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Board of Directors

Officers

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

Curtis Brookshire, *Vice President*
703-772-7002
curtis.brookshire@verizon.net

Sharon Stewart, *Secretary*
stewartsharon10@hotmail.com

Patricia Jennings, *Treasurer*
pjdrg2006@yahoo.com

Board Members

Johnny Graybeal, *Past President*
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Dr. Fred Alsop III
Jerry Turbyfill

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
ETSU
Johnson City, TN 37614

Yeah, It's Cold Right Now... But Look What's Happening in ET&WNC Country!

2020 looks to be another busy year in the ET&WNC world. We're busy planning the 32nd(!) annual convention, scheduled for May 29-31. Once again the Carnegie Hotel will be our home base. They have a block of rooms set aside for us and *THEY'RE TAKING RESERVATIONS NOW*. Remember to ask for the ET&WNC RR Historical Society block. We're a little earlier this year so we don't have to be under the "Big Top" again. Look for a full convention preview in the April newsletter.

Looking inside this issue, you'll see everyone's been working hard. The layout in the G. L. Carter museum is once again featured in White River's HON3 Annual, the Doe River Gorge is working hard on their Crown steam locomotive and other things, and Tweetsie Railroad is planning for an exciting 2020 season. They're open 8½ months of the year now: April–October + December, February and March to complete off-season shop work.

This is a great time of the year to visit Newton and the Southeast Narrow Gauge and Short Line Museum, home of the motorcars and boxcar 434 among other precious items. And there are new things coming in the modeling world.

2020 is another anniversary year, but on the sadder side. August marks 80 years since the 1940 flood dealt its fatal blow to the Linville River Ry and service to Boone. Seems we just celebrated the 100th anniversary of the railroad opening in Boone. But remember, that busy college town was connected to

the nation's rail grid for only a short 21 years.

October is the 70th anniversary of the last revenue narrow gauge train. 20 years ago we marked the 50th with a special train in the Gorge pulled by "Rachael", a small steam engine, and attended by many of us who have since "caught the Westbound"... George Allison, Ruth Tupper, and Jack Williams among them. Ken Riddle has sad news of yet another member of the ET&WNC family lost to us. But cheer up, good news follows...

Curtis Brookshire, Editor 🚂

From the President—

Want to volunteer? Your Historical Society is an all volunteer organization. Tennessee is the "Volunteer State". And the ET&WNC RR started in Tennessee. Coincidence? Maybe... but use these cold winter doldrum months to consider lending us a hand in the coming years. Do you have skills that you think would be useful to the organization? Are you a great organizer? Do you have ideas about where the Historical Society should be headed? Are you an attorney? Maybe a website "magician"? Photographer? Do you have lots of contacts in the ET area? A Historical Society has need for all these things and more, and we will be needing help from motivated members as we move into this next decade of our Society's life. Officer's and member's lives change and evolve, and so do the needs of the Society. Think about volunteering with us... and contact me with your thoughts!

CFORD

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 –

The G. L. Carter Railroad Museum celebrated its 12th Anniversary in mid-November, 2019, having more than doubled its footprint since its dedication in 2007 to over 5,000 sq ft of railroad layout, display galleries, workspace, and a railroad library holding more than 1,200 hardback volumes and hundreds of DVDs. The more than 130 members of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) club continue to be the principal volunteer docents for the museum operating the 4 model train layouts for the public every Saturday, but the George L. Carter Chapter of the NRHS provides strong support, including co-hosting 3 rail excursion trips annually. The museum-affiliated ET&WNC RR Historical Society continues to provide support for the museum especially focused on the museum's 1,300 sq ft HOn3 "Tweetsie" layout. This layout, in its 8th year of construction, continues to be one of the visitor highlights of the museum that attracts approximately 8,000 visitors annually.

Our ET&WNC RR model layout has attracted the attention of George Riley and other editorial staff of *White River Productions*. Articles written by MEMRR member Geoff Stunkard, and illustrated by several of our members, have now appeared in 6 consecutive editions of their HOn3 Annual. The national and international attention these publications have generated has helped generate more interest in "the little railroad with a heart" that we all have a passion for.

This additional interest in the ET&WNC RR can be seen in the creation of new products in the modeling world just for the ET&WNC from new companies like *Western-Rails* and others. We are now able to purchase exact replicas of Tweetsie rolling stock never available before along with modifications for some of the ET's early locomotives numbers 4, 5, and 6 that make our existing models even more like their long-vanished prototypes.

Work continues throughout the museum, as well as on our "Tweetsie" layout, with scenery being created to cover the landscaping of tunnel #1 and the Hampton Depot area. I have



Your Historical Society has a permanent presence at the Green Bridge Landing Park in Hampton by way of a new historical marker telling the story of the ET&WNC covered bridge which graced this beautiful little spot on the river for almost 70 years. *Photo courtesy of Fred Alsop.*

been working on building the Johnson City Depot which has become a time-consuming project matching roof lines, roof underbracing and creating the stained glass windows of the station waiting rooms. When completed and installed it will be one of the largest buildings on the layout. A model of the Lacey home at Blevins will also soon be installed behind their store at Hopson.

