



Q1 Jan.-Mar. 2022

“Seven point four” is 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.

President’s Message

2022 was another great year of progress, membership, and donations. Our members, supporters, volunteers, and donors once again came together. The Friends organization is now 16 years old, being founded in 2006. We can all be very proud of what has been accomplished in this time.

It has been my pleasure to serve this fine organization and its members for the past five years. Michael Ruane has expressed a sincere interest in running for President. I wish him the best and look forward to seeing the organization flourish under his leadership. I still plan to stick around and enjoy myself, just in a position of much less responsibility. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Dave Watson

Annual Meeting Announcement

Our 2022 Annual Meeting for members is being held at 9:30 AM on Saturday, June 11, 2022. The purpose of this meeting is to elect a new board of directors, review yearly results, and transact any other business that may duly come before the group.

To join, simply use the link below:
<https://join.freeconferencecall.com/friendsofstr>

We look forward to seeing you there. Please be sure to return your ballot by Saturday, June 5, following the instructions on the form, to allow us to tally all votes. Thank you for your continued support, membership, and donations.

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**2021 Year-End Financial Report
Provided by Donna Kuhlman, Treasurer**

	Beg. Balance Jan 2021	End Balance Dec 2021
Backhoe Maintenance Fund	5.00	10.00
Bridge #5 Restoration		1,005.00
Coach #1158 Restoration Fund	3,541.62	1,000.00
Coach #1341 Fund	1,117.00	1,155.00
Coach Restoration Fund	23.00	28.00
Endowment Fund	403.00	579.00
Equipment Fund	171.00	1,014.50
Flatcar Fund	235.00	240.00

(Cont’d on page 2)

2020-2021 Friends Officers

President - Dave Watson
Vice President - Mike Ruane
Treasurer - Donna Kuhlman
Secretary - Thomas Stahl
Assistant Secretary - Jack Sanford
Director-At-Large - Larry Morgan
Director-At-Large - Jim Kuhlman
Director-At-Large - Miles Weaver
Director-At-Large - Jim Whipple
Director-At-Large - Ken Bitten
Newsletter Editor - Joe Krepps

(Cont'd. from page 1)

	Beg. Balance Jan 2021	End Balance Dec 2021
Jr Railroaders Uniform Fund	155.47	160.47
Locomotive #9/ Mighty Mo Fund	311.00	316.00
Locomotive #84 Fund	525.45	940.95
Passenger Coach Fund	30.00	30.00
Railbus Preservation Fund	1,246.92	1,251.92
ROW / Track fund Station	3,470.43	3,048.43
Preservation Fund	580.18	630.18
Tie Inserter Fund	-	20.00

1st Quarter 2022 News Updates: Coach 1341 Update



Volunteers from the Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc. started in January 2022 on the roof/ceiling restoration project of coach 1341. The ceiling was removed first. This required removing several screws and nails. Entire ceiling panels had to be removed, exposing horse-hair insulation. The Railroad Company hired a professional contractor to remove it along with proper disposal. After that, the ceiling was painted white. Any rotted wood around the air vents was replaced, which ended up being much of it. A contract welder will be brought in immediately after Easter Trains to start welding new steel along the bottom roof edges on both sides of the car. Stay tuned for updates!

2020 Federal Census Count Along STRT By Bill Histed

When our railroad was first chartered and built in the 1880s, the federal census said Stewartstown only had 303 residents! Think about that. Our core reason for being came from several hundred people plus the farmers long our route to New Freedom! The 2020 official census puts Stewartstown's population at 2,088. Census figures show growth as such: 1920 federal census, 719 residents of Stewartstown; 985 in 1940, 1,133 in 1950, 1,157 in 1970. Lordy, with all the old buildings in town, I am amazed how few people lived in Stewartstown a hundred or more years ago.

New Freedom, Largest city on our line

The 2020 federal census says that New Freedom, our terminal, or connecting point, is our largest city that we serve on our railroad. The latest federal count, released only weeks ago, says that New Freedom has 4,667 souls, making it our largest on-line community.

New Freedom, the 1880 federal census says, only had 324 people. How few people lived there when Abraham Lincoln came through in the 1860s! Census figures for New Freedom shows: 1900, 550 people; 1920, 906 people; 1940, 1,137 count, 1970, 1,495 people. Things really started picking up in New Freedom by 1990 when the population doubled in 20 years to 2,930 people. By 2000, New Freedom was up to 3,513 and by 2010, the feds say the population increased to 4,464.

