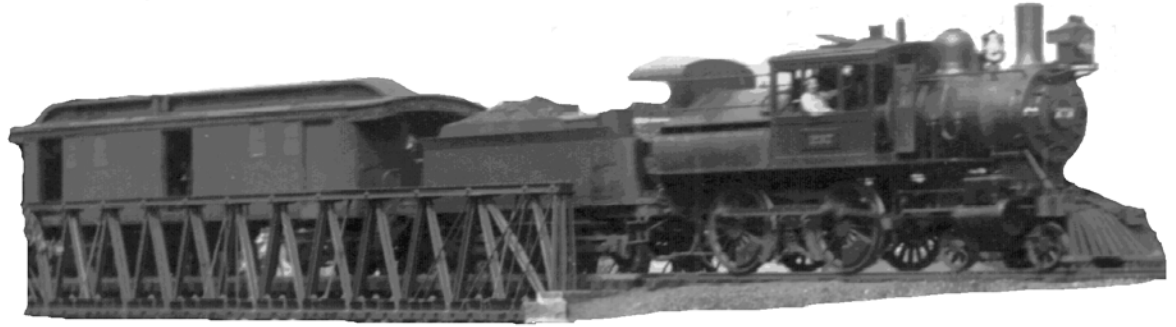




Pottstown & Reading
Chapter, NRHS Inc.



THE COLEBROOKDALE LOCAL

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Winter, 2011

Presidents Message:

Happy New Year everyone! I hope you had a memorable and happy holidays with family and friends. I wish you a good, healthy, and prosperous 2011.

The weather sure has been unusually cold, so most of the snow that fell stayed on the ground so that we could take pictures of trains in snow scenes.

Our Chapter-sponsored Railcamper Joe Samolewicz was at our last meeting, and we were pleased that he had a great educational experience and a good time. He was very thankful for our sponsorship.

We are planning to sponsor another student to attend RailCamp 2011 in Scranton, PA. Chapter eligibility and RailCamp requirements are a male or female freshman through senior high school age, living within a 40-mile radius of Reading or Pottstown, and submitting an essay of 250 words or more explaining why they are interested in railroads and desire to attend RailCamp. Check out www.nrhs.com for other details. Submission postmark deadline for our chapter is Thursday, March 17, 2011.

Looking forward to seeing you at Chapter meetings in 2011.

John Sweigart

From The Raffle Guy:

Congratulations to Charlie Weber Jr. for winning the book "Anthracite Railroads and Mining in Color" at the 2010 Fall Banquet. Thanks go to everyone who purchased tickets at either our chapter meetings or at the Banquet, and to Charlie Weber Jr. for working the crowd and collecting the money. The total raised was around \$60 which goes right into our treasury.

The next item to be raffled off will be a new book titled "The Reading Railroads Wreck Trains & Disasters, by Benjamin Bernhart". This book will be our next raffle item. We will pick the winner at the Spring Banquet. At the Spring Banquet we will have many fine items (both rail and non-rail) items to raffle off. Please attend this event on March 19th 2011 in Shillington.

Contact Wayne Blattner for tickets which are as always \$1 a piece. Wayne's e-mail is wblattner1@Comcast.net and phone is 610-948-6285. Thanks for your support!

Meeting dates for 2011:

January 27

February 24

March 19 Banquet

April 28

May 26

June 30

July 28

August 25

September 17 Banquet

October 27

December 1

If a StormWatch or weather warning has been issued for the Reading/Exeter/Berks area, our monthly meeting will be canceled.

Redners' Warehouse Markets has issued new "Save-A-Tape" cards - they also can be used at their Pump Perks (\$100 in groceries = 10 cent/gallon gas discount). Be sure to stop by their Courtesy Counter to pick up the new cards.

At the present time, 67% of our membership has paid their dues for 2011. They can be paid at the next meeting, or sent to William Reber Jr., at 230 Gollub Drive, Birdsboro, PA 19508. Deadline for 2011 dues is January 31.

At our last meeting, our Chapter's officers were re-elected for 2011:

President: John Sweigart

Vice President: William Reber Jr.

Secretary Rich White II

Treasurer: Charles Weber Jr.

Historian: Dean Kaiser

National Director: John Sweigart

Editor: position is still open – in the interim, Dick White will continue to publish a newsletter on a limited basis.

Grings Mill Model Railroad: Thank you to the following people who ran this year, including: Dick Freeze, Jim Von Neida, Joe Samolewicz, John Sweigart, Paul Weber, T.J. Weber, Gary Weny, and Dick White.

RAIL NEWS

BARTA officials have announced that funding is in place to restore the 80-year old Franklin Street Station. BARTA already had \$2.6 million for the project and recently secured an additional \$2 million from the state. Abandoned since 1981, the station will require a near-total makeover. BARTA hopes to use the station for public buses to and from neighboring counties.

