



Official Newsletter
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Spring 2023

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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 SPRING ISSUE OF THE COAL BUCKET

The feature article in this issue is a chronological account of the scrapping of the 1949 Elkhart 250 ton Industrial Brownhoist Crane & Boom Car de-accessioned by ARMM last fall. Editor Leonard Alwine made many trips to ARMM this winter to photograph the inner workings of this marvel of engineering as it was exposed through the scrapping process. The main part, the center pivot and gear base of the crane was as one piece cast steel part which was 3-6 inches thick and over 12 inches deep. It took several days torching to cut it into pieces that could be hauled out by the scrap trucks of Muellers scrap metal. (My friend John, owner of the company, told me he estimated they had hauled over 225 tons of scrap from the crane alone, not counting the saved trucks.)

Editor

In the “Under the Wire” column, is a story about the Hershey Transit Company Trolley freight system which brought milk into the chocolate plant from the surrounding county farm to make those famous Hershey bars.

Joe Harella continues to keep us informed of the local news events and happenings and the chapter minutes which lists things up - coming in the Local Yard News column.

And finally, the Look Back column contains a photo essay about “old” postcards from the old PRR days of the mid 16900’s that were taken and/or produced by local photographers.

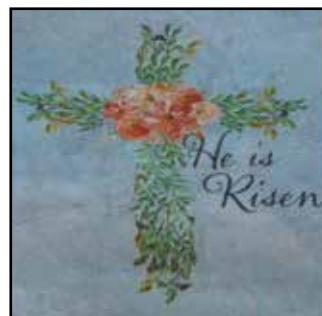
In closing, we take a look at the sign at the Horseshoe Curve taken January 5, 2023, which is kind of an “oxymoron” (a combination of contradicting words). Welcome but we are closed.

Anyhow, the Curve was 169 years old February 15th and hopefully by the time the membership reads this Coal Bucket it will be a lot warmer and the Curve will be “open”.



In closing, the staff of the Coal Bucket wishes all a happy Spring and a return to train watching at the Curve and other local sites.

Wishing all a Happy Easter Season 2023!



AN ENGINEERING MARVEL LOST

by Leonard Alwine

Between Christmas 2022 and New Years 2023, Altoona lost another big complicated piece of equipment once on display at ARMM. It was a piece of railroad equipment that was used when things went wrong on the tracks and a derailment of a train occurred.

That piece was a 1948 Elkhart 250 ton Industrial Brownhoist Crane and Boom Car. This unit was originally a New York Central car based out of Elkhart, Indiana. At some point in time it was most likely passed on to Penn Central and then later to Conrail #45215 which was the letters and number is had when arriving at ARMM.

Most of these crane cars also had a boom car which carried hooks and tools needed in recovering derailed trains. It also provided for a place for the crane and hooks and pulleys to rest when not in use or when traveling. A lot of these cranes were built as steam powered units and many had an old steam engine tender attached to these cars to serve as a supply car for coal and water needed to operate the crane. Most were later rebuilt as a diesel powered unit once steam trains were becoming obsolete.

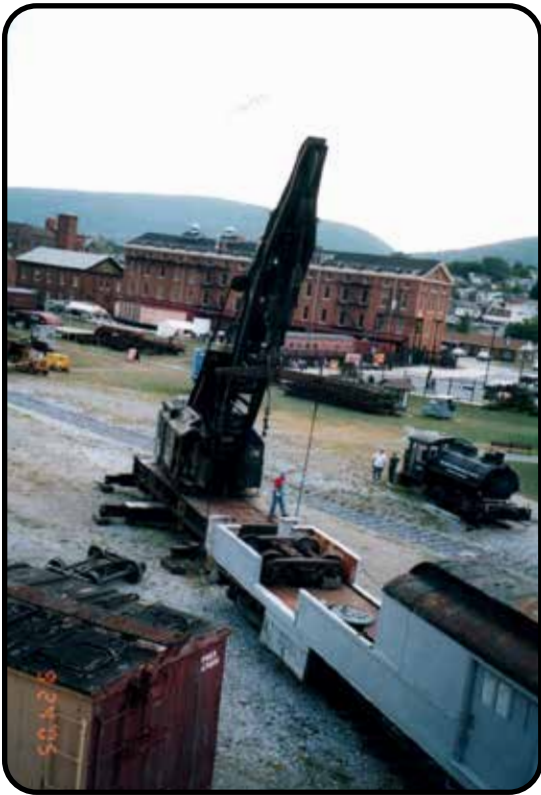


Photo of a sister car, X-16
of the New York Central line.



