



Official newsletter of Horseshoe Curve
Chapter, National Railway Historical Society
P.O. Box 1361
Altoona, PA 16603-1361

Note: Time-sensitive materials should be sent
to President (below).

SPRING 2010

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Francis X. Givler, 114 Scott Avenue,
Altoona, PA 16602 (Note: ALL time-sensitive
correspondence should be sent to this address.
ottodofacs@atlanticbb.net

Vice-President: Joseph K. Harella, 3812 5th
Avenue, Altoona, PA., 16602
jkharella@pennswoods.net.

National Director: M. Richard Charlesworth, 903
Penn St., Hollidaysburg, PA 16648;
charlesworth2@verizon.net

Treasurer: Denny Walls, R. R. # 2, Box ,
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648; d63w@aol.com.

Secretary: Karin Givler, 114 Scott Avenue,
Altoona, PA 16602; kackiefrass@atlanticbb.net.

Chapter Historian/Editor: David W. Seidel, 2011
14th St., Altoona, PA., 16601-3020;
dwsnrhs@aol.com.

Webmaster: Christopher J. Behe, 333 Council
Oaks Dr., Severn, MD,

Miscellaneous News

Those who have railfanned around
Cresson recall the ex PRR F30 flat car
that was in PC lettering was cut up
for scrap last week (week of Jan 4, 2010).
I didn't have the car number but I know
someone has it.

Pat McKinney

Noteworthy Events for 2010

80th Anniversary of Harris Tower,
Harrisburg, PA

100th Anniversary of Pennsylvania Station,
New York City

May 11, 2010 – 42nd Anniversary of Horseshoe
Curve Chapter NRHS

A Trip on the Capitol Limited

On February 3, 2010, Chapter Director Dick
Charlesworth, Chapter Historian Dave Seidel,
and Chapter member Dan Moringiello aka
“Diesel Dan”, had the opportunity to travel
eastward on the Capitol Limited from
Cumberland, MD to Washington, DC
courtesy of Chapter member Kevin Moore,
with friend Barry Widdowson. Kevin, as
most of us know, is an avid railfan from
Brookville, PA, but has been involved with
private rail car ownership and operation over
the years. On this occasion, he had just
purchased the ex-American Orient Express
Sleeping Car *BERLIN*. Kevin was riding the
car from Denver this past week, to its new
home on the Lancaster & Chester RR, in
Charlotte NC. Barry joined the journey in
Pittsburgh while Dick, Dave and Dan boarded
in Cumberland (the three D's).



Cumberland, Maryland



Dick Charlesworth, Kevin Moore and “Diesel Dan” Moringiello



Dick Charlesworth, Dave Seidel and “Diesel Dan” Moringiello

The *BERLIN* was attached to the rear of the eastbound Capitol Ltd, Train No. 30, and arrived in Cumberland on time. Resplendent in the American Orient Express royal blue and ivory colors, minus the letterboard, we boarded and headed eastward on a snowy day fitting for any respectable Christmas card. *BERLIN* was formerly an eleven bedroom sleeping car of Union Pacific heritage (a product of Pullman-Standard 1956) and was later Amtrak No. 2263; the *Berlin* was undergoing re-construction to a six bedroom car (spacious rooms), at the time American Orient Express and successor Grande Luxe, filed for bankruptcy. The car’s rooms and hallway were lined with Honduran Mahogany conveying that richness and elegance characteristic of American orient Express equipment. The American Orient Express trainset aka Grande Luxe was primarily sold as a unit to Philip Anschutz, owner of Coors Brewery with the exception of the *Berlin*, *Tallahassee*, and *Pacific Star*.



The journey eastward provided the opportunity to occupy the open vestibule on

the rear of the train enabling us to savor, enjoy, and capture some of the images in this article. The cold was biting, but was an opportunity not to be missed. As the morning progressed, sunshine made an appearance further enhancing the landscape. However, the ability to clearly see the railroad infrastructure on the CSX mainline, unobstructed by tinted or dirty window glazing, was remarkable, especially as we entered into electrified territory that is Union Station in Washington DC., arriving 30 minutes ahead of schedule (freight traffic on the line was light). The journey also seemed to free us from the issues surrounding photography on railroad property in the post-911 era, an experience to be savored. Amtrak private car No. 1000, the *Beech Grove* was also in Union Station but not accessible.



