



The Beltline

On the Web at www.nationalcapitaltrackers.org

Official Newsletter of the National Capital Trackers

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Trackers and Helpers at CPAM, photo

NCT Club News

Monthly Membership Meetings are every month on the Third Thursday. Members may attend in person at Green Acres Center in Fairfax or on Zoom.

December meeting usually NOT HELD.

Please pay your dues for 2023 if you wish to participate in club shows next year. We rely on dues payments to cover expenses each month, including maintenance of our two trailers and club assets. We thank those who recently have paid their 2023 dues.

Dues for Passengers are \$30; dues for Partners are \$20. There are no dues for Junior members but the Junior's parent pays as a Passenger.

Please send your dues to: John Masiyowski, NCT Treasurer, either in person at the monthly meetings OR send a check or money order made out to NCT / National Capital Trackers. Send to John at the address:

John Masiyowski, 13607 Brass Harness Ct. Oak Hill, VA 20171-3364

We are in the process of updating the membership list on our new website. If you have any roster updates, send an email to Dave Eadie at dbeadie@verizon.net

New Equipment: NCT recently purchased two new MTH Z-4000 transformers from Toy Trains & Collectibles of Manassas, VA.

Not Quite O Gauge... by Bill Hakkarinen

In 2020, my wife and I moved to Broadmead, a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) in Cockeysville, MD. (www.broadmead.org). This meant the demolition of my basement O-gauge empire. It was difficult physically, but more so emotionally. Some Trackers were able to salvage some of the modules and materials, but the auctioneer got the most. I wondered if my model railroading days were over.

When some new neighbors heard of my interest in trains, they asked if I'd thought of trying to get a layout here. The Broadmead Residents Association is very active, and I read the materials on starting a new group, since activities are resident initiated. When an incoming resident brought his 1950 American Flyer Circus train

with him and then wanted to donate it to the residents' association, I knew which track I wanted to take.

Eight people attended our first meeting on March 8, 2022. We decided that our initial effort would focus on developing a layout for the end-of-the year holiday season. Four members went to the York TCA show on April 29 to get a feel for what was available. I looked at York with new eyes, now focused on American Flyer.

Another future Broadmead resident heard of our group from the marketing department and approached us about bringing some of his O-gauge buildings when he moved in. He had been very involved with the former Jacksonville Senior Center layout, since moved to Martin Airport, and turned out to be a master craftsman. He had built scale models of Penn Station, Mt. Royal Station, the Shot tower, the Meyerhoff, and other Baltimore landmarks.

The wood shop users offered to build the platform, and administration gave permission to set up a 4 x 8 platform in the library. Now we had all the pieces: trains, platform, scenery, and workers. We set up a mini-layout at the October Fall Festival to judge resident response. It was tremendous! Residents were very excited and pleased to see an operating electric train.

We started work the day after Thanksgiving. We scheduled an hour of operation each day, and that first Sunday we had 45 visitors to the layout.

Our train garden at Broadmead has been a big success. A loop of American Flyer encircles a resident's Z-gauge module. Usually we run the 1950's circus train, but we also purchased a Flyer Chief GP7. I also got a really neat Christmas present: a Flyer Chief Berkshire! That brings some of the feel of O gauge to the layout.

The layout was in operation from November 27, 2022, through January 1, 2023. Residents are already asking about next year, and the administration is exploring options for us to have a permanent layout. It looks like a clear track ahead for model railroading at Broadmead!





Man's name tag: [unreadable]

Model train set information sheet:

NAME	NO.	YEAR	SCALE
TYPE	WGT.	LEN.	PRICE
OR.			

The First Transcon

Everyone knows that the first transcontinental railroad was completed with the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10, 1869. But was this really the first TRANSCONTINENTAL railroad? Actually, no. It was the first transcontinental railroad IN THE UNITED STATES, but the first railroad to cross North America from Atlantic to Pacific was the Panama Railroad which was completed across the Isthmus of Panama in 1855. This 47 ½ -mile long railroad saved passengers the arduous sea voyage around Cape Horn and would later facilitate the completion of the Panama Canal. From the newsletter of the Santa Fe 2926 New Mexico Steam Railroad Society, sent by Tom Hargis.