#45215 arrived at ARMM
with a diesel engine powering the car
and was at that time operational.

On September 24, 2005, Neil Myers demonstrated the car by picking up the end of it's boom car and putting it back on to the track for display purposes after it somehow got derailed.



The car in use at
ARMM
September 24, 2005

It took a lot of engineering to produce these giants and make them work. They had to remain stable and at the same time be able to lift or pull 250 tons of weight. All the gearing and rigging of the pulleys and pulley blocks was really an engineering marvel.



The most famous photo of these was in use at the Red Arrow Wreck, where four of these were used to pull the engines back upgrade to the tracks. That was 1000 tons of power in use. A.L. Carberry Sr. served as wreckmaster on this feat of engineering.

I worked for 45 years at a concrete precast plant and we made and built all of our crane trucks and equipment to deliver and install the pre-cast products. A lot of "old school" chain drive equipment was retired or rebuilt once hydraulics came into vogue and oil pressure was used to do the work.

The same thing happened to these giant cranes once hydraulics built onto cat tractors made train recovery quicker and easier when a wreck happened.



A wreck in Altoona on April 10, 2021 using four of these cats to pickup the cars and put them back on the track (two at each end).

So, after about 20 years at ARMM, this crane car in a news release was said (judged to be “non pertinent” to the organizations mission). It was offered for sale in early December 2022 but had no takers so it was moved to the scrapping area after Christmas and destroyed. All that old school gearing and engineering marvel from the past used to build this car and make it operate is lost.



Sitting on the scrapping track
December 17, 2022



Diesel engine shown inside cab
December 17, 2022



With the boom and pulleys and cab removed, December 30, 2022, only the gear box was left on base of the car.



Workmen torching the gear assembly into small parts, December 30, 2022, to remove from the base of the car.



Workmen torching the gear
box cover to remove it.
January 10, 2023



End frame of crane cut off revealing the
heavy under crane frame.
January 10, 2023



With the frame cut off the boom, car body
is moved closer to get the tracks off.
January 13, 2023



Gear box covering removed, laying by
digger, boom car body laying on it side,
workmen torching the gears.
January 17, 2023



Diesel engine removed (yellow to the
right) boom car on its side.
January 17, 2023



Only the cable drum, crane pivot plate
and crane main base plates remain.
January 19, 2023



End power trucks removed, only center power truck and crane pivot base remain.
January 24, 2023



Center power truck showing gears used to transmit power to end power truck gears (right side of photo).
January 24, 2023



Close up of center power truck gears used to transmit power to end trucks.
January 24, 2023



Pivot ring and base January 28, 2023. It was a cast steel piece about 4-6 inches thick and close to 12 inches high.



Torching the ring gear into pieces the trackhoe could pick up.
January 31, 2023



Ring gear removed, leaving only the base piece to be cut up. February 2, 2023
Still a heavy thick piece needing to be cut up to be able to haul it.



Boom car body removed leaving only
ring gear base.
February 4, 2023



Last piece of base structure loaded
on the truck.
February 6, 2023

UNDER THE WIRE **by Leonard Alwine**

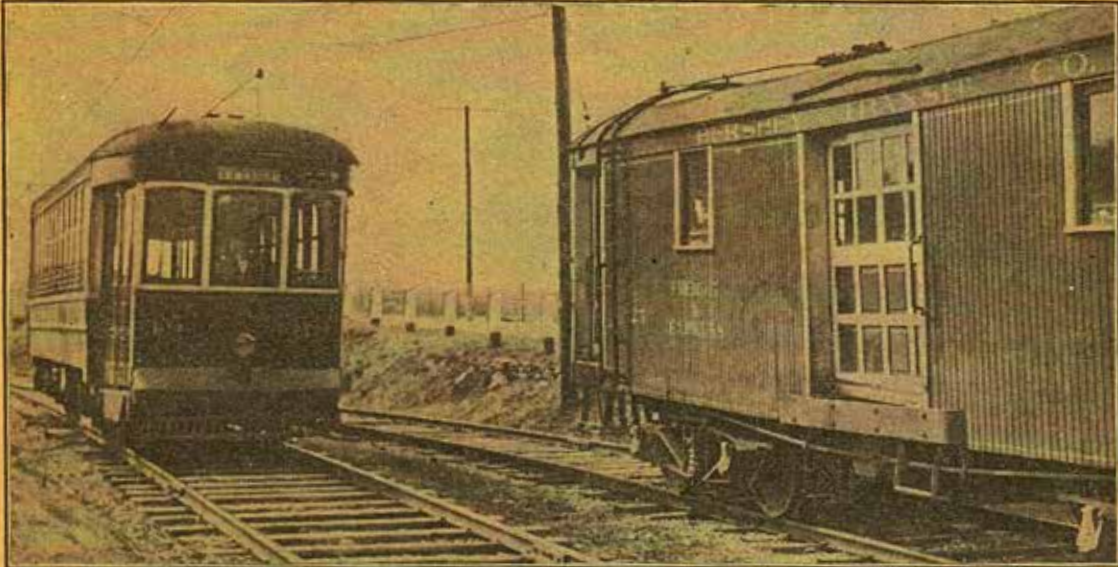
I recently purchased an old Railroad Magazine Vol. 30, No. 6 from November 1941. It originally sold for 15 cents, a lot less than I paid for it.

