

The Order Board

Volume 7 Number 3 Summer 2005

A Publication of The Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society

ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The annual membership meeting of the Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society is almost upon us. This year the meeting will be held on Sunday, October 23rd. As usual the meeting will be held at the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum at 1316 Plum Street in Terre Haute, Indiana. The business meeting will begin promptly at 11:30 AM CDT. After the business meeting the Society will hold the traditional picnic but this year's picnic will be slightly different from those of the past five years.

No amendments to the constitution of the Society have been proposed so the only business will be the routine items: approval of the minutes of last year's meetings, approval of the treasurer's report and election of two board members whose terms expire this year. Election of the directors might lead to a change in the day and time of the board's monthly meetings.

Jim Rhodes has served as a director since the Society incorporated. He currently is the treasurer for the group. It is believed that he is willing to serve another three-year term on the board. Ralph Bell's term on the board also expires this year but Ralph has stated that he does not want to serve again. Therefore, it will be necessary to nominate and elect a vice president for the Society. Any member of the Society at least age 21 may serve on the board. All that is required is a willingness to serve. Therefore, at the meeting nominations will be accepted for the two positions.

Although not requiring official action Bill Foster will present a report on the activities of the Society during the past year. A lot has happened so most members will want to attend to hear about current events.

At the picnic this year the Society will offer food for those that can not travel and bring their own but the offering will be limited to chili. That was the traditional fare for the annual picnics held at Haley Tower before the Society was incorporated. This year donations for the food will not only be accepted but also encouraged. The financial situation of the Society is tighter this year than in the past as has been explained in the previous issue of THE ORDER BOARD and in the next article in this issue.

Members may feel free to bring another entree if desired and all are encouraged to bring a side dish that can be shared by all present. A small propane-fired grill is available at the Museum for those who may prefer hamburgers or another dish that needs a means of cooking. Of course, the Museum has electricity for devices such as crock-pots full of chili. Everyone needs to bring his own soft drinks and lawn chair.

As always it is hoped that many members will attend to voice opinions on the Society's activities and plans.

Please, if you plan to attend and partake of the Society's chili notify us so we can prepare the correct amount of food. Email Ralph Bell at ralabell@att.net or call him at (317) 894 2626. Also, please let us know how many will be attending.



**The Haley Tower
Historical &
Technical Society**

*A non-profit
organization
dedicated to
the preservation
and exhibition
of railroad history
in the greater
Wabash Valley*

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EXCITEMENT, YET CONCERN AT THE MUSEUM

The board of directors of the Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society has embarked on a project that has the directors excited but also concerned. This project, if completed, will greatly impact the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum.

The original plan for the Museum included acquiring a caboose and placing it on the property. It was expected that the caboose would be of Pennsylvania Railroad heritage and would serve as the location to display artifacts and memorabilia of that line. Members may recall that each of the four historic steam railroads that served Terre Haute was to have one structure at the Museum to convey the story of that railroad's impact on the city and surrounding area. Haley Tower would represent the Chicago & Eastern Illinois. Spring Hill Tower would contain information about the Milwaukee Road. A caboose would serve for the Pennsylvania while a depot would be acquired or built to house the New York Central story.

The original plan had to be modified when the Society fortunately was able to save and move Turner Depot to the Museum. Being a Vandalia Railroad depot and that line being a predecessor to the Pennsylvania it was proper that Turner Depot should display Pennsylvania Railroad history.

As far back as September of 2003 the Terre Haute Parks Department realized that they had a problem in Dobbs Park with the caboose that has been displayed there since the mid 1980's. The caboose is a wooden PRR N6b that was built or rebuilt in Terre Haute by the railroad. After its retirement from the railroad local physician Wayne Crockett acquired the car. Dr. Crockett donated the car to the city of Terre Haute asking that it be displayed in Dobbs Park because it would be close to his home. After the car arrived at the park a group of former PRR employees restored it and it was opened to the public. It became popular with area children as a place to play and it held many children's birthday parties. In June of 2005 former Terre Haute mayor Pete Chalos wrote an opinion piece for the Terre Haute Tribune-Star telling readers that they could visit Dobbs Park and climb on the caboose. However, little money was spent on maintenance of the car and the wood deteriorated to the point that the car became a hazard to the public.

