



NRHS News

National Railway Bulletin

January 2005

Pre-registration extended until Feb. 19 for convention

Pre-registrations are rolling in for the 2005 NRHS Convention, scheduled July 5-9, in Portland Ore. Event officials are encouraged by the number of pre-registrations and especially the number of international pre-registrations. If you haven't yet pre-registered, the deadline has now been extended to Feb. 19, 2005 and the cost is a record low of only \$10.

The website, <www.nrhs2005.com>, continues to be updated with the latest convention information. Please visit this site for the latest information and answers to frequently asked questions. The convention registration booklet will be mailed to those pre-registered during March 2005.

Trains Unlimited Tours is operating an official convention in-bound trip, **Pacific Northwest Express**, from Sacramento to Portland July 2-4. Also available from Trains Unlimited Tours is an out-bound trip, **Cascade Rail Adventure**, from Portland to Oakland July 10-11. More information is available at www.trainsunlimitedtours.com or by phoning 1-800-359-4870.

Portland is internationally known as the home for the SP&S 700 and SP 4449 steam locomotives. Work continues by the Pacific Northwest Chapter host members attempt to incorporate these operational locomotives into the convention.

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Charter member Bowman dies; leaves photo collection to NRHS

John J. Bowman, Jr., 88, of Lancaster, Pa., a charter member of the NRHS, died Monday, Dec. 13, after a period of declining health.

Mr. Bowman was a native of Lancaster, the son of John J. Sr. and Edna Ryder Bowman. He was a founding member in 1934 of the Lancaster Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, a group which joined with the Interstate Trolley Club on Oct. 13,

1935, to form NRHS, with Lancaster as its first chapter.

Throughout his life, Mr. Bowman was involved in numerous family businesses in the Lancaster area, all the while using his camera to record rail history wherever he traveled. He participated in many of the early NRHS excursions, particularly in Pennsylvania, and documented these

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Nelson Bowers dies at age 73; was former NRHS president

Former NRHS President Nelson W. Bowers, 73, of Lancaster, Pa., died Sunday, Sept. 5, after a long battle with cancer.

Born Jan. 14, 1931, in Lancaster, Mr. Bowers was the son of William D. and Lillian I. Bowers. He graduated from Philadelphia's Drexel University in 1955 with a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering. He immediately went to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad, and later for Penn Central and Conrail. He retired in 1990 following a 35-year career.

Mr. Bowers joined NRHS in 1947 at the then-minimum age of 16, and was associated with Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Lancaster Chapters. At the young age of 21, he served as Lancaster Chapter treasurer, and while working in Baltimore, served as Baltimore Chapter president from 1967 to 1969. Mr. Bowers was director, train operations for Lancaster Chapter for many years, arranging and overseeing a host of Amtrak excursions. Always involved, he provided invaluable assistance to the Philadelphia and West Jersey Chapters in the operation of the 1976 NRHS convention, which will be remembered for the high-speed runby of gaudily-decorated Conrail GG1 #4800 through Lancaster station. That trip was planned and executed by Mr. Bowers.

His national NRHS service extended over a period of 15 years, beginning as vice president-membership from 1972 to 1976, senior vice president from 1976 to 1983 and National President from 1983 to 1987. While president, he presided over the official ceremonies when Philadelphia's venerable Reading Terminal was closed in 1984, after 91 years of service.

His contributions to the rail history preservation movement were extensive as well. He was instrumental in a little-known effort to preserve former Pennsylvania Railroad EMD E7A passenger diesel #5901, a move which ultimately found it preserved at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania at Strasburg. He was a major player in the Friends of GG1 4935 effort in 1977 to repaint that active Amtrak locomotive back into the PRR pinstripe paint scheme. He later led the effort to move the former Lehigh Valley Budd RDC-1 #40 (later Reading Company and SEPTA 9163) to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in 1984.

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NELSON BOWERS served the NRHS in several leadership roles, including president from 1983 to 1987.

RailCamp 2004 successful; 2005 session set July 17-23

Twenty-four young adults from nine different states took part in Basic RailCamp 2004, held from July 18-24 at Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pa.

