



The ET TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ET&WNC RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Board of Directors

Officers

Chris Ford, *President*
901-497-0809
chris@cfordart.com

Jerry Turbyfill, *Vice-President*
828-733-0680
jerryturbyfill@gmail.com

Sharon Stewart, *Interim Secretary*
stewartsharon10@hotmail.com

Patricia Jennings, *Treasurer*
336-452-4212
pjdr2006@yahoo.com

Board Members

Johnny Graybeal, *Past President*
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Benjamin Burton

Newsletter Editor & Society Historian

Curtis Brookshire
curtis.brookshire@verizon.net

Society Website

www.etwncrrhs.org

Address any inquiries to -

The ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society

PO Box 70697
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, TN 37614

Society Marks 30 Years and 30 Conventions June 1-3, 2018

In 1988 a high school history teacher from DeSoto, Missouri asked a retired pilot from Charlotte, North Carolina for the mailing list from an inactive group. Thus was born the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad Historical Society, courtesy of the late John R. Waite. Last year we celebrated three big birthdays and this year it's time to celebrate another – OURS! The Society is 30 but by no means “over the hill”.

We'll gather at the Carnegie Hotel over the weekend of June 1-3 with a list of special activities. Among them will be the third annual Train Show and sale over at the ETSU Mini-Dome. The convention formally begins at 5 pm on Friday, so if you're in town that morning, you'll have the day to yourself to ride/walk the Tweetsie Trail; eat at the White Duck Taco Shop/Yee Haw Brewery at the beautiful and historic ET&WNC Johnson City Depot or at the Tupelo Honey Cafe in the equally historic Clinchfield Depot across the street; visit the George L. Carter Museum and see the progress made on the ET&WNC layout; and of course visit the Train Show at the Mini-Dome.

At 5 pm we'll gather in the Grand Soldiers Room at the Carnegie for our annual business meeting followed by dinner. Our guest speaker this year is Grandfather Mountain expert Randy Johnson who will cover operations on the Boone Fork Lumber Company which fed lumber traffic to the ET&WNC and was the reason for extending the Linville River Railway on to Shull's Mills.

Randy will talk again Saturday morn-

ing from 8:30 to 9:30 about our feature event this year: a hike over a portion of the Boone Fork Lumber Company's grade on Grandfather Mountain. He'll tell us what to look forward to and make sure we have directions to our meeting point. For our hike we'll meet around 1:15 for a 1:30 start of our hike at the Boone Fork parking area at MP 299 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We'll be finished in time for the train ride at Tweetsie Railroad.

Speaking of Tweetsie, the park will begin admitting Convention Attendees at 4 pm. Our annual train ride with photo runs and an extended trip around the mountain will depart around 6:15. Then it's off to the Tweetsie Palace for a Dan'l Boone Inn dinner. As is our custom, we'll “pass the hat” to show our appreciation to the train crew for their hard work and hospitality.

Sunday is another train riding opportunity - a trip through the Doe River Gorge. Train leaves at 9:45 am SHARP from the Christian Camp.

Convention registration cost is \$55.00. Please register as early as possible to help the organizers determine space and how many hungry mouths there will be to feed.

Another special feature this year is a 30-year ET Historical Society commemorative pin that will be included with each paid registration. If you want more, they will be for sale at the convention for \$5.00.

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A block of rooms are reserved at the Carnegie Hotel for \$93.00 per night. This rate is good until the rooms sell out (which they will). You can call the Carnegie at 423-979-6400 or toll free

at 866-757-8277. When you call make sure to ask for rooms blocked for the Historical Society, NOT for the Train Show as they also have a block of rooms that are now full. You can also reserve at the Carnegie website. www.carnegiehotel.com ■

Randy Johnson Convention Presentation: *How Tweetsie Logged the Grandfather*

The boom and bust story of the Boone Fork Lumber Company and the town of Shull's Mills is one of the most intriguing stories of the ET&WNC's economic impact on the North Carolina mountains. Many people know the broad outline of how that and other timber mills brought much-needed employment that harvested lucrative timber to the High Country, but few people remember or ever knew the true scale and scope of the logging that happened not far from the ET's tracks.

