



THE YELLA BOARD

Volume 53 Number 1

MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM
Where "I've Been Working On the
Railroad" Becomes a Reality.
May—June 2020



“ It is a cool October day as 401 has arrived the Monticello Depot and passengers mill about waiting the call for boarding and the return of the sounds of a steam locomotive in action. Art Purchase photo

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**THE
OBSERVATION
PLATFORM**



June 2020

“Will the last one out, please turn out the lights”

**Dale Jenkins
Editor - Senior Conductor**

It is being observed that we are living in unusual times. In the history of this museum, this is the first time that we have shut the doors to the public. Now where do we go from here? With social distancing the rule, car capacity is reduced. After each run, additional duties include the sanitation of the cars before the next run. Whether we like it or not, the conductor and car attendant must breathe through a face mask. To use the term, “bottom line” this operation would provide a meager income. With the year 2020 now half over, the balance of the year does not look any better. The Polar Express will have a set of its own unique problems. Seating families together and yet away from others, and yet the dancers would be even closer than the mandated six feet. Cleaning the cars would be mandatory, as if the crews responding to the clarion call is being taxed: without this additional duty. Think in terms of a youngster viewing Santa wearing a face mask, which will surely lead to an uncomfortable encounter.

The Polar Express is the one large means of revenue generation on the property. Couple this with the reduction of membership participation, it poses the question of what next? This cannot last forever, but what can be done in the meantime.

Behind the scenes are a core of dedicated members whom are working on the various projects that will come into fruition now and into the future. The mindset is to keep building now, and be ready for the future then. The future survival of this museum not only depends on the museum visitor, but the continued rehabilitation of equipment. This is in addition to the maintenance of the equipment in service and the grounds.

This dedicate crew of members practice the required mandate of compliance, but continue to produce results. This continued effort is not without the problem of a sufficient number of member participation in a work force to meet the demand for completing a project. These days everyone is busy and leisure time is limited. However, this begs the question, “Is this time satisfying?” Does your leisure time seem to lack something that offers you the feeling of accomplishment? May I suggest that if this is the case, to channel this energy towards the development of a comradery with other members as you see your joint efforts develop into a functional unit of the museum. The personal satisfaction of knowing that you are part of the future of this museum, the pride of observing your contribution for all to witness.

A day or a month, or a month of days, can make the difference for the future survival of the museum: your participation is needed! No one wants to be the “last one to turn off the lights”.



THE BACK SHOP

By Kent McClure
Chief Mechanical Officer

Wabash F7A #1189 1189 was used as usual. We had no issues with this unit this year, other than a hot-start power issue which turned out to be a bad cable.

ALCO FPA4 #6789 was in service this past season, working without issue.

Milwaukee Road NW2 #1649 continued to work without issue through the fall, after all the work done by Paul Nelson and Al Strange to get the leaky power

assembly (discussed in a previous Yella Board) re-sealed.

IC GP11 #8733 The GP11 has seen normal service this season, with no further indications of a water leak as discussed in a previous Yella Board.

Southern Steam Locomotive #401 was in service as usual for this past season. During the operating season, about a half a dozen tubes have been re-rolled as they begin to weep. With the loco due for a re-tubing before the 2021 season, the weeping tubes are not of much concern since they will be removed at the end of the 2020 season. The new PEEK check valve on the right side has worked as well as expected, requiring no attention. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the BOD decided to move the 1472 day inspection up, starting on that work summer of 2020. New boiler tubes are on site for this project.

IC Diner #4110 A third refrigerator was placed in service in this car late in the summer, and seems to be working well. Having these refrigerators available made stocking of Polar supplies easier. There are still two freezers to bring back to life should we determine we need them in working order. The “curtains” for the windows are still in process. The firm working on that project was swamped with work from higher-paying customers, so our project was pushed back. We have hope this spring will see them complete. The Covid 19 pandemic has also impacted this project, further delaying the curtain project.

