



Turntable TIMES

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

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Turntable Times is published bimonthly 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, November 16, 2006 at 7:30 pm. at the Link Museum located in the former N&W Passenger Station, 101 Shenandoah Avenue. Our program this month will be some very interesting films, please see the description elsewhere in this issue.

Please be sure to note our weather cancellation policy below, please note, this policy also applies to Board Meetings.

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 January/February 2007 issue of Turntable Times is Monday December 18, 2006. Please send articles, information and exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA. 24078-2128.

Meeting Cancellation Policy

Any Chapter meeting will be considered cancelled if any of the following conditions are due to weather: 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.

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

Fall always gets us in the mood for an excursion train. Alas, the days of 611 along New River or the 765 on the New River Train are long gone. But with the beautiful fall weather, the New River Train excursions still survive, although not looking much different from any other Amtrak train. On a gorgeous Saturday, 21, 2006, the New River Train is pulling into Hinton, West Virginia running about 40 minutes late. K.L. Miller Photo

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held at the O. Winston Link Museum on Thursday, November 16, 2006. 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.

The nominees are as follows for the three available positions:

Walt Alexander
Ken Miller
Eddie Mooneyham

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting, please be sure you have that person's consent before making a nomination. The committee, headed by Brian Crosier, is searching for nominees for these three positions

Instructions for Absentee Ballot: This year we will elect three (3) directors 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 promptly.

If there are no more candidates than positions, a motion to elect by acclaim will be accepted.

To vote by absentee ballot, one must:

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

2 - Mark the ballot (vote for not more than four (4) directors. If more than four (4) 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, NRHS
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.

Mixed Freight - November

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Glory Days, they will pass you by, Glory Days in the wink of a railfan's eye, Glory days, Glory days. When Bruce Springsteen wrote those words to his hit single "Glory Days" back in the mid eighties, it is a sure bet that he was not thinking about trains. Glory days are personal to each individual and thus mean different things to different folks. Like many of you, I miss and am still nostalgic for the glory days of the Southern Railway and later Norfolk Southern steam excursion program. Autumn is the time of year I long for those days the most. Cold to chilly mornings were so ideal for those trips especially from a photographer's point of view. And yes this longing includes the steam powered New River Gorge trips between Huntington and Hinton West Virginia. I especially enjoyed those trips because the round trip took 14 hours plus to complete and with Nickle Plate Road Berkshire No. 765 on the business end, what more is there to say?

One point that was emphasized during the Hurricane Katrina disaster last year was the possible use of trains to help move peo-

ple out of an area that is in the path of an oncoming weather disaster. With that in mind, Amtrak has received a \$700,000 contract to overhaul 24 older Amfleet cars. These cars along with 23 other cars that are used regularly in daily service in the Gulf Coast would be employed should the need arise again. One train can move 1,600 out of harm's way. Part of the money would be used to take care of administrative costs too. The cars are currently stored at Amtrak's Bear, Delaware facility.

Amtrak's board of directors has appointed Alexander Kummant as the railroad's new president and CEO. He assumed his duties on September 16th. Mr. Kummant hails from Union Pacific where he served as a regional vice-president, vice-president and general manager of Industrial Products and other positions as well.

The Buckingham Branch Railroad will assume it's own dispatching duties come December 21st of this year. The dispatching center will be located in Staunton; VA. It will be on the job 24/7. A reliable source has informed me that CSX will not operate its normal flow of train traffic over the B.B. for several days so the staff can ease into their jobs with less stress.

For about six months now, there has been a book out entitled *Trackside Around Charlottesville*. In my opinion, it is a very good railroad book. My only gripe with the book is the title. Do not ignore this book simply because you might not have an interest in the Charlottesville railroad scene. The book should have been entitled *Trackside In The Old Dominion*. There are photos and text covering nearly every railroad in existence in Virginia within the 1967 - 1984 time frame. Of course, this means locales

outside Charlottesville. When I first viewed the book back in the late spring, the hobby shop owner had to hand me a super Depends to place under my chin. Fallen flags and first and second generation diesels. Lord Have Mercy.

