

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”**

June 2025

Here we go, starting another fiscal year as the Neuse River Model Railroad Club. I wonder if anyone ever thought we would be around this long, and still growing and prospering. Congratulations to one and all and thank you all for your contributions to our growth and success. Let's be sure to work hard to keep this going.

Speaking of hard work and working together, we are already full on with progress in planning for our Fall show. Bob Witwer is once again head over heels in the middle of making this year even greater than the last year. I tell you; this guy is the energizer bunny when it comes to working for a successful show. And, he has built a great team around him that specializes in the details that make our shows great. If you want to be a part of this fun filled project, contact Bob – I'm sure he can find the perfect place for you to be the most help.

Yet another busy bee is Chuck Larnerd, who has taken on the added job of Track Czar for the HO layout, in addition to being the wiring ace for that layout. Please help Chuck as he works on plans to develop a comprehensive track manual and procedures guide for any and all track laid on the HO layout. He is going to need all of your help and cooperation with this. Let's make him a hero.

Lots of other fun stuff happening around the Club – in all scales. It's up to you to be there and join in - I'm looking for all of you at the Club. Soon.

Hey that's a train coming. See you at the Club.

**All Aboard**

**John Spach, President**

## Donation to the Building Fund



(Photo by Ken Howard)

**Gene Sing** presents a check from Piedmont Railroad Museum & Library, Inc. to President **John Spach** earmarked for the NRV Building Fund.

## Volunteers Needed to Plan and Organize the “Craftsman’s Showcase Event” at the NRV Fall Train Show

“Craftsman’s Showcase” is a new activity for the Club’s train shows. It is an opportunity for any craftsman to display their scratch-built (or kit-bashed) models of locomotives, rolling stock, structures, and dioramas. Anyone is invited to bring their projects to showcase their talents at our shows starting this fall.

The NRV Club is inviting the NMRA local CPD13 Division along with the Mid-Eastern Region, other model train clubs, and anyone else to bring their crafts to display with the hope of attracting more enthusiasm for our hobby.

So we need a couple of members to take the reins to plan and organize this activity. We are also asking some members from CPD13 to share their knowledge and work with us. This is a great way to get involved and learn or enhance your craftsman skills. Contact Bob Witwer or Randy Foulke to volunteer... before you’re voluntold!

## Expertise Needed – Please Respond

The Club needs to know if you have (and are willing to apply) expertise in information technologies; particularly Facebook, eBay sales, Groups.io, website design, Facebook, etc. Please contact John Spach, Ken Howard, or Tom Garren if you can help the Club improve our electronic presence.

## **Addendum to *A Primer on Headend Passenger Cars*** **by Randy Foulke**

I realized after my presentation on *A Primer on Headend Passenger Cars* at the General Membership meeting on April 17, 2025 that I had forgotten a very important business using express reefer cars. Flowers were a significant portion, both by volume and revenue, of business for Railway Express Agency, Pacific Fruit Express, Santa Fe, Atlantic Coast Line, Pennsylvania, and Great Northern express reefers. Shipments from Arizona, California, and Florida to the east



coast and Midwest predominated. As you might expect, the days prior to Valentine's Day were the busiest time of the year. Flower shipments by express reefer had dwindled by 1959 and were gone by the early 1960's. Flower shipments transferred to the highways and air. Today, most flower shipments are by air, although rail has made a modest comeback using mechanically refrigerated containers as pictured to the left.

Someone at the meeting mentioned that Amtrak "tried running" express boxcars. Amtrak started its non-passenger mail and express business with its own startup in 1971. Mail and express were handled in Heritage Fleet conventional baggage cars purchased from member railroads. In addition to Heritage Fleet cars, there were three types of equipment for Amtrak's Mail and Express service:

- First were the 1400- and 1500-series Material Handling Cars (MHCs), which were 61 feet over end sills. The MHCs were delivered in 1986 and 1988 and were used almost exclusively for bulk mail shipments.
- Second were the standard-design express boxcars, numbered in the 70000- 71000- and 71200-series numbers. The express boxcars were delivered in 1997, and because they lacked HEP pass-through cabling, they were restricted to rear-of-train service.
- Third were the standard design mechanical refrigerator cars leased to *ExpressTrak*. The dedicated equipment was removed from service in 2004 (2006 for *ExpressTrak*).

The picture on the left below is an MHC. MHC cars were painted in four different schemes. The center picture is an express box car. They were painted in three different schemes. Many MHCs and a few express boxcars included a USPS logo on both sides of the car. The right hand picture is an express reefer, and they existed in two different paint schemes.



