



# The Highball

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER  
of the  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OLD DOMINION CHAPTER



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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual whose byline appears on the article and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Old Dominion Chapter – NRHS.

## Chapter Meeting

Bill Todd

The ODC will feature another vintage archives program on April 16. Charles Curley's program will feature some vintage selections from the Archives including photos by Ed Patterson, Reuben Vaughan, Evan Siler and J.I. Kelly. Meetings start at 7 pm at the museum at 102 Hull St. Please come out to see this history and bring a friend. Refreshments & door prizes.

## Archives Photo

Charles Curley

This month's Archives photo will lead off the program on April 16th. It is a J.I. Kelly shot of Atlantic Coast Line's Q-1 class 2-10-2 #2001 entering Acca yard off the Belt Line. These locomotives were more common further south on the ACL in Georgia and Alabama, but they did operate into Richmond. They were the most powerful steam locomotives that the ACL ever owned. The car behind the tender is an auxiliary water tender.



## From the President

John DeMajo

Remember that our open house evening and silent movie presentation of Buster Keaton's "The General" with Dr. Mark Andersen at the Mighty Wurlitzer, will be held on Friday, April 20th at 7 PM. Seating is limited, so please contact Ned Krack at nedrdgfan@msn.com to reserve seating. There is no charge for the movie, but ALL attendees will pay \$5 admission to the museum

An American Movie Classic

# The General


Starring  
**Buster Keaton**

With live chamber organ accompaniment

One night only! 7:00pm, Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>  
The Richmond Railroad Museum  
102 Hull Street -- Just across the 14<sup>th</sup> St. (Mayo's) Bridge

Don't miss this rare presentation of a classic silent film during one of the biggest stars of the era. *The General* is rated one of the 10 Best Films of All Time. It's action-packed with romance, humor, chase scenes and the most remarkable stunts ever put to film. For this special showing only, *admission, live music theater accompaniment will be provided at the "Mighty Wurlitzer" for the reserved seating. Don't miss this rare silent film with live chamber organ accompaniment from the Radio Classic Club and the Richmond Symphony Orchestra. Stay back in time as we salute *The General*!*

Seating is limited. Make your reservation now by emailing Ned Krack at [nedrdgfan@msn.com](mailto:nedrdgfan@msn.com). There is no additional charge for the movie. (Regular \$5 Museum admission charge applies for all ages.)  
[www.RichmondRailroadMuseum.org](http://www.RichmondRailroadMuseum.org)



## Surcharge for Snail Mail Highball

Kim Young/John DeMajo

Effective with the July issue, anyone who would like to receive a printed copy of **The Highball** must have paid a \$5 surcharge in advance per vote of the board of directors. The preferred method of payment is a check so designated given to Kim Young at a meeting or mailed to ODCNRHS PO Box 3131 Chester VA 23831. Again, this must be received PRIOR to the July publication date (7/16).

We will continue to print a few copies for distribution at the museum.

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### **Dillwyn Work Sessions**

Ned Krack

Work continues on preparing the excursion train for the spring trips. The generator on car 706 has been repaired and is running smoothly when fired up. Much work has been done on the interiors of 706 and car 1006. Seats, flooring and armrests are being repaired, and we are replacing the window sills that were in a state of disrepair. The toilet in 1006 is now working and work continues on other plumbing issues. We have contracted with a local firm to do a thorough cleaning of the inside of both enclosed cars. They will also be doing maintenance after each trip.

The exteriors of both enclosed cars as well as the exterior of the commissary car will be painted in April by the company that does the car painting for the Buckingham Branch Railroad.

Work has also been ongoing with the Moo cars. We have replaced six of the cattle gates and are in the process of painting them safety yellow. The safety signage is also being redone.

There is still a lot of work to be done. We will be having work sessions on Saturday, April 14 and Saturday, April 28. Thank to everyone who has worked so far. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Ned Krack at 804-239-4067 or [nedrdgfan@msn.com](mailto:nedrdgfan@msn.com).

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### **Little Changes at Ashland**

Doug Riddel

(Editor's note: This is a combination of two posts Doug made on Facebook. Even though the second changes some of what is in the first, I left the original intact as it contained important information about rail operations in general.

