



Please send your digital photos and story material to billtrainthomas@gmail.com or mail to Bill Thomas, First Christian Church 1030 College Dr. Madisonville, KY 42431.



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Next Meeting Monday, Monday February 19 7:00 pm Innovation Station (Former L&N Depot) Madisonville, KY

Guest Speaker Ray Hagerman, Hopkins County-Madisonville Economic Development Corp.

Program Following Business Session and Refreshments Served

Western Kentucky Chapter, NRHS, Inc. President Ricky Bivins Vice President Steve Miller Secretary-Treasurer Bill Farrell National Director Will Kling Director at Large Keith Kittinger

'PENNYRAIL' is the official publication of the Western Kentucky Chapter, NRHS. Send news notes, historical notes and other rail information to: Editor Bill Thomas 1025 Lakewood Drive Madisonville, KY 42431 (270) 339-9482 Cell e-mail: billtrainthomas@gmail.com

Hey folks, we need material for March! Editor Bill

2018 convention to be headquartered in Cumberland, Md.

The 2018 NRHS convention will be held Tuesday-Sunday, Aug. 7-12, with headquarters in Cumberland, Md. The tentative schedule includes scenic rail trips through the countryside of West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, plus the annual meetings of the Society. The registration room for the convention will open in mid-afternoon on Tuesday, Aug. 7. The board meeting for the NRHS Fund Inc., will be held that evening.

The first trip is scheduled for Wednesday with an all-day outing to Cass, W.Va. to ride the Cass Scenic Railroad up to Spruce, W.Va. At that point, there will be a “cross platform transfer” from the Cass steam train to the Salamander diesel train to Elkins, W.Va. Lunch will be served on the Salamander. Once in Elkins, NRHS members will re-board the buses for the return trip to the hotel in Cumberland.

The tentative schedule for Thursday includes a charter train ride on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad from the depot on Cumberland (three blocks from the hotel) to Frostburg, Md., behind the newly rebuilt steam engine No. 1309. Photo run-bys are scheduled for this trip. Cab rides will be offered in both directions with proceeds benefitting the NRHS.

To read more from the NRHS News, go to https://admin.nrhs.com/NRHSNews/NRHS_News_October_2017.pdf.

Pickin' the Points

Opinions and Stories by Bill Thomas, Editor

Thanks to my wife Angela, I have been given access to the former screened-in porch that I enclosed several years ago so our young boys could have a play room. Well, play has evolved into video games and electric guitars in their bedroom. The room has served mainly as a cat litter box facility and a place for my backyard container plants to find refuge in the winter.

Upon receiving home dispatcher permission to enter the block, I quickly set up a 6-foot plastic folding table for a temporary work space. Soon I was installing digital decoders in several of my locomotives which have been in storage for years - some for decades. My soldering skills were revived as was my excitement of being able to “run” a train somewhere again in HO scale.

Here’s my “point” for this month’s article. The thought of moving these blue (Athern) and yellow box (Atlas) older locomotives into the digital command control (DCC) ages was daunting - but I’m a persistent man. Overhearing sidebar talk at meetings about DCC from our own Steve Miller and Keith Kittinger, I knew from where my help would come. And sure enough, I’m about to install my 5th and 6th decoders as I write.

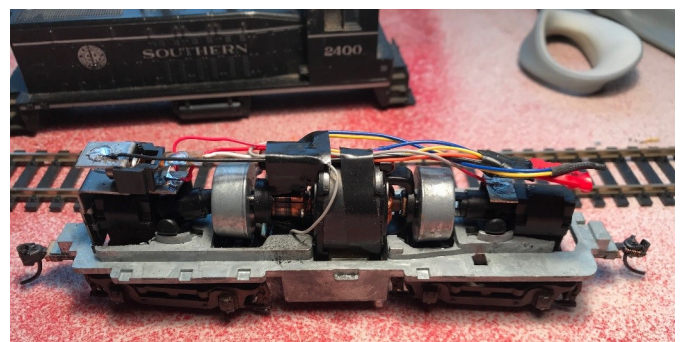
My next step was to begin preparations for painting some of my “foreign road” equipment to bring them into the L&N/Family Lines clan I have envisioned in the years 1970-1985ish. Some train

smack talk with Keith, Tony Clark, and former chapter member Bill Heaton, put me on track and today I bought my first 3 bottles of paint for the air brush I’ve never had out of the box.

