

# THE MARKER LIGHT

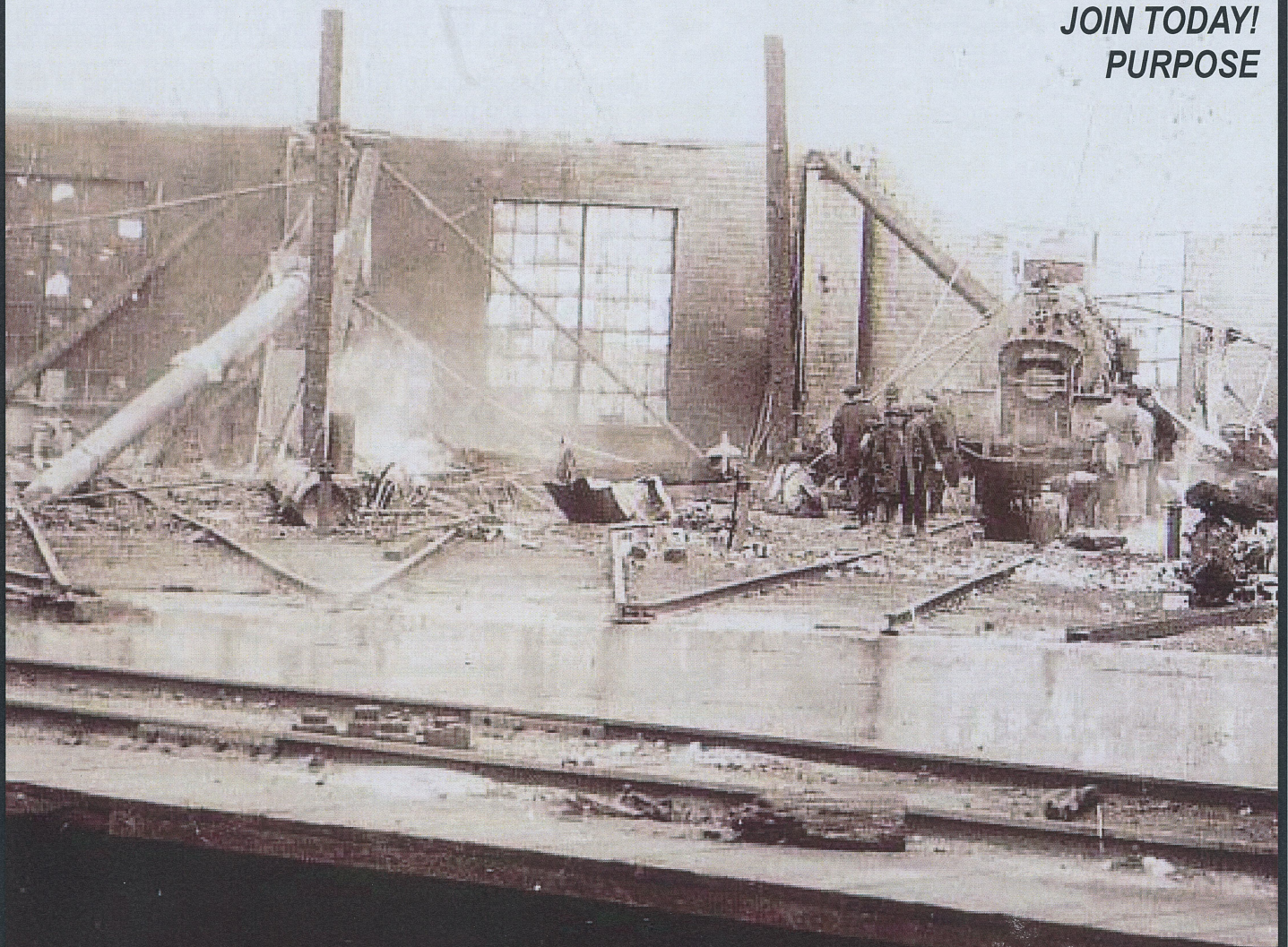
NUMBER 13

THE PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2013

## THE 1926 ROUNDHOUSE FIRE

**GET ONBOARD: MARP & NARP!  
SATURDAYS AT THE WYE  
ARCHIVE COMMITTEE  
BUILDING COMMITTEE  
THE RAILROAD PASS  
PH&D 50' 1000 SERIES (REVISITED)  
2013 CALENDAR  
BIRTHDAY BOYS!  
CARRY YOUR CARD!  
JOIN TODAY!  
PURPOSE**



