



# Turntable TIMES

The Official Newsletter of the  
Roanoke Chapter, National  
Railway Historical Society, Inc.

Volume 33, Number 4

April 2001



## Coming soon:

Virginian locomotive No. 800 explodes at Stewartsville, killing crew of three. A 60th anniversary remembrance.



# Turntable TIMES

**Volume 33, Number 4  
April 2001**

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Turntable Times is published monthly as the newsletter of the Roanoke Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc. Opinions and points of view expressed herein are those of the staff members of the Turntable Times and not necessarily reflect those of the members, officers or directors of the Chapter.

## *Meeting Notice*

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next general meeting on Thursday, April 19, 2001 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke. Our program will be a video tape provided by Joe Austin.

Our May program will be a slide presentation by Carl Jensen on our "Independence Limited International" from 1980. This was our most ambitious IL ever and is an interesting story.

## *From The Head End*

### **Cards and Flowers**

If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, lost a loved one or has a new birth in the family, please contact Bonnie Molinary. Bonnie is responsible for Chapter cards and flowers and can be reached at 362-0273.

### **Deadline for Turntable Times**

The deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Wednesday, April 18, 2001. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

### **Material For Turntable Times**

We are always in need of articles, photos or news items for the Turntable Times. Due to copyright restrictions, we cannot reprint articles from many newspapers; a condensed or rewritten article crediting the source is acceptable.

## *Cover Photo*

Roanoke Street Railway No. 1 "Leila" an 0-4-2 steam dummy with car No. 1. This may be the initial test run of Leila. The Roanoke Times dubbed "the union of Roanoke and Vinton...one of the most important events in the history of the two cities..." by the steam dummy line. Leila was one of two for the Railway that were built by Baldwin in June 1889 c/n 10024 and 10025. The featured 33 inch drivers and 9 x 12" cylinders. Alas, they would have short lives as electric cars replaced them after mid 1893. K. L. Miller Collection

## Ninth Street Facility News

by Brian Crosier

Trackwork has continued at Ninth street with the addition of a track bumper acquired in trade from Moore's for a set of wheel stops. The number two track is within twenty feet of completion on the east end of the yard. We have applied ballast though a portion of the new turnout and begun leveling and straightening. Plans are being made with warmer weather around the corner. Norfolk and Western GP30 522 will be the first on the warm weather projects with the completion of its paint job. After that, the Chapter's Norfolk and Western caboose will be repainted, then the green M of W boxcar, then a surprise project.

## Mixed Freight - April

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

You readers don't need me to tell you that we are living in an increasingly noisy, make that annoyingly noisy world. Beepers, cell phones and other noisy gadgets are everywhere. Some folks have reached their personal plateau for these sounds and are demanding quiet zones and or quiet times. A select group of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor trains now have quiet cars between Washington D.C. and New York City. The quiet cars entered service on February 1st and they prohibit the use of noisy laptops, beepers, cell phones and loud conversations.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation Railroad Division has a four page railroad directory of that states railroad network. It focuses on the shortlines. Two pages are a map. The map is by no



Both: Brian Crosier  
Trackwork proceeds at Ninth Street Maintenance Facility.

means as detailed as the one issued for Virginia. This directory is offered free to the public. Write to: NCDOT Railroad Division, 1553 Mail Service Centre, Raleigh, N.C., 27699.

Some of you might have been surprised that nothing was mentioned in my last column concerning the passing of Mr. O. Winston Link and the fire that did serious damage to the former Virginian Railway passenger depot in Roanoke. At the time I was pretty much at a loss for words. For me personally the loss of Mr. Link also meant a failure to me for a goal I wished to achieve. That failure was to get Mr. Link's autograph on my personal copy of his last book "The Last Steam Railroad in America."

Along with having him autograph my personal copy of his book "Steam Steel And Stars" many years ago, I enjoyed my conversation with him. His dry wit sense of humor was a real treat.

Like some of you, the Virginian Railway depot often formed the perfect backdrop for photos I took of Norfolk and Western Railway trains back in the 70's and early 80's. When I spent this past Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend in Roanoke, ironically I took some time just to look at the station and just think about what the activity was like at the station back when it was in business for it's intended use. Little did I know what fate would occur to the elderly structure within a few weeks. To add to this, if it had not been for the Union Pacific SD70M with wings on the point of an east-bound NS coal train waiting to move out, I would not have had my last moment with the station that I did.

A personal note here. During the past few issues of The Turntable Times, the editor has been asking for someone to step forward and report on Roanoke's railroad scene. It's really strange to me. I railfan Roanoke 3 to 5 times a year usually. Seldom do I see fellow fans out and about at trackside in and around Roanoke. There is still a lot of train action going on to make for a good day or night for pursuing the hobby. In the past I have asked local Roanoke fans about time they spend trackside and most said they spend very little time trackside in Roanoke. Family, careers and general lack of enthusiasm were cited for not spending much time trackside.

