# Susquehanna Sidetracks





HTTP://trainweb.com/mvmra/nmra11.htm

NMRA/MER

Susquehanna Division 11 October - December 1999

Vol. 7 No. 4

## Great Joint Division Meet at Strasburg

by Wm. Terry Nesbit

The joint Susquehanna and Philadelphia division meet held at Strasburg Railroad on the 18th of September was well attended. We had over 35 people, who either visited the Pennsylvania Train Museum, the Toy Train Museum, or rode the Strasburg Railroad train and had a picnic lunch along the railroad. I brought several different kinds of soft drinks and apple juice. My thanks to Brian Brandt who donated the ice for the liquid refreshments.

Strasburg Railroad has many cars painted in a scheme not familiar to us. These cars still have the colors and lettering from the movie "Wild Wild West". A note to Alan Frame, who was in attendance and measuring ex-Ma & Pa equipment. Passenger car #20, is painted as Western Pacific and only has two truss rods.

After the picnic we had a tour of the shops and engine house at Strasburg Railroad. In the Car Shop we were able to see a Rutland outside braced box car under going restoration and a scratch built ... 8 wheel passenger car being built as an open car for Strasburg's use. Over in the Engine Shop, we saw Strasburg #89 a 2-6-0 having its 5 year check under FRA rules, a 4-6-0, #972 less its firebox and flues being worked on, and a 2-6-0 being constructed from scratch. It would appear from our tour that Strasburg Railroad has the ability to built complete locomotives, a very unique skill in this day in age.

While we were finishing the tour, we were told that Strasburg's locomotive ex-N&W, 4-8-0 was to be turned on the turntable at the Pennsylvania Train Museum.

This was being done as the locomotive was lettered as "Indian Valley #472", for a commercial movie which was Cont'd on page 2

## **Coming Events**

November 6, 1999: Layout tour for Division 11, Columbia Historical Society, 19 N. 2nd St., Columbia, PA, 10-2:30

November 6 & 7, 1999: Reading Society of Model Engineers Fall Open House, Noon to 5 p.m., Iron Horse Lane, Reading, PA. Ph 610-929-5444 or web site http://www.rsme.org

November 13-14, 1999: Allentown Train Meet, Allentown Fairgrounds, Agricultural Hall, Allentown, PA, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Adm: \$5/\$3

November 11-14, 1999: Hub City Limited, Fall 1999 MER Convention, Ramada Inn Convention Center, Rt. 40 East, Hagerstown, MD.

November 21, 1999: Altoona Area Train Collectors Meet, National Guard Armory, 327 Frankstown Road, Altoona, PA, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Adm: \$3

Nov. 26, 1999 - Jan 2, 2000: South Penn Model RR, Inc., Holiday Open House, 520 N. Charlotte St., Lancaster, PA. Further info time and dates elsewhere in this issue.

November 28, December 4-5, 11-12, 1999: Mifflin County Model Railroad Club Open House, 101 Third St., Lewistown, PA, 1 to 5 p.m.

November 28, December 5, 12, 19, 26, 1999: Stiegel Valley Model Railroad Club Open House, 230 S. Charlotte St., Manheim, PA, 1 to 4 p.m.

November 28, December 5, 12, 19, 26, 1999: Miniature Railroad Club of York Open House, 381 Wheatfield St., 1 to 5 p.m., Adm: \$2/\$0.50

January 29, 2000: Division Meet at Mechanicsburg, PA March 25, 2000: Joint Division Meet with New Jersey Division.

April 27-30, 2000: MER Spring 2000 Convention in Hampton, VA.

#### **Division 11 Staff**

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Susquehanna Sidetracks is the official publication of the Susquehanna Division 11 of the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association, Inc. Dues are \$2.00 per year payable to "Susquehanna Division 11". Remit dues to the Chief Clerk. Dues include subscription to the Division newsletter. Deadlines for submissions to the newsletter are the first day of each quarter: January 1 for Jan-Mar, April 1 for Apr-Jun; July 1 for Jul-Sep; and October 1 for Oct-Dec.

When remitting dues for the national and/or region, please provide photocopies of your current MER and NMRA membership cards, along with your Divisional membership renewal form. Also include the appropriate postage, 33 or 66 cents, with your check. This will help defray the cost of these additional mailings. We must mail the national and regional dues separately. Be sure that all information is correct and complete so dues can be properly credited to you.

