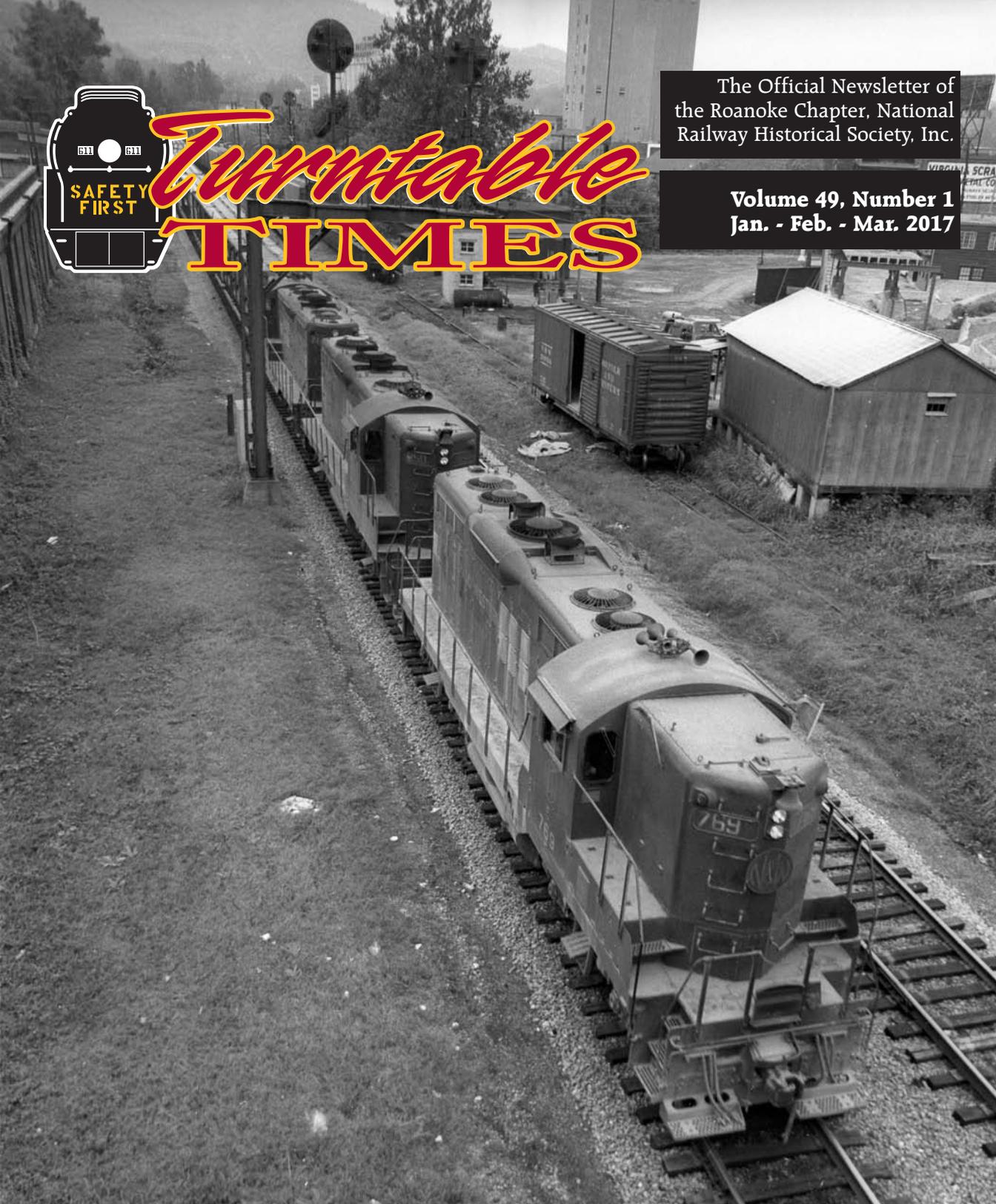




Turntable TIMES

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

Volume 49, Number 1
Jan. - Feb. - Mar. 2017





Turntable TIMES

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Jan.-Feb.-Mar. 2017

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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 16th. 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 20th. The May meeting will be Thursday, May 18.

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 Friday, June 9, 2017. 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, Dorr Tucker at joandorr@cox.net and Ken Miller at 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

The times have sure changed in Roanoke. Photographer Abram D. Burnett III, was out early to capture first 51 pulling into Roanoke off the Winston-Salem line led by GP9 769. The scene has changed, 769 is carrying green flags, indicating another section following, Roanoke City Mills is gone, the concrete plant at right is gone, open auto rack cars, gone. The date is Tuesday, September 28, 1965 at 7:53 am. Like many of us, Abe certainly never thought while recording this scene that it would turn up to be shared over 50 years later.

