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The ET TIMES

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Thanks For A Successful 33rd Annual Convention! Tweetsie Railroad Heritage Weekend Coming Soon!

We had to dodge a few raindrops as well as bundle up in 49 degree temps at Tweetsie during our 33rd Annual Convention. But the crew at Tweetsie gave us a fine show, as the cold moist air provided for billowing steam exhaust. We also got to ride either in or behind coach #5. As the cool air circulated through the open coaches, your editor reminisced about when coach #5 still had a potbellied stove inside.

Change was also in the air as we paid our last visits to the Carter Museum's venue at ETSU.

Doe River Gorge Director Terry Maughon, our guest speaker, told us of challenges and a few miracles that enabled the Christian Camp to get underway, put the track in a usable condition to run over, and how the DRG acquired what will be their Christmas Train.

Chris Jessee opened a new dimension to "modeling" the ET&WNC by using computer-based graphics to replicate the Cranberry Store in 3D.

Mark Milbourne and the crew at the Doe River Gorge made everyone welcome on Sunday for a lunch and ride.

Next up is Heritage Weekend at Tweetsie on August 26th and 27th. We hope some more members and prospective members will be there. If you can come, please join us and help spread the word. Chris Robbins and his staff are big supporters of us and the history of both the ET&WNC and the Tweetsie RR park, (which is now 66 years old). I'm sure we'll be in for a fine weekend. We're also looking ahead already for 2024. We'll talk more about that in an upcoming issue.

Curtis Brookshire, Editor 🍷



Time To Pay Your Dues!

News From Around the ET&WNC Preservation Community

George L. Carter Railroad Museum (on the move) with focus on the HO_n3 ET&WNC RR layout

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

The G. L. Carter Railroad Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN participated in three major events at the end of May and into June. Our members were proud to co-host the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad Historical Society as part of their Annual Convention here in Johnson City over Memorial Day weekend. The railroad museum hosted Society members for train operations on our nationally-known HO_n3 “Tweetsie” layout on Friday and Saturday of the Convention. We had a great time scheduling passenger and freight trains between the layout’s termini at Cranberry Iron & Coal Co, Cranberry, NC and Johnson City, TN. The runs made their way through mountain scenery of the Doe River Gorge and through the towns of Roan Mountain, Shell Creek, and Elk Park on the 1,300 sq ft narrow gauge layout. Lots of pictures and videos were made because these were the last runs by Society members on this layout in its present location, a spot where these little locomotives have been hauling their consists for more than 11 years. More on that later in this column.

Two days after the Historical Society departed Johnson City, the members of the Carter RR Museum were busy gathering tables from around the Tri-Cities area for the 7th Annual Big Train Show sponsored by the railroad museum. It took more than 375 tables to meet the needs of more than 70 vendors and 6 model train layouts for this year’s show which was the largest in every way that we have had to date. Our model train display layouts varied from Z-Scale to a 10,000 sq ft HO-Scale layout operated by Sippin-N-Switchin, plus one operated by live steam. Attendance at the show was great and the vendors were satisfied with their sales. We are already making plans for next year’s event.

We closed the George L. Carter Railroad Museum on Saturday, June 3, the day the Big Train Show ended after 15 years of serving the public on the

ETSU campus. Our members, the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders and the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS, have been working almost daily since June 8th packing up all the items that are not nailed or cemented down that have accumulated over a decade and a half at the museum. The very old university building we occupy is slated for demolition later this fall to make way for a new modern classroom building and all occupants have to vacate the premises by September 1, 2023. We are working with the university administration and the city of Johnson City, along with a possible landlord of a suitable off-campus building, to find us a new larger home.

As the deadline clock continues to tick down we are packing boxes by the score and storing them temporarily in some of the vacated rooms down the hall in this building. The layouts will be the last items to be readied for moving. All the items, vehicles, buildings, etc. that are not fastened to them are being removed and packed. When all of this is accomplished we will begin the task of disassembling the layouts into sections that can be taken out of the building either through the corridors and doorways, or through openings cut into the exterior walls. Hopefully, by the time this happens we will have a lease agreement for a new home for the museum and we can move the layouts directly into it. Many of the other items may have to be stored until the layouts are in place before we can begin that phase of unpacking.

