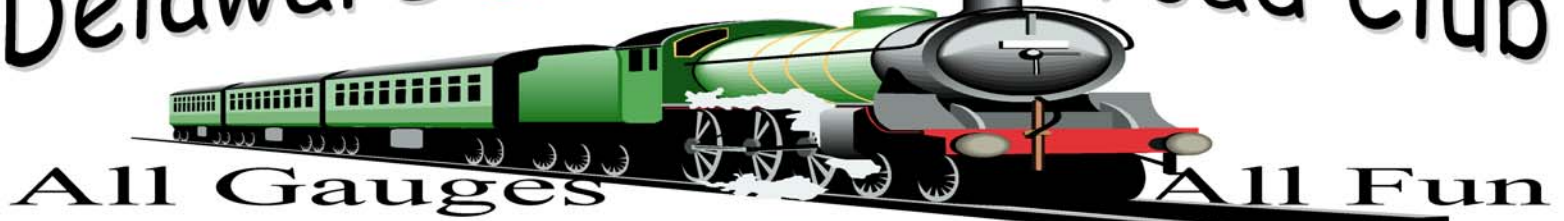


# Delaware SeaSide Railroad Club



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## Fire Destroys Most of Club's Property

Anyone who is on our E-mail list, or who might have attended the meeting on May 10th, will have already heard about the terrible fire and the extent to which our club was devastated by the accident. While the official reports are still to be filed, I was in attendance when two independent investigators and the State Fire Marshall determined that the cause of the fire is "Undetermined". A separate investigation into the problem with the building's fire suppression (sprinkler) system is still open.

To summarize the impact of the loss in terms of dollars is quite difficult, especially when you consider that certain items, such as the Marx Store Display layout from 1958, are irreplaceable. I have so far priced the equipment lost at over \$32,000 including some equipment owned by various club members. We currently have no expectation of a claim from any insurance. Our club was only carrying liability coverage, and the building owner had no coverage for content damage as far as we know at this time.

**\*\* Note: Next Meeting is Wednesday, June 15th \*\***

Your board has been working hard to begin the rebuilding effort by focusing on the upcoming Train Show on June 18th at Rehoboth Convention Center. We ask for your support both by coming to the show and also in offering to help if you can.

Also, we are pleased to announce a very generous donation of trains, track, lumber and Department 56 buildings by Mrs. Rose Bell of Dover, Delaware. The number of items includes MTH, RailKing and K-line as well as Lionel rolling stock. The Dept. 56, Lemax and other buildings and accessories alone would retail at over \$6,000! As of this writing, we intend to finish the removal of the layout, and pick up the last of the boxes of material in this wonderful donation. Mrs. Bell, who lost her husband John to cancer in 2010, had been concerned for some time over what to do with the trains. A plumbing emergency, which damaged some of the basement where the trains were, forced her into action, and news of our losses with the fire prompted her to reach out to our club to make this generous donation possible. What is it they say about silver linings behind every cloud?



I believe these pictures speak for themselves.



**\*\* Note: Next Meeting is Wednesday, June 15th \*\***



## Club News

The club met on May 10th, with possibly the largest attendance ever, and although the major topic of the evening was the fire at the Georgetown Train Station, the members present respectfully waited until other important club business was handled before we briefed them on the biggest issue.

We discussed the upcoming Train Show and many members signed up to help, and although we have far fewer dealers tables sold than is normal, we are hoping that all the press coverage we have had recently will help us achieve a good showing in attendance. We have confirmed our contract for the June show.

Miles Potter reported on our membership status, and we also discussed the Roxanna Show in September, including the fact that we will bring just our O gauge modular layout for display at that show.

We also discussed the possibility of taking over a building with an impressive HO layout and moving it here from its Ft. Worth Texas location. The members felt we should pursue this, and later discussions with the Historic Georgetown Association suggested we might be able to find suitable space on HGA leased land near the Train Station. The estate of the gentleman who owned the building and built the train display was also endowed with some funds to facilitate the move, but it is unclear whether the sum available would be sufficient.

We discussed the upcoming Felton Heritage Day event where we were asked to display, and signed up some members to help with this also.

John Hodges gave a brief summary, but asked Dr. David Lawrence and Miles Potter to share their experience as first hand observers of the fire on May 7th. After this, Dr. Lawrence gave a very thorough photo presentation of the damage as recorded by Bill Ziegler on the day, and contrasted that with pictures of how the room looked before the fire, as he had taken several photos on the day, recording the progress on the build programs for both the HO and O gauge layouts. His cameras were recovered by the Fire Marshall on the day of the blaze, and although the cameras were destroyed, the memory cards survived and afforded us excellent documentation on what was present in the building.

We also shared one small success story. Bob Hodges reached under some insulation and retrieved the K-Line Pennsy K-4 locomotive and tender, dirty but cosmetically unharmed. The headlight even worked!

## Calendar of Events

**Please Note: Meeting date is Wednesday, not Tuesday**  
**June 15 7 pm- Meeting, South Coastal Library**  
**June 17, 1 pm- Set up time at Rehoboth Conv. Center**  
**June 18, 10 am-4 pm, DSRC Train Show**  
**July 12, 6 pm til 8 pm Picnic at Bob and Kathy Hodges'**

### Sifting Through the Aftermath of a Fire

Going through the Georgetown Train Station on May 13th was an experience I will never forget.

Fire often creates total destruction, and in our case, there was little that escaped the flames. We never found the slightest evidence of the Norfolk Western J-Class steam engine and 7 passenger cars. Same was true of the B & O EA diesel set and its cars. We looked for some signs of survival where we had stored a NAPA O Gauge train set by Lionel, and found only a melted plastic locomotive shell in its familiar blue and yellow paint scheme. Bob Hodges found the plastic bin we used to store some items which are removed from dioramas when we pack up the O gauge modular layout. Not much from that bin survived, but some recognizable items were returned to their owners, and at the bottom of that bin he found the Lionel Mikado Steam Engine, intact, and after some minor repairs and one driver board for the motor, it is in 100% serviceable condition! We were not allowed to venture into the S gauge layout area much, due to ongoing cause and origin inquiries at that time. We then discovered what amounted to a treasure trove when we looked under the small plastic table near the entrance door. First, my own box of five Dept.56 buildings was undamaged except for their outer boxes. Then, also under the table, a Thomas The Tank Engine O Gauge set (Lionel) was found, and although the external shipping box was water damaged, the plastic sleeve covering the interior picture box and the trains inside were in perfect shape. Also, the S gauge NY Central train set was recovered, even though the box is slightly scorched. On my last visit I found, in the back of our display case, one K-Line Baggage/Combine car from the adopted Broadway Limited train set. So, even though just these few things remained, we can certainly use them to help us begin again, and continue the excellent service our club has provided the local community for 7 years.