

# The Sentinel



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**Harry Carl Eck**  
1925 - 2012





# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The gruesome deaths of two teen-age girls in Ellicott City, Maryland—buried in coal spilled from a derailed 110-ton hopper car—bring to the fore yet again the need for smart safety practices by both the railfan community and the general public, and perhaps the need for the former to actively engage in teaching the latter.

Editorial rant first—whatinhell were those girls thinking when they walked out on the bridge that carries the former B&O Old Main Line over an Ellicott City street? Then, according to reports, they sat down on the edge of the bridge and started tweeting messages and, according to one account, pictures of their feet. Did they even hear CSX Train U813, 80 cars of coal behind two big, modern (and hardly silent) diesels, coming apart and derailling behind them?

In the aftermath, the inevitable finger-pointing included questions about whether there was enough fencing in place to deter such intrusions.

Let's point a finger somewhere else—were the two girls, and in fact any young people in that or any other area, ever made to sit down for a formal presentation anywhere on how to behave around the tracks?

If you grow up close enough to them you learn—even if you can't sit for a while because of the whipping you got for racing across the front lawn as the *National Limited* came barreling west—that you stay off the tracks. You learn, quickly, that the odds are in favor of the freight train getting on a bridge before you can get off it. You learn that while it

might be considered fun to put a penny on the track to be flattened, you improve the odds of losing your head while finding the penny.

The Federal Railroad Administration told a reporter for the *Washington Post* that 411 people died and another 355 were injured walking on the tracks in 2011.

And what does all of this have to do with you, the average, responsible Society railfan? Everything. You need to be in the forefront of pushing for more safety lessons, in more places.

My grandson is 8 years old. Ask him to recite the basic rules of railfan safety, and he'll respond: "Never step on a rail. Get across the track quickly; don't stop between rails or double track. Stay a good 10 yards back from the track so if the train throws up dirt or a stone, you don't get hit."

So hooray for me, you say. "Why do I care?" Well, you care for two reasons: railfans are persona non grata in a lot of places as much for their safety blunders as for any national security reasons, and because no one is in a better position to either teach safety around trains or push local organizations—schools, clubs, churches, whatever—to find someone who'll welcome the chance to get the message out.

It's easy enough to find a responsible program—type Operation Lifesaver into a computer search and hit "enter." The Internet is great for digging out things like that; try a few search phrases that seem related and see what you can find.

Then take that information to some-  
(continued on page 35)

## The Sentinel

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## ON THE COVERS

After Tropical Storm Agnes in June 1972 (*The Sentinel*, second quarter 2012), the B&O had a lot of freight backed up, so traffic got heavy. John King was in Dickerson, Maryland, one afternoon and wondered why the head brakeman on eastbound 3742 [front] was gesturing at him. He turned just in time [back] to capture the meet between 3742 and westbound autos in the charge of 4624.



The S-class 2-10-2 was the choice for freight power through Connellsville, Pennsylvania, in the early 1950s. Here, on September 5, 1951, S-1a Number 6220 leads an eastbound train under the Pittsburgh & West Virginia bridge west of the B&O station.

# The B&O Drops Fires in Connellsville, Pennsylvania

## The Last Days of Steam in the Coke District

Article and Photographs  
by Bill Hopkins

Connellsville is located on the Youghiogheny River in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, about 60 miles south of Pittsburgh. It was founded in 1793 by a settler named Zachariah Connell.

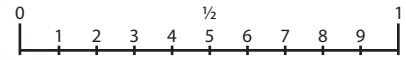
Even back then, the abundance of coal in the area did not go unnoticed. Pittsburgh's foremost position as a steel production center was not based upon accessibility of iron ore, but upon nearby deposits of prime metallurgical coal possessing superior coking qualities. The best and largest quantities were in the Connellsville region. These vast deposits of bituminous coal are part of the Pittsburgh



The B&O station in Connellsville served 18 daily trains in 1952. Lying before us to the east is the Pennsylvania Railroad Southwest Branch crossing the B&O and Youghiogheny River. B&O's yard is in the distance.



