



Turntable TIMES

Volume 32, Number 8

August 2000

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





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MIXED FREIGHT

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SMALL RAILS

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SPLINTERS

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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, August 17, 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 Monday, August 21, 2000. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

Cover Photo

The clean modern appearance of the Virginian Railway's roundhouse in Roanoke is the subject of the photographer. DE-S No. 21 is posed in the recently modernized facility. The diesel servicing required changes in the methods of repair and servicing. Many railroads built all new facilities tearing down the steam servicing areas as quickly as possible. The Virginian did neither, instead new platforms and concrete floors were installed at the roundhouse at Roanoke, adapting to the changing times. The steam era structure stood on, until December 1959 brought the merger into the N&W, it was soon determined that this facility was redundant with a more modern Shaffers Crossing just across town.

With the end of Virginian's electrification in June 1962, there was no need at all for a locomotive facility in South Roanoke and the area was quickly cleared and leased or sold off for commercial development.

Virginian Railway Photo, K. L. Miller Collection

Mixed Freight - August

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

A number of Great American Train Stores have been closed according to a reliable source. I know the Richmond, VA and the location at Amtrak's Union Depot in Washington D.C. have been closed.

This is definitely old news to those of you who can be classified as active trackside railfans. Many months ago, Norfolk Southern began stenciling the model type of locomotive just below and to the right of the locomotive's number. Conrail had been doing this for years and so has

On a Sunday night in early June, the little community of Prospect, VA lost its 150 year old train station to a fire that has been under investigation. Prospect is located on U.S. 460 and Norfolk Southern's Blue Ridge District about 10 miles west of Farmville. The Prospect Historical Society had plans to convert the structure into a museum and community center.

Those of us whom patronize the Great Scale Train Shows up in Timonium, Maryland usually have a good time purchasing model railroad goods and socializing with comrades of the hobby in a comfortable environment. The environment was not comfortable during the Saturday June 24th event because the air conditioning system was not functioning. One good thing about the uncomfortable temperature was that it thinned out all but the hardcore modelers, collectors and true loyalist to the hobby of model railroading. This made shopping a lot easier with the reduction of bodies to compete for space with. But, this

reduction in shoppers also translated to a reduction in sales for the dealers.

Leased locomotives plus run thru units from other railroads continue to contribute variety to CSX freight trains. This appears to be a constant for the time being. The time I've spent trackside with Norfolk Southern over the past three months has yielded only a few foreign road locomotives. In fact, I really don't even see that many Conrail units with former Conrail lines being the exception.

Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

Union Pacific has launched a new web site for its steam program. The site features information on all UP steam operations for 2000 also offers official souvenirs from the UP steam program. Check it out at www.upsteam.com

If you're interested in military rail operations in the United States such as locomotives in service, rosters, etc., then check out this web site at <http://military.railfan.net>

(Above two items from Colorado Midland Rails, Colorado Midland Chapter, NRHS).

CSX recently notified the tenants at the old Clinchfield Station in downtown Johnson City, Tennessee that they had the intentions to tear down the building on July 22. The tenants were notified to move from the building by this date. After much concern about losing the station, CSXT is now talking with Johnson City about the possibility of donating the building to some group. (From Watauga Chapter newsletter Whistle Stop, July, 2000).

An occasion column appearing in the Turntable Times featuring material from the Roanoke Chapter Archive Facility.

**Historian
Kenneth L. Miller**

An material of interest comments or corrections may be submitted to Roanoke Chapter NRHS Archives, attn Ken Miller, P. O. Box 13222, Roanoke, VA 24032.

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Many years ago, 40 foot long boxcars loaded to the top filled the tracks alongside Freight stations across America. The railroad was the way to receive goods and services for local industries. Today the tractor trailer has replaced the boxcar, and freight stations stand empty, torn down or utilized for other service.

The Bluefield Freight Station was completed in early 1925 and was a modern, clean, efficient facility that the N&W was quite proud of. The signs listing the various consignee's tell the story of the wide variety of products which passed through this and similar facilities each day.

Apparently, a hand truck was parked where it should not have been during the photo. The photographer attempted to scrape the emulsion off the film to eliminate the offending cart after the film was processed and printed.

Norfolk and Western
Photo





M.G. WHITLOW
HDW.

APPALACHIAN
POWER CO.

VIRGINIA
SUP. CO.

SOURCEFR CO.

STILLING
HDW. CO.

DAILY
TR. PRG. CO.

STANLEY
GRUPTON

HEAT
TR. CO.

W. H. BRYSON

W. E. DREYER

W. A. BAKER

DEBERRY

W. H. BRYSON

W. A. BAKER

W. H. BRYSON

W. H. BRYSON

W. H. BRYSON

W. H. BRYSON

Sunbrite Cleanser

7723

Small Rails

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers are continuing work on the steam and diesel service areas. Work also continues to blend the scenery as it progresses from one module to another. Scenery and ballast are being added to the refurbished yard area. Several members had an outing to the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad in June. The club is also planning a family picnic for the weekend after Labor Day.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators' July meeting will be a trip to visit the Historic Spencer Shops on July 29th. Plans have been made to meet in Fort Chiswell and "convoy" from there. The club is trying to lower postage costs by sending the meeting notices via email. As most of the members have an email account, the new method seems to be working fairly well. The club also placed an information packet in Black Forest Gifts. This gift shop is doing a fair amount of business in LGB and Lehman trains, and we hope to attract some of these train buyers into our club.

