



# *Turntable* TIMES

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

**Volume 34, Number 8**

**August 2002**





# Turntable TIMES

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## **EDITOR**

Kenney Kirkman

## **MIXED FREIGHT**

Robin R. Shavers

## **SMALL RAILS**

Dave Meashey

## **SPLINTERS**

Bill Arnold

## **HISTORIAN**

Kenneth L. Miller

All materials should be sent directly to the Editor:  
Kenney Kirkman  
590 Murphy Road  
Collinsville, VA  
24078-2128

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 regular meeting on Thursday, August 15, 2002 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*

### **Meeting Notice**

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next regular meeting on Thursday, August 22, 2002 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.

### **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 Saturday, August 17, 2002. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

### **Material for Turntable Times**

We are always in need of articles, photos or news items for the Turntable Times. Due to copyright restrictions, we cannot reprint articles from many newspapers; a condensed rewritten article crediting the source is acceptable. We still need material on an ongoing basis. Please contribute!

### **Cover Photo**

Twenty years ago this month after a full restoration, the 611 returned to Roanoke under steam for the first time since October, 1959. It is difficult for the folks who have been involved in this organization that it was 20 years, but to step back just a tiny bit further, it was 25 years since the 1977 NRHS National Convention was held in Roanoke. On the famous Roanoke-Cedar Bluff round trip, ex Texas & Pacific 2-10-4 No. 610 is shown running near Lurich, Virginia. Photo by K. L. Miller

## Important Notice!

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All members should have received a letter and proposal regarding the Chapter's involvement in the purchase and renovation of the former Virginian station in Roanoke. Please make every effort to attend the Chapter meeting for this important discussion.

## Small Rails

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by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers are making progress on the new display layout. The benchwork is complete, and some of the track is laid. The display layout should be quite impressive once it is finished.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators held their June meeting at the home of Steve King on Saturday, June 21st. Steve is a 7/8ths inch-to-the-foot scale modeler. Although these models run on Gauge One track, they represent two-foot gauge equipment, so many of the models are HUGE! Even small industrial cars and locomotives are quite impressive in 7/8ths inch scale. Most of these models either run on batteries of live steam. Alcohol and butane/propane are the fuels of choice, but some enthusiasts are considering coal fired steam locomotives.

## Mixed Freight - August

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by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

If you are unaware of it, RAILPACE Magazine did a wonderful and thorough article on the West Virginia Central Railroad and the Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad within the pages of their August 2002 issue. Considering the ties that the Roanoke Chapter N.R.H.S. has with the above railroads, I highly recommend the reading of that article to all chapter members.

The Blue Ridge Live Steamers has a busy Saturday July 13th during our summer run and open house. Editor Kenney Kirkman even

showed up for a few hours. He even got to run a train. Despite the rural location of our track-site, we do have neighbors. During that weekend, one of our neighbors north of our site had a family reunion with close to 600 participants. Most of them paid the B.R.L.S. a visit. They were delivered to us via a twin horse team drawn wagon and a farm tractor drawn wagon. I reckon 70 percent of those wishing to ride were female, and I must say they made for quite an attractive manifest. Along with the above normal loads came above normal donations too. I understand that one of the family members was so impressed with us and our treatment of the entire group that he would be sending us a special donation.

Our next run will be Labor Day Weekend, August 31st thru September 2nd. Run times are from 10:00 am., til 4:00 pm., Saturday and Sunday. Cut off time for Labor Day will be 1:00 pm.

There have been some changes to Norfolk Southern trains in the Roanoke area. Former 194 is now # 274. This is an all autorack train loaded with American made cars for a distribution center just north of Winston-Salem, N.C. It's northbound counterpart is still symbolized No. 195. On the other side of the former Shenandoah Division, freights 460 and 461 are no more. Southbound freights operating from Hagerstown to Bristol are 15T and 37Q from Hagerstown to Roanoke. 16T operates from Bristol to Hagerstown and 38Q runs from Roanoke to Hagerstown. Local freight V18 operates from Roanoke to Shenandoah and V19 does the return to Roanoke trip.

The Great American Train Show will pull into Richmond during the weekend of August 17th & 18th. The event will take place out at The Virginia State Fairgrounds, located on Laburne Avenue. Times are from 11:00 am., til 4:00 pm., both days.

The Southern Junction Model Railroad event will take place in The Dorton arena at The North Carolina State Fairgrounds in Raleigh on

September 7th & 8th. For more information, call 919-467-8105. One thing I really enjoy about this event is the large amount of used but in good condition HO scale rolling stock. A fair amount of prototype railroaders can usually be found too.

