

The *EAST COAST CHAMPION*

April 2002

PRESIDENT'S MEMO TO STOCKHOLDERS

What happened??? Today (March 30) was the field trip to the Central Florida Chapter's Central Florida Railroad Museum in Winter Garden, and practically no one showed up. This, despite a showing of hands of 12 to 14 members expressing their interest in a field trip to this museum. Chapter members who did enjoy the museum today were Jim Sleeth and Jerry Sheehan, each with guests, and Harlan Hannah and me.

The low turnout was especially disappointing since their president Al Pfeiffer and Jim Gillin made a special trip from South Daytona to open the museum for us. They are normally open only on Sunday afternoons.

The Central Florida Railroad Museum is a very nice small museum with lots of railroad memorabilia nicely displayed in the old Tavares and Gulf Railway Depot. The collection includes several displays of dining and bar car service from various railroads.

George Gillette took us railroading through the state of Michigan last meeting. It was an interesting and informative "trip". Thank you George for this well-received program. I know he spent some time preparing for it which showed and was appreciated.

While I am on the subject of programs, I will mention the program scheduled for the April meeting. Mr. Don Marson, a guest at our March meeting and co-author of "Railroads of the Pine Tree State, Volumes I and II," will give us a slide show with commentary on these railroads of the Pine Tree State (Maine.) I am looking forward to this program.

The Brevard Zoo is going to re-route the train track because of a new African exhibit. They are looking for volunteers for the following dates, May 17-19 and May 24-26. If you can spare the time, I know it would be appreciated. Let me know the dates you will be willing to work. I will be compiling a list and forwarding it to Jeff White, project coordinator. Let me know at the meeting or call me at 783-7049.

I have received a listing of rolling equipment for sale from Ozark Mountain Railcar. If anyone is interested in looking at the list, let me know. I will have it at the meeting.

Again, thanks to Bob Sowden for his donation of railroad books so that we can offer them to members by way of a raffle. This gets someone a nice book, and it helps our treasury. Bob's donated book for April is "The Golden Age of American Rail Travel" by Bill Yenne. This is a very nice book – goes into a lot of detail.

See you at the next meeting when we "go to Maine" and get some cooler weather chasing trains.

Until the 8th,
Stop, Look, & Listen,
Chuck

MINUTES FROM THE MARCH MEETING

President Billings called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM on March 11, 2002.

Don Marson was in attendance as a guest. Don has co-authored several books on railroads in Maine. In addition, Jim Reebel who has been a guest at the last several meetings joined the chapter this evening.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Bob Selle gave the monthly Treasurer's report.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – The minutes of the February meeting as published in the newsletter were approved without correction. The motion to approve was made by Dick Alkus and seconded by Jerry Sheehan.

Bob Sowden again donated a book *The Encyclopedia of Model Railroads* to be raffled off. The winner of the raffle was the writer.

The President received two Railroad art calendars from Orchard Supply and Hardware. One copy was available for auction. The calendar proceeds were donated to the Salvation Army. Winning bidder was the writer.

OLD BUSINESS – It was suggested that the Chapter obtain and install an appropriate plaque for the wall pendulum clock which the Chapter donated to the Brevard Zoo about 5 years ago. The President will have a plaque made.

The chapter will be making a field trip to the Central Florida Chapter's museum in Winter Garden March 30. The Central Florida Chapter will open the museum for our visit. See last month's newsletter for details.

NEW BUSINESS – Jerry Sheehan brought the new Bachman "G" gauge Consolidation in for the Chapter's inspection.

The Brevard Zoo will again be extending its railroad. Volunteers are being sought to lay track May 17 through 19. Contact the president if you wish to volunteer.

Seth Bramson again donated a number of items of railroadians to the chapter at the Jacksonville show. This material is used for our periodic library and other educational displays. The Chapter wishes to thank Mr. Bramson. Mr. Bramson indicated that he expects to have the new edition of his book *Speedway to Sunshine* out in May. He is hoping to have a book signing at the depot hobby shop in Titusville.

REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jim Sleeth spoke with an Amtrak engineer recently. Amtrak will be closing the Lakeland Depot. The engineer reported that the Genesis engines are "crash proof" but are very rough riding.