For current information on the FIRE UP 611! campaign,
see www.FireUp611.org

From The Editor

As March arrives the Roanoke Chapter is gearing up to help staff 611 excursions for 2017. For the third year Norfolk Southern has graciously allowed the Virginia Museum of Transportation and the North Carolina Transportation Museum to operate what will be a total of 13 all day or half-day excursions in Virginia and North Carolina. Roanoke Chapter provides much of the volunteer help needed to operate these excursions. See the article by Lewis Foster for information on signing up to assist if you haven't already done so.

Be sure to send in your dues renewal for 2017 if you haven't done so already. This year the Chapter will be able to handle both National and Chapter dues at the same time. Please return the renewal notices promptly. If you did not receive this information please contact Delta or Jim Cosby.

Activity continues at our 9th Street maintenance facility. See Lewis Foster's report in this issue and consider coming out to see what's going on and maybe give a hand.

The Chapter is to sponsor a RailCamper at NRHS RailCamp this summer. This is a good way for a young person of high school age to get a feel about railroading. See Carl Jensen's report in this issue for this and other NRHS information.

Our annual Holiday Gathering at Roanoke's Calvary Baptist Church on December 15, 2016, had 73 in attendance. A good time (and good eating) was enjoyed by all. Thanks to everyone who helped, especially Bonnie Molinary and Kathy Overholser.

2017 should see the arrival of the first Amtrak Northeast Regional train, starting daily service to many cities along the Northeast corridor and making train travel from Roanoke an easy experience. We will

welcome the train this fall!

Condolences

Member Scott Williamson's father passed away recently. Our thoughts and prayers go out to him and his family.

Member Sick List

Rebecca Tinnell is recovering from another stroke.

Norris Deyerle continues to improve as he recovers at home. He is back on the internet now.

Harold Hunley is recovering from knee replacement surgery.

Gordon Hamilton is also recovering from knee replacement surgery.

Lawanda Ely's daughter Carla has continuing health issues, and your thoughts and prayers are welcome.

The Timetable

March 20-21 – The Red Unit of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus passes through Roanoke for the last time, eastbound. The dates are approximate.

May 1-2 and 8-9 – The Blue Unit of the RBBB circus passes through Roanoke for the last times, to and from Charleston, WV, ending an era. The dates are approximate.

May 19 – 20 – Southern Railway Historical Association annual convention, Chattanooga, TN. www.srha.net

June 20 – 24 – NRHS National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. www.nrhs.com

July 13 –16 – Norfolk and Western Historical Society annual convention, Strasburg, PA. www.nwhs.org

August 2 – 6 – Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society annual conference, Huntington, WV. www.cohs.org

August 12 – Blue Ridge Chapter Rail Day, Lynchburg. www.blueridgenrhs.org

October – Amtrak service to Roanoke

begins with the extension of the present Lynchburg train.

Board Of Directors

Our Chapter Board usually meets at 7 PM the first Tuesday of each month in the Chapter's Virginian Station. Note the new location. Members are welcome to attend. Please welcome Fred Boettner (elected at the Chapter Annual Meeting November 17, 2016) to the Board, and a big "Thank You" to Steve Smith for his service on the Board. The Board elected officers for 2017 at the January 3rd meeting, will all 2016 officers continuing in the same position in 2017.

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

The Contributing Editor

Due to an abundance of informative mechanical news from Lewis Foster, we will omit Dorr's usual column.

At the same time we want to remind the membership that we are still looking for a replacement program chairman. In the meantime we want to thank Paul M. Howell who has agreed to provide an assortment of DVD programs that we can enjoy from time to time. Until the new chairman is selected please see Dorr to arrange for special programs.

Emergency Notification Phone Numbers

You may use these phone numbers to report emergencies or other conditions affecting railroad operations, including tres-

passers, vandalism, fires, defective equipment, etc. If at a railroad/highway grade crossing try to provide the unique crossing number/DOT number posted nearby, usually on a blue sign.

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

Treasurers Report

Members are always welcome to review Roanoke Chapter's Treasurers Report. Please contact Treasurer Jim Cosby to receive a copy, either by email or on paper. The report for the fiscal (calendar) year 2016 has been completed and is available.

