

HARRISBURG RAIL REVIEW

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE HARRISBURG CHAPTER, NRHS, INC.
637 WALNUT STREET, HARRISBURG, PA 17101-1924

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SIGHTINGS DEPARTMENT:

Workers at Harris Tower on 9/9 were treated to two sightings: the private car "Berlin" on a one-way move Pgh to NYC behind the *Pennsylvanian* and NS heritage engine Illinois Terminal 1072 on the point of a w/b tank car train (Fred Wertz). The "Berlin" was on its way to the AAPRCO convention in VT, but two passengers who rode it only as far east as Hbg detrained and visited Harris Tower before catching the w/b *Pennsylvanian*. . . On 9/14, Dan Cupper was called for a 7:45 am on-duty time at Enola for a Track Geometry train, symbol 905, to run from Enola to Perryville, MD, spin on the Amtrak wye and return to Enola. This is about a 150-mile round-trip. The train consisted of standard-cab SD70 No. 2534, research car 38 (known as "the Brick" for its shape and Tuscan-red color), and research car 36, also in Tuscan red. . . . A different set of NS research cars—33 and 34—were by Harris Tower on 9/21 at 11:30 and again at 12:45 (give or take). Pulled by NS C44-9W 8993, car 34 has been rebuilt from a locomotive, while the 33 looks like a heavyweight passenger car. Just a day later, an NS Office Car train was seen crossing Rockville Bridge e/b (both, Dan Rapak).

SEPTEMBER 12 MEETING MINUTES:

Our meeting began at 7 pm, attended by 50 people. Charlie Webb, our NRHS National Director, reported National has digitized most of the NRHS *Bulletins*. National's new computer system (Neon) to replace Amelia is up and running. NRHS membership continues to decline about 8% each year, but member dues is covering 97% of national's budget. RailCamp 2018 applications will be on the website 1/1/2018. Charlie plans to attend the next national meeting this October in Kansas City. The 2018 convention will be in Cumberland, MD, date to be determined. The Roanoke Chapter NRHS developed a challenge grant program to encourage donations to the national's Grants Program. [Ed. Note: Hbg Chapter received a grant from the national program in 2017. A copy of the Roanoke Chapter challenge rules is on the last page].

Richard Crow provided his treasurer's report. Sloan Auchincloss announced the October chapter program will be provided by the Baltimore Streetcar Museum. President Smith adjourned our meeting at 7:10 pm.

The program for the evening was provided by Kerry Jury. His black and white photography goes back to the 1950s, and his early association with the local Millersburg railroad employees allowed him access and opportunity to put his Brownie box camera (and later upgrades) to excellent use. Thanks to the hours he has spent digitizing his negatives, we were able to see many great shots of passenger, through freight and Lykens Branch locals in his hometown area.

Sam W. Wilder Secretary

AMTRAK NEWS:

Amtrak has submitted plans to erect a sanding tower south of the train shed alongside Track 9, its current inspection pit track. It will bring an end to current practice that requires filling the sand reservoir in the locomotives from 80-pounds bags hand carried up a ladder and poured into the reservoir. Not only is this method unsafe and unwieldy, it does not follow the OSHA-required silica dust-control regulations. The proposed system will consist of a pre-fabricated instrument house that contains an air compressor, dehumidifier and related equipment; a steel frame that spans the track and train and supports the sand silo; and attached ladders with safety cages to access and service the silo. Sand will be delivered to the tower by vehicles. Because part of the sanding system spans electrified tracks, the structure must also provide safe clearance around the catenary system. The total height of the system, measured from the top of rail, is approximately 58 feet. For comparison, the ridge beam on the existing train shed is 50½ feet high, and the monitor adds approximately five feet to the height of the train shed roof. Our chapter along with the Historic Hbg Association was invited to consult on this project, and Al



www.amtrak.com

DiCenso has agreed to represent us due to his experience dealing with Amtrak.

