



Volume 33

SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS

**An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11
Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA**



Number 4



The National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum serves as an important national educational and cultural resource. With its beginnings in the early 19th century, the iron and steel industry played a key role in transforming both Pennsylvania and the nation. Coatesville, Pennsylvania is central to this important story. It was here, in 1825, that a female entrepreneur named Rebecca Lukens began managing the mill and created a successful iron-making operation on the Brandywine River.

Since that time, Coatesville has been the site of an unbroken chain of innovation and improvement in the making of iron and steel. From the rolling of plate for America's first iron-hulled vessel in 1819; improvements in the making of armor plate steel that helped America defend itself in war; innovations in steel technology that provided the framework of many modern skyscrapers including the World Trade Center; each of these facts tell the story of the Lukens heritage. The entrepreneurial creativity of the early steel pioneers has continued right up to the present-day in Coatesville.

The Museum and the Lukens Historic District are a national center for educating the public about the important history and heritage of iron and steel making in America. Core museum exhibits are located in the Visitor Center in addition to the 120" Mill Motor House, a World War II era historic structure that was part of the steel-making complex in Coatesville.

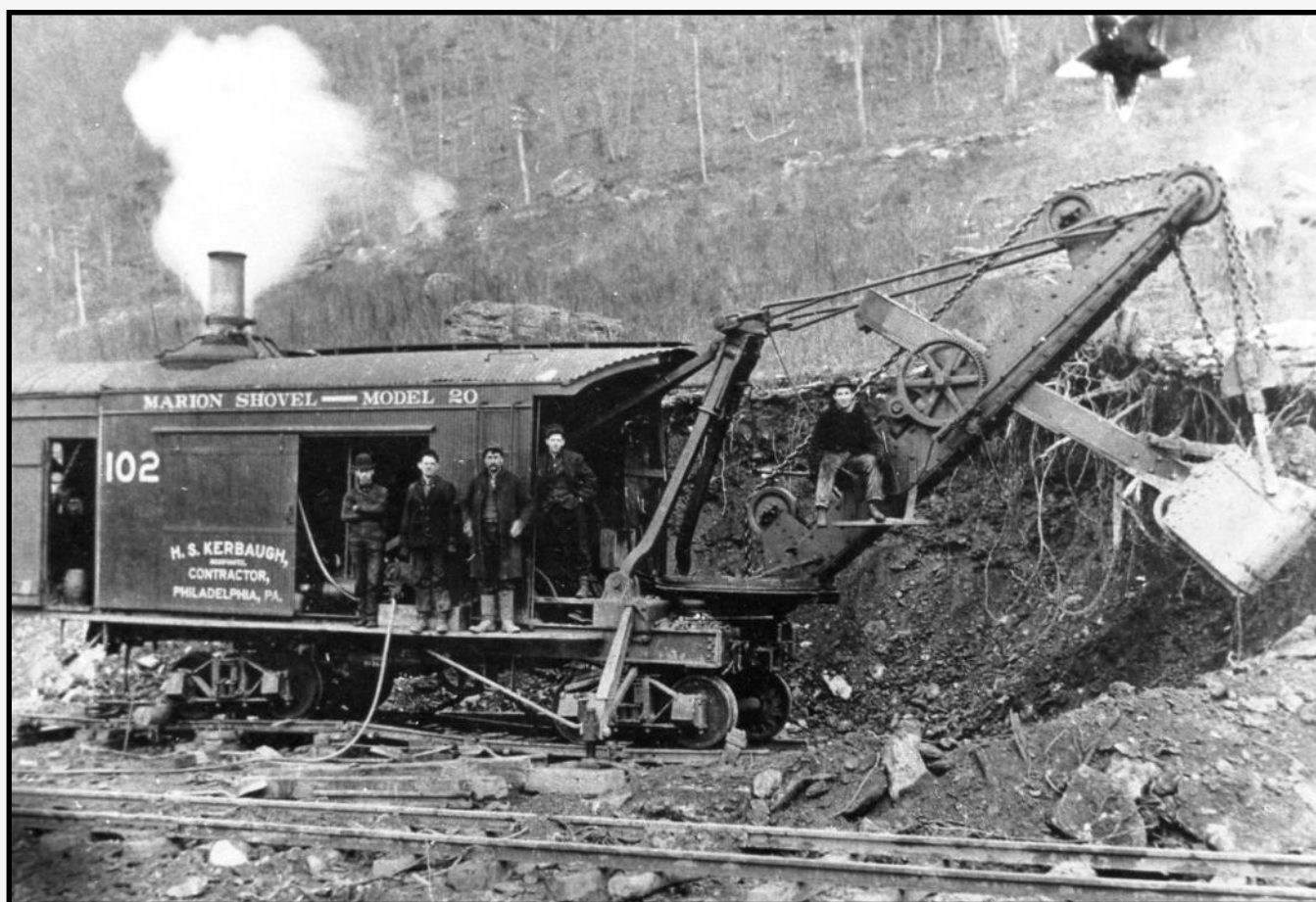
Visitors can see the steel products located throughout the museum grounds. Those products include a submarine sonarsphere, a clad pack, and the Steelworkers' Memorial which features a steel trident from the World Trade Center Twin Towers.

