



Official Newsletter
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 1361
Altoona, PA 16603-1361
www.hscnrhs.org

Fall 2019

CHAPTER OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Francis X. Givler, Jr., 114 Scott Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

*NOTE: *time-sensitive correspondence should be sent to this address**

ottodocfac@atlanticbb.net

VICE-PRESIDENT, CHAPTER DELEGATE TO NRHS & WEBMASTER: Joseph A. DeFrancesco
1266 Lincoln Avenue, Tyrone, PA 16686

jdefrancesco5@verizon.net

SECRETARY: Joseph K. Harella, 3812 5th Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

jkharella@pennswoods.net

TREASURER: Denny Walls, 123 Sandcastle Lane, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

d63w@aol.com

CHAPTER HISTORIAN/EDITOR: Leonard E. Alwine, 212 N. 11th Avenue, Altoona, PA 16601

NOTE: Horseshoe Curve Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was granted a charter by the NRHS on May 11, 1968 (3 months and 10 days after the PRR-NYC merger), evolving from the Altoona Railway Museum Club (1965-1968). We meet on the **FOURTH** Tuesday of each month except December, at the Railroaders Memorial Museum, Altoona, PA, at 7:30 PM. Occasional exceptions are announced to the membership.

90 (+) % of all communications and notices are handled by e-mail. Please keep your e-mail address current with the officers, especially the President and the Chapter Historian/Editor.

Meetings are open to those interested in railroad history and membership inquiries are invited. Chapter-only membership is available but national membership dues are separate. For more information visit www.nrhs.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This issue of the Coal Bucket is a little late due to my wife falling and breaking her pelvic bone. I had to spend much time in the hospital with her and do everything at home which left very little time to work on this issue. I hope she is back home soon.

I also hope to get the winter issue back on schedule. Anyone having information for articles for that issue please have them to me by November 15, 2019.

Thank you,

Leonard Alwine, Editor

WHY DIDN'T THEY KEEP THAT?

by Leonard E. Alwine

As members of a historical society, we often ask the question, "Why didn't they keep that?" "Why was that special one of a kind example destroyed?" "Why was that scrapped?"

And of course the even more asked question, "What happened to that piece that is no longer at the museum?"

After much thought on this subject and after talking to others who have the same questions, I am going to try to relate some thoughts as I have answers to these questions. If someone else has different answers, I challenge you to write an article for inclusion in a future edition of the Coal Bucket.

The biggest answer to the first three questions is Basic Economics. As for question #1, when a company builds something (a car, truck, train, streetcar, bus, fire truck, etc.) they are doing it to make money. They hope to sell the items for a profit over a certain period of time until that item becomes outdated by "new" improved examples. By that time, the originals are worn out or used up doing the jobs they were designed to do.



Used up steam engines wait at Juniata
for the scrap man

Once in a good while a company will maybe buy back serial #1 and restore it for the goodwill of the company. Sometimes even the customer will restore a unit for help promoting the company at shows and parades. But even these items cost time and money to maintain and many times down the road they are sidelined and "lost" from the public view.



First bus of Capitol Trailways (Harrisburg, PA) restored and on display at the bus Museum in Hershey, PA, a 1936 Chevy Fritz John Stretch Car.

For question #2, we always wonder why was that special sometimes one of example destroyed? The best answer is that it was a test bed. It was planned as an engineering piece from start, never to be really sold. Maybe certain parts will make it into production in the future but the example is usually doomed right from the start or even before it was built.



Chrysler Turbine cars being scrapped in the mid 1960's.

They were built in Italy and never planned to be kept due to high import fees. They were brought into the U.S. for testing and the \$25,000.00 a piece cost written off as engineering.

Sometimes the mule is purchased by a collector who is in the right place at the right time but many test bed examples have met the scrappers torch.

As for questions #3, again being the law of economics, a lot of times companies will scrap items just to get a few more bucks out of them from the metal used to build them. Probably the most glaring examples all over the United States was the trolley cars of the early 1900's and of course the steam engines and early diesel engines. All scrapped to get some funds from the sale of the metal for the company. Even bus companies do this because of the aluminum in the bodies.



Logan Valley Cars being scrapped at the car barn in the late 1950's.



Amtran bus #209, the last bus built by AM General being scrapped at Hollidaysburg

Of course sometimes historic groups or individuals do rescue an item from the scrapman's torch, but that then develops another problem, what do we do with them?

