



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 4:00 pm until ??

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

5000 SERIES RAPID TRANSITY CAR

ENDS ITS RUN ALONG THE NORTH-SOUTH RED LINE.



RAPID TRANSIT
THE OTHER RAILROAD
RIDING THE "L" IN CHICAGO



Our journey starts at the Howard Street Station on the north side of Chicago on the border with the city of Evanston. The station is a major transfer point between the Red, Purple and Yellow lines.

Respectively the lines are: RED=North-South local between Howard Street and the 95th/Dan Ryan station on Chicago's Southside; PURPLE=North-South Local trains from North Evanston to the Howard and Express trains from Howard to the Loop; and, YELLOW=the Skokie Swift Express from Howard Street to the City of Skokie on Chicago's Northside.

On the day of our visit the PURPLE line was rerouted to the subway through downtown Chicago due to repairs to the "L" tracks so we did not ride to the loop. The lines see heavy use during the weekday commuter rushes, so repair time is limited to off hours and weekends. The "L" structure dates to the 1890-1900 era and receives constant attention.

The Skokie Swift line was also out-of-service due to an embankment failure. The Skokie line was originally the high-speed line for the famed Chicago, Northshore, and Milwaukee Railway. It was built for speed. However, one of the fills just north of the Chicago-Skokie border was built over a trestle and back filled. When a second track was added to the line, the embankment was simply extended laterally to the side. As a result when the water authority performed waterline repairs this past spring, the unsupported track and embankment collapsed leaving track and ties dangling across the void. Fortunately the collapse happened during off hours for the "Swift" while no trains were operating. Shuttle buses are being employed to span the gap in service. Of course commuters are finding their commutes lengthened from the normal 7-10 minutes to 30+ minutes each direction.

Due to the disruption of service on the day we rode the "L" Howard was not as busy as it might have been during a regular work day. Still there was plenty of action since RED, PURPLE and BROWN (this line joins the main North-South "L" and serves the Northwest neighborhoods of the city) lines run on 10-15 minute intervals on weekends.



Buses and taxis aren't the only vehicles that get shrink wrapped advertising... a 5000 series "L" car gets the treatment as well. Unlike New York's mass transit cars, Chicago cars are remarkably free of urban art and graffiti.



Another string of 5000 series cars are headed southbound to the loop. This train is destined for the 95th/Dan Ryan station on the south side. Since the train does not loop for the return trip the destination sign reads Howard on the rear of the train. RED line markers can be seen above the middle window along the car side.



Not all "L" cars are the same... there are subtle differences between cars. Here is a 3000 series car stopped at Belmont station. It is headed south on the BROWN Line. Its usual destination is the Loop, though on this day it will be routed through the subway line.



Here is a view of the "L" structure from the top side. The view is looking south toward the Loop from the end of the Belmont platform. Note how even the lower level of the right-of-way is used as a car park. Parking in the city runs upwards of \$30 per day especially in the Loop itself.



These two views are from the front of car 3283 heading towards the Loop. Notice the complex track work with three sets of double crossovers and the requisite diamonds. This complex track arrangement is required to accommodate trains running on multiple routes against local and express traffic.



Except for the contemporary clothing these two photos could have been taken anytime in the "L"'s storied history.



Famed Wrigley Field – home of the Chicago Cubs – is readily accessible by rapid transit. The ball park is nestled in a quaint neighborhood. Note the right field bleachers set atop an apartment complex. A new scoreboard nearly finished off this tradition..... only in Chicago!



Back at Howard Street Station a train consisting of 5000-series cars has finished its run and will soon wend its way through the yard.



An Evanston Express is set to depart for the northern most station – Linden Ave – at the end of the line.



A view of the Howard Street yard, home for Skokie, Evanston and Loop trains.



In the distance an Evanston Express approaches the flyover that will allow the train free passage from the yard onto the Evanston 2-track main.

A trip on the "L" is worth the effort if ever in the Chicago area. Total time for our short excursion was 45 minutes. Cost: \$0.00 parking (yep we found free parking on the street at Howard St.; and \$5 for two fares. There is no need for additional fares if you change between platforms. An unlimited day pass can be purchased for \$10 weekdays and \$6 weekends. You can easily ride from Howard to the Loop, detrain and observe the elevated from the ground in the Loop. There are great photo opportunities like along the river where the "L" crosses the river on an early 1900's lift bridge.

For contemporary passenger service you have easy access to the Roosevelt overpass south of Union station which services Amtrak, and METRA commuters. There is lots of action to see as trains constantly arrive and depart throughout the day.

CTA CARS AND EQUIPMENT
A CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL ROSTER
 From [WWW.Chicago-l.org](http://www.Chicago-l.org)



STATE OF THE ART (SOAC) Cars

Specifications:

Built by: St. Louis Car Division, General Steel Industries
Year: 1972
Length: 74'-8.5"
Width at Windows: 9'-9"
Trucks: ?
Truck wheelbase: 7'-6"
Wheel diameter: ?
Weight (w/o passengers): 90,000 lbs.
Free speed: 80 mph

Width at Floor: 9'-7.25"
Height over Roof: 11'-8.5" to 12'-1.5"
Truck centers: 33'-8"
Coupler: ?
Seats: 62 (Car 1), 72 (Car 2)
Motors per car: ?