One more prototype item. Last year I reported that CSX combined southbound intermodal train 175 with southbound K651 which is an all empty train of Tropicana boxcars. The train was symbolized K651. Due to an increase in intermodal traffic, the two trains are back to separate operation. This became effective on June 18th.

## **Covington Stations to be Restored**

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For the third year in a row, the city of Covington, Virginia has received a federal grant which will permit the city to proceed with plans to restore two former CSX railroad passenger stations.

The funding will help convert the depots on Maple Avenue into facilities for the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce, the Alleghany Historical Society, a genealogy society and a railroad museum. Total cost of the project will be \$715,000. Thus far, grants for the project have totaled \$450,000. This year's grant totaled \$150,000.

The first train station was built in 1890 and the second in 1915 before being converted into a freight station. Since the early 1990's the buildings have been left deteriorating and empty. The depots are on property owned by CSX, and will be leased by the railroad to the city of Covington for 20 years.

The chamber of commerce and the historical society will locate in the station building that was constructed in 1915. Plans for the museum are still in the formative stages, but the city is working with the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke to help get things

rolling.

(From article in the Roanoke Times by Tarah Holland, Saturday, July 6, 2002, courtesy of Carol Jensen.)

## **Norfolk Southern Corporation Vital Statistics**

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21,800 route miles of track in 22 states, District of Columbia, and Ontario province; 3,575 locomotives, including leased locomotives; 114,499 freight cars; 6.8 million shipments in 2000, including trailer-on-flatcar and container-on-flatcar.

197 billion revenue ton-miles in 2000, from the following sources: coal, coke, iron ore, 23 percent; intermodal, 18 percent; automotive, 15 percent; chemicals, 13 percent; metals, construction, 11 percent; paper, clay, forest products, 10 percent; agriculture, construction products, 10 percent.

Major facilities served; 174 bulk transfer centers, 170 coal loading facilities, 136 utility plants, 124 lumber reload centers, 105 paper distribution centers, 74 steel mills, 71 metals distribution centers, 66 paper mills, 52 intermodal terminals, 38 auto distribution facilities, 34 auto assembly plants, 26 coal and iron ore transload facilities, 13 sea ports, 9 Triple Crown terminals, 7 lake ports, 7 plastics warehouse/distribution centers, 4 vehicle mixing centers, 4 just-in-time rail auto parts centers.

(Above submitted by Mr. Robin R. Shavers.)

## **A Unique Lodging Experience!**

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by David Helmer

Have you ever wanted to spend the night in a depot? No—I'm not talking about a vagrant sleeping in some abandoned station—but in a beautifully restored depot that is now a Bed and Breakfast. There is one rather close by to the Roanoke Valley—in beautiful downtown

Paint Bank, VA.

Located along state highway 311, northwest of Salem, VA is the little town of Paint Bank, VA. In 1907, there was a flurry of activity in the area as the result of a mining boom for iron ore. The Norfolk and Western Railway helped construct a 38 mile branch— primarily along Stony Creek from near Ripplemead, VA to Paint Bank. This became know as the Potts Valley branch of the N&W (See Lewis Newton's book, *Rails Remembered Volume #3* for details).

While the branch was abandoned beyond Kerns, VA in 1933, two stations remain— at Waiteville, WV (in very poor condition) and at Paint Bank, VA. Several years ago— a former Roanoke College alumnus, who is a Wall St. investment broker, begin buying up nearly 7,000 acres in Potts Valley, along with most of the town of Paint Bank. What has been developed is the largest bison ranch in Virginia and a very well-done restoration of the ole depot that sat forlorn for many years. There are even more improvements in the area to come.

Grace and I recently stayed overnight at this railroad B&B ñ we were the only guests that evening. The depot was originally built in 1909. Paint Bank was the final stop of the Potts Valley branch. The depot has been renovated, maintaining as much of the original architecture as possible and converted into a recently opened lodge. The owner DID NOT skimp on the restoration or the furnishings. There are four rooms upstairs, each with its own gas log stove, private bath and complete with rustic antique decor. Downstairs in the depot is a large suite overlooking Potts Creek and garden. Visitors are treated in the morning to a privately prepared hearty continental breakfast, featuring biscuits and gravy, sausage biscuits and fresh fruit.

We had a special treat for our visit— an hour long private tour of the bison ranch by the General Manager of Hollow Hill farms— the operator of the ranch, as well as the B&B. They have a herd of 350 bison, plus more than 100 cattle from the Scottish Highlands.

