



December 2024

<https://patrolley.org/ptm-operations/>

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Art Ellis at his Birthday Party celebrating 105 years at the PTM Events Room.
November 15, 2024
Scott Becker photo.



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Remembering Art Ellis, Sr.

By Scott R. Becker, Executive Director & CEO

It is with great sadness that Art Ellis, Sr. passed away Sunday, November 24th after a short illness. Art had just celebrated his 105th birthday on November 15th and was PTM's oldest member (#5).

Arthur S. Ellis was born in Montpelier, Vermont in 1919 and became a trolley fan at an early age with his Aunt Laura introducing him to the joy of trolley travel. He traveled all over the country starting in the 1930s riding trains to where there were trolleys that have long since disappeared. He took many photographs and 8mm movies and retained an excellent memory of all his adventures. He moved to Pittsburgh in the 1940s and had a long career with Pittsburgh Railways and the Port Authority of Allegheny County in the scheduling department. He had many great stories to tell of life during the Trolley Era at its peak. A memorable story was during the great Black Friday Snowstorm of 1950. Art was tasked with driving a rental car taking trolley operators to the various streetcars along the lines, to relieve the crews whose streetcars were stranded in the snow.



2019

Art was one of the earliest members of the Pittsburgh Electric Railway Club, the organization which founded our museum. He was a passenger on the trips which brought West Penn 832 to Ingram in May 1953 as well as the trip which brought the three cars to the Museum site in Washington County on February 7, 1954.

I was happy to honor Art with the first Executive Director's award in recognition of his many behind-the-scenes projects he had done for the Museum. These include the Play Trolley #225. He decided to number it 225 for ages 2-5. He also designed and built special steps to help people get on the trolley cars. He built three of them and they are known as "Art Steps" and "works of Art" Art volunteered well into his late 90s working in the Museum Store and running the toy train layout during our Santa Trolley event. Not only did Art volunteer in many capacities, but his family legacy carries on with his children, Artie Ellis and Cindy Wells; his grandchildren, Sarah, Laura, and Patrick; and his son-in-law Bruce Wells!



2024

The Museum honored Art with a Lifetime Achievement Award and he was also recently honored when the Museum's new streetcar stop serving the Eaton Parking lot was named Ellis Stop. It is appropriate that Ellis Stop is next to Redman Wye as Art Ellis and Lou Redman were good friends and early volunteers at the Museum.

Visitation & Memorial Service

Wednesday December 4th 2:00-4:00, 6:00-8:00 PM

Beinhauer's Funeral Home

2828 Washington Road (Route 19) in McMurray, PA. 724-941-3211

There will be a memorial service there at 7:00 PM.

There is a remembrance page on Beinhauer's website at:

<https://www.beinhauer.com/obituaries/Arthur-S-Ellis?Id=33874215&source=EmSh>

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in memory of Art to Pennsylvania Trolley Museum.

Rest in peace, Art.
Scott Becker

2015



I'm sure many people will express accolades about Mr. Ellis. He was a kind, gracious and very capable Man. Art has left a long-lasting legacy; his accomplishments, his work ethic, his Children and Grandchildren, his love of the Museum and the Industry, his caring and giving. Art's impact can be seen and felt all around the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum today. I am particularly grateful to Art for how considerate he was toward my Grandchildren when they visited the Museum. Art was patient and compassionate. All of us should be a little bit more like Art.

God bless, Ray Betler

1953



Art was always one to create interesting solutions. (Yes, they were works of Art.) Back before we had any sort of properly heated building (but we did have bathrooms and a shower), we had trouble with the water lines freezing up in the winter. Art created an ... assembly ... of a timer, a motor and a water valve and a few other things that would briefly open up every 30 minutes or so to run some water into the slop sink. It wasn't quite as complex as a Rube Goldberg cartoon, but it was still something to see, and it worked. Dan Bower

I had the pleasure of interviewing Art for my podcast. It was such a joy to speak with him and hear his stories. My heart goes out to his family.

