



The Coal Road

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The Monthly Newsletter of the George L. Carter Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee Volume 5, Number 8, August 2015



The Drawbar

As you are reading this Jo Ann and I are in the wilds of Bolivia birding and leading 8 other birders to see new birds and new places. However, I shall continue to periodically think of railroading, my fellow Carter Chapter NRHS members, and the Carter Railroad Museum. Thank you all for keeping the museum up and running for the public while I am taking a much needed break in a very different world. So, this monthly column is being written two weeks before our newsletter editor's normal deadline and will not have as much "news" from me in it as you may regularly have come to find.

Special visitors to the museum in July included 15 members of the Kingsport-based East Tennessee Railfan Chapter NRHS. They toured the museum on Tuesday night of the 14th, provided refreshments to our volunteers who came in to man the layouts and the museum, and had their monthly business meeting. Their treasurer, **Doug Zimmerman**, made a donation to the museum on behalf of the chapter. We have hosted this group 2 or 3 times now and they are always welcome. My thanks to the many MEMRR members and Carter Chapter NRHS members who gave up part of a Tuesday evening to make them feel welcome and to exhibit our work in the museum.

After a short hiatus from children's birthday parties we now have 3 scheduled in close proximity; one on July 25th (our July Heritage Day commemorating western railroads), one on August 1st, and another on August 22nd. Our members always do an outstanding job helping our Station Master, **Taylor Jessee**, decorate for these special events in the lives of our Little Engineers and with the festivities.

The electricians from the ETSU Facilities Management Plant spent a couple of weeks in mid-July installing LED lighting in both the Alsop and the Marsh galleries. The lighting is not as bright as the florescent lighting we have had up to this point, 3000K vs. 5-6000K, but the lighting is a warmer color making the scenery look more

natural, the LED carbon footprint is much smaller than that of the fluorescent's, and the LEDs will not fade the scenery and the photographs and paintings on the walls in the galleries. The Carter RR Museum used its foundation monies from donations to pay for the hardware and the university installed them without charging for the installation. You will notice the different look and after your eyes adjust from coming into the galleries from more intense lighting, either in the hallways or from a sunny day outside, I think you will find them more pleasing to the eye.

We have been diligent since March of 2014 in keeping a more accurate count of the number of visitors that are coming to see us at the railroad museum and this is becoming more important. Each of the last two Julys I have been asked for attendance numbers for the university president's annual report of educational outreach programs. In the 2013-2014 year that began on 1 July 2013 and ended on June 30, 2014 we had an approximate headcount of visitors combined from the Little Engineers room and the rest of the museum of 6,600. This year's count from July 1, 2014 ending on June 30, 2015 was our biggest ever with **8,006** combined visitors counted. Our popularity is continuing to grow and we are becoming a destination for a lot of people from the surrounding area and beyond on Saturdays and at other arranged special times as well. I can point to the last two Saturdays I was in the museum as examples as we recorded 109 visitors on July 18, and 125 on July 25th. The efforts you have put into the layouts that are the heart of the museum's displays, the special Heritage Days you participate in, and the special way you treat our visitors all are major parts in the continued increase in our visitors' numbers and the new members who join our club.

We had such a special visitor one Thursday July evening in the museum that WJHL Channel 11 TV and *The Johnson City Press* sent reporters to interview her. One hundred and four year old **Gladys Lacey Jones** made her second annual visit to see how we were progressing on the Tweetsie layout. She has a very special interest in this project as we have a photo of her made with her family; mother, father, older sister, and younger brother when she was 4 years old in 1915. They are standing in front of the store her father built in Hopson, TN adjacent to the depot he constructed for the ET&WNC RR in what became known as Blevins. We will model the store, the station, and if there is room to do so, the Lacey house on the layout. Mrs. Jones lives with her daughter, Bette, just north of Atlanta, GA and they are relatives of MEMRR member, **Dawn Lacey Fritz**. Mrs. Jones is the oldest person we have had in our railroad museum and I will work to create models of her bit of history on our little railroad.

