



Turntable TIMES

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

Volume 37, Number 3
March 2005





Turntable TIMES

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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 regular meeting on Thursday, March 17, 2005 at 7:30 pm.

Please be sure to note our weather cancellation policy below., please note, this policy also applies to Board Meetings.

Our March program will be 1986 Vancouver SteamExpo by Pentrex. Over 20 operating steam locomotives in one location. Featuring a Grand Parade of Steam. The presentation lasts 90 minutes. There is also bonus footage of SP 4449 Steaming from Portland to Hollywood.

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 Friday, March 18, 2005. Please send articles, information and exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA 24078-2128.

Meeting Cancellation Policy

Any Chapter meeting will be considered cancelled if any of the following conditions are due to weather: Roanoke City Schools are closed on the day of or for the day after the meeting, or Virginia Western night classes are cancelled for the night of a meeting.

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 most newspapers; a condensed rewritten article crediting the source, however, is acceptable.

Cover Photo

Train No. 14, an unnamed Bristol-Roanoke local is making its way through the snow near Glenvar this Monday morning, January 8, 1940. At the headend is a deadheading coach, probably returning to Roanoke after carrying sectionmen back to Bristol the previous night on No. 13. N&W Photo/K.L. Miller Collection

Small Rails-March

by Dave Meashey

I visited the Roanoke Valley Model Engineers at their Crossroads Mall location Between Christmas and New Year's Day. The club now has multiple layouts. There are two HO layouts. The original HO layout can run trains in analog mode or as a DCC (Digital Command Control) layout. The new HO layout is DCC only.

The club also has an N scale layout under construction. An O gauge three-rail layout is on prominent display through the storefront window. The club's brochure indicates that they would also like to have a large scale following within their ranks. Given the size of indoor large scale layouts, I'm not sure where the club would have room for one within their present floor space. I'm sure something could be done to accommodate large scale enthusiasts if enough interest were there.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators have not been able to hold their reorganization meeting, due to bad weather blowing into the valley every time we try to schedule the meeting. We have decided to wait until early April to try again. This time the meeting will be at my house. The club may emerge with a new name. That is kind of hard for me to accept, since I came up with the original name. Still, I'd rather see the organization prosper than have my ego enhanced. If the old name is keeping some people from participating, then it is better to change the name.

Mixed Freight - March

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Years ago, the Federal Railroad Administration mandated that all locomotives that are to be on the point of any train operating in the U.S. be equipped with operating

ditch lights that are to be activated when the train approaches a public or private railroad crossing. This was of course meant to heighten the moving train's visibility and perhaps to make motorists more cautious about driving across the track or tracks with two lights flashing at them at eye level. Now the F.R.A. wants the visibility of freight cars enhanced at night at grade crossings via white or yellow reflectors attached to the sides of the cars. This measure includes locomotives too. This rule will become effective March 4th, 2005 requiring the railroads to have the reflectors installed on locomotives within two years and on freight cars within 10 years. I assume private car owners will have to comply likewise.

On Saturday January 29th I journey northward towards the western part of Fredericksburg to attend a quarterly meeting of the just getting organized Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad Historical Society. It has been a loose not quite organized group of about 30 individuals for a few years. On the 29th bylaws were drafted and some basic goals and ideas for the organizations being and purpose were discussed. Right now, we will meet 4 times yearly at some location along the former RF&P. I will report on our progress and on how the general public may board the membership.

Since I don't have much to report on as far as today's railroading is concerned, I'll report on a few events I participated in back in the fall. RAILFEST 2004 was held in Altoona the first weekend of October. It was not nearly as much fun as it was in previous years. The popular excursions to Gallitzin with Horseshoe Curve being the main feature of the excursions were cancelled. Norfolk Southern claimed that freight traffic would have been delayed by the 3 to 4 excursion runs per day. I and a few other fans whom

are quite familiar with the freight traffic for the area and during that particular time of year were puzzled. There were less freight trains running compared to the same time of year in the past.

