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# The ET TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ET&WNC RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## Enjoy the Fall Weather and Colors of the ET&WNC Area!

Welcome to our Late Fall newsletter! Not because it's late in the season, but because it's fall and we're late! Hope all our members are having a fine season. Here on the coastal plain of Eastern Carolina we're having a real autumn, with cooler temperatures and great fall color; something rather rare this early.

So what's going on with our favorite activities? We had a fine time at Tweetsie's Heritage Weekend back in August. There was a good sized crowd and fine weather. Your editor enjoyed all the visitors that came to our table to buy tickets for coach 5 and working with Matt Bumgarner and Chris Robbins. We passed out quite a few membership applications and if you are one of those who responded – WELCOME! We're glad you could join us and hope to hear from you on what we do and what you'd like to see us do. (That also goes to all members regardless of how long you've been with us.)

My kudos and thanks to Matt and Tim and all the train crew members for a great Tweetsie Heritage Weekend show – including a surprise doubleheader for the Saturday photo train. I know there are some really fine photos out there as we had some really fine photographers out there taking pictures.

As you'll see within this issue, things are happening at the Doe River Gorge that will greatly expand railroad operations and open a new dimension for events there. Tweetsie Railroad is getting ready for its Christmas season after a spooky October with the Ghost Train. And from the Carter Museum at ETSU news of layout work, excursion trips and the upcoming end of an era. Our suggestion is to visit there as often as you can and operate, photograph and drink in all the beautiful modeling work while we still can. "All good things must. . ."

*Curtis Brookshire, Editor* 🚩

## From the workbench of your Society President –

We're making plans already for the 2023 Annual Society Convention. Help us plan with suggestions of things you might like to see or do. There's still time to think about a Spring Hike like we used to do...it lets us get out on the right-of-way and explore places we can't get to in the summer. Drop an email to me or Curtis with any of your thoughts. The ET&WNC is on the minds of lots more folks these days, and that's a good thing for all. Thank y'all for participating in spreading the word about our favorite little narrow gauge railroad!

*CFORD*



Blevins area, October 1995 – Chris Ford



# News From Around the ET&WNC Preservation Community

## George L. Carter Railroad Museum at ETSU with focus on the ET&WNC RR HOn3 layout

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

Lots of work has been going on to improve the museum's exhibits in both of our large galleries. New scenery and structures are being created for the Mountain Empire Model Railroad Club's large HO-Scale layout and the same is taking place on the Knoxville-oriented N-Scale layout. The latter layout was constructed with lots of lichens used for much of the basic hillside foliage and that is being removed and upgraded with fresher looking ground foam "foliage" that is giving the landscape a much brighter appearance.

A Morristown, TN couple, Dick and Ginger Curran, recently donated a large collection of Franklin Mint miniature farm equipment models to the museum and, even though they are not railroad models, this outstanding collection will be on exhibit in one of our galleries through the first of the year.

The Carter Railroad Museum runs several rail excursion trips for the public during the course of the year as public-outreach programs. We just had a trip from ETSU to Bryson City, NC in early October to ride the Smoky Mountain Railroad. We will be planning trips for May, September, and October 2023 and if you would like to be on our mailing list just email me at my address later in this report.

We are also planning for our 6th Annual Big Train Show at the ETSU Mini-Dome for June 2-3, 2023 and are looking for potential vendors. We fill 64,000 sq.ft. of space with vendors and operating layouts. This show is becoming one of the largest in the southeast with 67 vendors from 8 states attending in 2022. Vendor forms are available from the Train Show Coordinator, Roger Teinert, at 423-791-4937.

Our 2023 Carter RR Museum calendar is in print and available. This year's theme is regional railroads and covers both prototype as well as model locomotives and trains.

Turning to the ET&WNC HOn3 layout, we have finished proofing 8 pages of text and photos that will be published in the 2022 edition of the

HOn3 Annual. The section of the layout that is being featured is the recently completed Elk Park, NC section — this will be the 9th consecutive year our "Tweetsie" layout has been featured in this White River Productions annual publication. One small pond in the Blevins section of the layout is currently being created. That will leave only one large section, the engine facilities and shops in Johnson City, to be landscaped and detailed to complete the major sections of the 1,300 sq.ft. layout that we started 11 years ago.

