

Emphasis Is on Everyone's Safety As A&TC Trains Resume Service

On June 6, a *Summertime Express* departed Cedar Park for Bertram, as the A&TC resumed passenger service for the first time since March 14.

The interruption, of course, was due to the coronavirus pandemic that has upended so much in daily life, and was ASTA's part in helping to contain spread of the virus.

As limited service has resumed, the number-one consideration, of course, has been the safety of staff, volunteers and passengers.

Capacity of the trains has been held to 50 per cent, physical distancing has been arranged in the onboard seating arrangements, masks are required of both crew members and passengers, food and drink are limited to pre-packaged items, and the train--especially surfaces that people might touch--is thoroughly and regularly cleaned and disinfected.

ASTA's computerized ticketing system has also been reconfigured so as to assign passengers properly distanced seating in the class of car they choose.

As summer begins, the train schedule is centered around the *Summertime Express* run, a three-hour round trip from Cedar Park to Bertram, without, of course, the

Bertram Flyer's traditional stop at the Bertram depot.

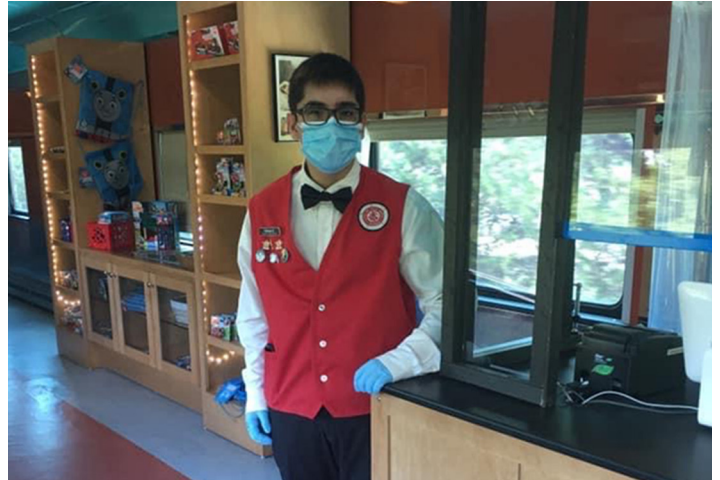
The train offering, though, also includes an entirely new route, the *Lakeline Limited*, which made its debut June 20. While the A&TC's operations have traditionally looked westward to Bertram and Burnet, the *Lakeline Limited* runs from Cedar Park eastward on a one-hour round trip.

The new train's route goes to Capital Metro's Lakeline commuter station five-plus miles east, running the engine around the train and returning to Cedar Park. Since the ride is shorter, emphasis has been put on telling passengers about historical sites along the way, such as the trestle crossing Brushy Creek, site of a spectacular 1888 derailment of a train carrying granite for the State Capitol.

As summer service progresses, look for more creative new runs with which the Austin & Texas Central can offer its patrons a relaxing and unforgettable experience on its historic trains while maximizing health safety.

For reservations, call **512-402-3830** or go to ASTA's website at www.austinsteamtrain.org/make-reservations/

See you on the train!



Appropriately masked and gloved, Car Attendant Edward De La Pena stands ready to extend the hospitality of the concession car "Cedar Park" to returning passengers. (Erin Hoff photo.)

You Can Help to Keep the Wheels Rolling!

As the coronavirus crisis challenged ASTA to do its part in helping to keep everyone safe this spring, the two-and-a-half-month suspension of train service had predictably severe financial effects on the organization. ASTA has been fortunate in the generosity of its friends and in being able to participate in national and local stimulus help, but since nearly all of our day-to-day operating funds come from ticket sales, much remains to be done to get back on a secure financial footing.

Centerpiece of the effort has been an online GoFundMe campaign that as of presstime had gathered \$61,039 from 237 generous people, and for which ASTA is sincerely grateful. If you'd like to help, it's easy to do. Simply go to

<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/asta2020>

Follow the easy instructions to make your donation, and then pat yourself on the back for helping to ensure that ASTA, its railroad and its mission carry on into the years ahead!

Thanks to our generous friends!

(Donations from Jan. 1 through June 26, 2020. If we have left anyone off, please accept our apologies and contact us at director@austinsteamin.org so we can make sure we recognize you in our next edition.)

DONORS TO OUR GOFUNDME CAMPAIGN



Most generous donors to the campaign are 17-year volunteers **Roger and Jeannie Shull**, with gifts totaling **\$10,000!**

\$2,000 to \$5,000:

Ken and Caryn Price
One anonymous donor

\$1,000 to \$1,999:

Mike and Ethel Barnes
David Claunch
David and Laura Gracy
Victoria Granado
Dennis Kearns
Larry and Lindy McGinnis
William Osborn
Joe and Janis Pinnelli
Chuck and Donna Pugh
Randy Leo and Colleen Waring
Ben Sargent
Jane Schoen
Dave and Eileen Shannon
Tinplate Trackers of Austin
(Thanks for support of our club!)
Clint and Mavis Waggoner
Three anonymous donors

\$500 to \$999:

