



Turntable TIMES

Volume 32, Number 4

April 2000

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





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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.

Meeting Notice

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

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 next issue of Turntable Times is Tuesday, April 18, 2000. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

Cover Photo

Something that is rarely associated with the steam era is piggy-back trailers, However close examination of the right side of this photo there is just a portion visible of a 22,000 gallon tender. Even though the N&W herald had been around for twenty years or so, it was rarely applied to equipment. The diesel locomotives, these trailers and the very first autoracks, were, to our knowledge the only standard applications of the herald. There is one steam locomotive that also received the herald, but it was a non-standard application. Norfolk and Western Photo, October 6, 1959.

Help Needed!

Your help is needed, we would like to have some contemporary photos for occasional use in the Turntable Times. We need good sharp prints or slides, color or black and white. Your originals will be returned. We also specifically need photos of Chapter activities.

Chapter Sympathy

The Roanoke Chapter wishes to extend its sympathy to the family of Robert T. Hairston. Robert, who was a member of the Roanoke Chapter NRHS, passed away in January. This notice came to us via a daughter, Nancy H. Lammers, 35 Briargate Rd., Cary, IL., 60013-2541.

Volunteers Needed

by Bill Arnold

Roanoke is on the schedule of Artrain 2000 May 11-14. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Our Chapter has been asked to provide volunteers to assist in acting as car hosts for four-hour shifts during the visit. Thursday (11th) and Friday (12th) will be dedicated to school visits (interaction with students-training and guidelines provided) and Saturday (13th) and Sunday (14th) will be open to general public (includes greeting visitors, answering questions-info and guidelines provided). This will be another great opportunity to expose our Chapter to the Roanoke Valley. Other valley organizations will also provide volunteers.

Kathy Overholser (343-1928) will chair the securing of our volunteers with assistance from Bonnie Molinary (362-0273) and Wanda Troutman (986-1056). Please give Kathy, Bonnie, or Wanda a call to indicate your interest and availability. We need to have our list together by mid-April.

Mixed Freight - April

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Very few things remain the same these days. When I first moved to the Petersburg - Richmond area back in the

early seventies, The Tropicana Juice Train was one of the most popular trains among the railfan fraternity. It still is. Back in those days it was an impressive sight seeing the Great White Train highballin' along the relatively flat terrain of the former Atlantic Coast Line behind a trio of modern diesels. Between Richmond and Potomac Yard, the RF&P did the honors. Sometime during the late seventies til early eighties the train gradually changed from white to orange. Nowadays it's a combination of Tropicana orange, CSX leased blue insulated boxcars and white Cyrotrans boxcars. The Tropicana company has now decided to repaint it's cars back to white and it will also purchase 135 new cars with it's new white paint scheme. White or light colored cars shield off intense sunlight whereas dark colored cars tend to absorb sunlight and decrease cooling efficiency.

Leased locomotives continue to make our railroading hobby more interesting. CSX has taken delivery of 50 SD40 and SD40-2 models from First Union Rail. FURX is the firm's reporting marks. The locomotives are painted an attractive green and silver. The fuel tank and frame are black.

Most of us have probably at least entertained the thought of owning a locomotive. If you are really serious about owning such a property, you might want to look into the sale of former C&O steam locomotive # 614. The engine is to be auctioned on May 20th, 2000. For information on such contact: D.F. Barnhardt & Associates, 8344 W. Franklin St., P.O. Box 1089, Mt. Pleasant, NC 28124, Phone (704) 436-9393, Fax: (704) 436-9399, or <http://www.trains-trams-trolleys.com/auctions.html>

Small Rails

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers are just about finished with their new modules. Completing these modules will allow the members to turn their attention to refurbishing some of the other modules. The club hopes to eventually expand the layout by adding some new modules inside the basic layout. Industries will most likely include a large coal loading facility and possibly a steel mill. Meanwhile, the transition areas between the current modules are being worked on to blend the scenery colors together better.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators will end their hibernation in April, on Palm Sunday weekend. The first meeting will be at my house. Hopefully, I will have some nice weekends to work on my track. Ballasting is required to level out the "relaxed roller coaster" profile it presently has taken.

There will be a big train meet in Timonium, Maryland on the weekend of April 1st. I have been invited to attend with some family friends. It should be interesting, and I plan to report on it in the next Turntable Times. These giant train meets are always a great opportunity to see the new releases in all the scales, sometimes before they arrive in the Roanoke area.

A Little Bit of This and That

by Dave Meashey

When I worked as a technical writer for Mack Trucks, Inc., one of my responsibilities was writing instructions for fire apparatus. At that time Mr. Harry Crowder was the chief fire apparatus engineer. Mr.

