

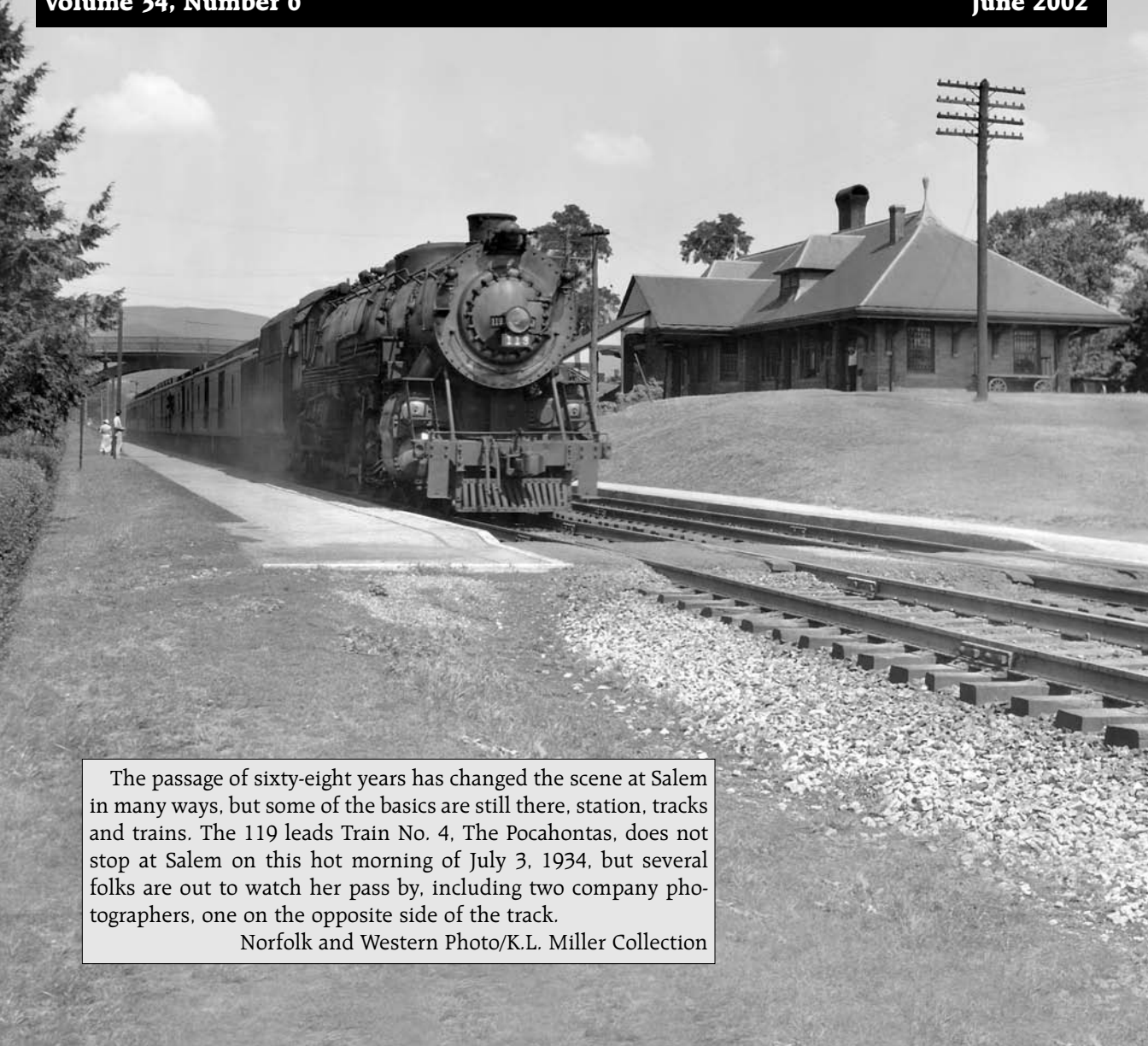


# Turntable TIMES

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

Volume 34, Number 6

June 2002



The passage of sixty-eight years has changed the scene at Salem in many ways, but some of the basics are still there, station, tracks and trains. The 119 leads Train No. 4, The Pocahontas, does not stop at Salem on this hot morning of July 3, 1934, but several folks are out to watch her pass by, including two company photographers, one on the opposite side of the track.

