

Official Newsletter  
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

**Winter 2023**

**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

[jdefrancesco@railroadcity.org](mailto:jdefrancesco@railroadcity.org)

**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.**

**THE COAL BUCKET  
WINTER ISSUE  
DECEMBER 2023 - MARCH 2024**

Winter can be a cold, dark and discouraging time of year, especially if you are an old truck, robbed of some of your parts, and sitting in a junkyard.

But even then, a fresh layer of white snow and some bright sunlight can make a beautiful photo preserving the past.

Let us all keep that in mind as we go through this winter, I am always looking for more of these photo opportunities to share in future Coal Bucket issues.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
FROM THE COAL BUCKET STAFF**

Editor & Writer: Leonard Alwine

Local Yard News & Minutes: Joe Harrella

Typesetting & Mailing: Tracey Shook

Proofreading: Frank & Karin Givler

## ALLIED MOLDING CORPORATION PART 2

by Leonard Alwine

In the Summer 2023 Issue of the Coal Bucket, I wrote an article about the colorful PCC cars I had in my collection. I promised that I would do another story about the other vehicles, trains, and houses that are also part of that collection. Again, I do not know how many colors these were modeled in, as I have many different ones in my collection. Back in my “without much money” days, I used these on my Christmas HO train layout until I could afford Matchbox cars and Plasticville houses for the layout village.

Well, about Thanksgiving I remembered that promise as I was working on the Winter 2023 issue, so it was back to the attic and after some more digging I had enough small plastic examples to do another article with photos of them, so here is Part 2.

Besides the PCC cars, there were two different years of automobiles (1940's and 1950's). Also, the 1950's car was made in two different sizes. There was also a fire rescue squad, a tow truck, and a tractor trailer made in two different sizes and an ambulance.

Again, some were made of hard plastic and some a rubber type and in many different colors.

There were also different train engines and rail cars made along with a few houses and businesses.

I also found a collection of Army vehicles I forgot I had from this time period that were made by MO-HAWK plastics which used some of the Allied molds: the tractor trailer, ambulance and the smaller 1950's car. It also had Jeeps and tanks in this set. Not sure if they used the same molds with stars embossed on them or if they were a totally separate company. It is hard to find information on 75 years old toys that most kids would have broken and thrown out in the late 1950's.

Also, another interesting toy that I found many years ago was a 1:25 scale model of the fire rescue truck. Again, I have had this truck for at least 55 or more years since I have always liked fire trucks. My dad usually got me models of them in his travels since he was a fireman too.

Anyway, these are interesting and if you find any at sales, they are usually in the \$1.00 to \$2.00 range, which is a cheap way of remembering your past, playing with them on the Christmas train layout.



Front row: fire truck, tow truck,  
two different tractor trailers.

Back row: PCC trolley, travel trailer,  
1940's car,  
and 1950's car.



Steam and diesel engine, showing size



Houses, churches, bank, post office, theater, ranch house, 2 story house



Train set with tender gondola, box car and caboose



Mohawk Army set with tractor trailer, ambulance, Jeep, small car and tanks



Fire rescue squads both small and 1:25 scale

## UNDER THE WIRE

by Leonard Alwine

In this issue is a reprint of an article found in the April 8, 1950 Altoona Mirror about the building of the Star Diner.

Not all Logan Valley street cars were burnt for scrap as can be seen in the photo of this diner being constructed. Two of them (Car #159 shown) were taken across 6th Avenue from the car barn and made into a diner. The photo shows one sitting on the foundation.

They were remodeled for this use. Late in life they were an office for a used car lot located there. At that time, I attempted to get inside one and take some photos, but the man in the office didn't want anything to do with that so I left. A few years later the lot closed and the building was torn down (1990's). So the last two Logan Valley trolleys went to the land fill near Juniata.

