

The

Whistle



Post

Official Newsletter of the

Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club

1615 Old Louisburg Rd Raleigh, NC 27604

Phone: 919-400-5570

“All Aboard”

Greetings one and all and welcome to Spring – and all the pollen you can breathe in and cough out. There is nothing like owning a black car in the South in the Spring – it’s amazing just how yellow it becomes every morning. Oh well, just one of the joys of life in the Carolinas.

We had our Spring Open House this last weekend, and it was a rip roaring success. It’s been a long time since we have seen such a great turnout. A big THANK YOU goes to John Mezera who stepped in at the almost last minute and did a bang up job. And as no good deed goes unpunished, he will now be the chairman of the Open House Committee. Thanks again, John.

Remember, our “Spring into Trains Show” is fast approaching. We still need more volunteers to sign up for 4 hour shifts at the show, especially Friday. Remember, if you don’t work at least one 4 hour shift, you will have to pay for a ticket to attend the Show. And one other thing, we need more help with scenicking the raffle layout – see Bernie Dawson for details.

If you happen to look down in the Crew Lounge area, you will notice the handiwork of Alan Servas. He has been cleaning the stained areas of the carpeting. Thank you Alan, and we look forward to helping you with a full carpet cleaning at a later date.

Oh yes, check out the developments in the HO layout. Mount Witwer is really taking shape. Lots of people are doing lots of work. Thank you all. It looks great!

Well enough for now. Got to catch a train.

All Aboard

John Spach, President

In Memorium

Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club lost a valued member on March 15, 2025. Erik Dyke was a Senior Member in the Club and had recently opened his home layout to his friends for operating sessions. A memorial service will be held Saturday, April 19, 2025 at 4:00 PM at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh, 3313 Wade Ave, Raleigh, NC 27607. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Wake County Animal Shelter:

<https://www.thepayplace.com/ncosc/wcanimalcenter/donations/billpreview.aspx>

Groups.IO - A New Communication Option for NRV Members

By Milo Poulin and John Wallis

What is Groups.IO you ask? It's an on-line, information sharing, and discussion forum for our Club. Groups.IO is a free service that is private to Club members, so topics and replies can only be viewed by our membership. Club members are encouraged to participate in these optional forums, but official Club correspondence will continue to be via email and the Whistle Post.

Alan Bradley first introduced this great resource to the NRV N Scale Subcommittee late last year. From there, we realized it would be a good idea to include the HO Scale, O Gauge, and S Gauge Subcommittees, as well as an overall NRV group as the logical next step.

While some Club members use text messaging to communicate, texts can quickly get out of control with lingering discussions and too many replies on the thread. Groups.IO is a little different in that you can pick and choose what topics you want to participate in and limit how often you get updates to the discussion as well. It's also a great way to keep discussion topics from getting side tracked.

As we set up the NRV group you will receive an invitation to join. Simply reply and follow the directions. Or, you can go to the individual groups and request membership. The URLs and moderators are:

<https://groups.io/g/NRV>
<https://groups.io/g/NRV-HO-CLUB>
<https://groups.io/g/NRV-N-CLUB>
<https://groups.io/g/NRV-S-CLUB>
<https://groups.io/g/NRV-O-CLUB>

Ken Howard, Tom Garren, John Spach
Ken Howard
Milo Poulin, Bernie Dawson
George List
George Sawyer

Once there, you should see a "Join this Group" button. Clicking will send an invitation notice to the group administrator/moderator who will approve the request. You can choose to receive individual emails from the group or a daily digest.

Members can start new topics of discussion, read previous posts, and reply to existing discussion topics within the website or on the mobile app. All topics are welcome, and we ask that members keep their replies on point and keep the groups safe places to share ideas in a respectful manner.