## **Super's Corner**

November is National Model Railroad Month. The Division has a meet in Columbia on Saturday the 6th of November from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM, details in an article written by Brian Brandt. Also, the Conewago Valley Model Railroad Club is having its auction on the evening of the 24th of November, starting at 7:00 PM. This is always a good place to find those pieces of unique railroad artifacts and older model railroad equipment. Our NMRA President, Mr. Bob Charles, will be the auctioneer again this year. This is a good place to "corner" Bob, and ask him questions on the NMRA, as it is difficult for him to escape to another NMRA "function". The Mid-Eastern Region has its Fall Convention at Hagerstown, MD this year from 11 to 14 November. I would like to see our members in attendance ... look out for those trains and have a rail fun day. Terry

## Meet Cont'd from page 1

being filmed on location at Strasburg, PA. Also, on Sunday the 19th of September the locomotive and two wooden passenger cars were going to the Harrisburg Train Station under steam, over Amtrack rails.

My deepest thanks to Linn Moedinger, VP, Strasburg Railroad for letting us tour the Strasburg Railroad Shops. Linn has finally decided to join the NMRA. You may remember that Linn is an HOn3 modeler, as he opened his layout for us two years ago.

#### Thomas The Locomotive

by Wm. Terry Nesbit

A commercial film company is filming in Pennsylvania at Strasburg and Harrisburg. This film is for the promotion of "Thomas the Locomotive". Strasburg Railroad has repainted three wooden passenger cars as "Indian Valley" as well as the ex-N&W 4-8-0 locomotive. It is my understanding that the film title is "The Magic Train".

On the 19th of September, the locomotive and passenger cars were to meet with an Amtrack locomotive at 5:00 AM at Paradise and be at Harrisburg, by 7:00 AM. The speed was to be 25 miles an hour, and the steam locomotive is

equipped with cab signals. Needless to say, Amtrack was very, very late, I expected to be filming about 5:30 AM, Cont'd on page 3

### **Editor's Notes**

Some time back I had received 3 articles for the newsletter and never seemed to have room to print them. One of the authors has contacted me and asked if I had lost them, since it has been so long. Well, I have included one of them in this issue. Yes Alan, the other one is still on file and I will print it soon. I also have one from Ivan Frantz on the YH&F Railroad history. It is lengthy so it may be in two parts. After one of the more reent issues was mailed out, I looked it over some more and wondered why I let our inventory lists, financial statement, etc. take up so much space when I can reduce them and fit two on a page. I hate a newsletter that is all facts and figures of this nature. Hind sight is always 20/20, so I will watch this in the future and try to keep the size of this to a minimum.

I am going to try to get to the Columbia Division Meet. I haven't seen many of you for a long time. If I miss you there I am sure I will see you at the Hagerstown MER Convention the next weekend (hint, hint) Later, Don.

### FOR SALE ... WANTED:

For Sale: Several MRC power packs; Philip Fairman 717-938-8811.

For Sale: Due to a redesign of my home layout plan, an almost new 6 3/4 turn double track helix rising 24 vertical inches is no longer needed. Inside track 24" radius. Outside dimension 58" diameter. Each level is supported by a combination of threaded rod and notched plywood. the base is butt-end joined 5/8" plywood. There are 63 pieces of Atlas code 100 flextrack mounted on 1/4" cork. All joints are soldered and wired for DCC for standard block control. The grade in the helix rises 1/4" per foot. Vertical space above the top of the rail is 3".; Gale W. Smith 610-756-4311.

Wanted: Athearn, Heavy Duty flat car, PRR #470200; Terry Nesbit, PO Box 3081, Shiremanstown, PA 17011.

#### Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad

Bibliography for sale, 54+ pages listing everything ever written about the railroad for \$10.50.

Looking for Ma & Pa memorabilia.

Paper, photographs, passes, models, newspaper articles, date nails, etc. Will pay cash. Write to Alan Frame 2430 Opal Rd., York, PA 17404

## Nominations For Division Officers

In May of 2000 our Division will have its annual meeting and election of Officers for a two year term. Jim Atkinson, 120 Colebrook Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022 is the point of contact for those members of Susquehanna Division 11, who are interested in running for office. The Division Officer positions which are up for election are: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Clerk/ Paymaster. Please note, the Chief Clerk/Paymaster position may be either one or two different persons and the paymaster must be covered under a financial bond, in order to have access to the Division monies. Jim Atkinson, will need, from each member wishing to run for office, a 100 word biosketch and a shoulders up photo no later than 10 December 1999. This is required so the information is available in a timely manner to be published in our January 2000 newsletter.