NRHS Membership Awards

Congratulations go to the following members on achieving long-term membership in our Chapter and NRHS, with appropriate Pins and Certificates for all:

- Jeff Sanders – 50 Years
- Georgianna and F.M. Hite - 25 Years
- Wanda and Jerry Johnson - 25 Years

NRHS News

Here is a link to the NRHS News, March issue. Included is information on membership, the Nashville convention coming in June, and RailCamp information.

https://admin.nrhs.com/telegraph/2017_03-Telegraph-v9-4p.pdf

President's Report

By Jeff Sanders, President

Chapter Activities From January 1
From the January Board Meeting: Delta Pelgrim has taken possession of the membership records and is diligently working to straighten out problems between National records and our own. Thanks to David Johnson for taking care of the membership records in recent years. We appreciate his service to the Chapter.

A motion was passed to develop a standard reimbursement form to be attached to receipts submitted, including the reason for the expense and the required authorization.

Mechanical continues work on various pieces of equipment at 9th Street, including coach 537, which we may be able to get into 611's consist for at least part of the Excursion season.

A budget was passed to install a 480-volt electrical hook-up at the Siding.

A new security system at the Virginian Station is being installed. This state-of-the-art system is being provided to the Chapter by member John Ferguson through his company, Audiotronics. We sincerely thank John for this generous gift to the Chapter for the Virginian Station Project. Skip Salmon and Fred Boettner are working with John to install the system.

A Chapter train crew switched the VMT yard January 3rd in preparation of 611 leaving for Spencer on the 6th. After 611's departure, we re-switched the yard, putting N&W No. 6 between the 1218 and 2156. Quite a contrast!

At our February Board Meeting, Delta Pelgrim, membership chair, reported 131 members. She is working with National to assure our members are properly listed. Also, we are encouraging members to join or renew National as, according to the By-Laws, you cannot be a member in good standing if you don't belong to both. You may pay your national dues through the Chapter, just mail your dues to the Chapter, in care of our Treasurer, with the renewal form and it will be taken care of for you. We will be checking to see if we can receive dues payments electronically, but that is for later.

A reimbursement form, drawn up by Treasurer Jim Cosby was adopted.

Work at 9th Street continues; see the Mechanical Committee report.

Our train crew operated our train at VMT on Saturday, February 11, for Train Lover's Day, carrying above 1100 passengers.

Carl Jensen, National Representative, reported that we have submitted the name of a young man for Rail Camp this year. We should hear of confirmation soon.

Our new security system has been installed at the Virginian Station.

The sale of tax credits should be ready for closing anytime now. Our Realtor is diligently looking for a suitable tenant for the passenger side of the building.

Membership Report

By Delta Helmer Pelgrim

Allow me to briefly introduce myself. I am Delta Helmer Pelgrim and have taken over for David Johnson as the Membership Chairman. I have been an active member of the chapter since before I could walk – selling souvenirs on trips and at the Transportation Museum, working in the first class diner, taking phone orders at my parent's house and doing whatever random task was assigned. I look forward to helping out in this new capacity and getting to know those of you who I don't already know. Now for my report:

We currently have 171 members in our chapter.

New members include: Jon Brillhart, Adrian Hayes, Roger Link, Larry Mitchell, Mike Perry, Gavin and Kathy Wilkes and Jason "Scotty" Williamson.

As a reminder, members need to be both a member of national and local chapter. I will be contacting individuals who are not members of both according to the records, to work to get the records straight.

I am working on ensuring our e-mail list is up to date so if you would like to be added to the distribution list please let me know.

If you have any questions I can be reached

at membership.rcnrhs@gmail.com or by phone at 703-627-7847.

Virginian Station Update

By Jim Cosby and Skip Salmon

We are expecting the financial closing of the Virginian Station to occur very soon. When this happens we will finish the pay off of the bank, attorney, and accountant and have money left over for the Chapter displays and tenant up-fit.

The Norfolk and Western Historical Society held their 1st quarter Board meeting in the station's Chapter Board room on February 25th. The Chapter Board meets monthly in the same space.

National Advisory Council (AC) And Board Of Directors (BoD) Report

By Carl Jensen, Chapter Council Representative

The AC and BOD of the NRHS will meet on March 31. As yet we have no agendas for either group.

However, the current status of several major Society Signature Programs are as follows:

The annual Grants Program has 33 requests received as of the March 2 application deadline. Unfortunately, this year the amount of available grant money is less than \$19,000 compared to the 2016 grants which totaled \$35,000. This is a woefully inadequate amount for the Society to provide if the program is to be a significant part of our ongoing service to preservation of rail history. This program uses all available earmarked or designated dollars each year along with whatever the BOD can supplement to establish the amount of grants available. There needs to be a renewed focus by the Board and by members to generate considerably more money each year that is designated solely for the Grants Program.

