

THE YELLA BOARD

Volume 41 Number 2

MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM

Where "I've Been Working On the
Railroad" Becomes a Reality

November—December
2008



The Polar Express Arrives MRM

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DIRECTORS

Brian Downing Dennis Sloan Barbara Mann
Dylan Cantrell Tom Hatchard Stan Rankin
Rob Doyle Steve Gerber Peg Bargon Rick Harper

Crew Caller: Dylan Cantrell (H) 217-367-3485
© 217-419-4788 1504 Greenridge Dr. Urbana, IL 61802
mrmcrew@icomcast.net

Membership Secretary: Kay Goodling (H) 217-863-21214
POB 2155 Bondville, IL 61815

**Chief Mech Officer & Supvtr
Loco Engineers:**
Kent McClure (H) 217-762-2813
620 Main St. Monticello, IL
61856
kemcclure@mchsi.com

2nd Section-Yella Board Editor: Dale Jenkins
(H) 217-423-ITRR 264 Victoria Ave. Decatur, IL 62522
dalejenkins@sbcglobal.net

*Front Cover; Conductor Dennis Sloan stands by to board
a young passenger for the Polar Express!*

**Track Superintendent: Tom
Hatchard**
4221 LaSalette Dr. Apt. 2, St. Louis, MO 63123
(H) 314-631-4317

Photo by John Sanner

General Manager: Syl Keller
POB 153, Carlock, IL 61725
(H) 309-376-3361

Gift Shop Manager: Art Purchase
1128 St. Andrews Cricle, Rantoul, IL 61866
(H) 2170893-4436 © 217-417-2430
Urtx@Route 24.net

Supervisor Loco Engineers: Tim Crouch
POB 92 White Heath, IL 61884
(H) 217-762-7428 crouchtnt@net66.com

Building & Grounds: Henry Brickman
427 Eyer St. Gibson City, IL 60936
(H) 217-784-5467 hankb28@sbcglobal.net

Curator: Barbra Mann
222 S. Dennis St. Decatur, IL 62522
(H) 217-422-2324 mrmtrainlady@aol.com

Signal & Communications: Neil Grant
6 Carrollton Estates Mattoon, IL 61938
(H) 217-258-8258 togrant@net66.com



**THE
OBSERVATION
PLATFORM**



Updates for 2008
John Sciutto, President

Many exciting mileposts were achieved during the year, including installation of sufficient ties and track improvements, including completely re-decking of Heath trestle, to allow the first locomotive and storage cars to run to White Heath in early November, completion of the new train shed at the Nelson’s Crossing complex in September and steam locomotive #401 nears completion and has passed FRA hydrostatic test in anticipation of live firing testing very soon. The two anchor cars of our regular train, Rock Island coach and IC combine received extensive repairs and paint this year. Various other ongoing improvements to the museum continue to make Monticello Railway Museum one of the best small railroad museums anywhere.

We would encourage all members, both new and old, to become actively involved in our museum and help in any way that you can. As you can see from this year, we have a lot going on for a small, not-for-profit, all volunteer museum and we continue to grow. Our volunteers make this success possible and each and every one of you deserves a big thank you for everything you have done for the museum. As the year draws to a close, we would also like to remind our members that donations are always accepted to help fund the various projects and sustain the museum in the future. Several current and future projects are being funded by members and benefactors to the museum and we sincerely thank them for their thoughtful generosity toward the museum.



We sincerely thank all the volunteers at the museum and the contributions each of you have made to make our museum a continued success. Without our volunteers, we would not be able to do the many things possible to sustain the many departments, special events, train operations and equipment restoration.

Above: The Polar Express at the Monticello Depot awaiting loading. Left: Railroad Days provided the opportunity to showcase the various pieces of rolling stock in service such as the “Mixed Train”.



THE RIP TRACK

By Kent McClure

Much has been accomplished during the year 2008 and the following is a compilation of these various projects;

Locomotive Southern 401

This was a year of much visible progress being made on 401. New steel for the tender tank was ordered and delivered in January of the year, with tank construction taking place rapidly thereafter. The tank was mostly assembled, leaving off the roof sheet while the interior of the tank was degreased, acid etched, and painted with several coats of single part polyurethane coating to protect the interior from rust. The roof sheet was then put in place and welded down. After the tank was complete, a water meter was borrowed from the Monticello Water Dept., and a leak and capacity test was run. The tank had no leaks, and held a total of 7200 gal. of water. Work then proceeded on the oil tank, which was also assembled in our shop. It was leak tested by pressurizing with 5 psi air pressure, and



The tender fuel oil tank in in position to weld the roof to the tank's side body. The ribs offer additional bracing of the sidewall.

spraying the tank with soapy water. Several leaks were found, which were corrected and found tight on the second test. The oil tank was then degreased, primed with epoxy primer and finished with black Imron on all surfaces that would be inaccessible after the tank's placement in the tender. The space occupied by the oil tank was also painted prior to the oil tank's installation.

