

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

THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

AND

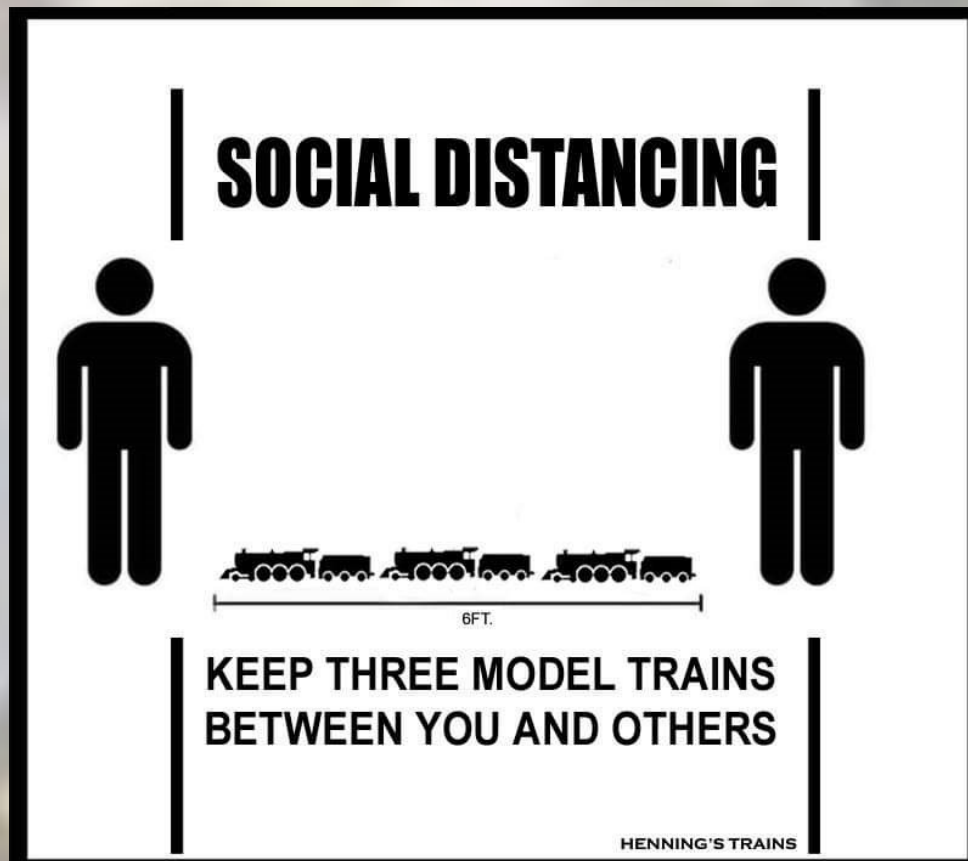
THE COAL ROAD

Volume 27—Issue 6 June 2020

LOSE TRACK OF TIME

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The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab & The Drawbar



June is upon us and we continue to practice physical distancing as we watch the news of the growing COVID-19 pandemic. We are blessed to live in upper East Tennessee as the invisible virus has not had the harsh impact on us as it has had on the rest of the state where the numbers of positive cases continue to rise even as the state continues to reopen for business. Stay safe and stay well as the predictions are for things to get worse before they get better with this disease. The university that houses us is still making cautious plans for a gradual reopening with some employees transitioning back to their offices and labs by June 15th, and there is some statements about being open to the public beginning on July 1, 2020, but there has been no details about just what that means. I have contacted university administrators asking if that may mean that the university museums, including the Carter RR Museum, may be opening on some basis on that date, but have not been given an answer to my query at this writing. So, hold tight. When I know something I will get the word out to our webmasters and you will know within the same hour that I know. In the meanwhile, enjoy the clearer, less polluted skies, the more pronounced sounds of nature, and the opportunity to spend more time at home and with your hobby of railroading.