Editor's Note: The above overview is taken from the Museum.

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This Marion Shovel Model 20 digs out the right-of-way along the Susquehanna River as the water level route from Columbia, PA to Port Deposit, MD is constructed. Photo courtesy of the Columbia Historical Preservation Society

Superintendent's Desk

Welcome to Summer everyone. This is the time of year when we engage in outdoor activities, and model railroad-ing goes on hiatus until the weather turns colder. But not for me; I've been working on scratch building a Jersey Central Class D9s 4-4-0 camel-back. I started the



project in February, and so far, I've completed the tender. There is a lot of cutting with a jeweler's saw and hours of filing to get things the way I want them.

We have elected a new Board of Directors. The gentlemen elected (or reelected) are Dave Ellis, Jim Mattern, Barry Schmitt, and Rich Wurst. Speaking of Rich, he is retiring from the editorship of *Susquehanna Sidetracks*. Taking his place is Kevin Macomber. He will make some changes because he is very involved with military veterans, having written the book, **Walking From The Shadow: My Journey With Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**.

On June 17th, Dean Johnson, Chris Kier, and I signed papers at the Ephrata branch of PNC Bank authorizing who can sign checks and opening an 8-month CD.

A friend gave me two large boxes of railroad related books which were part of our June 21st free raffle. On July 18th through 20th, we will have an information table at the Central Pennsylvania Shortlines RPM in Mt. Union. Then on August 16th, we will have our next in-person meet at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. While you are there, be sure to check out former C&O 4-8-4 "Greenbrier" No. 614 next door at the Strasburg Railroad where it will undergo restoration to full operation.

Alan



In Memoriam

William (Bill) Lesjak 1945-2025

Bill was born in Washington, DC and spent his formative years there. His studies eventually brought him to the world of media where he spent most of his professional career in film animation. Bill finished his career as an IRS supervisor at the Baltimore call center. Throughout his work career he was a model railroad enthusiast. Upon retirement he finally got around to building his HO layout in his York County home.

I first met Bill and Lorraine at a 2013 Division event in Mechanicsburg. During the event it was announced that the Division would be sponsoring Model Railroad Day at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. As usual, a request for volunteers was announced. During a break in the program, Bill approached me and cheerfully asked what he could do in support of the event. Bill and Lorraine eventually served as program registrar collecting the entrance fees, making name badges, scheduling attendees for three Restoration Shop tours and manned the greeter's table on the day of the event. All of this work was done with a positive demeanor and a welcoming attitude.

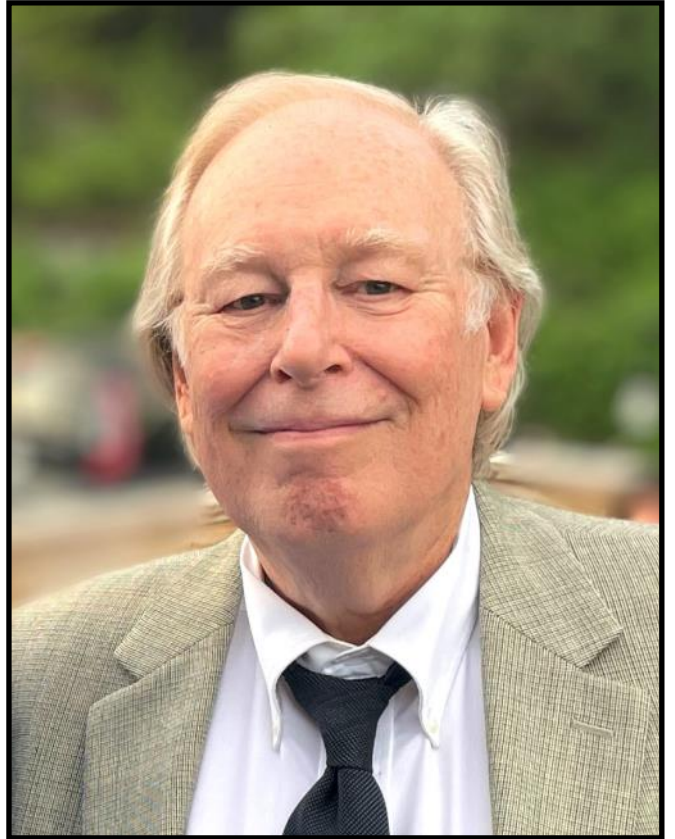
May 2019 saw the introduction of Columbia Railroad Day. The Susquehanna Division became a co-sponsor with the NRHS Lancaster Chapter and the Columbia Historic Preservation Society for the event. Bill was instrumental in serving as the Program Master of Ceremonies and securing clinic presenters. The success of this event led to annual events for several years. Bill coordinated the succeeding events with the Director of the Columbia Historical Society and was instrumental in moving the venue to Columbia Crossings Trail Center which was a larger facility. The last Columbia Railroad Day was held on June 3, 2023 with a clinic on the Baltimore Trolley Museum and a visit by the Codorus Valley Traction modular layout. Bill was always the liaison and point man for these special event days.

