

French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

P.O. Box 632 Meadville, PA 16335

SPRING 2016

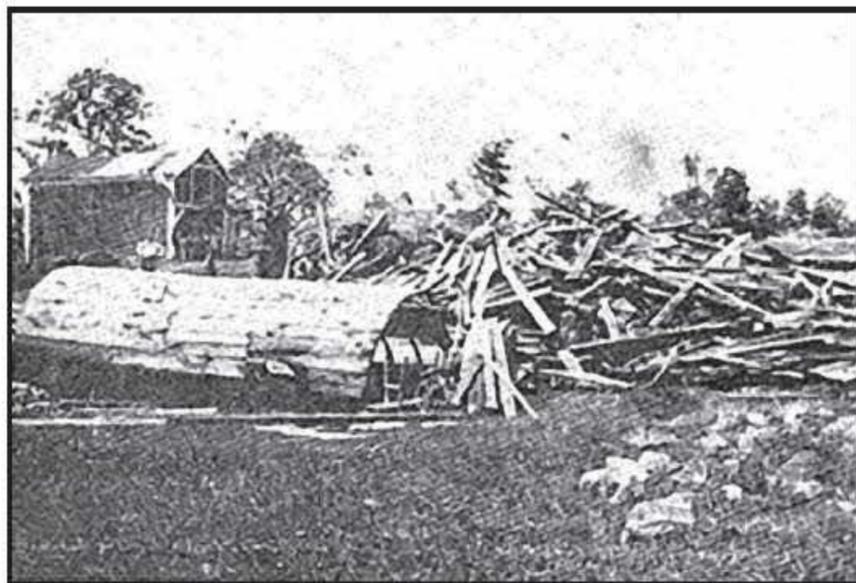
Newsletter of the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

Volume II Number I

VALLEY EXPRESS

The History of Stony Point - Part Three

Stony Point, as we knew it then, was about to change as a community. On June 28th, 1924 at 6:30 PM, an estimated F3 tornado hit Crawford County, resulting in the destruction of Stony Point and nearby Geneva. The storm, the result of a low pressure system moving from Iowa towards Michigan and Ontario, crossed the area of western Ohio. Northern Ohio/Northwest Pennsylvania temperatures that day were in the lower 80's, common for late June readings. A tornado developed over Sandusky Bay late that afternoon and hit the city of Sandusky, OH resulting in the deaths of eight individuals, and destroying 100 homes. Then the storm moved east over Lake Erie, hitting Lorain, OH, and killing 80 people. Damage to the city was extensive to both residential and business structures. Additional tornados moved across Ohio hitting three additional counties before moving on through northwestern Pennsylvania. Three additional individuals died in rural Ohio and five died in Pennsylvania. In the aftermath Geneva rebuilt, but Stony Point did not. Because the community was a population mostly of railroad workers, most chose to leave the shanty town and move on. Almost overnight Stony Point ceased to be.



Geneva Tornado

But Stony Point was about to change importance in the next two decades. War was returning to Europe and although the United States tried to stay out of the action, it still found itself supporting its allies there. Then, on December 7, 1941 Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and we found ourselves right in the middle of hostile actions. Quickly, the government made aquisition of a large tract of land in Greenwood Township, east of Stony Point, and soon began construction of the Keystone Ordnance Works. Since the Erie Railroad would be serving the facility, track construction began at Stony Point to build an eight mile siding east to the site. Stony Point passing track was then rebuilt to handle the additional traffic into the facility. The eastbound siding was nearly doubled in length west, and a new storage track was placed along side of the extension.

