



Turntable **TIMES**

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

Volume 42, Number 1
January-February 2010





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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 regular meeting on Thursday, January 21st at 7:30 pm. at the Link Museum located in the former N&W Passenger Station, 101 Shenandoah Avenue.

Our February meeting will be held on Thursday, February 18, 2010 at the O. Winston Link Museum in the auditorium.

Watch the website to see the announcement of the programs for these meetings! The website is normally updated frequently, with important notices of meetings, weather announcements and other information, the address is www.roanokeNRHS.org.

Be sure to check out the possible outing by our friends at the Blue Ridge Chapter NRHS in the article on page 8, quick action is required if you are planning to participate.

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 March/April 2010 issue of Turntable Times is Thursday, February 18, 2010. Please send articles, information and 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: kkirkman50@hotmail.com and Ken Miller at klmiller@rev.net

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.

Cover Photo

On the former Potts Valley Branch of the N&W, the restored Paint Bank depot still stands on October 24, 2009. These two story depots are somewhat rare on the N&W, providing living space for the agent and his family on the second floor, in places normally too remote to easily travel to and from, these were the norm.

K.L. Miller Photo

Membership Report

By Walter Alexander, Membership Chairman

During the last 3 months we have received 24 new members. Please make welcome Linda Leone, Gloria & John Garnand III, Wizzy Strom, Nancy Pierce, Janie & Gary Wood, Cara Wood, K. Engle Paschal, Richard Wm. Jenkins, Shirley & Harold Hunley Jr, Keith Barnett, Angie & Abbey Mooneyham, Jane & William Harris III, Thomas Harris, Megan & Mark Erickson, Mary Burton, Jane DePreiter, Bill Weiss, and Russell Chu.

At the end of 2009, membership stood at 166. However, of these, 40 had not yet renewed for 2010. Please check the mailing label of this newsletter as it will show your dues expiration date. If it shows 2009, you are delinquent, so please send in your dues at once! I plan to prepare a new Membership Roster in March, so pay your dues in time to be included in that roster and also avoid a disruption in receiving mailings from NRHS Headquarters and the Chapter. If there are any questions about your dues, please contact me.

The Chapter has email addresses for 56 members. From time to time there is late-breaking news that we email to these members. We also email the Minutes of Chapter Meetings shortly after the meeting. If you would like to be included in receiving emails from the chapter, please send an email to me at TERRAPIN66@COX.NET with a note "I want to be included in email distribution of Chapter news." Your email address will only be used for Chapter related messages.

The mailing of Turntable Times has been reduced from over 250 copies to 115 copies. These are now sent by First Class mail rather than Bulk Mail. We no longer mail paper copies to other NRHS Chapters, muse-

ums, and clubs. Instead, these are sent the newsletter as a PDF attachment to an email. Also, 25 of Roanoke Chapter members have elected to receive the electronic version of Turntable Times rather than a paper copy. If you would like to switch from a paper copy to a PDF (in color), please send an email to me at TERRAPIN66@COX.NET and say "I want TT via PDF." You will receive the newsletter earlier and help save the Chapter a little money.

Mixed Freight - Jan/Feb 2010

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Well, 2010 is here. 2009 was something else on a variety of fronts especially in terms of NRHS members being tapped on the shoulder by the Grim Reaper. The Blue Ridge Chapter, Old Dominion Chapter and the Roanoke Chapter were especially hard hit this past year as a number of key and well loved and respected members were called forth to meet their maker. Lets hope and pray 2010 will not be like 2009 on that front. Let those of us whom are still here continue to give spiritual support to the families and friends of the deceased.

I bring the following up periodically because I feel it is necessary. The Turntable Times welcomes ALL members within the Roanoke Chapter and the NRHS period to contribute articles, photos and personal railroad oriented accounts. You don't have to be a master writer. Just express yourself in your own words. Personally, I wish someone would come forward to report on the railroad scene including Roanoke, Clifton Forge, Lynchburg, Danville and the region in between. Maybe a small contingent could work together. Keep in mind that The Turntable Times is bimonthly so you have two months to prepare an article.

There has been much dialogue going on

about a consortium of railroad historical organizations working together to attract railfans to the region and thus adding another source of revenue to the Roanoke, Clifton Forge and Lynchburg triangle. About 5 years ago, a parallel idea came to life up in Pennsylvania along the former Pennsylvania Railroad stretching from Horseshoe Curve to Sumerhill, a distance of 21 rail miles. It is known as Allegheny Mountain Magic and distinctive light blue signs with black lettering are positioned to alert visitors of points of interest. This area has been a draw for railfans for decades. The AMM marketing idea has indeed increased business to a number of businesses such as lodging, restaurants, ma & pa establishments and especially railfan point of interest locations. For those of you reading this and will be active with this idea for this Virginia rail interest triangle, you may want to call 814-886-8871 or check out www.gallitzin.info AMM even has a 12 page foldout brochure to give visitors information on the numerous points of interest and businesses.

