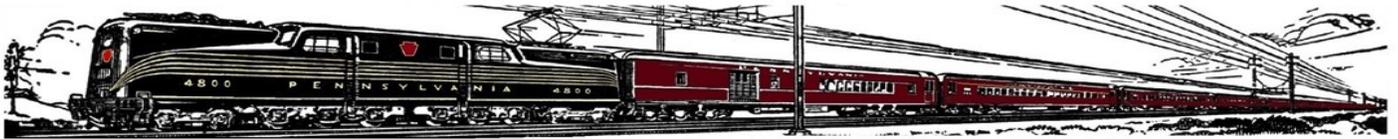


# LANCASTER DISPATCHER

1935-2025



LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 58 NUMBER 3

DISTRICT 2—CHAPTER WEBSITE: WWW.NRHS1.ORG

MARCH 2025



On this foggy and misty evening, the passengers waiting on the platform are looking forward to settling in and happy their train is “Right on Time”

Printed with permission  
Rail Art by Shayne  
(see page 10 for more information)



## Railway News Flash

By Steve Ferrell

Gathered from press releases and revised for this publication

***March, 2025***

Scott Sauer, a long-time SEPTA veteran has taken over as the transit authority's new General Manager. Sauer had been most recently the Chief Operating Officer of SEPTA. He replaces Leslie Richards who stepped down at the end of November. Scott has 30 years of service with the transit authority and started as a Surface Train Operator.

350 passengers were evacuated after a Silverliner IV car caught fire on the SEPTA line to Wilmington on Thursday night, February 6<sup>th</sup>. The first EMU coach in the six-car train caught fire at Crum Lynne Station on the southbound train to Wilmington. Passengers said they could smell smoke right after leaving 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station in Philadelphia. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is investigating the incident.

The Gateway Development Commission has awarded a \$1.8 billion contract for a portion of the Hudson Tunnel Project to a joint venture of Frontier, Kemper, Tutor and Perini. This is because of a plan by that group that could save nine months in construction time for the project's completion. The Manhattan Tunnel Project contract calls for the construction of 700 feet of twin 30-foot-diameter tunnels at the Manhattan side of the project, connecting them with the tunnel shaft already under construction in the Hudson Yards area.

On January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, a proposed bill requiring Amtrak refunds for cancelled or late trains due to a failure of Amtrak has been introduced in the US Congress by New Jersey Representative: Josh Gottheimer with Representative Thomas Kean (NJ) as co-sponsor. It was sent to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and includes a "Passenger Bill of Rights".

Amtrak has commissioned a large quilt to be featured at Lancaster Station. Called "A Place for Every Piece: Lancaster's Living Quilt," this art installation tells the story of the people of Lancaster through fabric donated by more than 100 local residents.

The 1.5 billion FRA award to Amtrak for infrastructure projects, 3 of these include projects near Philadelphia: One is 397.3 million to replace the catenary system between Zoo Tower and Paoli. 7.4 million is for development and design of a new POTTS interlocking at Exton. This will replace the existing manual interlocking near Thorndale (SEPTA) station. Finally, 3.2 million has been awarded to find ways to reduce interference between SEPTA and Amtrak on the Northeast Corridor between Newark, Delaware and Philadelphia and Trenton, NJ and Philadelphia.

Reading and Northern celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their partnership with Norfolk Southern after the demise of Conrail. After initial tension, NS and RBMN became trusted partners and began to grow business together.



## Railway News Flash

***March, 2025 (continued)***

By Steve Ferrell

Gathered from press releases and revised for this publication

From Dan Cupper - On January 14<sup>th</sup>, Reading and Northern Railroad received seven passenger cars from the Penn Valley Railroad. Owner Jeff Pontius has sold his fleet after 27 years of operating tourist excursions in Bloomsburg, Sunbury and other towns operated by the North Shore Railroad. A former Great Northern Empire Builder streamlined coach, a former Jersey Central heavyweight table/lounge car, and a onetime New York Central sleeper headline the acquisition. The cars are being painted Tuscan red (although none are ex-PRR), all cars are roller bearing equipped and the Strasburg Rail Road shop had converted all to modern ABDX air-brake systems. The cars will be briefly displayed at its Nesquehoning, PA campus and then enter its car shop for overhauls and repainting.

