



Turntable TIMES

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

Volume 32, Number 10

October 2000



THE POCAHONTAS
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COMPANY

23146



Turntable TIMES

**Volume 32, Number 10
October 2000**

EDITOR

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MIXED FREIGHT

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SMALL RAILS

Dave Meashey

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, October 19, 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.

Both October and November's program will be special presentations. Our friends from the Blue Ridge Chapter, Tom Ledford will make a presentation on canals and railroads in Lynchburg in October and Ed Fielding will do a slide presentation in November on North Carolina shortlines.

Please come out and support these fine programs.

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, October 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

In keeping with our presentation on Lynchburg's railroads and canals, this month's cover features a view from the mid 1930s used by the N&W to promote the "Pocahontas" as one of America's finest steam trains. The image is retouched and depicts the eastbound No. 4 passing under the Rivermont Bridge.

Norfolk and Western Photo, Negative No. 23146.

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 six (6) directors will be elected.

This election provides a change from standard procedure, normally we elect five directors in even number years, however with the resignation of Gary Ballard earlier this year, we have the remaining year of his two-year term to fill with the election, therefore, we elect six directors, one of which will serve a one year term.

Instructions for Absentee Ballot: This year we will be electing six (6) 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. The nominating committee is chaired by Bill Arnold, members Bonnie Molinary and Jim Overholser. You will receive (a) one ballot; (b) one "ballot" envelope; and (c) one mailing envelope.

2 - Mark the ballot (vote for not more than six (6) directors. If more than six (6) 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.

Christmas Gathering

by Bonnie Molinary

Last December a number of members and friends enjoyed a Christmas social meeting in lieu of the normal Banquet which occurred at the end of January.

Come and join us again this year for an evening of food and fun at the Virginia Museum of Transportation on Thursday, December 14 beginning at 7:00 pm. You can enjoy a wide variety of finger foods, desserts and beverages.

There will be plenty of time to socialize with very little business to be conducted except for the installation of officers and directors for 2001. Come and enjoy! For details and/or to volunteer to help, contact Bonnie Molinary, Kathy Overholser or Wanda Troutman.

Of Interest

Chapter members may find the following announcement of note:

The National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Mid-East Region Convention will be held at the Salem Civic

Center with the following sessions open to the public:

Friday, October 20, 2000, 10:00 am-12 noon, 2:00-4:00 pm, Saturday, October 21, 2000, from 10:00 am to 12 noon.

One of the featured topics is Celebrating Railroad Timekeeping. On Friday from 1:00-2:00 pm is "Touching Up The Clock Shop" and a workshop from 3:00-4:00 pm a workshop "Antique Wooden Clock Case Restoration, Before and After." On Saturday, from 8:00-9:00 am, the topic will be "Railroad Time Service-Inspections," from 10:30-11:30, "Railroad Timekeepers" featuring clocks from the B&O Railroad Museum Clock Collection.

There will be several workshops and lectures as well, please come to the Chapter meeting on the 19th for more details.

Mixed Freight - October

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Last month I reported on funds being secured to restore former Pennsylvania Railroad K4s No. 1361 to operational status. There were two more sources of funds to help see the project thru that I failed to mention. \$50,000.00 in private contributions and \$11,000.00 from the Philadelphia Chapter of the PRR Technical and Historical Society.

It has been a while since I've mentioned anything about the shortline Virginia Southern headquartered at Keysville, Va. On a recent visit to Keysville while on my way to Danville, I was pleasantly surprised to see two Missouri & Northern Arkansas GP38's performing freight moving duties. The paint scheme includes the colors of red and grey. The M&NA Railroad is part of the Railtex family like Virginia Southern.

The units were very clean and looked great with the lush green vegetation along the former Southern Railway route. The three green and cream Virginia Southern units were stored on a siding in downtown Keysville. Judging from the rust on the wheels, they have been inactive for quite a spell.

While on the subject of locomotives, a few months ago I mentioned that I had noticed a decrease of foreign and leased locomotives powering Norfolk Southern trains in Virginia and North Carolina. That is not the case as of this writing and since early August. In fact, NS has just leased 50 six axle EMD locomotives from Kansas City Southern. The models include SD40, SD40-2s and SD50s.

Virginia Railway Express has replaced it's cafe cars with coach cars. By doing so, the company added 225 seats to it's capacity. The commuter trains are carrying about 9,400 passengers daily.

