

THE PENNYRAIL

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
WEST KENTUCKY CHAPTER OF
THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March 2022

Meeting

Innovation Station

Monday,

March 21

7:00 PM

President-Keith Kittinger

Vice President-Steve Miller

Sec/Treas-Bill Farrell

Chapter Rep-Will Kling

Director at Large-Cooper Smith

Editor-Bill Thomas

**Program by Jim
Pearson about
his trip to the
Nevada
Northern RR**



Minutes from February 2022 Meeting

President Keith Kittinger called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm, February 21, 2022. There was a total of 12 members present for the meeting.

The minutes from the January 17, 2021 meeting were approved as printed in the club bulletin. Motion to except the minutes by Steve Miller, seconded by Bill Thomas. The minutes were approved by the members present.

The treasurers report was given by William Farrell, of 3,318.80. Motion to except the treasures report was made by. The treasures report was approved by the members present.

Old Business;

Jim Pearson conducted the photo contest for January. The membership voted on the six photos entered. First place was William Farrell, with second going to Cooper Smith. Jim also reported on the format for future contest.

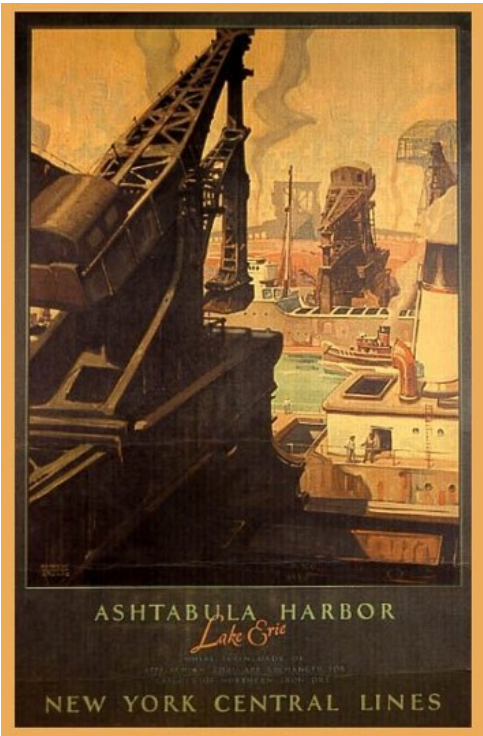
Bill Farrell reported that there were only about 5 members who had not paid their dues as of the Monday night meeting. Bill will re-invoice them in March.

New Business;

There was no new business discussed at the February meeting. With no further business, Jim Pearson motioned to adjourn the business meeting, seconded by Will Kling, motion passed.

Business meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully; William Farrell, 2/22/2022



Left: In light of our February program on Hueletts, Gary Ostlund had a timely entry for the PennyRail... (ed)

There were 77 Hulettts in use on the Great Lakes. Not just the 4 PRR units at Cleveland. The NYCRR owned 8 at Ashtabula, Joint ownership with the B&O for 2 at Toledo and didn't own but had total use of the 1 at Buffalo. The picture is NYCRR advertising. - submitted by Gary Ostlund

NEWS BRIEFS



Photo Contest

Now - March 31, 2022



RJ Corman Gallery



NRHS National Convention

May 15-20

<https://nrhs.com/convention>

Agenda For March 21, 2022

Call meeting to Order	Keith Kittinger
Welcome Members & Guest	Keith Kittinger
Minutes from February 21st , meeting	Bill Farrell
Treasures Report	Bill Farrell
Call for Old Business	
Sign Up Sheet	Keith Kittinger
Chapter Dues	Bill Farrell
Call for any other Old Business	
Call for New Business	
Photo Contest	Jim Pearson
Call for any other New Business	
NRHS Representative Report	Will Kling
Chapter Historian	Ricky Bivins
Adjourn Business Meeting	Keith Kittinger
Show-N-Tell	
March Refreshments by	Jim Pearson
March Program by	Jim Pearson
Next Meeting April 18th	
April Refreshments	Ricky Bivins
April Program	Keith Kittinger
Adjourn	

Reminder that the chapter voted to omit the printing of the finance report in the January 2022 meeting. That report is available to the membership upon request or may be heard at each monthly meeting. -ed.

PHOTO CONTEST

March photo contest is now running through the end of March.

PHOTO GALLERY



My records reveal that I've used this picture previously. Clearly it is one of my favorites. This is Amtrak's Coast Starlight, crossing the Chambers Creek lift-bridge near Steilacoom, Washington. South Puget Sound was my stomping grounds until '04, and a recreational and railroad paradise.

The train is northbound and follows the Sound for about 15 miles, facing great sunsets with the Olympic Mountains to the west. After tunneling under Tacoma's Point Defiance Park, it will skirt Commencement Bay for another 5 or 6 miles.

This was a warm Summer evening out on the boat, and I had anchored, patiently awaiting a train, any train. Afterward I overnighted a few miles south near the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge. Nature provides a nicely protected breakwater, with the double track railroad a hundred feet or so up the bank, and endless wildlife throughout. A campfire on the beach with hot chocolate and marshmallows is in order.

