



THE SWITCHSTAND

*The Official Newsletter of the
Byesville Scenic Railway
Volume 4 Issue 4*

Byesville Scenic Railway, Inc.
100 Tolliver Trail
P.O. Box 254
Byesville, Ohio 43723
www.bsrw.org



"Byesville Scenic Railway has resumed its passenger service"

Byesville Scenic Railway's President, Tim Brown, reports the Byesville Scenic Railway has resumed its passenger service as of 10-1-11.

This action comes as a result of negotiations between the Cambridge-Guernsey County Community Improvement Corporation, acting on behalf of the Railway, and the railroad track owner, Byesville Scenic Trails, LLC; Mr. Jerry Jacobson, of Sugar creek, Ohio

Jacobson recently provided the Railway a written notice that they may resume operations during our negotiation to purchase the railway.

Norm Blanchard, Cambridge-Guernsey County Community Improvement Corporation's Executive Director, acting on behalf of the Railway has been negotiating a purchase of the track from Byesville to Cumberland from Jacobson since the Railway received the notice by Jacobson to shut down. Blanchard reports the sale is planned to be completed very soon.

The Byesville Scenic Railway will be open as published in our brochures and on the web site www.BSRW.org and additional information may be obtained by contacting the Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors & Convention Bureau by calling 1-800-933-5480 or visit www.VisitGuernseyCounty.com

The Byesville Scenic Railway wishes to apologize for any inconvenience to our visitors and tourism partners.

The mission of the Byesville Scenic Railway is to preserve, restore, maintain and operate historic and vintage railway equipment and to provide scenic train rides featuring a living history of the local coal mines. To promote, create and maintain a railroad and coal mining museum and display site for the education and entertainment of the general public, to assist in the economic development of the area and to operate same as a non-profit 501-c-3 organization.

FROM THE ORDER FORK

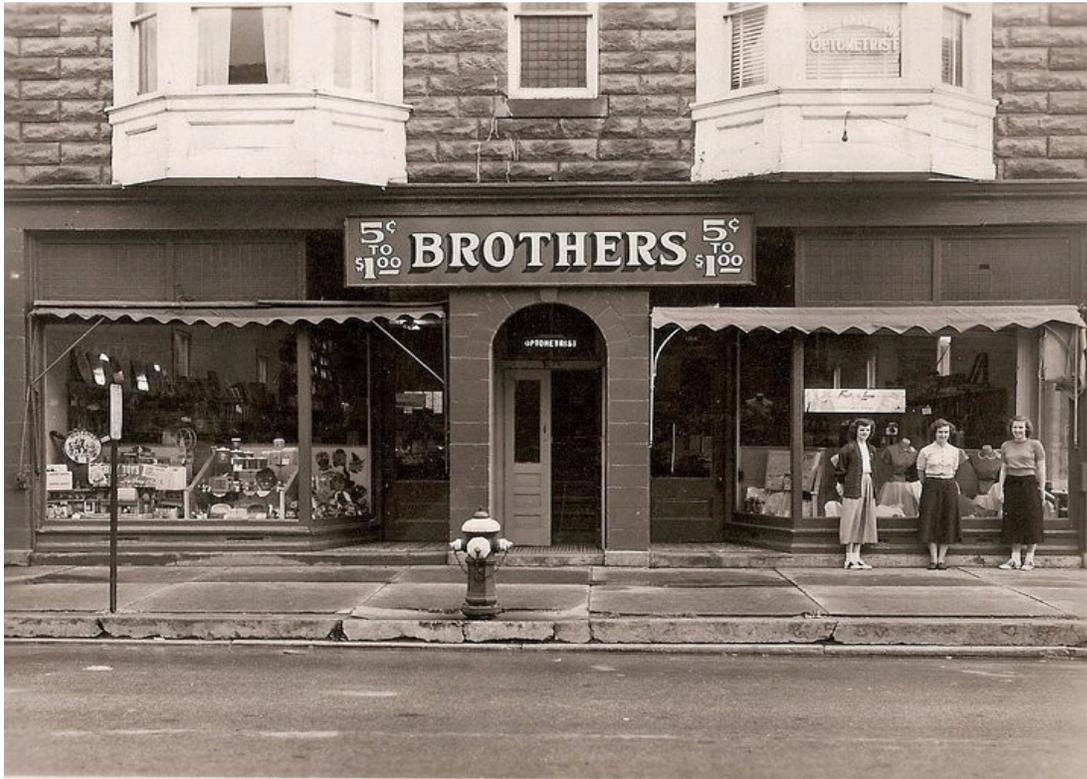
by Jake & Louise Davis

Since the last edition of the Switchstand, we have gone through some tumultuous times with uncertainty, despair, and perhaps the most frustrating of all, even now to this very day as I write this, we do not know the reason why !!

