

# FOX RIVER LINES

m a g a z i n e

official publication of the  
FOX RIVER TROLLEY MUSEUM



Come ride with us!

2020-2

news from  
**UNDER  
the wire**

RECENT FOX RIVER LINE HAPPENINGS

news from  
**UNDER  
the wire**



Jeff Bennett

## Aurora Elgin & Fox River Electric Company Locomotive #5

Ordered by and sold for \$13,000 to the Aurora Elgin & Fox River Electric Company as #5, Class B-B 90/90-2GE-733, 300 HP, serial number 28467 was erected in June 1946 and was shipped on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1946. It was delivered in a light blue paint scheme with black underbody and trim. Sometime in the 1950's, based on an April 30, 1955 black and white photo, #5 received an orange superstructure with white reflective stripes on its' frame, which it bore most of its first service life on the Fox River Line.

It weighs 90,000 lbs. (45 tons), is only 28' 4" long, 9' 6" wide and 12' 0" high. The locomotive was built with two Cummins HBI-600, 150 HP diesel engines. It has two GE 733 traction motors with 19.9/1 double reduction gearing to the inboard axle of each truck. With this gearing the locomotive is mechanically limited to a maximum speed of 20 MPH. Mainline diesel locomotives have a gear ratio of about 4/1 so that when #5 is going 20 MPH the motors are spinning at about 100 MPH. This is why the motors "sing" when it is going 20 MPH. Any faster and the armatures would "bird's nest" or fly apart.

The two builder's plates were stolen at the museum in 1972-73 where the locomotive was stored while RELIC, the predecessor of our Fox River Trolley Museum, was negotiating and working to purchase the railroad. The hospital requested that the railroad's track be taken up which RELIC assisted in doing. Knowing that RELIC could not afford both the railroad and the locomotive, then owner *Bob DeYoung* first leased #5 and then sold it to the Chicago Gravel Company for use at its' pit near Spaulding, Illinois. June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1973 was the last day for #5 in its' first life. On its last journey before leaving, the engine was run down to *Ken Ward's* house so *Ken* could operate #5 down to Coleman and up the interchange track to the Illinois Central Gulf. It should be noted that both *Ken* and *Fred Lonnes*, as part time employees, would occasionally make trips to and from the interchange for *Mr. DeYoung* when he was unavailable to run his railroad. When the eastbound ICG train showed up, its power was cutoff and run ahead as #5 pulled in behind. Then the road engines backed up with #5 in the consist. The little locomotive

(Continued on page 3)

## Editor's Notes

We have finally published the second FOX RIVER LINES for the year 2020. I apologize for it being so late, but so much has been happening it seems I can't keep up, coupled with my desire to chronical the history of the museum, is part of the reason for the delay.

Speaking of being late, the mail delivery of Issue 2020-1 took strange and unusual time lines to reach our members and friends. It took just shy of one month for my issue to arrive in Milwaukee. Other members I have been in contact with, got theirs within a week of the mailing from Cary, Illinois. One out of state member got his issue two months after the mailing. There was no rhyme or reason for the delays so we will see how this issue goes. Once I receive my issue in the mail it has been my practice to release the on-line version to the website <www.foxtrolley.org> so anyone with internet access can view the issue. Back issues can also be accessed in this way.

The Association's Treasurer, Doug Rundell, tends the Post Office Box in South Elgin and promptly reports newsletters that are returned so that appropriate action can be taken by Ed Konecki, our publications manager, who maintains our mailing lists.

Email is no panacea for the delivery of information either as I was reminded of on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 when my account was hacked, with the hacker trying to solicit money in my name, if one responded to their first message. Those who know me well could tell that it was not from me. When it happened, it took me hours to just respond to all those who were reporting the hack to me. As a result, I have a new email address, jrhenge@outlook.com, so please use it to contact me as my live.com address is no longer active. In retrospect I gave up my password to an email that looked like it came from Microsoft's live.com but it was a cut and paste job taken from their web site. The hard lesson learned was to never give up one's password.

Written contributions are always welcomed and we have an article from member Doug Rundell in this issue. The articles I pen are taken from observation and from reports presented to the board. Photos come from many sources and with the quality of cellphone cameras ever improving, many events at the museum are captured in this way. A number of members pass such pictures on to me and one story in this issue is based on a series of photos sent to me by Damin Keenan. Thanks to all who have contributed, first in the tasks you do and then taking the time to write a report and/or send pictures of what has been done.

Joseph Hazinski – editor

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## Aurora Elgin & Fox River Electric Company Locomotive #5

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jumped straight up as the Geeps found the rest of the train. #5 was now just idling along for the ride, but Mr. DeYoung was absolutely beaming from the cab window as he watched the 100+ cars follow him across the Fox River bridge! At Munger the power pulled ahead again as #5 ran itself over the interchange track to wait for an EJ&E northbound for the trip to Spaulding. Then later after a short jaunt over the Milwaukee Road the little engine was on Chicago Gravel Company rails, its' home for the next 27 years. RELIC finally bought the railroad from Mr. DeYoung in 1974 and proceeded to remove the rest of the rail and ties from outside the hospital to the current north end of track at the museum. At the gravel pit #5 eventually became #511. At first it was operated in its AE&FR livery but eventually was painted an off red and had its diesel prime movers replaced with newer Cummins NH 855L, 150 HP units in 1986-87. The engine shrouds had to be raised up on steel channels as these diesel engines are slightly taller than the original HBI-600's.