IC Combine #892 The new sash (windows) in this car were finally completed late in the fall. Many thanks to Syl Keller, Al Strange, Eric Schafer and Dennis Slone for their work in fitting, trimming, fitting, and re-trimming each window into their respective openings. Finally, the new hardware and shades were installed, making the car nearly complete in the coach section. So, entering this car is stepping back to 1916, short of the upholstery, which as-built was Rattan. Considering the difficulty of getting rattan, and applying it, we used alternative material. The addition of the inner sash greatly reduced the sweating of the glass on the inside of the car during Polar Express, making it easier to see out of the car for the whole trip. Many, many thanks to the John H. Emery Trust for their generous funding of this work.

IC Coach #2612 This car was used only during Polar. This past spring fling session saw the car converted to electric overhead heat, and the shortening of the leaking interior radiation, removing the leaking portion, and adding a small amount (1500 watts) of electric heat to the hallway where the floor radiation was removed. This work turned out to be trouble-free during Polar Express, and also now allows us to heat this car when steam is not available, and the ambient temperatures are not terribly cold. The car decorators really like that, as well as the car cleaners! It is much easier to mop a floor when the water doesn't freeze before it dries!

No further work has been done on the air conditioning conversion as yet, due to work on the power car requiring all of our attention prior to Polar Express.

CN #15421 Jeff Tillman, Paul Jones, John Sciutto, Travis Atchison, Bill Lygiros, Philip Lopez, Matt Kluge, Dennis Slone, Daniel Frye, Syl Keller, Al Strange and Mark Weckel all jumped in this fall assisting with new water tank welding/painting/installation/plumbing, having them ready to go well before Polar Express. They were also on hand to assist with the installation of the new genset, getting it bolted down, and working on modifying the roof hatch, and getting it painted and ready to reinstall. Also a special thanks to John Sciutto for having to make several treks to Cummins of Normal to get parts/antifreeze/etc. on short notice. John also fabricated new steps and platforms, mostly out of bits and pieces of expanded metal and angle iron he could scrounge up. The platforms protect the main power wiring as it leaves the genset and heads toward the battery box from which it feeds the HEP trainline.

The newly built and installed transformer/rectifier Jeff Tillman installed in the spring to power the steam generator was placed in service this fall, and works much better than the previous arrangement. Running the steam generator from a three phase source through a three phase transformer/rectifier removed a large source of current imbalance on the genset.

All work done on the genset cooling system during spring fling by Bruce Jarrett, was leak and trouble free. All new belts were installed, replacing what appeared to be original belts from 1987. New radiator hoses were also installed at this time. After a season of Polar, we have a pretty good handle on fuel use of the new unit. During Polar, the old arrangement used an average of 10 gallons of fuel per hour, and could only electrically carry half of the train, with diner 4112's generator powering the rest of the train. Now, the power car is carrying the entire train electrically, as well as steam, at an average burn rate of 11 gallons/hour, dependent on ambient temperature and therefore, steam demand. Plus, we no longer need to use the genset on 4112 except during the short period of time the power car is not coupled to the train during the run-around moves. On top of that, NO lube oil was needed for make-up oil in the genset! With the old Detroit unit, we'd go through about six gallons of lube oil during Polar as well, with most of it leaking out and dripping onto sorbents on the car floor. So, while the new unit uses slightly more fuel, being able to not use 4112's genset saves us about 160 gallons over what we used in previous years. All this said, we still have enough generating capacity within the train to run everything should something happen to the main genset during Polar, allowing the operation to continue if there is a problem with the main genset.

Bates and Rogers Crane was utilized during Railroad Days, primarily to move various freight and passenger car trucks off of active tracks, and onto a length of panel track put together by Syl Keller and Paul Jones. It was also used during a weekend in July to stack a pair of trucks, and to move a surplus weed mower adjacent to the Milmine building where it will be dismantled for spare parts as time permits. Travis Atchison, Brian Downing, Bill Lygiros, Philip Lopez, Don Bodine and his son all spent time learning to operate this antique, yet very useful piece of equipment.

Snowplow CP 40065 Dave Marshall, Dennis Slone, Art Purchase, Paul Jones, Syl Keller, John Sciutto and others have been at work on this car. Most of the major wood work on this car is now complete, and the car is currently being stripped of paint both inside and out. Dennis Slone has done most of the interior stripping, and Syl Keller, Paul Jones, Bruce Backus, George Roadcap and Al Strange are working on stripping the exterior. This is quite a job due to the extreme amount of paint on the steel parts of the car.

