

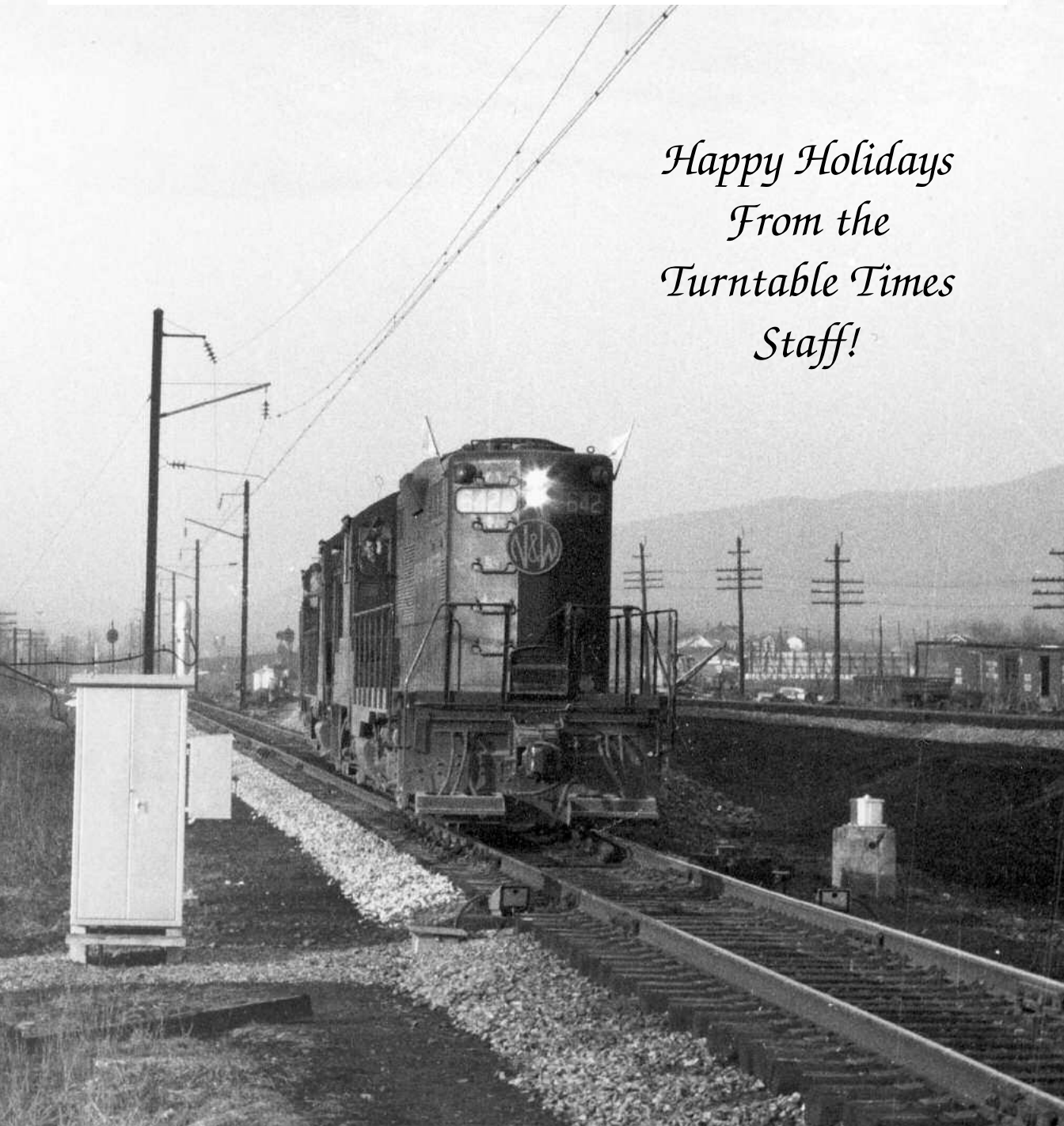
# Turntable Times

Volume XXXI

Number 12

December 1999

*Happy Holidays  
From the  
Turntable Times  
Staff!*



# Turntable Times

**Volume XXXI December 1999 Number 12**

Editor ..... Kenney Kirkman  
Mixed Freight ..... Robin Shavers  
Small Rails ..... Dave Meashey  
Splinters ..... Bill Arnold  
Publisher ..... Richard D. Shell  
Publisher ..... Kenneth L. Miller

**All materials should be sent directly to**

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**590 Murphy Road**

**Collinsville, VA 24078-2128**

## 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 flowers and can be reached at 389-5274.

## Meeting Notice

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next general meeting on Thursday, January 20, 2000 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.