Greg and Teresa Duepner
Jerry Elder
Walt Grey
Benjamin Holland
Larry Springer
Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Thompson
Brian and Virginia Urban
Rich and LJ Wise
Four anonymous donors
(one in memory of Bert Dockall)

\$100 to \$499:

Chris and Gordon Bain
Jeanne and Jim Barker
Mike Barrett
Dudley Bayne

Bill and Carolyn Bingham
Mitch and Pat Burk
Jimmie and Kathy Burleyson
Paul and Gail Calmes
(Tinplate Trackers support ASTA!)
BJ Capdevielle
Carlton Carl
Robert and Susie Crossman
Joel Davidson
Charlie DeWeese
Jerry Dorcz
Al Dykes
Tom and Nancy Fitzgerald
Mr. and Mrs. William R. Gamble
Jim and Dody Goldmeyer
Sandy Guzman
Darren Haan
Sue Anne Haight
Jerry Halstead
Steve Hanson
Caroline and Jim Hassell
Kent Hemingson
Paul and Sheena Hickman
John Hudspeth
Gary A. Hurd
Sam and Jun Hurt
Barry and Charlotte Hutcheson
Julie and David Itz
Jeri Jarrett
(For Noah: Happy Easter to my train-loving son!)
Clif Jones
Karen Kennedy
Brent Lamb
John Lazaretti
John Lewis
(in memory of Casey Jones)
Jo and RJ Liñan
Wendy Loftus
Dewey C. Meeks

Tom Marsh

(Thanks to the Shulls for matching gift)

Michael Mosley
David Nicaastro
Joanie Norwood
Hal and Gudrun Opperman
Marc Opperman
Joe Osborn
John Pearce
Ed and Linda Sargent
Sam Sargent
Monica Schiller
(Tribute to Randy Leo)
Bob and Mollie Schluter
Lil and Pat Serafine
Adam Staerkel
Steve and Kim Stover Family
Russell and Deborah Straw
Valanta Taveirne
(For my David and on behalf of the Gulf Coast NRHS)
Lorna and Robert Terhune
The Buffaloe Herd
The Oteros
The Pearsons
Brian and Amy Thompson
Mike and Monica Thompson
Karen Timmermann
Barbara Turley
Terry and Sharon Vaughn
Jim and Jill Wadlow
Lee Walker
Wanderin' Bill
Michael Welhausen
Bethany Willick
Joyce and Jimmy Wilson
Kirk Yoshida
Jack and Audrey Zieger
Seven anonymous donors
Friends of Thomas the Train

\$10 to \$99:

Kelly
Mike and Ann Quinn
Mayet Andreassen
Diana Barton
(So many memories on the rails with y'all!)
Gramp Boatright
Bobby Booth
Ed Bradford
Tim Brown
(in memory of John Moran)
The Carlisle Family
Angela Castille

Brandy Conway
Janette De Pree
Joseph Dean
Dave Dech
Edward DeLaPena
Dennis Norris and Carrie King
Jacob Dolan
Stephanie and Rose Fisco
Lanette and Preston Griggs
Lisa Henggeler
(in honor of my nephew Ethan, who loves trains more than anything in the world)
Charlie and C Hess
Gene Holiman
Jean Balch and Alex Balch
Nathan Jerkins
Roberta Johnson
Jessica Jones
Jonse Family
Casey Kelley
Bradley Linda
(in memory of Bert Dockall)
Lowery Family
Jeremy Lynch
Christine Mallory
Richard McKinstry
Sandy Mobley
Domingo G. Molina III
David Moore
David Morris
Thomas Musser
Sam Nicaastro
Anupama Pai
PAN Foundation
Mirtha Perez
Frances Rush
Sandi Sanders
Douglas and Deborah Smith
Lucas Stanford
Jennifer Starr
Amanda Stevenson
Julia Suits
Aran Tavakoli
The Skiers
Kim Vance
Zena and Chris Vaughn
Bill Waldrop
Debra Walker
Sam Waring
Cathy and Ric Werne
Darwin Whaley
Suzy Wilson
Tom Winkle
Bradley Winn
Brian Winn
26 anonymous donors

[More on the back page!]

Jack Pearson, One of ASTA's Best Friends, Makes His Final Departure

Diner He Donated to ASTA Will Be Named in His Honor

Jack Pearson, who had served as chief mechanical officer for ASTA and its railroad over the last three-plus years, passed away on June 4.

Jack died at his home in Plainfield, Ill., after a long bout with serious health issues. He was 70 years old.

Retired from a 42-year management career with Amtrak, Jack not only helped to care for ASTA's equipment but was an able teacher to ASTA volunteers and mechanical staff about the restoration, repair and maintenance of our cars. Since early 2017, Jack had officially served as ASTA's chief mechanical officer, signing off on the safety and road-worthiness of the equipment.

Said ASTA President Robert Schoen, "In the short time we knew him, he did a lot for ASTA. He was a wealth of knowledge, and hopefully, we managed to catch some of it."

Chris Hoff, ASTA's general superintendent, recalled that "his plethora of knowledge was outstanding! He was always willing to help me ensure we were going the right direction on certain projects. I could always count on him to find an answer I couldn't find. Jack is, and always will be, missed."

