

NRHS News

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH 2024

All Aboard! Riding the “Sugar Express”

By DOUG SCOTT, Cape Cod Chapter and Western Connecticut Chapter NRHS (all photo credit)

At the 2023 NRHS Convention in Florida, attendees had a sweet ride on the “Sugar Express” provided by the U.S. Sugar Railroad.



U.S. SUGAR RAILROAD AND THE “SUGAR EXPRESS” – September 4, 2023, Sugar Express charter train at Moore Haven.



“SUGAR EXPRESS” AT LAKE PLACID, FLORIDA – No. 148 in shining black at the station.

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Announcements

NRHS 2024 Election

- **Deadline to nominate candidates: March 31, 2024.**
- All NRHS members, in good standing, as of April 11, 2024, will elect the Vice President and nine (9) Directors. Members must be 12 years of age as of June 13, 2024, to be eligible to vote in this election.

RailCamp 2024

- **Deadline to apply is April 1, 2024.**
- **RailCamp East is June 23 to June 29, 2024.** Headquartered at the University of Delaware in Newark, DE.
- **RailCamp Northwest is August 4 to August 11, 2024.** Headquartered at the University of Puget Sound Tacoma, WA.
- Application available at
<https://nrhs.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024RailCampApplication.pdf>

NRHS Convention & Conferences

NRHS Annual Convention - August 26 thru August 31, 2024, in Harrisburg, PA

- The hotel is the Hilton Hotel in downtown Harrisburg, PA.
- Hotel rate, parking and reservation details will be announced soon.

NRHS News Deadlines

Issue

April 2024 (online pdf issue)

June 2024 (online pdf issue)

Submit by

March 20, 2024

May 18, 2024

NRHS 2024 Election – Nominations Due March 31, 2024

By Bob Ernst, Chair, 2024 NRHS Election Committee

Dear Fellow NRHS Member:

The National Railway Historical Society, Incorporated (NRHS) is conducting its national elections in 2024 under the procedures outlined in the NRHS Bylaws as revised and adopted September 26, 2020.

Per the revised Bylaws of the NRHS, the NRHS Board of Directors consists of eleven members. Two (2) members hold the office of NRHS President and NRHS Vice President; nine (9) members are Directors.

The upcoming 2024 election is the second election being conducted under the revised NRHS Bylaws.

Nominations for candidates are open through March 31, 2024. In this election, the Vice President has a four-year term, and each Board member will be elected to a two-year term. We have provided you the details about the election process on the NRHS Admin web site <https://admin.nrhs.com>

The qualifications for candidates are contained in the NRHS By-laws, also found on the NRHS Admin web site.

All NRHS members, in good standing, as of April 11, 2024, will elect the Vice President and nine (9) Directors. Directors represent the entire NRHS membership. Members must be 12 years of age as of June 13, 2024, to be eligible to vote in this election.

Why should you run for office? Simply stated: to better guide the future direction and programs of your society.

The Electoral Committee is now soliciting members who wish to run for these offices. All NRHS members who meet the qualifications and wish to run should contact the committee so that they may be placed on the ballot. If you have any questions regarding qualifications for office, please contact John Fiorilla at gc@nrhs.com.

Please note that all nominations for any NRHS office must be received no later than March 31, 2024.

Send your completed nomination forms to: NRHS 2024 Elections, c/o Bob Ernst, 5246 S. Newland Ave. Chicago, IL 60638-1125 or as an email attachment to gc@nrhs.com

The electoral committee for the 2024 election consists of Bob Ernst and Patti Webb with legal support from John K. Fiorilla, NRHS General Counsel. The committee is responsible for the entire election process which includes the approval of qualifications of candidates, and oversight of the election process to assure that schedules and procedures adhere to the NRHS Bylaws and laws of the State of Maryland.

Bob Ernst - Chair

2024 NRHS Electoral Committee

Harrisburg Chapter Recognizes Dan Rapak - 25 Years as a “Member Extraordinaire”

In November 2023, Dan Rapak celebrated his 25th Year Anniversary as a member of both the Harrisburg Chapter and the National Railway Historical Society. The Chapter recognized Dan for his many accomplishments:

Congratulations to member extraordinaire, Dan Rapak, for receiving his 25-year membership award and pin. If you've been to Harris [Tower] at any point over those years, there's a good chance you may have met Dan, who is chiefly responsible for the computer simulation of the Harris interlocking machine.



Photo courtesy of Harrisburg Chapter

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH THE HARRISBURG CHAPTER AND NRHS
 – Dan Rapak (left above) received his 25-year certificate from Patti Webb on behalf of the Harrisburg Chapter. Dan is best known for his technical wizardry in the design and improvement of the interlocking machine at Harris Tower in downtown Harrisburg.