We never did anything wrong, unless putting smiles on peoples faces and giving thrills to the young children is wrong. Never ever convince me of that. However, one thing that should be said: Through all of this that we went through, and so to speak, when all of the dust has settled; Hey, here we are. We're still here !!

Now it is all forward under a better situation. The tracks will soon be ours and we will feel a sense of relief just to know that.

We had three beautiful runs on Sat. 24 Sept. The first group from leadership Guernsey were so appreciative. We had a crew and gave them a ride to Seneca Lane. They really enjoyed that. Also, so did the Colgate people. They listened, laughed, asked questions and made comments. A great day. You all know that earlier this year in the news was all the talk of a strike by the NFL players and a lockout by the owners. Finally and very sensibly they came to an agreement. All you heard then was the phrase "the NFL, its good to be back". Well now, we all can say that to the Byesville Scenic Railroad. "Its good to be back."



From "You Know You are from Byesville" Fred C Lauer collection
(building presently owned by Tim Brown)

Brothers Store – mid 1950's

Change of Season... amidst a Season of Change for The Byesville Scenic Railway

A look back at the early years of the Byesville Scenic in the Fall Season Part 1 of a Series

By Douglas Stolarik, BSRW Webmaster

The origin of The Byesville Scenic Railway dates back to June 2003, when the equipment of the "Buckeye Central Scenic Railroad" (now defunct) was transferred from Hebron, OH to Byesville. Accommodations for passengers (and crew) were certainly "modest" at best that first excursion season. Noticeable improvements to the grounds would begin in early 2004 with the construction of our familiar 8-sided ticket office.

RIGHT: The weather looks fabulous in this photo taken October 25th 2003, making for a pleasant ride to Derwent on this fine fall day.



LEFT: Another view of eager passengers ready to board the 1 pm excursion on October 25th 2003. Although not that long ago, the scene is strangely unfamiliar. No ticket office, no passenger shelter, no signals, no gift shop, no siding. This photo is testament to the dedicated volunteers and all they have accomplished in the past seven years. Naturally, without the strong support of the community and surrounding region, none of this would be possible.

In the early days of the BSRW, the entertainment on board the excursion began well before the train started moving. Airships, ducks, and yes the occasional fish would magically fly, and even swim, past the coach windows, much to the delight of passengers (especially little ones). This would help pass the time should the train be delayed in leaving the station, but served a more important purpose- to perform a walking inspection of the train.

RIGHT: Shown left to right are Bob Sears, Mark Chicwak, Bob Emerson, Russ Boley, (unknown), and Dave Adair. Photo taken October 25th 2003.



RIGHT: The date is October 25th 2003 and the 1pm excursion to Derwent is returning northbound at old PRR milepost 52, just south of Byesville Curve. Buckeye Central Scenic Railway SW-1 No. 8599, built in 1948, was a former Pennsylvania engine, and was right at home on this former PRR branch line. The passenger coaches were at one time used on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (the bright blue and yellow colors of which had been inspired by the Delaware and Hudson Railway). Enjoying the scenery from the rear platform of 8599 on this fine fall day is former BCSR member Russ Boley.



ABOVE: The Byesville Ticket office, built by volunteers of the railway, would be finished by the fall of 2004. This is how it appeared just before the cupola was added, painted applied, and sidewalks poured.

Our earliest structure, the 8-sided ticket office, dates back to 2004. Volunteers Steve and Marguerite Stolarik provided the following details of why and how the BSRW ticket office was built that year... "We built the Byesville Ticket office because when we started in 2003 we were working off of a picnic table and under a \$20 canopy. The sub-floor, the studs, and the two windows came from a house that we tore down (Otis and Melba Watson's former place on Greendale Ave). Dave Adair and I built the framework in the driveway at Dad's place on 5th Street, where it was nice and level. When the framework was done, we moved the ticket office to where it now sits using a flatbed from Bartholow's Towing." (con't)

Steve and Marguerite also informed that... “The siding for the ticket office was salvaged from a house that was over 100 years old, and which originally had square cut nails in the boards. The door was donated by Chad Moore of R.C. Moore Lumber in Caldwell. The plywood for the roof was donated by Jack Young of Bi-Con Services, Derwent. The cupola was built by former member Bob Sears, Captain with the Salvation Army. The drywall, shingles, and paint were purchased with proceeds made from selling soft drinks on the train back in those earlier years. At times we would have to wait from week to week until we had enough money to purchase materials.”

