



Seven-Point-Four

the newsletter of the Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc. A Pennsylvania non-stock not-for-profit organization, tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



April-June

Second Quarter 2020

April-June

SECOND QUARTER 2020 will certainly be remembered as a challenging time for our country. The onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic turned the entire country topsy-turvy as scientists, government leaders, business leaders, and everyday citizens had to deal with a fast-spreading illness with unknown remedies.

In this issue of 7.4 you will read how the Friends organization and the Stewartstown Railroad Company has been dealing with the pandemic while still attempting to make progress on our shared mission of restoring the railroad to full operation. The Friends organization appreciates the donations it has received, especially during this period, to help us continue our work. We realize for many of our donors this is a very difficult period financially. Your donation in any amount is helpful and appreciated!

In this mailing we are including information regarding the Friends postponed 2020 annual membership meeting. This meeting will be a "virtual meeting" held electronically to avoid exceeding permitted in-person attendance limits. Please read these materials for instructions on participating in the meeting and remember to return your ballot!

— Ray Reter

RESULTS OF FRIENDS BYLAWS REVISION VOTE

Earlier this year the Friends asked its membership to approve two changes to its bylaws. We are pleased to announce that the term limit on the president, previously set at three consecutive terms of one year each, has been removed. Also the definition of a "quorum" has been updated to reflect the current number of seated officers and directors more accurately. Thank you to everyone for returning your ballots.

CODE "RED" ON THE STEWARTSTOWN RAILROAD

With the COVID-19 pandemic raging, the state of Pennsylvania locked down the commonwealth only allowing emergency and essential businesses to operate. Tourist railroad excursions were no exception, leaving the Stewartstown Railroad with no other options but to cancel trains and remain closed to the public. Road travel was also restricted barring volunteers from attending workdays. Not much information was available on what we could and could not do during this time from the local, state, or federal government.

Once we were able to start working again, volunteers in small groups wearing masks and practicing proper social distancing were able to slowly start trickling back to perform trackwork, coach rehabilitation, and other efforts needed to maintain the railroad. Some volunteers, understandably, chose to take a temporary hiatus from the railroad to help protect their health and wellbeing.

When Pennsylvania went green and restrictions from the governor's shutdown order started to lift, the Stewartstown Railroad Company modified its schedule to begin operations with motorcar rides and full-size train operations using the Friends' open-air car. Both the motorcars and the open-air car allow for easy cleaning and sanitization between trips as required by government regulation.

As an unfortunate effect of the shutdown order both the railroad company and the Friends organization were greatly impacted financially by the lack of patrons to the railroad. Please consider coming out to ride the rails, volunteer your time, or donate to help get our various restoration projects and efforts back on track for 2020.



One of the railroad's volunteer work crews on-site.

Photo by Miles Weaver.

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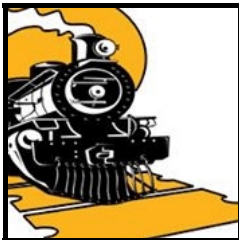
On the web at www.stewartstownfriends.org

David Watson, *President*
Michael Ruane, *Vice President*
Thomas Stahl, *Secretary*
Raymond E. Reter, *Treasurer / Newsletter Editor*
James Kuhlman, *Director-at-Large*
Madeline McCabe, *Director-at-Large / Newsletter Fulfillment*
M. Larry Morgan, *Director-at-Large*
Matthew Mundis, *Director-at-Large*
Owen Stedding, *Director-at-Large*
Kay Hoshour, *Corporate Registered Agent*
Donna Kuhlman, *Gift Shop Manager*

Articles and news items to be considered for publication in 7.4 need to be submitted by the first of each month to allow time for editing, fact-checking, and possible consolidation with other submitted items to create comprehensive articles. When submitting photographs, please submit as .jpg files and identify the photographer who took the photograph.

The Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad outreach program has supported the following organizations through membership in and/or by donations to:

Explore York
(formerly York County Convention and Visitors Bureau)
Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County
New Freedom Heritage, Inc.
Preservation Pennsylvania, Inc.
Stewartstown Fall Fest
Stewartstown Historical Society, Inc.
Stewartstown Area Senior Center
Stewartstown Summer Theatre
York County History Center



REMEMBER:

You can purchase train ride tickets in advance with your credit card through the *WhistleTix* service on the railroad company's website:

www.stewartstownrailroadco.com

MAJOR CROSSTIE DONATION FROM KOPPERS, INC.

by Dave Watson

Through the generosity of our donors and supporters, we have been able to provide hundreds of ties for the railroad company's track rehabilitation and stabilization program.

However, like many other organizations during this time, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Friends financially. I reached out to Koppers, Inc. a few months ago seeking a donation of crossties. Much to my surprise, they responded rather quickly and offered us 200 brand-new industrial grade crossties. All we had to do was provide the proper documentation and pick them up. Arrangements have been made for the ties to be picked-up during the first week of August. Once the ties arrive, they will be used to significantly extend the railroad's "class one" track. We are extremely grateful and sincerely thank Koppers, Inc. for their major donation of crossties!

AMAZON SMILE PROGRAM

The Friends organization is qualified to receive donations under this program offered by Amazon.com. Please consider supporting the Friends thru the Amazon Smile Program when you make purchases on Amazon.com. This program *does not* add any cost to the purchaser! It acts as a "vote" to influence Amazon.com's charitable donations paid from Amazon's profits. A link to access the program is available on the Friends website homepage.

FRIENDS TAMPER UPDATE

The Friends' tamper is currently undergoing a basic evaluation to determine its present mechanical state. Dan Varholy, Bob Dumas, and Dave Watson inspected the machine recently. It was determined that the tamper needs a battery and a 12-volt starter solenoid for a Detroit 3-53 diesel motor. Once these parts are obtained, work will continue to determine what is needed to make the machine functional.



Staging crossties at one of the many worksites along the Stewartstown Railroad. Photo by Miles Weaver.

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COACH 1158 UPDATE

COVID-19 has certainly impacted our progress on Coach 1158. We have picked up a few new volunteers while some of our “regular” volunteers have had to take time off while we wait for the pandemic to abate. One of our most critical tasks is welding. Jim Kuhlman taught Aaron Fried MIG welding skills which has added a third person to this work. Together, we are now able to complete one whole side of a window track repair plus any internal frame repair needed to reinforce the internal supports in a single day. We have completed roughly five windows, with 35 more to go. Of all the repairs needed to complete this project, this will be the most time-consuming and long-term task. As welding repairs are completed, the finished replacement windows are being installed.

Internal surface preparation and priming has started. To ensure a smooth finished surface, a variety of tools are being used to perform surface preparation. Most surfaces are needle-scaled first. Then we follow up with sanding discs and the Eastwood contour tool which has a 5-inch rotating drum. This tool also has a variety of sanding drums available. We purchased the most destructive one which can tear paint and destroy rust in a matter of seconds. We then follow up with a finishing drum like Scotch-brite pads that leaves a little scuff for the primer to stick. Rustoleum rusty metal primer is being used along with a PPG oil-based topcoat. Button head screws are being installed along the roof line where the rivets were removed when the holes were patched in the roof's sheet metal.

Looking ahead, the Friends' board decided that it will solicit bids to hire a professional company to media-blast, prime, and paint the roof next summer. Volunteers will take steps to stabilize the existing patches to prevent any damage from taking place between now and then. We will be raising funds and looking for additional grant funding to help cover the roof painting costs over the next several months.

We are always looking for additional project volunteers. A volunteer specifically with woodworking skills would be helpful to assist with window installation and reinstalling the ceiling. Please let us know if you are interested in helping!