About the Interlocking Machine: Visitors to Harris Tower can operate the levers of the Interlocking Machine and observe the illuminated model board and follow the simulated train movements, exactly as it was done decades ago. The Interlocking Machine and Model Board have been linked to a computer simulation that is programmed with the actual Pennsylvania Railroad train schedules from the early 1940's. It is then up to the visitor to throw the proper levers to route the trains to their correct destinations. In this way, rather than simply viewing a static display, visitors to Harris Tower can operate the equipment and experience for themselves what it would have been like to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad in its heyday.

Many thanks to the Harrisburg Chapter for sharing Dan's anniversary and "HARRIS" Tower description.

Brightline – Aventura to Orlando & Return

By *WALTER E. ZULLIG JR., Member New York Chapter NRHS.*

© 2024 *Walter E Zullig Jr.*

Brightline is America's new high speed rail passenger service between Miami and Orlando. It first opened in 2018 between Ft. Lauderdale (FTL) and West Palm Beach (WPB) and my wife Suzanne and I rode that segment at that time. The next year it opened to Miami and the new Central Terminal was constructed near the site of the former Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway Miami station. Naturally we had ridden it a few times out of Miami.

The NRHS National Convention was held in South Florida last August-September [2023] and a Brightline trip to Orlando was scheduled as part of the program. We had been told the extension to Orlando (ORL) would open on September 1 so we planned to ride on September 2. Alas, about ten days before that, we received messages that the extension wouldn't be able to open until later that month so the convention changed to a WPB-MIA round trip with a visit to the Running Repair Facility in WPB and the Operations Center at Miami.

Naturally Suzanne and I still wanted to ride the new line, especially the newly built 125 mph section between Cocoa and Orlando Airport. So back in December I reserved tickets from Aventura to Orlando and return on February 6, 2024, with the hope that the sun would be shining that day.

By way of background, Brightline utilizes the North-South Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) Main Line between downtown Miami and Cocoa, where it diverges on to the new 125 mph line that is generally an East-West route. Years ago the FEC had been double track, but was single tracked, finishing around 1978. Thus there was room to restore the double track although that was a big project involving many grade crossings, signal cables and other appurtenances. The new passenger-only line from Cocoa to the airport is double track for a distance at each end, but single track for most of the route.

We were thankful that the sun was shining on the morning of February 6 as we drove to the Aventura station to board our train, due to leave there at 11:09. Four tracks pass through the station. Brightline trains use an island platform and freight trains run past on the two outside tracks. Once the train was announced, the passengers used escalators or elevators to a bridge crossing the two westerly tracks, then down to the island platform to await the train. The platform here is very long with a high level platform for Brightline trains at the north end and a low level platform at the south end for future commuter trains. Markers on the platform indicate the locations where the cars stop so we headed for the one designated for Car 3 just as the train arrived almost silently.

We traveled coach [SMART] northbound and first class [PREMIUM] southbound. A week earlier I had received an email indicating a change of our seats from row 6 to row 10, which was good as in row 6 we would have had only half a window. The train departed and soon was up to the maximum 79 mph allowed in this area. We were one minute late at Fort Lauderdale and lost time at several locations due to slow orders and one problematic grade crossing where a full stop was made. The train ran faster after WPB and we reached Cocoa Junction [CP Cocoa] at 2:01, after which we entered the new line

where the 125 mph speed was soon attained. The line runs more or less parallel to a State toll road and soon the vehicles on the road looked as though they were standing still. Our arrival at Orlando was 11 minutes late at 2:26.



BRIGHTLINE TRAIN FROM MIAMI ARRIVING ORLANDO TERMINAL – Photo taken from upstairs waiting room.

The Siemens built Brightline cars ride quite well and with the FEC's excellent roadbed, the ride is smooth and quiet. The cars are immaculate and equipped with the latest features. One pushes a button to open and close the lavatory doors and waves a hand over a light to flush the toilet. A car attendant passed through with snacks, beverages and sandwiches and we purchased some for lunch. The only drawback, in our opinion, is that in order to create a wide aisle so wheelchairs can traverse the entire train, the seats are narrower than those on Amtrak equipment. Thus we were touching each other much of time, something that could be annoying to two strangers sitting next to each other. Our car was about one-third full until WPB, where most of the riders detrained and a few boarded.

Upon exiting at Orlando, I went forward for some pictures and met up with the conductor who rides up front with the engineer. He mentioned that he hails from Pennsylvania and recently retired from Norfolk Southern where he ran long freight trains over the mountains. After the photos, we went upstairs into the station area and then outside. Brightline's station is immaculate and is part of Orlando Airport Terminal C, all of which is sparkling new.

