



Turntable TIMES

Volume 33, Number 5

May 2001

The Official Newsletter of the
Roanoke Chapter, National
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Turntable TIMES

**Volume 33, Number 5
May 2001**

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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 general meeting on Thursday, May 17, 2001 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke. Our program will be a video tape which will be a surprise.

Our May program on "Independence Limited International" has been rescheduled to fall due to a scheduling conflict.

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 Friday, May 18, 2001. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

Material For Turntable Times

We are always in need of articles, photos or news items for the Turntable Times. Due to copyright restrictions, we cannot reprint articles from many newspapers; a condensed or rewritten article crediting the source is acceptable.

Cover Photo

The last Pocahontas is heading east rolling off the miles thirty years ago, on May 1, 1971. The train at least ended with class, using ex-Nickel Plate Berkshire No. 759 to power the train. Thankfully, the original NKP whistle was replaced for the trip with an original whistle from an N&W class J from Bob Claytor's collection, the first time a class J whistle was heard in this territory since October 1959. This image was featured on the Norfolk and Western Magazine cover in June of 1971. Norfolk and Western Photo/ K. L. Miller Collection

Turntable Times

by Kenney Kirkman

Recently we began placing a paragraph within Turntable Times which said that articles and other information are requested for each issue of Turntable Times.

We have begged and pleaded for material that is written or submitted by you on numerous occasions, but to little avail. If it were not for the contributions of several regulars, there would be little to put together for each issue of Turntable Times.

What do you the readers want to see? The staff does not really know.

While we have not heard any complaints about the newsletter itself, we also have had only a small amount of positive commentary.

Our supply of current news is somewhat limited. With that in mind, we have discussed changing the format of the Turntable Times to more of a magazine format and only producing 3 or 4 magazines per year depending on content provided. This would provide space for more photos, or longer and larger articles.

Several of you have, both in the distant past or recently, sent along articles which while greatly appreciated, have had to be either divided or rewritten to a very small extent in order for them to fit the current size of the Turntable Times.

Again, we appreciate all articles when they do reach us, but sometimes we simply have to change them such as leaving out graphics, figures, or diagrams so that we can still present the basic gist of the article or story within the format of Turntable Times. And again we will emphasize that articles that come from magazines and

newspapers must be rewritten and credited as to the source because of copyright restrictions frequently.

One of the considerations of this project is a cost factor. We presently are spending about a dollar per issue. With printing costs and postage, that is \$12 per person each year. As you may or may not realize, we only take in \$10 in dues for each primary member.

We do not believe that the members want to drop the quality level of the production of Turntable Times. But, we have to find a compromise on the costs versus return.

This is not a threat. The Turntable Times is not going anywhere. But the scheduling may change. Another option is to drop production to a bi-monthly publication and retain the same size and format.

The staff would like to know what you think. Please forward your comments to either Kenney Kirkman at his Collinsville, Virginia address listed within Turntable Times or to Kenney at kkirkman50@hotmail.com Or you may contact Ken Miller at: KMiller611@aol.com Or you may contact Kenney Kirkman or Ken Miller in care of the Chapter P.O. Box if you wish.

Changes to the Turntable Times are not something we would take lightly, nor without consideration of you the readers. But, this project is still much work each month for the staff, and we would like to have a better product, and You Can Help!

Turntable Times Part II

by Ken Miller

What is going on here? The Turntable Times is changing the format? For

those who attended the April meeting (37 people) you already know what is going on here, a proposal was made to the membership at that meeting regarding the format change and the ideas mentioned in Kenney's article above are more than likely a reality. This or June may well be the last issue of Turntable Times with a specific month as a date and the smaller format.

The reasons are numerous, but it comes down to a several simple facts; we rarely have items of "news": those that involve a time factor, the costs of printing and postage, and a lack of material contributed other than our regular people.

This newsletter has been carried by our regulars for some months now, and while we love our contributors, we still need more and varied material, going back to what Kenney said, we need to know what the readers think. The quickest way to get to us, is via email, I check mine daily (unless out of town) and Kenney checks his frequently but he has no computer at home; it still will be faster than mail.

It has been suggested for our members and friends to provide us with an email address for noteworthy news to be passed in that manner. A show of hands at the last meeting showed almost 75% of those attending had email or access to such, if you are interested in this please feel free to drop Kenney or myself a note with the account you want the mail to go to, we'll be glad to send notices and news as necessary, the addresses are in his article above this one.

Our intent is to keep the membership informed of events; we probably will do this with a postcard every other month to

the local or area members. A look at the back panel of each issue of the newsletter for the past months has listed upcoming meetings and events for the next few months.