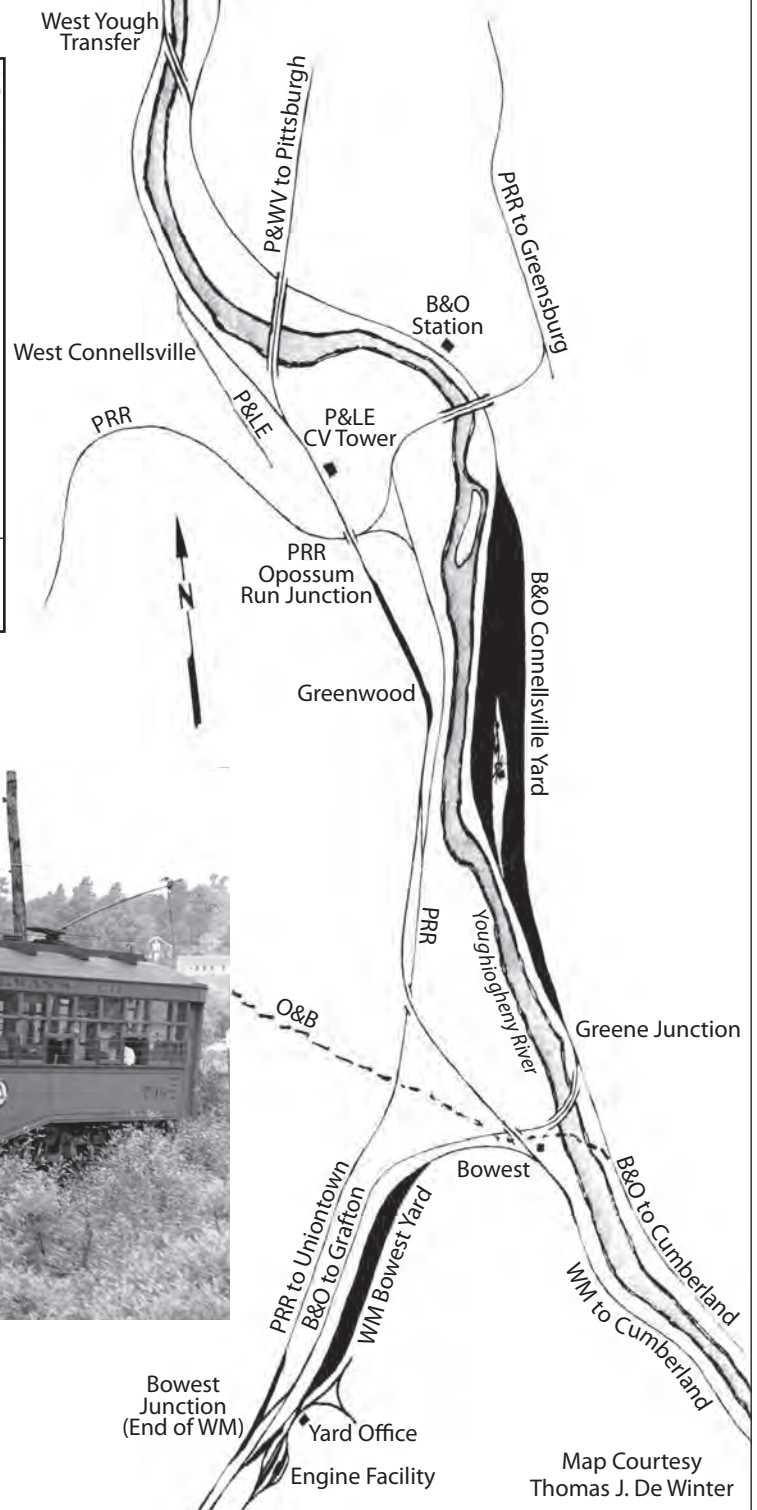
# CONNELLVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA



**SYMBOLS**  
**C** - COALING STATION    **S** - TRACK SCALE    **W** - WATER STATION  
**E** - ENGINE HOUSE    **T** - TURNTABLE    **Y** - WYE TRACK



West Penn Railways Number 739 is about a mile out of Connellville in this July 20, 1952, photo. U.S. 119 is in the background. The photographer was in the nick of time; West Penn was abandoned in August 1952.



