

LGB Convention Trip Report!!

By Katie Dokken

Photos by Katie Dokken, except as noted

This year's convention had a little bit of everything for everybody. Held in North Conway, located in the beautiful White Mountains of New Hampshire, full of many outlet shops, small homemade ice cream shops, little country stores, and quaint mom and pop eateries. There were many tours of local railroads, both during the day and at night, a boat trip, clinics on all sorts of topics, a visit to a local Toy Train Museum, and a modular layout in the Dealer Hall courtesy of the New Hampshire Garden Railway Society. There was even an optional side excursion to a local Garden Railway!!!



I drove into town the day before the convention started via the scenic Kancamagus Highway which crosses over the Kancamagus pass and parallels the Swift River for miles. I arrived at the convention hotel to find them putting in a wonderful garden railway in front of the hotel and another small display in the hotel lobby.



The White Mountain area was filled with many small towns, all seeming to include a homemade ice cream shop! And North Conway itself was filled from end to end with outlet shopping of every kind imaginable. There were also many

quaint small eateries in town that I took advantage of!! There were Moose crossing signs everywhere that everybody remarked on, especially given the fact that nobody could spot a moose during the entire trip!! We eventually concluded that the signs must have been put up to attract tourists. It worked!! After all, we were there!! The closest I came was dining out one night at the Muddy Moose Restaurant and Pub. An excellent meal but no moose.....

Early registration took place Sunday evening and then the Dealer Hall opened! And what a hall it was!! While perhaps not as large as some of the other conventions, it was nevertheless crammed with those red boxes (and some yellow ones!) that we all love. There were many excellent deals to be had and I walked out with several European boxcars to add to my collection.



Twila Frieders, Jonathan Meador (LGB of America), Johannes Richter (LGB), and Katie Dokken, Photo by Mike Frieders

During the first day of the convention I didn't take part in any of the organized tours opting instead to spend the day with my friends Mike and Twila Frieders exploring the area around North Conway. We visited many picturesque small towns, of course stopping for home made ice cream, and just spending a leisurely day. During the afternoon, we visited the Mount Washington Hotel which first opened in 1902. This spectacular hotel has been recently refurbished and stands out in the Mount Washington valley as a glistening white jewel.

That evening during the opening reception I met many wonderful people. Some were old friends; some I was meeting for the first time. Tons of wonderful hors d'oeuvres made the rounds of the foyer in front of the dealer hall and when the hall opened the "snacks" as they were billed, followed us in. For me the greatest delight was to see and meet people that I've only known by their "handles" on such Internet forums as the Big Trains listserv, and the LGB oriented Yahoo G Scalpers group. I also got a chance to meet Johannes Richter, Ron Gibson, Alan Hess, Jonathan Meador, Larry Cromwell, Bernie Brownstein, and Scot Osterweil, to name just a few. Our local club, the Washington, Virginia, and Maryland Garden Railway Society, was represented at the convention by Mike & Twila Frieders, Arnie & Ellen Hoffman, and myself, Katie Dokken.

The next day, the first tour I participated in was the "Boat meets the Train" tour starting off with the Hobo Ice Cream Train, better known as the Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad, where we received an LGB "bindle stick" and ate a wonderful (and incredibly fattening) sundae from Friendly's courtesy of LGB and watched the spectacular views of Lake Winnepesaukee (here we also met a young man working on the train by the name of Brett -- more on him later). Afterwards we boarded the MV Mount Washington boat for a 2 1/2 hour cruise of Lake Winnepesaukee and a buffet lunch. We received many compliments on our club shirts which we wore that day and posed for a group photo aboard the boat. That evening I sat in on Jonathan Meador's clinic, "Care & Feeding of Your LGB," back at the Hotel. Dedicated to maintenance and technical tips about those wonderful trains we all love, Jonathan was very informative, friendly, and answered all questions posed. He even gave out prizes!!



Jonathan Meador, LGB of America

Ellen and Arnie Hoffman, Katie Dokken, Twila and Mike Frieders, Photo by

The following day I boarded the Mount Washington Cog Railway where the tour demand was so high that we sold out all the 9:00am and 10:00am tours. The brakeman on our coach was Brett!! The young man from the Hobo train yesterday! We enjoyed a wonderful three hour round trip to the top of Mount Washington on the world's second steepest cog railway. After the Cog Trip we boarded buses to meet the Conway Scenic Railroad at the Crawford Notch Station. From there we enjoyed a wonderful 1 1/2 hour ride through the Crawford Notch Pass and on to the station at North Conway. From there, buses brought us the short distance back to the Hotel. That evening I visited the Hartmann's Toy Train Museum with a Pork and Spatzel "snack" that was really a wonderfully prepared full dinner. They had a hobby shop at the Museum and I took the opportunity to purchase a little 'something' for my layout. Also at the Museum were two outdoor 1 foot gauge trains. One passenger train and one freight train. Who was running these trains? None other than that energetic young man Brett!! Mr. Hartmann also provided the tour with a small music group playing a variety of tunes during the museum tour. During breaks in running the 1 foot trains, Brett, yes Brett! jumped up with the band and played banjo!! Is there anything this young man couldn't do? I was informed that he sings also!



Twila Frieders and Katie Dokken at the top of Mount Washington Photo by Mike Frieders



Twila Frieders, Katie Dokken, Ellen & Arnie Hoffman on the Conway Scenic Notch Train, Photo by Mike Frieders

This story couldn't go on with out mentioning the LGBMRRRC Anna Lee doll -- The infamous!! Just ask anybody who was at the convention about this doll and wait for the peals of laughter. I know it was Bob DiPietro's personal favorite as evidenced in his great delight in giving them away!!! The rest of us spent each nightly raffle praying that we wouldn't win one.....

Thursday was the final day of the convention. The morning started off with the annual membership meeting with free breakfast, which in and of itself was enough to get me there!! At the meeting we listened to various reports by the Board members, voted on a dues increase, the location of the 2003 convention (went to King of Prussia, PA), and listened to a short talk on the upcoming Atlanta convention next year. After the business meeting wrapped up the Dealer Hall opened for the last time. People were cleaning out the dealers like piranhas. I personally walked out with two RhB sliding wall cars. And lastly the day was topped of with a super banquet dinner, with incredibly rich deserts, and an oldies show complete with an Elvis impersonator with a Boston accent!! Alive and well and back from the Donut Shop (and apparently working as a Mailman in his "spare" time)!! Who could ask for more?

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The entire convention was well run, everything took place like clockwork, many kudos to Bob DiPietro for an excellent job!!!! There were many more tours and clinics offered that I didn't participate in to include what I heard was a wonderful dinner train excursion. Many an evening was spent toasting the days activities, comparing raffle wins, or those excellent deals in the Dealer Hall, up in Wylie's Pub, which was just a short trip upstairs from the convention area.

Look for upcoming in depth articles on both the Mount Washington Cog Railway and the Conway Scenic Railroad, just two of the highlights of this years convention!