With new trestle, Costa Mesa model railroad is back on track, by Alicia Robinson, Orange County (CA) Register



Members of Orange County Model Engineers are all smiles as they take their trains across the refurbished Hank Hornsveld Trestle in Costa Mesa, CA on Tuesday, October 25, 2022. The trestle was originally built in 1991 and is part of over 5 miles of track at the site. (Photo by Paul Bersebach, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By [ALICIA ROBINSON](#) | arobinson@scng.com | The Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: October 25, 2022 at 6:04 p.m. | UPDATED: October 25, 2022 at 6:04 p.m.

The model railroad at Costa Mesa’s Fairview Park is ready to give free rides to delighted children for decades to come, now that a new trestle bridge is in place.

The Orange County Model Engineers, the club that operates and maintains the railroad, held a dedication for the trestle on Tuesday, Oct. 25.

The new span replaces a 30-year-old bridge that was riddled with termites and structurally unsound – and it’s a surprise it lasted that long, since it was built with donated lumber that was for indoor rather than outdoor use, said Hank Castignetti, the club’s secretary.

The trestle remains named for Hank Hornsveld, an early club member who spearheaded construction of the original bridge. Three of his now-grown grandchildren came to the dedication, which included 15 scale model engines on the trestle blowing their horns at once (known in model railroad jargon as a “big toot”) as a ribbon was cut.







A man stands on the refurbished Hank Hornsveld Trestle at Orange County Model Engineers in Costa Mesa, CA on Tuesday, October 25, 2022. The trestle was originally built in 1991 and is part of over 5 miles of track at the Mackerel Flats and Goat Hill Junction Railroad. (Photo by Paul Bersebach, Orange County Register/SCNG)

When the club announced last year that [it was raising money](#) to replace the trestle, Castignetti said the community stepped up to help, just as they did when the model engineers' building was recently vandalized.

“We were absolutely shocked and gratified by everybody’s response, particularly the citizens of Costa Mesa – they just turned out in droves with checks and cash,” he said, adding local businesses made in-kind donations to the project.

The model engineers have been at Fairview Park since 1988. Over the past several years, the club has spent about \$300,000 replacing all five and a half miles of tracks for the trains, and with help from the community it fixed up the building and put in the new trestle, which Castignetti hopes will last 50 years or more.

The club gives free rides with the small trains from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m on the third Saturday and Sunday of every month, and it also does birthday parties where kids can sit in the engineer's seat, blow the horn and throw the switches.

The best part for Castignetti is sharing his love of model trains with children.

Nevada Northern Rebuilds Line to Downtown Ely, from Railfan and Railroad Magazine, via Google News



The Nevada Northern Railway Museum is reconstructing about a mile of track that will soon connect it to downtown Ely.

In the early 20th century, NNRy would operate “ping-pong” commuter trains between downtown Ely and East Ely, where the railroad’s main shop and yard were located. The run took about eight minutes and made multiple trips per day, hence the name. Once roads improved and more people had automobiles, passenger service ended and the railroad had little reason to run downtown. Eventually, the tracks at the very end were removed, but the right-of-way remained intact to the edge of the city’s core area. Today, the end of the track is located at the White Pine Public Museum. With the help of the City of Ely, the State of Nevada, and the federal government, NNRy was able to start rebuilding track in early November.

Once the track is in service again, NNRy will once again run “ping-pong” trains between the museum and the downtown area, although it’s unclear when that service will begin and how often it will run. The railroad plans on using a GE 45-tonner for the service.

Meanwhile, the railroad is still rebuilding 4-6-0 40 and hoped to have three steam locomotives running by the end of 2023. When complete, locomotive 40 will join 2-8-0s 81 and 93. The railroad also has a growing fleet of diesel locomotives including a Baldwin VO-1000 and an RSD-5. Soon they will be joined by the railroad’s only SD7, currently stored at a Utah power plant and still wearing its red and yellow NNRy paint.

Historic Train Car Transformed Into an Art Deco Dream for a Family of Railway Enthusiasts, by Lauren Wicks, Veranda.com, sent by Tom Hargis

Scottsdale, Arizona-based designer Wendy Rodgers had been working with Rob Menzies, a railway owner and private railcar enthusiast, for years on both residential and railcar projects before landing her biggest challenge yet. Menzies presented Rodgers with a third railcar project: a 1954 Union Pacific vessel originally built as an observation bar and lounge car that he envisioned as his next luxurious home on the rails. The problem was, the car had been completely stripped down. Rodgers says that the car was practically nothing inside but steel, and though she knew she had her work cut out for her, the designer couldn’t wait to give this project a new life.





