

# *The Highball*

The monthly newsletter of the Old Dominion Chapter  
National Railway Historical Society

Volume 52, Number 1

December 2010



***ODC Christmas Santa Train December, 2009*** (photo shared by June "Bug" Hodges)

*Caption: As we will always think of him, Nelson Burks with his red "C" Cincinnati Reds hat sits with his buddies (Greg Hodges, Calvin Boles and Bill Todd) on the Santa Train in December 2009. His friendly smile and personality will always be remembered. God bless Nelson Burks. Note: an article of tribute to Nelson Burks is inside. Check it out.*

***Come to Dillwyn and see the Santa Train 2010 on December 4 and 11!***

## **ODC Chapter December Meeting**

**Location & Time: Monday, December 20, 7:30 PM**

**Richmond Railroad Museum  
102 Hull Street Road, Richmond**

**Program: Annual Christmas Party & Slide Show**

ODC member Jeff Hawkins will present a digital slide show of this 2010 photo activities around Virginia and West Virginia. He is currently putting the program together and will feature trains along the former C&O Rwy. Jeff's outstanding programs have always been a big hit with ODC, and you will not want to miss this one.

He will also bring along some of his books published this year on "Railroads Around Richmond" for sale and will autograph those of ODC members who have previously purchased one. You definitely need Jeff's book for your train library and as a Christmas gift to some of your buddies.

In addition, we'll have our annual Christmas Party with lots of cheer. So come on out and enjoy the program, festivities and fellowship. See you on December 20th.

**Holiday Season Message from the President, Kevin Frick**

As we enter into the Holiday season we have many things to be happy about as far as the chapter goes. We have made many giant strides in the work at Hull Street Station in the restoration of the building and grounds. We have had successful excursion trips during these hard times and have aligned our future with progress as we apply for another grant to move the station towards full restoration. Unfortunately we have lost several near and dear members this year who we need to remember as the rail fans that they were and remember their families as we go forth. May you all have a very Merry Christmas and a joyful new year as the chapter continues to attract new talent and we go forth with more energy than we have seen in a while. Thank you all for your participation and help during this past year and may we all look forward to more of the same for 2011. Kevin Frick

**Tribute to Nelson Burks** by Bill Todd

A day or so prior to the November *Highball* publication we lost Nelson Burks to the Lord. This represents a more thorough tribute to a long time ODC member and good friend.

Nelson passed away suddenly on November 2 following heart surgery a few days previously. He hailed from the Kenova "West By God Virginia" area and was mighty proud of it. He was quite loyal to his family back there around Huntington, his Huguenot Road Baptist Church, his neighbors (he lived next door to Betty Staples and was a big help to her), and his fellow employees at Dominion Virginia Power (he retired a few years ago with an early buy-out.)

In addition, Nelson had three major extra curricular activities: baseball, fire engines and trains. Nelson was "nuts" about the Cincinnati Reds baseball team. So much so, he would not only attend several weeks of games in Cincinnati but also go to their training camp for a week each spring. That's true fan devotion!

As for fire engines, Nelson was a volunteer officer with the Bon Air Fire Department. He brought this interest with him from West Virginia when many years ago back there he was one of the first responders to the tragic Marshall University football team airplane crash.

Of course, we at ODC are most aware of Nelson's abiding interest in trains. Having grown up in the Kenova area, you can guess that his two favorite railroads were the Chesapeake & Ohio and the Norfolk & Western. He was a member of both of their historical societies and attended almost all of their annual conferences. At ODC, Nelson was very active as an officer, board member, national director and excursion train attendant. We will miss him greatly. God bless Nelson Burks.

**ODC Archives Meeting for December 2010** by Calvin Boles

The Archives Committee will meet on 9 Dec 10 @ 3600 W. Broad St. @1900 hrs. This will be the only meeting during December.

**New Editor of The Highball**

John DeMajo will be the new editor starting with the January 2011 issue of *The Highball*.

His e-mail address is: [jdemajo@demajo.net](mailto:jdemajo@demajo.net)

His address is: John G. DeMajo

6001 Statue Street

Chesterfield, VA 23832

Please get your articles in very early; after the changeover is made, John will set all deadline dates.