Shrewsbury, 10-Fold increase since 1840

The first mention I could find in federal census documents of Shrewsbury was in 1840 with a census count of 340. Of course, this was well before the War

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Between the States and the creation of The Stewartstown Railroad in the 1880s. By 1860, just before the war broke out, the count was 552. Even as late as 1960, Shrewsbury had 943 people, but 30 years later it almost tripled to 2,680. By 2000, it was 3,378 and in the 2020 federal census it was 3,858.

We have several new housing developments in the vicinity of our line. That makes it hard to expand your footprint for growth and future generations with so much demand for land near the railroad. Demand usually means firm, or higher prices to acquire needed land for a railroad that is struggling “gracefully” as they say. Yet almost all things go in cycles and my personal wish is that we can still expand our footprint while we can and become something even greater than we are. Thanks to our volunteers and The Friends Organization. The railroad would not have come this far without YOU. If I may make a sales pitch, I would like to. It is critical that we keep moving forward, despite occasional obstacles we don’t always control.

I have provisions in my will for The Friends of The Stewartstown Railroad. I hope to live a very long time yet, but I probably won’t outlive the railroad. So, leave something behind to say that you were here and that you were a part of a very important historical property that you have helped keep going.

Mrs. Stahl told me a few years ago when the railroad directors negotiated the purchase of our much-needed bank building with handicapped restrooms, extra parking space and extra exhibit space, “We are doing this for future generations.” I could not have said it better. Her words still ring in my ears. That is why I am involved. I saw in my small railroad town in Ohio most of the railroad buildings torn down. I was a kid and too young to do anything about it.

Please keep supporting and giving, as you can afford, to The Friends. Our hope and prayers are that this will all be here, and a whole lot more, after we are gone as a historic, teaching, and fun place for people yet unborn. Some folks give to big name charities, and you never know where the money went. it is gone. The Stewartstown Railroad, I can attest, is a place where directors and officers get no fees, and if anything, we pay in. I am one director out of a dozen overseeing budgets and spending. This is a very tight ship. Thanks, Friends members, for all that you do. You are part of what keeps the railroad going.

Princess Trains Coming Summer 2022

Princesses and Princes, Kings, and Queens, you are cordially invited to ride with us aboard the Princess Express! Three royal guests will join us for a live show and exciting ride: the Island Princess, Ice Princess, and Mermaid Princess! Share in the magic with personal interactions, photo opportunities using your own camera at no extra charge, magical prizes, and your very own princess passport! Meet and greet with characters during the ride and sing along to some of your favorites. Be sure to wear your most festive royal attire! We look forward to having you join us for this enchanting ride! All tickets are just \$22!



First ride? Cab ride!

By Joe Krepps

What better way for your new Editor to get acquainted with the railroad after a 40 year spell than riding a train? It was the late 1970’s when I first set eyes on the Stewartstown Railroad with none other than the railroad’s current president, Dave Williamson, brought me to the Stewartstown station. I admit I was a bit underwhelmed. All was quiet and closed up. I have photo prints (remember them?) of the station which included a flat car and a shot looking straight down at a rail spiked directly to the tie, no tie plate. Dave saw the potential of the railroad and I remember him telling me that, someday, he had hopes to be the president of this quiet little railroad.

For a short time in the mid-1990’s, I worked for the former Northern Central Dinner Train in the office, taking reservations. Naturally, I knew about the connection to the STRT but, it was still a quiet railroad.

Fast forward to 2021, the age of the Internet where information about pretty much anything is at your fingertips, including the STRT. Lo and behold, there’s a Facebook page for it! Further, I’m

proud to say my childhood friend, Dave, did indeed become the president. The railroad was very much alive and skillfully navigated through a rather turbulent post-George Hart era.

Enthusiasm is contagious and the STRT's volunteers and workers are practically beaming with enthusiasm! So much rightful pride in keeping this little railroad alive and working towards regular service to New Freedom. How could I not get involved when there was a search for a new editor for the "7.4"? Bolstered by 25 years of desktop publishing experience, including digital photography, I cheerfully stepped forward. Just one problem - though I live only 30 minutes away, I'd never ridden the railroad. How can I edit other's stories about the line without ever having a train ride?

For the die-hard railfan, there's nothing like riding in the cab of a train's locomotive. I was fortunate to get several rides on the dinner train as the "fireman". An honorary position in a diesel loco, who's job was to watch grade crossings in the event that the flagger wasn't able to protect the crossing. Fortunately, the STRT offers cab rides for an extra fare. I decided the best way to get a first hand view of how this great little railroad operates is with the dedicated crew who make it happen.

