



Newsletter

WWW.LAKEFREDERICKTRAVELCLUB.COM

MEETS THE 2ND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH FROM 11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. IN RACHEL'S KITCHEN

2026 Committee

George Darnell
President

Doc Holladay
Vice President

Nanci Bowers
Treasurer

Cindy Holmes
Membership Coordinator

Nanci Bowers
Newsletter Coordinator

Pam Toliver
Website Coordinator

Dan Mortland
Program Director

Greg Payonk
Cruise & Foreign Travel

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Meeting
May 11, 2026
Rachel's Kitchen
11:30 a.m.

JUNE 2026 ISSUE

President's Message

Welcome to Summer!

I hope you had a chance to celebrate Mother's Day and Memorial Day with family and friends. Memorial Day weekend was a bit challenging, but we need the rain. June starts our busy summer season of trips. I hope you can join us on some of them. They are highlighted in this issue.

April Trips

Our two-day Blue Ridge Spring Odysseys on April 30 – May 1 was a great success. Read Mike Erricksen's trip report in this issue.

May Trip

Sam Kerns and Rick Turner led an informative and enjoyable tour of Fisher's Hill and Cedar Creek Battlefields on May 15, 2026. Read John Toliver's trip report in this issue.

June Trips

Bill Johnson will be leading a trip to Monticello, Michie Tavern, and Blue Quartz Winery on June 4, 2026. This trip is almost full. Bill, our early American historian and wine enthusiast, is also leading a repeat of our pre-Covid Frontier Heritage Tour in June. See the announcement in this newsletter and register on MTL Events.

July and August Trips

We have three great trips in July and August: a summer winery tour; a trail ride with brewery lunch in Front Royal; and a tour of Harper's Ferry. Read the trip

announcements in this newsletter and register on MTL Events.

Trip Ideas for 2026 Updated

We try to project our trips for the year on our Trip Ideas page in each newsletter to help you plan. Trip details or cancellations will be included in newsletters throughout the year. Trip registration is not open until a trip's details are included in a newsletter and we have posted it on MTL Events. See our Trip Ideas for the remainder of 2026 in this issue. If you have any suggestions, especially if you can help in the planning, please send them to me with as much information as you can.

We will include Sam Kerns' Pennsylvania Disasters and Railroads overnight trip on October 13 and 14 using a Varsity motor coach. Watch for future details.

Trip Ideas for 2027

It's not too early to think about our trips for 2027. I am thinking about repeating some of our most popular trips from past years. If you have any favorites, you would like us to repeat, or an idea for something new, let me know.

Shenandoah Tours <https://www.shenandoahtours.com/>

We will return to using Shenandoah Tours for some of our trips. See the selection of trips that Doc Holiday made in this issue.

Registering for Travel Club Trips

If you have any trouble registering for our trips the Lodge Concierge should be able to help you. This includes club members who are not MTL members and family and friends travelling with a club member. Or send Nanci Bowers, Treasurer, an email or text with questions at bowers647@verizon.net – 703-8326925. We do not post our trips on MTL Events for registration until they have been announced in our newsletter. Your registration is not confirmed until our treasurer has your check.

Website Manager Needed

Pam Toliver has done an amazing job of designing and maintaining our club website since our founding by Judy Bogner. It contains all our newsletters and serves as our club's historical archive. Pam's family obligations prevent her from continuing in this role. If you have basic computer skills Pam can train you to take over our website. Please contact Pam or me if you can help.

Personal Status

You may have heard that Michelle and I were in a serious auto accident in May requiring hospitalization. I am home now recovering from fractured ribs. Michelle is out of ICU and able to sit on the edge of the bed for meals. The next step for her is a rehab center to restore her mobility. We are grateful for the prayers, well wishes, and support of family and friends during this traumatic time in our lives.

June 8 Meeting

Join us for our June 8 lunch meeting in Rachel's Kitchen from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. No agenda; just good food and conversation. Don't forget your dish to share.

See you around campus and at our monthly meeting!

