

NRHS Convention Meeting-DRAFT
Plenary Session
Hilton Harrisburg, Harrisburg PA
August 29, 2024

Vice President Joe Maloney called the Plenary Session to order at 9:05 AM. He explained that President White had surgery the day before and was recuperating in the hospital. He then turned the meeting over to Secretary Ellen Scott for the reports section of the meeting.

Reports from the Committees: Note: written reports are available on the website under Documents Available to the Public, 2024 National Convention.

Alco Photos – Joe Maloney. So far, the group has scanned 40,000 negatives. They have between 110-120,000 to go. The film stock is all done. They are now working on the glass stock now. They are also working with Trish to get some of the work on the website.

Bulletin – Jeff Smith. Jeff was not present, but his report is posted with the others online.

Chapter Engagement Committee – Elizabeth Guenzler. They committee held its second chat on July 19 with the Central Coast Chapter. The purpose of the chats is to try to get chapters involved. A member of the board is present to answer questions. Skip Waters represented the board. The had 15 members present in person and 21 via Zoom. They have referred the unresponsive chapters to Tony White and Ellen Scott.

Cedar Rapids Conference – Mike Yuhas and Eric Fogg. Mike stated that he and Eric put this together. 50 people participated. We visited the Iowa interstate headquarters in Cedar Rapids. After the tour we got back on the buses headed to the diesel shop in South Amana. After the tour, and before boarding our train, a presentation of a donation check to Operation Lifesaver was made. We then boarded our bus and headed to the Railroading Heritage of Midwest America in Silvas. A brief stop was made in Iowa City on the way to photograph the business train and a passing freight train. Once arriving at the shops, we had a tour of the work being done there. After the tour we boarded our bus and headed back to the hotel.

Conferences – Bob Bitzer. Our next conference will be held on October 11-12 in Wilmington, Delaware. The Wilmington Chapter is hosting the conference. On Friday, they have teamed with SMS Rail Service to provide a charter trip on the Woodstown Central Railroad. This trip will run on the Salem Branch providing new and rare mileage. We will break for lunch and then travel to Pureland to the SMS's Baldwin House shop for a behind the scenes tour. After the tour, we will have a trip on the trackage of the Pureland Industrial Park.

The Fund will meet Friday night, and all other meetings will be on Saturday. He is looking for chapters to do future conferences. If your chapter is interested, you can contact Bob for more information.

Conventions- John Goodman. John recapped the trips from Tuesday and Wednesday, stating the excursions have been wonderful. Tomorrow we will board our busses and travel to the Reading and Northern depot. We will be riding in bud cars. We will stop in Minersville. The station will be open and has restrooms and a gift shop. Lunches will be delivered at that location. How they will be distributed is not known at this time. We will re-board the train to travel to Port Clinton. We will visit the car shop and the steam engine shop.

Saturday's trip will take us to the Middletown & Hummelstown Railroad where we will do some street running. We will then board the train and travel the length of the line and have lunch on board the train. Once back at the station, we will board the busses to the Northern Central Railroad. This will take us to the tunnel in Hanover PA.

Film Preservation – Marlin Taylor and Mitch Dakelman. Marlon stated that the committee is working hard. They only have four members, and they are working as fast as they can. It is very time consuming to do each hour of film. The committee is also looking for help. Marlon then answered questions from the floor. Victor Varney stated that having the film on YouTube is a great way to reach a larger audience. All members are doing a great job. You can read Mitch's report online.

Heritage Grants – Charlie Webb. A detailed report is available online. He then explained how to find and apply for Heritage Grants on the website. He showed on screen where everything is located. This should make the application process much easier. There is a list of all the grants that have been issued. In addition, there is a section that show several of the grants that have been awarded and how the funds were used. The applications for the 2025 grant cycle will be online by mid-November. The deadline is January 31, 2025.

Historic Plaques – Walter Zullig. He is still working on the language for the plaque at Donner Summit. Hoping to have that cleared up soon.

Inspector General – Walter Zullig. See report online.

General Counsel – John Fiorilla. Report available online. John is always available to all committees for any questions they may have. Don't hesitate to contact him.

Membership – Patti Webb. Patti stated she wrote a report but forgot to send it. We currently have 3,995 members on the rolls. She would like us to get 5 more so we can get to 4,000 by the end of the year. One member stated that they just sent in 2 more members. Patti thanked them and stated, "now we just need 3 more."