Podcast link: <https://theroundhousepodcast.com/2022/11/16/126-pennsylvania-trolley-museum-founder-art-ellis/> Nick Ozorak

A few years ago I was running 4398 on the last trip of the day. Art was at the Museum and got on board. A couple minutes later I asked if he wanted to run the car. He did, and as you might expect, we had a fine trip. We'll all miss him!

Tony Schill #74

Art was the first person I met when I brought my family to the Arden Trolley Museum for the first time back in the mid 70's. He gave us a ride on New Orleans 823. He took time to questions and told me about membership. I couldn't wait to join up and have been here ever since!

Don Bailey

This just cropped up on a PTM volunteer site. Still in shock. Have known Art since hitching a ride with him for Cat's Run Wye track removal some five plus decades ago. (only recollection is that it was COLD, plus helping to lift and move rail, and riding with Art from Mt. Lebanon area) Art was also a PRC schedule department link to John Baxter, a family friend who guided me into the railfan and transit world. In later years, I remember Art as the museum photographer on the Santa Trolley runs. And amazed that he could still recall the various running times on the Washington and Charleroi interurbans.
John Swindler

I only saw him once at a Trolleology presentation in February this year, but he was the most memorable part of the presentation. He still had a cheer in his voice.
Christian Brooks



2019

If your looking for super short Art stories, here's mine. It dates from around 2014 or so when I was still quite new. Art was still active in the store when I started operating. At one point, I was out on a test trip in 3756 following some work that had been done on it. My mother came to visit with my godmother and upon their arrival, Art promptly picked up his radio and called me on the radio announcing to everybody, "Brett, your mother is here!" I appreciated the warning, but I almost fell over. Brett Freithaler

I didn't know Art for as long as most members have. However, what I knew about him at PTM was interesting. Having been involved from the very beginning and one who was involved in making PTM what it is today, a marvelous trolley museum attraction. I was shocked when I read he had passed and the loss to PTM as well as a loss to all of us who are members.
Ray Lonabaugh

Cont on page 7

I'm not really sure when I met Art Ellis Sr. exactly, possibly 1995. It was at a monthly meeting in Pittsburgh. I attended these regularly as I did not have any regular "duty" at the Museum. Art was instrumental, to say the least, in my becoming somewhat skilled in processing newsletters through the General Mail Facility. This I did for many years. I, too, was intrigued with his many stories. In particular he told me of an excursion he had in a Vermont where trees were being cut. It so happened a large tree fell the wrong way and landed on the Ellis family car, pushing it into the ground. Whenever the tree was cut up and removed, possibly several days later, the car resumed to near normal height. Art said it was operable but the head room was quite reduced and the wheels had been bent giving the ride a severe up-and-down motion.

Bernie Orient

Grandpa was easy to share. It wouldn't be fair to keep someone that good all to yourself. There was more than one time that I had to explain to someone (new volunteer or regular guest) that I didn't just call him Grandpa as a pet name. He really was my relative and a great source of information about almost anything transit history related. He lived it.

Sarah Wells

I remember when I started volunteering, Art was the man taking pictures with the polaroid camera for Santa Trolley. He would always engage with the youngsters and get a good photo; then finish the job by placing the picture into the frame and handing it to the parents. He would also sing along with the Christmas Carols as we rode up and down the valley. He made that event special.

Frank BobroI

I first met Art at the museum nearly 20 years ago, before I became a member. Naturally, our conversation quickly turned to trolleys. I mentioned how I had just missed the trolley era where I grew up and how much I would have loved to see them in action. When I told him I was from Clarksburg, WV, he said he might be able to help and asked for my mailing address.

About a week later, I received a VHS tape in the mail. It was a 10- to 11-minute black-and-white film made from 8mm footage of a fan trip on the interurban line from Clarksburg to Fairmont, WV, filmed in 1946—the year before the line was abandoned. Watching it was a thrill. I recognized so many places, and it gave me a glimpse into a world I had only imagined.

Since then, I've transferred the footage to DVD and later to a jump drive. I still have it and have made several copies to ensure that it is preserved.

Rest in peace, Art—you truly made a difference!

