

# MILEPOSTS

THE BULLETIN OF  
THE MIDLAND RAILWAY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Baldwin City, Kansas

Vol. XXII, No. 2

www.midland-ry.org

December, 2009

## Special Activities in 2009

### Easter Trains, a Wedding Train, Day Out With Thomas, Halloween Trains are Among this Year's Special Highlights

We began 2009 with the Easter Egg Hunt train on April 11 with a total of 784 passengers.

The 8th annual Day Out With Thomas (May 29-31; June 5-7) brought out 13,697 happy Thomas fans.

Midland "Railfest Weekend" (Sept 5-7) carried 347 rail enthusiasts. Bob Turner assisted Charles Pitcher and members of Kansas City Chapter Railway Mail Clerks (RMCs) man KCS RPO 30 during the Railfest event. Our theme this year was "1969-2009: Railroading Forty Years Ago."

Numbers for the Maple Leaf Festival (Oct. 17-18) were at 654, down considerably from the 2008 total of 1,227.

We also transported 978 very



**DEPARTING PASSENGERS** waiting their turn to photograph their children with Thomas the Tank Engine. 6/09—photo by Charles Pitcher.

"happy campers" with our 2009 Scout Program, including Boy

Scouts, Girl Scouts and even Cub Scouts!

Through the years, in cooperation with Kansas Operation Lifesaver, OLI presentations have been given to the Scouts by Charles Pitcher, Tom Wheeler, or Ivan & Shorty Voorhees.

Finally, our Halloween "Haunted Train" (Oct. 23, 24, 29, 30) frightened 1,198 eager fans.

The Murder Mystery and Christmas Santa Claus trains were not operated in 2009.

Charters, birthdays, a wedding (see article "Nuptials on the Midland") and even a movie train rounded out some of the many special activities operated by Midland this year.

(See pages 4-6 for more pictures.)



**THOMAS FANS ADORE** him, whether he is lifesize or model train size, as these children are enjoying. 6/09.—photo by Charles Pitcher

## **TRACK & BRIDGE REPORTS**

### **Boy Scout Work Projects Accomplished**

Our Boy Scout camps have always been a win-win program for Midland. The boys enjoy a great camp-out experience and obtain their railroad merit badges by learning about the railroad industry, Operation Lifesaver and above all, working safely!

Midland is a proud supporter of KS OLI, providing presentations at the 2009 Boy Scout/Girl Scout and Cub Scout camps.

The boys learn how America's railroads were built as they, too, get hands-on experience of picking, shoveling, and spiking ties. At the end of the day, they all agree that track work is hard but satisfied in the fact they accomplished something special. It is also important for Midland having these boys install new ties, keeping our track safe and strong.

This year, the boys re-tied a long stretch of track just south of Montana Road crossing. Much thanks goes out to all the Midland members who devoted their time and effort to help these fine young men; and to the dads (and some moms, too) for their assistance as well.

### **All Members Mark Your 2010 Calendar**

The 2010 Annual Meeting of Membership for Midland Railway Historical Association has been scheduled for February 27. A written notice will be mailed to each member with further details.

Also, the ninth annual Day Out With Thomas event is scheduled for June 4-5-6; 11-12-13.

For other 2010 activities, please visit our website;

[www.midland-ry.org](http://www.midland-ry.org)

### **ARRA Trestle Grant Project for Restoration of Bridges on South End**

Currently, information was sent to five agencies in preparation for the ARRA Trestle Project. The KS Dept. of Agriculture permits are needed to work in stream beds. Hopefully construction could begin in February,

2010, depending on the weather.

### **Track Material Donated or Purchased**

The Lawrence KS Tie/Rail Project grossed over \$17,000, but less costs of about \$10,000, or approximately \$185 per long ton from A&K. We also salvaged ties and OTM to be used in 2010.

## **Lucky DOWT Visitors Win Train Sets**



**OPERATION LIFESAVER** presenter Charles Pitcher presents HO-scale model train to Tanner Schuetz (rt.), Olathe, KS (as brother Spencer looks on), winner DOWT drawing.—photo by Charles Pitcher

Each day during Midland Railway's 2009 Day Out With Thomas event (May 29-30-31; June 5-6-7), thousands of happy families filed onto the grounds at Baldwin City, KS, anxious to ride behind Thomas the Tank Engine. As they arrived, they were greeted by Midland's information and Kansas Operation Lifesaver booth.

At the booth, located under the front depot awning, the kids filled in "What Am I?" connect-the-dots entry forms for a daily HO-scale model train drawing, provided by Kansas Operation Lifesaver. The correct answer to "What Am I?" – CROSS BUCK SIGN.