Additional sources such as bequests, especially those of sufficient size to generate income annually would be an ideal source. Thus the principle could be preserved to produce future recurring income. At the Advisory Council meeting, I will bring this matter up for consideration and recommendation to the Board for their action.

On a very encouraging note, the NRHS RailCamp program has already received 30 applications for this year's two camps. And, we still have five open commitments from sponsor chapters to fund a camper of their designation. These Chapters had until March 1 to receive preferred consideration of their candidates, ahead of unsponsored applications. They have now lost their preference position. At the rate we have been receiving applications we will shortly have enough to fulfill our total camp rosters of 36 (24 at East camp, and 12 at the West, the latter is already full). Not all applications received so far have been screened or approved, so some may not be accepted this year. We do anticipate having more applications than spots, as has happened the last several years, and a wait list will be established to cover last minute withdrawals. This program has been very well supported both inside the NRHS as well as from a number of other rail related organizations that recognize the potential for young people interested in the industry. Hopefully our Roanoke Chapter candidate should be notified in March of his acceptance.

The Advisory Council has begun spirited discussion of the challenge of members in chapters that are not paying national dues and thus are not NRHS members but still participating in their local chapters. The Council agreed at the Fall meeting to try to come up with recommendations to make some changes in national by-laws to accommodate this situation. Meanwhile exist-

ing by-laws require NRHS membership for individuals to belong to a chapter, as we are doing here in Roanoke. I don't know how this will work out. I understand the National Board is now looking into alternative ways of streamlining the membership dues renewal process.

In 2017 expect to receive two printed copies of the NRHS Bulletin (one was recently received) and several hard copies of the NRHS NEWS. The usual 6 email copies of the NEWS will continue to be available to those who have email capability.

The National Convention will be held at Nashville, TN June 21– June 24. The complete convention plan and event ordering information and hotel reservation info are now available on the NRHS website.

611 Excursion Report

By Lewis Foster

Preparations for this year's Virginia Museum of Transportation 611 steam excursions continue, with mechanical work on the 611 ongoing at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer and planning for the trips out of Spencer, Greensboro, Lynchburg, and Roanoke. Tickets are on sale at <http://www.fireup611.org/> and some trips are selling out fast. Several Chapter members are helping to coordinate the volunteers and on board service on the excursion train again this year. Lewis Foster will be coordinating the volunteers, Paul V Howell will be organizing the first class service, Ron Davis will be handling the boarding planning, and Mike Voiland will be working mechanical on the train.

The Chapter will be providing on-board staff for the Greensboro, Lynchburg, and Roanoke trips in conjunction with the Greensboro and Blue Ridge Chapters, along with other local groups. Volunteer informa-

tion is being accepted via the new online volunteer management page. If you'd like to volunteer to work as a coach car host or first class host this year, please go to <https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?ap=1029444437> and enter your information. If you don't have internet access please contact the Editor, Jim Overholser, at 343-1928, and he will pass the contact information along.

Winter Mechanical Committee Report

By Lewis Foster

Much has happened at 9th street since the last report. Significant progress has been made on N&W P3 class coach No. 537 over the winter. The interior has been sanded and painted in new two-tone paint and all of the interior stainless has been polished. Reconditioned fixtures and lights have been installed in the bathroom as well, and this past weekend a new toilet was installed. New wire has been run to the vestibule end of the car for the AC controls, blowers, and lights, as well as new runs under the car to the generator and AC system. The floor has been cleaned using stripper and a floor buffer, along with quite a bit of hand cleaning and is ready to be waxed and then the seats reinstalled.

On the outside, we are doing some minor repairs to the sheet metal at the bottom edges of the side sheets and the skirts. The custom-fabricated stainless steel holding tank has been fit and hung underneath the car as well. The fuel and electric connections have been made to the generator and the remote start connections are being set up as well. Additionally, the metal to fabricate the buffer tube mounts for each end of the car has arrived and that work will begin soon.

We are also working on the AC system



on the car. Our contractor has the new compressor ready to install and has been working on testing the system and prepping to install the new solenoid and expansion valves. We have replacement cloth bellows installed to the blower and main duct of the car. The overhead coils have been lowered from the ceiling to allow some repairs to be made there as well.

RNRH (AEP) SW1000 No. 1 has also

received quite a bit of work this winter. The air brakes are now in complete operable condition. The damaged coupler at the cab end of the locomotive has been replaced. Repairs have been made to the steps and several other parts of the locomotive. We hope to resolve several other minor issues this spring and have the engine blue carded for operation soon.

Work continues on Virginian caboose No.



