

North Texas Chapter – National Railway Historical Society



September Chapter Meeting: Highlights of the 2021 and 2022 NRHS National Conventions



When: Tuesday, September 12th (Not September 5th) Chapter Meeting @ 7:00 pm, Meet “N” Greet @ 6:30.

*NOTE: Date postponed until September 12 due to conflict with the NRHS National Convention and Labor Day Holiday. Also, since Spring Creek closes at 9:00 pm, we will start 30 minutes earlier.

Where: Spring Creek BBQ, 3514 W Airport Fwy, Irving, TX 75062; Phone: (972) 313-0987

Table of Contents:

Sept. Meeting @ Spring Creek BBQ, Irving.....Page 1
 Trips & Events Committee Meeting Report.....Page 1
 “Never Marry A Railroad Man” Page 2
 Come To “24 Hours @ Big Sandy”..... Page 3
 Rail Fanning With Bill Brown..... Page 4
 The Real Reason You Never See CabooseesPage 9

Perspective Of A Former Amtrak Engineer.....Page 13
 Update on #608.....Page 17
 NTC August Meeting Minutes..... Page 18
 10 Historic Train Rides in America.....Page 19
 Chapter Directory/History..... Page 21
 Doodlebug News Briefs.....Page 21

Trips and Events Committee

The first meeting of the Trips and Events committee was held before the regularly scheduled August meeting and was called to order by board member Bill Long. All members were invited and we had good attendance. Bill explained the purpose for holding the meeting was that the chapter has not had any excursions in the past few years, like the chapter used to do. This is in part due to Skip being busy on the weekends, when most excursions are likely to occur. So the board decided to have an events committee to inspire us to have some trips. Skip will be able to help with the background work but may not be able to be at the actual event. This first meeting achieved its goal. After a brainstorming session led by VP of Trips and Events, Skip Waters, the following trips/events were ranked by committee vote.

- 1) Chapter Excursion on the Grapevine Vintage Railroad

- 2) Chapter Excursion on the Texas State Railroad
- 3) Private ride (Charter) on McKinney Avenue Transit
- 4) Three Way Tie –
 - Excursion on Amtrak (same day or overnight stay somewhere)
 - Chapter Excursion on the Austin Steam Train
 - Tour of former North Texas Traction Facilities
- 5) Tour of select Texas Railroad Museums

Other possibilities discussed were: DART/DCCA tour, Museum of the American Railroad (Frisco). For future trips the idea of chartering a bus was discussed.

The top vote getter was a ride on the Grapevine Vintage Railroad. The committee wasted no time in scheduling a ride leaving and returning Grapevine, Saturday, November 11, 2023. We discussed meeting as a group in the Grapevine Founder’s Building, if it is available. Other options to meet as a group were also discussed.

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Humorous Song From The Past: “Never Marry A Railroad Man”

This song by the rock group Shocking Blue came out in 1969 and is warning women not to marry men who work on the railroad because they are not reliable partners. The song advises against falling in love with them and suggests forgetting about them if they do. The female singer says that railroad men only love their partners occasionally and are more focused on their trains than their relationships. None of us are guilty of this, right?

Have you been broken-hearted once or twice
 If it's yes, how did you feel at his first lies?
 If it's no, you need this good advice
 Never marry a Railroad man
 He loves you every now and then
 His heart is at his new train, no, no, no
 Don't fall in love with a Railroad man
 If you do, forget him if you can
 You're better off without him, ahh
 Have you ever been restless in your bed?
 And so lonely that your eyes became wet
 Let me tell you then one thing
 Mmm, mmm, mmm
 Mmm, mmm, mmm
 Mmm, mmm, mmm
 No, no, no
 Never marry a Railroad man
 He loves you every now and then
 His heart is at his new train, no, no, no
 Don't fall in love with a Railroad man
 If you do, forget him if you can
 You're better off without him, no, no, no
 No, no, no
 No, no, no

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HEAR YE, HEAR YE!

The countdown has started to attend the 1st Annual "24 Hours @ BIG SANDY" 2023!!!

IT'S

TIME

TO

WATCH

SOME

TRAINS...

In BIG SANDY, TEXAS!!!

