

THE MARKER LIGHT

NUMBER 26

THE PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2016

CHANGING TIRES INTERVIEW: BRUCE SAWDON

~ JULY WORK WEEKEND ~ PROJECT #52 ~
~ RR-MARKED WOODEN CLOTHES HANGERS ~

THE RIP TRACK (Photo: Askar-Shain)

Cover: Everything's ready to change tires: Heat and cooling rings, hoist, and the sliding truck rails with ball bearings.

PG. 2: From Where I Sit; Annual Spring Picnic

PG. 3: July 23 Saturday at the Wye

PG. 4: Changing Tires; Interview with Roundhouse Foreman Bruce Sawdon

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FROM WHERE I SIT

place the engine when it arrives this fall. This is a really big deal. Saving one of these first generation ALCO diesel switchers is a rare event.

Now that we have functioning offices, we begin the intensive work cataloguing our inventory. The business of the Society will be run out of these two rooms as well, giving us the ability to keep our house in order. Please stop by when you come in and have a look!

Dear Friends of the PH&D:

The Summer issue is a bit late but I hope it is worth it.

Our interview with Bruce Sawdon gives us extra insight to the process of changing tires on our fleet of vintage ALCOs, all done in house!

Project #52 continues. The paint samples have been obtained and the codes have been identified through an authorized PPG dealer in Detroit. Our next step is to install the section of display track, then move the cabooses to the east for blasting, priming, and painting. When the engine arrives, the cabooses will be moved back to make room and lash up to its originally assigned engine after over 30 years! No other rail museum in the country can boast this combination. Our partner is Raymond Contracting. They'll build the road bed and install the track and ties, provided by the Society. They'll also lift and

Sandy Duffy

2016 SPRING PICNIC

The Society hosted the annual 2016 Spring Picnic on June 11. The 90 degree temperature didn't stop the gang from grilling hot dogs, with sauerkraut and onions on the side, a tradition enjoyed by all.

Those who attended were treated to viewing the newly remodeled offices. Both rooms feature a "maize and blue" scheme, with attractive blue carpets and light golden tan walls. The Duffy brothers would have been proud!

ROUNDHOUSES BOOK

ROUNDHOUSES



OF MICHIGAN'S RAILROADS

BYRON BABBISH

Our long time friend Byron Babbish has just published his book on Michigan roundhouses and our roundhouse interior is on the front cover! Byron has been a respected photographer of Michigan railroads for years. His black and white images are especially evocative.

His coverage on the PH&D is 19 pages with 29 pictures. Even shows a young Bruce Sawdon!

The book can be obtained through Amazon or P&D Hobbies in Fraser \$60.



BOYS IN BLUE

Bruce Sawdon (L) and Society Member Hugh Hales at the Spring Picnic. Hugh is one of our heroes, underwriting the publication of this newsletter for the past two years!

JULY 23 SATURDAY AT THE WYE

We started at 10:00 and finished by 2:00 and managed to get two tasks completed: 1). To clear out "the pit" to make room for the new floor and 2). To obtain 8 railroad ties to store the rail we've acquired through a donation. We welcomed Society members Ron Bilotta, from Almont and Mike Vanoost from East Detroit. Thanks to Bruce Sawdon, Bill Rauli, T.J. Gaffney, Jack Allison, Shaun Maertens, and Ron Bilotta, we cleared out the pit and brought in 8 railroad ties from Adair Salvage. Lunch of kraut and dogs and lemonade was provided by the Society. Well done crew!



With a new cement floor, we'll be able to install a new wall with a double door leading into a future gift shop counter.



Members Mike Vanoost and Ron Bilotta



(L-R) Bill Rauli, Shawn Maertens, Ron Bilotta, and T.J. Gaffney

CHANGING TIRES

ALCO engine wheels are essentially a wheel surrounded by a flanged “tire”. Over time, the flange wears down and has to be replaced. In the case of the PH&D, both engines #60 and #62 had slightly larger wheels and could provide a “hand-me-down” to the smaller engine #52. In all replacements, we had the equipment and the know-how to do what was required, dictated by the Federal Railway Administration guidelines or when an FRA man came in, always without warning, and flagged an engine he deemed ready for tire replacement, measured by the two tools he carried.

Roundhouse foreman Nate Georgian and after him, Bruce Sawdon kept a monthly log on each engine. This log included flange measurements. When a tire replacement was due, Bruce would call in several men from the section gang and would begin the process which would take about three days to complete. Recently, he revealed how that replacement happened and what was needed to get the job done.

ML: Bruce, what told you it was time to change a tire?

