Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Club & George L Carter Chapter of NRHS Newsletter THE SIGNAL BRIDGE AND THE COAL ROAD

Volume 27 – Issue 4 and 5 April and May 2020

LOSE TRACK OF TIME

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<u>April Column</u>

Spring has arrived with its splashes of color as a thousands of wildflowers and flowering trees, the dogwoods, redbuds, cherries and others, burst into blossom. Everything is growing and greening-up outside; but it is not the spring that any of us have ever experienced in our lifetimes before. The global pandemic of COVID-19 has changed all of our lives for now, and perhaps for-

ever, as it will take a long time once this scourge has peaked and passed for us to begin to once more feel like things are "normal" in our lives. We are all spending more time at home then we were only a few weeks ago, building the security around the domestic teams of our families and close friends, and practicing social-distancing when we make those necessary trips into the outside world. Seeing lots of people we don't know wearing masks, finding paper products and meats like chicken a rare commodity at the grocery stores, not being able to dine with family and friends in our favorite restaurants, have become parts of our everyday "new normal". Our clubs and our railroad museum activities have been taken from our lives for the present and I miss the social interactions they provided on a weekly and monthly basis. We will not be able to hold our monthly Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, G.L. Carter Chapter NRHS, and Big Train Show meetings, or do our work and meet the public in the Carter Railroad Museum, perhaps for many weeks to come, but we will stay together through our newsletter, our emails and texts, and our passion for the hobby that we all share. At this time I am unaware that any of our members, or their families, have contracted the virus, or have been tested positive for it, and for that we are all most thankful. Stay well and stay safe! This too, will pass.

It is with a heavy heart that I must tell you that we did lose a valued MEMRR member, *Rita Jones*, beloved wife of *Bob Jones*, to an unfortunate accident that occurred in their home on April 8th. Our thoughts and prays go out to Bob and his family in this time of sorrow. I know many of you have already expressed your personal condolences to Bob and his family who have had to bear their grieve without the visitation of friends who would have been able to do so in person if we were not living under "stay at home" restrictions. It is my understanding the final services will be in South Carolina with family. Pirate Bob, we hope you will continue to reside here and be an active member of our club and our museum with your many railroading friends who care so much about you.

East Tennessee State University remains under lockdown now and for the foreseeable future. I have permission as director of the Carter RR Museum to enter it as needed. If any of you find you have left something there that you really find you need to have at home for the next few weeks, please let me know and I will try to make arrangements to meet you there to retrieve it.

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However, remember that I am one of those people in the category listed a "highest risk" because of my age and my compromised immune system, so please be sure any such request are truly urgent before you ask me to try to meet your request for items left behind. The university security systems and security personnel are still active 24/7 and your personal belongings, as well as mine, are safe in the locked Campus Center Building that houses the Carter Railroad Museum.

The university has cancelled all group meetings for April and all the buildings are still locked down with special permission needed for any university employees to enter any of the buildings. Currently any employ has to seek and be granted such permission well before they are requesting to go inside any building. We are all waiting for this pandemic to begin to flatten out and begin to decrease the infection rate. Tennessee was late with its "stay at home" orders, therefore, we don't know when our infection peak will arrive to East Tennessee. The university is requiring the faculty to prepare all of their summer classes to be online classes (just as we are doing for the current Spring Semester), and the Spring graduation exercises have been cancelled.

National NRHS has contacted us to say that they have had to cancel both the East and West Rail-Camps for 2020. This is especially disappointing to our Carter Chapter as we were, for the 4th consecutive year, sponsoring one of our high school members to the East Railcamp based in Dover, Delaware. I know how disappointed *Jordan Cathelyn*, who was our candidate for this year's camp, is at learning that his June trip and railroad learning experience has been cancelled. However, if Jordan wants to be our guy for the camp in 2021 he shall have that opportunity with all expenses paid for his transportation and its tuition.

The ET&WNC RR Historical Society has also been forced to cancel, or perhaps postpone, their planned Annual Convention this June that was to be based once more in the Carnegie Hotel, Johnson City, TN. There is hope the convention might still be held in the fall if the status of the COVID-19 virus has subsided to a level that such group meetings are possible.

