



SAFETY
FIRST

Turntable TIMES

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

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October 2005





Turntable TIMES

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EDITOR

Kenney Kirman

KKIRKMAN50@hotmail.com

MIXED FREIGHT

Robin R. Shavers

SMALL RAILS

Dave Meashey

kndmeashey@msn.com

HISTORIAN

Kenneth L. Miller

klmiller@rev.net

All materials should be sent directly to the Editor:
Kenney Kirman
590 Murphy Road
Collinsville, VA
24078-2128

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, October 15, 2005 at 7:30 pm. Our meeting location will be at the Link Museum located in the former N&W Passenger Station, 101 Shenandoah Avenue. Please enter on the lower level at trackside, our meetings are held in the theatre/auditorium downstairs.

Our program will be a visit to the Tweetsie Railroad on its Railfan's weekend at the end of August by Brian Crosier. It was a lot of steam and an enjoyable time for all. Come see the fun!

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 Tuesday, October 18, 2005. Please send articles, information and 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 most newspapers; a condensed rewritten article crediting the source, however, is acceptable.

For those interested, a PDF of the Turntable Times is posted on the website when the issue goes to the printer, at least ten days before seeing it in the mail, check the website for last minute announcements as well. This issue was posted on October 3.

Cover Photo

Norfolk Southern No. 9250 heads west with an empty hopper (more correctly, an empty train, as the cars are really gondolas not hoppers) train at Elliston, VA. It's a beautiful afternoon on September 13, 2005. Photo by Richard D. Shell

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held at the O. Winston Link Museum on Thursday, November 17, 2005. The meeting will begin at 7:30 pm. At this time, we will hold our annual election in which four (4) directors will be elected.

Our nominating committee is headed up by Wanda Troutman. Board members whose term is up are as follows:

Lawanda Ely
Carl Jensen
Bill Mason
David Meashey

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting, please be sure you have that person's consent before making a nomination. The committee is searching for nominees for these four positions

Instructions for Absentee Ballot: This year we will elect four (4) directors by secret ballot. Any member in good standing may vote by absentee ballot.

Please Note: if you are interested in running, or know of another Chapter member who is, please contact the nominating committee as soon as possible.

To vote by absentee ballot, one must:

- 1 - Request an absentee ballot from the Secretary or a member of the nominating committee. The nominating committee is chaired by Wanda Troutman. You will receive (a) one ballot; (b) one "ballot" envelope; and (c) one mailing envelope.
- 2 - Mark the ballot (vote for not more than four (4) directors. If more than four (4) votes are cast, the ballot will be discarded).
- 3 - Place the ballot in the "ballot" envelope and seal. Do not put your name on the bal-

lot or "ballot" envelope.

4 - Place "ballot" envelope in the mailing envelope. Write your name and return address on the mailing envelope and mail to:

Roanoke Chapter, NRHS
P.O. Box 13222
Roanoke, VA 24032-1322

or the envelope may be hand delivered to the Secretary anytime before the election at the annual meeting.

Chapter Outing-October 30

by Walt Alexander

We are now offering a single short day trip that will involve a rather unique opportunity for members to ride some rare mileage.

On Sunday, October 30th we will an Abbott bus northward to ride on the former Chesapeake Western Railway. We'll leave about 10:30 so we can get to Verona to ride the 1:00 pm train. This will be the final day of operation of their first foray into excursion train operation.

It will be a nice day of fellowship and fun. After the ride, we'll make a special stop with the bus to photograph the train on the 3:00 pm trip. After that we'll ride over to Staunton's historic district where we should see the Cardinal (assuming on time running) and have (at your own expense) a very nice meal at one of the two restaurants located in Staunton's depot.

This is a very reasonably priced trip at \$39 for members and \$45 for non-members. We need your participation to make it work. Call Walt Alexander at 345-5826 or email at terrapin66@cox.net, please bring your check or money to the next Chapter meeting.

Mixed Freight - October

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Seeing brand-new Norfolk Southern locomotives in road service minus the company's paint scheme and logos is nothing new to those of us whom keep up with today's railroading scene. CSX is now doing likewise with its spanking new ES40DC locomotives from General Electric. Most are fully painted in CSX's latest dark blue scheme that some railfans have dubbed "dark future." The ones that have been placed in service in primer have yellow reflector strips on the nose and flanks. The numeric class is 5200.

I forgot to mention this two months ago, but Amtrak finally placed it's new Auto Train auto carriers in service. They really look sharp along with the modern passenger carrying equipment. The numeric class for the new auto carriers is 9200.

Our friends of the Blue Ridge Chapter NRHS have decided to have RAIL DAYS 2006. We will try to secure a different venue for the event; maybe in Altavista or some other facility not too far from Lynchburg. It might even be a 2 day affair.

It is an accepted fact that two things are certain in life, death and taxes and not necessarily in that order. There is now a third. The third is that the Blue Ridge Chapter NRHS cannot keep a permanent meeting location for long. As it stands now, our last meeting at The Community Room at Kemper Street Station will be Wednesday October 12th. Lynchburg's Parks & Recreation Department will be moving some of their offices to KSS near the end of October. That Community Room was ideal for an organization about railroading. I and

the rest of the chapter will surely miss meeting there.

