

PENNYRAIL

JANUARY 2005

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 1

TODAY'S FACTS ARE
TOMORROW'S HISTORY

20 YEARS

It was 20 years ago next month when a group of rail enthusiasts formed the Western Kentucky Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society in Madisonville, Kentucky. Many of the Charter members had been affiliated with the Owensboro Chapter but wanted something a bit closer to home.

Our February meeting will be a **Chapter Birthday Celebration.**

The evenings program will feature slides depicting things as they were 20 years ago in Western Kentucky and surrounding areas. We also hope to have pictures of some of the charter members back when waist lines were a bit slimmer and hair was a bit longer. If you have any pictures from the mid 1980s be sure to bring them to the meeting to share with the membership.

In 1985 there was no CSX, The P&L and R J Corman were IC and Seaboard. You could find 30 engines at IC's Central City yard. Peabody still had rail operations in Muhlenberg County and at several locations in southern Indiana and Illinois.

Keith Kittinger will provide the refreshments for the celebration and I wouldn't be surprised



Chapter

CHAPTER MEETING MONDAY, JANUARY 24 7:00 PM Badgett Center (Old L&N Depot) (Arch St and the Railroad) Madisonville, KY

PROGRAM

Rick Bivins will provide the program for the first Chapter meeting of 2005. **Rick** will have a video, "Mainline USA." and some selected slides. **Phil Randall** will provide the refreshments. January is traditionally President's Night but **Bob and Jackie** are in Florida so President's Night will be postponed until March.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER MEETINGS

The November meeting of the Western Kentucky Chapter of the NRHS on November 22 was attended by nineteen members. **Wallace Henderson** gave a comprehensive report on the Fall NRHS Board meeting in Utica, NY. The Chapter voted to donate \$250 to the WTTL Christmas Toy Drive in Don Bowles name. Don has provided the Charolais locomotive for three Chapter outings this fall. **Donny and Betty**

(Continued on page 2)

Western Kentucky
Chapter, NRHS

111 Reed Place
Madisonville, KY 42431

* * * * *

President
Bob McCracken

Vice President
Rich Hane

Sect. Treas.
Wally Watts

National Director
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"PENNYRAIL" is the
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Chapter News

(Continued from page 1)

Knight provided the refreshments. The program, provided by **Wallace Henderson**, was a 1950s era movie "The Great Locomotive Chase."

CSX provided two trains during the meeting. First was southbound manifest Q687 with UP locomotives, an SD70M and a C40-8. Later another southbound train, Q647, rumbled by the depot with a UP C41-8W and a CSX C40-8W (still in Conrail paint) pulling the loads.

Around 45 members and friends attended the Clayton-Watts Open House on November 13. They enjoyed fine food, lot's of train talk and some smoky operations on the C&W RR in the basement. Thanks to **Don** and **Wally** for a superb evening.

On November 20, eight Chapter members and nine guests met at St. Charles to operate "The Charolais Cardinal". This was the third time the chapter has operated the former Illinois Central switcher along the almost three miles of trackage. This day the train operated to the west end of track in St. Charles. People were coming out to see a locomotive operating on this trackage again. By the way, the name "Charolais Cardinal" comes from two sources. Charolais Corporation is the owner of the locomotives. Cardinal is the name of the last Illinois Central passenger train, "The Kentucky Cardinal" which operated between Paducah and Louisville.

On December 13, the chapter closed out 2004 with our annual Christmas Banquet at the Madisonville Country Club. Twenty-nine members and guests were on hand for the festivities, hosted by **Bob and Jackie McCracken**.

The highlight of the evening was the members "Show & Tell" of their railroad items. Our members sure have some very nice railroad items in their collections,

(Continued on page 3)

SAND PATCH, ALCOS and UTICA

I attended the NRHS fall board meeting in Utica, New York, from October 22 through 24th. I had planned a railfanning trip up there but again I was bitten by the eastern bad weather bug. The weather began sunny as I drove to Cumberland, Maryland, on the 16th for a day of railfanning on CSX's ex-B&O Sand Patch grade over the Allegheny Mountains with Jeff Smith the following day. (Jeff is editor of the NRHS Bulletin). Sunny skies brought out the beautiful autumn colors but a cold north wind made handling the camera difficult. We only saw a dozen trains for the day but still had a good time.

