



Official Newsletter  
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 1361  
Altoona, PA 16603-1361  
[www.hsenrhs.org](http://www.hsenrhs.org)

Spring 2022

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](mailto:ottodocfac@atlanticbb.net)

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Ronald A. Givler, 208 S. 24th Street, Altoona, PA 16602-3432

[givlerronald@gmail.com](mailto:givlerronald@gmail.com)

**CHAPTER DELEGATE TO NRHS & WEBMASTER:** Joseph A. DeFrancesco

1266 Lincoln Avenue, Tyrone, PA 16686

[jdefrancesco5@verizon.net](mailto:jdefrancesco5@verizon.net)

**SECRETARY:** Joseph P. Harella, 3806 5th Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

[jkharella@gmail.com](mailto:jkharella@gmail.com)

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

[d63w@aol.com](mailto: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.

## **IN THIS ISSUE**

By the time you read this, Spring will either be here or real close. After the really cold Winter it will be a welcome.

Once again, this issue will be lacking some of the things I promised in the Winter Issue. It is with sadness that I must say that on February 1st, my dad passed away. In dealing with that just 2 1/2 months after my wife Diane's passing, the Coal Bucket has once again taken a back seat. While some articles had already been written, a lot more were not far enough along to be put in this issue.

Many thanks to Jeff Holland and Joe Harella for stepping up and writing articles for this issue, making it more complete and interesting.

With that said, here is the line up for the Spring 2022 Issue of the Coal Bucket:

1. Six More Weeks - by Leonard Alwine
2. Nela Beach - by Jeff Holland
3. "Under the Wire", PCC's, The Cars That Won't Quit - by Leonard Alwine
4. Local Yard News and Chapter Minutes - Joe Harella
5. A Look Back - by Leonard Alwine
6. In Memory

I hope all enjoy this issue and pray that circumstances and grief will subside so that the Summer Coal Bucket will be back to normal.

Editor, Leonard Alwine

## **SIX MORE WEEKS**

**by Leonard Alwine**

At 7:24 am, February 2, 2022, Punxsutawney Phil emerged from his stump burrow and saw his shadow. Phil then spoke to his handler A.J. Derewme in "groundhogese" that six more weeks of winter would be coming.

The date February 2nd is known as Candlemas day. A day half way between the winter solstice and the spring equinox or the middle of the winter season. So no matter what the prediction, it is still going to be six weeks until the official first day of spring.

But waiting for Phil's official proclamation does bring a little glimmer of hope to all who are struggling through a cold bleak winter.

The annual event was brought to Punxsutawney by German settlers. The first time they went to Gobblers Knob was 2-2-1887 and the temperature that day was a cold 18 degrees below zero! This year it was a warm 26 degrees above zero.

There was the 136th time Phil has predicted from Gobblers Knob. Over the years, he has predicted six more weeks of winter 106 times after seeing his shadow. There have been 20 times that he did not see his shadow and he predicted an early spring. There are 10 years that the records have been lost. The event is well attended with thousands of Phil followers showing up in the wee hours of the morning to await his emergence from his stump.

Your Editor and his late wife attended the event 4 times during the years 1985 through 2002. One time it was near 32 degrees, the other times closer to zero. The huge crowd, the bonfire and the excitement kept you from feeling the cold too much.

It was a fun event and since Diane loved animals and thought Phil was cute, six more weeks of winter was OK.



Len Alwine with Phil  
2-2-2002



Diane Alwine with Phil  
2-2-2002

We went that year because of the special date, all twos and zeros. This year was another date like that.

## NELA BEACH

by Jeff Holland



Metal sign from Nela Beach  
Altoona, PA 1923



Poster advertisement from Nela Beach  
circa 1923.

Note the reference to Logan Valley Trolleys and buses as a means of travel to the beach!

**“A Sign for Christmas”**  
**Nela Beach**  
**By Jeffery D. Holland**

Christmas is the time of year when we remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. One of the many ways we have come to celebrate Christmas is by giving and receiving of gifts. This year, I have to say I was given a gift which I was truly pleased to receive. As most of you know I am an avid student of local history and I collect photographs and items from the past of Blair County especially Altoona, Pa; therefore, I was very touched and pleased when one of our faithful congregants, Dale Sheesley, gave me a wonderful piece of local history. (See Photo) Dale so generously gave me this wonderful old aluminum sign advertising Nela Beach in Altoona, Pa. It says, “One of America’s Finest Inland Bathing Beaches.” I really want to thank Dale for this gift. It is now a prized part of my collection. Like many other pieces in my collection, it inspired me to do a bit of research into the story of Nela Beach. Here’s what I uncovered:

Nela Beach was built by W. H. Davis, J. R. Davis & C. R. Fluke (all of Altoona, Pa.) in 1923. The park was located at what today is the corner of South 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Valley View Boulevard. The site is presently the location of Health First Chiropractic and the Altoona Beauty School. Nela Beach was heavily promoted in the local newspapers to increase excitement and drive crowds to the park. It was set to open initially on August 17<sup>th</sup> 1923, but due to delays in preparations, the Grand opening did not take place until August 26<sup>th</sup> 1923.

