



Turntable TIMES

The Official Newsletter of the
Roanoke Chapter, National
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**Volume 36, Number 6
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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, June 17, 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: Pocahontas Glory Volume 1, in full digital quality will be our program for June. Only recently released on DVD, these programs are among the best ever on N&W steam. Everyone will certainly enjoy this program.

We will be having a dinner meeting for July at the Western Sizzlin' at Crossroads Mall. Come early at 6:15 or so and have dinner and fellowship then stay for the meeting.

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 15, 2004. Please send 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.

Cover Photo

The hot mid day sun is beating down this summer day as GP9 No. 780 leads four other units westbound with an hopper train at Singer, Virginia. It seems like yesterday to the photographer, but more than 20 years have passed since this train thundered past. The years have taken away the Geeps, the Alco (last unit), the caboose on the rear and even the phone lines just to the left of the unit! Photo by Kenneth L. Miller

Small Rails

by Dave Meashey

The Big Lick Big Train Operators held their first meeting for the Year 2004 on Sunday, May 23rd at the home of Otto and Imtraut Hartenstein in Blacksburg. The Hartensteins have a magnificent garden railroad. It was even featured in the New River Valley "Neighbors" section of The Roanoke Times several years ago. Otto handles the railroad duties and Imtraut keeps the garden at its best.

It was a joy to see good friends and fellow club members after the long winter break. Everyone seemed enthusiastic and ready to start a new season of garden railroading. Several members had brought newly finished projects to show off to the group. We even had some guests visiting who were interested in starting their own garden railroad.

Otto's trains are run on Digital Command Control (DCC). This system keeps constant power to the track and transmits signals to receivers in the individual locomotives. It allows more than one train to run on the same track. Engineers carry radio control units with them, and can adjust their own train's speed to allow for preceding or following trains.

The garden railroad got a "bonus" this spring. Hundreds of tadpoles were swimming in the pond located at the approximate center of the garden railroad. The Hartensteins should have plenty of small frogs to help with insect control this summer.

Our meeting ended just as another thunderstorm was getting ready to roll into the neighborhood. We were all thankful to have had just enough time to enjoy the operations of this wonderful garden railroad before the rain came again.

Mixed Freight - June

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

By the time this issue of the Turntable Times reaches the subscribers, it will be old news that the Buckingham Branch Railroad will be leasing the former Chesapeake & Ohio Railway Richmond to Clifton Forge line via Charlottesville which is now part of CSX Transportation. In a not very detailed article within the business section of the Wednesday May 5th edition of The Richmond Times Dispatch, it was stated that the BB will maintain the track, bridges and other infrastructure. The deal also includes the short segment that extends from Gordonsville to Orange. The possible disposal of this piece of railroad by CSX has been the talk of discussion among railfans and some railroaders for the past two years and earlier back in the early nineties. CSX will have the right to operate trains over the line. Terms and timing of the deal had yet to be made public.

Smokers have lost some more ground. The number of trains traveling long distance over night where on board smoking will be allowed has been reduced. Smoking is allowed now only in smoking rooms in lounge cars on The Crescent, The Auto Train, The Silver Meteor and The Silver Star.

Some time ago I reported that the former Southern Railway depot located in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina was to be converted into a transportation terminal to meet the needs for rail, intercity bus and interstate bus travelers. The facility has been named The J. Douglas Galyon Depot. Mr. Galyon is chairman for the Board of Transportation in North Carolina. The depot was named in his honor for his many years of leadership and service to the Greensboro

community. A photo of the depot graces the front panel of North Carolina's state highway map for 2004.

Speaking of North Carolina, the annual RAIL DAYS event held and presented at The North Carolina Transportation Museum was again a fun and enjoyable event. Saturday we came under siege numerous times by strong downpours. Weather was more cooperative on Sunday. Mr. Levin's E8s did not make it again this year. The former Pennsy E8s were supposed to bring an excursion train down from the north. I spoke with a comrade whom is also a vice president with the museum informed me that the E8s did not travel south because they did not have a train to bring. Originally a train consisting of privately owned passenger cars and other sources was planned. Somehow the plan unraveled. The N.C.T.M. will try again next year.