Well most items will find their way into a museum of some kind. There are museums all around the U.S. for trains, trolleys, buses, cars, trucks and firetrucks. But, most of these are supported by members who donate time and funds to keep them going. Once in a while the museum will be supported by foundations, but even then something happens to items that find their way there.

A lot of times (most times) a museum depends on it's members to do the grunt work of restoring the items which it puts on display for the public to see. This means that a lot of the items are a "work in progress" and the museum never really has it's display done.

And in there lies the answer to question #4. I belong to a lot of different museums and historic groups for different things. And in everyone I have seen the same thing happen.

Members work had to preserve (save from the scrapper's torch) an item and get it into a museum. But most museums have limited space inside so things are left outside to further deteriorate from the weather making restoration (restored like new) harder and more costly. Even work done will be undone in a few years by weather.

And again as time goes on, the people (members and officers) who worked hard on that piece to acquire it or restore it grow old and no longer can do very much around the museum, new younger members take over and they usually have their own ideas of what the museum should be and what should be worked on. And then one day it becomes time to clean out and some things preserved from the past get thrown away or sold off or scrapped. Some things just get lost, like a few old Logan Valley items.



Old Logan Valley sign at original museum building



Old Logan Valley change counting machine at original museum building

We can all say that we have seen this happen no matter what museum you belong to, either big or small. It is sad but it is the way it works. There is only so much time and money and space at any given museum and a change in the guard (members and officers) usually means a change in the display and the items preserved.

So what can we do? Accept it as the way it is and take a lot of photos of preserved pieces before they disappear and hope that the photos you take will not meet the same fate.

BUS TRIP TO WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD

by Dick Charlesworth

On Saturday, August 3rd, 2019, The Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS sponsored a bus trip to Cumberland, Maryland to ride behind Ex C&O Steam Locomotive #1309. Due to restoration delays, we had to settle with diesel power pulling our train. We had a total of 36 people make the trip.

Upon arrival in Cumberland, we proceeded to the recently opened Western Maryland Scenic Railroad Museum. It is a joint venture of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and the Western Maryland Chapter NRHS. The museum was enjoyed by all.

We boarded our train at 11:00 a.m. for a 11:30 departure. It was approximately an hour ride to Frostburg, passing an occasional bike rider on the parallel bike/walking path to our left. While ascending the mountain from Cumberland (elevation 630') to Frostburg (2070') we enjoyed our lunch on board. We could select from either bacon cheeseburger, grilled cheese, turkey wrap, or chef salad served with chips and drink. All of the food was made in the Ex PRR Cafeteria Lounge Car #1155 from the Congressional Limited Train. We were served in an Ex PRR Twin Unit Dinner Car.

Arriving in Frostburg, the layover allowed time to see the turning of the engine on the turntable, a tour of the Carriage House Museum adjacent to the Frostburg Station, and time to ride a shuttle van to downtown Frostburg.

Our return trip to Cumberland allowed us to enjoy dessert of cheesecake on the train while taking in the site along the tracks.

After arriving in Cumberland we headed to Queen City Creamery where everyone could choose their favorite ice cream dessert. This place is Cumberland's version of our Meadows.

Enroute home we recognized our driver, Bill Scully, owner of Freedom Excursions, for his safe handling of our Journey and also rewarded him with a gratuity.

We also heard many favorable comments from our riders about enjoying the trip.

- Dick Charlesworth

A STATION MANAGER'S NIGHTMARE

by Leonard Alwine

When we used to hold Railfest and had to keep 6-8 trains and a couple thousand passengers all moving in the right directions at the time for two days we considered it "well done" if all went as planned. And it did take a lot of planning to pull Railfest off.

But that planning didn't even come close to the planning and headaches associated with the Boy Scouts Jamborees that were held in Valley Forge, PA in the 1950's.

Valley Forge is about 20 miles Northwest of Philadelphia. The Boy Scouts decided to hold their 2nd Annual National Jamboree there from June 30 - July 6, 1950. (The first was held elsewhere in 1937 but was discontinued for a while due to World War II).

