



LAUREL LINES

Celebrating 50 Years!

1973 - 2023



Vol 51, Issue 4 - April, 2024

A PUBLICATION OF THE LACKAWANNA AND WYOMING VALLEY RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

R&N Pacific # 425 with the 11:00 AM LGSR trip heading North on the ex-CNJ Nesquehoning Bridge, 2020



*Photo Submitted by
Kat Bischak*

The Chapter Meeting will be held on
April 11th, 2024 in the Iron Skillet
Restaurant at the Petro Truck Stop
Dupont, PA. Dinner is a-la cart at 6 PM
(buffet not available).
Meeting at 7 PM, program to follow.

This Month's Program:
Chapter member Ed Kochler and a program
on the NYO&W Railway

Mission Statement:

Through fellowship, community and educational outreach to affect rail preservation and appreciation of railroad history focusing on Northeastern Pennsylvania

President's Message:

Believe it or not, it's time to think about the season at Moscow Station. Seems like only yesterday we were closing it down for the winter. Once the water is turned back on, activity can begin in earnest. Before we can be open for excursions, we need to re-arrange the freight house and passenger station, changing from holiday train mode to the regular season arrangement. This is no small task. There are still many projects to be completed (some, but not limited to: painting the deck, vertical rails, safety line and other, hanging photos and O scale layout construction) before our grand re-opening in July. Roy Pauli and Norm Barrett will be looking for volunteers.

As of this writing we do not have a schedule for excursions from Steamtown. We are also looking forward to partnering with the Iron Horse Society for addition excursions! We are hoping for an active train season.

We would like to send two of our young members to Railcamp however the cost would be over \$3,000.00. At this point we are asking our members to please consider a donation towards the cost (see article elsewhere).

This year's NRHS National Convention is in our backyard - Harrisburg. (See minutes and NRHS web site.)

Vee Pauli, President

"A ROAD OVER THE MOOSIC MOUNTAIN"

From *Post Jervis Tri-States Union*, 1899

Submitted by Bob Young

"The Erie and Delaware and Hudson joined at Honesdale this Week - Vice President Young thinks nothing will be done with canal.

From Friday's Daily Union. A dispatch from Honesdale last night says:

The Erie and the Delaware and Hudson railroad companies have reached a working agreement. The Delaware and Hudson will begin immediately to build a road over the Moosic mountains, from Waymart to Carbondale. The Erie and the Delaware and Hudson were joined at Honesdale this week, and today President Olyphant and Vice-President Young came from New-York over the Erie railroad, and were the first to ride over the joined section on two roads. They announced that a union station for the two companies will be built in Honesdale immediately, and that the Delaware and Hudson Coal will be run to tidewater over the Erie road. The road between Honesdale and Waymart will be straightened, and Shephard's Crook will be replaced by a switchback. The grade from Carbondale to Fairview is about 50 feet to the mile.

Vice-President Young could give no information as to the future of the abandoned Delaware and Hudson canal. He said that it had passed entirely out of the hands of the company, and in his opinion nothing would be done with it."

HUMOR ME

A husband asked his wife "Why do you cry and sniffle at a movie over the imaginary woes of people you've never met?"

"For the same reason," she replied, "that you yell and scream when a man you've never met slides into second base."

Secretary Minutes of the March 14th, 2024 Monthly Chapter Meeting at 7pm Iron Skillet Restaurant, Dupont, PA

President Pauli requested a moment of silence for Mary O'Jevich, wife of Clem O'Jevich who passed away on February 23rd, 2024. The meeting was then opened in due form followed by a Pledge to the Flag. Vee requested a motion to approve the minutes of the February meeting as what appeared in the March 2024 Laurel Lines. Motion made, 2nd and carried without exceptions or extensions.

Treasurer Ed Zech was called upon to read the Treasurer's report. Income and expenses from the General Fund, Special Projects was read, line by line with end balances provided. A motion was made to accept the report, 2nd and carried without exceptions or extensions.

