



THE DISPATCH

The Journal of PhillyNMRA

May 2023



Operator's desk at the SONO Switch Tower Museum in South Norwalk, Connecticut, previously known as Old Tower 44 on the New Haven Railroad. Info and photo by John Springer, <http://thetracksidephotographer.com/2020/04/23/last-of-a-dying-breed>



THE DISPATCH

Official Publication of the Philadelphia Division
Mid-Eastern Region
National Model Railroad Association



May 2023

PhillyNMRA.org

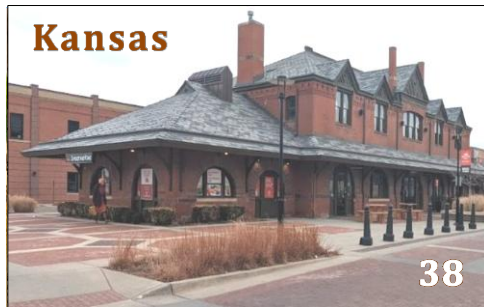
Volume 30, No. 4

In this issue...



Scratch Building a
Specialized Boxcar

27



Kansas

38

ONLINE NAVIGATION: Click on any page to be taken there. Click on any footer to return here.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3 Form 19
Division Officials | 33 Cup o' Joe |
| 4 June Meet Details
Division News
Upcoming Events | 38 On the Road |
| 5 June Meet Maps | 55 Cincinnati Division Car |
| 6 April Meet Report | 56 New Jersey Division Car |
| 26 Division Organization
Hobby Shops | 58 NMRA/MER Publications
& Conventions |
| 31 Video Vigilante | 59 Division Apparel |
| | 60 Golden Spike Application |

THE DISPATCH

Submissions: *THE DISPATCH* welcomes any model railroad- or railroad-related material. Members are encouraged to send in articles, letters to the editor, reviews, etc. The editors reserve the right to, when necessary, paraphrase portions of the text in order to fit the space available.

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Steve Wysowski



From the Super's Desk

Greetings! As we move into the summer months, exciting things are occurring in the division.

First, we will be wrapping up our board of directors elections. I was happy to see so many members using electronic voting. It only takes a few minutes to vote, but each vote really matters. We still send out paper ballots for those without email addresses. In these mailouts you can find information that inform members about the division activities.

Our June meet is our yearly business meeting. It will be held in Jenkintown, PA at Alverthorpe Park. Last year was our first time at this venue. It worked out so well that we will be back again this year to enjoy our second annual barbecue. I invite you all to come out to the meet and enjoy the good food afterwards. As always, after the meet, model train layouts will be opened for viewing.

After two months off, we will resume our meets in September at a new venue, the College Settlement in Horsham.

In October, we look forward to the MER convention being held this year in Altoona, PA. These fall con-

ventions are a great way to meet regional members, show off your models in the contest room, and spend two days attending interesting clinics of your choice. And let's not forget the opportunity to visit layouts you would not ordinarily get to see.

November marks our last face-to-face meet for the 2023 year. Our facility in Wilmington, usually used for the November meet, is no longer available. At this time we are looking for an alternative venue. If you are aware of a place that will suit our needs please contact me or Venue Chair Jeff Witt.

I'd like to say a few words about the passing of PJ Mattson. I worked with PJ for 25 years on the November open house schedule. PJ always stepped up to do what was needed. He was a big help to me personally while I was working on my MMR. He had served as superintendent of the New Jersey division and president of the MER. His Raccoon Valley Railroad was a fine example of his modeling skills. I will miss his quick wit and insight regarding model railroad operations.

Enjoy your summer! Keep chugging along.

Joe



From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to our May edition of *The Dispatcher*. In this issue you'll find information on our upcoming June meet and an impressive scratch-building project by recent transplant Steve Wysowski. As Charlie Long had to miss the April meet, Assistant Superintendent Rob Hinkle stepped up to provide us with the April meet report along with his usual excellent photos.

Now, while I have been receiving some written contributions since my last plea—and I am grateful for

those—I still want to encourage more.

As editor, I have the privilege of being able to dole out assignments. Your job is to write an article on what you did over the summer that relates to trains or model railroading. It can be any length. Extra credit for including photos/graphics. I'm an easy grader, so everyone gets an A and AP credit. I'll expect to see them on my "desk" in September. Until then, see you at the June meet and have a great summer!

Howard

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June Meet & Picnic in Jenkintown

Following the success of last year's June meet, the Philadelphia Division will return to Alverthorpe Park to hold its next meet on Saturday, June 10, 2023. The official address of the park is Jenkintown Road and Forrest Avenue, Jenkintown, PA 19046. However, the picnic entrance is on Fox Chase Road. Detailed maps and directions are on page 7. The gates open at 9:00am and the festivities begin at 10am.

First on the agenda is our annual business meeting. Board directors and committee chairmen will deliver their reports, followed by Superintendent Joe Walters discussing the past years events, and then delving into what we have planned for the coming year. Concluding the business meeting will be the announcement of the results of the board of directors election.



Our clinic will feature director and door

prize master Mike Dettinger, whose clinic will be an introduction to T-TRAK, the table-top modular layout system. Mike will point out some common misconceptions about T-TRAK and set the record straight. He will discuss the ease of creating a module from either kits or materials on hand. The discussion will continue with the operational potential of T-TRAK modules and close with a look at his car float and new barge modules. Featured will be modules from other members as well as Mike's Horseshoe Curve.

Mike's past modeling has included the obscure, the unique, the exotic, and even the absurd. But of late he has focused more on his N-scale T-TRAK modules and has become quite the expert.



Example of a T-TRAK module

All attendees are encouraged to bring a model to the meet. Toward the end of the meet, we have a show and tell. It is an open mike opportunity to share a recently completed project or give a glimpse of an in-progress work.

In addition, the Achievement Program Committee is now judging models at the meets. If you wish to have a model judged, please inform either Earl Paine or Joe Walters ahead of time.

As usual we'll hold our 50/50 raffle, draw for door prizes, and have coffee, donuts, and Philly soft pretzels.

After the morning program, we will indulge in hot dogs, hamburgers, and other picnic goodies, all prepared with the expertise of our grill masters, Jeff Witt and Bill Fagan.

After lunch, the GATSME club layout located nearby at the Rockledge Model Railroad Museum will be open to visitation along with two other quite im-

pressive home layouts. Please come and join us for fun and feast. We look forward to seeing you all on June 10th.

Remember to Vote

By this time all Philadelphia Division members in good standing should have received the election issue of *The Dispatcher*, which includes the candidates' statements. Those who have supplied valid email addresses will also have received via email the link to online voting. Please take the time to vote.



Planning Ahead – Division Meets & Other Upcoming Events

June 10, 2023

Philadelphia Division Meet/Picnic
Alverthorpe Park
Jenkintown Road & Forrest Ave.
Jenkintown, PA 19046

July 8–9, 2023

Greenberg's Train & Toy Show
The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center
100 Station Avenue
Oaks, PA 19456

August 20–26, 2023

NMRA Convention "Texas Express"
Gaylord Texan
1501 Gaylord Trail
Grapevine, TX 76051

September 9, 2023

Philadelphia Division Meet
College Settlement Day Camp
590 Witmer Road
Horsham, PA 19044

October 19-22, 2023

MER Convention "Round the Curve to Altoona"
Altoona Grand Hotel
1 Sheraton Drive
Altoona, PA 16601

November 2023

Philadelphia Division Meet
TBA

Check <http://www.phillynmra.org/regional-timetable> for links to these and other upcoming events.

Maps and Directions for the June Meet

Alverthorpe Park Picnic Shelter

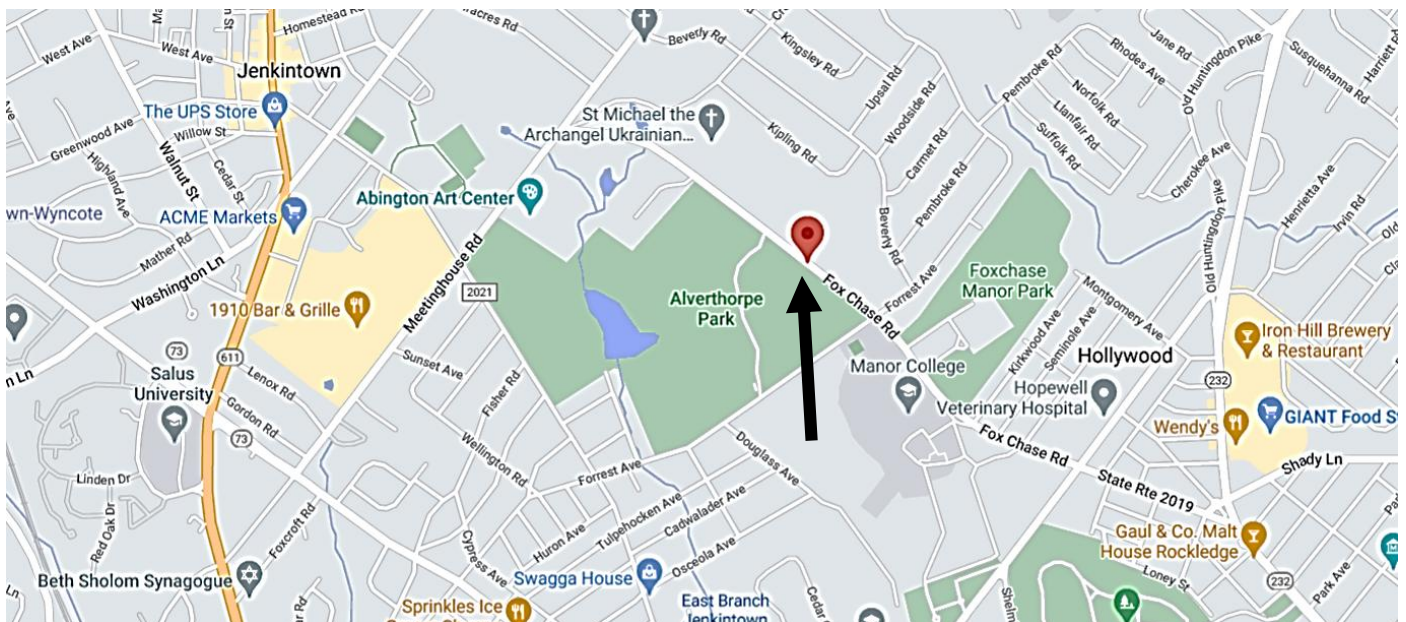
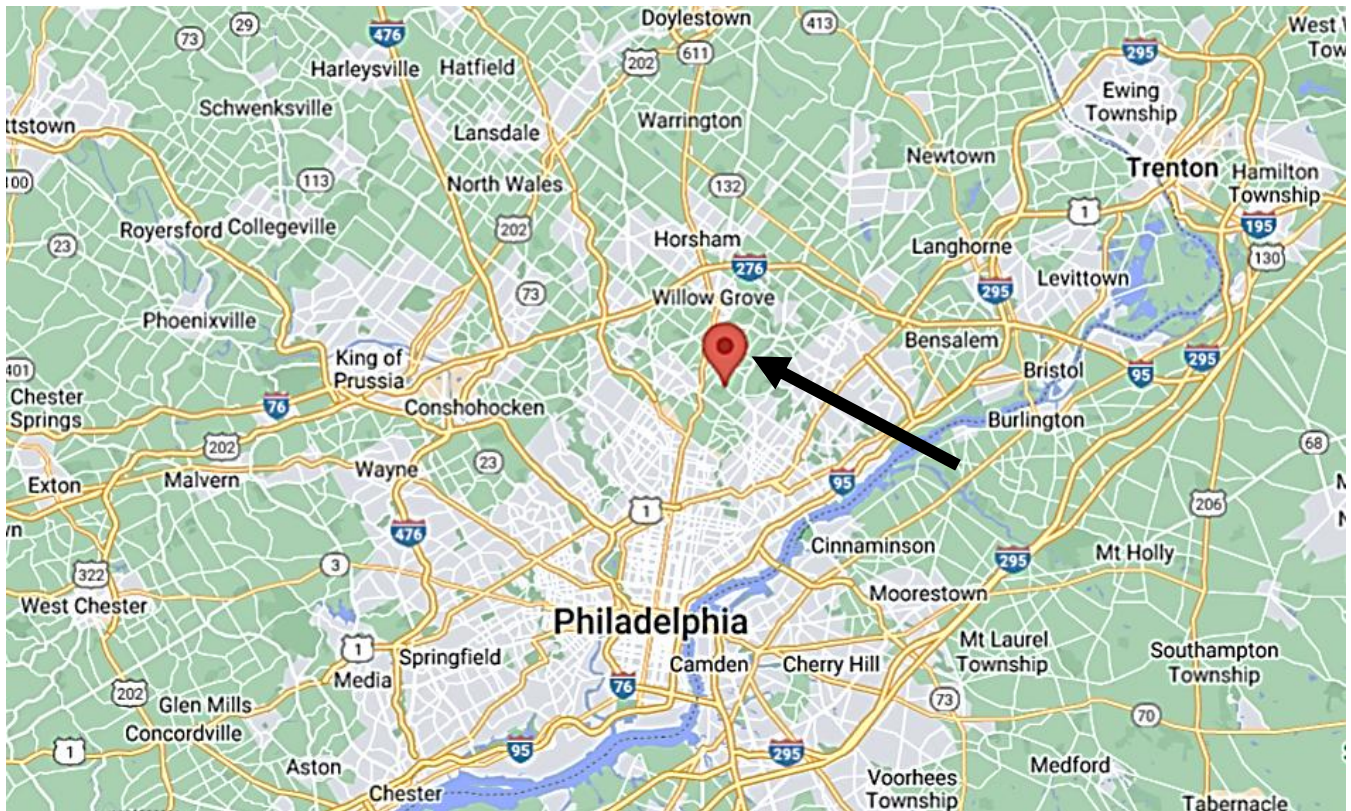
Located on Fox Chase Rd., across from World Mission Society Church of God whose address is 875 Fox Chase Rd., Jenkintown, PA 19046

Coordinates: 40°05'27.4"N 75°06'27.7"W

Gate opens at 9am. Program begins at 10am.



