


# Turntable Times

Volume XXXI

Number 9

September 1999



The late morning August heat is beating down with a thunderstorm brewing as an extra freight lead by a Y6 is rolling east at Singer, Virginia in this 1940 scene. N&W Negative Number 500622

# Turntable Times

**Volume XXXI September 1999 Number 9**

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Mixed Freight ..... Robin Shavers  
Small Rails ..... Dave Meashey  
Splinters ..... Bill Arnold  
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## 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, September 16, 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 Saturday, September 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.

## Archive Report

by Ken Miller

Work continues at our Archive Facility despite a decided lack of time. Some wonderful material has recently arrived for our use, including a variety of Locomotive Cyclopedias from the 1920s through early 1950s and a number of books related to mechanical engineering subjects specifically the mechanics of railroad subjects have been donated by Dorothy Kelch.

Through the cooperation of the Roanoke City Library, we have received their large collection of bound volumes of Railway Age, Railway Gazette and Railway Mechanical Engineer and the related publications. This wonderful collection originally given to the Library many years ago by the Norfolk and Western Chief Engineer's Office received little use while shelved at the Library and was removed to storage over a year ago to make shelf space available.

These volumes are virtually a complete run from 1904 through 1962 with several miscellaneous publications thrown in for good measure. These volumes are generally in good condition, some of the bindings are poor and damaged condition, of course the age of some of this material is approaching the 100 year mark, it is expected to show some signs of aging. These volumes represent the single best source of early information on the history of the railroads in America as almost nothing went undocumented. Sadly today, no publication matches the detail of these publications.

Gary Ballard, Brian Cozier, Bill Mason, Richard Sherman and myself carried two trucks full of the volumes from the library to our facility on

Monday August 29th.

Other recent donations to the archive have been a excellent collection of Locomotive Cyclopedias from 1922 through the edition of 1959-1952 and a large group of mechanical engineering books from the 1920s through the late 1940s. A beautiful piece of folk art of a handmade model of an N&W Class J, 4-4-2, built by George H. Kelch in 1925 that was depicted in an N&W magazine of the time was also part of this collection donated by Dorothy Kelch. We certainly appreciate these great donations towards our goal.

Other recent acquisitions include a huge collection of survey engineer field books from the N&W engineering department. Estimated to be in excess of 400 of these notebooks, most are of little use as are only collections of survey data; i.e. recordings of measurements taken in the field, but some have excellent detail drawings made by the engineer while on site, data recording work performed on a detailed daily basis on various projects, including construction of the Roanoke Freight Station, Shaffers Crossing roundhouse, and Shenandoah engine facility. Of course this only scratches the surface, there is a lot more there that will need to be cataloged and sorted.

One item we are still looking for is a set of bound N&W magazines, we have volumes from the late 1940s through the early 1950s, but would like to have from the first issue in June 1923 onward. Of course, we will accept any volumes offered, complete set or not! Any donations, of course, are tax deductible to the extent of the present IRS code. One major item we would love to have is a working photocopy machine capable of copying flat work up to an 11x17" sheet.

As you may have noted in recent months, we have been publishing the feature "From the

Archive' this is just one of the purposes of the archive facility, to collect materials that may be unavailable otherwise and make them available to interested parties at reasonable costs.

As you may recall from the last issue we offered copied diagrams of Roanoke Terminal from 1930, if there is sufficient interest in this type of material, more will be offered as time permits. If you are looking for particular materials please feel free to write or email me at KMiller611@aol.com, I'll be glad to see what I can find on your request. Copies of materials can be had at reasonable prices, depending on the amount of effort involved in researching such requests may require a research fee, there will be a archive information request form published in the Turntable Times soon listing average fees. Remember we are an all-volunteer organization, and it does cost money to keep the lights on and purchase materials.

## **Book Review**

by John Austen

Rescue by Rail: Troop Transfer and the Civil War in the West, 1863 by Roger Pickenpaugh; 1998, University of Nebraska Press, 312 North 14th Street, PO Box 880484, Lincoln NE 68588-0484; 9-1/4" x 5-3/4", 244pp. + xviii; ISBN 0-8023-3720-0; \$27.95.

This exemplifies the coming of age of the railroads as a strategic force in modern warfare. This was not the first use of railroads to transfer significant bodies of troops in time to influence a battle or campaign; but it is the most noteworthy case in the war.

