

# THE MAIL POUCH

VOLUME 38

Issue No. 06

June 2026



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## MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 9th, 2026. The meeting will begin promptly at 7:00pm and will be held at The Museum's Taylor Annex. For directions or additional information, please contact James Taylor at (540) 295-2974.

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## July Meeting Agenda

- Brief Update on recent progress at the Museum's cars and displays.*
- Discussion of future projects and needs.*
- Entertainment TBD.*

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*Cover: The 1218 Rides The Rails Again (June 2003) This photo from June 11, 2003 show the N&W 1218 following a superb cosmetic restoration and during a transfer move to the Virginia Museum of Transportation. Following a trip through the Roanoke wye to orient the locomotive for display, the 1218 was then pushed into a side track at the museum. Other museum equipment was then pulled out of the intended display track, and then coupled to the 1218. At around 3:00 PM, the resulting "train" was then pushed into place with the 1218 at the lead. The 1218 is now on display at the VMT alongside the 611, and under the new \$2 million Claytor Pavilion which was dedicated on June 14, 2003. Kipp Teague photo*

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## A monthly publication of the Rappahannock Railroad Museum

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Opinions expressed in *The Mail Pouch* are those of the editor and contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.. Please send all correspondence to the following address:

Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.  
11700 Main St.  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

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## Museum Officers and Staff

President:	James F. Taylor	Chief Mech Engineer:	Donald Kirkpatrick
First Vice President:	Curtis Tammany	Museum Liaison:	David Wurick
Secretary:	Andy Sentipal	Newsletter Editor:	James Keehner
Treasurer:	Virginia Smith	Registered Agent:	Mike Thomas
Museum Curator:	James F. Taylor	Chairman B.O.D.	Mike Thomas
Webmaster:	James Keehner		

Web Site: [www.RRMuseum.org](http://www.RRMuseum.org)

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## THE PRESIDENTS 1/2 PAGE

No Message for this month

James (Jake) Taylor  
President  
Rappahannock Railroad Museum

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The Museum and the Editor can use your help to fill the pages of the Mail Pouch. If you have a subject you would like to share, photos or just about any other information, please consider submitting it for publication in our Mailpouch. There are a lot of exciting things happening at the Museum, I would be glad to publish personal notes from those who are making the changes and updates at the museum. All submissions will be included in the Mail Pouch (unless restricted by copywrite laws).

Thank you all for your support.

Jim Keehner  
Editor  
Rappahannock Railroad Museum



*The above picture it is of the ODC car (school Bus) we leased it May 7, 2024 two years and lot of work, lets use it.*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Rappahannock Railroad Museum** EVERY SATURDAY MORNING TRAIN RIDE – EXCURSION. Ride the rails along Historic Deep Run Creek in Spotsylvania Co. on open rail maintenance cars and experience how the railroad workers of the mid 20th century rode to their worksites. Every Saturday 9AM to Noon – weather and conditions permitting. To ensure you get aboard the last train run, please be at the museum by 10:30AM. We attempt to board all parties on a first come basis but boarding is conducted on the platform by our station conductor and train crew so first come first aboard may not always occur. All children under 12 or those needing intensive supervision must be accompanied by a responsible adult. They must be seated together. Departing from the Rappahannock Railroad Museum, 11700 Main Street, Fredericksburg, Va. 22408. Donations accepted.

### Monthly Meetings:

**June 11th, 2026**

**July 9th, 2026**

**August 13th, 2026**

### NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION

2026 NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION – CHATTANOOGA, TN JULY 27 TO AUGUST 2, 2026, <https://www.nmra2026.org>

### NATIONAL NARROW GAUGE CONVENTION

Collinsville, IL / St Louis, MO • September 3 - 6, 2025, [www.45thnngc.com](http://www.45thnngc.com)

