



A Publication of the Railroad Model and Historical Society of Southeastern Ohio, Inc.

PO Box 1, Albany, Ohio, 45710

December 2015

### ***Upcoming Events:***

#### **December 12-13, 2015**

Railfair 2015  
Sat. 10am - 9pm  
Sun. 12pm - 5pm  
The Market on State,  
Athens, Ohio  
Admission: FREE  
Operating Layouts, Raffle

#### **January 2, 2016**

Snow Dogs Train Show  
Parma, Ohio  
Admission: \$6  
Operating Layouts, Buy/Sell/  
Trade, 150+ Dealer Tables, All  
Gauge Show

#### **January 12, 2016**

Club Meeting  
7:00pm  
Ohio State Highway Patrol Post  
13600 Della Drive, Athens  
Bring something for  
show and tell!

#### **January 16, 2016**

Winter Train Meet  
Parma, Ohio  
Admission: \$6  
Operating Layouts, Buy/Sell/  
Trade, New and Old Trains,  
Parts, Supplies, All Scales

#### **January 16-17, 2016**

Greenberg's Great Train Show  
Columbus, Ohio  
Admission: \$7  
Operating Layouts, Buy/Sell/  
Trade, New and Old Trains,  
Parts, Supplies, All Scales, Free  
Workshops and Clinics

#### **March 6, 2016**

Darke County Model RR Club  
Flea Market  
Greenville, Ohio  
Admission: \$4  
Swap Meet, Train Show and Sale,  
All Scales

## **35 Years of Railfair**

By Kirk DePeel

This year marks the club's 35<sup>th</sup> Railfair which is a remarkable achievement in itself. It will also mark my 25<sup>th</sup> show as a paid member. Looking back at my first show, I could never have imagined how much things would change. Back then I was the proud owner of a 2' x 4' HO module for the club layout. I remember fussing and detailing it to make it look as prototypical as I could. I was pretty proud of what I had done, and even named it Jason's crossing (after my son) like many other modelers had named theirs. Both the module and layout are but a distant memory.

Today I own a large N-scale layout and am part owner of a Lionel set up. Both layouts will be present at the show and both make my first module seem not as impressive. That's the nice thing about time; you get

better at things over the years. Currently the Lionel layout is set up at 80 N. Court Street for the Christmas holidays.

Preparing for the show has definitely changed. Back then we rented a truck and moved our layouts into the mall on the Friday of the show. After the show ended we moved them back out that night. I remember a couple of years not being done until after midnight. Now the mall provides us with a store so we can move in prior to the show and not have to move them out that night. It also provided us with a new tradition; to go out to eat after the show and enjoy each other's company.

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# 35 Years of Railfair

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Security was also not as big of a concern back then. I remember being at the mall until 2:30 in the morning, long after all the mall personnel were gone, getting ready for the show. As the maintenance guy was leaving, he wished us a good night and told us to use the back door when we left. I can only imagine what would be said if we asked to stay later than the mall is open.

Personally I'm older and ache more with each show. Moving stuff in, setting up, operating all weekend, then tearing

down, and moving the stuff out is a young man's game. When I started I was good the next day. Later I needed a full day after the show to recover. Now it takes longer until the aches and pain subside. Doing the show can be a real pain in the butt, especially when things go wrong.

What hasn't changed over the years is the pleasure our show brings to the people who are there. For some visitors this is there only exposure to model railroading for the entire

year. What better way to experience our show than with Santa, live music, and a giant Christmas tree. Trains and Christmas just naturally go together and bring out the joy in people. This is what keeps me going. The aches and pain will fade; but the happiness you bring to others never goes away. Thank God some things never do change. Railfair lives in the hearts of all those who show up for it.

## Don't Forget Your Raffle Tickets!

### Prizes

- **Wooden Train Set** complete with trains, track, and table
- **Lionel Train Set** complete with track, power supply, cars, and puffing engine
- **Complete HO Scale Train Layout**

### Ticket Prices

- 1 Ticket for \$1
- 7 Tickets for \$5
- 15 Tickets for \$10

Divide your tickets however you choose among the prizes!

