



Turntable TIMES

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

Volume 38, Number 6
September-October 2006





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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, September 21, 2006 at 7:30 pm. at the Link Museum located in the former N&W Passenger Station, 101 Shenandoah Avenue. Our program will be
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 November issue of Turntable Times is Wednesday, October 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

"Fallen flag" railroads, like the Virginian, Nickel Plate, Wabash and others are part of the now distant past. However, these photos depict a "fallen flag," the Eastern Shore has become the Bay Coast Railroad. Like most other fallen flags, some equipment will stay lettered for the line for some time after the name change. Clockwise from top: On August 10th, leased GP38 2014 is at rest at the Bay Coast's Little Creek, Virginia facility. In the former Pennsylvania enginehouse, newly rebuilt GP15 No. 400 is slowly being revealed in the new paint scheme. K.L. Miller Photos

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.

Board members whose term is up are as follows:

Walt Alexander
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, 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 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. 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 - September/October

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Within the pages of the July-August Turntable Times, there was an article entitled BNSF Wants Railfans To Help Out. This publication was by no means the only one that that article appeared in. It generated quite a bit of dialogue trackside and online. One concern brought up was the possibility of BNSF using the information we railfans send in to register to screen out railfans should they apply to the company for employment. Several said they would wait and see what happens in the future before they would register if they did at all. It's ironic that it required almost five years after 911 for a railroad to step forward and realize what we have been stating since 911. That the railfans can be an asset instead of a security liability.

The High Bridge Railroad Club based in Farmville continues to make progress with both it's O gauge and HO gauge layouts. Both layouts are "open" but still require a LOT of work to be presentable to the public for the upcoming Christmas season. The main feature for the HO layout will be a high bridge. The group is also in the process of creating a new club logo for baseball caps.

Here is the latest that I am aware of concerning a project to remove The Church Hill train buried within a tunnel 84 years ago. Richmond's mayor temporarily halted the project because the contractor hired to perform the task did not obtain the required permits. Then there was tremendous concern about removing the train without compromising the tunnel's stability. No one

wants to encourage the possibility of a cave-in which might bring what is above the tunnel into the tunnel, like someone's front or backyard.

Whenever I take my newspapers to the recycling containers, I can't help but look thru the accumulation that others have left before me. I did so back in early August and noticed the caption Men Working On The Railroad. The word railroad was in huge black letters. My goodness, Ray Charles could have seen it. The article appeared in the Empire section of The Bristol Herald Courier from Bristol, VA. It was dated April 27, 2006. A few years ago, a mother and son became curious about the lives of railroaders prior to 1986. This curiosity got fired up as a result of taking numerous bike rides along the right of way of the former Norfolk and Western Railway Abingdon Branch which is now a biking, hiking and horseback riding trail. The father of the woman mentioned above was a locomotive engineer on The Abingdon Branch. The mother and son decided to quench their curiosity by producing a documentary about the lives of railroaders from an earlier era with the help from the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley. They interviewed 10 retired railroaders. Some of these men began their career as early as 1939. A 45 minute documentary DVD was produced. If any of you are interested in obtaining a copy of the DVD entitled Men Of The Rail for \$12.79, just call 540-980-7363. All ten of the men appearing in the presentation worked on The Abingdon Branch aka The Virginia Creeper.

I will not go into any real detail about Lynchburg Rail Day 2006 because by the time this article reaches your eyes, most of you whom are interested would have heard the details via word of mouth and the newsletter Blue Ridge Dispatcher, the newsletter of the Blue Ridge Chapter NRHS.

I enjoyed it but I'll admit I miss the RAIL DAYS from the eighties and nineties.

When I paid the Roanoke area a visit the second weekend of July to attend the summer open house of the Blue Ridge Live Steamers, it did not take long for the word to reach me that The Creator had called Mr. Bill Carson home from his final run. Like the passing of Bill Cecil and Joe Austin, it was a real spiritual blow for me. I met all three back in 1977 during the NRHS National Convention. Like I noted when I commented on Joe Austin last summer, after chatting with Bill Carson for five minutes aboard a Bluefield bound excursion train, it was like we were friends of many years instead of a few minutes. I really enjoyed his sense of humor and laid back demeanor. The stories that man could tell, especially adventures aboard those infamous Independence Limited excursions from years go. The last time I really enjoyed his company was three years ago in Danville, VA during the 100th anniversary celebration of The Wreck Of Ole 97. With S.R. Winegard and a fourth person whos name I can't remember, we sure had a good time on that summer Saturday.

Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

The gap between the time a steam locomotive is retired and the time it is restored varies greatly, but Colorado & Southern 2-6-0 No. 9, built by Cooke in 1884, may hold the all-time record. No. 9 was returned to service in June at Georgetown Loop after being without steam in her boiler for almost 60 years. Engine No. 9 brought the last passenger train from Leadville to Denver on April 10, 1937, and sat as a display locomotive at the New York World's Fair in 1939. Georgetown Loop Railroad operator, Railstar Corp., will use No. 9 doubleheaded with No. 12 to provide

more motive power to the overall operation and to pull more passengers. (From TRAIN.COM NEWSWIRE via Salisbury Point H.S. and the 470 Newsletter)

There has been a lot of talk about Guilford Rail System's Pam Am Railways, a name often mentioned by rail enthusiasts with a twinkle in the eye, but did you know that Pan American Airways once owned and operated a railroad? Correct. In the 1930's it had an unnamed diesel-powered narrow gauge line that ran for over 200 yards on Wake Island to haul construction materials for the base to support the "China Clipper" flying boats! And how about the old Boston & Maine Airways that ran in the 1930's. (From ODDS AND ENDS Column, by Roy L. Hudson, August, 2006 'Cinders', newsletter of the Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS.)

When Utah's state quarter comes out in 2007 it will feature the design of two locomotives facing one another with a large spike between and above will be the text "Crossroads of the West". The scene is based on the famous photograph showing CPRR's Juniper loco touching the nose of the UP RR's No. 119. (From Coin World via Interchange, Baltimore Chapter NRHS and The Keystone, Pittsburgh Chapter NRHS.)

In case you haven't heard, the Monopoly game board has been redesigned. The four railroads, B&O, Reading, Pennsylvania and Short Line will be replaced with airports JFK, LAX, O'Hare and Hartsfield. (The Green Block via The Keystone, Pittsburgh Chapter, NRHS.)

Tibet Railway Stories

(Turntable Times Editor's Note: The following two stories about the new railway in Tibet, entitled 'A Railway to Oblivion for Tibet?' and 'Could The Tibetan "Miracle" Go Up In Smoke?' were recently submitted to the Editor by Roanoke Chapter Member Joe Fagan. Both stories were put together by Mr.

Geoffrey York and then sent via email to Mr. Gill Ediger who then forwarded them on to Joe Fagan's son, Joey. Joe Fagan found the stories to be interesting and thought that the Turntable Times Readers would too.)

A Railway to Oblivion for Tibet?

by Geoffrey York

It's one of the world's greatest marvels of engineering and one of the greatest concerns for those worried about Tibet's cultural survival.

Love it or hate it, the world's highest mountain railway will begin operations tomorrow with a major contribution from Canada, triggering a new eruption of controversy over its impact.

Tibetan students are planning protests at Chinese embassies around the world when the first passenger train officially embarks on the 4,064-kilometer, 48-hour journey from Beijing to Lhasa, the Tibetan capital.

The protesters say the railway will devastate the environment, jeopardize Tibetan's culture, assimilate their people and lock them under Beijing's tightening grip.

Beijing meanwhile, has launched a propaganda blitz to celebrate the event, and the first train will be stuffed with government bigwigs and journalists. The country's leaders see the railway as a crucial step in the poor region's development.

The \$4.2-billion (U.S.) railway, climbing across permafrost and 5,000-metre mountain passes, is the highest-altitude railway in the world and the first to reach the long-isolated Tibetan plateau.

The newest portion of the line is a 1,100-kilometer section with an average altitude of 4,500 - meters -- an engineering feat that was long believed impossible because of the frozen earth, layers of ice, earthquakes, high altitude and the need for massive bridges and tunnels. The railway was completed a year ahead of schedule. An average of 30,000

workers a year toiled to build it, carrying their own bottled oxygen supplies to fend off altitude sickness. It was a "miracle" that none of the workers perished from altitude sickness, a Chinese official said yesterday.

Doctors and nurses will travel on every train to Tibet, and oxygen bottles will be available to every passenger. Nobody will be allowed aboard the train if their health condition is deemed inadequate.

Two Canadian companies, Bombardier and Nortel, are playing key roles in the "roof of the world" railway. Bombardier's joint venture in China is manufacturing all of the 363 unique railway cars -- tightly sealed and oxygen-enriched, with specially designed windows to protect against UV rays -- while Nortel is providing the cellphone technology, which is a first for a Chinese railway line.