Riveting was finished on the smokebox, and the smokebox front was sandblasted, painted, and door was fitted. The smokebox front was then installed, marked, and removed to grind off excess material that overhung the sides of the smokebox. Also done during this time was the construction and application of a new exhaust nozzle. We have built a nozzle based on the work of Armstrong at the U of I. It is a multi-port nozzle, providing much more steam jet area to entrain exhaust gasses, as opposed to the typical single port nozzle. The new nozzle is also easy to adjust by simply bolting on a plate of different diameters to vary the total area of nozzle opening. Also taking place this year was the application of some of the jewelry. Namely, the headlights were rebuilt, painted inside and out, one reflector required re-silvering, and new visors made and applied, then they were installed on their new mounting brackets on the tender and smokebox door. New lenses for the class lights were purchased to replace those missing, and the class lights were assembled, painted and applied. A bell was provided by member John Downing, one

With a new cab now in place, efforts are underway to construct a new tender. In the front center, the sidewall of the fuel oil tank pocket is being erected.



which had no marks inside the bell, making it apparent it was a Anew@ bell that had never been applied to a locomotive. (401's bell was kept by Alabama Asphaltic Limestone at the time MRM purchased the locomotive).

Gauges have been placed in the cab, brake valves mounted, and plumbing work has started, mostly on the tender at this point to get fuel and water connections located and mounted. We have spent much time chasing leaks in the boiler, mostly in the washout plugs installed at the manufacturer. Those issues have been taken care of, and the boiler has passed its hydrostatic test for the Federal Railroad Administration.

A burner has been made, and test fired outside the shop, working as expected on fuel oil. Work continues on fuel plumbing, as well as cab floor, tender deck, and apron design and installation.

F-&A Wabash 1189

Wabash F7 #1189 was found to have a blown head gasket on one cylinder this past season, requiring removal and resealing. Work is also being done on the speedometer due to an intermittent connection problem causing speed indication problems. The right side cab heater control switch was also replaced due to the old one failing



Southern 401 is coming to life with the application of headlight, bell and classification lights.

FPA4 CN 6789

CN FPA4 #6789 has had usual running maintenance, but did have a voltage regulator problem this season. The locomotive has been used sparingly due to needing two new batteries. Those should be purchased and installed prior to the locomotives travels to NS in December

Combine ICRR 892



CN 6789 arrives the Monticello Depot on time.

ICRR 892 Combine was shopped this past winter, with much new steel applied to the ends of the car, some collision post work on the vestibule end, and the hand brake rebuilt. The passenger compartment ceiling was removed, the interior of the ceiling was cleaned and given a fresh coat of primer, new insulation applied, and a new ceiling was applied. The original ceiling color was found intact under one of the light fixtures, and was matched and the same color reapplied to the new ceiling. The car sides also saw a fair amount of new steel applied, then much sanding and bodywork, with exterior painting and interior re-assembly completed just in time for the second weekend of Ghost Train. This coming winter the interior work should be completed. This will include a second coat of ceiling color, application of pin striping that was originally on the ceiling, and refinishing of the inside of the coach-end door. We will also need to either replace or repair the baggage end door. MRM researchers also found the builders photos of a sister car to 892, allowing us to repaint to its as-built appearance.

<p>THE RIP TRACK continued</p>

EQUIPMENT PROJECTS: COMPLETED OR UNDERWAY

ALCO RS3 #704

ALCO RS3 #704 is currently out of service for replacement of at least one, and probably both lead truck traction motors. The #2 motor has had issues ever since its purchase, and the #1 motor has experienced a ground in the field coil circuit, causing it to be unusable in train service. The #2 and #3 wheel sets both have thin flanges as well, and must be replaced before it can operate. When time and labor exists, the plan is to swap trucks with the ex-NS Alco slug that was donated by NS for just that purpose.



Milwaukee Road NW2 #1649

Milwaukee Road NW2 #1649 has run reliably this past season, but has been used mostly for switching duties in and around the yard.

The Gulfport

The Gulfport was sandblasted this spring to remove the thick paint on the car and allow a closer look at its condition. Much of the under frame was also blasted to assure there were no problems hiding there. The car was then given a shop coat of primer, and placed back in storage awaiting its turn in the shop.

