

SUMMER EVENTS AND RESTORATION NEWS

Johnstown Car Day - On June 7, 2025 we commemorated the 65th year since Johnstown Traction Company (JTC) stopped operating trolley cars. The highlight of the day was celebrating the 100th birthday of 355. The celebration began at 11:00 am with a short ceremony in the pavilion. Don Hamilton talked about the history of JTC, and Justin (Skip) Kipp, safety manager of Cam-Tran, the current day successor to JTC, talked about the history of transportation in Johnstown since trolley lines were abandoned in 1960. Wes Lambert, whose father operated one of the cars on the last day, spoke about his father and what life was like as a child during this time of transition. This was followed by birthday cake and unlimited trolley rides for the remainder of the day. Don Hamilton took a private trip with the Lambert family and allowed Wes's son and grandson to operate 311. With Wes having operated 311 last year for a Run-A-Trolley event, this made four generations of the Lambert family operating the same car.

Stuff the Trolley - Our second year of our Stuff the Trolley was a success!! Thank you to everyone who donated for the Huntingdon County Humane Society's wishlist, additional items beyond the wishlist, and the monetary donations! Despite the rain, we were still able to get many donations to help keep the shelter pets stocked up with what they need! Thanks to Shannon Turner for setting up this event which completely supports the Huntingdon County Humane Society.

(Report continues on Page 5)



Top and bottom left: Car 355 all decked out for her 100th birthday and Johnstown Car Day. 311 also ran on this day, June 7, 2025.



Top and bottom right: Organized by Shannon Turner, AKA Jingles the Elf, the second Stuff the Trolley event raised donations for the Huntingdon County Humane Society.



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*The Retriever is published four times per year for
members and friends of Railways To Yesterday,
Inc. to share news and events at the Rockhill
Trolley Museum.*

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Visit us online: rockhilltrolley.org

OTHER MUSEUM NEWS

Trolley Operations – First, some concerning news. Due to not having an operator for Saturday June 28, the museum was unable to open for visitors. We did have a conductor available but needed a full crew. This is concerning for multiple reasons. We are doing our best to increase our operating staff, but this does not happen overnight. If you are interested in learning to become a trolley operator, we'd be happy to have you join our team and we can train you on the safe and operation of cars from our collection. If interested, contact Don Hamilton at yankee0023@yahoo.com.

In contrast to that day, we operated the evening of Friday, July 4th, had plenty of help and carried over 140 riders. We offered a multiple ride ticket for the bargain price of \$5 and many people took advantage of this taking a second or third ride. The evening concluded with a spectacular fireworks display sponsored by the EBT and other local businesses.

Thanks to those who continue to volunteer for multiple days in the operations department. We do want to keep our trolleys operating for our visitors to enjoy every day we are scheduled to be open.

Building and Grounds - The pit was recently full of water due to a failed sump pump and Keith Bray replaced the pump with a new one and the pit was again available for use. Keith also replaced a leaking outdoor faucet in front of the members building.

Bob Emery and Brendan Scherzinger have been trimming weeds and cutting grass around the property.

Fred Walter installed a window unit air conditioner in the clean room on the shop mezzanine. This will help with the paint and varnish to dry better and certainly helps with the comfort of the volunteers applying the materials.

Overhead Repair - Nicholas Brightbill led a replacement of two wood strains, one that had failed and one that looked questionable. Don Hamilton and Joel Salomon assisted.

Middletown Parts - Nicholas Brightbill and Don Hamilton recently traveled to Middletown, PA to pick up another truck load of parts that we acquired from the large parts swap held in October and November 2024.

Welcome to the following individual who recently became a member of the Rockhill Trolley Museum.
We hope you can visit us soon!

John Roth
Pasadena, MD

WE'D LIKE YOU TO MEET - FRED WALTER

This issue we'd like to spotlight a dedicated member who made a major contribution to the restoration of York Railways and designing it's propulsion system.

What got you interested in trolleys and when did you realize you had the bug?

We would ride Red Arrow trolleys on the Media and Sharon Hill lines to 69th Street for shopping. I would look for the trolleys on the West Chester line when we crossed at Sproul Road.

Did you have model trains as a child?

I had a Lionel O-27 layout that was 2- 4X8 tables that took up a lot of space in a crowded cellar. They were stored hanging from the basement ceiling most of the year and fitted with legs and lower for a few winter months.

Tell us a little bit about your family if you like.

