

“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

Greetings, Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad! I hope that 2023 has started well for all of you. Things are progressing well on the Stewartstown railroad, thanks to your support and assistance. Our volunteers have actually made a pretty good jump on trackwork for the first quarter of the year. Seven lengths of rail were replaced in the S-curves just west of Iron Bridge road, which required pulling spikes, filling holes, moving old rails out, new rails in, regauging and respiking. Because the weather was cooperative, we were able to put in about 120 ties so far this year. Many of them still need spiking and tamping, but we’re getting to them. The Friends purchased two loads of ballast stone for the railroad, and we’ve already started spreading some of it around and using the Tamper.



The Tamper is one of those machines that make track work much simpler. It can literally do in less than a minute what would take one man an exhausting eight or nine minutes. It requires maintenance, materials, and fuel. Most of the maintenance we do ourselves, but diesel fuel is pretty expensive, and hydraulic fluid even more so – it currently costs us \$13 a gallon. Now, the Tamper is a fifty-year old machine and we rehabbed it before it was brought to the railroad, but not every single hose and fitting was replaced, and in the usual use of the machine, they break and need replacing. Sometimes they start with a slow leak, and we can bring the machine back without damage or loss of fluids, but sometimes the hose or fitting in question just gives up and a lot of fluid gets lost. After we make the repairs, we need to refill the lost fluid, at \$13 a gallon. It’s one of those hidden, unglamorous costs, that your donations fill and help us keep going, and we thank you for it.

Dave Watson and his crew have been making great progress on Coach 1158, and we’re finally

(Cont. on page 2)

Inside

- FSR President’s message 1**
- Railroad signs 2**
- Coach 1348 Update 5**
- Coach 1158 Update 5**
- Maintenance Of Way 6**
- “Tales from the rails” 7**
- “The Wonderland Express 7**
- Membership form 8**

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(President's Message, cont. from page 1)

making some progress on getting Ma&Pa 84 moved to our tracks in New Freedom. You can read more about these and other topics in this issue as well. Elsewhere in this issue we have information about the 2023 annual meeting. We hope that you can come out and see the progress that we've been making on the railroad!

Mike Ruane

Railroad signs

I usually spend my time with the Stewartstown Railroad working on the track crew, but due to some shoulder issues and having less time available, I've found another small way that I can help out. Late last year, I noticed that three ancient Railroad signs had appeared in the freight portion of the main station. One sign was a "W" whistle sign, the other a Railroad crossing sign. Both date from between 1890-1920 or so. According to one of our resident railroad experts, John Nolan, the signs came from the Reading Railroad on the line between Reinholds, PA and Denver, PA. There is third sign that is much larger, which I have not yet explored. One of my hobbies is antique auto restoration, so I thought it would be quite easy for me to restore these two signs in a similar fashion. The main reason I chose these two signs was because they would fit in my wagon so I could take them home to Virginia for

restoration.

Upon getting the signs home, I assessed them. They were both covered with heavy surface rust, but nothing structural. The "W" sign had two bullet holes and the back pole mount was cracked, but stable. The "RR" sign had no real damage. I decided to start with the "W" sign. This would be an easy task for a sand blaster. I have a sandblaster that I can hook up to my air compressor and use outside. Over a few days, I was able to sandblast the sign while applying rust inhibitor in between sessions to prevent flash rust, as it took multiple days to complete the sand blasting. Unfortunately, both signs will exhibit some rust pitting when complete and will have a rougher appearance than they would have had when new, but the fact that these signs even exist after over 100 years is remarkable. The sand blasting was by far the most difficult part, due to the amount of time it would take, running out of blasting media, and cleaning up the huge mess in my driveway that was created after each session.

Upon completion of the sand blasting, a layer of automotive primer was applied to cover the rust inhibitor and ensure that the paint would stick properly. I decided not to repair the bullet damage, as 1) it was part of the history and character of the sign, but more importantly, 2) it would be very difficult to repair as it can't really be welded and plugged and automotive body filler would not look right with the surrounding area, due to the roughness and porosity of the metal throughout the sign and the smoothness that would have to be created with the body filler was sanded. Once primer was applied, I could apply the actual paint. I started by painting the whole thing black, as black is the majority of the sign color. The back of the sign and the pole is all black. The outer rim and "W" itself were painted white. I determined this by examining what was left of the original paint when I began the restoration, so the paint scheme is the original color pattern from when it was first made. After the black paint thoroughly dried, I taped off all the areas on the front of the sign that would remain black with painters tape, leaving the areas that would

be white exposed. I then sprayed white paint on the exposed "W" and outer rim. Once the white paint dried, I removed the tape to reveal an almost-completed sign. Even though I used painters tape, due to irregularities of the sign, some of the white paint leached into the black areas of the sign, leaving a few sloppy borders between the black and white paint. Due to the rough cast appearance of the sign, these problem areas were simply touched up with a brush with black paint to cover up the errant leached white paint, leaving clean borders between the black and white paint. I am now starting on the slightly smaller Railroad Crossing sign, and hope to have it finished within the next two months. These two signs should be on display near the train station hopefully by the summer.