CRI&P #2541

CRI&P #2541 aka the Rock Island coach, was cleaned, sanded, and repainted this past spring. Further research was also done to uncover builder's photos of all four groups of cars as ordered by the Rock Island, as well as uncovering construction drawings for these cars at IRM's Pullman Library.



Misc. Items

An acid wash pump has been assembled to acid wash the steam generator in our ex-CN Steam generator car #15421. Four new hoses and fittings were installed on our 5 ton hydraulic Krane Kar. My sincere thanks and appreciation for everyone who has helped make all this happen over the past year. Quite a lot of work has been done, but as always, it never ends. I want to encourage all who would like to get involved in a project that there will be much to do this winter, with much of it not being highly skilled. So please, come on out and lend a hand!

THE ARCHIVES



2008 was a challenging year, primarily due to health problems at home; thus, things did not go forward as I had hoped this year. I did not spend as much time at the museum and what time I did spend was usually on Saturdays staffing the exhibit cars for our visitors.

The museum continues to receive gifts and donations from unexpected sources. As the members or visitors tell others about the museum, donors come to visit, like what they see and contact us about taking their items. Many times they are from the collection of a family member and they are glad to find an appreciative



Ben Freid and Barb Mann

Barb Mann, Archivist

home for them. Sometimes the owners just don't know what to do with them and hope we can help by taking them. Either way, we are adding to our collection. For example, this past spring, an elderly couple from Bloomington approached the local historical society regarding a donation. The local society declined the donation. The couple had visited Monticello Railway Museum several years ago and was aware of our efforts at rail preservation but was not aware of our new archival storage building and efforts at cataloging our collection and how much the museum had grown and expanded over the years. After contacting the museum and making a follow-up visit, they donated several items from their collection, including a very unique 1/2 scale model of a blacksmith anvil, complete with miniature tools. This presentation anvil had been fabricated at the Bloomington GM&O shop and presented to a former Chicago and Alton retiree following 50-years of service. Coincidentally, this retirement presentation also took place in 1958, which was the same year the last significant tie replacement took place on our IC line! In addition, we also received a link that came from the TP&W Chatsworth, IL 1887 wreck.

Keep up the good work of promoting the museum to others we build our collection. But remember only Syl Keller, John Scitutto, Donna McClure, or myself can accept the donations on behalf of the museum.

The Little Engine that Could

A SUMMER OF FUN!!

Railroad Days 2008



With the sounds of a horn wailing in the distance, a train slowly pulls away from the depot as small noses press against a cold window pane to peer out into darkness with the lights of the small town fading out into the darkness. Many children clad in pajamas and robes settle back into the seat to sip on hot chocolate and munch on cookies, served to them at their seat by waiters dressed in chef garb. All this while a young troupe of dancers twirl along the aisle, intertwined with the conductor call of “*tickets please*”!!! A short time later the train is slowing and once again, by duty, the small noses press against the glass to realize that the distance lights beckon from a transformed Nelsons Crossing to the now North Pole. Without warning, **HE** comes into view....the destination personified in human form...**Santa Claus**!! By true nature of this jolly elf, he knew that anxious youngsters aboard would want an audience with him, to which he immediately went to work. Once aboard he would hand out the first gift of Christmas; a bell. Not just any ordinary bell, but the special bell; the Jingle Bell which represented a belief in Christmas. But, just as fast as he finished his work and disappeared into the darkness, the train would arrive at the depot in the same darkness. The excited children departed the train after experiencing the Polar Express story which was no longer a figment of their imagination, but a reality with the presence of the ho-bo, waiters, chefs, dancers, conductors, Santa and the Polar Express Train itself.



The children’s story, originating in 1985, was written and illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg, a former professor at the Rhode Island School of Design. In 2004, it was adapted as an Academy Award nominated film. The story opens on Christmas eve as a young boy is laying in bed waiting to hear the sounds of Santa’s sleigh bells, but instead hears the arrival of the mystical train called the Polar Express pull up in front of his house. Called to board the train by the conductor, the young lad boards the train to join other children clad in their pajamas, drinking hot chocolate as the train rumbles through the snow covered country-side, enroute to the North Pole. On arrival, the elves had gathered in the center of Santa’s village to send Santa onto his designated rounds. *But...*before departing, Santa hand picks our young traveler to receive the first gift of Christmas; a silver bell from Santa’s sleigh. After

returning to the train for the return trip home, the young ward discovers that the magical bell had fallen through a hole in the pocket of his robe. However, Christmas morning, a small box from Santa holds the lost bell, to which he and his sister marvel at the beautiful sound, to which both parents remark that the bell must be broken, as they heard nothing. To this end, the theme of the story is explained “At one time, most of my friends could hear the



bell, but as years passed, it fell silent for all of them. Though I have grown old, the bell still rings for me, as it does for all who truly believes”.