George Darnell, President

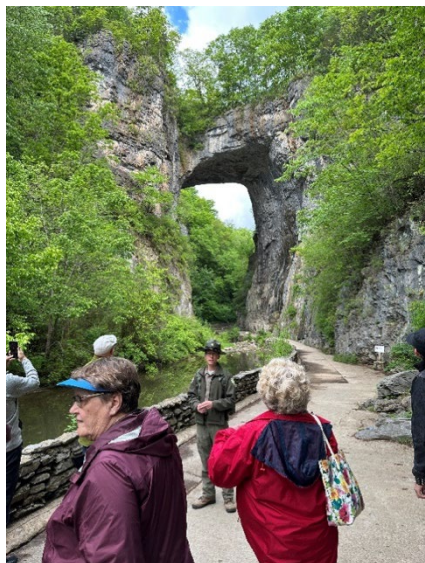
703-850-2132

darnellqd@hotmail.com

Blue Ridge Spring Odyssey, April 30 – May 1, 2026, Trip Report

By: Mike Ericksen

Photo Credits: Mike Ericksen, John Osius, and George Darnell



Twenty-six travelers boarded our bus at 7:30 a.m. and headed South on I-81 for a two-day Blue Ridge Spring Odyssey. Our first stop was the interstate rest stop south of Harrisonburg, which was about halfway to Natural Bridge (*Good thing we didn't stop at near-by Bug-ee's or we would have needed to add another day to our trip*). Natural Bridge is an awesome stop! Beautiful well-maintained easy hike to the limestone bridge, though there were a good deal of steps to contend with so George arranged a shuttle bus for those who choose to ride. Our tour included a dapper park ranger guide who was a font of interesting historical facts. There were a little waterfall and a huge gift shop with exhibits. A historic hotel was located nearby. The guide mentioned a saltpeter cave beyond the bridge—an interesting trail for another visit.



Then, thoroughly emersed in Natural Bridge history, it was back on the bus for a short ride to the quaint little town of Buchanan. But first, we experienced a ride over the Natural Bridge on Highway 11. We arrived at our lunch stop location with a little extra time to explore the sights. So, most of us wandered over a rustic wooden foot bridge that spanned the James River. The warning sign on the other side of the river suggested that the swinging bridge would only support three people at a time. I guess that diet really saved the day for us because we all made it back across for an excellent lunch at Mrs. B's restaurant.

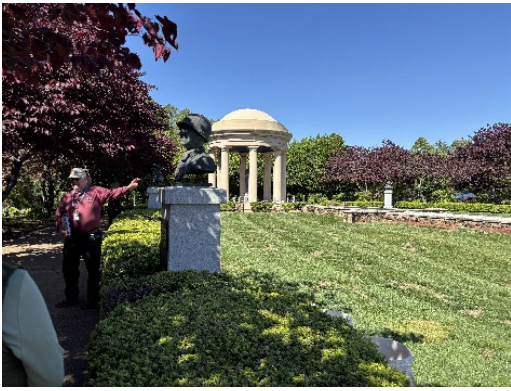


It is interesting to mention that the municipal water utility for the entire town of Buchanan was shut off during our lunch, limiting our selection to bottled

drinks and closing the restrooms. Fortunately, the restaurant called to warn us while we were at Natural Bridge, and we had a chance to use the restrooms there before leaving.

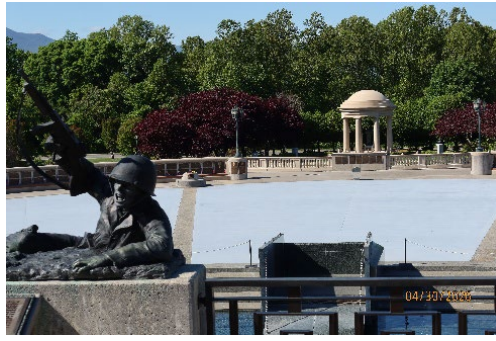


Next, we travelled to the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center. Unfortunately, the Blue Ridge Parkway was closed. So, our driver, Julie, had to take a circuitous route for spectacular views from the visitor center to the surrounding peaks. The restrooms were also a welcome sight. Hurricane Helene, in September 2024, caused at least 57 landslides and significant damage to the parkway. Many sections are slowly being repaired. The Peaks of Otter Lodge was nearby, enabling us to make a brief visit to this popular place for food and lodging in the Blue Ridge.



