

# THE MARKER LIGHT

NUMBER 30

THE PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2017

A man wearing a white t-shirt, a baseball cap, and glasses is sitting on a blue and yellow model train engine. The engine is on a track that runs through a grassy area. In the background, there are trees, a patio with a large umbrella, and a real train with colorful containers on a hillside.

## A SERIOUS OBSESSION

Hobofest 2017  
Acquisitions:  
GTW Reefer #206447  
Engine #52  
SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT:  
Allen Stevens  
FALL 2017 CALENDAR  
CARRY YOUR CARD!  
JOIN TODAY!  
PURPOSE

Allen Stevens at the throttle

Cover: *Allen Stevens behind the throttle of his PH&DRR engine.*

PG. 2: From Where I Sit; 2017 Hobofest

PG. 3: Acquisitions: GTW Reefer # 206447 & PH&D ALCO Engine #52

PG. 4: Allen Stevens: A Serious Obsession

PG. 5: (Cont.)

PG. 6: Charles Geletzke's visit to the PH&D.

PG. 7: Books

PG. 8: Summer 2017 Calendar; Carry Your Card; Join; Purpose of the Society; Society Spotlight: Allen Stevens; 2017 Board of Directors



## FROM WHERE I SIT

Dear Friends of the PH&D:

**Chad Thompson** said he could do it and he did. He and his team delivered a rare Grand Trunk Western refrigerator car, #206447. The move went fairly smoothly, as the car traveled over 200 miles across the state from Holland. We now have a significant piece of our local history: this car would have originated and been serviced from the GTW shops across from our wye, and loaded from the old ice house, which was once located just west of us. Although the car was donated, we had to somehow pay for the move and we have to thank the many Friends of the Society for buying our shirts and hats, as well as those who donated, to make this a success. This completes the first of two scheduled projects for the Society this year.

Our second project is scheduled for early October. We are moving our Alco S1 engine #52 from Knoxville, Tennessee. To date, we have collected over two thirds of the estimated \$21,000 needed. We are on track to accomplish this. This will be a significant addition and noteworthy to rail fans nationally, since this will be the first time this original engine, acquired in 1945, will be reunited with its originally-assigned caboose! Truly historic. Stay tuned: we will let everyone know, through email and social media, when she'll leave Knoxville.

Hobofest 2017 is coming! It will be held on Saturday, September 16. A special meet and greet video event will take place on Friday evening. This is a chance to honor and remember those who travelled by rail, from town to town, looking for employment, during the economic tough times in the 1930s. We always have a huge cauldron of authentic "Hobo stew" on the fire, which is free to all, as is the "jungle camp" boss **Larry Yaek's** "cowboy coffee" (see below). Games for kids and live music will be available throughout the day.

Like to thank **Aaron Farmer** for his service on the board. His work at the Greenfield Village roundhouse pulls him away. Aaron is directly responsible for our acquisition of engine #52. It all started with him! We wish him well.

Lastly, we'd like to pay our respects to our former Superintendent, William "Bill" Munce who passed away recently. He's pictured below in the lawn chair. He was a loyal supporter of the Society and attended many of our events.

This is our thirtieth issue! Our newsletter is one of our ways to keep you up to date on our progress as your Society. We've come a long way from that first issue. Want to thank my mom for editing all those years! If you're missing some in your collection, we do have some in inventory. Contact Tom on the website!

**Sandy Duffy**

## 2017 Hobofest

On Saturday, September 16, the Society will host our 10th annual event, open to the public from 10 until 5. It will feature authentic hobo stew, a spam carving contest, live music, games for children, and the crowning of a Hobofest king and queen. Additional plans may include a food truck on site, and we'll have PH&DRR items for sale!

Parking will be at the corner of Petit and 32nd Streets with a Blue Water Transit trolley on site to take our visitors to the wye.

Hobofest is held each year to commemorate the period when economic times were hard and those seeking employment traveled by boxcar from town to town. Port Huron was a well used location, having a large rail yard between Toronto and Chicago, making it an ideal departure point.