In November we will be celebrating our 15th year on campus in our present location, and the last year that we will occupy this space. Capital planning for the university includes the replacement of the ancient building where we occupy the basement — a building that once served as the university's student center. Demolition of the building is slated to begin in late summer around August 2023, and I have been busy working with the city of Johnson City and ETSU to find us a new, and much larger home. Once that structure is located we will have a lot of planning to do to design the new museum and to pack up and move what we currently have created in the present one. Watch this space as we learn the what, where, and when of our future location. Hear the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come.

The Carter Railroad Museum is open to the public every Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm, and for special groups by appointment at other times. For more information contact Fred Alsop via email at [alsopf@etsu.edu](mailto:alsopf@etsu.edu). Our website can be found at [www.memrrr.org](http://www.memrrr.org). 🚂



A small, newly-built pond just down the track from the Blevins Depot, beckons the local kids to come and play. No fish, but some excellent wading! *Photo courtesy of Fred Alsop.*



Mixed-train action on the 3-span covered deck bridge just outside of Hampton, with number 12 making its way back to Johnson City. The original 19E highway bridge sits just behind the well-worn railroad bridge, just as it did on the prototype. *Photo courtesy of Fred Alsop.*



## Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum

*Matt Bumgarner has this news from Newton, NC –*

The third quarter of this year saw lots of activity at SEN-GASM. Norfolk Southern approved pedestrian crossing across the old Carolina & North-Western mainline that currently bisects our museum campus. Additionally, NS agreed to lease us an out-of-service siding that will allow us another quarter mile of operation for our Alco, motorcar operation, and car storage. Unfortunately, NS declined to lease us a second siding and it was unceremoniously removed by the railroad as what little that remains of the C&N-W continues to erode.

Mechanically, our team dropped the rods on our steam locomotive, Virginia-Carolina #50, and with a little bit of good luck, by the next newsletter we will be able to report on the locomotive being able to freely roll for the first time in 60+ years. Also, with financial aid from Tweetsie Railroad donations from last year's "Heritage Weekend", work continues on restoring the ET&WNC #1 motorcar. The chassis has been reassembled and rolls, with plans to mount the rebuilt engine, transmission, and Hobbs Reversing box very soon.

Speaking of Tweetsie Railroad, a half dozen of our volunteers helped staff the Heritage Weekend. The crowd was one of the largest ever, if not THE largest, in the years we have been attending the event. Words can barely express the gratitude that our museum has to Chris Robbins and the entire staff of Tweetsie Railroad for all of the support and friendship. Truly, a class organization from top to bottom. I realize that I am preaching to the choir that receives this newsletter, but it needs to be said nonetheless. Thank you Chris!

Please visit our website at [www.newtondepot.com](http://www.newtondepot.com). 🚩

## News from the Historical Society Modeling Committee

David Kmecik and family completed the physical move of their business and their printers recently, so the *Western Rails* and the *3DP Train* websites are now again active, and his line of 3D printed ET&WNC equipment is once again available. Visit David's site at <https://3dptrain.com>.

If you can't find what you're looking for there, check out Ben Merritt's site at [merritt.3d.com](http://merritt.3d.com) for bobber cabooses, water tanks and the parlor car Azalea. They have some more projects under development and we'll let you know when they announce their next model.

As Fred Alsop mentioned above, the 2022 HO<sub>n3</sub> Annual should be available by the time you get this. In addition to the latest in the 9-year series on the Carter Museum layout, there should be another article from Johnny Graybeal. Check the White River Productions website for ordering information. As of this writing, you can only find the 2022 Annual by clicking on the "books" then "modeling" tab. Once they publish, it will show on the "annuals" tab. Also available right now is the 2022 On30 Annual. White River Productions products can be found at <https://shop.whiteriverproductions.com>. 🚩

## Linville Depot & Caboose 505 at the Avery County Historical Museum

*Jerry Turbyfill send us this from Newland, NC –*

The Avery County Museum's website is currently under renovation. There are several events around Avery county scheduled for the late fall season. Check any of the Avery County websites for information about those.