More recently, Bill served as the Model Showcase Chair. He emceed the presentations by members who brought their models to events. In addition to being the timekeeper and documentarian for Sidetracks features, Bill was known for his railroad jokes. Some were 'groaners' while others were just plain funny!

2024 saw the first Division Annville Railroad Station Event. It was through Bill's efforts that this event took place. He travelled to Annville months before the tentative date to meet with the Annville Historical Society's President. Planning then took place and a clinic program for the morning was developed. Following a lunch break, afternoon visits to the Cornwall Furnace and Draud's Derailment Hobby Shop were scheduled. The event at the station was enjoyed by all with a special Norfolk Southern freight traffic running nearby on the Harrisburg-Reading main line.

Bill was elected as a Division Director in 2023. He served for a year and a half before stepping down due to health reasons. He reluctantly resigned with the intent of focusing all his energy on battling the cancer. After months of treatment he succumbed to his illness, cutting short the life of a gentleman, husband, father and grandfather.

On May 12, 2025, Bill passed away after battling pancreatic cancer. He endured various medical treatments that tried to combat the disease while taking a severe toll on his general health. He is survived by his wife Lorraine of 56 years.



Rich Wurst

Second Section

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division 11
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA

Contributing to Sidetracks are always welcome. Division members wishing to contribute articles, photos or features may do so by emailing items to the Editor at the e-mail address listed below.

Submissions should be in WORD format with photos sent under separate cover. Photos which are part of the submission should be identified as to their location in the WORD document.

The deadline for submission for the next issue is August 15, 2025.

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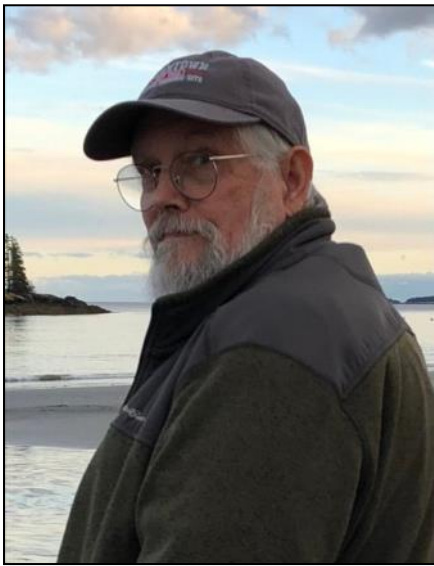
Stacked creosoted ties with metal end grain splitting preventer plates.

Division Board of Directors Election

The Division Board of Directors election process was finalized as of May 31, 2025. During the nomination procedure there were five candidates vying for four positions. After announcing the list of candidates in the May/June issue of Sidetracks one candidate dropped out of the race. The election continued with the opportunity for write-in candidates. However, the final ballot contained no write-ins and all four candidates were elected.

There was a total of twenty-two members who cast their ballots for this election. We thank these members who took the time to support the new Directors. Dave Ellis, Jim Mattern , Barry Schmitt and Rich Wurst will each serve a two-year term. We thank them for their desire to manage and direct our Division. A special thank you is also extended to Jerry Lauchle, MMR and Ken Roth who served during the previous term.

The results of this election have been certified by Dean Johnson, Chief Clerk of the Susquehanna Division.



Dave Ellis, Director



Jim Mattern, Director



Barry Schmitt, Director



Rich Wurst, Director

Susquehanna Division 2025 Calendar of Events

Tentative Susquehanna Division Upcoming Events 2025

Month — Date	Location	Type of Meeting or Event
June 6/21/25	Dauphin, PA Zion Lutheran Church	In-person Membership Meeting- Confirmed
July 18-20	Mount Union, PA Central Pennsylvania Shortlines RPM <u>Registration is open</u>	Division Information Table Local division members have layouts open on July 18, 1-4 PM
August 8/16/25	Strasburg, PA Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania	In-person Membership Meeting- Confirmed
September	Invitation will be emailed	Virtual Membership Meeting on Zoom
October 10/16—10/19	King of Prussia, PA	Attend or volunteer <u>MER Regional Convention</u>
November 11/15/2025	Mechanicsburg, PA Good Hope Fire Company	In-person Membership Meeting- Confirmed
November	Model Railroad Open Houses	On your own model railroad visits. We will publicize the link when ready
December	Invitation will be emailed	Virtual Membership Meeting on Zoom