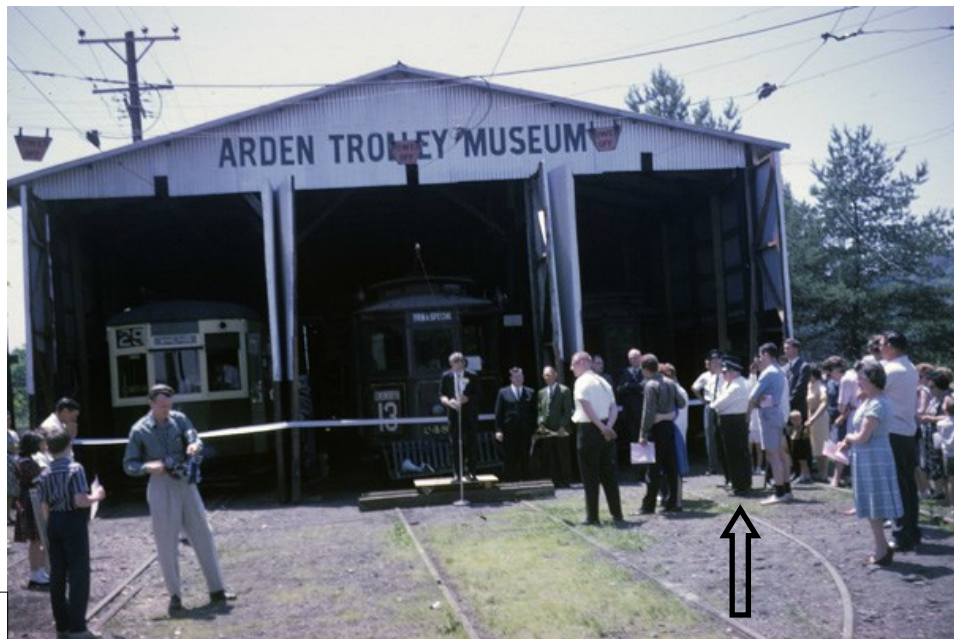
Jim Selario

Many years ago when I was Store Manager, Art built a sales booth in the shape/color of 4398 & 3756. It was about 7ft tall and 10 ft long. There were 3 panels on each end with a bracket that could take a genuine headlight. It could be assembled to be fully enclosed or not. One of the back panels had half of a wooden folding trolley door (two leaves), so that was a little on the narrow side but it really looked good and added to the ambiance. The sales side was open and had an attached counter held up with 2x4 legs. The whole thing was put together with dowels run through eyebolts. The panels could be loaded in the back of a pick-up. We took it to Greenberg's train show for many years. It was highly visible and provided us with instant recognition. A simple but unexpected design that was definitely a 'work of Art'. Kathryn Black

At the TDB one fall Sunday afternoon, Art (tongue in cheek) said the reason PRRy had a rule to stop before entering loops was a result of a motorman crashing into a bar that was popular with the operators and mechanics.

Ned Apalakian

1963



My memories of Art go way back to the beginnings of the PTM. It was then known as the Pittsburgh Electric Railway Club (PERC). I have photos of him on a hot summer day in 1955 dragging rail with his Willys Jeepster. No running water or electricity at the museum on those days.

He had a good sense of humor and would tell of his experiences riding trolleys and trains throughout the country and abroad. He often shared foreign railway newsletters and continued to keep up with current developments in the transit industry. His Christmas cards always featured a winter scene with a trolley taken on one of his many fantrips. Without a doubt he was the longest serving volunteer and member of the PTM. He will be truly missed.

Bill Fronczek

I just rewatched the 30 minute YouTube featuring Art. What a life, what a lucky connection for all of us to have....a guy who actually scheduled our beloved streetcars over their routes! I enjoyed talking to him about the Keating Car Barn where I could change streetcars to West View Park and the Craft Car House where I would end up when I was in high school and learning at the old Pittsburgh Play House.

I felt like a trip to Washington, PA to the PTM was like visiting George Washington himself. What he gave us we'll never take for granted and we are blessed that he sent generations of his family to serve us.