All this to say that one of the most valuable elements of being in a club, historical society chapter, or other organization of like-minded people, is the range and volume of helpful information and pure “assistance” and encouragement that can come from friends who have already tread the path before you. Keeping us from making some of the mistakes they might have made along the way.

So, with a grateful heart, I say, “Thanks!” to those who continue to work, play, and strive to increase the quality of our experience together. Keep up the good work. I hope to pass the favor on to someone new down the tracks.

Your editor, Bill Thomas





Above: Hands-on Whistle Display at the Museum of American Railroads, State Fairgrounds, Dallas, TX - 1998

The working display of steam whistles was a popular attraction at the Museum of American Railroads in Dallas. An air compressor rather than live steam provided the real whistling, with a lanyard for each type shown. This very noisy display commanded a lot of attention., the kids loved it, some big kids did too.

Railroad engineers don't blow the locomotive whistle just for the fun of it, although that's what you might have thought in years past, when you heard unusual series of dots and dashes coming from a steam whistle or air horn. In the era prior to radio and other modern communications the locomotive whistle signals were extremely important in safe train movement. Most of the many signals are no longer used, even the flagman's job has been eliminated along with brakemen and most switchmen, along with the caboose.

“Whoooooo whoooooo whoo Whoooooo,” is the most familiar train whistle used as a warning for the highway grade crossing. That last Whoooooo is to be the moment the engine actually crosses the highway. As an aside: Dash-Dash-Dot-Dash is the Morse Code letter “Q.” That signal was used by the Queen of England’s yacht when entering a harbor, to announce her arrival. (probably also meant get the heck out of the way..)

Another whistle signals still in use today is: three long bursts for “I’m about to back up.” You may hear that signal down at the harbor too when a large ship is about to move astern.

Steam whistles used by American railroads were almost always chosen for their ability to be heard over great distances and to stand out over other noises and whistles of the day. Not all American railroads used deep sounding whistles. The Pennsylvania, for example, used a shrieking single note or “banshee” sound. Most mainline railroads preferred either a three-note or six-note whistle with the most popular being the three-chime version.

Fast moving steam locomotives generally had an air-horn to supplement the whistle, as at speeds of 80 -90 even a hundred miles per hour, the air-horn provided warnings at a greater range.

Credits: Photo by Mitchael K. Ostlund - Excerpts from Trains Magazines Feb 50 and Sep 2014 - Note: The Museum has since moved from Dallas to Frisco, TX. The fate of the display is not known. - **Gary O. Ostlund**

Ricky's Replies!

Greetings fellow members. And welcome to February 2018. I am happy to report after talking with Bill Farrell, that he is doing well following open heart surgery where in he had five bypasses performed. He is following his doctors orders, his medical and exercise regime and of course Mrs. Farrell is keeping him at bay! We certainly hope to see Bill at the February meeting.

As you are well aware, inclement weather forced me to cancel the January meeting. I felt it was best for all parties involved. As a result, I will be hosting the February meeting as opposed to traditionally the January meeting.

Speaking of the Chapter meeting, we will meet at the Madisonville-Hopkins County Economic Development Corporation headquarters. Which happens to be the former L&N Railroad station in downtown Madisonville. Located on W. Arch St., Madisonville, this building has been repurposed by the City of Madisonville and is now called Innovation Station.

My guest for the evening will be Ray Hagerman, President of Madisonville-Hopkins County Economic Development Corporation. Ray will enlighten us as to the events developing Innovation Station The trials and frustrations and the ultimate success of the building not to mention the function of the building. This will be an interesting night. I plan to depart from our normal meeting criteria and give Ray the floor at 7 o'clock. Then we will have our business meeting and I will follow with a short video program entitled C&O 614, March to Hinton. This 30 minute video pits Ross Rowlands 614 against the Diesel Locomotive in the hills of Virginia and West Virginia. It is very entertaining.