Ex-C&O 4-8-4 #614, which was stored at the R&N's facilities in Port Clinton since 2000, was moved to the Reading yards on January 12th, heading for Roanoke, VA. On the 13th, NS movement #069, with NS #8792, picked up the #614 (with auxiliary tender) and headed for Hagerstown with a 25mph speed restriction. It spent all day Friday at Vardo yard, moving on to Roanoke on Saturday the 15th. The locomotive will go to the East End Shops in preparation for its movement to the shed at the Virginia Museum of Transportation in the next few weeks, joining the #1218 and #611.

Amtrak has opened a new and larger AutoTrain station at Sanford, Florida, replacing the former depot constructed in 1971 and renovated in 1995. The new station seats nearly 600 passengers and is approx. 10,000 sq. ft. in size. It contains a larger passenger lounge, ticket counter, café, restrooms, and of course, a gift shop. Part of the old station will be turned into administrative offices to be completed early this year. Ridership on the AutoTrain has increased each year for the last five years. Amtrak ridership increased nearly 37% since 2000 – setting a ridership record of 28,716,857 passengers for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2010 and collecting a record \$1.74 billion in ticket revenue.

Last April, Amtrak and the Oklahoma DOT launched a one-year test of a bio-diesel fueled GE P32-8 locomotive on the Hearthland Flyer route between Oklahoma City and Fort Worth, TX. The locomotive uses a

bio-diesel blend known as B20, which contains 20% bio and 80% regular diesel fuel. At the end of the test year, Amtrak will take detailed measurements on the bio-diesel's impact on the engines parts.

The new Eastern Berks Gateway Railroad has been named as the operator of the 8.6-mile Colebrookdale Spur that runs from Pottstown to Boyertown. The 5-year lease states that Berks County will gradually shift the operating costs to the railroad, with the railroad paying all costs by the end of the lease. If the railroad generates more than \$15,000 in revenue in any quarter, the railroad will pay the county \$4,125 rent. The money will go into a special fund for future repairs. So far, only Drug Plastics & Glass Co, in Boyertown, is the only customer. Boyertown Borough Council has agreed to lease 1/3 of the former East Penn Railroad yard, a 2-acre tract at 3rd and Washington Streets, to the new railroad – but not the portion of the yard that contains the antique iron crane, a symbol of Boyertown rail history.

The East Penn Railroad has filed to abandon their “Chester Valley” King of Prussia/Bridgeport line. This is the former-Reading line that crosses over Rt. 202 between KoP and Norristown. Five years ago, public dollars were spent to build a run-around at the NS interchange, but even then the line was serviced only two times a week. The abandonment exemption states that the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. Current motive power on the line is NIWX SW1500 #2581

CSX has turned over the Lansdale Cluster, on the former Reading Railroad Bethlehem Branch, to the Pennsylvania Northeast Railroad. They will assume trackage right operations of the Lansdale cluster on SEPTA, excluding the Blue Line and Stony Creek Branch.

Norfolk Southern has placed a multi-year order for both GE and EMD units. They will receive (43) GE ES44C units (#8024-8066), plus another (25) ES44C units (#8067-8091) this year. From EMD, they ordered (25) SD70ACE units for 2011 (#1000-1024). For 2012-2014, it is anticipated that NS will order 25 additional locomotives per year from both GE and EMD.

Norfolk Southern has also announced the order of four additional EPA Tier 2 compliant high-horsepower repowered locomotives from Progress Rail Services / Caterpillar Inc., designated as PR43C's. Since 2008, NS and Progress Rail have been working with two PR43C's – closely monitoring their performance. The PR43C's have dual engines, a Cat C-175 rated at 3600hp. and a C-18 rated at 700hp, which will work in tandem.

- Coming Events -

March 19: Harrisburg Chapter's Railroad Show and Collectors Market, to be held from 9AM-3PM at the IW Abel Union Hall, 200 Gibson St., Steelton, PA. For info, call 717-732-3867. Donation is \$5.00

April 3: RCT&HS Train Meet at the Leesport Farmers Market, 9AM-2PM, Admission \$4.00. For additional info, call 610-777-2053

May 28: Annual PicnicRail, to be held at Maiers Grove in Blandon. More details to follow.

Upcoming programs for 2011:

January: Bye Bye Blues, a VHS on Reading commuter service in Philadelphia

February: Pacific Electric & MetroLink – DVD by Bill Volkmer

March: Banquet (see flyer on rear page)

April: World's Greatest Train Ride – Australia VHS on 2400+ miles

May: Ma & Pa Photo Journal, DVD by Charles Maham Jr.

The COLEBROOKDALE LOCAL is the official newsletter of the Pottstown & Reading Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Inc. The NRHS is a non-profit organization for historical and educational purposes. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and/or contributors and not of the Chapter or Society. Items of interest should be addressed to Richard White, 918 Charles St., Reading, PA 19606-3708. Phone (610)-582-1437, Fax # (610)-404-0666, E-MAIL: rwwhite@yahoo.com (Editor) or rwhite2@dejazzd.com (Rich White). Chapter web site: www.rsignal.com/nrhs