### GREENBERG TRAIN SHOWS

**Jul. 18-19 - Oaks, PA\***

**Jul. 25-26 - Monroeville, PA\***

**Aug. 8-9 - Edison, NJ\***

**Oct. 17-18 - Fredericksburg, VA\***

**Nov. 7-8 - Monroeville, PA\***

**Nov. 21-22 - Wilmington, MA\***

**Nov. 28-29 - Edison, NJ\***

**Dec. 5-6 - Timonium, MD\***

**Prince William County Model Railroad Club Schedule - PWMRC.org**

**June 6, 2026 Manassas Railway Festival (tentative) Manassas Railway Festival logo**

### RAPPAHANNOCK MODEL RAILROADERS

**July 21-24 - Private event (Stafford Junction) N, HO layouts**

**July 24 – Aug 2 – Fredericksburg Agricultural Fair O gauge layout**

**September 12 – RMR Open House All gauges**

**September 19 – Disability Resource Center Fall Festival at Fredericksburg Fair Grounds N gauge layout**

**September 26 – Museum of Culpeper History HO confirmed, N and O gauge invited**

**October 10-11 - Historic Appomattox Railroad Festival N gauge layout**

**October 24 - Shannon Airport Harvest Festival All gauges**

**November 7-8 – Spotsylvania Town Center Holiday kickoff O, N gauge layouts**

**December 12-13 - RMR Christmas show at Eagles Lodge All gauges**

**Editor's Note:** *If anyone has any other Organizational information that they would like to see in the “Upcoming Events”, please forward that information to the Editor for inclusion. I try to get a spread of regional and National events, but I cannot research every organization that is out there, so if you belong to or are interested in something that is not included here, please send me the information.*

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## MONTHLY RECAP

**05-02-2025** - TOO MANY CELEBRATIONS! We had a slow day, not our fault as there were other Special programs scheduled Saturday. The “Great train Race” in downtown Fredericksburg. Spotsylvania had large “250th history celebration” at courthouse. But glad we were open giving tours, made two runs with train and had time to catch up on some needed projects. Did some much needed cleaning and repair planning.

Just a reminder we do have a birthday party scheduled For May 16th, let us be ready. Our monthly meeting scheduled for May14th. If someone has an idea for about a 20 to 30 minute program on the 14th please talk with me.

Continue to be aware of reckless traffic passing museum in the morning, trying to make scheduled appointments next door. Sheriff is aware of situation and trying to control it with patrols and radar.

I have notice tension building within members. I believe it is caused by concern for answers to track usage and a lot of member sickness. Most of us understand nothing with the government moves quickly and health problems cannot be controlled. So, let's be patience with all problems and work together for best of museum and our community. Looking for clear track ahead.

**05-09-2025** - HAPPY MOM'S DAY TOMORROW. Had a rather normal morning with good weather, equipment ran well nice group of seniors enjoyed tour. We did get some training but not as expected. At this time Jimmy is tentatively scheduling the next training session for May 23 if this date works for you, please let Jimmy know (livesteam36@verizon.net). Some training will be done onboard Train and written test will probably be at 1:00 in Taylor annex.

Note: we will be hosting a Birthday party this Saturday May 16th from 9 to noon. They had held party's here before, let's make sure They enjoy this one also SAFETLY.

**05-16-2025** - REALLY GOOD DAY. No complaints, good weather, lots of visitors, all equipment ran well, made four trips with train, birthday party was a success and we had a total estimate of 104 attending museum. We interfaced with visitors in several ways, helped find a hearing aid, stopped train on return trip to retrieve ladies hat, gave switch operation class 101 to young rider. These may seem simple actions but makes visitors trip to museum a personal happy memory. Also please watch out for safety of younger visitors (of all ages). Politely advise even if parents are with them, I found young visitor playing with a pointed stake that had a sharp screw sticking out of it, parents were advised and stick was secured. We do not want anyone hurt at museum, we are to teach safety around trains at all times. Always explain reason for your concern, politely.

No Crew Training this Saturday. Jimmy had a change in schedule and will not be at Museum Saturday May 23, 2026. Stay Cool remember when you complained it was TOO COLD. See you Saturday.

