Chapter NRHS, and the Carter RR Museum. They were many and commendable in 2014 and every member should be proud of the outcome of their work and dedication to our hobby and our passion for trains, railroading and engaging the community. Dirty Santa paid a visit after desserts were finished and he was in a milder, friendlier mood this year with little stealing of presents from our crew. We all had a wonderful time socializing with each other and enjoying the pleasure that such good company brings. It is always good to have the opportunity to back away from the business side of our clubs and the museum and engage in a great meal with family members and colleagues in railroading in a venue outside of our normal meeting arenas. I am already looking forward to our next schedule social event.

As we come into this new year we welcome the new members who joined the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS in the final quarter of 2014 and we look forward to all that they will bring to our chapter and to the Carter Railroad Museum. As a

reminder to those members who still have not renewed their memberships this window to do so that opened in November 2014 will soon close for you and we as a chapter need your continued support as does the financially strapped National NRHS. So, please get your chapter membership dues, to **John Dodge**, our treasurer, as soon as you can and, if possible, go on line and renew your national membership with a credit card. We want to keep you on our membership rolls and you want to keep all the privileges that come with your full membership of having a voice in your railroad historical society chapter, open access to the Carter Railroad Museum and all the opportunities that provides including access to layouts in 4 scales, modeling opportunities, the monthly subscription to an outstanding newsletter and the opportunity to have the newsletter exchanges from many other NRHS chapters, and the comradeship of a great group of railroader enthusiasts. **If you have not already done so renew your membership now.** Do your part to help build our chapter membership. Bring a friend to the next meeting and tell your friends about our chapter and what it is doing. Tell the also about the national organization and about the Carter RR Museum. We have a great deal to offer and you speaking for us as our representative will speak volumes for getting us potential members. Bigger is better when it comes to obtaining a critical mass for all the activities we have been engaged in so think of your recruiting new members as making your tasks in the chapter for 2015 go a little lighter.

As you are reading this I should be near the end of a birding trip in extreme northeastern India. I have never had the opportunity to bird in Asia and hope to survive this trip where I am seeking to see several hundred bird species that will be new to me (remember, I am a biologist who is an ornithologist and birding has been a hobby of mine for more than 50 years) as well as seeing a new part of the world, its people and culture and perhaps, even a tiger in the wild. If all goes well I will see you at the January business meeting.

Our January meeting is an important one for the chapter and the Carter RR Museum as it is the meeting in which we will be attempting to establish our event calendar for the year. Come prepared to provide your suggestions for the things you feel will be important for the Carter Chapter and for the Railroad Museum and our sister chapter, the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders. We will plan social events based on what we have done in the past, i.e. Spring Fling, Summer Picnic, Christmas Party, but all of these are open for comment, suggestion and possible changes. We can add to them or decide not to engage them all as the club and the Carter Chapter wishes. We will plan two more rail excursions, one in May and another in October. These have proved to be good fund raisers for the Chapter and for the RR Museum and we have created a network of contacts that is beginning to serve us well. Our two excursions in 2014 had a significant increase in guest-clients and we filled an additional bus, totaling 3, for each trip. We have discussed the possibility of sponsoring a regional train excursion in 2015 and some work has been done by **Jim Pahr** to gather information about the mechanics and possible costs of doing so as a fund-raiser for the club and the museum. So, be sure to put the January 20th meeting on your calendar and some prepared to help your officers and fellow

chapter members create an exciting calendar for 2015. The Carter RR Museum will be hosting the ET&WNC RR Historical Society for their 27th Annual Convention in Johnson City again in 2015 and we will be much further along with our Tweetsie Project by the time of their late June meeting.

Hopefully, by the time you are reading this the long awaited 6th Edition of the *HOn3 Annual* will be on the shelves of booksellers and hobby shops across the nation. This is the edition that will carry 10 pages of text and photos of our Tweetsie Project in the Carter RR Museum. I was told on December 20th by **Geoff Stunkard**, the author and photographer, of the modeling article that representatives at White River Productions have told him the magazine is at the printers. I provided information in my December column that will allow you to call or go on line to purchase your personal copy(ies) and we have asked **Bob and Mary at HobbyTownUSA** to stock 20 copies so we may be able to get them locally. If you are interested in adding to your personal collection of area railroad books and helping the chapter recoup some of its investment in them, we have a good selection of new hardback books available for sale. **Vice-President Jim Pahr** has been coordinating these sales and has been offering them to the public visiting the Carter RR Museum though the Christmas Holidays. If you would like to see a list of what is available please contact Jim, or come by the RR Museum any Saturday and look through the collection. These are the books we bought on speculation for sales at the November NRHS Fall Conference in Johnson City, and represent the remainder of the unsold stock. So, do yourself a personal favor while you are helping your chapter by selecting one or more of these outstanding volumes for some good railroad reading in a warm cozy place while the winter cold swirls outside.

