

PRRTHS

BUCKEYE CHAPTER

Volume 9. No 4 – November 2012

CHAPTER MEETING DECEMBER 2

AT UPPER ARLINGTON LIBRARY, LANE ROAD

Our next chapter meeting will be in the Lane Road branch of the Upper Arlington Library, a place in which we have met several times before. We will meet at 1 p.m. with the business meeting called to order by President Al Dodroe at 1:30. Following the meeting, we will have a slide show by Alex Campbell on PRR subjects.

The library meeting room has ample space for displaying what you are doing related to PRR in modeling, researching, and recalling. Feel free to bring your exhibits to share with others.

Al says our next meeting will be pushed back to March 24, to hear a speaker from out of town. Details will be forthcoming at the December meeting.

Also, annual dues will be coming due with the new year. Please use the renewal form included with this newsletter, as this is an opportunity to double-check information on your roster.

DIRECTIONS TO LANE ROAD LIBRARY

The Lane Road branch library is found at 1945 LANE ROAD. Please note that this is not LANE AVENUE! Lane Road is further north in Upper Arlington.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED

I am suffering from an eye disease that makes reading increasingly difficult, and ultimately my driving will have to be limited. For this reason, the chapter should select a new editor for this newsletter, so that we can effect a reasonable transition. If you are willing to take on this position, please let either me or Al know and we will work to phase you into the duties of Newsletter Editor.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following story was published by the Cleveland Plain Dealer November 9. I am sure many of you are familiar with the facts of the Dennison Depot, but I include it for your perusal.

DENNISON DEPOT ACHIEVES LANDMARK DESIGNATION

(By Fred Albright, Reprinted from the Cleveland Plain Dealer)

For more than a million GIs, a railroad depot canteen in Dennison, southeast of Canton, provided a last taste of home before heading off to train or fight in World War II.

The GIs called it "Dreamsville," a term that might have been taken from the title of a popular song of that era, or perhaps a sentiment reflecting their state of mind, according to Wendy Zucal, director of the Dennison Railroad Depot Museum. For young homesick soldiers, often fresh off the farm and anxious about going to war, a few minutes at the depot canteen where they could get food and a warm smile could be like a dream come true, Zucal said.

On Monday, the restored depot will be the site of a ceremony celebrating its designation this year by the National Park Service as a National Historic Landmark.

The Pennsylvania Railroad Depot and Baggage Room in Dennison was home to the Dennison Depot Salvation Army's Servicemen's Canteen, third largest in the country during World War II. Today, it is the only surviving railroad station in the U.S. that still reflects that wartime role. The canteens, manned 24/7 by local volunteers who provided and prepared all the food, were located along major routes of the National Defense Railroad system. Ohio once had 12 canteens, the most of any state.

Zucal said the canteens solved the problem of feeding troops on the move. "This was a great partnership between the military and the home front, where the home front rallied to answer that need," she noted.

Dennison was located on the most direct route between St. Louis and New York City, and was also a regular stop halfway between Pittsburgh and Columbus where steam-powered locomotives could be re-supplied with water and coal.

The canteen was started by Lucille Nussdorfer, who remembered when Dennison folks went to the depot to give food to the boys going off to World War I.

She and a small group of local ladies made sandwiches, cookies and coffee to give to military personnel aboard trains stopping in Dennison. But they were quickly overwhelmed by the rush of trains, each carrying upwards of 600 to 800 troops.



Volunteers prepare sandwiches for distribution to troop trains passing through Dennison during World War II. More than 2 million sandwiches were distributed from the depot canteen during the war. *Dennison Railroad Depot Museum*

The Salvation Army was invited to manage the operation, and soon nearly 4,000 volunteers drawn from an eight-county area were involved in the effort.

Zucal noted that during a time of wartime rationing, volunteers had to draw from their own limited supplies of food and cooking supplies to feed the troops. "Farmers from all around would donate bushels of apples," she added. "Everybody did what they could."

Because it was important. From talks with former volunteers, Zucal said she learned that "they felt that if they did this service here, that somebody [else] would be taking care of their loved ones wherever they went."

From 1942-1946, the canteen served more than 2 million sandwiches, 1.3 million cups of beverages, 1.6 million pastries, more than 1 million pieces of fruit, and distributed a half-million magazines, books and newspapers.

Zucal said some of the high school girls tucked their names and addresses in printed materials given to the troops, and became pen pals with GIs serving overseas.

She said one woman who will be at Monday's ceremony later married her wartime pen pal, "so there's romance involved here as well."

Jayne Roe, 88 of Dennison, also will be at the ceremony to help lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Roe was a canteen volunteer in 1942 and helped distribute food to the troops.

"It was really wonderful to be able to help out the servicemen," she recalled. "They couldn't believe that people would be doing something like that."

Thank-you letters from grateful troops who remembered the depot flooded into Dennison during the war, Zucal said. She noted that the importance of that brief stop also is illustrated by the man who donated a sandwich bag to the museum that he'd kept for 50 years after visiting the depot as a soldier.

Zucal said some soldiers foolishly opted to take advantage of their brief stop in Dennison by hitting the Top Hat, a nearby bar, and missed their trains.

After the war, the depot slowly fell into disuse and disrepair. The village bought the boarded-up structure from Conrail in 1984 for \$25,000, and still owns the depot. Since then, more than \$5 million worth of repair and reconstruction has gone into creating a time capsule of World War II that draws about 50,000 visitors each year, Zucal said.



The old Pennsylvania Railroad depot in

Dennison, built in 1873, has been designated a National Historic Landmark for its role as a canteen that served troop trains during World War II. *John Kuntz, The Plain Dealer*

Some of the early restoration work was done by local railroad enthusiasts and vocational students. Saving and restoring the depot has always been a community effort, reflecting much the same spirit as that of the World War II canteen volunteers, according to Zucal. "There was a tremendous pride for both the railroad heritage and the service they gave to veterans, and that legacy continues to this day," she said. The depot's message, then and now, is that "there was a great partnership between communities and veterans, and that they needed and supported each other," she added. "Our story really is the moment when our home front volunteers meet face-to-face with the soldiers on the platform. That's our story -- that moment, and how important that is to our country."

LINES WEST - BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER

2013 MEMBERSHIP DUES RECEIPT

PLEASE CIRCLE TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP APPLYING FOR:

REGULAR \$10.00
ASSOCIATE \$10.00
ORGANIZATIONAL \$25.00

NATIONAL PRRT&HS MEMBERSHIP # _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

AMOUNT PAID \$ _____ DATE _____

**Please mail to: Lines West, c/o Richard Briggs, 4397 Hidden Street,
Grove City, Ohio, 43123-8489 or bring to the chapter meeting.**

**P.R.R.T. & H.S. LINES WEST - BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER THANKS
YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**