We have two annual social events to plan; the **annual summer picnic** and the **annual Christmas party**. The Christmas party will be held at Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site on Friday, December 18th (time and details to be worked out later) and will be a pot-luck affair with the meats being purchased by the MEMRR (70% of the cost) and the Carter Chapter NRHS (30% of the cost as we have done in past years based on membership numbers in the respective organizations). The two organizations will also contribute funding in these percentages for the rental of the

hall. The Carter Chapter NRHS membership voted to cancel their previously planned party at the Choo-Choo Café in Erwin as they had previously voted to do, to continue the social event with the MEMRR as many of its members hold joint membership in both organizations and wanted to continue to enjoy the extended fellowship afforded by joint social events as we have traditionally done. It will make it easier for **Dirty Santa** to make one trip down the collective chimney instead of trying to visit both venues on different nights, and at his age this is a blessing for him that will be manifested in great toys for all us boys and girls. We will need to establish coordinators for the Christmas Party to assure that everything runs smoothly and that we have accurate headcounts and a variety of food to eat.

Our Annual Picnic is much closer and I have asked **Jim Pahr** to once again coordinate the event for our two organizations. **Kim** and **Tom McKee** have once again invited us to come to their lakefront home for this event to be held on Sunday, September 13th. We will provide a time and maps to the site via emails and in the newsletters of both organizations. The McKees will once again provide the meat for the picnic and we will need to get an accurate headcount and lists of what each member will be bringing to eat. Tom has G-Scale garden railroads on his property and they will be operating. He has added a little more to his railroad each year we have visited and I am sure you will enjoy the trains, the event and the generous hospitality of the McKees. An email announcement for this picnic was circulated in the 4th week of July, but additional details will be forthcoming. We hope you will mark your social calendars and plan to join us for this relaxing afternoon with great foods and wonderful company in a wonderful location.

Both these annual events are for members and their spouse, or significant other, but adults only. We graciously ask that you leave the children at home.

Our Heritage Day Event, coordinated by **Geoff Stunkard**, is scheduled for August 29th and will feature "Little Engines that Could: Industrial and Short Line Railroads". Start making your plans for the little engines, and their consists, that you will bring to operate on the layouts. The G-Scale layout already has a logging operation with a sawmill destination, and the Tweetsie layout is a short line of 34 miles, but there are lots of opportunities for the big HO-Scale layout as well, so bring them on and let's have a lot of fun with short trains and little prime movers. Any display items you have we can put into our display cases for the event are also most welcome. Please coordinate with Geoff.

Just as our promotional hardcopy brochures are important in advertising our organization and in providing a means for new membership Websites have become important tools of communication in our society. The MEMRR website has been a popular electronic means for us not only to interact as a chapter of NRHS, but also as a conduit to inform anyone selecting the site about the Carter Chapter NRHS, and with links, about the Carter Railroad Museum and our sister mode. railroad club, the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders. The Carter Chapter NRHS is currently building a website of its own that will soon be on line. That site will link the MEMRR and the

Carter RR Museum, as well as linking the National NRHS. I am currently working with technical folks at ETSU to improve the George L. Carter Railroad Museum's small established website into a vital working website. When this is completed in late August or early September it will provide updated information about the museum and events occurring there, but will also add an additional public platform that will link all the organizations affiliated with it. The sites' links will connect the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders, the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS, the National NRHS and the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad Historical Society providing additional pathways to each of our organizations. The site will be part of the ETSU homepage. The Carter Chapter is encouraged to also build a Facebook site as well as our website as a further means to become connected by people who regularly use this form of social media. I would encourage **Mark Woomer**, or any of you with the technical skills to do so, to explore creating such a site for the Chapter.