Each prime mover is coupled to a GE 5GT1503X1 generator which also acts as the starter motor for each engine. Each generator is connected to one traction motor and the power is transferred from the inside axle via the side rods to the outer axle of each truck, a feature along with the counterweights, give #5 its "flailing" charm. The gravel pit ceased processing stone via rail and the locomotive became surplus. Fortunately, Abbott Land & Investment Company, which had purchased the Chicago Gravel Company property, agreed to donate the locomotive and allowed the museum to repaint and re-letter it as AE&FR #5 before it returned via flatbed highway trailer on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001. It ran itself up onto the Silk Road low boy trailer and was kept running while being moved as *Fred Lonnes* and *Ken Ward* were concerned that they would not be able to restart it so it could run itself off the trailer onto the mainline at the museum. As #511, it had a hard life at

(Continued on page 4)



Photographer unknown

**This is the earliest photo I have been able to locate of #5 in its as delivered light blue paint scheme taken sometime after Bob DeYoung (in the cab) purchased the railroad but before the track was moved to the side of the road in 1955.**



Mark Lianuza

**It is April 30, 1955 and #5 is in its fresh new orange and black paint scheme with an IC hopper on the Elgin State Hospital grounds.**



## 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.



Mark Lianuza

This is reported to be the last run of empty hoppers going to the interchange in 1971 passing through Castlemuir where by this time RELIC has established its historic trolley ride operation. It is not clear why one hopper is ahead of the locomotive.



Jeff Bennett

At first #5 was leased to the Chicago Gravel Company where it shuttled retired ore jennies from the pit to the crusher. A piece of rubber is being used to "protect" the headlight.



Photographer unknown

By May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1978 #5 has become property of Chicago Gravel and is known as #511 and is painted a more pedestrian box car red. The horns have disappeared and a CB style radio was installed for use in the gravel pit.

## Aurora Elgin & Fox River Electric Company Locomotive #5 *(Continued from page 3)*

the gravel pit and eventually the #2 (North) generator failed at the museum. The #1 truck (South) was sent out to Progress Rail Services by the museum for new wheels in 2002 as the original wheels were badly worn out. The #2 (North) truck had received new wheels during its Chicago Gravel stint from RELCO Locomotive which had the service contact with Chicago Gravel. The #1 truck was returned in 2003 and thereafter developed side rod wear problems which gave out the "clank" sound many of us are familiar with. In November 2017 the locomotive repair company, "LocoDocs Inc" replaced the #2 generator and tried to resolve the side rod wear and noise issues. LocoDocs along with *Fred Lonnes* and *Jeff Bennett* worked on getting the long dormant #2 Cummins back to operating condition along with servicing the #1 prime mover.

A WABCO No. 14-EL brake schedule has served the locomotive well over the years with periodic inspection and maintenance. The worn out #2 air compressor was replaced in 2018 through the efforts of *Fred Lonnes* and along with new packing cups in the four truck mounted brake cylinders, installed in 2017, now supply air to apply new brake shoes to the wheels. During 2019 problems continued to plague the #2 engine which hopefully were to have been remedied by a complete cleaning of the fuel tanks and the addition of water separators in the fuel lines for both engines.

In 2020 more issues arose with the side rods as it was discovered that there were no lubrication grooves in the bushings which are pressed into the side rods. To complicate matters, *(Continued on page 6)*



Photographer unknown



Photographer unknown

**In 2002 the worn-out south truck is removed at the museum for re-wheeling.**

**Next in 2003 the rebuilt truck is reinstalled after one of the first expenditures of funds by the museum on the locomotive.**



Doug Rundell

**The north or #2 generator had been out of service for many years, so finally on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 it was replaced by a contractor.**

Showing nearly twenty years of wear and tear at the museum #5 rests on Track 3 North at the museum on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.



Joseph Hazinski



Jeff Bennett

Work has started on August 17<sup>th</sup> 2020 of the process of removing all the paint for a complete repainting.

## Locomotive #5 *(Continued from page 5)*

it was found that the bushing in the northwest corner of the #1 or south truck was seized to the counterweight pin and rotating in the side rod, exactly the opposite of what it is supposed to do. This is where the “clank” was coming from and almost locking up the axle when being subject to the forces caused by going around a curve. Fred Lonnes again contacted LocoDocs which over a period of weeks removed all side rods, reworked them with proper bearings with lubrication grooves and installed them on the #2 or north end truck. Then they did the same to the #1 truck, in addition to having a new oversized bearing made for the northwest end of the west side rod and renewing the pins on the matching counter weights, they finally were able to install those rods and make the drive system whole again.

But #5 was not content to let our shop crew have any peace. The recently reactivated #2 Cummins diesel would not stay running once it was started. Jeff traced the problem to the fuel pump/governor which was losing it prime when trying to bring up fuel from the tank. He was able to find a party to overhaul this



Joseph Hazinski

Efforts moved inside the barn and masking is underway so the actual painting process can begin.

unit. The renewed pump was reinstalled along with a new fuel line but now as of this writing there is an issue in the cylinder head of the 855, which Jeff felt he could resolve once he could take the time.