Norfolk and Western Photo/K.L. Miller Collection



# Turntable TIMES

**Volume 34, Number 6  
June 2002**

## **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, June 20, 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.

Our June program will be a video compilation of the best of railroading, Hollywood style by Gary Ballard. Gary's presentations are always entertaining, and everyone is encouraged to attend!

## *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, June 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 many newspapers; a condensed, rewritten article crediting the source is acceptable. We still need material on an ongoing basis. Please contribute.

### **Open House**

Reminder: Our Open House at 9th Street June 22-23, 2002. Our 9th Street crew will host an open house and 40th Birthday celebration! Our GP30 No. 522 was delivered to the N&W in late June, 1962.

Hours for both days will be 10 am to 6 pm, Saturday between noon and 1 will be the birthday celebration and rededication. Need directions? Come to the Chapter meeting on June 20!

## Small Rails - June

---

by Dave Meashey

I don't have any news from the Roanoke Valley Model Engineers this month.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators held their May meeting at the home of Otto and Imtraut Hartenstein in Blacksburg on Saturday, May 18th. Although the weather was cold, the Hartenstein's garden railway was well worth the trip. Members were treated to mountain operation on a double-track mainline. The railway features several tunnels and some spectacular bridges and trestles.

The Hartenstein's garden railway also has a five-stall roundhouse, accessed by a turntable with a three-foot bridge. Otto has built a model of the D&RGW Rico station in 1:22/5 scale. A grist mill with an overshot wheel supplied by a three-foot flume is another interesting feature. Otto also has built a "town" of building flats that conceal a large three-track train shed, which is used to store his equipment while it is not running. Aristo-Craft Train Engineer radio control throttles power the railway.

## Mixed Freight - June

---

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

A few months ago I reported on a 12 year old boy whom was run over by Amtrak's southbound Auto Train and survived without a scratch. I forgot to mention that the incident happened within the city limits of Richmond, Virginia.

A lot of people see the age of 65 as the age of retirement and a time to fully enjoy the fruits of one's labors. For Mr. David L. Gunn, the age of 65 marks the start of a new career. That career is the presidency of Amtrak as of May 15th, 2002. He has a long history in the field of rail passenger transportation. In his past he has served as gen-

eral manager for Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, Washington D.C.'s Metro Rail as it's head from 1991 to 1994, president of the New York City Transit Agency and chief general manager for Toronto Transit Commission. I wish him and Amtrak much success. They both really have their work cut out for them.

Amtrak had an official Grand Opening and Open House for the recently renovated former Southern Railway Kemper Street Station in Lynchburg, Va. The public responded tremendously. Some visitors had to park blocks away. Our sister NRHS Chapter, Blue Ridge, had on display an impressive collection of photographs of Southern Railway and Norfolk and Western Railway trains with the station back in the fifties.

Coal carloadings of CSX Transportation were down for the first quarter. The winter was milder than normal, natural gas prices were lower and coal stockpiles were not depleted as much as anticipated. This resulted in 43,000 fewer carloads or 4 million tons less hauled than the same time frame last year.

CSX employed the business unit concept several years ago and it has a proven TRACK record. Norfolk Southern began it's East Carolina Business Unit on April 1st, 2002. The purpose for the business unit concept is to develop new business, increase operating efficiency and improve customer service. Raleigh, North Carolina serves as the appropriate headquarters since the routes covered under the ECBU radiate east and south out of Raleigh. Raleigh will also be the terminal where freight cars are sorted and trains built. 485 route miles of trackage will be under the jurisdiction of the East Carolina Business Unit. Chocowinity, New Bern, Goldsboro

and Morehead City are serving as satellite terminals.

## **9th Street Open House**

Mark your calendar, June 22-23, 2002. Our 9th Street crew will host an open house and 40th Birthday celebration for a young lady! Our GP30 No. 522 was delivered to the N&W in late June, 1962.

Hours for both days will be 10 am to 6 pm, Saturday between noon and 1 will be the birthday celebration and rededication.