I have a little timesaving tip to pass on to those of you whom frequent hobby shows and events. A lot of these events offer contest prizes and mailing lists for future events. It takes a little time to fill out the forms with your name, address and phone number. Of course, the more you fill out, the greater your chances of winning. The answer is self-sticking address labels. I receive hundreds of these things from companies trying to entice me to purchase their goods or services or organizations desiring my membership. I don't even send out that much mail to warrant so many address labels. Using them to fill out entry cards for contest prizes is a real time saver. Of course, if you don't receive them in the mail, home computers with the necessary hardware can fill the bill.

Small Rails

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers finished adding the last of the new scenic touches to the layout the week before our train show. Members staffed the layout on September 23rd, the day of the train show, for those visitors who wanted to travel over to Crossroads Mall to see the layout in operation. Many of us feel that the show was a success, especially since it was the club's first venture into this kind of event. Over 300 people attended. There were over 20 vendors present. Grace and David Helmer were there representing the Chapter's gift shop. Several vendors told club members that their sales were better than they expected for a first time show. Hopefully, we will be able to sponsor another show as early as spring of 2001.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators' August and September meetings were at the new home of Karen and Tom Harris in Wytheville. The attendance was slim, my family and the Harris', but we had a good time visiting and running trains. I hope the club can be built up in 2001. Presently we have only three households that are really active.

I represented the club at the Roanoke Valley Model Engineers' train show on September 23rd. I kept my large scale trains running from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Several folks visiting the show took copies of the club information cards I brought with me. There are many people interested in large scale trains and garden railroads in the Roanoke area. I just haven't found out how to reach them. Let me say here that if you would be interested in our large scale club, please get in touch with me in care of this newsletter or at a regular chapter meeting.

A POSSIBLE CANCELLED RUN: Every

now and then a regular train must be dropped from the schedule for perhaps a trip or two. I am in a situation like that right now. I'm well past the deadline for submitting this column because other family business distracted me, so I don't know whether it will be printed in October or November. The distraction is a happy one, a wedding. My younger daughter, Laura is getting married soon. I will get back into the swing of things once the wedding is over, but November's material is probably a washout.

It's funny how things can happen over time. When my daughters were small, I would take them with me to the Transportation Museum in Wasena Park. While I tinkered with the HO layout or ran trains, my girls would play inside the layout room or on the museum's playground equipment. There was a little blond boy and his younger sister who played at the museum too. Fifteen years later that little blond boy and my little sandy-haired girl met again. They were all grown up, and they fell in love. So on October 14th Laura B. Meashey and B. T. Fitzpatrick III will be married.

Our Apologies

Last month's newsletter was delayed at the print shop, seems with the regular person out, no one thought about making a phone call to John Garrett to let him know it was ready! It was not until the day of the meeting that we called and found out it had been ready for a week. We hope to improve the service here.

The issue was also fouled up in it's text flow, this is the type of thing that happens when material still comes in after the deadline, this causes juggling of pages to fit for the printer.

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

Historian
Kenneth L. Miller

Any 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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Forty-five years ago this month, the curtain began to descend on N&W steam power. The clipping at the right tells the story. The clock was ticking despite the R.H. Smith comment! From the initial announcement in the Roanoke Times in May 1955 to the last fire being dropped was almost exactly five years later

Even if the first units were to free up big steam power to work elsewhere, the die was cast. Before the second group of four Alco switchers arrived in Roanoke in February of 1956 it was decided to put them to the test, running over the mountainous Radford and Pocahontas Divisions.

The four Dynamometers on Valley just after 9

It was a s for steam w recorded th ers headed

These, of trading on operated th in 1950 as v



units, numbered 92-95 coupled to
ter Car 514780 and 196 empty hop-
entine's Day 1956 and headed west
am.

unny day for photos, but a dark day
when the company photographer
is scene near Glenvar as the foreign-
westbound.

course, were not the first diesels
the territory as Southern units had
rough Roanoke during a coal strike
well as the EMD tests of 1952.

N&W To Buy Eight Diesels For Use On Durham Line

'This Does Not Mean Change' In Coal Reliance, Smith Asserts

The Norfolk and Western Railway announced yesterday it will purchase eight general-purpose diesel locomotive units at a cost of about \$1,400,000. Delivery is expected in September.

"THIS DOES NOT mean that we have changed our view that our modern roller bearing coal-burned steam locomotives can handle the major part of our traffic economically," N&W President H. W. Smith said.

"Nor does it mean that our interest in new and better types of coal burning locomotives has diminished in any way," the railroad executive added.

At the same time the N&W announced the railroad is ordering 160 steel box cars from the Pullman Standard Car Manufacturing Co. at a cost of \$1,600,000.