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Moscow Station - Norm Barrett had nothing to report, which means he'll have double for the next meeting!

Station Director Roy Pauli reports that there has already been the first work session for 2024. Roy says he found Norm working there, however Norm has chosen to not divulge all the things he works on and will provided a report in a future issue. Roy indicates the water will soon be turned on in preparation of the Grand Opening of the newly restored Moscow Station scheduled for July 20th, 2024 - We hope many of you can join us that day. Roy has also scheduled a Volunteer breakfast for April 6th, 2024 for those who stepped up and helped at Moscow and other facets of the Chapter. Those who have been invited were notified by phone and directions to the breakfast will appear in this LL.

Calendar 2025 - Chairman Jim

Kilcullen was absent. Committee member **Paul Hart** reported that all the pictures have been selected, enhanced and digitized. The Committee will soon begin to match captions with the pictures.

If you like our annual calendar... why not join the Committee and contribute your time and talent? No help is ever refused and the Committee meetings are held locally and are flexible. Each Chapter member receives 1 copy each year with your paid dues. Additional copies are available for sale and can be picked up at meetings or mailed. Paul Hart takes care of that time consuming task. Paul's contact: phrail@verizon.net

Membership - Paul Hart and Ken

Kertes have made one last effort to contact those members who have not renewed for 2024. March 31st, 2024 is the last day renewals are being accepted. After that, those names will be removed from the database and will not receive the calendar nor the LL. However, new memberships are always accepted. For 2024, membership dues are \$30.00 for the year and each family member is \$5.00. If you are a new member, you will receive the current calendar and issues of LL will be issued via the internet, unless we are notified otherwise. Electronic versions are handled by LL Editor Katie Bischak at kbischakphoto@gmail.com. Mailing labels for LL are handled by Paul Hart at: phrail@verizon.net

NRHS Advisory Council

Representative Ed Fortuna reports that the NRHS will conduct 2 Rail Camps this year. One in the east at the Amtrak facility in Newark, DE from June 23rd to the 29th. There is another one scheduled in the western part of the country as well. The fee to send a candidate is \$1575.00 for the week. The NRHS does award some scholarship money to attend. This Chapter has 2 candidates who have applied, and Ed is seeking financial assistance to send these fine Chapter members.

Interested in helping? Contact Ed Fortuna at: edfed243@gmail.com if you would like to help.

Ed reported that there is a Regional Meeting of the NRHS to be held in Iowa, and that the NRHS 2024 National Convention will be held in Harrisburg, PA from August 26th to the 31st. More details will be available via the NRHS website - <https://nrhs.com>

Vee reports that Railfest 2024 is also scheduled at Steamtown on August 31st. Decisions. Decisions!!!

Laurel Lines Newsletter - The March issue was mailed via the usual means on February 29th, however, due to time constraints, the April issue needs to go to print a bit sooner. The standard procedure of sending information for LL is the following protocol -

1 week after the Monthly meeting, all info must be sent to **LL Editor Katie Bischak**. Katie will then take the following week to compose, edit and send it off to the printer. Please be guided by these time limits and contact Katie at: kbischakphoto@gmail.com.

An ensuing discussion transpired surrounding the March issue of LL and that the front page was printed in color. A show of hands overwhelming approved of the color copy. It was stated that the electronic version is sent in color, and that the printed version costs more and as a result, the dues would have to be raised. Further discourse dictates that the Chapter Board of Directors will have to determine if future copies will be made available in color and how/if the cost is to be handled. Some comments this evening are not being printed due to the various opinions of the color copy.

Chapter Historian/Program Director Neil Weinberg reports that this evening's program is a DVD on Conrail in the Northeast by Charles Smiley. The April 11th, 2024 meeting will feature Chapter member Ed Koehler and a program on the NYO&W Railway.

Webmaster Alex Strausser can be contacted at alexstrausser9@gmail.com for any new updates for the Chapter website.

