



# *Turntable* TIMES

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

**Volume 41, Number 2**  
**March-April 2009**





# Turntable TIMES

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Turntable Times is published bimonthly 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 meeting on Thursday, March 19th at 7:30 pm. at the Link Museum located in the former N&W Passenger Station, 101 Shenandoah Avenue. The April Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 16th at 7:30 p.m. in the same location.

## *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 May/June 2009 issue of Turntable Times is Saturday April 18, 2009. Please send written articles and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA 24078. All parties sending newsletters to the Roanoke Chapter via email should send them to: kirkman50@hotmail.com and Ken Miller at klmiller@rev.net As noted elsewhere in this issue, the Roanoke Chapter will begin sending the Turntable Times to other groups via email beginning with the May/June 2009 issue.

### **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**

With just over 20 minutes notice, President Jeff Sanders managed to catch the southbound Ringling Brothers train highballing through Salem at 4:20 p.m. on February 23, 2009.

## **Attention Exchange Newsletter**

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To all editors of NRHS chapter newsletters. For many years, the Roanoke Chapter has been exchanging printed copies of its newsletter, Turntable Times, with other chapters on a complimentary basis. The Roanoke Chapter Board of Directors has announced that beginning with the May/June issue it will follow the lead of the NRHS national Board's announcement regarding changing the NRHS Telegraph to all-electronic distribution. Roanoke Chapter will be sending Turntable Times only via email to other NRHS Chapter. Eliminating paper distribution of the newsletter to other chapters will allow Roanoke Chapter to reduce expenses and apply the savings to restoring and maintaining our historic railroad equipment. If you wish to continue receiving the Roanoke Chapter's newsletter for your chapter, please send your chapter name, chapter newsletter editor's name, and email address to the Roanoke Chapter Membership Chairman at [TERRAPIN66@COX.NET](mailto:TERRAPIN66@COX.NET). Failure to do so will purge your chapter from the distribution list.

## **2008 Chapter Christmas Party**

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Another very fine Holiday Gathering was held in December despite a lack of a report in these pages in the last issue. Over 40 members and guests joined in for the excellent food, fellowship and fun. Our thanks to our organizers, Bonnie Molinary, Wanda Troutman and Kathy Overholser for their efforts. We look forward to seeing all of you out next December.

## **NC Rails Excursion**

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**SOLD OUT!** What more do we need to say? Hope you can join us next time!

## **Mixed Freight March/April 2009**

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by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

A few years ago, I mentioned that while shifting thru some newspapers that had been discarded for recycling, I spotted an article about a mother and son team that had produced a video about the life of the N&W Railway crews on The Abingdon Branch. A few months back while visiting a nearby public library, I noticed a basket of magazines for sale for a quarter each. They were back issues of a wide variety of magazines that the library was disposing of. The third magazine from the top had a steam train on the cover. The magazine was the June 2005 issue of Blue Ridge Country, a magazine headquartered in The Star City. That issue featured an article entitled Remembering The Age Of Trains. It featured information on the history of railroads serving Southern Appalachia and the Blue Ridge areas of Virginia. The Tweetsie Railroad and The Great Smokey Mountains Railroad. It also spotlighted well known tourist and excursion railroads within Virginia and West Virginia. The O. Winston Link Museum along with a few of Mr. Link's photos made for an impressive photo story for the magazine and it should have resulted in an increase in patronage for the museum for 2005. A supplement story to the Link Museum article covered the January 21, 2005 re-creation session of Mr. Link's photo in Waynesboro that was taken fifty years earlier. All in all, I thought the articles were well written and obviously researched for accuracy. If you are interested in acquiring a copy, and this is no guarantee, try calling the folks at Blue Ridge County at 540-989-6138. Spider your way to their website at [www.BlueRidgeCountry.com](http://www.BlueRidgeCountry.com)