(continued on page 5)

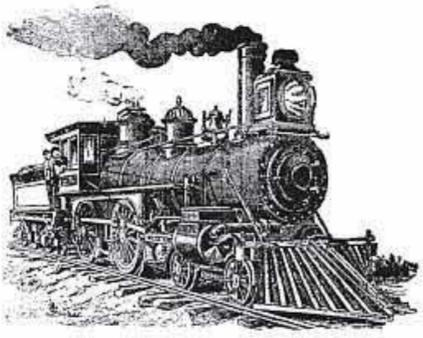
Local News

FCVRRHS Acquiring DL&W Snow Plow

The French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society, having received the B&LE 1908 wooden boxcar in October 2015, is now working on hauling a former DL&W Russell snowplow that was built in 1945. The snowplow is being donated by its owner, the Growth Resources of Wellsboro (GROW), PA. Ferlin Patrick, president of GROW, came to the membership meeting in February to discuss the snowplow. Mr. Patrick's organization owns the track and right of way that the Wellsboro & Corning Railroad and the Tioga Central (Scenic) Railroad operates on. The current operator of the WCRR is Genesee & Wyoming, which recently acquired operating rights from Trans-Rail America.

The snowplow was built in Ridgway, PA, the home of Russell Car and Snowplow Company until 1960, when they closed their doors. The plow was built for the Lackawanna as #95904, then was owned by the Erie-Lackawanna when the Erie and the Lackawanna merged. It did not get repainted in EL colors, but when Conrail took over it became CR #64568. It recently was repainted in maintenance of way yellow, but with no lettering.

The FCVRRHS is currently looking for grants and donations to help pay for its transportation to Meadville. Anyone willing to donate can contact a board member or go to our website (www.fcvrrhs.org) and click on the "Donate" button on the lower left side of the home page. A photo of the snowplow can be seen on page 6.



From the Stationmaster's Office

The membership is now in the process of completing the B&LE boxcar. We will be replacing the boards and staining the sides. We also need to finish painting and lettering the 518.

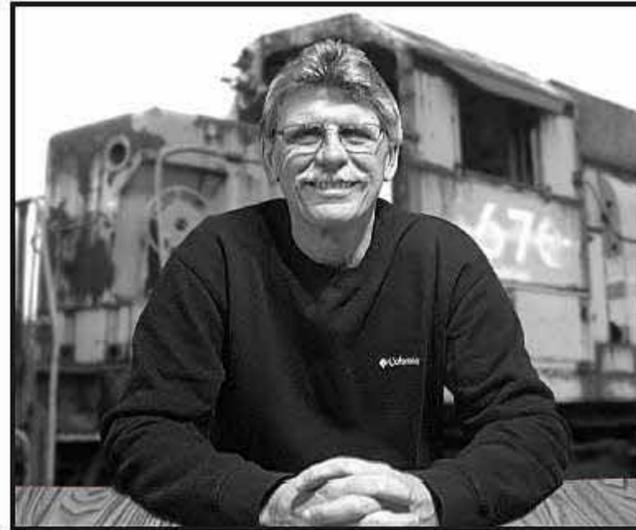
We need to get all this done so we can open up our display site to generate interest and income.

We also have work to do on the tool car, and once we have the title to a certain property, we will be getting that parcel ready for the Russell snowplow that is being donated by the Growth Resources of Wellsboro. We thank Ferlin Patrick for making this happen. We appreciate G.R.O.W. recognizing the FCVRRHS as a viable caretaker of this wonderful piece of railroad history.

Thank you to all the members who have taken the time to help out at the display site and to all those who have given their support to help make the FCVRRHS even better.

Condolences to fellow member, Wayne Brown, and his family on the passing of his wife in February. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Bernie Hanmore



French Creek Valley Express

A Publication of the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

Officers

Bernie Hanmore - President
Dennis Mead - Vice President
Ed Cronin - Treasurer
Vanessa Timko - Asst. Treasurer
Carl Timko - Secretary