East River Tunnel rehabilitation work and changes to the Empire Service in New York State has sidelined United Railroad Historical Society's Hudson River rail excursions. These trips use former New York Central lounge cars and travel on the Empire service tracks. Their farewell (for now) tickets went on sale January 29<sup>th</sup> for the daytrips that use the Hickory Creek, Swift Stream and tavern-lounge car number 43. A dozen round trips have been scheduled for dates in February and March.

The Woodstown Central tourist railroad (run by the SMS rail service) will operate a steam locomotive over its ex-Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line Salem Branch in New Jersey. The locomotive is a 0-6-0 built in 1942 for the US Army. The engine was rebuilt by SMS at its Bridgeport, NJ shops and received FRA certification in November 2023. Additionally, the Woodstown Central has two former Reading Railroad's FP7's, numbers 902 and 903. The former once owned by the Lancaster NRHS Chapter and recently by the Reading Railroad Historical Society and leased to SMS. The 903 was owned by NRHS Philadelphia chapter and sold to SMS outright. The 903 should be ready for some tourist activity this summer.

The East Penn Railroad (Short line) will receive \$455,000 from Penn DOT to rehabilitate 8 bridges on the former Pennsylvania Railroad Octoraro branch in Chester County and the Perkiomen, Lancaster, Northern and York branch lines within the state.

From Dan Cupper: The Strasburg Railroad was ordered to reinstate an employee and pay more than \$220,000 after a whistleblower complaint. OSHA found that a worker was fired for refusing to issue operating license to an unqualified management official. That official is no longer with the company and had resigned on his own.

Dan Cupper reports that the former Pennsylvania Railroad K4 4-6-2 steam locomotive is halfway towards its goal of returning to operation by the Altoona Railroader's Memorial. The Strasburg Railroad's mechanical department has finished the inspection, cleaning and conditioning of its drivers. They will be returned to Altoona and cocooned until the frame, boiler, firebox and cab are ready for reassembly.

## THIS MONTH ON THE PENNSY

### PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN MARCH

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

March 15, 1916 Electrified lines of LIRR paralyzed for first time by combination of ice storm and high winds; whip-sawing of ice coated transmission lines shatters insulators and creates short circuits; by 10:30 AM all service halted except between Penn Station and Jamaica; that service fails at 2:00 PM; all service restored by 4:30; one train stalled on Jamaica Bay trestle has to be rescued by steam locomotive; three others stranded in Flushing Meadows.

March 28, 1921 Ground broken for Princeton University dormitory on site of old PRR station.

March 4, 1926 PRR tests train telephone between cabin car and engine on 73-car eastbound freight on Fort Wayne Division; telephone line strung over tops of cars.

March 8, 1931 Time Freight AC-10 makes record run from Enola to North Point (Baltimore) over the Port Road; locomotives No. 611 and No. 1296 haul 120 cars in 4:40; average speed 19.88 MPH.

March 18, 1931 PRR reroutes its 3-car Broad Street-West Philadelphia shuttle from old main line tracks at West Philadelphia Station to a new route through the upper level of 30th Street Station and over a temporary track to a make-shift platform over the north end of the New York-Washington tracks at the West Philadelphia Station; westbound, the trains use the center duck under for Maryland Division trains, then back up on new track to the temporary platform at West Philadelphia; eastbound, they run forward through the yard and onto the main line tracks on the upper level.

March 3, 1936 EMC's first road passenger diesels, demonstrators No. 511-512, begin five weeks of tests on PRR between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh on Chicago trains; later run as far west as Chicago; run 5,936 miles with trains up to 13 cars without major problems.



March 12, 1941 PRR Board authorizes \$1.1 million to air-condition and convert 25 P70 coaches to Scheme 4, 3 PB70 combines to passenger-baggage-dormitory cars, and 2 P70 coaches to lounge cars; building a restaurant and lunch room for the Union News Company at Pennsylvania Station, Newark

March 4, 1946 T1's assigned to trains No. 23 Manhattan Limited and No. 42 between Pittsburgh and Chicago for testing.

March 26, 1946 Meeting held in the office of the Chief of Motive Power with Regional General Managers Nancarrow, Feucht and Pevler to consider operation of the Class T1 locomotives; 10 are to be assigned to passenger pool service between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh and 14 between Crestline and Chicago with new deliveries to be split between the two services and some possibly assigned to Columbus-St. Louis.