Back on the bus, we headed over the mountain to the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford for a guided tour of this amazing site commemorating the Normandy Invasion in WWII. An awe-inspiring experience! We had no idea that it would be so moving.

Our tour guide was very knowledgeable and explained the connection of this National D-Day Memorial to the Bedford, VA and the National Guard unit from that town which suffered 90 percent casualties during the D-Day landing on Omaha Beach. Finally, we headed to the Hotel Roanoke, where we checked in for dinner and lodging.



The Hotel Roanoke is truly a treasure. One night was not long enough to appreciate this magnificent hotel. The sky bridge to downtown over the rail tracks was convenient. The restaurant had a wonderful dinner selection, and breakfast buffet was very elegant. Some of us enjoyed dinner in the casual bar area.

In the morning, we had time to stroll the beautiful grounds before taking a quick head count and our bus climbed a peak and got a view of the City of Roanoke from a parkway high point called the Roanoke Star Overlook. The Roanoke Star is an iconic symbol of Virginia's Blue Ridge and a must-see spot when visiting the region. The star sits perched atop Mill Mountain and overlooks the surrounding valley and Blue Ridge Mountains. It is illuminated every night. Julie did a masterful job motoring our large bus up and down the hairpin turns around the Blue Ridge peaks.





Our next adventure was a narrated two-hour-long relaxing lunch cruise of Smith Mountain Lake on a paddle-wheel replica called Virginia Dare after an historic Virginia woman. The crew informed us that the lake was down 4-1/2 feet because of drought. This put the gangway entrance to the ship at a steep downhill angle. Fortunately, the crew helped everyone get on board. Nothing but gorgeous views the entire time. The BBQ buffet was satisfying, and the narrated boat ride was interesting but over too soon.

We were back on the bus for a short one-hour drive to tour Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest country retreat near Lynchburg. Designated a National Historic Landmark, Poplar Forest is an award-winning historic restoration, nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We learned that during the Revolutionary War in 1781, Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson fled to Poplar Forest from Monticello to evade capture from British forces. The recent renovations showed the home as it was when Jefferson stayed there. It is much smaller than Monticello, but that is plus with less crowds. We spoke to an archeologist who described their current work there, which was very interesting. A beautiful setting.



On the way home we stopped at Devils Backbone Basecamp on the Appalachian. I think we all may logged a few steps onto the trail. We soon joined the Friday crowd for dinner and a few famous Devil's Backbone beers and other beverages in the shadow of the Blue Ridge "Devils Backbone".

Finally, we headed back to I-81 and Lake Frederick, making a rest stop about halfway. We arrived home with the same number we started with. Another successful fun-packed trip (mission completed).

Fisher's Hill & Cedar Creek Battlefields May 15, 2026, Tour Trip Report

By John Toliver

Civil War experts Sam Kerns and Rick Turner led sixteen fellow Trilogy Community members on an excellent tour of the two final battles of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley. We left the Shenandoah Lodge on a beautiful sky blue with white puffy clouds May Day and headed South on 522 to Reliance Road.

Turning West on Reliance Road toward Middletown, our first stop was at a small cemetery where Rick briefed us on the basic geography of the countryside and the importance of it relative to the battles. We viewed "Signal Knob" to the Southwest, the dominant mountain feature rising high above Strasburg and the Shenandoah River. It was occupied by the Confederates until they were driven out of the Valley. From it, the Confederates could see for miles in every direction, thus observing troop movements and activities. It played a significant role, particularly in the two battlefields we were to tour and could be seen from each stop we made.



Proceeding to Middletown, we turned South on Route 11, drove up the Valley crossing Cedar Creek, and stopped on Route 11 just South of Strasburg to observe Signal Knob again. Overlooking a field looking toward Signal Knob, Rick told us we were standing in the narrowest part of the Shenandoah Valley, less than four miles wide, where Little North Mountain, in the Allegheny's to the west, sits closest to Massanutten Mountains to the east (Signal Knob). Fisher's Hill was referred to as the "Gibraltar of the Valley" during the Civil War. It provided a naturally strong defensive fortification because the entire span of the valley could be guarded from a single ridge line. Troop movements by either army were bottlenecked on what is

now Route 11, particularly cannons, wagons, horses, and the men assigned to them.

