



The Highball



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
of the
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

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Chapter Meeting

Kim Young

The July meeting of the Old Dominion Chapter WILL NOT be held at Hull St. Station. Instead, we will hold our 2017 annual picnic and social gathering on the evening of Monday, July 17th at Ashland Coffee and Tea, located on Railroad Avenue in Ashland, VA.

As part of the program, The Ashland Museum, located across the street, will open their doors for an exclusive tour for our group at 5:15PM. At 6 PM, we will meet at Ashland Coffee and Tea for dinner in their meeting room, and then train watching until 8 PM. AC&T is normally closed on Mondays, but this will be an exclusive party just for ODC members and their friends and families. Tiny Tim's will also be open for any of our members who wish to do some shopping while in the area.

Reservations are required. Meal cost is \$15. Please send reservation requests and checks to cover meals to ODCNRHS PO Box 8583 Richmond, VA. 23226-8583 or contact Ned Krack at nedrdgfan@msn.com or 804 239 4067. Deadline is July 13.

Menu: Barbeque pulled pork and potato salad, green tossed salad, corn muffins, brownies, iced tea, coffee or lemonade

Museum Host Schedule

Linda Nelon

1	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Bill Taylor	Host
	Bob Stevens	Host
2	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Stanley Clark	Host
	Steve Tarrant	Host
8	Greg Hodges	Gift Shop
	Ned Krack	Host
	Calvin Boles	Host
9	Linda Nelon	Gift Shop

	Bob Williams	Host
	Wyane Poates	Host
	Steve Tarrant	Floodwall
	Ned Krack	Floodwall
15	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Kim Young	Host
	Bob Dickinson	Host
16	Greg Hodges	Gift Shop
	Tom Emory	Host
	Bill & Ann Todd	Host
22	Ervin White	Gift Shop
	Jack Newsom (11-1:30)	Host
	Jim Lewis (1:30-4)	Host
	Ned Krack	Host
23	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Charles Curley	Host
	Ray Potter	Host
29	Linda Nelon	Gift Shop
	Stanley Clark	Host
	Bob Stevens	Host
30	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Bob Dickinson	Host
	Jerry Grosshans	Host
	TBA	Host

Raise the Roof

Ray Potter

On June 21st roof restoration work started on the 100-year old Hull Street Station. Although the outer portion of the roof is made of individual clay tiles which are impervious to weather, the wood that comprises the supporting structure is subject to rot and decay over time. The tiles on the Railroad Museum are called a "French Pattern" and are manufactured by the more than 100-year old Ludovici Company of Ohio. These are the same tiles used on Richmond's Main St. Station roof. The company still has the molds and can make new tiles if needed.

Our restoration work is being performed by the Paul Saunders Roofing Company of Richmond. The bid price was \$6,886 plus \$47 labor for each tile that has to be replaced. The Museum has a number of spare tiles on hand that were excess from the last work on Main St. Station. The main wood being replaced is the “nailers” forming the roof peaks and ridges according to Steve Tarrant, Museum volunteer overseeing this job. Nine bullet holes were found in the roof when the contractor started work. Other bullet holes have been found in the station over the years.

This work is expected to be completed this 4th of July week. Having a water-tight roof will ensure a dry Museum with protected displays for years to come. Funds to pay for this restoration work comes from Museum visitor donations, proceeds from our spring and fall excursions on the Buckingham Branch Railroad, and insurance claims for storm damage.



Portion of Railroad Museum tile roof showing tiles and wood ridge nailers. The brick pattern on the walls of the station is called “Flemish Bond.”

July Archives Photo

Charles Curley

The US Army Transportation Corps had steam operations at Ft. Eustis well into the 1960's. Before that era in 1957, we see 2-8-0's #610 and #606 steamed up. One with passenger equipment and one with freight equipment. Photo by Evan Siler.



Prayers and Good Wishes

Linda Nelson

We wish Finola Steiner a speedy recovery from her surgery.

Our heartfelt prayers and thoughts go out to Jim Lewis who lost his youngest son, David.

Richmond Railroad Museum Report for June 2017

Bob Dickinson

Visitors: 239 (1,668 total for year so far)

Donations: \$330.00

Volunteer hours: 333

Gift shop sales: \$581.88

Chapter meeting attendance: 23

Caboose birthday party – June 24th 20 attendees (Cost to rent caboose for events is usually \$25 per hour. Contact Ned Krack to reserve and verify cost if interested in rental.)