3200 Series

Specifications:

Built by: Morrison-Knudsen
Year: 1992-94
Length: 48'-0"
Width at Windows: 9'-4"
Trucks: Duewag
Truck wheelbase: 78"
Wheel diameter: 28"
Weight (w/o passengers): 54,290 lb. (cars without pans)
 56,100 lb. (cars with pans #)
 54,600 lb. (cars with roof boards ##)
Balancing speed: 70 mph

Width at Floor: 8'-8"
Height over Roof: 12'-0" *
Truck centers: 33'-8"
Coupler: #1 end / #2 end: Form 5 / tubular
Seats: 39 **

Motors per car: 4 GE1262A4 @ 110hp

Governed speed: 55 mph +

* 13'-6" height to top of locked down pantograph on cars 3445-3456

** Except cars 3401-02 with double seats substituted for the single seats

Cars assigned to Yellow Line service, last pantographs removed in late 2004-early 2005

Cars with pantographs removed but still with roofboards and some ancillary equipment

+ The propulsion package, while capable of higher speeds, is limited by the logic of the car controls and the external signal system.



5000 Series

Specifications:

Built by: Bombardier Transit Corporation
Year: 2009 (5001-5012),
 2011-? (5013-5714)
Length: 48'-0"
Width at Windows: 9'-4"
Trucks: Bombardier
Truck wheelbase: 6' 6"
Wheel diameter: 28"
Weight (w/o passengers): 57,000 lbs
Balancing speed: 70 mph

Width at Floor: 8'-8"
Height over Roof: 12'-0"
Truck centers: 33' 8"
Coupler: #1 end / #2 end: Form 5 / tubular
Seats: 38
Motors per car: 4
Governed speed: 55 mph +



2600 Series

Specifications:

Built by: Budd Company/Transit America
Year: 1981-1987
Length: 48'-0"
Width at Windows: 9'-4"
Trucks: Wegmann

Width at Floor: 8'-8"
Height over Roof: 12'-0"
Truck centers: 33'-8"

Truck wheelbase: 78" **Coupler:** #1 end / #2 end: Form 5 / tubular
Wheel diameter: 28"
Seats: A-43 B-49 (as-built)
 A-45 B-46 (after mid-life rehab) *
Weight (w/o passengers): 54,140 lb **Motors per car:** 4 GE1262A1 @ 110hp
Balancing speed: 70 mph **Governed speed:** 55 mph +
 * Cars rebuilt by Alstom in 1998-2002
 + The propulsion package, while capable of higher speeds, is limited by the logic of the car controls and the external signal system.



2400 Series

Specifications:
Built by: Boeing-Vertol
Year: 1976-1978
Length: 48'-0" **Width at Floor:** 8'-8"
Width at Windows: 9'-4" **Height over Roof:** 12'-0"
Trucks: Wegmann **Truck centers:** 33'-8"
Truck wheelbase: 78" **Coupler:** #1 end / #2 end: Form 5 / tubular
Wheel diameter: 28"
Seats: A-43 B-49 (as-built)
 A-45 B-45 (after mid-life rehab) *
Weight (w/o passengers): 54,300 lb.
Motors per car: 4 GE1262A1 @ 110hp **Balancing speed:** 70 mph
Governed speed: 55 mph +
 * Rehabbed by Skokie Shops in 1987-1995
 + The propulsion package, while capable of higher speeds, is limited by the logic of the car controls and the external signal system.



2200 Series

Specifications:
Built by: Budd Company
Year: 1969-70

Length: 48'-0" **Width at Floor:** 8'-8"
Width at Windows: 9'-4" **Height over Roof:** 12'-0"
Trucks: Budd Pioneer III **Truck centers:** 33'-8"
Truck wheelbase: 78" **Coupler:** #1 end / #2 end: Form 5 / tubular
Wheel diameter: 28"
Seats: A-47 B-51 (as-built)
 A-42 B-46 (after mid-life rehab) *
Weight (w/o passengers): 47,400 lb.
Motors per car: 4 GE1250K1 @ 100hp
Balancing speed: 70 mph **Governed speed:** 55 mph +
 * Rebuilt by New York Rail Car in 1990-1992
 + The propulsion package, while capable of higher speeds, is limited by the logic of the car controls and the external signal system.