Non-NMRA Event

READING RAILROAD DAYS



Wednesday, July 2 through Sunday, July 6
Wednesday, July 9 through Saturday, July 12



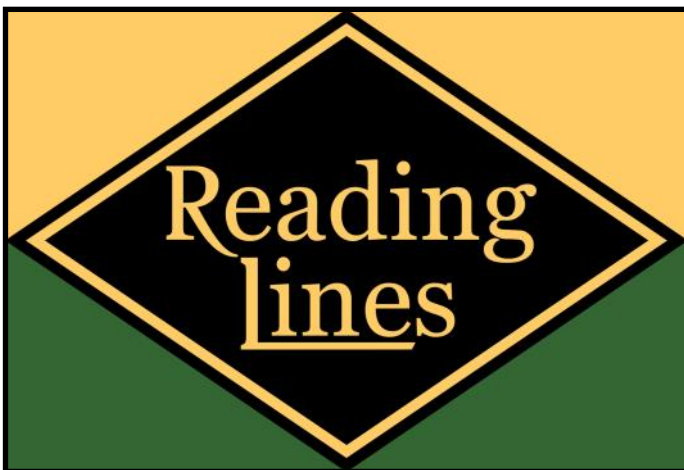
Strasburg, Lancaster County, PA — The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania hosts the annual Reading Railroad Days on Wednesday, July 2 to Sunday, July 6 and Wednesday, July 9 to Saturday, July 12. Reading Railroad Days takes place during regular Museum hours and is included in the regular Museum admission.

An enormous, detailed HO scale model train layout of the Reading Railroad, operated by members of the Reading Company Technical & Historical Society, is a centerpiece in the Museum's climate-controlled Rolling Stock Hall. Visitors also may view Reading Company equipment from the Museum's premier collection, including the 106-year-old tank engine No. 1251, multiple unit car No. 800, *Crusader* observation car No. 1 and the 1928 turntable. Artist Peter Lerro will display his many railroad paintings and reproductions.

In its heyday, the Reading Company was a multifaceted industrial giant. Originally established as the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad in 1833 to transport anthracite coal, the pioneering 94-mile line evolved into a mighty corporation serving eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Operations included coal mining, iron making, canal and sea-going transportation and shipbuilding. With its great complex of shops for locomotive and car building and repair, and constant advances in railroad technology, the company held a position of leadership in the railroad industry for over a century.

Now in its 50th year, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania is home to a world-class collection of about 100 historic locomotives and railroad cars, a vast research library and archives, a working restoration shop, an immersive education center and programs, a Museum store and special events and exhibits.

A Smithsonian Affiliate, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania is one of 11 historic sites and museums administered by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission as part of the Pennsylvania Trails of History®, with the active support of the nonprofit Friends of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. Visit RRMuseumPA.org or call (717) 687-8628.



Non-NMRA Event



Model Railroading Days at the Museum

The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, located in Strasburg, PA, will be presenting Model Railroad Days each Saturday during August (except Labor Day weekend). This special event has expanded from one weekend to four Saturdays! The popularity of model railroading has driven the expansion of this annual event for greater visitor opportunities.

MODEL Railroading Days 2025 Exhibitor Schedule (subject to change)

Week #1- August 2nd

Modular Groups

DC Area Independent Hi-Railers- O Scale

Strasburg Model Railroad- O Scale

Table Display- Manayunk Diorama

Weekend #2- August 9th

Modular Groups

Capitol PenNscalers

Baltimore Area American Flyer Club

Keystone NTrack

World's Largest Lionel– O Scale

Weekend #3- August 16th

Modular Groups

Strasburg Model Railroader Club– HO Scale

Capitol Free-Mo– HO Scale

Northeast Corridor Historical Society– HO Scale

Lower Susquehanna Valley Model Railroaders– O Scale

NMRA Clinics August 16th only (see page11 for details)

Weekend #4- August 23rd

Modular Groups

Stillmeadow Crossing Modular Train Group– O Scale

Non-NMRA Event



Mainline Hobby Sale and Open House / Layout Tours

September 20-21, 2025

Main Line Hobby Supply

15066 Buchanan Trail

Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214

Saturday- 9 AM-5 PM

Sunday- 12 Noon-5 PM

Come out and visit with us, take part in the Model Railroad Layout Tour! Layout tours include N scale to G scale home and club model railroads. Pick up the tour booklet at the store. **There is NO charge!** Tours are self-guided, all within an hour of the store. Also, we are having a SALE that weekend, on EVERYTHING in the store! (Excludes consignment items).



