

# The ET TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ET&WNC RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## 2019 Convention Celebrates Two Anniversaries – 2020 Convention Plans Underway

The Society recognized two landmark anniversaries at this year's convention: Johnson City's 150th birthday and the centennial of the Linville River's start of service to Boone. Friday's meeting was under the "big top" adjacent to the Carnegie Hotel as we enjoyed a program by Ken Riddle and Joanie Allison (daughter of Brownie Allison), recalling some of the glory days of the narrow gauge and a fine engineer. Patricia Jennings agreed to continue as Society treasurer and was re-elected by acclamation. Long time vice president Jerry Turbyfill decided to retire and the group elected your newsletter editor as vice president. The vice's primary duty is planning and overseeing the convention, and we'll talk about some ideas for next year shortly. Saturday morning we enjoyed a presentation on Johnson City's 150th birthday by Alan Bridwell. He's also the manager of the Johnson's Depot website. We learned how the railroads "made" the city and also why it earned the nickname "Little Chicago" during Prohibition. We also got a chance to see the progress made on the ET&WNC layout at the Carter Museum at ETSU (more on that below), and visit the now-annual train show at the ETSU Mini-Dome. Saturday afternoon, at the Boone Library, Johnny Graybeal presented a history of the railroad's extension to Boone to mark the 100th anniversary of scheduled train service to that mountain town. Tweetsie Railroad provided us with a fun evening of photography and riding behind #12. They also pulled out the coach, which hasn't seen much

running in the last two years, AND gave us a new photo location on the downgrade above the shops, along with the trestle and holdup site. Sunday we tested the tractive effort of the Doe River Gorge's motor car, which just wasn't able to make it with two trailers loaded with society members. After we lightened the load and got past the slick spot, everyone enjoyed a few minutes at the deck truss bridge. Chris conducted a short right of way tour after lunch around the site of the Coal Chute outside Elizabethton.

Next year we plan to meet the weekend of May 29-31, the weekend after Memorial Day. We've confirmed meeting space *inside* the Carnegie on Friday night. Some events we're looking at in 2020: on Friday morning, for early arrivals (and early risers) a bicycle tour of the Tweetsie Trail, and a timetable operating session of the ET&WNC layout at the Carter Museum replicating a typical day on the narrow gauge 100 years ago. Friday evening will be the business meeting, banquet and a presentation of the restoration of Caboose 505. Saturday, another chance to see the layout in operation at the museum, dedication of Caboose 505 at the Avery County museum, a right-of-way exploration and our annual trip on Tweetsie along with dinner. Sunday will allow us to ride in the Gorge and look over Hampton...we'd like to explore the sites depicted in the 1941 video that's been online recently.

Now let's see what's been going on around the ET&WNC community...

Curtis Brookshire, Editor

***Time To Pay Your Dues!***

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# News From Around the ET&WNC Preservation Community

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## George L. Carter Railroad Museum at ETSU

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

The visitation at the G. L. Carter Railroad Museum on the ETSU campus set a new 2-day record during the recent 4th Annual Big Train show on May 31-June 1 with 275 visitors on Friday and a whopping 400 on Saturday! Among them were many members of the ET&WNC RR Historical Society. A lot of their interest was centered on the ET&WNC RR HOn3 layout that continues to add new scenery along the tracks. Most recent work has centered on the little community of Crab Orchard, also called Crab Tree, just west of the town of Roan Mountain. The Bowling Chapel Methodist Church and the three original houses that once stood there (two of the homes are no longer standing) have been recreated from historic photos and are now on a hillside along the tracks with the Crab Tree siding nearby. The scene is a busy one with lots of activity including some tall grass in the lawn being mowed with a mechanical push mower, a workman unloading rhododendron plants on the siding's loading dock for shipment to Johnson City, and a small funeral being conducted at the cemetery on the hillside above the church.

With that section of the layout now completed work has moved westward to add scenery on the hillsides between Crab Tree, the Hopson store and the depot at Blevins. Trees and shrubbery are being “planted” and work is underway on the Big Nance and Little Nance rock cuts to complete the scenery between these two small mountain communities. Plans are to create a pond with cattails and a good stand of willow trees between the Blevins Depot and the Blevins bridge as we move westward.