# Star Diner Is Erected From Street Cars

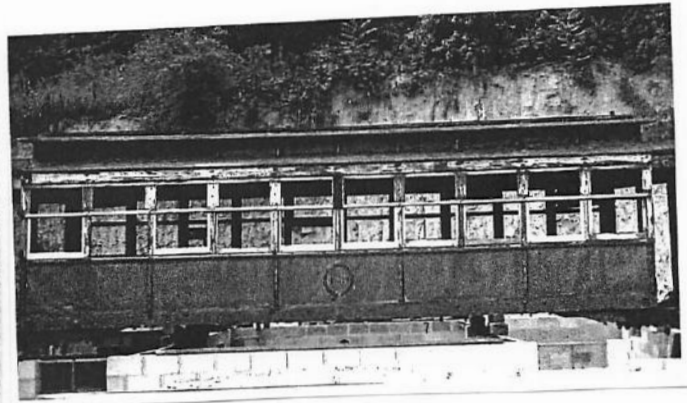
The Star diner, newest edition to Altoona's expanding mercantile area in the southwestern section of the city, formerly opened today at 3404 Sixth avenue under the joint ownership of Franks Loucks and Pauline Shaeffer.

Although it is one of the most complete and up-to-date eating places in the central Pennsylvania area, the diner will bring nostalgic memories to many patrons. It has been constructed from two antiquated street cars that at one time traversed the city's streets.

The diner will remain open 24 hours a day and specialize in full-course dinners. Free parking space adjacent to the diner and across the street from the Logan Valley

Bus company garage is available to patrons.

The owners offer a cordial invitation to the public to inspect their new diner over the Easter holiday.



## LOCAL YARD NEWS AND CHAPTER MINUTES

by Joe Harella

### HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

#### REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

AUGUST 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS scheduled for August 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2023 was canceled. The chapter picnic however was held on August 27<sup>TH</sup> at the Horseshoe Curve. A good time was had by all.

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

**HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS**

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS scheduled for September 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 was canceled. The chapter did however schedule a hot dog cook out/fire to be held on Saturday September 23<sup>RD</sup>. The weather however decided not to cooperate and so the event was canceled.

**JOSEPH HARELLA**

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

**HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS**

**HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS**

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

**OCTOBER 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on October 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Frank Givler at 7:10 P.M.. The meeting was held at Perkin's Family Restaurant.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved by Denny Walls, second by Ralph Simpson. The motion passed.

The financial statements were read by Treasurer Denny Walls. Ron Givler made a motion to accept the financial report, Don Goebel second, the motion passed. Denny also reported that the 2024 calendars are now in. The cost is still \$13.00.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. Pres. Givler reminded everyone that due to our picnic in August and the wiener roast in September [ which had to be canceled ] we did not hold meetings in those months.
2. Bus Trip To Lancaster- Dick Charlesworth reported on his bus/train trip to Lancaster. We had 42 people on the trip, which netted a profit of \$1,092.24. We split the profit between the Chapter and the K4 project which gave each one \$546.12. Dick also informed us that Dean and Nancy McKnight had to cancel out on the trip but rather than taking a refund, they asked Dick to find someone else who would like to go, which he did. Dick also asked for any ideas for a future bus trip as he said that he will do just one more.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Christmas Dinner- A discussion was held on the time and date of the dinner. Ron Givler made a motion Don Goebel second to have the dinner on Saturday, December 2<sup>ND</sup> at 6:00 P.M., if the Geeseytown Fire Hall is available. The motion passed. Denny will check on the firehall. Holland Brothers will cater the meal.

2. Storage for the Walters- Treasurer Denny Walls made out a check and gave it to Pres. Givler for \$840.00 for storage for the Walters.
3. Alto Model Train Collectors Train Show- The show will be held on November 5<sup>TH</sup> at the Convention Center from 9:00 to 2:00 P.M.. The cost is still \$5.00.
4. Additional AMTRAK Train-Dick Charlesworth reported that AMTRAK is discussing the possibility of putting on an additional train that would pass through Altoona. Plans are moving along for the necessary track work , as well as the purchase of possibly two new train sets.
5. Light Standards at the Museum- Three or four light standards that were used to light up the 1939 World's Fair in New York, will soon be lighting up the yard at the Railroader's Memorial Museum in Altoona. The lights were donated to the museum and stand about 100 feet tall. They will be an added attraction to all of the improvements that are currently under way.

#### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

1. Chapter Office Space in the Museum- Some time ago it was discussed about the Chapter having some office space in the museum, possibly on the 4<sup>TH</sup> floor. Dick said that he would talk to Joe Defrancesco. It would be a place for the Chapter to store and display railroad items.
2. VHS TAPES- Member John Fisher informed us that Virginia Seidel gave him boxes of Dave's vhs tapes. They are free to anyone interested in them. John said that he will bring some of the tapes to the next meeting.
3. K4 Hallmark Christmas Ornaments- Len Alwine wanted to let everyone know that this year Hallmark is coming out with a special ornament featuring K4s 1361. The ornaments are part of the Lionel Trains edition in the Hallmark Keepsake Series. They are now available at Chris's Hallmark store in the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center.

Ron Givler then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Nick Martino second, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 P.M.—18 Members Present.

**ATTENDANCE :** Ron Givler, Mary Ann Stanley, George Stanley, Marge Simpson, Ralph Simpson, Dee Hartman, Don Goebel. Will Teeter, Zach Noonan, Larry McKee, John Fisher, Nick Martino, Karin Givler, Frank Givler, Dick Charlesworth, Mary Jane Walls, Denny Walls, Joe Harella

JOSEPH HARELLA  
RECORDING SECRETARY  
HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

## **HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS**

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on November 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Frank Givler at 7:08 P.M.. The meeting was held at Perkin's Family Restaurant.

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

The financial statements were read by Treasurer Denny Walls. All bills have been paid and the check for storing the Walters has been delivered. Ron Givler made a motion to accept the financial report, Don Goebel second. The motion passed.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Chapter Christmas Party-The party will be held on Saturday, December 2<sup>ND</sup>. The doors at the Geeseytown Firehall will open at 5:00 P.M., dinner will be served at 6:00. The cost of the dinner this year is \$21.00 per person. Joe DeFrancesco will be the guest speaker.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Election of Officers- Pres. Givler asked the members if they would be agreeable to keeping the current officers for another term? Don Goebel made a motion to retain the current slate of officers for another term, Ralph Simpson second, the motion passed.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

1. Purchase of Chapter Cars- Dick Charlesworth reported on how the chapter went about purchasing these cars. The Erie Lackawanna MU cars were a fleet of electric multiple unit commuter cars and ran primarily in the state of New Jersey. A small contingent of chapter members led by Roy Hunt visited this fleet of cars and picked out three that deemed to be in good condition. The cars were purchased in 1985. The cost of the cars was \$5000 each – a total of \$15000. Back home financing was arranged for a monthly payment of \$200.00. The cars kept many chapter members busy over the years with ongoing maintenance and repairs. It all paid off though in the long run with a tremendous boost to our bank account. Two of the three cars continue to operate in passenger service today provided by the Everett Railroad. A job well done.!
2. Office Space for the Chapter in the Museum Pres. Givler informed everyone that he will speak to the museum Executive Director Joe DeFrancesco about office space for the chapter. The office will probably be located on the fourth floor.
3. Valley Dairy Restaurant- Don Goebel suggested that we could possibly try out a new location to hold our meeting. The restaurant is located in the Walmart plaza and has a meeting room similar to the one at Perkins. Pres. Givler said that we might try it out some time.

The Chapter would like to extend our sincere sympathies and condolences to the family and friends of Dick Mitchell on his passing.



Ron Givler then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ralph Simpson second, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25P.M.—14 Members Present.

**ATTENDANCE**- Ron Givler, Dee Hartman, Don Goebel, Betsie Price, Gary Price, Marge Simpson, Ralph Simpson, Karin Givler, Frank Givler, Dan Summers, Dick Charlesworth, Maryjean Walls, Denny Walls, Joe Harella

JOSEPH HARELLA  
RECORDING SECRETARY  
HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

**TAKING A SPECIAL LOOK BACK**  
**FIFTY YEARS AGO**  
by Leonard Alwine

This past Fall I acquired a special Altoona Mirror issue at a yard sale for \$1.00. It was the 100th birthday issue of the newspaper. It was printed June 13, 1974 and had a total of 76 pages.

It was also printed the size that the newspaper used to be, 15" x 22". Besides being fragile it was hard to hold since I am now used to today's paper size. Fully opened it was 30" x 22".

The first few pages were the history of the Mirror and the early people who were the head editors and writers. Also the early owners of the paper. Most of these people also had photos of them in the article which made this a "sort of" history book. Well worth the \$1.00 I paid for it, just for this section. Also some of the head writers of today were then listed as "new" with young photos of them included.