Amtrak is investing in an extensive overhaul of its train interiors on more than a dozen popular services operating in the Northeast and Midwest aimed at introducing a more modern, more comfortable experience. Amtrak coach cars were to undergo a series of major improvements including: brand-new seat cushions, new carpeting, new LED reading lights, new bathroom flooring, upgraded wainscoting and bulkhead, new curtains in Business Class cars and redesigned galleys in the café cars. The total investment is valued at more than \$16 million. The overhaul will take place on Amtrak's Amfleet I equipment, which includes more than 450 coach cars across the national network. Locally, we will see these improvements on both Keystone trains and the *Pennsylvanian*. Amtrak schedules will not change due to the program. In fact, Amtrak is strategically utilizing a phased approach during the refresh to ensure uninterrupted service for customers. Coach cars will be pulled offline on a rotating basis to upgrade or install new components as they become available. The refresh will take approximately nine months to complete.

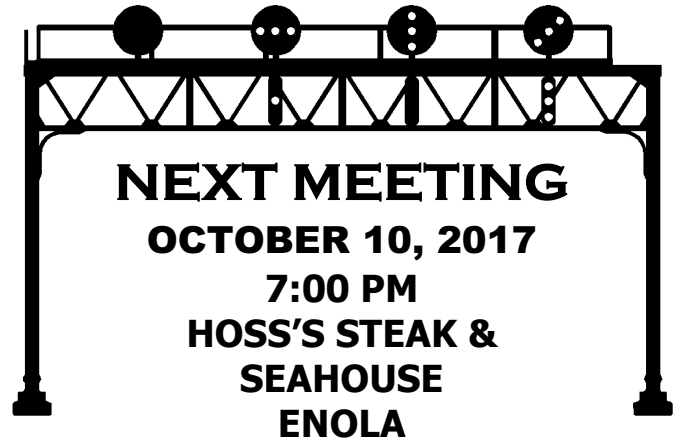
. A VIEW FROM THE TOWER WINDOW:

John W. Smith

The Penn Central Historical Society had its annual convention in Hbg this year and 63 members visited Harris Tower on 9/23. PCHS President Gary Farmer presented us with a most-welcome and greatly-appreciated donation of \$1000. The simulation, ATCS and telegraph display were all well-received and many positive comments on Harris restoration were offered. Thanks to Jim Nowotarski, Brad Anderson, Abe Burnett, Sloan Auchincloss and Kerry Jury for making the day successful. Dick Crow contributed with his usual weekly maintenance, cleaning and floor polishing and weed whacking. We were able to come up with a box of PC timetables, employee magazines and stationary for their banquet door prizes.

Jonathan Sheetz and Fred Wertz attended the September work day and were able to review several more boxes of old PRR files. This is important as it helps with additional space for other things. I purchased, refinished and donated two oak straight-leg chairs that sit beside the telegraph display. I also refinished a previously-donated oak, caster-equipped clerk's chair. With these three chairs, we can forgo using folding chairs.

Next up at Harris will be taking the interlocking machine cover apart so it can be painted. There is a work day scheduled for October 14, please call me at 717-774-4196 if you can make it. There will be an informal slide show at Hoss's on October 24.



NEXT MEETING AND CHAPTER NEWS:

The meeting in October will be held on the **10th** at Hoss's Steak and Seahouse, 743 Wertzville Road, Enola. Take Exit 61 (Wertzville Road) off I-81 and go east on Wertzville Road for 1.8 miles. The restaurant is on the left, across from CVS Pharmacy. Dinner is available to everyone, or you can attend just the meeting at 7 pm. As part of Hoss's Community Night Program, Hoss's returns 20% of the total amount of sales back to us. We have been very fortunate to receive substantial payments from Hoss's, so enjoy eating there if possible. Prepare to order with staff in the meeting room rather than at the register. Please pay your tab before the meeting and tip your waitstaff accordingly.