Informal discussions took place in 2003 between the Society and persons with Terre Haute Parks to see if the Society would help restore the caboose. The Society declined because the caboose would have remained in Dobbs Park. The Society felt that we could only help if the caboose would eventually be moved to our Museum.

The subject came up again last year at the August annual meeting of HTH&TS when Trish Eccles informally mentioned that the Parks Department wanted to do something about the caboose. At that time no one from our group had really studied the car to see its condition except Bob Mount who had taken several photographs of it. Society members at the August meeting discussed the situation and the attitude seemed to be that we could not afford to repair an item for the city of Terre Haute. No vote was taken on the matter.

In April of this year it became apparent that the Parks Department would give the caboose to an individual or group that would be willing to restore it and display it. If no one could be found then the caboose would be demolished to remove the hazards it presented in Dobbs Park.

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SPECIAL INSERT IN THIS ISSUE

A special insert has been placed in this issue of THE ORDER BOARD. It is a membership application. It is not for you. Most of you are already members of the Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society. It is for a friend of yours. You decide who that friend is. The Society needs your friends as members. The article above explains why we need more help at the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum.

The Society and the Museum currently have certain manpower requirements that are filled by a group of eight to ten volunteers. It is a recognized fact for museums of all types that only ten percent of the members will be able to give time as volunteers working at the museums. Our volunteer group is slightly more than ten percent of our members so we might be more fortunate than many museums. However, this year several members of that group have found themselves unable to spend as much time as in years past at the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum so more volunteers are needed. Using the ten-percent formula, for each ten new members we will also find one new volunteer.

Acquisition of this Pennsylvania Railroad cab car will also increase our need for volunteers. We will need people with the knowledge of woodworking because structural members of this caboos are likely to need replacement. It will require more than just sawing and nailing together some lumber acquired from the local building-supply store. The top of the caboos should be coated with "asphaltum." We need people that know how to work with asphaltum and probably someone that knows what it really is. When the structural and exterior repairs are complete the caboos will need to be painted. Many of us are capable of this task but we need the number of available hours to complete it. More volunteers equates to more available hours. After painting, the lettering will need to be replaced on the exterior. A friend with the Indiana Transportation Museum can provide the correct lettering but that lettering can only be properly applied if at least two people are involved.

Other major projects remain unfinished at the Museum. The upper level of Spring Hill Tower will be restored to its appearance circa 1960. The tile floor must be removed, as must the remainder of the "knotty-pine" paneling on the walls. The entire building must be re-wired so that the lower level can become a showcase for the history of the Milwaukee Road. Rewiring will not be of any use until a trench is dug from the power pole to the tower so that electrical service can be connected.

Haley Tower is almost complete but the wood trim still needs painting and those surfaces should be properly prepared before painting. Turner Depot has been painted but the preparation was hurried and not done properly. The depot will need to be repainted in three or four years. In the yard at the Museum are sufficient pieces of limestone to rebuild a representative section of the tower of the Big Four Depot. Many Terre Haute residents have no memory of its appearance.

Volunteers are also needed for the mundane tasks involved in maintaining the Museum grounds. Grass growth depends on rainfall but must always be done and we have more than three acres of grass to mow. Then the growth must be trimmed in the areas where a mower can not go.

For six months of the year the Museum is open to the public to fulfill its purpose of exhibiting the railroad history of the Wabash Valley. Most weekends we have very few visitors and one "interpreter" can deal with all visitors. However, on a special day such as "Learning Day in Terre Haute" the Museum receives more publicity and more visitors. On that day, September 24, nineteen people were on the grounds simultaneously. The two volunteers working that day had their hands full trying to explain the exhibits to all that visited.

