



# Turntable TIMES

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

**Volume 48, Number 1**  
**Jan.-Feb.-March 2016**





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Turntable Times is published quarterly 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 or contributors of the Turntable Times and do 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 regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 17. The meeting will be held in the auditorium at the O. Winston Link Museum at 7:30 pm. Please be sure to enter at the west end of the building on the track level.

Our April meeting will be on Thursday, April 21st, and the May meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19. Please be sure to check the cancellation policy below, as it does apply year round.

## *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 966-4809.

### **Deadline for Turntable Times**

The deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Sunday, June 12, 2016. Please send articles, information and exchange newsletters to: Editor Turntable Times, P.O. Box 13222, Roanoke, VA, 24032. All parties sending newsletters to the Roanoke Chapter via email should send them to Jim Overholser: [jgoverholser@verizon.net](mailto:jgoverholser@verizon.net), Dorr Tucker at [joandorr@cox.net](mailto:joandorr@cox.net) and Ken Miller at [klmiller@rev.net](mailto:klmiller@rev.net)

### **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.

### **Cover Photo**

Resplendent in vivid new colors, Dorr Tucker captured Norfolk Southern rebuilt DC to AC Units 4000 & 4001 in South Yard, two days after the last major winter storm on February 17 this year. The units originally built by GE in 1995 have been operating on a more or less frequent basis between Roanoke and Winston Salem in recent weeks.

For current information on the FIRE UP 611! campaign,  
see [www.FireUp611.org](http://www.FireUp611.org)

## Membership Report

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David Johnson

We have gained eight new members since the last edition of Turntable Times: James Spangler, Gwen Spangler, Clair Spangler, and Russell Spangler of Salem Virginia, D. James Feltner and Virginia Feltner of Check Virginia, Jim Garner of Roanoke Virginia, and Jim Graves of Roanoke Virginia.

We currently have 129 members renewed and in good standing. Please send in your renewals if you have not done so. March 31st is the last day for renewals. National dues can be renewed online at <http://nrhs.com/membership/renew>. Local dues can be paid by returning the form from your renewal letter. It is recommended that you keep a copy of proof of renewal for your national dues for your records. Please include notation for having paid national dues with your local renewal. National membership is required to be a member in good standing with our local chapter.

Chapter Rates are:

Regular . . . . .	\$18.00
Family (each) . . . . .	3.00
Student . . . . .	12.00
Youth . . . . .	3.00

Make checks payable to Roanoke Chapter, NRHS, and mail to:

Roanoke Chapter, NRHS  
ATTN: Membership Chairman  
P.O. Box 13222  
Roanoke, VA 24032-3222

If you have any questions please contact me at [membership.rcnrhs@gmail.com](mailto:membership.rcnrhs@gmail.com) or call me at (434) 426-3133.

## Mixed Freight

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By Mr. Robin R. Shavers

My first Mixed Freight for 2016 is being written on day two of the first major

snowstorm for the year. It's an ideal day for accomplishing this quarterly responsibility. As you read this, reflect back on what you were doing on Saturday, January 23rd, 2016.

Calendar recycle. Calendars for 1988 correspond to 2016 as a Leap Year calendar.

In early December on a beautiful and very warm Thursday, I paid a visit to the Victoria Railroad Park for the first time in almost 3 years. I was really surprised to see Virginian caboose No. 342 completed painted caboose red sans its Virginian livery. I was also surprised to see part of the Virginian logo peeling away on the east side of the gondola. I emailed the official caretaker for the park and he assured me that the lettering for the caboose would be redone come warmer weather. There was no reply with respect to the peeling VGN logo on the gondola. Also, since my last visit, the VRP now has an official Virginian Railway target signal that works and can be seen displaying an aspect at night. It is situated close to the caboose so one can include it in a photo with the caboose.

Driving thru Victoria after departing the park, I spotted a ma 'n' pa thrift store. I was hoping to find a desirable flannel or denim shirt but no luck. Just as I was about to depart, my conscious suggested checking out the used VHS tape selection, something I normally do anyway but I was occupied on what might be going on at Crewe, my next stop. After a five to eight minute search thru a very unfriendly customer user stack of tapes, my effort paid off. Wedged between Jane Fonda's DYNAMIC THIGHS WORKOUT and FORREST GUMP was Pocahontas Glory Volume One from Herron Rail Video. The price was 75 cents but the cashier assumed I was a railroader so she charged me a quarter. The 48-minute video focused on N&W passenger service in the fifties. Freight service is included too.

In my previous Mixed Freight, I noted the caboose located in Farmville at the former N&W depot had been moved eastward about 3 blocks. To my surprise the caboose is positioned on rails minus crossties. The rails are heavy nut and bolted to a concrete base. A ramp is situated on the west side to accommodate handicap patrons.

Those of you who spend time enjoying today's freight action are pretty familiar with the reporting marks EEC for the East Erie Commercial Railroad out of Erie, PA. I was under the impression that this was a relatively newcomer to the shortline railroad arena. I just noticed these now common reporting marks maybe five years ago. This railroad has been around for at least 30 years. While reading a recently acquired N&W employee timetable for the Pittsburgh Division issued December 16, 1984, I noticed this railroad mentioned on page 40 since the EEC and the N&W connected in Erie. By the way, that is timetable No. 1.

As most of you know by now, Norfolk Southern announced on January 12 the Virginia and Pocahontas Divisions would be combined to create a new Pocahontas Division that would be headquartered in Roanoke, effective February 1st. Personal comment. It looks to me like they should have come up with a different name for the division to emphasize the combined territories. Appalachian would have been ideal since that is the prominent geographical mountain range that is a major feature of both divisions.

CSX turned 35 years old this past November. It wasn't until five years later in 1985 that the Chessie System and Seaboard System railroads actually started to work together as a unified railroad.

On that note, June 2015 marked 45 years since the famous Tropicana Juice Train commenced operating from Bradenton,

Florida, to Kearny, New Jersey. There is a strong rumor floating around that Norfolk Southern is very interested in having that Tropicana traffic.