I finally made it to The Crewe Railroad Museum for the first time in almost 4 years. With the museum operating at specific times, the times I visit Crewe the museum is often closed. A new addition has been added to house a multitiered O gauge model railroad layout, photos of N&W trains, railroad artifacts and other items donated by railfans and railroaders. The road leading to the museum and the parking lot are now blacktop. This has enhanced appearance of the museum indeed. If you plan to visit the Crewe Railroad Museum, PLEASE call or write before you go to be sure it will be open when you arrive. The phone number is 434-645-9868. You can write them at 612 Powell Street or 106 Gatewood Avenue, Crewe, VA 23930. Their website is [www.crewerailroadmuseum.org](http://www.crewerailroadmuseum.org) After spending some time at the CRM, take the 11 mile ride south on Highway 49 to Victoria and visit Virginian caboose No. 342, it'll be glad to see you.

I mentioned within this column over a year ago about plans for a MAERSKE operation to occupy a portion of Norfolk Southern's Crewe Yard for a container transloading facility. Nothing has been built yet and I have not heard anything more about the proposed facility.

Speaking of Crewe Yard, I noticed via my scanner that frequency 160.950 and 160.440 are being used for yard channels. That first frequency is also used as the road frequency for the former Southern Railway and the second is also used as the road channel for the Shenandoah line.

Here they GROW again. On Tuesday February 3, 2009 it was announced that the Buckingham Branch Railroad has been named the new operator for the former Virginia Southern Railroad. The 55 mile rail line extends from Burkeville to Clarksville, Virginia. The BB plans to commence operat-

ing the railroad sometime in April. A name for this new division was not available at press time.

Those of you whom may have a special interest in steel coil cars may want to pay the little community of Pamplin, Virginia a visit. While on my way to the Blue Ridge Chapter NRHS January meeting, I noticed a number of those cars in storage on the Farmville Stub. The group is close to a mile in length and is composed of steel coil cars in a variety of road names from predecessor roads that made up today's Norfolk Southern. A downside to railroads storing unneeded freight cars besides the obvious is the easy target for taggers. Like railfans, those vermin are organized. They know where to go and when to go.

I just received a copy of Norfolk Southern's new bimonthly periodical newsletter called BizNS. BizNS replaces the company's former monthly newsletter called Newsbreak. The mission of BizNS is to explore the opportunities and challenges facing the railroad industry in the 21st Century and how Norfolk Southern is striving to be the best in the business. Along with a hardcopy, you may also read BizNS via [www.nscorp.com](http://www.nscorp.com)

Like individuals and company's alike, CSX had done and is continuing to cut cost where it can. Over the past two months, 4 freights have been cut from the Richmond railroad scene. Trains Q450 and Q451 that operated between Richmond and Rocky Mount, NC. Freight Q438 handles what Q450 handled and Q405 handles the traffic that Q451 handled. North out of Richmond we no longer have freights Q411 and Q414 between Richmond and Cumberland, MD. Q130 now handles the traffic carried by Q411 and Q139 handles the traffic carried by Q414. Q130 and Q139 WERE all intermodal trains operating between Portsmouth,

VA and Chicago, IL. Management is trying to combine the traffic carried by local freight F773 between Collier Yard in Petersburg and Acca Yard in Richmond. That train carries the same symbol in both directions.

## **"Dick and Willie" Railroad Tour**

by Kenney Kirkman

At approximately 9:15 a.m. on Sunday morning February 15, 2009, Chapter members Jim Overholser, S.R. Winegard, Jeff Sanders, Dorr Tucker and Alan Easome joined up with me at the Foodlion parking lot at Bassett Forks, VA to begin a day long tour along the route of the old "Dick and Willie" Railroad from the Fieldale area eastward through Martinsville and on to Eden, NC and Danville, VA. Initial plans called for us to also go beyond Danville to visit other locations such as the depot at Ringgold on the former Southern Railway line from Richmond to Danville, and on to Milton, NC to see the depot there on the former Norfolk Franklin & Danville rail line. But our day would conclude at Ringgold.

