



THE YELLA BOARD

Volume 55 Number 2

MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM
Where “I’ve Been Working On the
Railroad” Becomes a Reality.
November—December 2022



“ Laura McCleary and daughter Scarlett are part of the Polar Express crew that makes the event a success every year!

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Volume 55 No. 2

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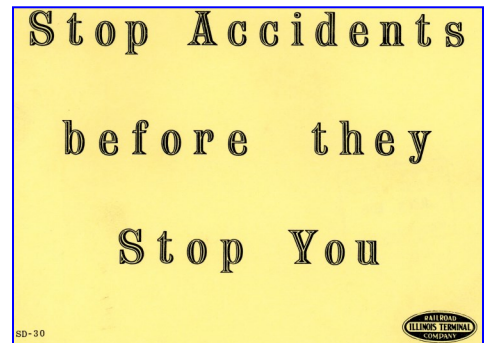
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**THE
OBSERVATION
PLATFORM**

What's Our Story?

George Roadcap

President



December 2022

Several members of the museum have approached me about adding a narration on our weekend trains to enhance the educational mission of the museum. There are other tourist railroad with narrations I have personally found interesting, such as the Cass Scenic Railroad, albeit with a thick West Virginia accent. For MRM, I would like to get some feedback from our members on what our story should be. How do we strike balance between railroad history, information about the museum, and what our riders see out the windows?

Assuming the technical issues of having a narration can be solved, there are other operational considerations, such as volume, GPS enablement, or which cars it should be played in. Should the style of the narration be a straight informational script or a more theatrical story with actors reading a series of vignettes and playing corny railroad songs? Should the narration be played only on the way into town or both ways?

The narration should encourage riders to see the displays the museum has to offer if they go through the exhibit cars, Stair Tower, and the Nelson display barn. The many events hosted by the museum could also be promoted such as throttle times, diner trains, Polar Express, and Railroad Days. The chance should not be missed to also make a pitch for new volunteers or donations.

A description of the train could lead off the interpretive portion of the narration with the history of 892 and 2541. This could then lead into some discussion of the restoration process and the other restored equipment at the museum. Do we pick one piece, like the snow plow, to highlight with more detail? Because we change locomotives every weekend, do we need a short summary of each? Should we discuss what it takes to operate and maintain them, including the 401? Attention must also be given to the two stations, arguably some of the biggest gems at the museum.

Moving to the tracks, we need to touch on the history of the Illinois Terminal, Illinois Central, and Wabash Railroads and where one could have taken them from downtown Monticello. This gives us a chance to discuss the historical importance of railroads to the development of Illinois and the role they play in society now. Should we explain why an interurban existed alongside a larger railroad? Are there frequently asked questions we should address, such as what are all the tank cars doing on our track? Finally, we could also discuss the evolution of the natural areas along our route at the CRP ground and the Camp Creek bottomlands. I would personally like to include a lecture on the geology and the importance of the area in providing recharge to the aquifer, but I may be alone on that.

Now that the narration is two hours long, how do we cut it down to something short our rider will enjoy?





**THE
BACK
SHOP**

By Kent McClure

Chief Mechanical Officer

2022 was busy with a number of projects. With 401 out the door in June, attention turned to building a new water crane vault, and researching/laying out potential sites for an elevated water tank and pump house, and a new location for the water crane that we had previously erected in front of the engine house. Work continues on Wabash coach #1238, CB&Q caboose 14042, and the usual running maintenance on the operating equipment. More details below:



nance on the operating equipment. More details below:

Wabash F7A #1189 - 1189 was in service this past season, with no issues in service. The new hotstart circulation pump however was a bit of a pain, with coolant leaks in the plumbing giving Paul Nelson fits. The locomotive was used for all of Polar Express, consuming 897 gallons of fuel across that single event, with a time total of 104.4 hours running time, including two dress rehearsals.

ALCO FPA4 #6789 - 6789 is still out of service for body work, with the holdup now being prepping for and repainting the lower portion of the nose. Other projects have taken priority, unfortunately.



Milwaukee Road NW2 #1649 - 1649 is now on display in the Nelson Barn, entering a hopefully temporary retirement. The batteries were removed from it this past fall and installed into the E8. There are two reasons for the retirement of this locomotive. The primary reason being the lead axle has become stuck in the jaws of the truck, and will not articulate up and down with changes in the track. It appears rust has attacked either or both the pedestal liners, and truck frame jaws,

swelling the pedestal liners against the boxes on both sides of the locomotive, causing the journal boxes to be pinched. Unfortunately, this is a derailment risk, and with all the other projects taking shop time, this one will have to wait a while. The other reason is the wiring, which appears original. While it also appears to be in fair shape for its age, we should treat it with some care. With the availability of ex C&IM #31, it seems prudent to give the wiring a rest for a bit, and when we get the stuck axle issue solved, we should likely restrict it to light service, enough to keep the rotating machinery dried out, but not so much to test the insulation.