All: Lewis Foster

Photos showing the hard work paying off on coach 537. From top left, newly painted bathroom and new toilet, bottom, brand new holding tank, designed and built by our forces, above, the new two tone paint scheme with new seat labels. Other improvements, below, are the brand new water line.

322 as well. Some of our younger volunteers have been working on stripping the interior wood in preparation for restoration work. Once the weather warms, we plan to make several metal repairs to the car body and then begin rebuilding the interior of the caboose.

We've also made several repairs to our facilities at 9th street. After three repairs to the water line in the past two years, it was decided that it made more sense to simply replace the 1980s vintage pipes. Over the holidays, several people worked on running a new trench, water lines, gravel backfill, and installing two new standpipes. We've also been experiencing periodic indoor rainstorms in the shop building during periods of heavy rain. A group of volunteers



removed the leaking roof drain and replaced it with a new one, jacked the roof to remove a sag, re-tarred the roof, and repaired and replaced several water damaged areas in the building.

Since the last report we also had three run days at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. We used N&W Alco T6 No.



Skip Salmon is sharing his love of trains with his grandson on Train Lover's Day, February 11, 2017 inside our coach 512.

41, N&W P2 class coach No. 512, and VMT's recently acquired ex-RF&P heavyweight No. 524. In December we carried almost 3,000 passengers for the Candy Cane Express and in February we carried another 1,100 for Train Lovers' Day. Come out and ride or help out at our next event at VMT later this year.

If you're interested in helping out with the restoration work, or just in visiting the yard at 9th street, please contact Gary Gray or Lewis Foster. Anyone is welcome to come see what we're working on and help out (no special skills are required). If you'd like to see photos of our current projects, you can find them on the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/roanokenrhs>

In Praise of Volunteers

By David Foster

Volunteers are what make the Roanoke Chapter work well, all of us doing what we can when we can. Sometimes I don't

think we adequately appreciate the hundreds of hours our volunteers contribute every year. Sometimes I overhear grumbling that projects take too long or cost too much. This kind of comment can be disheartening to volunteers, who are almost always already doing the best they can. And in my view, they also almost always give of themselves a lot more freely than the grumblers.

During the extended Christmas and New Year's weekends, I had the pleasure of visiting and working at the Ninth Street shop and yard. I was amazed by the work accomplished by volunteers there, while most people were off enjoying their holidays. Here is some of what I saw being done:

- The shop roof was repaired and a new drain installed, of the type that should have been used originally, to prevent water build-up and leaks.
- The upstairs floor of the shop, rotted from years of leaks, was rebuilt, and now is secure, dry, usable space.
- A trench for a new water line was dug about 120 yards to the city meter in the street, a new water pipe and two hydrants were installed, and the trench backfilled with gravel.
- The entire interior of coach N&W 537 was repainted, both colors, including the bathroom, and most of the stainless steel trim polished.
- All four tracks of the yard were switched to rearrange equipment more helpfully and to bring the newly acquired express boxcar inside the fence from across Ninth Street.

I'm sure there were other more minor tasks that escape my memory. But I feel this holiday experience is illustrative of the commitment of so many of the Chapter's dedicated volunteers. Many hands make light work. You, too, can volunteer.

We are lucky to have people who regularly show up and staff train rides at VMT and for

the N&W 611 trips. We are lucky to have had a core of volunteers who labored for years in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds to bring in the Virginian Station project.

Here's to our wonderful volunteers and all they do for us! They are pivotal to our success!

Amtrak Station Track and Platform

Work began in early February on the new Amtrak station track and platform in downtown Roanoke on the south side of the Norfolk Southern mainlines along Norfolk Avenue. The new track will have a high-level platform for the new Northeast Regional passenger train service expected to begin this fall. An October startup date has been reported. The new service is an extension of the present Lynchburg train and will depart early in the morning with through service as far north as Boston during the week and New York City on weekends and holidays. The return train from the Northeast will arrive around 10 PM. After unloading passengers the train will be moved to the new servicing facility along Williamson Road.

Amtrak Servicing Facility

Work is complete on the new servicing/maintenance facility between Albemarle Avenue and JK interlocking where the Northeast Regional train will be held overnight when Amtrak service begins later this year. Construction began in September 2016.

