

The *EAST COAST CHAMPION*

April 2003

REMEMBERING DAVE SHORT

David Short passed away March 18, 2003. Dave was a member of the Florida East Coast Chapter for 13 years and received his 25-year pin from NRHS in 1998. Until Dave's failing health prevented it, he and his wife Virginia, until her passing, faithfully attended our monthly meetings, driving from Edgewater. Dave was a true railroad fan and loved watching videos of anything with trains.

PRESIDENT'S MEMO TO STOCKHOLDERS

Reading of the problems of members of the ELHS trying to get to the meeting by use of a train in North Jersey where we once had a great variety of service brought to mind a couple of things I saw on a recent vacation to London & Paris. I thought I'd share them since we are all (presumably) interested in 1) seeing that GM doesn't succeed in paving over the continental United States, 2) restoring that which we once had and frittered away (good train service) and 3) avoiding dependence on foreign oil - a high percentage of which money is immediately funneled into organizations which wish only to kill us & destroy our way of life - kind of like those anti-marijuana ads on TV.

BRITAIN - Has introduced legislation which establishes a surtax for those who wish to drive their private autos into London. If you MUST drive your car into the central city, you will pay for a license tag that acts as a permit to do so. This is in addition to the regular license fees. Trucks entering the city will also be restricted as to times of delivery and parking. This has been seen on websites like TRAINORDERS.COM, so I was aware of the movement, but while in London last week, I saw huge posters all over saying "Next week begins the license restrictions!!! A fine of 60 Pounds will be assessed for each violation."

I hadn't been to Britain for 25 years and was astounded at how congested the roads were. More cars = more roads = more cars. The 4-laners were packed even in non-rush hour times & the local roads in the city - FORGET IT. THIS with a train service that would be the envy of most American cities! Sad to say, Britain has handicapped itself in a misguided attempt at 'PRIVATIZING' the rail services. The result has been downsizing, cutting of benefits, layoffs, and 'deferred maintenance'.

The day we left for France, there began a strike on the commuter services into London because the private companies eliminated 'guards' (conductors) rationalizing that one man could run the train alone. BBC-TV had a scathing interview of a RR official who explained how they were rushing to train clerks to handle the duties of the conductors. They are called SCABS. My own thoughts went to how would the engineer cut out a bad-order car, flag when his train is stopped, etc. The supervisor on BBCTV was showing a class of newbies a red flag "This is how you stop an oncoming train." BOOOOMMM.

FRANCE. We rode the Chunnel train into Gare du Nord. Traffic seemed to be normal as we neared Paris, but there was lots of slow running in England with poor track, etc. On this RR at least, the French had their act together. SNCF has always been a tough act to follow. That country understands the value of its' RR infrastructure.

The downside came during a tour of the city. The lady who was the tour guide enlightened us about a new law enacted by the mayor of Paris and to take effect shortly. No more private autos in the city, and no more tour busses. HIZZONER intends for everyone - commuters, tourists, - to travel in boats on the Seine river which winds at a leisurely way through the center of the city. JUST GREAT - that river is already crowded with freight barges, tour boats, and people living in canal boats, barges, yachts, etc. to escape the huge rents. There IS a law that says one has to own an apartment if you live in a boat in Paris. You therefore need 2 residences to live in one.

They DO have a problem....cars are parked EVERYWHERE. on street corners, at crosswalks, straddling curbs where there is some grass between the curb and sidewalk, blocking exits from buildings, - total anarchy. I remarked on this & the tour guide said, "Well, m'sieu, everytime we elect a new president, the new president proclaims an amnesty on all fines for parking, speeding, etc. Therefore if you get 500 parking tickets, so what, you never will pay them."

With a great METRO and good rail service, it IS possible to get around by foot, but by the second day, the calves on my legs ached. WE are spoiled. I don't know what will happen in Paris....I don't see riverboats as the answer to public transport in Paris, but at least they are trying. Our politicians on the other hand don't seem to be aware that we HAVE a problem.

Regards,
Walter E. Smith

MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 2003 MEETING

Chapter President Walt Smith called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM on February 10, 2003. No guests were present.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Bob Selle gave the Treasurer's report. Bob McMillion moved to approve the report. Jerry Sheehan seconded the motion which passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Dick Alkus wanted to clarify minutes to the effect that he doesn't intend to donate his collection of video tapes to the chapter, but to donate tapes on occasion to be raffled at chapter meetings. Chuck Beckner moved to accept the meeting minutes. Jerry Sheehan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS – Chuck Billings reported that he had not yet made arrangements for the trip to see model railroad in Ormond. Chuck indicated that he would try to schedule the trip for early April.

NEW BUSINESS – A copy of the new edition of *Speedway to Sunshine* was donated to the Brevard County Library. Ms. Osaka of the library staff accepted the donation. The book will be held in the reference collection.

REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS –

- Ed Vosatka will be doing his program on the Union Cypress mill and railway for the North Brevard Historical Society in Titusville on Monday February 24 at 3 PM. The program will be at the North Brevard Historical Museum.
- Hal Greenlee: Jacksonville Train show will be February 15. Space Coast Hobbies is having a club appreciation day February 22. Show a club membership card for a discount.
- NRHS Nation Board will meet in Richmond Virginia April 4th – 6th. Open to all Society members. Anyone interest in attending should contact Tom Hammond.
- Harry Armer reported that the Lancaster chapter has restored the depot in Christiana Pa. The chapter is also restoring a F7 locomotive.
- *TRAINS* magazine has an excellent article on the electrification of Amtrak's Washington to New York route.
- Dues are due.

PROGRAM – video of the last run of the last SP cab forward.

MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 2003 MEETING

Chapter President Walt Smith called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM on March 10, 2003.

BOOK RAFFLE – The book raffled was *Trains an Illustrated History of Locomotive Development*. Harlan Hannah won the raffle again.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Bob Selle gave the Treasurer's report. Dick Alkus moved to approve the report. Walt Smith seconded the motion which passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Due to an error by the chapter secretary the February minutes did not make the newsletter. Copies of the February minutes were distributed at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS – Chuck Billings discussed the plans for the trip to Rusty Taylor's model railroad and model train collection.

NEW BUSINESS –

- Dick Alkus proposed that the chapter draft a letter supporting the proposed high-speed rail system to be sent to our legislators. The Secretary opposed the proposal because of the political nature of the proposal and because our organizations purpose is historical education and contemporary railroad awareness. A motion was made by Dick and seconded by Bob Sowden to send the letter. The motion failed.

REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS –

- Hal Greenlee: The damage to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum will not have a major impact on our national convention. The damage has closed the museum and forced the cancellation of the Fair of the Ironhorse in Baltimore.
- Walt Smith commented on a column by Billy Cox in the "Florida Today" paper. Walt contributed a copy of the column for the chapter archive.
- Bob Selle: The Mount Dora steam locomotive has been sold and shipped out. The Doodlebug may still be operating. Also Bob circulated an album of photos he had taken of the new Tampa Bay Trolleys. Bob reported that for anyone wanting to ride the trolleys, they run from 9 AM to 2 AM.
- Bob introduced his guest Bob Groseclose.
- Bill McCord introduced his guest John Struckman.

Sorry You Missed It!

by Chuck Billings

The short trip some of us took to Ormond Beach was really something to behold. There were, I believe, 14 including 4 spouses among us who visited Rusty Taylor's "barn" housing his 22' x 33' "O" Gauge layout. Everyone was really impressed with the extent of the layout and the amount of detail. This may be the wrong word, but everything was well choreographed.

There were two mountains, one big and the other bigger with a double spiral inside it. Lots of cars, people, trees, signs, buildings, houses, etc. There is a circus, large union station, downtown city scene, train yards, industrial areas, lumber camp, and much, much more. There are 10 separately controlled rail lines running steam and diesel of all types. In addition to this layout, there are two tracks against the wall just below the ceiling, one with a long Mesabi ore train and the other with a beautiful blue Standard Gauge 1930's Lionel passenger train, which can really fly, and it almost did.

Now that I have told you all of this, there is more — lots more. On all four walls of the 30' x 40' room, there are shelves, like bookshelves, floor to ceiling, minus the two rail lines previously described, displaying steam engines, streamlined steam engines, an SP cab forward, and diesel engines of all types including a one-of-a-kind huge UP turbo unit. This display also includes freight cars, cabooses, and passenger train units. Everyone was very impressed, and I was overwhelmed. For those who were not able to make the visit, I am sorry. Dr. Taylor is a most congenial host who was so appreciative that we came to see and enjoy his display with him. A big thanks to Rusty.

THE ELECTRIC NOTEPAD

by Dave Klein

First, I have to thank all of you for your card and kind thoughts that I received after the loss of my mother. Some of you may have met her; if you had, you would know what a great person she was. She wanted to come to the last Annual Dinner to meet "some of her son's friends" but she was too sick to go out. I now have the task of disposing of her things, donating her clothes, etc. She left a list as to who gets what and things like that. Which brings me to an important point: read that page on what to do with your railroad memorabilia and other items that appears near the back of the NRHS Annual Activities issue. You know what I'm talking about, even though you don't want to talk about it. Enough said.

I see Light Rail is in the news again. Orlando's former mayor, Ms. Glenda Hood, told reporters that the failure of the Light Rail initiatives was the greatest disappointment of her tenure as Mayor. It will happen someday, but it will cost a lot more, especially after interest rates get higher. There were millions available from Federal Sources with few strings attached when we had a budget surplus, but those days are probably gone for a long time. Other cities have jumped in and "grabbed" Orlando's money, most notably Charlotte, NC, which will start a mixture of Commuter Rail, Light Rail, and Bus operations to help solve their congestion problems. Even Little Rock, AR, recently broke ground for an \$18M, 2.2 mile heritage-type trolley line. They'll be using GOMACO-built cars similar to the Tampa Birneys. Tampa, by the way, has ordered the two extra cars they had an option on from GOMACO, bringing their fleet to ten cars.

