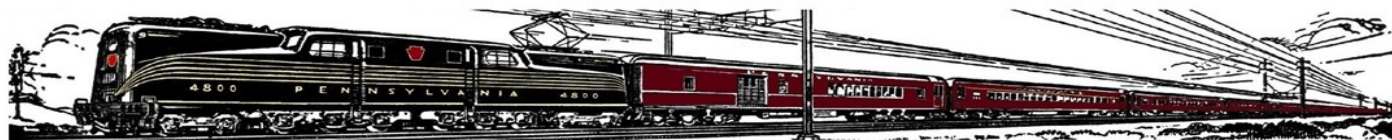


LANCASTER DISPATCHER

1935-2023



LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 56 NUMBER 7

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JULY 2023



“New Day” by Grif Teller

From the Pennsylvania Railroad Calendar of 1934

This was a true “artist’s rendition” of a P5A locomotive.



Railway News Flash

By Steve Ferrell

Gathered from press releases
and revised for this publication

July, 2023

The Lancaster County Emergency Management Agency introduced train derailment response training for its emergency workers and first responders. This is in response to the multiple freight train derailments in recent months.

The SEPTA board announced the reappointment of Leslie S. Richards as the Authority's General Manager and CEO. It is a four-year contract.

With the collapse and closure of a section of Interstate 95 in Northeast Philadelphia, SEPTA is adding additional services for rail commuters. SEPTA has increased capacity on the Trenton, West Trenton and Fox Chase lines. Two days after the accident, SEPTA reported 12% more riders on their commuter rail system.

Metro North plans to expand the use of lasers to combat fallen leaves on the rails. This program was piloted successfully during the Fall of 2022 and this year a second train will be equipped with this innovative technology.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority and the Transport Workers Union Local 100 have reached a tentative labor agreement. The union is now in their ratification process with their membership. The union represents workers in the MTA bus and subway systems.

Amtrak submitted federal requests for funding to switch the Cardinal route (Chicago-New York via Washington, DC) to daily operations. In recent years the train has operated three times a week.

Amtrak applied for 7.3 billion in Federal Grants to advance the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure. The projects include the East River Tunnel Rehabilitation Project, Susquehanna River Rail Bridge Project and the Connecticut River Bridge Replacement Project among other projects.

Amtrak and celebrity Chef Stephen Starr have united to redefine culinary excellence onboard Acela first class service. Acela First Class passengers will enjoy a rotating selection of new signature dishes based on Starr Restaurant Groups' renowned Northeast Corridor first-class service.

The new Acela II's are now not expected to debut until 2024, meaning that the new trains will be at least three years late! Amtrak has withdrawn four of the first-generation original Acela sets that were in need of extensive maintenance. This places a strain on these original units built 22-25 years ago.

Construction of the new SEPTA/Amtrak station in Ardmore, PA is continuing. A new station building is being constructed and high-level platforms are being added to this location. There is no completion date scheduled at this time.

Freight railroad, CSX made a \$5 million gift to the B&O Railroad Museum. This will go to the museum's \$30 million capital campaign to build new event space. The CSX donation will be used to build the CSX Bicentennial Garden, which includes an amphitheater and multi-use space for local community gatherings.

The Intermodal Shippers association has named CSX as the top-performing freight railroad in the Northeast.

Openings are still available Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania's Age 9- and 10-year old's Summer Camp from July 11 through July 14th. This day camp offers rides on the Strasburg Railroad, a visit to the Choo Choo Barn, inside tours of the Museum and 9- and 10-year model railroad crafting projects. For more information contact the Educator at 717-687-8628, extension 3025. The older age 11-12 camp during the fourth week of July is sold out.

**THIS MONTH ON THE PENNSY****PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN JULY**

Source: Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society (permission of Christopher Baer, PRRHTS).

July 1, 1919 Pennsylvania Railroad Women's Club holds organization meeting; Philadelphia Terminal Division and General Office employees to hold monthly meetings for socializing, lectures, entertainment and recreation; a separate club for "colored" women employees is also formed.