Membership Awards – Jon Baake. Jon wanted everyone to know that the QR code on the back of the brochure does not work. He is planning to update the brochure. He has personally sent out 10,000 brochures. He stated that he always carries brochures with him. While at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, he noticed they did not have any. They now have brochures. The gift shop at the East Broad Top also now has them. Contact him if you need any brochures.

Membership Awards – Doug Scott. Nothing new to report. All pin awards are up to date.

NRHS News – Val Hoski. Val wanted to thank her helpers. She couldn't put it together without their assistance. She also said that the latest edition is 49 pages. The News is expanding.

RailCamp – Becky Gerstung. Report online. Becky thanked all the sponsors. With their assistance no camper was turned away for admission. She is currently working on the 2025 camps. Nine counselors were there this year. WE couldn't do it without them and our sponsors. The partners take time out form their business day to work with us. She has brochures if anyone needs them. This year a 25-year pin was awarded to a member who was a camper at our first camp. We are always looking for counselors. If you know someone who might be interested, have them contact Becky for more information.

Treasurer – Bob Bitzer. Reports have been sent out through July 2024. He has been working with our accountants to get us up to date. We are still looking for someone with QuickBooks knowledge to handle some of the bookkeeping. Now that we have Ward Wells as our Assistant Treasurer, it will be a big help. He is currently working on the budget for 2025. All committee chairs should advise him what type of budget they are looking for next year.

Fund – Bob Ernst. His report is online. He plans on getting the Admin Site cleaned up and updated. See the report for detailed information.

Election – Bob Ernst. The ballots for the election were counted the past Sunday (8/25/24). Your new directors are Bob Bitzer, Ellen Scott, Mike Yugas, Ken Mosby, Kevin Feeney, Larry Pearlman, Thomas Gallagher, Eric Fogg, and Jon Baake. The Vice President is Scott Andes.

Ellen Scott announced that the East Carolina Chapter NRHS has had a name change. The new name is the North Carolina Railway Museum.

At this point, Ellen Scott asked Val Hoski to come forward. We all know Val and all the hard work she does for the NRHS. Today is her birthday and we want to wish her a happy birthday.

Skip Waters announced that a former RailCamper, Bill Didden, post regularly to the NRHS Facebook page.

Mike Yugas thanked the sponsors of our meetings, Wheel Rail Seminars, Steel Highway, and White River Productions.

There being no further reports this portion of the meeting was adjourned.

NRHS Convention Meeting
Board of Directors Session

Vice President Joe Maloney called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

Attendance – Ellen Scott.

First Name	Middle	Last Name	Title	Present	Absent
Tony		White	President		X
Joe		Maloney	Vice President	A	
Ellen		Scott	Secretary/Director	A	
Ralph	Robert	Bitzer	Treasurer/Director	A	
Ward		Wells	Asst. Treasurer	A	
Scott		Andes	Director	A	
Kevin		Feeney	Director	A	
Eric		Fogg	Director	A	
John		Goodman	Director	A	
Skip		Waters	Director	A	
Charlie		Webb	Director	A	
Baake		Jon	Director	A	

A = Present, X = Absent

See Attachment A for all others in attendance.

Approval of Minutes from the May 5, 2024, Spring Conference, Cedar Rapids, IA. A motion was made by Jon Baake to approve the minutes, seconded by Scott Andes, approved by all members.

VP Maloney reminded everyone that this evening, Mitch Dakelman will be showing films that have been restored.

Conventions – John Goodman. For the trip tomorrow (Friday), all NRHS items for sale will be onboard the train in the snack car. Dave Baniewicz will not be on the train, but Elizabeth Guenzler will be handling the sales. On Saturday we will have a run-by on the street at the Middletown & Hummelstown Railroad. We will board the train for a ride and lunch will be on the train. We will board the buses at 1:00 PM for the trip to Northern Central for the ride to the tunnel. We need to be there by 2:30 PM.

2026 Convention. John discussed moving the convention to Toledo OH instead of East Lansing MI. Toledo has Amtrak service from many points to that station. We would visit the Ford Museum where the 2666 is located. We would spend the day there. Other possibilities are the Huckleberry Railroad which is a narrow-gauge steam. The NMRA is having a function there in July. The Steam Institute mentioned that they have

200 seats and maybe we could join them. That would be an option. There is also the possibility of the 765. We would need rooms for Registration, meeting, and seminars. He realized that seminars are very important.