The beautiful Pennsy E8s that normally powered the excursions were parked with a few passenger cars on the property of The Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum. PRR No. 5711 was open to the public, well at least it's cab was. Until I climbed into it's cab and sat on the throne and blew the standard grade crossing warning, no one else had. From then on, 5711's air horn could be heard for the remainder of the weekend all over downtown Altoona.

Since the mainline excursions had been cancelled, shorter excursions were offered on the shortline Nittany & Bald Eagle Railroad out of the little town of Tyrone, PA 14 miles north of Altoona. I rode the 2 p.m. run.

There were bigger and better model railroad flea market and railroaders event happening within the concourse of the small mall adjacent to The A.R.M.M.

That Saturday night I attended and presented slides for a railfan get together at Cassandra, PA. This 3rd annual event took place at the volunteer fire department with the former Pennsy Harrisburg to Pittsburgh high iron a little over 100 feet away. It was an enjoyable evening of Conrail videos, railroad artifacts, slides of railroading back in the day, food and general railfan camaraderie.

The following weekend found me back in the Keystone State for The East Broad Top's annual Autumn Spectacular Weekend. This event too was not nearly as much fun as it has been in the past due to the fact that only one steam locomotive is up and running, No. 14. The staff and management of the E.B.T. had hoped to have a second

steamer in operation for the 2004 Autumn Spectacular. With limited resources, they are doing the best they can and most of us understand and respect the railroad for what they are able to accomplish. The highlight for me that Sunday was a personal invitation from Mr. Joseph Kovalchick to ride the M-1 self propelled vehicle.

As always, there was a good turnout of people. The sun was in and out most of the day and this was the first time in a long time where a long sleeve flannel shirt was more comfortable than a short sleeve tee shirt.

Gift Shop

by Ken Miller and Bill Arnold

On February 23, 2005 an era ended for the Roanoke Chapter NRHS. With the close of business on that day, our gift shop operation at the Virginia Museum of Transportation was no more. A lot of folks have never understood the relationship between the VMT and the Roanoke Chapter, and this change has been no exception.

Last September, Chapter members listened to a recommendation from the Board of Directors to end the Chapter's contract to operate the Gift Shop within the Virginia Museum of Transportation. After several months of attempting to smooth out a rift between the two organizations, the Souvenir Committee recommended that the agreement be terminated. This recommendation was not taken lightly by the Board and after much deliberation, agreed to recommend this to the membership. After outlining the problems, the membership approved the recommendation without a single opposing vote.

We submitted our letter of intent the next day, giving our six month notice which carried us through February 23, 2005. While this is a regrettable situation, it was felt that

was our only option. The Chapter were severing a relationship with the transportation museum that goes back to its very beginnings as an independent operation in 1976 at Wasena Park.

Many people in the community, railfans and otherwise, thought the transportation museum WAS the Chapter's operation. That was far from the truth. The transportation museum was established from a Roanoke City park operation taken over by a non-profit organization in 1976. The Chapter was closely involved in the formation of the non-profit group and quite instrumental in many of the Museum's successes. Our representatives on the Museum Board worked hard and Chapter operations focused on both the Museum and our equipment. Volunteers were plentiful and members worked long and hard hours to benefit both organizations.

With our experience of operating souvenir sales on excursion trips, it was a natural transition for the Chapter to operate a gift shop operation at what was then called the Roanoke Transportation Museum. The Museum benefited from revenues from sales, and perhaps more importantly, the knowledgeable and willing volunteer workforce that had a lot of enthusiasm. The gift shop was an adjunct to our regular souvenir operations through the end of the excursion train era in 1994, when the gift shop became our sole source of regular income.

