



THE YELLA BOARD

Volume 50 Number 2

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

November
December
2017



“ All I want for Christmas is...” the reply from Conductor Dennis Sloan, telling Santa his wish list in exchange for not only being a good boy, but a Grand Polar Express Conductor.

Photo Courtesy Dale Jenkins

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Volume 50 No. 2

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**THE
OBSERVATION
PLATFORM**

Another Successful Polar Express



December 2017

2017 was a very successful year for the Museum, and it contained some rather significant milestones. Perhaps the most notable were the property acquisitions mentioned in the previous Yella Board, primarily the farmland adjacent to Camp Creek Yard. These help ensure that we have room to expand in the future. Again, thanks to the donors who made these acquisitions financially possible. In addition, Stair Tower and the demonstration interlocking were made functional (sans track circuits) for Railroad Days. This has been the culmination of years of work by many volunteers, and again, thanks are due to them that we now have this unique and valuable resource available to us.

Polar Express was quite successful in 2017, as usual. The new Private Car service in IC #7 was very well received and will be featured again in 2018 and beyond. Work on IC diner #4110 is nearly complete; the car will be in Polar Express service in 2018, which will roughly double the number of Deluxe-class tickets available. Polar remains by far the most financially significant event for the Museum, as it provides well over half of our ordinary (non-donation) annual revenue. Many of the "quality of life" improvements we've seen over the past years have been directly enabled by the income from Polar. Anyone wondering what they can do to help the Museum should keep this in mind; continued success and growth of Polar is currently the best way we have to ensure a regular, growing income stream to finance our organization. It is a huge amount of work, but it is worth it. Many, many thanks are owed to all our volunteers, Debbie's Dance Studio, Art In Motion, and our partners in the community who have made Polar possible and successful in 2017.

Of course, huge thanks also go out to all those volunteering work on other projects and general maintenance, from clean-up to track restoration to the gift shop to archiving. Work is proceeding rapidly on the new wood shop at the south end of the Camp Creek car barn. This will be a boon to car restoration, especially in the winter as it will be able to be heated! Also, the mezzanine area above the wood shop will provide some more badly needed storage. Finally, it is expected that at least some new track circuits will be installed for the Stair Tower interlocking in 2018. This will involve a significant amount of track work and wiring and a whole bunch of bonding of joints; help, as usual, is needed.

With the hard work, care, and dedication of all of our volunteers, 2018 will be even more positive than 2017. Thank you.





**THE
BACK
SHOP**

By Kent McClure

Chief Mechanical Officer

Wabash F7A #1189 was finally back in service in time for Polar Express. However, the hot start circulation pump motor burned out, requiring an emergency replacement due to the cold weather.

(The "hot start" is basi-



John Sanner photo

cally a large water heater/circulation system to keep the engine coolant warm in freezing weather). A new pump/motor assembly were required due to the existing pump/motor combination being obsoleted by the manufacturer... already. Paul Nelson had to fight with installing the new pump/motor combination, but had it up and running before the weather really turned cold. Paul has also been busy checking transition shunt relays, as well as the large, series-parallel relays, cleaning, replacing contacts, and generally making sure it all works as it should.

ALCO FPA4 #6789 was in service this past year after completion of its bi-annual inspection. Paul Nelson has been busy this winter replacing all the victaulic coupling gaskets throughout the cooling system. The old gaskets were getting in very poor condition, and after one failed, he decided the wisest course of action was to just go through the entire system and replace all of them while the unit was down for the winter.

Milwaukee Road NW2 #1649 has had rather low oil pressure when hot and idling, and in doing a routine oil analysis, we found the lube oil was 4% fuel. This necessitated an oil change, as fuel in the oil will damage bearings. This, of course, was cause to search for a leak and Paul Nelson found a fuel oil leak at an injector, which would explain the excess fuel in the oil. The leak was corrected, and the lubricating oil changed, but as it was late in the season and we have not had a chance to test it on a really hot day. In the cooler weather of the fall, it was doing much better. This coming season will tell us if we need to explore replacing main bearings.

