



Turntable TIMES

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

Volume 35, Number 1
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It just doesn't snow in Roanoke!



Turntable TIMES

**Volume 354, Number 1
January 2003**

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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. The program will be a video of "Thunder of Steam In The Blue Ridge."

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 Saturday, January 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.

This month's issue is shorter than normal because of printing and mailing deadlines, join us next month for a much larger and very interesting issue, with several items of particular interest.

Cover Photo

For those folks who think "it never snows in Virginia." This little reminder that winter does occasionally visit the Roanoke area. This scene at Shaffers Crossing is during one of the worst winters during the mid 1960s. Schools closed for almost ten days, but the railroad kept running, albeit with numerous delays.

Norfolk and Western Railway/K.L. Miller Collection

Meeting Cancellation Policy

Since it's that time of year, as a reminder we have the following policy regarding inclement weather.

The meeting will be considered cancelled if any of the following conditions are met: Roanoke City Schools are closed on the day of or for the day after the meeting, or Virginia Western night classes are cancelled for the night of a meeting.

Membership Renewal Time!

Your membership renewal notices have been sent out recently, please try to get them back in quickly so Lawanda Ely, our membership chairperson will be able to get them back in to National.

Officers and Directors - 2003

PresidentKen Miller
Vice President Brian Crosier
Secretary Dave Meashey
TreasurerWanda Troutman
National Director Carl Jensen
Director at Large.....Alan Easome
Director at LargeLawanda Ely
Director at Large..... Chad Jordan
Director at Large Bill Mason

Mixed Freight - January

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

I hope you all had a safe and pleasant holiday season. It sure did come and go quickly. I don't have a lot to report this month so here goes. CSX installed and activated an equipment defect detector at milepost 8.1 on the high iron of the former Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac just north of Richmond. The machine gives the train's length and axle count plus the track number.

Back in the day when the Southern Railway and later Norfolk Southern offered a darn good

steam excursion program, one of the better chase runs could be had on the Southern Railway lined between Richmond and Keysville. The train speed was leisurely and the country roads that followed the tracks were numerous. Oh yes, U.S. 360 was a big help too. Many of us have photos of excursion trains on that fine piece of railroad. Photos of mainline freights were a challenge because the two freights that operated over the line at that time were nocturnal. Daylight extras were rare. This was true under Norfolk Southern until about 3 or 4 months ago. Local freight VO8 used to depart Richmond for Crewe usually between 10:00 and 11:00 pm., nightly. It would usually arrive back in Richmond between 6:00 and 8:00 am. It now departs Richmond between 6:00 am., and 8:00 am., and returns to Richmond before 4:00 pm. It's usually a good sized train exceeding 60 cars. Years ago four axle diesels were the rule, but now 6 axle machines, including widecabs, do the honors for most runs.

If you have any 1997 calendars stored away, they can be used for the year 2003.

Holiday Gathering

by Bonnie Molinary

A number of members and guests enjoyed an evening of food and socializing on Thursday, December 19 at the Chapter's holiday Gathering. Our thanks to Bonnie Molinary, Kathy Overholser, Wanda Troutman and their assistants for putting together another fine event.

Victoria, Virginia News

The town of Victoria, Virginia is making plans to establish a railroad park on former Virginian Railroad property that was donated to the town by the Virginian's successor, the Norfolk and Western Railway, back in 1963.

Victoria has received a \$241,000 grant through the Virginia Department of

Transportation for the project.

TIMMONS Inc., an engineer and land planning organization which was selected as the design and development consultants, noted that some of the features of the park will include a pavilion area, picnic areas, playground, trails, and landscaping and interpretation of railroad elements. Part of the landscaping plans for the park will include the unearthing of the original roundhouse foundation.

Initially, a museum was featured in the plans for the park, but that idea was dropped because of cost factors according to town manager J.B. Crenshaw. Local politicians still want to have a museum in Victoria, and efforts are underway to hopefully use the old high school to house local historic artifacts including those that would depict the days when the Virginian Railway and later Norfolk and Western Railway served the community.

(Above from Richmond Times Dispatch article by Jamie C. Ruff, Sept. 3, 2002 and submitted by Kenney Kirkman).

N&W Portsmouth Station to be Demolished!