SMOKING RUINS (G.Y. Duffy Collection)



**Cover:** *It's a few days after the fire which destroyed the 4-stall PH&DRR roundhouse. Onlookers mull the results.*

**PG. 2:** From Where I Sit; Get Onboard: MARP & NARP!

**PG. 3:** Saturdays at the Wye; Archive Committee News, Building Committee News

**PG. 4:** From the Archives: 1926 Roundhouse Fire

**PG. 5:** (Cont.)

**PG. 6:** Collector's Corner: *The Railroad Pass*

**PG. 7:** Conductor's Log Book; DBC&W News

**PG. 8:** 2013 1st Quarter Calendar; Birthday Boys!; Carry Your Card; Join; Purpose; Board of Directors



### FROM WHERE I SIT

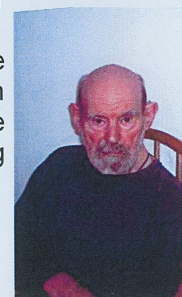
I'd lay odds that you might get a steaming cup of coffee.

I recently had the pleasure of attending a monthly Michigan Association of Railway Passengers meeting at the Capac Historical Museum. Board member T.J. Gaffney was on hand and gave a mini-power-point talk on the Thumb Railroads of Michigan. PH&DRRHS member Bill Rauli also attended. It was an impressive meeting. These men and women are pushing hard to support rail passenger travel in Michigan by making sure our state legislators know how important continued funding keeps our routes active. There is a possibility that our Society will team up with MARP on National Train Day, May 11 to commemorate the event in Port Huron. If you join MARP, you'll help them continue to improve rail passenger travel in Michigan. Become a member and carry a MARP card along with your PH&DRRHS card too!

Finally, we can't say enough about our volunteers and donors. With these folks on board, we continue to move forward. The crew that helped pick up the items donated by Robert and June Hill, in spite of the brutal winter roads, deserve our deep appreciation. Thanks to Bob and June, we now have a matching set of 1940's era furniture which will look excellent up on the second floor offices, among other valuable items. These all came from the collection of June's father, Robert Ballard.

Ok, we're all looking for warmer weather and Saturdays at the wye!

*This issue was printed courtesy of Board Member Ron Walters! Thanks Ron!  
Want to support the Society and sponsor the Summer 2013 issue? It's Tax-deductable!  
Please contact [whlrydr@aol.com](mailto:whlrydr@aol.com) or call 810-984-1931.*



Mr. Ballard

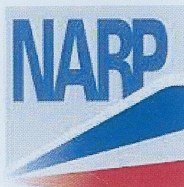
### GET ONBOARD: MARP & NARP!

You love railroads, right? While we all can't hop onboard every year, here's a chance to help promote railroad passenger travel in America and Michigan! Join both to keep up on how passenger rail corridors are being funded and improved and keep up with the latest news on the Michigan rail passenger scene.



#### Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

P.O. Box 180076  
Utica, MI 48318-0076  
[www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org)  
\$25



#### National Association of Railroad Passengers

505 Capital Court, N.E., Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20002-7706  
[www.narprail.org](http://www.narprail.org)  
\$35



**SATURDAYS AT THE WYE**

Electricity has arrived at our office for the first time since 1984! Just recently, crews from DTE Energy hooked us up with a “drop” from our parking lot pole to the building and into a power panel located in the former (and current) utility room. We now have power for lights in the meeting room and to run power tools!

During the winter months, we don’t get to meet on Saturdays as we usually do but Spring is approaching and that means we’ll start getting revved up. We do need YOU to help us out. Just look at the list of projects we have planned and you’ll see that we have much to accomplish. If you want to find out if there will be someone out at the wye, email me ([whlydr@aol.com](mailto:whlydr@aol.com)).



