

**Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Club &  
George L Carter Chapter of NRHS Newsletter**

**THE SIGNAL BRIDGE**

**AND**

**THE COAL ROAD**



**CLUB NEWS**

*contributed by Ben Merritt*

This week we have another behind the scenes look from our Heritage Day event for Johnson City "Little Chicago" Rail Days where members had started setting up trains in staging ready to roll for the event as engines from both the Southern Railway and the Clinchfield Railroad take up the ready tracks either having their trains put together or waiting for clearance to move to the main line.

**Inside this issue:**

<b>Club News</b>	1, 7
<b>President's Msg</b>	2 - 4
<b>Lose Track of Time</b>	6
<b>Meeting Minutes</b>	5
<b>Club Information</b>	8



# The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab



Happy New Year wishes to all our members and their families! 2020 has arrived bringing us into a new decade and it promises to be an active one for the MEMRR, the G.L. Carter Chapter NRHS and the George L. Carter Railroad Museum. We also wish to welcome our newest members and we look forward to getting to know each of you and participating with you in our hobbies of model railroading and our interests in the prototype railroads, past and present, that have drawn us all together at

our railroad museum. *January is also the final month to renew your memberships in the MEMRR and the NRHS, so if you have not already done so, please get your annual dues to your respective treasurer (John Dodge for the Carter Chapter NRHS and Gary Emmert for the MEMRR).* At the end of the month those of you who are members in good standing will continue to receive your monthly newsletter(s) [*The Coal Road* and *The Signal Bridge* are now combined into one single newsletter edited by Cathy Smith) for the remaining year and the combination code on the museum's outside door will be changed with notification of the new code distributed to all of our members.

**Late December Newsletter:** Many of you have inquired about the status of the December newsletters. I am sad to report that our Newsletter Editor, *Cathy Smith*, has been ill for most of the Holiday Season and this, unfortunately, has prevented her from completing the many tasks required to put together our newsletters and to get them distributed. I am sure all of us are aware of the many respiratory and GI-tract maladies that have been going around combined with a more severe than usual flu season that has sidelined many of us, yours truly included. We wish our most valued editor a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing her back to full strength and to receiving our next newsletter. Get well Cathy!

**Parking Passes:** New volunteer parking passes are now available that are valid until June 30, 2020. You may obtain yours in the Alsop Gallery by the Train Master's station. Please fill out the required information (name and vehicle license number) on the accompanying log sheet that matches your parking pass number. Parking passes are limited, so remember to take only one (not one per vehicle, only 1). Please obey ETSU parking regulations and park only in spaces marked with a blue or yellow blaze on the parking spot. You are not legal to park in service vehicle spaces, fire lanes, or other restricted areas. You may park in handicapped spots if you have the proper handicapped tag or license plate. If you do manage to get a parking citation, and you got it by parking illegally, you are responsible for taking care of it.

# The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab

Continued from page 2

**Heritage Day Event:** Our December Heritage Day featured "Fallen Flags" and it proved to be one of the most visited of any of the events we have hosted at the Carter Railroad Museum. Almost 300 people visited the museum hosted by more than 25 of our members in the 5-hour period we were open on December 28<sup>th</sup>. Perhaps the public interest was bolstered by the timing of the event, just following Christmas and just before New Year's Eve, but we had folks packed wall-to-wall during parts of the day. My thanks to all of our volunteers who did such a great job of operating the layouts, working in the children's playroom, and helping all our visitors on such an actively crowded day. Great Job Everyone!!!

The Heritage Day Event for January is on Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> and we are celebrating "Johnson City-Little Chicago" with vintage trains from this 150-year-old town that was founded by the establishment of Henry Johnson's water tank along the right-of-way.

**Big Train Show:** The Big Train Show Committee chaired by *Roger Teinert* continues to plan for the June 4-5, 2020 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Big Train Show to be held in the ETSU Mini-Dome. The committee generally meets on the third Monday of the month at Portobellos Restaurant around 5:00 p.m. The meetings are open and any interested person is welcome to come dine with us and join in the planning sessions. As we get closer to the event itself we will be asking a number of you to help us with the show and the extra open hours for the Carter Railroad Museum. We already have a good numbers of vendors who have reserved their tables for the show and it promises to be the biggest one we have had to date.