George Gillette? reported that they stopped at the FEC Bowden yards on the way home from Jacksonville. He talked to a FEC employee that indicated that it is OK to visit and take photos as long as one remains in the parking lot.

Harlan Hannah, Secretary

THE ELECTRIC NOTEPAD

by Dave Klein

A few weeks ago I dropped my brother off at the airport in Orlando after a short visit. Now I was in "O-town" before lunch, so I decided to go towards International Drive and see if the "Trolley and Train Museum" is still around. I've never seen the place, even though the name itself would have moved it to the top of my priority list of places to visit. I found the "museum" near the Convention Center; it shares a small building with a helicopter ride outfit. Around the building is a loop of two foot gauge track with a small "steam engine" and a pair of open passenger cars behind it. The engine, named "Lady Liberty", is a Mason design built by the Custom Locomotive Company of Chicago. Of course, there is a gas engine hidden underneath the metal work. (Before you criticize that it isn't prototypical, remember that even Lionel steamers are really electric locomotives.) I don't know why, but they don't run the train in the afternoon. Anyhow, inside the building is a train store carrying Lionel, MTH, and LGB models, among others. The prices were at the high end, but I'm not an expert on new prices, especially LGB. It doesn't cost anything to get into the store area (that also had a snack and play area for kids) but there was a \$5-\$6 charge (depending if you're a kid, a Senior Citizen, or not) to see the large scale (LGB -sized) layout. After paying the admission, you pass through doors and "tunnels" to see the train layout. It is a large layout, but split into sections and the three trains and two trolleys ran through all of them. The trains ran continuously. On one wall was a small display case with some old, or reproduction, toy trains and trolleys; that seemed to be the "museum" part of the place. Overall, I feel that I get more for my money at any Fred Rose train show.

Speaking of shows, The Electric Railway Clubs of Florida's 17th Annual Florida Trolley Meet will be held April 19 and 20 at The Webber Center, Central Florida Community college in Ocala. Normally, Friday (the 19th) is for setup and testing, and Saturday is for running. In the past, the "public" was allowed in on Saturday by donations. (Last year, there was a tie-in with a local NMRA meet nearby and that forced an admission charge.) For more info (and as whether there is any charge) contact Frank M. Graham at 967 SE 57th Ave., Ocala, FL 34471. A SASE would be

appreciated. The past shows had modular trolley layouts in HO, O-scale, G-scale, and 1/2-inch scales. Some trolley dealers also show up.

Did you know that there's an 110 -year-old outfit known as The Empire City Subway Company that never ran any trains? That long ago, a "subway" was essentially an underground tunnel or pathway to run utilities, such as telephone or electric power cables. Anyhow, The Empire City Subway is now a subsidiary of the Verizon network.

The Tandy Subway in Ft. Worth, TX, will be shut down by the end of the year. The area is scheduled to be redeveloped. The original Tandy fleet used former Washington, DC PCC cars and thus, are one window shorter than a standard PCC. (Required to fit on DC Transit's transfer tables.) So if a frame could be mated to a standard carbody, after removing enough steel, would you have a "legal" Washington PCC? There are very few "legal" Washington PCC's around, but repainting a surplus car, as San Francisco does, is cheaper. Now we return to debate of making replicas, restoring what you've got, or doing without. I've discussed this on these pages years ago. There are museum groups in Great Britain that are making replica steam engines from plans of units that weren't saved from the torch. New Orleans is making replica cars. Don't forget about GOMACO making cars. Maybe one day, when they run out of cars to restore, (HAH!), the trolley museums will make replicas of cars they didn't rescue from the torch.

The United Kingdom is prepared to spend \$48 billion to improve their railway system and they figure that \$70 billion may eventually be needed. How much will Amtrak get over the next few years?