Now some people may disagree, but the operation was profitable for the Chapter, for one reason only, it was strictly all volunteers that managed, staffed and supplied the shop. With even a single paid employee, profits would have been miniscule, if not non-existent. A number of folks have been quite instrumental in the on-going success of the shop, Dorothy and Floyd Kelch, Alice Powers, Nellie Brock, Grace and Dave

Helmer, Bill and Ellen Arnold, Joe Austin as well as many, many others. In fact, virtually every Chapter member has had some involvement in the gift shop over time. We could easily fill the rest of the newsletter with the names of those participating, but time and space does not permit that and as soon as I make a list, accidentally someone will be left off.

Perhaps most importantly, the gift shop provided activity and a home base for almost every Chapter member. The volunteers were the heart and sole of the operations and provided a friendly, knowledgeable face for the public. Visitors could come in, talk trains, get information and learn more about the railroad and Roanoke area.

The Chapter went through good times with the Museum, from the 1970s and very early 1980s into the Nancy McBride era, the flood of 1985, and movement to Norfolk Avenue location. Tension began to arise at the new location, the Chapter continued operation of our gift shop in coach 1205 while the Museum simultaneously ran a shop inside the building. In late 1988, after much negotiation, VMT agreed to close their shop and have the Chapter take over and move its operation inside the Museum.

Chapter volunteers had been encouraged during the winter and spring of 2002-03 when a number of Chapter volunteers worked hard with the Museum's Chris McBride to bring the N&W 1218 back to the Museum in fine shape. When the big locomotive came back to VMT in June, a very fine event ensued and our volunteers were welcomed.

With the beginning of 2004, a new executive director was hired at VMT and it appeared that rail interest would not continue to be a major focus as it had been in the past. The museum was changing and not in a way many of our members felt was for the

best. After many years of Chapter representation on the Museum Board of Directors, we ceased to be represented on the 42-member board after Bill Arnold's retirement from their Board in June 2004.

Although our Gift Shop coordinators were always on the lookout for new volunteers, the shop was always manned by loyal informed, sales oriented Chapter members as needed to continue our presence. These countless hours also included shop management and purchasing.

At the conclusion of the contract, VMT was obligated to purchase the remaining inventory from the shop. Per the contract, we were required to carry a minimum retail value of \$30,000. The Museum's representative suggested an inventory reduction sale by reducing prices on all stock (short of Link merchandise) by 1/3rd. With the beginning of the sale, the Chapter was no longer obligated to pay the Museum the 20% of the gross sales commission. The sale allowed the Chapter to provide income as well as help the Museum reduce the amount due the Chapter at the end of the Contract.

Difficult is hardly the word to describe the last eight months for our Gift Shop volunteers as well as the Chapter Board. It has been a time of many hurt feelings and strong emotions. Hopefully, that time has now passed; the Chapter has to move forward from here. Our involvement and love of the 611, 1218 and company has not gone away and our lack of presence will leave a void for all concerned. Our efforts need to be focused on new Chapter projects and efforts. Our relationship with the O. Winston Link Museum continues to be strong and will continue. Perhaps the day will come when our knowledge, expertise and volunteers will be welcomed once again at VMT. For now, we need to be focused on making a new home for our organization.

Mechanical Department

Thanks to each of the members whom I came down for the February work session on Feb. 19. It was a very big success in cleaning up debris and organizing materials that had accumulated on the eastern half of the railyard. We actually had three different projects going on during the day since there was a fairly good turnout. Thanks to S.R. Winegard, Bill Mason and Brian Crosier for cleanup crew, Eddie Mooneyham and Rick Rader for their progress on rust repair to the sidesheets of the Chapters N&W caboose, and to Ellen and Bill Arnold, and Ken Miller for their work on organizing some Gift shop materials.

With the recent arrival of donated switch ties from Koppers in Salem, much needed maintenance will soon be made to the switches leading into each of our spurs.

The March work session will continue with some cleanup and will progress into the completion of track three. This track needs approximately 70 ties to be gauged and spiked, and 12 ties still need to be inserted to complete this track. After this, the track will be ready to have ballast tamped and then will be ready for service. If you have time available on a day other than Saturday March 19, please let Bill Mason or Brian Crosier know.

