

PENNYRAIL

September 2019

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 9

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.



Chapter Chatter

In this issue...

- ♦ Ricky's Experiences
- ♦ Photo Contest Winners
- ♦ Visit to Fordsville Depot
- ♦ Chapter Interchange Track
- ♦ Minutes & Financial Report
- ♦ *And more!*

**Next Meeting
Monday
September 16
7:00 pm**

**Innovation Station
(Former L&N Depot)
Main Line & Arch St**

**Program by
Blair Terry
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:

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***UP COMING
PHOTO
CONTEST
Submission
Deadline Dates
On page 4***

Ricky's Experiences



Left: For my money, one of the best looking diesel locomotives to ever grace a 4'8.5" gauge track. The 42-year-old, 1977 built-for-Conrail EMD SD40-2 rolls south through Morton's Gap, KY, September 12, 2019. Photo by Morton's Gap resident and our president, Ricky Bivins.

Right and Below: Continuing the recent DPU (Distributed Power Units) parade by CSX, a north bound freight glides through Morton's Gap, KY. Photo by Ricky Bivins.



Pickin' the Points

Opinions and Stories by Bill Thomas, Editor

Social Media and Rail Enthusiasts

Are you a hold out for jumping into the social media circle? Afraid you'll get unsolicited friend requests and suspicious messages from people you don't know and may not want to know? Reluctant about getting your account hacked? Well, if you're willing to change your password every 6 months or so you can avoid most of these demons.

The truth is, in my opinion, the advantages and benefits social media offers to rail fans and model railroads far outweigh the occasional frustrations experienced by many of us, myself included. Here are just a few examples of rail-related Facebook pages and/or groups:

Nashville Steam - a FB page dedicated to promoting the restoration of NC&StL steam locomotive 576. It is chocked full of pictures and current information about the restoration process. You can post questions and make comments on each post.

Illinois Central Railroad - A public FB page designed for former (and current it still says) employees of The Illinois Central - "A place for former and current employees of the Illinois Central Railroad to hang out and keep in touch."

L&N Railroad Modelers - A public FB page for those modeling anything L&N.

Railroad Fools - I think the name of the public page speaks for itself. One of my favorites.

Railroad Oddball Locomotives and MOW Equipment - A closed group so you'll have to click on the "Join Group" button and wait to be granted entrance. A unique site for unusual railroading equipment.

West Kentucky Chapter of The National Railway Historical Society - keep in touch with what your chapter mates are up to and post your own photos, comments, and ideas. Jim Pearson does a great job keeping the public page updated and looking good.

I hope these samples have encouraged you to give social media a try. If you do not have a computer, smart phone, or tablet, you can use your public library's computers. Just ask the library staff for help.

Bill Thomas, editor



Photography Contest News

All members are invited to submit no more than two entries each to webmaster@westkentuckynrhs.org. You must be a paid member of the chapter to participate in these contests. Your photo must have been shot between June 15-30th. The Membership will judge the photos at the meeting following each contest and select 1st through 3rd place. The winners will be published in the PennyRail and on the chapter website. At least the 1st place winners will be used to produce a chapter calendar for the next year.

**Our next contest will run:
September 15-30
Submission Deadline: October 7, 2019**



First Place, July 2019, West Kentucky NRHS Photo Contest - CSX locomotive # 958 pulls an intermodal south on the Henderson Subdivision after emerging from the south portal of Ridgetop Tunnel, north of Baker Station crossing in Ridgetop Tennessee on May 30, 2019. - Photo by Bill Farrell.

More on the following page.

Photo Contest Winners Continued



Second Place, July 2019, West Kentucky NRHS Photo Contest - CSX locomotive # 958 pulls an intermodal south on the Henderson Subdivision after emerging from the south portal of Ridgetop Tunnel, north of Baker Station crossing in Ridgetop Tennessee on May 30, 2019. - Photo by Bill Farrell.



Third Place, July 2019, West Kentucky NRHS Photo Contest - Illinois Central 1026 and 1000 lead a northbound CN mixed freight on the Centralia Subdivision at Champaign, Illinois on July 29, 2019. - Photo by Rick Bivins

Where Rails Once Ran

Earlier this year my wife and I visited the Fordsville, Ky train depot on a rainy day. Fordsville is about 46 miles east of Madisonville in Ohio county. The depot is across the street from City Hall downtown. The first train to Fordsville on the newly built Owensboro and Fordsville Railroad was on October 1, 1889 and regular freight and passenger service started a week later. The round trip fare was 85 cents. The Illinois Central Railroad built a branch line from Horse Branch to Fordsville in 1893. The L&N Railroad bought the lines in 1905 and the present station was built in 1916.

As many as 6 passenger trains a day went between Horse Branch and Owensboro but passenger service was cut June 15, 1941. Freight service lasted until the late 1970s.

