

French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

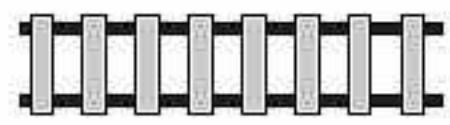
P.O. Box 632 Meadville, PA 16335

FALL 2012

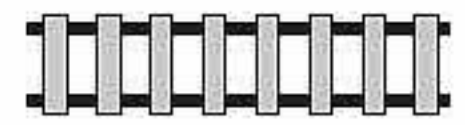
Newsletter of the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

Volume 7 Number 2

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VALLEY EXPRESS



518 Has Arrived!

After over six years of hard work preparing to move a diesel locomotive back to Meadville, the dreams for many of the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society members have finally come true. Alco model S-2, built in October of 1948 for the Erie Railroad, has returned to its home territory.

This project began in 2006 when it was reported to the Board that Robert Callahan, CEO of the Ashtabula, Carson & Jefferson Railroad, was offering to our society a former Erie Railroad switcher that he had just retired. The 518 came to the AC&J from the Cleveland Electric Illuminating, which bought the engine from the Erie Lackawanna Railway (formerly the Erie Railroad) for their Ashtabula power plant. After accepting the offer, several members went to Jefferson, OH to examine the engine and work out the details of the agreement. The AC&J requested that they keep the prime mover, and many other usable parts from the 518 so that they could be used for the other two Alco switchers on their roster. It was at that time, also, that we learned that we would have to tear the engine apart to move the engine. For some of us who are avid model railroaders, we suddenly realized this would not be as easy as tearing apart a model engine on a workshop table.



Alco S-2 Switcher Being Unloaded at Pomona Park (Photo Courtesy of Jan Nagle)

We started tearing apart things that were easiest at first. But, as time went by, disassembly became slower and slower as we realized we didn't have the skills or knowledge needed. Then, within the past couple of years, two of our newer members came to the work sessions and showed us their skill at accomplishing the difficult jobs. Now we began making progress.

During the last year we realized we were ready to move the engine. Ed Cronin took charge and began searching for the heavy equipment needed to remove the remaining parts off the engine and begin moving the hulk to Meadville. But, during this phase of the project, we hit a stumbling point. No one was responding to our requests for bids. We felt so close to completion, but we just could not get the people we needed to move it.

The beginning of this year saw very little activity until this summer. Our newly elected President Bernie Hanmore requested we take a good look at the project and decide if we should proceed or end it. We came close to ending it, but were finally successful in securing contractors to move it. A date was agreed upon by everyone involved to accomplish the move in two consecutive days, August 28 and 29. On the 28th, volunteer workers had departed for Jefferson when Ed's cell phone rang. The crane operator informed us that he was stuck on a job in Pittsburgh and would have to reschedule the move. Calls went out immediately to TV stations and newspaper people to avoid their showing up for nothing. We began to wonder if this was all meant to happen. Then three weeks later it all fell into place. Volunteers, contractors and photographers came together in Jefferson on Monday, September 24th, and the movement began. Soon the prime mover was removed along with other accessories, and the

(continued on page 5)

Local Update

According to the Erie Times, GE will move their management offices to the Heller International Bldg. on Monroe St. in Chicago, IL within two years. In May the company also announced it would enter into a joint venture to build a \$90 million diesel engine plant in Kazakhstan; and, in July announced plans for hybrid locomotives, requiring advanced battery manufacturing, to be built in a modern \$170 million plant in Schenectady, NY. Also, a plan to build mine truck equipment has resulted in the \$700 million purchase of the Australia-based Industrea Ltd., as well as Virginia-based Fairchild International. Caterpillar, the top builder of mining trucks, acquired Bucyrus International and EPA Mining Machinery.

