



Official Newsletter
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Summer 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 ISSUE SUMMER 2023

The first article is “Strike Up the Band”, a story of the many PRR bands from the area until their demise in the 1950’s.

Next is an article written many years ago by Editor Leonard Alwine about different people you might meet at a train or toy show. A “tongue and cheek” look at dealers at shows.

The Under the Wire segment is a two part edition by Editor Leonard Alwine about Logan Valley’s last trolley buses in Altoona and one about a fleet of plastic PCC carts collected by Leonard in his childhood days.

Joe Harella continues to keep us informed about Local Yard News and chapter minutes in the next section.

Then, Editor Leonard Alwine writes an article about the K-4 progress after a tour of the roundhouse and interview with Mike Reindl, the lead volunteer worker on the project.

That is followed by an article by Larry McKee and John Fisher about the 130th Anniversary Memorial Service for the Walter L. Main Circus Train Wreck of 1893 near Vail outside of Tyrone.

And finally the Look Back section has a few old Altoona PRR Station photos included for your looking pleasure.

With summer now here, let’s hope that all our members will be out looking for trains to photograph and that some of those photos will be shared with the group through the Fall Issue of the Coal Bucket.

Have a nice summer! Leonard Alwine, Editor

STRIKE UP THE BAND, PRR STYLE

by Leonard Alwine

Back to October 1853, the Altoona City Band was founded. They made their first appearance February 22, 1854. They practiced at the Goodwill Fire House at 9th Avenue and 12th Street. They marched in a parade to celebrate the arrival of the city's first steam fire engine December 31, 1875. At midnight that day, canons were fired from Gospel Hill and many steam engines in the Altoona yards blew their whistles.

In January 1879, Jules Neff, who worked for the PRR Works Accounting Department, took over leadership of the band. They performed two concerts a week on the Logan House lawn. On July 4, 1882, the band led a procession of street cars through downtown at the formal opening of the City Passenger Railway.

The band was taken by special PRR trains to many other towns such as Cresson, Philadelphia, Erie, The White House in Washington D.C. and Mt. Vernon to name a few. In 1890, they played at the reception for President Harrison.

In 1891, the PRR razed the bandstand at the Logan House and built a new one at Cricketfield where the band continued to play concerts on Monday and Thursday nights. In 1893, Logan Valley opened up Lakemont Park and they began to play concerts at the theatre at the park.

They again played in Washington D.C. for Theodore Roosevelt's inauguration in 1905.

In 1918 the band came to a close when Mr. Neff had to retire due to health issues. In 1920, it was reorganized as the Machine Shop Band and a few years later as the Altoona Works Band. Shortly after WWII, the band went out of existence after 88 years service to the community.

Also during the same time period the PRR had a Tyrone Shop Band from 1910. They played weekly concerts at local fairs all summer. At one point in time, John Phillip Sousa and Fred Warring played with this band and did a few concerts at The Mishler Theatre in Altoona. Their biggest claim to fame was in 1912 when they were chosen to play at the International Convention of the YMCA in Chicago for a whole week. By 1918 they disbanded.

In 1916, a Middle Division Band was formed by Joseph Monti. It lasted until 1933 when a lot of its members retired from work.

Another PRR band was the Car Shop Band organized in 1919. They ceased to exist in 1926 when many of its members joined the 110th Infantry Band. This band practiced at the Roselawn Fire Hall in Eldorado and did concerts there.

Around the same time another band, The Juniata Shop Band, under the direction of Edgar Pross was organized. As the country went to war and that changed the way people lived, with many members joining the Armed Forces, all these PRR bands seemed to cease around 1954.

Another band from Altoona was the WFBG Blue Bird Entertainers which played live music from the Gable's Department store from 1924 over the radio station. This also lasted into the 1950's. One of the nephews from a member of the band played with the Altoona High School Band and one night Janet Blair (of the Lafferty Trucking family) who was a movie star at this time, performed with the band at Mansion Park.