Quite a bit of coal and grain traffic that traveled south down the former Clinchfield Railroad is now being routed to Richmond via the former Chesapeake & Ohio Railway along the James River and heading southward down the former Seaboard Coast Line. This has been going on since October with monster unit coal and grain trains of 160 to 200 plus cars with three to five locos on the point. Trains employing distributed power have been noted. Broken couplers between AM Junction and South A wye have been very common and very annoying to motorists in central Richmond.

As I have noted from time to time, live and recorded music is my second greatest interest behind railroading. As many of you are aware, a number of famous musicians departed life as we know it here on earth in December and January. On Tuesday, January 5th, the railfan/railroad historian fraternity lost a great man to cancer, Mr. William E. Griffin, Jr. If you are an avid or casual fan of the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac or the Atlantic Coast Line or Seaboard Air Line or the Norfolk, Franklin & Danville railroads, his name is by no means a stranger to you. For me, he was a personal friend and one of the few who kept his word to the T. In some circles he was referred to as Mr. RF&P because he was extremely knowledgeable about every aspect of that railroad. He would often contact me to let me know that some of interest to me was on its way to RF&P's Acca Yard or was already there. Like Mr. O. Winston Link, I am very proud to have a number of Bill's books to be an important part of my railroad book library.

Missing those color position light signals, aka CPLs? Well, there are still a few left on

the N&W. Based on some of the conversation I am hearing from some railfans trackside and at meetings and railfan hobby events, some of us don't know the real reason for the conversion of these beloved trackside fixtures to the ugly modern replacements nicknamed "Darth Vaders" by the railfan contingent. These new modern signals are required because they will be compatible with the new positive train control system (PTC) that will be required for rail routes that carry passenger and hazmat traffic. For me and for a lot of you readers those CPLs were cherished symbols of class for the Norfolk and Western, the Baltimore & Ohio, and the Pennsylvania railroads.

## **Getting the Christmas Spirit in the Star City**

by Skip Salmon

The Roanoke Chapter NRHS "Candy Cane Express" was a big hit with fans again this year in December at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. I worked the event as I have from its first run, when it was called the "Candy Cane Shifter", giving rides just for Chapter members for Christmas at the Industrial Center in Roanoke. Thousands came to ride one of the two N&W cabooses or an ex-Powhatan Arrow coach pulled by the Chapter's Alco T-6 1,000 horsepower switch engine, from the loading dock at VMT to 10th Street and return.

As my hair and beard are turning white and my knees aren't what they used to be, I act as a "Conductor", complete with the black vest, brass buttons, gold chain and RR pocket watch. My assignment this year was to meet and greet the waiting passengers and see that about 90 are "metered" out for boarding, each trip. This gave me an opportunity to talk to many waiting for the 15 minute ride, and proved to me the love of trains is alive and well in the Star City of the

South.

One older gentleman arrived with his family on his electric "scooter". Before boarding, his scooter was placed in the line with 7 baby strollers and "fit right in". After the ride, I asked him if he worked for the railroad. "No but my grandfather was an Engineer on the Abingdon Branch".

A real nice lady who reminded me of my Mom, told me about her recently departed husband's model trains and how he had given each child and grandchild a complete set, out of his collection. She also proudly spoke of him making a "Thomas the Tank Engine" out of a coffee can and wood carving that "will never be given away or sold".

Later in the day a tour bus from "South Jersey" arrived and most of the passengers rode our train. They were in Roanoke to see the Steam Trinity: Class A, J and Y steam engines. I was very proud to point to Roanoke Shops and tell them about working in the very place they were build.

After one run, as the passengers were filing by and I thanked them for riding and wished them a "Merry Christmas", a small boy stopped in front of me, with his Dad. I bent down and was about to ask him if he enjoyed his ride, when our eyes locked on each other's. There's nothing quite like a 3-year old's innocent, sincere and noble stare. Before I could speak, he said "Are you Santa?" I told him "No, but I do know him....."

## **Mechanical Committee Report**

by Lewis Foster

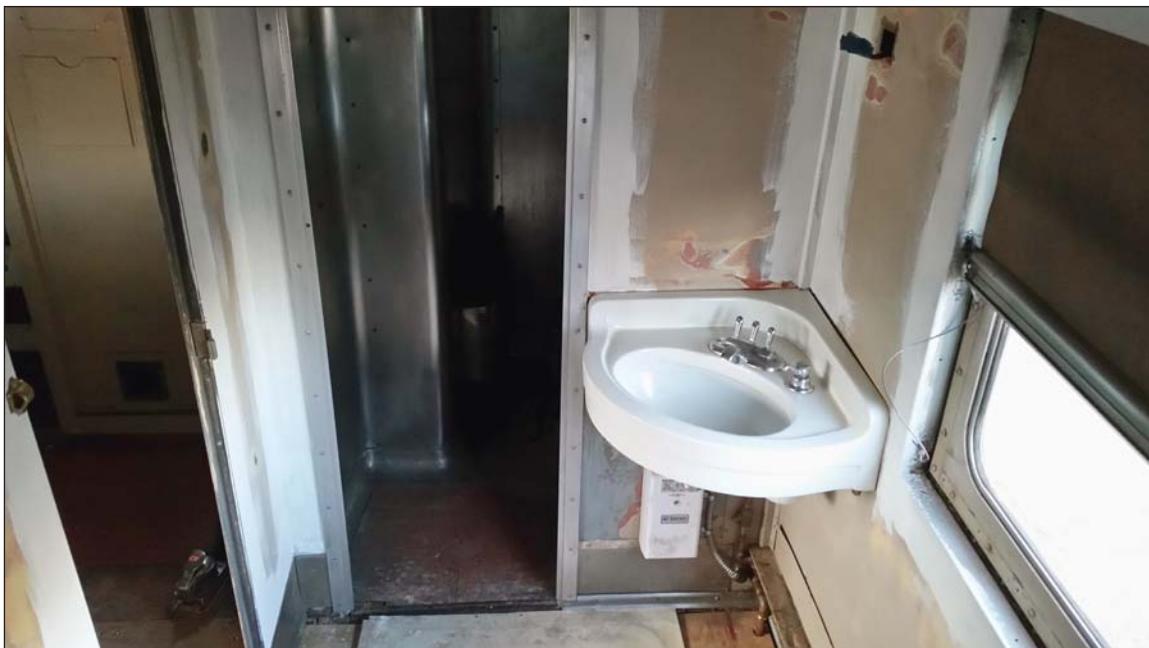
Winter has finally caught up with us at 9th street and slowed some of the work down. However, progress continues on N&W P3 class coach No. 537. The generator is back in place under the car after a long list of work, including new bearings, motor mounts, wiring, control system, as well as

significant upgrades to the generator enclosure. Construction of the new wastewater holding tank is under way. This is the last major fabrication project required for putting the car back in service.