**MEMRR Operations Night:** Mark your calendar for February 3<sup>rd</sup> for the next exciting Operations Night. We have new operations schedules that were created by *Geoff Stunkard* that we have been using and tweaking since they were first introduced at our November 2019 session and they have proved to be a lot of fun and a real railroading challenge for those who have come to participate. They involve a lot of train movements and tight schedules for the pickup and setting out of rolling stock while making up trains in the yard and clearing the mainlines for passenger and fast freight consists. This one night of operations like the big boys a month takes at least a dozen members working on keeping on schedules and fills the 3 hours we are normally operating the layout. Almost every foot of track on the entire layout is in play for some portion of each session and club and module owners have been most cooperative in clearing needed tracks and yards for our joint operations. For the January session we had 13 members, including some of our youngest members, present and participating. Plan to join us for the February session and join the fun. No experience is necessary; just an interest in operating the layout like a prototype railroad. The club/museum locomotives and rolling stock provide all the pieces we need to operate, so please don't bring your own equipment. If you do own a DCC Digitrax throttle you are encouraged to bring it, or use the free downloadable app on your smart phone, so we have enough throttles for everyone who wants to run trains.

# The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab

*(continued from page 3)*

**NRHS RailCamp June 2020:** For the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS is sponsoring one of our MEMRR junior members to the East RailCamp to be held on the campus of the University of Delaware. The student selected to participate this year is *Jordan Cathelyn*, the son of Patricia and Jim Cathelyn, and a very active member of the MEMRR who can be found in the Carter Railroad Museum most Saturdays running his trains. Jordan has also participated in the Tweetsie side of the museum operating some of our narrow gauge trains. We are happy to be able to sponsor such an outstanding young man and outstanding student to represent our NRHS Chapter. Jordan's RailCamp tuition and round trip airfare will be paid by the Carter Chapter, and when Jordan returns he will present an account of his week at the camp to the Carter Chapter and the MEMRR at one of our monthly business meetings. We wish Jordan a great week and a wonderful railroading adventure.

**ETSU back in Session:** The first day of classes for the ETSU Spring Semester will begin the day after Martin Luther King's anniversary on Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. Be prepared for parking to be much tighter from then until the middle of May when the term ends. Parking around the railroad museum opens up some around 4:30 p.m. on weekdays when the 8-4:30 staff leave for the day providing some opportunities to find parking reasonably close to the building. Good hunting!

We are entering a new decade and our Railroad Museum is into its 13<sup>th</sup> year. Our memberships are healthy and new folks with interesting backgrounds and experiences who are interested in railroads and the hobby of model railroading continue to join our organizations. We look forward to another good year with its challenges and unanticipated 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, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders  
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU



# Club News

G.L. Carter Railroad Museum Coordinators' Meeting - 12 December 2019

Meeting called to order by Fred Alsop in room 235 Campus Center Building, ETSU at 6:00 p.m.

**Fred Alsop – General Announcements:**

ETSU Fall Graduation Saturday, Dec. 14; expect crowded parking lots.

Carter RR Museum Christmas Party Dec 13, Presbyterian Church, Jonesborough beginning around 6 p.m.

White River Productions has contacted Geoff Stunkard to explore the possibilities of a book about the history, construction and operation of our HOn3 "Tweetsie" layout.

Operations Night the first Monday of January on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Plan to begin around 5 p.m. All members are invited. Operations use all layouts and club locomotives and rolling stock.

No news on the Ashe Street building.

**John Carter – MEMRR HO Layout:** Members continue to work on the layout. Frank Fizzie working on powering turnouts in the roundhouse area. Repairing/replacing tortoise machine on "Ramey" module. Working on completing the track installation on the upper loop of the "Ramey" module and making plans for extending tracks connecting "Roberts" module with plans for designing a logging operation.

**Robert Sullivan – Membership:** Provide contact information for new members and complete survey of their modeling interests. Requested to send "get well" cards to Charlotte Pahrts and to Gary Gilliam.

**Mike Tartar – N-Scale Layout:** Continuing to improve train operations on the layout including cleaning track.

**Jim Hoit – RIP Track:** Obtained a box of long-shank knuckle couplers to install on rolling stock. Requests Fred order Micro-Mark truck pliers in HO-Scale and N-Scale to spread trucks for wheel installation. Reported the club/museum inventory for HO-Scale rolling stock now totals approximately 1,000 cars.

