



# *Turntable* TIMES

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

**Volume 36, Number 4**  
**April 2004**





# Turntable TIMES

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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 regular meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2004 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 program: May: Travel back east to our own neighborhood as we begin to visit again the Norfolk and Western in its heyday with Pocahontas Glory Volume one in Digital quality. Highly acclaimed as one of the definitive sets of N&W Material, now just recently available on DVD.

## *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.

### **Condolences**

Long time member Roy Allman passed away just after the February issue went to press reporting him back at Friendship Manor. Our thoughts are with the family. Helen Garrett has also been recently been hospitalized at UVa and back again at Lewis-Gale. Our wishes for a speedy recovery.

### **Deadline for Turntable Times**

The Deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Monday, April 19, 2004. 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.

### **Cover Photo**

Extra 2181 West. Y6b No. 2181 still has its oval smokebox door in this view with a westbound freight train near Singer, Virginia. The exhaust is light but you can bet that locomotive is working! N&W Photo, K. L. Miller Collection

## Mixed Freight - April

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by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

It has been quite a while since I've reported on the Richmond area railroad scene. Traffic on CSX is up. Way up. Freights are longer. 2 sections are common. Lulls still occur but for the most part, trains have to wait for space to enter Acca Yard. Carloads of scrap metal, finished steel plates and home building materials have increased significantly. Foreign power from Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe show up occasionally but not nearly as much as seen on competitor Norfolk Southern. Leased locomotives are quite common from a number of leasing outfits. Without question, the locomotive model thats garnering the most enthusiasm from the railfan ranks is the SD70AC from General Motors. The railroaders simply refer to them as the 4700s. Some railfans are hailing these machines as the SD45a for the 21st Century. With their flared radiators, thats a pretty fair connotation. CSX deploys them on intermodal, general freight, unit coal and unit grain trains. Being brand new they are found in the new dark future paint scheme only. Of course a fair amount of Conrail units can still be seen too. As I have stated in the past, there is plenty of places to enjoy the action without trespassing. One more item I almost forgot about is the routing of some coal trains from the west heading south down the former RF&P and heading east over the former C&O to Newport News. Doswell continues to be a busy interchange point.

CSX continues to streamline itself to become a more fine tuned operating entity. The Detroit Division was absorbed into the Chcago Division and the C&O and Applachian Divisions have been absorbed into the Huntington Division. CSX is now comprised of ten divisions that comprise 2 regions, the Northern and Southern.

Barring any unforeseen problems, the folks up at the B&O Railroad Museum hope to reopen to the public on November 13, 2004.

One of the oldest if not oldest railroading events in The Old Dominion is facing a stop and stay signal for the time being. That event is RAIL DAY sponsored by the good folks at Trains Unlimited in Lynchburg, VA. For the past several years, the August event has taken place at The Greenstone Center located in Forest. That facility will not be available for RAIL DAY any more. Citing this and the possible difficulty of locating a suitable facility in time for the RAIL DAY event in August, Bill Cox of Trains Unlimited decided to vacate the engineers seat of sponsorship. This does not mean that RAIL DAY will not happen this year or in the future. Our comrades of The Blue Ridge Chapter N.R.H.S. over in Lynchburg are thoroughly investigating the possiblity of sponsoring RAIL DAY. Details of progress for this possible endeavor will be presented in the months to come. If any of you would like to offer any constructive input, including good old fashioned manpower, please feel free to contact The Blue Ridge Chapter at Post Office Box 11731, Lynchburg, VA 24506 or log onto [www.mindspring.com/~brc.nrhs](http://www.mindspring.com/~brc.nrhs) The main challenge is locating a facility willing to have RAIL DAY as well as being physically able to facilitate it.

There will be a massive prototype and model railroad event occuring for four days in May commencing on the 20th and wrapping up on the 23rd. The event is KUDZU RAILS. This will be a joint event sponsored by a number of railroad historical societies for railroads of the southeast. The Southern Museum of Civil War & Locomotive History located in Kennesaw, Georgia will serve as

the headquarters. For more information, here you are. KUDZU RAILS 2004, 101 Hemlock Drive, Morganton, N.C. 28655. Phone 828-438-1536.

<http://www.aclsal.org/kudzu04/index.html>  
Email @ kudzu04@yahoo.com

This will be a four day event comprised of prototype and modeling activities, including tours and train rides, model displays and clinics in addition to a railroadianna and model railroad show. CSX fans take note, the headquarters is situated adjacent to CSX's Atlanta - Chattanooga high iron.

## Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

After years of speculation official word was received recently that money has been appropriated for the renovation of the Winston-Salem Union Station. \$1.3 million has been allocated for the project. The building, which is now Davis Garage, will become a commuter rail and transportation hub linking Winston-Salem with a similar hub planned in Greensboro at PTI airport. (Winston-Salem Journal, Jan. 23, 2004 via The Rail, Winston-Salem Chapter, NRHS).

Work is well underway to convert the old N&W Freight Depot in downtown Lynchburg to a restaurant (the Depot Grille), to be operated by David and Robin Poole. David and Robin also operate the Depot Grille in the former Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad depot in Staunton. Two boxcars were moved into place on February 20th for use as a kitchen. (From Internet Sources).

Norfolk Southern is initiating an 18-month test of software known as Locomotive Engineer Assist Display & Event Recorder (LEADER), a computer system to help train crews determine the best han-

dling for safety, efficiency, economy, and performance. It will be installed on 15 GE Dash-9 locomotives operating over the Roanoke to Winston-Salem line. It will continuously monitor and record brake use, throttle settings, etc., to determine, after a number of trips, the most efficient settings for the optimum trip. Thereafter, it will prompt crews to repeat the best trip by adjusting brakes and throttle, speeds for the best performance and efficiency. (NS Newsbreak via Highball, Old Dominion Chapter, NRHS, February, 2004).

After five years of planning, Gettysburg has bids out for a \$2 million restoration of its historic 1858-vintage ex-Western Maryland Railway depot. The borough hopes to have a dedication in November, 2004, 141 years to the month since President Lincoln arrived at the station on his way to deliver the Gettysburg Address. (Civil War News via Cinders, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, February, 2004).

A new Amtrak station for Paradise Township, PA, should be built and ready for passengers by the end of 2004. The unmanned station will be built where the Strasburg Railroad reaches the Amtrak right-of-way in Paradise. The station will feature a circular driveway, a passenger drop-off area, 300-foot long covered platforms, hitching posts for horses and buggies, parking for about 30 cars, and it will be served by RRTA buses. The project also includes the construction of a turntable allowing the steam engines of the Strasburg Railroad to turn around for the trip back to Strasburg. Officials hope the new station will boost tourism as it will enable anyone with access to Amtrak to visit the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg and other sites.

(High Green via "The 470", newsletter of The 470 Railroad Club).

Spain and Morocco have agreed to build a 24-mile railroad tunnel beneath the Mediterranean Sea to link Europe and Africa, according to the World Edition of BBC News. The Spanish Development Ministry said two adjacent tunnels would run beneath the Straits of Gibraltar to Morocco. Work is expected to begin in early 2004. A comparison with the Channel Tunnel that links England and France raises the possibility of a continuous rail link between Scotland and Africa. (The Fast Mail via "The 470" newsletter).

And after 140 years of planning to complete a railroad across the Australian continent north-and-south, Australia recently celebrated the departure of the first passenger train on the route. The train left Adelaide, South Australia, on a three-day journey northward to the Northern Territory sea-coast city of Darwin, according to a report from the BBC. The 1851-mile line, which for decades was half-built as far north as Alice Springs in the central part of the continent, cost almost \$1 billion to complete. (Australia has also had an east-west transcontinental railway for decades). The first freight train reached Darwin on January 17th. (TRAINS News Wire, February 2, 2004 via Lancaster Dispatcher, Lancaster Chapter, NRHS).

## Small Rails

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by Dave Meashey

My column has been absent from these pages for a few months. I apologize for the absence. This is a slow time for garden railroading, so there is little news to report. I cannot make the HO club's meetings, as they are on Tuesday nights. I have a meeting

either at church or the Chapter every Tuesday evening of the month. If another Chapter member is also a member of the HO club, I would be more than happy to post any news you bring me concerning the HO club.

While things are quite at this time of year for garden railroaders, most of us are busy. This is when new equipment and structures get built, and when existing equipment and structures get refurbished and repaired. I am presently working on my first train for the Brandywine & Gondor Railroad, a post War of the Rings railroad—for those of you familiar with The Lord of the Rings. The train is whimsy, a form of modeling that is more common in large scale than the other model railroad scales. I enjoy working with "what if" type models, so whimsy is a lot of fun and relaxation for me.