The announcement that the N&W is buying some diesels is major news in the railroad industry since the N&W is among

the last Class I railroads to enter this field of motive power.

Smith said the N&W's diesel units will be operated between Lynchburg and Durham, N.C., where traffic is lighter than on the main line.

This will enable the N&W to transfer its heavy steam locomotives now in use on the Lynchburg-Durham branch to main line operations where they are needed.

Major reason for the switch to diesels on the Durham line, the railroad president said, is based on our need of the present line for additional motive power elsewhere, and particularly for the large box power we

are at present using on the Durham line, which, because of comparatively low traffic, we are not able to get out of this line power the full service of which it is capable. We have therefore concluded that the smaller diesel units will be sufficient for this territory."

Single diesel units will be used in yard switching operations and in multiples of three or four for straight road haul service.

DURING 1954 the N&W put in service and tested a new type of coal burning steam turbine, electrically driven locomotive.

John Jones, as it is known among N&W railroad men, "has operated satisfactorily," Smith said.

This revolutionary locomotive, Smith said, "has demonstrated its ability to handle heavy tonnage loads on our main line with substantial savings as compared to other types of locomotives."

Smith also said the N&W is participating in the reconstruction of a coal burning gas turbine engine.



Norfolk and Western Railway Photo

New England Train Vacation

by David Helmer

After retiring from Norfolk Southern (effective 3-1-00) and then the US Census - it was time to go on vacation in early August 2000 - by train; of course. Therefore, Grace and I began a 11 day trip to the New England states.

Friday - August 4th - in the morning, drove to our daughter Delta's home in Maryland - located just outside the Capital Beltway. The most interesting event each time we go there is driving from the west-side of DC to the eastside. There is no good alternative to avoid traffic and congestion!

Saturday - August 5th - left on Amtrak #86 Northeast Direct (formerly The Virginian) from New Carrollton, MD. to New York City. This trip was swift and on-time to the Big Apple. The train was near its capacity in carrying passengers. After arriving in New York City's Penn Station - went directly to the baggage office to check our bags to Rutland, VT. on train #291, The Ethan Allen Express. While page 34 of the current Northeast Corridor timetable indicates baggage service is available on this train - not the case in reality.

Nevertheless, after using the Metropolitan Lounge for an hour or so - we boarded the business class section of the train for a pleasant ride to Vermont. The Ethan Allen Express is indeed an express service to Albany, NY. - however - it becomes slower and slower, as one goes further north. The last 25 miles is on a short-line - a subsidiary of the Vermont Railway. Arrival in Rutland is at a modern downtown station around 9 p.m. Unfortunately, no taxis were available on arrival, so the Amtrak agent gave us a ride in his car to the nearby Comfort Inn - Trolley Square.

Sunday - August 6th - after breakfast, we walked to the Hertz rental agency to get a

car to drive during the next five days to Boston, MA. Our first stop - was at Proctor, VT., to visit the Vermont Marble Co and learn about mining marble and the role of railroads in the development of this industry. Next, we visited the birthplace and home of President Calvin Coolidge. Later, we crossed the Quechee gorge on a bridge which was originally built in 1911 for the long abandoned Woodstock Railroad, a short-line which connected with the outside world at White River Junction, VT. Besides, a nice Amtrak station - there is very little left of the facilities which once were in operation at White River Junction. Finally - we drove in rain and fog to Lincoln, NH. - our base of travel for several days.

Monday - August 7th - Lincoln NH has THREE active short-line rail operations, plus several other railroads in the area. Our first mission - was to drive though the scenic Franconia Notch to - to take the steam powered cog railway to the top of Mt Washington, some 6,200+ feet in elevation. This railway began operations just after the Civil War and still uses century old steam locomotives to make the very steep climb on track which is just 4' 8" wide. When we got to the 4,500 foot level - we went in a cloud /fog bank which lasted all the way to the top. It was less than 50 degrees at the top - with winds of 35-45 mph. Welcome to Mt Washington! After getting down the mountain and eating at the Base Station cafe - we drove to the beautiful Crawford Notch (ex-Maine Central) - now on the Conway Scenic line. That evening - ate dinner in an old train station in North Woodstock, NH. and went on a moose watching tour that evening and actually saw one!