Directions: PA TPK (I-76) to Exit 343 – PA 611. Take PA-611 south into Jenkintown, left on Greenwood Ave., left on Meetinghouse Rd., right on Fox Chase Rd. Consult your online map or GPS for the best route. Use the provided coordinates or the church address for the most accurate location. You'll see a white sign with green lettering and PhillyNMRA signs at the entrance. Once inside, picnic area is to the left and visible at the end of the parking lot.



In Memoriam: PJ Mattson, MMR

We regret to report the passing of well-known NMRA member, New Jersey Division member, and friend, PJ Mattson, MMR. PJ was a predominant figure in the NMRA, especially the Mid-Eastern Region, having served as its convention registrar for many years, and then its president. And, of course, he had also served in many positions in the New Jersey Division, most notably as superintendent as

well as their AP coordinator. He had also helped out with judging the work of Philly members when our AP committee was short staffed. He frequently opened his impressive Raccoon Valley Railroad to visitors. He was an inspiration to the model railroad community and will certainly be missed.

April Meet Report *by Rob Hinkle, Assistant Superintendent*

Photos by Rob Hinkle



On Saturday April 15th, the division returned to St. Alban's Church in Newtown Square for our meet. The church is the home of the StARR Model Railroad Club, and they graciously offered us the meeting space to use for the meet.

Joe Walters started the meeting shortly after 9am and gave some updates on division information before starting the first clinic which was given by Adam Eyring on the Illinois Terminal Railroad.

Adam's clinic dealt with the history of the Illinois Terminal Railroad, showing various photos along the route of the line, and talking about how he got into traction modeling and providing some tips on how to model it.

After Adam's clinic the Achivelent Program team awarded two AP certificates to Steve Salotti—one for Model Railroad Engineer—Civil and one for Structures. Steve is very close to becoming the division's next Master Model Railroader.

The next clinic was given by Alan Silverblatt on the inventory software (Train DB Plus) that he is developing to handle tracking collections rolling stock and locomotive along with other things such as magazines and books. The software is currently still under development, Alan showed off his latest working copy at the meet and the open discussion of ideas will lead to future product improvements. The software is available for download on Alan's website at silverblatt.net/traindbplus.htm. For our show and tell, Eric Hansman, who has recently moved into the division, displayed and talked about some models he made for his 1920s-era layout.

The St. Albans Model Railroad Club, also known as StARR, opened up for viewing in the basement of the church building. The club originally started as a modular layout, but has been in their location for many years. The club is getting everything back up to speed after the lockdowns of the prior years, and everything looked to be running great on the layout.



As model railroaders would say, "A nice turnout"



Superintendent Joe Walters, MMR greets the attendees


With assistance from John Nawn, the Newtown Square Railroad Museum was open for visits after the meet. The museum has several cars on display as well as a nice display of various artifacts inside the original freight station building, which was moved to its current park location.

Finally, Stephen Richardson had his D&H layout open. This impressive layout has a lot of city structures, much of it done with 3D-printed details parts which he had shown off at a previous meet. He then allowed us to view his setup for both a resin and a filament



Steve Salotti (L), nearing his MMR, receives two AP certificates from AP Coordinator Earl Paine

printer in his office space.

Thanks go out to StARR, St. Alban's Church, and everyone who contributed to this event. For those who help set up and tear down, if you wish to receive AP Volunteer credit, please contact Earl Paine. 



Clinician Alan Silverblatt (L) receives his appreciation certificate from Superintendent Joe Walters, MMR



Clinician Adam Eyring (L) receives his appreciation certificate



George Phillips (L), president of StARR, accepts an appreciation certificate on behalf of the club



Steve Richardson (L) receives recognition for graciously opening his layout to the members



"Okay, here's the plan. You grab the 50/50 money while I get the pretzels. Then let's get out of here before anyone finds out."



Once a treasurer, always a treasurer! Howard Kaplan eagerly snatches the money from a member buying 50/50 tickets while accomplice Charles Butsch smiles and nods with approval.



Delaware member Andreas Nessemann and Steve Salotti discuss model railroading



Adam Eyring tells the story of the Illinois Terminal Railroad



Alan Silverblatt describes the train database software he created



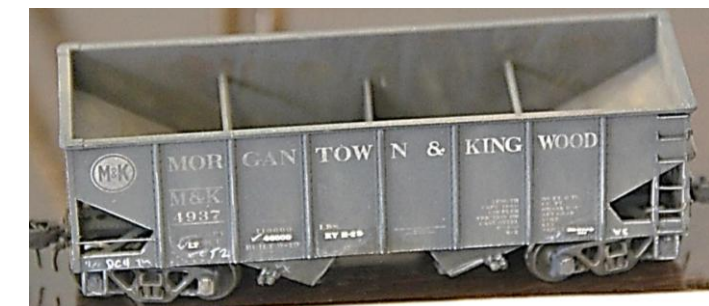
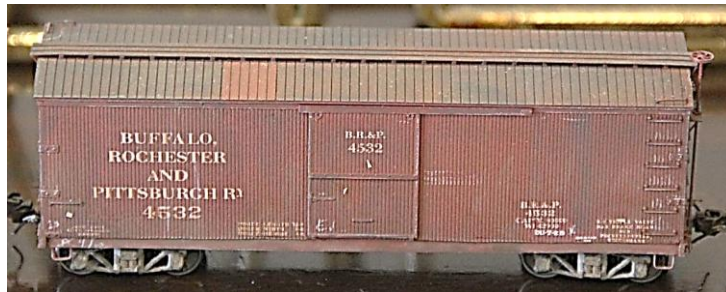
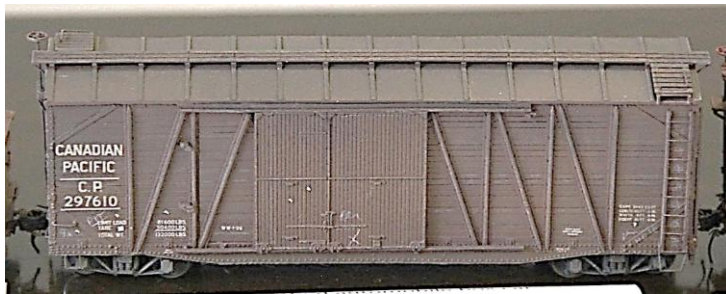
"Front Table Mayhem"...a raucous comedy starring (L to R): Chip Stevens, Howard Kaplan, Mike Dettinger, and Ron Hoess

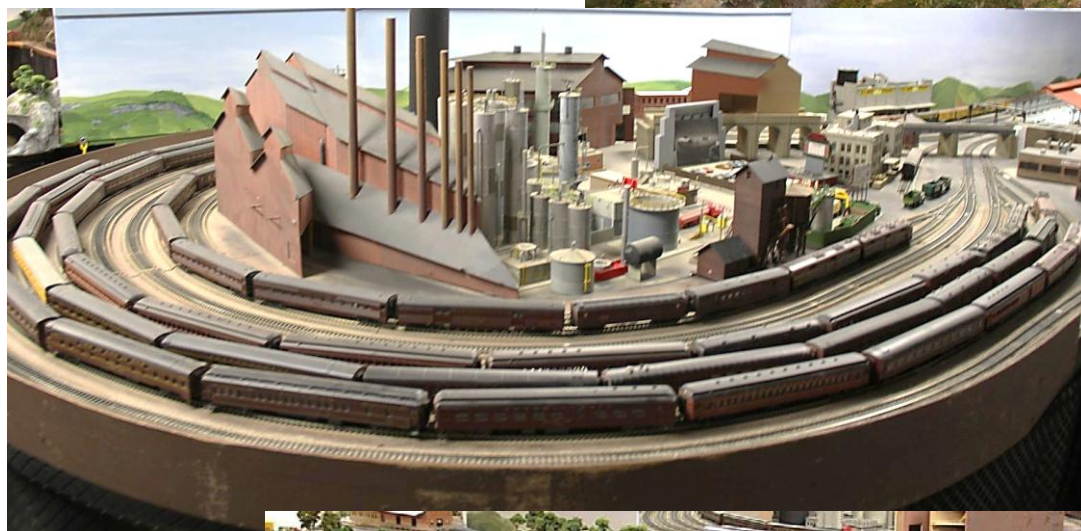


Attendees peruse the swap tables



Door prizes galore







Former Superintendents Charles Butsch (L) and John Seibert admire the layout









Treasurer Kevin Feeney (L) and Super Joe Walters



The super and director Jeff Witt



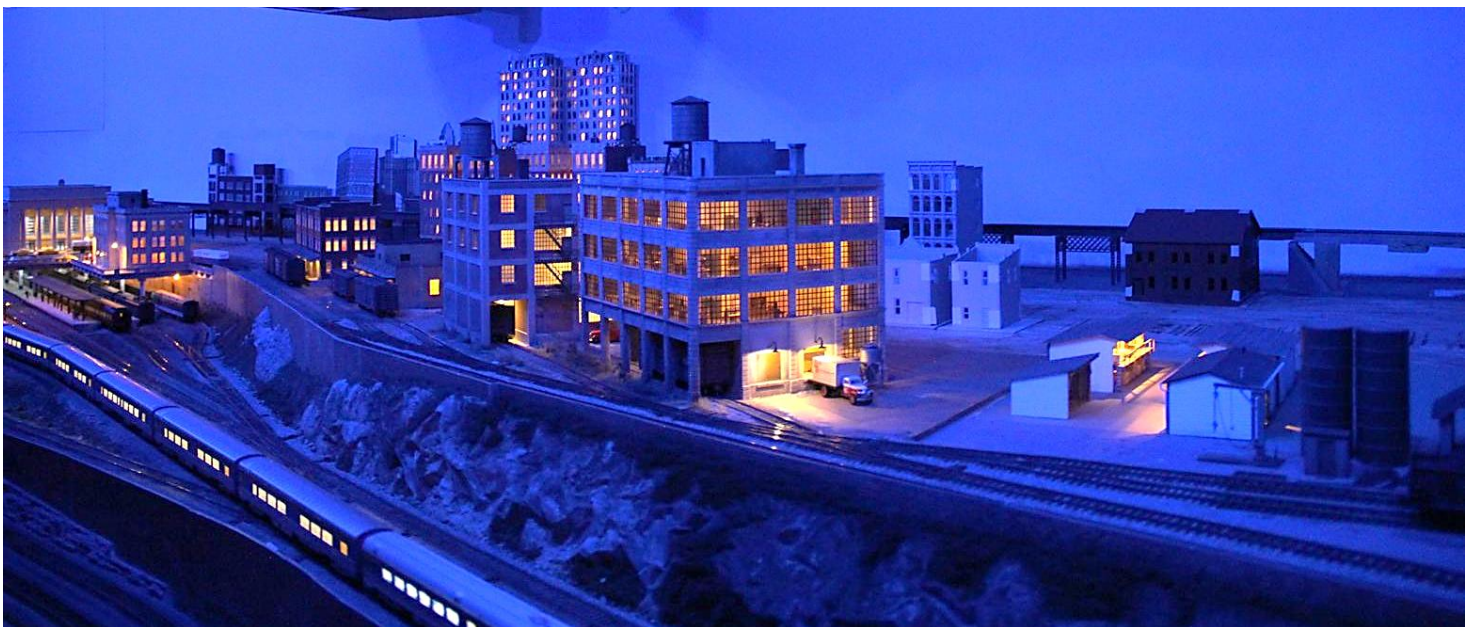
The super and fellow Delawarean John Trout examine the steel mill structures



The super and StARR Prez George Phillips just chillin'

Stephen Richardson's Delaware & Hudson Railroad (HO)







Note the detailed interiors









Layout owner Steve Richardson (L) looks on as Super and AP Chair Joe Walters inspects Steve's fine work

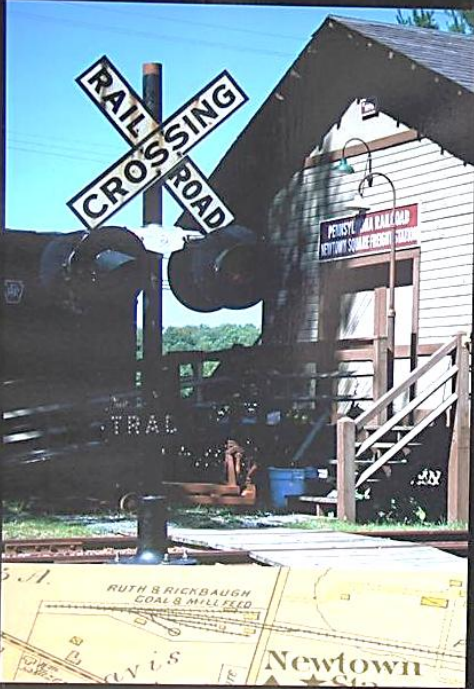


Newtown Square Railroad Museum (at Drexel Park Lodge)



The 1895 PRR Newtown Square Freight Station












The Newtown Square Freight station was constructed in 1895, shortly after the Pennsylvania Railroad branch line was built. It was located on the west side of Newtown Street Road (Rt. 252) and what is now Winding Way (near where the WAWA now stands). This was also the site of the lumber and coal yard, plus a feed and grain store. A corral was located in back of the freight station to hold livestock for shipments to and from the farms in the area. Farmers would bring their horses to E.W. Powell, the veterinarian, and after being tended by him they would be shipped out by stock car. A passenger station was next to the freight station. It housed the post office and telegraph station for many years. The freight station was the end of the branch line, the last stop from Philadelphia. A map of the train yard can be found on this sign.