Website

For those who have not visited the Chapter's website (for now) in recent times, a visit is in order. After a long period of being unable to make any changes due to various computer problems, the site is now being updated on a regular basis. The newest issue of Turntable Times will generally appear a week to ten days before the meeting date depending on time and avail-

ability in PDF format. For those not of the computer generation, the PDF stands for "Portable Document Format" a development of the Adobe Corporation. This makes a document that can be viewed on virtually any computer with the free Adobe Acrobat viewer (download at adobe.com) that appears almost identically to the printed version. The biggest difference will be the photographic coverage, the photos will not appear as sharp and crisp as they print due to the limitations of the web. There are also other news and informational pieces on the site as well as we work to develop a full fledged site, which we will announce here as soon as it is available.

Chapter Outing-April 30, 2005

by Paul Howell and Ken Miller

Make your reservations now before we are sold out. As mentioned in last months issue, and discussed at the February meeting, we are heading to the southland in the springtime, well maybe not too far south, but to one of our favorite places, the historic Spencer Shops in Spencer, North Carolina.

This outing is a joint venture with the Link Museum and we fully expect a sellout. The following is a basic schedule:

Saturday April 30th

(Please have Breakfast before you arrive)

7:45 A.M. meet the Abbott charter bus at the Link Museum (Old N &W Passenger Station, 101 Shenandoah Ave., across from Hotel Roanoke). Arrangements have been made for parking down the ramp at the rear of the building.

8:00 The Abbott Bus will depart for Spencer, NC with one rest stop in route.

11:00 A.M. The Abbott Bus arrives at the North Carolina Transportation Museum (Spencer Shops) 411 South Salisbury

Avenue, Spencer, NC.

Box lunches, drinks, and admission tickets to the Museum and Train ride will be distributed.

11:00 A.M. until 4:30 P.M. Have lunch, tour the Spencer rail exhibits, round house, museum and ride one of the train trips around the Spencer Museum.

4:30 P.M. The Abbott Bus departs for our return to Roanoke.

5:30 P.M. Stop for dinner (on your own) at a Restaurant in the Greensboro, NC area.

6:45 P.M. The Abbott bus departs for return to The Link Museum in Roanoke.

8:45 P.M. The Abbott bus arrives at the Link Museum.

The very special price for members of either organization is only \$35 per person, non members are welcome, but their price is \$40 per person. This includes roundtrip transportation, a box lunch and admission to Spencer Shops. There will be many activities this day as it is their annual Railfair, with lots of things going on.

To sign up, call Paul Howell at 774-2619 before it is too late!

Even Tragedy Has Some Good News In It

by Gary Ballard

It is rare that the newsletter of this organization covers matters that are sad. This publication usually brings positive news and announcements of upcoming rail related events. But I have a serious story of sad consequences to report of events that happened to me during the week of February 18 and 19. This is a story of tragedy that has some goodness in it.

Since I joined Amtrak six years ago on March 4th, my career with Amtrak has had many upturns. I have gone through the ranks from a waiter on train 50/51, the

"Cardinal," to getting qualified on signals and rules on the railroad reaching from Florence, SC, to New York City. Now I'm an Assistant Conductor on runs from Washington, DC to New York. Time seems to fly by when you're having fun. Seems like only yesterday when I was at my last day on the air at WSLC radio. I was lucky to have my last show reported on the TV evening news in Roanoke. There were many fun times on my old morning show, but there were serious news stories to tell as well. One of those things we reported was of trespassers who die on our nation's railroad tracks. I wouldn't have imagined that years later I would be on the receiving end of such a tragedy and find myself walking the tracks to find death.

This story is not about the number of fatalities involving the trains I was working. That would be around eight in just 5 years. But in February 2005, I had the misfortune of going through two of these ordeals back to back. Some of my coworkers tell me I hold the record of having two fatal mishaps in a row. While that is not something I am proud of, I wanted to share the good that came my way during these sad events.