March 14, 1951 PRR freight "Sharknose" 1,600 HP A-unit No. 9721A is Baldwin's 75,000th locomotive.

March 17, 1956 Trailer Train Company goes into operation with 500 flat cars; stockholders include PRR, N&W, St. Louis-San Francisco and Missouri Pacific.

March 2, 1961 ICC authorizes the new Hudson Rapid Tubes Corporation to assume the trackage rights over the PRR between Journal Square and Newark exercised by the old Hudson & Manhattan Railroad.

March 3, 1966 First three GG1s retired; No. 4804, No. 4831, No. 4847.

March 24, 1966 PRR receives last of order of 100 diesel locomotives.

March 1, 1971 Penn Central begins routing freight for Long Island via Hell Gate Bridge to eliminate car floating in New York harbor; first step in elimination of labor-intensive floating operations; all LIRR car-floating discontinued.

**Rails to West Chester**  
**By Stephen B. Ferrell**

**Part one: The Lancaster NRHS trip on the West Chester Railroad**

In the fall of 2024, the Lancaster Chapter of the NRHS chartered the former Reading Blueliner (converted into a dining car design) on the West Chester Railroad. The locomotive on our train was an EMD GP38. The engine was pushing the train on the outbound trip and pulling on the return. Our coach was a former Reading Blueliner, built between 1931 and 1932 and re-purposed with facing seats and tables to allow possible food service as a dining car. The route follows the former Pennsylvania Railroad, Conrail and SEPTA Commuter line to Media and then on to Philadelphia. Our group boarded our reserved coach with the assistance of our trainman, chapter member, Tom Fluck. Upon departure we quickly came upon the WCRR yard on left (still within the West Chester town limits) with its extensive collection of cars and locomotives.



**On the left: Passengers gathering prior to boarding the train. Note former catenary in the background. On right, Dispatcher Newsletter editor after a cab ride in our locomotive, a GP38.**



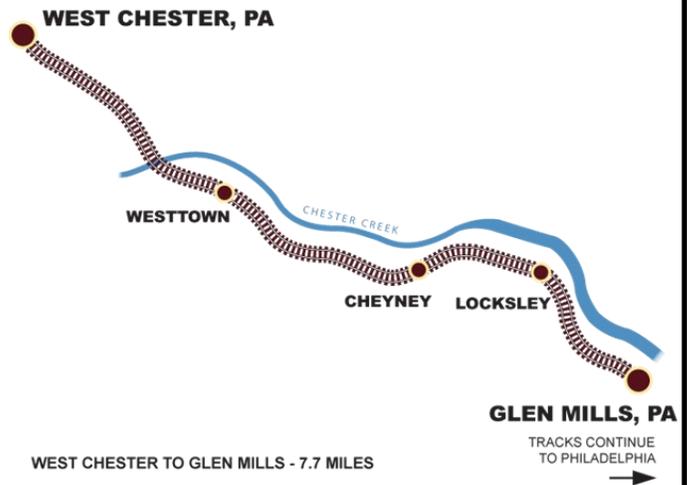
The train traveled through great scenery along the Chester Creek to Glen Mills, over fairly rough track through thick forest and hillsides with very upscale homes along the way. Passing Westtown Station, we noticed that it had been re-purposed as an art gallery. The 19<sup>th</sup> century station at Cheyney is located near one of America’s oldest black universities. After a half hour ride, we stopped at Glen Mills for thirty minutes, where we indulged at the local winery. The vintage Glen Mills Station (believed – but not confirmed - to have been designed by the noted architect, Frank Furness) had a nice museum within.

On the way back, one of our members, Jim Donohue had the privilege of a cab ride in the locomotive and talked with the general manager of the railroad along the way. After the ride, Tom Fluck took some of the group to the High Street Café nearby, for authentic “New Orleans” cuisine. It should also be noted that there is a great pizza and hoagie shop next door to the boarding platform – Lorenzo & Son’s Pizza.