IC GP11 #8733 has been working well this past year, with some rust repairs in the front deck attended to by Paul Nelson and Al Strange. Items that will need attention soon are the main generator, which has now had three coils of the companion alternator bypassed due to being grounded. The companion alternator generates power for the traction motor cooling fans, and the radiator fans. EMD standards allow for the bypassing of up to three, so we are now at the maximum. We have begun getting quotes for a replacement main generator, and it looks like it will be in the neighborhood of \$25,000.00 to \$35,000.00 to get this taken care of. Better to start planning now than waiting for it to fail completely.



Nick Clayborn photo

Southern Steam Locomotive #401 ran without serious issue this past season. One item that did require attention was a steam chest gasket was pushed out of place, and began to leak. This required pulling the steam chest cover and chest to access the gasket, and straighten it out, anneal it, and reinstall back in the proper location. The steam chest was reassembled, the loco fired up and tested for half a day to get the steam chest good and hot, then all the steam chest clamping studs were re-torqued while hot. This should prevent a repeat of that event. Many thanks to Tim Jacobs, John Sciutto, Brian Downing and Travis Atchison for their help.

Another small change that has improved things was a change to the left boiler check valve. The original bronze check valve was being a nuisance, requiring frequent regrinding to keep it steam-tight. Russ Fischer designed a new check valve which incorporated a Teflon seating surface. This was used for the 2016 season, with the end result being the Teflon seat would seal well, but the frequent opening and closing, and the pressure on the closed valve, caused the Teflon to "cold flow", slowing increasing the valve clearance, and forcing the Teflon in to the area between the wings and the valve body. The latter issue

would eventually cause the valve to stick, though we managed to get them changed out before that would occur. We have since changed the seat material to PEEK, which is Polyether Ether Ketone. This is a plastic frequently used in high pressure/high temperature environments, and seems to be working well in this application. It is not as subject to the cold flow phenomenon as is Teflon, so seems to be working well to date.



Dale Jenkins photo



Art Purchase photo

One notable change was changing the whistle mid-season to an Illinois Central three chime, provided to the Museum by Mary Rae McPherson. Mary has been very active in the background at MRM, creating videos of #401's operations which we have been selling in the gift shop. Mary is Conductor for Amtrak, and is based in Carbondale. Due to her job, she can't be on site all that frequently, but what she does in the background is much appreciated. The whistle she provided is a very deep three chime, one that you feel more than hear. The last time an IC three chime steam whistle would have been heard in Monticello is likely sometime in the 1950's. Her efforts have brought back another piece of history to the local area. This whistle will not be permanently

on the locomotive, but will be used from time to time. Many thanks to Mary for coming up with this historic piece, and to John Sciutto for making the changes necessary in the whistle linkage to work with this whistle.

Speaking of whistles for #401, Ron Berkman has also delivered a whistle said to be from a Southern RY PS-4 Pacific. It was donated by the late Bill Millsap. Bill was from Robinson, IL, and was a fan of railroading in general. He had a particular fondness for steam, and anything related to Southern RY. This whistle is also a three chime, deep toned whistle, similar to the IC whistle noted above. It will also likely be used on #401 from time to time.

IC Diner #4110 is making good progress, but not good enough to make Polar Express this past season. The seats have been reupholstered in material as close as we could find to the original, and we have contracted with Impressive Floors of Bedford, PA, for custom made carpet to match the original in appearance, but to be made of nylon, as opposed to the original wool. That will allow the carpet to be steam cleaned during/after polar. The sad part of this story was the carpet was to be delivered in time for Polar Express, but ended up two weeks late to Dalton, Georgia. When the folks in Dalton opened the container, they found ALL the

carpet in the container had gotten wet in shipping, and all of it grew mold. Needless to say, our carpet is being made again, on the shipping company's dime. As of this writing, it is complete and in transit. We anticipate delivery in Monticello sometime toward the end of February, or early March at the latest.

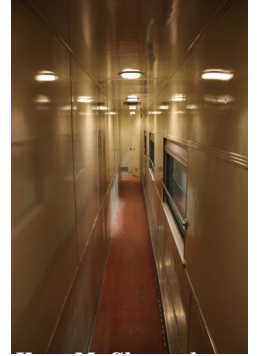
The interior was finally primed and painted, in large part due to the help of Tylene Crouch, and that of Nicole Sager and her husband, who have begun volunteering this past fall. The three of them really got the project off of dead center and moved it ahead rapidly with all the tedious work of prepping for paint. Al Strange worked at buffing all the hardware in the car to get the corrosion off of it and bring back the shine of the nickel plating.

