

FOX RIVER LINES

m a g a z i n e

official publication of the
FOX RIVER TROLLEY MUSEUM



Come ride with us!

2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

news from
**UNDER
the wire**

RECENT FOX RIVER LINE HAPPENINGS

news from
**UNDER
the wire**

2017 Year in Review



Joseph Hazinski

Above: New Maintenance of Way Shed Extension.

Below: The Polar Express prepares to depart Blackhawk in a gentle snowfall.



Douglas Rundell



From the Front Platform

My twelfth birthday was one of my more memorable, thanks to my grandfather's gift of my great-grandfather's Elgin pocket watch. I remember being impressed with the size, weight, and beauty of the watch. More than just a watch, it represented a connection to the great-grandfather I never met, a way of life, a period long past, and the love and foresight of my grandfather in keeping the watch in good repair in the faith that he would one day have someone to pass it along to.

As someone of middle age, I wonder what my children will think about that watch and other family artifacts when I pass them along. I hope that the watch and other articles help form a tangible connection to times and places that my children and future generations may be distanced from. I hope that these personal items help impart some knowledge, and inspire meaningful questions that make their lives richer.

Many of us who have chosen to make the museum a part of our lives feel the same way about the railroad, cars and other historical artifacts as my grandfather did about the pocket watch. We take great joy in operating cars over the line, maintaining and restoring our equipment, and talking about what was, and what is, hoping that our visitors take from their experience some part of the sense of wonder and purpose that inspires us.

As with many volunteer-driven organizations we are extremely fortunate to have a common goal of sharing the museum and its artifacts with future generations. We believe that where you are, and what you are becoming is easier to understand when you know where you (and others) came from.

I hope that as you read this edition of the Fox River Lines, you see our collective efforts to tell the story of the Aurora, Elgin and Fox River Electric Company and electric traction within the context of their sizeable impact upon the development of the Fox River Valley, and the Chicago metropolitan area, and think about how you might help preserve the past for the future through your time, money and efforts.

Luke Helm, Jr.
Vice President, Fox River Trolley Association

A Word from Your Editor

Hello fellow Fox River Trolley Museum members, supporters, and friends on behalf of the Fox River Trolley Association, operator of the Fox River Trolley Museum. I would like to welcome you to our 2017 edition of the Fox River Lines, with a commitment that you should see more frequent newsletters in 2018.

We are very fortunate to build on the work of previous editor Joseph Hazinski, and a host of great content driven by our outstanding volunteer base. I am pleased and honored to help tell the story of the Fox River Trolley Museum.

As we try to do for our volunteers in the pages of FRL, I would also like to recognize the efforts of recent English graduates Sarah Hirsch and Melissa Baron for their assistance preparing this edition of the Fox River Lines.

Please watch for the first issue of 2018 with information on Aurora, Elgin and Fox River Electric locomotive 5 work, the painting of CTA car 43, a wrap-up of the 2017 Polar Express, and more coming soon.

Luke Helm, Jr., Editor

FOX RIVER TROLLEY ASSOCIATION, INC.

2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 Edward Konecki, Joseph Hazinski, Luke Helm Jr., Douglas Rundell, and Ralph Taylor

2017 OFFICERS
President - Edward Konecki
Vice President - Luke Helm Jr.
Secretary - Ralph Taylor
Treasurer - Douglas Rundell

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Collection Assessment Committee - Ralph Taylor chair, Joe Hazinski, Chuck Galitz

2017 MUSEUM DEPARTMENT LEADERS
MUSEUM OPERATIONS:
Operations Superintendent - Douglas Rundell
Trainmaster - vacant
Assistant Trainmasters - Jeff Bennett, Damin Keenan
Museum Store Manager - Laura Taylor
Assistant Store Manager - vacant

MUSEUM SERVICES DEPARTMENT:
Membership Secretary - Laura Taylor
Membership Activities Coordinator - vacant
Membership Development Coordinator - vacant

MUSEUM SERVICES DEPARTMENT:
Museum Services Manager - Edward Konecki
Media Relations Coordinator - Bob Breese-Rodenkirch
Curator - Edward Konecki
Archivist - Marty Tuohy
Education Coordinator - vacant
Capitol Development Coordinator - Edward Konecki
Information Technology - Luke Helm, Jr.
Publications Manager - Edward Konecki
Community Relations Manager - vacant