Dates are confirmed for the 1st Annual "24 Hours @ BIG SANDY" 2023!

7:00pm Friday, September 22nd through 7:00pm Saturday, September 23rd,

at the Big Sandy Heritage Center on Gilmer Street in Big Sandy, Texas (East, Texas).

The BEST PART --- One of the main reasons for building this Heritage Center was to have it as a Railfan Park, where train enthusiasts can view trains... This is FOR REAL!!!

The Heritage Center is located next to a major rail crossing for the Union Pacific Railroad in East, Texas. The former Texas & Pacific and the Cotton Belt rail lines cross here. It is reported to have 50-60 trains pass per day including Amtrak's Texas Eagle. You can view this rail crossing via a live railcam linked here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNerDlcpFx8>

Plan to join us in Big Sandy in September for Rail Fun with Rail Friends doing what we love to do best and watch TRAINS from the back porch of the Big Sandy "Railfan Park" at the Heritage Center!!!

We are now accepting those who want to show a program or presentation that can be done inside the Heritage Center! Video programs, Show N Tell, speakers, demonstrations or what have you are welcome. The Heritage Center comes with a Big Screen, seating and restrooms....**YES, INDOOR RESTROOMS** (but don't get crazy).

POP UP TENTS -- We are not sure yet if POP UP tents will be allowed on the grounds of 24 Hours at Big Sandy. Once we find out, we will let you know.

Come Play the Great Locomotive Race Trivia Game with new questions, and expect the usual great fun, friends and activities to keep you busy for 24 Hours... and lots of TRAIN WATCHING!!!

So mark your calendars for September 22nd & 23rd, get your lawn chairs ready (sleeping bags too) because, it's **TIME TO WATCH SOME TRAINS... IN BIG SANDY!!!**

Join the "24 Hours @ Big Sandy" Facebook page for the latest updates,

(NOTE: This is also the Saginaw page, but that's how it goes for now) <https://www.facebook.com/24hoursatSaginaw>

PRESENTERS: We are now accepting presenters who would like to put on a program for this year's event. Please email Skip Waters: wgcrush@swbell.net to be on the schedule.

Skip Waters, Event Chair, 1st Annual "24 Hours @ Big Sandy" 2023

Rail Fanning Pictorial
By William "Bill" Brown



Prairie Lines at ADM in Clinton, Iowa.



BNSF southbound on BNSF's Aurora Sub at the Savanna, Illinois Veterans Memorial.



The Albuquerque Commuter Train at Belen, NM.



BNSF Eastbound Intermodal Train at the Albuquerque, NM Amtrak Station.



Westbound BNSF Intermodal Train at Needles, California.



Westbound BNSF Intermodal Train at Mile Post 602.2 on the Needles Sub West of Needles.



The Santa Fe Beep at the Western Railroad Museum in Barstow, California.



Eastbound BNSF International Intermodal Train at the Kingman, Arizona Depot.



Westbound BNSF Mixed Freight at the Fort Sumner, NM Depot.



Fort Worth and Western's new SD60Ms at Hodge Yard in Fort Worth, TX.

The Real Reason You Never See Caboose On Trains Anymore

By William Fischer/Aug. 9, 2023



Caboose is loaded onto tracks
University Of Southern California/Getty Images
By William Fischer/Aug. 9, 2023 7:00 am EST

The glory days of America's railway system are well behind her. According to The Washington Post, the past century has seen U.S. passenger rail go from the envy of the world to the worst among peer nations, largely on account of poor regulatory decisions made during the New Deal era. Freight rail has remained a success by comparison, but its customers have had issues with its service for years. American rail's reputation is poor enough that China has used it to talk up its own high-speed lines and technological superiority.

There have been efforts in recent years to revive America's trains. They're a climate-friendly travel option compared to cars and planes, and for all the comments made at Amtrak's expense, many of its customers like it. Trains also retain a sheen of romance in the American mind, and not without reason — the rail systems put down after the Civil War played a large part in moving the nation's mentality from a group of states to a unified country. But whatever the fate of U.S. railways and the efforts to improve them, there's one famous piece of their legacy you won't see, and haven't seen on any operational train for decades: the caboose. It might be the most recognizable part of a train after the engine for many people, but familiarity couldn't save cabooses from the march of technological progress and harsh economic realities.