Amtrak also tried using *Roadrailer*s for hauling bulk mail shipments. A *Roadrailer* is a specialized semi-trailer designed to transition seamlessly between road and rail transportation. It's essentially a truck trailer with built-in rail wheels that can be deployed to connect to a train. This allows for intermodal freight transportation, where goods can be moved efficiently between roads and rails without the need for flatcars or cranes to load the trailer. The *Roadrailer*s used by Amtrak included side doors on both sides and were unique to Amtrak. The side doors allowed for transfer of bulk mail at stations like a baggage car. The *Roadrailer*s were painted in two different schemes, and many had a USPS logo or the words "U.S. MAIL CONTRACTOR" on both sides. The picture shows a string of *Roadrailer*s on the end of an Amtrak Train.



In theory, Amtrak being in the express business seemed like a good idea, in the sense that adding a few cars to the headend or rear of a passenger train would have few costs. But the equipment was not cheap, the switching moves shuffling the equipment at stations were time consuming and expensive, and the impact on passenger convenience was severe. Too much had changed since the days of the traditional pre-Amtrak headend mail and express business. An interesting idea that should have worked, but it was poorly executed.

Like the Amtrak SDP40F in a previous generation, the MHCs experienced some high-speed derailments on the BNSF in the 2000's, and were restricted to 60 mph on that railroad. This was not practical for passenger train service. Amtrak sold off the express boxcars to freight operating entities and let the lease run out on the express reefers. Most of the MHCs were placed in storage. A few were transferred to maintenance-of-way service with Amtrak and Class II and III railroads. Some MHC's still reside in storage. Most of the *Roadrailer*s were sold to Norfolk Southern and could be seen for many years in the Amtrak paint scheme patched with *Triple Crown Service*.

## New HO Rolling Stock

Recent donations have given the Club a chance to upgrade existing rolling stock and to add some quality newcomers. The table summarizes the newest editions to the HO collection.

NRV #	Railroad	Road No,	Type	Notes
454	Union Pacific	50596	Flat with load	
455	CSX	4547	SD70AC	DCC genesis w/sound
456	CSX	8952	SD45-2	DCC
198	Union Pacific	113808	40 foot box	Cleaner – replaced B&O box car cleaner with no doors.
457	GATX	3308	Covered hopper	
458	Southern	292099	Drop floor gondola	
459	Norfolk Southern	555059	Caboose	
460	Canadian National	43630	40 foot box	New Track Cleaner



## Club “Pass the Hat” Fundraiser

**Editor’s Note:** Please enjoy the photos and heart-felt thank you letter from Jim Smith’s family.



(Photos by Cassie Zakovsky)

My name is Cassie: my son is Wesley. Wesley is the little boy with Dravet Syndrome – a rare form of epilepsy. We want to thank the organization for their generous donation to assist our family in receiving the seizure alert dog. The dog will be a great asset to assure Wesley’s safety and in turn increase his quality of life.

Wesley is a smart, brave, resilient, determined, and hilarious 6-year old boy. He loves to play baseball, play with trains and cars, and to be outside. Typically, when he has a seizure it’s in his sleep or doing one of the above mentioned activities. We pray his seizure alert dog, Ace, will be a life-long companion and help provide that extra support we need for Wes.

Thank you from the entire Zakovsky/Smith family for your generous donation.

## Brick Universe

Steve Wills has been setting up his LEGO layout with the help of our Club members since 2017 and will continue that tradition this year. The show this year will be held on **June 28th and 29th** at **Raleigh's Convention Center**. See the recent email blast for more particulars.

Those who help during the show days are able to get into the event at no charge. You normally do have to pay for parking. Please contact Steve at [glitterstim@aol.com](mailto:glitterstim@aol.com) or 984-292-7938 to offer help.

## HO Donation

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, Club members picked up a donated HO layout from Bob Kaspen in Cary. The layout is DCC operational, fully scenicked, and was retrieved intact for future use. Some of the rolling stock has already been added to the HO collection. Thanks to Sam Ambrose, Randy Foulke, Ken Howard, Greg Rehe, John Spach, and Bob Witwer for donating time and vehicles for this acquisition. The layout is currently in storage in Ken Howard’s shed.



(Photos by Ken Howard)

## Opportunities for Members

The Board of Governors will offer two pieces of little used equipment from the Shop to the members before final disposal. The items for sale are:

- a Wanhao PowerSpec, Duplicator i3 MINI, three-D printer and accessories, and
- a small Craftsman drill press stand #572.53020 including a Dremel tool.



Interested members should contact Ken Howard at [klhowardjr@aol.com](mailto:klhowardjr@aol.com) for particulars and prices. If there is no interest from Club members, the items will either be sold or donated to a local charity.