The six winners: Tanner Schuetz, Olathe, KS; Christina Baker, Liberty,



**OPERATION LIFESAVER** presenter Charles Pitcher presents HO-scale model train to Christina Baker, Liberty, MO, winner of Midland Ry's DOWT daily drawing.—photo by Charles Pitcher

MO (both of which were personally delivered by Operation Lifesaver presenter Charles Pitcher); Elijah Bousson, Cummings, KS; Maddie Byrd, Wichita, KS; Ty Downing, Grove, OK; and Adam Toth, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Helping Charles at the booth during the event were Bob Hruska, Jim Massey (and his son, Brad), Ken Walters, Alan Bixler, John LaGessee, Ivan & Shorty Voorhees and Darlene Osterhaus! Finally, Midland wants to thank Darlene Osterhaus, Executive Director, and Kansas Operation Lifesaver of Topeka, for providing the six model train sets, hand fans, brochures, zipper pulls, key chains, and many other great Operation Lifesaver handouts.

# OPERATIONAL ITEMS FOR 2009

## Ridership Numbers with Saturday-only Schedule

A major change in our 2009 operations came with the discontinuance of most Sunday operations – this to allow maintenance-of-way more track time with which to make repairs. Combined general weekend/Thursday ridership starting June 11 was 2,197, down just 110 from 2008.

## New Crew Caller Named

Susie Pratt, wife of Mike Pratt, became our new crew caller this season.

## Locomotive 524

524 developed a serious air leak which was traced to two rusted-out



pipes going thru the cab floor. One was the main air line, the other from the brake control stand to the train



line. Tom Hamilton and Dick Bell made the repairs. Both lines were replaced, although it was an extremely tight fit to gain access under the cab floor requiring a hole to be cut. A new cover panel will be installed.

## Caboose 32 and Tool Car

At the 1/24/09 Board Meeting, member John Killian’s donation of Caboose GN X32 was accepted. Thank you, John Killian!

Caboose 32’s brakes needed attention. The service and emergency valves and brake cylinder were repaired and cleaned.

The tool car had a new handbrake and new angle cock installed.

## MKT Locomotive 142

142 developed electrical problems “dropping the load (power)” at various times when pulling trains. An electrician diagnosed the problem was in the throttle control stand. Dick Bell and Tom Hamilton removed the dirt, bare wires and contacts and made the repairs.

## Coaches 803 and 441

Also thanks to Dick Bell and Tom Hamilton – along with help from outside sources – coach 803 was returned to service just in time for 2009 Day Out With Thomas. The car had suffered coupler damage the year before, so the availability of those extra seats helped greatly!

Also in the foreseeable agenda for 2010, Allen Maty wants to get to work on the 441 combine with roof, body work and new paint!

## Radios

If you own a two-way walkie-talkie radio with Midland Railway frequency, it may need to be repaired



so that it is compliant with new FCC regulations. According to Art Davis, FCC is mandating that all radios on the LMR bandwidth be converted to “narrowband” spacing. Radios need to be capable of a 6kHz bandwidth versus the current 20kHz spacing.

E-mail your radio model number to John Kleinschmidt at [gb2btall@aol.com](mailto:gb2btall@aol.com) and he will determine if it is upgradeable.



## News We Can Use

If you have an article or editorial you would like published, please send it to Charles Pitcher (Editor, MILEPOSTS) either at his e-mail:

[charlespitcher@comcast.net](mailto:charlespitcher@comcast.net)

or c/o Midland Railway,  
P.O. Box 5,

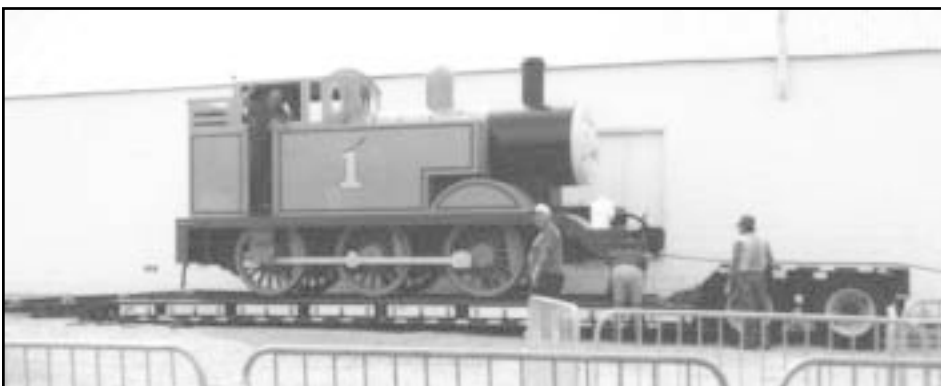
Baldwin City, KS 66006-0005  
Attn: MILEPOSTS.



