

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

THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

AND

THE COAL ROAD

Volume 27 – Issue 8 August 2020

LOSE TRACK OF TIME

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



Greetings to all my fellow MEMRR and Carter Chapter NRHS members and COVID-19 isolated “shut-ins”. I hope you are all safe and well, practicing mask-wearing, social distancing, and washing your hands often. I am looking forward to beating this pandemic so our lives can get back to some level of “normal” and we can begin to see each other again at the museum and at our club/chapter meetings. I hope you have found some diversions in reading, watching videos that include some about our railroading

hobby, and perhaps doing some model railroad work. This will end, but we all have to do our parts to make it happen sooner rather than later.

Sick Bay: One of our members, *Mike Buster*, “Mr. Mike” has recently had successful surgery in Knoxville and my last reports from his wife are all positive as he recovers at home. I know we all want to wish him a most speedy and complete recovery and that he would appreciate hearing from his railroading buddies. Get well soon, Mike, and we look forward to sharing in your most pleasant company very soon.

University News: ETSU will open its 2020 Fall Semester for classes on August 24th. Because of the COVID pandemic, this will be a most unusual opening. Students will be returning to classes and our buildings will be open, but under safety-oriented conditions. Most of the classes, approximately 80%, that will be provided will be online, distant-learning classes. Some classes, because of the hands-on requirements for learning and certifications, will have to be on-ground, face-to-face classes. The safety restrictions that are currently imposed for the campus include the following: Everyone on campus must be wearing a mask. Social distancing must be practiced, particularly in enclosed spaces. Frequent handwashing and use of anti-bacterial disinfectants are strongly encouraged. No indoor groups may exceed 15 persons in number. All students, faculty, staff, and others must take the COVID-19 Pledge (I will send this around via email to all members).

University museums, including the Carter RR Museum, are planning soft openings in August to the public. We will be adhering to the requirements listed above and there will be safety posters and information posted in appropriate places in our buildings for our staff and the public. I will be checking the middle of August with other museum directors and university administration to establish what we must do in order to reopen to the public. I know that we will have to limit the number of our members and the public present in the museum at any one time based on current information; all of which is being driven by the level of COVID infection in our region of the state and adjoining states.

*Currently, our planned reopening date for the
G.L. Carter Railroad Museum is Saturday, August 29th.*

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As this is the last Saturday of the month, it is also one of our Heritage Day events. The scheduled theme for the Heritage Day is, "Round-up 2020; Western Railroads". So, MEMRR members bring your western locomotives and consists, freight or passenger, to the museum on the 29th! *Gilliams* with the yellow and gray of the Union Pacific, *Stunkard* with the Santa Fe, and all others with BNSF, NP bloody nose, and the rest. We have not had an open house for the public, or for ourselves, for months, so bring out the trains and let's enjoy the ride!

Note: If anything changes I will notify everyone via email; but for now, plan on the museum opening on August 29.

Little Engineer's Room: I am most happy to report that I have been able to "re-hire" our Little Engineers Room Station Master, *Amy Merritt*, back into her position at the Carter Railroad Museum. When East Tennessee State University locked the campus down in mid-March they furloughed all of their part-time employees that were deemed "non-essential" workers. That included their large group of adjunct professors and, unfortunately, our Station Master as well. I was successful in late July to be able to convince higher administration at ETSU that Amy's services were much needed as we begin our plans for museum reopening's across the university campus. Along with our students coming back for the new academic year we have been able to request APS student workers for the museum as well and we are fortunate to have *Lorelei Sexton* coming back to the children's playroom as well.

Member News: One of our younger members, Station Master *Ben Merritt*, will be entering the university in August as a freshman. Ben has won a number of academic scholarships that will help fund his college education and he will be working for me as an APS student in the Department of Biological Sciences on the EagleCam Project that I direct. This project live-streams the lives of two pairs of local Bald Eagles around the world and Ben will bring his considerable expertise to bear on the technical side of that project monitoring our computers that feed the video and working to improve our site's webpage.

Gary & Sarah Emmert will be in Texas departing on 24 August and returning around 4 September to visit their son, Charlie, for his birthday. Charlie remains in very poor health resulting from a series of medical conditions suffered for many years now. We wish the Emmert family the very best for their son and their safe travels to a state that currently has one of the highest numbers of COVID cases in the country.

Carl Hacker, the Secretary for the G.L. Carter Chapter, NRHS, has recently relocated to coastal North Carolina. We will miss him at the Carter RR Museum and at our meetings. Carl generously donated most of his HO-Scale model trains and structures, as well as some of his railroad li-

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brary, to the railroad museum. Additionally, he offered many of his shop tools for sale to members, as a way of down-sizing before moving from Tennessee. His departure not only deprives us of his company and expertise, but **we now have a chapter officer's position, that of Chapter Secretary, to fill. If you have any interest in volunteering to fill this important position in the Carter Chapter, please contact me ASAP.** The Chapter thanks you in advance for your willingness to support us in this capacity.

