

## CLUB OFFICERS

**President:**  
Fred Alsop

**Vice-President:**  
John Carter

**Secretary:**  
Art Daniels

**Treasurer:**  
Duane Swank

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Ted Bleck-Doran

**Webmaster:**  
John Edwards

## LOCATION

ETSU Campus, George L. Carter Museum

## HOURS

Business Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Meetings start at 7:00 PM at ETSU Campus, Brown Hall Science Bldg, Room 312, Johnson City, TN.

- A social gathering is held prior to the business meeting at *EL TORITO* on State of Franklin near ETSU in the Kroger Plaza starting at 5:45 PM. Visitors and those interested in joining MEMRR are invited to attend.

- Work nights are held weekly on Thursday evenings starting at 4:30 PM and lasting until ???

- Open viewing and operating layout is available every Saturday from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM.

## THE BANKUS SPECIAL



The Bankus Layout is the George L. Carter Railroad Museum's N-Gauge layout. While property of the university MEMRR Club members have maintained and improved the appearance and running reliability of the display. The following are several recent photos showing the improvements the N-Scale contingent have made. Photos are courtesy of Geoff Stunkard.

The layout depicts the city of Knoxville with many recognizable structures. The rural sections attempt to depict the mountains of East Tennessee. There's a rugged helix climb inside the mountain. Two traction systems grace the display. The layout also includes a working turntable and roundhouse (sorry you HO'ers the N-Scalers beat you with the engine facilities... 8^)).

Improvements include a sound system, new wiring and the relating of track in problem areas. Next time you are at a Saturday open house or a Thursday work night, ask someone for a guided tour.



**MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB  
MONTHLY MEETING  
MINUTES  
August 18, 2009**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Fred Alsop. 24 members were present.

**Officers' Reports:**

**Secretary's Report:** Minutes from the July meeting were accepted as printed in August Edition of *The Signal Bridge*. Secretary Art Daniels was absent.

**Newsletter Editor's Report:** Highlights of the 10 page August 2009 Issue were given by Fred Alsop. Newsletter Editor Ted Bleck-Doran was absent.

**Treasurer's Report:** Duane Swank reported as follows: Balance Forward = \$1,821.01

Income .....	=	204.50
Expenses.....	=	149.09
Month Ending Bal.=		1,876.42
Available Balance =		1,421.10

**Webmaster's Report:** John Edward's emailed report was that the Website is up and functional. Webmaster John Edwards was absent.

**Vice President's Report:** John Carter reported he has a DVD program for September and asked for suggestions for programs and/or volunteers for programs for the coming months.

**President's Report:** Fred Alsop reported on the University's media release on the installation of the roundhouse; presented a copy of Museum "Operating Instructions" an inclusive "How-To" guide for Saturday volunteers at the museum; and announced that noted author of railroad books on the L&N, Ron Flanary, has agreed to make some of his L&N models and railroad memorabilia available for display in the Carter Railroad Museum.

**Old Business:**

- President Alsop reported on a signed Memorandum of Understanding between the East Tennessee Chapter National Railway Historical Society, the MEMRR, and the George L. Carter Railroad Museum detailing the Club and Museum's selling of consigned pairs of photos of Clinchfield Railroad F7 locos and consists as a fund-raiser for all 3 organizations. The East Tenn. Chapter will receive \$6.25/print (\$12.50/pair) from the Club/RR Museum sales. Records and revenues of all monthly sales will be given to ETSU's Advancement Office who will extract state sales tax, send the agreed upon amount to the East Tenn. Chapt. and deposit the balance into an account set up for us. President Alsop and ETSU will advertise the sale of the prints as a fund-raiser for the RR Museum through the media and university publications. A motion was passed to sell the prints at \$20/single; \$30 pair. The treasurer took member orders for 12 pairs of prints. Checks are to be made out to "ETSU".
- President Alsop proposed a monthly meeting of 30-45 minutes of club officers and operating group coordinators to plan, discuss, and coordinate projects underway and/or proposed. Meetings would take place at 6:00 PM on a Thursday (club work night) in a meeting room one floor above

the RR Museum. Motion was passed approving these meetings to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. First meeting will be Sept. 10.

- President Alsop reported sending letters notifying Tom McKee and ETSU President Paul Stanton, Jr. of their honorary 1-year memberships in the MEMRR as voted by members attending the July '09 meeting. Fred read a gracious letter of acceptance from President Stanton.

