

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

**THE SIGNAL BRIDGE**

**AND**

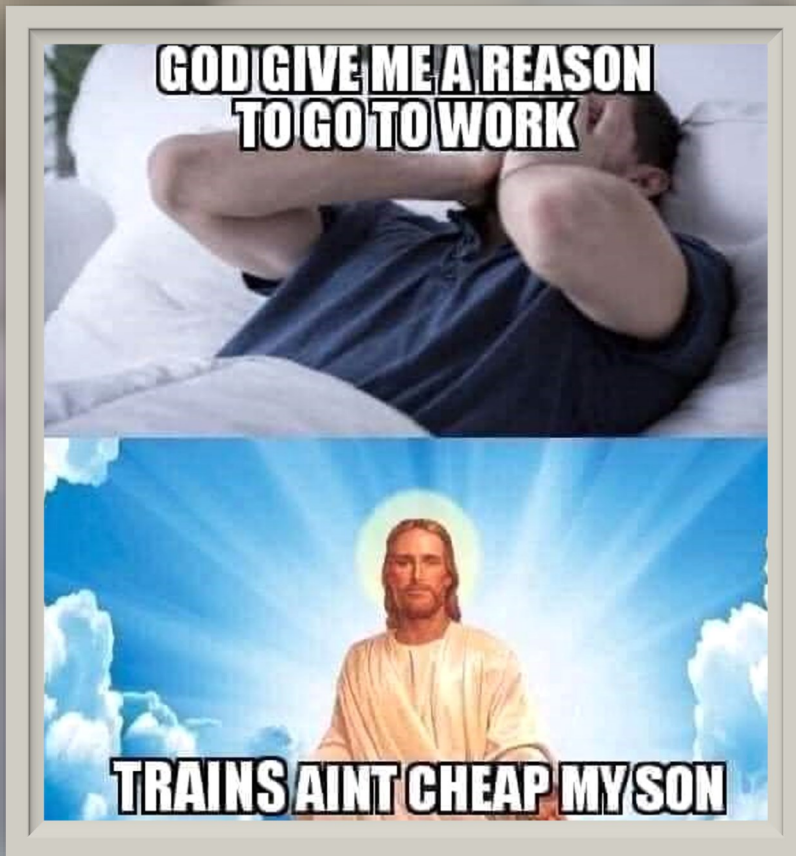
**THE COAL ROAD**

Volume 27 – Issue 11 November 2020

**LOSE TRACK OF TIME**

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



We have had a splendid Fall season with great foliage color in the trees and mild temperatures in our East Tennessee setting of the mountainous Southern Appalachians. The only shadow that lingers over us is the threat of the ever-increasing cases of the COVID pandemic. All of us are doing our best to practice social-distancing, wearing face masks, and washing our hands more frequently than we ever did before in our lifetime. We have managed to keep the George L. Carter Railroad Museum open to the public, and for our club and chapter members, by practicing the health safety guidelines of the university and the CDC. So far we have been lucky and only a few of our members have tested positive for the virus. They all self-quarantined and followed the prescribed COVID guidelines, and all have come out the other side with a new set of antibodies in their bodies that may give them some immunity going forward. Visitation at the Carter RR Museum has been steady, but lighter than before our lock-down in mid-March with visitors numbering between 25 and 50 most Saturdays. The fact that visitors are still choosing to come to see our museum is a testament to the value they place on it, and the lower numbers are a blessed relief that makes us feel safer as we continue to serve the public. Thank all of you who have continued to come to the museum to keep the layouts operating for our guests and for the Thursday night work sessions that are so important. It has been good for us all to be able to continue to practice our hobby together and to share our experiences during the past 8 months.

**November Celebrations:** November is a hallmark month for model railroaders and for the G.L. Carter Railroad Museum. The nation celebrates *National Model Railroad Month* in November. Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, is *National Take A Toy Train To Work Day*. The *George L. Carter Railroad Museum was created in 2007* with its dedication opening in mid-November of that year. We had some 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary birthday banners up and some beverages and drinks for our members and our visitors on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, to celebrate that milestone for our train museum.