2000 Series

Specifications:
Built by: Pullman Car Co.
Year: 1964
Length: 48'-0" **Width at Floor:** 8'-8"
Width at Windows: 9'-4" **Height over Roof:** 12'-0"
Trucks: CTA-1 **Truck centers:** 33'-8"
Truck wheelbase: 78" **Coupler:** #1 end / #2 end: Form 5 / tubular
Wheel diameter: 28" **Seats:** A car / B car: 47 / 51
Weight (w/o passengers): 47,400 lb.
Motors per car: 4 GE1250K1 @ 100hp
Balancing speed: 65 mph **Governed speed:** 55 mph +
 + The propulsion package, while capable of higher speeds, was limited by the logic of the car controls and the external signal system



1-50; 61-65 Series

Specifications:

Cars 1-50:

Built by: St. Louis Car Co.

Year: 1959-60 *

Length: 48'-0"

Width at Floor: 8'-8"

Width at Windows: 9'-4"

Height over Roof: 11'-10"

Trucks: St. Louis B-20 (1),
GSC General 70 (2),
Budd Pioneer III (3), St. Louis B-30 (4),
St. Louis B-3 (5-50)

Coupler: Form 5

Wheel diameter: 26"

Seats: 46

Weight (w/o passengers): 45,900-51,500lb. (depending on equipment)

Motors per car:

- GE 1250D1 (1),
- GE 1250E1 (2),
- WH 1454D (3, 4),
- GE 1220F1 [on delivery],
- WH1432Lk [1964 - cars converted to Skokie service],
- 1432's [1985 - all cars] (5-50)

Balancing speed: 70 mph (1-4), 50 mph (5-50)

Cars 61-65 A&B:

Built by: St. Louis Car Co.

Year: 1959-60 **

Length: 96'-3" (as-rebuilt married pair unit) **

Width at Floor: 8'-8"

Width at Windows: 9'-4"

Height over Roof: 11'-10" (13'-6" to top of locked down pantograph)

Trucks: St. Louis B-3

Coupler: Form 5

Wheel diameter: 26" **Seats:** 90 (as-rebuilt married pair unit) **

Weight (w/o passengers): 99,650 lbs. **

Motors per unit: 8 WH1432LK @ 55hp

Balancing speed: 70 mph

Governed speed: 55 mph +

* Rebuilt by Morrison-Knudsen in 1985

** Built as 1-50 series cars, rebuilt by Morrison-Knudsen in 1985, renumbered, and joined into two-car units

+ The propulsion package, while capable of higher speeds, was limited by the logic of the car controls and the external signal system.

Trucks: Clark B-2

Truck centers: 33'-8"

Truck wheelbase: 72" **Coupler:** #1 end / #2 end: Form 5 / tubular

Wheel diameter: 26"

Seats: A car / B car: 47 / 51 (varied)

Weight (w/o passengers): 41,700 lb.

Motors per car: 4 W 1432 @ 55hp

Balancing speed: 50 mph



5000 Series

Specifications:

Built by: Pullman Car Co. (5001-02), and

St. Louis Car Co. (5003-04)

Year: 1947

Length: 88'-7.5"

Width at Floor: 8'-8"

Width at Windows: 9'-4"

Height over Roof: 12'-2"

Trucks: Clark (5001-02) and St. Louis (5003-04)

Truck centers: 33'-8"

Truck wheelbase: 72"

Coupler: Form 5

Wheel diameter: 26"

Seats: 96

Weight (w/o passengers): 93,000 lb.

Motors per car: WH1432LK (5001-5002),

GE 1220 (5003-5004)



4000 Series

Specifications:

Built by: Cincinnati Car Co.

Year: 1914-15 (4001-4250),

1922-24 (4251-4455)

Length: 48'-6"

Width: 8'-8"

Height over Roof: 12'-3"

Trucks: Baldwin MCB 78" M / 66" T

Truck centers: 33'-8"

Coupler: Stearns & Ward

Wheel diameter: 34" M / 31" T

Seats: 52

Weight (w/o passengers): 54,000 lb. (4001-4066),



6000 Series

Specifications:

Built by: St. Louis Car Co.

Year: 1950-59

Length: 48'-0"

Width at Floor: 8'-8"

Width at Windows: 9'-4"

Height over Roof: 11'-10"

**WESTERN RAILROADS IN
ACTION ROAR IN SCALE SIZE AT
ETSU'S CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM
ON JULY 25**
**'GO WEST, YOUNG MAN – BIG
COUNTRY RAILROADING WEST OF THE
MISSISSIPPI; WILL SHOWCASE NEWS AND
OLD TRAIN AT FREE MUSEUM'S MONTHLY
HERITAGE DAY**

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum Heritage Day kicks into a powerhouse overdrive with 'Go West, Young Man – Big Country Railroading west of the Mississippi' on Saturday, July 25. The free museum located at 176 Ross Dr in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University will feature vintage and current railroad action and displays from west of the Mississippi, bringing attention to one of the most vast rail expanses in the hemisphere. The George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders club are planning for a unique compilation of American railroading on this special day.



CSX No. 6488 and No. 2254 idle in Kingsport TN waiting to switch the yard.