**New Business:**

- A motion was passed to limit "engineer's" operating time on Saturdays to 1-hour if others are waiting and to give first priority to run locomotives to those members who have volunteered for that day. This pertains to the club HO layout only. Allan Morton volunteered to construct a "time table" board that would allow "engineers" to sign into time slots to track time.
- A motion was passed to inventory and offer for sale the club's North Coast (NCE) DCC system and throttles.
- President Alsop requested a "Spring Cleaning" to remove any and all unnecessary boxes, supplies, materials, junk, etc., etc., from beneath the club HO layout. The wiring work crews have difficulty doing their rewiring tasks with the addition of constantly moving and replacing all the treasures stored under our modules. Please remove those personal items that are not necessary for your use on a regular basis. This stored "stuff" detracts from the public's appreciation of the excellent modeling that has taken place on the topside of the layout as they view it. Some storage space is available in the cabinets in 108 for members. A future project might involve putting "skirts" on the inside of the layout to hide anything stored beneath it.
- A motion was passed to offer the two unfinished HO modules constructed by a former member and now "stored" beneath the HO staging yard for sale. A minimum "donation" price will be placed on them and they will be placed in the hallway on Saturdays until sold.
- Hobie Hyder reported that it appeared that a club trip to Cass Scenic Railroad might be favored over one to Chattanooga. The club asked for more detailed information on costs and Hobie promised to report his finding at a later date.

**Layout Reports:**

No layout reports were asked for due to time constraints. Updated reports will be made in Sept.

**Volunteers for Saturday Museum Operating Sessions:** Volunteers were taken for Aug. 22, Aug. 29, Sept. 5, and Sept. 12.

**Announcements:**

- Bob Barrett sent word that Digitrax representatives will be at HobbyTown USA in Johnson City on Sunday, August 23, and noon. Light refreshments will be served. Members are invited. 10 indicated they would attend.
- Trainshows: Flatrock, NC, Oct 10; Bluefield, WVA, Nov 14. Details to follow.

**Program:** Duane Swank presented a home video program of some of his and Harriet's visit to a large, new model railroad museum [ENTERTRAINMENT JUNCTION]in West Chester, Ohio,

that features G-Scale locos, rolling stock, and scenery. Much of this particular video focused on the "behind-the-scenes" aspect via a guided tour.



### The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab;

Our recent publicity in area newspapers regarding the installation of the roundhouse on the HO layout has resulted in noticeably increased attendance to the Carter Railroad Museum since the article appeared in print. We continue to receive strong support from the president of ETSU, Paul E. Stanton, Jr., in the form of a thank you letter to the MEMRR for his honorary membership into the club

and in his recent State of the University Address during the annual fall faculty convocation. In his speech to the university faculty as he was recognizing some of the people and their accomplishments that have made the university the outstanding institution of higher learning it is today and under a heading of, "Ours is a story of creativity and vision", he said, "...to create a museum that pays tribute to model railroading while recognizing the founder of ETSU, George L. Carter;.....". I read his letter of thanks to those club members in attendance at the August meeting, but I want to include it here for those of you who were not able to share it there.

August 12, 2009

Dr. Fred J. Alsop, III, President, MEMRR  
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum  
Campus Box 70703

Dear Fred:

*Thank you so very much for the honor of receiving membership in the Mountain Empire Model Railroad Club. To be a member, receive the Signal Bridge Newsletter and access to the George L. Carter Railroad Museum when the current membership total is only around eighty-five model railroad hobbyists, is a true privilege and compliment. I am humbled by it and extremely appreciative. Please express my appreciation and/or this letter to the other MEMRR members.*

*The work you and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders are doing is most impressive and of the highest professional order. We at ETSU and we in this region of ours are most appreciative and most impressed.*

Sincerely,

Paul E. Stanton, Jr.  
President

We have been working with the university on the sale of the 2 **Clinchfield Railroad prints** as a fund-raiser for our club, the museum and the East Tennessee Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society. Prints are available to club members for \$20 single/\$30 pair with tax included. Sales to the public at the museum will be the same plus tax rounded to \$22 single/\$33 pair. I am working with the university to advertise the sale of these prints through several local, regional and national university

Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Fred Alsop for Secretary Arthur Daniels.

publications. I will provide additional details at the September meeting.

Hobie Hyder, Allan Morton, and I have been working on the **Carter Railroad Museum logo contest** in conjunction with the ETSU Office of Advancement and hope to have it ready to go by the time you read this. We are working out details of contest rules, entry fees, prizes and the possibility of a public showing of the entries. Details of this contest will be discussed at the September meeting.

#### Club News:

At the August meeting it was decided that the club officers and the coordinators of the new club/museum operating groups would have brief monthly meetings to further organize each group's efforts and projects. We will meet at 6:00 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday night of the month in a meeting room above the museum. The meetings will last no more than 45 minutes. Those involved should plan to be present for their regular museum work night and we will adjourn to the meeting room from the museum. First scheduled meeting is September 10<sup>th</sup>. Groups and group projects will be posted on the large white board in workroom #108 labeled "research".