IC GP11 #8733 - The GP11 has been the primary storage move and charter/throttle time locomotive this year, but as last I said in the last issue, it has been sharing more of this work with C&IM RS1325 #31. After rebuilt reversing contactors were installed, it has been trouble free and receiving only preventative maintenance.



C&IM RS1325 #31 – #31 has been used regularly for both train service and storage moves this past season, with only the usual inspections and maintenance. Bill Crisp has been scouring the earth for detail parts that will be needed to bring it back to it's full C&IM appearance. He has managed to come up with the loan of class light housings so we have patterns to use to fabricate new ones when the time comes.



Art Purchase Photo

Southern Steam Locomotive #401 - #401 ran well through the season. We did some additional experimenting with different exhaust nozzle cover plates with little change in performance. Then Brian Downing made some changes, optimizing the sizes of the nozzle openings and the open area between the nozzle openings. This change made quite the difference in smokebox vacuum, and consequently, in it's steaming. Compared to the previous years, it has now become more difficult to keep the thing cooled off than to keep it hot. That is

a good problem to have!

The purchase of the RO water filtering system has also proven to be a good move. We simply filled the tender with RO water when the system was set up, and with the exception of the first trip leaving Monticello with the new water, the foaming issue slowly improved as the non-RO treated water cycled out of the boiler, as shown by the drop in total dissolved solids. As of October, the foaming had disappeared. The boiler wash in October was much, much cleaner than previous years, but now we are cleaning out the scale that had been deposited by the use of the well water. That is the treatment doing it's job.



Art Purchase Photo

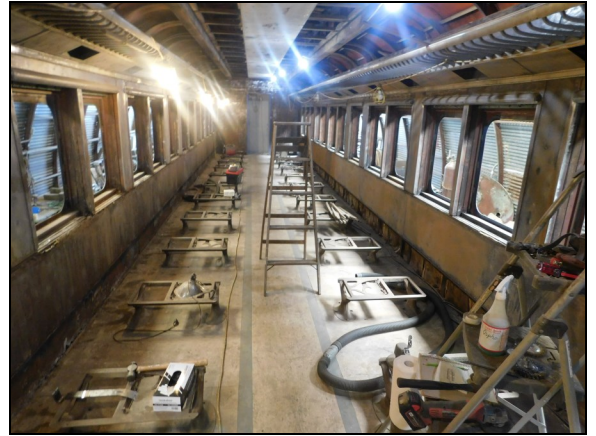
IC Diners 4110 & 4112 – The dinner trains have proven to be popular, along with the Donut Trains. A big Thank You to Dylan Cantrell and Daniel Frye for creating and running these events. It is good to see the diners earning some income to offset all the funds expended in their respective restorations and ongoing maintenance. It is also gratifying to see them being used as they were intended, at least partially. We are actually running a dinner train once every month this winter to see if that market would be worth pursuing. Unfortunately, winter costs are much higher as the diners must be kept warm to prevent freezing of the water systems if they are going to be used regularly. Winterizing them is a somewhat costly project, but the bigger issue is draining and rinsing the rv antifreeze out of them to place them in service in the winter, hence why we decided to keep them full of water, warm and ready to go.

This past season saw the carpet in 4112 replaced with the correct carpet, which is the same pattern that is in 4110. We will now have to track down a curtain that approximates what was in the car and it will be very near it's appearance after rebuilding by the ICRR. 4110 has been waiting on new curtains for some time. We had been working with a historic fabric specialist who had spent much time on the pattern in which the curtains were woven, and the correct colors of the thread/yarn used. (The original curtains, which did come with the car, less two, are so tar-stained from cigarette smoke, as to be nowhere near what the colors were when they were new.) Unfortunately, the fabric specialists were unable to actually weave the pattern accurately enough for them to be willing to do the job. If they can't recreate it accurately, they won't do it. So we will have to pursue another avenue to try to get new curtains for this car. At least they were able to tease out the correct colors from the originals, so that much information has been preserved. And, they also provided us with a couple of leads to other people who may be able to help get it done. Fortunately, all the research and work they did attempting to make the recreations was at no cost to MRM.



