



Official Newsletter
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Spring 2026

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NOTE: Horseshoe Curve Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was granted a charter by the NRHS on May 11, 1968 (3 months and 10 days after the PRR-NYC merger), evolving from the Altoona Railway Museum Club (1965-1968). We meet on the FOURTH Tuesday of each month except December, at the Railroaders Memorial Museum, Altoona, PA, at 7:30 PM. Occasional exceptions are announced to the membership.

90 (+) % of all communications and notices are handled by e-mail.

Please keep your e-mail address current with the officers, especially the President and the Chapter Historian/Editor.

IN THIS SPRING ISSUE 2026

With this issue something new is being done. The chapter will have a new typesetter and mailer. That person is Jeff Holland and he will begin in early April and hopefully will be able to keep the Coal Bucket on schedule.

The biggest problem is the fact that your editor Len Alwine is not “computer friendly” and since most everything is done by E-Mail today, he is having a hard time getting stories completed. We will see how things go for now BUT if anyone would like the job of editor (finding ideas for stories, and photos to go with them, writing the stories and laying out the photos in them, and typing everything up and getting it all to the typesetter in a timely fashion,) PLEASE STEP FORWARD!!.

Having said that, the line up for this Spring 2026 issue is:

1. **OOPS** -- Part of the article on railroad museums from the Winter issue was missed in the layout and is included with this issue.
2. **Memorial Board Re-Hung at ARMM** -- The up-dated and 2nd Memorial Boards have been hung near the entrance at ARMM this past January.
3. **Under The Wire** by Len Alwine takes a look at the Traintown Mini Golf built at Lakemont Park in the 1980's.
4. **Chapter minutes and Local Yard News** by Joe Harrella for the past three months.
5. **Back Home** by Len Alwine highlights the return of the old coin counting machine to Amtran after nearly 45 years on display at ARMM.
6. **A Look Back** by Len Alwine -- The origin of “CARE” packages and other local interest remembering's.

OOPS

by Leonard Alwine

In the last Winter issue 2026 of the Coal Bucket an important page for the article on rail museums in Pa. was misplaced by your editor. It was never sent to the typesetter or later to the proofreaders. It was after the issue came out and during a re-read the next week that I noticed something was missing. A quick check of my hand-written notes revealed that a couple of pages about the Newton Square Museum and photos of thier rail car display were not sent out to be included in the finished article.

They are now included with this Spring issue in hopes that all members will be able to insert them after the photo of their restored freight station.

These photos are of the Red Arrow Lines trolley #23, PRR passenger car #1444, PRR Caboose #478131, A 1920 steam engine that never ran for the PRR, and a 1907 PRR wooden box car.

Sorry about missing them, but getting the issues written and out, sometimes does not run smoothly on my "Non-welded" old style clickety clack rails.

- The Editor



The Trolley Car

Read about the history of the trolley that ran through Newtown Square and the trolley car the museum has and is presently restoring.



The Passenger Car

It was built in 1902 in the West Philadelphia Shops of the Pennsylvania Railroad. There were 600 built that year and this is their last remaining one. After service with the PRR it was sold to The Canadian National Railroad. The Henry Ford Museum in Detroit gave it to our museum, and we are working on its restoration.



The Steam Engine

It is a 1920 yard locomotive built by the American Locomotive Works. It worked in Syracuse, New York until 1950, then for a short time elsewhere before it was retired and just rusted away. The Museum obtained it in 2002 and has restored it to look like an engine of the 1890's. It is a great example of an old steam engine, although this particular one never actually ran on the Pennsylvania Railroad.



The Box Car

This car we believe was built in 1907. It is wooden and typical of the kind that was used on our freight line to Newtown Square. This car was given to us by the National Park Service's Railroad Museum called "Steamtown" located in Scranton, PA.



The Cabooses

The Pennsylvania Railroad built this car in 1950. We obtained it from a local group in New Brunswick, NJ. And have been restoring it. Today cabooses are no longer used on freight trains due to advancing modern technology.

MEMORIAL BOARD REHUNG AT ARMM NEW BUILDING

by Leonard Alwine

The James E. Amigh Memorial Call Boards are again hanging on the wall next to the theatre entrance at the ARMM current building. The board is placed to remember past NRHS Chapter members who have passed away. The memorial board once hung in the older original ARMM building but was not kept hanging in the newer ARMM building once the museum was moved there.

This past summer it was decided by the chapter to up-date the list of names and then hang it in the new museum. Since up-dating the names filled the first plaque, a second one had to be made in order to honor all members who have passed away.

The first name on the original board is Roy G. Price from 1989. That original board which holds 60 name plates was filled by 2024 deaths. A second board was made to match which already has 6 name plates installed on it.