## Deadly Snow!

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Lynchburg, Va., police held up Norfolk Southern operations in the city Wednesday evening, March 7 when an officer drove under a stopped train on Campbell Ave. and was "dripped on" by a mystery liquid. The officer noticed a large, wet patch on the roadway. Because it was a train everyone freaked out and thought it was a hazardous material spill.

The police blocked the road, called NS to stop all trains, and brought in the fire department Haz-Mat team. The fire department would not take the railroads word that all was OK with the car. Even after NS clerks showed up with the computer list of the train and its loads, they were not convinced. So the Haz-Mat team had to approach the drip with airpicks on and test the liquid with some type of litmus paper to determine its chemical content.

This went on for over 90 minutes stopping hot piggyback train No. 204 for 30 minutes. Finally after checking the "spill" the fire department was convinced all was OK and let the NS and city return to normal.

The culprit was an empty box car—complete with side door open—with 8 inches of clearly visible snow on the roof melting in the warm temperatures!

(From March, 2001 Lynchburg Chapter newsletter, Blue Ridge Dispatcher).

## Allisonia Station Revisited

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by Ray Myers

The March 1996 issue of Turntable Times carried a picture and an article on how the station was being operated when I visited there on November 11, 1949.

Allisonia Station in September 1999....The Pulaski branch to Galax/Fries had long since been removed with the right of way turned into a nature trail. The station had been bought by a private party and turned 90 degrees to the nearby former tracks. The station has been made into an overnight accommodation for hikers. The waiting room is now sleeping quarters while the ticket/telegraph office is a kitchenette. The owner has retained the freight room as a private workshop. The trail crosses the former railroad bridge over the New River at nearby Hiwassee where posts prohibit the entrance of vehicles.

History Preserved....The owner was interested in the buildings history and had found several pictures of my dad (who was the agent/operator in 1949) but with my name on them. The owner now displays larger pictures of the 1949 era which includes: The timetable for trains 48/49, a Norfolk and Western route map, a picture of a freight train passing the station and a picture of my dad in front of the station.

The owner of the station when I visited in September, 1999 was: Don Holt, HC02 Box 15B, Allisonia, Va. 24347. E-mail: newriver@usit.net and fax phone, 540-980-2051.

## **Railroading History**

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Shortline railroading abounds in North Carolina; surviving among the larger Corporate Owned Railroads. Here is a sampling: The Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad was incorporated in 1892 and opened from Aberdeen to Raeford in 1898 and then to Fayetteville in 1912. It is the only shortline still operated by the family of its original

founders.

The Atlantic & Western Railway was opened from Sanford to Broadway in 1905 and extended to Lillington in 1913. All but three miles were abandoned in 1961 and is currently operated by a Florida-based company.

The Alexander Railroad came to life, taking over operations of a former Southern Railway branch from Statesville to Taylorsville in 1945. This line still uses cast iron whistle posts for its grade crossings. (Turntable Times Editor's Note: The Roanoke Chapter had an outing on the Alexander Railroad back in the late 1970's).

The oldest terminal switching line in operation in NC is the Cape Fear Railways, beginning its career as a street car line from Fayetteville to nearby Fort Bragg in the early 1920's. In 1930 it assumed operational control of all US Government track- age with Fort Bragg boundaries. The line to Fayetteville is abandoned, but the railroad still operates on base. An unusual operating shortline actually does "double duty" as both freight and passenger carrier. A former Southern Railway line from Dillsboro to Murphy had been purchased by the State. In 1988 the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad was formed to operate the line between Dillsboro and Murphy to carry freight from online customers to the interchange with NS at Sylva. The portion from Andrews to Murphy, while intact, is no longer in service. The Chesapeake & Albemarle Railroad established in 1990 to operate the former Norfolk Southern line from Edenton and Tidewater, VA was recently purchased by the North Carolina & Virginia Railroad, which was established in 1987, operating between Ahoskie and

Boykins, VA on former CSX trackage.

(Above from The Company Mail, Spencer Chapter, NRHS, January, 2001).

## Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

The city of Hamlet North Carolina needs your help. The railroad station built in 1900 for the Seaboard Air Line Railroad is in desperate need of repairs. CSX and the city of Hamlet have agreed that the best way to "Save Our Station" is to move the building from the northwest quadrant to the southwest quadrant of the east-west tracks around the station. This move will alleviate safety concerns, move the building off CSX property and place it on property owned by the city. The move and renovations to the building will be expensive, but worth the preservation of one of the last wood framed stations in use in North Carolina. If you would like to help your tax-deductible contribution can be made to the "Save Our Station Fund," c/o City of Hamlet, PO Box 1398, Hamlet, NC 28345. (From Company Mail, Spencer Chapter, January, 2001).