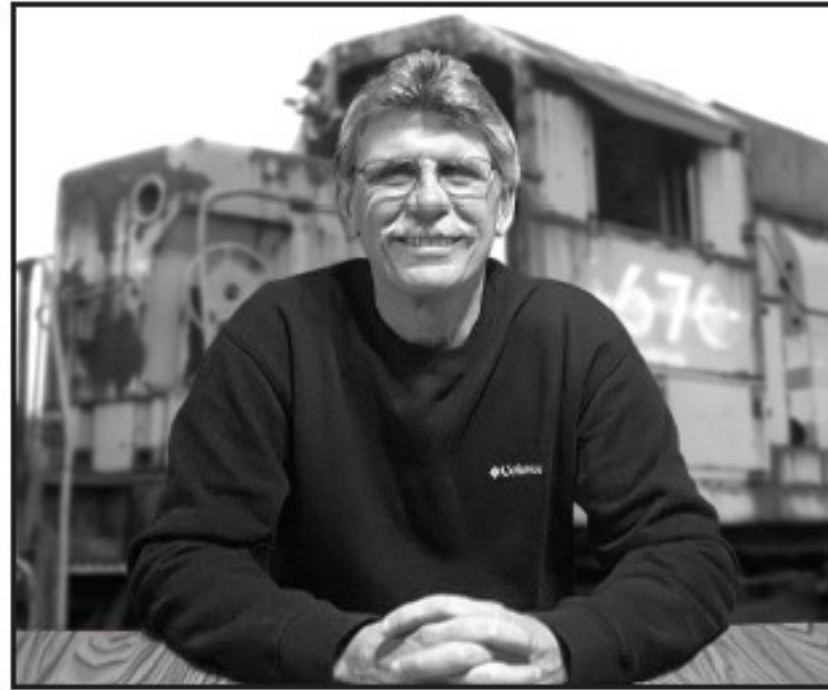
Locally, track and a switch have been removed from the Spring Street extension crossing, and the switch may be made available to our Society for installation near the proposed Museum.

Editor's Note: The Spring issue erred in citing B&LE rather than ELHS.



From the Stationmaster's Office

Believe it or not, our Alco S2 switcher engine has finally arrived from Jefferson, OH as a generous donation from the A,C&J railroad folks. I must say the 518 looks good leading the caboose despite the missing hood and other temporary removals, which are undergoing repair and painting. I want to thank the die hard group of members who consistently found time to participate in the 6-year effort of making it happen. Hopefully, other members will pick



up the slack now that the engine is in town. Our coming year should prove interesting as we tidy up the 518 project and initiate plans for a complementary educational walk to describe the array of turn-of-the-century shop equipment sited at Pomona Park.

But, first off, I would like to see our Society participate in an annual spring model railroad layout tour with volunteer members agreeing to host visitors on either a Saturday or a Sunday to demonstrate their layout operations. I feel that this could eventually generate operating sessions in the future.

I hope we can line up an annual local train excursion run - maybe as a Christmas event for the region's rail buffs.

I would like to thank our outgoing president, Denny Mead for his able leadership during his previous terms served, and to wish him well with his health issues and continued service as vice president. I would also like to thank Lloyd's Crane and Equipment LLC for their generous waiver of additional 518 charges owing to the delays associated with stubborn traction motor removals in Jefferson, OH.

Bernie Hanmore

CONTRIBUTIONS & GIFTS

- Weber Electric Supply
- Staples Copy & Print
- Lloyd's Rental & Sales
- Crawford County Historical Society
- Tom's Train Terminal
- Western New York & PA RR
- Pipp Graphics & Design
- US Bronze Foundry & Machine
- AC & J RR, Jefferson, OH
- LakeShore Railway Historical Society
- Scott Wilson Family
- Bob Bingham family
- Bill McComas Family
- Carl Timko Family
- Anne W. Stewart
- Tom Collard Family
- Ed Cronin Family
- Richard Szymkowski Family
- Jack Sheets Family
- Joe Mazzone
- Moss Family
- Jason Ferguson Family

French Creek Valley Express

A Publication of the
French Creek Valley Railroad
Historical Society

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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.

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



Budget and Finance

As you may know our fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. August and September are a bit busy for the treasurer. In addition to the membership renewal which begins July 1 (*have you paid your dues yet?*) we are required to file with the IRS, the Pennsylvania Corporate Bureau, the PA Bureau of Charitable Organizations, and this year we applied for a PA sales tax exemption (this means the Society will not have to pay state sales tax on items we purchase but we still need to collect and pay state sales tax on taxable items we sell). Throw in moving 518, transferring the 518 fund from the Heritage Center and issuing the checks for the move, and paying sales tax, I am still not caught up. It did bring a smile to my face when our checkbook balance exceeded \$23,000 but with the 518 expenses plus paying for the new calendars, the checkbook balance is back to where it was a year ago.