BS: *I used two gauges to measure flange wear. One was a thin flange and the other was a high flange gauge. On the PH&D, we had so many curves, that's what wore down the flanges.*

ML: How often did the FRA man come in?

BS: *You'd never know. One time he came in and went over to #60, measured it and condemned it. I got my gauge out and put it on the flange and I could still see a hairline under there.*

ML: You could still see “daylight”?

BS: *I could but he says it's “condemned”; you got to change it right then and there. So that's how it works. What they say, goes. That's the first thing he looks for when he comes in.*

ML: Did you check the flanges on a regular basis?

BS: *Oh, yeah. We had that curve at the Diamond (Crystal Salt) where it's real sharp and wears it down.*

ML: Was that something that would come up on an inspection report?

BS: *Yeah, used to be every month, you'd have to put it in there and have a copy of it up in the cab of the engine.*

ML: What was the process that took place when changing a tire?

BS: *Well, you got to get some men off the track department, and set things up. The engine would be spotted into the repair track.*

ML: That was one of the bays facing north?

BS: *Yes. The engine would be moved to a spot where you could change the tire. At the end of the repair track was a moveable section of track with large ball bearings which we could slide a complete set of trucks out along tracks in the cement floor. We'd use a 50 ton jack to raise the engine on one end. Once up, we'd take a place a pile of ties underneath as a safety. Then we'd disconnect the air and other cables and then slide out the entire set of trucks. There was an overhead track with an electrical crane hoist. The cement is recessed with a place to put a bolt through on each side. You'd take a piece of rail up to the traction motor which had a horseshoe and jack 'em up. This would help remove the side frame on the wheel you'd want to change. Then you'd get the side frame out of the way and then take what we called a heat ring, which was maybe an inch and a half round tube with holes all the way around the inside. Then you'd take the acetylene and oxygen and hook it up and heat the tire up. I'll tell you, Ol' Nate had a secret: after 15 minutes, he'd spit on it! I'm serious. It's all how it bubbled up! Then you'd knock the tire off the wheel using the overhead cranes, set it out of the way, and add another ring, this time with water coolant to cool the wheel. Then you'd get another tire, which had to be matched up, and hook it on the overhead crane. Then you'd put your heat ring on it and expand it. You can tell by its sound by hitting it with a sledge. Once it feels loose, you tap it back on to the cold wheel. Then you cool it down and reverse the deal.*

ML: Was a wheel-tire assembly different on #52 than #60?

BS: *Yes. These here we took off #60 and kept a bunch of 'em and matched 'em up to the wear and shipped 'em out. We had 'em all turned down to make sets. Then when we got 'em back, they're the ones we used on #52. They were smaller, but she had more power just not very fast.*

ML: How did you order more tires?

BS: *I'd come over to the office and put in the order. I had a book of parts from ALCO but I always went through the upstairs office.*

ML: From start to finish, how long did it take you to change out a tire?

BS: *It'd take a couple days, maybe three if everything goes right and you have a good bunch to work with you.*

ML: Well, there we have it! Thanks Bruce!

BS: *Any time!*



George Redfield has arrived with lunch bucket in hand, having been pulled from the section gang. The side frames are exposed and the crane stands ready to hoist them to expose the wheel/tire assembly.



Flange measuring tools



Former Roundhouse Foreman Bruce Sawdon measuring the flange on caboose #52. It would have passed.

COLLECTORS CORNER: WOODEN RAILROAD-MARKED CLOTHES HANGERS

Ok, you could say I'm hung up, for sure! I do not know when it started, collecting these hangers. Perhaps the first few were Pullman. Then others. All in all, I think I may have over a dozen, maybe, more. All I know is that Railroad-marked wooden clothes hangers have taken up way more time than I expected! Pullman, then NYC, CP, and, yep, gotta get that CN-marked hanger as well! Good thing these are relatively inexpensive. Most go for between \$15-25. On Ebay, not a lot of bidding. So maybe now is a good time to buy 'em up. Or else I'm wasting my time. But then, again, I convince myself that these will be in our Gift Shop inventory some day. So I keep on a-buying!

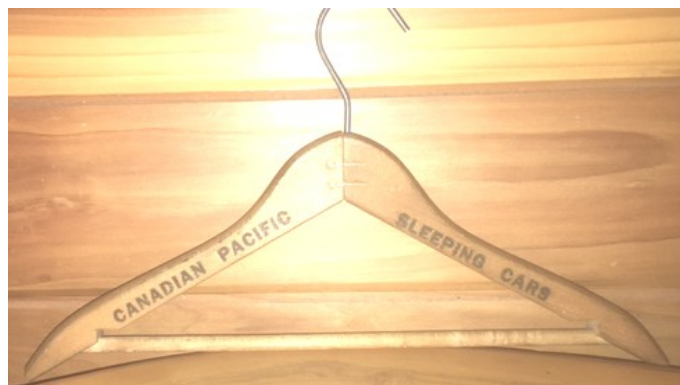
Here's a sample of the current collection.