And Railways to Yesterday, operators of the Shade Gap Trolley Museum in Rockhill Furnace, PA, have announced a major track extension project for 2001. The project will involve 2,900 feet of track, poles, wire, drains, ditching and a switch for a pocket track at the end. When built, the museum's total length of track will be about two miles. The total cost is estimated to be \$140,000, and the museum is soliciting donations, which are tax deductible, payable to and mailed to "Railways to Yesterday Inc.," PO Box 1601, Allentown, PA

18105. The museum also maintains an excellent working relationship with the adjacent East Broad Top Railroad, helping with track projects along the EBT as well as painting and sprucing up several pieces of EBT equipment in recent months. (From Harrisburg Rail Review, Harrisburg Chapter, February, 2001).

Pullman Porter Unveils Historical Registry

The A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum in collaboration with Amtrak, unveiled the Historic National Registry for African American railroad employees, at Chicago's Union Station. The idea for the registry was originally intended to document surviving members of the once renowned Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union, the first African American labor union chartered in the United States. Surviving members of the now defunct union would be documented, or their descendants would register their relative. The legendary Pullman Porters symbolized the golden age of rail transportation as its ambassadors of hospitality. These men also influenced and created social changes in American History. "We thought it would be great to have a sort of repository, or listing of every man who had ever worked as a Pullman Porter," says Lyn Hughes, museum founder. "Since the museum opened in 1995 we began receiving calls and letters from people all over the country indicating that they had a relative who worked as a Pullman Porter or for the railroad in other capacities. Because of those inquiries the decision was made to develop a national register and include all African Americans who worked for the railroad from 1863 to 1963." The official unveiling of the registry

was slated to take place on February 23. Amtrak is providing computers and people support to register surviving union members or their descendants who desire to register; Pullman Porters, dining car waiters, and other railroad employees. The names entered on the registry will become part of history and will be honored and preserved. The A. Philip Randolph Museum plans to use the names in a Commemorative Exhibit to be displayed at the museum. (Midwestern Rail Scene Report, April, 2001).

### Rail Days at Spencer

The North Carolina Transportation Museum at Spencer will hold its Rail Days on April 28th and 29th from 9 am. until 5 pm. both days.

As part of the 14th annual Rail Days, which includes train rides, family activities, model train show and musical entertainment, the NCTM is offering a special afternoon on April 28th to remember the 28 year success of the "Glory Days" of the

Southern Railway / Norfolk Southern Steam Excursions.

Afternoon activities on the 28th starting at 3 pm. and ending at 5 pm. include: A book signing for the new book "Steam's Camelot: Southern and Norfolk Southern Excursions in Color" by Jim Wrinn; and appearances and remembrances with the people who ran, managed and repaired the locomotives. Expected to be on hand that afternoon is Jim Bistline, Carl Jensen, Bill Purdie, and many others from the shop and operating crews.

A festive BBQ dinner will be held on site at the Museum at 5:30 pm. following the above mentioned activity at a cost of \$10 per person. Barbecue tickets must be purchased in advance by April 20, 2001 and can be purchased by credit card over the phone at 704-636-2889 or 1-877-NCTMFUN. See the order form provided below.

Tickets for the Rail Days are \$7 per person (6 and under free) - sold on the day of the event. For more information call 1-704-636-2889.

**Barbecue tickets must be purchased in advance by April 20, 2001**

***Tickets can be purchased by credit card over the phone 704 -636-2889 or 1-877-NCTMFUN***

Name: _____		BBQ RESERVATION FORM only		(copies of this form accepted)	
Address: _____		Sign up for:	Price Each	Total Price	<b>Saturday, April 28, 2001</b>
Daytime Phone: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Qty - Dinners	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>BBQ to be held at 5:30pm in the Roundhouse</b>
Method of Payment		Dinner includes:			Mail Completed form to:
<input type="checkbox"/> Check	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	Mesquite Chicken & Chopped BBQ			NCTMF
<input type="checkbox"/> Discover Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Master Card	Cole Slaw, Baked Beans, Roll, Dessert, and Tea			Attn: Rail Days BBQ
<input type="checkbox"/> American Express					PO Box 44
Credit Card # _____	Exp. date _____	No Refunds or Rainchecks			Spencer, NC 28159
Signature _____		BBQ Ticket price does not include Rail Days			

## **Chapter Outing**

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As proposed at the March meeting, the Chapter will be sponsoring a bus trip to the Strasburg Railroad, Pennsylvania State Railroad Museum, overnight at Lancaster, Pennsylvania and bus the next morning to the B&O Museum in Baltimore.

This should be a great outing. We need good participation from the members to make this a success. Come to the April meeting and sign up!

## **Banquet Report**

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Our March 31 banquet at Hotel Roanoke attracted 59 members and guests who enjoyed an excellent dinner, buffet style and a great presentation by John Hildebrand on the Valley and Shenandoah Valley Railroads in the Valley of Virginia.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

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April 19, 2001

General Meeting, 7:30 pm

May 1, 2001

Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

May 17, 2001

Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

June 5, 2001

Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

June 21, 2001

Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

## **Chapter Outing**

July 28-29, 2001, Strasburg and more!

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