Editor's Note: Information for this article was gleaned from the book The Great Big Band by Fred E. Long, given to me by my aunt in 1978. Mr. Long was past President of the Blair County Historical Society.



The Altoona City Band



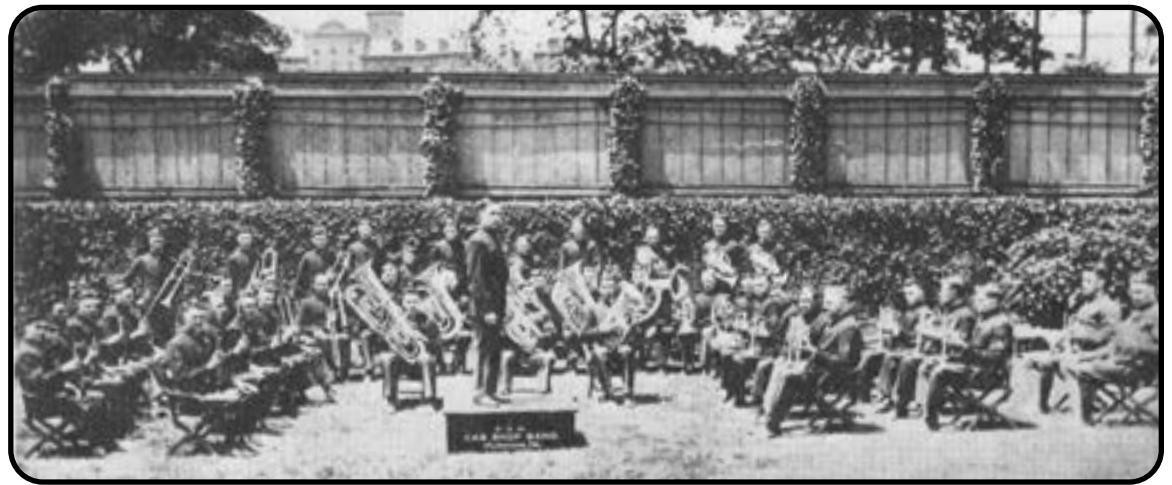
Tyrone
Shop Band



Middle Division
Band



Juniata Shop
Band



Car Shop
Band



WFBG Band

(trumpet player
next to drum is
the great uncle of
a boy in Altoona
High Band)

Boy in
Altoona High School
being kissed
by Janet Blair
at Mansion Park
in the 1950s.



TRAIN AND CAR SHOW DEALERS

by Leonard Alwine

With the return of summer weather and the hopeful demise of covid, many train and car shows will once again be held. These are events that collectors and dealers alike look forward to attending. Collectors to acquire items for their collections and dealers to sell some stock to make a few dollars. Even event organizers look forward to happy attendees and also some “bucks” from admission and table rental fees.

While I have collected toys and trains seemingly from my earliest days as a child, I remember that my summers used to be spent driving my Chrysler New Yorker later to toy and train shows in about a five state area. That was when gas was cheap and even the items for sale at shows were reasonable in price.

While trains and firetruck toys were always picked up at these shows, my main interest for many years were Matchbox diecast. During those years my collection grew by close to 5,000 Matchbox cars alone.

Matchbox cars were a “HOT” item for about 20 years from the 1970’s until Mattel (Hot Wheels) bought out Lesney (Matchbox) and that changed the collectability of these diecast. A lot of collectors then left the hobby and these stand alone car shows for diecast events were mainly discontinued. Also clubs devoted to these diecast toy collectors also folded.

Back in the day, I belonged to many “Matchbox” clubs, the two largest I belonged to were “The American International Matchbox Collectors and Exchange Club (AIM)” out of Lynn, Massachusetts and the “Keystone Chapter of the Pennsylvania Matchbox Collectors Club” out of Reading, Pennsylvania. Both of these clubs printed a monthly newsletter and sent it to it’s members and they both also held annual conventions, usually in Pennsylvania due to many of their members living in or near that state.

