



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
MARCH 2016 - MEMBERS EDITION

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CLUB OFFICERS

President:

Fred Alsop

ALSOPF@mail.etsu.edu

Vice-President

John Carter

carterjohn92@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Gary Emmert

jbox1015@comcast.net

Secretary:

Debbi Edwards

Debbi.edwards14@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Ted Bleck-Doran

Ted_mary@memrr.org

Webmasters:

John Edwards

webmaster@memrr.org

Bob Jones

bobjonesmemrr@gmail.com



LOCATION

ETSU Campus
George L. Carter
Railroad Museum

HOURS

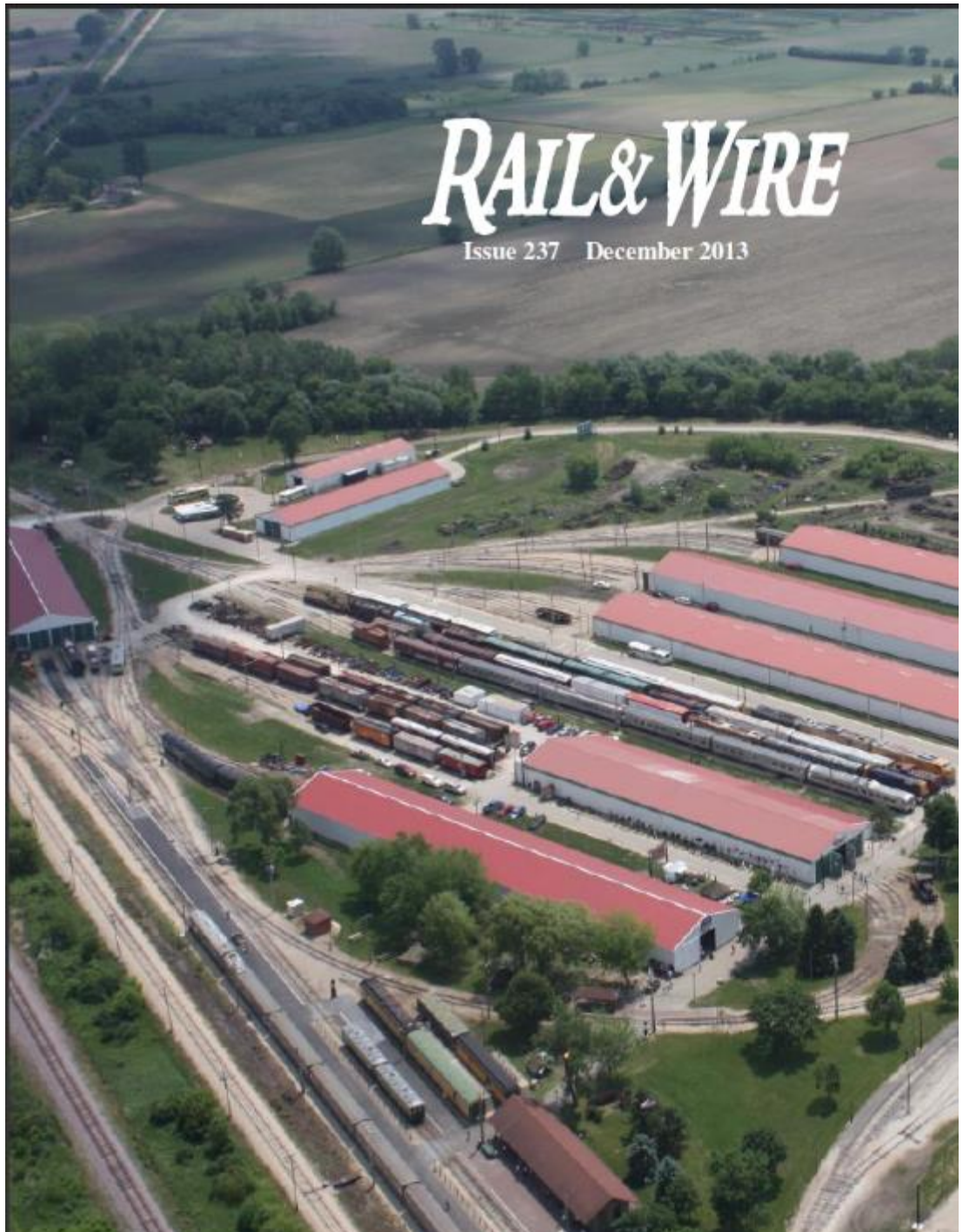
Business Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Meetings start at 6:30 PM in:

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 ??

SPECIAL FOCUS THIS ISSUE THE ILLINOIS RAILWAY MUSEUM



Aerial view of the Illinois Railway Museum taken from the cover of the museum's Newsletter Rail & Wire for December 2013 – see page 6 for a recounting of their 2015 Parade of Diesels Event

PAUL'S PAGES

PHOTOS FROM DWARF SIGNAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Photos from the camera of Paul Haynes



A foursome, doing yard duty in Kingsport this morning, shoving and spotting cars. Prominent among the group is a new CSX loco on their roster. Sometimes, timing is everything, and for a change I was able to tag these during my morning break





Valentine's Day snow-motion action on the NS line southbound through Johnson City.



PASSING THROUGH

NORFOLK SOUTHERN HERITAGE UNITS SEEN IN THE AREA FEBRUARY-MARCH 2016

NS 1066 "New York Central RR"



NS 8099 "Southern RY"



NS 4001 DC-AC Paint SD70ACe Unit



NS 6025 "Monongahela RR"



NS 4000 DC-AC Paint SD70ACe Unit



NS 8098 "Conrail"



AMTRAK JOURNEYS
LIFE AS AN AMTRAK CAR ATTENDANT

By Donald Beck

The Great Baby Powder Mystery

Working as an Amtrak car attendant has its moments like riding across the great American Plains at night. Watching the scenery pass from an open vestibule with just you, the train, and the land rushing by. Then there are those other moments.

