



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

Jane Brady, *Secretary*
336-566-3437
just1jane67@gmail.com

Patricia Jennings, *Treasurer*
336-452-4212
pjdrj2006@yahoo.com

Board Members

Johnny Graybeal, *Past President*
Joel Shipley
Dr. Fred Alsop III

Address any inquiries to -

The ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society

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

The 2015 Annual Convention

The 27th Annual Convention of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad Historical Society was held June 26th-28th in Johnson City, Tennessee at the beautiful Carnegie Hotel. Chris Ford presided over his first convention since his election in 2014. He welcomed 66 members and guests. He introduced the Board of Directors:

Jerry Turbyfill – Vice-President
Jane Brady – Secretary, appointed
LeAnn Odle – Treasurer
Johnny Graybeal – Past President
Dr. Fred Alsop III
Joel Shipley

General Proceedings were begun by Chris's sharing his hopes for future successful conventions. He stated the improvements to Linville Depot and Caboose 505. He wants our members to enjoy their memberships in the Society. Chris informed the members that our preliminary website is up and running.

Thanks go to Clark Barrow who now has our Historical Society on Facebook.

Our membership is growing. LeAnn shared that the number of emailed newsletters is up to 63 percent.

Secretary Jane Brady read the minutes from the 26th Convention in 2014. They were approved as read.

Treasurer LeAnn shared the financial status of the Society. She projected the budget for 2016 by sharing the expen-

ditures from the years 2012-2014. Eight thousand, one hundred thirty dollars (\$8130) will be collected for next year, with three thousand, four hundred dollars (\$3400) going for expenses of the 2016 Convention. Members can pay dues with credit cards. There are 164 newsletters being printed. The financial report was accepted as presented.

Old Business began with an energetic momentum as Joel Shipley, a member of the Pros and Cons Committee brought the report to the floor. This committee has been working on the pros and cons of "associating, joining, affiliating, or just being friends" with the George L. Carter Museum located on the campus of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. Many members voiced their concerns that the ET&WNC Society not lose its identity or purpose. LeAnn Odle introduced the idea that a Memorandum of Understanding needs to be written that will define our position in working with the George L. Carter Museum. This document will be brought to the 2016 Convention for examination and decision.

As Michael Paschall, head of the society web site committee, was not in attendance there was no report on the status of our web site.

Fred Alsop invited the Society to come to Johnson City for the 2016 Convention. This was seconded. Matt

Bumgarner also invited the Society to consider meeting in Newton, North Carolina to commemorate the sixteenth anniversary of their museum complex.

A motion was made to accept Jane Brady as Secretary. The motion was unanimous.

The floor was open for selection of the Vice-President. Jerry Turbyfill graciously agreed to continue his role as Vice-President for another two years. The office of Treasurer was also open. Patricia Jennings was nominated and LeAnn Odle expressed her desire to continue in her job. Both women spoke and were voted upon. LeAnn will continue in her role as Treasurer.

Johnny Graybeal shared the news that ET&WNC Boxcar #434 is on wheels at Newton, North Carolina. Motorcar #1 is undergoing restoration.

Jerry Turbyfill informed the members that the Linville Depot has light fixtures. He also shared that they have lost a beloved worker. As a tribute to Jim Bowers, T-shirts are being screen-printed in sizes L and XL.

Hopefully, the train in the Doe River Gorge will be running soon. The boiler is being inspected.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

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Dr. Brian Noland, President of East Tennessee State surprised the members by stopping in to welcome the Society and to thank us for contributions to East Tennessee State University, the George L. Carter Museum, and the community.

Our supper banquet was lasagna, garden salad, garlic rosemary rolls, and water or tea. For dessert, tiramisu was served. Because our meeting room was larger this year, our members were able to eat in our meeting room.

Dr. Fred Alsop, who is also the Director of the George L. Carter Museum gave the official welcome to members and guests. Jerry Turbyfill, Vice-President of our Society, a resident of Avery County, and a carpenter at the Linville Depot in Newland, introduced our evening speaker, Mr. Chris Robbins, President and CEO Railroad in Blowing Rock.

Mr. Robbins entertained us with the

history of the Tweetsie Railroad Park. He told us of the day-to-day operation and work to keep Tweetsie going. The question and answer period was most enjoyable. We appreciate Mr. Robbins for his work in keeping Tweetsie running so that we can continue to enjoy our special relationship with this wonderful historic train.

Saturday's agenda began in the Robert Taylor meeting room. President Chris Ford gave a Powerpoint presentation using maps to show locations of the ET&WNC Depot, the ET&WNC Enginehouse and railroad lines going to Elizabethton from Johnson City. This is now the ten mile long Tweetsie Trail open for walking and biking. Chris showed points of interest such as Milligan College, the Bemberg Rayon Plant, the North American Rayon Plant, and the quarry. The Bemberg Depot is also along the Tweetsie Trail. After the presentation by Chris, members who chose to go with him and Jerry walked a couple miles of the Tweetsie Trail.