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The 2023 Annual Big Train Show, sponsored by the G.L.Carter Railroad Museum June 2-3 in the ETSU Mini-Dome. The foreground shows only part of the background over 70 vendors, plus additional modular layouts, help fill up the 64,000 sq ft arena space. *Photo courtesy of Fred Alsop.*

A new home for the museum off campus in a non-university owned building means we will be entering a new era of operation for the Carter Railroad Museum. For the first time we will be renting space from a landlord. This means instead of being open to the public for 5 hours one day a week (as has been our schedule from our inception on the ETSU campus), we will be open 5 days/week and will have to monetize the museum with admission charges. We will have overhead, including salaried positions (new for us as well), and will be conducting several fund-raisers annually in addition to applying for grants to support the museum. We will continue to host the Annual Big Train Show and run several public rail excursions each year. So, things will soon be changing drastically for us as we become an incorporated 501(c)(3) non-profit museum. Wish us luck!

We have a story to tell that links the origins of Johnson City and that of ETSU with the railroad history of the region and we intend to tell it well. We appreciate the ET&WNC RR Historical Society's long affiliation with the George L. Carter Railroad Museum and we look forward to serving you and the public for many years to come.

As we solidify our future with a new site for the museum we will keep you all informed and look forward to your future visits in 2024. I am most optimistic that all of this will get worked out and the "new" Carter Railroad Museum will be bigger and better than ever. Come see us!

For more information contact Fred Alsop at 615-604-8759 or email at alsopf@etsu.edu. Our website and current info can be found at memrrr.org.



of a 10,000 sq ft modular layout, while in the

News from the Historical Society Modeling Committee

On the 3D printing front, David Kmecik at 3dptrain.com, has re-issued several of the ET&WNC kits, most recently cabooses 505 and 506, and an updated caboose 503. You can find freight cars, locomotive details, trucks and Laconia passenger car kits available there also.

Ben Merritt at merritt3d.com, now has whistle boards and mileposts added to his line that includes water tanks, motor car #1 and the Azalea.

For NMRA members, look for an upcoming article featuring Lee Bishop's On30 layout. We've been recently looking at some photos of his layout posted on the ETWNC iO online group.

Speaking of O scale, White River is taking reservations for the upcoming On3 annual at a discount price of \$30.00 through July 31, 2023, then it will be \$34.95.

Historical Society Magazine - Every Time With No Complaint

Johnny Graybeal sends us this update –

Work is progressing on a new issue. Rae Augenstein stepped forward at the Historical Society Convention in late May and volunteered to take over layout of the magazine. The team is working on having a double issue out before the end of the year, hopefully sooner. Thank you for your patience as the magazine moves beyond the death of Matt Bumgarner. Several stories are in the works, so in time we will get back on schedule.

Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum

Johnny Graybeal shares this news from Newton, NC –

The museum is working to move on after the sudden death of Matt Bumgarner. The Alexander Chapter has been discussing what priority to give to certain projects. A couple of those include getting truss rods installed under boxcar 434 to get the car closer to completely finished. Others are working on ET&WNC Motor Car #1 to prepare it for eventual display. Saturday work sessions will be starting back up, so any Society Members in the Hickory/Newton NC area are welcome to join in the restoration work. There is an Alexander Chapter NRHS group on Facebook that you can ask to join that will keep you informed of work days. Please visit our website at newtondepot.com.

Linville Depot & Caboose 505 at the Avery County Historical Museum

Jerry Turbyfill sends us this from Newland, NC –

Jerry Turbyfill let us know that there's been some maintenance work done on the Linville Depot. The rear platform received some new wood to renew some that had begun to deteriorate. Interesting to remember the building has been at Newland for almost 15 years now, with original framework dating back over 100 years.

The Avery County Historical Museum's website has been renovated. The Museum is open Tuesday through 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. Check out their new website at averycountymuseum.org.



Number 12 under steam followed by coach 5 during the Historical Society's 2023 Annual Convention visit hosted by Tweetsie Railroad. Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.

Doe River Gorge

Mark Milbourne reports from Hampton, TN –

Camp season is in full swing and the railroad is again busy... weekdays carrying campers to activities and Saturdays taking guests on scenic trips during our Day Quest program. This year again, one Saturday is a company picnic for Nuclear Fuel Services with a very large crowd, about 700, expected. Also, as usual, parents are offered a ride on Sunday afternoons after they check-in their campers.

Track maintenance continues apace, thanks to the full-time (for the summer) crew of volunteer Rick Paffrath and “RR interns” Ethan Freeman and Evan Black. So far they’ve replaced about 80 crossties, in between handling the daily motorcar operations for campers. Ethan was also here last summer and regularly in the fall and spring as well and has filmed much of the work for his YouTube channel “190 Tweetsie”, which has grown to over 100,000 subscribers! So you may want to check out his channel. Also our “original RR volunteer” Phil Raynes was recently here to spend a few days with the crew and we noted that it was 25 years ago that he and I began the original track restoration efforts, installing a few ties just beyond the first tunnel.