ANNUAL MEETING REMINDER

Please remember to review the annual meeting documents enclosed with this issue of 7.4. We'd like you to participate in the meeting!



Left: David Collison installing buttonhead screws on the roof of coach #1158.

Photo by Dave Watson.



Left: Aaron Fried smoothing the welds on coach #1158.

Photo by Dave Watson.



Left: Jim Kuhlman cutting a sheet of steel using the Friends plasma cutter.

Photo by Dave Watson.



Left: One of the new windows recently installed in coach #1158.

Photo by Dave Watson.

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PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE RAILROAD'S TRACK DEPARTMENT

by David Williamson

Trackwork continues on schedule. At the July work weekend, we installed 20 ties on the curve at the water cistern to strengthen it and get rid of failed ties no longer doing their job. We also continued tie installation heading west past milepost 6 leading to the picnic grove. We are now up to the grove with ties in the ground but there are well over 100 that still need to be spiked. An additional 40 ties are needed to provide a sufficient stopping distance for the train to let passengers off and on. We expect to put those in at the August work weekend, and start catching-up on spiking.

The Plasser tamper was also out on the line in July, raising low joints and working on the swale before the pumpkin patch. This area now looks much better but there is some additional track lining to do.

The Wednesday night work crew spent three weekday evenings cutting over-hanging tree branches that were hitting the train along the stretch from the pumpkin patch to MP6. This stretch of line is complete and is in very good shape with plenty of clearance for the train. Several leaning trees need to be removed. We will be working on taking them down on an ongoing basis, but right now they are not interfering with the train.

We have sufficient ties, ballast, spikes, bolts, etc. on-hand to continue trackwork for the rest of the summer and into the fall, even with limited railroad operations and revenue. As of July 12, 310 ties have been installed with 380 sourced so far this year. This includes 12 long switch ties for the upper wye switch frog area that have been purchased and delivered but not yet installed. We will work on that switch after we have reached our picnic grove goal to get the big train up there.

The Friends has received a donation of 200 *new* ties from Koppers, Inc. When they are delivered in August that will take us to 580 ties for the year, well over last year's record of 504! We are planning to get one more load of relay ties in the fall, that should be a full truckload of 240, taking us to potentially 820 for the year, over our planned goal of 750, so we are looming at record years for both tie purchasing and installation. The Friends will need some additional donations to its right-of-way/track fund for this to happen. They are getting close to halfway of the \$4,800 purchase price but need an additional \$2,400 to make this happen.

(Continued on page 5)



Work train at the water cistern site. *Photo by Dave Williamson.*



Track crew at the site near the water cistern. *Photo by Dave Williamson.*



Here's a seldom-seen view of the remains of the water cistern from the TOP! *Photo by Nathan Filak.*



Water cistern area trackwork under way. *Photo by Dave Williamson.*



The tie inserter at work! *Photo by Miles Weaver.*



The "picnic area" prior to this season's clean-up. *Photo by Aaron Fried.*



The "picnic area" after our volunteers' clean-up efforts. *Photo by Aaron Fried.*

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PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE RAILROAD'S TRACK DEPARTMENT—Continued

by David Williamson

The new spiker, purchased by the railroad company in February, is operational and we have been using it regularly. It has taken some time and some trial runs to get it in service, plus some minor repairs, tuning-up and regular maintenance. When it is working well it can spike a tie about every two minutes, with a crew of three. But everything needs to be set up for it in advance—tie plates properly positioned and ties fairly-well tamped up and positioned perpendicular to the rails so the machine can properly hold them. The track also needs to be properly gauged. Sometimes we need to hand spike a few ties ahead of it to hold the track to proper gauge as the gauging function of the machine is not yet working.

The Plasser tamper is getting more use as we get more familiar with it. It has been raising low joints from Bailey's crossing to Bridge #8, and also working farther down at the swale. It has had some tracking problems; the suspension seems stiff and it does not seem to like cross level issues and the worn rail on curves has not helped. We are also finding small repairs needed since the machine was placed back in service after more than ten years of no use. But each time we try it out it, we get better at using it.