Fred Lonnes has been steadily working on the windows, changing out cracked glass and installing retainer clips that were part of the original window installation. Now it was finally time to get around to repainting the unit.

On Saturday August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Fred Alford, a grandson-in-law of Bob DeYoung, graciously donated \$5,000 to fund the repainting of the unit after having a cordial conversation with Chief Car Officer Jeff Bennett and other museum officials. Shortly afterwards work started on needle scaling the locomotive's exterior with work being moved inside the car barn in the place where AE&FR 304 is normally kept. Both sets of radiator shutters were removed for offsite sand blasting and painting. After final wire wheeling and DA sanding, the super structure was masked off so it could be primed with a fast-curing epoxy primer and then sprayed with a color matched Imron brand combination orange/clear coat paint. After this



Jeff Bennett



Jeff Bennett

Finally, the special epoxy primer is being applied by Kyle Kunzer, a professional painter.

The primer has been applied to all the surfaces that are to be painted orange on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.



Jeff Bennett



Joseph Hazinski

This white primer dries very fast so that the orange color-clear sealant coat can be applied the same day.

After the masking is changed, Jeff Bennett is spraying the black trim paint to the frame and end steps and foot boards.

cured more masking was done and the frame was sprayed black. Two splash panels were made up by our metal workers *John and Thee VanPaseuth* and installed on the ends. They also made four metal guard pieces that go on the inboard ends of the foot boards which are also being reconstructed using the one remaining foot board as a pattern. Once the black paint was cured, #5 was relocated on Track 3 South outside the barn once 304 returned to its inside berth. *Jeff* had a graphics company make up the lettering for the cab sides in vinyl and obtained vinyl black tape for the stripes on the hoods.

The highlight of our annual Members Day on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 was *Fred Alford* running #5 up from the car barn to the Track 2 platform to reveal the freshly painted locomotive to many relatives of *Bob DeYoung* and the attending membership.

*(Continued on page 8)*



Jeff Bennett

Once all the paint is dry the process of removing the masking starts.



Joseph Hazinski



Jeff Bennett

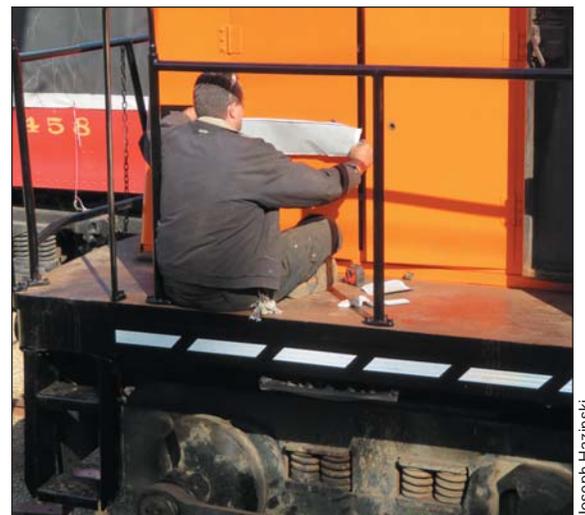
The locomotive finally makes it out of the barn and basks in the sun light with its new orange paint on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

October 3<sup>rd</sup> sees feverish activity to install the details on the locomotive including the freshly restored grills,



Mike Gillies

James Tarbet applies reflective stripes to the frame while Patrick Storm leads efforts to install a bell onto the locomotive, an accessory that disappeared at the gravel pit.



Joseph Hazinski

Here Jeff is carefully applying the black stripe to the side of the engine hood.



Joseph Hazinski

It is Members Day 2021 and project sponsor Fred Alford brings up #5 to the Track 2 platform as part of the grand reveal.

## Locomotive #5 *(Continued from page 7)*

Both Ken Ward and Fred Lonnes were in attendance and Chief Car Officer Jeff Bennett spoke to the assembled crowd. Besides the fresh paint and lettering, new reflective white tape stripes were added to the frame along with a replacement bell and a whistle which is supplemented by two, twin bell air horns, one on each hood. As an extra touch, *Bod DeYoung's* name in script was applied under the first fixed window on the engineer's side of the cab. After a light lunch a number of trips were made up and down the line with family and museum members having a chance at the throttle. At the close of the day #5 did the necessary switching to put the under restoration 4000's back in the car barn. It was a grand day for the museum and its very special locomotive.

In a post script, #5's gremlins continue to plague the Car Department. Before a calendar picture could be taken the



Joseph Hazinski

Jeff Bennett addresses the members of the Bob DeYoung family and Fox River members in attendance at this momentous occasion.



Edward Konecki



Joseph Hazinski

It is only fitting that Bob DeYoung's name be placed on #5 for he worked with our predecessor group RELIC to first allow them to run on his railroad and then later sell the railroad to them when the freight operation ceased. His efforts were critical to the preservation of the trolley operation along the Fox River, now in its third century.

Members of the Robert DeYoung family pose on the locomotive. Top row: Pam DeYoung, Joan Thompson, and Kathy Zimmer. Bottom row: Fred Alford, Mark Thompson, Jane Anderson and Dan Zimmer.

locomotive was operated without proper side rod lubrication and once again a bearing seized to a crank pin, this time on the east side of the #1 truck. This bearing was then replaced and all the other seven bearings were modified to allow for better lubrication by our contractor LocoDocs which left the locomotive inoperable for several weeks. Once the locomotive was running again Jeff was able to take some photos for use in the 2021 promotional calendar.