Two years ago, Jack donated to ASTA an historic former Missouri Pacific dining car which is being fitted for excursion service, and in recognition of all that he has meant to the organization and its operations, the ASTA



It would be difficult to find a photo of Jack Pearson in which he's not at work on passenger equipment, and here he is (with a jack, ironically enough) helping to lift a car in Cedar Park Yard.

executive committee voted to name the car the "Jack L. Pearson."

The car, a combination 32-seat diner and 12-seat lounge, was built in 1949, and had seen service on the MP's "Texas Eagle" and later on the Mexican national railroad. Jack also was instrumental in completing the restoration of ASTA's concession car, "Cedar Park."

Starting as a mechanical foreman in Houston, Jack wound up his Amtrak career as superintendent of terminal operations in Chicago, having served as an assistant superintendent for road operations, chief mechanical officer for Amtrak's central region, and general manager of Amtrak's maintenance shops in Beech Grove, Ill. He also served on the board for Chicago Union Station.

Motive-Power Projects Continue, Preparing for Brighter Days Ahead

One odd advantage of not readying passenger trains to depart every weekend was the freeing up of a limited number of staff and volunteers safely to make progress on capital projects in our Cedar Park Yard. These essential motive-power projects continue as the railroad resumes limited train service, and ASTA deeply appreciates the efforts of everyone working on them, under the direction of General Superintendent Chris Hoff and President Robert Schoen! The details.....

ATCX 442, ASTA's historic Alco RSD-15 diesel, which was pulled from service in early 2017 with electrical, engine and other ailments. With an eye toward restoring her to regular passenger service, crews have lifted the engine off her trucks and....

-- removed worn bearing box wear plates and pedestal liners.

-- cleaned trucks, traction motors and frame.

-- electrically analyzed the motors to see whether one or more needs replacement.

-- analyzed wheel diameters on each axle, as well as axle-to-axle, to see if wheel diameters need to be equalized back to specifications.

-- built up worn areas on the equalizer arms with weldment, back to original specifications.

-- cleaned the plenums supplying cooling air to the traction motors of decades' worth of oil, sand and grease, that most likely contributed to traction-motor damage.

Next steps will be to order new wear plates, pedestal liners, shock absorbers and traction-motor blower boots, followed by re-assembly.

Before returning to Illinois, he had lived in Hempstead, advising many railroads as Texas Central Rail Inc.

He is survived by his wife Laun and two step-brothers.

SP 786, the 1916 Alco Mikado steam locomotive that is the centerpiece of ASTA's preservation efforts but whose return to passenger service has been delayed by the demands of passenger operations.

To prepare for reinstalling the engine's frame on her driving wheels, and boiler and firebox on frame....

-- provisions have been made for completing the machining of the fabricated oil cellars that will lubricate 786's drivers, and for re-casting of one additional pair of the shoes and wedges that are part of her spring rigging.

-- the frame is being meticulously cleaned, needle-scaled, re-primed and finish-color painted.

-- the containers and crates containing 786's many parts have been reorganized and refurbished in preparation for renewing the steam-engine reassembly when conditions permit.

-- all appliances for the engine have been oiled and air-operated every six months for ongoing maintenance.

A memorial service will be announced at a later date.

He will be greatly missed by the ASTA family, and the organization and railroad appreciate his service.

And Thanks to More of ASTA's Generous Friends.....

General Donations:

Lee and Kathy Crain
E. Lee DeGolyer
Andrew Diefenthaler
Nicole Fodera and Jerry
Leblanc
Margaret Frihart
Susie Grizzard
Dr. John Reid Howell and
Susan G. Conway
William and Susan Jefferys
Randy Leo and Colleen
Waring
Michelle McMeekin
Network for Good
Brian W. Smith
Spates Family Fund
Adam Staerkel
Virginia and Brian Urban

Memberships:

Robert L. Bucher
Paul S. Lewis
Gene Pipkin
Williard and Charlene Wood

Memorials:

Brian Inberg
(in memory of Randa Stahl)
Brian Winters
(in memory of Randa Stahl)

786 Fund:

Paul S. Lewis
Craig M. Smith
(in honor of Brian Smith)
Ray Rylander

2021 Fundraising Dinner:

Dennis Kearns

Face-Mask Project:

Ben Sargent
Robert and Lu Schoen
Lil and Pat Serafine

Call Board Underwriter:

Ben Sargent

*Join us for the fun, and for
the satisfaction
of a worthwhile job well-done....*

Be an ASTA Volunteer!

*If you love railroading, love history, or just love
helping people have a good time, give us a call.*

We have a place for you!

It's simple....call our volunteer coordinator,

Erin Hoff, at

512-477-8468 ext. 205,

e-mail volunteers@austinsteamtrain.org

or come by our office,

401 E. Whitestone, Suite C-100, Cedar Park.

A Special Thanks to Our Friends and Supporters,
the City of Cedar Park and Cedar Park Tourism Services!



Your Summer Call Board!

Austin Steam Train Association Inc.
401 E. Whitestone Blvd., Suite C-100
Cedar Park, Texas 78613

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Austin, Texas
Permit No. 3134