Roger Teinert's Big Train Show Committee has been making plans for the 2020 5th Annual Big Train Show. Each year we have attracted more vendors and more attendees to the show that is held in the huge ETSU Mini-Dome. Vendors and operating layouts spread out over 64,000 sq ft of indoor display area. Mark your calendars for June 4-5th, 2020.

Our railroad museum is open every Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm and admission is free (donations happily accepted). We work on exhibits on Thursday evenings until around 8 pm. Drop by any time you are in town to tour our exhibits and chat with the volunteer staff. For more information about events check the MEMRR website at www.memrr.org 🚂

Linville Depot & Caboose 505 at the Avery County Historical Museum

Tense Banks sends the latest from Newland, NC –

The restoration of the ET&WNC caboose #505 has been completed with just a few last-minute details to be added. The Avery County Historical Museum hopes to work with the ET&WNC RR Historical Society to present the restored caboose to the public this spring. The Museum will be closed the months of January and February to redo and upgrade our research facilities. This will give visitors better access to our numerous reference materials, especially the donation of several large collections of historical items. These include the library of former ET&WNC employee, Clyde Dellinger. We look forward to reopening and welcoming all to visit our ever-expanding museum. The museum's website is www.averycountymuseum.com 🚂



Logged area and nice rockwork in the Crab Tree scene on the ET&WNC layout at ETSU. *Photo courtesy of Fred Alsop.*

Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum

Matt Bumgarner has this news from Newton, NC –

The big update from the SENG&SM was the November arrival of our fully restored and fully operational Alco S-3 switcher that was donated by the Alexander Railroad. We had to make numerous infrastructure changes, including a live switch off the old Carolina & North-Western yard into our covered rolling stock pavilion, as well as some electrical changes needed to accommodate an engine block heater to keep the engine above 40 degrees during the winter months. The engine was originally built in 1953 as the Davenport & Rock Island #5, coming to the Alexander Railroad (Taylorsville to Statesville, NC, 18 miles) in 1976. She served in regular rotation on the ARC until 2009, when newer EMDs were purchased, though she has operated sporadically since then. The locomotive is stunning in her “Junebug Line” paint scheme of John Deere Green and safety yellow, and will remain a tribute to the legacy and image of the Alexander RR as it appeared during the last quarter of the 20th Century.

Come visit her at the Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum in Newton, NC, with the museum open Fridays and Saturdays. Better yet, plan a visit to the 18th Annual NC Railroad Expo in Hickory on Saturday, April 4th, and make a day of visiting the show and the museum. Find more about us on our website at www.newtondepot.com 🚂

News from the Historical Society Modeling Committee

All four of the ex-Boston Revere Beach & Lynn coaches (22-23-24-25) in both HO_{N3} and N_{N3} scales are available from Western-Rails. Check out the ET products on their website at <http://western-rails.com/product-category/railroad/etwnc/>. They are offered at a discount for early purchasers. Correct trucks for the coaches are also available. They are also making a new 28-foot early ET&WNC box car.

Carolina Craftsman Kits has a NEW Cranberry Depot kit in the works to go with the Cranberry Iron and Coal Company Store. Ken Anderson is working with CCK on this new laser cut kit. Keep an eye on the Carolina Craftsman website at <https://carolinacraftsmankits.com/products> for a release date. BTW, the Cranberry Story kit is again available for \$124.00. Sales will determine future offerings.

Two notes from your editor: I've seen talk on the io email group, <https://groups.io/g/ETWNC>, about the lack of O scale offerings. While I'm not connected to or in contact with manufacturers, I would recommend contacting them to ask if they plan to offer, or can offer, kits or equipment in O scale. The more interest shown, the more likely the chance to see structures or rolling stock in O scale. Second item: if you have a modeling story to tell about your layout and can write an article with good photos, you can have your craftsmanship published in the Society's official magazine *Every Time With No Complaint*. Johnny Graybeal would be happy to offer some space in the magazine (I asked him). For example, I've seen some excellent work on the io group with HO_{N30} layouts. We have some outstanding HO and large scale modelers out there. Here's a chance to tell your stories. (note to self: work on your layout too, please) 🚂



I just got back home from Monte Vista Cemetery in Johnson City. I'm heartbroken to report that my ol buddy Joan Allison Deardon caught the westbound last week at the tender young age of 86. She was Brownie's oldest girl and logged more miles on the narrow gauge than anybody alive when she died the other day. She rode with her Dad many miles when she was a girl and really was a daddy's girl. She and her younger sister Carol were a couple of the prettiest girls that ever came from Johnson City I always thought and both were totally classy girls that had a great life. Carol died a few years ago before Mrs. Allison did, and her mother never got over it as tough as she was.

