

The

Whistle



Post

Official Newsletter of the

Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club

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“All Aboard”

Our major Fall events are almost upon us, but before we finalize plans for the Open House and Fall Train Show, we should acknowledge the work that has been going on this summer to make the Club and our layouts a better place to enjoy and run trains.

- New brass track has been acquired for the G scale train in the Crew Lounge. We hope that replacing the aluminum track will allow smoother operation and lower maintenance efforts. Volunteers are needed to participate in cleaning and installation of the new track.
- The S gauge layout has fallen victim to a serious cleaning effort. Locos and rolling stock are also being cleaned and inspected. The layout is now easy to operate and makes a good first impression on new visitors as they come in the front door.
- It's hard to miss the beehive of activity in the HO layout room (see additional details in articles that follow). Track work and new switch panels are essentially completed, and lots of new scenery details are in progress. The white board on the wall behind the HO layout is covered with plans, maps, and information on upcoming projects. Forms for submitting new project suggestions are available there as well. Please visit the layout and recognize that all this work has been done while keeping the layout operational for running trains.
- Not to be outdone, the N scale crew continues to make steady progress on layout upgrades while maintaining operations. Addition of scenery, buildings, and water features is about to begin.

Please contact John Mezera or Phil Michaud (Co-chairs) to volunteer your time for the October 17th Open House. We need to have trains running and members to explain model railroading and our Club to our guests. We hope to implement a better method for gathering information from guests and potential new members. Phil and John are working on details.

Signup sheets are available at the Clubhouse for **YOU** to volunteer your time and services for the Fall Show. **Please volunteer ASAP!** There are still too many blank slots on the signup sheets. Please contribute as much of your time as possible.

All Aboard

Ken Howard, President

Addendum to the August 2026 Trivia Question and Answer

By Randy Foulke

An NRV member challenged my assertion of the easternmost point of the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR). This person said I should consider Montauk, NY (on the eastern end of Long Island) as the easternmost point because PRR owned the Long Island Railroad (LIRR). I considered this viewpoint when I wrote the article but dismissed this opinion because the LIRR was operated as a separate railroad with its own management, operating staff, and unique roster of locomotives and rolling stock. LIRR also had a unique color scheme, as shown at right. It also should be noted that PRR and LIRR rolling stock did not intermingle to any great extent. Therefore, I believe my assertion in the August 2026 *Whistle Post* is correct.



The PRR invested in and controlled many railroad properties, one of which was the Wabash Railroad, a PRR subsidiary from 1927 to 1964. If the same logic were applied, then the westernmost point of the PRR would have been Des Moines, IA. I don't believe this would be a correct interpretation for the same reasons.

HO NEWS - September 13, 2026

By Chuck Larnerd

We held our monthly HO meeting on Sunday the 13th @ noon. Lots of discussion, and decisions were made. I will post the Minutes on the communication wall in the layout room (Minutes are also available on the Club website). We have an Open House coming up on the 17th of October, and a moratorium on track work (other than emergency fixes) was approved. We have lots of scenery to add, repair, and replace. **LOOKING** for volunteers to help! If you have a knack for scenery, or just want to learn some, please let me know and I'll try to get you hooked up based on your skill level. Tree/grass planters, ballasters, repairers of broken stuff, and general cleanup helpers are needed. If you see something that needs fixing that you are skilled at, let me know.

As a reminder, please **DO NOT** take it upon yourself to make **ANY** changes to the layout. **ALL** changes (scenery, track, electronics) **MUST** be reviewed by the HO discussion group and voted on. If you want to have input on future updates to the layouts, please try to attend the Sunday discussions (2nd Sunday of the month at noon.) Once we get Groups.IO working, we would like to use it for news and discussions. The updated Track Guide, Checklist, and Change Request Forms are in a basket on the communication wall. The "Good Neighbor" **Layout Participation Guidelines** have been posted to ensure that everyone has a good experience when using the HO layout... so make sure to read them if you haven't already.

New Urban Development on the HO Layout



John Spach took these photos of the new urban renewal project that he has created on Module 2. If you haven't seen these additions, visit the layout as soon as you can. John has invested a lot of hours and effort into improving the module. The buildings are new or rebuilt, the streets are full of vehicles, and people are out and about on the sidewalks. The buildings are also lighted.

September Trivia Question

By Randy Foulke

What is a "sealed" and a "working" express or mail car, and what is a "rotary" car in passenger or express train service?

See page 8 for the answers.

America 250 Locomotive Celebration

John Mezera attended the festivities in Spencer, NC and provided the pictures below of the event. Any errors in the captions for the locomotives are not John's fault – the editor accepts responsibility for any missed IDs.



R. J. Cormann Dash 8 #1776



Buffalo & Pittsburgh C44-9W #4434



Lake State Railway SD70M #1776



Susquehanna (NYS&W) SD40M-2 #3634



Buffalo & Pittsburgh C44-9W #4434



From left to right: Norfolk Southern SD70ACE #8118, CSX CM44AH #2026, and Carolina Coastal Railway GP38-2 #1776.