On December 26<sup>th</sup>, #5 was called to service to take Illinois Central caboose 9648 down to Coleman Yard to facilitate overhead repair. Unfortunately, one of the two batteries used to start it suffered an internal failure necessitating borrowing a battery from the temporarily out of service locomotive MS-65 to get it started.

Chief Car Officer *Jeff Bennett* has obtained a replacement Cummins NH 855L diesel engine to replace the ailing #2 prime mover with its installation planned when other Car Department work permits. Once this is done #5 will finally be up to full strength. There are some other details to attend to and the locomotive's restoration will be complete.

All toll, over five times its 1946 purchase price has been spent by the museum over the years to return this three-quarter century old locomotive to full operating condition on its home road where it continues to serve not only as a very useful tool but also as an iconic exhibit in helping to perform our mission statement of education through demonstration.

**Joseph Hazinski**

## Tree Limb Down in July

On Saturday July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 our depot agent *Paul Kaufman* received a phone call from an on-line neighbor reporting that a tree limb had come down on our wire. Trainmaster *Damin Keenan*, *Jeff Bennett* and *Mike Gilles* got the motor car and trailer loaded up with the necessary ladder, chainsaw and tools and headed down the location of the incident, several poles north of the Illinois Central bridge.

The limb was on our feeder wire and some branches were almost to the trolley wire. The step ladder was taken to the tree where *Jeff* climbed it and used the chainsaw to carefully cut what was left of its connection to the trunk. Once the limb was free of the tree, it was broken up into manageable pieces to be moved away from the track zone. Our crew loaded up the motorcar train and returned to the Maintenance of Way siding and demonstration service for the day started more or less on time.

**Joseph Hazinski**

*All photos from Damin Keenan*



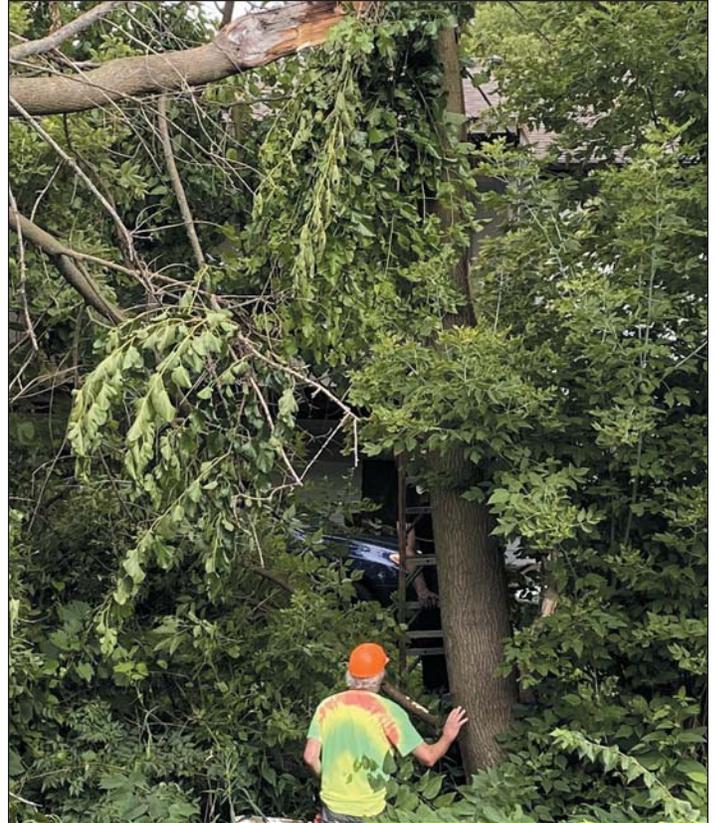
| The scene as the motorcar train found it on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020.



| Mike Gilles and Jeff Bennett carry the large fiberglass step ladder past the down limb.



| Mike grabs the chainsaw from the motorcar.



| Fortunately, the ladder was tall enough to allow access to where the limb split from the main trunk of the tree.



**In the foliage Jeff wields the chainsaw to cut the rather large branch off.**



**Once the limb was down Jeff had to cut it into manageable pieces.**



**The feeder wire is free and now the downed limb needs to be reduced and moved into the clear.**



**Jeff clears one of the smaller sections from the track zone.**



Joseph Hazinski

## Our 2019 Holiday Trains | CTA 40 heads up a three-car train at the specially constructed auxiliary high-level platform at Blackhawk station in the Jon Duerr Forest Preserve on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

The addition of a third car, a new event and additional days of operation made the 2019 Christmas Holiday train service a new challenge for the museum. Luke Helm coordinated *The Polar Express™* planning and operation while Doug Rundell coordinated *The Christmas City Express* planning and operation. Jeff Bennett oversaw the museum site preparation and car preparation.

*The Polar Express Train Ride™* is operated by the Museum under license from Warner Brothers, Inc. through its agent Rail Events, Incorporated. *The Christmas City Express* is operated by the Museum under license from the Lake Superior Railroad Museum of Duluth, Minnesota.