**The Altoona Tribune reported the following on Monday August 28<sup>th</sup> 1923:**

**New Bathing Beach Attracts Hundreds**

*“With the weather just right for bathing and the resort open for its initial Sunday business, Nela beach, the city's new swimming pool in Pleasant Valley, attracted thousands from Altoona and adjacent communities yesterday afternoon. Parties from points more than 100 miles distance came to give the pool a tryout and so many spectators were there that the bathers were obliged to take their sand bath in the water. The new pool covers an area of 175 by 300 feet and is so graded in depth to permit for diving and swimming and wading. Concreted throughout, there is an eight foot sand beach all the way around the pool and on the North and West sides are boardwalks. An orchestra stand has been erected in the center of the pool to which boats convey the musicians.*

*Water for the pool is piped from a mountain spring on Brush Mountain. A force pump has been installed to conduct the water into the bathhouse because the force of the pipe is not sufficiently strong to carry the water into the buildings.*

*The bath house is 276' long and 28' wide and contains separate compartments for both men and women, each equipped with 87 booths. There are check rooms with a capacity for 2000 outfits. A Red Cross tent equipped with first aid material and manned by competent persons adjoins the bathhouse.*

*Although Saturday was the opening day for the pool, yesterday's crowd was by far the larger of the two days. Perfect order prevailed throughout the day and no accident of any consequence was reported. The new resort is in charge of Ray and Harry Davis both of Altoona and George Good of Patton.”*

All that is said above here is a description of Nela Beach and its amenities that I was able to compile from newspaper records. The all concrete pool, which was the primary feature of the park, was 175 feet wide by 300 feet long varying in depth to accommodate wading, swimming, and diving. It took 1.5 million gallons of water pumped from a mountain spring on brush run to fill the pool. The water was filtered and circulated in and out of the pool at nine gallons per second. The management were very intentional to make the public aware that the water was clean and sanitary. This helped to put the minds of the public at ease. The pool also featured a band stand in the center to which the musicians and their instruments had to be carried by boat. Another feature touted to the public was a large slide that could accommodate 7 persons at once and was said to be the largest of its kind anywhere. The pool was also furnished with lights to allow for swimming at night. Upon exiting the pool there was an eight foot perimeter of sand surrounding the edge of the pool provided for sun bathing. Additionally a boardwalk was built along the north and west edges of the pool. The admission fee for the pool was 25 cents.

Adjoining the board walk were two large buildings. The first was a two story structure the first floor of which contained amusements, refreshments, and games such as ski ball, a shooting gallery, photograph gallery, penny arcade, and a shop selling beach wear. The second floor was a large dance hall that had an early version of a disco ball called a "crystal ball" it was made from 3000 small mirrors and "when colored lights are flashed on them give the effect of a snow scene." At the time when it was installed in 1927, it was said to be one of only three "crystal balls" in the United States.

The second building housed changing rooms for men and women each with 87 stalls and clothing check facilities for thousands as well as restrooms. There was also a staffed first aid tent as well as a merry go round and ferris wheel.

Aside from the obvious attraction to the swimming pool, Nela Beach was a hot spot for dancing in the second floor dance hall. The park held dances with live music being preformed by traveling acts weekly in season. Admission to the dances for men was 75 cents while for women it was 25 cents. The management of the park also regularly booked performers such as high divers and musicians. In 1924, the park displayed the Golden Mermaid Statue which was the original prize trophy for the winner of the Atlantic City Golden Mermaid Contest. This same contest would later become the Miss America Pageant. Park management in between 1923 and 1926 seasons seemed to work hard to gain people's attention and drive patronage to the park.

In 1927, the management of the park changed hands. All the concession and other operational positions were advertised for hire. I noticed while doing most of this research in the newspaper records that the amount of advertising dropped off significantly in the 1927 and 1928 seasons.

One of the few mentions of the park in 1928 was that of a lawsuit between the park's owners the Davis brothers and Chathams Electrical Company. A suit was brought against the owners of the park alleging that they had not paid for the water pump equipment installed by Chathams. The Davis brothers claimed that the pump was faulty and had failed to preform the task as promised by Chathams. Despite my best efforts, I was not able to find the result of this lawsuit.

In 1929 there was no mention of the park being open for the season at all.

An article published on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1930 in the Altoona Tribune states that:

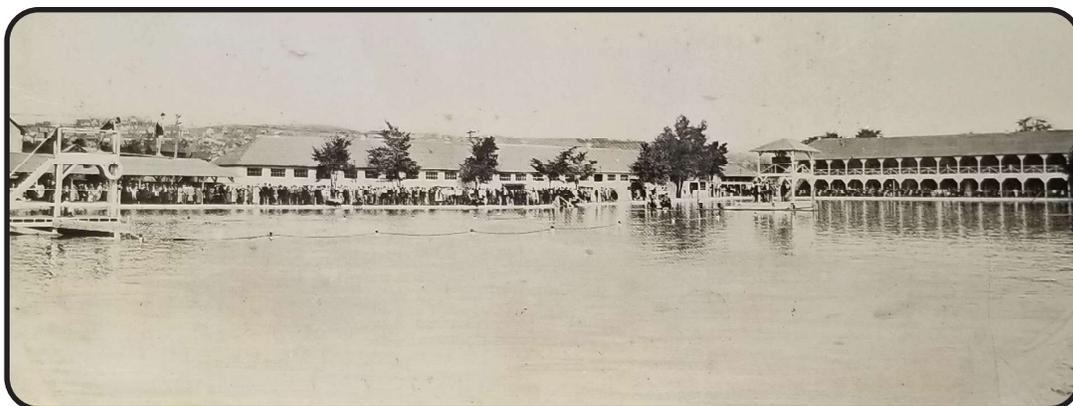
*“Nela beach, once the mecca for thousands of people on Sundays and holidays, is now almost a ruin. Several years ago the promoters of the resort park spent thousands of dollars in installing expensive and attractive equipment in the park in Pleasant Valley. Other funds were expended in engaging music and entertainment for patrons and bathers who visited there. There was a large swimming pool, a floating island, slides and other bathing accessories. An excellent dance floor, with a large crystal ball, was erected and famous orchestras were brought to the pavilion.*

*But the place failed to click after one prosperous season, and after a vain attempt to come back, was abandoned. Now the concrete bottom of the pool is cracked and overgrown with weeds, the buildings are out of line and decaying, the boardwalks are full of holes where boards have been torn up, and the place has a deserted and dilapidated appearance. Only the advertisements painted on the board fence around the pool give evidence of former prosperity. It is reputed that the cause of the failure of the resort was lack of adequate transportation facilities. Notwithstanding the failure of Nela Beach. It is reported the promoters are contemplating another entertainment venture.”*

When I read that, I thought that was the final chapter in the story of Nela Beach, but there was one short lived final act to come.

In 1949, the City of Altoona’s Park and Recreation Board announced that the commission had cleared the dirt and old trees from the former Nela Beach Pool and had flooded it with water in order to provide a place for Pleasant Valley area children to ice skate. It seems this met with limited success due to a mild winter. The following year in 1950 the former pool was stocked with carp and other fish to allow for juvenile fishing; however, in 1951 both ice skating and fishing were permanently suspended by the owners of the property. It seems the owners stopped allowing the use of the former Nela Beach “pond” due to children fishing in it on Sundays, this violated the terms set for it’s use.

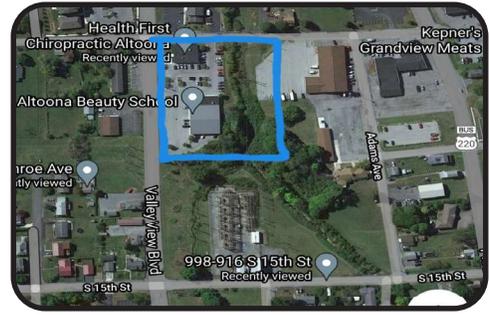
During the Christmas season, we give gifts to commemorate the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ. I am very grateful for the Christmas gift of this Nela Beach sign. The journey through history was great fun as I learned more about this unique piece of our community’s past. At it’s peak, Nela Beach was a gift to the community where many happy memories were made. It is my hope that you were able to make many happy memories of your own with our church family this Christmas Season. Spring will be here soon, but until then, whenever I drive past the former site where this pool once stood, I can’t help but take a moment to fantasize about warmer weather and what it must have been like at Nela Beach.



Looking across the swimming pool towards the bathhouse (left) and the dance hall (right).



Aerial view with the bath house (right) and the dance hall (left) which was still under construction in 1923.



Present day map showing the former location of Nela Beach inside the drawn on square.

## UNDER THE WIRE by Leonard Alwine

### THE PICKLE PROMO

In the last issue I wrote about the Pickle Promo Trolley car from the Heinz Company. After looking at the issue, something just didn't seem right. The sign used in the photo wasn't what I thought I remembered.

So I dug out the model again, looked at it and found that the signs on the sides of the car are different. One promotes the pickles and the other the ketchup that is made by the Heinz Company.

So I am including both sides in this issue for all to see.