We still have a lot of expenses for 518. We need to finish painting the body and purchase decals and stripes. We need to have repairs made to the cab body. A cover plate and step need to be fabricated for the lower rear edge of the cab, and we may have to purchase a bolt or two for reassembly not to mention windows, a bell, and a horn. Finally, lighting and an additional section of fence needs to be added before we can call the project finished ...all before next June. Would anyone care to sponsor some of these projects?

Don't forget the PRR baggage car we recently received from the WNY&PRR. I'm sure it will need a little more than spit and polish.

As always, if you can spare a few dollars for our projects it will be greatly appreciated.

-Ed Cronin

Membership

Roger Reinnagel is hereby welcomed as a new member and has made several donations.

Dan Higham is a new Lifetime Member of the Society.

-Carl Timko & Ed Cronin



Museum

The annual meeting of the Heritage Center took place on Monday, June 11, at the Johnson-Shaw Stereoscopic Museum. At the meeting Mr. Ashley Porter of Porter Consulting Engineers was recognized as the Heritage Center Volunteer of the year. Ashley has been great to work with and has been quite generous with his time as well.

Mark Turner from the Economic Progress Alliance accepted the award for the Alliance as the Partner Organization of the Year. The Alliance is very supportive of our project, and with the gift of land last fall helped us move a lot closer to building the museum.

Marilyn Black, our membership chair, announced our membership program whereby members of the community and businesses may become charter members of the Heritage Center. All FCV members will receive a \$5.00 discount if they choose to become a member. For more information please visit www.railroadtoolingmuseum.com.

In the last issue I mentioned the Transportation Enhancements (TE) Grant application we filed that might enable us to begin construction of

the building. Unfortunately we were not selected as a grantee and to add insult to injury the Museum category was eliminated for future TE Grant programs. The Museum Board believes the best course is to move forward with a series of smaller projects that we can get smaller grants for.

The first of these projects is the purchase of former Erie Lackawanna #3639. Unlike 518, we plan to have it painted before it arrives in Meadville and unlike 518, it must come by rail (it weighs almost 200 tons). The Virginia Museum of Transportation will hold the locomotive for us for a year as we get funding in place. Initially it can be stored on the track between Meadville Moving & Storage and Universal Well Services but we plan to build a siding for 3639 and other rolling stock that comes our way. We have asked for help from the WNY&PRR and will probably lay much of the track with volunteers.

The weekend of October 14, four members journeyed down to Roanoke, VA to see and discuss 3639. Although this project will be a part of the Heritage Center, our Railroad Historical Society will play a big part in putting it on display here in Meadville.



Thanks to the efforts of Nate Clark, we may soon receive the east portal of the Erie Railroad Bridge that spanned half of the Shenango River adjacent to the B&LE Shenango Yard. It has been suggested we use this artifact as an entrance to the museum, an exhibit inside the museum, or an outside metal sculpture. In any case, a part of this 1895 bridge will be coming to Meadville soon. (See picture below)



Photo courtesy of Jon Clark

Another project that we recently became aware of is a milk bottle collection from the estate of James Roha. During his lifetime Mr. Roha collected over 200 glass milk bottles ... all from in and around Crawford County. The family is looking to place it with one of the local Historical Societies. We hope it will become a permanent exhibit in the Museum.

