



Turntable TIMES

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

Volume 36, Number 10

October 2004





Turntable TIMES

**Volume 36, Number 10
October 2004**

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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, October 21, 2004 at 7:30 pm.

October Program will be presented by Bill Carson. Allegheny Rails Vol II- The Western Maryland- See WM trains on Salisbury Viaduct, Helmstetter's Curve, Black Fork Grade and more! From Bill Price 8mm color films made in 1953-54. Includes Cumberland to Connellsville and Elkins Subdivisions. Locomotives featured include Challenger, Decapod, Potomac, H-9, Pacific, F7, and Alco RS-2. Narrated by Rege Cordic with historical documentation by Harry Stegmaier Jr. and Bill Price. 52 minutes.

This footage will include the area which we recently traveled on the Western Maryland Scenic Railway on the recent Chapter outing. Please come out and join us for an excellent program.

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 Monday, October 18, 2004. Please send articles, information and exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirman, 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 rainy morning of October 24, 1959 did not so much dawn, as it lightened with the heavy cloud cover. This grim weather befitted the occasion forty-five years ago, as Class J Number 611 was to head westbound with an excursion train bound for Williamson and return. This would be it, the last run ever of a J, at least that was the sentiment then. Few onboard even speculated that might someday change. N&W Photo/K.L. Miller Collection.

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of Crystal Spring and McClanahan Street on Thursday, November 18, 2004. The meeting will begin at 7:30 pm. At this time we will hold our annual election in which three (3) directors will be elected.

Due to the decline in membership totals, the board voted last year to reduce the size of the board from nine back to seven. The board had been increased from seven in the mid 1980s due to the increased activities.

Our nominating committee is headed up by Carl Jensen. Board members whose turn is up are as follows:

Alan Easome
Chad Jordan
Bill Mason
Ken Miller

Wanda Troutman

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting, please be sure you have that persons consent before making a nomination. The committee is searching for nominees for these five positions

Instructions for Absentee Ballot: This year we will be electing three (3) directors. Election will be by secret ballot. Any member in good standing may vote by absentee ballot.

Please Note: if you are interested in running, or know of another Chapter member who is, please contact the nominating committee as soon as possible.

To vote by absentee ballot, one must:

1 - Request an absentee ballot from the Secretary or a member of the nominating committee. The nominating committee is chaired by Carl Jensen. You will receive (a) one ballot; (b) one "ballot" envelope; and (c)

one mailing envelope.

2 - Mark the ballot (vote for not more than five (5) directors. If more than five (5) votes are cast, the ballot will be discarded).

3 - Place the ballot in the "ballot" envelope and seal. Do not put your name on the ballot or "ballot" envelope.

4 - Place "ballot" envelope in the mailing envelope. Write your name and return address on the mailing envelope and mail to;

Roanoke Chapter, N.R.H.S.

P. O.Box 13222

Roanoke, VA 24032-1322

or the envelope may be hand delivered to the Secretary anytime before the election at the annual meeting.

Small Rails

by Dave Meashey

The Big Lick Big Train Operators held their August meeting on Saturday, August 28th at the home of Brad Dobbins in the Catawba area. Brad has a very nice indoor European theme layout in the basement of his home. Brad is beginning to install digital command control in his locomotives. Future plans include expanding the mainline to the great outdoors.

The September meeting was held at the home of John Singleton on Sunday, September 26th. The Singleton family have a nice garden railroad that is still growing. The outstanding feature of this railroad is its beautiful water garden. A spring flows from high atop a mountain via a multiple-shelf waterfall into a gently curving stream. The stream empties into a pond filled with several varieties of aquatic plants and beautiful goldfish. An oval mainline encircles this environment, but new branch lines are in the works.

The club is currently hoping to reorganize administratively. Jim Davis has done a fine

job of scheduling meetings and notifying the membership via email for the past four years. Jim's job as a car man for NS will require him to move closer to Shenandoah, where he works. We will miss Jim's good leadership, but some other members have indicated a willingness to take over the administrative duties. November has been tentatively scheduled as the month for the changeover.

Mixed Freight - October 2004

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Amtrak's mail hauling days are numbered. Mail hauling will cease sometime in October. Amtrak President and CEO David Gunn stated that mail and package hauling no longer makes sense for Amtrak. This service has negatively impacted the quality of passenger service. Ironically, some depots in the states of Florida, Ohio and Indiana will lose passenger service as a result of this decision.