Side one:  
advertising the Heinz's Preserved  
Sweet Mixed Pickles

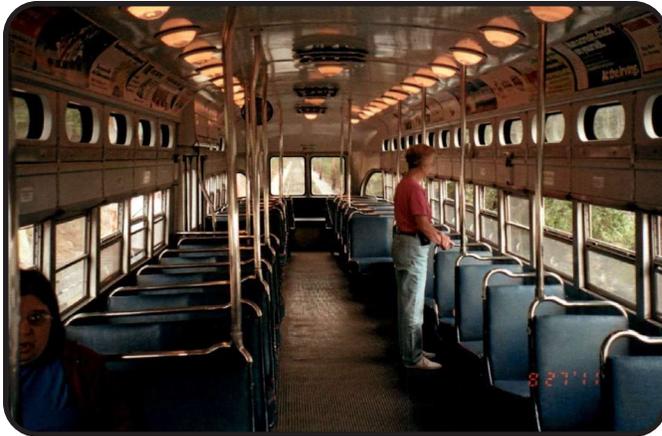


Side two:  
advertising the Heinz's Tomato Ketchup

## A MODERN TROLLEY 1936 STYLE

by Leonard Alwine

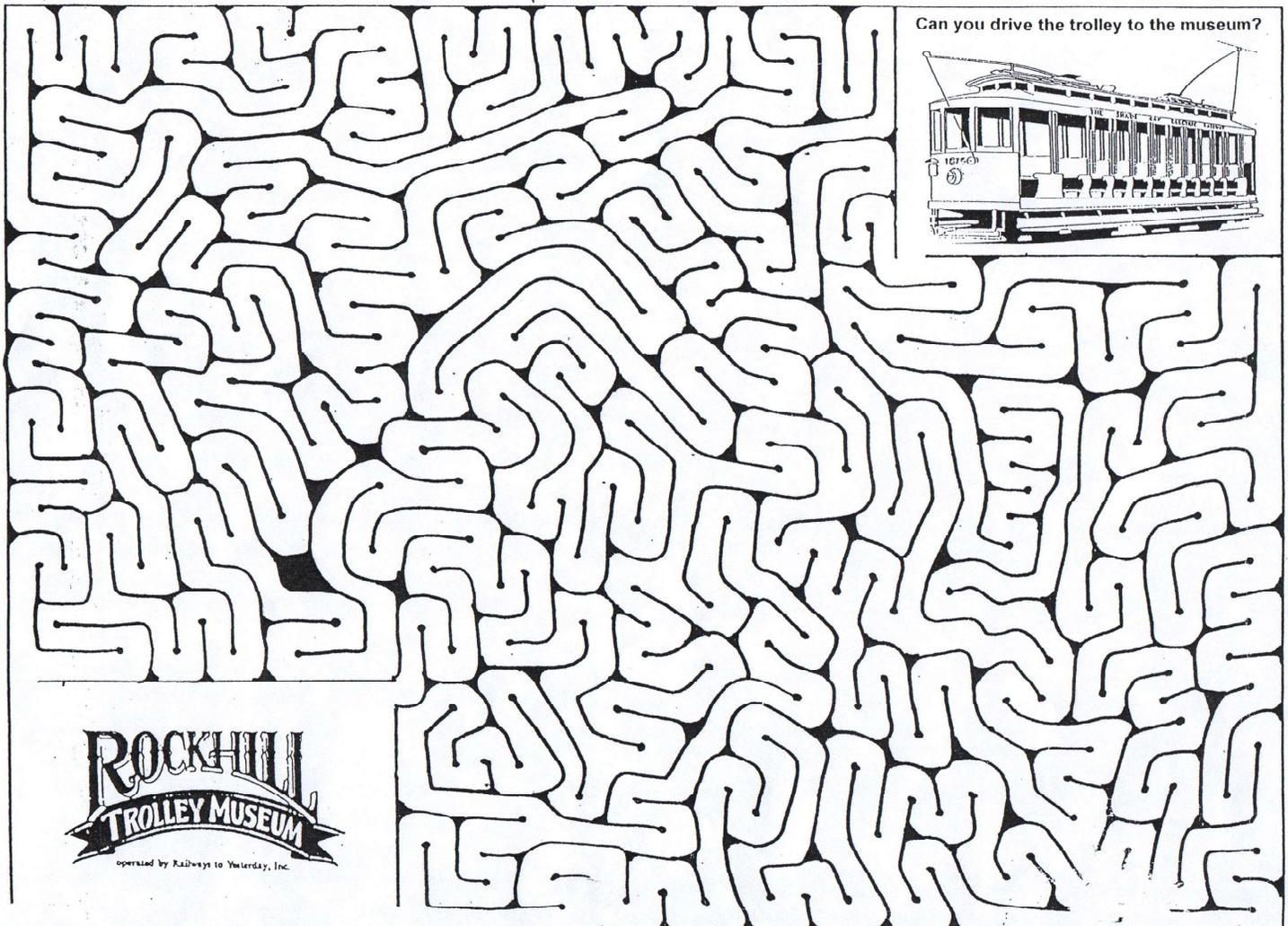
PCC Trolley Cars were the last to be made as a true trolley. We will look at a few in the rest of this Under the Wire column.



Diane Alwine sits at the far left of restored PCC #6 at the Rockhill Trolley Museum when it was dedicated on 8-27-2011. This car ran for public service of N.J.

The photo shows the interior of the new styled trolley of the mid 1930's.

Following the article on PCC cars is a puzzle Diane received at this dedication service. It is reproduced here for you to try your luck in finding a way for the trolley to get to the Rockhill Trolley Museum. Good Luck!



## PPC'S - THE CARS THAT WILL NOT QUIT!

by Leonard Alwine

Back in 1929, representatives from many trolley operators and about a half dozen street car manufacturers, formed the Electronic Railway President's Conference Committee. Armed with about one million dollars in 1929 money, their goal was to produce plans for a modern street car which would look streamlined, look good to the riders' eyes, and was comfortable and reliable in operation.

Up to that point in time, most trolleys were built looking and riding like the horse cars that they replaced. They had grown in size from small four wheeled single truck cars to larger eight wheeled double truck cars, but they were still mostly built of wood that sagged and creaked as the cars got older. In fact, most still running on the rails were fast approaching 40 years old. Even though some had been built of steel they were still the same old designed cards that grandma and grandpap had rode to the store and to work.