NMRA Event– Susquehanna Division

The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania will be sponsoring their Model Railroading Days each weekend throughout the month of August (except the Labor Day weekend). Our Division has partnered with the Museum presenting two clinics on Saturday, August 16th.

The clinics are open to any Museum visitor with a paid admission. Regular admission is \$10 and seniors admission is \$9. The Museum hours on the 16th are 10 AM-4 PM. The Museum is located at 300 Gap Road, Strasburg, PA .

The Susquehanna Division will present two clinics on Saturday, August 16th at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania beginning at 10:30 AM. Doors will open at 10 AM offering an opportunity for conversation and gift shop browsing..

The Division will present David Trussell, the creator, founder and builder of the Colorado Model Railroad Museum in Greeley CO. Mr. Trussell will share the Museum's video presentation showing all aspects of this monumental model railroad. He will take questions while expanding on the presented video content. To preview the presentation, go to <https://www.cmrmm.org> .

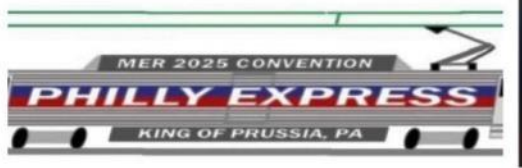


The second program will be given by Gary Russell, the owner of the Choo Choo Barn in Strasburg, PA at 1:30 PM. He will briefly describe the heritage of the Choo Choo Barn and bring us up-to-date changes and improvements of this O gauge layout featuring numerous animated scenes. Gary will then discuss the Choo Choo Barn Foundation. This non-profit, educational entity brings the joy of model railroading to youth of Lancaster County. He and his volunteers try to instill the values, historical perspectives and sheer joy of model railroading with local model railroad programs. In addition to his presentation, Gary will have some examples of his traveling promotional activities for model railroading.



Before and after the presentations, your admission to the Museum will enable you to see all Museum exhibits, the modular train layouts and the exterior Museum Yard!





Coming Soon!

Check back at phillyexpress.org often
for updates regarding all the
exciting events planned for **PHILLY
EXPRESS**

Welcome to the

PHILLY EXPRESS

2025 NMRA/MER Convention

October 16-19, 2025

Crowne Plaza Hotel – **King
of Prussia, PA**

Clinics, Prototype Tour, Home Layouts

Vendors, Operating Layouts on Site

Ops Sessions

- **Hosted by the Philadelphia
Division NMRA**



This year's Mid-East Region of the NMRA will host their annual convention in King of Prussia, PA. The convention is sponsored by the Philadelphia Division 3.

On the left is the information distributed to all members. Planning, organizing and gathering volunteers is starting to ramp up. As more details are announced registration and programming will be shared.

For current information you can check out the Philly Division's website:

<https://www.phillynmra.org/>

Mark your calendar and set your sights on a great model railroading event!

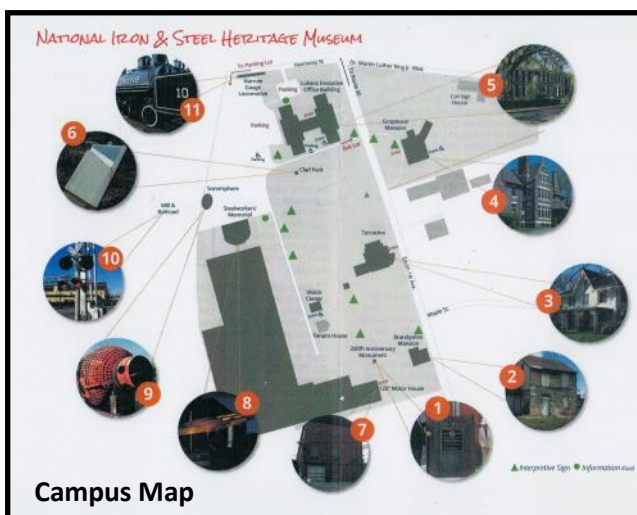
National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum (continued)



The Lukens Executive Office Building built in 1903 currently houses some exhibits of the Heritage Museum and other private foundations and businesses.

Several months ago, I had the opportunity to visit the National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum in Coatesville, PA. I was intrigued by this site having never known of its existence even though I resided in the area for over 18 years. The Museum is located along the Brandywine Creek in Coatesville. An iron furnace was established in 1810 by Isaac Pennock (father of Rebecca Lukens) to manufacture rolled boiler plate. The iron furnace expanded to a steel mill specializing in rolled plate. This manufacturing site still operates a rolling mill to this day! Lukens Steel was eventually taken over by Bethlehem Steel and currently is owned and operated by Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc.