CB&Q Caboose #14042 – Summer and fall is a slow time for work on this car, with all the outdoor projects and Polar Express prep taking priority.

Wabash Coach #1238 – #1238 interior work has been moving forward, as well as some exterior work. Jeff Tillman has closed up all the holes in the roof that we had been able to find, as well as the holes related to the water tanks that were removed last winter. Kevin Steckel spent a week of his vacation out here from Pennsylvania, and removed all the steam heat plumbing from under the car. That turned out to be no small task, and filthy to boot. In addition, admission valves in the floor were removed, as were toilets, sinks, and trim from both lounges and restrooms. That will allow a thorough clean-up and make painting the interior easier with less masking required. The pattern in the linoleum flooring was documented, samples saved, and the flooring removed to allow subfloor repairs to be done, primarily at both end doors, and in the coach compartment where the admission valves were located. Turns out they used really good adhesive on the linoleum, with Bruce having a heck of a time getting it scraped off the subfloor. Some preliminary wiring has been done, and conduit boxes located and mounted at each end of the car.



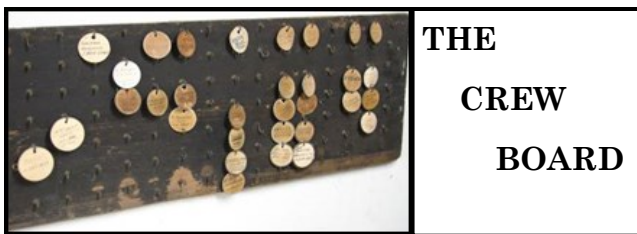
Work has moved forward with interior woodwork, with Paul Jones making new window sills and side trim for each window opening. Prairie Woodworks of Downs, IL, has been contracted to make and install new formica window sills and edge trim. This turned out to be a project just finding something that resembled, color-wise, what was in the car. It seemed like every time we found a sample that was close, the vendor would come back with “that color has been discontinued”. Several different samples went that way before we found something close enough that was still available. Much steel work still awaits on the exterior, and some work has begun on this part of the project, namely working on removing rust behind the drip rail above the windows to allow the drip rail to be re-attached at the bottom, where rust expansion has broken nearly all the mounting screws.

Other Projects that have been consuming mechanical department time:

Work is also proceeding on the turntable project. We have signed a contract with an engineering firm to provide foundation plans for the turntable, the elevated water tank in its new location, and a cost estimate to replace the small trestle on the north edge of Monticello with a pair of culverts. In regard to the turntable, one of the four trucks is in the backshop where Mark Weckel, Paul Jones, Bruce Backus and Syl Keller have been hard at work removing rusted away fasteners to allow the bearings and wheels to be removed from the truck frame so the individual parts can be cleaned up, new fasteners made as required, and the truck frames blasted, inspected, reassembled and painted.

The elevated water tank and relocated water crane are going to be in the vicinity of Nelson Crossing, with the water crane located next to the Central Division, adjacent to the NX restroom building. This location allows a 16” casing to be bored, about 7 feet underground, straight from the location of the water tank to the water crane. This casing will carry the 8” water main from the water tank to the water crane, a 2 inch supply that will carry city water from the restroom building to the pump house, and finally, conduit for electrical power in the water crane vault for a sump pump and lights. The above-mentioned engineering firm will also be providing a footing plan for the water tank support structure, which will be timber and will be a near replica for the tanks that once existed in both Monticello, and on the north side of White Heath. The timber structure is in process now, being done by Glen Vermette of Long Creek Timber Framers of Paxton. The support structure for the tank amounts to about 27,000 lbs of white oak timber, ranging from 12”x12” timbers, down to 2”x2” pieces in the trim around the platform. Once the necessary millwork is done on the timber, and the timber is dry enough, it will be creosote treated at Missouri Tie, the primary vendor for our railroad ties. The tank itself is still in the budgetary quoting stages for several different grades of tank, either wood, steel, or stainless steel. This decision will probably be made soon. The tank will also be equipped with a spout, and will be located adjacent to the track that will be the future turntable lead. This will give us two locations at which we can take water with a steam locomotive, with the water crane location being far more useful during operations, particularly railroad days.

Kent McClure CMO



THE
CREW
BOARD

.. Dennis Slone.....

“Once you heard stories of railroading,
you were hooked for life.”



Dennis is a native of Newburg, Missouri, a small farming community ten miles west of Rolla, on the Frisco St. Louis-Springfield line, “Route of the Meteor”. His grandfather was a conductor on the Frisco and on occasion worked as a baggagemen, from whence his railroad interest would develop. His house, situated on a hill overlooking the main line, would be his look-out point as his grandfather waved his lantern from the passing train, with a response of the front porch light being flicked on and off. Of course, his grandfather would tell him fascinating stories of railroading, which would hook him for life.