This one got by me and I just discovered it back in early November. The former C&O Railway depot at Lee Hall, Virginia was moved from the southside of the high iron to the northside back in August. The depot was divided into two sections for the move and required two days. Crossing protection signals had to be removed for the move. Moving the depot indeed created a more desirable train watching location in my opinion. The move of that building has been talked about for probably 10 years if not more. At one time it housed an N gauge model railroad layout. Lee Hall is just a few miles east of Williamsburg.

Those of you whom keep up with today's railroad happenings are aware of the numerous corridor projects going on with Norfolk Southern. If you are interested in finding

out more information on the benefits of partnerships and railroad corridors, you should visit a website created by Norfolk Southern known as TheFutureNeedsUs.com Roanoke is at the crossrailroad of the east west Heartland Corridor and the north south Crescent Corridor.

December 18, 2009 marked 100 years since the Virginian Railway broke all known records of the day by forwarding a coal train east to Tidewater Virginia that was one mile and six feet in length. The train had 120 forty four foot steel hopper cars loaded with fifty tons each of West Virginia's finest.

I attended quite a few model railroad open houses back in November, national model railroad month. For me a good deal of entertainment comes from eaves dropping on people's conversations about the layouts. Kids are no exception. One little boy whom I estimate to be about 3 years old exclaimed "When I grow up, I want to a macamotive". His father did his darndest to get the tike to say locomotive but to no avail. I's sure time and a little patience will get the little guy on the correct enunciation track.

Norfolk Southern to Expand Philadelphia Rail Yard

Norfolk Southern recently announced plans to expand its rail yard at the Navy Yard in South Philadelphia by 15 acres. The expansion will be part of Norfolk Southern's goal of getting more freight onto trains and off highways. The South Philadelphia Yard is currently made up of some 45 acres.

The Navy Yard terminal will be served by two daily trains, and will connect to Norfolk Southern's planned 2,500 mile Crescent Corridor between New York and New Orleans. The Navy Yard is expected to handle more than 72,000 containers and trailers annually.

When the Crescent Corridor plans are completed by about 2020, annual benefits for Pennsylvania are expected to include cargo on 700,000 trucks taken off highways and put onto rail, nearly 10 million gallons of diesel fuel saved, and a reduction of 10,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions Norfolk Southern officials stated.

Pennsylvania is taking the lead along with Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi in seeking some \$300 million in federal funds for the corridor. Total cost of the Crescent Corridor will be \$2.5 billion. This will include a new \$95 million terminal in Greencastle, PA, \$52 million in improvements to a terminal in Harrisburg and track and signal improvements in nine Pennsylvania counties.

(Above excerpted from an article by Linda Ford in the Philadelphia Enquirer, dated Nov. 3, 2009 submitted to Turntable Times by Sheila Dorr.)

My Memories of a One-Way Trip (part one)

by Joe Fagan

Part one of this story was printed in the Turntable Times Vol. XXIV, No. 2, February 1991. Probably a few readers have forgotten that epic treatise so I will recap it in a much abbreviated form. It began in June 1945. I had been sent from the Bainbridge Radioman School to the Washington D.C Navy Yard Barracks. No explanation of why was made. It was located only a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol. There were lots of cool things to investigate there. The USS Constitution (less the masts) was there being used as a school. President Roosevelt's yacht and his run about boat too. The city of Washington with all of its museums and government buildings were there for us to explore. The capitol building was open to

wander in freely. I visited Ford Theater and stood in the box Lincoln was in. The Navy School of Music was just across the river in the Anacostia Receiving Station. The bands practiced in the drill field in front of the Navy Yard barracks. Almost every noon and evening meal was to the strains of music. Some times it would be a classic quartet or a swing band or even a country group or jazz. The only thing that was unpleasant was having to take those darned shots. There were forty of us in the group but none of us knew where we were going. They took us to the State Department and issued all of us passports and gave us all another leave for ten days home. We were given a list of toiletries to bring back with us and what not to bring which included our entire sea bag except for one set of blues, two sets of dungarees and our shoes and skivvies. I still didn't know where I was going. But what the heck, I was just a kid just turned nineteen.

