

Turntable Times

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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 Elizabeth Leedy. Elizabeth is responsible for Chapter cards and can be reached at 389-5274.

Cover Photo

N&W SD45 No. 1791 shines in the sun in this EMD photo from December 1967.

Meeting Notice

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next general meeting on Thursday, February 19, 1998 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.

Meeting Cancellation Policy

Since it is that time of year, as a reminder we have the following policy regarding inclement weather. The meeting will be considered cancelled if any of the following conditions are met: 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.

Deadline for Turntable Times

The deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Wednesday, February 25. Please send articles, information and exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA. 24078-2128.

Mixed Freight - February

by Mr. Robin Shavers

I guess you can call it "job security" for the rolling stock and personnel of Norfolk Southern that keep the coal moving from mines to markets. Three of Norfolk Southern's land acquiring affiliates recently obtained 340,000 acres of mineral ground in West Virginia. That acquisition will yield at least 300 million tons of coal that will be used mainly for electric power generation.

Our Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS comrades in Lynchburg, VA will be celebrating their chapter's 40th anniversary this year. If you are interested in participating or contributing towards events and functions commemorating their forty years, write to: Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS, P.O. Box 11731, Lynchburg, VA 24506.

To my dismay, and probably to the dismay of some of you too, Conrail locomotives no longer operate south of Hagerstown, Maryland on Norfolk Southern freights. This has been in effect since about the first of this year. Several of my NS contacts I spoke with couldn't offer an explanation. I'm sure the answer will eventually come forth via the commercial railfan press and the Internet. On a similar subject matter, locomotives that are now under the Union Pacific shield have been appearing regularly on NS trains. Locomotives of Southern Pacific, Cotton Belt, Rio Grande and of course Union Pacific are quite common, especially on former Norfolk & Western high iron. This also includes Chicago & Northwestern units too.

Those of us whom spend a reasonable amount of time along tracks that host Amtrak trains are probably familiar with the sight of seeing a freight locomotive of the hosting railroad

leading and powering an Amtraker. Seldom do we see just the opposite happen. On January 9th of this year, the opposite did indeed occur on CSX's Piedmont Subdivision at the town of Gordonsville, VA. CSX's local freight H756 was performing switching duties for customer Clockner-Pentaplast just west of Gordonsville when it's fuel supply expired. Genesis locomotive # 828 was commandeered off of Amtrak's westbound Cardinal to retrieve the local and pull it back to Gordonsville for refueling. You can best be assured that someone received a stern reprimand for that act of irresponsibility.

High speed train technology on foreign shores continues to make progress and the news. The latest is a new speed record set by a low friction experimental train that hit 312 miles per hour. The train, known as MLX01, is Japan's superconducting, magnetic levitation train. The test was conducted on the tracks of Central Japan Railway and it is believed that a top speed of 340 can be reached this coming spring when more testing will be conducted. The train and it's support facilities cost \$43.3 million. Are you considering a career with a railroad or desire employment period? You might want to give Conrail a try. The firm plans to hire 500 plus people for train and locomotive service systemwide this year. Preference will sway first to current and laid off employees. If you're interested, give The Big Blue a call at 215-209-4505.

Despite my strong interest in and love for railroading, there are many parts of it I'd just as soon do without. One of those "parts" were 10 locomotives delivered to the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad in The Family Lines System livery and designated as BQ23-7. These machines were purchased in anticipation of caboosless trains systemwide back in the mid-seventies. Like Santa Fe's CF7 creations, I thought and still view these locomotives as some of the ugliest things to ever ride the rails. The last two of the ten were retired from service by CSX on December 23rd 1997. Their road numbers were

3001 and 3004.