The 1950 event had 47,163 scouts attend. Most came by trains of the PRR and Reading Railroads. The PRR scheduled 50 special trains using 150 locomotives, 350 cars, 100 baggage cars, 75 dining cars, and 75

sleepers. Most came through New York and Philadelphia under GG-1 power. Their diesel switcher power was added to pull the trains up the 21 mile Schuylkill non-electric branch line to Betzwood station across the river from the campsite. There the scouts de-trained and marched across the highway bridge into the camp. Once unloaded the trains were moved back to Philadelphia where storage of the 600 plus cars took place along with cleaning and servicing until the cars were needed again the next week. About 20,000 of the scouts came by the PRR trains. The rest came by the Reading trains on the opposite side of the river using the Valley Forge station located at the park to de-train. The Reading used steam power for the 110 special trains requiring 50 locomotives and 450 cars of different types. The B&O Railroad also ran 35 special trains using the Reading right-of-way to Valley Forge. During the week the Reading also ran 40 special trains from Valley Forge to Philadelphia and New York for site seeing by the scouts.

The PRR also ran several freight trains to the event to bring in supplies and tents. The most used item was 74,480 quartz of milk daily.

In 1957, the 4th National Jamboree was again held at Valley Forge. Only this time not as many scouts arrived by train, most now using chartered buses. Besides using regular trains the PRR ran 27 special trains hauling 22,500 scouts and the Reading 26 special trains hauling 12,500 scouts. Also this year, only 14 site-seeing trains were ran.

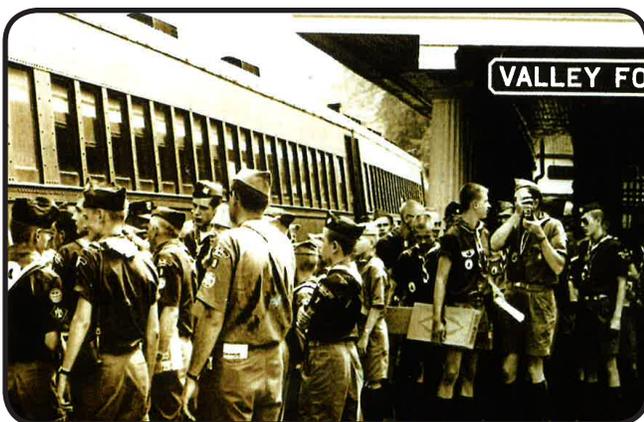
This jamboree was held between July 7 and July 21, 1957. Probably the worst headache was getting the right scouts on the right trains at departure times. It actually took a couple days to do this.

In 1964, the Jamboree was once again held at Valley Forge. But this time, most all scouts arrived by chartered buses. Even those who did travel by train were de-trained at 30th Street station and bused the rest of the way to the camp. The only real special train to the event was a 100 box car freight train of the PRR which brought in supplies for the camp.

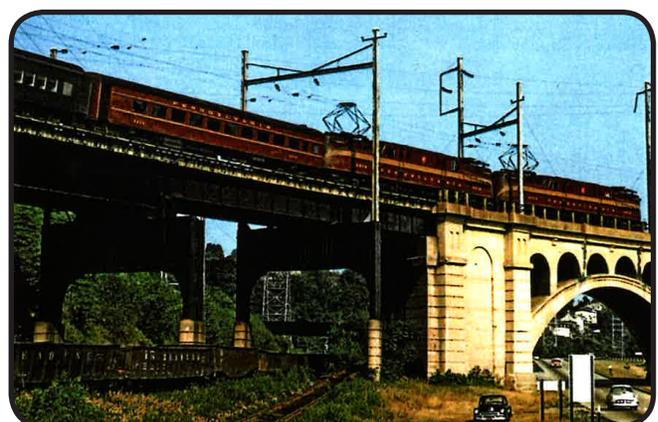
In 1969, the scouts once again tried to hold the Jamboree at the park but were told no by the park service because it took a major rehabilitation to return the park to pre-Jamboree condition. It seemed having 50,000 scouts marching and setting up thousands of tents ruined the grass and landscape of the park.

Anyhow, back in the day it would have been exciting to see all the train action taking place on this branch line for a couple of days in mid summer. As long as someone else was in charge of the scheduling required to keep them moving.

- Leonard Alwine



Boy Scouts arrive at Valley Forge Station on the Reading Lines for the 1957 Jamboree



GG-1's, 4913 and 4910, lead a train of scouts from New England area to the Jamboree crossing the Schuylkill area near Norristown, PA

TRAIN RIDE TO HARRISBURG, PA

TRAIN RIDE TO HARRISBURG, PA

On Friday, June 28TH, 2019, Dick Charlesworth escorted a number of Horseshoe Curve Chapter members to Harrisburg, Pa. The contingent from Altoona included Dick Charlesworth, Mark Yingling, Larry Leer, Kathy and Joe Harella, John Fisher and his friend Hermon Nagle.