July 2, 1924 PRR announces tests of first diesel tugboat No. 16 at New York; is first diesel tug in New York harbor; built by Staten Island Shipbuilding Company, with engine installed at PRR's Hoboken Marine Shops.

July 7, 1929 First run of *Airway Limited* between New York and Columbus as one leg of combined rail-air two-day service to Los Angeles; name is applied to the first section of *The American* between New York and new airport station at Port Columbus, Ohio; prior to departure, Ford Tri-motor "City of New York" is placed on display in Penn Station and christened by Amelia Earhart, the Assistant to General Traffic Manager of Transcontinental Air Transport; train christened by Dorothy Stone; fare is \$338.10, or about twice all-rail fare; service operates at only 50% of capacity for first month; for transporting passengers to planes use "Aerocar" trailer and hauled by Studebaker roadsters; carries 14 passengers and baggage; first flight attendants, or "Couriers," are sons of executives, including C.B. Sudborough, Jr.; couriers wear naval type uniforms, drive the "Aerocars", load luggage, and serve Fred Harvey meals.

July 30, 1934 New station at Norristown, Pa., opens; part of grade crossing elimination project; has high level platform and pocket track for easy transfer between MU trains and steam trains or gas-electric cars operating west of Norristown.

July 1, 1939 Savarins restaurant and cocktail lounge opens on LIRR Concourse of Penn Station; air conditioned and designed by Raymond Loewy.

July 16, 1939 PRR discontinues use of green and white classification lights to designate extras and multiple sections of trains.

July 24, 1944 Nursery opens in Penn Station for mothers, particularly servicemen's wives, traveling with small children; staffed by registered nurses and decorated with murals of nursery rhymes by artist Angelo Magnanti; the room is cut out of the Concourse behind the Women's Waiting Room; space for a nursery had been provided above the Ladies Lounge in 1910 but never finished.

July 24, 1949 PRR and Philadelphia Chapter of NRHS operate "Off the Beaten Track" excursion from Philadelphia to Perryville via Oxford, thence up Port Road through Harrisburg to the Rockville Bridge and return via Enola and the Low Grade Line.

July 1, 1954 PRR inaugurates WC-1 West Coast Clipper; New York-Chicago freight with direct connections for West Coast; cuts 24 hours from time required to cross Chicago gateway.

July 12, 1959 Pres. James M. Symes inaugurates Plan II piggyback service (PRR trailers) between New York and Chicago in LCL-1, LCL-2, and LCL-7; originally called "Railtrailer"; trade name "TrucTrain" chosen in contest around September, 1954; Philadelphia-Pittsburgh service added July 14; piggyback terminals built at Meadows Yard (Kearny, N.J.), 55th Street Yard (Chicago), Kensington Yard (Philadelphia) and Island Avenue Yard (Pittsburgh); PRR assigns 90 40-foot flat cars to service; within six months, revenues reach \$100,000 per month. According to Railway Age, the first run is just 6 trailers to Chicago.

Summer, 1964 PRR applies to Pennsylvania PUC for intrastate exemption to discontinue The Broadway Limited; application denied.

Rare Mileage Trip on the Reading and Northern
Or
Ride Without Me Steve II
By Jim Donohue

The Lehigh Valley Chapter of the N.R.H.S. hosted a rare mileage trip on the Reading and Northern on April 15th, 2023. For the second time in its brief history, the Ride With Me Steve crew had to fend for themselves without the presence of our fearless leader. Steve's recovery from knee surgery has taken longer than expected and Steve felt he could not get on and off the RDC cars in non-station territory for photo run-bys. This prognostication would prove correct, as others with mobility issues had to remain on the three RDC's at each stop.

The trip was advertised by the Lehigh Valley Chapter as The Railroad Explorer II and indeed it was. The trip was entirely over branches that had not seen passenger service in decades. The majority of routes currently feed some large factory facilities and also carry anthracite coal out-bound.