Operating Session at Ken Reising's Layout

Ken Reising hosted an operating session on his HO Southern Pacific railroad on March 25th. Randy Foulke, Peter Jerkewitz, Tom Garren, Ken Howard, John Spach, and Bob Witwer met with Ken for breakfast at Jones Café in Clayton. The session was dominated by operation of through passenger and freight trains coupled with complex switching operations at Watsonville and by breakdown of freight trains at San Jose where Ken Howard and Bob Witwer broke four trains and dispatched a through freight to Los Angeles. At least eight trains were dispatched during the session. A good time was had by all. Thanks, Ken



Randy Foulke, Tom Garren , Ken Reising, and John Spach discuss the day's plan of operation (photo by Ken Howard).



Peter Jerkewitz and Tom Garren working on a switching problem in Watsonville Junction (photo by Ken Howard).

Personal Rolling Stock Storage Update

Several members have responded to the Club's request that personal equipment stored on the Member Equipment shelves in the HO layout room bear an identification code. About half the equipment stored on the shelves is now correctly marked and the owners identified.

If you have not already done so, please add your identification code to the equipment and record it on the list next to the shelves. For those who haven't read the signage, or identified their equipment, please do so before the end of April. Unmarked equipment will be moved from the shelves to secure storage at the beginning of May.

HO Layout Goings On

For members who haven't seen **Liam Bryant's** new ScaleTrains' J Class 611, here are some shots he staged on the NRV HO layout. If you hadn't noticed, some pretty neat backgrounds are available for members to take realistic looking snaps of their equipment. Thanks to Liam for showing what can be done to show off your models. As layout quality continues to improve, there will be more photo opportunities.



Liam's J poses for a publicity photo with Alec Urban's Southern E6 on Module 3.



N&W 611 pauses to take on passengers at the Raleigh Station on Module 8.



The new engine can make prodigious amounts of smoke as this photo demonstrates.



For those who like a little less smoke, this shot at the Angier station on Module 2 might appeal.

Open House – April 4, 2025

Thirty-two Club members participated in our April House event: Wayne Aiken, Ed Bottum, Richard Calfee, Ely Carter-Williamson, Jeff Cole, Bernie Dawson, Dan Egy, Sam Ely, Dylan Fann, Randy Foulke, Tom Garren, Michael Hinman, Ken Howard, Michael Johns, Michael Keelean, John

Kuchnia, Ted Kunstling, Paul Lebiezinski, George List, Gordon Lucas, Larry Martin, Adam McDonald, Don McPherson, John Mezera, Schaefer O'Neill, Milo Poulin, George Sawyer, Alan Servas, Brennan Smith, John Spach, John Wallis, and Don Weaver. Thanks to all.

The Open House exceeded our expectations and was a very successful event. We received applications from four prospective new members and entertained more than 75 guests. The event also generated several hundred dollars in sales from the Crew Lounge shelves. Additionally, visitors and members devastated the supply of cookies and snacks that members contributed to the event. Thanks to all who brought a great variety of drinks, cookies, and salty snacks.



Waiting for the arrival of visitors in the Crew Lounge (photo by Ken Howard).



Visitors enjoying the N scale layout (photo by Ken Howard).



Visitors operating the S scale layout in the Crew Lounge (photo by George List).



Club members explaining the N scale and HO scale layouts to guests (photo by Richard Calfee).

HO Layout Workday – March 22nd



Milo Poulin, Paul Lebedinski, and Bob Witwer working on scenery for Mt. Witwer (photo by Ken Howard).



Greg Rehe caught in the act of planting trees on module 9 (photo by Ken Howard).

Another HO workday was held with the specific goal of making the layout more presentable for the upcoming Open House. Thanks to Ely Carter-Williamson, Ken Howard, Ted Kunstling, Paul Lebedinski, Milo Poulin, Greg Rehe, Adam Servas, Alec Urban, and Bob Witwer.

Efforts focused on Mount Witwer, the plywood prairie on Module 4, scenery on Module 9, and touch ups of damaged areas in the foreground of several other modules. The most important visual impact is that Mount Witwer is no longer a treeless, snow-capped pimple that dominates the room. It is now brown with vegetation starting to grow.