Thanks to the efforts of those who refused to accept Union Pacific's ban on photography from its public station platforms; the ban has been abolished. The ACLU was a big help too. Railroad officials and employees still have the right to question what they consider suspicious activity even on public property. The story made the pages of *The Chicago Tribune*.

Here is something to think about if you are an active trackside railfan. How often have you gone out to enjoy the hobby and see something that really made the venture extra worthwhile? Maybe it was a freight car of a fallen flag that you assumed had been repainted or retired. Maybe it was an unusual locomotive lashup or locomotive within the lashup. Maybe you experienced and caught on film a number of trains at the same spot at the same time. Do you sometimes wonder what you miss when you are not trackside? Yes sometimes fellow fans may fill you in, but it's not the same as seeing it for yourself. Also, what really appealed to you might have gone unnoticed by comrades.

Holiday Gathering

by Bonnie Molinary

Bring your family and join us again for our Holiday Gathering, an evening of food and fun at our former meeting location at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke on Thursday, December 14,

2006, beginning at 6:30 pm. You can enjoy a wide variety of finger foods, desserts and beverages. If past years is any indication, more than enough food will be on hand! So come hungry.

There will be plenty of time to socialize with no business except for installation of officers and directors for 2007.

Like last year, we are asking for members to bring their special dessert to share with everyone, other food is provided by the Chapter. Come and enjoy! For details and/or to volunteer to help, contact Bonnie Molinary, Kathy Overholser or Wanda Troutman.

Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

Excursion trips through the Hiwassee River Gorge and over the famed Hiwassee Loop began recently. A three-year contract has been reached between the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association, which owns the line, and the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum. Initial weekend trips began at the Gee Creek Campground area near Etowah, travel above the Loop to Farner, Tennessee, then return to the campground. Riders will meet at the former Louisville & Nashville Depot in Etowah, then bused to the loading point. Excursions now operate every weekend through November. Plans call for trips to be run both on weekends and for special weekday events beginning next April through December. A \$1.7 million loan through Glenn Springs Holdings and help from the Tennessee State Parks has made the long-term agreement possible. (Whistle Stop, Watauga Chapter Newsletter).

Strasburg Railroad has repainted their

only diesel, a GE 44-tonner built in 1948, in its original Pennsylvania RR Brunswick green color and assigned it No. 9331, its original PRR number. It is used as a general switcher in the Strasburg yard. The Strasburg shop has a busy workload this winter overhauling N&W 4-8-0 No. 475, working on UP Challenger No. 3985's driving wheels and UP 4-8-4 No. 844's front truck as well as restoring back to running condition, Colorado Railroad Museum's 1899 narrow gauge Rio Grande Southern 4-6-0 No. 20. (Trains News Wire via The Green Block, Central New York Chapter newsletter).

Remember when SP Daylight Steam Engine No. 4449 was in this part of the country back in the mid 1970's? Nowadays, No. 4449 is still at work, and on September 16-17, 2006. She completed a 400 mile round trip from Portland to Bend and back to Portland. The trip was 200 miles one way east on Saturday and 200 miles one way west on Sunday. Sustained speed for this trip was 75 miles per hour!

A Canadian Adventure Steam is Where You Find It!

by Dorr Tucker

After years of anticipation, I finally had the opportunity to ride Via Rail's Canadian. My overnight journey would take me 547 miles from Vancouver BC to Jasper AB. The highlight of the scenic route would be Mt Robson, at 12,972 ft., the highest peak of the Canadian Rockies.

Regardless of the scenery, the 22 car all Budd stainless steel streamliner is an outstanding example of top notch maintenance and long term preservation. This magnificent silver and blue passenger train had no less than 14 sleepers (including my lower



Dorr Tucker Photo

What more could a railfan ask for, the American Orient Express on one track, a long stainless passenger train on the other all in a picturesque setting of snow capped mountains? Jasper, Alberta, September 16, 2006.

berth in the Franklin Manor), 2 full diners, 4 domes as well as 2 coaches and a baggage. On board were 362 fine folks from England, Scotland, Japan, Australia and New Zealand as well as "locals" from Montreal and Toronto. As expected the amenities were outstanding. The crew was polite and reserved yet always attentive. The meals were superb, and even the coach dinette food was cooked from scratch.