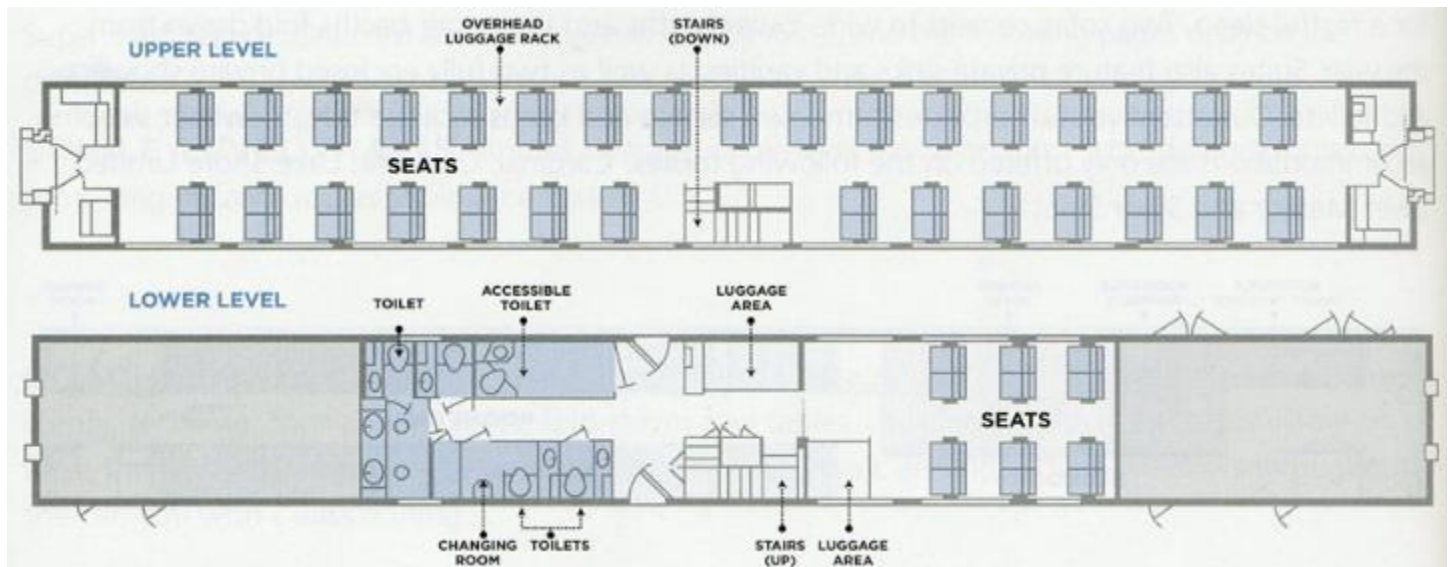
As a car attendant on the Chicago-Los Angeles Transcontinental I was assigned two Superliner Coaches (one with a smoking section on its lower level; the other, a handicapped toilet on the lower level) with a total of 100 passengers to tend. My job was to ensure the comfort and safety of the passengers.

The smoking section always demanded attention and repeated cleaning. Smoking passengers are not always the neatest of the traveling public. However, little did I realize that the handicapped toilet facilities would be my greatest challenge for the run.

As I made the first of my morning inspections of the handicapped restroom I discovered much to my surprise that the toilet had been trashed. The entire room looked like it had been the victim of a talcum powder explosion. Talcum powder covered every flat surface there was. It took an

Coach

Car for coach passengers. Main seating is upstairs. Many coaches have lower level seating as well. Some have no lower level seating and instead have a baggage area (coach-baggage car).



Superliner Floorplan from WWW.Craigmasburn.com

inordinate amount of time to clean up, putting me behind my other task that day.

After I got caught up I returned to the handicapped restroom for a second inspection. The talcum powder wielding bathroom assailant had struck once again. And once again baby powder covered every surface of the room. This time, however, the villain left clues as to their identity. A trail of talcum powder footprints led out the door and down the corridor to the lower level seating compartment. All I had to do was follow the trail and – Ta Dah – I would nab the culprit flatfooted as it were!

I could clearly make out the footprints on the carpeting. It was no problem to ascertain the “talcum bomber’s” seat as the prints ended where they had turned into sit. There was someone there crouched down as if they were hiding from me. Oh, how that made my blood boil. But as I neared the seated baby powder vandal, I saw that she was a diminutive, elderly lady with the warmest of smile.

After ascertaining if she had any special needs, and encouraging her to be mindful of the needs of other passengers who would require use of the facilities, I was able to complete the day’s duties without further explosions of talcum – the baby powder caper had been solved! Or perhaps she had just run out of her supply for that trip.

Don’s Railroad career included a stint as Engine Crew Dispatcher for the Southern Pacific and as a car attendant with Amtrak serving on Amtrak Transcontinental LA-Chicago and Wet Coast IA-Seattle trains.



PASSENGER CAR PHOTO INDEX - AMTRAK 34000 - 37016

2015 PARADE OF DIESELS
ILLINOIS RAILWAY MUSEUM – UNION, IL

By Ted Bleck-Doran

The last time I visited the Illinois Railway Museum was in 1972 just as I was finishing degree work in Chicago. Even then it was gaining a reputation as a premier collection of railroad equipment and artifacts. So it was with great anticipation that for my birthday observance in 2015 Mary and I would take a side trip to revisit the museum and its collection. I was not disappointed!

The Saturday we selected happened to be the museum’s annual Parade of Diesels. While the museum usually has one or more pieces of equipment running from various segments of their collection, Parade Days feature as many pieces of a specific theme (e.g., - diesels, steam, trolleys, interurbans, electric buses, etc.). The museum staff ran, pushed, pulled, dragged everything in their diesel inventory that would roll on rail out for fan viewing. And what a display!