**05-23-2025** - WONDERFUL WEEKEND OF RAIN! Yes, I know some of you are ready to hang me but we Needed rain so bad in this area. Sorry if you are setting in Hotel Room looking out window.

We did have a good day at museum, did not take train out but visitors did enjoy all our inside displays, nice couple from Pennsylvania really like the B-60. Members had fun showing off models and playing with them. Good work (fun) members. No one got upset even when a little Boo Boo happened, members just planned how to prevent it from happening anymore.

We did have total estimate of 46 attending , even with rain and being a holiday. REMEMBER FREEDOM IS NOT FREE! Thank a VETERAN.

**05-30-2025** - WE FINISHED MAY! We finished May rather well. Saturday was busy with a Total estimated of 68 attending, signed up another new Member, sold couple of modules, made three trips with Train. We were short on help putting train away but THANKS To couple of young members from North annex we got Train back in container. We are planning on a way to make Train setup and return a litter easier, but we could still use Help at end of day.

We have always had little hills to overcome but right now Several of our members are having health and or family situations where they cannot attend on Saturday like they would like. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers, also you maybe ask to help in a different part of museum at times. Thanks for your understanding. Things will get better.

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# HARRIS TOWER

Visiting the only operating historic interlocking tower. By Jim Keehner



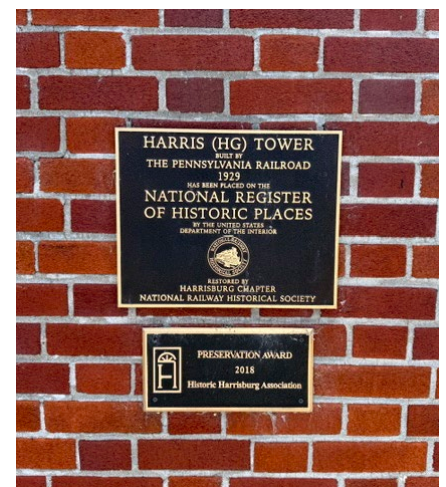
Recently my wife and I took a weekend trip to Harrisburg PA. for the Summer Narrow O Scale event held in the city. While in town we were looking for interesting locations to visit and came across this information on Harris Tower. We weren't sure what the museum had to offer but game for the experience. When we arrived, the building was in very nice shape with parking adjacent to the museum. As we stepped inside, we were directed to the second floor by signage. The museum is free to visit, and like our own museum, is operated on donations. The NRHS staff at the museum that day were cordial and the tour was informative. The best part of the tour is that it is interactive, you as the visitor get to throw the switching levers and the signal indicators to see a "train" route itself out of the passenger terminal and move down the line. The train is a computer generated simulation of lights indicated on the block sections of the board by occupancy lights.

Harris Switch Tower, also known as HG Tower or Harris Tower, is an interlocking tower in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in the United States. The tower was built in 1929 by the Pennsylvania Railroad and remained in operation until it was closed in 1991 by Amtrak. Harris was purchased by the local chapter of the National Railway Historical Society in 1992 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994.

Harris Tower is a two-story, Colonial Revival-structure located at 7th & Walnut Streets in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It is situated southeast of the Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex and between the State Street Bridge and the Harrisburg Transportation Center. Its Flemish bond brickwork sits atop a partially exposed, concrete foundation; the stories are visually separated by a soldier course.

The second floor contains the tower's interlocking machine, used to control signals and switches. The Union Switch & Signal Model 14 machine contains many steel bars that interlock with one another to prevent conflicts and sudden changes that could cause a derailment. The machine is 24 feet 10 inches (7.6 m) long, 6 feet 6 inches (2.0 m) wide and 4 feet 4 inches (1.3 m) tall. The front has 113 levers which were used to control all the switches and signals in Harris Tower's territory. A 4-foot-4-inch (1.3 m) tall model board is mounted above the machine. More than 450 indicator lamps of the model board show the current position of switches, locations of trains within the interlocking limits, and whether the overhead electric catenary is energized.

