



# Turntable TIMES

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

**Volume 37, Number 2**  
**February 2005**





# Turntable TIMES

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Turntable Times is published monthly as the newsletter of the Roanoke Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc. Opinions and points of view expressed herein are those of the staff members of the Turntable Times and not necessarily reflect those of the members, officers or directors of the Chapter.

## *Meeting Notice*

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next regular meeting on Thursday, February 17, 2005 at 7:30 pm.

Please be sure to note our weather cancellation policy below.

Our program for February will be a surprise and provided by Paul Howell.

## *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, February 18, 2005. 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**

Absolutely spotless Norfolk Southern EMD SD70M No. 2641 under the capable hand of engineer Jimmy Lisle, hustles three NS business cars north thru Nace, Virginia on January 21, 2005. Her ultimate destination is Altoona, but first she has a date with fame. She will stand in for Train No. 2 at Waynesboro, Virginia for the reenactment of O. Winston Link's first N&W photo some fifty years earlier to the day. Photo by Richard D. Shell

## Condolences

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Our thoughts are with Alan Easome and his family as his father passed away suddenly on Monday, January 17th.

Edith Winegard underwent surgery on December 30th and is now at home recuperating, we are all wishing her well and a speedy recovery.

## Mixed Freight – February

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by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

A few months back I informed you readers that The North Carolina Transportation Museum was having some funding cut and as a result some operational adjustments would have to be implemented. Progress is still being made thanks in large part to folks digging deeper into their pockets during the museum's Annual Fund Campaign. The turntable is receiving a major overhaul. Southern Railway FP7 No. 6133 will be getting it's fifteen year rebuild. The doors, deck and ADA ramp for the Roundhouse will be rebuilt. The Back Shop Project is still steaming along as I write. The main structure is now completely enclosed with all new windows, re-painted brick and a new roof.

Two months ago I gave an update on The Crewe Railroad Museum. It is advised strongly that you call ahead first before driving any long distance especially during the winter months. Here are three numbers of contact: 434-645-9868, 434-645-9860, & 434-645-9146. Do that spider thang @ [www.crewerailroadmuseum.org](http://www.crewerailroadmuseum.org)

CSX fans take note. The company is stepping up the pace for repainting it's locomotive fleet into the dark blue scheme that was introduced back in early 2002. Over 500 diesels now sport this latest scheme. CSX

hopes to repaint at least ten older engines per week starting in January 2005.

The railfan fraternity lost a great member in terms of great photography and general human kindness on November 27, 2004. On that autumn day in Charleston, West Virginia Mr. John J. Young was called to his final terminal. Most of you knew him as J. J. Young. He could best be described as a one man welcome wagon. He was truly addicted especially to Alcos and the Baltimore & Ohio's legendary EM-1s.

This past autumn and holiday season was quite busy and mind occupying with the situation in Iraq getting more intense and the hottest presidential election in recent history if not ever. As railfans did any of you remember that November 2004 marked the 10th year since Norfolk Southern announced that it would be terminating it's excursion train program. That was a real blow and surprise to a lot of us especially since the company had just given it's excursion coaches major overhauls. 611 & 1218 were in fine form and public participation was robust. Hard to believe it has been that long since we have ridden the rails behind those two above mentioned machines or the quartet of Southern FP7s. There are places I have not seen and folks I have not seen since that excursion program came to an end. Yes I still ride the rails via Amtrak and the numerous tourist railroad entities along the eastern seaboard, but it's not the same. One of the true highs I spiritually received during the celebration of the official grand opening of The Claytor Pavilion and 1218's 60th birthday and coming home event on Saturday June 14th, 2003 was the presence of that magic that riding, chasing or just viewing those excursion trains could gener-

ate. With the holidays over and cold winter days present and ahead, take a few moments or hours and pull out the photos, tape recordings, video footage and memorabilia souvenirs of those wonderful excursions you as an individual or with family or friends enjoyed from 1995 on back to the early seventies. I did just that for an entire Saturday that was cold and dreary and it really brought back some fond memories.

## **A Branch Runs Thru It**

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by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

The branch in this case is a railroad, not a very small stream of water that meanders thru the countryside. The "It" being central Virginia. Tuesday, December 21st 2004 marked the first day of winter. With the weather forecasters reporting a morning temperature of 17 degrees, there was no doubt about it. It was also the first day of operation for the Buckingham Branch's Richmond & Allegheny Division operating between Richmond and Clifton Forge. Naturally I had to be on hand for day one since Doswell is just a mere 22 miles up the track from home.

I arrived at Doswell at 9:03 a.m. On the scene was a small battalion of white trucks with Buckingham Branch magnetic signs attached to their side doors. A crew was busy repairing a track that connects the trackage between the former C&O and the former RF&P. Two GP16s, No. 2 and No. 3, were switching cars in the small yard to the north. Three other railfans, 2 from southern Maryland and one from Northern Virginia, were on hand that very cold morning. It was cold and very sunny. I talked with most of the employees on hand including the general manager. They all were in good spirit and

generally optimistic about the future for the leased property. In fact the atmosphere was like Mayberry on flanged wheels. Down home friendliness but businesslike none the less. After a while, a staff writer and photographer from the Richmond Times Dispatch arrived. They spent much time aboard GP16 No. 2. Their photo and story appeared in the December 23rd edition in the business section.