We continue to install more ties where needed based on regular walking track inspections. We have also placed a lot of ballast to build-up track shoulders where they are missing and improve drainage and support the track. Spot brush cutting is ongoing. The weeds and brush were sprayed on the whole line in June. A second weed spraying will be necessary to knock down grass and Mare's Tail that rapidly reseed themselves.

As you can see, the track crew has been very active and much has been done. Thanks to all who have come out on a regular basis to push our progress forward! We have had some very good workdays when we have 10 to 12 people out and they are super productive. We have also had some workdays with only three people and they are, of course, less productive than when we have a bigger crew. Right now we are *not* limited by lack of materials or machinery or fuel—our limiting factor is people! Plus, the Wednesday night work crew is out every week working on small jobs that need to be done: spot ties, spiking, hauling and unloading ballast, spot brush cutting, etc.

The next work weekend will be August 15 and 16, our goal will be to finish trackwork up to the picnic grove so fall trains can go that far. Please come out and help—there is plenty to do and the more help we have, the more work we can get done!



One of the Stewartstown Railroad's work trains at the station awaiting its crew.

Photo by Miles Weaver.



Spiker crew orientation briefing.
Photo by William Larduskey.



A track crew working near Bailey Springs. Photo by Mike Ruane.



Track equipment in position near Bailey Springs.
Photo by Mike Ruane.



The tie inserter at work!
Photo by Miles Weaver.

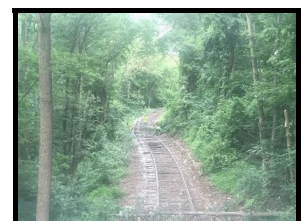


Another track crew in action during the second quarter of 2020.
Photo by Miles Weaver.



One of the areas along the right-of-way needing some brush control!

Photo by Dave Williamson.



The same area after some diligent brush cutting by our volunteers.

Photo by Dave Williamson.

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LOCOMOTIVE 84

For the past few months, we have spent several Saturdays trying to charge locomotive #84's starting batteries with a generator and charger. After each charging session, we attempted to roll over the engine, but the batteries just would not cooperate. Friends' member Miles Weaver adjusted the timing and valve clearances on all 12 cylinders in preparation for starting-up #84. Jack brought a large gas-driven welding machine along with 55-gallon drums and a water pump. After some slight hesitation, #84 started up coming back to life after 10 years of inactivity. We had to work quickly to pump nearly 200 gallons of water into the cooling system.

Getting the engine running allowed us to further evaluate #84's condition. It ran quite well for over four hours. All gauges and critical components seemed to be functioning properly. We discovered that a bearing needs to be replaced on the #2 traction motor blower, two power assemblies need to be repacked due to leaks, and a center traction motor contactor was seized and needs to be serviced. Work is currently underway to correct these remaining issues. Miles Weaver is currently creating a new headlight from scratch. Additionally, a bell has also been donated.

Looking At The Past...



The two photographs above were taken by Friends' member Robert Williams, who now resides in Colorado, in the mid-1950s when he was a teenage railfan living in Stewartstown. The photograph on the **left** shows a front view of Stewartstown Railroad locomotive #9, the "Mighty Mo," resting in front of the station in Stewartstown. Note the farm implements dealership building across the street from the station. Today, this area is occupied by the local Rutter's gas station/convenience store.

The photograph on the **right**, taken the same day, shows Mighty Mo from the rear. The brick building in the background was an equipment parts dealership. This building was torn down and the sight is now occupied by a former bank building which the Stewartstown Railroad Company was able to purchase recently for use as its administrative headquarters. The Friends' gift shop is located in the headquarters building. Note the B&O railroad boxcar in the yard. This was back when the Stewartstown was a freight-hauling shortline!

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