**TOM WHEELER** and Dave Holland oversee the safe loading of Thomas aboard its low-boy trailer enroute to the next DOWT event. 6/7/09



**CROWDS BOARD** one of the Baldwin school buses enroute back to their automobiles. Buses ran continuous shuttles throughout the event between the parking lot and depot.



**TOM WHEELER** makes sure Thomas is safely secured on the low-boy trailer, ready to leave Baldwin for its next destination. 6/7/09

## D.O.W.T. in Photos



**A MIDLAND TRADITION.** Each morning opening DOWT festivities, the Baldwin City Fire Department raises the American flag atop their hook-and-ladder truck to the "Star Spangled Banner."



**KIDS GET A REAL** bounce at the DOWT "moonwalk" inflated playground. June, 2009.

# More D.O.W.T. Photos



**"THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE"** taking a break between trips at Baldwin City, KS 6/09



**A HAPPY FAMILY** poses with Sir Topham Hatt. 6/09



**KS OPERATION LIFESAVER** presents Alan Bixler (left) and Ivan Voorhees (right). Ivan, of course, is also an active Midland Member. DOWT June, 2009.



**BUSINESS WAS GOOD** inside the DOWT Gift Shop Tent. 6/09.



**CHARLES PITCHER'S** daughter Kelsey and grandson Michael Monaco proudly shows his "Engineer Certificate" while DOWT Conductor J.D. Linn looks on.



**CHARLES PITCHER** (KS Operation Lifesaver) and Bob Hruska (Midland Information Booth) visit with patrons to 2009 D.O.W.T. KS OLI presenter Jim Massey (far left) looks on.



**D.O.W.T.  
photos by  
Charles  
Pitcher**



**THE KANSAS OPERATION LIFESAVER** booth at front of Baldwin City depot was a very busy place. KS OLI Presenter Ken Walters assists our visitors.

**==HELLO NEW MEMBERS==**

It's been a long time since we've welcomed new Midland members in print. The new memberships approved during 2009 include:

- Jason Martin**  
Louisburg, KS (Family)
- Don Bleam**  
Auburn, KS (Senior)

- Rhonda Moses,**  
Lenexa, KS (Family)
- Dave Mann**  
Olathe, KS (Family)
- Gary T. Elliott**  
Lincoln, NE (Family)
- Karen Jo Boyle**  
Wellsville, KS (Family)
- Christyne Hays**  
Greenwood, MO (Youth)



**DON'T GET LOST!** Kids going thru the hay bale maze while waiting their turn to enter the train boarding area.

# *Nuptials on the Midland!*

On September 19, Midland Railway hosted the wedding of Midland member Mr. Robert Dean Hall, Jr. to Miss Susan Lee Shinneman.

The "Wedding Express Limited" left Baldwin Depot at 4:00 p.m. The Express consist included MKT 142, coaches 2507 and 803, caboose ATSF 999060 as well as KCS RPO 30, which served as the reception car!

The train arrived in Norwood at 4:35 p.m. Guests



**JUST MARRIED!** Dean and Susan Hall stroll down the aisle at the Norwood, KS "chapel" moments after saying "I do!" Sept. 19, 2009. -photo by Charles Pitcher



**NEWLYWEDS** Dean and Susan Hall aboard the reception car (KCS 30) on their wedding train at Norwood, KS Sept. 19, 2009. -photo by Charles Pitcher

were seated in the Norwood shelter and the wedding ceremony commenced about 5:00 p.m. Cake and punch were served from the RPO car as wedding guests leisurely passed from the coaches to partake in the wonderful refreshments.

Midland Railway and all of Dean's and Susan's friends

wish them a joyous and prosperous marriage!



**NORWOOD, KS** shelter house is transformed into a wedding chapel. Guests await Dean Hall and Susan Shinneman about to be married Sept. 19, 2009. -photo by Charles Pitcher



**CONDUCTOR IVAN VOORHEES** offered his congratulations to the new Mrs. Robert Dean Hall (Susan Shinneman) Sept. 19, 2009. -photo by Charles Pitcher

## **Former Midland Member and KCS Chef Dies**

On September 29, we were saddened to learn of the unexpected death of Michael Edmondson, 49, who had been a Midland member during the years 2003-2004.

Most notably, he had been Executive Business Car Chef for Kansas City Southern, and was employed by the Union Pacific serving in train service at the time of his death.