Work also continues on the interior of the car. Several volunteers have been working on the restroom lounge; stripping, sanding,

and priming the walls and ceiling. This has been a significant effort due to the significant number of layers of existing paint of several different colors.

There is a significant list of other tasks to complete, including floor tile, upholstery, and paint touch up on the interior, and some minor metalwork and painting the



Lewis Foster Photos

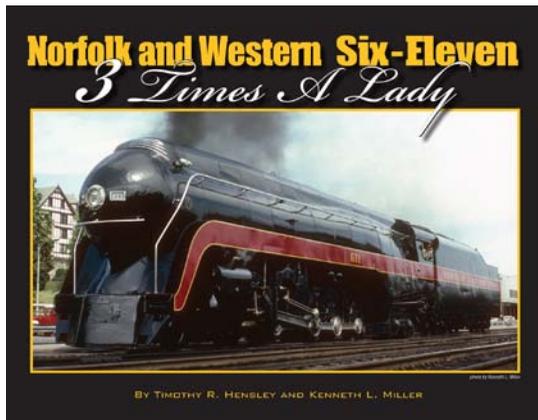
exterior. We hope to have the car ready and running in the upcoming excursion season.

N&W GP-30 No. 522 has been in service this fall at Southern Appalachia Railway Museum. The engine is loading correctly after tracking down an issue with the dynamic brake relays. Over the winter, the radiators will be removed and refurbished, which will resolve the continued water leak issues.

Our Candy Cane Express event at the Virginia Museum of Transportation was a big success this year, registering 3,800 riders over a day and a half. This is a new record for us and VMT had a new weekend attendance record as well. If you'd like to help out during our events at VMT or come by the yard at 9th street to help out or just see what we're working on, feel free to get in touch with Gary Gray or Lewis Foster for times and directions. No special skills are required.

## Book Review

by Dorr Tucker



Norfolk and Western Six-Eleven  
Three Times a Lady

By Timothy R. Hensley and Kenneth L. Miller

**T**his comprehensive and colorful 98 page hard cover jewel is a must for all who

are interested in the always changing saga of Norfolk and Western's most famous locomotive.

The two authors are without doubt the leading Norfolk and Western historians born in the post-war era.

Tim Hensley, a native of Kenova, West Virginia, is a journalism graduate of Marshall University who joined Chessie System as a brakeman and later rose to the rank of Resident Vice President for West Virginia for CSX. Thirteen years ago he joined Amtrak as engineer on the Cardinal. With many hours to kill while laying over in Charlottesville he could devote this time to historical research or to meet with Coauthor Miller before going back to Huntington. Now in full retirement, he is proprietor of a Bed and Breakfast in Kenova.

Ken Miller, publisher of this newsletter and Roanoke Chapter historian, is a skilled photographer and graphic artist. Among other talents he produced and led the application of all the stenciling used when the 611 was painted last year. Ken's parents, the late Elbert and Claudine Miller, were very supportive and played meaningful rolls with our Roanoke NRHS Chapter. In addition, Ken authored and produced "Norfolk and Western Class J, The Finest Steam Passenger Locomotive" published by Roanoke Chapter in 2000.

Of the 152 photographs in the book some 38 are by coauthor Miller. However the major achievements of both authors center around their penchant for research. Both have been known to walk tracks (Off To The Side Of Course) or abandoned right of ways looking for historical clues. Both have collected piles of both rail and generalized documents, or have delved into various libraries from Crewe to Iaeger. One such article dug up by Tim tells of a incident on December 7th, 1954, at McDermott, Ohio (9 miles west

of Portsmouth) where train number 25 hit a 1941 Ford. As a Christmas Eve guest with my parents in the home of 'Arrow' dining car steward R.O. Dooley, I vividly remember Mr. Dooley's comments concerning minimal damage in car 494 as the dinner hour was almost over.

To generalize, the Tragedy on Tug Fork, which was the derailment of 611 powered train number 3 on January 23rd, 1956, is well documented. In spite of the tragic death of engineer Willard, that occurrence may have been a harbinger for future operations (as time has already told). The book updates this event by mentioning that N&W P3 coach 539, now owned by the Watauga Valley folks in Johnson City, was the scene of most of the rescue drama after the derailment. And speaking of Generals, Ike's campaign train from Columbus to Kenova did have the 611 (operating behind the 613); however don't let your grandmother tell you that the 611 brought General Eisenhower's train into Roanoke. Numbers 600 and 604

brought the future President's special in from Winston-Salem and numbers 612 and 613 took the passenger extra to Petersburg. (Yep, they all looked like the 611 back in those days.)

The text refers to the 611's later operations in 1959 as if they were almost ghost trains. Taboo was the word for steam under the Saunders administration. This was the age of tail-finned automobiles completely changing appearance every year. Urban renewal was out to destroy every structure built within 30 years of the turn of the century. Old was out and costly, smoky steam must be out of the public's eye until all can be scrapped.

The authors called on Lynchburg rail fan and historian Aubrey Wiley to document the 611's last trip that ran to Williamson on October 24, 1959.

During this period, with the life of the 611 in jeopardy, Graham Claytor was in almost continuous negotiation with Stuart T. Saunders working out plans to save the 611.

H. Reid Photo/  
Pocahontas  
Productions  
Collection

One of the many previously unpublished photos in this book is this fine color view from Virginian historian H. Reid who captured the 608 working the local freight at Zuni, Va on January 18, 1959.



At the same time, George H. Kelch, the first president of the newly reactivated (1968) Roanoke NRHS Chapter, was reported to be involved in 611's preservation. Although not mentioned in the book he was probably one of many unsung heroes, devoted to the cause like the boilermakers in the roundhouse who covered the engine with tarpaulins. Meanwhile Bob Claytor remained incognito, ready for a more active presence at a later date.