Although you may not immediately notice it, CSX has made a major change in the speed limit through the town of Ashland, VA. It has replaced the "city ordinance" restriction of 35 MPH Daytime/45 MPH Nighttime, with a "permanent" 35 MPH speed restriction. This is being done to facilitate implementation of PTC on the RF&P Subdivision. PTC will permit only one speed between two fixed points, so the different speeds for night and day are being eliminated, and its classification as a "city ordinance" speed restriction will now be replaced with the designation of a "permanent" restriction.

Permanent speed restrictions are those identified by diamond-shaped signs at the point where the restriction begins and ends. Unlike the "city ordinance" restriction that has historically been in place at Ashland (and in other locations), in which the speed of a train may be increased as soon as the lead locomotive reaches the far end of the limits, "permanent" speed restrictions require the reduced speed to be maintained until the rear of the train has cleared the furthest point at which the restriction applies.

For example, a two-mile-long southbound CSX freight train must be at 35 MPH upon reaching the northmost point of the restriction and may not increase its speed until the rear end has reached the southmost point--about two miles in length. Considering that the combined length of the train and the restriction are four miles, at 35 MPH, the train will occupy the town for roughly seven minutes from the time it enters Vaughn Road until it clears Ashcake Road.

While shorter Amtrak trains (Auto Train being the exception) will see the least delay, the impact caused by longer freight trains running ahead of them will obviously impact running times of Amtrak trains to a degree.

### **Second Thoughts on Ashland**

CSX has had second thoughts about the "permanent" speed restriction for Ashland, and while the speed limit will remain at 35 MPH 24/7, it will revert to a "city ordinance" classification.

For those of you who read my original post, this means that the speed of trains through Ashland will apply to the "head end only." In other words, once the leading end of the movement reaches the far end of the limits, speed is allowed to be increased.

The initial change--a permanent 35 MPH speed restriction--would have required all trains to maintain 35 MPH from the time the engines entered the limits, until the last car exited the far end of the restriction. This would have significantly increased the time that trains would've occupied the town of Ashland and would also have precipitated greater delay to following trains. Permanent speed restrictions usually apply to locations where the normal speed is limited because of a curve or other physical condition that will not permit maximum speed.

Sounds like a win-win for everyone.

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## Pullman Conductor Portrait Card

Brandy Martin

This just surfaced at an antique mall outside of Petersburg. It was taken by the George S. Cook Studio, 913 Main Street, Richmond. There is no name of the subject;. No date, and no negative number to reorder. The Valentine has some Cook negatives and plates, but not searchable given the unknowns here. The lantern appears to be an Adams & Westlake "Pullman" conductor's lantern, introduced about 1895 and still available as late as 1913 (see Richard Barrett's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Railroad Lighting, Vol 1, page 54 ).



## Museum Report

Bob Dickinson

Visitors: 218 (788 year to date)  
Admission charges \$715 (143 "paid" admissions)  
Donations: \$125  
Volunteer hours: 352  
Gift shop sales: \$408.29  
Chapter meeting: 29 attendees

Thanks to all who volunteered during March! We still need a few more volunteers to work as hosts and in the gift shop. New duties for the gift shop "host" now include "collecting" admissions from visitors 14 and over. Of course, chapter members, hosts, and "volunteers" don't need to pay, but if you are bringing someone in for a "regular" tour then the entrance charge of \$5 would normally apply for the visitor. Also, if you have a small group that would like to use the station for a meeting, birthday party etc. during a time that the museum is

not open the building can be "rented" for the \$5 regular admission charge per person. An additional fee for someone from the Chapter to be there would apply unless the person sponsoring the event is a Chapter member or Museum volunteer who would handle unlocking and locking doors and cleaning up the building after the meeting. We could really use a couple of "younger" volunteers who like working with computers to help with train simulator exhibit. Lots of times the hosts are too busy giving tours and don't have time or sometimes the knowledge to help guests that want to operate the simulator. Steve Tarrant continues to work on several outdoor projects that have been delayed due to unfavorable weather. Calvin Boles and John Williams continue to work on updating displays and exhibits. Thanks to Bob Stevens the TV in the waiting room has its own "switched" electrical outlet. The wires hanging down the wall have been eliminated! The "CVRR" modelers are planning to build viewing "stands" so the "little" visitors can see the model trains when they run without having to be held up so see them. Also, the "downtown" streetcars will be running soon on the layout after a few of the "bugs" are worked out. Recently a donation was received from the son of a former RF&P engineering department employee. The donation consisted of 2 wall "crank" telephones (similar to the one already in the stationmaster's office) that were used in stations and buildings on the RF&P.