I enjoyed the view from the rear chair in round end observation "Prince Albert Park," as we headed east out of Vancouver at 5 PM on the 15th of September. This ride was reminiscent of many pleasant times with folks like Joe Austen and Bill Carson in our "Mardi Gras."

The icing on the cake was arrival in snow capped Jasper. Spotted on the next track was the 18 car "American Orient Express"

resplendent in a livery of blue and cream, and bringing up the markers was ex-20th Century observation, now named New York.

What more could I ask for? Steam?

Back in Roanoke several days before my departure for the West Coast a little "net" research told me that the Kamloops Heritage Railway Operating out of Kamloops BC would run an all-day excursion train powered by ex-CN light consolidation 2141.

The trip was scheduled for Saturday the 16th, the very day that I would be arriving in Jasper some 272 miles to the northeast. On a whim, I called the Kamloops folks figuring I might have an outside chance of seeing the little 2-8-0 and its green & black CN heritage rolling stock. I talked to Ann who reminded me of our Kim at the Link Museum. She told me that the train would be in downtown Kamloops between 8:30 &



Dorr Tucker Photo

Steam IS where you find it! Ex-CN 2-8-0 No. 2141 is at Kamloops on September 17, 2006.

9AM on Sunday the 17th and that the locomotive would be turned on the wye at Kamloops Jct. 2.8 miles to the north before returning to town in an hour.

Thanks Ann! It happened exactly as you said. The price: a 1:30 AM Kamloops Jct. arrival for me the night before, followed by a \$27 cab ride to the Travelodge. Even the 5 hour Greyhound back to Vancouver was much enjoyed as I had the front seat. After all, it was my birthday!

November Program

Join us for this fascinating program, one or both films. First is a 28-minute movie, *MEN AND MAIL IN TRANSIT*, produced by the Post Office Department as a training film in 1956. It shows all aspects of how Railway Postal Clerks did their work aboard a Railway Post Office (RPO) car. *MAIL IN MOTION* runs 18 minutes. It is a 1956 educational film developed by the National Postal Transport Association (NPTA). The

NPTA was the successor to the Railway Mail Association (RMA) after 1949. In addition to RPOs, *MAIL IN MOTION* describes the work performed at Terminal RPOs, Air Mail Facilities (AMF), and Highway Post Offices (HPO). Most of the railway scenes in both movies were filmed on the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad between Washington, DC, and Cumberland, Maryland.

Mechanical Report

Our mechanical forces have not reported in for some time, but they have been working on several things, over the past months, but they can always use more help. Work sessions are usually held the Saturday after the regular meeting, and on other occasions as well, check with Bill Mason or Brian Crosier to see what is going on and when.

An ongoing project has been the repairs to the side sheets of 1940 N&W Caboose 518409. These cabs all suffer from the same problem with side sheets, they rot from the



Brian Crosier Photo

Left: Ex-N&W CH caboose No. 518409 shows its major side sheet repairs. The grab iron will be replaced, as will "fake" rivets before paint and lettering will be applied.

Bottom: the loading dock, cut to allow clearance from cars on the curve, has an all new center section to replace the rotted timbers.

inside out, leaving nothing but a thin, bulged out piece of metal. The only solution is to cut off the rotten portion of the sheets about 6-10 inches above the bottom edge, burn out the rivets, then weld in a new sheet steel piece in place. Of course, this no longer has the rivet pattern in place which has to be drilled out and round headed bolts substituted as rivets. Once they have been painted, you can hardly tell the difference. This is a long process, as you might imagine, but our folks are doing a good job as you can see. By late next spring, hopefully, the work can be complete, and new paint and lettering on the car about the time of her 67th birthday. But that work does not get to stop there, the former Virginia 322 needs most of the same repairs done to it before it can move forward.

The loading dock has also received attention of late, with the replacement of a number of rotten boards. Unfortunately, we could not acquire 3 inch thick planks, so we had to do the next best thing, sandwich two 1/2 inch boards together to replace the heavy timbers.