In addition to a short article about future passenger train operations in Florida, the April issue of *Trains* magazine reports that a number of Boeing Standard Light Rail cars from San Francisco may be purchased, at scrap prices, for use in the UK (Manchester). The Boeing SLRV's in Boston are still being used during rush hours because the low-floor BREDA cars have problems. (It would be ironic if Boston bought a few San Francisco cars until the BREDA cars are fixed!) Even so, I never contemplated that those Boeing cars would become over 20 years old and now are "surplus" for other light rail systems or museums to acquire. The Boeing cars are complicated, especially compared to a PCC, so lots of spare parts will be required to keep even one museum car operating. (The Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, ME, is supposed to be getting such a "problem".) Here's a thought: Maybe Orlando could buy some and run them on International Drive? See you next time!

STACK TALK

by Neil Moran

The greatest show in the world as far as steam action is concerned is still taking place over at Jing Peng Pass in Chinese Mongolia on the JiTong Railway. Santa Fe types (2-10-2) are hammering up through the pass as you read this. Truly the thunder they make and the ground they shake is an awesome sight-and-sound show. China has classed these behemoths which pull freights over the pass as QJ's. There are two passenger trains running on the line, but they go through the pass at night. Presently there is no shortage of the QJ's. Back in 1996 there was a large supply of 2-10-2's which had been displaced by diesels and electrics on other lines. The new diesels cost about three million dollars per unit, while the steam engines cost only \$50,000; it was a no-brainer in any language to use steam power since it was already on hand. Local Mongolian people have been trained to operate the 2-10-2's, and these machines now operate on the 200-mile line which serves the coal mines in the area; the railroad runs between Tongliao and Jining. These locomotives are fitted both with whistles and with air horns. Just about all freights have two Santa Fe types on the point, and in some cases two pushing in the rear. Quite the show!! At the pass itself one can spend three or four days photographing this "show of shows." Not only are the grades close to two percent, but there are two tunnels, and the engines really blast out of the portals. The trains then climb to cross high viaducts and loop around to gain altitude and reach the pass. From what I hear this is an incredible scene.

Now great news has come to me about a railfan week on the JiTong Railway; this will be December 2-9, 2002. The activities start at the Inner Mongolia Railroad Shops in Daban; then one can travel by train up to Jing Peng Pass, with photo runbys at various locations. To enhance the trip, cab rides will be offered. The railroad will bring out additional locomotives pulling both freight and passenger trains. All the details are not in yet, but I'll pass them along as I receive them. This writer plans to visit Jing Peng Pass in October, when temperatures will be relatively moderate. However, the railfan week in December may be the last, I fear, as time is beginning to run out for steam. Hmmm - it's a puzzlement! Maybe I should look in my drawer for my long Johns. Brrr!! Zero degrees, here I come! (Several tour operators organize trips to Jing Peng to see the show; those contemplating a trip, or who might like to try an independent trip, may wish to visit <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/steam/trains/china37.htm>, which has plenty of information including detailed maps of Jing Peng Pass, and links to information regarding many other steam operations in China.)

Closer to home, this just in: ex-C&O 4-8-4 #614 was a familiar sight several years ago powering steam excursions in the New York area, notably Hoboken to Port Jervis. But the trips did not succeed financially; and most recently the engine was scheduled to be auctioned off on March 7 at the office of D.S. Barnhart in Mount Pleasant, North Carolina. Other equipment was to be on the block as well, including a 1929 Heisler located in southern Alabama.

Next up to the Yukon and Alaska for an update on the steam situation at the White Pass & Yukon. As reported last month, Mikado #73 will indeed run this year on Saturdays from Skagway, Alaska up to Bennett Lake, British Columbia. Consol #40 has meanwhile been returned to the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, Col., to do pinch-hit duty for the moment, replacing D&RGW #346. Ultimately, #40 will be returned to the Georgetown Loop Railway in Colorado, which had leased the locomotive to the WP&Y. WP&Y has also purchased Consol #69 from the Nebraska Northern, this engine has been moved to Colorado for evaluation before #69 can be moved back to its original home in Alaska. WP&Y also has several engines stored at the north end of the Skagway shops, including Ten-Wheelers #60, #62, and #67; and Consol #61. Residing inside the shop itself are #73; and a 2-6-0, #52. The railroad plans to evaluate #52 to see if she can be restored to service.