Virginia Museum Of Transportation Report

By Bev Fitzpatrick

We continue to be busy at the VMT as we close in on our 611 Trips this year. We started about 30 days ahead of time and are now getting into the advertising and communications functions particu-



Garland Harper of the Blue Ridge Chapter recorded the work beginning on the new platform in Roanoke on February 17.

larly on the trips with the North Carolina Transportation Museum and our two trips out of Greensboro to Roanoke. We are looking forward to having a lot of Roanoke Chapter members onboard helping us with the Greensboro and later trips and appreciate your commitment to these important trips. The "Queen of Steam" has passed her FRA inspection and is close to being ready to get going on her 2017 Season! We will be having a media day on March 23rd at the NCTM. All of you are welcome to join us that day.

Thanks to all of you who helped with the "Train Lovers Day" event. It went well and we had over 1800 folks and were so proud of all we accomplished together. As you know, once we got permission to use the lead track from Wick, our largest attendance is on the days we have you all partnering with us. A great Win Win for the chapter and the museum.

The Museum continues work on several projects:

* We are installing a new video area in the Auto Gallery that will showcase videos

of important folks in the vehicular world just as we have in the Aviation Gallery. Star City Motor Madness is helping fund this exhibit along with some grants we have received for the project. The old Advance Shed is gone next to the garage and it will be installed in that area.

* We are beginning planning for the restoration of a unique rail car at the Museum. More information will be coming soon about this great project and how you can help.

* For those of you who have not been down to the museum lately we have a new Communications and Media Director, Vanessa Mills. She has been working at Virginia Tech and originally is from Seattle. Please come by to meet her when you can. She is working with Walker and Tracy well as their new boss and is fitting right in.

* We had a very good meeting with representatives of the Chapter to discuss the Beltline project and were glad to get a proposal for all of us to review done by Jim Cosby. We had a very productive discussion and hope to continue our talks as we come to an agreement that hopefully will bear fruit in time for both organizations. It will take a lot of investment on both our parts but has the potential to boost both our incomes in the years to come. We believe we can see some possibilities with things like Thomas the Tank Engine and the Polar Express in our futures!

* As you all know the Amtrak Platform is under construction and we are all excited about seeing dirt moving. This required the moving of the David and Susan Goode Railwalk and a lot of exhibits. We have them stored in the rear of the Museum as some of you might have already noticed.

* We have received a wonderful new wagon on loan from the Western Virginia Historical Society. It is from the Kegley family and formerly from Wytheville. It was

rebuilt years ago and has been in the History Museum. We are so glad to have it and hope to have it on display soon.

That is our update for now and thanks for letting us be in the TURNTABLE TIMES. Hope all of you have a great St. Patrick's Day. Come see us in the parade.

611 and VMT

The Roanoke Times (Edited)
Wednesday, December 21, 2016

By Mike Allen

The Virginia Museum of Transportation has released the 2017 excursion schedule for the Norfolk & Western Class J 611 steam engine.

"We're ready to go," said museum spokesman Walker Nelms.

Built in Roanoke in 1950 to pull passenger trains, the 611 is the only remaining steam locomotive in its class. After a \$1 million restoration completed in May 2015, the 611 has attracted thousands of visitors to the Roanoke Valley, and pulled sold-out excursion trains for two years running.

The museum will oversee 10 excursions in April and May. North Carolina Transportation Museum will oversee the first 3 excursions in early April. Tickets are on sale. See the last paragraph for ordering information.

All excursions are round trips. The dates, departure points and destinations are:

- April 8, Spencer, NC, to Lynchburg (full-day trip)
- April 9, Spencer to Charlotte (morning trip)
- April 9, Spencer to Greensboro (afternoon trip)
- April 22, Greensboro, NC, to Roanoke (full-day trip)
- April 23, Greensboro to Roanoke (full-day trip)
- May 6, Lynchburg to Petersburg (full-day trip)
- May 7, Lynchburg to Petersburg (full-day trip)
- May 27, Roanoke to Lynchburg (half-day trip);
Roanoke to Radford (half-day trip)
- May 28, Roanoke to Lynchburg (half-day trip);
Roanoke to Radford (half-day trip)

May 29, Roanoke to Lynchburg (half-day trip);
Roanoke to Radford (half-day trip)

The museum still intends to construct a new building to house and maintain the 611, but that project has been on hold as plans to build an Amtrak boarding platform in Roanoke have gone forward. Ideally, museum director Bev Fitzpatrick said, the facility will allow for "At the Throttle" events similar to those that have been held at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, North Carolina, where patrons have paid \$611 to operate the 611 for a half-hour.

Wednesday, Fitzpatrick said that Norfolk Southern has given the museum the go-ahead to determine a location and get preliminary estimates on any changes to train tracks that might be needed. The museum has about \$1 million saved toward the project.

The question of whether or not the 611 will be able to use the Amtrak platform for excursions appears to have an answer.