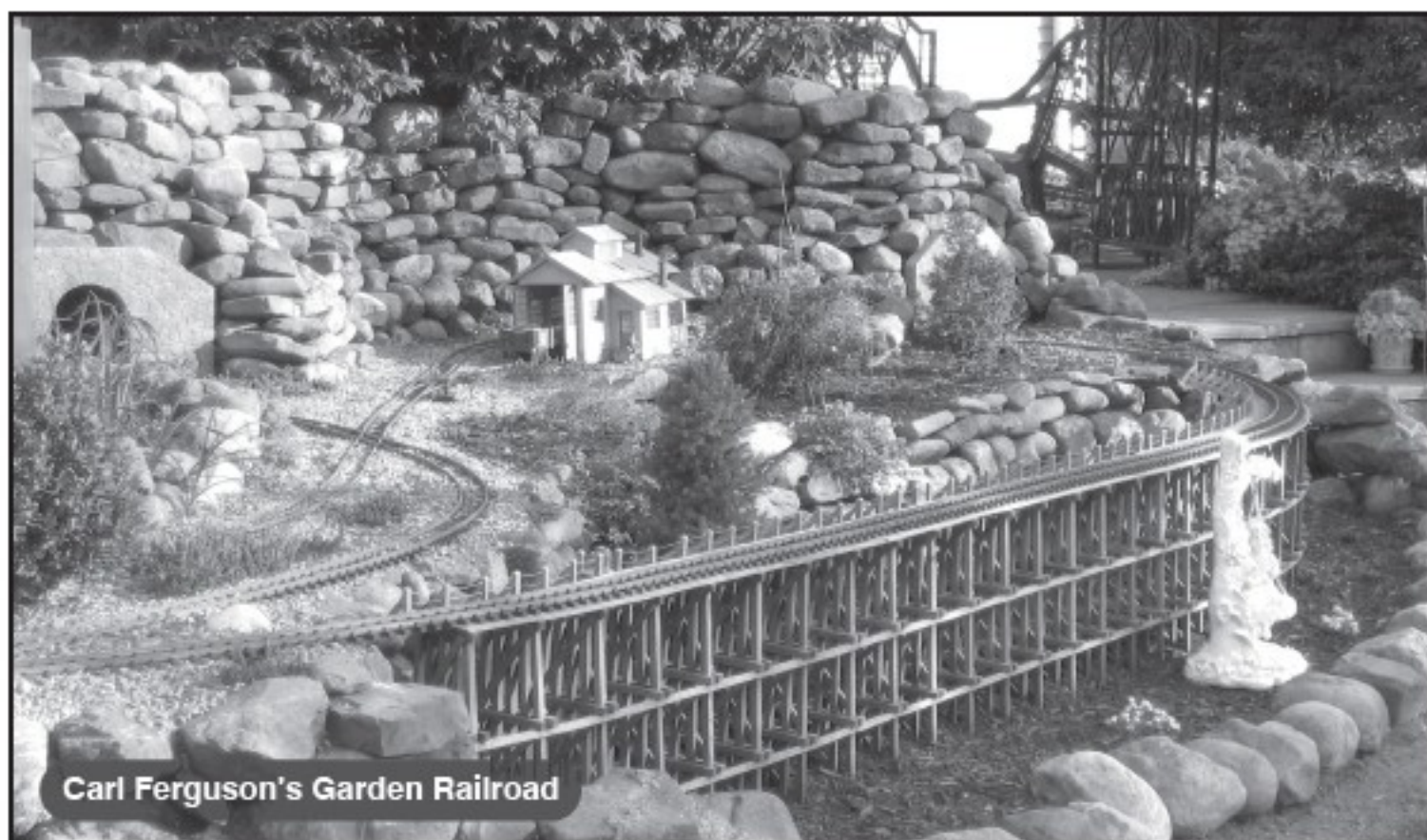
Last but not least is a project to build several movable exhibits which would be placed in local school libraries. These 3x3-foot exhibits could feature any of the past or present industries from northwestern Pennsylvania and would eventually move into the Heritage Center.

-Ed Cronin

Model Railroading

The Model Railroad Club has been meeting on Wednesdays from 6-8 PM at Shops@thebank on Park Avenue, to construct benchwork for 3 scales including HO, TT, and N scales.

Member Carl Ferguson (Pennsylvania Tool & Gages) and his wife Joyce recently participated in hosting ELHS to a layout tour. His G-scale garden railroad shown on this page is nicely complemented by Joyce's porch wind chime collection, which overlooks the setup. A model



Carl Ferguson's Garden Railroad

barn in the layout is a replica of his barn - right down to the cedar shake roof.

-Tom Collard & Scott Wilson

Special Events / Programs

We have an outside chance of offering a train excursion sometime over the holidays. Hopefully, we can initiate an annual layout tour on a Saturday this spring.

-Dan Higham

Public Relations

The headline story here, of course, is the arrival of the 518 in Meadville on September 25th. The event certainly did not get the same attention as the Rover landing on Mars this year, but the society did get some good coverage in the media.



Wind chimes and train whistles

Television coverage from the Erie channels WICU, WSEE and WJET spread the word throughout northwestern PA, western New York and eastern Ohio. Also, the Meadville Tribune gave full front page coverage, complete with photos and quotes from Society members. All together, the French Creek Valley RR Historical Society benefited from the attention given our project - attention that might attract more members and contributions. As the 518 project moves along, we will continue to use the media to report our progress.

The 2013 calendar is fresh off the press and available for purchase. This year's calendar continues with more pix from the Stuart Ladner collection. Just like last year, the calendar features many photos never seen before.