The next morning, Monday, Jeff was riding a Carl Franz photo special on the Western Maryland Scenic so I drove to the Narrows just north of Cumberland to shoot the train as it came out of town. The sun had just crested the mountain when it showed up; a beautiful sight to behold with the billowing smoke catching the sun's first light. As the group on board prepared for a photo run, clouds covered the sun and that was the last I saw of the sun until the end of the week! Driving eastward to Paw Paw, West Virginia, I began to fulfill a long held desire to drive the Magnolia Cutoff. This can be accomplished by driving the grade of the now abandoned original B&O mainline which follows the curving Potomac River while the Cutoff soars above it and crosses and recrosses the river. This is a remote and very sparsely populated area with summer fishing camps along the river. Major track work was being done on the westbound main but traffic was sparse with only five trains for the day. One bonus of this area is the old BO color position light signals still in use but existing on borrowed time.

That night was spent in Hancock, Maryland. The next morning was foggy with pouring rain and this continued for most of the morning as I headed up 1-81 towards Scranton. There I found the shops of the Delaware-Lackawanna, a bastion of Alco power. The rain was over but in spite of the heavy overcast, I photographed all the power sitting around, from switchers to RS3s to a big Century C425. After such a miserable day, weatherwise, I treated myself to a night at the Lackawanna Station Inn, my third stay there. The next morning, the D-L was switching across from Steamtown with an ex-British Columbia M420 and ex-Indiana Hi-Rail C420, exx D&H. while a pair of Alco Centuries waited to take a coal train east over the mountain on the former DL&W mainline.

Back on the interstate, my next stop was Binghamton, New York, where I found a variety of power at the NY S&W shop, from a SP tunnel motor to a B40-8, ex-Providence & Worcester U23B, and Cartier C-636 which was once Alco demonstrator #63&2. About this time, a westbound NS freight arrived with CN power, the middle unit being IC GP40R #3117. And I was glad to find that the former Erie Railroad Southern Tier mainline (now NS) is once again alive and well with five freights there recrewing. And also in Binghamton is the very fine preserved former DL&W passenger station, now used by a business.

It is a beautiful drive up 1-88 to Albany and I stopped in Oneonta to see the large old D&H passenger station built in 1892 and now a restaurant. Here westbound NS freight #169 from Portland, Maine to Chicago showed up, led by Conrail power, on CP's exD&H mainline. I spent that night in Troy, across the river from Albany, and the next morning headed for Utica on the old road, paralleling the Water Level Route. With time to spare, I spent an hour or so in Little Falls where I caught the eastbound "Lake

(Continued on page 3)

Chapter News

(Continued from page 2)

highlighted by **Wally Watt's** railroad watches, **Dave Millen's** L&N silver creamer and Wes Ross' presentation lanterns.

CHAPTER NEWS

Chapter member **Jimmy "Freight Line" Hayes** of Madisonville died on November 15. Jimmy grew up in Earlington. He worked for the L&N Railroad in as a messenger, while he was in high school. He got his nickname "Freight Line" because of his habit of jumping on southbound trains leaving the Earlington Yard and riding them about eight blocks to his home on Westside Ave. He was a retired coal miner with thirty-three years of service. He had been a Chapter member since April 2000.

Barbara Kniffen, wife of former Chapter member **Harold Kniffen**, passed away on December 6 in Cincinnati. Barbara had fought a year long battle with cancer. Harold, may God be with you and your family at this time.

Theda Moore, mother of Chapter member **Tim Moore**, passed away on December 25 in Madisonville. Tim, our condolences to you and your family during this time of loss.

