



The Highball

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
of the
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OLD DOMINION CHAPTER



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Monthly Meetings

Bill Todd

The monthly meeting of the ODC will be held at 7 pm on Monday, 10/17 At Hull Street Station. Charles Curley will present a digital slide show "Celtic Rails: A brief look a railroading in Ireland and Scotland." Refreshments will be served. Come and bring a friend!

Notice of Annual Meeting

Ned Krack

Notice is hereby given of the Annual meeting of the Old Dominion Chapter, NRHS. The meeting will be held on Monday, November 21st at The Richmond Railroad Museum and will start at 7:00 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to elect members of the Board of Directors and undertake an other business that may come before the meeting. There are currently five open spots on the Board: Three one year terms to expire November 2017 and two three year terms ending November 2019. Those who have agreed to run for the board include Charles Curley, Kim Young, and John Estes (all one year terms), Bob Dickinson and John Forsythe (three year terms) and George Saunders.

In order to serve, one must be a member in good standing and be at least 18 years old. If you wish to serve on the Board, please contact one of the nominating committee members:

Ned Krack 804-239-4067 or nedrdgfan@msn.com

Greg Hodges 804-794-1926 or
junehodges@verizon.net

Ray Potter 804-216-9767 or
rpotter122@comcast.net

ODC Members Enjoy Hallsboro Picnic

Ray Potter (Photos: Tom Hardesty/Ray Potter)

Saturday, September 24 was a lovely Fall day with sun, blue skies and moderate temperatures, a perfect day for a picnic. Instead of a regular monthly meeting at the Hull Street Station, the members of the Old Dominion Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society decided to have a picnic at our storage and restoration site in Hallsboro, Virginia. This was a chance for all members to see what has been in the works during the past year and for spouses and children to visit the facility they may have never seen before.

The 10-acre yard at Hallsboro was acquired by the ODC some years ago. The ties that comprise the tracks came from the old Broad Street Station. The rails came from Tidewater Supply Co., McGuire Veterans' Hospital, Albemarle Paper Co. and other sources. The ties were donated to the ODC when Broad Street Station was turned into the Science Museum. ODC members transported the rails and ties to the Hallsboro location west of Richmond and constructed the trackage all by hand. Today most of the Chapter's rolling stock including is stored on these rails. This includes locomotives, Pullman cars, and coaches waiting to be restored and a Pullman car, caboose and a steam locomotive that have been restored.

Saturday the ODC members and their families enjoyed fried chicken with all the trimmings, water and soft drinks and a cake to top everything off. Everyone got on board the 1920's era Pullman car, the "Dinwidde County" and our restored RF&P caboose. The coal-fired steam locomotive was on display and rides down the rails were given in our gasoline powered, hump motor car HM-6 which was used by switching yard crews many years ago. A wonderful time was had by all.



October Archives Photo

Charles Curley

This month features streetcar action in Baltimore. Baltimore Transit's PCC car #7376 is stopped somewhere in Baltimore in 1962. It appears that it is being used in a railfan excursion. I'm always amazed that streetcars ran in Baltimore as late as 1962. Light Rail returned to Baltimore in the early 1990's and streetcar service has recently returned to nearby Washington D.C.



Thanks to Field Day Car Hosts

Steve Tarrant

This 3-day "County Fair on Steroids", Sept. 16 -18, was the 25th year for Field Days Of The Past, and our 15th year of car hosting aboard their 1923 Pullman 10 Sec/Obs heavyweight sleeper "Mt. Foraker". She's a sister car to our own "Dinwiddie County", originally the "Mt. Angeles", and the only air-conditioned exhibit on the 54-acre showgrounds. We lucked out again on the weather: no rain, warm but humid, except it was hot and humid on Sunday. Good crowds, though possibly not quite as many as last year -I'll report on this as soon as I have the figure. We handed out a great many flyers for the Dillwyn Santa trains in December, and as of this writing (Sept. 26) this has considerably boosted our ticket sales.

Many, many thanks go to our Members and friends who served as Car Hosts : Calvin Boles, Steve Bolte, John Burmeister, Nancy Carter, Stanley Clark, John Estes, Waynes Hay, Greg Hodges, Ned Krack, Jim Lewis, Randy Ridgely, Steve Tarrant, Tim Torrez, Bob Williams, and John Williams. New members Wayne Hay and Nancy Carter, from Williamsburg, jumped into the deep end, both serving Friday and Saturday afternoon shifts as first-time hosts. A special thanks also to new member Dave Coldren, who interned Saturday morning and part of Saturday afternoon.