In *The Polar Express™* a young boy is wrestling with his belief in Santa. Is he real? After he has gone to bed one evening, a steam engine pulling a passenger train arrives outside his home, with many noises of hissing steam and clanking couplers. The boy asks the train conductor “Where is this train going?” The conductor tells him “We are going to the North Pole. This is the Polar Express”.



Mark Llanuza

Damin Keenan, Ed Konecki and Patrick Storm pose with character conductor in front of car 45.

*Editor's Note: This article was written before it was determined that because of the restrictions caused by the pandemic, that the planned 2020 Polar Express operations were canceled. Considering the level of vaccinations, declining levels of infections and current guidance from health officials, the museum is offering reservations for Polar Express™ tickets July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. It is important that all members understand how much effort goes into this major event.*



Joseph Hazinski

**Back at Castlemuir aka the “North Pole”, a heated CNS&M 715 serves as a dressing room for the cast which perform on the trains.**



Joseph Hazinski

**Jeff Bennett devised a simple curtain system to provide privacy and as a scene block inside of 715.**

After a long trip to the North Pole, the boy receives a magic bell from Santa’s sleigh that rings true to his ears to this day as he maintains his belief in Santa.

With the *Christmas City Express* a young girl is riding the train on Christmas Eve to visit her grandparents. The train encounters a blizzard on the way and ultimately has to stop. Will Santa miss the travelers? Can Christmas be saved? The conductor brings a fresh tree onto the train, and passengers spontaneously take ribbons from the presents they are carrying to decorate the tree. Santa finds the stranded train and hands out magic gifts to all the passengers.

Besides a parking brake replacement on one car and traction motor change out on another, all three cars needed



Joseph Hazinski

**A new portable sound system was acquired and besides providing the necessary music and announcements serves as a “will-call” desk for our patrons to pick up their tickets. As seen in this picture Ed Konecki’s portable canopy provides protection during inclement weather.**

extensive work on their control systems and in spite of this, each car continued to have their own unique problems. Even with the upgrading of track bonding and rail ground connection to the substation as well as the prep work on CTA cars 40, 43 and 45, the three cars did not operate well together as a three-car train. Every day it was a different problem with a different solution worked out by *Jeff* and *Fred Lonnes* to keep the trips running. The worst night was when the 600-volt DC trolley power dropped out and AE&FR 5 was called upon to shove the train down to Blackhawk and pull it back to Castlemuir using a special adaptor coupler. There was some DC power available to keep the lights on and heat in the train, as it turned out a fuse on one of

*(Continued on page 14)*



Joseph Hazinski

The passengers line up along the new stanchion system to board car 40 via the auxiliary high-level platform while the waiters and conductor await the signal to board.



Barbara Bennett

Meanwhile at the "North Pole", Santa and his elf assistant, Rebecka Tullock, pose for the photographer while they wait for the first train of the day.



James Slattery

Excited children are being photographed by their excited parents as they wait to see Santa.



James Slattery

Finally Jolly Old Saint Nick enthralls children and adults alike.

## Our 2019 Holiday Trains

(Continued from page 13)

the three AC electrical phases had blown, which was diagnosed and repaired by Chief Engineer *Ralph Taylor* the next day.

Also new in 2019, each car now has its own advanced public address system and operates as an independent entertainment experience led by its own story reader. With *The Polar Express™*; Hero Boy, the Hobo and the character Conductor visit each car and do their scene prior to departure while Hero Boy and Santa also have their own scene in each car at the North Pole. Servers made sure hot chocolate and cookies are available, a feature of both train experiences.

Service was split on different days between *The Polar Express™* and *The Christmas City Express* which has its own

customized Fox River Line story book (available in the museum store). Both train experiences incorporate musicians to provide sing-along activities during the times Santa is visiting each individual car as well as on the trip back to Blackhawk. We have always provided sing-along lyrics but the 2019 season's booklet was the most professionally done by far.

All the "talent" this year were employed by the museum just as the musicians and the lone reader in the past had been. A talent coordinator was hired to find the actors for *The Polar Express™* presentation as we did not hire an event coordinator, who in the past recruited volunteer groups to serve as waiters. Recently repainted CNS&M 715 served as a dressing room for the actors and waiters at Castlemuir. The Santas this season were professionally trained persons with a couple of museum members available as an emergency backup which fortunately were



Berry S. Kamenear

**Here is the scene after Santa enters the car and interacts with Hero Boy explaining the first bell of Christmas. This scene was repeated in every car.**



Mark Llanuza

**Grandpa gets to photograph his two grandchildren with Santa.**



James Tarbet

**Another part of the experience is the singing of Christmas songs.**



Barbara Bennett

**Here our troubadour, Danny Biggins strums out another holiday song as server Michael Surles encourages the singing.**

not needed. A volunteer elf kept Santa company at the North Pole and assisted him in visiting each car.

Because of the three-car train operation, an auxiliary high-level platform was constructed by KRB at Blackhawk to facilitate loading of the third car. A new professional portable PA system which doubled as a ticket kiosk, was used along with a third speaker to provide the ambiance music and announcements at the Jon Duerr Forest Preserve loading point. A third row of parking was instituted in the main parking lot to handle the additional vehicles and once again additional portable toilets were rented to augment the Forest Preserve's facilities. Also new in 2019 was the use of a professional grade stanchion system to guide our families to and from the trains. Much work went into producing passenger manifests for each trip and setting up packets of tickets for each family group. With this information it

was possible for the Blackhawk agent to preassign groups to each of the cars so that all family groups could sit together.