Tim and Ken cover the formation of The Roanoke Transportation Museum, followed almost a decade later in 1971 by the last run of the Pocahontas with a "J" whistle on a Nickle Plate locomotive. Ten more years would pass before the big news on October 13, 1981, that the 611 would go to the Southern shops outside Birmingham to study the feasibility of restoration for main line operation. This happened within one week of the announcement that Bob Claytor would take over as Norfolk and Western president.

The 611 had an illustrious life during the next dozen years running all over the South and the Midwest under the direction of Messrs. Bistline and Jensen. Then there was the Dismal Swamp incident where author Miller called the Associated Press telling them that wooden cars had been eliminated from mainline passenger service for over 50 years. While the 1987 NRHS Convention in Roanoke was probably the highlight of the First Excursion Era, the straw that broke the camel's back was the September 1994 derailment and destruction of several good passenger cars in a storage track at Kinney Yard in Lynchburg. The authors finalized the first excursion era with the sad farewell run into Roanoke on December 7 that year.

Before the advent of the second excursion era in 2015 we are reminded of the many who played various roles in the vacillating saga of the Mighty Class J. A few or

the names to be remembered are Collins, Housman, Karhan, Browning, Jensen, Wilkins, Sanders, Winegard, Saxton and Lindsay among many others.

The third excursion era has kindled the fire of interest in both the old timers as well as those born after the previous eras. We will never forget the support of Wick Moorman and an event where the 611 was present but not yet under steam. Yet, with over 20 gorgeous streamlined sisters in attendance who could be disappointed with the Streamliners at Spencer?

The last chapter in "Three Times a Lady" recalls the enthusiasm of Virginia Museum of Transportation's Bev Fitzpatrick and many of those who contributed to the cause last year.

Class J No. 611 is an icon for the Norfolk and Western and a tribute to the designers and craftsmen who designed and fabricated her in Roanoke's East End Shops. With or without "The Spirit of Roanoke" appellation she is a magnificent example of American Design and Technology.

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## **The Timetable**

May 19 to 22 – N&W Historical Society convention, headquartered in Pikeville, Kentucky. [www.nwhs.org](http://www.nwhs.org)

July 19 to 24 - 2016 NRHS National Convention, Denver, Colorado. Info at [www.nrhs.com](http://www.nrhs.com). For information on a private rail car trip to and from the convention contact Carl Jensen.

July 27 to 31 - C&O Historical Society 2016 Conference, Cumberland, Md. [www.cohs.org](http://www.cohs.org)

August 13 – Blue Ridge Chapter Rail Day, Lynchburg. [www.blueridgenrhs.org](http://www.blueridgenrhs.org)

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## **Board Of Directors**

At the November 2015 annual meeting incumbent directors Jim Cosby, Gary Gray, Carl Jensen, Skip Salmon and Jeff Sanders were re-elected by acclamation. At the

December 1 Board meeting officers were elected with no changes from 2015.

Our Chapter Board usually meets at 7 PM the first Tuesday of each month in the VMT Conference Room. Members are welcome to attend.

President - Jeff Sanders  
Vice-President - Gary Gray  
Treasurer - Jim Cosby  
Secretary - Lewis Foster  
National Representative - Carl Jensen  
Ken Miller  
Skip Salmon  
Steve Smith  
Percy Wilkins

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## Condolences

Member Rebecca Tinnell's brother, Earl Roberston, passed away on January 4th. He was a very active former member.

Eddie Mooneyham's father, Leonard Mooneyham, passed away March 2.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your families.

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## Sick List

Member Bob Allison was at UVA Hospital in Charlottesville Friday, February 19th for extensive reconstructive surgery to be followed by several weeks of convalescing at Raleigh Court Health Care in Roanoke.

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## Programs

Roanoke Chapter is always interested in programs for our monthly meetings. If you have a program in mind, please contact Program Chairman Dorr Tucker.

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## Emergency Notification Phone Numbers

You may use these phone numbers to report emergencies or other conditions affecting railroad operations, including trespassers, vandalism, fires, defective equip-

ment, etc. If at a railroad/highway grade crossing try to provide the unique crossing number/DOT number posted nearby.

Norfolk Southern 800-453-2530  
CSX 800-232-0144

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## Holiday Gathering

89 members and guests enjoyed our 2015 Holiday Gathering at Calvary Baptist Church in Roanoke. Good fellowship and good food were enjoyed by all. Thanks to Bonnie Molinary, Kathy Overholser, and all their helpers and to all who attended.

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## Railcamp 2016

See the National Representative report by Carl Jensen in this issue. Roanoke Chapter wants to sponsor a camper this year. Contact Carl Jensen for more information and to provide the name of a potential candidate.

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## Virginian Station Update

By Skip Salmon

Phase II seems to be on schedule to complete the project by May. The power and gas have been metered and into building. HVAC is progressing. We now have heat. The plasterers are moving right along. A lot of the restored windows are back in. We plan a grand celebration when work is completed later this year.

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## Amtrak Cardinal Service

Amtrak added Business Class service to the existing Coach and Sleeping Car service to trains 50 and 51, the Cardinal, on January 19. This becomes the second long distance train to include Business Class service, the other being the Coast Starlight. The Auto Train, between Lorton, VA, and Sanford, FL, is to add Business Class too.

Amtrak has also been adding a pet carrying service for small dogs and cats to a number of trains. See the Amtrak website for more



Skip Salmon Photos

Top: The waiting room on the west end depicting new ductwork and ceiling in place.

Bottom: The ticket office with new window framing in place. These views have already changed since early February, as the plaster work is now in place and beautifully done!

details, [www.Amtrak.com/](http://www.Amtrak.com/)

## 25 Year Membership Award

Congratulations for 25 years of NRHS membership to Roanoke Chapter member Gerald Caterina of Huntington Beach, California.