The first piece of eye-candy was CB&Q #9911A, an EMC 1940 E-5A. It would be drawing duty hauling the CB&Q’s Nebraska Zephyr “Goddess” train, a 5 car consist including:



Power-Coach #960 “Venus”



Coach #4626 “Vesta”



Coach 4627 "Minerva"



Diner #150 "Ceres",



and Parlor-Observation #225 "Juno".

The train was built by the Budd Manufacturing Company in 1936 with the cars being articulated (sharing a truck with each adjacent car) and a fixed consist. This particular train has been used in excursion service out of Chicago in years past. Two sets of cars were constructed with cars named after Roman gods and goddesses. The set named after the Roman Gods was scrapped, but one can still ride the

"Goddess" set on the 5 mile private right-of-way maintained by the museum.

The earlier (1934) Pioneer Zephyr has also been preserved and can be found at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry.

**A SIDE TRIP IF YOU ARE IN THE CHICAGO AREA
VISIT THE PIONEER ZEPHYR
AT THE CHICAGO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND
INDUSTRY**



All Aboard the Silver Streak invites you to go back in time—to May 26, 1934—as a passenger on the Pioneer Zephyr. You won't want to miss this record-breaking "ride" from Denver to Chicago. On your 20-minute guided tour, you will explore the baggage, smoking, passenger and observation compartments of the Pioneer Zephyr. You can also view the engineer's cab, supplemented by a computer interactive that allows you to "drive" the Pioneer Zephyr. The exhibit also features newsreel footage that will take you back to 1934.

Stationed along the platform, as well as on the shelter's floor level, you'll be invited to interact with displays on the technology and history of the Pioneer Zephyr. There are science interactives such as demonstrations on diesel-electric transmissions, compression ignition, center of gravity and streamlining.



US Army Transportation Corps GE 44-Ton built in 1944

During the morning and afternoon the staff spent their time staging the locomotives, pulling them out of their storage tracks and lining them along the museum's mainline. This gave photographers ample opportunity to set up shots of their favorite locomotives.

By mid-afternoon the diesels were lined up and ready to roll. Leading off the parade was the diminutive GE 44-ton industrial switcher once owned by the US Army Transportation Corps. As each locomotive rolled past the museum's depot, its pedigree was announced over a public address speaker. One after another the diesels took their turns on center stage.

However, the parade was cut short. A typical Mid-West summer storm started to brew up. Clouds darkened, thunder rolled and lightning strikes could be seen on the horizon. The rain was a torrent when it arrived with a stiff wind, driving to visitors to shelter. But, all was not lost. The summer storm gave me a chance to tour the collection sheltered by the 11 pole-barns already constructed (14 are planned). Each barn is capable of housing 30-40 pieces of equipment, providing protection for the museum's over 375 preserved cars, locomotives and artifacts.



Chicago & North Western #6847,



Burlington Northern # 5383, a GE U30C built in 1974 represents part of IRM's second generation diesels.



METRA's #308, an EMD F-7A built in 1949



While not a true internal combustion (diesel) locomotive, IRM has one of the Union Pacific's Gas Turbine locomotives, No. 18, in its collection.



Burlington Northern BN-3, an E-9AM built by EMD in 1956

The museum has over 45 diesel locomotive in its collection and as is the case with many museums, all are in varying states of restoration and repair.



Chicago Burlington and Quincy #504 is an EMD SD-24 built in 1959 and restored in the CB&Q red-grey-and-white paint scheme



Milwaukee Road (CMStP&P) #118-C is a 1951 EMD F-7A approaches the depot with an F-7B and Geep in tow



Commonwealth Edison's #15, an EMD SW1, is a fine example of a first generation switcher



C&NW #4689 represented ALCo in the parade lineup



Built in 1950, CB&Q's #9255 shows the evolution of the yard switcher as a SW-7 wearing Burlington's attractive black-grey-red-and- orange paint.



CMStP&P (The Milwaukee Road) #37-A is an EMD E-9A of 1960 vintage... unlike its sister engine #118-C she needs major cosmetic restoration