Chapter officers for 2005 are: President, **Bob McCracken**, Vice President, **Rich Hane**, Secretary/Treasurer, **Wally Watts**,

SUBSCRIPTION
RATES
PENNYRAIL
11 issues
\$12 PER YEAR

UTICA

(Continued from page 2)

Shore Limited", two other Amtrak trains, and a pair of CSX freights, one with BNSF power.

The board meeting was held in the historic and nicely restored downtown Hotel Utica and the first day, the 22nd., began with a tour of the huge restored NYC passenger station, where they have a NYC 0-6-0 on display, followed by a tour of the NY S&W shop in the former DL&W freight station. The most interesting piece of equipment here was New York Ontario & Western wooden open-end observation business car "Warwick" in the shop. Also present were NY S&W GP-20 #2064 (ex-TP&W, exx-Santa Fe) and F45 #3636 plus a half dozen Bangor & Aroostock GP38s, available for lease. Our next stop was Milford, N.Y. and the 1869 depot of the Cooperstown & Charlotte Valley tourist line on a former D&H branchline. We rode to Cooperstown behind a Alco S-4 switcher, followed by another photo freight behind a Alco S-7, both originally CN switchers. Several photo runs were made, followed by a delicious buffet

(Continued on page 5)

RAILROAD EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

AS RAILFANS WE ARE OFTEN AT TRACKSIDE AND IN POSITION TO OBSERVE EMERGENCY CONDITIONS THAT COULD AFFECT RAILROAD SAFETY OR SECURITY. KEEP THESE NUMBERS HANDY TO REPORT INCIDENTS.

BNSF	800-832-5452
CN/IC	800-465-9239
CSX	800-232-0144
NS	800-453-2530

PENNYRAIL

18 Hours at Barstow

by Bob Moffet

Or 43 hours in Vegas, if you prefer. The purpose of this trip was to first, ride a train, second, be attacked by the Borg and Klingons, and third, visit with friends from Ohio at Bally's in Las Vegas. In two nights at Bally's, I accumulated gambling bonus points worth exactly \$ 0.10 (That's right, ten cents). They were happy to see me leave. The trip from the bus station to Bally's and back would have been made much easier had the Las Vegas Monorail been operating; however, its been out of service for as long as I can remember and being rebuilt. Someone told me that it was dropping parts into the street.

My fascination with Barstow, California started with scenes in a Pentrex video "Santa Fe's Mojave Mainline, The Needles Subdivision" During a trip about four years ago, the Southwest Chief reached Barstow about three hours late. I changed to a Las Vegas bus in Los Angeles and arrived in Las Vegas about eight hours later after noting that the bus stopped in Barstow at the same station used by Amtrak; therefore, I planned to use that connection on this trip. Unfortunately, the bus station has moved to "Main Street Station", a McDonalds in rail cars, bus station, gift shop and food court located about three miles from the Amtrak station. A second Amtrak stop at this location was to have been added on April 26, 2004, but that addition has not been made.

It was still dark at 4:30 AM on October 6, 2004 when the westbound Southwest Chief arrived in Barstow about 30 minutes late. I was hoping it would be later since my bus did not leave Barstow for the three hour trip to Las Vegas until 11:30 AM. However, with mail service terminated by Amtrak earlier in the week and only a few ExpressTrak cars (I think there were five one way and two the

(Continued on page 4)

Barstow

(Continued from page 3)

other, but I didn't make a good mental note.) in tow pursuant to current contractual commitments the three PE42's pulling the normal consist of one baggage car, a transition sleeper for the crew, two regular sleepers, a lounge, diner, and three coaches, maintained the schedule. My cousin put me on the train in Lawrence, Kansas which allowed a round of golf rather than the change in Chicago, and the Southwest Chief stopped short of the station for about 20 minutes since it was running early. Four years earlier, it was almost two hours late. We lost 30 minutes on a siding north of Albuquerque, New Mexico waiting on the eastbound Southwest Chief which appeared to be running about two hours late.