Born October 13, 1959, he obtained a Culinary Degree at Johnson County, KS, Community College, prior to working at the Westin Crown Center Hotel, Kansas City, then on the "Southern Belle" Business Train with KCS during the 1990s.

He leaves his wife, Debi, and their two sons, and many friends at KCS, UP and Midland.

## Board Position Appointees



**Mike Beem**

At the May 23, 2009, Board Meeting, Roger Clark and Mike Beem were nominated to fill two board position vacancies created by the resignations of Ernie Griffin and



**Roger Clark**

Charles Pitcher, who could not fulfill their terms.

Mike Pratt was appointed to the position of General Manager, which will not be a Board position.

### **An Overdue Salute to our Good Friends, The Kansas City Railway Mail Clerks Association**

For many years, it has been a Midland tradition to operate over the Labor Day Weekend with our annual "Railfest". Besides a lot of hard-working Midland members who help operate the train, sing railroad songs, and cook burgers and hotdogs for our patrons, there have been others who participate – those we wish to gratefully recognize: Members of the Kansas City Chapter Railway Mail Clerks Association (RMCs).

Currently, President George Corben has directed fellows in his group to sort mail on the Baldwin and Norwood route – and they have done a wonderful job, too. Over at least the past 12 years, guys like George, Norman Minden, Charles Hagen, Herb Crawford, Richard Weiss, John Pirog, Bob Bradshaw, Glenn Titsworth, Lester Brown, Lyle Rose, Charles Able, Art Jiminez, Marvin Treadway, Don Bliss, Eldon Denny, Marvin Martin, Gene Anderson,

Charles Stephens, John J. Collum, George R. Johnson, George Wilkerson, Bill Moser, Clarence Whitaker, Jesse Pace and Bob White have taken their time to ride the rails onboard KCS Railway Post Office Car 30, cheerfully demonstrating how mail used to be sorted aboard fast-moving passenger trains! (names compiled from back issues of RMC newsletter, *Transit News*, 1997-2009) Their group was even featured in the Fall 2006 issue of *Classic Trains* magazine.

With the years gone by, some of these fellows have passed on, but their legacy remains, and Midland Railway wishes to thank them all again for their great generosity.

**Check Midland's Website  
for schedule changes  
and breaking news.  
[www.midland-ry.org](http://www.midland-ry.org)**

## OPEN FORUM

A letter from member Ernie Griffin

In April, 2009, I resigned from the Board of Directors of the Midland Railway Association. This occurred after serving only two months from being reelected in February. Many people felt this was because of the dramatic changes in the operation of the railroad and the methods used by one board member to achieve that goal. Though I was adamantly opposed to those changes, that was not the reason for my resignation.

As most of you know, in December, 2008 I had my left leg amputated. This was going to require a prostheses and rehabilitation. Because I live alone and was unable to drive at that time, I could not have gone to a rehab facility for outpatient service. This meant that I would have to have a visiting therapist for this rehab.

In order for my insurance to pay for these home visits, I had to be confined to my home, with the exceptions of going to church, doctor or the barber shop. I had no choice but to follow their regulations. This rehab continued until August, 2009.

I would have missed the majority of the season, and according to the bylaws of this organization, I could have been removed from the board. Regardless, I would have been unable to fulfill my duties at the position to which I had been elected.

Because of recent changes, I felt it important that I keep the reason for my resignation confidential until this time.

I wanted to explain to the numerous supporters that voted for me at the last election for my reason.

I have since become more mobile, and I am able to drive to outpatient rehab and to participate more in Midland activities in the future.

Thanks to all of you for your kindness and understanding this past year.

## OPEN FORUM: *“The Eleven and A Half Miles of Steel”*

by Christyne Hays

All I hear is just the screech and pounding of hard steel rolling powerfully on, flying across the smoothing rail. The rhythm of my heart matches the sway of the car and motion of my hips. With my radio clipped to my belt, my trusty boots warmly fitted on my feet, my hair coming out of the tightest pony tail, and the breeze flying in my face, I close my eyes tightly just to hear the symphony of noises the rail car makes. This is my passion; this is who I was, who I am, and who I will always be: The Queen of the Rail!

As I travel the short eleven and a half miles of glistening steel, I dream of how beautiful everything is around me. I feel free, alone, and happy as I become who I want to be without anyone's judgment.

After I read the wonderful adventures of Christopher Johnson McCandless, better known as Alexander Supertramp, I felt some kind of connection with the beliefs and concerns that Alex expresses throughout his adventures towards Alaska.

Sometimes I feel like I am him, only I'm not spending two years away from home and living in Alaska. Instead, I spend only one short day at Midland Railway, and if I can when I'm really tired and just need to catch up on some much-needed sleep, I can relax in a caboose, my favorite place in the whole world.