# Where Have My “Ventilated” Reefer Cars Gone?

By Keith Morrow

Needless to say, I like history. As I begin this piece, I am reminded of a quote that was painted above the black board of my tenth grade world history classroom; “The roots of the present lie deep in the past and nothing in the past is dead to the man who would learn how the present comes to be what it is.” William Stubbs. Keep this quote in mind, because it ties all the rest of this article together.

A couple of years ago, I was visiting my daughter and son-in-law in Bellevue, Ohio when my daughter suggested that we go visit the Mad River & NKP Railroad Museum in Bellevue. We had tried to visit before, but every time I was there, they were closed.

We spent a great afternoon looking at the exhibits and the rolling stock in the museum’s rail yard. We came upon an old ventilated reefer car that had a

stairway up to the inside. We climbed inside, and on the walls there were some old black and white photos showing reefers with meat or produce stacked inside, but nothing to describe how it worked. I proceeded to explain to her how ice was dropped into the bunkers on the ends of the car

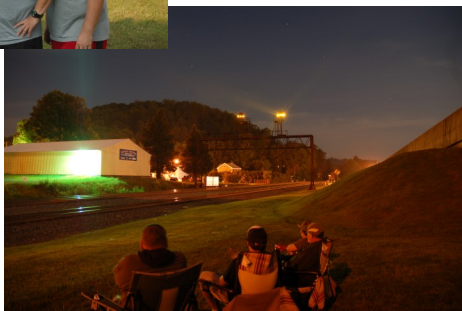


from hatches in the roof. Rock salt would be added with the ice to lower the temperature. The cold would move out through holes in the bunker to keep the food cold. There were tracks in the ceiling to hang meat hooks and sides of beef or hogs. Wooden pallets would be

put on the floor to allow the cold to circulate under the food crates. The walls were a good six inches thick and were insulated with cork blocks or sawdust. When I had finished, there was a small crowd of people around me, asking questions. Before I could get away, a lady with her son asked how long I had worked for the museum. I had to tell her I was just a visiting railroad geek who grew up in a railroad family.

On the way home, my daughter asked me how I knew so much about reefer cars. She knew I had a lot of railroad knowledge but I had never talked about reefer cars before.

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## Club Trip 2015

For the 2015 Club Trip, we went to Pennsylvania to visit Horseshoe Curve and the surrounding locations. The ex-Pennsylvania mainline across the Allegheny Mountains is now owned and operated by Norfolk Southern. The mainline, which had four tracks in the Pennsylvania era, now has three tracks. Norfolk Southern generally operates 60-80 trains in a 24 hour period with an additional two Amtrak trains and many more light engine moves.



# Where Have My “Ventilated” Reefer Cars Gone?

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I told her that I had personal experiences with reefer cars when I was younger.

In June of 1966, the summer I graduated from high school, I needed a job to pay for my first year of college (I think tuition was about \$500 back then), I took a job working for the City Ice and Fuel company at Albany, NY working in the ice plant. The ice plant produced 300+ lb blocks of ice. Ice was sold to bars and restaurants that used crushed ice, cubed ice in bags in vending machines, and by the block. Our biggest customer was the New York Central Railroad. The railroad used block ice to ice “ventilated” reefer cars. Ice was taken to the railroad yard in stake bed trucks covered with a tarp. A three hundred pound block of ice is about 42 inches high, 24 inches wide and about 12 inches deep. It is slid around on it’s end with a set of

ice tongs. That summer we would take truckloads of ice to the West Albany railroad yards and ice reefer cars. Ice would be pushed off the trucks onto a conveyor belt that took the ice up to a platform level with the top of reefer cars. Blocks of ice were transferred to the roof of the car on planks and dropped into the ice compartments at



each end of the cars. Rock salt was sprinkled in to lower the melting point of the ice, kind of like making iced cream in a hand crank iced cream maker. The roof hatches on the roof had a prop rod with notches that allowed the hatches to be kept open and allow some

airflow to move the cold through the car. As the ice melted the water would drip out the bottom of the car onto the tracks. It took between 9-11,000 pounds of ice to ice one reefer from scratch. Of course hopefully you didn’t have to start from scratch, but would be just topping off cars as they passed through the yards on their way to their final destinations.