Protesters have dogged the annual meetings of both companies for years, complaining that they are making it easier for Beijing to wipe out Tibet's culture and autonomy.

Migrant workers and tourists from mainland China pour into Tibet in huge numbers as the railway enters commercial operation. As many as 2,700 passengers will arrive in Tibet by rail daily and the railway is expected to deliver 400,000 new tourists every year. Train tickets will be subsidized -- some seats will be as cheap as \$49 (U.S.) for the two-day journey, much cheaper than flights.

This massive flow of newcomers on the rail line, primarily from the Han Chinese ethnic majority, is a form of "demographic aggression" against the Tibetan people, according to the Tibetan Youth Congress. Other critics have called it "cultural genocide."

The railway project's deputy director, Zhu Zhensheng, insisted that the railway will benefit "all ethnic groups" in Tibet. He argued that Tibetan culture can best be pre-

served by ending its isolation. Mr. Zhu also expressed confidence that the railway will not damage Tibet's fragile environment, although critics charge it will harm the highland ecosystem.

Others worry that melting permafrost will destabilize the tracks. Government monitoring has found that the permafrost has diminished by just two centimeters a year since the beginning of construction. Special cooling technology has been installed under the tracks to counter thawing.

Could the Tibetan "miracle" Go Up In Smoke?

by Geoffrey York

After conquering mountain peaks and permafrost, the builders of the world's highest railway area facing a new threat: cigarette smokers.

The inaugural 48-hour voyage of the Beijing-Tibet train was July 3. Chinese officials were gearing up for the danger of banned cigarettes in the Canadian-built railway cars, where oxygen is pumped into the sealed cars as they reach high altitude. Two-thirds of Chinese men are smoking addicts.

Of the 870 passengers on the first two-day journey from Beijing to Lhasa, about 300 are working staff, including a number of uniformed police, and one of their tasks is to enforce the smoking ban.

The rail cars, built by a consortium led by Bombardier, are sleek ultramodern vehicles with all of the latest technology to protect passengers from altitude sickness and ultraviolet rays.

The project has provoked protests around the world, including at the annual meeting of Nortel and Bombardier in Canada. On Friday, three protesters--including a Canadian woman--were arrested at a Beijing railway station when they unfurled a banner against the railway. They were released after

three hours of custody.

The train that departed from Beijing on Saturday night was the first to bring passengers on the entire route, Beijing to Lhasa. But earlier on Saturday, two trains headed to Lhasa from the northwestern Chinese city of Golmud after a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by Chinese President Hu Jintao.

"The project is not only a magnificent feat in China's history of railway construction, it is also a great miracle for the world," Mr. Hu told the ceremony, which coincided with the 85th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party.

One of the passengers on the first train was a Canadian tourist, Michael Hoyt, who managed to get last-minute tickets for a friend. He said he was impressed by the train. "The cars are really beautiful," he said yesterday after his first night on the two-day journey. "It's a very smooth and quiet ride, compared to a lot of trains I've been on. The service has been really good. They come around and bring us hot water and food."

Mr. Hoyt, who is teaching English at a university in Jilin province, said he disagreed with the protesters. "I don't think Tibet will lose from this. I think it will open a lot of doors. I don't care about people protesting to protect old cultures."

As he spoke, he puffed away on a cigarette, but said he was planning to switch to nicotine gum at high altitude.

Synopsis of the NRHS Board of Directors Meeting

submitted by Carl Jensen

The NRHS Board of Directors met in New Philadelphia, Ohio on July 21, 2006, followed by the Annual Meeting of the Membership. Here are some highlights.

The Society announced the awarding of 14 Railway Heritage Grants for a total of \$34,000. Since the program began in 1991,

we have raised and awarded over \$314,000 to support a variety of preservation projects. Just as in past years, the total applied for was many times larger than the funds available.

President Molloy announced that the NRHS has been approved for participation in the 2006 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), our third year of participation. The CFC has become an important source of outside donations for the Society.

Mr. Molloy also discussed unfavorable long-term trends in the Society's current business model. His comments will appear in the next NRHS News. Although the NRHS is operating under financial constraints, national dues levels will remain unchanged for 2007.

Senior Vice President Barry Smith reported that student RailCamp programs were recently completed at two venues, the Steamtown National Historic Site and a new program at the Nevada Northern Railway Museum. In addition, the first adult session was held in Nevada. All of the programs operated successfully, and we expect to operate at both sites next year.

