



The VALLEY FLYER

The Periodic Newsletter of the Friends of the Valley Railroad

Celebrating 100 Years of Locomotive 40

By CHRIS ZYGMUNT

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When looking back at the Essex Steam Train & Riverboat's (EST&R) 2020 operating season, no one would blame you for calling it an abnormal running season. For most of the year, the EST&R was a fleet of rail bikes, a 1980's highrail truck, and old reliable motor handcar #952. However, we all were excited to see, hear, and smell the familiar sights, sounds and aromas of steam railroading towards the end of the season. While things were a bit different, many familiar sights were still there. The honor of pulling all of the steam powered train was given to Locomotive No. 40, quite fitting because 2020 marked 40's 100th birthday.

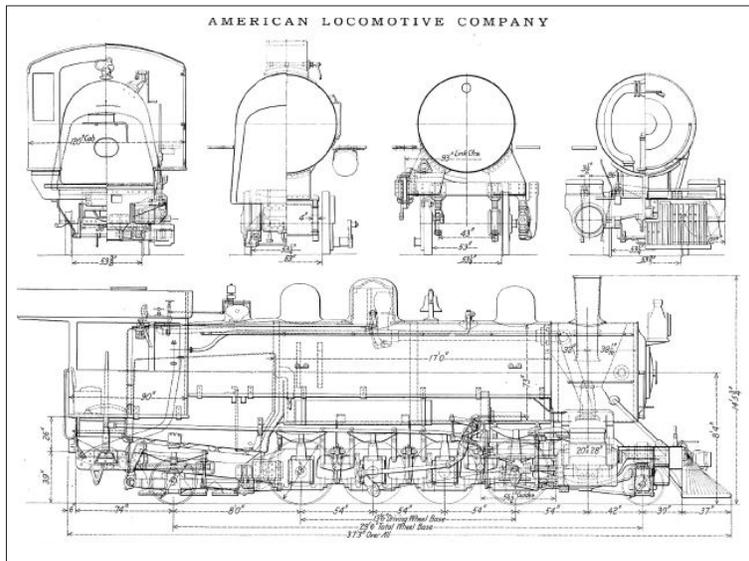
As most of you know, 40 is one of three operating steam locomotives on the Valley Railroad/EST&R. This Mikado-class

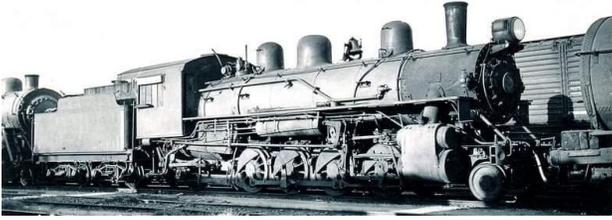
locomotive, with a 2-8-2 wheel arrangement, started its journey back in the beginning of the year 1920. A man named David F. Eccles had started a lumber company out of the town of Bank, Oregon which required a steam locomotive to haul the timber

from the camps to the mill/interchange. Mr. Eccles' company placed an order for three standard gauge Mikado steam locomotives, with modification for logging, with the American Locomotive Works (ALCO). The three engines were completed in August 1920 and assigned numbers 100 (pictured below), 101, and 102. Locomotive 40 was originally numbered 101.

These engines ran on 48" driving wheels and burned California crude oil. During

their construction, their intended railroad's name and owners changed frequently, due to the company's financial issues. Things got so bad that 101 was rejected by the owners and set to be shipped back to ALCO's factory. It was placed into storage for





a few months before being sold to another lumber company, the Minarets & Western, near Fresno, California, where it ran for over 12 years hauling logs out of the forests. When the M&W was absorbed by the Southern Pacific the line was shut down.

Number 101 was placed into serviceable storage for at least a year (above).

In December of 1935, 101 was sold to a used locomotive dealer who in turn sold it to the Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad (A&R) of North Carolina. When it arrived, the locomotive was overhauled and converted to burn coal. This is also when it was officially renumbered to become A&R 40.



While on the A&R, 40 hauled both passenger and freight trains, especially during World War II where it could be seen hauling soldiers and cargo to and from the near-

by Fort Bragg. Its ability to provide heat to the passenger cars on troop trains was one of the reasons it survived well into the railroad's dieselization. In 1952, 40 was officially retired from active service but was again saved from scrap by becoming a publicity tool for the A&R. The engine was cosmetically restored and used on events across the A&R lines. This continued up until the fall of 1977 when 40, its tender, and original oil tanks were loaded onto flat cars for their long trip north (below left). They were headed for a new-found tourist railroad in the lower Connecticut valley that needed some more steam power to haul their growing tourist trains.

