

July 2009 No. 7

Meeting - Monday July 13th 6:30 PM

Chapter News

Health & Welfare

It is with deep regret I have to report the passing of Nola Raymond, the wife of Ron. Ron and Nola were members of the Chapter for many years. When they retired, they relocated to South Carolina.

Farewell

This will be my last issue as editor of the Flatwheel. Jeff Dearmin has graciously volunteered for the editor's position and I will leave it in Jeff's capable hands. A Flatwheel committee has also been formed consisting of David Rhea and Roger Wilson.



Editing the FW with my nosey Siamese cat, Cecilia watching and commenting on my every move.

I joined the chapter in July of 1994 when I relocated from New York. What I found was a great group of friendly people who loved trains and helped me feel comfortable in strange surroundings. My new job takes me on a new adventure. Hopefully I will find another group that is just as kind and friendly. It is with heartfelt feelings I bid you farewell and good luck.

July Birthdays

Kim Fallon

Missing Flatwheels

Phil Cross is trying to complete the collection of Flatwheels. If you have any of the following issues please contact Phil.

1977 – May, July, August, September, October and December.

1978 – I need all months.

1979 – January, April, May, July, August, September, October, November and December.

1981 – October and December (it is possible that these 2 months were not published – I haven't been able to confirm).

Flatwheel

Delivery of the Flatwheel by email in PDF format is available. If you wish to signup, please send me an email or talk to me at the meeting.

I'm always looking for reader articles and photos. Did you do any rail fanning on your vacation? Tell us about it! When giving me photos etc., please put your name on them so I can return them promptly.

Other RR News

Online Digital RR Collection

Illinois's Knox College announced that it had launched "Railroads in the Midwest," an online digital collective of early railroad documents and images. The collection, organized and digitized by the College's Seymour Library, includes high-quality scans of 19th Century photographs and PDFs of railroad annual reports. The collection may be accessed at

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/index_knx_rail.php?CISOROOT=/knx_rail or by typing "Railroads in the Midwest Knox collection" into Google. (ffd: Galesburg Register-Mail)- Weekly Rail Review 6/29/09

High Line Opens for Business

The abandoned freight line on the west side of Manhattan has opened the first ½ mile for visitors on June 8th. As funds become available the park will extend further south. See previous FW's for more on the High Line. Also see:

<http://www.thehighline.org>

Local Rail Enthusiasts Create a Rolling Rail Museum

Lots of people have memories of playing with toy train sets as a kid, and just about every one of those trains has that unmistakable red cabooses.

A group of railroad enthusiasts in Albemarle County, Virginia decided to turn an abandoned life-size cabooses into one that adults can appreciate.

Restoring the cabooses to working order took almost four years. It's one of the only fully-functional cabooses in the

U.S. While fifteen members of the Rivanna Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society worked through all kinds of weather to fix up the train, they say they did it for fun.

Railroad buffs call it a rolling museum. It's an actual caboose, restored and repainted to look exactly as it did when it was built in 1941.



The Pennsylvania Railroad caboose sits on a track right next to a working Norfolk Southern train line just off Red Hill Depot Road in southern Albemarle County. Sometimes engineers actually stop their trains and step out to look inside.

The man who organized the restoration, John Pfaltz, describes why the caboose means so much to him and his friends.

"Trains are marvelous. They're fascinating. They're monstrous. I served in the Navy, and this has thicker steel than the ship in the navy I was on. There's a kind of excitement about it," says Pfaltz, the Rivanna Railway Historical Society President.

Pfaltz estimates the restored caboose is worth about \$25,000.

It's the first part of a train that these railroad enthusiasts have ever restored, but after the success of the Pennsylvania caboose, they hope to work on more in the future. They also hope that students at the nearby Red Hill Elementary School will get the opportunity to see the caboose and step inside of it as part of a history field trip.

You might be wondering what keeps this little caboose from being vandalized since it hasn't been moved from the track near Route 29 South in years. The renovators say train engineers look out for it, and nearby residents also patrol the caboose, to make sure it stays just the way it is. – from 7/09 Iron Horses, Alabama Gulf Chapter NRHS

Lessons Learned

WALT SMITH

At the last meeting of the FEC Chapter of the NRHS, I related a couple stories about the OLD Auto-Train. As I was leaving, the members asked for an encore but since I was short on time, I promised to WRITE a story for inclusion in the monthly newsletter.

It is my contention that the operating departments in the railroad business have (like our banking industry) gotten more and more careless. I first learned this at the OLD Auto-Train in Sanford where I worked as an engineer in the yard there. The Vice-President/Operations was Mr. Arne Q. Olson who had previously been in charge of the private cars of the wealthy 'snowbirds' who came south for the winter. This required a great knowledge of all the systems of passenger cars - electrical, water, air, steam, air conditioning.....you get the picture. It did NOT require knowledge of the OPERATING department and therein lay our problem. All us folks on the switch crews had to do was get the cars to the wheel pit, rip track,...wherever. Just DO IT.