Crowder had come to the United States as a consulting engineer for Napier Deltic during the Mack Super Pumper project. The Super Pumper's fire pump was powered by a Napier Deltic diesel engine, the same engine used in British Railway's Napier Deltic diesel locomotives. When the Napier Deltic diesel locomotives were undergoing their initial service tests, Mr. Crowder was one of the company's test engineers. He rode the locomotive cab and evaluated its performance during the road trials.

Most of the time the locomotive saw ordinary goods and passenger service, but on one occasion, the Napier Deltic company wanted to make headlines. The company decided that their locomotive had to equal the Mallard's speed record to prove the reliability of the diesel locomotive. (The Mallard was the streamlined 4-6-2 A4 class steam locomotive of London North Eastern Railway that set the 126.5 mph world speed record for steam.) Mr. Crowder said he was terrified on that trip. Level crossings (grade crossings) flashed past like there was no distance between them. He wondered how they would ever stop if an emergency arose. Fortunately, the record was met without any bad circumstances.

Another of Mr. Crowder's stories was amusing. It seems that the driver (locomotive engineer) chosen for that day's run was really old, possibly in his eighties. The first thing the old gentleman said when he ascended into the cab was, "Well, where's the shovel?" The puzzled test engineers replied, "Whatever do you need a shovel for, man? This is a diesel locomotive." The old

gent's quick retort was, "Well, we never had any toilets in the steam locomotives y'know!"

Casey Jones Story

The year 2000 is the 100th anniversary of the legend of Casey Jones, the gallant engineer whose story is embedded in folklore the world over. To honor this anniversary, the historic Casey Jones Home and Railroad Museum in Jackson, Tennessee, is hosting a year-long extravaganza commemorating the life of America's most famous railroad engineer. With his train whistle shattering the silence of the early morning of April 30, 1900, Casey Jones lost his life in a train wreck and became a legend. His story spread around the world through a song which would become one of the best loved of all railroad songs - "The Ballad of Casey Jones." During the celebration, the museum's current displays will be enhanced with new memorabilia and special events.

Many events are planned for the year-long anniversary celebration, including special tributes to Sim Webb and Wallace Saunders, two African-Americans who contributed to the legend. Sim Webb was Jones' fireman and Wallace Saunders originally composed the ballad. A Casey Jones Family Reunion will bring Casey's grandchildren and over 50 other members of the Jones family together at the historic museum for a special weekend. The museum, in operation since 1956, is located inside the actual white framed house where Casey and his family lived at the time of his death. On the grounds, visitors can explore an authentic 130 ton steam locomotive, an

1890's railcar containing model railroad exhibits and the original horse drawn funeral hearse which carried Casey Jones to his grave. Check in their web site at www.caseyjones.com (Press release via The 470 Railroad Club newsletter, The 470).

A Strange Tale of Speed

Would you be surprised to learn that the U.S. rail speed record is held by a Budd RDC? Strange but true, the United Aircraft Turbo train that hit nearly 171 mph in 1967 and the Acela Express that recently clocked 168 mph on a test run placed second and third behind New York Central's RDC3 M-497.

Back in 1966, the New York Central Railroad was experimenting with high-speed rail service. Railroad management assigned Don Wetzel, a licensed pilot and Assistant Director of Technical Research at the Central's Cleveland Technical Center, the task of building a rolling laboratory to collect data on high-speed rail operations. Wetzel was given all of 45 days, but with unlimited funds, to develop the project.

Obtaining a 13-year-old Budd RDC3, Wetzel had it moved to Cleveland, where its motors and passenger seating were removed and the space reused for instrumentation to measure, display and record vital parameters of high-speed running. The axles, wheels and frame of the RDC3 were left intact. To power the motorless shell, Wetzel had a unique idea. Two General Electric J47-19 jet engines, designed to assist the Convair B36 strategic bomber, were mounted up front on the roof of the M-497, and a streamlined cowling was applied to the nose of the car.

The M-497 was taken to a long tangent stretch of track on the New York Central main line between Butler, Indiana and Stryker, Ohio, mostly consisting of ordinary 39-foot jointed rail. The M-497 was fired up for a week-long series of test runs. On July 23, 1966, with Wetzel in the engineer's seat and New York Central President Alfred Perlman sitting alongside, Wetzel brought the M-497 up to a verified 183.85 mph, thereby setting a U.S. rail speed record that has remained unbroken to this day.

As you have probably noticed, the M-497 did not spawn a generation of jet-powered rail cars. High-speed trains since have made use of more conventional diesel-electric or straight electric power. The M-497 itself was restored to its original configuration and put back into undistinguished commuter service. (Above from Tower Topics, newsletter of the Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter, NRHS).