Of course, the main purpose of any newspaper is to make money and many local businesses were sold ads in this special edition. There were almost 100 ads from local businesses in this paper.

The amazing thing was that 66 were no longer in business today. These were major businesses and institutions from the area. Times do change.

A few of those major ones are listed below (just a few of each category). How many of these do you remember?

**STORES:**

Gable's, Wolf's Furniture, Bonton, Shirley's Shoes, Wissinger's, IGA, K-mart, The Music Hut, A&P Super Markets, ACME Markets, Meyer Johnason's, AG Food Stores, George's TV and Ford Music Store

**CAR DEALERSHIPS:**

Montgomery Volkswagon, Bill Book Chevrolet, Blair County Jeep, Condrin Oldsmobile, Mierley Motors, Suburban Dodge, Piper Auto Body

**BOTTLERS AND BAKERS:**

Jack Frost Bottling (7-up), Nehi Bottling Works (RC Cola), Coca Cola Bottling, Penn Alto Bottling (Pepsi), Servomation Corp, McMahon's Dairy, J.E. Hershberger Dairy, Marhofer Bakery, Haller Holsum Bakery

**MANUFACTURERS:**

Stanley Electric, SKF Industries, Schwarzenbach Huber Sportswear, Saf-T-Bak, Puritan Sportswear, Vogue-Butterick Patterns, Brumbaugh Body Works

**PLACES TO ENJOY YOURSELF:**

Blatt Bros Theaters, Alaskaland Ice Cream Parlor, Hotel Penn Alto Lounge, Altoona YMCA

**OTHER AREA INSTITUTIONS:**

Altoona Hospital, Mercy Hospital, Altoona School of Commerce, Drenning Delivery Service, Blue & White Bus Lines, Alto Printing

These are but a partial listing of businesses no longer here 50 years later. I remembered going to a lot of these places when I was younger. Makes you think what ones that are here today that will not be here in the next special edition of the Altoona Mirror?

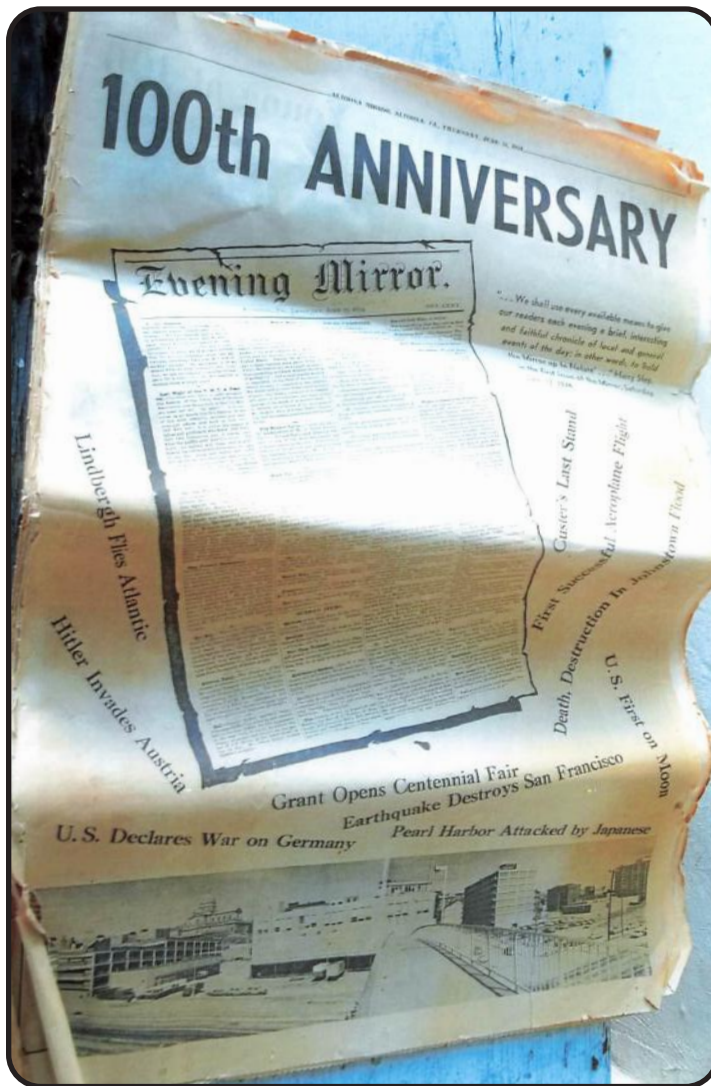


Photo of the newspaper cover  
June 13, 1974

In keeping with the 50 years ago theme, the following events took place in the area:

1. Raymond Garvin was elected President and David Seidel Vice President of the newly formed Railroaders Memorial Museum Inc.
2. John Shearer, a retired PRR locomotive repairman inspected the K-4 at the Curve and said that he felt the locomotive 1361 could be put back into running condition for \$100,000.00.
3. When a dozen trash cans at Horseshoe Curve were vandalized officials thought it was kids loitering at the Curve at night, but further evidence showed that it was bears coming down the mountains.
4. The world's largest miniature circus was to be displayed at Gable's Toyland for the Christmas season. It had over 50,000 hand carved pieces and was a replica for the Ringling Bros-Barnum & Bailey Circus complete with wagons, animals and the big top.
5. The dedication of the new 17th Street Bridge over the PRR mainline was held and it was named by Redevelopment Authority Chairman Roy McDaniel as the "Gateway to the Heartland of Blair County".
6. Winky's Family Restaurant at 7th Avenue and 20th Street held a grand opening for its new dining room addition which had room for 66 diners inside.
7. Robert Gable, former President of Gable's Department Store passed away at age 79. He was the first news photographer for the Altoona Mirror, Altoona Tribune, and the Altoona Times Newspapers. He also helped establish the radio station WFBG.
8. Raymond A. Long was elected chairman of the Altoona & Logan Township Bus Authority. He was also involved with the Blue & White Bus Lines of Altoona.

## **LOGAN VALLEY REMEMBERED**

A new booklet, One Hundred Years Altoona's Mass Transit Buses 1923 - 2023, has recently been released by the Blair County Historical Society. It came from the printer shortly before Thanksgiving and was written by Leonard Alwine.

In the booklet the history of Logan Valley and Amtran buses is traced from the first 1923 Garford bus of Logan Valley to the latest natural gas powered buses of Amtran.

A brief history of the trolleys is included in the booklet as well as a history of the buses used by Logan Valley and the bus authority which took operations November 1, 1959 as the very first bus authority in the state of Pennsylvania and now operates as Amtran (Altoona Metro Transit).

Besides the script, there are 40 plus photos from the collection of the author showing the bus progression over the past 100 years.

The story ends with a manufacturers drawing of a bus on order for mid 2024 delivery which will be painted in Logan Valley colors from the Gillig bus builder.

This booklet is available from the Blair County Historical Society's gift shop at the Baker's Mansion Museum in Altoona. (The Bakers' were the builders of the City & Park Railway, a forerunner of Logan Valley and The Lakemont Park. Both of these businesses became part of Logan Valley Electric Railway August 5, 1903.)

The cost of the booklet is very reasonable at \$5.00, well worth that price for the cover photo alone.

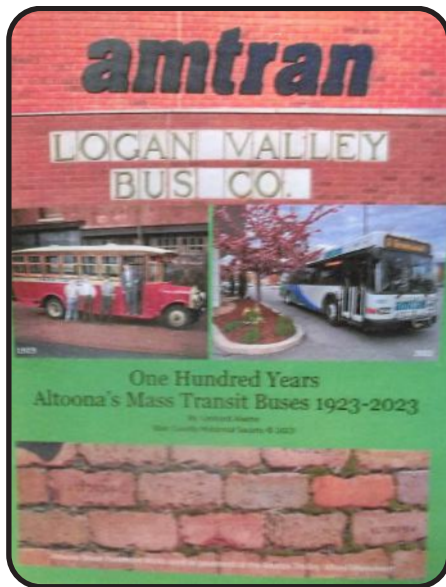


Photo of the book cover showing buses from 1923 and 2022.

## **LOCAL TRUCK PRESERVED**

**by Leonard Alwine**

This past Fall another piece of local history was preserved and put on display. Ward Trucking truck #855 was restored and put on display at the Ward complex in Greenwood across from the corporate offices.