Michelle Kelly, our FWS student worker, who has brought such energy and innovation to the Little Engineers Room, working first with her big sister, **Amanda**, and then with our new Station Master, **Taylor Jesse**, graduated with honors with her degree from ETSU on December 13th. We asked her to drop by the museum with her family on that Saturday following the graduation ceremonies and she did so along with Amanda, their parents and other family members. We used the opportunity to give Michelle and Amanda each a plaque commemorating their outstanding service to the Carter Railroad Museum and for the children whom they engaged with on countless Saturdays and for giving us the opportunity to know them, respect their work and to be their friends. They both went well beyond their job descriptions bringing joy and learning opportunities to their small charges in the playroom, but expanded the offerings of the museum to children and their parents/guardians by the special events they created and the Facebook technology they used to make coming to the Little Engineers Room a treasured and anticipated weekly experience for many of the areas children. Thank you, Michelle, for a job well done and the best to you in your new job in Kingsport. Come back and see us and the Little Engineers whenever you can. You too, Amanda! Michelle is working to help find her replacement so that Taylor will have plenty of help in this most popular room.

We had a very good 2014 and the future looks very bright for the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS and, with your continued help, for the George L. Carter Railroad Museum as well. The new year of 2015 has the potential for being even better with the new challenges it will bring; but new challenges are also new opportunities. 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, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU

**George L. Carter Chapter of the NRHS
Minutes of December, 2014
Choo Choo Cafe
Erwin**

Seeing as this was our Christmas party for both the MEMRR and G.L. Carter Chapter of the NRHS, there were no formal minutes taken. See Fred’s column.

<u>MEMBERSHIP</u>		
2015 Business Meeting Dates		
Monday – 1/19/2015	Monday – 5/18/2015	Monday – 9/14/2015
Monday – 2/16/2015*	Monday – 6/15/2015	Monday – 10/19/2015*
Monday – 3/16/2015	Monday – 7/20/2015*	Monday – 11/16/2015
Monday – 4/20/2015*	Monday – 8/17/2015	12/15/2015– Christmas Party

Dates with an * indicate B.O.D. Meeting also

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

As I have stated in past notes, I grew up on the main line of the PRR and rode on a lot of MUTS and behind a lot of GG-1’s. It is with much regret that I did not take a lot of pictures of the trains and stations, but you have to remember it was a common experience and did not seem out of the ordinary. Little did I know then that the days of commuting from our little station would be ending in the late 60’s. I still have a picture somewhere of our station and I purchased 2 books of PRR standard structures, alas our station was one of a kind and is not in the books. The structure on the southbound side, however, is in the book as it was a standard shelter for the PRR. I remember that shed being used at about 4 stations that we stopped at on the way back to Iselin from NYC or Newark.

One of the things I do remember was that the conductors and brakemen on the commuter trains were very friendly and accommodating. Seems like I would always get to the station in plenty of time to obtain a newspaper (The New York Daily News for 5 cents!) and see if my sister would be running for the train as usual. We only lived three blocks from the station and because Auth Avenue was on an angle, I could see if she was on her way. About 99% of the time she was OK and just running up the stairs as the train pulled in. But on some occasions it would be necessary for me to inform the Conductor that a passenger was a little late and would he hold the train for her to make it. Needless to say, they would always delay the train from 30 seconds to a minute for my sister. I still can see her running up the stairs as the train waited. Those were the Good Old days.

My Sister became a Nun in 1956 and is still active at 84 years old. The good thing is she doesn't have to run for the train anymore and has finally retired as a Curriculum Librarian at Mt. Saint Mary's College in Newburgh New York. I sure do miss holding the train for her though.

Bill



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 Pahriss, Mark Woomer and John Dodge

NRHS Convention sales now on line!

The ticket sales function now is operating with a link from the NRHS website. The dome and first class seats are selling fast but, of course, plenty of coach seats are available.

Those of you who are chapter officers, please get the word out to your members.

Thanks,

Walter Zullig

Chairman, VERMONT RAILS 2015

To get to the NRHS site, go to www.NRHS.com and click on the appropriate link.