

Midwest Central Railroad

ORDER BOARD

Distributed to Friends and Members of the MCRR

July 2005

MCRR Goes “Hollywood”

It’s not that unusual these days for our favorite Hollywood stars to undergo a bit of plastic surgery to stay in the game. So when our own Engine #6 needed a “makeover” to win a part in the movies, MCRR was ready with our version of a nip and tuck.

Director Edward McDougal and his production company were looking for a railroad to film some scenes for their movie, “The Legend of Dog Jack,” set during the Civil War. The movie crew liked our steam engine and track, but the #6 needed a few changes to better fit the time period of the movie. With only a few weeks to complete the work, MCRR volunteers came through, fitting the engine with a new smokestack and headlamp. Those who will be attending the Reunion will be able to see the changes to the #6, as the engine will remain dressed for its role in the movie, at least for now.

“The Legend of Dog Jack” is based on the novel “Dog Jack” by Florence Biros. The story follows an escaped slave boy named Jed, who along with his dog Jack, joins the Union Army with the 102nd Pennsylvania Volunteers to fight against his former captors.

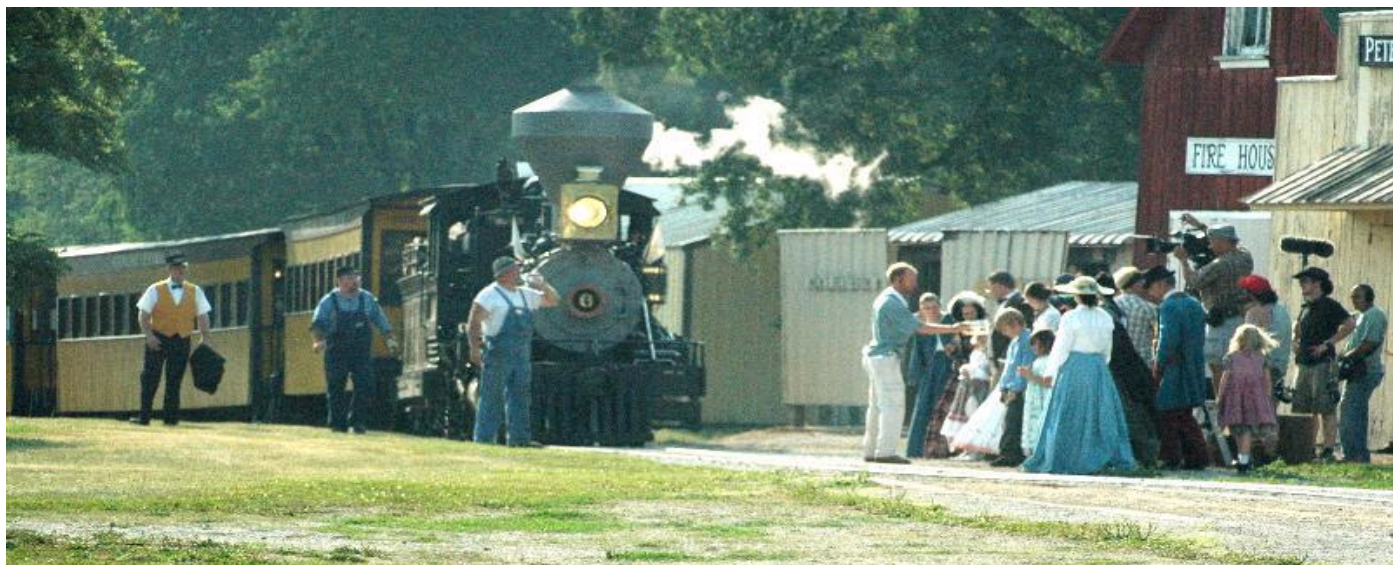
Sunday, July 17 saw temperatures in the upper-90s, but at least the sun was shining as “The Legend of Dog Jack” cast and crew arrived at McMillan Park for

one day of filming. A small group of MCRR volunteers were also on hand to run the engine, of course, as well as provide set safety and security, organize press coverage, and other logistical issues for the production crew. MCRR’s Blair Buffington also was asked to play the Conductor in one of the scenes.

The day began with a meeting of the cast, crew, and the Civil War reenactors – many of whom were from the Southeast Iowa area. The director and his crew then studied the location, set up the shots, and did a walk-through of each scene multiple times with the cast and extras before beginning to film each of the movie’s four scenes shot at MCRR. While being involved with the production of a movie and being on the set was very exciting, I’ve also learned that it’s a very painstaking and deliberate process, and takes many long and dedicated hours on the part of the cast and crew involved.

Filming ended as the sunlight faded, and the movie crew took the opportunity to take a ride around the track with the MCRR volunteers. I was proud to say that the production crew made a number of nice comments about MCRR – our equipment, location, and volunteers. Hopefully this is only the beginning of a beautiful friendship between Hollywood and MCRR!

