



# *Turntable* TIMES

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

**Volume 40, Number 4**  
**July-August 2008**





# Turntable TIMES

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July-August 2008**

## **EDITOR**

Kenney Kirkman  
KKIRKMAN50@hotmail.com

## **MIXED FREIGHT**

Robin R. Shavers

## **SMALL RAILS**

Dave Meashey  
kndmeashey@msn.com

## **HISTORIAN**

Kenneth L. Miller  
klmiller@rev.net

All materials should be sent directly to the Editor:  
Kenney Kirkman  
590 Murphy Road  
Collinsville, VA  
24078-2128

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, July 17th at 7:30 pm. at the Link Museum located in the former N&W Passenger Station, 101 Shenandoah Avenue. The August Meeting will be on Thursday August 21st.

Please make plans to pay for your Cass outing no later than the July meeting.

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 September/October 2008 issue of Turntable Times is Monday August 18, 2008. 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**

Not quite as dramatic as O. Winston Link's shot at this location taken on a rainy April night, but John Krause captured a more subdued Class A No. 1226 on this warm bright summery day. As was typical with Krause, he rarely recorded dates, time, even locations on his photos. Regardless, the scene is almost timeless having taken place thousands of times in the steam era. John Krause photo, K. L. Miller collection

## Cass Outing Planned!

by Brian Crosier

On September 20th a bus trip to Cass Scenic Railway will be hosted by the Virginia Railway Heritage Coalition. Two tickets will be available; Open class tickets will be for the open cars and Closed class will be for reserved seating in an enclosed car for the ride up to Bald Knob. Both tickets include the price of the bus trip and will include a box lunch. (Vegetarian meals will be available upon request if told at time ticket is purchased and at least thirty days before trip.) Tickets will be available shortly through the O. Winston Link Museum. Departure will be from the West gravel parking lot at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. Please no parking in front of the museum as this is reserved for the daily patrons of the museum. This will be a one day trip leaving Saturday morning and returning Saturday night. Open cars are not guaranteed seating, they are a combination of standing and seats on a first come basis. Pricing will be \$70.00 for open car and \$75.00 for closed car. Closed car capacity is 44 passenger's and will be taken on a first paid for basis. We have two Abbott busses reserved for this trip and will be opening ticket sales to the general public in April so please reserve your seats now if you plan on attending. No refunds will be given after August 10th as we can not cancel reservations after this date.

For tickets contact the O. Winston Link museum at 540-982-5465 for tickets.

The Virginia Railway Heritage Coalition is an umbrella organization made of the Virginia Museum of Transportation, O. Winston Link Museum, Norfolk and Western Historical Society, Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society and the Blue Ridge

and Roanoke Chapter's of the National Railway Historical Society.

## Mixed Freight July/August

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

I am going to start this MIXED FREIGHT off by coat tailing on a book report furnished within the pages of the March - April 2008 Turntable Times by my friend Dorr Tucker. Dorr is right about the fact that there are indeed a lot of all color slide show books out there and new ones are making the scene monthly. I must admit I enjoy these kind of books and quite a few of them can be found within my railroad library. But like everything else, I have to draw the line and be sensible. A lot of fallen flags interest me enough to purchase books on them. With the cost of living getting worse, I really have to pick and choose with extreme diligence. Book sharing with fellow fans with parallel interest really comes in handy. You really have to have a strong ethic of respect for another persons property for the sharing idea to work.

Dorr also commented on the fact that 61 pages out of 128 did not fall within the subject matter of the book's title which is "Trackside In The Middle Atlantic States 1946 thru 1959". I made a similar observation when I gave a brief review of the book "Trackside Around Charlottesville, Virginia 1967 thru 1984". That book included photos and text on the N&W, SCL, RF&P and even shortlines such as the Winchester & Western, Virginia Blue Ridge and the Chesapeake Western. The book is one of my favorites but the title is misleading to a degree.

Improvements on the Buckingham Branch Railroad at Doswell were completed on schedule. The main work was upgrading the

connecting tracks between the small yard just north of the diamond and the former C&O on the northwest quadrant. Welded rail replaced decades old jointed rail and the same was likewise for crossties and switches.