*Powered Up!*

**ARCHIVE COMMITTEE NEWS**

Chad Thompson’s organizational skills resulted in the transportation of numerous display cases from a train museum and a set of classic 1940’s period furniture, donated from the Robert and June Hill family.

In spite of a recent snowfall of 10”, trucks and trailers headed out first to Holly, Michigan to collect a series of display cases “donated” by Chad and Charles Warczynsky to the Society. Then it was on into Detroit to load up a sofa and matching chairs from the 1940’s as well as other period furniture. Carefully wrapped the day before, all contents were safely delivered to the Museum headquarters and unloaded with additional help, from the crew you see here.

A huge thanks to the Kalises for their moving van and our Society Board members who pitched in to make it happen. Others who helped: T.J. Gaffney, Parker Moon, and Tom Boswell, who coordinated with the Hills’ to obtain the furniture, which will be covered and stored.



*Moving Crew (L-R): Jack Molinaro & his nephew Marlon , Bill Rauli, Dan Kalis, Charles Warczynsky, Mark Kalis, Chad Thompson & Bruce Sawdon.*

**BUILDING COMMITTEE NEWS**

The Board of Directors recently approved a list of projects for this year. We plan to address the following tasks:

- 1). Adding under-roof soffits
- 2). Remove and replace existing sidewalk; install ramp
- 3). Scrape and paint downstairs windows
- 4). Install a temporary overhang at main entry (*Done!*)
- 5). Bleach and seal Agent’s room vault and install a light
- 6). Rough in replacement treads to existing stairway
- 7). Install more windows to Caboose #62

All these tasks are important, but the sidewalk replacement is a big one. We need help from you, our membership on tearing out and breaking up the existing concrete. You can help make the job go quicker; we need to remove the old concrete, construct the forms, and prepare the ground, to bring in the concrete mixer. Finishing with smoothing tools will produce a new installation we can all be proud of.

Our plan is to use a weekend in the Spring. We’ll let everyone know when that’s scheduled in the next issue.



*A new sidewalk coming soon!*



### FROM THE ARCHIVES: *Roundhouse Fire of 1926*

On the evening of April 26, 1926, a fire broke out inside the PH&DRR roundhouse at 32nd Street. By 11:00PM, it had consumed most of the structure including engines #30 and #32 which were in their stalls. The Times Herald article printed the next day (*reproduced on the opposite page*) tells the story. Note that no nearby fire plugs existed; the only water hose was inside the building! When city fire crews arrived, all they could do was watch it burn. A.C. McDannel, General Manager, reported a faulty electrical wire as cause of the blaze. What's interesting is that two men were in the building when the fire broke out. How did a fire build itself into an inferno so fast that no one could reach the 2" water hose situated in the middle of the building? (*Be nice to review the insurance claims probably stashed somewhere in the Michigan History archives in Lansing...*) Four days later, management authorized Chief Engineer William Boyd to rebuild and expand the building from a 4-stall engine house into a 6-stall affair. This would be the first of a number of expansions.