Last year I reported that the borough of Bronx, New York had reached an agreement with a landfill in Southampton County, Virginia to send 2000 tons of municipal garbage per day. I speculated that rail would be the means for shipment. Back in November, 97, a new train dedicated to moving containerized garbage from a collection terminal west of New York City to a landfill in Waverly, VA, began operating. The train is a joint operation of Conrail and Norfolk Southern and is symbolized 372 to the landfill and 371 empty back to New York state. The train uses NS tracks between Hagerstown and Glasgow, CSX trackage rights between Glasgow and Lynchburg and NS trackage from Lynchburg to Waverly. Operation of the train appears to be irregular so you might see the trains anytime. On CSX, the trains are symbolized Z711.

Norfolk Southern recently reached an agreement to sell it's North American Van Lines subsidiary. By selling off NAVL, NS can concentrate more resources on railroading with the pending 58% takeover of Conrail.

Norfolk Southern has ordered 167 new center beam flatcars for hauling finished lumber products. The new cars will replace NS's existing fleet of 61 foot bulkhead flats and are expected to be in service by April of this year. To handle the seasonal increase of lumber traffic during the first three months of the year, the company has leased 208 centerbeam flats for the time being. It's a good chance NS's unwanted 61 footers will end up as shortline railroad properties.

The Gaithersburg Model Railroad Society will hold it's annual spring model railroad merchandise sale on Sunday, April 19th, 1998 at The Maryland County Agriculture Center in Gaithersburg, MD. For you veterans, this is the same location as the annual Railroadiana Sale held the first weekend in November the past number of years. The time will be 9 a.m. til 4:00 p.m. For more information, call 301-948-8064. I attended the winter edition of this sale back in December and I was quite impressed with the

available merchandise and the price tags.

Destroying The Myth

by Ken Miller

After many years of seeing the famous photo below reproduced with a variety of captions and inaccuracies, I thought it was time to set the record straight.

Many people have gone great lengths to make the photo something it is not, the most recent being the book "Norfolk & Western in the Alleghanies" (see Book Review, following) this book has a number of errors, but they are not alone, this photo is probably one of the most reproduced N&W passenger images of all time.

The caption on page 14 reads "The company photographer shot a gleaming J 600 with train 46, the eastbound Tennessean, near Bedford,

Virginia with the Peaks of Otter in the background. In this December 1941 view, both the engine and train are brand spanking new."

First, take a look at the photo below, there seems to be an inordinate amount of foliage on the trees for a December scene. For train 46, a late 1941 schedule shows the train leaving Roanoke at 2:49 pm, this lighting and shadows indicate a mid morning view. Anyone familiar with the railroad, realizes that this location does not exist, a little examination to the print indicates a great deal of retouching. The other major inaccuracy is Train 46, The Tennessean, began regular service on May 18, 1941, hardly "brand spanking new", plus the train was a stainless steel equipped train, not the obviously tuscan red train depicted. Naturally the railroad was



N&W Photo

quite proud of its new class J, just out of the shop on October 20, 1941, but using a Southern stainless steel train for a widely circulated publicity photo is just a bit far fetched. Other clues to examine in the photo for retouching are: first the three head cars, the RPO, baggage-mail, and a combine all appear to be lightweight cars with streamlined roofs. Now it could be possible that the mail car might be a M1 class delivered in 1937, but the doors do not match that type of car. Until the NKP/Wabash mergers, the N&W, to my knowledge, never owned a baggage-mail car with this type of roofline. Next up are two streamlined lightweight coaches, well, that is believable, the first lightweights were delivered in October, 1941, but not for the Tennessean, however. Then we have a group of four cars, all

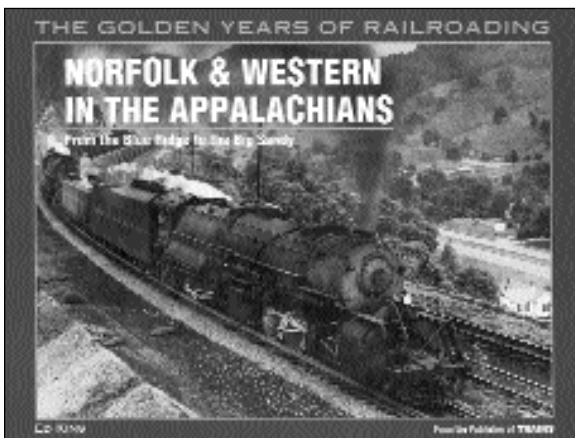
appearing to be lightweight cars, again, however window patterns do not match anything on the N&W at that time.