In spite of Steve's absence, three intrepid RWMS members, Randy Lennon, Dan Murray and Jim Donohue managed to find their way to Port Clinton and board at 8:15 AM for the 9:00 AM departure. The three car RDC's immediately veered off to the left (northwest), away from the "main line" to Jim Thorpe. Our journey would take us throughout former Reading Company lines in Schuylkill County. Our destinations were (in order) Pottsville and Mill Creek Junction to Palo Alto then moving on through Schuylkill Haven. Next, the RDC's would go upgrade to Minersville and then reverse to Tremont.



Our first photo run-by took place about 15 minutes outside of Port Clinton. The shot was lined up with the RDC's passing under a bridge that the Pennsylvania Railroad used to make their access into this coal region. The first announcement was that this was a test for the entire trip as to how many run-bys we might enjoy, based on the department of all during the process. All two hundred riders were alerted that the steps would be difficult to detrain. Further, everyone was warned to stand back from other photographers and, since many were filming the train, to remain quiet. Most obliged to the latter, but there was an announcement after re-boarding that not everyone has ceased talking and that such behavior would not be tolerated for the rest of the day. There were no further issues!



Photo, right: Run-by 1 Photo credit: Randy Lennon

The highlight of the entire trip was the stop at Minersville. Awaiting us there was the steamed-up Central Railroad of New Jersey 0-6-0 # 113. We were greeted with several loud blasts from their whistle and there was no mistaking it for our RDC's horns! Railway Restoration Project 113 has restored and operates the CNJ locomotive and runs occasional excursion trains.



Above, CNJ 0-6-0 # 113. Photo credit: Jim Donohue

Right, our three intrepid riders gracing the # 113. L-to-R, Dan Murray, Jim Donohue, Randy Lennon. Photo credit: kind fellow rider.



Rare Mileage Trip on the Reading and Northern (continued)

Some riders took advantage of the stop to blow the whistle on the # 113. In all likelihood, the good citizens of Minersville were probably glad to see us pull out. Aside from the noise, many photographers stood on the somewhat busy street at the station for photos. In addition, two riders had drones flying for aerial photos.



Left, the 3-car RDC Rail-road Explorer II, resting at Minersville.

Right, CNJ business car # 98 has enormous potential, but needs a lot of work!

Photos: Jim Donohue



Departing Minersville, the RDC's reversed to Westwood Junction and then began the last leg of the trip. It was a long uphill ride to Tremont, PA. The scenery was magnificent as spring had not entirely taken over in this mountainous region. So riders had a great view of the deeply forested area without extensive leafage that would block the scenery during the summer.

We entered Tremont on street-running territory, right down the middle of Railroad Street, Tremont Road and Crescent Street. It seemed as though everyone in town turned out to see a passenger train passing through.

Right: Tremont Run-by. Photo credit: Jim Donohue



Despite the weather forecast for rain and thunderstorms, we escaped with just an occasional drizzle. During the last twenty minutes back into Port Clinton, it poured, but eased up as we arrived. Other areas had it much harder, as I-78 near Allentown was shut down for some time.

Overall, an excellent trip! The Lehigh Valley Chapter and the Reading and Northern Railroad always do a great job and The Railroad Explorer II was no exception.