MUSEUM SAFETY DEPARTMENT:
Safety Coordinator - Ralph Taylor (acting)

CAR DEPARTMENT:
Car Department Superintendent - vacant
Car Department Assistant Superintendent - vacant
Chief Mechanical Officer - vacant
Car Maintenance Superintendent - Joe Hazinski

FIXED PLANT DEPARTMENT:
Chief Engineer - Ralph Taylor
Roadmaster - Chris Nelson
Assistant Roadmaster - vacant
Chief Lineman - Chuck Galitz
Building and Grounds Superintendent - vacant
Electrical Supply and Signals - Ralph Taylor

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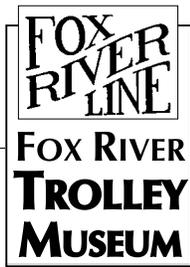
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Douglas Rundell

Framing goes up for the both the north and south sides of the MOW shed extension.

Movin' On Up: Maintenance of Way Expansion



MISSION

To preserve and interpret Chicago's electric transport era that began in the 1890s and peaked before 1950. The electric transport era is significant because electric railways, including interurban, rapid transit, and streetcars, helped the Chicago region grow to be one of North America's great metropolitan areas. The Museum strives to show that electric railways were more than convenient, they were and are a way of life for generations of people from all walks of life.

The Museum fulfills this mission by preserving, interpreting, and operating historic railway vehicles on its demonstration electric railway, over the Aurora, Elgin and Fox River Electric route at South Elgin, Illinois. Furthermore, the museum preserves, displays and interprets smaller artifacts, photos, oral histories, and documents which help relate the importance of electric transport in and around the Chicago Metropolitan Area, putting them in context with their surroundings and era.

Sheds can only hold so much. Anyone with a backyard shed or a garage has probably reached the point of no return, when seasonal items sit on top of lawn care equipment shoved under shelving that's filled to bursting with the bric-a-brac collected by time, hobbies, and projects. "You store so much in your garage, eventually you can't get the car in there anymore," joked museum member Chuck Galitz of the car department. Sheds for railroad museums are no different.

Phenomenal Storage Needs... Itty Bitty Living Space

The Fox River Trolley Museum uses a Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) railroad work shed to store equipment, parts, and other necessary materials that aid in the routine maintenance for the track at the museum. Over the years, the MOW shed became the catch-all and keeper of more storage materials and equipment than the 28-foot long building could comfortably hold without making it difficult to maneuver and work in.

"It has been cluttered for as long as I have been at the museum, when I joined the track team in 2005," said Roadmaster Chris Nelson. "We have a cart that is supposed to be pulled by the maintenance speeder and carries tools, but it was always blocked in and had too much stuff stacked on it to be used."

The decision to extend the shed to accommodate the museum's growing needs came in part from a desire to organize the main car barn, so the car department could have more space

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Movin' On Up: MOW Expansion

(Continued from page 3)

to work on the collection. "The car barn had two old speeders and two handcars taking up floor space," Nelson added, "and since they are track work equipment, it was decided that a bigger MOW shed would be a better place to keep them."

According to Chuck Galitz, the shed extension would also assist with trailer consolidation and easier inventory. "It will be simpler to keep track of these parts and equipment with the car barn cleaned up and the shed more organized."

Expansion Construction

Talks and plans of expansion started in 2015, but the expansion of the MOW shed began in the fall of 2016. Chris Nelson readied the building by moving items away from the walls, as the walls would be torn down to extend the shed from 28 feet to 85 feet total. The south end received a 15-foot extension, and the north end received a 42-foot extension. Ralph Taylor, Chief Engineer, oversaw construction of a retaining wall to control a long-time erosion issue. The actual construction of the wall was completed by local Boy Scouts as an Eagle Scout Service Project. After the contractors built the extensions and the framing inspections were complete, Ralph Taylor, Mike Gilles, and Chuck Galitz set up plywood inside the walls to protect the shell of the building.

Another major project of the expansion to render the building usable was the floor. The existing MOW shed had rubber grade crossing mats on the track for a "floor," with gravel filling in around the walls. "It was good enough to store things and keep the building reasonably clean and dry," Nelson stated. There had not been a floor plan for the new building, so Nelson devised one; he located a source for more grade crossing mats that fit the light rail size. Jeff Bennett, from the car department, used his own business



Douglas Rundell

Framing goes up for the both the north and south sides of the MOW shed extension.