Open Letter to Railroad Customers

After Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Canadian National proposed to create North America's largest railroad, the Surface Transportation Board announced that it will study the impact of the transaction on the future structure of the railroad industry. Because of the importance of this issue, we want to share with you some of our concerns and encourage you to voice yours.

We have serious concerns with the potential impact of the BNSF/CN merger on the future structure of the rail industry. We agree with the STB that the BNSF/CN proposal may trigger another round of railroad consolida-

tions, resulting in two large rail systems serving North America. History teaches that this will happen: BNSF's merger launched the last round of rail consolidations.

We also agree with the STB that the BNSF/CN proposal should not be considered in isolation. We think that the future structure of the railroad industry should be discussed now, before the BNSF/CN merger does go forward, and our railroads are forced to develop strategic responses. No major member of the rail network can afford to stand still while another becomes disproportionately larger.

We believe that another wave of mergers would be premature. The railroad industry has little experience with the new railroad industry structure resulting from the last round of mergers. The BN/Santa Fe, UP/SP, CN/IC and Conrail transactions are not yet fully implemented, and expected benefits are still emerging as service stabilizes. Fewer railroads, coupled with improved business processes and new technology, should allow us to provide more reliable seamless interline service. It is now time for the railroads to concentrate on existing opportunities to improve service rather than on further consolidation.

The STB is very interested in hearing from shippers, and so are we. You can write to the STB at the following address: Secretary, U.S. Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington D.C., 20423-0001 (refer to Finance Docket No. 33842). The above letter was signed by The Chairman of Norfolk Southern, CSX, Union Pacific and Canadian Pacific. (Above submitted by Mr. Robin R. Shavers).

Web-Site Review

Interested in the latest regarding steam power excursions, operations, restorations, etc? Then check out the following website: <http://www.steamcentral.org> This web site is an excellent guide to steam related events around the United States and is starting to cover steam events in Europe. Excursion, museum, and tourist-line schedules are posted, and every few days there's news items about steam-locomotive operations and restoration work. We discovered this website recently simply by punching in the words steam central on the computer to see if a site by that name

would appear, and up came the address listed above. There's lots of color photos to go along with the information presented, so check it out.

Railroad Radio

Those of you whom monitor railroad communications probably will hear the dispatcher instruct the crew to switch to another channel. There are 96 channels allocated for rail use in North America. The handy guide below will provide information on what to program into your scanner when you hear a channel change mentioned.

Association of American Railroads Allocated Frequency Guide

submitted by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Channel	Frequency	Channel	Frequency	Channel	Frequency	Channel	Frequency
02	159.810*	26	160.500	50	160.860	74	161.220
03	159.930*	27	160.515	51	160.875	75	161.235
04	160.050*	28	160.530	52	160.890	76	161.250
05	160.185*	29	160.545	53	160.905	77	161.265
06	160.200*	30	160.560	54	160.920	78	161.280
07	160.215	31	160.575	55	160.935	79	161.295
08	160.230	32	160.590	56	160.950	80	161.310
09	160.245	33	160.605	57	160.965	81	161.325
10	160.260	34	160.620	58	160.980	82	161.340
11	160.275	35	160.635	59	160.995	83	161.355
12	160.290	36	160.650	60	161.010	84	161.370
13	160.305	37	160.665	61	161.025	85	161.385
14	160.320	38	160.680	62	161.040	86	161.400
15	160.335	39	160.695	63	161.055	87	161.415
16	160.350	40	160.710	64	161.070	88	161.430
17	160.365	41	160.725	65	161.085	89	161.445
18	160.380	42	160.740	66	161.100	90	161.460
19	160.395	43	160.755	67	161.115	91	161.475
20	160.410	44	160.770	68	161.130	92	161.490
21	160.425	45	160.785	69	161.145	93	161.505
22	160.440	46	160.800	70	161.160	94	161.520
23	160.455	47	160.815	71	161.175	95	161.535
24	160.470	48	160.830	72	161.190	96	161.550
25	160.485	49	160.845	73	161.205	97	160.565

• Used in Canada only for railroads, used for trucking companies in the US.

End of Train Monitors, Primary 457.9374, Future Use 457.5375, Norfolk Southern 161.115

Railcamp

Still looking for candidates for Railcamp. The Railcamp sponsored by the National Park Service and NRHS at Steamtown in Scranton, PA. This year is June 18-24.

The Roanoke Chapter is willing to sponsor a participant at the camp and is looking for nominations from our membership. The candidate does not have to be a member, come to the March or April meeting for more details or contact Bill Arnold at 389-3217.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

April 20, 2000
Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

May 2, 2000
Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

May 18, 2000
Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

June 6, 2000
Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

June 15, 2000
Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

July 4, 2000 (tentative)
Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

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