Coming events include the Rainbow Gardens Train Show at Waldameer Park in Erie on November 4th. We again will have a table there with calendars, T-shirts and other items for sale. Be sure to attend.

-Dennis Mead

History & Archives

The 2013 FCVRRHS Erie Railroad calendars are now on sale for \$12.75 (including sales tax). To have it mailed by priority mail, please add \$5.25. Make check or money order out to:

FCVRRHS, P.O. Box 632
Meadville, PA 16335

The Society will man a table at the

Rainbow Gardens train show in Erie on Sunday, November 4. Hours are 10 AM- 4PM. The following donations were received from Charles Young: (1) a letter from the USA Railroad Retirement Board to Mrs. Young, (2) a postcard of an Erie 4-6-2 #2929, (3) a Christmas card with an Erie FTA at Susquehanna Station, (4) a color pic of a 2-8-2, and (5) photo album of the 1959 flood in Meadville's Erie Yard. New member Roger Reinnagel donated: (1) a matted pen/ink drawing of the B&LE Albion depot, (2) seven issues of "Logging Railroad Era of Lumbering in PA" series, and (3) a signed letter from author Walt Casler. The Crawford County Civil War Roundtable Military History Library gave a copy of C.L. Siebert, Jr's "Northwestern Pennsylvania Railway", a book on Erie passenger cars. We're very grateful for the donations.

-Carl Timko



Property and Equipment

Our work sessions to the 518 in Jefferson, OH finally ended on September 25, when the Alco S2 unit was placed in Pomona Park to 'lead' the caboose northward. The hood and other removals will be restored before reinstalling. (The fence needs to be reinstalled as well.) President Bernie Hanmore and Ed Cronin will travel to the George Silcott Co. in Worthington, OH to pick up two air brake tanks for the S2 and Jack agreed to pay for one. Stan Niwa will weld the coupler so that the caboose can be hooked up. Terry Martin has sand blasted bolts in preparation of rehangng the step to the right rear.

The signal mast housing has been primed, painted and rewired, and hopefully Hunt Christie has proper sized lenses to replace broken ones. The specs for the concrete base will be adhered to when erecting the unit.

The Tool Car has a leaking roof which Jack is attempting to patch.