— by Amy Frantz



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The Order Board is a newsletter of the Midwest Central Railroad. Photos and articles may be submitted to the Midwest Central Railroad office or to the Editor. The Order Board reserves the right to edit for length and clarity. Any opinions expressed are those of the author and may or may not reflect the opinion of the Board of Directors.

The Midwest Central Railroad was incorporated in 1960 as a non-profit educational organization, dedicated to the preservation and operation of narrow gauge steam powered railroad equipment. Donations of cash or materials are welcomed and are tax-deductible under section 501(c)3 of the federal tax code.

**If you have articles,
photographs, or story
ideas for the next issue
of the Order Board,
please send them to the
Editor or to MCRR at
P.O. Box 102,
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FROM THE SHOP — “*Volunteers*” by Greg Roth

This issue of “From the Shop” focuses on the people who keep the shop going. In particular two volunteer members of the MCRR. Let us start with the foundation of the railroad, its volunteers, and the concept of the Midwest Central Railroad as a completely “voluntary” organization.

There are very few truly “volunteer” organizations. Many organizational structures of “volunteer” organizations include a small group of people who are paid to keep the organization organized and recruits recruited. Obviously the MCRR does not have this type of luxurious volunteerism. The MCRR is truly a volunteer organization from the bottom to the top. There are simply no paid positions. But this does not mean the act of volunteering is equitable and consistent across the volunteer organization.

The website *Dictionary.com* defines the term “volunteer” as, “(1) To perform or offer to perform a service of one’s own free will. (2) To do charitable or helpful work without pay.” Considering this definition everyone involved with the MCRR is a “volunteer,” but there are those that this definition is extremely short in content. This definition addresses the facts that the person is performing the task(s) of their own free-will and without pay but allows for a selfish side of volunteering, that is, doing the task to receive some compensation in the future. Many fall under this type of volunteering and may not even show up unless a train is running. This type of volunteering will not keep this an organization, shall I say, “running” or “on track,” but those with a truly volunteer mindset will. This article is about two true volunteers that keep the MCRR running, Mike Engebretson and Bill Ferguson.

Mike Engebretson has been attending the Old Thresher’s Reunion since 1992 and became a member of the railroad in 1994. Mike credits MCRR member Eric Chockley with getting him involved since Eric worked with Mike’s dad, Don Engebretson. Mike remembers Eric giving him his first cab ride in Engine #9. From that point every time Mike could get a ride to Mount Pleasant he was at the railroad. Initially he remembers helping the conductors, cleaning engines, and painting the signal tower.

The reason I have selected Mike for this article is his unselfish volunteerism and his impact on the functioning of the railroad itself. Mike is simply the reason the #6 ran on time last season. I say simply not in reflection of the extreme effort he made to make this engine and its tender ready to run, this was everything but “simple,” but I say simply in that this one volunteer unselfishly made the engine ready to run so others could play. Why was this a purely “unselfish” act? At the time Mike was 17 years old, one year short of being old enough to operate the engine. The only reason the engine ran on time was because this young volunteer just wanted to see it run, not because he wanted to show-up and operate it. Mike helped clean out the fuel bunker, epoxy the water bunker, plug the boiler, checking the tender by filling it with water (and then applying more epoxy), and

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generally preparing Engine #6. Without Mike, I doubt very seriously if Engine #6 would have been ready to go for the Old Thresher’s Reunion, “The Show” we depend on for financial support.

This year Mike has once again stepped up as a true volunteer by performing numerous tasks that simply had to be done. For the recent movie taping at MCRR, Mike had been behind the scenes way before the cameras were even on the property, let alone rolling with “lights... camera... action.” He helped with the continual cleaning of Engine #6 and prepared the “Quinn Coach” by addressing general problems with the coach itself and painting it. Even though it turned out the Quinn Coach was not used during the filming, it was ready when wanted mostly due to the efforts of this volunteer.

Mike also found time to help put the Model “T” engine back together, install it, and get it running. This was another area of concern in that some felt the “T” would not be back together this season.

Mike is at the railroad almost every weekend and, during the summer, many week days. He represents what we all should be in a volunteer, an MCRR member that gets done what is needed without any selfish expectations of the future. As of July 17th Mike is 18 years old and can now begin to reap the rewards of his efforts. Happy Birthday Mike!

The second truly “volunteer” member seen around the MCRR shop recently is not a seasoned veteran like Mike but is a new member. Bill Ferguson lives in

Plattsburg, Missouri and has managed to be present at MCRR for several entire weekends since recently joining. He has already adapted to life in the office of the shop and has done what ever has been asked of him. Like Mike, Bill’s voluntary labor has no hidden or selfish expectations attached. He is truly a railroad fan and wants to see the railroad continue in its mission.