Other news of note include: a) The *ad hoc* railroad museum committee, chaired by **Roger Teinert**, continues to meet regularly as it plans the big train show in the ETSU "minidome" for June 2-4, 2016. Currently the committee is working on table charges, entrance fees, vendor lists, and meeting university safety regulations. They are planning a big show with lots of vendors and many operating layouts for this 2-day event. Plans are to have a successful show that will please both vendors and the public and that will become an annual event. b) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) discussions continue between the Town of Jonesborough and ETSU with some "sticky" points of responsibility being the focus. I have a scheduled meeting on July 28 with ETSU President Brian Noland to discuss the potential financial costs to the university if we agree to establish a satellite railroad museum in Jonesborough. I shall keep you posted. c) The Carter Chapter NRHS is in the planning stages for an October rail excursion that is focusing on the train running into the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. This event will possibly be packaged with a luncheon boat ride on the Tennessee River. d) At its monthly business meeting in July the chapter members present voted unanimously to donate \$1,000 dollars to the NRHS divided equally between their heritage preservation grant program and their railcamp program.

Carolyn Gregg continues to follow up with contacts with memories and stories about the area's railroad histories and their personal experiences for interviews in our Tales of the Rails oral history preservation project. We will be meeting with **Dr. Delanna Reed**, ETSU faculty member, sometime after I get back from my travels to plan what we want to do with the considerable amount of materials that have already been gathered by our team. Certainly a book is possible as well as perhaps some public oral presentations. All the materials gathered will be archived for researchers in the ETSU Archives of Appalachia, but we want to bring some of these fascinating memories our interviewees experienced back to life for broader audiences so they may share some of the rich history of railroading in this region.

We have a lot of exciting things happening in the Carter Chapter NRHS and at the Carter RR Museum. Your membership is the key to your participation in any or all of these activities. Come and join fellow members in this dynamic part of model railroading at our monthly business meetings, at the Carter RR Museum, and at the public festivals we attend. We can use your experience and your talents and we look forward to your company.

Listen to the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come.

Fred J. Alsop III

President, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU

**Business Meeting
Brown Hall, Room 312
6:30 PM
Monday, July 20, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM with a quorum.

Officers Reports

- **President's Report, Fred Alsop.** At the most recent Tweetsie Historical Society meeting, a motion was made and seconded to become affiliated with the Carter Museum. This brings additional marketing value to both organizations.

The Carter Museum is listed on the NRHS.COM website.

The Elizabethton Tweetsie Station is finally getting some traction with the city and the Elizabethton School Board. There is also talk about eventually moving the tea kettle locomotive and cars to the station.

- **Vice President's Report, Jim Pahrts.** If any member has not received an NRHS membership card contact Jim Pahrts or Mark Woomer. Mark and Jim are going to work with NRHS national to resolve any membership issues. Membership cards and other problems are not limited to just our chapter; this is a widespread problem, but nothing that cannot be fixed. 2015 membership income so far is \$749,298 but represents a 27% drop from last year.

There were 142 grant requests with only \$13,000 in grant money distributed. A number of organizations that received grant money were/are not part of the NRHS; the NRHS national organization deemed a number of non-NRHS related group requests to be very worthy of support. Money donated to the NRHS for grants is tax deductible as the NRHS is a 501 (c3) program.

The 2017 NRHS national conventions is probably going to be in either Nashville or Chattanooga, Tennessee. The 2016 national convention will be in Denver, Colorado.

- **Chapter Representative, Charlotte Pahrís.** Twenty-four youths will attend the NRHS Rail Camp in Delaware. The NRHS has enough money for 2015 operations, but not any for 2016, yet. Increasing available funds is a challenge that must be addressed.

There are a lot of materials and books at NRHS national not currently available to the general membership. NRHS is looking for volunteers to inventory the materials.

The NRHS Advisory Council agreed to mail the NRHS News to those members that do not have email addresses.

The Advisory Council is trying to figure out a policy to cover local NRHS chapter members that are not members of the national organization.

Al Weber, the new president of the NRHS, recently went to Washington, D.C., for meetings and handed out a lot of business cards. Some people at the meetings thought Al was with the New Rochelle High School. The Advisory Council is addressing this.

Several people approached Jim and Charlotte Pahrís at the national meeting to express very high compliments regarding the NRHS 2014 Fall Convention last year at the Carnegie Hotel.

