



Turntable TIMES

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

Volume 35, Number 4
April 2003



April Meeting Only
Please Note
Change Meeting Place



The samples (of course shown in black and white) are among the wonderful color slides that will be a part of the April program by Aubrey Wiley of Lynchburg. These views of the Powhatan Arrow are just a small portion of the contents of this program that everyone should enjoy tremendously. As announced at the

March meeting, due to a schedule conflict at the usual meeting place at First Presbyterian Church, we will meet at the Western Sizzlin' Steakhouse at Crossroads Mall, on the corner of Williamson and Hershberger Roads. Come early for dinner at 6:15 or so (dutch treat), then stay for the business meeting and wonderful program. If the idea of a dinner and meeting is successful, we will look into continuing the plan. Blue Ridge Chapter has been doing this for many years. Hope to see you on April 17th!



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**Volume 35, Number 4
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MIXED FREIGHT

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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, April 17, 2003 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Western Sizzlin' Restaurant at Crossroads Mall on the corner of Williamson and Hersberger Road in Roanoke. The program will be presented by Blue Ridge Chapter member Aubrey Wiley. This is an excellent slide show featuring mostly color pictures of Norfolk and Western, Southern and Virginian along with a few others around our area during the 1950s and 60s.

This meeting location is a temporary change due to the unavailability of our regular space at the Church. Please come early at about 6:15 and have dinner (on your own) for some excellent fellowship.

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 Friday, April 18, 2003. 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.

We love having articles of news, of a historical nature, the staff will be glad to assist in finding information or illustrations if you do not have any available.

We also need your contributions of photos for the Turntable Times, historical, current, Chapter events are all desired. We prefer to have the original photo but can work with you for the correct scans.

Annual Banquet, March 29, 2003

The Chapter's Annual Banquet was held at the Clarion Hotel in Roanoke on Saturday, March 29th. 46 members and guests enjoyed the service and food at the event.

Retired Norfolk and Western and Norfolk Southern Public Relations Director Don Piedmont was our guest speaker and provided numerous humorous anecdotes of his career in public relations with N&W and NS.

Pual Howell presented the "Thank-You" Award for 2002 to editor Kenney Kirkman.

Our thanks to Dave Meashey and Bill Arnold who put together another excellent event.

Scanner Chatter

compiled by Brian Crosier

Seen this month in and around Roanoke.

If you are a western railroad fan then Roanoke is the place to be. For many months there has been an efflux of BNSF and Union Pacific among other flavors of the rainbow. Sightings of pure foreign power on trains are becoming commonplace and at times areas have been noted as not having a sign of Norfolk Southern present. I noted one train coming north on the Winston Salem line with nine units, a Norfolk Southern Dash 9 and a mix of eight high horsepower Union Pacific units. B Crosier

Santa Fe GP60m 158 still in full red and silver warbonnet was seen on March 6 in south yard on a rail train by Dorr Tucker, B Crosier, and Chad Jordan

BNSF 4416 and 4936 were spotted behind the Virginian station on March 12. B Crosier

Union Pacific 6707, a GE C44AC was seen in south yard with a BNSF GE on March 27. Brian and Sarah Crosier

Union Pacific SD90ac 8524 (?) was seen at Shaffers Crossing fuel rack March 18

Special Event, April 10, 2003

by Kathy Overholser

Ronaoke Chapter members and their families are invited to attend a special program entitled "The Redesign of American Railroads in the 1930's and 1940's by Raymond Loewy & others." It will be presented on Thursday, April 10, at 7:30 pm at the History Museum in downtown Roanoke's Center in the Square.

The presentation will be made by nationally-known architectural historian Professor Richard Guy Wilson, head of the Architectural History Department at the University of Virginia. Professor Wilson is an interesting and entertaining speaker, an authority on the station's re-designer Raymond Loewy, a collector of O. Winston Link photography, and a rail enthusiast.

This event is being sponsored by the History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia. It is open exclusively to members (and their families) of the following supporting organizations: the History Museum, Roanoke Chapter NRHS, and the Preservation Foundation and the Science Museum of Western Virginia.

There is no charge for this program, but due to limited space reservations, must be made in advance with the History Museum at 540-342-5770..

