

BLUE RIDGE DISPATCHER

Vol. 24

March 2017

No. 3



Above: Confluence, PA. June, 1974. Right: Elkins, WV. Jan. 1977.

The Blue Ridge Chapter welcomes Robert Kaplan to Lynchburg. Bob will share with us a program on the Western Maryland Ry. and its successors, including the Maryland Midland, York Rail and the Western Maryland Scenic. Some steam featuring part of a 4501 run from Pittsburgh to Alexandria is included, too.

Bob provides this biography. I was born in the Bronx, New York City. I have been married to my wife Ruthe since 1967. We are the proud parents of two wonderful daughters and four great grandsons.

Ruthe and I met and married in Pittsburgh, PA, where she lived while I was in graduate school. We lived briefly in Pittsburgh and then in Columbus, OH, for almost three years before moving to Maryland.

I spent most of my career as a Metallurgist/Materials Scientist with the U. S. Bureau of Mines managing metallurgy research programs.

I have loved trains since my earliest memory. I took my first railroad photos in the mid 1950s as a teenager but did not really get serious about shooting until we moved to Maryland in 1971. Soon after moving I joined the Potomac Chapter, NRHS, which had many excellent photographers. I was privileged to learn much about photography and local railroading from them.

I have had an opportunity to photograph trains in all 50 states; and in many foreign countries when my wife and I visited them. I look forward to sharing my WM program with the Blue Ridge Chapter.

A wonderful program is in store this month, so make plans to attend.

Wednesday, March 8, 2017. 6:00 p.m.
Charley's Restaurant. 707 Graves Mill Rd. Lynchburg, VA



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Lynchburg, Virginia



Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS Minutes of Meeting – February 8, 2017

President Rick Johnson called the meeting to order at Charley's Restaurant at 7:33 pm. Rick welcomed 25 members and 6 guests for a total of 31 in attendance. Our guests for the evening were Dona Duvall, Mary Guthrow, Edy Tanner, Rick Edwards, Bernard Haxel and Dan Livingston (Dan joined the BRC after our meeting tonight). Rick informed everyone of Norris Deyerle's improving condition and an upcoming surgery in March that will set his recovery back several weeks. Rick shared thank you letters from C&O Historical Society and Roanoke Chapter, NRHS for our donations.

Rick asked that the reading of the January 2017 minutes be dispensed. The minutes were approved as published in the "Blue Ridge Dispatcher" with one correction by Charlie Long, of BRC guest Jerry Glass' name.

Treasurer's Report: John Tanner reported:

Old Business: None

New Business: John Tanner informed everyone of Roanoke Chapter, NRHS's invitation to BRC members to assist with the upcoming 611 Steam Excursions. Lewis Foster with Roanoke Chapter will be emailing John & Rick volunteer sign-up info and they will distribute to BRC members once received.

Rick asked that anyone that would like to provide a program this year contact him as a few months are still available.

Vice President's Report: Gale McKinley – Asked everyone to please pay their National dues (directly to National) ASAP.

Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS Chairman of Virginia's Rail Heritage Region Partners: Norris Deyerle - absent due to illness

Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS National Representative: Bob Leslie – Reminded everyone that he would be attending the spring director's meeting.

Webmaster Report: John Siegle - No report

Editor's Report: Garland Harper - Absent - Rick thanked Garland for getting the newsletter out. Programs: Our March 8th meeting will feature special guest presenter, Robert "Bob" Kaplan and our March 22nd "Fun" meeting will feature special guest speaker/author Michael Abraham with his new book "Chasing The Powhatan Arrow".

Tonight our special guest (and BRC member), C&OHS's Tom Dixon, presented the evening's program featuring Michigan's C&O car ferry operations! Thanks Tom for a terrific show!

50/50 Raffle: 50/50 winner was guest, Bernard Haxel.

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Rick Johnson, acting BRC Secretary

BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER NOTES - Rick Johnson

WELCOME NEW BRC MEMBER

The Blue Ridge Chapter would like to welcome Dan Livingston to its membership!!!

2017 BRC DUES

BRC dues are now being collected with many members already paid. BRC yearly dues are again \$13.00. We hope that you will also continue your National membership; however, National dues must be paid directly to NRHS. National dues will not be accepted by the BRC.

FUN MEETING MARCH 22. CHASING THE POWHATAN ARROW - MICHAEL ABRAHAM

Our March 22nd "Fun" meeting program will be presented by special guest speaker/author Michael Abraham featuring his new book *Chasing The Powhatan Arrow*. Personal bio and program notes follow in this issue of the BRD.

Chasing the Powhatan Arrow A Travelogue in Economic Geography. Presentation by Michael Abraham

From its inception in the 1880s, The Norfolk and Western Railway was primarily a freight carrying company, principally conveying coal from the central Appalachian coal fields in Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky to the eastern seaboard port of Norfolk and to Cincinnati for transfer to the steel mills and power plants of the Great Lakes region. But as a sideline, it always provided passenger service as well. A profitable, well run company, N&W only accepted the very best.