The group boarded Amtrak's train #42 at the Altoona station at about 10:25 A.M., as the train was running a little late. The train's scheduled departure time from Altoona is 9:56. We also experienced another delay when we encountered a freight train on our way down.

The late arrival of our train in Harrisburg limited the time that we had to catch lunch. Luckily, Alva's restaurant is located directly across the street from the Harrisburg train station. We ordered lunch right away and had ample time to enjoy it.

We then hustled back across the street to the train station to catch Amtrak's west bound train #43. Once boarded, we all sat down for a relaxing and enjoyable ride home.

Keep your ears open because we'll probably be running this trip again.

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTR NRHS

LOCAL YARD NEWS ARTICLES

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

JUNE25, 2019

The regular monthly meeting Of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on June 25, 2019. The meeting was called to order by President Frank Givler at 7:30 P.M..

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved by Larry McKee, second by Joe Defrancesco, the motion passed.

The financial statements were read by Treasurer Denny Walls. Joe Defrancesco made a motion to accept the financial report, Paul Campbell second, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Cumberland Bus Trip- Dick Charlesworth reported that he now has 36 people signed up for the trip. However, the 1309 is not running yet, and the train will be pulled by a diesel. There are some issues with the engine and a number of railroad ties must be replaced.
2. Train Trip To Harrisburg- Dick Charlesworth is running another train trip to Harrisburg on Friday, June 28TH. Anyone that would like to go, please let Dick know. The group will be meeting for breakfast at Nicoletta's at 8:00 A.M..
3. Tender Update- Museum Curator Joe Defrancesco gave a report to the members regarding the tender for 1361. He said that it is now in primer. A new knuckle for the coupler will be installed, along with some electrical work. Once the inside is given a final cleaning, the tender will be ready for the top coat of paint, possibly sometime in August.

NEW BUSINESS

1. July Meeting/Chapter Picnic- Pres. Givler asked the members if they would like to see a movie and have coffee and doughnuts at the July meeting. Everyone agreed. However, we then decided on the date of July 20TH for our chapter picnic. The picnic will be held at the Deer Hollow Bed and Breakfast and is operated by Rachel and Dink Gensimore, in Tyrone, Pa. Since our meeting was scheduled for July 23RD, there will not be a meeting held in July. Sorry, no coffee and doughnuts this month. The picnic will begin at 5:00P.M.. You may bring your adult beverages if you like.
2. Pres. Givler informed everyone that he received a request from George Rowles for a picture of the Altoona and Logan Valley Electric Railway's black belt symbol that is displayed on the doors of the Walters truck. In checking the files provided by Len Alwine, he did in fact come across a picture of the Walters truck including the black belt symbol. The picture will now become part of a collection.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Larry McKee reported that new rail passenger cars are being built for AMTRAK in Cornel, New York.
2. Joe Defrancesco informed everyone that the lettering for the cars in the yard will be done by JackWhite and Curry Rail and should be done soon, weather permitting.
3. Len Alwine informed everyone that the latest Coal Bucket is now out. He also said that if anybody ever has anything they would like put in the Coal Bucket, just write something up and give it to him.

Bob Airhart then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Joe Defrancesco second, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 P.M. – 21 Members Present.

Attendance: Sean Bickel, Nick Martino, Dana Martino, Mike Walls, Paul Campbell, John Fisher, Larry McKee, Dewayne Miller, Dan Summers, Denny Walls, Frank Givler, Wil Teeter, Don Gobel, Dick Charlesworth, Bob Airhart, John Gardner, Larry Leer, Len Alwine, Jim Caum, Joe Defrancesco, Joe Harella

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

JULY 23RD, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS scheduled for July 23rd was canceled due to the chapter picnic which was held on July 20, 2019.

The picnic was held at the Deer Hollow Bed & Breakfast operated by Rachel and Dink Gensimore in Tyrone, Pa.. The Gensimores are grandparents to Joe DeFrancesco.

The menu consisted of a large variety of picnic foods, including dessert, as each member was asked to bring something to share.

The grill once again was manned by President Frank Givler who did an excellent job.

Despite the warm temperature that day (close to 90 degrees) some members and guests ventured over to enjoy the bonfire. Everyone had an enjoyable time.

Thank you goes out to Rachel and Dink for hosting the party.

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

AUGUST 27, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on August 27, 2019. The meeting was called to order by President Frank Givler at 7:30P.M..