Membership Records Director Bob Ernst reported that as of July 13, membership renewals for 2006 have passed the 88% mark. Several chapters are still significantly behind their 2005 membership levels, although the number of inactive chapters is down to two. Technical preparations for the 2007 dues bills are on schedule. In early August, chapters will receive a final updated roster report to review before bills go into production.

Production of Bulletin issues has resumed after being delayed for several months by the project to re-size the publication to a full-size (8 1/2 x 11) format. The 2005 Yearbook and regular issues from both the 2005 and 2006 Bulletin years are in final lay-

out for late-summer printing. The Bulletins with 2006 cover dates will be sent to only those members who are renewed for the current year.

Project manager Jim Lilly reported that the implementation contract for the Society's new information system is in final review and will be released in August.

The Board accepted the audited financial statements for 2005 prepared by Padden Guerrini & Associates, PC. Our external CPA firm reported no exceptions to the financial statements of the Society.

The Nominating Committee reported that all current officers and regional vice presidents are willing to serve again in 2007. Nominations for 2007 offices remain open until September 15, 2006.

Convention Committee chair Carl Jensen reported that the 2006 convention, operated by the national organization, was running smoothly. Pre-registration is now open for the 2007 convention in Chattanooga. There is still no firm plan for conventions in 2008 and beyond, but the Society intends to continue the program.

Helping our Friends

by Ken Miller

The Roanoke Chapter has been quite generous over the years donating or raising money for other organizations in our inter-

est. The Chapter and its members have been willing to share our knowledge and talents with other organizations where that information and know-how is valued.

In that mindset, over the years we have helped out one organization a variety of times, financially, and with volunteers and materials. That museum is the North Carolina Museum of Transportation in Spencer. Just why does the Roanoke Chapter help out a Museum that is almost 150 miles away from Roanoke? It is quite simple, actually. When our members go to work or visit the Spencer Shops, we are treated as though we belong and welcomed as old friends.

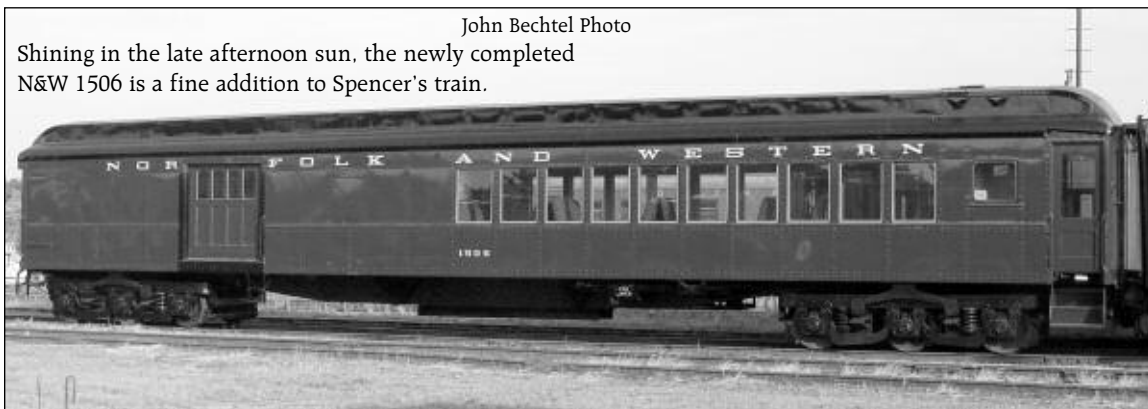
That simple concept of friendship and appreciation is a huge difference from the way some other groups have reacted toward the Chapter over the years. Unfortunately, our knowledge and help, is not always recognized or acknowledged.

All that aside, however, our latest venture with Spencer was providing stencils and proper information on lettering their newly completed ex-Norfolk and Western combine, No. 1506. In July, the car rolled out to rave reviews as the new, handicapped access car for their train ride. Take a look at the photo provided by Spencer's John Bechtel, and you can see it looks stunning.

Roanoke Chapter provided stencils cut on

John Bechtel Photo

Shining in the late afternoon sun, the newly completed N&W 1506 is a fine addition to Spencer's train.



demand for the lettering on the car, and almost five hours was spent developing a detailed diagram for positioning and spacing the lettering for the Spencer volunteers to make the car look as it rolled out of Roanoke Shops in the late 1940s.