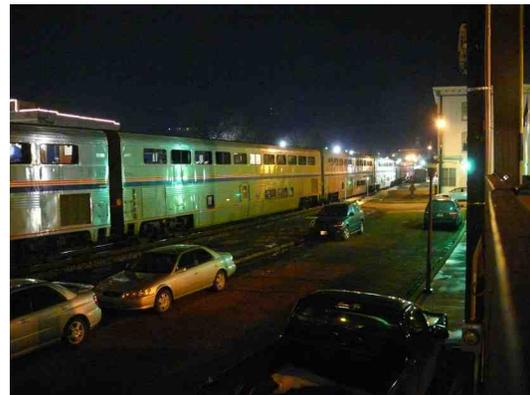
Washington DC: Dick Charlesworth, “Diesel Dan” Moringiello, Kevin Moore and Barry Widdowson.

Private car *Berlin* was sent over to track 17 later in the afternoon from arrival track 30 and was to be prepared for a southward journey on the *Carolinian* the following day.

We savored a three-hour layover in Union Station, admiring the grandness of the architecture over hot coffee and good conversation. Kevin’s recounting of the bureaucracy-to-be-navigated in moving a private car with all certifications and inspections in place, was mind-boggling but also a lesson in diplomacy, good management, and patience.

The “three D’s” boarded the Capitol Limited, Train No. 29 for the 4:05 PM EST departure and began the journey westward to Cumberland. Once again, the Capitol was

graced by another private car, what appeared to be a bedroom/lounge/diner from the old Milwaukee road. No letterboard adorned the car, but the name was *Wisconsin Valley*, (AAPRCO Member) carrying reporting marks NSR 3010. Although a mid-train car, it trailed the Amtrak consist on the rear.



We arrived in Cumberland 20 minutes late, but it was a non-issue preceded by a great experience in the Sight-Seer Lounge followed by dinner-in-the-diner. The diner was recently re-designed and outfitted by Amtrak without the traditional “booth” seating which was a pleasant experience as was the menu offering and food preparation. We give it high marks.

Alas, every journey must end, and we returned north to Altoona and Hollidaysburg to savor the experience.

As it turns out, our very positive trip experience would have been a non-experience almost a week later. The derailment of a 100+ coal train near Fairhope, PA (sandpatch vicinity), and some additional snowfalls, would have annulled the Capitol Limited and interrupted all east-west traffic on the CSX line.

UNDER THE WIRE

by Leonard Alwine

RIBBON CUT AT TROLLEY WORKS BUSINESS PARK

On January 14, 2010 I was invited to attend the ribbon cutting for the completed buildings at the Trolley Works Business Park by Amtran (Altoona Metro Transit Authority).

The completed buildings [following the razing or renovation of structures from the predecessor Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway] consist of the old carpenter shop building and the engine room of the power-house building. The machine shop building is yet to be completed and a future building on the site of the former bus garage (later used as the retail Roaring River Mills) building has not been started. Landscaping and the completion of the court yard will most likely be completed as soon as weather permits. All buildings have been updated with modern windows and ceilings and walls, making the old structures energy efficient, yet retaining the historic flavor of the old car barn area, especially with the new window glazing.

The former engine room has been transformed into a conference room for Amtran with an inside wall adjacent to the old carpenter shop retained in the original brick. In addition, the roof trusses, old heat pipes, and steam lines have been preserved in place, although not functional, as well as the catwalk in the roof area. A circa 1900 fire door separating this space from the power house generator room has been left in place and will become a focal point of a mural to be painted on this wall. The fire door is now locked into the 'open' position and the mural will show a Logan Valley trolley coming down a street the door opening. I am anxious to see this completed and am very pleased with Amtran for their efforts in preserving this history.



The Carpenter Shop building has been divided into two parts with a common hallway

linking them and the conference room. Rest rooms have been installed in this area also. Boty of these rooms are to be rented to future businesses. One room is slightly larger than the other but both have small kitchenettes.

The larger room still has two arched brick partitions in it which divided parts of the shop buildings in the old days. It was nice that these have been left in place and I could not help but think of how many Logan Valley employees had walked through these arches. Also, in these two rooms, embedded in the floor, asre the old trolley tracks. They are still visible now, but will most likely be covered by carpet once a tenant is found.



The courtyard between these buildings has been transformed into a very nice picnic area with trees and benches and tables. The area had been all brick and most likely used for storage of trolley parts. All the bricks (several thousand) were removed, cleaned, and re-installed. Most bricks have 'Altoona' stenciled on them. Again, Amtrain tried to preserve as much of the old, while building something new.