Directors

Bill McComas
Jack Sheets
John Snyder
Tom Stewart
Stan Niwa

Webmaster

Dianne Jones

Editor

Carl Timko

Assistant Editor

Dennis Mead

Contact Information

P.O. Box 632
Meadville, PA 16335

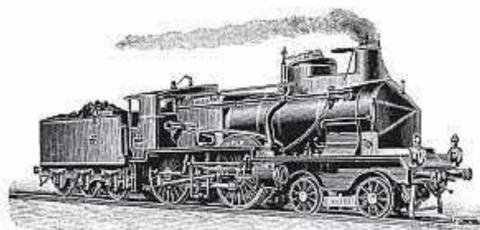
Website: www.fcrrhs.org

French Creek Valley Express is published Spring and Fall. Those wishing to submit material must do so no later than 30 days prior to publication, i.e. by April 1st or October 1st. All submissions are subject to editing for length and clarity. Queries must include full name, address, and daytime phone number or e-mail address. Individual membership dues are \$20.00/year, family membership dues are \$35.00/year (\$1.00 for juniors to 18 years) for the period July 1- Jun 30. New member dues received after January 1 are good through the following full year period. Support from local businesses is welcomed: Gold, Silver and Bronze levels at \$500.00, \$250.00, and \$100.00, respectively, are available.

CONTRIBUTIONS & GIFTS

- Weber Electrical Supply
- Staples Copy & Print
- Lloyd's Rental & Sales
- Crawford County Historical Society
- Western New York & PA RR
- Susi Building Supplies
- US Bronze Foundry & Machine
- AC & J Railroad, Jefferson, OH
- LakeShore Railway Historical Society
- David P. Miller Family
- Industrial Truck & Crane
- Anderson Enterprises
- Specialty Fabrications & Powder Coating
- Bob Bingham family
- Bill McComas Family
- Scott Royer
- Ed Fine
- Carl Timko Family
- Jan Grayson / Perfect Coat
- Tom Collard Family
- Ed Cronin Family
- Seco/Warwick (Sheet Metal)
- Jack Sheets Family
- D & M Tool
- Hafer Trucking

There's lots more information as well as interesting photos and stories on our website! Check it out at www.fcrrhs.org



Our Museum

Since last year the NWPA Heritage Partnership has been concentrating on completing the Trolley Station and getting it operational. Thanks to Vice President Dan Higham, exterior landscaping was completed last fall plus new concrete was poured for walks, driveways, and under the portico. Volunteers also laid paving bricks at the north end of the property where the trolley stopped. Sod was installed for the new lawn and plantings and mulch were installed too. A water heater was purchased and the drywall in the back room was completed.

We have applied for grant money to pay for two new overhead doors, finishing the walls and ceiling of the ticket office and kitchenette, and taping and finishing of the new drywall in the back room. Also we are planning to add two new columns to support the roof over the portico per the original design and a new concrete floor in the back room.

Remaining items include exterior lighting and signage, painting the back room and installing new flooring, cabinets, counter top, a sink and appliances in the kitchenette. A recent mailing to Cambridge Springs residents has yielded almost enough to pay for the items listed in this paragraph.

We have been delighted with our utility bills which are considerably lower than what was budgeted.

The NWPA Heritage Partnership Annual Meeting this year is planned for Monday, July 11, 2016 at the Cambridge Springs Trolley Station Museum. Details will be announced in the near future.

-Ed Cronin

Property & Equipment

As most of our readers know, the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad wooden boxcar arrived on October 13, 2015, on two trucks. The body was on a truck and trailer of Dailey Express, and the trucks came aboard a flat bed belonging to Hall's

Excavation. Crane services were provided by Industrial Truck and Crane. Since then, preparations are under way to replace many boards of the wood siding. Yellow pine boards were purchased from Frontier Lumber of Erie. Very soon, the boards will be delivered to a local miller to rout the tongue and groove joinery. Afterwards, the siding will be stained instead of painted. We deeply appreciate the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. David P. Miller for donating funds to help bring the boxcar to Meadville.



Ed Cronin receiving a check from Mr. and Mrs. David Miller. Bernie Hanmore presenting a certificate of appreciation.

The display of equipment will be growing, as a former Lackawanna Russell snowplow has been donated by the Growth Resources of Wellsboro, PA. Currently, plans are being worked out to transport the snowplow to Meadville. Preliminary plans are to place it across the drive on a parcel that is being acquired. The snowplow may share the new track, once built, with the PRR tool car. The snowplow, built in October 1945, will be a rather rare piece of rolling stock to visit.