There is a tremendous amount of work that goes into decorating both the North Pole at Castlemuir and our boarding point at Blackhawk station in the Jon Duerr Forest Preserve. Flats depicting Santa's work shop are erected on the hillside next to Highway 31 after being removed from our events highway trailer. Lighting equipment and decorations for the interiors of our cars are also stored in this trailer and have to be installed. Jeff has made a retired ambulance available to transport the equipment needed at Blackhawk which stands by during the actual operating hours of the trains. Special lighting for the high-level platform and lighting through the skylights of the permanent restrooms is installed ahead of time. A generator to

*(Continued on page 16)*

## Our 2019 Holiday Trains

(Continued from page 15)

power these lights, the stanchions and the portable sound system are carried in the ambulance which are set up and taken down daily. Another daily task is picking up the hot chocolate in large jugs from a vendor, two for each car. The cookies, cups and other supplies are refreshed daily from the events trailer at Castlemuir. Besides clean up between runs, the cars are also given a more intense clean up after every weekend. Once all the trains have been run, all the decorations at both Castlemuir and Blackhawk as well as those in the cars are taken down to be stored in the event trailer which is eventually removed from the museum grounds and stored off site. For our volunteers and coordinators, it is an intense two-month period of activity, not to mention the preplanning and organization that takes place over the course of the year to make this financially important event a reality.

While the Christmas trains have been significant sources of funding for the Museum's restoration and maintenance projects there is also another dimension as we have continued to recognize opportunities for community service during the Christmas season. We have run gratis excursions of *The Polar Express Train Ride™* for the Best Buddies chapter at South Elgin High School, a group supporting families of special needs children. In 2019, one of our professional Santas (a pastor at a local church) told us that he was also a chaplain for a National Guard family support group in the Rockford, Illinois area. Their family members had been deployed to Afghanistan. Again, we were able to offer about 100 no-charge excursions to these families in 2019.

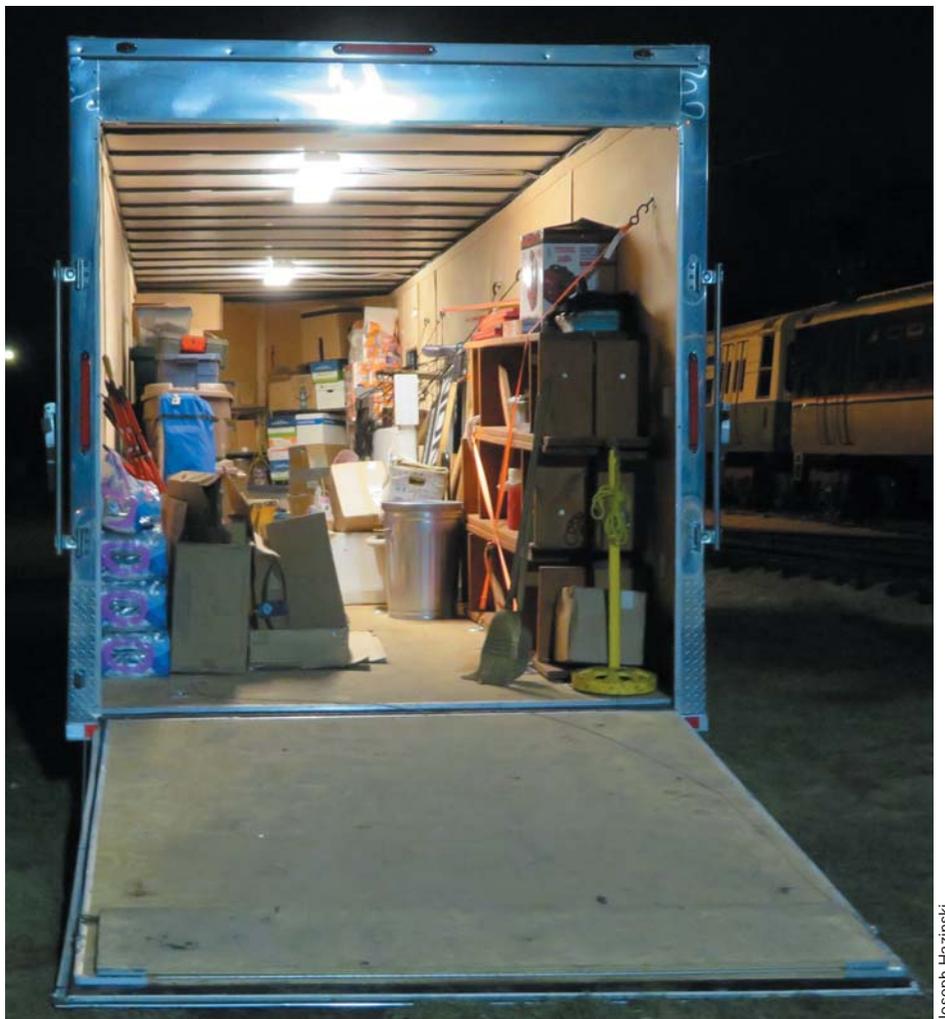
It was always rewarding to hear the "thank you" and "Merry Christmas" greetings from the happy families as they descended the steps at Blackhawk on the way back to their vehicles and to know that all the many hours of varied efforts of so many volunteers and paid contractors are positively received. A hearty thank you goes out to all who make this annual event possible.