Douglas Rundell



Chuck Galitz

Three-quarters view of the MOW Shed

Contract Trackwork Completed

Prior to the beginning of the 2017 operating season, on the recommendation of Roadmaster Chris Nelson, the museum contracted with track contractor Swanson to replace approximately 300 mainline ties and all the timbers on switch 23 as well as several of the ties under switch 54. The tie replacement areas were tamped, and all scrap ties were disposed of. For further in-house tie replacement, over 100 new ties were also purchased for ongoing track maintenance needs. This work resulted in a significant improvement to the condition of the track, and provided relief to the Maintenance of Way (MOW) Department.

Fox River Lines Staff



Joseph Hazinski

Mike Gilles, Chuck Galitz and Ralph Taylor hang plywood sheathing.

resources to bring the mats to the museum.

Once the building construction was underway, a challenge presented itself: They discovered that the existing track was too far out of alignment inside, and would need to be straightened for the new mats to fit. Nelson, helped along by Jim Slattery, spent a few weekends digging out the ties so the track could be shifted sideways, using jacks. Galitz then used the tractor to finish the track realignment outside of the building. One of the last items Nelson addressed for the shed extension is taking out the last of the mud from the track for new gravel installation. "It helps the railroad ties last longer," he explained. "Once that is done, the mats can be installed, and the building should be ready for reorganizing."

The MOW extension is now mostly complete, except for electrical fixtures currently being added, extra shelving, laying of the new track mats, and installation of new gutters for the now not-so-small MOW shed.

Looking Forward

The completion of the MOW shed extension is a boon to the museum for parts and materials organization, ease of inventory, and making the track work process easier, as well as giving more space to the car department in the car barn. "Our volunteer work will be more productive," Nelson said, "and we will be able to take better care of supplies by storing more things inside. General visitors might see the museum site straightened up a little more over time. The handcars will also be easier to access when we use them for special events, meaning there will be more things for visitors to do at the museum if we take out the handcars more often."

Once the MOW shed is outfitted with electricity, they hope to begin decorating it for Polar Express; another treat for passengers to view. That nicely fulfills all three tenets of what a building should be: solid, useful, and beautiful.

Fox River Lines Staff

2018 BOARD & MEMBER MEETINGS Fox River Trolley Association, Inc.

Sunday, March 4, 2018, 10 a.m.,
Board Meeting

Sunday, May 6, 2018, 1 p.m.,
Board Meeting

Saturday, July 7, 2018, 7 p.m.,
Board Meeting

Saturday, September 8, 2018, 1 p.m.,
Board Meeting

Saturday, October 13, 2018, 1 p.m.,
Members' Day, (Museum Grounds)

Saturday, October 13, 2018, 7 p.m.,
Annual Meeting of the Membership

Saturday, November 3, 2018, 1 p.m.,
Board Meeting

Note:

Meetings are typically held at the Elgin Township Offices, 729 S. McLean Blvd., Elgin, IL. Times, location and schedule subject to change.

Please contact the museum at: (847) 697-4676 for changes.

Refurbished Platforms at Blackhawk, Castlemuir

With spring comes renewal, and our platforms at Blackhawk Station and Castlemuir have been capturing that spirit.

The Blackhawk Station platform was in rough shape this season, and we all knew that some major repairs were needed to achieve a like-new platform. Following a vote for a full restoration, the board selected a bid from KRB Construction of St. Charles with one major caveat: the project must be done in the five weeks before the opening of the 2017 operating season. With just five weeks to opening day, the board signed a contract under the promise that the project would be completed in time.

Despite this spring's cold, rainy weather, Cliff at KRB pulled through not only in time, but with a week to spare. Jeff Bennett, project manager for the rebuilding of the Blackhawk Station platform, says, "Not only was he tasked with completing the project on a five-week timeline, he finished it a week in advance."

On opening day, compliments poured in from amazed passengers. The new platform was a complete tear-off and a much-needed improvement. As many of us know, the Blackhawk Station platform had been leaning toward the cars and touching them when passengers were unloading. Because KRB rebuilt the structure underneath, it no longer touches. Bennett says, "On opening day, we pulled in Car 20, and the platform was perfectly aligned all the way down."

Following KRB's expeditious, high-quality work on the Blackhawk Station platform, we immediately authorized them to begin work on the two platforms at Castlemuir. While those were not full restorations, they did require maintenance to prevent further deterioration.