His senior year of Effingham (Illinois) High School would offer him the opportunity to make friends with the ICRR depot operator, signal maintainer and signal supervisor. In the early 1980’s his interest expanded with the acquisition of a motorcar from the ICRR, leading him to ride the rails in the company of excursions of motorcar groups over the Rock Island in Union, Missouri or the tourist line at French Lick, Indiana and even transverse the museum rails. In addition, his association of the ICRR signal supervisor afforded him the opportunity begin collecting various type signals as they were retired over various lines of the ICRR.

Of course, it was only natural to become a member of a museum, using the opportunity to follow the N&W 611 steam locomotive to Monticello, stopping at the museum only to find the train crew was trackside watching the passing of the famed steam locomotive. In 1986 he joined the museum working with the “old heads” of the maintenance-of-way crew. Dick Stair, always available for a shot of dry humor, told Dennis that half of the crew would stand on one side of the track and the other half on the opposite side when a train passed by. When asked why, the response was “In case the train derailed, one half of the crew would survive!” Of course, the old heads would ride in the only seat in the flatbed work truck and the younger members would ride on the flatbed sharing the space with used ties and tools.” It was a hard and hot job, averaging 8 to 10 ties installed a day. But on this one occasion, (without thinking) he started to open the passenger door when he was warned by Foreman Stair “uh...uh...uh...you chickens ride in the back.”

Dennis would eventually move up to a car attendant and from there qualify as a flagman then a conductor. His interest of railcar restoration would occur when in the late 1980’s he purchased ICRR 9926 side-door caboose, which was shipped to the museum. Working with Syl Keller, he would soon acquire the ability to restore equipment and enjoy the opportunity to ride in *his* caboose during caboose days at the museum. He would also acquire a Jordan Spreader, ICX 238 pile driver-idler flat-tender car, IC wooden boxcar ICX 1957 and IC 635 baggage car, which were donated to the museum. During the summer Dennis would work as a conductor filling the weekend responsibilities and during the winter months help with the restoration of the BOCT Bobber-Caboose, the CP 40065 Snowplow and now the CB&Q 14042 caboose. Also, he is a regular conductor on the ever popular Polar Express. Dennis notes that he enjoys the opportunity to be part of the museum, helping restore old equipment back to life and the interaction with the passengers. Indeed, “Once railroading gets in your blood, you are hooked for life.”



**Dennis Slone (left) and
Art Purchase**

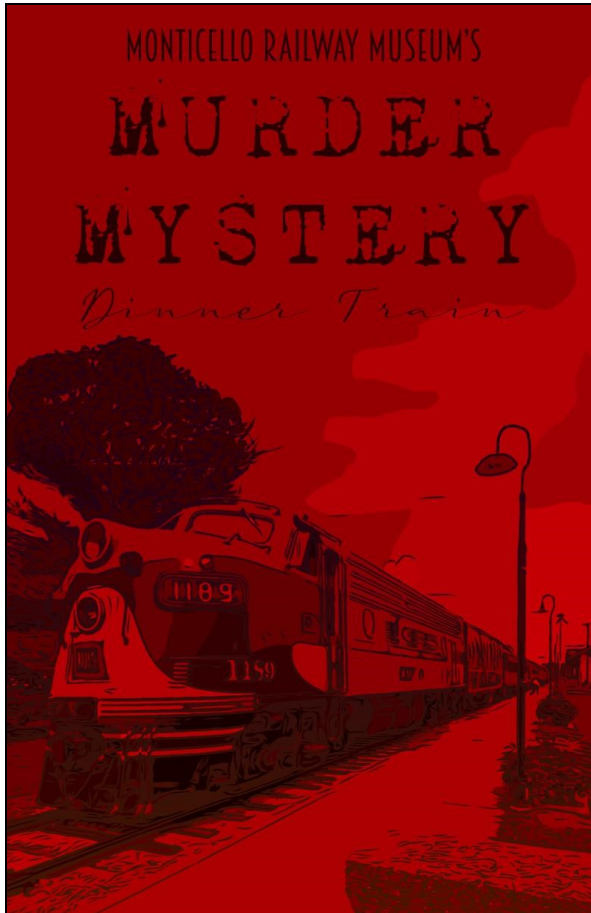
(L C L*)

LESS THAN CARLOAD

excellent staff of *Holly's County Kitchen* of Monticello.