Map Courtesy  
Thomas J. De Winter

# Harry Eck, Executive and Teacher, Dies



At ease explaining diesel braking or dynamometer car operation, Harry Eck signed on as a docent at the B&O Railroad Museum after retiring in 1985 as superintendent of locomotive operations for CSX. (Sharon Beischer Harwood photograph, 2010)

In 41 years' service with the B&O and its Chessie System successor, Harry Carl Eck spent a great amount of time and effort teaching—air brake training, locomotive and train-handling procedures, a classroom/on-the-job program for new engineers.

And after his retirement, the teaching continued, as a member of the first class of volunteer docents meeting and talking with visitors to the B&O Railroad Museum.

Outside the formal settings, he was always ready to talk with B&O fans, answer editors' questions and, at one point, provide an audio-visual program for the B&ORRHS about "Life Aboard a Q-4."

Harry Eck died July 14, 2012, at Northwest Hospital in Baltimore. The Catonsville resident was 86.

The son of a lumber merchant and a homemaker, born in the Baltimore area, Harry developed an early romance with steam railroading in the early 1930s, when

## Harry Eck's B&O Career

*(From material he provided at The Sentinel's request)*

- 1943 Summer vacation, electrical apprentice at Mt. Clare shops in the passenger car department.
- 1944 Signed on as fireman after graduation from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute.
- 1953 Promoted to engineer.
- 1956 Entered management as assistant road foreman of engines at Philadelphia.
- 1960 Transferred to New Castle, Pennsylvania, as ARFE.
- 1961 Air brake instructor on general staff of Mechanical Department—Baltimore, handling mechanical and air brake lectures and examinations for promotion to engineer.
- 1962 Appointed general supervisor of locomotive operations, responsible for setting locomotive operation and train handling procedures for the entire system.
- 1963 Moved to Huntington, West Virginia, with B&O Mechanical Department during merger.
- 1974 Returned to Baltimore as superintendent of locomotive operations in Transportation Department, carrying same responsibilities as previous title.
- 1985 Retired.

his family took "Depression Sunday drives in the family's Studebaker."

"And when we did this, I would always ask my daddy, 'Can we go by a railroad crossing?' in hopes of seeing a train, and frequently we did," he told Paula Snell, who interviewed Harry in 2002 for the B&O Museum's oral history collection.

"So my entire ride was based on when we get to the railroad track, crossing over and hopefully seeing a train with one of those big, beautiful steam locomotives,"





## Maintenance Under Review in Ellicott City Wreck

The Oliver Viaduct in Ellicott City had coal piled on and under it, and was festooned with overturned 110-ton hopper cars. The one in the street below the bridge had just been dragged out of a parking lot it fell into. *(All photographs by John Teichmoeller)*

The National Transportation Safety Board has named the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees as “one of the parties to the investigation” of a coal train derailment in Ellicott City, Maryland, on August 20 that led to the deaths of two teenage women.

The first 21 of the 80 cars of CSX Train 813 derailed just west of the bridge that carries the former B&O track across Main Street after an air line broke, setting the train’s brakes and causing it to pull apart. As they overturned, each of the 21 spilled 110 tons of coal. They just missed the Ellicott City railroad station/museum.