Other members went to the Norfolk Southern Railroad line and watched for the Norfolk Southern Steam Special pulled by the locomotive #4501. This locomotive was purchased in 1966 by Paul Merriman of the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum. This locomotive built in 1911 was the first Mikado owned by Southern Railroad. It is now part of the 21st Century Norfolk Southern Steam Program and is fresh out of overhaul after sitting idle for many years in Chattanooga.

Doors were open from 10:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the George L. Carter Museum on the East Tennessee State campus. Our members were able to view several model layouts, including the ongoing construction of the ET&WNC Railroad layout. The layout continues to amaze with the amount of detail going into this wonderful project. These workers are to be commended for their diligence and time.

Our fabulous day ended at Tweetsie Railroad. Getting to ride #190, having photo shots of #12, eating Daniel Boone chicken in the Tweetsie Palace, and being with fellow train lovers make a Society member know this an exceptional experience. The dinner menu at Tweetsie Palace included chicken and ham, mashed potatoes and corn, fried apples, biscuits, strawberry shortcake and tea.

We traveled from Johnson City to the Doe River Gorge for our final morning activity. We members had the choice of walking to the bridge or riding on the train. The day was magnificent, a beautiful day to be out. We couldn't believe that white and pink Rhododendrons were still in bloom. Johnny Graybeal shared a story of his visiting Hillbilly World as a boy. He rode the train up through the Gorge and told about the show of the hillbillies and the moonshiner. They put on a show similar to Tweetsie.

The steam engine at the Gorge was discovered by Ken Riddle while he was in Alabama. The engine is being overhauled. When we were there, the boiler was ready to be inspected. Hopefully, in 2016, there will be a live steam engine to pull us up through the Gorge.

The last official stop of the day was the Avery County Museum in Newland, North Carolina. The commemorative T-shirts in honor of Jim Bowers are on sale here. The Linville Depot looks great. Having electricity is a great step and work continues by the dedicated people who are proud of their heritage. They are adding wood to the walls at this time. Oscar Lidstrom, one of our members, gifted the Depot with a special little train. It is a G scale model of the East Tennessee train - with a tender, workcars, and caboos. It has a beautiful whistle.

**THANKS TO
THE MEMBERS
WHO MADE THIS
CONVENTION A
MEMORABLE TIME!**

**And Special Thanks
Go To LeAnn For
The Outstanding
Convention Packet!**

Meeting of the Board

August 22, 2015

Members present for the Meeting -

Chris Ford – President
Jerry Turbyfill – Vice-President
Jane Brady – Secretary
Johnny Graybeal
Joel Shipley
Dr. Fred Alsop III

At 10:00 a.m. Chris called the meeting to order. The Convention went well. General conversation about the Convention was positive. People are excited about the goings on for next year. The food was tasty and good; the price was up a little. The air was not on in the Tweetsie Palace when members arrived for supper. Members had the choice of seeing Engine 4501 and supper. Chris Robbins' speech went well and the question and answer session was most enjoyable. An idea for Fred to pursue: Could the Society get Engine 630 or other trains from the Tennessee Railroad in conjunction with the ET&WNC? Johnny wondered about the coordination with Tennessee Valley to take pictures at the Depot since there is so much traveling from NC to TN to NC to TN. There were several ideas of train excursions which shall be pursued. Jerry and Fred both are eager to do some special activities since 2017 will be the hundred year anniversary of ET&WNC engine number 12, combine car number 15, and the Linville Depot. Johnny suggested that the Norfolk Southern management may give its blessing to use steam.

Johnny spoke about the hotel's restaurant opening at the same time as Chris' morning Tweetsie talk. Chris said that we should have informed members to get breakfast outside the hotel before the trail lecture. Fred will look out for that in the future and get the restaurant to open earlier. Joel mentioned that we need good communication with the hotel in case of another glitch in the reserved block of rooms. Chris said that the hotel knows the Society now and that key points should be noted for our future stays.

Fred spoke about the Tweetsie Trail.

Ten miles is complete from Johnson City to Elizabethton. There is publicity, a website, and Facebook. Fred told us that the Carnegie Hotel has been reserved for our convention next year. Fred informed us that a model train show is booked for the Mini-Dome on June 3rd and 4th. We decided to hold our 28th Convention during this weekend to coincide with the train show. This will let us avoid the Thomas events. Tweetsie will be running and should be available for photo-op opportunities. Our speaker for the Friday evening business meeting will be Dean Smith. No, not the man who encouraged the color Carolina Blue. Dean's topic will be "Modeling the Tweetsie". We have several other fun times in the planning stages.

We decided to work on the Memorandum of Understanding before next year. We want it to be in place by then. Each member will be able to obtain a copy of our by-laws from the Secretary. We are looking at the Officers' duties in order to fine tune each person's work descriptions. We discussed dates for newsletter and magazine publications. We want to have a form letter letting members know of deaths in our membership. We are publishing complimentary magazines for high schools and libraries.

Chris adjourned the meeting.