Fitzpatrick said the engine will not be able to roll up next to the platform, because it's too wide. However, the passenger cars it pulls match modern specifications, so the 611 could still back the cars up beside the platform for boarding.

"We're just glad that we have an Amtrak station coming," Fitzpatrick said. At present the platform is scheduled for completion in late 2017.

For more information on the 611 and tickets, call 342-5670 or visit vmt.org or FireUp611.org.

Circus Trains To Pass Through Roanoke For The Last Times

The Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey "The Greatest Show on Earth" Blue unit (one of two complete circuses) circus train is scheduled to pass through

Roanoke twice in May, to and from Charleston, West Virginia, the next to last show before shutting down (the Red unit will have already shut down by this time). Coming from Baltimore, Maryland, via Lynchburg, likely on the night of May 1, the mile long train will head toward Bluefield and the round-about route to Charleston via Mullins. Once the circus finishes playing Charleston (May 3 to 7), the Blue unit is scheduled to retrace the route through Roanoke, perhaps late on May 8, and through the Shenandoah Valley, as it heads to New York's Long Island for the "last show."

The Red unit should pass through Roanoke in March enroute from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Norfolk. The circus plays in Norfolk March 23 to 26 and should pass through Roanoke around March 20 or 21.

The circus trains don't move on a precise schedule, as timing depends on how quickly the train is loaded after the last performance and how the railroad handles the train, so the times/dates shown above are a best-guess based on past trips. Routing may also change.

This is the end of an era, since the 1800's, that the circus has traveled by rail. There are a few smaller circuses that have moved by highway for some time and will continue to operate. While the James E. Strates carnival show train continues to use the rails for some performances, only the show's equipment is on the train with all staff traveling by highway.

C&O 1309 Excursion Announced

TRAINS Newswire (Edited)

The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad announced recently that tickets are on sale to ride behind C&O 2-6-6-2 No. 1309 near the July 4th weekend. The railroad urged enthusiasts to purchase their tickets now

for the Allegheny Mountain Express, the 1st train to be pulled by C&O 1309 this summer. The inaugural trip will take place Saturday, July 1 and will feature a round-trip excursion from Cumberland to Frostburg. The train will leave from Cumberland at 9 a.m. and return at 11:45 a.m. There will be a 45 minute layover in Frostburg

The WMSR is confident the 1309 will be under steam before July 1 but is setting that day as the official start date for excursions.

The locomotive, which remains in pieces at the railroad's shops in Ridgeley, West, Va., has been under restoration since July 2014. C&O 1309 was the last locomotive built by Baldwin Locomotive Works for use on a domestic railroad in the U.S. It entered service in September, 1949. For ticket information, go to <http://wmsr.com>

Old Dominion Chapter Excursions From Dilwyn

We are happy to announce that our 2017 operating schedule will be as follows: the spring trips are May 13 (two 1.5 hour trips and one 3.5 hour trip), May 20, and June 3. The last two dates will feature two 3.5 hour trips. The fall dates are October 14th, 21st, and 28th. Each date will feature two 3.5 hour trips. The Santa trains are scheduled for December 2nd and 9th with six 45 minute trips each day. The Tom Mix Rangers will be with us on all spring and fall trips.

Tickets for the spring trips are on sale now, and tickets for the fall and Santa trips will go on sale on or about 6/4. Please join us again this year. www.odcnrhs.org

Boyce Railway Depot Foundation Established

The Boyce Railway Depot Foundation (BRDF) was chartered on January 20th, 2017. It is organized as a non-profit Virginia corporation for preservation of the historic

Norfolk & Western Railway's 1913 train station building and pump house at Boyce, Virginia, on Norfolk Southern's Shenandoah Valley line.

The chief focus during 2017 will be developing a membership base. The first membership meeting at the depot is planned for Sunday afternoon, October 1, 2017. Those who join prior to December 31, 2017, will be designated Founding Charter Members. Annual membership dues are \$10. These funds will be devoted towards completing the Internal Revenue Service's required submission for compliance with Internal Revenue Code 501(C)(3) provisions.

Members and volunteers will initially support grounds-keeping and exterior building maintenance. The longer term vision is for the BRDF to lease the building and grounds, then arrange space rentals for special events and meetings as income sources for preservation efforts.

Come join us! Please write to:
Boyce Railway Depot Foundation
117 East Main Street
Boyce VA 22620-9639

1st Quarter Mixed Freight

By Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Without a doubt my first item to report on is close to my spirit as a railfan deeply attached to the fallen flags. I am sure most of you are already knowledgeable about the fact that CSX SD 40 No. 4617 will be returned to its original C&O livery by CSX at its Cumberland, Maryland, locomotive shop. The locomotive will be restored fully operational as well. It will be turned over to the Buckingham Branch Railroad for regular freight service based out of Charlottesville. It will indeed be a real pleasure to see and hear an authentic C&O Railway locomotive operating over former C&O trackage.