We only stayed outside for a short time, then returned to the station and entered the Premium Lounge to relax and await our return train, scheduled to depart at 3:50 pm. As at the other stations, the Premium Lounge is entered by touching the ticket on the screen at a gate. Inside there are drinks, snacks and numerous munchies. In the past I had seen bottles or cans of beer and wine inside a refrigerator at the WPB and FTL lounges. Here they had cans of soda but the beer was on tap. Only problem: when you pull the lever nothing happens.

Soon I noticed a sign describing a complex procedure involving a selfie, your ticket and some other steps after which a bar tender from outside the lounge will bring your requested beer. As I suspected, this was established to prevent minors from getting at the beer supply. Soon an attendant came over, swiped her ID card at the machine and the beer flowed.

Our return was in Car 1 behind the engine. Departure was on time at 3:50 but we soon came to a stop at the end of the double track awaiting an inbound train. Nothing was scheduled but a train soon came past, perhaps a crew qualification trip. Our car attendant made excellent announcements about everything, including that the unscheduled stop would make us five minutes late. Unfortunately, this was the one trainset that is “wrapped” with ads for the Bahamas, thereby somewhat blocking the view when the sun was shining on the window. I got a better view by looking across the aisle but because of the speed, often had trouble figuring out our location. A southbound FEC freight with two locomotives in the orange and yellow “Champion” color scheme was awaiting our passage at CP Cocoa. Later we passed a northbound freight and yet another was passing when we detrained at Aventura.

Soon the car attendant asked about our dinner selections, mainly salads and sandwiches. They were delivered on a tray along with a fruit cup. I had another beer and yet another one a little later. Our car was perhaps 20 percent full out of Orlando. But nearing WPB, the attendant announced that the entire train was sold out from there, so “please move back to your reserved seat if you’ve changed.” Sure enough the platform at WPB was full of people when we arrived at 6:20 (6:00). Once out of there, our car had only a few empty seats and the attendant really had to earn his keep to satisfy the food and beverage needs of all the new riders. Some detrained at FTL but just as many boarded there.

When we were close to Aventura, we walked toward the end of the car to exit but just as we stopped, I heard a scream. It seems the attendant had been pushing the food/beverage cart along and lost control with the result that part of it hit Suzanne’s ankle, causing her great pain. He was on the radio to hold the train and get the station manager to our door. Once we got names of those involved and they took pictures of our tickets from my phone, the manager took us into the station to await medical attention. Perhaps 15 minutes later, a Miami-Dade ambulance arrived with three staff members. They were of the view that nothing was broken and it would heal but be painful for a time. Thus we decided not to go to nearby Aventura Hospital and returned home in our auto which had been parked at the station. (\$7 advance purchase for all day parking.)

Sadly the food cart incident put a damper on an otherwise excellent trip. To be fair, both the car attendant and the station manager handled the incident in a highly professional manner. Naturally they want to avoid claims and we'll see if a claim agent follows up with us. Our overall experience with the train and the service was excellent. Due to the several stops, including the problematic grade crossing, our arrival at Aventura was late at 7:15 (6:51). The detailed schedule of both trains is shown below.

Aventura – Orlando & return 2/06/2024.

<i>North read down</i>			<i>South read up</i>	
<u>Sched</u>	<u>Actual</u>		<u>Sched</u>	<u>Actual</u>
11:09	OT	AVENTURA	6:51	7:15
11:25	11:26	Ft. Lauderdale (FTL)	6:35	6:59
-----	11:41 (pass)	Boca Raton	----	6:43
12:07	OT	West Palm Beach (WPB)	6:00	6:20
	12:23	Jupiter		5:57
	12:40	Stuart [St. Lucie Riv. Bridge]		5:37
	1:03	Ft. Pierce		5:20
	1:10	Vero Beach		
		Sebastian		
		Palm Bay		
	1:37	Melbourne		
		Eau Gallie		
	2:01	CP Cocoa [FEC MP 170.5]		4:26
2:15	2:26	ORLANDO	3:50	3:50

About the NRHS News

The *NRHS News* is published nine times a year by the National Railway Historical Society. Six full-color issues are published in even-numbered months. Each is available as a pdf file on the NRHS web site. The three remaining issues are printed black-and-white and mailed to members across the year.

