

# POTOMAC RAIL NEWS

POTOMAC CHAPTER, NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 235, KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20895-0235

MAY 2019



**HEADING FOR THE GOLDEN SPIKE!** On May 4<sup>th</sup>, Union Pacific 4-8-8-4 Big Boy No. 4014 departed Cheyenne, WY, with UP 4-8-4 No. 844 on a multi-day trip to Ogden, UT, before joining in the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary "Golden Spike" Celebration on May 10, 2019. The Big Boy is shown here leading "The UP 4014 Special" at Medicine Bow, WY. Photo by: Jim Kleeman

**PROGRAM:** Jim Mixter will present a selection of short video programs that were shown at Summerail 2018. See program list of videos on page 2.

**MEETING:** May 21, 2019. 8PM. Lobby Level Auditorium of the Montgomery County Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** June 18, 2019

**DEADLINE FOR JUNE ISSUE:** May 24, 2019. Send news items to Clay Moritz, Editor, Potomac Rail News, at [c.moritz@comcast.net](mailto:c.moritz@comcast.net)

**INFO ON CHAPTER ACTIVITIES:** <http://potomacnrhs.org/>

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THE CHAPTER FAMILY

If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, has lost a loved one, or has a new birth in the family, please call the Chapter on (301) 251-9461.

IN MEMORIAM. With sadness we note the May 12, 2019, passing of former long-time Potomac Chapter Member Richard M. Sparks (1943-2019), after a long, courageous battle with cancer. This was posted May 12<sup>th</sup> on Railway Preservation News by Alexander D. Mitchell IV: "Mr. Sparks was a renowned railroad artist and historian, charter member and officer of the Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association, where he served as longtime editor of "The Log Train." A native of Alexandria, Virginia, Richard devoted his life to researching and documenting the "true history" of Cass and West Virginia logging railroads. For many years, he coordinated CALS (Chesapeake & Allegheny Live Steamers) photo charters, to the delight of photographers. Mr. Sparks was magnanimous in the sharing of both his knowledge and photographs and our community is richer in many ways for having been exposed to his artwork and writings. Richard will be remembered as a humble gentleman, who never met a stranger. A short visit with him left you with an impression that would last a lifetime. Please keep his loving wife, Ann, and the entire Sparks family in your prayers. Rest easy, Richard and thank you for being so generous by sharing your incredible work with all of us."

Richard was also a long-time member of the Potomac Chapter. While Richard has not been a member for a number of years, I have known him for around 35 years. A very talented artist, Richard created the paintings used for the dust jacket covers on three books featuring Bill Price's color slides of the Western Maryland and Baltimore & Ohio railroads. The three books were co-authored by Potomac Chapter Members Deane Mellander and Bob Kaplan and published by our Chapter.

Over the years, I saw Richard at several annual Gaithersburg Railroadiana Shows. Occasionally, Richard presented our monthly Chapter program, which featured his excellent photographs and artwork. I remember Richard showing a slide of the painting he created of a window that featured on the outside a steam locomotive at home in the railyard. Richard said he always enjoyed looking at the painting, which he hung on the wall of his windowless office. His "window at work" gave him a great view of steam in the yard. The Potomac Chapter extends its Deepest Sympathy to Richard's wife and family. Please keep Richard and the Sparks family in your Thoughts and Prayers. (Clay Moritz)

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM. Jim Mixter will present the following video programs, which were shown at Summer Rail 2018:

(1) Pete Ruesch, "Pete's Potpourri: A Year in Video." What you can do when you are set up to take stills and have a second camera with video capability. Produced by Pete Ruesch. (2) "Railfanning as a Family." Chris now takes his son along, and things are a little more about being together than simply 'getting the shot.' Produced by Chris Haynes. (3) "Great Lakes Iron Ore Roads." The story of ore-hauling from the 1980s, from the pits to the laker ore vessels. Produced by Mike Hartog. (4) "Richard Baldwin's Greatest Hits." Don samples many never-seen images from Richard Baldwin's color slide collection--late 1950s/early 1960s views of the steam-to-diesel transition and many diesels in their "as built" paint schemes. Produced by Don Toon. (5) Possible Encore: Brian Sellers, "Cincinnati's Shortlines and Streamliners." Views of former mainlines now in shortline freight service and streamlined visitors including Ringling Brothers over the last decade.