Steam into History

Kim Young

Also on 9/24, Wayne Poates and I made our way to New Freedom PA for Steam into History's photographers' special. The train consisted of a

combine car, a coach, and an open-air car pulled by a replica of a 4-4-0 American locomotive of 1860's design. The cars are replicas from the same era. Unlike locomotives on which it is based, this replica runs on oil – specifically recycled motor oil – rather than wood. Much of the route passes through woods similar to those along the BB from Dillwyn, but there are a couple of small towns as well as some large farms. The end of the current line at Hanover Junction features a small museum. The only real downside to the route is that there are no good opportunities to photograph the locomotive from onboard. The curves are not sharp, and the train is too short to give any kind of angle. The plan for the day included four photo runbys, but as we returned to New Freedom they decided to add a fifth. This was fortunate for me as I got my best shots there. A group of Civil War reenactors were on board to participate in the photo shoots. (See photo below.) During their operating season, the company offers a variety of events, most Civil War themed but not all, that are appropriate for all ages. It is well worth fighting the DC area traffic to visit. (With no stops and no traffic issues, it's a little under 3 hours.)



The Mystery Of The New Jersey Transit Commuter Train Wreck At Hoboken

Doug Riddell

The dust was still flying and people still scurrying about the beautifully restored Erie-Lackawanna Hudson River Terminal in Hoboken when charges and counter charges began to fill the air as thickly as dust and debris, following the deadly runaway commuter train wreck that tore down a portion of the boarding platform shed. In the end, one person died after being stuck by flying wreckage. Another 100 were injured, including the train's engineer, trapped at the throttle of his Comet 5 cab car, found unconscious.

About the only thing the cable news gurus got right, at least most of them, was that that the train was operated by an engineer—not a conductor. With the train in “push” mode—the 1996 vintage EMD diesel on the rear—some even said the train was backing into Hoboken. A friend of mine, the editor of *Railway Age*, worked nearby and was picked up by MSNBC, and for a while gave the most accurate account of the event. Once the regular hosts began offering their “expert” insight as daily commuters, the conversation went downhill. To make things worse, the event recorder (black box) on the diesel was initially thought to have been inoperative; the one in the cab of the lead car was inaccessible by wreckage, so theories began to find their way onto the airwaves.

I received a call from a friend in Florida, a retired engineer, who worked into and out of Hoboken in the dark ages, at the throttle of EL Alco road switchers, and knew the physical layout of the area. He also said that because after exiting the North Bergen tunnel, there was a steady sharp downgrade to the station, even being cautious, doing so was a challenge. The double bore tunnel spreads out to a

dozen or more stub end tracks at an interlocking plant midway to the station, a scenario similar to the southward approach to Washington Union Station from New York Avenue.

Recalling the 1953 Congressional runaway, I immediately began to question the train's air brakes. You see, while the line is still to be equipped with Positive Train Control (PTC) it does have cab signals and train control of the same type as on the RF&P. On top of that, it is enhanced with ACSES, the same as Amtrak's New York-Washington main line, where transponders can be installed along the right of way to automatically initiate a train's brakes should the engineer fail to control the train's speed. PTC simply calibrates the distance and speed of a train as it approaches another PTC equipped train or restriction.

The shortcoming is that with conventional train control, each signal indication carries with it a maximum speed at which a train can operate before the engineer is required to acknowledge the warning and manually apply the brakes until reaching the proper speed. When operating on a "restricting" signal indication however, there is no absolute "stop" function as long as the train is moving at approximately 19 MPH or less. In other words, upon reaching 15 MPH, even with train control, you can travel on until your engine runs out of fuel. At that point, it's up to the operator to stop the train manually.

And this is what happened, according to information just released by the National Transportation Safety Board. In essence, the engineer was nearing the station at 8 MPH with his throttle in idle—drifting toward the bumping block at the end of the track. This was suddenly and inexplicably increased to No. 4 position, and the train speed increased until it reached 21 MPH, when the engineer manually applied the emergency brake just as the train hit the barrier. Despite an alerter that the engineer must acknowledge roughly every 20 seconds, the general assumption is that he momentarily "nodded off" with his hand on the throttle, inadvertently moving it to demand more power. Keep in mind, this is not official. The NTSB is very good at their job. They do not judge; they simply investigate and report.

The engineer, age 48, had almost 30 years railroad experience—18 as an engineer. He was in good health (We must have an annual physical exam.), a

clear disciplinary record, and post-accident tests confirmed neither alcohol nor drugs. He'd had his legal rest during the past 72 hours.