## Deadline for Turntable Times

The deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Saturday, December 18, 1999. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128. After receiving a number of responses and after studying the matter over for some time, Kenney has decided to remain as editor of Turntable Times. So, please continue to send any articles and information for the newsletter to Kenney at the address listed above.

## Cover Photo

The N&W and Virginian merger is only 10 days old as a loaded coal train crosses over to go into the former Virginian at VN in west Salem. N&W 642, 804 and 723 carrying white flags lead the train under the wire on December 11, 1959. William P. Cecil photo.

## December and January Schedule

by Bill Arnold

As we had discussed at an earlier Chapter meeting, due to a lack of communication, the Chapter lost our Saturday night Banquet reservation at the Hotel Roanoke for December 1999. At the membership's direction, we have decided to hold our annual banquet at the Hotel Roanoke on Saturday, January 22, 2000. We have received confirmation of our regular Saturday night date for December of 2000.

### Mark these dates on your calendar:

#### Thursday, December 9, 1999

Plan to be at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. 303 Norfolk Avenue beginning at 7:15 pm for a night of socializing and partake of some elegant desserts. Bonnie Molinary and Wanda Troutman are planning on procuring a variety of desserts and accompaniments for our enjoyment as well as plenty of socializing. It should be a night of fun—with very little business other than the installation of officers for 2000.

#### Thursday, January 20, 2000

Regular Chapter meeting held at the church at the regular time.

#### Saturday, January 22, 2000

We will hold our annual banquet at the Hotel Roanoke at 7:30 pm. Our guest speaker will be Lewis I. (Bud) Jefferies author of the popular 1980 book; N&W: Giant of Steam. Bud has

promised a program that will be tailored to everyone.

As per the membership vote at the November meeting, we will have a buffet style meal served in the room with two different entrees, vegetables, salads and desert. The cost of this will be \$21 per member, family member or significant other. Cost for any other guest is \$26 per person. Please make your reservations with Bill Arnold at 387-3217 or Jow Austin at 343-3131 no later than January 15, 2000 and pay at the January 20th meeting.

### **Small Rails - December**

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers will be running trains on their layout at Crossroads Mall during the holiday season. The club has worked for several weeks prior to Thanksgiving to get things ready. Starting the Friday after Thanksgiving, the club will run trains on Friday evenings, Saturdays, and Sunday afternoons through December 19th. Several new people have visited during the work nights and expressed an interest in joining the club.

The club has also passed a set of bylaws. The club's officer's are investigating incorporation as a non-profit corporation. This will allow us to receive tax-deductible gifts and donations.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators held their November meeting at the home of Tim Kelly in Salem on November 20th. Tim had set up some track on his patio, and the day was absolutely glorious. During one part of the afternoon, three trains were running on this single track. Two of the trains were running on track power. The members decided to suspend meetings until next spring, since we had no prospect for a Holiday gathering (such as running trains for a church or retirement home) for a December meeting.

### **Mixed Freight - December**

by Mr. Robin Shavers

By the time your eyes view this writing, the Conrail split takeover by Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation will be almost 6 months old. A lot has been said, speculated, written and opinionated about the transaction that is now a reality. With a rather contentious startup and months of delayed trains, upset customers, curious observers, things have begun to settle into place for the better for the most part. Everything is not 100% satisfactory yet and that is to be expected. A railfan associate whom is also an engineer for CSX recently informed me that the acquiring of former Conrail executives in the upper ranks has indeed been good medicine for CSX. My associate is quite impressed with new CSX Transportation president Ronald J. Conway. I will not elaborate on what Mr. Conway has accomplished or plans to do at CSX. All of that and more can be found on pages 38 and 39 within the December 1999 issue of TRAINS magazine.