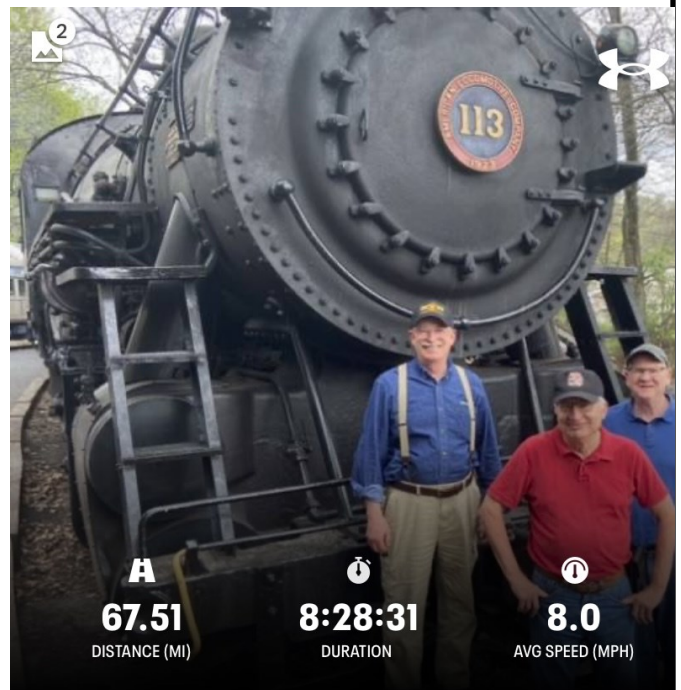
Rare Mileage Definition

During the trip, the subject of railfans and rare mileage came up. Clearly, there are those who measure every mile with a GPS unit for complete accuracy. At one point, our conductor announced that riders had the opportunity to photograph a short portion over a branch or to remain on the train for additional "rare mileage" trackage, even for just a few hundred feet. But you could not do both! There was definitely some angst among a number of riders!

This led to a discussion among ourselves as to what constituted "rare mileage."

Dan Murray: If you haven't ridden on it before, its rare mileage!

Randy Lennon went online as we traversed the two hundred additional feet of trackage. His research provided the following definition: There are 140,000 miles of track, of which 26,000 are available to Amtrak, regional commuter, and tourist trains. That leaves a 114,000 rare mileage challenge!



Zoo Tower

(AKA: Zoo Junction, Zoo Interlocking)

By Steve Ferrell

Zoo tower was once a very busy tower on the Northeast Corridor, the Paoli Thorndale line, the Cynwyd line and Amtrak's Keystone service to Harrisburg and Beyond. The Broadway limited would bypass 30th Street here, coming in from the North and heading out on the Keystone line. The Pennsylvania Railroad Lines to the north (Chestnut Hill West, Jersey Shore lines) all passed by and were routed by the tower operators at Zoo.

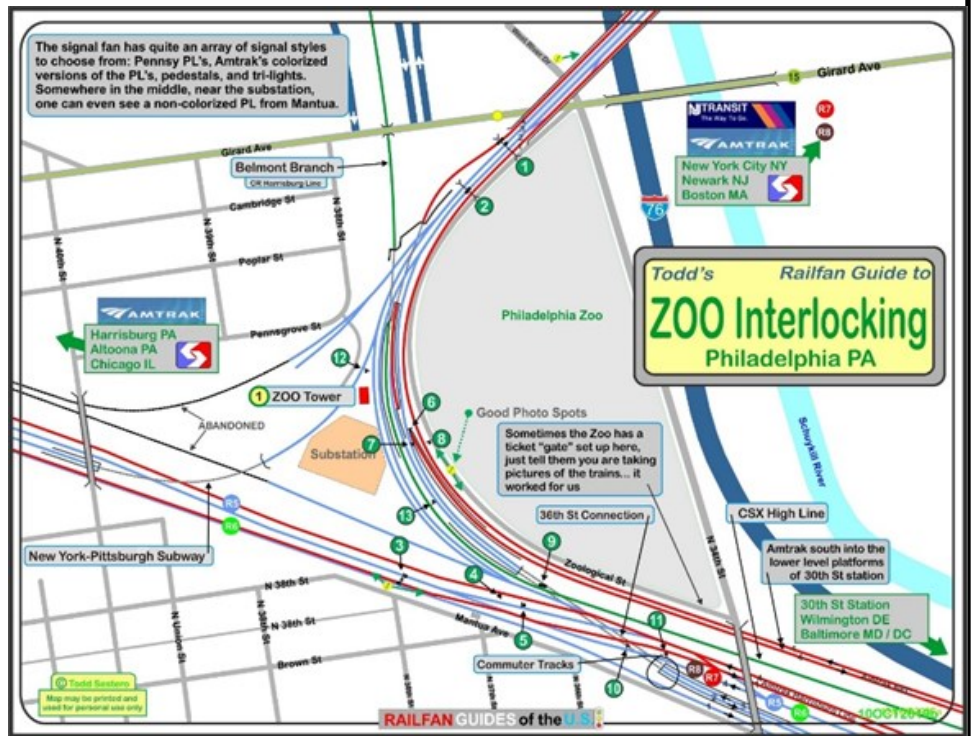
Today, operations at Zoo tower are limited. They still control the Keystone Corridor and New Jersey Transit trains from and to Atlantic City. They also switch the Cynwyd line and control the SEPTA Overbrook yard and maintenance facility. Amtrak dispatches and switches their Northeast Corridor trains from their Wilmington, DE control center.