The 125th anniversary of the Grand Canyon is also coming up. John received information from Richard Shulby regarding a trip there. Richard is looking for 1000 people. This would include the NRHS and several other groups. At a past convention we have stayed in Williams, but Amtrak no longer stops there. So having a convention there is probably not feasible.

There have also been discussions regarding Toronto and Montreal. Both locations may be restrictive due to customs and other regulations. However, he will look into those locations.

John then asked for a motion to move the 2025 from East Lansing MI to Toledo OH. The motion was made, seconded, and passed. Jon Baake asked for a vote on having a banquet instead of the reception. Only one person wanted the banquet. Walter asked that we have more chairs and tables next time. Not everyone was able to sit. John said he would look into that for next year.

Conferences – Bob Bitzer. Bob had nothing additional from the report this morning. He did say that there is a chapter considering hosting a conference next year. They have done one in the past and are investigating hosting one next year. There is nothing definite currently. Bob did go on to say that we continue to need chapters to host conferences. He will gladly work with anyone interested and to remember that the national does pick up some of the expenses.

Old Business:

Unresponsive Chapters- Tony White, Ellen Scott. Ellen reported that she and Tony looked at each of these chapters to check the membership in each. Two of the chapters did not have any current members. Not sure of how to proceed with them, Ellen contacted John Fiorilla. John advised that he would check with the respective Secretary of State to see if they were corporations and still listed. Pocahontas Chapter was dissolved by the members during Covid. A motion will be taken in New Business.

Two members of the Miami Chapter came forward to say that they only have two members at this time and should be dissolved also. Walter Zullig stated that he is also a member of the chapter. They are requesting that the chapter be dissolved, and they are currently looking for the charter.

New Business:

Unresponsive Chapters – Walter Zullig made a motion that we dissolve the Miami Chapter, and they return the charter when they locate it. John Goodman seconded, Passed.

John Goodman made a motion to dissolve the Pocahontas Chapter with the receipt of their charter. Seconded, passed. Skip read an email from Mr. Massey regarding the dissolution of the chapter. He will see that the charter is returned.

New Chapter - Skip Waters. We now have our third new chapter in two years. This is the Cincinnati Northern Kentucky Chapter. They are part of the Ludlow Heritage Museum. They are a very active chapter. This came about as an offshoot of Heritage Grants. They couldn't find a chapter to sponsor them for a grant, so they formed their own chapter. There was some discussion about the name, but the current Cincinnati chapter has no problem with that name. Skip made a motion that we accept the Cincinnati Northern Kentucky Chapter. The motion was seconded and passed with one No vote.

Heritage Grants – Charlie Webb. Charlie requested that the amount for Grants for 2025 be increased to \$150,000 for 2025. There was also a request for money for software. The increase for grants was discussed first. Bob Bitzer agree we can cover the amount but need to find ways to increase donations to help fund this program. We can't cover alone with donations. Bob Ernst explained that we have \$150,000 over the next 3 years from the Freeman Grant. That give us \$50,000 and we get approximately \$14,000 in donation. Plus, there are funds in the Unrestricted Account to cover. A motion was made to increase the Heritage Grants to \$150,000 for 2025. Motion was seconded, passed.

Kevin discussed that there is software available that handles grants. It would allow everyone to work to evaluate in an easier fashion. The approximate cost is around \$5000. This would be a budget item so they should submit the request to Bob to add to the 2025 budget.

Online Content – Mike Yuhas and Tom Hogan. See Appendix B for the report. Tom Hogan is the President of the Iowa Chapter. He and Mike have been working on the NRHS and becoming involved with online video, meetings, content, etc. This is an opportunity for us to grow new members. It is the best way to attract younger members since they use online content. Iowa uses YouTube for slide shows. There is a variety of films on YouTube and the NRHS site. Tom Coughlin has recently added 24 films. We have 1000 subscribers to our YouTube channel. Mike and Tom want to take this further. They want to get a sub-channel for current film. They are also looking into a Zoom webinar for members only. They are requesting the board give them authorization to start. The cost for a Zoom Webinar is \$690 for 500 seats. Our YouTube channel currently mirrors the web. The Zoom would be for members only. You would have to register to get access. Discussion followed as to how this would work. Skip moved that we let them move forward with this concept, seconded by Jon Baake. Approved. Mike added that down the line they may request funding for film editing.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be Saturday, October 12.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Scott