The Pennsylvania Railroad completed its main line across the Allegheny Mountains, connecting Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, in 1854. By the 1870s, the Pennsylvania had connected New York City to Chicago and St. Louis; consequently, all freight and passenger traffic from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington,



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## HARRIS TOWER

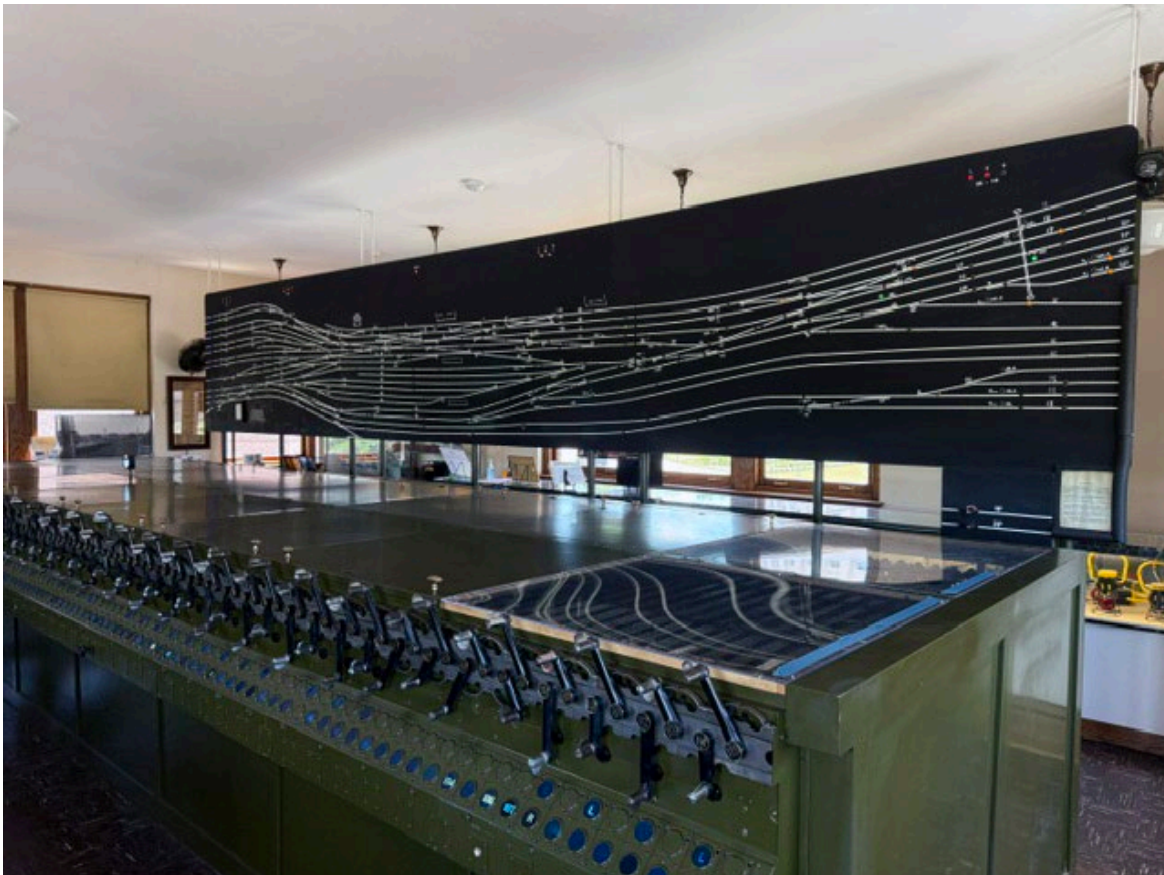
### Visiting the only operating historic interlocking tower

D.C., had to pass through Harrisburg before heading west. Harris Tower, then called HG Tower from its call sign when railroad communications were sent via telegraph, was built in 1929. It replaced three nearby towers that had been constructed in 1889. The consolidation reduced the manpower needed to control the 3,300 feet (1,000 m) and 15 sets of tracks north of Pennsylvania Station from 21 to 12. Harris Tower was put into service on April 26, 1930.