And the rest they say is history.... During the 1977-78 season, 40 entered service on the Valley Railroad and has remained to this day. During this past August, the 19th to be exact, 40 turned 100 years old. Now let's again look back at the 2020 operating season. It means so much more knowing that Locomotive 40 was on center stage. So, here's looking forward to another year of steam along the lower Connecticut River Valley and to the next 100 years of service for our beloved locomotive. 🚂

From the President

Welcome, Friends, to the re-energized *Valley Flyer!* The Board felt that this was one of the things that we could do to pull the family closer together and give us a greater sense of community and belonging. We have gathered a lot of talent to get this effort off the ground, due largely to the efforts of Janis Platts, and we thank her for her time and commitment. We hope you will find the *Flyer* both informative and enjoyable.

What a year 2020 was! We faced all kinds of challenges, from the Railroad's total shutdown due to Covid-19, to the passing of two of our finest members, Wayne Poglitsch and Lee Carlson. We will miss them! Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Friends still managed to complete some preservation and track projects this year.

While the Friends' purpose revolves around preserving history, I don't want to

dwell in the past. There is a light at the end of the Covid-19 tunnel (*not* a train headlight!) and 2021 holds the promise of things returning to a more friendly environment for volunteer work. Hopefully, the Railroad can soon resume a normal operating schedule, recall all of its employees, and get the shop up and running. We have been able to make a return to the shop nights and other preservation work on railroad equipment to help get things ready in anticipation of some steam train operations this summer. We worked closely with Railroad management to make this happen, and we need strong attendance numbers to make this worthwhile. In the meantime, Brendan's track gang continues to charge ahead with brush cutting, tie replacement, and other maintenance work on the lightly-serviced track. And I will be heading up another building preservation job. Come

out and support these efforts if you can.

Finally, I would like to hear from the members. Participation this year tended to be the same faces every time, and we missed some of you who are usually regulars. I'd be interested in hearing your reasons. Did the projects not interest you? Were Covid-19 restrictions too bothersome? Other reasons? Going forward, what projects would you like to tackle? Our task list is often prioritized by the Railroad, but we also have leeway. So let me hear from you, please!

Please dig into this issue. If you enjoy a feature, please reach out to the author and thank them. If you have your own contribution you'd like to see in a future issue, please reach out to Janis and let her know. And above all, remember that the Friends is still here, and still strong, and we hope to see you on the rails in 2021.

—Ben Manfull, FVRR President

Remembering Wayne Poglitsch

Last year we lost Wayne Poglitsch who, over two decades, volunteered in the shop and on the track gang. To honor his years of volunteer service, the Friends dedicated a custom bench to him overlooking the Connecticut River just north of Goodspeed Station. Wayne loved boating on the river while spending weekends at his cottage in Camp Bethel.

Following are personal recollections of Wayne from those members of the Friends who worked alongside him:

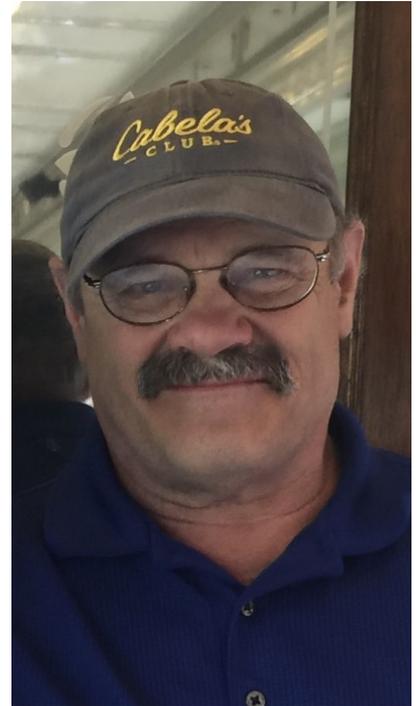
Brendan Matthews: I first met Wayne in the '90s when we were cutting the trees that were growing between the rails near Camp Bethel. Over the years, he told me many stories—memories from his childhood of the railroad, the wonderful vista, and of the work he did at the Camp to maintain the buildings and grounds. In my humble opinion, our purpose in life is to find what we are good at and use it to make the world a better place, and Wayne did exactly that. He gave so much of his time to the Camp, the railroad, and his family. We will all miss Wayne dearly, but I feel good knowing he lived a fulfilled life that he was proud of.