Professor Wilson will offer some interesting insights, so please plan to attend this program. For more information contact Kathy Overholser at 343-1928.

Mixed Freight - March/April

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

CSX has been using remote controlled locomotives at it's Acca Yard complex in Richmond, Virginia for over three months now. There are usually 3 of these units in

operation at one time with one as a training unit. According to a railfan associate who is an engineer for CSX, the remote controlled units are not working out quite as well as CSX has hoped for. He did not go into details. About a month before the units were deployed, CSX posted signs at strategic locations on streets providing access to Acca Yard warning motorists and pedestrians that remote control units were in operation and they may be unmanned.

In October 2000, Norfolk Southern implemented NS 21, a program geared to improve productivity and reduce the cost of performing business. Since implementation, Norfolk Southern has realized \$110 million in benefits. This includes \$45 million in recurring cost savings. The company has reduced the number of facilities operated or owned, including freight cars and motor vehicles. Substantial improvements have been made in the quality and accuracy of day to day transactions with customers, improved EDI opportunities for small and medium sized customers and implementing strategic sourcing strategies for buying goods and services.

Steel wheels traveling over steel rails does not guarantee a frictionless during the entire journey. Sharp curves are a necessary evil for many railroad routes. Flange lubricators are used to administer a generous amount of a petroleum lubricant to reduce or eliminate friction. Enter the soybean. Norfolk Southern in cooperation with the University of North Iowa's Ag-Based Industrial Lubricants for the past three years has been developing a soybean based lubricant. Soybean oil combined with additives has been labeled SoyTrak. There are two blends, one for warm climates and the second for cold. A third all season blend is being developed. One great advantage of SoyTrak is that it is biodegradable. Those of

you who spend time along the mainline have seen all the grease, and grime that accumulates around conventional petroleum based flange lubricators. The price is competitive and the SoyTrak very effective according to NS.

I always look forward to RAIL DAYS sponsored by The North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, N.C. Those Roanoke Chapter members who have participated the past several years know where I'm coming from. This year there will be an additional event, day long excursion trains. The first excursion will be operating from Asheville, N.C. to Spencer, N.C. on Saturday April 26. The second run will be from Spencer to Roanoke via the Winston-Salem Southbound Railway and the former Norfolk and Western Railway Pumpkin Vine line. The trains will be powered by Mr. Bennett Levin's fully restored 2 E8 units to Pennsylvania Railroad livery. These locomotives are indeed a sight to behold, and the sound will take you back to a bygone era. One thing I need to emphasize. The two excursions are not an all train roundtrips. Passengers will be motor coached to Asheville for the train ride to Spencer. Passengers arriving in Roanoke will be motor coached back to Spencer.

For more info on the excursions and a host of other RAIL DAYS activities, phone 704-636-2889 or visit the web at: <http://nctrans.org>

Passenger Train Update- March 2003

by Gary Ballard

During the days of 1962 and 1963, railroads were feeling the pressure of their passenger cars hauling less and less people. We as a society were hung up on the automobile and those new interstates to drive them

on. No longer did one have to make reservations with perhaps the Pennsylvania railroad along with the Seaboard, Southern, Katy, MoPac and the Santa Fe railroads just to go to the Grand Canyon. But any individual did, say if they wanted to leave their home in Newark, N.J., then visit his Aunt in Weldon, N.C., then go thru Arkansas to pick up a friend en route to the big ditch in Arizona... phew! Just gas up the car, forget the train!

In 1962, an upward showing of passengers were taking the trains to Florida. Ticket offices were counting the dollars from the Seaboard Coast Line's famous three named trains: Silver Meteor, Silver Star and Silver Comet. True other railroads were crying the blues over low revenue, but at Seaboard things were better for a short while. The upsurge in travel saw those loaned E-units handed to the N&W, during that road's dieselization period, go back to the trains heading to the sunshine state. The N&W went to diesel four years prior, but the growing number of patrons on the SCL trains were already showing.

Something that had been showing for a few years during this period, was a new train from General Motors. The designers for GM's Truck and Coach division came up with a train of new sorts. It looked like an automobile, but had windows from a bus, the slanted type found on Greyhound buses that were also built by GM. The Aero Train toured the country and actually preformed revenue service on several railroads, the Burlington and Pennsy to name two.