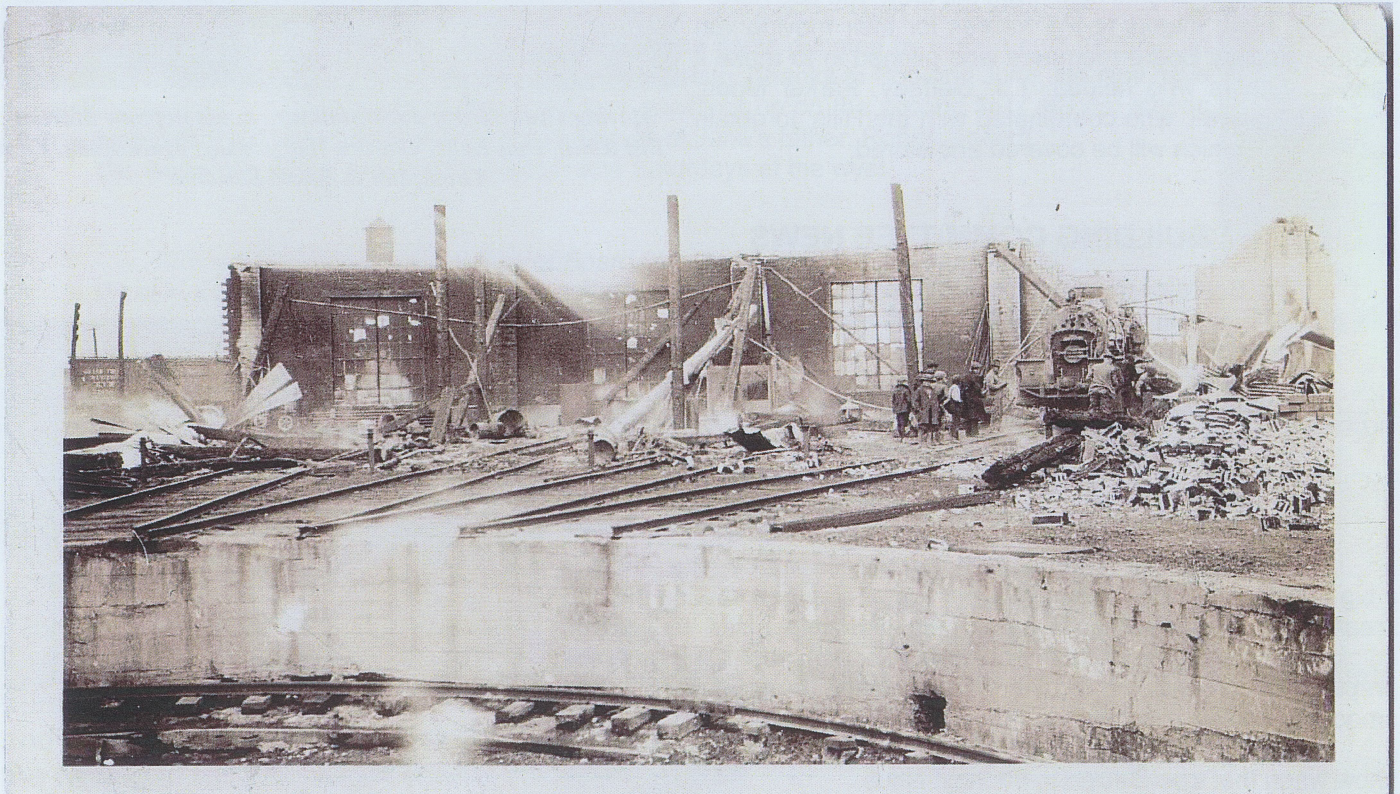
Our roundhouse was first constructed in September 1920 and measured 40'x80'x20'. Two months later, 540' of trackage, including 4 120' tracks, were connected and included a 60' deck girder turntable. After the fire, the turntable was "retired". It was removed after the 6-stall rebuild according to the Boyd Narrative.

The new structure included two additional stalls with tracks coming out of the north side. These connected to the north passing track of the wye which led to the interchange with the Pere Marquette Railway to the east. The four tracks facing south became two tracks with two switches instead of the turntable. These led to the main line. They still remain to this day, embedded in the original concrete. In the diesel era, after 1945, the eastern-most south-facing track would house one of the Alco's, while the two north-facing stalls berthed the other two Schenectady-built engines.

Boyd's new structure holds up now, nearly 87 years later, due in part to the iron turnbuckles holding the walls together throughout the top as well as actual sections of rail reinforcing the upper beams. If you inspect the exterior walls, you'll find them remarkably true with minimal settling and cracking. It's a true testament to his thorough application of the proper materials that have left us with this historic building.