Just before it arrived at the station, the train would have passed through the 600-acre Pennsylvania Hospital Farm, which housed many resident worker-families as well as patients, with hundreds of farm animals and acres of orchards and gardens. It was a massive operation, encompassing (more or less) all the area between Goshen Road and West Chester Pike and between Newtown Street Road and Bryn Mawr Avenue.

Between 1895 and 1908, as many as thirteen trains a day pulled in and out of the Newtown Square station: the milk train, the mail train, and various freight and passenger trains. The railroad ran its passenger service from 1895 to 1908, but its freight service operated into 1963 - in the later years servicing mostly the lumber yard. There were ten stops on the line - eight of them were "flag stops", along with the Llanerch and Newtown Square stations. The freight station is the last vestige of the Newtown Square branch of the P.R.R. freight and passenger line that once rumbled 9.2 miles between Philadelphia and Newtown Square.


Several years ago, when the Winding Way bypass was to be built, the abandoned freight station was saved from destruction by the *Newtown Square Historical Society*, who raised money to have it disassembled and relocated to Newtown Township's Drexel Lodge Park, where it was restored and the *Newtown Square Railroad Museum* built up around it - which now includes a 1902 passenger car, 1907 box car, 1950 caboose and small steam engine.



www.newtownsquarerailroadmuseum.org








The 1902 PK Class PRR Passenger Car #1444



Built in 1902, the all-wooden PRR Car #1444 is a "PK Class Car" — one of only 600 manufactured by the *Pennsylvania Railroad*, built in West Philadelphia and the only known survivor of this class of car. It is in fact the last all-wooden passenger car built by the PRR — the next class of car was manufactured with steel.


Passenger cars pulled by a steam engine ran on the *Pennsylvania Railroad* Newtown Square Branch between 1895-1908, and one can certainly imagine that Car #1444 could well have been one of those cars. Even if this exact one never made it to Newtown Square over 100 years ago, it represents the style of passenger cars that did.


PRR Car #1444 took quite a journey before getting to Newtown Square. After 1928, wooden passenger cars owned by the *Pennsylvania Railroad* ceased to be used in regular passenger service. Some were scrapped outright, some were converted into business cars, inspection cars or other utility cars, and some were sold to other railroads.

While some of the history of this car remains to be rediscovered, it is known that the car, after use by the *Pennsylvania Railroad*, was owned by *The Canadian National Railroad*, the *American Railroad Equipment Association* and finally the *Henry Ford Museum in Detroit / Greenfield Village Railroad*.


The car was in poor condition by the time it was decommissioned and eventually donated to the *Newtown Square Pennsylvania Railroad Museum*. After it arrived it was stabilized, a temporary roof put on and interior details began to be uncovered and restored. The interior woodwork had at one point been sandblasted; so much of the original ornate carving has been lost. However, enough remains to get a good flavor of the beauty the car once had.

The seats were restored to original condition next — a detail that while some would think would be the last thing to be done, museum founders Sam Coco and Jack Grant believed that people needed to get a taste of how stunning the car could be when completely restored. They certainly succeeded!





Follow the QR code below to go to the museum's web page dedicated to the 1902 PK Class PRR Passenger Car



www.newtownsquarerailroadmuseum.org



1902 wooden PRR passenger car. Built at the West Philadelphia PRR shops. Only remaining car of 600 built. Donated by Henry Ford Museum





PHILADELPHIA & WEST CHESTER TRACTION COMPANY THE NEWTOWN SQUARE MILK TROLLEY (1897-1925)

THE STORY OF OUR LOCAL FARMING FAMILIES AND THE TROLLEY CAR

In the early days of West Chester Pike, farmers from Newtown Square and the surrounding communities brought their milk to be sold in Philadelphia each day via horse and wagon. The trip into the city and back usually took all day.

Then, beginning in 1895, the Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Company started to run a trolley car between Philadelphia and Newtown Square (eventually going all the way to West Chester). By January of 1897, the trolley company added a daily "milk run." A special trolley car would travel out to the end of the line and then pick up milk in cans from farmers on the way back to Philadelphia. Once the trolley reached 63rd Street, the milk would be purchased by local dairies who had lined up with horse-drawn wagons. The empty milk cans would be returned first thing the next morning.



The service was beneficial to the farming families, and over one million quarts of milk were transported in just the first year. The farmers built platforms along the route of the trolley where their milk could be picked up easily. Newtown Square was such a busy pickup location that a special siding off the main line was built next to the Newtown Square Hotel, located at the corner of West Chester Pike and Newtown Street Road. Known by the locals as the "Farmers Siding", Newtown Square farmers brought their milk here for pickup and delivery to Philadelphia for many years.

Nonetheless, in 1924 Supplee Willis-Jones (a dairy that had purchased many of the smaller ones and now the largest dairy that purchased the milk) started sending their own delivery trucks down West Chester Pike directly to the farmers. By January of 1925 the "milk trolley" was done and service discontinued completely. The siding next to the Newtown Square Hotel was eventually ripped out and its history forgotten. With West Chester Pike and Newtown Street Road widened several times since then, all traces of the "milk trolley" siding were erased.

However, a remarkable discovery was made in 2020 while PennDOT was overseeing another widening of West Chester Pike. Excavations were being made for storm water piping at the location of the long-gone Newtown Square Hotel. The contractors hit something metal, and pulled from the pit two small pieces of rail. The rails were different than another rail piece which had been found in the median strip (where the main trolley line originally ran). Fortunately, both Newtown Township and the Newtown Square Historical Society were notified, and the pieces were quickly identified as having been part of the milk trolley siding from over 100 years ago.

The Newtown Square Railroad Museum, home of one of the later trolley cars that carried passengers through Newtown Square, is honored to display these two relics of the history of Newtown Square and the farming community that thrived here. They recall the story of how the farmers and the trolley worked together to provide milk to the City of Philadelphia and to benefit the local farming families who supplied it.



www.newtownsquarerailroadmuseum.org



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Assistant Superintendent – Rob Hinkle (2023)
Clerk – Charles Long (2024)
Treasurer – Kevin Feeney (2023)

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Mike Dettinger – Clinics (2024)
Chip Stevens – Publicity (2023)
Jeff Witt – Venues (2023)



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AP Committee Chair – Joe Walters, MMR
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster – Howard Kaplan

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Layouts – Bill Fagan
Venues – Jeff Witt, Kevin Feeney
Refreshments – Bill Fagan, Joe Walters, Kevin Feeney
Door Prizes – Mike Dettinger, Kevin Feeney
Clinic Video – Chip Stevens, Rob Hinkle
Certificates/Awards/Printed Materials – Earl Paine, Howard Kaplan
Publicity – Chip Stevens

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Member Outreach – Chip Stevens
Membership Records – Charles Long

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OPS – Rob Hinkle

ITEM DONATIONS –00 Kevin Feeney

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Webmaster – Howard Kaplan
Newsletter – Howard Kaplan, Earl Paine, Bill Fagan, Joe Walters MMR, Kevin Feeney, Chip Stevens
Layout Video – Bill Fagan
Photography – Rob Hinkle, Howard Kaplan, Bill Fagan, Rob Ischinger, Mark Wallace

DIVISION APPAREL – Howard Kaplan

Hobby Shops

Be sure to patronize the following hobby shops that are now offering discounts on model railroading purchases to NMRA members:

Henning's Trains
128 South Line Steet
Lansdale, PA 19446
215-362-2442

henningstrains.com

10% in addition to already discounted prices

Please let us know of any hobby shops that would be interested in advertising or offering discounts to NMRA members.

How I Made A Specialized Boxcar

by Steve Wysowski

Most of you in this division are experienced modelers and probably have scratch-built structures and cars on your own layouts. This article will just show a few of the structures I have built. This article describes a boxcar construction and while I will be walking you through the “build,” I have no step-by-step photos of the construction of any of my structures.

I will describe some of the “tactics” I used to finalize construction by walking you through scratch build process of a specialized boxcar. On the next page note a photo of a portion of a diorama section where I scratch built several structures recreating a scene from 1910 photographs. I used very simple tools and worked with wood which is my favorite medium.

Some tips:

- You will make errors, so be prepared to correct
- Take your time
- Plan by thinking about the problems you may encounter due to improper sequencing
- Have rough a drawing with dimensions; it helps to refer back to.
- Square off cuts.

This piece highlights the construction of a specialized boxcar, but some of the techniques apply to the construction of structures.

No item is ever really finished, so please understand that detailing can go on for quite some time after a base structure or car has been built. Also, the message here is **to not fear starting--as long as you commit to finishing. So practice what I say and not what I do!**

Figure 1 is a photo of a “scratch-bashing” project that I have been working on for three years! It is a specialized coach, a “fun car” where music can be heard and dancing is enjoyed on a rail car!



You may notice that the structures in Figure 2 contain rows of windows, I used Tichy windows, varied types for these buildings. I used an exacto knife to cut out designs that I had scribed on wood sheets. I had to reinforce the walls so they would not warp; I used wooden “scale beams” for that.



**Take note of a hint I offer later in this piece to strengthen thin wood pieces so they do not break during cutting.*

Figure 3 shows some structures that I have built on my home layout. Some members of this division have been out and have seen them. Notice the horse-drawn trolley to the right of the station and at the base of the stairs (the horse is outside the picture). It is a “bashed/scratch-built” N-scale passenger coach.



In Figure 4 the red silo was my first scratch-built structure. Just in front of that is a turpentine still that I made in honor of a close friend who, at the time, was seriously ill. That still is on the NMRA website! The four structures in the foreground—the shelter, the dock, the station, and the freight house—are all scratch built. In total there are over 30 scratch-built structures, including a boat, on the layout.



In this article, I want to quickly walk you through the steps that I used to scratch build a 20-foot specialized boxcar. I need a “carriage transport” car for a wagon works business in the pike. This will be an end-load boxcar.

I model HOn3. The inspiration for this car as well as the structures you see above came from either *The Narrow Gauge Gazette* or one of the *HO Annuals*. Both provide excellent starting points for us mere mortals.

The article in Figure 5 walks the reader through a 24-foot boxcar; mine is 20 feet. I prefer them as short as possible because of the sharp curves on my layout. Also I want five car sidings so this length is perfect to accommodate!

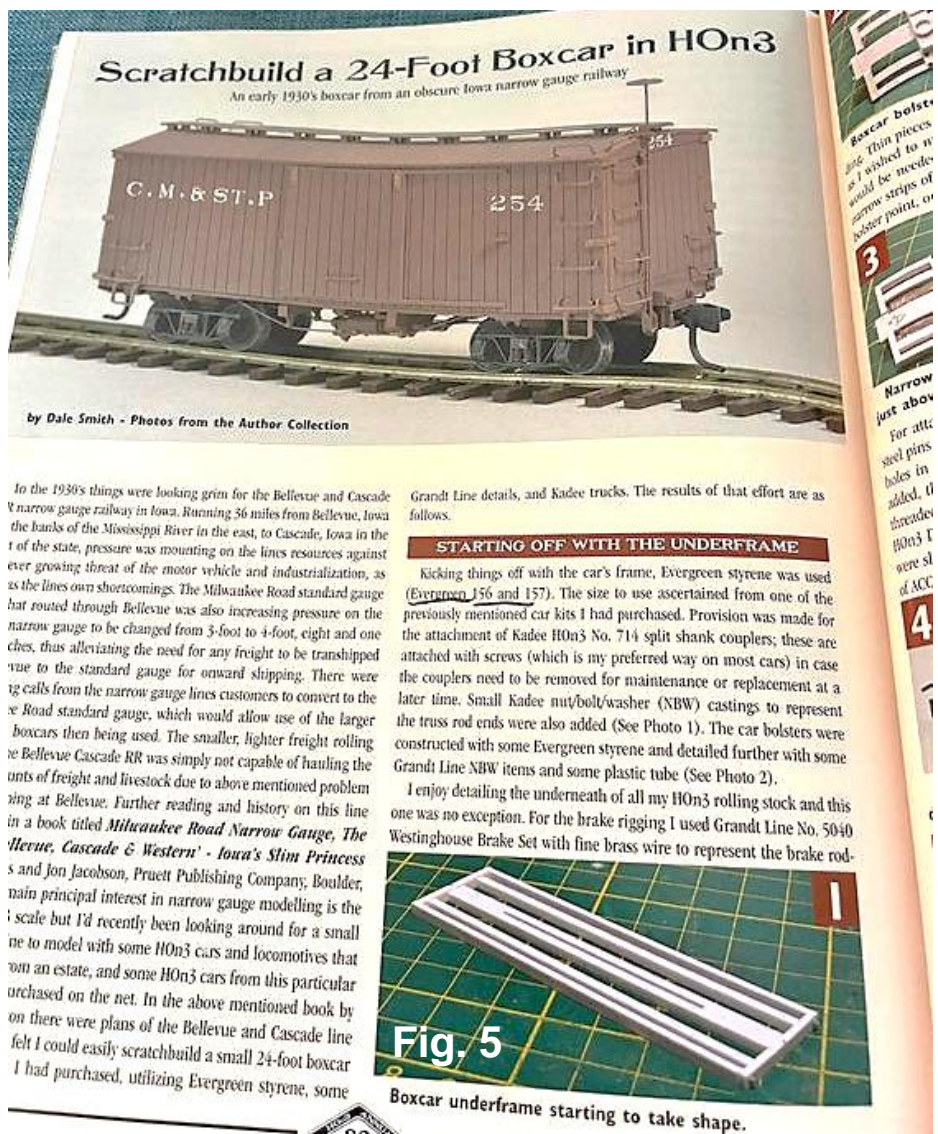


Fig. 5

Boxcar underframe starting to take shape.

Figures 6 and 7 show the tools I used. In Figure 6, lower left is a sander with special tips to fit tough spots—works for fine and precise work; to the right, a jigsaw, to the right of that a caliper, and left upper corner of the pad a scale ruler! Also I have a chop saw (see Figure 7). Another essential set of tools are files of all types.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

The materials I used are all wood as you can see in Figure 8. These are Mt. Albert basswood sheets—a one-foot, scale wooden beam and some rails for the doors to slide on. I will use card stock for the roof and I always draw a scale plan with the scaled dimensions. One foot by one foot scale wood beams were also used for the base. Special, cupped wood for the door rails were on hand so I also used them. Stirrups, ladders, and hardware were either left over or pirated from some of my HO-scale fleet.