Updates: The roofers have been working on replacing the deteriorated “nailers” along the peaks of the roof. They have also found several of the roof tiles damaged by bullets! Work is expected to be completed soon. Calvin Boles has made a few additional improvements to the lighting for exhibits in the freight room. Work is still underway on the new steps for the boxcar. Thanks to James Dunlap for carpentry work and to John DeMajo for donating supplies. Also thanks to Tedd Hensley at CSX for donation of “Safetran” color dwarf signal. This was one that was formerly used near the Amtrak station on the old “RF&P”. It has four colors -red, green, amber, and “lunar” white. It has four bulbs inside and is unique as it uses “fiber optic” cable to get the light from the bulb and filter to the output lens with no moving parts inside. We have a mechanical “searchlight” signal that actually moves the correct color filter in front of the light bulb. They will both be operating and on display soon. What’s the “lunar white” signal for? It is used at the Amtrak station to allow passenger trains to s-l-o-w-l-y proceed thru what would normally be a “red” signal and pull into the station closely behind another train already there. Sometimes the lunar indication for the station can be seen from the Hermitage road crossing just north of the station. Help needed for projects: There are several items on display in the Stationmasters office (to start with) that we need information about such as the scale, the desk with the disappearing typewriter, the order

hoops etc. What kind of information? Manufacturer, date, perhaps a catalog showing it and similar items. Information would be used on "tags" on each of the items to tell their story.

The next museum committee meeting will be on a Saturday morning - probably on August 12th. All interested are invited to attend.

First Annual Train Day

David Coldren

Train Day 2017 is coming to the Richmond Railroad Museum on Saturday, September 23rd. Plans are being made to bring entertainment, food, scale models, rides for the kids and full-sized railroad equipment to the Museum from 9am to 3pm. This comes on the weekend following the Field Day of the Past. So, we will have plenty of opportunity to get the word out and make it a big success.

We hope that the fun and interesting programs for the whole family will draw lots of first-time visitors to the Museum and the Chapter. This is also our chance to raise awareness of the importance of programs like Operation Lifesaver and our excursion trains. We may not quite top Ashland for the biggest rail event of the year. But, we want to give Richmond a day to be proud of.

Circle the date on your calendar because there will be something for all of our members to do as we show off our facility and collections. Dave Coldren is chairing the Train Day committee. Contact him at 571-364-5069 or david.coldren@cbre.com with questions or suggestions.

South Richmond Railfanning

Gerry Grosshans

I can generally depend on some sort of action whenever I leave the museum, especially on Fridays, and June 30 was no exception. I noted a lineup of maintenance equipment at Fanshaw, but continued to Centralia where the usual evening Amtraks made their appearances, followed by several freights in both directions as well as F712 for Fanshaw. Shortly after he passed Q136 went by, and I heard a horn in the distance, south at Chester. I waited to see what was coming, only to witness a car heading for Chester Road, making an abrupt left turn at the crossing, right onto track#1. Having heard the horn, I immediately called 911 on my cell phone describing what was happening and advising the operator of the approaching train. She asked me

to stay on the line to advise if the northbound hit the car, which he did not appearing to miss by about a foot. By that time an officer was on the scene and several others rapidly appeared as well as several CSX personnel. At the same time, I noticed a number of people on foot arriving from the north. Meanwhile a tow truck came and moved the car, which was operable, so I waited to see what happened next. The whole group of pedestrians headed north along with the CSX personnel and at least three officers. During this time, I heard one of the CSX persons calling to halt traffic. Maybe a quarter hour later several pickups with trailers arrived from the north carrying a number of ATVs, I counted at least 8, and they parked effectively blocking me in. Paperwork was changing hands so I am certain that some citations here handed out. About a half dozen folks gathered near the front of my car, all speaking Spanish, and they started to depart. The officers finally approached me with word to the effect asking my involvement in the whole episode. I advised that I was train watching and that I made the original 911 call, for which I was roundly thanked. I took this opportunity to discuss the who situation (more on this follows) and shortly was alone when a train of Herzog ballast hoppers moved south, he having been stopped at either FA or more likely Quartermaster, until being cleared to proceed south. The F712 came by, returning to Collier and a long coal train went south with two units up front and a DPU on the rear. I waited a while but saw nothing else nor did I hear any radio traffic, so I went home, all of this covering about three hours.

I mentioned conversing with the officers and CSX personnel. CSX usually drives a piece of old rail vertically into the ground, or I should say two of those rails, and at one time cable or chains were strung between them cutting off access to the trackside roads but most of them are gone and the white paint and no trespassing wording on the rails are mostly worn off. When encountering this do not proceed beyond the rails or get closer to the track than the outside of the two vertical rails. Where I was parked and usually sit is perfectly fine, with the police, CSX and the Verizon folks who maintain the installation there

CSX is working over the crossing on the Bellwood line, reaching Dale Avenue by the 4th of July as they work toward the north. The maintenance equipment (See photo below.), new ties and ballast make it look like the Bellwood trackage is going to

be well worked over, and the same appears for the Hopewell and Wheelright tracks where they leave the north end of Bellwood Yard.