### Thomas Cont'd from page 2

however, they passed me at Salunga at 6:45 AM and arrived in Harrisburg around 7:35 AM. The Amtrack diesel was on the rear of the train. I often wonder what the residents, who live along this section of tracks, were thinking when they heard the ex-N&W 4-8-0 blowing its whistle for the road crossings that morning?

I have some 1/2" video tape of this locomotive under steam along the former PRR high line just South of Salunga at dawn on the morning of the 19th of September. It is my understanding that Brian Brandt also took some photo's that morning. I was able to get ahead of them and tape at Middletown and Harrisburg, PA.I will have this tape and/or still photographs for viewing at our 29 January 2000 meet at the Keystone Historical Model Railroad Club in Mechanicsburg, PA 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Note, we will be having a model contest at Mechanicsburg, for a model of a track side structure, the best kit bashed water tank.

Do you need decals made? Then contact our Membership Chairman, Jim Atkinson. He has an Alps Printer which can print white on decal paper. He can tell you what format is needed and give you the details.

## Forgotten Ma & Pa Steam

by Alan Frame

By George, there still exists a steam locomotive from the Ma & Pa. (Albeit the markings say U.S.A) The Baldwin Locomotive Works, 2-8-0, serial number 69856 is stored by the Texas State Railroad in Rusk, TX. This locomotive was built in August, 1843 and was donated by the U.S. Army to Texas in 1971. U.S. Army engine #611, number 2628 prior to 1952, has a Ma & Pa history.

The United States Army Transportation Corps Board (USATCB) sent letters to railroads seeking one to test a recently equipped U.S. Army standard 2-8-0 coal burning locomotive. The new options were the Franklin Type D Poppet Valve, Superheater Company Steam Dryer, a non-air operated automatic fire door and a Nathan 1 Lever Injector. Lt. Colonel Robert C. Hanes explained what rules had to be followed and what forms had to be filled out. The next 12 sentences concerned costs. What I feel caught the attention of the railroad about costs for use of the locomotive was the one word, FREE. The Army contract with a railroad was to "test the engine on a commercial railroad both in switching and in road service to determine its performance and reliability."

Mr. J. B. Nance, President and General Manager of the Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad, "would be delighted to have the free use of a locomotive for a few months." He had a few questions though. The four sets of drivers on the Army locomotive had flanges. The middle two sets of drivers on the Ma & Pa locomotives were blind (no flanges). The wheelbase (USA) was 15' 6" vs. (Ma & Pa) 14' 3". The army said the engine would run on the Ma & Pa. The contract was for a six month trial run with a six month extension, by mutual agreement. The locomotive was shipped from the Vulcan Iron Works, Wilkes Barre, PA on Jan 16, 1950. The Vulcan Iron Works installed the Franklin Type D Poppet Valve. The Franklin gears consist of a rotating cam in the steam chest which activates valves similar to an automobile; the long shaft connecting crank and steam chest is rotated by a worm gear located on the crank. The gear's primary advantage is in precise valve timing.

The locomotive weighed 188,680 pounds at Ashley, PA (south of Wilkes Barre). It was shipped via the Central Railroad of Pennsylvania, Reading, and Baltimore & Ohio railroads to interchange at Baltimore with the Ma & Pa. It

was not to travel over 25 miles per hour.

The locomotive had minor additions added by the Ma & Pa. The fire door was converted to air operation instead of mechanical, the sandbox was greatly enlarged. The present sandbox did not hold enough sand for the many grades of the line. The locomotive needed rail washers installed to clean track off during its switching and long reverse runs. The railroad had problems with the tender bouncing excessively. Snubber springs were added to prevent derailment. The first trip beyond the Baltimore yard took place April 4, 1950. The engine handled 383 tons and its performance indicated that this was about the maximum tonnage that it could haul.

Of note are the wages paid to employees: Machinist, Boilermaker, \$1.642/hour, Machinist Helper, \$1.354/hour, and Lead Car Repairer, \$1.462/hour.