It is a 144 page soft cover book that has stories from all over the USA including pages about model railroading and a section on trolleys, which is the reason I purchased it. I liked the article on trolley freight service which featured the Hershey Transit Company of the chocolate town by the same name.

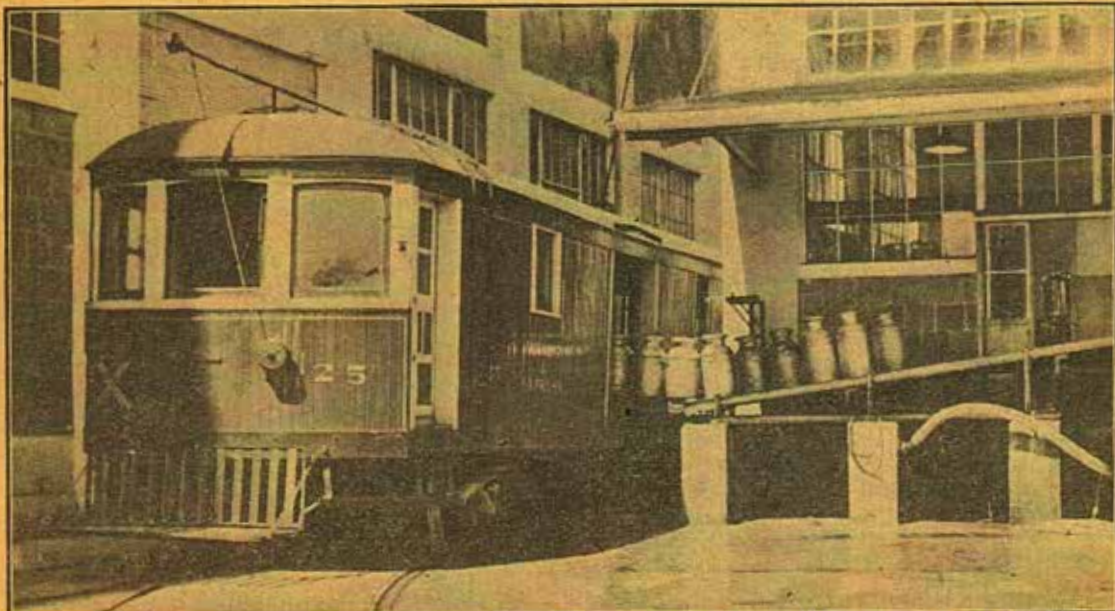
It had some very interesting photos of the milk can deliveries for that chocolate. Richard Steinmetz, who was the editor of Publications on the N.R.H.S. at that time took the photos which I am using for this issue of the Coal Bucket. I can only assume that these photos were taken in late summer or early fall of 1941 as there is no snow on the ground as yet. Even so, the one photo of the inside of the freight motor of it filled with milk cans is unique!

Trolley Freight Service

Eight photos by Richard H. Steinmetz, Editor of Publications, National Railway Historical Society, Inc., P. O. Box 103, Lemoyne, Pa.