- **Editor's Report, Bill Beagen.** We currently exchange chapter newsletters with at least 14 other NRHS chapters around the country.
- **Treasurer's Report, John Dodge.** We have a very positive treasury balance.
- **Secretary's Report, Mark Woomer.** The previous meeting minutes were approved.

Current Business

Carter Railroad Museum Train Show. The Carter Museum Train Show scheduled for June 2-4, 2016, will be an ETSU-sponsored event at the Mini Dome, which has over 64,000 square feet of space available for vendors and displays.

Three Rivers Rambler Excursion. The Three Rivers Rambler excursion received very positive survey responses (a 90% response rate) and the monetary result was very good. People heard about the excursion from many different sources. Suggestions for future excursions are all over the map. Most of the people that went do want to be contacted and notified of future trips. We did receive a thank you letter from the steamboat company with a request for suggestions as to how to make the cruise experience better. Picture taking during the boarding process created a bottle-neck, and there were not enough tables initially setup even though the boat had a total count for our group. This information will be forwarded to the company.

Fall Excursion Planning. Suggestions for a Fall Excursion include Oak Ridge, Stearns, KY, Asheville, and Bryson City. We need to coordinate the excursion with the area Fall football schedules for ETSU and UT. The current consensus is an Oak Ridge train ride with a Star of Knoxville riverboat cruise. The UT Volunteers are away September 26, October 24, and October 31.

- **Summer Picnic.** The annual summer picnic will be at the McKee's on Sunday, September 13, 2015. They will provide the meat, and we bring everything else. Please contact Jim Pahriss to let him know you will attend, how many in your party, and what food you will bring or what food you need to bring:

Jim Pahriss Email: pahrissj@comcast.net.
Jim Pahriss Phone: 423-753-8045.

Annual Christmas Party. The GLCC voted to have the annual Christmas party on December 18 at the Choo Choo Café in Erwin, TN. The MEMRR decided they want to have the party on December 17 at the Tipton-Haynes facility. A motion was made, 2nded, and approved to join the MEMRR at Tipton-Haynes as how the two organizations had some Christmas parties in the past.

- **Tweetsie Convention.** No new information but we plan to host the convention again in 2016.
- **Chapter Web Page and Information.** Bill Beagen and Mark Woomer met with Terry Countermine, Sam Burke, Mark Buckner, Brad Cross, and Joseph Elliott in the ETSU Computer Science Department to review the status of the chapter web site. The goal is to have a GLCC NRHS chapter website implemented so as to provide the ability to easily update chapter and NRHS information, provide excursion announcement, and provide any other chapter information in an easy to get to website. What the fellows at ETSU will do is to review the current website development, document what needs to be done, come up with a schedule, move the website to the hosted site, and document how to keep the site updates. The site will contain links to the MEMRR, Carter Museum, and Tweetsie Society websites, among other information, and each site will contain links to each of the other websites.
- **Carter RR Museum satellite location in Jonesborough.** Fred Alsop will meet with ETSU President, Dr. Brian Noland, to review the lease and what needs to be done to the building in Jonesborough. In order to have a kid's room, we need to have a person that is CPR-certified. Jonesborough is willing to help staff the building because the City of Jonesborough is very interested in having the Museum satellite location in their town.

Attendance at the Carter Museum on ETSU campus is up from last year, with 8,000 people having been in the museum from July 2014 thru June 2015. This is a truly remarkable number considering the museum is only open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, with a small number of other open dates based on special requests.

- **GLCC NRHS Chapter logo Pins.** We still have a number of chapter logo pins available at \$5.00 each.
- **GLCC NRHS Chapter participation in local events.** The lack of participation with moving the Cope Layout to Jonesborough for Jonesborough Days and to the Hands On Museum for the Blue Plum Festival in Johnson City is a definite concern. The MEMRR passed a motion mandating participation as the Cope Layout belongs to the MEMRR.