At about the same time, new housing developments were being built outside the city limits and the cost of laying rails and the necessary overhead was too expensive to install as many riders were now purchasing their own automobiles and driving to work and the store.

To compete with this trend, trolley operators began using buses to haul riders from these housing developments to the end of the trolley lines from where they could complete their ride downtown aboard the trolley car.

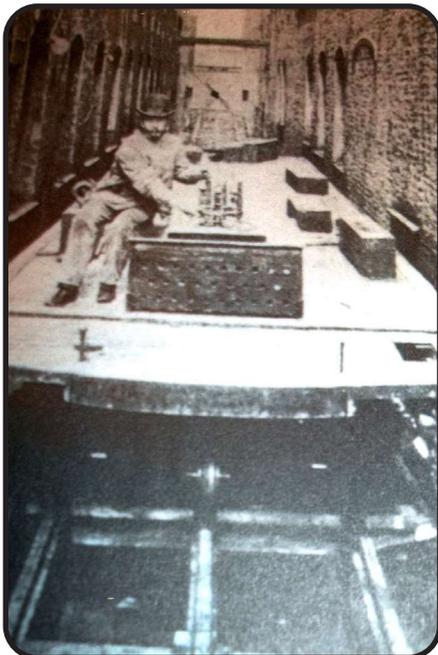
The downtown areas still needed the electric trolleys to help with the smog produced by the buses and cars and trucks now on the city streets.

But the riders were reluctant to change from a smooth riding bus with soft seats to the trolley with it's rough ride, creaking noises, and rattan hard seats. Something had to be done, and that challenge was handed over to the President's Conference Committee.

Five years later, in 1934, the four prototype cars were unveiled in Cleveland, Ohio, named the PCC car after the committee that developed the design for them.

The cars were very modern looking, similar to the streamlined trains now running on most major railroads. Inside they were brightly lit and had cushioned seats like the buses had. They were quiet running and smooth riding. They could accelerate quickly and without jerking and brake quickly with the powerful brakes built into them.

At this event was a man named Frank Sprague, who had actually invented the trolley car back in the late 1880's. He rode the new car and was pleased. Sadly, he passed a couple weeks later before he got to see how widespread there use would become.



Frank Sprague tests his first trolley in 1886 on 200 feet of track in the alley behind his shop. The trolley body had not yet been constructed on the car.

And run they did. Most every major city in the United States and Canada began using the PCC cars, replacing most of the older style trolleys. Over the years, beginning in 1936 when cars first went into production, 100's were ordered by trolley companies resulting in 1000's being produced. Most went to large cities who purchased them 100's at a time until they were about the only cars in use. The smallest city to ever purchase PCC cars was Johnstown, PA, who purchased 17 PCC cars in March 1945. They ran there until June 11, 1960 when trolleys were retired.

Today, nearly 70 years later, the PCC's still run on special lines and in historic fleets across the country. But, in Boston, the MBTA still uses 8 rebuilt PCC's on the Mattapan line. At one time, the MBTA has 344 PCC cars on the roster.

The Mattapan Line is a double tracked 2.6 mile line from Mattapan to Ashmont, which was scheduled to be converted to a trolley bus line, but the cost to tear out the tracks and pave and widen the route made it cost prohibitive. Besides, the riders voiced their wants to keep the trolleys on the route! So the PCC's got reprieve and were returned to their original traction orange colors in 1999. After being delivered in those colors, they were repainted red and white in 1977, green and white in 1980, and now back to traction orange and ivory today.

The MBTA plans on using these PCC's another ten years on this line which will make them nearly 86 years old! Not bad for a "new" design of the 1930's. That is a lot more years service than the new buses delivered today which have a life span of 10 to 12 years.

I often wonder "WHAT IF?" government would have put as much money into trolley lines as they did into the streets for cars and trucks where the traction industry would be today.

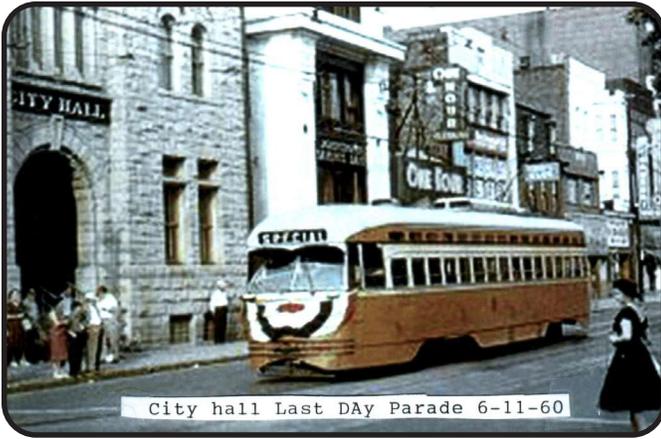
If you have never ridden on a PCC car and want to, you could travel from Altoona 500 miles to Boston and ride on of these cars or travel 60 miles to Rockhill Trolley Museum and ride one of their restored cars.



