

Whistles in the Woods

Published by Adirondack Live Steamers

OPERATING 6500 FEET OF TRACK IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE ADIRONDACKS

7 1/4" GAUGE 1 1/2" SCALE

OPERATING GAUGE 1 TRACKAGE FOR STEAM AND ELECTRIC

SAFETY FIRST

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2008

THE DAYS GROW LONGER

Yes, the days are gradually growing longer, and to any live steam fan, this means that it won't be long before we are once again out at the track, running our trains, working on many projects, and enjoying again, the companionship of our ALS friends.

We hope that you have had an enjoyable, productive, winter. Perhaps you have purchased, or completed building some new equipment that you just can't wait to show everyone. Or maybe you have just relaxed and enjoyed the cold weather. Either way, we are all looking forward to getting back to our favorite hobby.

We figuratively get the wheels rolling with our first Membership Meeting of the new year on **Saturday, March 15 at 11:30 AM at the Greenwich Public Library**. Please note several changes in the meeting time and location. There

was a problem with the library schedule and we have had to move our meeting back a week from March 8 to March 15. Since the library closes at Noon, we want to get things started at 11:30. We can stay until our meeting is completed. The library is located at 148 Main Street, Greenwich, NY. From the ALS grounds, go right on Loudon Road to the STOP sign, left on Rt. 29 east, and through Schuylerville to Greenwich. Just before the business district, the library will be on the right.

We hope to see a good turnout for the meeting. Our new President, Don Buesing will present us with the plans for the coming year, and we welcome the comments of the membership on our priorities. This is your club. Get involved. Don't watch from outside the gate. ***

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**Next Meeting: Saturday, March 15, 11:30 AM
Greenwich Public Library
(Directions above)**

**Deadline for the April *Whistles in the Woods*
Saturday, March 22**

Other Important Dates: See Page 7 and Note Pad on Back

President's Corner

Is your shop nice and toasty? Good. Are you getting plenty accomplished? Even better. Can't wait for the snow to clear and get back out to the track? Me too!

Many of us will arrive on that first day in a couple months and not notice too much being different from when we were there last fall. The usual branches and limbs will need to be picked up, picnic tables set out, water turned on; that sort of thing will preoccupy us. But if you look down toward the far end of Rateau Yard you'll see some new fill where we need it to build the new yard and service tracks. This material came from the excavation of the new tunnel under Broadway on the new division. Yup, work has started on the mainline extension onto "Charlie's Land"! When done it will add about a quarter of a mile or more to the mainline's current length, allowing us to claim over a mile of mainline. We're about 40 feet short of that claim now. We are fortunate to have had Bill Banta and his son bring some of their big equipment to make a lot of progress in a little time late last fall. Thanks guys.

And if you take a peak behind the station you will see our newest piece of equipment, a diesel powered Case 580 backhoe / bucket loader donated by Larry Fahy and delivered from Pennsylvania by Richard Dean. Thanks guys; it will surely come in very, very handy!

There is a bit more to do before we can declare completion on the DeSantis overpass project. The signals and remote switches need to be reinstalled (no easy task!) and more blocks will be needed for fill retention. Then we can get busy on the new dump truck body that will replace the old one about 50 feet away on a new lead near the storage container. Also the station exterior needs a second coat of paint and the library needs to take form inside the storage room for all the volumes we have acquired over the past few years. I think everyone will be surprised at just how much there is to organize and get on the shelves. It may also surprise you how many volumes there are that contain very valuable model engineering content as a result of some very significant donations. And then there's talk of a shelter for all the new equipment. All of this will take manpower and money. When you get your renewal letters from our Membership Secretary keep these two items in mind. Somehow we never seem to have enough of either, yet great things still happen at ALS.

So it sound like we'll be pretty busy again this year, but we all MUST remember that ALS is about having fun running trains too. Look at the ALS calendar and Plan On It!

Don Buesing, President

Whistles in the Woods
NEWSLETTER OF THE
ADIRONDACK LIVE STEAMERS
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SUBMISSIONS: *Whistles in the Woods* welcomes articles, news items, classifieds, and other contributions. Please contact any of the staff.

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MEMBERSHIP

Anyone interested in joining the ADIRONDACK LIVE STEAMERS should contact Rich Dean, Membership Secretary.
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CORRECTIONS

The December issue of *Whistles in the Woods* contained two errors in the Calendar. The Organizational Meeting for the Spring Meet will be on Thursday, JUNE 12, and the Annual Membership Meeting (Election of Officers) will be SATURDAY, November 8. Your Editor regrets these errors. See also the Calendar on page 7.

NOTES FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Don Buesing

While the rest of you have been enjoying your winter break, your Board of Directors has been meeting on several occasions. Following are some notes to bring the membership up to date on what has been happening.