Recent news articles reported that the Governor plans to put the High-Speed Rail project on the ballot again, probably real soon. The Governor thinks it's too expensive and there's already squabbling about the route(s). Other recent news include the collapse of a large section of the roof over the B&O RR Museum's roundhouse. Too much snow recently hit the Baltimore area, causing the collapse with a lot of damage being reported. More locally, I see the Mt. Dora operation has shut down. My friends at the Electric Railway Clubs of Florida noted that the equipment will be returned to their owners unless someone else decides to lose some money; the use of the diesel instead of the ailing steamer was a big factor. We weren't sure what happened to the former Philadelphia & Western interurban-turned-doodlebug or the reported Dallas streetcar being worked on in the area. (A recent rail news item showed a similarly modified P&W car being used elsewhere, but the P&W car numbers were different.)

More info from my Electric Railway friends: Memphis has a number of single truck Brill cars imported from Oporto, Portugal, plus some Melbourne, Australia, Type 1 cars. The city is reworking the track and extending the line. In order to shorten the dwell time of the cars at the ends of the line (while the motorman changes the poles), the cars are getting pantographs! Somehow, the little Oporto cars don't seem to be the type to warrant a pan, even if they're of the single-arm European type....How about a turntable on a trolley line? The McKinney Street system in Dallas is apparently installing one for their single-ended cars. What single-ended cars? It seems they may be getting some former Toronto all-electric PCC cars which are single-ended. The cars will be re-gauged and refurbished for the line. I'm sure they know that the Seashore Trolley Museum has a few ex-Dallas double-ended PCC cars that were last used in Boston. The museum in Kennebunkport, ME, bought a few extra for "investment" purposes rather than restoration. One of those should return home.

A recent trip to the Big Apple caused me to land at JFK, so I looked for progress on the "Airtrain" system that will link the airport to the Jamaica Terminal of the Long Island Railroad/NYC Subway complex. A lot (if not all) of the elevated structure is in place, together with the track. It looks like typical subway track with outside third rail. The cars are supposed to be lighter than subway equipment and supposedly there isn't any joint operation. There's a loop connecting all of the air terminals plus a stop at the rent-a-car lot. At this large parking lot there is a link from this stop directly to the Jamaica

terminal. A pair of the city's traffic cameras is aimed at one of the expressways that has the Airtrain pylons down it's centerline, so when the system starts running, we'll have an electric line on the Web.

That last item got me thinking: I know that there are a number of Web cameras aimed at railroads are out there but most are "quiet" for long periods of time due to the nature of freight trains. But how many are aimed at Light Rail systems? Maybe few directly, but I'll bet there are many that are part of a city's traffic monitoring network and are known only to the locals. I'd like to find the sites that monitor San Francisco's Market Street for the Trolley Fests and New Orleans' Canal Street Line. Isn't technology great! See you next time.

STACK TALK

by Neil Moran

On to Tiefsa, the last leg of our journey in China. Tiefsa is the "Land of the Mikados." This is the only place in the world where the 2-8-2s reign supreme. After checking into our hotel and having lunch, we met a representative from the railroad, who took us over to the huge railroad yard and servicing area. There, in front of us, stood eight Mikados having their tenders loaded with coal. On the ground were several crew members washing and wiping down the engines, while all the time a large coal bucket was moving overhead, swinging from one track to another, dropping coal into tenders. This unit moves on two rails that parallel the service tracks. Crews are again very friendly and beckon you to come up to the cab as they did in Daban. Naturally, they expect some American money, and generally two dollars does the trick. These engines were mostly built back in the early 70s, and into the 80s. Some of them look their years in service, with rusting around the pilot and boiler. All the time we were looking at these engines, freights and passenger trains were moving through the yards delivering passengers to their destinations. Most of the commuter service consisted of six or seven coaches, all painted green. We saw no double-headed trains powering freights either. One could wander around the yards freely, naturally using good judgment. I spotted several Mikes moving through the yards pushing or pulling several freight cars. At the widest part of the yards there was a signal bridge that spanned over all eighteen tracks. This certainly was a scene out of the Enola Yards in Pennsylvania back in the 40s. By the time 4 p.m. came around light was fading fast, and it had turned bitterly cold, so back to the hotel for us. Our second day found us out on the wye area where passenger and freights come by. Before us were tracks from all directions controlled by regular signals (there are no semaphores here). With the temperature a little over 20 degrees, our group stayed within the warm confines of our van until someone spotted smoke. Trains rumbled by at 30-35 mph at a fairly frequent pace, all pulled by Mikados. Several trains however had their engines running tender first, something we saw the day before.