**Dues are due!!** November begins the period of renewing your annual dues. *Gary Emmert* is the treasurer for the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders and your dues should be sent to him. *John Dodge* is the treasurer for the G.L. Carter Chapter NRHS and he will gladly take your chapter and National NRHS dues. All the dues in all levels of membership in both organizations remain the same and all are used solely by your club (except the NRHS where a good portion of them go to support the national organization). None of our members' dues are used by the Carter Railroad Museum that is funded largely through donations and a small budget from ETSU. *Renew as soon as you can and continue to be an active member supporting your club/chapter. There will be renewal reminders throughout the dues renewal period.*

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

*(continued from page 2)*

**November Officer Elections:** During our October Zoom business meeting, I asked those attending if they would agree to just asking the current officers in the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS if they would be willing to serve another year in their present positions. I made the request because of the inability for us to hold our regular monthly meetings face-to-face because of the restrictions placed on gatherings by the current pandemic. All present agreed that instead of forming Nominating Committees tasked with soliciting candidates, this would be a practical way to secure a slate of offices for the ballot for the coming year. I then asked each person serving in an elected position in both organizations if they would stand for reelection, and all but one agreed to do so. Therefore, I created a list of candidates for nomination and routed both organization's ballots to one of our webmasters, Ben Merritt, who created electronic ballots that have been emailed to everyone for whom we have an email address for their vote. Each ballot contains a nominee for each elected position in addition to a space that would allow write-in candidates to be included for election in each position. Each electronic ballot is secure and the identity of each person casting a ballot is anonymous. We do need candidates to fill two positions in the G.L. Carter Chapter NRHS. We need a secretary with the departure of Carl Harker to his new home in North Carolina, and we need one Director-at-Large. Anyone wishing to fill these positions are most welcome to put their name on the ballot, or to get in touch with me. **All ballots are to be returned to our webmaster, Ben Merritt, with a deadline for being counted as Monday, November 30, 2020.**

I would personally like to express my appreciation to all of our officers who have served our organizations so well, particularly in these most unusual, stressful times, over the past year. You have done outstanding work to keep our organizations and the Carter Railroad Museum up and running and you are to be commended for your service. To those of you who said, "Yes. I will continue to serve if elected." I look forward to working with you in the coming year as we strive to make the MEMRR, the Carter Chapter NRHS, and the Carter Railroad Museum even better. Thank You!!!

**Member of the Year/Officer of the Year:** Several years ago we began a special recognition of our members who were judged to have provided outstanding service, above and beyond that which is required or expected of them, to their club and/or the railroad museum. These candidates are nominated by their peers and elected by them. The winners each year have their names engraved on the permanent plaques in the big gallery in the Carter Railroad Museum and are given a special plaque commemorating their service and selection as part of our recognition for their service to us. Traditionally, these awards have been made to our honorees at our annual Christmas party, and the folks receiving them had not been told beforehand that they were to receive them. Please, as you fill out your ballots electing our officers, take time to nominate two of our members for these special awards. If you would like to make a statement to support your nomination, please feel free to do so. A person who has already received this honor can be nominated again, there is no limit on recognizing any one person for outstanding service. As soon as we have winners and I can get their plaques made following the election deadline on November 30<sup>th</sup>, I will announce the winners. If you want to see who has been bestowed this honor in the past, check out the plaques in the Alsop Gallery of the Carter RR Museum.

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

(continued from page 3)

**2021 Calendars:** With many thanks to *Geoff Stunkard* for once again using his talents to create our Carter RR Museum calendar, the 2021 calendar has arrived from the ETSU Print Shop and is available at the museum. This is our third calendar, and in many ways our best one. As in the past it features photos from our model railroad layouts as well as great pictures of the prototype railroads. Geared for our members, it has all of our meeting dates, Heritage Day event dates, and other important dates to remember. They make great gifts with the holidays just around the corner. The calendars sell for \$8.00 to the public, but are discounted to \$5.00 for our members. The museum sends calendars to publicize the museum, the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS, to all of our Big Train Show vendors and potential vendors, and I give some to principle administrators at ETSU and some of our donors. Be sure to purchase yours, or several, the next time you are at the Carter RR Museum.