Jim Pearson will have the results of our first 2018 Photo Contest. The next contest is March 1-15 with March 22 as the entry deadline. Make an effort to enter this Chapter event, even if only with a cell phone photo. Keep in mind, The Chapter Calendar showcases the photos from these yearly contests.

Be sure to check the recent NRHS News and NRHS Telegraph publications available online from the NRHS Website. There are several interesting articles therein with excellent photos. And while on the web sight, check out the other tabs available. A lot of work goes into the National Newsletter and is very well done.

The only old business I have is a reminder to pay dues. National as well as Chapter dues are...well..DUE! One can pay National Dues online with a credit card or via check. Chapter dues are to be paid to Bill Farrell by check or cash. In one of the National publications there was a note stating in the future National dues can be paid through the Chapter. That option is not yet available.

New Business will address our meeting space, Program idea's, Chapter trips etc. Etc. being anything the membership wishes to bring before the Chapter. Bill Farrell has suggested we drop the raffle as a fundraiser. Once he has presented the results of the Breakfast with Santa, Photos with the Polar Express Characters and the raffle, we will discuss this option.

As always, Members can step up with programs, ideas and suggestions. Trips trackside or to a museum etc. This is train enthusiast group...let us make 2018 another banner year.

Rick Bivins.

Here's a link where you can purchase copies of our 2018 Chapter Calendars

Small Calendar 8.5x11 -\$16.95 + shipping

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/jim-pearson/2018-west-ky-nrhs-small-calendar/calendar/product-23458388.html>

Large Wall Calendar 13x19 #14.95 + Shipping

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/jim-pearson/2018-west-kentucky-nrhs-large-calendar/calendar/product-23458434.html>



Photography Contest News

Below are the dates for upcoming chapter photo contests. During the months listed all members are invited to shoot pictures and submit no more than two entries to webmaster@westkentuckynrhs.org by the deadline listed next to each contest. You must be a paid member of the chapter to participate in these contests.

Jim Pearson will judge the photos and select 1st through 3rd place and the winners will be presented in the PennyRail and on the chapter website. We'll also view them at the meeting following each contest.

At least the 1st place winners will be used to produce a chapter calendar for the next year. All submissions must have a caption that lists at least the railroad, location and date with photographer's credit and any other relevant information.

March 1-31, 2018

Submission Deadline: April 7, 2018

May 1-31, 2018

Submission Deadline: June 7, 2018

July 1-31, 2018

Submission Deadline: August 7, 2018

September 1-30, 2018

Submission Deadline: October 7, 2018

November 1-30, 2018

Submission Deadline: December 7, 2018



From Bill Heaton's O Scale Layout



More from the Great Northwest! By Gary Ostland



Left: Eastbound just exited Tunnel #11 atop the Continental Divide – Pipestone Pass. We recently discussed the train whistles, and to a short extent the signal calls. Two longs, a short followed by another long is a highway grade crossing warning. Three longs alert the whole train crew the intent to put the train in a reverse movement. Switchmen and brakemen on the ground would usually communicate by hand signal, or by kerosene lanterns in darkness, and respond to whistle signals as appropriate. Widespread railroad radio communications only goes back to the 40s & 50s.

When a train made an unscheduled stop out on the mainline, for any reason, a flagman was dispatched from the caboose. He was equipped with a flag, lantern, fusee (flares) and track torpedoes. It was up to him to make the train secure from any following movement. How far to the rear was dictated by the highest speed allowed on that track segment.

Upon removal of the cause for the delay, the engineer would “whistle-in” the flagman. After waiting for a reasonable time the train would slowly get underway, assuming the flagman recovered from his position and was aboard the caboose.

There were instances where the flagman may not hear the call; canyons, heavy tree foliage, unrelated noise, like highways, waterfalls, storm conditions, etc., even other trains, like across the river. More than one flagman got left behind. A good Conductor would not let that happen. His method to prevent abandonment was to open the air-brake valve and disallow the brakes from releasing. The engineer would know what is happening by the lack of air-pressure building in the train-line.*

Getting left behind up in the mountains or out in the desert had to be on the mind of that lonely flagman. I guess worse than that would be stranded adjacent to an alligator-filled Southern swamp, in the middle of the night. I don’t think they paid these guys enough.

