

# Turntable Times

Volume XXXI

Number 10

October 1999



The mid day sun is beating down on the engine crew with extra west No. 1725 in this May 1925 scene. Testing of the Class Y2a Baldwin product of 1919 with the Dynamometer car is underway on this Bluefield bound empty train. In those days the passenger trains are running as first class trains and this extra train is standing in the middle track at Elliston, Va, probably awaiting the passage of passenger train No. 25. N&W Negative Number 7750A

# Turntable Times

**Volume XXXI October 1999 Number 10**

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**

**Editor Kenney Kirkman**

**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 289-5274.

## Meeting Notice

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next general meeting on Thursday, October 21, 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 Monday, October 18, 1999. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

## From the Editor

Effective with the December, 1999 issue of Turntable Times, I will be resigning as Editor. If you are interested in this position, please contact me by letter or phone. Or, you may get in touch with Chapter President Richard Shell or Ken Miller.

## 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.

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. The nominees will be included in the November Turntable Times, and announced at the October meeting.

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. Members of the nominating committee are Chairman Richard Shell, . 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.

## Small Rails - October

by Dave Meashey

As I write this column, the Roanoke Valley Model Engineers has not held a meeting for almost a month. The Big Lick Big Train Operators will not hold their September meeting until Sunday, September 26th. Late summer and early fall of 1999 are turning out to be a slow period for model railroad clubs. This seems strange to me.

The Roanoke area has an abundance of model railroaders, but few of them want to be members of a model railroad club. I'm not sure why this has happened. Perhaps some of them had a bad experience with a model railroad club in another locale. Possibly clubs are perceived as authoritarian and stifling. Perhaps some modelers just don't have time to work on both a home layout and a club project. Whatever the reason, I hope perceptions will change for the better in the future. All of our local clubs could use more good members.

## **Mixed Freight - October**

by Mr. Robin Shavers

On the weekend of August 21st-22nd, the Great American Train Show made it's yearly presence in Richmond, VA. Along with GATS there was an N Gauge Non Convention. This event consisted of a layout with the measurements 260 feet by 80 feet. It was a joint project incorporating modules from numerous N gauge clubs including some from Sweden. It was an impressive layout no matter the angle you viewed it. I don't know the number of trains operating at one time, but I do know the beginning operations were reminiscent of CSX and NS with their respective shares of Conrail during the first months of operation. Once the bugs got worked out, the trains operated as they should to the delight of the thousands of patrons

whom viewed in awe the largest model railroad layout in the world.

It required 4 years of time and \$327 million in funds and it is now finished, Union Pacific's 108 mile triple track project between Gibbon and North Platte, Nebraska. This segment of the railroad is now capable of handling 140 trains a day at speeds up to 70 miles per hour.

The model railroaders in Bluefield, West Virginia and surrounding areas will present their 1999 Railfest during the weekend of November 13th and 14th. The place for the event will be the Bluefield Youth Center located at 1780 Stadium Drive in Bluefield, WV. The time for Saturday will be 9 a.m. til 5 p.m., and Sunday's will be 12 Noon til 5 p.m. There will be twice as many operating layouts and tables of model railroad merchandise and railroadiana this year. For more information, call 304-431-2593 or 304-327-0026.

Sometime ago I reported that former PRR K4 # 1361 had been sent to Steamtown to undergo some major work so that it may again pull excursion trains in the future. Repairs to the firebox, boiler, smokebox, wheels and axles is progressing at a reasonable rate. A new smokebox had to be fabricated. A new smokestack will have to be fabricated too. Cracks in the boiler will be repaired using a patch that will be applied via welding and riveting. If sufficient funds are obtained in time, it is hoped that the locomotive will be ready in time to participate in Independence Day festivities at Steamtown in the year 2000 and Railfest 2000 in Altoona the following October.

Just as I traditionally spend Memorial Day weekend with Conrail in and near Altoona, PA, I usually do likewise with Roanoke for Labor Day weekend. Time is usually spent with the Blue Ridge Live Steamers during Saturday and Sunday. With the B.R.L.S. out of commission,



# From the ARCHIVES

(This will be an occasional feature in our newsletter, featuring materials out of the Chapter Archive Facility)

by Ken Miller

Virginian Railway Photo

How the railroad scene can change! In 1951 the Virginian's main shops at Princeton was a bustling place with over 800 employees, cars

were built and heavy repairs were being done. Since this was the system's only main shop all heavy and class repairs to motive power were done here.