The 522 will be up and running, now freshly restored to as delivered paint and appearance (plus a few safety enhancements). More details will be forthcoming at the Chapter meeting.

## **Roanoke Chapter Spring Outing**

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

When it was announced within the pages of the March issue of The Turntable Times about the then upcoming Chapter Spring Outing, I was elated. I then remembered that the weekend set for the West Virginia weekend was the same weekend for RAIL DAYS held annually at The North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer and the spring meet of The Central Carolina Live Steamers at Apex, N.C. After MUCH mental debate, I opted for the Roanoke Chapter's weekend. It was a good choice that I do not regret.

During the last weekend of April, the 27th and 28th, 31 participants spent a significant amount of time riding the rails and riding the asphalt to reach the rails. Saturday's feature event was an excursion aboard The New Tygart Flyer while enjoying an all you could eat buffet lunch on board. The excursion was very relaxed as we had the four car train all to ourselves. A highlight of the excursion was a photo

runby at Bowden complete with a Western Maryland BL2 brought out of it's shed for our pleasure.

For dinner that evening, it was thought that a Western Sizzlin' was located at Elkins. There wasn't one so we opted for Shoney's which was not far from our Days Inn Hotel where we would lodge for the night. Shoney's was slow to acknowledge our presence. Joe Austin diplomatically spoke up and let them know we were present, hungry and were "fed up" with waiting to be seated. Management got the message.

After dinner, we were bussed back to The Days Inn with rain falling. It had been a long day for most of us. Mine started at 4:15 a.m. in Danville, Virginia.

Sunday morning arrived with rain and more to fall. According to the weather channel, most of the upper east coast was under siege with heavy rains and strong winds. Dorr Tucker almost came under siege himself. Dorr had walked to a nearby convenience store to purchase some food items that are indigenous within West Virginia. For some reason, a red flag arose on the part of the young people working the store that morning simply because Dorr had walked to the store versus driving. Local law enforcement happened by and asked Dorr a few questions. Dorr reported officers did not accuse him of anything and were polite. Needless to say, this minor episode generated numerous comments among us for the duration of our trip.

Breakfast was enjoyed at a Hardees decorated with a railroad motif. Rain continued to pick up. This day would involve riding three different rail oriented vehicles. The New Tygart Flyer would take us to High Falls where we would board The Cheat Mountain Salamander. Both rides were leisurely. Without a doubt, the main feature that captured attention of we riders of

the rails that morning was the moving water on both sides of the tracks. The chances of a flooded or washed out roadbed was indeed a very real possibility. The rain eventually let up and then stopped all together. The sunshine came thru as strong winds pushed the clouds eastward. The Salamander delivered us safely to Cheat Bridge where we boarded Abbott Bus No. 104 for the ride to Durbin. At Durbin we would again be treated to a delicious all you could eat meal. It was close to 1:30 and by that time, our meal at Hardees over 4 hours ago had long since been spent. Our train, The Durbin Rocket, patiently waited for us as we dined in what used to be a former Chesapeake & Ohio passenger depot.

Our steam powered Durbin Rocket would be our final train ride for the weekend and it was indeed a fun ride. I opted for the caboose instead of the open gondola. We had two photo runbys. The first included one of Durbin's four legged residents. Yes even Bambi briefly got into the action of a photo runby. Upon our arrival back at Durbin, a few more souvenirs and ice cream cones were purchased before the journey back to Vinton commenced. A rest stop was made at a Virginia rest stop on I-64. We arrived in Vinton around 7:30 pm. All I heard were positive comments about our weekend adventure. Suggestions were made to Richard Shell for future trips. The most common was a repeat of our West Virginia Weekend in the fall.

Our driver's name was Myron, a tall reserved fellow. He was not much for conversation but he definitely responded to the typical humor that is common among rail enthusiasts. A collection was taken and presented to him by Richard D. Shell. Myron thanked us and commented how he appreciated our warm hospitality.

## Salem Station Open House

---

by Ken Miller

On May 24-25, the Chapter hosted a display and open house at Salem's 111 year old N&W passenger station as part of Salem's Bicentennial Celebration.

The display consisted of 31 enlarged photographs and a variety of drawings relating to railroading in and around the Salem area dating from the 1860s through the 1970s. Other items displayed included lanterns, N&W china and silver, vintage crossing signs and other steam era artifacts.