The book is divided into nine chapters, as well as eight other sections (notes, index, list of maps, etc.). The Prologue and first three chapters set the scene. The Confederates used their railroads in September of 1863 to move most of

Longstreet's corps from northern Virginia to northwest Georgia in time to participate decisively in the battle of Chickamauga and bottle the Union Army of the Tennessee up in Chattanooga. This brought about the plan to transfer a detachment (the XI and XII Corps) of the Army of the Potomac to Tennessee. Chapter One is a succinct account of the status of the railroads up to this point in the war. Chapter Two recounts the Confederate movement. Chapter Three describes the genesis of the Union plan and considers the thorny contentions among the commanders involved.

The actual movement of the two corps is documented in detail in the next three chapters. Chapter Four is devoted mostly to the gathering of the equipment, concentration of the troops, and loading. It continues with the actual movements over the US Military Railroads (Orange and Alexandria) in Virginia and the whole length of the Baltimore & Ohio (including the Washington Branch and the old main line all the way to the end on the Ohio). Chapter Five recounts the experiences of the troops as they pass through Ohio and Indiana, feted and fed by admiring crowds at every stop. Chapter Six covers their return to the South including the movement through Kentucky and Tennessee on the Louisville & Nashville, and the Nashville & Chattanooga. Much of the N & C was built with strap rail: wooden stringers with a strip of iron nailed on top. The movement of the troops was essentially completed within the planned seven days, but the follow-up movement of their transportation (horses, mules, and wagons) took a few days more. Some of the animals had not stood the trip from the east well, so substitutes were taken from stock on hand at Louisville.

The last three chapters recount the actions of the troops thus transferred, and their rescue of the beleaguered force by opening a supply line

to them. In one of the first skirmishes by these troops west of the Appalachians they met their old opponents from the Army of Northern Virginia, whose rail transfer started this whole thing. Here it is pointed out that these movements could not have taken place ten years earlier since not all the railroads were in place at that time. The presence of these two bodies of troops in this place at this time verified that railroads had come of age as tools of war.

The book is very tightly edited and has all of the essential facts straight. Among the very few errors I could find was one instance in which the Louisville & Lexington railroad was identified as the Lexington & Louisville (it's in the index both ways). Another was a discrepancy as to its gauge, said in one place to be 6' and in another to be 4' 4-1/2". The essential point is valid in either case: that it was to be changed to 5' gauge to agree with the Louisville & Nashville and most of the other railroads in the south at that time.

This is a very interesting book, pointing out the technological and organizational advantages possessed by the Union as illustrated in these related but contrasting long-distance rail movements. The anecdotes make it an interesting story; the recounting of the operational problems (and their solutions) make it a valuable study in wartime logistics.

### **Small Rails - September**

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers continue to upgrade the track and scenery on their layout modules. Scenery has had the biggest thrust this month. Most of the scenery stayed intact, but areas that had track changes needed touching up. Structures also got attention. One brick factory got mortar work touched

up, as well as a general weathering. Another abandoned house "grew" a profuse covering of vines.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators did not hold an August meeting, as a host for the August meeting could not be found.

## **Mixed Freight - September**

by Mr. Robin Shavers

**A**mtrak has developed a handheld computer that will allow the company to maintain an up to the moment headcount aboard it's trains. The computer is manufactured by Motorola out of Illinois. The new item will go into service first with the new "Acela" service later this year. It should be fully implemented system wide by Autumn 2000.

The handheld unit was created to enable conductors to collect fares and issue seat checks more easily. As a conductor passes thru a car, a passenger count in the computer will be updated with each passenger marked off or seat check issued.

In an earlier edition of this column, I mentioned that The Blue Ridge Live Steamers would be operating, hopefully, by July of this summer. This did not come to pass and when things will get back on track is anybody's guess. Basically due to some interpersonal conflicts, most of the core members abandoned the group earlier this year. With the exception of a few folks operating their equipment on their own here and there, the property at Burnt Chimney has not enjoyed the activity that used to be common during the spring and summer months.