Perhaps the most interesting happenings on the railroad scene that would concern readers of the Turntable Times is the variety of locomotives found powering CSX and NS freights. I mentioned this fact a few months back and the motive power variety continues. You even find CSX diesels on NS freights and vice versa. Both railroads have leased units from leasing firms as well as other railroads. These units can be found leading as well as trailing. Some lashups I have personally observed have been pure lease without a single NS unit found within the lashup. One thing I'm happy to see continue is CP Rail System units on a train each way on the former Southern Railway between Linwood, N.C., and the Delaware & Hudson Railway up north. Along with C.P. Rail System diesels powering these trains symbolized 11R southbound and 12R northbound, SOO LINE and St. Lawrence & Hudson painted units along with Conrail and NS diesels are used too. If you have not photographed a St. Lawrence & Hudson painted locomotive and wish to, you might

## Roanoke Chapter Acquires 1st N&W GP30 for Preservation

by Ken Miller

At the August meeting the membership approved, based on certain pre-purchase conditions, the Board's authorization to purchase a historic Norfolk and Western diesel locomotive. N&W's first unit of "second-generation" power was purchased from Cycle Systems in Roanoke and subsequently delivered to our 9th Street Facility on October 28th.

N&W 522 was the first of a series of 44 N&W GP30s with delivery beginning in early July 1962. These units developed 2250 HP and were ordered in early 1962 as replacements for the former Virginian electrics that ran between Mullens, West Virginia and Roanoke. N&W had decided that standardization on all diesel

power was the best course and with the aging infrastructure of the Virginian electrification (installed 1924-25) a cost reduction factor in physical plant was also considered.

After much success with the GP9s and GP18s, EMD's recently introduced new higher horsepower units as GP30s, the N&W opted for purchase of these units. Interestingly enough, some of these units were purchased under a Virginian Railway trust as can be witnessed from the trust plate on the photo below. The plate was located just above the front truck brake cylinder on the lead truck at lower left.

The number series followed the N&W GP9 passenger units (500-521), GP30s were 522-565.

EMD first delivered the GP30 in July 1961 and continued production until November 1963 when the GP35 was first introduced in October



of that year. EMD produced approximately 908 cab units and 40 GP30B units (no cabs or controls, all delivered to the Union Pacific). The only other major variation was both N&W and Southern opted for designating the long hood as the front and having a high short nose for more crew protection. Among other options that N&W purchased was dual control stands and dynamic brakes.

The N&W would also acquire 9 additional GP30s with the merger with Nickel Plate in 1964, these units were more typical with a low nose and single control stand.

The GP30 served in a variety of assignments over the years, according to my records they were first assigned to time freight service, at least on the Radford Division on delivery. The occasionally appeared on passenger trains as

well. They remained in road service until all were finally retired by late 1990.

The 522 represents our second diesel locomotive preservation effort, and at this writing, the only original N&W GP30 to be so preserved. As an added bonus to the acquisition of the unit it is in operable condition.

The 522 last saw service near Birmingham, Alabama in 1990 in work train service. Retired as part of a designated group of 4 axle power, the 522 was brought to Roanoke and stored in South yard, until sold to Cycle Systems in March of 1991. It was stored serviceable but not operational until operating condition was restored in September and October of this year.

Norfolk and Western Photo, K. L. Miller Collection



want to make that goal a priority. It is my understanding that Canadian Pacific Rail System is repainting diesels with new scheme whereby Canadian Pacific is actually spelled out on the flanks of the long hood complete with the beaver corporate emblem. This new scheme does indeed make for an attractive locomotive set against beautiful Virginia green.

Back in October, Norfolk Southern announced it will invest \$250 million on infrastructure projects to remove bottlenecks and increase capacity at key locations. The above mentioned spending is part of \$1 billion earmarked for 1999.