Here is some information I'll pass on for fans interested in paying a visit to the R&A. They use frequencies 160.440 for yard use & 160.445 for the road. They also communicate with the CSX dispatcher on 160.230. So far the only symbol for a Buckingham Branch train operating at Doswell is Z626. Out of Staunton it is Z631. The train out of Staunton is due to depart at 3:00 a.m. for Clifton Forge. It is due out of Clifton Forge by 7:00 a.m. No definite times as of my last visit to Doswell were given for westbound or eastbound departures from there. On my last of 3 visits, maintenance of way workers were still performing track repairs. Motive power wise, a GP40-2 No. 5 has taken the place of one of the GP16s. Switching chores are performed in the morning at Doswell. In fact I was told that a crew just for switching cars and building trains at Doswell may be added so that the road trains can get out earlier to serve the customers.

## **Here and There**

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by Kenney Kirkman

The West Virginia Museum has been awarded a \$1.5 million federal grant for the construction of a bridge to replace the former Western Maryland Railway bridge into downtown Elkins, West Virginia. The new bridge will connect the tracks of the

West Virginia Central Railroad to the former WM passenger train station in downtown Elkins. Local funds must be raised in order to receive the federal funds. To date, \$224,000 has been committed; and additional \$56,000 must be raised. The museum hopes to award a construction contract in the spring, and hopes to be able to operate trains into the station by the fall of 2005. (The Interchange, Dec. 2004, via The Automatic Block, Western Maryland NRHS, Jan. 2005).

According to a recent report in the Raleigh News and Observer the North Carolina Railroad will spend 8 million dollars to restore old railroad buildings. Among those to be restored are the Selma Freight Depot, the Kinston Freight Depot and the New Bern Passenger Station. The railroad will then lease the buildings for use as stores, restaurants, and other businesses. On December 4th, the old Company Shop building in Burlington opened. There is a great exhibit inside called Railroading Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. The building and exhibit are open to the public Tuesday—Saturday from 10 to 4 pm. If you haven't traveled through Southern Pines, NC the depot there is being

restored and should open sometime in 2005. And, the Kannapolis depot is in its last phase of construction. DOT rail has announced that the Kannapolis stop will be annulled for a couple of months to allow the work to change over to the new depot. (Above articles from the Dec. 2004 and Jan. 2005 issues of 'The Company Mail', newsletter of the Samuel Spencer Chapter NRHS).

Mike Tilley reports in the Jan. 2005 issue of the Watauga Chapter newsletter 'Whistlestop' that the possibility that the Watauga Chapter may operate excursions over the former East Tennessee and Western North Carolina route between Johnson City and Elizabethton, Tennessee looks good. The parent company of the East Tennessee Railway recently accepted the local governments' offer to purchase the line for future use. The ETR effectively ceased rail transportation service to Elizabethton last year shortly after all but one area shipper ended using rail service.

Several rail newsletters have had articles about Julie, the computer-generated "voice of Amtrak," who helps callers navigate Amtrak's electronic answering system. Her affable telephone persona would not be pos-



January 26, 2005 has photographer Skip Salmon spotting brand new EMD SD70M power. Nos. 2645 and 2647 in Roanoke, wearing white paint(!) with black numbers and reporting marks. Perhaps this is a new winter "stealth" NS scheme in use? Is this to indicate a change from basic black?

sible without a real live Julie. In this case she is Ms. Julie Stanneford, age 41, of Littleton, Massachusetts. Since her debut in April, 2001, Julie has earned high marks from callers, who have given an approval rate of more than 90% according to surveys done by Amtrak and a consultant. In handling roughly five million calls, or about a quarter of Amtrak's annual call volume, Julie has saved the company more than \$13 million that it would have cost for real person to handle the calls. (From a highly condensed New York Times article about Julie via the January, 2005 edition of 'The Shortline', newsletter of the Champlain Valley Chapter NRHS).

And, many Roanoke Chapter members were in attendance at the 1980 NRHS Convention in Toronto and rode excursions powered by former Canadian National 4-8-2 No. 6060. Presently, this giant locomotive is still chugging down the tracks so to speak, having powered a Santa Claus special back in December from Stettler, Alberta, to Big Valley. The trip was sold out for weeks in advance. (From STACK TALK, by Neil Moran, Jan. 2005 'Semaphore', newsletter of the Long Island Sunrise Trail Chapter NRHS).

## **Recreating History**

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by Ken Miller

**A**fter writing the story for the January Newsletter about the cold and 614 in West Virginia, 20 years prior, I really never imagined that some would be experiencing a similar situation, almost exactly twenty years to the date of our 614 expedition.

The occasion was the 50th anniversary of recreating of the very first O. Winston Link N&W steam photograph on January 21, 2005, at Waynesboro, Virginia. This time

there was no snow falling, but we had some on the ground from the previous day.