The states represented by this past summer's attendees were California, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, according to NRHS Senior Vice President and RailCamp Director Larry Eastwood.

This was the seventh year for the program. The National Park Service and NRHS have been partners in the project since its inception, with strong support from the University of Scranton, a Jesuit university located near Steamtown where RailCampers are housed and fed during the week-long session. In 1999, Canadian Pacific Railway, through its-then subsidiary, Delaware & Hudson Railway, joined in an active role, enhancing the experience.

Since 1998, approximately 200 young adults have gone through the program, designed to provide an unusual experience in rail history interpretation, historic equipment preservation, railroad operations and career opportunities. Additional social opportunities are scheduled to provide an opportunity for participants to interact with their peers from other areas of the United States. Numerous RailCamp participants have come back to act as counselors for present-day attendees. Numerous RailCamp "alumni" have gone on to professional rail transportation careers, while many more are active

volunteers on local tourist railroads and at local rail museum sites.

In 2005, there will be one session of Basic RailCamp, operated from July 17-23 at Steamtown in Scranton. The program will be similar to that of the three prior years, with minor refinements to improve the experience. Housing and meals will again be provided by the University of Scranton, and instruction provided by Park Service personnel at Steamtown. The Canadian Pacific Railway will also provide a one-day outing which includes an Operation Lifesaver presentation by the their police service, and a tour of a CP yard facility where participants can see rail operations of a mainline freight railroad first-hand.

The program is open to young adults between the ages of 14 and 18 (entering 9th grade in September, 2005 to having graduated from high school in June, 2005). Tuition for the session is \$825 per participant, with an "early-bird" discount fee of \$725 if registered and paid by April 1, 2005. Scholarship assistance is available from NRHS through the Geoffrey W. Gerstung Education Fund, as well as from individual chapters of the society.

Basic RailCamp 2005 represents a unique opportunity for a "behind-the-scenes" experience for its participants. A complete flyer and registration form are available from: Basic RailCamp 2005, National Railway Historical Society, P. O. Box 58547, Philadelphia, PA 19102-8547. The NRHS may also be contacted via email at info@nrhs.com.

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Slide, multi-media presentations planned at Steamtown this winter

Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pa. will have guest photographer presentations in the museum theatre during the winter months. Regular park admission applies. The tentative schedule includes:

Feb. 12 -- Tom Nemeth of *Railpace NewsMagazine* will present a slide show on the D&H Penn Division from 1965-1985.

March 5 -- Steve Barry of *Railfan & Railroad* will present a slide show on west-ern Canada.

March 19: Michael Harting will present

a multi-media slide show on ore railroads and Great Lakes ore ships.

March 26: Frank Etzel will present a video presentation titled "Trains, Planes, Automobiles...& Ships!"

April 23 -- NRHS Vice President and Bulletin Editor Jeff Smith will present a digital multi-media show featuring the B&W photography of the late John Bowman.

Other shows may be added. Contact them to confirm the schedule. Steamtown maintains a web site at www.nps.gov/stea and their phone number is 888-693-9391.

Pre-registration extended for NRHS convention

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Short line and logging steam locomotives along with a trip on the Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad and the A-Line to Astoria are being planned for the convention. The Willamette River, which bisects the City of Portland, will be the venue for dinner cruises.

Convention event details will be included in the registration booklet. In the meantime, more information about Portland may be obtained from the Port-

land Oregon Visitors Association web site: www.pova.com.

NRHS members are invited to fill out the pre-registration form and get prepared for an outstanding week of railroad history and railroading in Portland. The \$10 pre-registration fee will be applied toward your registration fee.

Railcamp 2005

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Prospective attendees are also invited to visit the RailCamp website at www.railcamp.com, where there is an on-line registration form.

Information requests for the 2005 session have been running high, according to RailCamp Director Larry Eastwood, and early registration is recommended to make certain space is available, as the 2004 session sold-out quickly. Young adults are invited to enjoy the RailCamp experience.

"Go By Train"

2005 NRHS

Convention

July 5-9

Portland, Ore.

Bowman collection donated to NRHS

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trips with some 9,000 photographic negatives.