In past columns I have made progress reports on a new street bridge being constructed over the west end of Enola Yard that was designed to be railroad enthusiast friendly. The new structure was opened to the public on August 3rd of this year.

Norfolk Southern has been busy installing a digital video recording system known as "Railview". The equipment is installed within a locomotive cab and records what can be seen ahead. It digitally records the train's direction of travel, the sound of the horn, speed and brake applications. Railview becomes activated at 1 mile per hour and continues for 4 minutes after the train has stopped. The technology has been researched and tested for a number of years by NS. Initially 50 diesels will receive Railview.

Along with Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific, Kansas City Southern is also a partner with EMP, Equipment Management Program. Conrail was a partner too until it's takeover occurred.

## **The Tinline Revival**

by Dave Meashey

A good number of us had Lionel, American Flyer, or Marx trains as children. These sturdy toys brightened our holiday season and special birthdays. Some lucky children were even allowed to keep their trains up all year round. For many of us the toy trains were an introduction to model railroading or an abiding love for

real railroads (or both). While the toy trains have languished for several decades, they are presently enjoying a revival of popularity.

Lionel and American Flyer are now made by the same company, and a new Marx Trains company is producing a delightful, although expensive, line of lithographed tinline trains. There are several "new kids on the block" who are making a name for themselves. The most popular among these new manufacturers is MTH (Mike's Train House). MTH is making both collectable trains for adult operators and some really nice starter sets for today's children. Atlas, K-Line, Weaver Models, and Williams Electric Trains are also producing some outstanding offerings for the three rail enthusiasts.

S gauge has not been forgotten either. S-Helper Service Inc. and American Models are beginning to fill the void caused when LTI (Lionel Trains Inc.) decided not to expand its American Flyer offerings. American Models even has a new steam locomotive for S gauge.

The new toy trains are still fairly pricey and aimed more at the collector than younger children, but that's changing too. The manufacturers realize that the hobby cannot grow unless new generations can have fond toy train memories. Several manufacturers are now working on more moderately priced sets that have a great deal of play value. Some of these sets even have interactive computer games to go with them. I don't know of any Pok'eMon trainsets as yet though.

## **Here and There**

by Kenney Kirkman

NS has announced plans to abandon the 6.26 mile Wilder Spur Extension in Southwest Virginia. This trackage includes the longest tunnel on NS, the 8,240 foot long Sandy Ridge Tunnel, placed in service in 1958. Trackage east of the tunnel to Carbo Yard, will remain operational. (Old Dominion Chapter newsletter, Highball, via Shenandoah Valley Express, newsletter of Shenandoah Valley Chapter, NRHS and Shenandoah Valley Railroad Club).

Shenandoah Rail Initiative, Inc., based in

Strasburg, VA, is working on a Civil War train tour that would operate between Winchester, VA., and Martinsburg, WV. The 41.9 mile rail line travels through an area rich in Civil War history. The Winchester & Western Railroad has agreed to give access to its tracks, which run parallel to Interstate 81 between Williamsport and Winchester, VA. (Potomac Rail News via Shenandoah Valley Express).

The Great American Station Foundation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation have placed Harper Ferry's former B&O station on their list of the Top 10 Most Endangered Stations in America. The station was built in 1892. Mayor Stowell of Harpers Ferry would like to see several large interior rooms used to house interpretive displays on the history of the station, a concession area where Amtrak and MARC passengers could buy coffee and newspapers. (Potomac Rail News via Shenandoah Valley Express).

A new dinner train will soon be operating in North Carolina. The special train, which will be known as The Carolina Dinner Train, will run from Aberdeen through Pinehurst and Candor to the village of Star. At Star the train will reverse direction and return the same route to Aberdeen. The price of a lunch excursion is \$36 per person, including the two-hour train ride, the meal and gratuity. Dinner is priced at \$59 per person, including the three-hour train ride, the meal and gratuity. Initially, dinner departures will be at 7:30 pm., Fridays and 7 pm., Saturdays. Lunch will be at 12:15 pm., Saturdays and Sundays. More departures will be added during the peak spring and fall seasons. The first public run for the train will be December 10. The dinner train is a partnership with the Aberdeen, Carolina & Western Railway Company, which recently installed welded rail on the Star-to-Aberdeen line. Reservations are required for individual or group travel and may be made by calling toll-free 877-944-7245. (The River Runner, Yadkin Valley Chapter, NRHS).