Help Your Editor and Your Fellow Members: Our newsletters, now combined into one, are the lifeline of information for our entire membership. Most members get their monthly edition via email on their computer, notepad or phone. Only a few still receive a hardcopy by mail. But, every member gets their copy every edition, which normally arrives every month. The newsletter has become even more important as we self-isolate during this pandemic and are denied the frequent comradery we have enjoyed with each other in the past at our club/chapter meetings, our social gatherings and at the railroad museum. It takes a lot of work by our wonderful, enthusiastic and innovative editor, *Cathy Smith*, to create this multipage, colorful newsletter filled with interesting information about our hobby, our members, and our organizations. Every editor, no matter how dedicated, talented, and motivated, needs a little help with each issue. This is where we all come in because it's our newsletter; not our editors. We need to supply some of the meat that is needed to put flesh on the bones of the skeleton of each newsletter that we look for each month. It is our newsletter. As members we need to furnish the photographs surrounding our hobby, be it modeling or chasing the prototype. Photographs with captions, and even better, with a story that they illustrate. Some of you have a particular interest in a particular railroad, particular type of railroad, or the railroads of a region. You have special knowledge of that railroad subject whether it is a scale model or a real 1:1 ratio entity. If you have a home layout share it with us through the newsletter. It does not matter if is completed or not (no model railroad is ever completed). It is the information you can provide about what goes into creating a layout that is important! Help your editor and give us some insight into the passion you have for trains by submitting an article to the editor for inclusion into our newsletter. Don't hesitate because you feel your submission will not be "good enough". Cathy will help you polish it as needed. That's some of what editors do! Many of you are continuing to model structures, assemble and weather rolling stock, detailing locomotives, taking photos of these and the prototype. Share what you are doing with the rest of us. Your interest may parallel that of another member down to a specific railroad, perhaps to a specific locomotive, or era on that line. You may spark the interest of another member and help them to complete some facet of the hobby they have been striving to do. Every editor has a deadline to meet on a regular basis and you can help in a big way by submitting materials to let us all know some of what your interest in this great hobby is. I am looking forward to seeing your contribution to our newsletter in an edition in the near future. Start submitting. Your newsletter needs YOU!!

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Around the Carter Railroad Museum: It's good to see some familiar faces in the railroad museum over the past few weeks since we opened for members. We have not changed the entry code in the key box outside, so you can still come and go as it fits your schedule. I remind you that I appreciate your letting me know when you want to go to the museum to work, or to run trains, so we can keep the number of folks in the galleries to 10 or less at any one time. Remember, too, that the wearing of masks is mandatory on the ETSU campus and to practice social distancing when others are present. We have a good supply of hand sanitizer available in all the rooms for your use and safety.

I have seen a number of our MEMRR members running trains on the club layout and working on the N-Scale layout. Some have been working to improve their modules, and *Frank Fezzie* has spent a lot of time making sure the electrical components of the layout are in good working order. As of late, he has spent a lot of time cleaning track and the metal wheels of much of our rolling stock. Dirty wheels greatly contribute to the dirtiness of the tracks they roll over; thus interfering with the conductivity of the track that brings the electrical energy our model locomotives depend on for smooth and efficient operation. It, perhaps, has been many months (years?) since anyone thought to clean the wheels on the club/museum cars and Frank is finding they are in urgent need of grim removal. Fortunately for us, he is working on the rolling stock to do just that. If anyone wants to pitch in and help, I am sure he would enjoy your company in this task. It would also be appropriate for each of us to check the condition of the wheel sets of our personally owned locomotives and rolling stock to see that they are clean and not contributing to the accumulation of dirt and grim on our club tracks before we run our trains next time.

On the "Tweetsie" layout side *Michael Sagers* has begun to work on a section of the layout near Hampton to recreate in miniature a very special water tank that was once located along that section of the narrow-gauge railroad. The railroad used a water source created by a natural spring just east of tunnel #1 by taking a natural rock area nestled within a bluff's rock-walled drainage and shoring it up with concrete and rock to create a catch basin. The basin would fill with water close to the roadbed and with a series of pipes and hose was used to supply water to the locomotive's tender. The concept was unique on the ET&WNC RR as all the other water sources were either by standpipes or conventional wooden water tanks. Michael has been climbing over the remaining remnants of the long-abandoned structure and the surrounding terrain that supplied the water with camera, sketchpad and tape measure to get the information he needs to create this unusual water supply on our layout. You will have to watch it take place. When I was working there yesterday (August 15) there was only a new big hole in the mountainside to mark the location where this new structure will come to life. Michael is an outstanding modeler and this will be a wonderful, eye-catching addition to this layout.

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I have been using some of my "summer-at-home" time to finish the Johnson City depot and to make drawings of some of the Johnson City ET&WNC RR engine and yard facilities. In the museum I have been working on the section of the Tweetsie layout that will have their depot and baggage room. I have been putting into place the footprint of that building and Spring Street that ran north-to-south on the east side of the structure. When that is completed, with the surrounding roadbeds fully ballasted, I will put the station in place.