Time really rolls on. This May 14th past marked the 10th year since Mr. Graham Claytor, Jr., passed.

I recently found out about the Suffolk Seaboard Station Railroad Museum located in downtown Suffolk, Virginia. It is located at 326 North Main St. The museum is open 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Wednesday thru Saturday and on Sunday from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. For more info visit the web at www.suffolk.va.us Phone 866-SEE-SUFK. The museum is filled with Memorabilia and artifacts from the railroads that served the city over the years. Those railroads include the Atlantic Coast Line, Norfolk Franklin & Danville, Norfolk and Western, Seaboard Air Line and The Virginian.

There will be a huge celebration of the 150th birthday of Horseshoe Curve on Sunday July 4th. The Curve is to be re-lit

that night for photos. It was lit for that purpose back in 1954 using 6,500 flashbulbs. Today's technology should make this year's lighting less complicated. There will be two levels of celebrating. V.I.P. trackside activities at The Curve itself for 500 people at \$60.00 a person or \$100.00 for two. Parking lot level celebrating for 2,500 at \$25.00 per person. Both levels will offer food, souvenirs, entertainment and of course a fireworks display by the famous Zambelli family. Tickets may be ordered from: Railroaders Memorial Museum & Horseshoe Curve, 1300 Ninth Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602. Phone 814-946-0834. Email, www.railroadcity.com

"Takin 'Twenty" with the Virginian Railway Brethren May 23, 2004

by Skip Salmon

Recently Tom "Cornbread" Victory, former Virginian yardmaster, invited me to have dinner with some ex-Virginian Railway employees at the Country Cookin' Restaurant in Roanoke. I worked with a lot of Virginian fellows, starting in January 1963 at Shaffers Crossing when I began my apprenticeship as an electrician so I accepted. Since then my life has been enriched by the fellowship and many accounts of Virginian Railway activities. I have attended every Wednesday night and continued to be educated, amused and entertained by them.

Just the recalling of the many colorful nicknames make the meetings worthwhile. Names like Russell "Slick" Inge; "Dirty-face" Snead, W. H. "Lemonhead" Smithson, M. C. "Motorcar" Foor, "Goat Head" Smith, "Coon" Ellington, "Mokie" Morton, "Pop" Stevenson, "Pistol Pete" Atkins, Ralph

"Nookie" Corning, H. L. "Hustle Bubble" Mattingley, "Flat Wheel" Reid, "Froggy" Williams, "Scrap Iron" Scott, "Dog Face" Hudson, "Dinger" Oftendinger, and others from along the line.

Many items of interest have surfaced during the dinners such as: Bootleg liquor was shipped from Norfolk in empty VGN hoppers by certain persons and intercepted by other certain persons at Roanoke when the car was "shopped." Landon Gregory, operator at Jarrett, once stopped the crack Atlantic Coast Line passenger train "Champion" that ran close to 100 mph, when he let a coal train cross the diamond first. During rain storms, waxed paper was used to keep train orders dry when using the famous "hoop" to give crews their "orders." Jimmie Whittaker's Grandmother's casket was carried from Roanoke to Princeton "on her annual pass" for her funeral. Tom Victory, who came from Tennessee, was told to go to the Post Office and register as an "alien". It was said that "if the Virginian Railway had fired everyone caught sleeping on the job, there would have been no one left to perform the investigation." All indicated that their Virginian Railway experience was a very positive one and they really enjoyed working there. However, "if the VGN owed you a dime, they would pay you; if they felt they did not, they would spend a million dollars not to have to pay," The Narrows Power plant furnished power to run the locomotives as well as power for the shops along the line and when the power to the locomotives was off, so were the lights in the offices. Once a cattle train was seen on the VGN that had one car with a special "room" on the end of it for a traveling "drover",

Conductor's cabooses were used on the VGN for some unusual purposes: "Major" Wood spent his vacation on his, on a siding near his favorite fishing hole. A. L. Allen needed a telephone pole and carried it on his cab to its destination with it "in one door and out the other," "Major" Wood actually passed away on his cab while on duty. Other interesting things happened while workers were "on duty,"