Speaking of the Buckingham Branch improvements at Doswell, if certain interests get their way, the trackage from Doswell to Richmond's Main Street Station could get upgraded substantially to handle Amtrak trains at a respectable velocity. Nothing has been etched in granite but studies have been conducted and are still being examined in an effort to relieve some of the congestion at CSX' Acca Yard. Ashland's business leaders are on edge as to what might happen in the not too distant future. With freight and passenger traffic increasing, the solution or solutions to handle the increases will indeed be interesting.

Thanks to major trackage maintenance projects along the former C&O in Virginia and West Virginia, grain trains from the midwest were routed onto the former B&O at Fostoria where they headed eastward and then southward over the former RF&P. This started in late April and the reroute schedule is indefinite. Empty grain trains traveled the same route in reverse of course.

Like a number of Roanoke Chapter NRHS members, I really enjoy and appreciate the work that has been accomplished and is still being accomplished at The North Carolina Transportation Museum located in Spencer, N.C. Hardcores like myself still refer to it as The Historic Spencer Shops. My only personal dissatisfaction about the place was the condition of the Southern Railway caboose that was used in the museum's caboose train. The Southern name and number had almost faded out and the caboose had deteriorated to pink. Aside from being a Southern Railway fan, the fact that the

museum occupies land that was once Southern property and the Southern Railway was the only railroad in town, you would think that the Southern caboose would have been the first to be restored to a like new condition. I would often ask why the caboose was in the sad shape it was in and I was always told it would be restored when funding became available. For the record, I have been a dues paying supporter-member for at least 15 years so have every right to speak my concern.

In late May when I received my copy of SHOP TALK, I was elated to read on page 15 that the Southern caboose is in the midst of being restored to a like new condition. The project is made possible via the generosity of a group of donors looking to create a lasting memorial for their friend Davis Douglas Buchanan Sr. "Doug" was a familiar face at the NCTM and a Southern Railway fan whom grew up near the tracks in Winnsboro, S.C.

Like many of you whom thoroughly enjoy railroading as a hobby, I know a lot about trains but I continue to pick up on information that I did not know. I have admired Nickel Plate Road S-3 Berkshire steam locomotives for a long time. I have read quite a bit of information on these great machines but recently read an article about them within the pages of NRHS Bulletin Vol. 38, No. 3 for 1973 that disclosed some information that was new to me. The NKP S-3 steamers had two whistles on the engineer's side. A soft one for passing thru municipalities and a more strident one for open country. This got me to thinking. Yes I know in some states I can be arrested for doing that. Anyway, with so many people living close to the tracks these days and complaining about blaring airhorns and signing petitions for quiet zones, maybe a "soft or melodic airhorn" for municipalities can be tested and

possibly implemented. Its at least worth a try.

Over the years, I have periodically tried to let you readers know what has been going on with the shortline Virginia Southern. They are still very much in the business of moving coal from their Norfolk Southern connection at Burkeville, VA to customers at Mecklenburg Cogeneration in Clarksville and Burlington Industries also located at Clarksville, VA. For a while woodchip loading at Chesapeake Forest Products had ceased. The loadings started back about a year or so ago.

Believe it or not, the Virginia Southern Railroad will turn 20 years old this coming November 28, 2008. I was glancing thru my copy of RAILFAN / RAILROAD magazine of September 1995 and a photo of a Virginia Southern freight was taken as the train rolled past an Amoco gas station in March 1994. Regular was \$ 107.9. Thoughts of a time machine still occupy my mind.

## **T-Shirt Feedback**

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

**O**n Saturday May 10, 2008 I journeyed northward to Fredericksburg to attend the spring meeting of the RF&P Railroad Historical Society. Rather than wear my personalized RF&PRHS club shirt, I decided to wear my RF&P T shirt that is nearly 20 years old and still fits. When I bought the shirt from a vendor at a train show, it simply had the latest RF&P logo on the front in white letters. Railroad was not included. The collar of the shirt was Navy blue. I definitely wanted to have the word Railroad under the RF&P. A railfan associate whom is no longer with us hand painted the word RAILROAD for me on that shirt. It is so perfect you'd think it was machine painted at

the factory. That's how skilled that man was.

