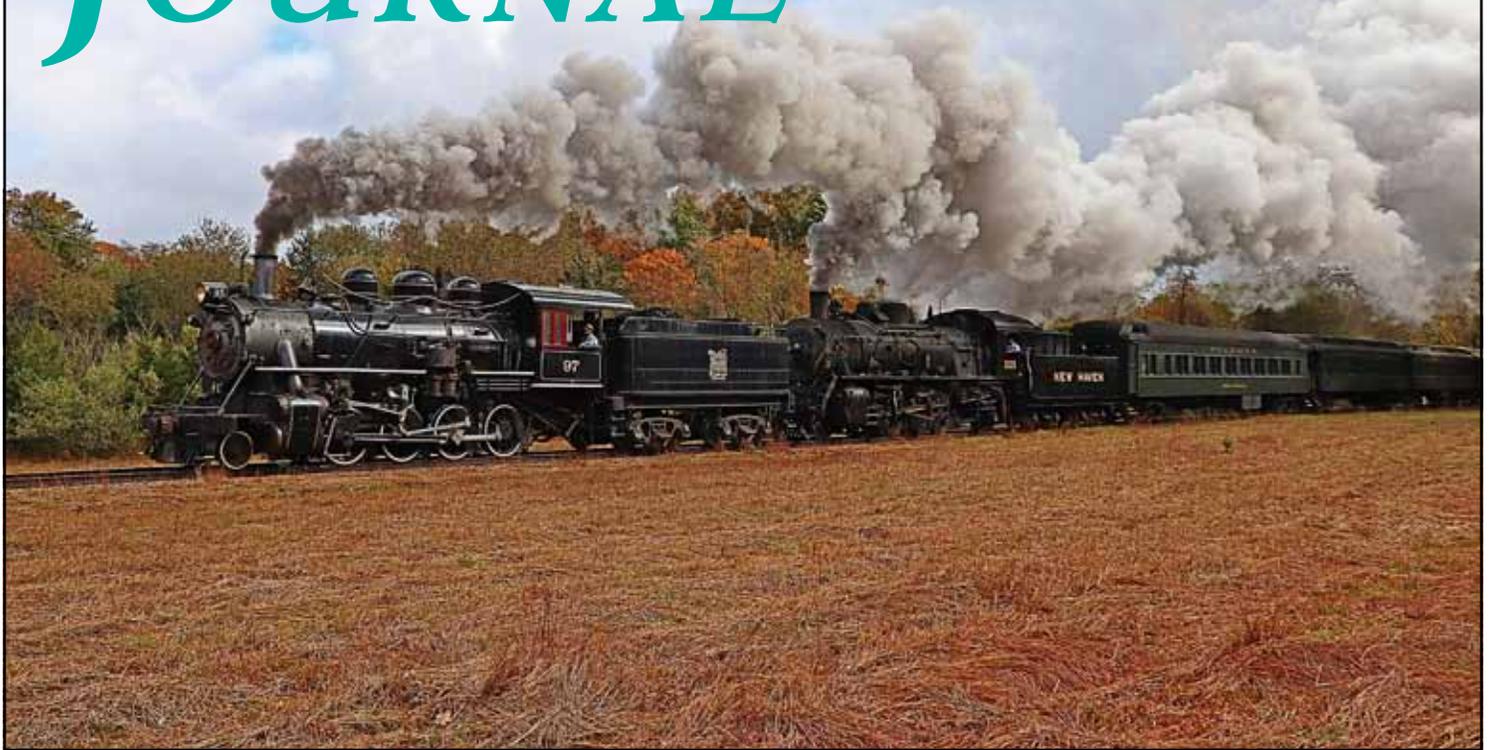


WAUSHAKUM JOURNAL



Winter 2020

**Matthew Betzner:
Mass Bay RRE's *Two Rivers Steam Special*
Club Business Update**

WAUSHAKUM JOURNAL

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From the Editor

J.B. Mentzer, Editor, Layout Designer and Lead Photographer

Photos ...

In September 2008, the ABC News morning show Good Morning America operated a whistle-stop train in the north-east.

Photo 1: A self-portrait of the Editor in the mirror on privately-owned private car, PRR 120.

The car was bringing up the markers (**Photo 2**) of the special train, at Springfield, MA.

The consist was comprised of Amtrak Superliner equipment, a novelty on the B&A.



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Two photos, J.B. MENTZER

Mass Bay RRE on the VRR

Matthew Betzner

Photos by the Author

In the article I wrote last year for this publication, I mentioned how new restraints on charter trains with Amtrak had thrown a curveball to major steam excursion stars. But oddly enough, within a year from October '18 to early October '19, I participated in two major steam events that took place two tourist lines, one occurring in New England, and the other that took place in Pennsylvania on a relatively familiar short line. Not one steam locomotive was the high liner of the events, but two and actually at certain points there was a third locomotive to join in. Not many heritage railroads in this day in age can claim they can have three standard gauge steam locomotives operating at any one time. I know of two, and those are the places we're going to in this story.