Two Final Runs

by Dave Meashey

The Great American Train Stores are no more. This chain of toy and hobby shops was the first contact many people had with toy and model trains, and railroad memorabilia. The chain had stores in many upscale malls across the nation. Unfortunately, the high cost of doing business in these malls might have had a share in the chain's undoing. Most train items had to sell at the full retail price for the stores to realize a profit. Once people

became familiar with the hobby, they found other sources of supply such as discount hobby stores and mail order.

I also noticed some people, who posted comments about the chain at model railroad related web sites, seemed to feel that the store staff really was not very knowledgeable about model and toy trains. I had visited the Richmond and Washington, DC stores. They were pricey, but I enjoyed looking around. I didn't have any questions for the staff, so I can't say how knowledgeable they were. What I did notice was the number of children attracted to these stores.

When I was a kid, I couldn't buy many trains. That didn't stop me from haunting the Lionel and American Flyer Christmas layouts. When I grew up, I made up for lost time when it came to buying trains. I'm sorry these stores failed. Where will all those kids I saw at the Great American Train Stores make up for lost time? I hope it will still happen.

The other loss happened on June 27th. The Large Scale On-Line web site suddenly ceased conducting business. The site's owner hinted that a major hobby magazine publisher's unfair competition had made him decide to quit, but most of the site's regulars doubt that we will ever learn the complete story. The site had become like a community for large scale train enthusiasts. We felt as if we had friends whom we had never met in person. Lots of tips and techniques were learned at LSOL.

On the positive side, several new web sites managed to spring up almost overnight to fill the void. Some were created by former LSOL members. Others are of

a more commercial nature. Those of us who made this exchange knowledge and good-natured fun a "home" on the web are glad that we could regroup and move on

Splinters from the Board

by Bill Arnold

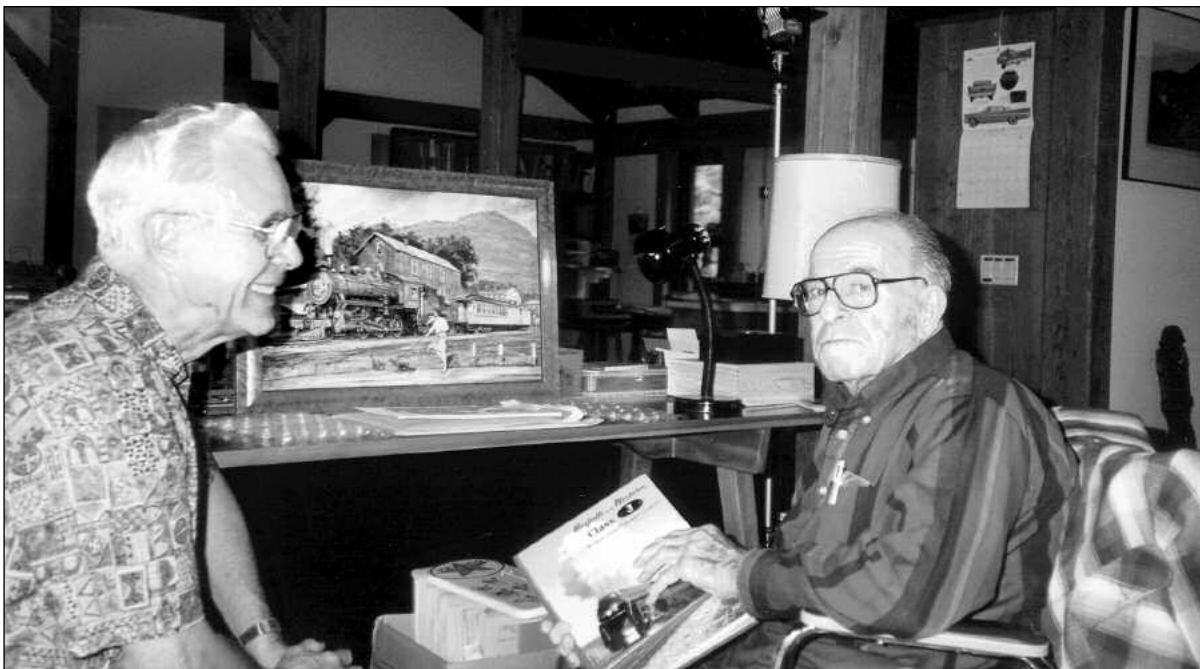
As many of you are aware, O. Winston Link provided four of his famous photographs of the Class J locomotive for use in our new book, "Norfolk and Western Class J, The Finest Steam Passenger Locomotive."

While attending the NRHS Board of Directors Meeting at Stamford, Conn. last month, I visited with Winston at his home in South Salem, New York to present him with a copy of the book. He was very com-

plimentary on the quality of the book, with comment of "nice" on the cover, "great, clear photographs" inside, and "excellent reproduction" regarding his photographs (pages 105, 106, 128-131).

While leafing through the book, Winston lamented that he didn't get the opportunity to visit the shops during construction of the J's (pages 18-25). He was particularly interested in the double page spread (pages 50-51) of the Shaffers Crossing engine facility at night in 1943. Early in the layout stage, Winston wanted to know whether we would have any photos of the "J without the shroud." He was quite pleased that we had three (pages 40, 43 and 44).

Incidentally, Winston has an exhibit in Grand Central Terminal in New York City



Ellen Arnold Photo

National Director Bill Arnold presents O. Winston Link with his copy of "Norfolk and Western Class J, The Finest Steam Passenger Locomotive".

which runs through mid-September. It includes a number of his N&W steam photos, several items he used to take the photos, the bell from Class M No. 382, and photos he took for the New York Transit Authority of various bridges around Manhattan. Go see it if you are in the area— Grand Central is great to see also.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

August 17, 2000

Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

September 5, 2000

Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

September 21, 2000

Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

October 2, 2000

Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

October 19, 2000

Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

November 7, 2000

Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

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