I actually hosted a Pennsylvania Matchbox Club event at my parents home and patio on July 12, 1980. While I took care of the business side of that event, my late wife Diana and mother Louise took care of refreshments and hot dogs that we provided for all who attended that day. It was also a time to “show off” my

collection that was then displayed in the basement of my parent's home.

Both of these groups encouraged members to write stories for inclusion in the monthly newsletter, which I did so through the years for both groups.

One that I wrote for the July 1986 issue of the AIM newsletter was a "Tongue and Cheek" story about "dealers" that could be seen at most every diecast show in the 1980's. I reprint it here for the NRHS membership which may still see some of these at train shows today. I hope the members enjoy reading this light hearted article, 37 years later.



Some of my Matchbox Collection on display for the PA event in 1980.



Diane and Louise Alwine serving at the refreshment table for the PA event.



For the PA Matchbox event I had the Matchbox model #66 Airport Coach, repainted and lettered with our names on the sides and the date 7-12-1980 printed on the baseplate.

These were given out to all who attended that day as a take home gift.

With winter over many collectors will be settling down and getting back into the business of collecting. I think business is the right word since many collectors are now buying and selling as well as collecting. In some respects this is good as the more sources of models there are the better your chances are of getting the models you desire. On the other hand it could also disrupt the entire chain of supply if "investors" stop the flow of models to hold out for future high prices.

I think that many of the newer collectors are really not collectors at all but investors. You hardly ever hear talk about what a model looks like only talk of it's availability and worth. With the demise of Lesney it would seem that it has gotten worse.

This is a hobby and should be treated as a hobby just like any other hobby. Since I have been a Matchbox collector since 1958 I feel I can speak with some knowledge about the hobby. If you compare this hobby with other hobbies it becomes rather funny. For instance; can you imagine a hunter or fisherman having to get enough game to sell and pay for his entire hunting or fishing trip? Or taking a new man out and not showing him a good spot to hunt or fish so that you can keep it for yourself and maybe sell him some game at the end of the day? Or maybe sell him your "sandbox" quality gun or rod at a price high enough to buy a new one?

It is in the spirit of "PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE" that I write this article to help the newer members and collectors to know where to and how to obtain models and who to obtain them from, and who to stay clear of. I won't mention any names but if the shoe fits, wear it.

The best place for new issues is at your local hobby shops or discount stores. Next would be mail order hobby shops. The owners of these stores have a reputation to stand up to and in many cases are collectors of some sort themselves and can understand your problems. The third would be mail order speciality shops which deal in diecast toys. Again these are about the same as mail order hobby shops but usually a little more expensive.

Now to the problem of discontinued models. First check with all the shops mentioned above. This past summer I found five mint third issue regular wheels at a shop in a small town for \$1.49 each. I didn't need them so I called a friend and he did and I got them for his collection. The next place would be your fellow collectors. Sometimes they have extras or as with the above mentioned models know where they might be available at. The next would be a reputable toy dealer. Again check with collectors who have been in the hobby for awhile to see who they would buy from. Flea markets will sometimes produce good models at low prices but by far a toy show will be a better bet.

If you chose a toy show there are some things to do before you go. First make a list of what models you want and what you are willing to pay for each. Then decide how much total you can spend at the show and put that in a separate pocket. When that money is all gone GO HOME. Also it would help to have most of this money in ones and fives. Take a carrying bag with you to put your purchases in and it is also helpful to have a friend along to hold the bag while making additional purchases. Once inside the show scout all the tables first to see what is available. What might be a bargain at one table could be even cheaper at another table. You should also be choosy about what dealers to buy from and what ones to stay clear of. Try to buy from known dealers or store owners who have good displays and prices clearly marked. I am always leery of someone who has 500 items and no price tags, and spouts off a figure from his head when asked what something costs. Also try not to buy from someone who does not wear a name tag or have his name and address displayed, in other words he don't want you to know who he is or where he is from. The following is a list of other "dealers" the rookie toy show goer should learn to recognize. While the names may be a little exaggerated I think you will see some of these people at every toy and train show. You can buy from them IF you are careful!

