

Meeting in a Virtual World - AI's Tips and Tools

By AL WEBER, *President NRHS*

In my line of work I participate in many video meetings each week, sometimes several per day. I've used many of the different programs. Everyone needs a few essential tools to make video conference work well.

1. *Good broadband (internet) connection* – Use a cable (“hard-wired”) connection instead of a wireless connection (“WiFi”). WiFi can lead to many problems that seem to multiply as the meeting goes on. The network connection must have the bandwidth to run video and audio real time. Otherwise, your computer might lock up or freeze during the session, and require you to restart it.
2. *A good headset and microphone.* – Get a high quality headset with attached microphone. Using the computer's speakers and microphone may cause feedback and amplified background noise. You must turn off your speakers and internal mike.
3. *Know how to mute your microphone and do it!* – Please mute when not talking. Background noises disrupt the meeting audio and disturb everyone in the session. Keep your ringing phone, barking dog, and other local ‘sound effects’ away from the meeting.
4. *Use a real computer or tablet.* - A phone does not have the computing power to do conferencing, and likely can't be connected to a wired internet connection. Newer computers provide better connections.
5. *Test your computer and meeting connection* – Before the meeting, test your equipment and connection. If needed, install the virtual meeting software on your computer. Start or ‘join’ the meeting, then test your audio, speakers and meeting screen. If your hardware does not pass the software's test, or does not connect correctly, it will not work in real time.

The two most common packages used in my meetings are GoToMeeting and Microsoft Teams. Zoom Meetings and Google Meet are used less frequently. Cisco Webex is an established tool, but it is becoming less popular with my clients. Other packages that I've used to attend virtual / online meetings include:

- BigBlueButton
- Bluejeans Meetings
- ClickMeeting
- Google Hangouts
- Google Meet
- Lifesize
- Microsoft Teams
- RingCentral Video
- U Meeting

Zoom is popular with many users. Security issues (i.e. ‘meeting crashers’) have limited or stopped use by schools and government agencies. Use of Zoom's security options help to reduce these problems.

When selecting the virtual meeting software, keep your intended use in mind. Informal use by a small group does not require a complicated tool. If you will use presentations, video programs, films or have medium or large groups, you will need more robust virtual meeting software. Movies require a lot of bandwidth, so use those sparingly and check that the broadband connection or speed is sufficient. Otherwise, you and your viewers will likely be disappointed in the result. The GoToMeeting and Microsoft Teams products offer the best helper programs for these options. The NRHS selected GoToMeeting. Many NRHS chapters and railroad clubs also use that tool, including the St. Louis Chapter.

Google Hangouts and Zoom Meetings are also popular with chapters for virtual chapter and officer meetings. Zoom Meetings software is popular, and offers a free version with limited features. While free, it is best used for small group meetings. GoToMeeting and most other virtual meeting products also offer the free and expanded versions. When selecting a meeting software package, see the five points above. All cost about the same, each has different features and limitations. Identify what you need most and how you want to use virtual meetings. Try out several free products, then choose the best software for the job.

More tips and hints for virtual meetings will continue in future issues of the NRHS News.

The 2020 NRHS election results are in! See page 3.

NRHS NEWS – SEPTEMBER 2020

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Important Notices

The Annual Meeting of the National Railway History Saturday, September 26, 2020

This Meeting will be held via GoToMeeting. The call starts at 1:00PM EDT/10:00AM PDT.

To join the online meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone, the login information is <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/816364413>

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/816364413>

You can also dial-in using your phone. US +1 (669) 224-3412, Access Code 816-364-413.

Upcoming Conferences and Conventions

2021	October, 2021
2021 NRHS Convention	2021 NRHS Fall Conference
(date, location to be confirmed)	Ronkonkoma, New York

Submission Deadlines

Month	Print or .pdf	Deadline
October 2020	.pdf	September 10, 2020
November 2020	Print / mail	October 10, 2020
December 2020	.pdf	November 14, 2020

2020 NRHS Election Results – VP and Directors

By AL WEBER, President NRHS

The results of the 2020 NRHS Election are in and confirmed. Please extend a warm welcome and congratulations to your new officer and directors.

Vice President

- Frank Cornelius.