That is a total of 66 members who have passed away from 1989 through February 2026.

The next time you are at ARMM, take a few moments and look at these memorial boards and remember our deceased members and what they done, individually and collectively, to preserve the railroad heritage of Altoona.



UNDER THE WIRE

by Leonard Alwine

In this issue of Under the Wire, I will take a look the mini golf course opened at Lakemont Park in 1991. The photos were taken by myself July 16, 1991.

Of course the park was originally owned by Logan Valley and was the destination for many trolley riders wanting to get out of the hot city and enjoy a relaxing time at the park.

After about 100 years that relaxing time became more modern with new rides and attractions. One of those new attractions was the Traintown Miniature Golf course named in reference to Altoona being originally a train town. The different holes were developed with railroad themed obstacles.

But the best in this authors view was the 18th hole that used part of the old Logan Valley station as a covering. That station was torn down when the highway was made into a four lane road using the old trolley right of way between Altoona and Hollidaysburg for two of those lanes.

For many years the old station lay rusting near the leap the dips until re-used as a covering for this final hole as a tribute to the Logan Valley trolley line. It now stands on the opposite side of the lake less than a ½ mile from it's original location.

Lakemont Park Traintown Miniature Golf Course



Lakemont Park Traintown Miniature Golf Course



**Logan Valley Trolley Station Shelter at the 18th Hole.
(Still on the same site today)**

LOCAL YARD NEWS/MEETING MINUTES

by Joe Harella

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS **DECEMBER 6TH, 2025**

The annual Christmas dinner held by the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on Saturday December 6th, 2025. The dinner was held at Hoss's Family Restaurant. We were all able to order from Hoss's regular menu, so we had a nice variety of meals to choose from.

The guest speaker for the evening was Mr. Bruce Crawford, General Manager of the Everett Railroad. Bruce's hometown is Era, Texas. He has been the General Manager at the Everett since December 2024. His career in the railroad industry spans over 37 years and he has worked at several other short-line railroads. Bruce said that he loves working for Alan Maples and the Everett Railroad and he is very impressed with the restoration work that has taken place.

He then thanked Frank and Dick for inviting him to our dinner and allowing him to talk about his railroading experiences throughout the years.

Pres. Givler then expressed his appreciation to Bruce for sharing his work history with us. It was a very interesting talk.

He also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

JOSEPH HARELLA
RECORDING SECRETARY
HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING** **JANUARY 27TH, 2026**

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on January 27th, 2026. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Frank Givler at 6:45 P.M. The meeting was held at Perkins Family Restaurant.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved by Ron Givler, second by Denny Haire. The motion passed.

The financial statements were read by Treasurer Denny Walls. Denny informed everyone that several transfers of funds had to be made to cover some expenses. Ron Givler then made a motion to accept the financial report, Denny Haire second. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Penn State Scholarships – Pres. Givler informed everyone that a check was sent to Penn State to cover the cost of the scholarships.
2. Memorial Plaques – Pres. Givler brought in the old plaque which has now run out of spaces. He also showed everyone the new plaque which he has begun to use. The plaques will be hung in the newly renovated movie theater.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Coal Bucket – A discussion was held on the cost of mailing out the coal bucket every quarter of the year. It amounts to nearly \$400.00. Ron Givler made a suggestion that we cut back mailing it out to twice a year to cut costs. Jeff Holland also had some ideas on what he could do to help out. The members then held a discussion on our finances but nothing definite was decided upon.

2. Andrea Vibbert – Dick Charlesworth informed everyone that Andrea Vibbert passed away last November. She was very instrumental in bringing the GG1 to Altoona. The Horseshoe Curve Chapter would like to extend our sincere sympathies and condolences to Andrea’s family on her passing.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Annual Dues – Pres. Givler informed everyone that he is now collecting our annual dues – \$20.00 per member, \$2.00 for your spouse. In an effort to increase our bank balance, Dean McKnight made a suggestion to cover the cost of an entire family for \$25.00. The members then discussed the matter with most being in agreement. Dean then made a motion for the dues to cover a family for \$25.00, Dick Charlesworth second. The motion passed. The increase in dues will take effect next year – 2027.

Dean then had some thoughts about the chapter. He said that originally he felt out of place at our meetings here. Later on however, he began to enjoy our railroad conversations, our personal stories and now he feels honored to be part of this group. Dean we are very glad to have you and Nancy as members of this group.

2. Next Months Meeting – Pres. Givler reminded everyone that our meeting next month will be held at the Railroader’s Memorial Museum at 6:00 P.M.

Ron Givler then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Denny Haire second, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 P.M. with 13 members present.