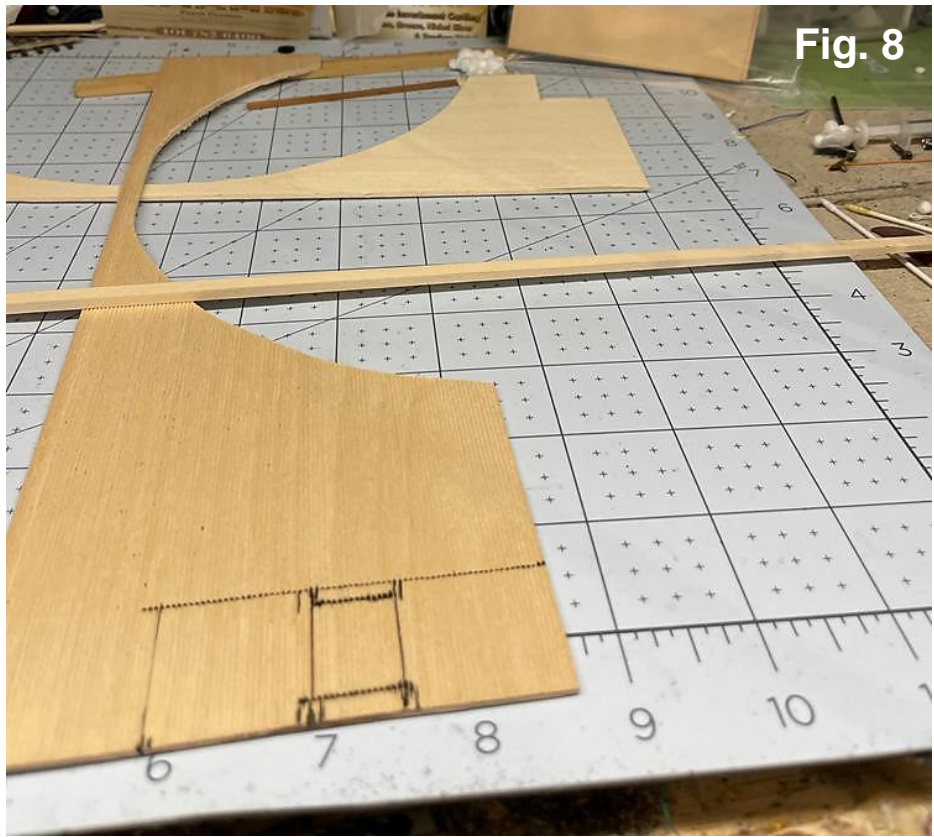


Fig. 8

I drew up a very basic drawing of the dimensions (Figure 9 on next page).

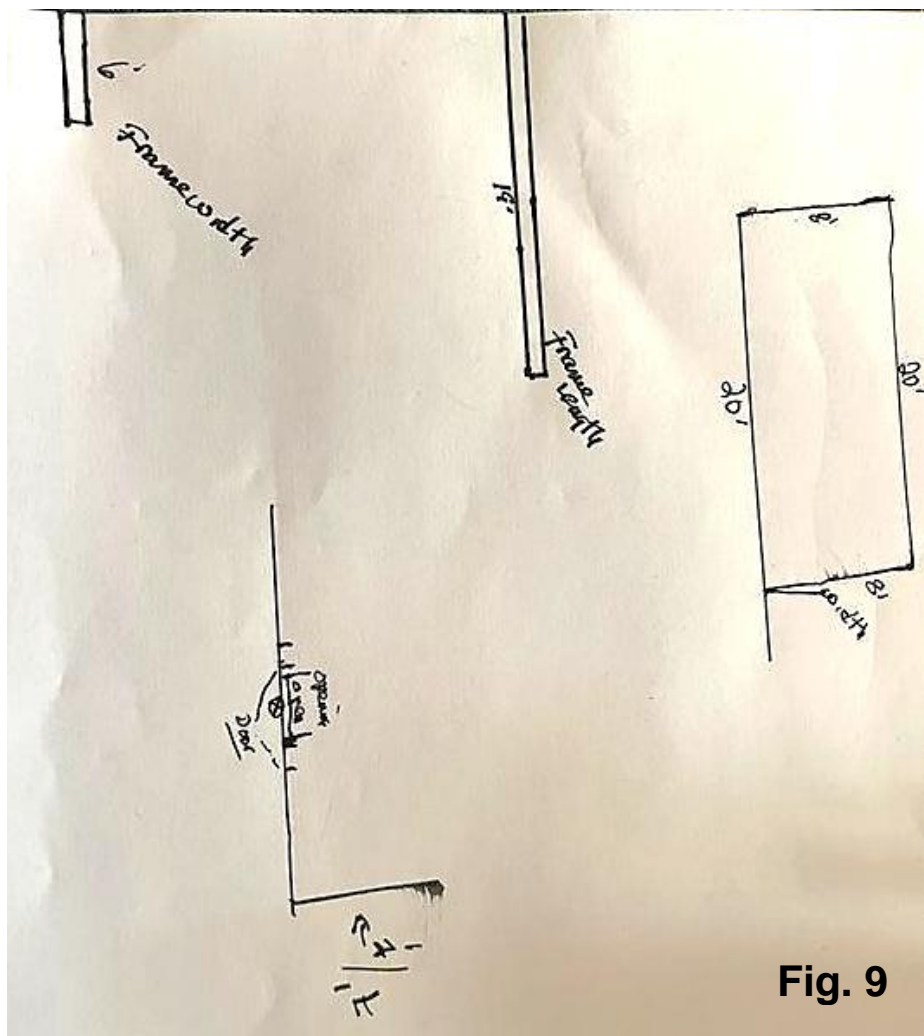


Fig. 9

Figure 10 shows all of the major pieces cut out and the frame has been assembled. I cut out three side sections; two are open door and one side is closed. Not sure what I want to do so keeping options open. The first step in assembling was the frame. I cut out the doors by starting with a slot carved by an X-acto knife. I slot the saw blade in and only cut straight lines. I cut four starter slots. See below for a cutting tip.

Hint: Take note of the very thin bottom pieces on the open door cuts. Before cutting, on the back of the cut-out areas, soak the wood with some CA glue. It strengthens the area so you do not break off a section of the body—a neat trick not found in books yet! The little scroll saw and sander are very handy for doing this.



Fig. 10

All sides glued together. Roof angle pieces glued. I need to fix up the four corners (Figure 11).



Fig. 11

Couplers and wheel sets added. Weights were also placed underneath (Figure 12).

Hint: I leave the bottom section open to add or eliminate weights. That part of the car is not viewed directly, only from the sides.

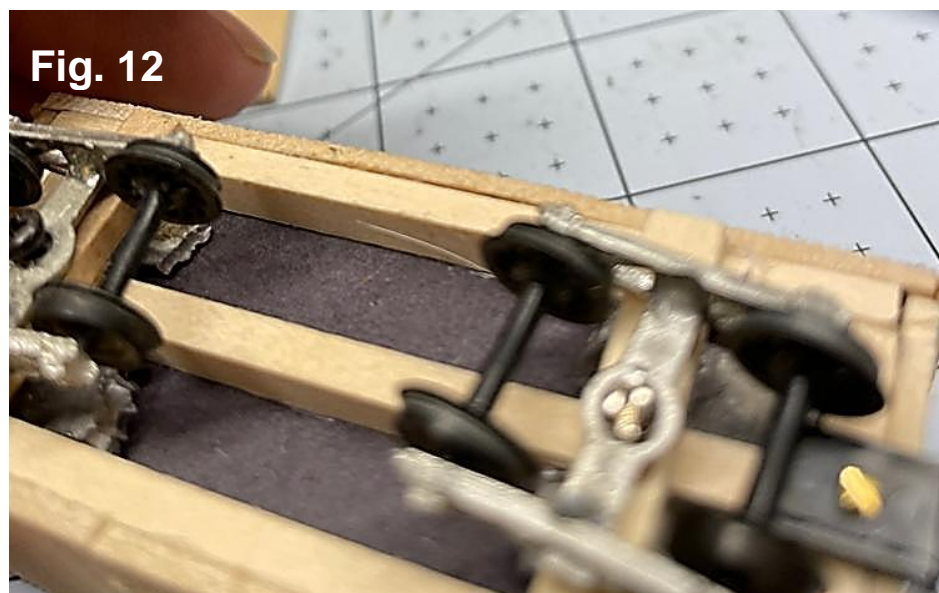


Fig. 12

I like the base to be open so I can add weights. I may add truss rods later. I cannot find anything to use as queen posts so they may have to wait!

Well, as promised, nearly finished. I built this car to satisfy a need on my pike. I have a carriage company that needs its wares transported and this car is a special end-loading piece that can carry two wagons or more to distribution. Yay!

The roof and floor are thick, black paper that I had from an old car kit. Notice the latch for the end doors; it is cut from an old steam line from Cal-Scale (Figure 13).



Fig. 13

Next, doors, and then stirrups, grab irons, and ladders. Went with ladders instead of grab irons; cannot find my grab iron jig and I tried using a makeshift one, but decided that ladders look better right now (Figure 14).



Fig. 14

Some gray stain and a poor job at lettering; the decals are 10 years old and crack easily. I also painted the trucks black (Figure 15).



Fig. 15

And with that, I've just added another car to my fleet—a specialized one for a specific industry. I still may add details to the car in the near future, but the bulk of the work is completed and it can be put in service immediately.



Fig. 16

About the author...

A Ph.D. in psychology, Dr. Steve Wysowski has taught many subjects at the high school level and as a college professor. He then worked 15 years as a principal, after which he was “drafted” to head the sports program in Connecticut.

Steve has had the train bug since the age of five, and is a recent transplant from the Nutmeg Division in the Northeast Region. In the short time he’s been with us, he’s already given a clinic and introduced us to his layout in the last issue. We’re certainly glad to have him as a member in the Philly Division.





Bill Fagan: *The Video Vigilante*



Photos are snapshots from videos/slideshows by Bill Fagan

Below are examples of some impressive layouts that I've visited. I've videoed layouts in California, Idaho, Maryland, Florida, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. 183 layouts with 775 videos and 2748 followers on YouTube with 1.5 million views.

↓ **Stephen Richardson's Delaware & Hudson Railroad**

HO scale, NCE DCC controlled, hand-laid turnouts, passenger and freight service. Highly-detailed building interiors, 26' x 18', and 7 years in the making.

Mainline: https://youtu.be/86d_9s-GZiA

Flyover: https://youtu.be/k9-3_feaTg4

Slideshow: <https://youtu.be/kITs5CVlh6E>



↓ Jimmy Shepard's Amanda and Sara Railroad

Size fills most of a 16' by 20' loft, HO Scale. Folded dog bone design. Two villages at each end of dog bone, Amanda and Sara, named after my two daughters. Center island Redwood City yard and industrial area, engine service, includes a pier. Many other smaller villages named for grandchildren. Double-track mainline and a branch line going to Doreen's Woods named after my wife.

Serves 20 industries of many types including an Army base 4th division training base named for outfit I served in Vietnam. DCC NCE system. Also features night lighting. Era is late 1950s to early 1960s central Pennsylvania. Trackage rights to PRR, Reading, Lehigh Valley.

Realistic scenery and structures are main focus. Several structures feature interior details. Campbell kits often used. (There are 37 outhouses around the railroad). Completed March 28th 2023 although you never finish. Took 3 years to design and create many structures from previous layouts.

Westbound: https://youtu.be/VphWM7ZYB_k

Eastbound: <https://youtu.be/PFftj2eO07A>

Flyover: <https://youtu.be/iPAkJJePBIXY>

Slideshow: <https://youtu.be/XDW2z1noPFU>



You can see these videos and other layouts on the Philly Division website: phillynmra.org— just click on Cab Ride Layout Videos. If you want to see future videos send me your email address and I'll put you on the distribution list. Do you want your railroad or a friend's railroad videoed? Email me at wfagan@comcast.net. More to follow in the next issue of **The Dispatcher**.

Enjoy,

Bill



RPM East

I recently attended the RPM East meet in New Stanton, PA. This year, the meet was held at the Westmoreland County Community College. The facility was modern and electronically friendly. The major drawback in my opinion was that accommodations for the attendees were spread over miles of motels and without the convenience of a usable kitchen for food and drink. When the convention is housed in a single motel or hotel, all members have access to all the facilities, and more importantly, to each other the entire time. This encourages more comradery and discussion.

On Thursday night, Roger Ossman, Steve Salotti, and I attended Dave Baker's operating session. His railroad is called The Cumberland and Lake Erie Railroad. Dave was a great host and the railroad ran flawlessly. Everyone who attended had a great time. Sit back and enjoy the pictures of Cumberland and Lake Erie Railroad.

I look forward to the RPM-Valley Forge meet in 2024 when it will be held at the Desmond Hotel in Malvern, PA.

The cup is low. It's time to go.

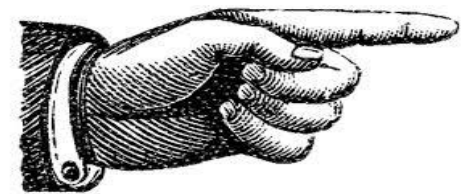
Joe

Dave Baker's Cumberland and Lake Erie









RPM Store





ON THE (RAIL) ROAD WITH KEVIN FEENEY

CONVENTIONS – SHOWS – TRAVEL

Kansas - February 1–5, 2023

We finally got to make this trip that was scheduled for the same weekend in 2022. That trip never happened due to a snowstorm in the Midwest and things almost repeated this year.

