



The Highball



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
of the
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OLD DOMINION CHAPTER

Volume 58

May 2018

Number 6

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 ODC monthly meeting will occur at 7.00 PM on Monday, May 21 at the Richmond RR Museum. Our speaker will be Danny Plaughter, Director of Virginians for High Speed Rail, and his A/V topic will be "The Case for Enhanced Passenger Rail." Please make a special effort to attend to hear this interesting presentation & bring a guest. Refreshments & Door Prizes available.

President's Column

John DeMajo

Things are looking up for our chapter. Our open house and silent movie presentation was a big success. As a result, the museum has been given a theater organ of our own to be used for concerts, future movie series and wedding rentals. Details appear in a separate article. In addition, an unexpected bequest of \$20,800 came our way from the estate of a local couple who were interested in our work during their lives. Steve Tarrant and John Forsythe are working to get the building onto the National Register, and a number of construction projects have been completed including the new caboose ramp and the Fascia renovations. In other areas, our excursion train has undergone repairs, cleaning and painting, and we are now ready to roll for our Spring trips. This is vital to the continued prosperity of our organization, and personally wish to thank all of the volunteers who worked to make that happen. Good things are happening at the ODC, so stay tuned for more upcoming developments.

Museum Host Schedule

Linda Nelon

5	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Calvin Boles	Host
	Bob Stevens	Host
6	Linda Nelon	Gift Shop
	Bill Todd	Host
	Chuck Taylor	Host
12	Erwin White	Gift Shop
	Calvin Boles	Host
	Stanley Clark	Host
13	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Bill Todd	Host
	Tim Torrez	Host
	Steve Tarrant	Floodwall
19	TBA	Gift Shop
	Ray Potter (11-1:30)	Host
	Jack Newsom(1:30-4)	Host
	Stanley Clark	Host
20	Greg Hodges	Gift Shop
	Charles Curley	Host
	Bill Todd	Host
26	Carl Steiner	Gift Shop
	Greg Hodges	Host
	TBA	Host
27	Ned Krack	Gift Shop
	Bob Dickinson	Host
	Steve Tarrant	Host

Richmond Railroad Museum and Archives Report for April 2018

Bob Dickinson

Visitors: 242 (1030 year to date)
Admission charges \$905 (181 paid admissions)
Donations: \$35
Volunteer hours: 369
Gift shop sales: \$377.64
Chapter meeting: 19 attendees
Open House – "The General" 52 attendees
Floodwall tours - 4

New paid admission policy seems to be paying off". The number of visitors at the museum for Earth Day was less than last year but the amounts of paid admissions and donations were more! We are planning now for next year's Earth Day and hope to have additional displays or attractions to increase attendance.

The area around the station continues to change and develop. New projects that will bring additional residents, businesses, and visitors into the area are being completed and planned. In just a few years the nature of the area has changed from gloomy industrial to bright residential. The number of walk in visitors increase each month.

Several tours, meetings, and rentals for the museum over the next few months have been booked. On September 15th the museum will be closed for a wedding. If you or your group would like to rent the building after normal museum hours for a special event it can be rented for a very reasonable price.

Projects – the fascia board replacement and the bridge project for the caboose have been completed. The paperwork part is being done now. New projects coming soon will be floor reinforcement, and building electrical system improvements.

Calvin Boles and John Williams recently constructed a cedar lined closet for storing the railroad uniforms that have been donated to the Chapter over the years. They recently installed it in the former RF&P express-baggage car # 185 that is at the museum. Thanks, Calvin and John!

Some discussions at a recent museum committee meeting include fund raising ideas, "uniforms" for museum hosts, background sounds and music for the museum, and the desire to have a railroad dining car on the premises! The next museum committee meeting will be held on June 9th beginning at 9:30 AM at the museum. Interested parties are welcome to attend. The minutes of the museum committee meetings have more detail and are available by request. (Thanks to Calvin Boles for faithfully taking and typing the minutes!) - Bob

Organ Donation

Ray Potter & John DeMajo

In the early days of New York's Grand Central Station, featured, among it's many amenities was a pipe organ that was played daily as background music for patrons utilizing the station's lounge. Similarly, the Dundee & Newtyle Railway Station in Perth, Australia featured organ music up until the time of its closing in the 1960s, and Toronto's main rail station still features live piano music daily in it's great hall. In keeping with that idea, the Richmond