## Museum Host Schedule

Linda Nelon

|    |                 |           |
|----|-----------------|-----------|
| 7  | Carl Steiner    | Gift Shop |
|    | Calvin Boles    | Host      |
|    | Bob Stevens     | Host      |
| 8  | Linda Nelon     | Gift Shop |
|    | Bill Todd       | Host      |
|    | Wayne Poates    | Host      |
|    | Steve Tarrant   | Floodwall |
| 14 | Ned Krack       | Gift Shop |
|    | Kim Young       | Host      |
|    | Calvin Boles    | Host      |
| 15 | Erwin White     | Gift Shop |
|    | Robert Williams | Host      |
|    | Bill Todd       | Host      |
| 21 | Ned Krack       | Gift Shop |
|    | Sam Williamson  | Host      |
|    | Calvin Boles    | Host      |
|    | Greg Hodges     | Host      |
|    | Bill Taylor     | Host      |

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|----|--------------------------------|-----------|
|    | Tim Torez                      | Host      |
| 22 | Ned Krack                      | Gift Shop |
|    | Charles Curley                 | Host      |
|    | John McKenna                   | Host      |
| 28 | Greg Hodges                    | Gift Shop |
|    | Stanley Clark                  | Host      |
|    | Ray Potter (11-1:30 tentative) | Host      |
|    | Jack Newsom (1:30-4)           | Host      |
| 29 | Ned Krack                      | Gift Shop |
|    | Bob Dickinson                  | Host      |
|    | Steve Tarrant                  | Host      |

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### Updates to Trip Entertainment

Dave Coldron

Please see flyer below and distribute as you can.

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### Railroading Today

Gerry Grosshans

There still appears to be quite a bit of trackwork in the area with a lot of temporary speed reductions and sporadic work on grade crossings. Old Lane crossing is still awaiting work, and while there is some equipment on site, there is an odd number of panels for crossing replacement, but one can still park there without any problems. I took my car for state inspection at the auto complex off of Woods Edge Road (Walthall) and saw that the crossing there has been replaced. I believe the crossing at the Highway Department facilities just south of there is either done or in progress. I noted that there are some rubber inserts for crossing work piled up at Walmsley Boulevard, and I have come to the conclusion that the clearing located between Walmsley and the overpass just south of there seems to be a staging area for supplies.

Several weeks ago, I was at Collier Yard and noted a number of smaller machines for trackwork gathered at the north end of the yard - regulators and a number of machines built out of repurposed excavators (mostly John Deer). I would assume that the trackage south of Collier should be OK as I believe the old tracks were reworked when the second main was restored. I might add that when I was there a number of grain trains were heading south using both mains.

On Easter Sunday I again "went south" and due to the large number of cars and people I went all of the way to Carson, a neat little place! What passes as downtown there consist of the library (with an old N&W caboose in use) and a grain elevator being repurposed on one side of the tracks and the

Post Office and bank one the other. After seeing him several times, a deputy sheriff stopped to see if I was OK, and we had a cordial conversation. He said that rail fans are always welcome there. After returning to the Collier area, I noted a string of cars with large pipes like they use on pipelines, nine to a car. Soon a northbound manifest stopped and left a few cars and picked up the cars with pipes. He also had a number of cars of pipe in his consist and his back and forth movement caused me to lose track of the number of cars of pipe in total. It may have been as high as two dozen. He finally headed north and right on his tail, local F712 left for work here at Fanshaw, so I returned to Richmond. The local made good time I pulled off JD onto Elliham Road. just North of the Defense center and after turning around saw his headlight approaching the signal at north Bellwood yard. My scanner was working half-way, and I believe after crossing the Appomattox bridge that the manifest went by track 1 (I heard the DD announce him.) and F712 took track 2.

The Railserve locomotive at the ethanol facility is not the only RRSX locomotive. The Ardinger's index of transactions in **Railfan & Railroad** showed about a dozen from that business active. At least one columnist seems to believe that CSX is on the rebound although there are still a number who are bad-mouthing and forecasting doom and gloom. A good place to watch trains is at the Petersburg (Ettrick) train station, plenty of room and "facilities"!