My parents had individually immigrated from Germany, naturalized in the 1930's. My father was a machinist, who apprenticed in Czechoslovakia before coming to the US during the Depression. He worked for Ford as a toolmaker. My mother worked as a nanny for a Main Line banker family. In the late 1930's she had her own car and even made trips back to Germany.

Did you ride trolleys or trains as a child either for actual transportation or at museums?

We rode the Pennsy commuter cars from Ridley Park to downtown Philadelphia, the 76 Bus and 11 Cars to Center City, and also the Red Arrow and Market Street El. The P&W was so much faster than the bus that the two routes took essentially the same overall time.

What were/are some of your favorite trolley systems?

Philadelphia - Spent a Saturday riding everything that we could transfer between.

San Francisco - Trolleys, trolley buses, and Cable Cars.
Chicago - Rode the Elevated, especially trips to Wrigley Field

How did you hear about the museum?

Tod Prowell and Phil Glass came to the Penn State Model RR Club and persuaded some of us to come to the 1967 Winter Spectacular.

When did you join the museum?

1967.

How often do you usually volunteer at the Museum?

15 times a year.

What projects have you been involved with as a member of the museum?

Wood trough and wire in CB1, installed 5 - 500W lights & wire in CB1. Unloading 249. Overhead extensions - Cummins Curve to Culvert and Culvert to Altoff. Culvert Construction in 1972, Moving, re-engineering and Restoration of 163. Moving 61, Southern Caboose, Reading Caboose, Brookville, Scranton 505, and 471.

What's your favorite part about volunteering at the Museum?

Many facets: Sharing with our guests, solving problems, working with others.

Do you have a favorite trolley at the museum, restored or unrestored?

York Railways #163.

Do you have a favorite trolley not at RTM?

Steeple Cab Locomotives.

Do you have any long term goals you would like to see the museum achieve in the future?

I want the collection to grow, but more so, want the existing collection to be restored, maintained and operated to demonstrate to and educate the public the importance of trolleys to the growth of our country.

What was/is your occupation?

Electrical Engineer - Coal and Nuclear Power Plants, Steel mills, Data Centers, Gypsum mines & quarries and Sheetrock Plants.



Above: Fred Walter with the late Phil Glass installing an overhead wire frog at Altoff siding in 1998.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to our top three operators Ron Rabena, Lawrence Biemiller, and Larry Zilch who have covered many of the days we have been open. We would like to see other volunteer operators/conductors step in to help. We also thank the operator training students Dennis Braun, Beth Stauffer, and Paul Wolfgang, who have come out to help with operations multiple times. Beth has also learned the ticket sales process as well. Thanks to all of the trolley operators, conductors, and others listed below who have been helping so far this year.

Don Hamilton Oper
Shannon Turner Oper
Asa Frantz Oper
Paul Wolfgang Cond
Dennis Braun Cond
Mike Nowak Oper
Jim Cohen Oper
Ron Rabena Oper
Philip Sauerlander Oper
Larry Zilch Oper
Zach Rudisill Oper
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Calvin Gerhard Oper
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Bud Blair Oper
Lawrence Biemiller Oper
Bob Emery Oper
Beth Stauffer Cond
Cameron James Cond
Elizabeth James Store/Tickets
Bill Rodgers Oper
Chuck Kumpas Store/Tickets
Mike Seguin Store/Tickets
Valerie Robbins-Rice VSP

SUMMER EVENTS (Continued from Page 1)

Trolley car shifting – In order to accommodate the number of visitors asking to see our new local acquisition, Lewistown and Reedsville 23, we effected a large shifting operation. It had been stored in Car Barn 2 since we acquired it in January of 2025. While we did have scheduled Car Barn 2 tours in 2025, many people can't wait until that designated time, so had been unable to see the car.

The goal was to switch storage places between Philadelphia freight motor 402 and Lewistown car 23. This required quite a bit of shifting of cars

as well as pulling 402 out with the Brookville and putting the diesel locomotive on the other end to push it up into track three in Car Barn 2. Before that could happen, operable cars on track three were taken out, and the Brookville was used to pull Lewistown car 23 to the Car Barn 1 area. The Bullet car restoration supplies stored in 402 were relocated into the Lewistown car. Visitors can now see car 23 in the rear of Car Barn 1. A donation box is set up for donations for the car's future restoration.

We made the Lewistown Sentinel newspaper with relocating the Lewistown car to its new display spot. Thanks to the shifting crew of Don Hamilton and Nicholas Brightbill, who planned out all the moves. Joel Salomon, Brendan Scherzinger and Fred Walter assisted in making all this possible.