The RF&P Railroad Historical Society held its third meeting for 2005 on Saturday August 20 at the Salem Church Library. We had a turnout of about 30. The topics that encouraged much discussion were criteria for selecting a person for honorary membership and a suitable location for our archives. Our first real newsletter, a 15 page booklet, has been printed and mailed to the membership. A few hundred complimentary copies are being distributed to the general public free of charge by a few of us.

Most of us are fully aware of the destruction wreaked by Hurricane Katrina. It'll be 20 years ago this coming November 3 thru 4 that a hurricane fueled flood attacked the Shenandoah Valley including Roanoke and West Virginia's South Branch Valley, Wasena Park and the railroad equipment located there as the original Roanoke Transportation Museum.

This September 10 marked the 10 year anniversary of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. This September past also marked 10 years since the name Broadway Limited disappeared from the American railroad scene.

I journeyed to Romney, West Virginia on Sunday August 21 to ride a Potomac Eagle excursion train to Petersburg, WV for the purpose of attending a railroad festival. The festival was not much of a festival by my standards, but it was good to see, and photograph motive power painted in Chessie System; C&O and South Branch Valley. The ride was enjoyable, and fun and I saw five eagles, 2 fully mature adults and three young adults. My binoculars hadn't gotten a workout like that since a trip to Virginia

Beach last summer, but I digress. The highlight other than the eagle sightings was an invitation from the head end brakeman to ride aboard South Branch Valley GP9 # 6506 from Sycamore Bridge to Romney. Why do deer wait to the last possible second to cross the track before an oncoming train? I was glad they all succeeded. The 6506 was a former locomotive of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

You never know what items you might find on the eBay auction website. According to 'The Ferroequinologist', newsletter of the Central Coast Railway Club in Santa Clara, California, Southern Pacific's Yuba City, California depot was perhaps the first railroad depot to be sold on eBay.

Watch Your Step Please

by Gary Ballard

Winter is not that far off. Slippery conditions will be around everywhere we go, just remember to watch your step. On the railroad, injuries occur all the time, in spite of the weather. It is important to know where your next step will be and what is behind you at all times.

Here is a small list of injuries encountered by Amtrak crews. The injuries happened on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor about three years ago. Marvel if you will by remembering our train trips of years ago with 24 cars and over 900 passengers, and how we had an accident/injury free history of trips.

Injury Cause	Result
• Carrying guest luggage, train lurched, fell	Strained shoulder
• Walking into vestibule, guest kicked ankle	Bruised ankle
• Stepped off train, struck by commissary truck	Broken elbow
• Setting up café, inhaled burning electrical fumes	Headache
• Opening cap on beer bottle	Cut finger
• Opening hot syrup for guest, spilled on hand	Burned back of hand
• Detraining, stepped on screw, twisted foot	Sprained foot
• Tripped on a rug inside crew base	Sprained neck, back
• Assisting guest off train, guest stepped onto foot	Fractured big toe
• Sweeping up broken glass in café car	Object in eye
• Closing trap door	Bruised heel
• Stepped off train, struck by commissary truck	Chipped tooth, cut head
• Assisting guest with luggage	Strained groin
• Slipped on wet vestibule buffer plate	Sprained neck
• Lifting tray of sandwiches in café car	Strained lower back
• Closing café counter door	Cut left finger
• Opening stuck baggage car door	Strained elbow
• Closing stuck baggage car door	Bruised hand / finger

The morale of this story... Every minute has an accident in it. As always, safety first!

Bidding on the 113 year old structure ended on August 13, with the winning bidder paying \$6,912.65. The new owner plans to move the depot to French Camp (near Stockton) and use it as an antique shop.

After years of anticipation and hope, the rebuilding of the 17-mile section of the legendary Virginia & Truckee Railroad is underway at Gold Hill, linking Carson City with Virginia City, Nevada. Granite Construction, which was awarded the contract, has donated track and ties from its downtown Reno railroad trench project. The Nevada Commission for the Reconstruction of the V&T Railroad has spent \$420,000 to acquire a steam locomotive. The locomotive that will pull passengers was purchased from the McCloud River Railroad and is in operating condition. It took only 10 months for mostly Chinese laborers in 1869 to build the 21-mile line from Carson City to Virginia City, including excavating five tunnels and negotiating an elevation gain between the two communities of 1,600 feet. (From the 470 Club Newsletter).

Turntable Times Editor's Note: I visited both Virginia City and Carson City in July during a three-week tour of the western United States. Virginia City is already quite a drawing card for those interested in the history of the town, and many folks who visit the area ride the Virginia & Truckee Railroad from Virginia City to its present terminus at Gold Hill, a ride of some three miles. At Carson City there is the Nevada State Railroad Museum, which features some 65 locomotives and cars, many of which are from the Virginia & Truckee Railroad. Among the freight cars at the Nevada State Railroad Museum is the "Merci" wooden boxcar. This boxcar was one of 49 sent to

each state in this country by France in 1949 as a "Thank You" for our country's help in France during both World War I and II. The "Merci" boxcar sent to North Carolina is on display at the North Carolina Museum of Transportation at Spencer. Which leads to an interesting question? Where is the boxcar that was donated to Virginia? Anyone know?