In the 3rd or 4th month of operations, Mr. Olson asked me to go up north, look over the Lorton operations for a week or so and see if I could make any suggestions to improve things. When I returned, I suggested that we hire a real switch crew to augment the two engineers employed there rather than simply grabbing a pipefitter, electrician, or laborer to handle the train up there (AMTRAK did this from day one). My idea was put on the floor for debate and one of the managers stated that he "Didn't intend to pay 2 switchmen to sit on their asses most of the day". I said that we'd likely lose more money by having people doing the switchmen's jobs who weren't transportation people. This brought a roar from Mr. Olson, "Walt what you're saying is CRAFT UNION BULLSHIT!" I tried to protest and heard "Not another Goddamned word! That's all union bullshit!" End of meeting & could have been the end of me...I now realized that Arne Olson had many run-ins with union people at Jacksonville and hated labor organizations. He later told me "Everybody at the Auto-Train has to do everybody else's job and help out".

One of the results was that anybody felt free to jump on an engine to move it, switch out a car, etc. I had a flat tire on the way to work and arrived to find a car foreman on my engine telling a laborer who occupied the engineer's seat "This here is the throttle and this makes it back up & go forward - the brass handle is the brake to stop it with." I said, "You weren't really going to let him handle a 30 car passenger train were you?". "Hell, yeah, YOU weren't here!". One day while my switch crew had taken a dining car to the wheel pit, a car knocker foreman had to get a sleeping car to the north end of the train where the sleepers were usually placed. He simply got a laborer and another car knocker as an impromptu switch crew and they proceeded to the north end on track 1 to place the sleeper on the train, which was on track 3. Problem here was the north end of the Auto-Train yard was very close to the mainline of the (then) SCL. There was a simple answer to this - one of the car foremen had a SCL switch key and was able to unlock the switch lock and line the switch so they were able to head out onto the mainline for headroom with the old Baldwin switcher and sleeping car. This led to an interesting radio conversation that went something like this...

"JACKSONVILLE DISPATCHER TO SANFORD OPERATOR.

SANFORD OPERATOR, GO AHEAD JACKSONVILLE.

I'VE GOT A TRACKLIGHT ON HERE AND #97 (THE SILVER METEOR) IS BY ORANGE CITY.

WHAATTT????

(I'll explain that the old ACL/SCL station had a clear view of the Auto-Train property and the operator saw the old Baldwin creeping out onto the mainline)

IT'S THOSE IDIOTS AT AUTO-TRAIN; THEY'RE OCCUPYING THE MAIN TRACK.

Up north, this would have been the equivalent of a New York Central yard crew opening up a switch for headroom as the Twentieth Century Limited approached.....of course the Auto-Train car-knocker crew was blissfully unaware that there WAS a problem. Problems like this were usually resolved by inviting Mr. Dunn (SCL yardmaster) to the dining car commissary on Persimmon Avenue and loading his car with sippin' whiskey, a few cases of Michelob, wine... and promising to be good and not do

this anymore.

My conductor and I were appalled since within a few days it was back to 'business as usual'. After about a week, I got a 2-pound Danish ham tin and saved the lid that I cut two round holes in, one over the other. I sprayed it gray and epoxied a circle of red plastic over the top hole & yellow plastic over the bottom hole. I put a light socket in back of each lens and wired a switch into each light so I could make it appear yellow or red over yellow, or red. I then put it in the seat box on the fireman's side of the old Baldwin. The opportunity for fun presented itself 2 days later when my crew was told to place a dome car in track #2 at the north end before the train got in. We rolled north in track #3 and stopped at the end of the platform where I placed the ham tin dwarf on the ground & covered the cord with ballast before plugging it into the 110 volt power box. The foreman soon appeared..."What the hell's the holdup?" I delivered the bad news..." After you guys delayed #97, the SCL placed a signal here and it's red - we can't go by it." The car knocker foreman was dumbfounded and turned and literally began leaping across the parking lot screaming "Mr. Olson, Mr. Olson, the Seaboard put a signal up ... By this time I caught him & told him to calm down. I was rewarded with some cussing & a lecture on "Yankee smart-talk". I figured I'd better dispose of the evidence & the 'dwarf signal' went in the dumpster.

