



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 monthly meeting of the Old Dominion Chapter will be held at 7.00 PM on Jan. 15 at the Richmond RR Museum. Bill Todd will present the second section of the TTX Specials. Last year he presented the TTX Special West to California in 1995. The East Special took place in 1999 from Chicago en route to NYC via the West Side of Hudson River; to Atlanta via Salisbury, NC; Chattanooga, Tenn; & Cincinnati, Ohio via the "Rat Hole." All over the CSX-NS. Power supplied by NS with rolling stock by BNSF (mainly ATSF). Trip took eight days, divided into three sections for managers & guests. The stopover in NYC included a harbor tour with a glance at the former Trade Towers prior to their demise. Also, five yard tours plus Civil War action in Chattanooga. Please make a special effort to come out and bring a friend.

Please see or e-mail Bill if you have ideas for future ODC programs for 2018.

From the President

John DeMajo

2018 is here, and we begin another year of ODC operation. As we continue to look at ways to improve our presentation to the public, the organization needs your help to keep our doors open. Over the years, costs of operation such as insurance, utilities, and materials needed to form our exhibits and preservation efforts, have drastically increased. While our primary source of funding is the excursion trips at Dillwin, our revenue has not kept up with inflation. With the

addition of the operating costs of the museum in 2011, and our legal responsibility to insure the organization correctly, our operating costs are now at the point of exceeding our annual revenue. Programs are being enacted to raise funds through programs such as Train Day, and through application for grants for specific projects. This year, funds will be expended to make repairs to the station building which were not done during the 2010 renovation. Fascia repairs are scheduled to begin with the return of warm weather. Hallsboro is also undergoing repair work with the intent of again being able to run our steam program. All of this work costs money, and it is getting harder each year to spread around our limited income to cover all the club's needs.

We are planning several fund-raising efforts for the coming year, including a public screening of the Buster Keaton movie "The General," complete with a live theatre organist accompanying the film. We also plan to begin offering track car rides in the spring. Hallsboro is being readied for a possible function later in the year, and the museum will begin charging a modest admission fee this year, rather than relying solely on voluntary donations by patrons. Hopefully, these efforts will help make up the approximately \$10,000 shortfall in operating funds for the club that has to be made up in some way if we are to keep the doors open and the lights on.

As members of the ODC, you too can play a part in these fund-raising efforts. Encourage your friends and neighbors to sign up for programs at Kroger and other retailers that donate money to the ODC based on their purchases. Members can also be alert for any opportunities to direct or encourage bequests and gifts to the ODC by individuals, businesses and trust organizations which bestow grants on Non-profits. Finally, your assistance as volunteers with our various programs is

fundamental in keeping the organization functioning. As our members age or move to retirement situations away from Richmond, there is an ever-increasing shortage of museum hosts, Hallsboro volunteers, and excursion train car hosts. Help in any of these areas will greatly assist the Board in being able to keep things moving along and will serve to improve the presentation of our services to the public. In that spirit, I wish each and everyone a happy and prosperous 2018.

Trip Reports

Ned Krack Photos: Tom and Marge Hardesty

12/9

9:30 a.m. trip
Sold = 107
Pulled = 92 (38 children)
Santa - Bill Butler
10:30 a.m. trip
Sold = 120
Pulled = 105 (45 children)
Santa -John Ambrose
11:30 a.m. trip
Sold = 116
Pulled = 88 (34 children)
Santa - Bill Butler
1:00 p.m. trip
Sold = 115
Pulled = 93 (31 children)
Santa - John Ambrose
2:00 p.m. trip
Sold = 115
Pulled = 99 (43 children)
Santa - Bill Butler
3:00 p.m. trip
Sold = 115
Pulled = 98 (38 children)
Santa - John Ambrose
BBRR crew: Will Hubbs (Engineer), Matt Dunaway (Engineer Trainee), and Greg Rohr (Conductor)
Trainmaster (ODC): Fred Terry
Car 706: David Coldren, Kathleen Frick, and John Forsythe
Car 1006: Laird Ramsey, Kevin Miller, and Bill Baskerville
Souvenirs: Ned Krack
Announcer: Greg Hodges
Santa Conductor: Tom Hardesty

Santa's helpers: Marge Hardesty, Barbara Ambrose, and Barbara Butler
Parking: Chuck Taylor
Mechanical: Kevin Frick
Operational issues - The generator on car 706 overheated on the outbound 9:30train. It was shut down for the remainder of that trip plus the 10:30 and 11:30 trips, leaving the train without lights or heat. It was operational for the afternoon trips. The morning trip times were affected by this issue.
Souvenirs:
\$305.00 gross sales
\$137.25 net sales
Donations = \$9.00