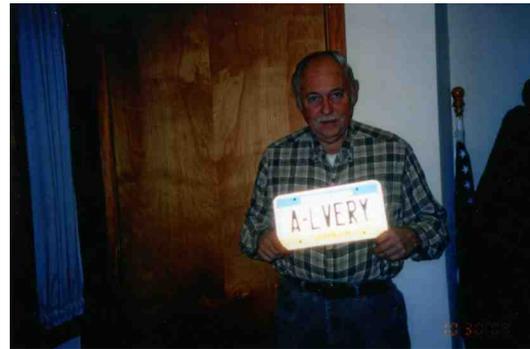
The ribbon cutting was held at 5:00 PM, with Amtran and local government officials. Following, a catered supper was served. The conference room was decorated in a tropical theme which made the room look very much alive after nearly fifty years of neglect. The affair was attended by nearly one hundred people.

As I left the reception, a view from across the street with interior and exterior lighting on, gave the facilities a warm and inviting appearance in contrast to the starkness of what was formerly industrial structures. Amtran is to be congratulated on a job well

done. Not only have they converted a derelict structure to usefulness again, they have tried to preserve as much of the history affiliated with the Logan Valley shops as possible.

NEW PLATE IN THE ALTOONA AREA by Leonard Alwine.

Have you noticed an automobile with a new personalized license plate in the Altoona area recently? One that proclaims A-LVERY! A few people have noticed and most wonder what it means or if the owner did not remember how to spell his name.



The license plate is to be found on my own car and the letters are a reminder that at one time, another railway other than the PRR operated throughout the area. The Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway was the trolley company whose orange and ivory cars operated around Altoona, Bellwood, Tyrone, and Hollidaysburg with the letters A & L V E Ry as a simple way to spell an otherwise long name. The license plate made its debut on my Plymouth in September 2009. Both the Plymouth and the A&LVERY are fallen flags by brand name.

GETTING RID OF THE WHITE STUFF by Leonard Alwine

For some time now, I have been thinking about a series of articles on the Logan Valley work equipment. Most people remember the trolley cars and have fond memories of riding them or at least seeing photos of the orange and ivory fore-runners of today's mass transit busses. However, very few people remember the work cars on the trolley line. . .the vehicles that kept the trolleys running, so to speak, by maintaining the tracks, overhead wire, and

other mundane tasks associated with operating an electric railway.



As I sit here warming up from another battle with the more than 36 inches of snow of recent weeks, I thought this might be an article on the Logan Valley snow removal equipment.



Logan Valley work equipment was painted a red-orange color for the most part and the rail equipment was numbered in the 500 series, while trucks/rubber-tired vehicles with two digit numbers. For battles with the 'white stuff', quite a roster of snow removal equipment was assembled by Logan Valley, considering that they were a small railway. The line did have over 50 miles of track routes and possibly as many bus routes at its peak.



A&LVERY snow sweeper on Altoona's 12th Avenue, just east of 13th Street.

Prior to 1902, I do not know how snow removal was handled, although I do have a photo of a horse car plodding down a snow covered street making one wonder if the horse-cars only operated as weather conditions dictated.



The first piece of equipment was a second-hand snow sweeper purchased in 1902. It was built by Brooklyn Rail Supply in 1894 and became Logan Valley # 500. It cost \$4,225.00

and was used to brush snow from the rails on city streets. It was retired 3-20-1948 and scrapped as were all of the Logan Valley street-cars. Also arriving in 1902 was a new snow sweeper built by McQuire Cummings, which became # 501, at a similar cost of \$4,225.00. This unit was not retired until 12-30-1954 after rail operations ceased. An additional unit arriving in 1902 was a new snow plow built by Taunton, which cost \$3,300.00. This was not a pushed plow, but rather a powered plow which operated off the trolley wire. It most likely was used on the urban routes to other towns where drifts may have been common. This unit was retired 11-15-1948, but photos suggest that it was not scrapped until the end in 1954 with the other trolleys. It was # 503 on the roster. In 1904, another McQuire Cummings snow sweeper arrived costing \$4,325.00 and became # 502 and was not retired until 12-30-1954 at the end of operations.



In 1913, a third McQuire Cummings snow sweeper arrived, again costing \$4,325.00. It became # 504 on the roster and lasted until 9-25-1950 when it was retired. This one may have been kept as a parts source for the others as it supposedly was also scrapped and the end of operations.

