



# *Turntable* TIMES

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

**Volume 34, Number 12**  
**December 2002**



*The Turntable Times Staff Wishes Everyone a  
Wonderful and Safe Holiday Season!*



# Turntable TIMES

**Volume 34, Number 12**  
**December 2002**

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## **MIXED FREIGHT**

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## **SMALL RAILS**

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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 meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2003 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 Wednesday, December 18, 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 most newspapers; a condensed rewritten article crediting the source, however, is acceptable. We still need material on an ongoing basis. Please contribute! It is your newsletter.

### **Cover Photo**

Simply having a Wonderful Christmas Time! Santa arrives in Roanoke via Norfolk and Western Business Car No. 3 on December 18, 1929. See the story from the Norfolk and Western Magazine of February, 1930 on page 6 of this issue. December 1929 was not a particularly wonderful Christmas season, as the Stock Market had collapsed on October 28, leading the economy into a world wide depression that lasted for over a decade. Most folks did not realize how deep the depression would be when this photo was made. Christmas 1929 was a festive season, the next few Christmases would not be as happy. Norfolk and Western photo, Jeff Sanders Collection.

## **Holiday Gathering**

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by Bonnie Molinary

Bring your family and join us once again this year for an evening of food and fun at our regular meeting location at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke on our regular meeting night, Thursday, December 19 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 no business to be conducted except for some announcements and installation of officers and directors for 2003. Come and enjoy! For details and/or to volunteer to help, contact Bonnie Molinary, Kathy Overholser or Wanda Troutman.

## **Condolences**

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The Chapter extends its thoughts to Wanda Troutman in the passing of her mother recently. Editor Kenney Kirkman has been under the weather as of late as well.

## **Mixed Freight - December**

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by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

I mentioned earlier this year that June 1st 2002 marked 20 years since the merger of the Southern Railway and the Norfolk & Western Railway Company. In commemoration of that 20 year achievement, Norfolk Southern has put together a book called Portrait 20. It is a 200 page project that covers 155 years of the railroad's history prior to the merger in addition to the 20 year post merger history. The book is a compilation of interviews, photographs, timelines and more than 60 articles by company employees. Norfolk Southern departmental supervisors will distribute one copy free to each employee.

Speaking of history so to speak, I recently acquired a 2001 edition of AAA Philadelphia, PA

city map. I was really surprised that the railroads were still named Penn Central and Reading.

The Blue Ridge Live Steamers had a very successful Autumn Run during the last weekend of October. It rained a lot and hard on Friday night but Saturday and Sunday were real blessings weatherwise. We had a good turn out of visitors and members as well. We had a nice group dinner Saturday night followed by both bull and intellectual conversation around a warm fire. Trains were put to rest around 5:30. On Sunday morning we spent time pruning trees and sprucing up the property. Visitors didn't show up til around noon. One of the important things we accomplished was deciding when and where we would have our annual holiday party which will be at an establishment in Roanoke the third Saturday night in January.

While railfanning in Roanoke after midnight, way after midnight, I observed NS intermodal train # 233 in the area located between the Virginia Museum of Transportation and the Coca Cola facility. With 30 autoracks on the headend in addition to a long consist of TOFC equipment, this made for a VERY long train. It was so long that when it stopped for a crew change, the rear was in front of that new parking deck next to the former Norfolk and Western Railway headquarters building. I had a feeling that the autoracks of NS 277 had been added to 233. I was really curious about 233's length. My NS contacts informed me that 277 had indeed been combined with 233 for a total train length of 10,731 feet.

With a hand upon the throttle and eyes scanning the rails, an engineer avoided a real disaster on the little Nashville & Eastern Railroad. The train was traveling to Nashville, TN with more than 400 passengers and crew members on a section of track restricted to 10 miles per hour. The person or persons had wedged tie plates against the inner sides of the rail. This could have caused the wheels to ride over the railhead and onto the ground onto a bridge that crosses Smith Fork Creek 60 feet below. As of this writ-

ing, the criminals have yet to be arrested.