Ellen Scott
NRHS Secretary

Appendix A
Members and Guests

Robert Brewster	Intermountain Chapter
Doug Scott	Cape Cod Chapter
Patti Webb	Harrisburg Chapter
Suzanne Zullig	New York Chapter
R. Victor Varney	North Carolina Railroad Museum
Bill Long	North Texas Chapter
Bob Stewart	At-Large
Mike Yuhas	Wisconsin Chapter
Becky Gerstung	Niagara Frontier Chapter
Ron Gawedzinski	Saint Louis Chapter
Richard Shulby	Piedmont Carolinas/Baltimore
Dawn Holmberg	Northstar Chapter
Marlin R. Taylor	Potomac/DelVal
G. Patrick Molloy	At-Large
Gregory Homatas	New York Chapter
Domingo E. Cozle	Miami Chapter
Sam Boldrick	Miami Chapter
Preston Hamilton	At-Large
Christopher Guenzler	At-Large
Greg Smith	At-Large
Tom Posatko	Wilmington Chapter
Edward Fortuna	Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley
Jim Perry	DC Chapter
John Zabrosky	DC Chapter
Carol Zabrosky	DC Chapter
Bill Holdsworth	Potomac Chapter
Valli Hoski	Harrisburg Chapter
Helen Shaak	Lancaster Chapter
Harold Shaak	Lancaster Chapter
Thomas Gallagher	Champlain Valley Chapter
Sue Bishop	Greensboro Chapter
Michael Dennis	At-Large
Al Weber	St. Louis Chapter
Eileen Weber	St. Louis Chapter
Wayne Freed	Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter
Jay Creswell	Potomac Chapter
Lee Schultz	P & R Chapter

Attending via Zoom

Cora Sowa
Ward Wells
Brad Bender
John DeRoo
Alan Butler
Richard King
Jason Lee Davis
D. Parker
Mike Crockett
John Simanton
Ken Eddy

Appendix B Online Content

We are here today with a proposal to develop and present NRHS online content. This idea is a roadmap for helping to engage and retain current members and to help drive new memberships. It's no secret that historical societies such as NRHS tend to skew toward older demographics. At the same time, there are legions of young railfans who participate in railroad photography every chance they can; many have a keen interest in railroad history. However, these young railfans share their craft in a very different way than the older generation. They are not going to Walgreens to process a couple rolls of film every month, and many are not Participating in the local railfan groups. Instead, they are editing videos to upload to YouTube or posting pictures on Facebook, Instagram, and Trainorders. This is a huge untapped group of potential members. As an organization, NRHS must adapt, and provide what these younger railfans are hungry for.

Our concept is that the NRHS begin hosting a diverse series of online events, via Zoom webinars and YouTube, including, but not limited to:

- Slide shows
- Video programs featuring historical subjects
- Video programs featuring current-day subjects
- Interviews with authors and historians
- Discussions with people conducting restorations
- Discussions with NRHS heritage grants recipients
- Interview the historic preservation award winner
- Today's railroading 101
- Promote NRHS activities (conferences, convention)
- Simulcast select chapter meetings

The content would be provided at least monthly, and the choice of platform would be dependent on the type of content. For example, Zoom would be used for exclusive, members-only material as that would be a way to help drive membership. The Zoom content would need to be both timely and relevant, such as interviews with authors and historians, programs related to upcoming events, ongoing preservation projects, and interviews with NRHS leadership. YouTube programs would be more promotional in nature, attempting to reach non-members and help drive new membership. These would include monthly slide shows with various presenters from around the country, as well as promoting upcoming NRHS events and activities. The existing NRHS YouTube channel will continue as excellent home for of film collections that have been donated and digitized. The general idea would be to hook people in with free content, but give

them a little taste of the benefits of membership, thus encouraging people to sign up and enjoy more great content.

There would be an ongoing cost involved for hosting the webinars on Zoom (\$690 annually for a 500-attendee webinar plan, in addition to our current Zoom subscription). At some future point we envision the need for a limited amount of video production equipment.

If this proposal is received favorably, we would work toward launching a full slate of programming on Zoom and YouTube in the next three to six months. That would allow @me to line up presenters, schedule meetings and record content allowing us to hit the ground running. The long-term benefits to NRHS would be to drive and retain membership, as well as potentially tap into a new demographic that is currently sorely under-represented in NRHS ranks. Thank you for considering this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Hogan, Iowa Chapter
Mike Yuhas, Wisconsin Chapter