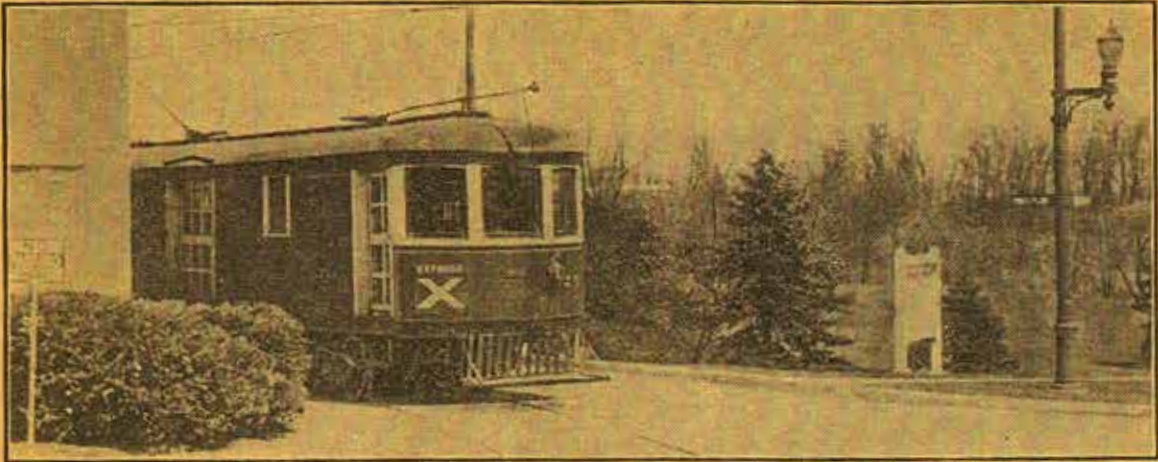
Hershey Transit Co. owes its existence to chocolate bars, shoes and milk, the products of three towns it serves: Hershey, Palmyra and Lebanon, Pa. It also connects the chocolate-manufacturing center with a swanky hotel of the same name, and a junior college, both on a hill two miles away, besides serving Hershey Park, a swimming pool, a stadium and a golf course in summer. Hotel patrons ride free; the rest of us pay 5-cent fare. Above photo shows westbound freight car 25 having a meet with eastbound passenger car 19 near Campbellstown



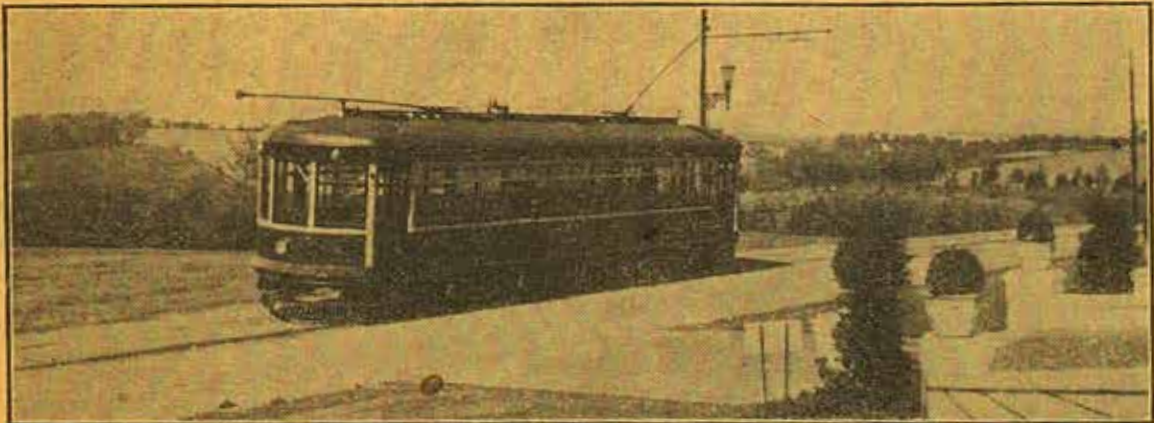
At the creamery of the big chocolate plant, empty milk cans rattle down the conveyor to a waiting car, to be taken back to Lebanon and refilled