Last month I commented on bands posing on railroad tracks and equipment for posters, publicity shots, etc. A few weeks ago I received some information from Operation Lifesaver on a parallel issue that involves the media in general. According to O.L., there has been a 23.6 increase in trespasser related deaths on railroad property for the first four months of 2002 compared to 2001. According to O.L., the media in so many words glamorizes trespassing on railroad property by using photos of people of all ages walking, sitting or playing on tracks. News photographers, writers and editors tend to confuse the area along railroad tracks with that of a public park. This philosophy is reinforced to the public via news photos and ads. Operation Lifesaver has begun an educational campaign aimed at the media to stop using such photos. A four color poster with samples of news photos, magazine covers and fashion spreads showing adults and children on the tracks is being sent to thousands of editors of newspapers and magazines nationwide.

CSX has taken delivery of 60 new air powered ATX end of train devices manufactured by Wabtec. The new equipment will be used exclusively on intermodal trains. The devices are powered by brake pipe pressure. This pressure spins an air turbine. Since these devices do not require batteries, tight scheduled intermodals won't be delayed from battery recharging.

## Passenger Train Update- December

by Gary Ballard

Amtrak is getting rid of the "Acela Spots" on its fleet of Amfleet cars. A more uniform look will be reached, as the old Metroliner paint scheme is being kept. This is the one with the broad blue window band and the small three red stripes along the top of the band. You can expect the big red, white and blue logo, which was paint scheme No. 3 to go by the wayside as well.

So by keeping paint scheme No. 4, the passenger carrier will have a solid "uniform appearance..." and rightfully so, there have been 3 different colors out there for the public to see. Mr.Gunn was a bit taken as to why the equipment was decorated in so many variables when he first came to Amtrak. No change is expected for the Acela high-speed trainsets, though.

The blue on the broad window band is actually more of a true blue, or Acela-blue. In the past, this color seemed to fade and appear to favor a faded purple instead. The reflective red stripe along the bottom of the cars will be retained. This stripe was part of the Acela Regional paint scheme. Amtrak's new brand will appear in the blue band, next to the entrance door where passengers go in.

The following Amfleet cars are now in their final "redone" livery..

20229 Cafe	82081	Coach
20008 Cafe	82080	Coach
21150 Cafe	21263	Coach

It's interesting to see old Heritage cars ply the rails, usually the markings of the car,s original owner can be seen, where the letters were pulled from the stainless steel only to catch where they once were. Many baggage cars still bear the fresh non faded areas where "Santa Fe" once was. On the Florida route, you can still see an old diner that once was part of the great fleet belonging to "New York Central." The car number is 8514, and the original name of the owner is visible along the stainless steel letterboard above the windows.

## Getting enough IRON in your diet??

by Chad Jordan

We want YOU to join us as a Mechanical Volunteer in this growing National Railway Historical Society. Mechanical Volunteers bring the trains at the Roanoke Chapter's ninth street maintenance facility back to life. The old locomotives and rail cars are

again shining examples of the rails at their best. Volunteer enthusiasm and commitment are the key to returning these artifacts to their former glory to be enjoyed by everyone.

If you have ridden our train during open house or watched the workers at the siding, you have seen our Mechanical Volunteers at work. They are a part of the Roanoke Chapter's Mechanical Department.

Our goal is to preserve historic rail equipment, buildings, and artifacts for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

It makes no difference what your background may be. In fact, some volunteers have no previous mechanical experience, while some have a history with the railroad.

The Mechanical Volunteers are a special part of the Roanoke Chapter. Our work is educational and team-spirited, and we make a difference for the Chapter. Seeing our projects succeed is proof.

We invite interested individuals to join our efforts and become a part of preserving Virginia's railroad history.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life with a common interest in working together at something we enjoy. We always learn, often from each other.

Help make history come alive! You can have an active part of the successes at the Roanoke Chapter's ninth street maintenance facility.

Some of the benefits you will enjoy include:

- "Behind the scenes" work
- Invitations to special events
- Annual volunteer Christmas party
- Being part of a special team

If you are interested in becoming a Mechanical Volunteer with your Roanoke Chapter. Please see one of our volunteers at a meeting, or call at the siding. We usually have work sessions on Saturdays and Sundays. You can call the siding to make sure we are working before you come down. The number is: (540) 427-5126. You can also use email for contact. Email: [caj\\_611@yahoo.com](mailto:caj_611@yahoo.com).