It was here that Confederate General Jubal Early stopped his badly defeated army fleeing from the Third Battle of Winchester on September 19, 1864, and positioned 9,500 men along the series of ridges between the two mountains.



Fisher's Hill on his left and Strasburg/Hupp's Hill/Signal Knob on his right, facing General Phil Sheridan's pursuing Union Army of 30,000 men. It was a short drive through the quaint village of Fisher Hill, to the Fisher's Hill Battlefield.



Rick explained: Right here, anchoring the Confederates on the left, General Ramseur's division, was surprised and overrun on September 22nd, by Gen. Crook's VIII Union Corps, resulting in the entire Confederate defense collapsing and Early's army retreated south, further up the Valley to Rockfish Gap near Waynesboro.

We then
drove to
right flank

Early's army, Hupp's Hill in Strasburg visited a nice Civil War museum in the visitor's center and viewed Confederate trenches still visible today.



the
of

Side note: My mother's maiden name was Hupp. Our probable Hupp genealogy indicates Caspar Hupp moved to Cedar Creek in 1735 and is said to have built the Hupp stone house and fort (still standing) in Strasburg. I assume he or a descendant may have owned this hill.

A good lunch was had in a timely fashion at the "Strasburg Diner," and we were soon off again. A great view of Signal Knob can be seen from the Diner.



Driving back to Middletown, we entered the Cedar Creek Battlefield which stretches 3.8 miles from Cedar Creek North down the Valley through Middletown. This was the last battle of the War in the Shenandoah Valley. It would require at least one day to tour it.

Stopping at the National Park Cedar Creek Battlefield Center we view the battlefield panoramic model.

We then viewed the site of the 8th Vermont Brigade's defensive position which received a Confederate Army early morning surprise attack on October 19, 1864. Jubal Early's Army was back in the Valley, thus opening the Cedar Creek Battle. This Brigade fought valiantly but at a great cost.



Out of 164 engaged soldiers, it suffered 110 killed, wounded, or captured. However, by the end of the day Sheridan's surprised army once again prevailed. This battle terminated the Confederate army in the Shenandoah Valley.



We then drove across the center of the battlefield, by Belle Grove Plantation home in and to the northern end of the battlefield where the Union Army turned the tide of the Confederates and sent them running south for good.

We arrived back at the Lodge and thanked Sam and Rick for an interesting, educational, nice tour on a beautiful day.

TRIP IDEAS 2026, VERSION 12

JUNE

- 4--Monticello, Michie Tavern Lunch, & Winery Tour
- 24--Frontier Heritage Tour

JULY

- 10--Summer Wine Tour
- 24--Trail Ride & Brewery Lunch

AUGUST

- 14--Harpers Ferry Tour

SEPTEMBER

- 16--Gettysburg Tour

OCTOBER

- 13-14--PA Disasters & Railroads Overnight Trip
- 30--Sperryville & Little Washington Tour

NOVEMBER

- 13--Fall Wine Tour

DECEMBER

- 12--Wreaths Across America
- 17--Candlelight Christmas at Mount Vernon

Frontier Heritage Museums, Beer and Wine Tour, 24 June 2026



Back by popular demand is the Frontier Heritage Tour covering some of the colonial and early American history of the Shenandoah Valley. Our first stop will be the Newtown History Center in Stephens City where we'll learn about the early settlement of the local area. Newtown was the name for Stephens City until the US Postal Service required a name change due to the multiple Newtowns in Virginia.

Afterwards, we'll travel UP the Valley to Harrisonburg to have lunch at the Capital Ale House which has a large selection of regional brews. Be sure and check out their \$10 lunch specials.



Next stop will be the Frontier Culture Museum, the largest open-air museum in the Valley, encompassing a large collection of 18th and 19th century buildings, staffed by costumed interpreters to explain life in those times experienced by immigrant English, Scottish, Irish, German, Native Americans, and enslaved Africans.



Our final stop will be the Cross Keys Vineyards, which has some of the best wines produced in Virginia as well as excellent food to go with them. Those who wish to do a tasting can do so at our table in the Bistro.