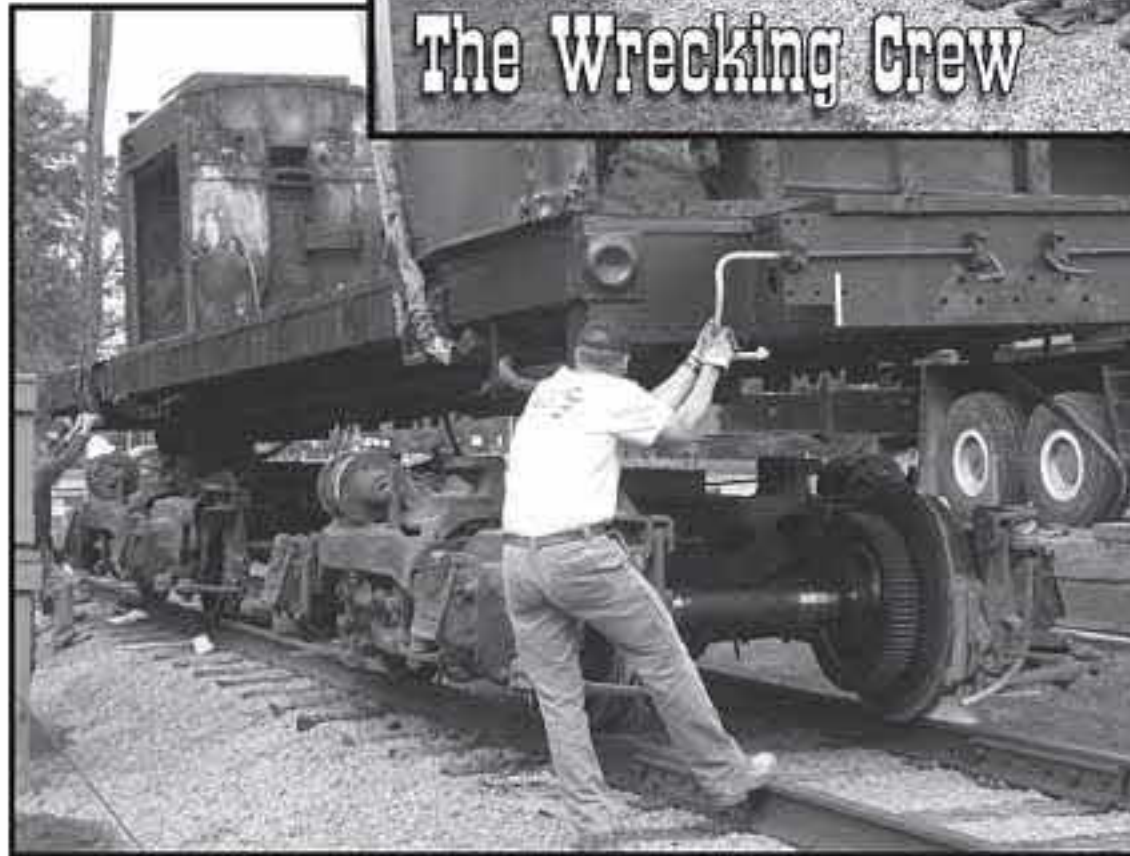
-Al Reibel & Jack Sheets

Front row (l-r):
Denny Mead,
Stan Niwa

Back row (l-r):
Ed Cronin,
Bill McComas,
Jack Sheets,
Bernie Hanmore,
Terry Martin,
John Snyder



The Wrecking Crew



Alco 518 Being Placed on
Wheel Sets at Pomona Park

Stan and Terry
Reconnecting
Brake



Photo courtesy of Tom Stewart

(continued from page 1)

engine was removed from its wheel sets and placed on a waiting low-boy truck. After a brief low-boy hangup on the nearby railroad crossing, the 518 was on the highway journey to its final home. Remaining were the wheel sets, which were to be swapped with another switcher on the AC&J. After that changeout came the task of removing the traction motors from the remaining wheel sets, so the trucks could be loaded and follow the engine to Meadville. But trouble occurred as they attempted to remove the motors. A call to the Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad educated us as to how to remove the stubborn motors correctly, but they ran out of daylight.

Early the next morning the remaining wheel sets were loaded onto a waiting truck and were soon on their way to Meadville, where they arrived before noon. Within two and a half hours the 518 was set into its final resting place and the project was complete. Ahead of us now is the reassembly of the 518. Does anyone remember where all those bolts and nuts went to hold everything together?

I would like to give special thanks to all the volunteers who have assisted with the project over these past six years. Special thanks go out to members Stan Niwa and Terry Martin, who really know how to tear locomotives apart. And extra special thanks go out to Carl Belke, CEO of the WNY&P Railroad and his Alco Locomotive expert Brian Allen, who provided advice in removing traction motor covers. Without all who helped in this project, the 518 would still be in the woods at the end of the AC&J tracks, awaiting its fate. And to Bob Callahan, thank you so very much for the donation. We hope we didn't leave anything behind.

-Dennis Mead



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



518 Traction Motor Removal
Photo courtesy of Tom Stewart

**French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society
Program & Events Schedule - Fall 2012**

October 27

Ohio/Pennsylvania RR Seminar • Darlington, PA

October 27

Orrville RR Heritage Society

November 3 (9 am - 12 pm)

“Learning Basic Model Railroading”

Lakeland Community College

Kirtland, OH *Free Admission*

Nov. 3-4, 10-11 & Dec. 1-2, 8-9 (Noon to 6 pm)

Youngstown Model Railroad Association

Open House *Admission \$3.00*

November 4 (10 am - 4 pm)

Rainbow Gardens Train Show • Erie, PA

(FCVRRHS Table) *Admission \$4.00*

November 10 (10 am - 2 pm)

150th Anniversary of Founding of Erie RR

Tom's Train Terminal • Meadville, PA

Ken Springirth Book Signing *Free Admission*

November 20 thru December 30

Clarion Model RR Club Open House

Cranberry Mall, Rte. 322

December 9 (10 am - 3:30 pm)

Christmas Train and Toy Show

Lakeland Community College

Kirkland, OH *Admission \$6.00*



A Section of Carl Ferguson's Garden Layout (see Page 4)

TOM'S TRAIN TERMINAL

Model Railroad Headquarters

O, HO, TT, N and Z Scales

Lionel Value Added Dealer

Shops@thebank

940 Park Avenue, Meadville, PA

(814) 853-2942