PEOPLE YOU MEET AT A TOY SHOW:
continued.

- NED THE NOVICE:** It's his first show as a dealer. He has enough goods for 10 tables piled onto one. He knows he has just what you want if he could just find it.
- AL THE AUTHORITY:** He knows everything about the item he is selling and he'll tell you so. Actually, he isn't even sure of his name but if you'll listen he'll keep talking.
- EDDIE THE EXPERT:** Same type as Al but from out of State.
- ART THE AUCTIONEER:** He doesn't price anything in hopes of getting two buyers interested in the same item at once. He then asks for bids and the highest one takes it, provided its higher than the average price for the item.
- HARRY THE HAGGLER:** He has everything priced way high in hopes that you will counter his offer with one a little less. If he accepts he's still making a fair profit.
- SAM THE SMUGGLER:** He has box after box of pre-production and salesmans samples which are not to be sold. He's in a risky business so his price is sky high in case that business is short lived.
- LARRY LIST PRICE:** He always has the latest and highest priced guide available to justify the high prices he wants for his junk. He won't come down any cause for all he has invested (mere pennies) he can afford to wait.
- DICK THE DEALER:** Actually he is a collector who can't afford the hobby. He stays in the hobby by buying cars at wholesale and trying to sell them for enough to keep one model for himself for free.
- IRVING THE INVESTOR:** If he is buying the model is worthless. If he is selling the model is pure gold. His prices are high and he won't come down. He is also ruining the hobby. Don't buy from him in hopes his investment will sour.
- FRANKIE FIRST RELEASE:** This is the guy who always has new items 3 months before the warehouse gets them. He pays dearly to someone at the factory for this service and you will too.
- WILLY WE BUY:** This guy has little to sell but attends a few shows a year to advertise that he buys collections (at about half their worth; he has to make a profit) to resell on his monthly mail order list which you may subscribe to for a buck a month.
- TED THE TRAVELER:** He travels the world in search of rare and exotic goods to sell. His prices include shipping (one way for the goods and two ways for him).
- PROUD PETER:** He doesn't have anything to sell but enjoys bringing one of's and rare pieces for display so you can tell him how lucky he is to own them.
- TOMMY TRADE ONLY:** Somewhere this guy has gotten two of the rare or hard to find pieces. One for his collection and one to trade for an equally hard to find piece that he doesn't have yet.

PEOPLE YOU MEET AT A TOY SHOW:
continued.

- GARY THE GAURDIAN ANGLE:** He's the guy watching the table for someone else. He doesn't know the prices. He doesn't know where the owner is or when he will be back. He isn't even sure where he himself is. He is just to prevent looting.
- OWEN THE OWNER:** He is the guy Gary is working for. Actually he just set a table up so his wife thinks he came to the show to sell. He is out buying for his collection and probably won't ever return to sell anything.
- RALPH THE ROOMIE:** This is the guy who is too cheap to buy a table at the show. He comes to the hotel the night before and opens shop in his room and stays there for the whole show.
- TAILGATE TAMMY:** She is minding the store in the back of her truck in the parking lot while her husband spreads the word inside. Their too cheap to even rent a room.
- SUITCASE SID:** He is really cutting down on expenses. He hitch hiked to the show and is selling out of a suitcase in the hall.
- LAST CHANCE CHARLIE:** He has the last of a certain hard to find item on his table and if you don't buy it you'll miss the chance of a lifetime. If he can pull off this scheme 24 times today he'll sell the whole case he has under the table.
- FAST BUCK FREDDIE:** He's the guy who tears down at noon during the 9:00 to 5:00 show. He's already shafted enough people that day and feels he had better make tracks.
- FLEA MARKET MAUDE:** She spends her weekends running around to all the flea markets picking up 10¢ sand box models. Come toy show day she has them all washed up and a \$5.00 price tag attached (check under the baseplate for sand before buying).
- YARD SALE SALLEY:** It's a toy and train show and here she sits with pots and pans and cloths for sale. Even if she has a token toy or train on her table it probably belongs to her kid who is running around the room somewhere (In case you spend too much on toys this might be a good table to find a take-home gift for your wife).
- EARLY BIRD BETTY:** While her husband is setting up she is scouting the hall for good buys and to see what to set their prices at. She is a buyer only till the show opens then she will sell her better buys to you at a profit.
- OLD MOTHER HUBBARD:** She comes to the show and sets up with the help of her 12 kids. Once set up she turns them loose to bother everyone else and leave her free to sell.
- COMPUTER HEAD CLYDE:** He has 1000 different items on his table and no prices marked on anything. Pick up an item and watch him smile as his computer mind tells you the price (Actually he has bought the whole collection at a dollar a piece so why shouldn't he smile, any price above that is pure profit).