Surprisingly ventilated reefers were the primary means of refrigeration until the early 1970’s when mechanical refrigeration cars started to become common. The last ventilated reefers were phased out in 1975.

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## Club Trip 2015

Other locations of interest in addition to Horseshoe Curve include (but are certainly not limited to) the Cassandra Overlook (upper right), the Cresson helper facility, the Gallitzin Tunnels (bottom left), the Altoona Amtrak Station, the Juniata Shops, and the signal bridges at Lilly and Summerhill. This is a great place to visit with lots of train traffic and terrific scenery. There’s even a hotel and a bed & breakfast that cater to railfans!

# Where Have My “Ventilated” Reefer Cars Gone?

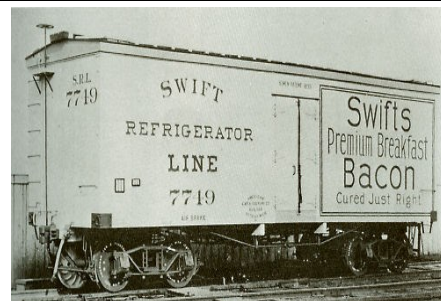
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Ice-bunker “ventilated” reefers had advantages over modern refrigeration in that there was nothing mechanical to break down. Temperature was adjusted by adding ice, and opening or closing hatches (ventilation) on the roof. The open hatches allowed for fresh air into the car. The disadvantages were it took a lot of ice and manpower to keep the ice. There were also numerous stops to keep the ice topped off which slowed down transportation. That summer there was a small railroad strike of train engineers and fireman. Reefer cars sat in the yards and had to be iced while going nowhere.

Since the beginning, railroads have been changing our lives with new technology. The reefer car is no exception. Before the reefer car was invented, meat, produce, beer, dairy and other perishable

foods had to be made and distributed locally. In 1851 the Northern Railroad (New York) began to experiment shipping perishable products in an insulated freight car called the “ice box on wheels.” It was only operated when it was cold outside to reduce the loss of cooling as it was only an insulated box. The same year, the Ogdensburg & Champlain RR began shipping dairy products using ice in box cars to maintain the cold. Different railroads experimented with adding ice bins to box cars with limited success.

In 1868, Swift & Co. hired Andrew Chase to design a ventilated reefer car with ice storage on top to ship meat. The idea was that the cold drained down to the bottom where meat was packed tightly to protect the cold. This enabled Swift to ship processed meats long distances.



Initially the idea of a reefer car was fought by those who had invested money in stock yards, pens, and stock cars, fearing local yards would no longer be needed. But eventually the reefer took hold as other uses came along.

Before pasteurization, beer would spoil if it wasn't kept cold. That meant that most towns had a small brewery to supply local demand. Anheuser-Busch saw potential to ship their suds great

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## Interested in Membership?

Interested in becoming a member? Join today! Membership dues are as follows:

- \$40 for a single membership for 1 year
- \$60 for a family membership for 1 year

Benefits of becoming a member:

- Voting
- Several great trips throughout the year
- Friends who share a common hobby

# Where Have My “Ventilated” Reefer Cars Gone?

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distances and compete in many markets. They invested in reefer cars, and successfully put many small breweries out of business and grew with the increase of market share.

Before practical reefer cars all fresh produce was grown locally. People’s diets changed with the seasons, or by eating dried or canned foods.

Although mechanical refrigeration was invented in the mid 1870’s it took until the 1950’s before 90 percent of American homes had a refrigerator to replace their ice boxes.

Although the ventilated reefer car has been gone from the railroad scene for 40 years, there are still a few examples sitting around the county side, mostly in railroad museums and scenic railroads. Driving by the Hocking Valley yard earlier this year I found two or three sitting on a siding.