RIGHT: Our ticket office nearing completion, as it appeared in September 2004.



“Fellow member Fred Gerdau donated most of the nails. The concrete around the depot was poured in sections as we came across profit money or donations. The steps were poured when Caldwell Concrete would call us to let us know that they had extra concrete left over from a local job.”

LEFT: Close up of the station sign and schedule board, with the now strangely out-of-place “Buckeye Central” lettering.

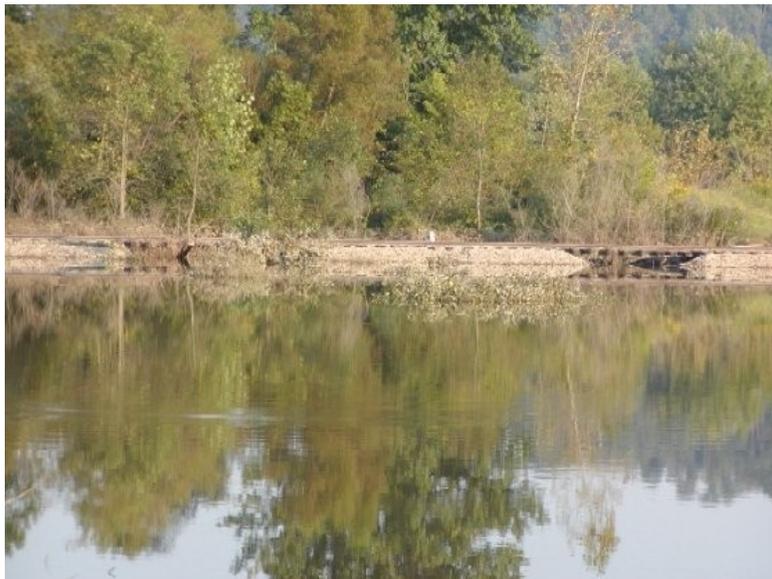
“All the local members of the group from the early years volunteered their labor to help construct the ticket office. Byesville donated the ground that the ticket office sits on. Some of the local businesses that contributed to the project were Black Funeral Home, Main Street School Supply, and Moore Hardware. And of course 10% of the materials came from rummaging around. So, for the early BSRW, the out-of-pocket cost for building the much needed ticket office was basically zero.”

RIGHT: A Pennsylvania Railroad cast iron whistle post and a length of 90 lb. rail, recently installed, help to decorate the ticket office site, still under construction. Photo taken in September 2004.



The Byesville Scenic Railway is no stranger to adversity. In September of 2004, the route of the Byesville Scenic Railway suffered extensive damage due to massive flooding. About eight inches of rain fell in a 48-hour period as the remnants of Hurricane Frances moved north through Ohio. The rain started falling Wednesday Sept. 8th and continued heavily and steadily through Thursday Sept. 9th.

RIGHT: In the photo to the right, the location is just south of Byesville Curve at old PRR Milepost 52, taken Saturday, September 11th 2004. In this view the first two of many washouts are visible.

