Viaduct, Steam Whistle Expo set

BELLAIRE -- The second annual Great Stone Viaduct George Wallace for the Saturday, Sept. 28, 9 a.m., at the Bellaire Public Library Community Room with a lineup of exhibits and history speakers. Later that afternoon, the Steam Whistle Expo will begin with a blast of steam whistles at the Belmont Community Health Center parking lot at the interior curve of the Great Stone Viaduct.

The library doors will open for a Meet and Greet at 9 a.m. and for registration. The community room will host exhibits including steam whistles, steam powered model engines, model steam locomotives and steamboats, all reminiscent of the industrial revolution of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Exhibits include steam whistles from factories, steam boilers and steam locomotives. A “B & O Tumortop” four-chime whistle, along with three-whistle manifolds that once sat atop a steamboat which plied the Ohio River, and a distinctive five-chime Erie Railroad Locomotive Whistle, are just some of those that will be displayed and sounded later that afternoon. Sid Heckman, a former steam railroad conductor in the Ohio Valley, will have the Imperial Glass Factory shift change whistle available for viewing and hearing for the first time since the factory closed. Imperial Glass had a factory a few hundred feet from where the whistles will be blown. Nickle Plate Railroad and Great Northern Railroad steam whistles will also be on display at the Community Room. Barb Warzynski of Weirton will be on hand to discuss Mose and many other whistle, from her collection. Paul Cramer of the GSV Society will also display small engines powered by steam, some of which may have served as prototypes to the much larger operating engines by their designers.

John Bowman of Wheeling, West Virginia, master craftsman of model steamboats and a true historian of steamboat building at Wheeling, will be sharing some of his creations. The “Eliza H” which was the steamboat that Jacob Heberingon used in his coal trade at Bellaire; the “Brown Dick,” including the car float, barge in tow, will demonstrate the manner in which the B & O Railroad interconnected freight and passengers between Bellaire and Wheeling prior to the construction of the existing railroad bridge. The steamboat “Sidney,” latter renamed “Washington,” also a steamer that visited Bellaire, will also be on display. Bowman, a historian on Ohio and Western River steamers, will be on hand to share information, explain model building, and autograph the books he has written which will be for sale. Lawrence “Yogi” Wallace, long time Bellaire resident, will also exhibit some of the G Scale Model Railroad structures he has created over 40 years of modeling, and demonstrate modeling techniques which he has created and mastered. Ohio Valley residents will remember his many years of G Scale Model Railroad at the Oglebay Mansion Museum, and later at the Artisan’s Center at the Nail City of the Baltimores and knowledge in both G Scale railroad and modeling will be shared along with static steam engine display, giving both the sight and sounds of the Ohio Valley.

Speaking at this year’s event will be two men well known to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad fan community. John Teichmoeller comes to Bellaire from Ellicott City, Maryland, through which passes the original mainline of America’s first railroad company. John is a modeler in his own right, but he also has taken great interest in the connections made at the water’s edge between rails and maritime transportation. He will speak at 9:30 a.m. on the rail-marine connections of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, both here at Bellaire and elsewhere, and the importance of those connections before technology was developed to span large rivers with bridges. James Dills, of Baltimore, Maryland, will discuss the morning session. James Dills, of Baltimore, and his morning presentations as he discusses the great railroad architecture of North America, and the struggle to preserve the buildings. Dills, in addition to his historical work entitled “The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in the 1840s,” has also authored works on the architecture of Baltimore City. He is currently working on a book which will spotlight the famous railroad architecture of North America.

Dills also brings to Bellaire, Ohio, his personal experiences as Co-Chair of the Thomas Viaduct Planning Committee. In 2010, the nation’s oldest stone viaduct over the Patapsco River in Maryland celebrated its 175th anniversary. Dills was instrumental in helping to plan the celebration and the preservation concept. He will tell us of the successes, the failures, and the overall achievements made in increasing public awareness of this great structure, and enlighten visitors about the Great Stone Viaduct Society of how we may also plan and celebrate our own national treasure.

Other exhibits will also be on hand, including the BHS Endowment Fund, the National Imperial Glass Collectors, and the GSV Society to offer information, books, and other items for sale to those attending the morning session. The morning session will be followed by a general public without registration made in advance or Saturday morning at the door. In the afternoon, the public will be invited to examine the exhibits for the cost of a donation to help defray expenses of the GSV Society. From noon to 1 p.m., the East of the River Shawnee Indian Tribe will perform an exhibition of drumming and native American ceremonial dances on the Belmont Community Health Center lawn. A Steam Whistle Car Show will be held in the front parking area, and more than two dozen crafstmen are anticipated to fill the parking lot behind the health center.

Hank Marsilio, from Youngstown, an expert in steam engineering and whistle knowledge, will have his restored wood and coal fired 1910 Reeves steam engine fired up and connected to a massive steam whistle manifolds upon which historical steam whistles from trains, ships and factories will be mounted and sounded off. The public is invited to bring in whistles from their collection and participate. Dana Dolfi of Pittsburgh will have his “Great American Horn Machine” available to play some patriotic songs throughout the day. After the steam whistle expo has concluded at 6 p.m., the Shadyzine Community Band will entertain the crowd with a selection of music fit for the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the Great Stone Viaduct.

Choice of seating will be whether you park your lawn chairs at the Steam Whistle event, so don’t forget to bring them! Also remember your camera!! It will be family friendly, so all are invited to join in the fun, as we “let off a little steam”!!! Tickets will be available both days for children and adults to blow the steam whistles, and these may be purchased at the event for “$20 for Ten Bucks” or in advance by contacting the GSV Society at info@greatstoneviaduct.org.

Bellaire schools off to good start

By MICHAEL SCHULER
Times Leader Staff Writer

Family Network