The two women, Rose Mayr and Elizabeth Nass, both 19, were in downtown celebrating the end of summer and their impending return to their colleges. Long-time residents of the area told reporters that the bridge was considered a place “to drink beer and smoke pot...out of sight, out of mind.” The two women scaled the railroad embankment, walked out onto the bridge and sat, their feet dangling over the edge. They apparently did not



Videographers, still photographers and bystanders gathered on the hill above the track below St. Paul’s church to see what was left of 21 toppled hopper cars. They narrowly missed the historic station and the preserved caboose.





On a summer day in 2007, Train Q-343 is westbound at Halethorpe, Maryland, with its engineer visible in the mirror of GP-40 Number 6828. The switches for the HX interlocking are in their final days of operation. Q-343 was a regular Baltimore-Cumberland assigned freight run, paired with Q-148.

# ‘Some Things Never Change’

## B&O Name Is Gone; Traffic Is Still There

By Dale Corn

Photographs From the Author’s Collection

When I hired on at CSXT 12 years ago, I felt I’d really missed out on many things from the railroad’s past after listening to stories from my grandfather, other railroaders and older volunteers at the B&O Railroad Museum. But now that I’ve been around, I have stories to tell, not only of my own, but also from such men as Harry Eck, Norm Nelson, Nick Powell and Howard Barr Jr. To wit: some things never change! (At this point, I’d like to say that this will be a collection of various stories presented as a single train trip. As most of the people involved are still

employed by the railroad, some names have been changed to protect them.

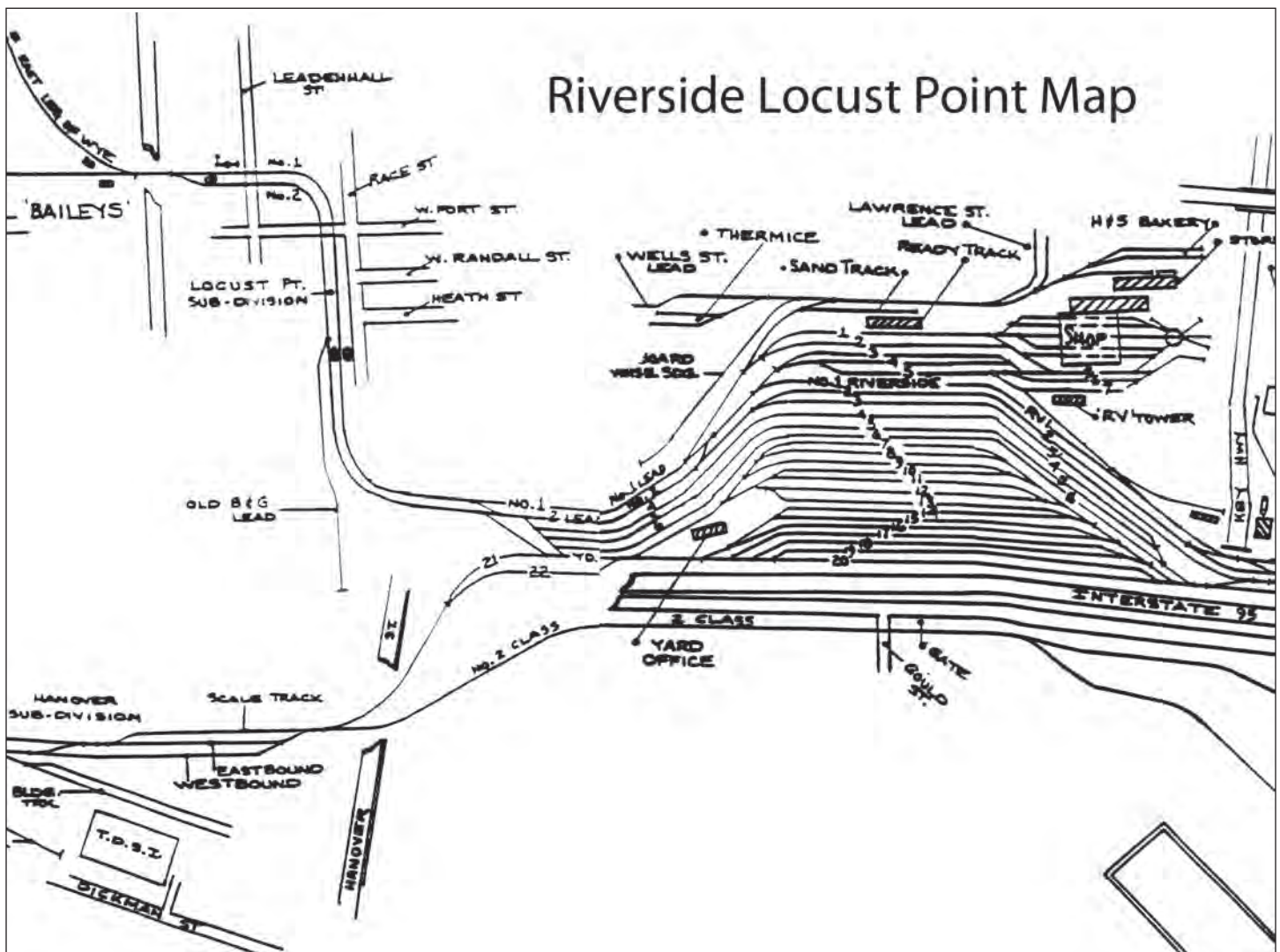
Of all the ground I’ve covered, I would say the most fun I’ve had was working the assigned freight trains between Baltimore and Cumberland. The best of these trains were the combination of Q-343 and Q-148, each of which had three crews assigned to it. One crew worked from each end of the run with the third crew at rest in their home terminal.