All these activities require volunteers but also something more and that is money. More members of the Society means more income from dues. However, among those new members perhaps will be another Trish Eccles, capable and willing to write a grant proposal that might bring the funds needed to complete some of these projects.

An additional benefit of more volunteers is that each has skills that he shares with the others. The Museum becomes a place where knowledge and talents are shared along with the history of Wabash Valley railroading.

Please take time to think about this and then send a letter to a friend. Explain why you became a member of the Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society and encourage your friend to join. Also, consider donating your time to the Museum. It can only make us all better.

Individual Membership Form

Personal Information (please print)

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Membership

Membership in the Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society is \$25.00 per year. Members will receive a membership card and a subscription to the ORDER BOARD, the Society's newsletter, to be published quarterly with updates and bulletins as warranted. Future benefits will be announced as resources allow.

Enclosed is my \$25 membership fee for one year.

Enclosed is an additional contribution of \$_____.

Mailing Address

Please mail this completed form, along with your remittance, to:

The Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society

PO Box 10291

Terre Haute, IN 47801-0291

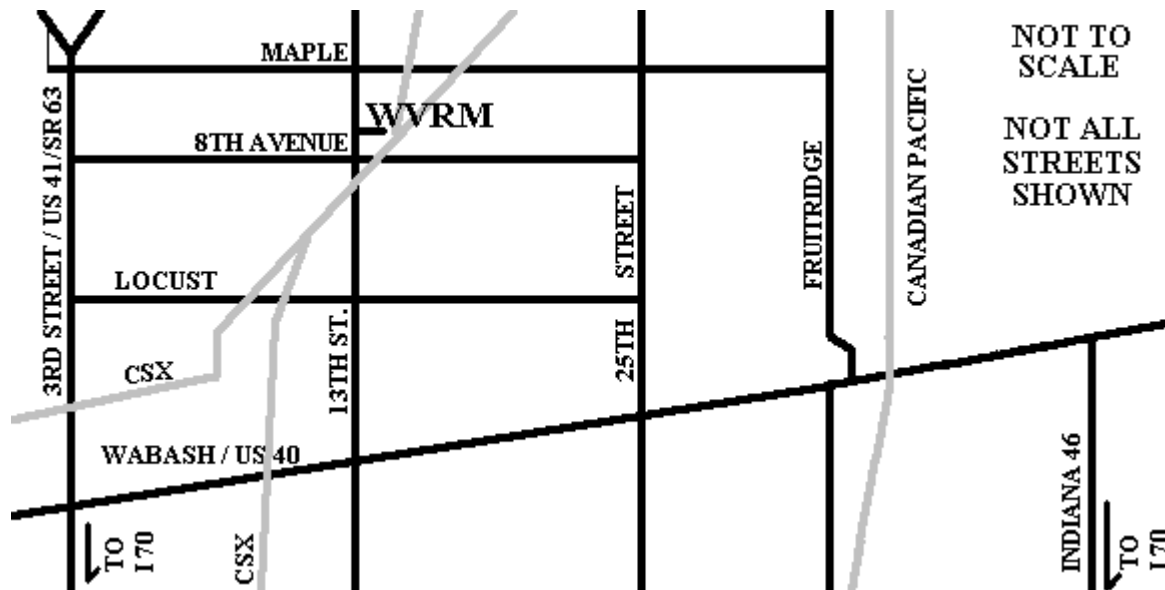
If you have questions or comments for us, please mail them to the address above.

You should receive your receipt and materials within 10 working days.

updated 09/04

CUT HERE AND MAIL THE TOP PORTION. USE THE MAP BELOW TO FIND YOUR MUSEUM.

HOW TO GET TO THE WABASH VALLEY RAILROADERS MUSEUM, HOME OF THE HALEY TOWER HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL SOCIETY



CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

The board of directors of the Society visited the park and found that the brakes and other appliances were all present and in good condition but the wood portions were deteriorated as shown in Bob's photos. Additionally, opossums were residing inside the car.

