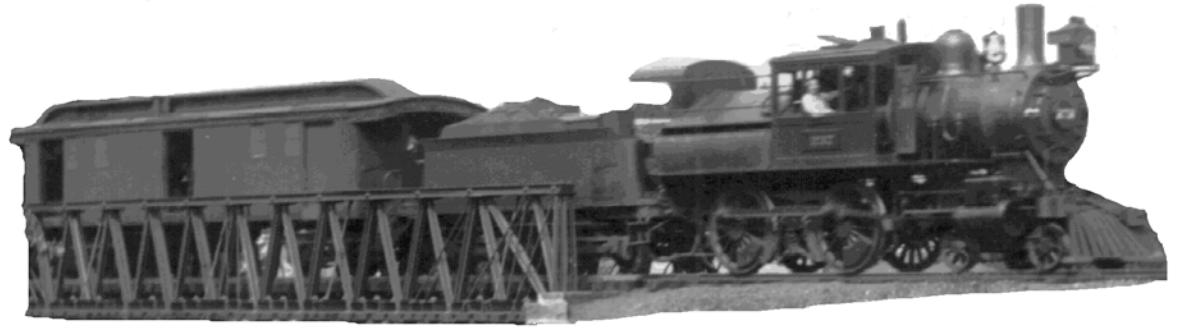




Pottstown & Reading  
Chapter, NRHS Inc.



# THE COLEBROOKDALE LOCAL

Volume 35, Number 7

December, 2008



Norfolk Southern #3850 - the first 6-axle genset locomotive delivered to NS. The three-engine 2100hp 3GS21CDE model, built by National Railway Equipment, was sent to Altoona for fine tuning and cab signals and recently was spotted in Manville, NJ, along with NS 100.

Our next, and last meeting for 2008, will take place on Thursday, December 4, 2008, at our present meeting location - the Exeter Bible Church's cafeteria - Off Route 422 in Extern behind Sheetz. The election of officers for 2009 will be on the agenda. After the meeting, our 2008 Railcamper, Seth Koehler, and NRHS director Barry Smith will present a program on 2008 Railcamp at Steamtown.

In the event of snow, sleet, or freezing rain on a scheduled meeting night, tune into radio stations WEEU 830AM or WRFY 102.5FM for cancellation information.

Your dues for 2009 are now due - if you didn't receive your notice or have any questions, call Bill Reber at 610-582-3323.

From The President:

The fall season has come to a close, the election campaigning has finally concluded, early cold weather, and an early surprising snowfall has occurred. Now we turn our attention to preparing for the holidays that are fast approaching.

I want to thank all the officers for their service this past year. A big thanks goes to our program chair for our excellent programs this past year. Our previous editor has continued to send out meeting reminders. The election of officers is scheduled for our December meeting. I would ask that someone would consider being our Chapter newsletter editor. A monthly publication to our members is a vital link of communication to the members that do not live within driving distance to attend our meetings.

Again, the Chapter members will be volunteering to operate the model railroad at Berks County's Gring's Mill Park during the Holiday Lights nightly program. It is a joy to be able to share our interest in trains and railroading to the young at heart, and especially to the children.

We are anticipating that the young person that our Chapter sponsored to attend RailCamp will be at our next meeting.

Looking forward to see you at our next meeting. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

John D. Sweigart, President

Raffle guy::

The next to be raffled will be the new book titled "Rails Around Reading in Color", by Ben Bernhart. As always, tickets are \$1.00 a piece. The winner will be drawn at the Spring Banquet in March. Here is your opportunity to pick up a very nice book. Please buy many tickets as you can! All proceeds go to into our chapter treasury. See or contact Wayne Blattner for tickets. Thank you.

New Lionel Reading Railroad items for this year (from Bob Sabo):

#6-25025 box car in green with yellow lettering.

2-8-0 steam engine and tender "Consolidation" #6-11132

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.

Our meeting dates for 2009 are as follows:

January 22	July 23
February 26	August 27
March 21 - Banquet	September 19 - Banquet
April 23	October 22
May 28	December 3
June TBD (possible trip)	

## RAIL NEWS

Work has nearly been completed on the undercutting project in the Phoenixville (Black Rock) Tunnel on NS's Harrisburg Line. In the early 90's, it was undercut to handle double-stack trains with one or two domestic (8'6" high) or one domestic and one marine (9'6" high) hi-cube containers. When completed, it will be able to handle trains with two marine containers double-stacked. This will be to the advantage of CP with their 30 and 31J trains.

In the last few months, the “Turkey Path” (between Cumru and Birdsboro) has been re-signaled. Gone are the ex-Reading 93B, 97B, 99B, and NS’s 1E. They are replaced by 16E/W at MP GV16 and 14E/W at MP GV14, making the track Rule 261 and eliminating Track Occupancy forms. New Safetran signals have also been installed at both ends of Cumru interlocking.