As his life progressed, he became a familiar fixture on the Strasburg Rail Road, and the photo collection includes numerous views of Mr. Bowman serving as a locomotive engineer on that Pennsylvania tourist line.

The society was named the recipient of this collection earlier this summer, and Director, Media Services Mitch Dakelman undertook the difficult task of moving the negatives, plus some 90 binders of photographs, from Mr. Bowman's former home in Lancaster to the NRHS Library in Philadelphia. NRHS Senior Vice President Larry Eastwood and Vice President Jeff Smith have been working to take the initial steps to stabilize this valuable collection. Mr. Bowman's attention to detail in putting together the albums was precise, with photos from early excursions being supported by a written narrative and, in some cases, the actual ticket from the trip itself.

Over the coming months, the NRHS Library volunteer staff will be undertaking the task of cataloguing the negatives and prints, with the ultimate goal of making them available to historians looking to document rail activity with photographs. This job will be made much easier because of Mr. Bowman's precise documentation.

Mr. Bowman is survived by two sisters, Julia Bowman of Lancaster, and Luetta Capra of Baltimore, Md.; as well as a nephew, David Capra, also of Baltimore; and several cousins.

A memorial service was held Mon-

day, Dec. 27, in Lancaster, with burial in Longenecker's Reformed Mennonite Cemetery. The society was represented at the service Mr. Eastwood, as well as several longtime NRHS acquaintances of Mr. Bowman.

"Our society is the organization it is today because of forward-thinking individuals such as John Bowman, who some 70 years ago had the foresight to band together with fellow rail enthusiasts in an organized manner for the benefit of future rail historians," said Eastwood.



JOHN BOWMAN talks with fellow Strasburg Rail Road employee, Attila Vorady, while standing beside 2-10-0 No. 90 at the East Strasburg train station in the fall of 1973.

Texas heritage museum, volunteers restore interurban relic, Car 524

By HEATHER NICHOLSON

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Baytown (Tex.) Sun

HIGHLANDS -- There it sat, in a Channelview pasture, rusted, abandoned and abused.

To most people, the last surviving electric interurban passenger car looked like another forgotten hunk of junk surrounded by overgrown weeds. But beneath the unsightly blue color and deterioration is a rich history of commerce and development closely intertwined with Baytown, Tex., and the surrounding area.

In an effort to preserve the past, a group of historical enthusiasts salvaged the relic, known as Car 524, and are attempting to restore it. Deemed the Highlands Heritage Museum and Preservation Project, the final product will be

displayed in a downtown Highlands park.

The Houston North Shore R railway was the first to connect Houston to the rural area of Goose Creek. Highlands, in particular, has special ties to the line because Harry K. Johnson, a 20th century settler, invested \$2 million to build the tracks. The interurban system ran from 1927 to 1948, when it was dismantled to make way for fuel and diesel powered buses.

When the Highlands Chamber of Commerce began to search this year for a historical monument to place in their city, it was well known that the last interurban car from the Houston North Shore line was close by on private property.

The Gulf Coast Chapter of the National Railway Society had been trying to buy the car for nearly 10 years, but price negotia-

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Bowers, former NRHS president, dies Sept. 5

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In 1983, he became involved in the joint Lancaster-Philadelphia Chapter effort to acquire and restore to operating condition former Reading EMD FP7 diesel locomotives #902 and 903. His wife, Cindy, has served as chair of the FP7 committee, which saw the locomotives restored to active service in 1995.

Mr. Bowers is survived by his wife of 14 years, Cynthia L. Bowers; daughters Naomi, Rebekah and Sarah; son-in-law Robert A. Ziegler; and grandson David.

R. L. Eastwood, Jr., NRHS senior vice president, commented that "Nelson's love and allegiance was with the Pennsylvania Railroad, and he also possessed a soft spot, perhaps disguised, for the Reading Railroad. How fitting, then, that he was

laid to rest Thursday, Sept. 9 in Charles Evans Cemetery in Reading, Pa., overlooking the former Reading Shops, his casket blanketed with a Pennsylvania Railroad flag that had come from Philadelphia's long-gone Broad Street Station.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, Sept. 18, at the Lancaster Chapter's restored ex-PRR Christiana freight station on Railroad Avenue in Christiana.