LAST CHANCE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MATCHING GRANT TO SUPPORT THE RESTORATION OF WMSR'S #1309 STEAM LOCOMOTIVE. May 31, 2019, is the DEADLINE for the Chapter's receipt of donations for the Potomac Chapter's Matching Grant, which will match member donations dollar-for-dollar that total up to \$2,500. The Matching Grant will support the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad's restoration to service of former Chesapeake and Ohio Railway 2-6-6-2 steam locomotive #1309. Please make checks payable to Potomac Chapter, NRHS, and indicate on the memo line that the donation is for "C&O 1309 restoration Matching Grant." Mail checks to: Potomac Chapter, NRHS, PO Box 235, Kensington, MD 20895-0235. Donations can also be made through the Potomac Chapter website at: <http://potomacnrhs.org>,

## RAIL NEWS

UTAH CELEBRATION FOR TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY INCLUDES HONORING OF CHINESE WORKERS. Everything was right on track for the 150-Year Anniversary of our First Transcontinental Railroad's completion. Thousands of spectators flocked to Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10, 2019, to witness the re-creation of the historic moment. On May 10, 1869, the Eastern U.S. was finally connected to the West when the final rail spike was hammered home to complete the 1,900-mile rail line.

In addition to the blasting of cannons, live music, and event goers donning old-time period outfits, there were plenty of speeches. In an apparent reference to the longtime lack of appreciation for the numerous Chinese workers, speaker and presidential historian Jon Meacham told the crowd that "The transcontinental railroad is the story of America, for better or worse." Meacham then immediately added, "The story is not perfect, but then neither are we."

The festivities, which took place at Golden Spike National Historic Park's location about 85 miles north of Salt Lake City, highlighted the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese who toiled long hours amid a hostile environment to help complete the railroad and bring a scarred America together just four years removed from the end of the Civil War.

The ceremony commenced with a Chinese lion dance, and the first speaker was Chinese historian Connie Young Yu, who bemoaned that descendants of Chinese workers were virtually unrecognized at the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 1969. "Today, we take this opportunity at the 150<sup>th</sup> to reclaim our place in history," said Young Yu. "To honor the courage, fortitude and sacrifice of the Chinese railroad workers and their legacy in America."

Interior Secretary David Bernhardt spoke of the incredible melding of



Andrew J. Russell's iconic photograph celebrates the driving of the "Golden Spike" joining the rails of the United States' First Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10, 1869. (Wikipedia)

engineering and courage that led to the railroad's ultimate completion. "The story of this site says so much about our country," said Bernhardt.

The 1869 rail line completion shortened cross-country travel from as long as six months in wagons and stagecoaches to about 10 days on the rails. "It psychologically and symbolically bound the country," said Utah's senior public historian Brad Westwood. "The joining of the two rail lines created a new sense of connectedness that helped for a common national identity." (New York Daily News)

News of the Golden Spike Celebration was noted around the world with news coverage by, among others, The London Daily Mail, China Plus, and Gulf Times Daily Newspaper published by GPPC Doha, Qatar.

#### USPS COMMEMORATES 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE GOLDEN SPIKE. Three new United States

Postal Service stamps in a pane of 18 mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad, a massive engineering feat that reduced travel time across the country and made the American West an integral part of the nation. Two different stamps feature the



Jupiter and the No. 119 locomotives that powered the trains carrying the officers and guests of the two railroad companies engaged in the work (Central Pacific and the Union Pacific) to the Golden Spike Ceremony, held when the two rail lines were joined at Promontory Summit in Utah. A third stamp portrays the famous golden spike that was a prominent part of the ceremony. [USPS.com via Whistle Stop - Watauga Valley Chapter, NRHS] (Ed. Note: On page 36 of the Spring 2019 issue of Classic Trains Magazine is an article "Undriving the Golden Spike," - Everyone knows about the driving of the Golden Spike but not many know about Southern Pacific's fight to abandon part of the original transcontinental railroad or the "un-driving" ceremony that followed."