Now let's take a look at steam action in Canada. I just got word that on February 21 Hudson #2816 left Calgary to return to Port Coquitlam, British Columbia; GP-38 #3084 provided assistance for the move. Plans were for service stops in Revelstoke the first evening, and at Kamloops the following evening, followed by the final leg into Port Coquitlam, where the engine will be stored for the moment. Plans are to make some minor adjustments to her boiler, and to perform backhead work in the cab. A schedule for this year's excursions is not yet available. But Canadian Pacific has big plans to show off #2816 this year, especially after investing in the two year project to rebuild her from the frame up. Publicity from her trip last September made the fires glow a lot brighter at CP headquarters in Calgary. What a good will ambassador she will make in the coming years, a truly magnificent steam engine!!

Moving eastward to Toronto, the Toronto Railway Historical Committee's plan for a railroad museum got a big boost recently when the Toronto City Council economic development committee approved a redevelopment deal that includes \$17.5 million for rehabilitating the John Street roundhouse. The city has also earmarked another \$2.7 million to establish a museum; another \$4.5 million is coming from other sources, for a grand total of \$7.2 million for the museum. Currently much of the roundhouse building is empty, although several stalls have been leased to a local brewery. The new museum plans to renovate the roundhouse, and install the turntable now stored on the site. Later, they will convert part of the roundhouse into a workshop for heavy equipment.

The biggest challenge facing the Toronto project is that the last rail connection from the site was severed years ago and the right of way sold for development. The prospects of restoring the track doesn't look good, so for now the equipment will have to be trucked in. One of the group's major restoration plans is to restore former Canadian National U2 class 4-8-4 #6213. The Northern is in good shape, and for years has been carefully preserved by the Toronto Locomotive Preservation Society. By the way, CN refers to the 4-8-4 wheel configuration as the "Confederation" type, rather than the familiar "Northern" term in use in the United States. No. 6213 was one of 35 of these types built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1942. In her "days in the sun" she shined the rails in Ontario and Québec. CN owned 160 of these 4-8-4s, which also worked into the United States on the Grand Trunk lines. The City of Toronto owns the engine, and has been supportive, praising the restoration efforts. Veteran steam fans might recall the twilight of steam in Canada in the 1960s, when sister engine #6167 ran fan trips until retirement in 1964; since 1973, #6167 has been at the Fort Erie Railroad Museum in Ontario. In additional work planned at the Toronto museum, the group's president reports that they plan to restore the turntable and move #6213 into a stall, and prepare additional spaces in the roundhouse for museum occupancy, including space for a restoration shop. It's expected that the space for #6213 will be ready by August. And the group has been working with the Bluewater NRHS Chapter in Michigan regarding leasing excursion train rolling stock. This would include several *Canadian Flyer* coaches, and a Grand Trunk diner, all in maple leaf schemes. If all this comes to fruition, the ugly question arises, where will the engine run? Well, Canadian National of all roads (CN has been so anti-steam in the past) said they will examine excursion proposals on their individual merits, provided proper liability insurance can be secured and provided that the trips won't interfere with the railroad's regular service. Apparently CN is getting a little jealous over all the publicity CP is getting from #2816's runs last September. By helping to bring #6213 back to the rails, CN would steal back some of this thunder. In a year or two, steam fans may have the opportunity of riding behind or chasing both locomotives. But which to choose, especially if they're running at the same time? Problems, problems, problems!

We now journey back out to the "left coast," to sunny California. On March 30 the Northern California Railroad Club and Golden State Railroad Museum were to operate jointly their "steam special" from San Francisco to San Jose. This trip was to feature the return of ex-Southern Pacific #2472 as the power, the first time the Pacific was to run since 1996. This may have also been the only public steam excursion by #2472 this year, due to pending weekend closures of the CalTrain line and higher insurance costs. Plans were to use single-level CalTrain VRE cars

as the rolling stock for the excursion, and to include several photo runbys. Let's hope everything went well with this trip!