Old Business

Vee submitted a list of dates for excursions from Steamtown to Moscow. An additional request was then sent for the Holiday trains and the deadline was March 4. The SNHS has committed to publish a train schedule by March 31st. A note of interest is that the RBM&N RR has already posted their schedule of trains this past February 17th. Slightly tardy Steamtown!

At the February meeting, a letter was sent to Vee seeking an answer why the railroad located in Exeter had stored cars and no activity. Vee responded and directed the gentleman to the Luzerne County Rail Authority.

New Business

We are looking for a person to "play" Santa Claus for the Holiday trains for November 29th, 30th and December 1st, 2024. The Chapter requested 5 Holiday trains, a 2-2-1 ratio. Steamtown representatives countered with a 1-1-1 schedule account that the coaches will not be equipped with heat, but might add more trains if they sell out. Chapter member Walter Smith, a Florida resident, mailed some posters and memorabilia, who was promptly thanked.

Chapter member Robert Young informed us that the Moscow County Fair, slated for July 27, will offer the Chapter a location within Fair premises, gratis, as a token to promote the Chapter by any means we deem appropriate.

We welcomed as new members this evening Mr. and Mrs. David Waldron and Daughter to the Chapter.

(Con't) —

Paul Hart informs us that Chapter Founding Member Don Banks has moved to an assisted care facility, Elmhurst Villa, and that Don has donated his entire book collection to the Chapter. The list will be cataloged and offered to members first and then available via other public information. Don was feted at the 50th Anniversary of the Chapter this past November. Stay well Don!

Motion to adjourn made by the Standard Bearer Joe Boshek at 7:52pm. 43 in attendance.

Yours Truly,
Ken Kertesz, Secretary

**VOLUNTEER BREAKFAST
INFORMATION**

The Board of Directors has authorized a volunteer "Thank You" breakfast for any volunteer with 10 hours of volunteer time. If you have not been called, please call Roy Pauli (570-344-9728)

If you have been called to attend the volunteer thank you breakfast you should be aware of the following Directions:

Place Covenant Presbyterian Church
550 Madison Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510

Best door use is on the right (handicap) - Walk straight back (Basement)

Parking:
Lot corner of Madison & Vine St.
Enter on Vine St.

Lot corner of Monroe & Olive St.
Enter on Olive

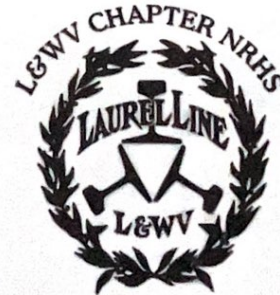
Glen Alden Corp Company Records

Submitted by Neil Weinberg
Email by Mike Dodge

"For those interested in researching the history of the Glen Alden Coal Company, Earth Conservancy (EC) of Ashley, PA, and the Industrial Archives & Library (IAL) of Bethlehem, PA, announced today that they had reached an Agreement between the two organizations in which IAL will assume ownership of the coal companies' records for the purpose of preparing them and making them accessible for research by historians, scholars and the public.

The collection is described as a virtual intact history of Glen Alden, Blue Coal and their predecessors (which would include DL&W-list content) and subsidiaries. Their press release can be found at this link:"

<https://www.industrialarchives.org/ial-announces-partnership-with-earth-conservancy/>



HUMOR ME (CON'T)

Doctor: Your problem is that you sit too much.

Patient: I understand

Doctor: Exactly

What's the leading cause of Dry Skin?
Towels.

A Note from the Editor...

For our next issue of *LL*, please keep an eye out for a section on the two members looking to attend RailCamp, Alex Strausser and Aiden Matkosky. We're working on an article that includes some information about the boys, as well as how RailCamp would help them pave their future of railroad employment.