Train ride day rolled around on May 3, 1950. I could not attend since I was a little over 3 years old and didn't even know of this railroad. Messrs. Goodwin, Harrison, Nicholson and Lewis, who represented the equipment manufacturers, and the Army rode the Ma & Pa.

The railroad submitted bills for improvements to the engine in amounts of \$289.17 and \$240.41 on April 6, 1950. The Government, being the way it is, sent paperwork back and forth and the railroad still wasn't paid on June 19th. Some things never change. Reread my last sentence ... It seems the Interstate Commerce Commission found out that the U.S. Army engine #2628 was running on the Ma & Pa. The ICC wanted the boiler specification card. Even though the Army (branch of the U.S. Government) had filed a card with the ICC (another branch of the Government) in August 1943, the ICC wanted to have the Ma & Pa send them one. The specification card was filled out by the Baldwin Locomotive Works when the locomotive was built. It states the material the locomotive was made of, thickness of fire tubes, crown stays, shell sheets, firebox, and locations of these items.

During July of 1950 the locomotive was pressed into passenger service. The only passenger train run this locomotive made was the afternoon Baltimore to York northbound train #7. It pulled the baggage mail and a coach. Cont'd on page 5

#### Ma & Pa Steam Cont'd from page 4

I won't bore you with all of the Government double speak but as of October 1950, the railroad still had not been paid for the two bills it submitted back in April. The group whose command the engine belonged to changed to the Transportation Research & Development Station located at Fort Eustis, VA. Also some of the wording of the contract was found to be incorrect.

The Army said they would take "prompt action" to pay the Ma & Pa what they owed them. I could not find any other correspondence, so I assume the bills were paid. On December 9th, 1950, the Army said it would like to terminate the contract for the railroad's testing of engine #2628 on or about April 2, 1951. The Army sent a letter to the Ma & Pa on July 24, 1951 stating, in what I would say polite words, where is their locomotive and return it.

The Ma & Pa wrote to the Army saying the "operation of this locomotive has been entirely satisfactory." Also "the manner in which this locomotive operated with the Franklin Poppet Valve is particularly well liked by the engineers who run it, They will all regret seeing the '2628' leave." The delivery date to Fort Eustis, VA was August 15, 1951. The Ma & Pa was to get free loan of a 2-8-0 locomotive for 6 months maybe 12 and they stretched it out to 19 months.

In 1952, engine #2628 was renumbered #611. The engine served well in its role of training soldiers and hauling supplies on the base. Base operations ended in the late

1970's. During 1971 the engine was donated to the Texas State Railways. The Army had cut the top of the smoke box and let the stack fall in. The engine was transported to Texas with only one main rod on one side, The other main rod was found by Sergeant Major Max Miller and it was sent on its was to Texas.

I asked the Texas State Railways for a photograph of #611 to go along with this article. They said "You would get sick when you saw them." No photos came with the letter.

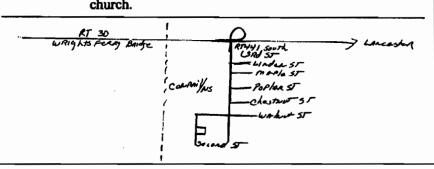
Thanks to Robert Matteson, U.S. Army Transportation Museum, Sergeant Major Miller, Roger Huber and Richard Wise (retired Ma & Pa engineer) for the information on this locomotive. For further information and help in modeling this locomotive, consult these publications:

- 1. The Ma & Pa, A history of the Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad by George W. Hilton (p.131 photos)
- 2. 1979 calendar, Bernard, Roberts & Co., Inc. (October)
- 3. Time table. The Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad Preservation & Historical Society (Summer 1994 P.9)
- 4. A Pictorial History of Steam Railroads of the Tri-State Area Book #3 by Carroll F. Spitzer (p.162 photo)
- 5. 1995 Calendar, The Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad Preservation & Historical Society (p. 5,10,11 photos)
- 6. The Bulletin, National Railway Historical Society (Volume 31, Number 4, 1966)

LAYOUT TOUR SATURDAY NOV. 6
COLUMBIA HISTORICAL SCOCIETY
19 N. SECOND ST. COLUMBIA, PA
10:00- 2:30
Directions: Rt 30 to Rt. 441 exit.

South on
441 to Walnut St. Right on Walnut to Second
St. Left on Second St. Look for old

St. Left on Second St. Look for old church.