Neat Links

Bernie Dawson suggests watching "Why Every Model Railroader on YouTube is Talking About This" on YouTube:

https://youtu.be/514w_xvXVy0?is=cS1JoCAnPjTb7nII

Ken Howard found this "Diesel Shop" website with a photo journal of all the semiquincentennial locomotives in patriotic livery.

[Semiquincentennial Locomotives](#)

Real Railroads

Ken Howard has been on vacation again, so you'll have to put up with some photos of mainline railroading in various states. Here's a short compilation from some major hotspots for photography.



On August 31st BNSF #7054 (ES44C4) and #7290 (ES44DC) are southbound with mixed freight into the Galesburg, IL yard.



It's August 25th and the Super Chief is departing from Galesburg, IL for Chicago behind GE P42DCs #13 and #198.



Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern GP30 #2535 sits on the ready track in Pittston, PA. The unit immediately behind it is a newly repainted SD50 #5019 slated for tourist runs.



Mainline action on Union Pacific west of Ames, IA on the morning of September 3rd. Two ES44AC-H units including #8236 are eastbound with a unit train.

Upcoming Events

Tracks to Tidewater: NMRA/MER Convention from October 15-18, 2026 at the Holiday Inn, Virginia Beach. Events hosted by Tidewater Division.

NRV Open House: Our Fall Open House will be held on October 17, 2026. This is a chance to put our Club and layouts on public display. Please plan on contributing your time to help us show off. Contact Phil Michaud or John Mezera (Co-chairs) for additional details.

NRV Fall Show: November 7-8, 2026 in the Graham Building at the NC State Fairgrounds. This is an all hands on deck event. We are in great need of members' assistance to make the show a success. Sign-ups for needed tasks from Thursday through Sunday are not very encouraging to date. Please sign up for time slots on the sheets in the Crew Lounge or contact Bernie Dawson.

Upcoming Club Meetings and Activities

September General Membership Meeting: The next membership meeting will be held on September 17th at 7:00 pm at the Clubhouse. Randy Foulke will give the presentation following the meeting titled: *Railroad Stations of Chicago, Part 2*.

October Board of Governors Meeting: Because of travel schedules of the President and Board members, the October BoG meeting will be held on Monday, October 15th at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held on **Zoom only**.

October HO Committee Meeting: Scheduled for noon on October 11th.

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

Notes from the Editor

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

Please support the Club's new Instagram site by submitting videos of operations on the NRV layouts to Alec Urban at alec.urban@icloud.com. Alec is managing the new site.

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://nrvcclub.net/meeting-minutes/>

Answer to Randy Foulke's September Trivia Question:

A “sealed” express or mail car was a car that travelled from the departure point to the destination point without opening any of the doors. This could be from the starting point to the end point of the route of the train, or the car could be switched in or out of the train, but the car would only be opened once it had arrived at its destination. Because of the contents of the car, the doors could literally be “sealed” to prevent unauthorized access. Generally, conventional baggage cars were used for “sealed” cars, but surplus railway post office (RPO) cars were sometimes used.

A “working” express car loaded and unloaded express packages and boxes along the route of the train. Express items could include live animals, valuables, and items requiring protection from the cold, such as green and flowering plants and Christmas poinsettias, and fish or seafood. Some of the packaging could include crates, barrels, or skids. Generally, express messenger cars were used for a “working” express car, but could also include surplus RPOs. (Surplus RPOs could be identified because the catcher arm, or hook, had been removed.) Express messenger cars were baggage cars that included a desk, stool or chair, a heater (steam), and a toilet. Some express messenger cars included a sink.

A “working” mail car was the RPO car, which sorted mail en route, and picked up and delivered mail bags along the route of the train. On heavy mail routes, a baggage car would be positioned next to the RPO for additional storage of mail bags to be sorted en route and was also called a “working” mail car. A car with bulk mail bags that were not sorted en route, but were picked up or delivered at stops en route, was also called a “working” mail car. These bulk mail cars were generally conventional baggage cars.

The US Postal Service and the Railway Express Agency both shipped valuable, sensitive, and confidential packages. This could include precious metals, currency, stocks, bonds, legal documents, classified documents, and jewelry. These items were shipped in bags that were secured with what were called rotary locks. The baggage cars that hauled these packages were specially fitted with hooks to hold the bags, and were separated by shipper and/or recipient. Certified and registered mail could also be carried in baggage cars. Over time, these special baggage cars became known as “rotary” cars. “Rotary” cars could be “working” or “sealed.” Usually, these cars were placed next to an RPO allowing the postal agents to provide security and protect the contents. If a “rotary” car was included in the consist, the postal agents would definitely be armed. Some of the rotary locks included a feature that changed the tumblers of the lock each time it was used to provide an additional level of security. An example of a rotary lock is shown above.



Source: Cape, R. E. & McKeen, R. G. (2026), *The Ghost Trains of SP's Overland Route, Train Nos. 21-22 - Second Section*, Southern Pacific Historical & Technical Society, Upland, CA

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