The Amtrak station in Barstow is now closed. There are no facilities, and one outside phone did not work. I tried my old cell phone, which could not find a Cingular line then elected to walk with two bags to the Main Street Station location. Fortunately, a young man in his late 20's who was in the lounge at needles and not in his assigned seat, missed his connection at needles served as a companion. We stopped at a donut shop on Main Street and after having sampling their wares and coffee, and again failing to contact yellow cab on a public phone, we walked the last two miles to Main Street Station which is right next to the BNSF main line, and with trackage rights granted to Union Pacific to the Barstow-Las Vegas junction. from Los Angeles probably provides close to 100 trains a day, and the back of the bus parking area is only about 50 feet from the tracks. If you are driving, this location is at the west terminus of I-40. Going to and from Las Vegas, I spent at least eight hours at this location, and at peak, saw four or

(Continued on page 6)

PHOTO SECTION



Diesellok #71, Named "Lippstadt" is a class G1204BB capable of producing 1120kW of power. Location: Erwitte, Germany, northbound toward Lippstadt.

Photograph by Frank Seebach, used with



Wally Watts is representing the Chapter as he presents our check for \$250 to the WTTL Toy Drive. The donation was made in the name of Don Bowles for his generosity in allowing us use of his locomotive facilities at St Charles last fall. Shown at the presentation is Marion Miller, WTTL, Don Bowles and Wally Watts. *digital image by Dave Marks*

REMEMBER

**BRING YOUR 1980s CHAPTER PHOTOGRAPHS TO THE CHAPTER'S
20TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION ON FEBRUARY 28, 2005**

. SEE YOU ALL THERE

PHOTO SECTION

PENNYRAIL

UTICA

(Continued from page 3)

lunch at the majestic Otesaga Hotel (built in 1909) on the lake of the same name in Cooperstown. Finally the sun shown as we returned to Utica and we ended the day with a stop at K&K Train & Hobby Shop where O Winston Link's Canadian Pacific ten-wheeler #453 is on display.

Saturday morning found us riding an Adirondack Scenic special over the Mohawk Adirondack & Northern from Utica northwest to Lyons Falls, a former New York Central line. Our train was pulled by NYC RS-3 #8223, restored in NYC "lightening stripes" paint, while on the rear were Adirondack Scenic ~A #1508 (ex-Alaska RR) and FP10A #1502, a GM&O F3A rebuilt by ICG at Paducah for the MBTA with head end power. Again, several photo runs were made. and we were back in Utica late in the afternoon for our pre-board meeting prior to that evening's banquet. At the conclusion of the board meeting early Sunday afternoon, I headed southwesterly for the Erie Railroad's Southern Tier mainline which had been restored from Hornell NY to Meadville, PA., and now operated by the Western New York & Pennsylvania RR, owned by the Livonia Avon & Lakeville, another bastion of Alco power. As I angled across through Ithaca, I spotted The Station Restaurant & Sleeping Cars in the former Lehigh Valley station there. Unfortunately I had already had lunch, but I went in and the staff were very friendly, inviting me to look around. Many train pictures adorn the walls and two of the cars are also available for eating in. The other two cars, one a Boston & Maine wooden open platform coach, house the sleeping rooms along with a caboose. A little 0~0ST steam locomotive completes the "train" and if I am ever back in that area, I know where I'm going to stay

(Continued on page 7)



Cooperstown & Charlotte Valley photo freight on a former Delaware & Hudson branch line in upstate New York. An Alco S-4 was pulling the freight while an Alco S-7 pulled the following train. The October 22, 2004 action was part of the activities at the Utica NRHS fall Board Meeting. *photo by Wallace*



An Adirondack Scenic special over the Mohawk Adirondack & Northern from Utica northwest to Lyons Falls, The train was pulled by NYC RS-3 #8223, restored in NYC "lightening stripes" paint, while on the rear were Adirondack Scenic ~A #1508 (ex-Alaska RR) and FP10A #1502, a GM&O F3A rebuilt by ICG at Paducah. Here the power is positioned for photographs by the passengers. October 23, 2004, NRHS BOD meeting. *photo by Wallace*

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2005 NRHS DUES?