The program for the evening will be "Baltimore Streetcar Museum; History and Achievements" by Chris McNally. The dinner and meeting are open to the public. McNally, the museum's Executive Vice President, will describe the museum's historical progress starting from its collaboration with the City of Baltimore to on-going preservation of vintage trolleys. He will also show examples of intricate craftsmanship used to restore and maintain antique Baltimore streetcars. Founded in 1966, the Baltimore Streetcar Museum is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Baltimore's transit history, especially the streetcar era. Museum volunteers operate restored trolleys on museum grounds on broad track gauge, unique to Baltimore, of 5' 4½".

It was nice to see new members Brock Lohman and Chris Tobias at the September meeting. . . There will be a Harris Tower work day on October 14 from 9 to 5. . . Look for your 2018 chapter renewal notices with the November issue. . . . October is our required annual meeting, which means elections. If you are interested in running for one of the ten elected offices (see roster for listing), let John Smith know and he will notify the Nominating Committee.

SHORT HOPS:

In between painting blue and gold locomotives, CSX Transportation's shop crews in Huntington, WV are dabbling with Pennsylvania Railroad Tuscan red. The railroad's shops

recently painted the Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society's "Braddock Inn" passenger car into its as-delivered PRR Tuscan color and lettering. The passenger car, which previously displayed Maryland Area Regional Commuter colors, will make its first trip on the 2017 *New River Train* on Oct. 21. The car is one of two Amtrak-certified cars in operation by the non-profit Society. It also will be used in charter service in Washington, New York, and the Midwest beginning with trips later this year. The "Braddock Inn" was built in February 1949 as a 21-roomette sleeper for the PRR. The car was used in regular service on the Pennsy's *Iron City Express* between New York City, Washington and Pgh. Later in its career, it was assigned to the *Indianapolis Limited* as a through sleeper before it was converted to a stainless steel coach and sold off to NJ Transit. After spending several years in New Jersey commuter service, the car was shipped to MD for use on MARC trains. The Huntington-based nonprofit acquired the car from MARC in 2004. The organization and its volunteers invested more than 1,100 hours into an interior restoration of the car in winter 2017. Crews equipped the car with new floors, shelving, cabinets, and other lounge car amenities. CSX created a dedicated page on its heritage legacy website in recognition of the passenger car's cosmetic restoration. In addition to profiling the "Braddock Inn" restoration, the page also discusses its Chessie System GE B30-7 restoration project and other historical projects (*Trains NewsWire*).

Norfolk Southern sold 73 diesel locomotives and five passenger cars (Nos. 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47) by auction on August 17. The cars had been included in numerous NS-sponsored steam excursions with Norfolk & Western 4-8-4 No. 611. The passenger cars are former PATrain cars, a defunct Pittsburgh-area commuter rail service discontinued in the late 1980s. The cars went on to the Connecticut DoT for commuter rail use on their Shoreline East service before retrofitted by NS for steam excursion use. Blackmon Auctions, the company working with NS on the equipment sale, planned to auction the passenger cars and as well as extra seats, which were to be available separately from the car auctions. The auction also included an assortment of locomotive parts such as injectors, radiators, filter kits and other items (*Lancaster Dispatcher*).

Among several steam locomotive restoration projects around the country, work continues on B&M 3713 at Steamtown in Scranton. A new headlight is being fabricated by Justin Sickler, a student at Johnson College in Scranton. As seen in the last *3713 Special Edition*, the barrel of the original headlight had experienced extreme rot from being on display outdoors for decades. Justin is volunteering his time and skills. Project 3713 hopes to find more opportunities to partner with local trade schools towards its restoration goals. While much of the work on 3713 takes place at Steamtown's backshop by the fine personnel at Steamtown, there is important work being done off-site. The satellite work is focused on a variety of appliances that are absolutely necessary for the successful operation of any steam

locomotive. The 3713 is equipped with two cross-compound air pumps mounted on its pilot. When evaluated prior to their rebuild, they were found to be in decent shape, but there was some damage from water sitting in the cylinders. Steam Services of America was contracted to do the rebuild on them and work is coming along nicely. The steam-powered electric generator, or dynamo as they are more commonly known, was also sent out to Steam Services of America for reconditioning. Inspection of the commutator, re-lamination of the windings, bearing replacements and new brushes were among the work performed on it.