Wayne LePard: The best part about working with Wayne was you knew it wasn't going to be a boring day and the work would go fast. Although we never agreed on anything, it was fun going back and forth with him on everything from teacher's benefits to politics. Then there was the time he and his brother chased me

down the tracks because I pointed out that he had no hair. They couldn't catch me though...I can run fast if I have to! We really had a lot of fun!

Kevin Carpenter: I first met Wayne when I was 18 years old, and he really took me under his wing, becoming that motivational voice I needed. Although he was one of the funniest guys I ever worked with, he still wanted the work done safely and successfully, and he gave me some really good advice: "If you want to achieve greatness in this life, you gotta push for it. Life is not going to hand you anything, you need to fight for it." He worked in construction and did the best he could for himself and his family, and I want to do the same. Eventually, when I cross that bridge, I hope he's there waiting for me.

Janis Platts: Wayne was a true character and great on track crews—hard working with that ever-present contagious laugh as we solved all the world's problems! But for me, it wasn't until he introduced me to his wife Judy, and I talked with the two of them together, that I met the Wayne that I truly respected. You can sense when two people care deeply for each other, and that was them. They had been through some tough trials in their 32 years of marriage, but I had no doubt that their steadfast belief in each other was what got them through. Wayne may have left us too soon, but he and Judy will always remind me of what is truly important in life. 🚂



More Sad Goodbyes: Lee Carlson

During the production of this issue of the *Flyer*, we were greatly saddened to hear of the passing of Lee Carlson, a long-time and valued member of the Friends and VRR.

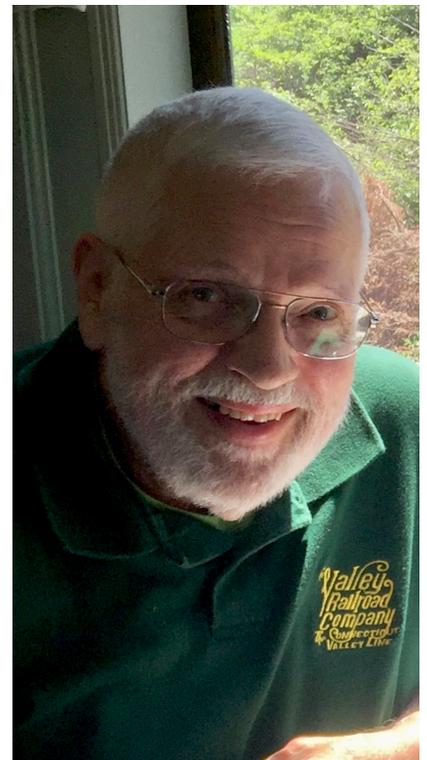
On Saturday, April 24th, there will be two events in Lee's honor. At 10:00 a.m. a train will depart Essex for a dedication of Chester station and a tribute bench to Lee, returning by 11:30 a.m. This is open to anyone, no RSVP required.

At 12:30 p.m., the Railroad will run a photo charter in Lee's honor all the way to Goodspeed. All FVRR members and friends are invited for both trains. The railroad will be charging \$25 per ticket for the photo

charter with 50% going to the Friends, but FVRR member and family members can reserve their free tickets through Ben Manfull (ben.manfull@friendsvrr.org). We will limit guests to immediate family; additional tickets may be purchased through the VRR office. Cutoff date for reserving seats photo charter is 4/21.

Additionally, the 2022 FVRR calendar will commemorate Lee's love of the Valley through his many photographs. The calendar will be on sale by late summer.

We will highlight this celebration of Lee's life in the next *Valley Flyer* issue. Happy rails, Lee. 🚂



FVRR 2020 Track Department Report

By LEE CARLSON



The majority of the work performed during the pandemic year was in the area north of MP 14.75, above the High Bridge over Mill Creek in Haddam. The crew removed and installed 75 ties in the three-mile stretch from the High Bridge to the washout, near MP 17.75, and 99 ties from Higganum to Maromas station in Middletown, the end of Valley Railroad track at MP 21.77.

This brought the total of 174 ties installed by FVRR in 2020. Added to the 220 ties installed in 2019, the total is 394 ties in the section north of Mill Creek, with 271 of these in the Haddam Meadows section.



There is now one sound tie under every track joint in this section. There are no Class 1 joint defects in this portion of the line. The goal is to get the track up to FRA Class 2 standards by the time the railroad is ready to expand north.