Book Review

by John Austen

**Boston's Depots and Terminals:
A History of Downtown Boston's
Railroad Stations**

by Richard C. Barrett

published by Railroad Research

Publications, 3400 Ridge Road West, Suite
5-266, Rochester NY 14626-3495; 8-3/4" x
11-1/4," 1996; hardcover; 226pp. + xiv;
illus. (b&w); \$54.95

Boston's Depots and Terminals is a very nicely done historical survey of the subject, recounting the development of rail passenger facilities serving the city from the earliest times to the present. Boston has always been the focus of the New England railroad system. The pioneering lines, most of which were named "Boston and _____" (fill the blank with the name of almost any nearby city, state, or direction), each built a depot in the city. In many cases these were expanded or replaced as business grew. By the turn of the century most of the individual depots had been replaced by Union stations, the precursors of the present North Station and South Station.

The book presents this development in thirteen chapters, each devoted to the depots of one of the railroads, or to one of the union stations. Most of the chapters are eight to sixteen pages long. Each con-

sists of a narrative thread to summarize the developments, and several black and white illustrations with extensive captions. The book presents a total of over three hundred illustrations. Many pages have no narrative, consisting entirely of one or two photos and the accompanying captions. Most of the photos have been reproduced adequately; but this comment from one place in the book could apply to many other places as well: "This rare, but poor quality, view" Indeed that is much of the charm of this book: that it provides rare documentation of long gone structures.

The book provides a well-balanced selection of photos: interior and exterior. A good overall appreciation of the workings of the stations is fostered by a sampling of advertisements, timetables and track diagrams as well. Some of the views are from stereopticon slides, a popular medium in much of the period covered. Some photos suffer from the bane of depot photography: impossible lighting. The wide overhanging eaves obscure the detail in a few shots. The story closes with a series of snapshots of the sites of the depots as they are today. Many of the vintage photos were made by an employee who worked in Boston for many years around the turn of the century. Others are professionally done; including some "birds-eye" views shot from the coal-ing towers and other such perches. The book is not totally devoid of color. The dust jacket has three fine full color photos: the North Union Station c.1893; South Union Station c. 1899; and the Boston & Providence Park Square Depot c. 1890. The endpapers have color renderings of several of the earliest depots, taken from

an 1856 issue of Ballou's Pictorial.

There are six appendices, one of which is the brief bibliography. There is no index, which is not really a problem in such a naturally organized work with relatively scant text. The other appendices address the news and restaurant dealers serving the depots; the beginnings of the express business; the snapshots of the depot sites as they are today; and timetables from the 1850's and 1870's.

The editing is very tight in this very well-produced book; it was a delight to read. At a price of \$54.95, Boston's Depots and Terminals is not a cheap book; but, then, you usually get what you pay for. This work is a step above being a popular picture book on a relatively esoteric subject; it is more nearly a comprehensive scholarly analysis. Much of the information presented here is not readily available elsewhere. This is a noteworthy case study in the development and consolidation of passenger facilities in a major metropolitan area. I eagerly anticipate upcoming works from this author.

Circus Train

The Ringling Borthers-Barnum and Bailey circus train (the blue unit, we are told) recently visited Roanoke coming here from Charleston, West Virginia via the former Virginian across Deepwater bridge, Mullens, Princeton before arriving on the N&W at Kellysville.

The train passed through Salem about 6:40 pm on Monday, April 23 with three big NS units, 38 passenger cars and other mixed type cars totaling 56 cars, quite an impressive passenger train.

Mixed Freight-May

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

I really do not have much to report this month in the way of railroad news, so I'll do the opposite and present some railroad "olds" as a quiz.

Most of these terms were in very common usage on American railroads prior to 1960. Some endure to this day. See how many you know or can make an educated guess before looking at the answers on the next page.

Railroad Jargon

1. All Darkie; No Sparkie
2. Ashcat
3. Bail It In
4. Ball Of Fire
5. Ballast
6. Ballast Scorcher
7. Battleship
8. Beanery
9. Beehive
10. Bird Cage
11. Black Home
12. Black Ones
13. Black Snake
14. Bouncer
15. Bowling Alley
16. Brain Plate
17. Buckle the Rubbers
18. Bull Pen
19. Bunch of Thieves
20. Calliope
21. Carhouse Car
22. Chambermaid
23. Circus
24. Dehorned
25. Dishwashers
26. Dope
27. Fish Wagon
28. Flag
29. Girl or Old Girl
30. Gods of Iron
31. Goo-Goo Eye
32. Goose
33. Grave-Digger
34. Greasy Spoon
35. Hanging up the Clock
36. How many EMs have you got?
37. Knock Her In The Head
38. Lapland
39. Last Call, Last Terminal
40. Lizard Scorcher
41. Lunch Hooks
42. Merry-Go-Round
43. Monkey Money
44. Nosebag
45. Paddle
46. Passing The Croaker
47. Possum Belly
48. Rattle Her Hocks
49. Car or Train of Slips
50. Soft Bellies
51. Squirrling
52. Straw-Hat Boys
53. Vaseline
54. Walk The Dog
55. Whiskers
56. Whitewash
57. XXX
58. Zoo Keeper