Come on over and join the fun!



Freight Car America Shop Tour

On Sunday, October 29, approximately 30 members of Roanoke Chapter, Blue Ridge Chapter and some friends had an interesting tour of the former N&W Roanoke Car Shops, now operated by Freight Car America. Our tour was guided by local manager Gene Wyss who walked us through the construction line where they are producing approximately 30 cars per day!

Cameras were allowed on the property, but no inside photos allowed due to potential trade secrets. Freight Car America is expanding their space to include the former Blacksmith Shop and old Paint Shop to make an additional production line.

We thank Mr. Wyss and Brian Crosier for arranging for our most informative tour.



From the **ARCHIVES**

Santa Travels by Train to South Boston and Vinton

Santa Claus made pre-Christmas visits at two N & W towns last month (December, 1946)—South Boston and Vinton. He arrived at both aboard N & W trains, traveling to South Boston on No. 35 and to Vinton on The Tennessean.

Vinton, Va., December 7, 1946—(Written by a N&W Magazine Writer)—So that the boys and girls of Vinton—as well as their parents—would not be disappointed, the westbound Tennessean (Train No. 45) made a nonscheduled stop here, today, to let off a distinguished gentleman—none other than Santa Claus.

The jolly old fellow received a joyous welcome from a large crowd of Vintonites. Santa Claus was conducted from The Tennessean to a waiting float bedecked in Christmas red and white. There he was greeted by some 25 small boys attired as undersize St. Nicks. Preceded by an honor guard, including Mayor W.R. McGee, Town Manager Guy L. Gearhart and other civic leaders and the 30-piece William Byrd High School Band, he was then escorted to a roped-off street previously prepared for his coming. He distributed candy to the hundreds of children who tagged the parade route and listened to their Christmas wants until late afternoon. Santa Claus was ably portrayed by Stuart Kelly; bookkeeper in the

office of the Pocahontas Land Corporation. The Tennessean was handled by Engineer B.F. Inge and Conductor F.A. Fitzpatrick.

South Boston, Va., December 24, 1946 (Following story written by a reporter from the RECORD-ADVERTISER). This has been a great day in South Boston. Santa Claus came to town. Local residents did not remember ever witnessing such a reception as that given Santa here this afternoon. The town has often before played host to celebrities, such as governors, senators, ambassadors, tobacco queens and others, but none of them received such an enthusiastic ovation as Santa Claus.

Santa chose the Norfolk and Western train as his means of arrival here. Long before train time came the N&W station at South Boston and the surrounding streets were jammed and packed with people. The crowd was estimated at somewhere between three and five thousand people, mostly children. The South Boston Jaycees made Santa's visit possible.

As No. 35 came puffing around the curve, the crowd became wild with excitement. The train moved in cautiously and began unloading its passengers, who gazed in wide-eyed amazement at the great sea of upturned faces. Finally, Santa Claus appeared at the end of the train. Cameras clicked, and cheers went up for him. He got on a waiting jeep operated by the Jaycees.

Santa Claus was just what the children thought he would be - fat, jolly and with a little red nose. After waving and smiling to the crowd he began throwing candy to the children. They cheered so loudly it was hard for Santa to be heard. As the party moved slowly up the street, it was followed by a continuous line of children.

South Boston sincerely appreciates the courtesy of the Norfolk and Western Railway in providing transportation for Santa, and we are grateful to the Jaycees for playing host to him. South Boston is much happier today because Santa Claus came to town. (Above from the January, 1947 Norfolk and Western Magazine).

*The Turntable Staff
Wishes Everyone a
Happy and Safe
Holiday Season*

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

**Regular Meeting Locations are at the
O. Winston Link Museum.**

November 16 - Annual Meeting
Election of Directors

December 5 - Board Meeting

December 14 - Holiday Gathering
To be held at the Church

January 2 - Board Meeting

January 18 - General Meeting

February 6 - Board Meeting

February 15 - General Meeting

March 6 - Board Meeting

March 15 - General Meeting

April 3 - Board Meeting

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

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