Photo contributed by Paul Haynes

Credited with opening the west up to expansion by the new nation, the first transcontinental line was completed in 1869, when the Union Pacific/Central Pacific operations joined Nebraska to San Francisco. The rugged terrain required both vast engineering to construct, and featured high-horsepower machinery to move trains to and from the Pacific coast. Over the following three decades of the 19th century, several other lines worked across the vast expanse of the American west, linking cities from San Diego to Seattle with steel rails, and bringing tens of thousands of immigrants hungry for citizenship and freedom into new homesteads. Today, those multiple lines are consolidated into the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe empires, with a handful of independents functioning regionally.

"The frontier of the American West was truly opened with the arrival of the railroads, and without them, our history would have been much different," says Geoff Stunkard, the coordinator of the monthly Heritage Days program at the museum. "Though the interstates and airlines have taken most of the passenger traffic, we get enormous percentages of our produce and food moved by rail across the nation. The railroads also continue to take an immense level of traffic from the public highway system in an environmentally-conscious way."

Model trains from many of these operations ranging from the heyday of steam to today's biggest engines will be running or on display on the MEMRR club's large 24x44 1:87 HO scale layout, one of four model lines that are housed in the museum. A special selection of advertising items and timetables from the museum's collection will be shown in the display cabinets as well.

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.



Hooked up and ready to go, CSX 6488 and 2245 begin their daily chores in Kingsport TN

Photo contributed by Paul Haynes

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.edu> or <http://johnsonsdepot.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.

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.

2015 Dates to Remember: George L Carter Railroad Museum

August 29: Little Engines that Could: Industrial and Shortline Rail Operations

September 26: ChiTown – Midwestern Lines and the Windy City

October 31: George L Carter’s Fabulous Clinchfield Lines;
Harvest-Fest for Little Engineers

November 14: Homecoming at Carter’s Place – 8th Anniversary

November 28: Precision Transportation: N&W and NS Glory

December 19: Home For Christmas: Railroading in the Cold Weather States

NOTFOLK SOUTHERN’S TRIBUTE TO FIRST RESPONERS VISITS THE AREA

NS 9-1-1 SHOWCASED AT NATURAL TUNNEL ON JULY 18, 2015

Photos contributed by Paul Haynes



View of the front pilot of NS 9-1-1



Embellishment on the side safety rails



First responder emblems on the sides of NS 9-1-1



Paul takes a moment from behind the lens to get a selfie in



The 9-1-1 was situated just right for the crowd to get a good view



A tail end shot of the 9-1-1



9-1-1 was accompanied by a pair of SD40-2's - here's a pilot shot of 1652



This view was taken to the stairway beneath the chair lift into the gorge



Paul was able to catch the three locomotives as they headed home from Natural Tunnel crossing the lower bridge at Copper Creek

FALLEN FLAGS IN KNIGPORT

A QUARTET OF SCL/LN COVERED HOPPERS ARE SPOTTED

Photos contributed by Paul Haynes



CSXT 252207 above / CSXT 247805 below



CSXT 250117 above / CSXT 251913 below



THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB. The MEMRR PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As you are reading this Jo Ann and I are in the wilds of Bolivia birding and leading 8 other birders to see new birds and new places. However, I shall continue to periodically think of railroading, my fellow MEMRR members, and the Carter Railroad Museum. Thank you all for keeping the museum up and running for the public while I am taking a much needed break in a very different world. So, this monthly column is being written two weeks before our newsletter editor's normal deadline and will not have as much "news" from me in it as you may regularly have come to find.

Welcome new MEMRR member **Brennan Howell** from Hickory, NC, who is very interested in working on the ET&WNC RR layout and whose family was connected with that railroad. Additionally, welcome new member **Michael Walker** from Johnson City, TN, who came to his first running session at the Carter RR Museum with a huge box of personal HO gauge locomotives and rolling stock to run on the club layout. Among the consists I saw was a most impressive Santa Fe set of war bonnet scheme locomotives with silver light weight passenger cars in the consist. We are most happy to have both of you young men as members of the MEMRR and look forward to lots of time with you at the Carter RR Museum.



Following its stint at Natural Tunnel 9-1-1 was detailed to Chattanooga and positioned outside the National Cemetery in honor of the soldiers who were shot on July.
Photo is courtesy of Justin Strickland

Special visitors to the museum in July included 15 members of the Kingsport-based East Tennessee Railfan Chapter NRHS. They toured the museum on Tuesday night of the 14th, provided refreshments to our volunteers who came in to man the layouts and the museum, and had their monthly

business meeting. Their treasurer, **Doug Zimmerman**, made a donation to the museum on behalf of the chapter. We have hosted this group 2 or 3 times now and they are always welcome. My thanks to the many MEMRR members and Carter Chapter NRHS members who gave up part of a Tuesday evening to make them feel welcome and to exhibit our work in the museum.

After a short hiatus from children's birthday parties we now have 3 scheduled in close proximity; one on July 25th (our July Heritage Day commemorating western railroads), one on August 1st, and another on August 22nd. Our members always do an outstanding job helping our Station Master, **Taylor Jessee**, decorate for these special events in the lives of our Little Engineers and with the festivities.