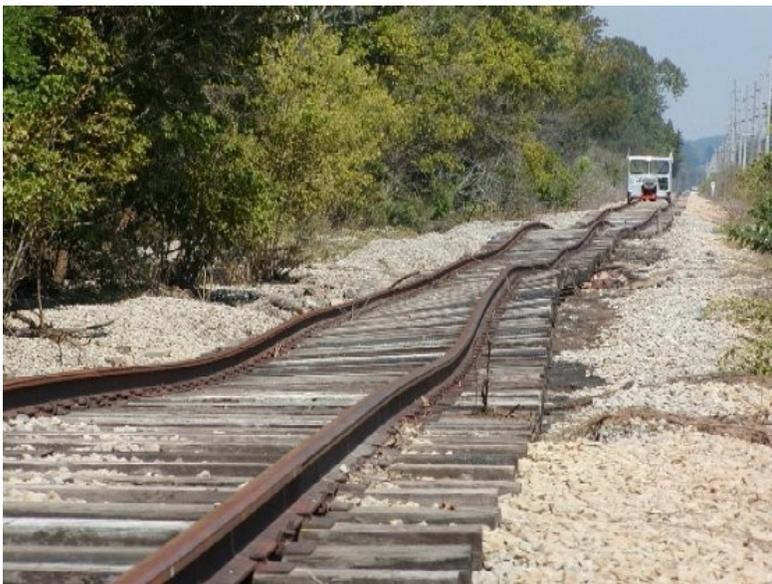


As the floodwaters crested on Friday Sept. 10th, Wills creek overflowed its banks. Soon the water was completely covering the rail line from the south end of Byesville all the way to Derwent, except for a short stretch near the Seneca Lane crossing. At some point, the water began to burst through the roadbed and hundreds of yards of ballast and under-bedding were being washed completely away from under the rails and ties. As the floodwaters receded, it was evident that the railroad had suffered extensive damage to its right-of-way. Over 140 washouts were discovered between Byesville and Derwent. Some of the washouts were as much as 15-20 feet long and 4-5 feet deep below the rail. Many ties were swept away with the floodwater, never to be seen again. Because our railroad parallels and crosses Wills Creek several times south of Byesville, the track was washed out from east to west in some areas, and from west to east in others.

LEFT: On September 11th 2004, our new ticket office, which had just been completed, was now closed due to the flooding.

The worst damage was located north Derwent between No. 4 bridge and Seneca Lane. Here, the floodwaters completely washed the roadbed out from under the track for a distance of over 400 feet and up to a depth of 4 feet. The tracks were suspended in the air, and shifted out of alignment by 10 feet. Fortunately none the continuously welded rail broke despite the great force of the water. Rebuilding of the line began in February of 2005, and was complete the following May, just in time for the 2005 excursion season.

RIGHT: The floodwaters have receded and the result is a roller coaster effect. Photo taken Sunday September 12th, 2004.



RIGHT: All is quiet at the Byesville ticket office on October 3rd 2004. Although excursions had been suspended, dedicated volunteers kept busy doing what they could- collecting spikes, tie plates, and rail joiners that had been worked loose from the washouts, in preparation for rebuilding the line. At the time, no one knew when, or if, rebuilding the line might occur.



Despite the heavy damage to the main line south of Byesville, members decided not to cancel the Halloween Excursions scheduled for that October. The length of the excursion would simply be cut short- terminating just south of Byesville Curve. Excursions were scheduled to last 20 minutes. Despite the truncated excursion route, many happy trick-or-treaters were given the opportunity to enjoy the very popular Halloween Excursions.

LEFT: Byesville ticket office surrounded with Halloween decorations. The colorful tombstones were provided by the BCSR.

RIGHT: The engine crew has just started up No. 8599 for the Halloween Excursions the evening October 30th 2004, and people have started to gather around the ticket office. The railheads are visibly rusty, as the train had not run since early September, due to the flood damage south of Byesville.



RIGHT: Passengers and crew gather around the Byesville ticket office in preparation for the 6:30 pm Halloween Excursion on a warm October 30th 2004. Visible to the left are John Warne (left), Ron Jedlicka, conductor with the Buckeye Central, and Cecil Carlson.



LEFT: Although the sun had not yet set, the ghosts and goblins were already out haunting the main line south of Second Street crossing on October 30th 2004. Undoubtedly, in many years past, more than one railroader traveling this line at night in a dimly lit engine cab or caboose ("cabin car" in Pennsylvania Railroad terminology) would have sworn he had witnessed similar strange and eerie sights... especially had he secretly violated RULE G (which forbids the use of alcohol while on duty).

RIGHT: This hobo camp, located at the switch to old Central Mine, was part of the trackside entertainment along the short ride that evening. The highlight of the camp was an outhouse with a real hobo inside who, upon opening the outhouse door, was surprised to see the passing of a trainload of passengers. This brought much amusement to the young trick-or-treaters riding aboard the train. 100 years ago, outhouses were once a common sight everywhere across the country (especially in our small coal mining communities) and are even remembered by some of the BSRW volunteers. In this photo, Bill Stolarik Sr. tends to the hobo campfire.



In 2004, the BSRW had not yet rebuilt any track south of Derwent. In fact, the entire line between Derwent and Cumberland was still owned by American Electric Power. The former B&O Eastern Ohio Branch, west of C&M Crossing, was in particularly bad condition. There were (and still are to this day) many washouts between Derwent and Cumberland, most of which were the result of the "Flood of the Century" in 1998.



