

# Turntable Times

Volume XXXI

Number 11

November 1999



# Turntable Times

**Volume XXXI November 1999 Number 11**

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**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, November 18, 1999 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 Thursday, November 18, 1999. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

## Cover Photo

50 Years ago this November and December, the long awaited new equipment for the Powhatan Arrow finally arrived from Pullman-Standard. The N&W was quite proud and took the train out for a press run and to pose for portraits such as this. N&W Photo.

## Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of Crystal Spring and McClanahan Street on Thursday, November 18, 1999. 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.

The nominees are as follows:

Bill Arnold  
Gary Ballard  
Brian Crosier  
Grace Helmer  
Carl Jensen  
Mike Valentine

Instructions for Absentee Ballot: This year we will be electing four (4) directors. Election will be by secret ballot. Any member may vote by absentee ballot.

To vote by absentee ballot, one must:

1 - Request an absentee ballot from the Secretary or a member of the nominating committee. Members of the nominating committee are Chairman Richard Shell, Joe Austin and Julien Sacks. You will receive (a) one ballot; (b) one "ballot" envelope; and (c) one mailing envelope.

2 - Mark the ballot (vote for not more than five (5) directors. If more than five (5) 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 ballot 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, N.R.H.S.  
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.

## **December and January Schedule**

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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**

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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, 200**

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

### **Saturday, January 22, 2000**

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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. More information and prices on this night at the November meeting, the December 9th social and the upcoming issues of Turntable Times.

## **Splinters from the Board**

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by Bill Arnold

While browsing through some old issues of the Turntable Times, I came across the January 1989 issue where I first introduced you to this column:

“Your Board meets monthly on the first Tuesday to discuss and recommend actions that govern the future of your organization. We have agreed to serve based on your confidence in our ability to do so. A typical Board meeting will run two to three hours. Our discussions run the gamut of items that will further our purpose—to preserve and promote the historical value of railroads—whether in be the donation of a model train set, the purchase of a vintage locomotive, sponsoring an excursion train, or equipping a railcar with various historical exhibits that puts our name and actions before the general public.

If you like or dislike what we are doing, let us know. The make-up of the present Board was published in the December issue of the Turntable Times. Our by-laws make time available to you at our Board meetings for the purpose of furthering or expanding our goals. In an effort to save time, we do request, however, that you submit your request in writing to one of the Board members at least seven days in advance of the scheduled date. This allows us time to research your request and possibly act upon it. How may we help you?

The premise remains the same. We're here to listen and as appropriate, act on your request. If you want to observe, come on down. We will occasionally close the Board meeting for discussion of items that may not be ready for dissemination among the membership, but usually this is not the case.

## Small Rails - November

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers pulled things together and put on a great show at the Salem Civic Center on the weekend of October 16/17. The trains ran well and the layout was looking pretty good at the fall toy, train and doll show. The club has been invited to set up for the Christmas season at Crossroads Mall. Perhaps the club will be able to attract some new members.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators held their September meeting at Karen and Tom Harris' home in Rural Retreat on September 26th. The Harris' are planning to build a new home in the Wytheville area, so this meeting may have been our last chance to see Karen's garden railway in Rural Retreat. A new garden railway will be built in Wytheville. The club did not have a meeting in October, but members were invited to Steve King's 7/8 inch scale meet on October 16th at Steve's home in Rocky Mount.

## Railroad Pot Pourri

by Ray Myers

ALLISONIA TRAIN STATION - The former Allisonia station has a new lease on life - it will open in November as a one bedroom with kitchenette hostel available to hikers on the nature trail that was once the Pulaski-Galax branch. An article on the station plus a picture taken by me on November 11, 1949 was featured in the March 1996 issue of Turntable Times. As a result of my visit there during September the owner will be proudly displaying other railroad pictures taken on that day 50 years ago.

SEPTEMBER CHAPTER MEETING - The potential storm that caused cancellation of the September meeting also cancelled my first visit to a chapter meeting since mid-1987. All was not lost. A silent visit to the 9th street yard coupled with a visit with Julian at the museum and dinner somewhere in southwest Roanoke with the Austins enabled me to "get up to speed" on most happenings. Good luck on your West

Virginia adventure.