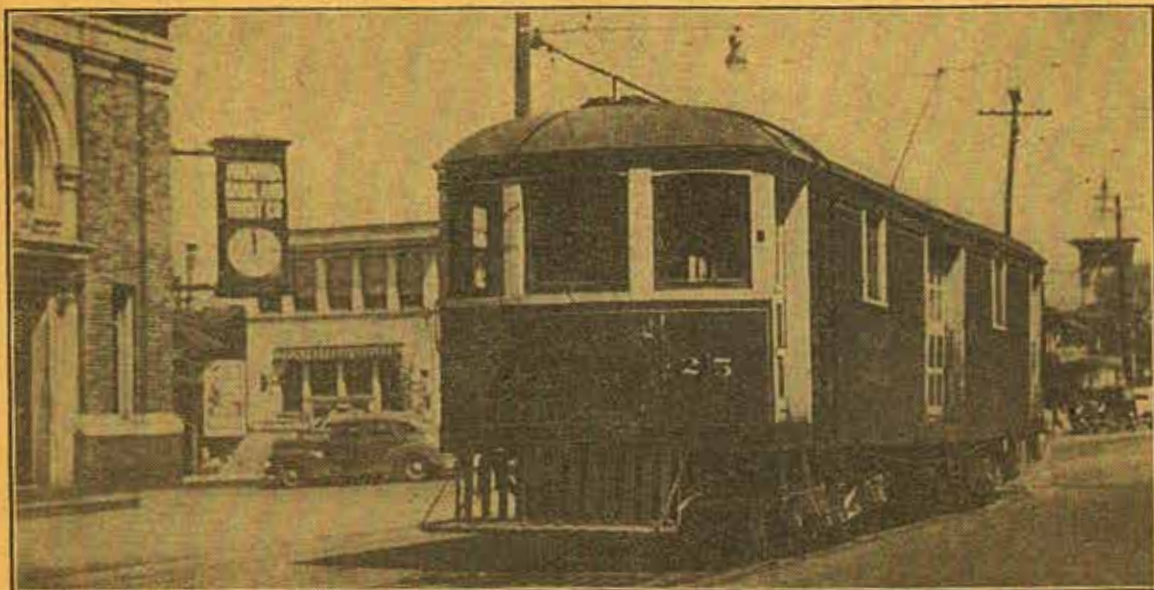
Conductor Harry King Checks over Waybills and Unloads Empty Cans



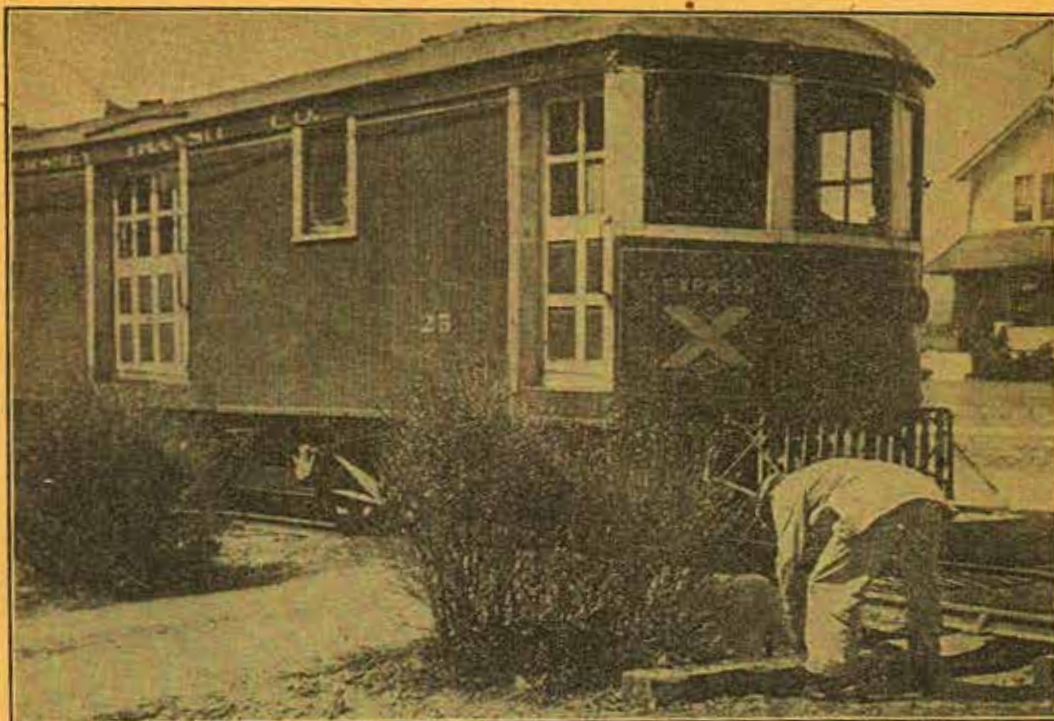
Express Freight Car Leaves the Chocolate Plant with a Load of Empty Milk Cans



At Hotel Hershey: Car 7, Formerly No. 32 of Lancaster, Ephrata & Lebanon Ry.