The first story begins more so in 2016 and 2017 with an excursion held in back to back years. The Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts in conjunction with the Providence and Worcester Railroad and the Valley Railroad (operator of the Essex Steam Train) ran three trips on an excursion called the 'Two Rivers Steam Special' running from Worcester, MA down to Old Saybrook, CT under P&W operation. At Old Saybrook, the diesel engines were cut off and the Valley's Chinese built 2-8-2 #3025 (rebuilt to resemble a New Haven J-1 class Mikado) coupled onto the train to take us up across all operable track that the valley had (which at the time was just up to the Marina past Goodspeed). The journey also included one photo runby at the Chester station where the #3025 strutted her stuff for the photographers. At Goodspeed the engine was run around and towed the train back to Old Saybrook where the P&W crews took over, swapped engines, and the excursion returned to Worcester later at night.

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Winter 2020

Club Business Update

Jed Weare, Secretary

October 10, 2019

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by the President at 7:58 PM on October 10th at the WLS track. 14 members were present.

As there was no meeting in September due to lack of quorum, the Minutes of the August 2019 meeting were read by the Secretary. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Walt Weber, seconded by Jim Davidson, and carried unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent's report was read by the John Pilling.

1. The leaks in the valve joints in the access pit (near the turn table controls) have been repaired. Both valves and connecting joints have been replaced.

The system was checked for leaks and found that the air line for the steaming bays around the turn table appear to be intact. There was evidence of additional leaks somewhere in the main steaming bay area, which are difficult to locate now but will probably be evident in the spring when the area is flooded again.

2. One of the security cameras that was covering the coal bin area (with overlap from two others) has been moved to the peak of the freight house to cover the train container and yard.
3. A new exhaust manifold has been installed on the tractor and an exhaust pipe has been ordered. While removing the gas tank to access the manifold bolts, we discovered several pinhole leaks from pitting and rust in the rear of the tank and they have been repaired.
4. Taking advantage of dry weather, we started to take down some of the tent covers for the winter and will continue on days when the weather is dry.

Marc Arsenault
WLS Superintendent

Old Business

The President reported that he was still looking into the sweat shirt issue.

New Business

Beginning with the next meeting, business meetings will be held at the Holliston Historical Society instead of at the track, and will commence at 7:00PM instead of 8:00PM. The President will inform the membership via email.

The President proposed that the February meeting be cancelled as in prior years, on the grounds of likely bad weather and lack of important business to conduct. The proposal was adopted by acclamation.

The final 2019 meeting, the Blowdown Meet, will be held on October 20th.

The final workday will be on October 26th, to prepare the track for the winter. We will also attempt to finish the engine house roof, under the direction of Tom McCune.

Mark Hirtle said that a potential Junior Member, Dominic, will be at the Blowdown Meet.

The Treasurer is looking into a new waste disposal service because of recent poor performance by B-P Trucking.

Walt Weber asked whether it had been decided to cover Butler Bridge with a tarp for the winter. The consensus was that it was probably better to leave it uncovered.

John Mentzer said he expected to have the next issue of the Journal out after the October meet.

The President reported that our neighbors were not upset at the cancellation of the Neighborhood Appreciation Day meet, in view of the Triple-E threat.

The Holliston Building Inspector visited and expressed concern about handicap accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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Mass Bay RRE “Two Rivers Steam Special” on the Valley Railroad

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For 2018 the Mass Bay RRE was unable to run any trips with the P&W, but managed to try something different with the Valley Railroad. Billed as; Valley Railroad Steam Extravaganza, the flyer advertised the train would have a double-header with both 3025 and #40 (1920 built ALCO-Brooks 2-8-2) happening on Sunday, October 28th, 2018. But with one of my closest friends in the RRE said that surprises were in store, including one on the head end of the train. For over the last (two years?) the Valley had been at work on 2-8-0 #97 (formerly Birmingham Southern #200) which had been out of service since 2010 and decided to make it a surprise that it would be leading the special along with #3025. That was a thrill for me hearing that, as #97 was the first standard gauge steam locomotive I rode behind when my dad and I visited the Valley for my 13th birthday.

The weekend started off dreary (note this will be a bit of theme) when I drove down to Connecticut on the day before the trip, October 27th. I met up with friends at Essex, where rain and cloudy conditions made things not the brightest, but still interesting to look around. #40 was rolling along the platform and out onto line doing sessions as part of the Hand on the Throttle program (HOTT) that was being offered during the weekend. The seven car train for our charter was sitting on the runaround track, while over at the shops, crews were rolling #97 out to service and look over the engine. It gave me chills seeing this locomotive again after a 15 year absence. I met up with my friends and after a while, we soon headed down to our hotel in Old Saybrook, and got some rest for tomorrow's exciting day.