Keith Sowder, clerk, actually watched his brand new 1950 Plymouth being unloaded from a box car on the VGN beside Baker's lot on Naval Reserve Ave in Roanoke. (now just Reserve Ave.) It seems that if the yard work was done, and the Roanoke Red Sox were in town, the workers could attend the Red Sox game. "Buck" Gibson was a great ball player and the Red Sox let him bat once. All went well until the Yard Master heard "Buck Gibson just hit a triple" announced over the PA and promptly sent for him. Also there was the "Virginian Country Club" that opened on Sundays in the freight house after the bosses left for church. Laborers who fed and watered cattle and pigs often fished in the Roanoke River and caught carp. They would put the fish in the stock watering troughs and "fatten" them up and take them home to eat. Employees were able to take home spilled peanuts and corn for their chickens until a car knocker was seen "helping" some leak from a box car. Call boys had to walk to the crew's houses if they lived within a few miles of the call office and did not answer or have a phone. Once a yard master was told that an incoming train had hit a big buck about 20 miles out of town. He took a yard engine out and got the deer and brought it back to the yard.

Clerk Bob Rowland told that once

Conductor Booth came into Roanoke from Victoria and was asked if he had a good run. Booth replied: "Lord, God, boy if a canary had landed on the cab, we would have stalled." "Lemonhead" Smithson, engineer, had his fireman running east. They came around a curve and there was a cab in sight...he jumped out the window after saying: "Red Board.....two of them." Bob Graham, engineer, told of having a fireman that was making his first trip west, out of Roanoke. When they went over the Blacklick high bridge at Kegley, the fireman said that "This is my last trip here, I don't like floating from mountain top to mountain top". He had to be carried back to Roanoke by auto. Brakeman Crotty who had got into a fight the night before was asked "Who gave you those black eyes?" He replied "Nobody gave them to me, I had to fight for them". Keith Sowder said that a favorite joke to play on new Operating Department employees was: After coming out of the Superintendent's Office with their brand new rule book and switch key, the rookie would be asked: "Did you get your rule book, key and watch?" The rookie would of course not have a watch and you would reply "He'll keep your watch every time." "Slick" Inge told of the Zava Restaurant in Victoria where you could get thick hamburgers, thick soup and chili that could "walk right out the door by itself". He said that the Zava family from Albania, first ran the Patrick Henry Hotel where crews stayed in Victoria. Mrs. Zava who spoke only broken English would answer the phone with what sounded like "Hut the Hell" for "Hotel"...locals would phone the hotel just to hear her answer.

For those of you who don't know, "takin' 20" is a railroad term for taking a meal

break. In shops and other places where the work is a 24 hour operation, 20 minutes is allotted for meal time.

Those who have attended the "Takin' Twenty" are:

Russell "Slick" Inge, VGN Trainmaster
 Tom "Cornbread" Victory, VGN Yard
 Conductor Roanoke Terminal
 Raymond "Hoghead" East,
 VGN and N&W Yard Engineer
 Jimmy Whittaker, VGN and N&W Clerk
 Keith "Slim" Sowder, VGN and N&W Clerk,
 Weighmaster, RH Clerk
 W. C. "Wes" Sowder, VGN and N&W Clerk
 B. M. "Ben" Handcock,
 VGN and N&W Yardmaster
 Landon D. Gregory, VGN Operator and Chief
 Dispatcher VA Div. NS
 Grover H. Austin, VGN and N&W Clerk
 Freight Station, Scale House and Yard Office
 James T. Economy VGN and N&W Yard
 Brakeman and Conductor
 Aubrey Wiley, author of several books on
 VGN and N&W, Lynchburg
 R. P. "Bob" Rowland,
 VGN and N&W clerk and callboy
 Greely Wyatt, VGN and N&W Electrical
 Foreman Mullens,
 Officer N&W and NS
 Clyde Weatherly, VGN Operator/Dispatcher
 Walter Grigg, VGN Master Mechanic,
 Mechanical Officer,
 Manager Motive Power N&W
 Ralph "Nookie" Corning,
 VGN Brakeman, Victoria
 C. E. "Skip" Salmon, Retired Foreman
 Electric, Roanoke Shops N&W and NS

Newsbits and bytes

Collected from various reports and sub-
 missions in the past few months.

