

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for November 27, 2016. Polar Express, the great hot chocolate extravaganza of 2016, is in full swing and your MOW Team has been instrumental in making dreams come true for tiny tykes and pajama-clad parents everywhere. So, let's get this update started before Santa comes to fill our stockings!

On Tuesday, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Matt McCracken, Weston Snyder, Joe Margucci, Gene Peck, Cliff Hayes, Frank Werry, and Heather Kearns gathered together for some pre-Thanksgiving MOW fun. The Team started off with an in-depth briefing on all the tasks needing to be accomplished Tuesday night. Cliff worked on building new latches for the tie-shear's kickers. Matt and Weston serviced the Weed-Team's spray rig. Matt joined Joe in working to repair the malfunctioning tail-lights lights on the front-end loader. Then Frank, Joe, Matt, and Weston took on the bad hitch-wires on the white trailer. Heather and Alan gathered up all the pieces of the frog at Switch 19 as we prepare to have it repaired. There are always great things being accomplished at MOW and Tuesday's crew did a fantastic job.

Maintenance of Way took Thursday and Saturday off due to the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. This, of course, meant that the Team went without doughnuts for an entire week. But, that doesn't mean the Team was idle. Polar Express 2016 kicked-off on Friday. Over the three-day weekend, most of the MOW Team regulars could be found volunteering with Polar Express including, Frank W., Weston, Heather, Jose Gomez, Ed Kottal, Joe M., Matt Blackburn, Anthony Filamor, Joe Galipeau, Taka Blackburn, Tom Freeburger, Frank Squire, Steve Wilson, Mike Willis, and a special guest appearance by Michael Florentine. They served in every capacity on the train – cookie server, car attendant, brakeman/fireman, on-board mechanical, narrator, engineer, and hospitality. The first weekend of Polar was an overwhelming success and went off with nary a hitch. Polar Express is the Foundation's biggest fundraiser of the year and, as Maintenance of Way's budget is funded by the Foundation, the Team is happy to help. It takes 52 volunteers per day just to staff the train – and, there are 18 days of it. That is an impressive commitment on the part of the entire volunteer corps at the Museum. And, they do an impressive job. MOW Team members will continue their efforts in the coming weeks both as crew on the Polar Express and out on the line building a better railroad.

Now that Thanksgiving is behind us, the MOW Team will return to its regularly scheduled programming. Tuesday and Thursday, the MOW fun begins at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, for those not working Polar, the ritual of the doughnuts will commence promptly at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks one and all for your participation and support.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



The Team discusses the evening's plans



Weston and Matt service the Weed Team's spray-rig



Jose stands ready to receive the first passengers of Polar Express 2016



In the Silver Palace, Mike W. dons his Maintenance of Way cap while keeping the Polar volunteers fueled up



Onboard Mechanical officer Frank W. kept the lights glowing bright



Engineer Tom prepares to pilot the Polar Express south to the North Pole



Ed goes over the sequence of events



Matt B., as Sunday's Onboard Mechanical officer, powers-up the SP 290 "Audubon"



"French Quarter" car attendants Steve and Joe M. are almost unrecognizable without their hi-vis vests and hard-hats



Mike F. couldn't resist joining the fun!