12/16

9:30 a.m. trip
Sold = 115
Pulled = 95 (32 children)
Santa - Charles Gauntt
10:30 a.m. trip
Sold = 115
Pulled = 108 (50 children)
Santa -Charles Gauntt
11:30 a.m. trip
Sold = 115
Pulled = 113 (46 children)
Santa - Siegie Ritenour
1:00 p.m. trip
Sold = 121 (includes 6 trackside sales)
Pulled = 121 (49 children)
Santa - Charles Gauntt
2:00 p.m. trip
Sold = 118 (includes 3 trackside sales)
Pulled = 110 (50 children)
Santa - Siegie Ritenour
3:00 p.m. trip
Sold = 116 (includes 1 trackside sale)
Pulled = 102 (45 children)
Santa - Siegie Ritenour
BBRR crew: Will Hubbs (Engineer) and Greg Rohr (Conductor)
Trainmaster (ODC): Fred Terry
Car 706: Bill Todd, Chuck Taylor, and John Forsythe
Car 1006: Ed Fielding, Kevin Miller, and Bill Baskerville
Souvenirs: Ned Krack
Announcer: John Estes
Santa Conductor: Tom Hardesty

Santa's helpers: Marge Hardesty and Abigail Martin
Parking: Bob Dickenson and Tim Torrez
Mechanical: Kevin Frick
Operational issues - The starter on the generator on car 706 failed leaving the train with no lights or heat.

Souvenirs:
\$766.00 gross sales
\$344.70 net sales
Donations = \$5.00



January Archives Photo

Charles Curley



Virginia Blue Ridge #7 an ex US Army 0-6-0 heads a short freight. The Virginia Blue Ridge connected the Southern Railway with the American Cyanimid factory at Piney River VA. The railroad used steam into the early 1960's. It is now abandoned. Evan Siler photo.

Petersburg's Streetcar History Again Unearthed

Brandy Martin

A water main break in the 400 block of North Sycamore (between Bollingbrook and Old Streets) after Christmas meant City Utilities crews and contractors had to dig up portions of the street. In the process they encountered the double tracks left after streetcar service ended in 1936. But this time they were in for a bonus – the turnouts that served Liberty Hall, used by the interurban cars of the Virginia Railway and Power Co, successor to the lines in Richmond and Petersburg, from about 1911 until replaced by the Electric Building fronting on the new Appomattox Bridge in 1925. A frog had to be removed, along with a short section of the girder rail. For details, consult *Rails in Richmond*, by Carlton McKenney, chapters 7 and 9.





Museum Host Schedule

Linda Nelon

6	CLOSED SNOW		
7	CLOSED SNOW		
13	Linda Nelon	Gift Shop	
	Calvin Boles	Host	
	Bob Dickinson		Host
14	Linda Nelon	Gift Shop	
	Bob Williams	Host	
	Dave McKenna(New)	Host	
	Ned Krack	HOST	
20	Ned Krack	Gift Shop	
	Calvin Boles	Host	
	Kim Young	HOST	
21	Greg Hodges	Gift Shop	
	Charles Curley		Host
	Bill Todd	Host	
27	Greg Hodges	Gift Shop	
	Ray Potter(11-1:30)	Host	
	Jack Newsome(1:30-4)		Host
	Linda Nelon	Host	
28	Ned Krack	Gift Shop	
	Bob Dickinson	Host	
	Jerry Grosshans	Host	
	TBA	HOST	

December Museum and Archives Report

Bob Dickinson

Visitors: 176 (Total for 2017 was 4,003 – a new record!)

Donations: \$329.00

Volunteer hours: 301

Gift shop sales: \$308.56

Chapter meeting: 32 attendees

Thanks to everyone that helped out at the museum during 2017! The attendance records at the museum were broken again this year! December was kind of “slow” for activities at the museum due mostly to cold weather and trips on the BB.

The modelers have made improvements to the layout and had trains running on more tracks during the holidays. New Plexiglas sides have been installed to keep small hands away from the operating equipment. There is also a new street car operating on the track that goes thru the “downtown” Richmond section.

There are also a couple of new displays in the freight room. Thanks to John Williams and Calvin Boles the front of the old city streetcar that was “rescued” from the city dump years ago has been converted to nice display about the city’s streetcars. John DeMajo has constructed a new kiosk containing a display and electronics that shows and tells about the operation of order hoops that were used to get train orders to the engineer and conductor. There are also additional smaller display boards around the museum explaining other items. The next “Museum committee meeting” is scheduled for Saturday January 13th, 2018 beginning at 9:30 AM – of course weather permitting.