Tuesday - August 8th - basically just stayed in the Lincoln area and did more

site seeing, including watching the diesel powered Hobo Railroad passenger trains operate through the putt putt golf course next to the Comfort Inn. They run daytime passenger train excursions on former Boston & Maine trackage along the Pemigewasset River. Also, we rode on the White Mountain Scenic Railroad which still uses wood fired steam locomotives that formerly operated on the East Branch & Lincoln, which ceased operations as a logging railroad in 1948. We were also able to get a cab ride on the second trip we made that day. That evening - was one of the highlights of the vacation - a dinner train trip on the Café Lafayette. This 20 mile round trip along the Pemigewasset River - allows one to see magnificent mountain vistas and lush New England forests - before a dramatic sunset outside your vista dome window. Also - the multi-course dinner is well prepared and served with style - worthy of the Roanoke Chapter service tradition.

Wednesday - August 9th - an early morning departure on the Kancamagus Highway, which uses partially the right-of-way of the East Branch and Lincoln - en route to Conway, NH. - for a brief stop to see the steam and diesel operations of the Conway Scenic Railway. Afterwards - off to Freeport, ME. to visit Delorme Mapping's headquarters, which has a 3 story high globe of Earth in its lobby. This is the firm which supplies the Chapter with numerous state atlases for sale at the VMT gift shop. Then - yes to L. L. Bean to do some shopping. That evening - we went to Portland, ME. for dinner and afterwards, saw the Maine Narrow Gauge (2') Railroad along Portland's waterfront.

Thursday - August 10th - drove north to the beautiful coastal town of Wiscasset, ME. to ride the Maine Coast Railroad to

Bath, ME. This operation is on former Maine Central trackage and uses old Alco diesels and Jersey Central coaches. That afternoon - we drove to Kennebunkport, ME. Did not find the Bush estate - but found the Seashore Trolley Museum open and running several trolley cars on their nearly 4 mile round trip. They have an extensive trolley collection - with some of their old equipment restored and/or operational. After walking along the ocean beach at the seacoast town of Wells Beach - we ate fresh seafood at the Lobster Barn - a local favorite.

Friday - August 11th - an early morning departure and drive in rush hour traffic into downtown Boston, MA. - to return the rental car (this was not a bright idea). We took a cab to a "brownstone apartment" in Boston to spend the night. Then off on the walking tour of Boston - including a couple of rides on the T, Boston's subway operation. A funny thing happened while walking in the North End of Boston while looking for Paul Revere's home. We met Keith Humphrey - Channel 7 newscaster, who was visiting family in the area.

Saturday - August 12th - walked to Back Bay station from the apartment - and boarded Amtrak #145 to Meriden, CT. This train generally was running ahead of schedule - as it went via Springfield, MA. en route to the Connecticut Valley. We rode in a refurbished Amtrak coach which will be used on the infamous Acela trains on the Northeast Corridor. At Meriden - we were meet by Dr. Craig Czarsty - fellow Chapter member - who was our host for the next two days. We made a quick trip to ride in a parlor car on the steam powered Essex train ride along the banks of the scenic Connecticut River. Afterwards - we drove back to Doc's home in Watertown, CT. - just northwest of Waterbury, CT. for

dinner with Margaret and their two children Mary Francis and Beth.

Sunday - August 13th - left late in the morning for a driving tour of sites and railroad operations in western CT. While stopping to see a Naugatuck Railroad excursion train north of Waterbury - we meet a railfan from Long Island. He asked " do not I know you from the video - you are Dave Helmer - how is your daughter Delta doing these days? (it's a small world after all!) He had ridden on some of our past Independence Limited excursions and purchased our videos. Later - we stopped by Canaan, CT. and Danbury, CT. to see rail operations. We were too late getting to Danbury to visit their fine railroad museum. Danbury is also the origination point of some Metro North commuter trains to New York City. We spent the night at Brewster, NY. - not to distant from where O Winston Link lives.

Monday - August 14th. With the assistance of Winston's son Conway - who was also staying at the motel - we had a good visit with Winston and tour of his home in South Salem, NY. (this was the first visit for Grace to Winston's unique abode). In the afternoon - we rode a Metro North commuter train to Grand Central Station. Since it was raining - took a taxi to our hotel near Penn Station. Then - back by subway to Grand Central Station to see the New York City Transit Museum's exhibit of Winston's photos - including those of bridges in the New York City area. For dinner - we met the producer for Vanity Fair of the upcoming feature story on Winston and went by subway with her to the Soho area of the City. Later in the evening, we had a 4 mile walk back up the Avenue of the Americas (6th Ave) to our hotel.