All Aboard Amtrak's Mary Jane Limited?

Written by William C. Vantuono, *Railway Age* Editor-in-Chief

Weeds on railroad tracks takes on a whole new meaning ...

If you're a railroad historian, you're doubtless aware of some of the passenger trains of bygone days named for famous people, like the Ethan Allen Express, Abraham Lincoln, Commodore Vanderbilt, William Penn, Will Rogers, Nancy Hanks, Nathan Hale, Paul Revere, etc. If a recent report in the Buffalo Chronicle is to be taken seriously, you'll be able to ride a new (or renamed) Amtrak long-distance train, the Mary Jane Limited.

Think I'm kidding? Blowing smoke at you? Puffing on funny cigarettes?

A recent Buffalo Chronicle article titled "At Schumer's urging, Amtrak will accommodate cannabis users on slow-moving routes" claims that "Amtrak is planning to accommodate cannabis users on its traditional regular-speed routes across the country, including on trains that run between Buffalo and New York City. The move is at the urging of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who believes that allowing adults to smoke cannabis on trains will improve the passenger experience and increase ticket sales for passengers that are willing to travel at a more leisurely pace."

It's a short joint—er, piece—so I may as well reproduce it here in full:

"Under new federal regulations that Schumer's office has been working on for months, Amtrak would be allowed to sell cannabis products to its passengers aboard trains—even while in states that ban it. The regulations would require Amtrak to designate some passenger cars as 'smoking' and others as 'non-smoking.' The nation's railways are federally regulated.

"It's unclear if Amtrak will be allowed to sell cannabis products to passengers inside its stations, prior to boarding.

“Many supporters of the policy believe that the new regulations will allow Amtrak to generate new revenue streams by enabling it to cultivate a ‘leisure travel’ market, particularly for long-distance sight-seeing routes. Improving passenger volumes on long-distance rural routes—which are some of the nation’s most scenic—would go a long way to turning the system’s poorest performing routes into some of its most profitable.

“‘I love a wide, slow-moving train,’ Schumer often quips. ‘There’s nothing better than being able to put your feet up and enjoy the ride.’

“It’s unlikely, however, that cannabis users will be accommodated on Amtrak’s most profitable route: the Acela Corridor. That high-speed service is marketed to business travelers at premium price points.

“‘These regs are designed to help make Amtrak profitable and to give it the flexibility to be competitive as it develops various niches in the market for travel,’ Schumer adds. ‘Particularly among leisure travelers who don’t mind traveling at a more comfortable pace.’”

OK folks, now that I’ve hopefully gotten your attention, here’s a spoiler, before I continue: The Buffalo Chronicle does indeed exist. It’s a website, and also has a Facebook page. However, everything it publishes is fake, phony, or at the very least, highly fictionalized. Its address, as Canada’s CBC discovered, is a long-abandoned warehouse. The Brooklyn Paper recently called it out for publishing “bogus stories about local news in Brooklyn and the rest of New York City for several years, fooling untold numbers of New Yorkers with articles that seem superficially plausible and look convincing, but lack any morsel of truth.”

The story about marijuana use permitted on Amtrak trains is actually funny, if you think about it. What’s not funny is that there are too many people who actually believe such cesspools of misinformation. The 33-year-old “publisher” who produces this nonsense, Buffalo resident Matthew Ricchiazzi, calls it “social art.” If you want more insight into Ricchiazzi, read the Brooklyn Paper article.

Tell a lie enough times and many people will start to believe it. For example, the story above references “Amtrak’s most profitable route: the Acela Corridor.” There’s no such thing as the “Acela Corridor.” There is an Amtrak service called Acela or Acela Express that operates on the Northeast Corridor. It is not profitable, when taking into account all costs, operating and capital, above and below the rail. Yet, even respected publications like the Wall Street Journal have spread misinformation that Acela service is profitable. (It doesn’t need to be, because passenger rail, a form of public transportation, is a service, but that’s another subject.)