*White River Productions*, who publish the HOn3 Annual, have confirmed that they want to publish another article in their 2019 edition on our “Tweetsie” layout. We are very excited as this will be the sixth consecutive year that our layout has been featured in this outstanding annual narrow gauge model railroading magazine. The national/international publicity this magazine has provided has given narrow gauge model railroaders a new look at our favorite little railroad and we are seeing more manufacturers beginning to produce ET&WNC rolling stock. The new 3-D printed HOn3 freight cars, excursion cars, and promised passenger cars are wonderful additions to our fleet as they are actual replicas of the prototype “Tweetsie” rolling stock. Now we don't have to kit-bash or try to substitute other railroad cars to make up our consists. Hopefully we can create enough interest to persuade a manufacturer like Blackstone to produce a 10-wheeler that runs without the electrical problems of our beautiful little brass locomotives.

I also want to thank the members of the Society for their continued interest in this layout, now in its 7th year of creation and development, and for your support through your recent donation toward the ongoing work. Please continue to come visit the museum when you are in Johnson City – Saturdays 10 am-3 pm and Thursday evenings when work is being done on exhibits throughout the museum. We have 5,000 sq ft

of model layouts in four different scales and our other layouts are great model railroads as well. Our Mountain Empire Model Railroaders are always happy to show visitors all our layouts and answer any modeling questions they may have.

Visit our website: [www.memrr.org](http://www.memrr.org) 🚩



A view of the houses and the Bowling Methodist Church in the little village of Crab Tree. This photo is from inside the layout. Dave Doughy works on the scene while standing in the spot where visitors will view this section of the layout.



The Crab Tree site includes this small scene of a worker unloading potted rhododendron plants from a truck onto the siding dock for shipment to Johnson City. These photos courtesy of Fred Alsop.

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

*Jerry Turbyfill sends the latest from Newland, NC –*

News from the 505 Caboose: the outside is now completed and the new tin roof is on. I will be working on scraping off peeling paint, repainting the inside and putting down oak flooring. Some sub-flooring had to be replaced because of leaking years ago around the stove pipe, but it has now been fixed. The new oak flooring is here and I will be putting it in as time permits. It takes longer than you would think because so many things have to be hand crafted. The museum's new website is: [www.averycountyhistoricalmuseum.com](http://www.averycountyhistoricalmuseum.com) 🚩

## Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum

Matt Bumgarner has this news from Newton, NC –

The last couple of months has brought great news for the SE Narrow Gauge & Short Line Museum. During Amtrak's latest de-accession of its "Heritage" cars, the museum was able to acquire a nearly pristine dining car. We had put in several bids for the four Southern Railway diners, but were unfortunately outbid by larger entities with deeper pockets. However, we did manage to nab our top backup – a stainless steel Budd Diner built for the California Zephyr. The car is in outstanding condition and was built in 1948 for one of the Burlington's most famous trains. Once the car arrives in the late July-August time frame it will be one of the very few operational dining cars in the state (with GSMRR owning the other).

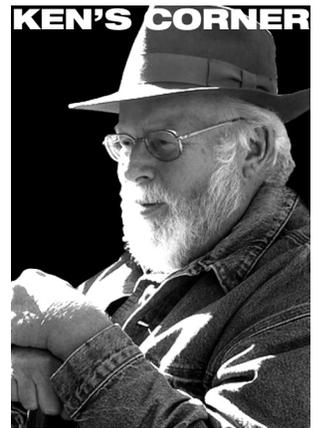
Now, of course, railfans joke among ourselves about how ornery and anal we can be to each other, and yes, we have heard some early comments about the dining car being neither narrow gauge, nor short line, nor local, and essentially not fitting our mission. That being said, it is our belief that 80% of the paying public really pays little attention to those three attributes in a vacuum, and the exception to our collection guidelines is fully justified by the revenue opportunity generated by the desire of the general public wanting to experience a "Dinner on the Diner." Also, there is some local historical significance to the Burlington heritage of the car. Our "hometown" narrow gauge, the Carolina & North-Western had the regional nickname of the "Can't & Never Will." According to the Lenoir newspaper, this nickname was born out of a conversation between the "waggishly inclined." As the tale goes, two fellows were in the small yard in Lenoir, and upon spying a boxcar, one inquired what the initials "CB&Q" stood for. His quick-witted companion promptly replied "Chester, By-George, and Quit!" and while they were at it, decided that the C&N-W's initials were symbolic of the tired "Can't & Never Will" sentiment of expanding the railroad into Tennessee that had been championed by the company for more than a decade. So, all in all, we think that the car will be a fine addition to our museum and will be an attraction opportunity that very few museums have these days, and we are grateful for your continued support in our endeavors.