Here is the latest scoop on the B.R.L.S. A few individuals whom are currently going by the name Live Steamers are hoping to carry on the torch without the personal baggage of the B.R.L.S. The group has held 2 meetings so far and

from my understanding may be starting fresh from the ballast up meaning a new and different property for operating trains. If you are interested in becoming involved or know of someone with a similar interest, contact Rick Anderson at 563-0759 or 362-1714. His partner in grime is Dan Andrews and he can be reached at 982-0233 or 387-8610. Mailing address is Live Steamers, 6711B Williamson Road, Roanoke, VA 24019

CSX Transportation now has two F40PH2 locomotives on it's roster. The units were former Amtrak 390 and 395 and are now numbered 9992 and 9993. The two units have received CSX's modern bright future paint scheme and will be employed to power office car trains.

The Board of Directors of The Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum recently voted to close The Horseshoe Curve National Historic Landmark during winter from January 2nd to March 31st annually. This is one of many cost cutting efforts being implemented.

Plans are in the works to perform some major vegetation clearing at Horseshoe Curve. The Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum in cooperation with Norfolk Southern plans to embark on a \$40,000 project to be performed by a contractor. When complete, the view will be as it was during the end of Pennsy's steam era back in the late 50s. The cost is to be split 50/50. Also, a train watching "theatre" is being completed adjacent to the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum and the high iron in Altoona. The project when completed will include fencing, paving, lighting, landscaping and seating. Granted, this sounds more like something for daisy pickers. Whether this feature will be open to the public 24/7 or strictly for museum patrons during museum hours I do not know at the moment.

# *Dining By Rail*

*by Ray Myers*





From an N&W Magazine article in March 1954, Steward C. E. Richardson ties on an N&W children's bib (Note the class J artwork, imagine how few of these must exist!) while an unidentified waiter serves the next table in this posed photo, the lights power cord is visible across the table at lower left. N&W Photo by Bryan Beard

When you reached the end of the 32 foot passageway in the dining car a man wearing a black suit with a white vest comes up to you as you enter the dining section. "Good evening, sir. Table for one?, Right this way". He shoves aside the aisle seat and pulls back the window chair. "How's this?"

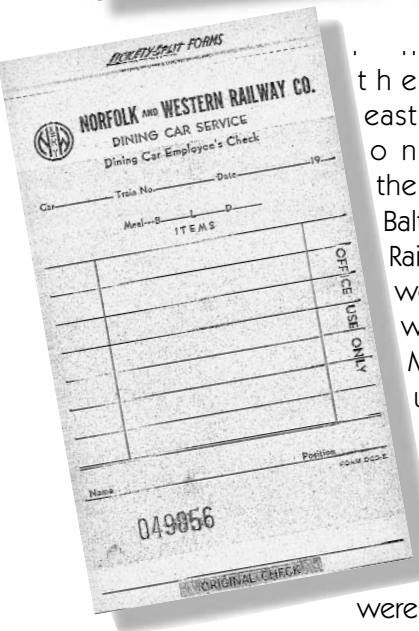
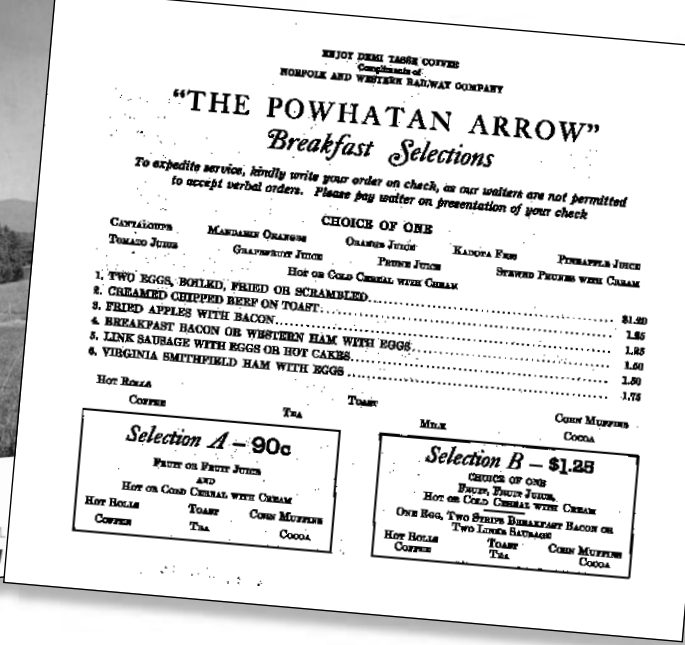
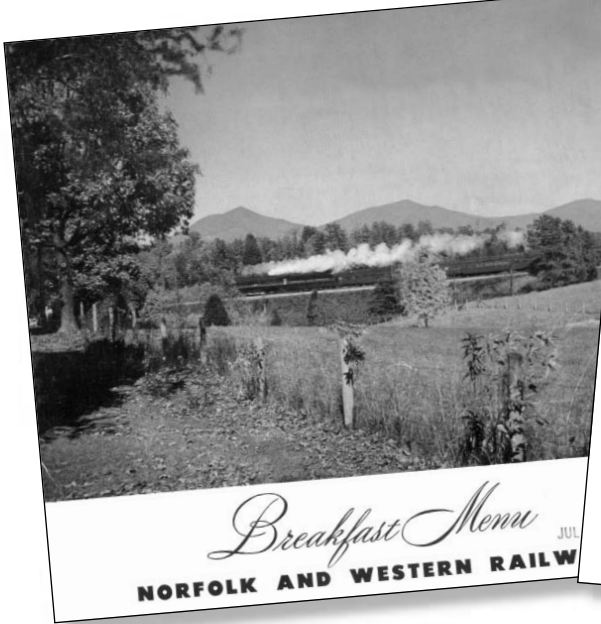
There really was nothing comparable to a diner - the sparkling silverware, the vase of cut flowers, the starched tablecloth and napkins, the glass pitcher of "pure spring water". The steward places a menu before you along with a guest check and pencil after which a waiter fills your glass with ice water - THAT IS HOW IT WAS IN THE HEYDAY OF THE DINING CAR. It was an elegant dining experience equal to that in any prestigious hotel. Yes, there was no one seated across the aisle wearing a baseball cap.