IC Coach 2920 Dennis Slone, Matt Weaver, Dave Berndt and Eric Schafer worked on scraping many years of dirt and paint overspray off of coach 2920's windows, making the view out of the car clearer than it has been in many years. This was a tedious process, using razor blades to initially, carefully, scrape the bulk of the stuff off the surface of each exterior window, then polishing the exterior glass with a glass polishing compound and a small power buffer. Then each pane had to be washed. This left quite a mess on the side of the car, requiring it be washed prior to Polar. Bill Lygiros then washed 2920 and 1827 prior to Polar.

Other items: After Polar, Bill Lygiros and Doug Capuder drained and winterized both diners, which is another tedious, yet necessary process every year to prevent freeze damage in the car's water systems.

Additional, early 2020 developments: Our key Spring Fling instigator, Bruce Backus, an MRM member since 1972, has finally retired. He retired from Norfolk Southern this past October, where he was based in Atlanta as an Electrical Engineer, Locomotive Design. He has moved "back home" (he grew up in Decatur), buying a house here in Monticello. He has thrown himself in to all the work needed here, particularly in the passenger equipment. He has been working with refrigeration units in both diners and IC Office car #7, and has installed a new condenser fan/motor in coach 1827.

In an opportunity, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, Bruce has also spearheaded the desperately needed rebuild of the interior of Rock Island coach 2541. This is a big job we have not had the time to do in the past. This car is such an important staple to our trains, we have not found the time to do more than could be completed over a winter in the past. While the car remains mechanically sound (including undergoing a truck rebuild during the 2011 winter), the pandemic has forced additional down time upon us. So, making lemonade out of lemons, the additional down time will allow us to try to completely go through the interior, replacing the ceiling, lower wall panels, wiring, possibly the floor, and also converting the car to electric heat. We are also adding additional HEP capacity to the car by adding three more main power cables through the car, along with the requisite HEP connectors. As part of this upgrade, the power distribution for the car will also be updated, and controls added for the electric heat. The latter will be a welcome addition inasmuch as the car heat control has been fully manual since before it came to us, requiring someone to turn on/off steam to the car's radiation as needed. So, naturally the car was always either too hot or too cold. Currently, the car has had much of the interior dismantled, and work is ongoing

The other, recent car shop project was the completion of the restoration of two tank cars received from the old SWIFT (later ADM) elevator in Champaign in November of 2002. Many thanks to Eric Schafer, Dennis Slone, Syl Keller and Paul Jones, Bruce Backus and the late Paul Bundy, for their efforts on these two cars, particularly with the all the work required to replace all the rotted wood blocking and running boards with new material. There was much cutting, milling and drilling, and trial fitting of all the timber involved. Then they had to devise a plan to mark each timber for car and location so they would go back in the place for which they were cut. After all that work, the timbers were sent to Missouri Tie for treatment. Then the waiting began until the painters got the cars painted so they could install the now treated timbers. This freight car project being pushed to completion also happened because Bruce Backus moved back to Monticello and jumped in with both feet. This is a good example of the difference one volunteer can make.

One of these two cars had enough original reporting mark information to return it to what it was, GATX 7297. However, the other car had no complete, legible reporting mark on the car itself. All we could find was a "G?TX 36105 on one truck bolster, and what was left of the second character did not look like it was an "A" Since both of these cars were sold to Swift to store boiler and generator fuel for their Champaign facility during the oil crisis of the 70's, we are somewhat dubious of markings on truck parts as they could have been easily swapped out by GATX pre-sale. So, after discussions with a number of knowledgeable people, we decided to repaint this unidentified car as A.E. Staley, as they had a large fleet of tank cars of this vintage and make. At that point in time, ADM did not have a tank car fleet, so that would not have been an appropriate option.

For those that wonder about working during the pandemic, due to ADM filling us with storage railcars, we have had to keep a number of volunteers on site to be available to move cars should ADM call some out of storage. Other than those occasional moves, those of us here stay busy with the projects we can do without direct, up close help.