November Treasures Report

Beginning Balance		\$1,891.55
Income		
Nat. Dues	\$93.00	
Chap. Dues	\$50.00	
Donations	\$0.00	
REA	\$0.00	
Raffle	\$0.00	
Video	\$25.00	
Other	\$0.00	
TOTAL	\$168.00	
Adjusted Balance		\$2,059.55
Expenses		
Nat. Dues	\$23.00	
Postage	\$57.35	
Printing	\$36.25	
Video	\$0.00	
Supplies	\$0.00	
REA	\$0.00	
Other	\$0.00	
TOTAL	\$116.60	
Ending Balance		\$1,942.95

MEMBERSHIP:	Full	5	3
	Chapter Only	1	8
	Total	7	1

Barstow

(Continued from page 4)

five trains an hour.

While in Las Vegas, I visited the Star Trek Experience at the Las Vegas Hilton. I was captured by the Klingons on a virtual reality ride that you don't want to take if you have a bad back, then was assimilated by the Borg in a scenario that effectively used a 3-D presentation. This experience was as much fun as riding the train. On the return trip, I had about nine hours to kill in Barstow. I spent four hours at Main Street Station watching trains and discovering that I could ride to the Amtrak station on Barstow Area Transit (local phone number is 256-0311) if I took the last scheduled run at about 5:00 PM. Service is also available from the Amtrak station beginning at about 7:00 AM. I spent the last five hours at the unmanned station with as many as four other people including two rail fans, employees of Ohio Central, that had rented a car for two days and visited the Tehachapi Loop where they saw only a limited number of trains. I spent some time looking at Casa del Desierto, the Barstow

(Continued on page 8)

TIMETABLE #89

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF RAILFANS ONLY

CHAPTER & NRHS EVENTS

February 28 Madisonville, KY Chapter 20th Birthday Celebration. 7PM Vintage Railroad Program and refreshments.

April 8-10 Cumberland, MD NRHS Spring Board Meeting Host - Western Maryland Chapter. Check with Wallace Henderson for details.

July 5-10 Portland, OR NRHS National Convention Host - Pacific Northwest Chapter. Details in NRHS newsletter.

MODEL RAILROAD EVENTS

Every Thursday evening at the Clayton Roundhouse in Madisonville. A C&W operating session and general bull session. Call Don at 270-821-0731 for more info.

January 29-30 Louisville, KY Greenberg's Train, Toy and Hobby Show. International Convention Center, 221 4th Ave. 10AM to 4PM \$7

February 5 Bowling Green, KY Model Railroad Show Knights of Columbus Hall 911 Searcy Way 9AM to 3:30PM Adults \$5. Children with adult, FREE. Family \$10. Details and table rent Bruce Badgett 270-542-8302.

February 26-27 Memphis, TN GATS Limited Train Show. Mid-South Fairgrounds. 11AM to 5PM \$8

RAILFAN EVENTS and EXCURSIONS

April 16, 2005 2005 Photo Freight on the Whitewater Valley Railroad in Indiana. All day photo run, dinner on return trip and a night photo session with Steve Barry of Railroad and Railfan Magazine. Info: SARM Photo Freight 2005, P.O. Box 5870, Knoxville, TN 37928. www.southernappalachia.railway.museum

April 29-May 1 Cass, WV CALS 27th steam railroad weekend in the Alleghenies. Double headed Shays. Runs to Bald Knob and WM trackage to Spruce and Big Cut. Lots of runbys and clean photo lines. Info. CALS % Poul Pedersen 19804 Spurrier Ave. Poolsville, MD 20837-2015 or from web site: www.calslivesteam.org

VISIT THE CHAPTER WEB SITE

<http://www.westkentuckynrhs.org>

REGIONAL RAIL NOTES

PENNYRAIL

UTICA

Just a note to alert people to the first operation of a photo freight train over the Whitewater Valley Railroad in Indiana. In April 2005, the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum will operate a Lima diesel-hauled freight over the line for both day and evening pictures. Night photos will be provided by Steve Barry of Railfan & Railroad Magazine.