The 5th Annual Big Train Show has not been cancelled at this writing on Good Friday, 10 April, and our Big Train Show Committee, chaired by *Roger Teinert*, will not make the decision for "go-or-no-go" until the end of the month. I fully expect that unless a miracle occurs with this highly infectious virus, we will have to cancel this event. If that becomes the reality we will contact all of our contracted vendors, and we have had more tables requested at this juncture than ever before, we will offer them whatever we can to persuade them to be with us in June 2021. We will keep all of our members fully informed of our decision regarding this important event as we move towards the scheduled June 2020 show. I do want to thank everyone on this critical committee for all the work they have done since the 2019 show ended to make the 5th Annual show bigger and better than all of those that preceded it. You are a terrific group to work with and I am honored to be in such dedicated and professional company.

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As to business meetings we shall not have the opportunity to hold them for a while so I will plan to keep in touch via email announcements forwarded via our Web-Masters, *Ben Merritt* and *Bill Smith*. I monitor my home email now, <u>fredjalsop3@earthlink.net</u>, that I am having to work from home, so please don't hesitate to contact me electronically or us my cell phone if you need an instantaneous reply, or just want to talk; 615/604-8759. Please don't forget how important our newsletter is for communications and updates as well. Our editor, Cathy Smith, is doing a great job in her role as our newsletter editor and editors always appreciate getting articles and photographs they can publish. Please submit any prototype railroading or model railroading items to her so we can all share in your trips, photos, modeling skills and projects.

Now that we are mostly home-bound we might use some of the time to deflect "cabin fever" to work on our hobby of model railroading or the lure of the prototype. It is a good time to catch up on the some of the articles in those model railroading magazines many of us subscribe to. What about reading that railroad-themed book that has been on the shelf for months now? If you have a model railroad layout at home you now have no excuse not to work on it and drive some trains. You don't have a home layout like most of us don't in the house? Then perhaps putting together some of those structure kits, or rolling stock kits that you purchased and were saving for a rainy day (its pouring now) might be just the thing to concentrate on. If you have already assembled all of those buildings and freight/passenger cars, this might be a great opportunity to weather them to make them look more prototypical; and don't forget to weather some of your locomotives as well. The web has numerous U-tube and other searchable videos on all facets of model railroad-ing as well as lots of videos on the big trains and railroads. This is a great opportunity to get back into the hobby that we all share as members of the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS.

While we are all facing this pandemic in some degree of isolation, we are all in this together. We will get through this and we will get back to being able to shake hands and hug each other, to have meetings, social gatherings, and to continue with our club, chapter and museum agendas. I know we all look forward to that time. Keep in touch; stay healthy and stay safe.

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

Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders President, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS



May Column

May is here already and along with all the new bright colors of spring we have had some cold, windy weather and frosty mornings. I hope everyone is safe and well and practicing social distancing and wearing your masks. Perhaps we should ask you to send your photos of you wearing your masks to our editor so we can not only see the newest important additions to our ward-

robes when we are making public appearances but to try to guess who is behind the colorful cloth. I feel lucky that we are living in Upper East Tennessee where the COVID-19 virus has not made serious medical problems for us, but I fear that opening up the state too soon will promote a public relaxation in our behavior that may allow the virus to begin to spread. Be safe and stay well!

Help our Editor with Materials for our Joint Newsletter!! Now that we are not meeting or seeing each other on a regular basis, we can stay connected as model and prototype railroaders though our outstanding newsletter. But editors are like millers; they need grist for their mill. Our newsletter editor, *Cathy Smith*, needs your articles and photos of what you are modeling at home, or what trains you have photographed and seen in the area. Editors are terrific at layouts and editing, but we cannot expect them to build a monthly newsletter alone? What project have you been working on at home? What railroading books that you have been reading would you recommend to the rest of your isolated club members? Have you seen a particularly interesting structure that you have photographed that might look terrific as a model on a layout? What are the real railroads doing that might be of interest to the rest of us? If you have never seen anything you have photographed or written in print, this is an outstanding opportunity for you to do so. Please share what you have been doing that has a railroading theme with the rest of us through our newsletter.