AUTO-TRAIN - On September 8th I rode the AUTO-TRAIN one way north. P40's 842 and 833 seemed to pull 34 cars ( 16 passenger and 18 auto racks ) with little effort with arrival ahead of schedule. The consist included five sleeping cars, two diners, one lounge and eight coaches. One diner serves only sleeping car passengers. The steak was more than I could eat and the

No. 609 leads the display train of the new Powhatan December 6, 1949. At the rear of the train are several sleeping cars of the train which covered from Cincinnati to Norfolk with people toured the train. Norfolk and Western Photo.



wine flowed freely during dinner (the meal was equal to that on THE COAST STARLIGHT described in a former article). Amtrak is again following the Pullman Company policy of naming sleeping cars. I was in the state of MAINE car, however there were two distinguished sleeping cars in the consist: W. GRAHAM CLAY-TOR, JR. (former president of Southern Railway, Secretary of the Navy, Assistant Secretary of

Defense and President of AMTRAK) and J. PHILLIP RANDOLPH, first president of the Pullman Porters Union. All AUTO-TRAIN passenger cars are superliners that have been built since 1995. As an oddity I was visiting the Bombardier assembly plant in Barre, Vermont, during August 1996 when sleeping cars MAINE and ARKANSAS were shoved out the door on to the test track. The AUTO-TRAIN averages about

Arrow equipment at Williamson on the morning of  
epers utilized by employees in charge of the the tour  
ch display stops at 16 locations where a total of 38,615



20,000 passengers and their cars per month, or about 333 passengers per trip. Looking at the passengers when they are awaiting for their cars to be unloaded one would not have much difficulty in thinking that the AUTO-TRAIN is a nursing home on wheels. It is indeed a great way for we oldsters to go back and forth.

ORANGE JUICE TRAIN - Tropicana's unit juice train has been running five plus days per week with trains going from Bradenton, Fl to Jersey City and Cincinnati since last summer. A new type of car is being tried that has no refrigeration unit - the cars are sealed and filled with compressed gas that are said to hold the temperature within a few degrees. The cars are marked CRYO-TRANS with reporting marks CRYX and are painted white with a wide orange band at the roof line and along the bottom. All cars are loaded with 18,000 gallons of juice in cardboard cartons as you buy in the store.

## **Now There's a Prototype**

by Dave Meashey

For many years most brands and gauges of model railroad track have been manufactured with plastic ties. Not very true to the prototype, but the plastic tie strips are relatively cheap to make, and usually come with a nice molded-in wood grain. Ironically, sometimes the toy and model train community are precursors for the real railroads. When the real railroads began using prefabricated track to restore service at wreck sites, they nicknamed it "snap track" for Atlas's HO gauge track sections.

Now the same thing is happening with railroad ties. The October issue of Finescale Railroader has a photograph on page 23 of "recycled plastic composite railroad ties being installed at Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center, Crane, Ind." I have seen park bench timbers at Garst Mill Park made of this type of material. It looks like fairly tough stuff. It won't rot, and it never needs painted. I suppose it could take the pounding a railroad tie must withstand. Only time will answer that question. Anyway, now there's a prototype for plastic tie track, and it's a great

way to reuse all those styrofoam cups and food containers. Indian Head Dinner Train The U.S. Navy has given approval to a project that will see a private operator, Northern Central Railways, begin a dinner train operation south of Washington D.C., in Maryland on a heretofore unused 15-mile branch line owned by the Navy. The line runs from the Indian Head Division of the Naval Surface Warfare Center on the Potomac River eastward to near White Plains, Md., on U.S. Highway 301 south of Waldorf, where it connects with CSX's former Conrail (PRR) Popes Creek Secondary which diverges from the Northeast Corridor southward from Bowie, Maryland. Northern Central already operates an excursion line out of New Freedom, Pa.