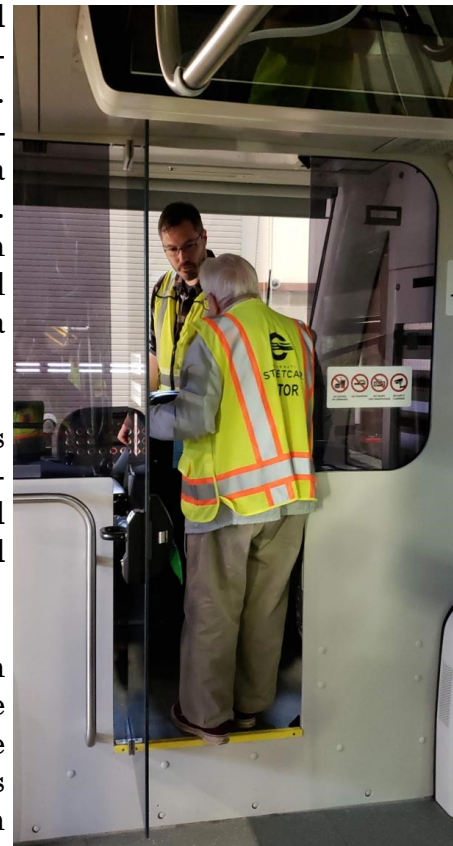
We are all richer for knowing Art. The PTM has done wonderful things to honor Art. Too often, a contributor to something goes unrecognized until it's too late.
Tom Rooney

In September of 2018, about a year before I started working at PTM, I attended my first Hoosier Traction Meet, affectionately also known as Geezerfest. That's where I first met Art (and Cindy and Bruce!) - after the meet, my boyfriend Paul Grether gave us a tour of the Cincinnati Streetcar maintenance facility. Paul explained to Art how the controls of the modern CAF streetcar worked, and we learned that the bell used by the modern Cincinnati streetcar is actually a recording of the bell on car 2227 at the museum.

About a year later, I remember Pepsi celebrated Art's 100th birthday with a gift of various products, including a model and a book, after the museum had reached out to tell them about Art's drinks and snacks of choice.

I recorded some oral history interviews with Art in the past couple years that I hope to edit sometime soon. While I didn't know him as long as most people here at the museum, I always enjoyed hearing his stories of fantrips, Pittsburgh Railways, and museum history!

Kristen Fredriksen



2019

My favorite memory of Art is one that he told on himself. Not sure if I should share it or not. Anyhow, when Art worked at scheduling, *he mistakenly put his home phone number on countless new schedules to be placed in the 'take one' boxes system wide.* Bob Jordan

Cont on page 10

I met Art when I was in my early twenties working at Port Authority! He was so kind and always ready to help this “new kid” trying to learn and understand public transit schedules! Such a wealth of knowledge and experience...you can't put a price on that!

Through most of my 25 year career there, Art was one of the “old guys” we counted on for historical information and anecdotes! Little did I know then that he was nowhere near “old” and would go on to live such a long and wonderful life.
RIP Art.

Laurie Andrews

1995



Several have mentioned this role that Art played for many years. You see, this was 1995. No one carried a phone in their pocket and few had cameras; none of them were instant, except Art's. Santa was based at Fairgrounds in a caboos pulled there by West Penn 1. Art supplied the porta-potty from his camper for Santa (that caboos did not have modern plumbing). P&WCT 66 would leave

Richfol looking for Santa, cross the highway, pick Santa up at Fairgrounds and proceed up to the end of track. It was a few years after this that Arden Loop was installed and the operators now only had to get out once to change ends.

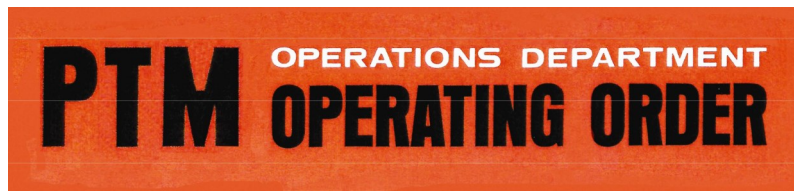
Santa wandered through the car, but the big difference was he sat with the children (as well as he could fit) and folks would want photos. Enter Art to save the day. He had a Poloroid Instant Camera. WOW! Larry Lovejoy & Bob Jordan led the caroling and we all had a great time. There was no pre-ticketing and Scott Becker was the only paid staff. How did we ever do it?