Bring your family and a camera!



*The Michigan Kid doles out authentic Hobo stew at the 2016 event.*

### ACQUISITIONS: GTW Refrigerator Car 206447

Our effort to move this rare Grand Trunk refrigerator box car has been completed! The car was transferred to a mobile setup and moved from Holland to Port Huron, a distance of about 225 Miles. A huge thanks to board member **Chad Thompson** who followed this project from start to finish! We are also fortunate that this move was filmed by Advanced Approach Videos, LLC, free of charge! Thanks **Mr. Conan Brooks**.

We had a number of people that helped volunteer behind the scenes: thanks go to **T.J. Gaffney, Steven Harvey, Rick Rowlands, Aaron Farmer, Charles Warczinsky, William Rauli, Orion Newall-Vuillemot, and Rusty Wood**, and our driver **Mark Kalis**.

Finally, we must recognize all of our *Friends of the Society* who bought our shirts and hats through the Facebook Booster program, and those of you who made additional donations.



*Photo: J. R. Valderas*

*GTW boxcar #296447 in Holland, Michigan, loaded on the "bogies" and ready to move.*



*Photo: Mary Truchan*

*Here are some of the crewmembers. Driver Mark Kalis deserves praise for delivery and spotting.*



*Photo: Mary Truchan*

*It took three days to make this move and here she is safe and sound, hooked up to our own PH&DRR caboose!*

### ACQUISITIONS: PH&D ALCO Engine #52

The Society has been aggressive in raising the funding necessary to move this rare first generation engine from Knoxville, Tennessee, over 500 miles away. The estimated cost of the move is pegged at \$21,500. As of this printing, we have raised over two thirds of that amount, \$16,500. Please help us bring her home! We have a little over 8 months to bring in the additional funding. You can help bring her home by donating.

Our mailing address is Treasurer PH&DRRHS, P.O. Box 315, St. Clair, MI 48079.



PHOTO: Rick Rowlands

## A SERIOUS OBSESSION: Allen Stevens' 1/8th Scale PH&D Layout

**Allen Stevens** has had a life long love for the PH&DRR. In 2005, he decided to begin construction of a layout on the beautiful lakefront properties he owns near Harbor Beach. His 1/8th scale layout runs approximately 3 scale miles. Numerous impressive trestles and bridges cross small streams and ravines. The line courses through wooded areas and around wide curves in a true loop design ending next to a swimming pool. Plans are to expand it down from the bluff which overlooks Lake Huron.

His PH&D engine is powered by a two-cylinder lawnmower engine similar to a Briggs & Stratton or Kohler type. It's heavy: it takes two to lift the engine in case of derailment. He has several spots that he's continuing to attend to; it's either a problem of gauge or wheelsets. "My first engine was a BN unit with one cylinder. The 62 has more horsepower!"

Most of the rolling stock are custom built from out of state suppliers and reflect Michigan roads from the 1970s and 1980s. Others are built from kits. He has ordered a PH&D caboose and expects it to be shipped in the fall. Although the PH&D is his favorite, he also likes the Rio Grande for that color scheme. He picks out the roads he likes based upon their paint jobs. He prefers hometown rail cars.

It's a working railroad as well. "You know me, I like things that work." He points to a flat car with slabs of rock. "Those came from left over pool materials. I've been using them for landscaping and shoring up embankments supporting the roadbed down below." He orders the track sections as well and these are laid upon beach sand, then black plastic to prevent weeds, and then a gravel sand mix. Upkeep is minimal and happens when he arrives in the spring and before winter sets in.

Track consists mainly of aluminum rails with ties from old DTE poles, milled to specs. Since his supply ran out,



*Engine #62 idling, swimming pool nearby.*



*Kay Houghton and Mino Kramer with Allen.*



*The custom 40' boxcars have removable rooves.*



*Allen sits in a GTW gondola to access the throttle of #62.*



*Yes, those are real rocks. Allen uses his railroad to move them!*



*Three tracks lead out from his tidy shop.*



*The shop is orderly and well designed to perform repairs.*

he relies on a supplier of ties made of plastic with aluminum rails.