Now begins the train trip. When my leave was over, I boarded Train 42 in Bristol, VA and headed back to Washington. The train was supposed to arrive there at 6:30 a.m., but had fallen down so that I didn't get to the Navy Yard until about 9:00 a.m. When I walked through the gate, I found my mates all in formation read to board a bus to go - you guessed it - to Union Station. Well I got away with being late that time.

There were two old Pullmans waiting for us. They were the last cars on a regular RF&P railroad passenger train bound for Richmond, VA. We (forty of us) were on our way south in short order. Down by Quantico Marine Base, through Fredericksburg and on into Richmond.

In Richmond our cars were switched to a Seaboard Air Lines Ry train and in no time at all we were off to Raleigh, NC. Beyond Raleigh we went through Hamlet, NC and

crossed over into South Carolina enroute to Atlanta, GA. Somewhere in the backwoods of South Carolina the old steam engine broke down. The air pumps went out. We were stuck there for four hours waiting on another engine. I'll bet we threw two tons of ballast at a creek off to the side of the track. We must have lost a lot of time because it was early morning of day two of our trip when we left Atlanta, GA enroute to Birmingham, AL, still on the SAL Ry under steam power. It was mid morning when we arrived in Birmingham.

There were a few hours of layover time in Birmingham, so we had time for a swim in a YMCA pool and lunch in a nearby hotel dining room. We returned to our Pullman cars, which now were coupled to a SLSF Ry train soon to depart for Memphis, TN. Our passage to Memphis was much better than over the SAL Ry. We still were under Steam Power. We must have been in a pretty hot train because we highballed across Mississippi with hardly a stop. We arrived in Memphis, TN in late afternoon. We didn't see much of Memphis because we were set off in a right big yard and the view was blocked. We were soon tagged onto the rear of a Missouri Pacific Ry train and on our way across the Mississippi River. That was some sight to see for a mountain boy who had never seen a river bigger than the New River at Radford, VA.

It was dark shortly after we got into Arkansas. I slept through most of the state. Right through Little Rock and Texarkana. About all I know of that part of the trip was that it was steam all the way. The train was entering Longview, TX when I awakened on day three. We had a long delay there because we missed a connection.

We pulled from Longview late in the morning bound for El Paso, TX. We were on the Texas Pacific Ry now, still behind

steam and on scheduled trains. The view of Dallas, TX was different. The city just stuck up out of the prairie as if it had no suburbs, just tall buildings standing alone. That all changed on the other side of town. It was urban sprawl all the way to Fort Worth with a big airport in the middle. It took two days to cross Texas. I remember passing towns with names I had heard in western movies - Ranger, Cisco, Abilene, Odessa and Pecos. Most of them even looked like they did in the pictures. I remember going through the King Ranch. It sure was different from the rest of the land around there. It was really well cared for. The closer to El Paso we got the more arid it became. Lots of scrub brush and cactus and bare land.

We arrived in El Paso, TX in late morning and were given liberty until late afternoon. About all we could do was wander around town and 'window shop'. I had a good steak dinner and crossed over into Mexico for a few feet just to say that I had been there. Most of the older men (those over twenty one years old) bought a bottle or two of booze to take along. That proved to put a little excitement in the the next few hours of the trip. Of course these same 'old' men hit a few bars before boarding the train and were quite happy when the train departed on the Southern Pacific Ry. One slight problem became apparent immediately. The Southern Pacific conductor must have been the "granddaddy blue nose teetotaler" in the whole southwest. The first thing he did was wire ahead to some army base for Military Police to shake us down.

As soon as word of that visit to our cars got back to us the guys started looking for hiding places for their bottles. Some of the men tried to hide them in the ventilation openings in the ceilings of the cars. The bottles slid down between the walls and lodged over the windows and other obstructions

well out of reach. They hid bottles up in seat springs, in the drinking water ice and some of them just drank all they could and tossed the rest out the window. Can you just imagine scrapping those cars?

Down the road a piece about twenty military police from some provost marital office boarded the train and gave a close up inspection. I don't think they found a single bottle - just a bunch of passed out sailors. Our luggage puzzled them. They couldn't figure out why a bunch of sailors would be traveling across the U.S. with the things we had in our hand luggage and without any sea bags. Can you imagine going half way around the world with no more stuff than that?