A visit to the Depot Lodge is to step back in time— to a very rural pastoral America. No television, on computers, just the soothing sound of flowing water.

For reservations or information, call Michele Smith— 1-800-970-DEPOT and tell her David sent you! We plan to make another visit to this B&B.

## Book Review

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by John Austen

Classic American Railroad Terminals

by Kevin J. Holland

MBI Publishing Company

2001; 10-3/8" x 10-3/8", 156pp.; \$34.95.

Available from MBI's Classic Motorbooks Catalog, toll free (800) 826-6600, the MBI website [www.motorbooks.com](http://www.motorbooks.com), and your favorite bookstore.

This oversized all-color tome is more than just a coffee-table book; it is a succinct survey of major terminals across North America (since it includes a chapter on Canada). The first chapter is entitled "Style and Substance: What Makes a Railroad Terminal"; it discusses terminal components, union stations, station architecture, and "the role of the terminal in America". The other six chapters present a total of 43 terminals, divided into regional groupings (heartland, east, south, west, Canada, and Chicago). Terminals in various styles are shown, from Richardsonian Romanesque, through Beaux-Arts Classicism to Art Deco and a few more modern examples. Seven of these terminals were used by Norfolk & Western. The book also mentions Roanoke in passing, as being one of "the handful of post-Art Deco terminals".

Each chapter starts with a full-bleed (right to the edge of the paper) photo that covers a full page and part of the adjacent page. Over two hundred images are in the book. Most of these are photographs (apparently never published before); 29 are postcards (from several collectors). The postcards provide color views of the

terminals in the era before color photography. Most appear to be Curt Teich linen cards.

Cincinnati Union Terminal receives due coverage. This was jointly owned by seven railroads, including N&W. In 1929 all signed the 42-page "Agreement for Union Station Facilities at Cincinnati".

Cleveland Union Terminal was opened in 1930 by joint owners New York Central (93%) and Nickel Plate (7%). N&W ceased use of the terminal in 1965 with the discontinuance of a final Buffalo-Chicago daytime schedule, less than a year after NKP was absorbed into N&W.

The "other" station in Detroit (other than the massive Michigan Central Station) was Fort Street Union Depot, one of the last built in the Romanesque style. It was opened in 1893, owned by three railroads. After various mergers and corporate changes Pennsylvania Railroad left in 1959, leaving C&O as the sole owner, with Wabash as a tenant. Wabash (absorbed into N&W in 1964) and C&O continued to serve FSUD until the coming of Amtrak in 1971. The station was razed in 1974.

St. Louis Union Station was still served by N&W (through a former Wabash line) and six other railroads when Amtrak arrived. These seven still had a total of 12 trains a day to and from St. Louis.

Chicago merits its own chapter. Both Wabash and Nickel Plate served Chicago. Although Dearborn Station was closed with the coming of Amtrak, the N&W (former Wabash) commuter operation lasted for another five years. The lone train terminated on a track adjacent to the terminal, and even had a makeshift structure (Polk Street Station) built especially for it. The regional transportation authority took over the operation and moved it to Union Station in 1976. N&W vacated use of La Salle Street Station in 1965 with the discontinuance of the last ex-Nickel Plate schedules.

N&W hung on at Kansas City Union Station longer than most. It was 1969 when the last of the former Wabash schedules ended here.

The narrative (c. 50,000 words) is informative and smooth flowing, with few typos. An extensive caption accompanies each photograph, expanding on the text and identifying the source. This lovely large hardback book (with dust jacket) is more than worth the price; you could not buy 200 post cards for that price even at a flea market, even if you could find these classics. At today's dealer/collector prices the book's 29 postcards alone would be worth five to ten times the price of the book. Many of the photos presented here are much larger than cards. All show the care taken by excellent photographers and editors (composition, exposure, developing, cropping, layout). Combined with helpful captions and insightful narrative these photos constitute a useful survey of major railroad terminals throughout the US and Canada.

## Amtrak Funding

Due to the recent flap over the government funding of Amtrak, I wanted to share some numbers. I was sent these facts about Amtrak funds and found them very interesting. Public transportation subsidies:

Highways & Roads:

\$32 Billion - 1 year (2001)

Airlines: \$15 Billion

9/11 Bailout \$13 Billion - Year 2001  
subsidies alone

Amtrak: \$24 Billion - 31 Years  
(Its entire life!)

