



Joe DeFrancesco &lt;jdefrancesco5@gmail.com&gt;

## HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS NEWSLETTER - FOURTH QUARTER

2 messages

DWSNRHS@aol.com &lt;DWSNRHS@aol.com&gt;

Mon, Oct 7, 2013 at 7:51 PM

To: VS2011@aol.com, dcalvinm@windstream.net, PKMac101@aol.com, jhooks@auxmail.iup.edu, smithfurniture@verizon.net, WBurket@aol.com, HWBurket@aol.com, crisbehe@atlanticbb.net, prdoc1@aol.com, ottodocfacs@atlanticbb.net, kackiefrass@atlanticbb.net, Alleopold@aol.com, my69riv@verizon.net, cbehe@earthlink.net, dwsnrhs@aol.com, train\_master@verizon.net, gkurtz@atlanticbb.net, pennsy065@aol.com, D63W@aol.com, runningtrains@atlanticbb.net, jkharella@gmail.com, scottpbrown@atlanticbb.net, dbsmith@chimrock.com, photobug42@aol.com, chief2@atlanticbb.net, GMamflyer@verizon.net, Furykid66@aol.com, trainspoppop@aol.com, prjoe@atlanticbb.net, lalwine@lfire.com, ragivler@hotmail.com, wteeter9345@atlanticbb.net, kmoore.dmd@comcast.net, jstogeson@gmail.com, buckretired@atlanticbb.net, dsinpa@hotmail.com, busyguys3@atlanticbb.net, mdean37651@aol.com, RDGCO2102T1jds@yahoo.com, llear@roaringspring.com, jeffery.holland11@gmail.com, tkyvlypspret@atlanticbb.net, FrKGeorge@verizon.net, gwren@comcast.net, RPAbraham@nb.net, ejh2@atlanticbb.net, jdefrancesco5@gmail.com, waterlillies1972@yahoo.com, tomonthehill@hotmail.com, missworld4kids@gmail.com, trainmaster1361@verizon.net, ElHefe2000@atlanticbb.net, peterjhart@aol.com, T11mds@aol.com



Official Newsletter  
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 1361

Altoona, PA 16603-1361

[www.hscnrhs.org](http://www.hscnrhs.org)

AUTUMN 2013

CHAPTER OFFICERS

-

**President: Francix X. Givler Jr., 114 Scott Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602**

**NOTE: \* time-sensitive correspondence should be sent to this address.**

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**UNDER THE WIRE**

by

**Leonard E. Alwine**

**TROLLEY LINE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF SERVICE**

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On July 6, 2013, the Shade Gap Electric Railway celebrated fifty years of service with a special ceremony at the Rock Hill Trolley Museum, at 11:00 AM. This was followed by a trip to Blacklog Narrows aboard the museum's cars # 6 and # 355. Then a delightful lunch was served in the member's pavilion from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. The rest of the day featured trolley parades of most of the operating fleet including snow sweepers and work cars, open car # 1875, other PCC cars, old style Brill cars and bullet car # 205 from SEPTA. This car, built in 1931, still looks good and rides smooth even though it cannot get fully up to the speed it was accustomed to from Norristown to Philadelphia due to Shade Gaps short two-mile line.

# ROCKHILL

## TROLLEY MUSEUM

Rockhill Furnace, PA  
**50 YEARS OF SERVING THE PUBLIC**

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

11:00AM  
 Saturday, July 6, 2013  
 Rockhill Furnace, PA



**Gala Grand Opening – July 6, 1963**

**The Shade Gap Electric Railway began in 1962 when the founding members purchased Johnstown Traction # 311 and moved it to Rockhill Furnace. It was operated on a short piece of track with a jumper wire to a generator. It also became the first trolley operated at a museum in Pennsylvania. Later, after more track was laid and poles/wires erected, the museum was officially opened on July 6, 1963. At that time there were no buildings or even a loading platform, but those founders had a vision.**

Fifty years later, that vision is reality as there are now two car barns for storage of cars, a shop for the restoration of the cars, a members building with kitchen and picnic area, a gift shop, two miles of track with four stops along the way with platforms and a ticket booth at the beginning of the line.

The museum has also grown from that one trolley car to twenty-two examples of electric railway equipment. All but two are stored inside buildings and most do operate.

Car # 311 is now in the shop building getting extensive rebuilding from the frame out. The members had wanted to have it operational for this anniversary, but did not want to rush the rebuild and overlook something.