January 27, 2021,  
an Ashmont bound PCC travels  
on the snow covered Mattapan line.



At the Ashmont station  
on February 12, 2021,  
a 1945 PCC trolley arrives with  
a 1970 Red Line train.  
Try to do this with buses of the same age.



Johnstown PCC car  
on the last day of trolley operations.



Restored PCC cars at the  
Rockhill Trolley museum.

## LOCAL YARD NEWS

by Joe Harella

Your 2022 Chapter dues are now due. \$15 per member and \$2 additional for spouse. Send to Francis Givler at 114 Scott Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602-4048

A piece of junk was picked up by Norfolk Southern locomotive and it then ruptured the fuel tank spilling 450 gallons of diesel fuel near the 24th Street bridge in Altoona.

The East Broad Top Railroad Foundation will be holding it's Winter Spectacular at the EBT Railroad in conjunction with the Rockhill Trolley Museum February 18th-19th at the Orbisonia location as a fund raiser for the group.

The Event includes:

Trolley rides 10 am to 5 pm - Cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children

A two hour photo session Friday, February 18th 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm - \$50 per person

Ride aboard EBT M-1 February 19th at 10 am - cost depends on age and seats wanted

Ride aboard EBT M-3 February 19th from 9:45 am to 6:30 pm - \$25 per person

Two hour tour of the EBT Roundhouse and shops February 19th at 2 pm - \$30 per person

One hour tour of the station and offices of EBT at 11:30 am (Please note that no photos are allowed to be taken inside the buildings on these tours)

Dinner and movie night showing rare 16 mm films of EBT at the Rockhill Fire Company - \$50 per person

The Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum and the Horseshoe Curve are now open Friday - Sunday 10 am to 5 pm.

On February 10th at 7 pm a lecture "The History of the Railroad in Blair County" will be presented at Arts Altoona - 2216 6th Avenue. Admission is free.

Bakers Mansion will remain closed until May 2022 so that new exhibits can be built.

A model train show will be held March 6, 2022 at the Blair County Convention Center from 9 am until 2 pm. Admission is \$5 for adults and children under 12 are free.

Funds for a second Amtrak passenger train through Altoona have been passed by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was announced at a news conference on February 18th. These funds will be used to build rails that would allow the second train to be used while not interfering with freight trains. The study calls for a second mainline through Pittsburgh, a crossover of three tracks in Johnstown, a crossover of three tracks in Portage, and a third mainline track around Altoona yard and a third mainline track in Harrisburg.

Attendees at the conference were told that this could take nearly five years to complete this project.

Norfolk Southern has recalled 18 laid off workers to the Altoona shops due to increased repair needs. At one time the PRR had 16,500 workers at the shops in Altoona. With the recall that number is now at 318 workers.

The Altoona Association of Model Railroaders, 2930 S. 10th Avenue, will be open on Friday nights during 2022 from 7:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Admission is free.

## MEETING MINUTES

### **HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS**

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

**DECEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2021**

Due to the Christmas holiday, the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS does not hold a monthly meeting in December. However, this year the annual Christmas dinner also had to be canceled due to the coronavirus. Hopefully, we will resume our monthly chapter meeting on January 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2022.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.**

**JOSEPH HARELLA**

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

**HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS**

## HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

### REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

JANUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on January 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2022. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Frank Givler at 7:25 P.M. The meeting was held here at King's Family Restaurant.

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

The financial statements were read by Treasurer Denny Walls. Paul Campbell made a motion to accept the financial report, Don Goebel second. The motion passed. Denny also reported that all current bills have been paid.

### OLD BUSINESS

1. Penn State Scholarships- Pres. Givler introduced Rachel Fowkes from the Penn State University. Rachel informed us that Penn State has come up with a new 5 year/\$2500 per year scholarship program. Rachel said that we would have the option of going with the new program or staying with our original \$1000 per year program. Dick Charlesworth said that originally we had asked that the recipients of the scholarships come and speak to us at one of our meetings, but nobody ever does. Rachel said that while Penn State could ask them to speak to us, they could not force anyone to do that. She also said that possibly Covid had something to do with that. Ron Givler also asked why our chapter members could not be given preference when selecting the scholarship recipients? Rachel said that there is certain criteria that must be met by all applicants, and we could not automatically give a scholarship to a chapter member. We cannot make this a bias issue, she said. Jeff Holland then asked if we could just give the chapter member a check for \$500? The members then held a discussion. Dick Charlesworth then made a motion to give Nick Martino a check for \$500, Jeff Holland second, the motion passed. Ron Givler then made a motion that we keep the scholarship program as is - \$1000 per year for 5 years, Gary Price second, the motion passed. Pres. Givler said that the scholarship fund contains \$4000 right now.
2. The N-10 Cabin Car- Joe Defrancesco reported that the total cost to sandblast the caboose was \$7,385.00. The project is steadily moving forward.

### NEW BUSINESS

1. The Alley Popper Train Weck- Jim Caum gave a report on the Pittsburgh and Susquehanna Railroad, later nicknamed the Alley Popper Railroad. The Alley Popper served the areas of Philipsburg, Houtzdale, Osceola Mills and Ramey. In 1914 two of the railroads oldest steam engines were used to film a head-on crash to be used in a number of silent movies. On September 8<sup>TH</sup>, thousands of people gathered to witness the crash. It's a very interesting film.