As most of you know, my home of Richmond, Virginia was ground zero for Hurricane Gaston's attack many weeks ago. As normal, the media paid little attention and coverage to how the Richmond area railroads were affected. Tracks at the south end of CSX's Acca Yard were under enough water to keep trains from proceeding south for several hours. Amtrak's southbound Auto Train was one of those trains. In Shockoe Bottom, two freight cars were lifted like empty beverage cans and careened against each other like two lovers at a drive in movie. Most of you have probably seen the photograph taken many years ago of the Southern Railway's track rails suspended in the air like telephone wires over the Tye River when Camille hit central Virginia back in the early seventies. That is what happened on a segment of trackage on the former C&O between Richmond and Doswell. A

washout left the single track main 35 feet in the air for about 100 feet. Main Street Station, located in Shockoe Bottom, the ground zero of ground zero, suffered a \$1 million plus in damages. The real slap in the face was this. A tractor trailer rig loaded with 78,000 pounds of Idaho potatoes for a local produce supplier was floated by the flood waters with ease through the station's wrought iron security gate.

In my August column, I mentioned that 11R and 12R were traversing the former N&W Shenandoah Valley line to and from Roanoke and proceeding over the former Virginian Railway between Roanoke and The Hurt Connection over the former Southern. That was a temporary detour due to a maintenance of way window created to complete a project on the former Southern Railway between Front Royal and Manassas. The detour only lasted a few weeks.

For those of you whom may not have gotten the word yet, The Blue Ridge Chapter NRHS is now holding it's monthly meetings at Kemper Street Station in Lynchburg located at 825 Kemper Street. This became effective at their September meeting.

In the past I have expressed much praise and enthusiasm for the progress made and being made at The North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer. I recently received word that the state has cut funding to the museum. As a result, the number of days the museum is open to the public have been reduced. The decision to suspend or terminate the beloved train operations has yet to be made.

THIS JUST IN.....CSX has reported that 698 freight cars in Richmond were damaged by flooding which occurred on Monday August 30th. If a wheel is submerged, all the wheel bearings have to be replaced. The cost of replacing an axle alone is \$1,600. With four axles per car, refitting 698 cars would

run about the neighborhood of \$4.5 million. That's an expensive neighborhood. A total of six miles of trackage was damaged requiring the replacement of ballast. Acca Yard required various levels of repair in order for trains to operate safely at normal speeds.

Norfolk Southern reported that no equipment was damaged and one washout occurred between Burkeville and West Point. It was repaired in less than a week.

On the CSX side, it has been a real treat as a railfan to see trains of ballast and riprap and cars used to transport and discharge these materials over the past few weeks.

Amtrak Schedule Changes

As a result of Amtrak's decision to cease hauling mail, several trains will have their schedules changed.

The 'Palmetto', currently operating between New York and Miami as a coach-only train, will no longer operate south of Savannah. Cities that will lose train service in Florida include Waldo, Ocala, Wildwood, and Dade City.

Trains 91 and 92, the 'Silver Star', will continue to run between New York and Miami, but will begin serving Tampa and Lakeland November 1st.

With the ending of mail service, both 'The Three Rivers' and the 'Pennsylvanian' will be replaced with a single New York-Pittsburgh-Chicago train. In March, 2005 service on this train will end west of Pittsburgh. As a result, the cities of Youngstown, Akron, and Fostoria in Ohio, and Nappanee, Indiana will lost Amtrak service. (From various sources)

Ex-Southern Steam Engine 630

Remember riding behind or photographing Southern Railway Steam Engine 630 when it powered excursions in the Roanoke area in the 1970's?

The Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum reports that work continues on the restoration of the locomotive. Boiler repairs have included replacement of a portion of the first boiler course which included the smokebox, the front tube sheet, and the forward 13" inches of first course shell. The top knuckle of the rear tube sheet was cut out, a new knuckle formed in a McCabe Flanger and welded out. Currently, several areas of the wrapper sheets are ready for pad welding.

The Museum purchased all new driving wheel springs (two of the eight springs did not belong in the locomotive) and manufactured new spring ripping parts. The restoration includes new castings for the driving boxes and welding worn areas on the frame. Further work on the running gear includes casting new shoes and wedges and machining new crown brasses and hub liners.

The museum purchased a new roller bearing lead truck wheelset. The lead truck frame will require extensive repair.