Let's go back in time. Initially trains did not

have dining cars. Prearranged meal stops were made to match train schedules. A trainman would take orders and hand the orders off to a telegraph operator who would wire them to the planned meal stop. These meals were often hurried, with indigestion often times rampant. The first makeshift diner appeared in 1862 on the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad. In 1868 the Pullman Company outshopped the first car dedicated to preparing and serving food to passengers. Named the DELMONICO after the eatery in New York City (we now eat DELMONICO steaks) the diner operated on the Chicago and Alton Railroad between Chicago and Springfield, Illinois. Thus, Chicago gets credit for having been the inaugural point for dining car service. This service was soon followed on the Michigan Central, CB&Q, Rock Island, C&NW and Wabash Railroads. In 1881

Steward J.E. Housman gives instructions to Waiter King Stovall in this scene on Train 25, The Powhatan Arrow, from an article in the January 1950 N & W Magazine.





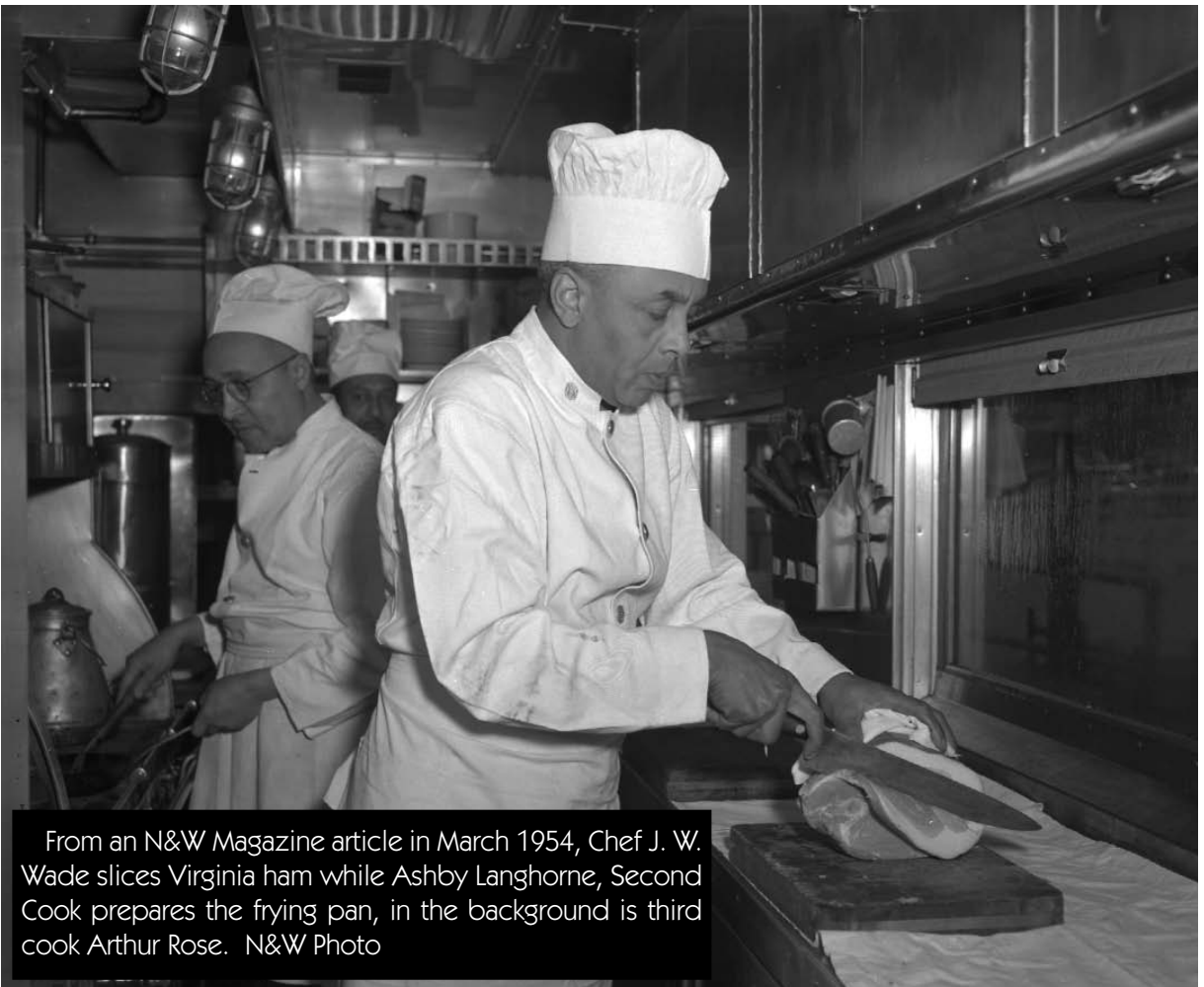
Above: Breakfast Menu from the Powhatan Arrow used between July 14 and August 15, 1954. Lower left: Meal check to be filled out by the patron, a tradition still followed to this day. All: K. L. Miller Collection

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Dining cars were not operated west of the Mississippi River until 1884 when the CB&Q broke an earlier agreement with other railroads.

Dining cars were operated by the individual railroads so personalized attention could be given to the traveling public. An exception was the one of a kind arrangement Fred Harvey had with the Santa Fe which included dining cars, Santa Fe built hotels and resorts plus large union stations (i.e. Kansas Union Station). Initially The Pullman Company operated