A Hot Noontide Sun Beats Down on X-25 During Her Layover at Palmyra, Pa.



While Motorman Herbert Straub Waits in His Car, Conductor King Throws Switches. Here King Is "Bending the Iron" for a Meet at Palmdale Turnout. Operation on the Hershey System Closely Follows Standard Practice of Steam Roads

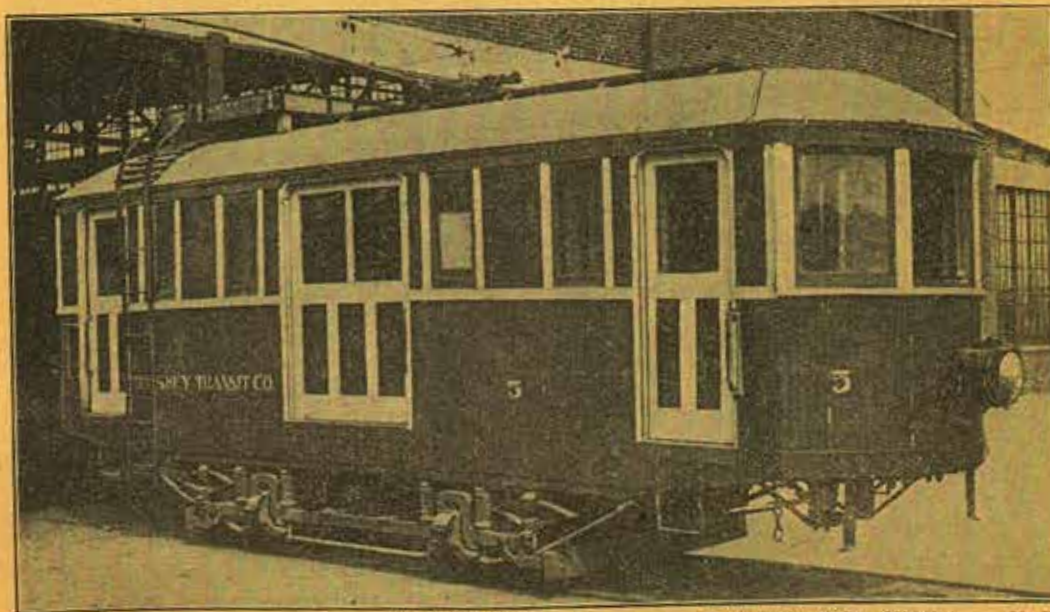


Photo by Stephen D. Maguire, 15 Courtland St., Middletown, N. Y.

Hershey Work Car: This Company's Efficient Freight Service Will Be Jeopardized—and Probably Abandoned—if Plans for a New Highway Are Carried Out

LOCAL YARD NEWS

by Joe Harella

HORSESHOECURVE CHAPTER NRHS

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

DECEMBER 3RD, 2022

The annual Christmas dinner held by the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on Saturday, December 3RD, 2022 at the Geeseytown Firehall. The turkey and roast beef dinner with all of the trimmings was catered by Holland Brothers. Those in attendance enjoyed a wonderful meal including dessert.

A special thank-you goes out to Karin Givler who coordinated the setting up and decorating of all of the tables.

The guest speaker for the evening was Joe Defrancesco, Executive Director of the Railroader's Memorial Museum. Joe gave an excellent report on past functions as well as future plans for the museum. His talk was very interesting.

The evening was very enjoyable to all. Pres. Givler then wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Joseph Harella

Recording Secretary

Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

JANUARY 24TH, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on January 24TH, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Frank Givler at 7:19 P.M..

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

The financial statements were read by Treasurer Denny Walls. Ralph Simpson made a motion to accept the financial report, Denny Haire second, the motion passed. Regarding our search for any additional investments to increase our interest, Denny said that he was unable to check on anything so far.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Penn State Scholarship- Pres. Givler received a letter from Penn State informing us that we have about \$4000 in our scholarship account. We also received a form which will allow us to renew our pledge.
2. Future Bus Trip - Dick Charlesworth informed everyone that he may run another bus trip this year, possibly to Lancaster.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Train Show in Harrisburg- National Railway Historical Society Board Member Charlie Webb informed us that a train show will be held in Harrisburg on March 11TH.
2. Alto Model Train Museum- Dick Charlesworth reported that the Alto Model Train Museum may possibly contribute half of the tuition for Zach Noonan to attend Rail Camp this year. He'll know more after their next meeting. We then held a discussion on past Rail Camps and those who were chosen to go.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Work Sessions in the Museum- Pres. Givler said that he received an email from the museum Executive Director Joe DeFrancesco stating that he would like to begin holding work sessions in the museum as soon as the weather breaks. The sessions would be held Thursday afternoon and on Saturdays. The projects might include scraping and painting the Nancy as well as the GG1. More on this later.