The primary purpose of this trip was to go to Wichita (ICT), which was the last unvisited city on a list of the 100 largest cities in the USA. I have been actively working through this list since we retired the end of 2018. Wichita was in fact #50 on the list with a current population of about 395K. FYI, it is the largest city in Kansas with more than twice the population of Kansas City, KS. Topeka, the state capital, only has 126K folks, while KC, Missouri has a population of 508K. Carol and I were in both KCs and Topeka back in August 2018 while attending the annual NMRA convention in KCMO. Seeing the amazing state Capitol building in Topeka was the start of our quest to visit them in all 50 states. The chosen weekend tied in with an annual train show called “The Best Train Show in Kansas.”



We booked our flights last October and were supposed to fly PHL–DFW–ICT leaving at 6:35AM. Three days before we were supposed to leave, AA posted a travel alert because of anticipated freezing rain in Texas. I called AA and we were changed to a routing via Chicago (ORD), which was the same way we were booked to return. AA does not have many flights to ICT, flying there just a few times a day from ORD and DFW. When I looked at our reservation on the day before we left, oddly AA was looking for folks looking to move to other flights, all of which were via DFW and were scheduled to arrive late on February 1st. We passed on AA’s offer that might have included a travel voucher. No doubt all the flights through DFW that day were cancelled or heavily delayed. We saw weather reports on the ice storm in DFW before we left. Some places had over an inch of ice on the roadways, wires and trees.



On Wednesday February 1st, we caught the 8:22AM SEPTA train from Jenkintown which was much better for us. Had we stayed with our original plane reservation, we would have been on a 4:25AM train! With a change of trains in Center City, we were at PHL by 9:20AM. Our train rides are free with our senior passes and the parking that used to cost \$1 a day is still free. For once, we did not check our bags due to a tight connection in ORD and to give us some flexibility if there were any issues. We left PHL at 10:40AM, 5 minutes early and arrived in ORD at 12:10PM. We had a fairly long walk from the K concourse to the G concourse where the boarding for our RJ flight started @ 12:36PM. Enroute while Carol was otherwise occupied, I brought two sandwiches from a McD to eat on board.

Our flight to ICT was AA3446 on an EMB 145, which is what I call a “tube jet” and is my least favorite aircraft. It is a long thin plane with 1-2 seating and the ceiling is so low I can barely stand up. There is NO room for carry-on bags so we had to valet check them at the gate. We left ORD 2 minutes early at 1:04PM and arrived at 3:19PM at the Wichita Eisenhower National (not Int’l!) airport. Our bags were returned in the jet way a few minutes later. ICT is a small airport served by 6 carriers (AA, UAL, DAL, SW, Allegiant, and Alaska) with nonstop flights to only a dozen cities.

Shopping for a rental car for this four-day trip, I found the best rate to be a “Manager’s Choice.” When we got to the Hertz counter in ICT, the clerk said she had just cancelled our reservation as we had been scheduled to be there about noon. No problem—she restored everything and gave us our vehicle: a bright red Toyota 4-door pickup with Texas plates.

This was certainly different. Roomier than a small car, but it rode rough and got terrible gas milage.

By the time we left the airport, it was almost 4PM so all we could do was drive around the city. The airport is west and a bit south of the downtown, so we drove east on US Route 400. We stayed on the west side of the Arkansas River heading to the museums in the River District. The highlight there is a 44-foot-tall steel sculpture of a Native American known as the “Keeper of the Plains.” Crossing the River, we drove through the downtown area with modern office buildings and came upon Old Town, which is a neighborhood of late 19th and early 20th century brick, commercial buildings that is now the City’s entertainment district with over 100 restaurants, bars, specialty shops, etc.

Also here is Wichita’s former Union Station which opened in 1914 as part of a project to elevate the railroad track through what was then the center of the



city. The station was built in the Beaux Arts style by the Santa Fe, Frisco, Rock Island, and MoPac railroads. Passenger service ended in 1979 when Amtrak discontinued the Lone Star train between Chicago–Houston. Today, the Union Station along with the adjacent red brick, former Rock Island Depot built in 1887, have been repurposed as commercial space. On the overpass in front of Union Station was this former ATSF 4-8-4 Northern type steam engine built by Baldwin in 1938, advertising the train show I would attend on Saturday.



Leaving the Old Town area, we drove south of Union Station and I noticed there was an upper-level parking area now where the station’s passenger platforms were once located. We drove up a ramp and were able to sit and rail fan for a while.

We headed to our hotel for the next four nights, a Candlewood Suites. This was an IHG property just a few miles east of the downtown and was much nicer than other Candlewood Suites where we stayed. I am always in the mood for a good pizza, so for dinner we went to Il Vicino Wood Oven Pizza. It was upscale—definitely not a pizza joint, but still you ordered at a counter, got an number in a holder and sat down with the holder on your table.

The menu was very different with choice of crust/sauce/cheese/etc., but there were some standard combos as well. However, there was no mention of the size so I walked over and asked the pizza makers by the oven. They only have a





small personal one and a medium size one of maybe 10" or 6 slices that I could have eaten by myself. I ended going with lasagna while Carol had the small pie that she said was very good and ate the whole thing herself except for giving me a small bite to taste. We also drank a whole bottle of a Moscato wine that was 50% off that day.

On Thursday, we were up early. The plan for the day was to drive to Abi-

lene, KS which was 95 miles to the north. This was the boyhood home of General (his preferred title) Dwight Eisenhower and now has a center that includes his presidential library and museum. Driving north of the downtown area on I-135, we saw a number of large, tall buildings—not commercial ones, but grain elevators, some of which were yuge.

We stopped in Newton about 30 miles from the hotel looking for the Amtrak station (closest one to ICT). At first, we ended up in a large yard west of town that is part of BNSF's Transcon route. We parked at road crossing for 15 minutes, but no trains passed by. So we followed the tracks back into town and came across this large building that was originally a Santa Fe station/office facility and now is the Amtrak stop. Across Route 15, we

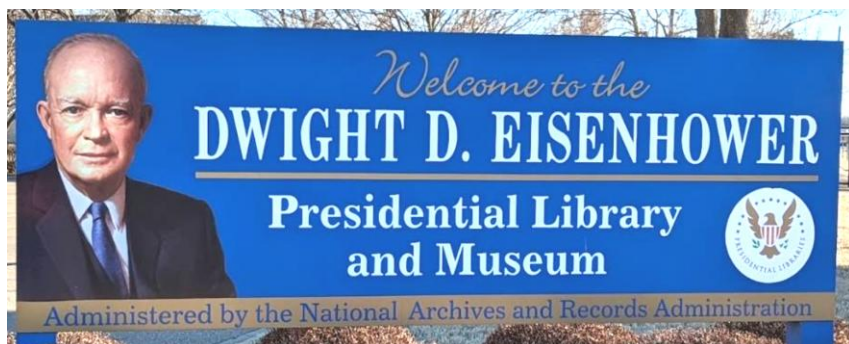
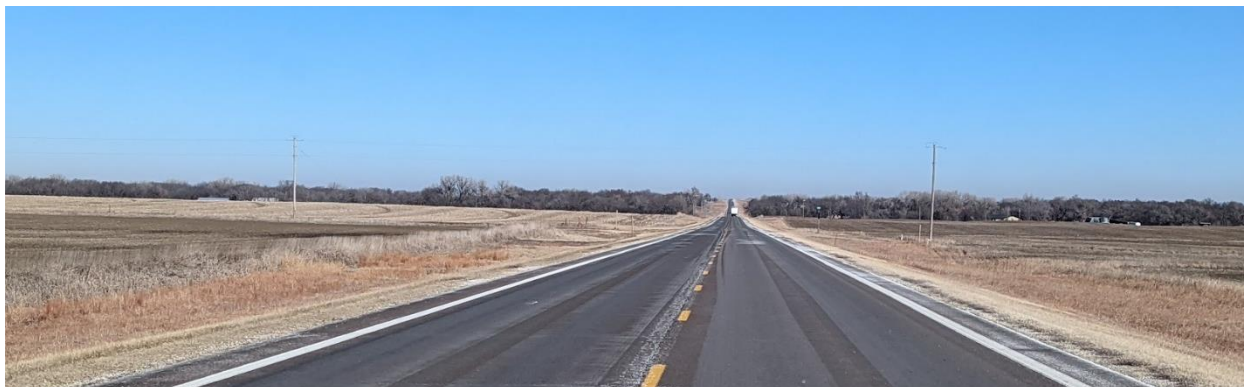


could see a large locomotive servicing facility. Driving around that we came to Newton's Railroad Park and were able to take the picture that follow. There are not many ATSF painted locomotives left, as the BN and ATSF merger took place back on December 31, 1996.



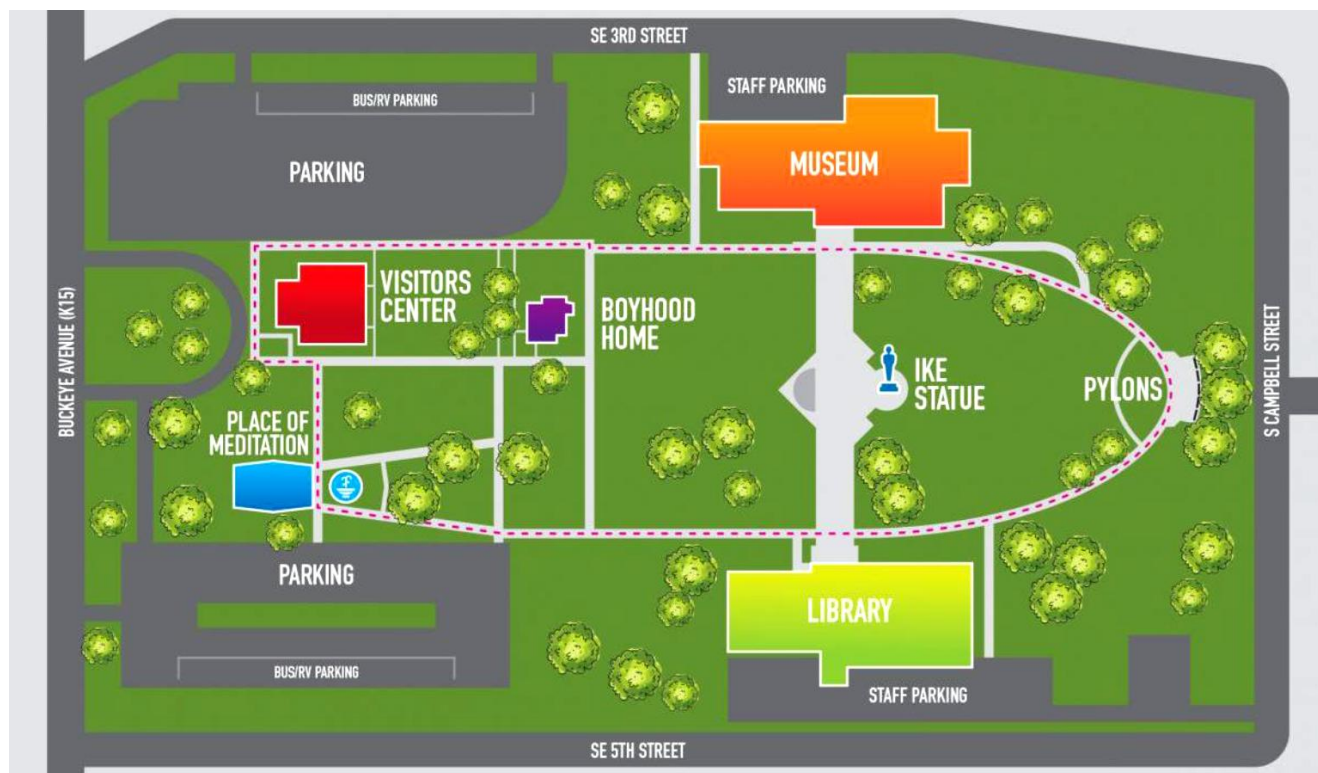
We continued north on KS-15, which basically follows what had been the northern end of the Chisholm Trail. This was a path used from 1867-1884 to drive an estimated 5 million head of cattle from ranches in central and south Texas, across what became Oklahoma, to Kansas railheads including Abilene. From there, the cattle were hauled to KC and Chicago. Between Newton and Abilene, a former ATSF rail line or The major part of the Chisholm Trail was 220 miles long,

but some of the ranches were down near San Antonio some 800 miles from Abilene. Today the area along Route 15 is flat and largely agricultural with mainly wheat farms and some cattle operations.



We approached Abilene from the south and Route 15 passes right by the Eisenhower Center. This is different from the other presidential sites we have visited recently as it was originally established in 1955, while Ike was President, to commemorate his leadership during WWII. As established, it included his boyhood home in its actual location. Today, the Center is a 22-acre park-like site with five buildings, statue and several architectural features. The Place of Mediation is where Ike, Mamie, and their infant

son are buried. When buying the tickets, the clerk talked about joining the Eisenhower Foundation. Its annual memberships cost \$34 (just \$4 more than 2 tickets and it included two t-shirts) in honor of the 34th President of the United States and offer free admission to all presidential libraries in the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) system. I wish I had received a similar offer at any of the six other presidential museums/libraries we visited in the last nine months. It would have saved us a lot of admissions.



Our first stop was Place of Mediation, which was like a chapel both inside and out. We learned Ike was buried in an enlisted man's plain coffin. Back to the visit center for an intro video. His boyhood home was closed for renovation. The museum was organized chronologically starting with how his family moved to Abilene. He went to West Point where, apparently he spent more time smoking and playing cards than on his studies. He graduated in 1915 but missed combat in WWI. He rose to temporary rank of Lt. Colonel in the National Army, but was back as a Captain in the regular army. He was one of the Army's pioneer tank commanders (with George Patton) and was involved with the 1919 Motor Transport Corps Convoy, when an Army unit took almost two months to travel 3000 miles between Washington, DC and SFO. Supposedly this experience, along with seeing the German Autobahns during WWII, led him to create the System of Interstate and Defense Highways when he was president.