In a related venture with Spencer, we have provided our train set for use, air conditioned coaches, N&W 512, 537 and 1827, ex-Great Northern dinette-dormitory No. 1148 "Devils Lake" and ex-Illinois Central round-end observation No. 3305, "Mardi Gras." The three coaches have been a Spencer since July 2005, and after a trip from Cumberland, MD, the other two joined them Monday, August 7, 27 days after leaving Cumberland. We thank Eddie Mooneyham for keeping on the move, otherwise, they might be standing somewhere.

It was reported elsewhere that the reason our cars were in Spencer is we lost our storage tracks in Roanoke for them. Nothing can be further from the truth, we certainly have the room for them at 9th Street, but felt that the cars deteriorate less in service and that with our connections and experience with Spencer, they would be in far better hands than previously. The cars would also serve a functional purpose at Spencer; something we cannot have in Roanoke.

To sum up, it is nice to have a group we can work with and feel as though our efforts are appreciated.

Small Rails-September

by Dave Meashey

June witnessed two meetings for the enthusiasts of large scale trains. 7/8ths inch scale enthusiasts from several east coast states gathered at Steve King's home in Rocky Mount to operate their trains on June 16th and 17th. Steve's track is almost level, but his property is not. The two ends of Steve's railroad have the track elevated on

4x4 deck posts, while the center of the railroad has the track on the ground.

I attended the gathering on June 16th. The trains that were operating that day were all battery powered and radio controlled. Many of the locomotives also had digital sound systems. Steve's railroad has no track power, so locomotives must either be battery, steam, or clockwork powered. The 7/8ths inch scale trains are about the largest scale that will run on Number 1 gauge track. These models represent two-foot gauge prototypes.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators held their



Dave Meashey Photo

Even a temporary layout can have some "railroady" scenery.

June meeting on Saturday, June 24th at my home. I had just finished removing the last of my track from the ground just two days before the meeting. The track was severely weath-

ered from being under an inch layer of pine needles for over a year. One switch machine even had a colony of tiny ants living in it. I uncovered them when I opened the switch machine to clean it. I ended up scrapping the switch machine and the ants.

I run track-powered trains so I needed clean track for my meeting. Fortunately, I do own a fair amount of track that was never used in the garden railroad. I set up the track on our carport. I did have to burnish the railheads on one switch and two short pieces of track to serve on the carport layout. The club members had a fine time running trains. Since it rained for part of that afternoon, we were glad the track was on the carport.

The 2006 NRHS Convention— Challenges of having no host chapter

by Carl Jensen, Nat'l Convention Committee

This year, for the first time in many years, NRHS conducted our convention without a host chapter. Those of us in Roanoke Chapter know (well, all of us old enough to remember) how much person power is needed to make a convention a success. This year our National Convention Committee (NCC) faced that same challenge, but without a host chapter to provide all the planning and execution of the convention.

Why no host chapter? Simply put, no one came forward to volunteer, despite numerous pleas. Determined to have a traditional convention – the 66th in the history of NRHS – the Board of Directors voted to have the National host to its own convention.

A core committee of 12 members was formed to plan and conduct the convention. We had previously determined that East Central Ohio was a viable area, based on the availability of one of the few railroads – the Ohio Central Railroad System – that was interested in, and still operating, steam passenger excursions under the leadership of its CEO Jerry Jacobson. New Philadelphia, Ohio, with a concentration of 6 motels within two blocks of each other, adjacent to Interstate 77, was only a twenty-minute drive of Dennison, Ohio, and the location of a viable restored ex PRR passenger station. It became our convention host city.

The NCC obtained the hotel arrangements and the agreement of Ohio Central to be the primary host railroad, in the fall of 2004, nearly two years before the actual convention. As with everything, circumstances changed with time, and the Ohio Central drastically curtailed its overall steam and passenger excursion business in early 2006. This was a major blow to our plans, and actually threatened to cause complete can-

cellation of the convention at one point.

Fortunately, we could negotiate some alternative arrangements, with the generous help from the nearby Orrville (Ohio) Railroad Historical Society. Their passenger cars became the primary equipment for our excursion trains, and their long-term relationship with the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad, and the Ohio Central made it possible to operate three major excursion trips. (A fourth trip on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic was not affected by the Ohio Central situation) These trips were essentially what we had planned all along, but had counted on Ohio Central coaches, and several steam locomotives for power. We leased two former NKP heavy weight open window coaches from the Cleveland area, a diner from a private party and had only one Ohio Central car, an ex Milwaukee full baggage car. These along with the Orrville cars provided us with an 11 car train.