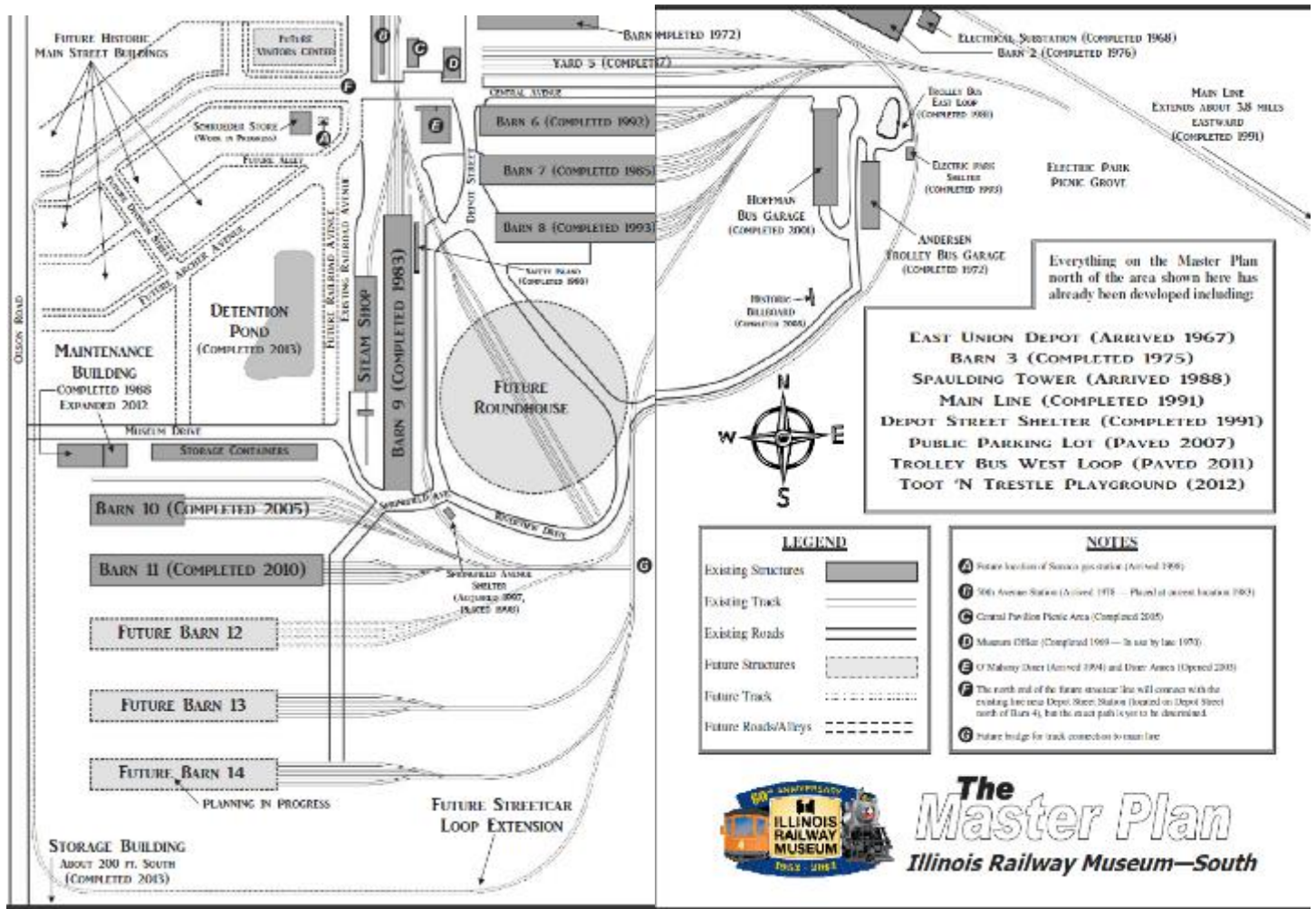


Sothern Pacific #1518 is yet another EMD product... an SD-7 built as the first in its class.



C&NW #2847 leads a string of cabooses past the IRM depot

The Illinois Railway Museum has ambitious plans for the future as can be seen in their master plan for the southern half of the property. Plans include the erection of three additional barns capable of housing 30-40 pieces of rolling stock and moving a small village's worth of historic structures to recreate a turn of the 19th-20th Century Illinois prairie town. IRM maintains an informative website at: WWW.IRM.ORG. The IRM website has equipment rosters and a newsletter archive filled with interesting articles and background.



MAKING A CITYSCAPE – Pt. 3 PREPARING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

By Ted Bleck-Doran
and Donald Beck

This month we turn our attention to the structures that line Depot Street. MEMRR is fortunate to have received numerous donations from members and visitors alike. Since the street scene will be placed on one of the club owned modules, all the buildings were repurposed from the donations received. Most were in fairly good condition. Several needed attention. All needed some freshening up and new paint to help achieve a more homogeneous look, as though they belonged together.



New member, Don Beck, stepped up to assist with the building renovations. He selected a couple of buildings that had been assembled but lacked paint and still revealed their plastic origins.

NOTE: to new members – don't be shy... step up and ask to join in... you'll find that everyone is welcome to try their hand at a new or old familiar task, to teach and learn the many aspects that make this the "World's Greatest Hobby."

Don first tackled a dual storefront building with a Chinese Take-out Restaurant/Barbershop on the ground floor. It depicted a brick building that had a fieldstone extension added to the front. He wanted to also capture a painted brick update as well. Using inexpensive craft type acrylic paints, he chose a deep purple that he specialty mixed for the brickwork, a medium grey for the fieldstone extension, and forest green for window and door trim. Black was used to renew the roofing.

Once the building received these initial color coats, Don wondered if he had made the best choice in colors. The purple was, well, just too purple, more of a ripe plum color. To cut the intensity of the purple, Don gave the entire building several washes of Burnt Umber (a dark blackish-brown color). These not only dulled the purple, but also filled in the mortar joints and irregularities in the brickwork and trim. The umber helped the details of the building "pop" out

for the eye to see. Likewise, to accent a plain black roof, several washes of medium or dark grey were applied.



Three buildings above demonstrate what can be done to disguise a model's plastic heritage: (left to right) a Plasticville Police Station has been painted in Sam Insull's cream and grey scheme; a brick substation made from leftover wall pieces and painted with Burnt Siena, Dark Grey, Medium Grey, and weathered with Burnt Umber washes; and finally Don's completed storefront.

NOTE ABOUT WASHES: *start with a small dab of paint placed in a tray or bottle lid. Use a large round or flat soft tipped brush. Dip the bristles of the brush in clear water allowing the brush to load with the water. Smear the dab of paint in the tray by mashing the loaded brush. In the process you will be diluting the paint and loading the brush with you weathering color. Apply the diluted paint to the building surface, working the color into the grooves of the surface.*

Don't worry if the color appears too thick. Just dip the brush in the water to further dilute the paint and go back to working the paint into the surface. With water based acrylics, you'll have 5-10 minutes to achieve the degree of weathering desired.

Remember: several light washes are always better than one heavy wash. Keep in mind that rain and air borne elements then to flow down the side of structures, so use a top to bottom brush stroke.



In the photo above, Don applies a wash of light grey to fill the mortar lines and dull the plastic sheen...



...the grey appears to be too thick, so Don thins the applied paint by dipping the brush in water and working the paint further into the mortar lines.



Here is a building Ted has been working on. It is destined to end up being the town newspaper offices and will appear a little more careworn and weathered.

MEMRR MEMBER(S) OF THE MONTH MEET BEN AND AMY MERRITT



Amy Merritt



Ben Merritt

Model Railroading is a family hobby! Meet this month's mother and son duo. Though not exactly new members, Amy and Ben joined the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders in 2015, they have become familiar faces in the club rooms and at MEMRR activities.