Zoo interlocking is one of the most complex systems of its type in the country. With multiple tunnels and flyovers, two four-track main lines come together. Top that off with a wye, a high line and a branch or two, this was once very busy. Historically Zoo Tower was staffed by seven people per shift, now only one person works each shift. The interlocking/tower was completed as it now exists in 1935. The facility operates using an electro-pneumatic interlocking system built by Union Switch and Signal. In its busiest years, Zoo tower operators had to interface with at least five other towers. This tower dispatched trains to and from Philly's main stations: 30th Street, Suburban and Broad Street Terminal (which closed in 1952). At one time, there was a station nearby serving the Philadelphia Zoo.



Telephoto view of Zoo Tower –
Picture by Steve Ferrell

Zoo Interlocking Map by Todd Sestero – note where the Broadway Limited could bypass entering 30th Street Station, thus avoiding a reverse move. (Labeled New York-Pittsburgh Subway).



The Origin of Railroad Track Gauge

By Dr.Jörg Storm on LinkedIn

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used?

Well, because that's the way they built them in England, and English engineers designed the first US railroads. Why did the English build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the wagon tramways, and that's the gauge they used. So, why did 'they' use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that same wheel spacing. Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break more often on some of the old, long distance roads in England . You see, that's the spacing of the wheel ruts. So who built those old rutted roads?

Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since.

And what about the ruts in the roads?

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match or run the risk of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome , they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Therefore the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. Bureaucracies live forever.



So the next time you are handed a specification/procedure/process and wonder 'What horse's ass came up with this?', you may be exactly right. Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses. (Two horses' asses.)

Now, the twist to the story:

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature, of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system, was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass. And you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important? Ancient horse's asses control almost everything.

.Railfanning During My Childhood

By Steve Ferrell

Llanerch Car Barn and the Red Arrow lines to West Chester and Ardmore (Age 4-9)

During my early pre-10 childhood, my friends and I used to play sliding down the rock piles across the street from the Quarry on Township Line Road in Upper Darby. While dangerous in many ways, we never told our parents so they wouldn't have to worry. From the top of these rock piles, we could view the Llanerch Car barn, where they serviced the trolleys on the West Chester and Ardmore lines. We could see trolleys going into the car barn for servicing and on West Chester Pike in the distance. The West Chester Line had closed by 1954, but the line to Ardmore was very busy. Alas, I never did get a chance to ride these trolleys in my early youth as we live closest to a bus station. The nearest trolley station was about a mile away and we didn't have a car at that time.

At 69th Street Station (Age 4-9)

Often, my mother would gather my sister and I up and take us by Red Arrow (Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company) Bus to 69th street. Arriving at 69th street we would get off the bus and watch arriving trolleys go up and over the concourse on the turnaround loop. We then hoped to get to the spot in the concourse where other trolleys were going over and feel the earth rumble above and below. We loved the smell of the freshly fried and prepared donuts at the bakery in the terminal. Alas, mom always said they would spoil dinner (Gee, it was 1230pm!). We would go to a double feature at the giant 3200 seat tower theater and then return home. It was a fairly cheap day out.