We followed his military career through WWII; D-Day was extensively covered. After WWII, Ike served as President of Columbia University for a short time (this would never happen today) and was the first military commander of NATO. He resigned his (lifetime) commission as General of the Army in 1952 so he could run for president. I was not aware that JFK restored him to that rank in March 1961 and Ike held it till he died on March 28, 1969 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.



We took a lunch break at 1:45PM and hurried over to Joe Snuffy's Café. This was a well-rated, local place that closed at 2PM. We were there a few minutes later and were their last customers that day. I had the daily special: hamburger stew (too many peas) and a grilled cheese sandwich, while Carol had a burger. After lunch, we briefly drove around the downtown area before returning to the museum to go through Ike's presidential years. After decades of military service, one would think, he would have had hawkish views, but his presidential actions were almost that of a pacifist. He got us out of Korea and kept us out of other skirmishes, save for a brief involvement in Lebanon in 1958. I wonder if this had something to do

with his upbringing. His family belonged to the Church of the Brethren that today has eight churches in Abilene, and which has taken a strong stance for "nonresistance" or Christian pacifism. It is one of the three historic peace churches alongside the Mennonites and Quakers. We stayed till just before it was closing, skipping the actual Presidential Library that had a 7-minute virtual tour of his boyhood home.



closed. Carol saw an independent bookstore and we went in to look. Talking with the clerk, we learned she was originally from Moorestown, NJ. Just south of the Ike center, we stopped at a third train station (next page). Historically this was the Rock Island station, but today houses the Abilene and Smoky Valley Railroad, a tourist line that is open from May through October.

Back on KS-15, we drove to Wichita. For most of the drive, the road runs north/south so looking to the west, we watched a colorful sunset. We stopped in Newton again and saw an eastbound intermodal train

We headed back to the downtown area to see these two former train stations. The one on the left (ex-AT&SF) was diagonally across Route 15 from the Ike center. The track from that line ran parallel to 3rd Street and just north of the center. Down those tracks a bit to the east was a small rail-served grain elevator. The former Union Pacific station (below) is now the local visitor's center but it was



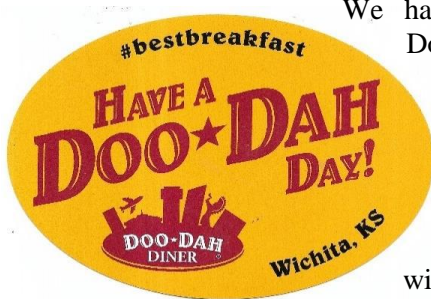


on BNSF's Transcon in the dark. Our hotel room had a partial kitchen so when back in Wichita, we made dinner with food we had bought the night before at a nearby Dillon's Grocery store. This is a local chain is owned by Kroger.

Friday was our day to explore more of Wichita. We saw in a guidebook that there was a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed, iconic, prairie-style house, the only one in Kansas. The only other structure designed by him in Wichita is the Corbin Education Center at Wichita State University (WSU) (I wish we had known this when we visited the WSU campus later that day).



This house was built in 1917 for Henry Allen, a local wealthy newspaper owner who later became Kansas's Governor and served as a U.S. Senator. Turns out it was in an upscale neighborhood with other interesting-looking houses from the early 20th century. The Allen House Foundation maintains it as a museum under the stewardship of the Wichita Center for the Arts. It had been been closed in January for annual maintenance and unfortunately has gone woke with the only access now available through a limited number of docent-led tours, none of which were available that day. Still, it was worth a look on our drive to breakfast.



We had breakfast at the well-rated Doo-Dah Diner. This was a very colorful and fun place. The menu was very limited compared to what you would see in a typical Jersey dinner. Carol had the special banana bread French toast while I went with pancakes/bacon/hashbrowns.



We headed to the north side of Wichita to get a closer look at the massive concrete grain elevators and to see some railroad activity. One elevator had this massive mural, but others were in ruins. We also came upon a small BNSF rail-yard. I parked across the street and watched the trains for a while. I saw some special freight cars that I knew were used to haul airplane parts so I drove in to where I probably should not have been, and took a picture.

After a light lunch (fries and a chocolate



shake) at a Freddy's, we drove to the campus of WSU to see the Pizza Hut Museum. Turns out a WSU student and his brother (a then recent WSU graduate), started this company in Wichita in 1957 selling pizza, which at that time was relatively unknown in the Midwest. The museum in the actual building (the "hut") where it all started although it was originally located near but not on the campus. We learned that the original sign on the building was so small that it only had room for three letters after the word "pizza" so they went with "hut." Inside there was a collection of memorabilia from the company's history and information about its various owners over the years.

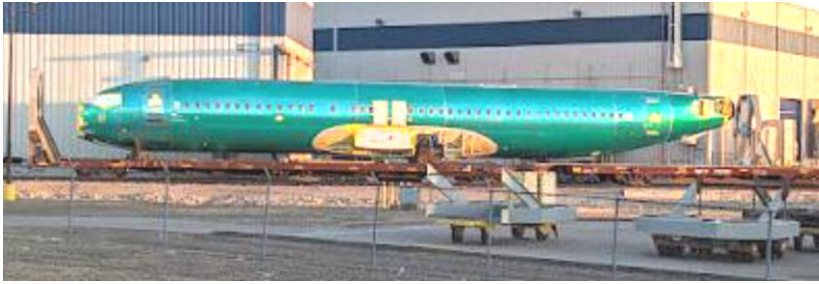


We headed back downtown to visit the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum. It is located in a massive stone building that was constructed in 1890 as the City Hall. This was a well-done museum on four floors. There was a sizable display devoted to Wichita being the self-proclaimed "Air Capital of the World." It started a refueling stop on the early airmail and passenger routes and quickly became the place where aircraft were manufactured. Cessna and Beech airplanes have long been made in the area and later Lear Jet built a factory there. Boeing had a factory there beginning in 1934 following the breakup of United Airlines that once made its own planes. During WWII, Boeing's massive factory there built thousands of B-17s and B-29 bombers. In the late 1940s and continuing till 1962, the same factory built several thousand B-47 and B-52 jet bombers. For many years, Boeing built the fuselage of the very popular 737 jet in Wichita. Boeing sold that plant to Spirit AeroSystems in 2005, but the 737 fuselage is still made there. All total over 300,000 propeller and jet aircraft have been manufactured locally—more than any other place in the world!

Leaving the museum about 4PM, we headed to McConnell Air Force Base that is located on Wichita's southeast side. I didn't know what we would be able to see. The original airfield there was built in the 1920s to serve as Wichita's Municipal Airport. Its Art Deco terminal building opened in 1929 and was used until 1954 when the commercial airport was moved to its current location west of Wichita. McConnell is a major AFB housing active duty and reserve refueling wings with KC-135 and KC-46 tankers, and several Kansas Air National Guard units. We drove along the western edge of the base and could see the tanker aircraft on the other side of the field and a few taking off. We passed the historic former terminal building that now houses the Kansas Aviation Museum and saw there were other aviation businesses there including the several large buildings that are used by Spirit AeroSystems.

I really wanted to see a 737 fuselage loaded on a railcar, so I drove around the Spirit facility until I saw railroad tracks. In a small yard, I saw one of the specialized flat cars used to carry a fuselage (but it was empty) and several of the specialized freight cars





used to transport the rudder and elevator panels like I had seen earlier in the day. From a public road, I was able to follow the tracks and could see how they entered the complex. I could see some 737s loaded on flatcars in the plant, but my view was obstructed. However, by driving into one of the employee parking lots I was able to get right next to one. Leaving the area, we passed the Cessna Activity Center that I would visit the next

day. Dinner that evening was some fried chicken from Dillon's.



I was up early on Saturday. We had bought some breakfast food the day before when we passed a Panera. I left by 8:30AM for the short drive to the Cessna Activity Center for a medium-sized train show hosted by the local NMRA division. I paid my \$8 admission and learned that in addition to the sale tables and modular layouts, the division was offering clinics and had a model contest. I was there till

about 11:30AM and had a good time finding several bargains and seeing nice modular layouts. I drove back to the hotel to get Carol who already had lunch.



We quickly headed back to the McConnell area to visit the Kansas Aviation Museum. This museum is spread out over three floors in the Art Deco-style former terminal building. Some of it was a repeat of what we had seen in the City/County Historical Museum the day before on Cessna, Lear Jet, Beechcraft, Stearman, and Boeing. On the 2nd floor, there were several restored historic planes from the 1920s to 1951. Carol was surprised to see that the wings of the

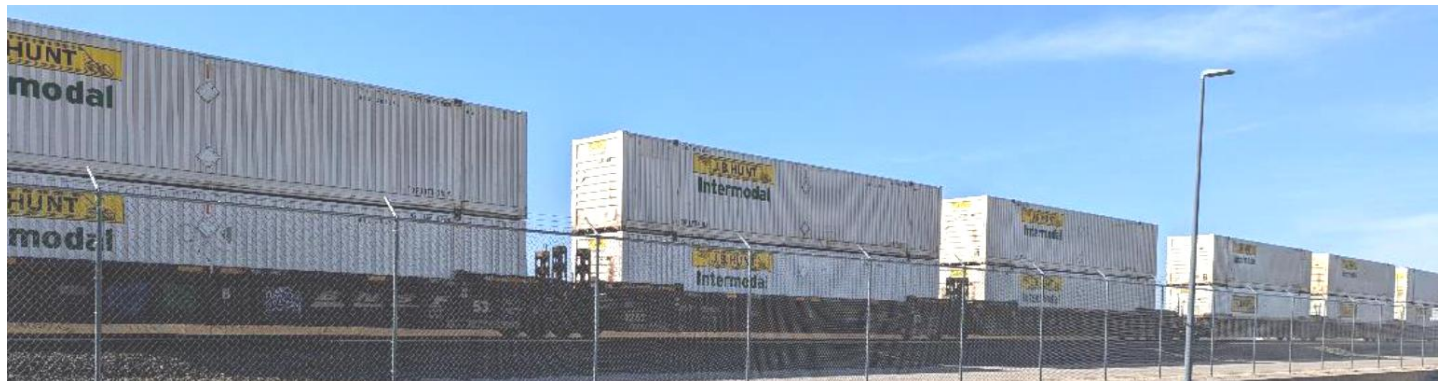


biplanes were covered with fabric, albeit heavily “doped.” To be politically correct, there were exhibits on women in aviation and black aviators (Tuskegee Airmen) during WWII. Outside were several planes that are part of the museum’s collection, some of which were actually made in Wichita. The internal rear stairs were down on a 727-100 in a FedEx livery.



These are the same kind of stairs that D. B. Cooper parachuted from in his infamous hijacking/robbery of a Northwest 727 on November 24, 1971. After this happened, all 727s flown by US airlines were modified so that the rear stairs could NOT be lowered during flight.

After leaving the Aviation Museum, I quickly drove Carol back to the hotel so I could head to the Great Plains Transportation Museum. This museum was located in Old Town across the street from Union Station. I saw some of its collection when railfanning on the platform level on Thursday when we first arrived in Wichita. Normally open till 4PM on Saturdays, the last admissions were at 3PM that day due to a shortage of volunteers. I had a bit of trouble with the GPS



finding their entrance and just made it there at 2:50PM. However, several others came in just after me. From the street-level entrance, I walked through a small museum to the upper level and then outside to see their collection up close. While doing this, a double-stack freight train was sitting on the active tracks just to the west. The museum is trying to raise funds to restore this rare FP-45 locomotive, built by EMD in 1967, to its original war bonnet paint scheme. Before leaving, I had a chat with the volunteer manning the admission desk. He had asked me when I entered why I came to Wichita, and when I mentioned my list of 100 cities, he wanted to learn more.



I headed back to the hotel only to get Carol and return to Old Town for dinner. It would have been a lot easier had she just gone with me to the Transportation Museum, but she wasn’t interested and did not feel well. We ate at the well-rated, Bite Me BBQ where the staff wore shirts with various messages that went well with the name of the place. It claims to have the best ribs, pork, brisket, and links in the state! However, I would say that honor belongs to Lonnie Q’s BBQ in Topeka! We ate there back in 2018. I was able to order Bite Me’s smoked prime rib that is only available on Friday and Saturday nights. (Readers may recall that I missed out on having smoked prime rib at a Rudy’s in College Station, Texas last month.) I ordered the large size serving and asked for it to be less well done than what I would normally order for myself so I could share it with Carol. She just ordered one of their large ribs and a side. The food was very good and

served promptly. My only complaint was the place was a bit too loud. I often walk out of restaurants that are too loud.