ATTENDANCE — Ron Givler, Frank Givler, Diane Haire, Denny Haire, Nancy McKnight, Dean McKnight, Dick Charlesworth, Patrick Kelley, Denny Walls, Zach Noonan, Jim Caum, Jeff Holland, Joe Harella.

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVWE CHAPTER NRHS

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
FEBRUARY 24TH, 2026

The regular monthly meeting of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS was held on February 24th, 2026. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Frank Givler at 6:02 P.M. The meeting was held at the Railroader's Memorial Museum.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved by Ron Givler, second by John Fisher. The motion passed.

The financial statements were read by Treasurer Denny Walls. Ron Givler made a motion to accept the financial report, Dick Charlesworth second. The motion passed. The members then held a discussion on our finances. Since we no longer have any fund raisers other than a bus trip now and then, we have to look into other investments other than CD'S. Ron Givler and Dick Charlesworth both said that we should look into other investment firms however, we have to be careful of who we invest with.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Coal Bucket Correction – It was noted from the last meeting that Jeff Holland will now handle sending out the coal bucket. Also, Len Alwine said that he is finding it more difficult to put the coal bucket together. He could use some help. He also commented on the museum and the way things are run these days. Things just aren't the same as they used to be, he said.
2. Plaques – Pres. Givler informed everyone that the old plaque as well as the new one have both been mounted next to the entrance to the movie theater. He invited everyone to stop and take a look. Unfortunately he already used six spaces on the new plaque.
3. Spring Bus Trip – Dick Charlesworth is still trying to set up a bus trip this spring or summer. The trip might include a ride on Amtrak's Acela train. Coming back we might pass through Lancaster and possibly eat at Miller's Smorgasbord.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Altoona Engine – Pres. Givler had a picture of the latest engine to be painted and lettered "ALTOONA". So far three engines have been painted up and lettered with more to come.
2. Penn State – Pres. Givler informed everyone that he received a message from Penn State stating that the annual meeting with students is scheduled for March 24th. This happens to be the same night as our regularly scheduled meeting. Frank and Dick usually attend this meeting so Vice-president Ron Givler will be running our meeting.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. "Big Boy" Coming to Town – It was noted that the Big Boy Steam Locomotive will pass through Altoona sometime this spring.
2. Charles Schwab Estate – Dick Charlesworth said that he will try again to set up the tour of the estate. He said that it probably will be in April or May. He then outlined the tour of what all it might include.

Ron Givler then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Denny Haire second, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 P.M. with 11 members present.

ATTENDANCE – Denny Walls, Dan Summers, Len Alwine, Pat Kelley, Ron Givler, Frank Givler, Dick Charlesworth, Diane Haire, Denny Haire, John Fisher, Joe Harella

JOSEPH HARELLA

RECORDING SECRETARY

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER NRHS

BACK HOME

by Leonard Alwine

The change counting machine from Logan Valley days, was moved "back home" in July 2024 and is now displayed in the conference room at the Trolley Works complex.

The machine was most likely moved to ARMM in the early 1980's when Amtran was re-building the car barn/ bus maintenance garage. It was mostly likely moved the same time as service truck 18.

There is no guessing how many coins it has counted for Logan Valley and the bus authority over the years, but it is now properly displayed at Amtran for many to see. Another small piece of history saved.



The change counting machine now on display in the Amtran conference room at the Trolley Works Park.

A LOOK BACK

by Leonard Alwine

CARE PACKAGES

A lot of people this past winter were given “Care” packages to help them keep going. Many churches and civic groups and school kids made and delivered those packages. Some were just to older neighbors communities. A lot of citizens either received or sent those care packages.

But where did the phrase “care package” come from? It came from the acronym for “Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe.” CARE.

It began when boxes of food were sent to help Europeans displaced by World War II.

The name stuck and became what even today over 80 years later the world calls “care packages” that are sent to help others in need.

50 years ago January 7, 1976

Joseph H. Orr Sr. was the official starter and the Altoona Association of Model Railroad members were judges as the 20th annual model electric train races were held at the Altoona Family YMCA. Marie Rendell won first place in the HO division and Michael Glass first place in the three rail division. First place winners won trophies and runners up won a silver dollar.

50 years ago February 2, 1776

Winky’s Drive In at 1927 7th. avenue advertised a Great One Hamberger and a Coke for \$0.76 that they called their 1776 special.

70 years ago 1955

The Altoona High School Street Patrol with Mr. Frank Ghessie as faculty sponsor cooperated with the school guards throughout the school year. The main duty of patrol is to keep students off the streets until the signal to cross is given by the school guard. During 1955 there were no accidents thanks to the efficiency of the ten members of this club.



Members of the Street Patrol hold back students at 6th ave, & 15th st. Near Roosevelt Jr. High.