NS has started retiring some of its class G52L and G52R bathtub coal gons. Most of the cars were rebuilt in the early 90’s. They show a lot of rust and deterioration where the metal tubs are attached to the car body. The empty cars are being routed to Shire Oaks for their formal paperwork to retire them and then to the scrappers. So far, more than 200 cars have been spotted ready for retirement. NS has already ordered 1,850, 3744-cubic foot H65 stainless steel-carbon steel 3-bay hoppers from FCA in Roanoke. They will have a load limit of 229,900 lbs. with a lt. weight of 56,100 lbs. They will be painted black with NS speed lettering. NS has also ordered 1,200, 4,133-cubic foot Coalporters, along with 400, 4040-cubic foot Autoflood III’s, and 300+ 4061-cubic foot ECP-H67-class cars.

Norfolk Southern has ordered 24 new ES44AC diesel electric locomotives from GE for delivery next year. Up to now, all new power ordered was DC - the only AC’s were the 17 SD80MAC’s that NS inherited from Conrail. They will be numbered #8000-8023.

Grand Luxe Rail Journeys has shut down their operations, leaving some paid-in-full fares for trips that have not been taken and some hefty obligations to creditors to be settled. They want to sell of their rolling stock of 31 cars, including 20 that are fully operational, and have retained Libra Securities to oversee the sale. The equipment will be moved to Napa Valley, CA, for viewing by interested parties.

The new short line, “Lehigh Railroad”, has applied to lease some 56 miles of NS’s ex-Lehigh Valley mainline between Mehoopany and Athens, PA. It will have rights onto Sayre to interchange with NS. It will also interchange with the Reading & Northern at Mehoopany. It is anticipated to handle over 2500 car loads a year.

The liquidation sale of the Knox & Kane equipment saw the ex Huntington & Broad Top #38, a 2-8-0, purchased by Alan Maples for the Everett RR for \$60,000. The ex-WM GP9 #39 was purchased by the Georges Creek RR in Maryland for \$35,000 - possibly to be run on the Western Maryland Scenic RR. And the Chinese-built #58, a 2-8-2, was purchased by the Valley RR, in CT., for \$100,000.

Joe Kovalchich, owner of the EBT and metal scrapper, has purchased the rail, ties, and right of way from Slaon Cornell’s family, possibly leading to scrapping. The Knox & Kane, once known for running excursion trains over the Kinzua Viaduct, fell victim of an arson fire in March, causing nearly \$1 million in damage.

Word has it that the Railroad Museum of PA will scrap the ex-Reading diner #1189. The car was built by Pullman-Standard in 1927 and was roller-bearing equipped and modernized in 1949 to be assigned to the “King Coal”. Later, it was assigned to the “Crusader”. The car was retired around 1966, then donated to the museum in 1970. The ex-Reading business car #15, the “Henry Huntington”, built in 1924, has been donated to the RCT&HS. The car is presently located in California, but is Amtrak-compatible so it will probably be shipped east by rail. Another ex-Reading business car, #10, is presently used in First Class and charter service on the Strasburg RR.

Scrappers have started removing the tracks from Coopersburg to Hellertown on the old Reading Bethlehem Branch. The last passenger train was run by SEPTA in July, 1981, and about that time, Conrail ran its last train. The local townships are building a hiking/bike trail from the County line at Hilltop north to Bethlehem. At the present, the rails will remain between Hilltop to Quakertown.

Last August, NS conveyed the 23-mile portion of the Enola Branch (A&S) to six townships in Lancaster County. The 1997 order of the PADUC requires some payments to be made to the townships along with the removal of several bridges. Bart, Conestoga, Martic, Providence, Sadsbury, and Eden townships have not yet decided what to do with the properties. The PRR built the Atglen & Susquehanna line from Creswell to Atglen in 1906.

## - Coming Events -

### December 11

The original Gilbertsville Train Show to be held at the Gilbertsville Fire Hall - Rt. 73, Gilbertsville, PA, from 8:30AM to 1:30PM. Admission \$3.00, under 12 free.

### Dec 13-14

Greenburg Train Show at the Valley Forge Convention Center, King of Prussia, PA 10AM-4PM. Admission: Adults \$7.00, Children under 11 free.

### Now thru Jan 10, 2009

“All Aboard the 175th Anniversary of the Reading Railroad” exhibit at the Historical Society of Berks County, 940 Centre Ave., Reading. Hours Tues-Saturday, 9-4PM. Admission: free.

Starting Tuesday, 11/11, the History Channel will run an 8-part series titled “Extreme Trains”. Its is aired at 10PM on cable and satellite. Check your local listing to be sure.

### March 14, 2009

The Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS, will hold their 23rd Railroad Show & Collectors Market at 1W Abel Union Hall, 200 Gibson St., Steelton, PA. from 9AM to 3PM.

### August 10-16

2009 Annual Convention of the NRHS to be held in Duluth, MN. Details still being finalized.

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: ewewhite@juno.com (Editor) or rwhite2@dejazzd.com (Rich White). Chapter web site: [www.rrsignal.com/nrhs](http://www.rrsignal.com/nrhs)