After months of negotiations, an agreement has been reached between Norfolk Southern, the City of Portsmouth, and the Scioto County Commissioners that calls for the closing and demolition of the former N&W station in Portsmouth.

Scioto County recently received a State grant to construct a new County Jail and Sheriff's Department, but did not have a site large enough to build it. The City of Portsmouth had wanted a couple of grade crossings in the city closed due to high maintenance costs, and NS had wanted to get rid of the station for years, since the only departments left in it were a couple of offices for the signal dept., and radio repairs.

(Above from Jim Detty(10/2002) Railway

Station Historic Society Web site via The Cincinnati, newsletter of the Cincinnati Chapter, NRHS, December, 2002).

Turntable Times Editor's Note: The Portsmouth Station was a familiar site to those members of the Roanoke Chapter who worked the numerous Independence Limited trips that traveled across Ohio over the years.

A Weekend Visit To Roanoke Part One

by Jim Carter

(Editor's Note: Jim is one of the Roanoke Chapter's original members, and visited the city on the first weekend of November, 2002)

The events of Friday went very well and I am most impressed with the happenings in downtown Roanoke particularly the station renovation. Perhaps the best people to critique this situation would be those who were unfamiliar with it. In this regard I pretended that I was a stranger there myself and this is what I saw.

I arrived in Roanoke, VA on a Piedmont Airlines De Havilland Dash 8 aircraft on October 31. When I booked my flight with US Airways I gave up control of the type of aeroplane and USAir Express line to be used, however, I was happy with the equipment and it was good to fly Piedmont again. The slower plane was still a lot faster than my car would have been, and circling the field gave me a chance to appreciate the gold, red, and orange of the leaves on the trees on the mountains surrounding this valley. Upon landing I escaped into the hall of the Woodrum Airfield to see a vast panorama of the city beneath the star on the mountain. While waiting for the car from the hotel I had a chance to study the October 1, 2002 Roanoke Regional Airport Flight Guide to discover that four major airlines viz. USAirways, Delta, Northwest & United operate forty-four daily flights to nine destination cities proving that you can get there from here.

On the way to the hotel we passed the

Roanoke Civic Center coliseum and auditorium. This is not to be confused with the convention center which is in the Roanoke Hotel complex, nor is it to be confused with the newly renovated Jefferson Hall auditorium, or the Mill Mountain Theatre in the Center in the Square or the Salem Civic Center—baseball park & football stadium or the Victory Stadium in the nearby Crystal Springs South Roanoke neighborhood, which may be moved to a new stadium near the Civic Center complex if the new biotech center goes in South Roanoke Park. By now I was so confused, but had concluded that if you were to have an affair Roanoke was the place to do it. Here in my hone of Wilmington the debate over a convention center has been raging for years. Maybe we could borrow one of Roanoke's.

Presently, we arrived at the hotel a short three miles from the airport. This well-appointed replica of an English Tudor style mansion of 332 bedrooms is an inspiration to behold. It was built in 1882 or there about by the Norfolk & Western Railroad. The name of this company would appear over and over as the historical centerpiece of Roanoke past, present and its projection into the future. The Hotel Roanoke (known as the Hotel to Roanokers) went through many conversations the most recent being in the late 1980's and early 1990's after the Norfolk Southern (successor to N&W Ry) gave it to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University AKA VPI & the City of Roanoke, which developed the convention center.

I enjoyed my walking tour of the complex discovering public rooms too numerous to count. I appreciate the portraits of famous Virginians from George Washington to Miss. Virginia and The local art especially of a railroad theme and the painting of Carter's Grove Plantation. I ventured outside into the central business district to discover office workers in their Halloween costumes and a number of children trick or treating in the downtown much to my surprise.