deferred to operating sleeping and parlor cars only.

Operating dining cars was an elaborate operation supported by commissaries at strategic locations on the railroad. It was headed by a Superintendent of Dining Cars who normally reported to a Vice President. On board there was a steward, chef, 3 to 4 cooks, pantryman and 4 to 6 waiters all of which had numerous specific jobs. The steward possessed the skills to cater to a U.S. President, a Henry Ford, a Greta Garbo or a foreign dignitary. It is said that the railroads hired black waiters whose thinking was that of a white man. There were special considerations on some railroads such as (1) running the diner with the kitchen in the rear so odors would not filter into the dining area, (2) Having waiters cover the dirty dishes being removed so they could not be seen by those eating, and (3) at stub end stations dining car waiters were



From an N&W Magazine article in March 1954, Chef J. W. Wade slices Virginia ham while Ashby Langhorne, Second Cook prepares the frying pan, in the background is third cook Arthur Rose. N&W Photo

lined up like soldiers in the dining car so boarding passengers passing by the dining car could anticipate the courteous service they would receive at meal time. Some things grew out of dining car operations that are familiar today such as (1) A General Mills executive was amazed at how fast he was served hot biscuits on a Southern Pacific train between Portland and San Francisco in 1930. The chef told him he had pre-mixed the ingredients - from this we got Bisquick (bis for biscuits and quick for fast), (2) the Pullman loaf of bread (sandwich bread) which is square on four sides to save valuable

space in the confines of a diners kitchen, and (3) the Pullman kitchen in dwellings (long and narrow as in a dining kitchen) originally designed by The Pullman Company.