RR Crossing sign before restoration



The two signs at home



(Left) Sharp, rusty, bent, and flattened end of "W" sign was cut off to get to good metal
(Right) Sharp, rusty, and corroded end of "RR" sign was cut off to get to good metal



Whistle sign before restoration. Note bullet hole towards top and bullet "dent" at lower center



Sand blasting of back of "W" sign. Note another bullet hole on upper pole

(Cont. on page 4)

(Railroad signs, cont. from page 3)



Front of "W" sign half sand-blasted. Note remaining original paint at right



Entire sign getting paint work



Sand-blasted side treated with rust inhibitor



Sign taped off for application of white paint



Rust inhibitor, primer, and black paint applied



White paint applied

*Thank you,
Volunteers & Supporters!*



Tape removed, sign completed

Coach 1341 Update

In April and May of this year, a crew consisting of John Pope, Isaac Ensminger, and Dave Watson have been working on preparing the entire length of coach 1341's roof edge for urgently needed welding repairs. The first 3 inches of sheet metal have been gone for several decades. Volunteers over the years have placed multiple layers of duct tape over the roof edge hoping to stop water leaks from coming inside the car. Water leaks and weather have damaged windows, sashes and window sliders replaced less than 5 years ago.



To begin the roof edge repair process, John removes what remains of the roof edge sheet metal with an air chisel. Isaac then follows behind with a cutting disc and grinding wheel to remove all of the rivet heads. Next, a contract welder that the Friends have used

before to repair coach 1158's roof edge welds in new sheet metal, restoring coach 1341's roof edge back into an original appearance. This effort will be on-going for several months and is expected to wrap up in spring 2024. A generous donation from Mike Ruane has permitted the Friends org to hire a contract welder with volunteers doing as much prep-work ahead of them to keep our costs down. But we need your help! Please consider donating to the coach fund to keep our restoration efforts moving forward. Thank you for your continued support!



Coach 1158 Update

We have a lot of progress to report since our last update at the end of 2022! All of the luggage racks have been refinished, painted, and re-hung. Several window sliders have been refurbished and painted with just a few more left to be finished up. The arm rests will be touched up before being reinstalled very shortly.



Maintenance Of Way, Saturday May 13 Brush and Tree Clearing

On Saturday May 13th Dave Williamson, Mark Koppenhaver, and Miles Weaver went out on the line to perform brush and tree clearing to make way for the spray truck in June. It was a cool and rainy day, but not so rainy to prevent much work from getting done.

In the morning the crew went to work clearing brush just beyond bridge 5 at Ridge Meadows Road.

After lunch, the crew drove with Mark to Hungerford where they met Patrick with his trackhoe. Three very large trees were leaning over the right of way just east of Hungerford blocking passage of the spray truck. Each tree would have easily taken a day to clear if it had not been for the mighty effort and help of Patrick's trackhoe and Mark's Pro Stihl chainsaw. The three trees and debris along with other brush was cleared in this area with time to spare to clear another large overhanging tree and brush near the Kirchner Road crossing near New Freedom. More brush clearing will be needed, but all in all it was an extremely productive day.



Notice of Annual Meeting - August 19, 2023, 9:30AM EST

Our 2023 Annual Meeting for members is being held at 9:30 AM on Saturday, August 19, 2023. 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.

Topic: Friends of the Stewartstown Railroad Annual Meeting Time: Aug 19, 2023 09:30 AM EST

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82183967698?pwd=YkxYb0VDWWVKaGYyQnFPWmgzRFFzUT09>

Meeting ID: 821 8396 7698, Passcode: 066672

We look forward to seeing you there. We will be mailing ballots out. Please be sure to return your ballot by Friday August 4, following the instructions on the form, to allow us to tally all votes. Thank you for your continued support, membership, and donations.

Dedicated to preserving the Stewartstown Railroad—An Authentic American Antiquity
VISIT US ON THE WEB AT: stewartstownfriends.org

“Tales from the rails”, with Matt Dodd



“The Wonderland Express”





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/