Amy joined the club in support of Ben's avid interest in all things railroading. She immediately pitched in by assisting Gary Emmert with cataloguing and sorting the George L

Carter Railroad Museum's library holdings. She is also interested in the "Little Engineers' Play Room" activities.

Ben joined as a sponsored youth member and has proven himself to be a bright, responsible and inquisitive member. His interest in trains dates to a preschool gift of a Thomas the Train play set and a Lego's building set. Since joining the club he has learned how to operate trains on the club's HO layout and on the museum's HO_n3 "Tweetsie" layout.

His interest in all things railroading led him to enter a science project competition in Unicoi featuring a model of maglev technology. A model of a maglev car actually glides above magnets affixed to the car floor and track surface. Ben sought advice and input from club members, Paul Haynes and Gary Emmert.

Ben writes: ***"I would like to be able to run trains for the public while learning about (railroading) and spending time with other railroading fans."***

His interests in the hobby extend to track laying, layout maintenance, electrical, and scenery/detailing.

Please give Ben and Amy a warm welcome next time you see them at the club.



RAILROAD MEMORIES

RIDING THE STREET CARS OF BALTIMORE MD

By Bill Hoover, MEMRR Member Emeritus

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following photo of a Baltimore MD streetcar appeared in the December 2015 issue of THE SIGNAL BRIDGE and elicited the following reply from MEMRR Emeritus Member, Bill Hoover.



Baltimore Transit Co. Semi-convertible # 5267 is making its way to the end of the #9 streetcar line in Ellicott City, Maryland on April 19, 1948 at 4:30 PM. Service lasted seven more years until June 19, 1955.

Photo by Leonard Rice from the Lee H. Rogers Estate (Maryland Rail Heritage Library Collection). Courtesy of the Baltimore Chapter National Railway Historical Society.

“And you’re probably wondering, now... what’s this about...!”

Well, when wandering thru some late issues of THE SIGNAL BRIDGE that Gary Emmert I came upon a picture in the December 2015 issue on page 17 of a street car in red and cream moving up hill in the quaint town of Ellicott City, Maryland.

Now there’s little doubt that you knew I am a native to Baltimore MD and the street car, one of many semi-

convertibles, running on the No. 9 route is part of the vast Baltimore Transit Company. SO?!

Well I grew up (since 4 years old) living on Edmondson Ave, the main street where the No. 9 cars ran. I lived in a row house, and your picture was as delight for sore eye! You see, I rode to junior high school, senior high school, as well as commuted to college riding a sister of this car each weekday and a number of weekends. I loved each occasion.

OK, regarding that sister! Well car #5267 was not the regularly assigned car to Edmondsoncar house. You can tell from looking to see the white metal sign hanging on the dasher. The destination of the back of the sign would read: “Charles & Lexington Streets. These were at the eastern end of the route. Assigned cars have their destinations noted on the roller sign at the top of the front section of the care.

The photo was taken of the #9 car approaching the western terminal, a stub end immediately next to the firehouse (the building with the white porch at right is next to the firehouse.

No. 9 cars were “scheduled” each hour, the supposed time to travel from the stub end to the loop at Charles & Lexington Streets. A second car at the eastern end was to start the return trip at the same time as the car left Ellicott City. Generally these cars would meet close to the Edmondson Car House. Two cars covered the service nicely.

I can only guess that one of the assigned cars was in for repair. No. 5267 was probably on loan from another car house, possibly Belvedere car house, since this type of car was assigned there.

Well, I sure do thank you for printing a well-known car from Baltimore.

**Regards,
Bill Hoover**



Grieg demonstrate his Ballasting technique as Mark looks on

NT'S COLUMN



Fred, Paul and John in deep discussion re: a tweetsie project

**CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM
FEBRUARY HERITAGE DAY
SHOWS RURAL TRANSPORT**



Fred Alsop's log train take the tunnel bridge on the MEMRR club layout during the George L Carter Railroad Museum's Heritage Day held February 27th.

On Saturday, Feb. 27, East Tennessee State University's George L. Carter Railroad Museum will have a tribute to the short lines and rural transport efforts of yesterday at its monthly Heritage Day with the theme, "Little Lines: Industrial, Logging and Short Line Railroads."

While many Heritage Days have focused on large railroads, the smaller operations tie the system to the nation's farthest reaches.

A "mixed train," or smaller scheduled train with combined freight and passenger service, ran once a day or weekly. With the advent of better roadways and personal automobile ownership, such train service gradually ended.

"These lines were considered romantic by some enthusiasts, who appreciated the quieter, simpler process as opposed to high-speed operation," says Geoff Stunkard, coordinator of the Heritage Days program. "Many people felt a sense of local pride about short line railroads, as they were considered 'our train' especially here in East Tennessee

where the Tweetsie narrow gauge railroad once ran into the mountains. We use this event to demonstrate how short line operations functioned."

In addition to mixed operations on the museum's HO scale layout, there also will be demonstrations of unique logging steam engines that would sometimes be called on when tracks had severe curvature or gradients. A vintage postcard display of original logging lines will be on display.

The museum's ongoing work to replicate the local ET&WNC, or Tweetsie, line will be available for tour-guided viewing. Members of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) club will coordinate the exhibits. Visit www.memrr.org to learn more about MEMRR, which helps demonstrate and maintain the model layouts, museum exhibits and other projects.



The lumberjacks are done for the day as the Shay heads back to the engine house.

The Carter Railroad Museum is open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are welcomed. The museum can be identified by a flashing railroad crossing signal at the back entrance to the Campus Center Building. Visitors should enter ETSU's campus from State of Franklin Road onto Jack Vest Drive and continue east to 176 Ross Drive, adjacent to the flashing RR crossing sign.

**LASER KNIFE BOOTH COMES
ON LINE
FIRST STRUCTURE PIECES CUT**

The month of February was spent preparing and installing the George L Carter Museum's new Laser Knife unit. Because of safety concerns it was decided that the unit would require a secure area to be housed in. Jim Gorney, with help from several members designed and built a work booth to house the unit. Ventilation and a water supply

unit also needed to be installed to make the Laser cutter fully operational.