#### PROMONTORY SPEAKER SAYS TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD OFFERS HOPE IN MODERN TIMES. A

day after Union Pacific officials used "#DONE" to memorialize the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, a U.S. presidential historian says the railroad's completion should conjure a different four-letter word: H-O-P-E.

Thousands of people from around the world have gathered to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad with music, dance, speeches, and a slightly more elaborate rendition of the Last Spike re-enactment performed often here at the National Historic Park.

It was 150 years ago, on May 10, 1869, that Central Pacific and Union Pacific officials and railroad workers paused with a ceremony to lay last rails, a last tie, and drive the Last Spike that was made of gold to finish a 1,776-mile route between Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Sacramento, CA.

Gates to the Golden Spike National Historic Park opened to the public about 8AM on May 10<sup>th</sup>, with replica 4-4-0 locomotives Union Pacific No. 119 and Central Pacific Jupiter arriving on scene soon after.

Prime ceremonies began at 11AM with introductions and speeches from Utah politicians, the National Park Service, Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, Union Pacific CEO Lance Fritz, and Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints President Russell M. Nelson.

Noted presidential historian Jon Meacham gave the keynote address and quoted such historic figures as Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Saint Augustine. Meacham called on the thousands gathered at the historic park today to place the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in context as a great act and as a lesson for today. He said, that if, in the midst of American Civil War, the nation could conceive of building a massive engineering feat, it should give modern Americans hope for our time. He said he'd rather deal with the problems posed by Facebook, rather than those from firing on Fort Sumpter, which launched the beginning of the Civil War.

Meacham says that Americans should not give up on hope, but should look to the Transcontinental Railroad, and its completion at Promontory Summit, as a reminder that a nation of imperfect and flawed people can join to achieve great feats in the face of daunting odds. Also, that Americans' predecessors should neither be idolized or vilified, but seen "eye-to-eye" as the people working to make the United States more perfect, as each generation does.

Utah officials drove a new "copper spike" for the ceremony forged from copper mined in the State. There were also presentations from Chinese-American groups, the Republic of Ireland's Ambassador to the U.S. and a Native American group, which offered blessings to the crowd.

Perhaps the highlight of the event was an approximately half-hour musical "As One" depicting the events of the Transcontinental Railroad in song and dance. Festivities at the national historic park were to continue through 7 p.m. Friday. (Trains News Wire)

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO RIDE THE CAB OF UNION PACIFIC NO. 4014? (Blog posted by Jim Wrinn, Editor of Trains Magazine, on Sunday, May 05, 2019) I have been thinking all day about how to describe to you how it feels to ride in the cab of Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014.

I had the chance to ride some 60 miles in the locomotive Sunday. I hope I do it justice. I have been riding locomotive cabs since age 12. In September 1973, engineer Dan Ranger invited me into the cab of Graham County Railroad Co. Shay No. 1925 for a ride I will never forget. Since then, either as a fan or as Trains editor since 2004, I've been lucky to ride many cabs, including Pacifics, Mikados, and 4-8-4s Nos. 611, 4449, and 6325. Some have been quiet as any antique machine can be. Some have been rough as riding a bronco. Some have been filthy messes, and some have been spotless (winner of the "you could eat off the floor" contest is still Canadian Pacific No. 2816 between Calgary & Lake Louise).