I started the new month with a hardy Virginia breakfast in the Hotel's Regency room after which I ventured outside into the market place. Upon exiting the Hotel I saw a large Art Deco building circa mid 1930's, which peaked my curiosity. I ventured into this edifice and spoke with the security guard who told me that this had been the General Office—North of the Norfolk and Western Railway known as the New Building like New Scotland Yard. Norfolk Southern Corporation had donated it to the city after they had completed their new twelve story regional office in the center of downtown. GOB-North was now the Roanoke Higher Education Facility and offered classes by Virginia universities and colleges, which I will not list for fear of over looking one. I will just call it the University of Roanoke. I also learned that the 1882 Queen Anne building to the South was the GOB South or Old Building, which is being converted to apartments. Upon leaving the New Building I again crossed the lawn of the Hotel to enter the glass enclosed sky walk into the market place. Halfway across I glanced West to the right to view a series of rail tracks protected by a multitude of red lights in a horizontal position, which leads into a massive make up yard to sort rail cars out for carriage to Cincinnati & Columbus and onto the Midwest and Great Lakes and the gateways of Chicago, Kansas City, St. Louis. This main line split at Radford, Va. for Bristol, Va.-Tenn. and on to Memphis and New Orleans and everywhere west. The Roanoke Yard called Shaffers Crossing repairs all manner of freight cars and locomotives.

Glancing to the East I spied Norfolk Southern Roanoke East End Shops, which have the capacity to build coal cars, enclosed hoppers and gondolas. The car building shops are now idle by the present economy. Beyond Interstate 581 lies the motive power building, round house, paint shop, foundry, which has now foundered, store house for material management. This complex looks like Victorian England at the turn of the

20th Century and includes the Roanoke City refuse center from which originates the trash train Waste Line Express. This may just be the most attractive garbage dump in the world. Norfolk Southern trains run East from Roanoke to Norfolk and the world and North to Hagerstown and the Northeast Mid Atlantic states and South to Greensboro and Winston-Salem and the rest of the South. Roanoke is very well rail connected. I also viewed the 1950 Raymond Lowey N&W passenger station. Mr. Lowey was an industrial designer who developed trains, planes and things including the Coca Cola bottle and maybe even Coke itself. Before the day was over I would get to see his work up front. At the end of my skywalk I saw a market building which the Mill Mountain Star seemed to be perched. In the distance I saw the Community Hospital of the Roanoke Valley & yet another railroad building that looked like a classical railroad station of twelve stories. This is the new NS regional office building that replaced the North and South buildings and contains offices of the railroad police, accounting, personal, marketing, benefits, purchasing, & others. The omnipresence of the railroad had become evident. I would later learn in the day that NS employees 1,800 in Roanoke with 1,600 retirees and 80 daily trains.

The economy of Roanoke is variable with the fate of the railroad and other business. In actuality the industrial base is diversified with the traditional Southern textile & furniture businesses and rail dependent grain, scrap, and steel. There is a large base of tire manufacturing, electrical machinery, night vision goggles and a multitude of other trades. The downtown into which I was now entering had many high-rise bank buildings, and brokerage offices, law, accounting, finance, insurance and computer firms. Medicine is actually the valleys largest business with the Carillon Health system headquarters nearby along with Community Hospital, Gill Memorial Eye, Ear and Throat clinic in Downtown and Carillon Roanoke

Memorial Hospital a few miles away in South Roanoke. There is yet another rail yard in south Roanoke that of the former Virginian Railroad where its electric lines from the west ended. The Virginian Railway station burned a few years ago and sits forlorn awaiting an unknown fate.

According to the literature in my hotel room Roanoke has a population of either 92,284 or 224,000 depending on how it is measured. Virginia has an usual system of separation of cities, and counties so we can assume that Roanoke City has about 100,000 Roanoke, Roanoke County has about a quarter of a million and people who would use the Roanoke Airport as their closest airfield would number half a million. This basis has varied with changes in major corporate readjustments including the closing of the American Viscose Rayon Fibers plant, the building of the last N&W steam engine in 1953 and complete dieselization in 1960. As the passenger trains were discontinued in the 1960's many waiters, cook, porter, conductor, fireman, and commissary jobs were lost. On the positive side railroad jobs came to town from Norfolk with the 1960 consolidation with the Virginian Railroad and the October 1964 Nickel Plate (New York, Chicago & St. Louis), Wabash, Pittsburgh and West Virginia and Akron, Canton & Youngstown. New citizens came from Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Akron and elsewhere. By 1982 railroad employment was at approximately 4,000 when N&W and the Southern Railway merged and relocated headquarters to Norfolk. Nevertheless, employees transferred in from Washington and Atlantic and in the 1999 Conrail consolidation people came from Philadelphia almost a vision of the past when the Pennsylvania Railroad controlled N&W turning tables. With all these mergers the named charged back and forth from railroad to railway and from Norfolk & Western to Norfolk Southern Corporation.