It was not unlike excursion days with a passenger train and people milling about, this time no riders, however. Roanoke Chapter members acted as safety personnel on this operation, making sure people were kept off the track, watching their step in the unlighted locations, generally doing the type of things we do best. This was definitely our coldest operation, with temperature standing about 20°.

There was a lecture and reception at a nearby church hall, then people were escorted in groups to the photo sight.

Now, of course, in the passing 50 years, the scene has changed a great deal, the depot is long gone, the track lowered, steam is gone and the area became overgrown.

Cooperation of Norfolk Southern was tremendous, Sylvania provided lighting support and a number of people came for many miles to be a part. NS personnel built a set of steps to the track, a small platform for "agent" Bruce Wingo, Norfolk Southern VP,, and provided a brand new EMD unit and three spotless business cars.

The train arrived about 6:15, cleared for a southbound hopper train, then backed into position. The official photo was made about 8:30, and just before 9, Buckingham Branch rolled their special train out and posed it on the former C&O bridge to allow an over-and-under shot as a special bonus.

My thanks to Roanoke Chapter members who acted as safety personnel: Doug André, Al Carroll, Brian Crosier, Gary Gray, Eddie Mooneyham and Richard Shell. We also added Chapter friend Tim Bentley to the group. The event went well, with no reportable incidents.

## **Another Piece of History Gone**

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by Ken Miller

The railroad world lost another ambassador recently, many folks visited the Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad in Clay County, West Virginia in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The last BC&G employee, Bobby Caruthers passed away on January 20, 2005 at age 79. Bobby was a true gentleman, allowing fans to visit his home and made everyone feel welcome. During the BC&G days Bobby kept the three locomotives spotless and was one of the BC&G "family" which made the BC&G so special. Bobby even made it to Spencer to see his beloved No. 4 in steam again. Bobby will now be back in good health, and in the Dundon location in the sky, he is caring again for 13, 14 and 4 while they proudly steam forth.

## **Help BC&G No. 4 Run Again**

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Since 1987, BC&G 4/NCTM 604 has been an integral part of the North Carolina Transportation Museum, providing passenger train rides to the thousands of visitors who attend the museum for fun, entertainment and educational purposes. Built in 1926, the locomotive is a "Consolidation" type steam engine. Originally intended for Mexico's national railways, the locomotive spent most of her career hauling coal on West Virginia's Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad. In 1964 locomotive was purchased by a Pennsylvania tourist railroad that later sold it to a Virginia tourist line in the early 1970's. The transportation museum's foundation purchased the locomotive in 1978. Today, the locomotive, one of the museum's two operating steam locomotives, (considered the museum's icon), is going through its

FRA mandatory 15 year rebuild.

During the last three years, the locomotive has been disassembled and all components have been thoroughly tested and inspected. Repairs have been divided into two components. The primary component of the rebuild is the boiler. The boiler was stripped externally and the flues removed from the interior. Needle scaling cleaned up the exterior, and the interior of the boiler was sandblasted. The entire boiler was thoroughly examined both inside and out. A special dye was used to check for cracks at certain locations. The thickness of the boiler steel was measured using a special ultrasonic test unit and x-rays. Results from the inspection showed that large portions of the firebox, the first boiler course and other sections must be replaced. This work will be contracted to a certified boiler company.

The other second major component of the rebuild is renewal of the smokebox, which has gradually deteriorated from the locomotive's exhaust. This will be replaced with new metal. In addition, the tender will also receive some much-needed repairs. Once all the repairs are finished, the locomotive will be re-assembled and returned to service.

We have done our homework and know what needs to be done. The locomotive is now ready for rebuild. We need your help to see some smoke and steam.

Here's how you can help:

Donors at the \$1,000 level and above will become members of the Boilermakers Club. In return, you will receive quarterly email updates on the work and a 604 hat and coffee mug. Members will also receive a cab ride and admission to an exclusive photo freight with the 1925 Shay in the Spring of 2006. They also will be recognized at the 604's inaugural. They will get to ride in the cab and participate in an exclusive photo freight. The best part of this, is you can

make your donations over time, you don't have to lay out the cash in one lump sum, We can arrange to have your credit card charged any amount over the next 3-4 years. Donations may be made over time and can be done by credit card. To help, contact Chuck Hotchkiss at (704) 636-2889 or email [chuck.hotchkiss@ncmail.net](mailto:chuck.hotchkiss@ncmail.net) or write to NCTMF P.O. Box 69, Spencer, N.C. 28159.

## **Mechanical Department**

The mechanical department is looking for a few good hands! Regular work sessions are to commence the third Saturday of each month. Plans for this month are to pick up debris left behind by last year's flooding and also organization of material such as brake shoes and track material onto pallets to facilitate work projects in the future.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

February 17 - Regular Meeting

March 1 - Board Meeting

March 17 - Regular Meeting

April 5 - Board Meeting

April 21 - Regular Meeting

April/May - Spring Potluck? Stay Tuned  
Volunteers/Organizers Needed

May 3 - Board Meeting

May 19 - Regular Meeting

June 7 - Board Meeting

June 16 - Regular Meeting

Volunteers are needed, come join in!

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

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