One more California story comes from Eureka in the north, where the City of Eureka is conducting a feasibility study regarding developing a tourist railroad. This would be in conjunction with the proposed Redwood Empire Museum of Timber Technology; a grant is being sought for the museum project. According to Marcus Brown, president of the Northern Counties Logging Interpretive Association, the proposed Humboldt Bay Scenic Railroad would be a great place for a tourist operation in the heart of the redwood country. The proposed line would use Northwestern Pacific tracks from Eureka to Samoa, about 15 miles. Plans also include a 20- to 40-acre museum complex in an old railroad yard with turntable. Mr. Brown is also applying for additional grants to rebuild the railroad station as an intermodal transportation center, and for a possible trolley line running on First Street, near the waterfront. He is also looking to purchase a steam locomotive and rolling stock. His options are numerous, as there are several locomotives for sale in the land of milk and honey.

Let's take a big jump east to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 #261 will make her first outing this year, on May 18-19, a round trip between Minneapolis and Duluth over Burlington Northern Santa Fe (ex Great Northern) rails. This will be a fundraiser for the Lake Superior Museum of Transportation in Duluth. The Northern will be operated by the "Friends of the 261," will pull a 20-car train on the 160-mile excursion, according to "Friends" spokesman Steve Sandberg, who said, "We're shooting for a matched consist of *Hiawatha*-painted equipment." The train will depart Minneapolis at 9 a.m. on May 18, and arrive Duluth at 2 p.m. That evening, #261 will power a "first class" excursion over 25 miles of the North Shore Railroad. First class cars will include lounges, business cars, and diners, and the trip will feature a Milwaukee Skytop observation car, one of the most beautiful cars ever constructed. The return trip is scheduled to depart Duluth at 11 a.m. on May 19, and arrive Minneapolis at 4 p.m. Several photo runbys are planned, and (great news!) *no* diesel protection will run behind #261. Oh happy day! For ticket information, click on www.261.com.

With all this avalanche of good news I'm sending your way this month, here's some more. The old Baltimore & Ohio shops in Martinsburg, West Virginia have dodged another bullet. This 19th century shop complex is the only one of its kind left in North America. It includes a two story machine shop, a backshop, and a cast iron framed locomotive roundhouse designed by Albert Fink and built between 1866 and 1872. The complex remained a major facility until the turn of the 20th century. After many years of decline, especially after the B&O-C&O merger, city fathers wondered what to do with 80,000 square feet of old railroad property. Since Martinsburg is at the western end of the Washington metropolitan area, and is the terminus for MARC commuter train service into the capital, it was thought that MARC would want it. Wrong!! Fortunately, thanks to an authority hired by a planning consultant, the shops have been saved. Federal money, state grants, and other special appropriations totaling \$3 million have saved the site. Roof trusses will cost \$500,000, and roofing for two other buildings will cost an additional one million dollars. Replacing bricks, repointing ten thousand square feet of wall, and new windows and doors will run another million. Work has already begun, and slowly the historic buildings are beginning to look like their old selves. This will remain a place where people can come and see how it once was in the glory days of railroading.

At Spencer, North Carolina, on April 27-28 the North Carolina Transportation Museum will celebrate its 15th Annual Rail Days. In operation should be former Buffalo Creek & Gauley 2-8-0 #604, altered to resemble a Southern Railway Consolidation. Both passenger and freight runs will operate. Special displays, blacksmithing, track laying and crane operations round out what sounds like an interesting two-day event.

In West Virginia, the Cass Scenic Railroad is planning not one but three Railfan Weekends this year. As the old saying goes, "You pays your money and you takes your choice." On May 3-5, Chesapeake & Allegheny Steam Preservation Society (CALS) will sponsor its 24th Steam Railroad Weekend, featuring double-headed Shays, a Shay race (whizzing along at 10 mph), trips to Bald Knob and Big Cut, and tons of runbys; the event is limited to 60 people. For information, visit www.calslivesteam.org, or write Paul Pederson, 19804 Spurrier Ave., Poolsville, MD 20837-2015. If you can't make this event, on May 10-12 there will be a chartered log train, with multiple runbys, using several Shays lettered "Mower Lumber Company." A three-train race and endless photo opportunities complete this weekend; for information call Carl Franz at 301-942-6197. Finally, on May 17-19, the Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association will sponsor its "Titans of the Mountains" weekend. Here we'll see a Shay-powered log train with many photo runbys, night photo session, and tours of the shops and the town. For information, visit www.msrlha.org, or write RFW, 6304 Kaybro Street, Laurel, MD 20707; phone 866-795-2607. Certainly one of these three weekends will be to your liking!