The diesel service facility on Module 4 is getting buildings and ballast, and scenery is creeping along the leading edge of the Module. A number of buildings (place holders – not final selections) are making the rest of the module look more in tune with adjacent modules on the legacy layout. The harsh boundaries between modules are being muted by the efforts of vegetation planters.

The grade on Module 9 going up the mountain has received additional attention to cover white plaster with paint. More vegetation has been added to help separate the yard from the agricultural area and to soften the harsh appearance of the exposed upgrade.

Railroad Trivia Question from Randy Foulke

What was the fastest train to run on US rails (likely it is not what you may have guessed)?

(answer and related article can be found on page 10)

Real Railroads

Larry Pearlman has been travelling again, and when he travels, we get to enjoy his trips through his railroad photography. Larry's latest snaps from his February and March trips follow:



UP AC45CCTE #7983 at Kansas City - February 2025.



Shipper's Car Line GE 44 Tonner and ARI 8 in Kansas City - February 2025.



Acela Express 2031 at Cornwells Heights, PA - March 2025.



Amtrak ACS-64 #613 over the Delaware River south of Trenton, NJ - February 2025.



Amtrak Metroliner cab car #9641 at Cornwells Heights, PA - March 2025.



Pennsylvania Heritage #4636 along the NEC at the Delaware River south of Trenton, NJ - February 2025.



Philly PCC Car Gerard and 2nd Street - March 2025.



SEPTA Reading Heritage Silverliner IV Car #293 at Woodbourne Station, PA

And closer to home, a work train in Franklinton, NC behind locomotive #1717 is an EMD SD23T4.



Neat Links

Tom Garren passed along the following link from **Bernie Dawson**: Watch "NS 272 with Severe Engine Problems"

https://youtu.be/jDDDgIIKrM4?si=eN--eWpO7K1r_Mo

Editor's Note: Don't give up viewing too early – the smoke isn't the whole story!

Ken Howard spotted the following video of a grade crossing accident in Minnesota. A semi-truck pulled into the path of the train as it turned off US Highway 14 in Sleepy Eye, MN. Two railroad workers and the truck driver were treated at the scene for minor injuries.

[Video: Semi-truck split in two after train smashes into it | CNN](#)

T-TRAK Update

From John Wallis

Several NRV members are building N Scale modules following the T-TRAK standard, and scenicked based on Eastern North Carolina. The first of these modules to be scenicked is “Tobacco Farm” by Bernie Dawson. The photo shows this module in a layout recently displayed at Carol Woods Retirement Home in Chapel Hill.



“Tobacco Farm” module in context with other T-TRAK modules (photo by John Wallis).



Closer view of “Tobacco Farm” (photo by John Wallis).

HO Layout Donation

On April 9th Mike Hinman, Ken Howard, John Spach, and Bob Witwer travelled to Fearington Village in Pittsboro, NC to receive a donation of a complete HO layout from Bruce Birch. The layout and associated rolling stock, scenic materials, and structures were disassembled and hauled down the staircase to Bob’s truck and were deposited in the Club’s storage lockers in about three hours. Thanks to the crew and to Mr. Birch for his generous donation. We look forward to sorting through the materials and assuring that the donation brings maximum benefits to the Club.



John Spach, Ken Howard, Bob Witwer, and Mike Hinman (photo by Erika Gyori).



The dreaded second story job (photo by Ken Howard).



The HO donation layout (photo by Erika Gyori).



After the "layoutectomy" (photo by Ken Howard).

Fastest Recorded Train in the United States by Randy Foulke

The fastest train to run in the United States was the New York Central's M-497 Turbojet Train, also known as the *Black Beetle*. The M-497 reached **183.68 mph** during trials on July 23rd and 24th, 1966 between Butler, Indiana and Air Line Junction, Ohio (near Toledo). This section of track was chosen for the trials because it was the longest tangent track on the New York Central System (68 miles). Unofficially, M-497 may have exceeded 190 mph, but is not officially known because the recording instruments were not designed to record speeds this high.