For the Johnson City engine facilities (the modified 3-stall engine house is still in place and used by the East Tennessee Railroad near the intersections of Alabama Street and Legion Street) I have made scale drawings of the carpenter shop and the 3-stall car shop and given them to *John Edwards* to convert onto the software for our laser knife and then to use that machine to cut them out of board-and-batten scale wood stock. When I have those back I will begin to assemble those buildings. I am currently drawing the plans for the little brick sand and oil house the railroad had in their yard. That will be followed by the designs for the large 3-stall engine house.

Down the Tracks: Stopping now to get this column of 2500+ words to our newsletter editor with the hope that all of you are safe and well and that we will be able to see each other soon. I am still talking with ETSU President Noland about our need for a new, larger railroad museum and he is very supportive of our needs and desire to grow and be more of a factor in the lives and culture of the university, the city and the region. I am also working with others outside the university to create a business plan for a new railroad museum. A business plan is critical as a selling point for the university, the city and the county, as well as outside interests, including granting agencies, that might help fund such a venture. So, stay tuned, we still have a good road ahead of us that can be pursued even within the strains of this pandemic.

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

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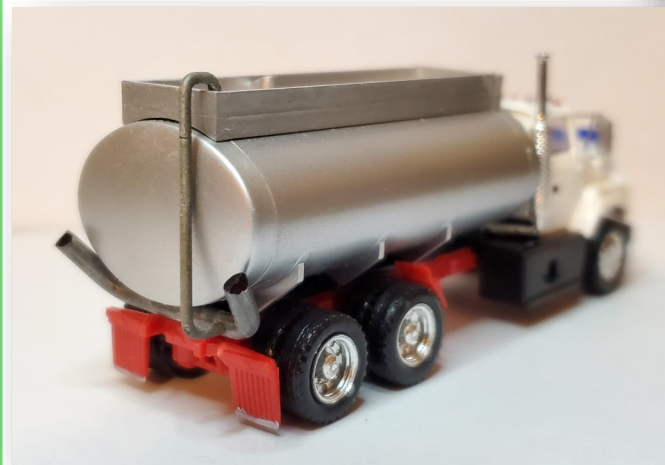
Modeling a Dust Control Truck: article and photographs by Jaykob Stephens

I model a small construction company in 1/87 (HO) scale, and I realized this summer that I needed a dust control truck. I found this used 1995 Ford Aeromax tanker for sale on Facebook and bought it for a song owing to its shabby condition after years of display. When it arrived in the mail, I immediately set to work. I first removed the cab and hood from the chassis, leaving only



the tank. The cab was yellowed from years of sunlight, so I replaced it and the hood with spares from my parts box. With the cab swap complete, I began working on the water spraying apparatus. I measured and bent a piece of steel stock to make the sprayer bar, which I attached to the end of the chassis. I added black paint to the tips to give the appearance of nozzles. I then bent and shortened a large paperclip in order to make the water return line which carries excess water back to the tank. After completing the spraying equipment, I turned my attention to the custom bug shield on the hood.

I cut a piece of clear plastic to size, attached it with glue, and used a blue Sharpie to give it a blue tint while maintaining the translucent quality typical of bug shields. After all custom parts were attached, I turned my attention to painting certain details using oil paint pens. I painted the grille, door handles, wipers, fuel tank caps, steering wheel spokes, shift knob, cab marker lights, front bumper, rear mud flap weights, and details on the engine. After



the paint dried, I attached the factory-supplied horns and mirrors. The grab handles on the cab were modified to fit by trimming off the mounting pins originally designed to attach them to a sleeper. My last step was swapping out the original white wheels for chrome ones from my parts box. The truck and materials needed to complete it cost me less than \$30. I believe it turned out pretty well for a 25 year old plastic model that was modified by an amateur. Keep your eyes out for it and my other construction equipment on the HO layout in the Alsop Gallery!

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NEW 2020 LEGO "Crocodile" locomotive : article and photographs by Robert Sullivan



An advance build for the NEW 2020 LEGO "Crocodile" locomotive. History just repeated itself with this Lego train. Lego 10277, it sold out July 1,2020 in under 3 hours, world wide. The second shipment sold out in under 45 minutes on Lego's website on July 24. I spent 4 hour's assembling this masterpiece! Lot's of detail with this model. For an additional charge, an engine can be added that works with a smartphone.

🕒 1 YEAR AGO



Paul Haynes



Happy Tuesday morning. Another early morning photo taken near Ripshin Mountain last Saturday.

**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.

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Weekly Work Nights

Thursdays from 4pm until ?

MEMRR Club Officers

- **Club President & Director of George L Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU:** Fred Alsop
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- **Vice President:** John Carter
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Cathy Smith

George L. Carter

Chapter NRHS Officers:

- **President:** Dr. Fred J. Alsop
- **Vice Pres:** Jim Pahriss
- **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 asopf@mail.etsu.edu.*
- *For disability accommodations, call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at*