I hate to close this exceptional column with all its good news, but close it I must. Thanks to my colleagues who took the time to contact me with all the great news you just read about: John Biehn (Dayton RR Society); Lee Beaujon (Railroad Enthusiasts - New York); Steve Barry (Railfan & Railroad Magazine); and Bruce Russell and John

Bobsin (NRHS – New York Chapter); I remain your most obedient servant in steam, UNTIL OUR TRACKS CROSS AGAIN.

Interesting Rail News

from trains.com "News Wire" (www.trains.com)

Florida tourist-hauler to mark ridership milestone

After its first full month of operating daily steam excursions between Orlando and Mount Dora, Fla., the Orlando & Mount Dora Railway on Friday will recognize its 5000th passenger. The Florida tourist-hauler will mark the occasion during a brief ceremony at its depot in Orlando. The railway began operations on December 1, 2001 after assuming the operation from its former owners. In four months, it has surpassed the total ticket sales for all of 2001.

CSX supports B&O Railroad Museum celebration with \$500,000 gift

CSX has joined the B&O Railroad Museum as a presenting sponsor of "175 Years: America on Track," a yearlong celebration of the 175th anniversary of railroading in America. CSX's \$500,000 gift, announced today, will enable the B&O Railroad Museum to offer special exhibitions, programs, a rail excursion and special events for families, children, and railroad enthusiasts. "We are proud to partner and celebrate with the B&O Railroad Museum as they embark on this significant celebration," said Michael J. Ward, president of CSX Transportation and a Baltimore native.

Through July 2003, the B&O Railroad Museum will host a series of monthly events and the debut of new educational programs and exhibits. Most recently, the Museum unveiled Portraits of American Railroading, an exhibit that includes images of important American railroad figures from the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery.

The 16-month celebration culminates with The Fair of the Iron Horse 175, a 10-day pageant of rare locomotives and citywide festival at Baltimore's Carroll Park in July 2003. "We are delighted that CSX has joined us to help show the world how railroading touches each of our lives everyday. Through their generosity, visitors from around the world will have the opportunity to take part in an enriching cultural and educational experience as we celebrate the anniversary of America's first railroad," said Courtney Wilson, executive director of the B&O Railroad Museum.

CSX and KCS lead U.S. industry in remote-control rollout

While other U.S. Class 1s mount limited locomotive remote control pilot projects, CSX and Kansas City Southern are aggressively moving toward rolling out remote control across their systems. Why have they jumped into remote control with both feet when Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific are content, for now, to merely dip their toes into the technology?

“There certainly are some very persuasive safety reasons to adopt the technology. You could pose the question the other way – why aren’t we going faster,” says Mike Wall, CSX’s vice president-mechanical. “We want to balance the expected benefits in safety with implementing it right.”

CSX has purchased 100 LRC units from Cattron-Theimeg, an order that will make it the largest LRC user in America when all 100 units are deployed sometime this fall. Measured on a pound-for-pound basis, though, the 2756-mile KCS and its 50 Canac Beltpacks rank the smallest Class 1 as the LRC heavyweight in the U.S. Both railroads say they envision purchasing more LRC units. Their LRC figures already dwarf those of the other U.S. railroads. BNSF has purchased four Beltpacks from Canac, NS has two units each from Canac and Cattron, and UP has five Cattron units.

KCS and CSX say the remote control experience of Canadian National and Canadian Pacific completely sold them on the technology. “Safety and injury prevention are right up there at the top” of the reasons KCS has pursued remote control, says Ab Rees, KCS’s senior vice president-operations.

“A number of years ago, my friend Jack McBain, senior vice president of operations on CN, had a number of us up there in Edmonton and gave us a demonstration of remote control,” Rees says. “He sold me on the safety, productivity, the reduction of lading loss. Everything from their experience said it was a very innovative thing to do.” Back then, though, the Federal Railroad Administration had not yet implemented guidelines for RC use, and the Class 1s lacked an agreement with rail labor.