Banking too has gone through a metamor-

phous with local firms like Dominion Bank and Colonial American National Bank mostly controlled in Charlotte, but still with a large local presence. Thus even in the boom times of the 1990s Roanoke City struggled to break through the 100,000 population barrier. While it may seem to be stuck in place its downtown has blossomed unlike most center cities, which I would discover as I canvassed the area. Roanoke is unlike other railroad towns. As railroads merged and became fewer and fewer large rail centers like Chicago remained as major cities on their own right. There are other railroad centers like Bellevue, Ohio, North Platte, Neb. and Crewe, Va. that are almost all rail. Roanoke is a rail center plus a lot more. After de-escalating from the skywalk I ventured into the market area passing by the Market Building a classical building that once housed butchers, fish mongers and other food vendors with yet another sports venue upstairs complete with basketball court and stage. The building now houses a food court and restaurants. I had occasion to step into the visitors center to learn that downtown had more than thirty restaurants so if one ate in a different one everyday it would take a month to cover all. Therefore, as I set out on my cafe crawl I would have to eat hourly to cover them all. I also learned the visitors center was scheduled to move into the old passenger station. A novel idea. I will not attempt to cover all the restaurant in downtown but suffice it to say I passed Italian, Brazilian, Indian, American, Southern, Bar-B-Que, Biscuits, French, Spanish Tapas, Steak house, hot-dog stands, hamburger places, sandwich shops, seafood, vegetarian, and I am sure I am missing some.

(to be continued next issue)

NS Locomotive Chart

provided by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

NS Number	Conrail Number	Builders Model	Number Axles	Group Number
50-59	----	SD9	6	Y
1355-1388	----	GP40	4	1
1400-1457	1601-1699	GP15-1	4	Y
1580-1624	----	SD40	6	3
1625-1652	----	SD40-2	6	3
2100-2111	----	SW1001	4	Y
2200-2347	----	SW1500	4	y
2348-2435	----	MP15DC	4	Y
2501-2590	2557-2580	SD70	8	5
271 7-2822	----	GP38	4	1
2823-2878	----	GP38AC	4	1
3000-3070	3275-3402	GP40-2	4	1
3170-3200	----	SD40	6	3
320 1-3447	6358-6997	SD40-2	6	3
3522-3566	----	D8-32B	4	2
3800-3820	6925-6959	SD38	6	Y
3973-4091	1900-2020	B23-7	4	1
3973-4091	2803-2815	B23-7	4	1
4100-4159	----	GP38AC	4	1
4606-4641	----	GP59	4	2
4800-4817	5063-5089	B40-8	4	2
5000-5393	8041-8281	GP38-2	4	1
5400-5445	6700-6833	SD50	6	4
6073-6206	----	SD40-2	6	3
6500-6525	----	SD50	6	4
6550-6716	----	SD60	6	5
6717-6806	5577-5653	SD60M/1	6	5
7002-7092	----	GP50	4	2
7100-7150	----	GP60	4	2
7200-7216	4101-4129	SD80MAC	8	6
8200-8212	6000-6021	C39-8	8	5
8314-8451	6051-6285	D8-40CW	8	5
8500-8542	----	C36-7	8	4
8550-8688	----	C39-8	8	5
8689-8763	----	D8-40C	8	5
8764-8888	----	D9-40C	8	5
8889-9744	----	D9-40C(W)	8	5

611 License Plate

We still have not reached the summit of Blue Ridge with the Virginia Historic Train Plate! We want to encourage everyone who has not ordered a plate by now, to get their form in, we only have until May 31 to get the required 350. I am still amazed that other hobbies can easily get their plates made, but it is hard to believe that there are not enough railfans in Virginia to meet the goal.

If you don't have an application, please send a SSAE to the post office box attention license plate, and we'll get one right out to you.

Just a reminder, the Chapter actually does not get anything out of the plate, it is done simply to get more recognition to our hobby. Order today.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

January 16, 2003
Regular Meeting

February 20, 2003
Board Meeting

February 20, 2003
Regular Meeting

March 4, 2003
Board Meeting

March 29, 2003
Annual Banquet

April 17, 2003
Regular Meeting

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