Another project that needed some help was the heating system. Dave Marshall and Brian Downing dove into that, getting the heating system up and running as it should. Dave spent much time chasing down wiring between the electrical locker and the thermostat, which of course are at opposite ends of the car. Brian also installed new speakers, wiring, and volume control for the car so that aspect would be ready for Polar should the car have been ready. Jeff Tillman ran the conduits and mounted the boxes for the sound system, and also completed the HEP wiring to the A-end of the car. Neal Grant was a big help in wiring the baseboard heating elements in the car, making that project move along much faster. All the work on the heating system also made it possible to have a warm car to work in this winter.

Dave also installed two new 110V AC outlets at the Stewards Station, allowing a place to plug in common, 110 volt appliances, such as vacuum cleaners. The outlets are installed directly into the wall using a special punch and die set that does away with the usual cover plate, making them somewhat less noticeable. He also installed conduit in the back of the Steward's Locker, and fished all the three phase heating wiring from the dining room into the ceiling, to allow connection of the overhead electric heating element. Tim Crouch worked at body filling the area in the hallway where the wrecking kit and fire extinguisher had been. These two areas had been covered with blanking plates and needed to have the screws and joints filled and sanded smooth to hide them prior to paint. We also uncovered a blanked off thermostat location to utilize for the new hallway thermostat to control the hallway baseboard heat. Jeff and Tim also installed the diaphragm on the B-end of the car. The A-end is still awaiting installation. Jeff also did some extensive floor repairs on the hallway-side service door, basically rebuilding the floor structure in that location, then reinsulating it. Then Donna McClure poured a new subfloor over the steel repairs using "Abocrete", which is an epoxy based material using sand as a thickener, and is commonly used for concrete repairs.

As noted in the previous Yella Board, #4110 is also the impetus to create a new air conditioning condenser/compressor assembly which will fit in the space formerly occupied by the Waukesha Ice Engine, and look like it as well. This project has made good headway, with new condensing coils designed and delivered, and now installed on the old Waukesha frame. The Compressor is mounted, the condenser fans, and the old Waukesha control box was gutted of old parts, machined out to create more space, and new control components installed. Jeff Tillman has been a big help with this as well, repairing the steel frame, and installing and brazing together all the copper tubing for the compressor/condenser system. Bruce Backus helped pull wire for the new air conditioner control and power wiring, as well as an additional circuit for heating the water tank enclosure. Most of the exterior projects on this car ground to a halt with the cold weather and the onset of Polar Express preparations.

Much remains however, to get the car completed. Since we now have until November of 2018, we have ordered (and received already) new rubber floor tile to replace the worn out linoleum that is in the car, and as it the case of #4112, we were able to find a very close match for the original material from Roppe Rubber Flooring. Strangely, even though we found #4110 and #4112 had the same carpet in them, the floor covering in the hallway and pantry areas were of slightly different colors, with #4110 being redder than #4112. Installing the new rubber flooring will require removing all the baseboard trim, taking up the old linoleum, then repairing any additional places in the subfloor that we find needing work. Couple this with completing the installation of all the hardware (door latches, locks, signal valve ropes and pulls, diaphragms, etc.) cleaning up the kitchen, finishing up body filler work on the exterior, final paint work on the exterior, reinstalling windows and associated trim, and installing and testing the air conditioning, will eat up lots of time.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RUN THE POLAR EXPRESS ?



Left: Dave Berndt Polar Express Chairman
Right: Ron Kempke Co-Chairman

Left: The ambassadors that welcome the passenger aboard the train is the Polar Express Conductor to make the journey an enjoyable family event. It requires a crew of nine to work the seven car consist.

Right: Paul Jones is the dedicated engineer at the throttle each night.

Below: It takes 28 Dancers and 28 Chefs to serve the coca and cookies.



John Sanner photo



Left: It takes 14 members to set up and operate the gift shop and waiting area in the Wabash Center. To set up and operate the logistics to make reservations and distribute tickets at the Monticello Depot requires four members.



Courtesy John Sanner



Courtesy John Sanner



Above Left: It takes 3 Santa's helpers to visit an average of 330 passengers per train.
Above Center: Behind the operating scene, set-up and take down crews takes 25 members.
Above Right: The hot chocolate express and preparation crew requires 4 members.