The Avery County Museum is open from Tuesday thru Friday from 10 am to 3 pm and Saturdays from 11 am to 3 pm. If you would like more information or to plan a visit, please call 828-733-7111 to confirm the museum's hours, and continue to watch for their new website at [www.averycountymuseum.org](http://www.averycountymuseum.org). 🚩

## Tweetsie Railroad Happenings

*Chris Robbins sends this from Blowing Rock, NC –*



I know a lot of Tweetsie Railroad/ET&WNC enthusiasts were at our recent Railroad Heritage Weekend Event. The weather was great, and our Engineering Staff put on a great show for the attendees. We were also fortunate to raise significant contributions for narrow gauge railroad projects. This event has grown to be popular with all our attendees, not just railroading fans.

As part of our major train track upgrade program, the Engineering shop oversaw the replacement of several hundred more crossies around the rail loop last month. The 2021-2022 replacement of a couple of thousand crossies and last spring's trestle rebuild should put the rail infrastructure in good shape for many years to come.

Tweetsie Railroad just started its annual Ghost Train nighttime event. After a great opening weekend, we shut the park down altogether for the September 30 thru October 2 weekend due to Hurricane Ian. But, on the bright side, the rest of October should make up for the loss. Attendance has been good and the prime "Leaf Weekends" are ahead of us. Then, it will be time to prepare for Tweetsie Christmas. Don't miss this wonderful event if you've never been! Hope to see all our loyal ET&WNC friends here at Tweetsie Railroad this Fall.

Check Tweetsie's website for the most current schedule and information at [www.tweetsie.com](http://www.tweetsie.com). 🚩



The 2022 Tweetsie Railroad Heritage Event train crew takes a well-deserved rest between runs to participate in a photo-op. *Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.*



## Doe River Gorge

Mark Milbourne reports from Hampton, TN –

Fall is here and as I write, the Gorge is ablaze with color! However, as mentioned in the last update, the “Maze of Life” corn maze/fall festival weekends were not offered this year due to the return of guest group business, and indeed 2022 is shaping up to be better than pre-COVID. Even last year, guest group traffic was resuming and began to come into conflict with the corn maze events. However, many groups, large and small, have scheduled their own train rides during the color season. And our summer Saturday lake day events had pretty good traffic as well, so the rails have remained shiny.

The other reason to not offer the maze weekends this year was due to anticipated grading of the Christmas Train route, part of which will pass right through where the corn maze would be. The engineering and permitting work was completed during the summer and quotes are being sought from contractors. However, this process has been slower than hoped and we still don't have a start date. But fall isn't over yet, and hopefully there will be a “dirt is moving” report next time! In the meantime, an issue with the engineering was recently discovered. This sent us back to the drawing board a bit, but

also provided opportunity for an overall improved plan, so in the end is a good thing. But this delay also somewhat hindered the process to secure a contractor. As reported last time, the boiler was removed from the first Porter steam locomotive. Since then it was shipped out in July for the boiler contractor to have as reference in fabricating a replacement. Camp season is always busy, so that was about the extent of summer steam work. And anymore fall stays quite busy too, but there has been time to get the tubes removed from the Crown and work is now in progress on the new ones.

This has been a good year for track and ROW work. We were able to complete the remainder of the crosstie work to be ready for the Crown to operate and get ahead on drainage work and vegetation removal. We are still hoping to take delivery of a tamper set that was offered as a donation in the spring. By the time you read this, most of the leaves will be down and we'll be watching for a stretch of dry weather to blow them off the ROW. And on that note, once the foliage is down, this is a great time to ride as so much more of the river and the gorge can be seen. Motorcar and train charters are almost always available as long as there isn't snow and ice on the rails! Please visit our website for more info about our activities at [www.doerivergorge.com](http://www.doerivergorge.com). 🚂



## 2022 Tweetsie Railroad Heritage Days Photos



2022 double-header photo-ops. Photos below courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.