- Kat Bischak

50/50 Fundraiser
TO OFFSET THE EXPENSE OF SENDING A YOUNG MEMBER TO RAILCAMP IN JUNE, THE CHAPTER WILL BE HOLDING A 50/50 RAFFLE AT OUR NEXT CHAPTER MEETING ON APRIL 11TH, 2024

THE 67TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SHUTDOWN OF THE NEW YORK, ONTARIO AND WESTERN RAILWAY

By Ed Kochler

Presented April 11th, 2024 @ Chapter Meeting



With the 67th Anniversary of the shutdown of the New York, Ontario and Western Railway coming up on March 29, 2024, it seems fitting that we mark the passing of this legendary rail line. This presentation consists of three parts; first is a quick photographic tour of the Southern Division from Weehawken to Norwich, then we will view a pre-World War II video taken aboard a milk train between Oneida and Sidney. The third part of this presentation discusses the shutdown of the line and the aftermath.



W. CLEMENT CO., MATTHEWS-NORTHRUP WORKS, BUFFALO, N. Y.

*Remember When...**By the Editor & Mike Bischak*

The article below is from the 1998 April issue of *Laurel Lines*, written by Ed Philbin

IN THE OLD DAYS...

The Railroad Towermen

Long gone from Pittston Junction is the two-story gray railroad tower at the bottom of Chapel Street that governed the crossing of the DL&W and LV railroads and was known to railroaders simply as J tower. At one time, it housed state-of-the-art equipment for maintaining

the flow of traffic. The LV had other towers locally as well. Deep in the bustling Coxton yard was OX tower, Franklin Junction in Wilkes-Barre and Gracedale tower in Mountaintop.

The towerman's job was to control the tracks in a given area. OX tower, for example, controlled the myriad of switches and signals at the east end of Coxton yard. Here, the two-track old main line broke off for Wilkes-Barre. This was used mostly by passenger, mine runs and locals. On the other side, the Mountain Cutoff's two tracks split for the long climb out of the valley for mainline freights. There was much more to the job than this. The operator had his hands full giving crews their orders, staying in touch with the dispatcher, lining switches and signals, and trying to keep an assortment of mine runs, through freights, passenger runs, helper engines, locals and yard jobs on schedule and out of each other's way and on time. They had to know the railroad like the back of their hand. The switches and signals were controlled by a series of Armstrong Levers. The waist-high levers got their moniker from the fact that they had to be thrown by hand.

Just outside the yard, J tower controlled the crossing of the Lackawanna's Bloomsburg branch and the LV's old main to Wilkes-Barre. Each line had an assortment of trains crossing the four track diamond. The Lackawanna ran 16 coal trains a day, eight loaded, eight empty, and several freight and passenger runs. The crossing became known as Pittston Junction and that name sticks to the location to this day. Since the LV was the second railroad to come to town in 1867, they followed common courtesy and maintained the diamonds. At Gracedale, the Cutoff and the old main came back together. Here, helper crews got their orders for the next bump. They could either be sent to Leighton to assist a westbound or back to Coxton.

Train crews received their orders from the towerman by use of a hoop on the end of a long stick. The train order was attached to the hoop and the crew at the head end of the train and the cabooses would each grab an order by putting their arm through the hoop. Helper crews would also grab their orders on the fly. They contained information on possible track and traffic conditions, meets or possible delays which the crews needed to be aware of. After getting their orders, the train crews would throw the hoop back to the ground. Each train movement was then diligently entered in the tower book.

By the mid 1950s, area railroads faced declining coal, general freight and passenger traffic. Looking to find better ways to save money and speed up traffic, the LV invested in centralized traffic control which allowed a dispatcher to control far-away tracks and replace several towerman. OX and J towers were combined into Coxton tower, which still stands today. Also, the tracks they controlled were simplified and signals became electric ending the Armstrong era. Today, there are few towers operating in Pennsylvania and none along the old Route of the Black Diamond. They have been replaced by computers, fiber optics and satellite tracking.

Article by Ed Philbin, L&WV member and writer for the *Pittston Dispatch*...3/5/98 *Pittston Thursday Dispatch*