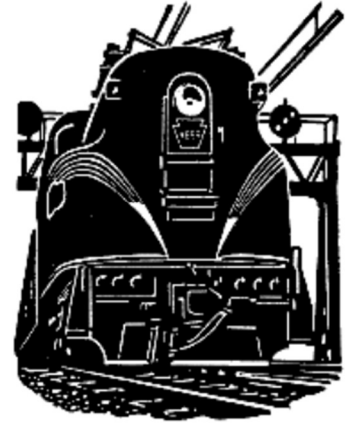
Valli Hoski, Harrisburg Chapter NRHS, Editor. Alex Mayes, Potomac Chapter NRHS, Content Assistant. Elizabeth Guenzler, Central Coast Chapter NRHS, Editorial Assistant. Eileen Weber, St. Louis Chapter NRHS, Editorial Assistant. Email submissions to News@nrhs.com or mail to NRHS News, c/o Valli Hoski, P.O. Box 234, York Springs, PA, 17372. The address for the Society is: National Railway Historical Society, Inc., 505 South Lenola Road, Suite 226, Moorestown, NJ 08057. Membership information changes should be sent to Patti Webb at Membership@nrhs.com. Membership dues should be mailed to NRHS - Membership, PO Box 31074, St. Louis, MO 63131-0074.

NRHS Chapters – Upcoming Events and Celebrations

Harrisburg Chapter – March 9, 2024

Thirty Sixth Annual HARRISBURG

RAILROAD SHOW & COLLECTORS MARKET



SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Scottish Rite Harrisburg
 2701 N. 3rd Street
 Harrisburg, PA 17110

Conveniently located just south of I-81 in Harrisburg, PA. From either direction, use exit 66 off I-81, then go south (down river) on Front Street 1.4 miles. Turn left on Division St., go four blocks and turn right on Fourth Street. The Complex is on the right with a large parking lot. Parking is also available in the lot on Third St. For a map, Google “Scottish Rite Harrisburg”.

- Railroadiana
- Model Railroad Items
- Books, Videos, Apparel
- Snack Bar
- Train Layouts
- Test Track

HARRIS TOWER and PDO
 WILL BE OPEN THIS DAY.
 SEE BACK FOR DETAILS

SPONSORED BY THE HARRISBURG CHAPTER, NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. (a non-profit educational organization)

Donation at the Door: \$5.00 Children under 12: FREE

Vendor Information: _____ **Date** _____

Name _____ **Types of items sold** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone (D) _____ **(N)** _____ **e-mail** _____

_____ (#) 8' Tables @ \$25.00 each = \$ _____

_____ (#) Additional admissions = \$ _____

**Note: Each table includes two admissions.
 Make check to Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS.**

Total Enclosed = \$ _____ **Wall space** _____ **Electricity** _____

Information and Table Reservations: Mark Irvin, 3814 Leyland Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
 Telephone: 717-343-7182 (For table confirmation, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)

Website: <http://harrisburgnrhs.org> E/mail address: irvinwepfer@msn.com

Harrisburg Chapter NRHS will not be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items or any accidents of any kind.
NOTICE: All vendors are responsible for collecting 6% PA Sales Tax. State law requires that all vendors have a temporary or permanent PA Sales Tax License.

North Carolina Transportation Museum - March events

Tickets, times and more are at <https://www.nctransportationmuseum.org/events-calendar/>

March 9,
2024



March
16 -17,
2024



Washington D.C. Chapter - Spring Events

For full details and to reserve online, please see the DCNRHS web site at www.dcnrhs.org.

<p>Blue Ridge Rambler</p> <p>May 19, 2024</p>	<p>Washington DC/Alexandria VA/Manassas VA to Roanoke and return. <i>Dover Harbor</i> will make a day trip from Washington DC, Alexandria and Manassas through the scenic Blue Ridge foothills to downtown Roanoke VA for a three-and-a-half-hour visit before the return trip departs back northward. Brunch and dinner are included aboard the car while enroute. For details and to reserve online, please see the DCNRHS web site at www.dcnrhs.org.</p>
<p>Berkshire-Hudson Wayfarer</p> <p>May 21-22, 2024</p>	<p>Northeast from Boston to Albany and Albany to New York. The National Railway Historical Society, Washington, D.C. Chapter, Inc. (DCNRHS) presents the <i>Berkshire-Hudson Wayfarer</i>. Settle in for a Pullman lounge rail travel experience aboard the classic 1930's Pullman car <i>Dover Harbor</i>. On Tuesday, May 21, 2024, <i>Dover Harbor</i> will make the run west across Massachusetts through the scenery of the Berkshire Mountains with a mid-day departure from Boston's South Station with Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited. Lunch will be served enroute before a scheduled early-evening arrival at Albany-Rensselaer, NY. For the second segment, <i>Dover Harbor</i> departs Albany-Rensselaer, NY mid-day on Wednesday, May 22, 2024, with Amtrak Empire Service train #238. Enjoy the many scenic vistas along the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains; and, while enroute, savor lunch served at table while heading southward to a mid-afternoon arrival at New York's Moynihan Train Hall. For full details and to reserve online, please see the DCNRHS web site at www.dcnrhs.org.</p>