The First Responder unit 9-1-1 was joined by Norfolk Southern's tribute unit to Veterans 6920.
Photo courtesy of Norfolk Southern

The electricians from the ETSU Facilities Management Plant spent a couple of weeks in mid-July installing LED lighting in both the Alsop and the Marsh galleries. The lighting is not as bright as the florescent lighting we have had up to this point, 3000K vs. 5-6000K, but the lighting is a warmer color making the scenery look more natural, the LED carbon footprint is much smaller than that of the fluorescent's, and the LEDs will not fade the scenery and the photographs and paintings on the walls in the galleries. The Carter RR Museum used its foundation monies from donations to pay for the hardware and the university installed them without charging for the installation. You will notice the different look and after your eyes adjust from coming into the galleries from more intense lighting, either in the hallways or from a sunny day outside, I think you will find them more pleasing to the eye.

We have been diligent since March of 2014 in keeping a more accurate count of the number of visitors that are coming to see us at the railroad museum and this is becoming more important. Each of the last two Julys I have been asked for attendance numbers for the university

president's annual report of educational outreach programs. In the 2013-2014 year that began on 1 July 2013 and ended on June 30, 2014 we had an approximate headcount of visitors combined from the Little Engineers room and the rest of the museum of 6,600. This year's count from July 1, 2014 ending on June 30, 2015 was our biggest ever with **8,006** combined visitors counted. Our popularity is continuing to grow and we are becoming a destination for a lot of people from the surrounding area and beyond on Saturdays and at other arranged special times as well. I can point to the last two Saturdays I was in the museum as examples as we recorded 109 visitors on July 18, and 125 on July 25th. The efforts you have put into the layouts that are the heart of the museum's displays, the special Heritage Days you participate in, and the special way you treat our visitors all are major parts in the continued increase in our visitors' numbers and the new members who join our club.



Riding New Orleans Streetcars
Photo courtesy of Eric Bronsky

We had such a special visitor one Thursday July evening in the museum that WJHL Channel 11 TV and *The Johnson City Press* sent reporters to interview her. One hundred and four year old **Gladys Lacey Jones** made her second annual visit to see how we were progressing on the Tweetsie layout. She has a very special interest in this project as we have a photo of her made with her family; mother, father, older sister, and younger brother when she was 4 years old in 1915. They are standing in front of the store her father built in Hopson, TN adjacent to the depot he constructed for the ET&WNC RR in what became known as Blevins. We will model the store, the station, and if there is room to do so, the Lacey house on the layout. Mrs. Jones lives with her daughter, Bette, just north of Atlanta, GA and they are relatives of MEMRR member, **Dawn Lacey Fritz**. Mrs. Jones is the oldest person we have had in our railroad museum and I will work to create models of her bit of history on our little railroad.

We have two annual social events to plan; the **annual summer picnic** and the **annual Christmas party**. The

Christmas party will be held at Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site on Friday, December 18th (time and details to be worked out later) and will be a pot-luck affair with the meats being purchased by the MEMRR (70% of the cost) and the Carter Chapter NRHS (30% of the cost as we have done in past years based on membership numbers in the respective organizations). The two organizations will also contribute funding in these percentages for the rental of the hall. The Carter Chapter NRHS membership voted to cancel their previously planned party at the Choo-Choo Café in Erwin as they had previously voted to do, to continue the social event with the MEMRR as many of its members hold joint membership in both organizations and wanted to continue to enjoy the extended fellowship afforded by joint social events as we have traditionally done. It will make it easier for **Dirty Santa** to make one trip down the collective chimney instead of trying to visit both venues on different nights, and at his age this is a blessing for him that will be manifested in great toys for all us boys and girls. We will need to establish coordinators for the Christmas Party to assure that everything runs smoothly and that we have accurate headcounts and a variety of food to eat.



New Orleans Streetcars meet
Photo courtesy of Eric Bronsky

Our Annual Picnic is much closer and I have asked **Jim Pahr** to once again coordinate the event for our two organizations. **Kim** and **Tom McKee** have once again invited us to come to their lakefront home for this event to be held on Sunday, September 13th. We will provide a time and maps to the site via emails and in the newsletters of both organizations. The McKees will once again provide the meat for the picnic and we will need to get an accurate headcount and lists of what each member will be bringing to eat. Tom has G-Scale garden railroads on his property and they will be operating. He has added a little more to his railroad each year we have visited and I am sure you will enjoy the trains, the event and the generous hospitality of the McKees. An email announcement for this picnic was circulated in the 4th week of July, but additional details will be forthcoming. We hope you will mark your social calendars and plan to join us for

this relaxing afternoon with great foods and wonderful company in a wonderful location.

Both these annual events are for members and their spouse, or significant other, but adults only. We graciously ask that you leave the children at home.