**Joseph Hazinski and Douglas Rundell**



Joseph Hazinski

| The new stanchion system helps mark the safe zone now that three cars are being used.



Joseph Hazinski

| At the end of the night material and equipment are stowed in our event trailer.



Mike Gilles

Fred Lonnes cuts up the sizeable limb into smaller sections as the siding wire and span rests on the ground.

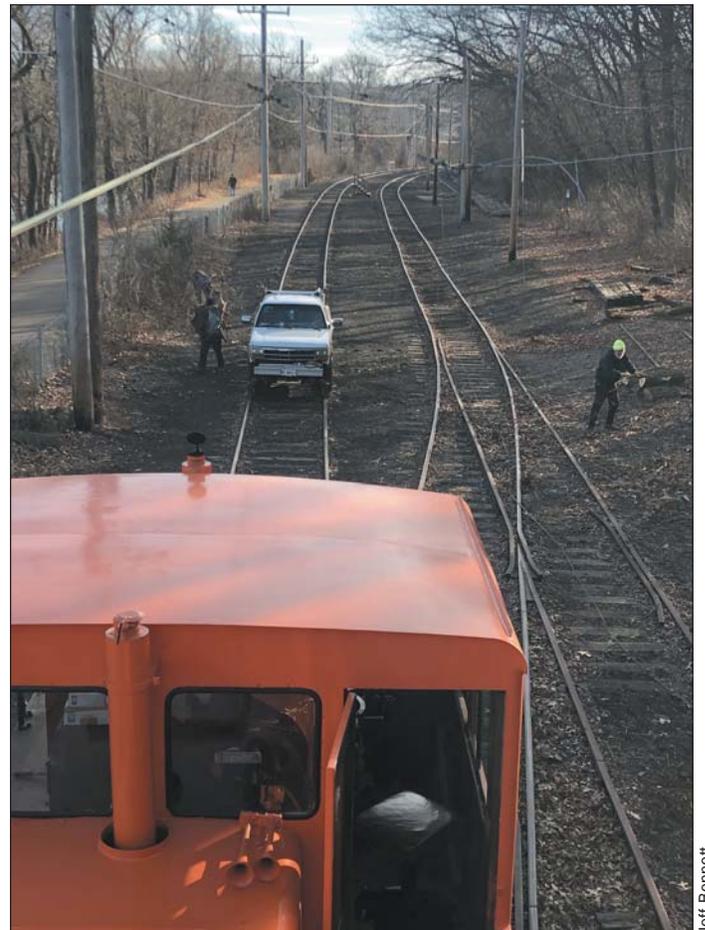
## Christmas Present in Coleman Yard

On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 our good neighbor Leo Metz, while biking on the Fox River path, called *Jeff Bennett* to inform him that Mother Nature had left us a Christmas Present in Coleman Yard in the form of a large tree limb which had come down and taken the north end of the siding's trolley wire down with it. Fortunately, *Fred Lonnes* was out with his high rail truck and along with *Mike Gilles* went down with a chain saw to evaluate the situation. The limb had fallen onto the siding wire, pulling it out of the overhead frog and landing it on the rail which would have been a dead short had the 600-volt DC power been turned on.

*Fred* reported back to *Jeff*, who along with *James Tarbet* gathered the necessary tools and fall-protection gear for the overhead repair. They went to start up locomotive #5 but it would not crank even though the batteries were on a trickle charge. *Jeff* diagnosed the problem as being an internal failure with one of a battery's terminal posts. They removed one of the batteries from MS-65, lugged it over to #5 and got it running so they could move CNS&M 715 out of the way and then couple onto Illinois Central caboose 9648 to use as an overhead work platform.

(Continued on page 18)

The view from the IC caboose roof just after the repair train arrived with Fred's Hi-rail truck on the mainline.



Jeff Bennett



Mike Gilles

The overhead repair train is in place under the North Coleman Switch overhead frog.



Jeff Bennett

Up on the caboose roof it can be seen where the siding wire is supposed to be.



Mike Gilles

Fred Lonnes, James Tabet and Jeff Bennett in the process of using a block and tackle to pull up the trolley wire which is gripped by a wire eccentric.



Mike Gilles

After the line crew had the wire clamped back into the frog, they then attended to reattaching the hanger and ear to the trolley wire so it could be held up once again by the cross span.

## Christmas Present *(Continued from page 17)*

By the time they arrived at Coleman Yard, Fred and Mike had cleared away the tree and moved the downed trolley wire to the side so the caboose and #5 could move into position under the north Coleman trolley wire frog. Under the guidance of Fred, they raised the trolley wire with the use of a block and tackle and reconnected it to the frog. Then they moved to reconnect an ear and hanger to a span wire which had also come apart in the incident. With the overhead back in place the repair train

returned to Castlemuir followed by Fred's high rail truck and then 715 was reshuffled back to its normal storage location.

While it was not their plan for the day, it was serendipitous that these four museum volunteers, alerted by our observant neighbor, were able to respond to this problem and resolve it before the winter sun went down. Another story in the history of the Aurora Elgin and Fox River Electric Company Railroad and the museum that works to keep it alive.