**HOn3 Annual:** The 2020 edition of the *HOn3 Annual* is no in print and being distributed. I have ordered 50 copies for the museum from the publisher, White River Productions, and hope to have them before Thanksgiving. I will let you know when they arrive via your email. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year we have had the ET&WNC RR layout featured in this national/internationally distributed narrow gauge model railroad publication and we have 8 pages in the current edition! Our HOn3 layout of the "Tweetsie" railroad may be the largest one in existence in this scale and it has received enough attention through this publication over the past several years that model railroad manufacturers, such as Western Rails, are now making rolling stock just for ET&WNC. This is a wonderful situation, as we can now purchase kits for almost any piece of equipment the "Tweetsie" ran instead of having to kitbash freight and passenger cars made for other railroads in order to make them resemble those for the "Little Railroad with a Heart" that we are modeling.

**Zoom Meetings:** For the past few months we have been holding combined MEMRR and Carter Chapter NRHS business meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday night of the month at 6:30 p.m. (the regularly scheduled meeting time for the MEMRR) via Zoom. *Ben Merritt* has been contacting our members in both organizations and providing the electronic "invitation" to join the meetings. You can use your smart phone, iPad, or computer to join us. It's easy, and Ben is happy to provide instructions if you are new at this and want to be a part of the meetings. We still can't meet in person because of COVID and university restrictions on how many can gather in a room (limit 10 persons), so this is the best we can do for now. But, it is fun and we can discuss club/chapter business together from the comfort of our homes; even with a dog at our side, or a cat on our lap. At our November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting we were joined from Florida by our former member and newsletter editor, *Ted Bleck-Doran*. Not only did we get to see and talk to Ted about his new railroad club, and his model railroading, but he also presented us with a PowerPoint program on weathering brick streets. A wonderful modeling tips program he had created and presented to his new home model railroad buddies. **Try to become a participant for the next meeting on 15 December.**

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

(continued from page 4)

**George L. Carter Railroad Museum:** We are still holding “work nights” on Thursdays at the Carter RR Museum. If you have not been there for a while come and join us as there are still plenty of projects going on that might be of interest to you and you could try your hand and modeling skills at helping us out. The MEMRR layout is still undergoing wiring and electrical upgrades under the skilled hands of *Frank Fezzie*. *John Carter* continues to lead the efforts to upgrade some of the club modules at the entrance of the big gallery with the goal of building a wooded mountainside complete with logging activities from felling the trees to processing them at the sawmill. *Mike Tarter* has some new members working on the N-Scale layout and he has taken on the continuing problem of strengthening the lift bridge that is the gateway to the pedestrian entrance to the interior of the HO layout. Others are busy working on these layouts as well; but we could always use your help. *Ken Harmon*, has been busy making miniature trees that look terrific! I have been busy planting trees and shrubs, and casting some additional rock faces around tunnel #1 on the “Tweetsie” layout. We also have several new members who are taking on projects and helping with layout operations that you probably have not met yet. Come on down on a Thursday evening or a Saturday and enjoy the comradery! Listen to the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come!

**Happy Thanksgiving!!** *Here's wishing you and yours a safe and joyous Thanksgiving! Stay safe and stay well!!*

*Fred J. Alsop III*

Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU

President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders

President, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS

## Club News

### Tweetsie Layout Update: Article and photographs by Logan Heaton

Work continues at tunnel #1 filling up the bare area on the side of the hill as more rock work is done by museum director Dr. Fred Alsop who can even be seen in the attached photos working on the rocks and cliff side adding in the detail as another area nears completion.