"Nelson's legacy to the rail history community, whom he considered part of his extended family, is an immense train consist of images and memories which will last for many years. Those of us who knew Nelson feel privileged to have ridden on his rail excursion through life," said Eastwood.

Classic Texas interurban car being restored

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tions could never be agreed upon with the landowner. When the Highlands preservation project leaders inquired about the car in October, it was only a matter of days before its scheduled demise to a scrap yard.

The land the car sat on land that was recently sold. The new owner just wanted it off the property, allowing project volunteers to haul it away for free.

When Highlands Chamber president Roy Elliott first saw the coveted Car 524, he was less than impressed.

“I looked at it and thought, ‘no way,’” he said. “But when I heard others worse off than this have been repaired, I felt more optimistic.”

After its final run, the 77-year-old car was bought by a company that used it as office space, removing most of its interior seating, adding shelves and a steel cage around the exterior as “burglar bars.”

The car was left outside, suffering decades of weathering that has caused the wood window frames to rot and most of

the structure to rust.

“We’re going to have to do a lot of woodwork and sandblasting to stabilize it,” said volunteer Gary Wiggins. “The main thing is it won’t deteriorate further.”

While at first glance, restoring the Highlands car appears daunting, restoration experts across the state have assured project leaders it is possible. The original structure is still intact so well that the finished product will be closer to its original state than a replica.

It took numerous volunteers, a flat bed truck, two towing motors and a police escort to resurrect Car 524 from the Channelview pasture, and move it to a pecan grove on Battle Bell Road.

It could take years to fully restore Car 524, depending on funds and volunteers. The finished project will eventually be placed on authentic Missouri Pacific tracks in a park near the Highlands fire station and chamber of commerce. Lights will illuminate it at night, and a museum with artifacts and documents will be constructed at the chamber building.



THE YADKIN VALLEY CHAPTER, NRHS, of North Wilkesboro (N.C.) recently moved into its new home, the former Wilkes Art Gallery. The 2,250 square foot building is being leased from the Town of North Wilkesboro for \$1 per year. The chapter plans to build a large HO scale model railroad layout in the facility, which also has a meeting room and office space. The building, which was home to the “Black Cat Sandwich Shop” more than 60 years ago, has been nicknamed “Black Cat Station” by the chapter.

'Trackside With NRHS' feature once again planned in 'Bulletin'

This year, the NRHS Bulletin will again sponsor a feature in the *Annual Activities Issue* called "Trackside with the NRHS". This feature will highlight NRHS events held during the calendar year 2004. A maximum of 20 pages of the *Activities Annual* will be devoted to high quality photographs run in full-color. We are looking for railfan photography, not photos of chapter picnics, group photos or items of that nature. Any chapter sponsored event will qualify as well as convention events and trips held during board of director meetings. Well-composed photos of NRHS preservation or restoration projects are also acceptable. We had a good response to last year's feature, and we hope that additional people will submit photographs this year.

We will accept slides, black and white prints and high quality color prints. Prints should be sized 6" X 9" or larger and should be professionally printed to ensure accurate colors and sharpness. Prints should not be mounted. Slides should not be printed. Please send the original slide. Prints made from a digital camera are acceptable if their quality is comparable to a 35mm slide and they are printed professionally. Digital prints made on color printers from your home computer are not acceptable. Digital

files will be accepted under certain circumstances. Please contact the editor at bulletin@nrhs.com before sending files.

You should include the following information on a separate sheet of paper or affixed to the back of the photograph:

- 1) Name of photographer
- 2) Your mailing address, phone number and/or email address (if you have one) in case we need more information about your photograph.
- 3) Caption information including the date of event, the location of event and the name of chapter(s) sponsoring the event(s)

Any NRHS member can send in an entry. Multiple entries from the same person are permissible. Entries from multiple events are acceptable. Submitters need not be a member of the chapter sponsoring the event or project. All entries must be received by March 1.

Photographs and slides will be returned upon publication only if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please send your entries and questions to:

Jeffrey Smith - Editor
Attn.: Along the Rails
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