## Amtrak Roanoke Platform Design Approved

As reported in The Roanoke Times on

January 22, the design for a high level (level) boarding) platform has been approved for the Roanoke Amtrak passenger station. This means the timetable for return of Amtrak service is still 2017, although no time of year has been given. When the Federal Railroad Administration said a high level platform was required the planned low level platform had to be redesigned. The platform location is in downtown Roanoke between Norfolk Avenue and the Norfolk Southern tracks, across from the present Roanoke bus terminal. Also recently, the town of Bedford agreed to pay for a study to help determine if adding Bedford as a stop for the new Roanoke Amtrak train is feasible.

## 21st Century Steam Program – 611 Excursions

While the Norfolk Southern 21ST CENTURY STEAM PROGRAM has officially ended, as reported in The Roanoke Times, we are looking forward to more steam excursions in 2016 with our hometown 611 by the Virginia Museum of Transportation with help from the Roanoke Chapter. As always, enjoy these trips while you can, by riding and working. You never know when the "plug" will be pulled and the excursions will end, as happened in 1994. Thanks to Norfolk Southern, trips with 611 will happen in 2016 but who knows after this year.

Here is 611's 2016 schedule as recently announced by VMT:

April 9, 2016 - The Virginian, Spencer, N.C., to Lynchburg, Va.

April 10, 2016 - The Blue Ridge Special, Spencer, N.C., to Asheville, N.C.

April 23, 2016 - The Roanoker, Greensboro, N.C. to Roanoke, Va.

April 24, 2016 - The Roanoker, Greensboro, N.C. to Roanoke, Va.

May 7, 2016 - The Powhatan Arrow, Roanoke, Va., to Lynchburg, Va.

May 7, 2016 - The Pelican, Roanoke, Va., to Walton (Radford), Va.

May 8, 2016 - The Powhatan Arrow, Roanoke, Va., to Lynchburg, Va.

May 8, 2016 - The Pelican, Roanoke, Va., to Walton (Radford), Va.

June 4, 2016 - The American, Manassas, Va., to Front Royal, Va., (runs once)

June 5, 2016 - The American, Manassas, Va., to Front Royal, Va., (runs twice)

Over the weekend of May 14, 2016 - visitors to the Virginia Museum of Transportation will get to view 611 fired up, and meet the crew.

June 4, 2016 - After the morning excursion, 611 will make a guest appearance at the Manassas, Va., Heritage Railway Festival.

June, 2016 - 611 on display at the VMT.

July, 2016 - 611 will be featured at the North Carolina Transportation Museum for special events.

Early August, 2016 - 611 return to VMT.

Early September, 2016 - 611 again will return to the NCTM for special events and maintenance.

Sept. 24-25, 2016 - 611 will travel to Danville, Va., to be featured during Danville Rail Heritage Days.

611 will return to Roanoke after the NCTM events conclude in the fall.

## **611 On The Move**

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**O**n February 3rd 611 was moved from VMT to Shaffers Crossing for the long-planned front truck wheel and bearing work. After being steamed up, 611 headed to Spencer, NC, on February 11 for maintenance and its annual Federal Railroad Administration Inspection in preparation for the upcoming 2016 excursion season. We are

looking forward to the return of 611 (again). Please help with the excursions by signing up with the Chapter. For more information contact Lewis Foster.

## **New Member Profiles**

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We have a suggestion to include profiles by our new members of themselves. This is a good idea and new members, you are invited to submit to the Editor some information about yourself. Suggestions include what about railroading you are interested in, how you came to be interested in trains, which Chapter activities you like, etc. Have at it!

## **New Chapter Donation**

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Skip Salmon

**I**n early February Norfolk Southern donated to the Roanoke Chapter a 40 foot box car MW No. 404 that started out as N&W/REA No. 226 Express Box Car. Plans for this car are to restore her as N&W Express Box No. 226, complete with the unusual side door and generator to provide power for trains on the new Roanoke Southern (Belt Line) excursion line. Thanks to Board Member and exceptional Friend of the Virginian Railway, Steve Smith for making this happen. I told him he "was fine as a frog's hair split nine different ways"! Plans are to bring this car from Birmingham, AL to the Chapter's 9th Street yard very soon.

## **Treasurers Report**

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Chapter Treasurer Jim Cosby has the 2015 Chapter Treasurers Report available for members. Please contact him if you want a copy.

## **NRHS News**

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Here is the link to the February 2016 NRHS News:

[https://admin.nrhs.com/NRHSNews/NRHS\\_NewsFebruary2016-2b.pdf](https://admin.nrhs.com/NRHSNews/NRHS_NewsFebruary2016-2b.pdf)

The NRHS News is published six times a year. In this issue there is information on the NRHS including the July Denver NRHS convention and RailCamp.

## **Ride Day At VMT**

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Skip Salmon

Saturday, February 20, was "Train Lover's Day" at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. There were lots of activities going on while the Roanoke Chapter NRHS gave rides on the cabooses and coach. Because of the delay of a week and a dinosaur show at the Roanoke Civic Center, our ridership was down to a little over 500. There was a "yard sale" by VMT of items from their gift shop, which was a big hit.

## **News From National**

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By Carl Jensen, Chapter Advisory Council Representative.

The next National Board of Directors and Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for April 22-23 in Cumberland, Md. No meeting agendas have been published as yet. Several events of national importance do take place this year. First, there is an election this fall for National Directors, including one of the two Directors from our Region (portions of VA, both Carolinas, GA, FL, AL.). I have not received anything yet on who is running, the current Director whose term is up is Larry Dyer from Atlanta.

There are two national signature projects in process at this time. First is the annual NRHS RailCamp event with the Eastern Camp headquartered at the University of Delaware, Newark, DE June 26 through July 2. The Northwest Camp will take place at Tacoma WA July 31 through August 6. Applications so far this year total 11 as of February 18, with 9 organizations offering sponsorships to campers. The fee is \$1,290.

Roanoke Chapter will sponsor a camper

this year, if we can locate a nominee who meets the application criteria. This is an opportunity for our members to help a young person interested in railroading experience a special one week of informative and educational activities with up to 24 of his or her peers (East Camp – up to 16 at NWest Camp). The program is open to both boys and girls between age 14 (going into 9th grade) through 18 (including graduating this year from high school) are eligible to apply. This is an educational experience with the longer term goal of encouraging young people to pursue their interest in railroads, history or even careers in the railroad business. It is an investment for us in the future of our organization as a group dedicated to railroad preservation, history and education. Information about the program including an application is available on the NRHS website NRHS.web.com. Also, I will be happy to discuss the program if anyone would like. Applications close April 15.