His workshop is orderly with tools in their place and most benches clear and ready for projects. On one, a yellow bulk-head flat, with out trucks, awaits servicing. Three tracks are carefully embedded in a smooth concrete floor and extend through doors leading out.

Later, after touring the workshop, I climbed into an Ontario Northland gondola. Then Allen throttled up and we started the tour. We proceeded out along the main, over streams, through forest, and past sidings filled with other cars. The day was warm and windy and the ride was enjoyable. The little engine had no problem pulling us along with the other freight cars in tow.

After the trip, we adjourned to a pleasant lunch in a room that overlooked track work leading to the beach.

We'd like to thank Allen for this visit and especially for his generosity to the Society. This man is one huge fan of the PH&D!

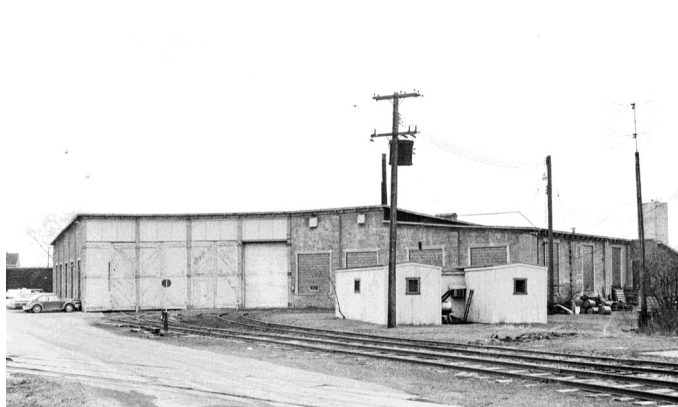


## THE CHARLES GELETZKE JR PHOTOGRAPHS

In the spring of 1967, noted Grand Trunk Western author **Charles H. Geletzke, Jr.** paid a visit to the PH&DRR. He had just signed on to work for the Grand Trunk and would remain with that road for 45 years, retiring in 2011. A special thanks to Dan Pence, editor of *The Semaphore*, the newsletter of the Grand Trunk Western Historical Society, and to Mr. Geletzke for allowing us to share these excellent images!



*Management's reserved parking spaces are indicate that Charles was on site after lunch. Everything looks tidy and orderly. The snow banks are receding and the yard is full.*



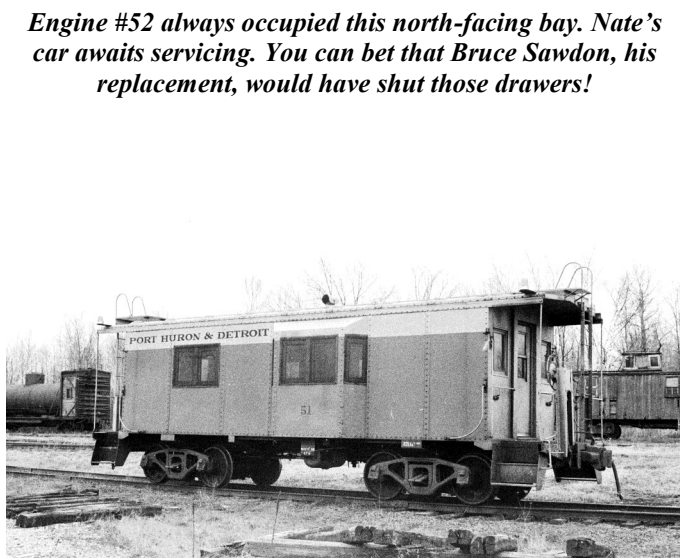
*The "reefers" housed roundhouse foreman Nate Georgian and his wife. Three of the four south-facing doors have track leads; the two MOW tracks have their own switch.*