The success of the museum was outlined by Matthew Nawn, Chairman of the Board. He stated that over the years every member has volunteered their time to help make that vision a reality. The museum operates with all volunteer help and donations are used to build the buildings and purchase and restore the cars. All volunteers are treated equally, whether it is cleaning the toilets, mowing the grass, or operating the cars for the public. A show of hands revealed that even though there are still a few members with 30 to 40 years service, a lot of members only have ten or less years, but are younger and can work harder. This younger membership will mean that the vision can be carried into the future.



*Johnstown Traction Co. #311. This was the museum's first acquisition in 1962. Shown in car shop undergoing repairs.*



*Johnstown Traction Company # 355*



*Brill # 172, single truck trolley at the loading platform in Rockhill Furnace. (A number of years ago, I helped paint the stripe and lettering on this car). To the rear is PCC # 6 from NJ Transit Co.*

To help insure that, the museum has just recently purchased a U-2 light-rail two-car train from San Diego Trolley. This trolley was built in 1981 and will help make the collection more relevant to the younger members and guests. The museum now has cars dating from 1895 to 1981. They are now raising funds to transport the cars from California to Rockhill, an estimated cost of \$10,000.00.



It was also learned at the service that car # 355 has been nominated to become the State trolley car. This car is also from Johnstown and was recently restored to better than new condition. It is the hope that the legislature will be able to finalize this designation for the current year.

As an aside, it was also pointed out that Rockhill Trolley Museum had actually operated trolley cars longer than most trolley lines in smaller Pennsylvania towns, with most lasting only 30-40 years.

At the conclusion of all the remarks, all present were given a vintage Shade Gap token used in the 1960's for rides. It was a nice gift.

If you have never visited Rock Hill trolley Museum, I would encourage to to visit some weekend. It is only an hour drive east from Altoona.

#### Upcoming Events:

September 14: Steel Wheels meet rubber tires Antique Car Event

October 12-13: Fall Spectacular

October 19-20: Pumpkin Patch Trolley\November 19-20: Polar Bear Express trolley

December 7: Santa Trolley

### **HORSESHOE CURVE PARK**

by

**Leonard E. Alwine**

I recently acquired some material on the PRR which included some material on the PRR and the Horseshoe Curve, primarily old post cards and a couple of pages from an old magazine.

The magazine was The Mutual Magazine and the pages were from the October 1941 edition. I found it very interesting, for it was a story about the building of the original park at the curve. Reading it brought back many very good memories of my many trips to the Curve as a kid and teenager. For me, the Curve was a stop on our Sunday car rides. I can not even tell how many times I climbed the old steps with my parents and grand-parents. We usually had to stop at the rest areas along the stairs for grandma to rest. It took awhile to get to the top, but then there was the big K-4 to look at and always at least a train or two would go around the tracks before we began the walk back down.

I remember always asking my grandfather who was a contractor in Altoona why he didn't build a roof over the K-4 so that it would not get wet and rust. He would always say because no one asked him to do it. I often wonder if someone had asked him, if the K-4 would still be in one piece today preserved at the Curve ?

Once at the bottom, we would usually get ice cream at the refreshment stand and sit on the picnic tables and watch the chipmunks run around the grounds. A quick look at the old wooden caboose and then back into the car for the trip home.

The article, which I hope can be reproduced in the Coal Bucket, brought back all those good memories, although I do not remember a fireplace in the first shelter going up the path. (Maybe it was removed before I began visiting the Curve.) Perhaps it will do the same for all those who read it.