After retiring for lunch we then went over to the station to catch the afternoon commuter rush. On the outside this station is not outstanding in its architecture, rather plain to the look. The inside waiting room had very few lights on, which makes for a somber atmosphere. In the People's Republic one gets by on the barest essentials. But just like Penn Station or Grand Central, people were rushing by to catch their trains. Once outside on the platforms you have to climb a long flight of stairs to get on the other tracks. We stood on the passenger bridge overlooking the five tracks. Commuters gave us the look of, "What planet are you from?" They simply could not believe that anybody would take pictures of trains pulled by steam locomotives. Some tried hard to talk to us, fortunately our guide who was always by our side explained what we were doing. Some even came up to us and touched our coats. After photographing several trains coming into and out of the station, we moved down to the platforms and walked up to the 2-8-2s. The crews hardly noticed us as they were busying themselves servicing the locomotives. We waited in a light snowfall and bitter cold for these trains to move out. Tiefsa seems to be a service stop. While the train is standing in the station, two female guards all in green uniforms stand on the ground near the staircase assisting passengers. With an announcement over the PA system the guards climb aboard as if as one person checking out for late passengers. To watch these people move it's like watching a dance number with the Radio City Rockettes performing. Bags of coal are brought up to each end of the car to be loaded before departure. This is used for the heating system. Quite fascinating to watch. During the afternoon we photographed eleven passenger trains, seven freights, and several "light" moves. There is also a water tower on a siding where I shot four Mikes taking water. With all this action taking place, you would think people would be extra careful, around such an active station. Quite the contrary; passengers as well as the general public wander and cross the tracks on a casual basis. Can you imagine that in this country? The insurance company and the railroads would have a heart attack. As the old saying goes, "ignorance is bliss." Our last day at Tiefsa we again went over to the main line near the wye, taking several shots of passenger trains, then had lunch only to go back to the Tiefsa station this time trying to get different angles. That afternoon twelve trains came through, and the usual array of light moves plus four freights rolled by. Late in the afternoon our group drove over for the final look at the coaling facilities. Once again eight Mikes were being serviced, while six or seven commuter trains rolled by, along with three freights. What a way to end our adventures in China. With a bitter wind picking up and possible snow not far off we reluctantly got back into our van and headed to Shenyang Bei to catch our train back to Beijing the next morning and finally home completely exhausted. Would I go back again? This poses an interesting question. Steam will reign supreme until at least 2004, after that it's anyone's guess. To answer the question above, I'll just say this: in James Hilton's "Lost Horizons," Robert Conway is overwhelmed by Shangri-La, as I was at Jing Ping Pass and Debon. He was forced to leave this Utopia to go back to civilization due to family ties, as I was. Nevertheless he returned to this Tibetan valley by sheer determination. Maybe, like Conway, I shall return to Jing Ping Pass before the steam curtain rings down. What do you think? Will Jing Ping Pass become my Shangri-La?

We now swing halfway around the world, and stop at Calgary, Alberta. Canadian Pacific Railroad has recently announced their proposed "Good Will" schedule for their Hudson type, #2816. As previously stated in this column, the engine was

going over into Montreal to help in the re-opening of several buildings at the railroad museum at St. Constant. This now has been scrubbed with these new plans. The Hudson will depart from Calgary on May 11 with stops at Moose Jaw (12), Broadview (13), Swift Current (14), and Brandon (15). After Brandon on the 15th it has not been determined what will happen immediately. However on May 18 the train will be in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Schreiber (19), Chapleau (20), Sudbury (21), MacTier (22), Toronto (23-26) on display at Union Station, Hamilton (26), London (27), Windsor (28), Woodstock (29), back to Toronto on the 30th until June 6. There will be side trips out of Toronto to Osawan, Milton, Agicourt, Streetsville, Brampton and Orangville, all short excursions in the Toronto area. The "Special" will then leave Toronto's Union Station on June 7 and head west stopping at these locations: Parry Sound (8), Cartier (9), Chapleau (10), White River (11), Nipicon (12), Ignack (13), Kandra (14), Portage-La-Prairie (15-16), Verdon (17), Regina (18), Swift Current (19), Medicine Hat (20), and finally back to Calgary (21). Naturally all dates are subject to change. Presently it is not known if tickets can be purchased from Calgary to Toronto, or any stops in between. This apparently will be a shippers and employees special. However the side trips out of Toronto may be open to the public. As far as I heard, #2816 is in fine condition with just the necessary repairs to keep her in good running form.

We now head into Alaska, and in a recent conversation with the White Pass & Yukon Railroad, I have this to pass on to you. Complete restoration of Mikado #73 is making great progress; meanwhile, the Consol received from Nebraska, #69, will not be refurbished it turns out: entirely too much work especially on the drivers; WP&Y is looking for another engine to work on after #73. On #73, the group is still working on the boiler which will take some time to complete. Finished so far includes complete retubing, new flues, new side sheets, new door sheet, and all riveting. A brand new cab is being installed as well. The driving wheels have been addressed and will be slipped under the boiler when it's ready. Various plumbing problems have been taken care of with some additional labor to be completed. Only minor fine-tuning is needed on the tender. All these things will fall into place in time for test runs due sometime in May. A special railfan weekend, sponsored by Trains Unlimited (Chris Skow) is slated for June 5-8 with #73. Regular service is slated for June 14 as the regular steam schedule from Skagway to Bennett Lake will start then. The steam train will operate every Saturday after that till August 23. Departure time is at 8 a.m. for the price of \$156. This includes lunch, and several run-bys along the way. There is also a walking tour at Lake Bennett. The train returns approximate to Skagway at 4:30 p.m. Certainly a day to look forward to, with magnificent scenery, bridges, tunnels and a flavor of the Old West that cannot be denied.