ETSU just had their first ever virtual graduation exercises as all our university building remain on lockdown. All the summer classes will be taught online in the same manner that we finished the spring semester. A new committee has been formed by the university president to guide the university in its planning for the duration of the summer and into the fall semester that will begin in late August. So far no one knows how that semester will begin. Will we have buildings open and face-to-face contact with our students; will we be online with all of our classes; or will there be some kind of hybrid situation? These decisions will also affect our clubs' access to the Carter Railroad Museum and to university rooms for our monthly meetings. I suspect when we do open up the campus we may be able to phase in work and operation sessions in the railroad museum with a limited number of members present at any one time, but not be open to the public for a while.

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<u>Cancellations</u>: We have cancelled our 5th Annual Big Train Show and have notified all of our club members and all of our vendors and potential vendors. I have secured our ETSU Mini-Dome venue for the 4-5 June, 2021 Big Train Show and we will continue to plan for that date. Our vendors have been notified of the 2021 date and have been given the option of us holding the fees they had paid for tables for the 2020 show as credit for that 2021 event, or of having their monies refunded to them. We have had some who have taken each option and I am working with the university to reimburse those that have asked for their money back to get them repaid as soon as possible.

Additionally, we have cancelled our **Labor Day Weekend Rail Excursions** that were to be held in Chattanooga, TN and Blue Ridge, GA. The university is not allowing public meetings, nor public transportation to take place at this time. Even if that were not the case, we would have little success promoting a trip under the current health crisis that would require the close contact required of people to ride for hours on buses and on trains. The original vendor for the lodging, meal and train/boat excursions for this trip declared Chapter 11 in April leaving a new vendor to take up their clients, which that vendor did. The Carter Chapter NRHS has a \$500 deposit for the trip currently with the new vendor (it was transferred automatically from the original vendor) that we are attempting to get them to carry over to the 2021 year when such a trip with our clients hopefully will be feasible.

Big Train Donation: The Carter Railroad Museum now has a new big train! *Vivian Caffey* and her children recently contacted me with the offer of a custom-built locomotive with three freight cars and a caboose, as well as the track and the controls. It is not unusual that the museum is offered a donation of a loved one's trains after their passing, but this is not the kind of locomotive, rolling stock and track that we have been accustomed to being gifted. *Bill Caffey*, now deceased for almost a decade, built the entire locomotive, cars and track in his outside workshop entirely from scratch for his children and potential grandchildren 50 years ago at his home in Kingsport, TN. The locomotive is an exact duplicate of a Southern F7 in the railroad's green and white scheme, the caboose is a matching Southern in caboose red, and the tank car has Eastman logos. The train is 1-foot gauge and to scale! It is beautiful as you will see in the accompanying photos we took when we met with Mrs. Caffey at her home recently. Mr. Caffey built a masterpiece of a train big enough for his children to ride on and laid his homemade track in his front yard on ties and rail he fabricated in his workshop. The gift to the museum is valued at approximately \$15,000.

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East Tennessee State University has granted my request for additional space at Valleybrook to temporarily store the 6-foot-long locomotive, and the rest of the equipment, until such time as we have a place where we can lay the track and operate the train. The locomotive is powered with a lawnmower gasoline engine equipped with an electric starter. Mr. Caffey did not ride on the locomotive, but rather built it to be controlled remotely via a hand-held controller similar to those used to fly radio-controlled model airplanes. (See photos on pages 8 and 9)

As soon as the Valleybrook space is cleaned out by the university and I am issued keys to the room, we will move the donated train and track to that facility. We will need some volunteer "gandy dancers" to help us unbolt the 7-foot track sections and remove them from the Caffey front yard and will be asking for that help in the near future. We will need to have a small group of 5-7, or so folks to do this work; a gang big enough to be efficient, but small enough to not be getting in each other's way. Let *Roger Teinert* or me know if you are interested and available to help. We will probably schedule this for a Saturday.

I have accepted this wonderful gift based on the hope that when we relocate the Carter RR Museum to a new building we will have the space to set up this train as a working part of the museum on an outside area with its 200+ feet of track.

As yet there is no further word about the Ashe Street Building, nor any other possible space for our museum to occupy. This is understandable based on the pandemic that has taken priority over lots of other things in our lives.