The really sad part of this is the car knocker foremen didn't SEE the danger of what they did. I was about to say WE never did anything this dumb, but in one of the TABER books is an incident where a switch crew decided to get 'JUST A LITTLE ROOM' and blocked the mainline as the Lackawanna Limited (making up time) hove into sight. The big 4-8-4 ripped the cylinder off the heavy switch engine and the superheated steam exhausted into the coach that was stopped there, killing many passengers. The road engine went on it's side killing the engine crew. I always think of the many times a switch crew has asked me to 'just pull up a few feet' and the yelling and screaming when I wouldn't. Rule 104-d is in most rulebooks and states, "A train or engine must not foul a track until all switches or derails are properly positioned for movement etc., etc., and THE NORMAL ROUTE IS SEEN TO BE CLEAR". Of course, we didn't have any rulebooks at Auto-Train. After near misses like this, Mr. Olson had another little saying. It went like this, "We've been mighty lucky today at the Auto-Train, Mighty Lucky.

Regards,
Walter E. Smith
Via The East Coast Champion, Florida East Coast Chapter NRHS

A-1-A Trucks

Lou Robi

Ever since 1937, when General Motors produced the first "E" units, the six-wheeled truck for diesel-electric locomotives has been a special application device. For decades, the assumed limit of 500 horsepower per axle and the track structure limit of 25 tons per axle, made the four-wheeled "B" truck the standard of the industry.

The "E" units, with their twin prime movers and a need to operate fast over lighter trackage with relatively light weight consists, required a three-axle truck with only four powered wheels.

As higher horsepower road switchers gained acceptance, their four wheeled "General Purpose" trucks were supplanted by three axle "Special Duty" trucks, but slower speeds and heavier consists required a third driving motor.

With the reduction in the number of passenger locomotives, and stringer track structures, the "A-1-A" truck all but disappeared, except on lighter weight "gauge rail lines in Canada.

Freight engines grew from 2000 horsepower to 6000 horsepower and wheel slip technology together with 35 ton-per axle track structures made the "C" truck the new industry standard.

Some time back, BNSF determined their six inverter, six motor 4400 horsepower evolution units, only needed four driving axles on their high speed intermodal trains on reduced grade right-of-ways. Their latest group of General Electric model ES44C4I locomotives has eliminated the cost and maintenance of the fifth and sixth inverter and motor, and reverted back to an "A-1-A" truck.

The Division dispatchers, however, must be careful because these units may not be able to restart heavier trains, if they are stopped on a stiff grade.

Interchange Baltimore Chap NRHS
via The Orderboard, Tampa Bay Chapter NRHS

Poughkeepsie Railroad Walkway Opening October 2009

Friday night Oct 2 around 7:00 pm invited guests and volunteers will gather at the East and West sides of the bridge to take part in the Grand Illumination of the Walkway, bringing it out of the shadows and into the night light of the Hudson River at its mid-point. They need 1000 to play an active role in the illumination of the bridge and Hot-air Lantern release that will follow.

Saturday Oct 3 They need another 1000 folks to take part in the official Opening Ceremony. With many State officials, YOU will also have a role! The plan is to TIE A KNOT with two nautical ropes coming from the East and West sides of the bridge. We need folks to hold and extend this MILE LONG rope across the bridge. There will be gala bands, lots of ceremony, kites, wind socks, and Grand Parade that will flow in BOTH directions across the bridge. Kids can be part of this too-so bring the whole family. To register, please fill out the online form, opening celebration@walkway.org. or call Jeanne Fleming at 845-758-519 . Construction is progressing. Check out the website for construction scenes. (Looks like a new spot to take train shots)
The West Conn Manifest via Western Connecticut Chapter, NRHS via The Green Block, Cent NY Chap, NRHS via The Orderboard, Tampa Bay Chapter NRHS

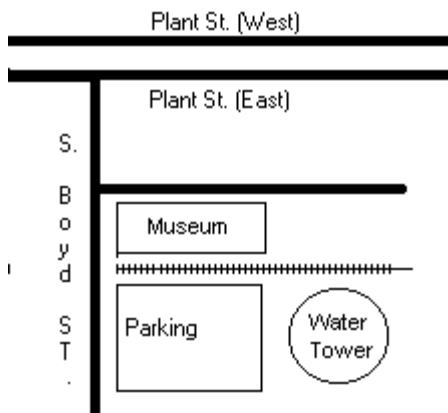
THE FLATWHEEL

1354 Foxfire Drive
Apopka, FL 32712

July 2009

The Museum: is located in downtown Winter Garden at 101 South Boyd Street, Winter Garden, FL 34787

It is open to visitors on **Daily 1-5 PM**, excluding holidays, or by special arrangements.



The Central Florida Chapter of the NRHS meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 PM at the museum location. Guests and visitors are encouraged to attend. The executive board meets at 6:30 PM of the same evening unless otherwise announced.

Club correspondence and other materials for the club should be sent to:

CFC-NRHS
PO Box 770567
Winter Garden, FL 34777-0567

Web page: <http://www.cfcnrhs.org>

Flatwheel- Material for the Flatwheel (including exchange newsletters) should be sent to:

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