What was the caboose used for?



Caboose idles by a crossing
Bruce Gifford/Getty Images

The caboose grew out of an improvised solution to a pressing need in the early days of the railway. Train engines were too crowded for conductors to be able to work comfortably, and with freight trains picking up and dropping off valuable cargo throughout their lines, there was a lot to keep track of. To have a usable workspace, conductors set up offices in older cars. Eventually, these evolved into the caboose as we know it, which functioned not only as a workspace but as living quarters and a lookout post for the crew.

The latter function was vital to a properly functioning train. Conductors needed to be able to see that everything on the train was working properly. If anything broke down, or if the train needed to come to a stop, the conductor would crawl into the top level of the caboose, the cupola, and supervise as crews manually applied the brakes to each train car.

A final use for cabooses was advertising. They have a reputation for being bright red cars at the end of a train, typically painted this color for safety. But cabooses came in many hues — rail companies often painted the caboose to reflect their signature colors and logos, or to match the rest of the train cars.

They disappeared because of technology



Train conductors ride a caboose
George Rinhart/Getty Images

The caboose wasn't just a convenience for the conductor and crew — until the 1980s, it was a mandated part of trains in the United States and Canada. As a place to survey the line for damage, it was an essential safety feature. But their necessity only lasted as long as technology didn't offer an alternative.

Two innovations helped make cabooses obsolete as a piece of railway safety. Monitoring systems installed on the side of train tracks detected any defects in car wheels or dragging pieces of freight or equipment, which meant that conductors didn't need the caboose to watch for such issues. And the end-of-train device (ETD) took over the monitoring of a train's air-break system. The ETD need only be fitted on the last car in a line to mind the breaks and relay any issues to the locomotive, which can transmit back an order to stop the train if needed.

As for being a resting place for cast and crew, rail companies started paying for motel rooms by the '80s, and conductors had less need for space when their paperwork went to computers. Some older workers argued for keeping cabooses as a safety feature, or just out of sentimentality, but the writing was on the wall. That cabooses lasted until the '80s in North America was unusual — Europe began phasing them out of its railways in the 1940s.

Some train lovers (and workers) want the caboose back



Caboose is parked on a rail track
Bruce Gifford/Getty Images

When technological advancements in the 1980s first suggested that train cabooses were redundant, some workers fought to keep them as a useful safety measure. Those arguments were not persuasive, especially not after the cost of maintaining cabooses (\$381 million per year, per the Lewiston Morning Tribune) were factored in. But if there are no grounds to have a caboose on a train based on utility or finance, some train workers — and train enthusiasts — argue that there's a sentimental case for them.

Kevin Keefe, former editor of *Trains* magazine, conceded that cabooses weren't needed anymore. But he told the *Chicago Tribune* in 1995, "The caboose is just one more romantic element of the railroad that's disappeared." He said that fellow train fans found advancements like the ETD cold and impersonal compared to the light from a manned caboose at the end of the line. And in 2020, Alan Clark argued in the *Herald Chronicle* that "nonessentials" like the caboose added an underappreciated color to life that technological advancement too often bleeds out of society. He suggested that even an unmanned caboose, a purely cosmetic addition to the backs of trains, would be welcome by railroad enthusiasts.

Read More: <https://www.grunge.com/1359298/real-reason-you-dont-see-cabooses-on-trains-anymore/>

Perspective Of A Former Amtrak Engineer
By Don Novak



View from the cab as southbound Heartland Flyer is entering the diamonds of Saginaw Yard. The grain elevators can be seen on the left and the outdoor detached restrooms of the Saginaw depot, home of “24 Hours at Saginaw” fame, can be seen on the right. The headlight of a northbound freight can barely be seen in the distance waiting in a siding for the Heartland Flyer to pass through. The tracks will soon be reconfigured and the diamonds will no longer exist. Date of Photo: July 6, 2021 @ 12:22 pm.



This is not the best position for a BNSF freight train. Taken south of Pauls Valley, September 3, 2020.