You see, Art Ellis was more than just a great volunteer (he was 76 when I took this photo) he was a unique member of society interested in preserving the past and sharing that passion with others. I knew a lot of guys Art's age (he was 4 years younger than my dad) and most of those lived day to day without thinking of the future. Art and his fellow historians were true trail blazers. We owe an incredible debt to their legacy. Embrace the future, but treasure the past. Be like Art.

DF Cramer

“Now You Know”

CJ Bick, Instructor



00#13-01
March 14, 2013
Revised and Re-issued April 12, 2013

SUBJECT: OPERATION AT CARBARN YARD AND TRACKS 11-12-13

TO: Operations personnel and All Concerned

SINGLE-ENDED CARS

Effective immediately single-ended cars are NOT to be backed into the car yard - this includes the yard throat as well as Tracks 11-12-13.

Backing said cars into this area creates a number of operational issues.

All single-ended cars must be operated toward the barn in a forward-facing orientation. The existence, or lack, of back-up controls on cars is not relevant to this Order.

The only exception to the above would be under the guidance of a supervisor (Dispatcher/Instructor) on the scene.

CARS PROHIBITED ON TRACK 13

Cars 66, 78 and 1758 ARE NOT to be operated onto Track 13 due to operational and non-clearance issues.

Chris Walker
Chris Walker
Operations Manager

You may be wondering why I've attached this operating order from 2013. Amazingly even though this order was put out 11 years ago and has been posted on the bulletin board, in the substation, ever since; Is also written on the chalkboard as a reminder, and was gone over this last requal with all the other operating notices/orders as Instruction prepares the new rulebooks. An operator crew parked a Red Arrow Car (78) on Track 13 during Pumpkin Trolley last month. When informing the crew of their error, they stated that they "didn't know" they couldn't park that car there. So, I'm reiterating the order here, not just as a reminder not to put these cars on Track 13,

but also to explain why this order exists. Why can't we put these certain few cars on that track?

The first problem has to do with wheel gauge and profile. As we know our track gauge is Pennsylvania Broad Gauge of 5' 2 1/2". However, this wasn't a standard size, even within the state of Pennsylvania, as Philadelphia used Pennsylvania Broad Gauge of 5' 2 1/4". This means that all of the Philadelphia equipment has 1/4" wiggle room going down our track. This explains why some cars like 5326 or 78 hunt from side to side while going up or down the valley. Our track is also set to street railways profile, meaning how the wheels of each car sit on the track and the flanges interact with curves, switches, and frogs are set up for street running. Cars like 78, 24, 4, & other Red Arrow cars all have a railroad profiled wheel, which has a much deeper flange and is designed for open track running, not so much street running, but is still compatible enough with our track to work without needing the wheels to be reprofiled. This, however, is not compatible with all of our trackage and specifically the curve coming out of Track 13.

Cont on page 12

Between the 1/8" wiggle room on either side, combined with the deeper flanges on the back-to-back of the wheels produces problems. If anyone is wondering just how much problems this causes, take a look next time you're around the museum at the scratches in the concrete all around that curve, or the crack in the brick on the platform, or the concrete park bench that has a massive crack in the back of one of its legs. All of that was caused from the last time 4 was parked on that track. That's why Most Red Arrow cars can't go on Track 13; but what about the specific others that had their wheels reprofiled? Why can't they go on that track?