## Memorial Service

A memorial service for William (Bill) Hanley was held Friday, May 16, 2025 at 11:30 am at the Renaissance Funeral Home. John Spach, Tom Garren, Randy Foulke, and George Sawyer represented NRV at the service.

## Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway Shop Tour By Randy Foulke

The Club is planning a shop tour of the Aberdeen, Carolina & Western Railway in Candor, NC on **September 5, 2025**. You will not want to miss this tour! The 2-hour tour will start at 1 pm. The cost will be \$25 per person. Tom Garren will send an email with information on signing up. I will take names and payment beginning late June or early July. Deadline is early August.

I was fortunate to tour the shop in 2023. The shop included historical passenger cars dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including some wood-sided cars. Photos from 2023 follow:



# Breakfast Social Alert – Barry’s will closed on July 2<sup>nd</sup>

## Special Sale to Club Members Only – June 21<sup>st</sup>, 11 am to 2 pm

As most of you know, the Club’s operating costs and expenses are covered by a variety of activities including donations, dues, Clubhouse sales, show proceeds, and eBay sales to name a few. Much donated material goes directly to show sales, Club layout inventory, or display in the Clubhouse, but a number of high end items go to eBay for sale to maximize the financial return to the Club. Because most members don’t get to see donated materials until they appear on our shelves for sale, the Board of Governors will provide a chance for members to view and purchase high-end items (price and quality) before they will be offered to the public via eBay.

Most of the merchandise for sale is DCC equipped HO locomotives, but there are other treasures as well, including a Clover Credit Card Machine, a WIFI router, a Poly Foam Kit, a Thorens Swiss music box that plays *Blue Danube*, Siemens SR70 trolley kit, and assorted European narrow gauge rolling stock. Come see what other oddities have been donated to the Club.

If you are in the market for good motive power or an eclectic item, stop by the Clubhouse on June 21<sup>st</sup> with cash or credit card in hand. Items are priced below eBay pricing for similar items and are firm. Negotiating and haggling will not be allowed. First person with the cash will own the item, so come prepared to make decisions – once it’s gone, it’s gone. Items that do not sell to members will be posted to eBay for sale to the general public.

## Lionel Donation

**Gene Sing** donated a high quality collection of mostly Lionel equipment to the Club at the May show and then made a second donation that was picked up at his home at a later date. The combined donations total over 200 items including rolling stock, steam and diesel locomotives, power supplies, railroad books, some HO stuff, etc. that are being sorted for retention or sale by the Club. The most visible impacts of this donation are the O Gauge sale shelf in the Crew Lounge and the book donation in the Library and Crew Lounge. Thanks to the members who picked up the second half of the donation: Alan Bradley, Phil Michaud, John Spach, John Wallis, and Bob Witwer. Thanks also go to George Sawyer, Mike Keelean, Wayne Aiken, and Don Weaver who have been sorting and sifting through all the material. **Thanks Gene.**





## “Spring into Trains” – May 1- 4, 2025

While the 2025 “Spring into Trains Show” is now history, but here’s a reminder to every member of the very successful event. A big **THANK YOU** goes to all our **SPONSORS**.



## Real Railroads

**George Lasley** caught multiple railroads in action at Glenwood Yard on May 10<sup>th</sup>.



Carolina Coastal



Norfolk Southern AC44C6M  
#4126



RJ Corman EMD SD40-2 #7181

**Larry Pearlman** continues his travels and railroad photography. This month's photos are from Tennessee, North Carolina, and Minnesota – enjoy.



Knoxville Locomotive Works - 75 percent off.



Knoxville Locomotive Works - Restoration work on New River Rambler #60 1922 Baldwin named Texas II and Yadkin Valley RR SD70MAC #9540 and NS Boxcar #2247.



Knoxville Locomotive Works Plymouth #151.



Southern 2-8-0 #154 on the Three Rivers Rambler in Knoxville, TN - built in 1890 at Schenectady Works.





Westminister Junction, St. Paul MN tunnel built in 1886.



BNSF ES44DC #7254 passing through Westminister Junction Tunnel 2 - St. Paul, MN.



Norfolk Southern EMD SD70Ace #1058 in Bristol, TN/VA.





Doe River Gorge Railroad Plymouth HSD #16 – old Tweetsie line through Doe River Gorge



American Railroad Equipment Association locomotive – HK Porter #17 at the Doe River Gorge Railroad, Hampton, TN



Doe River Gorge Railroad – old Tweetsie tunnel



American Railroad Equipment Association locomotive #17 at the Doe River Gorge Railroad, Hampton, TN

## Help Wanted – eBay Manager

The Club is in need of a volunteer to take over the Club's eBay sales. The work involves photographing and describing the merchandise, posting to the site, completing sales and shipping of the purchased goods. Help will be available to introduce the volunteer to the Club's site and procedures. Contact Ken Howard or John Spach if you are interested. eBay sales have the potential to generate thousands of dollars a year to support the Club.