Randy Johnson's award-winning 2016 book *Grandfather Mountain: The History and Guide to an Appalachian Icon* presents a lot of new material about that drama of devastation. Johnson's Friday evening Society Convention presentation will feature how and when the process of logging Grandfather Mountain and its surroundings actually happened. He'll cover the less than widely appreciated status of Grandfather Mountain's virgin forest and how the impact of Tweetsie's timber harvesting rippled down through time to the 21st century.

In a multimedia presentation titled *How Tweetsie Logged the Grandfather* Johnson will draw on historic imagery and his own nationally published photography to recall the iconic significance of Grandfather's virgin timber and describe the process that stripped most of it off the slopes and shipped it out on the ET&WNC Railroad. Ironically, the logging was so devastating that it no doubt helped spark the massive flood that claimed the Linville River Ry's tracks in 1940.

Johnson will also lead an excursion of several short walks on Saturday that will actually visit the remains of Boone Fork Lumber Company railroad routes on the mountain near the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Johnson was a founding editor of *The Mountain Times* and launched the Grandfather Mountain wilderness trail program in the 1970s that reclaimed the mountain's trails and opened new paths, some on old logging railroad routes. He's the author of best-selling trail guides such as *Hiking the Blue Ridge Parkway* and was the longtime editor of United Airlines *Hemispheres* magazine, named "World's Best Airline Magazine" in 2007. ■

News From Around the ET&WNC Preservation Community

George L. Carter Railroad Museum at ETSU

Fred J. Alsop III, Director of the museum, sends us this –

Big Train Show: The museum began planning for the 3rd Annual Big Train Show almost a year ago and lots of vendors are expected, including operating model train layouts in many scales including live-steam. The Big Show will be held in the ETSU Memorial Center (Mini-Dome) June 1-2 across from the Carnegie Hotel. Friday hours are from noon to 6 pm, and Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm. We expect more than 300 tables of model and prototype train related items for sale. The Carter Railroad Museum Open House will have extended hours – Friday 10 am to 5 pm, and Saturday 10 am to 4 pm.

ET&WNC Railroad Layout: Progress continues with a major focus on the scenery between tunnels 4 and 5. The west side of Tunnel 5 has been completed with appropriately eroded hillsides that made it the "sand tunnel". MEMRR member Michael Sager modeled the column-shaped rock faces. The roadbed is drained by rock-lined culverts and is stabilized by a concrete retaining wall.

Logging in the mountains is reflected by the addition of a two-truck shay. Fred Alsop used images of a Ritter Lumber caboose to scratch-build a suitable wagon-roofed bobber. ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society member Ken Harmon continues to create countless trees for the layout.

The Railroad Museum has for sale the 2017 HOn3 Annual with 9 pages on the Cranberry Mine section of our ET layout, along with several other articles about the "Tweetsie". We also have a limited supply of the 3 previous Annuals that feature articles about the Carter Railroad Museum's ET&WNC Railroad layout. Visit our website: www.memrr.org ■

Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum

Matt Bumgarner has this news from Newton, NC –

Matt Bumgarner and the team in Newton is currently working on tearing out rotten wood from the CC&O 1023 caboose as part of its restoration. They also expect to have put narrow gauge trucks under ET&WNC boxcar 434 by June. They're also working to replace a stripped gear on ET&WNC motor car #2 to get it running again. This museum is located near Hickory and is worth the trip. www.newtondepot.com ■

News from the Historical Society Modeling Committee

3D printing is the hottest thing in the ET&WNC modeling world right now. Shapeways continues to add to its expanding line of ET&WNC HO and O scale offerings. Recently added were excursion cars and the piggyback flat and trailer. Excursion cars come in two versions: #11 in its late appearance with the solid front end and a more open car that can represent an earlier #11 or, with a little judicious modification, excursion cars 12, 13 or 14. Next up should be an ETX silver gasoline tank car with hopper cars #1 thru 46 due soon.