Steam Services of America refurbished both the dynamo and air compressors at their shop in North Carolina. Transportation services to ship both appliances to NC were graciously donated by Teamsters Local 776. Rare among operating steam engines today is a fully functional booster engine. The 3713's booster is mounted on its trailing truck and was used to give it a better footing on the rail at slow speeds when accelerating from station stops or on steep grades. Next Gen Rail Services has agreed to do the work to overhaul 3713's booster. Work will be performed on location at the Steamtown backshop, which will allow Steamtown to inspect work as it is performed and quickly answer questions regarding the work. When complete, the booster will be put to good use on the Pocono Mountain grade. Also of note, progress continues on the Coffin feedwater heater pump at the Coffin factory in Englewood, NJ as their busy schedule allows time for it in their shop. Strasburg Railroad will be manufacturing the three new safety valves for 3713. They are expected to be completed in 2018 (*Laurel Lines*).

Windows on three rail cars owned by the Central PA Chapter NRHS at White Deer (near Lewisburg) were shattered as vandals threw rocks inside the cars. The windows of a small crossing shack were also broken. State police say the damage happened sometime over the weekend of 9/9. The Chapter plans to upgrade the security system so this does not happen again (Newswatch 16). . . Since taking ownership of the former Schuylkill Haven train station two years ago, Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad has transformed the former borough hall into a picture-perfect representation of what it looked like a century ago. The building serves as the office for the railroad's passenger department. The borough agreed to exchange the 12 West Main St. property with RBMN Railroad in 2015 for the former National Penn Bank building at 333 Centre Ave. The railroad bought the former bank building earlier that year. Borough hall moved to its new location in August 2015, while RBMN Railroad employees occupied their new home by March 2016. RBMN is still headquartered in Port Clinton (RBMN).

According to a Feb. 28, 1902, article in *The Call* in the Schuylkill Haven History Collection assembled by Richard J. Nagle, the Philadelphia and Reading Co. passenger station was completed that year for about \$15,000. It stood back about 30 feet from the tracks and 100 feet from Main Street. Single story, it was built with Pottsville conglomerate rock

trimmed with Indiana limestone. The broad roof is covered with slate and trimmed with terra cotta. The station is 40-by-100 feet and was divided into a waiting room, ticket office, baggage room, express room and rest rooms, according to the article. There is also a stone fireplace built of Pottsville conglomerate rock at the south end of the waiting room. When the railroad took back the building, local contractors based their renovations on a 1914 photograph of the waiting area and blueprints from the 1950s. Meanwhile, the railroad looked for items like the brass ticket window and railing, and wooden benches that were as close to the original as possible. There are also a few items in the waiting area that do not appear on the 1914 photograph. There are about 10 scale, working locomotives on display and a wooden phone booth (*Pottsville Republican Herald*).

The rail transportation engineering degree program at Penn State Altoona has been sanctioned by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET. The program's validation makes it the only ABET-accredited rail transportation engineering program in the US. Penn State Altoona's program is the first and only Bachelor of Science degree program in rail transportation engineering. According to the University's website, the degree program prepares students for careers in railroad track design and maintenance; civil infrastructure design and maintenance; railway construction management;

railcar and locomotive design and maintenance; railway signaling; rail transportation logistics; and network planning and operations. Recognized by the Council for Higher Education, ABET is a global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering and engineering technology (*Progressive Railroading via Pioneer*).