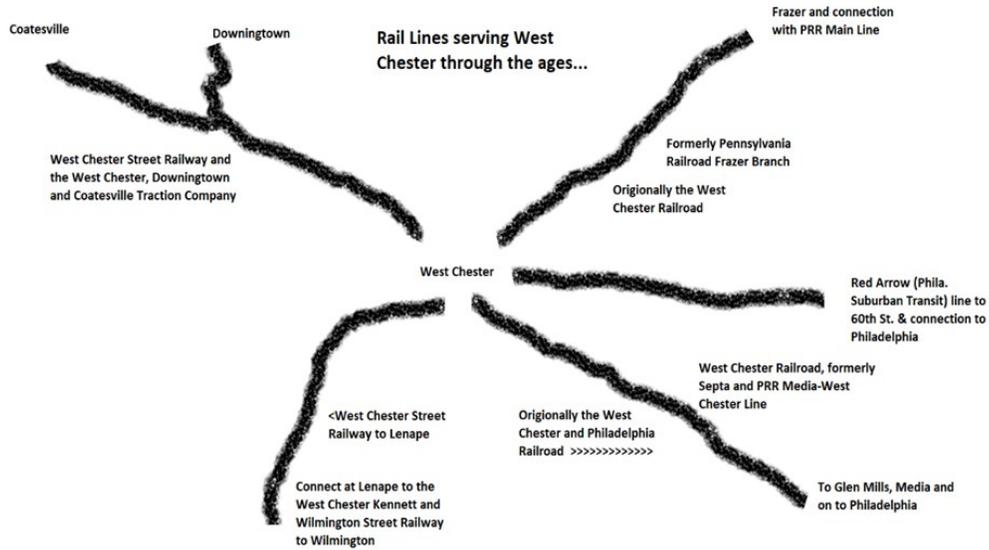


**Our trainman, chapter Secretary Tom Fluck waiting for us to board our chartered coach.**

**Right: The West Chester Railroad**



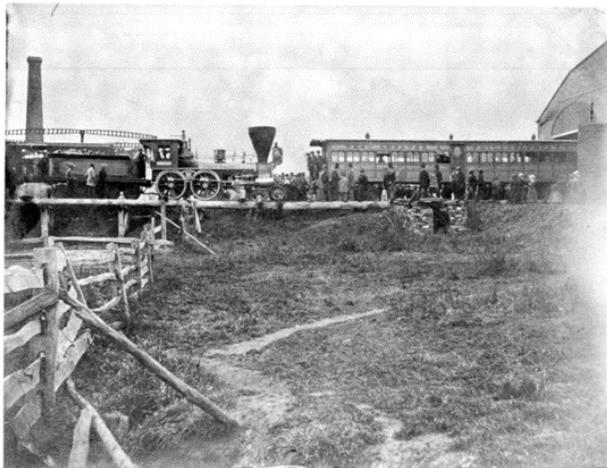
### Historical Rail Services in West Chester, PA



#### History of the Media West Chester Line, originally called the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad

The West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad opened on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1858. It became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad system by 1881 and then became known as the Media branch. For the next eighty-nine years, the Market Street Station was West Chester’s gateway to the world. Bringing produce and supplies to and from the borough carrying residents and visitors to and from the town. At its height, the PRR operated twenty-four scheduled trains and three freights a day to West Chester. The line was electrified in 1928.

The Market Street Station was built in 1875 and rebuilt following a fire in 1885. The station had four tracks and two platforms. A line on the east side of the station bypassed the station building and headed northeast to Frazer. Although the Market Street station was demolished in 1968, Penn Central and then SEPTA continued to operate passenger service on this electrified line until 1986. Today, the new West Chester Railroad Company is owned and operated by 4 States Railway Service, Inc. and is dedicated to preserving the Media branch.



FIRST TRAIN TO WEST CHESTER OVER W.C.&P.R.R.

Far left: A NRHS sponsored steam train at West Chester’s Market Street Station, the line in the foreground is the Frazer Branch.

Photo on the right is of the first train to west Chester – photos from the archives of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

History of the Media West Chester Line, originally called the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad

(continued)

PHILADELPHIA AND BALTIMORE CENTRAL RAILROAD. TRAINS BETWEEN PHILADELPHIA, WEST CHESTER AND INTERMEDIATE STATIONS.

Table 105. For Additional Trains to West Chester, see Philadelphia Division. Table with columns for train numbers (4507-4627) and stations (Philadelphia, Broad St., West Phila., etc.).

PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD & WASHINGTON RAILROAD COMPANY - Continued. Includes PRR logo and company name.

Schedule from the May 1916 Official Guide of the Railways, note while many trains were through trains from Philadelphia, some required a cross-platform transfer at Media.