As luck would have it, rail traffic that evening was light, actually non-existent. As I read my book and watched the daylight wane I felt certain that I was skunked. But low and behold, I heard whistling for the crossing at the ferry dock about a mile south. Another look at the bridge, with the sun now down to about a half-finger on an outstretched arm, and fading fast. Camera ready, here it comes clattering across the bridge. Click. It was then that I realized the sun was tightly packed between the train and the rail. Is that dumb luck or what? Could I have planned it that way.....? Not likely.

- Gary Ostlund

Classic RJ Corman by Steve Gentry

Steve Gentry happened upon these RJ Corman units at a sand and gravel distributor on River Road in Louisville March 14, 2022. Could the sky have been any more perfect?



RJC 3806 is a GP 38 rebuild - one of my favorites! My opinion, the GPs and SDs and the greatest looking faces and bodies.



MILITARY RAILWAY SERVICE VET REMEMBERS 1944

Rough ride for some Brass Hats

Christmas 1944 . . . Belgium . . . the Battle of the Bulge. The day dawned clear, bitter cold, and “anxious” for me. To explain the anxiety, let me say that although my assignment was Master Mechanic, 709th Railway Grand Division, Military Railway Service (a Grand Division in the Army is about the equivalent of a general superintendent’s staff in civilian railroading), my bosses, knowing I was a qualified locomotive engineer, sometimes used me as an engineman on special trains. Supposedly to confuse the enemy, we called them “test trains.” (I once pulled Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. His train’s symbol was “A-1.”)

At that time, a flock of generals, including Gen. Frank Ross, Theater Transportation Commander, plus several colonels and officers of lesser rank, wanted to inspect the fluid battle situation. I was called as engineman to leave Brussels about 6:30 a.m. on Christmas Day. My fireman was Sgt. Jim DeFrancisco, and our engine was a 65-ton Whitcomb center-cab diesel-electric. The train consist was a steam-heat car, several sleeping cars, a dining car, and a European version of an office car. A Major Alexander, trainmaster for one of the Operating Battalions, rode the cab with us. He informed me that all personnel, military and civilian, were alerted to the vital importance of this movement, and that we had superiority over all trains between Brussels and Charleroi. Nothing was to delay this “Brass Hat Special.”

We departed Brussels just about on time. All of us were tense, but happy at the sight of sunshine after many days of fog, snow, and gloom. At the first station outside Brussels, the signal was red. I called for it, but no acknowledgment was made, so I stopped and whistled out a flag while Major Alexander sprinted into the station. Almost at once he ran back to the locomotive, giving me a highball, so I whistled in the flagman and proceeded. When I asked him, “What happened?” he shook his head and replied, “The operator [a Belgian] was asleep.”

We proceeded without incident until we reached a block tower at Luttre on a stretch

of four-track main which was run (and designated) the opposite of American practice. In other words, we were on Track 1, which in the United States would’ve been Track 4. The signal system, however, was patterned after American standards, and I got a “green-over-green-over-green” indication, which was about as clear as possible. The trainmaster was in the cab and called the indication, echoing what my fireman and I had exchanged.

Suddenly the diesel started a buck-and-wing dance, almost throwing me off the seatbox. With one hand I grabbed the brake valve, and with the other steadied myself to keep from falling to the floor. At 35 mph we were being routed from Track 1 to Track 4 — through low-speed crossovers. I snapped a glance back at the train — the cars were reeling like small boats in a heavy sea. We made it safely through the crossovers, but to this day I’ll never understand how.

Upon our arrival at Charleroi, even before we stopped rolling, I was not surprised to see a colonel swing off one of the cars and head toward my cab. Nor was I surprised at his red-as-a-fusee face — but his bandaged neck did shake me. It seems he had been shaving as we hit the crossovers at Luttre.

He started bellowing at me some distance down the platform. I was a lowly captain, and since he seemed near to apoplexy, I felt that it would be prudent just to let him “run down.” When he paused to catch his breath (and his lung capacity was truly amazing), I explained the occurrence at Luttre, calling on my fireman and the trainmaster for verification, whereupon he quieted down.



All over the European Theater of Operations that day, the majority of servicemen were being treated to a special holiday dinner. My commanding officer, Col. Merle M. Shappell (a Union Pacific officer in civilian life) was seated in the warm, comfortable dining car eating turkey and the trimmings in company with the brass. His faithful servants had come off without even a box of K rations. So I made myself conspicuous, marching up and down the platform alongside the dining car, catching the colonel’s eye occasionally with the most plaintive look I could muster. He got the message, gave me the high sign, and got up from his seat. Shortly we “poor folks” were tearing into thick turkey sandwiches and mugs of hot coffee. As long as I live, I’ll remember with deep gratitude Colonel Shappell’s thoughtfulness.

As an epilogue, I heard later that the Army investigated *l'affaire Luttre* and that the Belgian towerman was executed as a Nazi collaborator who had done his best to neutralize a trainload of American brass. This story, while certainly plausible, I cannot confirm. I do know that he terrified those of us on that locomotive when he “accidentally” crossed us over four tracks at too high a speed. Only luck kept us from a spectacular pileup.

Submitted by Gary Ostlund



Railroad Interchange

Free back issues of O Gauge Railroading, ranging from 1996-2002, and a Norfolk Southern Station list from May 1996.

Also looking for HO scale railroad junk parts such as barrels, diesel parts, tools, etc. for an engine house diorama scene.

Call, text, or email Bill Thomas, billtrainthomas@gmail.com, 270-339-9482.

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