* A discussion on air-brakes may be in order, for another day. Notice the Milwaukee Road used “Bay-window caboose.” Photo credit: Tom Post, David P. Oroszi collection, May 1973, fourteen months prior to wires coming down. (rear cover The Milwaukee Railroader mag. 2nd Qtr. 2014) - Gary O. Ostlund

Photo Section

Below: Summit of Continental Divide, at Donald siding, Pipestone Pass, Montana - 1973 - We have at least three things going on here. The eastbound freight will soon descend about 2 thousand feet into the Jefferson River valley. The grade is a steep 2% compensated. The 3-unit set of boxcab helpers were apparently on the point climbing out of Butte, and not needed for regenerative braking. They ducked into the siding when the train stopped, it's nose barely out of the tunnel, just out of view to the left. The Speeder (putt-putt) will follow the train vigilantly watching as a fire preventive.

During fire season down bound trains were shadowed by water-equipped speeders. Even with the motor/units up front applying regenerative braking some air-brake use is often needed. That involved brake shoes pressing on spinning wheels, with sparks always swirling along the right-of-way.

This scene was in the Summer of 1973 at Donald, the summit of Pipestone Pass and the Continental Divide. The train climbed out of the Clarks Fork River drainage that leads to the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean. Ahead the train drops into the Missouri River watershed leading to the Mississippi and Gulf.

The helper crew, Engineer Fred Coombes and Fireman Del Hart are still in the cab hidden by the boxcar. Del Hart is the former engineer that wrinkled up the Little Joe E-78 in Sixteen Mile Canyon on May 23, 1966. Hart was fired, rehired after good union representation, but restricted to fireman status on the Butte Helper, only. He eventually retired from that position, and has since passed. I knew both Coombes and Hart. Coombes lived in Butte, Hart had a place about half way up the pass adjacent to the mainline.

Coombes was #1 seniority in the division, and a fellow church member. He knew I was an avid railfan, but straight-laced as he was, he never even let me up in the cab the many times I saw him hooking up and trekking over the pass. He retired when the electrics ended in 74, and moved to Seattle with his wife of many years. I once asked him why as #1 on engineer's roster that he didn't bid on some glamorous hotshot freight run. With a twinkle in his eye he stated; "I sleep in my own bed every night."

In a year the Milwaukee electrics will be history, and in 1980 the entire system west of the Red River of the North will shut down. The roadway behind the helper is Old US Highway 10, by then downgraded by I-90, about 7 miles the way the crow flies to the north. The Milwaukee Road favored bay-window type cabooses, and the tri-level auto racks are open to the elements. Why they are now completely enclosed, and the wreck of the E-78 are stories for another time. - Gary O. Ostlund



RailPictures.Net - Image Copyright © Steve Schmolinger

TIMETABLE #110
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF RAILFANS ONLY

- February 18 - Regular Chapter Meeting
- March 18 - Regular Chapter Meeting
- April 16 - Regular Chapter Meeting
- May 21 - Regular Chapter Meeting at Hopkinsville

If you know of regional events we can put on the Timetable, please forward those to me, bill@fbcmadisonville.com.

The Bumper

If you have items for sale or looking something in particular, feel free to send a description and digital photographs to me for publication in the next issue of The PennyRail.



Free to a good home - Time Books. Bill Thomas, 270-339-9482 or my email in the left box below.

PENNYRAIL” is your publication. If you have photographs or other material of current or historical interest that you would like to share with Chapter members, your editor would appreciate hearing from you. Your material will receive the best of care while being readied for publication. Your help is appreciated.

Bill Thomas, editor
billtrainthomas@gmail.com

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
UP	888-877-7267
Amtrak	800-331-0008

National Railway Historical Society

www.nrhs.com

Railway Preservation News

www.rypn.org/

Kentucky Railway Museum

www.kyrail.org/

Indiana Railway Museum and French

Lick Scenic Railway

www.indianarailwaymuseum.org

Illinois RR Historical Society

<http://icrrhistorical.org/>

Illinois Railway Museum

www.irm.org/

Tennessee Central

Railway Museum

www.tcry.org/

VISIT THE CHAPTER WEB SITE: <http://www.westkentuckynrhs.org>

PENNYRAIL

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