The cab will also receive a new skin as the old one rotted through in many places. The restoration will replace the 6-ET brake with a 26-L system. The plans call for replacing the riveted air reservoirs with welded versions. The headlight, bell, sandbox, and steam dome will remain unchanged, as will the handrails and ladders.

The museum plans to replace the tender with a welded one. The tender truck wheelsets will convert to roller bearing sets.

When completed, the 630 will receive the traditional black SR freight scheme. (From Railway Preservation Website via 'The Pioneer', Cumberland Valley Chapter, NRHS).

Listen to Radio Talk on the Internet

If you have access to the internet and like to listen to train talk, try going to this

website - <http://www.railroadradio.net> . You can choose locations from all over the United States and listen to the communications between dispatchers and crews on the trains. (From 'The Pioneer', Cumberland Valley Chapter, NRHS).

Roanoke Chapter Equipment, Part 3

by Ken Miller

Continuing our series describing some of the Roanoke Chapter's rolling stock collection past and present.

This month, we will present three cars that were mainstays of Chapter trips for many years. One is still with us, the other two now passed on to other hands.

3305 "MARDI GRAS" former Illinois Central 47 seat round-end observation lounge. Built as Illinois Central coach 2188 in 1916. Converted to present configuration in 1947. This car was used on Illinois Central's famous train "City of New Orleans," among others, from Chicago to New Orleans. This train was made famous by songwriter/singer Steve Goodman who wrote the song, "The City of New Orleans," in 1970. The first popular version was released by the singer Arlo Guthrie in 1971 followed by Willie Nelson many years later. This type of car is mentioned in the song as the club car. It is equipped with a bar, lounge seats, and several booths. This car was purchased by the Roanoke Chapter in 1979 from the New Orleans Chapter NRHS.

When purchased, the car was still in original Illinois Central orange, yellow and chocolate. It ran at least one occasion on a Chapter trip in those colors, but was not long in being initiated into the fleet in N&W tuscan red. It is very reminiscent of the tavern-lounge cars used by the N&W on the "Powhatan Arrow" in the 1950's. In June, 1985, the "Mardi Gras" returned to the

Illinois Central mainline on the rear of Amtrak's City of New Orleans for the first time since purchase of the car. Fully restored by Roanoke Chapter 1984-85. Painted in standard N&W tuscan red with black roof and running gear with dulux gold lettering and striping. The 3305 needs some fairly major (read expensive) mechanical and structural work to be suitable for mainline use once again.

Just a little over a year after the acquisition of the 3305, the Chapter fleet was expanded once again, this time adding two cars from the Southern's fleet. These two came so closely together, we consider them arriving about the same time.

727 "FORT MITCHELL" former Southern 727, combination coach/ baggage car with 42 coach seats. Built by the Budd Company for the Central of Georgia Railroad as number 391 in 1947. Purchased from Southern Railway in 1979. Baggage compartment converted by Roanoke Chapter in 1980-81 into a Souvenir counter car with coach end intact. Currently in use in excursion service. This is a corrugated stainless steel car with a ribbed roof. The roof is painted black, stainless is clean with a tuscan red window band with black running gear. All exterior lettering is dulux gold on tuscan letterboards and nameboards. Letter and name boards were stripped before sale. This car was sold to Cuyahoga Valley railroad in early 1995 as it was no longer suitable for use in main line excursion service without major overhaul.

2021 "YADKIN RIVER" former Southern Railway 10-6 Pullman sleeper (10 roomettes/6 double bedrooms) Donated to Roanoke Chapter in 1980 after being in the Southern Crescent wreck near Charlottesville, VA in December, 1979. Car was badly damaged on one end and along one side. Rebuilt by the Roanoke Chapter. Work commenced after donation in 1980

and was completed in April 1983. Built by Pullman-Standard in 1949. The car was used as daytime lounge facilities for first class passengers and night time use as crew accommodations. Occasionally used as first class passenger sleeping space. This is a corrugated stainless steel car with a ribbed roof. The roof is painted black, stainless is clean with a tuscan red window band with black running gear. All exterior lettering is dulux gold on tuscan letterboards and nameboards. This car was retired from regular excursion service at the end of 1992 as overhaul costs were excessive to keep it in NS excursion service. It was sold to Mid America Car and Locomotive in February 2000.