Details are at <http://www.southernappalachia.railway.museum>
internet Bart

Jennings

Q231-03 with CSX 9051 leading HLCX 6304 derailed at Eagle Tunnel (on the Louisville-Cincinnati Short Line) about 3:30 am this morning (December 5, 2005) when the train struck a cave in just inside the north portal. A portion of the tunnel roof apparently collapsed under the strain of the rain saturated soil above. Eight loaded autoracks derailed with six of them coming to rest accordion style wedged in the cut. Fortunately the train was running on an approach signal and the lower speed helped to lessen the impact which lead to only minor injuries to the crew.

RJ Corman is on the scene rerailling the equipment under very difficult conditions. The north end of the tunnel was not accessible until a road was plowed down the side of the hill and the mud is creating horrific working conditions. Additional equipment from another contractor is now on the scene and they have cleared all of the trees off the north hillside. The plan is to daylight approximately 100 feet of the north end of the tunnel and build a new stair step cut leading into the hillside. A positive from this process will be a nice open view of the track leading up to the north portal that has not been available previously.

CSX Short Line trains are being detoured over the Indiana and Hoosier Subs as well as the LIRC, RJ Corman and NS Railroads.

Bill Grady,

internet

Genesee & Wyoming, Inc. leases the P&PU (Peoria & Pekin Union) from its owners - Canadian National, Norfolk Southern, Pennsylvania Lines LLC (NS's ex-Conrail shares) and Union Pacific. Though Tazewell & Peoria RR (TZPR) is the operating entity, P&PU still exists as a paper railroad and as landlord to the lessor. The lease extends 20 years from November 1, 2004 and can be renewed in five year increments.

IC list,

internet

Visited Paducah during Christmas break on the 27th. Not much cooking but strangely the P&L enginehouse was largely vacant. A few 3800 series units were sitting about along with the 3600. The ex- WC GP35m's are still stored...along with PAL GP10's 8319, 8321 and GP7u 8200 (8200 is still stenciled for VLIX).

A road slug/GP40 combo is used for switching now in place of the former GP10 tandems.

One surprise was green PAL caboose #9602 sitting in the yard.

CN was running a train out to Fulton with ex-IC SD40-2 6113 and DWP SD40. A BNSF coal extra was leaving empty with 2 SD70MACs in DPU mode.

There was evidence of a small derailment near Tractor Supply Co. on the P&I. Two grain hoppers were on their sides blocking the

(Continued from page 5)

and eat!

Dr. Wes Ross had told me there were Alco diesels at the LA&L's Bath & Hammondsport shop in Cohocton, north of Bath, NY, so in gloomy fading light I detoured up there. Was he ever right! Sitting outside the shop were six ex-Cartier M636s and one C636 built as Alco demonstrator #636-3 plus B&H Alco S-I switcher #4, 54 years old.

After spending the night in Hornell, I checked out the Alstom plant and found four newly built and as yet unpainted diesels in a new design for New Jersey Transit. Alstom has also restored the former Erie passenger station here for their headquarters. Another gloomy day yielded only a trackage rights NS coal train but no WNY&P trains, although I found preserved PRR stations in Olean, NY and Union City, PA plus a large two story BR&P (B&O) station in East Salamanca NY, obviously once a division headquarters. Finally I found a Belt Railway of Chicago Alco C424, now in the employ of the WNY&P, switching in Falconer (Jamestown) NY. Also here, was LA&L open platform observation business car "Traveler".