Our Heritage Day Event, coordinated by **Geoff Stunkard**, is scheduled for August 29th and will feature “Little Engines that Could: Industrial and Short Line Railroads”. Start making your plans for the little engines, and their consists, that you will bring to operate on the layouts. The G-Scale layout already has a logging operation with a sawmill destination, and the Tweetsie layout is a short line of 34 miles, but there are lots of opportunities for the big HO-Scale layout as well, so bring them on and let’s have a lot of fun with short trains and little prime movers. Any display items you have we can put into our display cases for the event are also most welcome. Please coordinate with Geoff.

them by putting together the 40-or-so HO_n3 rolling stock kits that we have for the little ET&WNC RR. **John Edwards, Frank Fezzie**, and other members have the narrow gauge locomotives and their meager consists traveling from one end of the layout to the other with trains going in both directions using the passing sidings just as the prototype did. Now, we need a fleet of cars for them to pull and to road test. Please help by signing out one or more kits and getting them ready to join the Tweetsie Fleet.



A meet from the cab – New Orleans Streetcars
Photo courtesy of Eric Bronsky



Another meet in New Orleans
Photo courtesy of Eric Bronsky

John Carter, Coordinator for the HO-Scale MEMRR layout, continues to work with **Roger Teinert, Gary Gilliam, Geoff Stunkard** and other club members to complete the yard tracks and their design to fit the diesel facilities that will occupy the mobile module. They now have a plan for the building arrangement that provides a workable track and building footprint while giving our visitors standing outside the layout the maximum view of all the facilities and the movements of locomotives and rolling stock on that module. They could use some help with the construction of one of the kit-bashed structures if you would like to assist them. Most of the major buildings are already constructed and one more will be ordered along with a few more turnouts. This part of the yard is very close to the throat of the yard and clearly visible to the public and will be a very popular area with all the potential action that will take place on it.

Just as our promotional hardcopy brochures are important in advertising our organization and in providing a means for new membership Websites have become important tools of communication in our society. The MEMRR website has been a popular electronic means for us not only to interact as a model railroad club, but also as a conduit to inform anyone selecting the site about the MEMRR, and with links, about the Carter Railroad Museum and our sister railroad chapter, the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS. The Carter Chapter NRHS is currently building a website of its own that will soon be on line. That site will link the MEMRR and the Carter RR Museum, as well as linking the National NRHS. I am currently working with technical folks at ETSU to improve the George L. Carter Railroad Museum’s small established website into a vital working website. When this is completed in late August or early September it will provide updated information about the museum and events occurring there, but will also add an additional public platform that will link all the organizations affiliated with it. The sites’ links will connect the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS, the National NRHS and the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad Historical Society providing additional pathways to each of our organizations. The site will be part of the ETSU homepage. The MEMRR is encouraged to continue to build its Facebook site as well continuing with YouTube videos and with more information about the Little Engineers Room.

Regarding building things, the members working on the Tweetsie Layout have previously asked for members to help

Other news of note include:

- a) The *ad hoc* railroad museum committee, chaired by **Roger Teinert**, continues to meet regularly as it plans the big train show in the ETSU “minidome” for June 2-4, 2016. Currently the committee is working on table charges, entrance fees, vendor lists, and meeting university safety regulations. They are planning a big show with lots of vendors and many operating layouts for this 2-day event. Plans are to have a successful show that will please both vendors and the public and that will become an annual event.
- b) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) discussions continue between the Town of Jonesborough and ETSU with some “sticky” points of responsibility being the focus. I have a scheduled meeting on July 28 with ETSU President Brian Noland to discuss the potential financial costs to the university if we agree to establish a satellite railroad museum in Jonesborough. I shall keep you posted.

c) The Carter Chapter NRHS is in the planning stages for an October rail excursion that is focusing on the train running into the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. This event will possibly be packaged with a luncheon boat ride on the Tennessee River.

We have a lot of things happening in the MEMRR and at the Carter RR Museum. Your membership is the key to your participation in any or all of these activities. Come and join fellow members in this dynamic part of model railroading at our monthly business meetings, at the Carter RR Museum, and at the public festivals we attend. We can use your experience and your talents and we look forward to your company. 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

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS MINUTES OF THE COORDINATOR'S MEETING JULY 16, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by club president Fred Alsop with 6 coordinator's in attendance.

N Scale – Jessie Kittle reported that he has been and will continue to do basic maintenance on the layout.

Tweetsie – John Edwards said trains can now run from one end to the other. Not all turnouts are live but the ones that are allow us to go up to Cranberry turn around on the loop and come back. Some sidings are also working. We have had 2 & 3 trains running at the same time. **Tutorial** - He has collected all the information from the coordinators and will start putting together the club tutorial.

HO Scale – No coordinator in attendance. The coordinator's discussed the trainmaster position and how the acting trainmaster needs to stay at the tower when trains are running.

G Scale – Mike Baker stated that in the main gallery he switched the engine, cleaned the track and made sure everything is running good. He also cleaned the track and made sure everything was running smoothly in the Tweetsie room. He has been told that the lead axle on the 460 went askew. He will talk to someone about getting it repaired.