PEOPLE YOU MEET AT A TOY SHOW:
continued.

DISPLAY BOX BOBBY: This fellow has a glass top display case with 100's of first issue and special releases thrown inside with prices marked from \$25.00 on up. (If they had cost him even 1/10th of what he was asking for them he certainly wouldn't throw them in the case that way).

As I said before you will meet people just like these at every toy show or train show you ever attend. You can buy from these people and even get a good model at a fair price. BUT as always as a buyer you must beware and make sure that the model is worth what you pay for it. Shows can be a lot of fun and increase your collection many times with the models you need. So have fun and good luck.

LEONARD ALWINE - ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA

UNDER THE WIRE by Leonard Alwine

LOGAN VALLEY SECOND ATTEMPT

As most all local Altoona Trolley Historians know, the last rail trolley cars ran for the last time August 7, 1954. Car numbers 51, 56, 70, 72, and 73 were scheduled for scrap at the car barn yard, one set of drive wheels from car #51, the last in the line up that day of the last run, were saved and still sit today on a patio beside the Amtran garage, an area that once had trolley tracks located there.

Logan Valley continued to run orange and ivory GM buses until November 1, 1959 when the very first public transit authority in the State of Pennsylvania was created to take over the operation.

The Altoona & Logan Township Bus Authority continued to run the orange and ivory GM buses until 1978 when a white and green decal was placed on them to reflect the change in operating name to Amtran, Altoona Metro Transit, only one Logan Valley bus was ever painted white and green, bus number 106, and that 1954 GM bus ran until 1983 when it was retired.

In May 1990, Amtran tried to bring some nostalgia to the Altoona city streets when number 173, a trolley replica bus was purchased and began operations on the city routes in orange and ivory colors and lettered for Logan Valley.

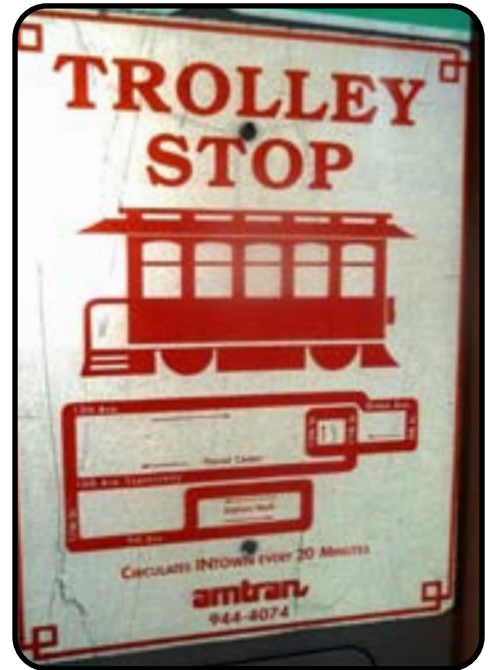


The new trolley bus at the downtown transit center.

The late Diane Alwine sits inside behind the fifth window.
She was an NRHS member.



Driver for the trolley bus was NRHS member, Joe Harella, that opening day.



Signs used to mark the new route.



Numbers 173 and 149 displayed at the dedication program for the new service.