## Club News

### Tweetsie Layout Update: Article and photographs by Logan Heaton

More progress has been made at tunnel #1 where museum director Dr. Fred Alsop has finished up with the last section of the forested area on the side hill even with some woodland critters finding their way to the area. With this complete focus is now moved to the area around the tunnel portal itself with more rock work and foliage being put around the are of the first tunnel and covered bridge on the route.



## Losing Track of Time

Contributed by Logan Heaton

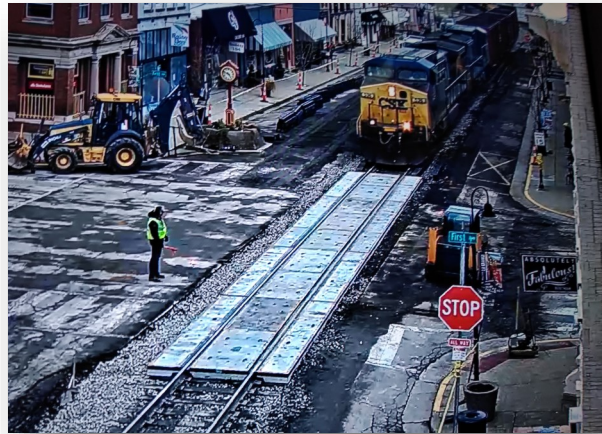




# Losing Track of Time

## Railfanning Article and photographs by Robert Sullivan

The trip to Louisville Kentucky was a railfans delight. Another adventure was visiting the real Virtual railfan location. The first photo is of the town square, of La Grange Kentucky. Virtual railfan is a live feed with two cameras. The CSX track runs through the square, in other words, Street train's. Second photo is of a CSX train running through with a mixed conset. The third photo is of another CSX train, mostly tanker, that came by us. We enjoyed this part of the trip. Earlier in the year (2020), I took photos from the webcam of the track replacement for La Grange Kentucky. These next photos are in no order, but are still full of learning opportunity.



## Club News

**Super South Southeastern Heritage Day Update:** Article and photographs by Logan Heaton

Our Heritage Day event for Super South Southeastern was an amazing success with a great turnout which resulted not only many visitors but many trains from railroads all across the southeast on display taking everything from slow freight trains to fast express passenger services. Here are some of the scenes that came up during the event. Enjoy!!



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## Club News

### Appalachian Rail Fest Heritage Day Update: Article and photographs by Logan Heaton

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(continued on page 12)

# Club News

## Appalachian Rail Fest Heritage Day Update: Article and photographs by Logan Heaton

(continued from page 11)



(continued on page 13)

# Club News

## Appalachian Rail Fest Heritage Day Update: Article and photographs by Logan Heaton

(continued from page 12)



# The 2020 HOn3 Annual is complete!

The Tweetsie layout has AGAIN been featured in this edition, with 8 pages focusing on the newly completed coal transfer station.

***Copies are available for \$20 each  
Get yours now!***



## Meeting Minutes

### MEMRR & George L. Carter Chapter of NRHS Monthly Business Meeting Minutes- 10/20/20

Note: Meeting was conducted via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by President Fred Alsop.

Members Present: Fred Alsop, Gary Emmert, Bill Smith, Don Beck, Wallace Shealy, Mike Tarter, Logan Heaton, Amy Merritt, Rick Mulholland, Ben Merritt, Cathy Smith, Robert Sullivan

After initial remarks, Fred called for Officer Reports.

**Secretary's report:** The Sept. minutes were included in the October Signal Bridge. Any corrections or additions are invited – please discuss any during our next business meeting.

**Treasurers' report:** Gary Emmert reports we have money and are solvent. He adds that the Library is adding tapes and books. He reminded us that dues for 2021 will be due soon, and he is accepting payments for 2021. John Dodge reports for the Carter Chapter of NRHS Treasury, this group has a sound financial position. Dues for this chapter are due as of Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Newsletter editor:** Cathy Smith is in attendance, she reports that The Signal Bridge and The Coal Road has been published each month despite covid19 and the October edition has been circulated. She mentions that the September meeting minutes are in the October edition. Articles and photos from members are always welcomed. She also mentioned that Logan is sharing the newsletter with the Carter Chapter of NRHS members.