The club voted to sell the NCE DCC equipment. It has been inventoried, priced and contact has been made with the model train club in Appalachia that is using a NCE system. They will discuss the MEMRR equipment at their September 20<sup>th</sup> club meeting and inform us of their interest and intent with regards to making an offer to purchase it.

At the August meeting it was decided to create an "engineer's running time" board to organize the Saturday operations on the HO layout only. Any member wishing to run equipment will be asked to sign up for a slot of 1-hour intervals with the day's volunteers having first preference and being allow to operate as long as they wish. Operations are limited to 4 trains on the mainlines per hour with other members running on chosen timeslots on a first-come/first-served basis. Hopefully, this will relieve some of the bottlenecks we have experienced of late and will allow everyone who wished to do so to have a fair and equal opportunity to run some trains. Allan Morton volunteered to construct the magnetic board.

We agreed to clean out all unnecessary materials stored beneath the HO layout in order to facilitate the wiring crew's efforts and to make it look more presentable to the viewing public. Many module owners responded by doing just that and we need for others who may just now be reading that request to do likewise. Some, limited, temporary storage space may be available across the hall in 108 in some of the cabinets and on some of the shelving.

#### Digitrax:

On Sunday, August 23, several club members met at HobbyTownUSA, where Bob Barrett was hosting the regional Digitrax representative. We discussed our Digitrax operating system and Digitrax's new duplex system followed by the representative accompanying us to the museum to advise up on our HO layouts and to allow us to use some of the company's

newest equipment. There are several outcomes of this meeting to report to the membership. 1) Bob Barrett will become a Digitrax dealer which will allow the club and its many members to purchase their DCC equipment here in Johnson City. 2) the club and the museum will be purchasing some additional Digitrax items for the HO club layout and the "Rabetoy" HO layout. 3) All club members can go together to place a single order for Digitrax DCC "stuff" and this initial order will receive a 30%, one-time-only, discount from Digitrax. So, fellow members make a list of what you want and coordinate it with the club officers and we will take advantage of this big discount.

**Carter RR Museum:** On 23 August, Duane Swank, John Carter and I met Bob Barrett at his storage bin and transported the components to assemble 4, glass-fronted metal display cabinets that Bob has donated to the museum. They will be installed in the room with the "Rabetoy" HO layout and will be used to display railroad memorabilia and model railroading items. We wish to express our gratitude to Bob for his generous and important gift that will be an important component of that portion of the railroad museum.

## Communications Regarding Sale of the NCE System

I had several telephone conversations with week concerning the NCE DCC equipment that the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders at the George L. Carter Railroad Museum on the campus of ETSU have for sale. I know your Appalachian model railroad club uses that system and our club no longer does as we switched to Digitrax several years ago. The club wishes to sell our NCE system which got little use as the club modules historically were set up only for a couple of weekends out of the year prior to 2005 when space became available to us that allowed us to have a more permanent home. We switched to Digitrax in 2007 for a combination of reasons leaving us with the NCE equipment unused and boxed. Several of the throttles were never used and are new-in-the-box (listed as "new" on the attached inventory sheet), and the remainder of the equipment is "like new".

The MEMRR would like to sell our NCE inventory as a bundle and not break it up into individual components. We have almost \$2,000 worth of equipment at current listed values/replacement costs and will be willing to consider a fair offer from your club that would carry a reasonable discount. So, after you and your club members have had the opportunity to discuss the matter at your upcoming September meeting please let us know the extent of your interest and I will communicate that to our membership. Of course, our NCE inventory will be available for your inspection as part of the deal. Just let me know when it will be convenient for you to make a trip down and I can either show you what we have to offer or make it possible for another club officer to do so. The equipment is stored in the Carter RR Museum on the ETSU campus. I look forward to hearing from you.

Fred Alsop  
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders  
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU

Rewiring efforts continue on the HO layout and on the Bankus N-Scale layout along with continued track improvement on the latter. The G-Scale division is poised to replace the worn track and turnouts on the McKee layout. The "Kid's" room continues to progress with the installation of the G-Scale track around the ceiling in its final stages. Work will soon begin on the "kid's caboose" which will move us a long way towards making that room operational. Scenery work has begun on the Cope portable layout.

Lots of things are happening at the Carter Railroad Museum through the skills and dedicated efforts of the members of the MEMRR. Lots of things still need to be done and we need your help. Join one or more of the Working Groups and lend a hand. See you at the museum. Hear the whistle blowing????

Fred Alsop  
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders  
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum ETSU



## Hobbytown USA Sponsors a Model Contest

Please pass on to the membership, Hobbytown USA will hold its train show again on October 18th in the parking lot. Everyone is welcome to attend, set up a display table and trade their train items.