Remembering 30 years ago

Many Chapter members can tell you where they were on May 1, 1971. It was a sad day for many of us, the end of a fine tradition of Norfolk and Western's passenger service, but what a glorious end it was!

The railroad decided to send the Pocahontas off in style on its last leg from Roanoke to Norfolk; using ex-Nickel Plate 2-8-4 No. 759 to power the huge sold-out train over Blue Ridge and onto the flat running of eastern Virginia.

Many members were on board as a Chapter souvenir operation was in order for this sad, yet joyous occasion. Some of us were trackside, just to witness the event.

It was an interesting story of the last months before Amtrak, from the initial announcement of "Railpax," the shock that Roanoke would not be part of the network, and the scramble to ride, photograph or just see the last days of N&W service.

Look for a feature article in the near future on the days and weeks leading up to the arrival of Amtrak.

Railroad Jargon Definitions

1. Hi-Ball on a roll by.
2. Locomotive fireman
3. Feed the locomotive firebox
4. Fast run
5. Turkey or chicken dressing
6. Speedy engineer
7. Large freight engine or interurban car, or a coal car. Also a formidable female, such as the landlady or hen-pecked man's wife.
8. Railroad eating house. Beanery Queen is a waitress.
9. Railroad yard office
10. Brakeman or switchman's lantern
11. Tunnel
12. Railway Express refrigerator or box cars having no interior illumination, pressed into mail service during a holiday rush.
13. Solid train of loaded coal cars
14. Caboose
15. Hand-fired coal burning locomotive. (A fireman throwing in lumps of coal goes through motions resembling bowling.)
16. Trainman's cap or hat badge
17. Connect air, steam or signal hose.
18. Crew room
19. Wrecking crew
20. Steam locomotive
21. Covered cement car
22. Machinist in roundhouse
23. Railroad
24. Demoted or discharged
25. Engine wipers at roundhouse
26. Order, official instructions, explanation. Also the packing of regular (not roller) bearing boxes.
27. Gas-Electric car or other motorcar equipped with an air horn (which sounds like a fish-monger's horn.)
28. Assumed name
29. Affectionate term for steam engine
30. Huge, powerful locomotive
31. Locomotive with two firedoors.
32. To make an emergency stop.
33. Section man
34. Railroad eating house
35. Boomer term, which meant hocking your railroad watch.
36. How many thousand pounds of tonnage is your locomotive pulling? (M stands for 1,000)
37. Slow down
38. Passenger jostled into someone else's lap in a crowded car.
39. Death
40. Dining car chef
41. Your two hands
42. Turntable
43. The pass of a passenger who is riding for free.
44. Lunch carried to work. Put on the nose-bag means to eat a meal.
45. Semaphore signal
46. Being examined by the company doctor.
47. Toolbox under a caboose or some wrecking cars.
48. Get speed out of an engine
49. Car or train of bananas.
50. Wooden frame cars.
51. Climbing on a car.
52. Railroad men who work only in pleasant weather.
53. Oil.
54. Wheel a freight so fast as to make the cars sway from side to side.
55. Quite a bit of seniority.
56. Milk
57. Bad Order
58. Gate tender at a passenger station.

Chapter Outing

Every member is encouraged to participate in the summer outing to the Strasburg Railroad; the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum and the B&O Museum in Baltimore on July 28-29.

Joe Austin and Paul Howell have put together a great package at a very economical price. This is tourist season in this area, and hotel costs are very high, but we have the package which includes the bus, the Strasburg ride, admission to Pennsylvania Railroad Museum, dinner, the hotel and a visit to the B&O Museum (admission not included) all for a low price of \$140 per member. We need as many participants for this outing to make it a huge success, this is our first outing since TVRM several years back, contact Joe or Paul or come to the next Chapter meetings to sign up.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

May 17, 2001
Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

June 5, 2001
Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

June 21, 2001
Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm

July 3, 2001
Board Meeting, 7:30 pm

July 19, 2001
General Meeting

Chapter Outing
July 28-29, 2001, Strasburg and more!

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