The ride I made Sunday, from Rawlins, WY, to Wamsutter, WY, is the impossible dream. This wasn't supposed to happen. Or as I joked to engineer Ed Dickens and fireman Austin Barker, we didn't have to die to get here (a suitable facsimile of the great beyond for a steam locomotive enthusiast). And so, I found myself working my way up the ladder to the deck of the Big Boy Sunday morning as the guest of the UP. The room I entered is best described as a living room. I've bumped into other people in locomotive cabs half this large. Big Boy's cab is practically stadium-sized with seats for the crew, two others, and standing room for yet more. The all-weather cab was comfortable on this day, neither hot nor cold, just right in the Wyoming spring.

We get underway about 8:24, backing out of the Rawlins yard onto the mainline. One thing is immediately apparent as we negotiate switch after switch to move from yard to main line: No. 4014 is the definition of riding like a battleship. No jerking. No yawing. Just movement in the direction of travel.

Appropriately at 8:44 a.m., the switches are lined, the signal ahead is green, and Ed Dickens reaches for the throttle. "Here we go," he announces. Soon, we are galloping along, drawing dirty looks from a nearby bull. Our



progress, however, is not to be far. We slow and stop to service the passenger cars. Barker has the fire set at 295 psi when the pops go off for their morning test. A few minutes later and we are off.

Big Boy quickly settles into a rhythm that is neither labored nor evocative of a machine itself designed and built to wrestle tonnage freight across a 65-mile grade and then move that same freight at 70 mph across the desert. Austin says he's still learning the sweet spots for firing and we both marvel at the whirring sound of the turbine on the exhaust steam injector. On hills, Big Boy's exhaust becomes a muffled roar, but the immensity of the giant is apparent when you look out the side and peer down the tracks. They are a long way ahead, and it is a long way down to the ballast.

We pass one grade crossing after another that is packed with fans and curious locals. Our progress is only impeded by a stop to check on No. 844's blow down. That gives me the chance to climb into the spot above the tender and look ahead over the cab roof. The top of a Big Boy is amazing in its own right with domes, dynos, and twin stacks. But we can worry about these attributes another day. Let's return to the cab where the crew is learning more about its charge. For a time, the trailing diesel is placed in full dynamic braking to simulate a load. No. 4014, at 35 mph, doesn't even notice. In fact, the locomotive begins to accelerate. With grade of less than 1%, we cruise along effortlessly.

Nobody has ridden in a Big Boy cab in 60 years. I've been fortunate to experience this. As I climb down from the cab, and cannot believe what has just happened. The king of steam has returned. And I was there to greet him. (Trains Magazine)

NEW RAILROAD MUSEUM OPENS IN WESTERN MARYLAND. Visitors traveling to Cumberland will now find another attraction to perk their interest. The Cumberland Railroad Museum, located next to the Canal Place Festival Grounds near the historic Footer Dye Works building, is devoted exclusively to the Queen City's rich railroad heritage. On display at the museum are artifacts and images representing the Baltimore & Ohio, Cumberland & Pennsylvania, Georges Creek & Cumberland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia Central, and Western Maryland railroads. Within the space of 793 square-feet, there is a wide variety of railroad objects and photographs on display. Undoubtedly, there is something exhibited that has been seen nowhere else. The railroad museum is a joint venture between the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and the Western Maryland Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and it is supported in part by a grant awarded from the Canal Place Heritage Area (CPHA). For more information, visit [www.wmnrhs.org](http://www.wmnrhs.org) website. (The Automatic Block - Western Maryland Chapter, NRHS)

CSX CLOSES RUSSELL LOCOMOTIVE SHOP. CSX is closing its Russell, Kentucky, Locomotive Shop, eliminating 113 jobs, according to a notice the company issued on April 5. The closure takes effect immediately and layoffs are effective 60 days from April 5, according to the notice. The company expects the closure to be permanent. The volume of work at the shop has declined over the past three years, leaving it without enough work to keep it open, according to the notice, which the company issued under requirements of the Federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act. Of the 113 jobs, 108 are held by union workers. The workers will receive pay and benefits for the 60-day period. Unions affected include 46 in the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, 31 in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, 16 in the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers and 15 in the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers. ("The Daily Independent," Ashland, KY, via Whistle Stop - Watauga Valley Chapter, NRHS)