I purchased the ticket online and picked it up at the station. Just one problem. I accidentally ordered the ticket for a Saturday "Santa Train" but I thought it was for a Sunday train. No problem! The Station Master gracefully made the change and I was set.

I walked up to the burbling 44 ton loco, #10, and hoisted myself with my work camera up onto today's ride. It's the smallest loco I'd ever ridden but there was plenty of space and a comfortable seat. (I hope to ride the smaller "Mighty Mo" someday.) Doug Plasterer, the engineer, introduced himself and we waited for clearance from the conductor to leave. As we waited, Doug explained how to stop the train in an emergency. I admit I was puzzled why I needed to know this?

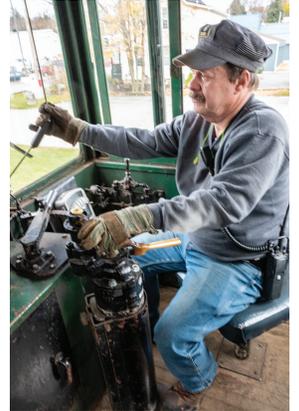
He further explained that, if anything happened to him, I would be present to stop the train. Keep in mind that the train meanders at a leisurely 5mph. Pretty much anyone could run to the loco and stop the train but I appreciated that the crew was so concerned about passenger safety.

Soon after, we left the station, drifting downgrade to the first crossing. A flagger was ready for us and with a toot of the horn, we were across.

Immediately, I knew a cab ride was THE best way to experience the line! All of the charm of a shortline, all of the effort put in by the many volunteers and the hard work of the employees came to life. Places written about in Eric J. Bickelman's "The story of the Stewartstown Railroad", not visible from the road, came into view. Doug gave a very helpful, running commentary along the ride, informing me of things not readily noticeable to this newbie.

I had a blast!!!

All too soon, we reached the current end of the line at the picnic grove. After a few moments, we began the journey back. I was surprised at the steep grades along the line but Doug kept everything moving smoothly. The conductor confirmed that Santa had visited every child, young or old and, we were safely back in Stewartstown. While I'm sure everyone else on the train was happy with their time with Santa, no one was happier than me! From the kindness and dedication of everyone who makes the train run to the beautiful scenery to the experience of being in the loco, I can't say enough about taking a cab ride!



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Easter Bunny Trains



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Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc.
 P.O. Box 456
 Stewartstown, Pa. 17363-0456

Place
 Stamp
 Here

Address service requested

TIME VALUE MATERIAL
 PLEASE DELIVER BY: Month Day, Year

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone number: _____



The Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc. invites all who are interested in preserving the Stewartstown Railroad to join the Friends organization. The railroad was founded in 1884 and opened in 1885.

One of the goals of the organization is to support our members as they perform their volunteer work on the railroad upgrading and maintaining the railroad's properties. Our volunteer's efforts help the railroad continue its operations over its 7.4 miles of track between Stewartstown and New Freedom, Pa., via the Deer Creek Valley. The Friends organization is a Pennsylvania non-stock, not-for-profit organization. The Friends organization is tax-exempt under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The Friends organization owns a minority equity interest in the Stewartstown Railroad Company.

Please send completed form and check to:
 Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad, Inc.
 P.O. Box 456
 Stewartstown, Pa. 17363-0456

Membership Classifications & Dues (Full year, Jan.-Dec.)

- Individual Membership\$20.00**
 Show your membership card and receive a \$2.00 discount on one regular Stewartstown Railroad train ticket, courtesy of the Stewartstown Railroad Company.
- Family Membership (all members at same address).....\$100.00**
 Show your membership card and receive a \$2.00 discount on up to four (4) Stewartstown Railroad train tickets, courtesy of the Stewartstown Railroad Company.
- Corporate Membership (business/organizational)\$300.00**
 Corporate members receive five (5) complimentary Stewartstown Railroad ticket coupons from the Friends organization.
- Optional: General Fund donation\$ _____**
- Optional: Endowment Fund donation.....\$ _____**
- Optional: Equipment Fund donation\$ _____**
- Optional: Right of Way/Track Fund donation\$ _____**
- Optional: Other donation, please specify\$ _____**

(You may specify a specific project on the line above for your optional donation, if you wish.)

- Optional: Check here to receive only electronic copy of "7.4" newsletter**
- Total enclosed: \$ _____**

We're on the web at:
www.stewartstownfriends.org
 You can join online too!
www.stewartstownfriends.org/join/