Plans are being formed to repair the sides of the tool car and prepare it for painting. It may be awhile before work gets started on it, as current priorities are lettering the #518, repairing the boxcar, building track for the snowplow and getting the plow to Meadville.

-Bernie Hanmore

History & Archives

Research is being conducted for a possible new lead story on the snowplows of the Russell Car and Snowplow Co. of Ridgway, PA. The Elk County Historical Society sent some valuable information toward this effort. Many thanks go out to Mary Kalinowski of the Elk County Historical Society.

-Carl Timko

Special Events & Programs

The Christmas layout at the Downtown Mall proved to be a big success. We had lots of visitors and plenty of sales of merchandise. We thank the management of the Meadville Downtown Mall and Shirley Barnes for letting us use space in her site the **Local Artisans Shop**, which was a temporary seasonal store.

The Erie train show that was just held on March 6, was great for the FCVRRHS as well. Part of the success may have been the location in Rainbow Gardens. We usually were located on the far wall, but this year, because we had two 8 foot tables, we were just two aisles in from the main door. The other part was we had very nice merchandise to sell. We had calendars, Erie Railroad books, shirts, the new sweatshirts, and one new hat, plus the remaining stock from Tom's Train Terminal. Anyone wishing to donate their model railroad equipment can contact any board member. Upcoming train shows are on page 6. The 2016 NMRA Division 5 Railfest was March 19 and 20 and is not listed as this publication was not released in time. Events can also be seen on the FCVRRHS website and "The Second Section", a monthly newsletter for members only.

-Carl Timko



Public Relations & Education

As I sit down and write this column we have just had three days of near-record warm temperatures, reminding us that Spring is around the corner. Looking back to this past mild Winter, our members have been busy. The train layout display during the holiday at the Downtown Mall was a success. We did very well with merchandise sales, and met many new friends. Thanks goes out to all who gave their time to man the display again this year

Early in January we purchased new lumber for replacement of the one side of the Bessemer boxcar. A crew was put together to place the delivered lumber inside the boxcar so it could be stored safely for the winter. With summer coming we will have lots of work tearing off the old boards and replacing it with the new.

Ferlin Patrick of Growth Resources of Wellsboro (G.R.O.W.) paid us a visit at our February business meeting and gave us a little history of their organization. G.R.O.W. recently awarded us the 1945 Lackawanna Russell snow plow. This is an exceptional gift, as it was repainted just last year, making it an excellent addition to our displays at Pomona Park. Work is in progress to determine how movement from Wellsboro, PA to Meadville will be made.

On Sunday, March 6th, we had our tables set up at Rainbow Gardens for the Erie Train Show. We had a very successful sales day, and promoted the snowplow project to our many visitors. Once again, thanks to all that gave their time to man the tables.

- Dennis Mead

The website is undergoing some changes. Some unnecessary content will be deleted and the number of pages reduced. Carl Timko is working with the webmaster, Dianne Jones of Hold-still Productions. It may take some time before it is completed. The website can be accessed at www.fcvrrhs.org. While on the website, click on the Facebook button to check out current happenings and messages. You can request to be a member of

the FCVRRHS Facebook site, but it does not indicate that you are a member of the FCVRRHS.

- Carl Timko

Budget & Finance

Though sales have been doing well at the Christmas layout and Erie Train Shows, the FCVRRHS still needs to find ways to bring in more income to complete our projects; the latest being the DL&W snowplow. The snowplow was donated to the FCVRRHS, but crane and transportation companies aren't so likely to donate their services. Customers and donors are very much needed to achieve any of our goals.