Sunday didn't start off any better than Saturday as far as weather was concerned but it was going to progress better as the day went along. All three engines were getting the fires going for their assignments, and as the buffs/enthusiasts arrived and started taking it all in. #40 had the task to move the excursion coaches into the platform area, and then #97 and #3025 pulled up the siding to get serviced and then once both of them were coupled to each other, they pulled forward and attached themselves to the north end of the train. Soon the passengers boarded and at 10 A.M. we began; going backwards, our trip covering all operable track included the stretch down towards Old Saybrook which was the first place we went to first.

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Club Business Update

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Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was proposed by Bob Mitchell, seconded by Walt Weber, and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by the President at 8:25 PM.

November 14, 2019

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by the President at 7:16 PM on November 14th at the Holliston Historical Society. 15 members were present.

The Minutes of the October 2019 meeting were read by the Secretary. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Bob

Mitchell, seconded by Bob Newcombe, and carried unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

Mark Arsenault presented the Superintendent's Report.

1. The scheduled October 26th club workday had a minimal attendance.

The water lines were blown out and the site secured for the winter along with completing the final touches to the engine house roof with the few that did respond to the call, which was much appreciated.

2. The truck load of track ballast has been delivered as ordered.
3. The Wednesday crew filled in the low (depressed) area in front of the engine house with ballast, we still have the other side of the transfer table track near the steaming bay to do.
4. The # 5 Engine house door spring has been adjusted to keep the door up without the use of temporary supports.

5. With the installation of a new gas tank, the major repairs to the tractor are now complete. This was all done at a cost to the club for less than a day's rental of a similar piece of construction equipment.
6. The halogen flood light on the outside of the train container have been replaced with two LED bulbs, thereby reducing the power consumption from 300 Watts to 30 Watt. In the future we will continue the effort to replace the high wattage lighting to LEDs throughout the yard.
7. The bulldozer has been secured for the winter. The water pump replacement will be done in the spring. This will be a substantial effort as we have a major disassembly involved with heavy components.

Marc Arsenault
WLS Superintendent

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Mass Bay RRE “Two Rivers Steam Special” on the Valley Railroad

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The journey down was quiet, and arrival was a bit anti-climactic before we changed directions and headed back north. Anybody who was on the ground trying to chase our train probably had the fun at the moment. We rolled back up into Essex where we paused to await #40 to come back in finishing a session of HOTT. I was lucky enough being one of the Mass Bay RRE personal to disembark and view our double-header parked at the platform. Which was then followed by the arrival of #40, making it one of the rare sights of the day seeing all three operable steam locomotives together. #40 had a new participant at the throttle and departed in short time, and I climbed back aboard for a short trip up track into the Meadows. A nice wide open field inaccessible by road or walk path was the site for the first runbys of the day. During one of the runbys, the sun did poke out casting some nice light of the smoke, steam, and the engines.

After two runbys, we all reboarded, and the train backed up again, and into Essex station. It was time for the lunch layover, which took place in the building known as Valley junction. A gourmet buffet including burgers, hot dogs, salad, brownies, and cookies awaited us, and a nice way to slow down for a moment. With the day's light improving, many people walked around the area, getting pictures of our train, and #40 when it returned again to conclude another HOTT session. Just past 1 P.M. we boarded again and our double-header thundered north through the meadows, and up through Deep River to our next photo spot.

We came up through Chester passing the depot and then up the hill to Mine Dock Rd, stopping at what would be our second photo runby location. Two runbys were staged here, with the front half of the train off for the first one, and the rear half for the second



runby. Afterwards we made our way up towards Goodspeed, slowly following alongside the Connecticut River Valley as we soon spotted the Haddam swing bridge coming up to the station at Goodspeed. We slowly continued up the line over more newly re-laid rail past the marina where we had stopped before the last two years. The excursion went as far as the Goodspeed yard limit marker just south of the Haddam Meadows State Park.

Unfortunately things hit a snag, nothing major to bring an abrupt end to the excursion, but our double-header status would be removed at this point in the trip. #97 had developed hot barring issues and the crews decided to uncouple the locomotive while 3025 would back the train into Goodspeed. Despite that, people still disembarked there and #3025 performed splendidly with two runbys through the station. Afterwards we had the passengers boarded, and I was able to hang around outside to watch #3025 runaround the train and couple onto the south end to bring us back towards Essex. Seemed at that point with the day winding down it was the time to reflect on the day. It had been fun from my standpoint, having run into many friends and riding behind two steam locomotives. But it was not over yet, we arrived back at the Meadows, where we all disembarked again. #3025 pulled the train

back into Essex, the plan was that after #3025 was back in the station; #40 would run by us before our train would return. It turned into a wait of at least 10 minutes. The Valley's hi-rail truck humorously ran back and forth in front of us; causing many to joke that's the highlight. Until the sound of aggressive chugging was heard, and #40 emerged; with #3025 right behind her and the train thrilling everyone with loud whistles and lots of smoke and steam in their wake as they flew by.