Above and below - "The Heartland Flyer's Big Game Train" for the Red River Shootout football classic between Texas and Oklahoma, as seen in Ardmore, OK. The game is traditionally played in October at the Cotton Bowl inside Fair Park in Dallas during the State Fair of Texas.





New locomotive freshly built in Ft Worth on July 30, 2023 at the Alliance Yard diesel facility. Don's new job!



Set of private cars at the Ft Worth Amtrak Facility, January 2, 2021.



Ms. Gigi getting ready to head north to OKC on the Heartland Flyer Train #821, April 15, 2020.



Another trip to OKC, November 26, 2020 for Ms. Gigi. Editor's Question – Is Ms. Gigi the engineer or conductor? Maybe the Road Foreman?



There's always some knucklehead that decides to stop on the tracks, which is a dangerous and many times deadly decision!

Update on #608
By James Dolande



When we last saw 608 mentioned in this newsletter, you might remember that the car was in danger of being scrapped by the City of Van Alstyne. It was thought the car was lost to history. Thankfully, we were wrong! In a remarkable twist of fate, the car was moved on to a new plinth within the city parking lot near the property taxes collection building. The trucks and chassis of the car have been reassembled, cleaned and repainted! What the city has in mind for the car's future is currently unknown, as both the city and project manager have not given any comments or statements regarding the progress of restoration. Safe to say that regardless, we are very relieved and happy to see the only steel-sided Monroe car shop home built trailer of the Texas Electric Railway back on display and in one piece.

Minutes of the August 2023 Meeting of the North Texas Chapter of the NRHS

The August 2023 meeting of the North Texas Chapter of the NRHS meeting was held on Tuesday, August 1st at the Founders Building in Grapevine, TX. Sixteen attendees were present, including two visitors.

President Wayne Smith called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

Wayne reported lots of travel during the month of July and passed around picture postcards of the Branson Scenic Railroad in Branson, MO; Oregon Rail Heritage Center in Portland including pictures of the SP 4449 and the SP&S 700; Portland Union Station; Portland Street Cars; and the British Columbia Forest Discovery Center with lots of shay and climax locomotives and a narrow gauge railroad.

Wayne also reported on the NMRA National Convention to be held August 20-26 at the Gaylord Resort in Grapevine, TX. See <https://2023texasexpress.com/> for more information.

Skip Waters reminded the attendees once again that the National NRHS Convention will be held in Deerfield Beach, FL September 1-6. It's not too late to purchase tickets for several events. Refer to the NRHS web site for additional details. <https://nrhs.com/convention/>

Skip reported that the first meeting of the Trips and Events committee was held prior to the regularly scheduled August meeting. After a brainstorming session led by VP of Trips and Events, Skip Waters, the following trips/events were ranked by committee vote. The top vote getter was a ride on the Grapevine Vintage Railroad. The committee wasted no time in scheduling a ride leaving and returning Grapevine, Saturday, November 11th, 2023. Other trips and events listed in descending order included: chapter excursion on the Texas State Railroad; private ride on McKinney Avenue Transit; three way tie between an excursion on Amtrak, excursion on the Austin Steam Train and a tour of former North Texas Traction facilities; and last was a tour of select Texas Railroad Museums.

“24 Hours at Big Sandy” will take place September 22-23. In nearby Mineola, an “Iron Horse Festival” is scheduled for Saturday, September 23rd. Simultaneous events might impact hotel room availability for those who wish to overnight in a hotel. More information to follow.

Jon Shea reminded everybody that the September program include Highlights of the 2021 and 2022 NRHS National Conventions. The September meeting has been postponed until the second Tuesday, September 12th due to the dates of the conflicting 2023 NRHS National Convention and Labor Day Holiday.

Locations for the annual Christmas dinner continued to be discussed, but a decision has not been made as to the location.

Elden Baker reported that the 17th Annual Cotton Belt Railroad Symposium will be August 5, 2023 at Texas A&M University-Commerce in Commerce, Texas.

The evening program was a highlight video produced by a third party on the 2008 NRHS National Convention sponsored by the North Texas Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

The meeting adjourned about 9:30 PM.