Little did I realize in 1966 working in the ice plant that I was at the end of the ventilated reefer era. On my last visit

home, I drove by the old ice plant, and was shocked to see that it was gone. The building had been turned into apartments! Gone were the two giant compressors that used ammonia as a refrigerant. Gone were the large brine tanks where rows of ice canisters froze water into 300 lb blocks.

In the late 1960’s the railroad helped support three ice plants in the Albany, New York area. Today they are all gone. Gone also is the reefer icing platform in the railroad yard, and the workers that unloaded the ice trucks, and iced the railroad cars.

Today’s next generation reefer cars are larger and lighter than their predecessors. Union Pacific, who has 70 percent (5200 cars) of the US reefer fleet, has contracted with Thermo King to make a new “Smart” Reefer. This will be the first major redesign in 20 years. Cars will have modern lightweight, stainless steel bodies that are three feet higher and 22 feet longer. They will have a fiberglass skin, 5 inches

of urea foam insulation, and a vinyl interior that reduces mold and mildew. Cars will have a built-in conveyor system for loading and unloading that cuts trip preparation time to 20 minutes. Cars will have a 40% increase in capacity. They will carry a 500 gallon fuel oil tank, and satellite connection that will also give the railroad the capability to know the location and internal temperature of each car. Recent tests showed cars could maintain minus 20 degrees on an 80 degree day in West Texas. Cars also include fresh air exchange to allow for greater cargo flexibility and reduce contamination across produce lines. From ice age to space age, railroads continue to be on the cutting edge of technology.



## Our Mission

*To Teach...*

*Those who want to know more.*

*To Educate...*

*Those who want to learn the history.*

*To Promote...*

*The hobby with enthusiasm.*

*And to share and enjoy the pleasure of all that is Railroading.*



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Want to see them in a future edition of the Ironhead Gazette?

Send them to us!

Email: [jdawg9292@yahoo.com](mailto:jdawg9292@yahoo.com)

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Albany, Ohio 45710

Your contributions keep the Ironhead Gazette moving!

All Aboard!

**The Railroad Model and Historical Society of Southeastern Ohio, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 1 - Albany, Ohio 45710**

**Membership Application**

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

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

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

Telephone Number: Area Code:(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

**Application Date:**

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Type of Membership:**    Regular    Affiliate/Family

**Scales Modeled:** (please check all that apply) Z    TT    S  
N    O    Narrow Gauge    HO    G    On30    None

**Do You Have a Home Layout?**    Yes    No    Scale: \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you learn about The Railroad Model and Historical Society of Southeastern Ohio?**

Friend    Hobby Shop    Open house or show    Other Train shows  
Newspaper    Internet    Other

**I am interested in or would like to learn more about** (please check all that apply)

- Operating trains
- Modeling Structures
- Modeling Scenery
- Modeling locomotives and rolling stock
- Layout Topside Maintenance (Track work)
- Layout Electronics
- Collecting
- Historical
- Photography
- Other (Please indicate)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**I have previous experience in (please check all that apply)**

- Operating trains
  - Modeling Structures
  - Modeling Scenery
  - Modeling locomotives and rolling stock
  - Layout Topside Maintenance (Track work)
  - Layout Electronics
  - Collecting
  - Historical
  - Photography
  - Other (Please indicate)
- 
- 

**I have the following *skills or capabilities* that I could offer to the club:**

- Food Preparation
  - Photography
  - Carpentry
  - Painting
  - Publicity and Promotion
  - Fund Raising
  - Librarian/Archive Maintenance
  - Setup, Tear Down, and Cleaning for Shows and Open Houses
  - Display Layout Operation and Hospitality
  - Website Design or Content Management
  - Other (Please Explain)
- 
- 

Thanks for completing this application. Please submit this form along with dues to the Club Treasurer or mail it to:

**The Railroad Model and Historical Society of Southeastern Ohio, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1 - Albany, Ohio 45710**