Afterwards, the train returned, #40 was uncoupled and headed on to continue its HOTT session, and we all boarded again for #3025 to shove it's train back into Essex to conclude the excursion. Several people then went their own separate ways; but a few hung around. #97 was still making her way back south slowly nursing the hot bearing, and eventually she arrived just after 5 P.M. Posing beside #3025 for a couple of minutes before the two engines moved back towards the engine house just before #40 returned to conclude the HOTT for the day. Then with direction from local photographer Tom Nanos, the three locomotives were positioned and the crew posed in between the three for the end of season photo that Tom took before all the steamers were tucked away in the sheds after an exciting day of action.

Club Business Update

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Old Business

The President reported that the gas-powered compressor had been worked on and was now in running order, though new muffler parts are needed. The compressor was tested and found to operate very well and will provide a valuable backup to the current compressor.

The engine house roof work is completed, with Tom McCune being the main force behind this effort. In the spring, attention will turn to the roof on Butler Bridge, which is showing signs of age.

The President is in contact with Harvey's of Westboro to replace B-P Trucking as our trash pickup service. B-P's performance has been poor, their customer service has been deteriorating to the point of open hostility, and their prices have risen dramatically.

The President distributed estimates for buying sweatshirts with WLS motifs. The cost will probably be about \$10 more than in 2015, due to the small order size. It will be a special purchase requiring members to pre-order what they want, rather than a club purchase for resale.

New Business

Nominations for Club Officers for 2020 will be opened at the next meeting, and elections held at the AGM in January.

The President reported on his discussions with Paul Saulnier regarding installation of a septic system at the track. The main points were that a tight tank will not be an option, unless the State changes the law to allow non-municipalities to install them; we must size it for the worst case, which will probably be for 200 people, even though this occurs only once per year; a 40 x 80 foot leach field seems likely, with pumps and a mound; and the toilet facilities must be permanent structures. Investigation continues.

The next meeting will be December 12th at 7:00PM at the Holliston Historical Society.

WAUSHAKUM JOURNAL Editor J.B. Mentzer said the next issue will be out very shortly.

Bob Mitchell announced that the Worcester Model Railroaders will once again be putting on a Christmas show at Sturbridge Village. The event will begin on the Monday after Thanksgiving

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was proposed by Tom McCune, seconded by Colt Stewart, and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by the President at 8:09 PM.

December 12, 2019

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by the President at 7:10 PM on December 12th at the Holliston Historical Society. 15 members were present.

The Minutes of the November meeting were read by the Secretary. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by John Pilling, seconded by Jim Davidson, and carried unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent indicated via email that there was no activity to report.

Old Business

Eight members have ordered sweatshirts.

The President reported that Bob Mitchell broke his ankle.

The gas-powered compressor seems to be working fine. It will be installed as a backup to the main compressor next season.

It seems that B-P trucking picked up and charged us for an empty dumpster. Unfortunately, Harvey's is not interested in a seasonal contract, so we will have to stick with B-P for now.

The possibility of a septic system was discussed again at this meeting. Relative to the sizing of such a system, Jim Abrams said he did an informal

count of attendees at the last Annual Meet, and came up with a vary rough estimate of the maximum people on site at one time of a bit less than 100. Discussions will continue.

Nominations for Officers for 2020 are open, and will continue to be open until the Election of Officers, which takes place at the Annual General Meeting, next month. The President encouraged nominations.

New Business

It was reported that Put Clark, a long-time and Life Member of the club, has died. He passed away October 25th, 2018, at his home in Millis, aged 85.

There will be the usual potluck lunch at the New Years Day Meet. Tony Riano will be asked to plow the driveway if necessary.

Glen Wigglesworth, a former member, was re-elected to Full membership. He is sponsored by Joe Cardelle. Colt Stewart

proposed that we accept Glen as a member in absentia. The motion was seconded by Walt Weber and passed unanimously.

We hired a company to spray for mosquitoes and ticks just before the last Annual Meet, and it was suggested that this would be a good thing to do every year. We will look into buying or renting a spraying machine to do the job ourselves.

Walt Weber asked if we will have a budget for next year. This was tabled for further discussion.

The next meeting, the AGM, will be at 7:00PM on January 9th 2020, at the Holliston Historical Society.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was proposed by Tom McCune, seconded by Bob Newcombe, and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by the President at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jed Weare
Secretary

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