



Turntable **TIMES**

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

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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, February 19, 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.

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, February 18, 2004. Please send all articles, information and 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 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.

Cover Photo

N&W LC-1 No. 2506 is returning downgrade at Ruth, West Virginia just outside Elkhorn Tunnel on December 18, 1932. The wind is whipping in the open front door open of the LC-1 this scene is taken from. The electrics were pretty quiet, only pant of the airpump, the clank of the side rods, and the clattering over the switch breaks the cold winter silence. We are lucky the elements did not stop the photographer from capturing this to capture this wonderful action view of N&W's operation over Elkhorn Mountain. As soon as the 2506 gets in the clear, the semaphore signal will rise to a clear indication. N&W Photo/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.

Chapter Members Activities

Longtime member Roy Allman was recently hospitalized but is now back at Friendship Manor. We wish him the best.

Our congratulations to Paul V. and Cathy Howell on the birth of their 2nd daughter Nichole Wylie Howell, weight 6 lbs. 1 Oz., 19.5 in. long on Thursday Jan. 22nd. at 10:20 A.M. Mother and daughter (and grandparents!) are doing fine.

Mixed Freight - February

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers
Unless you are a railfan or a person whom is not particularly in a hurry, having to wait for a long slow freight at a grade crossing is something most folks would avoid if at all possible. Until a few months ago, motorist within the city limits of Manassas, Virginia were plagued by such on a regular daily basis. Yes motorist within Manassas still have to wait for freights to clear crossings of major roads but the waits considerably shorter thanks to the efforts of Norfolk Southern Railway, the Virginia Dept. of Transportation and Virginia Dept. of Rail and Transportation. A study of the problem was conducted back in March 1992. The project to relieve the congestion came in three parts. The first involved realigning the curved track at Wellington Road. The second

phase single track was doubled. The third was the relocation of Norfolk Southern's crew change center from within the city limits to Prince William County. This was the main cause for longer than normal waits at grade crossings. When trains stopped to change crews, they blocked crossings while doing so. The relocation of the crew change center works in favor of the train crews too in that they don't have to rush. Rushing can sometimes compromise safety. This is especially true during inclement weather.

The Georgia Pacific Corporation has agreed to sell three of it's shortline railroads to shortline owner Genesee & Wyoming Incorporated. The \$55.6 million deal includes the 57 mile Fordyce & Princeton Railroad, the 53 mile Arkansas, Louisiana & Mississippi Railroad and the "Better By a Dam Site" 15 mile Chattahoochie Industrial Railroad.

We are all familiar with and used to the merger of railroad companies. Railroad unions are known to merge too. The latest is the effective January 1st, 2004 merger of The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers with The International Brotherhood of Teamsters. The new entity is now known as The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. The new union is now a division of The International Brotherhood of Teamsters Rail Conference.

I have in the past passed on information within this column about communities desiring to silence trains blowing for grade crossings. Some succeed and some do not. The Federal Railroad Administration has taken a step in favor of communities wishing to apply horn blowing ordinances. FRA published a rule in December that would allow communities nationwide effecting close to 150,000 crossings to impose such bans if specific safety requirements are

addressed. The rule is called The Interim Final Rule. The rule would also make it possible for communities with horn blowing ordinances on the books already to continue such ordinances.

I do not remember the first time I laid eyes on a photograph taken by the late O. Winston Link. Back in the early seventies, I often wrote to railroad public relations departments for literature, photographs and anything of interest. Back in those days, it was common for us young railfans to write the railroads for such and most were happy to oblige. I don't know what its like today. Of course such a request from me was forwarded to one of my favorite railroads, the Norfolk & Western. Among other forms of literature, they sent me a photo booklet entitled "Night Trick". It was a small collection of some of O. Winston Link's photographs of N&W employees and trains at night. I was impressed to say the least and in the following years I ordered both of Mr. Link's hardcover books via mail order without hesitation. If his works were displayed anywhere within a reasonable driving distance, I was there. On Saturday, January 10th, 2004, I along with a healthy turnout of folks from near and far attended the official grand opening of The O. Winston Link Museum in downtown Roanoke. It was COLD outside but the warmth generated by the genius of Mr. Link's works and the love for that man and his works quickly defrosted the chill Mother Nature had bestowed upon us during our walks from our vehicles to the museum's lobby. All I heard were comments of praise for the museum and admiration for the photos. I am not going to comment on how great and important the O. Winston Link Museum is because I'm sure by the time most of you read this, you would have already read or heard about the place already. For those of you whom have

yet to visit the place, I will forward the following information. The museum not only focuses on Mr. Link's works, but also the technical behind the scenes facts that most of us were not aware of. There is a good amount of information about the Norfolk & Western Railway and it's operations. Most of us are used to seeing Mr. Link's black and white night time photos of N&W trains and their environs.