Railroading Today

Gerry Grosshans

I’m not going to dwell upon the death of Hunter Harrison, other than to say that Z felt there were issues with his health more than a couple of months ago, and I tried to convey this in the **Highball**. Photographs of him with supplemental oxygen tubing and feeding tubes were in several magazines. Now that he is deceased, we have to look at what he left behind: a mixed legacy. I’m not going so far as to say that he “fired” them, but the departure of the head of the CSX legal offices and especially VP/COO Cindy Sanborn left their mark. As far as Cindy is/was concerned, I can’t find too much derogatory about her. Several years ago, **Trains** magazine listed her among the 100 most influential railroad officials. She was given considerable praise for getting CSX to weather the downturn brought on by the decline of coal. Her unique “28 hour days” brought her praise for lessening corporate loss, and just the last month she got good press for the Clinchfield Santa Claus train, in which she played an important part. As of now there are very few “old timers” left at CSX, and I believe the road is “poorer” for the departures we have seen. As far as over-the-road operations, the best I can say is that it looks like CSX did several years ago, before the Virginia Avenue tunnel was holed

through. The Amtraks are generally at the same times, and there are one to as many as three intermodals, single level, domestic trailers and containers, one of which sends the empty Tropicana cars back to Bradenton. There can be up to two general freights running north and usually one south between four and 7:30 p.m, when a lull sets in after Amtrak 125 (Norfolk) for several hours. I have not seen a double-stack for months and have not even heard the numbers QI 35 and QI 36, which were the stacks to and from Portsmouth. Several articles have mentioned that the cranes have been removed from New Baltimore, and that relatively new facility is now only serving a flat switching yard. I also have heard, on good authority, from several sources, that the programs to overhaul and/or rebuild series 38 and 40 older EMD units has been either terminated or drastically cut back.

I have been awaiting the rebuilding of the crossing on Old Lane, the materials are still there, but in the interval the crossing on Commerce Road has been worked over (It needed it.) but the Old Lane crossing is getting bad - loose and missing pieces of timber - so it ought to be worked before long.

For several months there have been several track maintenance machines parked at Fanshaw Yard. I am not certain where they are working, or if they are just parked, for later use. I noticed a train delivering coal to the Cogentrix facility, so knowing his work would take up both tracks I went south to Staton Road (near the 84 Lumber facility) and went over the private grade crossing there. From what I could see, the bridge over Falling Creek is double tracked, so the only single track is the area of the signal at North Bellwood. This seems strange as if the double track extended further south to the South Bellwood switch, one could park at least a normal length train the length of the yard.

Remarkable about the latest Amtrak wreck in the Pacific Northwest, one thing it did was to give a good look at the Talgo trainsets they use. The cars are quite low-slung and are about half the length of regular single level cars. Talgo cars have only a single wheelset, with one axle per car. This is located at the rear of the car, the front being supported by the rear of the car in front, sort of like a semi-trailer or the older Roadrailer sets.

When these cars first came out, they were used with an older EMD F 59, which was quite tall, so cars that had two fins on either side of the roof behind the

locomotives were introduced to better match the different heights of the trainset and the power. Photographs of the train show such a car next to the old Amtrak P42 at the rear of the train. The power on the train was never shown clearly, but I believe it was one of the very new Spinters, as I saw a brief shot of the X shaped radiator which the Spinters use. I also saw one shot of the roof of the lead locomotive, with two large cooling fans on the roof. That train had a locomotive on either end, but only one was in use at any given time. With the speed the train was going, it appeared the cars had good strength, for there to be only 3 fatalities (which are 3 too many) but many of the injured may have not been hurt severely. This run was the first in revenue service on this line. There was no train control on the line, and outside of the obvious overspeed, other issues have not been addressed, such as the distraction by the second man in the locomotive, reports of objects on the track and perhaps equipment failure.

That brings to three accidents for Amtrak recently, all appearing to be caused by actions of the crew. The Philadelphia situation where they seem to want to blame the Engineer Bostian, the other eastern wreck with maintenance equipment fouling the main, and this latest situation. While being careful of placing too much blame on the crew, the situation where the locomotive hit the equipment turned up at least three persons with narcotics in their systems, although it was said the amounts were not enough to cause significant impairment. These types of situations frequently take months to resolve so all I can say- is keep tuned!

Additional Santa Photo



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