

CHAPTER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAPTER ROUNDTABLE

**During NRHS Spring Conference in Salt Lake City, UT
May 30th, 2026 from 13:30 to 14:35**

In Person: Elizabeth Guenzler, Richard Shulby, Chris Guenzler, Mike Yuhas, Dawn Holmberg, Jon Baake, Dan Meyer, Jim Perry, Al Weber, Ted Itchon, Doug Scott, Cliff Kierstead, Skip Waters, Ken Eddy, Cora Sowa, Mark Reynolds, Jack Barbier

Joining Remotely: Robert Leslie, Marlin Taylor, John Simanton, Bob St. John, Wesley Ross, Regan Rickson, Ed Berntsen, Ken Katta, Patti Webb, David Foster, Richard King, William Welk, John DeRoo, Tom Posatko, Marvin Rogers, Andrew Wartman, Julia Eriksen, David Foster, Ed Fortuna. Tom Gallagher, Bob Bitzer.

Elizabeth, as lead of the Chapter Engagement Committee, opened the roundtable at 13:30, noting there was no agenda as this is an open forum.

Mark Reynolds, President of the Pacific Northwest Chapter, has been president for three terms and noted a drastic reduction in chapter membership (265 to half) since COVID-19. They have had a long-term affiliation with Antique Powerland, which has engaged media specialists. One of their projects is "Youtube shorts". The museum has given up on print media.

It was noted that since we are a railway historical society, we need to appeal to those interested in history by recording history and equipment restoration.

Bob Bitzer remarked of his experience in the retail world where marketing and advertising are paramount to finding the correct niche market. It has to be focussed and continuous and generate a story line.

Julia Erikson, Representative for the Wichita Valley Chapter, asked about a contact list of committee heads and directors. Elizabeth noted that one had been sent out last October and it was agreed that such a list would be updated and sent out twice a year - January and June.

Action Item 1: Elizabeth to contact Ellen Scott, National Secretary to acquire an up-to-date list of committee heads and directors every January and June. This list to be sent to all Advisory Council Representatives and Chapter Presidents.

In response to a comment regarding e-mails sent to the "info@nrhs.com", Dawn Holmberg noted that there have been issues with website e-mail which has resulted in delays responding.

Skip Waters of the North Texas Chapter asked about the groups.io forum, which had been discussed at the last conference. Mike Yuhas confirmed the forum, **NRHSChapterForum@groups.io** does exist.

Action Item 2: Elizabeth to explore the forum and send an e-mail to AC Representatives and Chapter Presidents with details and how to join.

Jack Barbier, President of the Northstar Chapter, noted the 4 P's - product, place, price and promotion and remarked that price is the hurdle. Jon Baake responded that the chapters are promoting chapter memberships, not National.

The St. Louis Chapter reduced their dues to \$14/year and have 80 members. 30 to 40 attend the meetings. They do have youth members. Attend several events and have tables.

Tom Gallagher noted the Champlain Valley Chapter's membership dues are \$15 except for the cost of the printed/mailed newsletter, which comes out ten times a year. It is \$35 if you wish to have the printed version.

Elizabeth noted the Central Coast Chapter's similar pricing structure - \$14 to be a member and have PDF version of the newsletter or an extra \$30 for a mailed monthly newsletter.

A comment was made that there is a list of historical societies in Railfan and Railroad magazine, which includes the dues structure. We are at the higher tier. Need to look at the value received of what you are paying. Skip noted a two-tier value system - perceived value and benefit.

Patti Webb of the Harrisburg Chapter reported that her chapter meets at a restaurant and they have a percentage (20 to 30%) taken off their food bill. Show up for a meal and you are given a presentation.

Julia Eriksen reported that the Wichita Valley Chapter meets at the depot which they received a grant for from Heritage Grants - promotion of NRHS.

Richard Shulby discussed donation of materials - utilizing collections to add to a chapter's own. Surplus books (duplicates, etc.) can be sold at shows, or list them on Ebay, thereby making additional monies for the chapter.

Skip further commented that estate donations can be sold and the money goes to the chapter, such is the case with North Texas. Those monies go to the chapter's grant program.
