

TO: Gregory Molloy, President, NRHS  
Members of the Board, NRHS

My reaction – and that of others-- to the just-arrived (Fall 2013) issue of the NRHS BULLETIN leads to my belief that changes must be made concerning the composition of the BULLETIN so that it will reflect much more closely the definition of NRHS and particularly the organization's history aspect.

Some of the several problems which I and others noticed relate to content and presentation, some to NRHS involvement.

- i. **Content and presentation.** While there are some old photos, or photos of old trolleys, the ONE article, occupying the entire issue, is about contemporary transit systems. That would be fine for TRAINS, for which the author also writes, but there is insufficient historical focus for the magazine of the National Railway **Historical** Society. In short, it is not appropriate for a publication on railway history. If the BULLETIN is to represent the purpose of the Society, it must reflect the purpose as a publication on railway history. This latest issue and other recent issues have been single-topic issues, rendering them inappropriate reflections of the Society's purpose. Moreover, devoting an entire issue to one topic – and, particularly, to one article—means the issue does not engage people with diverse interests in NRHS. It has been suggested that, by comparison, the NRHS BULLETIN trails well behind Railroad & Locomotive History Society's *Railroad History*.
- ii. **It is both startling and troubling that there is absolutely nothing** about NRHS in the BULLETIN, except for a block paragraph in extremely small print in the left hand column of the Contents page (p. 3). That paragraph is above, and in the same small size font as the standard required postal notice. "NRHS Business Office" contact info also is provided, further up in the column under the staff listing. I have never known of a journal of an organization that does not somewhere indicate the ORGANIZATION's officers and also have a *statement about the organization and its mission*. Instead, in the BULLETIN, the only people mentioned are the Editorial Staff (Jeff Smith as editor; the people at White River Productions – who are listed before Charles Williams as Associate Editor, which also seems wrong; the book review editor; and Alex Mayes as staff photographer). **At a minimum**, the officers (and, now that the Board is small, perhaps the Board) ought to be listed. The NRHS is now paying someone for publicity. Since the NRHS is already publishing the BULLETIN, shouldn't the two work together? A statement about NRHS in the BULLETIN would add nothing to publication cost.

When a publication like the BULLETIN is supposed to be one of the NRHS's signature products –and one of two publications received regularly by all NRHS members—I would hope that the officers and Board of the organization would pay more attention to its content, including providing greater supervision. A publication whose editor is unsupervised is not likely to assist the organization's "presentation of self," and this BULLETIN issue is evidence of that.

I would also note that this issue (labeled "Fall 2013") was late; NRHS members should be receiving the Winter 2014 issue at this time. It is my hope that this delayed arrival does not augur the sort of serious "behindness" that characterized the BULLETIN not long ago.

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