Again, Cliff was tasked with a tight deadline-this time one week-and again, he followed through. He replaced hardware, some of the wood where it was



Joseph Hazinski

Newly painted CTA 43 at newly redecked Blackhawk.



Douglas Rundell

KBR Construction rebuilding Blackhawk platform.



Douglas Rundell

needed, and used two coats of Deck-Over to create the appearance of like-new platforms.

The new platforms at Blackhawk Station and Castlemuir are impressive,

and we look forward to the first season of their use. Many thanks to museum member Jeff Bennett for project coordination and Cliff at KRB for his efficient and excellent work.

Fox River Lines Staff

New Storage Semitrailers

Over the winter of 2016, a large project has been underway to relocate and organize our vast inventory of trolley parts. In the past, storage has been provided at no cost by Mr. David Kloke, but due to a change in location, a new storage option was needed. This year, Jeff Bennett has provided three semitrailers and storage on his Crystal Lake property, and he and Ralph Taylor began the task of moving and organizing the inventory.

In the early 1990s, Fred Lonnes acquired the museum's original two semitrailers to store surplus trolley parts that were accumulating, some acquired as far back as the museum's inception in the 1960s and were parked at various locations with friends of the museum. Stored on Mr. Kloke's property for the past four years, the semitrailers were not readily accessible in times of urgent need. The new semitrailers have solved that issue.

Jeff Bennett, with several other members (Chuck Galitz, Joe Hazinski, Mike Gilles, Doug Rundell, and Chris Nelson), relocated the old semitrailers, unloaded and disposed of them. The team inventoried and organized the parts from the original trailers and began loading them into the three new trailers purchased by Jeff. So far, two of the three trailers have been filled, and one is waiting to be filled. The project is currently on hold and will likely resume in 2018.

A reorganized system of storage and a sole person responsible of it—Jeff Bennett—has already proven worthwhile. From the surplus of trolley parts, we found the parts needed to replace the traction motor for Car 40. Our goal is to have Car 40's motor, which is currently being rebuilt by L and S Electric, replaced in time for Polar Express 2017. When Joe Hazinski needed bearings for the motor project at L and S, Jeff could head right over to the new trailers and get the parts needed. Once the car barn has been emptied and organized, the new organization system will allow for a much smoother work flow.

Fox River Lines Staff



Joseph Hazinski

A new parts storage trailer.



Jeff Bennett

Railcar parts organized in one of the new storage trailers.

Car Department Updates

Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee #715

Work continues making more windows in the passenger compartment functional and construction of replacement external doors to replace the existing deteriorated doors.

Chicago Transit Authority #43

Work continues by Jeff Bennett, Jim Slattery, Mike Gilles, Joe Hazinski, Ralph Taylor and Chuck Galitz to reorganize storage space in the car barn to create work space for car #43 in preparation for body work and a professional paint job.

[Spoiler alert: see a picture of repainted car #43 at the refurbished platforms at Blackhawk, Castlemuir article on page 6, and a more detailed article in the upcoming first 2018 Fox River Lines. - Editor]