Friday, February 18th, I was working as "Head Brakeman" on one of Amtrak's regional trains. This person makes the onboard announcements such as station stops, no smoking, please observe the emergency exit signs etc. Obviously, this was not something new to me. You can't imagine how many times a passenger has come up and said, "You make very good train announcements, you sound like a radio announcer!" I never confess, I just say that I used to do the announcements on the Norfolk Southern steam train some years back. The passenger says, "What?," and the conversation gets real interesting for several minutes. On this day the train left Philadelphia heading south on

the old Pennsy mainline, I would soon earn my pay on the public address system.

As soon as the train passed the small station in Sharon Hills, PA. we struck a trespasser who attempted to cross the busy 4 track mainline. In minutes, several helicopters from Philly's TV stations were overhead recording this fatal mishap. Apparently, the person tried to cross the tracks where a chain link fence is erected in the middle of the right of way to prevent that from happening. At track speed, which goes as high as 125 mph, the train is usually the winner in these events. The weather was fine and made for good light to take video from high up in a chopper. Now I was a train conductor, once a member of the media, now I felt anger about the media flying over me to get the shot labeled "Breaking News." It is difficult enough, just trying to do my job of explaining over the P.A. to 450 passengers, while a body lies motionless on the ground outside. Much less phrasing in a sensitive way. I was disgusted deep inside that we were providing fodder for some reporter to say, "Lets go live now to Chopper 10..."

Any railroader can tell you that this type of event takes your day down as far as it can go. I can say that it probably makes no difference if the train involved was traveling at 125 mph, or 5 mph. It's tragic for any engineer to have to deal with. It's no easier when the conductor has to step down from the train and walk back to the accident site, only to confirm on the radio that there has been a fatality.

One of the first things that popped into mind was wondering why this person did not use the overpass of the nearby road to cross the tracks. We'll never know. Maybe the individual was in a hurry, heading to a friend's house. Perhaps they were all going to the mall afterwards. What if this person

was going to meet their girlfriend or boyfriend? In a few moments when this person doesn't show up, what does the waiting person do? After about 20 minutes of waiting for a friend or a buddy to show up, we all get impatient. Perhaps the waiting person made a cell phone call, only to get a voice message. Maybe they turned on the TV, perhaps the overhead helicopter did not provide a tight shot of the incident scene. Put yourself in the shoes of the person waiting for this now deceased individual to show up, and turning the TV set on.

While passengers were transferred to three other delayed trains (all traffic comes to a halt during these events) I was the voice trying to keep waiting passengers calm and mainly, not so irate. Despite the horrible event outside, several people on my train told me of the wonderful job I did on the microphone. They thanked me for my efforts in such horrible circumstances. That was as nice as being handed a million dollars. The passengers were handed over to other trains. They went on to their destinations, and I'll likely never see them again, but I remember the faces who gave a look of satisfaction. This had to be the first time the entire crew got "thank you's" during this type of event.

The other good in this story happened when the Road Foreman, who I'll leave nameless, asked me if I was all right. That's his job. Through the other fatalities I've been involved in, I remember being asked if I was okay, and was given a number of that particular person. I was always told to call by the next day if I had the need to talk with someone. That's their job to say that, but at Sharon Hills I was being told by a company veteran whom I've met before. The words coming out of his mouth were sincere, "Call me if you need me."

I decided to report to work the next day.

There are provisions set aside in the rules for any employee involved in an event like this to take time off from duty. I knew that I was not affected in a way where I could not perform my duties, so I went back to work the next day. I say to people, give me one reason how tomorrow could not end up being better than today was? I was hours from finding out.