On November 28 and 29, 2008, the Monticello Railway Museum introduced the storied Polar Express Train to central Illinois and over 600 passengers, operating two trains nightly. This major undertaking was under the direction of Ron Kempke and was one of the largest gathering of volunteers ever assembled by the museum. The equipment pressed into service was Wabash 1189 used to pull this special consist and Steam Generator Car CN 15421 to provide steam heat and lights. Rock Island 2541 served as Car #1 followed by IC Combine 692 with the baggage room serving as a staging area for serving drinks, snacks, and character participants and the seating section serving as car #2. IC coaches 2612 (car

#3) and 2920 (car #4). Bringing up the markers and crowning this special consist, was IC Business Car #7, serving as a staging car and back-up movement platform. Each car was manned by a conductor, with a strolling magician portraying the hobo, museum members serving behind the scenes in a variety of roles, from preparation to presentation, and dancers from Debbie’s Dance Studio. The cool and crisp night air enhanced the escaping steam between coaches to create the ambiance of a fabled passenger train, further enhanced by the lit brick pavement platform. The magic of the evening served well both parent and child to make this one of the most successful ventures for this organization. The train functioned under the license agreements from Time Warner Co. and will return in 2009 to once again tap the resources of manpower to power this *Polar Express*!!



Photos courtesy of John Sanner



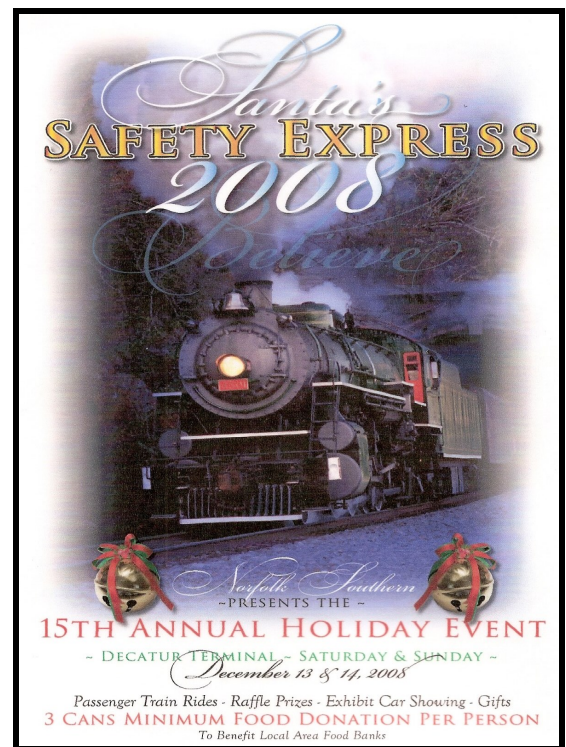
“The cool and crisp night air enhanced the escaping steam between coaches to create the ambiance of a fabled passenger train, further enhanced by the lit brick pavement platform”.



THE NS SANTA SAFETY EXPRESS



On December 13-14, 2008, the Norfolk Southern ran the 15th Annual Santa's Safety Express-2008 for the employees, using Monticello Railway Museum equipment. To operate the 5-trains a day, Wabash F-7A 1189 was the lead unit to pull Illinois Central Business Car #7, coaches 2920, 2612, and steam heat generator car CN 15420. The train would operate west to Illiopolis and with FPA-4 CN 6789, on the rear, pull the train back to Decatur.



Photos Courtesy of John Sanner

The train was a joint effort of the Norfolk Southern Railway and the Safety Committees to provide an opportunity for the employee families to ride a train and visit with Santa Claus. A total of 1,107 passengers rode the train, donating (as fare to ride) 4,500 pounds (2 1/4 TONS) of canned goods to be donated to the local food pantry and Catholic Charities. In observance of this being the 15th anniversary, the aboard crews were uniformed and employees dug into their pockets to donate \$5,000 to pay for Polar Express gift sets given to the families that attended. Aboard the train, MRM Chief Mechanical Officer Kent McClure was assisted by Bruce Backus to keep the steam car properly functioning to heat the cars and to assure top performance by the motive power. The elf assisting Santa was none other than our own Donna McClure.



MONTICELLO
RAILWAY MUSEUM
P O BOX 401
MONTICELLO, ILLINOIS 61856

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTICELLO RAILWAY MUSEUM



ARRIVALS
&
DEPARTURES

At this time of publication a 2009 Schedule of Events have not been established. Check the museum website at www.mrym.org for updates and the next issue of the Second Section.



**Just don't stand
there; JOIN!!! Be-
come part of group
that makes this a
reality!!**