While Jim and crew prepared the workspace, John Ewards familiarized himself with the operating manual and the associated CAD (computer assisted drawing) programs require to operate the knife. Fred Alsop also got down to drafting drawings of the Blevins Station on the ET&WNC line. The station is to be the first structure to be crafted for the Tweetsie layout using the Laser Knife.

On Saturday, February 27th the plan came altogether. John loaded the CAD drawings into the computer, did a couple of

trial pieces for a sample track side shanty that came with the unit, and then bravely stepped into the unknown and untried. Taking Fred's drawings and some scribed baswood pieces, he engaged the cutter and produced front and rear wall pieces for the model of the Blivens station!



“Captain” Edwards at the bridge of MEMMR ship, the George L Carter... orders “engage lasers”

It was amazing to see the laser cut perfect edges, door and window openings and precisely slanted eaves. The openings looked like they would accept Tichy door and window moldings without major fitting headaches.

With the first success behind them, John and Fred plan on expanding their development of Tweetsie related structure to include many of the building that made up the Cranberry Mine complex. If successful they may even be plans to release kits to the modeling public.



John Carter and John Edwards pause outside the completed work booth

MODELLING TIP OF THE MONTH
HO SCALE CAR WEIGHT.

Measure the car on an HO Scale Ruler in scale feet, or if the length is known use that (40' Box Car use 40). Divided that length by 14.5 for each 1oz, then add 1oz (it works). That is 'Length in scale feet' divided by '14.5' then add 1oz.

It simple, the rule is '.25 oz' per '1/2 inch' or '.5 oz' per '1 inch' or '1 oz per '2 inch', then add 1 oz. Do not be leave it, put a HO Scale ruler next to an inch ruler. '2 inches' = '14.5' HO scale feet.

Still do not be leave it. HO scale is '1/87'. That is for each 1 foot, you have '87' HO scale feet. So the last time I looked, one foot equal 12 inches. Divide '87 by 12' which will equal '7.25' times '2' will equal '14.5'.

Submitted by Bob Jones

SPRING FLING
SET FOR MARCH 18TH

The Spring Fling will be on March 18, 2016 at the Black Olive in Jonesborough. It runs from 6:30 until around 8 PM and is for all members of the MEMRR and G.L. Carter Chapter NRHS. If you plan to attend, please contact Bill Beagen. His e mail is rbill@embarqmail.com.



Frank Fezzie has been busy building the new electrical control center for the Tweetsie layout

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

The days are getting noticeably longer and there is a feeling of spring in the air. Some of our members have been attending train shows and many MEMRR members have been spending Thursday evenings and Saturdays at the Carter Railroad Museum. It is great to see such a regular turnout at the museum from our members as good progress is being made on the club's HO layout, as well as on the Tweetsie layout. The N-Scale and G-Scale layouts have also been improved and maintained in good working order thanks to lots of dedicated helping hands. Visitation has remained steady with an average of over a 100 visitors at the museum every weekend this year. The only exception was the one Saturday when snow and icy conditions closed the university, and the museum for the day; but the following Saturday we had 206 folks coming to tour the railroad museum!

February ended our drive to encourage MEMRR members to renew their memberships with plenty of notices in the preceding newsletters and personal reminders at club meetings and at the museum. As always the majority of our membership has renewed their dues, but we have lost some from our roles as we do each year. But, our annual membership has remained at over 100 for the past several years and each year brings some new members to the club with new talents, experiences and contributions. We hate to lose our old friends as club members, and hope they will become members once more, but we also look forward to attracting new model railroaders to our organization. One of the perks to being a member is access to the Carter Railroad Museum 24/7 via the keys in the combination lockbox on the entrance door. Only our paid-up members are given this combination for museum entry and that code is changed at the end of each membership year. Accordingly, **the entry code has been changed as of February 29th** (everyone got one extra day this leap year) and the new code has been distributed to our current members only. For our continued security that code is not to be given to anyone else, including former members.

Spring means the coming of a traditional museum social gathering and **March 18th** has been selected as the date for this year's event. Members and spouses, or significant others, are invited to join us for a Dutch Treat dinner at the **Black Olive Restaurant in Jonesborough, TN** for this enjoyable annual event. Dinners will be selected personally from the restaurant's highly varied menu and the gathering will begin at 6:00 p.m. **Bill Began**, the newsletter editor for

the Carter Chapter NRHS, has made the arrangements with the restaurant for use of their private dining room for this event.

March 18th is a significant date for the Carter Railroad Museum as well. **We will have a group of 30 home-schooled children, ranging in age from the early primary grades to high school aged children, visiting the ETSU university museums on that day and they are scheduled to tour the G. L. Carter Railroad Museum beginning at 1:00 p.m. on that Friday.** Parking during weekday school hours can be challenging, but Friday afternoons often have more parking spaces than at other times during the week. We need 5-7 volunteers from the MEMRR and the NRHS to come to the museum around 12:30 and to have the museum operational and open for this group who will be in our museum for about an hour. My teaching schedule will allow me to be there and I hope that several of you can come and join me and assist in giving these children, and the parents and teachers who will be escorting them, a great model railroading experience. I will send out a reminder the week of this scheduled event, but please place it on your calendars and let me know if you plan to help out. Thank you in advance.



Muskrat Mtn RR passenger consist pulls into the station

The **Heritage Day Event** for March has proven to be one of our most popular events with our club members and our museum visitors alike. Once again, for the 6th consecutive year, we are bringing back our **Annual Steam Up**. The sounds of puffing miniature steam locomotives and their bells and whistles will be heard throughout the Carter Railroad Museum in 4 scales; N, HO, HO_N3 and G. If you have a steam locomotive bring it in, or use one of the several club steam locomotives housed in our roundhouse. This is the time for mixed freight consists, short line trains, switchers, and the speedy passenger trains with their polished varnish to take to the rails echoing images of railroading's glory days with the iron horses of the past. If you have steam era memorabilia that we can display please bring it in and our Heritage Day Coordinator, **Geoff Stunkard**, will help you display your treasured items. We often have a

big crowd on our Heritage Days and this one should be no exception. So, bring your favorites and let's fill the galleries with the sound of steam locomotives on **March 26th**.