By the merger on December 1, 1959 it seemed that little would change, but the winds of change were beginning to blow. Construction was gradually shifted to Roanoke, heavy repair work began to decline. Employees transferred to other locations. By the mid 1980s the shops had little car work, locomotive repairs had disappeared. Princeton was still a repair point for the cabooses



fleet, but that would end in 1988, only the road-way equipment maintenance was still performed (MofW) shortly that work would be transferred to the new shop at Charlotte, NC. In 1991, the shops would close. Beginning in the mid 1980s, buildings started to be torn down. As of this writing, only a few structures remain. The erecting shop (large building under the two stacks), the storehouse (out of sight behind erecting shop to right) the foundry (large building, left center), and several others that are not visible behind the erecting hall. The large mostly open

car shop still stands with a variety of side walls still reflecting its heritage, as they were constructed utilizing worn out hopper and gondola side sheets with portions of the Virginian lettering still managing to show up, but it will be a fleeting glimpse as soon the wrecking ball and torch will probably take them in the same way almost all of the track and other buildings have been removed, joining the ranks of history



time was focused on busy Norfolk Southern activities. The highlight for me was the wide variety of foreign and leased locomotives. Yes it rained as if God were trying to wash Roanoke and it's environs away. The rain was intermittent and for some reason whenever a unit of interest appeared, the rain disappeared. If anyone would have told me I'd see 4 SD45s in one day in Roanoke in 1999 I would not have believed them. Leasing outfits were Morrison-Knudsen, Helm Leasing, Electro Motive and General American Transportation. Foreign roads included Union Pacific, Burlington Northern in numerous schemes, CSX, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific and Soo Line. Other fans have reported more variety. Eddie Mooneyham joined me for a few hours on Labor Day as we chased and photographed numerous trains with foreign or leased power in the lead including Conrail diesels. So if you live in the Roanoke environs and believe all NS trains are powered by the bland black & white throughbred diesels, get out and see for yourself the current activity that abounds. How long it will last is anyone's guess.

### **This Hit the Fan**

by Dave Meashey

When I worked for Mack Trucks, Inc., one of the design engineers was also a railroad enthusiast. One day he shared a short article from a diesel locomotive manufacturer's company magazine with me. I don't remember which builder's magazine the article was from, but it was both ironic and funny and I'd like to share it with you. I do remember the title was "Boy, Were Our Faces Red!"

A cab type diesel locomotive was being designed. The toilet compartment was located behind the cab, and the draftsman assigned to the toilet compartment drawing was told to put

a vent in the toilet compartment. The design engineer left it up to the draftsman as to where to locate the vent.

The draftsman decided the logical place for the vent would be near the ceiling on the wall between the toilet compartment and the engine room. That's where he drew the vent. That's how the vent was built. No problem; well almost.

The new locomotive model toured various railroads as a test locomotive. One day as the locomotive was being tested on a severe grade, somebody had to use the toilet. The diesel engine was running at full throttle and all the engine room ventilator fans were spinning at full speed as the toilet was flushed. Then something bizarre happened. Instead of going out the drain, the contents of the toilet rose gently into the air and shot through the vent! Yes gentle reader, on this occasion the feces actually did strike the whirling ventilator!

### **NYC Steam Locomotive Comes Home**

The Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter of the NRHS, in Central New York State, was recently awarded ownership of New York Central 0-6-0 #6721, one of only four "modern" NYCRR steam locomotives to have survived the scrapper.

#6721 had been maintained in excellent condition by Carillon Historical Park in Dayton, OH, but they are trimming down their railroad equipment holdings and wished to find a suitable home for the locomotive, which was manufactured and employed in New York State. The U&MV Chapter was judged by Carillon Historical Park to have submitted the best proposal for future care of #6721, displaying it at Utica Union Station.

#6721 was moved from Dayton to Utica in late August 1999. The U&MV Chapter would wel-

come financial support in any amount from other NRHS members to support subsequent site preparation at Utica Union Station, security, lighting, signage, authentic painting and lettering, and future maintenance of the display. Donations are tax-deductible and may be sent to: U&MV Chapter, NRHS Inc., PO Box 257, Whitesboro, NY 13492. (From the Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter, c/o John V. Weber, Treasurer).