“I made the decision then that as soon as it was possible in the U.S. that we on the KCS would pursue it,” Rees recalls. The FRA issued RC guidelines last year, and the United Transportation Union and railroads reached a pilot project agreement in January. Although railroads clearly see cost savings from remote control – the systems replace the engineer on switching jobs – it is safety benefits they are touting most. With a conductor or switchman operating the train from the ground, remote control eliminates communication failures and visibility problems that can occur during conventional switching with an engineer in the cab.

The Canadian roads have been using remote control for yard switching for more than a decade. On CN, the continent’s largest RC user, accident rates in yards where RC is used are 56 percent lower than in yards where RC is not used. “The starting point and ending point for us is safety,” Wall says. “We have looked at both Canadian roads’ operations, and we feel like we can achieve that safety improvement – and hopefully be even better.”

CSX and KCS say their LRC rollouts are going smoothly. The two-week training process is the same on all railroads. During the first week, crews receive classroom training, are tested, and switch cars in a controlled environment. During the second week, they switch cars on the job under the supervision of instructors.

CSX introduced remote control at its yards in Baldwin and Tampa, Fla., during the last week in January. Since then, it has spread to six other locations: Montgomery, Ala.; Wilmington, N.C.; Charleston, S.C.; Miami, and Lakeland, Fla.; and Augusta, Ga., which both began training last week. “We’ve had very good support from the UTU,” Wall says. “The general chairmen have been involved. We’ve worked to communicate with them, and they’ve been supportive of the implementation.”

The UTU says the rollout has gone well, and that crews are reacting positively. “They like it. It’s brought a bit of fun back into railroading,” says John Hancock, a UTU general chairman on CSX. “It’s kind of like model railroading...like having your own HO-scale train out there.”

The union and management have created a safety committee to examine remote control issues, including ergonomics. The process has worked well, and Hancock says he believes RC operation will prove to be safer than traditional switching with an engineer. Watco is installing the RC equipment on CSX locomotives at its facility in Jacksonville, Fla. So far, 25 locomotives – SW1500s, MP15s, GP40-2s and SD40-2s – have been equipped.

Overall, 100 locomotives will be equipped. The number of terminals with LRCs will be less than that, Wall says, because some yards may have two or three units in operation. CSX has not yet determined every terminal that will

receive LRCs, he said. For now, flat-switching operations with three-person crews are targeted for remote control. Some hump operations may receive remote control toward the end of the implementation this year, Wall said.

On KCS, the remote control leader was Knoche Yard in Kansas City. LRC operations began there in late January, and three of its jobs are currently run by remote control, Rees said. One job at KCS's Mill Street Yard in Kansas City also runs by remote control. "The people are very interested in it, and their productivity is very, very good," Rees said of the rollout.

KCS crews began training this month in Shreveport, La., where four jobs are currently using RC. Two more will be added there by the end of the month, Rees said. Next up: Beaumont, Texas, and Baton Rouge, La. The yard-by-yard rollout schedule for the rest of the railroad hasn't been finalized yet, Rees said, but every terminal should have it by September 15.

So far, KCS has a dozen locomotives – all SW1500s – equipped with remote control. Four more units are currently at MidAmerica Car in Kansas City for installation work, Rees said. Ultimately, KCS will have SW1500s and some GP38s and GP40s equipped for remote control, Rees says.

Neither CSX nor KCS is able to quantify cost savings of remote control yet. They expect productivity increases, as well as reduced damage due to improved coupling speeds. Engineer positions on the remote control jobs will be eliminated on both CSX and KCS. But the engineers themselves will still have jobs, as both railroads are hungry for engineers. The changes to railroad retirement, which allow 60-year-olds with 30 years of service to retire with full benefits, are expected to accelerate normal attrition rates among engineers, both railroads said. Remote control will help cushion the blow to both railroads and the engineers. CSX compared Catron and Canac systems, Wall said, and "felt very comfortable" with Catron, which also happens to be less expensive than Canac.

KCS didn't look beyond Canac, the Canadian National subsidiary that supplies LRC systems to both CN and CP. "As a smaller company, we can't experiment too much," Rees said. "We wanted proven technology."