Bill Arnold and Ken Miller coordinated the event which was attended by over 120 people, with the multiple activities going on in the Roanoke Valley that weekend, we considered the turnout a success.

Our thanks go to John Garrett, Brian Crosier, Lawanda Ely, Jim Overholser, Alan Easome and Ellen Arnold whom all helped out in hosting the event.

## Passenger Train Update

---

by Gary Ballard

Amtrak has a new President and CEO. He is David L. Gunn and his appointment begins on May 15, 2002. Mr. Gunn succeeds George Warrington, who, is going to be the new executive director of New Jersey Transit.

For the most part, this is good news for the ailing passenger carrier. David Gunn's background has always included improvements and "better than before" status when he left where ever he has worked before. He's been the head of transit systems in New York City, Boston and Washington D.C. His resume' includes the Illinois Central Gulf and Santa Fe Railroads.

Does his track record speak for itself? Yes, if you take your mind to the Metro system of New York during the mid-1980's.

During these years, the surface (bus) and subway lines were a forgotten mess. Grafitti was an adopted art-form, and there was plenty of it on the property. The bus system was a less than desired collection of vehicles from GMC and Flixible bus manufacturers. Many had cracked frames. Even the first generation of GMC's modern creations of 1979 were lacking proper care and upkeep.

Under Gunn's leadership, the war on grafitti was on. Railyards got new fenced-in borders. Vandals were arrested. The subway cars got more than new paint jobs, they were rebuilt. The bus system went over to one brand of bus, to keep overhauls and parts inventories simpler. Today there is a subway system, where the stations look and smell better than in years past. The busses are shiny and clean. The GMC name plate is a thing of the past on the white and blue-striped bus, another builder came along and continued the design after General Motors left the bus building industry. But it was the business that New York City gave the new builder, that made it profitable for the vehicle production to go on. The Metro became a class act, with everybody pulling together. Can you see the similarities from this to what Amtrak has going on? You can see them if you look hard enough. (repairing the bumpy tracks of the Northeast Corridor, raising the standards of luxury travel on long haul trains...are just two that come to mind).

According to the National Association of Railroad Passengers, a nonprofit group, the fiscal year that ended last Sept. 30 was the 5th straight year in which Amtrak ridership grew. Breaking the information down, and you get another story.

First, ridership for the Acela Express high speed train stood at 219,917 in March. That comes to 300 passengers a train. Delta Air

Lines and US Airways reported 215,366 passengers. These figures are for the Boston shuttle route for December. Acela is beating the airlines in seats sold, as some people have declined to fly since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The New York Times reported that Jayette Becker (director of physical infrastructure issues at the General Accounting Office) that ridership on long haul trains is at a terrible low, of the 46 states that are served by Amtrak's national system, 34 of these states had fewer than 1,000 passengers a day. In 12 states there are fewer than 100 passengers a day.

Oddly, some routes consisting of hundreds of miles have a low cost factor, that is to say the cost of running a train is less when you have 200 or less passengers. The amount of stock (food) to put on the train is smaller. Some say the dining car and it's expenses is what broke the railroads, on the other hand, that car is where most of the onboard revenue comes from on a trip!

One coach and one sleeper car for The Cardinal (Wash-Clifton Forge-Chicago) with one attendant each brings the costs down. A full train consist like The Silver Meteor (New York-Miami) that has several coaches and sleepers carries more passengers, but the respective on-board cost rises. A chart in The New York Times, showed the route of The Cardinal with losses of 30 million or slightly less. The route of The Silver Meteor had a loss of 70 million or more.

For those of us who turn to the newspaper on a daily basis to see what will happen to Amtrak's long distance trains, there is a silver lining in the clouds. According to the notices sent to crew bases, these trains will NOT be abolished. However, some departure and arrival times have changed and are found in the new timetables issued to the public as of April 29th. This is good news for many of us who were about to go

and ride many of these routes before they were done away with. In fact, the general sentiment towards these trains is good. Those on Capitol Hill are speaking out in favor of keeping trains.

Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee chairman Patty Murray was flabbergasted at the idea of cutting back trains until all you have is one left...she angrily said, "We're not taking a bunch of trains hostage!" Chairman Murray had reason to be mad, her home state of Washington is the 2nd biggest supporter to Amtrak behind California...64 million and 11.6 million respectively.

Senator Ernest F. Hollings, said the attacks on Sept. 11 showed America needs alternatives to flying and driving. Mr. Hollings, a South Carolina Democrat, said Congress has treated Amtrak with "benign neglect" for three decades.

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee voted 20-3 for a bill that would keep Amtrak operating for five more years and spend 4.6 billion a year on improving and expanding rail service. The bill goes to the full Senate.

The reason to ride and make a train part of your travel plans is still right there in front of you. Buy a fare paying ticket! Just like in the days of mainline steam excursions of not too many years ago...don't just take pictures of them or chase after them in your vehicle, support their existence. Buy a ticket. Put some money into the system! And then, maybe you won't have to rely on stories to the youngsters of "the train that used to go by here".

## **Eagle Rock Historical Cards**

---

A group known as the Eagle Rock Improvement Association has produced a second series of note cards entitled 'Just A Touch Of Eagle Rock History'.

The note card pack contains two copies each of scenes of Eagle Mountain, Eagle

Mountain Railroad Depot, Eagle Rock School, and Eagle Rock Milling and Manufacturing Company, Inc. The Eagle Mountain Depot scene was taken prior to 1930, and includes the water tank in the background as well. The cards are either in color or duotone. Series One cards are still available, and other sets are planned for the future.

The cards are \$9.00 a set, plus postage and may be ordered from: Eagle Rock Improvement Association, PO Box 55, Eagle Rock, Va. 24085. For further information, contact Pam Rhodes at 844-2697, Nadine Rankin at 884-2531, or Anita Lambert at 884-2422. You may email Anita at [frlambert@earthlink.net](mailto:frlambert@earthlink.net)

(From The Fincastle Herald, Wednesday, May 8, 2002, courtesy of Carl Jensen).

## **Valley Railroad Bed May Become Greenway**

---

The old right-of-way for the Valley Railroad in the Buchanan-Lexington area could become a greenway for walkers and horses. Will Trinkle of Roanoke, who is the owner of much of the 26-mile right-of-way between those two localities, has stated an interest in preserving and possibly making the section he owns into a greenway. Trinkle had asked Roger Holnback, who is director of the Western Virginia Land Trust, to co-ordinate a public meeting to determine if there would be enough interest in the proposed project so that a group would form that would take care of details. Some 25 people were expected to attend the meeting in mid-May, and it was hoped a steering committee would be formed as a result of the meeting. Some sections of the roadbed have been sold to local landowners, but Holnback noted that in these areas the greenway could follow Plank Road or Lee Highway right-of-way.

The history of the Valley Railroad goes

back to the 1870's and 80s, when organizers hoped to build their railroad from Harrisonburg to Salem. Approximately one half of the line did get constructed, from Harrisonburg to Lexington, and the 50 plus miles between Lexington and Salem was started, but never completed. Sections of the Valley Railroad are visible between Harrisonburg and Salem such as stone bridges, culverts and sections of the rail bed itself. Route 11 and I-81 generally follow the path of the Valley Railroad between Buchanan and Hollins. A historical marker depicting the history of the Valley Railroad is located alongside Route 11 between Troutville and Buchanan.

A detailed history of the Valley Railroad was done recently by John R. Hildebrand of Salem. His book is entitled, 'Iron Horses in the Valley, The Valley and Shenandoah Valley Railroads, 1866-1882'.

(From articles in The Fincastle Herald by Edwin L. McCoy, May 8, 2002, courtesy of Carl Jensen).

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

June 20, 2002  
Regular Meeting

June 22-23, 2002 • Open House  
9th Street Maintenance Facility

July 2, 2002  
Board Meeting

July 18, 2002  
Regular Meeting

August 6, 2002  
Board Meeting

August 15, 2002  
Regular Meeting

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. Items of interest should be sent to Editor Kenny Kirkman, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA 24078-2128.

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

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Roanoke, VA  
Permit No. 89

**Dated Material**  
**Please do not delay**