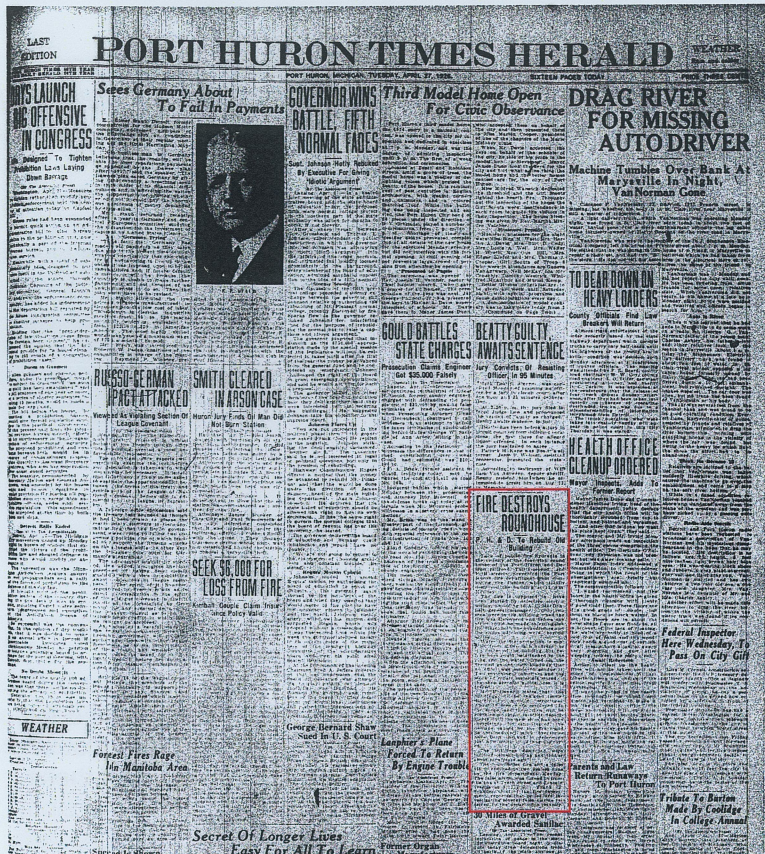
Only nine roundhouses on their original foundation remain in the state, according to an informal poll taken from [Michiganrailroads.com](http://Michiganrailroads.com). Although most of the tar-paper roof has disintegrated and the roofing beams have fallen, this building is in great shape. A new metal roof with replacement windows and a heating plant would make this an excellent top-draw railroad museum complex with interesting displays. To be able to house one of our original diesels, first delivered in 1945, would make this entire complex a high-quality tourist attraction and bring visitors in from all over America.

The next time you're at the wye, look over at the roundhouse and tip your hat to Bill Boyd!



*All four south-facing tracks led to a 60' turntable with a substantial shop area on the right (out of the camera view).*





Tuesday, April 27 front page of the Port Huron Times Herald.

# FIRE DESTROYS ROUNDHOUSE

## P. H. & D. To Rebuild Old Building

Lack of public fire hydrants in the vicinity of the four-stall roundhouse of the Port Huron and Detroit railroad, Thirty-second and Tenth streets, prevented the Port Huron fire department from combating the flames, which totally destroyed the building at 11 p.m. Monday.

The fire is supposed to have been started by defective electric wiring, according to A. C. McDannell, general manager. Only two men were in the building when the fire was discovered and before any effort could be made to extinguish the blaze, both the roundhouse and the shops adjoining were beyond saving.

Water for fire protection is supplied from a two-inch hydrant in the center of the building, but before hose could be attached to the plug and the water turned on, the fire had gained such headway that no effort was made to subdue it. Two switching locomotives and the stock of repair materials stored in the shop are also a total loss, it is feared.

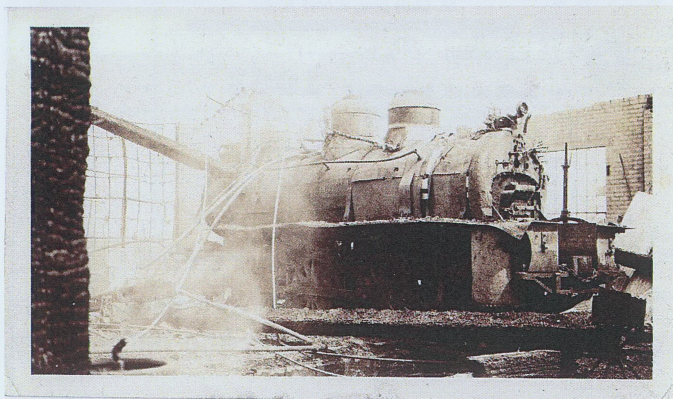
Mr. McDannell states that the buildings will be replaced immediately by modern structures. About 10 men were employed in the shops, and these men will be given employment in other departments until the new shop has been completed. No estimates of the damage caused by the fire could be obtained until stock inventories have been checked to determine just how much stock was destroyed.