Number 149 was scrapped at the Amtran Garage.



Some items were preserved from bus #149.

In March 2003, #173 was repainted green and white and lettered for Amtran. It ran in these colors mostly on charters until December 2007. At that time Amtran was forced to discontinue charters due to government regulations changes.

The last trolley bus runs were done in December 2008 for the Christmas Light Trolley tours. In January 2009, #173 was retired and sold, thus ending the second attempt at Logan Valley Trolley use in Altoona.



#173 repainted green and white and lettered for Amtran March 2003

UNDER THE WIRE (PART TWO) by Leonard Alwine

THE COLORFUL STREETCARS WE CANNOT RIDE

While looking through my collection of books this past cold winter, I came across one about trolleys which served as an inspiration for this story.

Back in 1986, the Central Electric Rail Fans Association printed Bulletin #125 entitled “The Colorful Streetcars We Rode”. It was laid out and typeset by George Krambles. The 112 page book has 103 all color photos of streetcars from all over the United States and a few from outside it’s borders dating from the horsecar days up to the PCC car days of the mid 1950’s.

There is even a photo of Altoona and Logan Valley #74 in Eldorado with a sign for gas at 26.9 cents per gallon and a photo of Johnstown Traction Company #311 crossing on the Moxham Bridge. They are found on pages 80 and 61 respectively.

For those of us from Altoona who think that orange and ivory are the only colors for streetcars (it was most likely the favorite colors) there were many other different and beautiful paint schemes used around the USA on the trolleys when they were the way to travel.



The cover of the book shows a fleet of about 40 PCCs sitting on yards of tracks in the snow of winter.

The cover caused me to think about a “fleet” of PCC cars I have from my childhood tucked away in my attic with other Christmas layout stuff.

They are all plastic one piece cars made by Allied Molding Corporation of Carono, New York in the 1950's. They are small and came molded in many colors. I have no idea how many different colors were used in the molding process.



A silver “rubber” plastic PCC car from later years showing the size of the car.

I received my first set of these cars (there are also cars, trucks and houses in the set) from my Grandpap in the mid 1950's. The set sold for \$1 back then which was about 2 cents a piece. Though not to scale, I used them as vehicles on my Christmas HO train layout under the tree.

Originally they were made of a hard plastic but in later years they were made of a rubber type plastic which did not break so easily. Over the years I have found both types at train shows and antique stores any where from \$1 to 10 cents each.

An inexpensive way to relive your childhood and a mass a fleet of colorful PCC cars.



My fleet of colorful PCC cars



A marble color showing the right side



A light blue one showing the front and left side



A green one showing the rear and right side

Perhaps if I remember, I will do an article on the cars, trucks and houses that also came in this set for the Christmas issue of the Coal Bucket coming up this year.

Until then, enjoy looking at this fleet of “The Colorful Streetcars We Cannot Ride”.

LOCAL YARD NEWS AND CHAPTER MINUTES

by Joe Harella

A new fire department history book has been published celebrating the 100th year of the Logan Township Volunteer Fire Company. It briefly describes the past history and has many photos of firehalls and fire trucks used during those 100 years. It was written by Editor Leonard Alwine and was released on April 23, 2023 for the 100th birthday.



Photo of book cover

Historical society lecture series starts Wednesday

The Blair County Historical Society Lecture Series kicks off on Wednesday, March 15.

All of the lectures will be presented at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month at the Altoona Railroaders Museum, 1200 Ninth Ave. Admission is free, but donations are welcome.

The first lecture is "Altoona in Photos 1968-1971, Part I: Downtown Altoona Before Urban Redevelopment" presented by Dr. Michael Farrow.

The remainder of the schedule includes:

■ April 19 — "Altoona Area's Forgotten Cemeteries" by Jim Snyder Jr.

■ May 17 — "Blair County's Fallen Soldiers: World War I to the Present — A Memorial Day Retrospective."

■ June 21 — "Glen White: The Town That Was Forgotten in the Allegheny Mountains" by Kevin Stiver.