**Webmaster reports:** Bill Smith reports that the website is up to date and the website “address’ has been renewed / reserved for another four years. Ben Merritt mentions that a few email addresses for members were invalid and he will be contacting those members for accurate info,

**V.P. report:** John Carter was not on the Zoom meeting..

#### **Presidents report:**

Fred was pleased to report that this Saturday (Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>) will be the ninth weekend the museum will be open to the public. Our attendance is back up to about half the pre-covid number of visitors, about 50 visitors and between 17-19 members (not all at the same time).

Fred says there is no update for moving to a new location, but it is being worked on. However, the renovation of Lamb Hall is still set to begin soon and will impact us. Apparently the funding for the replacement building is about 2 years off.

There is no new guidance from ETSU on social gatherings – they are limiting on campus gatherings to 10 people in a room. The Clubs will continue with Zoom Business meetings to comply.

Coordinators meeting: no meeting was held for October. Fred suggest that we let him know of any Club or museum needs.

Members Health: Jim Hoit is recovering from Covid19. Please inform Fred and Robert Sullivan if you learn of any Club members that are ill.

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# Meeting Minutes

## Minutes of MEMRR And George L. Carter Chapter of NRHS Monthly Business Meeting 10/20/20

(continued from page 15)

### Old Business:

HOn3 Annual (White River Publications) galleys have been proofed. The Tweetsie layout will AGAIN be in this edition, 8 pages focusing on the newly completed coal transfer station. Fred thanked Geoff Stunkard for his urgent production of the article.

The 2021 calendar is at the printer; 400 copies will be available. Again, thank you, Geoff.

2021 Train show committee; Roger Teinert is not logged into the meeting. Fred reports plans are progressing well – Roger is on top of it. (Which sounds uncomfortable...) The train show flyers are at the printer; 7000 flyers will be printed. Fred confirms we have the venue reserved. Fred and Roger will be sending out posters, calendars and flyers with the display invite, to prospective vendors and media.

Fred reminded us that Saturday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, is South East Heritage day.

### New Business:

Gary Emmert brings up that many students are parking in Staff parking spots. Nonetheless, we should display a parking pass if on campus other than on Saturday mornings.

Fred thanked Wallace Shelby who has been helping catalog donated books and materials being added to our reference library. This is being slowed by the present “old” computer (which was a donation years ago). The library needs a more up to date computer, preferably with Windows 10. Fred says it’s possible to acquire a refurbished Dell, or buy a new one for approximately \$750 from foundation funds. Discussion ensued, the conclusion was to buy a new computer. A new Ethernet drop is planned for the Library.

Gary adds that there are too many donated train books and materials to shelve all at once, and that he expects more donations. So let him know if you are interested in a particular railroad.

Fred added that we have many duplicate books, which we can sell to garner funds for the organizations.

The Annual Christmas Party is likely cancelled due to Covid, as have all social events and outings been this year.

November 14<sup>th</sup> is the museums 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Someone will be notifying local media – the guest attendance may be larger that Saturday.

November is also our annual election of officers (normally). Fred has asked all existing officers if they would continue in their present roles for continuity in 2021. All have confirmed they are willing to continue to serve, but ballots will be produced with a write in candidate line for each position anyway. Please first check with the person you nominate if writing in a name.

Announcements; Ben Merritt informs us that Doe River Gorge Ministries is having Fall events – train rides, hayrides, pony rides and a corn maze. Look at [www.doerivergorge.com](http://www.doerivergorge.com) for info, and plan for this in 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30.

Respectfully submitted;

Mike Tarter, Secretary



**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  
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:** Roger Teinert
- **Secretary:** Carl Hacker
- **Treasurer:** John W. Dodge
- **Historian:** Carolyn Gregg
- **National Representative to the NRHS:** Charlotte Pahr

# 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://johnsonsdspot.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](http://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](mailto:asopf@mail.etsu.edu).*
- *For disability accommodations, call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at 423-439-8346*