Tuesday - August 15th - we walked in the morning to Penn Station and rode train

#141 (formerly The Bankers) Northeast Direct service to Washington DC. Had another Amlunch on the train. Since Delta and family had moved to northern Virginia during the past week - with luggage in hand - we rode the Metro to just about the end of the Orange Line - where Delta met us at the station. After picking up Madeline from school and dinner with them - including Delta's husband - David - we hit the road and made it back to Roanoke - by 11 p.m.. Thus - ending a wonderful vacation.

Mechanical Report

by Ken Miller

Trackwork is continuing in moving and installing a switch next to the loading dock. This project has taken much longer than originally anticipated, but it is a large job. Any projects at the maintenance facility have only a limited number of people working which does not allow speedy progress on any project. Your hands are needed, most every Saturday and Sunday.

The Open House at the Maintenance Facility and Archive on Sunday, October 1, was a success with a number of members and guests attending for a visit, we only wish more could have participated. Perhaps sometime next spring we will do another open house and have the 522 operational. It was not running this time because of the removal of a number of safety appliances for restoration.

Our mechanical crew has made two trips to Belington, WV for work on our passenger equipment in use on the West Virginia Central. Replacement of windows and repair to the floor behind the counter of the No. 3305 "Mardi Gras" were the primary focus of these work sessions.

Another purpose of the latest trip was a test run of some of the passenger equipment to see whether trackwork in the tun-

nel east of Elkins has resulted in acceptable clearance to handle the cars, The tunnel is a difficult one as it has a curve going into the west end and an opposite curve on the east end. The cars did successfully traverse the tunnel, with just a small amount of clearance available on each side.

Editors note: The following is reprinted from last months issue, since it was not printed in complete order and form.

Mixed Freight - September

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

I am happy to announce that The Blue Ridge Live Steamers are back on track again. I am not going to present all the details to what has been going on with us for nearly the past two years. To make a long train short, member John Zinn purchased the land, trackage and structures located in beautiful Burnt Chimney, Virginia for an undisclosed to the public amount. The land, trackage and structures were in turn turned over to the Blue Ridge Live Steamers. Once the organization gets fully functional and a course of action planned, John Zinn is to be paid back. We had our first run in almost two years during the weekend of August 12 and 13th. It was a combination of running trains, our mouths and machines that cut and trim vegetation. We BRLS's were not busy at our site for nearly two years, but Mother Nature surely was. All the rain this summer definitely made a tremendous contribution to the vegetational prosperity. We plan to have our traditional Labor Day Weekend Run in early September. The public is indeed invited.

It's hard to believe the Summer of 2000

is almost over. With the coming of Autumn comes the barrage of railroad hobbyist activities. Normally, The Altoona Railroad Festival and East Broad Top's Autumn Spectacular Weekend fall on two separate weekends. This year, both events happen during the weekend of October 7th and 8th. With Altoona and Orbisonia being about an hour apart, convenience is the word here. Oh yes, one more item concerning that weekend in Altoona, the National Model Railroad Association will be holding it's annual convention there too. Needless to say lodging will be tight and this does not even include the football fans attending area college football games.

A few months back I reported that former C&O Greenbrier No. 614 was up for auction. The auction took place, but was deemed unacceptable in terms of the highest bid offered which was only \$200,000. Ross Rowland is seeking \$ 1 million dollars minimum for his locomotive. If you are interested phone 704-436-9393 or FAX 704-436-9399.

Talk about a lack of foresight. Amtrak will limit it's Acela Express to 75 miles per hour between New York and New Haven and the train's tilting function on curves will not be activated on the grounds that a malfunction may cause two trains to strike each other.

Here is the latest I have on the restoration of former PRR steam locomotive K4s # 1361. Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge has released \$600,000 to restore the locomotive to operating condition. The restoration project was on the verge of coming to a full halt had the funding not come thru. A grant for \$420,000 from The

Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission got the restoration project rolling back in 1992. As of this writing, the restoration is 60% complete.

The Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum was recently awarded a \$40,000 grant via the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century AKA TEA-21 to clear vegetation and to plant ground cover for protection of the environment at Horseshoe Curve. The project is not expected to commence until late 2001.

To the dismay of photographers, Norfolk Southern has installed a fence on the bridge spanning it's tracks at Gallitzin, PA. This has been a popular photo vantage point for decades and required absolutely no trespassing.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

October 19, 2000
Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

November 7, 2000
Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

November 16, 2000
Annual Meeting, 7:30 pm

December 5, 2000
Board Meeting, 7: 30 pm

December 14, 2000
Christmas Gathering - VMT

January 2, 2001
Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

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