- The budget has been finalized; it will be a topic at the March Membership Meeting.
 - Funds were allocated to finish the DeSantis Divide project.
 - The last payment for the new land will be made this year.
 - The Woodstock #2 boiler fund may be close to the amount needed for replacement. (Note: Woodstock #2 is the club steam engine. *Ed.*)
- The new division's tentative building schedule was discussed, and will be a topic at the March Meeting.
- Plowing, or the current lack of plowing, was discussed.
- The club's 25th Anniversary (this year) was discussed, and will be a topic at the March Meeting. ***

A BATTENKILL TALE

Bill Mischler

Did I ever tell you about the snowy winter afternoon and night I spent with Engineer Ron Crowd and Conductor Bill Taber—both good friends of mine—on a Battenkill Railroad freight train? I forget what year it was. I remember it was between Christmas and New Years, but I went up to Greenwich that afternoon, and Ron asked if I wanted to ride with them. Jim Connor was there, but perhaps wisely thought of other commitments that afternoon and evening. Well, after riding around town in Ron's old Jeep station wagon, the one with the machete stuck in the driver's door (the interior panel was long since gone), we got ready to head out on the rails. Ron's the polio-victim owner, or was at the time, of the railroad from Greenwich and Salem, to Shushan, Cambridge, and Eagle Bridge.

Well about three o'clock, off we went, first to set out a car at the Salem Agway. That's the first clue I had of what was ahead of us for the evening. As we pushed the car into the siding with the old Alco RS-3 locomotive, Ron applied the independent air brake, and the locomotive turned into a 150 ton sled on the snowy rails. He opened his window, yelled for Bill to drop off the ladder of the car, and I braced myself in a corner of the cab. We slid into the standing cars on the siding at a pretty good speed – enough to rattle our teeth pretty well, but no injuries, thanks to the warning and knowing what to do.

Later as the snow got heavier, Bill and I bailed off the engine at every grade crossing to sweep and peck it out. We used a broom with a chisel on the opposite end of the handle, and a pickaxe. We had to clean the flangeways so the locomotive wouldn't go on the ground, then out of the cold and snow and back to the comfortable warm cab to catch our breath until the next crossing. This kept up all night, until we cleared up after midnight.

But wait—there's more! Every time we wanted to throw a switch, go in a siding to

pick up a car, or drop one off, we had to dig out the switch. Using the shovel and broom, we would clean out behind the open point so we could throw it all the way and lock it against the outside rail. If not done correctly, the locomotive, or perhaps a loaded car almost as heavy, would go astray of the rails. There were plenty of switches and crossings, especially when Ron told us we would probably have to make two trips from Cambridge to Eagle Bridge. Well, that had pluses and minuses. Plus side: the trees, heavy with snow, were making a big white tunnel ahead of us in the headlight beam. It was an almost fairyland appearance with the falling snow; the trees arched over; the warm cab with the engine's rumble in its hood behind the cab; and the sound of the wheels crunching snow on the rail, which was getting deeper, nearing a foot of new accumulation. This was the beautiful scene that was our compensation for the hard work in the snow and cold.

So, we made two trips from Cambridge to Eagle Bridge, on account of siding lengths, the number of cars already there, and the number we had to add to them. Sweeping, shoveling, pecking crossings, and digging out switches. This continued for pretty much eight straight hours, interspersed with warm comfortable sitting and recuperating in the cab, knowing that we were going to be back out again in a few minutes. But it went well. Bill and I could do our "guy thing," with jokes, foul language about the snow and the ice, but not foul enough to melt it, discussions of the railroad, the railroad business, and the camaraderie, all accompanied by Ron's encouragement.

The last move of the night was up to Thompson, to set out a boxcar at the paper plant. Well, the siding sort of slopes downhill. Bill would pull the coupler pin, Ron would back off with the engine, and the car would chase it. Each of us (except Ron who was in charge of encouragement, and

who would shout from the cab and get a dose of abuse from us in repayment) took a turn climbing up the slippery rungs on the end of the car to wind up the brake wheel, but there was snow packed between the car wheels and the brake shoes. This car wasn't going to hold, no matter how we cursed at it. Now we needed a chock to put under a wheel. Have you ever looked for a 2 x 4 in a foot or more of fresh snow, when you didn't even know if there was one, much less where it might be? Keep in mind that it was midnight in the middle of a cold and somewhat breezy snowstorm. It was not your average picnic; that's for sure. We were beat, and this last car was trying to get the best of us. Well, Bill finally kicked up a block of wood somewhere in his search, and we got the car to stay put. Great! Now we had to clear that switch after we backed out, throw it over, and head for Greenwich and the barn.

There was nothing in the road crossings for us to sweep and peck since we'd gone by a half hour before. The rest of the world was sensible enough to be snug in their beds by then. Now we were down to the last switch, the one to the enginehouse. Bill suggested that it was Ron's turn to dig out the switch. Ron replied that, crutches and all, he could, but that it would take awhile. So, once again Bill and I walked the snow covered walkway of the engine, down the snow-plugged steps, trudged ahead, and dug out and threw that last switch. Back on the engine, we ran down to the enginehouse, and climbed off to open the doors. Whew! There was solid dry ground on the floor inside. No snow! Ron moved the locomotive in and shut it down. He and Bill took care of a couple of details, made sure that the furnace would not go out before morning, and we each headed toward home.