Roger Teinert suggested having a maintenance coordinator. It was suggested that Gary Gilliam would be a great person for this position.

Communications – Roger Teinert stated that the club got 3 new members but has seen only one of them. **Train Show** – After Monday's meeting he should have the pricing. After that everything should be set so that it is ready to go on the web and on the marquee. Fred Alsop suggested that he contact Bill Hensley because he has a lot of new information that can be helpful. We are in need of tables for the train show. We have approximately 45-50 tables (that belong to ETSU) available but are going to need a lot more. Show dates are June 2, 3, & 4, 2016. Fred Alsop stated that the EWNC Board of Directors will be meeting in August to set a date for their 2016 convention, which will be in Johnson City again. There was a mention of possibly having their convention the same weekend as our train show.

Web-master/Librarian – Bob Jones is working on organizing the library. He found 2 lists for the Model Railroad Magazines and is working on the videos. We now have 20+ books. He talked to Mark Woomer and he will be in charge of the NHRS link on our website.

President – Fred Alsop has talked to some people on campus about putting together a website for the museum. When completed we will have another link to and on our website. The Z scale layout is now in storage at Fred's house. The satellite museum in Jonesborough is progressing nicely. NHRS now has our newsletter in their directory. We are going to be in the next HOn3 Annual which may be out next September. Mr. Alsop will be doing a workshop at this month's business meeting “The Buildings of Shell Creek”. Mike Buster will be doing the workshop in August on Dry

Transfer that will be packed with information and goodies. The LED lighting is now being installed into the museum and there is a noticeable difference. Hopefully they will be completely installed within a week. We are checking into having T-shirts made for the children's room.

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Debbi Edwards
 Secretary, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS MEETING JULY 21, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 by club president Fred Alsop with 14 members in attendance. Mr. Alsop stated that we have several new members including Mr. Howell from Hickory, NC who has family history on the Tweetsie.

Secretary Report – Debbi Edwards reported that the minutes for the June business meeting was published in the Signal Bridge. A motion was made and passed to accept them as p

Newsletter – Ted Bleck-Doran stated that the newsletter was published on the 8th. There are some great articles and pictures and please keep them coming. Next month's will include photographs from the Natural Tunnel and several articles.

Treasurer – Gary Emmert was not present at the meeting but gave the report to Fred Alsop. Mr. Alsop reported that the club finances are in good standing.

Webmaster – John Edwards reported that everything is running fine. Our domain name registration is due. It is a yearly fee.

Webmaster – Bob Jones said the signal bridge is posted on the website. He has done some updating on the library. He had added more Model Railroader Magazines. They are sorted by the subject and by the month/year. He also added 5 hard bound books "Bob's Scrapbook" which contain cut out articles from Model Railroader Magazines. You can make copies of any of the articles. He is currently working on more volumes. He has found some amber LED lights, so he will be replacing lights in cars very soon.

Vice President – John Carter stated that next month's meeting will be presented by Mike Buster. Mr. Buster said that he will be doing a hands- on program "Intro to Dry Transfer". It should be a very fun and informative program.

President – Fred Alsop thanked members for the time and effort they have put into the success of the Cope Layout. YMCA campers sent a nice thank you note. We have also had visits from The East TN Rail Fans, The Governor's school and

VA Intermont Upward Bound Program. Thank you to membership for making these events possible.

Paperwork is back in the hands of the town of Jonesborough. There are still items that need to be negotiated between the 2 parties but it is progressing nicely.

We have had record attendance at the museum. From July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 we had 2500 visitors in the Little Engineers room and the main gallery had over 5500 visitors. Thank you again for what you do. ETWNC Historical Society will be having their 2016 convention in Johnson City. Not sure of the dates, possibly the same weekend of our train show. They have voted unanimously to affiliate with the George L Carter Railroad Museum. More information to come at a later date.

Carter Chapter voted to join our Christmas Party at Tipton Hayes. The clubs will split the cost for the party. Debbi Edwards volunteered to coordinate the celebration.

Old Business:

1. **Operational Tutorial** – John Edwards stated that he has received all the need information from the coordinators and will now start putting it all together.
2. **Summer Picnic** – No updates to report.
3. **Train Show** – Roger Teinert is the new coordinator for this event. Flyers should be out in the next week or so. There is much work to do but things are progressing nicely. We are in need of tables for the show.
4. **Memorial Cars** – Mike Buster has not been able to work on the cars lately. He did request that membrs keep their eyes out for more L&N coaches and L&N heavy weights.

New Business:

1. **Railroad Heritage Day** this month is "Go West Young Man: Western Railroads. The press release is out.
2. Coordinators meeting minutes will be published in the Signal Bridge.
3. The new N scale coordinator is Jessie Kittle. Gary Gillam is the new locomotive maintenance coordinator. If you have problems with the locomotives in the museum please let Mr. Gillam know.