Railroad Museum recently acquired a donation of a three manual theater organ, which we plan to use to augment our upcoming movie series, as well as offering it's use to patrons who rent our building for weddings and parties. The instrument was provided as a donation by Jim and Elizabeth Heller who reside in Woodbine, Maryland. Daffer Organ Company, and their vice president Al Murrell were instrumental in securing the gift and installing it in its new home. According to Old Dominion Chapter president, and concert organist John DeMajo, the idea of installing an organ in the museum came after a recent very successful screening of the Buster Keaton silent film, "The General," which featured live organ accompaniment by Dr. Mark Andersen, a nationally known concert organist. DeMajo and Murrell saw the possibility of the museum offering a regular movie series with features such as Phantom of The Opera at Halloween, as well as other classic and railroad related presentations. By making the organ available to music students from several area colleges that offer performance degree programs, DeMajo hopes to increase the museum's attractiveness to the public by presenting cultural and entertainment programs that augment the museum's primary mission of presenting the story of Richmond's rich railroad heritage.



In Memory of Hazel

Wayne Poates

Hazel Lee Andrews Henshaw is/ was a very warm and loving person. She enjoyed time with friends and family and church. She enjoyed sewing, making dolls and traveling to craft shows helping someone sell handmade rugs and cooking. Hazel even pasteurized milk that her husband milked from the cow in a home pasteurizer on the stove. Many do not know that she worked at the voting booths. She would make what she called "Poll

Soup". This was soup and fixings for those that worked at voting precinct where she was assigned and worked numerous elections. There was no recipe for this soup...I asked.

Hazel had a lot of love for others and she wanted a large family. She and her husband Calvin brought up four children. But this was not enough. they opened their home to many foster children and some stayed in touch with her lifelong. She enjoyed time on trains when she started coming with Lyle and Mary after her husband's passing. Once in a while she would say she wanted to come back to the train...but by then she was not leaving the house to go out to eat when tempted by the mention of her favorite places to eat out.

Hazel liked playing small, harmless practical jokes on people. For example, she would tell you to hold out your hand she's going to give you something... it might be a small piece of candy or might be in the candy wrapper.! Ya never knew! When she and her husband bought the property and built the house in south Chester, the house in which she passed away in, in early March at age 95, she had to learn how to drive. Her husband at one time ran two filling stations. Someone that worked at one of the filling stations helped teach Hazel how to drive... and told her..."You know what the floorboard down there is for? "No", Hazel said she answered. "The floorboard is there to keep the accelerator from dragging the ground!", the man said. I thought that was great! She had a big heart and you knew that if she loved you, you knew it and if she didn't, you wouldn't find out.

All in all, Heaven created a one-of-a-kind....What a model to follow. This ole earth could use a few hundred thousand just like her.

Keysville Depot

Greg Hodges

On my recent trip to Atlanta early last month, I made a quick stop in Keysville to check on the progress on restoring the old Sou Ry. station there. A local group ("Friends of the Ft. Mitchell and Keysville Depots") has been making a stab at restoring it over the last few years....and limited progress seems to have been made. The 1st photo below shows the freight room (at left) now sheathed in builders siding after being stripped to just the bare wall studs last time I was there. Not much

seems to have been done to the main station area. (right). No doubt money and not enough workers is keeping things at a snail's pace....but hopefully this station will face a brighter future than the C&O station at Gladstone. Those of you familiar with this area recall that the station is adjacent to the "Y" that was used to turn ODC "Specials" excursion trains around years ago for the return to Richmond. A lot of tie replacement has been done by the BBRR in recent months on the rail leg departing here for Clarksville to the south. (Old Durham branch.) The future of the "Durham" line is in doubt, however, as Dominion Energy has now mothballed their coal fired plant at Clarksville. Coal for the plant was about the only traffic on this line. The Ft Mitchell depot (2nd photo) on this branch has been restored. The 1st Keysville depot on the site was destroyed during the Civil War and construction of the current one was started in 1890, when it was still on the Richmond & Danville RR. I noted that 4 BBRR locomotives were parked at the Keysville depot - Nos. 2.,10, 11, & 15 - not sure of their operating condition.



May Archives Photo

Charles Curley

The Atlantic Coast Line station at Stony Creek VA 47.5 miles south of Richmond was torn down many years ago. Seen here in a Raymond Knight photo on February 2, 1966, it was still in use by the ACL, although it's white and purple paint was peeling and faded.