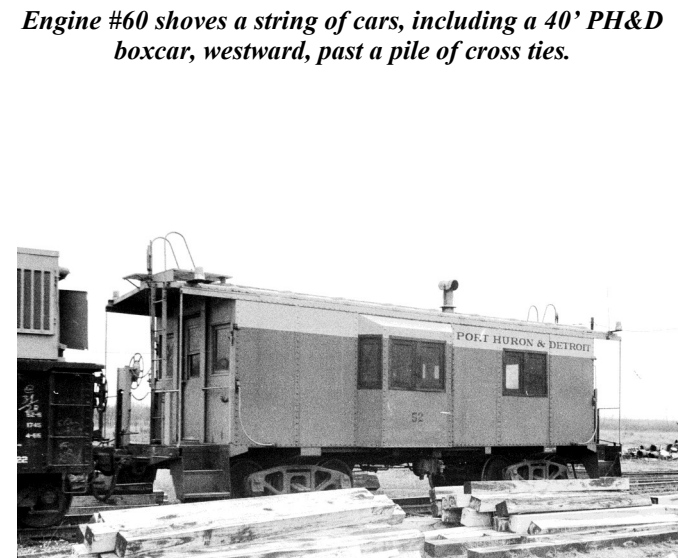
*Engine #52 always occupied this north-facing bay. Nate's car awaits servicing. You can bet that Bruce Sawdon, his replacement, would have shut those drawers!*



*Engine #60 shoves a string of cars, including a 40' PH&D boxcar, westward, past a pile of cross ties.*



*Bay window #51 sits behind the roundhouse awaiting the night job in its as-delivered red and gray livery.*



*Charles did not miss a step capturing our second caboose. It appears to be in service hooked up to a gondola in back of a pile of brand new creosote-soaked cross ties.*



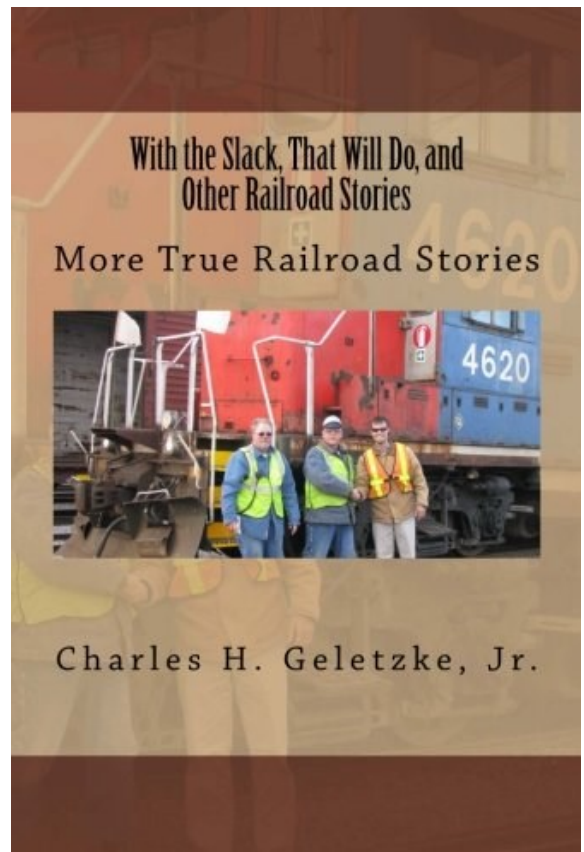
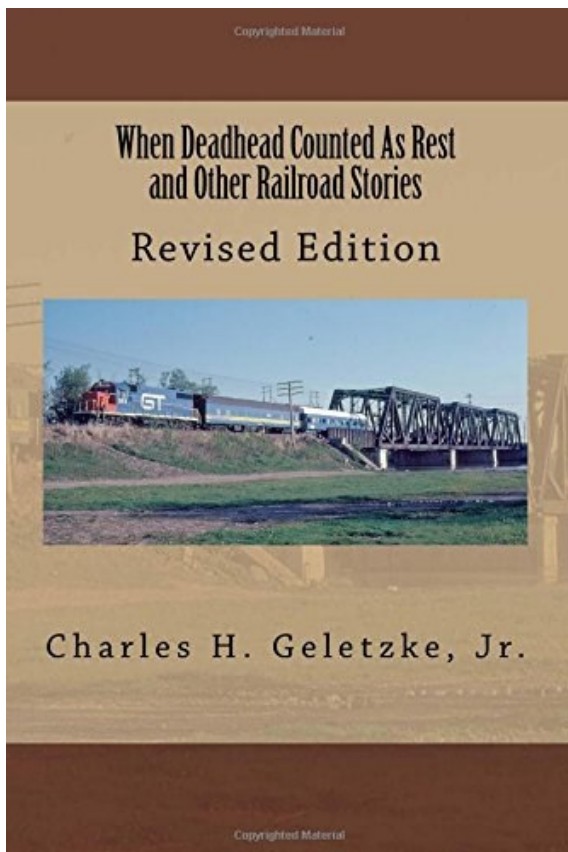
*ML#6 tells us the caboose on the left is #53. The 4-window caboose, #54, is gone, replaced by this one, identical to #53, but in rougher shape. Geletzke has given us a mystery.*