One must remember that until the 1950 era persons of great influence rode trains for business purposes as well as for going on vacations. Thus it behooved individual railroads to provide the finest foods possible to entice shippers to use their railroad for their freight business. Operating dining cars was never a paying proposition as far as dining car income equaling operating expenses. It is said that a Fred Harvey

## Norfolk and Western Fried Chicken and Cream Gravy

For those who might be interested in a sample of the way dining was on the Norfolk and Western Railway:

1 - 2/3 lb. frying chicken, salt and pepper, flour to coat, 4 tbsp butter, plus more as needed, 2/3 tbsp water.

Wash and drain chicken and quarter or otherwise cut into serving pieces. Season with salt and pepper, then roll into flour. In large skillet over heat, melt butter and fry chicken for about fifteen minutes, turning frequently to brown pieces on all sides. Cover and continue cooking over low heat 30-45 minutes, until tender. Add 2 or 3 tbsp of water and more butter as needed to keep moist, and turn chicken occasionally to insure even cooking. Remove chicken from pan and make gravy. To serve, place 1/4 cup gravy on plate, chicken on top, and remaining gravy over.

Gravy - drippings from fried chicken, 3 tbsp flour, 2 cups milk, hot, salt and pepper to taste; Add flour to drippings remaining in skillet from frying chicken, stirring constantly to mix well. Add hot milk gradually and cook, stirring constantly until thickened. Season to taste.

Note: You'll need: large skillet, small saucepan. Preparation time: 1 1/4 hours. Yield: 4 servings.

steward on the Santa Fe was fired for trying to break even - in other words the food was not as plentiful or tasty as it should have been.

Dining by rail in 1999, Amtrak offers little in comparison with dining by rail as briefly described herein. The COAST STARLIGHT (Seattle-Los Angeles) reportedly offers the best dining experience. Having ridden this train in 1997 as well as other Amtrak trains I concur - at least after passengers traveling first class are given free wine and cheese in the lounge car there are many happy campers at the evening meal after the southbound train departs Eugene, Oregon and heads across the Cascade Mountains. Amtrak food service is now provided by Sky Chefs (the airline catering firm).

## Mechanical Report

by Ken Miller

Work has continued on our equipment during the summer by our small but

dedicated work force, former open window coach 1829 has been completely stripped and we have been awaiting a return call from Norfolk Southern about making the three mile move to the scrapyard to complete its journey. But as we can understand, NS has been just a little busy with something called Conrail!

On the active equipment, as you may recall in an earlier issue we reported on the vandalism to our cars enroute to West Virginia Central, the painted graffiti was removed but the excess speed coupling on CSX with coach 1827 resulted in a derailment badly damaging the generator. Our crew went to Belington and removed the gen set and returned it to Roanoke where it is presently awaiting arrival of a replacement generator, since the original was a total loss, with the demand of generators (for Y2K!) it was a 4-6 week delay before we can get the replacement. When it does arrive, it will be promptly loaded up and reinstalled.

The flat glass broken from the smoking lounge has been replaced and is ready for transport to the car and reinstallation, the curved glass make be a different case, and options are still being discussed for it.

In related work at the 9th Street facility, Jerry Johnson has completed restoration on our first N&W partners desk, and it simply can be described in one word: Beautiful!

Jerry repaired the long abused desk and refinished it to a like new state. It had been used as a workbench for many years with holes, gouges and paint spilled on it, while Jerry did not remove all the gouges (and character) of the desk it also was in danger of collapsing from many broken joints and lack of decent repair over time.

We did acquire an additional partners desk back in the spring, but it was in outstanding condition and may only need refinishing to restore it to it's original beauty.

### **Your Help Needed.**

We need help within the Chapter! Our continued staffing of the Gift Shop, our nominating committee, archives, even planning various events, coordinating activities all takes volunteers. Even this publication needs your assistance! It can be fun, you can meet interesting people and make an important contribution.

This organization cannot be handled by just a few folks! Come on out and volunteer. We are sure you have talents and skills you can offer.

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