Midland Railway is my second favorite place in the whole world, which is where the caboose lies. This place is a not-for-profit organization that I have known even before I was born; in fact, just three days before I was born I was almost let into this world on one of the two red cabooses

that reside at my perfect utopia (Midland Railway).

My dad, Douglas, is one of the seven founding members of Midland in Baldwin City, KS. The really amazing part of it is that they founded Midland just to keep the spirit of railroading alive.

Another wonder that I also hold dear to my heart is that my father works for the Union Pacific Railroad, which was originally the Missouri Pacific or the Southern Pacific for 15 years, and before that he worked for the Boston and Maine and the Gateway Western. This brings his railroading career to a total of 23 years.

One could say that trains run in my and my two siblings' blood. Trains are a passion that runs through my veins to the deepest parts of my soul. They are everything I have ever known.

The greatest reason for my passion is of course Midland, but also the way I feel when I'm on a locomotive (the engine pulling the heavy load of a short or long train) or one of the train cars; it's just the way I feel when I'm there holding the cold steel on one of the old passenger cars that just makes everything come into place. The wind, the bell, and the dance of axle on the rail send me flying higher than the sky or the immensely bright moon.

Now I can't even measure how I tingle when the fumes from the smokestacks tease my senses. Everything there puts me at peace, calms my spirit, and reminds me of who I truly am and not what I'm trying to be for the rest of the world.

Now one may ask, "What does any of this have to do with your past?" My answer is as simple as can be; it is everything, these events in my life have not stopped, and I wouldn't want them to. Everything I have de-

scribed is how I feel for real then and now; Midland is my greatest adventure in life no matter what happens to me in my near and distant future.

I must say it can be quite depressing to know that people don't truly understand the magic that lies in store for those that listen to the song played by the locomotive and its tail.

Even after sixteen years, four months, fourteen days and four hours of knowing of Midland's existence, I still have much to learn from the simplicity of the rails and the crops that surround them.

In *Into the Wild*, one of Chris' cross country teammates, Gordy Cuculla, described how Chris McCandless would "lead us on long, killer runs through places like farmers' fields and construction sites, places we weren't supposed to be, and intentionally try to get us lost. We'd run as far and as fast as we could, down strange roads, through woods, whatever. The whole idea was to lose our bearings, to push ourselves into unknown territory," (Krakauer 112). That's how I feel and have felt since May 1, 1993, at 10:00 in the morning about the trains, Midland Railway, and wherever the train tracks lie.

When I stand calmly in the striking presence of my gifted hobby, it is hard for a person, such as I, who loves something so much to express those intense feelings. I know lately I have grown to have huge a heart and a strong head on my shoulders from the people I have known my entire life at Midland, and the pure serenity of how beautiful the railroad is.

I must say that when a person is surrounded by the people that one loves and are loved unconditionally back, it's so easy to learn from the

*(Cont. on page 10)*



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## OPEN FORUM

*Cont. from page 9*

examples they set for one they want to see do well in life. I cannot forget what my close friend, whom I have known my entire life, said to me. He told me that whatever happens during my teenage years or during my college career to wait until I am married to enjoy true love. It struck me as interesting that people, who really care about a person such as me, want to make it known that they want me to be happy and not see me get hurt. I do, however, feel blessed; it just would be so wonderful if others (mostly my age) only knew to wait on love.

I must say that I do *love* Midland Railway with all that I am, and I hope that when I am older that I will still be able to hear the glide of the rails and see the sight of how the sun glis-

tens on top of the meadows. I would never want to leave if possible. It would be heart breaking if I could not gaze at the mix and match of train cars that make up the tail of the mighty and strikingly beautiful locomotive. I expect, however, that one day, when it is their time that my children and grandchildren can get a great taste of a life through railroading, too. As for now, I will enjoy it myself, as it should be; all with my Midland family and friends, whom I love ever so dearly. I, Christyne Marie Hays, the Queen of the Rail!

**Please Note:** This was for English II Honors class, in which we had to write a personal narrative paper of an event in our past. I did get a wonderful grade on this, a perfect A. I can only thank that grade to wonders that I have experienced here at Midland Railway. I would also like to thank the person I quoted; I will never forget your words. Thank you very much to that member and to every-

one of you that inspired the words of this paper. You all are like my family and I wouldn't trade any of anything for the world. I just hope we pull through like I know we can.



## Midland Milepost

an official publication of the  
**Midland Railway Historical Association**  
 Charles Pitcher, Editor & Photos  
 Produced by Champion Publishing, Baldwin City, KS