The second problem has to deal with specifically car 14. Its issue lies in the car's overall length as it is 50 ft. 5in. long. This means that even though it fits physically into the building, it's too long for either the first or second spot, as either will cause the car to block the door to the inside hallway which is not favorable when there are other spots on other tracks that it can go so that you can get to that door. The Third problem has to again deal with size. Cars 66 & 1758 are both relatively short, 66 being 47ft. 10in. & 1758 being only 40ft. 2in. long. Their problem doesn't deal with their lengths, but rather their widths. Both are so wide, 66 being 8ft. 7in. & 1758 being 9ft. 6in. over the running boards. This means that when approaching the building, on that curve, there's not enough straight section before entering the building for the cars to straighten themselves out. They don't line up square and are almost more of a parallelogram to the building meaning that they can't fit through the doors without hitting either, or both of them.

All of these reasons stated on why these certain cars can't go on Track 13 were found out the hard way when trying to put them on that track and therefore, to keep others from doing the same, the operating order was created. This time around, thankfully, was fortunate enough NOT to have anything happen while correcting the error that was made by the crew that day. Since this operating order came out so long ago, cars have been added to the original list and now we simply state "No Red Arrow cars & 1758 are allowed on Track 13". This is also how it will appear in the new rulebook. This should be used as a reminder to all that the excuse of "I didn't know" is not a viable excuse, as it is posted in multiple places, and now you have this article explaining why Red Arrow cars & 1758 are not permitted on Track 13.



Lucky the Motorman

Episode Five - 1711 Takes a Step Back, Only
Brett Freithaler

“Always remember, as a dispatcher, if you keep your crews busy, they will have less time to come in here and talk your ear off,” said Fedora to Bob Lucky who was thinking he wanted to train as a dispatcher. “Look up there, see on the camera for the platform, Apples is returning from the TDB towards us because her birthday charter is done. She’s going to need something to do.” Just then, Fedora’s phone rang. “Oh, look! It’s G. Rees.”

The door opened and Apples stepped in. “Hallo...” She stopped short upon seeing Fedora on the phone.

“Yes, I think I can find a couple. They’ll be down in a few,” finished Fedora as he slipped his phone back into his pocket. “Bob, G. Rees needs some operators to shift 1711 out in exchange for 4145 which is down on twelve.” This was followed by him staring down Lucky expectantly.

To break the awkward silence, Lucky asked Apples, “So how’d your birthday go?”

To which she replied, “It vent very vell. Ze little tree-year-alt boy loved ze bell.” Fedora reached over and poked Lucky. Noticing this, Apples asked, “Vat do you vant?”

“Ask Bob,” replied Fedora.

“Fedora wants me to send you to help G. Rees shift out 1711 for 4145 down the west site. Want to do that?”

“Ja, I can do zat, but I vill need somebody to help me back Forty-von Forty-five.”

“Hmm... Cookie is on 14 with Coffee, right? 14’s a one-man car. Maybe hop on 14 for its next trip then take Cookie with you.”

“Okay,” replied Apples as she took her leave to go intercept 14 at the platform.

“Cookie the Rookie, really?” Fedora said to Bob once Apples was gone.

“Well yes, I can’t send Coffee because then Cookie would be by himself and he’s still a student.”

“Five bucks they are going to have an issue.”

“Oh well. I’ll jump off that bridge when I come to it. The students have to learn the ropes somehow.”

They watched on the cameras as Apples boarded 14, then alighted at the West Site with Cookie and went to the shop. G. Rees and company already had 1711 fired up. They watched as 1711 was backed out onto the hill, then watched Apples and Cookie go up to and disappear into Founder's Carhouse. A few minutes later, 4145 backed out of the barn, stopped then pulled out behind an eastbound service car into the clear at County Home.

4004 appeared westbound, then passed through toward Arden as Apples and Cookie walked back to fetch 1711.

"Hey Fedora, they didn't call us to enter the main."

"Remember rule number one, Bob, about staying off the radio. Now what you really need to keep in mind is that the westbound car is going to be eastbound at Richfol about nine minutes after it cleared County Home. You are going to have to make sure it doesn't pass through until the shop cars are off the siding."

1711 started backing up track 21, crossed Museum Road, then pulled into the siding. On the camera, they saw Cookie run up to the front seat, lean over to throw the hook, then lean over again, then stand up and run to the back again.

"Here we go," smirked Fedora. "Get out your wallet."