Heading to dinner on the crack 20th Century Limited from Chicago to New York City. The dining car steward takes your coat and escorts you and yours to a table with two chairs.



The 20th Century Limited is racing to New York City and, after cocktails, you're ready for bed. The "N.Y." is abbreviated with Central in lower case. "Sleeping Car Service".



Time for bed on the CP. Boldly marked in all caps.



This is an earlier Pullman hanger, marked "Property of the Pullman Company" before the marketing department adopted the "Travel and Sleep..." slogan. This early hanger features a wood and metal pants rod.



Here's a newer Pullman hanger with the famous "Travel and Sleep in Safety and Comfort" boldly marked on both sides.



Not to be outdone, we also have the Canadian National on board. Spartan markings.

PROJECT #52

Burgess Contracting has been retained by the Society's Board of Directors to prepare for the arrival of ALCO PH&DRR Engine #52. Their job is defined in stages. The first phase is to prepare the site for the new display track which will extend the current caboose track to 150'. This will be a temporary display until we finally obtain the roundhouse.

Second, when the engine arrives, they'll be on hand to lift and place the two sets of trucks for both caboose and the engine, (boxcar yet to come), then lift both engine and caboose and place on their respective trucks. Both will be freshly painted with the pre-sale 1984 livery.

As you may expect, preparation involves careful step by step advance planning. Thanks to the sharp eyes of one of our members, **Shawn Maertens**, we located a pile of 85 pound rail down in the Dow area in Marysville, which were rail sections original to the PH&DRR. Obtaining matching angle-bars and tie plates, spikes, and then laying ballast are all part of this site prep.

When our engine finally arrives, it will be a rare one-time event. Matching an engine to its originally assigned caboose is extremely rare for railroad museums across the U.S. This will certainly draw state and national attention. *Classic Trains* and *Trains Magazine* editors have been following our progress and will certainly cover it.

Our Society has set up a special account to pay for this historic undertaking. Checks can be made payable to the Society with "Engine #52 Project" in the note. And it will cost us. Maybe you can help us by donating to "Engine #52 Project", which will help us get this completed.

We are extremely excited to have this ahead of us. Step by step, we keep adding and improving which builds upon what we already have making that 32nd Street "wye" a worthwhile destination. As this event gets closer, you as a member will get updates via email and our website. Stay tuned!



Image: Dan Meinhard

Society member Dan Meinhard, who created this excellent image, states that the length of this track works out to be around 138 feet.

2016 EVENTS CALENDAR

Aug 13 Board Meeting	32nd St Wye	9:00A
Sept 8 Board Meeting	32nd St. Wye	9:00A
Sept 10 Hobofest 2016	32nd St. Wye	10:00A

NOTE: **Board Meetings changed to 2nd Saturdays**
 All members and guests are welcome to attend monthly board meetings.

Saturdays at the Wye have resumed. Check the website for events and announcements.

Website: www.phdrailroad.com
 Email: info@phdrailroad.com

All members in good standing are issued membership cards which allow unlimited access to the Society-owned west half of the "wye" property marked by a yellow stripe.

Please stay off CSX property including the Roundhouse.

PH D	PORT HURON and DETROIT RAILROAD CO. - St. Clair Blue Water Route -
	PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP CARD
NAME: _____	
JOINED: ____ / ____ MO/YEAR	

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, PH&DRRHS members must, if requested, present their membership 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 Detroit Bay City & Western Railroad, and The Port Huron Southern Railway as well as the Grand Trunk Western/Canadian National, and the Pere Marquette/Chesapeake and Ohio railroads;

To obtain, restore and maintain the roundhouse at 32nd Street for museum use, 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.

Special Thanks to donors
 Mike Vanoost, Robert Kohlhagen,
 Ron Walters, Kurt Stetzer, Robert
 Richmond, and Bill Schultz

Correction:
 In the last issue, young Doris
 crossed M-29, not M-25.

Special Thanks to
 Allen Stevens for his very generous
 donation!

PH&DRR EMPLOYEES:

JAMES WOOD

Jim Wood signed on in December of 1974 as a Demurrage Clerk. He kept track of cars on line which would generate charges if not moved quickly. Weekly and then monthly accounting. It all added up. Jim would return by lunch and record the day's logs.



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 classy newsletters, a chance to help create the area's first railroad transportation museum complex, and have exclusive Member-only access to the 32nd Street "Wye" and a Class I rail yard.

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

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