The buildings destroyed were built of cement blocks and timber about nine years ago.

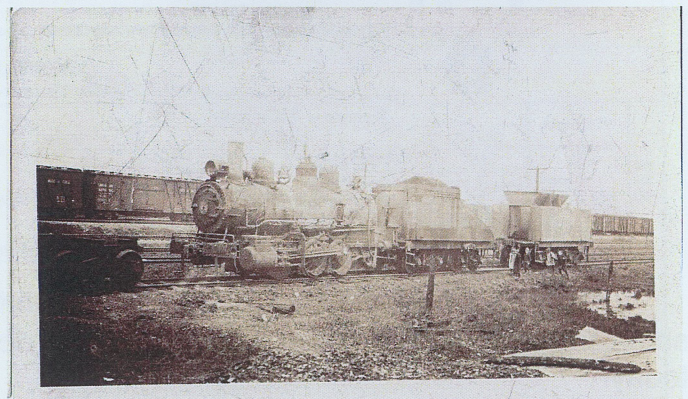
The roundhouse fire and a false alarm resulted in two useless runs by the fire department Monday. The false alarm was turned in from the box at Tenth street and Lincoln avenue at 9:12 p.m. Frank J. Schaller, chief of the fire department, reports that police are investigating several false alarms resolved by the department recently.



Nothing was spared including the shop area.



Engine #30 sits warped and mangled.



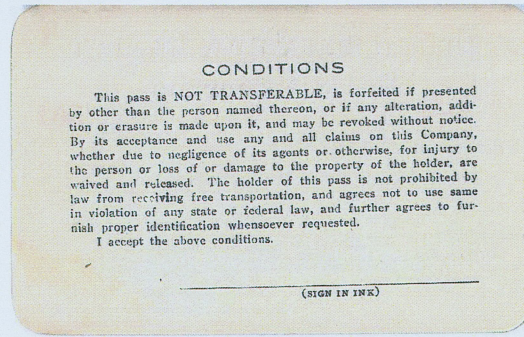
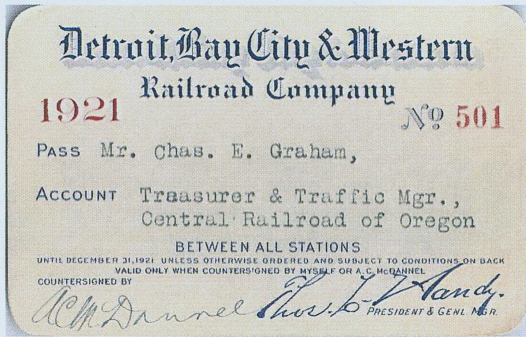
Engine #32 awaits a trip to the nearby GTW repair shops.



COLLECTOR'S CORNER: RAILROAD PASSES

The railroad pass occupies a niche that attracts a specialized area of railroad memorabilia collectors. It was used from the 1900's to the end of the 1960's and given to employees, customers, and friends of corporate officers, usually through written request. In the 1940's and 1950's, executives traded them to other officers at annual railroad transportation conventions.

While the Port Huron & Detroit Railroad never had passenger equipment, its predecessor, the Detroit, Bay City & Western, did, from 1910 until about 1924. Recently, one of these railroad passes appeared on Ebay, which was subsequently obtained for our archives. Numbered 501 and dated 1921, it is signed by President Thomas Lincoln Handy and countersigned by his right hand man, A.C. McDannel. This is one rare card and one that's not likely to appear again.



After World War II ended, the nation went into a period of growth and prosperity, and business boomed for the railroads. At annual meetings, rail executives had the opportunity to meet with customers and leaders of other transportation companies. In the 1950's, "schmoozing" meant the 5 o'clock cocktail and they took advantage of these gatherings to make the deals amongst themselves. The Duffy brothers felt that they too should have their own version of the railroad pass and came up with a version, with a map of the "system" on the reverse.