Visit us at: [www.newtondepot.com](http://www.newtondepot.com) 🚩

## News from the Historical Society Modeling Committee

Carolina Craftsman Kits has produced in HO scale the Cranberry General Store, the company store that was adjacent to the Cranberry Depot. The first run sold out in days, but they have done another run of the kit. Cost is \$124.00. Visit [carolinacraftsmankits.com](http://carolinacraftsmankits.com).

Johnny Graybeal has all four Mt. Blue kits. The two boxcar kits and the 37' flat/gondola wood kit (2 cars per kit) are \$35 plus \$3 shipping. The 33' flat/gondola wood kit (1 car per kit) is \$25 plus shipping. HO scale ET&WNC freight decals are \$10 plus \$2 shipping. O scale decals are temporarily out of stock. G Scale freight decals are in stock, same price as HO decals. Reach Johnny at: [johnnyg@boone.net](mailto:johnnyg@boone.net) 🚩



It was great to see everyone at the convention this year. I was so proud to see Joanie Allison Deardon there and listen to her stories.

I told some of you that Joanie has spent more time on that narrow gauge train than anybody left alive in the world. When the school was quarantined when she was a little girl she went to work with her daddy every day for months. Her dad was Brownie Allison, you must remember, and he held a regular job on the yard plus the three times a week to Cranberry on the narrow gauge those days. Brownie was so good to me as long as he lived.

Her uncle was Walter Allison, and her grandpa was Francis "Cap" Allison who was the superintendent for many years. Cap probably had more to do with the long term things that people like to study on the little railroad than anybody except maybe Mr. Hobbs.

That's her and her dog Ned in the Jack Alexander movies, too!

We sure are proud she came over to be with us and I sure hope she will come back every year!

Did y'all know the narrow gauge had a motto? Well, they did. Like "Southern Serves the South" or "Main Line of Mid-America"?

The narrow gauge motto was "We Haul the Honey From the Bees, the Milk from the Cows, and the Farmers From the Farms."

I always thought that was pretty appropriate.

Ken Riddle 🚩



Cody Cagle—engineer at the Doe River Gorge, Joanie Allison—daughter of long-time ET&WNC engineer Brownie Allison, and Jesse Hoyle—engineer at Tweetsie Railroad, pause for a few minutes after our Saturday evening train ride. After many years of riding on #12 as a child with her dad, Joanie finally got to blow the whistle! Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.

## Doe River Gorge

Mark Millbourne reports from Hampton, TN –

Doe River Gorge enjoyed hosting the ET&WNC RR HS convention attendees again on June 2nd for the annual ride/hike up the gorge. This year we confirmed that the upper gorge is a little steeper than the lower gorge when the big motorcar couldn't quite pull two trailers of attendees, while previously we've done it a number of times below Pardee Point. Adventure Quest camps have been in full swing as well since June 2

with the motorcars taking campers to activities in the gorge most weekdays. Parents are also offered a train ride while dropping their campers off on Sundays. And many Saturdays (thru early-September) we have our Day Quest program where one can attend for the day to enjoy all the lake activities and several others including train rides. We always try to share some basic ET&WNC RR history with those that ride the Day Quest trains. See details at *Day Quest Summer Saturdays* on our website. Visit our website at: [www.doerivergorge.com](http://www.doerivergorge.com) ■

## Tweetsie Railroad Happenings

Chris Robbins sends us this from Blowing Rock, NC –



The park stays open until 9 pm on Saturday nights throughout July. Everyone can enjoy the park as the sun sets. Riders in the Sky visit on August 17-18. Railroad Heritage Weekend is August 24-25. Chris Robbins and the crew are still planning exactly what they want to do

that weekend, but they usually pull out all the stops for rail fans as they have run both locomotives plus the coach in the past. Here's also an opportunity for Society members to join with the Alexander Chapter of the NRHS to help tell the history of the ET&WNC to park visitors. The park's biggest attraction, the Ghost Train, begins on September 20th and runs Friday and Saturday nights through October.

Visit the website: <https://tweetsie.com> ■

# Photos from the 2019 Historical Society Convention



Number 12 on the trestle at Tweetsie Railroad during the Saturday evening photo runby. Photo courtesy of Benjamin Burton.



Engineer Jesse Hoyle and Fireman Jason Hollifield before our annual ride at Tweetsie. Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.



Some of Jerry Turbyfill's beautiful carpentry work is showcased in the wooden cab of the new steam engine slated to begin running at the Doe River Gorge Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.

2019 Group Photo in front of "the bandit shack" at Tweetsie on Saturday evening. Photo courtesy of Benjamin Burton.