The newest in merchandise the FCVRRHS has for sale are sweatshirts with the yellow diamond FCVRRHS logo, and black ball caps with the yellow diamond logo embroidered on the hat. The crew neck sweatshirts sell for \$25 each, the hooded sweatshirts sell for \$32 each, and the hats sell for \$15 for members or \$20 for non-members. We are taking orders for both the sweatshirts and hats. They are available by ordering from our website or by contacting Carl Timko. Please allow some time for delivery if your size or style is not in stock.

Other merchandise for sale includes the 2016 calendar, the Erie Railroad photo book, and the book, "European Capital, British Iron, and an American Dream" by Pete Gifford and Bob Ilsevich.

An idea discussed at recent meetings to raise funds is selling model wood boxcars, either in the Bessemer and Lake Erie scheme, similar to what the prototype had, or adorned with logos of companies that exist now or have existed. Suggestions include Meadville Distillery with two different logos, Talon, and American Brake Shoe. The board is still investigating the cost and who could do the manufacturing and lettering.

- Dennis Mead,
Vanessa Timko,
Ed Cronin

Model Railroad

Members of the Model Railroad Committee have collected donations of model railroad equipment for the purpose of raising funds for the FCVRRHS. The FCVRRHS is always willing to receive good new and used model railroad equipment.

- Bill McComas & John Snyder

Membership

We sadly say goodbye to a member and a former member. Larry Smith passed away on Jan. 11, 2016 at the age of 57. Larry was one of the founding members of the FCVRRHS and its president from 2005 to 2007. Larry moved to N.C. to work for the federal government, and passed away in Sanford, NC.



Larry Smith



Jim Cray

Jim Cray, age 78, passed on October 16, 2015, after a battle with cancer. Jim was on the board of directors of the FCVRRHS. He was known for his collection of railroad memorabilia, which filled his house, according to many members who visited him. He later left the FCVRRHS and joined with the Lake Shore Railway Historical Society, where he gave rides aboard his speeder.

- Carl Timko

Despite the natural attrition in membership, the FCVRRHS is receiving new members. The latest is Steven Grzegorzewski. Welcome aboard Steve!

Former board member Tom Collard and his wife Sindi, are now living in Santa Clara, California.

The FCVRRHS annual picnic and business meeting will be held at Terry and Maryann Martin's residence on Thursday, June 16. The date is tentative, but will be finalized by the May membership meeting, and will be noted in your issue of the "Second Section".

- Terry Martin & Carl Timko



Stony Point - Part 3

(continued from page 1)

In the years following World War II not much seemed to be happening to Stony Point. The Ordinance Works was slowly dismantled by the government, and there seemed to be no future in sight for the property.

The ordnance property was sold to Paul Kebert, and Pittsburgh Plate Glass soon opened a facility on the site. Shipments of silica sand soon brought business back to the railroad. Additional businesses began to follow, and more traffic came with it. Then in April 1976 change was to come to the profile of the railroad when Conrail took over operations of the line. As part of the takeover, Conrail began to consolidate train routes in the Northeastern United States, and much of the traffic hauled by the former Erie Lackawanna soon found movement on other railroad routes in the area. In 1949 the former Erie Railroad had made additional changes to the passing tracks at Stony Point, extending the westbound passing track west by an additional 2200 feet. Now Conrail found no need to have that much trackage, so they began to remove track from Townline Road west to Calvin Road. Now all that was left was a single passing track of 2100 feet. Norfolk Southern, who took over the operations of the Meadville line in 1999 still maintains that trackage with usually one train a day.

Today two new industries are building on the ordnance site. One is Deerfield Farms who is constructing a grain loading facility with a large track loop serving the site. The other is a proposed tire-to-energy facility, which will receive large shipments daily of used tires by rail when completed.

As for Stony Point, it will continue to exist by location only on the railroad. Its past existence as a town is now only history.

Author's note: I would like to thank the following for their assistance on finding information for this series. They include Nate Clark, Jr., Richard Feidler, Sandy Porter, the Crawford County

Historical Society, the Conneaut Lake Historical Society, and if there is anyone I have failed to mention, my apology.