I am considering having a train show contest with categories like:

- 1.) Custom weathered rolling stock
- 2.) Custom painted engines
- 3.) Scale Building/Diorama for any scale

I would encourage everyone to put in an entry. There would be prizes

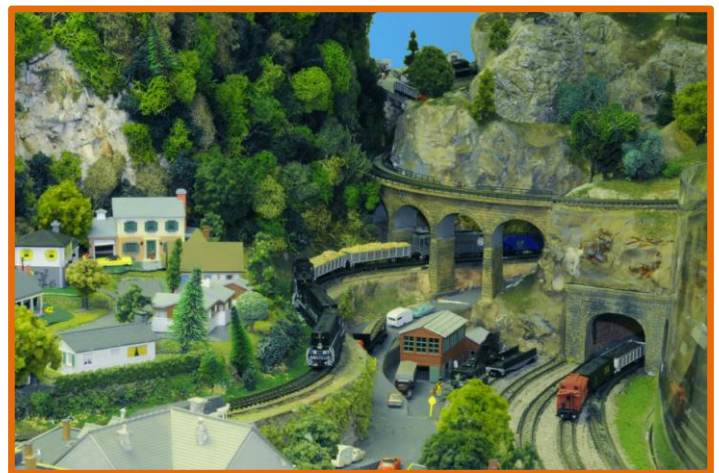
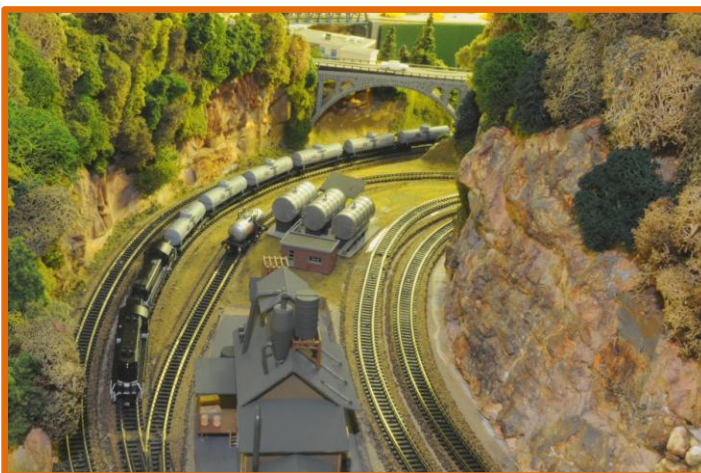
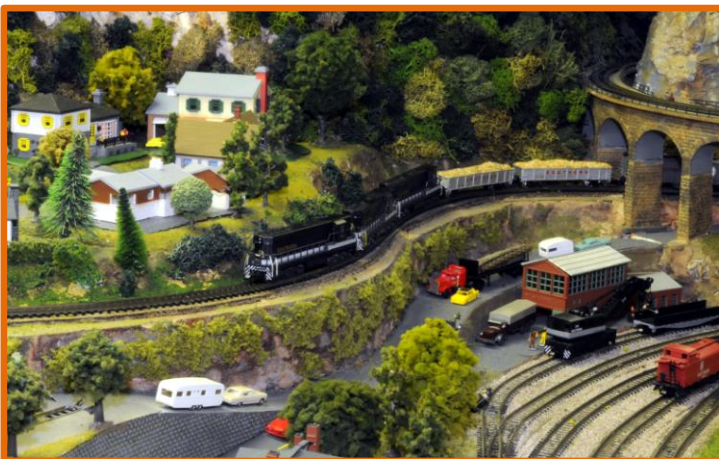
awarded for each category winner as well as a best of show (maybe a \$50.00 certificate). Entry fee would be like \$3.00 per entry.  
Put it on your calendars!!!  
Bob Barrett



## Upcoming Club/Museum Purchase of Digitrax Equipment

The Digitrax rep will allow us a one-time-only purchase of their equipment through Bob Barrett's local *HobbyTownUSA* with a **30% discount**. The club and the Carter RR Museum is currently making up and order. Several of the MEMRR members are also making up orders to be put with this order. We will combine everything into one single order as a group. Any member wishing to take advantage of this offer needs to contact Duane Swank, club treasurer, ASAP with a list of what they want to purchase and an **80% down-payment**. We will be discussing this offer and the club order at the September meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> of September. We will be placing the order on the following Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Anyone with questions about this offer should contact Duane, Fred, John Carter or John Edwards.

## The Bankus Layout Continued...



COME JOIN THE FUN – WORK NIGHTS ARE THURSDAYS 4:30 UNTIL???  
OPEN HOUSES FOR THE PUBLIC ARE SATURDAYS 10 am UNTIL 3 pm

VINTAGE RAILROAD POSTCARDS  
FROM THE GEOFF STUNKARD COLLECTION