THE DINNER TRAIN SERIES

The Monticello Railway Museum has added a series of dinner trains which have proven to be quite successful. What started as a simple Donut Train has expanded to a full course dining pleasure with the “Roaring 20’s” Dinner Train and the Taste of New Orleans Dinner Train, with all trains being sold out! This year new trains have been added and you can travel in style dining in either IC Business Car No 7 or an IC Dining Car! These meals are prepared by the



On January 14TH, all aboard the Monticello Railway Museum’s Murder Mystery Dinner Train for a one-of-a-kind theatrical experience! Join us Saturday, January 14th for an exciting evening of mystery and mayhem presented by Champaign Urbana Theatre Company’s Seven Corpse Dinner Murder Mysteries. Passengers on board will be treated to this delicious three-course meal of your choice of Roasted Chicken, Grilled Teriyaki Salmon, Pasta Primavera, sides, and desert.

February 10th: At 7pm and Sunday and **February 12th** at 2pm and 5pm, join us for the Valentine’s Day Dinner Train. Passengers on board will be treated to a delicious four course meal during this approximately two-hour train ride, departing from the Wabash Depot in downtown Monticello. Ride in style as you enjoy one of the following entree options:

Herb Crusted Tenderloin (Gluten Free)

Pecan Chicken

Pasta Primavera (Vegetarian)

Each entrée will be accompanied by a Zuppa Toscano Soup, a Caesar Salad, Scalloped Potatoes, Buttered Broccoli Normandy, and Dessert!

Beverages available will be Sweet and Unsweet Tea, Lemonade and Water. All passengers are welcome to dress up for this event. Enjoy your meal in the jovial atmosphere of an historic railroad dining car! The ticket price for this exciting event is \$75 per passenger. Visit mrym.org for tickets!

February 11th: All aboard the Monticello Railway Museum’s Valentine’s Murder Mystery Dinner Train for a one-of-a-kind theatrical experience! Join us for two departures at 4 PM and 7 PM for an exciting evening of mystery and mayhem presented by Urbana Champaign Theatre Company’s Seven Corpse Dinner Murder Mysteries. Passengers on board will be treated to this delicious four course meal

Doughnut Trains To Be Announced

Brunch Train April 1st

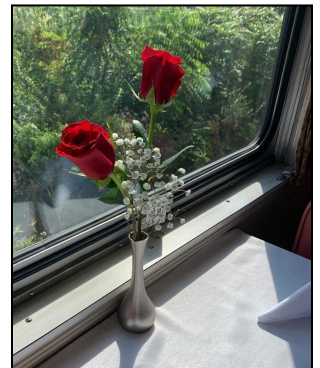
Taste of Italy May 6th

Roarin’20’s Dinner Train June 3d

Barbecue Train July 3d

Fall Sunset Dinner Train October 14th

Holiday Dinner Train To Be Announced



NEW BATTERIES FOR IC 4044



The E-8 Locomotive no. 4044 is coming to life with the installation of a set of batteries, nearing the completion of restoration to operation. The locomotive is being masked in preparation for painting in the IC colors.

Tourism Impact Award Presented



On July 13, 2022, MRM General Manager Syl Keller was presented with the Tourism Impact Award by the Visit Champaign County Foundation at the Toast To Tourism presentation at the Virginia Theater, Champaign, A film presentation of Syl Keller was made and can viewed at: <https://youtu.be/cLMzSjADoJU>

Wabash 1238;
Above: Work is being done on the roof joint that attaches to the body of the car. **Below:** Work continues on the interior with new window frames being fabricated for the windows.



RAILROADING ON RAILROAD DAYS !



Chairman Bill Crips

ALL ABOARD THE POLAR EXPRESS !!



MONTICELLO
RAILWAY MUSEUM
P O BOX 401
MONTICELLO, ILLINOIS 61856

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES



STEAM SCHEDULE

401 in Steam: Ride behind our restored 1907-steam locomotive!
May 20-21, June 24-25, July 15-16, August 12-13,
September 16-17, October 7-8

Throttle Time: Saturday-Sunday: April 29 through October 14

Opening Weekend: May 6th

School Days: May 2nd and 10th

Mothers Day: May 13th and 14th

Fathers Day: June 17th and 18th

Fireworks Train: July 3d

Railroad Days: September 16th and 17th

**The Polar Express™: November 17th-18th-19th, 24th-25th-26th,
December 1st-2nd-3d, 8th-9th-10th**

Lunch with Santa on the Train: December 2nd and 3d