



NSDARW  
National Society Descendants of  
American Railroad Workers

# The National Society Descendants of American Railroad Workers Newsletter

2024-2026: #2

"All Aboard"

October 30, 2025

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Members of NSDARW,

Thanks to the 24 members that attended the Regular meeting on September 14, 2025, and enjoyed the program, "Joshua Leach - Founder of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen," which our Historian, Glenn Martin, provided. It was an excellent presentation. Thank you, Glenn. In Glenn's honor, the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, PA was given a donation of \$50.

Please enjoy this newsletter to catch up a bit on what we have achieved to this point and plans for the future.

These accomplishments would not have happened without the coordination and collaboration with the Executive Board plus the two appointed officers.

As always, all officers are available to try and answer your questions.

And this goes, without saying too many times, THANKS for your participation in helping NSDARW to increase our membership and accomplish even more over the coming years.

In the meantime, all aboard!

Elaine Baldasare  
President, 2024-2026

## ZOOM ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, March 22, 2026  
at 4 p.m., Eastern Time

The Executive Board has chosen the date for our 2026 Annual Meeting. Look for an email in February 2026 from our corresponding secretary asking you to register. Registering allows you to receive the link just before the meeting.

At this Annual Meeting, you will hear officer reports along with other information about your society. That includes the nomination, election and installation of the 2026-2028 officers.

Please try and attend. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Just a few comments about the day of the week and the time of day.

We are a National society which means when it is 4:00 p.m. on the East Coast, it is 1:00 p.m. on the West Coast. If we opted for a weekday meeting, we may lose members on the East Coast that retire early to bed the night of the meeting due to an early start the next day when they go to work. Sunday just seems a better day to meet than Saturday.



## MEMBERSHIP

NSDARW has admitted 134 members since the Society was organized on February 28, 2021.

In 2025, Aaron Cross, registrar, has approved 13 new members and 2 supplementals. This brings our ancestor total to 149.

### A big WELCOME to our members since the May newsletter:

- Susan Michael, 8/26/2025
- Steve Havlovic, 8/26/2025
- Renee Hamilton, 10/4/2025
- Cheryl Clark, 10/4/2025
- Douglas Evans, 10/13/2025



## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

At our September meeting, I asked for volunteers to serve on a Membership Committee. Janisue Rigel, Linda Kay White and Bev Scheule stepped up to form the committee. We need to implement more ways to attract new members. They have already met...and we are ready to put some of their suggestions into action!

The Executive Board has approved the suggestions from the Membership Committee to make available an offer for prospectives to join at a discounted amount. Remember: When an offer is made, it will be for a specific amount of time.

So, here's your first opportunity from now through December 31, 2025:

Any applicant who is related to a current member, may join for \$200. This includes a certificate and the original insignia (until the inventory is depleted).

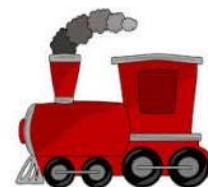
Any current member may purchase a gift certificate for a relative to join for \$200. This includes a certificate and the original insignia (until the inventory is depleted).

Any Junior/Youth (birth through age 17) related to a current member may join for a flat fee of \$125. This includes a certificate but NOT the original insignia. When the Junior/Youth reaches the age of 18, there is NO additional fee.

Those are the initial offers...get the word out...ask your relatives to join us at these reduced rates. They won't last forever. Act today!



The proposed bylaw to provide the minutes to the membership at least 30 days prior to the next meeting was voted on and approved at our March 9, 2025 meeting. The 9/14/2025 minutes will be made available for your review at least 30 days prior to the March 22, 2026 meeting and will be voted on at that meeting.





## NEW INSIGNIA/RIBBON

The above is our new society colors and insignia. It is optional to purchase both the ribbon and insignia (2 sizes) on the Citypride website at:

<https://cityprideltd.com>

- Ocean Blue: represents the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans
- Steel Gray: represents the thousands of miles of rails that connect the coasts
- Scarlet: represents the sacrifices made by our ancestors to forge and operate that connection

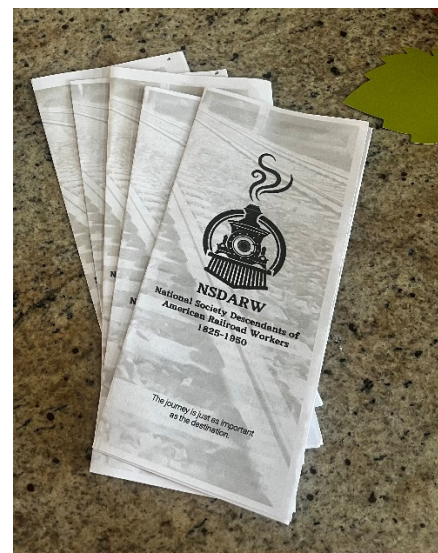
The Executive Board did not rush into making this decision to change the Society colors. Here are some of our reasoning:

- We thought the ribbon could use some “pop.” I hope you will agree.
- We could not order additional lengths of ribbon with the current blue/gold to hold ancestor bars, charter pin, nor the train pin.
- We were not particularly fond of the ribbon being tacked onto clothing and thought pinning was a better option and, if desired, could use a pin magnet.

As promised, the inventory of the ribbon (blue/gold) with insignia will be part of the membership fee UNTIL the current inventory is depleted. At that time, members may purchase the products offered by Citypride.

## PROMOTING NSDARW!

On September 20, 2025, Kim Defibaugh attended the Genealogical Conference sponsored by the Williamsburg Area Genealogical Society. The first photo below shows Kim’s NSDARW business card in the event program. She also placed brochures on a table reserved for sharing information about lineage societies. Thank you, Kim, for continuing to find events where you can share and invite prospectives to join us.



## **Donation to Railroaders Memorial Museum**

After Glenn offered to give the program at our September 14<sup>th</sup> Regular meeting, he was asked to give a suggestion on where to send his honorarium. Glenn chose the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, PA. Upon receipt of the donation, the museum curator emailed me to thank NSDARW. I emailed the curator our tri-fold brochure. And this is his reply: *I wanted to reach out because I get emails constantly of individuals asking for information on a relative who worked for the Railroad. The Museum only has a limited number of employees and they are PRR, Penn Central, and Conrail who have worked in Altoona, Central PA, and few in the Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia area. It would help my end to be able to direct people to an organization that has retired railroad information. I printed out your brochure and will set some up in our lobby.*

This would be great if we gained members by this action.



## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The 3-member committee has taken their job seriously and is currently working towards filling a slate of officers (2026-2028). Do you have a desire to be an officer of NSDARW? Then contact Kelly Dugas, Margaret Powell and Brenda Reeder. Please send them a bio, expressing your interest. Don't wait if you want to serve now...you might be too late!

Sherry Cornett submitted the following article, "*Vintage Rail Tours.*" She has offered to share a future article covering other parts of our great country. If you enjoyed Sherry's article, send me an email ([nsdarw@gmail.com](mailto:nsdarw@gmail.com))!

## **VINTAGE RAIL TOURS**

The National Society of Descendants of American Railroad Workers is where you can combine your love of genealogy with your love of railroads and trains. There is something almost magical about the allure of trains – a feeling of nostalgia, childhood memories of watching them rumble by, and the soothing rhythm of a journey by rail.

As members of this organization, we have an ancestral bond to the majestic locomotives that have traversed America. These engineering marvels bring a comforting sense of order and predictability with precise schedules and fixed routes in an ever-changing world.

They have the ability to transport us back to a simpler time.

Currently, there are 65 heritage railroads operating in the United States. These vintage trains known for their historical significance, giving us the opportunity to share a bit of history and adventure with our families. Too many to include them all in this article but here are a few of the scenic train rides and museums you can enjoy in the Southeastern United States.

## Blue Ridge Scenic Railway, North Georgia



Blue Ridge Scenic Railway

<https://brscenic.com/galleries/>

After boarding the **Blue Ridge Scenic Railway** (BRSR) at the historic depot in downtown Blue Ridge, GA, riders take a 26-mile roundtrip journey along the Toccoa River through the beautiful North Georgia countryside. You can pick your mode of travel with a choice of vintage, climate-controlled or open-air rail cars. BRSR will allow you to schedule a ride inside the cab of the locomotive with the conductor and engineer...and give you a certificate to commemorate your experience of "driving" the train!

The first leg of the adventure takes riders on a one-hour trip to the quaint towns of McCaysville, GA, and Copperhill, TN. The towns are divided by the Oconee River if you are in Tennessee or the Toccoa River as it is called when it enters Georgia. You disembark the train and have a couple of hours to explore the small towns, wander through little shops or get some yummy fudge for the return trip. The "all aboard" is sounded and you head back to Blue Ridge as the train winds

through the southern Appalachian forest along the Toccoa River. It's a great weekend adventure for your family

## Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, Chattanooga, TN



Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum

<https://www.tvrail.com/train-rides/summerville-steam-special/>

Historic Chattanooga, TN, memorialized in the Glen Miller tune, Chattanooga Choo-Choo, is our next adventure, and it's two-fold. The **Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum** provides an interactive, historical experience making it the first destination on your visit to Chattanooga. Here you will find the only regularly scheduled, full-sized train ride in Tennessee where you can experience the sights and sounds of yesteryear!