As noted, we departed El Paso on the rear of a scheduled Southern Pacific train still under steam power. We went through Columbus, NM and down to the Mexican border through Douglas, AZ through Bisbee and on to Tucson, AZ and then on to Yuma, AZ. That was really dry desolate country there. We stopped for water far out in the middle of about the biggest nowhere I ever saw. There was one little shack next to the water tank and not another place in sight. Can you imagine living out there? We crossed the mighty Colorado River at Yuma and just west of there we crossed into California. Soon we were in the Imperial Valley among miles of irrigated truck farms then alongside of the Salton Sea. North of that the agriculture turned to orange groves and then that morphed into the suburbs of Los Angeles, CA. Soon we were at the Los Angeles SP Ry passenger station. It didn't take long for us to pick up our ditty bags and say goodbye to the Pullman cars and hello to the Pacific Electric Ry train. At that point all of the farms and orange groves turned into old fashioned oil derricks and nodding monkey pumps shoulder to should-

er almost all the way to Long Beach, CA Navy base. A long hot shower was the most welcome thing there. Little did we know what lay ahead.

According to my additon, starting in Bristol on Sunday night and arriving in Long Beach on Saturday afternoon I had traveled 3,477 miles give or take a mile or two in six days. Except for the distance from Monroe, VA to Washington on the Southern Ry behind AB diesel power and the Pacific Electric Ry in Los Angeles, all was behind steam power.

The Railroad Land Grant Myth

One of the more persistent and harmful myths about U.S. railroads is that during the 19th Century they received enormous land grants absolutely free from the federal government. This is definitely not accurate history.

Railroads were not given the land grants - they were required to pay, and did pay, for them - ten times over. Repayment was in the form of reduced rates on government traffic - passengers, freight and mail.

When the reduced rate requirements of the land grants were repealed by Congress in 1945, a Congressional committee reported: "It is probable that the railroads have contributed over \$900 million in payment of the lands which were transferred to them under the Land Grants Act...the total value of the lands at the time they were granted was not more than \$126 million."

Reduced rates on most government traffic continued in effect until October 1, 1946, raising total estimated payments by the railroads to \$1 and 3/4 billion, or about ten times the value of the land received.

No federal land grant aid was involved in the construction of 90% of the railroad mileage in existence today.

Railroads benefitted from the land grants,

of course. But the greatest beneficiary by far was the American public.

(Above from Southern Pacific Bulletin, via Norfolk and Western Magazine, 3/25/1968 and submitted to Turntable Times by Joe Fagan).

Summary of January 5, 2010 Board Meeting

by Jeff Sanders

Directors attending the meeting were: Jeff Sanders, Eddie Mooneyham, Skip Salmon, Jim Cosby, Landon Gregory, Bill Mason, Carl Jensen, Ken Miller and Jim Overholser. Also present was Membership Chairman Walt Alexander.

- Minutes of previous Regular and Special Meetings were approved.

- Treasurer's Report was made by Jim Cosby, which is available to any Chapter Member upon request. The Amtrak Excursion Report is still being reviewed, with several known outstanding bills to be paid. It appears that the excursions were a definite success. It was reported that the bell on the 522 has been replaced and that member Percy Wilkins' stolen bell has also been replaced. The Board voted to donate \$250 to Roanoke Emergency Medical Services, which is the volunteer organization that furnished EMTS for our fall excursion trips.

- Membership report by Walt Alexander shows that as of Dec. 31 we had 166 members. This includes 24 new members. So far 117 have renewed for 2010, leaving 25 with 2010 dues outstanding. The next Turntable Times will contain important membership information. After discussion about Walt Alexander's suggested membership requirement changes, Jeff Sanders appointed a committee to review Chapter By-Laws and report back to the Board any changes they deem necessary. Walt Alexander will

chair, with Board members Jim Cosby and Jim Overholser serving on the committee. Any changes must be consistent with our Articles of Incorporation, as well as those of the National. Walt will invite to the next Chapter meeting persons listed as "at large" NRHS members, in our area.

- National: The Board voted to provide a Rail Camp Scholarship, if someone from our area makes proper application, and is approved. See Carl Jensen if you know of someone who may be interested in participating.

Committees:

- Mechanical/Equipment/Siding - Eddie reported that our equipment in Spencer has been checked recently, and all is operational at this time. Will Harris will be moving the 25-Ton hi-rail crane to 9th Street for us during his next round of movements. The Chapter will apply for a grant from National NRHS for help in manufacturing a stack for our N&W M2 1118. Our Contract with Spencer for 2010 has been signed and forwarded to NCTM, and we are awaiting its return.

- Virginian Station project. Jim Cosby reported on the latest delay by VDOT in Richmond. The Chapter, our Architect, the City of Roanoke, and the local VDOT office are all working diligently to overcome this problem and get the contract awarded.