Submitted by Wayne Smith in the absence of Chapter Secretary Jerry Nunn

These Are 10 Of The Most Historic Train Rides To Enjoy In America

Story by Aaron Spray

Source: <https://www.thetravel.com/most-historic-train-rides-in-the-us/#strasburg-rail-road-pennsylvania-the-oldest-continuously-operating-railroad>

One of the top innovations that enabled the growth, expansion, and consolidation of the United States was the development of the railroads. While passenger trains have long largely gone out of fashion in the United States, there are plenty of historic train rides all around the country. Some of these train rides are only short rides, while others are much more complete adventures.

Here are ten of the most historic train rides in the United States to add to the bucket list, each of which is rooted in history and offers stunning scenery.

Strasburg Rail Road, Pennsylvania: The Oldest Continuously Operating Railroad -

Go to Lancaster County in Pennsylvania (famous for its large Amish population), and visitors can find the Strasburg Rail Road. The Strasburg Rail Road is the oldest public utility in the state (technically a commonwealth) and has been operating since 1832.

The railroad still has five operational steam locomotives (plus more in various stages of restoration), and visitors can enjoy historic rides today.

Grand Canyon Railway, Arizona: The Wild West-Themed Train -

Perhaps the best way to go to the Grand Canyon is on the Grand Canyon Railway. This train was completed in 1901, and today, it operates as a family-friendly attraction with a Wild West-themed experience.

See the kids entertained with acted 'train robberies' and 'shootouts' on a fun day out along this route. It runs 64 miles from Williams to Grand Canyon Village, offering entertaining experiences and gorgeous scenery along the way.

White Pass and Yukon Route, Alaska: The Klondike Gold Rush Train -

The Klondike Gold Rush was the last and greatest of the gold rushes in history. Thousands of people scrambled to cross over the mountain ranges of Alaska to get to the gold fields of Dawson City in Canada's Yukon Territory.

Soon, a train was built through the mountains from Skagway to Canada. Today, a section of the railroad has been restored and offers a great throwback to the Klondike Gold Rush, enabling travelers to learn about this event's history and retrace the steps of those who lived throughout this significant time in US history.

The "Skunk Train", Northern California: A Train Among The Redwoods -

Take a tour through the redwoods of Northern California on the historic "Skunk Train" (it was once notorious for its smell from the train's fumes). Today visitors can still ride in the old railroad cars without the smells of the past.

Relax and enjoy the ride as it takes passengers through varying scenery, including over trestle bridges, through tunnels, and along the Noyo River Canyon.

Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, Colorado: Relive The Golden Age-

Winding its way through the stunning San Juan National Forest of Colorado is the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. This 45-mile-long track runs from Durango to Silverton and was first opened in 1882. The railroad has real Wild West stories and offers a trip back in time for passengers who can learn about this period in time and the people who lived it.

See the gold mines at the end, capping off an excellent authentic experience for tourists.

Polar Express, New York: Take A Historic Ride At Christmas -

The Polar Express takes over during the winter holiday season from the historic trains in the Catskills offering rides for hikers. The Polar Express is Christmas-themed and a wonderful experience for the whole family.

Passengers are encouraged to wear their pajamas and really get into the festive atmosphere. The Polar Express is one of the best ways to enjoy the Catskills in the winter. It's also among the best Christmas experiences in the US, hands down.

Cass Scenic Railroad, West Virginia: Take A Historic Coal Train -

In the Appalachians, travelers can find plenty of abandoned old coal-mining trains. A few of them have been preserved, and today, they are great family-friendly activities. Ride on the Cass Scenic Railroad and discover some of the stunning landscapes of West Virginia as well as the coal mining heritage of the region.

Today, this route is one of the most historic train rides in America that enables passengers to enjoy the area's rich history as well as its beautiful scenery.

Conway Scenic Railroad, New Hampshire: See The Coal Heritage -

The Conway Scenic Railroad is one of the more historic railroads still offering tours to tourists today in New Hampshire. Today, visitors can ride on historic streamlined passenger cars while departing from a 19th-century Victorian-style station. Passengers have the choice of two train tours - Heritage Rides and Scenic Railroad Excursions.