4. There has been a lot of work done by John Edwards, Frank Fezzie and others. There are now trains running on the layout. The security cameras (used by the yard master to monitor the trains) are up and working. There are a few blind spots so we will purchase some more. Now that we have locomotives running we now need to have cars behind them. We have 40+ kits that need to be put together.
5. We have birthday parties scheduled for Aug 8 and Aug 22. We need volunteers to help set up the party on the 22nd.
6. Mike Buster requested that prices be put on the rolling stock that we have for sale.
7. Jim Pahriss would like a sign to hang in the hall directing visitors to the Tweetsie room.

8. We need to get the workroom cleaned up.
9. John Carter told the club that the Rail Fan Assoc. wanted to thank the club. They really enjoyed their visit and were very impressed with the progress in the Tweetsie room and the main gallery.

The next order of business was the call for volunteers and trainmaster.

Club President Fred Alsop gave a spectacular presentation on "Modeling Shell Creek in 1:87 scale". It was packed with pictures, information and history of the town. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Debbi Edwards

Secretary, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders

The Electronics Shop

Frank Fezzie

We have arrived at a good time to review the progress made to date in updating and improving the electronics in the MEMRR Modular HO layout and the museum's ET & WNC layout. For both layouts we determined a set of major tasks to be done in order to achieve the objective of having reliable operation of trains. These tasks include;

1. Attaching feeder wires to all turnouts to insure that all rails and frogs are powered.
2. Correcting or installing appropriate polarity reversing circuits to handle all situations where track polarity must be adjusted for correct operation of the trains. These are often called reversing districts or sections,
3. Update the Loconet wiring and devices in order to provide the most reliable control possible.
4. Update the track power distribution from the command station and boosters to the layout to provide steady power to the entire layout and isolate short-circuits to as small a section of the layout, often called power districts, as possible. This includes eliminating any cross-connections between power districts.
5. Add indicators to the status display panels showing the current status of all power districts.
6. Update JMRI on the MEMRR HO Modular layout to fully display and control all turnouts on the layout.
7. Install a closed-circuit camera system on the ET & WNC layout to help provide security for the layout as well as permitting the dispatcher to see the trains around the entire layout.
8. In addition to the above, much of the required track power and turnout control wiring was not in place on the

ET & WNC layout and therefore needed to be installed as well.

9. Change over turnout control on the HO mainline section of the ET & WNC from manual controls on panels to DCC control. This will allow all of the control panels to be rebuilt into status display panels that will be much simpler to use.
10. Create control panels as needed in JMRI on the ET & WNC to allow the dispatcher to have full control of the layout.

We have been making steady progress on the MEMRR Modular HO layout. Work has been done to improve track power distribution to the mainline tracks, including the elimination of cross-connections between power districts. Temporary work has also been done to the wye junction between the yard and the mainlines to improve the function of the auto-reverser that adjusts the polarity of track power in the yard to match that of the mainlines. Work in these two areas has significantly improved the reliability of train operations between the yard and the mainlines.

Our primary task on this layout the past four months has been to add appropriate feeder wires and connections to the turnout rails and frogs to insure that all rails are correctly powered. With only a couple of modules left to do, we are approaching completion of this task. The work accomplished so far now allows trains to traverse the modified turnouts and crossovers without loss of power. In addition, as each module is worked on, we identify any turnouts that cannot be operated from the DCC system and then install the necessary mechanical and electrical items needed to bring them under full control of the layout operators.

I believe that the next task to work on will be the rebuilding of the command station and booster package and the Loconet to the best current practices to improve reliability of operation on the layout. Construction of the diesel service facilities and car shops are underway. There will be much electrical work to accomplish as well with these new facilities.

Work has also been progressing on the ET & WNC layout. All turnout wiring and controls have been installed for all tracks in the Johnson City yard, and the mainline all the way up to Cranberry. We are now running trains all the way from Johnson City yard to Cranberry, around the main loop at Cranberry, and back to Johnson City, where they can turn on the wye and be ready for the next trip up into the mountains.

The dual gauge tracks also connect the "Tweetsie" to HO standard gauge mainline section in the middle, thus allowing us to move standard gauge trains between Johnson City yard and the HO mainlines.

Thanks to the installation of 6 cameras in the closed-circuit system, the dispatcher can monitor these trains all the way

up and back. We will be adding additional cameras to address a few blind spots that we have discovered in the process of running the trains.

We have the goal of having Cranberry completed in both track work and scenery by next May. The next step is to install all of the needed turnout control wiring and track feeders in Cranberry, so that all Cranberry tracks and turnouts are operational. After sufficient testing of the track work is complete, the scenery crew will do their magic and bring Cranberry to life.

In summary, the operational reliability of trains on both layouts has improved significantly over the past 9 months. But we still have a lot more work to do to bring the quality of layout operation to the level that we all want to see.

If you have a question about electronics in model railroading, please send it to me via e-mail at frank@ffweb.info and I will do my best to answer it for you, either directly or in this column.



Schnabel CEBX 800 negotiating a tight curve on the IHB