2020 Global Directors

- Edward “Ned” Harris
- Eric P. Fogg
- Regan J. Rickson

2020 District Directors

- District A Patrick Molloy
- District B Ricky Durrant
- District 1 Tony White
- District 2 Charles Webb
- District 3 Marlin Taylor
- District 4 Frank Scheer
- District 5 William Scott Andes
- District 6 John P. Simanton
- District 7 Skip Waters

Also please share your thanks and appreciation to the out-going NRHS officers and directors who have shared their talents, time, and efforts with the NRHS. This year’s pandemic resulted in many unforeseen cancellations, planning and replanning of the Society’s traditional events, excursion and activities. The challenges have been many, but all officers and directors rose to the challenge and the NRHS is on good footing for this and upcoming years.

Preserving the Past & Doubling Your Donation!

By ROBERT J. ERNST, NRHS Fund President

Thanks to many NRHS members—likely including you—and others, your Society was able to distribute a record \$48,100.00 in grant dollars to 16 preservation projects here in 2020. Coming up on its 30th anniversary, the NRHS Railway Heritage Grants Program provides financial support to projects that contribute to preservation of, and education about, railway history.

In light of this ... it’s time to step up to the challenge, play “double your money” and begin “filling the tender” in preparation for the 2021 Heritage Grant selection process. Will the Grants committee have an equal or greater amount in hand to fulfill next year’s grant requests? That determination is in our hands, those of every member and officer!

What about “double your money?” In case you haven’t read, an anonymous donor is ready to match every dollar sent for the 2021 Heritage Grants program up to \$5,000.00!

Every year the Grants Committee receives more applications than grant money available. With whatever amount you can afford ... I ask you to be part of this “preservation endeavor” with your tax-deductible donation.

To make an online donation by credit card, please go to the NRHS.com website, click on the GIVING button, and scroll down the right column to “Heritage Grants.”

If you’d rather send a check, make it payable to “NRHS Fund Inc.” and note “NRHS Heritage Grants”. Then, please mail to:

NRHS Heritage Grants Challenge
505 South Lenola Road, Ste 216
Moorestown, NJ 08057

Thank you for helping preserve our nation’s great rail history!

**The 2020 NRHS Fall Conference (Johnson City TN) and
2021 NRHS Spring Conference (Raleigh NC) are cancelled.**

Be in good health until we meet again.

Membership Matters

By HUGH HARRIS, Membership Administrator NRHS

We're again approaching the start of the renewal season, when we send out the reminders for people to renew their memberships in the NRHS. Please remember that, according to the by-laws, every Membership expires on December 31st of each year.

The Board of Directors allows a 365 day grace period – so you can renew any time during the year, without penalty, but we hope that you'll renew soon since that allows us to complete the renewal cycle quickly. As with all NRHS activities, we're all volunteers so we would like to get the renewals done as quickly as we can and get back to our regular lives!

The first reminder letter will go to the mailing service in late September and we hope to have it in your hands by early October. Note that, when you renew on-line now you will be entering information into PayPal, not our database. We will transfer the information, probably every day or two, from PayPal to the database.

Remember also that you can now renew for more than one year at a time. Renewal is \$50.00 per year for a Regular Member and is an additional \$7.00 each for Family Members living at the same address. If you have college students no longer living at home and want to continue to have them as Members then they can shift to the Student Member class for \$16.00 per year and they will then get copies of the NEWS and the Bulletin at the new home address. However, once they get to be over 24 years old then they'll need to switch to a Regular Member at the normal \$50.00 each. They can ONLY be Family Members if they live at the same address as a Regular Member.

I'll provide a new membership report for the Annual Membership Meeting on September 26th. When I ran the report for the last Meeting the overall total was up by a small amount from last year. I'll have a complete and detailed report for the Membership Meeting in a few weeks.

Gulf Coast Chapter Enters Into New Museum Development Agreement

In a press release dated August 19, 2020, the Gulf Coast Chapter announced a new museum agreement.

The Houston-based Gulf Coast Chapter - National Railway Historical Society, Inc. (Gulf Coast NRHS) is entering into a new operating agreement with Texas Railroading Heritage Museum (TRHM) to pursue development of a railroad museum in the Houston area. Both organizations are 501(c) (3) nonprofit educational organizations incorporated in the State of Texas.

A previous agreement between Gulf Coast NRHS and TRHM related to establishment of a railroad museum in the City of Tomball north of Houston has been terminated as TRHM and the city have agreed mutually to withdraw from the project.

What's up with the Film Archival Project ?

By MARLIN TAYLOR, *Film Archival Committee NRHS*

The NRHS Film Archival Project team ...

