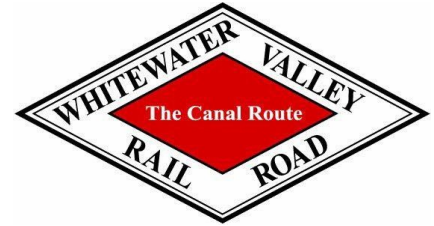


# TOWPATH TRACKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE WHITEWATER VALLEY RAILROAD  
CONNERSVILLE, INDIANA USA      AUGUST 2020



## Hollywood comes to the WVRR

On Sunday, August 30, Octave Films shot a short film at the railroad. Titled "Red, Red, Rose," the film will be used by director Terry Marsh to showcase his talents and solicit financial backing for a feature-length film. Exterior shots were filmed with the Valley Flyer consist at Dearborn Tower. Interior shots were filmed in coach #9 inside the shop building. Using Hollywood "magic," the shots from inside coach #9 will be made to look as if they were made on a moving train. The film crew was very impressed with the railroad and the support they received. In appreciation, "the members of the Whitewater Valley Railroad" will be credited in the film.



Director Terry Marsh organizing the exterior shoot at Dearborn Tower. Tyler Darland, Posty Media

## Metamora Cancels Canal Days

At a meeting on August 27, Historic Metamora's Canal Days committee decided to cancel Metamora's

Canal Days festival for 2020. With unanimous support from the Duck Creek Association, the Whitewater Canal Scenic Byway Association, and the Metamora Merchant's Association, the committee voted unanimously to cancel this year's event and hold all reservations over to 2021. Historic Metamora president Connie Wendell explained, "It isn't just a question of safety because people are coming here contracting it (COVID-19) then taking it back to their communities, it is also a concern of what people would bring into our community, and we have to keep our community safe." Metamora's shops and the Whitewater Canal State Historic Site will be open as usual.

The railroad has canceled all five Metamora Canal Days Limited trains scheduled for October 2, 3, and 4. Replacing them will be a Fall Foliage Flyer on October 2 at 10:01 am, and Valley Flyers on both October 3 and 4 at 12:01 pm. Crews from the October 3 and 4 10:01 am trains are encouraged to fill in open spots on the Valley Flyer or Metamora Local trains.



Special effects outside coach #9. John Sprinkle

## Metamora Holiday Special trains canceled for 2020 season

During their July meeting, the railroad's Board of Directors made the difficult decision to cancel all of the Metamora Holiday Special trains for the 2020 holiday season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The cancellations will enable the railroad to focus on the Polar Express event and maximize potential income during the holiday season. The equipment and crew hours made available by the cancellations will enable the addition of six 2:00 PM matinee trains plus an additional coach on all trains. Even with running trains at half the capacity to allow for social distancing, these additions will enable us to accommodate 67% of our regular event capacity. The additional 2:00 PM matinee trains will be on the following dates:

- Saturday, November 14
- Saturday, November 21
- **Friday**, November 27
- Saturday, December 5
- Saturday, December 12
- Saturday, December 19

The Santa Claus Limited will still run as scheduled on Saturday, November 28.

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## Murder Mystery Train to Dinner returns

The railroad's Murder Mystery Trains to Dinner have returned for a second season. In conjunction with Imagine Performing Arts of Connersville, the trains take passengers to the Laurel Hotel for dinner as an intriguing mystery unfolds on the train ride. While the passengers enjoy the story and take notes, characters visit with them, answer questions, and hopefully give clues. Once back at Grand Central Station, the murderer is revealed. The first passenger to correctly solve the mystery is awarded a certificate. There are four dates scheduled for this year, July 24 & 25, and August 28 & 29, all of which have sold out. The August dates will feature a new story with all new characters. These popular trains will return with at least four dates in the 2021 season.



*Not even a pandemic can silence Mrs Reading, played by IPA member Carla Beard.*

*Sammy Ferguson*

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## Easter Bunny Express rescheduled

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual running of the Easter Bunny Express has been rescheduled for Saturday, September 26. Passengers were given a choice of either a refund or saving their tickets for the rescheduled date. The vast majority chose to wait, a testament to the popularity of the event. With over 12,000 candy-filled eggs on hand and trains running at 50% capacity to allow for social distancing, all participants will find an abundance of eggs in the bunny patch! Event coordinator Brian Dershem is requesting help in the Bunny Patch, on the train, and at Grand Central Station. More support will be needed than in the past since we will have additional work to do to keep everything sanitary for our passengers and volunteers. Please contact Brian at [brian.dershem@whitewatervalleyrr.org](mailto:brian.dershem@whitewatervalleyrr.org) or at (937) 479-2771 to sign up. Trains will run at 10:01 am, 12:30 pm, 2:30 pm, and 4:30 pm. Tickets are on sale online and will also be available on the day of the event.