## **Old Railroad Under Smith Mountain Lake**

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by Kenney Kirkman

Almost every week or two, something is mentioned in the news about the Smith Mountain Lake area, be it positive or negative. Much of the area beneath the lake has a very interesting history, some of it forgotten. One of those forgotten stories is the one about an old railroad line that stretched from the edge of Bedford County across the Roanoke (Staunton) River into Franklin County.

Beginning around 1909 a wealthy New York physician, Dr. George Meyer, purchased timber rights in the above mentioned area and began building a seven-mile railroad from Bedford County across the Roanoke (Staunton) River into Franklin County. There he could connect with the Franklin & Pittsylvania Railroad at the little town of Penhook. The Franklin & Pittsylvania Railroad operated from Rocky Mount in Franklin County to Gretna in Pittsylvania County.

On September 25, 1909 a deed is recorded of residents of Bedford and Franklin counties and George Meyer who was contemplating building a railroad or tram way from the timber rights on Craddock Creek to Penhook. Meyer was to place cribs at Staunton River to hold up a bridge, erect cattle guards and be responsible for any dam-

age by fire caused from the engine used on the railroad. The railroad was described to run across the lower end of Monroe Bottom and then up Louse Creek.

At the time there was no bridge over the river at Anthony's Ford so Meyer built his railroad trestle 300-400 yards above the old Anthony Ford bridge site, now under the waters of Smith Mountain Lake. Also under the water now is the site of the sawmill which was located on the Bedford County side of the lake.

The Meyer Railroad came into Penhook northwest of the old Franklin & Pittsylvania depot on the south side of present day Route 40. It came up what is now Route 660 by Penhook University (an old one-room school on the west side of Route 660). The line was steel rails, some of it 20 Lb., from its origin in the Staunton River area to Penhook University; the four-tenths mile distance from there to the depot was wood rails.

Operation of the line ceased sometime after 1913.

## **Our Condolences**

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A number of our members may recall when the C&O Historical Society's Diner 965 "Gadsby's Tavern" was at our 9th Street Facility for major mechanical upgrades some years back. One of the regular C&OHS workers was Stewart Bostic, retired from the C&O.

Stewart passed away on Wednesday, October 13th at Roanoke Memorial Hospital. He had been suffering from cancer for several years but retained his spirits until recent weeks. Stewart was a major worker at Clifton Forge for the C&OHS and will long be missed there.

The Chapter extends its sympathy to Stewarts family and many friends.

**PROPOSED CONRAIL LOCOMOTIVES TO NS OWNERSHIP - REVERSE - FORM 11117 (REV. 1/99)**

ROAD NOS.			MODEL	QTY	ROAD NOS.			MODEL	QTY
NS #	CR #				NS #	CR #			
0100	4020		E8A	1	5257-5393	8041-8281	GP38-2	137	
1000,1001	1003,1006		MT4	2	5400-5477	6700-6833	SD50	78	
1100-1115	1101-1128		MT6	16	6701-6716	6840-6867	SD60	16	
1400-1457	1601-1699		GP15-1	58	6717-6762	5577-5653	SD60I	46	
1700-1706	6654-6666		SD45-2	7	6763-6806	5501-5574	SD60M	44	
2557-2580	2557-2580		SD70	24	7200-7216	4101-4129	SD80MAC	17	
2880-2957	7604-7939		GP38	78	8083-8111	6550-6599	C30-7A	29	
3000-3072	3275-3402		GP40-2	73	8200-8212	6000-6021	C39-8	13	
3329-3447	6358-6997		SD40-2	119	8300-8313	6026-6048	D8-40C	14	
3600-3631	5000-5059		B36-7	32	8314-8451	6051-6285	D8-40CW	138	
3800-3820	6925-6959		SD38	21	8480-8493	6620-6644	C36-7	14	
4024-4085	1900-2020		B23-7	62	8543-8548	6611-6649	C32-8	6	
4086-4091	2803-2815		B23-7	6	9400-9422	9400-9422	SW1001	12	
4093-4099	2031-2040		B23-7R	7	9503-9620	9503-9620	SW1500	44	
4800-4817	5063-5089		B40-8	18					
								<b>Total Units - 1,132</b>	

**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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