Recently Bill was given a short time in the fireman’s seat to get a feel of the engine. He did not think he would get this experience so soon and had not expected it. His reaction clearly showed his surprise and delight. This is what makes Bill a true “volunteer,” his noticeable lack of expectations. He does not expect to be a fireman or engineer in a short time, nor does he expect to reap the benefits of railroading from the efforts of others.

Although an adult, Bill emanates an almost child-like enthusiasm for the railroad which translates to a maximized effort. It amazes me that a person who lives in Plattsburg, Missouri, which I hear is just northeast of Kansas City, will make the commitment to the railroad to be here so often. Bill is into model railroading and is creating a very nice “Garden Railroad” in his backyard, but the model he is exhibiting at the MCRR is one of volunteering. A model of behavior we all should strive to equal. A model of behavior we can all equal if we want to truly “volunteer.”

I would like to thank Mike and Bill, and all the volunteers at MCRR who give their time and effort to make the railroad better for all of us.



The MCRR crew takes the Bellevue & Cascade Caboose out for a spin.

**MCRR- 2005
Dates of Operation**

Old Threshers Reunion
September 1 - 5

Ghost Train
*October 15, 21, 22, 28 & 29
6-10 p.m.*

North Pole Express
December 2, 3, & 4

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Reunion Reminders

If you haven't already done so, please send in your MCRR membership renewal using the form on page 5 of the ORDER BOARD. Deb Crouch was asked to create a family membership for the MCRR. The new membership format information is below. Membership renewals must be returned by August 15 to be eligible for the prices listed. If you have any questions, contact Deb at (319)367-5498 or dscrouch@interl.net.

MCRR FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS

Depot Level:

Midwest Central Membership \$10.00

Includes (adult memberships)

1 - Midwest Central membership & button

Newsletter - for one address

10% discount card for the Red Caboose Gift Shop

Track Level:

Midwest Central Membership \$22.00

Includes (adult memberships)

1 - Midwest Central membership & button

1 - Old Threshers pass & button

Newsletter - for one address

10% discount card for the Red Caboose Gift Shop

Caboose Level:

Midwest Central Membership \$35.00

Includes (adult memberships)

2 - Midwest Central membership & button

2 - Old Threshers pass & button

Newsletter - for one address

10% discount card for the Red Caboose Gift Shop

Boxcar Level:

Midwest Central Membership \$50.00

Includes (adult memberships)

3 - Midwest Central membership & button

3 - Old Threshers pass & button

Newsletter - for one address

10% discount card for the Red Caboose Gift Shop

MCRR Reunion Volunteer Meetings

Safety and Information meetings have been scheduled for all MCRR Reunion volunteers.

The meetings will be held in the South Station on **Wednesday, August 31.**

Conductors - 6:00 P.M.

All Volunteers (including Conductors) - 6:45 P.M.

MCRR Volunteer Dinner

Friday, September 2

Passenger Car Level:

Midwest Central Membership \$75.00

Includes (adult memberships)

4 - Midwest Central membership & button

4 - Old Threshers pass & button

Newsletter - for one address

10% discount card for the Red Caboose Gift Shop

Engine Level:

Midwest Central Membership \$100.00

Includes (adult memberships)

5 - Midwest Central membership & button

5 - Old Threshers pass & button

Newsletter - for one address

10% discount card for the Red Caboose Gift Shop

Child's Membership \$5.00 up to age 14

Includes Midwest Central membership & button

10% discount card for the Red Caboose Gift Shop

Additional Old Threshers pass & button - \$12.00 each
(You must purchase an MCRR adult membership to be eligible to purchase additional Old Threshers passes)

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MCRR Membership Renewal for 2005-2006

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A New Website for Midwest Central Railroad

The web address is the same – www.mcrr.org – but Midwest Central Railroad’s website has undergone some changes. MCRR was looking for someone who could update the website and keep it updated and current. MCRR volunteer Brenda Roth recently stepped up to put her talents to use for the railroad. Brenda made it known that she could and would take on the website project for free. Since then she has put in numerous hours developing the new website, researching the history of the MCRR, and taking current photos.

Many people helped Brenda in the informational aspect of the new website including Matt Crull, Jesse VanWinkle, Mary Bixler, and Eric Chockley to name but a few. These members provided history, articles, and advice.

The website is now up and running and needs your support. Please go to the site for a preview and send any comments, critiques, suggestions, etc. to the webmaster’s email address on the website. If you have any pictures you think would be of interest to others, or should otherwise be on the website, attach them to an email or send them to the railroad. They will be posted in the relevant area and returned.

One of the main goals of the new website is to be current and evolving. Please help us with this by being involved with it and tell your friends about the new site – especially the link to becoming a member of the MCRR.

A special thank you to Brenda Roth for the development of this site and the extra effort she has put into it.

Midwest Central Railroad
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