Flood of September 28, 2004

by Brian Crosier

Norfolk Southern's South yard (former Virginian) has been mostly vacated of all equipment as of noon on the 28th, two units on a coal train and a grain train are still within the yard but moved as far west as possible to avoid the rising water. According to NS personnel who were stationed on the Jefferson Street bridge to oversee any major problems arising in the area, the only major problems seemed to be underground air lines leaking (used for maintaining air on cars while stored in yard), the inevitable undercutting of the ballast at the east end of yard (at station) and on the Winston-Salem line near the steam engines behind Mennel Milling and Roanoke Scrap Iron and Metal. Water rose so fast that there were six to eight personnel trapped at Mennel until rescued by boat. Two more were on top of a backhoe that they had been moving to higher ground and a person trapped in Blue Ridge Tire on Williamson, all were safely rescued.

Multiple trucks and heavy equipment were left in rising water and most were finally moved out by crewman that waded the waters to try and salvage as much equipment as possible. Of note the only equipment left in water that was of concern was one fuel trailer of Diesel fuel being delivered to NS that was moved adjacent to Jefferson Street across from Mennel Milling where it was originally thought to be on high enough ground to avoid trouble. The last time I saw it water was over the chassis and starting to rise up the tank part of the body. There was also a large fuel tank (empty or at least mostly empty) that was drifting downstream adjacent to Jefferson Street towards South yard. The Fueling office was under at least three feet of water and an environmental containment truck(ironic) had water halfway over the engine compartment as no one knew which company owned it or was responsible for it to call and notify.

The "river" was completely around the Virginian Station and into the grass on the north side of the parking lot (away from the tracks). The diamond at JK tower was under roughly a foot and a half of water around noon and still rising. The Chapter's equipment at Ninth street seemed safe as the weather service predicted a crest of only 19 feet which did not bring the water closer than 40 feet to the east side of the yard. An additional two to three feet would be needed before the water would back wash into the area between tracks and have the potential for any damage.

Trains were backed up on the mainline near Blue Ridge as Tinker Creek pushed the boundaries of safety in Vinton and the railroad evaluated the bridge for problems resulting. Most trains were being rerouted across the Tinker Creek connection and running normal from there. West of Roanoke

was a traffic jam as trains were backed out of South Yard to avoid the water. One train was moved to the Winston Salem line and stored near Starkey due to slides near Boones Mill but had to be taken out of South Yard. Another coal train was taken east of South Yard and tied down near the Tinker Creek connection until a crew could be found to take it east. Most of these moves were being made by yard crews as most road crews were already "in service" elsewhere.

Of other note the Beltline around the south side of Roanoke was under water in numerous spots and several bridge timber we seen floating by. There are still several wooden bridges along the line and they are prone to damage due to there location over large creeks and streams. Also a lot of the line is located adjacent to the banks of the Roanoke River.

Chapter members reported that our 9th Street Facility received no damage other than trash accumulating along the fence. Water had been inside, as usual from the back up of storm drains. The water was as high as the bottom edge of the rails in most cases, a lot of ballast has been washed, and trash accumulated, but otherwise, not serious problems. The Archive roof seems to have leaked as usual, but that was also expected and planned for. Thanks to Eddie Mooneyham and Bill Mason for their reports.

The Roanoke River crested at 17.9 feet, placing it at 7th out of the 10 worst floods since recordkeeping began in 1901. No. 1 on the list was November 1985 at 23.35 feet.

(Editor's note) The Catawba Branch had several small washouts along Kessler Mill Road, where the line was severely damaged in 1985. The damage there was no where near as serious this time and the NS Maintenance crews had been repairing the damage on Wednesday afternoon.

Four Hurricanes Create Problems

By Gary Ballard

Note: all the following is taken from various CSX news stories and rewritten.

As October rolls in, so do the damage estimates as miles of railroad is hit by 4 hurricanes in the southeast. Florida is still in the battle to return life back to normal. It has made for some long hours for both CSX and Amtrak just to keep things going. As of this writing, 200 miles of high volume track of CSX in the Panhandle section have been returned to service. According to company spokesperson Gary Sease, the line handles about 30 trains a day, and it's CSX's only direct link between Florida and New Orleans. Washouts and fallen trees, too many to count, along with power outages that make for dark trackside signals have been the top story played out day after day.