Links for our Historical Society -

www.facebook.com/etwncrailroadhistoricalsociety

Clark Barrow has started a great Facebook page for the society.

www.etwncrrhs.org

Our Society history. A new member form, member renewal form, and past newsletters can be downloaded here.

www.thetweetsietrail.com

Information includes a link to Tweetsie, the work behind the trail, activities include casual walking, hiking, biking, and running.

www.cfordart.com

Chris' website has photographs and commentary for fieldtrips during conventions from 1989 through 2011.

A Word From Our President

Hey y'all!

Man, it's been a long hot summer, especially here in Memphis. Hope it's starting to cool off a bit where you are. Football is right around the corner...no, wait, it's here already! Good luck trying to drive in Boone between now and Thanksgiving!

Your Board of Directors has been busy this summer. We had a board meeting in Johnson City Saturday, August 22 to go over the 2015 Society convention, and to make plans for the next conventions. Did the August 22 date ring a bell? It should, it was a NASCAR Bristol race weekend, and boy are they proud of their hotel rooms on that weekend. Remind me not to plan board meetings on race weekends anymore. Although truthfully it wasn't hard to get into eating establishments on Saturday like I thought it would be... I guess because everybody was at the race! Despite all that, I think we accomplished some things, made some plans, and we've actually got some cool events lined up for 2016, and if we can get all our ducks in a row we'll have some activities we haven't enjoyed for a good many years. I'm sure Jerry and Fred will fill us in on the particulars when things get nailed down. Remember that 2017 will be the 100th anniversary of the #12 AND the Linville Depot! Has it really been that long? For a hundred years old that Linville Depot still looks great...thanks in large part to Jerry Turbyfill and Joel Shipley.

And speaking of ducks, be sure to visit the White Duck Taco Shop anchored in our old favorite ET&WNC Railroad depot in downtown Johnson City. Craft beer and tacos in the old train station? No stranger than selling tires out of there I guess. Even if you don't like tacos or beer, you'll really like what the new owners have done with the place. And they are also "fixing up" the old trainmen's hotel directly across the street from the depot... which is directly across the tracks from the new farmer's market open air pavilion. All this paired with the opening of Tupelo Honey restaurant in the old CC&O

depot across the street... they've almost single-handedly turned downtown Johnson City from a "they're going to tear all this down?!!!" area into a real destination. What a difference a few years, a lot of money, and a vision that includes a respect for historical significance can make. Mr. Gary Baker is to be thanked for honoring the history of these downtown structures, and the Society intends to send him a letter of appreciation for having and sharing that vision.

We're still working on the Society website, so bear with us on that. It's going to be key to getting our business handled in a timely and more efficient manner, and it will make the treasurer's job a little more streamlined and transparent. And speaking of the treasurer's position, the resignation of long time member LeAnn Odle from that position has left us with a temporary spot to fill. I've appointed Patricia Jennings, who ran for the treasurer spot at the last convention, to be that person. Patricia will need to jump in feet first because that office will be an integral part of the website. And I think we've decided that it's a good idea to finally start issuing membership cards to help all of us remember that we're actually a functioning member of the ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society... and can prove it! It's gonna be a good thing that can be done rather inexpensively, but will provide a good service to the members.

The Memorandum of Shared Interest and Understanding (as it's called now), that was voted in by the membership at the last convention, now has a face and a definition and is currently being signed by our board members to be sent to the George L. Carter museum head for a final signature. This shared interest association will bring with it some major perks that we didn't have, with no cost or downside for us. A win-win for our organization.

When your current president was elected to head this organization it seemed it was for a reason. And I think that reason was that the Society was looking for a break in the same old, same old in the organization. A bit of change in what we were doing, a bit of change in the conventions, and most importantly, a bit of change in where we, as a Historical Society, were going.

And not just change for change sake... but a meaningful shift in direction. We're trying to do that. But as much as we'd like to snap our fingers and get things done, it just doesn't happen like that... this ain't Hollywood. It will be a process and will take a while.

So bear with us, your Board of Directors, and please let us know what you think we're doing right, and more importantly, what you think we're doing wrong. And thanks, as always, for your support!



Upcoming Events -

Tweetsie's Ghost Train Halloween Festival will be held every weekend in October 2015.

"Fall Colors" now known as "Family Fun Day" will be held on October 18th at Doe River Gorge from 10:00 to 5:00. The admission is free. There is a charge to ride the train. The website is www.doeriver.com or www.doerivergorge.com.

The 28th East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad Historical Society convention will be held in Johnson City, TN the weekend of June 3-5, 2016.

Current Happenings -

Your Board is continuing to plan an outstanding Convention for 2016.

Our treasurer, LeAnn, has resigned effective September 3, 2015. Five members of the Board have voted that Patricia Jennings fill in as Treasurer until our June Convention.

On Sept. 18, with six members voting, the Board has recommended that we have our mail come to the post office box at the George L. Carter Museum. They will forward it to whomever it is being sent. This will be convenient for us and will avoid having to change the mailing address as officers change.

The new address is:

ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society
PO Box 70697
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City TN 37614

Patricia's contact info -
pjdr2006@yahoo.com
336-452-4212

Happy Rails to you,
Jane Brady, Secretary



Photo courtesy of Chris Ford - Engine number 12 builder plate - 1989 convention