We'll now turn our attention to steam news from the States. First, some excellent news about the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway. The state of New Mexico has kicked in with their share of subsidy funds to keep the railroad at least running this year. Colorado is still dragging its heels as far as its support for the railroad. At least the C&T can go ahead and fix the three Mikados which need work to run this year. Also some of the money will go to restore the rolling stock, along with track work. Approximately 8000 ties must be replaced to maintain the railroad in good running condition. There are around 200,000 ties on the railroad, and at a price of \$50 per tie, the bill runs up to \$6.4 million. A similar argument can be made for the locomotives rehab. At the moment, the C&T has no legally operating engine, and will need three in operation for the May opening. An estimated \$3.5 million is desired to have all six locomotives in good condition. They will probably have to get by with half that figure. Presently Colorado is in severe financial crisis, and most probably cannot participate on an equal basis with New Mexico. It has been estimated that approximately \$4.5 million per year comes in to the two states' coffers in tax revenues directly related to the operation of the railroad. As this article was written in early March it is not known whether Colorado has participated in funding the C&T. I'll keep you informed when further news comes in.

Last February as everyone knows the B&O Railroad Museum sustained a severe blow when the roof collapsed due to heavy snow and ice. Extent of the damage at this writing has yet to be fully determined, but it is known that besides the damage to the roundhouse itself, the coaches inside took the brunt of the damage. The model railroad display sustained heavy damage as well, along with railroadians displayed on the floor. Several steam locomotives sustained damage as well, but fortunately several locomotives had been moved to the Strasburg Railroad for maintenance, and so escaped the disaster. The Museum's priceless collection dates back to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad of the 1830s. The Museum, an historic icon of American railroading, will be closed indefinitely. Funding for reconstruction has already started, and work started to erect a temporary covering over the damaged roof. Exhibits will likely be moved before rebuilding can commence. Several special events have been cancelled; all events are cancelled until further notice. The "Fair of the Iron Horse" spectacular slated for June will be cancelled; however, the joint national conference of the NRHS and the R&LHS, planned to be held in conjunction with the Museum's Fair, will nonetheless go forward. Unfortunately, the four steam locomotives slated to come to the Fair will not be coming: the engines are Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 #261; Nickel Plate Mikado #587; Nickel Plate Berkshire #765; and Pere Marquette Berkshire #1225.

Moving to the Midwest, the former steam queen of Midwestern rails, Nickel Plate Berkshire (2-8-4) #765 is currently undergoing a thorough rebuilding at the New Haven, Indiana shop for her return to service. Her owners and operators, the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society, started this adventure two years ago when the group received a federal TEA-21 grant for \$450,000 to fund this activity. President and "Chief Rebuilder" Glen Brendel says this is a very extensive overhaul, and that he means to do the best possible job. Work on the running gear is progressing well. Three of the four main driver axles are nearing completion, basically awaiting new tires at this point. Bearing housings have been completely refurbished, and all eight bearing set have been inspected and reworked. All wheel centers have been turned to insure proper tire fit. The Society feels very fortunate to have the TVRM wheel shop at their disposal. Crankpins have been requartered and rolled at the TVRM shops. Elsewhere extensive boiler work has been started. Front and rear tube sheets have been replaced, and new tubes and flues have been installed. A complete set of new superheaters awaits installation. In the firebox, the crew is currently finishing a major throat sheet replacement, and all four corners of the firebox. By the time you read these accomplishments, a hydro test should have taken place. Additional assistance is coming in from Gary Bensman of

Diversified Rail Service. He's helping with the boiler work, while Scott Lindsay of Steam Operations Corporation of Birmingham, Alabama, was hired to do bearing box overhauls. After the hydro test is completed, remaining work on the cab, appliance, stoker and tender should be completed quickly. The first "fire-up" has been tentatively set for May, and the locomotive will remain coal fired.

As for future plans, Glen Brendel had hoped to bring the #765 to Baltimore for the Rail Fair this June, but the collapse of the B&O Museum's roundhouse seems to have cancelled that possibility. The outrageous cost of insurance makes it hard to predict what mainline steaming will be possible this year. Regarding other steam restorations at New Haven, the Society does have a couple of things on the back burner. Former LE&W/NKP caboose restoration is going slowly, along with ex-Wabash 0-6-0 #534. But the #534 will not be touched until #765 is finished and out the door.