## South Penn Model RR, Inc.

520 N. Charlotte St. Lancaster, PA

#### **Holiday Open House**

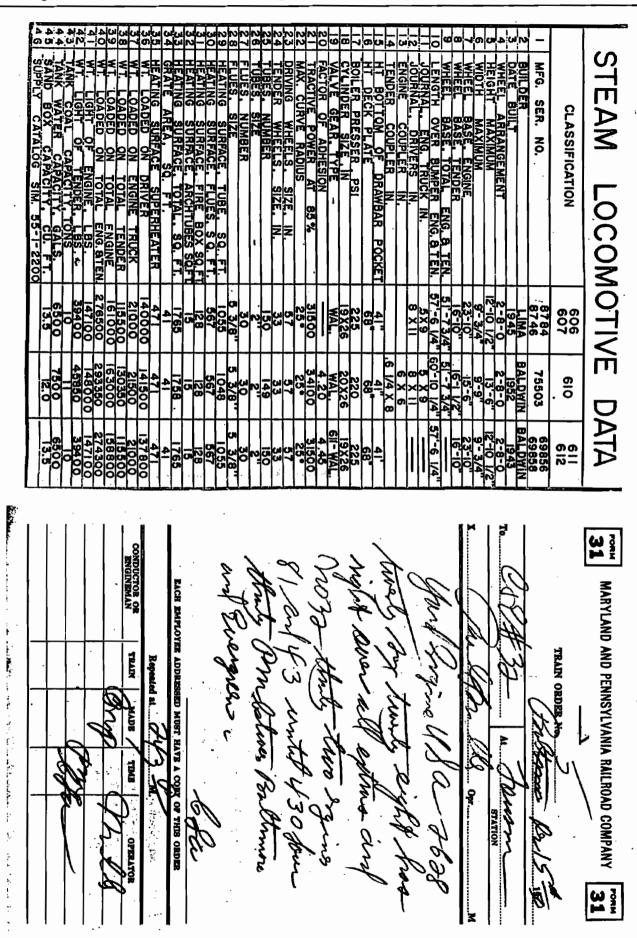
Nov. 26, Dec. 3, 10, 17, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

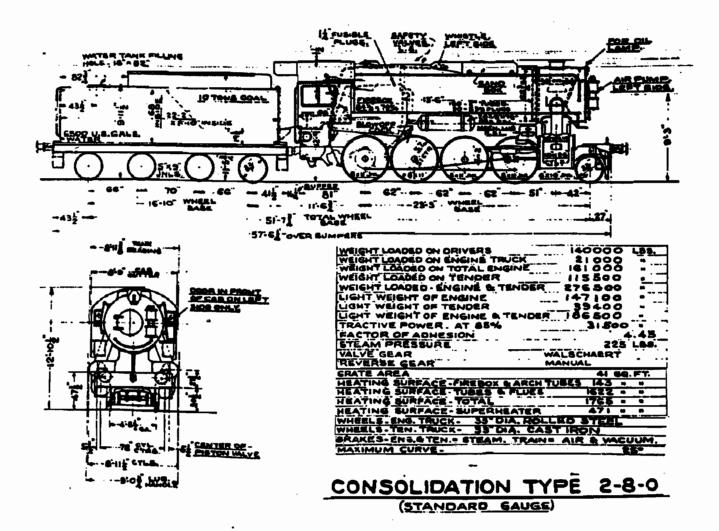
Nov. 27, 28, Dec 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 26, 1999 & Jan 2, 2000

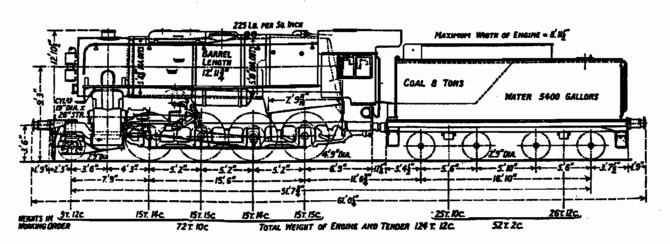
1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Info: Brian Brandt at

717-560-9542







Engine diagram giving principal dimensions and weights

The Officers and staff of Susquehanna Division 11, NMRA, MER, would like to extend our sincerest wishes to everyone for a very happy and safe Holiday Season.

Merry Christmas Happy Hanunakah

#### JOIN THE NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

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