Floridians have waited many hours at gas stations to wait for the truck to arrive with gasoline for vehicles. The gas had to arrive in special unit trains before getting poured into tank trucks. The unit trains were provided by several railroads, but the journey getting there has been a long one. One can only imagine the slow orders, fallen trees and the lack of operating crossing gates imposing on a highly flammable load of gasoline stretching out in several railroad tank cars of a unit train. The fuel-trains made their trips thanks to many unsung heroes. Rail traffic was opened in bits along the Atlantic coast, first tracks north of Jacksonville. Then between Waycross, Ga and Montgomery, Ala. For a while no traffic operated between Jacksonville/Baldwin and Miami because of widespread electric outages. Chainsaws and boots were the order of many crews attempting to clear the way for

days. In some areas, entire sections of railroad lasting several miles were damaged by hurricane Ivan. The most recent storm, Jeanne, went out to sea once and then returned to the southeast only to hit Florida and states to the north for a second time.

Amtrak had to cancel all Florida service that operates between New York and Miami. The Auto Train serving Lorton, Va. and Sanford, Fla. did not operate. The Sanford and Orlando areas were hit with power outages. Food, gas and ice were no longer available after the weather cleared, so it would not have been good judgement to send a trainload of passengers to the stricken area. All Amtrak stations in the sunshine state and stations to the north on the affected routes up to Charlotte and Fayetteville, N.C. were closed.

CSX ballast trains were busy at various locations such as Hamlet, NC, Baldwin, Fla. and Augusta, Ga. Several ocean ports had to be warned of pending slow shipments in and out of Florida. This caused Florida East Coast Railway to issue an embargo notice for all traffic to, from or via all FEC destinations and interchanges in Florida.

The havoc caused by hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne have prompted the largest relief effort ever undertaken by Federal and local agencies. The President has requested additional storm aid, and so far that help has reached over \$ 12.2 billion. Patience has been in demand as people wait for the gas truck, the ice shipment at a local Home Depot store, all in hot summer temperatures. One newspaper reported residents without power had to dine on hot plates over a fire. The evening meal consisted of a can of ravioli and a bottle of Snapple tea.

States to the north saw the furry of a hurricane in the form of buckets of rain. Flooded tracks and washouts were common

as far north as Virginia and up through Philadelphia. TV viewers in Philadelphia watched on their evening newscast scenes of a flooded Victory Stadium in a place called Roanoke, Va. Likewise viewers in Roanoke were shown scenes from Philadelphia where many streets became rivers. The delay of Amtrak trains went late into the night as the leftovers of hurricane Jeanne went spinning for a second night. Commuters leaving after a busy day's work in Washington, DC. found out the trip to Manassas, Va. was almost impossible. Virginia Railway Express had to cancel trains running west on the Manassas line due to reports of Loudon County getting upwards of 6 inches of rain. Officials did not want to have riders become stranded in places where nearby roads were also becoming impassable. All total, clean up efforts continue. This has been the first time Florida was hit by 4 hurricanes in the same storm season, since Texas was victim to the same in 1886. Two months remain in the 2004 hurricane season.

Show Train at Danville

by Kenny Kirman

For the first time in some 20 years, the James A. Strates Show came to Danville in mid-September. The 61-car train and 34 trucks unloaded rides and other heavy equipment at the old Ringgold depot just east of Danville for the Danville-Pittsylvania County Fair, which was held Sept. 17-25. Ringgold is located along what was once the Richmond & Danville Railroad route between those two named localities.

It had been at least 12 years since a train had traveled to the Ringgold Depot, according to a Norfolk Southern spokesman. Trains normally stop at Broadway, which is about one mile west of the Ringgold depot.

The former Richmond & Danville Railroad

route from Ringgold eastward to the village of Sutherlin on the Halifax County line has been converted into a walking, biking trail in recent years. From Sutherlin eastward to South Boston, the tracks have also been removed, but from South Boston to Clover the rails remain and are now traveled by Norfolk Southern trains which deliver coal to a power plant at Clover. From Clover eastward to the town of Keysville, the tracks are also gone.

In 1985, Southern Railway steam engine 4501 powered a Greensboro Chapter NRHS excursion from Greensboro to Keysville via Danville, Ringgold, and South Boston. The Ringgold station has recently been repainted as has an old Norfolk and Western caboose on display nearby.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

October 21, 2004 - Regular Meeting

November 2, 2004 - Board Meeting

November 18 - Annual Meeting and Election of Directors

December 7 - Board Meeting

December 16 - Holiday Gathering.
Regular meeting night and location,
details forthcoming.

December 31, Your renewal is due.

January 4 - Board Meeting

January 20 - Regular Meeting

February 1 - Board Meeting

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

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