Arriving in Greenville, PA., to spend the night, I found a small rail museum across from the small Erie station (this part of the Erie's mainline up to Meadville is now owned by NS). And in brilliant late afternoon sunshine (at last) there stood "the world's largest steam switching locomotive": Union RR 0-10-2 #304 (Baldwin - 1936) along with several cabooses and a B&LE ore car. A pretty B&LE passenger station in downtown Greenville and a B&LE ore train in the yard

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28
THE CHAPTER'S
20TH BIRTHDAY**

Barstow

(Continued from page 6)

Harvey House, complete with a main hall with large possibly brass chandeliers. Part of the building, which appeared to be in fairly good, houses a railroad museum. I think its hours are 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Fridays and Saturdays. We left Barstow about 30 minutes late, and were an hour late at Gallup, New Mexico; however, we left Albuquerque on time. I saw one of Louie's Atlantic Coast Line cars, in purple and silver, at perhaps Lamy, New Mexico, and

BUY SELL SWAP

Buy or Swap I am looking for any back issues of Locomotive & Railway Preservation magazine formerly published by Pentrex. I would purchase them or trade for them. Phil Randall 270-676-8703 e-mail paroc@madisonville.com.

Wanted Junk or scrap HO locomotives or locomotive shells, GP7s, GP9s and GP18s. I'm building a series of Paducah Geeps - GP8s and GP10s. Eric Travis 270-821-0865 e-mail eltravis@spis.net

For Sale **L&N** and **Family Lines** employee magazines, \$2 each plus postage. Call or send for list. Dennis Carnal 704 Choctaw Drive Madisonville, KY 42431 270-825-0693

Sell or Swap 63 issues of **DIESEL ERA** (1994 to 2003), a very well edited and illustrated locomotive magazine. The multiple views and varying paint schemes of locomotives can be most helpful to modelers. \$1 an issue or \$50 for the lot. Chuck Hinrichs 270-886-2849 e-mail chuckrail@charter.net

Sell or Swap Bound volumes of **Model Railroader** magazine, 2001,2002, 2003 and 2004. \$25 ea. Earlier issues - 90s back to 60s \$1 per issue. Call or e-mail for list. Chuck Hinrichs 270-886-2849 e-mail chuckrail@charter.net

Deadline for material for the February PENNYRAIL is Monday, February 14.

A Different Kind Of Walk & Leave Early!!!

When a railfan sees the reporting marks WLE, most think of the Ohio-based Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway, a early 1990-spinoff of the Thoroughbred, Norfolk Southern. However in mid-December 2004, WLE took on a whole new meaning for me: The Westphalia National Railway (WLE) headquartered in Lippstadt, Germany.

Due to a new project at work, it was off "across the pond" to take care of some business with Mercedes Benz and Daimler Chrysler at Hella's headquarters in Lippstadt, Germany. If you drive a new M-Class SUV built by Mercedes, the product that keeps you cool or warm is my responsibility. We're also developing a rear view camera for the Chrysler Pacifica and Jeep Super Cherokee (yes, Ron, it's a bigger version of the Grand Cherokee due out in Model Year 2007). Enough business - we need to talk about trains!!!

The WLE is the largest railway company within the western part of Germany, and operates several lines in the northeast of North-Rhine/Westphalia. The today's WLE was created as "Warstein Lippstaedter Railway" in the 1883. This happened due to the need for a good traffic route from Warstein and points north for the regional iron and stone industry (yes, this WLE and the U.S. version are very similar in traffic!!!) From the edge of the sour country into the center of Westphalia, the WLE operates a distance of 120 km. Connections with the German AG are made in Lippstadt and Beckum.

The WLE carries approximately 1.2 million tons of cargo each year. For transportation execution, 19 locomotives of the performance classes between 115 KW and 1672 KW are available. A predominant part of these locomotives are equipped and certified for operation in pool service on the German National Railways AG. Rolling stock includes 84 specialty cars, primarily for the transport of limestone and cement. Passenger traffic on the rail was stopped in September 1975.

In addition to the WLE, I was able to see lots of different trains of the Deutsche Bahn and Swiss Federal Railways, including the large transfer yards in Bern, Switzerland. It's a different kind of railfanning, but most definitely enjoyable when you are traveling through the Black Forest country and the French-speaking portion of the Swiss Alps!!! Unfortunately, there was no time for mileage collecting (or should I say kilometer-age collecting???)

It was great to get back home, but definitely a chance of a lifetime to see how other railfans live - and I'm sure there will be a next time!!!