

CHAPTER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAPTER ROUNDTABLE

**During NRHS Autumn Conference in Wilmington, DE
October 12th, 2024 from 13:30 to 14:30**

In Person: Elizabeth Guenzler, Richard Shulby, Tom Posatko, Scott Andes, Eric Fogg, Ron Gawedzinski, Chris Guenzler, David Warner, Mike Yuhas, Bob Bitzer, Ken Mosby, Tom Gallagher, Dawn Holmberg, Jon Baake, Ward Wells, Al Walton, Charlie Webb, Patti Webb, Robert Grant, Christopher Montje, Ron Leslie, Richard Shulby, Dan Meyer, Jim Perry

On Zoom: Val Hoski, Skip Waters, Richard King, John Simanton, John DeRoo, Dave Baniewicz

Elizabeth, in her position as the Chair of the Chapter Engagement Committee, opened the Chapter Roundtable, noting there was no agenda - it was an open forum for discussion of chapter-related items.

However, she started by highlighting the Perryville Chapter's 2025 calendar, a new venture for that chapter this year. They received a price break at 250, so that is how many calendars were produced. Al Walton, the Vice-President, noted that they have other merchandise for sale, including coffee cups, T-shirts and ornaments, which are available on their Facebook page. They are working on a website.

Skip remarked that he could post the Chapter's calendar and merchandise offerings on the NRHS Facebook page.

Skip encouraged all chapters that if they have activities or events, to invite the public, which is a good way of attracting members.

Ron suggested setting up a table at area train shows (a challenge is volunteers) which his Chapter, St. Louis, has had limited success with. They have teamed up with the Gateway Division of the NMRA for joint group tours.

Dawn noted there is currently no e-commerce page on the NRHS website. Bob Bitzer discussed modernized convention souvenir sales. He and Dave Baniewicz discussed a similar program for online NRHS-branded loco items with online sales, direct order, direct ship -- this is a work in progress.

Elizabeth asked John Simanton (Inland Northwest Chapter) if he had any news - they have gained a GP9 and possibly a Spokane, Portland and Seattle FP7.

Tom Posatko remarked that we are a 'historical society' not an online store. He mentioned "Young Eagles", a program where pilots have given one million children their first airplane ride with a certificate. He suggested "Young Caseys" (name is his) we/chapters take a child on their first train ride with a certificate, badge, cap or something. Meaningful to child (as long as not too young) and the parents also.

David Warner mentioned he volunteers at a minor league baseball park and certificates are given for first baseball game -- we could create certificate by the railroad, sponsored by the NRHS. [Note: an agenda item for next CEC meeting.]

Ron mentioned roll-up banners at train shows.

Jon Baake wondered if a marketing/communications chair could help chapters rent table at shows so we could promote the NRHS.

Al Walton noted their Facebook presence gets a large audience.

Richard Shulby remarked that the Alexander Chapter has an active Facebook page.

Skip suggested that we compile a list of things that work.

Richard King noted there is a chapter in transition in West Chester, going a new direction, seeking more members, activity and raising funds.

Val suggested attracting young children and parents - train story times at library, craft building "railroad theme".

Bob Bitzer mentioned the Winchester Chapter's aggressive approach with a youth program - sold out their banquet. Van Welton is the person to contact. You can rebuild a chapter in the right direction. Youth programs are important.

Bob Brewster noted that seven Intermountain Chapter members from Colorado attended the convention in Harrisburg. In addition, the Rocky Mountain Division of the Toy Train Collectors Association has participated in Chapter events and sold merchandise that people donate. A chapter event was a program by the CEO of the Forney Museum.