On the next day, I was on another trip to New York's Penn Station and return. My crew base is in Washington, DC. Today's trip had me as flagman, covering the rear of an Amfleet equipped train for the ride north. On the trip back, I would be the flag, as it is referred to, on an Acela high speed train. On the Acela trains, the flag makes all onboard announcements. Little did I know that almost 2 hours into the trip that I would again hear the distinct sound of the train's air-brake system going into emergency, accompanied by the yell from the engineer over the radio of the words "Emergency" repeated 3 times. For two days in a row, my train had struck a trespasser. When the engineer dumped the air, my gut told me what I wouldn't believe. In seconds my engineer said over the radio what had just happened. There was no time to question the odds of this two days in a row. I quickly went to work mode and moved to the P.A. In seconds, I told those standing or those walking in the aisle to hold on as we were making a stop. The Acela cars have more disc brakes on each axle than any other train in North America. An emergency stop, from the train's allowable speeds of 130 mph south of New York City, comes mighty fast.

Back as a calm voice on the microphone, I told everyone what had taken place. Once again I used words to describe the event without really blurting it out. This day, we had several youngsters onboard. One child, a little 5 year old lad had the vocabulary of a

30 year old business man. He was a true railfan. This was not his first ride on the Acela, as he told me, "Me and Mom ride the Acela occasionally..." Just minutes ago, he pointed out the café windows and showed me that we were in Delaware. Indeed we were. That was then, now the train has stopped just south of the giant bridge in Harve de Grace, MD. The little boy and his Mom have returned to their seats. I have a lot of work to do.

This is day two for me dealing with this type of sad event, and now have to walk back to the incident scene. Those who manufactured this train must have thought that this equipment was so futuristic that one will ever have reason to lower a set of traps (the steps) without a platform. There are no traps nor steps to the ground on the Acela. One must walk through the last coach next to the locomotive, and exit through the cab door and climb down a set of stirrups that leave you five feet above the ballast! Great. As I'm doing this, I have thoughts of meeting the designer someday, and it wouldn't be a friendly greeting.

My conductor is a good coworker that I've had the pleasure of working with many times. Neither of us are energetic to search for the person's body. We walk what must have been at least a mile, and there we had to confirm to the dispatcher over the radio. A few minutes with local police, gave them what little info we knew at that point. It was cold and windy, it felt like 19 degrees outside. Despite the two of us wearing our Amtrak parkas, we were freezing. The long walk on chunks of ballast that seemed to be the size of grapefruit did not help our feelings either.

One hour went by before we walked back to the train. It was back to the P.A. to let everyone know that we would be here for some time. In such an event, two hours can

go by quickly. However, one must remember this is the Northeast. People's patience span seems to cover every bit of 40 seconds. Acela riders may be worse, since they expect to arrive sooner, get there quicker, and if anything goes wrong, demand a refund from the conductor! Again I would earn my pay on the microphone, telling them that the hardest thing to do in this matter would be to wait. It is up to the police and medical personnel on site to decide when to reopen the railroad. After the police have determined that the scene is not a crime scene, they pass the decision to the Road Foreman to open the tracks for movement of trains. This is the root of the long delay. During this time, our attendant practically sold everything in the café car. Beer, the top commodity, was gone in no time.

In the First Class section, the attendant was told to keep her kitchen open. On my train there is a family of four that missed making train 19, the "Crescent." The station personnel in New York put them on my train, thinking that our Acela could beat them to Washington where they could catch up with the Crescent. The historic overnight train to the south was in Philly when we passed them. No.19 is still behind us, as were all southbound trains. Nothing was moving. I got home that day at 10:00pm, after being three hours late into Washington. We were allowed to stay on the same train. The decision was that our train did not sustain damage making it unsafe for movement, partly derived by my walking to the front of the train to survey and take note of any exceptions to the equipment. The nose cone of the Acela train had scuff marks. That wasn't much as far as damage goes, but knowing what had just caused those marks can bring you way down.