www.shapeways.com/shops/wr?li=pb

Shapeways is asking for your requests for future projects. Cast your vote at: <https://western-rails.com/requests/>

Mount Blue is working on 32' gons in all variations for a possible fall release. See Johnny Graybeal at the convention for ET&WNC HO freight car decals plus the latest on other Mount Blue kits. ■

Lindbergh Estep was the proprietor of Estep Coal Company in Elizabethton. His little office still stands, although it's listing to the north pretty bad now, along with his shed for his loader. The tippie is pretty much gone but you can still see coal scattered alongside of the "Tweetsie Trail" where his enterprise stood. Mr. Estep closed it up maybe five or six years ago as his health was failing and the coal business in Carter County had about dried up.

I knew him pretty well. I would buy a few sacks a year for the live steamers or occasionally for the fireplace. He would always entertain me for a half hour or so with his philosophies on everything from politics to whether cornbread should have sugar or not and I always enjoyed the time I spent with him. It was particularly enjoyable when my son Tyler would go along. He was a natural born comic and those two could really push each other's buttons. They always did their routine on college. Estep had graduated from East Tennessee State in the thirties and Tyler was attending there at the time.

Estep would start the routine thusly:

"College was the hardest thing I ever did."
Tyler would reply "Hard."
Estep "Hard."
Tyler "Hard Hard."
"Hard Hard Hard."
"Hard Hard Hard Hard."
"Not as hard as the coal business."
"Not as hard as riding a skateboard."

And on and on they would go.

One thing that made the Estep coal business interesting to me is that it was built on railroad property. Mr. Hobbs charged him fifty dollars a month rent, due first of each month. Estep and Hobbs had a running battle over the rent. Every first of the month Hobbs would come for the money only to be met with Estep pontificating about the low margin of the coal business and how it was an ongoing struggle to keep the coal contract for the school board, and all sort of excuses. Mr. Hobbs would soon tire of the whining and let loose with "DON'T SCREW WITH ME ESTEP, I'LL PUT YOUR ASS IN THE STREET!"

That got three tens and four fives crossing the palm with green every time.



Even all those years later if I mentioned Mr. Hobbs, Estep would get pale.

"I've met the devil his self and his name was Hobbs!"

After Mr. Hobbs died the job fell to Cecil Bowden to collect the rent. He had no use for the foolishness and excuses so after a few months he just quit fooling with it.

I wonder if when the great civic movers and shakers put together the deal for the Trail if anyone even knew about all the rent never paid over there.

Mr. Estep, Mr. Hobbs, Cecil, and Tyler are all gone now and I'm sure not telling anybody.....

Except y'all!

*Ken Riddle
March 2018*

Linville Depot & Caboose 505 at the Avery County Museum

Society Vice-President Jerry Turbyfill sends the latest from Newland –

Jerry Turbyfill is working on the beaded ceiling for the 505. He's special ordered the lumber from Lowe's and at press time is waiting for delivery. You'll notice new siding on the caboose. Weren't there windows on the sides? Yes, and Jerry will cut window openings in due time. He's also working the locomotive cab for the little steamer being restored for service at the Doe River Gorge. Attaching the cab will depend on those working on the engine itself. Stop by the Avery County Museum and see what's new in June.
www.averymuseum.org ■

Tentative Convention Schedule June 1-3

Friday, June 1

Carter Railroad Museum Open House –
ETSU Campus 10 am-5 pm

Train Show –
ETSU Mini-Dome..... Noon-6 pm

Convention Registration –
Carnegie Hotel Lobby 3-5 pm

Business Meeting –
Grand Ballroom 5 pm

Banquet –
Grand Ballroom 7 pm

Guest Speaker –
Randy Johnson 8 pm

Saturday, June 2

Wellington's at the Carnegie Hotel –
Opens for breakfast 7 am

Randy Johnson Talk –
Discuss the Afternoon Boone Fork Hikes
Lower Level Meeting Room 8:30 am