The depot has been nicely restored and contains a modest train museum. Call 270-929-5792 for current hours of operation. There is a nice diner a block away on the main road (Hwy 54). Rich Hane



Sniffing Out Frequencies

WHEN VISITING A NEW LOCATION, railfans typically check the web or talk to locals to figure out which radio frequencies are used in the area and for what purpose. Because modern scanners can blaze through all railroad radio channels in an instant, there isn't much need to program in specific frequencies as was necessary in the old days. However, there are some railroad-related communications that might not be conducted on railroad channels — for instance, transmissions from first responders, maintenance contractors, scrappers, cleanup crews, and taxis. Because in many cases there's no easy way to identify who these communicators are, it would be difficult to figure out which frequencies to program into your scanner. This is where the wireless frequency counter, or "sniffer," comes in.

A sniffer is a small, battery-operated handheld device that displays the frequency of any strong signals it picks up in the immediate area. For instance, if you were railfanning near a rail line or yard, the sniffer would pick up signals from nearby base stations, mobiles, and portables and indicate each reception by emitting a beep or other alerting signal. Most importantly, the sniffer would then display the frequency being detected so that you could program it into your scanner.

Because sniffers are designed to pick up all transmissions in a given area, it might hit on transmissions that have nothing to do with railroading. This would be a bigger problem in urban areas, which tend to be thick with radio users. However, by watching when users transmit with their radios, it would be possible to correlate their transmissions with the responses from the sniffer. To minimize unwanted "hits," you can use a sniffer antenna that excludes specific band segments, for example, one that would filter out reception of FM broadcast signals.

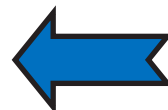
Fortunately, sniffers can typically store up to 400 frequencies and record up to 250 hits per frequency. This means you can leave the sniffer on, unattended, while you sleep, drive, and scout, and recall just about everything it picked up on railroad radio channels. This is useful because you can determine which railroad frequencies are the busiest so that you can ignore the unused ones.

For hardcore scanning enthusiasts and equipment junkies, sniffers can usually

"reaction tune" more advanced scanner models. Reaction tuning is the process where a scanner automatically tunes to the frequency picked up by the sniffer, allowing the listener to immediately hear the transmission without having to program the frequency into the scanner. Reaction tuning does not work with all scanners and requires a separate interface and associated cabling.

Sniffers are available on the new and used markets, with new units retailing for around \$350, and used units selling for less on Craigslist and eBay. The most popular model on the market is the Scout, manufactured by Optoelectronics of Boca Raton, Fla. (www.optoelectronics.com). Optoelectronics offers a line of accessories including tuned antennas, filters, batteries, power packs, and a reaction tuning interface and associated cabling for Radio Shack PRO-2005, 2006, 2035, and 2042 scanners. As with most things in today's world, there are several videos on YouTube that show how the Scout works with radio scanners and others that show how to do such things as change the battery. Operator manuals for Scout are available at the Optoelectronics website.

The next time you're on the road and want an idea of which frequencies are used the most in your area, or if you see radios being used that you're not hearing, a sniffer could be just what you need. Fortunately, they're small, lightweight, and fit in with camera bags, glove compartments, and travel plans. ☑



Submitted by Rich Hane

Minutes from August 2019

President Ricky Bivins called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm, August 15, 2019. There was a total of 14 members present for the meeting.

The minutes from the July 15, 2019 meeting were approved as printed in the club bulletin (PennyRail).

The treasurers report was given by Bill Farrell, of 2,940.02. There was no activity in the treasurer since the last meeting. The treasures report was approved.

Old Business;

President Bivins called on the Don Clayton slide committee for a report. Steve Miller and Don Clayton have been working on the slide collection sorting out local shots of interest. Steve said they will give another report at the next meeting in September.

It was reported that the Parkway Plaza Mall had been sold. No one knows who the new owner is and what to expect from the mall concerning the Christmas Show. There will be more information coming forth in the September meeting. Wally Watts volunteered to put out a display of steam engines if we do the show.

New Business

The only new business was a suggestion for members think about the possibility of purchasing club jackets. Bill Farrell volunteered to have samples for the next meeting. The club logo would be placed over the left chest with either embroidered or silk-screened print. President Bivins asked for a show of hands of how many members present would be interested in purchasing a jacket. Upon a count a majority of members were interested in more information.

The winner of the July photo contest was won by Bill Farrell taking both first and second place.

Steve Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Will Kling, motion carried.

Business meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully;

William Farrell

Current Financial Report

5/1/2019	Beginning Balance		2,940.02
6/1/2019	Beginning Balance		2,940.02
7/1/2019	Beginning Balance		2,940.02
8/1/2019	Beginning Balance		2,940.02
9/1/2019	Beginning Balance		2,940.02
9/5/2019	Dues, 2019	5	2,945.02
9/5/2019	Calendars	15	2,960.02

The Bumper

Chapter Interchange Track

Bill Thomas - Does anyone have information (other than what is online) about the Tennessee, Alabama & Georgia RR? Please email me, billtrainthomas@gmail.com.

If you have items for sale or looking for a particular item or items, Email me at billtrainthomas@gmail.com with the information and I will list it here.



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

TIMETABLE #110

September 16, 7PM - WKNRHS Meeting
September 28 - Crofton Picnic
October 21, 7PM - WKNRHS Meeting
November 18, 7PM - WKNRHS Meeting
No meeting in December

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

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>

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