Stay safe and stay in touch. When we can get together as clubs and reoccupy our museum we shall do so. This too, shall end. 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

Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders President, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS

Donation of Bill Caffey's Big Train



This is a photo of the late Bill Caffey and the 1-foot gauge locomotive he created in his Kingsport home workshop as shown in the Kingsport Times-News shortly after it was completed. Note the detail in the workmanship. Mr. Caffey passed away about 10 years ago.

This photo was taken on May 4 at the Caffey residence. This is Vivian Caffey, Bill Caffey's widow, with me and the donated Southern locomotive that was created by her husband in this workshop. The silver frame the locomotive is resting on is to carry the engine with





Vivian Caffey and Fred standing in front of the Southern caboose her late husband, Bill, created. The roof panels lift off so that children can ride seated inside the caboose.

This is the Eastman tank car and the gondola that Mr. Caffey created.

Children can ride in the gondola.



Creation of the Johnson City "Tweetsie" Station in HO Scale

By Fred Alsop

The creation of the Johnson City, TN combination depot that was originally used by both the Southern Railway and the ET&WNC Railroad has been months in the making. Fred Alsop began the modeling project of the large station by creating scale drawings of the structure from photographs and drawings from Johnny Graybeal's excellent books on the railroads of Johnson City and the ET&WNC depots and from other sources, including the building that still stands. John Edwards then converted my drawings into scale components for the building construction using our Micro-Mark laser knife. The exterior of the station and attached baggage building is brick and the plastic simulated brick sheets in HO scale were so thin that identical pieces had to be cut from wood to provide enough structural strength, when these two identical pieces were laminated together, to support the building sides and roofs. Titchy and Grantdline windows and doors would be used throughout the building painted in the green scheme the "Tweetsie" used for their depots.

See Figure 1: Some of the laser-cut pieces from Fred's drawings. Because the building had brick walls each piece had to be cut both from wood and from plastic brick sheeting to make the walls sturdy.



Figure 2: The laminated walls are being assembled attached to a ¹/₄" plastic base.

The station is a combination depot with a very large baggage room as it was initially used by both the narrow gauge and the class A standard gauge railroad. It measured almost 100 feet in length and will be one of the larger structures on the ET&WNC RR layout. After the walls were in place and glued to its large plastic base the next step was to assemble the building's roofs in such a manner that they could be removed for later interior detailing and lighting of the structure. The station platform roofs were permanently attached to the exterior of the depot.

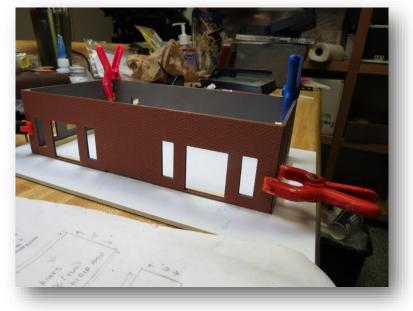


Figure 3: The wooden roofs covering the passenger platforms for the depot are being added.

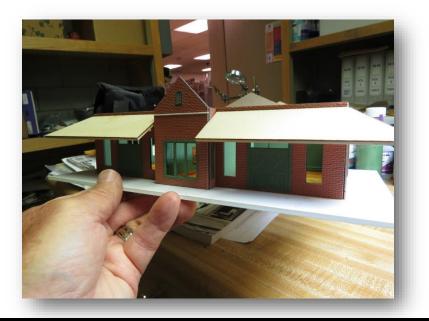


Figure 4: The depot and baggage room roofs are peeked and hip-roof structures with dormers on the front of the depot.