Fred Wertz, Editor
Eric and Joan Ohstrom, Mailing

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ROANOKE CHAPTER CHALLENGE GRANT TO SUPPORT NRHS GRANTS PROGRAM

The Chapter Board has moved to help support the NRHS Grants Program, which has been underfunded for several years. Because of this underfunding, there was only \$20,000 of money available in 2017. Some 36 applications were received but only 8 awards were made, the largest being \$3,000 with others of lesser amounts. With few exceptions, Grants made were only able to partially fund the amounts requested.

To help support the Program, and assist in jump-starting the 2018 available money, the Chapter will donate \$3,000 and has established a matching challenge offer of up to \$2,000 more. The provisions are shown below:

1. ROANOKE CHAPTER DONATES \$3,000 TO START AN INITIAL CHALLENGE FOR ALL OTHER NRHS CHAPTERS AND OTHERS WHO MAY WISH TO CONTRIBUTE BY DONATION IN INCREMENTS OF AT LEAST \$500 TOWARD GROWING THE AVAILABLE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE NEXT ANNUAL NRHS GRANT PROGRAM. THIS \$3,000 IS COMMITTED REGARDLESS OF WHATEVER CHALLENGES MAY BE RECEIVED AS OUTLINED BELOW.
2. ROANOKE CHAPTER CHALLENGES OTHER CHAPTERS, ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN RAILROAD PRESERVATION BY ENCOURAGING THEM TO JOIN IN THIS PROJECT. ROANOKE WILL MATCH 10% FOR EACH DONATION OF AT LEAST \$500 CONTRIBUTED BY OTHERS
3. *Example:* 20 Donations @ \$500 each = \$10,000 + matches @ 10% x \$500 = \$1,000 or a total of \$11,000.
IN ADDITION TO THE INITIAL DONATION BY THE CHAPTER OF \$3,000, THEN WE WILL RAISE \$14,000.
IF THE CHALLENGES ARE MET WITH THE EQUIVALENT OF 20 \$1,000 DONATIONS THEN ROANOKE'S 10% CHALLENGE MATCH WOULD RESULT IN A TOTAL OF \$25,000 GENERATED FOR THE GRANTS FUND. (20x\$1,000 = \$20,000 plus 10% x \$20,000 = \$2,000 Total \$22,000 + \$3,000 = \$25,000).
4. INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS CHAPTERS MAY CONTRIBUTE. MINIMUM CONTRIBUTION IS \$500 (PREFERABLY \$1,000), OR MORE AND MAY BE DONATED IN \$100 INCREMENTS BEYOND THAT AMOUNT. ALL WILL BE MATCHED BY ROANOKE AT 10% OF THE DONATION. DONORS ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS AND APPLY FOR MATCHING FUNDS FROM THEIR EMPLOYER OR OTHER ORGANIZATION THAT HAS THAT SERVICE AVAILABLE. BOTH ROANOKE CHAPTER AND THE NATIONAL NRHS ARE TAX EXEMPT 501c3 CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS.
5. THIS PROGRAM WILL BEGIN JULY 1, AND CONTINUE UNTIL APPROXIMATELY FEBRUARY 1, 2018, AT WHICH TIME ALL FUNDS COLLECTED WILL BE EARMARKED FOR THE 2018 GRANTS.
6. MAKE ALL DONATIONS PAYABLE TO Roanoke Chapter, NRHS, P.O. Box 13222, Roanoke, VA 24032. DONATIONS MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED: EARMARKED FOR NRHS GRANTS PROGRAM. DONATIONS PLUS THE 10% MATCH FROM THE CHAPTER WILL BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE NRHS FUND FOR DEPOSIT.
7. A FORM MUST ACCOMPANY THE DONATION, TO BE SENT TO THE CHAPTER FOR ACCOUNTING AND MATCHING TO BE COUNTED. (Form to be available from the Chapter at www.RoanokeNRHS.org)