-Dennis Mead

Local News

(continued from page 1)

NS v. CPR

The Canadian Pacific Railway is trying to get the Norfolk Southern Railroad to merge with the CPR. The NS has been refusing all attempts by the CPR. The CEO, Hunter Harrison, was the CEO of Canadian National when the CN bought Great Lakes Transportation (which comprised of the B&LE, DMIR, Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock Co. along with other companies) in 2004. He was credited with bringing CN's operating ratio down into the 60's. The former bench mark for operating ratios for railroads was the mid to low 80's. The operating ratio is calculated by dividing the operational expenses by the net sales. (*ed. note: Information from Trains Magazine, August 2009 issue*). NS is resisting because they believe they are operating the railroad just fine. Many smaller railroads that do business with the NS feel the same way. If a merger or takeover were to happen, it is likely many jobs and route miles would be lost, as what usually happens with business mergers.

- Carl Timko

LSRHS Banquet

The 2016 Lake Shore Railway Historical Society banquet will be held on Saturday, April 16 at St. James Place, 2622 Buffalo Road, Wesleyville, PA. The banquet starts at 5 p.m. and will have the president and CEO of the Florida East Coast Railway, James Hertwig, as the featured speaker. Mr. Hertwig has been involved in the transportation industry for over 45 years and is a former Erie native.

To make reservations for the banquet, visit the museum's website at www.lakeshorerailway.com and click on the link to download the reservation form.

- Ray Grabowski

Losing History

An Editor's Comment

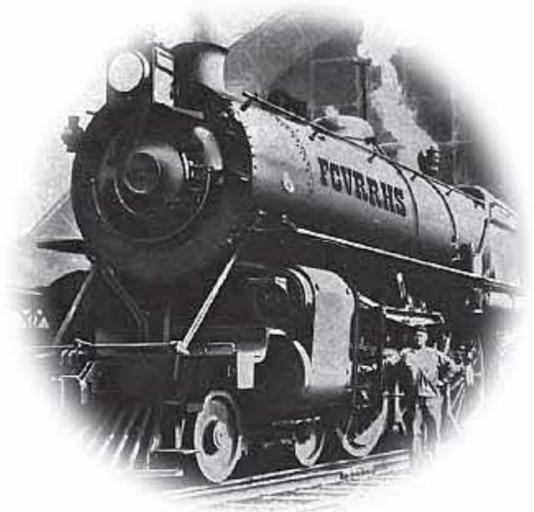
This editor has noticed, in the past several weeks, that a lot of railroad historical artifacts have been lost to dealers or collectors. An auction for the estate of a former well-known FCVRRHS member has seen many items that pertained to the history of the railroads in our area. A bell from a steam locomotive of the Meadville Conneaut Lake & Linesville Railroad was sold recently, along with a bell from a Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad steam locomotive. From the same auction, lanterns, signs, books, and photographs were sold. Granted, his family had every right to auction off his property, but it so disappointing to see locally pertinent railroad artifacts lost to the highest bidder.

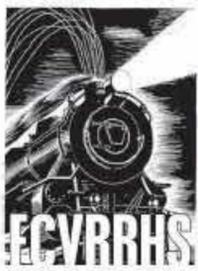
Another artifact that may be lost was seen on Facebook. It was a medallion from the Northwestern Pennsylvania Railway Co. For those that don't know, this was the trolley line that ran in Crawford County and Erie County until 1928. When was the last time you saw anything from the trolley era?

Of the choice between collectors and dealers, collectors are more likely to donate artifacts to a museum. Dealers are out for the profit.

So, if you or your family have railroad artifacts that may be of importance to the area history, please think of your local museums and historical societies before selling them off. If they are of great value, have them appraised, then donate them and get a tax write-off. This way more than just a few can take in the history behind the artifact.

- Carl Timko





French Creek Valley
 Railroad Historical Society
 P.O. Box 632
 Meadville, PA 16335



Former DL&W Russell Snowplow #95904

**French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society
 Program & Events Schedule
 Spring 2016 - Fall 2016**

Apr. 2,3 - Rochester, NY - Greenberg's Train Show

Apr. 3 - Monaca, PA - Beaver Co. Spring Train Sale
Center Stage, 1495 Old Broadhead Rd.