Now back to May 10th 2008. After feeding the South Acca Yard Cats, I proceed to do likewise for myself before hitting U.S. 1 North. I do this at a WAWA. For the uninformed, WAWA is like SHEETZ. After filling my commuter mug to the max with extra caffeine enhanced mocha, I proceed to the cashier to make payment. A man stares at the shirt, smiles and says "Man that shirt is really nice". I thank him for the compliment and proceed with light talk. He said he never worked for the RF&P but knew quite a few people who did. They often spoke highly of that railroad and it's close knit family comradery. With intensity in his voice, he commented on how railroaders he knows whom work on the former RF&P don't have that close knitness anymore. We wished each a good weekend and parted company. Still in line, a silver haired elderly lady turns to me and says "My late husband was a railroad man for 42 years". I asked what railroad and occupation. She replied that her husband retired as a passenger conductor for the Southern's new crack passenger trains between Washington D.C. and Salisbury, N.C. At the time their home was in Amherst, VA. She now resides with her sister in the Richmond suburbs. She commented on how much her husband enjoyed being a railroader and how he didn't look forward to retirement. Talking with that lady about her husband and trains really made her day if not the entire week. She was beaming. We part company, I pay for my mocha and hit the road but not for long. As I approach a grade crossing on the former RF&P, the crossing protection apparatus comes to life and a huge smile does likewise across my face. It is CSX mainfest # Q400 with 145 cars and 7 motors. Only 3 are on line. In front of me on the dual lane is a big

blue Ford pickup. I put my Corsica in park and get out to observe the freight as I sip on my fresh mocha. I'm observing the train when the guy in the pickup motions for me to come to him. He appears pissed. I'm thinking to myself, what the XXXXX does he want? Keeping one eye on the freight and one cautiously on the Ford driver I approach and say "Hi". He says "Mornin" and comments on the shirt I'm wearing. He then says "You know the RF&P is gone". I say "Not really because it still lives in the hearts of many". He agreed and mentioned that he had worked for the RF&P for 27 years repairing freight cars at Bryant Park Terminal. He enjoyed his RF&P employer but CSX left a bitter taste with him and others. He commented on how things had changed for the worse. As Q400 rolled by, he pointed out things to me that needed addressing on that freight for safety reasons. Sitting in his truck, despair covered his face. We spoke of mutual acquaintances we knew on the RF&P before Q400 came to an end and we parted ways with him thanking me for wearing the shirt and keeping the spirit of a good company alive and me thanking him for not being pissed as he appeared to be at first. With my scanner broadcasting radio transmissions, especially Q400 calling signals and the cassette player playing the greatest hits of Diana Ross & The Supremes, I'm thinking about what has transpired within the past 20 minutes just from wearing a T shirt for the RF&P Railroad. All three of the individuals I had just chatted with made me feel even better for having a passion for railroading. I made it to the meeting "just in time" and it was an informative as well as enjoyable affair. As of May 10, we were up to 425 members. Of the 425, 309 members reside in Virginia. Members stretch from Seattle, WA to the west to London, England to the east.

Later that evening when I stopped at a restaurant for carry out back in Richmond, a patron assumed that I worked for the railroad and asked how I enjoyed it. I played along and said that like other occupations, it has it's good days and not so good days. He commented that his father was a track worker for the C&O out of Clifton Forge, VA. I told him that I knew Clifton Forge well. He commented on how the family enjoyed traveling to Buckro Beach using his fathers pass back in the sixties.

## **We've Met Our Match**

Mid-Continent Railway Museum news release  
submitted by Harold Castleman

**F**or the first time in its 46 years of operations at North Freedom, the Mid-Continent Railway Museum has had to cancel its train rides.

"This is a point of pride for us," says Don Meyer the museum's general manager. "We have always told our guests that the train runs, rain or shine." Even last February's blizzard did not prevent the museum from holding its celebrated Snow Train event. But in this year's flooding Meyer admits the museum has finally met its match.

"The extent of the flood damage is so excessive," he reports, "that it looks like it will be a severe challenge for us to even stage our Autumn Color and Pumpkin Special events in October."

By the time the water crested Tuesday night every building except for the office, the highest point of the property, was inundated with water. The worst hit was the museum's 1894 Chicago & North Western depot.