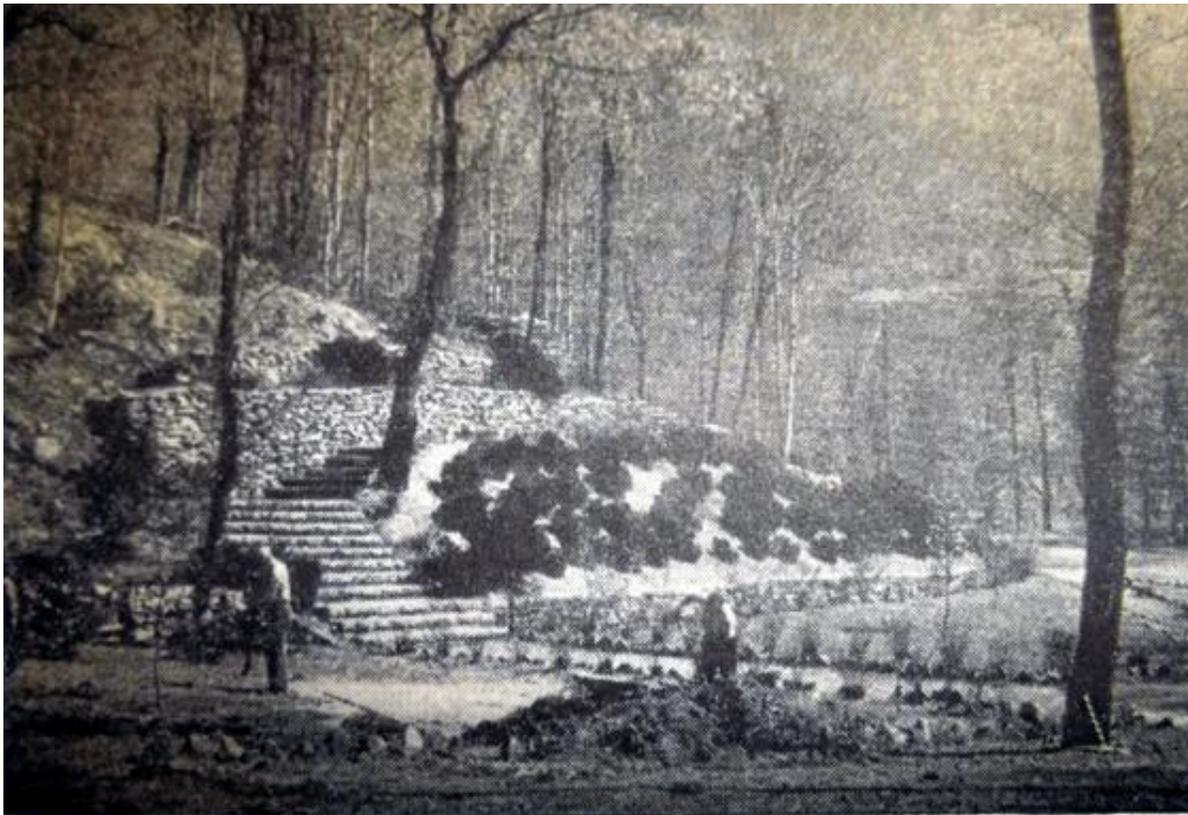
The Horseshoe Curve park today is not at all the same. A small part of the original walk is still there, although not showcased and kind of hard to get to. The new park is nice and has a lot more historic valued things to look at, but the old park had that special quiet, rustic setting which made it something you wanted to visit time and time again, which anyone could most any time of day or night. There were no gates or fences and admission was free even if you did feel obligated to throw a few pennies into the wishing well.

So, read this old article and remember your earlier trips to the Curve.

Horseshoe Curve Park  
The Mutual Magazine October, 1941

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*Beautiful Horseshoe Curve Park, one of Pennsylvania's most unique and scenic tourist attractions, is located at Kittanning Point, just west of Altoona, PA., on the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. This attractive and well developed parkland is situated on land owned by the City of Altoona immediately below the world famous Horseshoe Curve of the railroad, and directly above the small chain of lakes which form Altoona's municipal water supply.*



*Rich in historical, scenic, and engineering attractions, this park has been developed by National Youth Administration workers of Blair County under sponsorship of the Altoona Parks Department. Annually thousands of tourists from all over the nation visit this spot to view its marvelous natural beauty and to watch as the huge trains wind up and around the famous Curve and on over the mountain top. It was to provide these visitors with adequate facilities that the work of developing this park was undertaken.*

*The park is nestled at the base of the mountain immediately below the Curve. Half of it is on level ground while the other half has been carved from the steep mountainside. At one end of the level section is located an unusual type shelter which houses a large hand-carved wooden panel \* containing the story of the Altoona watershed and other data on Altoona's water supply. This panel was designed and made in the Altoona NYA woodshop.*

*Adjacent to this shelter is the park's largest building, a stone and timber Rest House or lodge. This was constructed by NYA youth with stone hauled in from the mountains. The timber used in its construction, as well as in other buildings, was also obtained from the nearby mountains. On the back wall of the Rest House has been placed a large hand-carved wooden panel \* which tells the story of the Horseshoe Curve. This panel covers the entire wall and was designed and made by NYA boys in the Altoona craft shop. One of the features of this panel is twelve hand-carved plaques, each about a foot square, which reveal the history of transportation.*

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**The large “Horseshoe” at grade (railroad) level constructed of native stone. Sadly, this had to be removed with the construction of the new funicular & steps circa 1997-98.**