The minutes of the June meeting were read and approved by Ron Givler, second by Mark Yingling, the motion passed.

The minutes of the July meeting were read and approved by Ron Givler, second by Gary Price, the motion passed.

The financial statements were read by Treasurer Denny Walls. Dick Charlesworth made a motion to accept the financial report, Mark Yingling second, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Cumberland Bus Trip- Dick Charlesworth reported that he had 36 people on the trip which took place on August 3RD. Transportation was provided by Freedom Excursions. While in Maryland, the group visited the Scenic Railroad and Western Maryland Museum. Ron Givler also reported on the carriage museum and he wished that they could have spent more time there. Everyone had a good time on the train, and all enjoyed their lunch, especially the cheese cake for dessert. Dick said that the trip made a profit of \$309.86. John Gardner commented on how nice the trip was and thanked Dick for organizing it.
2. Roaring Spring Historical Society- Dick Charlesworth made a motion to donate \$150 from the profits from the Cumberland bus trip to the Roaring Spring Historical Society, Paul Campbell second, the motion passed.
3. Bus Trip To Pa Grand Canyon- The trip was to benefit the Alto Model Train Museum. However, there is not enough time to put the trip together and so it is canceled.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Scholarship Fund- President Givler suggested that we put the next \$1000 check from Alan Maples into the Penn State Scholarship Fund. Ron Givler made the motion, Wil Teeter second, the motion passed.
2. Coffee and Doughnuts- Pres. Givler asked the members if they would like coffee and doughnuts along with a movie at the September meeting? Everyone agreed that would be a great idea.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Chuck Swenson informed everyone that the next issue of "Classic Trains" will contain articles about Grand Central Station and Penn Station in New York.

2. Coal Bucket- Len Alwine everyone that the next coal bucket will be out soon. He also suggested that we begin to think about the Christmas dinner. Denny will check with the fire hall for available dates.
3. Production Document- Dave Seidel brought in a copy of the production document for the film that is shown here at the museum "Altoona At Work". It is very interesting.
4. Dick Charlesworth informed everyone that State Rep. Lou Schmitt will conduct a hearing hear at the museum on Wednesday, August 28TH at 3:00 P.M.. The topic of the hearing will be the expansion of service for AMTRAK. Everyone is welcome.
5. Denny Walls will lead a contingent from Altoona this Saturday, August 31ST to Williams Grove. Pennsylvania engine #643 will be up and running. If you would like to go , please see Denny. He also informed us that the DeGol Industrial Center in Hollidaysburg is accepting bids to rehab 4800 feet of track and also to reconstruct a trans loading facility.

Bob Airhart then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ron Givler second, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 P.M.- 20 Members Present

ATTENDANCE: Mark Yingling, Ron Givler, Don Goebel, Gary Price, Joe Defrancesco, Len Alwine, Dave Seidel, Bob Airhart, Dick Charlesworth, Frank Givler, Jim Caum, Larry Leer, Mike Walls, Denny Walls, Paul Campbell, George Stanley, John Gardner, Chuck Swenson, Wil Teeter, Joe Harella

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

UNDER THE WIRE by Leonard E. Alwine

OOOPSS!! Sometimes during the making of the Coal Bucket, items get lost or forgotten as they progress from the idea drawer to the writing drawer to the typing drawer to the send it to the printer's folder. Of course, I blame my two assistants, Fluffy and Tiger, my cats who always want to be on my lap or on the typewriter pushing keys as I work on the Coal Bucket.

With that in mind, I came upon two photos which should have been in the last issue in the article about Mr. Rodgers neighborhood. They are included now for your viewing.



Mr. Rodgers Neighborhood Trolley
at Idlewood Park



A kid's ride, the Doodlebug Trolley,
at Idlewild Park

THE TOONERVILLE TROLLEY

If you are old enough to remember riding an actual 4-wheeled trolley car, you are also old enough to remember the comic strip The Toonerville Trolley.

The smaller 4-wheeled trolleys usually rode rather rough and bounced around a lot. Most were used on small lines with few passengers which meant little income for the Traction Company. This resulted in little maintenance to the tracks and also to the trolley cars.

Back in 1904, a man named Fontaine Fox was attending Indiana University and during his second year needed to do something to support himself. He liked to draw and had special insight into the people and times back then. It was the time of small towns and everybody knew everybody and most people had nicknames which related who they were or what they did or how they acted. (Today to do this would result in you being sued for bullying if you called someone by a nickname.)