New Business

- 2010 Excursions: Jim Cosby will investigate a possible bus/Amtrak trip for the spring. We have been "penciled in" for a fall excursion out of Roanoke for November 6 and 7, subject to approval by Amtrak and Norfolk Southern. Fall excursion routes and destinations and are being explored and will be announced as soon as possible. The Board voted to purchase six additional Chapter radios for excursion use.

- The Chapter's Annual SCC Report has

been submitted.

- National Train Day. The Chapter will participate with VMT, OWLM, Blue Ridge Chapter and C&OHS for the observance of this day in early May.

Amtrak Excursions to Return to Roanoke in 2010 (We Hope!)

As noted above, Amtrak has us tentatively on their schedule as the last of a series of fall trips in the area, much like last year. Our excursions in 2009 went fairly well, benefitted all three local groups, OWLM, VMT and the Chapter, and we hope that NS will look favorably on an operation this fall.

We are in the process of selecting destinations at this time, Bluefield is always a popular destination, but will probably be run on Sunday. Financially our trip to Shenandoah could have done better, operationally, and with the help of the town of Shenandoah it couldn't have worked better, but we are looking at an alternative destination, or destinations for Saturday's trip. Stay tuned for details, we hope to have approval to run sometime in the spring, and a flyer will follow shortly.

Blue Ridge Chapter's Circle Tour of Virginia on April 24, 2010.

A Circle Tour around Virginia. Saturday, April 24, 2010.

If you can't make it to the BRC meeting then Lee needs to be notified by January 13, 2010 if you're mailing him a check. Lee Hawkins' contact info: Bus: 434-522-6704, email: ilhawkins@babcock.com. The total number of people that sign up for the trip at January's meeting will determine if the trip is scheduled or canceled. Important: The \$35.00 check is just for the bus ride from Lynchburg to Richmond. You'll need to purchase your own ticket(s) for the Amtrak por-

tion of the trip at an additional cost. Please contact our newsletter Editor and Amtrak Agent Garland Harper for help in purchasing the Amtrak ticket(s). Garland Harper's contact info: Mobile: 434-660-1218, email: grharper@aol.com. You do not have to be a Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS, member or spouse to take this trip. Space is limited and extra seats will be opened up to everyone after BRC, NRHS, members and their spouses have their opportunity to sign up first on January 13, 2010.

ITINERARY:

Leave from Kemper Street Station at 6:15 a.m. via chartered bus for Richmond's Main Street Station arriving about 8:45 a.m. Spend about 90 minutes in the downtown / Shockoe Bottom neighborhood of Richmond. Board Amtrak train No.194 at 10:17 a.m. from Main Street Station traveling over the former RF&P for Alexandria, VA. Arrive Alexandria at 12:40 p.m.

While in Alexandria eat lunch, perhaps, at Joe Theismann's Restaurant next to station. Other restaurants close by include Five Guys and Hard Times Café. Tour King Street - free street shuttle every 10 minutes to the Potomac River and back; or the George Washington Masonic National Monument; or just hang out at Alexandria's Union Station and watch trains.

Catch NEC Regional train No.147 in Alexandria at 4:17 p.m. arriving in Lynchburg at 7:39 p.m.

At least thirty people are needed to commit to make this trip a reality. We need to know by the February 10 meeting if we have enough to make the bus charter worth our while. The estimate for the bus portion of our trip is \$35. Assuming we decide to go those who have signed up will then need to make their own Amtrak ticket arrangements. Right now the cost to travel on the two trains is \$57. Our Chapter rail travel

consultant, Garland Harper , can assist you in booking. If you have any questions about the trip please contact me, Lee Hawkins, at railhawk46@aol.com OR ilhawkins@babcock.com

Purchase your train tickets on your own after the February 10, 2010, meeting. We should know if the trip is a go or no go by then. We are only reserving the one way bus to Richmond through the chapter. This will cost \$35.00 per person for the bus only, due by January 13th. The cost will be non-refundable unless the trip is canceled.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

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

- January 21, 2009 - Regular Meeting
- February 2, 2010 - Board Meeting
- February 18, 2010 - Regular Meeting
- March 2, 2010 - Board Meeting
- March 18, 2010 - Regular Meeting
- April 6, 2010 - Board Meeting
- April 15, 2010 - Regular Meeting
- May 4, 2010 - Board Meeting
- May 2010 - Chapter Outing (tentative)
- May 20, 2010 - Regular Meeting
- June 1, 2010 - Board Meeting

Visit us on the web: www.RoanokeNRHS.org

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