We look forward to having you aboard!

## **JetTrain locomotive arrives amid uncertainty**

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WASHINGTON, D.C.: A new high-speed jet-powered locomotive was unveiled here last month, but the future of the train in America is clouded by an uncertain market and mechanical troubles with its close cousin, Amtrak's Acela, according to a Reuters report.

Montreal-based Bombardier Inc. showed off the sleek red JetTrain at Washington's Union Station, touting its maximum speed "up to 150 mph" and adaptability to existing rail infrastructure, including track. Another plus, say proponents, is that JetTrain eliminates the enormous expense of having to electrify rail lines.

"JetTrain's high speed is game-changing technology that breaks open the high-speed market throughout North America," Pierre Lortie, president and chief operating officer of Bombardier, told the news conference.

But, while the U.S. federal government underwrote half of JetTrain's \$25-million development and some consider it promising; its future in the United States is entwined in the tangled debate over city-to-city rail.

Most travelers fly or drive, and the nation's only recent experience with high-speed rail has been with beleaguered Amtrak and its problematic Acela trains, which are also made by Bombardier.

Congress is considering legislation that would fund development of regional rail corridors and provide Amtrak with enough money to adequately maintain Acela and other flagship services in the Northeast.

Florida and California are considering high-speed rail initiatives as is a coalition of nine midwestern states.

U.S. proponents tout high-speed rail as an answer to ease increased air and highway congestion, especially for trips of 300 miles or less. They also see regional rail development as a cornerstone of local economic development.

Opponents favor promoting spending on greater air and road capacity.

Amtrak itself is unhappy with Bombardier because of mechanical problems it has had with Acela and a long-running legal battle over delivery of the trains, which have been popular with travelers.

The worst Acela problem occurred this summer when cracks were found in several suspension systems, prompting Amtrak to temporarily suspend all Acela service between Washington, New York and Boston. Full service has yet to be restored.

Amtrak says it will not buy any more Acela trains but Lortie said he is convinced his problems with Amtrak will not hurt Bombardier's ability to sell JetTrain in North America.

JetTrain is 38,000 pounds lighter than a conventional diesel-powered engine, limiting track damage that often occurs with many existing high-speed trains.

Before it could be used in the United States a number of multi-million dollar track upgrades would be needed, including railroad crossing improvements and making curves less steep.

Bombardier hopes to sell its first JetTrain sometime next year and deliver the first train with cars before 2005.

from UTU News

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## **Ninth Street News**

by Brian Crosier

This month the big news at Ninth St. is the disposal of car 1829. This car was originally built for the Boston and Maine and later sold to the Wabash.

After many attempts with other scrappers, we were finally able to make arrangements with R&R contractors based out of Hardy VA but located adjacent to us in the industrial center to disassemble the car and dispose of the body. We salvaged every possible piece that can be used in other restoration projects from the trucks and underbody equipment down to light

fixtures and luggage racks. It was sad to see it go but had to be done. It was amazing to watch how difficult it was to tear the car apart.

Since the car was primarily stainless steel, torches were virtually useless and the car had to be sectioned and torn into pieces. Once the car was reduced to diaphragms and trucks, the trucks were rolled back down to our maintenance yard (we received permission for the car to be scrapped on the old Moore's siding so the scrapper would have full access to both sides and allowing easier cleanup of the mess afterward). Once the trucks were back on the main the 1829 was coupled with itself and currently resides in front of the dock so we can salvage the last parts from the draft gear and diaphragms.

We are about to start working on the track rehabilitation again for the Winter months so please let Bill Mason know whether you are available to assist. We will announce dates for work sessions to finish up track one and three.

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## **Pre-Register Now for Star Spangled Rails**

The National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) and the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, Inc. (R&LHS) invite you to attend a joint convention, named Star Spangled Rails, in Baltimore, Maryland July 1 - 6, 2003. Hosted by the Washington, DC Chapter of the NRHS and the R&LHS, the convention highlights are expected to include exciting mainline excursion trains, other fun rail oriented trips, educational seminars, a railodiana flea market, along with the annual banquet. And of course, there will be a spectacular 4th of July fireworks show, courtesy of the City of Baltimore. There will also be non-rail excursions to see the historic, the cultural, and the fun parts of Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland.