So Mr. Fox began doing a cartoon for the Louisville Times. He was paid \$12.00 a week for the daily cartoons he drew. After about a year he left school to become the sketch artist for the Times.

In 1915, he joined the Wheeler Syndicate and moved to New York. There he became friends with and was inspired by an old bearded man who ran the rundown trolley in Pelham, New York. Mr. Fox had to ride this trolley to visit cartoonist Charlie Veight who wrote the comic strip "Betty".

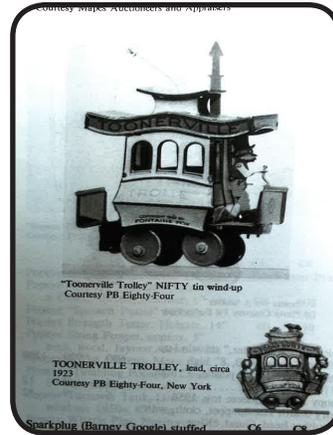
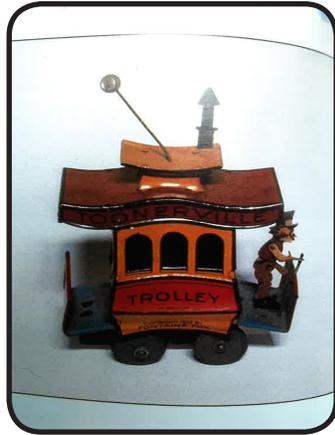
Soon the comic strip "The Toonerville Trolley that Meets All Trains" was born and the conductor-motorman "The Skipper" became the lead character.

Soon other characters from the town of Toonerville became part of the strip again based on people Mr. Fox knew from a small town setting in the days when kids played outside in vacant lots and neighbors knew each other and had nicknames which told a lot about them.

Some of the others were the "out of town city folks" who always wanted to pay with paper dollars for the nickel fare, which made "The Skipper" have to stop at the bank for change. Then there was "Micky McGuir", the little Irish boy who wanted to fight with everyone, "the little fat boy", "little Jake", and the "little scorpions" all of whom were always trying to get even with "Micky McGuir".

Then also there was the “terrible tempered Mr. Bang”, “the Wortle Family”, which today would be called dysfunctional, “the powerful Katrinka”, a large lady with powerful strength, “suitcase Simpson” who had extra large feet, “Aunt Eppie Hogg” the fattest woman in three counties, “Grandma Futty” who kept everyone in line with her cane and “The Wilkins Family” which was always fighting with the Wortle Family. And others like “Uncle Chew Wilson” who was always spitting tobacco juice and “Cynthia Snoop” the town busy body. There were also many others who made appearances in the strip.

All these characters kept the cartoon alive for many years. There were even toys and trinkets made to look like the trolley over the years and once motion pictures were invented even a few cartoons for the intermission times at the local movie houses.



Toys made to represent the Trolley in the early days, using tin and pewter.

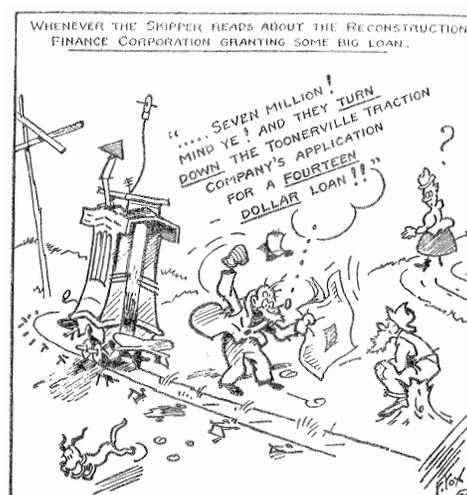
The cartoon was printed in over 300 newspapers for many years. By the late 1930's, Mr. Fox was making over \$1,400.00 a week sketching the cartoons.