Overhead trolley and bus turnaround loop

Morton (Age 9-14)

In 1959, just before turning 9, my family moved to a house in the Swarthmore-Ridley Township Area. I discovered a great place to watch trains! I would ride a mile or so on my bike from our house to Morton's Pennsylvania Railroad Station. This wonderful location on the Media-West Chester commuter rail line had a classic stone stationhouse, a freight house and a crossing guard shanty that was still manned by an old-time railroad employee. The crossing was the juncture of five points so it was a complicated intersection. When trains came (from Philadelphia) around the curve or the other way from Swarthmore, the operator would actuate the levers for the gates and lots of bells rang out loudly. Then an MP54 would come into the station, groaning and swaying with lots of electric motor and breaking smells – quite an arrival and I loved it.



**Morton Today --
Photo courtesy of
Wikipedia**

Swarthmore (Age 11-14)

In 1961, I discovered that even closer to my house (using my bike) was the Swarthmore PRR Station. Here was a large stone stationhouse, that like many on the PRR had an apartment for the Ticket Agent and their family. A playground on that property was used for the agent's children and I envied their home on the railroad.

Here you could see the MP54's approaching like a ship on a turbulent sea rocking and rolling. Again, they didn't glide into the station, they arrived with noise and smell – a kid's delight.

Railfanning During My Childhood (continued)

Soon during this period, the new Budd Silverliner I's and II's began service. Interestingly, the Pennsylvania Railroad only used them during non-rush hour service on the Media route, leaving the non-air conditioned and more uncomfortable MP54's for the rush hour commuters.

**Right: Swarthmore Station with an MP54 on the outbound track –
Photo courtesy of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania**



To the World's Fair! (1963, age 13)

“Let's go to the World's Fair in New York for vacation!”, said my dad. My mom, sister and I were in on that trip! Then he said, let's take the bus! We all replied “Have a nice time dad, as we are not going that way!” Two years prior, our family had taken Greyhound bus service to visit friends in Montreal and the trip was fraught with travel nightmares: the bus broke down at three in the morning at Lake George, waiting in long lines at the Port Authority Bus Terminal for an available seat and getting seats on the very back of the bus over the engine were among the many problems. So, my dad, who was not a fan of trains (having taken troop trains during WWII) relented.



We rode in a consist of old MP54's from Swarthmore station to 30th Street and soon boarded a New York Bound Pennsylvania Railroad consist, led by a GG1! We sat in a comfortable and well maintained P70 coach. Leaving 30th Street, I was amazed at how smooth the train accelerated. Soon the conductor came to punch our tickets and made nice small talk with all the children on board – many also going to the World's Fair. Then came a snack cart, and we purchased sandwiches and chocolate milk. Within an hour and a half, we arrived at Penn Station as it was in the middle of being demolished. We didn't know any better, but there were temporary sidewalks and wooden planks to walk on to get to the street.

It was a great vacation, however my dad to save money opted for a hotel that was about to close. It had a very shaky elevator with an operator, TV's that didn't work plus no air-conditioning, but he was happy that it was only \$10 a night! (We were not amused). I remember sore feet and a lot of fun at the World's Fair and seeing the Rockettes and a movie at Radio City Music Hall. I don't remember the train trip back, but I am sure it was great.

ANNUAL CHAPTER "AWAY" MEETING

SUNDAY, JULY 16, 2023



In lieu of a July formal meeting, the Lancaster NRHS Chapter invites our members to a visit on the East Broad Top Railroad and the Rockhill Trolley Museum. Members will drive / carpool to Rockhill Furnace and meet at the train station. East Broad Top is just two hours from Lancaster city.