By two AM, I arrived home, and looked at the plow berm and the foot of snow in my

driveway. I had to run the snow blower even if it did wake the neighbors. I had to carve out a spot for the car and head in to bed. The first thing in the morning, it was out with the blower again to finish the cleanup. Now it was a beautiful clear winter day with a perfect blue sky. Well, I thought, the Vermont Railway should be running from Rutland over to Whitehall. I'm awake, the driveway's clean, and there's time to get north and meet the train, watch and photograph it on the way into, then working in, Whitehall. And I got a few hours of sleep didn't I? So I made the phone call to confirm, drove up, and got dynamite photos. I probably crashed pretty hard that night, and probably early.

But I could look back on quality time, teamwork, friends, good fresh air, a job well done, no derailments on our watch, and the next day the rewards of a beautiful bright snow-covered world and the magic of Kodachrome. What a great 24 hour period it was, one that I will obviously remember vividly. The takeaway? One Bill would have been lonely, discouraged, and really beat to a pulp doing all the digging and pecking. With two Bills, it was more of a lark, or at least a game to see who could clear his rail before the other guy, and variations on the theme. On top of that, the three of us were companions to share those fairyland views of the snow, trees, crossing flashers, and the few lights found on late in homes in the beautiful valley of the Battenkill. Yes, and to share the victory of finally defeating that damn roll-happy boxcar in Thompson. Teamwork, joy and friendship, some sharp good natured barbs thrown and fielded, a job done quickly that seems quicker yet for the banter and just the joy of being with friends, even if to battle the demon weather.

I hope you enjoyed the ride as much as I enjoyed recalling it. ***

THESE WEB SITES MAY INTEREST YOU

Ken Nelson

WWW.SDRM.ORG

Do you have a question or questions about railroading? Who doesn't have at least a few?

A friend of mine (sorry I forget who) made me aware a few months ago of an interesting web page. It is sponsored by the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum which is in California. Go first to www.sdrm.org and you will be connected to the organization's web site. From there you can click on "faqs" and may then choose any area of steam, diesel, or general railroading questions.

The information is based on the operations of the Museum's trains, and may in some cases be a bit dated, but generally one can learn a lot from the site about the building and operation of locomotives of any size, signals and how to read them, the operating rules adopted by many railroads in our country, and even complete operation booklets for several different prototype diesels. In addition to the educational aspect of the site, there is also some humor. Have fun! ***

WWW.TRHA.CA

Many of you have no doubt traveled to Toronto, Canada. It is a beautiful city which includes some very interesting railroad sites. This web site is sponsored by the Toronto Railway Historical Association which is working hand in hand with the city of Toronto to create the Railway Heritage Center in the heart of downtown Toronto.

After going to www.trha.ca you will have the opportunity to see what the Association is all about, what they have accomplished so far, and what they are planning for the future. Several different short articles, many photos, and even some short videos will keep you busy for some time. I hope you enjoy it. ***

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YOUR NEW CALENDAR

Each year, we print a calendar of ALS events for the year. As you put up your new year's calendar on the wall, we hope you will find a place to hang the ALS Calendar, and to plan to join in on

as many of the scheduled events as you can. This year's calendar is on page 7, and can easily be removed from the newsletter and posted. ***

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**Spring is coming at ALS
Are you ready?**

ADIRONDACK LIVE STEAMERS

2008 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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FEBRUARY

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APRIL

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JUNE

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JULY

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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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July 12 –
Membership Meeting
1:00 PM
July 13 –
Family Day I
July 19 –
Proto Operation Day I

August 9 –
Membership Meeting
1:00 PM
August 10 –
Family Day II
August 23 –
Proto Operation Day II

September 4 –
Meeting 7:30 PM
September 5-7 –
Fall Meet

October 11 –
Membership Meeting
1:00 PM
October 18-19 –
Blowdown

November 8 –
Membership Meeting
Election of Officers
1:00 PM

December 7 –
Albany Train Show

Feb. 3 –
Banquet 1:00 PM

March 15 –
Membership Meeting
11:30 AM

April 12 –
Membership Meeting
1:00 PM

May 10 –
Membership Meeting
1:00 PM
May 17 –
New Member's Day

June 12 –
Meeting 7:30 PM
June 13-15 –
Spring Meet

Adirondack Live Steamers
c/o Peter Petrillos
41 Goode Street
Burnt Hills, NY 12027

First Class

NOTE PAD

February 3 – Winter Banquet
March 15 – Membership Meeting
April 12 – Membership Meeting
See page 7 for 2008 ALS Calendar
All Winter – Track panel building

Get ready for
a great year
of rail roading