History of the Frazer branch, originally called the West Chester Railroad Company

This railroad was chartered in 1831 and started operations in 1832. It operated from West Chester to Malvern, PA, initially using horse-drawn cars. The line was rebuilt in the late 1840's to accommodate steam locomotives and its terminus in West Chester on Chestnut Street was routed south to end the line at the East Market Street Station used by the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad Company. Here the tracks joined with the line to Media and then onward to Philadelphia.

The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) took over the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad (later their Main Line) in 1859 and began a lease arrangement with the West Chester Railroad. In the 1870's, the entire stock of the railroad was sold to the PRR. It remained a subsidiary until it was fully merged into the PRR in 1903.

The Pennsylvania had re-routed the railroad at its northern end from Malvern to Frazer and was then known as the Frazer branch. The PRR ended passenger service on the Frazer branch in 1932, with freight service continuing sporadically. Most of this branch was removed in 1969, with the rest of it surviving until 1981.

### History of the Frazer branch, originally called the West Chester Railroad Company (continued)



Above, left: Photo of the Frazer Branch (single track in foreground) leaving Market Street Station in West Chester – Photo from the archives of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania.

Above, right: 2024 view of Morstein Station, built in 1840 still standing on the former Frazer branch. This station was the second station after leaving Frazer – photo by author

### Philadelphia Suburban Transit's (Red Arrow Line) trolley route to West Chester, an interurban line

The route along what is now U.S. Route 3, West Chester Pike began as a dirt road dating back to 1793. In 1848, the Philadelphia and West Chester Turnpike was created as a plank road between Philadelphia and Newtown Square and then as a stone road in the 1898's. A trolley route began service as a horse-drawn trolley in latter half of the 1800's. The Philadelphia and West Chester Traction company began operating the horse-drawn trolley line in 1895 and during 1898, the first electric trolley ran from 63<sup>rd</sup> Street in Philadelphia arrived at West Chester at 220pm. The trip was twenty miles. In the 1936, this line was consolidated with the other lines from the Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company, nicknamed "the Red Arrow Lines". After that, the trolleys operated from the newly opened 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal. In the line's early years, it operated many freight trolleys to and from West Chester, carrying primarily milk and produce more from the Chester County farms to the city of Philadelphia.

Arriving in West Chester, riders could connect with the West Chester Street Railway, then the Downingtown and Coatesville Traction Company, and finally the Conestoga Traction Company for a leisurely trip from 69<sup>th</sup> Street to Lancaster, that trip took almost four hours with two transfers!

**Right: Trolley car on the route to West Chester in 1953. Note that West Chester Pike is only two lanes (now it is four lanes) – Photo from the archives of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania**



### **Philadelphia Suburban Transit's (Red Arrow Line) trolley route to West Chester, an interurban line**

This was a true interurban line, connecting two urban cities (or towns), providing needed passenger and freight transportation. The trip to West Chester took less than an hour! Today it takes approximately 45 minutes in good traffic to drive the route. After World War II, there was a tremendous postwar suburban migration and the increasing number of automobiles, plus the need of wider roads spelled doom for the line. In June of 1954, the trolley line was abandoned. Formerly two lanes, West Chester Pike (U.S. Route 3) is now four lanes, often divided by a greenway.

### **West Chester Street Railway and connecting lines**

West Chester Street Railway operated over three lines: One was a local line within West Chester. The second line ran to Lenape Park and Kennett Square. Connections here could be made to Wilmington and West Grove on the West Chester, Kennett and Wilmington Street Railway. The third and final route operated to Downingtown and Coatesville where you could connect to Lancaster and beyond using the West Chester, Downingtown and Coatesville Traction Company and then the Conestoga Traction Company. Sometimes the Street Railway ran cars on the Philadelphia Suburban Transit (Red Arrow) line to the race track just to the east of West Chester.

The West Chester Street Railway began operating in 1891 with a single streetcar within the borough. Later that year, a 4.2-mile extension to Lenape was opened. It ran at 7 miles per hour and took twenty minutes for a one-way trip. The line first terminated at Lenape, but at the instigation of the second owner William Hayes, Lenape park was constructed to accommodate weekend picnics and provide seasonal entertainment to residents of West Chester and neighboring towns. Often a baggage car was attached to the trolley car to Lenape to be transferred to the West Chester, Kennett and Wilmington Street Railway to Wilmington.

As cars and busses became the mode of choice for most riders during the "roaring twenties", the railroad ceased operations in 1929.