This train will have an unusual fuel source, the fiery breath from a small dragon perched atop the coalbunker. Instead of stoking coal, the fireman (firehobbit?) must ensure that the little dragon gets enough chili peppers to eat during the run! The cars are filled with hobbits, men, dwarves, and one homeless Nazgul. (The elves have left Middle Earth by now.) The train is a fun project, and with the popularity of The Lord of the Rings movies, it should be a hit at train shows.

Of course, a small number of hardy souls still run their garden railroads in the winter. These model railroaders have come up with about as many ways to remove snow as the prototypes have. For those who have easy reach to all their tracks, a gentle sweeping with a soft broom works best.

Other garden railroaders have used leaf blowers on powder snow with great success. Some garden railroaders build or buy snow-plows, rotary plows, or flangers. One creative

individual even built a large scale railroad snow blower using a bilge blower from a boat supply store. Those of you who attended the Holiday Party saw the off-the-shelf wedge snowplow I own. I have not tried to use my snowplow yet, but I have no doubt that it will be effective as long as the snow is not several inches above the plow blade.

Snow plowing in large scale requires a few minor planning steps. One cannot simply carry the plow out from the house, set it on the track, and expect it to work. Real railroad snow removal equipment spends all its time outdoors. It remains at the ambient temperature. Large scale equipment must spend enough time outdoors to cool down to the ambient temperature. Otherwise the snow will melt and refreeze on the blade, trucks, and wheels, rendering the equipment useless. Secondly, real railroad snow removal equipment has great mass. Most large scale equipment will need extra weight before it can effectively do its job. It is also a good idea to spray the plow blade or rotary vanes with a cooking spray such as Pam before plowing. This helps the snow to slide off the blade or vanes.

Lastly, just as the plow needs weight, make sure you have enough locomotives to shove the plow, and that the locomotives themselves are adequately weighted. And the garden railroader has to be realistic in his or her expectations. Snow that is twice as deep as the train's height is going to stop the train every time. We have to work within reasonable parameters, but when we do, snow removal can be a miniature railroad adventure.

### **Railway Mail Service Library, Inc.**

The Railway Mail Service (RMS) Library is a major collection of materials pertaining

to en route distribution history.

Incorporated in May, 2003, it can assist researchers interested in route agent, seapost, railway, and highway post office (RPO and HPO) history. The collection has many unique, original-source documents that provide answers to questions dealing with the transportation and distribution of USA Mail between 1862 and 1977, as well as other countries during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The RMS Library has grown from the AmerRPO ("American RPO") Society Library established in the early 1950's by Bryant Alden Long, co-author of the superb book on the subject MAIL BY RAIL. After a period of stagnation it was acquired by Hershel Rankin, who renamed it the R.M.S. Library. When he was 80 years old and no longer able to handle research requests, Dr. Frank R. Scheer purchased the collection. Over a two-year period the collection was moved from Florida to Virginia and renamed the "Railway Mail Service Library." Included in the collection are John McClelland's 1905 to 1949 bound issues of THE RAILWAY POST OFFICE, Paul Nagle's set of the POSTAL TRANSPORT JOURNAL between 1950 and 1959, photographs of HPO and RPO vehicles, oral collections of former clerks on audio and visual tapes, movies about the RMS/PTS, post office route maps from H.W. "Red" Reed, Len Cohen's worldwide postal emblems, James Monday's postal locks, and schemes and schedules which are particularly helpful for understanding how the network of mail transportation and distribution activities operated.

As with most archival libraries, the principal activities are assisting research inquiries, organizing and filing the collection, as well

as the preservation of materials. The largest artifact in the collection is the building that became the library's permanent home on October 16, 2003: the Boyce, Virginia railroad station. Built in 1913 and in service on the Norfolk & Western Railway for more than four decades, the Boyce station handled mail to the Hagerstown & Roanoke Railway Post Office (RPO) on trains 1, 2, 13 and 14 until 1957. During the 1960's and 1970's the Boyce station was the town post office. Inside the 25' by 45' freight room are 20 filing cabinets and more than 500 feet of shelving. Artifact displays will be presented in the former baggage room after 2004. Painting of the outside of the station commenced in October, 2003 and by the spring of 2004 the building will feature a white with green trim.

The RMS Library also seeks to buy or exchange documents, publications, and artifacts to expand the collections scope and coverage. Items that are acquired are preserved in a climate-controlled environment. Rarer items are restored or treated to insure their existence for use by future researchers. The RMS Library also participates in inter-library loans or will provide photo-reproductions of items at five cents per page.