Apr. 9 - Painesville, OH - NETS Swap & Trade Meet
First Church of Christ, 422 Mentor Ave.

Apr.10 - Batavia, NY - Great Batavia Train Show
Veteran's Memorial Dr.

**Apr. 10 - Niles, OH - YMRA Toy Train and
 Model Railroad Flea Market**
McMenamy's Banquet Hall, 325 Youngstown-Warren Rd.

Apr. 14-16 - York, PA - Eastern Div. TCA Show
York Fairgrounds

May 7 - Painesville, OH - Railfanning Days
475 Railroad St.

May 14 - Jamestown, NY - National Train Day
Jamestown Gateway Erie RR Train Station, 211-217 W. 2nd St.

**May 15 - Chautauqua Co. Fairgrounds -
 165th Anniv. First Train Arrival**
Gate 2, Waldorff Rd.

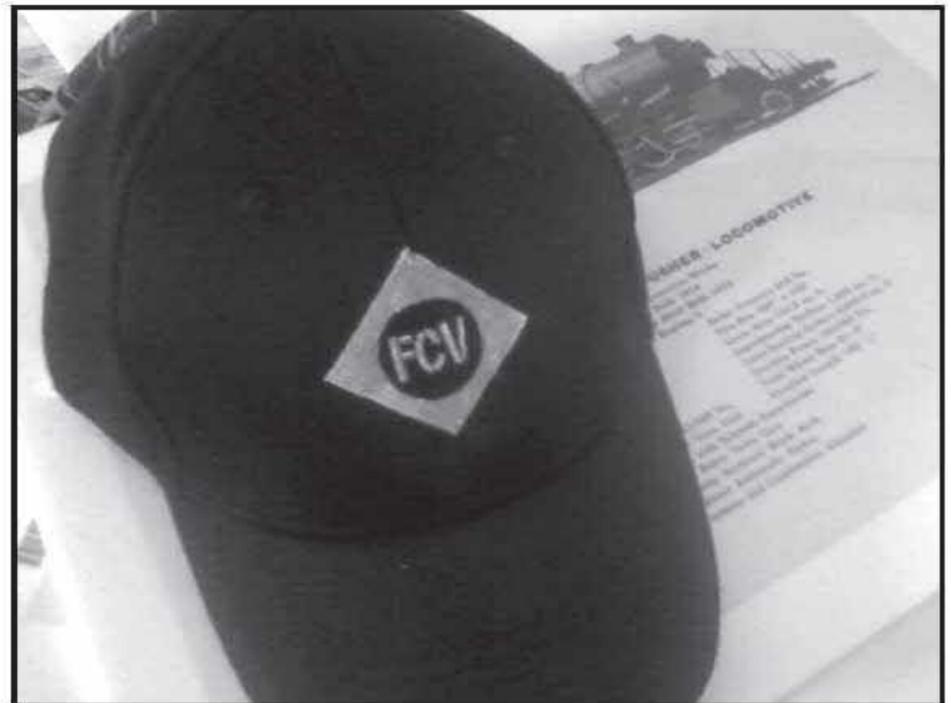
June 18,19-Lake Shore Railway Historical Society
"Up All Night" All night train watching

July 24 - Painesville, OH - Railfanning Days
475 Railroad St.

Aug. 28 - Painesville, OH - Railroad Memorabilia Show
475 Railroad St.

Sep. 10 - Painesville, OH - Railfanning Days
475 Railroad St.

Oct.2 - Berea, OH - Great Berea Train Show
Cuyahoga Co. Fairgrounds, Bagley Rd.



**FCVRRHS Ball cap now
 available for order.**

**Members price \$15
 Non-members pay \$20**

**Hat is black, has adjustable
 Velcro® strap, with yellow
 embroidered "FCV" diamond logo.**