As World War II ended, N&W provided several named trains along its main line, including the Cavalier, the Pocahontas, and its daytime flagship the Powhatan Arrow. Pulled by the magnificent Class J steam locomotives that N&W manufactured at its Roanoke Shops, the Powhatan Arrow provided fast, luxurious, and memorable service for over two decades before passenger service gave way to automobile and airplane travel nationwide.

The corridor traversed by the Powhatan Arrow is a wonderfully complex, geographically fascinating, socially diverse, and economically mixed path through Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio. The vicissitudes of time have endowed the communities along the way with a broad spectrum branching from success to failure.

With railroads no longer carrying passengers, author Michael Abraham duplicated the route as closely as possible by car, motorcycle, bicycle, and even canoe, gathering each area's history and culture and profiling entrepreneurs, historians, rail fans, and everyday people in this entertaining, educational, enlightening, and humorous look at a swath of America's past, present, and future.

Michael's presentation includes the genesis of his project, a discussion of the findings and conclusions, and several relevant readings from the book. He will be available following the presentation for questions and discussions. His book, *Chasing the Powhatan Arrow*, as well as his prior seven books, will be available for purchase.

About the Author

Michael Abraham is a native of Christiansburg and a graduate of Virginia Tech with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He has had a varied career in engineering, sales, marketing, business management, and real estate management. He currently splits his time between the management of an industrial shell building in Christiansburg and his writing career.

He lives in Blacksburg with his wife, two dogs, and four motorcycles. He and his wife have one adult daughter.

Chasing the Powhatan Arrow is his eighth book. All are about Virginia and West Virginia. The others are:

Keepers of the Tradition is a non-fiction compilation of portraits of contemporary Appalachians.

Orange, VA is a novel of political intrigue.

War, WV is a novel of the fight for justice in the Appalachian coal fields.

Providence, VA is a novel of inner strength found in adversity.

Harmonic Highways is a non-fiction look at Virginia's Crooked Road.

Union, WV, is a novel of loss, healing, and redemption in contemporary Appalachia.

The Spine of the Virginias is a non-fiction account of journeys along the border of Virginia and West Virginia.



He can be reached at bikemike@nrnunwired.net. His website is www.bikemike.name.

Remembering a friend of the Blue Ridge Chapter, Tom Riddle, Jr. Norris Deyerle

Until my wife Peggy and I attended Tom's memorial service March 4 I was going to title my tribute to Tom "My Friend Tom Riddle Passes Away". Near the end of Tom's memorial service there was time to "Remember Tom with Words of Comfort and Hope". People that grew up with Tom and those that got to know him after he moved to Richmond from Lynchburg all had one thing in common. They all loved the man dearly! They said that every time Tom greeted them it was with a smile. Church members talked about how Tom was involved in their youth groups and anything else he was recruited to do.

After listening to many fond memories of Tom I felt that I needed to say something out of respect. During my recent illness Tom called me many times during my recovery period. We stayed in touch over the years since he was on my "RXR Superfans" railroad email list. He was always making suggestions to me on how to make our annual BRC, NRHS Lynchburg Rail Day train show better. If I had a history question regarding railroading or Lynchburg/Richmond history he was my go to source! I thought that we made a good team to get folk's questions answered.

Tom's email address included "tomscatco" and mine includes "railcow". Those email addresses should tell you something about our personalities! Ha! During my remembrance of Tom I said among other things that Tom never met a stranger. I ended my tribute to Tom by saying that I will miss him.

I watched a tribute to the singer John Denver today on PBS celebrating what would have been John's 70th birthday! One of the lyrics to one of John's songs made me think of Tom. It's from "Poems, Prayers and Promises" and it goes like this: "How sweet is to love someone, how right is it to care. How long it's been since yesterday, what about tomorrow and what about our dreams and the memories we share?"

Our lives have been made better by friends like Tom.

May the Lord be with you and your families {and friends},

Norris Deyerle

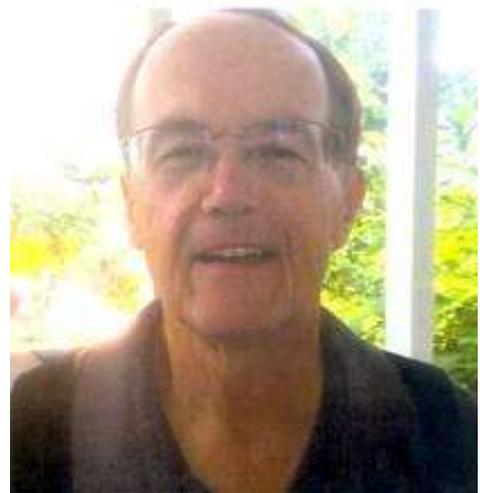
Aubrey Thomas Riddle, Jr. November 15, 1951 - February 16, 2017

Aubrey Thomas "Tom" Riddle, Jr., 65, of Richmond, formerly of Lynchburg, passed away Thursday, February 16, 2017 at his residence.

Born November 15, 1951, in Lynchburg, he was the son of the late Aubrey T. Riddle, Sr. and the late Ruth King Riddle. Tom was a graduate of the University of Richmond and a retired sales manager. He was a member of Fairview United Methodist Church.