Aero Train's locomotive was powered by a GM71 series diesel engine that was found in what must have been a million city buses. The engineer's cab was a deck and a half higher than the rest of the train. It pulled several coaches, all made by GM, and their sides resembled the fluted sides of GM's

buses. The train was an underpowered flight of fancy. No one saw enough interest to purchase it, a mid 50's failure that showed up on a box in 1962.

Because the train did have that "futuristic" look to it, it was enough for one maker of children's cereal to show a picture of the Aero Train on the back of the box. "Send in a few boxtops and 5 dollars to run this train on your layout at home," were the words to a young lad eating his breakfast. The back of that cereal box had the offer of a lifetime, or so it seemed.

Speaking of buses for a moment, because during these years, the passenger train and long haul buses were at war for that beloved dollar. GMC had introduced a new model of transit bus for both city and short haul routes. Known as the New Look bus, or the Fish Bowl model, it was remembered for its big droopy windshield. Designed in 1958, it was hauling passengers in lots of cities by 1962.

The Baltimore and Annapolis Railroad was an interurban line serving its two namesakes. It stopped running passenger service way before 1962, but the new Fish Bowl bus from GM caught the attention of the B&A. Soon the bus was covering the same routes the B&A electric cars once ran. On the side of the bus was: The Baltimore & Annapolis Railroad Co. Today the B&A, even in a rubber tire version, is gone. Oddly enough, trains today are back on a portion of the same route; the Baltimore light-rail system uses the same railroad right of way once belonging to the B&A.

Steam fans will enjoy knowing that the folks at GM came up with a steam powered version of the Fish Bowl bus in the early 1970's. This steam engine was developed by William M. Brobeck of Berkeley and used for a short while by AC Transit. The steam bus turned out to use three times more fuel

than it's diesel counter part.

One railroad and bus company matched their efforts, and together they provided superb passenger service to the public. Santa Fe and Continental Trailways operated motorcoach service through the 1960's to areas where Santa Fe's great trains did not reach. The blue and white cross and circle logo of the railroad and the once famous silver eagle logo of Continental Trailways were a fixture on the sides of the great Belgium made buses, cranking out miles in 1962. Back east, a locomotive was adding up the years. That year saw the 28th birthday of the Pennsylvania Railroad's giant GG1 locomotives. The big electrics were introduced in 1934, the dependable workhorses pulled everything the railroad could couple into them. They were retired in 1981, but 1962 was a turnaround point for one special train they pulled back in 1952.

1962 was the year the Pennsy brought back its Congressional service. These trains featured all stainless steel cars built by the Budd Company. As the trainsets entered the fourth year of service, the Pennsy broke up the consists and sent them far across its system on other trains. The Congressionals were popular with the public; these 14 to 18 car red and silver beauties were the top of the line. The Northeast Corridor said bye, bye to them in 1956. The great Standard Railroad of the World would see fit to return The Senator, a 14 car cousin train, back to New York and Washington train riders in 1962. The bold move was too late. The pampered riding public sought transportation elsewhere.

The passengers who once enjoyed a coffee-shop car and meals delivered to one's seat, were enjoying the same type of service on none other than the buses of Continental Trailways. Making the same 75 mile per hour speeds as did the Pennsy's GG1 pow-

ered trains, CT's Golden Eagle Red Carpet Service made only a few stops between Washington and New York. The sides of these dedicated motor coaches were electroplated in gold. An attendant took care of the passengers with beverages and light food along the journey...talk about the railroads and buses fighting for the same dollar!

During 1962, there were celebrations witnessed in the passenger train industry. Out west, the Denver and Rio Grande Western was still full of pride with it's training hauling tourists up and over the Rocky Mountains. Locomotives wearing silver and yellow pulled cars made by Budd through some of the finest sights available from any train in America. In 1962, the D&RGW assigned new F-units from EMD, replacing the Alco made units that held down the run for several years. Panoramic views and repeat customers kept death to the western passenger trains off by years.