To plan the convention our core committee consisted of members from all over the country, all of who had conducted conventions themselves in their home chapters, and whose experience allowed us to put together a solid plan, and conduct a nearly flawless convention. Our strength was sorely tested by the major change by the Ohio Central, scaling back their steam department to two persons, mechanical problems with one of the steam engines we planned to use, sale of most of their passenger cars and beautiful F9 diesels, changes in costs and even insurance requirements. All this took place after our convention brochure and ticket order information was in the hands of members and sales had begun. But very good – and fast – negotiating by several committee members and major help from several people at Orrville and within Ohio Central provided alternative agreements that preserved our basic activity plans.

As we approached convention time, we realized that our little band of 12 (by then expanded to 15) needed extra help to cover various on train responsibilities, registration room activity, etc. The Orrville group provided not only their passenger cars, but hosts as well. Since they were nearly all a non-NRHS members, we wanted to supplement their personnel with experienced NRHS volunteers. We also needed help with the box lunch distribution from our leased diner. So, some 20 members from all over the US were recruited both before and during the convention. Among the volunteers who assisted us during convention week were Roanoke Chapter members Jim and Kathy Overholser and Gary Ballard. Several other members – including Dorr Tucker and Jeff Saunders, either rode one or more days with us, or were spotted trackside chasing.

Details of the trips and other convention events are covered in two stories in the current issues of TRAINS and RAILFAN magazines. We understand RAILPACE will also have an article in their next issue. Members will also receive their copies of the NRHS NEWS in September with another story.

This year's convention was indeed national in terms of personnel who helped make it a success and whose own affiliations and interests came literally from coast to coast. In 2007 we will again be forced to conduct the convention in Chattanooga, TN as a National hosted event, as no chapter would agree to be the primary sponsor. The effort, and additional expense involved by having a convention committee that is made up of people from numerous cities is indeed a difficult way to have these conventions. If NRHS were a different kind of organization, with a big budget that could support a permanent convention committee with sufficient fully dedicated personnel then this would be a different matter. But, NRHS

isn't that way, and so it is critical that we find Chapters who will step up to help. Our NCC is a volunteer advisory committee whose purpose is to assure conventions are conducted within the policy guidelines of NRHS, and not to conduct the convention, as we did this past summer. Anybody want to step up?

Amtrak's New Boss

by Gary Ballard

Amtrak got a new boss, effective Sept. 12. Amtrak's Board of Directors appointed Alexander Kummant as President and CEO.

Kummant previously served as Region Vice-president of Union Pacific, serving in numerous high profile categories including overseeing UP intermodal and automotive networks, transportation, engineering and construction departments on the railroad.

Before Union Pacific, Kummant served as Executive VP and Chief Marketing Officer at Komatsu America. Komatsu is second to Caterpillar as the largest builder of heavy construction equipment worldwide.

This ample background has provided Kummant with a domestic and global track record in competitive business operations where staying alive globally is an eat or be eaten environment.

Amtrak's BOD feel that Kummant has what it takes to lead a changing passenger rail carrier more focused on customer relations and being financially responsible. Chairman David Laney said the appointment fulfills the board's commitment in finding a capable and strong leader.

Many within Amtrak will wait and see what fruit this choice will bear. It is still fresh in the minds of many who work at Amtrak what happened to David Gunn, the ex-big boss who was fired by the Bush-appointed BOD because he was not acting fast enough to dismantle the company and send the carrier into bankruptcy. It is diffi-

cult to find that in print, it is the reason Gunn is no longer in charge.

Kummant fills the position held by David Hughes, who held the CEO position since Gunn's departure last November. Hughes will continue with Amtrak in a yet to be announced position.

What the new boss at Amtrak will bring many are wondering. National agreements with the Conductor, Assistant Conductor and Engineer crafts have gone without a new contract for a number of years. The Bush administration has wanted Amtrak to fold, and go into bankruptcy. This thinking on behalf of Capitol Hill would allow a new Amtrak to be created, thus not having to honor union contracts.

So will Kummant honor the deeply felt desire of President Bush and the group who hates Amtrak? That remains to be seen. Stay tuned over the next few months.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

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

September 21 - Regular Meeting

October 3 - Board Meeting

October 19 - General Meeting

November 7 - Board Meeting

November 16 - Annual Meeting
Election of Directors

December 5 - Board Meeting

December - Holiday Gathering

January 2 - Board Meeting

January 18 - General Meeting

February 6 - Board Meeting

February 15 - General Meeting

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

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