As always, many thanks to all of you who have helped with these projects over the past season. We could not get them done without your help!

Kent McClure
CMO

THE ARCHIVES



The David Marshall Collection

Right: On September 17, 2009, the Levianthan steam locomotive came to the museum for a short visit and test run. *Below:* On a cool day in May of 1988, the RS-3 is passing the Nelson Crossing depot.



Above: The view is from the roof of the locomotive shop of the Camp Creek Yard in February of 1989. The three cars are the consist used on the road train.



The three cars are the consist used on the road train.

Left: Rumbling across the Camp Creek Trestle, the Monticello & Sangamon Valley locomotive No. 1 has the train in tow, en route to Monticello, on this fine Spring day of May 1988. Engineer Charlie Daigh is at the throttle, creating a cloud of smoke for the photo effect.



Left: On a very cold day in December of 1988, the “Santa Express” has departed the Nelson Crossing heading for Country Road with Santa aboard, as the train passes the snack car.

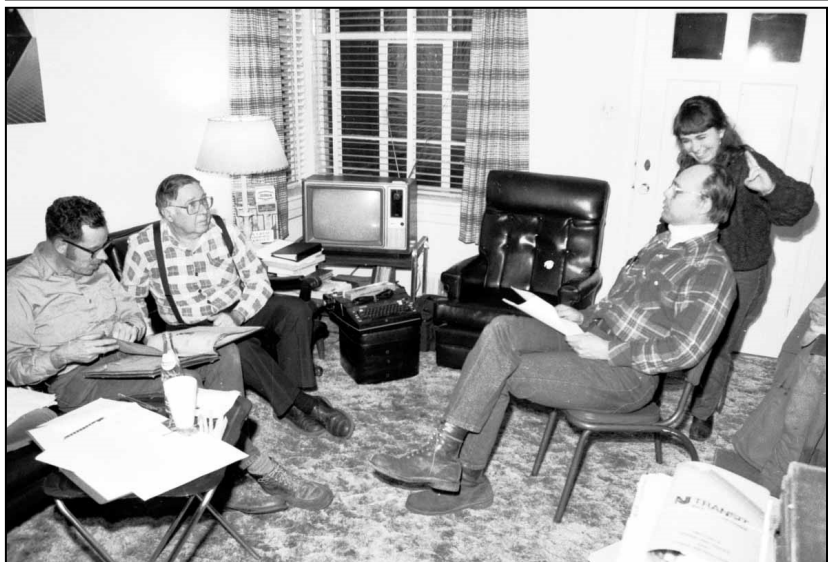
Below: It is Halloween night of 1995 and the “Spook Express” has arrived back to Nelson Crossing and the passengers are detraining to embark on the next “adventure” in the haunted boxcar.



Above: Before there was the Polar Express, the museum operated the Santa Train, departing from the Monticello Station on this December 3, 2001.



Below Right: On January 14, 1991, the Grant Committee held a meeting in the home of a member. The committee consisted of (left to right) John Downing, Dick Stair (deceased) Syl Keller and Donna McClure.





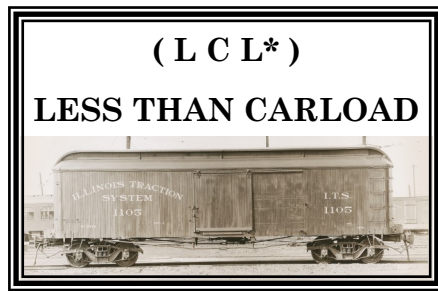
THE
LAST
RUN



In Memoriam

**Charles Werner
May 10, 2020**

Charles (Chuck) Werner, for many years the face of the Illinois Central RR Historical Society who opened the doors of the museum in Paxton for visitors twice a month, passed away May 10, 2020 at his home in Paxton, IL. Born in Kankakee in 1939, his family moved to Paxton where his love for the IC was developed. Chuck married Mary Lou Johnson and they had four children. Chuck and his brother operated a contracting business in the Paxton area. When the Illinois Central Historical Society acquired the former NKP freight house, the office area was depot green, and the freight house had black floors and open rafters. With this, Chuck put his carpentry skills to work assisted by members to convert the freight house into a museum display room. There he would be found at any time either sorting through the vast amount of glass plate negatives that were stored there or organizing displays. He was a true patriot of the Illinois Central and will be missed.