I mentioned several times about the new signals on the Bellwood line and it appears that the new set-up includes a signal head with four lamps at the Commerce Road (South Richmond) installation. I do not know the colors, but assume that at least one is duplicated, unless a lunar (white) is included with the red, amber and green expected.

As for my personal observations about CSX and its operations now that Hunter Harrison is running the show, it appears that the trains may actually be shorter, and as I have no access to the freight schedules I cannot say if the runs are faster or slower, but it seems as the single level intermodals that used to dodge the Amtraks between 5pm and 7:30 are not running then. Q136 now usually appears before total darkness falls (earlier north of the city, naturally), but I have only caught a single Q135 (if that was what I saw), few containers and a long line of empties. I did see an example of a new car, prototype or a new series, much like a combination of a lumber/building materials car with a depressed center flat, adding another layer for cargo between the wheelset locations. I have not seen any of the long empty auto racks, either. Out of all of this did Cindy get a promotion? I believe she is the highest-ranking female in railroading. Both TRAINS and TRP have extensive coverage of the circus trains in their current issues, TRP covering the history of such operations and TRAINS covering the final runs.

One thing I have noticed is that there are a few more foreign locomotives in use (See Richard Todd's photos.), one evening seeing two trains within 15 minutes, both being headed up by new UP power. And there have been a few of the colorful Citirail leasers, too. I did see a new UP ET model on NS several weeks ago, but that carrier seems to have more foreign power that does CSX.

It may sound funny coming from someone with only one good ear, but you can railfan pretty well by sound. Amtraks, old GE's, EMD and the new GE's all seem to have different horns for the most part. And, the large flats which haul the big garbage containers seem to roll quieter (fewer flat spots) than most freight cars. I've seen some Amtrak trains noisier than them. This goes for both the orange and green outfits. (I'm not sure of the names) Also, of late the green outfit seems to carry as a third unit a GP38 or Butthead next to the flats

I have a CSX locomotive roster as of January 1, but it's in such poor shape I cannot copy it. I am working on it. Several things of note, most of the CW60's have apparently been reduced in power and are in fact stored. All 4 axle and conventional GE units are also off of the roster.



CSX maintenance of way equipment in the Bellwood Yard. Kim Young



On 6/20/17 I photographed a westbound empty grain train crossing over from the "S" line to the Buckingham Branch C&O line with a set of BNSF (4597 C44-9W leading) and one NS GE in downtown Richmond. Richard Todd



Here is a new comer to the NS yard in Richmond. On July 1st I photographed NS 5113 waiting for its next call to duty. The unit is a rebuilt gp38-2 with a new admiral cab from Juniata Shops in May 2015. The unit was converted from a former Southern Rwy hi nose long hood forward unit.



CN 8866 SD70M-2 in the engine facility at Newport News, VA on 06/24/2017 waiting for the next empty hopper train heading back to WV for some black diamonds.

Snapshots

Doug Riddell

I often comment that my grandfather's gold Hamilton Railway Special was with me the first day I showed up for work on the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad, and that I carried it with my last trip as engineer of Amtrak's Silver Star, between Washington, DC, and Richmond, VA. While that old biscuit might have been a necessity (and I was obligated to carry a card with me, testifying that it had received its annual inspection by a certified railroad watch inspector), having a standard railroad grade watch was more symbolic than anything else. Like so much else that was part of my railroad world on May 23, 1977, when I answered the call to work a 6:30 AM yard job as a switchman at the former Seaboard Air Line's Brown Street Yard (including the yard itself), I could never have predicted the changes I would see when I registered off for the final time on the night of December 18, 2012. I wish I had a snapshot, that would freeze in time, every aspect of the life I lived, and the momentous changes that took place.

Looking back, I can understand the perplexities of the "old heads" with whom I worked then—former Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line employees—who lamented how the railroad was "going to hell in a hand basket" hiring people like me, who appeared on the property with a railroad hat on my head that bore a logo (SCL), and a camera over my shoulder (Canon Ftb). "That damn hat, SCL, is an insult to us over here at Brown Street," I was told. "It means, still coast line." Having written a book in 1999 (*From The Cab, Stories From A Locomotive Engineer*), I won't repeat those tales. They're fairly well known.

