

The Highball

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER of the NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OLD DOMINION CHAPTER



Volume 57 March 2017

Number 4

odcnrhs.org

Monthly Meeting

Bill Todd

The monthly meeting of the ODC will be held at 7 pm on Monday, 3/20 at Hull Street Station. TTX Business Car Special, 1995 will be shown again. This was first presented about 12 years ago at Broad Street Station when we met there, but we have several new members since then plus older members who now attend, we will take this eight day ride again. The eleven ATSF cars originated in Chicago destined to LA, then Oakland and finally back via ATSF-UP-C&NW. New ATSF engines to Stockton then UP e-units on at Salt Lake City with C&NW GE power to their station in the "Windy City." This also represents a follow up to Doug Riddell's interesting article on "Office Cars." Inspection stops included yards in KC, Barstow & North Platte plus RR Museums in Sacramento, Potola & Chevenne. Also, harbor tours in LA & San Francisco (aboard FDR's yacht "Potomac."

President's Message

John DeMajo

Over this past month, the board and I have been busy trying to get some much needed projects off the ground. We are currently looking at some options to improve the appearance of the station property, and we have also put together the budget for the new fiscal year. We received word recently that the IRS has removed the penalty that we were facing when they erroneously claimed that our tax return was not filed on time. Ned now has a letter from IRS stating that we owe them nothing from that earlier claim.

A visit to the station will illustrate the great job that Calvin is doing as our Curator of Exhibits. He has now replaced the display board that held our Hallsboro photos, with a new clean exhibit that matches our other four new displays. Calvin is also working on a streetcar exhibit. We are looking for anyone with body and fender repair experience and tools, who could assist Calvin with the restoration of a streetcar front panel that we have had in storage. If you can help with that, please contact Calvin. Hopefully, we will be able to report on substantial progress in some other areas by next month.

Membership/Highball

Kim Young

At the request of several members, I would like to clarify a few things about memberships. First and foremost, the chapter is no longer involved in collecting national dues. For a brief time, I was getting a list of which chapter members had also joined national, but that has not happened for quite some time. Now that national membership is no longer a requirement in the by-laws, this information is not relevant to chapter operations. Also, our membership year runs from 1/1 - 12/31, but we follow national's long-standing policies that anyone joining after 9/1 of one calendar year is considered a member through the end of the next calendar year. We also do not take any action to remove members from the roster until 3/31. I will remove from the snail mail Highball list any member who does not renew by that date. Related to that, we have made great progress in shifting members from snail mail to email and would like to continue in that direction. Members receiving by email get their several days before the snail mail edition and their pictures in color. It is sent as a pdf which can easily be printed if one needs a hard copy, so if you are currently not on the email list please make every effort to switch over to it.

Night of Slides

Robin Shavers

There will be a night of slides at the Orange VA depot/visitors' center on Sat. 4/1. The presentations begin at 7 pm, and anyone is free to present his/her slides. You may bring your own snacks and non-alcoholic beverages.

April Archives Photo

Charles Curley

Chesapeake and Ohio Allegheny class 2-6-6-6 is seen in this undated J I Kelly shot, probably at White Sulphur Springs WV.



Spring Trips Set Ned Krack

The Chapter will be offering seven trips this May and June on the Virginia Springtime Special. On May 13th, we will have two 1.5 hour trips from Dillwyn to Johnson and return at 9:30 and 11:30. An afternoon trip will depart Dillwyn at 1:30 pm for the James River at New Canton and return. On May 20th and June 3rd there will be two round trips, 9:30 and 1:30, to New Canton. Help is needed on all trips. To volunteer, please contact Ned Krack at 804-239-4067 or nedrdgfan@msn.com.

Museum, Archives, Hallsboro

Bob Dickinson

Museum Report

Museum visitors for February were 257 and so far for this year total 490.

Museum gift shop sales: \$183.42, Donations: \$220.00

31 visitors at the February Chapter meeting which included a great program!

