



Taking a ride
Roar in the Mountains brought motorcyclists to Holldaysburg for a late summer day

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Altoona Mirror

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Local model train club gets set to display vintage railroad posters



Gregg Miller (left) of Altoona and Jim Shade of Lakemont look over one of the posters mounted on the walls of the Alto Model Train Museum titled "Speed and Security" Tuesday.

Mirror photos by Gary M. Baranec

Tribute to trains

By JIMMY MINCIN
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If you're into railroad art, look no farther than your hometown museum. The Alto Model Train Museum Association in Altoona is unveiling a collection of railroad posters that have been added to its permanent displays — all of which will be on display when the 29th Street location re-opens from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

"We're very happy to have these important posters to display," club President Richard Mitchell said. "They are an attractive addition to our collection and help convey the real-world industry that lives on in our displays and brightens the lives of the thousands who visit the museum each year."

There are 40 posters being prepared for display, 19 of which have been donated by retired local architect A. Raymond Goodman, who designed the original structure of what is now the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, Mitchell, 65, of Altoona said. The posters aren't easy to come by, with some worth as much as \$950.

"They are definitely hard to find, but people do hang on to them," Mitchell said. "Mostly what happens is, people get old and they go into nursing facilities and have to break up their homes. Unfortunately, that'll happen to all of us, and that's why the biggest thing we hope for is to get the young people interested in the history of the railroad. ... After all, if it wasn't for the railroad, Altoona wouldn't be here."

The posters, which measure approximately 29 inches by 29 inches, were published by major railroads including the Pennsylvania Railroad, New York Central and Chessie System Inc. (which merged with Seaboard Coastline Industries in 1980 to form CSX Corporation) from the 1920s through the 1960s, the club's membership chairman Gregg Miller said.

The commercial artists commissioned to create the posters include Howard Fogg, Griff Teller, Dean Cornwell and Harold Brett. The posters depict several local scenes, including two views of the Horseshoe Curve, from 1935 and 1952. "They're extremely valuable collectible



Conner Bagrosky, 6, of Altoona watches the trains roll along the track at the Alto Train Museum in Altoona. Shade, a volunteer, explained some of the features of the display.

If you go

What: Alto Model Train Museum Association Open House
When: From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, noon to 4 p.m. Sunday
Where: 2827 Industrial Ave., Altoona (Floor 3)
Admission: Free
More information: Call 942-5469 or 942-1848

pieces," Gregg Miller, 67, of Altoona said. "Each and every one of these pieces is probably worth at least \$100 and up. The railroad only gave them out to shop employees — never to the engineers. I'm not sure why they did that, but that's how they did it."

Club member Eric Miller (Gregg Miller's son), 40, of Brooklyn has provided more than a dozen posters to the museum on permanent loan. Many of the framing materials also have been donated by club members and local businesses. Gregg Miller constructed all the frames, while local businesses donated the acrylic plastic sheets.

"It really is a great display, and our volunteers have put a lot of work into this," Club secretary Ruth Miller (Gregg's wife), 64, said. "People young and old love to look at the calendars — and we have just about every one the Pennsylvania Railroad ever put out."

The Pennsylvania Railroad issued a calendar every year from 1925 to 1959, Gregg Miller said, with a commemorative edition coming out in 1960. The museum contains every one but eight — 1927-29, 1933, 1938, 1942, 1946 and 1955. He cited "Serving the Nation" (1943) and "Forward" (1941), both by Cornwell, as his favorites from the collection.

"The variety is just so rich and they're both emphasizing American patriotism," he said.

Other calendar titles include "Giant Conquerors of Space and Time" (1931), which shows a Ford Tri-Motor plane passing overhead a cross-country-bound train; "Pittsburgh Promotes Progress" (1954), which boasts urban renewal efforts in that city; and "Main Line Commerce" (1951), which depicts the transition from steam to diesel power.

"Harnessing the Plane to the Iron Horse" (1929), a poster depicting an early system combining passenger trains and rail travel to complete a cross-country voyage, is one of the club's most-sought calendars to display in the museum.

"Well, we're hoping to get the chance to see what other (calendars) are available. Some people might have the ones we need," Gregg Miller said of the forthcoming open houses. "As a 501C3 nonprofit organization, people should know that if they want to donate, we will give them a tax write-off."

Mirror Staff Writer Jimmy Mincin is at 946-7460.



Courtesy photo

"Click, Clack, Moo" is coming to the Mishler Theatre, Altoona, next month.

Family Theatre at the Mishler returns Oct. 8

The 2009-2010 Family Theatre at the Mishler season opens at 7 p.m. Oct. 8 with a Theatreworks USA musical "Click, Clack, Moo."

A lesson in negotiation and compromise, the show features shivering cows in a barn who use a young girl's laptop computer to demand blankets. When their demands are not met, the cows go on strike and the chickens join them in solidarity.

A bossy little pig's demands frazzle a little girl in the Nov. 24 presentation of Theatreworks USA's "If You Give A Pig A Pancake." This cause-and-effect mini-musical is based on popular children's books, "Diary of a Worm," "Fluffy the Classroom Guinea Pig," "Horace and Morris but Mostly Dolores," "How I Became a Pirate," "Lilly's Big Day" and the "Paper Bag Princess."

On Feb. 22, the Missoula Children's Theatre's little red truck pulls into Altoona with everything needed to mount a full-scale musical production of "Jack and the Beanstalk" — everything except the cast.

The characters, ranging in age from kindergarten through twelfth grade, will be chosen during open auditions. Rehearsals are held throughout the week and two performances will be staged on Feb. 27.

Altoona Community Theatre will present "Pinkalicious The Musical" on March 16.

Pinkalicious loves pink and wants everything in her life to be pink. After over-indulging in pink cupcakes, she wakes up pink, is diagnosed with a disease, and learns a valuable lesson in being careful what you wish for.

The March 30 Theatreworks USA's production of Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing features 9-year-old Peter Hatcher, whose life would be sweet if it weren't for Fudge, his toddler terro of a brother. Two Beans Productions captures all the humor, sibling rivalry and elementary school angst of Judy Bloom's beloved book in this heart-warming adaptation.

Musician Jay Smar brings History through Folk Music to life on April 13. A unique blending of Pennsylvania and American History with Jay's talented fiddle, banjo and guitar playing artistry provides audiences with a delightful interactive experience.

Season tickets for the six-production series are on sale at the Mishler Theatre Box Office, 1212 12th Ave., Altoona. For more information and tickets, call 944-9434.

If you go

What: Family Theatre at the Mishler
When: 7 p.m. Oct. 8, Nov. 24, Feb. 27, March 18, March 30 and April 13
Where: The Mishler Theatre, Altoona
Tickets: For individual shows, \$10.50 for adults, \$9.50 for seniors and \$7 for students; for the season, \$43 for adults, \$38 for seniors and \$30 for students
More information: www.mishlertheatre.org or 944-9434