



On Track: Building And Restoring Small Railroad Vehicles MARCH 12 @ 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

By Mike Piersa

BETHLEHEM - Did you ever wonder what it would take to create a brand-new human powered rail car or revive a rusty railroad "speeder" with a gas engine over 80 years old? Learn from the people who have done just that and see the rail cars in person.

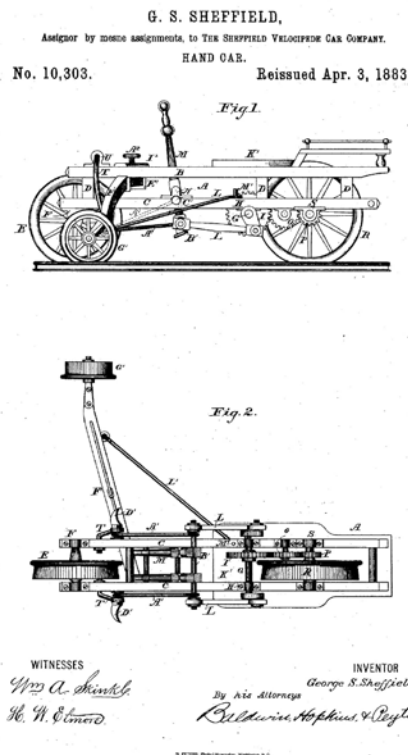
The first of two talks will delve into the restoration of former Lehigh & New England Railroad (LNE) motor car 549. A brief history of its manufacturer, the Sheffield Velocipede Car Company, and its first owner, the LNE, will lead into a more detailed discussion of the history and operation of 549. The illustrated presentation will be given by Charles Smith, Secretary of the Volunteer Railroaders Association (VRA). The VRA is a non-profit all-volunteer group whose heart is running fundraising Santa & Easter Bunny train rides and operating motor cars (aka speeders). The VRA restored the 1894 NYS&W station in Hawthorne, NJ and operates it today. More information about the VRA can be found on their website www.vratrrips.org

Bill McCarthy will then detail the design and construction of a modern replica hand powered rail car, known as a Velocipede. These vehicles were popular before internal combustion engines made cars like 549 practical. Over the past few years, rail bikes have seen a resurgence of popularity across the country. This particular machine was inspired by a three-wheel design also built by the Sheffield Velocipede Car Company. Bill McCarthy has been an operator and restorer of historic machinery for over four decades, doing business as Restoration Millwork in Riegelsville, PA. He has built everything from bar counters to fully functioning marine steam engines.

The presentations will begin at 3:30 PM on Saturday March 12, 2022 at the National Museum of Industrial History in Bethlehem, PA. Be sure to arrive early to see the Museum's 115 ton Corliss stationary steam engine operate at 2:30 PM.

This event is included with the cost for museum admission.

Please note that if you plan to build or restore your own rail vehicle, you NEED permission to put it on a railroad track, even track that you have never seen a train on. The best way to get on the rails is by joining an organization such as the Volunteer Railroaders Association.



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