One of our members has announced that he is leaving us this summer. *Carl Hacker* came to us from Texas following his retirement from academia there with Claudia, his long-time companion, who took an administrative position at East Tennessee State University. Carl is a big-time ham radio operator with a passion for trains, and it was this latter hobby that brought him to us. He has been an MEMRR and a Carter Chapter NRHS member almost as long as he has lived in East Tennessee. For the past two years he has served as the Chapter Secretary of the Carter Chapter and has done an outstanding job for the Chapter in this capacity. Carl and Claudia are downsizing in their forthcoming move to North Carolina, and he has donated boxes of his model railroading collection to the Carter Railroad Museum. In addition, he has advertised for sale a lot of his shop tools and equipment. We will miss his quick smile and his cheerful helpfulness at the museum where he often operated trains on the Tweetsie layout and spent a lot of time talking to our visitors, especially the children, who always got a quick education on model trains and railroading from him. Carl and Claudia, we will miss you and we wish you well in your new home. Thank you so much for being our friend and for all you have contributed with your time and talent to our clubs and our railroad museum.

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The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab & The Drawbar

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On May 23rd **Roger Teinert, Rick Romanski, Gary Emmert, John Carter** and I went to the King-sport home of **Vivian Chaffey** and collected the large, 1-foot gauge locomotive, cars, and accessories she has donated to the Carter RR Museum. We also removed approximately 175 feet of track from its roadbed in her front yard and have stored it all safely in space provided by ETSU at their Valleybrook facility. Read the longer story elsewhere in this newsletter. Thank you guys for all your help and the heavy lifting.

Several of you have suggested that we try to get together remotely for virtual meetings and social chats via technology. I know some of you have zoom-meeting capabilities either on your computers or with your smart phones. I have had to finish my semester teaching from home and have had to learn to use zoom for meetings with my department as well. Ben Merritt has, at my request, recently sent out an email to our members asking those of you who would like to try to get together via zoom to let us know and we will work on doing just that if enough of you, 15 or 20, or more, would like to give it a try. Just let Ben know and we will attempt to work out the technology from there. I don't know when it will be possible for us to meet as a group, even with masks and social-distancing (*now being called physical-distancing*) in place. It may well still be many weeks before we can have a meeting together in the same room. I am most willing to give it a try if enough of you indicate that you want that as well.

Other social casualties of COVID-19 besides our clubs not being able to meet monthly, and not being able to work in the Carter Railroad Museum, and not being able to have our monthly Monday Operations Night, have included our student delegate, **Jordan Cathelyn**, not being able to attend the NRHS East Rail Camp, our 5th Annual Big Train Show, the ET&WNC RR Historical Society's Annual Convention at the Carnegie Hotel, the Carter Chapter's Labor Day Weekend rail excursions in the Chattanooga area, and the National Railway Historical Society's Fall National Meeting in Johnson City. All of these events were cancelled because of the application of the necessary precautions to try to keep us all safe and well from the virus. But, brighter days are ahead. We just have to be tolerant of the "new normal" we are now living in and be as patient and easy-going as we can be until we all get through this. Getting to spend more time at home with Catherine has been good for both of us. We have gotten to share a lot of things that we may have missed if I was still working 6 days a week and I suspect that most of you have found family and hobby time being expanded a little more as we self-isolate has had its positive elements too. I do look forward to being at the museum and interacting with you all again, practicing our hobby together and running some trains around our layouts. But, we now have some time to work on our hobby and interact with our family and others that we may not have had before, so enjoy the moments. We will get through this.

The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab & The Drawbar

(continued from page 3)

The NRHS's administrative decided to cancel their national business meeting that was scheduled to be headquartered at the Carnegie Hotel, here October 16-18, 2020. It was to be hosted by our Carter Chapter NRHS. The NRHS schedules their meetings approximately 2 years ahead and they have had to cancel their national convention meeting in California this month after cancelling their spring meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio earlier this year because of the pandemic. We have invited them to have their spring 2022 meeting back here in Johnson City, and they have accepted our invitation. We will work on plans for that meeting to include a field trip to Knoxville for train and boat rides and a tour of the Knoxville Locomotive Works over the next few months.

We are still planning a rail excursion on the Smoky Mountain Railroad for October 24th, so mark your calendars and keep your fingers crossed that the last planned rail excursion for the year co-hosted by the Carter Chapter NRHS and the Carter RR Museum will be able to run as planned. We shall keep you updated and will have announcements out promoting the trip very soon. Hopefully, the university will be in phase 4 of its reopening by early August and we will be able to attract enough people to make the bus ride to Bryson City, NC in a safe environment. Of course that will totally depend on the extent of the virus in our part of the world over the next few months. But, for now the buses are chartered and our reservations with the railroad have been made.