Cross bucks at public grade crossings have now been upgraded to the new, federally mandated style.

Brush cutting and tree removal is another task of the crew, normally performed

during winter months, when the ground is frozen, and track work cannot be done. In 2019-2020, major cutting was done between Goodspeed, at MP 12.25, and Gates Way, MP 14.5. The crew concentrated on the area from Higganum to Maromas, cutting back 15 feet from the track on both sides.

The track crew also assisted the railroad's track department with major jobs like grade crossing renewals.

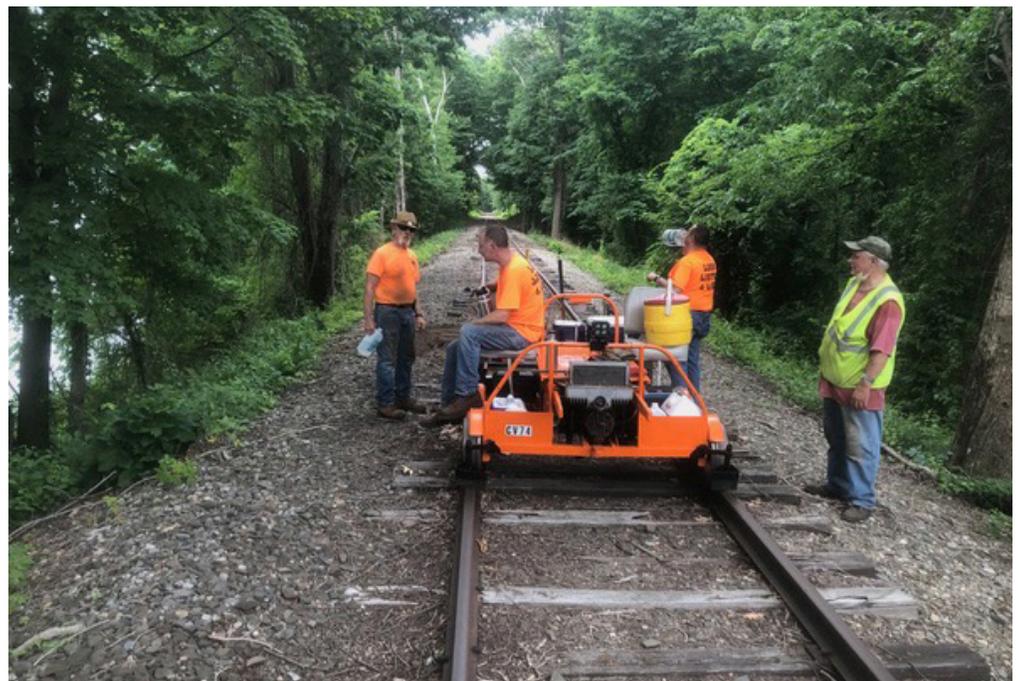
The crew normally works Wednesday evenings (daylight permitting), and every other Saturday.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Brendan Matthews. His email is brendan.matthews@friendsvrr.org.

Below is a list of the 2020 volunteers who generously donated their time and effort on track projects this past year:

Tom Bennett	Charlie Oates
Peter Bertucio	Janis Platts
William Burtan	Andrew Porter
Bryan Bodt	Jeremy Prema
Paul Favolise	William Swartzell
David James	Marty Szuch
Tom Krulikowski	Carmen Vaccarelli
Wayne Leopard	Hank Walther
Douglas Low	Chris Zygmunt
Lillian Mello	

Please let us know if we inadvertently left your name off the above list. 🚂



Shout Outs

- Hank Walther – Hank has been a long-time proponent of getting rail bikes on the Valley RR, and pivotal in the purchasing and building of the initial fleet. The bikes have turned out to be wildly popular!
- Chris Zygmunt – Chris has taken on the task of researching and compiling the history of all current VRR rolling stock, some of which will be featured in the *Valley Flyer*, such as the lead story about locomotive 40. Chris was also busy exchanging wedding vows with Katie in September! Congratulations and best wishes!
- Jim Altieri – Jim, nicknamed “Boss” by those who were fortunate enough to work with him, ran his last steam run on 11/13/20. If there was a Valley Hall of Fame, Jim would be in it! From donating his time to the mechanical needs of various rolling stock to the training and mentoring of firemen and engineers, his skills were renowned. As Ron Olsen stated: “It was a pleasure to fire for Jim, he ran the engine so efficiently that it made the fireman’s job easy.” He will be missed.
- Max Miller – For taking the time to sit

down with Paul Costello and come up with the questions for our new trivia challenge that we hope will have even our most seasoned of members scratching their heads. This is your chance to win two Essex Clipper Dinner Train tickets so check out the *Flyer Trivia Takedown* below and see how well you really know your Connecticut Valley Railroad history!