At home I always like to watch the news, catch up on world events and get a look at

the weather for the next day. The Baltimore TV stations covered the fatality I was just on. Their reports were pretty much along the lines of what my engineer saw, someone jumping into the center of the track. The person never moved, just stood there. We had the unofficial idea that the person was young. The TV reports said the child was 11 years old. If this was true, I asked myself, then why did they do that? Were they hiding a problem that made them want to be in front of a train speeding along at over 100 mph? Then I asked myself, what problems could an 11 year old have that would be that big and demanding?

The good in this day is the element that makes it possible to hold onto what sanity that one has left. And that's why I'm writing this story of such tragic proportions. For a second time, passengers thanked me for a job well done in keeping them informed during this ordeal. Not that I'm bragging, but it's a surprise to get that. I thank God that I was able to keep about 200 individuals calm and made it possible for them to understand the scope of such a matter. Not once, but several times, people of all ages thanked me on the platform at Washington's Union Station. I thought, thanking me for what? They were 3 hours late on a Saturday night.

Later that night, another conductor called me from his cell phone to see if I was OK. He was the conductor the previous day who had come onboard to relieve the regular assigned conductor after the fatal incident. He had heard that I was involved in today's event. He informed me that I have the distinction on the railroad of having two in a row. Though he was laughing to cheer me up, he had sincere feelings in his voice as he asked me if I was all right. That mattered. It meant something.

I would get another call, this time from the person whom my employer has to check

on those conductors and engineers who have been involved in fatalities. The person admitted not too many conductors have been through two events back to back. I was then told that my engineer was OK. This was his first, as I had learned earlier when I went into the locomotive to see how he was. Shaking his head, he told me this was his first. He explained to me what he saw, the person had turned their back towards the train, standing there on the track.

Tragedy can have some good in it. In two days, I've had several Road Foreman ask me over the phone if I was OK. Passengers thanked me for doing a good job and a coworker offer me their ear in case I needed someone to talk to. I write this while I have two days off. I am OK, in spite of the rare odds of something like this happening. Tomorrow, there will be two funerals. I will remember the sincere voices from my brethren of the railroad, and from strangers I didn't know who let out a kind word in this tragedy.

60 Years Ago

60 years ago in January the N&W's newest film premiered at Better Service Club meetings across the system.

The Modern Coal Burning Steam Locomotive is a 25 minute film produced by the N&W's photographer's Bryan Beard and Frank Rader telling the story of Norfolk and Western's Class J and Class A locomotives, with their low initial cost, availability and versatility. The construction of the Class J's, the roller bearings, the ease of servicing and the high availability are major points. It was N&W's challenge to diesels though not spoken of directly. The Class A's are covered more briefly to fill out the remainder of the film. Now, 60 years later the film still holds up quite nicely as a record of the railroad in 1944 and the age of steam.

New O. Winston Link Book

Now available an all new 48-page plus cover 8.5x11 horizontal format softcover book, "O. Winston Link: The Man and the Museum" by Tom Garver.

Garver describes Link's early years and his work, discusses the technical skills and engineering knowledge he used to customize lighting equipment. Garver continues with Link's N&W photographs. Link's commercial work and archival photos complement more than 30 N&W photos.

Garver tells the story of Link's life after the N&W Project – including the trials and legal battles with his ex-wife. Development and construction of the museum concludes the story. To order a copy or obtain books for distribution, contact the Museum Shop at (540) 982-6956 or giftshop@linkmuseum.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

March 17 - Regular Meeting/Board Meeting at 6:30 pm

April 5 - Board Meeting

April 21 - Regular Meeting

April/May - Spring Potluck? Stay Tuned
Volunteers/Organizers Needed

April 30 - Chapter Outing to Rail Days,
Spencer NC

May 3 - Board Meeting

May 19 - Regular Meeting

June 7 - Board Meeting

June 16 - Regular Meeting

<http://community.roanoke.com/RoanokeChapterNationalRailwayHistoricalSociety>

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. Items of interest should be sent to Editor Kenny Kirkman, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA 24078-2128.

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