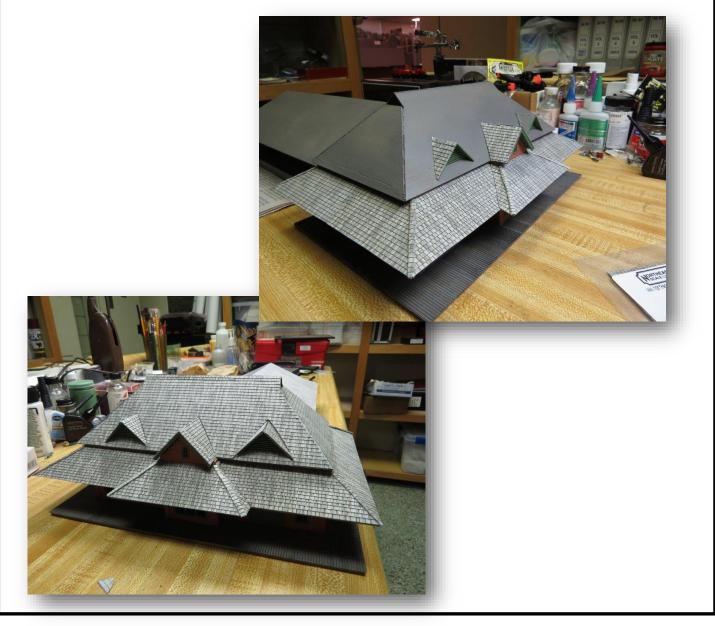
The depot had stained glass panels around the waiting room windows and this proved to be a challenge as to how to attempt to duplicate them. The problem was solved with the use of art-quality translucent permanent marking pins that placed pigment onto the acrylic panes with the black bordering shown in the historic photographs. I had no color photos of these windows so the yellow and green selected are based on my thinking of what was the most probable colors the railroad may have used.

Figure 6: The "stained glass" windows in place in the waiting room windows.



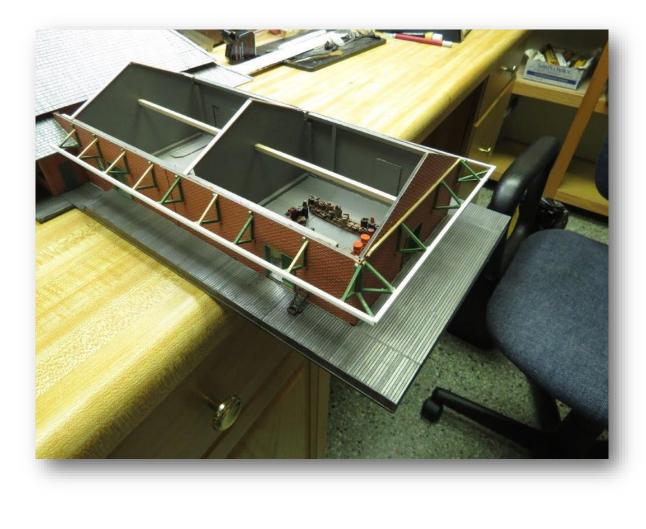
With the roof completed and painted on both surfaces to keep it from warping, it was time to place on the sheets of shingles. This turned out to be a time-consuming labor because of all the roof angles on the main structures, but on the dormers as well. At times I felt I could have shingled the prototype as quickly as this model's roof took to complete. But once done, the roof took on a life of its own and will be the major part of the building one will see as they view the depot on the layout.

Figures 7 & 8 show the shingling process and the finished roof.



The loading dock has diagonal bracing that is anchored on the vertical posts on the sides of the building and that supports the overhanging platform of the loading dock on three sides of the baggage building. The roof of this entire section of the T-shaped structure lifts off in one piece, therefore, I was facing a problem of how to create the bracing in such a manner that it would be sturdy and solid when I could not tie it into the lift-off roof. I solved the problem by creating a "floating" perimeter rail that the braces could be attached to that would not be seen once the roof was set into place and would provide the desired effect that the braces were, indeed, supporting the roof above them.

Figure 9: The platform brace details for the "floating" perimeter support of the platform roof.



With the major phases of the construction completed I next turned my attention to some of the smaller details that included completing the bracing of the depot platform roof, the three chimneys and the station signage. The two chimneys on the depot roof are large and somewhat fancy with brick inlays. The chimneys were made from the same plastic sheeting used for the walls of the structure with mortar lines and weathering for a more natural effect. The "Johnson City" signs were created with dry transfer lettering secured with an overspray of dull coat clear sealer. Some stains from the ash of the chimneys was also applied to the roof for additional weathering detail using chalks set with dull coat spray.

Figures 10, 11, & 12: Details of station signage, chimneys and platform bracing.



The station is now completed except for some of the necessary details that will bring it to life. In addition to interior lighting, it will have a furnished ticket office and waiting rooms, boxes, bags, benches, scales, baggage carts and all the objects inside and out that an active train station in the 1920's would have had. And last, but not least, all the passengers, baggage and freight handlers, and railroad employees that would populate such a busy, important place. So, there is still some work to be done, but what began as scale drawings on white paper is now a model of a building that still stands in downtown Johnson City, TN. All aboard!!