RAILROAD DAYS 2017

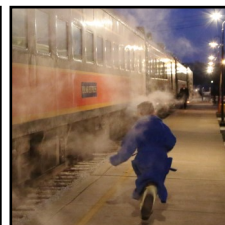


Courtesy Nick Clayborn



THE POLAR EXPRESS 2017

Photos Courtesy John Sanner





**THE
LAST
RUN**



Henry "Hank" Brickman of Gibson City, passed away on November 11, 2017, at the age of 89. Hank was a member of this organization for 45 years, serving on the board of directors, with a passion to work on the track. In addition, he was an engineer and conductor and very active in working a variety of projects.

A native of South Bend, Indiana, he attended Roosevelt University and Loyola University and worked for Central Soya of Gibson City in accounting and customer service for 30 years. He was an avid trolley fan and now resides in a grave adjacent to the MRM main line in the Monticello Township Cemetery.

In Memoriam

Henry "Hank" Brickman

November 11, 2017



(L C L *)

LESS THAN CARLOAD

On August 19, 2017, the Illinois State Military Museum of Springfield sponsored an encampment to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the United States entry into WW I. Doughboys, fliers and even a flapper of the era made an appearance. Some of the doughboys enjoy a Green River, a popular drink of that time of history.



Ted Lemen photo



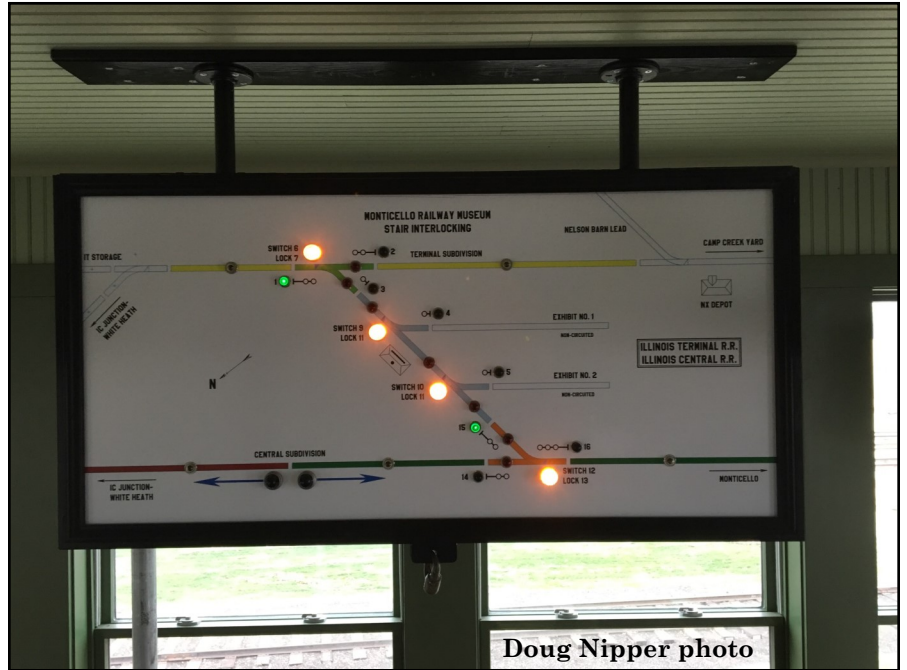
Ted Lemen photo



Travis Hunt photo

A new feature of the Polar Express trains for 2017 was the addition of working signals controlled from Stair Tower. While some passengers could see them and commented positively, the other reason to have them was safety. No switch could be in the wrong position and allow a signal to clear. Thus the engineer and the flagman for each run knew positively that all four switches on the exhibit track lead were lined properly for the movement in each direction. Of course, we know they also checked switch targets too!"

Right: During Railroad Days 2017 trains were directed by signal indication. Signal circuits were finished in time for the event and a final push to completion is credited to Brian Downing who spent countless hours toward finishing the task. **Below:** Track circuits are not complete however, and Doug Nipper constructed a switch box which is temporarily wired into the plant. The switch box allows the lever man to electrically show track occupancy thus making the locking functions operate properly.



Doug Nipper photo



Doug Nipper photo



Doug Nipper photo

Right: The levers are lined for a movement.

**MONTICELLO
RAILWAY MUSEUM
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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Photos courtesy of John Sanner