The majority of railroad accidents happen between 2- 6 AM. No matter how much sleep you've had, your body wants to sleep when it's dark. Some of the worst jobs I ever had on the railroad were those where I got to witness the sunrise. No matter how well prepared I was, how much rest I'd had, how many cups of coffee the conductor brought up to the cab, I used to fight drowsiness at daybreak, especially heading into the sun (and that was the direction of the Hoboken train.) The northbound Silver Meteor approaching Quantico, the eastbound Capitol Limited coming down Sandpatch into Cumberland, a third trick yard job at Acca; these are all opportunities for something to go wrong when your eyes are open, but your mind is calling for sleep.

One of the perks of working at Amtrak was support given to employees whose work cycle required working nights, or even worse, being on call, working any shift called for. There are things you can do, certain types of food to eat or avoid. The Federal Hours of Service Act has recently been changed for the first time in decades to address sleep deprivation. All of it sounds good, but Mother Nature has the final word. Just another reason that working on the railroad comes with a price and a great deal of danger.

Museum Hosts for October

Linda Nelon

1	Linda Nelon	Gift Shop
11-1:30	Jim Lewis	Host
1:30-4:00	Jack Newsome	Host
	Wayne Poates	Host
2	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Calvin Boles	Host
	Bill & Ann Todd	Host
8	Randy Ridgely	Gift Shop
	Chuck Breeden	Host
	Stanley Clark	Host
9	Greg Hodges	Gift Shop
	Stanley Clark	Host
	Bob Preston	Host
	Steve Tarrant	Floodwall
	Ned Krack	Floodwall
15	Randy Ridgely	Gift Shop

11-1:30	Jack Newsome	Host
1:30-4	Jim Lewis	Host
	Calvin Boles	Host
16	Carl Steiner	Gift Shop
	Bob Williams	Host
	Steve Tarrant	Host
22	Carl Steiner	Gift Shop
	Bob Stevens	Host
	TBA	Host
23	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Charles Curley	Host
	TBA	Host
29	Greg Hodges	Gift Shop
	Bob Stevens	Host
	Ray Potter	Host
30	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Bob Dickinson	Host
	Jerry Grosshans	Host

Richmond Railroad Museum and Archives Report for September 2016

Bob Dickinson

Visitors: 235 (2324 total for year so far)
 Donations: \$280.00
 Volunteer hours: 321
 Gift shop sales: \$616.31
 Chapter meeting attendance: NA (Picnic was held at yard in place of Chapter meeting.)
 Flood Wall Tour: 5
 Tour group: 15
 Thanks to everyone that hosted during September.
 Speaking of hosts - we could use a few more to help at the museum in October since there are 10 days that the museum will be open and a lot of the regulars will be working on the train in Dillwyn. Please let Linda Nelson know if you can help.
 The new display board that Calvin has been working on is now complete and in the freight room. Please look at it and let Calvin know what you think. There are more to come.
 The next museum committee meeting will be held in November as most everyone will be involved in the trips on the BB.
 Archives - Volunteers needed who have an eye for detail! We have many photos that need to be identified. Currently there are several groups of photos that are in albums that need to be removed and labeled with the photographers name, location, railroad, date etc. in preparation for scanning and

entering into our database. Familiarity with local railroads and locations around Richmond a must!

Supplement

Calvin Boles

The first new display board has been installed in the Baggage and Express Room at the museum. The second board is in production and is expected before Nov. 1st. A third board is in the planning stage. All who donate to the \$400 cost of the third Board will have their names shown at the bottom of the board. Donations can be made to the ODCNRHS Display Board Project and should be sent to Ned Krack, Treasurer.

Railroading Today

Gerry Grosshans

The latest issue of TRAINS magazine (November) has several pages on the Blue Cut fire in California's Cajon Pass, which is the first de-finite information I have gotten about the situation, after being entertained by the use of "Cajon Pass" by many in the news media. One would assume that, with the number of Hispanics around, they'd get that right: But I remember a major network and prominent anchors asking us to keep tuned in for coverage of the death of NASCAR great Dale Erhart: It's the old saying of "don't believe everything you hear": Anyhow, back to Cajon Pass. According to the article, the fire started in the area of Blue Cut and moved to the northwest for over 15 miles. At the risk of oversimplification, I will try to give you the layout of the pass. I've never been there and I would guess many of you have not either. The tracks head northwest and then curve east just before the summit. The pass is basically a valley, narrow and with steep side and grade. Santa Fe put through the first track, later adding a second on a different alignment, SP put through a track on a still different alignment after trying to reach agreement with ATSF. Finally, just a few years ago, BNSF, successor to Santa Fe, put in a third track of its own, basically beside its second track. The SP track, known as the Palmdale Cutoff is now Union Pacific, UP also having rights over the three BNSF tracks which are operated as such: The original track, steeper in gradient is westbound, the two other BNSF tracks are used for eastbound (up-hill) movements although all BNSF tracks are signalled

in both di-rections. Added to the congestion of four tracks on three alignments run by two different railroads, there are several highways running through the narrow area, chiefly 1-15 and Cajor Blvd. The word is that most of the secondary roads and forest service trails are shut down. Train watching places such as Hill 582, Sullivan's curve, and Blue Cut itself are now closed and will probably remain so for up to a year. If you can get the magazine, please do so, and I would expect some of this would be on line.