**Mike Buster – ET&WNC HOn3 Layout:** 6 ore cars have been constructed and are now on the layout. Cautions that they are fragile, especially the accessories, and should be handled with care. This also applies to all the HOn3 rolling stock and locomotives because of their small size and extensive small detail parts. Requests purchase of hydrocal.

**Gary Emmert – Library:** Donations have been made to the ETSU Archives of Appalachia. We have received \$649 Lionel donation. Paul Hopkins is offering to appraise Lionel and American Flyer items that have been donated. Gary has been asked to visit two HO-scale layouts in Virginia to advise the owners on possible value and disposition of them. Bill Smith has donated a box of railroad DVDs. We have some duplicate railroad books for sale in the library; see Gary if you are interested in purchasing one or more.

**Roger Teinert – Big Train Show:** 2020 museum railroad calendars and train show flyers have been sent to more than 80 potential vendors and train show coordinators. Committee continues to have monthly planning meetings that are open to any interested members. Next meeting on January 20, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in Portobellos Restaurant, Johnson City.

# Lose Track of Time!

*Contributed by Geoff Stunkard*

The City of San Francisco train snowbound at Donner Pass in 1952.





# CLUB NEWS

*Contributed by Ben Merritt*

MEMRR Layout Update: a quick follow up update for the work being done along the siding at Richland where the coaling tower area is just about done. Focus has now moved to the other side of the road where an area for the water tower and additional buildings are in progress. Additionally, the road itself is getting some work done. Stay tuned for more updates coming soon!!





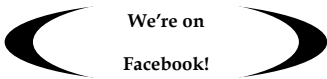
**Mountain Empire Model  
Railroaders Club**

Location:



George L. Carter Railroad Museum  
East Tennessee State University  
Brown Hall, Rm 223  
Johnson City, TN

<http://www.etsu.edu/railroad>



**Business Meetings**

Held monthly on the  
3rd Tuesday at 6:30pm.  
\*

**Weekly Work Nights**

Thursdays from 4pm until ?

**Club Officers**

- **Club President & Director of George L Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU:** Fred Alsop  
alsopf@mail.etsu.edu
- **Vice President:** John Carter  
carterjohn92@gmail.com
- **Treasurer:** Gary Emmert  
jbox1015@comcast.net
- **Secretary:** Mike Tarter  
miketarter06@gmail.com
- **Webmasters:**  
Logan Heaton  
Ben Merritt  
Bill Smith  
memrrwebmaster@gmail.com
- **Newsletter Editor:**  
Cathy Smith  
cathysmithmemrr@yahoo.com

## **George L Carter Railroad Museum and MEMMR**

The many colorful multiple railroads of the Midwest are featured at the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, located in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University. The region encompassing Chicago, Detroit, Louisville, Milwaukee and St. Louis was the true epicenter of American commerce between east and west during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Literally dozens of railroads large and small provided service throughout Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and the upper midwestern states, all service as links to the chain.

Between passenger and freight operations, the railroad were crucially important in the era before widespread air travel and interstate highways. This was especially true during the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars. Whether it was perishables like produce and livestock or raw commodities such as coal and ore, everything from store goods to Studebakers came from this region. Since so many models of these trains remain popular, icons of streamlining and strength, it is planned to have excellent Midwestern representations in operation by volunteers on the museum's 24x44 foot HO scale layout. 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

In addition to the displays, there is also a growing research library, and an oral history archive being established as part of the museum's programs. Info can be found online at 'http://etsu.edu/railroad/' or 'http://johnsonsddepot.com/' or 'http://www.stateoffranklin.net/johnsons/glcarter/cartermuseum.htm'

Members of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) club coordinate the exhibits. Visit 'www.memrr.org' to learn more about MEMRR, or visit 'http://glcarternrhs.com/' to learn more about Carter Chapter, which helps demonstrate and maintain the model layouts, museum exhibits and other projects.

Membership opportunities are available to adults, and include special benefits and model railroading enjoyment.

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 (at green light) onto Jack Vest Drive and continue east to North Dossett Drive (then left) to John Roberts Bell Drive at end, then right then left on Ross Drive(176) to end, adjacent to the flashing RR crossing sign.

- *For more information about Heritage Day, contact Fred Alsop at 423-439-6858 or asopf@mail.etsu.edu.*
- *For disability accommodations, call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at*

**Notice:**

**If a Member does not want His/Her name, phone # and e-mail listed,  
please contact Fred so it can be removed.**