Chicago Transit Authority #40

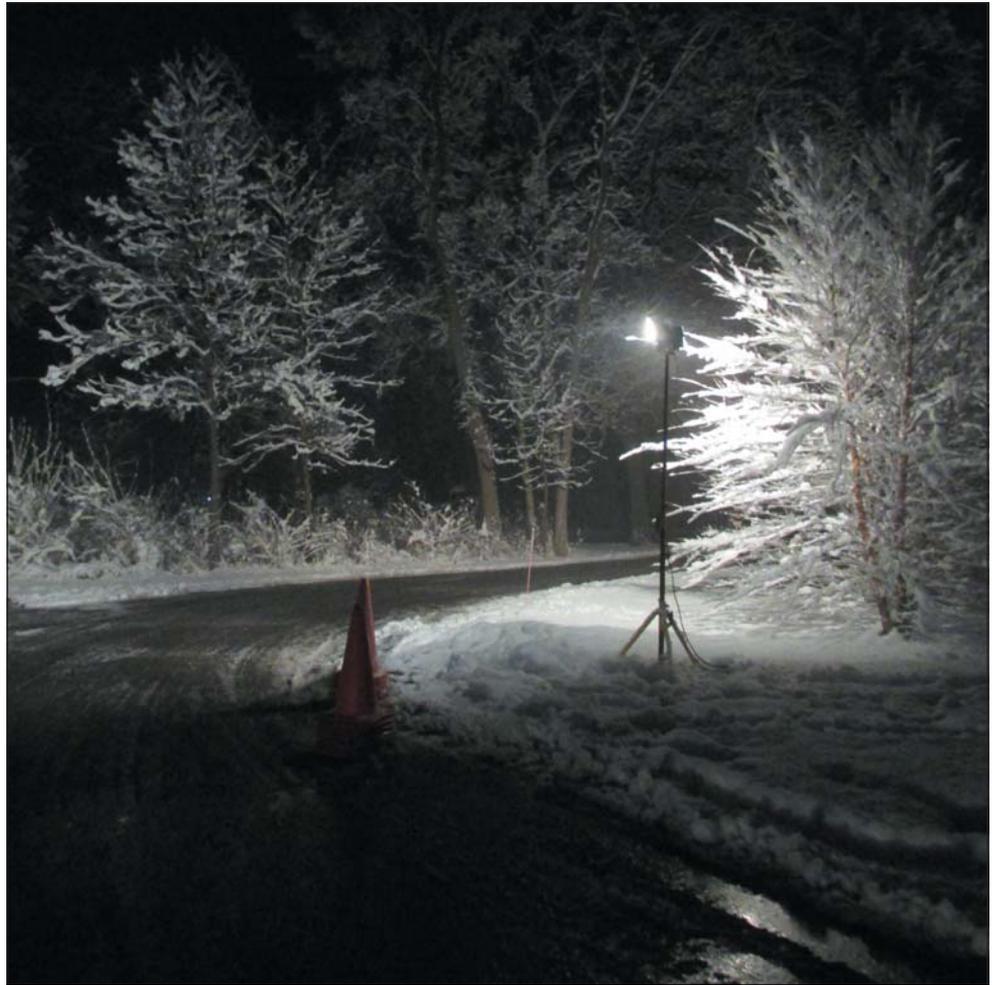
During the 2015 operating season, car 40 suffered a failure of its #3 traction motor. Two motors were pulled from the museum's parts inventory this year and are currently at L and S Electric in Sturtevant Wisconsin in the process of being refurbished to provide a replacement motor for car 40 and a serviceable spare motor. When complete, one refurbished motor will be installed by members Fred Lonnes, Chuck Galitz and Jeff Bennett.

Joseph Hazinski

Polar Express 2016

Longtime members of the Fox River Trolley Museum might be aware that the Polar Express represents the museum's largest revenue generator and most complex operation. Revenue from the Polar Express helps fund a significant number of the museum's capital and maintenance expenditures. Work on the Polar Express begins almost as soon as the previous year's event has ended. Below, please find a narrative composed by museum volunteer Douglas Rundell about the museum's Polar Express. - Editor

Polar Express 2016 was a complete success. The beautiful scenery, the excitement of the passengers, and the train's nearly flawless execution made for a joyful Christmas experience.



| Passengers were greeted at Blackhawk with snow adorned trees.



| This trolley pole is buried under a thick layer of snow.



| Volunteers cleaned snow from the Blackhawk platform area.



**Banishing the Gremlins:
Preparation for 2016's
Polar Express**

Well in advance of Santa and Mrs. Claus's arrival, the Fox River Lines volunteers are hard at work preparing the trolley cars for our beloved Christmas event. Last summer we began repairs on Car 43 and Car 45 so they would be in great working order for the festivities.

In 2015, the motor-generator set in Car 43 had failed, requiring us to run it as an unpowered control trailer. A refurbished motor-generator (MG) set was installed this in summer 2016 to bring 43 back to life.

The other primary trolley, Car 45, presented us with multiple challenges underneath it with the controls for the motor propulsion and braking. With a considerable amount of effort by several volunteers, these issues were addressed, and we had two working cars to depend on.

Routine maintenance was also required to get the cars into tip-top shape. We spent time caulking the roof boards, greasing coupler pins, checking motor brushes, installing new carbon power shoe inserts, and adjusting the parking brakes. While these activities may not have been as 'memorable' or 'challenging', they were also necessary to prepare the cars for this year's Polar Express.

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Chuck Galitz systematically checks the contactors that control power to the traction motors and brakes one by one.

A 300-pound MG Set is added to Car 43.



With a floor jack and bracing wedges, the MG Set is carefully raised up into its cabinet by Chuck Galitz and Mike Gilles.