The new operation will employ the slogan "Route of the Blue Heron." The Indian Head branch, about a half hour south of the nation's capital and which runs along wetlands surrounding Mattawoman Creek, was built during World War I and last saw regular use in the 1970's, to transport coal, supplies, and other materials to Indian Head. (From The Orderboard, Tampa Bay Chapter).

## **Hurricane Floyd Damages Rail Lines**

While much was seen on television in late September regarding the loss of human life, livestock, and property by thousands of people caused by Hurricane Floyd, little was shown about the damage to rail lines inflicted by the storm.

CSX's "A Line", the route of the former Atlantic Coast Line from Richmond to Savannah, which hosts several Amtrak trains as well as the Auto-Train, was not expected to reopen until September 23rd. At this time the only Amtrak train operated from New York to Florida was the Silver Star, running on Norfolk Southern from Alexandria to Charlotte via Lynchburg and then on an NS freight line to Columbia, S.C., to rejoin its normal route. Norfolk Southern had to shut down operations east of Raleigh, and after a short closure period, Amtrak resumed the state-

supported Piedmont over NS between Charlotte and Raleigh. One track between Selma and Goldsboro was under about 5 feet of water, while NS's line to Morehead City was flooded in several locations. Of particular concern to CSX was its Tar River bridge located about 1 mile north of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. The span apparently was washed completely away by the high water.

On CSX's Florence Division, North End Subdivision, there was a washout at Halifax, N.C., 140 feet long and 30 feet deep. To restore the line 30,000 tons of fill was required, and 400 feet of metal pipe was to be installed where a 15-foot arch failed. In Delaware, Floyd's floodwaters heavily damaged the tourist line Wilmington & Western Railroad, washing away two trestles, damaging three more to varying degrees, and washing out the track at many locations. Damage estimates totaled some \$2,500,000.00. Fortunately, the Wilmington & Western shops were some distance from the stream which overflowed, and none of the equipment, including 0-6-0 #58, which was just placed in service in 1998, was affected.

### **What Will They Think Of Next?**

In its Casual Furnishings Catalog this fall, L.L. Bean is offering a Pullman Club Chair. You can call them at 1-800-221-4221 or write Freeport, Maine 04033. The chair is 32"H x 32"W x 34"D. Colors are light olive and burgundy. Plush and comfortable, the Pullman Club Chair brought a new level of style and grace to train travel in the late 1800s. Just in case you're interested in ordering one these chairs from L.L. Bean for Christmas to go with all the other railroadians you have at home, the sale price is \$1,195.00, plus \$125.00 shipping. (Steel Wheels, Boston Chapter).

### **Volunteers Needed!**

As always we need help in the gift shop. Help Needed at the Gift Shop. Those who volunteer do because they enjoy their time

spent at the shop. While it does not pay financial rewards, it is gratifying to these individuals because of the contacts they make with the customers (and browsers alike). They are given the opportunity to talk about railroad history, particularly how it relates to the N&W and the surrounding area. Can you spare a day? How about a half day (two halves make a whole)? If you've worked before and can spare the time, we'd love to have you back. If you've never worked before, we'll be glad to train you. It is easy! Give it a try—you'll be glad you did, it is very rewarding! Call Ellen Arnold at 389-3217, Grace Helmer at 366-2169 or Paul Howell at 774-2619 for more information or to sign up.

### **Archive Report**

by Ken Miller

Work is still progressing at the Archive Facility at 9th Street. New shelving has been purchased to shelve the growing collection of books and publications.

I hope everyone has been enjoying the from the Archive feature in the Turntable Times, I still have several remaining on disc for future use, if there is interest in these, I will continue production of them.

We recently added Lawanda Ely to our faithful volunteer staff. We have been cataloguing a number of Virginian drawings into a computer database so that a printed catalogue can be produced and copies of these drawings can be offered for sale.

Cataloging is a long rather tedious process and requires concentration and effort, we need your help in this area most weekends are working days feel free to contact me regarding working times.

Our wishlist for the archive, besides more interesting material is for a good copy machine that has the capability to copy up to an 11x17.



**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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