Ralph Simpson then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jim Caum second, the meeting was adjourned at 8:41 P.M.- 25 members present.

ATTENDANCE- Ron Givler, Gary Clare, Betsie Price, Gary Price, Marge Simpson, Ralph Simpson, Dee Hartman, Don Goebel, Diane Haire, Denny Haire, Jim Caum, Denny Walls, Mike Walls, Dick Charlesworth, Jean Noonan, Zach Noonan, Larry McKee, John Fisher, Karin Givler Frank Givler, Dana Martino, Nick Martino, Dewayne Miller, Larry Lear, Joe Harella

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

FEBRUARY 28TH, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on February 28th, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Frank Givler at 7:28 P.M..

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. Ralph Simpson made a motion to accept the financial report, Joe Defrancesco second, the motion passed. Denny also informed everyone that all bills have been paid.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Possible Bus Trip- Dick Charlesworth informed everyone that he may run another bus trip possibly this summer down to Lancaster. He is checking with AMTRAK to see if that could be part of the trip. He also reported that Miller's Smorgasbord is now accepting buses. More on this later.
2. Coal Bucket- Len Alwine reported that the next coal bucket will be coming out soon. Please let him know if you have anything that you would like to be included.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Liability Insurance- Pres. Givler reported that the premium for this policy is now due, and he is not so sure that we still need it. We no longer have our cars to work on, and anyone working in the museum is covered by their insurance. The members then held a discussion. Ron Givler then made a motion to cancel this policy, Jeff Holland second, the motion passed.
2. National Delegate- Joe Defrancesco is our delegate to the National Railway Historical Society. Joe said that he recently spoke to the national secretary. She informed him that the convention this year is in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, however next year it will be in Harrisburg, Pa.
3. Norfolk & Western Class J 611- Denny Walls reported that the 611 is currently located in Strasburg, Pa. and will be there for the next several months. He also informed us that there are 16 to 18 steam operations located in Pennsylvania. He also informed us that the Doodlebug is up and running at the EBT.
4. Museum Update- Museum Executive Director Joe Defrancesco outlined the numerous list of events that will take place at the museum beginning in March and continuing right

through the end of the year. All of the events that he talked about can be found on the Museum's web site. People are urged to take advantage of these activities as they are very interesting and they help to promote support for the museum.

Work also continues on other projects such as the K-4, the Penn Central caboose, the renovation and upgrading of the yard, all of which are moving along. A one million dollar grant has been applied for to help with these projects and also upgrades at the Horseshoe Curve.

Another project will be the renovation of the auditorium, which when completed will be named after Dave Seidel. An anonymous group has provided a large gift towards this project, but additional funds will still be needed. Joe is asking the Chapter if we could possibly help out? There are a number of fund raising options available such as purchasing theater seats or simply making a donation. Joe would like to honor Dave by naming the theater after him and mounting two plaques with Dave's picture. He is certainly most deserving of this honor for all that he did.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Chapter History- Dick Charlesworth said that many of the museum members, especially the newer members, are not aware of the involvement of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter with the museum. He would like to have the history of the chapter preserved in such a way that not only current members but also future members will know that the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was very instrumental in developing what we all know today as the Railroader's Memorial Museum. Hopefully some space in the museum could be provided to the Chapter so that we could showcase just what this partnership has meant down through the years.

2. Dates to Remember- Dick also informed everyone that the next train show will be held on March 19th at the Blair County Convention Center. He also said that a car show will be held in Hollidaysburg on May 26th.

Ron Givler then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Gary Price second, the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 P.M.- 25 Members Present.

Attendance-Ron Givler, Betsie Price, Gary Price, Marge Simpson, Ralph Simpson, Dee Hartman, Don Goebel, Dan Summers, George Stanley, Jeff Holland, Wil Teeter, Mike Walls, Larry Lear, Denny Walls, Karin Givler, Frank Givler, Jean Noonan, Zach Noonan, Dick Charlesworth, Larry McKee, Joe DeFrancesco, Len Alwine, John Fisher, Joe Harella
Gary Clare

ALTOONA RAILROADERS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Docents are leading tours of the roundhouse and the K-4 every Saturday at 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. The museum is now open Thursday - Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

On March 23rd, as a fundraiser, the museum is holding Comedy Night from 7-9 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and \$30.