According to old Logan Valley work order records which I sifted through in the mid-1980's (they have since been lost when the bus garage was be-built), Logan Valley also used two old busses as snow plows for company lots and bus routes. Former bus # 3, a 1923 Garford, was converted to snow plow use on January 1, 1936 at a cost of \$450.00. Most interesting is that this bus was not listed on the roster of vehicles purchased by the bus authority when it took over operations in 1959, but it was listed as a vehicle being sold

to a scrap dealer with several other old buses 12-6-1962. Since the bus was nearly 40 years old at that time, I doubt it was running; perhaps it was just something that was still in the old car barn when it was being cleaned out (too bad no one thought about saving that bus as it was one of the first purchased by Logan Valley in 1923; of course no trolley cars were saved either).

The other bus was former bus # 25, a 1929 ACF (American Car & Foundry), which was converted to snow plow use on 10-10-1936 for a cost of \$511.00. This was retired 3-29-1958 which was about the time Logan Valley was trying to go out of business.



The last unit Logan Valley purchased for snow removal was Service Truck # 18, a 1946 Walter Snow Fighter, which has both front plow, and an under-the-bed grader plow. This truck cost \$12,576.00 when new. It was one of the trucks purchased by the bus authority from Logan Valley in 1959. It was used by the bus authority until around 1980. It then went to the "new" Railroader's Memorial Museum in Altoona until the early 1990's, when the Horseshoe Curve Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society acquired it, and restored the vehicle. Today, it is the only surviving example of Logan Valley equipment. end



A&L Verry Line car and crew. Date unknown. From the internet.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

All chapter memberships for 2010 have been processed and we are at the same level as 2009. Horseshoe Curve Chapter lost two memberships but gained two.

CHAPTER BUS TRIP PLANNED

Director Dick Charlesworth has organized another bus trip/excursion for June 12, 2010. The itinerary includes a visit to Harpers Ferry, WV which is a seat of Civil War era history as well as a significant railroad location on the CSX mainline between Washington DC and Pittsburgh, PA. Other stops will include a visit to a toy train museum, as well as the railroad museum at Brunswick MD. If you are interested in joining us, contact Dick Charlesworth at (814) 695-1428 as soon as possible to reserve your spot. Price: \$79.00 pp for members and \$82.00 pp for non-members. A dinner stop will be made on the return trip at Ryan's Steak House.

MARPLEX TRUCK RESTORATION

Over the past winter, Horseshoe Curve Chapter restored a utility truck for Railroaders Memorial Museum known simply as the MARPLEX truck. It is a yellow truck in the museum yard about the size of a Jeep CJ but built like a military TANK – of heavy plate steel. An off-road vehicle, it was donated to Railroader's Memorial Museum by Conrail and is used primarily to haul welding tanks and materials around the museum yard. It was in serious need of mechanical and cosmetic attention, a project worked on by the Chapter for the museum over the winter months. The project is nearing completion and will soon be returned to the museum yard. You can't miss it...it is that bright yellow vehicle out there. Another of our community service projects.



Diesel Dan Moringiello

VOLUNTEER JOURNAL



Frank Givler



Joe Harella



Denny Walls



Scott Houseman & Frank Givler



Joe DeFrancesco



Mark Yingling and Frank Givler

All Photos by David Seidel



**Scott
Houseman**



**Dan
Moringiello**



**Marplex After - New Paint in bright Safety
Yellow**

Now, the perplexing question is: What will we tackle next winter ?

SYMPATHY EXTENDED

To chapter friend Paul Ciampoli, whose wife Cara Lee passed away on April 30, 2010. Funeral May 4, 2010. Paul, as some of us know, volunteered on the annual Railfest Train Crew and performed decent work at Railroader's Memorial Museum. We extend our sympathies to Paul and his family at this difficult time.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

MAY 25-CHAPTER MONTHLY MEETING

JUNE 22-CHAPTER MONTHLY MEETING

JULY 27 CHAPTER MONTHLY MEETING

**AUG 15 CHAPTER PICNIC AT WILL AND
DIANE TEETER'S LODGE
FRANKSTOWN TWP**

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS ARE THE
FOURTH TUESDAY, 7:30 pm, RAILROADER'S
MEMORIAL MUSEUM THEATRE.

SUMMER PROJECTS

Horseshoe Curve Chapter will be starting our usual outdoor maintenance projects at Railroader's Memorial Museum...Saturday mornings and Monday evenings....if you want to participate. Questions? Call President Frank (814) 943-4942 to confirm the work schedule. Saturdays often include breakfast at Tom & Joe's at 7 AM followed by the museum at 8AM or 8:30AM...via 12th street gate. Monday evenings after 6 PM. Our first project of the season will be to finish painting the *LORETTO*. Wear old clothes you don't mind getting paint on. Anyone is welcome. Gloves recommended. Yes, you will get dirty (a fringe benefit).