A typical day in the A-3 assigned freight pool would start without a phone call. One of the perks of this assignment

was that we never had to wait for a call to start the working day from home.

I would make my way to Locust Point by the starting time of 1730, if I remember correctly. At this time of day, one might find second-trick yard crews waiting on their paper work or locomotives or just doing what most railroaders do best: “chewing the fat”.

On this train, I would normally work with my friend John, who was usually on the ball and would speak his mind. We never wanted to waste too much time on this job, so we’d see Yardmaster

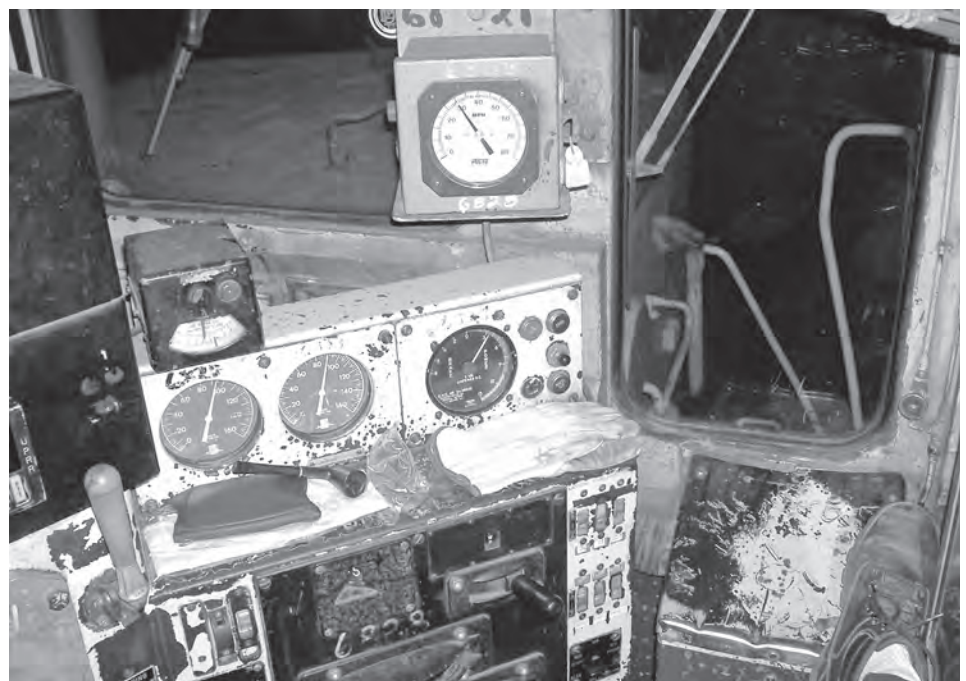


This map of Riverside dates to 1982 and shows the changes as a result of the construction of I-95.

D.J. to get our paper work and yarding instructions. D.J. was always a nervous wreck and often talked too fast.

Upon getting our paperwork, we would look over the train profile to be sure things were in order, checking for such things as haz-mat cars or other restricted equipment, followed by the train orders with temporary speed restrictions and work authorities (ex: maintenance of way crews working on or along the main).

After checking these items, we would gather our grips (bags) and make our way to the locomotives, normally a short walk from the yard office over to No. 22 Track. John would go over the power to make certain everything was in proper order as a good engineer always does. I would help at times as I was a licensed engineer by then, but had been bumped back to a trainman's position.



The inside of a GP-40, with its EMD-style control stand. Dale refuses to identify the person attached to the foot at the lower right, to protect the innocent.





The scene of the washout at Blue Hole Pond in southwest Indiana on March 27, 1913. Four men died when a locomotive went through the 230-foot-long trestle, and the 150 workmen in the cars remaining on the tracks were stranded when the White River Bridge farther west was also washed out. (All photographs, Chas. E. Smith collection)

# The Blue Hole Disaster

By Edward Young

In late March 1913, heavy spring rains had brought the waters of the White River to the brink of overflowing in parts of southern Indiana.