Schedule:

- 8:45 a.m. Check in at the Lodge
- 9:00 Depart Lodge
- 9:30 Private tour of Newton History Center in Stephens City
- 10:30 Depart Stephens Cit
- 11:30 Arrive Capital Ale House in Harrisonburg for lunch
- 12:30 p.m. Depart Harrisonburg
- 1:30 Arrive in Staunton and tour the Frontier Culture Museum
- 4:00 Depart the Frontier Culture Museum
- 4:30 Arrive Cross Keys Vineyards for Dinner in the Bistro
- 6:30 Leave for Lake Frederick
- 7:45 Arrive Lake Frederick

Minimum for this trip is 12 and maximum is 18.

Registration is \$60 for transportation. Food, drinks, tastings, museum admissions, and driver tip are not included.

Register on MTL Events and drop off your registration check, payable to "[Lake Frederick Travel Club.](#)" Please include your contact information, the name and date of the trip, with the Lodge Concierge representative **No Later than June 10, 2026**. The Travel Club Treasurer will confirm receipt of your check.

Contact [Bill Johnson](#) (703-774-5252) wfjohnson52@gmail.com regarding questions about this trip.

Summer Wine Tour, July 10, 2026

For this tour we will visit three wineries in nearby Fauquier County. Our first stop will be the popular winery off Rout 17, Mediterranean Cellars. It is a boutique winery with excellent wines in an old-world atmosphere. This will be our first visit.



Our

second stop will be Gray Ghost Vineyards on Route 211 headed toward Sperryville. Its manor house has colonial charm, and it is one of the oldest vineyards in the county. We are also visiting them for the first time.

Our last stop, Philip Carter Winery, sits on a ridge with views of the east side of the Blue Ridge. They have a large outdoor area with seating and games for children and adults. Their wine and food are also excellent. We have visited them a few times before.

Schedule

- 11:00 Gather in Lodge
- 11:15 leave Lodge
- 12:00 Arrive Mediterranean Cellars
- 1:45 Leave
- 2:15 Arrive Gray Ghost Vineyard
- 4:00 Leave
- 4:30 Arrive Philip Carter Winery
- 6:00 Leave
- 6:30 Arrive Lodge

The minimum for this trip is 12 and maximum is 18.

Registration is \$60 for transportation. Food, tastings, and driver's tip are not included.

Please register on MTL Events and drop off your registration check, payable to **"Lake Frederick Travel Club,"** with your contact information and the date of the trip, with the lodge concierge no later than

July 5, 2026



George Darnell

(703-850-2132)

darnellgd@hotmail.com

Trail Ride & Brewery Lunch - July 24, 2026



Join the Lake Frederick Travel Club for an exciting trail ride at Royal Horseshoe Farm in the Shenandoah Valley followed by lunch at nearby Vibrissa Brewery



About Royal Horseshoe Farm in Front Royal:

- Our trails pass through the Shenandoah Valley's rich meadows, woods, and hills.
- You can ride across Manassas Run, pass the old cannon emplacements that used to guard Morgan's Ford, visit the old barns that used to hold US Cavalry ponies, and see the house where George Washington stayed when he was a young man surveying for Lord Fairfax.
- One or more trail guides lead each ride. Riding experiences range from gentle pastures to wide sloping trails, crossing small or medium sized streams, and even some trails that are narrow, windy, wooded and steep.

About Vibrissa Brewery

- After visiting historic Front Royal, hiking the Appalachian Trail, or taking in the views of [Shenandoah National Park](#), or even floating down the Shenandoah River, stop by our brewery on Main Street for great food and beer served to you in a full-service restaurant.
- We can't wait to have a beer with you!

Schedule:

- 9:00 a.m. Meet at the Lodge
- 9:15 Leave Lodge
- 9:30 Arrive Royal Horseshoe for fitting
- 10:30 Begin Trail Ride 11:30 End Trail Ride
- 12:00 Noon Lunch at Vibrissa Brewery
- 2:00 p.m. Tour Main Street Front Royal on your own
- 3:00 Board bus
- 3:30 Arrive Lodge

Minimum for this trip is 10 and maximum is 15.

Registration is \$100.00 for transportation and trail ride. Lunch, trail guide and driver tips are not included. Please wear comfortable and sturdy clothes and shoes for the trail ride.

