



# CINDERS

February 2024 Extra



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**Extra**

Volume 85 Newsletter of the  
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
Post Office Box 7302  
Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, INC.  
Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

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**CHAPTER WEBSITE:** For current Chapter information, as well as virtual views of Chapter trips and activities, visit website: [www.rhphladelphia.org](http://www.rhphladelphia.org)

#### CHAPTER OFFICERS (Elected)

President: R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769  
[rl@eastwood.comcast.net](mailto:rl@eastwood.comcast.net)  
Vice President: John Smith (215) 527-6180  
[johnsmith212@gmail.com](mailto:johnsmith212@gmail.com)  
Secretary: Marie K. Eastwood (215) 947-5769  
[mk@eastwood.net](mailto:mk@eastwood.net)  
Treasurer: Robert Young (215) 808-5136  
[Rob\\_Young@erizon.net](mailto:Rob_Young@erizon.net)  
National Representative: William Wolk (215) 681-1957  
[wolk999@gmail.com](mailto:wolk999@gmail.com)

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Appointed)

Editor: R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769  
[rl@eastwood.comcast.net](mailto:rl@eastwood.comcast.net)  
Equipment Chair: David R. McGuire (610) 544-2749  
[dmr6452@verizon.net](mailto:dmr6452@verizon.net)  
Membership Chair: Sheila A. Dorr (610) 642-2830  
[sheladorr@gmail.com](mailto:sheladorr@gmail.com)  
Program Director: Steve Ferrell (610) 812-1020  
[sferrell@gmail.com](mailto:sferrell@gmail.com)  
Publicity Chair: Daniel Knowse (610) 631-9436  
[dknowse@earthlink.net](mailto:dknowse@earthlink.net)  
Zoom Master: Eric Dervinis (610) 613-2828  
[eric.dervinis@gmail.com](mailto:eric.dervinis@gmail.com)

**2023-24 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES:** Effective September 1, 2023, \$20.00 per person, which covers Philadelphia Chapter dues through December 31, 2024. (NRHS National membership dues for 2023 are \$50.00, billed directly by NRHS). NRHS chapters bill their members separately for Chapter dues. Donation requests for Philadelphia Railfriends will be mailed during October, 2023 via separate mailing from Cinders. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS should forward remittance, payable to Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS in the amount of \$20.00 to Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Please be sure to include name, valid mailing address, telephone number and E-mail address, as applicable.

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Send all Editor Entries at Post Office Box 353, Hantsborough, Valley, PA 19066-0353. (Include year CURRENT TELEPHONE NUMBER and E-MAIL ADDRESS so our records are complete.) Beginning in early 2023, we will effect electronic delivery of Cinders to those who elect to receive same.

Cinders is published 11 times a year by Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, Inc. Correspondence regarding Cinders should be directed to the Editor at P.O. Box 353, Hantsborough, Valley, PA 19066-0353. EXCHANGE newsletters should BE SENT TO: R. L. Eastwood, Jr., Editor, P. O. Box 353, Hantsborough, Valley, PA 19066-0353, or by electronic mail to [rl@eastwood.comcast.net](mailto:rl@eastwood.comcast.net)

**Our February 15, 2024 Meeting:**

**Will feature Harry Pinsker with a presentation on Metro-North Commuter Railroad. If the technology can be worked out, Eric Dervinis and Steve Ferrell, the program may be available by ZOOM.**

**7:00 PM, February 15, Elkins Central Meeting Room**

**GEORGE W. METZ**  
**July 29, 1941 – January 24, 2024**

It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of Chapter Member George W. Metz on January 24, 2024 at the age of 82. He lived in Newtown Square, formerly of Media and Havertown. George had been a devoted member and Past Master of the Media Lodge #295 FAAM of Pennsylvania, 33rd degree Mason in the Scottish Rite in the Valley of Philadelphia and Past Grand Commander of the Knights Templar of Pennsylvania, who helped others through the many activities of the Masons. Loving son of the late Robert T. and Miriam T. Warburton Metz; dear uncle of Kimberly L. Conner (Frank) and Robert S. Thomson; dear uncle of April R. Dawson and Andrea T. Dawson, dear brother of the late Barbara T. Blevins (nee Metz). George was well loved by his family.

George was very active with the Lackawanna Railroad in Scranton and enjoyed operating the Steamtown trolley, especially at Christmas with Santa on the trolley and other times throughout the year. He was an avid Star Wars fan dressing up as a Storm Trooper in parades and other events. George brought much happiness to others. He was also an avid Roman History buff and made his own lifelike Roman clothing and participated in reenactments and shared his knowledge of Roman History throughout presentations at schools and hospitals.

His visitation was held on Friday, February 2, 2024, 10 AM to 11 AM at the Cavanagh-Patterson Family Funeral Home, 41 E. Baltimore Avenue, Media, PA, followed by his Masonic Service at 11 AM with the Knights Templar Service after that. The prairie service followed the Knights Templar Service. Interment was in Valley Forge Memorial Gardens, King of Prussia, PA.

## New Flags, Diamonds & Statues Issue on the RDG Blueliners

The Anthracite Railroads Historical Society has recently published its latest quarterly issue, Volume 29, Number 1. This full 32-page edition covers the Reading Railroad's Blueliner MU electric cars, which includes a roster of the cars and their dispositions, including many quality color photos of the cars in their home operating territory and a "Where are They Now" photo section.

The article sets the stage for the Blueliner Project against the story of new the City of Philadelphia stepped up in the late 1950's to save their commuter rail system, beginning with the "Operations" programs. The first program in 1958 was "Operation Northwest" on both the Pennsylvania Railroad and Reading Railroad branches to Chestnut Hill. The program was declared successful and was expanded to other lines providing service within the Philadelphia City limits. Next, to purchase new equipment, the Philadelphia Service Improvement Corporation was created. It contracted with the Budd Company to build 12 RDC-1 cars for the Reading's non-electrified lines, then 55 Silverliner II MU cars for the PRR and RDG electrified suburban lines.

Money for additional new equipment was scarce, so the Blueliner Program was created to upgrade 38 members of the 30-year-old Reading MU fleet. Once introduced, these cars were well-received. The Reading was proud of their quality workmanship in their own Reading, Pennsylvania shops and took steps toward a follow-up Blueliner II program for their remaining green MU fleet. However, new carbuilders intervened. The fleet of original Blueliners provided electric service for another 26 years before their retirement in 1990. In the interim, service refurbishment programs extended their service life.

However, the story does not end with their electric service. Fifty-two percent of the cars are still providing locomotive-hauled tourist line service in 2023. This issue of *Flags, Diamonds & Statues* is available at Henning's Train Store in Lansdale, PA and on-line. It is also available from the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society at their website [www.anthraciterailroads.org](http://www.anthraciterailroads.org).