The original plant expanded to both sides of the Brandywine Creek, but today the operating mill is on the west bank while the Museum and abandoned mill and motor house is on the east bank. Norfolk Southern serves the mill with the delivery of raw materials



and shipping of finished products. Tractor-trailer services also occur for both imports and exports.

National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum (continued)

The Museum is not housed in one location. The introductory film and docent presentation took place in the 1903 era Executive Offices. A walking tour then began by observing an original Porter 0-4-0T engine sitting on the grounds. Next, was the 911 Memorial erected in front of the old mill entrance. A huge trident from the façade of the twin towers sits on an angled pedestal pointing to the sky. This trident was manufactured with rolled steel from the plant and welded into its current shape by another fabrication company.

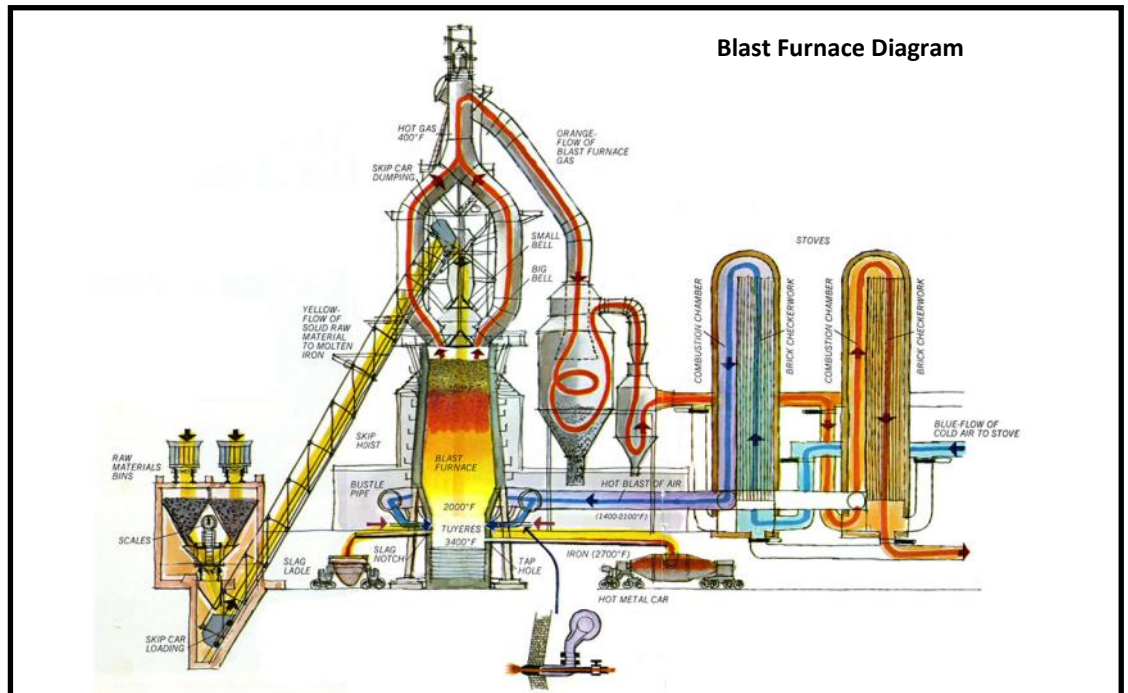


National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum (continued)

Located in an adjacent parking area is a flatbed trailer which can be observed holding a very odd and unique steel sphere. This 27-ton sonar sphere measuring 15' in diameter was built for the US Navy. Constructed at the Lukens mill in 1984 it housed 1,245 hydrophones that were the eyes and ears of a nuclear submarine.



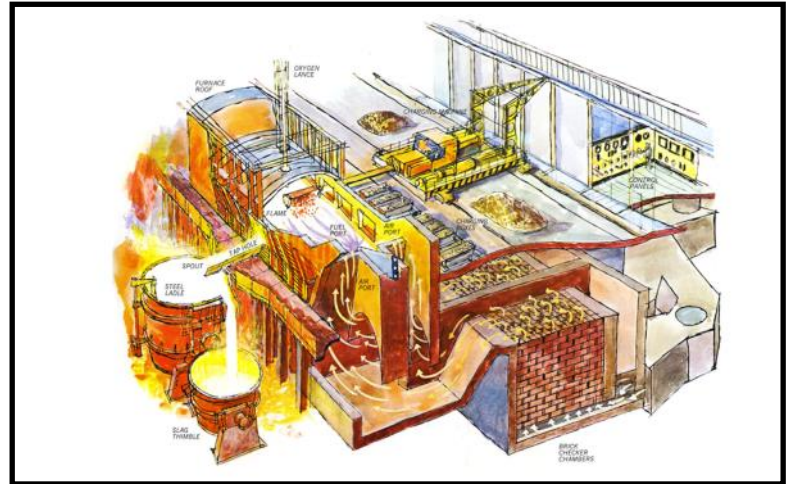
The tour continued to the Museum Exhibit Building which houses historical artifacts, scale models, and instructive displays. Products made for the railroad, ship building, yachting, aircraft and space industries are also present. Of significant interest to model railroaders were the various replicas of various steel and iron ore production mills. Anyone interested in replicating some form of steel manufacturing on their layout would be thrilled to see and photographing these replicas. I found these exhibits especially interesting!