Our Librarian, **Gary Emmert**, has been steadily adding more hard-backed books to our railroad library. Many of these have come from the **Rev. Howard Walker Estate** which is source of the majority of our approximately 1,000 volume collection. Many new DVDs have been added from the same source, as well as from other donors. Remember, these books, DVDS, and railroading magazines are available for checkout to our members, and while some folks are taking advantage of these library holdings dedicated to railroading and model railroading, many of you have not. The checkout procedure is easy and Gary will assist you in finding the books on railroads you are interested in and checking out the materials to you. Many of the DVDs are from the Kalmbach ***Dream, Plan, Build*** series of videos with many featuring model railroading tips to improve your modeling skills. One member recently told me that access to the museum's library was well worth more than the small annual membership dues he pays if that was the only privilege he reaped from them.



Speaking of books and magazines, **Jim Pahr** has been regularly manning a sales table for the museum on Saturdays providing materials for sale to the visiting public. Included in the sales stock are a number of books and magazines that our members should be interested in including: *HOn3 Annual 6th Ed. (2014)*, *HOn3 Annual 7th Ed. (2015)*—these two editions feature the Tweetsie Layout in our Carter RR Museum—, *HOn30 Annual for 2014 and 2015*, *The Blue Ridge Stemwinder* (the definitive work on the ET&WNC RR), and others that you might want to add to your personal library. Stop by the sales table and check out its offerings.

Our Vice-President, **John Carter**, can always use some help as one of his duties as vice-president is to arrange **programs for each business meeting**. We can always show a DVD on some aspect of model railroading from the library's collection, but it is more informative to have a modeler from the club, or someone who has experience in prototype railroading, present a program that provides the personal interactions, the question-and-answer sessions, that are not possible from watching a how-to-do-it modeling tips video. If you have some modeling talent and there is something you do very well with track laying, wiring, installing or programing decoders, scenery techniques, weathering structures or rolling stock, photographing models, etc., or experience in how the prototype railroads are operated, how consists are put together, railroad signaling, etc., these are all things fellow members would like to hear and learn about. Please help your vice-president by volunteering to demonstrate or present some aspect of model railroading we can learn and benefit from. The programs don't have to be long, only about 15-30 minutes, and they don't have to be of professional grade, just tell us what you know and how you do it and we shall all benefit from your efforts. **Volunteers needed!** Be one! Talk to John soon. Thank you in advance and we look forward to your program.

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum has a Webpage. Work is still going on to complete the building of this museum webpage, but we are easy to locate by going to the ETSU homepage and in the "search box" on the tool bar at the top right of the page just type in "George L. Carter Railroad Museum" and it will link you to our page. In the near future many of **Geoff Stunkard's** find photos of the museum's galleries and children's playroom will be inserted to illustrate the display areas of the museum. All our affiliated clubs and historical society's links will be there, including links to **Allan Bidwell's** Johnson's Depot, and the Tweetsie Trail site. We post our museum, club and chapter events and many others on this site. If you have suggestions for improvements of the site please tell me, or email them to me, and I shall incorporate as many as I can into the site. This site has actually existed for several years, but I have just last fall turned my attention to improving it with the help of a service on campus that works on webpages.

A lot of work continues on the MEMRR HO layout, particularly on the yard sections. Much of the current effort is now concentrated on the movable module that will house the diesel facilities, the yard office, transfer table, back shops, and other supporting facilities. All of this complex will be close to the outside of the layout in clear view of our visitors and great care is being taken to make this sprawling complex as interesting and accurate as possible. Several members, working with the HO-Scale Coordinator, **John Carter**, have

recently been creating under track inspection pits in the floor of one of the buildings. If this is a section of the yard you would like to help with please see some of the guys working on it some Thursday night soon. There are also plenty of other tasks that need to be done on many sections of the yard that could use your help including rail painting, ballasting, scenery, and more. **Ted Bleck-Doran** and **Donaald Beck** are working on a street scene to be incorporated along the mainline merger with the throat of the yard to add to the landscape. It is a big yard and we need members to help us complete the many tasks, both large and small, that will make it both functional and realistic.

The Tweetsie side of the Railroad Museum is becoming busier and busier with each passing week. A train crew has been successfully running 2 or more trains on the point-to-point layout for many weeks now. This operation of trains has attracted the attention of many more visitors to this side of the museum while allowing us to troubleshoot the performance of the locomotives, rolling stock and the rails. As we have detected problem areas we have moved to correct them which, in turn, have greatly improved operational performance.

There is still several years' of work to be done and many of our members are working hard to complete them. We still have thousands of trees, from puff-ball to realistic foreground trees, to be created and planted. **Ken Harmon** has become very skilled at creating many great looking trees in many sizes and shapes and he has been instructing any members who want to learn his tree-making techniques in this modeling skill. You might consider joining him and learning how to make miniature trees and shrubs that will get planted in Tweetsie country, Much of the rail needs to be painted and we still have ballasting to do.



Rich Gallaher and others have been constructing car kits for the ET&WNC RR, but we still have scores of kits to be assembled, painted and decaled. You can be a big help by working with us to put together some of our much-needed rolling stock.

Frank Fezzie has been taking the lead with the wiring on the Tweetsie layout which includes the installation of ceiling mounted cameras that allow the trainmaster to follow the trains through the steep mountain landscape that dominates the layout. Frank will also soon turn some of his talents to lighting some of the structures on the layout beginning with Shell Creek.