Truck #855 is a 1980 International City delivery truck which traveled the Altoona city streets for about 20 years. After retirement, it was parked near the garage in Greenwood and used to store unusable parts from other trucks being retired.

In the Spring of 2023, as many of those other older "parts" trucks were being cleaned out, it was decided to keep #855 as it still looked good. With a little coaxing the shop employees got #855 running again. Then the paint shop took over and gave it a 1980's paint scheme and polished it's bumper and van body to look new again.

It was then placed on a cement slab across from the corporate offices in Greenwood for all to see.

Ward Trucking was started by W.W. Ward in 1931 with one truck. Today, Ward Trucking is a country wide trucking and logistics company still operated by Mr. Ward's descendants.



## **CHRISTMAS DINNER 2023**

**by Leonard Alwine**

On Saturday, December 2, 2023, 48 chapter members met at the Geeseytown Fire Hall at about 5:30 for the annual Christmas Dinner party.

The tables were very festively decorated by Karin Givler. At 6:00 p.m. Ron Givler said a prayer for the chapter members and blessed the food.

The meal was catered by Holland Bros. and consisted of roast beef, turkey, filling, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, cole slaw, roll and butter along with coffee and iced tea. Apple or pumpkin pie for dessert.

Following the meal, Joe DeFrancesco from Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum was the guest speaker. He jokingly said he had about 5000 slides to show about the progress and improvements made at ARMM and the Horseshoe Curve the past year.

The slides shown recorded all the progress in the yard at ARMM from the holes and dirt piles to the finished stage, statue area, sidewalks made of cement and new green grass sod placed on the ground. It was amazing to see the difference from the dirt to the almost finished yard today. A few more things need finished to complete that project, hopefully by the end of the year 2023.

Also, the 4th floor of the building has been remodeled and painted and workers are now installing shelves so that paper archives can be stored in a safe and dry place.

In the roundhouse, K-4 1361 has had the fire box fit and it is now down south getting the many holes drilled in it. The bay window caboose has been sandblasted and is primed. Also, Engine 2020 for the Penn State Rail Engineering class has arrived in a shiny blue and white color. Both ARMM and NRHS Chapter donate funds to sponsor students for this class.

In front of the old museum building the area has been cleared up and space made to park food trucks for events held at the museum.

At Horseshoe Curve, much brush and some trees have been cut and now viewing the trains going around the tracks is much improved. In the gift shop, the walls have been repainted and new carpet installed. Also, an area has been set up for visitors to purchase sandwiches, cookies and drinks and a picnic pavilion built at the top of the curve to enjoy those snacks.

It was a nice update for the members to see what has been going on for the past year, at both locations.

Following his speech, the members then helped clean the tables and then wished everyone a Merry Christmas and all left shortly after 9:00 p.m.

## IN MEMORY

This issue announces the passing of Richard E. "Dick" Mitchell, July 19, 1944 - November 19, 2023.

Although Dick was not a chapter member, he was involved in the model railroad scene in Altoona for many years. He owned and operated Dick's Train Store in Juniata and could be seen making trees for the layout at the Alto Model Train Association almost any week.

May you rest in peace, Dick.

### **Richard E. 'Dick' Mitchell**

*July 19, 1944 - Nov. 19, 2023*

Richard E. "Dick" Mitchell, 79, Altoona, passed away Sunday at his home.

He was born in Altoona, son of the late Lester and Kathryn (Estep) Mitchell.

He married Terry Cowher in Altoona in 1965.



**Mitchell**

In addition to his wife of 58 years, Terry, he is survived by two sons, Grant and Brian, both of Altoona.

Dick retired after 31 years of service from Norfolk Southern Corp. as a machinist and foreman. He owned and operated Dick's Train Store in Juniata for many years and also spun as DJ Spinner for 15 years.

He was a member of the Alto Model Train Association Inc. and enjoyed his many friends and the members of the two local model train clubs. Dick also adored his loving family.

He served two years in the U.S. Navy as a Radar man.

Friends will be received from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 22, 2023, at **Mauk & Yates Funeral Home Inc.**, 719 N. Fourth Ave., Altoona. Interment will be made at Alto-Reste Park.