National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum (continued)



Blast Furnace Model



Open Hearth Furnace Diagram



Coke Mill Model



Continuous Casting Machine Model



Blast Furnace Model

National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum (continued)



Coking Plant
Model



Coking Plant Model



Open Hearth
Process Model

"On The Union Pacific"

ROLLED IN LUKENS' World's Widest-Plate Mill

THE wrapper sheet of this firebox measuring 241" x 195" x 3/4" was rolled in Lukens' World's largest Plate Mill and is within one half inch of being the widest plate ever made in the world. Plates measuring 195 1/2" wide were previously rolled by Lukens.

Especially interesting now is the selection of Lukens plates for Union Pacific 7000 and its significance can be interpreted in only one way.

This locomotive was built to render the utmost in heavy duty service—reducing the failure hazard was a requisite of first importance.

The designers decided in favor of Lukens for they knew that fewer seams mean fewer failures—lower cost and longer life.

LUKENS STEEL COMPANY
COATESVILLE PENNSYLVANIA

Reprinted from Railway Age, October 14, 1922

National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum (continued)

Besides the nitty-gritty of steel manufacturing, there are three restored homes on the campus. One is a tenant home that was used by company employees. This home is not open to the public. The other two homes have been restored and are part of the tour. They housed the Iron Master and their families over the years of the Lukens ownership of the mill. Ladies from our tour group were quite impressed with opulence of the furnishings and ornate woodworking.



Tenant House— currently a private residence



"Terracina"- Iron Master's House circa 1849



Graystone Mansion— home of the Iron Master circa 1889

National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum (continued)

Walking along the abandoned mill structure (yet to be restored) you can grasp the immense length of this single building. The stroll took us to a two-story structure known as the Motor House. It was here that incoming AC electricity was converted into DC for powering motors and rolling mill. The interior walls were covered with glazed ceramic tile to prevent heat damage to the walls and ceiling. In addition to gigantic rectifiers (AC to DC converters), the current Motor House displayed old fire engines and an ambulance that were part of the mill's safety response team. Visitors can observe the "Guppy 1", a two-man submersible similar to "Alvin", the submersible that photographed the sunken wreck of the Titanic.

North end of Lukens Rolling Mill



East wall of the 120" Lukens Rolling Mill



Left- A spare DC motor core located in the Motor House.

Right- A DC motor located in the Motor House.



National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum (continued)



Interior views of the World War II era Motor House



The total tour encompassed several hours and required a good deal of walking on both paved and unpaved areas. Overall, the National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum is a unique blend of history, manufacturing, transportation, forgotten pastimes and modern-day corporate activity. I would highly recommend a visit for not only model rail-roaders but anyone interested in historical sites that tell the story of our industrial past.

To see an interesting video about the museum site, visit this link at You Tube :

<https://www.discoverlancaster.com/directory/national-iron-steel-heritage-museum/>

The Iron & Steel Heritage Museum website can also be a source of additional information:

<https://steelmuseum.org/>

This wall display of model trains is located in the Museum Exhibit Building/Visitor Center. The collection was donated to the Museum by C. L. Huston III.



Article and photos by Rich Wurst

Salvaging a Keystone Locomotive Works GE 44-Tonner

What do I need a GE 44-tonner for? I model the Central Railroad of New Jersey in 1953 and the railroad never rostered even one of them. But I was at a convention of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA and I saw the kit for sale in the company store. I bought it simply because it was a kit and inexpensive. I'm a builder so I shy away from ready-to-run models (unless it's an imported brass CNJ steam locomotive that has a ridiculously low price tag on it – yes, I'm dreaming). How in the world would I use this engine on my model railroad? Well, my proposed CNJ layout which will run between Plainfield, NJ and Somerville where the South Branch extends to Flemington and will have a short spur of the Middlebrook Branch which served a quarry. At one time, it was known as the Chimney Rock Quarry, and it had its own engine – ex-CNJ Alco HH-600 switcher No. 1021 painted in pumpkin orange. Okay, I can use that 44-tonner there.