Speaking of the Buckingham Branch Railroad, the two former Southern Railway GP 38-2 engines that were purchased at the Norfolk Southern used locomotive auction held in Roanoke back in August were spotted in Doswell the middle of February. They are currently painted glossy black with small numbers, 14 and 16. There is no Buckingham Branch lettering on the locomotives yet. The high nose has not been chopped.

For some reason, the following did not receive much media coverage. On the very frigid morning of Saturday, February 4th, eastbound Norfolk Southern Railway coal train No. 820 experienced a major derailment in the heart of Suffolk shortly before 7 AM. 44 fully loaded coal gons of the 161-car train spilled an estimated 4,500 tons of coal. There were no reported injuries and a parked car and one house received broken windows from the impact of the spilling coal. Train traffic did not resume thru Suffolk until 2:25 AM the following Monday. A broken rail was the confirmed culprit, probably as the result of the extreme cold temperature that morning.

A few months back, I noted that the Norfolk & Western caboose stationed at the Bowie, Maryland, Railroad Museum had been removed due to its decaying condition. It was wooden and time and the elements had just collected their toll on the car. That caboose was replaced by a Chessie System (B&O) caboose No. C-3842. It came from the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore and arrived in Bowie on September 12, 2016. The caboose is a bay window. Also, this railroad museum located at Bowie next to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor is now named The Huntington Railroad Museum.

Here is my annual calendar recycle alert. Calendars for 1989 and 2006 correspond with the year 2017.

I recently found out that 2016 marked the 50th anniversary for The New River Train excursions that operate each October between Huntington and Hinton, West Virginia. I sure do miss the steam-powered era of these excursions.

This year of 2017 marks a number of railroad related anniversaries. For starters, it marks 50 years since the passing of Mr. F. Nelson Blount, the founder of Steamtown. Ironically, Mr. Blount was killed in an airplane that crashed while he was flying it. On a happier note, 2017 marks the 40th anniversary since the beginning of the runs of The Chessie Steam Specials. Those truly were some highly enjoyable and well-patronized excursions fully enjoyed by the railfans as well as the general public. Former Reading Lines T-1 No. 2101 was the star of these excursions as well as former C&O 4-8-4 No. 614. And yes folks, I still have an official Chessie Steam Special cap that is still in good condition. During this time 30 years ago in 1987, Norfolk & Western class A No. 1218 was being readied for its return to active excursion duties at the former Southern Railway shops in Birmingham, Alabama. I will touch on this and other railroad related anniversaries later this year as 2017 gets closer to the event itself.

When I attended the Second Section of the Grand Reopening of Roanoke's Virginian Railway depot on Saturday, November 12, I got to thinking about what I personally refer to as Roanoke's Railroad Revival. An awful lot of projects and progress has been achieved. Not necessarily in order of occurrence, in 2009 the three steam locomotives that had been deteriorating away for decades at the former Virginian Scrap Iron & Metal Company property in South Roanoke found new homes. Of those three, the No. 1511, an M2c, was donated to the VMT. Hopefully it will be cosmetically restored in the future.

In 2013, Project FIRE UP 611 commenced with enthusiasm that was unheralded. In 2015, 611 made her triumphant return to The Star City. Also, progress was still being made with the Virginian Station restoration, and talk of Amtrak service returning to Roanoke was gaining momentum. If that wasn't enough, Norfolk Southern donated a three-mile industrial line (the Belt Line) within the city limits to the VMT, which was quickly named the Roanoke Southern. It is hoped that excursion service will begin as soon as needed details can be worked out. In 2015, Y6a No. 2156 began a five year visit at the VMT. For the first time in a little over five decades, Roanoke has what many refer to as the Magnificent Three. With Amtrak service expected to return in autumn, with 611 2017 excursions just around the bend, Roanoke's Railroad Revival has clear boards for the time being.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

Regular Meeting Locations are at the O. Winston Link Museum, board meetings at the Virginian Station.

February 16 - General Meeting

March 7 - Board Meeting

March 16 - General Meeting

April 4 - Board Meeting

April 20 - General Meeting

May 2 - Board Meeting

May 18 - General Meeting

June 6 - Board Meeting

June 15 - General Meeting

July 4 - Board Meeting (tentative)

Visit us on the web: www.RoanokeNRHS.org

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