Inquiries pertaining to RMS Library holdings or persons seeking research assistance should contact Dr. Scheer at: RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE LIBRARY, INC., 12 East Rosemont Avenue, Alexandria, Va. 22301-2325. Telephone (703) 549-4095; Facsimile (703) 836-1955; or email [fscheer@railwaymailservice.org](mailto:fscheer@railwaymailservice.org) Roanoke Chapter members, and anyone else interested, are welcome to visit on weekends by prior appointment.

(From Information submitted by Dr. Frank R. Scheer).

## One Hundred Years Ago

by Jeff Sanders

Although we trace the roots of THE VIRGINIAN RAILWAY to the formation of the DEEPWATER RAILWAY in 1898, in one sense we can mark the literal beginning of the VIRGINIAN to 1904.

On January 25, 1898 William N. Page of Ansted, WV, and others, incorporated the DEEPWATER RAILWAY in order to develop coal and timber on lands owned by Abram S. Hewitt and others of New York. Page managed these properties for Mr. Hewitt. The DEEPWATER extended four miles from Robson to Deepwater, where it connected with the CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RY. and was, in fact, operated under contract by the C&O.

While it is evident that Standard Oil Vice President, self-made millionaire, Henry H. Rogers, became involved by acquiring the DEEPWATER in early 1902, many believe that at this point in time, there was no plan to build to a railroad to Tidewater. Many think that the original plan, besides the opening of the coal and timber reserves, in which Rogers had probably invested, was to construct a railroad to move these products to a connection with either the C&O or N&W, at which time one of those roads would probably buy them out. When Rogers became involved, the DEEPWATER charter was amended to allow construction to the West Virginia-Virginia line, thus allowing a southerly connection with the N&W.

It was in late 1902 when N&W and C&O Presidents Kimball and Stevens, respectively, decided to try to thwart this "newcomer" by working to prevent acquisition of rights of way by the DEEPWATER. By 1903, Kimball believed that the DEEPWATER was a

real threat and vowed to fight with the C&O against their common enemy. It was still not known at this time that Rogers was the financial backer of the DEEPWATER.

When Rogers saw that neither the N&W nor C&O were interested in seeing the DEEPWATER constructed, he upped his ante by devising another plan that would create an outlet for his interests.

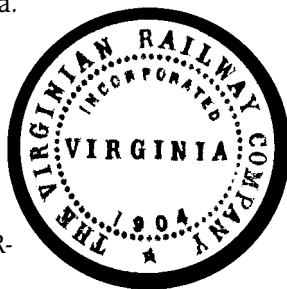
This began when the TIDEWATER RAILWAY was incorporated in Virginia on February 20, 1904, one hundred years ago. This marked the real beginning of a trunk line from the coalfields to the sea.

Why then, you may ask, does the Seal of THE VIRGINIAN RAILWAY show incorporation in 1904, the same as that for the TIDEWATER, when THE VIRGINIAN name actually did not appear

until 1907. On March 8, 1907, an amendment to the charter of the TIDEWATER was made, in which the corporation name was changed to THE VIRGINIAN RAILWAY COMPANY. THE VIRGINIAN in turn was authorized to acquire, by purchase, the DEEPWATER. In a deed dated April 22, 1907, all the holdings of the DEEPWATER were transferred to THE VIRGINIAN, thus forming the entire line from Deepwater, WV to Tidewater under one company.

Postscript

Only once did Mr. Rogers see his magnificent railroad. After the April 2, 1909 open-



Both: Jeff Sanders Collection

ing ceremonies in Norfolk, complete with a speech by Mr. Rogers' good friend Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), the financier made an inspection trip westward over his new road. After an overnight stay in Roanoke, complete with a grand banquet at Hotel Roanoke on April 5th, Mr. Rogers' special continued west the next day. After arrival in Deepwater, the train proceeded to Washington, where the party split, with Mr. Rogers returning to New York. The following month, after being stricken with paralysis, Henry Huttleston Rogers died on May 19, 1909. His railroad officially opened, with the inauguration of through passenger service July 1, 1909.

## Book Review

by Lloyd D. Lewis

UNCLE SAM'S LOCOMOTIVES: The USRA and the Nation's Railroads;  
by Dr. Eugene L. Huddleston  
Indiana University Press

601 North Morton Street, Bloomington,  
Indiana 47404-3796 USA; 2002  
\$49.95; 232 pages, 231 black & white photos,  
eight tables, index, clothbound.