The Keystone Locomotive Works GE 44-tonner kit dates from around 1990 and had never been started. It is a composite kit with flat brass hoods and frame with white metal parts. The gearboxes were produced by Grandt Line with the wheels, axles, and gears from North West Short Line. The chassis was completely assembled; all I had to do was build the superstructure.

BUT THERE WAS A PROBLEM

The axles were held in place with plastic clips, and every one of them was broken. I contacted both Grandt Line and North West Short Line, but they didn't have any replacement clips. It seemed like I had purchased an unusable piece of motive power. But I've never been one to shy away from a challenge. Glue wouldn't hold the broken clip pieces together, so I had to come up with my own solution: Evergreen No. 227 7/32" styrene tubing. I cut 1/8-inch lengths of it and removed one quarter of it to form a C-clip. They all snapped neatly in place; now I had a useable chassis.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Salvaging a K L W GE 44-Tonner (continued)

BUILDING THE REST

There isn't much I can say about building the rest of the engine; I followed the instructions. I did, however, make a few modifications. After gluing the brass hoods to the cast hood ends, instead of anchoring the subassemblies to the frame by relying on the cast pins on the hood ends, I drilled the pins out and tapped the holes for 0-80 flat head machine screws. And to keep the hoods centered above the frame opening, I soldered bits of brass strip on the inside of the hoods.

I have to admit that forming of the handrails was difficult. The handrail bending diagram didn't show the true configuration of them, so I went to the Internet and looked at many photos of prototype engines. I also looked at several photos I took at the Walkersville Southern Railroad during a Susquehanna Division meet. Apparently, handrails on GE 44-tonners changed over time or during use on the various railroads which rostered them. I settled on the handrail arrangement of PRR 9331 at the Walkersville Southern. It took a while, but I formed them from .020 phosphor bronze wire and soldered the pieces together. Oh yes, I painted my model pumpkin orange.

After decaling the engine as Chimney Rock Quarry 5, I gave it a spray of Testor's Dullcote and then glazed the cab windows with Evergreen No. 9007 .015" clear styrene. I took the dividers out of the center windows so the engineer had a place to rest his arm. I added a Digitrax Z-scale decoder and a pair of 12-volt incandescent bulbs.

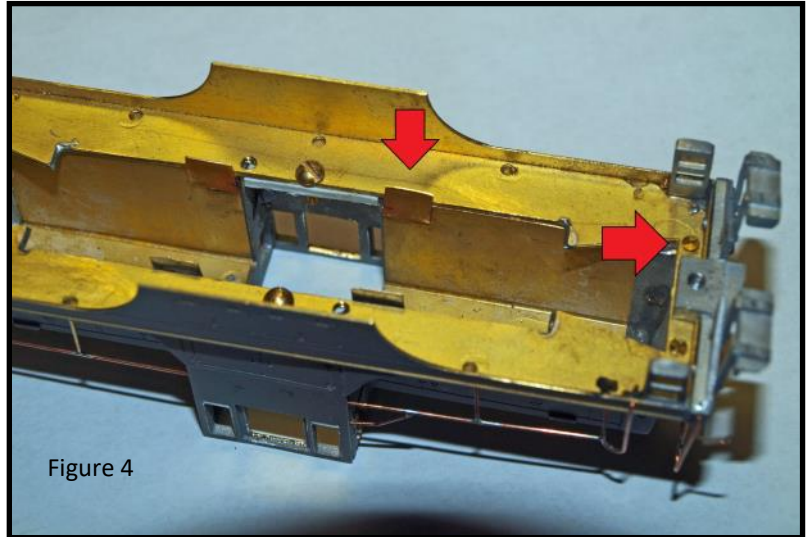


Figure 4



Figure 5

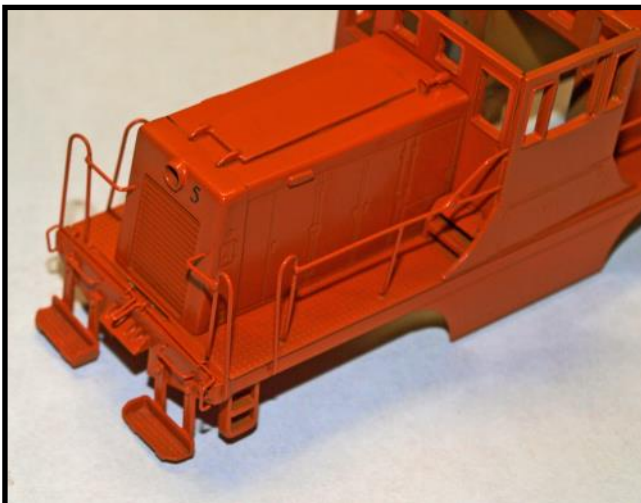


Figure 6



Figure 7

Article and photos by Alan Mende