RIGHT: This washout was located just east of the S.R. 821 road crossing near Pleasant City, and has since been repaired. Photo taken November 2004.



LEFT: The State Route 821 crossing as it appeared in November 2004, view looking westbound. This grade crossing had been paved-over for several years. The visibility is very poor for eastbound trains, making this a "blind crossing" (In the early 1980's, the author of this article, along with brother Bill and sister Mary, were almost struck by an eastbound Chessie System engine, when Mom, driving northbound, heard the air horn blowing for the crossing, hit the brakes and skidded to a stop—directly in front of the locomotive! Our Mom cut out of there with just a few seconds to spare!).

RIGHT: The train crew is greeting riders who have started to gather around the ticket office for short Veteran's Day Excursions on this overcast day in November 2004.





ABOVE: 2005 would be the last full year the Buckeye Central Scenic would operate in Byesville. In the Spring of 2006, the BCSR equipment would return to Hebron. Here the BCSR equipment is shown at the Byesville ticket office, where things are quiet on this day in late September 2005.



In 2006, the Byesville Scenic Railway was officially chartered to assume operations of the Byesville excursion train. One of the first orders of business for the group was to acquire its own engine and cars for exclusive use in Byesville. G.E. center-cab diesel No. 386 and two coach cars were acquired from the Ohio Central Railroad in June of 2006. Immediately after arriving in Byesville, both coaches were quickly lettered "BYESVILLE SCENIC RAILWAY", and No. 386 was painted from a "bright red" to a "tuscan red" color that resembles the color of former Pennsylvania Railroad equipment. It is with great pride that the BSRW has recently made the final payment for engine No. 386 and both coach cars.

ABOVE: In late September 2006, BSRW trainmen gather around the ticket office while the enginemen perform an inspection of No. 386. The 80-ton diesel, built in November of 1945 as No. 22 for the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad, would become Ohio Central No. 82 in later years. Ironically, the Ohio Central Railroad itself would be sold to the modern-day Genesee & Wyoming.

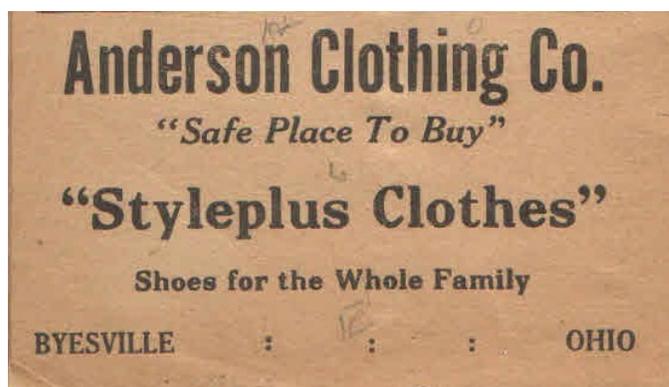
To be continued...

This part of this edition of the Switchstand is going to be dedicated to "the days of common sense".

Dave Adair graciously loaned to me an old miners time book from the year 1921. There are some great old advertisements contained therein, of which I will use as many as I can in this newsletter. In this modern age of so-called "electronic wizardry" : cell phones, I-pods, smart phones, droids whatever they are, and all these other gadgets, most of us, the town in which a lot of us live doesn't even have a grocery store anymore, your hometown is dead or dying, no bonafide gas stations, no clothing stores, no real restaurants. Is this the price we pay to walk around with a cell phone in our pocket? I always got just as good of service phone wise, at least all that I wanted, 60 years ago. At least back then, I could walk to the grocery store. I know that it is a combination of things that have all but destroyed our "free enterprise system." Mainly greed, and socialism. So enjoy and marvel at these old ads. Marvel at the number of businesses there used to be back in the "days of common sense."



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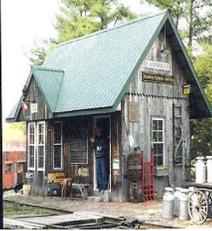
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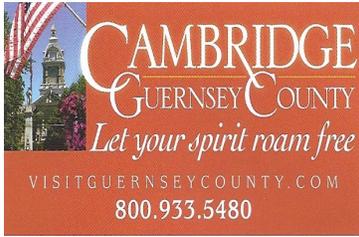
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Jake & Louise Davis, editors