Jim Overholser, our van driver, first stopped at the Norfolk Southern freight yard at Payne VA which is on the former N&W line between Roanoke and Winston-Salem. Here we viewed two sets of NS switchers sitting in the yard. One switcher works the Martinsville area while the second proceeds south of Martinsville to points such as Madison NC and Pine Hall NC. Years ago the N&W had a turntable at Payne along with a large water tank. A tiny section of concrete from the turntable still remains while the water tank is now located in the town of Ridgeway VA.

Just south of the former N&W yard at Payne is the little town of Fieldale. Here, the "Dick and Willie" or Danville and Western Railway trains stopped at a brick depot

before making their way westward to the town of Stuart in Patrick Country, or eastward back to Martinsville, Eden and Danville. We stopped to view the "Dick and Willie" station at Fieldale which was recently heavily damaged by an arson fire. The track that once ran by the Fieldale station was removed in the 1990s when the Fieldcrest Mills plant closed.

Proceeding a couple miles eastward from Fieldale, we then stopped at the former junction between the "Dick and Willie" and Norfolk and Western lines at the village of Koehler. The Koehler depot is long gone, but the connection remains, but it only serves a scrap metal business located approximately two miles east of Koehler on the "Dick and Willie" line. From the scrap metal business eastward the "Dick and Willie" track remains into Martinsville, but has been unused for several years.

After stopping at the two sites of "Dick and Willie" stations in Martinsville, we then followed the abandoned right of way from the eastern city limits of Martinsville to the town of Axton, VA. The Axton depot still stands, but the track here was removed in the early 1990s. As we continued from Axton southward to the village of Cascade in Pittsylvania County, it was hard at times for us to tell exactly where the "Dick and Willie" right of way once was. And, it was even much harder for us to imagine since the track has been gone for so long, that this area was where the 1976 "Independence Limited once traveled. Nature sure has a way of reclaiming unused land doesn't it!

After leaving Cascade, we then followed the "Dick and Willie" route through the Draper, Spray and Leaksville sections of Eden, NC. At Draper, the old depot still stands, and just up the line from Draper, a present day brick facility stands adjacent to the entrance to the Miller Brewery Plant.

Also near the Brewery is a branch line to a Duke Power Plant along with various sidings to other facilities. In the Spray section of Eden, the track remains across the Smith River, but is not used. Between the Spray and Leaksville sections of Eden the track has been removed along with the brick depot at Leaksville which was torn down circa 4 or 5 years ago.

Leaving Eden, we then followed the "Dick and Willie" route into Danville and stopped in Danville to visit the former Southern Railway station area and to walk the rail trail area that includes the bridge across the Dan River which the "Old 97" train would have come across had it not wrecked at another location further west. While at the Danville station we saw a NS engine and a caboose with NS wrote on the side of the caboose coming off the former Norfolk Franklin and Danville line that goes eastward a few miles to the Goodyear Tire Plant.

Following a brief stop at Dundee Tower in North Danville, we then proceeded eastward to view the beautifully restored depot on the former Southern Railway Richmond to Danville line at Ringgold. On display adjacent to the Ringgold station is an N&W caboose. The rail line has been abandoned from Ringgold eastward to South Boston, with some five miles of the right of way from Ringgold eastward having been converted into a biking, hiking trail. Along this trail is a five arch stone bridge that we had hoped to see, along with going on to the town of Milton to view the depot there. But the daylight was getting shorter by the time we were wrapping up our stop at Ringgold, so perhaps another time we will be able to take in more of what railroading history in this part of southern Virginia and northern North Carolina has to offer.

## Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

The town of Abingdon VA has been working on a beautification project for the former N&W depot which has been underway for several months. A small section of track has been located adjacent to the south end of the depot where has been placed. (From the 'Whistle Stop', Watauga Chapter newsletter).