John Edwards has been learning the software that is necessary to operate our newly purchased Micro-Mark LaserKnife. This machine will be used to cut out most of the structures from scale drawings of them that I am making for use on this layout. We plan to begin with the station at Blevins using station floor plans and photos from some of **Johnny Graybeal's** books as well as **John Waite's** *The Blue Ridge Stemwinder*. **Dawn Lacey** and cousin **Bettie Noble** have been providing photos of their family's store at Hopson, TN, and the family home behind it, that will compete the structures needed for the Blevin's section of the layout. We are planning to use the LazerKnife to cut out the depot and the store as the first projects for the machine. This choice is made because **Gladys Lacey** is pictured in the family photo taken in front of her father's store in 1915 and she has visited the Carter RR Museum in the past two consecutive years; her last visit in 2015 when she was 104 years old! . Her father also built the Blevins Depot. I would like for her and her family to be able to see the models we are creating of her family place along the Tweetsie tracks.

When we complete "Blevins" the next structures we will create, via my drawings and John's skill with the LaserKnife, will be all the wooden buildings that make up the Cranberry Mine complex. Completing as much of this section of the Tweetsie layout by the end of June is the priority to make the deadline for another possible feature on the museum in the 2016 edition of the *HOn3 Annual, 8th Ed.*

Gregg Mundkowsky has decided to take on the task of trying to convert our 0-4-0 Porter locomotives that are to be used in the Cranberry Mine from HOn30 locomotives that use N-Scale gauge track to HOn3 locomotives by spreading their wheel base just far enough to make them fit the slightly wider 3 foot track. If he is successful in doing so our mine tracks and the Tweetsie tracks will all the have compatible 3-foot narrow gauge trackage that will mimic the prototype and let our ET&WNC locomotives and rolling stock transverse the Cranberry mine tracks just as they did when the railroad and the mine were in operation. If this

reallocation of wheel base is successful on the locomotives we can more easily convert the mine's array of ore and log cars to HO_n3 and the next step will be to convert the little mine engines from DC to DCC operation. If anyone would like to join Gregg in this enterprise please let him know and you can collectively try to complete this task.



Our planned museum's big **train show on June 3-4, 2016** is slowly taking life under the direction of the Train Show Committee of **Carolyn Gregg, Mark Woomer, Bill Hensley, and me, chaired by Roger Teinert.** Members of the committee have submitted information about the show to a number of national model railroading magazines and other railroading publications for insertion in their "coming events" columns and we have taken out an ad in forthcoming issues of *Model Railroad Craftsman*. Several of the committee members have been going to regional train shows and manning a table to notify others, including potential vendors and clubs with traveling layouts in any scale, about our show. I have been working with the director of the Johnson City Blue Plum Festival to get cross advertising for our event with theirs and we are sharing ideas for letting the 80,000 people Blue Plum expects to have at this year's event be fully aware that we have a train show happening on the ETSU campus the same weekend. We are working very hard to make this first show that we hope will become an annual event, a big

success. We welcome any members who would like to help us in this effort. We are also being asked by many people who plan to attend the show from outside our region if we can have the Carter Railroad Museum open for them to tour on Friday as well as on our regular Saturday operating hours and several of our MEMRR members have also agreed with me that we should, indeed, have our museum open for all to see who wish to visit.

We are also reminded that the Carter RR Museum will again be co-hosting the **ET&WNC RR Historical Society** at the Carnegie Hotel the same weekend as the train show and you are invited to become a member of this historical society that voted to affiliate with our museum at their annual convention and their programs for their convention are outstanding. I would encourage you to consider joining this organization (membership is \$30 annually) whose mission is to keep the spirit of the Tweetsie alive through the preservation of its few remaining physical assets and its rich historical legacy. Our modeling of this famous narrow-gauge railroad that originated here in Johnson City is a major reason for their joining with us. Their annual convention is scheduled for June 3-5 and we have membership information available at the Carter RR Museum. Please see me if you are interested in joining and/or want more information regarding their upcoming convention.

Spring is almost here and we have had a busy start to the New Year. There are lots of opportunities and challenges ahead of us as we continue to enjoy and share our hobby of railroading in all of its many forms with each other and with the thousands of annual visitors to our museum. Many are potential club members and many have joined us. Have fun with you passion for trains big and small. Thank you for all you do for the club and the Carter Railroad Museum. Hear the sound of the whistle of the train at 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

NS PROGRESSES ON ITS SD70ACU PROGRAM

**By Chris Guss | February 10, 2016 from
 Trainsnewswire.com**

ALTOONA, Pa. — Norfolk Southern has released the first two of its rebuilt SD70ACU locomotives from its Altoona, Pa., shop in January. The program which began in 2015 is the

latest for the railroad to upgrade older, less reliable locomotives in its fleet. The program draws from the 100 former Union Pacific SD90MACs acquired second hand from EMD. The rebuild program features a complete electrical upgrade, replacing the existing Siemens electrical equipment, including the inverters, with Mitsubishi electronics. The existing cab is replaced with a new isolated SD70ACe cab along with a number of other smaller changes to the locomotive during rebuild. The changes bring the locomotive up to essentially the same mechanical

specification as EMDs SD70ACes. The first two SD70ACUs released from Altoona were NS Nos. 7248 and 7283 in January. Both units were sent to Progress Rail's Muncie, Ind., plant for testing. A third unit, No. 7319, emerged from the Altoona paint shop this week. To accelerate the program,

Norfolk Southern will have EMD rebuild a number of SD90MACs concurrent with the ongoing program at Altoona. The first four, NS Nos. 7262, 7267, 7280, and 7295 have already been shipped to Progress Rail's Muncie plant to begin the rebuild program there.



Norfolk Southern SD70ACU No. 7319 is ready, but not released for service, at the railroad's shops in Altoona, Pa. The railroad has already completed two refits from SD90MACs. Photo by L.R. Myers of AltoonaWorks.info



A string of ex-UP SD90's awaiting conversion outside the Altoona Shops.