Saturday, May 6th from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. they will be celebrating Juniata Jewel Jubilee with a press conference at 3:00 p.m. by FMW about the K-4.

The Horseshoe Curve will be opening with limited days and hours in April. They will be holding Twilight at the Curve from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on May 13th, 27th, June 10th, 24th, July 8th, 22nd, and August 12th, 26th.

The Blair County Historical Society will again this year be holding their lecture series at the theater room at ARMM. Schedule for this Spring are:

March 15th - Altoona in photos from 1968-1970

April 19th - Altoona's Forgotten Cemeteries

May 17th - Blair County Fallen Soldiers

These lectures start at 7:00 p.m.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Frank Givler reminds all members that 2023 dues are now due. If you have not paid your due for 2023 as yet, please do so.

They may be sent to: Frank Givler

114 Scott Avenue

Altoona, PA 16602

Dues are \$15 for members and \$17 for members and spouse. These are for the Chapter dues, NRHS National Dues of \$50 must be sent directly to the NRHS office.

ON THE MOVE



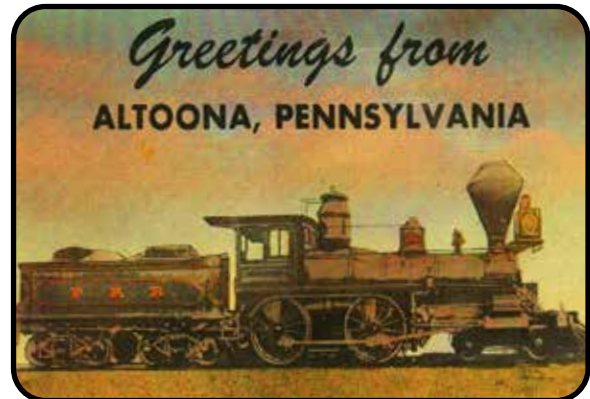
The PRR flat car which was on display at the entrance of the Horseshoe Curve has been moved to the ARMM and now sits at the entrance to it where the caboose used to be displayed.

A "POSTCARD" LOOK BACK

by Leonard Alwine

I recently purchased a post card collection of old Altoona buildings and sites. There were a few old Altoona PRR trains and sites which I wish to show and share in this issue of the Coal Bucket. The first six were published by the old camera shop in downtown Altoona during the mid 1900s.

Greetings from Altoona featuring the first engine #142 built in Altoona in 1866. Postcard made for the Altoona Centennial Celebration, August 7-14, 1949.



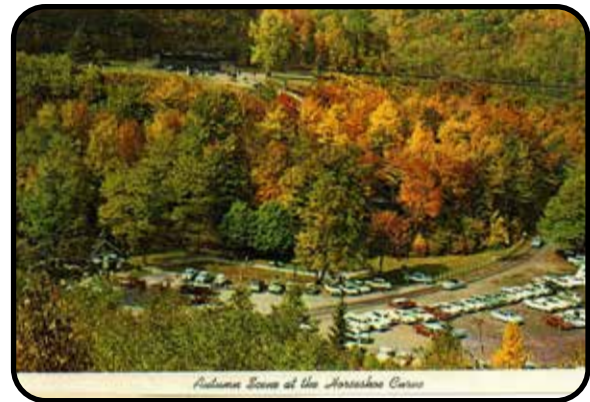
Juniata Yard showing K-4 #1361 in 1943.



Autumn scene at the old curve park.
Photo by Sheldon Burns.



Autumn scene at the old curve park.
Photo by Sheldon Burns.



The old entrance going up to the steps to the top of the curve.
Photo by Sheldon Burns.



Photo of the K-4 #1361 at the top of the curve
in the late 1950's.
Photo by Sheldon Burns.



These last three cards were made by Mary Jane Railroad Specialties:

The "Juniata" train at Altoona Station,
late 1950's.
Photo by Dave Seidel.



The "Manhattan" Limited at Altoona Station ,
November 1968.
Photo by Dave Seidel.



K-4 #1361 at the top of the curve the winter
before being moved to ARMM.
Photo by Dave Seidel.