Former N&W dining car D-1 class 492 has entered a new phase of life. It has been relocated from an old freight house siding in Newcastle, Maine to the Conway Scenic Railroad in North Conway, New Hampshire. Built in 1949 by Pullman, Car 492 was one of four dining cars built for the N&W and used on the Powhatan Arrow and Pocahontas trains. In the 1980s it, along with two PG class coaches, were donated to the Maine Rail Group/Down East Rail, moved over the road to Newcastle and re-railed. The Conway Scenic Railroad advises that the car 492's stainless steel kitchen and utility systems will be upgraded, and the dining section will be furnished to suit the expanding dinner train program on the Conway Scenic. (News from MRG, INC./DOWNEAST RAIL) via 'The 470', newsletter of the 470 Railroad Club, Portland Maine.)

In Britain on Saturday, January 31, 2009, Peppercorn Pacific Class A1 No. 60163, the "Tornado", hauled her first passenger train on the Network Rail main line from York to Newcastle-upon-Tyne and return. "Tornado" is the first new mainline steam locomotive to be built in Britain since "Evening Star" was built in 1960. The train consisted of 11 coaches and ran at speeds up to 75 miles per hour. All original Peppercorn A1s were scrapped by 1966 after only a 15 year average service life. (Various sources)



another award is made. Since he was not present to receive the lantern at the December meeting, several members met with S.R. on Saturday, January 24th and made the presentation. Present for the occasion was Ken and Beth Miller, Jim Overholser, Dorr Tucker and Jeff Sanders.

S.R. was actually a charter member of the Roanoke Chapter, having been present at the re-organizational meeting in November 1967. He was active in the Chapter until a promotion took him out of the state for quite a number of years. Upon his return, and subsequent retirement in 1990, S. R. rejoined the Chapter. He has been an invaluable help, particularly to our mechanical committee, because of

## Chapter "Thank You" Award

by Jeff Sanders

Member S. R. Winegard is the recipient of the Chapter's "Thank You" award. This award is presented to members who have contributed significantly to the Chapter through the years. Even though the announcement of the award was made at the December dinner meeting, S. R. was unable to be there to receive the "Thank You" lantern.

The lantern is an original N&W Ry trainman's lantern, to which the names of the award winners have been attached. The winner keeps the lantern for a year, or until

his experience as a Fireman, Engineer, Road Foreman of Engines, and Air Brake Instructor with N&W/NS. His vast knowledge of locomotives, and his willingness to share that knowledge, has been a tremendous help in working through many problems with the Chapter's two diesel locomotives. He has given of his knowledge and time unselfishly through the years.

Therefore, the officers, directors and members of the Roanoke Chapter are proud and pleased to present this award to S.R. Winegard, with a sincere "Thank You" for your contributions through the years.

## Unusual Passenger Movement

by Joe Fagan

When I was working as a telegrapher in the MH telegraph office in the Roanoke passenger station and as a leverman in the Randolph Street Tower in the 1950s about once a year a special Pullman car came through with advance telegraphed notice to the Station Master warning people to stay away from the car. The car was a big heavy-weight Pullman with all of the shades pulled down and no lights showing. It was always on the rear of train 17 that departed Roanoke at 9:15 P.M. All of the passengers aboard that car were leprosy patients going to a leprosy colony at Carville, Louisiana. That was one somber looking Pullman car.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

**Regular Meeting Locations are at the O. Winston Link Museum.**

March 19, 2009 - General Meeting

April 7, 2009 - Board Meeting

April 16, 2009 - General Meeting

April 18, 2009 - Outing on Amtrak,  
SOLD OUT!

May 5, 2009 - Board Meeting

May 9, 2009 - Celebration at the  
Station, Link Museum

May 21, 2009 - General Meeting

June 2, 2009 - Board Meeting

June 18, 2009 - General Meeting

**Visit us on the web: [www.RoanokeNRHS.org](http://www.RoanokeNRHS.org)**

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