**Top right: NRHS Photo of 1900 West Chester Street Railway Car – From the National Railway Historical Society Archives**



**Bottom right: Lenape Station, where travelers from West Chester could transfer to Wilmington, Delaware. Photo from the Locust Grove Schoolhouse part of the Chester County Historical Society website -permission requested**



### Rail Art by Shayne

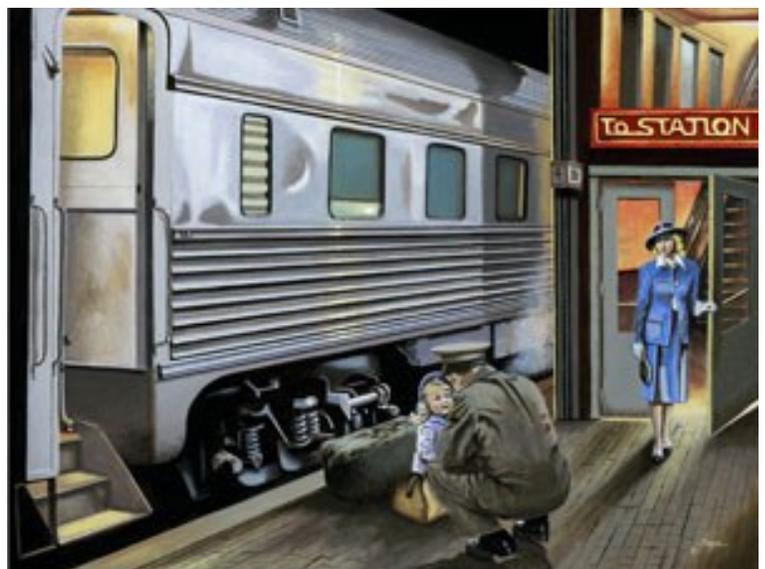
Gracing our cover this month is a magnificent painting by Shayne Stoakes. Shayne offers many railroad paintings and drawings as well as custom commissioned works through his website: <https://www.railartbyshayne.com/>

#### From his website:

Shayne Stoakes is a railroader at heart. He was born and raised in Pocatello, Idaho where his love for trains and nature began. He spent thirty plus years working for Union Pacific Railroad as a Fireman/Oiler and Safety Coordinator for the locomotive mechanical department in Pocatello. He enjoys model railroading as well as a variety of outdoor activities. Shayne is a talented self taught artist and his many personal interests, family, former occupation, and scenic location provide wonderful inspiration and resources for his artistic gift.

Shayne has a wide array of subject matter including railroad, aviation, wildlife, landscapes and portraits. He works primarily in acrylics, but also enjoys pencil and oils. His close attention to detail and realistic style inspire you to experience the scenes depicted in his art, bringing to mind memories of a simpler time and days gone by.

Originals and prints of his work are available. Each print is individually inspected and signed by Shayne.



Samples of Shayne's paintings available on his web site:

[www.railartbyshayne.com/](https://www.railartbyshayne.com/)

"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"  
UPCOMING LANCASTER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

MARCH 17, 2025 - SUNDAY, 3:00 PM CHAPTER MEETING AT CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE  
10 RAILROAD AVENUE, CHRISTIANA, PA 17509  
BOARD MEETING, 2:00 PM

### 2025 Meeting Schedule

March 16th, Sunday, 3:00 PM, Chapter Meeting at Christiana Freight House  
2:00 PM, Board Meeting

April 21st, Monday, 7:30 PM, Chapter Meeting at Christiana Freight House

May 19th, Monday, 7:30 PM, Chapter Meeting at Christiana Freight House

June 16th, Monday, 7:30 PM, Chapter Meeting at Christiana Freight House

July Meeting: "Away Meeting" - Date and Location to be determined

August 17th, Sunday, 3:00 PM, Strasburg Railroad Train Ride and Chapter Meeting

September 21st, Sunday, 3:00 PM, Annual Picnic Christiana Freight House

It is with sadness that we announce that another Lancaster Chapter NRHS member, Marlyn (Sonny) J Geesey of York, PA has passed away on January 9th, 2025.



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**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING**

**LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., N.R.H.S.  
MARCH 17, 2025 - SUNDAY, 3:00 PM  
CHAPTER MEETING  
CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE  
10 RAILROAD AVENUE  
CHRISTIANA, PA 17509**

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