The actual photo, shown below, is train No. 4, the Pocahontas, made March 24, 1942, quite a few miles from Bedford, arriving at the west end of the Roanoke yard the train is posed in a favorite location for N&W photographers, the big curve just back of the Veterans Hospital. In fact another camera can be seen, with the black cloth covering it almost parallel to the front of the locomotive. Obviously the telephone poles are missing from the retouched view, but the switch lamp located to the right of the locomotive, was not eliminated. Switchlamps seldom appeared on the N&W outside of a terminal or actual yard, just another clue for you all, that



N&W Photo

sometimes things are not always as they seem.



Book Review

by Ken Miller

Norfolk & Western In The Appalachians
by Ed King, published by Kalmbach, 1997,
\$18.95 11x 8 1/2" format, 128 pages softbound

A recent addition to the library from Kalmbach collects a wide variety of photos of the N&W from the era 1920-1960. Most have been published in Trains over the years and a variety of other books, using a wide group of photographers including some company material.

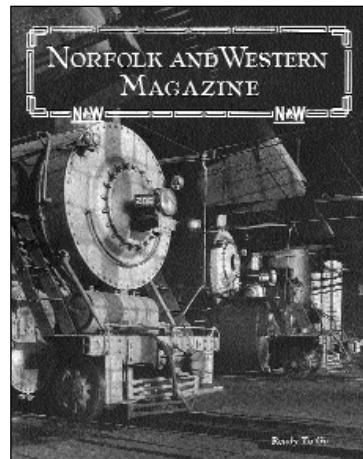
The book is organized by operating division and works east to west with a general overview of the railroad's history in a seven page section at the beginning of the book. Each division is devoted a page of description before the photo section. For the general person who may or may not be that familiar with the territory, an element lacking here is a map of each division in it's respective place, or even anywhere within the book. Those who know the railroad well, does not need a map, but even some die hard fans would like a map to check place names.

Personally, as a designer, I like the use of white space in a layout, this book which is specifically oriented as a photo book, the largest photo is 6 1/4" x 9 1/2". A little measuring shows the pho-

tos have borders of an inch on each side, fine in an art book, but I don't believe that these books are meant as a work of art. The original photos appear to be crisp and sharp and are certainly worthy of making a full page bleed out of any number of them. One of the nicest images in the book is a skimpy 6 3/4" x 5 3/4" (page 117). Now, I'll grant you occasionally a photo cannot be large, as there is detail to cut off of the sides. However most of the photos do not have a specific details that will be cut off in the trim, so why not enlarge them? If they do, nothing has been described in the captions about what is there.

I believe that some additional research by the author would have been nice, as there are a number of mistakes made in the captions. (See "Destroying the Myth") Obviously little research was done on that one, who knows how much other detail is missed throughout the book?

Another question is on page 47, a view of K-3 No. 205 and a Y-3 in the Shaffers Crossing roundhouse, credited to the AAR. Well, the AAR used many N&W photos



over the years and were provided with negatives shot at the same time. The author, states very assured, that this photo dates from World War II, since the 205 was sold to RF&P in February 1944, and the Y-3 acquired the bridge-pipe low pressure system in 1940 or 1941. Not bad, but coincidentally a nearly identical photo, with the same lighting conditions, at a slightly different angle appears on the N&W magazine cover for January 1931 (see above), hardly World War II.

On page 60, a coal train, is "just east of Elliston, Virginia", in all my time along the N&W, I have never seen a scene like this anywhere near Elliston, it appears to be much more like the area near Pepper, Virginia.

On page 84, a westbound time freight is purported to be passes the middle track at Pepper, Virginia. This one is probably the simplest to correct, and the most obvious, the locomotive is passing milepost N 283, a quick look at any employee timetable from any era, would show milepost N283 between Arthur and Montgomery, almost 20 miles east of Pepper.