As for the eastern roads, CSX and Norfolk Southern both say "No" to any steam operations. However CSX might keep the door open. Their attitude toward steam on their rails should be revealed soon when negotiations begin between the company and the various steam operators, such as Milwaukee Road #261. #261 had hoped to run to Baltimore for the now-cancelled Rail Fare, running exclusively over CSX rails, but CSX was demanding \$200 million insurance coverage for any passenger service. This puts any steam excursions on CSX for the NRHS/R&LHS convention a remote possibility. Not very enticing, is it?

Sorry to end this column on the down side, but this is the reality when you're an admirer of steam.

Special thanks to John Biehn and Don Clark (Dayton RR Society), John Mielke (Master Mechanic, White Pass & Yukon RR), Warren Smith (RRE-NY), and Steve Barry (*Railfan and Railroad Magazine*), and yours truly. I remain your humble servant in steam,

UNTIL OUR TRACKS CROSS AGAIN.

INTERESTING RAIL NEWS

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

Track work temporarily suspends *Sunset Limited* between New Orleans, Orlando

Due to scheduled track maintenance work by CSX, Amtrak's *Sunset Limited* (trains no. 1 and 2) was temporarily suspended between New Orleans, La, and Orlando, Fla. in mid-March. The train operated on its normal schedule between Los Angeles and New Orleans. CSX will be completing an intensive track improvement project, forcing the change in the three-day-a-week *Sunset Limited*.

"We understand that this temporary suspension in service may cause some inconvenience to our passengers," said Joe Wall, general Superintendent of Amtrak's Southern Division. "However, by closing the tracks entirely, the project will be completed as quickly as possible, minimizing service disruptions."

During the track maintenance project, train no. 1, which would normally originate in Orlando on March 16, 18 and 20, will instead originate in New Orleans on March 17, 19 and 21 with service through to Los Angeles. Eastbound departures originating in Los Angeles on March 12, 14 and 16 will terminate in New Orleans. The last westbound train prior to the suspension will depart Orlando on March 13. The last eastbound train prior to the suspension will depart Los Angeles on March 9. The *Sunset Limited* will resume its normal route westbound with a departure from Orlando on March 23 and an eastbound departure from Los Angeles on March 19.

Amtrak to limit use of 'Acela' name

In a change of strategy, Amtrak will begin using the *Acela* name only as a brand for the high-speed *Acela Express* trainsets that travel the Northeast Corridor between Boston, New York and Washington. Conventional Northeast Corridor trains between Boston and Newport News, Va., were previously marketed as *Acela Regional* trains, alongside the *Acela Express* trains in timetables. As of March 17, the conventional trains will be simply known as *Regionals*. Amtrak's other Northeast Corridor operations – the limited-stop *Metroliners*, *Keystone* trains to Harrisburg, Pa., and New York-Philadelphia *Clocker* commuter trains – will retain their own brand names.

Union Pacific to carry wind turbine parts

The first of seven special trains carrying giant wind turbine blades along with their accompanying electrical equipment left Houston, Texas, for Sacramento, Calif. on March 6. The remaining six trains will run periodically until May.

The wind turbine parts, including the 135-foot blades, were shipped from Denmark to the Port of Houston, then loaded onto special freight cars with buffer cars in-between in order to accommodate blade overhang. Each train will be about 50 cars long and carry enough material for 81 wind turbines that will eventually be installed near Sacramento. When assembled, each turbine will be 200 feet tall and have the capacity to generate enough electricity for 45,000 homes. The route is from Houston to California via UP's *Sunset Route* through El Paso, Tucson and Colton, over Tehachapi Pass and up to Sacramento.

Norfolk & Western 1218 joining no. 611 at new pavilion

Norfolk & Western 1218 will return to the Virginia Museum of Transportation on June 14. The Class A 2-6-6-4, built at N&W's Roanoke Shops, will be displayed beside N&W Class J 4-8-4 611 under the new Robert B. Claytor and W. Graham Claytor, Jr. Pavilion, which will be dedicated that day.

The Virginia Museum of Transportation is raising money for the cosmetic restoration of the 1218. The locomotive has been stored in Norfolk Southern's Roanoke Shops since 1995 and needs to be repaired and painted. When NS's steam excursion program ended in 1994, the 1218 was undergoing heavy repairs and was not operational. Built for dual service in the mid-1930s, the Class As numbered 42 in all. They could reach speeds as high as 65 mph in time-freight service and up to 70 mph in passenger service. They were equipped with 24" x 30" cylinders and 70" drivers, weighed 573,000 pounds, and generated a tractive effort of 114,000 pounds.

NRHS, R&LHS moving forward with national convention

The National Railway Historical Society says that "Star Spangled Rails", this year's convention in Baltimore, continues to move ahead. Star Spangled Rails planned for June 30 to July 6 will be the NRHS's 63rd annual convention.

"The news of the roof collapse on the historic roundhouse at the B&O Railroad Museum and the subsequent cancellation of the Fair of the Iron Horse are very sad," said publicity chairman Kevin Tankersley. "Despite these unfortunate events, we will go forward with what promises to be a memorable convention."