Joanie's name was actually Marion, named for her grandfather Francis Marion “Cap” Allison who was the Superintendent for many years on the railroad. Remember, he was Brownie's Daddy and Engineer Walter Allison's Brother. I didn't know she was named Marion until after she passed on.

Joanie came to the last convention and we made a little talk about the train and her life. She was totally charming and beautiful just like always and I'm so glad we did that.

Richard (her constant companion and sweetie pie) told me this the morning she left. “She was so sick from the cancer she was just totally unresponsive. I went to give her a kiss and a hug that morning and while I did the Southern Railway had a northbound coming in from Knoxville and he blew in for the crossings next to the hospital. I asked her if she heard the train blowing and when I looked she was no longer breathing. She left on the train.” I personally like to think that pretty little dark headed girl swung off at Buffalo Street and caught up on the 204 with that little Engineer with the high-cuff white mule gloves and headed out to collect the morning cut from the Clinchfield. This time I bet she got some of the running! I will miss Joanie Allison so bad. Love to you Richard and Kathy too.

Ken Riddle 🚂



Photo courtesy of the John Waite Collection.

Doe River Gorge

Mark Millbourne reports from Hampton, TN –

As usual, DRG offered fall color train rides during our annual Fall Family Fun Festival October 19-20. Unfortunately turnout was light due to iffy weather Saturday leading to drizzle/light-rain by mid-afternoon. We expected better turnout Sunday as it had been forecast to be nice, but the overnight rain lingered into the morning and while things dried out by mid-day, the sun never came out. Colors also were not very far along either and didn't really peak until the following weekend. So we only carried about 400 passengers total. But those that did come enjoyed it, and we had a good volunteer crew and still had some fun. However, the familiar friendly face of Cody Cagle's sister Christy, guiding passengers to their seats, was not with us this time. Right after Thanksgiving we mourned her passing after a long battle with cancer.

While the Fall Color event typically caps off our operating season, which as reported last issue was busier than usual thanks to many guest groups and charters. We had several additional groups afterwards into mid-November. And, as I write this in mid-January, we have two groups staying this weekend that have scheduled rides!

The remaining task in late fall is to walk the track with backpack blowers and clear the fallen leaves away from the track as far as possible. This is to prolong the life of the crossies as blown leaves otherwise tend to gather along the rail, particularly around the spike heads. If left over the winter they will decay and begin to promote rot in the most critical part of the cross tie. We try to get this completed by Thanksgiving, but some early winter weather in November and other wet periods delayed finishing this task until the Friday before Christmas! Otherwise, December was quiet on the railroad except that Mike Dowdy reported hiking the ROW over the Christmas holiday and encountering a bear!

But after the early cold and snow in November, the winter so far has been relatively mild which has enabled some work to continue on the Crown locomotive, even today as I write. There was a delay on the grates that were fabricated as they didn't quite fit and had to be sent back for some tweaks, but they are now in place and work is currently in progress to clean up and finish the ash pan area below the grates. Plumbing work is also in progress on the injectors and air pump.

DRG also just acquired an interesting extra piece of rolling stock in the form of a small horse-drawn trolley car that was just donated. Don Ramey and I travelled to Dallas, Texas during the first week of January to pick it up. DRG does have horses, or it could be pulled by our large motorcar, but first it will need a new roof fabricated and general restoration as it has been stored outside for a number of years. It was built for the Indianapolis Zoo, but we're told it did not operate there very long due to unanticipated logistical issues that ended up requiring too many staff. As an interesting aside, two larger cars were first built but were found to be too heavy for the horses, so these were electrified via third rail and used at Idlewild park in Pittsburgh to create a Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood ride. However, we don't see adding a third rail or overhead wire in the gorge!

Visit our website at www.doerivergorge.com 🚂



Tunnel 2 in snow, Doe River Gorge, 2016. Photo by and courtesy of Benjamin Burton.

Tweetsie Railroad Happenings

Chris Robbins sends this from Blowing Rock, NC –

Tweetsie Railroad just wrapped up the 2019 season with its third annual Tweetsie Christmas.

This was a very well-attended event, with a few rainy nights that didn't deter guests... but no real snow was experienced for a change. Tweetsie Christmas has already become our most popular special event of the year, and we are constantly amazed at how many visitors are experiencing Tweetsie Railroad for the very first time when they come to the Park during



the Holidays. We hope a lot of them will return during the "Regular" season and become frequent visitors. As in previous Christmas seasons, locomotive #12 faithfully pulled the trains through the spectacular light displays.

In the Shop, locomotive #190 is undergoing boiler tube and superheater tube replacement. A significant section of track and culverts are also being rebuilt, along with all the usual rolling stock and ride repairs and refurbishments. It's a busy time for Matt Ernst's crew as our "off-season" is now only a few weeks in duration and the park opens on April 3rd.

Visit our website at www.tweetsie.com 🚂