

The Buzz Box

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 3

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR GREAT LAKES RAILCARS

Whitewater Valley RR and ITM Weekend

By Roger J. Hoffman

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Six motorcars and one HyRail truck showed up in Connersville IN during what seemed like the wee hours of the morning on 29 July for the GLR excursion on the Whitewater Valley Railroad. The event was coordinated by EC Chuck White and hosted by WVRR's Bill Gray. Bob Brown and Gary Skora, both volunteers with the WVRR, served as our lead and tail escorts. The plan was to attempt two round trips to Metamora, with lunch sometime in Metamora. We had to work around the WVRR excursion train schedule which didn't seem to pose any trouble for our little group. Switching out to the siding north of Metamora to wait for the train was a nice experience relative to real train operations.

The HyRail truck came in handy at lunch time when we had to leave the motorcars north of Metamora in the siding. The motorcar operators left their passengers in town prior to motoring back to the siding where they all climbed into the back for a ferry trip back into town for lunch.



The only mechanical issue encountered during the event was a fouled plug in Chuck White's MT-19. It was a short delay and a learning experience for Chuck, who had apparently not had such an experience before. In his words "*For me, the WV (run) was unique due to the fouled plug I encountered. I'm not the most technical guy. For me to diagnose the problem, and then fix it within a matter of minutes is almost unbelievable.*" Such modesty!

We ran a total of 70 miles on the WVRR, amounting to the equivalent of two round trips, satisfying our initial goal.

The next morning, five motorcars and the same HyRail truck showed up in Noblesville for set on for the Indiana Transportation Museum run. This run was also coordinated by EC Chuck White and hosted and escorted by the

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CONFIRMED EXCURSIONS

SATURDAY, November 11

Eastern Illinois Railroad

Great Lakes Railcars is sponsoring a 1 day run on Eastern Illinois Railroad- travel 84 miles round trip from Brocton to Neoga, IL. This is a NARCOA insured excursion and all NARCOA rules apply. Set on is at 8 AM and departure is at 9 AM. Trip fee is \$60. For trip details contact: Richard Hinds @ (217) 487-7750.

SUNDAY, November 12

Monticello Railway Museum Railroad

Great Lakes Railcars is sponsoring a 1 day run on Monticello Railway Museum Railroad. Traveling 12 miles round trip with several runs between Monticello to White Heath, IL. Cost is \$30. McDonalds Restaurant on end of run. Set on at 7:00. Leave at 8:00 a.m. Contact Richard Hinds at (217)487-7750.

Please Note:

Motels in Tuscola and Monticello have been booked for months due to an event at the University of Illinois. However, rooms are still available in Arcola, Decatur, and Paris, IL. It has also been suggested staying in a motel off of I-70 in Indiana, in or near Terre Haute.

SUNDAY, December 10

Indiana Transportation Museum

Welcome to our annual Christmas trip with Santa. Participants are invited to decorate their railcar for Christmas. This is a one day run. We'll travel between Noblesville and Tipton, IN. There will be a pizza buffet at Tipton, which is included in the excursion fee. Set on is in Noblesville, 8 blocks south of the square at 9:00 am. Seat belts will be required. Departure is scheduled for 10:00 am. Approximate round trip mileage for this excursion is 32 miles. This event is sponsored by GLR. NARCOA insurance and rules apply. The cost of this trip is \$40. This includes railroad costs and meal for two persons. Contact: Les McConnell.

NOTES FROM THE CHIEF MECHANIC

Zero Issues Remaining

If you see a zero on the front of your envelope, this will be the last issue you will receive via the USPS. If you're not receiving this newsletter via email and would like to continue to receive it (and save \$10), please send your email address to: railcarman@gmail.com (Note the change). I would encourage everyone who can, to subscribe to this newsletter electronically.

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ITM's Les McConnell. An interesting twist for me was the fact that the ITM's HyRail truck broke down just two days before the run so Les didn't have a ride. It only took about a minute for him to decide that he would commandeer a ride in my HyRailer and that we would lead the pack. This required me setting off from the tail end and setting on again at the front. This in and of itself wasn't a problem....the problem was that I had never been "in the lead" before and I had never had a RR guy ride with me before. I was worried about how Les would perceive my "performance" but it didn't take but a mile or two down the track to realize that Les is a really neat guy and has just as much fun riding the rails as the rest of us do. He told me a lot of interesting and historical things about the ITM and because we were in front, well, I guess I probably had the best ride of any of us on that run.