Tom is survived by his sister, Kathy S. Riddle of Lynchburg; nieces and nephews, Michael Goin (Cheryl), Desiree Goin, Amy G. Garrett, and Aubrey Hall and numerous nieces, nephews and one great-great nephew. .

A memorial service was held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, March 4, 2017, at Fairview U.M. Church with the Rev. Phil Showers officiating.



Ringling Bros. to auction off all of its rolling stock

As we have all heard by now the Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey circus after 146 years of operation will shut down permanently in a few months. Railfans will mourn the loss of the two circus trains which have criss-crossed the nation for as many years transporting the Red Unit and the Blue Unit to their various venues.

You now have a chance to own a piece of railroading history. Feld Entertainment is auctioning off all the railcars and running gear. The deadline to make a bid is March 10. A summary of equipment up for bids is listed at this website:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=687fed9230ab456284c9c45ddb206dec>

Blue Ridge Chapter, National Railway Historical Society 39th Annual

LYNCHBURG RAIL DAY 2017

Saturday, August 12, 2017

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

BOONSBORO RURITAN CLUB

1065 Coffee Road Lynchburg, Va. 24503

Admission: \$6/person, Family admission: \$10. Children 12 & under free w/paying adult

Your ticket purchase helps towards paying for area railroad preservation projects!

OPERATING MODEL TRAIN LAYOUTS ON DISPLAY IN AIR CONDITIONED HALL
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE - FREE PARKING - FRESHLY PREPARED FOOD/BEVERAGES SOLD

* * * * * **BARGAIN MART** * * * * *

Model Train Items and Railroad Memorabilia "For Sale" from vendors from around our area

Sales tables available to the general public, advance registration/payment required

8 foot sales tables: \$33.00 each with no charge for two attendees per table

* * * * * **"WHITE ELEPHANT" TABLE** * * * * *

"MAKE MONEY WHILE YOU BROWSE THE TRAIN SHOW!"

Available to train show attendees, the Blue Ridge Chapter N.R.H.S. will sell your model trains and Railroad Memorabilia for a 20% commission. If your consignment items don't sell then it costs you nothing! "White Elephant Table Guidelines" forms are available on our website.

For additional LRD 2017 train show information and to rent Vendor/Sales Tables contact:

LRD 2017 Vendor Table Registrar: John Tanner - Mobile (434)841-6669 flytrains@yahoo.com, LRD

2017 Chairman: Barry Moorefeild rockdalefarm@live.com, LRD 2017 Train Show Coordinator:

Norris Deyerle – Mobile (434)851-0151 railcow@msn.com

Blue Ridge Chapter, N.R.H.S., P.O. Box 11731, Lynchburg, Va. 24506-1731

Website: www.blueridgenrhs.org



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N&W Class J #611's 2017 Excursion schedule

- April 8, 2017: *The Virginian*, Spencer, NC, to Lynchburg, VA
- April 9, 2017: *The Charlotte Special*, Spencer, NC, to Charlotte, NC
- April 9, 2017: *The Piedmont Limited*, Spencer, NC, to Greensboro, NC
- April 22, 2017: *The Roanoker*, Greensboro, NC, to Roanoke, VA
- April 23, 2017: *The Roanoker*, Greensboro, NC, to Roanoke, VA
- May 6, 2017: *The Cavalier*, Lynchburg, VA, to Petersburg, VA
- May 7, 2017: *The Cavalier*, Lynchburg, VA, to Petersburg, VA
- May 27, 2017: *The Powhatan Arrow*, Roanoke, VA, to Lynchburg, VA
- May 27, 2017: *The Pocahontas*, Roanoke, VA, to Walton (Radford), VA
- May 28, 2017: *The Powhatan Arrow*, Roanoke, VA, to Lynchburg, VA
- May 28, 2017: *The Pocahontas*, Roanoke, VA, to Walton (Radford), VA
- May 29, 2017: *The Powhatan Arrow*, Roanoke, VA, to Lynchburg, VA
- May 29, 2017: *The Pocahontas*, Roanoke, VA, to Walton (Radford), VA

Tickets are now on sale. Visit www.vmt.org

Donate to the N&W Class J 611 preservation at <http://fireup611.org/>

SIGHTINGS

Roanoke Amtrak platform construction in downtown gets under way. Feb. 17, 2017. Sources have said service to Roanoke will begin October 1, 2017. (G. Harper)



A surprise on NS train 36Q! Passenger coach for the Buckingham Branch RR named Arvonnia spotted Feb. 12. (Skip Hansberry)

NS AC44C6M 4003 seen on the head end of NS train 214 behind Kemper St. Feb. 19, 2017. (G. Harper)



The Virginian unit, NS 1069, spotted crossing Cotton Mill trestle trailing on "ash train" V76. Feb. 17, 2017. (G. Harper)

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The BLUE RIDGE DISPATCHER is published by the Blue Ridge Chapter, National Railway Historical Society. Opinions expressed are those of the editor and contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Blue Ridge Chapter or the National Railway Historical Society unless otherwise stated.

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