Three mainline excursions covering rare mileage, one utilizing vintage Pennsylvania Railroad E8s as motive power, are just a few of the more than 25 events scheduled. Convention co-hosts are the Washington, D.C., Chapter of the NRHS and the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society. For more information visit <http://www.starspangledrails.org/>.

Florida tourist line ceases operations

The Orlando & Mount Dora Railway, owned by Iowa Pacific Holdings of Chicago, stopped operations in February. The last run occurred on Feb. 22 between Orlando and Mount Dora, Fla. The Mount Dora Limited left Orlando with 160 passengers bound for Mount Dora. After returning to Orlando, the equipment was deadheaded to Plymouth, Fla. The operation began in December 2001 with steam-powered trains running a 10-mile roundtrip. The steam engine, ex-Reader no. 4, broke down on March 30, 2002, and never returned to service. Florida Central CF7s filled in for the final months of operations. The equipment is awaiting dispersal. The railway employed 10 people.

One last stop for former New York City subway cars

A third set of former New York City subway cars made their final station call last Tuesday somewhere off Virginia Beach. The hulks, without doors, windows and electrical gear were dumped off a barge a dozen miles off the coast to become manmade reefs – new homes, if you will – for fish and other sea creatures. Two earlier shipments of subway cars were dumped in other spots along the Virginia seaboard for the same purpose. The cars are joined by a variety of other man-made objects dumped into the Atlantic for the same purpose, including U.S. Army tanks, sunken World War II transports and other odds and ends to help fish populate the area.

B&O museum repairs could be done by year's end

Still uncertain when its badly damaged roundhouse will be fixed, a B&O Railroad Museum official offered on March 12 a best-case scenario, saying rebuilding could be completed by the end of this year. Officials said the remaining portion of the lower roof over the roundhouse will likely have to be taken down in order to rebuild the slate roof over the 45,000-square-foot building. The upper roof in the building's cupola can remain intact, says Courtney Wilson, the museum's executive director.

About 50 percent of the lower roof – the main roof – collapsed Feb. 17 during a record snowstorm. Wilson has said building engineers are trying to pinpoint whether there was a structural defect or simply deterioration in the building, which was built in 1884. The museum is closed indefinitely and officials, expecting a difficult recovery, have canceled events and catered engagements through the year. Artifact handlers continue to remove small artifacts, rolling stock and small locomotives from the roundhouse to make room for additional "shoring" towers. Once removed, the locomotives and cars are placed in storage facilities.

The B&O Railroad Museum has released a preliminary list of artifacts damaged Feb. 17 when the roof of the museum's roundhouse collapsed under heavy snow. A complete list is pending further debris removal, the museum says, and a formal damage assessment reports not available at this time. A preliminary list can be seen at http://www.borail.org/roundhouse_restoration/20030319.asp.

CN/IC trimming 200 miles in Mississippi

Canadian National/Illinois Central is considering abandoning more 200 miles of track between Canton, Miss., and Memphis, and between Brookhaven and Natchez, Miss. CN/IC says the pending closure of the International Paper plant at Natchez, which will happen this summer, is a key reason for abandoning the line. The Canton-Memphis line is the former main passenger line, route of IC's historic passenger-train fleet and of Amtrak's City of New Orleans for 130 years, until September 1995, when Amtrak was shifted to what had become IC's freight route through Greenwood and Yazoo City, 30 miles to the west. The route, which was that of the legendary engineer Casey Jones, now has little on-line freight business.

NRHS national official Bob Pinsky dies

Robert A. ("Bob") Pinsky, 55, National Railway Historical Society's national vice president since 1996, died March 15. Pinsky, a lifelong resident of Oak Park, Ill., was national director for NRHS's Chicago Chapter, which was chartered in 1985, and served as national Convention Chairman when the chapter hosted the event in 1993. NRHS President Greg Molloy credits Pinsky with making "significant improvements" to NRHS's membership records operation, "which allowed NRHS to assume essential operations from outside firms and increased [its] flexibility." Pinsky also served as editor of "NRHS News" and "News Extra." His wife of more than 30 years, Dr. Ellen Pinsky, serves as NRHS national assistant secretary.

Sand problems and railroads the subject of conference

Just as much as wind and rain, sand is a problem for railroads in many areas of the world. Railway safety experts from more than a dozen countries met in Saudi Arabia this week to recommend measures to safely operate in sandy areas. Concluding that most train incidents in Arab and African countries had been caused by sand accumulation on the track, the conference suggested mechanical means of sand removal, chemical means, as well as planting trees near the track.

While the last suggestion, trees, appears to be the most sound and ecologically correct, it is not a new solution. The Southern Pacific learned that lesson decades ago when it planted miles of eucalyptus trees on both sides of the tracks on their Sunset Route through the Southern California desert.