M-497 was the brainchild of Don Wetzel and Hank Morris. They came up with the idea over coffee in the summer of 1965 of a jet powered train as a means of offering high-speed passenger service. Don Wetzel was a veteran jet fighter pilot and a Professional Engineer. Don was also the railroad's Assistant Director of Technical Research at NYC's Technical Research Laboratory in Cleveland. Amazingly, after their pitch to then-president Alfred Perlman, the project was given the go ahead.

Don and Hank decided to use a NYC RDC-3 for mounting the jet engines. With Don's experience in the USAF, he was aware of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base near Tucson, AZ that housed surplus and stored aircraft. Don travelled to the base and bought two jet engines from a B-36D "Peacekeeper" nuclear bomber. The Air Force charged Don the grand sum of \$5,000. With jet engines in hand, Don and Hank began preparing the M-497 for its test. Improvements included streamlining the nose (note from the picture that the RDC was modified to run backward from its normal orientation). Other improvements included instruments, sensors, and recorders to monitor and record the tests. Total cost of improvements, including the jet engines, was estimated to be \$30,000. The inlet cones of the jet engines were painted red to "give the rail car some class."

During the tests, Don Wetzel actually operated the unit. The tests proved that a jet powered train was feasible. However, the Penn Central merger was imminent, and the Pennsylvania personnel were adamant about pursuing the *Metroliner* project. The jet engines were removed from M-497

and used for snow removal by Penn Central (Snow removal proved problematic because the engine exhaust tended to blow loose ballast around). M-497 was returned to service, eventually owned by Conrail, sold to the Metropolitan Transit Authority for parts, and finally scrapped in 1984.

The second fastest train speed record is held by an un-modified, production trainset that reached **170.8 mph** between Trenton and New Brunswick, New Jersey on December 20, 1967. This speed was achieved by a TurboTrain, a turbine-powered train, during a test run. The gas turbine power plant was similar to engines used on US Army helicopters. No American train has come close to these speeds since 1967. The fastest speed of Acela trainsets is 150 mph.

Upcoming Club Meetings and Activities

May Board of Governors Meeting: The next BoG meeting will be held at the Clubhouse on Monday, May 5th at 7:00 pm. Attendance via Zoom is optional.

April General Membership Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 17th at 7:00 pm at the Clubhouse. Peter Denofrio will present a program on Railroad Stations.

April N Scale Committee Meeting: The N Scale Committee will meet on Saturday, April 19th at 10:00 am in the Clubhouse.

April HO Committee Meeting: The next meeting will be on Sunday, April 20th at 1:00 pm in the Clubhouse.

Breakfast Social: Join us for the breakfast social every Wednesday, 9:00 am at Barry's Café, Raleigh, NC.

"Spring into Trains" show: May 3-4: All hands on deck! Be sure to sign up for a time slot to work at the show. See the signup sheet in the Crew Lounge or contact Bernie Dawson.

Notes from the Editor and Webmaster

Please send photos of Club activities to Brian Heaton, Webmaster, at bheaton1@gmail.com, so he can maintain and update our website. Also, don't forget to send your material, especially videos, to Ted Kunstling at trkunstling@aol.com so that he can keep our Facebook site current.

Please send articles, photos of real trains and Club activities, book reviews, product reviews, photographs of your home layouts, and interesting links to Ken Howard, Whistle Post Editor, at klhowardjr@aol.com.

Minutes of Membership, Board, HO, and N Committee's Meetings

Minutes of Board of Governors, Membership, and HO and N Committee meetings are available on the Club website. The link below takes you directly to the Minutes page:

<https://nrvclub.net/meeting-minutes/>

NRV Whistle Post
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First Class

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