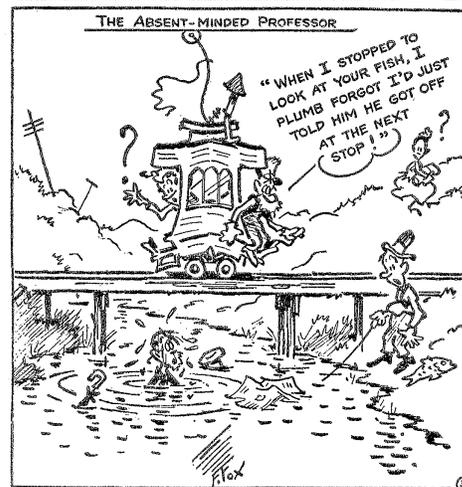
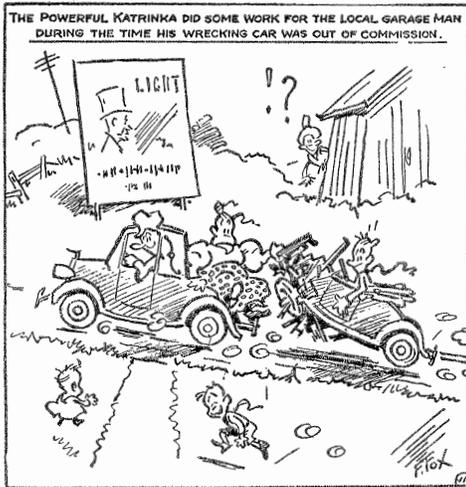
The Toonerville Trolley reached the end of the line February 9, 1955 when the 70 year old Fox retired. He passed away August 9, 1964.

But during it's run the Toonerville Trolley captured the heart of American life in a humorous way. A style of life that has since passed away with the loss of vacant lots and small towns.

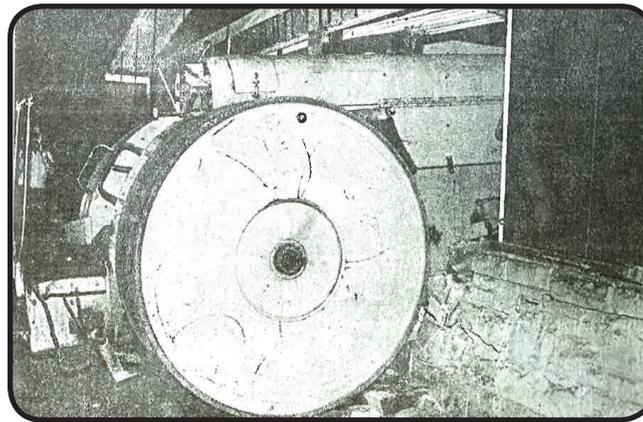
EDITOR'S NOTE: The information for Mr. Fox's biography was gleaned from the book "Toonerville Trolley" by Herb Galewitz and Don Winslow.

Below is a sampling of the comic strips:





A LOOK BACK by Leonard E. Alwine



Remember when on June 10, 1986, vandals were able to get a PennDot road roller started and then drove it through the wall of the original Horseshoe Curve Gift Shop??

60 YEARS AGO - Lee Petty won the first Daytona 500 Stockcar Race held February 22 at Daytona, Florida.

The first Barbie dolls hit the market at toy stores. Although Barbie wore many different uniforms of various professions, she never was an engineer.

The first Mercury Seven Astronauts were picked to travel into orbit around the earth. Then 50 years ago the first man landed on the moon.

50 YEARS AGO - The PRR freight station built in 1891 at 10th Avenue and 11th Street was being raised by American Demolition Company to make way for the newly proposed 10th Avenue Expressway.

The Spirit of St. Louis passenger train was delayed 1 hour and 20 minutes at the Altoona Station because 35 passengers sat on the tracks in front of the engine until Penn Central repaired the air conditioning on the cars.

The Altoona High School Marching Band, majorettes and color guard, a total of 244 members, traveled to Holland, Michigan to take part in the Tulip Festival parade.



Band marching in Holland, Michigan for the Tulip Festival

25 YEARS AGO - The new Lakemont Park Historical Museum Inc. opened at the Lakemont Park.

THIS YEAR - On July 13th, an Amtrak train went through Altoona Station pulling 3 PRR cars on the tail end in celebration of the 70th anniversary of new cars being used on the Broadway Limited. (This information is from Dave Seidel who saw the train.)

INTERCHANGE TRACKS ARTICLES

STATE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE HEARING

RAILROADER'S MEMORIAL MUSEUM

AUGUST 28TH, 2019

The State House Transportation Committee held a hearing at the Railroader's Memorial Museum on Wednesday August 28TH, 2019 at 3:00 P.M.. The purpose of the hearing was to discuss the possibility of extending AMTRAK service by putting on a second train. However, a recently completed study showed that State costs alone would make it financially unfeasible to add the increased service between Altoona and Pittsburgh. State Representative Lou Schmitt though is determined to continue his efforts to bring about the additional service.