So now that you know the truth, I’ll pick up where I left off. Full disclosure: Frank Wilner, our Capitol Hill Contributing Editor, provided some “observations” that I’ve worked into the narrative. I love wordplay, and I do have a slightly warped sense of humor, so hopefully you will enjoy this, which is written as if I took the Buffalo Chronicle seriously:

It’s generally understood that one of the most dangerous things one can do is step between Chuck Schumer and a TV camera. That danger zone now appears to be filling up with smoke, and not the type accompanied by mirrors. So what’s up, Chuck? Are you playing foil to Republicans just weeks ahead of the midterm elections?

The real truth is that Schumer may be pulling—at least for younger voters who often require additional stimulus to get out of bed early and to the polls—a Democratic rabbit out of his hat. Many people recognize that our jails and prisons are overflowing with people targeted for minor drug offenses. Polls and state legislation surely validate that a majority of the especially younger public favor relaxed drug laws. While old grey heads may mutter and groan while enjoying their liquid buzz of choice in elegantly appointed taverns, younger generations attending concerts and raves embrace an alternative buzz of choice. Allowing cannabis on Amtrak trains is, in fact, a progressive approach to what already is broadly accepted. No doubt, Schumer’s rabbit is munching on grass and weeds.

“We’ve got better stuff on board. In the meantime, this should tide you over.”

So, will the “smoking cars” that will have to be added to Amtrak long-distance trains be called reefers? Will stoned passengers be less-annoyed by rough track caused by weed-infested bad ballast, which as we all know consists of crushed stones? Will the Fats Waller/Andy Razaf/J.C. Johnson 1937 jazz tune The Joint is Jumpin’, Don Redman’s 1931 jazz classic Chant of the Weed, or Hugh Masekela’s 1968 Grazing in the Grass be played in Amtrak café cars, where high-profit-margin snacks like potato chips and pretzels will sell like hotcakes, because (again as we all know), smoking marijuana gives you the “munchies.” Will this newfound profitability please former Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.), or will it make his toupée spin uncontrollably? And let’s not forget the 1936 “educational” film, Reefer Madness. Perhaps it could be screened in the café cars?

So, what’s next, Amtrak? Allowing use of a certain illegal white powder on your trains, thereby resurrecting the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western’s famous named train, the Phoebe Snow?

“Are you smoking something? Get off my locomotive before you get hurt, Phoebe Snow!”

Marijuana has been called a “gateway drug.” Will the Gateway Project, one of Chuck Schumer’s pet projects, take on a whole new meaning?

On a more serious note, what happens when conductors and sleeping car attendants start inhaling second-hand “happy smoke”?

And once Amtrak starts permitting passengers to partake of cannabis, will the airlines be far behind? After all, there has to be some way of dealing with agitated, unruly passengers prone to attacking innocent flight attendants and customer service reps, right?

No doubt, the Surface Transportation Board will have to get involved, as there will be a cabal of crafty attorneys arguing that Amtrak’s legislated right to sell cannabis on board trains like the Mary Jane Limited, High-a-Watha and Nathan Inhaled constitutes a monopoly.

I will conclude with some history: Wisconsin in 1874 passed the “Potter Law,” named for Wisconsin State Sen. Robert Potter. It reduced railroad rates to where there was nothing left to pay fixed costs. In the second year of the law’s operation, no Wisconsin railroad paid a dividend; only four paid interest on their bonds. Railroad construction had come to a standstill. Even the facilities on existing railroads could not be kept up. Foreign capital refused to invest in Wisconsin. Within two years of the Potter Law’s passage, railroads convinced the Wisconsin legislature to repeal it, citing financial strain that so adversely affected rail service quality that trains operating in Wisconsin came to be known as “Potter Trains.”

There once were “Potter trains.” So why not “Pot trains”?

**ADULTS
ONLY!**

The **Sweet**
"PILL"
*that MAKES LIFE
BITTER!*



**WOMEN CRY FOR IT -
MEN DIE FOR IT!**

"REEFER MADNESS"



**DRUG-
CRAZED
ABANDON**

SEE



YOUTHFUL MARIHUANA VICTIMS

WHAT ACTUALLY !

Trackers and Helpers at the College Park Aviation Museum Show

photo sent by Don Hemmer



The **Beltline** needs your articles **in MS Word format**, photos **as JPEG image files**, and links about trains and railroading, prototypical or scale, new or old. Send them to GilBaldwin3@gmail.com