Watch CSX watching you

With the nation at an "Orange" terrorist threat level, railfans watching trains along CSX should be aware that employees are now reporting photographers to local authorities or railroad police. CSX spokesman Gary Sease indicated as much in a story published in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Sease told the newspaper that railfans often shoot photos of trains rolling by. Before the increased risks of terrorist acts CSX engineers would wave at them. Employees now report rail photographers to railroad police or local authorities.

Security continues to tighten around U.S. railroads

With the commencement of U.S. military action in Iraq and in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security and other national security officials, North America's major freight railroads are taking additional security steps, says the Association of American Railroads. Some of the actions taken since Sept. 11, 2001, include increased cybersecurity, restricted access to railcar location data, spot employee identification checks, increased tracking and inspection of certain shipments, new encryption technology for selected data communications, increased security at physical assets, and increased employee training to ensure that the industry's more than 200,000 employees serve as the "eyes and ears" of the security effort, according to AAR.

With military action against Iraq, the industry has taken additional security steps including real-time monitoring and additional surveillance of designated trains, increased security at certain rail yards, increased inspection of priority track, tunnels and bridges, and working with customers to tighten control of supply chain logistics.

Union Pacific has increased monitoring and surveillance of certain trains, as well as key yards, main lines, tunnels, and bridges as the United States opened war against Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. State troopers from Connecticut and New Jersey who have recently begun riding New York City-bound commuter trains in an effort to increase rail safety, have been given law enforcement jurisdictional powers in New York by Governor George Pataki. The New York state executive order extends powers of arrest and other law enforcement authority to the out-of-state officers.

Meanwhile, Cincinnati police have begun round-the-clock patrols on two key Ohio River railroad bridges. Patrols, which began Tuesday as part of the increased terrorism alert, are posted at the Clay Wade Bailey Bridge and the Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific bridge, which crosses the Ohio River at Ludlow, Ky., across the river from Cincinnati.

CSX and Norfolk Southern operate major lines through the Tristate area, and CSX operates one of its largest Midwest yards, Queensgate, in Cincinnati. More than 60 trains cross through the area daily, with some carrying toxic chemicals as well as key raw goods such as coal. Both bridges enable trains to access Queensgate Yard. CSX is not commenting on its increased security efforts. AAR says U.S. railroads are one of the few private sector industries to receive an "A" for its security efforts in a recent independent analysis by The Washington Post.

CSX may gain new spur in Florida

A tentative schedule sets an April 2004 deadline for construction of a CSX spur into a 340-acre city industrial park. The 2.8 mile rail spur from the CSX main line to the vicinity of Aercon Florida LLC would cost about \$1 million per mile. Taxpayer costs preliminarily pegged at \$420,000 could jump to just under \$1 million if CSX demands that Haines City buy an intervening parcel rather than permitting the city to lease a right of way. That possibility has irked some city officials.

The project reinstates 12,700 feet of abandoned rail line, builds a new bridge, reactivates two grade crossings, and adds 3,440 feet of new track. Aercon, an aerated concrete block manufacturer, moved into the complex based largely on assurances that the city would reactivate and extend a former spur. A 55-week project schedule, including 30 weeks of construction, could place the spur into service this time next year.

Study touts benefits of West Virginia double-stack routing

A study released by Marshall University's Rahall Transportation Institute says a new West Virginia routing for double-stack train would generate multiple benefits. In addition to significantly shortening mid-Atlantic to mid-west shipping times, the project would open central Appalachia to affordable domestic and international container service, thereby helping to spur economic development within the region, according to the study.

The study, conducted in conjunction with Norfolk Southern and a number of mid-Atlantic and Midwestern states, examines the economic feasibility of expanding clearances along Norfolk Southern's mainline route between Norfolk, Va., and a variety of Midwestern cities. Work would include modifying 28 railroad tunnels located primarily in West Virginia.

According to the study, the ability to use double-stack container equipment along the West Virginia routing could save shippers and their customers as much as \$759 million over the life of the project. The present value of these savings is estimated to be \$368 million. Associated construction costs should be in the area of \$120 million. The RTI study includes plans for the development of a truck/rail intermodal facility in western West Virginia.

FEC in negotiation to sell land

About five acres of Florida East Coast Railway land is in negotiation for sale with the city of New Smyrna Beach. The parcel is near the intersection of State Road 44 and South Myrtle Avenue. If the sale goes through, one city plan includes building a fire station.

PROGRAM MANIFESTS

UPCOMING CHAPTER PROGRAMS & EVENTS

APRIL – MONDAY the 14TH, 7PM. – Jim Gillin will show the video he made: *East Broadtop Fall Spectacular, 1995*. BOOK RAFFLE: *The Men Who Built the Railroads*, by Aaron E. Klein, donated by Bill Hurst.

MAY – MONDAY the 12TH, 7PM. – Program to be announced.

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<http://www.geocities.com/jingram05/index.html>

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NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 14, 7:00 p.m.
Central Brevard Library & Reference Center
308 Forrest Avenue, Cocoa (321) 633-1792
PROGRAM: Jim Gillin will show the video:
EAST BROADTOP FALL SPECTACULAR, 1995