Mr. Link's works included color photos, day time photos and works that do not include trains. There are also railroad artifacts on display and there is quite a bit of interactive buttons to activate for audio narratives about specific works. For those whom enjoy watching today's Norfolk Southern trains, the museum offers command post views on both levels from inside. If you go, go when you have time to thoroughly enjoy everything OWLM has to offer. I overheard many attendees on the grand opening say that they would return to fully enjoy the museum minus the crowds common but welcomed to any grand opening. I was one of those whom made such a comment despite the fact that I was in that museum for over 6 hours that day. The City of Roanoke, the Roanoke Valley, Virginia and the nation has indeed added another treasure of art to be proud of. Enjoy it and treasure it.

Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

On November 21, 2003, the High Point, North Carolina train station was dedicated. The former Southern Railway depot was completely renovated. The main room now serves as the Amtrak waiting room, accommodating about 40 passengers. The former baggage room can now be used for meetings and other functions.

In December, Norfolk Southern formally absorbed the long-time Southern Railway subsidiary, Atlantic & East Carolina Railway, into its system. Known as the "Tobacco Belt Route," the AEC's original line stretched 94 miles linking Goldsboro to Morehead City, North Carolina. (From January, 2004 Midwest Rail Scene Report).

Strasburg Rail Road has installed two new sidings on the north side of its station at East Strasburg, to be used for displays and car storage. Parked at the end of the track is the former Philadelphia & Reading business car # 10, built for the P&R in 1913 and now open for tours. The car has been painted in authentic Reading colors instead of the light brown in which it was dressed for years. The miniature Cagney live steam train is also a new feature at the Strasburg complex. Across the street, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania has drawn up plans for a new facade to be added to the front of its main building, facing Route 741. (Jan. 2004 Midwest Rail Scene Report)

Steamtown National Historic Site has announced its 2004 Train Excursion Schedule. There will not be regular daily trips run out of Scranton, and they have been replaced by date-specific, destination-specific trips. Additional details at their website: www.nps.gov/stea/exc.htm or info and reservations toll free (888) 693-0301. (From Central Pennsylvania Chapter newsletter, The Susquehannock).

The town of Gordonsville, VA and Historic Gordonsville, Inc., recently acquired the 1841 train depot that sits just off the town center on CSX's tracks. Originally built as a passenger station, the depot served as a freight station and until about 10 years ago was a signal station for CSX. The depot's original ticket booth will be restored, and an exhibit area will showcase the non-Civil War history of Gordonsville. Plans call for

the station to be moved towards the nearby Gordonsville Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum. (From Richmond Times Dispatch via Potomac Rail News).

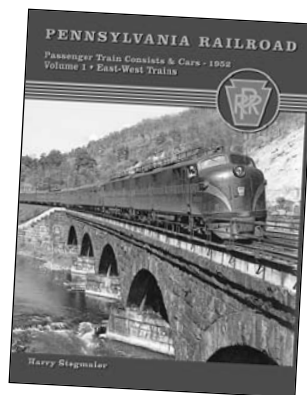
And Chad Jordan reports that one of Virginia's oldest pieces of railroad equipment, if not one of the rarest, was recently destroyed. Near Emporia, Virginia an ancient narrow gauge wooden coach that was originally used on the Atlantic and Danville, then Southern line from Emporia to Claremont on the James River and which had sat near a mill pond for over fifty years, was struck by a fallen oak tree. The impact destroyed about one fourth of the car. The car number was NG5.

Book Review

by John Austen

Pennsylvania Railroad
Passenger Trains, Consists and Cars - 1952,
Volume One: East-West Trains,
by Harry Stegmaier, Jr.
TLC Publishing Inc., 2003
144pp. \$39.95, hardcover.

If you like seeing Tuscan Red passenger cars you should love this new all-color book from TLC. It is based on an official consist book from 1952, just before the sharp decline in passenger traffic. It shows the regular consist (with commentary on variations) for over sixty intercity trains, from the Broadway Limited and other name trains, through the Blue Ribbon Fleet, to secondary mainline trains and mail trains. The narrative addresses many of the changes over the ensuing twenty years as well, and also discusses operational aspects such as



switching cars in and out of trains. It provides details (through the consists and commentary) of transcontinental cars exchanged between PRR and various western railroads, sleeping car lines that require switching to different trains, and various set-outs and short-hauls for all classes of cars, especially at Harrisburg and Pittsburg.

Particular cars appropriate for each train are shown. These include UP and SP cars (both in Armour Yellow, since UP wanted a unified look for the western trains), and silver California Zephyr cars (including pool cars owned by WP and D&RGW) through Chicago, and blue cars through St. Louis (MoPac and T&P, for the Texas Eagle, and Penn Texas). Many of the western railroads turned over a transcontinental sleeper to a PRR train. The special colors sometimes worked the other way: the L&N had three Tuscan Red sleepers for use on the sleeping car line from New York to Louisville, so the Cincinnati Limited (which handled them between New York and Cincinnati) would be solid Tuscan.

But most of the cars are PRR Tuscan, both light and heavyweights. The book provides specific details, including when and where square-end lounges were used and what happened to the few round-end ones. There are also a surprising number of sleeper/lounge combines in various configurations, sometimes two in the same train.