In what may be an unusual decision, NS is rebuilding the old SD8Q units from the Conrail breakup (remember they got the CSX share) using rebuilt 20-cylinder 710 two stroke powerplants and other upgrading, to get a unit of about 5500 hp. All of the other railroads with the larger units have stored them or are downpowering them. In fact, NS has been rebuilding and depowering the old SD9043 units acquired from UP into SD 70 equivalents.

It's been over a month since I saw a doublestack train, but there is still single level intermodal and the occasional Tropicana cars attached. Looking into the containers I have been told that the dark blue ones labeled U MAX are either owned by UP or by a group which UP controls. If you see containers labeled UPSU they are united parcel service (UPS) and I understand that FEDEX is also using containers in addition to trailers. By the way, the "U"

on the ownership is an identifier just as the X is for non-railroad traincars .

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. I have very reluctantly decided that I cannot efficiently serve as a museum host any longer. I have been hobbling around with a walker and have had a couple of family matter needing attention. For those who have never hosted, please give it a try. Now that we are charging admission, we need all of the

help we can get. And, if you have not been on Hull Street between the river and JD Cowardin, things have changed. A larger and more modern McDonalds, several other places to eat, especially pizza. and traffic flow has improved. Above all it is now a very safe and upscale area, with even a Mosque just east of the library!



# RAILROAD THROUGH TIME!

Memories of Buckingham County come to life aboard the *Virginia Springtime Specials*. Rail passengers are immersed in authentic period performances capturing the style and sounds of an era gone for over 100 years.

## SATURDAY, MAY 12<sup>th</sup> *The 1860's*

The Wild West was never any wilder than these rail trips through time! Trains were prime targets of outlaws after the Civil War. But, no fear, you will be well protected by the trusty Tom Mix Rangers as you pass through the exact spot where the Virginia slate industry began in 1867. Keep an eye out for more time travelers as your train rolls on down the tracks.

## SATURDAY, MAY 19<sup>th</sup> *The 1880's*

America and Buckingham County became a bit more civilized toward the end of the 1800's - squarely in the middle of the Victorian era. This weekend, we surround you with the fashions and the customs of the time. Think Charles Dickens and PT Barnum. And, don't be surprised if your hosts need your help in solving a railroad mystery!

## SATURDAY, June 2<sup>nd</sup> *The 1920's*

Rail travel in the "Roaring 20's" was at its most extravagant peak. Both enclosed passenger cars on the Springtime Special date to this era. Babe Ruth, Flappers and swing music were just the opposite of the stodgy Victorian times. Live large and love life as we Ramble through the History of America and Buckingham County like real rail barons.



# RAMBLES

OLD DOMINION NRHS

## TRIP SCHEDULE

### Saturday 5/12

- ♦ 9:30a-11:00a – 90-minute trip - Great for the kids
- ♦ 11:30a-1:00p – Another awesome 90-minute trip
- ♦ 1:30p-4:30p – All 3-hour trips cross James River Bridge

### Saturday 5/19

- ♦ 9:30a-12:30p – All 3-hour trips cross the James River Br.
- ♦ 1:30p-4:30p – All 3-hour trips cross the James River Br.

### Saturday 6/2

- ♦ 9:30a-12:30p – All 3-hour trips cross the James River Br.
- ♦ 1:30p-4:30p – Last Spring trip to the James River Bridge

*Don't be disappointed, get your tickets now:*

**Adults - \$26 (\$15 for 90 min. trips)**

**Children - \$13 (\$8 for 90 min. trips)**

*Children's tickets are for ages 2-12.*

*Under 2 without a seat, no charge.*

**Train trips begin and end at**

**👉 Dillwyn, VA station 👈**

**About an hour from Richmond**

**For Tickets, Directions and info:**

**[www.odcnrhs.org/excursions](http://www.odcnrhs.org/excursions)**

**Note:** All seating is on first-come basis at boarding location. You'll choose from open-air, open window or enclosed coaches. Expect occasional loud noises, frequent laughter & moving scenery. Snacks and souvenirs will be sold on the train.

**ODCNRES**  
**PO Box 3131**  
**Chester VA**  
**23831**