The B&O Railroad had experienced the river's wrath on many occasions over the years, including along its tracks around Washington, Indiana. On March 27, 1913, a work train had been dispatched from the Shops in Washington carrying sandbags to shore up fill around a number of bridges west of town. One of these areas was around the approaches to a 230-foot-long wood trestle over Blue Hole Pond, about 2 ½ miles west of the Shops.

In the wee hours of the morning, the train, headed by 2-8-0 Number 401, was eastbound on the trestle over Blue Hole Pond. Without warning, the trestle, under the weight of the locomotive, was washed away by the floodwaters. The engine and one car were thrown into the deep and swirling water. The remaining cars in the train, carrying 150 workmen, were spared when they became uncoupled.

Thirty minutes after the Blue Hole trestle collapsed, the White River

Bridge—a 450-foot-long, two-span truss bridge built in 1894 about a mile and a half farther west—also was washed out.

The workmen riding in the rear cars of the train were trapped between the two washouts. Some abandoned the cars and waded out using the rails of a spur track as a guide until they reached Tom's Hill, the highest point in the area, about a mile to the west. Local residents sheltered them until they could be rescued the next day. Those who stayed with the train were rescued by boats in the morning.

Six men were riding on the engine when it went into the water. Four of them died: Theodore Gharst, the engineer; Reason Jackson, the fireman; Daniel Shaffer, general yardmaster at Shops; and Clifford McLemore, night yardmaster at Shops.

The other two, trainmaster C.G. Stevens and switchman Dan Tucker, were saved by men in boats, who were guided in the dark by the cries for help of the two men as they clung desperately to branches in the tops of trees.

The railroad hired Joseph T. Gayre and his son, professional divers from Vincennes, to locate the locomotive

and the bodies of the missing trainmen. They found Engine Number 401 on April 6, but the first efforts to raise it were unsuccessful when the chains attached to it by the divers broke. It was eventually raised, refurbished at Shops and returned to operation. Its tender was never found; a new tender was assigned to the locomotive.