The other signature program is the annual NRHS Grants program which is currently taking grant applications up to March 1. The amount of fund money available this year has not been determined, it is a function of current donations to the fund. So far they have received 6 applications. Award results will be announced at the national convention in July at Denver, Colorado.

The National Convention takes place in Denver beginning July 19 through July 24. A number of our members are planning to attend. Convention info is also available on the national website.

## **Norfolk Southern Combines Regions And Divisions**

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From Norfolk 'Southern

NORFOLK, Va., March 1, 2016 – Norfolk Southern today announced it is consolidating its three operating regions into two,

effective March 15. The decision to further streamline railroad operations is part of the company's ongoing execution of its five-year strategic plan, announced in December 2015, to enhance operating efficiencies, reduce costs, drive profitability, and accelerate growth. As previously announced, NS is targeting annual expense savings of \$650 million by 2020.

"We are committed to aggressively controlling costs while delivering the high levels of superior service that our customers value," said Mike Wheeler, executive vice president and chief operating officer. "Consolidating our operating regions will generate productivity savings, not only through right-sizing, but also by leveraging advancements in train dispatch technologies that support more fluid and efficient movement of freight across the network. As we continue to execute on our five-year strategic plan, we are confident that these steps will make Norfolk Southern a faster, lower-cost, and more profitable railroad."

Earlier this year, Norfolk Southern streamlined division operations by combining the former Virginia and Pocahontas divisions into a larger Pocahontas Division headquartered in Roanoke. This became effective Feb. 1, and followed other key strategic initiatives including the reduction from three corporate office locations to two, restructuring of the Triple Crown Services subsidiary, integration of the D&H South Line to increase options for shippers, and idling of certain parts of the 'West Virginia Secondary' line.

Norfolk Southern's network spans 22 states in the eastern U.S. The railroad presently manages train operations across 10 operating divisions that are part of three larger operating regions – the Eastern, Western, and Northern regions.

Under the new structure, effective March 15, Norfolk Southern's network will be

divided into Northern and Southern regions only. The Northern Region will include the Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Dearborn, Lake, and Illinois divisions. The Southern Region will include the Piedmont, Alabama, Georgia, Central, and Pocahontas divisions..

Each of the two consolidated regions will support approximately 1,000 daily crew starts for long-haul train operations, connecting customers and communities to global markets with freight rail that moves consumer goods, automobiles, coal, grain, and products essential to U.S. households, businesses, and industries.

## Walt Alexander Honored

by Ken Miller

At our Holiday Gathering, Walt Alexander was awarded the Elbert M. Miller Service Award by the Chapter. The award honors a member who has distinguished themselves with dedicated service to the Chapter.

Walt has served on our board many times. His most impressive contribution, however, is his long service as Membership Chairman, where he brought us forward to, and was one of the major shepherds to bring National's new membership plan to fruition. Walt advised National in many ways while doing this and helped shape the process.



Of course that work is totally behind the scenes.

Walt posted the following letter to President Jeff Sanders and is reproduced here with his permission.

Dear Jeff,

At the beginning of the 2015 Annual Chapter Christmas Party, I looked over the door prizes that were to be given later as numbers were drawn. One was a framed 13 X 17 print of Nickle Plate No. 759 on Gulf Summit, Pennsylvania, which I understand was photographed in 1973. I told Shirley that if my number was drawn, that is what I would choose. My number wasn't called, but Shirley's was. She selected the NKP 759 photo and gave to me to keep for her.

Now that print to others may have just been any old steam locomotive, but to my family it has special meaning.

I had joined the Northeast Chapter of NRHS in 1968 while residing in Harborcreek, Pennsylvania, just east of Erie. From the front window of my house, we could see the parallel right-of-ways of the Nickle Plate Road and New York Central railroads a quarter mile away. A month after joining, I learned that NKP 759 had just been restored and would be operating her first steam excursion between Conneaut, Ohio, and Buffalo, New York on August 30, 1968. After church, I took my three daughters – Beth, Shirley, and Lynn – to the nearest grade crossing (Mooreheadville Road in Harborcreek) to wait for NKP 759 to pass.

After what seemed like a long wait to the girls, we finally heard the approaching whistle. The girls looked in bewilderment as the train roared by. This was the very first steam locomotive "under steam" that the three girls had ever seen. As the observation car passed by, Beth looked at me wide-eyed and said, "Daddy, now I know why they call them choo-choo trains!"

If you know who donated that print for the door prize drawing, please pass on my thanks to them!

Sincerely,

Walter Alexander, #2791

We are quite pleased that Walt ended up with the print and thank him for his service.

## **Old Dominion Chapter Dillwyn Spring Excursions**

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Tickets for the Old Dominion Chapter's spring excursions on the Buckingham Branch RR are now on sale. The cowboys and outlaws of the Tom Mix Rangers will join us on all of the following trips. Get your tickets early and bring some friends. The scenery for these trips, especially the dogwoods on the April dates, should be the best this stretch of the BB has to offer!

April 23, 2016 9:30 a.m. (1.5 hr.), 11:30 a.m. (1.5 hr.) and 1:30 p.m.

April 30, 2016 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

May 7, 2016 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Ticket prices: \$14 adult / \$8.00 child (short trips) and \$25 adult / \$13.00 child

Visit <http://odcnrhs.ticketleap.com/> to order tickets.

## **Virginia Museum Of Transportation Report**

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Bev Fitzpatrick, Executive Director

**A**s we move into February, there is a lot going on at VMT! First of all, we are getting prepared for the 2016 Excursions! The main course for this year is Greensboro to Roanoke... April 23 & 24; Roanoke to Lynchburg and Roanoke to Walton... May 7 & 8; and Manassas to Front Royal... June 4 & 5.

We are most appreciative of Norfolk Southern's willingness to provide trackage for excursions and are look forward to having the Roanoke Chapter as partners again.

The opportunity for the Roanoke Chapter and the VMT to use the Beltline in the

future continues to take shape. The VMT has formed Roanoke Southern, LLC to strictly own the property known as the Roanoke Beltline. Our attorney recommended that this be a separate corporation due to the need to transfer it as operating railroad trackage.