2. John Fisher informed everyone that author Jim Sundman will give a presentation and hold a book signing at the RailRoader's Memorial Museum . The date and time to be announced later.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

1. John Fisher- asked if anyone has spoken to Len Alwine lately? Frank said that he is still having a rough time with the passing of his wife Diane.
2. A question was asked regarding a train station in Newry? Ron Givler informed us that Newry did have a train station however, it was not served by the PRR. The Newry Branch Railroad ran for about 3 miles into Newry.
3. Dick Charlesworth informed everyone that Denny Beecher has passed away. Denny designed the couplers for the chapter cars. Dick attended his viewing.
4. Dick also informed everyone that a train show will be held in Allentown on February 26<sup>TH</sup>. Let Dick know if you are interested.
5. Larry McKee reported that the movie "Unstoppable" is now on Blue Ray.
6. Gary Price has Conrail hats to give away. Help yourself.

Paul Campbell then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Denny Haire second, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 P.M.-29 Members Present.

**ATTENDANCE :** Mark Yingling, Dan Summers, Ron Givler, Gary Price, Betsie Price, Jean Noonan, Zach Noonan, Paul Campbell, Denny Walls, Mike Walls, Don Goebel, Dee, Dean McKnight, Nancy McKnight, Denny Haire, wife, Dick Charlesworth, Karin Givler, Frank Givler, Larry Lear, Rachel Fowkes {Penn State}, Wil Teeter, Larry McKee, Nick Martino, Dana Martino, John Fisher, Jeff Holland, Jim Caum, Joe Harella

**JOSEPH HARELLA**  
**RECORDING SECRETARY**  
**HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS**

**HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS**

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 22, 2022**

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on February 22, 2022. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Frank Givler at 7:35 P.M.. The meeting was held here at King's Family Restaurant.

Due to the fact that we had a guest attending the meeting, the regular order of business was suspended.

Mr. Dave Harpster, a former dispatcher and block operator described to us his many experiences while working on the railroad , answering our questions as he went along. Dave worked in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Altoona. He worked at Alto Tower when the line was four tracked. When Alto Tower was closed in 2012, Dave went to work in the Store House at Juniata. One interesting fact was that the railroad actually made their own

cell phones. He also discussed Positive Train Control.

Dave gave a very interesting talk, as were some of the questions that were asked of him. Everyone enjoyed it. Thank you Dave.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 P.M..-26 Members Present.

Attendance: Don Goebel, Dee, Ron Givler, Dean McKnight, Nancy McKnight, Ralph Simpson, Marge Simpson, Jean Noonan, Zach Noonan, Denny Haire, wife, Dave Harpster [guest], Gary Price, Betsie Price, Dick Charlesworth, Jim Caum, Judy Caum, Larry Lear, Larry McKee, John Fisher, Dan Summers, Nick Martino, Dana Martino, Karin Givler, Frank Givler, Joe Harella

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

.HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

## **A LOOK BACK** **by Leonard Alwine**

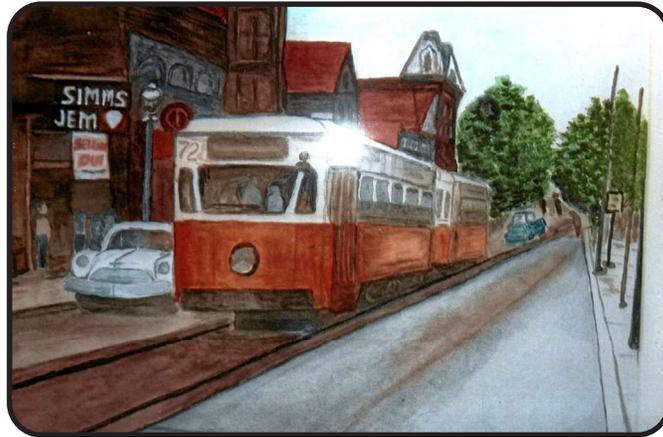
**75 YEARS AGO** The Altoona Chapter of the National Miniature Railroad Association, Pat Tate President, hosted members from Pittsburgh at their model train club at 1121 11th Avenue.  
(Any NRHS member knowing anything about this local club please let the Editor know!)

Penn State Altoona Undergraduate Center board Chairman J.E. Holtzinger made the last payment of \$35,000.000 on the local campus and took possession of the deed to the old Ivyside Park grounds.

**65 YEARS AGO** President Dwight Eisenhower signed into law the Federal Aid Highway Act and the interstate road system was born. The \$26 billion project was to be financed through a 3¢ per gallon tax on gas. Eventually 46,000 miles of road would be built by this system. (This year President Bidon signed into law a \$1 Trillion infrastructure bill to replace bridges, a lot in this system. He spoke in Pennsylvania about the \$1.6 billion slated for Pennsylvania on the same day as a bridge collapsed in Pittsburgh.)