*In the center of the park’s level area is a large drinking fountain and a large paved area from which radiate the 1500 feet of pathways which traverse the park. From the rear of the paved area, a pathway leads up the side of the mountain toward the apex of the Curve. Halfway up on the left, a level section has been excavated and in this is located a large picnic shelter complete with fireplace and other facilities. At two locations on the right of the path are observation levels from which can be had a magnificent view of the three lakes, parts of the Curve, and the beautiful vista of the valley looking toward the City of Altoona.*

*From these a pathway and stone steps lead on up to the level of the Horseshoe Curve. Here visitors with complete safety, can watch the passenger trains speed up the mountain side and gaze at the huge freight trains as they roar around the Curve.*

*All the pathways, especially those leading up to the picnic shelter, the observation stations, and the Curve, have been installed in a permanent fashion. Masonry steps and walks have been included as well as stone curbing and drainage ditches. Opposite the level section of the park is a large parking area.*

*The entire park has been landscaped and beautified, and among some of the work of the NYA was planting thousands of bulbs, plants, and shrubbery. A total of 1500 feet of walks were installed in the park, 500 feet of drainage ditches dug, and 600 feet of dry wall placed.*

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*The City of Altoona has recently completed installation of a lighting system through the entire area. The lights near the embankment of the famous Curve are large lanterns, exact duplicates of those used to light the streets of Williamsburg, Va. These lanterns are made of stainless steel and are mounted on standards eight feet high. End.*

*\* The carved NYA Board was saved and is on display in the visitor center at the new Horseshoe Curve National Historic site today along with other vintage memorabilia.*

### HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER WEBPAGE ANNOUNCEMENT

*It is with much regret that the officers of Horseshoe Curve Chapter have accepted the resignation of Christopher J. Behe of Severn, MD, who developed and provided the chapter's webpage for 20(+) years. We sincerely thank him for his service. This webpage is no longer on the internet.*

*Joseph DeFrancesco has assumed the duties of Webmaster. The new webpage is listed at [www.hscnrhs.org](http://www.hscnrhs.org). The new format will be designed to handle e-store transactions and train ticket orders as the system develops. Please send any photos and/or news submissions to Joe at [jdeFrancesco5@verizon.net](mailto:jdeFrancesco5@verizon.net) from this time on.*

### CHAPTER RECEIVES ART DONATION

-  
**Altoona artist Joe Servello, donated original art to the Horseshoe Curve Chapter at the regular monthly meeting July 23, 2013. The work depicted the Kittanning Point area at Horseshoe Curve during the steam-era approximately 100 years ago. Known for his depiction of historical Altoona and Blair County landscapes, much of Joe Servello's efforts also documented the best years of the Pennsylvania Railroad in and around Altoona. In addition to the donation to our chapter, Mr. Servello also donated works to the Altoona Association of Model Railroaders and the Alto Model Train Museum. THANK YOU JOE !**

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**CHAPTER PROJECTS 2013**

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**Repainting of coaches on the exterior; Maroon with gold stripe along window line.**

**Replacement of air brake valves and piping on coach # 105; conversion from UC to ABDW. Vestibule repairs (diamond-plate decking), car # 105.**

**Painting at Railroader's Memorial Museum:**

**Brookville Industrial Locomotive  
Ex-Conrail Scale Test Weight Car  
Roof of the LORETTO private car.**





**Paintwork at Railroader's Memorial Museum: Brookville Industrial Locomotive and ex-Conrail, ex-PCRR, ex-PRR Scale Test Weight car**





**Painting roof of the LORETTO, Charles M. Scwab's private railcar.**



**Repainting Chapter Coaches at Wye Switches, Duncansville**



**Replacing airbrake valves on Chapter Coaches.**



**President Frank Givler and Neil Myers review airbrake piping diagrams.**

**Charter trip on the Everett RR for the Claysburg Historical Society in June**

**2014 HISTORICAL CALENDARS MERITING ATTENTION**  
**AMTRAN CALENDAR**

“Once again this year, Amtran will be producing a ‘Past to Present’ calendar. The calendar will have twelve photos of past and present buses and trolleys, each month having one which could be framed and kept as an individual photo or the whole calendar as an historic item. Sue McKelvey and Len Alwine are teaming up for this years edition. The cost will be \$20.00 each. To reserve your copy, phone Sue McKelvey at Amtran, @ (814) 944-4074. Orders must be placed by November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 to assure Christmas delivery.” *Len Alwine*

**Audio Visuals Designs annual PRR CALENDAR with superior Black & White Photos**  
**Contact Chapter Treasurer, Denny Walls at [d63w@aol.com](mailto:d63w@aol.com) .**