Figures 13 & 14: A front view of the depot with a wooded hillside in the background and the completed structure on the layout in the location it will occupy once it is detailed and the area around it is landscaped. (photos 3930 & 4035 respectfully)



In this time of separation I thought it might be nice to have an "open house by a visual tour of my Tennessee Ohio Eastern Railroad" - *contributed by Jim Hoit*

A story that must be told, " A Whale of a Tail", "A true Gas Light story", as told through the Rose Colored classes of yesterday.

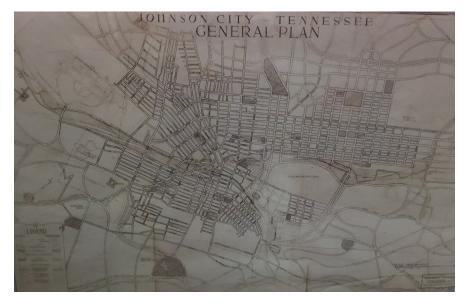
The year is 1827, the beginning of Railroading in America by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Over the next 193 years many railroads began to crisscross the country, one of these was the Tennessee Ohio Eastern Railroad. With it's vast trackage stretching from the Tennessee valley in Johnson City, Tn, North through the Ohio valley reaching the Great Lakes at Defiance, Ohio then turning east to the Atlantic coast and South to the Carolina's.

This Railroad was founded by Gentleman Jim and his Grandson Jeremiah Hoit. They carried Passengers, Freight, Grain and raw materials to and from all points east of the Mississippi River. (pic # 01)

Our story begins at the ticket window (pic #02) to purchase a ticket to ride. There are a number of ways to travel by rail, one by first class with all of the privileges, another is by coach with all of the confronts of home, third is if you would want to work for your fare you can enjoy riding in the caboose collecting and sorting train orders and last is traveling in the baggage car sorting mail and packages for delivery along the trip.







We begin our trip from Johnson City, Tn.(see map # 3), we encounter many sites and sounds of other trains moving in the opposite direction. These massive machines are moving warehouses that can travel across this land stretching from the valleys through the mountainous terrain that a billy goat would have trouble attaining and crossing rivers that would take a day to cross by boat.

When we reach Defiance, Ohio we will have time to visit my Grandfather, Harry S. Gardner who worked for the B & O Railroad for 55 years. (pic # 4) As we enter the Museum we see a model train layout showing the vast country across which the T.O.E. Railroad travels.

As we zoom in on some of the scenes is a fishing hole enjoyed by a father & son, (pic # 5) while the other children are at play on the farm and mom puts out the wash to dry. (pic # 6)







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It's a busy day in the city with movement of people, buying and selling goods and freight being moved about the depot in Charlotte, N.C. with passengers waiting on the next train.(pic #8)





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The rail yard in Rockville, Md is quite busy with trains filling the yard waiting to be sorted, (pic #9) while a baseball game is enjoyed by all. (pic #10) in the mountains of southwest Virginia a passenger train passes through the Moretz farm (a log cabin that still stands today) in Taylors Valley , a short distance from Damascus Va (pic #11) I can just make out the squeal of the metal wheels against the rails and a whistle "Toweeeeet" echoes through the mountains along the "Virginia Creeper Trail".



I hope you have enjoyed this visual tour of the Tennessee Ohio Eastern Railroad. I look forward to the day when we again can gather at the George L. Carter Museum and take a train ride through our heritage.



Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Club

Location:



George L. Carter Railroad Museum East Tennessee State University

> Business Meetings Held monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 6:30pm.

<u>Weekly Work Nights</u> Thursdays from 4pm until ?

MEMRR 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

George L. Carter

Chapter NRHS Officers:

- President: Dr. Fred J. Alsop
- Vice Pres: Jim Pahris
- Secretary: Carl Hacker
- Treasurer: John W. Dodge
- Historian: Carolyn Gregg
- National Representative to the NRHS: Charlotte Pahris

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 20th 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 1st & 2nd World Wars. Whether it was perishables like produce and live-stock 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://johnsonsdepot.com/' or 'http:// www.stateoffranklin.net/johnsons/glcarter/cartermuseum.html'

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