Remember your newsletter editor needs information to keep our newsletter fresh, up-to-date and informative. Write to her about the home layout you are working on and send some photos to share in print with the rest of us. If you had a great rail experience tell us about it and the train you rode, and send photos of the train and the scenery you saw. If you have been working on weathering locomotives, cars, buildings, etc., tell us of your techniques and send some pictures to share. Model railroading or prototype railroading, big or small, send your editor some grist for her editorial mill and share with your fellow members. This is one important way for our members to stay in touch with the common shared experience provided by our excellent newsletter each month. It will allow us to remain alone together through our hobby of railroading. Do your part. See your words and pictures in print!

We are all working to stay safe and well and to protect others. But we can still make plans for our futures that include our hobby of railroading. Listen to the sound of the whistle of the train at 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

CLUB NEWS

Donation of Bill Caffey's Big Train - contributed by Fred Alsop



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.

In late April, 2020, I got a call from Vivian Chaffey, the wife of Bill Chaffey, now deceased, asking if the George L. Carter Railroad Museum might still be interested in the train, track and accessories her husband had built in his home workshop more than 50 years ago. This was the first time I had heard from Mrs. Chaffey and her family for more than a decade, when they had first contacted me asking me to come to their home on Ore Bank Road, Kingsport, TN, to meet them and discuss their possible donation of Bill's train to our ETSU railroad museum.

On that occasion I met Bill and Vivian, and got my first look at a wonderfully detailed Southern Railway F-unit in Southern green and white. It was complimented with a red wooden Southern caboose and 3 freight cars, including a highly detailed Eastman Co. tank car, representing the company where Bill had retired from as an electrical engineer. The entire locomotive and its consist had been designed and constructed by Bill in his nearby workshop that was also adorned with a score of carefully handmade birdhouses. The attention to detail was amassing. The train was constructed to run on 1-foot gauge track that Bill had also constructed and laid on a gravel-ballasted roadbed in his front yard; a run of track approximately 175 feet in length in roughly an oval configuration. The entire enterprise had been constructed for Bill's children, and later his grandchildren, to ride on guided by Bill's hands on the remote controls.

CLUB NEWS

Bill's reason for inviting me to see his train was based on the fact that his children had grown to adults and most of them and his grandchildren no longer lived in the state. He felt his family no longer had any real interest in the train. The train and track, now more than 40 years old, was not getting any use and he felt it was time for some other children to enjoy it and hoped the Carter RR Museum would be able to store it until such time as it could be set up again and operated. I told the family the museum would be more than honored to except his gift and would seek to fulfill his wishes. Approximately 2 weeks after this meeting Mr. Chaffey suddenly passed away. I was once more asked to meet with Mrs. Chaffey and two of her children who had come home to help their mother through the funeral services and getting things settled following his death. During this discussion the children decided that they did not want to donate the train until they had had more time to think and about it and see if any one of them wanted to keep it. I certainly agreed to their desires and understood that this train, built from scratch by their father, was an important part of their life. I heard no more about the train for more than 10 years, not until Vivian Chaffey contacted me in April, 2020. Mrs. Chaffey and her oldest son, Bill junior, told me they had once again been discussing their train and what should be done with it, and that was why they had decided to contact me as the director of the G.L. Carter Railroad Museum. They wanted to donate Bill's train, track and accessories.

On May 4th Roger Teinert and I visited Vivian Chaffey in her home to discuss her donation with her and to see the items she was giving to the university railroad museum. We looked at the wonderful locomotive and freight cars her late husband had created, at many of her photos of his work in her scrapbook and the track in her front yard. We accepted her donation with gratitude and told her we would come back for it as soon as we could arrange storage space for it at the university. Working with university administration I secured additional space at Valleybrook large enough to house the donated items and made arrangements with several of our club members and Mrs. Chaffey to return to her Kingsport home to receive them and to take up the track from her yard.