Despite all of these errors, and there are more, I still recommend this book, if only for the collection of photos. I just wish authors would take these projects a little more seriously and make sure that what they are publishing is accurate, the hazard of things like this going in print, now establishes a precedent. This is no better than painting a piece of equipment in a museum up in incorrect paint and lettering; now a museum is telling the general public, that what they have on display is correct and reflects history accurately, in 50 years, when the people who know better are no longer available, what remains is now the historical record, recorded on many snapshots perhaps even published in books. I guess my point is do it correctly, or at least try to, or don't bother to do it at all.

Condolences

Our sympathies and thoughts go out to Fred Thompson and family who's brother, Raymond passed away on February 3.

As we were going to press, we received the news that Old Dominion Chapter National Director and Newsletter Editor, Jack Stith passed away on February 11th. Jack was a good friend to our chapter and we send our thoughts to those whom he left behind.

Special Thanks

We want to thank the mechanical committee who turned out to assemble and prepare the

three issue package for mailing.

Dues

A reminder, your dues are now due. If your membership has lapsed for more than a calendar year, it will not be continuous for the national organization and you will have to fill out an application again, this is now a chapter policy.

Small Rails - February

by Dave Meashey

The Big Lick Boomers held a single meeting in January. Ironically, higher education has had a negative impact on the club's ranks. At least two members have Tuesday evening classes for the spring semester, so we have decided for the time being that we need to pick a new meeting night. We will probably meet within the next two weeks to determine which night will work for most members.

We did manage to make some headway with the tunnel module during the January meeting. The tunnel was "daylighted," that is we removed the mountain scenery from the space above the tracks. The code 83 track was pulled up and some preparation was made to replace it with code 100 track.

The Three Rail Renaissance

by Dave Meashey

Many of us who were born right after World War II or in the early 1950's grew up with Lionel, American Flyer, or Marx trains. During the thirty years after the "heyday" of these wonderful toy trains, the three Rail part of the hobby was pretty much the domain of the toy train collector, but things have really been changing within the last ten to twelve years. A rise in the number of toy train operators - people who love the classic style toy trains but prefer running them on layouts to displaying them on shelves - has brought about a three rail renaissance.

Lionel and a recently revived Marx Trains are still players in the three rail market. American Flyer, now totally owned by Lionel, is still avail-

able as a two rail S gauge tinplate product. All three trade names are now owned by corporate entities different from the companies that originally produced them. Of the three, Marx are the only true tinplate trains, the others being made from diecast metal and plastic.

Of course new tinplate is no longer "cheap". Many of us can remember when you could get a pretty nice Marx train set for under \$25. I believe my uncle's Marx Commodore Vanderbilt freight set cost about \$4.50 during the Great Depression. (\$4.50 also represented about a week's wages at that time.) Today's Marx tinplate sets command about \$300 to \$400 per set.

Along with the old favorites, many new companies have entered the toy train business. K-Line started out with the late production Marx dies for locomotives and cars. Today they make a high quality line of toy trains, some with nearly complete scale length and details. MTH began its manufacturing of toy trains with replicas of popular Lionel tinplate models. Today they make a wonderful line of toy trains, includ-

ing some that are true scale models, as well as track and transformers. Williams Electric Trains also has a beautiful line of O gauge toy trains, mostly using diesels and electric locomotives. Weaver Models, perhaps better known for their O scale freight cars, also offer these same cars with Lionel-compatible trucks. As a finale, the Third Rail division of Sunset Models offers brass models for three rail operators.

S gauge operators have not been forgotten either. S-Helper Service has a nice line of American Flyer compatible cars, including a new early style TOFC car with Fifties era trailers. An American Models is offering a new S gauge Pacific type steam locomotive, the first such model in 40 years.

This is a good time to be a toy train operator. There's a lot of high quality, exciting products on the market, including a new line of sectional three foot track by Atlas. If you would like to relive the fun you had with toy trains, this is a great time to do it.

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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