Other Current/Old Business:

- **Tales of the Rails.** We received a \$2,500.00 grant two years ago. Carolyn Gregg has been working on getting the transcribing completed so we can get a book published. A motion was made to set aside \$2,000.00 to be used as needed to continue to collect railroad stories (the collection of railroad stories involves meeting with the “story tellers”, recording their stories, and then transcribing the stories to an electronic document for storage and/or preparation for publishing). The money would be used for travel and other expenses related to collecting the stories. An amendment to the motion was made to direct Carolyn Gregg to gather and document the estimated costs involved with publishing the collected stories. Expenditures to be authorized for payment by receipts and documentation. The amendment was passed. The original motion was passed.

New Business:

- **Football.** ETSU plays UT in Knoxville in 2017. There could be the possibility of organizing a train excursion from Johnson City to Knoxville. This is being explored.
- **Motion For A Grant.** A motion was made, 2nded, and passed to provide two grants to the NRHS, one grant for the NRHS Rail Camp in the amount of \$500.00, and a grant for the NRHS Grants Fund in the amount of \$500.00.


**Evening Program
Meeting Adjournment**

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark Woomer
Secretary

<u>MEMBERSHIP</u>		
2015 Business Meeting Dates		
Monday 1/19/2015	Monday Cancelled	Monday – 9/14/2015
Monday 2/16/2015*	Monday 6/8/2015	Monday – 10/19/2015*
Monday 3/16/2015	Monday 7/20/2015*	Monday – 11/16/2015
Monday 4/20/2015*	Monday – 8/17/2015	12/15/2015– Christmas Party

Dates with an * indicate B.O.D. Meeting also

ETSU's cafeteria "The Market Place" on the 3rd Floor of the Culp University Center will be open for those members who wish to meet for dinner at 5:00 p.m. prior to the Chapter business meeting. Meal price is \$5.45 per person but you must mention that you are a staff member (by volunteering in the RR Museum) in order to get this reduced price.



The George L. Carter Chapter NRHS

The Monthly Meetings are the Monday preceding the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM in room 312 of Brown Hall, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN. The room is on the Third floor entering from the northeast entrance doors. For more information, please write to the Chapter at:
 George L Carter Chapter NRHS
 P.O. Box 70697
 East Tennessee State University
 Johnson City, TN 37614

The George L. Carter Chapter NRHS Newsletter is prepared and distributed monthly prior to the meeting. Opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily the views of East Tennessee State University and its employees, the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS, and its members, officers, and board of directors and the National Railway Historical Society. Contributions of articles are welcome and encouraged. For permission to use the material in this newsletter, please contact the editor, Bill Beagen (rbill@embarqmail.com). Contributors are Fred Alsop, Jim Pahr, Mark Woomer and John Dodge

Editors Note

Trip to New York City and the Automat

As most of you know by now, I lived in a small town in NJ called Iselin that was on the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad about 25 miles from New York. I had been riding trains since I was a babe in arms and as my Dad and Mom did not own a car, we went everywhere by either bus or train. The best times were when my Dad would take me (when I was older) to New York City for a haircut. I know this sounds weird, but my Dad always went to the same barber in NYC when he was working and naturally it was easier to take the train to the city and make a day of it.

Every time we would head in for a shearing, we would always go to the Automat (owned and operated by the Horn and Hardart Company in NY & Philadelphia) for lunch and it was a blast! For those who don't know what an Automat is, or even heard of one, they were the best thing in the world for a good meal at a reasonable price. When you went in,

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you would hand the lady (there were usually around 4 of them and the Horn and Hardart Company called them nickel throwers) at the big counter a dollar and she would count out 20 nickels to you in about 2 seconds. They would do this with amazing speed and it was never wrong!

Once you had your nickels there was a wall of little glass doors with all kinds of foods behind them. You would figure out what you wanted, put the correct amount of nickels in and turn the handle. The door would pop open and stay there while you got your food out of the little cubbyhole. My favorite was their Macaroni and Cheese followed closely by Baked Beans. At that time it was 15 cents for either of them, a slice of pie or cake was a dime and a glass of milk was a nickel! You could feast like a king for less than 75 cents.

To me those were the days I remember most, I miss my Dad and Mom, but I will always have the memories of going to New York and getting a haircut or sometimes going with my Mom and go to Macy's and shop and when we were done, it was down to the Automat again. I loved that place!