**Welcome, John, it is wonderful your health has improved!**

**Richmond Museums Shoppers' Fair**

Photos and Article by Kim Young

On November 4-6 the ODC participated in The Richmond Museums Shoppers' Fair held at the Virginia Historical Society. Sue Rasmussen did an outstanding job of ordering merchandise, some of which arrived at her home in the middle of setup on Thursday and organizing the event. Sales totaled approximately \$3400 with RF&P merchandise leading the way along with Triple Crossing and Main Street Station ornaments, Triple Crossing mouse pads, Chessie calendars, and our new remote-control locomotive. In addition, we had the opportunity to promote the museum with many of the customers and gave them the website and Facebook pages to keep track of the progress toward re-opening it. Volunteers included Kim Young, Bob Stevens, Bob and Delores Dickinson, Randy Ridgley, Ned Krack, Joe Andrews, Bill Todd, Ann Thorn, Giles Scott, Ed Tuin, Sandy Terry, Fred Terry, Linda Nelson, Marsha and Morty Cox, Steve Harrison and his daughters.



**WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD**

By Kim Young

*(Schedule and fare info from 2010 season—2011 brochures will be available at the museum when published)*

**Location:** Cumberland, MD

**Distance from Chesterfield County:** 250 miles

**Drive time:** 4 hours

**Power:** WMSR GP30-2 #501 (originally Pennsy 2249) or #502 (originally Reading 5507) (*Thursday*), WM Consolidation 2-8-0 # 734 (originally Lake Superior & Ishpeming) (*Friday-Sunday*)

**Excursion:** 3.5 hours (12 miles to Frostburg) departing at 11:30

**Fares:**

Standard Fares for 2010

	<b>Coach Seating</b>	<b>Club Service Seating</b>	<b>First Class Seating</b>
Adult	30.00	40.00	35.00
Senior (60+)	28.00	40.00	53.00
Child (12 & under)	16.00	25.00	35.00

*Note: I was going to begin this series with one of the year-round museums but decided that I'd rather start with a location that I have visited.*

The Western Maryland is one of my favorite rail adventures. The ride begins at the 1920's depot in Cumberland, which is accessed from I-68 quickly and easily. After leaving town, the route heads to The Narrows, a cut through the Alleghenies used by the National Road (US 40) and the B&O, C&P, and Western Maryland Railroads. Next up is Helmstetter's Curve a ½ mile arc across the Cash Valley, which is a great spot to get some shots of the locomotive at full steam. Following a trip through Brush Tunnel, you arrive in Frostburg for a 1 ½ layover. During that time, you have an opportunity that to my knowledge is offered nowhere else: watching the locomotive being disconnected, turned on the turntable, and moved to the other end of the train. Between the porch of the nearby restaurant and the steps and decks leading up to downtown Frostburg, there is no shortage of great vantage points to see this. On returning to Cumberland, there is plenty of time to check out the C&O Canal and other attractions. Much of the Canal's tow path is open for biking and hikings. There are plenty of reasonable accommodations just west of Cumberland in LaVale.



### Membership Chair Report

All 2010 memberships expire on December 31. Renewals should be submitted before the end of the year. As always, you should return your renewals to the Old Dominion Chapter mail box, as indicated on the form. For those making a donation to the chapter, please check that box on the form and, if you want to designate the donation for a specific purpose, please enclose the following form or write the information on your renewal card. Note that those new members who joined in September are already 2011 members and will not need to renew until this time next year.

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Please allocate my contribution to the Old Dominion Chapter as follows:

Archives and Library	\$_____.	00
General Fund	\$_____.	00
Hallsboro Yard and Rolling Stock	\$_____.	00
The <i>Highball</i> , Programs and Meetings	\$_____.	00
The Museum Renovation Capitol Fund	\$_____.	00
Other: _____	\$_____.	00
TOTAL	\$_____.	00

Please enclose this sheet with your dues payment and write the total amount shown above on the "Chapter Donation" line on the renewal card

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#### **NOTE FROM THE EDITOR—Betty Staples**

First, let me wish each of you the best ever holiday season. The etching by Bill Anthony (former ODC member, now deceased) above is the result by Hank and me some years ago. We wanted a scene with a church, woods, and a train. Bill gave us exactly what we desired. This drawing was used on the front of our Christmas cards that year. Bill and Hank are no longer living, but I must say their spirit lives on.

This is officially the last issue of which I shall be the editor. John DeMajo will be taking over with the January issue. His health is much improved and I shall be giving the editorship to him. This has been a super 11 years for me, but it is now time for me to step down, and I am most excited to see John being editor. I feel we are so fortunate to have the talents of John as the editor. I want to thank each of you for all you have done for Hank and me over the years. **MERRY CHRISTMAS!!**