The Star Spangled Rails event will coincide with the 175th Anniversary of Railroading in the United States and will occur at the height of

the B&O Railroad Museum's America on Track Celebration. The highlight of the Museum's celebration will be a recreation of the 1927 "Fair of the Iron Horse." The fair will include special exhibits at the museum and Baltimore's Carroll Park. Railroad equipment of all kinds and vintages will be on display, something special no one will want to miss. Besides all of the exciting public events of the Fair, special private events for Star Spangled Rails attendees only are being planned in conjunction with the museum.

Along with planned convention activities, Baltimore offers many attractions. You can spend the day exploring Baltimore's Inner Harbor, the Maryland Science Center, the Baltimore Zoo and the National Aquarium. See historical mansions and monuments. Visit Fort McHenry where the national anthem was written. Catch a ball game or Broadway show. Enjoy cool jazz or summer concerts. And, of course, shop, shop, shop in the 200+ specialty shops at The Inner Harbor. To delight the epicureans, Baltimore offers everything from Crabs to Caviar, as well as a fantastic variety in dining experiences. The city has everything from Chesapeake Bay cuisine to Italian delights, traditional fares and everything in between. Then sit back at your hotel or stroll down to the Inner Harbor and enjoy the 4th of July fireworks spectacle.

This convention is definitely something both railfans and non-railfans will not want to miss! For more information, check the official convention website at [www.starspangledrails.org](http://www.starspangledrails.org). Pre-registration is now OPEN for members of both NRHS and the R&LHS.

## Scanner Chatter

Let us know of the interesting things you see or hear about on the Railroad. The Roanoke Chapter does not condone TRESPASSING on railroad property, please railfan responsibly and legally.

Union Pacific GE's 6655 and 6458 were seen being fueled in South yard and later pushing a coal train south on the Pumpkin vine.

BNSF red and Silver Warbonnet GE C44-9W #711 was the third unit in an eastbound NS covered hopper train behind NS GE Dash 9-40CW 9711 and #8931.



## Santa Claus Visits Roanoke



From the Norfolk and Western Magazine, February, 1930  
**S**anta Claus, that mysterious giver of gifts, who lives at the North Pole, came down to Roanoke six days before his regular annual visit to prove to all its skeptical residents that

he is a real, live human being. He was brought to Roanoke on a Norfolk and Western special train. Mr. Claus traveled via sled and reindeer to a point in the Shenandoah Valley. Leaving his reindeer here to graze, he boarded the special in the early morning of December 18. He was whisked down our Shenandoah Valley line in time to greet Roanoke's children as they were dismissed from school.

The train pulled into Roanoke promptly at 4:00 o'clock and stopped on the west side of the Jefferson Street crossing where a large crowd of children and grown-ups had gathered to see him. As he stepped down from the decorated train he was welcomed to the city by Mayor Charles D. Fox, and a committee of Roanoke citizens headed by B. F. Moomaw, secretary of the Roanoke Chamber of Commerce.

His Royal Majesty was then ushered to a waiting automobile and preceded by a guard of

Roanoke scouts and the Roanoke Shop Band, he took part in a parade through the principal streets of the city. The parade ended at Elmwood Park where Santa responded to Mayor Fox's formal welcome with a short talk to the crowd which had gathered there. His visit to Roanoke ended when he was escorted back to his special train which departed for the North again soon afterward.

The train was artistically decorated with evergreens and mistletoe, and was composed of a baggage car laden with boxes, a passenger coach with toys packed to the windows, and a business car. The crew was composed of R. P. Phenix, conductor; O. H. Rea, engineer; T. R. May, brakeman, and J. C. May, fireman. The credit for the splendid appearance of the special train goes to Superintendent Car Department S. P. Seifert and his force.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

Christmas Gathering  
December 19, 2002

January 7, 2003  
Board Meeting

January 16, 2003  
Regular Meeting

February 20, 2003  
Regular Meeting

March 4, 2003  
Board Meeting

March 29, 2003  
Annual Banquet

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