Register on MTL Events and drop off your registration check, payable to "[Lake Frederick Travel Club](#)." Please include your contact information, the name and date of the trip, with the Lodge Concierge representative **No Later than July 19, 2026**. The Travel Club Treasurer will confirm receipt of your check.

[Contact George Darnell](#) (703-850-2132) darnellgd@hotmail.com regarding questions about this trip.

Harpers Ferry, WV Tour - August 14, 2026

Nestled in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park is a must visit destination for anyone looking to explore America's past in a picturesque natural setting. Sitting at the junction of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers, and bordered by Virginia and Maryland, Harpers Ferry has been a strategic and majestic site since the time of Washington and Jefferson, who visited here often.



For this trip, our leader, Mike Ericksen, has arranged for a professional tour guide to board our bus and show us around this historic area. After the guided tour we will have time to explore on our own before meeting our bus to travel to “Th Rabbit Hole” for lunch overlooking the railway station. Following lunch, we will travel to Harpers Ferry Brewery for stunning views of Harpers Ferry from Bolivar Heights while sipping a cool beverage in this popular watering hole. Then we will take the scenic ride back to Lake Frederick. Bring your National Park Service Senior Pass or cash for entrance to the park.

Schedule

- 8:15 a.m. Meet at the Lodge
- 8:30 Bus Departs from the Lodge
- 9:30 Meet professional guide at Harpers Ferry Historical National Park Visitor Center
- 9:30 - 12:00 Tour by bus historical museums and points of interest around Harpers Ferry
- 12:00 Noon Lunch and group photo at “The Rabbit Hole” followed by free time to visit shops, walk the footbridge over the river, revisit historical sites, etc.
- 2:30 p.m. Board bus and depart Harpers Ferry
- 3:00 Arrive Harpers Ferry Brewery
- 4:30 Depart
- 5:30 Arrive Lodge

The minimum for this trip is 16 and maximum is 24

Registration is \$60.0 for transportation. Lunch, purchases, tips for the guide and driver are not included.

Register on MTL Events and drop off your registration check, payable to “[Lake Frederick Travel Club](#).” Please include your contact information, the name and date of the trip, with the Lodge Concierge representative **No Later than August 8, 2026**. The Travel Club Treasurer will confirm receipt of your check.

[Contact George Darnell](#) (703-850-2132) darnellgd@hotmail.com regarding questions about this trip.

Calendar of Shenandoah Tours Trips for 2026, V10



June 8-11 – Niagara Falls “Moments to Remember” by motor coach. 4 Days/3 Nights/ 4 Meals; \$1029 pp double/\$1419 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 11) Contact: https://www.shenandoahtours.com/	Nov 27-30 – A Country Christmas at Opryland Hotel by motor coach. 4 Days/3 Nights/ 2 Meals; \$1499 pp double/\$1999 single; Deposit \$150 pp. (Page 43) Contact: https://www.shenandoahtours.com/
Sep 14-17 – Niagara Falls “Moments to Remember” by motor coach. 4 Days/3 Nights/ 4 Meals; \$1029 pp double/\$1419 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 11) Contact: https://www.shenandoahtours.com/	Dec 1-3 – Candlelight Christmas at Biltmore Estate by motor coach. 3 Days/2 Nights/4 Meals; \$979 pp double/\$ 1099 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 44) Contact: https://www.shenandoahtours.com/
Sep 23-29 – Iceland “Land of Fire and Ice.” 7 Days/6 Nights/7 Meals; \$4618 double/\$6377 single; Deposit \$699 pp. (Page 33) Contact: https://www.shenandoahtours.com/	Dec 8-10 – Virginia’s Festival of Lights by motor coach. 3 Days/2 Nights/4 Meals; \$819 pp double/\$999 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 46) Contact: https://www.shenandoahtours.com/
Nov 18-20 – Magical Smokey Mountain Christmas by motor coach. 3 Days/2 Nights/3 Meals; \$709 pp double/\$879 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 42) Contact: https://www.shenandoahtours.com/	

NOTE: For Shenandoah motor coach tours, we need a minimum of 8 people for pick up in Lake Frederick. Otherwise, pick up is at Routes 522 & 50 in the Red Roof Inn parking lot.