There is a new and updated display board in place about the Chapters Hallsboro maintenance and storage yard located in western Chesterfield County. Please take a look at it the next time you visit the museum. Many thanks go to Calvin Boles who put together the display. Many more thanks to those who made donations to pay for it! Many visitors to the museum have seen the ex-C&O signal that is installed next to the boxcar but there is a little more to the story. It recently came to light that the signal came from Newport News Virginia – Mile post CA 16.7 on the peninsular subdivision At Haperville road. It would be great to have a photo showing it in its original location should someone have one to share with us.

is being used in cataloging the ODC collection of artifacts. Photos of various items and information have already been entered into our database by Megan - who is interning at the museum. The track motorcar and trailer that are stored outside at the museum both have new heavy tarps to help protect them from the weather. A lightweight metal frame with an a-frame plywood roof was built over the motorcar and the new 10 mil tarp installed over it. Thanks to Bob Stevens and Wally Winn for helping with this project.

The Chapter has purchased some new software that

Alan Cox – president of the ODC Modelers reports they have begun a new track maintenance program. The track will be cleaned every Saturday morning to keep the trains running smoothly. Also recently new lighted signs were added around the layout. They are on a timer so no action is required to turn them on or off.

There is a new item on the desk in the stationmaster's office. John DeMajo has connected a new audible oscillator to the Vibroplex "speed key" that is on display. This generates sounds like those used on "radio telegraph" rather than the sounders used on the regular telegraph instruments. The code for each is also a little different. Hosts need to plug and unplug from power each day.

Archives Report

New boards for the metal shelving in the boxcar were salvaged from the old display boards that were retired from the museum. This will finally give more desperately needed storage space. Next job inside the boxcar is to sort out all of the material on the floor and put it on the shelves. A good "load" of old magazines have been relocated to the ODC archives at the 3600 building to free up more space

in the baggage car. Still needed is help to identify locations and items shown in thousands of slides and photographs!

Hallsboro Yard

Due to recent vandalism much effort has been expended at the ODC storage yard to better secure the fence and equipment. Fence mending is continuing where man and nature have made it easier to enter the property. Several trees have been removed from the fence after they have fallen during storms. Some holes in the fence have been repaired where purposely cut by intruders! New locks and other security will soon be installed on some cars and equipment. Thanks to Devin Gray and Wally Winn for their efforts. One of the victims of the vandalism was our 1904 ex-RF&P caboose. One of the cupola windows was broken out in an attempt to enter the car. The cost of the replacement glass was about \$30, but the labor involved is much more costly. The Chapters goal is to preserve the equipment and it is very disappointing to all of us that our valuable time and resources have to be used for repairing vandalism.

Museum Host Schedule

Ned Krack

- 4 Ned Krack Gift Shop Bob Stevens Host Chuck Breeden Host
- 5 Ned Krack Gift Shop Steve Tarrant Host Doug Riddell Host
- 11 Ned Krack Gift Shop Calvin Boles Host VACANT
- 12 Greg Hodges Gift Shop Jack Newsom Host Jim Lewis Host
- 18 Greg Hodges Gift Shop Ned Krack Host
 - Bill Taylor Host
- 19 Carl Steiner Gift Shop Charles Curley Host Bob Williams Host
- 25 Linda Nelon Gift ShopWayne Poates HostNed Krack Host
- Ned Krack Gift ShopBob Dickinson HostJerry Grosshans Host

Railroading Today

Gerry Grosshans

On the local scene...I have not caught F724 for a considerable time. It may not be running daily any longer. I did catch it several times around the beginning of the month, and both time sit was without the old decrepit caboose used as a shoving platform for the move to Walmsley Blvd. (FA). Once may be a problem with the equipment, but twice..... Also, for the first time I can recall, I saw a F-712 running on a Sunday...had seven cars, too. If anyone wonders how the cars for Goodwyn are handled at the south end of Bellwood yard, F-712 leaves Collier with Goodwyn's cars at the head end. Upon arrival at Fanshaw, the locomotive runs around the train, working from the rear for set-offs and pick-ups at Fanshaw. When the train is ready t o return to Collier it heads south wit h the Goodwyn cars now at the rear. Upon arrival at Bellwood, if Goodwyn has any empties, they are removed and the train then backs the loads into Goodwyn's siding, which can hold at least two cars. After Goodwyn is handled, the EOT is put on the rear and it is a straight shot back to Collier. F-712 has been using several combinations of power. Of late the most frequent is a set of a GP38 and GP40, although either can appear by itself. If one unit, it usually runs long end front out of Collier. At one time a slug set was used but I have not seen such in