"This is probably the most recognizable building on our property," Meyer says. "Every visitor walks through its doors to purchase their tickets for the ride. It's where

your journey always begins." Now this historic icon has standing water in each of its rooms several inches deep.

Also hard hit is the museum's equipment. "We will literally be stuck in the mud once the water recedes," he admits. "We will likely need to truck our diesel engines to another site for clean-up and repair. The work will simply be too big for us to do ourselves."

The damage from the mud and water will also affect the coaches people ride in. "Nothing will move," Meyer promises, "until each car has its wheels and bearings cleaned and lubricated." So the work will have to take place outside right where the vintage equipment is currently standing for fear of doing further damage.

What is totally unknown at this time is the extent of the damage done to the museum's track. This includes the two bridges that are part of its four-mile route. In the final analysis, the rebuild of the bridges may confront the museum with its most costly repairs. It will depend on what a physical inspection reveals once the water level has gone down far enough for an informed assessment to be made.

All the main roads leading to the museum have been closed due to the high water. Still there have been a few venturesome people who have found a way to get there by locating the back roads that have not been affected by the flooding.

Everyone who makes it has camera in hand. The site of steam locomotives and railroad cars waist deep in the muddy current is just too amazing not to record. Meyer's weekly web log message ruefully refers to the museum's facility as Lake Mid-Continent.

Ironically something else that has been inundated is the museum's web site. Their service provider has asked Mid-Continent's webmasters to remove the link to its two

web cams located on the property. Visits to the site were just too numerous for the provider to handle. As an alternative, a gallery of still images is being archived so people can view the water's invasion of the once active rail yard. Follow the links on our home page to view the pictures of the damage.

The museum is operated by the Mid-Continent Railway Historic Society, a Wisconsin not-for-profit corporation founded in 1959. It's collection of wooden cars is purported to be the largest in the country, many of them one-of-a-kind pieces that have been saved from destruction by the dedication of the society's members. Now that same task is confronting them again.

"We'll survive," Meyer says. "It's that point of pride we have about what has been accomplished here since we first moved our collection to North Freedom in 1963." The commitment of the society's members can be summed up in just four words, "The trains must run." And given time they will again. Donations to aid with the clean-up and repair of the facility are tax-deductible and can be sent to the Mid-Continent Railway Museum's mailing address at PO Box 358, North Freedom, WI 53951.

Donations can also be made via credit card through our website,  
[www.midcontinent.org](http://www.midcontinent.org).

All gifts are gratefully appreciated and will be properly receipted.

## **Planned Giveaway!**

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Just in case you are missing some issues of Trains, Railfan or Railroad magazines, you just might be in luck. Plan on attending the July or August meetings and you just might find what you are looking for, for the best possible price. Absolutely FREE, first come, first served, no reservations.

Member Jean Carson, wife of our late Bill Carson is moving out of the area, and she needed to clean out some of the remaining material the Bill left her. She donated the magazine collection to the Chapter to share with the membership.

We appreciate Jean remembering us, and have a wonderful opportunity to complete, or start, a collection.

So come to the meeting prepared to carry off some great magazines, we'll bring them until they are gone! Happy hunting!

### **Don't Miss Lynchburg RailDays**

Come help our friends at the Blue Ridge Chapter's Rail Days, Saturday, August 9, the 30th Anniversary Train Show! For train show information or table rental please contact Norris Deyerle, LRD 2008 Train Show Coordinator at 434-237-4912 or email him at railcow@msn.com.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

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

- July 17 - General Meeting
- August 5 - Board Meeting
- August 9 - Lynchburg Rail Days!
- August 21 - General Meeting
- Sept. 2 - Board Meeting
- Sept. 18 - General Meeting
- Sept. 20 - Cass Outing (see article)
- October 7 - Board Meeting
- October 16 - General Meeting
- November 4 - Board Meeting
- November 20 - Annual Meeting
- December 2 - Board Meeting

**New Website: [www.RoanokeNRHS.org](http://www.RoanokeNRHS.org)**

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Editor, Turntable Times  
Roanoke Chapter NRHS  
P.O. Box 13222  
Roanoke, VA 24032-3222

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