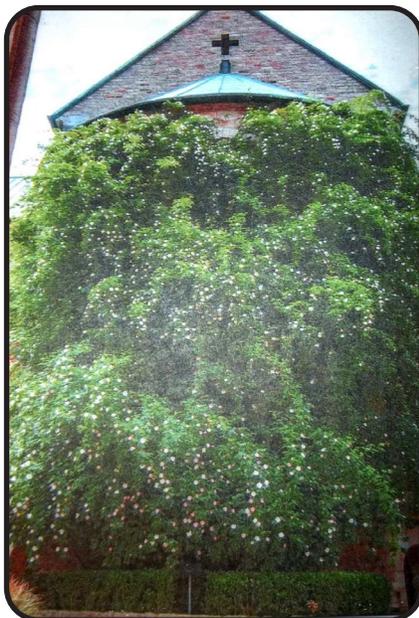
The Summer Olympics held in Melbourne, Australia ran from November 22 to December 8 and were the only Summer games held late in the year due to that being the southern Hemisphere's hot season.

- 60 YEARS AGO Teenagers Mick Jagger, Bill Wyman, Brian Jones, Keith Richards, and Charlie Watts formed the band The Rolling Stones. Their first hit song was “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction”.
- 25 YEARS AGO The Blair County Convention and Sports Facility Authority made plans to build a convention center and a connecting road between Plank Road and Logan Blvd.
- 10 YEARS AGO Joe Servello Gallery of Art on 11th Avenue in downtown Altoona was closed. It had been the home to about 20 local artists displaying their works for sale.



A water color painting of Logan Valley Trolleys in downtown Altoona by Joe Servello

## **A LOOK BACK “SPECIAL DATES”**



Valentine’s Day, celebrated February 14th, is the number one holiday for flower sales in the United States. More than 250 million roses are grown for the occasion! Roses have been a popular flower for centuries. In fact, the oldest living rose bush is thought to be more than 1,200 years old. The Rose of Hildesheim, also known as the Thousand-Year Rose, is growing on the side of a cathedral in Germany. The plant even survived a bombing during World War II.

On February 18, 1947 at 3:25 am, the Red Arrow Passenger train jumped the tracks on Bennington Curve and slid down the slope 150 feet into Gum Tree Hollow. There were 141 people injured and 22 people died in the crash.



Railroad officials stand guard over passengers belongings retrieved from the wreck of the Red Arrow train.

March 10th is National Popcorn Day so grab a dish of popcorn and sit down and watch one of your favorite railroad tapes in your collection

March 17th is Saint Patrick's Day and we all now wear green to celebrate the day. But, St. Patrick from Ireland originally wore blue robes. King Henry VIII of England had portrayed himself as the King of Ireland and created a coat of arms which used the blue color.

Over time Irish people chose green as a symbol of Irish identity and rebellion against the British Crown.

Green represents Ireland's grassy landscape and it's national symbol, the shamrock. So, go to McDonald's and get a shamrock shake and celebrate St. Patrick's Day.



March 31st is the first day of the Major League Baseball season. Over 240,000 baseballs are produced each year for the MLB Association. A brand new baseball is hard for players to grip so before each ball is used in a game it is rubbed with a little bit of mud scooped from a special area along the Delaware River in New Jersey. If things don't improve, they may not need as many baseballs for this season.

## IN MEMORY

DENNIS L. BEECHER

February 25, 1944 - January 6, 2022

Dennis L. Beecher was born in Altoona and then lived in Martinsburg, PA. He married Barbara Nigro on March 15, 1975. He is survived by her and one son, Dennis Scott Beecher and two grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a son, Steve Beecher.

Dennis was a graduate of Bellwood High School. He spent his working years at Conrail from where he retired in 1996. While there, he engineered the Conrail Track Geometry Car.

He had also helped our Chapter by designing the couplers used on our former passenger cars.

He was also a pilot and had served on the board of the Altoona-Blair County Airport. He enjoyed flying and working on antique airplanes and cars.

May you rest in peace, Dennis.

HOWARD E. "BOOTS" ALWINE

October 3, 1931 - February 1, 2022

Howard Alwine was the father of member Leonard Alwine and died unexpectedly from an apparent heart attack February 1, 2022 at the age of 90. He married Louise Ritchey February 23, 1951. She passed away November 26, 2002.

He had three children: Leonard, Gail and Anita, and two grandchildren, one great grandchild and two great great grandchildren.

He was employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad at the East Altoona (Juniata) Coaling Wharf until the mid 1950's. He then purchased his own truck and became a long distance truck driver leasing it to many companies from coast to coast. By the mid 1970's he had several trucks hauling Mallow Cups to the west coast and then hauling produce from California to Altoona for Patts Produce and Country Garden Markets. They also hauled Dubuque brand meats to Altoona and the east coast. After retiring from driving he worked as a cook at Austin's Texas Hot Dogs in Tipton.

He was a life member of the Logan Township Grandview Fire Company and attended East End United Methodist Church.

May you rest in peace Boots.



Dad gave me this badge in the late 1950's to wear when I ran my train layout. As a young kid I did just that and in later years just kept it as an honor to him.

He wore this when employed by the PRR.

Editor, Leonard Alwine