■ July 19 — "The Underground Railroad in Blair County" by Harriet Gaston.

■ Aug. 16 — "Blair County War Memorials and their Heroes" by Julia Plummer Schokker.

■ Sept. 20 — "The Martinsburg Indian School" by Cori Shirk, Jodi Stouffer and Frank Vitale IV.

■ Oct. 18 — "White Ladies, Hairy Bests and Things That Go Bump in the Night" by Michael Allison.

■ Nov. 15 — "Altoona in Photos 1968-1971 Part II: AHS and Railroad Areas Before Urban Redevelopment" by Dr. Michael Farrow.

The Blair County Historical Society once again will be holding lectures at ARMM on the third Wednesday of each month. They start at 7:00 p.m. The ones held so far have been standing room only so plan to come early to get a seat.

The Horseshoe Curve incline is still out of service. If you wish to view trains from topside you can walk up the 194 steps to the trackside viewing since the Curve Gift Shop and Museum is now open. Of course, you must then walk back down those 194 steps to get back to your car.

The incline at Johnstown is also out of service. They are awaiting replacement parts which may not be in for months. For that reason it may be shut down until late Fall.

It's a shame that these two inclines will be shut down during the main tourist season.

K-4 SLOWLY CHUGGING ALONG

by Leonard Alwine

On Thursday, May 18th, NRHS member John Fisher made arrangements to take me down to ARMM to view firsthand the progress the K-4 1361 is making.

John introduced me to Mike Reindl, the local lead worker on the K-4. For almost an hour, Mike gave me a personal tour of the many parts and pieces laying around the roundhouse that he and others are working at rebuilding.

After spending that time with Mike I now understand why the K-4 is not “steamed up” yet and most likely will not be for some time.

Many things done in the past to the K-4 have had to be redone or replaced due to not passing tests for current steam operations.

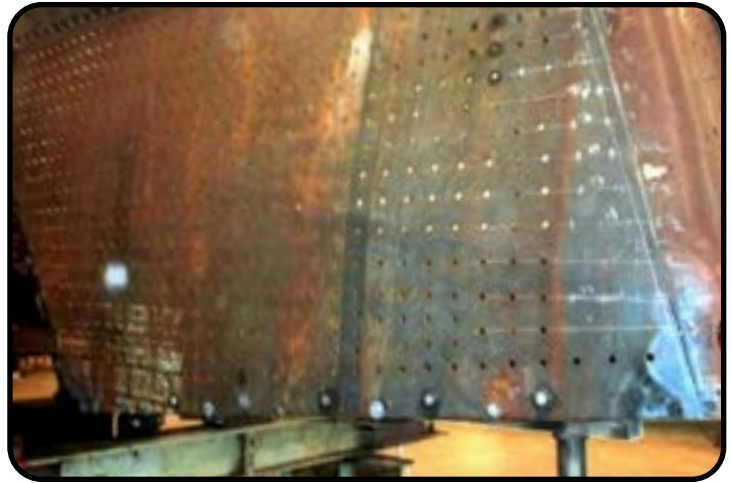
All the boiler pieces and bolts, etc., must pass a pressure test of 820 psi. That is because the boiler will operate at 205 psi and the materials must pass a four times test according to FRA requirements. Also all parts must be x-rayed to make sure things are pure with no flaws in materials or in the heat penetration of the welds. Already the steam dome had flunked the test twice and then had to be rebuilt and welded. Every six inch square area on the boiler including bolts and welds must be x-rayed.



Mike pointing out one of the squares and bolt needing x-rayed and documented for the boiler rebuild.

The water jacket for the boiler is made of 15/16 inch thick steel which came in a 10 foot by 16 foot piece which had to be cut and fitted, bent and then have almost 1000 holes drilled into it for the staybolts. There is one for each side of the engine. Recently ordered are the pieces of steel for the inside of the water jacket which too will have to be cut, bent and have holes drilled in it. These holes must be exact so as to line up with the outside piece so when the staybolts are placed in them they will hold the two pieces together without any distortion.