Abundance of Snow Makes for a Memorable White Christmas

Unlike 2015's mild and rainy December, this year's North Pole had more than sufficient snow for a memorable White Christmas.

The cars had no problems navigating the rails, and we did not experience snow and ice freezing on the overhead wire. However, snowfall built up on the trolley boards during operation and interfered with hooking the pole down at the end of a run.

Despite the minor difficulties, the snow created a beautiful Winter Wonderland at the North Pole and the Blackhawk boarding area.



| Santa offers a magic bell to a young passenger.



| Santa and Mrs. Claus feel right at home with a baggage cart filled with gifts as the snow falls over the North Pole.

Follow-up and Feedback

While mittens, socks, hats, and glasses are often left on the trains, this year we found more than usual. When possible, an email blast was sent out to patrons who had bought their tickets through us. One hat was reunited with its owner.

We also got some great email feedback on this year's experience:

My family had a wonderful time on the Polar Express.

We always value the kind words and support of our patrons, and we are delighted that this family enjoyed the experience:

[I] wanted to tell you that my kids and their kids, 3 grandkids, totally enjoyed the Polar Express and got awesome pics for this old granny, plus they called me up on the way home to say what a great fun time they had. I was so excited, got those tickets at 2 a.m. on June 1st, and surprised them with them on Thanksgiving Day. My son has been wanting to do this forever. Please tell the staff and all, thanks so much for making it enjoyable and fun for them.

*Just wanted to let you know we had a wonderful time!
Looking forward to next year.*

(Continued on page 12)



A passenger's view from inside the train - Santa waves to the railfan seat and rings the bell just before the Polar Express departs the North Pole.



A snowy platform at the North Pole awaits the arrival of the Polar Express. It won't be long before a train filled with excited children will arrive.



Sentimental Moments: A Gift for Santa

Every year on the Polar Express, our young passengers send heartfelt, handwritten letters and wish lists to Santa. This year, he received a unique gift. As Santa came through the train, a little girl handed him something unexpected: a pacifier! After previously come agreeing with her parents that she would give it up, she chose to give a present back to the man responsible for making the holidays so special. Luckily, Santa had a large red sack to put the pacifier safely away.



| All Aboard!

Acknowledgements: The People Who Made It All Happen

The Polar Express was made possible through the talents and time of many people who attend to tasks like car preparation, decoration, printing the tickets, answering the help line, greeting our patrons in the cold parking lot, running the trains, and carrying out a score of other important tasks. With the spirit of Christmas in their heart, these people lent their time and energy to the Fox River Trolley Museum to create this magical experience for our passengers.

We gratefully acknowledge: Laura Schaefer, Danny Biggins, Jack Fluegel, Jonathan Horn, Paul Kaufmann, The South Elgin High School National Honors Society, Jennifer Estes and the snowplow crews at the Jon Duerr Forest Preserve, Isabel "Izzy" Romano, JP Quirk, Bob Wayman, Bill Minerly, Bob Bresse-Rodenkirk, Jr., Chuck Galitz, Dan Kelly, Damin Keenan, Doug Rundell, Barbara Rundell, Edward Konecki, Gene Jannece, Jack Lange, James Slattery, James Tarbet, Jan Gonyo, Jeff Bennett, Jim Gonyo, Luke Helm, Patrick Storm, Laura Taylor, Ralph Taylor, Sandy Solinski, Joe Solinski, Art Lemke, Chris Nelson, Joe Hazinski, Lisa Helm, Mark Petersen, Mike Gilles, James Ham, James Minerly, Russ Friend, Bob Hillman, Tracy Hillman, Fred Lonnes, Barbara Stuenkel, Brianna Nowicki, Rebecca Tulloch, Rob Watson, Rylee Bennett, Melissa Phillips, Jessica Migatz, and Melissa DeBoor.

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Submissions: Submission of stories from members and others is necessary in order to publish the *Fox River Lines*. Feature length articles are welcome and considered as are photographs and illustrations. Please contact the staff before undergoing a project. Contributors submit materials with the understanding that no monetary compensation is provided.

Correspondence: Comments, letters to the Editor, suggestions and corrections relating to the *Fox River Lines* should be directed to Editor Luke Helm, Jr. at the address given above. The editorial staff appreciates your feedback.

Photography: Joseph Hazinski, Douglas Rundell, Fred Lonnes, Mike Gilles, Facebook posts of Warrenville Park District