We worked our way all the way south from Noblesville to the Indiana State Fairgrounds. From what I understand, this was a sort of a record as no other motorcar group has made it that far before. From some of the things Les told me, we could have physically run all the way into downtown Indy, but it apparently would not have been a wise thing to do from a safety point of view. I was speaking with another motorcar operator two months later while on the Tuscola and Saginaw Bay RR run out of Cadillac MI and he was surprised we went all the way to the fairgrounds. He was surprised that we were "brave enough" to take on all those major crossings inside the I-465 "beltway". Thinking back, I remember we had several 4-lane crossings to contend with, but I didn't remember any of them being particularly busy or troublesome. However, one has to remember that we left Noblesville at something like 7:30 in the morning so we probably skipped by before traffic had time to grow.

A really interesting event on the way back north to Noblesville from the fairgrounds was the I-465 overpass that the rails went under. On the way down, we saw where painting crews had been working the previous few days. Their "cherry picker" and curtains had been left on the scene. Well, 45 minutes later, when we came back thru, not only was the equipment still on the scene, but it was in use. The painters had come in behind us and resumed work, completely oblivious to the fact that the rails were in use that day. We came back thru and found the large curtain pulled across the rails and several air compressor and portable A/C hoses laying across the track. Les got out of the truck to "encourage" the crew to clear the track for us so we could get thru and it was pretty clear that we startled the guy in the cherry picker pretty good. Anyway, it took them about 10 minutes to move their equipment and hoses and pull the curtain aside. It was a neat distraction....something that we will probably never encounter again in our motorcar experiences.

We stopped briefly at the set-on point in Noblesville to allow folks to retrieve forgotten things from their tow vehicles and then we headed out to the ITM property. Motorcar running thru Noblesville was a unique experience because of the street running...right down the center of a moderately busy 5 lane street with intersections and traffic lights. I don't know how the motorcar



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operators felt, but I felt pretty vulnerable in my HyRailer as I was not in the lanes where other non-knowing drivers would expect to find a ¾ ton pickup truck. Thankfully, Les and others walked the several blocks of dual-use roadway and flagged us thru the worst of the congestion.

We spent a fair amount of time at the ITM, stretching our legs and touring some of the buildings and museum pieces. It always amazes me how the various museums around the country can muster enough volunteer man-power to restore the stuff they have on display, or even decide what piece of history should be restored next. My hat is off to the staffs of these museums....they clearly have their hands full.

Resuming our trek north we stopped in Tipton for lunch. I was anticipating this stop to be the highlight of the trip for me as I had always heard of the all-you-can-eat pizza place in Tipton. Being rail side, it was a really neat stop and we got some good visibility with the public. It was indeed pretty neat. And I didn't go hungry!

The return trip to Noblesville was uneventful with only a minor stop near Arcadia (I think) while we waited for the ITM excursion train to resume its trip southbound. It was nice photo opportunity and another good chance for exposure to the public. We ran the streets of Noblesville again with our pacing flaggers protecting our flanks and we set off having completed nearly 68 miles (according to the GPS).

All in all, two days of great fun and I want to thank Chuck White for his efforts in setting it, the both railroads for hosting us, and the operators for keeping it all safe.

NOTES FROM THE CHIEF MECHANIC CONT.**New Editor & Publisher**

Getting this issue published has made me realize it's time for someone else to take over this newsletter. I've got a few too many things on my plate right now, to handle the BB per my expectations, and as any subscriber would also expect. And, I've developed something like "writer's block." I apologize for the delay in getting this issue out to you. This would be inexcusable if there was any compensation involved. Finally, I've been handling this task for about 7 years. It's time for someone with "fresh blood," and new ideas to take on this role. Thanks to everyone who has helped me out with this journalistic endeavor.

My resignation is effective as soon as my replacement can be found. Please contact myself, or any of the GLR BOD members, if you would be interested in taking on this responsibility .

Thanks.

Chuck White, Editor & Publisher