The divers were not able to locate the bodies of the four trainmen. Because they had not been found downstream, it was initially believed that they had been trapped in the cab of the engine. However, there was no trace of them when the locomotive was found and raised.

On April 20, the first two bodies were recovered. The coat of Reason Jackson, the fireman, was discovered sticking out of the sand by Raymond Leonard. He had gone to the Blue Hole site with C.G. Stevens, one of the rescued men, to view the tree he had held onto the night of the accident. The body of Clifford McLemore was found in the afternoon by a group of boys who were fishing in one of the deep pools left by the flood. The body had been partially uncovered as the floodwaters receded.



# RUNNING LIGHT



B&O A-18c coach Number 5259, its exterior restored by the Midwest Railway Preservation Society in Cleveland, is now part of an art gallery complex at the former Wheeling & Lake Erie depot in Hartville, Ohio, that includes the C&O caboose just visible to the right rear. The coach will become the gallery owner's frame-making shop. (Cheryl Gifford photograph)

*Running Light is designed to provide a forum for amplifications of articles, corrections, updates and late news briefs. Mail them to Harry Meem, or e-mail them to Barry Rubin or Harry. We also steal from the Yahoo! chat room.*

◆◆◆

A B&O coach built by Pullman in 1924 now belongs to the owner of an art gallery in Hartville, Ohio, southeast of Akron.

The Midwest Railway Preservation Society in Cleveland spent five months restoring the 70-foot car, **Steve Korpos**, one of the society's trustees, told the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Its original blue, gray and gold paint was restored.

Korpos said the car will be incorporated into the operation of the Maple Street Art Gallery in Hartville.

New owner **John Tarzan** said he paid \$24,000 for the car and spent \$10,000 on the restoration. The car will house the gallery's framing shop.

Tarzan bought Hartville's original Wheeling & Lake Erie depot to house the main gallery, and has a 1929 C&O caboose as well.

CSX, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad and the current Wheeling & Lake Erie collaborated to move the car to Hartville.

The preservation society said that per common practice the car never had a name, bearing only the number 5259. The name *Hartville* was applied during the restoration.

Society research showed it was built for service in the Detroit pool and later served as a Chessie System safety car. MRPS acquired it when CSX declared it surplus.

The B&O 1960 *Summary of Equipment* listed Number 5259 as a class A-18c.

As built by Pullman the coaches had seating of walkover, revolving and revolving/reclining types. All A-18c's were equipped with the standard B&O York air conditioning in 1936-37. (The *Sentinel* staff hopes to have a more thorough look at the A-class coaches in the near future.)

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**Al McEvoy**, who has taken over direction of the Society archives, reports that **Chris Manthey**, who recently began attending archiving work sessions, is working on filing in an Excel table with some basic information about each of the articles or topics listed in the Table of Contents of every *B&O Magazine* in the Society's collection, working forward from a starting point in the early teens.

This new *B&O Magazine* "database"

will be searchable by anyone looking for information that may be in feature articles in the *B&O Magazine*.

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It wouldn't be a real *Sentinel* without some bit of incidental B&O history offered by **Norman Nelson**. He notes that among the questions he got from **Don Barnes** about the Old Main Line and Brunswick was, "Where in the Brunswick yard did they keep the Hagerstown Doodlebug?"

"I had to think for a bit since it came off in 1949. I was not 100 percent sure that it was in what was called 'the Coach Yard.' The Doodlebug had a hot water heating/cooling system, so the engine had to be kept running all of the time to keep it from freezing up in the winter months. They didn't use anti-freeze.

"Same thing was true for the Budd cars when they got them—they were also stored in the Coach Yard. There was a steam line that ran from the roundhouse that kept the conventional coaches heated.

"When I got my current [third quarter 2012] copy of *The Sentinel*, lo and behold, there was a photograph of the Doodlebug in the Coach Yard. So I guess my memory is not as bad as I had thought!"

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