We were of course happy to see many of you at the convention on May 28, in spite of the rain. We were grateful for the roofed coaches and a hardy 10 or so even braved the unsheltered motorcar ride to the bridge. During lunch that day I shared that grading work for the new Christmas Train loop was imminent and indeed it has now begun. Several large pieces of equipment are now on site and preliminary work has begun on silt fences and drainage pipe. We are still grappling with details and cost issues on the locomotive shop plan, but that process is also moving forward.

We’ve known since the early planning of the Christmas Train project that it would require additional staff. So we’ve been very pleased to have David Poteat join us in early April. David brings many years of general mechanical experience as well as RR and steam-specific experience from his time on the New Georgia RR which included steam operations and restoration of A&WP 290. The timing of his arrival has been great as well, making him available to help work through the various current logistics and details on construction. He has also already been to Minnesota to inspect progress on the new boiler for the first Porter, which should be ready by early fall. And he is also starting to go through the chassis and running gear, so it will be ready for the new boiler when it arrives. David also dove in, almost on day one, to oversee the repair of our diesel loco, which was suddenly out of service with coolant in the oil, and right on the cusp of springtime operations for guest groups and school field trips. The engine had to be pulled and sent out to the local Caterpillar shop. Thankfully there was no crank/bearing damage. The culprit was a leaking water pump seal, and it also received new head and cylinder sleeve gaskets. And it was back in time to handle the peak weeks of traffic (and the ET&WNC convention). In the meantime we made due with motorcar rides for the preliminary groups. The little “deezul” has given us 19 years of quite reliable service and with the engine work, should now have many more to give.

If you didn’t make it to the convention, there are still opportunities to see the Gorge on many Saturdays through the end of August, as our Day Quest program continues. And by the time you read this, the rhododendron along the track should be in full bloom. Hope everyone has a great summer and maybe we’ll even see track being laid by this fall! Please visit our website for more info about our activities at doerivergorge.com. 🚂

Tweetsie Railroad Happenings

Chris Robbins sends this from Blowing Rock, NC –



Tweetsie Railroad’s 2023 season is rolling along, with three all-new rides debuting this past April: In Country Fair, replacing our previous free fall ride, is the Buckaroo Drop – taller than the previous ride...and it rotates too! The “Barrels of Fun” spinning figure-eight coaster has proven to be popular with the whole family. And on Miners Mountain the Mini-Swing is great for young children.

On the railroad side, the first of five excursion cars returned to service this spring after a complete overhaul. The other four will follow over the next several months, joined by an all-new excursion car being constructed from scratch. Several hundred more crossties will be replaced in the 2023-24 “slow” season, and the final details of the Trestle refurbishment project will also be completed. Both steam locomotives have been in service this spring and summer and are running well, with the #12 taking lead duty during the recent Thomas The Tank Engine event.

Railroad Heritage Weekend is August 26th

and 27th. A schedule will be announced in the coming weeks on our web site. Our condolences to the family of Matt Bumgarner, who was always an eager contributor to this event and will be sorely missed this year. Check Tweetsie’s website for the most current schedule and more information at tweetsie.com. 🚂



Number 12 makes some nice cool-weather steam and smoke on this photo runby during the Historical Society’s 2023 Annual Convention visit hosted by Tweetsie Railroad. Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.



ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society

PO Box 70697 • ETSU • Johnson City, TN 37614

2023-2024 Membership/Dues Form

Your contact information:

Name _____

Address _____

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Thank you for paying your dues in a timely manner! This helps with our record keeping, lowers our costs, and keeps you from missing important Society publications.

Please note that the current "Dues Year" runs from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

Please check your current Membership Card or contact the Treasurer if there is any question about your membership status or if you have a change of home or email address.

The Society thanks you for helping to keep our operating costs low!

If you would like to receive your newsletters and notices via email, please check here...

Please Check Which Year(s) This Payment Represents -	
2023 - 2024 (current year runs from July 1, 2023 thru June 30, 2024)	
2024 - 2025	
2025 - 2026	
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Payment Enclosed For The Following -	Amount
Society Membership Dues - \$30.00 per year	
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Combine Car #15 Donation	
G. L. Carter Museum ET&WNC Layout Donation	
Motorcar #1 Donation	
Linville Depot Maintenance Donation	
Doe River Gorge Railroad Donation	

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If you have any questions please contact Treasurer Patricia Jennings at pjdr2006@yahoo.com.