Last year alone the nation's highways and roads received \$32 billion from the Department of Transportation, more than the \$24 billion Amtrak has received in its entire 31 years. Air travel, at \$13 billion last year, receives more funding in two years than Amtrak has in its three decades. The General Accounting Office this year said the cost of modernizing America's passenger rail system would be \$30 billion over the next 20 years. That is still less than what America spent last year on highways.

from The Brass Switch Key Newsletter

## Condolences

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The Chapter and members have suffered some losses recently and our condolences are offered.

Member Ray Myers passed away on June 25, 2002 in Plant City, Florida. Ray had finally retired and moved to Florida a number of years back. Ray had been quite active in his years in Roanoke, and even after moving to Florida continued to contribute to the Turntable Times, his last article was about Alexandria, Virginia in the May issue.

Bill Arnold's mother also passed away recently. Bill and Ellen offer their thanks to the Chapter for the thoughts.

Elbert and Claudine Miller suffered two losses in 9 days, first was sister-in-law Grace Kytchen on July 26, then brother, Howard Miller on August 4th.

## Railroading, The Way It Was

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compiled by Ken Miller

The following two articles taken from older Norfolk and Western Magazines show just how service and dedication to your job on the railroad was like at one time. It also shows the company's efforts to provide service to its customers. Sadly it appears that both qualities have been lost to the ages.

## In An Emergency

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From the N&W Magazine November 1929

Another instance of our operating folks coming to the aid of our patrons in an emergency was uncovered recently when President A. C. Needles received a letter from a Columbus concern commending the quick action of Terminal Trainmaster J. F. Moore, of Columbus, his secretary, Miss Spurgeon, and Night Yardmaster Richards. The letter follows:

"At 9:00 o'clock on the morning of September 17, two cars, consigned to us were delivered at South Charleston, Oh. The connecting line train was delayed, we understand, and we called Miss Spurgeon, secretary to J. F. Moore, termi-

nal trainmaster here, telling her that it was necessary that these cars be on our platform at 8:00 o'clock on the morning of September 18, to prevent our shutting down. These cars were not delivered to the Norfolk and Western until early in the morning of September 18, but Night Yardmaster Richards hurried them down to your lower yards and they were placed at our platform at 7:00 o'clock on that same morning in time to insure our operation.

"This fine cooperation is very much appreciated by us and we feel that you should know of this attention to your patrons, as indicated in this instance. We desire, at this time, to commend the prompt movement of our cars in general here at Columbus, inasmuch as the heavy construction work you are doing here must be reckoned with in your yard operation."

## The Stuff That Real Heroes Are Made Of

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From the N&W Magazine, August 1923

When fifteen freight cars, without warning, suddenly pile up on top of you, demolishing the building you are in, it takes something that unfortunately every one doesn't have, to crawl out and carry on your work. And when you can do an extra eight hours of work to relieve the other fellow whose nerves have been shattered by the accident, you can justly lay claim to the stuff from which real heroes are made. Such a man is L. K. Thornton, our operator at Lunch, Va.

But let Superintendent R. H. Smith of the Radford Division tell the story as he did in his letter of commendation to Operator Thornton.

"On May 30 you were working as operator at Lurich. At 3:57 p. m. extra 2022 east wrecked 15 cars, including one electric motor, completely destroying the telegraph office in which you were standing. I understand that you went down with the building and crawled out from under the wreckage. All telephone and telegraph communications were broken. At 4:15 p. m. you communicated the details of the accident to the chief dispatcher from over the long

distance country telephone. At 4:45 p. m. you succeeded in getting sufficient instruments and wires connected up to clear the dispatching telephone circuit and communicate direct with the dispatcher. You got the instruments out of the wreckage and the wires from the pole next to the station and improvised a telephone office on the ground back of the wreckage. For commendable service, I am entering a credit of 20 days on your record and I wish to personally congratulate you on your cool-headedness and nerve.

"I am also glad to make this addition to a record which has been absolutely clear for 18 years. In sending this well-merited commendation to the magazine, Superintendent Smith added:

"The second trick operator who was in the office with Mr. Thornton at the time the trouble occurred had his nerves so badly shaken that he was unable to continue on duty so Mr. Thornton relieved him and continued to work at his improvised telegraph office until the third trick operator came on duty."

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

August 15, 2002  
Regular Meeting

September 3, 2002  
Board Meeting

September 3, 2002  
Board Meeting

September 19, 2002  
Regular Meeting

October 1, 2002  
Board Meeting

October 17, 2002  
Regular Meeting

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**Editor, Turntable Times**  
**Roanoke Chapter NRHS**  
**P.O. Box 13222**  
**Roanoke, VA 24032-1322**

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