(Editor's Note: War Memorial Museum, Huntington Park, Newport News, Virginia.)

How About You?

Do you "Just Belong?" Are you an involved member? The kind that would be missed? Or are you just contented that your name is on the list? Do you take an active part to move the work along? Or are you simply satisfied to "Just Belong?" Do you work on a committee—to that there is no trick. Or leave the work to just a few and talk about the clique. Why not come to all the meetings and help with hand and heart? Don't be "just a member" But take an active part! Think this over, member. You know the right from wrong. Are you an involved member? Or do you just belong? (Author Unknown, from The Station Lamp, newsletter of the Kentucky Railway Museum).

August/September Newsletter

by Ken Miller

My apologies for the August/September issue of Turntable Times. The August issue was late due to scheduling problems it was decided to make a combined issue of August and September.

The combined issue was delivered to the printer August 31 with instructions to be completed on Thursday, September 8, which allows a week for assembly, labeling and mailing. That is the normal procedure. Sometimes the system fails, apparently the

print shop failed to call F.M. Hite and tell him the job was ready, in my rush, I neglected to email him to tell it was scheduled to be ready on the 8th, it was not until the week after the meeting that we discovered the lack of communication.

James A. Bistline

June 18, 1915 – Sept. 20, 2005

by Carl S. Jensen

The Society has lost one of its best-known and valued members, Jim Bistline, who died September 20 at the age of 90. Although best remembered by many NRHS members as the man who arranged the Southern and then Norfolk Southern Ry. steam and diesel excursions for nearly 20 years, Jim was a very diverse and accomplished individual.

He was born in Newport, Pa., and said he remembered the PRR trains. His teens and early twenties were spent in Cumberland, MD and Old Fort, NC. Academically gifted, Jim finished first in his class at Duke University, went on to Columbia University, joining the New York Bar in 1940. During WW II, Jim was a member of the US Army Judge Advocate Corps, and participated in the post war German war trials. He maintained his Reserve Colonel rank, serving as past president of the JAG Association. For many years, he attended International Bar meetings all over the world. Throughout his life, he continued his active interests in the legal field, maintaining numerous contacts in the profession.

Jim joined the Southern Railway Law Department in 1948. He practiced before the Interstate Commerce Commission, as well as numerous state regulatory bodies. He served as President of the Association of ICC Practitioners and chaired the Railroad Committee of the Federal Bar Association, along with many other organizations.

After 25 years in the Law Department he

was appointed Assistant to the President by Graham Claytor. One of his diverse duties was to make the arrangements for the early Southern Railway steam excursions. He once said that at the time he wasn't even interested in steam engines. That changed, of course. The job became full time. Jim built Graham Claytor's enthusiasm for steam operations into probably the largest and most comprehensive excursion train program of its type in the US, and probably the world. Although he retired from Norfolk Southern in 1985 at age 70, he maintained his active interest in the program in subsequent years.

One of the strategies Jim used during the formative years of the program was to find individuals, or groups of local civic or railfan organizations, to sponsor excursion trips. This rapidly built a network of persons interested in railroading into the basis for forming NRHS chapters, particularly in the geographic area of Southern's operations. At least 30 Chapters can trace their formation, or rapid growth directly to the steam program. Jim was instrumental in assisting the formation of numerous rail museums, by donation of equipment, track materials, land, station buildings, and in some instances portions of rail lines. He supported many NRHS national conventions at minimum cost to sponsors at Southern cities, with many special trains, steam locomotives and trips.

Jim traveled very extensively, took thousands of good pictures of railroading around the world, and willingly shared them with railfan groups. His talks to various groups were always entertaining. Jim had a tremendous memory for many subjects, and was always willing to share a story or two. In June, Jim celebrated his 90th birthday with a group of approximately 80 family and friends at the Army-Navy Club in Washington. Although his health was fail-

ing, his humor and stories were as good as ever.

Jim's wife Lillian and one son, James, preceded him in death. He leaves sons Scott and Mark, and one granddaughter. He also leaves a legacy of great service to railfans everywhere, many of whom were pleased to know him and to have considered him their friend. The Society will miss this wonderful gentleman.

Don Piedmont

Long time N&W Public Relations director Don Piedmont passed away on September 8, 2005 at age 77. Don was one of our banquet speakers several years back and was known for his book on Hotel Roanoke "Peanut Soup and Spoonbread" and his license plate "NO CMNT." So the best thing we can say in tribute, is "No Comment." Godspeed, Don.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The October Meeting Location will be at the O. Winston Link Museum.

October 30 - Chapter Outing
See inside for details

October 20 - General Meeting

November 1 - Board Meeting

November 17 - Annual Meeting

December 15 - Holiday Gathering
7 PM, Fellowship Hall, First
Presbyterian Church (old meeting site)

Your dues are now due
please renew early!

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

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Roanoke Chapter NRHS
P.O. Box 13222
Roanoke, VA 24032-1322

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