In the east, a railroad with train names like The Vanderbilt and The Knickerbocker, also operated a train that was fit for the stars of Hollywood. The 20th Century Limited was the top train of the New York Central System. The train operated between Chicago and New York City. In 1962, the 20th Century Limited was 60 years old. Through the years it's exterior was dark gray with a lighter gray lightning stripe running the length of the entire consist. Later, the train took on a stainless steel appearance up to its final run on December 3, 1967.

Performer Jackie Gleason was always a train traveler. His show was a TV hit in the early 1960's, and Miami was the location of his show. It was during this time that the New York Central was getting rid of the passenger cars it deemed to be surplus. One of those cars was stainless steel round end observation "Bonnie Brook." The Seaboard

picked up the car and put it to use on the Florida route between New York and Miami. Perhaps Mr. Gleason was very impressed with this car. He bought from the railroad one of the most elegant cars to ride the rails. Today, the Bonnie Brook is owned by a private individual who operates the car on private charters. The car also brought up the rear markers on a few Southern and Norfolk Southern steam specials.

Commercial jet travel was only 4 years old at this time. Travel time for a coast to coast flight was once 7 to 8 hours on a four engine propeller craft. With four Pratt & Whitney turbo fans, the trip was knocked down to a little over 4 hours. The Boeing 707, Convair 880 and the Douglas DC-8 gave the passenger train a good run for its money.

If the passenger train seemed to be in a struggle to remain alive, it was not out of breath yet. Although Delta Airline's overnight fare of \$39.00 from Baltimore to Atlanta in the early 1970's was a hard bargain to beat, we must remember that the Southern stayed away from Amtrak until 1981. Southern didn't want the fine services of The Crescent to be dissolved in the bland and ho-hum services that were coming from Amtrak. The last hold out of any passenger train might have begun in the early 1960's and things were about to get interesting.

Many historical entries into the world of passenger trains took place during the period of 1962 to 1963. Next month this article will cover a change of heart that took place with

in the C&O railroad. Also included will be the double dining cars on N&W trains, the last train to Waynesboro, plus the last production year for a little self propelled car called the RDC.

Virginian Station Update

by Ken Miller

On March 8, Doug Andre, Brian Crosier, Alan Easome, Bill Mason, Ken Miller and S.R. Winegard turned out for a session of cleaning out the fire and water damaged materials inside the passenger station.

The biggest part of the cleanup phase remains. Removal of the badly deteriorating pet food and other trash will proceed in the next few sessions. This rotting food creates quite an odor and is a real mess. Nothing was removed from the station immediately after the fire, and has sat exposed to the elements for the past two years. This will be a job for several people and a small loader or Bobcat and a large trash container.

Once the interior cleanup is finished, then work to protect other elements, such as the windows will proceed. Once the cleanup is done, then a contractor will be selected to begin the roof project.

9th Street News

by Brian Crosier

As the warmer days of March crept in, work at the siding became a little more bearable. The second weekend saw about forty ties being inserted and twelve being spiked in a day with Shirldon Winegard, Chad Jordan, Brian Crosier, Bill Mason, and Percy Wilkins working on a very nice Saturday. On Sunday, rain and cooler weather made for light work with a borrowed skid steer being handled by Brian as drive areas were graded and smoothed, some holes filled



Photo by Brian Crosier

with rock and ties in new track four being lined up for spiking. Also two planters were built at the main gate to create a sign garden to show off some of the many different signs the railroad has used through the years.

The Chapter also took delivery of a 1918 built Norfolk and Western outside braced wood boxcar through a trade with Eddie Mooneyham and Rick Rader. We purchased an ex Wabash Pullman standard steel boxcar and provided it as an even trade.

Chad Jordan and Alan Easome traveled to Bellington despite an unusual snowstorm at the end of March which brought eleven inches and many broken trees to finish tagging the chapters passenger cars and Alco for their departure from Belington to travel to Cumberland for repairs.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

April 17, 2003
Regular Meeting

May 6, 2003
Board Meeting

May 15, 2003
Regular Meeting

June 3, 2003
Board Meeting

June 19, 2003
Regular Meeting

<http://community.roanoke.com/RoanokeChapterNationalRailwayHistoricalSociety>

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