*Charles included the weed sprayer, converted from an outside braced wooden boxcar that had been in an accident down at the Diamond Crystal Salt Co. A modelling project?*

“Author Geletzke has compiled a collection of 81 short stories (and 35 b&w photos), all about the railroad, and all true. Written in the style of one of his favorite authors (O. Henry) with their suspenseful endings, these selections will keep the reader right on the edge of his or her seat right to the end! Mr. Geletzke retired in 2011 from a 45-year railroad career; but actually got his start as a small child riding steam locomotives, switching the coal yards at the end of his block. While Mr. Geletzke has written most of these stories, many too have been written or told by his friends and co-workers. Most are humorous, some are mundane or perhaps even preposterous, and several will literally terrify the reader. The railroad was a great place to work; but it could also be extremely dangerous. At its conclusion, the reader will want more stories, and author Geletzke, already has another book on the way.” From an online review.

Here are two must have books: When Deadhead Counted as Rest and Other Railroad Stories, is a collection of 80 short stories of local scenes that we all can relate to. His companion book is With the Slack, That Will Do, and Other Railroad Stories. As a former rail, I was totally enthralled and could relate to many of the stories. Readers from our Thumb area will feel right at home with both these volumes as many locations and stories are recognizable.,



**Fall 2017 CALENDAR**

Sept 9	Board Meeting, 32nd St	9:00AM
Sep 16	Hobofest 2017, 32nd St.	10:00AM
Oct 14	Board Meeting, 32nd St	9:00AM
Nov 11	Board Meeting, 32nd St.	9:00AM

All members are welcome to attend monthly board meetings.

**Saturdays at the Wye** has begun. Check the website for updates and schedules. [www.phdrailroad.com](http://www.phdrailroad.com)

If you'd like to come up on a Saturday and spend time watching and photographing trains, make sure you have a paid-up membership card which allows you unlimited access to the Society-owned half of the "wye" property, marked by the yellow stripe. You may park along 32nd Street and the west side of the stripe.

PH

PORT HURON and DETROIT RAILROAD CO.

- St. Clair Blue Water Route -

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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, 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.*

**SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT**

*Allen Stevens*

Allen was a founding board member back in 2008. He has been a steadfast and generous supporter of the Society and our mission from the very first. He shares our vision of a world-class transportation museum.

Allen lives in Connecticut but spends his time at his home near Harbor Beach running his version of the PH&DRR!



**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 315,  
St. Clair, MI 48079-0315**

**BOARD of DIRECTORS  
2017**

- Jack Allison**
- Thomas Boswell**
- Jo Burgett**
- George Y. Duffy, Jr.**
- T.J. Gaffney**
- Bruce Sawdon**
- David N. Schultz**
- Chad Thompson**

**The Board would like to express its appreciation to Aaron Farmer and his invaluable help on the board!**

**Huge thank you to Allen Stevens, Kay Houghton, & Mino Kramer for their generous help with Project 52!**

**We want also thank Advanced Approach Videos for covering the arrival of our boxcar!**