The Illinois Central Historical Society collection is housed in the former NKP Freight house in Paxton, Illinois. This collection is now the North Campus of the Monticello Railway Museum.



Ted Lemen photos



Left: Syl Keller putting the finishing touches on trim after priming/finish coating walls and trim on Nelson depot. The operators window has been replaced with a brand new one manufactured in our wood shop. **Above;** George Roadcap working on painting primer on the restrooms at Nelson crossing. Maintenance of both the grounds and building are an ever-going concern to maintain both appearance and condition of the museum.



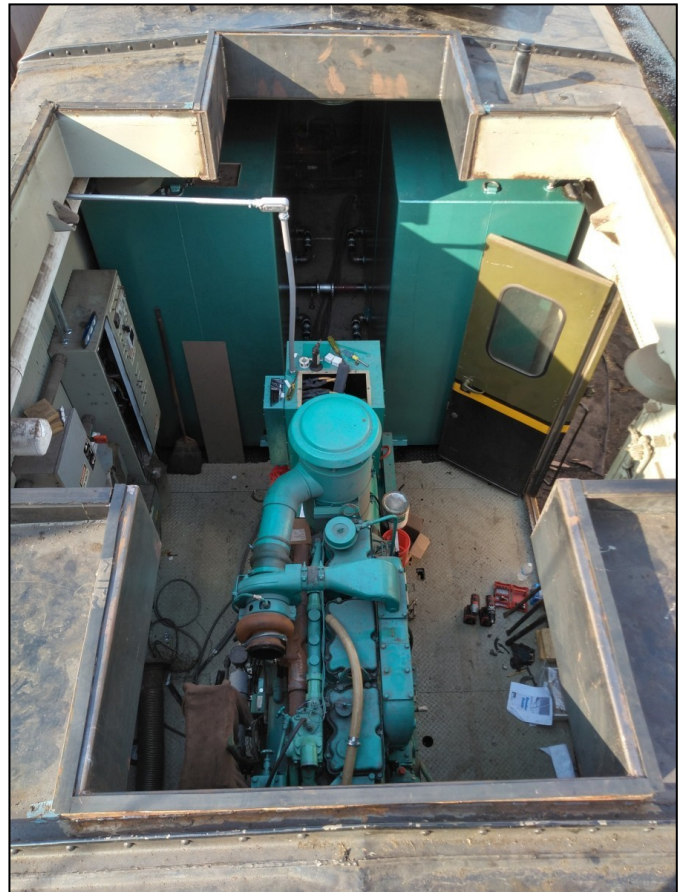
Left: At Peoria the turntable pit will make a nice flower garden. **Right:** Loaded, the turntable is ready to move to its new home. Paul Jones photos





Fresh out of the museum paint shops rolls two fully restored tank cars. The A. E. Staley tank car was assigned to the Decatur plant and carried corn syrup.

Paul Jones photos



Above Left: Eric Schafer looking at work required to anchor the tops of the water tanks to the car sides. Lower foreground shows the base for the new genset in place. **Above Right:** New genset installed in CN 15421, shortly before applying the roof hatch.

Paul Jones photos

MONTICELLO
RAILWAY MUSEUM
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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES



STEAM SCHEDULE

401 in Steam: Ride behind our re-
steam locomotive! stored 1907-vintage

May Saturday: 16 - Sunday: 17
Sunday: 14

July Saturday:

June Saturday: 13 -
18 - Sunday: 19 **August**

Cancelled

Spring Throttle Time - April: Saturday—25 Sunday - 26

School Days - May: Tuesday - 5

Opening Weekend - May: Saturday - 2

Mothers Day - May: Saturday - 9 Sunday - 10

Fathers Day - June: Saturday - 20 Sunday - 21

Fireworks Train - July: Friday - 3

Railroad Days - September: Saturday - 19 Sunday - 20

Fall Throttle Time - October: Saturday - 10 Sunday - 11

The Polar Express™ - To Be announced

Cancelled