To celebrate the new design of the 40' steel boxcars which came online in 1963, they redesigned their pass with that date. Each pass was numbered "1". Here is this card signed by both brothers.



The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society honors our heritage with its membership card you carry, which is based upon the design of these historic cards. Join and carry yours today!



**PH&D 50' 1000 SERIES (REVISITED)**

In the last issue, we reviewed four conductor's log books (Form 112) which gave us undeniable proof of the first appearance of the road's 50' steel-sided boxcars. On May 15, 1977, six cars from the PH&D 1000 series box car were delivered to Diamond Crystal Salt. Since then, I have been on the lookout for an Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) dated as close to that month of May. Not long after, one appeared on Ebay, dated July 1977. After winning the bid, the book arrived at my door.

On page 565, the entry records that 100 cars, numbered 1000-1099. These were of course leased and the contact address was San Francisco. The leasing company was ITEL Rail.

I remember well the appearance of a crew of snappy-looking attorneys who arrived one Monday to discuss the lease agreement with President James E. Duffy, Jr. Now James E. Junior had graduated Summa Cum Laude from his University of Michigan Law School back in the mid 1920's, at the top of his class.

Sitting at my desk, I would see these guys arrive each morning and leave by noon; both Duffy's had their daily lunch meeting at the Elk's Club, where they played Gin Rummy at a penny a point!

By Friday morning, when they finalized the deal and were about to leave for the airport in Detroit, one of these fellows admitted to me that had come expecting to only spend a day or two at most to "ink the deal" but had not expected to tangle with the elder Duffy. They didn't look so trim and were plum wore out by the time Jim got done with them!



C.T.C.-R.E.R.-No. 404  
Cancels C.T.C.-R.E.R.-No. 403

No Tariff Supplements will  
be issued to this publication

I.C.C.-R.E.R.-No. 404  
Cancels I.C.C.-R.E.R.-No. 403

See Page II for State Commission Numbers and Cancellations

## THE OFFICIAL RAILWAY EQUIPMENT REGISTER®

FREIGHT CARS OPERATED  
BY THE RAILROADS AND PRIVATE CAR  
COMPANIES OF NORTH AMERICA

Vol. 93, No. 1  
ISSUED JULY 10, 1977
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**PORT HURON AND DETROIT RAILROAD COMPANY**

Reporting Marks and ACI Nos.—“PHD”—0 647  
Uniform Alphabetic Code and ACI No.—“PHD”—0 647

GENERAL OFFICES: Box 266, Port Huron, MI 48060

**GENERAL OFFICERS**

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| G. Y. Duffy, President                  | Port Huron, MI 48060 | O. Wood, Auditor                   | Port Huron, MI 48060 |
| W. W. Munce, Vice-President, Operations | Port Huron, MI 48060 | H. J. Ferns, Car Accountant        | Port Huron, MI 48060 |

Miles of road: Operated, 19.06. Equipment: Locomotives—diesel-electric, 3.

**FREIGHT EQUIPMENT**

Cars are marked "PHD" and are numbered and classified as follows:

| Line No. | A.A.R. Mech. Desig. | DESCRIPTION                                   | A.A.R. Car Type Code | NUMBERS<br><br>»Change from Previous Issue | DIMENSIONS |       |        |         |         |         |         |                  |         |         | CAPACITY        |            | No. of Cars |         |         |
|----------|---------------------|---|----------------------|--|------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------------|---------|---------|
|          |                     |   |                      |  | INSIDE     |       |        | OUTSIDE |         |         |         |                  | DOORS   |         | Cubic Feet Full | Lbs. (000) |             |         |         |
|          |                     |   |                      |  | Length     | Width | Height | Length  |         | Width   |         | Height from Rail |         | Side    |                 |            |             |         |         |
|          |                     |   |                      |  |            |       |        | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in.          | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in.         | ft. in.    |             | ft. in. | ft. in. |
| 1        | XM                  | Box, Stl., Cush. Underfr., Nailable Stl. Flr. | B209                 | 1000-1099                                  | 50 6       | 9 6   | 10 7   | 57 3    | 9 7     | 10 8    | 12 9    | 13 11            | 14 3    | 14 10   | 10 ....         | 9 10       | 5077        | 154     | 100     |
| Total    |                     |   |                      |  |            |       |        |         |         |         |         |                  |         |         |                 |            |             |         | 100     |