Southeastern Pannsylvania Transit
 Authority (SEPTA) in Philadelphia, PA caught

some employees in the coach yard that had planted motion detection devices throughout the yard limits.

National security? Hardly, the employees were apparently interested in when the boss was approaching the property! Only a few employees knew of the plan, but word did get out and the company may press charges. submitted by Gary Ballard

Norfolk Southern is not totally out of the excursion train business, despite the shut down ten years ago. On Friday, May 21st a special train was run from Richmond to Roanoke with guests attending a reception at the Link Museum and overnighting at Hotel Roanoke before a 10:30 departure on Saturday morning. The riders? Apparently the large donors to the Virginia Historical Society of which Mrs. Goode is a strong supporter, and well, you know the rest.

The five car train seemed quite a bit overpowered with two new SD-70M as power.

3000	SD40,40-2	5.5	4.1	168
3500	SD50	-	2.9	175
3800	SD60,			
	60M,601	-	2.9	184
4000	SD70,70M	-	3.0	191
5000	SD80MAC	3.6	-	237
2250	B23-7, 7R	3.6	3.0	120
3000	B30-7A	3.0	-	152
3200	D8-32B	3.4	2.1	158
4000	B40-8	3.7	2.5	192
3000	C30-7	4.0	3.3	164
3000	C36-7	4.0	3.2	187
3900	C39-8	3.4	2.8	189
4000	D8-40C,CW	3.7	2.5	192
4000	D9-40C,CW	3.6	2.5	190

(Data furnished by locomotive builders, courtesy of Mr. Robin R. Shavers.)

Robin thought that with soaring diesel and gasoline prices, this might be of interest to you irregardless of what we are paying and that goes for the railroad industry as well.

Fuel Consumption

HP	Model	Idle Gal./Hr.	Low Idle Gal./Hr	Full Load Gal./Hr.
600	SW1	1.5	-	35
1000	SW1001	2.1	2.7	63
1500	SW1500	3.8	2.8	90
1500	MP15DC	3.6	2.8	92
1500	GP15-1	3.6	2.8	92
2000	GP38	5.0	3.5	124
2000	GP38-2AC	4.6	3.4	124
3000	GP40,40-2	5.5	4.1	168
3500	GP40X	6.1	4.7	193
2800	GP49	4.0	2.4	144
3500	GP50	5.2	4.1	191
3000	GP59	-	2.4	149
3800	GP60	-	2.9	186
1750	SD9	3.5	-	115
2000	SD38	5.0	3.5	124

Virginian Station Update

by Ken Miller

For those folks who have not or cannot attend the monthly Chapter meeting, here is a summation of what is going on with the Virginian Station project.

As of this writing (May 26, 2004) we still have not heard back from NS regarding the survey which we had done and provided to NS in mid-February. This is a critical piece of information as the property cannot be transferred to us without a legal survey and description. The survey and description are a necessary part of the subdivision of the larger plat of land which will require processing through Roanoke City channels, but, again, without the railroad's agreement to the survey, we cannot proceed with any paperwork. We have an estimate on fencing

and that can move along rapidly, again, waiting on approval of NS.

The overall project budget was revised, to approximately 1.4 million, and placed in phases and submitted to VDOT for consideration on TEA-21 grants for this year. To date, no word out of VDOT on any TEA-21 project.

Representative Bob Goodlatte has included some funding for the project in a House approved bill, \$80,000 Fiscal Year 2005, \$82,500 FY2006 and \$87,500 FY 2007. That bill is still in discussion in the Senate.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

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

September 7, 2004 - Board Meeting

September 13, 2004 - Regular Meeting

October 5, 2004 - Board Meeting

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

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