Car Cruise In - This renewed event featured 22 beautiful antique and classic cars on display at the museum on Saturday, July 11th. Drivers of the vehicles were offered free trolley tickets, and their passengers were offered tickets at half-price. Although the day was warm, it was great fun looking at the various classic and custom cars. Thanks to Ron Rabena for setting up the event. We will be having it again on the same weekend next year, the second Saturday in July, so be sure to mark your calendars.



Above: Lewistown and Reedsville car 23 poses on the Car Barn One lead before being pushed into Car Barn 1 for its new display site.



Left: Lewistown and Reedsville 23 in its new spot at the rear of CBI.

RESTORATION NEWS

Chicago 315 - The paint we chose for car 315 is a linseed oil-based paint from Sweden. This type of paint allows the object to be coated with linseed oil to bring the gloss back so if the paint starts to fade all that would be required to bring the gloss back is to recoat the car with linseed oil. We chose this paint based on a visit to the Strasburg Rail Road years ago. Unfortunately, this paint has been having issues with drying evenly.

Keith Bray has had numerous lengthy conversations with the paint distributor over the years since the paint was first applied. Recently, the distributor changed to a different paint manufacturer due to other customers complaining about drying with the uneven look. They sent us a new batch of paint and the color was not even close, even though it was supposed to be the same. Our distributor told us there are not many customers who use this shade of green in the quantities we ordered. Apparently, the new manufacturer's base colors are different from the old, which required Keith and Joel Salomon to mix the paint to a formula the distributor supplied. The good news is recently the car was wiped down with the linseed oil soap to prepare it for new paint. Amanda and Jeff Morgan repainted the car with this "new" paint. The color match is good with the new mixed paint.

There's been plenty of other progress on the car as well. Additional trim pieces were varnished for a final coat by Keith and Joel and have been installed by Keith. Most of these pieces are on the ceiling of the coach and smoker sections. Most of the car card pieces that hold the car cards have been stripped by Carl Salomon and Rich. They were then primed and painted by Keith. Carl has been painting the doors of the car and also stripped additional trim pieces and varnished some by brush. Trim pieces needed for the ceiling have been varnished, which completes that part of the restoration.

The seat backs for the interior of the car moved into full swing in several ways. The condition of the seat backs were at best in poor condition. Knowing this, Keith Bray built new seat backs at his home work shop. With the new seat backs made, volunteers started die grinding the rivets off the three different types of spring sets, which contained very old and unusable webbing. The springs were then reassembled onto the appropriate spring steel with new fabric webbing cut to the appropriate length. At this time all of the spring sets have been renewed with new webbing and nuts and bolts taking the place of the rivets. We have several seats that had no pleats as these seats were replaced by the CA&E in later years and contained different types of spring sets. Thanks to Asa Frantz, Eric Knepp, Kevin

Nolish, Richard Rasch, Carl Salomon, Joel Salomon Beth Stauffer, and Shannon Turner for accomplishing this work.

The first coat of green mixed with linseed oil has been applied on various parts of the car accessories including the doors, electrical compartment doors, and various trim pieces on the end platforms by Carl Salomon. Tracing out wiring for the car heaters has been underway, and two of the three lamp base fixtures have been installed by Charlie Wootton and Keith Bray. Thanks to all of these volunteers for their help with making this progress possible.

Car 1875 work - Various volunteers have been helping with the open car rehabilitation. Kevin Nolish sanded all of the remaining grab handles to have them ready for varnish. Asa Frantz applied a coat of varnish to these pieces. Richard Rasch sanded the posts on the car and applied varnish to them. Beth Stauffer and Asa Frantz applied varnish to the seat bottoms completing that phase of the project. Fred Haganir, Keith Bray, and Fred Walter have all been working on the underfloor parts of the car with the motor harness, wiring, and resistors. Fred H and Kevin have also been working on cleaning the underside of the car and coating the areas that have been cleaned. Thanks to everyone for their participation.



Above: Long-time volunteers Fred Walter and Calvin Gerhard with Open Car 1875, which is currently being refurbished.

TROLLEY RESTORATIONS REPORT

Bullet car 205 - Fred Wagner has been leading the Bullet car 205 project, assisted by his wife Barb and Fred Huganir and others occasionally. The results of all of their hard work is amazing.