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

*Here's the dope on these cars as listed for the July 1977 ORER issue.*



**Spring 2013 CALENDAR**

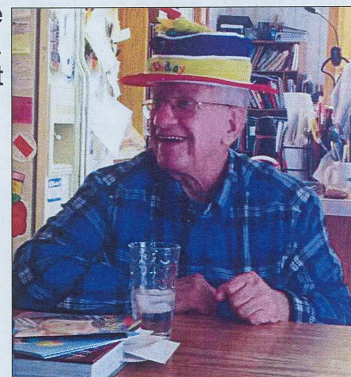
|          |                        |        |
|----------|------------------------|--------|
| Mar 14   | Board Meeting 32nd St. | 6:00PM |
| April 11 | " "                    | "      |
| May 9    | " "                    | "      |

All members are welcome to attend monthly board meetings.

**Saturdays at the Wye** to resume in April. If you'd like to come up on a Saturday and spend some time watching and photographing trains at the Wye at the 32nd Street office, make sure you have a paid-up membership card which allows you unlimited access to the Society-owned half of the property.

**BIRTHDAY BOYS**

Two gents who always put their hearts into our Society recently celebrated birthdays: Dave Schultz (60) and Bruce Sawdon (82)! Dave and pals were at the Dorsey House while Bruce and family were at home. No ladders were used at either location.



"Can I get this 'to go'?" "A new ladder? Thanks Joyce!"

**JOIN NOW AND GET ONBOARD!**

The *Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society* needs your talent! We invite you to join committees, contribute your time with hands on restoration projects, and be on board at this early, critical stage.

Membership, publicity, web design, resource development, lawn mowing, and acquisitions, are just a few of the areas that you can help out with.

For only \$30 a year, you'll receive 4 nifty newsletters, a chance to be a part of creating the area's first railroad transportation museum complex, have exclusive access to the "wye", and learn more about this historic Michigan short line!

Mail to: PH&DRRHS, P.O. Box 217, Marysville, MI 48040.

**PH** PORT HURON and DETROIT RAILROAD CO.  
- St. Clair Blue Water Route -

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**D** PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**MEMBERSHIP CARD**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

JOINED: \_\_\_\_\_ MO \_\_\_\_\_ YR

PRESIDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Regulations covering access to U.S. rail yards are in effect, administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and enforced by local enforcement agencies. Accordingly, those with PH&DRRHS membership cards must, if requested, present their cards to authorized personnel from either CN, CSX, or St. Clair County Sheriff's officers. When visiting, please stay on the west side of the yellow line (PH&DRRHS property).

**The purpose of**

*The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society is:*

*To collect, archive, preserve, and present, all for the education of the community, historical documents, photographs, drawings, artifacts and equipment relating to The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Company and its predecessors, The Port Huron Southern Railway and The Detroit Bay City & Western Railroad, as well as the Grand Trunk Western/Canadian National, and the Pere Marquette/Chesapeake and Ohio.*

*To obtain, restore and maintain the roundhouse at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street for use as a museum, as well as other structures, artifacts, and rolling stock, as they may become available;*

*To accumulate, conserve, and index all data relating to the above-named railroads for the use of scholars, rail fans and scale modelers.*

**BOARD of DIRECTORS  
2012**

- Thomas Boswell**
- George Y. Duffy, Jr.**
- T.J. Gaffney**
- Bruce Sawdon**
- Ken Schramm**
- Earl Shoulders**
- Chad Thompson**
- Ron Walters**

**SPECIAL THANKS:**

Ron Walters for this issue's publication sponsor!

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR LATEST NEWS!**

[phdrrhs.com](http://phdrrhs.com)