One of the most enlightening features of the book is the inclusion of menus for many of the trains, along with extensive captions explaining the differences in dining service. The Broadway Limited, of course, had the most extensive menu; but several other trains rated menus printed with the train name, even the Red Arrow to Detroit. Lesser trains used "field menus", not mentioning the train name. Menus varied con-

siderably, depending on the timing and service level of the train. The Cleavelander and the eastbound Akronite used the same abbreviated menu due to their late evening departures.

There are a couple of specific N&W tie-ins: The Cleavelander handled two sleepers from Harrisburg to New York, which had come from Roanoke via Hagerstown; and our own Ken Miller did the layout for the book, as well as sharing some items from his collection. This lively and informative book is a great way to gain a good understanding of big-time passenger operations.

Speaking of Cats

by Joe Fagan

Years ago, while I was still working the telegrapher's extra board, the Chief Dispatcher sent me to New River, Virginia to fill in for the agent for a while. One beautiful Fall afternoon I was sitting outside on the waiting rooms steps (I was waiting on quitting time) watching the birds and the bees, when a blue jay started making a fuss about something in a maple tree across the track from the depot. The bird flew away soon and just then the weirdest growl I ever heard came from that tree. It was throaty and loud with a wild quality about it. I heard the growl a couple more times when suddenly a big grey cat jumped out from behind a limb about twenty feet up the tree and actually ran another twenty feet higher up. The limbs were pretty small that high. There was a big lump up there on a small twig of a branch which turned out to be a yellow cat hanging on for dear life. Apparently he had decided to make his stand right there on that twig swinging back and forth. The grey cat tied right into the yellow one. They both got in a few good

bites and scratches before the weight of two cats and all that fighting broke the twig off. Both cats went airborne at about forty feet of altitude. The whole affair flashed from cat fight to dog fight and back to cat fight in the next few seconds. They scratched and bit in the tree fall all the way down. I could hear them hit the ground with a thump all the way across the right of way. They made two trips around the tree in the fallen leaves with the fur flying before the yellow cat got his bearings and took a tangent straight to where I was sitting. I don't think either cat realized I was there. It began to look like I was going to get into that cat fight and all sort of painful possibilities began to flash before my eyes. The grey cat was still in charge of the fight and he was in close striking range. It looked like he had gender alterations on his mind for Old Yaller. They were running so fast and so close together that it looked like a five foot long, two toned, eight legged Tasmanian devil closing on me at warp speed. I must have screamed when I was looking for a place to jump because the yellow cat looked me straight in the eyes, kicked it into overdrive and ran under the depot. The grey cat got a quick look at me and made a hard left stright for the out house. There must have been a land mine in there because the door flew open and a hobo came out with his pants at half mast running flat out for the river bridge. As for me, I ran into the warehouse and grabbed a brake stick in case the cats came back. 73s

Facts About our Railroad

from the April 1954 N&W Magazine
Collected from the regular column in N&W Magazine, it might be interesting to know how today compares, 50 years later.

The Norfolk and Western's terminal at Norfolk has more tracks (main line, sidings and yard tracks) than has the entire State of Rhode Island in line mileage. Norfolk Terminal has 197.2 miles of track as compared with trackage totaling 183 line miles in Rhode Island.

In 1953 our Roanoke Shops built 15 Class S-1a switching locomotives and made heavy classified repairs to a total of 149 locomotives.

The American railroads operate every day about 25,000 trains a total distance of nearly two and one-third million miles. These trains carry more than a million passengers on journeys totaling nearly 90 million miles a day, and move every day more than 10 tons of freight one mile for each person in America.

There are approximately 145,000 board feet of treated timber in the crossties in one mile of main track railroad.

In 1885 regulations provided that Virginia & Tennessee Railroad trains should pass over bridges at a speed not greater than four miles an hour.

Kentucky and West Virginia together have recoverable reserves of bituminous coal exceeding 100 billion tons.

The Norfolk and Western's present roadbed for about ten miles across Dismal Swamp was constructed by General William Mahone nearly 100 years ago by cutting trees from a 100-foot-wide strip, trimming the branches and throwing the trunks to the center of the strip so that they made a corduroy mat, on top of which he placed the earthen embankment. This made a stable foundation and, being always submerged, the logs never rotted. Today this roadbed carries the tonnage of one of the nation's heaviest traffic railroad lines and requires astonishingly little maintenance.

Last year more than 44,000,000 sacks of mail and parcels moved in and out of the Union Terminal at Washington, D. C. In December, which is always the biggest in volume of mail, the terminal handled 7,500 cars.

Norfolk and Western locomotives traveled 16,505,949 miles in 1953.

Ohio ranks second among the states as a coal consumer. It provides a market for about 50 millions tons annually.

Approximately 4,000,000 acres of land are used by the railroad of the U. S. for right of way, yards, shops, station grounds and other railway purposes.

At the end of 1953 a total of 3,638.39 miles of Norfolk and Western track was laid with 130-pound or heavier rail. This mileage represented 78.85 per cent. of all our tracks.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

February 19, 2004 - General Meeting

March 2, 2004 - Board Meeting

March 18, 2004 - General Meeting

April 6, 2004 - Board Meeting

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

Chapter Outing? Stay Tuned!

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

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