Today's railroaders are just as likely to sit around and discuss where they got their college degree as the experienced railroaders of my youth were to complain about their days in the armed forces during WWII. Facing seasonal layoffs, most of the old men had second jobs—painters, carpenters, auto mechanics—to supplement their unemployment. Some didn't know how to read or write. Today's men (and women) in the operating ranks of both freight and passenger railroads, spend their off time working from home on their computers, although for the most part, with reduced crew sizes, there are few layoffs, and in fact, all too often, a shortage of manpower.

The computer has changed the railroad as much, if not more than the diesel locomotive that replaced the steam engine, because technology has seeped into every aspect of the industry, from operations and maintenance to clerical and dispatching. CSX has just announced that it intends once again to dispatch its entire system from the same building in Jacksonville, FL, that it abandoned only ten years ago "to allow dispatchers to be more familiar with their territory." It's surprised me that some enterprising chief executive hasn't attempted to

outsource his railroad's dispatching chores to a call center overseas. There's really no barrier (other than the unions) which stands in the way.

Computers allow a dispatcher to do *everything*, literally. In 1977, when operation was by timetable and train order, with that vaunted standard railroad timepiece, only operators were permitted to copy a train order from a train dispatcher. If there was no other option, a conductor or other rules qualified member of the crew, was given a full day's pay to do so. We'd race to the nearest wayside railroad phone, ring up the dispatcher, give him our name and ID number—so we'd be properly compensated, and copy everything he said, word for word, letter by letter. But then, like the book of operating rules and the employee timetable, train orders had to be perfect. When two trains were barreling toward each other, it was imperative that everyone had a proper understanding as to who was to take the siding, and who would occupy the main line.

I never thought twice about operating over "dark" territory—with no form of wayside signals, like the former SAL Portsmouth Subdivision, between Garysburg, NC and Shops Yard in Portsmouth. Everyone knew exactly what they were supposed to be doing, what time it was—to the second, who had to be in the clear, when, and what to do in the event that something went wrong. When something *did* go wrong, you ran back (and ahead) of your train with a lighted fusee (flare), torpedoes (small packs of explosives, that you could tie to the top of the railroad to give an audible signal to a train to stop or slow down)—and you used them to protect your train from a head-on or a rear end collision. Everyone took their job seriously. Their lives depended on it.

The railroad rule book specifies the priority of one train over another by right, class and direction. There were regular trains, extra trains and sections of trains. Today's railroaders have no idea what right, class and direction mean, and worse still, what importance they hold. If there were to be a power failure, a good many of them wouldn't know what to do or who to call. And it's not their fault. Why teach an operating system that is no longer used. Time table and train order operation belonged to railroading prior to radio communication. There were no cell phones, no internet. Train orders are no longer copied on flimsy onion skin paper with a clearance card stapled to it, handed up by an operator on a hoop; they are spit out of a printer in the crew room of some sign-up location, hundreds of miles away from the dispatching center, where a train dispatcher watches over electronic screens that allow him (or her) to direct and keep track of scores of train movements that once required two or three employees. And yes, there is such a thing as "auto pilot," for lack of a better term, that if allowed to do so, would determine routes and meets without interference from human hands.

While the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requires that a railroad official must test operating employees on their efficiency, and their willingness to comply with the rules periodically to remain certified, modern electronic monitoring actually permits a train master or road foreman to call up data from the locomotive engineer's dashboard display (even viewing the forward-facing camera to see what the engineer sees). CSX has, in fact, done away with the job of the road foreman of engines, putting all of the work on the train master. NS monitors the performance of their engineers, disciplining them for failing to operate their trains in a manner that conserves fuel. As railroad employees will testify, they truly *are* subject to the purview of "big brother."

Technology however, is a two-edged sword. The forward-facing camera has proved to be a valuable tool. While it was intended to empirically determine such things as claims of signal malfunctions or missed instructions, in the case of incidents where rules violations have been asserted, those same cameras can, and do provide some degree of protection for the railroad against litigation by persons whose vehicles have been struck by trains, who state without reservation, that crossing gates and lights didn't activate, or that the engineer failed to blow the locomotive horn or ring its bell. Not so welcomed is the FRA's position that the railroad is within its rights to place inward facing

cameras in the cab that enables real time monitoring of employees, resulting in complaints that it violates personal privacy.

I don't have to wonder what "Taterhead" Peele, "Rosie" Griffin, "Rough Nuts" Hayes, or some of my other mentors would have to say if they were called to work that 6:30 AM yard job on today's railroad. Without a doubt, they'd go about their job, just as they did back in 1977, and they'd still be complaining that "the railroad is going to hell in a hand basket."



ODCNRES
PO Box 3131
Chester VA
23831