The Bullet car team continued their work on various areas prepping and applying the U-pol acid #8, Kirby primers, and the finish coats of Kirby Tuscan red. Areas addressed included the letterboard and main body panels on the right side of the car, and the tapered letterboards on the A end. The A end anticlimber was cleaned with dish soap and a small scrub brush to keep the dust down. The interior was wiped down and the sub-ceiling interior orange panels on the left side with wet soapy rags, with good results.

The process for applying new paint to the car is extensive. After the paint is removed by stripping, the car was sanded. Volunteers then clean and prep the steel with the U-pol acid 8 etching primer which prepares the aluminum to receive the paint. After the etching primer has dried, it is scuffed and then primer is applied, followed by the final two coats of Kirby Tuscan paint which is applied by rolling and tipping.

A huge thank you to both Fred Huganir, Fred Wagner and Fred's wife Barb for their dedication to the Bullet car 205 project.

Overhead wire delivery - We recently purchased a reel of overhead wire from the Electric City Trolley Museum. This reel was stored in their Buckingham, PA shop. Joel Salomon made arrangements with Mike Trosino and Ron Walker from ECTMA to have the wire delivered by Mike, who is also an RTM member. This occurred on a July in Saturday while he was going to be in the area. The cost was a trip on our Stratford car 162. They have Stratford car 164 operating in Scranton so they know this type of car very well. Thanks to Mike and Joel and Henry Long who unloaded the wire.

Car Maintenance - Johnstown 311 and York 163 received a thorough greasing of their trucks' center and side bearings, and a check of all the journal axle bearings. All were lubricated as needed. Thanks to Brendan Scherzinger, Don Hamilton, David Gallagher, and Joel Salomon for making all this possible.

Philadelphia PCC 2743 - Applying this car in "park" is sometimes challenging ever since the pedal assembly was replaced many years ago. Recently Joel Salomon, David Gallagher, and Fred Walter had the car over the pit and made some adjustments, with suggestions from Matt Nawn, to make it easier for operators to find the "park" position. Several operators have tried the "park" position and it seems to be easier and the car operates well. Thanks to all involved.



Top left: Great progress is being made on the exterior Bullet Car paint work by our dedicated volunteers working in the back of Car barn One!



Bottom left: New volunteer Kevin Nolish sands a seat back for Open Car 1875.



Right: 1875's newly sanded and varnished grab bars after being reinstalled. The brass hardware has also been polished.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Thank you to the following donors who recently made contributions to the development and operation of the museum.

General Fund

- Mark Wiles
- Richard Freeze
- Charles Long
- David Batchelder
- Robert Zimmerman

Track & Wire

- Henry Long

Lewistown Car 23

- Kent Bollinger
- Charles Plantholt
- Larry Altoff
- Bill Shaefer

Red Arrow 61

- Nicholas Brightbill

Porto 172

- Graham Buxton
- Randy & Laura Watts
- John Spsychalski
- Philip Saurlander
- Larry Zilch
- Joel Salomon

York Railways 162

- Kent Bollinger
- William Vigrass
- Charles Plantholt
- Larry Altoff



Top left: Car 172 had its "Santa" red paint renewed ahead of the 2025 holiday season. Note 2743 in the background.



Top left: Volunteer Fred Walter has worked on numerous projects in his 58 years of volunteering at RTM. Here, he is repairing the DC welder on work car 64.



Middle left: Fred Wagner and Fred Haganir painting the Bullet Car A end Kirby Tuscan red.



Above left: Car 315 trim pieces for the upper clerestory painted and ready to be installed.



Above right: Car 1875's seat minutes after a fresh coat of varnish was applied.

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WE NEED YOUR HELP! As you read in the articles about the progress made at the museum, all of it is possible only because of the dedication of many volunteers. We are always looking for additional volunteers to ensure this progress is maintained. Think about the fun that you would have helping to accomplish great things at the trolley museum. It is truly a special feeling of satisfaction that you can only get by volunteering! Contact any Department Head to learn how to participate.

PROJECTS IN NEED OF VOLUNTEERS

- **Maintenance and restoration of our trolley and internal combustion fleet - mechanical, electrical, machining, painting, upholstery etc.**
- **Trolley operators - Our trolley operators are the face of the museum and tell the story of the electric trolley car and our museum collection of trolleys and interurbans. No prior experience needed! We will train you!**
- **Museum store staff - Welcome our visitors to the museum. Make sales in the store and help with museum projects.**
- **Video production - We're looking for someone with video editing skills to help us promote the museum.**
- **High level steps to get into the caboose for volunteers**

- **Paint the Car barn 2 door trim.**



Join our volunteers with any of these projects or our many other activities.