The other local, F-705 (the Hopewell train) I have not seen in a couple months. When I see a green signal at the north end of the Bellwood yard it has been an empty Wheelright coal train Sometimes there is a bit of excitement, one evening recently, at about twilight, I was sitting at Centralia when a car on Old Lane slowed down for the crossing, the car following him, not so much and there was a rear-ender right on the tracks. The first car was pushed almost to Chester Road, the other one was dead on the tracks. I called 911 to report this and while speaking to the dispatcher, the culprit managed to fire up his jalopy and get off of the crossing. Eventually several officers arrived to sort out the mess. I drove over the crossing to see if there was any damage but saw none. The occupants, of which there were several, appeared to be Hispanic. I could hear them but not understand. CSX is supposed to have gotten rid of all old GE conventional cab units, including some B20-8's, which were described as B40-8's which were

reduced in power. As I mentioned a while ago, I am wondering how t he power reduction was handled. The original GE powerplant (7FDL or FDL7) when first used on the old U25 series was 2500 hp which gradually got up to 4400. So, if the resulting B20 locomotives only put out 2000 hp I seriously wonder how they managed to run, since most power reduction are by changing the fuel settings. I have never heard anything about a prime mover transplant

The little shortline, Pickens (PICK) has acquired at least one B-20 to go with the old U18's they operate, so maybe we'll find out eventually. In the last month I have seen only two double-stacks, both going east (or south) but did see a baretable train, probably Q139 at about 9:15 one evening. While it was going west/north, a long DUPX coal train came south and the two of them kept the Old Lane and Centralia Road crossings well tied up for quite a spell.

As for the trains themselves, they certainly are longer and I have noticed what appears to be more lumber and building materials being shipped, not only dimensional lumber but plywood, sheet rock and other paneling. There are still the single-level trains going south, sometimes three or so in an hour, one of which returns the Tropicana empties south. I have also noticed an increase in the number of liquid-holding tanks, adapted with framework to be used on container trains, first came the 20 foot ones and now increasingly 40 foot setups Several train-vehicle collisions have recently made the news. A FrontRunner train in Utah apparently failed to set off crossing signals and numerous photographs show the train hitting a semitrailer just as the gates began to come down. Apparently there were no serious injuries. More recently a CSX train collided with a bus, apparently stopped on the tracks, resulting in several fatalities. Most news account said the train "plowed into" the bus. It is not the best choice of words, but how about the situation being described as "a bus being struck by a train on the tracks." What was stuck on the tracks a train or a bus? Another example of poor word selection.

I am going to hold off comments about the CSX leadership situation. One day the local paper mentions a former tennis star taking over not much about his railroad experience, and then comes the Hunter Harrison situation and a predatory hedge fund. I don't know about the hedge fund, but there is both good and bad about Harrison.

The on and off again program to rebuild GP38, GP40 and SD40 units from dash 2 models to dash 3 is apparently back on. 18 GP38's and 33 GP40's will be upgraded by CSX and 50 SD40's by MPI, About the new units ...#3250 is apparently the first of the tier 4 (ET) units of which there should be 125 (and are common here) and #3249 and below are "ES' units built under a tier 4 credit program. I don't claim to know all of this emissions credit mumbojumbo, but saw a listing a while ago that KCS and an order of locomotives and in the middle they were divided, half could only work in Mexico. the other half in the USA and Mexico, no difference between the two groups of units was noticed.

I should mention a couple of trains seen almost a month ago, two empty grain trains to head back west on the BB from Richmond, a bit shorter than usual, and each had two very old and decrepit SD 40 units. With the paint peeling and at night, I could not make out the ex-GT unit numbers but each was in a series beginning in 8. I might add that the cars were also very rusty and resembled a rolling junkpile.