Carter Railroad Museum Open House –
ETSU Campus 10 am-4 pm

Train Show –
ETSU Mini-Dome..... 10 am-4 pm

Lunch On Your Own –

Boone Fork Lumber Right-of-Way Hikes –
Meet at Boone Fork Parking Area
Mile Post 299
Blue Ridge Parkway 1:15 pm

Boone Fork Lumber
Right-of-Way Hikes 1:30-4:30 pm

Park Opens to Convention Attendees –
Tweetsie Railroad..... 4 pm

Convention Train Ride Departs –
Tweetsie Railroad..... 6:15 pm

Dinner Catered by Dan'l Boone Inn –
Tweetsie Palace 7:15 pm

Sunday, June 3

Gorge Train Ride Departs Sharp –
Doe River Gorge 9:45 am

Informal Afternoon Guided Walks –
Agenda TBD
Green Bridge Landing - Tweetsie Trail -
Hillside Stone Water Tank 1:30 pm

Happenings at Tweetsie Railroad Next up – 2018 Summer Season

DAVID HOLT AND LIGHTNING BOLTS - Saturday, May 26

David Holt and the Lightning Bolts enlivens old-time music with a new-time jolt, and a sound that is full, driving and energetic. Seating is on a first-come/first-seated basis – reservations are not required. Shows are included with park admission.

FIREWORKS EXTRAVAGANZA - Wednesday, July 4

Wednesday, July 4th, the Park will be open until 9 pm with fireworks at 9:30. Enjoy the most spectacular fireworks show in the High Country! It's one of the most popular events in the mountains. Spend the day at Tweetsie Railroad and enjoy fireworks under the stars after the park closes. There is no parking charge

for Golden Rail Season Pass holders. Optional dinner and premium fireworks viewing in the Hacienda: a special chicken and barbeque buffet will be served with all the trimmings.

COOL SUMMER NIGHTS - Saturday, July 7, 14, 21 & 28

This is a new event for 2018! The Park will be open Saturdays 9 am to 9 pm. Here at Tweetsie Railroad, when the sun begins to drop behind the Blue Ridge Mountains, the day turns to dusk, and the fireflies begin their nightly performance. On these special evenings the fun continues. The park will feature our Wild West Train Adventure, rides at dusk, and summer memories for your family. The kids will love it, too! Cool Summer Nights is included as part of your regular park admission for select Saturdays in July.

Visit our website: www.tweetsie.com 📱

Spring Hikers Trace ET's Right-of-Way

A group of over 25 "hikers" toured and hiked portions of the ET&WNC/LRRy right-of-way on Saturday, March 17th, 2018. Jerry Turbyfill, Historical Society Vice-President and tour organizer, wanted to take advantage of the lack of foliage which let us see things not normally visible during our summer conventions. Chris Ford, Society President and tour guide, gave the hikers handouts at each location showing the track location overlayed on a Google Earth photo.

First stop was Shull's Mills, where an abutment from the through-truss bridge that once stood over the Watauga River still stands. Chris pointed out where the Boone Fork Lumber Company sawmill stood and where lumber was stacked to dry before making its trip to Tennessee over the ET&WNC. Next it was off to Linville Gap, which at 4,045 feet above sea level was the highest station east of the Mississippi served by a scheduled passenger train. The group then visited the original site of the Linville Depot as well as its current home at the Avery County Museum. Driving the Old Toe River Road, the old grade was visible for most of the way to Minneapolis. The group spent about 2 hours walking over the grade around Cranberry as well as the site of the mine, and even locating remains of two inspection pits that were inside the 3-stall engine house. After a trip down Old Railroad Grade Road in

Carter County, the group met at a newly built "pocket park", Green Bridge Landing, at the Doe River/Little Doe River site where the green ET&WNC covered bridge once stood. The west abutment is directly across the river from the park. Finally the group hiked down from highway 19E across the now-crumbling old highway bridge where the covered deck bridge stood and through tunnel 1 to the site of a little-known hillside stone water tank that served the railroad in its earliest days. The weather started out cloudy and cold, but warmed up quickly by noon to a sunny no-jacket day. Many thanks to Jerry and Chris, and let's do another soon! 📱



Society President (and tour guide) Chris Ford gave short infrastructure talks, aided by printed handouts, at stopping points on the hike. This is Linville Gap.