On May 23, accompanied by Roger Teinert, Gary Emmert, John Carter, Sam McClain, and Rick Romanski, we returned with the RR Museum trailer and landscaping materials (topsoil, straw bales, and grass seed) to transport the train and its accessories, and the track back to Valleybrook. Our first job was loading the train and its consists into the trailer. That was followed by several hours of removing the hand-laid track from its ballasted resting place for approximately 50 years from the Chaffey yard. Once that was done we smoothed the track bed adding topsoil to make it as level as possible. That was followed by planting grass seed and covering it all with straw.

The Southern locomotive and its consist of Eastman tank car, gondola, flat car and Southern ca-boose are now safely in storage where they will remain until such time as we can secure a proper place to relay the 1-foot gauge track and put her on the rails again for children of another generation to have the joy of riding. Thank you Vivian and the Chaffey family for such a unique and wonderful gift!

CLUB NEWS

Donation of Bill Caffey's Big Train - contributed by Fred Alsop

(Continued from page 6)



Rick Romanski, John Carter and Gary Emmert removing 1-foot gauge track from the Chaffey yard.

Rick, John & Gary taking up track.



CLUB NEWS

Donation of Bill Caffey's Big Train - contributed by Fred Alsop

(Continued from page 7)



Beginning to take up the track that had been in place 50 years

Reseeding the leveled roadbed after track removal



CLUB NEWS

Donation of Bill Caffey's Big Train - contributed by Fred Alsop

(Continued from page 8)



Roger packing the museum trailer with the locomotive, train and accessories

Roger Teinert spreading straw on the newly seeded topsoil on the old roadbed



CLUB NEWS

Donation of Bill Caffey's Big Train - contributed by Fred Alsop

(Continued from page 9)



Rick, John and Gary taking apart the track

Rick and Gary loading the track sections into Gary's truck



LOSE TRACK OF TIME

Bill Heaton Layout

Scale: O Scale 2-rail

Overall room is 25x25 with a long section for a freight yard & engine facilities that is 45'..

Time period is late 40's-early 50's. Railroads modeled are Southern, Clinchfield, Norfolk & Western, L&N & C&O.

The overall goal for the layout is to model East TN/Western NC in terrain. The scenery is being done by Bob Welch. All the rocks are real rocks that Bob found. I built the structures mostly from kits. All of the passenger cars are kits and kit bashed models that I built, painted and lettered. There are 18 steam locomotives with all but 1 being painted, lettered and weathered by me, 22 diesels, over 200 freight cars, 72 passenger cars all with complete interiors & 13 cabooses. Name trains that I have modeled are The Tennessean, The Powhatan Arrow, a streamline George Washington, a heavyweight George Washington, The Royal Palm & the Pelican. I also have a small hospital passenger train.

I have been building & collecting models for 35 years but this is my first layout. I am blessed to have a great brother in law who encouraged me to go forward in starting the build. He loves doing the scenery and he is very good at as the photos attest. He is better known as "Bob the Builder"! I've also had much help from Frank Fezzie who's the best in electronics anywhere. A layout is never finished and mine certainly is not but we've made a good start. Many things are unique to Elizabethton where I grew up and now live. The scene with the freight house reminds me of how things looked when I was growing up. I painted & lettered the ETWNC tractor/trailer from a photo in a book I have in my library. Some structures are named after relatives and friends. My fire house Dalmatian is being unruly with the fire hydrant but dogs will be dogs I guess. I think the scenes are self explanatory. The Lynnwood Hotel scene captures the overall look of the old hotel that was in Elizabethton when I was growing up but the gazebo & garden is just an addition that enhances the whole scene & yes, there is a couple getting married in the gazebo! Hope everyone enjoys the photos.



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LOSE TRACK OF TIME

Bill Heaton's Layout continued from page 7



(continued on page 9)

LOSE TRACK OF TIME

Bill Heaton's Layout continued from page 8



**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.
*

Weekly Work Nights

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
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- **Webmasters:**
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Ben Merritt
Bill Smith
webmastermemrr@gmail.com
- **Newsletter Editor:**
Cathy Smith

George L. Carter

Chapter NRHS Officers:

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

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 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://johnsonsdetpot.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 alsopf@mail.etsu.edu.*
- *For disability accommodations, call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at*