Since then board members have discussed whether the Society should undertake a program to move the caboos to the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum and restore it. Some of the discussion was held on the WVRMnews group on the Internet so that members other than the directors could express their opinions. Much of the discussion centered on the fact that restoration of this car will take a great deal of time and expertise that we may not have. Also, the extraordinary expenditures incurred this year because of the break-in and theft in June have left the Society with little in the way of funds. Many members questioned if we would be able to pay to move the caboos let alone restore it. We have received a price quote from our preferred mover, MCF. An additional consideration was that the Society had no concrete evidence that the city would give away the caboos.

In late August of this year several HTH&TS members attended the monthly meeting of the Terre Haute Parks board. Bill Foster presented that body with a proposal for moving the caboos to the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum but not until 2006 when we have had an opportunity to raise needed funds. The proposal included plans for securing the car at Dobbs Park now so that the public could not gain access and also included plans to winterize it so that no further deterioration could occur during the winter. Trish Eccles then addressed the gathering and presented a nascent plan to write a grant proposal that would give the Society the monetary means to undertake this project.

The Parks board wants the car out of Dobbs Park and seemed to favor the idea of giving us the caboos. They instructed their attorney to check legalities of a possible transfer of ownership. At their September meeting our proposal was accepted. The attorney has not finished the document that will transfer ownership but the plans were approved and the Dobbs Park maintenance crew will even extend additional help in securing and winterizing the car. Trish Eccles stated that she is proceeding on a grant proposal that will be submitted to the Wabash Valley Community Foundation. That organization gave the money that was used to move Haley Tower.

Your directors are pleased that the caboos will be added to the Museum's collection. This car is one of probably fewer than ten N6b cab cars that still exist out of more than 1100 built by the Pennsylvania Railroad from 1914 to 1923. The class was the most numerous of styles used by that railroad and, although built of wood, was still built after the PRR started building steel caboos. After the railroad stopped building N6b cab cars all future cars were steel construction.

Not only will the museum be given the car but also the panel of track upon which it sits in Dobbs Park. It will be placed north of Turner Depot and a platform will be built between the two giving the appearance of a true old railroad station beside the rails. It is hoped that all the people of Terre Haute who loved the caboos in Dobbs Park will come to visit it at its new home and become familiar with the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum.

The Society's board is still concerned over a number of issues surrounding the caboos. If the grant is not given a great deal of money will need to be raised to move and restore it. Restoration of other wood caboos by groups around the country have required thousands of man-hours over several years so greater volunteer participation would be needed. Some of the restoration work would require a measure of woodworking expertise of which we currently have only a little.

The board believes this project to be worthy of all our efforts. We will certainly be telling you more and asking for your help in the future.

SOME PROJECTS ADVANCED DESPITE SETBACKS

The break-in at the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum in June caused the diversion of funds that were to be spent on other projects this summer. Despite that problem some projects did move forward.

In July several volunteers made preparations for running electricity from the office to Turner Depot. A concrete pad lay over the area where the electric wires need to run and these workers managed to break-up that concrete mostly using sledge hammers. The rubble was moved to the west side of the viewing platform where it was used as riprap on the slope. While removing the concrete pad they discovered six by six timbers and three-inch diameter pipes, all set in another concrete pad.

For some time it has been planned that the viewing platform would have electricity so visitors could connect their scanners and listen to railroad transmissions. A conduit has been run from the northwest corner of the platform to the pole where the electric meter and panel are located. The actual wires still need to be pulled into the conduit.

Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society
P O Box 10291
Terre Haute, IN 47801-0291

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL

PLEASE OPEN AND READ IMMEDIATELY OR YOU'LL MISS THE PICNIC

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturdays and Sundays through October – Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum open 11AM to 3PM

Wednesday, October 12 – 6:00 PM, Monthly board meeting at the Wabash Valley Railroaders Museum

Saturday, October 15 – 10 AM until dusk, Monthly workday at the Museum

Sunday, October 23 – 11:30 AM until ?, Annual membership meeting and Picnic at the Museum