Back to the hotel and we packed up for our very early flight. I called AA and tried to switch us to a later flight but was



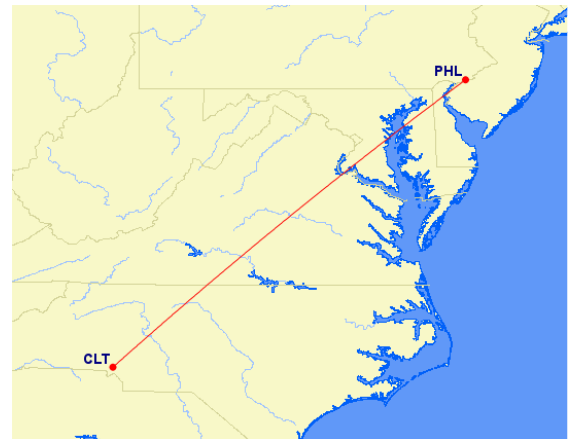
told no. However, the agent said we could do stand-by for the 11:08AM flight to ORD. I asked how we could do that when our booked flight was at 6:40AM and she had no answer. We left the hotel Sunday morning at 4:45AM and were at the airport just after 5AM. Hertz was not open yet so we just left the car and it was checked in later with no problems. There were several planes leaving around 6AM, so it took a few minutes to get through TSA. I only found one penny. The plane was another EMB-145 tube jet that had come in late Saturday night from ORD. There is no business class section on these planes (AA does not even have first class anymore except on a handful of coast-to-coast flights). We sat in the exit row, the

only one with additional leg room. The flight left 8-minutes early and arrived in Chicago at 8:32AM, 6 minutes early. There we had another long walk between the G and H concourses. We were upgraded on the 9:41AM CST flight to PHL that left 11 minutes early due to a smaller passenger load. We arrived in Philly at 12:30PM EST, 22 minutes early. We had checked our bags on the return. They took a while to come out in the baggage carousel, but we still made the 1:10PM SEPTA train. We were at Jenkintown where we left our car an hour later and home by 2:30PM. Soon it was time for mass at 4:30PM at our church. We had thought about going to mass at the Cathedral in Wichita that has the same name as our local church, Immaculate Conception

Recapping the miles, etc. It was 2530 miles RT via Chicago, which puts me at 963K towards AA's Million Mile Status. Bummer, as flying via DFW would have been 365 miles more! I will easily make the 1 million later this year between scheduled and other anticipated trips. I earned 4939 loyalty points/award miles for the four flights. The LPs are meaningless as the current scheme ends on February 28th and I already earned Executive Platinum status through March 31, 2024. Award miles are always nice, but I have over 2.1 million of them. For the hotel, I paid for one night and used 53K points to cover the other three nights. This type of mix is our normal practice from now on as we have over 1.7 million IHG points. From the paid night, use of an IHG credit card to pay for it and my two welcome bonuses I earned 3128 points. The truck from Hertz cost \$331 for four days and I didn't earn anything extra, just the normal points from using a credit card. We only drove 310 miles on this trip. Gas prices we saw ranged from \$2.99 to \$3.19; I filled up \$3.09 on Saturday eve.

North Carolina - February 22-27, 2023

This is now an annual trip for us that started over 20 years ago. Originally, its purpose was to visit two friends, Dan Lang and Lew Merrill (now deceased), who had moved (retired) to Western, NC from CT. The reasons for going increased when one of my cousins moved there in 2009. Initially, the trip was made during various times of the year. However, for the last few years, the trip has been scheduled towards the end of February or early March, depending on the dates of the Asheville Train Show. This is medium-sized show with almost 200 tables and several modular layouts held annually in the WNC Agricultural Center. Because most of the Baptist folks that live there spent their Sundays in church, the train show starts at noon on Friday and runs through Saturday afternoon. FYI, there are over 50 Baptist churches in the local county (Hendersonville) as opposed to just one Catholic church that has the same name, Immaculate Conception, as our parish in PA.

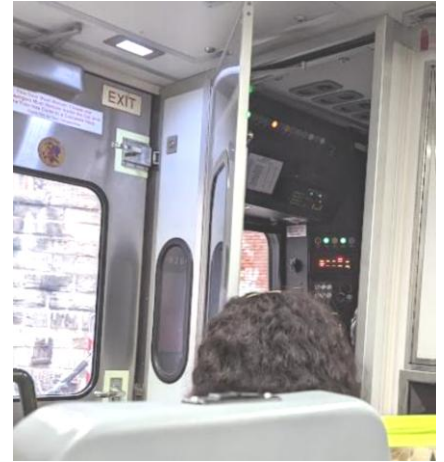


The AG Center is a fairground complex located across the highway from the Asheville Airport (AVL). AVL is actually located in Fletcher, NC and is about 16 miles south of downtown Asheville. On occasion, we have flown into AVL, but that requires a short and usually expensive connection from Charlotte (CLT). Some years, we have flown into the Greenville-Spartanburg Int'l Airport (GSP) in SC that is about 60 miles south of AVL. Airfares to GSP are usually more

reasonable, but not this time. The rest of the time, we just fly to CLT and drive from there; it is just over a 100 miles and mostly on highways. However, if we are driving, we usually find some place along the way to visit. Readers may recall the last time we flew to Charlotte we stopped at the Earl Scruggs Center in Shelby, NC. This year, the plan was to see some of Charlotte proper and visit with one of Carol's former work colleagues who lives nearby. However, it turned out Carol's friend was in Spain, so I had to come up with something else to do.



Our flight to CLT was scheduled to depart PHL on Wednesday February 22 at 7:10PM, so for once we did not have to get up when it is still dark. We take SEPTA to the airport and in planning our trip, I always make sure that a later train would still get up there in time for our flight. This time, I planned to take a 4:08PM train that would have included a connection. However, we left the house a bit early and we were able to catch the 3:52PM airport train that was running a bit late. I was seated in the railfan seat towards the front of the train. At the Melrose Park station, an off-duty SEPTA employee boarded and walked up to the engineer's cab



and knocked on the door. Once the door was open, the engineer and the employee started a meaningless conversation that continued for the whole ride into Center City.

Things like this are not safe and should not occur. I went to the SEPTA app and reported the situation saying I had a picture. To my surprise, I got an immediate response from SEPTA asking for the above picture. I will probably never hear what actions were taken in this case, but a SEPTA engineer who belongs to my model railroad club told me that both employees would likely face an unpaid suspension of at least five days. It could be more if there were other bad things on their service records.

We were at PHL by 4:50PM and walked over to the terminal to check in. We had been upgraded to business class several days before. I found 13 cents going through TSA (plus another 20 cents during the rest of the trip including 3 cents going through TSA in CLT). We headed to the food court for dinner and then walked to the C gate I had seen in the app earlier only to find the flight was moved to a B gate. The flight boarded quickly and we left 11 minutes early and landed about 7 minutes early at 8:52PM. Most of the time we just connect in CLT, so we have missed the construction that has been going on there for years. NOT TODAY! Our intended exit was closed so we had to detour around, over, and through the new airport only to come back into the existing airport for baggage claim.

The car rental companies are in a consolidated facility across the arrival roadway. We had Enterprise this time so we could use some reward points that reduced the cost to \$308. We went up where Enterprise was on 3rd floor but no one was there. Down to National (same company) on the 2nd floor who sent me to the Enterprise counter on first floor. The only clerk there was eating his pizza dinner. Once I had the paperwork, I was directed back up to National as Enterprise was closed. We were given a black 2022 Nissan Sentra. All of this took too long so it was almost 10PM when we left CLT. Our hotel for the night was an Avid property that was about 13 miles to the south, just across the border in Ft. Mill, SC. This is a new IHG brand aimed at millennials, but I booked it because it was the only IHG property near CLT for under \$100 (all in).

Near CLT and our hotel is the Billy Graham Library and this is where we headed on Thursday after breakfast. It is well worth seeing; it was very much like the presidential libraries we have been visiting of late. The volunteer staff was very welcoming. On the site is the actual house where Billy grew up although it has been relocated from the Graham family's dairy farm that was several miles away. Next, we entered through a giant cross on the side of a barn-like building to experience



“The Journey of Faith.” This is a series of galleries and exhibits that tell Billy’s life story through multi-media presentations. It only opened last year.

While I had certainly heard him speak over the years, I was never aware of the extent of his international travel and the size of the crowds that assembled wherever he preached. There were an estimated 1.1 million people in attendance at the closing of his Korean crusade on June 3, 1973. Like Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, Billy Graham was a fixture on prime time TV in the 1950s—something that would never happen today!



I finished the Journey before Carol, and as I exited one of the volunteers came up to me and asked me if I wanted to pray. I said yes, but only that my wife would finish up soon. The woman then suggested that I just sit in a rocking chair till Carol came out, which she did a few minutes later. All total, we were there almost two-hours. Admission was free, but we were given a paper to fill out if we wanted to support the ministry. Supposedly there were donations boxes in the lobby, but I did not see them.

Next, we headed to Charlotte Premium Outlets that were about 10 minutes away—not to go shopping per se, but Carol forgot to pack her bras. She made a quick stop at the Jockey Store while I called my sister, Deirdre, to see how winter storm Oliver was affecting Minneapolis-St. Paul. The Catholic school where she works as the librarian was closed for the 2nd day primarily because of the intense cold. While MSP certainly gets a lot of snow, snow days are quite rare there as folks know how to deal with it. (As I wrote this at 9:40PM on 2/27, the ground at our home in Abington was covered with snow for the first time this winter, but was all gone by the next AM.)

Leaving the outlets, we headed to Columbia, SC as part of our continuing quest to visit all 50 state capitols. Columbia was about 90 miles to the south and we had to rush to be at the SC State House at 2:30PM for the last guided tour of the day. We were in the building at 2:22PM!



While I have only been to about a dozen capitol buildings, I have been in about 45 capital cities (all but those in NV, SD, MO, ME, and SC), meaning Columbia was a new one for me. I knew nothing of its history. SC’s original capital was in Charleston and as folks started to move into the western part of the state, they objected to having to travel a week or more to reach Charleston on state business. So, a more central location was picked and named Columbia to honor Christopher Columbus. The current capitol building was started in 1855 but was not completed until 1907! On the tour, we saw both houses of the legislature, the former law library from when the state’s supreme court was located there, plus the areas with the offices for the state’s Governor and Lt. Governor. The tour took about 45 minutes including an introductory video. Carol got her state capitol guidebook stamped and brought two shirts on sales in the gift shop.



We drove around “Cola” for a while. Apparently, this is what locals call the city. Of course, our first stop was at the Amtrak station, which was built in 1991. It is located some distance from the downtown area, but near the University of SC Campus. Service is limited to the Silver Star trains that run between NYC and Miami. Locally, train #92 stops at 4:09AM northbound and #91 at 1:49AM southbound.



We passed this very colorful caboose as we turned into the station’s parking lot.



Driving back to downtown, we passed this former grain elevator with an old Southern boxcar on a stub piece of track. We drove to the Five Points neighborhood that was mentioned in the city guidebook looking for a place to have an early dinner. However, all of the parking was metered and we had used up what few coins we had while parking near the State House. We tried to eat at the Cook Out there (great regional chain), but it was drive through only. So we got on I-26 and headed northwest towards NC.



While I drove, Carol searched for places to eat in the AA Dining Rewards program and on a map of SC BBQ places that we picked up in the State House. We got off in Chapin planning to go to a burger place when we drove by Farm Boy BBQ. We stopped and saw it was well rated. We went in and were surprised that it was a very nice buffet and a real bargain. The total cost with a tip was only \$33. I left with a large cup of iced tea.



We got back on I-26. All total, the drive from Columbia to Fletcher, NC was about 142 miles and we arrived at about 7:30PM. This was at the home of Andrea Haulk, a Liggan first cousin once removed, and her daughter, Haley. We stay with them on each year's visit to western NC. We brought down a suitcase full of things that came from Andrea's mother, Ellen Christian. I had visited with Ellen at the end of 2022 at her new apartment near Pittsburgh. I brought home a box of things that I thought could sell on eBay for her. Some did sell and the rest I brought to NC for Andrea to sell at her neighborhood's annual garage sale in April.

Friday, we slept in as the train show didn't start until noon and it was less than 15 minutes away. I got there just before noon and was surprised there was no line. Apparently, they let folks in early this year. I picked up the flyer for next year's show on February 23 and 24, 2024.





I headed over to the local NMRA division's tables and saw two friends I had seen at the Cocoa Beach RPM back in January. Another NC friend, Dan Lang, whom I met in the mid-1990s when he lived in CT was sick and missed the show. I spent 3.5 hours there and had a good time. I bought a few things for me, one HO vintage "made in Japan" freight car for friend Charlie Getz, and several things that I could easily resell. One table was giving away free issues of *Railroad Model Craftsman* (RMC) magazine. Amazingly, these RMC issues were from 1991 and were still in the sealed plastic mailing bag and addressed to some guy in Brooklyn, NY. I took several to read during the trip and on the way home. All of these things conveniently would go into the then empty suitcase that was used to bring down the stuff for Andrea's garage sale. For dinner, we all went to the local



Culver's where they serve walleye during Lent.

On Saturday we were up early, and all four of us headed to Atlanta for the day. It was 190-miles, a 3.25-hr. drive, and lunch time when we arrived so we headed to The Varsity. This was the first time Andrea and Haley have been to this famous eatery. My burger was average, but the fries and onion rings were excellent. It was disappointing that even though Dr. Pepper was shown in an historic painting of the place, being in Atlanta, only Coke products were served.



After lunch we drove to the Carter Presidential Center, which was the real reason for the trip. I had some concerns about being able to visit the Center given the recent news on the 98-year-old former president's health. After a series of short hospital stays, Jimmy Carter decided on February 18th to spend his remaining time at home with his family in Plains and receive hospice care instead of additional medical intervention. Had he passed away that week, I think the Center would have been closed in tribute for a few days.

The Center opened on October 1, 1986 and is affiliated with Emory University. Its mission is to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health. It also is a presidential library and museum, the latter of which was our real interest. Surprisingly, our membership card from the Eisenhower Center allowed Andrea and Haley to enter for free.

The Carter Museum was laid out chronologically and well done. The only real issue I had was the claim that Carter got the Iranian hostages released just before he left office. Not so! Ronald Reagan was about to assume the presidency and Iran let them free being afraid of what Reagan would do. His redneck brother Billy Carter was pictured, but received no mention. Given he left office in 1981, a large part of the museum was devoted to his and the Center's real accomplish-

ments since then. Compared to other presidential centers we have visited, its bookstore was quite small. This is ironic because Jimmy Carter has written over 20 books. We were there for just over two hours.