- Continues to take in and preserve rail-related film, slide and photo print collections.
- Continues to work on digitizing all of these for long-term preservation.
- The only thing we lack at present is qualified manpower to enable us to speed up the process.

Longtime NRHS "volunteer" Director of Media Services, Mitch Dakelman, is due many thanks and credit for doing much of the digitization work.

While other, smaller collections continue to arrive, our focus in recent months has been on the large collection gifted to the Society last year by the heirs of long-time member, Walter Weible. Included was some 40,000 feet of 16 mm. film as well as hours of VHS videotape.

Digital transfer is almost the easiest part of the job. To be successful, quality digital transfer requires very sophisticated computer hardware and a software program plus a skilled technician. This is the reason we don't attempt the work in-house. Many hours of labor are needed to prepare the film footage, including cleaning, review and removal of defective or irrelevant portions and repair of splices. So far, nearly 10,000 feet of this film has been digitized. Some of the subjects in this footage include the N&W 611, a bit of the 1957 convention held in Roanoke, the Flying Scotsman, ATSF Super Chief and Chessie Safety Express.

In his later years, Mr. Weible switched from film to videotape and traveled closer to home, documenting trains in the Michigan area. To enable these transfers, we have acquired a high-quality VHS playback system, which are no longer being manufactured but we were able to secure re-conditioned components. Credit is due to the Bluewater Michigan NRHS Chapter, for their significant donation to facilitate the project in honor of Mr. Weible.

When we began the digitizing activity, we were using a nationally-recognized facility in the Nation's Capital region. However, we since have discovered a small operation in Arlington, Texas, allowing us to reduce the per-foot transfer cost by nearly half without any sacrifice in quality of results.

While we have been slowed by world conditions, our search for one or more qualified persons with access to editing facilities plus possessing some creative talents and interest in volunteering their time continues ... to take these digital files and create interesting, well-paced presentations. Our goal is the take the best, most interesting footage and assemble productions for viewing by you, other railfans and history lovers ... not keep this material buried in a vault! If you or someone you know (perhaps a grandchild?) might fit this description, please email Marlin Taylor <marlin@nrhs.com>. Thank you.

A reminder - if you have a collection of rail-related film, slides or even photo prints, please consider designating the NRHS. Otherwise, your heirs might well choose the closest dumpster! You can write to the NRHS address or Marlin Taylor <marlin@nrhs.com>.

Editor's note: Mr. Walt Weible and his wife Jean were close friends of your editor Val. They were excellent mentors in the railroading hobby, and brought me into the NRHS fold. Walt kindly and generously shared his knowledge and enjoyment of the railroad hobby. Jean taught me the fine skills of 'working' on an excursion – from the sales and souvenir counter to food service and much more. Last, but not least, Walt and Jean introduced me to the fellowship and shared love of the railroad hobby within the NRHS. Walt, Jean and the Bluewater Chapter were my first 'home' within the NRHS and, to this day, my heart holds warm affection and wonderful memories of them all.

Restoration of Rail Passenger Car *Alabama Club*

By *MARK WALKER, Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum NRHS*

Originally built in 1926 by the Pullman Company, this railroad passenger car contained 10 sleeping sections, an observation lounge, and an open platform at the rear. Utilized in Pullman passenger service, the car received the name *Mount Gibbs*. By 1938 Pullman removed the open platform and replaced it with picture windows for better viewing from the lounge. During this remodeling period, the car was renamed *Alabama*. In 1948 the car was sold to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, who in turn leased it back to Pullman.

In March 1954 the car was withdrawn from lease and rebuilt into Tavern / Lounge car number 3050, *Alabama Club*. This remodeling project removed the large picture windows and the passenger sleeping sections. The car then received a lounge makeover that provided seating for 14 guests and a tavern section which accommodated 24 patrons. This tavern section provided table seating for light eating & drinks. A serving bar separated the Tavern from the Lounge. To provide partial separation between the bar and the tavern, two large etched glass partitions were installed. One etching contains the car's name, while the other etching depicts the Alabama Statehouse. The car also contained 2 restrooms, electrical & storage closets, and stewards' accommodations.

During the 1960's the *Alabama Club*, along with her sister cars the Tennessee Club and the Kentucky Club, was assigned passenger service on the L&N Pan American route operating from Cincinnati to New Orleans, passing through Alabama's principal cities of Decatur, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile. The entire trip took 23 hours to move passengers from Cincinnati, down to New Orleans. Shortly after this period, the car was retired by the railroad and purchased by a group of private individuals. The Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum purchased the car in early 1991. After the purchase, the car was used as a stationary birthday party car for many years.