Speaking of disasters...as I write this Hurricane Matthew is doing a job on Florida's east coast and coastal areas to the immediate north. CSX in Jacksonville will be hit hard as well as the virtual length of the Florida East Coast Railroad, where this could be as bad as the storm of many years past, which wiped out the oversea railroad to Key West. Amtrak has cancelled the Star and Meteor as well as the Auto Train. Probably the Palmetto is suspended, too. I would anticipate local service as well as Carolinians and the Norfolk trains to be running, unless there is a substantial change in the predicted direction of the storm.

In other news, Genesee & Wyoming is acquiring Providence and Worcester, which is a good fit. P&W covers over 500 miles, so is not your typical short line. G&W operates over 120 railroads. Sometime this month UP will operate 844 as far east as Memphis. As is usual on such moves, a diesel is cut in for dynamic brakes as well as handling purposes. The UP heritage MP unit is scheduled to do the honors.

NS is using a variation of the scheme used on the "blues bros." units (#4000 and 4001) painting #4002 with a Tuscan red stripe behind the cab on the "horse's mane" depiction.

Apparently Progress Rail is going to abandon the use of the EMD and Electromotive branding in the future, simplifying their corporate structure, by removing one of the corporate steps. At present, EMD is a division of Progress Rail, which in turn is a division of Catterpillar.

Unfortunately the hurricane has dashed plans for Florida East Coast to introduce service with liquefied natural gas as locomotive fuel. TRAINS also had a short article on this,

Locally, I guess that Cindy also loves short trains, as I have seen at least three very short intermodal

trains (one north two south) with a single unit for power.

An old and respected chapter member has advised me that he recently saw a loaded coal train, with the familiar SCWX markings, heading SOUTH on the ex-RF&P trackage. This may not be unusual as the utilities get their coal wherever they can, for the best price for the commodity and transportation. This was probably from the B&O area. I haven't been out as much over the past several weeks, but I did see a northbound train veer off on the Bellwood trackage using an ET unit and an SC60 as head-end power and another ET unit as a rear end DPU unit, this being the first DPU train to be headed west, empty, over the Bellwood trackage, and presumably going as such over the BB trackage. The axle count was 530, if I heard the DD right, which is always a problem with the high-wide DDs on the Bellwood line. I tried unsuccessfully, to catch a westbound coal empty with seven units and I could only catch a "9 and 8" from the Ruffin road DD. On both of these movements I managed to get to the hospital Street area, only to have to wait for a long time on trains turning at AM junction, one of which was awaiting refueling by a tank truck beside the tracks. I was told by a member that a new switch was installed at the junction with the Burgess Cutoff at South Collier

Traffic is now using the outside lanes at the overpass of Jeff. Davis and the Bellwood trackage, with only minor touch-up needing to be done before this is fully in use.

With my latest Virginia Power Bill I received a brochure "If you see something, say something" concerning security. It should be noted that many of the "suspicious behaviors" mentioned are activities which normal railfans do all of the time, loiter around photograph, etc. While good intentions may have caused this it's bound to cause us problems: Several persons have asked about my nephew, Bryan Grosshans, who is employed by BNSF and a well-known railfan, author and map maker in the northwest. He's now living in Spokane, and if anyone needs or wants to contact him, please advise.

I mentioned unusual coal moves...CSX is interchanging at East St. Louis (to UP) coal mined in McClure, VA for use in Mexico: Power is from both roads.

Membership renewals

Kim Young

It is time to renew your membership for 2017. Please complete and return the form below ASAP. You can mail it or leave it in the membership box at the museum.



Membership Application/Renewal Form - Old Dominion Chapter, National Railway Historical Society

Please type or print legibly

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ This will be used for communications and **Highball** delivery.

Phone: _____

Family member(s) (if joining): _____

Special talents/interests: _____

Membership

Regular \$11 _____

Family \$1 ea. _____

Chapter donation _____

Designated purpose (if any) _____

Total _____

Please send to the following or leave in the membership box at 102 Hull St.

ODC Membership

PO Box 3131

Chester VA 23831

I agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Old Dominion Chapter

Signature _____

Date: _____

ODCNRES
PO Box 3131
Chester VA
23831