You can take a scenic day trip to Summerville, GA, via a restored steam engine to enjoy the fall foliage. There is also a Christmas train trip, a dinner train excursion, and a Missionary Ridge option that includes a behind-the-scenes look at a railyard with vintage trains.

## Chattanooga Choo Choo



Restored Passenger Car Hotel Room

<https://thehotelchalet.com/>

A trip to Chattanooga wouldn't be complete without a visit to the Chattanooga Choo Choo itself. Now the Hotel Chalet, this elegant building started as a busy train depot with the first train arriving in 1907. At its height, there were more than 50 trains a day chugging through the station. The Choo Choo boasts that three U.S. Presidents have visited via rail: Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt.

There are several restaurants and shops in the complex and of course, you may choose to spend the night in a refurbished passenger car! The ultimate experience of stepping back in time is to climb aboard one of these "rooms" and have your own sleeper car for the night...or the week!

## Virginia Scenic Railway



Virginia Scenic Railway

<https://www.virginiascenicrailway.com/>

Heading further north to the beautiful Shenandoah Valley is the Virginia Scenic Railway. Trains have been serving the Shenandoah Valley town of Staunton, VA, for nearly 170 years. Step onto the train and you get the feeling you have stepped back in time to a romantic era of steam locomotives and luxurious passenger cars.

Just an hour west of Charlottesville, the Virginia Scenic Railway is a must-see! There is something for everyone and a choice of a variety of magnificent trains. Depending on the time of year, you may choose to go on an autumn leaf watching tour, visit with Santa in a Christmas wonderland, roar through a carved mountain tunnel, or solve a mystery on the Murder on the Menu Express dinner theatre! The trains have elegant dining cars, or you can order a box lunch and take it with you while you ride in a glass-domed car. Most of the excursions are three hours of fun riding the rails.

## Great Smoky Mountains Railroad



Great Smoky Mountains Railroad

<https://gsmr.com/>

This scenic railroad offers tour packages through some of the most beautiful countryside in the Southeast. The Nantahala ride departs from Bryson City, NC, following Alarka Creek and past Fontana Lake. The Fontana Trestle takes you across a serene reservoir and into the breathtaking Nantahala Gorge. You may choose a dining option or just enjoy the ride.

Take a relaxing ride through the quiet countryside on your way to small-town life in Western North Carolina on the Tuckasegee route. Departing from Bryson City, NC, this 4-hour excursion travels to Dillsboro and back again. Experience a ride through the 836-foot-long Cowee Tunnel, which is said to be haunted. You'll also pass by the movie setting of *The Fugitive* starring Harrison Ford.

Choose from a steam or diesel locomotive, with seating styles ranging from open air to enclosed climate-controlled cars. You can also select special packages, including Christmas and Easter excursions, as well as wine and whiskey tastings.

Included with your train ticket purchase is a complementary visit to the

Smoky Mountain Trains Museum. With its impressive collection of 7,000 Lionel™ engines, cars and accessories, interesting operating layout, children's activity center, and gift shop, Smoky Mountain Trains will have something for the whole family.

Sherry N. Cornett  
Roswell, GA  
NSDARW #127



*Happy Holidays!*



**Halloween:** I often think of Edgar Allan Poe and his poem, *The Raven*:

*Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore –*

*While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,*

*As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door –*

*“Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door – Only this and nothing more.”*



### Thanksgiving Thought:

*As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.*



### If You Celebrate Christmas:

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heaven and nature sing.*



*Look back to 2025 only if you must,  
Look ahead to 2026 for you must.  
Life can be good.  
Life can be hard.  
Contribute when and where you can to show  
love and offer goodwill and peace.  
In 365 days, you'll find yourself in 2027...  
Hopefully repeating these same words, at least!*

Do you have "railroad" news to share in a future newsletter? For consideration, please send an email to: [nsdarw@gmail.com](mailto:nsdarw@gmail.com)



## The National Society Descendants of American Railroad Workers National Officers, 2024-2026

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- Advisor – Appointed:** Janisue Rigel
- Parliamentarian – Appointed:**  
Gwen Causey

*"Our life is a constant journey.  
The landscape changes, the people change,  
but the train keeps moving.  
Life is the train, not the station."  
~Thomas Carlyle*