BNSF's pilot project is at Newton, Kans., and Mandan, N.Dak. UP's is at Des Moines, Iowa. NS has its Canac Beltpack equipment in use at Bellevue and Columbus, Ohio, using GP38-2s. Training is under way with Catron-equipped GP38-2s at Savannah, Ga.

Pennsylvania House passes bill banning long-hood forward operation

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives on Tuesday passed a bill that would prohibit Class 1 railroads from operating locomotives long-hood forward. The measure, backed by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, passed the House 198-1 and will go on to the state Senate.

The BLE claims that running long-hood forward poses health and safety hazards for train crews and the public. "Operating a large freight in reverse forces engineers into a contorted position that keeps them from seeing instruments and gauges while facing the direction of movement and checking trackside signals, and it subjects them to the back draft of noxious fumes from the train's smokestack," said state Mike Rep. Veon, D-Beaver Falls.

The measure would bar long-hood forward operation except in emergencies, switching operations, and passenger transportation. Short lines and regionals would be exempt in certain situations. However, railroads operating in the Keystone State oppose the bill.

"We, and every railroad operating in Pennsylvania – whether a Class 1, short line or regional – have vehemently opposed the legislation, and we will continue to do so," said Norfolk Southern spokesman Rudy Husband. "We don't think it does anything to enhance safety for railroad employees or the general public."

NS once frequently operated long-hood forward, but that practice has declined in recent years. Several years ago, the BLE asked the Federal Railroad Administration to ban long-hood forward operation. But the FRA declined to act on the request.

Quotable

"This nation spends more money annually on cleaning up roadkill on highways and on salt for snow removal" than on passenger rail. --Amtrak President and CEO George Warrington, quoted in an Associated Press story on the railroad and its financial troubles.

"We are taking prices up some, and last year price increases at our railroad resulted in additional revenue of about \$150 million. I think we can continue to do that for some time to come."--CSX Corp. CEO John W. Snow, quoted in a Reuters story last week.

"Amtrak might be a victim. That's legitimate, but to say we're going to cut Amtrak to balance the budget would be like saying if my checking account was overdrawn by a couple thousand dollars I'm going to stop buying Bic pens." --Sen. Mark Dayton, D-Minn., quoted in a Minneapolis Star Tribune story on Amtrak's financial woes.

"I'll go back to Austin and see if we can get the commission, the state government, local governments and maybe the federal government to work together on the problem." --Texas Railroad Commission Chairman Michael Williams, quoted in the Star-Telegram of Fort Worth after going on a tour of the busy Tower 55 junction with railroad and government officials. Everyone agreed the at-grade junction of busy Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific lines should be grade-separated. But the big question is how to pay for such a project.

"The good news is we have a lot of terminals. The bad news is we use them." --Don Seale, Norfolk Southern senior vice president for merchandise marketing, quoted in a Wall Street Journal story on the railroad's new operating plan, which reduces car handling, shaves transit times and schedules trains. On NS, about 60 percent of a typical car's transit time is spent in terminals.

PROGRAM MANIFESTS

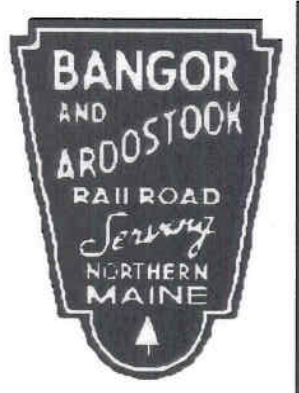
UPCOMING CHAPTER PROGRAMS

APRIL – MONDAY, the 8TH, 7PM. Don Marson slide presentation, "Railroads of the Pine Tree State".

MAY – MONDAY, the 13TH, 7PM. Program to be announced. (Any volunteers?)

CURRENT AND UPCOMING FLORIDA EAST COAST EVENTS

JUNE – Train & Toy Show, Eau Gallie Civic Center, 1551 Highland Ave, Melbourne. 9am - 2pm. Admission - \$3.00. Children under 10 free with parent. (321) 453-4125.



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NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 8, 2002, 7:00 PM
Central Brevard Library & Reference Center
308 Forrest Avenue, Cocoa (321) 633-1792
PROGRAM: Don Marson slide show "Railroads
of the Pine Tree State"