Dumpster Diving In the Age Of Hunter HarrisonDoug Riddell

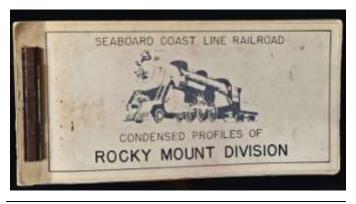
History books aren't necessarily ones with striking pictures and flashy graphics. They can (and often are) old, faded documents which once were the property of railroads that no longer are. I got one in the mail the other day, after having successfully bid for it on eBay—Seaboard Coast Line Condensed Profiles of Rocky Mount Division, revised 1977. It was important to me because I made my first day on that railroad on May 23, 1977, as a brakeman at Richmond's Brown Street Yard. At that time, it was a thriving facility that not only handled our interchange with the C&O, but was the hub of SCL's local industrial switching operations—Hermitage Yard having just recently been razed, RF&P's Acca Yard the north end of the new railroad, and ACL's Shops Yard in Manchester, living on borrowed time. The only way I can now remember what it used to look like are with photographs I took (when doing so wasn't a crime) and this book of track charts, both of which now serve to jog the ol' memory. The book is a comprehensive look at the former SAL and ACL tracks from Richmond, VA to Florence, SC. It includes the Bellwood and Hopewell Subdivisions of SAL lineage, as well as the tracks

from Byrd Street Station to Falling Creek, Meadow to Clopton, Pender to Kinston, NC tracks, and the Rocky Mount to Bunn. It even has the original ACL from Dunlop to Collier via downtown Petersburg. It shows grades, curves, signaling, grade crossing, and even what types of bridges, culverts and other construction existed at the time that comprised the Rocky Mount Division of the "new railroad." Notably missing was the old ACL East End, from Portsmouth to Rocky Mount, major portions of which had just been abandoned or turned over the roadway forces of the Raleigh Division, whose Portsmouth to Norlina "long barrel" was chosen to survive as SCL's gateway to South Hampton Roads, with the exception of the Roanoke River span, which had been grafted into the former ACL at North Weldon and Weldon Yard. It must have been the property of someone working on the North End and Richmond Terminal Subdivisions, since it did not include ACL's network of small branch lines in Eastern North Carolina that served to bring timber and agricultural commodities from the hinterlands to be sent on their way across the country after being classified and switched into long through freights at Rocky Mount.

The whole philosophy of railroading has changed since those track charts were a valid roadmap of the ten-year-old SCL when they were assembled and distributed in 1977, and given the latest acquisition by CSX—the hiring of Hunter Harrison, last week, what little that still remains of those tracks will likely disappear in the very near future. The man who made money for the stockholders of CN and CP plans to do the same for CSX. As one long-time manager told me over drinks at a tavern in Jacksonville a couple of weeks ago, "If your job isn't directly responsible for the movement of trains, it is expendable." The words "branch line" do not appear in the lexicon of Harrison's "precision railroading" blueprints. It's long-haul or no-haul.

Whether this bodes good times or ill-will for CSX and its employees depends on whether you own stock in the corporation. Railroads for too long have been marginally profitable, as much as some people might like to argue. They've been over regulated and over taxed, and people like its new owners are a new breed with no soft spots in their hearts fond memories. Bottom line, take your pictures, gather up treasures from the dumpster and preserve what you can, while you can. If not, future generations of rail fans will be combing the fields for hints of what

at one time was railroading in our part of America—just as I am with my new purchase from eBay. Thank you, whoever you were, for keeping it, so that I could get my hands on it.



Circus Train
Kim Young from Trains magazine

Ringling Brothers Circus will open in Richmond for the final time on 3/23 after closing in NJ on 3/19. That will bring the Blue train down the R&P to ACCA Yard sometime between those dates. The Red train will pass through Richmond en route from Cincinnati to Norfolk in the same time frame.

Steam Crane

Ray Potter

I was at Hallsboro Wednesday 3/8 with Bob Dickinson taking photos of our steam crane. There is a movie company interested in purchasing it but they needed more quality photos. We have now sent them the photos. Coupled to the crane is a "fireless cooker" locomotive from a coal-fired electric power plant. They didn't want to risk a coal-fired loco throwing off sparks and hot ashes so this runs on "plant steam." The asbestos insulation has been removed leaving it naked. Bob says the forged hook and pulley sheaves are worth as much as the crane.







ODCNRHS
PO Box 3131
Chester VA
23831