GATEWAY PROJECT TUNNEL. The \$12.7 billion Gateway project, which focuses on building a new railroad tunnel between New Jersey and New York City, has been a political bone of contention for years. But Amtrak officials say the project must go forward if rail service to the New York City is to continue. Bloomberg reports that Amtrak Chief Executive Officer Richard Anderson told reporters that there's "an inevitability" that the Gateway tunnel will be built. "The reality is Amtrak owns this tunnel, and it is a vital national asset that has to be maintained well and has to be reconstructed," he said. The tunnel would replace an older tube that was damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. That tunnel is the only direct rail link between New Jersey and Manhattan. Anderson said that Amtrak would have to begin scaling back service on its popular Northeast Corridor trains within the next few years if the tunnel and bridge reconstruction envisioned in the Gateway project aren't completed. State, local and Federal officials have come to some agreement about the scope of the project, but continue to haggle over how much money each level of government should be contributing toward its completion. [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) (Business Traveler)

RAIL EXCURSION GAINING GROUND IN SCENIC WEST VIRGINIA VALLEY. Thousands of miners and loggers once lived in the little valley through which West Virginia's newest rail excursion runs. Trout swim and deer browse where a century ago striking miners bombed the line that rail-bikes and little engines now follow.

Peace, quiet, and history are chief reasons more than 1,200 guests pedaled or boarded open coaches on the old Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad in 2018, and thousands more are expected this year as word of the excursion spreads.

Officials are not entirely sure why the new attraction has gained so much attention, but all indications are that it will continue to do so, says Mitch DeBoard, Executive Director of the Clay County Business Development Authority. "Riders talk about the stream and how clear it is and about the waterfalls and how beautiful they are and about the graveyard and the cliffs, but it's the whole experience that seems to move them," he says.

DeBoard and volunteers spent the morning of April 10<sup>th</sup> stocking Buffalo Creek, the tributary of the Elk River that the line follows into the hills from the county seat at Clay, a 20-minute drive from I-79 north of Charleston, West Virginia. The stocking of more than 250 pounds of trout acquired from nearby Indian Lake Fisheries in Elkview is part of the initiative to attract visitors to the region. Anglers are welcome to fish the sparkling stream or board the train to one of many holes and riffles along the way.

Aside from a dirt road that leads out of the hills to a cemetery along the line, no other access is provided into the valley, which is also what seems to attract many visitors. "The church and school stood over there," DeBoard said, gesturing toward the woods while walking among the old headstones, "but they're long gone now, and this is all that's left."

The railroad was established by J.G. Bradley in the early 1900s and was operated by the Elk River Coal and Lumber Co., which used steam engines from 1904 until 1967, and was one of the last all-steam lines in the U.S. Beds of daffodils and yuccas appear in the woods where houses once stood, but few people now come into this part of the valley, with the exception of anglers, hunters, and rail passengers.

Excursions in 2019 are being conducted at 9 a.m., 1 p.m., and 5 p.m. Thursday through Monday and are \$25 per adult and \$15 per child 12 and younger. Despite its wooded location in the mountains of central West Virginia, the line is easily accessible, and is a drive of an hour east from Charleston and two hours south of Clarksburg, West Virginia. Prospective riders are encouraged to call 304-618-7992 or visit the excursion website, Buffalo Creek Trail. (West Virginia Explorer [www.wvexplorer.com](http://www.wvexplorer.com))

POTOMAC RAIL NEWS is published monthly by the Potomac Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 235, Kensington, Maryland 20895-0235 Website: [www.potomacnrhs.org](http://www.potomacnrhs.org)

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***150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
First Transcontinental Railroad  
May 10, 1869 - May 10, 2019***

**FIRST CLASS**