We are now setting up another LLC to be the Roanoke Southern Railway (name TBD) that will operate the Beltline. We anticipate having this ready to go by March 2016. Our goal is to continue to have all four rail partners involved. As of February 4, 2016, the Roanoke Southern, LLC owns the Roanoke Beltline and has recorded the deed. After we get the operating LLC underway, we will plan an organizational meeting.

Now the real work begins as we need to clear the property and assess what improvements we are going to have to put into place in order to run. Best estimates by both groups are that we will need at least two – three years before any operations can take place. Access to Norfolk Southern will be at the Franklin Road end.

This has been the ultimate partnership having all Roanoke Rail Groups, the Roanoke Chapter, the VMT, the Link and the NWHS, all working together on the proposal made to Wick Moorman. Had we not come together to make the proposal to Wick, this likely would never have happened. He is the man who made this possible and we all need to give him a big note of thanks!

Class J 611 went to Shaffers the first week of February for new wheels which were installed. She left Roanoke later in the month to go to Spencer for her FRA Annual Inspection. She was under steam for that exciting journey.

## **RPCA Elects Director**

**A**t the January Railroad Passenger Car Alliance meeting in Texas, Chapter

Secretary and Director Lewis Foster was elected to the board of directors. Congratulations, Lewis. Roanoke Chapter has a long history of working with RPCA and Carl Jensen was one of the founding individuals.

## **Roanoke Chapter, NRHS, 2015 Activities, Part 1, Jan-July**

Jeffrey L. Sanders, President

**A**s I begin our recap of Chapter activities, we need to start by recognizing our fellow members, relatives and friends of the Chapter who passed away during the year.

Members Bill & Judy Baumgardner lost Judy's brother, Christopher Markley January 11.

Mark & Mary Erickson lost Mark's mother January 19.

Member Willard Hamill passed away January 21 followed by member David Helmer on February 21.

Friend of the Chapter, Lloyd Lewis, passed away July 6.

Friend of the Chapter, Larry Evans, lost his father September 20.

Member Skip Salmon, lost his brother, Joe, September 26.

Member Jeff Shelton's father, W. Carlton Shelton, June 25.

Members Steve & Phyllis Smith lost Steve's mother, Peggy Smith, October 2.

Mary Lee Claytor, October 14.

Member Dave Shumate lost his father December 2.

Walt Alexander was presented with the Elbert Miller Service Award.

In January the 9th St. grade crossing project was largely complete. The city just paved the crossing and the flangeways have been opened. We provided track materials for the project.

Refurbishing our N&W coach No. 537 is the next planned project for the Mechanical

Department. The car will need some minor repairs to sheet metal, repairs to the generator mounts, replacement of the diaphragm curtains, conversion of the bathroom to a retention toilet, sanding and painting the exterior, and replacement of the window-gaskets. We will also need to inspect the draft gear and couplers for damage to make sure that they were not damaged in transit from Tennessee Valley RR Museum to Roanoke. The Board has authorized up to \$22,000 to restore the 537 to operating condition, subject to the Mechanical Committee providing a written report and budget of projected income and expenses.

Potential contractors for the structural and truck work for our diner-dormitory No. 1148 have given preliminary figures to complete that work. The quotes have been sent to the Passenger Car Committee for review and to make a recommendation to the board.

Our coach No. 1489 will be moved from VMT to the Chapter siding at 9th St. for work in preparation for Amtrak certification. This will clear space for VMT.

Work has begun on producing a Chapter Operating Rule Book.

A mid-Winter National Board & Advisory Council Meeting was held in Roanoke at the Hotel Roanoke on Jan. 9, 10, and 11, with many members helping provide for the logistics involved.

Free admission was provided by our partners at Link, VMT, and N&WHS for all conference attendees. With many problems to be worked out on the National level, there was a lively and productive meeting.

A meeting was held at Spectrum Design regarding rebidding Phase 2 of the Virginian Station project. Several critical decisions were made concerning the preparation of the bid documents.

In February member Fred Boettner donated a computer for Membership Chairman

Dave Johnson to use for managing the Chapter database.

Work continued on the 9th St. grade crossing, due to bad track, and took longer than expected. Work moved forward on our coaches, including No. 537, No. 1148, and No. 1489. We are applying for a Dailey Foundation grant for help on No. 1148.

Train Lovers Day was held 2/14/2015 at VMT. Fred Boettner, our new radio man, is working with VMT on setting up their radios for excursions, focusing on making sure that they are interoperable with Chapter radios if we have joint operations.

Carl Jensen reported that the National Director's meeting which occurred in Roanoke on 1/9 – 1/11, lost approximately \$650 for the Chapter. Carl has asked that the National organization reimburse us for that, though we don't know if that will happen. There were 52 people who registered at the meeting.

The Board voted to sponsor another RailCamp attendee for 2015 at a cost of approximately \$1,296.00. We also voted to accept Spectrum Design's proposal to handle bid documents for Phase II of the Virginian Station.

It was decided to plan for a Chapter picnic, the first in many years, sometime in late 2015. Dorr Tucker and Percy Wilkins were appointed to work on the picnic. Member Peter Lewis has invited us to his Apple Ridge Farm in Copper Hill, VA.

A cleanup session at VMT occurred recently dividing the signal equipment from the scrap and sorting out the materials donated to the Chapter and to VMT

Discussions continued with Spectrum, dealing with the Phase II bid documents for the Virginian Station.

At Train Lover's Day at VMT, the Chapter train operation handled over 3,000 riders.

March brought good news from VDOT

with approval of grants in the amount of \$246,000 for the Virginian Station. Also, member Gary Gray has been hired by VMT to coordinate 611 operations.

As of April 6, 2015 164 members have paid local dues. 101 members are on record as having paid national dues. You must pay both National, as well as Chapter dues in order to be a member-in-good-standing.

The 537 and 1489 were moved to 9th street. Work began in earnest on refurbishing the 537. The sub-floor has been repaired, out of service equipment in the vestibule is being removed, a new box has been hung for the water pump, and plumbing has been started. The GP-30 No. 522 should be moving to Southern Appalachia Railway Museum soon, for repairs we are unable to handle.