Some of the tracks controlled by Harris were removed, and the model board revised, when a new engine terminal was built in conjunction with the electrification of the line between Harrisburg and Philadelphia in 1938. The territory controlled by Harris Tower marked the western end of the electrification of the Pennsylvania Railroad's passenger lines. The engine terminal assisted in the switching of electric locomotives to steam or diesel locomotives for the trip west of Harrisburg. The Pennsylvania merged with the New York Central Railroad in 1968 to form Penn Central.

In 1971, Amtrak took over intercity passenger service from Penn Central and also took possession of many ex-Pennsylvania Railroad tracks and facilities, including Harris Tower. Penn Central was taken over by Conrail in 1976. Conrail modernized its signaling control system in 1989 and consolidated it into a centralized traffic control facility located north of Harrisburg. Consequently, Harris Tower was reduced to controlling only four Amtrak trains a day. Amtrak combined the functions of Harris Tower with the nearby State Tower located in the Harrisburg Transportation Center on November 15, 1991, and closed the tower.

On July 24, 1992, the Harrisburg chapter of the National Railway Historical Society purchased Harris Tower from Amtrak. The chapter opened the tower to the public as a museum, as well as allow visitors to operate the interlocking machine. Instead of controlling a network of signals and switches, it is connected to a computer which simulates train movements through the interlocking. The simulation uses Pennsylvania Railroad timetables from the early 1940s when the rail traffic at the tower was busiest.[4] The tower is popular with railfans as an observation point for the numerous Amtrak and Norfolk Southern trains that regularly pass it. The tower was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 30, 1994



*The US&S interlocking machine inside the tower*

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## **RAIL BIKE TOURS**

**By Andy Sentipal**

My wife and I recently took a rail bike trip out of Seven Valleys (formerly Smyser) Pennsylvania. The company that operates the rail bikes is named American Rail Bike Adventures and they have an excellent website. You can choose from a two or four seat rail bike when you make your reservation. It is approximately a 2 1/2 hour drive from Fredericksburg.

The ride lasts 2 hours and covers 7 miles round trip. The bulk of the trip is downhill and the small up hill section is hardly noticeable. The speed is about 10 miles an hour and the rail bikes are spaced 100 feet apart so you get great views during the trip. Some amazing scenery and you cross several bridges. I found the rail bikes easy to pedal.

The highlight of the trip is riding through the Howard Tunnel. It opened for operation in 1838 and is the second oldest active railroad tunnel in the United States. The tunnel itself is brick lined and is 275 feet long. It was guarded during the Civil War, WWI and WWII. Lincoln's funeral train passed through this tunnel

The tracks are part of the Old Northern Central Railway (later the Pennsylvania Railroad). The route is the one used by the PRR's premier, all Pullman train the, Liberty Limited which ran from Washington, DC to Chicago starting in the early 1920's.

If you want more railroading along this same line, checkout the Northern Central Railway operating out of New Freedom, Pa. They operate several different excursions options and have many special events. One of their train routes goes to Hanover Junction and the original station is still there. The line splits with tracks (now gone) that went to Gettysburg, Pa. Lincoln took this line to give the Gettysburg Address during the Civil War. Lots of beautiful scenery and history on both trips.



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## BUY SELL or TRADE

This is a new section of the newsletter and will also be added to the Museum webpage (if there is the option to do so, I will make this a members only access page of the Website). It's purpose is to give the Museum and members the opportunity to offer items they do not plan to use to other members. This page will not be included in copies of the Mail Pouch shared with other organizations.

If you have items you wish to get published in this section, please email the editor clear pictures of the item, a brief description and your asking price. Your name will be included in the listing, if you wish to have other information included such as contact info, please include that as well.