East Broad Top Railroad
42 Meadow Street
Rockhill Furnace, PA 17249

The schedule and fares are as follows:

1:00 pm EBT Train Ride \$ 18.00 for 1 hour Open-Air Car

Tom Shenk is arranging to purchase tickets. Please use this page as an order form and mail your ticket request to Tom.

Member Name: _____

Guest Names: _____

Street Address: _____

State, Zip Code: _____

Number of train ride tickets requested: ___ @ \$ 18.00 = \$ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

LANCASTER CHAPTER, NRHS

Mail your ticket request and remittance to:

Mr. Tom Shenk
11 Marquis Court
Lititz, PA 17543

In order to make reservations at East Broad Top for the entire Chapter, please reserve as early as possible..

Chapter Member Additional Options:

(Note: the Chapter is not handling reservations for these two portions).

11:00 am Shop Tour \$ 16.00 (1 hour)

Trolley Rides: \$ 10.00 (45 minutes at adjacent Rockhill Museum)

To make your reservation for either of both of the above, please visit the EBT web site:

<https://eastbroadtop.com>



"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"
UPCOMING LANCASTER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

JULY 16, 2023 - SUNDAY, 1:00 PM CHAPTER MEETING AT EAST BROAD TOP RAILROAD, ROCKHILL FURNCE, PA

CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

June 19, 2023

The Membership Meeting of the Lancaster Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was held at the Christiana Freight Station, Christiana, PA on Monday, June 19th (Juneteenth) 2023. Thirty-Three were in attendance. Tom Shenk called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

TREASURES REPORT:

The Treasurer Richard Rutledge gave the treasurers report for the month of May of 2023 as well a reviewing some of the Chapters budget items.

DONATIONS:

Tom Larson made a \$50.00 donation

Tom Fluck delivered two boxes of Railroad Modeling magazines.

FREIGHT STATION UPDATE:

Cindy and Glenn Kendig announced another clean-up day on Saturday August 12th, at 9am.

Please come and help if possible!

Approval of May Minutes

Helen Shaak made a motion to accept the May minutes as published and was seconded by Steve Himpysl.

The motion carried.

Upcoming Events:

-Sunday, July 16, 2023 trip to East Broad Top RR: So far 14 pre-sales accepted. Some tickets still available, contact Tom Shenk if interested. No regular meeting in the month of July.

-Saturday, August 12th, 9am clean-up day at the Christiana Freight Station.

-Sunday, August 20th, Strasburg Railroad Train Ride and meeting on the train; Tom Shenk and Steve Himpysl will be on platform at 2 PM selling ride tickets for \$ 5.00 each (for this day's trip only).

-Saturday, September 9th is Christiana Festival. The chapter participates, so plan to attend!

-Sunday, September 17th is the annual picnic at the Freight Station. BBQ Chicken entree provided, Pot Luck side dishes-bring your favorite side!

OTHER:

-Tom Shenk thanked Steve Himpysl for running the chapter table at the Columbia Railroad Days event. Steve reported \$367.00 in sales at the event!

-The 611 was returned to the Virginia Transportation Museum.

-The chapter has a fresh supply of Strasburg RR tickets for sale. \$10.00 vs. \$22.00, the ticket window price. Contact Steve Himpysl or Tom Shenk to purchase.

Adjournment

After the group enjoyed fresh brewed coffee and snacks, at 8:05pm, Tom Shenk adjourned the meeting.

After adjournment Doug Henry gave a slide presentation on 'What is New at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania.'

Respectfully submitted by Tom Fluck, Secretary

**ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS—
ARE YOUR DUES PAID FOR 2023?**

Please check and remit now if you have not paid, to remain on the membership roster

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CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP MEETING
LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., N.R.H.S.
JULY 16, 2023 - SUNDAY, 1:00 PM
"AWAY" CHAPTER MEETING
AT EAST BROAD TOP RAILROAD

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC.
 NATIONAL RAILWAY
 HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 10 RAILROAD AVENUE
 CHRISTIANA, PA 17509-1416
 PHONE: 717-917-5137
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