**CHAPTER CHRISTMAS DINNER**

**Will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2013 at the Geeseytown Fire Hall at 6 PM.**

**Roast Beef & Chicken + all the sides. Adults \$ 15.00; Children under age 5 Free; Children over age 5: \$9.00. Cake for dessert. No last minute walk-ins. No take-out meals unless pre-ordered.**

**Program to be announced.**

**Please RSVP to Denny Walls: [d63w@aol.com](mailto:d63w@aol.com)**

**DEADLINE FOR RSVP: DEC 1, 2013**

***PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS***

**SCALEFEST TOY TRAIN SWAP MEET**

*Sponsored by*

***ALTO MODEL TRAIN MUSEUM ASSOCIATION***

**Blair County Convention Center**

**Upper Level Ballroom**

**One Convention Center Drive, Altoona, PA 16602**

**Sunday October 13, 2013**

**9:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

**Admission \$5.00**

**Children Under 12 FREE**

***LIONEL TRAIN SET DOOR PRIZE GIVEAWAY***

***LARGEST SHOW FROM PITTSBURGH TO HARRISBURG***



**AUTUMN FOLIAGE TRAIN EXCURSION**

-  
**This will be a charter train trip by the Roaring Spring, PA Rotary club, scheduled for Saturday, October 19, 2013. Rotarians will be staffing the train but “some” chapter members will be needed to assist with safety in each coach and assist passengers to board and de-train. Contact President Givler daytime at 943-4942 if you are available. Tickets are available via the Roaring Spring Department Store, Roaring Spring, PA. Trains depart Roaring Spring passenger station.**

### EVENTS CALENDAR

**October 19: Charter Trip/Autumn Foliage/Roaring Spring Rotary Club**

-  
**October 22 – Regular Chapter Monthly Meeting @ Railroaders Memorial Museum    Caution: October has 5 Tuesdays**

**HAPPY HALLOWEEN**

**November 23 & 24: Santa Trains, Roaring Spring Station**

**November 26 – Regular Chapter Meeting, Railroaders Memorial Museum. Note: This will be ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

**November 30<sup>th</sup> }**

**December 1<sup>st</sup> } Santa Trains, Roaring Spring, PA**

**December 1<sup>st</sup>: Deadline for Christmas Party Reservations to Denny Walls: [d63w@aol.com](mailto:d63w@aol.com)**

**December 7<sup>th</sup>: Chapter Christmas Dinner at Geeseytown Fire Hall, 6 PM. Program to be announced.**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**THIS IS THE LAST COAL BUCKET EDITION FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2013. LAST MINUTE MESSAGES OF IMPORTANCE WILL BE SENT TO THE MEMBERSHIP VIA E-MAIL.**

**SANTA TRAIN**

*Travel with Santa  
& Enjoy Holiday Music  
By Local Church Choirs!*

**ALL ABOARD!!**

*Travel with Santa on board from  
Roaring Spring to Martinsburg!*

**DATES & TIMES**

**SATURDAY, November 23rd**  
10 am • 12 Noon • 2 pm

**SUNDAY, November 24th**  
12 Noon • 2 pm • 4 pm

**SATURDAY, November 30th**  
10 am • 12 Noon  
2 pm • 4 pm

**SUNDAY, December 1st**  
12 Noon • 2 pm • 4 pm

**ADULTS: \$15**  
**CHILDREN 3-12: \$8**  
*Call for Caboose Availability*

**For more info contact (after 6 pm):  
Dick Charlesworth at 814-695-1428 or  
Virginia Seidel at 814-943-5321  
or order online at [www.railroadcity.com](http://www.railroadcity.com)**

**COACH ATTENDANTS WILL BE NEEDED EACH TRIP DAY. JOE DeFRANCESCO IS COORDINATING COACH ASSIGNMENTS.**

**PLEASE ASSIST CLEANING UP AT ROARING SPRING STATION AFTER THE LAST TRIP EACH DAY. OUR THANKS TO THE ROARING SPRING HISTORIAL SOCIETY AND THE EVERETT RAILROAD COMPANY.**

**NOTE: THERE IS NO CABOOSE AVAILABILITY FOR 2013.**

**2 attachments**



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32K



clip\_image040.jpg  
87K

Joe DeFrancesco <jdefrancesco5@gmail.com>  
To: hscnrhs@gmail.com

Thu, Oct 10, 2013 at 5:44 PM

**J.A.D.**

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