

THE PENNYRAIL

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
WEST KENTUCKY CHAPTER OF
THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May 2021 Meeting
Innovation Station
Monday, May 17
Program
And
Refreshments
7:00 PM

President-Keith Kittinger

Vice President-Steve Miller

Sec/Treas-Bill Farrell

Chapter Rep-Will Kling

Director at Large-Cooper Smith

Editor-Bill Thomas

**Photo
Contest is
in progress.
May 15-31.**



Minutes from March Meeting

Western Kentucky Chapter/NRHS

Minutes March 15, 2021

President Keith Kittinger called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm, March 15, 2021. There was a total of 16 members present and 1 guest for the meeting. The minutes from the October 17, 2020 meeting were approved as read by Secretary William Farrell. The treasurers report was given by William Farrell, of 2,562,41. The treasures report was approved by the members present.

Old Business;

Bill Farrell reported on the reinstatement of the chapter to its 501 status. The original cost was estimated to be 450.00 for the chapter to gain its reinstatement status. Bill reported the actual cost was 195.00.

New Business;

Jim Pearson reported on Chuck Hendrick's railroad slides that he wants to donate to the chapter. Jim Pearson volunteered to go by Chucks house and pick up the slides. Jim Pearson reported on the March photo contest that started on March 15th, 2021 and would continue until the last day of the month. After that the membership has seven day to submit their photos to Jim as the photo contest chairperson. Jim had the membership vote on the photos from the winter snow storm contest. The winners were Bill Grady in first place, with Copper Smith taking both 2nd and 3rd place. Ricky Bivins reported that Darrell Morris of the Owensboro Chapter/NRHS had passed way and was one of the individuals responsible for the formation of our chapter. Ricky ask that the Western Kentucky Chapter send a nice card of condolences to Darrell's family. Ricky will get with Bill Farrell and send the card out to Darrell's family. Ricky Bivins noted that we no longer have a Chapter Historian. President Kittinger ask Ricky if he would serve in that position. Ricky agreed to serve as the Chapter Historian. Steve Miller motioned for Ricky to serve in the position of Chapter Historian. Seconded by Blair Terry, motion passed.

Steve Miller motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Will Kling. Motion passed. Business meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully; William Farrell , 3/16/2021

NEWS BRIEFS



May Meeting Moved to Madisonville

Regional Event

FJR INTERPRETATIONS

Photography by Dr. Frederick J. Ripley

PO Box 21491
Columbus, OH 43221
614-949-2056
fjripley68@gmail.com

'20 '20 VISIONS: 100 YEARS OF WEST VIRGINIA RAILROADING
April 30 - October 30, 2021, at the West Virginia Railroad Museum in Elkins



West Virginia Railroad Museum 2 Railroad Avenue Elkins, WV 26241 304-637-4810
OPEN 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS, & SUNDAYS STARTING APRIL 30

The West Virginia Railroad Museum is pleased to present the work of nationally acclaimed railroad photographer Dr. Frederick J. Ripley as the centerpiece of their exhibit for the 2021 season. Entitled **'20 '20 VISIONS: 100 YEARS OF WEST VIRGINIA RAILROADING**, it features 27 of Ripley's dramatic images taken throughout West Virginia and the surrounding region, all enlarged to 20" x 30" and framed under glass, accompanied by detailed caption information. All of Ripley's photos are for sale, and all sales benefit the West Virginia Railroad Museum. The exhibit also includes a fascinating selection of older photos, maps from various eras, and detailed interpretive text panels. The museum is on the upper level of the historic Darden Mill building, a beautifully restored venue in this former railroad town. Staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to create a safe environment, with frequent cleaning and sanitizing. Don't miss this exciting exhibit about railroading in the Mountain State!

RPOs No More

The year is 1968, the place: Bethel, Minnesota on the Great Northern line from the Twin Cities north to the port cities of Duluth and Superior. Mail messenger Phil Fox is hanging a catcher pouch of outbound mail on the crane.

Soon the southbound Badger, Train #23 from Duluth will fly by at 70 MPH and snag the pouch with a hook mounted in the Railway Post Office open car door. The clerk manning the hook will simultaneously toss a sack on inbound mail. The arms on the mail crane will collapse as a safety measure for other train crewman like the conductor standing in the vestibule.

This scene was repeated daily, hundreds of times on 1500 RPO routes across the country. The Railway Mail Service once employed 30,000 men in 4,000 RPO cars. These men sorted mail enroute, a service that many times included dispatching letters in pouches at stations that were snagged on the fly earlier in the same run.

It all came to an end on June 30, 1977 when the "New York & Washington," in both directions, made their last runs. As a sole survivor, this RPO run saw all the others "twilight" with the inception of AMTRAK in 1971. RPOs were victims of airlifting first class mail and the use of trucks.

A little editorial comment: When the RPOs were active, you could mail a letter in Seattle and have it delivered to a home in the Twin Cities on the 3rd day. Even with 500MPH jets today,?? forget it.

Photos by Don L.Hofsommer as seen in Classic Trains magazine, Fall 2006

Professor Hofsommer is a noted railfan/author.

Submitted by Gary Ostlund



PHOTO CONTEST INFORMATION

Just as a reminder that our next Chapter Photo Contest for 2021 will run May 15-31, 2021!

Each dues paying member is allowed to submit two photographs taken anywhere during the two weeks. Entries with captions should be sent to jim@jimpearsonphotography.com.

Current Treasury Balance Unavailable

PHOTO SECTION



Steve Gentry caught two NS freights waiting to enter the yard at Princeton, IN, May 8, 2021. More from his outing on the following pages.

PHOTO SECTION



NS heritage unit in Princeton, IN. Photo by Steve Gentry