Photo courtesy of Alan Dismukes

IN 2002 THE CAR ENTERED OUR SHOP FOR A FULL RESTORATION – Work proceeded slowly.

In 2002 the car arrived for restoration. Work on the car proceeded slowly for many years. The car did receive all new interior wiring and a new electrical panel. The car's badly rusted ends and vestibule were rebuilt.

Fast forward now to late 2018 when our museum board of directors pledged \$65,000 of museum funding to the project. This funding sparked interest from our museum volunteers who now wanted to see life returned to this rich piece of Alabama railroading history. By early 2019, restoration work jumped into high gear as work was broken out into smaller, more manageable projects. However, knowing additional funding would be required, volunteers investigated a grant with the John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust, hoping for additional support.

In early spring, word was received that we were fortunate to obtain a \$15,000 grant from the Emery Trust. This grant provided a large portion of the funds needed to purchase a railroad car generator. The original power source for this car relied on a large bank of batteries and a charging system that operated via a belt attached to an axle. To produce charging power, the car had to operate at speeds of 30 MPH or more; speeds that our trains would be unable to reach. This grant ignited even more interest in our volunteers to see the restoration through.



Photos courtesy of Mark Walker

DURING OUR 2019 SEASON, SEVERAL RESTORATION EFFORTS WERE COMPLETED – Interior trim, fixtures, interior walls, windows and doors were improved and repaired.

Several large ticket items have been accomplished with the restoration. Interior trim and fixtures were removed, stripped and polished; interior walls were sanded and primed; 62 kilowatt generator was purchased and mounted; all new windows and window gaskets were installed; wooden

furniture and wooden end doors are being restored or fabricated; light fixtures and window shades are being restored or fabricated; the old toilet system was removed.

Plans are already in the works for 2020, unfortunately museum funding will be much tighter in the coming year as several other museum projects must receive attention. Currently, the estimated 2020 expenses are just over \$100,000; we currently have \$45,000 allocated. Project items that we were hoping to accomplish in 2020 include: new HVAC system acquired and installed; new toilet system installed; generator wired; fuel tank constructed and installed; interior walls painted; interior trim, fixtures, and accessories reattached; and the brake system updated.

Even after all these items are completed, the car will still need additional work in 2021 with exterior painting being the primary project; restoring her back to an original L&N livery appearance. It is our hope that the car can be ready to receive passengers by 2022. With continued support from our volunteers, museum board, and our donors, this car will become a working example of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad's engineering, design, and ingenuity. Once restored, this car will provide passengers with a glimpse back in time-- a time when railroads were the only way to travel.

We would like to give special thanks to the John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust; the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum for assisting with fabrication work on a number of items; the L&N Historical Society for motivation; the Kentucky Railway Museum who owns the Kentucky Club; the Evansville Museum of Art, History, & Science who owns the Tennessee Club; our dedicated museum volunteers who have spent well over 800 hours of labor thus far this year, and our museum board of directors.

The Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum, located in Calera, Alabama is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Our volunteers give of their time and talents to restore, maintain, operate, and share the rich railroading history located here. Train rides and special events help to raise awareness and operating funds for our museum. To learn more about our museum, train rides, and special events, or if you wish to donate of your time, please visit our web site at www.hodrrm.org.

NRHS Dinner – See Any Familiar Faces or Places ?

By MITCH DAKELMAN, Chair, Director of Media Services

Ever so often, we receive photos taken many years ago of various NRHS activities. This photo was donated several months ago, but we do not know the individuals pictured, the event, and date.



CRP&A Sends Thanks for 2020 Heritage Grant

By CHARLES WEBB, Chair, NRHS Heritage Grants Committee

In 2020, the NRHS awarded a Heritage Grant to the Center for Railroad Photography and Art. Scott Lothes, President and Executive Director, sent the NRHS a letter of thanks and appreciation.



August 17, 2020

Mr. Charles L. Webb
Chair, NRHS Heritage Grants Committee
Charliw1258@yahoo.com

Dear Mr. Webb,

Thank you and everyone at the NRHS for your Heritage Grant of \$5,000 to the Center for Railroad Photography & Art, which allows us to accelerate our processing efforts on the Jim Shaughnessy Collection. We are grateful for your commitment to our community and this endeavor.