This is a very loose representation of the Rappahannock River Bridge in Fredericksburg. The name has been removed from the bridge structure. The track is supported with risers hidden by the bridge. The track is code 100 Atlas flextrack. The structures are a mix of kits from multiple manufacturers. The ground cover and ballast are Woodland scenics. This module has legs available. ASKING PRICE is simply Best Offer!



Left is the “Old Man of the Mountain” module and right is “The Holler” both are meant to represent vacation spots where folks can relax and enjoy nature. The track is code 100 Atlas flextrack. The structures are a mix of kits from multiple manufacturers. The ground cover and ballast are Woodland scenics. This modules DO have legs available. ASKING PRICE is simply Best Offer for each!

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# PHOTOS



*Top Left and Right: Flash Back May 16, 2016. B-60 being enjoyed after update.*

*Center Left and Right: We had a very quiet visitor, but really looked our displays Over.*

*Bottom Left: Sometimes we have visitors at night just passing thru. From our security camera, Thanks Justin. Yes, all cameras work. Inset Right: The Man of Steel has decided to make an appearance!*

*Bottom Right: on June 5,2010 we meet a NB VRE at MP 57. Unusual For Saturday. It was a crew training run for new contractor: Don, Larry and Stan on LYT, I took picture*



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# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Membership Application/Renewal Form

Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.  
Please type or print legibly

New                      Renewal                      if renewal Updated information    Y    N

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Membership(S) if Joining: \_\_\_\_\_  
Membership

Regular \$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_, can Vote, can hold office

Family \$1.00 each \_\_\_\_\_, cannot vote, cannot hold office.

Museum Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to the following address or hand in at meeting.

Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.  
11700 Main Street  
Fredericksburg, VA. 22408

I agree to be a member in good standing and follow safety rules of  
the Rappahannock Railroad Museum, Inc.  
Membership dues for January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# **JUNE MONTHLY MEETING AGENDA**

- Saturday June 6th Meet at our Museum Site 9:00am to 12:00pm for tours and train rides, construction and upgrades(weather permitting). Members continue to improve displays and area.
- Thursday June 11th **MUSEUM MONTHLY MEETING IN THE TAYLOR ANNEX.** Monthly meeting starting promptly at 7:00pm. Important discussion on Museum future activities.
- Saturday June 13th Meet at our Museum Site 9:00am to 12:00pm for tours and train rides, construction and upgrades(weather permitting). Members continue to improve displays and area.
- Saturday June 20th Meet at our Museum Site 9:00am to 12:00pm for tours and train rides, construction and upgrades(weather permitting). Members continue to improve displays and area.
- Saturday June 27th Meet at our Museum Site 9:00am to 12:00pm for tours and train rides, construction and upgrades(weather permitting). Members continue to improve displays and area.

Additional work days may be scheduled on an as needed basis.

**Middle of the year extreme weather and heat,**  
**Seeing the wonder on the faces of visitors can't be beat;**  
**The Museum has experienced a few set backs,**  
**But we move forward and keep it on the tracks.**

## **“Promoting Railway History and Preservation”**

**SUBMISSIONS NOTE:** Any items that you wish to have published in *The Mail Pouch* must be submitted as a complete package, articles must have all supporting images and diagrams at time of submission. Items to be published that are “borrowed from other publications” must have the proper credits noted to avoid copyright violations. Any items that you wish to have published in *The Mail Pouch* must be submitted to the Editor in electronic format (Text Files for articles and separate Digital Photos) prior to the **20th** of the proceeding month. Items not in an electronic format (items needing scans or typesetting) must be submitted prior to the **15th** of the proceeding month. Articles, Photos and other items may be submitted in person on Saturday mornings at the Museum, or electronically at [jkeehner67@hotmail.com](mailto:jkeehner67@hotmail.com), **subject line EDITOR.** *All items submitted after the deadlines of the month will be held for publication in the following months Newsletter.*