

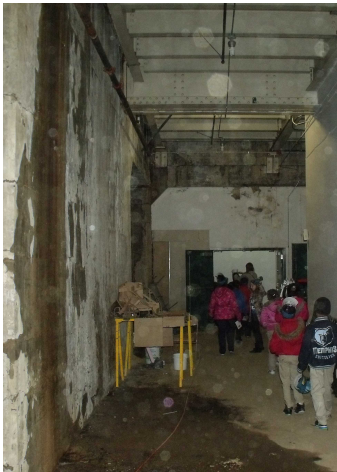


Newsletter

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We would like to be one of the first to wish you a happy and prosperous new year.



The Leak

The museum has enjoyed a successful 2013 and is anticipating bigger and better things for 2014. Engineers have been commissioned by MATA (the owner of Central Station) to look at the water leak problem in the freight tunnel and recommend a solution. The problem

seem to be inadequate drainage of the Amtrak parking lot. Instead of draining off, rainwater seeps into the ground on the north end of the parking lot and finds its way into the tunnel. Once this problem is solved, the museum can move ahead with Phase II, the model of the Memphis Riverfront of the 1900's.

A major project for 2014 is moving the Louis Ertz' "West Tennessee Central" layout to the museum. This project will require resources (money) and manpower (volunteers) to accomplish. With help from the local model railroad community as well as support from the "O" gauge railroaders across the country, we can get the job done.

The Ertz layout should prove to be a major tourist attraction and a



West Tennessee Central

welcome addition to South Main Street district of downtown Memphis.

Work will begin in earnest on the Harahan Bridge project in 2014. Present plans call for the walkway leading to the bridge to pass along the sidewalk right in front of the museum. Improvements along South Main Street in connection with the walkway across the Mississippi River have already been authorized and work is expected to begin any day. The museum should benefit from this increased exposure as the project progresses.

Looking a little further down the road, in 2015 the management of Central Station is slated to be taken over by a management team headed by Memphis developers Henry Turley, Jr. and Archie W. Willis III. The museum is looking forward to working with the new management team. The station is presently managed by the Alexander Company of Madison, WI. Mr. Turley has numerous real estate holdings in downtown Memphis and is presently developing South Junction Apartments, just a block south of the Station. His brother Calvin is on the Board of Directors of the Memphis Cotton Museum.

RAILROAD TORPEDOS REMOVED FROM MUSE- UM



Railroad Torpedo

A story on the internet about a Wisconsin collector of railroad memorabilia caught our attention a couple of months ago. The collector bought a lot of railroad artifacts from the estate of a retired Soo Line employee. In the lot was what was described as a “can” containing about fifty railroad torpedoes.

The police were called and the bomb squad was sent to remove the explosives which were later detonated at the police firing range.

Railroad torpedoes are a device about the size of a tea bag. They are filled with explosives and have a lead strap attached to them. They were secured to a rail with the lead

straps when a train was stopped on a track to warn an approaching train that the track was obstructed. The torpedo would explode with a loud bang when run over by the train, alerting the engineer to stop.

On display at the museum is a metal case that contained a flag, fusees (flares) and torpedoes, all paraphernalia used to signal an approaching train. Realizing the potential danger, the case was examined and it was determined that the torpedoes were still in their compartment. Vice President Mike Fleming immediately called the Memphis Fire Department and they came and removed the torpedoes. The fire department considered them “live” explosives and turned them over to the Memphis Police Department Bomb Unit and were destroyed at their bunker.

The news article erroneously stated that torpedoes contained nitroglycerine. This

is not the case. The explosive is potassium chlorate mixed with sand. They normally cannot detonate in a storage container. They can become unstable over time, however. The case on display at the museum was behind a barrier and not accessible to the public.

MRTM Mural Trolley Heavily Damaged by Fire



The metal case and torpedo compartment



MRTM Trolley Mural



#452 after the fire - Memphis Flyer Photo

Memphis Transit Authority trolley number 452 was heavily damaged by fire at about 10:30 the morning of Wednesday, November 4th. This is the same trolley featured on our mural at the museum. The incident occurred on the

Madison Avenue line near Bellevue. The fire was thought to be electrical in nature and was first noticed when flames erupted from the control stand. Only minor injuries were reported. MATA is evaluating its condition, no word as yet whether it can be repaired or if it will be scrapped.

MATA purchased # 452 from the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority in 1999. Renumbered by the New Orleans Authority, it was built by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramway Board in 1927 and originally numbered M&MBT 626. It is a type "W2" trolley and trolleys of this type were in service in Melbourne, Australia until 1985. MATA reportedly has eight other "W2"s in their fleet.

We have received all of our initial order of Thomas and Friends stock and we have them on sale in the gift shop. All of the items are also available on line at mrtm.org/catalog. Our prices are competitive with the "big box" stores and the profits of each sale help support the museum. Except for shipping, the prices on line or in the gift shop are the same. You can even order on line and pick it up in the gift shop. In most cases we ship within twenty four hours of receiving your order. Check us out!



#452 on the New Orleans Riverfront Line - Dick Leonhardt photo (rrpicturearchives.net)

Thomas & Friends available in Gift Shop and On-line

Brian Starr Leaves MRTM





Brian Starr guides a school group through the freight tunnel.

Brian Starr has resigned from the staff of the Memphis Railroad and Trolley Museum to pursue other opportunities. A victim of the “Great Recession”, Brian was between jobs when he came on board at the museum. He was able to find a few part-time and temporary positions during his tenure at the museum but has now secured full time work.

Brian brought with him experience from the Colorado Railroad Museum. and served as Volunteer Coordinator and Assistant Gift Shop Manager. He was involved in the upgrading of the Gift Shop, adding items and inventory. He was also involved in selecting and installing Shop-keep, a point of sale cash register and inventory system.

Brian's duties have been absorbed by Gift Shop Manager Marti Albers with help from her husband, Steve.

Good Luck Brian!

***Welcome Back
Kenny!***



Kenny and some of his model railroad buddies. A little ingenuity gets Kenny up to track level!

The Memphis Railroad and Trolley Museum would like to welcome Kenny Young back to the Memphis model railroad and railfan scene. After over a year of fighting cancer, Kenny is back and already resuming his activities. Kenny never lost his sense of humor or optimism throughout the long ordeal. He has really been an inspiration to everyone who has been following his progress. One of Kenny's main duties at the museum is to keep all the engines up and running. All of them are probably ready for a little of Kenny's TLC.