- Better late than never... As Covid has unfortunately turned our lives upside down, we were unable to show our appreciation to those volunteers who put in 25+ hours for 2019 on the annual Friends luncheon train last year. We would at least like to recognize the Top 3 hour earners for that year here: #1 Chris Zygmunt; #2 Escott Smith, Escott Smith III; #3 Brian Kaufman.
- Last, but by no means least, YOU. Whether you are currently an active member, were so in the past; a donor, or a treasured life member, we appreciate you. The accomplishments achieved by the Friends over the years would not have been possible without everyone’s hard work and dedication. Thank you one and all!! 🚂

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Flyer Trivia Takedown

You like trains. You like food. You like food on trains...and no one does that better than the Valley Railroad’s Essex Clipper Dinner Train. The Friends would like to give one of our members two free tickets to the dinner train, but there’s a catch: you must answer the following questions in this and the upcoming 2021 *Flyer* issues, and for each correct response you will earn one entry into the drawing. So, fire up those brain cells and let’s get started!

1. On the original Valley Line (before the current operations), at what location were passenger tickets sold on a regular basis off-property (hint: it was on the other side of the river)?
2. Also on the original Valley Railroad, at what locations could the steam engines take on water?

3. How many operable steam locomotives, active or inactive, have graced the rails of the Valley line since 1971 and what are/were they?
4. Identify the location in the photo below:



Send only one email with your name and responses to ftt@friendsvrr.org prior to June 1, 2021. Answers to the trivia questions will be noted in the next issue. The winner will be announced in early 2022.

Goodspeed Yard Office 2020

By BRIAN KAUFMAN

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Covid-19 shut down Friends of the Valley Railroad (FVRR) Wednesday night shop activities in mid-March. This challenged us to find a project that would allow volunteer activities to resume, preferably not in the shop, and to meet the needs for social distancing and wearing masks. In mid-August, the FVRR chose to work on the Goodspeed Yard Office, the one-story building located on the west side of the tracks about 75-feet north of the Rt. 82 railroad crossing, within the foot-print of the original Goodspeed Station.

The Goodspeed Yard Office, originally the 1871 North Chester Station, is the oldest extant station on the Connecticut Valley Railroad line. It has experienced a number of moves, modifications, and uses through its history. At its present location, the building needed some overdue attention. Its vertical siding required sanding, replacement of some rotted sections, and more than one coat of pain. The rafters required patching, sanding, and painting. The skirting around the Yard Office required the most work, including wholesale replacement in some areas (particularly on the west side of the building), selected replacement of vertical trim, and repairs at a number of the corners (*bottom left*). To prevent future rot, soil has

been removed to eliminate contact with the renewed wood skirting. The double hung windows were sanded, selectively re-glazed, and repainted. The doorway, including its outdoor frame and threshold was sanded and painted. In addition to the work on the Yard Office itself, two outdoor wooden benches were repainted.

Some of the challenges to completing the work included dwindling daylight as Fall progressed, access to necessary tools, and the weather. Work lights were set up to provide visibility with dwindling daylight (*top left*). A number of the volunteers brought their own tools to complete the work. With the challenge of daylight and colder weather it was decided to complete the work on a Saturday. On November 14th, the project was finished, (*below*) extending the life of the oldest remaining office on the Connecticut Valley Railroad line.

The invaluable work force included Ben Manfull, who led the project, Stew Macmillan and Brian Kaufman who performed the lion's share of the work, as well as the following FVRR volunteers:

Chris Zygmunt	William Burtan
Janis Platts	Andrew Porter
Ron Olsenw	Kevin Carpenter
Andre LaFerriere	

Thank you, one and all. 🚂



Editor's Note: Long before myself, Lee Carlson had offered to assist in getting the *Flyer* into production again, and he gladly accepted the roles of proofreader and Track Department reporter when proposed to him. I am pleased that he was able to complete writing this issue's track crew update. He will be dearly missed. We were actually derailed (where is Rob when you need him!) from our intended roll-out date but are happy to finally be in your "in box" now. We will be keeping you on the edge of your seats with our updates on a quarterly time frame. —Janis