A number of testifiers from across the state, including Rudy Husband, Vice-pres., Norfolk Southern Corporation, stated their cases either for or against the increased passenger service. Rudy explained that as freight trains become longer, mainly because NS is adopting the "Precision Scheduled Railroading" for better efficiency, it becomes more and more difficult to accommodate the passenger trains. NS operates between 40 and 60 trains per day. He also said that freight demand is expected to double over the next 20 years. He did say however, that NS has agreed to do its own study to see how it would be affected by one additional train per day.

Todd Hunter from the North Shore Railroad spoke about the importance of short line railroads. There are 51 short lines in Penna. He said that they are being affected by the trucking industry with longer and heavier hauling trucks. These trucks are also damaging roads and bridges all across the state.

Mark Spada and Lucida Beattie, both from Western Pa., spoke about the importance of an additional train. It is very difficult to use the train for business or pleasure from Altoona to Pittsburgh due to the limited service. People in the East have 14 trains per day from Harrisburg to Philadelphia. It has been proven that increased service results in increased ridership.

Ultimately, for expanding rail service in Western Pa., would that increase in ridership be enough?

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

IN MEMORIAM

Past Member, Lester “Les” Shaffer passed away May 25, 2019. Les is survived by his wife, Pat Shaffer, 6 children, 15 grandchildren, 24 great grandchildren, and one great great grandchild.

Les drove truck for Lafferty trucking and also Stroehmann Bakery. After retiring he drove vans for Blair Senior Services. Les was 90 years old at the time of his death.

Les is best known for his interest in steam powered locomotives. He worked on the K-4 1361 during it’s first restoration.

He also built his own live steam train engine which ran on about a quarter mile of hand laid tracks around his home. The rails were about 1 1/2 feet apart. He even had a real steam engine cab from a PRR engine which he used as an engine house for his train. The line was known as “The Shafferton and Lural Pass Railroad”. He also has a very unique mailbox post in front of his house.

May you rest in peace Les.



Train car coupler used as a mailbox post
in front of Les’ home.

Retired Legislator from the 79th District, Rick Geist, died at the age of 76 of a heart attack while traveling in Russia with wife, Jeannie.

For many years Rich was the Chairman of the House Transportation Committee. In that position he was able to get funding for many projects around Altoona like the 10th Avenue and Chestnut Avenue Expressways. He also helped to create the International Tour de 'Toona bike races which included the 1992 Olympic Time Trials.

He was also a special friend to the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum and the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS. An unknown amount of funding came through his committee to help build the museum, the quarter roundhouse and turntable. Also much funding helped with the restoration of K-4 1361 and several other pieces on display at the museum yard.

Thank you Rick, and may you rest in peace.

IN MEMORIAM

by David Seidel

JAMES E. GOTTSBALL

Most present-day members of Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS will be asking who is Jim Gottshall. I have to go back to the first restoration attempt on the K-4 steam locomotive # 1361. During this time period (1986-1987) many railfans and talented steam mechanics traveled to Altoona frequently for the privilege of volunteering on this locomotive's restoration. JAMES E. "JUNIOR" GOTTSBALL was one of many, and often found a bed with the Seidels, resulting in a long friendship lasting from 1986 until 2019. Sadly in 2019, Junior contracted cancer while he was doing seasonal work in Florida, but he made it home to Catawissa prior to his passing.

Junior was previously associated with Central PA Chapter NRHS at White Deer PA. Coincidentally, during the K-4 restoration the Horseshoe Curve Chapter had the rare opportunity to bring their 3 ex-Erie Lackawanna coaches into the ConRail shop where we were able to modify them for service with the K-4. Jim Gottshall was instrumental in that work by using welding torches to remove undercarriage appliances.

Friendships are special wherever we find them, and this was certainly one of the special ones. There were many friendships formed during 1986-1987 along with "Junior", but it's almost impossible to list everyone at the risk of missing somebody. Many others are now deceased also.

Of special note, we are reminded in recent days of the passing of former PA State Representative Rick Geist. Rick was a good friend and supporter to both the Railroader's Memorial Museum and the NRHS Horseshoe Curve Chapter.



Jim Gottshall Jr. working on Chapter cars in 1986.



Jim Gottshall Jr. working K-4 1361 in April 1987



James E. Gottshall, Catawissa, PA

Rick Geist announcing funding for the Railroaders Memorial Museum on May 5, 2006 with the Loretto and GG-1 4913 in the background.