## Kerber Packing – the Other AE&FRE Customer



Al Williams

Let your imagination take you back to South Elgin of 1910. As you stand on the State Street bridge, you keep a sharp eye on your surroundings. Coming toward you are dozens of hogs, being herded over the bridge through the streets of South Elgin. As you ask “where did they come from” the drover points back across the river to the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad tracks. When you ask “where are they going”, he points northward towards Kerber Packing, at 1764 North LaFox Street.

In 1893, Kerber Packing was formed by three German immigrants of the same namesake, William, Charles, and Otto. Initially they sold meat just in the local area between Elgin and Saint Charles. Later, as roads and transport improved, their popular Kerber’s Kustom Kured Hams were shipped to much of northern Illinois, including Chicago.

In its day, it was a busy plant. It would often process a full stock car load of pigs

every day. With that many animals being driven through the streets, a few would wander off and damage people’s property. Many citizen complaints were heard by the village board. Kerber tried to induce the C&NW build a spur along the west side of the Fox River from Elgin to their plant, but finally settled for a connection to the Aurora Elgin and Chicago, Fox River Division trolley line in 1915.

The plant was expanded in 1938 and again in 1947. However, the years after the 1950’s were not kind to Kerber. The business lost money, and in 1970, the descendants of Charles Kerber ceased operation. Kerber’s Kustom Kured Hams faded into history. Robert DeYoung lost one of his two customers, leaving him only with the State Hospital in Elgin.

Little remains of Kerber Packing today. Their packing house was occupied for a time by GMP Plastics, but a fire in 1978 destroyed the building. The thick cork insulation smoldered and then re-

**AE&FR #5 with an IC double deck stock car and some hoppers pauses at what will become Castlemuir about 1963. Track 1 has been cut into the railroad with Switch 55 so the initial collection of rolling stock RELIC owned can be stored at what will become the museum. The substation has been moved and the building has been re-erected over the machinery but the electrical connection to Commonwealth Edison to power it has not yet been made nor have any line poles or overhead put up. I was pleasantly surprised to come upon this photo as I figured that by this time trucks would be delivering hogs to Kerber’s. Trolley operation would not return until July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1966.**

ignited, making it a difficult fire to bring under control, and the plastics inventory provided a large supply of fuel. A newer industrial building is now on the site.

Much of the history of the AE&FRE and of the Trolley Museum is associated with the State Hospital in Elgin. Let’s not forget Kerber Packing.

**Douglas Rundell**

*(See photo on page 20.)*

A photo of a five-pound bucket which held lard that was a by-product of the hog slaughtering and curing process at the Kerber Packing Company. Such pails are now considered collectors' items.



Found on line

## Welcome Aboard in 2020

The Fox River Trolley Museum welcomes the following twenty-two (22) new members for the year 2020.

David Foss of Arlington Heights  
Carl Flaks of Elgin  
The Hogland Family of St. Charles  
Nicole Segar of South Elgin  
George Barreto of Brooklyn, NY  
Connor Ladley of Crystal Lake  
John Stueber

*(We wish we had contact information on John, as he paid in cash at the museum. So if anyone knows him, please contact our Membership Secretary, Laura Taylor);*

John Gosnell of San Francisco, CA  
Nicholas Whitney of West Chicago  
Kenneth McKiness of North Aurora  
Kyle Engstrom of Oak Park  
James Fitzgerald of Chicago  
Jasmine Carlson of Algonquin  
Ben Franz of South Elgin;  
Derek Thomas of Beloit WI  
Ugnius Ceicys of Naperville  
Robert Baker of Libertyville  
Alan Heuer of Bloomington IN  
Joe Caliendo of Lombard  
Daniel Mann of Astoria NY  
Michael Iwema of Chicago  
Ryan Reynolds of Round Lake Beach

Membership Secretary Laura Taylor also noted the we had four returning members during 2020.

Bradly Logan and Skip Shearer both of Wheaton  
Bill Zydel of South Elgin and  
John Iwasyk of Wilmington DE rejoined during the 2020 calendar year.

There are lots of folks from the northern Illinois area but also a pleasantly surprising number of people from out of state and around the country. This was a nice increase in membership in spite of the challenge of the pandemic. Hopefully as the national health situation improves this season, we will be able to add more people and families to our roster. We appreciate each and every member's contribution to and support of the goals of the museum.

**Joseph Hazinski**

## Department of Corrections for FRL 2020-1

An eagle-eyed reader came up with some more information on two articles in the 2020-1 issue.

Concerning the South Shore cars, the brakes on 7 worked fine but the brake pipe through the north bolster of 14 was rusted out making its brakes inoperable which is why the two were chained together. We received the de-motored 7 from the National Park Service when they gave up plans of having an operational trolley line in one of their parks. The 14 was received from the then RTA along with coach 24. The Association sold 24 to the East Troy Railroad Museum where it became part of their dinner train.

CTA S-314 was operated once before just after the Fox River Bicycle Trail was constructed to set some poles along the replacement track at the south end of the line. It was the dedication ceremony of that replacement track that set the events in motion which resulted in the extension into the then Blackhawk Forest Preserve and the creation of DeYoung Junction in 2001. Needless to say, S-314 sat unused until its rehabilitation in 2019.

**Joseph Hazinski - Editor**

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