Dr. Huddleston, an emeritus professor of American thought and language at Michigan State University, has established himself through careful and thorough scholarship as one of the nation's leading authors of railroad books.

His latest work deals with a long overdue subject, that of the standardization of American railroad locomotives -- all steam-powered in those days - by the United States Railroad Administration, a World War I creation of our Federal Government.

Following the abrupt entry of the U.S. into World War I in 1918, the nation's railroad were literally overwhelmed with additional traffic, both freight and passenger ser-

vice, which was, in the main, generated by the war effort itself. After eight months of turmoil, President Wilson established the USRA to operate the railroads by government edict until the war ended in 1920 - and promptly installed his own son-in-law as its director.

One of the new agency's first acts was to standardize railroad rolling stock designs, including 12 locomotive types, at a time when customized designs were taken for granted. The 12 designs unexpectedly turned out to be major successes. Of course, the designs were drawn in consultation with existing railroad mechanical staffs working as committees. Proof of their successes was that many types were re-ordered after the war ended and hauled billions of ton-miles of freight and millions of passengers for more than 40 years, including the even more demanding stresses and strains on the country's railroads during World War II.

Dr. Huddleston goes into great detail of the planning and operations about each of the 12 locomotive type and declares after years of his own study: "While the standardization experiment had little if any effect on winning the war, it was highly successful from an engineering standpoint...many railroads kept their original USRA locomotives in service until the end of steam on these roads (generally in the 1950s, ed.). Also, (they) made repeated orders of these designs...locomotives of USRA design were generally among the last steamers to be withdrawn from service in the move toward dieselization on American railroads."

With its picture gallery of 189 superb illustrations and informative captions, this book is well worth the price for anyone interested in one of the most important chapters in the long saga of American railroading.

Signed: "Lloyd D. Lewis"

## Chapter News/Outing

by Ken Miller

Just a reminder, please send me your email address. Even if you think I have it, please forward me a message and I will respond, I want to be certain that we have your permission to publish it in the directory, we may also send out a text or PDF version of the newsletter to those members, as well as notifications on late notice events as well. If every member who can would send their address to me at [klmiller@rev.net](mailto:klmiller@rev.net), we will incorporate it into a list and the directory.

We announced a chapter outing at our March meeting, but not nearly enough people signed up to make it a break-even proposition. So we have now rescheduled the event for the first weekend in August. We need a full bus to make this happen, so sign up at the April meeting.

Saturday and Sunday August 7-8, 2004

Charter Abbott Bus, Box Lunch Included, from Roanoke to Romney, WV to ride the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad. A three-hour narrated excursion through a tranquil and pristine mountain valley along the Potomac River.

Our Bus will then proceed to Cumberland/LaVale, MD for an overnight stay at the Braddock Best Western Motor Inn, with a free continental breakfast on Sunday morning. The Braddock Motor Inn has a heated indoor pool, exercise room, and is near a shopping center with various restaurants.

On Sunday our bus will take us a short distance to the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad Station where we will board a steam-powered train for a trip through the mountains to the Frostburg station. We will be riding in the First Class section and will be served a meal (included) of your choice. In Frostburg we will have time to visit Gift shops, and watch while the locomotive is

being turned on the turntable.

We will board our train, and return to the Western Maryland Railroad Station in Cumberland.

Our bus will then return to Roanoke in the afternoon, with a fast food stop along the way, and we should arrive back in Roanoke at approximately 9:00 P.M.

The price of this excursion outing is \$145.00 per person payable to Roanoke Chapter N.R.H.S.

The deadline for reservations is June 17th, payment must be made by July 15.

For reservations and information contact the Trip Committee:

Paul M. Howell at (540) 774-2619

Dorr Tucker at (540) 342-7759, or

Joe Austin at (540) 343-3131

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

April 15, 2004 - General Meeting

May 4, 2004 - Board Meeting

May 20, 2004 - Regular Meeting

June 1, 2004 - Board Meeting

June 17, 2004 - Regular Meeting

July 6, 2004 - Board Meeting

July 15, 2004 - Regular Meeting

August 3, 2004 - Board Meeting

August 7-8 - Chapter Outing, Potomac Eagle and Western Maryland Scenic

August 19, 2004 - Regular Meeting

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

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