The work to rehouse, catalog, and digitize negatives in the Shaughnessy Collection is our top-most archival priority this year. We look forward to presenting selections from Jim's incredible body of work with you in the months and years ahead.

Thank you again for your gift to ensure the lasting visibility and viability of Jim's photography and the history it tells. We will keep you apprised as this project progresses, and welcome any questions you may have.

With appreciation, and continued wishes of health and safety for you and yours,

Scott Lothes
President and Executive Director

The Center for Railroad Photography & Art is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service. Gifts to the Center are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

cc: Jeff Smith, National Railway Historical Society

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Hobbyist Safety in Today's Changing Times

By AL WEBER, President, National Railway Historical Society

As of early 2020, many parts of the world have eased or slowed down personal activity. Now things are starting up again slowly. Not quite the same as before, but people are slowly starting to get out more, doing more activities.

The NRHS is still operating but in a new virtual way. Many chapters are doing virtual meetings while some are having face-to-face get-togethers again.

If your chapter or group is meeting in-person (face-to-face), please emphasize the need and importance of:

- Wearing face masks
- Frequent hand washing and sanitizing
- Temperature checks at facility entry
- Social distancing whenever and however possible
- Frequent sanitizing of facilities

- Quarantining protocols for many that have risk factors

Here in St Louis our chapter is committed to virtual meetings through Fall. We are investigating meeting locations that have enough space for good social distancing and have found several locations. At the national level your officers and committees are still running the NRHS. I miss the conferences and seeing and talking direct to many of you.

We have planned a virtual Membership meeting. Please test your communications hardware well before the meeting. It may take some time and extra help, so plan and test well in advance of the meeting.

Stay safe, Al <aweber@nrhs.com>

Editor's Notes – A Sunday Drive for Rail Gems

By VALLI HOSKI, Editor, NRHS News, & member North Texas Chapter, NRHS

The railroading hobby is a gift, a lifetime of adventures, a group of very special friends and a time of laughter, shared stories, railroad facts plus a whole lot of trivia. Then suddenly, it gets derailed, goes awry, all activities and destinations on the board are marked 'delayed'.

One just doesn't know what's coming next, where or when. Long-planned trips, long-anticipated gathering of friends at a conference or convention, long-awaited adventures on rails not explored before – all are stopped in the tracks at the grade crossing of life.

Slowly, life resumes again, just not the same. We understand the world's changed, yet we look for and expect the old reliable routines, favorite activities and good times to be back. Well, they are, just waiting to be rediscovered, perhaps while you take a leisurely 'Sunday drive' around your home area..

Over the summer, railroading has snuck back into my family's leisure activities and interests. Several recent outings found my husband and me discovering new views, venues and historical treasures of places within 30 miles of home, most involving railroads. One such gem is located on US-30 (Lincoln Highway) in New Oxford PA.

The historic Western Maryland train station was built in 1892. If there's a railroad treasure to be found, from a lantern chandelier to an historical rail key or vintage artifact, it will find you in this small but significant museum. From the faded B&O tile on the depot's lawn, to the massive chandelier assembled from many train lanterns, you will be delighted by many artifacts, photos and more on display. The station museum is at 214 Lincoln Way W., New Oxford, PA 17350.

Another day's drive found us back at the Williams Grove Historical Steam Association's grounds for 'just a few more photos' of their historic PRR steam locomotive. Their locomotive is unique, and is one of the few places to see PRR steam in action. The locomotive is sheltered in a shop building, but does operate occasionally on the local track. Open mostly on weekends, it's a hidden treasure in the south central PA region. Location and more details can be found at <https://www.wghsea.org/>

Take a 'Sunday drive' for two, with a spouse or friend, and seek out new gems and memories of the rail hobby in your area. Be surprised and delighted at what you see, find and be sure to make new memories.

The NRHS News is published nine times a year by the National Railway Historical Society. Valli Hoski, North Texas Chapter NRHS, Editor. Alex Mayes, Potomac Chapter NRHS, content and editorial assistant. Send items to: NRHS News, c/o Valli Hoski, P.O. Box 234, York Springs, PA, 17372. E-mail: <NEWS@NRHS.COM>. Phone 717-398-0430. The address for the Society is: National Railway Historical Society, Inc., 505 South Lenola Road, Suite 226, Moorestown, NJ 08057. All membership information changes should be sent to Hugh Harris <hughrharris@aol.com>.