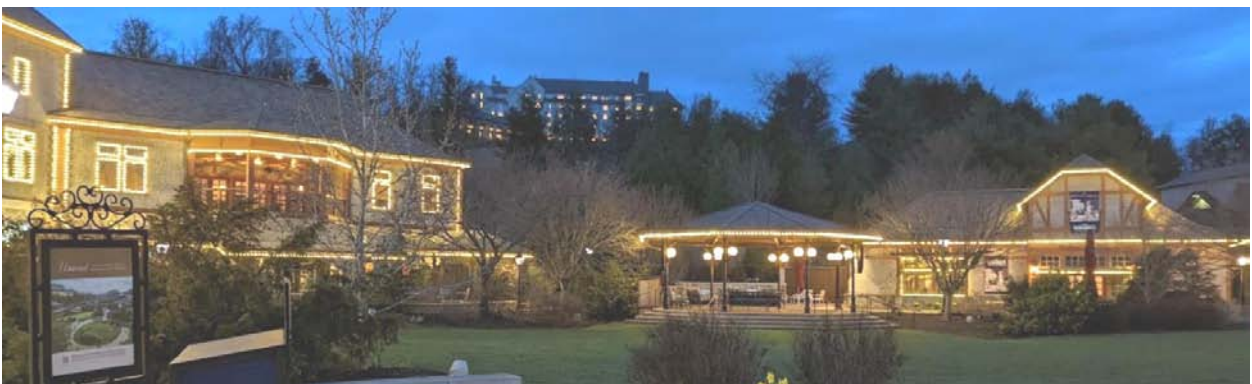


We worked our way up to I-85 and headed back to NC. We stopped for dinner at Sonny BBQ in Commerce, GA. It had a nice décor, but was not the best experience because by 5:30PM it was out of several meats, the advertised bowls were not available, and there were dirty dishes on several tables. I left a poor review. Had we checked its reviews ahead of time (3.5 on Trip Advisor with lots of poor and terrible ones), we would have gone somewhere else to eat.

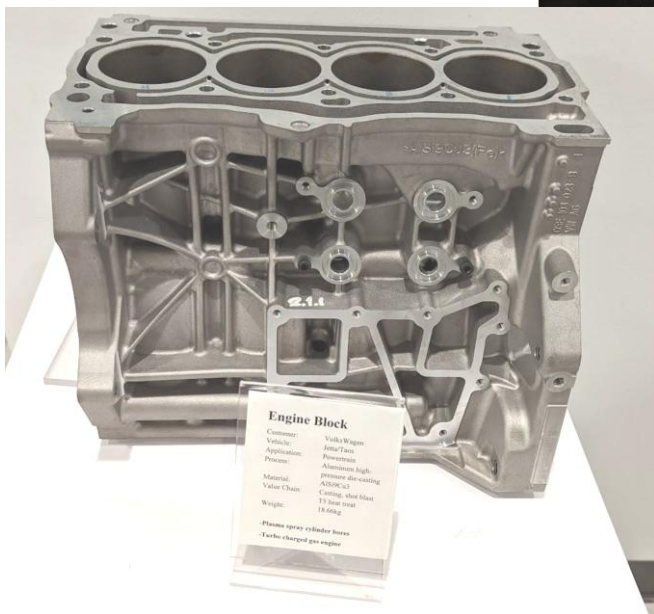


On Sunday, we slept in again. We left the house after 10AM heading to an 11AM mass at the Catholic church there. But first, we stopped at Smiley's, a yuge Sat/Sun- only flea market with both outdoor and indoor vendors. It is interesting to see shotguns and rifles being sold. I brought a 1/100 model of a jet plane for \$10 while Carol got a nice Coach bag for \$18. After mass, we drove south to Hendersonville, about 10 miles away, for lunch. My friend, Dan Lang, who lives further south in Flat Rock, was still sick so we were not able to meet up with him as originally planned.

Haley Haulk was almost 19 (her birthday is 3/12) and is completing a five-year combined high school/college program. She will graduate in May with her high school diploma and an Associates degree from Blue Ridge Community College. She will attend Western Carolina University (part of the UNC system) this fall to study Forensic Science. For more than a year, she has worked at the Biltmore Estate. During the school year, she works every Sunday. Our plan was to drive and have dinner there after her shift. With her employee ID, we get free entry and she gets a 20% discount in the restaurants. However, business was slow that day so she was sent home early. Haley changed from her uniform and an hour later we all drove there for our 5PM reservation, The Biltmore Estate is about a half hour north, toward Asheville. After a nice dinner in the Village Social, we walked around and had dessert in the Creamery.



Andrea works in H/R at Linamar Light Metals which has a large plant by the airport. She needed to terminate an employee so we stopped by there on the way back from the Biltmore. When we got there, she asked if I wanted a tour? Sure. After donning some PPE, she took Haley and I through the plant, which makes large, extremely precise, die castings for the automotive industry out of aluminum



or magnesium. There were two large furnaces that melt metal ingots and scrap. The molten metal is transferred to several very large, hydraulic, die-cast machines. After the die cast parts pass inspection, they go through heat treatment and some machining or assembly. I could not take any pictures in the plant, but was able to take pictures of parts on display in the lobby. The picture on the previous page shows what supports the dash on a Ford F-150 pickup. The picture below is an aluminum VW engine block that was die-cast in one piece!

Back at their house, I helped Haley do her income tax online with H&R Block. She owes nothing, but had to file to get refunds of the amounts withheld for federal and state income taxes. I packed up my train show purchases and gathered up all my things. On Monday, we left their house after 10AM for the 102-mile drive to Charlotte.

We first stopped at the Flat Rock PO so Carol could buy some postcard stamps. She buys cards on all of our trips and sends them to a friend and relatives. We drove east on I-26 and soon came to where the Eastern Continental Divide (at 2130') crossed the highway. From there, I-26 quickly descends from the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. We passed through a narrow gorge (Howard Gap) and then down a steep three-mile 6% grade. The area is usually foggy and that day was no exception. We continued to where the highway splits and then followed US-74 toward Charlotte. By this point, I-26 has dropped over 1100 feet in about 15 miles. US-74 is a limited access highway except for a 10-mile stretch through Shelby. We stopped there to get gas @\$3.02.

As we approached the greater Charlotte area, we got on I-85, but then exited back to US-74 by Gastonia to have lunch. I was planning on stopping at a Cook Out there, but it was drive through-only. There is a Steak 'n' Shake next to it and I was surprised to see it was still open. Most/many SnS restaurants have closed in the last few years. I walked in to do a takeout order and use the bathroom. Tried to order a milk shake, but heard their machine has been broken for weeks.

We stayed on US-74 to the airport. I missed the sign for Enterprise in the rental car center so had to do a lap around the airport. We returned the rental car that we had driven 853 miles and headed into the terminal. It was 1:35PM. There was no line at the AA counter, but we waited almost 15 minutes at TSA. From there we had a long walk to our flight at gate C8. It was a totally full flight so no upgrades; I was #4 on the list and Carol was much lower. Still, I was able to have a Tito 'n' tonic in my usual exit row seat (11F) which has lots of leg room because there is no window seat in row 10.

We took off three minutes early at 2:55PM and landed at 4:26PM, 7 minutes early. Toward the end of the flight, we flew right up the Delaware River and landed to the north. Normally planes arriving at PHL make a big loop over South Jersey and then land to the south. We headed to baggage carousel #18 where our bags took a while to come out. We made the 5:10PM SEPTA train to Fox Chase and exited at Jefferson. We boarded a 5:47PM express train to Jenkintown and were there 20 minutes later. I made a dinner stop at



Wawa to use an expiring \$2 reward. It was starting to sleet when we arrived home a few minutes later.

Recapping the miles, points etc. For the round-trip PHL-CLT flights I earned 2662 loyalty points/award miles and got credit for 894 actual miles, so I now have 963,459 of the needed million miles. Today, 2/28/2023, was the end of the 12-month earning period for AA's current reward program. I ended with 221,451 loyalty points, or more than the 200K needed to make Executive Platinum. Still, I benefited from making EP early at the end of 2022. I have been upgraded more frequently in 2023 and receive a bigger bonus on each flight taken. I have booked several future trips using award miles, so my account balance has now dipped below 2 million. For the hotel stay, including the use of the Chase IHG credit card, I earned 3042 points. More importantly, the stay counts towards a special IHG promotion that will allow me to



keep my Diamond Elite status for 2023 (I did not qualify based on number of stays in 2022) if I stay a certain number of nights by 3/31/2023. From Enterprise, I earned 254 points for the 5-day rental but used 1150 points from my rewards account to pay for one day. We drove 853 miles. Gas prices ranged from \$2.99 to the \$3 teens in NC and GA, but were from the \$2.70s to below \$3 in SC.

The weather on this trip had been mixed. On Thursday, it was sunny and the temperature was in the low 80s so I was able to wear shorts. The other days were in the 50s to 60s and overcast. Like many places in the east, NC/SC have had a very mild winter this year. Many plants and trees there were already in bloom. This picture shows a Bradford pear tree in full bloom. This is an ornamental tree commonly planted in NC.



Cincinnati Division, MCR

We'd like to make all NMRA members aware of a new, Limited Edition, HO scale freight car that Cincinnati Division 7, Mid-Central Region is now offering for sale/purchase. It is a N&W HC-46 ACF 2-Bay Covered Hopper in a unique repaint scheme with patched-out data; available in 3 different road numbers.

The following link provides details about it as well as pricing, shipping and ordering information.

<https://www.cincy-div7.org/projects.html>

New Jersey Division 50th Anniversary Car

**Tangent Scale Models Bethlehem 70-Ton
Riveted Drop-End Gondola in HO Scale
All cars are ready-to-run.**

**We have produced the car in two numbers to
commemorate our 50th anniversary:**

1968 & 2018

**The car has reporting marks NJDX, black with
white lettering and data for the 1950s.**

The cost is \$35.00 each

OR

a set of both numbers for \$65.00.

To have them shipped USPS Priority: \$9 for 1 car, \$10.75 for 2 cars

**The cars are available now. Checks should
be made payable to “NJ Division”**

They are selling fast so don’t be left out!

(Photo/artwork on next page)

Website: <https://njdivnmra.org> for questions

Name_____

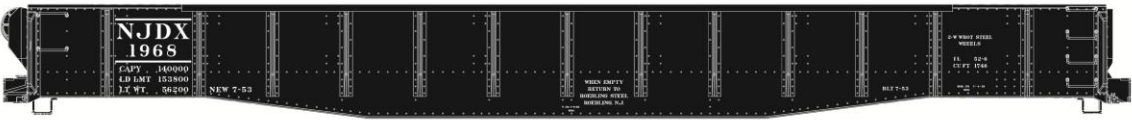
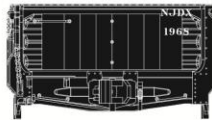
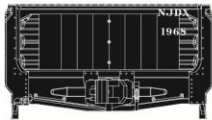
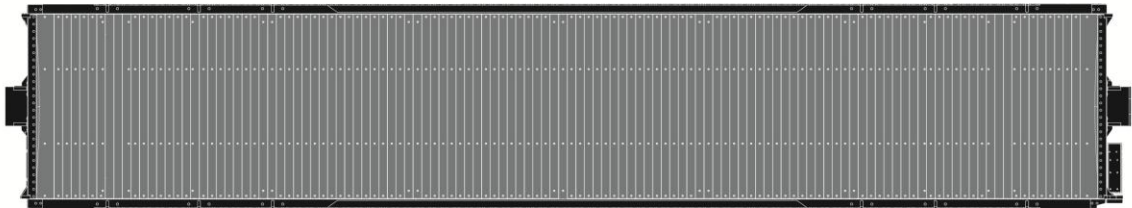
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See Tangent website for more info support@tangentscalemodels.com

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If you missed out on any of our previous events, all of the videos are saved on the NMRA YouTube channel:

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Upcoming NMRA Conventions



2023 Texas Express

2023

2023 Texas Express

<https://www.nmra.org/conventions/2023-texas-express>

Upcoming MER Conventions



MER 2023 - Round the Curve to Altoona
-October 19-22, 2023

Division Apparel



Polo



Polo with pocket



Cap



Short Sleeve Button-Down



Long Sleeve Button-Down

Our new apparel source is Daylight Sales. Website: <https://www.daylightsales.net/> You can do a search for “PhillyNMRA” to find our items, or [click here](#) for the direct link. Email: daylightsales@gmail.com Phone: (888) 557-9899.

We continue to offer the Port Authority polo, with or without pocket, and the short- and long-sleeve button down shirts. As before, you can have your name added. A new offering is a matching cap. Unfortunately patches are no longer available as our emblem is now being directly embroidered onto the items.

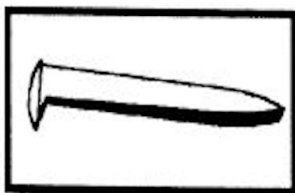
Manufacturer’s descriptions and specs:

POLO

POLO W/POCKET

LONG SLEEVE BUTTON DOWN

SHORT SLEEVE BUTTON DOWN



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION FORM AND SEND TO YOUR REGIONAL OR DIVISIONAL AP CHAIR

Member's Name: _____ NMRA#: _____ EXP: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Prov: _____ Country: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date Submitted: _____ Region: _____

The Golden Spike Award will be awarded to any NMRA member who has completed the Qualifications Checklist, obtained the necessary signatures and who does not hold MMR status. It will be administered by the regional and divisional AP Chairs. AP regulations and definitions apply for scratch building and super detailing. To qualify for the award the member must complete the following checklist, obtain the signature of the divisional AP Chair or another NMRA member designated by the divisional Chair. The divisional Chair will submit the signed form to the regional AP Chair who will issue the Golden Spike Award certificate.

QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST:

1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power & Cars):

Display six units of rolling stock either scratch built, craftsman kits or super-detailed commercial kits.

2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

Construct a minimum of eight square feet of layout including scenery.

Construct five structures either scratch built, craftsman kits or super detailed commercial kits. If a module has less than five structures, additional structures separate from the scene may be presented.

3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

Three types of track required (e.g. turnout, crossing, crossover, etc.). All must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed. Commercial track may be used.

All installed track must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously (e.g. double track main, single track main with sidings, and block or command control).

Provide one additional electrical feature such as power operated turnouts, signaling, turnout indication, lighted buildings, etc.

Witness: _____ Print Name: _____ NMRA #: _____

Regional AP Chair: _____ Region: _____

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