The Western Hemisphere's last steam powered railway with regular passenger service, ceased operation earlier this year. Paraguay's

only mainline railway, from Ascuncion, the capital, to Encarnacion, on the Argentine border, shut down in March or April. It's unique locomotive fleet consisted of elderly wood burning steam locomotives. Except for a couple delivered in 1955, all were of World War I vintage. Their Belpair-type boilers and wide fireboxes were designed to burn logs from forest near the right-of-way. Until the end, a regular passenger service was being run four times a week between Ascuncion and Yparacari. Cars were 1960 vintage coaches bought at scrap value from Argentina. Until the 1970's, the Ferrocarril del Paraguay was the final link in through passenger service between Buenos Aires and Ascuncion. (Rail Travel News via The Green Block, Central New York Chapter).

And, if you're interested in getting something totally different for that special loved one or friend for Christmas, then how about a railroad town. Really!!! Charles H. Brunken of Rocky Ford, Georgia is selling nearly all of a historical district of a town in the "Old South" that includes a 900-foot siding on the main line of the NS RR (formerly Central of Georgia Railroad). We are selling it all, says Charles, just make an offer. For further information, contact Charles H. Brunken at 912-863-4901 or fax: 912-863-7609. ( From Gondola Gazette, Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society, Inc.).

### **Merger Accomplished 40 Years Ago!**

At one minute after midnight on December 31, 1959, two great railroads became one when the merger of the Norfolk and Western and the Virginian Railways was accomplished. That time marked the beginning of the new Norfolk and Western Railway Company - an aggressive on-the-go system with 2,746 miles of road and 5,870 miles of track, more than a billion dollars in assets (with subsidiaries), nearly 82,000 freight cars, the nation's newest and most modern fleet of diesel locomotives, great tide-water terminals and a variety of other up-to-date facilities. The unification was the completion of a huge job well done by the owners,

directors, officers and employees of the two corporations.

The dramatic, eventful midnight hour not only signalized the consummation of the merger from a legal standpoint, but the beginning of actual operation of the two railroad properties as one. Just one hour and ten minutes after midnight, December 1, a 200-car coal train moved from the former Virginian Railway onto the rails of the Norfolk and Western at Abilene, Va. At 6:35 a.m. Virginian time freight train No. 74 was switched over to Norfolk and Western tracks at Salem so that this train could move into Roanoke Terminal for yarding and consolidation of its cars into N&W fast freight trains moving east, north and south. At 9:40 a.m., a Norfolk and Western coal train was shunted over to the former Virginian rails at Glenvar for operation into South Roanoke Yard. And at Richmond, N&W Assistant General Counsel R.B. Claytor filed articles of merger with the Virginia State Corporation Commission. It was the first merger of two major independent railroads in this century.

The employees who had the honor of operating the first trains to move over the merged railroads were: First train to move from Virginian to N&W at 1:10 a.m., December 1 at Abilene (Extra 26-22-27 east) - Engineer R.M. Montgomery, Conductor W.W. Epperson, Fireman E.M. Hart, and Brakemen C.R. Johnson and R.T. Bowden. Second train - Train No. 74 (time freight) moving from Virginian to Norfolk and Western at Salem, 6:40 a.m., December 1 (Diesel units 59 and 65) - Engineer F.G. Williams, Conductor C.H. Campbell, Fireman R.E. Rhinehart, and Brakemen O.H. Martin and W.B. Manning. Third train - coal train pulled by diesel units 633-745-743, moving over the new connection east of Glenvar at 9:40 a.m., December 1. Engineer W.H. Collins, Conductor F.W. Dowdy, Fireman H.C. Saul and Brakemen D.C. Megginson and J.W. Mauck. (From Norfolk and Western Magazine, December, 1959).

**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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