Heber Valley Railroad, Utah: A Heritage Tour Through Scenic Landscapes -

One of the more historic trains in the US to take in Utah is the Heber Valley Railroad. The rides on this heritage train last for less than three hours and go from Heber City and Vivian Park.

Along the way, passengers enjoy some of Utah's most spectacular scenery while being pulled by vintage trains. Interestingly, the flagship train is No. 618 - a 1907 vintage steam locomotive complete with restored vintage coaches.

Royal Gorge Route Railroad, Colorado: The Trip "That Bankrupts The English Language" -

The Royal Gorge Route Railroad is so stunning that President Teddy Roosevelt [stated] that it bankrupts the English language. It is a real Wild West railroad famous for the "Royal Gorge War" which involved real fights between rival railroad companies to build the first railroad there.

Chapter Directory

North Texas Chapter Officers, 2023

- *President, Wayne Smith, 940-300-4407
- *Vice President/Programs, Jon Shea, 972-948-2413
- *Vice President/Trips and Events, Skip Waters,
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- *Vice President/Communications, Vacant
- *Secretary, Jerry Nunn
- *Treasurer, Bob Kennedy
- *National Representative, Bill Long
- *Webmaster, Kim Hays, kimhays516@gmail.com
- *Zephyr Editor, Wayne Smith

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North Texas Chapter site: <https://ntxnrhs.org/>

Facebook Page:
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/409467244127/>

North Texas Zephyr (current issues):
[The Zephyr Newsletter - North Texas Chapter, NRHS \(ntxnrhs.org\)](http://www.ntxnrhs.org/)

Zephyr Archives:
[Rail History Newsletters \(gogeocaching.com\)](http://www.gogeocaching.com/)

North Texas Chapter History

Founded and chartered in 1996, the North Texas Chapter is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) educational organization incorporated under the laws of the state of Texas. Emphasis of the chapter is activity, history, and enjoyment of railroading past and present. Meetings are usually held 7:30-9:30 PM, the first Tuesday of each month. Visitors and newcomers are welcome.

Chapter membership includes our monthly chapter newsletter, the North Texas Zephyr. Currently, chapter dues are \$16, plus \$2 per additional family member. Payment may be made by check or paid online. By check - Mail a check payable to "North Texas Chapter NRHS" for \$16 (individual) or \$18 (family) and mail it to North Texas Chapter NRHS, PO Box 600304, Dallas TX, 75360. If your check does not clearly indicate who the member is, please add a note with the member's name.

Online - Visit the chapter's on-line store at
<https://ntxnrhs.org/store>

to pay by credit card or PayPal. A small service charge (50 cents for individuals, 75 cents for families) is added to your dues payment to cover processing fees.

Learn about the National Railway Historical Society at
www.nrhs.com

Doodlebug News Briefs



MKT doodlebug M10

Tuesday, September 12th (Not September 5th) Chapter Meeting - Spring Creek BBQ Irving, Program: Highlights of the 2021 and 2022 NRHS National Conventions.

7:00pm Friday, Sept. 22nd through 7:00pm Saturday, 23rd - 24 Hours @ Big Sandy, TX. Details to come!

Tuesday, October 3rd Chapter Meeting - Grapevine Founders Building, Program: Trolley – The Cars That Built Our City

Tuesday, November 7th Chapter Meeting - Texas Western Model RR Club, Forest Hill; Annual Auction.

Tuesday, December 5th Chapter Meeting – Annual Christmas Party and White Elephant Exchange, TBA

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Index:

Sept. Meeting @ Spring Creek BBQ, Irving.....Page 1
 Trips & Events Committee Meeting Report.....Page 1
 "Never Marry A Railroad Man"..... Page 2
 Come To "24 Hours @ Big Sandy"..... Page 3
 Rail Fanning With Bill Brown..... Page 4
 The Real Reason You Never See CabooseesPage 9
 Perspective Of A Former Amtrak Engineer.....Page 13
 Update on #608.....Page 17
 NTC August Meeting Minutes..... Page 18
 10 Historic Train Rides in America.....Page 19
 Chapter Directory/History..... Page 21
 Doodlebug News Briefs..... Page 21

Wayne Smith, North Texas News Editor.
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