The 9th St. grade crossing repairs are finally completed, with a total cost for the Chapter of \$8,500.

On March 28 GE Day at VMT went well with a total of 360 Passengers carried over 7 trips, plus quite a few motor car, hand car, and velocipede rides.

In April It was announced that the 611 would be steaming home on May 30, after spending a year in Spencer, NCTM Roundhouse being totally restored. Members were asked to sign-up to work as many of the trips as possible.

The chapter completed a contract to lease our Storage Mail car No. 1407, as tool car for 611. Also, we installed a GPS device on the 1407 for safety purposes. We had already agreed to allow NS to use the 1407, "free of charge" to accompany Y6a No. 2156 from St. Louis to Roanoke.

Donations to the Mechanical Department from the Roanoke Shops included an agitating parts washer, cutting torch carts, and breakdown bench.

Proposals and discussions were held with VMT to establish the Chapter's involvement

in the upcoming 611 operations.

The National contract with Fernley & Fernley ends this month, April 2015.

Carl Jensen attended the National Board and Advisory Council Meeting in York, PA.

Bid documents for the Virginian Station have been prepared for rebidding Phase 2 by Spectrum (650+ pages plus drawings) and have been delivered to the City and VDOT. We are waiting on both parties to review. Due to unforeseen costs of rebidding Phase 2, we have temporarily cut some things from the project and will re-bid them later.

In May coach No. 537 had the fresh water system roughed in and pressure tested. Window gasket replacement was underway. The bathroom sub-floor has been replaced. The waste tank, generator enclosure, and buffer tube mounts are the major remaining construction items.

The Color Position Light from Randolph St. has been moved to our 9th Street siding. Several members of the Mechanical Department will restore the signal which will displayed at the O. Winston Link Museum in honor of Dave Helmer.

A bus trip to Lynchburg for 611 home-coming for members was planned. Big news for all railfans, the former N&W Y6a No. 2156 returned to Roanoke for display at VMT for the next five years. This is the first time that all three "Modern Coal Burning Steam Locomotives" designed by Roanokers, and built by Roanokers in N&W's East Roanoke Shops have been together in at least 55 years! She was accompanied by our "Tool Car 1407", which, to our knowledge, is the only car to have been operated behind each of the "Giants of Steam" N&W Class A-1218, Y6a-2156 and J-611, all as a dedicated Tool Car for support of the engines.

Carl Jensen reports from the York, PA National Board Meeting that the National NRHS has now paid all of their back bills

and are paying new ones with available funds. Fernley & Fernley is no longer associated with the National organization. Also, from York, RailCamp now has enough applicants to run, both in the East and West. The National Convention in 2016 will be in Denver, CO.

On May 30 the Chapter took about 50 members to Lynchburg, by bus, paid to ride the 611 trip into Roanoke. We basically leased a coach from VMT who was kind enough to accommodate us. 611 made her triumphant Homecoming on May 30.

As we move forward, working with VMT on the planned 611 trips in late June and early July, several of our people took major parts in the staffing, food service, and organization of the operations. Paul V. Howell ran the entire First Class service for VMT on all trips. Lewis Foster tackled the enormous job of staffing the car hosts, and working with Paul to fill the First Class workers. Bonnie Molinary ran the coach food service, which was totally a Chapter operation. We also pulled from our friends of the Blue Ridge Chapter, in Lynchburg, and other individual friends, to help man all these trains. Our thanks go out to everyone who helped in any way to make the 611 operations highly successfully.

One of our attorneys is drafting a contract for Carter Bank for the construction loan necessary for the Virginian Station project.

As of July we have 190 members who have paid their Chapter dues. 130 are confirmed as having paid their National dues.

Ken Miller has designed and printed a new Chapter brochure which was made available to passengers on board the 611 excursion trains.

The deck on the dock at 9th Street has been replaced.

After our July participation with VMT in the 611 Operations, we received over \$30,

000 for our part, including staffing car hosts and first class plus the lease of 1407 and the coach food service. Our people really worked themselves to the bone to make the trips successful!

In mid June, Carl Jensen attended the Annual Convention in Rutland, VT. The cleanup in both the financial records and the membership records continues. Rail Camp got approximately \$4,000 donated during the annual convention banquet, which will complete funding the program for 2015 as well as providing some seed money for next year's program.

The Advisory Council is pushing for updates to the organization and operations of the National Organization. The bylaws changes that were voted upon at the Convention were approved.

The Board voted to study our Franklin Rd. property and make recommendations for improvements to make the property useful and attractive for lease.

Gary Gray, working for VMT coordinating the 611 operations, reported that the Manassas and Lynchburg trips were very successful. The Chapter will play an even more comprehensive roll in the upcoming trips out of Roanoke on the July 4th weekend.

Carter Bank has confirmed that they are willing to use the income from the sale of tax credits as collateral for the construction loan. This frees us from the need to deal with NS concerning the reversion clause in the deed of the Virginian Station property as donated to the Chapter.

In July we had 190 members who have paid their Chapter dues. The new membership brochure, produced by Ken Miller, was printed and were available on the 611 excursion trains. We had 3 or 4 people fill the brochure out and pay dues onboard.

Work continued at our 9th Street facility

on our various passenger cars.

The weekend of July 3, 4, & 5 keep almost all Chapter members busy working on the six trips (two each day) with 611. The morning trips ran Roanoke to Lynchburg and return, followed by the afternoon trips Roanoke to Walton and return. The 611 performed flawlessly during her grueling eleven trip schedule, not counting the 200 mile homecoming run from Spencer to Roanoke on May 30.

Chapter members worked long, hard hours to please the 900+ passengers each trip. The VMT folks have praised our members and repeatedly thanked us for our professional operation.

To be continued next issue.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

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

March 17 - Chapter Meeting

April 5 - Board Meeting

Be sure to check the schedule inside for 611 operations!

April 21 - Chapter Meeting

May 3 - Board Meeting

May 19 - General Meeting

June 7 - Board Meeting

June 15 - General Meeting

July 5 - Board Meeting

July 21 - General Meeting

**Visit us on the web: [www.RoanokeNRHS.org](http://www.RoanokeNRHS.org)**

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