Railroading Today

Gerry Grosshans

With the weather turning milder and making it easier to gear up and go trainwatching, I have a couple of things to report, both good and bad. The good first. Having the crossing work virtually completed at the Jahnke Road crossing, I can advise that it is an excellent location now. For those who are not familiar with South Richmond, there are several ways to get there. The best for those north of the river is to use the toll road and get off at Forest Hill Avenue, turn left and you will cross the tracks on an overpass. Continue to Jahnke Road and turn right to the crossing.

There is an array of signal heads just south of the crossing called "Meadow". Both tracks have a setup of three heads per track, the bottom having four lights. Pull into the parking area between four or five utility poles and the property line of adjacent landowners. You can always see the signals of track 2, but track 1 is hard to see until it begins to get dark. With the number and variety of signals to be seen, in a less than two-hour period I saw

everything from high green (the least restrictive) to all reds (most restrictive) including a high amber, high and middle amber, middle flashing green and lunar white. There is a setup of some type of sensors north of the crossing, a square box about a foot square on either side of each track and aimed upward at what would be the side of passing railcars. Trains heading south are climbing up a hill from the bridge over the river and are noticeably increasing speed as they go south. The defect detector at MP 3 can easily be heard when trains reach it. There are also crossovers between the tracks. Just south of there is a crossing on Bassett Ave where the signals for northbounds are displayed. This is not a good place for trainwatching, no parking space and you are right in the middle of a residential neighborhood. If crews are doing as they should, and call signals, southbounds will next reach Broad Rock and northbounds will call Douglasdale (across the river). There is a city alleyway that comes out several car-lengths to the south and there is an older man living down the alley who comes out to chat and check the signals. I've also seen several other rail fans, including one from Oklahoma. Many years, in fact decades, ago a person who was retired from the Milwaukee Road lived just west of the crossing but I have not seen him in years. I have spoken to several CSX employees, the driver of a crew taxi and several police officers, so I believe all of the above to be OK and correct.

Now for the bad news. I had mentioned, several times, about the crossing at Broad Rock, and several things have come up which give me some concern. Although I still feel safe there. One is the fact that several rather aggressive panhandlers seem to have taken to being bothersome. They are often quite inebriated. One fellow there said one of these guys actually got in his car and he couldn't get him to leave! Of equal concern is what appears to be drug dealing, or worse. Several young ladies have started to cars to ask for a ride home although I believe they had something else in mind. I was approached and asked if I was Hispanic, and I also saw them come up to CSX workers in their official vehicles. I have made a police report, received with quite a bit of interest, about this. If one desired to be in the area, you can go up Belt Boulevard to where Starnie E. Lyttle is located, at the old Hopkins Road

location and park there, just don't enter Lyttle's property. It is posted.

I see we have the year's allotment of fatalities on CSX, with several youths being hit and killed in Chester. I went down there to see what I could find out, but apparently the immediate area is being readied for a festival so I didn't get very far.

I was surprised to hear TV reporters talking about a "cargo train" meaning a freight, so when I found out the youths killed were Hispanic, perhaps this is where the term came from. (Editor's note: I believe "cargo train" is what the British call a freight train, so this explanation is entirely possible.) From what I could gather, A number of youths were waiting for a freight to clear and were hit by the Amtrak coming in the opposite direction at speed. There is apparently heavy traffic from a school to the shopping center, so I am somewhat surprised this has not happened there before. I am wondering about the dirt bike and ATV traffic at Old Lane but have seen officers patrolling for this now.

With all of the work to be done on crossings, I have about given up on reporting on this activity.

Train traffic is good and seems to be heavier, but very little is going west on the Bellwood line right now. I have seen a number of empty grain trains heading north at Jahnke Road. Have only seen one double-stack in several weeks,

An inexpensive commemorative unit? CSX has gotten rid of some EMD SD70MAC units. PIRR has picked them up and leased them to NS. still in CSX paint, so someone has painted one in the old C&O block letter scheme.

Penultimate Call on Snail Mail

Kim Young

Next-to-last reminder for those receiving **The Highball** by snail mail. As of the July issue – **which likely will be a week late due to my vacation** – you will be purged from the snail mail list if we have not received your \$5 surcharge. You will also miss out on the partial issue which I will send out by email the morning of June 29 before I leave. There is still time to switch to the email version and avoid both of these. Just send your email address to membership@odcnrhs.org.

Painting the Cars in Dillwyn

Buckingham Branch Railroad



ODCNRES
PO Box 3131
Chester VA
23831