## Neat Links

**Charles Tubman** passed on the following link to CSRRRC's program by Ralph Hawkins titled "A Half-Dozen Georgia Peaches" about train rides in the Peach state.

[https://youtu.be/1edBfLrZ\\_Cs?si=VHP9w-m\\_h1CwoqNz](https://youtu.be/1edBfLrZ_Cs?si=VHP9w-m_h1CwoqNz)

**Phil Michaud** sent several links and comments including an article about Amtrak plans to extend service to Bangor, ME.

"Right in my backyard so to speak. Currently, Amtrak only goes to Brunswick, ME from Boston's North Station (under TD Bank Gardens). Biggest problem for Amtrak ridership in northern New England is in Boston. Amtrak from south (CT, NY, etc.) ends in South Station and riders can only get to North Station by using Boston transit. North Station services NH and ME for Amtrak."

<https://www.wmtw.com/article/economy-study-extension-amtrak-downeaster-bangor/64784641>

**Phil Michaud:** "This is a great read. Steam locomotive's design reflects its intended use."

<https://www.trains.com/trn/train-basics/abcs-of-railroading/making-sense-of-steam/>

**Phil Michaud:** Here is another article about "last mile" efforts driven by NS to their 260+ short line partners

<https://www.trains.com/trn/news-reviews/news-wire/ns-expands-interchange-improvement-program-to-all-short-line-connections/>

**Tom Garren** passed along the following link from **Ted Kunstling**:

[A Comedian Saves a Railroad With Purchase of a New Jersey Home - WSJ](#)

## Upcoming Club Meetings and Activities

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

June HO Committee Meeting: The next meeting will be on Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in the Clubhouse.

June HO Track Subcommittee Meeting: The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am in the Clubhouse.

June General Membership Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Clubhouse. George Lasley will present a program titled "Backdrops".

June Merchandise Sale for Members: Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup> from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Clubhouse.

Breakfast Social: Join us for the breakfast social every Wednesday, 9:00 am at Barry's Café, Raleigh, NC. Don't forget – Barry's will close the first week in July for summer vacation. **There will be no breakfast social on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

Brick Universe: June 28-29 at Raleigh Convention Center.

## **Notes from the Editor**

Please send photos of Club activities to Brian Heaton, Webmaster, at [bheaton1@gmail.com](mailto: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 [tkunstling@aol.com](mailto:tkunstling@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](mailto: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://nrvcub.net/meeting-minutes/>



NRV Whistle Post  
The Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club, Inc.  
1615 Old Louisburg Road  
PO Box 19573  
Raleigh, NC 27619-9573

First Class

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

John Spach	President	<a href="mailto:jtspach@earthlink.net">jtspach@earthlink.net</a>	919-361-3650
Ken Howard	Vice-President	<a href="mailto:klhowardjr@aol.com">klhowardjr@aol.com</a>	919-851-3805
Schaefer O'Neill	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:schaefer.oneill@gmail.com">schaefer.oneill@gmail.com</a>	919-740-6923
Tom Garren	Secretary	<a href="mailto:tomgar@mindspring.com">tomgar@mindspring.com</a>	919-805-0909
Richard Calfee (Calfee)	At-Large	<a href="mailto:rhcalfree@yahoo.com">rhcalfree@yahoo.com</a>	301-335-1054
George Sawyer	At-Large	<a href="mailto:gsawyer@ix.netcom.com">gsawyer@ix.netcom.com</a>	919-469-0442
Bob Witwer	At-Large	<a href="mailto:bobwitwer@gmail.com">bobwitwer@gmail.com</a>	919-632-0785

### OTHER KEY POSITIONS

Bob Witwer	Show Chairman	<a href="mailto:bobwitwer@gmail.com">bobwitwer@gmail.com</a>	919-632-0785
Clif Kelly	Membership Chair	<a href="mailto:bkelly11@nc.rr.com">bkelly11@nc.rr.com</a>	919-614-8891
Ted Kunstling	Social Media Chair	<a href="mailto:trkunstling@aol.com">trkunstling@aol.com</a>	919-787-5282
Wayne Aiken	Librarian	<a href="mailto:htomc42@hotmail.com">htomc42@hotmail.com</a>	919-602-8529
Ken Howard	Newsletter Editor	<a href="mailto:klhowardjr@aol.com">klhowardjr@aol.com</a>	919-851-3805
Brian Heaton	Webmaster	<a href="mailto:bheaton1@gmail.com">bheaton1@gmail.com</a>	765-427-6541

**WEB SITE** [www.nrvclub.net](http://www.nrvclub.net)