The seldom-seen cut stone hillside water tank just east of tunnel 1 at Hampton.



A beautiful view of Doe River awaits at newly built Carter County Green Bridge Landing. The park is at the site of the ET covered bridge. Photos courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.



30th Annual ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society Convention June 1-3, 2018 at the Carnegie Hotel - Johnson City, Tennessee Convention Registration Form

Your contact information:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

The Convention price this year will be \$55.00 per person. Total cost for you and a spouse would be \$110.00. This fee includes all Convention sponsored activities, the Friday night banquet at the business meeting and the meal at Tweetsie Railroad on Saturday night. Give us the name of each person attending the Convention so that name badges can be made. Please mark which meals each person will be present for so that we can get a head-count and have meal tickets ready for you. Thank you!

Name	Friday Night Banquet	Meal at Tweetsie	Price
			\$55.00
			\$55.00
			\$55.00
			\$55.00
			\$55.00

Mail check and this form to:

ET&WNC RR Historical Society Treasurer
PO Box 70697
ETSU
Johnson City, TN 37614

Total Enclosed _____

Please make checks payable to:
ET&WNC RR HS

You may also pay by credit/debit card*** Visa____ MasterCard____ AmericanExpress____ Discover____

Name on card _____

Card number _____

Expiration Date: Month____ Year____ Billing Zip Code_____

Security number on back of card_____

*****Note - There is a 3.5% plus 15 cents processing fee added to this transaction by the card processing company. Your card will be charged \$57.08 per person.**

If you have any questions please contact Treasurer Patricia Jennings at pjdrgr2006@yahoo.com or 336-452-4212.

Don't forget to make your reservations at the beautiful Carnegie Hotel in downtown Johnson City, Tennessee. There is a *limited* block of rooms available just for our Historical Society Convention attendees at the great rate of \$93 per night, so *please book early*. Make your reservations by calling the Carnegie toll-free at **866-757-8277 and be sure to tell them you are with the *ET&WNC RR Historical Society*. View the accommodations at www.carnegiehotel.com.**



ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society

Polo Shirts - Patches - Pins

Order Form



Shirts are black -
65% polyester/35% cotton

Shirt sizes & prices:

S-M-L-XL = \$28 | 2XL = \$32 | 3XL = \$34 | 4XL = \$36 | 5XL = \$38 | 6XL = \$40

Polo Shirt with Embroidered Logo

Size	Qty	Price per shirt	Total

+ \$5.00 for shipping

Polo Shirt with Embroidered Logo *Plus* Embroidered Name - Name adds \$5.00 to the above prices

Size	Qty	Name on shirt - Please print legibly	Price per shirt +\$5	Total

+ \$5.00 for shipping



Patches & Pins - \$5.00 each

Item	Qty	Price per item	Total
3 inch Embroidered Logo Patch		\$5.00	
1 inch Enameled Metal Logo Pin - Green		\$5.00	
1 inch Enameled Metal Logo Pin - Red		\$5.00	

+ \$3.00 for shipping

Please check one:

☐ I will pick up my order at the June Convention.

☐ Please ship my order to the address below.

Shipping & Handling:

\$5.00 total for shirts - \$3.00 total for patches/pins

Mail check and this form to:

George L. Carter RR Museum
PO Box 70703
ETSU
Johnson City, TN 37614

Please make checks payable to:

George L. Carter RR Museum

Total Enclosed _____

Your contact and shipping information:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____