## Progress being made on engine No. 709

Despite a tight budget due to the pandemic, progress is being made on the restoration of engine No. 709. The high voltage wiring has been completed. The air compress has been installed, and the doors have been put on the electrical cabinet. Using power from a welder, project leader Danny Pabst successfully rolled over the prime mover, verifying that the electrical system is in "sequence." The project is still in need of about \$10,000 to purchase batteries and an oil cooler. Please send donations to:

Whitewater Valley Railroad  
ATTN: 709 Restoration Project  
P O Box 406  
Connersville, IN 47331



*Engine No 709's compressor installed. John Sprinkle*

## South Connersville shower room remodel proposed

Member Paul Hillman has proposed a project to remodel the shower room at the railroad's South Connersville facility. Although still functional, the shower room is showing its age and would definitely

benefit from a remodel. The plan includes the following:

- new ceiling
- new water-resistant drywall
- new water-resistant flooring
- new shower stall with door
- new toilet
- new vanity and sink
- new, larger mirror over the sink
- new lighting fixtures
- new exhaust fan
- cabinets for supply storage
- bench
- lockers

The estimated cost for the materials is \$5,400, with the labor coming from WVRR volunteers. Funding for the project will be through donations from the membership. Please send contributions to:

Whitewater Valley Railroad  
ATTN: Shower Remodel Project  
P O Box 406  
Connersville, IN 47331

Once donations reach \$5,000, the acquisition of materials will begin. Major construction will be scheduled to occur in the offseason to minimize inconvenience to members. Comments, suggestions, or questions about the project are welcomed and can be sent to [shower-remodel@whitewatervalleyrr.org](mailto:shower-remodel@whitewatervalleyrr.org).

## Promotions

### To engineer:

Lindsey Brooks  
Tom Nitza

### To conductor:

Bobby McCoy

### To brakeman:

Diana Marshall  
Bryce Owen  
Pat Schwering

Diana is the first student from the 2020 Training Class to be promoted to brakeman. Even with the season

starting late, she has completed all of here student runs and demonstrated her competency.

## Weller & Weller complete fourth motor car restoration



Photo by Kerry Weller

WVRR members Robby and Kerry Weller have completed their fourth motor car restoration project. The Fairmont A6-F, jointly owned by John & Lindsey Brooks, Jason Lambert, and John Sprinkle, was restored entirely in just four months! The car's unique paint scheme was inspired by the Monon Railroad. Powered by a Ford 300 six-cylinder motor, this large car was built to transport up to a dozen maintenance-of-way workers.

## Calendar

**Subject to change due to COVID-19 pandemic**

### August

14 – BoD Meeting 7:00 pm SCONN  
28 – **CANCELED** Membership Meeting 7:00 pm SCONN  
28 & 29 – Murder Mystery Train to Dinner

### September

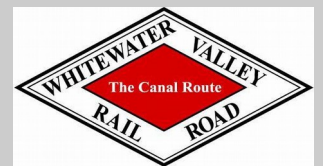
5 & 6 – Metamora Music Festival  
7 – Labor Day  
11 – BoD Meeting 7:00 pm SCONN  
11 – Patriot Day  
22 – Fall Begins  
25 – Membership Meeting 7:00 pm SCONN  
25 – Ghost Train of Metamora Boot Camp  
26 – **RESCHEDULED** Easter Bunny Express

### October

2, 3 & 4 – **CANCELED** Metamora Canal Days  
9 – BoD Meeting 7:00 pm SCONN  
9 & 10 – Ghost Train of Metamora  
12 – Columbus Day  
16 & 17 – Ghost Train of Metamora  
23 – Membership Meeting 7:00 pm SCONN  
23 & 24 – Ghost Train of Metamora  
24 & 25 – Pumpkinliner  
30 & 31 – Ghost Train of Metamora  
31 – Halloween  
31 – Metamora Trick-or-Treat 5 to 7 pm

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The Whitewater Valley Railroad is a 501 (c) 3 not for profit operating railroad museum dedicated to preserving a historic branch line railroad, the restoration of railroad equipment, and the conduct of educational railroad programs.

Dues: \$30 annually or \$200 lifetime