"I'm sure they'll figure it out," Lucky replied as calmly as he could.

Then Apples appeared at the front of the car, leaned over for the hook, sat up, leaned over again, then went back to the rear of the car. After a few seconds the car went back a couple feet.

"Do you want to call that eastbound car now or after Apples calls you? Be proactive," advised Fedora.

Lucky did as he was told, called 4004, and told him to hold eastbound at Richfol.

"1711 zu dispatch."

"Five bucks, Bob."

"Shut up, I didn't agree to your wager," replied Lucky before keying up. "This is dispatch."

"Hallo, 1711. Die Straßenbahn fährt rückwärts, aber nicht vorwärts. Wir haben wieder rückwärts fahren..." the rant continued as Lucky turned to Fedora.

"I don't speak German," Lucky said to Fedora.

“Nor do I, but her car will not move forwards. You saw them going back and forth changing ends and checking the hook. Tell them to shut the car down, wait two minutes, then restart it.”

“Sometimes you’re a real jerk, you know that, right? What the heck is that going to do? It’s not like there is a computer to reboot in that car.”

“It gives us two minutes to figure out what we are going to do in the case they don’t get that car to move forward.”

Out on 1711, the next two minutes were spent with Cookie looking up the start up and shut down procedures for 1711 while Apples tried not to panic. In the dispatch office, Lucky and Fedora came to grips with how much of a pain it would be to tow 1711 since it was flanked by 4004 facing east and 4145 without a tow pocket. After two minutes, the radio squelched. “1711 to dispatch.”

“This is dispatch,” replied Lucky, relieved that he was now talking to Cookie the Rookie in plain English.

“We’re back in business. There were fewer breakers to turn off than the book said. ‘Drum Brake Release’ wasn’t on for some reason, but we put it on like the book said and the car works now. Thanks for your help.”

Lucky’s jaw was on the floor. Fedora said to him smugly, “Did you learn anything? By the way, you should say ‘You’re welcome,’ when somebody thanks you.”

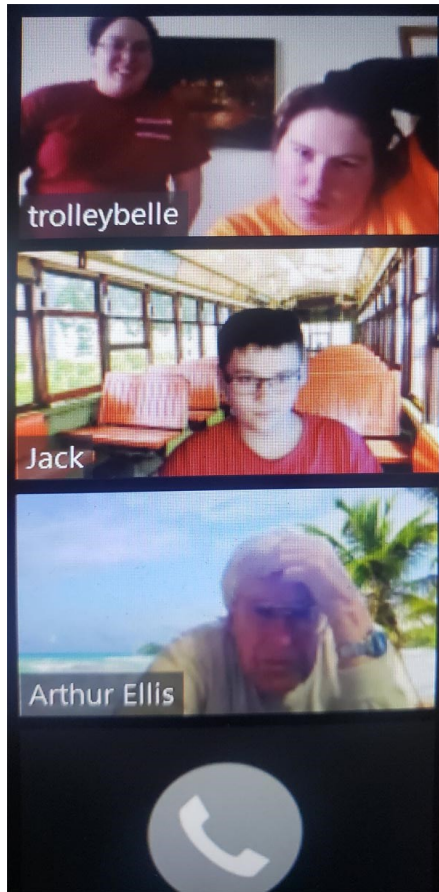
Lucky did as he was told; then, after some pondering, answered Fedora’s question. “I’m starting to understand why you are the way you are.” Fedora simply nodded, first back at Lucky, then at the screen showing 4004 waiting patiently at Richfol as 4145 was now pulling into 21.

Lucky sighed, then picked up his radio once again and called 4004.

Never assume that something simple was not overlooked. Sometimes the trouble is as simple as somebody forgetting a switch in a cabinet.

Shutting down and restarting the car is a good way to both retrace your steps as well as the steps of others.

Changing ends is also a good way to isolate trouble. In this case, the car only worked at the back-up controller because the rear controller bypasses that breaker in order to be able to release the brakes while the brake pedal is latched.



PTM's youngest & oldest volunteers during a museum Zoom in 2020.



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Grampa and his Gang