Photo of the one side with the many holes (about 1000 per side) already drilled into it.



The primary contractor for the mechanical side of the project is FMW who does all the inspections on all the parts as they are made. They also have to report everything done to the FRA and that report is already 200 pages long.

Once the boiler is completed and passes tests, progress will speed up as the many parts laying all over the roundhouse will be bolted on and the K-4 will begin to look like a steam engine again.

Before we left I asked Mike when he thought that might happen? His reply was “in the future sometime”. With all those holes yet to be laid out and drilled, I guess we will not be shoveling coal any time soon.

Anyhow, thank you Mike for your time helping to explain the slow process of rebuilding the K-4 1361.

ANOTHER PROJECT ONGOING AT ARMM

Another project underway at ARMM is the restoration of a bay window caboose. The outside has been sanded and primed and now work is underway on the inside. A crew of volunteers assemble at the roundhouse each Thursday night to work on this project.



NRHS members Joe Harrella and Zack Noonan look out of the bay window of the caboose they are helping to restore.

130TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL SERVICE

by Larry McKee & John Fisher

On May 24th at 10 a.m., a memorial service was held at Vail on the site of the Walter L. Main Circus Train Wreck of 1893. The service remembered and honored the five men who lost their lives in the derailment along with over 100 circus horses and animals also killed in the wreck.

The shows entire collection of cages and show wagons were crushed and lost in the wreck as well as 13 of the 17 cars in the train. Luckily, the three sleeper cars stayed on the track because the combination car (lunch car) turned sideways and did not go over the bank and these sleeper cars ran into it and stopped. Most of the shows performers were asleep in these cars along with some workers. Even so, many of them had injuries due to the wreck.

Ahead of the combination car was three stack cars for the horses, animals and elephants in the show. The first 10 flat cars held all the wagons and they were destroyed along with the flat cars coming to rest in a pile about 40 high at the bottom of the bank.

The train left Houtzdale for Lewistown, it's next stop 80 miles away, when Engineer Red Creswald stopped the train at Summit for the 10 mile trip down the mountain to Vail, he asked for another engine to help his PRR engine #1500 to help hold the consist back while descending the mountain. He was told by dispatch that another engine and the expense of another crew was not needed because 17-20 car trains regularly descend the mountain with only one engine. He tried to explain that this train was twice the length and weight of a regular 17 car train because the circus cars were 70 feet long making the train over 1/4 mile long. He was told to get down the mountain or be fired by dispatch since it was already several hours late. So he left and was soon traveling faster than it should have been, estimated at twice the recommended speed for this area. The train derailed near the bottom about a 1/2 mile from the Vail station.

The memorial program is produced by the Tyrone Area Historical Society and Susie O'Brian who is a resident of the wreck site and has devoted many years into preserving artifacts from the wreck. This year she was helped by the Adam Forebaugh Tent No. 2 Emmet Kelly Bella Nook Tent No. 41, The John Ringling North II Steven Ryan Tent No. 170 of the Circus Fans of America, and also the Friestate Clown Alley No. 30. As part of the service a wreath was laid at the memorial monument at the wreck site and later that day a wreath was laid at Grandview Cemetery on the graves of the two canvas men who died in the wreck.

Susie O'Brian also had a new book (including the original painting of a book by Fred E. Long) available at the modest fee of \$5.00.

The service was attended by over 40 people and was very humbling and moving.

EDITORS NOTE: Larry McKee and John Fisher are members of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS. Larry is also President of the Adam Forebaugh Tent No. 2 organization.

A LOOK BACK

ALTOONA PRR STATION MEMORIES



Altoona High School Band playing for the arrival of the American Freedom Train.

Special baggage carts used to transport caskets of soldiers from the PRR trains to waiting hearses during WWII.



Shift change workers using the 12th Street foot bridge beside PRR station in the 1920's.

Altoona PRR Station during the early 1960's.

